



The Hieroglyphic Inscriptions on the Coffin of Soter (BM EA 6705)

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STUDENTS OF ALY OMAR ABDALLA adore him. During the cooperation project between Helwan University in Cairo and the University of Würzburg in the field of Egyptology and Museum Studies my encounters with Aly Omar, who is the project's backbone on the Egyptian side, made me realize whence this admiration came: Aly Omar is not just a professor, but also a caring father for his students. He is truly a great man. Thus, I deem it appropriate to study texts that a scribe composed for another "great one in his city" who lived in early second-century Thebes; this is even more appropriate since the honoree's field of specialization is the Graeco-Roman Period of Egypt. Furthermore, my article addresses Egyptian funerary religion in the Roman period that Aly Omar studied for his PhD-thesis in Liverpool.¹ Thus, I am confident that Aly Omar will find the following lines to be of some interest.

The coffin of the Theban *archon* Soter, son of Cornelius Pollius, dates to 100 to 120 CE. In 2005, Christina Riggs devoted an article to the remarkable archaic decoration of the coffins that were fashioned for the family of Soter and looked for potential models that she found in Theban temple decoration.² Her focus laid on the art, and she excluded the study of the hieroglyphic inscriptions to which she referred only in passing. This is entirely legitimate, but in her remark "Each wind 'speaks' in a text beginning with *jnk*, 'I am', and ending with a reference to the deceased",³ it becomes apparent that she did not understand the inscriptions because the putative *jnk* is rather *ii-nꜥk X*, "X comes to you...". The coffin has not been included into Dieter Kurth's collection of "materials concerning the funerary belief in Roman Egypt" with shrouds, mummy boards, mummy shrines, and chests.⁴ Thus, the edition of the inscriptions on the coffin of "the great one" of Thebes, Soter, is a desideratum, and the subject of my article complements Christina Riggs's study.

The rendering of the inscriptions in hieroglyphs generated by JSesh⁵ are an approximation, since not all details can be displayed in those standardized hieroglyphs. For instance, in the original, the snake's tail in  reaches higher up, almost entirely encircling the mummy, as in . However, this article is about the correct reading of the inscriptions, not their palaeog-

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¹ A. ABDALLA, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt, Liverpool monographs in archaeology and oriental studies*, Liverpool, 1992.

² Chr. RIGGS, "Archaism and Artistic Sources in Roman Egypt. The Coffins of the Soter Family and the Temple of Deir el-Medina", *BIFAO* 106, 2006, p. 315-332; M. SMITH, *Following Osiris. Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia*, Oxford, 2017, p. 506-507, for further references.

³ Chr. RIGGS, *BIFAO* 106, 2006, p. 319.

⁴ D. KURTH, *Materialien zum Totenglauben im römischen Ägypten*, Hützel, 2010.

⁵ S. ROSMORDUC, *JSesh Documentation [online]*, <http://jseshdoc.qenherkhopeshef.org>, Stand: 26.04.2019.

raphy. The photographs of Soter's coffin which I downloaded from the BM's online database several years ago and from which I copied the text in JSesh, are not included here,⁶ as the British Museum would charge me £105 for that. The Trustees of the British Museum must ask themselves the question whether they want to continue their current image policy that impedes the advancement of knowledge and scholarship, as it prevents objects in that important collection from being published. To overcome this, I drew facsimiles and am publishing them here. In the JSesh reproduction, I maintained the hieroglyphs' original orientation but changed columns to lines. Their arrangement is artificial, whereas I present the two lines on the coffin's side in their original arrangement of micro-columns that make up the lines.

1. The Central Column on the Coffin's Lid [fig. 1]

The central column on the lid of Soter's coffin (S) is the only inscription that finds close parallels. They are

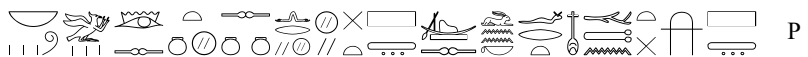
- P = the lid of the coffin that was made for Soter's son Padiimenipet and that is now in the Louvre (E 13016) [fig. 2],
- L = pLouvre N 3166 III 2–3 (L).

The only publication of the former is a drawing by Frédéric Cailliaud (without a translation, however) that François-René Herbin used in his booklet on Padiimenipet's burial.⁷ Herbin gave a translation of P,⁸ while in his publication of L he transliterated, translated, and briefly commented on P also, as far as it was parallel to L.⁹



št3 št3.t-tn nfr.t wnn<.t>=k im=s št3 št3<.t> iwt.t rh-s nn thn-s rhy.t

This beautiful tomb in which you are, it is a mysterious secret that (one) does not know, without the *rekhyt*-people violating it.



št3 št3.t-tn nfr.t wnn<.t>=k im=s št3.t sp-2 n rh-s nn thn-s rhy.t-nb<.t>

This beautiful tomb in which you are, it is a mysterious secret – (one) does not know it, without all the *rekhyt*-people violating it.



št3 št3.t-tn wr<.t> wn<.t>= hr=k št3 sp-2 nn rh-s nn dhn-s rhy.t




⁶ The images have been removed from the British Museum Collection Database ('6705', www.britishmuseum.org/collection. British Museum. Online. Access 22 March 2019); other photographs may be found there. Chr. RIGGS, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt. Art, Identity, and Funerary Religion*, Oxford, 2005, p. 187, figs. 87-88, and *ead.*, *BIFAO* 106, 2006, p. 328, fig. 1, reproduces the photographs of which I have digital files. However, the images are too small for reading the hieroglyphs in those two publications.

