This paper aims to publish and study the offering table of Ankhmeryre, which is currently exhibited at the Imhotep Museum in Saqqara (SQ.SCA.19409). It was discovered in Gisr el-Mudir cemetery at Saqqara in 2003. This paper provides a comprehensive description of the offering table, including the inscribed texts, their transliteration, translation, and comments regarding Ankhmeryre's names and titles. Through the study of the texts, it has been observed that Ankhmeryre carries another name. Although the name Ankhmeryre was common in the Old Kingdom, another name Nb(j)-m-hnn-nsw didn’t appear among the names of private individuals except one time. The study concluded that this offering table belongs to Nb(j)-m-hnn-nsw, who was the owner of tomb 604 in Sadment Al Gabal, it is dated the end of the Old Kingdom or the beginning of the First Intermediate period. It could be suggested that this offering table may have been a funerary object from his tomb. According to this, in addition to the epigraphical and orthographical study of the offering table, it dates from the late Old Kingdom or the Early First Intermediate Period.

Introduction

The offering tables were referred to by several terms in the ancient Egyptian language, for instance: $\text{htp}$; $\text{h3wt}$; $\text{wdhw}$. 

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1 Wb. III, 183, 4-6; Hannig, R., Grobes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch, Mainz, 1995, p. 610.
2 Wb. III, 226, 11-16; Mostafa, M.M. F., Untersuchungen zu Opfertafeln im Alten Reich, Hildsheim, 1982, p. 15.
Those words have been attested since the Old Kingdom. $\xi$ 
this word has appeared since the Middle Kingdom, and $hpt$ appeared in the Amarna Period and the Nineteenth Dynasty.

In ancient Egyptian tombs and temples, offerings played a vital role in rituals dating back to prehistoric times. The objective was to ensure the safety of the deceased's soul in the afterlife by presenting various offerings on tables specifically designed for this purpose. Consequently, offering tables held significant importance in these rituals, and most well-prepared ancient state tombs contained one or more of them.

The offering tables were placed in front of the false door within the tomb and temples. Their purpose was to provide the deceased with the necessary provisions for the afterlife and facilitate their resurrection. Blackman suggests that the offering table personifies the god Atum, the creator god, thereby aiding in the resurrection of the deceased through its offerings. Additionally, the offering table symbolizes the Eye of Horus, as mentioned in Pyr. 58 b:

$$Dhwty\ jn\ swr.s(t)\ pr\ n.f\ jrt\ hr\ h3wt$$

It is Thoth who brings (himself), he holds the table of the Eye of Horus.

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6 Wb. III, 183, 8.
7 Altenmüller, H., «Oper», *LÄ* IV, col. 583.
8 Abd El Karim, E., «The Offering Table of $\hwy\ \xi$ from the Twelfth Dynasty (RC-2990)», *BCPS* 38/1, 2021, p. 150.
The offering table of Ankhmeryre

It is made out of Limestone. It measures 36 cm high and 53.5 cm wide. It was excavated in 2003 by Khaled Mahmoud for the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA). The offering table was found in North Saqqara, in the main courtyard of the tomb of Nyankhesut, shaft (No. 4) in Gisr el-Mudir. This site is located west of the Pyramid of Unas and about 400 meters southwest of the Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara. This site is considered the western extension of the Una's cemetery (Plan. 1). The offering table is currently on display at the Imhotep Museum in Saqqara. It is registered under the number (SQ.SCA.19409). It is in good condition for preservation.

Description (Pl. 1 and Fig. 1)

The offering table of Ankhmeryre is rectangular and engraved with the hieroglyphic sign $\text{htp}$ on its upper surface in a raised relief. Two rectangular purification basins of approximately the same size are carved on both sides of the offering table. It carries a representation of Ankhmeryre sitting on a stool with animal legs. In front of him is a depiction of an offering table with four vertical loaves of bread. Next to the scene is a text reading from right to left as follows:

\[ \text{ Offering table of Ankhmeryre } \]

Text

It is inscribed by the $\text{htp dj nsw.t}$ formula which is the traditional offering formula in ancient Egypt. It is also inscribed with the titles and the names of the deceased. They are shown on two hieroglyphic horizontal lines reading from right to left as follows:

\[ \text{ Offering table of Ankhmeryre } \]

16 A request has been submitted to Dr. Mostafa Waziri, the Secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt to obtain approval for publishing this offering table and it has been approved.

