

**The Offering Table of Hor-khebit from Abu-Yasin
(CG 23141 = GEM 11736)
with extensive notes on its cartouche-shaped basin***

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Abstract: The offering table under study belongs to Hor-khebit, son of Mai-Hor-khebit and Ta-ouheret from Tell Abu-Yasin (Sharqyah). This table was stored at the Egyptian Museum Cairo and recently moved to the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM). One of the highlights of this piece is its cartouche-shaped basin with two hieroglyphic texts in its margin. This paper will present this offering table, its use, context and significance, especially regarding its ownership. The study will then shed light on its dating. In addition, paleographical, religious and genealogical comments will be made.

Keywords: Hor-khebit - Mai-Hor-khebit - Ta-ouheret – Horbeit – palaeography - Abu-Yasin – cartouche – retrograde – genealogy - Horentabat.

مائدة قرابين حور-خبيت من أبو ياسين (رقم 23141 بكتالوج المتحف المصري = رقم
11736 بالمتحف الكبير): مع ملاحظات على شكل الحوض بهيئة الخرطوش

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المخلص: مائدة القرابين قيد الدراسة تخص شخصاً غامضاً يُدعى حور-خبيت ابن ماي-حور-خبيت واسم أمه تا-أوهرت. عثر على هذه المائدة في منطقة تل أبو ياسين الأثرية (الشرقية)، ثم تم تخزينها في المتحف المصري بالقاهرة، ثم نُقلت مؤخرًا إلى المتحف المصري الكبير. ومن أهم ما يميز هذه القطعة حوضها الذي يتخذ شكل الخرطوش وعلى حافته نصان بالهيروغليفية. ستقدم هذه الورقة البحثية دراسة حول مائدة القرابين هذه واستخدامها وسياقها وأهميتها، خاصة فيما يتعلق بماهية صاحبها، وبالتالي تسلط الضوء على تاريخها، بالإضافة إلى التعليقات اللغوية والدينية والمتعلقة بالأنساب.

الكلمات الدالة: حور-خبيت - ماي-حور-خبيت - تا-أوهرت، هوربيط - باليوجرافيا - أبو ياسين - خرطوش - كتابة معكوسة - علم الأنساب - حورن-تابات.

I: Technical information:

I.1: Inventory: CG.23141, JE 40529, SR 5/9747 (GEM 11736)

I.2: Material: Limestone.

I.3: Dimensions and weight:

Length	Width	Height	Weight
34 cm	23 cm	8 cm	9980 gm

I.4: Provenance and date of discovery: According to Ahmed Kamal, the author of the Catalogue General for the offering tables in the Egyptian Museum, the offering table was found at Abu-Yasin in the governorate of al-Sharqiyyah¹. However, no information has been provided about neither the archaeological context nor the date of discovery. The piece has not been mentioned in any reference on Abu-Yasin or in the Eastern Delta in general prior to the publication of the Catalogue General².

Between 1883 and the 1900s, the inhabitants of Sharqiyyah found many monuments and archaeological finds while looking for *sebakh* for their farms³. One example of such finds is the now famous statue of the astronomer Horentabat (below IV.2). Our offering table could likely then have been found by the inhabitants of the village of Tell Abu-

* The authors are grateful to Dr. Mennat-Allah El Dorry for her fruitful remarks on this article.

¹ Ahmed Kamal, *Tables d'offrandes* (Le Caire: IFAO, 1909), 110. Tell Abu Yasin is a modern village at Abu-Kabir in Sharqiyyah ca. 3 km to south of the ancient Horbeit (*Shedemu* in the Egyptian Texts and Pharaithos in Greek sources). This Tell then occupies an important part of the ancient 19th LE nome (Tanis/San elHagar) at the eastern Delta. Abu-Yasin became more familiar through the discovery of the sarcophagi of the bull Apis, the sacred animal of Horus and Osiris there. This nome was prominent during the Late Period. Some monuments of *Saft elHenneh* also found there from the New Kingdom, but they seem to be taken from Qantir (Piramess). See PM IV, 27; Arne Eggebrecht, Horbeit, in: *LÄ* II, 1267; Kurth Sethe, "Zum Namen Pharaithos" *ZÄS* 63 (1928): 99; *GDG*, I, p. 11; IV, 173; Anne Forgeau, Aux origines du nom d'Harchébis. Le dieu "Horus dans Chemmis" existe-t-il? (eds) Berger, Catherine, Gisèle Clerc, and Nicolas Grimal, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* 3 (Le Caire, IFAO, 1994), 213-222; Adolphe Gutbub, "Remarques sur les dieux du nome tanitique à la Basse Époque (suite)" *Kēmi* 17 (1964): 35-60.

² The authors of this article investigated all references and reports on the visits and the excavations at Abu-Yasin since Naville in 1885/6 until the *Catalogue Général* on offering tables in 1909. Naville visited Horbeit around 1886-1887 after he finished his excavations at Tell-Basta. see Eduard Naville, *Goshen and the Shrine of Saft elHenneh* (London: Messrs. Trübner & Co. 1887), 4. He also referred to this visit in his article, "La Plante de Horbéit" *ASAE* 10 (1910): 191f and pl. 1-2. Other visits to the eastern Delta were carried out by George Foucart, "Extraits des rapports adressés pendant une inspection de la Basse-Égypte en 1893-1894" *ASAE* 2 (1901): 44-83; Ahmed Kamal, "Fragments de monuments provenant du Delta" *ASAE* 5 (1904): 193-200; Kamal, *Tables d'offrandes*, 109-110. After the issue of this CG, several excavations have been carried out at Tell Abu Yasin: Ahmed Abdel Salam, "Rapport sur les fouilles du Service des Antiquités à Abou-Yassin (Charquieh)" *ASAE* 38 (1938): 609-622; Labib Habachi, "Khatâ'na-Qantîr: importance" *ASAE* 52 (1954): 521ff.

³ Cf. Naville, "La Plante de Horbéit," 191f and pl. 1-2.

Yasin, moved to storage at the Boulaq Museum, then moved to the Egyptian Museum and more recently moved to GEM¹.

