



AN OVERVIEW OF THE OFFERING TRAYS AND SOUL HOUSES IN THE PENN MUSEUM

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ABSTRACT

This paper is part of ongoing research into the largely unpublished corpus of offering trays and soul houses currently in the care of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. The goal of this preliminary exposition is to draw attention to the Penn material, examine how it fits with past studies, and explore the broader uses and significance of offering trays and soul houses during the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. This paper addresses the interconnections between the worlds of the living and the dead and touches on the myriad of ways the ancient Egyptians chose to model, display, and represent those connections.

Offering trays and soul houses are handmade, three-dimensional objects constructed from fired clay. They are typically found in funerary contexts either on the surface above a burial or within the burial chamber or shaft.¹ These two object types are often discussed together, as they are found at many of the same sites, in association with the same types of burials, and are made using similar materials and techniques. William Flinders Petrie believed that soul houses represented the final phase of development for offering trays, something that newer research, discussed below, has called into question.² Offering trays and soul houses appear throughout the Nile Valley in both Egypt and Nubia, from the First Intermediate Period through the end of the Twelfth Dynasty; they are found in association with burials that reflect a range of socioeconomic

statuses. Offering trays come in a variety of basic forms and often include model offerings such as meat, bread, and vegetables, as well as basins or mock offering tables with finger-impressed channels for drainage.³ They are always anepigraphic.⁴ Soul houses exhibit many of the same features but also contain model architecture.

This paper focuses on a group of 100 offering trays and soul houses currently in the care of the Penn Museum⁵—the majority of this group is previously unpublished. The following presents a brief overview of the form and development of offering trays and soul houses and a look at how the Penn material could potentially enhance our current understanding of these object types. The object-based research for this project was conducted in 2012.⁶ Subsequently, this material has been relocated

offsite and is currently inaccessible, due to a long-term, museum-wide renovation project. The chief goal of this initial publication is to draw attention to this group of materials; future avenues for study are discussed below. While it was not possible to include new photography at this time, black-and-white images of all the Penn objects discussed are part of the museum's publicly accessible online collections database.⁷ An appendix relating the provenance, form, object number, description, and relevant publications is included at the end of this article.

One of the most in-depth analyses of the development of offering trays and soul houses is Angela Tooley's 1989 University of Liverpool dissertation, which examined some 370 examples.⁸ Of the 100 offering trays and soul houses in the Penn Museum, only five are directly referenced in Tooley's study, and she lists their current location as unknown—indicating the group as a whole was not part of her original corpus.⁹ Similarly, the majority of the trays do not appear in Andrea Kilian's 2012 treatment of pottery offering trays.¹⁰ The soul houses, the majority of which are from Rifeh, are better known, as nearly all the Penn examples appear in Petrie's 1907 publication on his work at the site.¹¹ The high variability among the various components of pottery offering trays and soul houses means that the more known examples from a particular site, the better our understanding of the overall picture. An open access database of all known examples would help to guide further research on these materials in the future.

DEFINING THE CORPUS

The previous categorization of offering trays has relied primarily on the exterior shape of the tray itself.¹² Altar-form trays are square and usually have a spout similar to those on stone offering tables. Horseshoe-form trays, as the name suggests, have an elongated semicircular shape with one open end. Plate-form trays are of two main types: oval or round. More complex trays, whose designations are more subjective include: the slab-form, which may imitate tomb architecture; the field-form, which consist of a square area divided into sections like a field; and the soul house, which includes a model structure of one or more stories.¹³ Kilian's work indicates that while certain regional trends related to shape preference and design may appear, it is not possible to create a typology, as no single tray is identical to another and none of the trends identified are exclusive to a single site.¹⁴ Further, the

arrangement of the internal features of these objects does not appear to have any relationship to their evolution. It is possible that an examination of the form of the offerings themselves might be useful to evaluate of the existence of possible workshop styles. However, Kilian's observation of small differences in the fabric of the trays she analyzed from Asyut argues against any suggestion of mass production.¹⁵

Pottery offering trays are handmade using rough Nile clay, and most display three key features: an exterior rim with a water outlet, a series of finger-impressed drainage channels, and a range of applied elements including offerings, architectural elements, and basins. Kilian provides an excellent summary of the possible offerings/equipment that can appear on such trays.¹⁶ There seem to be no hard rules as to what combination of elements is necessary or even as to the design of individual elements. However, Kilian has observed a small number of regional preferences,¹⁷ which will be discussed below as they relate to the Penn group. Generally speaking, the preserved data indicate that canals, basins, heads and legs of oxen, and round bread loaves appear on trays from the full area of distribution, while the following elements appear in more restricted contexts: bound oxen (Asyut to Gebelein); birds (el-Lahun, Abydos, Balat, Asyut); *hs* vases (often in combination with birds); conical loaves (Armant, el-Lahun, Asyut, Rifeh); and triangular loaves (Asyut, Rifeh soul houses).¹⁸ In most cases these offerings appear surrounding or on top of a centralized basin, but placement can vary. Most of the time offerings are three dimensional, although incised examples occur.

The presence of basins and drainage channels suggest the trays and the offerings contained therein would have been activated via libation rituals.¹⁹ However, the variety of forms and techniques coupled with differences in the placement of the trays argues against a strict, one-size-fits-all interpretation. Previously, scholars have suggested that pottery offering trays may have served as cult offering places,²⁰ symbolic tombs,²¹ or votive offerings.²² In her assessment of these options, Kilian rightly observed that knowing the original placement location is key to understanding intentionality.²³ For example, trays found in a cult chamber or near a shaft mouth related to the world of the living and may have been activated by libation rituals,²⁴ whereas trays placed inside the burial chamber most likely related to the deceased, with the offerings acting as substitutes and the canals etc. symbolizing ritual

libation. She notes further that in this context, the seats found on some examples may have served as places for the dead to sit as they interacted with the tray.²⁵

Petrie was the first to propose a dated sequence for the development of offering trays, based on three examples from the site of Dendara.²⁶ His sequence suggested that simple trays with no offerings appeared in the Eleventh Dynasty, evolving into more complex forms during the Twelfth Dynasty, and culminating in the development of the soul house. Tooley's analysis, which derives from a much larger corpus of material, indicates that there is no way to determine where various tray forms originated, or which form was the earliest²⁷—a conclusion echoed in Kilian's more recent treatment.²⁸ While none of the known examples comes from a precisely dated context, trays appear to span from the First Intermediate Period to the end of the Twelfth Dynasty, with most coming from Middle Kingdom contexts, particularly the Nubian fortresses and the site of el-Lahun.²⁹

While Petrie believed that offering trays were modeled after stone altars and then became more elaborate over time,³⁰ the data indicate that tray morphology relates more to location than date.³¹ Kilian's overview of the larger corpus of pottery offering trays indicates the following distribution of tray types throughout the Nile Valley and oases.³² Rectangular trays appear everywhere from el-Lahun to Uronarti and in the oases, with key sites being Asyut and Rifeh. Oval trays appear from Dendara to Qubbet el-Hawa, with single examples from Rifeh, Gebelein, and Esna—no examples are known north of Rifeh. Round trays come from the Theban areas of Armant, Qurna, and el-Tarif; very few come from between Dendara and Gebelein, which marks their farthest appearance in the south. Horseshoe trays range from Asyut to Qubbet el-Hawa. Regarding soul houses, Tooley notes that in the area from Ballas to el-Misha, all types of trays and soul houses appear.³³ The Penn material fits well with this assessment and ranges from el-Lahun in the north to Elkab in the south.

