

The Last 1022 Years Were Boring Anyway

Too Many Inscriptions

Written by Abigail Tan

20 hard pre-1000 AD history tossups.

1. Possibly drawing from similar inscriptions from around three hundred years earlier, an inscription on this object includes the phrase “may my throne be secure, my reign long-lasting, on your sublime writing-board which fixes the boundary of heaven and earth” in the middle of a prayer. This object’s inscription, which unusually features three separate prayers for different members of one family, ends with the invocation “may their good fortune be established by your mouth”. The last recorded use of the ancient title *šar kiššati* (“shar kishati”) or “King of the Universe” is on this object. This object records a building’s foundations being laid “in the month Addaru, day 20, of year 43” of a certain year (*) numbering system. This object’s inscription describes how its namesake ruler rebuilt the Ezida Temple in Borsippa in the third century BC, and wishes good fortune upon that ruler’s wife, Stratonice. For 10 points, which Akkadian-inscribed cylinder was named for the second king of the Seleucid Empire?

ANSWER: Antiochus Cylinder [or Borsippa Cylinder before read; accept just Antiochus after “cylinder” is read]

2. According to the medieval text *The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*, a debate over this military campaign involved a jurist claiming “if I were a bird, I wouldn’t fly over there” on hearing of the travel distance involved. Early in this campaign, a leader named Asad disobeyed orders to place twigs on his soldiers’ helmets as an identifying mark. A force in this campaign was aided by Farghalush, who broke a siege before dying of plague. The first of three sieges of a major city during this campaign saw the Venetian duke Giustiniano Participazio come to its aid. Prior to this campaign, an ally named Balata deserted a commander who had supposedly earlier abducted the (*) nun Homoniza and killed the strategos Constantine Soudas. This campaign began after the Eastern Roman commander Euphemius revolted in 826 and requested the aid of Ziyadat Allah, Emir of Ifriqiya. For 10 points, name this ninth-century campaign in which an Arab dynasty conquered a large Mediterranean island.

ANSWER: Aghlabid conquest of Sicily [accept equivalents; accept Aghlabid conquest of more specific parts of Sicily, such as Syracuse; prompt on partial answer by asking for the specific dynasty or region]

3. A statue at the Acropolis of a man from this city has a base inscription calling him “admired by all” for “capturing ships which Asia sent forth”. People from this city supposedly beat Persians with walking sticks when they threatened it and tried to arrest a fugitive. Plutarch records how Alexander the Great sent some spoils from the Battle of Gaugamela to this city to honour an earlier resident. According to Herodotus, this city denied having received aid from a Spartan prince, claiming their only foreign help in one war was from Callias the Elean. A man from this city gained the favour of Darius I after (*) curing his sprained ankle. The only ship from this city to participate in the Battle of Salamis was commanded by a three-time victor at the Pythian games named Phayllos. This city may have been aided by Dorieus to subjugate its rival in Magna Graecia, Sybaris. For 10 points, Pythagoras of Samos founded his school in which southern Italian Greek city, home to the physician Democedes and the wrestler Milo?

ANSWER: Croton [or Crotona or Crotone] (The Acropolis statue is of Phayllos of Croton. Democedes was pursued by Persians when he fled to Croton.)

4. One of these places dedicated in 738 AD was the last architectural project of one ruler before their capture and beheading by a much smaller vassal. One of the oldest of these places is at a site whose name means “beloved’s pass”, and dates to 1400 BC. Elongated sculptures of bird effigies, that could be worn, were found primarily in a culture notable for having as many as eighteen of these places. Since it does not appear on the site’s stela 14, a phrase inscribed at one of these locations is likely a local toponym and not part of Lord Chac’s name. Several stelae show participants at these places with (*) blood-snakes spewing from their necks. These places viewed from above often had an uppercase I shape and sloping surfaces.

U-shaped yokes, hachas, and palmas were used in these places in the Classic Veracruz culture. Losers at events at these places supposedly had their skulls placed on the tzompantli, as shown on Chichen Itza inscriptions. For 10 points, name these places where a ritual sport was played in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica.

ANSWER: Mesoamerican **ballcourts** [accept places where the Mesoamerican **ballgame** was played, or equivalent] (The first line refers to Eighteen Rabbit at Cópán, and the fourth to K'ahk'nal Ajaw, part of the name of Lord Chac of Uxmal. Paso de la Amada is Spanish for "beloved's pass".)

