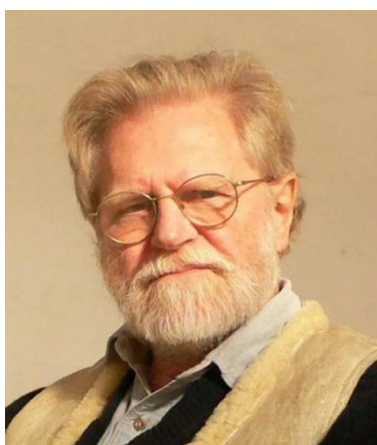




# HOTEP

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## Barry Kemp (1940-2024)



Many of you will already have heard the sad news of the sudden death of Barry Kemp, on Wednesday 15 May, just one day after his 84th birthday. Professor Kemp's name will forever be associated with Amarna and his decades of work there with the EES and lately the Amarna Trust. Southampton Ancient Egypt Society members will know him from the fascinating talks and study days he gave us, both in person and via Zoom. Students of Egyptology will forever bless him for his publications, especially *'Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization'*, which is that rare beast, a readable reference work.

I met Barry in person for the first time in the late 1980s when, as a youngish Adult Education lecturer at the University of Southampton, I was emboldened to approach him to present an Amarna Study Day for our Continuing Education programme. I cringe at the memory of my contribution to that day, as I was suffering from a severe case of nerves brought on by hero worship. But Barry, as you would expect, was all politeness and encouragement. I consider myself

## The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

privileged to be able to say that I once shared a lecture platform with Barry Kemp, a true giant of Egyptology.

Safe journey to the West, Barry, united with the sun's disc forever.

**Hilary Wilson**

### News of the GEM

After years of uncertainty and constantly moving deadlines, the Grand Egyptian Museum is coming closer to opening its doors to tourists. For some while, since they were moved from the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir Square, the closest anyone has been able to get to the Tutankhamun Treasures has been via the temporary Tutankhamun experience at the new Giza complex. Now the promises that all the contents of tomb KV62 will be put on display for the first time are coming closer to fulfilment.



Thanks to Arthur Farrow and Gertie Werner-Baumer for this link:

[https://www.nature.com/immersive/d41586-024-01467-w/index.html?utm\\_source=Live+Audienc&utm\\_campaign=d5b550e473-nature-briefing-daily-20240523&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_b27a691814-d5b550e473-50569308](https://www.nature.com/immersive/d41586-024-01467-w/index.html?utm_source=Live+Audienc&utm_campaign=d5b550e473-nature-briefing-daily-20240523&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b27a691814-d5b550e473-50569308)

## Reviews of Latest Meetings

**Saturday 16 March 2024**

### ***'Silver and the Egyptian economy'***

**by Juan Carlos Moreno García**



Starting with an overview of the principal commodities traded across the Near East during the Early Bronze Age, Juan-Carlos made clear how the economies of the great powers, including Egypt, were dependent on agreed rules of engagement, the recognition of compatible weights and measures, and mutually agreed media of exchange. Metals, particularly copper, were commonly used in economic transactions in ancient Egypt during the third millennium BC. By the Late Bronze Age, the increasing integration of Egypt in the exchange networks of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, Anatolia, the Levant and Mesopotamia, led to the adoption of silver as a regular means of payment, from the beginning of the second millennium BC.

The minimal local sources of silver-bearing ores available to the Egyptians, meant that most of their metallic silver was obtained by means of trade and the exchange of diplomatic gifts between royal houses. Hoards of 'hack silver' – scraps, broken or damaged vessels, small ingots etc which served as 'currency' – have been found in trade centres such as Ebla and in Egypt itself, e.g. the Tod



hoard (above).

Goods and services were valued by a weight of silver, notional or actual. Part of the wealth produced in Egypt was

commercialized, with silver being employed as a means of negotiating prices, fees and charges. Egyptian records mention silver being used not only for the purchase of goods, but also for the payment of taxes, the valuation of commodities in the domestic and export markets, and the investment in land. In Late Bronze Age Egypt, the adoption of this sort of 'silver standard' induced changes in the productive activities of ancient Egypt, although recognisable silver coinage was not introduced until the Late Period into the Graeco-Roman.

Juan-Carlos made the subject of ancient economics both understandable and fascinating. This was a highly enjoyable contribution to our Silver Anniversary celebration.

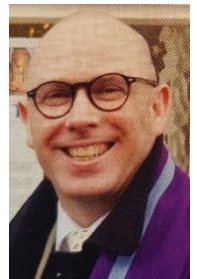
**Saturday 20 April**

### ***'Lost in Time and Space: Unrolling Egypt's Ancient Dead'***

**by John J Johnston**

In a welcome return to SAES, albeit via the medium of Zoom, John J Johnston took us back to the start of the Egyptomania craze at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. He gave us a reminder of how Egypt was opened up by travellers, excavators and dealers, and how the Napoleonic cultural and scientific survey brought Egyptian art and material culture to wider European notice, spawning a further appetite for the collection of Egyptian artefacts.

