

Newsletter

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

Editors: Peter Robinson, Lyn Green



Winter 2014 #1

S.S.E.A
PO Box 19004 Walmer
360A Bloor St W
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 3C9
CANADA

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From our new Editor

Welcome to the Winter/Spring edition of the SSEA newsletter and the first edition where I take over the reins of editing. Having been the Editorial Assistant for the Summer 2014 newsletter, I did take on this role with some trepidation, as I know how hard it can be to set up the newsletter on a regular basis, but I hope that the outward appearance and quality of the newsletter continues to remain the same high standard that it has been these past years for the foreseeable future. I have been a member of the SSEA since 2004, and so have had chance to look through some of the previous newsletters I have received since then. Over the years, the newsletter has grown from just four pages, to one that contains 12 or even on the odd occasion 16 pages. Of course, all this comes at a price and with the costs of printing and postage going up all the time, it can be hard to squeeze all the items into the size of the newsletter, yet keep it legible and interesting and something that all our members wish to read. I hope, therefore, that every inch of space, has been well-used.

I wish to thank the previous editors of the newsletter on behalf of the readership, especially Melissa Campbell. Lyn Green, our national President, is continuing to help with some of the editorial work, and so members might see her

Editor Contact details:

Peter Robinson : newsletter@thessea.org
or directly on :
peter@robinsonp15.freemove.co.uk

name popping up in a few places over the coming editions.

The function of a society's newsletter such as this is to contain news and items of general interest to our members, as well as reports from our society's projects and Annual conference, and I hope this can continue whilst I am editor. Of course, in the past the SSEA's newsletter has contained regular Chapter reports and various articles produced by members and academics who have spoken at the annual symposia, and I look forward to continuing to include these in future editions.

In this particular newsletter, we have a brief resumé of the 2014 Scholars' Colloquium and the 40th Annual Symposium, 'Ages of Chaos', held in Toronto last November. The Symposium weekend always includes the national society's Annual General Meeting, and as is often the case at such meetings, there have been a number of changes in the Board. There is also an article by one of our members who must rank as one of furthest travelled regular attendees at

our annual conference weekends, Juan Jose Castillos, of the Uruguayan Institute of Egyptology.

Finally, I wish to take this moment to personally thank all those from the Board and Chapter Executives of last year who worked tirelessly to maintain the smooth running of the society, both at National and at Chapter

level. In addition, I wish to thank all those, who for whatever reason, have now left the Board, and also to welcome the new Board members on behalf of the membership and hope that they will add as valuable a contribution to the society as the outgoing trustees did. And with that, all that remains is for me to wish all of our members happy reading!

40th Annual SSEA/SÉÉA Symposium

AGES OF CHAOS

Demystifying Ancient Egypt's Intermediate Periods

Ages of Chaos? Demystifying Ancient Egypt's Intermediate Periods, the SSEA's 40th Annual Symposium was held on November 15th 2014 on the campus of the University of Toronto. The first speaker of the day, Prof. Ronald J. Leprohon of University of Toronto, set the scene for the audience with a presentation on *History, Text and First Intermediate Period Egypt*. He was followed by Elisa Priglinger of the Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology, Austrian Academy of Sciences, giving the first of two presentations: *Archaeology of the First Intermediate Period and our knowledge of Egyptian Society at that time*. Our impressive lineup continued with Dr. Julien Siesse, Université Paris-Sorbonne, whose talk, *The Study of Throne Names as a Clue for the Internal Chronology of the 13th to 17th Dynasties*, was a great introduction to the report by Prof. Josef Wegner of the University of Pennsylvania on his discovery at Abydos of a new king from the end of 13th Dynasty.

The generosity of Prof. Robert K. Ritner of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, also allowed to hear two presentations. The first of these, *The Tempest Stela and the Second Intermediate Period*, served to introduce this era of Egyptian history. Elisa Priglinger further explored it in her second presentation "*Hyksos Archaeology and Tell ed-Daba in the Second Intermediate Period*".

Prof. Ritner's second presentation, *History and Text in the Third Intermediate Period*, gave us the benefit of his expertise on this era, while Dr. William Cooney (Library and Archives Canada) offered a contrasting view of the Libyan kings in *Ethnic Identity and Archaeology of the Third Intermediate Period*.

On behalf of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities/Société pour l'Étude de l'Égypte Ancienne, the Symposium Committee would like to express their thanks to the speakers, and to the various volunteers who helped out in creating the website, abstract booklet and during the day with a/v and other needs, and the members who came out to support us – especially those who came hundreds, or even thousands of kilometres.