5. *Note to players: two answers required.*

In one battle, a fleet led by the son of one of these two people defeated the fleet of the other, led by the admiral Abantus. One of these people made a surprise crossing of the Hebrus to defeat the other in battle. When one of these two people defended against Rausimod's invasion, the other accused them of trespassing and allied with the Thervingian warrior Alica. After one of these two people refused to surrender Senecio to the other, they fought the Battle of Cibalae. After the Battle of Mardia, these two people signed a treaty at Serdica on the twenty-fourth anniversary of the victor's father's elevation as (*) Caesar of the West. These two people fought near Adrianople where one side used the labarum standard. These two people fought intermittently between 316 and 324 after their respective defeats of Maxentius at Milvian Bridge and Maximinus Daza at Tzirallum. For 10 points, which two Roman emperors fought the Battle of Chrysopolis, ending the civil wars of the Tetrarchy?

ANSWER: **Constantine** I and **Licinius** [accept in either order; accept **Constantine** the Great or Flavius Valerius **Constantinus** for "Constantine I", but not other numbers; accept Valerius Licinianus **Licinius** for "Licinius"] (The first two clues are about the Battle of the Hellespont and the 324 Battle of Adrianople.)

6. *Note to players: description acceptable.*

A short inscription recording how one ruler unusually performed this action twice is dated to either the first century BC or AD since the inscription may refer to either that ruler's "sixth son" or "sixth descendant". Some fourth-century AD coins feature a queen holding a fan and a towel, and the inscription "powerful enough to perform" this action. During one part of this practice, a club would be used to kill a so-called "four-eyed black dog". The legend "the King of Kings, who had done [this action], wins heaven after conquering the earth" appears alongside a yūpa on Samudragupta's coins. According to the Ayodhya Inscription of Dhana, Pushyamitra Shunga did this action twice to (*) legitimise his rule. This action's central subject would be accompanied by four hundred kshatriya warriors who would subjugate any encountered rivals. For 10 points, many ancient Indian kings proved their sovereignty by performing what Vedic ritual, in which an animal was allowed to wander for a year before being sacrificed?

ANSWER: **Ashvamedha** ritual [accept **horse sacrifice** ritual; accept descriptions of a **horse** being allowed to wander for a year and then being **sacrificed**, or equivalent]

7. According to an inscription on it, a structure of uncertain purpose at this location was known as the "Cold Foundation". A trilingual inscription at this location is the only detailed source for the Battle of Barbalissos. One monument at this location includes two short inscriptions, one honouring a bowbearer holding a battle-axe and the other a lancebearer, as well as a larger inscription ending with the command "let this not seem repugnant to you; do not leave the right path; do not rise in rebellion!". In an inscription at this location, Kartir claims to have "struck down" religious minorities. A relief at this location showing a triumphant ruler on horseback commemorates his victory at the Battle of (*) Edessa. This site is home to a cuboidal stepped structure called the Ka'ba-ye Zartosht, and has four cross-shaped tombs. The most famous of this site's Sassanian rock carvings depicts Valerian submitting to Shapur I. For 10 points, name this necropolis of four Achaemenid kings, home to the tomb of Darius the Great.

ANSWER: **Naqsh-e Rostam** [prompt on more specific answers like **Ka'ba-ye Zartosht** or the **Achaemenid necropolis** or the **tomb** of **Darius** or equivalents before read, by asking "within what larger site?"] (The first line is from Kartir's inscription about the Ka'ba-ye Zartosht.)

8. The ancient cultic name of one region in this city translates as "district" or "opening" of a type of tree, belonging to "the secluded land" or "binding of eternity", though its modern name refers to the broken

pottery shards found scattered there. One carving at this city initially reading “he who repulses the nine enemies of Egypt” was recarved as “he who protects Egypt and overthrows the foreign countries” in the 13th century BC. The discovery of the tomb of Senebkay supports the debated existence of a local dynasty based around this city. The only pyramid built at this city was a cenotaph for Ahmose I. The sole source for the names of many Seventh and Eighth Dynasty pharaohs is a (*) list of 76 kings found in a temple of Seti I in this city. The tombs of First Dynasty pharaohs, including that of Narmer, are found in this city at Umm El Qa’ab. This city was initially the cult centre of Khentimentiu, god of the dead, before association with a more famous deity. For 10 points, name this ancient Egyptian city that was the main cult centre of Osiris.
ANSWER: Abydos, Egypt [or Abdju] (The first line refers to Umm El Qa’ab, and the second to a carving at the temple of Seti I.)