I.5: Date: Kamal dates the offering table of Hor-khebit to the Greek period², while the databases of both the Egyptian Museum and the GEM date it to the Greco-Roman period. The current study, however, dates it to the 26th dynasty (below IV.2).

II: Description of the offering table of Hor-khebit (figures 1-2):

The rectangular offering table of Hor-khebit is divided into two parts: the first part is the square containing the offerings of bread and vessels, while the second part contains a cartouche-shaped basin. The vignettes are in high relief, while the hieroglyphic inscriptions are in sunk relief. These hieroglyphic texts are distributed on both the platter and the thickness of the back side (III.1-3).

II.1: The first part (square) with the offerings:

The first part takes the form of the *htp*- sign through the existence of the external spout, now lost. It is framed by two symmetric texts (III.1.1-2); each beginning with the popular *htp-di-nsw* formula next to the bottom of the two vessels. These texts run in their both directions horizontally until the back corner of the table, then vertically until its front corner. The last division of these both texts is written in retrograde or reversed style (see below IV.1.1).

The central platform of this square part is sunk and is occupied by a few elements or offerings forming like a group of hieroglyphic signs, that could be detailed as follows:

- Two tall water-pots or Hs-vessels (Gardiner W14), whose straps are placed towards the external spout of the table to allude to a libation ritual despite the absence of the flooding water (below IV.3).
- Two circles are depicted above the straps of the water-pots. They usually represent the round *p3t*-loaves (Gardiner X6) but they do not include the marks of the baker's fingers, which are remarkable on the edges of the usual round *p3t*-loaves³.
- The number of the round loaves that accompany the two water-pots is not certain. But most offering tables have four loaves located between these two water-pots not above them⁴. Therefore, the two circles above the pots might represent then stoppers for these water-pots⁵.

¹ Another case is JE 26056, which is bought at Sa-elHagar from 22nd -24th dynasty. It belongs Nakht-Hor-khebit, son Paentefankhi and Mertneit: Peter Munro, *Die spätägyptischen Totenstelen*, 2 vols. Ägyptologische Forschungen 25 (Glückstadt: Verlag J. J. Augusten 1973), 344.

² Kamal, *Tables d'offrandes*, 110.

³ Compare the marks of backers' fingers in CG 23024; 23032; 23034; 23037; 23078.

⁴ Instances in: CG 23018; 23154; 23205; 23208 (without the vessels?); CG 23222 (the four loaves above the two vessels); CG 23225 (one vessel among four loaves); CG 23233; 23236; 23239; 23242. In some cases, two hands (catching) were put on that kind of bread apparently to indicate the desire of the deceased to eat them (CG 23011; 23031; 23099). Moreover, the name of this kind of bread is described as *šn*^c on some examples (CG 23013).

⁵ Compare for instance CG 23206, where two stoppers are clearly shown above the vessels in addition to four round loafs between these two vessels.

- Two *t*-shapes (bread: Gardiner X1) are depicted, the one between the two vessels and the other between the two so-called stoppers. However, they could represent two nb-signs from the direction of the two vessels. Both *t*- and nb-shapes accompany the vessels on other offering tables¹.
- A small square is located between the straps of the two water-pots. This square is also obscure, despite occurring in some other offering tables². It could however represent a modification of the cup (Gardiner W10) for purification, that is sometimes depicted among the bread and water-pots³.

II.2: The second part of the offering table with the cartouche-shaped basin:

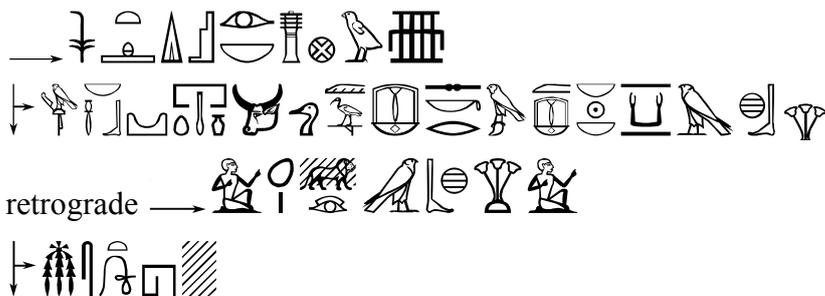
The second part of the offering table is smaller and rectangular. It represents a separate area for the basin. This basin takes the shape of a cartouche. Despite the frequent examples of the cartouche-shaped basin, the oval in our offering table is surrounded by two symmetric hieroglyphic texts (III.2.1-2), that belong to the well-known *im3hw*-formula.

III. The hieroglyphic texts on the offering table of Hor-Khebit:

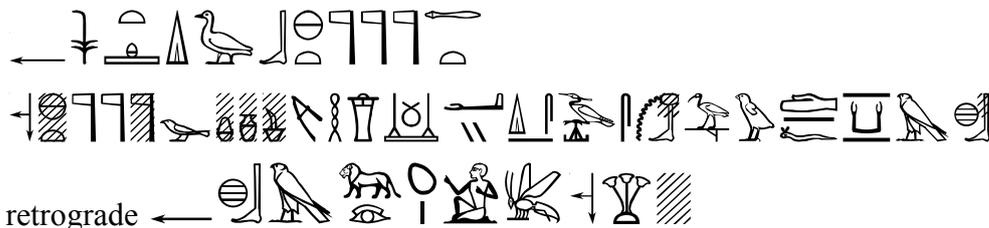
The hieroglyphic texts are distributed on three places of the offering table: two on its platter and one on the thickness on the back side.

III.1. The texts of the square division:

III.1.1: left:



III.1.2: right:



III.2: The text around the cartouche:

¹ *t*-bread in CG 23154; 23222, while nb-basket with fruits in CG 23130; 23154; 23222.

² CG 23157 and 23230. CG 23230 is similar to the offering table under study with its two divisions.

³ CG 23097; 23121; 23130; 23233.

