

# Learn by Doing

## **Choice** The Door to Heaven

The teachings of the New Church tell us that writing was developed so that there could be a written Word, which could be preserved and spread throughout the world. This is so important because the Word provides a means of communication between this world and heaven. When we read the Word, we come closer to the Lord and His angels. In this activity, students decode messages about heaven, using Egyptian hieroglyphs, which Moses may have learned as a boy growing up in Pharaoh’s house.

1. What would you do if you needed to send a message to someone far away, but you had no written language? What if you had no idea what language the person knew? How would you communicate? (Encourage brainstorming.) What if we came up with a picture language? What picture could we use to communicate “sun”? What about “swim” or “mountain”? How about “love”?
2. Some of the first forms of ancient writing started as pictures or pictographs. Hieroglyphs are one of these early written languages. Hieroglyphs were developed in Egypt where Moses was born. Each picture represented a word or an idea rather than a sound. Over time, some of the hieroglyphs came to be used like the letters in our alphabet which stand for sounds, although the Egyptians continued to use ideograms (picture symbols) as well.
3. The burial tombs of wealthy and important people in ancient Egypt contained hieroglyphs. Many tombs included a “spirit door” or “false door”—a stone carving of a door through which the Egyptians believed they could communicate with the dead and leave offerings for them.
4. We are going to look at hieroglyphic symbols, and then we will use them to decode some “inscriptions” on a “spirit door”. These inscriptions are quotations from the Writings for the New Church. Let’s see what messages about eternal life this “door” has for us.
5. Hand out *Hieroglyphic Alphabet* and *Spirit Door* (pp. 3 & 4) and pens or pencils.
6. Students can work individually, in pairs or as a group to decode the messages of the hieroglyphs. Have them write the letters on the *Spirit Door* (p. 4) as they figure out the hieroglyphs. **Hint:** Decode unique letters such as h or l first. That will help students figure out the other letters.
7. The Egyptians believed that spirit doors were a way to communicate between the two worlds—a symbolic door to the next life. For us, the written Word is a way to communicate between this world and the next. It is our “door to heaven” because it brings our minds into closer connection with the Lord and His angels.

### Materials Needed

copies of *Hieroglyphic Alphabet* and *Spirit Door* pp. 3-4 and pen or pencil for each student; 1 copy of *Spirit Door Stones* pp. 5-21; wall space 1/2’x3’ (1m x 1.3m), removable tape such as masking tape

### Prepare in Advance

Print all needed pages. Set up a Spirit Door as shown on the *Teacher Instructions & Answer Key* p. 2, by taping the *Spirit Door Stones* pp. 5-21 on a wall. Read through the *Teacher Instructions*.



Coelestia

### New Church Concept The Written Word

There are many reasons why it pleased the Lord to be born...on our earth.... The principal reason was for the sake of the Word, in that it could be written on our earth, and when written could then be published throughout the whole earth; and once published could be preserved for all posterity.... *Arcana Coelestia* 9350-9351



# Teacher Instructions & Answer Key

## Set Up

1. Print out *Spirit Door Stones* (pp. 5-21) single-sided. Each page has an additional small number printed in the bottom left hand corner, *Stones 1-17*. The following directions refer to the numbers on the pictures.
2. Set up the spirit door by taping the numbered pages to a wall in the order shown in the answer key to the right. *Stones 1-13* are placed horizontally to form the outside of the door and make up one quotation that reads clockwise starting at the bottom left side. *Stone 14* is a picture placed horizontally in the center. *Stones 15-17* are placed vertically in the center of the door and form a second quotation that reads from the top to the bottom.

