

**An Offering Table of Sneferu-nefer II Egyptian Museum
(JE 11527, CG 1328, SR 2/ 15727)**

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Abstract

The present paper is about publishing an alabaster inscribed hetep-sign shape offering table with slanting sides and measures 32 cm high, 55 cm wide, and 22cm deep, it is exhibited at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo under numbers (JE 11527, CG 1328, SR 2/ 15727). The offering table was found in the tomb of Sneferu-nefer II (E7), excavated by A. Mariette for the Egyptian Antiquities Service in 1860 in North Saqqara, to the north of the Step Pyramid. Sneferu-nefer II was the overseer of singers of the great house, the under-supervisor of the prophets of the pyramid of Dedkare, and the overseer of residence of courtiers. The offering table is in good condition of preservation. The upper surface is occupied with a spout, two bowls, and a disc surrounded by incised hieroglyphic inscriptions. The hieroglyphs are carved in sunken reliefs, and the signs are small but deeply and carefully incised. Based on its style and the orthographical and paleographical details, the offering table probably dates back to the 6th Dynasty.

Keywords: Hetep- Sign shape offering table, Saqqara- Sneferu-nefer II, the overseer of singers of the great house, Offerings- "*htp-di-nsw(t)*" offering formulas.

1. Introduction

Ancient Egypt is frequently depicted as a society “obsessed with death” (Davies, J.2002; Zeman, J., 2009) because death was one of the most powerful generators of Egyptian culture (Assmann 2000; Metcalf, P., & Huntington, R., 1991).

Seeking to extend life after death, the Egyptians made provisions in their burials for the afterlife to protect the deceased's body and ensure prosperous immortality for the soul (Smith, W., 1960) that returns to the body after its physical death. This action ensured the continuity of its life after death through taking part in the funerary cult and burial rites (Barta, M., 2011) as providing the deceased with offerings on various occasions (Mostafa, M., 1982), which guarantees the deceased happiness and contentment in the other world (Barta, W., 1963).

This article aims to publish an inscribed hetep-sign shape offering table displayed at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo under the numbers (JE 11527, CG 1328, SR 2/ 15727). The offering table was found in the tomb of Sneferu-nefer II (E7) by A. Mariette during the excavations for the Egyptian Antiquities Service in 1860 in

North Saqqara to the north of the Step Pyramid (Borchardt, L., 1937; Mariette, A., 1889; De-Rouge, J., 1877; *PM III*², 468).

Through the texts recorded on this offering table and a group of other artifacts found in the tomb of Sneferu-nefer II. (*PM III*², 468; Strudwick, N., 2005; Borchardt, L., 1937), it is revealed that Sneferu-nefer II was the under-supervisor of prophets of the pyramid of Dedkare, the overseer of singers of the great house, and the overseer of residence of courtiers. His father was possibly Snefru-nefer I, tomb no. 58[E6] in North Saqqara (Mariette, A., 1889). The offering table is in a good state of preservation. Through the offering table style and orthographical and paleographical details, the table likely dates to the 6th Dynasty.

2. Description

It is a flat rectangular inscribed alabaster offering table taking the standard shape of the *htp*-sign with slanting sides and measures 32 cm high, 55 cm wide, and 22cm deep. It is composed of a rectangular tray with a loaf of bread in the form of a "hetep" sign, the Egyptian hieroglyph for "offering". The upper surface is occupied with a spout, two bowls, and a disc surrounded by incised hieroglyphic inscriptions, where liquids come forth to be collected after flowing across the energizing surface of the tables, then poured into the tombs. Spouts were generally present to collect the water, which was absorbed back into the earth to reach the dead, providing the deceased with water and other liquids (Moret, A., 1978), such as milk (Guglielmi, W., 1982), beer, and wine (Abou-Ghazi, D., 1980) in the hereafter. Because liquids were associated with rejuvenation, renewal, and purity in ancient Egyptian belief (Jequier, G., 1921; Poo, M., 2010), the deceased was eager to confirm that he was pure. For example, in the "judgment of the dead" in Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, the deceased confirms: "I am pure, I am pure, I am pure, I am pure! My purity is equal to that of Heracleopolis great Benu-bird". (Quack, J., 2013) Furthermore, liquids, particularly water, were crucial for transferring and preserving Heka, which was the means for capturing the cosmic power of ka (Fitzenreiter, M., 2018; Velde, H., 1970).

