

Titles Of Dentists In Ancient Egypt

القاب أطباء الأسنان في مصر القديمة

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Article Info

Article Language: English

Vol. 5 No. 1, (2022) pp. 81-95 | <https://doi.org/10.21608/SIS.2022.163442.1074>

معلومات المقالة

لغة المقالة: الإنجليزية

Abstract

Among all the branches of science pursued during ancient Egyptian history, none achieved such an importance and popularity as medicine. The medical profession in ancient Egypt was highly advanced and practiced in very professional ways, the physicians had great respect and were the absolute elite and famous people for their exceptional knowledge, experience, and skills. They knew several medical specialties and subspecialties in the healthcare field; as Herodotus wrote: *'The practice of medicine is so divided among them, that each physician is a healer of one disease and no more. All the country is full of physicians, some of the eye, others for the head, some of the teeth, some of what pertains to the belly, and some of the hidden and unknown diseases'* (Greef, 2014, 93; Todd, 1921, 462; Leek, 1967, 51)

So “dentists” were mentioned clearly among these medical specialists, also Edwin Smith and Ebers Papyrus¹ reported that dental disease were very common, and the Egyptians suffered from different problems such as dental caries, mouth abscesses and ulcers, teeth extraction, and jaw dislocation. They were pioneers in the development of odontology and performed dental surgeries, inlaying precious stones in the teeth for aesthetic purposes, furthermore, several teeth wired - like those which were found in the 4th dynasty tombs at Giza - have suggested that an attempt to manufacture a dental bridge occurred. (Reeves, 1992, 21; Leek, 1967, 52)

Aims of the study:

This research seeks to provide a concise overview of individuals who practiced dentistry under the titles *iry ibh* or *ibh swnw*; it aims to categorize the various titles associated with these dentists and highlight the evidence supporting their names and professional designations

Keywords: Ancient Egypt , medicine, dentists, *iry ibh* , *ibh swnw*

عرف المصريون القدماء العديد من التخصصات الطبية المختلفة، ويعتبر طب الأسنان أحد تلك التخصصات التي اشتهر بها المصري القديم وكان له الريادة والسبق في هذا العلم الواسع.

وقد ذكرت العديد من البرديات امراض الاسنان التي انتشرت في تلك الفترة مثل تسوس الاسنان، تقرحات اللثة وخراج الاسنان، والعديد من الامراض الاخرى التي ذكرت في مختلف الوثائق.

وقد تعامل القدماء مع تلك الامراض بحرفيه ومهارة عالية بل وتعاملوا مع بعض حالات تجميل الفك مثل وضع بعض الاحجار الكريمة بغرض الزينة وتركيب بعض الاسلاك لعمل ما يشبه الموجود حاليا والمعروف بتقويم الأسنان. ومن ضمن حوالي 150 طبيب عرف منهم 9 فقط كأطباء اسنان و للأسف وضعوا تحت لقب الطبيب بصفه عامة ولم يتم توثيقهم بشكل جيد، فقط تم التمييز بينهم تحت لقب *ibh* (*y*) لطبيب الاسنان و *swnw* للطبيب بصفه عامة.



ويهدف هذا البحث الى القاء الضوء على اطباء الاسنان عند المصريين القدماء والألقاب التي حملوها والآثار والوثائق التي خلفوها عن فترات حياتهم المختلفة.

الكلمات الدالة: مصر القديمة ، الطب ، اطباء الأسنان

1 The Edwin Smith and Ebers Papyri are the most well-known and informative medical papyri which is considered the world's oldest known medical papyri. it is written around 1600 B.C. in hieratic and its chapters contain 48 cases of contraception, diagnosis of pregnancy and other gynecological matters, intestinal disease and parasites, head, face, neck, the upper part of the thorax, spine, and arm, eye and skin problems, dentistry and the surgical treatment of abscesses and tumors, bone-setting and burns. Each medical case follows the same pattern, beginning with the title “knowledge gained from practical experience: examination, diagnosis and prognosis, and treatment. (James, 2005,9,11; Nunn, 1996, 26-30)

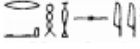
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Introduction:

Among a cohort of approximately 150 medical practitioners in ancient Egypt, a mere nine individuals were formally acknowledged and designated as dental specialists (Cockitt and David, 2010,75; Forshaw,2009,481). Regrettably, historical records pertaining to these dental specialists were inadequately documented (Budka,2000,16) and falling solely within the purview of the physician, only separated in hieroglyphic symbols: *ibh* (y) for dentist and *swnw* for physician (Zingarelli, 2017,68). Within the dental profession, some practitioners hold both titles and were known as *ibh swnw*  physician and dentist, while others exclusively bear the title *iry ibh*  of dentist.* (PM III, H. 141).

