



Ancient Egypt

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About this resource

This resource explores the inscriptions on the inner coffin of Iyhat, an Egyptian Priest, from the collections at The Box.

Originally translated by Professor David Salter in 2008, from the hieroglyphic text published by Professor Aidan Dodson in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 2008, 94, 107-138.

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The hieroglyphs

Here is a translation of the inscriptions on the front of the coffin of Iyhat, an Egyptian priest who lived around 700 BC.

Considering the hieroglyphs used, his name translates into something like “He who is foremost”. This seems a bit ironic as Iyhat became a “wab priest”, that is, someone ritually purified for general duties in the service of the god Amun, whereas his father Pawerma and his paternal grandfather Hor were both priests higher up the hierarchy with the rank of “god’s-father”, although Iyhat may once be given that title in error on the coffin. Iyhat’s mother was called Henuttawy, meaning “Mistress of the Two Lands”, or approximately, “Queen”. However, this rather grand name was fairly common in Egypt at the time, so could perhaps be compared to our use of “Queenie” as an ordinary name in London in the past. Henuttawy is described as a “lady of a house”, that is, a lady in charge of a substantial household or estate.

Most of the inscriptions on the front of Iyhat’s coffin are fairly standard, but one (at the side, above his lower left shin) is rather poignant. He basically says that because he has done a good job for the gods, he trusts them to look after him in return: “You are doing this, (O) Horus: making protection (for) the Osiris, the wab-priest of Amun, Iyhat, true of voice, honoured before all the estate of the god”.

The central vertical strip of hieroglyphs on the coffin (between the legs) is the standard offering formula: “An offering which the king gives to Osiris, foremost of the Westerners (i.e. the dead), so that he will give a good burial in the necropolis to the Osiris, the wab-priest of Amun, Iyhat, true [of voice]”.

On the chest of the coffin there is in the centre the squatting, winged figure of the sky-goddess Nut, with her name above in hieroglyphs, and on each side of her is the same text: “The Osiris, the wab-priest of Amun, Iyhat, the justified, the venerated”.

Below is the first horizontal band. Going rightwards from the central ankh sign, this reads: “Life and reverence with Sokar to the Osiris, purified one of Amun, Iyhat, son of Pamerma”. Going leftwards: “Life and reverence to the Osiris, the wab-priest of Amun, Iyhat, the justified, the venerated”.



Next below is the second highest register of vertical hieroglyphs. In the central picture is the deceased lyhat, looking left towards the god Osiris, with the goddesses Isis and Nephthys standing behind. This picture is flanked by hieroglyphic texts relating to the Four Sons of Horus. The first on the far left reads: “Words spoken by the Osiris Duamutef, true of voice: “I am your son, your beloved existing in your protection every day”.

The next to the right reads: “Words spoken by the Osiris Imseti, true of voice: ‘I am your son your beloved, existing in your protection every day , the Osiris lyhat, the justified, the revered’”. The next to the right again, on the right of the central picture, reads: “Words spoken by the Osiris Hapy, true of voice: ‘I am your son your beloved, existing in your protection every day, the Osiris, purified of Amun, lyhat, the justified, the honourable’”. The one on the far right reads: “Words spoken by the Osiris Qebhsenuf, true of voice: “I am your your beloved, existing in your protection every day, the Osiris lyhat, the justified, venerated before the great god”.

Below is the second horizontal band. Going rightwards from the central ankh sign, this reads: “Life and reverence with Osiris to the purified one of Amun, lyhat, son of god’s father of Amun, Pawerma”. Going leftwards: “Life and reverence with Osiris to the wab-priest of Amun, lyhat, son of god’s father of Amun, Pawerma, the justified”.