17 In April 2000, the Supreme Council of Antiquities excavations in Saqqara revealed a limestone tomb of “Nyankhesut”, dated to the end of the 5th Dynasty and the beginning of the 6th Dynasty in the Gisr el-Mudir site. In the first season of excavations, most parts of this tomb were revealed, while in the second season of excavations in 2003, a group of wells (11 wells so far) was discovered in the yard of the cemetery, some of which were cleaned, including the well of “Ankhmeryre” No. 4. Report of the excavations work in ‘Gisr el-Mudir’, 2003 season (second season); Leahy, A. & Mathieson, I., «The Tomb of Nyankhesut (Re)discovered», JEA 87, 2001, p. 33.


19 Imhotep Museum’s database at Saqqara.
Transliteration

[1] htp dj nsw.t 'Inpw tpj dw.f jmy wt nb t3-dsr prt-hrw t n.f m ḫrt-nṯr m smjt jmn tt

[2] ṣpsy nswt smr pr jm3ḥ.w Nb(.j)-m-hnn-nsw rn.f 'nḥ-Mr(j).y-Rʾ.w

Translation

[1] An offering which the king gives and Anubis, who is upon his mountain, who is in the place of the embalming, Lord of the sacred land, an invocation offering (consisting of) bread to him in the western desert.

[2] Noble of the king, Companion of the house, the revered one “Nebemhenennesu” its name “Ankhmeryre”.

Commentary

A. Artistic comments

The hotep-sign offering tables were been known since the Old Kingdom\(^{20}\) and continued until the Graeco-Roman period\(^{21}\). The hotep-sign offering table evolved from the predynastic practice of placing bread on a mat spread in front of the tomb.

This primitive form is continued in the hieroglyphic sign ♀ htp, meaning “satisfaction” or “offering”. They were either circular or rectangular or had a surface combining the symbol of a hotep and a deep basin\(^{22}\).

Fig 2. Group of Hotep offering tables


On both sides of the table are two basins; their purpose is to receive liquid offerings or the water poured on the offerings piled on the table to purify them. Another suggestion is that the basin is probably designated to receive water symbolically used to purify the hands of the one who presents offerings.

According to Radwan, the basins probably were intended to represent the eternal ocean "Nun", which is the source of all life and as the morning sun, the deceased is supposed to be born from the lotus flower that comes out of "Nun"; Therefore, such small basins could fulfill the deceased’s wish of being reborn every morning in the other world.

Taylor and Fischer agree that these small basins made of limestone turn into a great lake through which the deceased goes on his journeys, as was his habit during life.

It is noticed in the scene depicted on the offering table a representation of the deceased (Ankhmeryre) sitting because sitting is the intermediate stage between death and resurrection; therefore, the seated deceased is ready to rise. Ankhmeryre is shown sitting on a seat with a lion’s legs. The lion was a solar animal in ancient Egypt. It was depicted in double rwty the representatives of the two gods Shu and Tefnut, who are depicted together in the form of two lions and they are night and day, and east and west, which are the elements of eternity. It could also symbolize the two lions “Aker” those who bear the sign of the horizon and the sun, and by sitting the deceased on this stool, it guarantees that the lion will contain him and it symbolizes resurrection.

In front of Ankhmeryre, there is a h3wt offering table. This type of offering table was used as a carrier for the offerings presented to the deceased, and its role was limited to carrying loaves of bread. By the fifth Dynasty, it started to occur heaped by various types of foods and offerings.