Like many other professions, the role of dentists exhibited a clear hierarchical structure, characterized by the presence of two distinct classes within the field. These classes were delineated by variations in both their responsibilities and their social standing. The first one : the *iry* (w) *ibh* (w) literally “dentists - the one who is concerned (deals) with teeth” and that is usually regarded as the lowest class of dentists. The other one is the high-class dentists or the elite dentists who were known as *wr iry* (w) *ibh* (w), the “great of those who are concerned with teeth”. (Cockitt and David, 2010, 75; Wb I, 64).

In the following, we will discuss the historical records of dentists in ancient Egypt, their respective titles, and the enduring monuments and documentation attributed to their practice.

I. *Hsy r* 

Date: early 3rd Dynasty (reign of king Djoser)

Titles: He holds numerous prestigious titles and designations, including *hk3 mhyt* priest of Mehit, *sš nsw* the royal scribe, *wr pi* great one of Buto, *hk3t inw* supervisor of the tribute, *wr šm'w* great one of Upper Egypt and *hm ntr pi hsy*; *hsy* priest of Buto. His medical title was *wr ibh swnw* great one (chef) of the dentists and physicians (Piacentini, 2002, 54-55).


The historical records prior to the time of *Hsy r* don't provide any documented evidence or references to the field of dentistry. He is sharing the title “physician” with Imhotep, the man who was considered the first doctor in Ancient Egypt (Greeff, 2014, 96; Reeves, 1992, 21). It has also become common to regard *Hsy r* as the earliest recorded and authenticated dentist in ancient Egypt (Cockitt and David, 2010, 75; Forshaw, 2009, 481).

Document (fig.1):

A finely carved decorated wooden panel (CG 1426) which was found in his large tomb at Saqqara, north of the funerary complex of Djoser with another ten panels in the western wall of the south interior corridor (Zingarelli,2017, 67; Wood, 1978, 9,22, pl. I-II; Reisner, 1936, 271).

fig.1



* this symbol  derived from the word tooth in ancient Egypt” (Wb I, 1971, 64; Faulkner, 2017, 19)

This panel is the one that contains the most complete list of *Hsy r^c*'s many titles. It shows him sitting at an offering table, wearing a long tight garment which covers his left shoulder but leaves the right one free and reaches down to his ankles. In his left hand he holds two rods. Scribal utensils “an inkpot with two holes for red and black paint, a reed writing stick and a bag” hanging from his right shoulder. His right arm is extended toward the offering table. On the offering plate are eight loaves of bread and directly above the table is a short offering list (Forshaw, 2013,190).

Hsy r^c is depicted with an enumeration of religious and secular titles, they were closer to the eye level than his figure, which suggests remarkable importance was attached to these titles. (Wood, 1978, 12; Borchardt, 1937, 108, pl. 25[1426]; Quibell, 1913, pl. 31). It is only the scene of this panel that represents *Hsy r^c* as *wr ibh swnw*, great one of the of dentists and physicians.

He was a dentist of a high ranking and a chief of dentists and physicians (Greeff, 2014, 96; Ledent, 2014, 93). Interestingly, *wr ibh swnw* appears at the top of his title list (Leek,1967,55), which proves that he was sufficiently proud of his medical and dental qualifications to place them at the head of his commemoratives panel, it is usually accepted that the higher the title in the ranking order the more important was this title and occupation (Forshaw,2011, 48; Nunn,1996, 124)

II. *ij mri*

Date: 4th Dynasty

Titles: *wr ibh iry ibh* and *hrp iry ibh* “great dentist and head of dentists”

In October 2006, a momentous archaeological discovery took place in Saqqara, the ancient burial ground near the Step Pyramid of Djoser. A unique necropolis was unearthed, bearing hidden tombs that held intriguing significance, this discovery marked the first instance of a necropolis solely dedicated to esteemed dental practitioners. Constructed with a masterful blend of mudbrick and limestone, these tombs exhibited a striking absence of mummies, setting them apart from traditional burial sites of the time.

Dr. Zahi Hawass, has postulated a compelling theory regarding the dentists' historical role. It is believed that these accomplished individuals resided in close proximity to the royal palace, where they diligently attended to the dental needs of the revered king and his royal family. As an acknowledgment of their exceptional services and loyal dedication, the kings of that time bestowed upon these skilled dentists the privilege to erect their final resting places in this prestigious location. The proximity of their tombs to one another serves as a testament to their probable close relationship, with the possibility that they either collaborated professionally or hailed from the same family lineage.