Next below is the third highest register of vertical hieroglyphs. In the central picture the mummy of lyhat is resting on a bier, with above him a hieroglyphic text reading “The Osiris lyhat”. Symmetrically placed on both sides of this are two texts. Both read: “Words spoken by the Osiris, the wab-priest of Amun, lyhat, true of voice, son of god’s father of Amun, Pawerma, the justified, borne of Henuttawy”. Flanking these, on the far left and far right, are two texts each

accompanied by pictures of the god Ra-Horakhty and the Eye of Horus, and both reading: “the Behdite (an epithet of Horus), the great god, lord of the Sky”.

Below is the third horizontal band. Going rightwards from the central ankh sign, this reads: “Life and reverence to the Osiris, the wab-priest of Amun, lyhat, son of Pawerma”. Going leftwards: “Life and reverence to the Osiris the wab-priest of Amun, lyhat, the justified, the revered”.

Next below is the fourth highest register of vertical hieroglyphs. There are four blocks. On the far left, we read: “Everything pleasant and sweet for the ka of the Osiris, the wab-priest of Amun, lyhat, borne of the lady of the house Henuttawy, true of voice, the lady”. Next towards the right there is a picture of Anubis-Imywet and the text: “Words spoken by Anubis, the one in the place of embalming, so that he may give all offerings, provisions (and) every good (thing), every purified (thing)”.

In a symmetrical position on the other side of the central vertical strip is a text associated with a picture of Anubis-Khentysehneter: “Words spoken by Anubis, foremost of the divine booth, so that he may give offerings, all provisions and every good (thing), every purified (thing), all things pleasant and sweet, for the ka (of lyhat)”. On the far right, the fourth block reads: “The Osiris, lyhat, true of voice, god’s father’s son lyhat, the justified, son of god’s father of Amun, Pawerma, the justified, the revered”.

Below is the fourth horizontal band. Going rightwards from the central vertical strip, this reads: “The one revered before Osiris, lyhat, true of voice, son of god’s father Pawerma, true of voice”. Going leftwards from the central strip: “The one revered before Osiris, the wab-priest, lyhat, the justified”.

Next below is the fifth highest register of vertical hieroglyphs. There are four blocks. On the far left, we read: “(lyha)t, the justified, son of god’s father of Amun, Pawerma, true of voice, borne of Henuttawy, true of voice, the lady”. Next towards the right there is a picture of Geb and the text: “Words spoken by the Executive of the Gods, Geb, so that he may give a voice-offering of meat, fowl and everything good and pure, for the ka of the Osiris, lyhat”.

In a symmetrical position on the other side of the central vertical strip is a text associated with a picture of Horus: “Words spoken by Horus, he (who) protects (his father), so that he may give every offering, all provisions, everything good and pure, everything pleasant and sweet for the ka of the Osiris the god’s [father] lyhat, true of voice, son of god’s father of Amun, Pawerma, the true of voice, borne of the lady of the house, Henut-tawy, true of voice, the revered before the great god”.



Below is the fifth horizontal band. Going rightwards from the central vertical strip, this reads: “The revered one, the Osiris, lyhat, son of god’s father Pawerma”. Going leftwards from the central strip: “The revered one, lyhat, true of voice”.

Below, at the level of the shins, flanking the two Eyes of Horus which themselves flank the central vertical strip, is the sixth highest register of vertical hieroglyphs.

The one on the left reads: “You are doing this, (O) Horus: making protection (for) the Osiris, lyhat, son of god’s father of Amun, Pawerma, the justified, the revered”. On the right looking at the coffin, at the side of the left shin of the mummy, the text reads: “You are doing this, (O) Horus: making protection (for) the Osiris, the wab-priest of Amun, lyhat, true of voice, honoured as to all the estate of the god”.

Below is the sixth and lowest horizontal band, which reads: “Words spoken by the Osiris, the purified one of Amun, lyhat, the justified, son of god’s father of Amun, Pawerma, borne of Henuttawy, true of voice”.

The feet of the mummy are protected by the squatting, winged Isis, whose picture has above it the text: “Isis, Lady of the Sky: (she) offers peace”.

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