

Things in Egypt have been getting hotter and hotter in recent months, and a large part of the heat comes from the elections, which at this writing are still in progress and no winners have yet ben announced.

Some of the probable power groups to be taking part in the new government are some fundamentalist Islamic groups. A few of these might prove to be troublesome for Egypt, and annoying, if not dangerous to the tourist trade. Their opinions are seen as extreme by most people, including a great number of Egyptians.

The most extreme of the protesters want to cover the faces of all the statues in black wax, and to coat all examples of nudity or even partial nudity with wax, too. Some even cry for the destruction of the 'false idols', as Islam sees human depictions.

Here is one of the more alarming reports (condensed) from bikyamasr (<http://tinyurl.com/7kgspp>)...



Egypt's Pharaonic relics draw a significant pull for the nation's tourism industry.

'The spokesperson for the Salifist Call, Abdel-Men'em Shahat, has reaffirmed and defended a call for covering Egypt's treasured Pharaonic relics with wax, claiming that they resemble false idols.

'In comments to al-Rai al-Aam newspaper, he reaffirmed his call for "covering the faces of the Egyptian Pharaonic statues with wax because they resembled the idols that were present in Mecca."

'The Salafi group came under attack when they first expressed this intention, especially in light of the fact that Pharaonic relics attract scores of tourists to Egypt every year, accounting for 15 percent of the nation's income.

"This was erroneously interpreted in some media outlets that the Salafists want to infuse terror and fear in the hearts of the Egyptians in order to scare them off from the spreading of the Islamic call," he asserted.

"We do not want to scare the Egyptians. We want to implement Islamic Sharia as ordered by God Almighty," he went on to explain.'

Another report tried to calm the fears of Islamic damage to the tourist industry and to tourists themselves. The report below (condensed) from the Associated Press (<http://tinyurl.com/chnf9gk>) stated...

'Islamists are dominating Egypt's elections and some of them have a new message for tourists: welcome, but no booze, bikinis or mixed bathing at beaches, please.

'That vision of turning Egypt into a sin-free vacation spot could spell doom for a key pillar of the economy that has already been badly battered by this year's political unrest.

"Tourists don't need to drink alcohol when they come to Egypt; they have plenty at home," a veiled Muslim Brotherhood candidate, Azza al-Jarf, told a cheering crowd of supporters on Sunday across the street from the Pyramids.

"They came to see the ancient civilization, not to drink alcohol," she said, her voice booming through a set of loudspeakers at a campaign event dubbed "Let's encourage tourism." The crowd chanted, "Tourism will be at its best under Freedom and Justice," the Brotherhood's party and the most influential political group to emerge from the fall of Hosni Mubarak.

'The Salafis of Al-Nour are up front about seeking to impose strict Islamic law in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood says publicly that it does not seek to force its views about an appropriate Islamic lifestyle on Egyptians.

'Islamic Brotherhood leader Saad el-Katatni is also now espousing a hands-off approach. "Tourism is not all about what to eat, drink or wear. ... We have nothing to do with beaches," he told the semi-official Al-Ahram daily. But in August, he told tourism officials that "Egypt is a pious country and the beach tourism and bikini should not be in public beaches."

'Also, clerics like Yasser Bourhami, influential among hardline Salafis, are presenting ideas for restrictions on tourism. Bourhami calls it "halal tourism," using the term for food that is ritually fit under Islamic law. "A five-star hotel with no alcohol, a beach for women — sisters — separated from men in a bay where the two sides can enjoy a vacation for a week without sins," he said in an interview with private television network Dream TV. "The tourist doesn't have to swim with a bikini and harm our youth."

'A leading member of Al-Nour, Tarek Shalaan, failed to explain whether hotel reception clerks will have to start demanding marriage certificates from couples checking in together. "Honestly, I don't know the Shariah position, so I don't want to give an answer," he said.

'Huge swaths of the country, like the Red Sea shores with their stunning coral reefs and Nile Valley cities like Luxor with their ancient temples and tombs, are solely dependent on tourism. This year, tourist arrivals fell more than 35 percent in the second quarter, according to government figures.

