The Reign of Sneferu: Some Aspects of the Historical and Religious Development

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The reign of Sneferu is a transitional moment in the Old Kingdom history of Ancient Egypt. Historical records from his time indicate that the founder of the $4^{\text{th}}$ dynasty succeeded in laying the foundations of a "new epoch" following and evolving the ideas of his predecessors.

The aim of this article is to present the reign of Sneferu in the light of the latest finds and achievements in the field of the historical and religious development of the Old Kingdom in Egypt and the fourth dynasty in particular. For the greater clarity of the paper the author has approached the aspects separately.

I. Succession and length of reign.

According to the Middle Kingdom papyrus Prisse (II, 7), Sneferu ascended to the throne after the death of Huni$^1$. The list of Manetho points Huni as the last ruler of the $3^{\text{rd}}$ dynasty and Sneferu, by the name of Soris, as the founder of the new $4^{\text{th}}$ dynasty$^2$. In the Royal Canon of Turin (III, 8)$^3$ and in the Royal list of Sakkara (N 15)$^4$, Huni also stands as the immediate predecessor of Sneferu.

Unfortunately, Huni is a very obscure figure in the ancient history of Egypt. We have only one certain monument left from his reign - a cone-shaped object found by Henri Gauthier in Elephantina. The inscription on it mentions his name, the correct reading of which is still debatable$^5$. Based on the evidence available to us, however, we are unanimous on the fact that the king who Sneferu succeeded was Huni.

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$^1$ Gardiner, A. "The Instruction addressed to Kagemni and his brethren", JEA 32/1946, 74, pl. XIV.
$^2$ Helck, W. Untersuchungen zu Manetho und den ägyptischen Königslisten, 1956, 52.
$^3$ Gardiner, A. The Royal Canon of Turin, Oxford, 1997, pl. II.
$^4$ Kitchen, K. Ramesside Inscriptions III, 482.
$^5$ In this article I have taken the generally accepted reading; for an alternative one see Goedicke, H. "The Pharaoh Ny-Swth", ZÄS 81/1956,18-24; Borchardt, L. "König Huni" ZÄS 46/1909, 12; Helck, W. SAK 4/1976, 125.
On the Cairo Fragment N 1 of the Palermo Stone Annals Jaroslav Černý has read the name of Queen Meresankh, who appears there as the mother of Sneferu. It seems highly probable that she was a minor, but still an influential queen of his predecessor (and possibly father), Huni. This inference could be drawn for two main reasons. In ancient Egypt the right of succession to the throne was transmitted through the "principal" queen (the crown prince was her first-born son). If Meresankh had been as described above, there would not have been a breakdown in the dynasty (the 3rd dynasty), where such usually indicated lack or death of the crown prince (in case there was not a violent breakdown). The other, and in my opinion more considerable argument was the title of "Daughter of God" (lit. "Daughter of God from his body" sṯ nṯr n ḫt.f) that Sneferu's wife, princess Hetepheres, bore in her tomb in Giza. This fact could serve as an almost irrefutable proof that she represented the direct inheritance of the line of the royal blood. If this supposition proved to be true, Sneferu must have married her in order to lay his claim to the throne.

The occasion for this marriage seems to have been the death of the crown prince of Huni who most of the Egyptologists believed to be the man buried in mastaba N 17 in Meidum. The latest data show, however, that we should associate the pyramid and necropolis at Meidum with Sneferu rather than with his predecessor. This suggestion would indicate that the people buried there were members of Sneferu's family and court and so was the

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7 The mention of the mothers of Djer and Semerkhet in the Cairo Annals strongly suggests that at the beginning of the Egyptian history the right of succession to the throne was already transmitted through the principal queen, who was variusly called "She who unites the two lords" (sm3wt nbwj), "She who sees Horus and Seth" (m33t hr štḥ) and "Mother of the king's children" (mwt msw nh3wt), Edwards, I. E. S., *The Early Dynastic Period in Egypt* In: CAH, 1969, v.1, p.2, 36.

8 In my opinion it is possible to believe that the beginning of a new dynasty does not compulsory mean lack of the crown prince, having in mind the fact that the Egyptians themselves didn't divide their kings into dynasties. So we don't really know what was the reason for Manetho to do it.

9 Lehner, M. *The Complete Pyramids*, L., 1997, 117; Reisner, G. A. and Smith, W. S. *A History of the Giza Necropolis. II. The Tomb of Hetepheres*, Cambridge, Mass., 1955. This so-called "tomb" of Hetepheres was actually a deep shaft, which the American Egyptologist George Reisner found in front of the east side of Khufu's pyramid at Giza. As it didn't contain a mummy and didn't present the usual features of an Old Kingdom elite burial many interpretations have been raised regarding the character of this find; see Münch, H. "Categorizing archeological finds: the funerary material of Queen Hetepheres I at Giza", *Antiquity* 74/2000 (286), 898-908.

10 Smith, W. S. *The Old Kingdom in Egypt...,* 164.

11 Idem, 165.

12 See the discussion about Sneferu's pyramids below.
man from mastaba N 17. This inference, however, does not refer to the one relating to the coming of Sneferu to the throne.

While the question of Sneferu's succession is nearly clear, the situation concerning the length of his reign is more complicated. The difficulty comes mainly from our uncertain knowledge of the ancient Egyptian chronology and the dating system applied at that time. We are well aware that there existed a method of reckoning throughout the Old Kingdom by a cattle count taken every second year. This system appears to have come out of the old (early dynastic) one called a "Following of Horus" (Šmsw Hr), i.e. a biennial royal tour of inspection by river carried out in the 1st dynasty. Towards the end of the 2nd dynasty a biennial count was added and in the reign of Sneferu cattle are first mentioned as the subject of the census.\(^3\)

The occasions of the biennial count served for dating the years of the king's reign and were marked by the expression "ḥ3t sp" (i.e. beginning of occasion (of count))\(^4\). Some of these "occasions" have come to us through the Palermo Stone Annals, but the greater part has reached us inscribed on the casing stones of the Old Kingdom pyramids. These quarry marks, as we call them, are of extreme value because they could provide us with information that the other sources lack. The latter holds quite good especially when the length of a king's reign is considered.

The uncertain system of dating that existed during the Old Kingdom has been much discussed by the egyptologists, mostly because of its great significance for elucidation of the chronology of the period. Already at the time of the 1st dynasty an indication of some irregularity appeared, when there was a 12-year omission in the royal inspection tour during the reign of Adjib. Next, towards the end of the 2nd dynasty when the biennial count was being inaugurated, the first two counts during Khasekhemwy's reign were made in successive years.\(^5\) The case of Sneferu did not make an exception, where the 8th count came immediately after the 7th.\(^6\) Unfortunately, the quarry marks are not reliable either, since the quantity available to us by now shows that the marks with years of census are much more than those inscribed with years after census.

\(^4\)Sir A. Gardiner was the first egyptologist who made difference between the Ancient Egyptian astronomical year which was marked with the Egyptian word "rnpḥ" (rempet) and the expression "ḥ3t sp" (coming out of the words ḥ3t- "beginning" and sp-"occasion" (Faulkner, R. A concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, Oxford, 1969, 162, 221)), which had the meaning of a "beginning of an occasion", i.e. of a count; see Gardiner, A. Egyptian Grammar, Oxford, 3rd ed., 1957, 203.
Recently, the Czech egyptologist Miroslav Verner made an attempt to throw light upon the chronology of the 4th and 5th dynasty on the basis of the already discussed quarry marks or, as he has called them, masons' marks\textsuperscript{17}. In his work some valuable remarks concerning our discussion could be found:

- In regard to the latest quarry marks unearthed at Meidum and published by Posener Kriéger, the latter also remarked the great disproportion between the occurrence of census years and post-census years by making a comment that "it was only rarely that a distinction was made between the years r\textit{npt} sp and r\textit{npt} (m-)!t sp\textsuperscript{18};

- Taking into consideration the archeological context in which the blocks were found, Verner noted that all of them were heaped on the northern side of the Meidum pyramid, while not a single block with date was discovered on the western side of the monument. This could only mean, he thought, that the casing blocks had been prepared in advance, kept in a local storage place and delivered to the building site when necessary\textsuperscript{19}.

- The available written evidence does not seem to reflect any "principally biennial system with just few exceptions". Moreover, it appears that in practice the annual cattle counts prevailed in frequency over the biennial ones\textsuperscript{20}.

- The marks available to us so far indicate that as much as we advance to the close of the Old Kingdom, as greater in number becomes those with post-census years on them. This fact seems to be in contradiction with Beckerath's opinion accepted by most of the authorities that the annual system should have become prevailing by that time\textsuperscript{21}.