The revelation of these hidden tombs shedding light on the significant role of dentistry within the royal court and its pivotal connection to the palace. This remarkable archaeological find not only enriches our understanding of dental practices in antiquity but also paints a vivid picture of the respect and recognition accorded to skilled healthcare professionals in the ancient world.

(https://www2.ljworld.com/news/2006/oct/23/thieves_first_discover_dentists_tombs_egyptian_py_r/; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/oct/24/arts.egypt> (22/4/2022))

Document (fig.2 a, b): tomb of the chef dentists *ij mri*

The tomb features an entrance that opens into a spacious rectangular hall, flanked by two L-shaped chapels adorned with intricate depictions of offerings and scenes from daily life ; these captivating

illustrations portrayed *ij mri* and his esteemed family engaging in significant rituals, partaking in reverent sacrifices, making generous offerings, and partaking in leisurely games. The vividly depicted scenes provide valuable glimpses into the private lives and customs of these ancient dental practitioners, underscoring their role not only as skilled healers but as respected members of their community.

The significance of *ij mri* within his profession is unequivocally inscribed on the walls, identifying him as *hrp iry ibh wr ibh iry ibh* signifying his status as “the distinguished leader and great chief of dentists” (Fig.2 a). Furthermore, upon careful examination of the left wall to the right of the entrance, a striking array of additional inscriptions came to light, artfully representing the profession of dentistry. These intricate carvings and hieroglyphics unveil the advanced knowledge and skill possessed by these ancient dental practitioners, shedding light on their sophisticated techniques and dedication to the art of preserving oral health.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZD7Z2NtqsVE>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/oct/24/arts.egypt.22/4/2022>)

fig.2 a



fig.2 b



III. *šhm k3*

Date: 4th Dynasty

Titles: *iry ibh* “dental practitioner , dentist”

Document (fig. 3 a, b): A tomb - located between the tombs of *k3 msw* and *ij mri* - with a limestone false door.

In the revered grounds of Saqqara, between the tombs of *k3 msw* and *ij mri*, a rectangular tomb of profound historical significance has been unveiled. Remarkably adorned with a limestone false door, this sepulchral structure features an offering basin, exquisitely crafted with the customary cavetto cornice and torus moulding. The door's surface is embellished with meticulously incised texts and figures on the jambs, while the central panel stands out in striking raised relief, depicting a poignant funerary meal scene. The door's jambs are adorned with dignified standing portraits of the deceased, positioned to face the central niche.

Within this captivating portrayal, the departed figure is adorned in an elegant shoulder-length wig, complemented by a regal broad collar. Additionally, the attire is distinguished by either a knee-length kilt, gracefully featured on the right jamb, or a pointed kilt, adorning the left one. The artistic rendition captures the essence of a timeless persona, imbued with an air of revered grandeur and cultural significance.

Within the distinguished confines of the tomb's left jamb, the inscriptions eloquently bestow upon its owner the esteemed title of *rh.t nsw.t shm k3*. Similarly, the right jamb bears the distinguished title *iry ibh shm k3* attesting to the revered standing of the individual within the realm of dental expertise.

Within the niche, nestled between the beautifully etched name of his beloved wife, Meret, we find the inscription *s3.t nsw.t rh.t nsw.t Mrt.* further solidifying the familial connections and honorable designations accorded to the revered couple. The upper frieze, adorned with artistry and precision, echoes the profession of the tomb's occupant, diligently repeating the illustrious title *rh nswt iry ibh shm k3*.

This compelling repetition reaffirms the individual's status as a dental expert, favored and recognized in the royal court, signifying the profound impact of his skills in the respected service of the kingdom's rulers. Above the tomb's entrance, a captivating tableau unfolds, presenting *shm K3* seated regally upon a backless throne, a scepter firmly grasped in his hand, and the accompanying inscriptions dutifully identifying him as *iry ibh shm k3*. This portrayal serves as a testament to his exceptional prominence and enduring legacy as a revered dental practitioner.

fig. 3 a



fig. 3 b



(http://www.guardians.net/hawass/news/ancient_egyptian_dentists_discovered.htm (22/4/2022))

IV. *K3 ms (w)*

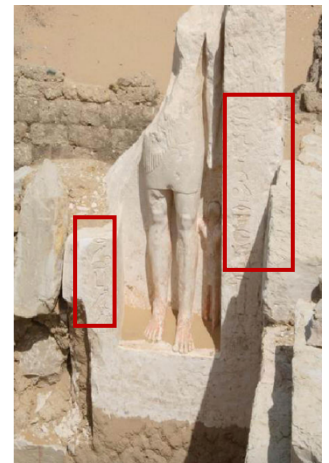
Date: the beginning of the 5th Dynasty

Titles: *iry ibh* “dental practitioner , dentist”

Document (fig. 4): A broken huge bust statue.