'Some Salafis acknowledge their approach could mean losses for the industry but propose ways to compensate, like promoting medical tourism or religious and educational tourism. Their talk prompted an outcry from hundreds of tour guides and the minister of tourism, who recently held a demonstration at the steps of the Great Pyramid. They asserted that each speech by the Islamists translated into reservation cancellations.

'The minister, Moneir Fakhri Abdel-Nour, said the impact of religious edicts, or fatwas, on tourism is as bad as the impact from Egypt's security troubles. "The tourism industry is facing a double challenge: security ... and the fatwas," Abdel-Nour said Monday, according to Egypt's state-run news agency. "No one will be able to destroy or threaten this industry," he added.'

We have all heard the stories of damage to the monuments during the chaotic revolution period. The stories are numerous, and many of them are misleading, or even false. The article below gives a fair, and even handed

over view of the situation. This appeared in Al-Ahram (<http://tinyurl.com/6sh982u>) (shortened somewhat)...

'This year, 2011, was indeed different for Egypt. Many storage places all over Egypt suffered break-ins, among them the Qantara East storehouse in Sinai, which houses artifacts belonging to the planned Port Said Museum and the Suez, Sharm El-Sheikh and Taba museums as well as objects returned from Israel under the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Looters broke into the storehouse and stole several boxes of objects containing up to 800 items, although to date 292 of these have been returned. Meanwhile, people have encroached on monument buffer zones, building houses or carrying out illegal nighttime excavations. Reports of illegal construction have come in from near the Pyramid of Merenre and at the Mastaba Faraun near Saqqara. Many sites, including some in Alexandria, Ismailia, Saqqara, Beheira, Sharqiya, Abusir and Dahshur, have reported illegal excavating, very often at night. At Saqqara the padlocks of many tombs have been smashed, and inscribed blocks and parts of the false door have been stolen from the tomb of Hetepka. A storehouse belonging to an archaeological expedition run by the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art in Dahshur, known as the De Morgan storehouse, was attacked twice by looters who overpowered and tied up guards. Looters broke into the storehouse of a Czech expedition in Abusir. In Giza looters carrying guns broke into the Selim Hassan storehouse and forced the unarmed site guards to surrender. Storehouses at Tel Al-Basta and Wadi Al-Feiran near Sharm El-Sheikh were also broken into.

'Several other ancient Egyptian sites were also subjected to vandalism and looting. The only known 19th-Dynasty tomb in Lower Egypt, that of Ken-Amun at Tel Al-Maskhuta near Ismailia was completely destroyed, as was the Old Kingdom tomb of Impy near the Sphinx on the Giza Plateau. Inscribed blocks were taken from the tomb of Ptahshepses in Abusir. Guards at sites in Nekhen, north of Edfu in Upper Egypt, managed to catch several thieves. In Aswan, looters attempted to steal a statue of Ramses II, but were apprehended by archaeologists and guards at the site. Looters have attacked Abydos nearly every night during the recent turmoil, carrying out illegal excavations and digging trenches, some as deep as five meters, damaging the site.

'On the employment level, protesters picketed the Zamalek offices of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), which soon after the outbreak of the revolution was renamed the Ministry of State for Antiquities (MSA). Many of those involved in the protests were archaeologists and restorers campaigning for employment within the newly created body. Some of them claimed they had been unemployed for years, while others demanded permanent appointments, better pay and equality. Frustrated at the situation of the country's antiquities, Zahi Hawass, previously the SCA general-

secretary and by then the minister of antiquities, resigned as minister, citing his inability to protect the nation's treasures. Hawass himself was also a target -- some said a victim -- of the disorder.

‘Two secretary-generals followed in quick succession, but resigned following protests. Two months ago Mustafa Amin was appointed SCA secretary-general and promised to solve all the employees' problems including salary increases, appointment to the SCA's permanent staff, and appointment for fresh graduates within the SCA's echelon. When Amin assumed his post but failed to meet the protesters' requirements, they renewed their action. However, with the resignation of the cabinet and appointment of Kamal El-Ganzouri as the new prime minister, the SCA once again became the MSA and Mohamed Ibrahim, a professor of archaeology at Ain Shams University, was given the antiquities portfolio and became the MSA's new minister.

