

The Role of the Tour Guide in Taking a Good Memorial Photograph in the Heritage Sites

Mohamed I. Abouelata

*College of Tourism and Archaeology, King Saud University,
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

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Abstract: Knowledge is one of the essential qualifications of the tour guide. His information should cover all fields of knowledge as the more he knows, the more he satisfies his guest. One of those necessary areas of knowledge for the tour guide is photography. This paper sheds light on the importance of the role of the tour guide in travel photography.

Introduction

Photography is a very important tool that is used to memorialize people's lives and yet they do not think of it at the time that they press that shutter button (Crawshaw and Urry 1997:179). People do not realize the importance of the images until the subject of one of the images passes on and then they are left with nothing but the memories (Schulman 1999 a). Photography helps them to relive the past and in a way to keep in touch with the past.

There are many reasons why photography is important. First, it can be proof that something actually happened (i.e. landing on the moon). Second, it can keep memories alive, when a person can look at a photo and remember that moment (Crawshaw and Urry 1997:179). Photos can also show someone something they themselves can not see. It can show something that is happening all over the world, even if the person is not there (Larsen 2003). Furthermore, it is another mean of communication, to send a picture of someone's kid to a relative. To see the face of a dead ancestor, or a person when they were ten years younger.

Briefly, photography is important because it captures all aspects of beauty in life. Pictures are a way that families and friends recollect their past events (Schulman 1999 a). It is like a time capsule. It is a recording of that event at that place and time

(Larsen 2005). Once the button has been pushed and the picture has been taken, it is then history.

The visitor to any site at any tourist spot in the world keeps on capturing a commemorative photograph either for the site itself or for the tourist himself at the site because the photo is considered a document of his visit to that place (Bruner 2005:56).

This keen increases when the place of visit is one of the important heritage sites all over the world. Whether it is a cultural heritage site such as the pyramids of Egypt (Lehner 2004), the Colosseum of Rome (Hopkins and Beard 2005; Coarelli and Gabucci 2007), the Acropolis of Athens (Hurwit 1999), and Petra of Jordan (Taylor 2001), or a natural heritage site as is the case in the Grand Canyon of the United States (Kaiser 2007), the Virgin Komi Forests in Russian Federation (van Dijk 2008), Kilimanjaro National Park in Tanzania (Riley & Riley 2005), or the Mount Kenya National Park in Kenya (Riley & Riley 2005).

In many instances, the keen of tourist to capture a self-photograph in the place in order to commemorate his visit become more important than the visit itself and knowing the features of the place and its history. Therefore, the successful tour guide is the one who can reconcile the urgent desire of tourists to take photos and his duty as a guide to clarify and explain the features of the place.

The best evidence of the importance of

photography is what happening during the visit to the Holly Kaaba. Sometimes, Hajj or visitor keen to photo-op at the Holly Mosque, which reflects the importance of the place itself and the desire of the visitor to record that moment in a picture remains as long as he remains alive. The picture, according to the Chinese proverb, worth a thousand words, and perhaps this explains why there is such a strong desire in photography in heritage sites.

The guide has two roles in photography process either he, himself, shoot the tourist, in such case he plays the role of photographer, or the tourist himself is the photographer so the role of the tour guide is to orient the tourist to get the best picture or becomes, according to the photography expression, the director of the photography.

The tourists traveling with the tour guide can be divided –according to their skills in taking pictures– into two groups, professionals and amateurs. As for the first group, the professional photographer tourists, professionalism here means that the tourist has already runs a career in photography, are often few in numbers. Some of them are experts in travel photography (Albers and James 1988) which is a subcategory of photography involving the documentation of an area's landscape, people, cultures, customs and history. The Photographic Society of America (PSA 2010) defines a travel photo as an image that expresses the feeling of a time and place, portrays a land, its people, or a culture in its natural state, and has no geographical limitations. The photographers of National Geographic magazine are considered the best examples of professional travel photography.

Even with such professional photographers, the tour guide has an indispensable role in capturing photographs. Although the professional photographer knows all the details of the photography art, the matter that may suggest the absence of the tour guide's role in such cases, which is absolutely not true as the details of the place remains a hidden secret to the professional photographer and available only to the tour guide who knows all the details of the place in terms of the best angles, the highest and the lowest spots, the panoramic areas, and weather conditions.

For example, some of the huge heritage buildings can not be a full shown in a photo taken from a close distance of the monument itself (Howell and Blanc 1992: 66). But size of the building increased in the photo the greater the distance between the photographer and the building (Harris 2002:17; Kopelow 2007: 79). In some cases, this distance is a few kilometers away from the monument and it is only the tour guide who knows the best spot to

capture such image. Taking a panoramic photo (Kopelow 2007: 139) also needs to a distance and to the absence of any obstacles that prevent the appearance of the full monument. As well as, the wind direction (Harris 2002:69;Kopelow 2007: 80), the dust it carries might hamper the photo or add to it, needs someone knows the climatic conditions of the site. In all these cases, it is the guide who provides solutions for the professional photographer.

