

Original article

THE INSCRIBED LINTEL OF NYKHONSU, DISCOVERED RECENTLY AT SAQQARA^(*)

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Abstract:

This article deals with an inscribed limestone lintel discovered recently at Saqqara. The study includes the description of the lintel, explanation of the scenes, and translation of the texts. The commentary focuses on the names, titles and epithets, figures of the deceased, original position of this lintel, its characteristics, and the artistic style. Comparisons are made with other lintels of that type and period showing the similarities and differences, and some interpretations and suggestions are introduced to explain the aim of its depictions. The lintel includes a new form for writing a rare name of an individual in the Old Kingdom. A new title was added to the list of Old Kingdom titles. The lintel is dated to Pepy II's reign, or the end of the Old Kingdom according to twenty-two features.

1. Introduction

A limestone lintel was discovered in 2010 by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), under the supervision of the author in the Gisir el-Mudir site, west of the Step Pyramid at Saqqara^(a). This inscribed lintel was found in the debris of a rock cut chapel in a family tomb-complex of a person named Shenduai. It was found with the following elements: a fine white limestone false door; part of a limestone slab; a limestone offering table with *htp*-sign, two rectangular basins and seven holes of the sacred oils cut into it. These elements were reconstructed in their original position inside a niche in the northern part of the west wall of the chapel, except for the part of the limestone slab, which is preserved in the museum store-room II at Saqqara. This site of Gisir el-Mudir includes rock cut tombs, mastabas, and burial shafts. These tombs belong to middle class officials and are dated from the end of the Fifth Dynasty up to the end of the Old Kingdom. Some of these tombs are decorated such as that of Ptahshepses and Ia-maat. Many limestone false doors were also discovered in the site fixed in the tombs, fallen in the burial shafts, or in the debris around the tombs.

2. Description

The lintel measures 112×40×14 cm. It is decorated with four figures, titles and names of a man named Nykhonsu figs. (1).

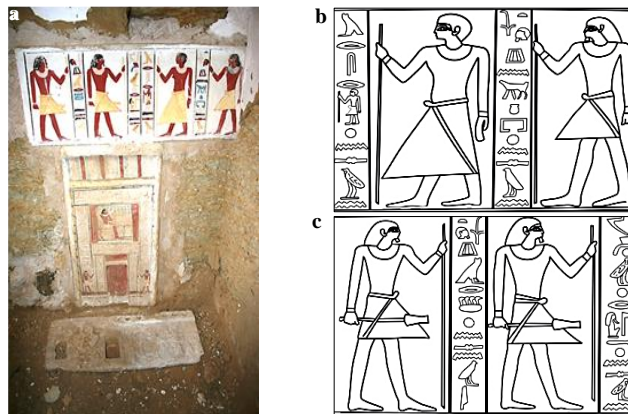


Figure (1) a. the lintel, the false door, and the offering table of Nykhonsu, b. & c. d. the drawing of the inscribed lintel of Nykhonsu (Drawn by Aly, D)

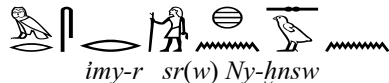
2.1. Scenes

This lintel is decorated with four standing figures in sunken relief, colored reddish brown. All figures are of the tomb owner and are facing each other. Three of them wear shoulder-length wigs of black hair, which do not cover the ears. One figure is shown with short, black hair, which could be natural or a wig. Three of them are depicted with a short beard. All wear collars and bracelets. They all wear the yellow, triangular projection kilts: three short and one

long. The loop of the belt is visible at the waist of the kilt. In the two representations on the left, the left arm of the tomb owner is bent in front of him and holding a staff which is the same height as him. His right arm is straight and extended behind him holding a scepter. In the two representations on the right, the right arm of the tomb owner is bent in front of him holding a staff. His left arm is straight and extended behind him with empty and open or grasped hand. The nipple appears in black color in all the figures.

2.2. Inscriptions

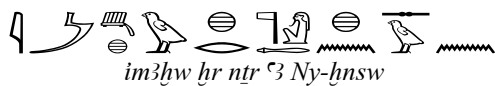
The inscriptions are written in sunken relief in front of each figure on the lintel. They were colored. These inscriptions are as follows:



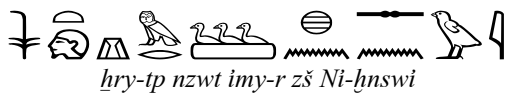
Overseer of *sr(w)*-officials, Nykhonsu.