Scholars' Colloquium

Friday November 14th -
Sunday November 16th 2014

Following on from 2013's annual Symposium and Scholars' Colloquium, which took place on a snowy January 2014 weekend, the 40th annual Symposium returned to the more usual balmy climes of mid-November, with the weekend's sessions being held at one of the University of

Toronto's lecture auditoriums in 5 Bancroft Avenue, Toronto, between Friday November 14th and Sunday November 16th 2014. The theme of Saturday's Symposium was that of 'Ages of Chaos: Demystifying Ancient Egypt's Intermediate Periods'. With scholars attending from Canada, the United States of

America, Europe and Egypt, the three days of the weekend were packed with the usual mix of informative papers, talks and presentations on language and literature, archaeology and object studies, based on the scholars' work and recent researches. In addition, like last year, there were a number of posters on display in the venue foyer over the conference weekend, and they attracted much scholarly attention from those present.

The papers presented on Friday were: *Some further thoughts on Demotic Literature and the Greek Novel* (Dr. Jackie Jay, Eastern Kentucky University); *The Goddess Bastet: a possible witness of ideological transformations during the first millennium BC* (Perrine Poiron, Sorbonne-Paris IV/Université du Québec à Montréal); *The Function and Structure of the dmd(y)t 'Myth'* (Dr. Kelly-Anne Diamond, Villanova University); *Death of a Poor Man: how the 'poor' prepared for burial in the Roman Fayoum* (Prof. Kerry Muhlestein, Brigham Young University). Returning for the afternoon sessions, the papers were: *Book of the Dead 180 in Ramesside Queens' Tombs* (Dr. Heather Lee McCarthy, NYU Epigraphical Expedition to the Ramesses II Temple at Abydos); *The Journey to the Afterlife continues: Some preliminary thoughts on the case of Later New Kingdom Royal tombs* (Peter Robinson, Poynton Egypt Group/SSEA-SÉÉA); *A Rationale of Osirian Symbolism in the Coffin Texts* (Dr. V. Tobin, Emeritus St. Mary's University). The final session of the day concentrated on topics relating to Coptic Egypt: *Monastic taxonomies: the four senses of the 'wanderer'* (Dr.

Marc Malevez, Université de Bruxelles); *'His soul was calm' An exploration of the ancient Egyptian ideal of the silent man in the context of early Egyptian monasticism* (Ihab Khalil); *The Coptic Monastery at the First Pylon of Karnak Temple: a Case Study of the Contested Space Theory in Late Antique Egypt* (Emad Ghaly, Fayoum University in Egypt/UCLA: winner of the Steven J. Larkman Travel Award).

On Sunday, November 16th, the audience heard presentations on the following topics: *The Surge of Prices under Ptolemies IV and V* (Richard Hazzard); *Tradition, Innovation and Gender in the Third Intermediate and Late Periods* (Dr. Jean Li, Ryerson University); *Positional Markers: Defining an Equivocal Concept* (Dr. Jean Revez, Université du Québec à Montréal); *The Reason for Sinuhe's Flight* (Dr. Steven B. Shubert); *New visitors' graffiti in the tomb of Merenptah* (Edwin C. Brock, The Merneptah Sarcophagi Restoration Project); *'In your Name of Sarcophagus' - the name as personality trait?* (Dr. Jennifer Hellum, University of Auckland); *The Location of Richer and/or Larger Subadult Graves in Egyptian Predynastic Cemeteries* (Dr. J.J. Castillos, Uruguayan Institute of Egyptology); *A curious Coffin from Kentucky* (Gayle Gibson, Royal Ontario Museum).

November 2014 Poster Session

Although this session of posters was smaller than our inaugural one (and plagued by a few delivery problems), it also featured poster presentations from around the world. Bethany Jensen, Polly Knight and Keri Erdmann Rowe of Brigham Young University created a poster called *Unwrapped: Preserving Textiles from Fag el-Gamous*. Venice Ibrahim Shehatta, senior conservator/ conservation scientist, Conservation department, Coptic Museum, Cairo, Egypt sent a poster entitled *Ibis Birds, And their Mummies in ancient Egypt & An Example of their conservation*. The poster of Elena Panaite, of Montpellier III Université in France was called *To raise one's index towards the king, is it a Libyan-related gesture?* Dr. Maria Nilsson of Lund University sent a poster about her project, *Gebel el Silsila - an introduction to the site, its challenges, archaeology and management*. Unfortunately, the courier company charged with delivery incorrectly delivered the poster, and so the physical poster was not there, although a pdf of the poster will be uploaded to one of the SSEA/SÉÉA websites. Abstracts of the

posters are available on the old SSEA/SÉÉA website (www.thessea.org/files/2014_colloquium_abstract_booklet.pdf) or at academia.edu: https://www.academia.edu/9824729/Abstracts_for_the_November_2014_Scholars_Colloquium

There were also organizational poster presentations by the Canadian Institute in Egypt (presented by Aliza Fatima and Antoine Hirsch), the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies and St. Mark's Museum. Short presentations for the posters were made on Sunday morning, and the SSEA would particularly like to thank Ihab Khalil for chairing this session, and Kerry Muhlestein for his help with the production of a few of the posters.

