

The Rectangular Abydene Limestone Stela of *Nfr-Hb* and *Htp-Hkt* at the Cairo Museum (CG 1594)

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Abstract:

This Article examines the stela CG 1594, housed in the Egyptian Museum Cairo. The stela was unearthed in Abydos but the date of its discovery and its actual location were unknown. The stela belongs to Nefer-Heb, who was “overseer of the *hm(w)-ntr* priests of Hathor”, “Sealer of the king of Lower Egypt” and “Sole Companion”. The main inscription of the stela follows a standard offering formula dedicated to Anubis. The inscription ended with the name of the owner of the stela and his titles. The stela depicts Nefer-Heb’s wife who was called “Hetep-heket” and mentions her only title “sole ornamented one of the king”. Alongside Nefer-Heb and his wife Hetep-heket”, his eldest son “They” appears on the stela who bore as well a sole title which is the sole companion. This article includes a detailed description of the stela, its artistic features and the figures represented on it, as well as an artistic commentary on them, followed by a reading and translation of the texts carved on the stela, as well as the names and titles of the individuals mentioned on it. This was followed by a commentary on the epigraphic and orthographic features carved on it. Based on stylistic, epigraphical and orthographical analysis of the stela’s features, it is estimated to date it from the very late Old Kingdom to early Heracleopolitan Period (from the Eighth dynasty to the beginning of the Ninth dynasty).

الملخص:

تدرس هذه المقالة اللوحة CG 1594 المحفوظة بالمتحف المصري بالتحرير، والتي تم الكشف عنها في أبيدوس بمحافظة سوهاج، إلا أن تاريخ العثور عليها ومكانها الأصلي فهما غير معروفين. تعود ملكية هذه اللوحة إلى شخص يدعى “نفر-حب” والذي حمل الألقاب: “المشرف على كهنة حتحور وحامل ختم ملك الوجه البحري والسمير الوحيد”. يحتوي النص الرئيسي المدون على اللوحة على صيغة تقديم القرابين التقليدية والمكرسة للمعبود “إنبو”، وتنتهي الصيغة بذكر صاحب اللوحة وألقابه. كما تظهر على اللوحة زوجة “نفر-حب” المدعوة “حتب-حقت” والتي حملت لقبًا وحيدًا على اللوحة وهو “المُزينة الوحيدة للملك”. وإلى جانب نفر-حب وزوجته “حتب - حقت” يظهر أيضًا على اللوحة ابنه الأكبر “إحيي” والذي حمل لقبًا وحيدًا وهو “السمير الوحيد”. تشتمل هذه المقالة على وصف دقيق للوحة وعناصرها الفنية والأشكال المُمثلة عليها وكذلك التعليق الفني عليها ثم قراءة وترجمة النصوص الواردة على اللوحة وكذلك أسماء الأشخاص والألقاب المذكورة عليها وقد أعقب ذلك تعليقًا على السمات الخطية والاملائية المدونة عليها. وختامًا، وفقًا للأسلوب الفني للوحة وسماتها وعناصرها الخطية والاملائية، يُرجح الباحث أن تاريخها يعود إلى نهاية عصر الدولة القديمة وبداية العصر الإهناسي.

Keywords:

Abydene Stela, Heracleopolitan Period, Late Old Kingdom, Nefer-Heb, Sole ornamented of the king.

الكلمات الدالة:

العصر الاهناسي، اللوحة الأبيدية، المُزينة الوحيدة للملك، نفر-حب، نهاية الدولة القديمة.

I: Introduction:

Abydos was a city of great importance to the Ancient Egyptians, notably as the sacred city of Osiris. Pilgrims visited it from the Middle Kingdom to the Late Roman Period, each erecting at least one stela for themselves in the holy city⁽¹⁾.

Many stelae were excavated by scholars in Abydos. however, a large number of these discovered stelae were neither recorded nor documented⁽²⁾, this was largely due to the gathering of large number of these stelae before the serious scientific efforts to record and document the excavations or collecting them from undisciplined excavations⁽³⁾.

The current stela was unearthed in Abydos. The exact location and date of excavating the stela are unknown. It is presented nowadays, in the first floor of the Egyptian Museum Cairo, under the accession numbers (CG 1594 = SR 3/9035).

The stela was initially mentioned by Ludwig Borchardt in his catalogue, He presented a transcription for its inscriptions and a very brief description for the individuals depicted on it⁽⁴⁾. Borchardt suggested dating it to the first Intermediate Period⁽⁵⁾. The stela was referenced by Hermann Ranke as a source to demonstrate two specific names *Nfr-hb* and *hṯp-hk.t*⁽⁶⁾. Jaromir Malek recorded the stela as a stela from Abydos preserved in Cairo Museum whose exact origin was unknown⁽⁷⁾. He mentioned also the name of its owner and his wife and recorded the same dating given before by Borchardt⁽⁸⁾. Lately, the stela was noted by Yvonne Lemke as a stela from Abydos that its owner named *Nfr-hb* and held the title *imy-r ḥm(w)-nṯr ḥwt-hr*⁽⁹⁾. He referred it with its number CG 1594 and put in parentheses that it dates back to the Sixth Dynasty⁽¹⁰⁾.

Despite these previous studies, the stela needed more analytical study. Consequently, the present article aims to present a detailed publication and analytical investigation of the current stela. Providing a comprehensive examination of its iconography and inscriptions. Furthermore, it seeks to elucidate the social standing of stela's owner and his family members depicted on that stela and suggesting a proposed date for it.

II: Description (Figs 1-2):

The stela is of limestone with the following measurements: 114 cm in height, 62.5 cm in width and 29 cm in depth.

It is rectangular in shape. Its surface is generally smooth. The edges of the stela are rough and its sides were left chipped. The decoration of the stela and its text were well executed in sunk relief^(a).

The stela was framed from its top by two wide incised lines surmounted by the Egyptian cornice, which is etched with a recurrent line simulating palm leaves^(b) with some remnants of red and black hues are still visible.

Thematically, the stela can be divided into two main parts, An upper one and a lower ones. As for the first main part or the upper one, it includes the main inscription of the stela. It consists of four incised horizontal lines runs from right to left representing the offering formula⁽¹¹⁾. The colours of all signs depicted on that part are still well obvious in black pigment and some particular signs

show internal details as in the case of: the city determinative⁽¹²⁾ in the second line and that of 

 *bity*⁽¹³⁾ and  *hb*⁽¹⁴⁾ in the fourth line. Each line of the four lines is separated from the other below by an incised horizontal red coloured borderline.

A red horizontal incised borderline separates the first part of the stela from the second one.

As for the second part of the stela, it is dominated with a double scene of offering tables for the deceased and his wife.

The owner of the stela is seated to the right side of that part wearing a large black coloured shoulder length wig that leaves the ears uncovered⁽¹⁵⁾, a *goatte*, a broad collar and a short tight apron⁽¹⁶⁾ tied at the waist with a rounded flap. Despite no knot can be visible. His left hand is extending on his leg holding a folded cloth, while his right hand is extending to reach the offering table depicted before him⁽¹⁷⁾. The deceased is sitting on a low backed chair with a pillow that covers the backrest⁽¹⁸⁾. The bottom of the front and rear legs of the chair ends in lions' feet⁽¹⁹⁾ which replaced that of the bulls later in the Old Kingdom^(e). The top of the back leg designs slightly above the minimal edge of the chair, is a lineament known in the Memphite Necropolis particularly in Giza and Saqqara cemeteries⁽²⁰⁾ by the late of the Sixth Dynasty and in the sites of Upper Egypt since the First Intermediate Period⁽²¹⁾.

The offering table depicted before him has a long, flat-topped stand⁽²²⁾ with a little, somewhat off-center triangle carved toward the bottom⁽²³⁾. Tall, stylized half loaves of bread appear on the table as out-ward-curving reeds⁽²⁴⁾. A visual pun signifying the field of offerings (*sht htpw*) the owner of the stela intended to visit in the Hereafter⁽²⁵⁾.

Above the bread is a large piece of meat, two forelegs of beef, a bundle of lettuce and a bunch of onions^(d).