9. *Note to players: two similar terms are sometimes used interchangeably for this, so either will be accepted.*
The “gaping wounds” or “ingentia vulnera” (“in-GEN-tia WUL-ne-ra”) inflicted by this specific weapon are described in a letter written by Marcus Cornelius Fronto to Lucius Verus. Valerius Maximus records how the 131 BC consul Publius Crassus died fighting Aristonicus’s forces when he was wounded in the side by a smaller variant of this specific weapon. Tiberius Claudius Maximus was promoted to decurion in association with the death of one leader by a smaller variant of this weapon. One monument dedicated to Mars Ultor provides evidence for the use of the manica to counter this weapon. A region south of where this weapon was most famously used had a similar weapon called the rhomphaia. This was the primary infantry weapon used by the losers at the Battle of (*) Adamclisi, and according to Trajan’s Column, a smaller variant of this weapon was used by Decebalus to commit suicide. For 10 points, name this weapon with a long wooden handle and a curved blade sharpened only on the inside, notably used by the Dacians.
ANSWER: falx [or falces; accept sica or sicae, which refers to the one-handed dagger variant, though the word falx is sometimes used for those as well; extremely generously accept rhomphaia before read, although it’s not particularly accurate to call the sica a smaller variant of the rhomphaia; generously prompt on sickle or scythe or dagger or pole-arm; do not accept or prompt on swords as the falx is different enough from that] (Tiberius Claudius Maximus was promoted after he brought the head of Decebalus back to Trajan. The rhomphaia was used in Thrace.)

10. After this battle, when one leader chastised his cavalry commander for attacking before the signal was given, he pinned the attack on a boy, to which he was told he had acted like a boy and the boy had acted like a good general. At this battle, the commander of a “secret” institution, tasked to report on the Illyrians and Acarnanians, was reportedly bribed to tell his superior to disregard the flanks and rear. A red flag of linen raised by a king was the designated signal for the other wing to attack forces on Euas at this battle. One side at this battle fortified two hills separated by the river Oenous, placing mercenaries on Olympus and Perioikoi on Euas. A charge led by (*) Philopoemen aided an assault on Eucleidas’ position at this battle, which took place after the Battle of Megalopolis. Following the defeated ruler’s flight to Alexandria, the ephorate in Sparta was restored after this battle, a victory for Macedon and the Achaean League. For 10 points, name this 222 BC battle where Antigonus III Doson defeated Cleomenes III.
ANSWER: Battle of Sellasia (The cavalry commander Alexander began assaulting the troops on Euas before the signal was given. The second line refers to Damoteles, commander of the krypteia.)

11. This ruler invited Adalbert of Trier to their domain, who barely escaped after a hostile reception from this ruler’s son. When this ruler’s successor intended to move to a city where they could get silver and horses from Hungary and Bohemia, this ruler supposedly said “You behold me in my weakness. Why do you desire to depart from me?”. This ruler subjugated one city after rebuffing their offers to pay honey and furs as tribute. During a siege faced by this ruler and their grandsons, a youth pretending to search for a horse ventured out to communicate with Pretich. This ruler centralised state rule by establishing trade centres called pogosti. After receiving a request from Prince (*) Mal, this ruler had negotiators carried to them in a boat and buried them alive. In one account, this ruler set Iskorosten on fire with the use of three pigeons and three sparrows. This ruler punished the Drevlians for having killed Igor by dismemberment. For 10 points, name this regent of the Kievan Rus’, the mother of Sviatoslav and grandmother of Vladimir the Great.

ANSWER: **Olga** of Kiev [or **Volīga**, or **Helga**, or **Alge**, or **Elena**, or **Olena**] (The third line refers to the prelude to the burning of Iskorosten.)

12. After this person's death, a newly reconstructed building was supposedly carved with the phrase "a work of mad discord produces a temple of Concord". The Lex Rubria authorised an initially inauspicious venture led by this person, which was later opposed by Minucius Rufus. During one expedition led by this person, the leading standard was supposedly broken into pieces by the wind, and sacrificial victims were scattered by a hurricane. This person served under Lucius Aurelius Orestes during an intentionally prolonged campaign in Sardinia. This person was in charge of the establishment of Colonia Junonia at the site of (*) Carthage. Lucius Opimius performed a ritual purification after this person and many supporters were killed on the Aventine Hill, allegedly having their head filled with molten lead to make it heavier. This person proposed a price-limiting grain law and re-enacted the Lex Agraria passed by their brother. For 10 points, name this reformist Roman statesman, the younger brother of Tiberius.

