

**Y Ganolfan Eifftaidd**  
Amgueddfa henebau'r Aifft  
Prifysgol Abertawe Parc Singleton  
Abertawe, SA2 8PP



**The Egypt Centre**  
Museum of Egyptian Antiquities  
Swansea University, Singleton Park,  
Swansea, SA2 8PP

01792 295960

Thank you for booking your school party at the Egypt Centre. Please find enclosed the Teachers activity pack. We have found that the activity pack is very useful, as you will have a record of the activities undertaken. Please note: You do not need to photocopy any materials when you visit Egypt Centre as all the activities are 'hands-on' and do not involve the use of work sheets.

The children will not be expected to work unaided but take part in the activities with the Museum's assistants. Most of our staff, who will be working with your pupils, are unpaid volunteers and not trained teachers. Please could you therefore ensure that the children are supervised at all times? The volunteers have indicated it is helpful if children are given name badges, however we understand that not all schools are happy to provide name badges therefore we leave to decision to you.

When you arrive the children are welcomed and divided into two groups. One group will go into the *House of Death* and one group will go into the *House of Life* and will later swap over. The morning children at the Egypt Centre will stay and have their lunch in the Egypt Centre and the children who are arriving here in the afternoon from Swansea Museum will have their lunch at Swansea Museum. Barry Hughes at Swansea Museum will organise your visit with them. Swansea Museum contact number is 01792 653763.

We charge £2 a head for each child. Teachers and children may bring cameras but **we do not allow flash photography** in the museum galleries, due to conservation issues regarding safe light levels. We also have a shop area with 'Egyptian' items for sale starting from 30p and also offer a 'goody bag' service. Please make cheques payable to **Swansea University**.

We look forward to seeing you and hope you enjoy your time at the Egypt Centre. Please fill in our teacher questionnaire any comments on how we can improve our services to you will be gratefully received. Sometimes teachers send us 'thank you' letters and drawings from children that we put in a booklet for other visitors to see. If you would like to send us children's work please can you obtain your head teachers permission for them to go on display.

Yours sincerely,  
Wendy Goodridge  
*Assistant curator*

The activities in the upstairs gallery, *The House of Life* are:

### 1. Egyptian materials

This activity enables the children to come into close contact with genuine Ancient Egyptian artefacts. The Egypt Centre is one of the few places where visitors are allowed to handle ancient objects. Children will learn about the various materials used by the Egyptians and how they were manufactured. During this activity the children will have the opportunity to handle objects, some possibly 6,000 years old, wearing gloves. As it is unclear what some of the objects are the children are encouraged to guess and discuss what they think objects were made of and used for.



### 2. Senet game

Over 120 Ancient Egyptian games have been found and are now in museum collections around the world. *Senet* is likely a game that was played on a day-to-day basis, like snakes and ladders. However, it also had significance as a funerary item. Tutankhamun had four sets of *senet* in his tomb. Children are placed in teams to play the ancient board game *senet*. They learn about the rules of *senet* and its place in Egyptian society, ancient Egyptian beliefs as well as developing strategy and team building skills. We have a replica of a *senet* board found in Tutankhamun's tomb with throw sticks instead of traditional dice.



The activities in the downstairs gallery, *The House of Death* are:

### 1. Mummification and Opening of the Mouth Ceremony

Using a life-size 'dummy mummy' the children learn the art of deluxe mummification! This includes the removal of organs from the body, drying and bandaging the body, along with the ceremony and ritual that was an integral part of the mummification process. Children are encouraged to participate in role-play and use the props provided. Children are encouraged to question whether or not the ancient Egyptian amulets (and other objects) found in the mummy wrappings to protect the dead person should have been taken from the body and displayed in museums around the world!



### 2. Food and drink offerings for the dead

Both food and drink were essential for the dead in the Afterlife. If real food and drink could not be provided a varied range of models were offered as substitutes and rituals performed. Children are encouraged to make their own offering tray, which includes making the food they would like to receive if they were in the Afterlife. The Ancient Egyptian climate and types of food grown in Ancient Egypt is discussed and compared to modern day diets.



# Important Notice for Teachers

We want to ensure that your visit to the Egypt Centre is happy, safe and rewarding. In order to achieve this we want to explain our roles; what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.

## *The Role of the Egypt Centre*

- All activities are museum led. We will provide trained activity leaders to work with small groups of children. Activity leaders are **not** expected to discipline children. All staff working with your children are fully-enhanced CRB checked.
- We will endeavour to provide as many of the activities chosen by the school in the time available.
- We will provide all materials and equipment needed for each activity, which are safe to use.
- We will provide each child with a clipboard, pencil and work-pack for their use during the visit.
- If required we can provide a safe area for lunch near toilet facilities.
- We provide a gift-shop that caters for school children and is relevant to areas of study.
- We welcome feedback from schools and each school is given a questionnaire to return.