We hope that this fall's poster session will continue to attract posters and presentations from projects and organizations around the world. If you are interested in presenting a poster at the 2015 AGM Weekend, please email scholarscoll@thessea.org or info@thessea.org

Annual General Meeting of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities / La Société Pour L'Étude De Égypte Ancienne

On the evening of November 14th, members of the society met in Room 323 of the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies of the University of Toronto's building at 4 Bancroft Avenue, for our annual general meeting. We would like to thank our SSEA volunteers and especially our hospitality co-ordinator/treasurer, Arlette Londes and her husband Jean, for making the evening so enjoyable.

After the approval of the Agenda, and the minutes of the previous AGM, held in January 2014, our President, Lyn Green offered an address to the membership about the work of the National Office and the society over the previous year.

As is usual for the AGM, a number of awards were given out. The Steven Larkman Memorial Travel grant was awarded to Emad Ghaly of the Fayoum University in Egypt and UCLA, and Professor Eugene Cruz-Urbe announced the recipient of the Missy Eldredge Scholarship was Carla Mesa-Guzzo of the University of Toronto.

Mark Trumpour, gave a run-through of the society's audited financial accounts, where the costs of the journal production were discussed.

There then followed the various chapter reports given by the chapter presidents, and reports by the various committees.

A number of members of the board chose not to stand for re-election this time for various reasons. This resulted in the election of some new board members, and the re-assignment of some established board members to new positions. Dr Kerry Muhlenstein of Brigham Young University was elected to the board, along with Dr Edmund Meltzer, Cloé Caron of Université du Québec à Montréal and Don Hall.

Amendments to the Bylaws were voted upon and accepted by the membership.

The AGM then adjourned and members were then invited to enjoy the usual post-AGM buffet reception laid on by Arlette and Jean.

Thank you to our previous Trustees

IHAB KHALIL

Outgoing trustee Ihab Khalil joined the SSEA in 1996. In 2011-2012, he was a member of the Executive of Toronto Chapter and in 2012, he assisted the SSEA/SEEA with the Annual Symposium budget. Standing for election in November 2012 he became Assistant Treasurer of the SSEA, a position which he held until January 2014. He has also served the SSEA as a member of the Finance Committee and as Chair of the Fundraising Committee. He continues to be involved with the SSEA as a member of the Bylaw and Policy Committee. Ihab's financial expertise and advice is missed.

MARK TRUMPOUR

Mark Trumpour became a member of The Society in 2000, and has been involved as a very active volunteer for many years – so much so that the many, many things he has done for the SSEA at the national and local level cannot be contained in one paragraph. He became a member of the Board in November 2006, and from about 2008 presented the budget and financial statements to the Annual General Meeting, and was officially designated Assistant Treasurer in 2009-2010. In 2007, he was a member of the first Executive of the newly formed Toronto Chapter, acting as their Chapter Secretary until 2011. With Dre. Brigitte Ouellet, he founded the SSEA project "In Search of Ancient Egypt in Canada/A la recherché de l'Égypte ancienne au Canada", which has proved very valuable in documenting the history of Egyptology in Canada. Later, he served as head of the Publications Production committee and was Vice President from November 2012 until his resignation this past year 2014, when he decided to move out of Toronto. The Board of Trustees, and the SSEA, will miss Mark's dependable help more than we can say.

PAUL ENGLISH

Paul English became a member of the fledgling Calgary Chapter of the SSEA more than 25 years ago, and has remained devoted to the Society and the Chapter during all that time. He became Calgary Chapter's representative to the Board of Trustees in 2011, and during that time served on a number of committees, including the Finance Committee, Fundraising Committee and Bylaw and Policy Committee, and he remains involved with the latter two. It is due to Paul's own personal generosity, and his ability to solicit matching donations from his employer, that the SSEA/SÉÉA has remained financially solvent.

SALLY KATARY

Founding member Sally Katary, served as a trustee for many years and when not actively on the board, has been an Honorary Trustee and the Associate Editor of the JSSEA, and head of the Book Review Committee. As Sally returns to Honorary Trustee status, she will continue to assist with the book reviews of the *Journal*. The SSEA, and our Scholars' Colloquium Committee.

JEAN REVEZ

This year we also lost the French Language Editor of our Journal, Jean Revez. Jean served on the board of Trustees for several years, offering his much-needed editorial skills.

CHRISTINA GEISEN

After several years representing Toronto Chapter and helping to organize the Poster Session at the AGM, Christina Geisen has stepped down from the board. She is replaced as Toronto Chapter representative by Zoe McQuinn.

