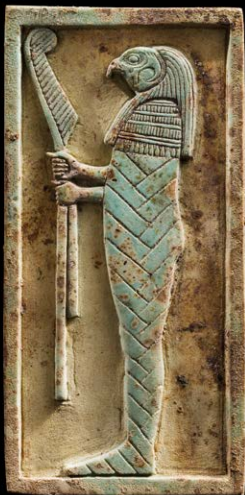


FUNERARY AMULETS FROM THE  
TOMB OF RENEP-PRIEST HOREMHEB



THE MERRIN GALLERY



# Funerary Amulets Depicting the Four Sons of Horus from the Tomb of Renep-Priest Horemheb

Egypt, Late Period, 26th Dynasty c. 664-332 BC  
Kôm el-Hisn (ancient Imaou), Valley of the Kings  
Faience

Dimensions: 11 cm H, 5.5 cm W each

Provenance: Private collection, France, 1970s

Didier Wormser, France, 1999

Private collection, Europe, 1999 to 2018

The Louvre acquired a lot of seven related plaques in 1999 from this same tomb,  
E 32591

Renep Priest Horemheb was a high priest in the Late Period of ancient Egypt, tasked with overseeing funeral rites and making offerings to the deceased. He was the son of Ankh-pakhered (father) and Ta-khered-en-ta-ihé (mother). He too was buried with treasures to protect him in the afterlife, including these four finely molded amulets, pierced with holes and would have been sewn on to his mummy shroud.

The back of each amulet is inscribed with four right-facing hieroglyphs, beginning with a kneeling figure of the Nile-god, Hapy. The god is recognized by the papyrus plant crowning his head. He holds a notched stick indicating a multitude. The following signs combine to form the name Horemheb ("Horus-is-in-festival"). The final sign is a seated figure which is the determinative of a deceased person of noble status.

Protective funerary amulets were essential in the burial process throughout ancient Egypt and placed on or within a mummy shroud. The iconography of an amulet called for protection from various gods, each serving a different function in the afterlife. The color of an amulet also had significance. The green hue of faience or glazed clay was associated with life and regeneration, as seen in these amulets. Magic and superstition was also a part of the world of the living, most commonly as amulets depicting the protective "Eye of Horus", promoting good health.

The amulets depict the Sons of Horus in mummy form, each wearing a tripartite wig and broad collar. The figures are molded in high relief and set within a raised frame. The pale green hue is typical of faience mixed with clay during the period in this region, the result of copper and iron. Details in the molding can be seen in the meticulous attention given to rendering the cloth wrapping the bodies, the ears, eyes, nose, lips, hair and in the fine fingers wrapped around a long ostrich feather.

The Sons of Horus were associated with the afterlife. Their mother was the goddess, Isis. They each represented an internal organ and had a specific function in the preparation for the afterlife. They were commonly represented on canopic jars used to store the internal organs after they were removed during the mummification process and entombed with the mummy. They themselves were protected by and represented a female deity and associated with a cardinal direction. Detailed instructions on their role and how the deceased interacts with them were explained in spells in *The Book of the Dead* that would have been in the tomb to prepare the deceased for his or her journey<sup>1</sup>.

Duamutef, the jackal-headed son of Horus, associated with Neith, protected the stomach and represented the east. He served to worship the deceased. His name literally means literally “he who worships his mother”. Imsety, the human headed son of Horus, is depicted here with a penis and false beard, further defining him as of human-form. He was associated with Isis, protected the liver and represented the south. His role was to help revivify the corpse of the dead person. Horus asks him to “lift him up”, to “not be far from [the deceased]”. Hapi, the baboon headed son of Horus, associated with Nephthys, protected the lungs and represented the north. He was often thought to be associated with navigation. Qe-behsenuf, the falcon-headed son of Horus, was associated with Selket, protected the intestines and represented the west. His role was to refresh the deceased, and his name means literally “he who libates his siblings”. Libation, cleansing and showering with cool water was a traditional form of worship and devotion.

On each amulet the sons of Horus hold a long ostrich feather, the Feather of Ma’at. This feather symbolizes truth, balance and law. Inter-

nal organs were removed during mummification. Only the heart, thought to contain the soul, was left in the body and was thought to be used to assess a person's final judgement. It was believed the god, Anubis, of male body and canine head, would weigh the heart against the Feather of Ma'at in the Hall of Two Truths (Hall of Ma'at) when the soul entered Duat, the Underworld. If the heart was found to be equal to or lighter than the feather, the deceased was deemed a virtuous person and would go to Aaru, paradise ruled by Osiris. If not, the heart would be devoured by Ammit, the soul-eating goddess, and the deceased would be condemned to remain in the Underworld.

Similar amulets also from the tomb of Renep Priest Horemheb's can be found at the Louvre (E 32591). Like these fine amulets depicting the sons of Horus, the Louvre's seven plaques are made of faience and pierced with holes to adorn the mummy shroud and were to protect him in the afterlife. They were acquired by the Louvre in 1999.

<sup>1</sup>For specific exchange between the deceased and the sons of Horus, see Spells 151 and 152. Thomas George Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 37, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1974. pp. 148

Egypt, Late Period, 26th Dynasty c. 664-332 BC  
Kôm el-Hisn (ancient Imaou), Valley of the Kings  
Faience

Dimensions: 49.5 cm L

Musée du Louvre (E 32591)





## The Merrin Gallery

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