ANCIENT HOUSEHOLD ITEMS AND THEIR CONTEMPORARY COUNTERPARTS

Ever wonder what door locks looked like in ancient times? How about colanders? Well, have no fear, the OI is here—we are spending this week looking at household items in the ancient world! To start off, we have provided a comparison of ancient versus contemporary items, including furniture, beauty products, and more!

**DOOR PLAQUE** This plaque was part of a locking device. A peg driven through the hole would have mounted the plaque to a wall, and a nearby door would have been locked by securing its cord or hook to the peg.

OIM A12417: Limestone; Early Dynastic; Iraq, Khafajah, Sin Temple IX; on display in The Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery

**BRONZE GROOMING KIT** So-called grooming or manicure kits were used commonly throughout the ancient Middle East over millennia. This particular grooming tool kit is made of bronze and includes an ear spoon, file, kohl applicator, and tweezers. Sets such as this one would have been contained in a bronze case.

OIM A17132: Bronze; Akkadian; Iraq, Tell Asmar; on display in The Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery
COLANDER Occasionally bowls are perforated with numerous holes to form “colanders.” This specific form of pottery reveals an interesting detail of construction, namely that the bowl was perforated before the ring base was added, for the center holes are blocked by the base.

OIM A8240: Clay; Isin-Larsa; Iraq, Tell Asmar; not on display

MIRROR Mirrors were associated with Hathor, the goddess of dance, love, music, and fertility. The identification of the figure on this mirror with this goddess is suggested by the emphasized sexuality of her form and the curled hairstyle that is characteristic of Hathor.

OIM E21694: Copper Alloy; New Kingdom, Dynasty 18; Egypt, Qustul, Tomb V 48; on display in The Robert F. Picken Family Nubian Gallery
**BED** The curved side rails of this bed are lashed with leather thongs to the end rails and the feet, which are carved in the shape of bulls’ legs. Leather strips were laced through rectangular holes in the inner sides and bottoms of the rails to provide a woven or lattice-work base to support the sleeper. A wooden bed like this one would have belonged only to a member of the wealthy class.

OIM  E12169: Wood, Leather, Modern Restoration; Early Dynastic, Dynasty 1; Egypt; on display in The Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery

**SPOON** Ivory and bone were ideal media for carving and were common throughout the fourth millennium. Delicate bone spoons, such as this, were also made, presumably for cosmetic use.

OIM  E5920: Ivory; Predynastic; Egypt, el-Amra; not on display

**COSMETIC CONTAINER** This cosmetic container is divided into several compartments. Based on its shape and size, many scholars believe that it contained either cosmetics or expensive foodstuffs, such as spices or condiments.

OIM  A17345: Stone or rock; Iron Age II or Iron Age III; Turkey, Amuq, Tell Judaidah; on display in The Henrietta Herbolsheimer, M.D. Syro-Anatolian Gallery

OIM  A12640 (lid): Stone or rock; Iron Age II or Iron Age III; Turkey, Amuq, Chatal Huyuk; on display in The Henrietta Herbolsheimer, M.D. Syro-Anatolian Gallery