‘Since he took office, Ibrahim has embarked on a number of inspection tours of archaeological sites and museums. He has visited the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir, the planned Grand Egyptian Museum, the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, the Salaheddin Citadel, the Giza Plateau and Luxor. He has promised to review all the MSA's projects and to work hard to meet all the protesters' demands and spruce up archaeological work. He has also met the head of the Antiquities and Tourism Police to agree on plans to tighten security measures at archaeological sites.’

Egypt has also had serious problems between the Islamic majority of the populace, and the minority group of Coptic Christians. This has produced acts of violence and even deaths in riots between the two groups. As is well known the Copts are not respected or liked in Egypt, and the old feelings are coming to the fore with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

The Egyptian government views this as a serious problem as shown by the story below from Al-Ahram (<http://tinyurl.com/6pnqrur>)...



‘The secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities Mustafa Amin met Pope Shenouda III on Tuesday morning and paid his condolences for the victims of the Maspero clashes earlier this month.

‘The meeting, which took place at St Mark’s Cathedral in Abbasiya, lasted for 30 minutes and was also attended by senior Coptic bishops and members of Pope Shenouda’s private secretariat.

‘Amin told reporters he had paid his condolences to Pope Shenouda not as a religious leader, but as an Egyptian citizen devoted to the security of his nation. All Egyptians agree on the need to protect national unity during this critical transitional period, he added.

‘During the meeting, Amin reiterated the SCA’s commitment to protect and preserve Egypt’s Coptic heritage, and invited Pope Shenouda to the official re-opening of the Hanging Church in Old Cairo after almost ten years of restoration work.’

Astute readers may have noticed the lack of any recent news concerning the once great Zahi Hawass. The truth is that he has largely disappeared, and rumors state that he is busy defending himself in a series of court cases and accusations. He is still there, however, as this report from ‘Nature’ magazine reveals what he has been up to, and what he might be up to in the future.(<http://tinyurl.com/7rdjych>) (condensed for space reasons).

What ever you do this month, do not fail to read the last two paragraphs. Zahi may yet rise up::

‘The antiquities service was set up in 1858 to stem a different kind of chaos: the loss of artifacts. Early Egyptologists were little more than treasure hunters, who carted off everything from jewelry to entire monuments. Now, the SCA conducts its own excavations and approves and supervises foreign archaeological missions, as well as conserving and managing the country's wealth of antiquities and archaeological sites.

‘The service was initially led by French scholars, and did not have an Egyptian head until the 1950s. After becoming secretary-general of the SCA in 2002, Hawass catapulted what had been a fairly anonymous position into the limelight. The image of Hawass enthusiastically unearthing treasures in his Indiana Jones-style hat became a familiar sight, and it gave Egyptology its first Egyptian face.

Even as he raised his own profile, Hawass did the same for archaeology in Egypt. His efforts attracted tourists and raised millions of dollars from international touring exhibitions of Tutankhamun's treasures. He fought hard — some felt too hard — for repatriation of artifacts, and pushed for Egyptian teams to conduct high-profile science. He raised money for state-of-the-art facilities in Egypt, notably persuading National Geographic in Washington DC to donate a US\$3-million scanner to the SCA in return for filming a project to scan Tutankhamun and other royal mummies; US broadcaster the Discovery Channel built two ancient-DNA labs in Cairo and donated \$250,000 towards testing the mummies' DNA. Hawass also tackled corruption and supported projects to develop archaeological sites, including building a suite of museums and dealing with rising groundwater that is threatening to damage sites across the country, including Giza's famous pyramids.

‘But critics claim that Hawass had a darker side: that as the years went on, he exerted excessive control and sought mainly to boost his own fame at the expense of other researchers and of high-quality science. Under Hawass, they complain, archaeologists were prevented from announcing their own discoveries. “This focus on him was something that really bothered people,” says Duistermaat. “Even for foreign missions, you had to wait, even for weeks, until Zahi would come down and 'excavate' it.”

‘Many archaeologists working in Egypt are reluctant to speak about Hawass on the record out of fear that he could regain influence in the country. But in private, several researchers say that Hawass was intolerant of opposition and blocked excavation permits to those who published results or theories that clashed with his own. Megan Rowland of the University of

Cambridge, who has just completed a master's of philosophy degree on the political significance of Egypt's antiquities during the revolution, says that researchers who crossed Hawass became targets of intense criticism or had their permits revoked.