It appeared on this offering table type of bread is known as t3-wr. This type appeared in the Old Kingdom period, and it depicted long loaves divided into two

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27 Mostafa, M.M.F., Untersuchungen zu Opfertafeln im Alten Reich, pp. 124-128.
31 There were many types of bread in ancient Egypt because was one of the most important items on the offering tables. The bread is the main component of energy and protein remains. For more on the
opposite groups, and the shape of bread could be represented a half loaves or cane sticks protruding in what looked like a sign 𓎊 sḫt.

B. Linguistic comments

ḥtp dj nsw.t: It is the usual formula mentioned for presenting an offering in ancient Egypt. It was engraved on the offering tables from the Old Kingdom until the end of the Greco-Roman Period. It should be noticed that the offering formula in the text here starts with a sign 𓐪 followed by a sign 𓊝 below it a sign of 𓊍 then a sign 𓊂, and that was the familiar arrangement of the offering formula from the Old Kingdom until the end of the Middle Kingdom.

Inpw: Anubis is one of the gods frequently mentioned in the offering formulas. It is noticed that the name of the god is written here with a jackal sign without its chapel. It is one of the oldest known forms of writing his name during the Old Kingdom.

tpj ḏ́w.f: “Who is upon his mountain” is one of the most common titles of the god Anubis in the offerings formulas. This title appeared from the Fifth Dynasty

37 Worsham, Ch., «A Reinterpretation of the So-called Bread Loaves in Egyptian Offering Scenes», JARCE 16, 1979, pp. 7–8.
onwards. It was written as follows, dated from the end of the Fifth dynasty until the beginning of the Middle Kingdom.

**jmy wt:** “Who is in the place of the embalming” is one of the titles of the god Anubis. It confirms the role of the god Anubis in mummification.

**nb t3-dsr:** “Lord of the sacred land” is worthy of note that the title ‘nb t3-dsr’ refers to the Necropolis and the netherworld. The land is higher than flood level because it lies in a desert where the deceased were buried far away and safe from inundation. This title is one of the common titles of the god Anubis. It appeared in the offering formula since the Fourth Dynasty.

This title was associated with several gods of the West, the Necropolis, and the death-like Osiris, Ptah-Soker-Osiris, and Webwawet.

‘nb t3-dsr’ was written as follows in a vertical form. This form dates back to the late Old Kingdom until the beginning of the Middle Kingdom.

**prt-hrw:** This formula was translated as “the voice goes forth” and came to mean “invocation offering” or “verbal offerings”. It is usually followed by a stated event or place, rarely by both. On Ankhmeryre’s table, prt-hrw is followed by a place. Accordingly, it is followed by the preposition m. It should be noticed that the form of this formula on the offering table of Ankhmeryre was widely spread from the Sixth Dynasty to Herakleopolitan Period.

**smjt jmntt:** “Western desert” refers to “the Necropolis”.

**špsy nswt:** “Noble of the King”, According to Edel this title reads as špsj (nj) njswt. It appeared during the Old Kingdom, and its first appearance was in the sixth

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41 Barta, W., *Aufbau und Bedeutung der alägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 15.
42 For a similar example from the first intermediate period, see: CG 1446; CG 1638; CG 20500, JE 49637, CG 1587, CG 45968.
47 Barta, W., *Aufbau und Bedeutung der alägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 8 (c).
49 For a similar example from the first intermediate period, see: CG 1446; CG 1649; EA1783.
51 Lapp, G., *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, p. 139f.
52 Lapp, G., *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, p. 102.

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https://jaauth.journals.ekb.eg/
Dynasty in Upper Egypt. It was a very common title in the old kingdom and was commonly used during the Eleventh Dynasty. It seems that it has not been used since the Eleventh Dynasty. This title was more often used for men than women. However, after the Old Kingdom, the masculine form disappeared, while the feminine form continued.

**smr pr:** It means “Companion of the house”, or “Courtier of the (royal) house”. The oldest evidence of this title dates back to the first Dynasty. This title was used to refer to those entrusted with tasks within the King’s royal palace only, without any personal tasks for the king himself.

