

MPM

a bulletin on the doings and undoings of
Barbara Mertz/Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels
Issue 39
Spring 2002
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

also look for:

mpmbooks.com

MPM: Mertz ● Peters ● Michaels

The official Barbara Mertz/Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels website

by Margie Knauff & Lisa Speckhardt

APPEARANCES

Saturday, May 4 C. Burr Artz Central Library
Frederick, MD
Grand Opening

1pm talk, discussion, and booksigning
If you are interested in attending, please
contact the library (301-694-1630, ext. 8)
regarding availability, **tickets must be
picked up in person by April 19,
no reservations or holding tickets**

PUBLISHING

THE GOLDEN ONE	April 2002	Hardcover	Avon Mystery
Lord of the Silent	April 2002	paperback	Avon Mystery

other Elizabeth Peters paperbacks recently (or soon to be) released by Avon Mystery:

The Jackal's Head	June 2002
The Night of Four Hundred Rabbits	March 2002
Die for Love	January 2002

The Copenhagen Connection

Devil May Care

The Dead Sea Cipher

The Love Talker

Summer of the Dragon

Camelot Caper

Deeds of the Disturber

Ape Who Guards the Balance

Barbara Michaels paperback released by Harper Torch:

Smoke and Mirrors February 2002



As some day it may happen that a victim must be found, I've got a little list, I've got a little list....And that singular anomaly, the lady novelist, I'm sure she'd not be miss'd! He's got her on his list...

Gilbert and Sullivan *The Mikado* "I've Got a Little List"

MPM

By now THE GOLDEN ONE is out and, I trust, on all your bookshelves. I look forward to receiving

your comments. By the time you receive this, I probably will have seen some of you at various signings and speaking engagements. That is always a pleasure.

One of the reasons why we are a little late with this newsletter is because we have been working hard on the Amelia Compendium (“we” is mostly Kristen, but never mind that). We’ve been talking about it for years, and now it is finally nearing completion. We have enlisted the assistance of Dennis Forbes, editor of my favorite publication KMT, to do the layouts and contribute his vast knowledge of Egyptology, and I am absolutely thrilled by the illustrations he has supplied. It’s going to be a gorgeous book. I can say that without conceit since Dennis and Kristen are doing all the work. To whet your interest we are including a copy of the cover and a brief overview. We’ll let you know, via the newsletter and the website, when it will be available.

A few other matters have occupied our time and attention. I’m working on the next Amelia and revising the two non-fiction books, Temples Tombs and Hieroglyphs and Red Land Black Land. Kristen is doing everything else, and I do mean everything. All work and no play is bad for me, so I’ve seen “Lord of the Rings” three times and “Harry Potter” twice. The garden is blooming--daffodils and my weeping cherry, with much more to come. The pond is full of frogs, to the delight of my grandchildren. (I sympathize with but do not share their passion for catching frogs. The frogs don’t much like it, either.) We are still under a drought warning, though we’ve had more rain lately. So pray for rain, for us, if not for you; a lot of wells have run dry in these parts and I’ve got my fingers crossed about mine.

That’s about it for now. A happy spring to all of you. And pray even harder for peace in the Middle East.



THE COMPENDIUM! (“At last!” sighs
MPM.)...watch this space for more details...

Announcing the imminent publication of the long-awaited, authoritative and extremely entertaining compendium to the journals of Amelia Peabody Emerson:

Amelia Peabody’s Egypt

As her dedicated Readers know, Mrs. Emerson’s journals covered the most remarkable period of Egyptian archaeology, from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. They offer fascinating insights into the great discoveries, the great personalities and the important events of her time.

The Compendium will offer the following:

Contemporary photographs and engravings of places and persons mentioned in the journals, many published here for the first time;

Articles by experts on various historical and technical subjects, including:

Islam, the British in Egypt, and the History of Egyptian archaeology, among numerous other topics;

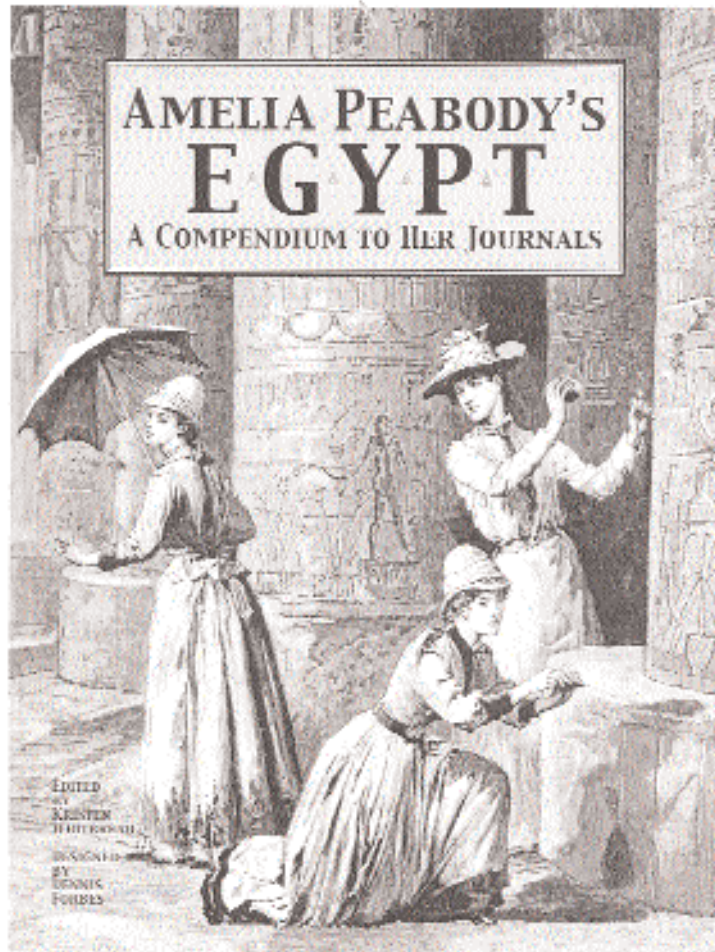
Biographical sketches of the persons who appear in the journals;