'The revolution changed all that. Hawass's hold on power started to slip when he denied, incorrectly, that any objects were missing after Cairo's Egyptian Museum was looted on 28 January. It was further eroded when he underestimated the extent of looting at important sites, despite reports that it was severe, and repeatedly voiced support for Mubarak. When Mubarak fell, Hawass's days were numbered. After resigning and being reappointed in March, Hawass finally left office in July.



Protesters filled Tahrir Square in Cairo, near the Egyptian Museum (top), during the revolution, and the antiquities council lost its leader, Zahi Hawass (bottom).

'Today, Egypt's most famous archaeologist can be found tucked away on the ninth floor of a faded apartment block in the Mohandessin district of

Cairo. Forbidden to leave Egypt while the investigation is ongoing, Hawass spends his days writing books in this modest office, surrounded by trophies, medals and photos of himself with celebrities. When Nature visits, he is charming and full of energy, bouncing up from his desk every few minutes to locate objects that will illustrate a point: his sweat-stained hat; his handwritten manuscripts; and a tall pile of stuffed envelopes that he says will prove his innocence in the attorney-general's investigation.

‘Hawass denies having close ties to Mubarak and calls the charges against him “ridiculous and untrue”. Almost all of them have been dismissed, and the rest will soon be resolved, he says. Regarding his leadership style and appearances on television, Hawass says that it was important for him to maintain a high profile “to Egyptianize Egyptian antiquities”. He denies taking credit for others' discoveries, arguing that he was required to scrutinize all results before they were announced to the media, to prevent unscrupulous archaeologists from making false claims.

‘Love him or hate him, Hawass's departure has unnerved Egyptologists. Asked what they're hoping for from his successor, many researchers say that they want more open discussion of ideas, more sharing of data and collaborations between Egyptian and foreign teams. But first, the SCA needs to get back on its feet. Researchers had hoped to resume work as soon as the security situation calmed..

‘As researchers waited through the summer, permits were left unsigned and decisions unmade. When Nature visited in October, the agency's headquarters in Zamalek, Cairo, was a hive of inactivity, with dozens of men milling around its halls and the waiting room filled with bored employees watching the clock until it was time to go home. “We've been sitting here for six months,” said one, clearly frustrated.

‘Everyone now hopes that Amin, the SCA's latest secretary-general, can get things started again. He holds a PhD in Islamic antiquities, and was previously head of the SCA's Islamic and Coptic department. Amin has some huge problems to address before even thinking about boosting the quality of research. His first priority is the security of Egypt's sites and museums. Some looting is still going on, and the full extent of the losses isn't known, says Tarek El Awady, director of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. “We're still waiting for the inventories,” he notes. But the most serious challenge is illegal building, with locals trying to claim archaeological land at several sites.

‘The second major problem facing Amin is funding. The SCA had a healthy income during Hawass's tenure, but the coffers are now empty, despite the extra millions of dollars that should have come in from the travelling exhibitions. “We have no money,” confirms El-Dahab. He says that

all conservation and excavation projects have been halted, and the agency is now borrowing millions of dollars from banks and the government just to pay salaries.

‘There is no shortage of conspiracy theories as to what might have happened to the cash, but El-Dahab says that it has gone to the many projects that Hawass championed, including the construction of 22 local museums, conservation and restoration work at important sites, and his efforts to deal with rising groundwater. Hawass denies any impropriety and defends his record. “I spent 1 billion Egyptian pounds [US\$167 million] a year” in support of Egyptian archaeology, he says proudly. He adds that he had planned to bring in more funds through tourism and travelling exhibitions, and blames the political situation — which has drastically cut the number of foreign visitors — for the SCA's financial crisis.

‘Ultimately, however, the future of archaeology in Egypt depends not just on Amin, but on the outcome of Egypt's first democratic elections in decades, scheduled to begin on 28 November. Researchers are wondering whether the new political regime will take a nationalistic approach that favors Egyptian researchers, or become more open to foreign researchers and international collaborations.

‘And there is one more move that the new government could make. Egypt is reliant on funds from the millions of tourists who come to see its antiquities each year, and although visitor numbers have picked up slightly since the revolution, they are still low. El-Dahab says that the number of tourists visiting the country in September 2011 was only one-quarter of what would normally be expected.