Further, Petrie's idea that pottery offering trays derived from stone offering tables may also be flawed. Kilian has identified a number of important differences between these two classes of object that suggest they may have been intentionally designed for different purposes.³⁴ Offering trays are

anepigraphic, can vary in shape, and have a more restricted repertoire of offerings. In addition, the *h*s vases commonly depicted on stone offering tables are rare on pottery offering trays, and the mat and type of bread loaf commonly rendered do not appear at all in the known corpus of pottery trays. Kilian has also identified examples from Asyut where stone offering tables and ceramic trays were found in the same tomb.³⁵ While their placement cannot be stated with certainty, the evidence suggests that the offering trays were placed inside the burial chamber, while the stone offering tables were found in front of it, suggesting they had different functions.³⁶

In her 2011 overview of soul houses, Kate Spence defines them as ceramic offering trays with shelters of varying complexity whose details are most closely associated with domestic architecture.³⁷ They are typically found in cemeteries, on the surface above the burial shaft, and were most likely intended to serve as a point of interaction between the living and the dead. Soul houses are preserved from Beni Hasan down to the Nubian fortresses.³⁸ The primary typology for soul houses derives from Petrie's work at Rifeh, where he uncovered a total of 150 examples.³⁹ Petrie defined thirteen types of soul houses, identified as Types A–N (there is no clear Type I), which he believed imitated domestic architecture.⁴⁰ Based on ceramics from the tombs, he asserted that his A–N sequence is roughly chronological.

Tooley followed Petrie's system, while François Leclère suggested that each object represented a combination of similar elements.⁴¹ He likened the development of soul houses to the regionalism seen in the offering trays and suggested that while many of the elements mimic domestic architecture, some represent contemporary funerary architecture.⁴² Spence builds on the work of Petrie,⁴³ Andrzej Niwinski,⁴⁴ and Leclère⁴⁵ in her assessment, which focuses on the domestic architectural forms present in the Rifeh examples. In her detailed study of that corpus, Spence stresses the link to domestic architecture and challenges others to consider the extent to which Middle Kingdom tomb porticos and their domestic counterparts might be linked, as both represent status, comfort, and air for the living/deceased.⁴⁶

The architectural elements present in soul houses vary considerably both regionally and at a given site—as is the case with pottery offering trays.⁴⁷ The

Rifeh examples are the most complex and can include porticos, staircases, windows, *mulqafs*, doors, inner rooms, and upper stories—all but one of the Penn soul houses come from Rifeh. At other sites, simpler shelters or huts are more common and can include columns, porticos, and stairs.⁴⁸ Most examples include a drainage spout and can also include applied offerings and other elements. Spence suggests that the form developed from rectangular offering trays, like those found at Rifeh, and she too distinguishes pottery offering trays from stone offering tables. As has been observed above, pottery offering trays have a distinctive rim that serves to enclose the space within, creating a clear spatiality, such as a courtyard with miniature offerings arranged inside.⁴⁹ The pour spouts and drainage channels are another link to the trays and further reflect the importance of libation rituals for the purification and activation of both object types.⁵⁰

THE PENN MATERIAL

The objects in the care of the Penn Museum include a total of eighty complete or nearly complete offering trays, twelve soul houses, eight large fragments or groups of offering tray fragments, and six additional soul house accessory figures. Of the eighty offering trays, there are fifty-six horseshoe-form, eighteen plate-form, and six altar-form trays. All the Penn examples come from excavated contexts and derive primarily from the excavations of Eckley Brinton Coxe, Jr., Petrie, and Charles H. Rosher in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This gives them a secure provenance—an important fact, given the proposed regionality among the objects within the broader corpus. Further research in the Penn Museum archives aimed at learning more about the excavation records related to these objects is part of the next phase of this project.

OFFERING TRAYS

There are eighty complete or nearly complete offering trays that preserve three of the most common types—horseshoe, plate, and altar form. These objects are all made of fired clay and range in size from approximately 24 x 22 x 7 cm to 40 x 32 x 9 cm (L x W x H). The Penn material includes examples from Elkab, Dra Abu el-Naga, Deir el-Ballas, Dendara, and el-Lahun.

Elkab

Moving from south to north: There are two

horseshoe trays from Elkab (E2330 and E2331). The first is covered with multiple finger-impressed grooves and contains a trussed quadruped, haunch, vegetables offerings, and bread loaves. The surface of the second has similar grooves and contains comparable offerings as well as two impressed square basins. These examples fit well with the Elkab traits identified in Kilian's survey.⁵¹ Tooley mentions a total of seventeen trays from Elkab that include her horseshoe, tomb, and altar forms.⁵² These trays are similar to examples from Dendara, Edfu, Armant, and Ballas where spouts with numerous parallel finger grooves are popular.⁵³

Dra Abu el-Naga

Ten Penn offering trays come from Dra Abu el-Naga,⁵⁴ adding to the single example previously discussed in Tooley and the roughly thirty-one Qurna examples compiled by Kilian.⁵⁵ All of the Penn trays come from L Cemetery and include altar-, horseshoe-, and plate-form examples. As is the case at other sites, each tray has a unique combination of elements even if they share a similar exterior shape. For example, Cairo CG 1895 is an altar-form tray with a bound calf, water jars, and holes for a canopy or foliage.⁵⁶ There are three altar-form trays in the Penn group. The first (29.87.8) is rectangular in shape with no offerings, the second (29.87.9) has a shovel shape with meat, vegetable, and bread offerings, and the third (29.87.14) contains two round depressions with drainage channels, food offerings, and a broken jar stand with four jars. None has holes as the Cairo example does.

Five horseshoe-form trays also come from the site.⁵⁷ Three have a seat at the back, and in two of the three the seat appears within a small, vaulted structure.⁵⁸ Generally, the Penn trays include a finger-impressed square basin with two channels heading toward the open end of the tray. Common offerings include an ox head, a haunch, vegetables, multiple bread loaves, and a row of two to four jars. Two plate-forms trays also come from the site; both are oval in design, with two finger-impressed channels that pierce the outer wall. One contains a haunch (29-87-11), while the other has no added offerings (29-87-10). The more complex trays in this group add significantly to our understanding of trends at Dra Abu el-Naga, as none of the published examples previously studied included seats or structures of any kind.

Ballas

Tooley analyzed three offering trays from Ballas, which she dated from the Eleventh–Twelfth Dynasties.⁵⁹ They include one horseshoe form, two slab forms, and one soul house. The Penn material includes two horseshoe forms (E1248 and E1249) and one soul house (E1247), all of which James Quibell attributed to the Twelfth Dynasty.⁶⁰ Offering trays were common in Twelfth Dynasty tombs at Ballas.⁶¹ The simplest contain a bull's head, a haunch, and some loaves of bread, while others also include a basin element. The Penn trays are both rather simple. E1248 includes a large semicircular depression with two channels leading to the end of the tray, while E1249 has two small finger-impressed depressions with channels leading out and three-dimensional offerings including an ox head, haunch, vegetables, and a bread loaf. The two Penn trays are very different in their style and composition, further underscoring the individuality of these items.

Dendara

A total of fifty-eight Penn offering trays come from Dendara.⁶² This group of altar, plate, and horseshoe forms mimics the examples in Tooley's and Kilian's analyses and seems to reflect the only styles used at Dendara, where Fisher found a total of 302 offering trays in his 1971 season at the site.⁶³ The Dendara trays date from the Sixth–Twelfth Dynasties, with plate forms being the oldest. The Penn materials includes fifteen plate-form offering trays of two types. Type I, round plates, represent 67% of the group (10/15), while type II, oval plates, make up the remaining 33% (5/15). Five have no internal decoration; nine have drainage channels that pierce the outer wall; three have seats in the back, and these three are the only trays that contain any offerings.

Horseshoe is the best attested style, with forty-one examples. There are two main variants: Type I consists of trays with a raised dividing wall pierced by either two channels or a horseshoe-shaped channel (24%; 10/41). Type II trays have no wall (76%; 31/41) and most contain a finger-impressed square/rectangle with one or two drainage channels; a group of four round, flat loaves is common on these mock offering tables.⁶⁴ Tooley found type I to be the most common;⁶⁵ however, examples of type II are the most numerous among the Penn examples. Of the forty-one Penn horseshoe trays, 80% have what appears to be a seat at the back (33/41), 80% contain an ox head and haunch (33/41), and all have

bread offerings of some type. Other popular offerings include vegetables, jars (either two or four), and rarely a trussed or decapitated quadruped. One interesting example, 29.65.709, depicts a pair of incised sandals.

