

Chapter 94 (Lepsius number)

Relative frequency at different periods (provisional date from Munro 1988, 2001, Quirke 1993)

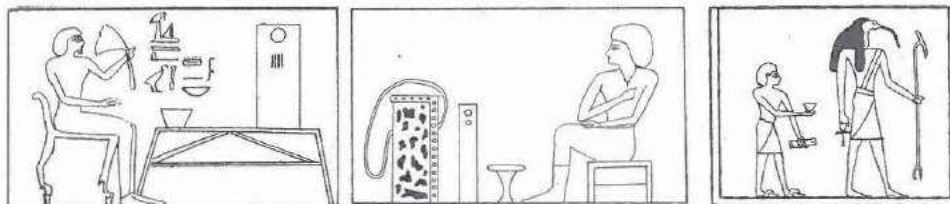
Mid- to late Eighteenth Dynasty manuscripts: 7 in Munro 1988

Mid-Eighteenth Dynasty tombs: Amenemhat (Theban Tomb 82)

Third Intermediate Period papyri: 5 in Munro 2001

Late Period to Ptolemaic Period: frequent

Illustration



Nebamun (Eighteenth Dynasty): man seated on lion-legged chair, smelling lotus, with water-pot and palette on table in front.

Meh shroud (Eighteenth Dynasty): man seated on low stool with water-pot, palette and writing-kit-bag on ground in front.

Neferwebenef (Eighteenth Dynasty): man walks behind Thoth, carrying water-pot and palette.

Iufankh (Ptolemaic Period): man stands holding water-pot and extending palette to ibis-headed Thoth, who holds was-sceptre and ankh-hieroglyph.

Version in the Papyrus of Nu, estate manager for the treasurer, mid-Eighteenth Dynasty, about 1400 BC, British Museum EA 10477

*r n dbh p3s gsti
dd mdw in
imy-r pr n imy-r htmt nw
ir.n imy-r pr imn-htp*

*i. wr m3 n it.f
try md3t nt dhwtj
in n.i sin 3kr imy stš
in n.i p3s gsti
m hrt-^c twy nt dhwtj
št3w imt.sn
mk wi m sš
in n.i hwb3t wsir sš.i im
ir.i ddt ntr 3 nfr r^c nb
m nfrt wdt.n.k n.i hr 3hty
iry.i m3^ct sb.i n r^c r^c nb*

Formula for requesting a water-pot and writing palette.

Words spoken by

*the estate manager for the treasurer, Nu,
born to the estate manager Amenhotep:*

O eldest god who looks to his father,
Keeper of the book of Thoth,
Bring me the clay of Aker containing Seth,
bring me the water-pot and writing palette
in that writing-kit of Thoth,
and the secrets that are in them.
See, I am the writer!
Bring me the fluids from Osiris, that I may write with them,
and put down the speech of the great god, the good, every day,
as the good deeds that you decreed to me, Horakhty.
I shall do what is Right, and despatch to Ra every day.

Written content

The "eldest god" of the address may be Horus as ruler, or Thoth himself in relation to Osiris or Ra or both. The core motif of this passage is the perception of divine being in the earthy matter of the ground itself (Aker) and of the fluids from embalming. The clay yields the red ochre, the pigment used to write titles and end words of passages on these manuscripts, but also baneful words and names such as Aapep, incarnation of absolute destruction, as in our concept of anti-matter. Fluids from the embalming of Osiris become the liquid used to wet the pigment cakes for writing down the words of the creator sun-god Ra-Horakhty and/or Osiris as ruler of the afterlife. Control of the materials for communicating ensure order (Right); power of good depends on daily despatches in divine as in earthly government.

No earlier sources