Precise renderings of the Emersons’ apparel

AND

**A recently discovered fragment from the notebooks of Prof. Emerson,
dated 1885!**

An indispensable guide to Victorian Egypt and Egyptology which no one interested in Mrs. Emerson’s journals or this period should be without!



And every one will say, as you walk your mystic way, "If this young man expresses himself in terms too deep for me, why what a very singu-

larly deep young man this deep young man must be!"

Gilbert and Sullivan *Patience* "If You're Anxious for to Shine"

Anonymous: Did you ever explain the significance of Emerson's wedding gift to Amelia?...

In comparing Crocodile and Snake, the scenes with the most parallels have to be the ones in which Emerson finds himself in an enclosed space, armed with a firearm that is not his and contains only one bullet, facing a snake he must kill in order to save Amelia's life. But did you really plan it so that neither man supplying the weapon is using his original given name, and his current name contains two syllables and ends in "S" - and it doesn't matter which name Sethos is using at the moment?

Driving on the freeway one day, I noticed that the car in front of me had a license plate reading DAMIFINO. I didn't have to wonder why it made me think of you!

MPM Frankly, the scarab didn't have any particular significance - except that only Emerson would consider it an appropriate betrothal gift and only Amelia would prefer it to precious stones.

Most of the parallels between Crocodile and Snake were planned, but not the two-syllable names. I'm not *that* ingenious.

Joan DeFato: Lately I've been listening to the Peabody tapes and have come to like them very much. Before I started, a German friend told

me that...Amelia's voice was entirely wrong. When I listened to the first tape, I was a little in agreement with her.... Luckily, I persisted in listening to the succeeding tapes and really do admire how Barbara Rosenblat can establish and maintain so many characters. When she is Emerson, Ramses, Abdullah or David, I even forget that the reader is a woman.

...I try to read the books while listening...it explains some odd things that I hear....Ramses's handwriting was compared to demonic Egyptian writing and the tape really does have demonic for demotic.... Importunate became important, the dinghy was sometimes a boat, "Is it so?" once became "Is that so?"...other changes, deletions and reversals of word order...crept in.

Are typos ever corrected in later reprintings?... One thing that surprised me in Crocodile on the Sandbank was that two typos were not corrected before recording although they made for a greater change in meaning than most.... Just minor distractions in an otherwise enjoyable experience.

MPM I agree with you, not your friend, about Barbara's readings. To me she is the perfect Amelia - and Emerson, Ramses and all the rest. The woman is a genius. As for typos, they drive me crazy too, but until recently I was not given the opportunity to proofread the galleys for paperback editions. (That still holds true for reprints by Warner Books - complain to them; I'd appreciate the support.) Nonetheless, depending on the year the book was taped, the reader may not have had the benefit of a corrected paperback edition. The reader is instructed to reproduce the text exactly, typos and all!

Jennifer Lyons: I was thinking that you could do a miniseries (instead of movies) of the Amelia Peabody series.... I believe that this would be the only way to do justice to the books, an epic miniseries that would not leave anything out! Also, it would be wonderful if Lego conspired with you to make little Lego Amelia, Emerson, Ramses, Nefret, David, Sethos, Gargary, EVERYONE! And, of course, a pyramid with lots of tunnels for Lego Amelia to clamber around in.

MPM I think a miniseries would be fun too, but unfortunately nobody has approached my agent wanting to make one! I would have to think twice about it in any case; I've seen too many books messed up by film makers.

The Lego would be great. I've just finished all the Harry Potter Legos and loved doing them. Unfortunately, I am not *quite* as popular as Harry P.

Jennifer Lyons: I watched a show about Egypt the other night on The Learning Channel and I was almost surprised that they did not mention Radcliffe Emerson! The show on Nefertiti mentioned some intriguing ideas about her, the heretic king, and Tutankhamon....