**jmḥ.w:** “Honored” or “Revered”. This title appeared in the Old Kingdom, at the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty in particular. It is one of the common titles in ancient Egypt, followed by the names and titles of the deceased. It appears regularly in Egyptian non-royal titles. It was carried by senior statesmen and those close to the king, and this title was carried by some princes in the Kingdom. The full orthographical of the epithet, whose initial (j) is never omitted was a feature of writing in the Old Kingdom until the first intermediate period.

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**Nb(j)-m-hnn-nsw:** It is the name of the owner of the offering table. It is an uncommon name. It means the name “My lord is in Herakleopolis”\(^69\). According to Ranke\(^70\) and Harvey\(^71\) this name reads as \(Nb(j)-m-swH.t\), while Fischer\(^72\) rendered it as \(Nb(j)-m-hnn-nsw\) in comparison with the name \(Nb(j)-m-hm\)\(^73\). The latter is a parallel form of \(Nb(j)-m-hnn-nsw\)\(^74\). This name appeared during the late Sixth Dynasty or the beginning of the First Intermediate period. Worthy of note that it appeared only on this offering table and two wooden statues of a person from Tomb No. 604 in Sadment Al Gabal\(^75\) (Pl. 2). According to Grajetzki this tomb dates back to the end of the Old Kingdom or the beginning of the First Intermediate period\(^76\).

This name was mentioned on the base of two statues. It reads as follows:

\[
\text{špsy nswt jm}-\text{r šnwt Nb(j)-m-hnn-nsw}
\]

Noble of the king, the overseer of the granary\(^77\) “Nebemhenennesu”.

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\(^{69}\) Herakleopolis is the Roman name of the capital of the twentieth upper Egyptian Nome, was known in the ancient Egyptian language by several terms as (\(nn\)-\(nsw\), \(hnn\)-\(nsw\), \(hwt\)-\(nn\)-\(nsw\) or \(hwt\)-\(nsw\)) it means the royal child. Herakleopolis is one of the cities of Beni Suef Governorate, located on Bahr Yussef. Mokhtar, M.G., *Ihnasya El Medineh (Heracleopolis Magna) its Importance and its Role in the Pharaonic History*, Le Cairo,1983, p. 10; Van Dijk, J., «Herakleopolis», OEAIE II, Oxford, 2001, p. 91.


\(^{75}\) Fischer, H.G., «An Occurrence of Ḥnn-\(nswt\) 'Ehnasya' on Two Statuettes of the Late Old Kingdom», JAOS 81, 1961, p. 423.


\(^{77}\) The overseer of the granary (\(jm\)-\(r\) \(šnwt\)) was an administrative title in ancient Egypt, who was in charge of storing threshed grain and supervisor of grain scribes who recorded the measuring of the fields and the annual crop yield. It was written in different forms in ancient Egyptian texts as \(\text{ǐm}\), \(\text{ǐm}\), \(\text{ǐm}\), \(\text{ǐm}\).

The epigraphical form of writing the name on both the two statues and the offering table suggests that they are for the same person. Moreover, they carry the same title $\text{spsy nswt}$.

$c\text{nhr-Mr(j).y-R^w.w:}$ This is another name for the owner of the offering table, which may serve as the $\text{rn nfr}$. Usually, the person in ancient Egypt carries two or three names, most often one of them includes the $\text{rn nfr}$ “the beautiful name”, which usually includes the king’s name, that is, contains the king’s name inside the cartouche and then writes the rest of the name, outside of it\textsuperscript{78}. This name means «May $\text{Mr(j).y-R^w.w}$ live». It appeared in the Old Kingdom, Sixth Dynasty, reign of King Pepi I, this name is also written as $\text{[diagrams]}$\textsuperscript{79}.

