

## Glasgow Museums Resource Centre

### Ancient Egypt Quiz Notes

#### Round 1 - Life in Ancient Egypt

##### Question 1

The Nile is the longest river in the world at over 4000 miles long

##### Question 2

Khemet - The Black Land, named after the black tar-like silt that was dredged up when the Nile flooded every year, bringing nutrients to the soil and allowing crops to grow

Interesting point - the word 'Deshret' is where we get our word for 'desert' from

##### Question 3

There are different ways of measuring it, but most scholars will say around 760 hieroglyphs

Hieroglyphs can be read up, down, left and right - you look at which way the figures are looking to guide you. The figures will always be looking towards the beginning of the 'sentence'.

#### **Object notes**

This limestone stela fragment was given to Glasgow Museums by Miss J. May Buchanan in 1912. It preserves parts of six columns of a hieroglyphic inscription separated by vertical lines. The surviving text is part of a hymn to the sun in the form of the god Ra-Horakhty, a combination of the sun-god, Ra, with the falcon god, Horus-of-the-Two-Horizons. The inscription reads:

*'[Giving praise to Ra]-Hor-akhty, when he goes to his rest in life in this his great mountain [...] he says, 'Hail to you, great one of the Ennead, who comes into being [...] in peace to the land of the Western mountain [...]'*

*'[...] when] he rises in the eastern horizon of the sky, by the servant / deputy [...] praise [...]'*

Hymns invoking Amun-Ra-Horakhty do not appear before the 20th Dynasty, suggesting a date of the 20th Dynasty for this fragment. The style of the inscription is similar to those

found at the workmen's village of Deir el-Medina in Western Thebes. This is supported by the reference to a servant or deputy, the role of the individual named on the now missing part of the stela. The workmen who lived at Deir el-Medina and constructed the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings, were called Servants in the Place of Truth. The Deputy was second in command to the Chief Workman, who led one of the two gangs of some 60 workmen working on the left side and right side of the tomb.'

#### **Question 4**

Bones & sticks - they improvised like people have always done! Who used to play games with sticks? Or even animal bones?

#### **Object notes**

Ivory dice from the Roman period - 30BC-395AD

#### **Question 5**

The first papyrus boats are estimated to have been made around 4000 BC - the reeds were filled with pockets of air so they were very buoyant

#### **Object notes**

Nile boat, of wood, with relief figures of ten seated rowers and casket in centre.  
12th Dynasty (1991-1783 BC)

## **Round 2 - The Egyptian Gods**

#### **Question 1**

There were more than 2000 deities in the Egyptian pantheon, of varying importance

There were gods assigned to just about everything, and they weren't all good - you had a god of destroying things (Sekhmet) and a god of terror (Ba-Pef)

Some of the most important gods:

- *Isis and Osiris* - Queen and King of the gods
- *Horus* - son of Isis and Osiris and god of the sky
- *Ra* - the sun god
- *Anubis* - god of the underworld and of burial

## **Object notes**

Ptolemaic Period, 332-30 BC

This bronze figurine from The Burrell Collection shows the three deities at the heart of ancient Egyptian belief about this life and the next. At the centre stands Osiris, who died but was reborn as king of the dead. He is wrapped in a mummy's shroud and carries the crook and flail of kingship. He is supported by his sister-wife Isis, and Horus, their son. Isis wears her crown of sun-disc between cow horns. Horus, as his father's heir, has his hair in a sidelock, and, wears the dual crown, as king of the living. The sun-god, Ra-Horakhty, protects their backs as a falcon with outstretched wings.

## **Question 2**

All of the above!

Baboons - Thoth

Scorpions - Hedetet

Dogs - Anubis

Crocodiles - Sobek

There were also gods protecting fish, mongoose, serpents and beetles!

## **Object notes**

Bronze cat, Saite Period, 7th Century BC

Bastet, goddess of cats

The beautiful goddess of cats, women's secrets, childbirth, fertility, and protector of the hearth and home from evil or misfortune. She was the daughter of Ra and closely associated with Hathor. Bastet was one of the most popular deities of ancient Egypt. Men and women revered her equally and carried talismans of her cult. She was so universally adored that, in 525 BCE, the Persians used the Egyptian devotion to Bastet to their advantage in winning the Battle of Pelusium. They painted images of Bastet on their shields and drove animals in front of their army knowing the Egyptians would rather surrender than offend their goddess. She is depicted as a cat or a woman with a cat's head, and her major cult center was at Bubastis.

## **Question 3**

When you died and had to make the journey to the underworld where you encountered lots of ancient gods. You had to endure a series of tests and show that you were worthy of being allowed entrance to the afterlife. Amulets were wrapped into the linen bandages used during burial.

