



September 2012, number 204

Events continue to move swiftly in Egypt. The new president, Mohamed Morsi, is sparring with the various powerbrokers in order to establish the new government, Mohamed Ibrahim is the new minister of antiquities, and the word seems to be that things are about to return to some semblance of normality for the various groups who wish to work in Egypt. New forms for applying for permits to excavate have appeared on the web, so let's all keep our fingers crossed.

The CyberScribe would like to begin this month's column by reopening the story about a new set of pyramids that were discovered by an amateur using Google Earth. Readers will recall that the first reports, accompanied by fuzzy photographs, declared that an entire new set of previously unknown pyramids had been discovered.

The "discoverer" was Angela Micol, an amateur archaeologist who is described as a person who searches the world for archaeological anomalies, and is associated with a company called "Google

Earth Anomalies". A glance at the home page for this company revealed the following statement:

"The anomalies posted at this site are derived from the Google Earth satellite imagery program. This site contains postings and satellite images from The Ultimate Anomaly Collection of over 5,000 placemarks that consist of anomalous earthworks, unusual topography, geographical anomalies, scientific anomalies, mound sites, extraordinary sites, weird sites, unexplained features, mysterious landscape signs, unusual underwater formations/geography, and strange places seen with Google Earth."

Reading through some of the offerings, the CyberScribe notes that they are generally rather questionable and fall under the "wishful thinking" brand of archaeology. In the news reports, Ms. Micol is variously described as an amateur archaeologist, an archaeologist, and archaeological researcher, and finally an Egyptologist.

The readers of last month's column will also remember that several geologists, including myself, examined the photos and pronounced them natural landforms.

Without going through all of the nonsense posted on the Internet about this so-called discovery, Egyptologists swiftly reported that the supposed "pyramids" were originally discovered in 1925 and are well known, and while there are some ruins associated with them, they are not pyramids. The article below (abbreviated for space reasons) from NBC news ([tinyurl.com/9jlnjak](http://tinyurl.com/9jlnjak)) explains these early discoveries, and is accompanied by close up pictures taken from the ground by a team that has recently visited and examined them. Read on and enjoy. Unless something absolutely extraordinary occurs relating to this story, this is the last time these rocky mounds will appear in the CyberScribe:



Copyright Soknopaiou Nesos Project, University of Salento

A photo from the Soknopaiou Nesos Project's 2006 survey of the Dimai archaeological site in the Egyptian desert shows a mound measuring roughly 76 meters (250 feet) in width. The feature gained fame last month as a potential pyramid site, but the archaeologists who have examined the site suspect that it served the function of a watchtower for an ancient desert community.

"The place that went viral last month as the potential site of a mysterious Egyptian pyramid looks more like a series of mounds on the surface of Mars when you see it up close.

"The site has been familiar to Egyptologists since the 1920s: It's thought to have been the locale for a desert settlement going back to Egypt's Ptolemaic era, when Greek and Roman influences were on the ascendance. Did these mounds serve as watchtowers, or tombs, or well sites?

Egyptologist Paola Davoli of Italy's University of Salento in Lecce, filled me in about the current state of her group's research last week. "They are not pyramids, but their date and use are still not known," she told me in an email. Since last week's exchange, Davoli sent pictures of the site, taken during a 2006 survey.

Davoli has also been in touch with Angela Micol, the North Carolina researcher who turned the spotlight on Dimai last month via her Google Earth Anomalies website. Based on the satellite imagery, Micol suggested that the mounds might represent eroded pyramids. The up-close pictures make the formations look more like piles of rocky rubble. The largest one appears to have the ruins of a square building or walls on its summit, but it'll take a full-blown excavation to unravel the mystery.



Copyright Soknopaiou Nesos Project, University of Salento

Here's the view from the large mound at the Dimai archaeological site, estimated to be about 76 meters (250 feet) in width. From above, the mound appears to have a squarish structure on top.



Copyright Soknopaiou Nesos Project, University of Salento

A photo from the Soknopaiou Nesos Project's survey of the Dimai archeological site in 2006 shows three mounds, each measuring about 30 meters (100 feet) in width.





*A Google Earth satellite image of the Dimai archaeological site provides context for the large mound and the smaller mounds.*

'Micol acknowledged that her experience is more in the line of architecture and scoping out satellite imagery for unusual features — which she said she's been doing for 10 years. "I really want to help archaeologists — that's my dream, that's my goal," she said. "I had no idea that this was going to go viral. I was shocked. I just wanted to help."



*Google Earth / Digital Globe / GeoEye*

Google Earth imagery shows what appears to be a triangle-shaped feature and nearby mounds at the Abu Sidhum site. Patterns in the terrain around the triangular butte suggest that water once flowed in the area.