III.2.1: left:



III.2.2: right:



III.3: The text on the thickness of the offering table:



Se c.	transliteration	translation
III. 1.1	<p><i>ḥtp-di-nsw (n) wsir nb ddw ḥnty-</i></p> <p><i>imnty nb 3bdw prt-ḥrw t ḥnkt k3w 3pd m ḏḥwtyt skr m ḥb nb r^c-nb n k3 n ḥr-ḥbyt</i></p> <p><i>s3 m3i-ḥr-ḥbyt</i></p> <p><i>msy (n) t3-wh<rt></i></p>	<p>An offering that the king gives (to)¹ Osiris, lord of Busiris², foremost of the westerners, lord of Abydos, an invocation offering (from) bread, beer, bulls and birds in the Thothyt, Soker feast and in every feast daily³ for the ka of Hor-khebit, son of Mai-Hor-khebit, born (of) Ta-ouh<eret>.</p>

¹ The dative-preposition (*n*) before the names of the deities is confirmed since the Herakliopolitan period (dynasties 9-10) until the Greco-Roman Period. Details in Wienfred Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel. Ägyptologische Forschungen* 24. (Glückstadt: Verlag J. J. Augustin, 1968), 265f.

² Note the absence the 2nd *dd*-sign and of the *d*-sign as phonetic compliment. This abbreviated form of Osiris is however known in the offering formulae in the Middle Kingdom: Günther Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches unter Berücksichtigung einiger späterer Formen*. (SDAIK Mainz: Philipp von Zebern, 1986), 28. For Osiris in the offering formulae since the end of the 5th dynasty, Barta, *Opferformel*, 287f.

³ Despite the damage of this part in the offering table, one could clearly recognize the sign of the Ibis for Thoth. Both Thoth and Sokar appear together since the Old Kingdom among the list of feasts and the canonical order but not in certain order. Sometimes, Thoth is replaced by *tp-rnpt*. Details in Barta, *Opferformel*, 10; 18; 51; 68; 104; 207; 318.

<p>III. 1.2</p>	<p><i>h̄tp-d̄i-nsw (n) gb ps̄dt ʕ̄3t</i></p> <p><i>ps̄dt nd̄st t h̄nkt sn̄tr mr̄h̄t mn̄h̄t ʕ̄wy d̄i.sn b̄ʕ̄h sw̄ʕ̄b d̄h̄wt̄y wdn.f n k̄3 n h̄r-h̄byt</i></p> <p><i>s̄3 m̄3i-h̄r-h̄byt</i></p> <p><...></p>	<p>An offering that the king gives (to) Geb¹, the great ennead and minor ennead², (from) bread, beer, incense, oil and clothes. The two arms, they³ may give inundation, so that Thot may purify⁴ his offering for the ka of Hor-khebit,</p> <p>son of Mai-Hor-Khebit,</p> <p><...>.</p>
<p>III. 2.1</p>	<p><i>im̄3h̄w h̄r ws̄ir h̄r-h̄byt s̄3 m̄3i-h̄r-h̄b(yt) ms̄y (n) t̄3- whr<t> nb(t) im̄3h̄</i></p>	<p>The revered one before Osiris, Hor-khebit son of Mai-Hor-kheb(it), born (of) Ta-ouher<et>, possessor of reverence.</p>
<p>III. 2.2</p>	<p><i>im̄3h̄w (h̄r) inpw tpy-d̄w.f h̄r- h̄byt s̄3 m̄3i-h̄r-h̄byt ʔ̄ry (n) t̄3- whr(t) m̄3ʕ̄(t)-h̄rw</i></p>	<p>The revered one (before) Anubis, who is upon his mountain, Hor-khebit son of Mai-Hor-kheb(it), born of Ta-ouher(et) the justified.</p>
<p>III. 3.1</p>	<p><i>h̄tp-d̄i-nsw (n) nb d̄dw n̄tr ʕ̄3 nb 3̄bd̄w prt-h̄rw t h̄nkt k̄3w 3̄pd h̄tpw</i></p>	<p>An offering that the king gives (to) Osiris lord of Busiris, the great god, lord of Abydos, an invocation offering (from) bread, beer, bulls, birds and offerings</p>
<p>II. 3.2</p>	<p><i>n k̄3 n h̄r-h̄byt s̄3 m̄3i-h̄r-h̄byt ms̄y (n) t̄3-whr(t) nb(t) im̄3h̄</i></p>	<p>for the ka of Hor-khebit son of Mai-Hor-kheb(it), born (of) Ta-ouher(et), possessor of reverence.</p>

¹ There have been several debates on the dative-preposition (n) before Geb. Lots of points of view are discussed in Barta, *Opferformel*, 290f. For Geb in respect of the offering formulae since the end of the 5th dynasty. His existence in the offering formulae is associated with the royal cult, that he precedes the enneads (great and small) since the 13th dynasty, he is described as that in front of (*hnty*) the great and small enneads. As a cosmic god of the earth, Geb takes the dead in himself to protect the body of the dead from the eternal corruption. Barta, *Opferformel*, 15; 74; 290f.

² The ennead(s) appear after Geb since the 13th dynasty. Barta, *Opferformel*, 74.

³ The suffix for ‘they’ refers to the two arms. Barta, *Opferformel*, 65.

⁴ Wiefred Barta, *Opferformel*, (Bitte 82: pages 65, 198, 312) translates: ‘die beiden Hände, sie mögen gegeben werden; die Überschwemmung, sie möge reinigen; Thoth, er möge opfern ...’. The absence of the suffix pronoun after the verb *swab* makes it difficult to accept this latter translation. Moreover, Thoth purifies the offerings for the deceased: Wb, I, p. 448, 3.

IV. Comments:

According to its form and content, the offering table of Hor-khebit could generally be classified as type BA 'Opfertafeln mit Becken oder isolierte Kultbecken'¹. It is distinguished by several characteristics. In a certain point, the signs are reversed towards the spout without changing their order of reading. The hieroglyphic signs show varieties in their forms. The name 'Hor-khebit' is given for the son, but represents the big division of the name of the father 'Mai-Hor-khebit'. In addition, the basin is framed with inscriptions associated with the texts on the other divisions to indicate performance of a certain ritual on this offering table.