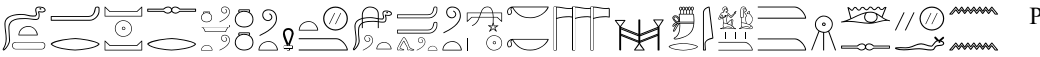
⁷ Fr. Cailliaud (ed.), *Voyage à Méroé, au Fleuve Blanc, au-delà de Fazoql dans le midi du Royaume de Sennâr, à Syounah et dans cinq autres oasis, fait dans les années 1819, 1820, 1821 et 1822* II, Paris, 1827, pl. 67, n° 1; Fr.R. HERBIN, *Padiimenipet, fils de Sôter. Histoire d'une famille dans l'Égypte romaine*, Solo 20, Paris, 2002, p. 31.




⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

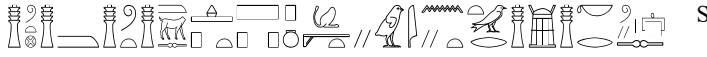
⁹ *Id.*, "Trois manuscrits originaux du Louvre porteurs du Livre des Respirations fait par Isis (P. Louvre N 3121, N 3083 et N 3166)", *RdE* 50, 1999, p. 192, 200, 220.

This great tomb that is under you, it is a mysterious secret – the *rekhyt*-people do not know it and do not violate¹⁰ it.

 S
 *idr ntr.w kk.tw sp-2 hh.tw sp-2 md.tsp-2 htm.tw nn wn.tw=s r nhh hn' d.t*
 (since) the gods exist, being very dark, being very sought for, being very deep, being sealed that it will not be opened forever and ever.











 P
nn hf-s hnmm.t m idr ntr.w kk.tw hh.tw md.tw sp{t}<-2> m htm.tw nn wn.tw=s r nhh hn' d.t
 without the sun people perceiving it, since the gods exist, being dark, being sought for, being very deep in being sealed so that it will not be opened forever and ever.

 L
 *m idr ntr.w kk.tw hh.tw md.tw sp-2 nn wn rh-s h3.w-mr*
 since the gods exist, being dark, being sought for, being very deep so that there is no populace knowing it. **End of parallel in L.**

 S
s3wy-s¹¹ k<3>r<.t> wr.t nty iw ntr¹²-pn šps¹³ htp m hnw=s dd.tw m Ddw
 To him¹⁴ it belongs, the great chapel in which this noble god rests and which endures in Busiris.

¹⁰ Abusive determination from *thn* “hide, to be hidden” (*Wb* V 327, 8-18; P. WILSON, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon. A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu*, OLA 78, Leuven, 1997, p. 1150-1151).

¹¹ Fr.R. HERBIN, *Padiimenipet, fils de Sôter*, p. 32, translates: “Sa paroi (?) est (celle de) la grande chapelle où ce grand dieu auguste est caché, (...)”. However, the sense would be a bit obscure then. To which noble god does the text then refer? I would expect that this is the deceased himself. If so, then the sentence is a circular statement (the coffin’s wall is the coffin’s wall). Furthermore, the lack of a determinative is irritating. I rather propose that *s3w* is the late writing of the absolute pronoun plus dependent pronoun as pronominal subject described by A.H. GARDINER, “A late-Egyptian use of the old absolute pronouns”, *ZÄS* 50, 1912, p. 114-117, esp. p. 117 (β).

¹² *A priori* the sign  – if a noun – should be read *hk3* “ruler” or *hk3* “magic” (R.K. RITNER, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, SAOC 54, Chicago, 1993, p. 25-26; D. KURTH, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische I. Eine Grammatik mit Zeichenliste und Übungsstücken*, Hützel, 2009, p. 225, n°45), but the parallel indicates *ntr*. The latter reading seems to be justified because of the  presumably serving as a phonetic complement beneath . The fact that an *r* is missing as a phonetic complement indicates that the scribe pronounced the word similar to Coptic *NOYTE*. Thus,  would turn out to be a variant of  and , for which the phonetic value *ntr* is attested (*id.*, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische I*, p. 138 no. 56 and p. 225 n° 44). R.K. RITNER, *op. cit.*, p. 26 n. 114, also quotes H. JUNKER, *Über das Schriftsystem im Tempel der Hathor in Dendera*, Berlin, 1903, p. 5-8. This must be emended to p. 15-18. This raises the question whether  and  in the tomb of the crown prince Sheshonq in Memphis (A. BADAWI, “Das Grab des Kronprinzen Scheschonk, Sohnes Osorkon’s II. und Hohenpriesters von Memphis”, *ASAE* 56, 1956, p. 170-171, pl. 11) are to be read *ntr* rather than *hk3* as R.K. RITNER, *loc. cit.*, proposes. Both writings label the depiction of deities. The reading *ntr* is not excluded as a label, nor is *ph3y*, cf. *LGG* III, 100c-101a; *LGG* IV 389a-390a, and both would account for  and .

¹³ In Soter’s version the  for *s* has been reduced to .