The offering table is in a good state of preservation. The polished upper surface is carefully carved with hieroglyphic sunk inscriptions running from right to left, around the outer edge of the bowls, the spout, the disc, and the bread sign. The main text is on the mat, and the signs are carved with some skill and care, making readings clear. As for the state of the table stone itself, it was subjected to two types of damage factors. The first factor resulted from human use who poured liquids, such as wine or beer, especially in the upper part of the table at the right and left holes on the right, which gave the edges of these openings a reddish color. It may refer to the use of the table to burn incense because this use caused spots to spread throughout all parts of the table with a fading color (Abd-Eltawab, N. & Askalany, M., 2011). The second damage factor was exposing the stone table to moisture for long periods inside the tomb where it was discovered, which resulted in a decay in the color of the stone itself and the beginning of the formation of salts that are

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usually halite salts distinguished by white color. The manifestations of damage include the fading of the color, the presence of carbon residues and red stains, salt deposits, pitting, erosion, as well as deformation of decorations and texts (El-Derby, A., 2010). According to Mostafa's classification, this table belongs to type C 1 (Mostafa, M.M.F., 1982), while according to Hölzl's classification, it belongs to the type B1. (Hölzl, R., 2002)

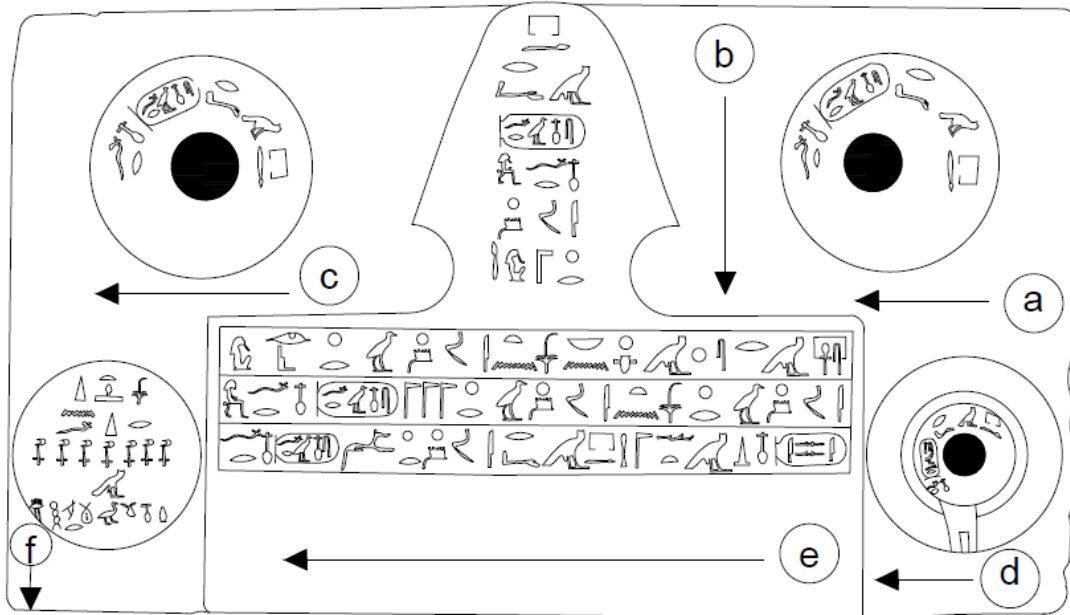


Fig.1. A facsimile of the offering table of Sneferu-nefer II

3. Inscriptions

Hieroglyphic sunk inscriptions running from right to left, around the outer edge of the bowls, the spout, the disc, the bread sign, and the main text on the mat were carved with skill and care. They are small and deeply incised with numerous simplified forms.

