

MPM

a bulletin on the doings and undoings of
Barbara Mertz/Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels
Issue 44
Winter/Spring 2004
Kristen Whitbread, Editor

The Amelia Peabody Books By Elizabeth Peters

In chronological order:
Crocodile on the Sandbank
Curse of the Pharaohs
The Mummy Case
Lion in the Valley
Deeds of the Disturber
The Last Camel Died at Noon
The Snake, the Crocodile, and the Dog
The Hippopotamus Pool
Seeing a Large Cat
The Ape Who Guards the Balance
The Falcon at the Portal
He Shall Thunder in the Sky
Lord of the Silent
The Golden One
Children of the Storm

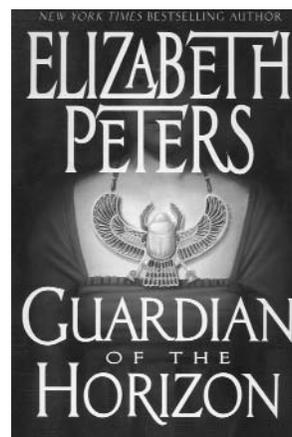
also look for:

mpmbooks.com

MPM: Mertz n Peters n Michaels

The official Barbara Mertz/Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels website

by Margie Knauff & Lisa Speckhardt



PUBLISHING

While April showers bring May flowers, William Morrow Publishers will be concentrating on...

Guardian of the Horizon

April 2004

hardcover

WilliamMorrow

Children of the Storm

April 2004

paperback

Avon Suspense

The Golden One

April 2003

paperback

Avon Suspense

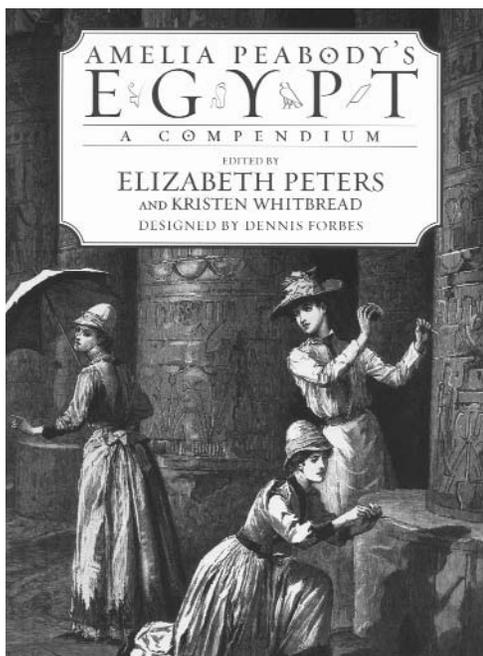
And...in bookstores now: **Amelia Peabody's Egypt, A Compendium**

(Nominated for an Edgar and an Agatha!)

October 2003

hardcover

WilliamMorrow



APPEARANCES of MPM

Borders Books & Music
5533 Urbana Pike
Frederick, MD 21704
Store Phone: 301-624-1577

Wednesday, March 31

7:00pm

Barnes & Noble
4801 Bethesda Ave.
Bethesda, MD 20814
Store Phone: 301-986-1761

Thursday, April 1

7:30pm

interview by Corey Flintoff (of NPR) then signing

Janet Roberts, the program coordinator, writes: Barbara Mertz's interview is part of a 7 week series with the Odyssey Program entitled *Mystery Loves Company: Conversations with Leading Mystery Writers*. Interviews are Tuesday evenings, March 23-May 11, 7-8:30 p.m. (No class April 6). The cost is \$148 for the series. There is a possibility that we may offer single session enrollments later, but at this time it is only available as the complete series. It will take place on the Homewood Campus of Johns Hopkins University (3400 N. Charles St., Baltimore). For more information or to register, prospective students may call (410) 516-4842. Or, they may print out a registration form and view a full course description at www.odyssey.jhu.edu

I feel about airplanes the way I feel about diets. It seems to me that they are wonderful things for other people to go on.

Jean Kerr *The Snake Has All the Lines*

MPM

Another year, another trip to Egypt. I hope you aren't getting bored with them, because I intend to go on at some length. There is always something new to see and do. As before my travelling companions were Dennis Forbes, editor of KMT, and Joel Cole, our artist friend. This time we got on a plane to Luxor straightaway, after the unavoidably horrible ten hour flight from New York to Cairo. There is something to be said for getting the travel part over and done with, and anyhow we had been invited for Thanksgiving Dinner at Chicago House--now a tradition not to be missed. The cooks take pride in producing a splendid feast; the presentation of the turkeys, adorned and decorated, is an essential part of the celebration.



The Turkey Presented by Justifiably Proud Chefs!

years, gradually deteriorating, until Ray and his Chicago House crew raised them onto moisture proof platforms and began sorting them out.