## Message

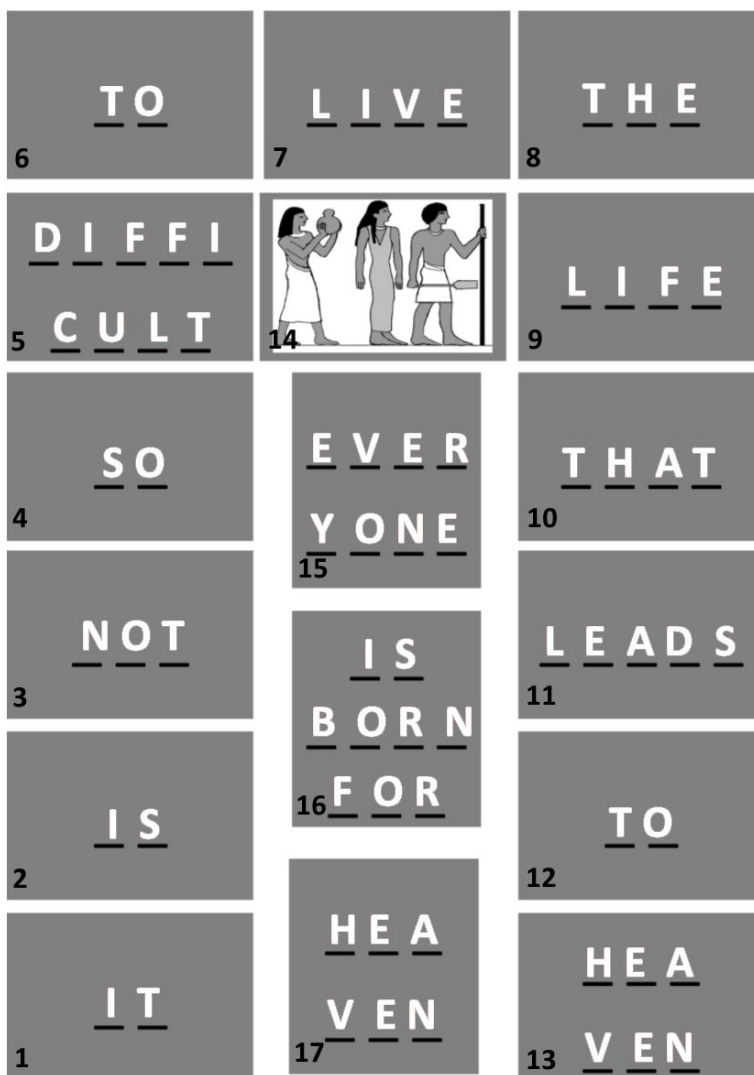
The Writings tell us that the purpose of creation is so that there can be a heaven from the human race (see *Divine Providence* 323). Heaven is the goal toward which the Lord is leading everyone. While human beings have the freedom to turn away from this purpose, it is what the Lord wants for everyone. The two quotations in this activity relate to these ideas.

“**Everyone is born for heaven** and none for hell. Everyone comes into heaven from the Lord, and into hell from the self” (*Conjugal Love* 350).

“**It is not so difficult to live the life that leads to heaven** as some believe” (*Heaven and Hell* 533).