'Now she's hoping to stay in contact with the experts on Egyptology, to find out more about Dimai as well as another site about 90 miles (144 kilometers) away, known as Abu Sidhum. Micol marveled over a triangle-shaped feature in the satellite imagery that she thought might represent the remnants of a pyramid. Geologists say the 190-meter-wide (625-foot-wide) feature at Abu Sidhum is merely a naturally formed butte, and one expert has been quoted as complaining that Micol appeared to be "one of the so-called 'pyrimidiots' who see pyramids everywhere.'"

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“USA Today” ([tinyurl.com/972qoc9](http://tinyurl.com/972qoc9)) recently made a surprising and much anticipated announcement. The Egyptian government has stated that it intends to open the entire Nile from Cairo to Aswan for tourist cruise ships. For a number of years middle Egypt has been off-limits for the cruise ships because of the concerns that terrorists might target these vessels.

The announcement was short and to the point, and tickets are already being sold for the first trips beginning in 2013. It said:

'A long-closed portion of Egypt's Nile River reopened to cruise ships this week, paving the way for new, longer itineraries along the legendary waterway. The 465-mile stretch between Cairo and Luxor has been closed for at least 15 years due to security concerns and unpredictable water levels. Its opening will allow cruise vessels to sail all the way from Cairo to Aswan -- a 600-mile stretch that is chock full of ancient ruins.

Tour companies are moving quickly to add sailings on the formerly closed area of the river, with Egypt specialist Abercrombie & Kent launching its first outing this week. Abercrombie & Kent also has announced plans for a series of new, 16-day Splendors of Egypt tours in 2013 that will include a 10-night sailing on the Nile that takes in the formerly closed area.

'Starting at \$8,695 per person, the new Abercrombie trips will take place on the recently renovated, 32-cabin Sanctuary Nile Adventurer and include a visit to such ancient sites as Beni Hassan (home to rock-cut tombs that feature unusual wrestling scenes) and

Tel El Amarna (the hometown of Queen Nefertiti and King Akhenaten). Both sites are located in the formerly off-limits area.

'In recent years, Nile cruises have been limited to a section of the river between Luxor and Aswan and usually lasted just a few days. They often were paired with a land-based visit to Cairo and an optional side trip to the Egyptian ruins of Abu Simbel.'

For those who are seriously interested, here is a copy of the prices for these first trips.

## Dates and Prices

Prices are in USD, per person, based on double occupancy.

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|---|----------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Cabin Class   | Price    | Single Supplement | Internal Air (From) | Availability          |
| <input type="radio"/> Nile Deck ^                               | \$8,695  | \$3,040           | \$445               | Available             |
| <input type="radio"/> Main Deck ^                               | \$9,055  | \$3,210           | \$445               | Available             |
| <input type="radio"/> Bridge Deck ^                             | \$9,245  | \$3,290           | \$445               | Available             |
| <input type="radio"/> Promenade Deck ^                          | \$9,430  | \$3,370           | \$445               | Available             |
| <input type="radio"/> Deluxe Cabin ^                            | \$9,980  | \$3,625           | \$445               | Call for Availability |
| <input type="radio"/> Presidential Suite ^                      | \$11,165 | \$4,380           | \$445               | Limited Availability  |

How many people are travelling in your group?

**REQUEST BOOKING**

### Notes

^ Price is based on seven or more guests; see below for pricing for 2-6 guests.

Nile Deck: \$10,695 per person

Main Deck: \$11,070 per person

Bridge Deck: \$11,260 per person

Promenade Deck: \$11,455 per person

Deluxe Cabin: \$12,025 per person

Presidential Suite: \$13,250 per person

**Child Policy:** On non-family programs, unless otherwise indicated on the individual program page, a minimum age of 10 years is required. Call for details.



*Cruise ship "Sanctuary Nile Adventurer"*

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Exciting new discoveries in Egypt have a habit of turning out to be old findings that didn't get much attention when they first appeared, but were resurrected on a slow news day and caught the interest of the world press.

One of these recycled "discoveries" talked about severed human hands found in Egyptian excavations associated with a Hyksos palace at Avaris (Tell el-Daba). This was exciting news because there are numerous references to human hands being chopped off the bodies of slain enemies during battles as evidence of the death of the warriors. Until now, these stories have never been supported by actual archaeological evidence.

An Internet source called "LiveScience" ([tinyurl.com/9qr9uhj](http://tinyurl.com/9qr9uhj)) pushed the story, accompanied by a photograph of one of these hands. The actual discovery was made and published in a paper that appeared in 2011. In any case, the report below (condensed somewhat) should interest the CyberScribe's readers:



*Severed right hand discovered in front of a Hyksos palace at Avaris. It would have been chopped off and presented to the king (or a subordinate) in exchange for gold. This is the first archaeological evidence of the practice.*

‘A team of archaeologists excavating a palace in the ancient city of Avaris, in Egypt, made a gruesome discovery.