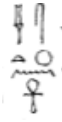
The magnificent archaeological find comprises a colossal bust, albeit slightly damaged, depicting the revered figure of *K3 ms (w)*, the respected king's dentist, accompanied by his son, proudly adorning the facade of his grand tomb. Crafted from limestone, this imposing statue meticulously captures the intricate details of the lower body, a testament to the artistry and skill of its creators.

fig.4



On the right side of the bust, the inscriptions emerge, revealing the distinguished title *iry ibh* // // // // // *ʿ3 ntr* alongside the name *k3 mš (w)*. These honorific designations serve to commemorate the exalted status and profound achievements of *k3 mš (w)*, underscoring his preeminence in the field of dentistry and his esteemed position within the court of the monarch.

(http://www.guardians.net/hawass/news/ancient_egyptian_dentists_discovered.htm (22/4/2022))



V. *Nj ʿnh šhm.t*

Date : the beginning of the 5th dynasty (reign of king Sahure)

Titles: *Nj ʿnh šhm.t* has many medical titles such as *šmšw swnw* head (elder) of physicians, *wr swnw pr-ʿ3* greatest of the physician of the royal palace, *šmšw swnw pr ʿ3* head of the royal palace physicians and *wr ibh pr-ʿ3* head of the palace dentists (Greeff, 2013, 54; PM III, 482).

Document (fig.5) :

fig.5

Archaeological excavations at Saqqara, situated north of the revered Step Pyramid, yielded a significant discovery within the mastaba of *Nj ʿnh šhm.t*. This invaluable finding comprises a stele, offering a poignant glimpse into the life of *Nj ʿnh šhm.t* and his beloved wife,.



The intricately carved stele portrays *Nj ʿnh šhm.t* seated beside his wife, *hmt.f rht nsw.t* with reverence and dignity, their figures arranged around a meticulously rendered offering table adorned with loaves of bread.

This sacred scene captures a poignant moment of ritualistic offering, wherein the couple presents sustenance to ensure spiritual nourishment for eternity. Above *Nj ʿnh šhm.t*'s noble visage, inscribed with profound significance, stands his esteemed title *wr swnw pr-ʿ3* signifying his eminent role as the overseer of dental physicians - a designation of utmost prestige denoting his leadership and prominence in the realm of dentistry.

Additionally, two horizontal lines grace the space under his chair, etched with the prestigious title *wr ibh pr-ʿ3* further reinforcing the profound stature of *Nj ʿnh šhm.t* in his capacity as the Great Dentist and the esteemed Overseer of Dental Physicians.



VI. *Mn k3w r ʿ ʿnh*

Date: 5th dynasty (reign of king Sahure)

Titles: *iry ibh* “dental practitioner , dentist” (Lefebvre, 1956, 59; Murray,1908, XVIII).

It is highly probable that *Mn k3w r ʿ ʿnh* and *Nj ʿnh šhm.t* share a close familial relationship, potentially that of father and son. This assertion is substantiated by the presence of *Mn k3w r ʿ ʿnh*'s name within the mastaba of *Nj ʿnh šhm.t* ,where he is depicted alongside his sibling(s) and offspring, suggesting the familial bond between them. (Riaud and Ledent, 2018, 6; Dilwyn, 2000, 307 no.1119).

Document (fig. 6 a,b): false door of *Nj ʿnh šhm.t*, exhibited at the Cairo Museum (CG 1482)

In the annals of ancient Egypt, king Sahure expressed profound gratitude for his well-being, acknowledging the exceptional care provided by the renowned and skilled practitioner *Nj ʿnh šhm.t*. In recognition of this esteemed dental expert's services, Sahure commissioned a magnificent false door crafted from a sizable block of exquisite white limestone, destined to adorn *Nj ʿnh šhm.t* final resting place within his tomb.

fig. 6 a

The creation of this false door was a momentous event, as it was carved and inscribed under the watchful gaze of Sahure himself. The meticulous craftsmanship and intricate inscriptions were carried out in the regal presence, signifying the paramount importance bestowed upon this revered dental practitioner and the profound appreciation for his contributions to the king's well-being.