IV.1: Linguistic comments:

IV.1.1: Retrograde:

Retrograde mostly occurs in texts written in vertical columns². Our case shows the retrograde in two small horizontal texts near the spout (figure 3). In this place of the offering table, each hieroglyphic sign turns its direction towards the end of the text instead of towards the beginning as in normal (prograde) writing. Hence, they read towards the spout. The usual direction in such a case on offering tables is either that the signs reverse their direction to follow the previous text³ or completely change their direction to begin both insight and reading from the center⁴.

Generally, retrograde is used for fitting a certain text into the surrounding context by associating relevant parts of that text with relevant associated figures. It can probably be understood in our case that the deceased, represented by his name, profits from the water that poured out through the spout by orienting his name towards this spout.

IV.1.2: Palaeographical notes:

The names Osiris and Geb are written without determinatives in contrast to Anubis and Sokar, who have determinatives, and Thoth, who is written as ideogram. Unfortunately, no interpretation is available for now.

- Some hieroglyphic signs are written in unusual ways:

¹ Regina Hölzl, *Ägyptische Opfertafeln und Kultbecken: eine Form- und Funktionsanalyse für das Alte, Mittlere und Neue Reich*. (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 2002), 11, 17-19; Esmarelda Lundius, "Offering tables as Ritual Landscapes. An Anthropological Perspective of Ancient Egyptian *Materia Magicae*" *Distant World Journal* 4 (2020): 87.

² Richard Simpson, Retrograde Writing in Ancient Egyptian Inscriptions. *Illuminating Osiris: Egyptological Studies in Honor of Mark Smith, MVCAE* 2. (Eds.) Jasnow, R., and Widmer, G., (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2017), 337–345.

³ E. g. CG 23019; 23122; 23170.

⁴ CG 23016; 23027; 23029 and CG 23002+23005 after Hölzl, *Ägyptische Opfertafeln*, pl. 16B; 81 fig 10 & 109 fig 21.

Sign	Square left	Square right	Oval left	Oval right	Thickness
					
					
					
 son					
 father					
					
					

- In all cases, the n-sign (Gardiner N35) is written in its hieratic form, which is characteristic for the Late Period.

- On one hand, the seated man is written in various forms, one of which is without head  (III.2.1). On the other hand, this seated man has the hair as diacritic sign  (III.1.1). Moreover, it disappears from the name of the father in the right side of both the square section and the oval section as well as in the text on the thickness. The latter omitted this seated man from the name of Hor-khebit as well.

- In order to write the word 's3' (son), the scribe used its both ways: the goose and the egg. The egg  is used for the son on the texts of the square and the thickness, while the goose  on the text of the basin. Such distribution of egg and goose might be associated with the nature of both signs, as the existence of goose as bird beside the basin might allude to the Ba-soul depicted in other cases drinking from the water in this basin. However, no interpretation could be given for the egg.

- The egg (sA) follows the hieratic writing system, as it  (III.1.1) is left open in its upper right corner like any oval or round shapes¹.

¹ George Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie die Aegyptische Buchschrift in ihrer Entwicklung von der fünften Dynastie bis zur römischen Kaiserzeit dargestellt*. (Berlin: J.C. Hinrich, 1936), III, 22 (Nr. 238. esp. from Tanis).

- The *hrw*-sign (Gardiner P8) crosses the line below in hieroglyphic text of the thickness (III.3.1).

- In contrast to this case, the lower part of this clump of papyrus ( III.1.1) is not incised, apparently to avoid crossing the line below. The edge of the frame is narrow in this place. However, the other cases are complete ,  (III.1),  (III.2),  (III.3).

- As for the signs that have the same value, they are chosen for certain purposes. For instance, the clump of papyrus (HA-sign: Gardiner, sign-list M16) occurs instead of the bee (bit-sign) in the name of the father Mai-Hor-khebit except for one case (III.1.1), where the name of the son is also written by the plant as in the following table:

Section	Hor-khebit	Father (Mai-Hor-khebit)
III.1.1		
III.1.2		
III.2.1		
III.2.2		
II.3.2		

IV.2: Who is Hor-khebit?

Archaeological material from the Delta region represents a particular difficulty due to the lack of parallels. This is also the case of investigating the personal name of ‘Hor-khebit’ and the period that he lived.

The name ‘Hor-khebit’ is well attested from the New Kingdom until the Late and Greco-Roman Periods¹ from several sources, both from Upper Egypt² and the Delta region³. The name was given to many individuals. Since our offering table comes from Abu-Yasin in the Eastern Delta, the current study on Hor-khebit himself will be limited to the monuments from the Delta which mention this name.

¹ Herman Ranke, *Die Ägyptischen Personennamen*. (Glückstadt: J. J. Augusten, 1935), I, 247 (15-16) and II, 306 (23).

² For instance, Hor-khebit from Akhmim on stela (CG 22054; 22147), from Thebes: TT 87, Heicke Guksch, *Die Gräber des Nacht-Min und des Men-cheper-Ra-seneb: Theben Nr. 87 und 79*. (Mainz: Phillip von Zabern, 1995), 112-115. From Fayum, Hor-khebit is the father of Hor-Oudja, Laurent Bricault, "Un Trône pour Deux" *Mythos* 3 (2009): 131 etc.

³ Beside our offering table and other monuments, that will be discussed here in detail, cf. from Heliopolis: The Round-topped stela of Hor-khebit in Geneva. See details in Massimo Patané, "Trois stèles égyptiennes de Basse Epoque" *GM* 166 (1998): 58 [C], 59 fig. on 63.

As mentioned above, no information is provided about the archaeological context of this offering table to better understand our object and its owner. No burial¹ is known for Hor-khebit until the moment as well. Moreover, no titles are recorded for him on this offering table.

Our Hor-khebit is the son of Mai-Hor-khebit² and Ta-ouheret³. Similarity is noticed between the names of both the owner and his father, as the difference between both names exists only in the first part of the father's name 'Mai' (meaning: lion)⁴.

This mutual part is written in its full form as 'Hor-m-akh-bit' by Ranke, meaning "Horus is inside the Khemmis"⁵. Following its writing forms in Ranke, the name includes the preposition 'm' only from the New Kingdom ⁶. This preposition 'm' is replaced by the preposition 'n' in one case from the Late Period ⁷.