MPM I'm sure you take all films about Egypt with a grain of salt, even those on the Learning and History channels. There were a number of unsubstantiated theories and just plain nonsense on that Nefertiti program. Several of my friends are associated with the project to finish clearing the area near Tutankhamon's tomb - I watched them digging year before last. I wish them well, though I'm not optimistic about their chances of finding a tomb. But one never knows!

Leah McDaniel: If I may be so bold to suggest a potential plot for you to use in the future, I would like to see some of Nefret's Lost

Oasis buddies come looking for her, maybe try to take her back and make her queen or something.

MPM I'd love to do another Lost Oasis book some day, but it may be a "missing years" episode at the rate I'm going.

Barbara Armistead: The March/April edition of *Archaeology* magazine... [has an article] entitled "Who's in Tomb 55?".... [In it] is a photograph of Theodore Davis, flanked by Ned Ayrton and Arthur Weigall and his wife. I was overjoyed to see Davis, attired in his gentleman archaeologist costume, whiskers at their flourishing best, posing in front of 'his' tomb. Weigall has his hands in his jacket pockets (probably so you can't see the clenched fists?) and Mrs Weigall is prim and proper in a long sleeved white dress.... Ayrton seems to be modestly pleased with himself, as well he should be. The article, its companion sidebar about the possible genealogy of the descendants of Tuya and Yuya and the article about the anatomy of the mummy, are also interesting. I'm impressed by the fact that no one is coming out with firm announcements about the identity of the mummy. Too often each new fact is grabbed with glee as confirming someone's pet theory. And don't archaeologists love to argue? I've heard some most interesting 'discussions' among Mesoamerican specialists.... I'm no professional...but even I can recognize a hobby horse when ridden that hard!

MPM I can't resist commenting on the *Archaeology* article, since it is on a subject of great interest to me (as you noticed in The Ape!) That photo is famous in Egyptological circles. The only useful part of the article is the excellent "autopsy" report by Dr. Filer. It confirms every other reliable examination made over the past 90 years - I cannot imagine how some scholars continue to stick to their preconceptions in view of the fact that the remains are undeniably those of a man too young to have been Akhenaton. But as you say, archaeologists love to argue. I declared 40 years ago (in Temples, Tombs and Heiroglyphs) that the bones were those of Smenkhare and I still think so!

Barbara Armistead: About kerkedah I do have some degree of puzzlement. In Panama, during the Christmas season, the markets offer bags of deep red blossom-like bracts of a plant they call sorrel. One old cookbook says the plant is a form of hibiscus, and the bracts are steeped with water and ginger root to make a wonderfully deep red drink. I am guessing that this is the same plant, and I would love to be able to trace the path it took from the Nile valley to Panama. I've seen the dried "blossoms" in stores in the American Southwest, under the name of Jamaica Flower. The route this suggests is a trail from Africa to the West Indies with the slave trade and thence to Panama with the West Indian laborers on the Canal. However it got there, it's firmly established now and regarded as a Christmas tradition.

MPM Thanks for the kerkedah data. I've never run into "sorrel," but your theory certainly sounds plausible. Does anyone else have an idea about sorrel and hibiscus?

Now to the banquet we press, Now for the eggs and the ham!... The eggs and the ham and the strawberry jam, the rollicking bun and the gay Sally Lunn!... The strawberry, strawberry jam...Oh! the rollicking, rollicking bun!

KDW

I've done it again. I've volunteered. By now I should not only know better, I should be wrestled to the ground and stuffed in a burlap sack when attempting to come into the proximity of my son's school...by my family that is. So, actually it's their fault for not protecting me from myself. The school officials, on the other hand, always seem so pleased to see me; after all, how many people would agree to cater a luncheon for a "Grand Opening" of a building BEFORE they knew the number of invitations being dispatched? Those few of you who are raising your hands out there know who you are - and you know this isn't the first thing you've volunteered to do, in addition to the multitude of other jobs and responsibilities you must perform. I can only ask - "What is wrong with you, for crying out loud? Get a hold of yourself before you strike again; if not for your sake, do it for the children!" Now, where was I? Oh, yes, the luncheon for 20 to 150 people - this would be the school's current estimate of attendance for a luncheon being held one week from now. You're probably thinking, "What? That's nuts!" However, while for some this might cause a bit of consternation when planning the menu, thanks to the foresight of Dr. Donald Ryan, my problems are solved.

Baked Camel (courtesy of Dr. Ryan)

Serving Size: Serves 50-200 / Preparation Time: 48 hrs.

Ingredients:

1 lg. Camel
2 lg. Sheep
4 lg. Turkeys
20 lg. Carp
200 md. Gull eggs
400 lg. Dates
Banana Leaves

Preparation:

Cook the eggs and peel them. Remove scales from carp. Fill the carp with the dates and eggs. Fill the turkeys with the carp. Fill the Sheep with the turkeys. Fill the camel with the sheep. Dig a large pit, fill with about 500 kilos of charcoal and light them. Wrap the camel in banana leaves and place in pit. Cover with earth and bake for two days. Serve with rice.

See? No cause for concern. By the way, has anyone out there got a camel they'd be willing to donate? I'll need it Fedex. Thanks.