

ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE

COMPETITIVE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION OCTOBER 1998

BILINGUAL SERIES

PAPER: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

A: Comprehension

Read the passage and answer the questions below

Nothing prepares you for their impact, you might think you must know their all detail beforehand; they have after all been described endlessly, by travel writers for over 2000 years. Their images have appeared again and again in publications ranging from solemn academic treatises to advertisement in fashionable magazines, so that as a result their shapes have become as familiar as that of your local place of worship; but no: nothing prepares for the sheer inhumanity of their titanic abstract shapes. For all the middle Middle East and the Western world the pyramids and their guardian sphinx have become symbols of eternity.

But now no one is quite sure how long the pyramids and Egypt's others antiquity can last. Recently a leading member of the Egyptian antiquity organization was quoted as saying "all of the monuments are endangered. If we don't do something soon, in 100 years the paintings will be gone and in 200 years the architecture will be gone".

All Egyptologist agree that the problems are getting worst analysis which has precipitated an involved, confused and at times bitter debate about the nature of conservation. The causes of the accelerated deterioration of structures that have so far manage to survive 4500 years of sun, sand, wind and war and depressingly familiar: pressure of population, pollution and perhaps most dangerous of all the devastating effect of mass tourism.

The benefits of the building of the as one high dam is undeniable: it controlled flooding of the Nile, releasing more land for agriculture and providing more water for irrigation. Yet the changing of water patterns has contributed greatly to the problems of conservation. The imbalance in the stones of the monuments, which is now very salty means that the stone is trying to "drink" water from below, like a wick or a sponge. But the water that it's drinking up is salt-saturated, so the level of salt in the stone itself is increased. In the heat the water evaporates, living damaging deposits of salt on the outside of the structures.

The problems of underground water have been exacerbated by the presence of sewage leaking from the ground from Cairo's drainage system. 1900 Cairo had a population of around one million, today it is nearer 14 million and there has been no appreciated expansion of the sewage system.

The effects of airborne pollution are less severe, but are certainly contributing to the eating away of the outside of the great pyramids. Fifty years ago, Cairo was six miles distant, but

today the Gaza suburb extends to the foot of the plateau itself. Traffic fumes combine with emissions from cement, steel and chemical industries a few miles away at Helwan, an area which has become known to some environmentalists as the death triangle. The continuing fascination held by Egypt the only country to have a complete science named after it does nothing to improve the situation. Archeologists still arrive in droves, lured by what remains hidden. But the archeologists are vastly outnumbered by the hordes of tourists who come to Giza nearly two million last year alone. Every ancient country has its tourist horror stories to tell but Egypt has suffered more than most.

If international rescue efforts are successful, the preservation of the Nile Valley monuments can act as a model for the rest of the world's ancient structures. If it's not then the world must resign itself to the fact that the great structure which bejewels the planet will survive on an arbitrary basis, in a cultural free-for-all conducted in an increasingly hostile physical environment.

1. Why would a visitor think he knows much about the pyramids before he even sees them?
2. Why are the structures deteriorating faster now than in the past?
3. What are the sources of the airborne pollution that is affecting the pyramids?

4. How has the building of the Aswan High Dam affected the people and the environment?

5. Suggest a passage for the passage

6. Which words or expressions in the passage means

a) Dilapidation b) contamination c) discouragingly d) destruction
e) harmful

f) Inhospitable g) disorganized i) at risk j) multitudes h) disproportion

7. Explain in your words what is meant by the following words and expressions as they are used in the comprehension text:

a) Solemn academic treatise b) tourist horror stories
c) Precipitated d) Death triangle e) arrive in droves, lured by.

UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

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Entrance Examination into the 1st Year Second Cycle 2002

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