The liegeman/chamberlain of the king of the residence, Nykhonsu.



Revered with the great god, Nykhonsu.



King's liegeman and overseer of the fowling pool, Nykhonsu.

3. Results

The deceased's name is written in two forms. The first form *Ny-hnzw/Ni-hnzw* is only found at Saqqara. This form is unique and is dated to the second half of the sixth dynasty. The second form is . It has four pronunciations; *hns.n-wi*, *Ni-hnzw*, *Ny-hnzw*, and *Ni-hnzw.i*. The sign 4 at the end of the name of the deceased can be considered as a suffix pronoun of the first person or a substitute for the determinative of a human figure. The title *hry-tp nzw n hnw* (the chamberlain of the king of the Residence) is a new one and is not attested before. It appeared in Pepy II's reign and more likely during the second half of his reign. This title could possibly refer to political instability, seeming to indicate the existence of more than one king at the same time. Probably this political turmoil and divided rule appeared or increased in the reign of Pepy II, especially during the second part of his reign. The title *imy-r sr(w)* (overseer of *sr(w)*-officials) appeared in the quarries from the fourth dynasty onwards and in the tombs from the middle of the fifth dynasty onwards in the Memphite necropolis and the provincial cemeteries. The title *imy-r zš* (overseer of the bird pool) was not common and mainly attested only at Saqqara and rarely at Dier El-Gabrawi. It was rarely used from the middle of the fifth dynasty and was

more connected to the sixth dynasty. The title *hry-tp nzw* (royal chamberlain) was attested in the Memphite necropolis, provincial cemeteries, and quarries and was more common at Giza, El-Hawawish, and Hammamat. It was rarely used in the first half of the Old Kingdom and increased in use in the second half of the Old Kingdom. It was more connected to the reign of Pepy II. This title confirms that Nykhonsu had direct contacts with the king under whom he served. This function kept him close to the person of the king. There are three possibilities for Nykhonsu holding this title; he inherited it from his father, he was rewarded and was given some more titles and jobs by his chiefs, or it was granted to him by the king himself. The epithet *im3hw hr ntr 3* (revered with the great god) was more common and more connected to the sixth dynasty up to the late Old Kingdom. Nykhonsu could have been of modest ranks. This is emphasized by the location of his tomb in Unas' cemetery, not in the royal cemetery of Pepy II. The deceased could have chosen the location of his tomb to be with his father. The Gisir El-Mudir cemetery continues tombs dated from the reign of Unas to the end of the Old Kingdom. There are from three up to seven figures depicted on the lintel above the false door. These figures could be the deceased only or him and his family. These multi-figured lintels above the false door are only found at Giza and Saqqara and are dated to late sixth dynasty. These multi figures have seven different aims and purposes. The *sekhem*-scepter without papyrus umbel and medium or short head, was attested from Cheops' reign until the late Old Kingdom, not until Niuserre's reign as it was thought. The double line defining the apron against the kilt of the deceased runs from the knot at the waist to meet the hem of the kilt over the wearer's rear leg was known from the time of Sahure to the end of the Old Kingdom, not to the reign of Pepy I, as was previously thought. The feeble and poor technical level and the errors in executing the decoration could express a period of decay and disorder in art. This is in line here with the end of the Old Kingdom.

4. Discussion and Comment

4.1. Inscriptions

There are four vertical lines of hieroglyphic inscriptions, including two forms of his name, one epithet and four titles.