Beneath the table to the left, rests a deep-nested ewer in its basin^(e). Its spout is oriented rightwards towards the seated deceased. While to the right and close to the feet of the deceased is a jar rack loaded with four tall red coloured *hs/kbh* jars⁽²⁶⁾ rests on the groundline^(f).

Above the offering table as well as above and in front of the deceased's head is an incised horizontal red coloured text consisting of five lines of the hieroglyphic writing. The first two lines that are carved above the offering table are longer than the other three. All the five lines are oriented from left to right⁽²⁷⁾. As for the first two lines, the first line shows a detailed ideographic offering list. Such list continued in the second line in addition to two titles for the deceased. The Third line begins below the latter two, to the right of the offerings and directly above the deceased's head, including a third title for the deceased. In front of the deceased's face directly, there are the last two lines which refer to his name.

As for the spouse, she is depicted to the left side of that part facing right, an orientation denoting high status⁽²⁸⁾, wearing a long tight fitting shoulder straps dress⁽²⁹⁾, a wesekh collar around her neck⁽³⁰⁾ and bracelets in both of her hands. She is wearing a long black coloured wig, showcasing a lappet that gracefully falls backwards leaving the ear exposed. No facial details can be observed. Her right arm is extending towards the offering table, which is depicted before her, whilst her left arm is bending on her chest with a fist hand⁽³¹⁾.

She is sitting on a chair similar to the one of her husband but with an exceptional point which is the presence of a space between her figure and the chair's back^(g). Before the wife is an offering stand, the same in shape as that of her husband but less in height, loaded with tall half loaves of bread surmounted with a large piece of meat, a bunch of onions and two forelegs of beef and finally a bunch of lettuce. Below the offering table on the groundline to the right rests an ewer and basin. The ewer's spout is directed towards the lady. Above the wife is a hieroglyphic text consisting of three incised horizontal red-coloured lines of inscriptions run from right to left. Such text shows her relationship with the owner of the stela, her title and her name. Between the two offering tables is a small naked boy^(h) in red colour with short hair. The naked boy is in a striding posture directed leftwards looking towards the seated deceased, the owner of the stela, before him directly is a large goose oriented falling upside down that its neck rests on the ewer and basin of the owner of the stela. Above the boy's head appears a very hardly seen vertical incised hieroglyphic inscription. It never shows the relationship between him and the owner of the stela, it only refers to the name of that young naked boy.

The stela is framed on the right by a vertical column of incised inscription in red colour representing his elder son as well as his title, epithet and ended with his figure⁽³²⁾. The elder son is representing standing in a striding posture wearing a short wig⁽³³⁾, a broad collar, a short apron reaching his knees⁽³⁴⁾. His two arms are extending freely beside his side. His facial details are in a bad state of preservation while the left side of the stela is framed by a zigzag decoration. Such decoration may suggest that the inscription of his elder son was added later after the draughtman had began to carve the inscriptions. Remains of red colour can be seen on the owner of the stela, his elder son, the offering stand of the owner, the offerings of the couple and the ewer and basin of the wife.

III: Commentary on the representations:

- (a) **Sunk relief:** It became a dominant feature from the end of the Fifth Dynasty particularly around the rule of the monarch Ne-User-Re and beyond⁽³⁵⁾. From that time through the end of the Old Kingdom and the Heracleopolitan period, it emerged as the defining characteristic⁽³⁶⁾.
- (b) **The Cornice:** Fischer proposed that monuments from Abydos dating from the late Sixth Dynasty to the end of the Eighth Dynasty are characterized by a tall form and a vestigial cavetto cornice⁽³⁷⁾. This type of cornice, represented by vertical lines, is visible on the British Museum stela of *Hw-b3w*⁽³⁸⁾ and it was suggested that the Cairo Museum stela of Mry (CG 1592)⁽³⁹⁾ might have originally featured a similar design. Both of which, according to Brovarski, were dated to the Eighth Dynasty⁽⁴⁰⁾. Anyways, such cornice continued till the very end of the Eighth Dynasty⁽⁴¹⁾.
- (c) **Lion legged chair:** The lion-legged chair was a common feature in the Ancient Egyptian Art across several dynasties, it was a rare feature during the Fourth Dynasty⁽⁴²⁾, more common in the Fifth Dynasty⁽⁴³⁾, very frequent in the Sixth Dynasty⁽⁴⁴⁾. It also continued as an Artistic feature during the end of the Old Kingdom (Dynasties 6-8)⁽⁴⁵⁾ and through the Heracleopolitan Period⁽⁴⁶⁾. Cherpion noted that lion's legs on the chair were found everywhere during the Old Kingdom and consequently, it should not be used as a dating method after that time⁽⁴⁷⁾.
- (d) **The Offering table content:** The arrangement of the offering table which is consisting of tall slices of bread topped with cuts of meat, foreleg of beef and bundles of onions and lettuce was the most common depiction of offering tables during the Heracleopolitan Period⁽⁴⁸⁾.

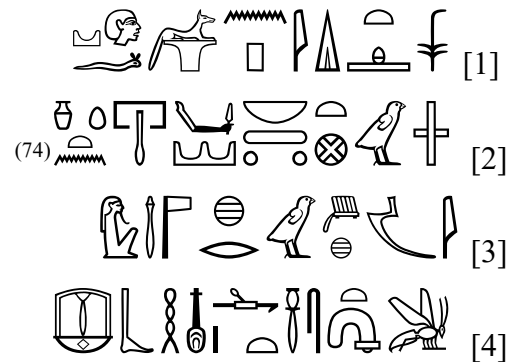
- (e) **The ewer deeply nested in its basin⁽⁴⁹⁾:** The ewer most likely held water, which was required for purification. As a result, ewer was placed below the offering tables to purify the offerings⁽⁵⁰⁾. It was also might had been used for hand washing before and after meals⁽⁵¹⁾.
- (f) **Jar rack with *hs/kbh* Jars on the groundline:** In Upper Egyptian tombs from the late Sixth Dynasty, nested ewers and basins along with the heset and / or kebeh vessels, are depicted in table scenes on the tomb walls. However, there is sometimes uncertainty in how these items are arranged, specially regarding service tables and racks. For example, in Ibi's tomb at Deir el Gebrawi (early Pepy's II reign), an ewer and basin are placed in a Jar rack near his legs. While a rack with heset and kebeh vessels is on the opposite side⁽⁵²⁾. In Tjauti's tomb at Qasr el-Saiyad (middle Pepy's II reign), these items are on small tables not racks⁽⁵³⁾. Conversely, the artists in Meir tombs of NiankhPepy Heny the Black⁽⁵⁴⁾ (early Pepy's II reign) and Pepyankh the Middle (Sixth – Eighth Dynasties) depicted these scenes correctly, without such confusion, directly before the tomb owner's legs⁽⁵⁵⁾. Whilst the same position of distributing the ewer and basin in the far side of the deceased and the jar racks before him directly below the offering table, which is depicted on the current stela, is attested in the tomb of Pepy ankh / Heni the Black of Meir⁽⁵⁶⁾ and that of shepsespumin / kheniankhu of Akhmim⁽⁵⁷⁾. The first was dated between the years 1-54 of Pepy II according to Harpur⁽⁵⁸⁾, while Baer dated him between 55 and 85 of Pepy's II reign⁽⁵⁹⁾. As for shepsespumin he was dated to the end of Pepy's II reign or to the Sixth-Eighth Dynasties⁽⁶⁰⁾. Therefore, The presence of a jar rack loaded with *hs/kbh* Jars on the groundline might be a dating criterion feature, dates back to the very end of the Old Kingdom.
- (g) **The representation of a notable distance between the seated deceased and the chair's back:** This iconographic element first known in the tomb 8 at Deir el-Gebrawi of Ibi⁽⁶¹⁾. Baer assigned it to the early up to middle reign of Pepy II⁽⁶²⁾. While Brovarski dated it to the initial third of Pepy II⁽⁶³⁾. since that time, this characteristic feature had been utilized frequently in south Saqqara⁽⁶⁴⁾ and in various provinces⁽⁶⁵⁾. Furthermore, it had been also documented during the Eighth Dynasty⁽⁶⁶⁾ and throughout the Heracleopolitan period in the Memphite Necropolis⁽⁶⁷⁾ and the provinces⁽⁶⁸⁾.
- (h) **Naked boy:** The naked boy might represent a younger or a nude portrait of the deceased⁽⁶⁹⁾, likely representing his younger ideal⁽⁷⁰⁾. It was possibly as well symbolizing his rebirth⁽⁷¹⁾. Another interpretation, proposed by Junker, suggests that it depicts the ka of the deceased⁽⁷²⁾.