But the high point of the trip, we all agreed, was a brief voyage on an actual hundred-year-old dahabeeyah, the Nefrue. It's owned by Museum Tours's Nancy and Bill Petty, who arranged our whole itinerary. The dahabeeyah isn't as spacious as the Amelia--it was, to be honest, a trifle cramped for five of us--but since we spent most of the time on the upper deck, the charm of the ambiance more than made up for any inconvenience. The other two

Among the new sights we saw in Luxor were the recent work at Karnak in the Open Air Museum. The lovely Chapelle Rouge of Hatshepsut has been reconstructed, and work has begun on the portico of the temple of Thutmose IV. We were also treated to a tour of the blockyard at Luxor Temple, by the mudir of Chicago House, Ray Johnson. Thousands of these decorated blocks, which came from various structures at Luxor, had been lying about on the damp ground for



Ray Johnson points out the Blockyard to Joel Cole



The Nefrue

photo by Ray Johnson

who joined us were Ray Johnson, whom we seduced from his duties, and Mohamud Anwar, the charming boat manager who works for Museum Tours. He was excellent company, and invaluable in making on shore arrangements and, at one exciting moment, fending off an outraged local boatman who had taken us ashore at one of the sites. We never did find out what he was mad about. Mohamud would only say, "No problem." But for a little while it looked as if we were going to be boarded, and our entire loyal crew crowded to the rail shouting back at the boatman and his gang. It was great fun--just the sort of thing Amelia might have run into. And I must say the food was up to her exacting standards. Our chef, Mamdouh, had worked at a number of fine restaurants. How he produced three course gourmet meals on his small single stove I cannot imagine.

We stopped at a couple of sites, including Gebel Silsileh, the ancient sandstone quarries. Dennis had been there, but Joel and I hadn't. It was quite a hike, and I trust none of my companions will be rude enough to mention the number of times I had to stop and sit on a rock, panting, while they forged ahead. (At least I worked off some of Mamdouh's food.) After lunch we took a local boat across to the west bank, where there is a series of rock-cut chapels, including the fascinating little temple of Harmhab. Luckily for my amour propre, our reis was anxious to get underway, so I didn't have to walk as far as I had expected. This was where we ran into a spot of difficulty with the boatman who had taken us across the river. He wasn't ready to leave when we were-- apparently he had gone off to collect a few friends to share the ride--and Mohammed's lecture may have instigated the attempted highjacking. (It wasn't really; just a lot of yelling back and forth.)



Gebel Silsileh - West Bank Funerary Niches

After staying overnight at Kom Ombo, we caught a bus next day for the trip back to Luxor, making one stop at a site none of us had visited--the ruins of the temples of Tod. While in Luxor we also went to Medinet Habu, Deir el Bahri, the Luxor Museum, and Karnak again--and again. Dennis loves Karnak. By mid afternoon my favorite part of the temple is the "Pepsi Palace," a little open air cafe that sells cold drinks. Another day we were honored by an invitation to lunch from Mamdouh, our chef, at his family home. I have never seen so much food. Dish after dish was placed on the table, which had been set up on the roof of the house, where there was a lovely breeze and a pretty view across the fields. Fortunately the family is large--brothers, cousins, wives and children--so we felt sure the leftovers wouldn't go to waste. As an obvious grandma, I got to hold one of the chub-

Dennis and Reis Sayyid - Sunset on the Nefrue





The House that Mahmoud Built...

by babies. They were all so friendly and welcoming, and it was fascinating to see the family, their home, and their little farm. The animals included a baby donkey, several sheep, geese, and an enchanting gosling, who had his own cage because he kept wandering around under people's feet. I got to hold him too.

After much enjoyable socializing with friends, and a long visit with the Chicago House cats, we

headed back to Cairo. Comfortably ensconced at the Nile Hilton, we were able to visit the museum as often as we liked, since it is only a short walk away and--an important consideration in Cairo!--there are no major streets to cross. The museum never palls; but the most fascinating part this time was a visit to the newly refurbished Animal Mummies room, conducted by Dr. Salima Ikram, who was responsible for conserving, x-raying, and re-arranging the specimens. Salima is also my shopping advisor, companion, and bad influence. We hit all my favorite shops in Cairo. I bought some stuff. The most outrageous was undoubtedly a red silk gown (I think it's called a thawb), heavily embroidered with gold, which had belonged to a Saudi princess. "What would I do with it?" I demanded of Salima, who was modelling it for me. "Have it," she replied. The perfect answer.



...the Gosling that Barbara Held that Lived in the Yard of the House that Mahmoud Built...

photo by Dennis Forbes

I made one side trip with the boys, to the Fayum--another first for us all--where we added two more pyramids to our collection. They are Twelfth Dynasty, and pretty banged up, but a pyramid is a pyramid, as Amelia would say. Dennis and Joel went off to Alexandria another day; I cancelled out, since I was beginning to fade. We had been there for almost three weeks, and by Sunday morning we were all ready to go home, though we had had a wonderful time. Up to this trip we had lucked out on travelling weather, but when we landed in New York it was snowing, sleet and raining; we had to sit on the runway for an hour till they cleared it. Kristen the invaluable had already warned me about the forecast, and had made a hotel reservation in NY, in case my driver wasn't able to get me home that night. The nice man said he was willing to risk it, so off we went, four hours from NYC to Frederick. "No

problem" except in my driveway! It took Dennis and Joel hours to get back to North Carolina, what with delayed connecting flights and a nasty drive through the snow. That was the most dangerous part of the entire trip. As always, we felt welcomed and safe in Egypt.