3.1. The text around the right bowl reads (a):

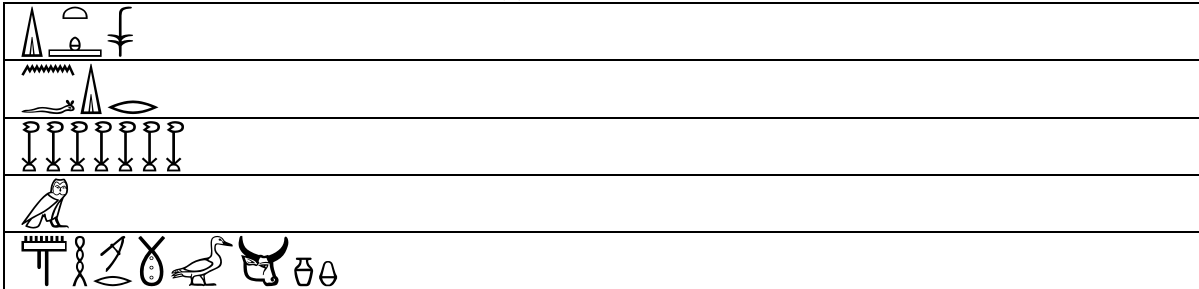


Imy-r3 ḥsy (w) (a) pr-3 (snfrw) nfr

The overseer of singers of the great house, Sneferu-nefer II

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3.6. The text on the disc reads(f):



[1] *htp-di-nsw* (d)

[2] *rdi.n.f* (e)

[3] *h3 h3 h3 h3 h3 h3 h3* (f)

[4] *m*

[5] *t* (g) *hnkt* (h) *k3(w)* (i) *3pdw(j)* *šs* (k) *mrht* (l) *sšrw(m)*

[1] An offering given by the King

[2] He gave

[3] A thousand, a thousand, a thousand, a thousand, a thousand, a thousand, a thousand.

[4] Of

[5] Bread, beer, oxen, fowls, alabaster, oil, and linen

4. Discussions:


4.1. An overview on the importance of offerings and offering table:

The Old Kingdom was characterized by the gradual development of religious belief structures that remained a characteristic of Egypt throughout history. The Egyptian culture struggled to find a unifying model for three distinct aspects of spiritual life: god worship, kingship, and the maintenance of private funerary cults (Elshazly, H., 1999). By the 5th Dynasty, as a result of the emergence of the "democratization of the hereafter", the royal offering list and some funerary rites for the King were used (Barta, W., 1963; Willems, H., 1988; Lapp, G., 1986; Finnestad, R., 1989; Sørensen, J., 1989). This transformation in the ancient Egyptian religion, which placed a high value on offerings, made offerings a central component of tomb and temple rituals. Offerings, in particular, were linked to two symbols: The Eye of Horus (Gardiner, A., 1964; Westendorf, W., 1980; *Wb I*; Clark, R., 1959; Englund, G., 2001; Griffith, J., 1958) and Maat (Englund, G., 2001; Assmann, J., 1990; Gardiner, A., 1964; Beinlich, H., 1980; Teeter, E., 1997; Karenga, M., 1994). Thus, offering tables were an essential tool in these rituals (Bolshakov, A., 2001). Offerings to the dead were made primarily to ensure that they would have enough nourishment in the hereafter (Lapp, G., 1986; Wilkinson, T., 2005; Cauville, S., 2012) whether real food, images of food, or models of food and its preparation

(Topcuoglu, O., 2017). They were related to the concept of power and the transfer of strength and vitality to the receiver (Altenmüller, H., 1982).

In terms of their purpose in funerary ceremonies and rituals (Mostafa, M., 1982), Offerings were used to bring forth and store ka (Hornblower, G., 1929; Bill, L., 1985; Cauville, S., 2012; Strudwick, N., 1984; Frankfort, H., 1948; Budge, E., 1904; Teeter, E., 1997). They also played an essential role in the opening of the mouth ceremony (Barta, W., 1963; Lapp, G., 1986; Hays, 2010; Grimes, 2000; Turner, V., 1969), which evolved from a ritual series of gestures and spells that ensured a newborn's capacity to eat and permitted the newly-reborn deceased to eating both actual and symbolic food (Roth, A., 1992). As a result, an offering table was required to perform special Egyptian rites (Turner, V., 1969; Bell, C.M., 1992; Hayes, H. M., 2002). They helped activate the departed within the tomb's hidden inner chambers, regarded as a part of the underworld (Harrington, M., 2015).