The nude depiction was likely intended to provide the deceased with a youthful, pure body for his existence after death, as well as to rejuvenate him in the afterlife. This rebirth wouldnot be as a child, but rather as in the prime of youth, as indicated by the frequent depiction of the subject in a striding posture and circumcised⁽⁷³⁾.

The naked boy here is a youthful depiction of *Nfr-hb* himself. Such point of view is confirmed by their depiction opposite to each other before the same offering table.

IV: The Inscriptions of the Stela:

IV.1: The main inscription of the Stela:



[1] *h̄tp-di-nsw Inpw tpy dw:f*

[2] *imy wt nb t3 d̄sr prt-ḥrw t ḥnkt n*

[3] *im3ḥw ḥr ntr ʿ3*

[4] *ḥtmty-bity⁽⁷⁵⁾ smr wʿty Nfr-ḥb*

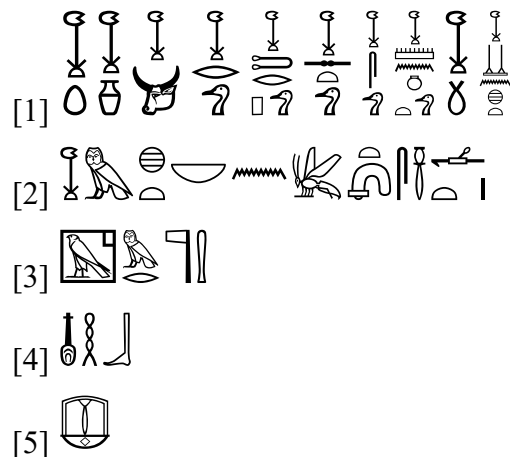
[1] An offering that the king and Anubis^(a) have given^(b), who is upon his mountain^(c)

[2] Who is in the place of embalming^(d), lord of sacred land^(e), An invocation offering^(f) of bread and beer to

[3] revered with the great god^(g)

[4] Sealer of the king of Lower Egypt^(h), Sole companion⁽ⁱ⁾ Nefer-Heb⁽ⁱ⁾.

IV.2: The inscriptions of the owner of the stela:



[1] *ḥ3 t ḥ3 ḥnkt ḥ3 k3w ḥ3 rw ḥ3 t̄rp ḥ3 st ḥ3 s ḥ3 mnwt ḥ3 šs ḥ3 mnḥt*

[2] *ḥ3 m ḥt nb(t) n ḥtmty-bity smr wʿty*

[3] *imy-r ḥm(w)-ntr (n) Ḥwt-ḥr*

[4] [5] *Nfr-ḥb*

[1] One thousand loaves of bread, One thousand Jars of beer, One thousand oxen, one thousand *r*-geese^(k), One thousand *trp*-geese^(l), One thousand *st*-ducks^(m), One thousand S-ducks⁽ⁿ⁾, One thousand *mnwt*-doves^(o), One thousand alabaster vessels, One thousand articles of clothing

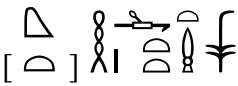
[2] and a thousand of every good thing for sealer of the king of Lower Egypt, sole companion

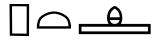
[3] overseer of the *hm-ntr* priests of Hathor^(p)

[4][5] Nefer-Heb

IV.3: The Inscriptions of the Lady:

 [1]

[2]  [2]

 [3]

[1] *hn^c hmt.f mrt.f*

[2] [3] *hkr nswt w^cty Htp-Hk[t]*

[1] together with his beloved wife⁽⁷⁶⁾

[2] [3] sole ornamented one of the king^(q) Hetep-Heqet^(r)

IV.4: The Inscription of the elder son:

s3.f smsw⁽⁷⁷⁾ mry.f smr w^cty Thy





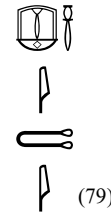




His eldest son^(s) whom he loves⁽⁷⁸⁾ sole companion Ihey^(t)

IV.5: The Inscription of the naked boy:

Nfr-ḥb It.i



Nefer-Heb / Ithy^(u)

V: Commentary on the Text:

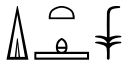
- (a) **Anubis:** The offering formula is invoked in the name of the deity Anubis. Anubis's association with death and decomposition, was reflected in his name which comes from the verb “to putrefy”, may have originated from witnessing desert dogs feeding on scavenging corpses in shallow graves during the late predynastic period⁽⁸⁰⁾. Anubis held a prominent position in the offering formulas, secondly only after Osiris, between the Fourth and Eleventh Dynasties⁽⁸¹⁾.

The tall stand under the Jackal, was a writing that appears in the Late Old Kingdom (Sixth Dynasty)⁽⁸²⁾ and later it became very common during the very late of the Old Kingdom⁽⁸³⁾ and the Heracleopolitan Period⁽⁸⁴⁾.

- (b) ***ḥtp-di-nsu*:** the Author follows Satzinger and Franke in his translation of the *ḥtp-di-nsu* formula. As Both of them have considered it as a “perfective relative form”⁽⁸⁵⁾.

In the Old Kingdom, the standard offering formula presented the King and a god (like Anubis) as parallel donors of offerings. While later during the Middle Kingdom, the formula evolved. The letter “n” was added, and the structure shifted to indicate that the king gave the offerings to a particular deity, as Osiris or Anubis, with the perception that this god would then pass these offerings on to the deceased personnel. Thus, the formula effectively described a chain of offering: from the king to the god, and from the god to the deceased⁽⁸⁶⁾. The core concept of the offering formula is a ritualistic process that the monarch presents offerings or gifts to a deity within a temple. This initial offering to the god serves as a conduit, enabling the subsequent transfer of these same provisions to a designated individual (deceased) in his tomb⁽⁸⁷⁾.

The formula of the *ḥtp-di-nsu* was known since the Fourth Dynasty⁽⁸⁸⁾. The arrangement

of the  formula on the stela was commonly used during the Sixth Dynasty to the end of the Old Kingdom⁽⁸⁹⁾ and thereafter in the Heracleopolitan Period⁽⁹⁰⁾.

The *Ḥtp-di-nsu* and the epithets of Anubis were attested with the same order, registered on the current stela, on most of the stelae dated back to the Heracleopolitan Period⁽⁹¹⁾.

- (c) ***tpy ḏw.f*:** means “who is upon his mountain”⁽⁹²⁾. This epithet interprets one of the considerations attributed to god Anubis in the Ancient Egyptian Mythology, which is the act of watching over the cemeteries from the heights of the desert cliffs⁽⁹³⁾.

tpy ḏw.f was initially recorded in the offering formulas of the Fifth Dynasty⁽⁹⁴⁾ and became frequently used during the Sixth Dynasty and the subsequent periods⁽⁹⁵⁾.



The arrangement of the epithet *tpy ḏw.f* in that way  was rare in the Fifth Dynasty⁽⁹⁶⁾, but it became a commonly employed form in the Sixth Dynasty⁽⁹⁷⁾, and thereafter till the end of the Heracleopolitan Period⁽⁹⁸⁾.

- (d) *imy wt*: the text describes a significant epithet associated with the Ancient Egyptian god Anubis and his role⁽⁹⁹⁾. This epithet means “the place or the house of embalming”. From the Old Kingdom onward, it referred to the city dedicated to mummification and was as well linked to Anubis’s symbolic representations⁽¹⁰⁰⁾.

As for *Imy wt*, as a local city central to mummification practices and associated with the deity Anubis, It was one of the villages of Assiut⁽¹⁰¹⁾. It was the place where the god Seth (*sth*)⁽¹⁰²⁾ had been embalmed and it was situated to the eastern part of the Tenth nome of Upper Egypt⁽¹⁰³⁾.

The writing of Anubis’s epithet “*imy wt*” with the city determinative  was known from the end of the Sixth Dynasty and thereafter till the end of the Heracleopolitan Period⁽¹⁰⁴⁾.