The final two trays are altar form, 29.65.721 and 29.65.742. The first (29.65.721) is almost horseshoe shaped, with an impressed square basin depicting a center line and single channel. It has a seat in back, a haunch, and an ox head. The second tray (29.65.742) is distinctive, containing a partial dividing wall with a large semi-circular platform in back.

El-Lahun/Kahun

Only one example (E268) comes from el-Lahun, and it was found in association with tomb 19.⁶⁶ It is altar form and contains four jars, an ox head, four round loaves, vegetables, a haunch, and a *hs* vase. Tooley records three offering trays from el-Lahun.⁶⁷ All are altar form as well and contain a similar set of offerings. Based on their archaeological context, it is likely that these trays date to the reign of Senwosret II.⁶⁸

SOUL HOUSES

There is a total of twelve soul houses in the care of the Penn Museum and six accessory elements, all of which are made from fired clay. Nine of the soul houses and all of the accessory elements come from the site of Rifeh, one comes from Ballas, and the locations of the final two examples are unknown. The accessory elements include model human figures, model chairs, and model couches.⁶⁹

Rifeh

Soul houses are the most dominant type of funerary object at Rifeh during this period, with approximately 150 soul houses and fifteen offering trays coming from the site.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, there are no Rifeh offering trays at the Penn Museum. All the preserved examples are altar form and the most common style includes two square or rectangular depressions with individual drainage channels that join to form a single central channel, an ox head in one corner, and vegetable and bread offerings.⁷¹

Soul houses usually include an altar-form courtyard and pillared façade and range from simple to elaborate. The Penn material includes a total of nine soul-house fragments from Rifeh that represent Petrie's types A, E, F, J, and K.⁷² Of the nine Penn soul houses, none is fully preserved, making any

extensive commentary on their form impossible. Preserved architectural elements include columned porticoes, stairs, and multiple stories—one includes a single bread loaf offering. The two preserved, or partially preserved, bases are altar form, which would fit with the general style for both soul houses and offering trays at Rifeh. There are also six accessory elements, which include a seated human figure, two chairs, and two couches.

ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTION

While my research into this topic and the Penn corpus is only in its initial stages, there are a number of aspects related to the form and development of these two object types that bear brief consideration here. Offering trays and soul houses have been connected since Petrie first discussed them in his 1890 (*Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara*) and 1907 (*Gizeh and Rifeh*) publications.⁷³ Petrie believed that soul houses represented the final form of development for offering trays, a theory that has been long lived.⁷⁴ Subsequent studies by Charles Kuentz, Ray Anita Slater, Angela Tooley, Andrzej Niwinski, François Leclère, Kate Spence, and Andrea Kilian have worked to further define these two object types and to synthesize the examples that have been uncovered since Petrie's initial excavations.⁷⁵ A brief discussion of the proposed connection between offering trays and soul houses is essential before moving forward with any additional research into the Penn material.

As noted above, offering trays are preserved at sites from el-Lisht to Mirgissa, and their use ranges from the First Intermediate Period to the Thirteenth Dynasty, with most coming from Middle Kingdom contexts. Soul houses are also found during roughly the same period and in a similar geographic range.⁷⁶ From the standpoint of materiality, both are handmade from rough Nile clays and fired, both have a raised rim with an opening for drainage, both are anepigraphic, and both incorporate a range of individualized elements including but not limited to water drainage features, offerings, and furniture and/or architecture.

The typical archaeological context for both is also similar, but key differences suggest subtle distinctions in how people, both living and deceased, engaged with these objects, as well as their possible function. Originally, scholars believed that the Egyptians placed offering trays on the surface above the burial.⁷⁷ However, new evidence for alternative placements, including inside the tomb, suggests a

greater range of possibilities, as discussed above.⁷⁸ Soul-house placements are more restricted to above-ground contexts, which implies a deeper connection to the actions of living individuals and a slightly more nuanced function.

Spence, who offers one of the most insightful assessments of the connection between these two forms, has suggested that soul houses developed from rectangular offering trays, such as those found at Rifeh.⁷⁹ She highlights the raised edge of the ceramic trays, which she believes served to enclose the space within, creating a clear spatiality, such as a courtyard with miniature offerings inside. Like Kilian and others, she also notes the importance of ritual libation for the activation of both the trays and houses.⁸⁰ So, while Petrie's underlying premise that soul houses are an extension of pottery offering trays seems to be a valid one, the idea of a clear chronological progression of forms leading to a culmination in complexity runs counter to the diversity present in the growing corpus of material remains found throughout the Nile Valley and oases during this period.

Following the discussion of offering tray function provided in more detail earlier in this paper, one final question remains. If offering trays and soul houses developed and were used during the same period of time, by similar types of people, and at similar sites, what sets one object type apart from the other in terms of purpose and function? Offering trays appear to have had a broader range of functionality, as indicated by the greater variety among findspots. As noted above, Kilian has observed that trays placed in above-ground contexts required the participation of the living, as they were likely activated through libation rituals, while trays placed inside the burial chamber functioned as funerary objects, with the offerings and channels acting as substitutes for the real thing. It is possible that the seats on certain offering trays, which Kilian suggests may have served as places for the dead to sit as they interacted with the tray,⁸¹ further accentuate the link between offering trays and soul houses—both provide places for the dead to come and engage with elements essential to their Hereafter.⁸²

Soul houses are more reflective of the close connection between the living and the dead, a fact that is best observed in their placement above ground—either above the burial of the deceased or, more rarely, in a settlement context. The common placement of Rifeh soul houses above ground and

facing into the tomb led Petrie to observe that they had evolved from places for the living to make offerings (such as Old Kingdom stone offering tables) into houses/dwellings for the soul.⁸³

Niwinski was the first to suggest that soul houses represented cult chapels,⁸⁴ and more recently Leclère has linked their architecture to both Abydene cenotaphs and contemporary *saff* tombs—two observations that are not without merit.⁸⁵ For the Egyptians, a part could often serve as the whole.⁸⁶ This is particularly clear in the case of offering trays and soul houses. In the case of lower-status tomb owners, a soul house could represent the offering chapel on a physical level and serve as a locus for cult activity; it could also symbolize the chapel on a cosmic level, acting as a dwelling place for the *ka*. Following this logic, offering trays could embody the offerings themselves, the act of offering, and all the visual representations of offering and offerings contained on tomb walls and coffins.⁸⁷ However, funerary architecture alone cannot account for all the features present in the Rifeh examples.

Nicholas Picardo has recently called this restrictive line of interpretation into question.⁸⁸ His research examines the potential uses for soul houses in settlement contexts, an issue Spence has also highlighted as a factor that argues against interpreting soul-house architecture as funerary in nature.⁸⁹ Spence's 2011 study is the most recent and thorough accounting of the Rifeh soul houses, and it successfully situates the majority of the architectural features present in that group within the domestic sphere.⁹⁰ Her work indicates that the Rifeh soul houses were idealized structures designed to manifest air, comfort, and shelter for the deceased.⁹¹ For example, in homes for the living, porticoes are designed to catch the cool breeze and provide shelter and shade, *mulqafs* serve as wind catchers, windows provide ventilation and light, stairs to the roof offer a cool place to sleep, and accessory elements, such as beds and chairs, provide a place for the deceased to rest.

Spence links these architectural elements and others with the Coffin Texts (CT), where the word *tꜣw* (wind) represents the "breath" or "air" needed for continued life.⁹² The question of how to convey air/breath in two or even three-dimensions is interesting. Spence's suggestion that the wind-focused features present in Rifeh soul houses were a deliberate attempt to render wind/air/breath in a manner that could be ritually activated through

libation makes sense and is in line with how past scholarship has interpreted other features of offering trays and soul houses.⁹³

Due to the variety present in this corpus, Spence has identified multiple themes that were likely developing side by side—including the themes of identity, status, and control.⁹⁴ In the case of the former, while basic offering trays present a more generic space, the addition of architectural elements allows for further specificity, creating an individualized burial marker. The elements of status and control come into play with the aspirational use of elite architectural elements and, in some cases, serving figures, while elements like furniture increase the focus on the singular owner and their control over the space.⁹⁵

Key to her analysis are CT 355 and 297, which deal with wind and breathing, but also with having a structure within which one can dwell. CT 355 refers to this structure as a *pr* (house) and 297 as an *r-pr* (chapel).⁹⁶ Faulkner suggests that the latter should also be read as "house," which may get at the root of some of the ambiguity present in the interpretation of these structures. These spells indicate that the deceased needed a specific place to inhabit, control, and receive offerings.⁹⁷ Soul houses offered such a place and their ritual activation through libation allowed their benefits to be transferred to the deceased in perpetuity.