Trustees for 2014-2015

and secretaries to the National board

Dr. Lyn Green, President

Dr. Brigitte Ouellet, Vice President/
Montreal Chapter Representative

Prof. Kerry Muhlestein (Brigham
Young University), Vice President

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**Secretaries - The Society for the
Study of Egyptian Antiquities**

Hanna Kurnitzki-west

John McGrady

Edgar Allen Poe and Ancient Egypt

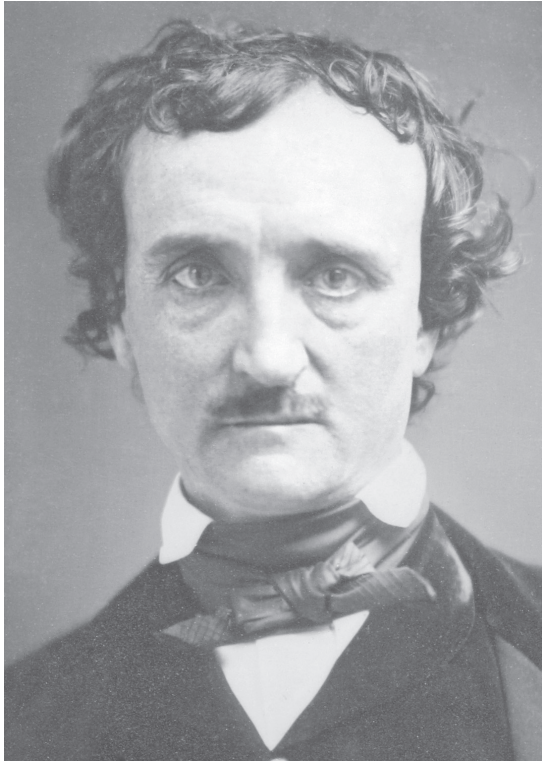
JUAN JOSÉ CASTILLOS *Uruguayan Institute of Egyptology*

ABSTRACT - Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most outstanding writers of the 19th century in the United States of America. Short stories, novel, poetry, journalism and a number of essays testify to his wide range of interests as well as to his ability to capture his readers with his well-reasoned plots. Some of his works enjoyed great popularity in other countries like France where he had significant influence on later writers. Contemporary of the events that saw the birth of the modern science of egyptology, it is not surprising that ancient Egypt appears mentioned in a number of his works, revealing the perceptions that many had at the time of that ancient civilization. In this paper I have endeavoured to trace the probable sources for his opinions on this subject and the sometimes contradictory statements that can be found in his works concerning ancient Egypt.

I must confess that in my early years Edgar Allan Poe, with Jules Verne and so many others, was one of the writers that captured my imagination. But in the case of Poe my infatuation was such that I read all his publications and in a few years had amassed what turned out to be the largest private library on Poe in the country, biographies, doubtful works attributed to him, letters, etc., I went even to a large

expenditure to buy the extremely rare early psychoanalytic study by Lauvrière (Lauvrière 1904), a book I hasten to add, that I read with circumspection due to the speculative nature of most of its conclusions. Lauvrière, for example, concluded that :

‘Telles sont les simples leçons qui se dégagent de cette troublante étude du génial Poe. L'examen attentif de sa



Portrait of Allen Poe

misérable vie déséquilibrée nous avait prêché l'indulgence morale, la critique minutieuse de sa grande oeuvre détraquée nous prêche maintenant la tolérance intellectuelle...' (Lauvrière 1904, 711).

People who knew Poe personally denied that the writer's apparent obsession with the macabre, death and decay reflected aspects of his own personality (Amper 2009, 38). At the time I was still in High School (the equivalent to the Canadian Grade 13) and the result was that as soon as the literature teacher learned about my interest and resources, I was asked to teach my fellow students the class on Poe. When the final test came at the end of the year, I was told it was Poe, so I saw myself passing with flying colours. To my great surprise, my teacher gave me low grades for my paper, according to her, because she 'expected more from me'. Fortunately, the next time a different teacher was assigned who was a well known local literary critic and I also chose Poe as my subject, but this time I got through all right. More realistic expectations probably made the difference. Egyptology came later and although at the time I thought there was little affinity between these two subjects, as I went back to my early interests in life, I discovered that whatever links existed, they merited closer attention and study, which is why I took up this project.

Following the expedition of Napoleon to Egypt at the end of the 18th century, the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphic writing system shortly after and the results obtained by the pioneers of Egyptian archaeology at the time, it is no wonder that a fascination with all things

Egyptian quickly spread all over Europe and North America. Many ancient objects and mummies were brought by visitors, some to be kept in private cabinets and displayed to acquaintances, others to tour the countries as a sort of freak shows and others to be exhibited in museums, where they arose immense curiosity. Public unwrappings of mummies then took place to help satisfy such widespread interest.

In America these events even led to the appearance of a new religion, that would have an extraordinary expansion in years to come, its most sacred book purportedly being a translation of tablets written in a form of writing called 'reformed Egyptian'. One of the most famous North American early egyptologists was George Gliddon, born in the UK, but who later became an American diplomat sent to Egypt, where he served with distinction and upon his return to his country extensively lectured on the subject of ancient Egypt and the discoveries that were taking place.

When Gliddon took up the popular undertaking of unwrapping mummies, these were events with massive attendance, but that led sometimes to embarrassing situations. On one occasion, the mummy turned out to be male and when the last layer of bandages was removed, it was found to be 'exhibiting in its fossil state the erected unequivocal mark of its sex'. Gliddon tried to extricate himself out of this quite unforeseen circumstance, perhaps at the same time being very grateful that at least in America, such exhibitions were not carried out in the presence of women and children.