As the name developed through time, both prepositions completely disappeared from the orthography of our case and from most of the other sources until the Greco-Roman period. Hence, the name 'Hor-khebit' could no longer be translated as "Horus is inside the Chemmis" but as "Horus of the Chemmis or the Horbeity" in reference not only to

¹ Offering table is the one of the mediators between dead and livings exactly like the false door. An extensive study on the offering table scenes composition with false doors, stelae and coffins in Barbara O'Neill, *Setting the Scenes: The Deceased and Regenerative Cult within Offering Table Imagery of the Egyptian Old to Middle Kingdoms (c.2686-c.1650 BC)*, Archaeopress and B. O'Neill 2015, 41f.

² Not found in Ranke PN.

³ The name "Ta-ouheret" is popular since the late Period meaning 'female dog'. Ranke, *Personennamen*, II, 355 (N^o 20); Hermann Ranke, "Tiernamen als Personennamen bei den Ägyptern" *ZÄS* 60 (1925): 81. See also from Assuan CG 22086; 22106; 22106; from Abydos CG 22126; from Akhmim CG 22141; 22238.

⁴ The name of the father 'Mai-Hor-khebit' means 'the lion Horus in Khemmis'. The relation between Horus and the lion at the eastern Delta is understandable through Mahes. Moreover, Hormety of Horbeit had received the epithets and attributes of the lion. The cult of the lion deities in Leontopolis or Tell Moqdam the capital of the 11th nome of the LE resulted such a connection. Yvon Jean-Louis. Gourlay, "Les seigneurs et les Baou vivants à Chedenou" *Melange Sauneron*, 379 (and n. 6); Philippe Derchain, "La Couronne de la justification, Essai d'analyse d'un rite ptolémaïque" *ChdÉg* XXX/60 (1955): 245f esp. n. 5; Constant de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens du lion dans l'Égypte ancienne*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951), 228-229. Cf. Hor-(pa)-Mai-Hesa in: Leitz, *LGG* V, 258.

⁵ Ranke, *Personennamen*, I, 247 (15-16); II, 306 (23).

⁶ Precisely from the reign of Thothmosis III (18th dynasty), who is considered as the young Horus inside the Chemmis (*Urk.* IV, 157, 11-12) Forgeau, Harchébis, 213, then from the 19 or 20th dynasty (Naville, *Todtenbuch*, 93 Lc). For the confirmation on preposition 'm', see Herman de Meulenaere, "Notes d'Onomastique Tardive" *RdE* 14 (1962): 48.

⁷ Ranke, *Personennamen* I, 247 (15-16); II, 306 (23).

the residence of Horus in Chemmis at Delta but also his origin (Nisbe) from there¹. The name 'Hor-khebit' is given in Greek as 'Ἀρχήβιος'² missing the *m/n* value.

Since the name 'Hor-khebit' is frequent, it is difficult to identify our Hor-khebit. In addition to our offering table, three other sources carrying the name 'Hor-khebit' were found in the Eastern Delta dating to between the 22nd and 30th dynasties:

1- JE 31653, dating to the 22nd dynasty (year 9 under Takelothis I), a donation stela recovered from Tell Basta, then sold to the Giza Museum. It was consecrated by Hor-khebit to the goddess Bastet³.

2- Zagreb Inv. 445, dating to the 26th dynasty, an Ushabti of Pa-n-ptah, whose father is 'Hor-khebit'⁴.

3- JE 38545, dating to the 30th dynasty, the statue of the renowned astronomer found at Tell Nebesha / Tell Faraon, a village near to Abu-Yasin⁵. At the beginning, the name of the owner of this statue was considered as 'Hor-khebit'⁶. Later studies prefer to read it as Horentabat⁷. Such latter reading leads to exclude this object from the parallels. The name Hor-khebit is mentioned on these finds as the following table shows:

¹ For the possibility of Nisbe through the preposition 'm' also compare Forgeau, Harchébis, 216-219. Hor-(m)-akhbit (*LGG* V, 238) is for a divinity in reference to Horus in a certain stage of his life hidden inside the papyrus marches (e.g. Davis, *Hibis* III, pl. 4II). From Assuan, there is the personal name is Pa-di-Hor-khebit (CG 22065). The name Hor-khebit recalls to the mythological location 'Akhbyt', which is known since the Pyramid Texts (e.g. §1214b) at Delta and is situated in a march region. It is then associated with Isis and her child Horus. It also seems that this place was identified with the posterior village 'Khebit' (Greek: Khemmis) which is nearby to Buto (19th LE nome) where Isis looked for the body of Osiris killed by Seth. There she also gave birth and brought up her child Horus. See *GDG*, I, p. 11; IV, p. 173; Hebatallah Abdou, "Is Selket the Lady of Chemmis and Wife of Horus?" *CRE 2009: proceedings of the 10th annual symposium, University of Liverpool 2009*, (eds), Corbelli, Judith, Daniel Boatright, and Claire Malleson. Oxbow books 2011, 16-17.

² Forgeau, Harchébis, 213.

³ George Daressy, "Inscriptions inédites de la XXII^e dynastie" *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* (1896): 18, 52-53.

⁴ Janine Monnet Saleh, *Les antiquités égyptiennes de Zagreb: catalogue raisonné des antiquités égyptiennes conservées au Musée archéologique de Zagreb en Yougoslavie*. (Paris: La Haye. Mouton, 1970, 147 (No.671).

⁵ For Nebesha *Imt* in Egyptian Texts, Karl Martin, "Imet", in: *LÄ* III, 140-141; George Daressy, "Léontopolis, métropole du XIX^e nome de la Basse-Égypte", *BIFAO* 30 (1931): 624-649; Gauthier, *DG*, I, pp. 73-74; George Foucart, "Extraits des rapports adressés pendant une inspection de la Basse-Égypte en 1893-1894", *ASAE* 2 (1901): 67-69.