Let us now have a look at the specific data available for the reign of Sneferu. The successive 7th and 8th count on the Palermo stone has already been mentioned, so we shall turn to the quarry marks. Casing stones of the Meidum pyramid show marks with 15th, 16th and 17th "\textit{ht} sp"\textsuperscript{22}. They come

\textsuperscript{17} Verner, M. Archeological Remarks on the 4th and 5th Dynasty Chronology, Ar. Or., 69/2001, 363-418.
\textsuperscript{18} Idem, 369.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Idem, 414.
\textsuperscript{22} Stadelmann, R. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alten Reiches (Die Länge der Regierung des Snefru) in: MDAIK 43/1987, 235; Petrie, W., Mackay, A., Wainwright, G. Meydum and Memphis, III, L., 1910, 9; see also the complete list of marks in Verner, M., Op. cit., 365-368, where one can see that there are no marks coming from the Bent pyramid at Dahshur, while 2/3 of the marks come from the Meidum pyramid.
from the last stage of its construction (i.e. stage E 3 or the stage of its final transformation into a true pyramid). From the base of the Northern Pyramid at Dahshur we have a fragment of casing stone dated from the 15th “h3t sp”. Another mark with the 15th “occasion” probably comes from the 12th layer and a third, with the 16th - from the 16/17th layer. Thus we are able to note that at the time the Meidum pyramid was up to be completed the Northern one was at the beginning of its construction. During the last expeditions at the pyramid of Meidum and the Northern one of Dahshur in the 1980's two fragments of a 23rd and 24th “h3t sp” respectively were found in the debris around them. The discovery was of the greatest importance since by then the 17th “h3t sp” was the highest known figure and was used to support the 24-year reign of Sneferu given in the Royal Canon of Turin.

Reiner Stadelmann, who directed the excavations carried out at Dahshur, immediately turned to use the new find assuming that Sneferu had ruled at least 44 years (or even 48 years) so that the Northern pyramid could be completed as the perfectly polished pyramidion showed. In his opinion the successive 7th and 8th count was an exception to the biennial system due to some kind of additional taxation caused by the moving of the royal residence from Meidum to Dahshur. Recently, while investigating all the dates relating to that king, R. Krauss offered a critical note to Stadelmann's suggestion, concluding that:

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23 Stadelmann, R., Op. cit., 233-34; idem The development of the pyramid temple in the Fourth Dynasty in: The Temple of Ancient Egypt, 1997, 5; these marks wasn’t found in situ but that doesn’t concern the general inference stated below.

24 The sequence of erection of the pyramids at Dahshur and Meidum could be also followed by investigating the technique used in their construction, see Edwards, I. E. S. The pyramids of Egypt, 1972, 78.

25 Verner, M., Op. cit., 367; Stadelmann, R., MDAIK 43/1987, 239-240; In fact the fragment of a 24th “h3t sp” had already been read by Erbkamm and published by Lepsius, R. in LD Text I, 206, but in view of the facts known at the time, this reading wasn’t accepted then. Unfortunately, we don’t know the archeological context in which the 23rd “occasion” from the Meidum pyramid was unearthed in order to make conclusions about the time of its completion in comparison with the pyramids of Dahshur. We can suppose, however, that the pyramid of Meidum and the Northern one of Dahshur were being completed simultaneously in the very last years of Sneferu's reign.

26 This suggestion has been presented by Smith, W. in CAH, v.1, p.2, 162; In this case an annual count should have been kept after the successive 7th and 8th one.

27 This conclusion is based on his estimation that, even under perfect circumstances, 15 years would be necessary for the erection of the Red pyramid and the completion of the other two pyramids. For that reason, in his early publications concerning the reign of Sneferu he had accepted the figure of 32-34 years, assuming in both of the cases that after the successive 7th and 8th count a return to a biennial count was made; cf. Stadelmann, R. Op. cit., 236; idem., Snofru und die Pyramiden von Meidum and Dahshur, MDAIK 36/1980, 440, n.19.
"...24 dates for Sneferu, whether years of the count or intervening years, represent eight occasions of the count followed by an intervening year and sixteen counts that occurred in successive years, yielding a reign of about 32 rather than 48 regnal years for that king".28

M. Verner is the last scholar to have given his opinion on this issue. In the course of his research he noticed that only one half of the expected years of census has appeared by now (years 2, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24). This fact led him to the reasonable conclusion that the years after census already available (10, 13, 18) should be doubled. Thus the correct estimation of the length of Sneferu based on the total sum of the number of the so far attested census years (24) and the number of both the attested (3) and presupposed (3) intervening years would be 30.29

Finally, considering all the information available for the length of Sneferu's reign, one can see that the questions are much more than the certain facts. So the best thing we can do is to be positive that more data in relation to this and the dating system issue in general shall appear.

II. The pyramids of Sneferu

It is usually considered that the greatest builder of ancient Egypt was Khufu, during whose reign the biggest pyramid at Giza was erected. His predecessor and father Sneferu, however, is believed to have built four pyramids - two at Dahshur one at Maidum and one at Seila (at the eastern end of Fayum) - the total amount of which together with the adjoining complexes exceeded that of Khufu nearly by a million cubic meters.30 The discussion whether he was the real owner of them all has been opened for years still more none of them has been designated with certainty for his burial place.

Besides the ownership problem, Sneferu's pyramids are of the greatest importance mostly because they afford lots of evidence that enables the development of stone building methods and the evolution of religious thought of the period to be better studied. Since their investigation is almost thoroughly completed we are able to have one parallel look on them and

29 Verner, M. Op. cit., 414; Thus M. Verner and R. Krauss arrived at the same conclusion by using different methods of estimation.
30 see Stadelmann, R. MDAIK 43/1987, 232.
gather as much information as possible in relation to all the questions of interest to us\textsuperscript{31}. In the next pages the most significant of them as illustrated by the pyramids at Meidum and Dahshur will be discussed, namely, the ownership problem, the question of Sneferu's burial place and the development of the pyramid complex during this reign.

\textbf{First.} The \textbf{ownership problem} will be treated first. Out of the three pyramids we are going to discuss, the \textit{Bent pyramid (or the Southern) at Dahshur}\textsuperscript{32} was the first to have been assigned with certainty to Sneferu. The pyramid was being surveyed throughout the XIX\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{33}, but its thorough investigation was carried out during the excavations undertaken by Ahmed Fakhry in 1951-1954\textsuperscript{34}. As a result of them enough data was collected in relation to the question of who the owner of this monument was. These were mainly limestone fragments of monumental inscriptions of the name of Sneferu inside a cartouche, as well as parts of his \textit{Horus} name \textit{Nb-m\textsuperscript{35}}t written in a \textit{serekh} and surmounted by a falcon\textsuperscript{35}. They proved to be the upper part of two monumental stelae the location of which was obviously in the funerary temple of the pyramid since their remains were discovered there. Such stelae stood also at the east of the satellite pyramid, where one of them was found still in situ. Thus we are able to ascertain that the lower part of this and probably of the other stelae\textsuperscript{36} is a representation of Sneferu, wearing a costume similar to that of the \textit{Hb-sd} festival, holding a flail in his hand with the double crown on his head.\textsuperscript{37} Still more evidence

\textsuperscript{31} The pyramid at Seila has to be excluded since it is of no interest to the problems concerned. This pyramid, as well as six others of the same type have been discovered in Upper and Middle Egypt. So far none has been shown to have a burial chamber or ancillary buildings such as chapels. In 1987, the Brigham Young University Expedition found a fragmentary offering slab, two stelae - one of which was inscribed with the name of Sneferu - and scant traces of a mudbrick causeway on the east side of the pyramid; cf. Lehner, M. \textit{Op.cit.}, 96.

\textsuperscript{32} Except this designation this pyramid has been variously named the “\textit{False}”, “\textit{Rhomboidal}” and “\textit{Blunted}” pyramid; Edwards, I. E. S. \textit{Op. cit.}, 67.

\textsuperscript{33} J. S. Perring, was the first to survey the pyramids at Dahshur and to clean up the interior of the Bent pyramid in 1839. His description was published in the book of Vyse, H. \textit{The Pyramids of Giza III}, 1892. \textit{De Morgan} and \textit{Jequier} worked at Dahshur in 1894 and 1924 respectively but didn't do much investigation on the Bent pyramid.

\textsuperscript{34} The research was part of the work of the “\textit{Project of the Pyramid Studies}” begun by the late \textit{Abdel Salam Mohammed Hussein} in 1945. He only tried to clean the interior of the pyramid. After his death the project was continued under the leadership of \textit{Abdel Salam Effendi} who also concentrated on cleaning the interiors as well as the exteriors in search of quarry marks, but he left the temples. The premature death of the latter in 1949 had as a result a pause of the research for some years, until Ahmed Fakhry took matters in hand and began again the excavations, see Fakhry, A. “\textit{The Southern Pyramid of Sneferu}” In: ASAE 51/1951, 509, n.1.

\textsuperscript{35} Idem, 515.

\textsuperscript{36} The lower parts of the stelae in front of the very pyramid were left undecorated.

