

Door to afterlife from ancient Egyptian tomb found

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This undated photo taken in Egypt and released by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities on Monday, March 29, 2010, is said by them to show a nearly six-foot-tall (1.75 meters) slab of pink granite used as a false door in the tomb of User, the chief minister of Queen Hatshepsut, which has been unearthed in Egypt. The Egyptian antiquities authority says archaeologists have unearthed the 3,500-year-old false door from the tomb of the high-ranking Egyptian official near Karnak temple in Luxor. (AP Photo/Supreme Council of Antiquities)

(AP) -- Archaeologists have unearthed a 3,500-year-old door to the afterlife from the tomb of a high-ranking Egyptian official near Karnak

temple in Luxor, the Egyptian antiquities authority said Monday.

These recessed niches found in nearly all ancient Egyptian tombs were meant to take the spirits of the dead to and from the afterworld. The nearly six-foot- tall (1.75 meters) slab of pink granite was covered with religious texts.

The door came from the tomb of User, the chief minister of Queen Hatshepsut, a powerful, long ruling 15th century B.C. queen from the New Kingdom with a famous mortuary temple near Luxor in southern [Egypt](#).

User held the position of vizier for 20 years, also acquiring the titles of prince and mayor of the city, according to the inscriptions. He may have inherited his position from his father.

Viziers in [ancient Egypt](#) were powerful officials tasked with the day-to-day running of the kingdom's complex bureaucracy.

As a testament to his importance, User had his own tomb on the west bank of the Nile in Luxor, where royal kings and queens were also buried. A chapel dedicated to him has also been discovered further south in the hills near Aswan.

The stone itself was long way from its tomb and had apparently been removed from the grave and then incorporated into the wall of a Roman-era building, more than a thousand years later.

False doors were placed in the west walls of [tombs](#) and faced offering tables where food and drink were left for the spirit of the deceased.

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