Nj ʿnh šhm.t false door found its revered position within the hall of “the crown of Sahure has appeared,” an illustrious location deemed worthy to preserve the legacy of this individual. Remarkably, this revered relic stands as the sole artifact recovered from the tomb, a testament to the deep respect and admiration held for *Nj ʿnh šhm.t* and his unparalleled dedication to the art of dentistry. (Chauvet, 2013, 62-63; Rice, 1999, 139; Borchardt, 1937, pl.39, no. 1482; Mariette, 1889, 202, 205)

Adjacent to the imposing false door of *Nj ʿnh šhm.t*, a captivating scene unfolds on the left side, portraying two distinguished figures stepping forward with an air of purpose. Both adorned with short hair and clad in traditional kilts, the smaller of the two, identified as the dentist *iry ibh Mn k3w r ʿnh*, is believed to have held a position of junior or subordinate standing, possibly attached to a senior physician within the esteemed ranks of their profession. (Ghalioungui, 1963, 111-112, 133 fig.14 ; Borchardt, 1937; 170, 171, No. 1482, pl.39).

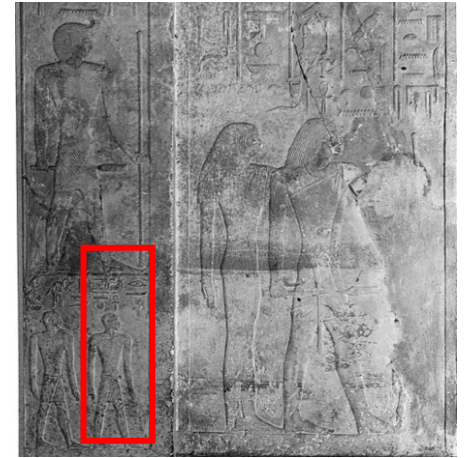
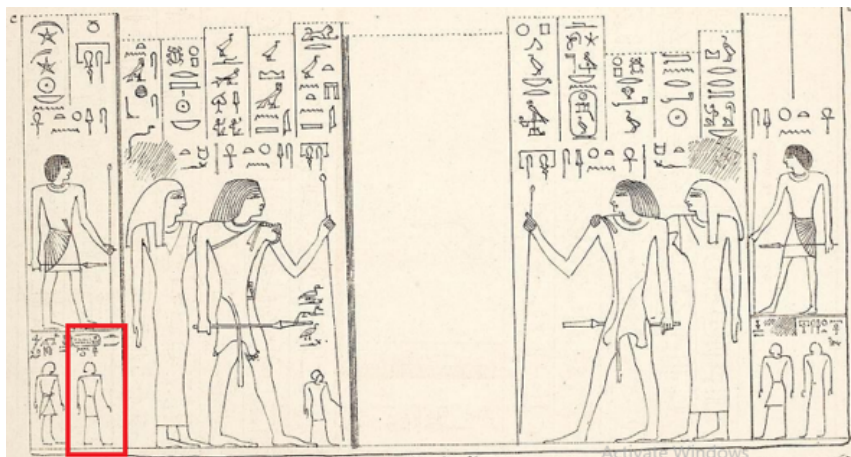


fig. 6 b



VII. *Nfr – irjts*

Date: 5th dynasty.

Titles: He has the title *iry ibh* “dental practitioner, dentist”, a court physician to the pharaoh, specializing in the treatment of toothache (Lefebvre, 1956, 59; Junker, 1934, 194; Junker, 1927, 70)

Document (fig.7 a, b): bas-relief from the north wall of the mastaba tomb of *sš3.t htp* at Giza (G 5152) opposite the great pyramid of *hww* (Strudwick, 1985, 136- 137; Junker, 1934, 172). Within the captivating tableau of this scene, the deceased, accompanied by his devoted wife, assumes a dignified seated position on a chair, its legs meticulously fashioned in the form of bulls. As a symbol of their esteemed status, a cushion graces the chair, adding a touch of regal grandeur to their portrayal.

The deceased holds a staff, signifying his authority and position, while his loving wife gently rests her left hand on his shoulder, expressing their enduring bond and mutual respect. In their midst, their young son stands as a small naked child, emblematic of the continuity of their lineage and the promise of future generations.

The family, poised in harmony, receives a list of offerings presented by devout offering-bringers positioned below, a demonstration of the profound reverence and gratitude accorded to the esteemed couple. Notably, among the witnesses to this poignant testamentary act, the figure of *Nfr-jrt.s* commands attention as one of the fifteen witnesses. Standing before the scene, he bears the distinguished title *iry ibh* vividly proclaiming his standing as a revered dental practitioner. The inclusion of *Nfr-jrt.s* in this illustrious assembly underscores the significance of dental professionals within the ancient Egyptian societal framework. (Riaud and Ledent, 2018, 8, fig.9; Ledent, 2014, 94; Kanawati, 2002, 28, pl.9 a, pl.47)