## *The Role of the School*

- The school should try to arrive at the agreed time
- The school will pay a £2 for each child and 50p for any work packs not used due to absence of children.  
(Please make cheques payable to *Swansea University*)
- A member of school staff should supervise each group of children at all times and ensure good behaviour.
- Ensure the equipment and materials that are to be used for subsequent school groups and the public are not being misused.
- Respect other visitors to the museum
- If the school has any concern please report it to a member of staff.

## Leaders'/Teachers' Responsibilities While Visiting the Museum

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The Egypt Centre wants to ensure that children are protected from harm while in the Museum. In addition to the Museum's responsibilities, we ask that teachers/leaders of groups exercise their own responsibilities.

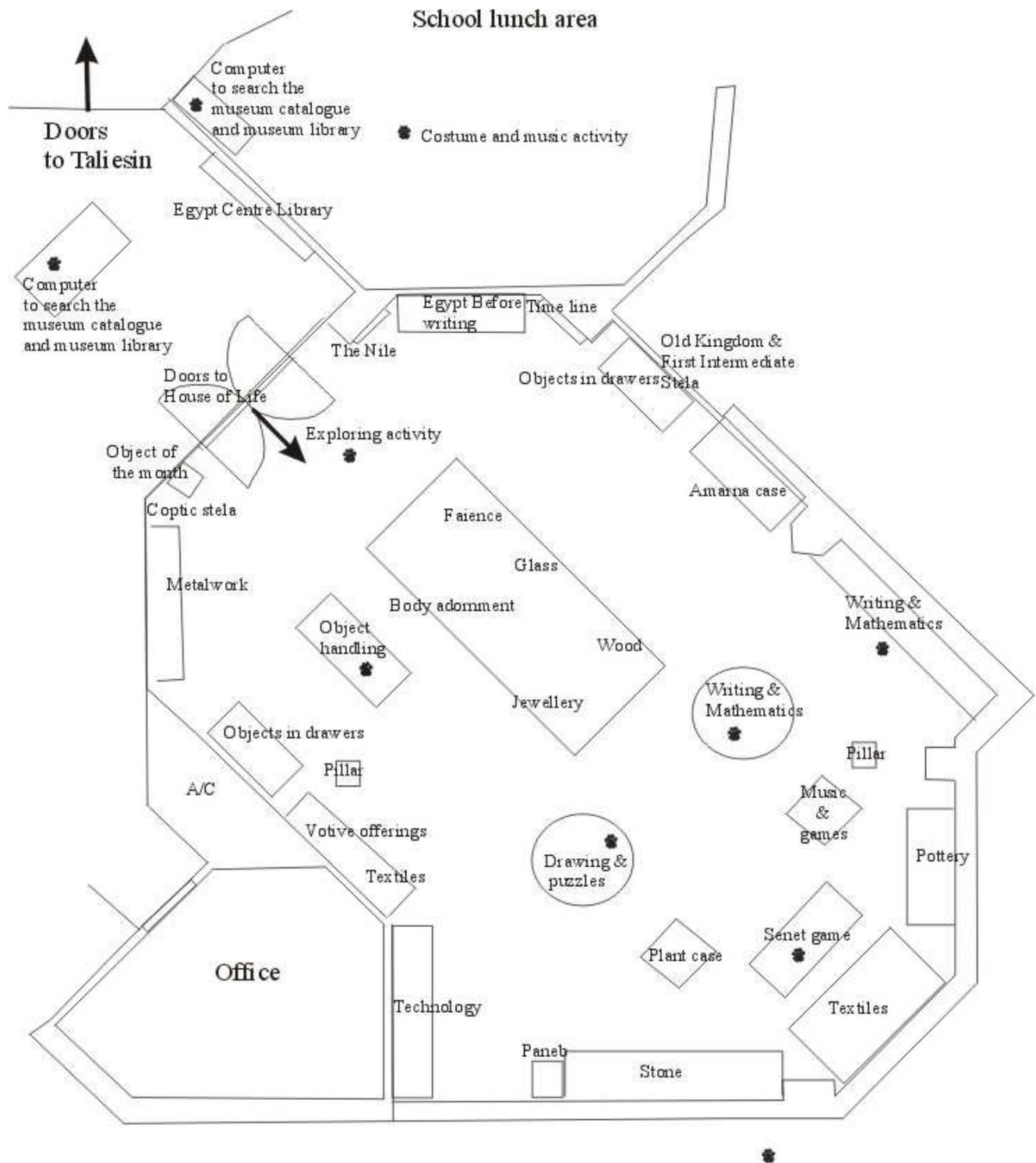
In particular, all leaders/teachers shall:

- Make sure they have adequate staff supervision using the ratios laid down by their institution. This is a suggestion:
  - 0-2 years = 1 adult to 3 children
  - 2-3 years = 1 adult to 4 children
  - 3-7 years = 1 adult to 8 children
  - 7 years + = 2 adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children/young people, and one additional staff member for every additional 10 children/young people.
- Ensure they supervise the children/young people at all times
- In case of an accident, contact a member of Museum staff who will follow Museum procedures
- In the case of a lost child, contact a member of Museum staff who will follow the Museum procedures
- Refrain from having possession of or consuming alcoholic beverages on the Museum premises
- Refrain from either verbally or physically abusing a child/young person
- Ensure adequate insurance cover for the group and leaders
- Ensure that the appropriate group leaders carry any necessary medicine for the children with them at all times, with the permission of the parents/guardian
- Inform their group of behavioural expectations while in the Egypt Centre

The Museum hopes each visitor has an enjoyable and exciting visit. We therefore expect all visitors to display courtesy and respect for others, and for the Museum property, at all times while visiting the Museum.

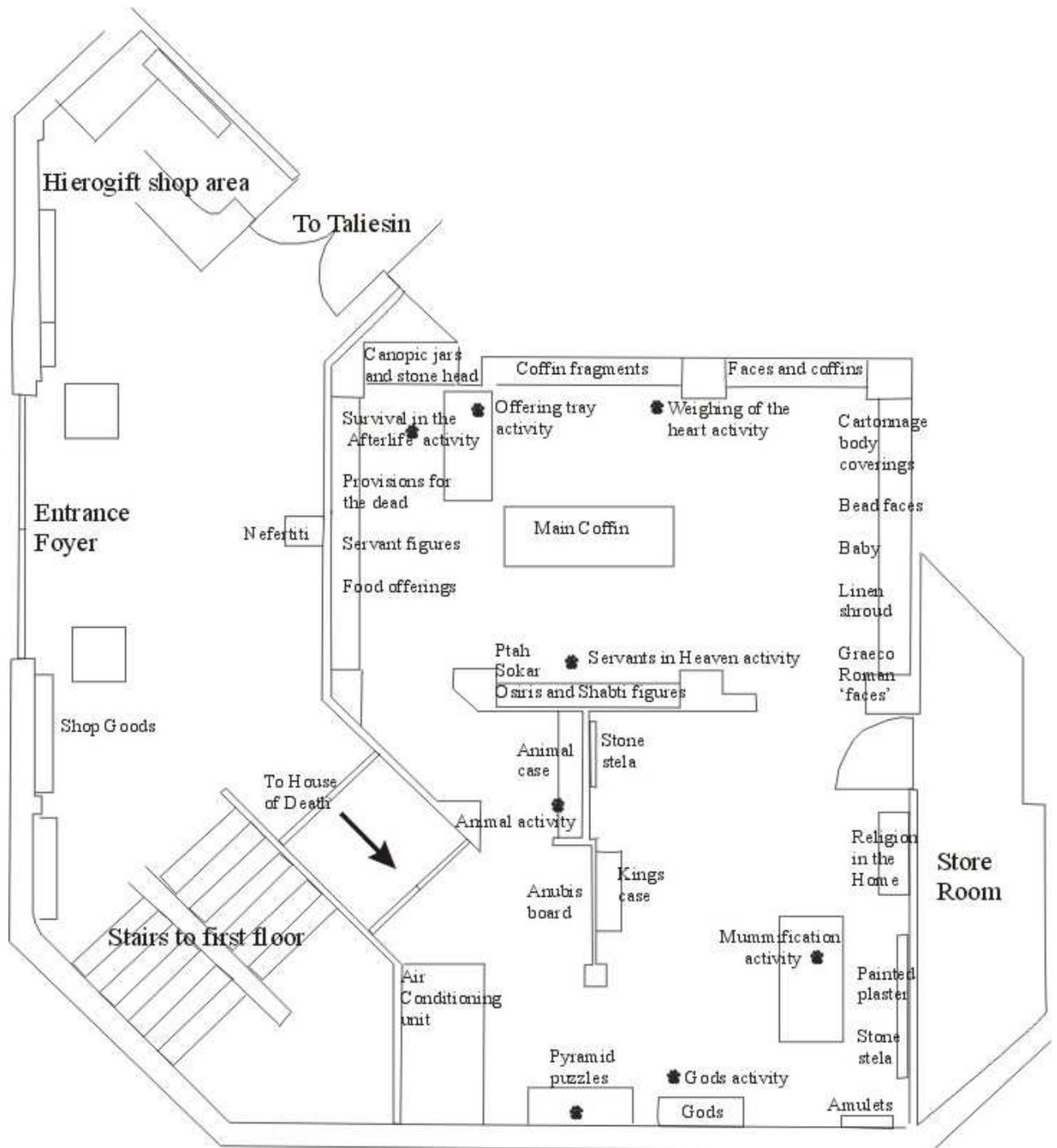
Group leaders should therefore not allow members of their group to:

- make any sectarian, racist, sexist or other offensive remarks toward any person or other group
- vandalise Museum property
- leave litter in the Museum/University grounds.



