

Inner Coffin of Henutmehyt **The British Museum**

From the tomb of Henutmehyt, Thebes, Egypt
19th Dynasty, around 1250 BC

A Theban priestess



The inner coffin of Henutmehyt is entirely covered in gold leaf, apart from her wig, eyes and eyebrows. This lavish use of gold, and the high quality of the rest of her funerary equipment indicates that Henutmehyt was a wealthy woman.

As is usual with coffins of this date, her arms are crossed over her chest. Her hands are shown in three dimensions, with her delicate fingers outstretched. Below is a kneeling figure of the sky-goddess Nut, with her wings unfurled, protecting the deceased. Nut also appears on the outer coffin and mummy board.

The lower body is divided into sections by a long vertical inscribed band, and several horizontal bands. These follow the arrangement of the outer bandages of Henutmehyt's mummy, and are also mirrored in the other elements of the coffin group. These neatly divide the surface into six areas. The upper four contain the Sons of Horus, who usually protected the internal organs of the deceased, but could be invoked to guard the mummy as well. The lower two areas, over the feet, contain the adoring figures of Isis and Nephthys. They are also believed to protect the deceased.

J.H. Taylor, *Studies in Egyptian antiquities*, British Museum Occasional Paper 123 (, 1999)

J.H. Taylor, *Egyptian coffins* (Aylesbury, Shire Publications, 1989)

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C.A.R. Andrews, *Egyptian mummies* (London, The British Museum Press, 1984)

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