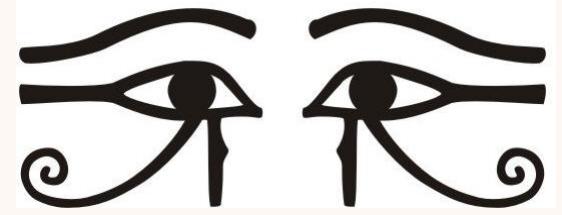


# A Look into Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs



## The Sculpture

For my project, I found a lintel of the Pharaoh Sesostris III and created a replica of it out of clay. The lintel is usually a stone above a door, and this one has the name of Sesostris III symmetrically carved into it. The lintel is written so that it can be read right to left or left to right from the ankh in the middle. I began to carve into the clay with wooden and wire tools, slowly going over the hieroglyphs multiple times to get the right depth, shape, and clean edge that are conducive with Egyptian hieroglyphs. Carving the three lines of text on the small lintel took over 15 hours. This was a great experience in putting myself in the place of an Egyptian scribe to learn the work and effort necessary to carve such intricate writing.

## The Course

Having not been very familiar with the history of writing systems prior to taking this course, I now realize that I took for granted how much writing has affected human culture and our relationship with information. I had not put much thought into how different life would be if we could not utilize writing on a daily basis and how it is a cornerstone for the human species to create large scale societies. This class has exposed me to new ideas about how we engage with writing and how it engages with us.

## The Writing

Egyptian hieroglyphs comprise about 24 characters that act as letters, as well as hundreds of other symbols that can exist as complete words or combinations of consonants. The major characteristics of the script include logograms, which represent words; phonograms, which represent sounds; and determinatives which when placed at the end of the word to help clarify its meaning. The history of Egyptian scripts not only influenced the lives of ancient Egyptians, but also influenced a vast amount of societies that invented scripts written after hieroglyphs. All alphabetic scripts branched from early Egyptian hieroglyphs which was the first writing system to use phonograms. This has contributed to the formation of many scripts throughout the world and has played a huge role in how writing has developed. Hieroglyphs can be extremely artistic as they can be read left-to-right or right-to-left depending on which direction the images of the script are facing. The symbols, often characters with faces, look toward the beginning of the sentence to direct the reader where to start reading. The ability to determine the orientation of the script allows the writer to manipulate how the reader reads the text.



Image of clay lintel of Sesostris III

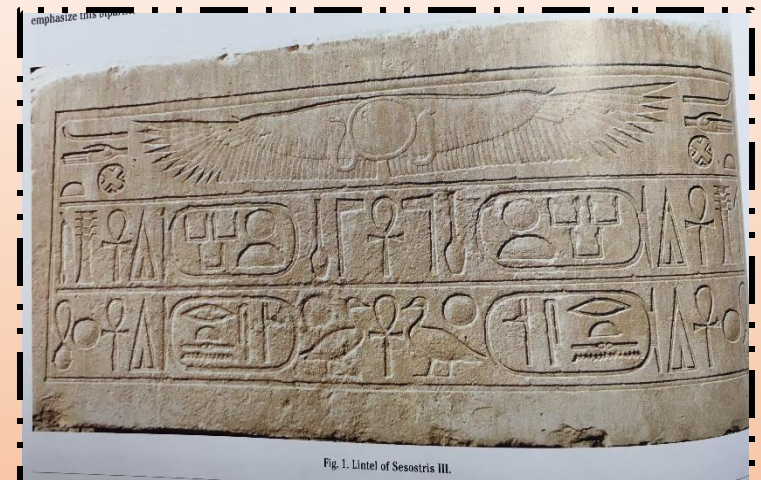


Fig. 1. Lintel of Sesostris III.

Image of original lintel of Sesostris III