fig. 7 a

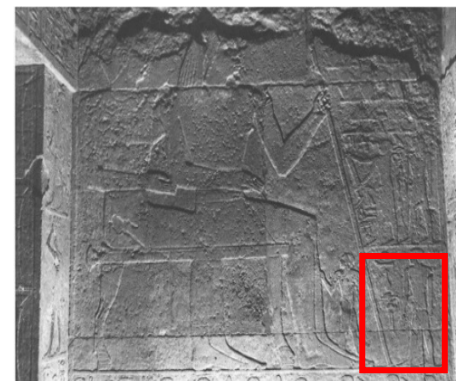
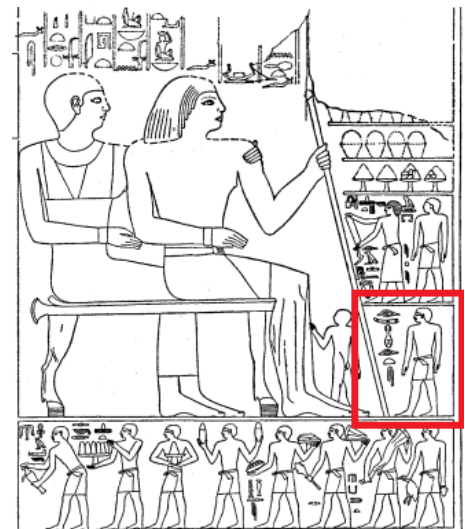


fig. 7 b

VIII. *Hwj*

Date: end of the 5th dynasty and the beginning of the 6th dynasty (reigns of Teti and Pepi I)

Titles: The titles attributed to *Hwj* offer profound insights into his distinguished career within the esteemed realm of the medical profession. Among these titles, we find designations that perhaps extended beyond his medical expertise, encompassing roles such as *smr w^c ty* and *sd3wty bity* which may have been granted based on economic considerations or administrative responsibilities. These additional titles likely underscore his multifaceted contributions and broader role within the societal and administrative framework. The construction of the inscribed chapel serves as a poignant

symbol of *Hwj* 's commitment to both his medical practice and priestly responsibilities. This sacred space not only honored the deities but also embodied the essence of *Hwj* 's devout devotion and dedication to serving the spiritual and healthcare needs of the community. (Dawood,1998, 171)

The trajectory of *Hwj* 's illustrious medical career is distinctly reflected in the gradual ascent of his titles, each indicative of increasing status and specialization within the esteemed field of medicine. Alongside these notable designations, we find others closely associated with the medical profession, signifying his comprehensive expertise and dedication to the healing arts. As *Hwj* 's expertise expanded and his reputation flourished, his titles underwent a remarkable evolution, mirroring the progressive stages of his professional journey. Commencing with titles of general recognition, he earned distinctions that acknowledged his foundational knowledge and competence in the medical domain. (Dawood,1998, 172)

He was “*swnw pr -c3* physician of the royal palace”, “*wr swnw pr-c3* chef of the physician of the royal palace”, “*šmšw swnw pr c3* head of the royal palace physicians”, “*wr swnw t3 mhw šm^c w* head of the physicians of the Upper and Lower Egypt”, “*wr ir ibh* chef and great of dentists”, “*nrw phw .t* shepherd of the anus” .(Zingarelli , 2017, 68; Ledent, 2014, 93; Greeff, 2013, 54).

This remarkable progression of titles serves as a testament to *Hwj* 's unyielding dedication, tenacity, and expertise, embodying the essence of an accomplished medical practitioner. His journey exemplifies the remarkable heights attainable through a lifelong commitment to the healing arts, leaving an indelible mark on the annals of ancient medicine and inspiring generations to come. (Dawood,1998, 172)

Hwj 's titles affords us invaluable insights into the trajectory of his esteemed medical career. Initially embarking as an ordinary physician, he honed his skills and accrued experience, reflected in his second and third titles, which likely denoted his seniority and growing expertise within the medical realm. It is evident that his demonstrated competence and seniority paved the way for his eventual appointment as the distinguished "Chief Physician of Upper and Lower Egypt," a position of profound responsibility and leadership in the field of medicine. (Dawood,1998, 172).

Document (fig. 8): A large limestone stela or (false door 170 x103 cm) was discovered in *situ* at Saqqara

The stela bears the distinctive hallmarks of the late Old Kingdom style, the intricate detailing and inscriptional finesse are executed with precision, with texts and figures adorning the jambs rendered through incised techniques, the funerary offering table scene is artfully presented in raised relief, offering a captivating contrast to the surrounding elements. Each of the six jambs has a standing portrait of the deceased, facing the central niche.

He wears a curled shoulder length wig “on the outer and middle left jambs, the inner and outer right jambs”, or a short wig “on the inner left and the middle right jambs”. He also wears a broad collar and either a knee length kilt “on the outer jambs” or a pointed kilt “on the middle and inner jambs”. The figures on the outer and middle left jambs as well as these on the inner and outer right jambs, show the deceased with both hands hanging open at his side.