- (e) *nb t3 dsr*: means “lord of the sacred land”⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. *nb t3 dsr* was one of the epithets that was linked with Anubis⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. It was firstly known within the offering formula of the Fourth Dynasty⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ and thereafter till the end of the Old Kingdom⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ and during the Heracleopolitan Period⁽¹⁰⁹⁾.

The term “*t3 dsr*” refers to the desert where the necropolises were located, it confirms the geographical area that the god Anubis moves as the deity of burials⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

The arrangement of  in that order was known at south Saqqara from the Late Sixth Dynasty⁽¹¹¹⁾ and in Naga-ed-Dêr at the First Intermediate Period⁽¹¹²⁾. It is worth to note that

during the very end of the Old Kingdom and the Heracleopolitan Period the  was usually omitted⁽¹¹³⁾. Although, It was attested on some Artifacts dating back to the Heracleopolitan Period⁽¹¹⁴⁾.

- (f) *Prt-hrw*: The term *prt-hrw* (An invocation – offering) used in the offering formulae. The core desire of every Ancient Egyptian was to ensure the ongoing efficacy of their funerary rituals. This meant their prayers and offerings would continue to be done and favorably received, sustained by their descendants, the priests serving their tomb, and those who visited their cemetery⁽¹¹⁵⁾.
- (g) *im3hw hr ntr 3*: means “revered with the great god”⁽¹¹⁶⁾. This epithet firstly appeared during the Old Kingdom⁽¹¹⁷⁾ and became widely used down to the end of the Heracleopolitan Period⁽¹¹⁸⁾.

The epithet “*im3hw*” means that its owner merits offerings in the Hereafter⁽¹¹⁹⁾. As for “*im3hw hr*”, It usually points to a connection where someone provides for the deceased’s burial and afterlife needs who is often a king or a god⁽¹²⁰⁾.

As for the term “*ntr 3*”, It was firstly known in the royal context since the reign of Snefru, while it was attested in the non-royal offering formulae since the last years of Khufu’s reign and the initial years of Khafre⁽¹²¹⁾.

It is believed that “*ntr 3*” could refer to Osiris, Re⁽¹²²⁾, Anubis, Horus⁽¹²³⁾ or the living or the deceased king⁽¹²⁴⁾. Azzam noted that in the private texts, *ntr 3* may refer to the deity Osiris depending on a text depicted on the false door of *Ipi* from Saqqara⁽¹²⁵⁾.

- (h) *htmty-bity*: Jones interprets that title as “sealer of the king of Lower Egypt”⁽¹²⁶⁾. *htmty bity*, according to Wb, was an ancient title for most distinct individuals⁽¹²⁷⁾. It was firstly known during king’s Den rule that it was held by *Hm3-k3*⁽¹²⁸⁾. Rainer Hannig considered it the third highest court title⁽¹²⁹⁾.

While *htmty-bity* was prevalent during the Fourth Dynasty but less so in the Fifth, it became very common in Memphis and the provinces during the Sixth Dynasty⁽¹³⁰⁾.

This title was found in various provinces including Abydos⁽¹³¹⁾, Deir el Gebrawi⁽¹³²⁾, Sheikh Said⁽¹³³⁾ and Naga-ed-Der⁽¹³⁴⁾.

Uphill suggested that “*htmty-bity*” represented an office other than a rank⁽¹³⁵⁾. A widespread role across the state⁽¹³⁶⁾, stemmed from the state’s crucial need to store various raw materials and food supplies across all provinces in large stores and warehouses which explains its widespread in the capital and the provinces as well.

These large stores were secured by the “*htmty-bity*” whose responsibility was to manage these stores and warehouses, under the local chief’s direct supervision⁽¹³⁷⁾, making the office consistently necessary.

It is worth to note that there was a close link between those holding the titles “*h3ty-ꜥ*” and “*htmty-bity*”, this link likely stemmed from the local chief’s responsibility for the security of these storage facilities⁽¹³⁸⁾.

- (i) ***Smr wꜥty***: Doxey preferred the translation of that title as “sole courtier”⁽¹³⁹⁾, depending on the contexts which refers to the holder of that title as a status of an acquaintance other than an actual personal friendship⁽¹⁴⁰⁾. Jones interprets the title as “sole companion”⁽¹⁴¹⁾.

The title is consisting of two words: The first one is the title “*smr*” which likely denoted princes who were overseeing the king’s personal affairs⁽¹⁴²⁾. The second word is the epithet “*wꜥty*” that was added to this title to enhance its importance⁽¹⁴³⁾.

smr wꜥty firstly appeared during the Third Dynasty on two stone vessels found in the underground galleries of Djoser’s pyramid at Saqqara bearing the name of the sovereign Ninertjer⁽¹⁴⁴⁾, the third king of the second Dynasty⁽¹⁴⁵⁾. With the advent of the Fourth Dynasty, viziers and high-ranking officials held this title⁽¹⁴⁶⁾. From the late Fifth Dynasty onward, *smr wꜥty* became a widely used honorific title⁽¹⁴⁷⁾, that was frequently used in Upper Egyptian provinces during the late Old Kingdom⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ and may refer to both nomarchs and high officials⁽¹⁴⁹⁾.

- (j) ***Nefer-Heb***: The personal name *nfr-hb* was known from the Old Kingdom as a male personal name⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ and continued thereafter down to the New Kingdom⁽¹⁵¹⁾.

The name was an example for the adjectival clauses. The adjectival clauses used as personal names appear in the following form: as clauses with a predicative adjective followed by a nominal subject⁽¹⁵²⁾.

The name of the owner of the stela was written with the predicative (logical) adjective “*nfr*”

which was carved with the trilateral sign  ⁽¹⁵³⁾ only without any phonetic complements.

Then the nominal subject “*hb*” which was written fully with the two uniliteral signs  and

 ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ followed by the determinative  ⁽¹⁵⁵⁾.

- (k) ***r-geese***: *r* or *r(3)* goose was a beloved bird, that was hunted for breeding and offered as offerings on a large scale. They were gathered in bird pens/stockyards for fattening and domestication.

r-goose can be identified by its silvery-grey color, the wholly pink bill, legs and feet, the ash brown anterior plumage, the dark posterior back feathering which is edged with white forming a transverse pattern and the white underside with irregularly spaced black markings⁽¹⁵⁶⁾. Its scientific name is “*Anser anser*”⁽¹⁵⁷⁾.

This goose occupied a fixed place in the offering lists from the second Dynasty until the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty which reflects its importance. The *r*-goose appears with this

name in the tomb of a Second Dynasty princess⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ and in the tombs dated to the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty of *k3-ni-nswt*⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ and *Nfr*⁽¹⁶⁰⁾.

Since the Fifth Dynasty, r-goose appeared in the offering scenes and the offering lists. Its name standing as the first bird in the rows of geese, as in the tombs of *ii-mry*⁽¹⁶¹⁾, *wri*⁽¹⁶²⁾, *k3hif*⁽¹⁶³⁾, *k3i-m-ꜥnh*⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ and *k3-bw-ptḥ*⁽¹⁶⁵⁾.

Due to its large size and importance, this goose occupied the first place in the row of geese depicted in the tombs, as according to the Ancient Egyptian traditions, the rows of offering birds were arranged according to their size⁽¹⁶⁶⁾.

In the late Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom, the r-goose appeared in some offering lists and offering scenes in the place of the “s” duck⁽¹⁶⁷⁾, which is usually placed in the Fourth place after r, *trp*-goose and *st*-duck, as in the tombs of *Iti*⁽¹⁶⁸⁾, *Idi*⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ and *Ppy-ꜥnh*⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ and the remains false door of *T3s.t*⁽¹⁷¹⁾.

The reason for this is may be that the duck “s” is sometimes called “sr” or “srw” which is the same name sometimes given to the goose r⁽³⁾⁽¹⁷²⁾.

It is worth to note that the r-goose appeared on the Heracleopolitan Period false door of *sni* from Saqqara⁽¹⁷³⁾.