## Activity Note

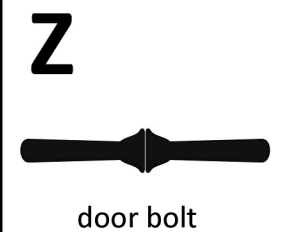
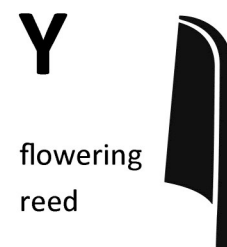
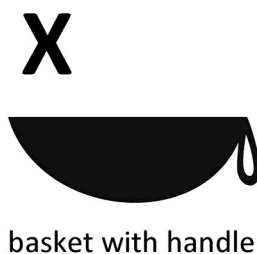
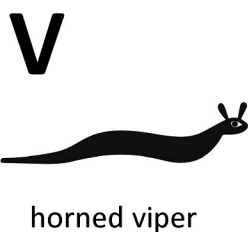
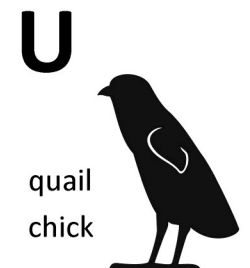
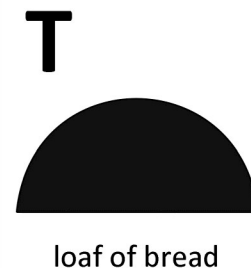
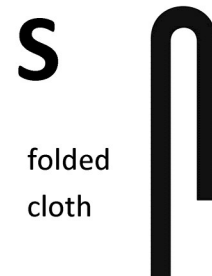
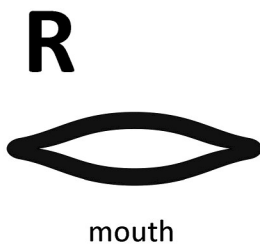
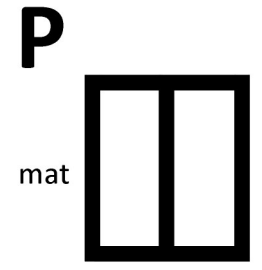
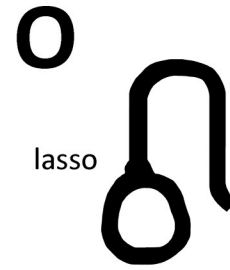
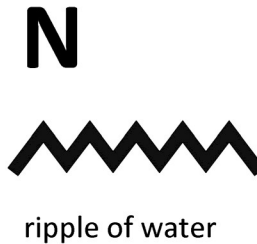
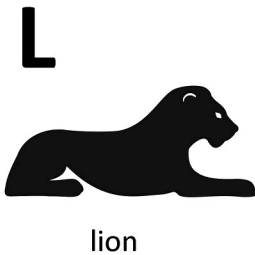
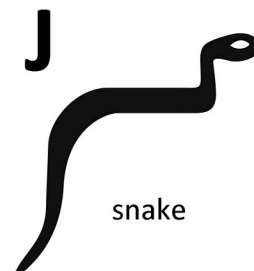
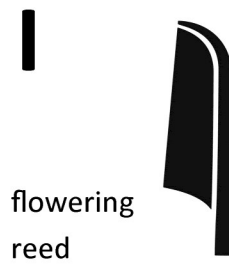
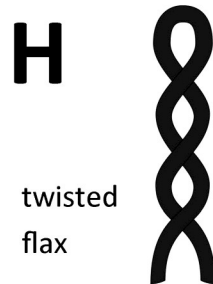
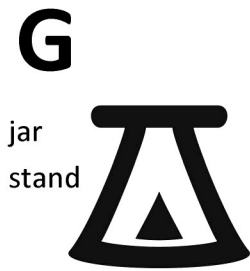
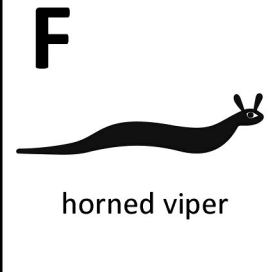
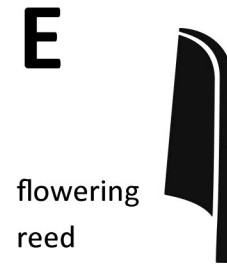
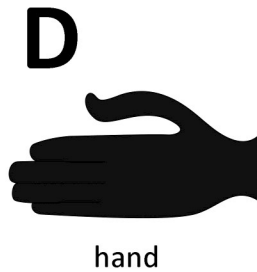
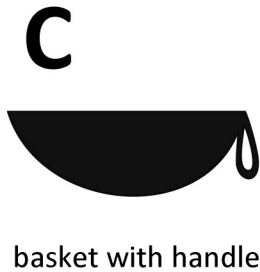
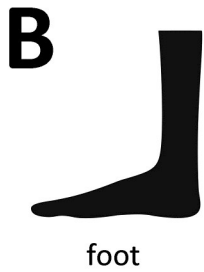
Students are creating a “transliteration” in which each character or “letter” is transferred from one alphabet to another. Translation, in contrast, is using words with the same meanings in another language, not just transferring the characters.