‘If there was one thing that Hawass was good at, it was bringing in tourists, keen to visit after watching his exploits on television, or marveling at Tutankhamun's travelling treasures. So it is not inconceivable that a new leader might yet invite the charismatic archaeologist back to the SCA.

Hawass has previously denied any interest in returning to his old job, but now seems to be repositioning himself. “I'm sorry to say it, but I'm the only one who can bring the tourists back,” he told Nature. So would he offer his services, if asked? “I will never come back unless there is a stable government,” he says. If the upcoming elections can deliver that, the man in the hat might yet rise again.’

Not everything in Egypt is dire. There was an announcement of the discovery of some important papyri that archives from the area around Teti's pyramid. These were some collected earlier, but forgotten. The article from 'Pharaon-Magazine' (<http://tinyurl.com/7t6kxzk>) tells us:

“Philippe Collombert (who heads the French mission of Saqqara South) unveiled the first results of work conducted over the past ten years: a batch of crumpled papyrus discovered by chance in a cardboard box in a room of the French Institute of Cairo (CDAQ).



“After long months of work to place many fragments, constitute 17 plates. The papyri are very damaged but Mr. Collombert can still provide particularly interesting results.

“They are probably from the reign of King Teti (6th dynasty) because the name of the King is cited many times and not only for his funerary complex (which is important). They were probably discovered by Lauer late 1930s on the pyramid of Unas.

‘The archives are from the royal Office of architecture, the administration managing the work of the King and particularly his pyramid. And the papyri frequently refer to the transport of stone blocks of limestone, but also and especially, granite! Many titles are also given: driver of the work,

lead work, head of the work, etc. The mortuary complex of Teti is quoted several times which could mean that it is a log of activity every day!

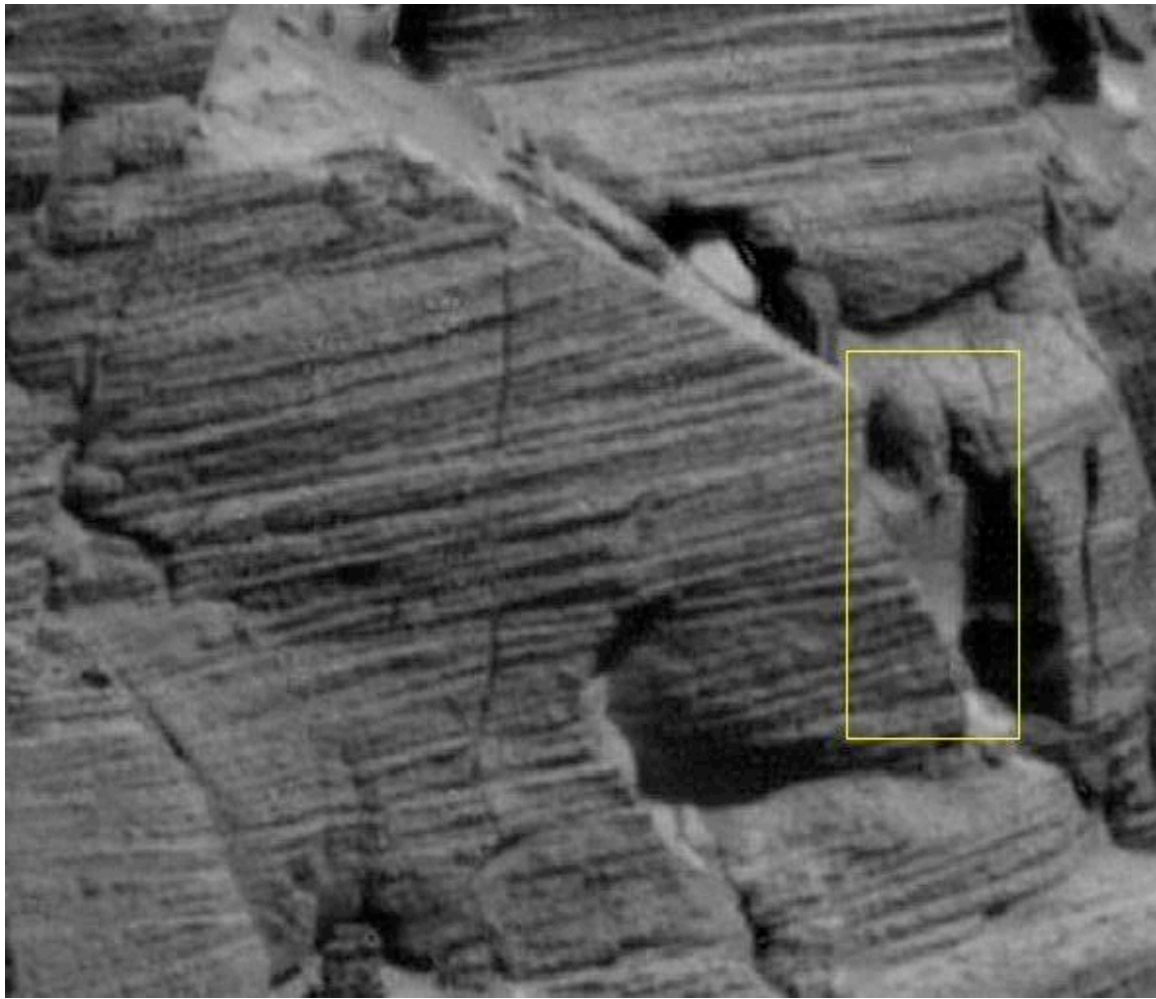
They also learned that some tombs of officials were probably built at the same time as the pyramid and mortuary temple. They cite transport ships. The Egyptologists found reviews of construction as of Royal letters. The documents refer to several Royal persons (Queens and princes) unknown so far and whose graves could lie in the vicinity of the royal pyramid of Teti, requiring new exploration!

