

Relief Fragment

19th to 20th Dynasty 1292 to 1075 B.C

Egypt.

Limestone

H: 37.5cm W: 28.9 D: 3.8cm

A fragment of indurated limestone carved in sunk relief. A row of three shrouded deities are depicted seated, facing left, each wearing a broad collar and characteristic crown. Osiris is shown with pharaonic beard and his typical feathered atef crown. Isis sits behind him with a throne-like hieroglyph on her head. Nephthys then follows, wearing a headdress in the shape of a house and basket. The field between the figures is inscribed with hieroglyphs. Traces of red pigment remain on the stone.

Nephthys and her sister Isis were often paired in funerary rites in their roles as protectors of the mummy and the god Osiris, who presided over the underworld as judge and lord of the dead. According to the Osiris myth, it was Isis and Nephthys who cared for the god's body after his murder at the hands of Set, and who protected his son Horus while he grew up. The trio are frequently depicted together in papyrus paintings, as seen in the Book of the Dead for the Chantress of Amun Nauny (c. 1050 BC) in Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (30.3.31).