

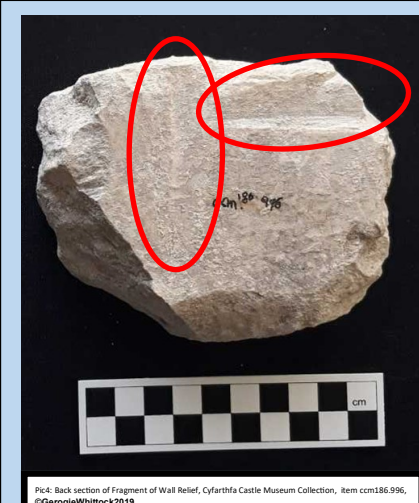


# INSCRIBED WALL RELIEF



## Wall Reliefs

Inscribed wall reliefs were in heavy use during the Ancient Egyptian Period, approx. 4500BC to 30AD. Most monumental architecture, benefited from Hieroglyphic adornment which was used throughout most of Upper and Lower Egypt, predominantly on building complexes relating to the afterlife. The best examples of wall reliefs are those found in Royal Tomb's or at high status Funerary Complexes, that include buildings such as chapels, ceremonial homes for the afterlife, pyramids, offering chambers, temple shrines, workshops etc. The use of Wall Reliefs is highly ceremonial due to the nature of the Egyptian culture and it's extremely complex language and art development. The meaning behind these wall reliefs hold far more power than our modern idea of Architecture. Despite the fact that the average Egyptian could not read hieroglyphic text or the later Hieratic, the symbolism of the text used for wall reliefs would have been 'symbolically' familiar and understandable to the average Egyptian (Cauville 2012, Berman 1999, Manley 2013, Budge 1975)



## Materials and Dating

The stone itself is limestone. There was an ample source of stone in Ancient Egypt, predominantly that of Sandstone and Limestone. Both were used in Wall Reliefs throughout the Ancient period and so we cannot draw on why limestone was used in this instance, however limestone was rather soft in relation to other stones in the area and so was far easier to work (Stocks 1999).