While Spence refutes the suggestion that soul house architecture is funerary in nature, at least in the context of the Rifeh examples, her interpretation calls into question such a distinction as perhaps one of modern semantics. If, as Spence has suggested, soul houses provided an offering place and a shelter/dwelling for the deceased, are those not the same benefits of a cult chapel? She notes further that soul houses served as liminal spaces connecting the worlds of the living and the dead, functioned as markers of identity, reflected the provisioning of status and control in the afterlife, and provisioned their owners with offerings, comfort, and the breath of life—again, all elements present in tomb chapels.⁹⁸ Further muddying the waters, Spence rightly challenges others to consider the extent to which Middle Kingdom tomb porticos, like those present in the popular *saff* tombs, and their domestic counterparts might both serve the same purpose: to illustrate status, comfort, and air for the living/deceased.⁹⁹ In an elite domestic context, porticos also serve as liminal spaces between the

external and internal portions of the house, just as a tomb portico represents the transition between the worlds of the living and the dead.¹⁰⁰

Soul houses from outside Rifeh tend to be less complicated, suggesting that different communities may have had different preferences.¹⁰¹ Given the high level of variability and individualization present in soul houses across sites or even from the same location, it is important to be open to multiple lines of interpretation. Perhaps it is better to think of offering trays and soul houses as individualized objects, whose form and content reflected the choices of the person who commissioned them and the community in which they lived. Both served a similar purpose, the provisioning of the deceased, and both were activated through ritual libation, either in-person or symbolic. In the case of soul houses, the architecture present reflects the close connection between architecture designed for this life and the Hereafter and the influence of domestic/community life on Egyptian mortuary practices.

The use of offering trays and soul houses mirrors the rise in popularity of the Osirian cult during the Twelfth Dynasty.¹⁰² When found in situ, they are most often associated with modest burials grouped around the larger tombs of the local elite.¹⁰³ These tombs usually consist of a simple vault with limited funerary furniture, and almost all lack a superstructure.¹⁰⁴ Offering trays do occasionally come from high-status tombs, but those instances are rare.¹⁰⁵ The fact that multiple levels of society used these items, in particular the owners of lower-status tombs, is significant as it fits with the use of repetition in ancient Egyptian funerary practices. Elite individuals could acquire multiple manifestations of the items most essential to their continued existence. They depicted these items on tomb walls, coffins, and offering tables, and represented them in the form of models, model offerings, and offering trays. Individuals at different levels of the social hierarchy had different budget. Those that could not afford such repetition could invest in a single item or group of items that represented the totality of what they needed. It is possible that offering trays and soul houses were one method for achieving such goals.

It is unclear why offering trays and soul houses fell out of favor.¹⁰⁶ Their disappearance mirrors that of wooden models and may relate to the termination of the position of nomarch and the increasing

recentralization of both people and material culture, which eliminated many of the community-based aspects that characterize the development of these two object types.¹⁰⁷ While this explanation takes into account the disappearance of regionalism, it fails to examine the religious changes taking place at the end of the Twelfth Dynasty. Tooley has proposed that *shabtis* likely took over some of the meaning inherent in the models.¹⁰⁸ The complicated and poorly understood nature of the religious developments of this period make it difficult to say more; however, it is clear there was a dramatic shift in funerary beliefs.¹⁰⁹

As I move forward with my own research on this group of material, I am interested in exploring the elements of individual choice and community preference that appear to be essential to the ways these items were made and used. While not discussed in detail in this paper, the placement of certain offering trays and soul houses in settlement contexts at el-Lahun, Buhen, Uronarti, and Mirgissa¹¹⁰ further attests to the individualized yet communal nature of these objects and underscore the long-term obligation between the living and the dead. Such obligations, as well as the desire for continued connection with deceased family/community members, call to mind Aubrey Cannon's work on the archaeology of death and the importance of spatial relationships to the creation and maintenance of personal and social memories.¹¹¹ In the future, I would like to evaluate the use of offering trays and soul houses in the context of the types of spatial and visual markers that Canon has noted serve to anchor the dead within the broader social and collective memory of their community.

I am also interested in the socio-economic factors that may have affected offering tray and soul house style and development. It is clear that numerous forms, styles, and components existed contemporaneously. How were these elements selected and combined and by whom? It is only logical to assume that more complex trays would have been costlier, as they would have required more work to produce and would have used more raw materials, but the question of where these objects were made and by whom remains open for debate. Other types of funerary and home goods were produced in specialist workshops, but Kilian's observation of small differences in the fabric of the trays she analyzed from Asyut argues against the idea of mass production.¹¹² So what does that mean in terms of production?

Offering trays and soul houses would have served the critical function of providing offerings for the deceased and an eternal resting place for the *ka*, thus providing the luxury of an afterlife at a fraction of the cost. It might be useful to consider how the popularity of these object types across the social hierarchy might also reflect varied levels of access to ritual knowledge and mortuary practices. Henning Franzmeier's 2012 study examines the cultural value of funerary goods and their potential link to the social status of the deceased, taking the occurrence of magical mud bricks in New Kingdom and Late Period tombs as a case study.¹¹³ Franzmeier ultimately concludes that despite the fact that such bricks are relatively small and simple to manufacture, they appear only in high-status contexts, suggesting limited access to the complex knowledge and rituals needed for their manufacture. Franzmeier's work provides an interesting parallel—just as the bricks are linked to the Book of the Dead, Spence's research indicates that soul houses may be connected to the Coffin Texts. With additional research, it may be possible to assess the likelihood of more widespread access to ritual knowledge during the Middle Kingdom.

Finally, archival research into the specific excavation context for each of the Penn examples is required in order to accurately assess how they may change or add to previous understandings and interpretations of these object types. This work would enhance a future formal review of this group, once museum renovations are complete and the objects are accessible once more.

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NOTES

- ¹ While not always recorded in past excavation

- publications, a review of known findspots for pottery offering trays appears in Kilian 2012, 109–110.
- 2 Petrie 1900, 26.
- 3 The literature refers to these square or rectangular elements as basins. They are most often finger-impressed, and the impressions either create the shape of a circular/oval pool or a square or rectangular outline. These elements often have one or more finger-impressed channels that run outward, toward the end of the tray. However, due to their shape and the fact that many of the Dendara examples have offerings laid out on top of the central rectangle, it is possible that these basin elements may represent offering tables or other objects as well.
- 4 Kilian 2012, 105.
- 5 Also known as the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- 6 The initial research for this project was conducted in 2012. I would like to thank David P. Silverman, Josef Wenger, and Jennifer Houser Wegner for facilitating my study of and access to this material at that time.
- 7 Black-and-white images of all the Penn materials are part of the museum’s online collections database: < penn.museum/collections >.
- 8 Tooley 1989. Her study focuses on burial customs of the Middle Kingdom, in particular the use of wooden funerary models and related materials.
- 9 These include: Penn E268 (el-Lahun), D3936 (Dendara), E1249 (Ballas), E1247 (Ballas), E2331 (Elkab).
- 10 Kilian 2012.
- 11 Petrie 1907.
- 12 The typological terminology used here follows Tooley, who based her sequence on an analysis of 370 objects as well as the work of previous scholars, including Petrie (Tooley 1989, 249). Kilian (2012) uses more general terminology, based purely on the exterior shape of the tray, thus avoiding any interpretive implications inherent in the typological designation.
- 13 For drawings and examples of all tray types discussed, see Tooley 1989.
- 14 Kilian 2012, 106–109.
- 15 Kilian 2012, 109.
- 16 Kilian 2012, 106–107.
- 17 Kilian 2012, 107–108.
- 18 Kilian 2012, 109.
- 19 Leclère 2001, 105–106; Solchaga 2020, 137; David 2002; Killian 2012, 111; Verhoeven 1997, 481.
- 20 Slater 1974, 311.
- 21 Aufrière 1992, 21; Jéquier 1910, 213.
- 22 Emery 1979, 151. He also suggests they could have been brought into town by mistake or could represent unused trays.
- 23 Kilian 2012, 111. Of the 370 trays Tooley studied, 83 (22.4 percent) come from unknown contexts, 3 (0.8 percent) come from dumps, 195 (52.7 percent) from the mouth of the tomb, 9 (2.4 percent) from in the superstructure or shaft, and 80 (21.6 percent) from the burial chamber (Tooley 1989, 301–302).
- 24 Verhoeven 1997, 481.
- 25 Leclère has suggested that examples containing a rear seat may have represented a three-dimensional version of a funerary banquet (Leclère 2001, 107).
- 26 Petrie 1900, 26.
- 27 Tooley 1989, 298–299.
- 28 Kilian 2012.
- 29 Kilian 2012, 110.
- 30 Petrie 1907, 15.
- 31 Niwinski 1975, 85; Tooley 1989, 249; Kilian 2012, 106–107.
- 32 Kilian 2012, 108–109.
- 33 Tooley 1989, 294.
- 34 Killian 2012, 111–112.
- 35 Ryan 1988: Tombs XIII (pp. 30–31), XXVII (pp. 47–49), XXXV (p. 59), XXXVI (p. 60); XLVII (p. 76), LI (p. 80).
- 36 Kilian 2012, 113.
- 37 Spence 2011, 895.