Concerning the second group, the amateur photographer tourists, it represents the vast majority of tourists around the world, although the degree of hobby varies from one tourist to another.

If the professional photographer knows how to take a picture in a professional way, most of tourists are amateur photographers, and here is a much greater role of the tour guide. In order to clarify that, if the guide accompanies a couple in their honeymoon and they wanted to record those important moments in their life, and the visit that has been planned for quite some time, and there is no one in the site except them and their guide, and they asked him to take them a photo, how would be the situation if he can not take a good photo? Certainly, that will affect their mood, as they will know that all the details of that trip which have long dreamed of will not be photographed and documented as they planned and expected. The alternative solutions would be either that each of them photographing the other alone and that would make them loss pleasure and comfort, or looking for, or waiting, some one else in the site to ask him for photographing them together. The last solution is to use the self-timer (Milburn 2000:64), including the photographer needs for setting up the camera and using the tripod (Milburn 2000:176). In the three cases, the couple has lost confidence in the ability of their guide to convince them again of the best places to take photographs.

It is worth mentioning that the reaction of the tourists here is instantaneously at the moment of capturing photos as they could be reviewed immediately in digital cameras. While in the case of a regular camera, the impression about the skill of the tourist guide in capturing photos delayed to the time of printing the pictures. The shock becomes much greater because the opportunity of compensation pictures and taking alternative photos is almost impossible as many tourists postpone the process of printing their pictures to post-trip when they return to their homelands. Even they did so in the destination country, the visit to the place where they took photos had been finished, and it becomes very difficult - if not impossible - to return to it once more in the same program.

In such case, and despite the delay of the tourist impression about the skills of his guide in photography, which may save the guide from the immediate reaction, but that could lose him a lot of respect by his tourists. The matter that surely affects his work on the long-term as a result of mouth-to-mouth propaganda.

Hence, the importance of having skills in photography stands out. It becomes an indispensable for the tour guide. Some of the most important knowledge in photography the guide should know include: Exposure (Kowaliski 1977:530; Johnson 1999: 120; Milburn 2000:234; Frost 2000), Sensitivity (Altman 1977:505), White Balance (Johnson 1999: 49; Milburn 2000:234), Horizon line (Johnson 1999: 139), The Golden Hour (Farace and Staver 1999:1), Flare (Altman 1977:490), while the most important at all is light (Johnson 1999: 47; Farace and Staver 1999; Milburn 2000:241; Frost 2000; Tharp 2010:19) as the word "photography" itself is derived from two Greek words, *phos* that means "light" and *graphê* which means "representation by means of lines" or "drawing" (Cherry 1986:199), the two words together meaning "drawing with light". Explanation of such skills is beyond the objectives of this paper, but can be gained through reading books about the basics of photography (McCartney 2005; Evans 2006; Heller 2007) or through practice or even through a study course in photography or workshops (Schulman 1999 a). Therefore, this research strongly recommends teaching photography to students of tour guidance.

However, what should be mentioned here is the ethics of photography in heritage site. As for the cultural heritage site, the guide should mention for his tourists which places where photography is permitted and which where is not allowed. He should explain the reasons for prohibition until it become convinced for the tourists. In some countries, photography is not allowed in the cultural heritage sites, specially inside old building such as palaces, tombs, temples, churches, and mosques, while some other countries allow that. The tourist as well, according to the protocol of travel photography, should ask before photographing sites of importance (Butcher 2003).

The guide and his group should leave a room for others to capture their photos, and not stand in a situation interrupts the field of other photographers. He must also explain for his amateur tourists photographers that photography is right of others as it is theirs. As long as they have taken their time in capturing picture, they should give enough time for others to do so.

The tourists shouldn't capture photos for local

people without their consent (Bruner 2005:117), and in the case of their approval they should not be imposed for certain poses (Schulman 1999).

Tourism is one of the practices through which photography constitutes society (Garrod 2009). Tourism and photography combine to create a "tourist gaze" in which local inhabitants are positioned and defined by the camera lens. However, it has also been argued that there exists a "reverse gaze" through which indigenous photographees can position the tourist photographer as a shallow consumer of images (Gillespie 2006).

One of the main points that bother many visitors to cultural heritage sites is no flash photography. The guide should be understanding of these rules and interprets them for the tourists because some of their countries allow flash photography in similar places.