- (l) **trp-geese:** *trp* goose was a favourite bird of the Ancient Egyptians. It was distinguished by the grey head and neck, the dark back and wing, the black and grey barring on the underside and the diagnostic white band surrounding the base of the bill⁽¹⁷⁴⁾. Its scientific name is “*Anser albifrons*”⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. It was a common winter visitor in the Nile Delta⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ which helped in hunting it during its migration season, collecting it, raising it and then presenting it as beloved offerings to the deceased⁽¹⁷⁷⁾.

This type of geese was considered one of the five main birds, along with the “r”-goose, the “st” and “s” ducks and the *mnwt* Dove, which occupied an important place in the offering lists since the Second Dynasty⁽¹⁷⁸⁾.

Boessneck noted that *trp*-goose was that goose depicted in the tombs of *k3i-m-ꜥnh*⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ and *ptḥ-špss*⁽¹⁸⁰⁾.

trp-goose was also depicted in the offering scenes, bird lists and processions in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties⁽¹⁸¹⁾ and it was mentioned as well on the false door of *sni* dated back to the Heracleopolitan period⁽¹⁸²⁾.

This goose always comes in the second place after the r-goose due to its size as in the tombs of Giza of *k3-dw3* dated to the Fifth Dynasty⁽¹⁸³⁾, *k3i-m-ꜥnh*⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ and *k3hif*⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ from the Sixth Dynasty and the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khumhotep at Saqqara dated back to the Sixth Dynasty⁽¹⁸⁶⁾.

The *trp*-goose is the sign G38 in Gardiner’s sign list⁽¹⁸⁷⁾. In addition to the common writing for this type of goose which is *trp*, other writings have appeared which are an abbreviation for *trp* as: *t* which appeared in the tombs of *k3-s-D3*⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ and *Ipi-ꜥnhw*⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ and *tp* which appeared in the tombs of *Hwi-wr*⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ and *Rꜥ-špss*⁽¹⁹¹⁾.

- (m) **St-ducks:** The identifying of this species of duck is not difficult as it is known with its slender build, the long and thin neck, the short legs and a long pointed central tail⁽¹⁹²⁾. Its scientific name is “*Anas acuta*”⁽¹⁹³⁾.

This duck appeared with its full name in the tomb of *k3i-m-ꜥnh* at Giza in one of the birds scenes, where two of this species were depicted with its distinctive features: a dark head, a white neck and belly and a pointed tail⁽¹⁹⁴⁾.

It was favourable as an offering, such fact is confirmed by its occurrence in the scenes of the offering bearers who carry this duck in large numbers in front of the owner of the tomb⁽¹⁹⁵⁾.

This duck appeared for the first time in a tomb dating back to the second Dynasty on the stela of Sakhu⁽¹⁹⁶⁾, and niche-stela from Saqqara from the same Dynasty⁽¹⁹⁷⁾.

Throughout the Old Kingdom till the New Kingdom, the duck “st” was one of the five traditional birds of the offering lists, appearing in almost all offering lists and scenes⁽¹⁹⁸⁾.

Due to its size, “st” duck was always placed behind the geese “r” and “trp”, in the third place in the birds offering scenes as in the tombs of *k3-dw3*⁽¹⁹⁹⁾, *k3i-m-ꜥnh*⁽²⁰⁰⁾ and *k3hif*⁽²⁰¹⁾ from Giza and that of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep from Saqqara⁽²⁰²⁾ and the Heracleopolitan false door of *sni*⁽²⁰³⁾.

This species of ducks appears in abundance with its wings spread and takes off in a slight forward bend, which in this representation is equivalent to the phonetic value *p3*⁽²⁰⁴⁾. In addition to the phonetic value of this duck which is “st”, this species played a vital role in the festival of the god Min, as the priest release four birds to fly in all the four cardinal orientations⁽²⁰⁵⁾.

- (n) **S-ducks:** This duck is identified by its darkhead, the distinguished speculum and the comma-shaped eye patch that is outlined by a narrow white line⁽²⁰⁶⁾.

The identification of this type of duck in the scenes is not conclusively confirmed, as the “s” duck resembles other ducks in terms of size and color⁽²⁰⁷⁾. It is a type of winter bird that comes to Egypt but in small numbers⁽²⁰⁸⁾, this species most probably was hunted using clap-nets from the Delta region or its swamps⁽²⁰⁹⁾. The scientific name of this duck is “*Anas crecca*”⁽²¹⁰⁾.

This kind of bird was depicted in the Giza tomb of *k3i-m-ꜥnh*, as one can find two ducks of this type under the name “s”⁽²¹¹⁾. The same duck was depicted in the Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of Ken-Amum (TT 93) at Sheikh Abdel Qurna⁽²¹²⁾.

Although the “s” duck was known since the Old Kingdom, the earliest extant portrayal of this bird is preserved in the tomb of khnumhotep II no. 3 at Beni Hassan, where the owner of the tomb is hunting a large number of this duck found on a pool and catching them with a net⁽²¹³⁾.

As a bird in the offering lists, this “s” duck has a special importance in that lists as it appears constantly among the five traditional birds that appear in almost all the offering lists⁽²¹⁴⁾ which are the “r” and “trp” geese, the “st” and “s” ducks and the “mnwt” Dove. As well as in the bird procession scenes, this species of duck was depicted in the tombs of *Rꜥ-m-k3*⁽²¹⁵⁾ and *s3bw*⁽²¹⁶⁾ at Saqqara.

It usually appears in the fourth place⁽²¹⁷⁾, but it sometimes occupies a late place as in the tomb of *Mrrri*⁽²¹⁸⁾. It was also mentioned on the false door of *sni* from the Heracleopolitan Period⁽²¹⁹⁾.

- (o) **Mnwt-Doves:** This Dove is identified by its short neck, the rounded head, the narrow black bill, the long tail, the mottled upper wing coverts and the diagnostic patch of parallel lines on the side of the neck⁽²²⁰⁾. Its scientific name is “*streptopelia turtur*”⁽²²¹⁾.

The first time that *mnwt* Dove can be positively be identified is during the Fifth Dynasty⁽²²²⁾. As they (*mnwt*-Doves) often depicted along with other domestic birds in processions on tomb and temple walls, sometimes labelled with its name and number⁽²²³⁾.

The *mnwt*-Dove was considered one of the five main offering birds and appears almost regularly in the offering lists⁽²²⁴⁾. *Mnwt*-Doves appear in offering scenes in many Old Kingdom tombs of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties of *Rꜥ-wr* II⁽²²⁵⁾, *Rꜥ-m-k3i*⁽²²⁶⁾, *s3bw*⁽²²⁷⁾, *k3i-m-ꜥnh*⁽²²⁸⁾, *Ti*⁽²²⁹⁾ and Mereruka⁽²³⁰⁾. It also mentioned on the Heracleopolitan stela of *sni*⁽²³¹⁾ and throughout the Middle Kingdom as it was depicted on the tomb walls of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan⁽²³²⁾.

It was beloved by the Ancient Egyptians and had been domesticated and tamed⁽²³³⁾. The remains of four doves were found in the burial chamber of the queen in the pyramid of Amenemhat III at Dahshur, where they were placed as meal for the deceased⁽²³⁴⁾. It also appeared as a name for people particularly females during the New Kingdom⁽²³⁵⁾.

- (p) **Overseer of the *hm-ntr* priests of Hathor:** Jones read the title as *imy-r hm(w)-ntr n Hwt-Hr* and translated it by “Overseer of the *hm-ntr* priests of Hathor”⁽²³⁶⁾.

It was mainly women who were involved in the cult of goddess Hathor⁽²³⁷⁾. However, since men were also known as *hmw-ntr Hwt-Hr* during the Old Kingdom, this fact raises the question of what differences there were between the male and female cult personnel.

The female counterpart of the title which is *hmt-ntr Hwt-Hr* was very frequent from the midst of the Old Kingdom down to the early Middle Kingdom⁽²³⁸⁾. After that it was occasionally occurred⁽²³⁹⁾.

Though the wide spread use of the title “Priestess of Hathor” might imply it was merely an honorary designation, evidence suggests otherwise. Associated titles and depictions indicate these priestesses were active participants in the temple and funerary rites of the Hathoric cult⁽²⁴⁰⁾. Furthermore, Galvin shows that the title was not inherited; instead, each woman acquired it through her own pursuit in the priesthood⁽²⁴¹⁾. Clearly, such Job was undoubtedly appealing due to its perks, benefits and social standing⁽²⁴²⁾. The holder of the title *hmt-ntr Hwt-Hr* was a high social class, fulfilling a role in Hathor’s worship that was equivalent to that of *hm-ntr* in the cult of other deities⁽²⁴³⁾.