## Egypt Centre First floor plan

 Hands-on activities



## Egypt Centre Ground floor plan

 Hands-on activities

## The Egypt Centre *Hierogift* Shop

### ‘GOODIE’ BAGS FACILITY

The museum shop is available to use for all visiting parties during their time at the centre. There are many items geared towards school children, and at a very affordable price (items start from 25p!) There should be (time permitting) a chance for your group to visit the shop at some time during the day.

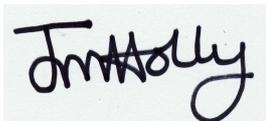
However, the shop is quite small, so we are unable to serve a whole group at the same time. It is recommended that groups use the shop 6 or 7 at a time in order to make it easier for the shop assistants and for the children themselves.

We also offer to make up ‘goodie bags’ which can be prepared in advance, up to a certain amount of money, ie. £1.50, £2.00, £3.00 etc. This can make the visit easier for schools especially if they are pressed for time.

If you wish to use this facility, please contact me in advance and I can have a selection of items for you to see during the morning session. I can suggest items to put in the bags, both educational and fun. Some examples include; blank papyrus, painted papyrus, bookmarks, pencils, pens, scarab beetles and small statues, necklaces and rings. The bags will be ready before you leave.

If there are any other questions about the shop you wish to ask, then please do not hesitate to contact me here at the Museum.

Many thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature reads "Jayne Holly" in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Jayne Holly

**Museum Assistant (Gift Shop manager)**

Tel: 01792 295960

E-mail [j.m.holly@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:j.m.holly@swansea.ac.uk)

# Sorting Materials

## *Faience*

Was made from crushed sand with lime and natron or plant ash.

It was modelled into the desired shape or pressed into a clay mould and fired.

The most common colour was blue or green, although other colours were produced. The blue colour resembled the precious gemstone *lapis lazuli*.

*Faience* was used as jewellery, models, vessels and amulets.

## *Glass*

Was made by heating together sand, lime or plant ash.

When it was cooled the middle segment was crystallised glass, which was crushed into a fine powder. This powder was heated to produce molten glass. A shaped core of mud might be used to dip into the molten glass, or the glass poured over a core. The glass might be cooled and moulded into shape or allowed to go cold and cut like stone. A lot of skill was needed to do this!

Core formed, striped glass, is made by winding different coloured strips of cooled glass around a core of mud. *Glass* was regarded as a precious stone and was used to make jewellery, amulets, statues, and vessels (glass was not blown until Roman times).

## *Pottery*

Is the most common item found from Ancient Egypt because it is easily preserved. Some pottery was made of clay from the Nile banks. Earlier pots were hand made before the development of the potter's wheel. The pots are then fired to harden them. Notice the *rilling* on the side of the pottery, the potter's fingers made this as he made the pot on a wheel.

Oxygen during firing turns the clay red, notice the black inner part of the pottery, which did not come into contact with oxygen.

*Pottery* had many uses for rich and poor. Vessels, models, offering trays, moulds, coffins, stools.

## *Wood*

Timber was precious because wood was scarce. Only the rich could afford wooden objects. Wood from fruit trees was used for furniture and buildings, coffins, weapons, tools, statues and boat building. Small strips of wood were joined together to form larger pieces.

The finest timber, such as cedar and pine was imported.

## *Metal*

Different types of metal used by the Ancient Egyptians include gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, bronze, lead and platinum. Metal was used to make weapons, jewellery, coffins, musical instruments, amulets, statues, and mirrors. Crude metal was melted and molten metal was sometimes poured into a mould (arrowheads, statues). Some tools and weapons were made by open-mould casting, such as flat axes and chisels. Sometimes cooled metal was taken to a blacksmith who would beat the metal with a stone to produce a metal sheet or plate. Lots of craftsmen needed metal tools they include carpenters, stonemasons, and leather workers. Also barbers, doctors and butchers needed metal tools.

## *Papyrus*

Was a green reed-like plant, which grew along the Nile banks. It was used to make baskets, rope, boats, sandals and paper. To make paper the outer skin was peeled away and the inner core was cut into strips and soaked in water. The wet strips were placed overlapping side by side and beaten to mesh the strips together then another layer placed across the top of these. A heavy weight was placed on top and it was left to dry. When it was dry the sheet was polished with a stone or a shell. The inner layer of the papyrus plant made the best quality paper. Sheets could be joined together to make a roll.

## *Stone*

Was used for making tools, vessels, weapons, statues, buildings, tombs and jewellery. Egypt had a wide range of different types of stone. There were hundreds of stone quarries across the deserts. Stone tools were used as knives, picks, etc. Embalmers used stone knives. Arrowheads were often

made of stone too. *Stone* was expensive for building as it had to be quarried, transported and then cut into shape. Only royalty and the rich could afford stone buildings. Most people lived in mud-brick houses.