- 38 Spence 2011, 895.
- 39 Petrie 1907, 14. One hundred examples appear on pls. 14–22, including all the Penn examples from that site.
- 40 Petrie 1907, 14–16.
- 41 Leclère 2001, 107–111.
- 42 Leclère 2001.
- 43 Petrie 1907.
- 44 Niwinski 1975.
- 45 Leclère 2001.
- 46 Spence 2011, 910.
- 47 Spence 2011, 899.
- 48 Spence 2011, 899.
- 49 Spence 2011, 900.
- 50 Spence 2011, 900; Kuentz 1981, 243–282.
- 51 Kilian 2012, 108.
- 52 Tooley 1989, 257–260.
- 53 Niwinski 1975, 85. Niwinski bases his study on the collection of the National Museum of Warsaw. The objects come from the second and third Franco-Polish campaigns to Edfu in 1938 and 1939, and all come from the First Intermediate Period–Middle Kingdom cemetery.
- 54 These include: Penn 29-87-5, 29-87-6, 29-87-7, 29-87-8, 29-87-9, 29-87-10, 29-87-11, 29-87-12, 29-87-13, and 29-87-14.
- 55 Tooley 1989, 271; Kilian 2012, 107, 115–116. For examples referenced in Kilian see: López Grande 2011, 598, fig. 2e; Petrie 1909, 4, pls. 20–21; Rummel 2007, 34, no. 18.
- 56 Tooley 1989, 271.
- 57 These include: Penn 29-87-5, 29-87-6, 29-87-7, 29-87-12, 29-87-13.
- 58 Penn 29-87-5, 29-87-12, 29-87-13.
- 59 Tooley 1989, 272–273.
- 60 Quibell 1896, 27. For images of the three objects, see pl. 44.4, 5, 7.
- 61 Quibell 1896, 27, pl. 44.4, 5, 7.
- 62 These include: Penn 29-65-721, 29-65-742, E3531, E3532, E3533, E3534, E3535, E3936, L-55-321, 29-65-698, 29-65-699, 29-65-700, 29-65-701, 29-65-702, 29-65-703, 29-65-704, 29-65-706, 29-65-707, 29-65-708, 29-65-709, 29-65-711, 29-65-713, 29-65-714, 29-65-719, 29-65-723, 29-65-725, 29-65-726, 29-65-728, 29-65-729, 29-65-730, 29-65-731, 29-65-732, 29-65-733, 29-65-735, 29-65-736, 29-65-737, 29-65-738, 29-65-739, 29-65-741, 29-66-851, 29-66-914, 29-66-922, 29-66-923, E3536, 29-65-705, 29-65-710, 29-65-712, 29-65-715, 29-65-716, 29-65-717, 29-65-718, 29-65-720, 29-65-722, 29-65-727, 29-65-731, 29-65-734, 29-65-740, and 29-66-890.
- 63 Tooley 1989, 273–276, 295; Kilian 2012, 107; Slater 1974, 301.
- 64 For a discussion of this style of loaf, see Jéquier 1910, 205–225, 215–216.
- 65 Tooley 1989, 273–276, 295.
- 66 See Petrie 1891, 9, pl. 4.20.
- 67 Tooley 1989, 292.
- 68 Tooley 1989.
- 69 Penn E2942 F-L.
- 70 Petrie 1907, 14–20.
- 71 Petrie 1907, pl. XIV. Tooley 1989, 280–285, 295. Tooley notes one possible horseshoe-form, but the register for the item is “dubious.”
- 72 Penn E2942, E2942 A-E, E3294, E3295, E3296A-B.
- 73 Petrie 1890; Petrie 1907.
- 74 Petrie 1907, 5; Kilian 2012, 105.
- 75 Kuentz 1981; Slater 1974; Tooley 1989; Niwinski 1975; Leclère 2001; Spence 2011; Kilian 2012.
- 76 Niwinski (1975, 95) notes a range from Memphis to Edfu, while Spence’s more recent treatment indicates soul-house distribution was a much more southern phenomenon, ranging from Beni Hasan to the Nubian fortresses (Spence 2011, p. 895).
- 77 Petrie 1907, 14.
- 78 Kilian 2012, 109–110.
- 79 Spence 2011, 900.
- 80 Spence 2011, 901; Kuentz 1981.
- 81 Leclère has suggested that examples containing a rear seat may have represented a three-

- dimensional version of a funerary banquet. Leclère 2001, 107.
- ⁸² For the use of this term see: Troche 2022.
- ⁸³ Petrie 1907, 15.
- ⁸⁴ Niwinski 1975, 105–109.
- ⁸⁵ Leclère 2001, 113–115. For a general description of Middle Kingdom cenotaphs, see O'Connor 1985.
- ⁸⁶ Silverman 1976, 201–207.
- ⁸⁷ Georgia Barker's recent work exploring the similarities and differences between funerary models and tomb wall scenes is highly informative on this topic and indicates that the only real differences in these modes of representation relate to the technical limits of the chosen medium (Barker 2018; Barker 2019). Further, Marisol Solchaga's work on soul houses also confirms that certain elements were designed to provide the deceased with the same elements as a decorated tomb (Solchaga 2020).
- ⁸⁸ Picardo 2014; Picardo 2020.
- ⁸⁹ Spence 2011, 898–899.
- ⁹⁰ Spence 2011.
- ⁹¹ Spence 2011, 901–902.
- ⁹² Spence 2011, 902.
- ⁹³ Spence 2011, 903.
- ⁹⁴ Spence 2011, 905.
- ⁹⁵ Spence 2011, 905–906.
- ⁹⁶ Faulkner 1973, 220, n. 2; Spence 2011, 907.
- ⁹⁷ Spence 2011, 907.
- ⁹⁸ Spence 2011, 909.
- ⁹⁹ Spence 2011, 210.
- ¹⁰⁰ Spence 2011, 210.
- ¹⁰¹ Spence 2011, 906.
- ¹⁰² Niwinski 1975, 97–98, 108–109.
- ¹⁰³ Leclère 2001, 102.
- ¹⁰⁴ For example, Petrie (1900, 26) described most of the offering trays from Dendara as coming from "indistinguishable pit tombs without any sculpture."
- ¹⁰⁵ These include the tombs of Sehertawy Intef I at Saff el-Dawaba (Arnold 1972, 26) and Nakht-nebtepnefer Intef III at Saff el-Baqar (Arnold 1973, 150). Tooley (1989, 299) points out that it is possible robbers threw them into the shaft accidentally, while ravaging other tombs. Examples also come from tombs containing wooden models, like tomb 14 at Asyut (Tooley 1989, 299).
- ¹⁰⁶ Niwinski (1975, 101) has noted that no other phenomenon in Egyptian history seems to have appeared and disappeared so rapidly.
- ¹⁰⁷ The slow eradication of the position likely began under Amenemhet II, with the elimination of the hereditary passage of titles and the absorption of elite families into the national bureaucracy (Picardo 2009, 35; Bourriau 1988, 86).
- ¹⁰⁸ Tooley 1989, 18.
- ¹⁰⁹ Quirke 2015, 218–221; Bourriau 1991, 3–20.
- ¹¹⁰ Spence 2011, 908.
- ¹¹¹ Cannon 2002.
- ¹¹² Kilian 2012, 109.
- ¹¹³ Franzmeier 2010.