‘And it would be just as interesting to initiate a new search next to the pyramid of UNAs to search for (possibly) new fragments, or even, the buildings of the royal Office.’

And now...the part you've all been waiting for...Egyptians on Mars!!!! Proof anyone will accept!!! Those sneaky guys over at NASA thought they could keep this great new discovery away from us...but they were wrong! Just like they tried to hide the face on Mars...and that kewl pyramid on the red planet. We are a lot smarter than them.

Read on below from a site that calls itself ‘nextme’ (<http://tinyurl.com/8xx3edu>). Now remember that the text here is a cleaned up version of a Google translation from the Italian, so the words may not flow as well as they might. Some of their stuff is pretty good...but this takes the cake.

A Pharaonic Osiride statue on Mars...carved with great care in a red sandstone niche...the faced with a false beard, and the head capped by the white crown!!! Its measurements are estimated to make it 1.35 meters (about 53 inches tall)



Martian Statue?

‘Still another mystery has been found on the surface of the red planet, Mars. The surprise comes, once again from the probe ‘Opportunity NASA’. This is the "Victor Crater," one of the many craters that dot the planet.

‘The Victor Crater, measuring 750 meters in diameter, and its name comes from Victoria, the first ship that circumnavigated the Earth and was owned by Magellan. Scientists, in analyzing one of the many images sent by Opportunity from that crater, came across as a stunning intriguing anomaly. It would seem, in fact, that one of the walls of the crater, is preserved, naturally or artificially, something very like a statue. But not any statue. One of those who recalling ancient Egypt, and particularly those statues who welcome visitors at the temple of Abu Simbel.