All this was happening in the forties of the 19th century, the last decade of Poe's life, when he was at the peak of his powers as a writer and could not have remained indifferent to a subject that had become so popular. At the time there were very different views in America about ancient Egypt, some saw it as an imperial ideal while others thought it was a hotbed of tyranny, the probable result of the fierce controversies raging there about race and political issues (Montgomery 2013, 57).

There are several possible sources for Poe's information about ancient Egypt and the discoveries that were taking place. Gliddon's public lectures, that were also printed in contemporary newspapers and later on as a book (Gliddon 1847), Wilkinson's *Description of the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (Wilkinson 1837-41), Rosellini's book on the monuments of Egypt and Nubia (Rosellini 1832-44) as well as other similar publications that had arrived in America from Europe. Another useful source of information available at the time were articles in the 1833 edition of *Encyclopaedia Americana*, not only about mummies but also about the embalming techniques used in ancient Egypt. Other possible books Poe may have read include publications by early travelers seeking the source of the Nile (e.g. Bruce 1790) which sometimes were more than mere travelogues and included speculations on the origin of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic writing system. A book that Poe certainly read was an account of travel in the Near



Unwrapping a mummy was a popular attraction in the 19th century

East (Stephens 1837) of which he published a review in which he objected to the author's opinion as to the place where the fleeing Hebrews left the country on their way out of Egypt (Allan Poe 1837).

There are twelve mentions of Egypt in Poe's works, namely, in *Some words with a mummy*, *Four beasts in one - the Homo-Cameleopard*, *The assignation*, *Landor's cottage*, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, *Ligeia*, *Lionizing*, *The Duc de L'Omelette*, *The colloquy of Monos and Una*, *Shadow - A parable* and *Al Aaraaf*.

The first and longest text dealing with ancient Egypt in Poe's works is a satirical story first published in 1845 bearing the title *Some words with a mummy*. A short summary of the plot is that the author meets with three other persons, an old acquaintance, Dr. Ponnonner who invites him to witness the unwrapping of the mummy, a Mr. Silk Buckingham and the aforementioned Mr. Gliddon. By using electricity they succeed to revive the body and those who could speak Egyptian have a long conversation with the mummy in which the achievements of 19th century America are compared to those of the ancient Egyptians, the former being consistently depicted as at a disadvantage until as a desperate last resort Dr. Ponnonner asks the revived mummy whether his people were acquainted with some common American medicines of the time such as 'Ponnonner's lozenges' or 'Brandreth's pills'. The Egyptian then hangs down his head and concedes defeat in a rather disproportionate and ridiculous denouement. The

author ends his tale expressing his wish to be mummified and revived after two hundred years so he can find out who will be president in 2045.

The fact that there could be any sort of oral communication with the Egyptian betrays the naive belief at the time that once the ancient hieroglyphs were deciphered, it followed that the spoken language could also be learnt and understood, an achievement Gliddon and Buckingham could boast about after their long period of residence in Egypt. But can we be too hard with Poe on this when some scholars in the fringe of egyptology in this 21st century maintain that they have discovered the exact vocalization of the ancient Egyptian language and dare publish papers on the subject?

The use of electricity from a Voltaic battery to attempt the revival agrees with the contemporary fascination with this mysterious and poorly understood scientific discovery, similar to the awe that would surround in the first half of the 20th century the discovery of radioactivity. Mary Shelley in 1818 made the way her monster was created unclear, but in later versions of her tale, another kind of electricity, the static variety derived from weather phenomena, was used to animate her famous monster.

During the ensuing conversation with the mummy, to which Poe gave the name Allamistakeo, perhaps unaware of how appropriate it would turn out to be in view of the notions he made it to utter, the Egyptian seemed to know nothing of the supposedly modern concept of wigs, in spite

of the well known fact then that the ancients could very well teach the Americans quite a lot about it.

Another curious revelation was that the mummy considered a salt of mercury as the advanced procedure used in his time to preserve bodies which were meant to be revived, when any contemporary chemist in the early 19th century could have pointed out that due to its poisonous nature, it would rather be a perfect means to commit suicide if ingested in large amounts. It was used by Arab physicians in the Middle Ages to disinfect wounds and also received the name of corrosive sublimate.

Further remarks by the Egyptian showed that the ancients knew all about electricity, animal magnetism,

Artesian wells and steam power. There was no question of polytheism since they believed in only one god, they were thoroughly acquainted with the principles of the Kabbala, the universe had had no creation and was in fact eternal, iron-grooved causeways, upon which the Egyptians conveyed entire temples and solid obelisks of a hundred and fifty feet in altitude, all which makes the reader think that the Americans had revived some other kind of mummy.


The only field in which the Egyptian made some sense was that of monumental architecture and the denial of any merit to the notion of democracy, that for Poe was little more than the rule of the mob.