### ***Cornelian***

This is a form of silica dioxide which is found in the Eastern Desert and Nubia. Its colour, a red or orange, was linked with blood and energy on the one hand and with Seth and disorder on the other. In the Late Period, cornelian *hrst*, also meant 'sadness' Cornelian amulets are known from the Predynastic. In the Egypt Centre there are some cornelian snake head amulets and a cornelian girdle of Isis in the amulets case.

### ***Lapis Lazuli***

This dark blue stone speckled with gold was probably imported into Egypt from north-east Afghanistan. In the Late Period, then name for this stone was *hsbd* meaning 'joy'. It was used for jewellery and small vessels, though after the Third Intermediate Period was uncommon. Chapter 26 of the *Book of the Dead* records a spell for a heart amulet of lapis lazuli. Its dark blue colour speckled with gold made it the colour of the sky and associated with solar aspects such as the scarab.

### ***Turquoise***

This light blue or green stone came from Sinai. It seems the Egyptian preferred the green type of this, rather than the blue. The latter tends to fade when exposed to sun or water. In the late Period *mjk3t*, 'turquoise' also meant 'joy'. Green was the colour of new life and thus rebirth. It was used for jewellery throughout the Dynastic Period.

### ***Amethyst***

Amethyst is also a form of silicon dioxide, but is violet coloured. It was found east of Aswan and around Abu Simbel. Most amulets made of this stone date to the Middle Kingdom.

### ***Haematite***

This black or grey iron oxide has a metallic sheen. Some certainly came from the Eastern Desert but in may also have been obtained from near Aswan and Sinai. It was used for beads and amulets. The plummet, carpenter's square and headrest amulet, in particular was made from this material. It was also used for small vessels and kohl sticks.

### ***Azurite***

Azurite, copper carbonate, may have been used to provide blue pigment, though the evidence is tenuous.

### ***Malachite***

Malachite is also copper carbonate and was used for the green pigment in Egyptian painting and also as a green eye-paint. However, as an eye-paint, it only seems to have been used until the Middle of the Old Kingdom, when it was replaced by black kohl. It was also used for beads, amulets and inlays. It occurs in the Eastern Desert and Sinai Peninsula.

### ***Rose Quartz***

During the Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom, rose quartz was occasionally used for funerary vessels.

### ***Rock Crystal***

From the Predynastic Period this was used for beads and small vessels. It was also used for the corneas of artificial eyes of statues. It is found in the western Desert and may have been exported to Crete.

### ***Jasper***

This form of silica dioxide comes in red, green and yellow varieties.. It was found in the Eastern Desert in Chapter 156 of the *Book of the Dead* the red form is given as the perfect material for the Girdle of Isis. Red and green jasper was used for beads from the Badarian Period and in the New Kingdom red jasper was particularly popular for penannular earrings and hair rings. Yellow jasper was used in sculpture from the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty but not used for jewellery until the Roman Period.

### ***Garnet***

This mineral comes in all colours except blue but the most popular forms are the violet and red varieties. Garnets are found in various parts of Egypt but are particularly common in the Eastern Desert. From the Badarian to New Kingdom garnets were used for beads. It has been suggested that Mycenaean garnet were imports from Egypt.

### ***Amazonite (microline)***

This type of green felspar was found in the Eastern Desert. It was prized in ancient Egypt and was carved into small beads and amulets.

### ***Olivine (peridot)***

The typical colour of this stone is a warm yellowish green. Most Egyptian peridot came from the island of Zabargad (St John's Island) in the Red Sea. Olivine was used for jewellery in the Predynastic Period but in the Ptolemaic Period was popular for intaglios.

### ***Onyx***

Onyx was used for beads from the Predynastic Period but became particularly popular from the Ptolemaic Period for intaglios; cutting, carving or engraving *into* a flat surface. Some of it was imported from India.

### **Further Reading**

Andrews, Carol 1994. *Amulets of Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum Press.

Aston, B.G., James, A., Harrell and Shaw, I., 2000. Stone. In Nicholson, P.T. and Shaw, I. *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology* 5-77.

## Senet (The Passing Game)

The game dates from the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. It died out, like much of ancient Egyptian culture, with the Christian era. The earliest known examples of senet boards come from 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty tombs at Abu Rawasch though it probably dates to the Predynastic times. There are over 120 games known in museums throughout the world.

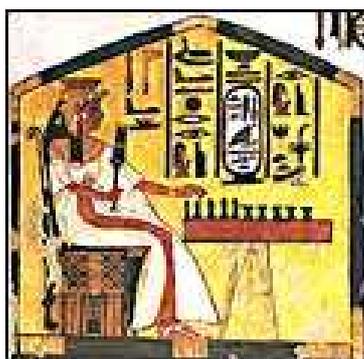
Senet may well have been a game played in everyday life, for fun. However, it also seems to have had a religious meaning, regarding funerals and Hathoric rites connected with funerals. Often games of senet were placed in tombs. Tutankhamun, for example had 4 games in the tomb with him.