Robins noted that the male counterpart of that title i.e. *hm-ntr Hwt-Hr* was rarely attested⁽²⁴⁴⁾. In fact, unlike their female counterpart, the Hathor priests had *imy-r hmw-ntr* (as *Nfr-hb*) and *shd hmw-ntr*⁽²⁴⁵⁾.

This is the first serious divergence between the female and male priesthood in connection with the goddess Hathor. The superior office of “an overseer / a headman” and the lower-ranking office of “an inspector” placed them on a higher level as issuers of orders than the simple *hm/hmt-ntr* who only carried out executive activities⁽²⁴⁶⁾. Lemke pointed out that among all women who were endowed with priestly titles not only for Hathor but also for Neith and other deities, not a single *imyt-r hmw-ntr* or *shdt hmw-ntr* or *imy-ht hmw-ntr* can be found, This is certainly related to the fact that very few women in contrast to those from the same official class men who were able to read and write⁽²⁴⁷⁾.

Perhaps, It was precisely these skills that were particularly important in the highest positions concerning the administration of the simple priests and priestesses⁽²⁴⁸⁾.

Another second difference between male and female Hathor priesthood, was that men as *hmw-ntr Hwt-Hr* mostly possess titles in which a localized epithet is given after the name of the goddess as: *Dw3-R/Ity* in his tomb E15 at Saqqara was *hm-ntr Hwt-Hr mrt Mn-k3w-Hr*⁽²⁴⁹⁾ and *tp-m-ḥnh* in his tomb D10 in the north of the step pyramid was *shd hmw-ntr Hwt-Hr m mrt wnīs*⁽²⁵⁰⁾.

Consequently, the additional mention of a royal name specifies exactly in which cult site those men performed priestly services for Hathor as they were tied to a specific building. But the situation is different for the female holders of the title cult personnel, with a few exceptions, the epithets given after the name of Hathor describe aspects of the goddess itself (e.g. *nbt nht*) or proper names of the cities (e.g. *nbt Twnt* or *nbt kis*) in which Hathor was worshipped as the main deity⁽²⁵¹⁾. The following list is an example for female priestess of Hathor describing aspects for that goddess:

The name	Cemetery (provenance)	Dynasty	Epithet	Referance
<i>Mr.s-^cnh</i>	Dahshur	Fifth	<i>Hmt-ntr Hwt-Hr nbt-nht</i>	Barsanti, A., “Rapports sur la fouille de Dahchour”, ASAE 3, 1902, pp. 201-202.
<i>Df3t-k3</i>	Giza	Fifth	<i>Hmt-ntr Hwt-Hr nbt-nht</i>	Reisner, G., A History of the Giza Necropolis, vol. I, pp. 503-508.
<i>Twfi</i>	El-Hammamiya	Fifth	<i>Hmt-ntr Hwt-Hr nbt-Twnt</i>	Fischer, H., Dendera, pp. 24-25.
<i>Hknw-hdt</i>	El-Hammamiya	Fifth	<i>Hmt-ntr Hwt-Hr nbt-Twnt</i>	Fischer, H., Dendera, pp. 23-28.
<i>I^ch-hwt / Hwti</i>	Meir	Sixth	<i>Hmt-ntr Hwt-Hr nbt-nht</i>	Blackman, A., Meir IV, p. 7, pl. IV.

Therefore, *hmwt-ntr Hwt-Hr* werenot restricted to a limited cult area such as a specific building, but worked in the residence as well as in the provinces.

From the previous, one can conclude that *Nfr-hb* as an overseer of the *hmw-ntr* priests of Hathor, doubtless entered before Hathor seeing her and performing the ceremonies for her with his own hands⁽²⁵²⁾.

Nfr-Hb was *imy-r hm(w)-ntr Hwt-Hr*, thus he was in charge of all the priests of that goddess including female priestesses and directing this phyle. Beside he was *htmty bity*, thus he was controlling the stores and warehouses under the local chief's direct supervision. Consequently, *Nfr-Hb* was a high social standing official who worked under the direct supervision of the local chief of Abydos where the stela was unearthed.

The hieroglyph for *hwt* sign that is distinguished by a small square positioned above and behind the falcon's head, began to appear since the end of Dynasty Five⁽²⁵³⁾. By the Middle of the Sixth Dynasty, its usage became common, and it remained the standard form of this sign in the First Intermediate Period⁽²⁵⁴⁾ and throughout the Middle Kingdom⁽²⁵⁵⁾.

- (q) **Sole Ornamented one of the king:** Selim Hassan translated the title *hkrt nswt w^ctt* as “sole concubine of the king”⁽²⁵⁶⁾. Nord and Ward translated the title as “sole lady in waiting”⁽²⁵⁷⁾. Fischer preferred the translation of “sole ornament of the king”⁽²⁵⁸⁾. Jones presented three interpretations for the title as “lady in waiting of the first rank, sole lady in waiting of the king, sole ornamented one of the king”⁽²⁵⁹⁾.

hkrt nswt w^ctt was a feminine title that was linked to the royal palace⁽²⁶⁰⁾. It was used sometimes since the fifth Dynasty and early the Sixth Dynasty but it became more common towards the end of the Old Kingdom in the Memphite necropolis and the provinces⁽²⁶¹⁾. Its use was widespread during the Heracleopolitan Period⁽²⁶²⁾ and continued into the Middle and New Kingdoms⁽²⁶³⁾.

As for *hkr(w)t*: They were secluded women whose charm and beauty entertained the king, and the same official also oversaw singers and dancers. However, It is unlikely that many provincial women calling themselves “sole ornament of the king” had actually been at the royal court particularly during the Heracleopolitan Period⁽²⁶⁴⁾.

The addition of *w^ctt* to the existing *hkrt nswt*⁽²⁶⁵⁾ was likely to indicate a high social standing, rather than a position of authority⁽²⁶⁶⁾.

Brack noted that *hkrt nswt (w^ctt)* was an honorary title for women that excludes an intimate relationship with the king⁽²⁶⁷⁾. It is worth commenting that *hkrt nswt* was during the Fifth Dynasty limited to the immediate vicinity of the royal court, even biological royal daughters could bear the last title, but it subsequently became a widespread honorary title, particularly among the princely families of the Late Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period⁽²⁶⁸⁾. The holders of *hkrt nswt* and *hkrt nswt w^ctt* actually wear a striking headdress in some depictions i.e. a headband wreathed with lotus blossoms or other flowers⁽²⁶⁹⁾.

I know at least ten Memphite holders of the title *hkrt nswt w^ctt* dated from the Fifth Dynasty to the end of the Heracleopolitan Period:

The name	Date	References
<i>Ttti</i>	Fifth Dynasty	Hassan, S., Excavations at Giza, vol. II, p. 55 fig. 50.
<i>Hm(t)-R^c</i>	Fifth to Sixth Dynasty	Borchardt, L., Denkmäler des Alten Reiches, vol. I, pp. 37-41 (CG 1380).
<i>nh.n.s</i>	Fifth to Sixth Dynasty	Borchardt, L., Denkmäler des Alten Reiches, vol. I, pp. 26 (CG 1357).
<i>nh.n.s-Ppy</i>	Late Sixth Dynasty	Borchardt, L., Denkmäler des Alten Reiches, vol. I, pp. 222-223 (CG 1522).
<i>Sbwtt</i>	Late Sixth Dynasty	Borchardt, L., Denkmäler des Alten Reiches, vol. II, p. 135 (CG 1687).
<i>sm^ct</i>	Late Old Kingdom or Heracleopolitan Period	Jéquier, G., Tombeaux de Particuliers Contemporains de Pepi II, p. 76, pl. 11.
<i>St-ib</i>	Heracleopolitan Period	Jéquier, G., Tombeaux de Particuliers Contemporains de Pepi II, p. 56.
<i>špst</i>	Heracleopolitan Period	Jéquier, G., Tombeaux, fig. 54.
<i>Kiswt</i>	Heracleopolitan Period	Firth, C. and Gunn, B., Teti Pyramid Cemeteries, vol. I, p. 196 (28).
<i>Df3t.s</i>	Heracleopolitan Period	Jéquier, G., Tombeaux, fig. 97.