APPENDIX
Offering Trays and Soul Houses in the Penn Museum

S	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
el-Lahun Locus: Tomb 19 (Petrie, 1889–1890)	Altar	E268	Red wash. Haunch, bull's head, vegetable, four round loaves, four cakes, wine jar. (31 x 26.5 cm)	Petrie 1891, 9, pl. 4.20; Tooley 1989, 292; University of Pennsylvania 1985, 83.

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Dendara Locus: 13:577 A/x 7 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Altar	29-65-721	Red wash. Nearly horseshoe shape. Impressed square basin with center line and single channel. Haunch, bull's head, seat at back. (35 x 25 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 8:616/2 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Altar	29-65-742	Partial dividing wall, two main sections. Larger, back section with large semi-circular raised platform. (25.3 x 19.5 cm)	
Dendara (Roshier Excavation, 1898)	Horseshoe	E3531	Red wash. Dividing wall pierced by two channels. Behind wall, haunch, bull's head, seat at back. (29 x 22 cm)	
Dendara (Roshier Excavation, 1898)	Horseshoe	E3532	Two impressed dividing lines and two channels. Haunch, bull's head, four round loaves, seat at back. (24.4 x 22.2 x 7 cm)	
Dendara (Roshier Excavation, 1898)	Horseshoe	E3533	Red wash. Two impressed channels. Haunch, bull's head, vegetable, two round loaves, depressions for two jars, seat at back. (29.1 x 24.7 cm)	
Dendara (Roshier Excavation, 1898)	Horseshoe	E3534	Red wash. Impressed square basin in center with two channels, vegetable and four round loaves on top. Haunch, bull's head, conical loaf, two three-legged benches each with space for two jars, seat at back. (33.5 x 26.5 x 5 cm)	
Dendara (Roshier Excavation, 1898)	Horseshoe	E3535	Impressed square basin with two channels, four round loaves and vegetables on top. Haunch, bull's head, two jars (now gone), seat at back. (32.5 x 26.2 cm)	
Dendara (Egypt Exploration Fund, 1898)	Horseshoe	E3936	Red wash. Dividing wall pierced by horseshoe-shaped channel. Haunch, bull's head, vegetables, conical loaf, seat at back. (40.5 x 32.5 x 8.5 cm)	Petrie 1900, pl. 19.8; Tooley 1989, 274; Slater 1974, 304, 314, 351.

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Dendara (Roshier Excavation, 1898)	Horseshoe	L-55-321	Dividing wall pierced by two channels. Haunch, bull's head, loaf, seat at back. (24 x 17.8 cm)	
Dendara Locus: D gg/x - 13:088/x (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-65-698	Two impressed dividing lines, two channels. Haunch, bull's head, four round loaves, seat at back. (27.5 x 23.5 cm)	
Dendara Locus: Mastaba 74 in area 13:070, etc. (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-65-699	Red wash. Two impressed channels, all offerings in upper half. Haunch, bull's head, side of ribs, round loaf, oval loaf, vegetable, unknown offering. Almost identical to 29-65-707. (34.8 x 28 cm)	
Dendara (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-65-700	Very elaborate. Raised rectangular basin with one channel. Haunch, bull's head, vegetables, three large round loaves, one conical loaf. On right, two jars and bench with places for three jars (now missing). Chair in back with four legs and incised seat. (39 x 32 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 13:193 B/x7 (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-65-701	Red wash. Impressed square basin with one channel, vegetable, conical loaf, two oval loaves on top. Other offerings: haunch, bull's head. (32 x 28.7 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 13: 198 C/x (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-65-702	Impressed square with single channel, four round loaves, one conical loaf, vegetables, headless quadruped on top. Other offerings: haunch, bull's head, row of four jars, seat at back. (39.5 x 32 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 13: 185 B/x1 (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-65-703	Impressed square basin in center with one channel, four round loaves on top. Other offerings: two haunches, one conical loaf, one oval loaf, vegetable, two jars. (32.2 x 26 cm)	

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Dendara Locus: 13: 184 A/x5 (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-65-704	High outer wall. High raised dividing wall pierced by two channels. Haunch, bull's head, vegetable, bread loaf, seat in back. (28 x 21.1 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 5: 621/x 1, offering niche w. of A (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Horseshoe	29-65-706	Two impressed dividing lines and two channels. Haunch, bull's head, bread loaf, seat in back. (29 x 22.5 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 5:646 B/x 1 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Horseshoe	29-65-707	Red wash. Two impressed channels, all offerings in upper half. Haunch, bull's head, side of ribs, round loaf, oval loaf, vegetable, unknown offering. Almost identical to 29-65-699. (33.3 x 28.5 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 5: 661 F/x 14 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Horseshoe	29-65-708	Red wash. Rectangular impressed basin with single channel, vegetables on top. Haunch, bull's head, four round loaves, two jars. Vaulted structure at back; side walls lead into the sides of impressed basin. (26.3 x 33.2 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 5:661 J/x 1 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Horseshoe	29-65-709	Basin with raised edge, single channel. Bull's head, trussed quadruped, four round loaves, one conical loaf, vegetables, stand with four jars, incised pair of sandals. Square structure at back with seat. (30 x 34 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 5:561 B/x 2 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Horseshoe	29-65-711	Impressed horseshoe-shaped channel. No offerings. Seat at back. (27.2 x 20.7 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 13:391 E/x 1 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Horseshoe	29-65-713	Two impressed channels. Haunch, bull's head, vegetables, conical loaf with incised "x" on top, seat at back. (29 x 22.7 cm)	

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Dendara Locus: 15: 110/x (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Horseshoe	29-65-714	Impressed square basin, single channel. Haunch, bull's head, vegetables, four round loaves, three conical loaves. Low seat at back. (28.5 x 26.7 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 15:213/2 mastaba (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Horseshoe	29-65-719	Two impressed, round depressions with a single channel coming out from each. No offerings. (36.5 x 30.5 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 15:435 C/x 14 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-723	High dividing wall pierced by impressed horseshoe channel. No offerings. Seat at back. (33.5 x 28.2 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23:183 C/x 3 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-725	Impressed square basin with single channel, four round loaves on top. Haunch, bull's head, three jars (two now gone). Small vaulted structure at back. (32 x 24 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23:195 A/x 4 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-726	Very small impressed rectangular basin at front edge with one channel. Haunch (?), bull's head, headless quadruped, vegetables, four round loaves, four jars on stand, seat at back. (35.2 x 28.5 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23: 272/1, mastaba (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-728	Raised dividing wall pierced by impressed horseshoe channel. Haunch, bull's head, two loaves, seat at back. (33 x 25.3 cm)	
Dendara Locus: East of 25:312 A/x 1 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-729	Partially restored. Impressed basin with two channels, four round loaves and three other offerings on top. Offerings finger impressed. (30 x 26.1 cm)	
Dendara Locus: East of 25: 312 A/x 2 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-730	Two impressed dividing lines and two channels. Haunch, bull's head, round loaf, seat at back. (28.2 x 23.5 cm)	