4.2. Hetep-sign offering table:

The most famous and widespread offering tables in ancient Egypt were the khawet offering table (Barta, W., 1963; *Wb* III; Helck, W., 1986; Mostafa, M., 1982; *Wb*. 3, 226, 12-16). Sha offering table (Mostafa, M., 1982; Bolshakov, A., 2001; Fisher, H., 1991; Hölzl, R., 2002), Wedehw offering table, and Hetep-sign offering table (*Wb* III) were the most common types in the 4th Dynasty (Elshazly, H., 1999). They prevailed in the middle era of the Old Kingdom. The Hetep-sign offering table evolved from a pre-dynastic practice of placing bread on a mat spread in front of the tomb. This primitive form continued in the hieroglyphic sign  Htp (*Wb* III; Helck, W., 1986; Bolshakov, A., 2001; Gardiner, A., 1964; *Wb* I; Moret, A., 1978), which meant 'satisfaction' and related to the emotions evoked by the display of offerings (Mostafa, M., 1982; Hölzl, R., 2002; Gardiner, A. & Davies, N., 1915; *Wb* III; Bolshakov, A., 2001). It was either circular, rectangular, or had a surface that combined the Hetep symbol and a deep basin (Legros, R., 2008; Bolshakov, A., 2001; Nicola, H., 2013; Taylor, 2001; Brovarski, E., 1991).

For examples of hetep Offering table, see: Kamal, A., 1909; Barta, M., 2011; Berlev, O.D., 1982; Mostafa, M.M.F., 1982; Bolshakov, A.O., 2005; Junker, H., 1951; S. Hassan, S., 1953; Vandier, J., 1954; Abdalaal, M., A., 2006; Abou-Ghazi, D., 1980; Bolshakov, A., O., 2001; Clère, J., J., 1981; El-Khouly, A., 1978; Fisher H.G., 1991; Hays, H., M., A., 2003; Hölzl, R., 2002; Kuentz, C., 1981; Lutz, H., F., 1927; Moussa, A., M., 1982; Radwan, A., 2008; Salwa, K., 2017).

As for the place where the offering table was placed in the tombs of the Old Kingdom, it was usually located near the entrance to the tomb owner's offering chapel in front of the false door. (Winlaw, S., 2010) Thus, the funeral priests or the family of the deceased could readily reach it and organize the offerings (Borchardt, L., 1907; Stockfish, V., 2003; Stadelmann, R., 1991; Steiner, P., 2012; Hawass, Z., 2003; D'Auria, S., et al., 1992). If the table was in the shape of "*htp*" sign, the base of the mat was found adjacent to the false door, forming a correct direction when

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the ba exited from the false door to it. In contrast, if the table was engraved, the texts were appropriate for the situation of the living visitor and could be read aloud by family members or priests (Eaton, K., 2013; Cauville, S., 2012).

4.3. The name, titles, and epithets of (snfrw) nfr:


The name (snfrw) nfr, which means (the King) Sneferu is god, appeared in the Old Kingdom (*PN*, I, 315, 20; Mariette, A., 1889). From the Sixth Dynasty, there were two supervisors for the singers of the royal palace, carrying Sneferu-nefer, namely the owner of the offering table, understudy, and Sneferu-nefer I. They were mostly a father and his son, and each of them has his own tomb in Saqqara. Another person had the same name whose statue was found in his tomb in Giza and held the title of teacher of singers in the palace (Maniche, L., 1991).



4.3.1. The name:

There are several comments on this name, as follows:

1- This official bore the name of King Sneferu (Beckerath, J., 1984; Smith, W., 1962), who occupied an important place among the Egyptians and had a mortuary cult established in the 4th Dynasty and revived during the Middle Kingdom (Wilson, A., 2014).

2- His name was written inside a cartouche, which was initially intended to contain the names of kings only, like a rope tied up around King's name that must protect his name from outer dangers or disintegration (*Wb.* IV). Moreover, the Egyptians believed that the rope circle represented everything enclosed by the sun, symbolizing the King's power over the universe (Frandsen, J., 2001). Later, the cartouche contained the names of people who had the same names of kings as a kind of appreciation and honor for kings and as a way to protect the name of the deceased because, according to the ancient Egyptian religion, if something happened to the deceased's body, or his name was not written down somewhere, the Ba and the Ka would get lost and he would not be able to enjoy the afterlife. Thus, the use of a cartouche was widespread. (Kaplony, P., 1977; Beckerath, J., 1984; Bolshakov, A., 1989).

3- The name Sneferu was written incorrectly  "snwfr", as the letter "w" came before the letter "f" and "r", while in the correct writing, it must come at the end of the name.

4- The name Sneferu-nefer is repeated six times on the offering table. Two of them as  with the determinative a man of rank seated on a chair , which is determinative of revered persons from the Old Kingdom (Gardiner,A., 1964). The name is written four times without it.

