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## Title of Object

Funerary papyrus

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## Photo of Object (optional)



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## Object Information

**Artist:** Unknown

**Country:** Egypt

**Date of Object:** 1070-712 BCE

**File Created:** 5/26/2016

**Accession Number:** 16.675

**Author of File:** Jena Lange

**Material/Medium:** Papyrus

**Reviewer of File:** Kara ZumBahlen

**Department:** Art of Africa

**Last Updated/Reviewed:** 6/1/2016

**Culture:** Ancient Egyptian

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## Tour Topics

Group 1 tour, Animals/Birds, ancient culture, fashion/dress, funerary/afterlife, gods/goddesses, mythology, ritual/ceremony, spirituality/sacred, stories/storytelling, symbolism, writing/calligraphy

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## Questions and Activities (list 3 to 4 sample questions here):

1. What is one of the animals that you see in the funerary papyrus?
  2. Would you consider (name an animal seen in the papyrus here) to be a friend or foe?
  3. What characteristic is that animal associated with that makes you say that?
  4. If you could pick your best trait, what would it be and what animal would you pick to represent that trait?
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## Key Points (Form: subject matter, medium and techniques of manufacture, style, etc.)

--Egyptians understood animal characteristics and admired them, especially those that had dangerous powers or had powers humans lacked.

--Ancient Egyptians believed in the infinite powers of the universe. They believed the divine existed in everything.

--Ancient Egyptians used animals as symbols for recognition aid and as a device to visually identify the powers and attributes of a god or goddess.

--In the papyrus, you will find these animals: Lioness, Snake, Vulture (probably, the studies are still being done and it could also be a falcon or ibis), Antelope, and Lion.

--Lioness could represent the goddesses Sekhmet or Bastet. The lioness image could show the fierce and unpredictable nature of Sekhmet or the protective, mothering nature of Bastet. The goddess Wadjet could also have a lioness head as she is the goddess of Lower Egypt.

--Snakes are feared and loved because they can use their venom to kill or to cure. Snakes in general are used as symbols of resurrection. From the British Museum, "in Egyptian religious iconography and mythology snakes are always symbols of great power, which can be negative or positive. For example, the serpent on the brow of the king (the uraeus) was believed to spit fire and represented the reptile's great power immanent in the king; on the other hand, the classic enemy of the sun-god during his travels through the underworld was the serpent Apophis."

--Vulture could represent the goddess Mut. She is considered the mother goddess and the goddess of Upper Egypt. Vultures are linked with symbols of rulership and eternity.

--Antelope could represent the god Sokar. Sokar watched over the royal cemeteries near Memphis (Ancient Egypt's northern capital).

--Ostrich feathers could represent the goddess Mayet (or Ma'at). She was the symbol for the physical and moral law of Egypt.

--Back to back lions were considered to be guardians of the horizon. They guarded the sun as it exited or entered the underworld. Pharaohs wanted to be associated with the fierce nature of lions so lions came to symbolize rulership.

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### **Key Points (Context: use, history, cultural information, artist bio, etc.)**

Funerary papyri were made to give the deceased directions in the afterlife, or to make sure the deceased would be reborn in the afterlife. Papyri were buried with the deceased.

Regarding the creation of the papyri, the typical scribal kit consisted of rush styluses (with reeds coming into use in the late first century B.C.), water, and cakes of ink, with a carbon-based black used for most texts and a red, fabricated with hematite, employed for emphasis. Various additional colors could be used for illustrations (Metmuseum).

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### **Current Mia Label Information (optional)**

Funerary papyri like this one, containing potent magical images, were placed in tombs to enable the deceased to be reborn in the afterlife as a god. On the right side of the divided papyrus, the priest Djedkhonsuifankh (pronounced "jed-CON-su-yu-eff-ONK" and meaning "the god Khonsu says he shall live") raises his hands in adoration and offers burning incense to the god Osiris. Because he is a priest, his head is shaved and he wears immaculate white linen garments. Osiris appears in the form of a mummy; his black skin color refers to the fertile black Nile river mud with its promise of new life.

Between them is a table heaped high with funerary offerings: loaves of bread, onions, a bunch of grapes, and three lotus flowers.

On the left, a lioness-headed goddess ushers Djedkhonsuiufankh into a shadowy world of gods and demons. The imagery depicts the sun god's passage through the underworld at night, where he unites with the god Osiris to emerge again at dawn. By identifying with the sun god, the deceased for whom this papyrus was painted hoped to participate in the solar cycle of rebirth and achieve victory over death.

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## Sources of Information and/or Prop Ideas (photos/videos)

Docent files in the Tour Office

[www.prm.ox.ac.uk/AnimalMummification.html](http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/AnimalMummification.html) (Webpage from the Pitt Rivers museum, with information on animal cults and mummification in ancient Egypt)

[www.ancient.eu/Egyptian\\_Burial/](http://www.ancient.eu/Egyptian_Burial/) (Information on ancient Egyptian burial from the Ancient History Encyclopedia)

[www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/papy/hd\\_papy.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/papy/hd_papy.htm) (great information on use of papyrus in ancient Egypt)

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=100944&partId=1&images=true](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=100944&partId=1&images=true) (British Museum bronze serpent)