

TEXTS FOR PROTECTION OF THE BODY on inner sarcophagi of the Saite-Persian period from Abusir

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Large shaft tombs represent a very specific type of Late Period funeral architecture in Lower Egypt. The inscriptions on the walls of the tombs and sarcophagi from these monuments constitute a key source for our understanding of religious concepts of the Saite-Persian era (Dynasties XXVI-XXVII).

In the shaft tomb, the deceased was completely surrounded by a complex system of religious-magical texts and images. In the case of the tombs of the **priest Iufaa** and the **general Menekhibnekau** in the Abusir cemetery one can observe compositions derived from older texts, but for many specific texts and images no parallels have thus far been identified.

The inner **anthropoid sarcophagus** of Menekhibnekau, which originally stored the mummy of the deceased general, was made out of **greywacke**. Its lower part was smashed by robbers in antiquity, but fragments of the lid covered with inscriptions were found, collected and joined together. The **text on the outside of the lid** consists of **16 vertical lines**, while the inner side of the sarcophagus is without decoration.



The tomb of the priest **Iufaa** was found intact, with the **anthropoid inner basalt sarcophagus** still holding a wooden coffin with Iufaa's mummy. The inside of the lid contains the same text as the one found on Menekhibnekau's outer lid. It consists of **14 vertical lines**.



Both sarcophagi held similar versions of the same composition, which was intentionally **located close to the body of the owner**. There are some differences between both versions: Iufaa, for one, had less space for the text, and as a result some parts are omitted at the very end of the composition.



- The composition opens with **14 parts of the body** connected to the sun god **Ra** with his different epithets.
- This is **followed by warnings** to humans, akhs, gods and the dead,
- and an assurance that Ra provides the appropriate parts of the body to deceased.
- As a result Iufaa and Menekhibnekau regain the **ability to live again** and are provided with every protection needed against their enemies in the other life.



14 parts of the body													
Head	Ears	Glowing eyes	Tongue	Nape	Neck	Arms	Chest	Body	jb heart	Haty heart	Spine	Penis	Legs
Belongs to Ra, Epithets of Ra.													
Invocation of all categories of beings (humans, gods, akhs, dead etc.),													
Do not control this head	Take care of these ears	Look after these eyes	Answer /Obey the orders of Ra	Do not control (PART OF BODY)									
Belonging to Ra, Epithets of Ra,				Belonging to Ra, Epithets of Ra,									
Beware of Beware of negative occurrences like darkness, enemy etc.										Do not control		Beware	
Oh Ra You gave to Menekhibnekau/Iufaa your (PART OF BODY)													
you gave													
Protection of the head against the executioner's block	To hear like Ra	To see to recognize eternity	To speak the truth like Ra	Protection opening mouth	To hear to speak Achet	Power to defeat enemies	Expansion breathing	To hide name against enemies	Magic protection	Protection Propitiation	To shine To get rid of enemies	Mighty image of Ra Life	Slaughtering enemies To endure