\textsuperscript{37} Fakhry, A. \textit{The excavations of Sneferu's monuments at Dahshur} (Second preliminary report) In: ASAE 52/1954, 564-66.
concerning the name of the pyramid builder appeared on the walls and pillars of the valley temple as they were embossed with scenes showing Sneferu or his name. If we note that his name came out written in a cartouche in the interior of the very pyramid as well, there is no doubt that he was the king who erected that monument.

The exploration of the Red (or the Northern) pyramid at Dahshur started in the XIXth century too. Unlike the Southern pyramid, however, its entire investigation took place many years later when in the autumn of 1980 the German Institute of Archeology obtained the necessary permission and began excavating at and around the pyramid. As there had not been completely positive facts about the belonging of this monument till that time, the expectations for finding incontestable data were great.

The facts at our disposal from the previous research concerning the ownership "problem" were mainly the following:

1. appearance of the Sneferu's Horus name on the masonry of the pyramid;
2. mastabas in the immediate neighborhood that belonged to Sneferu's courtiers;
3. a decree dated from the 21st year of Pepi I the purpose of which was to exempt from certain taxes the priests of the "Two pyramids of Sneferu" named "Hj-Snfrw";
4. a false door from the 5th dynasty mastaba of Duare situated in the vicinity of the Bent pyramid which bears an inscription mentioning a son of the owner who is described as the Overseer of the Southern pyramid of Sneferu.

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38 Idem, 571.
39 The person to be thanked for this find was Abdel Salam Effendi, who worked at Dahsur before Fakhry, see n. 34.
40 The name of the pyramid comes from the color of the limestone used in its construction; Stadelmann, R. & Sourouzian, H. Die Pyramiden des Snofru In Dahschur. Erster Bericht über die Ausgrabungen an den nördlichen Steinpyramide In: MDAIK 38/1982, 382.
41 It was J. Perring again who carried out the first measurements of the pyramid and cleaned the corridor leading to the three chambers in the interior, see n. 33; de Morgan in 1894-5 and A. Hassein in 1944 were the next to survey the pyramid.
42 Works during the 10-year exploration around the Red pyramid were conducted by R. Stadelmann, whose interests are in the history of the 4th dynasty and especially the reign of Sneferu.
43 Already in 1894/95 de Morgan had excavated, in the eastern necropolis of the pyramid, tombs from the time of the 4th dynasty, cf. de Morgan, J. Fouilles à Dahchour I (1894) 8-14 and II (1894-95) 1-23; after Stadelmann, R. Op. cit., 381.
45 The same designation of the pyramid can be seen on a figure of a priest of the Middle Kingdom which was actually discovered in the valley temple of the Bent pyramid; Fakhry, A. Op. cit., 573 575, see also Edwards, I. E. S. Op. cit., 76.
I. E. S. Edwards was the first to mark that the presence of the Horus name on the masonry of the pyramid was not an irrefutable argument for belonging because there is evidence for at least one king from the Old Kingdom who, in building his pyramid, used blocks which bore the name of his predecessor\textsuperscript{46}. More indicative, he noted seems to be the mastabas of Sneferu's courtiers around the pyramid that would not have been there if he had not been their sovereign\textsuperscript{47}. On the other hand, if we trust L. Borchardt that the original position of the decree mentioned above was on the edge of the cultivation near the Red pyramid, this pyramid turns out to be the other of the "Two pyramids of Sneferu". The first one should be the Bent or the Southern pyramid designated as such on the inscription of the false door of Duare, as its location is in south direction only in relation to the Red or the Northern one.

While all these suppositions were made through sound reasoning, the last excavations of the German Institute of Archeology proved them to be true. In clearing the eastern site of the pyramid where the mortuary temple was expected to have been situated, fragments of relief scenes were discovered, some of them rather large and showing the king in a Ḥb-ṣd cloak sitting on a throne. On one of the fragments a Horus name was inscribed that could undoubtedly be restored to the one of Sneferu - Nb-\textit{m\textsuperscript{3}f}\textsuperscript{48}. Thus the latter was ascertained as the owner of the Red pyramid at Dahshur as well.

Last but not least the pyramid of Meidum will be considered. Out of the three pyramids in question its belonging seems most difficult to determine. Though certain arguments are available in favor of Sneferu as its owner, the debates in relation to this issue have not been completely settled yet.

In many respects the pyramid of Meidum is one of the most significant and at the same time it may be the most mysterious monument from the time of the Old Kingdom. Built cumulatively, i.e. in successive coats, each one of them bearing a furnished dressed face, it presents one of the best opportunities for the egyptologists to follow the development of construction methods and different types of royal funerary architecture at the time. The puzzling question we shall turn back to later is what was the purpose for the erection of such unusual and unique monument?

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.; the king in question was Unas, the last king of the 5\textsuperscript{th} dynasty;
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.;
\textsuperscript{48} Stadelmann, R., \textit{Die Pyramiden des Snofru in Dahshur. Zweiter Bericht über die Ausgrabungen an der nördlichen Steinpyramide}, MDAIK, 39/1983, 233, fig. 5; idem, \textit{The development of the pyramid temple...}, 5, pl.3b;
The strange shape of the Meidum pyramid has drawn and still draws the attention of many egyptologists. For that reason it has been much explored and many opinions have been given in relation to the most controversial issues mentioned above. Gaston Maspero was the first to enter the pyramid in 1882 but its initial thorough investigation was undertaken ten years later by F. Petrie\textsuperscript{49}. G. Wainright, L. Borchartd and A. Rowe were the next scholars to survey the monument\textsuperscript{50}. Its last exploration was carried out in 1980's as a part of the continuing program of Egyptian Antiquities Organization for restoration and preservation of the pyramids and was directed by the Egyptian archeologist Ali El-Khouli\textsuperscript{51}.

Already during Petrie’s excavation in 1892 a lot of inscriptions and graffiti in and around the mortuary temple were unearthed. Left there by visitors of Middle and New Kingdom time they showed clearly the then people's belief that this temple belonged to Sneferu\textsuperscript{52}. In fact, their uncovering was very essential, since the initial finds in and outside the pyramid were completely silent about who the builder of this monument was\textsuperscript{53}. Subsequently other evidence also appeared to support the data from the above mentioned graffiti. I would like to present here the most significant facts in relation to this issue following the pattern applied by Dietrich Wildung in his article “Zur Deutung der Pyramide von Medum” from 1969\textsuperscript{54}:

1) The tombs in the necropolis at the pyramid of Meidum belonged to people of Sneferu's family and court, while Mtn, one of the most prominent officials of Huni, was buried in Saqqara\textsuperscript{55};

2) One of the lists from Abusir papyri containing temple incomes of the Neferirkara mortuary temple mentions a place called \textit{dd-Snfrw} as a supplier of the latter\textsuperscript{56}.

\textsuperscript{49}Petrie, W. M. F. \textit{Medum}, L., 1892;
\textsuperscript{50}These Egyptologists paid attention mainly to the methods of construction;
\textsuperscript{51}El-Khouli, A. \textit{Medum}, (ACE Report 3) 1991;
\textsuperscript{52}In finding the graffiti, Petrie expressed his satisfaction by saying “...but my satisfaction was complete when I caught sight of Sneferu's name, and knew that at last there was monumental evidence for attribution, which had always seemed very probable, but which had been as yet without proof…””, after Jhonson, G. \textit{The Pyramid of Meidum. Part I.}, KMT. A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt, 4/1993, 68.
\textsuperscript{53}Initially there wasn't a single name to give us a clue of the king who might have built the pyramid. The burial chamber was empty and so was the surface of the two uncovered stelae in the mortuary temple; cf. Jhonson, G. \textit{Op. cit.}, 65-66.
\textsuperscript{54}In Rde 21/1969, 135-145.
\textsuperscript{55}Huni was the other king whom the scholars attribute the erection of the Meidum pyramid, or at least of its initial stage; see also Stadelmann, R. MDAIK 36/1980, 446, n.38.
3) In the temple of Meidum a statuette was found with an inscription on it evoking the “Gods who are in dd-Snfrw”\(^{57}\).

4) Two graffiti in the pyramid temple dated from the Middle Kingdom time mention the name of Sneferu in the following way:

“Wnn-nfr n n nsw-bjt Snfrw ḫntjw…”

“Wnn-nfr is the name of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Snfrw, who is in front of…”\(^{58}\);

5) The scribe ‘3-hpr-k3-Rc-šnb who visited the temple of Meidum at the time of Tuthmose III described it as the “beautiful temple of the Horus Sneferu” and also spoke about “this pyramid of Horus Sneferu”\(^{59}\);

In the light of the above facts, I feel inclined to think that we should attribute the erection and use of the Meidum pyramid rather to Sneferu than to his predecessor. The single fact that no pyramid has been ascribed to Huni up to now\(^{60}\), as well as the preconceived idea that Sneferu could not have built four pyramids during the time of his rule, has made some egyptologists arrive at different conclusions in relation to this issue\(^{61}\).