¹⁴ *I.e.*, the deceased resting in the coffin who is then likened to the noble god.



s3wy-s k<3>r.t wr<.t> nty iw ntr-pn šps imn im=s

To him it belongs, the great chapel in which this noble god is hidden



n 3b=k r 3bdw mn m W3s.t s.t ib=k iz.t t3m.t nhh d.t

You are not separate from Abydos. Endure in Thebes, your favourite place, the mound of Djeme,¹⁵ forever and ever.¹⁶





nsy.t=k m-k3b=s Wsir S3wtr m3'-h3rw bw3¹⁷ wr m nw.t=f msi.n Hw.t-Hr Pymr¹⁸

Your kingship is within it, Osiris of Soter, justified, the dignitary, the great one in his city, whom the Hathor¹⁹ of Philo bore.




d3w nsy.t n hm=f²⁰ ntr imy=s w3h Wsir P3-di-Imn-ip.t m3'-h3rw msi.n Grwptr

The kingship is given to His Majesty, the god therein. May the Osiris of Padiimenipet, justified, whom Cleopatra bore, endure.



¹⁵ The mound of Djeme (Medinet Habu, cf. M.A. STADLER, “The Funerary Texts of Papyrus Turin N. 766: A Demotic Book of Breathing (Part I)”, *Enchoria* 25, 1999, p. 92) stands here as a mythologically important place in the Theban cultic landscape *pars pro toto* for the Theban area.

¹⁶ Because of this addition in S, the translation of Fr.R. HERBIN, *Padiimenipet, fils de Sôter*, p. 32, does not work. Herbin adds “donnant la royauté à sa Majesté, le dieu qui est en elle” immediately after “... où ce grand dieu auguste est caché” which works for P but ignores the version in S. The latter indicates that we are dealing with three or – in P – with two sentences.

¹⁷ K. VAN LANDUYT, “The Soter Family. Genealogy and Onomastics”, in: S.P. Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred Gated Thebes. Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, P.L.Bat. 27, Leiden, New York, Köln, 1995, p. 71, falsely renders the variant  on the shroud as *wr m nw.t=f b3w sr '3 n sp3.t=f W3s.t* “an important man in his city, the mighty (?) and great official of his district”, apparently not knowing the word *bw3* (*Wb* I, 454). Thus, the variant should be read as *wr m nw.t=f bw3 '3 n sp3.t=f W3s.t* “the great one in his city, the great dignitary of his nome Thebes”.

¹⁸ *P<3>y-mwt* “She who belongs to death” is an obviously wrong explanation for the mother’s name (see *ibid.*, p. 71-72) because *p3y* would be masculine and not feminine. The putative *mwt* is as *mr* rather a writing for /lō/, see I. GUERMEUR, Recension “Derchain Ph. – *Les impondérables de l'hellénisation*, MRE 7, Turnhout, 2000”, *BiOr* 60, 2003, p. 337-338, and G. VITTMANN, “Zwischen Integration und Ausgrenzung. Zur Akkulturation von Ausländern im spätzeitlichen Ägypten”, in: R. Rollinger, B. Truschnegg (eds.), *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum. Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante. Festschrift für Peter W. Haider zum 60. Geburtstag*, *Oriens et Occidens* 12, Stuttgart, 2006, p. 587-588.

¹⁹ For Hathor as an acquired state of deceased women see M. SMITH, *Following Osiris*, Oxford, 2017, p. 384-349.

²⁰ Like Fr.R. HERBIN, *Padiimenipet, fils de Sôter*, p. 32, I take  as it appears in Cailliaud’s drawing as a mistake for .



iw b3zfm gs hr.t²¹ h3.tsf <m> dw3.t²²

His *ba* is at the side of the sky, his corpse in the netherworld.²³

2. The Lateral Horizontal Inscriptions

a. The Right-Hand Side (from the Mummy's Perspective) [fig. 3]



h3 Wsir Swtr m3'-hrw msi.n Hw.t-Hr Pymr ii-n=k Inpw imy wt nb t3²⁴ dsr di3f 'wy3f r=k n krs.t nfr.t n<.t> d.t 'nh b3=k rnpi h'.w=k 'nh b3=k m p.t²⁵ hr R' ntry rn=k m t3 šr Gbb rnpi h3.t=k m dw3.t hr Wsir šsp=k qbh m- 'Hr sz 3s.t dpy-sw-mq²⁶ t m- '3s.t Nb.t-hw.t hn b3²⁷=k iw twtw.w

²¹ All attestations of an extended version of this formula in the *Book of Traversing Eternity* (Fr.R. HERBIN, *Le Livre de parcourir l'éternité*, OLA 58, Leuven, 1994, p. 81-83, 383) as well as those in the *Embalming Ritual* (x+II 12, x+VII 4, 18, x+10 20 – S. TÖPFER, *Das Balsamierungsritual. Eine (Neu-)Edition der Textkomposition Balsamierungsritual* (pBoulaq 3, pLouvre 5158, pDurham 1983.11 + pSt. Petersburg 18128), SSR 13, Wiesbaden, 2015, p. 72, 151, 157, 193) write “sky” as which is conventionally transliterated as *p.t*. This would also be the first choice here, but on the Soter coffin the same formula recurs twice at the end of the lateral horizontal inscriptions (2a) and (2b) as or respectively indicating that *hr.t* is also to be read here. However, appears in several instances on the Soter coffin where I kept the conventional transliteration *p.t*.

²² I take some of the as they appear in Cailliaud's drawing as (maybe Cailliaud's) mistakes for .

²³ This is a variant of a notion that is also found in various funerary texts: S. TÖPFER, *Das Balsamierungsritual*, p. 72, 85 note (an) with further references, p. 157 (with the tripartite version *ba* in sky – corpse in the netherworld – image in the temple), p. 193, a cognate version on p. 151. Likewise, it recurs on the coffin of Soter several times in variants, see below.