Almost all world-class museums restrict flash photography. Flashes on cameras generate small amounts of ultraviolet light "UV" (Stroebel and others 2000:9). Although those small amounts of the UV rays are much weaker than those generated by the sun but they could cause the same effect. Sunlight is a powerful oxidizer and will bleach color out of many materials such as cloth, paint, wood, paper, etc. if given enough exposure time. Hundreds of flashes daily, millions over time, surely the objects exposed would eventually fade. In addition to light, much of the blame is due to the heat produced by light and the chemical reactions produced as well.

This does not address also the nuisance caused by tons of flashes. Truly, there is nothing more annoying that a hundred flashes going off while the tourist is trying to enjoy some sight seeing. In art galleries, flash is prohibited for the same reasons, moreover it is a distraction and an annoyance to the security personnel.

While in the natural heritage sites, there are principles of ethical field practices. The North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) believes that following these practices promotes the well-being of the location, subject and photographer. Every place, plant, and animal, whether above or below water, is unique, and cumulative impacts occur over time. Therefore, one must always exercise good individual judgment. It is NANPA's belief that these principles will encourage all who participate in the enjoyment of nature to do so in a way that best promotes good stewardship of the resource (NANPA 2010). The guide should advise the tourists to follow those principles:

- Environmental: knowledge of subject and place
- Learn patterns of animal behavior, know when not to interfere with animals' life cycles.

- Respect the routine needs of animals, remember that others will attempt to photograph them, too.
- Use appropriate lenses to photograph wild animals, if an animal shows stress, move back and use a longer lens.
- Acquaint yourself with the fragility of the ecosystem, stay on trails that are intended to lessen impact.

Social: knowledge of rules and laws

- When appropriate, inform managers or other authorities of your presence and purpose, help minimize cumulative impacts and maintain safety.
- Learn the rules and laws of the location, if minimum distances exist for approaching wildlife, follow them.
- In the absence of management authority, use good judgment, treat the wildlife, plants and places as if you were their guest.
- Prepare yourself and your equipment for unexpected events, avoid exposing yourself and others to preventable mishaps.

Individual: expertise and responsibilities

- Treat others courteously, ask before joining others already shooting in an area.
- Tactfully inform others if you observe them engaging in inappropriate or harmful behavior. Many people unknowingly endanger themselves and animals.
- Report inappropriate behavior to proper authorities, don't argue with those who don't care; report them.
- Be a good role model, both as a photographer and a citizen, educate others by your actions; enhance their understanding.

Moreover, the guide should know, then explain to his tourists, the most important points in the wildlife photography code of ethics (Peterson 2003:138; Wheeler 2002; Weston 2005:6; Toit 2002:86; Hosking and Gooders 1973; 155)

- First and foremost, view wildlife from a safe distance for both you and them. Respect their spatial needs. If the animal interrupts its behavior (resting, feeding, etc.), then you are too close and must distance yourself.
- Never force an action. Be patient! The most beautiful photographs result from natural action.
- Never come between a parent and its offspring. It is unacceptable behavior to distress, tree or separate tiny cubs from their mother eager for a closer look..
- Never crowd, pursue, prevent escape, make

- deliberate noises to distract, startle or harass wildlife. This is stressful and wastes valuable energy in needless flight. The impact is cumulative. Consider that you may be the 60th person to yell "hey moose" at that animal that day while it's attempting to tend to its young.
- Never feed or leave food (baiting) for wildlife. Habituation due to handouts can result in disease or even death of that animal and injury to you.
- Never encroach on nests or dens as certain species will abandon their young.
- Never interfere with animals engaged in breeding, nesting, or caring for young.
- Learn to recognize wildlife alarm signals and never forget that these animals are not tame no matter how docile or cuddly they appear. No one would argue that you should not try to pet a bull yet there have been numerous instances where a tourist attempted to have his photo taken next to a bison with disastrous consequences.
- Do not damage or remove any plant, life form or natural object. Do pack out trash.
- Acquaint yourself with and respect the behaviors and ecosystems of the wildlife you may encounter. By doing so, you will enrich your experience tremendously.
- Finally, and most significant, remember that the welfare of the subject and habitat are irrefutably more important than the photograph.

Conclusion

From what is mentioned above, it is very clear that the role of the tour guide is very important in taking a good picture of the Heritage site. His responsibility increases the less tourist abilities in photography, and vice versa, it decreases the more tourist skills, but never reaches to nil. In all cases, part of the level of photo quality is the responsibility of the tour guide.

The findings of this research shows that if the tour guide was able to achieve an excellent photograph as the tourist dreamed with, and if he succeeded to change the comment of the tourist, as soon as watching it, from the expression "That's good" to the expression "This is fantastic", it means he is not only a clever guide in knowledge and interpreting, but he is a distinguished photographer as well.

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