*Sneferu Nefer held a set of titles and epithets as following:

4.3.2. The titles:

(1)The titles *Imy-r3 ḥsy (w) pr-ḥ3* "The overseer of singers of the great house" did not appear earlier than the mid-fifth Dynasty and was known during the Sixth Dynasty (Jones, D., 2000; Al- Ayedi, A., 2006; Mathieu, B.,2012;Ward, W., 1982; Kanawati,N.,1977;Goelet, S.F.J.,1982;Hassan,.1936 ;*Wb* ,III ; Grdseloff,B.,1943). It was the most beloved title for Sneferu-nefer, as shown from his keenness to repeat this title five times, but he mentioned the other titles once. I suppose that the one called "ḥsy" should be translated as what is known in Arabic "El-maddah", "The encomiast", the one who sings religious songs rather than a "singer." The ancient Egyptian used the word *ḥsy*, derived from the verb *ḥs* that basically meant "to praise"(*Wb* III) and then used in the texts "to sing" (*Wb* III). This assumption may be supported that they often occupied other functions, which were usually positions in the priestly hierarchy (Emerit, S., 2013), as shown in the case of Sneferu-nefer, who held the title "the under-supervisor of the priest(s) of the pyramid complex "Isesi is beautiful". In some cases, they were associated with deities, including "the overseer of singers of Ptah (Martin, G., 1985), "the singer of the domain of Mut" (Onstine, S., 2001; *Wb* I)"the singers of the residence (or interior) of Amun".

(2)The title *shmh-ib nb n nsw* could be translated as:

*If we assume that the title *imy-r* was dropped by the writer inadvertently or due to lack of space, then the title could be translated as in the common form, which is (*imy-r*) *shmh-ib nb n nsw* "the overseer of all royal amusement". (Jones,D.,2000; Murray,M.,1908;*UrkI*;Fischer,H.G.,1997;Knawati,N.,1982; Mariette, A.,1989). In this case, the title is close to some other similar titles, such as *imy-r shmh-ib nb nfr n nsw*, the overseer of all goodly entertainment of the King (*Wb*, IV; Hannig, R.,1995), *imy-r shmh-jb nb nfr m pr-ḥ3* , the overseer of all goodly entertainment of the great house (Jones, D., 2000; Hassan, S.,1936), *jmy-r shmh-jb nb m hnw (j)s.wt pr-ḥ3*, the overseer of all entertainment in the interior places of the great house (Bolshakov, A.,2005).However, if we accept that the writer did not make a mistake, and he did not lose the title of *imy-r*, the title could be translated either "the lord of entertainment of the king", given that *shmh-ib* is a noun (Cannuyer,C.,2002; *LDLE* II) and it is an adjectival Predict to the delayed subject "*nb*" (Drenkhahn,R.,1976),or If *shmh-jb* is considered a verb, which means "to entertain" (*Wb*, IV; *LDLE* II). In this case, it can be linked to the previous title *Imy-r ḥsy (w) pr-ḥ3* .Accordingly, *shmh-jb nb n nsw* can be translated as "The overseer of singers of the great house and all which delights the heart of the King (*Wb*, IV).

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(3)The title *Imy-r pr-smr* could be translated as "The overseer of residence of companions or friends because the word *smr* means a friend or companion (*Wb*, IV; Taylor, J., 2001; Al- Ayedi, A., 2006; *LDLE II*). It also could be translated as "The overseer of residence of courtiers" based on the meaning of $\overline{\text{pr}}$ *Pr-smr* (*Wb*, IV), which means the residence of those working in a profession close to or related to the King, such as the doctor, the artist, and the singer.

(4)The title (*issi nfr (mr) imy-ht hm(.w)-ntr*): The under-supervisor of the priest(s) of the pyramid "Isesi is beautiful" (Jones, D., 2000; Taylor, J., 2001) appeared in the Old Kingdom with the following formula: A title (*imy-r, imy-ht,.....* + a name of pyramid complex, for instance, the overseer of the pyramid complex whose name is (*n*) (Murray, M.,1908; Borchardt, 1899; *PM III*; Helck, W., 1957; Kuentz, C.,1917; Jones, D., 2000).