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Dendara Locus: 23:395/1 mastaba (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-731	White wash. Impressed rectangular basin with single channel, four loaves, two vegetables on top. Haunch, bull's head, trussed quadruped. (32.7 x 28 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23:470/x area (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-732	Red wash. Raised dividing wall pierced by two impressed channels. Haunch, bull's head, loaf (?). (30.5 x 23.7 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23:479 B/x 5 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-733	Red wash. Raised dividing wall pierced by two impressed channels. Haunch, bull's head, loaf, seat at back. (27 x 19 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23:484 E/x 15 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-735	Raised dividing wall pierced by impressed horseshoe channel. No offerings. Seat at back. (25.8 x 19 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 25:511 A/x 22 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-736	Red wash. Impressed square basin with single channel, conical loaf, vegetables on top. Haunch, bull's head, stand with four jars (three now gone), seat in back with incised decoration on seat and back. (39 x 31 cm)	University of Pennsylvania 1985, 125.
Dendara Locus: Niche west of 23:573 C/4 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-737	Impressed square basin with single channel, four round loaves, vegetables on top. Haunch, bull's head, trussed quadruped, vegetables, two jars (one now gone), seat at back. (36.6 x 28 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 25: 611 G/x 6 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-738	Raised dividing wall pierced by impressed horseshoe channel. No offerings. (34.5 x 28.6 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23:682 B/x 3 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-739	Red wash. Impressed square basin with single channel, vegetables on top. Haunch, bull's head, four round loaves, one conical loaf, two jars, seat in back with incised decoration. (29.4 x 23.7 cm)	

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Dendara Locus: 23:781 E/x 3 surface (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Horseshoe	29-65-741	Raised square basin with channel. Bull's head, trussed quadruped, vegetables, four round loaves, four jars. Vaulted structure at back containing chair and haunch. (41 x 34.6 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 13:183 B/x 14 (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-66-851	Tall outer wall. Impressed square basin with single channel, vegetables, conical loaf on top. Haunch, bull's head, two-legged stand for two jars. Vaulted structure at back with seat. (36.5 x 27.5 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 25: 316 B x 10 (east of shaft) (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-66-914	Two impressed dividing lines and two channels. Haunch, bull's head, four round loaves, seat at back. Similar to 29-65-730, 29-65-698, and E3532. (29 x 23 x 7 cm)	
Dendara (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-66-922	Raised square basin with single channel. Haunch, bull's head, trussed quadruped, vegetables, various breads, jar stand with four jars. Vaulted structure at back with seat. (31.5 x 25 x 9)	
Dendara (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Horseshoe	29-66-923	Broken half. Raised basin with possible channel. Bull's head, vegetables, four round loaves, jar stand with four jars. Possible vaulted structure at back. (38.1 x 16.51 x 7.62 cm)	
Dendara (Roshier Excavation, 1898)	Plate, round	E3536	Circular. No internal décor. (D. = 25 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 5:730.1/x1 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Plate, round	29-65-705	Red wash. Circular. Low central dividing wall. Hole near edge of plate depression. No offerings. (D. = 20 cm)	

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Dendara Locus: 5:561 B/x 1 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Plate, oval	29-65-710	Red wash. Oval shape with impressed horseshoe channel piercing outer wall. Haunch, bull's head, vegetables, four round loaves, one conical loaf, seat at back. (29.5 x 26.7 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 5:663 E/x 1 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Plate, oval	29-65-712	Oval shape with mock spout. Impressed square basin with single channel that pierces exterior wall. No offerings. (27.8 x 20.3 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 13:395/x 14 mastaba (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Plate, round	29-65-715	Raised walls divide interior into three sections, one half size, two quarter size. Each of the smaller compartments has a hole perforating the outer wall. No offerings. (26.5 x 23.8 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 13:388 C/x 70 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Plate, oval	29-65-716	Oval shape with single impressed channel that pierces the exterior wall. In back half, two stepped platform. No offerings. (29.8 x 19.2 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 13:491/x 2 mastaba (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Plate, round	29-65-717	Raised central dividing wall with impressed channel that pierces outer wall. No offerings. (D. = ca. 12.6 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 13:495/5 mastaba (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Plate, oval	29-65-718	Red wash. Two impressed circular basins each with one channel that pierces outer wall. (23.7 x 20.2 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 15:410.4/x 1 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Plate, round	29-65-720	No internal décor. (D. = 22.5 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 15:325/x 1 (Coxe Expedition, 1916)	Plate, round	29-65-722	No internal décor. (D. = ca. 22 cm)	

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Dendara Locus: 25: 210/x 1 area (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Plate, oval	29-65-727	Raised dividing wall pierced by horseshoe channel. Haunch, bull's head, loaf (?), and an additional offering, seat at back. (25.5 x 19.5 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23:395/1 mastaba	Plate, round	29-65-731	Burnishing and possible white slip. Raised dividing wall, pierced by impressed horseshoe channel, ends go through outer wall. Haunch, bull's head, vegetables, bread loaf, seat at back. (D. = 32.7 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23:483 E/x 14 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Plate, round	29-65-734	No internal décor. (D. = 19 cm)	
Dendara Locus: 23:692 A/x 12 (Coxe Expedition, 1917)	Plate, round	29-65-740	Two impressed circular basins with channels forming rough spout. Rounded platform area in back half. (39 x 31.5 cm)	
Dendara (Coxe Expedition, 1915)	Plate, round	29-66-890	Raised central dividing wall. Single impressed channel that pierces outer wall. (D. = 22 cm; H. = 4.5 cm)	
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L.C. 15, shaft X. x/1. (Coxe Expedition, 1922)	Altar	29-87-8	Plain with rectangular pro- jection/spout. No offerings. (32 x 20.1 cm)	
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L.C. II, 3, surface X. x/1.	Altar	29-87-9	Red wash. Almost horse- shoe shape. Haunch, bull's head, vegetable offering, conical loaf. (34.3 x 27.1 cm)	
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L.C. 308, over outer sill, x/4 (Coxe Expedition, 1923)	Altar	29-87-14	Two square depressions with impressed channels that extend out through spout. Haunch, vegetables, four round loaves, stand with 4 jars. Back end missing. (40 x 26 cm)	

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L. cemetery I, group B, x/1 (Coxe Expedition, 1922)	Horseshoe	29-87-5	Almost square. Seat at back, with impressed channel coming down. Haunch, bull's head, vegetable, two loaves. (38 x 33.8 cm)	
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L cemetery I, 1 x of tomb with crude brick superstructure, x/1 (Coxe Expedition, 1922)	Horseshoe	29-87-6	Red wash. Deep side walls. Two impressed channels. Haunch, bull's head, vegetables, two loaves. (36 x 26.5 cm)	
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L cemetery I, 1 x of tomb with crude brick superstructure x/2 (Coxe Expedition, 1922)	Horseshoe	29-87-7	Red wash. Broken, half preserved. Remains of slightly raised square basin with single channel. Two holes for jars and vegetable offerings. (L. = 32 cm)	
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L.C. VI, 2, 60 A, x/36 (Coxe Expedition, 1922)	Horseshoe	29-87-12	Impressed square basin with two channels. Haunch, quadruped, vegetables, stand with places for four jars. Vaulted structure at back with seat inside. (40 x 37.5 cm)	
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L.C. VIII, 1, 71 shaft, x/1 (Coxe Expedition, 1922)	Horseshoe	29-87-13	Red wash. Impressed horseshoe channel. Haunch, bull's head, round loaf, oval loaf, four jars. Vaulted structure at back. Separate impressed rectangular basin on left side. (40.5 x 33 cm)	
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L.C. 24 A, x/9 (Coxe Expedition, 1922)	Plate, oval	29-87-10	Impressed H-shaped channels, with two that pierce the outer wall. (30.3 x 23.6 cm)	
Dra Abu el-Naga Locus: L.C. IV, 3, 32A, x/6 (Coxe Expedition, 1922)	Plate, oval	29-87-11	Red wash. Impressed round basin with two channels that pierce out wall. Haunch. (32 x 22.8 cm)	
Ballas Locus: Intrusive burials of the N. town. (Egyptian Research Account, 1895)	Horseshoe	E1248	Sunken tank divided by possible mock vaulted structure, two channels. (30.1 x 23.1 x 3.5 cm)	Petrie and Quibell 1896, 42, pl. 44.5.