²⁴ Writing *t3* like *tw3.t* – possibly indicating a change of meaning of Anubis' epithet to “lord of the sacred netherworld” – is paralleled by contemporary religious Demotic texts: M. SMITH, *Papyrus Harkness* (MMA 31.9.7), Oxford, 2005, p. 181, 225-226; G. WIDMER, *Résurrection d'Osiris-naissance d'Horus. Les papyrus Berlin P. 6750 et Berlin P. 8765, témoignages de la persistance de la tradition sacerdotale dans le Fayoum à l'époque romaine*, ÄOP 3, Berlin, Boston, 2015, p. 128-130; M.A. STADLER, *Das Soknopaiosritual. Texte zum Täglichen Ritual im Tempel des Soknopaios zu Dimê*, ÄOP 6, Berlin, Boston 2022, p. 253-254.

²⁵ Or *hr.t*? Cf. note 21.

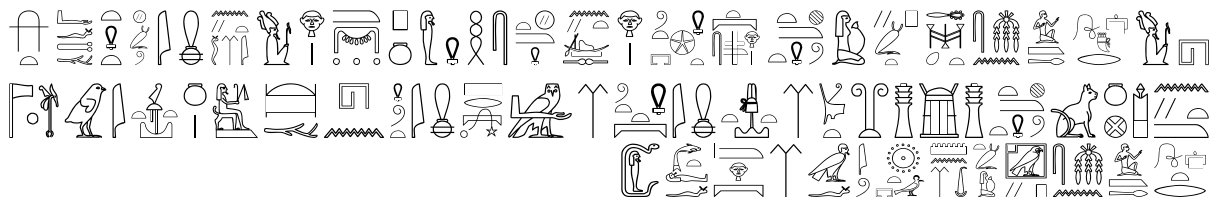
²⁶ The transliteration follows D. KURTH, *Materialien zum Totenglauben*, p. 108, while D. KLOTZ, *Caesar in the City of Amun. Egyptian Temple Construction and Theology in Roman Thebes*, MRE 15, Turnhout, 2012, p. 56, transliterates *tp hrw 10*, which seems to be faulty because the decade is *sw mq/sw 10*, not *hrw mq/10*, cf. *Wb* IV, 58, maintained by the *TLA*.

²⁷ The wind determinative for *b3* could express the *ba*'s flying up and mobility through the air. It also evokes associations with the vignette of *BD* spell 54 with deceased holding the *t3w*-sail. The spell refers explicitly to the ability of breathing and conceives the deceased as a bird (cf. M. MOSHER Jr, *The Book of the Dead, Saite through Ptolemaic Periods. A Study of Traditions Evident in Versions of Texts and Vignettes* 4. *BD Spells* 50–63, 65–77, *SPBDStudies*, Prescott, Az, 2017, p. 113-120). This allows associations to the *ba* and his nature to be made and

mr<.w>ef iwef m gs hr.t h.t.k d.t

“Ho, Osiris of Soter, justified, whom the Hathor of Philo bore, Anubis who is in the embalming place, the lord of the sacred land, came to you. He gave his two hands upon you for a beautiful burial of eternity/of the body²⁸. Your *ba* will live, your body will rejuvenate. Your *ba* will live in the sky before Ra, your name will be divine on²⁹ earth before Geb, your corpse will rejuvenate in the netherworld before Osiris.³⁰ You will receive libation from Horus, son of Isis, (at) the Feast of the Decade,³¹ bread from Isis and Nephthys. Your *ba* will alight upon all (divine) images that he desires, and he will be at the side of the sky, your³² body (in) the underworld.³³”

b. The Left-Hand Side (from the Mummy's Perspective)



*h3 Wsir Swtr m3 '-hrw msi.n Hw.t-Hr³⁴ Pymr htm.tw p.t³⁵ hr imy=s htm.tw dw3.t hr nty im=s htm
s< '>h-pn m nbw hr Wsir nty im=ef mi htm.tw 'ft.t nty m Iwnw mi htm.tw šty.t wr.t nt<.t> m 3bdw*

could explain the determination here. The same writing reappears in the text addressed to the East Wind, see (3d) below.

²⁸ The writing system of that period does not allow to conclusively decide which rendering is correct. I would suppose that it was ambiguous and expressed both at once for the ancient reader also.

²⁹ *M* would indicate *prima facie* “in the earth”, but the following phrase referring to the netherworld makes it clear that “on earth” is meant. Otherwise, one of the three levels (D. KURTH, *Wo Götter, Menschen und Tote lebten. Eine Studie zum Weltbild der alten Ägypter, Quellen und Interpretationen – Altägypten 3*, Hützel, 2016, p. 243-244, cf. also the sarcophagus of Wereshnefer, New York MMA 14.7.1, *ibid.*, p. 213-216, and L. MIATELLO, “On Egypt as the Horus Eye”, *GöttMisz* 252, 2017, p. 102-104, with a diverging interpretation) would be missing and one would be doubled.

³⁰ Cf. note 23. A parallel for the specific phrasing here is found in D. KURTH, *Materialien zum Totenglauben*, p. 108.