4.1.1. Name of the owner of the lintel

The deceased's name is written in two forms and has different pronunciations and readings; the first form is *Ny-hnzw/Ni-hnzw*, Nykhonsu/Nikhonsu. This means 'the one who belongs to the god Khonsu' [1]. This form is written three times on the lintel. This name was attested in the Old Kingdom for males [2]. There are only two persons with that name so far. Both are found in Saqqara. The name on the lintel here is written with a different form than the old one [3], and the sign *n* is written at the end, not at the beginning, also there is no pustule or gland determinative. The second form of the name is . It can be read *hns.n-wi*, Khonsenui. This form is written once on the lintel. The sign 4 at the end of a noun could be nisba ending in the Old

Egyptian [4]. So, the name can be read as the same previous form *Ni-hnzwi*, Nikhonsui. The sign 𓆎 at the end of a personal name could be a substitute for the determinative 𓆎 or 𓆏 and is very rare in the Old Kingdom [5-7]. So the name can be read *Ny-hnzw*, Nikhonsu. The sign 𓆎 following verb or noun could be the suffix pronoun of the first person, which is written explicitly from the reign of Qakare Ibi, eighth dynasty onwards [4]. So the name can be read *Ni-hnzw.i*, Nikhonsui. Most of the ancient Egyptian names are linked with the names of deities or kings. Here, the name of the tomb owner is connected with the god Khonsu and means ‘the one who belongs to Khonsu’. Khonsu was considered a moon deity. In spell 402 of the Pyramid Texts, he appears in the ‘Cannibal Hymn’ as a bloodthirsty deity who helps the dead sovereign to hold and slaughter the deities upon whom the king feeds to obtain their power. He was connected with Osiris, Shu, and Horus. He had many shrines throughout Egypt. The name of the god Khonsu was thought to be derived from two words ‘*h* placenta’ and ‘*nzwt* king’ as a personification of the royal placenta. Now it is believed that it is derived from ‘*hns* to traverse or to cross over’, meaning ‘he who crosses (the sky)’ [8]. It is remarkable that the verb *hns* was attested in Old Kingdom tombs to express the action of the deceased when he was fowling or fishing in the marshes [9,10]. One of Nykhonsu’s titles is ‘overseer of the fowling pool’. So, his name expresses his job and is connected to it.

4.1.2. Titles and epithets of Nykhonsu

Nykhonsu had five titles and epithets: the first is $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆎}$ *im3hw hr ntr* 𓆎 , revered with the great god [11]. The second title is $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆎}$ *imy-r sr(w)*, overseer of *sr(w)*-officials [11]. The third title is $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆎}$ *imy -r zš*, overseer of the bird pool/fowling pool [11]. The fourth title is $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆎}$ *hry-tp nzwt*, king’s liegeman/royal chamberlain/he who is under the head of the king/the one upon royal property [11]. The fifth and last title is $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆎}$ *hry-tp nzwt n hnw*, the liegeman/chamberlain of the king of the Residence, he who is under the head of the king of the Residence. It is a new title and is not attested in Jones’ study. Nykhonsu followed two orders in writing his inscriptions. The first is one title and the name, no epithets. The second order is one epithet and the name, no titles. Epithets are many expressions, including the element *im3hw*. It can be written alone or followed by the deity or the king in general or a specific god or a king. Nykhonsu had one of these epithets, *im3hw hr ntr* 𓆎 . Nykhonsu had one expression connected with *im3hw*. It is derived from the root *im3h* which means being honored or equipped. There are two main employments for the word *im3hw*: phrases consisting of the derivatives of the word *im3h* are present in the autobiographical texts, or as an epithet, preceding the tomb owner’s name, as in the case of Nykhonsu. The word *im3h* could be used alone as a self-contained qualification of the person, as for Nykhonsu, or in connection with a prepositional phrase describing additional conditions of the state of *im3hw hr/ n* (by/ of a deity, a king, or a private