4.3.3. The epithets:

The epithet *jm3h.w* "revered" or "honored" (*Wb* I; Jones, D., 2000; Eyre, C., 1987) was one of the most prevalent epithets that the ancient Egyptians, both living and dead (Taylor, J., 2001; Jansen, W., 1996; Assmann, J., 1986), wanted to be known by (Helck, W., 1956; Jansen-W., 1996; Kloth, N., 2002) .It appeared at the beginning of all Old Kingdom funeral offering formulations before the actual sequence of titles (Nuzzolo, M., 2010). It was written in many forms, *im3h* , *im3hy*, *jm3x.w* (Jansen-W,1996; Junker, H., 1934; Taylor, J., 2001; Chauvet, V., 2002; Helck, W., 1956; Allen, J., 2006; Jones,D.,2000; Doxey, D., 1998; Pfluger, K., 1947; Bennett, C., 1941; Franke, D., 2003). This epithet came individually or applied to an idol, such as the King or gods, in general. It might be assigned to a specific god, such as Amun and Osiris. It's interesting to note Sneferu- nefer's desire to be honored before the King, Osiris, Anubis, and all gods; he was described, as follows:

(1)The title *Im3hy hr ntr-ꜥ3*: The honored (revered) one before the great god was a common epithet in the Old Kingdom onwards (Jones, D., 2000; Doxey, D., 1998; Taylor, J., 2001; Junker, H., 1934; Hassan, S., 1932; Id., 1936; Id., 1953; Id., 1974; Lutz, H., F., 1927;Törnqvist, J., 2017). This title is controversial about the term *ntr - ꜥ3* "Great God" to whom it referred. It might refer to Osiris (Ziegler, C., 1990), Ra, or the King himself. (Allen, J., 2006) It is traditionally translated as "Great God". It is actually the "Elder God", Sun, as opposed to his son, *ntr nfr*, the "Younger God" the King (Berlev, O., 1972; Hodjash, S. &Berlev, 1975; Bolshakov, A., 1989; Törnqvist, J., 2017; Bennett, C., 1941; Fischer, H., 1992; Allen, J., 2006; Ziegler, C., 1990).

(2) The title *im3hw hr wsir* (*Wb* I; Jones, D., 2000; Kanawati, N., & McFarlane, A., 1993) reflects the vital role of Osiris in the construction and reconstruction of the

character of the deceased, which endowed Osiris with multiple attributes. (Zecchi, M., 2006)

(3) *Im3hw hr nsw* The honored (revered) one with the King (Jones, D., 2000; Doxy, D., 1998; Jansen, W., 1996; Hassan, S, 1948; Id., 1975).

(4) The title *im3hw hr ntrw*: The honored (revered) one with gods did not appear before the Fifth Dynasty or later (Jones, D., 2000).

(5) The title *Im3hw hr inpw*: The revered one before Anubis. (*FCDM*; Jones, D., 2000; Doxy, D., 1998; Taylor, J., 2001)

4.4. Singers and their status in ancient Egyptian society:

Music was an essential element of life in ancient Egypt, as demonstrated by the numerous texts and illustrations found on temples, palaces, workshops, farms, war relics, tombs, etc. It had symbolic value and helped maintain equilibrium during periods of transition. (Hassan, S., 1932; Emerit, S., 2013)

The importance of music affected the reputation of musicians and artists, as there were at least twelve musical specialties in ancient Egypt, including singers (Emerit, S., 2013; Arroyo, R., 2001), who derived their position through the importance of singing in the ancient Egyptian society. Singing was practiced in public and private places, e.g., temples, palaces, religious processions, burials as a part of the funerary cult, private festivals, and military parades (Teeter, E., 2009; Manniche, L., 1991; Onstine, S., 2001).

Artists could attain high ranks, such as *shd* “inspector”, *hrp* “director”, *jmj-r* “overseer”, *jmj* “director”, and *hrj* “superior” (Labrousse, A., & Lauer, J., 2000; Kees, H., 1964; Emerit, S., 2013). In general, artisans belonged to the lower middle class. Yet, it is important to distinguish between independent artists and those associated with an institution or administration, such as a royal palace or a temple, because they did not share the same economic and social position. While the first category could scarcely erect a stela or statue in a sacred place, the second category was known for inscribed tombs. Nonetheless, most artisans and musicians did not have a funeral chapel, instead opting for a false-door, stela, rock inscription, statue, shabti, libation basin, offering table, textile, or seal as a memorial or commemorative artifact bearing their names (Lieven, A., 2006b; Fantechi, S., & Zingarelli, A., 2002).