³¹ Horus, son of Isis, being mentioned here in the context of the decadary rites neatly fits in the assimilation of Amenope to Horus, son of Isis, as described by Cl. TRAUNECKER, “Le Papyrus Spiegelberg et l’évolution des liturgies thébaines”, in: S.P. Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred Gated Thebes, P.L.Bat. 27*, Leiden, New York, Cologne, 1995, p. 193-196. See also Fr.R. HERBIN, “Une Liturgie des rites décadaires de Djemê. Papyrus Vienne 3865”, *RdE* 35, 1984, p. 105-126; *id.*, “La renaissance d’Osiris au temple d’Opet (P. Vatican inv. 38606)”, *RdE* 54, 2003, p. 67-129; A. FORGEAU, *Horus-fils-d’Isis. La jeunesse d’un dieu*, *BiEtud* 150, Cairo, 2010, p. 300-304 and M. SMITH, *Traversing Eternity. Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt*, Oxford, 2009, p. 183-184, 193. The shroud in the Olsen collection has Amenope instead of Horus, son of Isis (D. KURTH, *loc. cit.*).

³² The use of the second person here is inconsistent and due to an imperfect transposition from a text recited for Soter during the performance of a burial rite to the descriptive form of the coffin. In the descriptive form the text refers to the deceased in the third person.

³³ For *d.t* as a writing of *dw3.t*, cf. also the interchangeability in Demotic as pointed out by G. WIDMER, *Résurrection d’Osiris-naissance d’Horus*, p. 128-130, and M.A. STADLER, Recension “Ghislaïne Widmer, *Résurrection d’Osiris – naissance d’Horus: les papyrus Berlin P. 6750 et Berlin P. 8765, témoignages de la persistance de la tradition sacerdotale dans le Fayoum à l’époque romaine*, *Ägyptische und Orientalische Papyri und Handschriften des Ägyptischen Museums und Papyrussammlung Berlin 3*, Berlin, Boston, 2015”, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2017.03.36, referring to *tw3.t* meaning various other words than “netherworld”. – For the entire phrase cf. note 23.

³⁴ Note the remarkable writing of *Hw.t-Hr* for which I am unable to cite parallels except for a second attestation in the inscription for the West Wind on Soter’s coffin, see below.

³⁵ Or *hr.t?* Cf. note 21.

mī ḥtm.tw p.t³⁶ m mšrw mī ḥtm.tw hn šps n imn.t.t iw Wsir Swtr m3³⁷ -hrw msi.n Ḥw.t-Ḥr Pymr mn m-hnw tb.t iw b3-f m gs hr<.t> h3.t-f <m> dw3.t

“Ho, Osiris of Soter, justified, whom the Hathor of Philo bore, sealed is the sky over him who is in it, sealed is the netherworld over the one who is in it. This mummy was sealed with gold over the Osiris who is in it, as the chest is sealed that is in Heliopolis, as the great crypt³⁷ that is in Abydos is sealed, as the sky is sealed in the evening, as the noble box of the west is sealed. The Osiris of Soter, justified, whom the Hathor of Philo bore, endures in the coffer, and his *ba* will be at the side of the sky, his corpse (in) the underworld.”³⁸

3. The Inscriptions on the Posts

I present the winds in the order of the cardinal points that contracts in their description of a real estate’s neighbourhood. It also appears in late funerary texts: *ink ḥpr m sp dpy ink rsy.t ink mh.t.t ink imn.t.t ink i3b.t.t nm irw mī ky=i wpi-hr-k* “I am one who came into existence on the first occasion. I am the South. I am the North. I am the West. I am the East. Who thereof is like my nature except for you?”³⁹

In Thebes, the entrance of the winds at the four corners of the coffin or sarcophagus has a tradition that goes back at least to the New Kingdom. On royal sarcophagi as well as private coffins of the New Kingdom the vignette of spell 161 of the *Book of the Dead* appears.⁴⁰ It shows Thoth opening the sky four times and says “one is for the North Wind that is Osiris, another the South Wind that is Ra, another one for the West Wind that is Isis, another one for the East Wind that is Nephthys”.⁴¹ The winds on the Soter coffin, however, do not follow the tradition of the *Book of the Dead*, but the underlying idea is still similar. The Soter winds rather connect to temple decoration as Christina Riggs has shown.⁴²

a. South Wind (Sheheb, Lion with Ram’s Head) [fig. 5]



ii-n=k t3w rsy pri m tph.t-f Šhb <r>n-f⁴³ ns<r>⁴⁴ f hfty.w=k di-f wbn b3-k m p.t⁴⁵ hn S3h Wsir


³⁶ Or *hr.t*? Cf. note 21.

³⁷ The Egyptian term refers to Osiris’ tomb, see Fr.R. HERBIN, *RdE* 35, 1984, p. 122 n. 67.

³⁸ Cf. note 23.

³⁹ Quote from pBM EA 10191 II 18–9. Fr.R. HERBIN, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts, Catalogue of Books of the Dead and Other Religious Texts in the British Museum* 4, London, 2008, p. 52, pls. 29, 31.

⁴⁰ M.A. STADLER, *Weiser und Wesir. Studien zu Vorkommen, Rolle und Wesen des Gottes Thot im ägyptischen Totenbuch, ORA* 1, Tübingen, 2009, p. 237, n. 10.

⁴¹ D. KURTH, *Wo Götter, Menschen und Tote lebten*, p. 14-15. Even though, I. BÖHME, “Botschafter der kosmischen Ordnung. Thot, Geb, Horus und  und Tb 161 auf den privaten Sarkophagen des Neuen Reiches”, in: M. Brose, et al. (eds.), *En détail – Philologie und Archäologie im Diskurs, Festschrift Für Hans-W. Fischer-Elfert, ZÄS-Beihefte* 7, Berlin, Boston, 2019, p. 103-131 cites, on p. 115, M.A. STADLER, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 303-305, she seems to have overlooked my discussion of the phenomenon on p. 236-239, which undoubtedly is superficial in comparison to her study.

