

# Egyptian Cartouche Creations

Learn how to write your name on a cartouche like ancient Egyptian royalty!

## Supplies

Air dry clay

Toothpicks or clay sculpting tools

Hieroglyph handouts

Paper towels

Cartouche cutouts

## Introduction

*What is a cartouche?*

A **cartouche** is an oval shape placed around the names of royalty. It symbolizes the pharaoh as a ruler of all that the sun encircled. Ancient Egyptians used cartouches for kings, queens, and other high-ranking people in the kingdom and put them in paintings, carvings in walls, and on sculptures so you knew who was being depicted or talked about.

The loop that makes the oval shape was thought of as a “magical rope” that symbolizes protection of the person named inside. The length of rope was folded and tied at one end.

Without a name written on a sarcophagus, that person could not journey into the afterlife.

A cartouche was meant to protect against evil spirits both in this life and in the afterlife.

*How can we read cartouches?*

The names on cartouches are written in **hieroglyphics**, or ancient Egyptian writing. We did not know how to read hieroglyphics until the 1820s!

The **Rosetta Stone**, discovered in 1799, provided many clues, as it had the same text written in 3 languages: Greek, Demotic (ancient Egyptian language), and hieroglyphs.

**Jean Francois Champollion** (zhahn (john) / frahn-swa / shahn-paw-lyawn) was a French scholar who studied Egyptian hieroglyphs for many years. He worked out how to read them by deciphering the hieroglyphs on the Rosetta Stone in 1822. He is considered the Father of Egyptology because he provided the foundation that scholars would need to understand the ancient Egyptians and their language!

*What are hieroglyphs?*

Hieroglyphs are pictures that represent the sounds of the Ancient Egyptian language. It’s like how our letters represent sounds of our language, but we use letters instead of pictures. Some hieroglyphics were used as alphabet sounds, so we can use them to spell out our names. Other hieroglyphics were pictures of the objects they represented.