person). Nykhonsu was *im3hw* by the great god. There was a main relationship between the status of *im3hw* and owning a tomb and *pri-hrw* offerings. Nykhonsu is accorded the status of *im3hw*, so he owned a tomb and the ceremonies and offerings were his due. The word *im3hw* described a person who could found his own funerary cult, so he needs a cult place, a person who would exert the cult and the material resources. These could be performed by the king, another person and a deity [12]. As for Nykhonsu the great god was the grantor of his cult. Nykhonsu had one epithet connected with the famous Old Kingdom deity ‘the honored by the great god’. Some Egyptologists suggested that Ra, Osiris, or the living or dead king could be this god. He was lord of the heaven, the west and burial. The deceased desired to ascend to him, to be revered before him, and to be welcomed and guided upon the beautiful roads of the west by and before him [13]. The title *imy-r sr(w)* appeared in the quarries at Wadi El-Hammamat from the fourth dynasty [14] onwards [15-17]. It appeared in the tombs of officials from the middle of the fifth dynasty [18] onwards [19-23]. Its meaning is not yet fully established [11]. *sr(w)* are characteristically officials of the residence or nome officials who have authority over other nomes [24]. They were often responsible for judgment [11]. After inspecting all the examples of this title [11,25], it is noticeable that it is attested in the Memphite necropolis at Giza and Saqqara. It is rarely attested in the provincial cemeteries at Denderah and Qubbel El-Hawa. *Imy-r sr(w)* is also attested at Hatnub, Wadi El-Hammamat, and Wadi Maghara. The last quarry includes more examples than the other two quarries. The title *imy-r zš* appeared from the middle of the fifth dynasty [18] onwards [18,26-28]. It was held by high officials and viziers [11]. It is connected with provisions and financial supply. After inspecting all the examples of this title [11,25], it is noticeable that this title was not common and mainly attested in the Memphite necropolis only at Saqqara. It is rarely attested in the provincial cemeteries only at Dier El-Gabrawi. The title *hry-tp nzwt* appeared from the third dynasty onwards [29]. After inspecting all the examples of this title [11,25], it is noticeable that it is attested in the Memphite necropolis at Giza, Abusir, and Saqqara. It was more common at Giza and was rarely used at Abusir. It is also found in the provincial cemeteries at Deir El-Gabrawi, El-Hawawish, Meir, and Qubbel El-Hawa. It was more common at El-Hawawish and was rarely used at the other sites. It is also attested in the quarries at Hatnub, Hammamat, Wadi Isa, Wadi Dungash, Wadi Umm Hode, Bueb, and Sehel. Hammamat includes more examples than all the other quarries. The title was a lower-ranking title [18]. The duties associated with it are not clear. This person could attend the king in his bedroom [11] or act on behalf of the king to execute short term administration of the royal property, so he was an assistant of the king [29]. It seems that it was one of the titles that most of its holders were particularly proud of it and wanted to emphasize it as much as they were able, electing to mention

it many times, more than any other title in the same tomb. It is attested sixty-one times in the tomb of Mehu [30], thirty-three times in the tombs of Neferseshemre [27] and Hesi [31]. This gives us some insight as to why the title was mentioned five times, more than any other title, in the chapel of Nykhonsu (once on the architrave of the main entrance of his chapel, once on the lintel above his false door and three times on his false door). There are three possible reasons why Nykhonsu held this title; the first possibility is that his father, Shenduai, also had this title. So, it could be the case that Nykhonsu inherited it from his father, as were the cases of Idu G 2002 and his son Qar G 2001, Senedjemib/Inti G 2370, his son Senedjemib/Mehi G 2378, and his grandson, Nekhebu G 2381. The second possibility is that he was rewarded and was given some more titles and jobs by his chiefs, this title being one of these rewards. The third possibility is that this title was granted to him by the king himself, as was the case in the autobiographies of Nekhebu in his tomb G 2381 at Giza [32,33] and Hesi in his tomb at Saqqara [31]. This title *hry-tp nzw*t and the next one *hry-tp nzw*t *n hnw* are associated with the king and his possessions during his life. These titles confirm that Nykhonsu had direct relations with the king under whom he served. These functions kept him close to the person of the king. Strudwick suggested that this title was most frequently found among the titles of scribes and legal officials [18]. The recently discovered tomb of Nykhonsu supports this idea, because his titles include *hry-tp nzw*t and *mdh zš(w) nzw*t (inscribed on unpublished parts of the tomb; the architrave of the main entrance and the false door). It appears to have been held almost always in conjunction with *smr wʿty*, as is the case with Nykhonsu. These two titles appear sporadically in the early sixth dynasty and then more frequently later [18]. This title decreased in its usage towards the late of the Old Kingdom [34]. The title *hry-tp nzw*t *n hnw* was rarely known and not attested in Jones' study. We believe that this title probably refers to a political instability and seems to involve the existence of more than one king at the same time. The holder of this title wanted to express his relationship and loyalty to the 'king of the capital', who was the rightful one, and lack of support for a rebel king who ruled some cities in the Provinces. Probably this political turmoil and divided rule appeared or increased during the reign of Pepy II, especially in the second part of his reign. After examining Nykhonsu's titles, it is clear that he held two administrative titles; *imy-r sr(w)* and *imy-r zš* and two honorific titles; *hry-tp nzw*t and *hry-tp nzw*t *n hnw*. It is evident that he was of modest ranks, though some of his titles indicate that he served in the royal court. This is emphasized by the location of his tomb, west of Unas' Pyramid, and not in the royal cemetery of Pepy II which included, as was common, the tombs of the royal family and the high officials [35]. It seems that Nykhonsu chose the location of his tomb in Gisir el-Mudir to be with his father. He had a rock