⁴² Chr. RIGGS, *BIFAO* 106, 2006, p. 315-332, with further references.

⁴³ For the emendation, cf. P. DU BOURGUET, *Le temple de Deir al-Médina, MIFAO* 121, Cairo, 2002, p. 106, 201, and *Esna* II, p. 208, no. 105, 1.

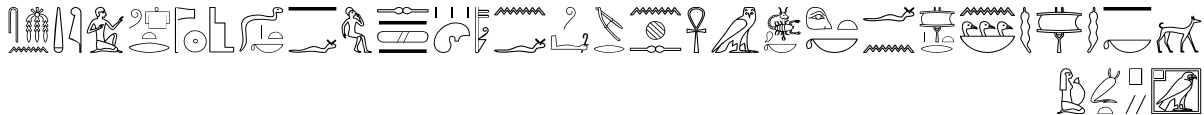
⁴⁴ — is in fact a not particularly well drawn —.

⁴⁵ Or *hr.t*? Cf. note 21.

Swtr m3 'hrw⁴⁶ msi.n Pymr ʀ..⁴⁷ Hw.t-Hr

“To you the South Wind comes emerging from his cavern, Sheheb his <na>me. He will burn your enemies, he will cause your *ba* to rise with Orion, Osiris of Soter, justified, whom Philo ʀ....ʀ, the Hathor, bore.”

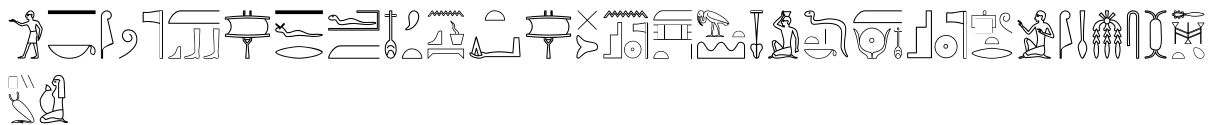
b. North Wind (*Qeb, Four-Headed Ram*) [fig. 5b]



ii-n⁴⁸ k t3w ndm n mh.t r fndk srk k m nh smr.nsf ks.wk snhn.n⁴⁹ sf d.tk Wsir Swtr m3 'hrw⁵⁰ msi.n Hw.t-Hr Pymr

“To you the sweet North Wind comes to your nose so that you breathe life. He caused your bones to be bound together⁵¹. He has caused your body to be youthful, Osiris of Soter, justified, whom the Hathor of Philo bore.”

c. West Wind (*Hedja, Falcon with Ram's Head*) [fig. 5c]




ii-nk Šw m kbb nfr pri m nfr.t n-k<3>b p.t di t3w wr n Wsir m sp3.t dšr.t sm3-f d.tk m hnm⁵² nfr Wsir Swtr m3 'hrw msi.n Hw.t-Hr⁵³ Pymr

“To you Shu comes as the beautiful cool wind emerging from the beautiful,⁵⁴ from within the sky (and) giving a great breeze to Osiris in the red nome. He will unite your body with the perfect respiratory air, Osiris of Soter, justified, whom the


⁴⁶ The hieroglyphic rendering tries to show how the artist has drawn the *hrw*.

⁴⁷ The signs look like a circle and a ×.

⁴⁸ Here — is a variant of .

⁴⁹ Cf. note 48.

⁵⁰ Cf. note 46.

⁵¹ Cf. for this notion of binding together the bones in differing wordings *i. a.*: pBremner-Rhind XI 2 (*t3r* “to fasten together”), XV 9 (*s3k* “to gather together”) – R.O. FAULKNER, *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind (British Museum No. 10188)*, *BiAeg* 3, Brussels, 1933, p. 20, 28; *s3hw* I spell 2, 2nd part, 8th strophe, verse 75 (*ts* “to knit together”) – J. ASSMANN, *Osirisliturgien in Papyri der Spätzeit*, *AltTot* 3, Heidelberg, 2008, p. 53; M. SMITH, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 174; *Stundenwachen*, second hour of the day (again *ts* “to knit together”) – A.H. PRIES, *Die Stundenwachen im Osiriskult. Eine Studie zur Tradition und späten Rezeption von Ritualen im Alten Ägypten*, *SSR* 2, Wiesbaden, 2011, p. 362. [However, pBremner-Rhind XI 2 is only relevant here in the interpretation “Your bones will be fastened together for you.” proposed by M. SMITH, *op. cit.*, p. 113 and A. KUCHARÉK, *Die Klagelieder von Isis und Nephthys in Texten der Griechisch-Römischen Zeit*, *AltTot* 4, *Supplemente zu den Schriften der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-Historische Klasse* 22, Heidelberg 2010, p. 176, while the version of F. Feder in the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (<http://aaew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/TlaLogin>; accessed 28th March, 2019) differs completely: “(Denn) ein Schutzschirm für dich ist die Dämmerung um dich!” However, this latter interpretation does not convince me, for it does not explain the determination of *izhh* (.

⁵² For this reading cf. D. KURTH, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische* I, p. 223 no. 25 and p. 232 n. 80.

⁵³ Cf. note 34.

⁵⁴ Presumably, this is a poetical reference to the sky, cf. R. VAN DER MOLEN, *A Hieroglyphic Dictionary of Egyptian Coffin Texts*, *ProblAg* 15, Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 2000, p. 225.