ANSWER: **Gaius Gracchus** [or **Gaius** Sempronius **Gracchus**; prompt on partial answer] (The second and third clues are about the establishment of Colonia Junonia.)

13. After this battle, one military strategist remarked "even a powerful arrow at the end of its flight cannot penetrate a silk cloth", referring to the exhaustion of the losing side. The commander who lost this battle later claimed to have retreated "only because of the sickness" and that it was "out of all reason" for an opposing general to take credit. Two candidates for this battle's precise location were known as the "Literary" and "Military" [this battle's site]. This battle saw the most famous use of an assault weapon with a name meaning "covered assaulter". An 11th-century poem called the "former ode" on this battle's location equates its location with (*) Huangzhou Hill. At this battle, a ruse of surrender involving mengchong fireships was used by Huang Gai to destroy the opposing fleet, preventing one warlord's efforts to conquer the lands south of the Yangtze River. For 10 points, name this naval battle fought near the end of the Han dynasty, where an alliance of Sun Quan, Liu Bei and Liu Qi defeated Cao Cao ("tsao-tsao").

ANSWER: Battle of **Red Cliffs** [or Battle of **Chibi**; accept equivalent translations for **Red Cliffs**]

14. According to al-Tabari, the defeat of this kingdom in one conflict was due to their opponent's use of the unfamiliar *panjagan*, a technique for firing a volley of five arrows. Some coins from this kingdom featured the motto "may this please the people" on the reverse, later rendered as "may this please the city" in a different language. A fourth-century ruler of this kingdom re-established that language on their coins, inscribed with the motto "by this sign you will conquer", associated with Constantine the Great. Cosmas the Monk mistook an inscription from this kingdom for a continuation of one about Ptolemy III Euergetes. To try and end Christian persecution, (*) Justin I requested that a ruler of this kingdom invade the Himyarite Kingdom, though after the Battle of Hadhramaut, the Sassanids expelled them from Arabia. This kingdom became the first to mint coins with crosses after Saint Frumentius' conversion of its king Ezana. For 10 points, King Kaleb ruled which African kingdom based in modern-day northern Ethiopia?

ANSWER: Kingdom of **Aksum** [or **Aksumite** Empire; generously prompt on **Ethiopia** before read] (The "by this sign/cross you will conquer" coins are those of MHDYS or Mehadeyis. The inscription visited by Cosmas the Monk is the Monumentum Adulitanum.)

15. While constructing a city, this ruler sent a governor a letter requesting 700 bales of straw and 700 bundles of reeds by a certain date, saying "should even one day pass by, you will die". This ruler reviled their predecessor "who did not fear the king of the world, whose hands have brought sacrilege in this city" in an inscription, suggesting a palace coup. In one campaign, this ruler destroyed the Gerdesorah fortress while it was still under construction. After revolting against this ruler, the governor of Hamath, Yahu-Bihdi, was flayed alive. This ruler deported Pisiri, the last king of Aštiruwa ("ash-tiruwa"), and conquered the Kingdom of Carchemish. A new city built by this ruler, now the site of (*) Khorsabad, was abandoned after their death in battle against Tabal, and their disturbed successor moved the capital to Nineveh. This ruler defeated Marduk-apla-iddina II and reconquered Babylon in 710 BC. For 10 points, Sennacherib was the son of which Assyrian king, who shares his name with the founder of the Akkadian Empire?

ANSWER: **Sargon II** [or **Šarru-kīn**; prompt on **Sargon**] (The first line is about the construction of Dur-Sharrukin.)

16. The ZPE 60 inscription found at this location recording a politician's decree has led one action carried out there to be attributed to a statesman known for dropping his shield. Antiphon's defence speech *On the Murder of Herodes* gives the only account of the wrongful execution of holders of an office originally based at this location. Pharnaces II of Phrygia offered residents of this location a home in Atramyttium when they were made to leave it. Chariot races were introduced for the first time at a *panegyris* at this location reinstated after a ritual. The Decree of Cleonymus involved officials of a body (*) named for this location. Dying in this location was prohibited in a ritual purification during the Peloponnesian War. An organisation named for this location involved the *Hellenotamiai* officials. In 454 BC, Pericles relocated a treasury from this location to Athens. For 10 points, name this island, the meeting-place of an Athens-led association of Greek city-states and the mythical birthplace of Apollo and Artemis.

