

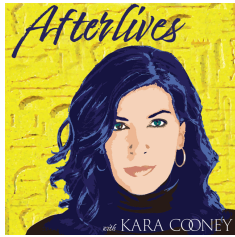
Afterlives with Kara Cooney

Episode #6: Ancient Egypt Spooky Edition, Part 1 - Ghosts

Kara Cooney & Jordan Galczynski

In this episode Kara and Jordan discuss ancient Egyptians' concept of the afterlife, their relationship to the dead, whether they believed in ghosts, demons as defenders, and letters to the dead.

- For more on the ancient Egyptian afterlife, see: Assmann, Jan 2005. *Death and salvation in ancient Egypt*. Translated by David Lorton. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- On the ancient Egyptian concept of the *akh* and the aspects of a person's "soul" see the following link: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient\\_Egyptian\\_conception\\_of\\_the\\_soul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egyptian_conception_of_the_soul)
  - The UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology also has articles on the *akh* and the *ba* by Jiří Janák:
    - *Akh* - <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7255p86v>
    - *Ba* - <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9tf6x6xp>
- For more on animal mummies as offerings see Aidan Dodson's article for the UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6wk541n0>
- On the Opening of the mouth ceremony and other funerary rituals see: <https://ancientegyptonline.co.uk/openingofthemouth/> and Hays, H. (2010). Funerary Rituals (Pharaonic Period). *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, 1(1). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1r32g9zn>
- Ancestor worship in ancient Egypt is discussed in Exell, K. (2008). Ancestor Bust. *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, 1(1). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/59k7832w> and Harrington, Nicola. 2013. *Living with the dead: ancestor worship and mortuary ritual in ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Learn more about the Beautiful Feast of the Valley in Thebes with [this wonderful slide show on Google Arts & Culture](#). For more on ancient Egyptian processions see Stadler, M. (2008). Procession. *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, 1(1). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/679146w5>
- For functional materiality see the "What is Art?" chapter in Hartwig, Melinda K. (ed.) 2015. *A companion to ancient Egyptian art*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.
- More on ancient Egyptian letters to the dead can be found here: Troche, J. (2018). Letters to the Dead. *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, 1(1). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6bh8w50t>
- Letters to the Dead discussed late in the episode are published in Parkinson, R. B. 1991. *Voices from ancient Egypt: an anthology of Middle Kingdom writings*. London: The British Museum Press.
- Kara writes about the heart scarab in the following article: Cooney, K. M. (2008). Scarab. *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, 1(1). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/13v7v5gd>
  - For the Book of the Dead Chapter 30B in which the deceased pleads with their heart to not stand as witness against them along with a wonderful photos of a heart scarab see: <https://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/staff-projects/ancient-egyptian-amulets/heart-scarab/>



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- For more on threat formulas in tombs (like “throttle you like a duck”) see Silverman, David P. “[The Threat-Formula and Biographical Text in the Tomb of Hezi at Saqqara](#).” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 37 (2000): 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40000520>. Lichtheim, Miriam 1988. *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: a study and an anthology*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 84. Freiburg (Schweiz); Göttingen: Universitätsverlag; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- [Code of Hammurabi](#)
- Ritner O. Gardiner 363<sup>1</sup>: Ritner, Robert K., and Robert K. Rittner. “[O. Gardiner 363: A Spell Against Night Terrors](#).” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): 25–41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40000071>.
- Many Egyptologists have written about sexuality and the deceased, but here are Kara’s articles on the subject: Cooney, Kathlyn M. “The Fragmentation of the Female: Re-gendered Funerary Equipment as a Means of Rebirth,” in: *Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt*, C. Graves-Brown, ed., Classical Press of Wales (Swansea 2008), 1-25. “[Gender Transformation in Death: A Case Study of Coffins from Ramesside Period Egypt](#),” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 73/4: 2-15 (2010).
  - Here is a photo of the depiction of [Osiris being awakened from the dead by Isis at Dendera](#)
- For more on masturbation in the creation myth discussed as well as other ancient Egyptian cosmogonies see: McClain, B. (2011). *Cosmogony (Late to Ptolemaic and Roman Periods)*. *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, 1(1). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8tf3j2qq>
- Ostraca (plural), ostracon (singular)
- For more about ancient Egyptian demons see: Graves-Brown, Carolyn 2018. *Daemons & spirits in ancient Egypt*. Lives and beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. Cardiff: University of Wales. Lucarelli, R. (2010). Demons (benevolent and malevolent). *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, 1(1). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1r72q9vv>
- A great book on dreams in ancient Egypt is Szpakowska, Kasia 2003. *Behind closed eyes: dreams and nightmares in ancient Egypt*. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales.
- On the origins of the word “demon” coming from the ancient Egyptian word *akh*: Alt, Karin, Bohak, Gideon, Chryssides, George D., et. al. “Demons, Demonology.” *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception: Dabbesheth – Dreams and Dream Interpretation*, edited by Constance M. Furey, Joel Marcus LeMon, Brian Matz, Thomas Chr. Römer, Jens Schröter, Barry Dov Walfish and Eric Ziolkowski. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2010. [https://www.degruyter.com/database/EBR/entry/MainLemma\\_37418/html](https://www.degruyter.com/database/EBR/entry/MainLemma_37418/html).
  - The article linked above is behind a paywall for most people, but here is the relevant quote (p. 532): “For the ancient Egyptian culture, it is rather problematic to speak of demons. While many entities have been labeled as such by modern scholars, it is difficult to point out a clear emic conception. In the Coptic language, the latest phase of Egyptian, the word *īkh* serves to render the Greek *δαίμων*. This word derives from the Egyptian term *ʿḫ* which, however, originally designated the blessed and glorified dead. Still, later usage shows a shift in meaning toward ambivalent spirits

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<sup>1</sup> A useful note on Egyptological artifact naming conventions for general audiences: O. Gardiner stands for “ostraca Gardiner.” Similarly, P. Harris stands for “papyrus Harris.”



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that can wreak serious damage and are thus close to the modern conception of demons.”

• More information on the god Anubis can be found here:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anubis>

- For more on Tawosret see: <https://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/staff-projects/ancient-egyptian-amulets/taweret/>
- There are some images of Ammit “the devourer” [here](#) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art has an [informative video on the weighing of the heart scene](#).
- Here is a National Geographic article on animals who eat their own young: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/140328-sloth-bear-zoo-infanticide-chimps-bonobos-animals>
- Click for images of [Djoser’s ka statue](#) and an [Old Kingdom ka statue](#).
- One of the ostraca with part of the Khonsuemhab and the Ghost text on it is in the [Museo Egizio in Turin](#) (S.6619). It was found by Italian archaeologist Schiaparelli at Deir el Medina in 1905. There are other ostraca with portions of the story on it in Paris, Florence, and Vienna. A translation of the story is in [Simpson, W. K. \*The Literature of Ancient Egypt\*. Yale University Press, 2003.](#)
- [Canopic jars](#) held the organs of the deceased.
- *Saff* is the Arabic word for “row” or “line” and “saff tombs” refers primarily to 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tombs cut into the necropolis hillside at Thebes in rows. An example is the [tomb of Aametju](#).

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