The ancient superiority in almost everything that the tale transmits agrees with older myths from before the birth of scientific egyptology that some fraternities hold even today to be true.

Of course, we should not take too seriously what was intended as a satire of contemporary institutions, the idea of progress and the egyptomania that was spreading all over the western world at the time, nevertheless, without diminishing the humorous impact of the tale, Poe could have made his mummy suggest many other fields of real or pretend superiority without breaking away from what scholarly research was revealing about ancient Egypt.

For instance, the revived mummy could have spoken Greek or Latin. Not surprising if it had been brought back to life on several occasions, it could have mentioned besides the monumental architecture, the greater complexity of the human being as conceived in ancient Egypt, their greatest respect for nature and all living things, their little concern with slavery, rampant in Poe's own environment at the time, among many other sources of pride that could be found in the contemporary literature if it was given more than just a cursory glance.

The satirical impact of this tale would have not suffered by such a more involved approach and Poe would have emerged from it as an admirably thorough writer, which is



New-York Historical Society.
LECTURES ON EGYPT: 1864.
CONCLUDING LECTURE BY
PROF. HENRY J. ANDERSON, LL. D.,
HALL OF THE UNION, COOPER INSTITUTE,
Thursday, December 15th, at 7: o'clock, P. M.,

To be followed by the
Unrolling of the Mummy.
TICKETS . . . 50 CENTS.

Mummy unwrappings were sometimes the climax of lectures about Ancient Egypt as this poster from 1864 shows

the impression the reader has from other works such as his review of Arabia Petraea, *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, which Poe considered his masterpiece, or *The Philosophy of Composition*, a much discussed literary theory that was at least described as a ‘highly ingenious exercise in the art of rationalization’ (Krutch 1926, 98).

In other tales such as *The Assignment*, ‘The eye wandered from object to object, and rested upon none - neither the grotesques of the Greek painters, nor the sculptures of the best Italian days, nor the huge carvings of untutored Egypt’.

Untutored Egypt indeed. Hardly the brilliant civilization that even in Poe’s day was becoming evident in so many ways. In the *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* the reader is told about an ‘idolatrous Egypt’, far from the monotheism mentioned above. In *Lionizing* we are told that the ancient Egyptians called the moon Bubastis. In *The Duc de l’Omelette* some statues are described as ‘Their beauty was Grecian, their deformity Egyptian, their tout ensemble French’ and in *Al Aaraaf* that ‘It is perhaps not generally known that the moon, in Egypt, has the effect of producing blindness to those who sleep with the face exposed to its rays’.

A possible explanation for Poe being so inconsistent at times in his opinions on ancient Egypt is perhaps realizing that a writer of fiction as an artist should not be expected to stick to one single view in everything he writes. He follows his inspiration, not the hard facts as he thinks he knows them, it is only the scientist who finds this puzzling and perhaps here is where I am at fault.

Walt Whitman made this clear in lines 1324 to 1326 of his poem *Song of Myself* (Whitman 1891-1892):

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes).

One of Poe’s most unfortunate decisions was to trust a fellow writer, Rufus Griswold, with the publication of his works after his death. Out of obscure motivations, Griswold used forged documents and committed character assassination denouncing Poe as a drunkard, drug addict and morally bankrupt individual which originated much adverse reaction to Poe among his contemporaries (Hoffman 1998, 14).

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- D. Hoffman, 1998, *Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe*, Baton Rouge.

Both praise and rejection have been heaped over the years upon Poe as a person and as a writer, but modern criticism starting with the monumental biography by A. Hobson Quinn (1941) has rehabilitated him on both counts and today he is considered as one of the greatest American writers. However, great names have been associated with derogatory remarks about Poe’s ability. William Yeats thought that his poems were ‘vulgar’ (Meyers 1992, 274), an opinion that was shared by Aldous Huxley (1967), and his cosmological essay *Eureka* has been criticized because of its many scientific errors, while on the other hand, no other than Albert Einstein thought that “it was a very beautiful achievement of an unusually independent mind” in his letter to Richard Gimbel in January 1934, although he did change his mind a few years later about the merits of *Eureka*.

Other distinguished writers also praised Poe, and Dostoevsky thought that the ‘vigor of [Poe’s] imagination’ distinguished him from every other author (Dostoevsky 1966, 61). Poe, as it could not be otherwise, was a man of his time and the talent he exhibits in his humorous tirades and in his more serious essays stands in surprising contrast to the superficial approach he had to ancient Egypt, inexcusable even in the first half of the 19th century when so much solid and verifiable knowledge was published by the pioneers of modern egyptology.

Much as we admire today the body of his published work, in the case of Egypt the discerning reader is greatly disappointed by the cavalier attitude we perceive in this respect and that he could have easily avoided if he had decided to dig a bit deeper in the contemporary scholarly literature.

All texts here were taken from E. A. Poe, *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, 5 Volumes, The Raven Edition, Champaign, 2000.