ANSWER: **Delos** [accept **Delian** League] (The Athenian statesman Cleonymus is said to have dropped his shield in battle in 424 BC, leading him to be viewed as a coward.)

17. A large folded piece of cloth from this culture that was 140cm broad, 120cm deep and around 30 metres long was found at a ceremonial site there. One major archaeological site belonging to this culture has a construction called the Room of the Posts, where the presence of huarango posts suggests ancestor worship. Three of the nine phases in this culture's pottery sequence, featuring increasingly realistic subjects, are called the Monumental phases, and are followed by the Transitional phase. One type of structure built by this culture featured vertical access shafts called "eyes" extending underground. Over forty mounds topped with (*) adobe structures are found at this culture's ceremonial centre of Cahuachi. This culture built aqueducts called puquios with corkscrew-shaped entrances, such as the Cantalloc Aqueducts, and it removed reddish-coloured pebbles to create large geoglyphs. For 10 points, the Andean Paracas culture preceded which culture in modern-day Peru, which created namesake "lines" in the desert?

ANSWER: **Nazca** culture [accept **Nazca** lines]

18. *Note to players: original language term required.*

In one account, a leader is told that the first subject of this practice was eventually laid low by "poor and independent men". Directly after describing this practice, one historical account writes of how its practitioners honour other nations less the more distant they are, since they regard themselves as the best of all. In the *Encomium of Demosthenes* attributed to Lucian, Archias believed Demosthenes was doing this action when in fact he was taking poison. According to Herodotus, different forms of this practice indicated different levels of social standing among one group. In an episode where a golden cup was passed around, one court historian (*) refused to perform this practice. Despite its lack of religious character in the Near East, according to Arrian, Callisthenes opposed Alexander the Great's adoption of this practice since he viewed it as fit for a god but not a mortal. For 10 points, give this Greek term for a gesture of supplication, often practiced by the Persians, which may involve prostrating oneself before a respected person.

ANSWER: **proskynesis** [accept word forms] (The first line is from Callisthenes' speech to Alexander in Arrian's *Anabasis*, referring to Cyrus the Great's death fighting the Massagetae, though proskynesis was not unique to the Achaemenids and was practiced earlier in the Assyrian court. The second is from Herodotus.)

19. Gaius Silanus proposed that these events be recorded on a bronze column and a marble column. In one mythological account, these events originated when Valesius prayed for his children to be cured. According to Suetonius, the announcement of one of these events "that no one had ever seen or would ever see again" was met with laughter. After one ruler likely died at the Battle of Misiche, a collection of animals including thirty-two elephants was repurposed for one of these events. At one of these events, Agrippina and Nero received much more (*) applause than Messalina and Britannicus. One of these events coincided with Rome's 1000-year anniversary during Philip the Arab's reign. A hymn sung at these events by twenty-seven boys and girls was written by Horace. Augustus revived these events in 17 BC, though Claudius

held one in 47 AD for Rome's 800th anniversary. For 10 points, name these Roman events celebrated roughly at 110-year intervals, named for marking the interval of longest human lifetime.

ANSWER: **Secular Games** [or **Saecular Games**, or **Ludi Saeculares**; accept **Ludi Tarentini**; prompt on games or equivalent; very generously prompt on anniversaries of the founding of Rome before mention, although that doesn't apply to everything, by asking "what specific events?"]

20. According to an early tenth-century chronicle, a king who ruled from this city seized power by giving his predecessor a sleeping drug and tonsuring him, rendering him unfit to rule, though some sources implicate a bishop named Julian. An early council at this city was assembled by Archbishop Patronus and saw the readmittance of Dictinnius and Symphonius into the church. Two liturgical traditions called Tradition A and Tradition B emerged in a kingdom ruled from this city. In 400, this city's first council condemned Priscillianism. At this city's third council, the term *filioque* was incorporated into the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed for the first time in Western Christianity. (*) Reccared I, who ruled from this city, converted to Catholicism from Arianism, to which his people had been converted by Ulfilas. This city was the capital of an early medieval kingdom previously ruled from Toulouse and Barcelona. For 10 points, name this city in central Spain, the site of eighteen church councils and the longest-serving capital of the Visigothic Kingdom.

ANSWER: **Toledo** (The early tenth-century chronicle is the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* - this refers to Erwig seizing power from Wamba.)