## Moses and the Word

The Writings for the New Church tell us that Moses represents the Word, or the Divine law itself (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6714). The first 5 books of the Word are called “the books of Moses”. Moses was told to write these books by the Lord. Written language developed so that all people on earth could learn about the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9351). So it makes sense that Moses was brought up in Egypt, one of the places that writing was first developed. In addition, he was found in the water (which corresponds to truth), where he was protected by papyrus reeds—which were used to make the world’s first paper.

# Hieroglyphic Alphabet



# Spirit Door

6 _ _	7 _ _ _ _	8 _ _ _
5 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	14 	9 _ _ _ _
4 _ _	15 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	10 _ _ _ _
3 _ _ _	16 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	11 _ _ _ _ _
2 _ _	17 _ _ _ _ _ _ _	12 _ _
1 _ _		13 _ _ _ _ _ _





Spirit Door Stones





Spirit Door Stones





Spirit Door Stones





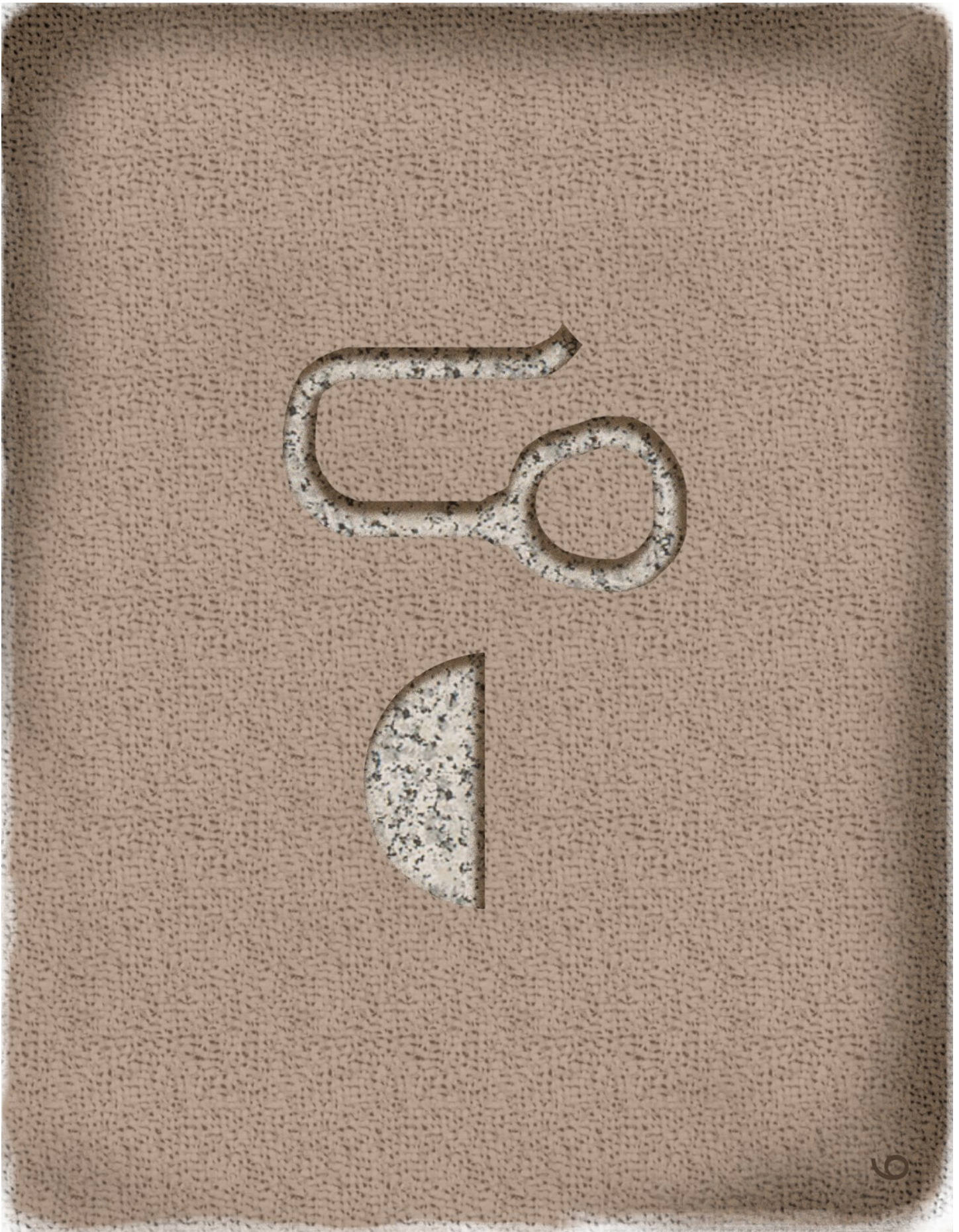
Spirit Door Stones





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Spirit Door Stones





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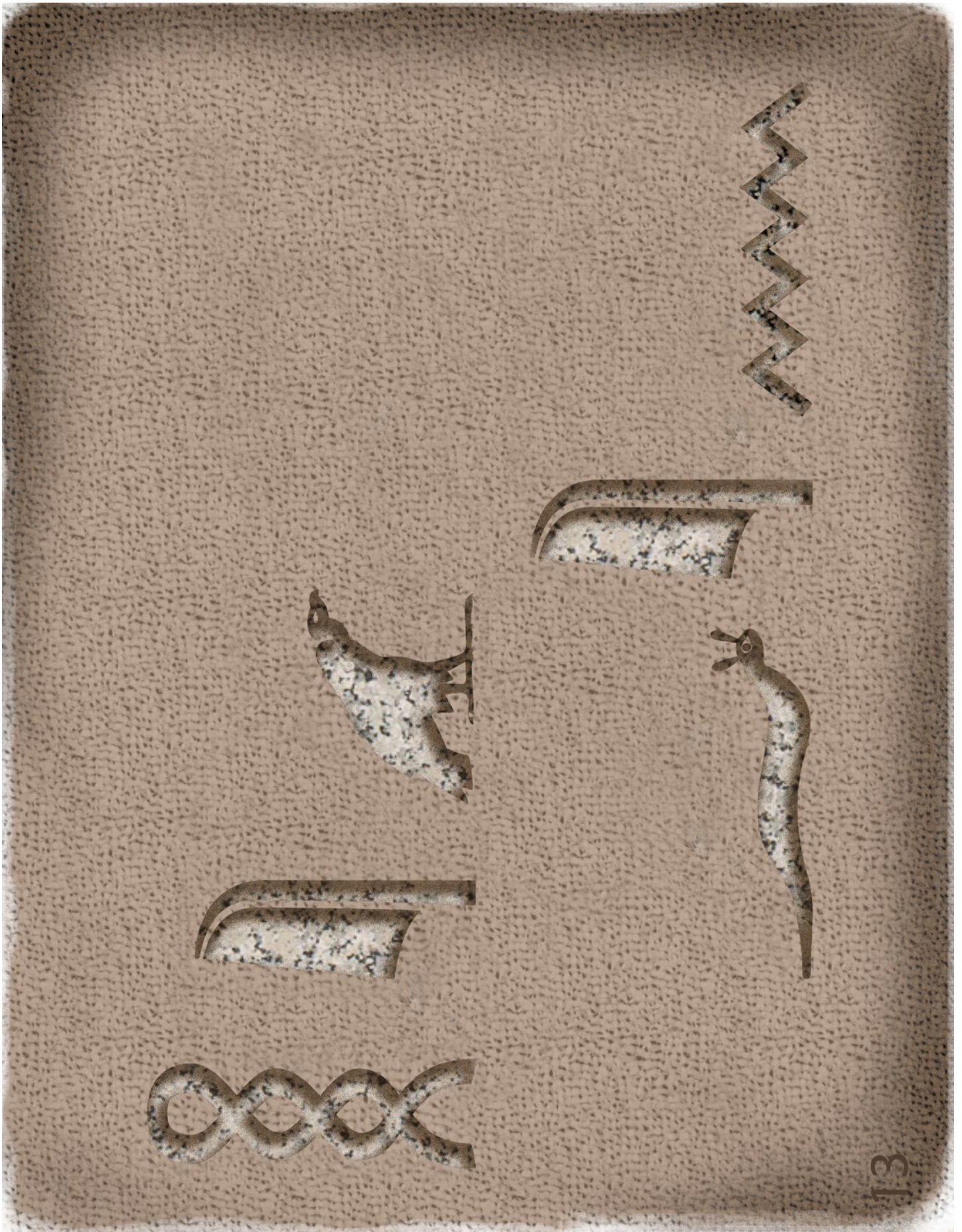