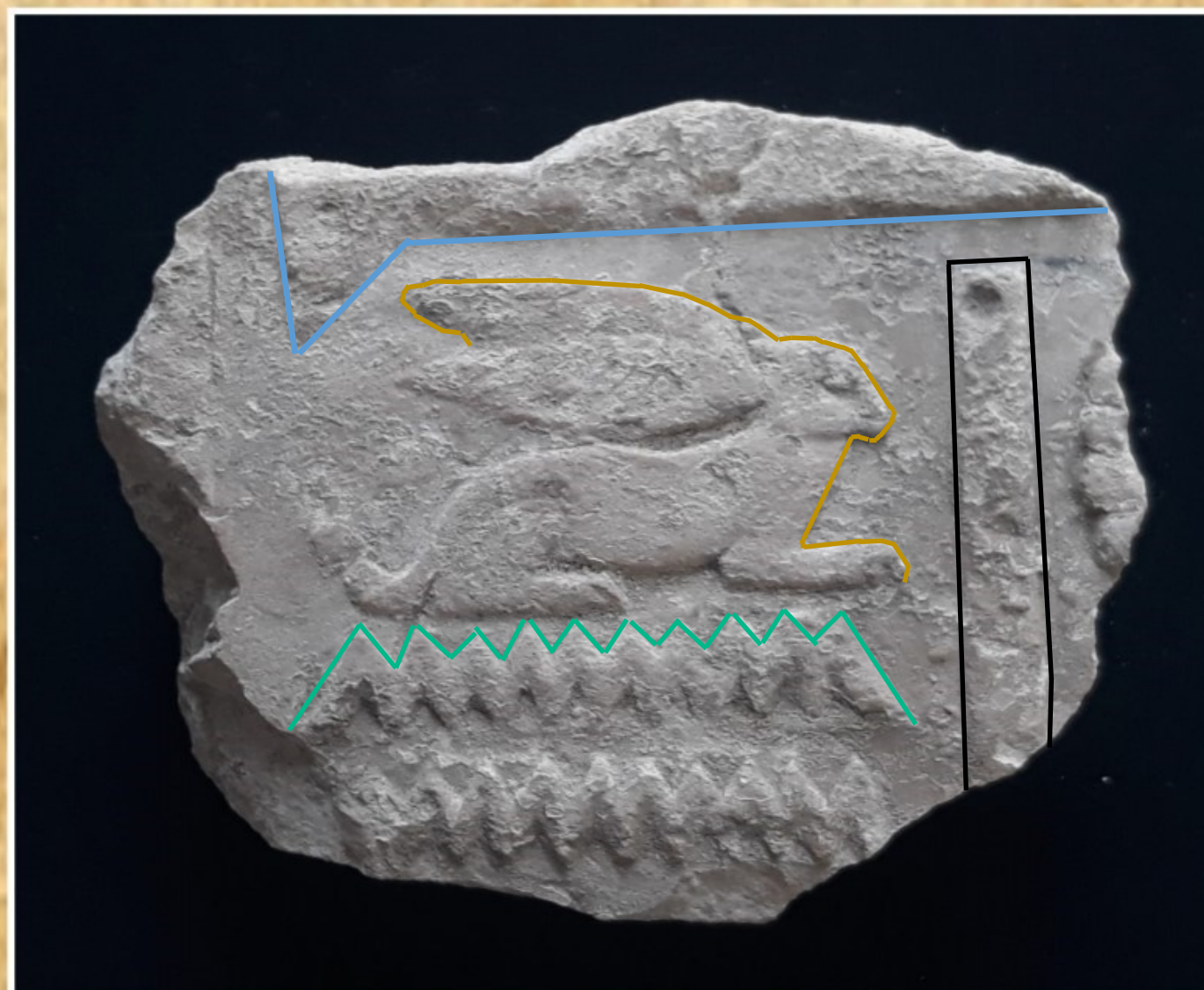
It is clear from the photography (see Pic 1 + 4), that this artefact has some serious damage, not least that it has clearly come away from the original full Wall Relief it belongs too. There are clear chisel marks (see red circles on Pic 4) on the back of this fragment, which imply it was forcibly removed from its original position in some way. These marks are clearly more recent than the hieroglyphic carvings on the other side, due to the continued presence of the paler un-oxidised stone that has been exposed by the removal. Limestone takes many years to oxidise in an open environment and so, this chisel mark could well have been made in 'modern' history (middle ages onwards). The damage on the rest of the piece seems to be more natural, wearing away some of the Hieroglyphs clarity and leaving pot marks and uneven surfaces, very normal damage for Ancient Egyptian artefacts (Ashurst 1988).



Pic3: Tomb relief of Amenhotep (Chief Physician 19th Dyn) - Berman 1999

## Wall Relief Fragment Hieroglyph Key

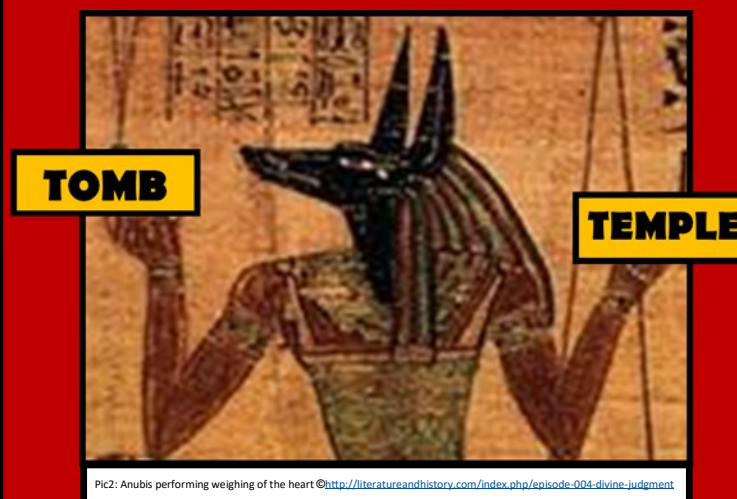
|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Sky (blue) - p.t (pet)          |  |
| Hare (yellow/brown) - w.n (wen) |  |
| Wave (aqua blue) - n            |  |
| Column (black) - text divider   |  |



