

Stela Fragment of Horiraa **The British Museum**

From Memphis, Egypt
30th Dynasty to early Ptolemaic Period (380-200 BC)

Part of a limestone funerary stela



The surviving hieroglyphic inscription on this funerary stela gives the name and titles of Horiraa, an important priest of Ptah at Memphis. The name of his mother is lost but its female determinative can be seen on the right side of the last line. The hieroglyphs are clearly carved and filled with black pigment so that they stand out from the white stone.

The demotic inscription below the official hieroglyphic text is also written clearly and in large characters. It is an addition to the main text, giving further titles of Horiraa. The inscription is contemporary with the hieroglyphs. It was perhaps for the benefit of people who could not read hieroglyphs, but were familiar with the script used for everyday writing.

Such subtitles to hieroglyphic texts in cursive scripts are quite common, often used to elaborate details or add information. The use of several scripts or even languages to convey the same information can also be seen on the Rosetta Stone. These multilingual or multi-script monuments have proved invaluable in deciphering the various Egyptian scripts.

R. Parkinson, *Cracking codes: the Rosetta St* (London, The British Museum Press, 1999)

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