Hathor of Philo bore.”





d. East Wind (*Henushesu, Scarab with Ram's Head*) [fig. 5d]








*iw-nzk t3w izb.t Hnw-hs{s}*⁵⁵ *dpy w'r.t nn.t sh'i.nsf bz*⁵⁶ *sk m hr.t*⁵⁷ *hn' R' imy.w skt.t rs.wy n*⁵⁸
ir.tyzk Wsir Swtr m3'-hrw msi.n Pymr

“To you comes the East Wind Henushesu being over the district of the firmament. He causes your *ba* to appear in the sky together with Ra (and) those who are in the morning bark⁵⁹. How joyful is (it) for your eyes, Osiris of Soter, justified, whom Philo bore!”

Conclusions

At first sight, inscriptions on coffins usually appear to be rather formulaic, trivial, even dull. Maybe that is the reason why nobody undertook to properly edit Soter's texts. However, these texts prove to be quite remarkable both on the level of their graphic design and on the level of their contents. Thus, the inscriptions show the scribe's endeavour (or the endeavour of the one who commissioned the coffin, maybe even Soter himself) to display his excellent command of hieroglyphic writings. For instance, all four attestations of “to come” are written in four different ways, two of them being playful: , , , and . The philological quality is generally high, for the text shows hardly any mistakes. If I have used <...>, it does not necessarily indicate scribal errors but simply emendations to a Middle Egyptian standard. The coffin's orthography rather perfectly corresponds to that of Ptolemaic and contemporary temple inscriptions, and the writing is partly due to the form of Egyptian as it was spoken in Soter's time, such as the feminine *t* that was not pronounced and consequently not written anymore.

Likewise, the contents appear to be carefully composed, be it in one horizontal line complementing the other one on the other side or be it each wind having a special function corresponding to its particular nature. Both inscriptions are complementary to each other as for their contents: (2a) thematizes the proper execution of the embalming rites that are the prerequisite for the *ba*'s well-being and the corporeal integrity as well as the deceased's continued participation in Theban cult feasts. On the other side, (2b) stresses the safe preservation in his coffin by repeatedly expressing this through mostly stative forms of *htm* “to seal”. On the posts, the hot South Wind burns the deceased's enemies while the other, cooler winds serve the deceased's revivification. Finally, the author showed a high competence and excellent art in condensing the essentials of Egyptian funerary belief to the space available.

⁵⁵ The graphically similar  has been put instead of . Cf. the writing in *Esna* II, p. 239, no. 128,1, and see in general D. KURTH, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische* I, p. 528 § 22.4 and p. 532 § 26.2, for  writing *š* and vice versa. His undifferentiating remark (p. 524 § 19) that *h*, *h*, *h*, and *h* are written  in Coptic is misleading in the light of what he himself writes before this, that *h* may be also  in Coptic, see his examples p. 532 § 26.2.

⁵⁶ Cf. note 27.

⁵⁷ Cf. note 21.

⁵⁸ Cf. note 48.

⁵⁹ For the late switch of meanings of the words for the morning and evening barks of the solar god see M. SMITH, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507, Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum* III, London 1987, p. 85.

Although the inscriptions are an epitome, they turn out to be longer, more elaborate, and richer in content than one would guess from an only superficial look at them. Overall, they have the same high standard of skilfulness as the pictorial “decoration” that is in fact far more than a mere aesthetic attribute. Rather on the contrary, it is an integral part of Soter’s erudite display of his belief in an Egyptian afterlife and forms a unity with the texts.



Fig. 1. The central column on the lid of Soter's coffin, cut where the falcon statue was inserted on the lid. (facsimile by M.A. Stadler).