**Second.** In the next few lines the question of Sneferu’s burial place will be discussed briefly. As is well known, no certain traces of royal interment have been detected in either of the three Sneferu's pyramids\(^{62}\). The wooden sarcophagus found by Petrie in the Meidum pyramid, proved to be

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\(^{57}\) *Ibid.*, n.5; In inscriptions from the tomb of Nefermaat (son of Sneferu), situated near the pyramid, the place Mnt-Snfrw is also mentioned; see Постовская, Н., “А царских кенотафах Древнего Египта”, ВДИ 1957, 125.

\(^{58}\) *Idem.*, 138, n.6.

\(^{59}\) There are many other graffiti giving the same information, but this one is perhaps the most indicative; *Idem*, 139, n.3.

\(^{60}\) In 1985 Nabil Swelim surveyed a large rock knoll at Abu Roash that Lepsius had seen covered with mudbricks and numbered I. A passage slopes down to a chamber of the kind found in pyramids of the early 4th dynasty. Though it is unique for this period in being made of mudbrick, Swelim dates it to the end of the 3rd dynasty or the start of the 4th, and assigns it to Huni; Lehner, M. *Op. cit.*, 96; see also Stadelmann, R. *Die Dreikammersystem der Königsgräber der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches*, MDAIK 47/1991, 380, n.24.

\(^{61}\) H. Ricke, for example, suggested that the pyramid had been erected by the order of Sneferu for his mother, while W. Smith reckoned that it had been designed for his father (Huni). Another assumption is that Sneferu had initially been buried in the Meidum pyramid and after the completion of the Red one, his mummy was removed there, after Постовская, Н. *Op. cit.*, 126; There has been also suggestion that Huni had begun the construction of the pyramid and Sneferu completed it after the death of the latter, see Савельева, Т. “Храмовые хозяйства Египта времен Древнего царства”, М., 1992, 38-9.

\(^{62}\) Since the pyramid at Seila has no burial chamber at all, it will not be considered in this paragraph; see n. 31.
of an earlier date\textsuperscript{63}, while the small mummy in a wooden box, discovered within the structure of the Bent pyramid, turned out to be that of a bird\textsuperscript{64}. Although remains of human burial still appeared in the chamber of the Red pyramid, it has not been ascertained whether or not they are from Sneferu's mummy\textsuperscript{65}.

The lack of certain evidence to confirm which Sneferu's real tomb was, has resulted in contradictory opinions on this point among the authorities. Ahmed Fakhry was the first to make some suggestion in relation to the issue. In consequence of the findings unearthed during his excavations between 1951 and 1955 he got "convinced that this king was buried in the Bent pyramid of Dahshur in the upper burial chamber at the end of the western gallery"\textsuperscript{66}. Many years later, in a survey made of the other (Red) pyramid of Dahshur, R. Stadelmann was perplexed by a quite unexpected find in the place where the pyramid temple was thought to have been situated. These were pieces of dark granite which, according to him, "may have belonged to a false door\textsuperscript{67}". In spite of the uncertainty expressed, the very fact that there was no trace of stelae - the usual feature of the other three pyramids of Sneferu - was enough to confirm, at least the different function of the Red pyramid.

As a result, Stadelmann found it necessary to reconsider the ideas of the pyramid temple and offered a critical note on the then prevailing concept of a pair of stelae as the main cult place in the 4\textsuperscript{th} dynasty mortuary temples\textsuperscript{68}. It should be noted, he remarked, that "from the end of the 4\textsuperscript{th} dynasty till the end of the New Kingdom it was always and only a false door that marked the central cult place in the royal funerary temples. Stelae on the contrary determine tumuli or pyramids as cenotaphs or royal memorials\textsuperscript{69}". Although the existence of a false door in the pyramid temple

\textsuperscript{63} "sarcophagus of the early plain type" - Petrie, W. M. F., \textit{Medium}, 1892, 11, after Постовская, Н., \textit{Op. cit.}, 125, n. 5.

\textsuperscript{64} Batrawi, A. \textit{Anatomical reports 1948. A small mummy from the pyramid of Dahshur}, ASAE 48/1948, 585-598.

\textsuperscript{65} Batrawi, A. \textit{The skeletal remains from the Northern Pyramid of Snefru}, ASAE, 51/1951, 435-440; after Stadelmann, R., \textit{MDAIK}, 36/1980, 448; Batrawi suggested that the mummy had been broken into pieces and burned by robbers in searching for jewelry that might have been wrapped up in it. Referring to the similar finds in the pyramids of Djoser and Djedkara, and noting that the remains were of the male sex, he ascribed the mummy to Sneferu; see Постовская, Н., \textit{Op. cit.}, 125.

\textsuperscript{66} Fakhry, A. \textit{The pyramids}, 1974, 97.


is ascertainable for sure as starting from the time of Sahure on\textsuperscript{70}, the lack of stelae in the other pyramid temples of the 4\textsuperscript{th} dynasty (except in Meidum and Dahshur-south), suggests that Stadelmann might be right\textsuperscript{71}.

Taking into consideration the above stated arguments, we may assume the Red pyramid at Dahshur as the most probable burial place of Sneferu. The Bent pyramid as well as the one at Maidum might have been initially designed for his tombs, as the burial departments and the official's necropolis would suggest\textsuperscript{72}, but were subsequently transformed into royal memorials for the deified king\textsuperscript{73}. This was not the case of the pyramid at Seila that had obviously been planned for a cenotaph from the very beginning\textsuperscript{74}.

Third. Finally, I would like to pay attention to the development of the pyramid complex as illustrated by the pyramids of Sneferu. Exactly during his reign some significant changes in the building and organization of the pyramid area took place that gave as a result the formation of the classical royal funerary complex of the Old Kingdom.

The initial steps to some fundamental transformations are already visible in the construction of the Meidum pyramid. In the first place, the whole complex changed its form and orientation - from a north-south oriented rectangle, like the one of Djoser, to an east-west oriented square as the pyramid installation was removed to the east side of the pyramid. The latter, however, consisting of a pair of stelae in an open court, an offering altar and a small antechamber, was of a simpler or at least different in function design than Djoser's one\textsuperscript{75}. All the other elements of the Meidum

\textsuperscript{70} The last ruler of the 4\textsuperscript{th} dynasty, Shepeseskaf, was the first king in whose mortuary temple a false door has been archeologically ascertained. He was, however, the only one of the dynasty.

\textsuperscript{71} Stadelmann's theory is open to criticism, of course. As he himself proposed "the question of the false door in the early 4\textsuperscript{th} dynasty funerary temples must be examined more closely and from different aspects", ibid.

\textsuperscript{72} The Bent pyramid does not have official's necropolis, probably because there was not enough time to be found such in between the removal from Meidum and the beginning of the Red pyramid at Dahshur; see Stadelmann, R. MDAIK 36/1980, 446.

\textsuperscript{73} See Wildung's view on what the function of the Meidum pyramid was in RdE 21/1969, 135-145; see also Stadelmann, R. La ville de pyramide à l'Ancien Empire, RdE 33/1982, 75-76.

\textsuperscript{74} See n. 31.

\textsuperscript{75} See Arnold, D. "Royal and Cult Complexes of the Old and Middle Kingdoms" In: Temples of Ancient Egypt (ed. by Byron E. Shafer), 1997, 45, who noted that "for the first time a cultic installation is directly connected to a royal tomb; no altars or offering places have been found in any of the earlier funerary complexes". The funerary temple of Djoser shows already the partition, characteristic of all the later temples, including the one of the Red pyramid, into an inner temple part with two funerary chapels and a more open temple part with two entrances and two open courts; see Stadelmann, R. The development of the ..., 2.
complex - a subsidiary pyramid\textsuperscript{76}, a long causeway, leading from the cultivated land to the pyramid, a pyramid town and a kind of gateway or protovalley temple - were newly introduced and they would become standard later\textsuperscript{77}. Yet another innovation showed the interior layout of the pyramid - the burial chamber was raised up into its body\textsuperscript{78}, which resulted in the lifting of the entrance above the first step of the structure too. The technique of corbelling, with each course of blocks projecting inwards above a certain height, used in the building of the very chamber was also a new achievement in the stone building methods applied.