Pic 1: Fragment of Wall Relief, Cyfarthfa Castle Museum Collection, item ccm186.996, ©GerogieWhittock2019

## Temple or Tomb?

It is very difficult to say where this fragment comes from. Most of the examples of the use of the w.n sign followed by two n signs, that are documented are used in in Tomb reliefs, such as the one below from Amenhotep's Tomb Relief (Chief Physician during the reign of Ramesses II) an example is also is also documented in the book of the dead—used in funerary magic rituals both in and out of the tomb (Berman 1999, Budge 1975).



Pic2: Anubis performing weighing of the heart ©http://literatureandhistory.com/index.php/episode-004-divine-judgment

## Hieroglyphs In Ancient Egypt

The ability to read and write in Hieroglyphs was not exactly commonplace in Egypt. Scribes had to study for years to learn the interchangeable uses for many of the signs. Hieroglyphs not only symbolised consonant sounds, but also symbolised the actual meaning of the Egyptian language. The symbols we see on our fragment, are used in many different words and sentences without the exact same meaning, and this is very important to understand when looking at the meaning and purpose of the wall relief this fragment once belonged too.

The section of Wall Relief (Pic1) is colour coded to highlight different aspects of our fragment. The colours also serve as an example of the colours this Wall Relief may have been painted in originally.

Along the upper aspect of the fragment, we can clearly see, highlighted in blue, the left side of a Hieroglyphic sign known as p.t (pet), which is used in many wall reliefs to denote the sky.

To the right of the object we can see a column outlined in black, used to separate the hieroglyphs so that we (the reader) know to read down the column rather than lengthways. This is typically used in most hieroglyphic texts (Budge 1975, Manley 2013).

To the centre of the object we can see the clear image of a Hare, outlined in brown/yellow. In Egyptian culture the hare was very important as a food staple and as such, they were also considered sacred animals belonging to the Goddess Wenet (W.n.t). Hares are often used in texts to denote fast movement or stealth in a descriptive sense (Ryneveld, 2016).

Bellow the Hare we have a wavy sign that is symbolic of water and can mean water if used three times in a row (Manley 2013).

## Disseminating Meaning

The use of these three signs together, as is depicted in our fragment (hare, water, water—w.n/n/n) seem to be used particularly in the 18th and 19th dynasty. Examples can be found in the book of the Dead, on the Stelae of Panehesi (18th Dynasty) and Wall Reliefs of high nobles and skilled workers, as we see in the wall relief of Amenhotep at Asyut (19th Dynasty—see Pic3) , although there are example of them being used earlier than this in the 12th Dynasty (Ryneveld 2016, Bermann 1999).

**Wn.n** is thought to be an ideogram for 'to exist' or 'to be'.

When we look at the examples given in the Book of the Dead, it is used firstly as part of the sentence 'of things which shall be (unenet—**Wn.n.t**). Later in the same example of the Book of the Dead, the signs are used as part of the name 'Un-nefer' - **Wn.n**'.

On the Stele of Pahehesi, we see the use of these Hieroglyphs in part of the sentence 'of things which shall be' (unenet/**wn.n.t**). (Budge 1975).

This combination of Hieroglyphs seem to be used in sequences that describe a 'being' quality, or a quality of the being 'of things', which would explain the use of these symbols in a name as well as general text. Names were thought to have some symbolic impact on ones life in Ancient Egypt.