Musicians and artists who worked for the palace or temple were considered privileged and equal to other functionaries (Pierrat-Bonnefois, G., 2003; Collombert, P., 2003). Such offering tables are fascinating to study and handle since they often had an “individualistic” character, reflecting a personal preference for shape and use. Moreover, their size, form, material, and placement showed their users' social status. The table's material and quality imply that its owner held a high social position, as seen by his title on the offering table, as he had the second-highest rank in this post. (Kilian, A., 2012; Spence, K., 2011; Leclère, 2001)

It seems that the singer's profession, like many professions in ancient Egyptian society, was hereditary. In some cases, children of the tomb owner bore titles related to a specific profession. For instance, the inscriptions and reliefs from the





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tomb of *KH-hH.j* in Saqqara showed musical titles, as three generations of the deceased's family were engaged in musical professions. The tomb owner bore titles including “director of singers” and “overseer of singers of the Two Houses” (Baer, K., 1960; Jones, D., 2000; Wen, J., 2018). His son *Nfr* had the title “director of singers”, while his three brothers had the title “inspector of singers” (Jones, D., 2000; Wen, J., 2018; Yehia, E., & Abdelhakim, W., 2021). The same applies to the case of Sneferu Nefer II, who was the overseer of singers of the great house, having the same title as Sneferu I, who was likely to be his father with his tomb no. 58[E6] (Mariette, A., 1889).

5. Comments:

(a)The word *hs(w)* is written in simplified form with forearm with the palm of hands downwards , which is the determinative of the word *hs* written in full way   . (Gardiner, A., 1964; Al- Ayedi., A., 2006)

(b)This form of writing the name of Osiris on the table was common during the Old and Middle Kingdoms (*Wb*, I; Erman, A., 1967; Fischer, H.G., 1996).

(c)  *imy-ht* , which means the under-supervisor, the follower, or the assistant, is basically written with *imy*,   but it was sometimes replaced by the letter (m) as in the offering table under study (*Wb*, I; Taylor, J., 2001).

(d)The *htp-di-nsw* formula prefaced the lists of offerings (Barta, W., 1968; Lapp, G., 1986; Barta, W., 1982; Barta, W., 1987; Hays, H., 2010; Allen, 2006; Assmann, J., 2002a; Kees, H., 1926; Breasted, J., 1912). It was recorded onto funerary stelae, false doors, coffins, offering tables, and other funerary objects (Abdel-Raziq, A., 2016) from the Old Kingdom to the Greco-Roman period (*Wb*. III, 186 (7); Barta, W., 1963; Hayes, H., 2002). This formula contributed to preserving the country's stability and survival in the afterlife for the deceased. (Depuydt, L., 1997).

(e) *rdi.f* as well *di nsw* (he gives or the King gives) is an abbreviated formula from *Htp di nsw* as "f" refers to the King, who acts on behalf of the deceased in offering to the gods as a mediator between the gods and humans (Lapp, G., 1986; Barta, W., 1968).

(f) The “*h3*” formula was based on the number one thousand, representing abundance and an infinite amount of offerings to the deceased (Barta, W., 1968; Baud, 1999; Brovarski, 2006; Hassan, S., 1953; Lapp, G., 1986; Reisner, A., 1942; Biers, W., 1992). It was read by priests or tomb visitors to supply "a thousand of bread, a thousand of beer, a thousand of oxen, a thousand of poultry, a thousand of ointment-jars, and a thousand of garments" to the deceased's spirit (Assmann, J., 2005; Nicola, H., 2013; Clark, R., 1959).

(g) Bread “*t*” was an essential element of the meal for livings and as offerings for the deceased to support his life during the hereafter (Samuel, D., 2001; Worsham, E., 1979; Leek, F.F., 1972).




(h) Beer “*hnkt*” (*Wb* I) was one of the most important offerings in the offering tables in the Fifth Dynasty at least. According to the legend of the Destruction of Mankind (Lichtheim, M., 2006), it was associated with the notion of purifying intoxication as purifying agents. Beer was listed as one of the ingredients for the ritual of setting up a bier in the Coffin Texts (Meeks, D., 1975; Faulkner, R., 1973). Beer was complemented among the social elite by wine, known as *irp* in Old Egypt. (Bárta, M., 2011)



(i) According to the ancient Egyptian religion, Oxen “*k3(w)*” (*Wb* V) was a symbol of Osiris and offering of the bull or a part of it. In the offering of “*hps*”, the soul and life force of the person would return to the mummified body, and the deceased could exist in the afterlife (Gordon, A., 1996; Te-Velde, H., 1967; Fischer, 1996).