The Bent pyramid at Dahshur was the first attempt, though unsuccessful, to erect a true pyramid. At first sight, it did not show much progress further, especially in the construction of the mortuary temple, which turned out to be almost identical with, or even more simplified than the one of the Meidum pyramid. Its valley temple, however, is a big step ahead, already displaying the main features of the later valley temples of the 4\textsuperscript{th} dynasty. It is a rectangular structure consisting of two large magazines, lying on either side of the entrance vestibule, an open court with pillared portico and a row of six chapels in the rear part of which statues of the king were kept\textsuperscript{79}. Since the chapels are not usually presented in the later buildings of the kind, M. Lehner suggested that this one was in fact a combination of both mortuary and valley temple, all the more that it was not situated near the cultivated land, as the other were, but a little further into the desert\textsuperscript{80}. This structure is also the first example of aboveground royal funerary architecture decorated with reliefs, showing the divine king accompanied by the gods and performing various ceremonies. The pyramid itself is unique in having two entrances - one on the north face and another on the west - leading to two separate chambers, both constructed with corbel vaults and raised, though at different height, up into the body of the pyramid. The one at the end of the north passage had an antechamber too,

\textsuperscript{76} This element might have its predecessor in the south tomb in Djoser's complex.
\textsuperscript{78} In fact, the chamber was built partly in the rock substratum and partly in the core of the superstructure, but the tendency toward lifting the burial departments up into the pyramid's body is at hand, see Edwards, I. E. S. \textit{Op. cit.}, 65. The two antechambers, however, were still cut deep into the ground; see Stadelmann, R. MDAIK 47/1991, 380.
\textsuperscript{79} Fakhry, A. ASAE 52/1954, 571-573, Edwards, I. E. S. \textit{Op. cit.}, 73. These statue chapels made Dieter Arnold call this structure "statue temple". He also pointed out that it was not a coincidence that statue cult uses appeared also in contemporary private mastabas where ceremonies were performed in the first real cult chambers. see Arnold, D. \textit{Op. cit.}, 47.
\textsuperscript{80} This position is uncommon since the valley temple was usually designed to be reached from the river by a canal. Lehner, M. \textit{Op. cit.}, 104. Although the chapels really miss in later temples, their content - the royal statues - is still present, though incorporated into a different design.
built, still after the old manner deep under the desert surface. The novel technique of corbelling, however, was applied here too.

In the building of the other pyramid at Dahshur we can see at last the successful end of the efforts to achieve a true pyramidal shape. The Red pyramid represents also the missing thread in the mortuary temple development between Djoser and Chufu. Although little is left from the structure, the archeological evidence is enough to confirm a separation, on the analogy of Djoser's, of an "inner" and an "outer" part. The first consists of two rooms, the southern one being "clearly the funerary chapel" at the western end of which the pieces of dark granite were found. The "outer" part can most probably be reconstructed as two freestanding chapels, which Stadelmann suggested to have been made for the statues of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, with an open pillared courtyard in between them. Thus the main features of the classical pyramid temple - an open court, a pillared courtyard, two statue chapels and an offering chapel in the rear part - are already represented here. Right next to the north and south of the mortuary temple, but still in the pyramid area, a number of deep holes filled with earth are noticeable. Being undoubtedly tree holes, they probably represent a sacred grove, which up to this last finding has been textually assigned to the 5th dynasty at the earliest, while archeologically it was firstly ascertained for the tomb of Mentuhotep in Deir el Bahri. The pyramid complex does not show any traces of a causeway. Having in mind the unfinished state of the complex itself, the building of such might not have been started at all. Nevertheless, a valley temple must have existed, since the decree of Pepi I concerning the pyramid town of Sneferu was found exactly near the cultivation where it should have been situated. The interior layout of the Red pyramid was a result, as was its true pyramidal shape, of a gradually developing design that reached its final stage here. The entrance passage leads to two antechambers made with corbel roofs and raised for the first time up into the pyramid.

81 See n. 78.
82 Stadelmann, R. "The development of the...", 6. Stadelman's opinion is based on the fact that this chapel lies exactly on the axis of the temple; see also idem. "Pyramiden und Necropole des Snofru in Dahschur. Dritter Vorbericht über die Grabungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Dahschur", MDAIK 49/1993, 263.
83 See above p. 11.
84 Stadelmann, R., "The development of the...", 6.
85 Stadelmann, R. " MDAIK 49/1993, 261.
86 Stadelmann, R., "The development of the...", 5, pl.2A and 2B.
87 See n. 44.
88 Савельева, Т., Op. cit., 4; Edwards, I. E. S., Op. cit., 76. It is unfortunate that the valley temple is not preserved, since it would have been the link in this structure development between Sneferu and Chefren, the latter being already different in design from the one of the Bent pyramid.
structure. The burial chamber itself was the last touch in this perfectly conceived burial arrangement. It was elevated considerably higher than the antechambers and was the first one oriented in an east-west direction. The most interesting thing in this, as well as in the burial chambers of the other Sneferu's pyramids, however, was the fact that there obviously had been no plan to place a sarcophagus in either of them.\(^\text{89}\)

In surveying Sneferu's pyramids, particularly that of Meidum and Dahshur-North, another two features showing further development could be noted. The first one is the official's necropolis that had been set up already in the 1\(^{st}\) dynasty, but had not been particularly organized. Here, in Meidum and Dahshur-North\(^\text{90}\), the elite cemetery becomes a compound, well-arranged part of the pyramid complex, so as to reach its perfection in the Giza necropolis. The second one is the progress achieved in the building methods. The technique of lying the stones in inclined courses, employed in all the step pyramids, including the initial stages of the Meidum pyramid and also the erection of the Bent pyramid, changed into a level-course technique that was firstly applied in the construction of the Red pyramid.\(^\text{91}\)

The above stated transformations, made in the layout of the royal funerary complex during Sneferu's reign, illustrated that some very important changes in the concept of kingship and king's afterlife had taken place which resulted in the formation of a new kind of state administration centered around the very pyramid complex. This is the reason to elaborate on these two questions in the next paragraphs.

### III. State administration and pyramid economy

The institution of the classic pyramid complex by Sneferu strongly affected the state administration. The building and maintenance of a gigantic, pyramid-shaped tomb together with its adjoining structures, intended to serve the cult of both the living and the deceased king and all the deities involved, was an undertaking that required much more working force and supplies than ever before. This meant that the whole state production and human resources were concentrated mainly on the royal residence and

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\(^\text{89}\) At least such was not found. Stadelmann suggested that the very burial chamber was designed for a sarcophagus, a fact that was unprecedented before or after Sneferu's reign.; see Stadelmann, R. MDAIK 36/1980, 444, idem MDAIK 47/1991, 382.

\(^\text{90}\) For the lack of necropolis at the Bent pyramid see n. 72.

pyramid complex\textsuperscript{92} turning them both into Egypt's economic nexus and center of distribution, thus resulting in the gradual centralization of the state\textsuperscript{93}. The sources from the reign of Sneferu are comparatively scarce, but are fairly enough to illustrate this process.

In the first place there is evidence showing that during Sneferu's reign much of the uncultivated land was being reclaimed by founding new settlements (\textit{grgwt}) and estates (\textit{hwwt})\textsuperscript{94} mostly in the region of the Delta, which was still rather swampy then\textsuperscript{95}. The first are mentioned in private inscriptions from the time, in particular those of \textit{Mtn}\textsuperscript{96} and \textit{Pfrmfr}\textsuperscript{97}. These two were high officials at the time of \textit{Huni} and \textit{Sneferu} during whose service 19 \textit{grgwt} might have been set up in the area of I, II, V and VI nomes of Lower Egypt\textsuperscript{98}. The foundation of \textit{hwwt} estates is referred to in the Palermo Stone Annals in connection with the "building of the southern and northern wall(s) of \textit{hwwt} Sneferu (\textit{kd inb (w) rsjw mhtjw hwwt Snfrw})"\textsuperscript{99}.

\textsuperscript{92} The idea of a capital city in the modern sense didn't exist in Ancient Egypt. The place where the king resided was always in the vicinity of the necropolis where his funerary complex was built. This whole area was called "\textit{r3 s} of king \textit{N}" and comprised the king's palace and pyramid complex. See Stadelmann, R. RdE 33/1982, 76-77. Lehner, M. \textit{Op. cit.}, 230.

\textsuperscript{93} The process of centralization had already begun during Djoser's reign as his funerary complex illustrates, being the first compound one. It was still much smaller in size than those of the 4\textsuperscript{th} dynasty were.

\textsuperscript{94} In her book "Храмовые хозяйства Египта времени Древнего царства", M., 1992, p. 15-16. Т. Савельева appropriately noted that there was a difference in the meaning and usage of \textit{sp3wt} and \textit{njwwt} on one hand and \textit{grgwt} and \textit{hwwt} on the other. The first were regions and settlements that had already existed in the beginning of Egyptian civilization and which the Gods bring (\textit{jn.n.f}) gather (\textit{jn.k.n.f}) or give (\textit{rdj.n.f}) to the king (Pyr. 993, 1475) in the making of the "united" Egyptian state, as the subsequent Pyramid texts inform us. On the contrary, the second two were always built up by the king's order.

\textsuperscript{95} The intensive reclamation of the Delta began already in pre-dynastic times, as the mention of "irrigated lands" (\textit{sp3wt}) in the western and eastern Delta on sealings of the 1\textsuperscript{st} dynasty king Den showed. However, at the time of Sneferu vast areas of land still remained uncultivated. See Савельева, Т. "Аграрный строй Египта..., 44-45.

\textsuperscript{96} The tomb of Meten in Saqqara was discovered and published by R. Lepsius in 1849; Lepsius, K. R. \textit{Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Äthiopien}, Abt. II, Berlin, 1949, Bl. 3-7. The inscriptions are being kept in the Berlin museum (N 1105, 1106) and were issued twice by H. Schäfer and K. Sethe in 1903.; Schäfer, H. \textit{Aegyptische Inschriften aus den Kön. Museen zu Berlin, I}, Leipzig, 1901, 68, 73-87; Sethe, K. \textit{Urkunden des Alten Reiches, I}, Leipzig, 1903, 1-7.