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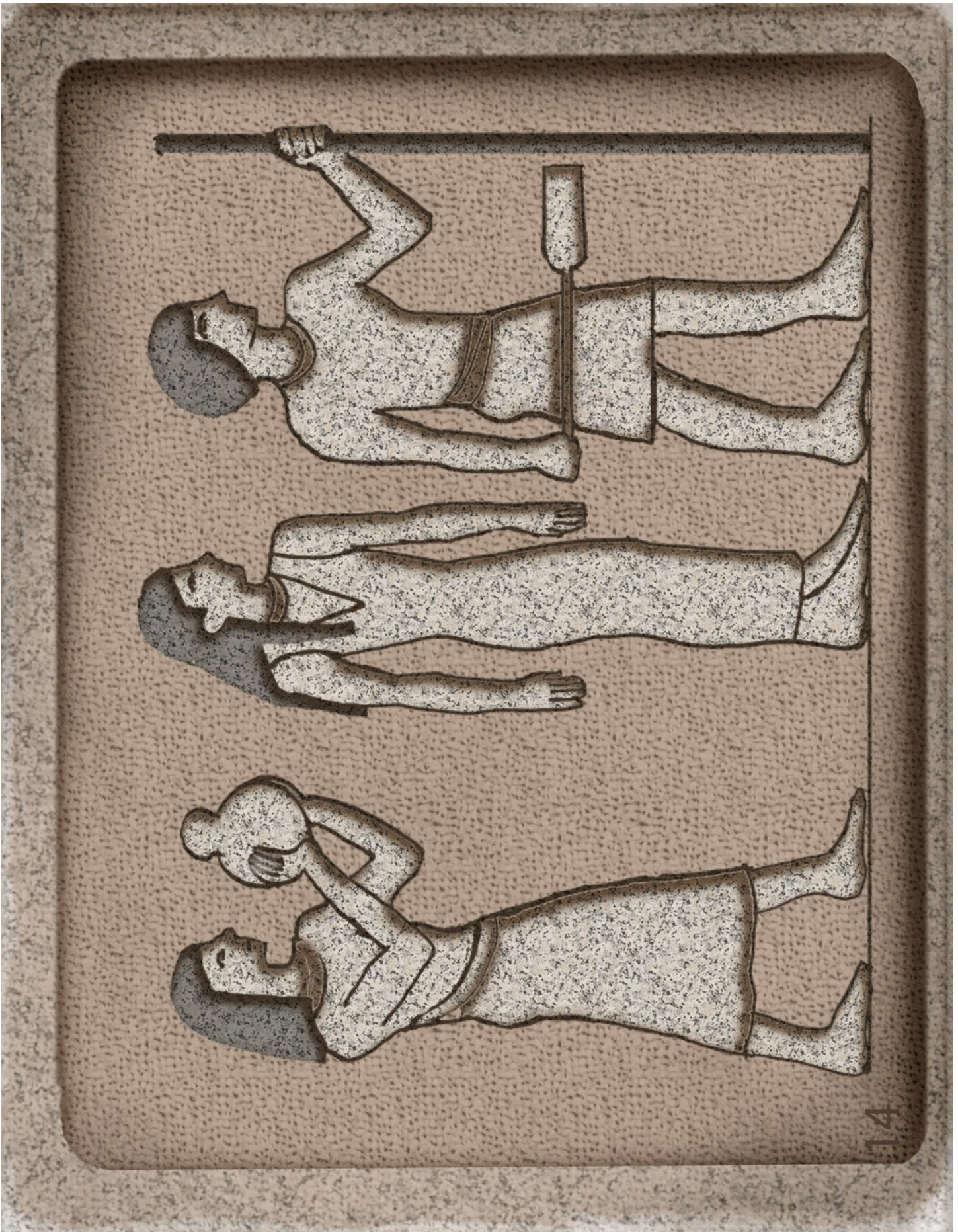
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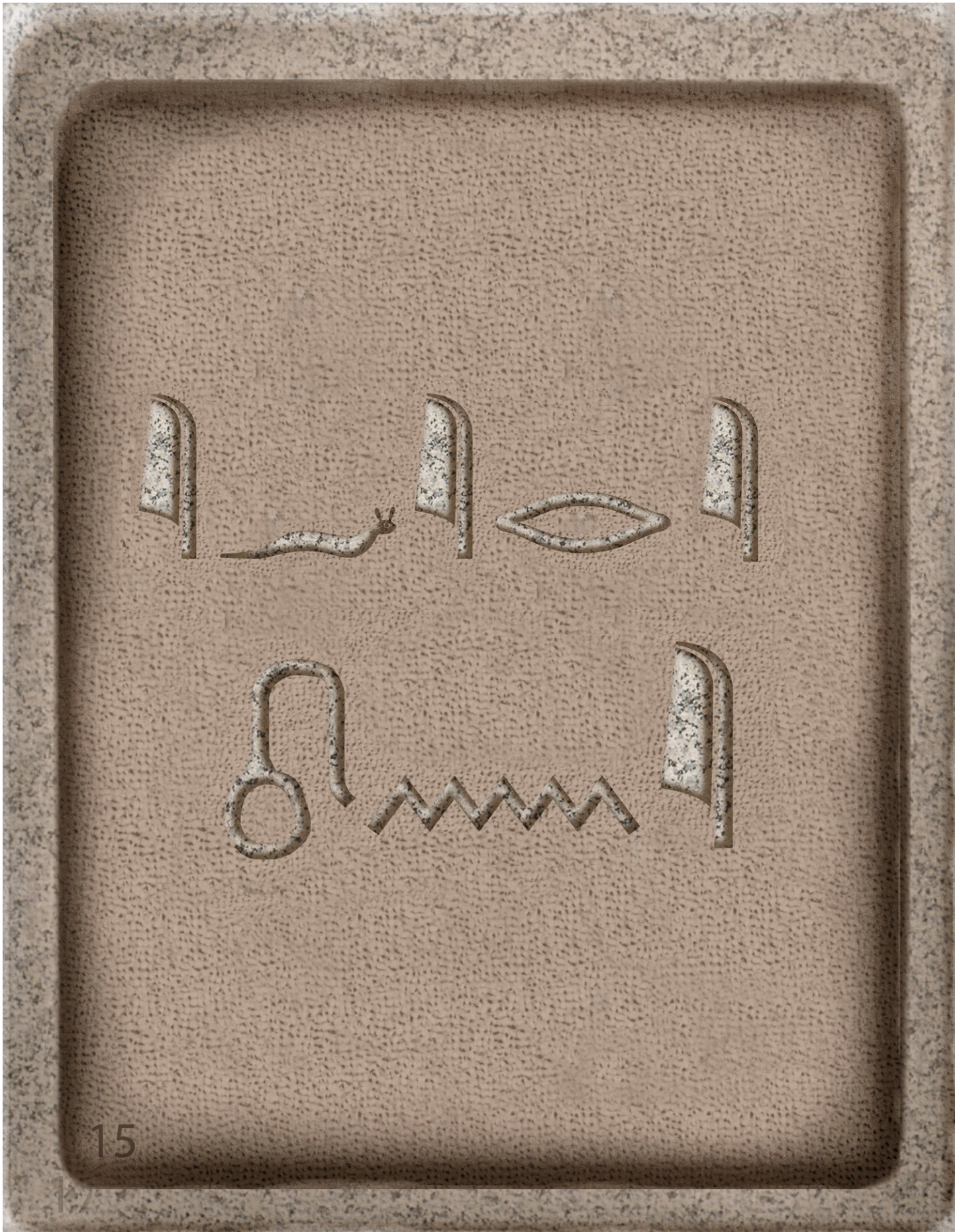
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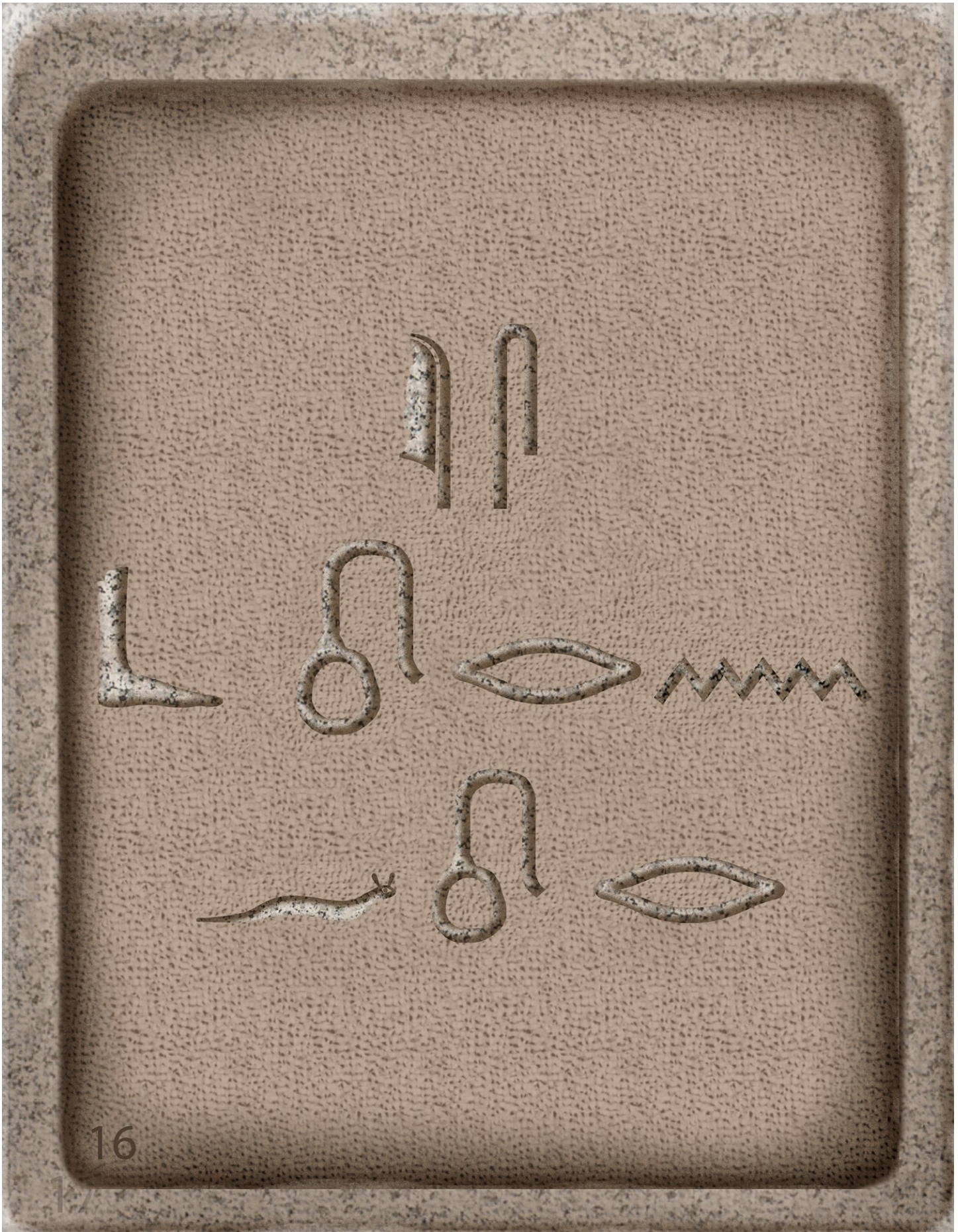
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