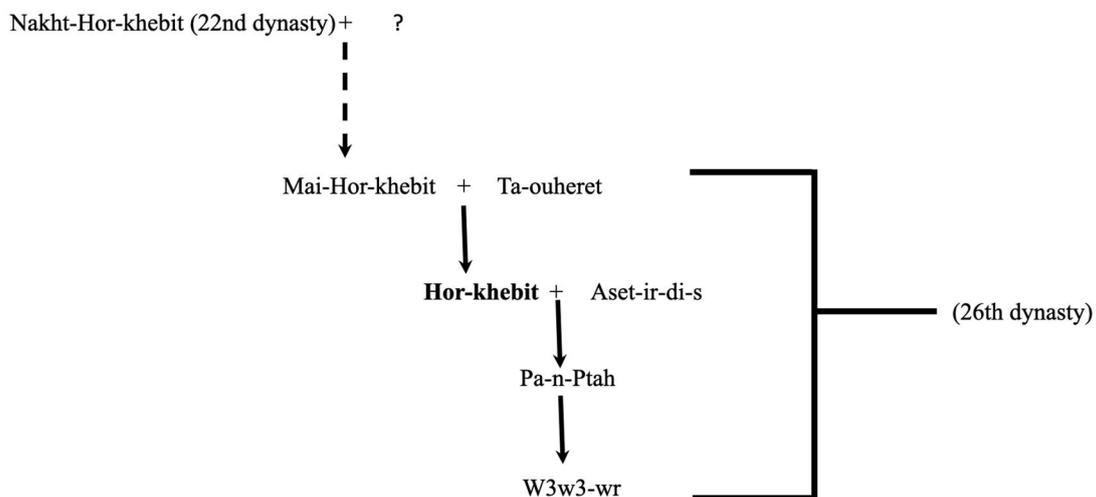
⁶ Ahmed Kamal, Rapport sur quelques localités de la Basse-Égypte: Nebesha Miscellaneous, in: *ASAE* 7, 1906: 239-240; George Daressy, "La Statue d'un Astronome" *ASAE* 16 (1916): 1-5; Hellmut Brunner, *Zeichendeutung aus Sternen und Winden in Ägypten, Das hörende Herz: kleine Schriften zur Religions- und Geistesgeschichte Ägyptens*. (ed.) Brunner, Hellmut, (1988): 224-229.

⁷ Michelle Thirion, "Notes d'onomastique: contribution à une révision du Ranke *PN* [neuvième série]" *Revue d'égyptologie* 45 (1994): 188. Recently, the astronomical text on this statue is intensively studied by Altmann-Wendling, Victoria and Marco Stockhusen. *Die Statue eines ägyptischen Priesters und Astronomen (JE 38545). Zeit in den Kulturen des Altertums: antike Chronologie im Spiegel der Quellen*, (eds.) Färber, Roland and Rita Gautschy, Wien-Köln, 2020, 103-115. However, the latter authors transliterate and translate this name as *hr-(n-)t(3)-b3t* (Horentabat) see also Ralph Birk, "Thebanische Astronomen der Ptolemäerzeit (I): das Dossier des Harmais (Kairo, TR 25/10/17/5 und JE 43652)", *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives (D3T 4)*, (ed.) Thiers, Christophe, (Montpellier 2021): 1-42.

Name	Dynasty	Document	Nr.	Found
Hor-khebit	22 nd	Stela	JE 31653	Tell-Basta
Hor-khebit	26 th	Ushabti	Zagreb 445	Tell-Elfaræin
Hor-khebit	26 th	Offering table	CG 23141	Tell-Abu-Yasin

The second source from the 26th dynasty is more relevant to our Hor-khebit. Thus, Hor-khebit seems to be an active individual in the Eastern Delta who descends from a prominent family since at least the 22nd dynasty. This family first lived at Tell-Basta (the first object), then later moved to Abu-Yasin. Hor-khebit founded a prominent family there. For three generations, this family served the goddess Neith in both her main temples at Tell El-Fara'in (nearby Abu-Yasin) under Psamtik I and Necho II¹.

A possible genealogy of Hor-khebit and his family at Eastern Delta can be suggested as follows:



IV.3: The cartouche-shaped basin in the offering table of Hor-Khebit:

In addition to the genealogy on this offering table of Hor-Khebit, a large and deep basin occupies a separate division unlike most other known cartouche-shaped basins in offering tables². It also represents a rare case of such kind through the writing on its

¹ For this person and his family, see Hermann Schlögl, "Eine prominente saïtische Familie", *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel: ägyptologische Beiträge für Erik Hornung aus seinem Schülerkreis*, (ed.) Andreas Brodbeck, (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 1998), 199-205.

² Most basins are rectangular and located among the other elements of the platter (e.g. CG 23003; 23007; 23010; 23014 etc). Rare cases however are designed in a separate area aside to the main square (e.g. CG 23142; 23143; 23176).

margin. Following Hölzl¹, the cartouche-shaped basins were innovated through the New Kingdom appearing as result of the increase of ritual vessels.

Generally, basins are designed on offering tables to provide the soul of the deceased with water. Several offering tables depict the Ba-soul receiving water from the sky-goddess Nut as well². Such a scene is mostly located twice beside the external spout. Moreover, the deceased himself is depicted seated receiving water from the sky-goddess Nut, while his Ba-soul is depicted standing twice on the cartouche-shaped basin receiving water emerging from a *ḥnh*-sign³.

Basins, either rectangular or oval, thus represent an essential means of water supply in offering tables, which is vital for the deceased in the hereafter. Several Nile elements, such as crocodiles, fishes and plants were depicted in association with these basins too⁴. They all indicate creation through that water (Nile power).

Pouring water on these basins in the offering tables might have been performed through the vessels (either *ḥs* or *nmst*) depicted within the offerings on the platter. The above mentioned *ḥnh*-sign flooding with water might represent *ḥnh*-vessels. Not to mention, that the *Hs*-vessels have taken the shape of *ḥnh*-sign since at least the Amarna period⁵. A setula is moreover depicted instead of the *Hs*-vessel on offering tables⁶. All these means confirm the importance of pouring water to the deceased through the basins in offering tables.

Regardless of their form, basins serve for drinking water, purification and creation, thus consequently the resurrection of the deceased. Their form as a cartouche is still under question in particular our case which include an inscription (*imḥw*-formula) on its margin.