\textsuperscript{97} Junker, H., "\textit{Pfrmfr}\textsuperscript{;}, \textit{ZAS} 75/1935. 63-84.


\textsuperscript{99} Schäfer, H. \textit{Ein Bruchstück ...}, 42, Nr. 2. H. Gauthier located these walls in the region of Memphis. See Gauthier, H. \textit{Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques}, Cairo, v. IV, 45, after Савельева, Т. "К вопросу о значении терминов “pr”, “hwt” и “hwt 3t” в надписи Менен", Древний Египет, 1960, 185, p.33. In the Annals the setting up of two other kinds of estates or structures is also mentioned whose meaning is not very clear. Schäfer, H, \textit{Op. cit.}, 42, Nr.3. While the second was obviously designed for cattle, as its determinative showed, the function of the first one is more obscure. M. Lehner suggested that the first kind were estates with people while the second were farms". Lehner, M. \textit{Op. cit.} 228.
The estates (ḥwḥt) and villages (njwḥt) of Sneferu are also depicted on the walls of the covered portico and the central hall of the valley temple of the Bent pyramid at Dahshur. They are listed in topographical order from south to north as each of them is personified as a female figure holding in both her arms an offering-table laden with bread and water. The sign for njwḥt surmounts the females' heads and over it the name of Sneferu is framed in the sign for ḥwḥt. Unfortunately, the wall with the estates of Lower Egypt is badly damaged and most of them are lost. The preserved ones together with those found on blocks in the debris and those of Upper Egypt number 44 - 34 in Upper Egypt and 10 in Lower. If we lay them on a map together with the ones known from the 3rd dynasty monuments, as M. Lehner has done, we will see the obvious "internal colonization" that Sneferu undertook in the nomes of Middle Egypt and in the still uncultivated land of the eastern Delta.

The concept grg.t has undoubtedly had the invariable meaning of an artificially cultivated and built up area for a long time. The very sign of the word confirms this meaning showing the very process of cultivation without any special implications of the status of the settlements it designates. That is not the situation concerning the ḥwḥt estate whose character, particularly in the period of the Old Kingdom has been much discussed. Fortunately, the inscriptions of Mtn give us a clue in relation to this issue since this man, during his official service, held the posts of "ḥk3 pr", "ḥk3 ḥwḥt" and "ḥk3 ḥwḥt ʿ3t". In translating and analyzing the inscriptions, T. Saveljeva paid special attention to the meaning of the terms "

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100 Fakhry, A. ASAE 52/1954, 577-583, fig. 4-6. The estates in Upper Egypt were sculptured on the western side, and those of Lower Egypt - on the eastern side.
101 Idem, 582.
102 It is interesting to note that four of the preserved estates in Lower Egypt are located in the XIIIth nome, which is that of Heliopolis; see idem, 583.
104 Ibid.
105 Except the four preserved estates in the Heliopolitan nome, there is no clear evidence that the other Lower Egyptian estates of Sneferu were situated in the eastern Delta. The nomes mentioned in the inscriptions of Meten as his place of service, however, indicate that the western Delta was much more cultivated at the end of the 3rd dynasty and the beginning of the 4th when this official lived than its eastern part was.
107 This is sign U 18 according to Gardiner’s list (Egyptian Grammar, 1957 3rd, 517) and it illustrates a pick excavating a pool. See also Савельева, Т. Op. cit., 42.
108 The later meaning of "ḥwḥt" as a "temple", "sanctuary" or "temple domain" did not hold force for the Old Kingdom time. See the discussion in Савельева, Т. "К вопросу о значении терминов "pr", "ḥwḥt" и "ḥwḥt ʿ3t"...", 183-185.
pr”, “hwit” and “hwit q3t”¹⁰⁹ and drew the conclusion that in the Old Kingdom time, “hwit” with a name written into the very sign stood either for settlements with the adjoining estates (in this case they have a determinative for a settlement) or estates intended to serve the mortuary cult of kings, members of the royal family and high officials¹¹⁰. Such was obviously the function of Sneferu's estates depicted in his valley temple, confirmed also by the offerings, which their female personifications carry. Thus the benefit from his intensive “colonization” was twice as bigger. On one hand much of the still uncultivated land throughout Egypt (especially in the Delta) became arable, and on the other - the production it gave was oriented to maintaining his cult and hence the pyramid economy as a whole¹¹¹.

In discussing the state economy we should also survey the pyramid complex as built up by Sneferu since, as has already been implied, its layout and way of administration reflected the process of centralization. This is best shown by the king's pyramid-shaped tomb, which then became the biggest and most distinctive part of the funerary complex¹¹², as if to illustrate the increasing quantity of work and food supplies the latter needed and did receive. This “core” was accessible only through the causeway leading to the real entrance of the pyramid complex, which developed into a new separate component - the valley temple. Except being a way in, the main function of this structure was to be a place for deification of the king, at that while still alive¹¹³. This meant that constant staff of priests was necessary for the maintenance of his cult, which naturally led to the appearance of another new element in the pyramid complex. This was the pyramid town¹¹⁴, in which the needed priests and their personnel lived. At first, it was organized around the valley temple, but later, usually after the king's death, it gradually expanded and spread within its boundaries leaving

¹¹⁰ Idem, 189. See also Савельева, Т. “Надписи из гробниц[ь] Мечен[а]”, In: Древний Египет и Древняя Африка, М. 1967, 121. The area of these estates was very large, as buildings, settlements and gardens were situated within them.
¹¹¹ This production was distributed to all the cult places of Sneferu, which at the time of his rule were at least two - one at Seila in the Fayum oases and another in the Letopolis nome of Lower Egypt.
¹¹² Thus it was in contrast to Djoser's, and probably all the other stepped-pyramid tombs from the 3rd dynasty time, which were designed just as a part of the whole complex.
¹¹³ In the valley temple the physical body of the living and later also of the deceased king was presented by a statue or many statues animated daily by the priests through the “opening of the mouth” ceremony. This was also the reason for D. Arnold to call this structure “statue temple”. See n. 79.
¹¹⁴ Though the pyramid town is firstly attested since the reign of Sneferu, Stadelmann suggested that its origin as a part of the funerary complex should be sought in the Djoser’s complex, which, he noted, after its completion had to be kept by staff and priests. See Stadelmann, R. RdE 33/1882, 67.
free area only for the performance of the cult. The evolution of these settlements throughout the Old Kingdom is notably indicative both of the duration of a certain king's cult and of the administration of the very complex and hence of the whole state.

The pyramid town as a part of the pyramid complex has not been much studied. There are only two detailed works, those of W. Helck\textsuperscript{115} and R. Stadelmann\textsuperscript{116}, which, though published through a big period of time, complement one another. Unfortunately, the evidence from the reign of Sneferu is comparatively scarce mostly for the lack of previous data and hence nothing to rely on. However, the information available is enough to illustrate the pattern of the pyramid town administration at the time.

In the first place, it should be noted that we did not have contemporary evidence for either of the pyramid towns of Sneferu. All of them are mentioned in records from a later time\textsuperscript{117} and only the one in Meidum is archeologically attested\textsuperscript{118}. Another important fact is that there is no data of a pyramid town designated as such till the 6\textsuperscript{th} dynasty time, except the one of Menkaura\textsuperscript{119}. What we have is a number of priestly titles related to the pyramid complexes as a whole, which in our case are $Dd$ Snfrw in Meidum, $H^uj$ Snfrw $rsj$ and $H^uj$ Snfrw $mhj$ in Dahshur. This can only suggest to us that initially, including at the time of Sneferu, the pyramid town was just a part of the king's funerary ensemble\textsuperscript{120} and was therefore administratively subordinate to its overseer ($jmj$-$rsj$ $Dd$ or $H^uj$ Snfrw). A question of greater significance for our discussion, however, is who the inhabitants of such a settlement were and what their social status was.