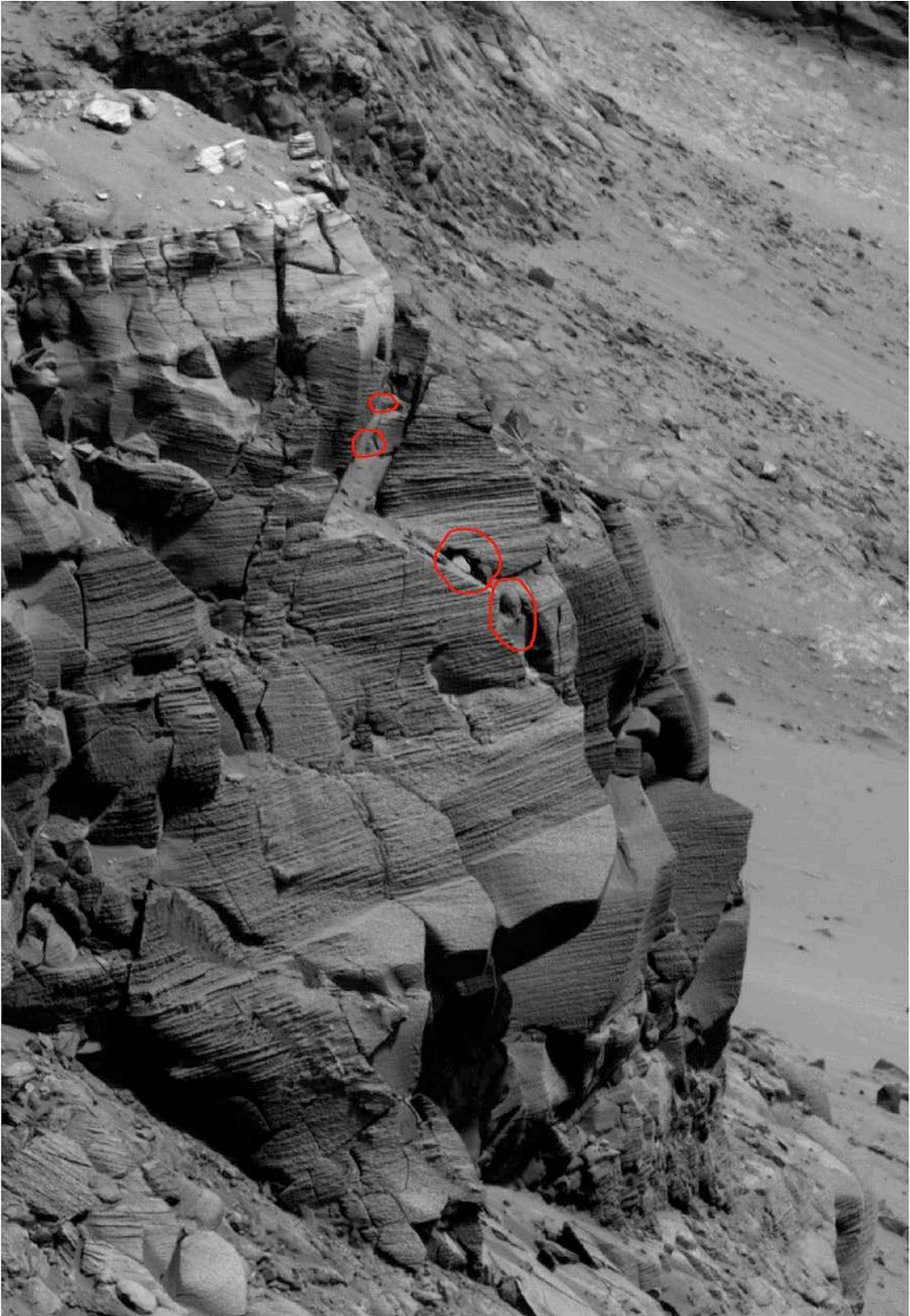
‘Features, forms, features and style are disturbingly similar. Many have questioned whether it is actually a bizarre play of light and shadow. It is not the first time that the probe provided NASA with provocative and mysterious coincidences. In 2008, scientists and crazed fans experienced an incredible image in which you noticed a strange object shaped like an elongate rectangle, resting on the Martian surface, darker in color than the surface of the planet.

‘For now, the video that accompanies the images is one of the most clicked on the web. And one can not say that it has the fascinating (<http://tinyurl.com/8xx3edu>).’

Still not convinced? Look at these other versions of the image. Yup, the Egyptians did indeed have space travel and were able to move between our two planets at will.