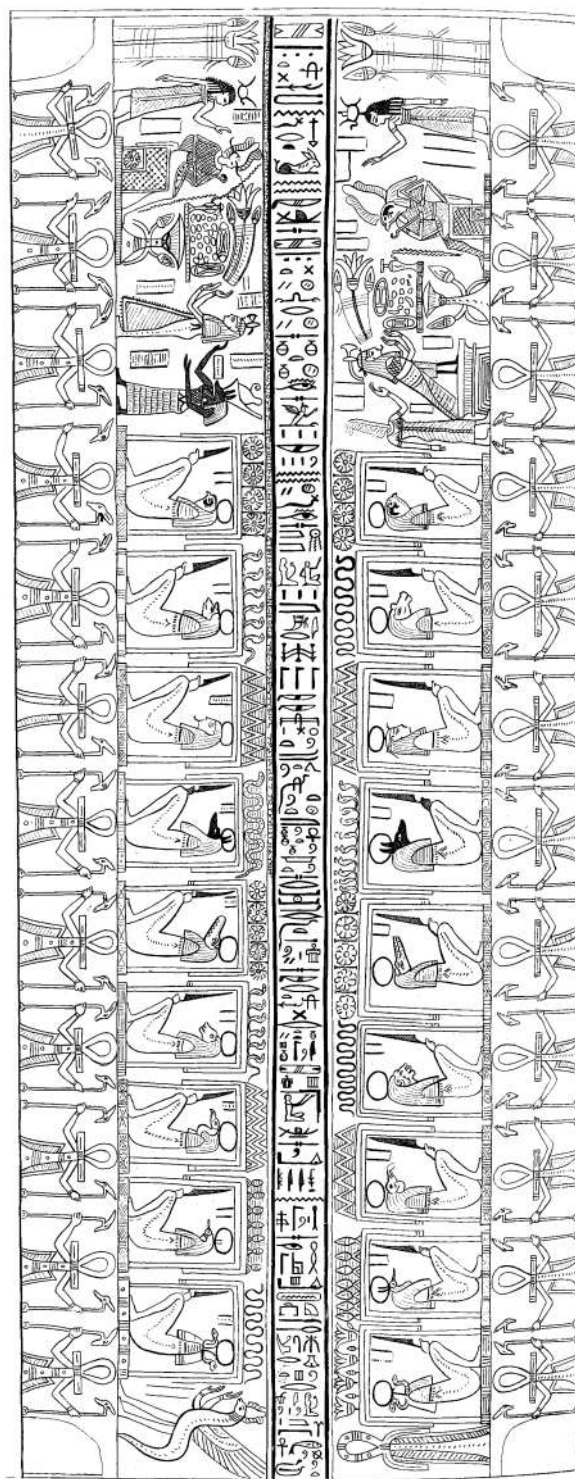


Fig. 2. The lid of Padiimenipet's coffin (Louvre E 13016) after Fr. Cailliaud (ed.), *Voyage à Méroé, au Fleuve Blanc, au-delà de Fazoql dans le midi du Royaume de Sennâr, à Syounah et dans cinq autres oasis, fait dans les années 1819, 1820, 1821 et 1822* II, Paris, 1827, pl. 67, n° 1.

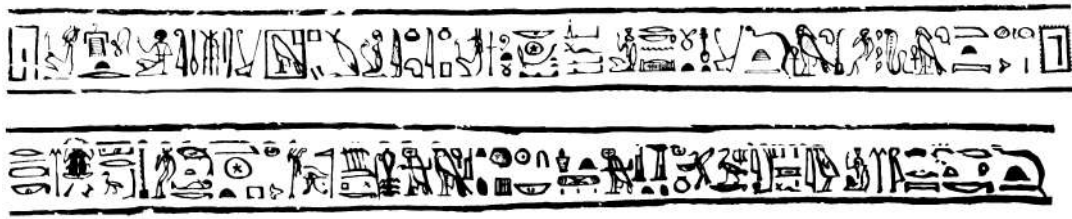


Fig. 3. The lateral horizontal inscription on the right-hand side of Soter's coffin (facsimile by M.A. Stadler).



Fig. 4. The lateral horizontal inscription on the left-hand side of Soter's coffin (facsimile by M.A. Stadler).

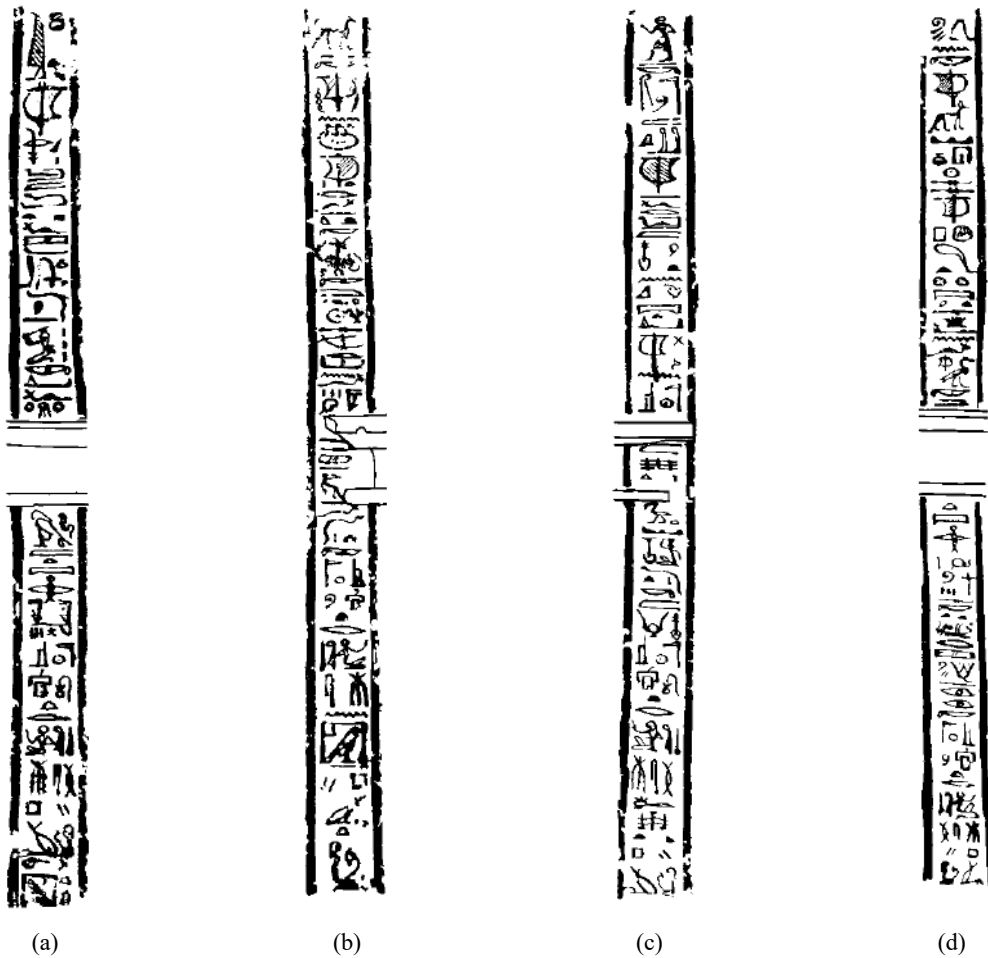


Fig. 5. The inscriptions on the posts of Soter's coffin (facsimile by M.A. Stadler): (a) South Wind, (b) North Wind, (c) West Wind, and (d) East Wind.