cut chapel in the royal cemetery of Unas in central Saqqara. More than this, the king allowed him to bring a lintel, a slab, a false door and an offering table made of limestone from Turah.

4.2. Scenes of the lintel

The lintel includes four standing figures for the deceased. The figure functions as a determinative and thus appears at the end of the text, after the titles and names, facing in the same direction [36]. He is shown with a snub nose.

4.2.1. Forms of depicting Nykhonsu

Nykhonsu is depicted in two different forms:

4.2.2.1. Nykhonsu standing and holding a staff and a scepter

On the left side of the lintel, Nykhonsu is standing twice and holding two objects symbolizing authority (the staff and scepter) in his hands. This is a male position and is connected to the tomb owners [36]. It is attested from the early Old Kingdom [37] onwards [36,38-42]. We believe that Nykhonsu is looking to the north towards the northern stars that do not disappear in the hope that his soul will be between them in the company of good people. The staff, in the Old Kingdom, extends vertically from the throat to ground level or just above [36]. The height of Nykhonsu's staffs are longer than the common type, they are in the same height as him or slightly lower, as are other staffs [43-45]. Nykhonsu holds a *sh*m-scepter which is without papyrus umbel and medium or short head. It was attested from Cheops' reign up to Niuserre's reign according to Cherpion's study [46]. We disagree with Cherpion and think this type of scepter continued in use in the late Old Kingdom as it is shown on Nykhonsu's lintel.

4.2.2.2. Nykhonsu standing and holding a staff in one hand and nothing in the other

Nykhonsu depicted twice on the right side of the lintel, standing with the inner leg forward. His frontal arm in the same side of his body is bent in front on him, holding a staff, which extends vertically from the head to the ground level. The rear or outer arm extends by the side with empty hand. This position is rare [36].

4.2.2. Nykhonsu's clothing and accessories

Nykhonsu is depicted three times wearing the shoulder-length wig of black hair. One of his figures is appeared with short, black hair, which could be natural or a wig. Some of the black color of the wigs has disappeared. These wigs expose the ears. Nykhonsu, as do deities, kings, and individuals, is shown three times with a short beard and once without a beard. The beard has no visible attachment, so it could possibly be natural and represent the real beard of the person, not the false beard for ceremonies and the official form. It is colored black. It is noticeable that the beard is worn in conjunction with the short kilt. Nykhonsu, as do men, women, and sometimes children, is depicted in his four figures with a wesekh-collar, no a pendant amulet. His collars are shown reaching lower than his armpit. The collars of Nykhonsu were colored with blue. The color has disappeared from three collars and still exists in one, the rear figure on the right. This color refers to that collar is made of pale turquoise. Nykhonsu is represented in his four figures with these bracelets on both wrists. His bracelets were colored

blue. Only the bracelets of his first figure on the right still have their color. The color of the bracelets of the other three figures has mostly disappeared and only slight remains still exist. The figures of Nykhonsu are depicted with a long skirt that flared out in front of him. It has a triangular apron-like front and is short (three times) or long (once). The standing figures wearing this kilt, as does Nikhonsu, were known from the second half of the fourth dynasty onwards for the tomb owners and some important persons [47]. The short kilt of Nykhonsu reaches to his knees and the long one to the middle of his torso. The kilt of the rear figure of Nykhonsu on the left has a double line defining the apron against the kilt, which runs from the knot at the waist to meet the hem of the kilt over the wearer's rear leg. The kilts of the frontal figure of Nykhonsu on the left and the rear figure of him on the right have a double line defining the apron against the kilt, which runs from the knot at the waist to meet the hem at the rear corner of the kilt [47]. The frontal figure of Nykhonsu on the right is represented with long triangular kilt, confusing the first and second styles. The double line defining the apron against the kilt, which runs from the knot at the waist to meet the hem, is shown at the rear corner of the kilt and also over the wearer's rear leg. So, this double line becomes three lines at the bottom, which is unusual.

