

Egypt

Life Examined Through Primary Sources

Background Information on Egyptian Life

- ❧ Daily life in ancient Egypt revolved around the Nile and the fertile land along its banks. The yearly flooding of the Nile enriched the soil and brought good harvests and wealth to the land.
- ❧ The people of ancient Egypt built mudbrick homes in villages and in the country. They grew some of their own food and traded in the villages for the food and goods they could not produce.

Egyptian Life

- ❧ Most ancient Egyptians worked as field hands, farmers, craftsmen and scribes. A small group of people were nobles. Together, these different groups of people made up the population of ancient Egypt.

What is a Primary Source?

- Primary sources are the raw materials of history — original documents and objects which were created at the time under study. They are different from secondary sources, accounts or interpretations of events created by someone without firsthand experience.

Think about these Questions

❧ A Student's View.

- Who created this primary source? When was it created? Where does your eye go first?
- What do you see that you didn't expect? What powerful words and ideas are expressed?
- What feelings and thoughts does the primary source trigger in you? What questions does it raise?

Can you find the following?

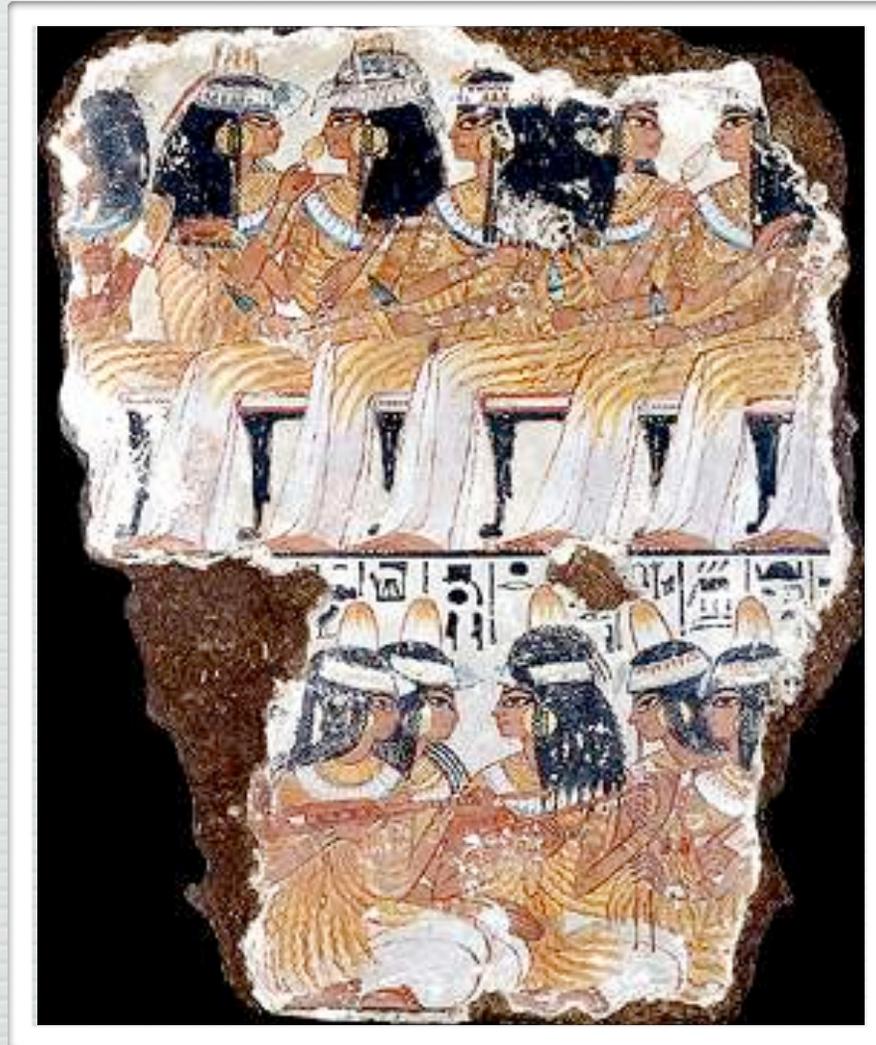


- * Assistant Inspector
- * Boundary stone
- * Grain

- * Hieroglyphs
- * Horse
- * Onagars

Painting Information

- ❧ It was the assistant inspector's job to make sure that the boundary stones which marked a farmer's property were in place. If the boundary stones were in the right place he would figure out how much tax to charge the farmer on his crops.
- ❧ A boundary stone marked where a landowner's fields began and ended
- ❧ The ancient Egyptians used grains like barley and wheat to make bread. Bread was one of the main foods eaten at most meals.
- ❧ 'Hieroglyphs' are the signs used in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic writing. The hieroglyphic script was used to record important information in tombs.
- ❧ Horses were not common in ancient Egypt. Sometimes they were owned by wealthy people and pulled private chariots. However they were more commonly used to pull war chariots.
- ❧ Onagars were a type of mule used in ancient Egypt. These animals were usually used in farming to pull carts.



- * Chairs
- * Double flute
- * Lotus flowers

- * Wig
- * Perfume cones
- * Lute

Lotus Flower

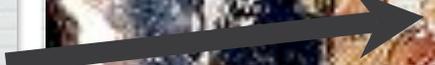
Wigs

Perfume Cones

Double Flute

Chairs

Lute



Painting Information

- ❧ It was a great honor to sit on a chair at a banquet in ancient Egypt. Usually just the hosts and their honored guests would sit on chairs while the other guests would sit on pillows.
- ❧ The double flute was a musical instrument used in ancient Egypt. It made a high-pitched sound like a modern flute.
- ❧ The ancient Egyptians liked the delicate smell of the lotus flower and sometimes gave them to guests at a banquet.
- ❧ The ancient Egyptians often wore wigs for special occasions like banquets or formal gatherings.
- ❧ Guests at banquets often wore cones of perfumed wax on their heads. The heat in the room would melt the cone and the perfumed wax would run down their heads.
- ❧ The lute was a musical instrument with strings. It was played like a guitar.



- * Bread
- * Figs
- * Grapes

- * Jugs of Wine
- * Leg of Ox
- * Duck



Figs

Duck

Bread

Leg of Ox

Grapes

Jugs of Wine

Painting Information

- ❧ The ancient Egyptians made many different kinds of bread. The different varieties appeared in tomb paintings as shapes such as circles and ovals.
- ❧ Figs were a common fruit in ancient Egypt.
- ❧ The ancient Egyptians ate grapes and used them to make wine.
- ❧ Wine was a very popular drink in ancient Egypt. It was kept in large pottery jugs and served in bowls.
- ❧ The ancient Egyptians ate many different kinds of meat. The leg of an ox was one of the best cuts of meat that was served at banquets and formal occasions.
- ❧ This is the body of a duck whose feathers were plucked off so that it could be cooked.

Inquiry

- ☛ * What was happening during this time period?
- * What was the creator's purpose in making this primary source?
- * What does the creator do to get his or her point across?
- * What was this primary source's audience?
- * What biases or stereotypes do you see?

New Skills

- Have students summarize what they've learned.
- Ask for reasons and specific evidence to support their conclusions.
- Help students identify questions for further investigation, and develop strategies for how they might answer them.
- Analysis tools and thematic primary source sets from the Library offer entry points to many topics.

References

❧ The British Museum

www.ancientegypt.co.uk/life/explore/main.html

Additional Areas to Explore

Geography

Gods & Goddesses

Mummification

Pharaoh

Pyramids

Temples

Time

Trades

Writing