## Activity

### *Spelling your name in hieroglyphs*

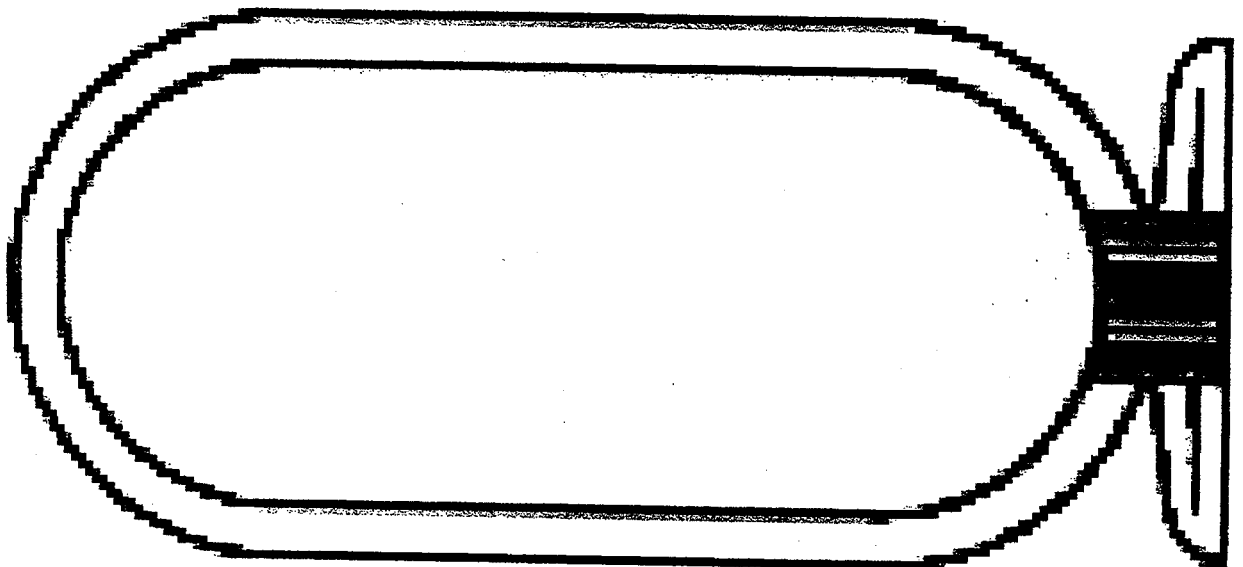
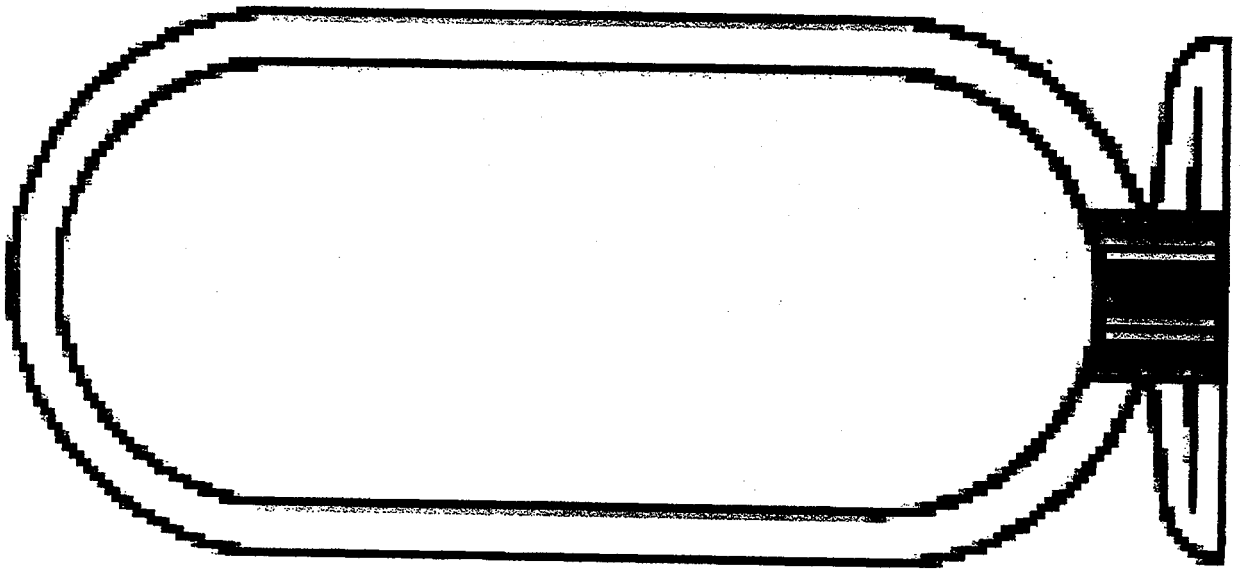
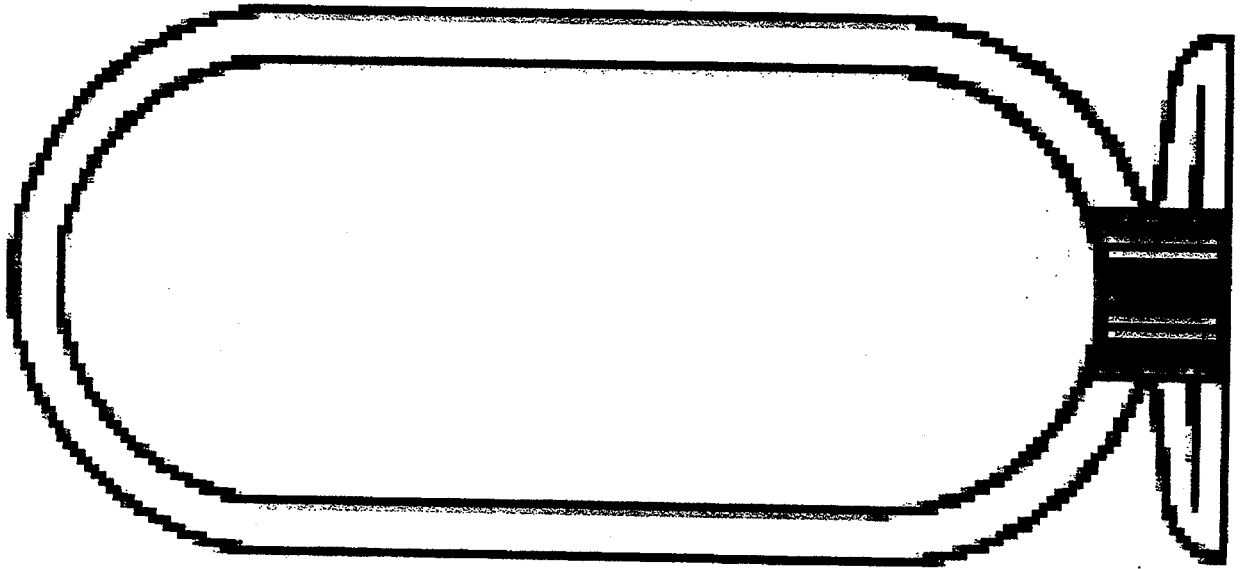
1. Write your name the way an ancient Egyptian scribe would! Write your name down on a piece of paper and say it out loud. Break it down into its basic sounds. Treat all double letters as single sounds.
2. Cross off any silent letters if your name has them.
3. Underline the syllables/basic sounds.
  - a. Example: There are 7 letters in “Michael,” but only 4 basic sounds: M-I-K-L.
4. Re-write your name with just the basic sounds.
5. Find the hieroglyphs that represent these basic sounds and write them down. You do not have to write them in straight lines -- hieroglyphs are arranged to create interesting designs! Try arranging them horizontally or vertically.
  - a. If you have “sh” in your name, the Egyptians used one hieroglyph for that sound.
  - b. Notice that “X” has two hieroglyphs. This is because the Egyptians did not have “X” in their language, so we combine “K” and “S” to get the “X” sound.

### *Creating a cartouche*

1. Dampen a paper towel and spread it out on a table or other flat surface.
2. Take a ball of clay and flatten it into an oval shape. You can use the cartouche cutouts as a guide.
3. Tear off a small piece of clay for your magical rope border. Roll it into a thin rope and set aside for now.
4. Carve your name inside the cartouche with the clay sculpting tools.
5. Gently wipe away any extra clay that is removed from the carving.
6. Gently press your magical rope border along the outside of your cartouche.
7. Carve decorations into your rope border.
8. Let dry.

Visit [lvnhm.org](http://lvnhm.org) for more educational materials or to learn about the Las Vegas Natural History Museum.





Egyptian Cartouche Creations 11.8 & 9 drop in format

A		H		N		U	
B		I		O		V	
C	or	J		P		W	
D		K		Q		X	
E	or   or	L		R		Y	or
F		M		S		Z	
G		T		SH			