And sixteen provincial holders of the title:

The name	Province	References
<i>Hny</i>	Naga-ed-Dêr	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae of the First Intermediate Period, Oxford University Press, London, 1937, no. 4, pl. III. 2.
<i>Iy</i>	Naga-ed-Dêr	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 10, pl. VI. 2.
<i>Hdwi</i>	Naga-ed-Dêr	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 21, pl. XII. 1.
<i>Int-it.s</i>	Naga-ed-Dêr	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 24
<i>Nbt-it.s</i>	Naga-ed-Dêr	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 25.
<i>Mryt</i>	Naga-ed-Dêr	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 26.
<i>St-nt-Inhrt</i>	Naga-ed-Dêr	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 31.
<i>nh.n.s-Ppy</i>	Naga-ed-Dêr	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 22, pl. XII.2.

<i>šnꜣyt</i>	Naga-ed-Der	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 62, pl. XX.2.
<i>Mwt-mwt.i</i>	Naga-ed-Der	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 78, pl. XXVIII.2.
<i>Htp.t.i</i>	Naga-ed-Der	Dunham, D., Naga-ed-Dêr Stelae, no. 73, pl. XXVI.1.
<i>spi</i>	El-Kab	Fischer, H., Inscriptions from the Coptite Nome, no. 5, pl. VIII.
Princess <i>Nbt</i>	Coptos	Habachi, L., "The Tomb of Princess Nebt of the VIII th Dynasty discovered at Qift", SAK 10, 1983, pp. 205-213.
<i>Tti</i>	Dendera	Fischer, H., Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C. down to the Theban domination of Upper Egypt, p. 152 fig. 28.
<i>Mrt-it.s</i>	Akhmim	Kanawati, N., The Rock Tombs of El-Hawawish, the Cemetery of Akhmim, vol. IX, Sydney, 1989, p. 59.
<i>Hnwt / Ini</i>	Akhmim	Kanawati, N., The Rock Tombs of El-Hawawish, the Cemetery of Akhmim, vol. IV, Sydney, 1983, pp. 39-41, pls. 11-12, figs. 29-30.

From the above, the title *hkrt nswt wꜣtt* was very frequent in the Memphite Cemeteries and the provinces by the end of the Old Kingdom and the Heracleopolitan Period.

According to Drenkhahn, when the title *hkrt nswt wꜣtt* was used for women in the provinces, it indicates that they were either the wives or daughters of the ruling nomarchs⁽²⁷⁰⁾. Thus, one can conclude that *htp-hk.t* was a high class woman of the Eighth nome of Upper Egypt, the place where the stela was unearthed.

- (r) **Hetep-Heqet:** Ranke read the name of the lady as *htp-hk.t*⁽²⁷¹⁾ and translated it as "the goddess *hkt* be gracious"⁽²⁷²⁾.

The name *htp-hk.t* was not mentioned by Scheele-Schweitzer although it was known as a female personal name in the Old Kingdom⁽²⁷³⁾. It also continued in the Middle Kingdom⁽²⁷⁴⁾.

The name of the current lady *htp-hk.t* was an example of Theophoric personal names⁽²⁷⁵⁾. Various statements about deities can be found in the anthroponyms of the Old Kingdom, As for *htp-hk.t* it was of that sort that contain statements about the actions, states and qualities of the deities⁽²⁷⁶⁾. A distinction must be made between names in which the deity appears as an agent and those in which the name bearer is associated with an action of the god recipient and those that provide information about the characteristics of the gods⁽²⁷⁷⁾.

As for the Theophoric name *htp-hk.t*, the deity *hkt* was an agent and the name bearer is receiving the action of *htp* which characterized that goddess. The goddess Heqet, was known in the pyramid texts, in order to enable the deceased king to ascend into the heaven⁽²⁷⁸⁾. Her cult had been documented since the First Intermediate Period⁽²⁷⁹⁾. Papyrus Westcar referred that during the birth of the three kings who would found the Fifth Dynasty, goddess Heket was depicted as actively "hastening" the final stages of their delivery⁽²⁸⁰⁾. Consequently, that goddess expressed the idea of divine help in earthly and otherworldly births⁽²⁸¹⁾ which interprets its association in personal names. The goddess heqet appeared in various personal names during the Old Kingdom, other than *htp-hk.t*, as *hkt-šrit*⁽²⁸²⁾. And

in the First Intermediate Period as *ỉm-hkt*⁽²⁸³⁾ as well as in the Middle Kingdom down to the second Intermediate Period as *nfr-hkt*⁽²⁸⁴⁾.

- (s) ***s3.f smsw (His eldest son)***: *Ihy* was the only son for *Nfr-hb* depicted on the stela, most probably due to his role after the death of his parents.

The eldest son (*smsw*) held primary responsibility for his parents' burial and typically inherited all the family property. This could only be altered by a formally signed and witnessed *imyt-pr* document. Later, in the New Kingdom the eldest son retained his burial duties, but his inheritance was limited to twice that his siblings received⁽²⁸⁵⁾.

The *s3.f smsw* was responsible for his father's burial, involved meticulous attention to funerary rites, including providing the regular offerings of food, incense and prayers and the appointment of the *ka*-priests to perform this ongoing duty during the Old Kingdom till the Middle Kingdom. As well as looking after his siblings in case of the death of their father⁽²⁸⁶⁾.

- (t) ***Ihy***: Ranke read the name of *Nfr-Hb*'s eldest son as *Ihy*⁽²⁸⁷⁾. It was known as a male personal name since the Old Kingdom⁽²⁸⁸⁾ and continued down to the Middle Kingdom⁽²⁸⁹⁾.

The name *Ihy* was an example of the Theophoric personal names as his owner was named after a god's name⁽²⁹⁰⁾. The personal name *Ihy* means "The one belonging to *Ihy*"⁽²⁹¹⁾.

As for the god *Ihy*, The Ancient Egyptians interpreted his name to mean "Musician or Sistrum Player"⁽²⁹²⁾. *Ihy* was a young god who personifies the joy that comes from the sacred rattle, an instrument primarily used in the worship of Hathor, his mother⁽²⁹³⁾. He was known since the Old Kingdom as he was represented in the Mastaba of Kagemni in the form of a calf⁽²⁹⁴⁾, later He was represented in the Coffin Texts and the Amduat respectively⁽²⁹⁵⁾. *Ihy* was always appear in human form⁽²⁹⁶⁾ beside naked child god with sistrum⁽²⁹⁷⁾, lion-shaped standing and headed with an ostrich feather and a bow in his hands and a bull shaped god with the head of a bull holding two knives⁽²⁹⁸⁾.

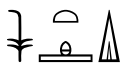
Ihy played a great role for the deceased as it can be frightening⁽²⁹⁹⁾, the deceased brings Osiris the water of the living (*mw ʿnhw*) which is in the arms of *Ihy*⁽³⁰⁰⁾. *Ihy* was also supposed to shape the bones of the deceased⁽³⁰¹⁾. Such role indicates its importance to the Ancient Egyptians that made them named their children after him.

- (u) ***Ithy***: a frequent name for males since the Old Kingdom⁽³⁰²⁾. *It.i* is an example of pet / short names or the so-called "Hypocoristics"⁽³⁰³⁾. The creation of pet/short names was possible in Ancient Egypt by adding hypocoristics ending to full names as sentence or word names or short names⁽³⁰⁴⁾.

Pet names can be classified into two types: those derived from a full name and those that were the name-forming element is unknown⁽³⁰⁵⁾. As for *It.i*, it is a kind of hypocoristics whose name forming element is no longer identifiable.

It.i is formed two radicals: *It* which is unknown element⁽³⁰⁶⁾ and the ending. *i*. The ending. *i*, is the most common hypocoristic ending. It is added to almost all types of pet forms resulting from reduplications as *mrr.i*, in non-reduplicated hypocoristics as *Is.i* and *It.i*, the hypocoristics based on a short name as *ʿnh.i* and the ending of the full word names as *Rwd.i*⁽³⁰⁷⁾. It is worth to note that the name *It.i* wasnot attested, as far as I know, in the Middle Kingdom.

