

ANCIENT CULTURES EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE BOX

ED.1988.18.1 Replica of an ancient Hebrew seal. This is an enlarged impression of a jasper seal showing a roaring lion and bearing the Hebrew inscription “Belonging to Shema, servant of Jeroboam”. Shema is believed to have been a minister to King Jeroboam II who reigned in ancient Israel between 792 B.C. and 752 B.C.

ED.1991.43.6 a-d

Miniature ceramic replicas of Archaic (1300 B.C.- 800 B.C.) and Classical era (600-300 B.C.) Greek pottery shapes:

- (a) amphora with early Archaic style designs
- (b) 2-handled vase, another style of amphora
- (c) pitcher or ewer
- (d) oil lamp

ED.2005.1.109 a,b Fragments of a Roman-era mosaic from Turkey. Mosaics, especially on floors, were very popular for decoration the homes of the wealthy and for public buildings and can be found throughout the area of the old Roman empire throughout Northern Africa, Italy, Greece and the Middle East. The design of a mosaic is built up of small stone or glass pieces called tesserae that are held in place by plaster or cement. They often depict scenes from legends or landscapes.

ED.2005.1.154 a,b Cuneiform tablets. These are examples of one of the earliest forms of writing known to man. Scribes in ancient Sumeria (now part of present-day Iraq) used pads of wet clay to write information with a stylus- a stick that was flat on one end and carved in a small triangle on the other. Erasing was easy, just rub out the mistake with your thumb. When done, the clay was fired and the recorded information became permanent. Archeologists have found thousands of these through the years at sites all through Iran, Iraq, Syria, etc. They record trading information, court cases, religious doctrines and legal matters as well as being used to mail more personal “letters” to friends and family. (a) is a plaster/resin reproduction, (b) may be the real thing!

ED.2005.1.338

“Time Line of Culture in the Nile Valley and its Relationship to Other World Cultures”- a fold-out booklet published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ED.2005.3.22

Painted papyrus- the ancestor of modern paper- with images of the sphinx and the pyramids. From a 1995 calendar from Egypt.

ED.2006.1.162

Piece of papyrus with hieroglyphic/hieratic script equivalents of the Latin alphabet. This was made in Egypt and sold as a tourist souvenir. It shows a late version of Egyptian writing (in use around the time of Cleopatra, etc.) that emphasized the phonetic sounds of the objects depicted rather than the earlier form of Egyptian hieroglyphics in which one design represented an entire word or idea.

ED.2006.1.320

This cast brass pendant is in the shape called an “ankh” which symbolized eternal life to the ancient Egyptians. It has been incised with hieroglyphic script (see above). Some scholars say that it is the ancestor to our modern Christian cross as

it was woven as a design into early Coptic Christian tunics of the first and second centuries A.D. This one was made for sale to tourists and can be strung on a necklace using the hole at the top.

ED.2006.1.321

This is a reproduction of the ancient Egyptian board game called "Senet". When the tomb of the pharaoh Tutankhamen was opened in the 1920s, four of these boards (made with precious materials such as ivory and ebony) were found to have been buried with the young ruler. The game had mystical meaning for the players and the movement of the pieces on the board was said to represent the wanderings of the soul in the afterlife. It is played by 2 persons, each with 5 game pieces. Four sticks, that have been cut to have one flat side and one curved, are used as the "dice" to determine the players' moves (see instruction sheet in plastic protector in box for a full description of how to play the game).