(j) Fowl offerings “*3pdw*” (*Wb* I) were known in the Old Kingdom and were widely depicted in the tombs of the Middle and New Kingdoms (Darby, P., 1977).

(k) Egyptian alabaster is a sedimentary rock of chemical origin, composed mainly of calcium carbonate. (El-Mezayen & Others., 2020) It was a favorite material to manufacture. Offering tables might have a practical purpose and a symbolic significance. The hardness and durability of stone symbolized permanence and eternity (David, R., 2003; Baines, J., 2000; Klemm, R., & Klemm, D., 1993; Id., 2001; Id., 2008; De-Putter, T., & Karlshausen, C., 1992; Brovarski, E., 1996; Harrell, J., 2012d; Id., 2014; Aston, B. & Harrell, J. & Shaw, I., 2000; Harrell, J., & Storemyr, P., 2009).

(l) “*mrht*” oil was one of the important items used in daily life, offerings, divine and funeral rites, and mummification (Koura, B., 2003).

*Writing the word “*mrht*” in the offering table understudy is reductive , as the writer did not write it with its determinative , which was customary besides writing the word in its entirety form  (*Wb*, II; Gardiner, A., 1964).

(m)The ancient Egyptian language contained many words that mean linen, the most famous of which were “*mnht*”  (*Wb*, II) and “*sšrw*”. The word used here is “*sšrw*” with its determinative  (*Wb*, IV; LDLE II).

6. Dating


The offering table could be dated to the second half of the Sixth Dynasty, reinforced by its style and few paleographical criteria, as follows:

* Typologically, the hetep-shape offering table appeared in the second half of the Fifth Dynasty and spread in the Sixth Dynasty (Mostafa, M.M.F., 1982; *Wb* III).

* The arrangement of the of the formula *htp di nsw* signs were known during the Sixth to Eleventh Dynasties (Firth, C.M & Gunn, B., 1926; Fischer, H.G., 1963; Barta, W., 1968; Ziegler, C., 1990; Satzinger H., (1997); Leprohon, R., J., 2001).

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* In the reign of Neuser, Osiris emerges for the first time in funerary texts at Memphite cemeteries.(Bear,1960) Noting that the method of writing the name of the god Osiris in the offering table is commonly employed in the late Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period.(Abdelrahiem,M.,2003)

*The writing of Anubis with the monosyllabic only  indicates dating criteria of the end of the Sixth Dynasty up to the Eighth Dynasty (Brovarski, E., 2006) because it was attested in the Memphite cemeteries in the reign of King Teti and shortly after in the provinces (Brovarski, E.,1989).

*The writing of the *ntr-ꜥ3* without a determinative appeared during the reign of King Pepi II. (EL-Masry, Y., 1994)

*The writing of *jm3h.(w)* without the initial *j* indicates dating criteria of the late Old Kingdom.(Bolshakov ,A.O., 2005).

*The complete spelling of the verb *rdj* with the initial *r* was rare in the Fourth Dynasty. It sporadically occurred in the Fifth Dynasty. It appeared for the first time in royal formula and can be occasionally found in the late Old Kingdom (Barta, W., 1987).

* The title *imy-r3 ḥsw pr-ꜥ3* emerged not earlier than the mid-fifth Dynasty and was common during the sixth Dynasty (Jones, D., 2000; Al- Ayedi, A., 2006; Mathieu, B., 2012; Ward, W., 1982).

*The title *im3ḥw ḥr ntrw* The honored (revered) one with gods did not appear before the Fifth Dynasty or later. (Mariette, A., 1889; Jones, D., 2000)

Conclusion:

This research paper aimed to publish an inscribed hetep-sign shape offering table displayed at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo under the numbers (JE 11527, CG 1328, SR 2/ 15727). The offering table was found in the tomb of Sneferu-nefer II (E7) by A. Mariette during the excavations for the Egyptian Antiquities Service in 1860 in North Saqqara to the north of the Step Pyramid. Sneferu-nefer II was the under-supervisor of the prophets of the pyramid of Dedkare, the overseer of residence of companions, and the overseer of the singers of the great house. The offering table is in a good state of preservation. Its material and quality imply that Sneferu-nefer II had a high social status, as seen by his titles on the offering table, showing that he had the second-highest position. Based on its style and some paleographical criteria, the table could be dated to the second half of the 6th Dynasty.

Plates



Pl.1. The Offering Table of Sneferu-nefer II



Plate.2. The Text around the Spouts

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