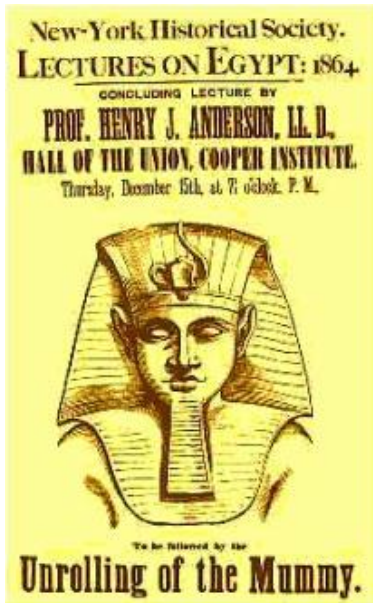
The most sought-after souvenir of wealthy travellers was a real Egyptian mummy, a term which often covered the bandaged body plus its case or coffin. The mummified cadavers themselves were often considered unimportant as art objects, compared with their containers, and consequently were deemed disposable. Uncased mummies and animal bodies were exported from Egypt in staggering quantities, destined for inclusion in medicaments of dubious efficacy, or the





preparation of the art pigment known as 'mummy brown', or to be ploughed into fields as fertiliser.

The entertainment of 'unrolling' or unwrapping an ancient mummy, which became increasingly popular in the salons and lecture theatres of Europe and North



America, (left), is illustrative of the Victorian attitudes towards the treatment of human remains.

The practice has been viewed as both a ghoulish spectacle for affluent sensation seekers and an early scientific approach to the nascent discipline of Egyptology. The mummies chosen for unwrapping in museums were

usually those in a poor state of preservation rendering them liable to loss through decay. However, in most cases the lack of even the briefest description of what such a spectacle might have revealed means that there is little evidence of their having produced information of serious scientific value.



Margaret Murray unwrapping the mummy of Khnum-nakht, Manchester, 1908

With the development of non-invasive techniques, ranging from primitive X-rays to digital imaging, the analysis of mummified remains has now been put on a scientific footing, but the image of Boris

Karloff's mummy, trailing rotten bandages as he wreaked his terrible vengeance, still predominates in the popular imagination, a legacy of that Victorian obsession for unrolling.

Drawing on his interest in all aspects of Egyptomania, John's delivery, as ever, was entertaining and informative. The talk gave us reason to be thankful that conservation and preservation have now become priorities for museum curators. For a discussion on the pros and cons of 'unrolling mummies', you might like to check the link below.

<https://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-technology/egyptian-mummies-unwrap-or-not-unwrap-001703>

**Saturday 18 May**  
**'The Seven Laughs of Neith: Ancient Egyptian Creator Goddesses'**

**by Lucia Gahlin**

Lucia Gahlin is an old friend of SAES and we were happy to see her again presenting her talk on the feminine principal in Ancient Egyptian creation mythology. The cosmogonies of most ancient societies developed



from their observation of nature and the environment. The human need to explain natural phenomena and answer the perennial question of 'where did we come from?' provided explanations understandable within their own cultural and environmental experience, which reduced the fear of the unknown.

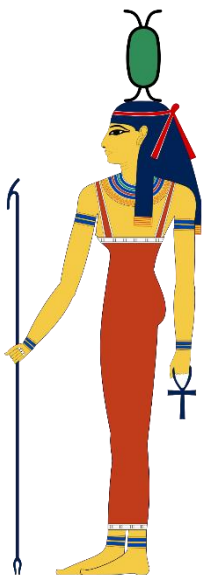
Creation myths were dominated by male deities such as Atum, Ptah, Amun, Khnum, but, as Lucia explained in the first part of her talk, from earliest times goddesses featured in the fundamental creation myths. She showed how the various Daughters of Ra, such as Hathor, Maat and Tefnut, had significant roles within the stories of how the world was created. The emphasis on the primordial flood, the waters from which creation emerged at the beginning of time,

clearly related to the experience of the Nile's annual inundation which was personified as the cow, Mehet Weret, 'the Great Flood'.



The link between these deities and the idea of a nurturing mother-goddess, was emphasised by the use of the cow, and the cow's horns supporting the sun's disc, marked their status in relation to the sun-god. Many goddesses were ascribed significant roles in relation to fertility and procreation, in various local cosmogonies. For example, at Hermopolis, ancient Khmunu, 'the City of the Eight', four pairs of male and female deities were believed to have created the great cosmic egg from which all creation hatched.