4.3. Position of this lintel

The lintel of Nykhonsu was found fallen from its position in the debris of the chapel. The multi-figured lintels were usually positioned above the main [24] and secondary [48] entrances, pillars [49], niches and false doors [24]. The original position of Nykhonsu's lintel was most probably placed above the false door in the chapel because of the presence of a horizontal niche cut above the false door in the west wall of the chapel which was the same size as the lintel. So, we fixed the lintel in this position after we had cleaned the chapel. Also, the wife of Nykhonsu has a similar lintel in the same family complex and its position is suggested above the false door [50].

4.4. Characteristics of lintels which are above false doors and niches

Nykhonsu has four representations shown on his lintel as do his wife Herti and Nypepy (the owner of a lintel discovered recently west of the Step Pyramid) [51]. The number of the figures, on the lintels above the false doors or niches, were three (Isti, the owner of a lintel discovered by Jéquier in South Saqqara) [52], four, five (Shenduai, father of Nykhonsu) or seven (Sekhemankhpta, the owner of a tomb discovered by Hassan at the Central Field at Giza) [19]. Nykhonsu's lintel, as do those of Nypepy, Isti, and Herti, includes the tomb owner only. Other lintels, as is the case of Shenduai and Sekhemankhptah, depict the tomb owner and his family members. Nykhonsu's figures are standing, as are all the representations on the lintels above the niches or false doors. All the figures are facing one direction: to the right, except those of Nykhonsu. They are facing each other; two figures are facing to the right and two more are facing to the left. Each of the four figures of Nykhonsu is preceded by a text, inscribed in one vertical column of Hieroglyphic inscriptions, as are those

of Sekhemankhptah, Shenduai (the three right figures), Herti (left figure), Isti, and Nypepy. It is marked that these lintels are only present in Giza and Saqqara and are more connected to Saqqara (Shenduai, Nykhonsu, Herti, Nypepy, and Isti) than Giza (Sekhemankhptah). The lintels of Nykhonsu, his wife, and his father, are the only multi-figured lintels found in the Gisir el-Mudir site fixed above false doors. There is a part of a lintel of a person named Shemai found in the same site, but its original position is not known [53]. The multi-figured representations of the deceased have seven different aims and purposes; the first is that these figures could express the different phases of the tomb owner's life [54,55], to help the soul to recognize him and his chapel. This idea could not be applied to all multi-figured lintels, because not all of them show youthful and aged figures together [36]. The second purpose is that these representations could represent the different offices of the deceased [55]. Three figures of Nykhonsu on his lintel are accompanied by different offices and titles? that this idea could not be applied to all multi-figured lintels, because not all of them are inscribed with different offices [36]. The third is these figures could express the several souls (*k3w*) of the deceased [55]. In the tomb of Nebkauhor at Saqqara, the tomb owner is depicted watching a party and the accompanied texts described the flute playing and dancing as 'for your *k3*' [56]. So, this means that the figure of the tomb owner represents one *k3*. The funerary texts of the Old Kingdom refer to the deceased having *k3w* as a plural. So, it could be that the multi-figured lintels are depicting the several souls of the deceased. Again, this idea could not be applied to all multi-figured lintels, because not all of them show the tomb owner only [36]. The fourth purpose is that these figures could represent an alternative - if one of them is lost, the other replaces it. The fifth purpose is that the aim of these multi-figures was to diversify the deceased's forms, dresses [57,58] and accessories. Nykhonsu is shown on his lintel in two different forms and wearing two dissimilar wigs and kilts. He is shown three times with short beard and once without it. The sixth aim is that in addition to the above mentioned, we think that Nykhonsu depicted these multi-figures facing south, looking towards the source of flood, the symbol of resurrection and rebirth, as well as depicting himself facing north, where the stars are not disappearing and where he wishes his soul to be. The seventh and last aim is that we also think that the multi figures of Nykhonsu can express symmetry and duality, two on each side of the lintel.