Welcomed and Safe in Egypt - And stuffed!

photo by Dennis Forbes

Barbara

A good message will always find a messenger.

Amelia Barr, *All the Days of My Life*

In newsletter #43, we printed Alice Goepfert's query: Where can I send contributions for excavations as you mentioned in your last newsletter? I would love to help in new discoveries and in the preservation of ancient Egypt!

I repeat our previous suggestions and add a distinguished member (thanks to a reminder from Edna Eglinton) to the list:

Friends of the Colossi of Memnon
Etude de Maitre Nicolas Gagnebin
2 Rue Saint Laurent
1207 Geneva
SWITZERLAND

The Amarna Research Foundation
16082 East Loyala Place
Aurora CO 80013

Dr. Salima Ikram
Director of The Animal Mummy Project
(See the article in the March/April issue of *Archaeology* about her work.)
Please send your queries to her c/o MPM's PO box, and we will forward them.

The Egypt Exploration Society
3 Doughty Mews
London WC1N 2PG
UK

Please send an inquiry prior to sending money to any of the organizations listed above and ask for the details of their ongoing projects (they usually fund more than one project, and you may wish to earmark your funds).

FYI: A webcast of MPM's talk at the Library of Congress from November '03 can be found on the Library of Congress Website: <http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/> (scroll down a bit to see the link to the webcast), in addition Margie and Lisa have created a link to it on the MPMBooks.com website.

This is my letter to the World/That never write to Me.

Emily Dickinson

KDW

There are recipes like fine poetry - deceptively simple in their ingredients, their results evoke complexities of palate which offer the appetite sustenance and pleasure and a glimpse of the soul which created them. Their results are universal such that children will devour them the way they would devour the rhythm of a poem, while adults, who know better, will savor them and try to understand them.

A recipe near and dear to my heart, and one that is well over 150 years old, is one of these languages of a soul. It came to me from my mother, who got it from her mother, who got it from her mother, who got it from her mother. Beyond that, we have lost track.

When I first considered sharing this cookie recipe with you, I admit that I felt a qualm about imparting something that has become an intimate link between the generations of women in my family. At the end of the day in December or January, with the fire in the woodstove built up, I will sit down with one or two of these cookies (to start with, in any case) and a cup of tea, and reflect upon the chord which connects us from this one recipe, how, despite our differences, each of the generations of women in my family must have followed variations on this small path. Perhaps they measured with the scoop of their hand - a knowledge of the heft of a pound of flour and a pound of sugar that my measuring cups have made obsolete, and perhaps with no refrigerator they chilled the dough in a cool root cellar, or a pantry or windowsill. But this cookie dictates certain behaviors, and so they would have waited for cold weather and low humidity, they would have given it a light bed of flour and a light hand in the rolling, they would have rolled it out thin enough to allow the butter to separate and crisp the layers, they would have kept it for special occasions given that the sugar in their case, and the butter in mine, is rich on the wallet and the hips, they would have taken pleasure in the expression on friends' faces when they bit into one of these cookies.

I have always regarded those who covet recipes as selfish and absurd, and while, in my hesitation, I understood that urge for a moment, I also understood what I've always known: that this small piece of my family's history is not exclusive (for surely my family never held this recipe alone), that sharing it does not destroy the intimacy of the link with my family, it only offers others the chance to include it in their own traditions, and that each new hand can keep the shared history of our past alive with something so simple as a cherished recipe.

SandTarts

1lb of sugar (2 cups)

1lb of butter (2 cups or 4 sticks)

1lb of flour (4 cups)

1 egg yolk (reserve white)

(optional 1-2 tsp. vanilla - added to the recipe by my mother)

Cream sugar and butter with your hands or a wooden spoon. Add flour, yolk and vanilla and stir until mixed. Wrap and chill dough at least 12 hours in the fridge (if you don't get to it for a week or two...or three, makes no difference - you can also freeze this dough). Roll out 1/4 of the dough (keeping the rest cool) upon a light bed of flour (more flour is better than less given the amount of butter in the recipe) to about 1/8" thickness or less. Cut into shapes, brush with egg white which has been whisked with a bit of water (or just with water if you had to throw out your egg white because your dough sat too long in the fridge), sprinkle lightly with colored sugar, and bake at 350 for about 8 -10 minutes. When they just start to brown on the edge take them out of the oven, let them sit about 30 sec. or so (not too long) on the pan and remove them to cool.