*Coffin Text* spell 405 states that senet is a means of the dead communicating with the living. In 1019 the mobility of the deceased in the necropolis is compared to a god travelling across a senet board.

The game of senet was connected with obtaining the afterlife. On several tombs from the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards the deceased is shown playing against no visible opponent. They may be playing against the powers of the beyond. The game is referred to in Chapter 17 of the *Book of the Dead*. From 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty scenes of senet playing often incorporated into text of *Book of the Dead* 17. The beginning may be translated as : *Spell for going forth by day, assuming whatever form one will, playing senet, sitting in a pavilion, going forth as a living soul....* Illustrations associated with *Book of the Dead* 17 sometimes show the deceased playing senet. Piccione believes that senet was played in or near the tomb in a pavilion. There are graffiti senet boards in tombs, presumably for games played by the living. At Beni Hasan there is a graffiti senet board near a depiction of a game painted on a tomb wall. Piccione suggests that the game allowed the living to contact the dead.

From the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty the game of senet was described on sets of papyri describing the journey through the underworld called 'The Great Game Text'. Such an example is P. Turin 1.775. It has been suggested that living people played senet to achieve unity with the sun god before they died. 'The Great Game Text' mentions boards in which all the squares are decorated.

The 30 squares of the senet board are also associated with the lunar month. It is usually agreed that the squares had metaphoric meaning associated with the afterlife. We cannot be certain but the following suggestions are usually given: the counters may represent the *ba* travelling between heaven and earth.



Queen Nefertari playing senet

Many boards do not have decorated squares. Boards of the Old and Middle Kingdom sometimes had numbers but from the New Kingdom onwards certain squares were decorated with religious symbols. These were not always the same on every board.

On some Old and Middle Kingdom boards each player had seven pieces but by the New Kingdom each player had five pieces. In the earlier games you would start on the House of Rebirth.



This is the House of rebirth. Sometimes there is frog on this square since frogs are to do with birth.



The House of happiness or House of Rejuvenation.



The House of water or the waters of chaos. One of the game texts says of square 27: "I seize his gamepieces so that he might drown together with his gamepieces. I throw him into the water." People who failed to achieve the afterlife would be drowned in the waters of the netherworld.



The House of the three truths.



The House of Re-Atum.

(Some versions have Isis and Nephthys instead of two seated men).

The replica of the board in Tutankhamun's tomb has the standard funerary offering on it showing it was made for the tomb. Such formula are often put on boards from the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards.

It seems that one of the rules used to be that if you landed on the last three squares you would have to throw the right number to exit- a 3 for the third square, a 2 for the second square and a 1 for the last square.

### **Bibliography**

Decker, Wolfgang, 1992. *Sports and Games of Ancient Egypt*, Cairo, The American University in Cairo Press, 124-131.

Kendall Timothy, 1978. *Passing Through the Netherworld : The Meaning and Play of Senet, an Ancient Egyptian Funerary Game*, Belmont, The Kirk Game Company

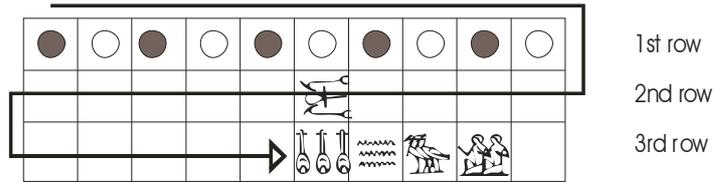
Piccione, Peter, 2001. *Gaming with the Gods: The game of Senet and ancient Egyptian Religious Beliefs*. Leiden, Brill.

Tyldesley, Joyce, 2007. *Egyptian Games and Sports*, Princes Risborough, Shire Publications, 11-14.

# Senet

We do not know exactly how senet was played. This is a possible way.

Starting position  
with direction  
of play.



Throw the die to move. Each role of the die moves only one piece. The aim is to be the first player to play all her/his pieces off 3rd row.

Before any player can play a piece off the board all players must be off the 1st row.

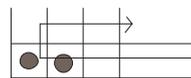
A player can 'capture' an opponent's piece by landing on it. In this case the captured piece is placed from where the 'victor' started.

A throw of '2' or '3' ends a player's turn and is the last move for that turn.

Strategy: A throw of '2' may be useful to protect pieces (see A below), a throw of '3' to advance a 'wall' (see B below).

A. Protected Pieces: Two pieces of the same colour in the line are deemed to protect each other and neither can be 'captured'

Examples:



direction  
of play



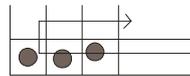
direction  
of play

B. Normally pieces can jump over each other, but not if you build a 'wall'.

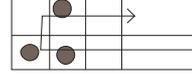
A Wall: Three pieces of the same colour in a line are a 'wall'.