A. Huxley, 1967, *Vulgarity in Literature*, in R. Regan, *Poe: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Englewood Cliffs.
J. Krutch, 1926, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Study in Genius*, New York.
E. Lauvrière, 1904, *Edgar Poe, sa vie et son oeuvre, Étude de psychologie pathologique*, Paris.
J. Meyers, 1992, *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy*, New York.
T. Montgomery, 2013, *The Near East*, in K. Hayes, (ed.), *Edgar Allan Poe in context*, New York.
I. Rosellini, 1832-1844, *I monumenti dell'Egitto e della Nubia*, Pisa.
J. Stephens, 1837, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea and the Holy Land*, New York.
W. Whitman, 1891-1892, *Song of Myself*, vs. 1324-1326, *Leaves of Grass*.
J. Wilkinson, 1837-1841, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, London.

New Editors for the *Journal of the SSEA*

The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities/Société pour l'Étude de l'Égypte Ancienne is very happy to announce that the *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (JSSEA)* has new editorial staff. The new Editors are (in alphabetical order), Dr. Jaqueline E. Jay and Dr. Edmund S. Meltzer. The duties of French Language Editor have been taken over by Cloé Caron.

We would like to thank outgoing editors (Editor-in-chief Katja Goebis, Associate Editor Sally Katary, French Language Editor Jean Revez and Assistant Editor Aliza Fatima) for their hard work and contributions to the Journal. Dr. Katary will remain on the Book Review Committee.

The new editorial board would also like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing editor-in-chief, Katja Goebis, for all of her hard work in the production of Vols. 38 and 39.

Nouveau Comité Rédactionnel pour le *JOURNAL OF THE SSEA*

La Société pour l'Étude de l'Égypte Ancienne est très heureuse de vous annoncer que le *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (JSSEA)* a un tout nouveau comité rédactionnel. Les nouveaux rédacteurs sont (dans l'ordre alphabétique), Dr. Jacqueline E. Jay ainsi que Dr. Edmund S. Meltzer. Les tâches de rédactrice de la section francophone du journal seront assurées par Cloé Caron.

Nous aimerions remercier les rédacteurs sortants, c'est-à-dire la rédactrice en chef Katja Goebis, la rédactrice associée Sally Katary, le rédacteur de la section francophone Jean Revez ainsi que l'assistante rédactrice Aliza Fatima, pour leur travail remarquable et leurs contributions au Journal. Dr. Katary poursuivra ses fonctions au sein du comité de comptes rendus.

Le nouveau comité rédactionnel aimerait également prendre la présente opportunité pour remercier la rédactrice en chef sortante, Katja Goebis, pour l'ensemble de son travail dévoué dans la réalisation des volumes 38 et 39.

The Dakhleh Oasis Project

2013 – 2014 Field Season

A Brief Report to the SSEA Annual Meeting, November 14, 2014

The 36th season of the Dakhleh Oasis Project was in the field from February 9 to mid March, 2014. The following is a very brief summary of activities.

Because we do not work in the Nile Valley and go off road, we require an extra layer of security clearance, specifically from the military. The internal strife in Egypt in recent times has made the acquisition of that clearance less predictable. This explains why our project has not progressed while Nile Valley projects have had fewer problems. Because of the absence of permission and lack of funding, this was a very limited season of work. Despite the situation in the Nile

Valley, the Dakhleh Oasis remained completely peaceful.

The Polish team of Pawel Polkowski and Ewa Kuciewicz continued their recording of petroglyphs, this season in a rich area known as the "Painted Wadi" and another area further east. About 70 new sites were discovered, bringing their total to almost 1,000 sites across the oasis. They range in dates from Neolithic, Pharaonic, Ptolomeic through to Roman and beyond.

Work continued at the town of Amheida, ancient Trimithis, under the direction of Dr. Roger Bagnall of New

York University, mainly in the temple of Thoth. About 500 decorated stone blocks found in the temple have been recorded and studied by Olaf Kaper. He has now identified the cartouches of nine kings from these. A Roman bath was also excavated. Dorothea Schulz completed the painting of the domed room in the reconstructed villa of Serenus.

The 'Bone Team', represented by Peter Sheldrick only, was finally given permission to curate and study skeletons that had been excavated in 2011. An important specimen of a woman in her early thirties who died of metastatic cancer, probably cervical cancer, was thoroughly examined and photographed.

Professor Fred Leemhuis was able to do only some maintenance work and documentary research for one week in Qasr.

On March 12, 2014 the oasis was struck by a severe thunderstorm that produced large hailstones and torrential rain in a matter of 10 minutes. The dig house suffered severe damage to the roof, which caused mud and water to fall into several rooms. The repairs will cost thousands of dollars and if anyone would like to help with this, tax-creditable donations would be gratefully accepted by the SSEA.

Further details of the project may be learned from our website, which can be reached by the link from the SSEA website.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Sheldrick for Tony Mills, November 14, 2014

Chapter Reports & Contacts

We normally include Chapter reports for the benefit of members in other Chapters and those that could not attend the Annual General Meeting, but for this newsletter, we have included contact points for the four Chapters, and the National office, including email addresses, websites and Facebook pages. Please feel free to make use of these to contact the Chapters directly.