The inner left jamb and the middle right jamb depict him holding one hand to his chest, and extending the other open at his side. (Brovarskip, 2011,113; Dawood,1998,170-171; Quibell, 1907, pl.14)


on the Left inner Jamb of the stela (Lefebvre, 1956,59) :



śmśw swnw pr ʿ3 hrp srkt im3hw wr irj ibh Hwj
 Senior Physician of the great house, Magician, he who is honoured, Chief of those who treat
 teeth, *Hwj*



fig. 8

IX. *Psmtk śnb* 

Date : Saite period (the 26th Dynasty - reign of Psametik II)

Titles: he has some medical titles such as *wr swnw* “chief of physicians”, *wr ir ibh* “chief of dentists”, *wr ir ibh pr-ʿ3* “great of the dentists of the palace”, *wr ibh swnw* “great of physicians and dentists” and *śmśw swnw* “dean of physicians”. He has also some non-medical titles such as *hrp hw wt n.t* the director of the temple of Neith, *hr .i śšt3 n(.i) p.t* the initiate into the secrets of heaven and *śmr wꜥ .ti* the sole friend, *hr .i tp nsw* leader of the foremost thrones, chief dentist of the pharaoh *wr ibh pr ʿ3*, *hrp srk.t* scorpion charmer and *s3 srk.t* son of Selket (Riaud and Ledent, 2018, 9; Ledent, 2014, 94; Greeff, 2013, 54; Alexandra, 1998, 216)

Document (fig. 9): kneeling naophorous statue

The venerable Vatikan Museum houses a striking green basalt naophorous statue, an emblematic representation of the esteemed *Psmtk śnb*. In this sculpted marvel, *Psmtk śnb* is depicted in a state of nakedness and with a clean-shaven head, gracefully kneeling in veneration. He reverently cradles

a shrine on his knees, gently clasping it with both hands, symbolizing his profound devotion and spiritual significance.

fig.9

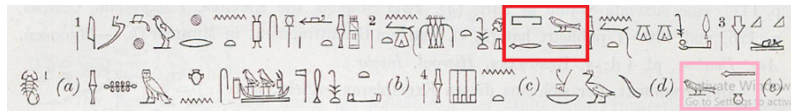
The naophorous statue is adorned with inscriptions that shed light on the distinguished titles and roles held by *Psmtk šnb*. Notably, the first and fourth lines on the naos and the dorsal pillar bear the prominent title *Wr swnw* an honorific denoting his prestigious position as “chief of physicians”. This designation attests to his leadership and commanding authority within the realm of medicine, signifying his profound impact in the healthcare domain.

Additionally, the second line on the naos reveals the illustrious title *wr ibh (y) pr ʿ3* underscoring *Psmtk šnb*’s esteemed status as the “chief of the dentists of the royal palace”. His elevated position within the royal court highlights the immense trust and confidence vested in him by the royal family, affirming his exceptional skill and expertise in dental practices. the socle unveils the revered title *šmšw sinw* designating *Psmtk šnb* as the “dean of physicians”.

This distinguished role reflects his prominence as a guiding figure and mentor to fellow physicians, entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the education and professional development of medical practitioners.

(Alexandra ,1998, 216; Ghaliounghui, 1983, 32, No.122, Jonckheere, 1958, 40, fig. 8)

The inscriptions on the Naos:

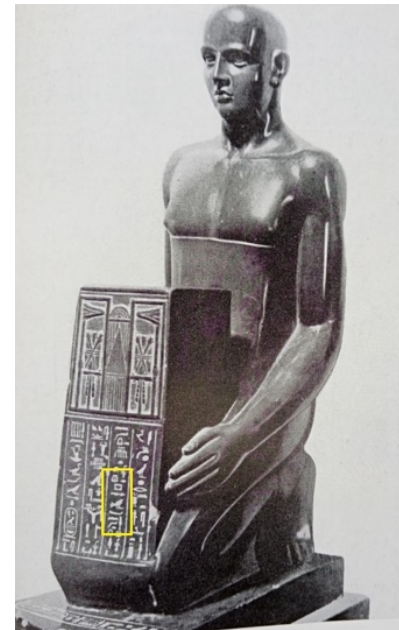


(Alexandra ,1998, 216; El-Sayed,1968, 247-248, No.28; Marucchi, 1899, 65 no.92; Wiedemann, A, 1885, 119 no. 2)

The Analytical Table

The following table briefly concludes the important information about the dentists mentioned in this paper:

Name	Titles	Where they were buried	their utensils
<i>Hsy r ʿ</i>	<i>wr ibh swnw</i> great of the of dentists and physicians.	Saqqara	Eleven finely carved decorated wooden panel
<i>ij mr</i>	<i>wr ibh iry ibh hrp iry ibh</i> head and great dentist	Saqqara	Tomb with a rectangular hall with two L-shaped chapels
<i>šhm k3</i>	<i>iry ibh</i> general dentist	Saqqara	A rectangular shaped tomb with a limestone false door and an offering basin
<i>k3 mš (w)</i>	<i>iry ibh</i> general dentist	Saqqara	A broken huge bust statue
<i>Nj ʿ nh šhmt</i>	<i>šmšw swnw</i> head of physicians <i>wr swnw pr-ʿ3</i> greatest of the physician of the royal palace	Saqqara	Stele was found in his mastaba at Saqqara



	<i>śmśw swnw pr ʿ3</i> head of the royal palace physicians <i>wr ibḥ pr-ʿ3</i> head of the palace dentists.		
<i>Mnk3w r ʿnh</i>	<i>iry ibḥ</i> general dentists or probably dental auxiliary	Unknown buried place, his name appear at the mastaba of <i>Nj ʿnh</i> <i>śhmt</i> in Saqqara	He doesn't have his own monument, but his name appears on the false door of <i>Nj ʿnh śhmt</i>
<i>Nfr – irjts</i>	<i>iry ibḥ</i> general dentists	Unknown buried place, his name appear at the mastaba tomb of <i>sš3. t ḥtp</i> at Giza	His name was inscribed on a bas-relief from the mastaba tomb of <i>sš3. t ḥtp</i>
<i>Hwj</i>	<i>wr ir ibḥ</i> great of dentists <i>swnw pr- ʿ3</i> physician of the royal palace <i>wr swnw pr- ʿ3</i> great of the physician of the royal palace <i>śmśw swnw pr ʿ3</i> head of the royal palace physicians	Saqqara	A false door stele which was discovered in his chapel at Saqqara
<i>Psmk-śnb</i>	<i>wr swnw</i> great of physician <i>wr ir ibḥ</i> great of dentists <i>wr ir ibḥ pr ʿ3</i> great of the dentists of the palace <i>wr ibḥ swnw</i> great of physicians and dentists <i>śmśw swnw</i> head (elder) of physicians.	Heliopolis	-a canopic jar preserved in the museum of Florence [n° 2226] -Naophorus statue in green basalt preserved in the Vatican Museum -There was found his inscribed sarcophagus which is now on display in Norfolk, Virginia at the Chrysler Museum His tomb at Heliopolis

Conclusion:

-In conclusion, the study of dentistry in ancient Egypt unveils a captivating narrative of skilled practitioners and their profound contributions to the realm of medical care during the Old Kingdom era. While the historical records predominantly date back to this period, with only one document from the 26th Dynasty, the knowledge gleaned from these sources offers a valuable glimpse into the esteemed position of dentists in this ancient civilization. Regrettably, the dearth of mentions of dentists during the Middle and New Kingdoms leaves much to be explored and elucidated in subsequent historical periods.

- The enigmatic world of dentistry in ancient Egypt continues to hold untold mysteries, with much remaining to be unveiled. Future discoveries and archaeological endeavors hold the promise of shedding new light on the intricacies of this esteemed medical practice within the historical context of Egypt. While dental practitioners occupied a position of utmost importance in ancient Egyptian society, the available records offer insights into only a select few among the vast array of approximately 150 medical personnel of the time.

- It is noteworthy that, despite their undeniable significance, only nine individuals have been officially recognized as dentists within the ancient Egyptian medical corpus. The limited number of identified dental practitioners and the paucity of comprehensive documentation leave many aspects of their profession shrouded in the mists of antiquity.

- The close proximity of the tombs belonging to esteemed dental practitioners, namely *ij mr* , *šhm K3* , and *K3 mš (w)*, raises the intriguing possibility of familial or collaborative ties. The spatial proximity suggests the likelihood of their shared work environment or familial connections, hinting at the potential hereditary nature of their esteemed profession. Additionally, the presence of *Mn k3w r' 'nh* as a close relative, potentially the son of *Nj' 'nh šhm.t*, reinforces the notion of a generational legacy within this distinguished medical lineage.

- The complexity of titles held by these dental practitioners offers fascinating insights into the multifaceted nature of their roles. Some dentists were adorned with both physician and dentist titles, while others solely carried the designation of dentists. The true implications of these multiple titles remain enigmatic, leaving room for speculation as to whether they reflect engagements in various medical specialties or serve administrative and honorary functions.

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