VI: Paleographical Remarks:

- (1) , This arrangement is a characteristic writing after the Old Kingdom⁽³⁰⁸⁾, particularly during the Ninth Dynasty at Naga-ed-Der and throughout southern Upper Egypt with only few variations⁽³⁰⁹⁾. Such arrangement was also known during the same reign in the Memphite Necropolis as well⁽³¹⁰⁾.
- (2) The writing of *Inpw* using both phonetic and ideographic signs refers to the date of the Heracleopolitan Period⁽³¹¹⁾.
- (3) The complete writing of the name of the deity *Inpw*  within the offering formulas does not appear in evidence before the Heracleopolitan Period⁽³¹²⁾.
- (4) The head sign in the word *tpy* lacks the beard. And according to Fischer's extensive study of the evidence from Dendera, the beard is usually present in the head sign in his groups dated to the Old and Middle Kingdoms, and it is as often omitted, as in the current stela, in the Eleventh Dynasty, while it is totally absent in his group ranging in date from the Eighth to Tenth Dynasty⁽³¹³⁾.
- (5) According to Schenkel, the absence of a vertical stroke beneath the  *nb* sign indicates a date before the Heracleopolitan Period⁽³¹⁴⁾. But it was attested as well on several stelae dated to the Heracleopolitan Period⁽³¹⁵⁾.
- (6) The  *o*  *β* sign, usually depicted with three pellets began to appear with only two pellets from the very late Old Kingdom onward⁽³¹⁶⁾. This variation is evidenced earlier in the Late Fifth Dynasty hieratic papyri from Abusir⁽³¹⁷⁾ and the Sixth Dynasty Inscriptions at the Cemeteries of Abydos⁽³¹⁸⁾, Deir el Gebrawi⁽³¹⁹⁾, Sheikh Said⁽³²⁰⁾, Saqqara⁽³²¹⁾ and Giza⁽³²²⁾ and in some Eighth Dynasty examples in the Pyramid Texts of *Tbi*⁽³²³⁾. Henry Fischer noted that these pellets often resemble grains⁽³²⁴⁾.
- (7) The bread loaf  is omitted in the *prt-hrw*. It was an orthographic feature known exclusively in the Heracleopolitan Period in the Memphite Necropolis⁽³²⁵⁾ and in the provinces as Heracleopolis⁽³²⁶⁾ and Naga-ed-Der⁽³²⁷⁾.
- (8) The dative preposition "n" which was used to introduce the name of the recipient in the *prt-hrw*, firstly appeared in inscriptions during the Sixth Dynasty⁽³²⁸⁾ and continued in the Heracleopolitan Period in Memphis⁽³²⁹⁾ and the provinces⁽³³⁰⁾ as well.
- (9) The determinative for the beer jar ⁽³³¹⁾ without hands⁽³³²⁾, became a standard linguistic convention during the Heracleopolitan Period⁽³³³⁾.
- (10) The unabbreviated orthographical writing of the epithet  *im3hw*, with the initial reed leaf, is the usual Old Kingdom form⁽³³⁴⁾ and continued till its end (Eighth Dynasty)⁽³³⁵⁾. Although Leprohon noted that such writing was known till the Pre-First Intermediate Period⁽³³⁶⁾, It was known during the Heracleopolitan Period⁽³³⁷⁾.
- (11) The writing of *ntr*  vertically as follows:  was an orthographic writing known throughout the Old Kingdom till its end⁽³³⁸⁾ and continued in the Heracleopolitan Period⁽³³⁹⁾. But by the Eleventh Dynasty, the scribes preferred the horizontal writing of the  sign⁽³⁴⁰⁾.

- (12) The ideogram depicting a seated god  ⁽³⁴¹⁾ was often used with *ntr* 𓄿. It seems this determinative likely first appeared after *ntr* 𓄿 around the end of the Fifth Dynasty particularly during the reign of Isesi and continued onward ⁽³⁴²⁾. Around the same period, It also started appearing frequently with Osiris ⁽³⁴³⁾. Such writing  was a Sixth Dynasty Paleographical feature after that it was usually omitted ⁽³⁴⁴⁾.

VII: Dating and Conclusion:

- (1) As discussed earlier in the preceding pages, most of the Iconographic, paleographic and orthographic features points to a date ranging from the late of the Old Kingdom (Sixth-Eighth Dynasties) up to the Heracleopolitan Period as: the usage of the sunk relief, the lion legged chair, the presence of a distance between the seated woman and the back of the chair, the tall stand under the Jackal of *Inpw*, the arrangement of the *htp-di-nsw* formula, the arrangement of *Inpw*'s epithets "*tpy dw.f*" and "*nb t3 dsr*", the writing of the city determinative in the epithet "*imy-wt*", the paleographical writing of *t3* sign with two pellets underneath, the Unabbreviated orthographical writing of the epithet *im3hw*, the dative preposition introducing the name of the recipient after the "*prt-hrw*" and finally, the paleographical writing of the *hwt* sign by a small square positioned above and behind the falcon's head.

Yet, there are some features which were not known after the Eighth Dynasty as: the type of the cornice and the depiction of the Jar rack with *hs* / *kbh* Jars depicted on the groundline.

On the other hand, it possesses several features that were not known before the Heracleopolitan Period as: The composition of the offering table, the writing of *Inpw*'s name phonetically and ideographically, the complete writing of *Inpw*'s name in the offering formula, the writing of the beer jar determinative without hands and the omission of the bread loaf in the *prt-hrw*'s writing.

Consequently, a date ranging from the very Late Old Kingdom (Eighth Dynasty) to the early Heracleopolitan Period (Ninth Dynasty) is suggested for that stela.

- (2) *Nfr-hb* was a high-class official as reflected from his three titles: *imy-r hm(w)-ntr (n) Hwt-Hr*, *htmty-bity* and *smr w^cty*.
- (3) *Nfr-hb* held a religious office and a civil one. According to the title *imy-r hm(w)-ntr (n) Hwt-Hr*, he was in charge of administrating, managing the *hm(w)-ntr* priests of Hathor and performing her ceremonies with his own. And according to the title *htmty-bity* he was managing the stores and warehouses of the raw materials and food supplies under the direct supervision of a local chief.
- (4) *Nfr-hb* might carried out the responsibilities of his offices in the Eighth Nome of Upper Egypt (Abydos) where the stela was excavated.
- (5) The wife *htp-hk.t* was a high-class woman depending on the appearing of her title *hkrt nswt w^ctt* on a provincial stela.
- (6) The naked boy represented on the stela was a youthful portrait for *Nfr-hb* himself.



Fig. 1. The Rectangular Abydene Limestone Stela of *Nfr-Hb* and *Htp-Hkt* (CG 1594) (photo: Ahmed Hamdy Abdelmoniem)



Fig. 2. The Rectangular Abydene Limestone Stela of *Nfr-Hb* and *Htp-Hkt* (CG 1594) (drawing: Ahmed Hamdy Abdelmoniem)

Endnotes:

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- ⁴ Borchardt, L., *Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire: Nos. 1295 – 1808, Denkmäler des Alten Reiches (Ausser den Statuen)*, vol. II, Cairo, 1964, p. 72, pl. 79.
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- ¹² Gardiner, A., *Egyptian Grammar*, Third edition, Oxford, 1979, p. 498 (O 49).
- ¹³ Gardiner, A., EG., p. 477 (L 2).
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- ¹⁵ Cherpion, N., *Mastabas et hypogées d'Ancien Empire, Le problème de la datation, connaissance de l'Égypte ancienne*, Brussels, 1989, pp. 57-58, fig. 46, 180 ; Green, L., "Hairstyles", in: Redford, D. (ed.), *OEAE II*, Oxford, 2001, p. 74, this phenomenon, initially seen during Pepy's I reign and gained increasing traction in subsequent periods afterwards particularly during the late Old Kingdom, Cherpion, N., *Mastabas*, figs. 46-47, p. 180 and the Heracleopolitan Period, Firth, C. and Gunn, B., *Excavations at Saqqara, Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, vol. II, IFAO, Cairo, 1926, pls. 73(1) *Htp*, 73(2) *snl*.
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