To find the answer, we need to look through the data available from the reign of Sneferu, gathered carefully in the above-mentioned works of W. Helck and R. Stadelmann. The information received shows that during Sneferu's lifetime his pyramid complexes were administered by lower members of the royal family\textsuperscript{121} who, together with their personnel, serviced the king's cult in the valley temple as well and therefore were settled in the area around, thus founding the pyramid town. There the royalties functioned

\textsuperscript{115} Helck, W., "Bemerkungen zu den Pyramidenstädten im Alten Reich", MDAIK 15/1957, 91-111.
\textsuperscript{118} Stadelmann, R. Op. cit., 69. The area on which the settlements in Dahshur are supposed to have been situated is now under the level of the underground water, which makes the excavations impossible.
\textsuperscript{120} Idem, 69.
\textsuperscript{121} These lower members were actually not first-born sons and daughters of the major queen as well as all other children of the king born by the minor queens.
as prophets (ḥmww-ntr) of the God-king, while their servants assisted them as wꜣbw priests. All of them, as Helck's list shows\textsuperscript{122}, held secular offices too, including the one of an overseer of the pyramid complexes and respectively, towns. Unfortunately, for the reign of Sneferu, we have only one overseer attested - the king's "eldest son"\textsuperscript{123} K3-nfr who, except being a king's prophet, was also a vizier (tꜣtj) at his father. As we know of another "eldest king's son" who held the office of a vizier, but not that of an overseer\textsuperscript{124}, and as there was not an overseer among the other prophets, it is reasonable to suggest that the overseers of Sneferu's pyramid complexes were chosen among the lower-ranked wꜣbw priests. In this relation it is interesting to note that from the reign of Nj-wsr-Rc on it was only the vizier who functioned as an overseer of the pyramid town\textsuperscript{125}. At that time, however, princes no longer held this office, as well as that of a king's prophet\textsuperscript{126}.

The above stated facts lead us to the conclusion that Sneferu laid the foundations of the centralized Egyptian state administered almost entirely by members of the royal family, as the offices were charged in a hierarchical order from the higher to the lower members. This could explain why lower-ranked officials or priests, who however were royalties, held the important position of an overseer of the pyramid complex. The situation gradually changed throughout the decades until late in the 5\textsuperscript{th} dynasty when just the opposite occurred, as has been shown.

Finally, I would like to note that during the reign of Sneferu, we could find officials holding very high positions without being members of the royal family. Such were Mtn and Phrmfr, mentioned in the beginning of this paragraph. They, however, had begun their service at the time of Sneferu's predecessor and, as the tradition was, continued in his reign, too.

\textsuperscript{122} See the list in Helck, W. \textit{Op. cit.}, 92. Helck suggested that the prophets lived in the royal residence. From the publishing of the Abusir archives by P. Posener-Kriège, however, it has become clear that they resided in the pyramid town. This could also explain why princes of a lower rank functioned as prophets. See Stadelmann, R. \textit{Op. cit.}, 74.

\textsuperscript{123} This meant the first-born son of some of the minor queens.

\textsuperscript{124} This was Nefermaat who held the office of a vizier before Kanefer. Except being viziers, these men were also "overseers of the works (jɪnɪj-r3 kꜣtj)" at their father's pyramids; Stadelmann, R. \textit{MDA1K} 36/1980, 440-442; Smith, W. \textit{"The Old Kingdom in Egypt...}, 166.

\textsuperscript{125} Helck, W., \textit{Op. cit.}, 94.

\textsuperscript{126} Idem, 95; Smith, W., \textit{Op. cit.}, 187.
IV. Religious development

In the paragraphs offered hitherto, the reign of Sneferu has been presented mainly through its “material” aspects, mirrored in the changes made in the funerary architecture, the building methods, and the state economy. In this one we have tried to comprehend the religious ideas standing behind these transformations since they were the main factor for their accomplishment.

Firstly, it should be noted that the monuments from the reign of Sneferu offer a very interesting combination between the two main concepts of the king's nature - that of the god Horus and the Sun god. The impression one could get is that exactly at that time they merged, with the solar concept gaining predominance. This is best seen in the development of the three pyramid complexes of Sneferu, as well as in the evolution of the king's titulary.

The earliest pyramid of Sneferu, that at Meidum, was initially built as a step pyramid, thus continuing the then prevailing tradition of the king's closer connection with Horus. The evidence of the king's cult there, which was maintained throughout the Middle and the New Kingdom and showed, that at that time Sneferu was worshipped as one of that God's manifestations, could confirm this. The new east-west orientation of the funerary complex, however, together with the construction of the other two Sneferu's tombs at Dahshur as true pyramids, followed by the completion of the Meidum pyramid as such too, "betrayed" the grandly conceived plan of Sneferu to give prominence to the solar concept in the Egyptian religious thought. Noting the great significance of the pyramidal form, J. H. Breasted wrote:

“The pyramidal form of the king's tomb was of the most sacred significance. The king was buried under the very symbol of the Sun-god which stood in the holy of the holies in the Sun-temple at Heliopolis, a symbol upon which, from the day when he created the gods, he was accustomed to manifest himself in the form of a Phoenix; and when in mountainous proportions the pyramid rose above the king's sepulchre,

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127 I am inclined to think that the step pyramid shape of the royal tomb, introduced by Djoser, was more connected with Horus and the stellar afterlife existence of the king than with the Sun god. This could be confirmed by a monument of the first dynasty ruler Adjib. It represents a rectangle on a step mound with the name of the king. Within the rectangle there is an inscription that reads "Protection around Horus”. See Lehner, M. Op. cit., 81.

128 Wildung, D. RdE 21/1969, 139-140.
dominating the royal city below and the valley beyond for many miles, it was the loftiest object which greeted the Sun-god in all the land and his morning rays glittered on its shining summit long before he scattered the shadows in the dwellings of the humble mortals below.\footnote{Breasted, J. H. The development of religion and thought in Ancient Egypt, 1912, 72.}

Though expressed almost a hundred years ago, this view still gives the best notion of what the meaning and symbolism of the pyramidal form is.

The transition to a true pyramidal shape was accompanied by transformations in the exterior layout of the whole complex and the interior arrangement of the very tomb, which were also in accordance with the solar idea. In the first place, the new east-west orientation resulted in the removal of the mortuary temple on the east side of the pyramid thus facing the rising sun. The tendency to raise the chambers from ground level into the body of the pyramid was probably another reflection of the king's growing desire to identify himself not only with Horus, but also with the Sun god. The final step was made when in the construction of the Red pyramid the burial chamber orientation was changed in an east-west direction too, and would stay unaltered till the end of the Old Kingdom. Another novelty to remark was the two elements that appeared in the funerary complex - the valley temple and the causeway as its connection with the main body, i.e. the pyramid and the mortuary temple. The former became a place for the worship of both the reigning and the deceased king, while the latter developed into a link between the land of the living (the valley temple) and the dead (the mortuary temple and the pyramid tomb)\footnote{The completion of the Meidum pyramid as a true pyramid ended with the building of its valley temple. This is important since this temple was connected with the new religious ideas related to the worship of the living king.}. Thus the king's pyramid complex developed into an instrument where an ever-going life-to-death cycle was created, with the intention to enable the king's afterlife ascending to the Sun god and his exaltation as such on earth.

Last but not least in the discussion concerning Sneferu's pyramids and the religious development I would like to pay attention to the names of his two complexes at Dahshur, which are "\textit{Hj Snfrw rsj}" and "\textit{Hj Snfrw mhtj}". The meaning of the verb \textit{hj} “rise (of the sun), appear (of god or king)\footnote{Faulkner, R. A concise dictionary of Middle Egyptian, Oxford, 1962, 185; Wb III, 239-240.} is seen best through the hieroglyph it is written with the sign, depicting a hill over which emerge the rays of the rising sun\footnote{Gardiner, A. \textit{Op cit.}, 489, sign N 28.}. The same verb, as the evidence show, will be used later in relation to the appearance of the
Egyptian king as well (especially during the coronation ritual), implying his close connection with the Sun god. In this way Sneferu was the first king who began to demonstrate, through the arrangement and the names of his pyramid complexes at Dahshur, what became clear in his son’s reign Chufu - that the Egyptian king had become one with the Sun god.

The evolution and meaning of the king's name is significant evidence, which allows of tracing the religious thought at the time. As far as the name of Sneferu is concerned the first remarkable thing is the fact that from his reign onward, the birth name of the king was always different from the Horus and Nebti name and was invariably encircled in a ring. This ring, written with the sn - hieroglyph was the most indicative part of the king's titulary which conveyed the idea of endlessness expressed in the solar cycle. It was not only the kartouche that showed Sneferu's wish to be closer related with the Son god. His Horus name - Nb-m3t - also did. Nb-m3t means "Lord of Maat" and later was used only in connection with Re or Osiris. Taking into consideration the data presented so far, and the fact that at the time the king's person was mostly revealed through the Horus name, it was rather the Sun god with whom Sneferu identified himself.

The last part of Sneferu's titulary to be treated here is the so-called Horus of gold name, which was closely connected with the ring name and always preceded it. It had already appeared in the first dynasties written with the hieroglyph for gold above which one or more other signs were

133 The titulary of Sneferu, as illustrated on his monuments, looked the following way: Hr Nb-m3t Nswt-hjt Nbti Nb-m3t Hr m nbw Snfrw. Schott, S. "Zur Krönungstitulatur der Pyramidentime", NAWG I. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 1956/4, 64, 67.

134 There is evidence that this, so to say, "differentiation" of the king's person had already happened before, but wasn't a regular occurrence.