## **Object notes**

1. Egyptian ring, of faience, bright blue. Design incorporating the wedjat eye.  
1600-1368 BC

2. 22nd Dynasty (Bubastite/Libyan), 945-715 BC

This winged scarab amulet dates to the 22nd Dynasty (Third Intermediate Period) and was given to Glasgow Museums by R. W. Raphael in 1903.

The god Khepri, who took the form of a sacred scarab beetle, was associated with ideas of rebirth. The ancient Egyptians saw the scarab beetle pushing a ball of dung in the shape of the sun, out of which its young were seen to emerge. They connected this therefore with the journey of the sun through the sky resulting in the sun's rebirth every morning in the east. Similarly the scarab seemed to be able to create life from dung. Both these were powerful images of life and rebirth and therefore a scarab beetle amulet, placed within the mummy's bandages on the chest of the deceased, could assist in his rebirth into the afterlife.

#### **Question 4**

Organs

Canopic jars were used during mummification to preserve the organs. The ancient Egyptians wanted to keep them but they couldn't stay in the body as it would make it rot.

Each organ had a god to protect it - the four sons of Horus

Quebesenef - head of a falcon - intestines

Duamutef - head of a jackal - stomach

Hapi - head of a baboon - lungs

Imsety - head of a human - liver

#### **Object notes**

Limestone canopic jar and cover in the form of a head of Imset.

During the mummification process, when a dead body was embalmed, the organs were removed. The organs were then preserved, sometimes being placed in four canopic jars. The jars represented the four sons of Horus (the falcon-headed god of the sky), who bore responsibility for protecting the organs of the deceased.

One jar represented Hapy, the baboon-headed god of the north, and contained the lungs. One depicted Duamutef, the jackal-headed god representing the east, and contained the stomach. Another depicted Qebehseuef, the falcon-headed god of the west, whose jar contained the intestines. This example depicts Imsety, the human-headed god representing the south, who protected the liver. The heart was not taken out of the body because it was believed to be the seat of intelligence and emotions and was needed by the dead in the afterlife.

These jars would be placed in the tomb alongside the mummified body. In later periods, the organs would be placed back in the preserved body and dummy canopic jars would be placed within the tomb.

## **Round 3 - Mystery objects round!**

### **Question 1**

A make-up pallet! You would place a piece of galena - a shiny black stone - on the larger slate slab and grind it down with the smaller stone. It was then mixed with oil to make a black paste - kohl. It was then dragged over your eyelids with a pointy stick. It was fashionable but it was primarily a sunblock. Both men and women wore it.

### **Object notes**

Slate pallet and stone, circa 3000BC.

### **Question 2**

Writing

### **Object notes**

Egyptian rectangular wooden writing tablet dating from the Graeco-Roman period, around 332 BC–395 AD. Tablets such as these were filled with a layer of wax, which, once set, offered a cheap, reusable and portable writing surface. A pointed stylus would be used to etch text into the surface. If a mistake was made, or once the text was no longer needed, the wax was easily smoothed out.

### **Question 3**

A stamp for storage jars

### **Object notes**

Egyptian stamp, of earthenware, cone shaped square divided into eight segments, same design on both ends, Roman Period, from Oxyrhynchus.  
Roman Period, 30 BC-395 AD

### **Question 4**

A headrest for sleeping on. Does it look very comfortable?

### **Object notes**

6th Dynasty, circa 2800 BC

Wooden headrest, supported on two reeded columns. There are traces of pigment and a repair to the base. It was made in the 6th Dynasty, about 2800 BC.

Gifted by Sir William and Lady Constance Burrell to the City of Glasgow, 1944

## **Question 5**

A shabti figure. These were buried with people in their tombs, and some people had hundreds of them! Shabtis were magical objects. It was believed that if you read the words inscribed on the shabti figure, it would come to life and act as a version of you. Part of the agreement in getting into the underworld was that you had to serve the gods, but if you had lots of shabti figures, they would do all the work for you!

### **Object notes**

18th Dynasty, 1550-1295 BC

This beautifully carved and painted limestone shabti was found in the excavated tomb of Henut-ta-neb, in Abydos, Upper Egypt, (tomb D51). The inscription however identifies that this figure belonged to another, Pa-ser, 'the guardian to the lord of the twin lands'. This may be evidence of an intrusive burial; a burial added to the tomb of Henut-ta-neb, years after her death. Alternatively, these objects may have become mixed up when they were excavated.

This shabti wears a fashionable two-piece wig and is wrapped in a white linen shroud. His crossed hands hold hoes, and he carries a woven basket and a yoke with two water-pots on his back. The six rows of hieroglyphs around his body invoke Chapter six of the 'Book of the Dead', which magically ensures this shabti will do agricultural labour for Pa-ser in the afterlife.

### **Bonus Question**

What colours were the pyramids originally?

Gleaming white - they were coated in highly polished limestone so that they would be seen for miles around.

**Thank you!**