### Table 1: Palaeographical remarks

<table>
<thead>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Signs</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>E15</td>
<td></td>
<td>The determinative of the god Anubis was written in a slim form, this form was widely spread in the Herakleopolitan Period\textsuperscript{80}.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D1</td>
<td></td>
<td>The sign of the head in the word $\text{tpj}$ has a beard started appearing during the Sixth Dynasty\textsuperscript{81}.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N17</td>
<td></td>
<td>The $\text{tj}$ land sign was written with a horizontal slim line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>O70</td>
<td></td>
<td>It was written inconsistently, noting the shortness of the oar sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>N35</td>
<td></td>
<td>The water wave $\text{n}$ is written in different forms and irregularly. In the word, $\text{hnm-nsw}$ was written inclining upwards as $\text{[diagrams]}$ maybe this is a mistake of the artist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{78} Vittmann, G., «Personal Names: Function and Significance», In: \textit{Elizabeth Frood and Willeke Wendrich (eds.), UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology}, Los Angeles, 2013, pp. 1-14, https://escholarship.org/content/qt7t12z11t/qt7t12z11t.pdf [Accessed at 30/10/2023, 4:00 pm].


\textsuperscript{80} For a similar example from the first intermediate period, see: CG 1505; MM 11434, MMA 64.100, MMA14.2.7, MMA 25.2.3.

Bird signs are written without extending the leg line. This appeared from the beginning of the 6th Dynasty until the 11th Dynasty\footnote{Younes, A., «An Unpublished Stela in the Egyptian Museum (Cairo JE 49637)», \textit{SHEDET} 9, 2022, p. 68.}.

The chisel sign was written with an elongated, in addition to the inaccuracy at the top of the sign.

The sign was written inconsistently.

The determinative of the city was written as instead of this .

Conclusion

- The epigraphical and artistic features of this offering table refer to very poor quality and indicate that a local artist made it.
- The paleographical and iconographical features, in addition to the presence of the cartouche of King “Mry-Ra” as part of the beautiful name of the offering table owner, suggest this offering table dates back to the end of the Old Kingdom or the beginning of the First Intermediate period.
- This study concluded that this offering table belonged to Nb(.j)-m-hnn-nsw who is the owner of tomb No. 604, Sadment Al Gabal at Ihnasya, and that the owner of the offering table was residing in this city, as his name on the offering table indicates his relationship with the city of Ihnasya. This offering table was one of the funerary objects buried at his tomb, and for unknown reasons and at an unknown time, it was moved to Saqqara where it was discovered. Until now this offering table is the only object belonging to Nb(.j)-m-hnn-nsw found in Saqqara.
- It is clear from the titles of the offering table owner reflect his rank as a High official who lived during the end of the Old Kingdom or the beginning of the First Intermediate period.
- The name Nb(.j)-m-hnn-nsw did not appear among the names of ancient Egypt officials just this person. This name includes the oldest mention of the city of Ihnasya so far outside the city itself.
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(Plan. 1) A plan showing the Great Enclosure (Gisr el-Mudir)

After: Soleiman, S., «The Inscribed Lintel of Ptahshepses at Saqqara», JEA 103, 2017, Fig. 1.
Pl. 1. Offering Table of Ankhmeryre (SQ.SCA.19409)
© Photo taken by the researcher

Fig 1. A Facsimile of the offering table of Ankhmeryre (SQ.SCA.19409)
© Facsimile by Rasha Abdel Hafez
Pl. 2. Two statues of Nebemhenennesu, Sedment Al Gabal, Tomb 604


Inscriptions of statue base (1921.1418)

After: Harvey, J.C., A Typological Study of Egyptian Wooden Statues of the Old Kingdom, p. 222.

Inscriptions of statue base (1921.1419)

After: Harvey, J.C., A Typological Study of Egyptian Wooden Statues of the Old Kingdom, p. 223.
مائدة قرابين غير منشورة لـ "عنخ-مري-رع" بمتحف إيمحتب في سقارة
أسماء شريف الجزار
مدرس بقسم الإرشاد السياحي بالمعهد العالي للدراسات النوعية - الجيزة

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الملاصق


الكلمات المفتاحية
متحف إيمحتب; عنخ-مري-رع; نب-ام-حن-نسو; مائدة قرابين; سقارة.