The shape of the cartouche is originally associated with the royal names (throne and birth) since the Old Kingdom. It symbolizes everything that the sun encircled and is thus an indication of the king's overlordship of the cosmos⁷. The transliteration of the

¹ Regina Hölzl, Offering tables, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* II, (ed.) D. Redford. (Oxford 2002), 575.

² CG 23126; 23240V; 23219. The Ba-soul receiving water beside the spout in the offering table Heidelberg, inv. no. 11 (Mykola Tarasenko, The Unpublished Article by S. V. Donich "The Offering Table of Isis. Inv. 51843 Of The Odessa Historical Museum" (Ma Sf Oam nos. 59404/59405)" *The Oriental Studies* No 86 (2020): 154.

³ CG 23165; 23162. On CG 23170, the water floods from the *ḥnh*-vessel towards the spout, *Hs*-vessels on both sides flood water too.

⁴ CG 23245; 23214; 23216 from the late periods. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that CG 23019 has a text beside the spout that mention both Nun and Atum which could associate the basin with the creation (primeval water) and thus resurrection from the nether world.

⁵ Ali Radwan, The *ḥnh*-vessel and its ritual function. *Mélanges Gamal eddin Mokhtar* 2, (ed.) Posener-Kriéger, Paule, (Le Caire: IFAO, 1985), 211-217.

⁶ To our information, only CG 23217.

⁷ Ronald Leprohon, Titulary, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, vol. III. (ed.) D. Redford. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 409.

cartouche as *rn* meaning ‘name’¹ does not help in respect of basins. But its other original transliteration *šn* meaning ‘to surround and to encircle’² could lead to understand the function of the cartouche-shaped basin. The word *Sn* also refers to a place where fresh water is sourced and brought for the deceased. This place is described as *šn-kbh_w* and located at Heliopolis. It was used to glorify Osiris and consequently the deceased³.

Not to mention, the text surrounding our cartouche-shaped basin is the *im3hw*-formula, which aims at both glorification and transformation of the deceased after being revered⁴.

This cartouche (*šn*)-shaped basin could then be a substitution to the real Shen-Qebehu area (=pool) at Heliopolis. The deceased should have been revered and provided in that pool. Recitation of such *im3hw*-formula during pouring water towards this cartouche-shaped basin makes provision more powerful and effective. The mythical pool (Shen-Qebehu) at Heliopolis must have been linked to the primeval ocean that refers to creation.

Based on these Heliopolitan theologies, the goddess Nut is depicted on the offering table as a tree-goddess pouring water to the deceased. On the other side, the two water-pots (*hs*-vessels) that depicted inside the square might refer to the both sources of the Nile flood⁵, one of which is near Heliopolis (*pr-h^cpi*) and the other at the 1st cataract in Assuan⁶. Not to mention the efflux of Osiris which could be associated to the Nile and this pool.

Such imaginary concerning the assimilation and substitution of the cartouche-shaped basin to the Shen-Qebehu at Heliopolis leads to assume rituals performed on the

¹ Wb. II, 425.1-428.19.

² Wb. IV, 489.

³ Wb IV, 493.8; Jean-Claude Goyon, "Le cérémonial de glorification d'Osiris du papyrus du Louvre I. 3079 (colonnes 110 à 112) [avec 5 planches]" *BIFAO* 65 (1967): 133, n. 210 and 214. cf. also *šn*-ocean (Wb 4, 493.12-13; Penelope Wilson, A ptolemaic lexikon a lexicographical study of the texts in the temple of Edfu, (Lueven: Peeters, 1997), 1016. Moreover, the Book of the Dead refers to ‘Osiris in Shenu’ in a list of his sacred places also including the offering place (BD 141/2).

⁴ Jean Sainte Fare Garnot, L'imakh et les imakhous sous l'Ancien Empire d'après les Textes des Pyramides. *Annuaire, École Pratique des Hautes Études: Ve section - sciences religieuses* 1942-1943, 5-32.

⁵ Hölzl, Offering tables, 574; Lundius, "Offering tables", 81ff. For the assimilation between the two water-pots (*hs*-vessels), as givers of water may be identified with the two sources of the Nile (get a proof), very important in the Egyptian mythological picture of the world, Hölzl, Offering tables, 575.

⁶ A text on an offering table confirms that water comes out from Elephantine (Assuan): CG 23233, the text reads: ‘Offering that the king gives, you purify Osiris (by) *kbhw*, that comes forth from Elephantine (*3bw*), a *nmst*-jar will be brought to you’.

offering table either before or after burial¹. This becomes evident through the following elements on our offering table: the basin, the two water-pots (Hs-vessels) and the funeral formulae (*h̄tp-di-nsw* and *im3h̄w*). All these elements work together to achieve the symbolic and functional properties of this offering table². As the Hs-vessels have their magical purpose for purification and libation beside the *nmst*-vessel³. Basins and canals express flood nature of pouring water (libation) in the tombs⁴.

Moreover, pouring water at the beginning of the purification rituals in the offerings of the funeral cult represents one of the most important and regular petitions ‘Bitte’ of the *h̄tp-di-nsw*-formulae⁵.

According to Lundius⁶, most offering tables are equipped with a spout where the water comes forth to be collected after flowing across the “energizing” surface of the tables and then being poured into the tombs, bringing gifts and services to the inhabitants of another realm. The soul benefits from the decorated elements on the platter of the offering through certain rituals. The offering table provides the deceased with water to be generated eternally like the annual inundation⁷. Such ceremonies need of course a ritualist, who must be the son of the deceased⁸. This ritualist stands in front of the spout to perform the rites over the offering table⁹.

Thothy and Sokar mentioned in our offering table as two feasts represent the occasions of the rituals. The phrase *r̄-nb* ‘daily’ however guarantees the durability of these rituals to the deceased.

¹ The offering table is a tomb equipment, that is focal element for the dead. Offerings were placed on such tables, that usually located before the false doors to enable the soul of this dead to get provisions. Regina Hölzl, *Offering tables*, 574.

² Hölzl emphasizes the fact that offering tables and basins have both symbolic and functional properties and played a vital role in mortuary ritual. Hölzl, *Ägyptische Opfertafeln*, 77. The *hs*-vessels pouring water from their straps toward the external spout of the *h̄tp*-offering tables in reference to libation ritual. See for instance: CG 23200; 23205.