SSEA/SÉÉA HEAD OFFICE/SIÈGE SOCIAL

(Symposium, Colloquium, Journal, Newsletter, Membership, Tax Receipts)

General Enquiries: info@thessea.org or thessea@gmail.com

For all membership matters (except in the province of Quebec):

info@thessea.org or sseainfo@gmail.com

Journal submissions and Journal Editor correspondence:

journal@thessea.org or journalofthessea@gmail.com

SSEA/SÉÉA website: <http://thessea.org/>

CALGARY

(Local events in Calgary)

Email calgary@thessea.org or info@calgaryssea.ca

Find SSEA Calgary Chapter on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Calgary-SSEA/280577115303717>

SSEA Calgary website: <http://www.calgaryssea.ca/>

MONTRÉAL

(Events in Montreal; membership matters for residents of Quebec)

Find SÉÉA Montréal on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/sseamontreal>

Visit the French-Language Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SEEA.francophone/>

Email/Courriel: info@sseamtl.org

Montreal Chapter website: <http://www.sseamtl.org/>

TORONTO

(Local events in Toronto and GTA)

Email toronto@thessea.org or sseatoronto@yahoo.ca

Find SSEA Toronto Chapter on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/SSEAToronto>

VANCOUVER

(Local events in Vancouver area)

Email vancouver@thessea.org or sseavancouver@gmail.com

SSEA Vancouver on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/vancouversssea>

Call for articles for *The Journal of the SSEA*

The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities is soliciting articles for upcoming volumes of the *Journal of The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (JSSEA)*. These may be concerned with any aspect of pre-pharaonic, pharaonic or Coptic Egypt. Articles submitted are subject to a peer review process. Submissions are accepted in English, French, and German. The deadline for submission of articles to be included in Volume 41 is June 30, 2015. For subsequent volumes the deadline will be **January 31st of each year**.

For more information or questions regarding the Guidelines for Contributors, please email journal@thessea.org or journalofthessea@gmail.com.

J.E. Jay, E.S. Meltzer, C. Caron,

Editors of the *JSSEA*

The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities/Société pour l'Étude de l'Égypte Ancienne

Appel d'articles pour le *Journal of the SSEA*

La Société pour l'étude de l'Égypte ancienne sollicite auprès de la communauté scientifique des articles pour les prochains volumes du *Journal of The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (JSSEA)*. Les articles, rédigés en anglais, français ou allemand, peuvent aborder les aspects les plus divers en rapport avec l'Égypte prédynastique, pharaonique ou copte. Les articles seront soumis à un processus d'évaluation par les pairs. Veuillez noter que la date limite pour la soumission des articles pour le prochain volume (41) est le 30 juin 2015. La date limite pour la soumission des articles pour les volumes suivants est le **31 janvier de chaque année**.

Pour obtenir les recommandations à l'intention des auteurs, veuillez envoyer un courriel à journal@thessea.org ou journalofthessea@gmail.com.

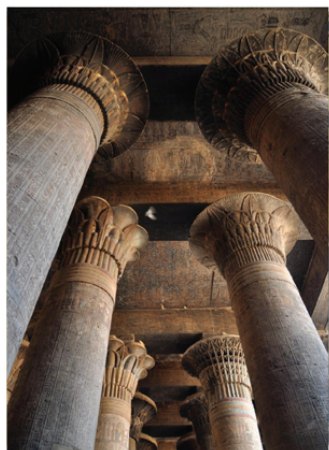
J.E. Jay, E.S. Meltzer, C. Caron,

Le comité rédactionnel du *JSSEA*

The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities/Société pour l'étude de l'Égypte ancienne

Support your SSEA

Buy SSEA/SÉÉA exclusive notecards and support SSEA/SÉÉA Member & Donation Recognition and our Speakers' Bureau funding initiative. This new series is based on photographs donated to the SSEA/SÉÉA by Victor Solkin (website: www.victorsolkin.ru). For information on how to order cards, contact sseafundraising@gmail.com or info@thessea.org. Examples of some of the cards are shown below:



The opinions expressed in the Newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities. Are you a member of the SSEA? The SSEA/SÉÉA has Chapters in Calgary, Alberta, Montréal, Québec, Toronto, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia. The Chapters host lectures and events on Egyptological topics. Full Individual and Student Memberships in the Society includes a volume of the scholarly *Journal of the SSEA* and the *SSEA Newsletter*, and free or discounted admission to SSEA events. Associate Membership in the SSEA includes the *Newsletter* and free or discounted admission to events. Associate Membership is only open to members in provinces which have a Chapter. All categories of membership, excluding institutional members, are entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting. To apply for membership, write to the address on the front of this Newsletter or email us at info@thessea.org. For updates, schedule changes, and further information, see the SSEA website at: www.thessea.org.