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Ballas Locus: 12th Dynasty Cemetery (Egyptian Research Account, 1895)	Horseshoe	E1249	Two small round depressions with impressed channels. Haunch, bull's head, vegetables, large round loaf. (31 x 20 x 6.5 cm)	Petrie and Quibell 1896, p. 42, pl. 44.7; possibly Tooley 1989, 273.
Ballas Locus: 12th Dynasty Cemetery (Egyptian Research Account, 1895)	Soul House	E1247	Complete house and courtyard. Four round loaves and vegetables in front of door, additional offerings arranged around impressed square basin in courtyard. Basin channel exits through gateway constructed at front. Bull's head, trussed quadruped, stand with four jars. Two floors. First floor has central column, upper floor has vaulted niche with seat at back. (29 x 22.5 x 13.5 cm)	Petrie and Quibell 1896, p. 8, 42, pl. 44.4; possibly Tooley 1989, 273; Silverman 1997, 182.
Elkab (Egyptian Research Account, 1897)	Horseshoe	E2330	Multiple impressed channels around entire surface of tray. Haunch, trussed ox, vegetables, loaves. (31 x 31 x 7.6 cm)	
Elkab (Egyptian Research Account, 1897)	Horseshoe	E2331	Two impressed square basins, multiple channels around entire surface of tray. Haunch, loaf, two other possible loaves. (28 x 27 x 8.5 cm)	Not published in Quibell 1897, but cf. pl. 5 #4 and p. 18; Tooley 1989, 258.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Soul House	E2942 A	Single story. Two columns in front. Impressed channel leading from front door out to spout-like area in front. (37.5 x 30.5 x 12 cm)	Petrie 1907, 17.45, pls. 17 A.65, 22 C.65. Type F.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Soul House	E2942 B	Front missing. Rectangular-shaped structure. Four columns, one bread loaf. (19 x 36 x 19 cm)	Petrie 1907, 16.40, pl. 22 B.89. Type A.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Soul House	E2942 C	Badly damaged. Two stories, two pillars with stairs on side. Two small vaulted structures on roof. (33.5 x 29 x 20.5 cm)	Petrie 1907, pl. 22 C. 117 and p. 17, 44. Type E; for UCL fragments see Tooley 1989, p. 286.

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Soul House	E2942 D	Badly damaged. Lower half lost. Three pillars preserved and a set of stairs on the side. (29 x 23 x 23.5 cm)	Petrie 1907, pl. 18, 101; pl. 22 C, 101; p. 17, 48. Type J.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Soul House	E2942 E	Superstructure missing. Altar-shaped tray with bases for eight columns. Bull's head, other small offerings visible. (33 cm x 37 cm x 7.1 cm)	Petrie 1907, 16.39, pl. 14.4.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Soul House	E3294	Base and back wall of structure preserved. Dividing wall at front of structure also preserved and decorated with four, vertical incised lines. Altar-shaped tray. Offerings in courtyard: haunch, bull's head, loaves, and vegetables. (39 x 35 x 16.5 cm)	Petrie 1907, 18.49, pls. 18.84; 22C. 84. Type K.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Soul House	E3295	Originally part of E2942 group.	Petrie 1907, 17.45, pls. 17 A.3, 22 C.3. Type F.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Soul House	E3296A	Tray missing. Two columns in front, window in front right side. (32 x 16 x 15.5 cm)	Petrie 1907, 17, 42, pls. 16.147, 22B, 147.
Rifeh	Soul House	E3296B	Red ware. Fragment only, courtyard missing. Portion of roof with two domed granaries. (18 x 11.5 x 12 cm)	Petrie 1907, 17.42, pls. 16.157, 22B. 147.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Associated Element	E2942F	Red wash. Human figure. Upper body, left arm across chest, right arm broken. Eyes and mouth indicated. Possibly holding something to chest. (5.7 x 5.5 cm)	Petrie 1907, pl. 22.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Associated Element	E2942G	Human figure. Seated, arms on knees, legs broken. (h. 8.3 cm)	Petrie 1907, pl. 22.

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Associated Element	E2942H	Chair. Four legs, raised back, something broken off from on top of seat. (5 x 3 x 6.5 cm)	Petrie 1907, pl. 21, 40 and p. 20, 59.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Associated Element	E2942J	Chair. Back legs broken off, something broken off top of seat. (3.4 x 4 x 5 cm)	Petrie 1907, pl. 22.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Associated Element	E2942K	Couch with pillow. One leg broken. (8 x 4.2 x 4.4 cm)	Petrie 1907, pl. 22.
Rifeh (British School of Archaeology, 1906–1907)	Associated Element	E2942L	Couch, two legs preserved. (8.7 x 3.5 x 3.7 cm)	Petrie 1907, pl. 20, 40.
Unknown	Horseshoe (museum classes as a Soul House)	CG2016-4-380	Possible white wash. Broken off in front. Vaulted structure at back with seat. In front of structure, four circles with some type of applied offering inside, part of jar stand. (8 x 9 x 4.5 cm)	
Unknown	Fragment (Horseshoe?)	CG2016-4-264	Fragment. Part of raised rectangular basin and a bull's head. (19 x 18 x 6 cm)	
Unknown	Fragment (Horseshoe?)	CG2016-4-253s	Fragment. Top of impressed horseshoe channel. Bull's head, bread loaves, vegetable. (12.6 x 17.2 cm)	
Unknown	Horseshoe	CG2016-4-258	Large central fragment with raised diving wall pierced by two channels, two circular depressions on other side of wall. Fragment does not preserve offerings. (L = c. 34 cm)	
Unknown	Fragment	CG2016-4-263 s	Fragment with what appears to be the horns of bull head offering. (12 x 11.5 x 2.5 cm)	
Unknown	Fragment (Horseshoe?)	CG2016-4-260	Fragment. Circular depression. Bull's head (with applied eyes and tongue), trussed quadruped. (15.4 x 15.5 x 4 cm)	

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Unknown	Horseshoe	CG2016-4-378	Two small circular depressions with channels emerging. Haunch, bull's head, vegetables, loaves. (34.29 x 25.4 x 6.35 cm)	
Unknown	Horseshoe	CG2016-4-376	Two impressed channels. Haunch, bull's head, four round loaves, two jars, seat at back. (35.56 x 25.4 x 5.08 cm)	
Unknown	Horseshoe	CG2016-4-274	White wash. Back missing, broken in half. Two impressed channels. Haunch, trussed quadruped, vegetables, bread loaves, two incised <i>hs</i> vases, incised stand with row of four jars on top. (29.21 x 26.67 cm)	
Unknown	Horseshoe (?)	CG2016-4-375	Square back end, open front like the other horseshoe trays. Raised dividing wall near front end pierced by three impressed channels, impressed square basin. Haunch, vegetable, plate with four round loaves. (33.02 x 24.13 x 6.35 cm)	
Unknown	Plate, round	CG2016-4-379	Raised dividing wall through center. No offerings. (D. = 20.32 cm; H = 5.08 cm)	
Unknown	Soul House	CG2016-4-254	Fragment. At least three columns. (18 x 13 x 9 cm)	
Unknown	Soul House	E2942	Two-story structure, four columns on lower, four windows (?) on upper, ramp to doorway with single channel.	
Unknown	Fragments	CG2016-4-381	Fifteen fragments. All likely from single tray, horseshoe shape. Possible impressed channel. Bread loaves and vegetables.	
Unknown	Fragments	NN-1*	Twenty-four small fragments. Not all appear from the same object.	

PROVENANCE	FORM	OBJECT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PUBLICATIONS
Unknown	Fragments	NN-2*	Eight fragments, some joined. Possibly from one piece, maybe horseshoe shape.	
Unknown	Fragments	NN-3*	Twelve Fragments, some joined. Possibly one object, horseshoe, or plate shape.	
<p>* NN or “no number” designations apply to objects whose original museum numbers were unknown at the time of this research. The COVID-19 pandemic and the relocation of these objects to off-site storage for the museum’s gallery renovations have prevented further research on this group of objects for the publication of this article.</p>				