4.5. Artistic style

There are some technical errors in executing the decoration of the lintel: the fingers of the hand holding the staff are hidden and should appear in the four hands. The back of the hands appears when it should not. The eyes are very wide and longer than usual. The rear hand of the inner figure on the right is too long. The staff is not straight and there is a curvature at the hand grip at the top. The double line defining the apron against the kilt, which runs from the knot at the waist to meet the hem, is shown at the rear corner of the kilt and also over the wearer's rear leg. So, this double line becomes three lines

at the bottom, which is wrong. The nipple appears unusually large. The frontal trunk of the outer person on the right is larger than his rear trunk. Some of the repeated signs are not written in the same shape or size as the quail chick *w* and the moustache of the *tp*. Some of the signs are not written in the center of the vertical column as the signs *n*, *z* in the three-right columns, the goat skin and house sign in the right column. If we compare this lintel with the lintel of his wife Herti, we will also find some technical errors in executing the reliefs such as the frontal arm is longer than the rear one, the inner foot is depicted in front of the frontal one. The frontal hand is too long. The repeated hieroglyphic signs are not inscribed in the same size or form [50]. These errors in both lintels represent the beginning of a period of weakness in ancient Egyptian history. If we compared these lintels of Nykhonsu and his wife Herti with the decoration of the rooms of Mehu in same cemetery of Unas, we will find big difference between them. The last represents high quality of work because it belongs to a vizier and is dated to the reigns of Unas to Pepy I, in that time the art was high and distinctive [59].

4.6. Dating of the lintel

It is suggested that Pepy II's reign or the end of the Old Kingdom (late sixth dynasty–eighth dynasty), as a date of this lintel for the following reasons: **1)** The lintel was discovered in the Gisir El-Mudir site. This site is the natural western extension of Unas' cemetery, which includes tombs dated from Unas' reign to the end of the Old Kingdom. According to this standard, this lintel can be dated to a specific time included in that period. **2)** The lintel comes from a chapel inside an unpublished funerary complex of Shenduai. This family complex includes three chapels for Shenduai, his son Nykhonsu, and the wife of this son named Herti. According to the architectural and artistic features, this funerary complex is dated to Pepy II's reign, sixth dynasty, or the end of the Old Kingdom. **3)** Nykhonsu's tomb consists of a forecourt with rock-cut steps and a rock-cut chapel. This architectural design is very well known from the reign of Pepy I and continued in use to the end of the sixth dynasty. **4)** The name of Nykhonsu is attested with the ending \overline{q} . This use of \overline{q} as a substitute for the determinative of a human figure can be found in some texts of Old Kingdom burial chambers. This custom was transferred to the texts of the chapel superstructures and the stelae, but not before the very end of the Old Kingdom [60]. **5)** The sign \overline{q} in the name of the deceased can be considered as a suffix pronoun of the first person. This pronoun was omitted in the Old Kingdom texts and was written explicitly in the texts from the reign of Ibi, eighth dynasty onwards [4,60]. So, the lintel could not be dated before the eighth dynasty. **6)** The name of Nykhonsu was rare and attested in one example at Saqqara, dated to the second half of the sixth dynasty [3]. **7)** The lintel of Nykhonsu contained the epithet *im3hw* attested in its complete form, with the reed leaf, sickle, back bone, placenta, and the quail chick. This unabbreviated form is Old Kingdom style, predating the First Intermediate Period examples, which were abbreviated [61]. **8)** The title, *imy-r sr(w)*, appeared in the Old Kingdom tombs of officials from the middle of the fifth dynasty and continued in use till the end of the Old Kingdom [11,25]. **9)** The title, *imy-r zš*, appeared from the middle of

the fifth dynasty and was rarely used. It was more connected to the sixth dynasty [11,25]. **10)** The title, *hry-tp nzwt*, was rarely used in the third and fourth dynasties, but it increased in use in the fifth dynasty and became even more prevalent in the sixth dynasty. It was rarely used in the late Old Kingdom. It was more connected to Pepy II's reign [62], and more than twenty-five persons, holding this title, are found [25]. **11)** Nykhonsu had the title *hry-tp nzwt n hnw*, which appeared in the time of Pepy II and more likely during the second half of his reign. **12)** Nykhonsu has the title *smr w^cty* written on a limestone slab fixed on the west wall next to his false door. He combined the title *smr w^cty* with the title *hry-tp nzwt*. A man holding *hry-tp nzwt* was bestowed *smr w^cty*, especially in Pepy II's reign. It was a development in the patterns of titularies [18]. **13)** Nykhonsu had the epithet, *im3hw hr ntr 3*, which appeared in the reign of Shepseskaf in the tomb of Kaseuza G 5340 at Giza [48,63].