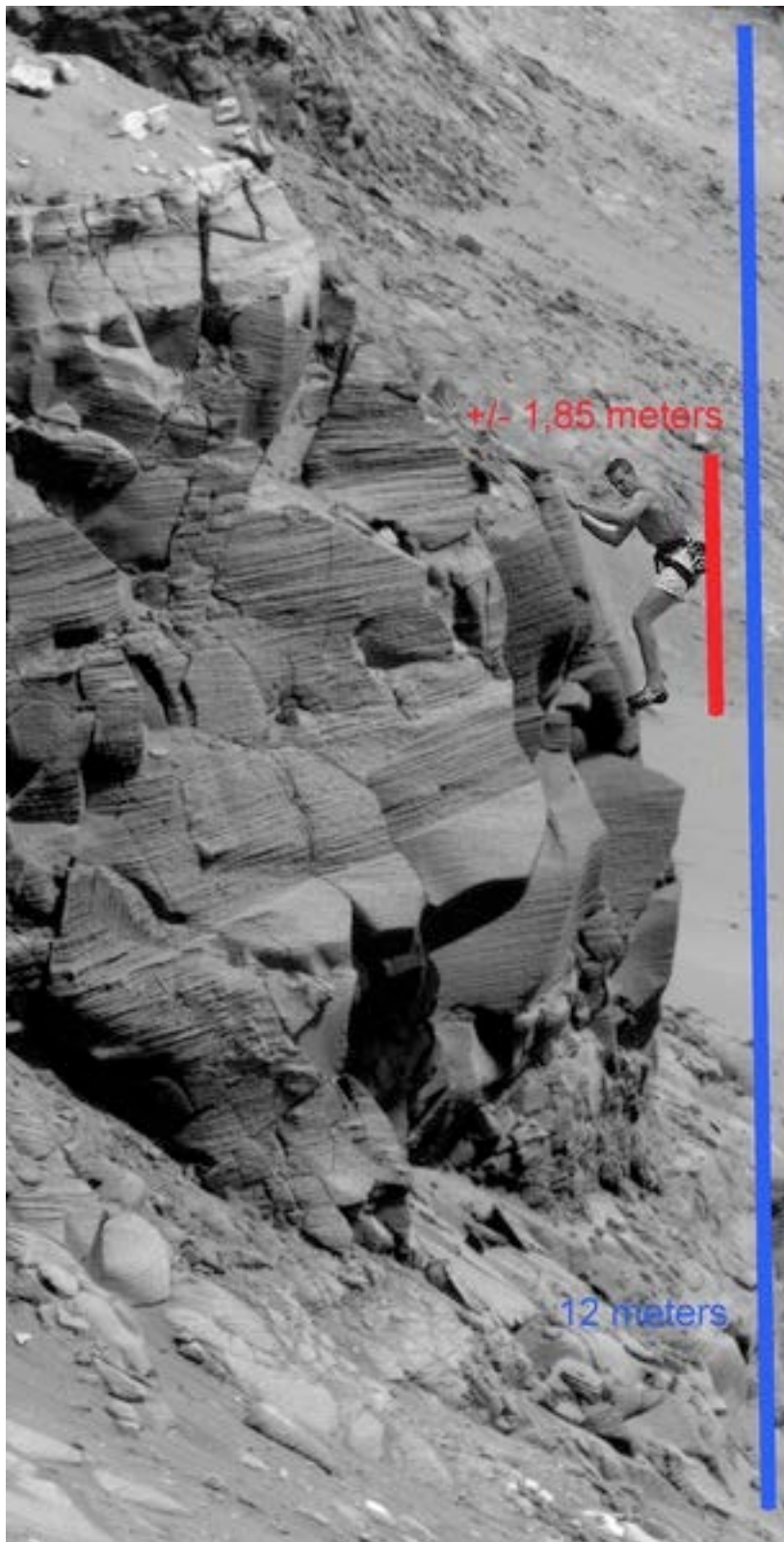
Pictures don’t lie. Especially not those pictures that have been carefully and extensively modified by selective pixel manipulation.





low sure can we be that this image is from a mars series. If you look just above the statue you can see whatlooks like a man with a turban on just going thru an entrance . Also just above that circled in red again are two little blurred out sections?. You say have to enlarge the pic to see as i cant figure that bit out. Interesting non the less .Two reasons spring to mind if not a genuine marspic .Firstly someone planted it there ase joke or to mislead , secondly it is out in the desert where "authentic" Egyptian statues are carved for the tourist trade perhaps .Have a look at the enlarged picture se what else you can see, im sure there is more there 🙄

and for scale:



That's all for this month, says the CyberScribe. I'm headed to the backyard with my binoculars to see if I can spot that neat statue on Mars! See you next month!