In this situation opponents pieces cannot pass until the wall is disbanded. If a player has no piece that can move forward he or she must move a piece backwards.

Examples:



direction  
of play



direction  
of play

'Protected Squares': Any piece on one of these squares cannot be captured.

Strategy: It is good to leave pieces here as long as you can, and you can use them as safe areas to start to build a wall on.

Protected Squares



'Water Trap': If a player has only one piece that can be moved and that piece lands on this square  that piece goes back to the  Square. If this place is occupied the 'water trapped' piece goes back to the first available square on the row.

# Mummification

The ancient Egyptians mummified their dead in order to attempt to preserve the body. The body was taken to a tent where it was washed in a natron solution (sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate) to cleanse it before mummification.

The Egyptians realised that the body was better preserved if the internal organs were removed. The brain was removed through the nose by a long hook! An incision was made in the left side of the body and the internal organs removed; these were washed and dried. They were placed in special canopic jars kept near the body, or in later times put back inside the body in parcels. Natron was piled on top of the body to dry out the body.

After 40 days the body cavity was packed with bags of clean natron along with bandages and sweet smelling spices to plump the body out and give it a better shape! The whole body was then coated in resin and wrapped in resin soaked bandages. Amulets were wrapped among the layers to give the body further protection. Bandaging the mummy took 15 days before it was ready to be placed in its coffin.

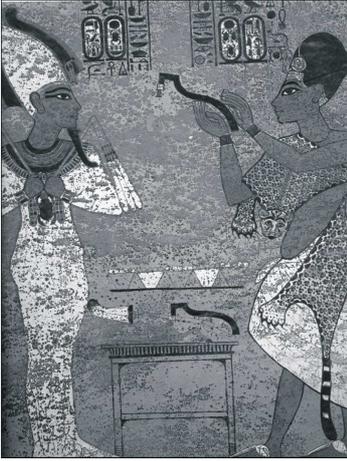
**Now it is your turn to make a mummy!**

## *Place the amulets on the mummy*

Different amulets were placed on different parts of the body.

1. **Wedjet Eye:** Protected mummy from evil and healed wounds. *Forehead, throat, stomach*
2. **Ankh:** Symbol of 'life.' *Chest, feet*
3. **Djed Pillar:** Back bone of Osiris, means 'stable or enduring.' *Throat, chest, stomach*
4. **Cat:** Goddess Bastet. *Feet*
5. **Hawk:** Horus. *Chest, stomach*
6. **Scarab beetle:** Dung beetle rolling ball of dung God Khepre rolling sun across the sky each day, symbol of new life and resurrection. *Collarbone, chest, stomach*
7. **Sons of Horus:** Same as canopic jarheads to protect the organs. *2 facing pairs, chest or stomach below winged scarab.*
8. **Uraeus serpent:** Cobra Goddess, worn on King's crown to strike enemies of Egypt, also a symbol of re-birth shedding skin. *Forehead, neckline, chest, stomach.*
9. **Papyrus Sceptre:** Green vegetation symbolised new life and youth. *Forehead, throat, chest, stomach*
10. **Heart** : Most essential organ, seat of intelligence all feelings/actions/memory. *Neck, left breast, chest.*

# The Opening of the Mouth Ceremony

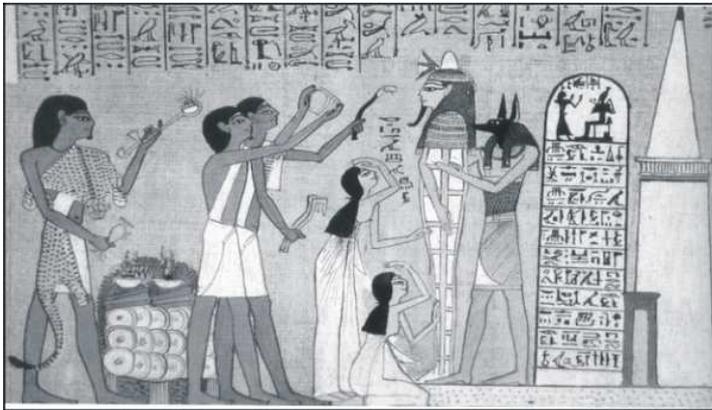


This picture shows Aye, dressed in a leopard skin, performing the ceremony of the 'Opening of the Mouth' before the mummy of Tutankhamun.

The son and heir of the dead person, or the **Sem-priest**, usually performed this ritual.

The ceremony was performed so that the mummy's senses were restored so it might eat, speak, see, smell and hear again. This was also practised on statues and figures of the dead.

The tool in Aye's hand is an adze, usually used by carpenters to carve wood. This touched the mummy's mouth and eye's, while spells were chanted to regain the senses.