This epithet was continued and increased in use in the fifth dynasty. It was more common and more connected to the sixth dynasty up to the late Old Kingdom [11]. **14)** The seated god determinative \overline{g} after the *ntr* sign, as it is mentioned on the lintel of Nykhonsu, became common in the texts after the late fifth dynasty [61]. **15)** The inscribed lintel with many figures above the false door, as in the case of Khonsui, is attested in the tombs of Shenduai, Herti [50], Sekhemankhtah [19,32], Nypepy [51] and Isti [35,52]. All these tombs are dated to the end of the sixth dynasty except for the tomb of Sekhemankhtah, it is not known in which period of the sixth dynasty this tomb was constructed. **16)** There are two figures of Nykhonsu holding the staff alone. This attitude was rare and connected to chapels of later sixth dynasty [36]. **17)** Nykhonsu's collars reach lower than his armpit. The collars, which reach the level of the armpit of the deceased or lower than this armpit, are dated to Nyuserre's reign up to the late of Pepy II's reign [47]. **18)** The double line defining the apron against the kilt of Nykhonsu runs from the knot at the waist to meet the hem of the kilt over the wearer's rear leg. Swinton suggested that this type of kilt was attested from Sahure's reign to Pepy I's reign [47]. This view is not in agreement with the recently discovered lintel of Nykhonsu, which indicates the existence of this kilt in Pepy II's reign and up to the end of the Old Kingdom. **19)** The double line defining the apron against the kilt of Nykhonsu runs from the knot at the waist to meet the hem at the rear corner of the kilt. This type of kilt was attested from the reigns of Sahure/Neferirkare to the late of Pepy II's reign [47]. **20)** Nykhonsu appears three times wearing a shoulder-length wig which exposed the ears. This type of wig appeared in Teti's reign and became popular during Pepy I's and Pepy II's reigns [46]. **21)** As for the artistic features, the figures of Nykhonsu have characteristics of the figures which are typical of the second Old Kingdom style of relief, dated to the second half of the sixth dynasty to the First Intermediate Period: large, open eyes with a pronounced inner canthus; and fingers which are exaggerated in length (the inner figure of Nykhonsu on the right) [64]. **22)** The feeble technical level indicates a period of decay and disorder in art. This is in conformity here with the end of the Old Kingdom.

5. Conclusion

The deceased's name could be written in one or more forms and could have one or different pronunciations. $\text{Nj-}h\text{nzw}/\text{Nj-}h\text{nzw}$ was attested in the Old Kingdom for males. It was a rare name and was only found at Saqqara. hry-tp has four different pronunciations and readings. The title hry-tp nzwt n hnw is not attested in any other tomb. It appeared during the second half of Pepy II's reign. The holder of this title could have wanted to express his relationship and loyalty to the 'king of the capital', who was the rightful one, and lack of support for a rebel king who ruled some cities in the provinces. The number of the figures of the lintel above the false door was from three up to seven of the tomb owner only or with his family members. They are always standing and facing right, except for this new discovered lintel. It is marked that these lintels are only present in Giza and Saqqara, are dated to the end of the sixth dynasty and have different aims and purposes. The Sekhem-scepter without papyrus umbel and medium or short head, was known from the reign of Cheops until the late Old Kingdom, not until the reign of Niuserre as it was thought. The unsophisticated technical level and the errors in executing the decoration indicate a period of decay and disorder in art. This would concur with the dating of the lintel to the end of the Old Kingdom.

Endnotes

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- (a) I and my colleague A. El-Batal worked as a team of SCA in this site over three years 2008-2011 and discovered many mastabas and rock cut tombs.

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