³ Hölzl, *Opfertafeln*, p. 77. The basins in the offering tables since the OK and MK confirm their ritual use for libation: Nicolas Manlius, "Tables d'offrandes, Relation à l'animal". *Pharaon* No 9 (2012): 42.

⁴ Hölzl, *Opfertafeln*, 135.

⁵ Hölzl, *Opfertafeln*, 88.

⁶ Lundius, "Offering tables", 83f.

⁷ Hölzl, *Offering tables*, 574.

⁸ The son of the deceased as ritualist is confirmed in a text from the offering table in the tomb of *Seshem-Nefer* (Giza, Old Kingdom) that mentions ‘pouring water by the son for the judge and overseer of scribes Seshem-nefer’, after Hölzl, *Opfertafeln*, 88. An extensive study on the offering table scenes composition with false doors, stelae and coffins in O’Niell, *Setting the Scenes*, 37f.

⁹ Following the opinion of Jean Clère, "La table d'offrandes de l'échnason royal Sa-Rénénoutet surnommé Tchaouy", *BIFAO* 81 Supplement (1981): 213-216 with n. 1; Harold Hays, "A New Offering Table for Shepenwepet", *JARCE* 40 (2003): 89.

Conclusion:

As information pertaining to the archaeological context where the offering table of Hor-khebit was found is lacking, its exact dating and date of discovery remain unknown. The authors of this article, however, assume that it may have been found by farmers between 1883 and 1900. Based on genealogical evidence, this offering table may date back to the 26th dynasty can be suggested. The name “Hor-khebit” was familiar during the Late Period. In the case of our Hor-khebit, the name represents the main part of his father’s name “Mai-Hor-khebit”. The names of the owner and his parents are written in retrograde towards the spout to enable him drinking from the water poured out on the table. The cartouche-shaped basin with its inscriptions confirms the provision of water to the soul of the deceased and guarantees his recreation. This shape refers to the mythical source of water at Heliopolis (shenu-qebehu), which was used to purify and glorify Osiris (and through that the deceased). This might also interpret the depiction of the Heliopolitan Nut pouring water to the deceased on offering tables. Pouring water on offering tables might be carried out by a ritualist (son of the deceased) in certain funeral feasts.

This offering table further adds to our knowledge of the 26th dynasty genealogy in the Delta. A family, containing the owner of this offering table, served the temples of Neith since the 22nd dynasty to later times in the eastern Delta. Several individuals have taken either simply the name Hor-Khebit or the composed Nakht-Hor-Khebit or even Mai-Hor-Khebit.

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Figures



Figure 1: photo and line drawing of the offering table of Hor-Khebit (section A & B on the surface) © authors.

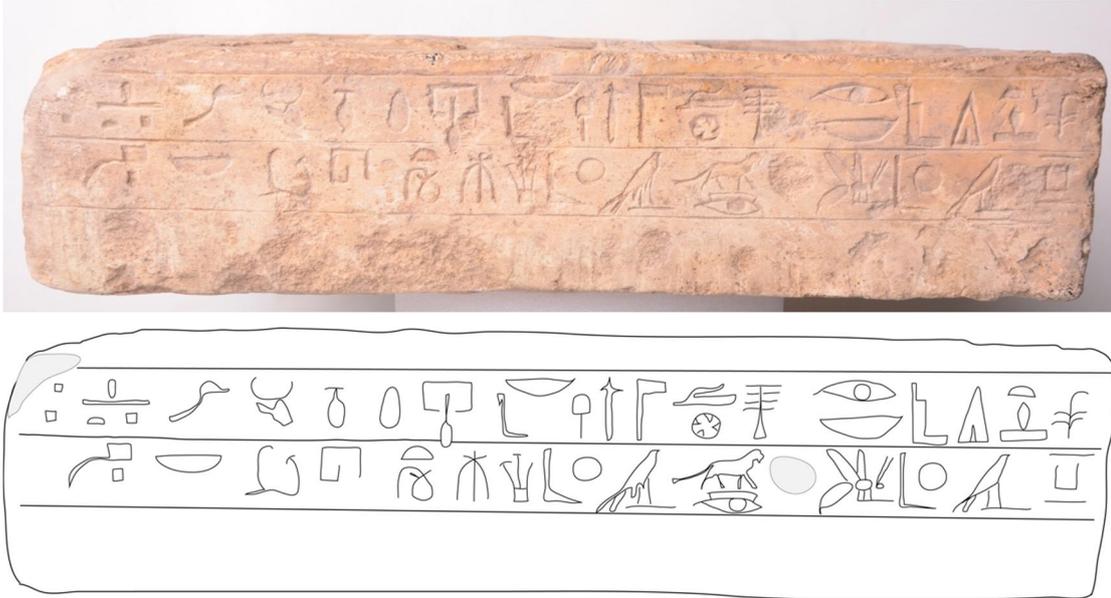


Figure 2: photo and line drawing of the offering table of Hor-Khebit (sections C=Thickness) © authors.

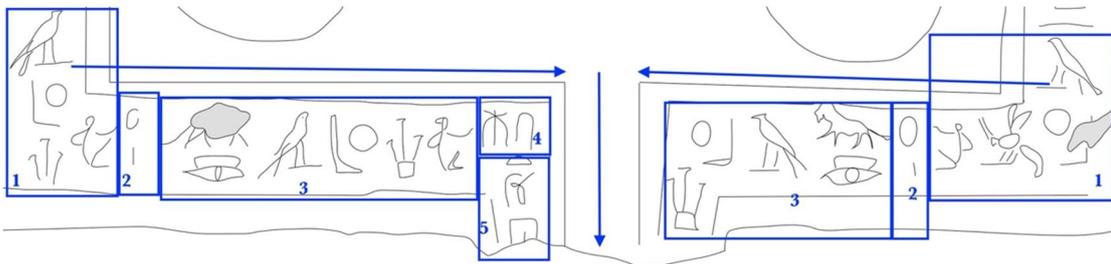


Fig. 3: Scheme of the retrograde on the offering table of Hor-Khebit by the authors.