

Professor John Richard Harris

23 December 1932 – 23 February 2020

John Harris, who has recently passed away, received his BA from the University of Oxford in 1955, followed by his MA in 1958 and D Phil the same year. He was Research Lecturer, Christ Church 1957-62; Lecturer, Christ Church 1962-64; Research Lecturer, Christ Church 1957-62; Laycock Student of Egyptology, Worcester College 1960-66; and Lady Wallis Budge Lecturer in Egyptology, University College Oxford, 1964-69. In 1969-70 he was reader in Egyptology, University of Durham.

In 1970, after a short interregnum, John Harris succeeded Hans Jacob Polotsky as professor of Egyptology at the University of Copenhagen. During his seven years in office, Harris shifted the focus of Egyptology from being essentially one of grammar and philology to history and culture, and he gradually raised the standard of research to the mainstream international level. At that time, the small cluster of students were hungry for knowledge and inspiration. From day one this was provided in full measure by Harris who gave tuition in his splendid office in the centre of Copenhagen, and even opened his door to members of the public who showed a particular interest in a subject. Scholars re-discovered Copenhagen as an important venue, and fruitful gatherings took place after hours in the hospitable Harris household.

During the 1970's the traditional exercise of power of the professors was replaced by a system of democracy. Harris gave full support to this change, but there was never any doubt as to who was in effect running the Institute of Egyptology, witness the gift given to him by students and colleagues when he left Copenhagen for the University of Durham in 1977: a folding chair with the inscription 'Seat of Authority', inspired by his article on that subject. John Harris will be remembered not only for his meticulous scholarship and high standards which he impressed on his students, but also for his strong mind and his wit.

The works of John Harris include *Lexicographical Studies of Ancient Egyptian Minerals*, Berlin 1961; the revised 4th edition of Alfred Lucas, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, Oxford 1962; (with Eve Harris), *Roman Cults in Britain*, Leiden 1965; and, as editor and contributor, the 2nd edition of *The Legacy of Egypt*, Oxford 1971; as well as a number of significant articles.

It was in his retirement in Scotland that he wrote a series of ten articles, mostly with an Amarna theme, for *Papyrus*, magazine of the Danish Egyptological Society which he supported from its start in 1978. These were written in English, translated into Danish by Lise Manniche, and the text then painstakingly revised in writing and through lengthy telephone conversations. Harris had excellent command of the written Danish language, but he never embraced the digital age. As these important contributions are not widely known, a list of them is given below. They are all available in Danish with English abstracts on <https://daes.dk/papyrus-arkiv/>

24/2 2004 A case of mistaken identity

25/1 2005 A personal remembrance of Amenhotep 3.

25/1 2005 The Aten my father

25/2 2005 The succession of Amenhotep 4.

25/2 2005 A curious iconographic detail

27/1 2007 Two obelisks of Amenhotep IV

27/2 2007 Distorting scholarship

28/1 2008 Apropos Nefertiti(1): Who was Nefertiti?

28/2 2008 Smenkhkara Resartus

30/2 2010 Remembering the Amarna Period?

Copenhagen, 5 March 2020

Lise Manniche and Paul John Frandsen