135 Of course, if not put in the "Palace facade" together with the Horus name. The ring or the kartouche had also appeared several times before, but not as a constant part of the king's titulary; see Barta, W. "Der Königsring als Symbol zyklischer Wiederkehr", ZAS, 98/1970, 7. Until recently, Huni was thought to have been the first king who inscribed his name in a kartouche, but on an unpublished cylinder seal in the Archeological Museum in Milano (Civiche Raccolte Archeologiche e Numismatiche, inv. RAN 997.02.01), one can easily discern a kartouche with the name of Peribsen (2nd Dynasty) inside it. The information about the seal is provided by F. Tiradritti – egyptologists at the above mentioned museum – on the catalog "KEMET – Alle sorgenti del Tempo" of the Archeaic – Ancient Egypt exhibition in Ravenna (1998).


placed\textsuperscript{139}. Haiba and Sneferu were the first to put the sign for falcon on it\textsuperscript{140}. At the time of Amenemhat I the falcon became invariable part of the name, and formed the third part of the king's titulary - *Falcon/Horus of gold (hr m nbw)*\textsuperscript{141}. The unchangeable element during the Old Kingdom, however, was only the sign for gold, where the more proper designation *gold name* comes from\textsuperscript{142}. The meaning of the *gold name* lies in its correct reading that O. Berleev, on the basis of a stela from the early 12\textsuperscript{th} dynasty\textsuperscript{143}, proved to have been *hr N m nbw*, where the first part *hr N*, in which *N* was an epithet of *hr*, characterized the second *nbw*. In the Old Kingdom time when the falcon was not a constant element of the name this formula seemed just as *N m nbw*, with the reservation that *N* here is not just an epithet, but designates the whole group of signs standing upon the gold. So the gold name of Djoser was *r*\textsuperscript{5} *m nbw* (*Sun in or made of gold*) while that of Sneferu - *"hr m nbw"*, i.e. *Falcon/Horus in or made of gold*. Noting that in the Egyptian's mind gold was a symbol of the divine flesh, it is evident that through this name the divine nature of the Egyptian king was expressed, defined additionally by the element standing upon the gold. Thus the gold name of Sneferu as stated above, showed not only his divinity but also his solar nature, since only the Sun was designated as a *Falcon of gold*\textsuperscript{144}.

I would like to note one more important feature concerning Sneferu's name, which, although not making a part of his titulary, perfectly illustrates the way he thought of himself. This is the epithet *ntr ˁ3* or "great God", which, as his inscription from Sinai showed, he attached to his ring name\textsuperscript{145}. It was already used in the first dynasty, but only in relation to gods, and mostly the Sun god Re whom the Egyptians believed to have been the predecessor of the Egyptian kings as the first ruler of Egypt\textsuperscript{146}. Sneferu was

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\textsuperscript{139} Schäfer, H. "Der Reliefschmuck der Berliner Tür aus der Stufenpyramide und der Königstitel Hr-nb", MDAIK 4/1933, Abb. 5, 8.

\textsuperscript{140} Берлес, О. ""Золотое имя" египетского царя" In: Ж. Ф. Шамполон и денковровка египетских иероглифов, М., 1979, 41.

\textsuperscript{141} Idem, 44. There is no certain evidence that in this name the falcon was also the God Horus.

\textsuperscript{142} Barta, W. "Zum Goldname der ägyptische Könige", ZÄS 95/1969, 82. The third name of Amenemhat III was called *rn nj nbw* (name belonging to gold or gold name), where it became clear that exactly the sign of "gold" was the core of the name, not the whole group with the falcon on it.

\textsuperscript{143} Idem, 49-50.

\textsuperscript{144} Idem, 54.


\textsuperscript{146} Berleev, O. "The eleventh dynasty in the dynastic history of Egypt", Studies presented to H. J. Polotsky (ed. by Dwight Young), 1981, 362; Савельева, Т. "Храмовые хозяйства...", 34.
the first king designated as ntr 'Ω while still alive\textsuperscript{147} thus trying to get closer to and identify himself with his creator.

Finally, in examining the religious development during Sneferu's reign, we can't overlook the appearance of the so-called mrt buildings. They are only textually attested and for a limited period of time - from 4\textsuperscript{th} to 6\textsuperscript{th} dynasties. From the examples in which a reference to these structures is made, collected and interpreted by W. Barta\textsuperscript{148}, it is evident that the first mentioning concerns the reign of Sneferu. As the purpose of this paper is not to get into details in the issue, a summary of Barta's observations made will be made:

1) The sources available show that these buildings were most probably located in the vicinity of the king's palace\textsuperscript{149}.

2) The mrt buildings were closely connected with their builder, i.e. the king, as they were always mentioned together with his birth or throne name\textsuperscript{150}.

3) The main function of the mrt buildings was to serve as a cult place of Hathor, particularly in her manifestation as the sycamore tree in Memphis. Her son Ihi, as well as the Son god Re, were also worshipped there.\textsuperscript{151}

4) The sources reveal that the cult service in the mrt buildings could be performed both for the living and the deceased king\textsuperscript{152}.

5) All the examples suggest that these buildings served for a place where the sacred marriage of Hathor and the reigning king occurred thus providing for the fertility of the land and the royal pair\textsuperscript{153}. This ritual was performed for the deceased king too, as he was Kamutef and Hathor was his mother. That guaranteed the resurrection of the ruler and his re-ascension to the throne.

6) W. Barta suggested that the deceased king should be identified with Re, while Ihi, in the image of the reigning ruler, was the symbol of the

\textsuperscript{147} From the Pyramid Texts, inscribed in the kings' pyramids from the end of the 5\textsuperscript{th} dynasty till the end of the Old Kingdom, we learn that at his death every king becomes ntr a3.


\textsuperscript{149} Idem, 101-102.

\textsuperscript{150} Idem, 102.

\textsuperscript{151} Ihi is mentioned in the example of "mrt Sneferu". God Re appears in a group of figures on a sealing from the time of Menkauhor, where the deceased king is placed between Re and Hathor as a determinative for "mrt Menkauhor"; Ibid.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{153} In the Old Kingdom the king was called "worshipper (dw\textsuperscript{3}tf)" of Hathor. At the same time, however, he was loved (mrj) by her and was designated as her lover (mrj). Idem, 103, n.45.
regenerated king. Thus an eternal cycle of his resurrection was created, where the Egyptian ruler was both Re (as a father) and Ihi (as a son).154

The appearance of the mrt building as a Hathor's sanctuary is of great importance for understanding the religious thought at the time. This goddess was worshipped from the beginning of the Egyptian history and was closely connected with the Horus king as his mother, especially in her manifestation of the sycamore tree155. As such she was related with the king's mother, too, who held the title of an “Overseer of the works in the sycamore house”156. In the mrt sanctuary, however, the relationships between Hathor and the king were placed on a different level, since there this goddess was worshipped not only as his mother, but as his wife too, while he played the role of both her son and lover. This marked the beginning of an ever-going cycle, which was the embodiment of the Egyptians' belief of constant regeneration of both the king and the world157.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to lay stress on the great respect and love the Egyptians themselves had for Sneferu, which was expressed in the cult they maintained till the end of the Egyptian civilization.

The evidence for the cult performed at the temple of the Meidum pyramid was already presented in the previous pages (p. 9, 10), showing that there Snefereu was worshipped as a manifestation of the god Horus (p. 20). One more thing needs noting here. On graffiti from the Middle Kingdom time Sneferu is mentioned together with Amun-Re, Ra-Harakhty and Atum, and so he was thought to be one of the great gods of Heliopol158.

As for the pyramids at Dahshur, only the Southern one was where the cult to Sneferu was maintained. The remains of the pyramid temple show that its plan was altered three times after the original construction. This

154 Idem, 104.
156 In her titulary the king's mother wasn't designated directly as Hathor, but the king was called “her Horus”, Idem, 46.
157 This might also have been connected with the appearance of Osiris in the Egyptian religious thought.
happened during the reign of Merenre in the 6th dynasty, then in the 12th dynasty when the necropolis at Dahshur was in use again and probably in the Ptolemaic times and was in relation to the reviving of the cult to Sneferu. There are also two altars left from 12th dynasty time.\(^{159}\)

In Dahshur like in Meidum, Sneferu was not only worshipped but was also deified as a God. On a stela dated from the year 27 of Amenemhat III he was mentioned in the manner of a God by whom the reigning king was beloved,\(^{160}\) while at Sarabit el-Khadim we find him represented among the Gods worshipped by Hatshepsut.\(^{161}\)

The memory of Sneferu, however, remained not only in the ancient Egyptians' mind. His name, though somewhat changed has survived in the name of the modern town Ašfûn el-Maṭâ'na, situated in Upper Egypt on the west bank of the Nile, some 45 km, south of Luxor.\(^{162}\) This was one of the many “ḥwwt” founded by Sneferu for the maintenance of his mortuary cult. A function which it performs up to now, keeping his name alive.

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\(^{159}\) Fakhry, A. ASAE 51/1951, 515-521.

\(^{160}\) Idem, ASAE 52/1954, 576, n.2.

\(^{161}\) Ibid.

\(^{162}\) Cerný, J. “The true form of the name of king Snefru”, RSO 38/1963, 90-91.