The Opening of the Mouth was an elaborate ritual involving:

**Purification** - Holy water is poured from vases

**Incense** - The *Sem*-Priest holds an incense burner

**Anointing with oils**

**Chanting spells** from the *Book of the Dead* while female mourners wail before the mummy.

**Pointing objects** at the mummy - The adze. Sometimes the right leg of an ox was used.

Act out the Opening of the Mouth Ceremony. Remember all the parts of the ritual. The mummy is now ready to be placed in its coffin. New Kingdom depictions show the mummy placed upright in a patch of clean sand at the entrance to the tomb.

©Egypt Centre 2002

# Food and drink offerings For the dead

The ancient Egyptians believed that everything they needed for survival in life was needed when they died. It was important for the dead, as well as the living, to receive food and drink offerings in their tombs to exist in the afterlife. If it was not possible to leave real food and drink they could be provided in the form of clay offerings, stone tables, paintings of food and drink or hieroglyphs listing types of food and drink. In the downstairs gallery you can see all four types of offerings.



## Clay offering tray

Water was poured out of a special vase onto the offering tray, which flowed through a hole in the tray onto the tomb. Spells were chanted in the belief this would feed the dead.

Make your own offering tray with the types of food you would like in the after-life? How does this compare with what the Ancient Egyptians would have eaten?

Make a special *hes* vase and pretend to pour water over your offering tray. Don't forget to chant a spell.



## Ancient Egyptian food and drink

**Bread and beer** (*ta* and *henket*) were the two most important foods to the ancient Egyptians.

**Bread** was made from wheat if you were rich, barley if you were poorer. Wheat and barley could also be used to make porridge, to put in soups, or mixed with oil to make little cakes, but they were mostly ground into flour to make bread.

Flour was made by grinding down the corn between two stones. This meant that bits of stone often got into the flour, and when it was made into bread, the bits of stone in the bread would wear down the Egyptians teeth!

To make bread, the flour was mixed with water and salt, shaped by hand until it looked like a pitta bread, then cooked, either on a flat stone over the fire, inside a clay oven, or in the ashes of a fire. Loaves could be made into many different shapes, such as ovals, triangles or squares. Some loaves were modelled into figures of animals or human for special occasions. Other loaves were baked in conical moulds, which had to be broken to get the bread out.

**Beer** was made from partially baked bread. It was crumbled, mixed with water and yeast, and fermented. It made a thick liquid that had to be strained through a sieve to get the lumps out! Beer came in several different colours. Red was most popular, black was the strongest.

**Vegetables** - Most poor people lived on vegetables as well as beer and bread, as they would not have been able to afford to eat meat. They may have eaten a fish or wild bird occasionally.

**Onions** - The workman's packed lunch consisted of bread, beer and onions. Onions and radishes were sometimes given as wages to workmen who built the pyramids. They were smaller than our onions, and probably sweeter.

Ancient Egyptians also ate **garlic, lettuces, radishes, leeks, and cucumbers**, which could be pickled and eaten all year round. **Peas, beans and lentils** were also popular. **Broad beans** were mashed with **onion, garlic and spices**, and fried to make rissoles. **Papyrus reeds** were also eaten as were the roots and the seeds of the **lotus flower**.

**Fruit** - There were two types of **fig**, the ordinary and the sycamore fig. Sycamore figs were stewed to make a dessert; the ordinary fig could be eaten fresh, or used to make wine. **Dates** could be eaten fresh or dried or pureed to make a sort of jam to eat with bread. **Grapes** could also be eaten fresh or dried. The dark skinned grapes were usually eaten while the other sorts were used to make wine. **Pomegranates** were also used to make wine. Other fruits include **watermelons**, the **persea**, which tasted like an apple. **Nabk** berries, which looked like cherries, and **dom palm fruits**, which tasted like gingerbread and could be made into cakes.

**Nuts** were rare and did not grow in Egypt. Neither did apples or lemons that were brought into Egypt from other countries.

### **Meat, fish and birds**

**Fish** was eaten by the rich and poor people. They were speared or caught with nets from the shore or from boats. Fish could be smoked, dried, pickled, or made into fish cakes. **Ducks** and **geese** were kept in pens and were also kept for their **eggs**. A goose was roasted on special occasions like our Christmas turkey. Like today **pigs, cows, sheep** and **goats** were kept to be eaten but they also lived wild and were hunted, as were **gazelles, desert hare** and **desert fox**.

### **Other food**

Both **salt and vinegar** were used to flavour and preserve food. **Herbs** and **pepper** were also used for flavour.

**Milk** from goats and sheep was drunk and made into **yoghurt and cheese**.

**Oil** from plants was used in cooking, and there were almost 30 different plants, including olive oil, to chose from.

Finally, as there was no sugar, **honey** or **carob beans** were used to sweeten food, although the poorer people would have used **pureed fruit**.