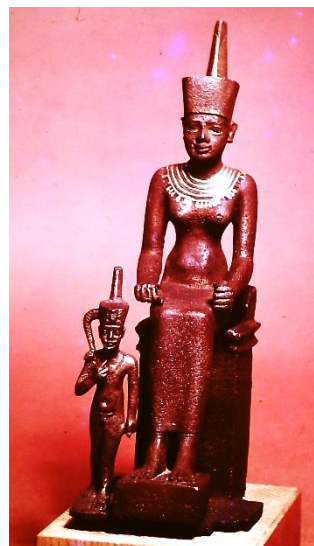
In the Delta centre of Sais, the female principal was Neith, who was believed to have helped Isis protect and nurture the infant Horus. The Red → Crown, which marked her position as a northern deity, was often replaced by two bows (left) and she regularly carried a bow and arrows signifying her protective role. In the funerary context, this is the form in which Neith appears on a sarcophagus or canopic chest, as one of the four protective goddesses. Lucia examined the significance of Neith, from the evidence for her worship as early as the First Dynasty, through her identification with the sky as a celestial cow, to her role as the mother of Sobek which gave her the title 'Mother of Crocodiles'.



One remarkably vivid explanation of the act of creation, reminiscent of the Ptah

myth in which the god speaks his thoughts into existence, describes Neith creating the cosmos by laughing seven times, or speaking seven magic words. The Egyptians' belief in the power of the mouth and the spoken word is evident in their use of double meanings, puns and 'sportive' writings within their literature. The concept of the goddess as the Hand of the God, the vital agent in the first masturbatory act of creation by Atum. The symbolism of the Eye of Ra, a female entity seen as the independent active representative of the sun-god, is emphasised by the use of the eye hieroglyph to convey ideas of 'making' and 'doing'.

Lucia's talk, which ranged through many more connections between creation and the female divine, showed how several vastly different explanations for the origins of the universe could be accepted as equally



Neith as protector of the infant Horus, Ashmolean Museum,

valid, and how different versions were developed or fell out of fashion throughout time. Lucia showed how the idea of the feminine creator is a common thread running through the tangled weave of Egyptian cosmogony, even though there is no single creation myth that covers all aspects of this fascinating subject.

Here is another link which you might find interesting.

<https://thecuriosegyptologist.com/2021/05/14/neith-the-great-mother-and-ruler-of-arrows/>





*ancient wisdom texts written by the Egyptians, without explaining those who wish to listen and what it all means. These ancient texts, which are often left unexplained to a wider audience, are those that tell of the fabulous stories, which were not only designed to teach, but also to entertain its reader. This book, aims to bridge the gap between those who only have a basic appreciation for the ancient Egyptian civilization and those who wish to know more about its actual people, . As many books focus on Egyptian chronologies and royal tombs, this book centres on the adventure tales of popular literature and how they influenced some of our own modern ideals.'*

**Our next Local (face-to-face) meeting** at Itchen College will be on:

**Saturday 6 July**

(1.30 pm for a start at 2pm)

This is the last of our Silver-themed meetings and we are pleased to welcome **Chris Naunton** to talk about **'Egypt's Silver Pharaohs: the royal tombs of Tanis'** As an anniversary gift to ourselves, entry to this meeting will be free but **places are limited so booking in advance is essential**. If you would like to take up one of the few places still available, please contact the Secretary, Annette, on [saesinfo55@gmail.com](mailto:saesinfo55@gmail.com)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: Car parking:**

Building works have closed the Nursery carpark (off Whites Road) which we usually use. On this occasion we have been asked to use the **main College carpark off Middle Road**. Full access details will be circulated nearer the time or are available from Annette. Please be aware that the Whites Road pedestrian entrance may also be obstructed so if you customarily walk or use public transport to reach Itchen College you may have to prepare for a lengthy detour or make other arrangements since pedestrian access will also be from Middle Road. We will let you know as soon as possible when we have definitive information.

**On the Small Screen**



The first part of a two-part documentary **'Mysteries of the Pyramids'** with **Dara O'Briain**, aired on Channel 5 on Monday 20 May. As a self-proclaimed 'science nerd' Dara talks to established Egyptologists, including Chris Naunton and Salima Ikram,



as well as alternative theorists in his attempt to understand and explain the very existence of the Egyptian pyramids. He makes an all-too brief mention of the recent identification of an extinct branch of the Nile flowing past the Giza group and allows a paranormal investigator to dismiss the importance of the Red Sea Scrolls found at Wadi el-Djarf. Though Dara tries to maintain balance between the various factions – such as those who believe in alien influences or Atlantean wisdom – the programme tends to take a rather superficial approach to this time-worn topic.

The programme will be available on catch-up for some while. A trailer can be seen on this Youtube link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPxMupznUKc>