‘The archaeologists unearthed skeletons of 16 human hands buried in four pits. Two pits, located in front of what is believed to be a throne room, hold one hand each. Two other pits, constructed at a slightly later time in an outer space of the palace, contain the 14 remaining hands. They are all right hands; there are no lefts.

“Most of the hands are quite large and some of them are very large,” Manfred Bietak, project and field director of the excavations, told LiveScience.

‘The finds, made in the Nile Delta northeast of Cairo, date back about 3,600 years to a time when the Hyksos, a people believed to be originally from northern Canaan, controlled part of Egypt and made their capital at Avaris, a location known today as Tell el-Daba. At the time the hands were buried, the palace was being used by one of the Hyksos rulers, King Khayan.

‘The hands appear to be the first physical evidence of a practice attested to in ancient Egyptian writing and art, in which a soldier would present the cut-off



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right hand of an enemy in exchange for gold, Bietak explains in the most recent edition of the periodical Egyptian Archaeology.

"Our evidence is the earliest evidence and the only physical evidence at all," Bietak said. "Each pit represents a ceremony." Cutting off the right hand, specifically, not only would have made counting victims easier, it would have served the symbolic purpose of taking away an enemy's strength. "You deprive him of his power eternally," Bietak explained.

'It's not known whose hands they were; they could have been Egyptians or people the Hyksos were fighting in the Levant. Cutting off the right hand of an enemy was a practice undertaken by both the Hyksos and the Egyptians.'

Another photo from the original 2011 report:



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These days it seems as though anyone with a mummy and the phone number for a hospital has had that mummy x-rayed or CT scanned in order to examine the physical remains inside the wrappings. This has happened so often in the last couple of years that the CyberScribe doesn't report them anymore, but one of these investigations recently appeared with a twist. Upon examination, the researchers discovered that there was a man's body inside an unopened woman's mummy wrappings.

The report originated in an Internet site called 'Phys Org' ([snipurl.com/24qlpn9](http://snipurl.com/24qlpn9)) and involves a mummy from Australia. The discovery has raised all sorts of speculative explanations, but read on and decide for yourself (condensed somewhat):

Australian nuclear scientists are helping an international team of archaeologists and historians to unravel a mystery about a collection of Egyptian mummies prone to cross dressing and lying about their gender and their age.

'Dr. Karin Sowada, started investigations into origins of the mummies some years ago when she was an Assistant Curator at the University of Sydney's Nicholson Museum that is home to the mummies. Her investigations are revealing some surprising results that include:

'Research (and carbon dating) published in 2011 revealed the mummy NM R28.2 inside a coffin belonged to a man called Padiashaikhet (725 – 700 BC) actually dated to the Roman period around 800 years later (68-129 AD);



'Research (and carbon dating) published in 2010 on a mummified head in the museum's collection (N2M R32) revealed that it dated to the Ptolemaic Period (204 – 49 BC); previously the date of this head was unknown;

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‘and perhaps most surprisingly, 2005 research (based on CT scans and other data) revealed mummy NM R27.3 was actually a man inside the coffin of a woman.

“‘In the 19th century it was common for Western tourists and scholars who journeyed to Egypt to bring home mummies, coffins, and other artifacts as souvenirs,” Dr. Sowada said. “Those antiquities were usually acquired from local dealers, whose attempts to maximize profits sometimes extended to breaking up objects for separate sale and creating ensembles that did not historically belong together, such as putting an unrelated mummy into a coffin.

‘The research we are doing in Sydney really has major implications for collections across the country and across the world – particularly those in smaller museums which have acquired mummies from private sources as opposed to archaeological excavations. Research published in 2005 showed mummy NM R27.3 was actually a man not a woman, and nuclear science techniques are now helping piece together more of the puzzle.

“‘We do not unwrap mummies anymore.’”

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The item below is sort of a wry and ironic twist on the confusion that characterizes parts of Egypt today. As so often happens in times of unrest, someone takes advantage of the situation, and sometimes that person turns out to be related to an important figure. In this case the scandal involved the sons of a former Egyptian Islamist lawmaker. The announcement below came from a brief article aired by "ABC News" ([tinyurl.com/9uslfhy](http://tinyurl.com/9uslfhy)):

‘A former Egyptian lawmaker's sons were briefly detained Sunday on charges of illegally digging for artifacts in the ancient city of Luxor in the latest scandal involving an ultraconservative Islamist who served in parliament.

‘Two sons of Gaber Abdel-Monem Ali, who goes by the name Gaber Gahlan, were arrested and then released, antiquities officials said.

‘Neighbors notified police when they heard drilling coming from inside the home owned by Gahlan, who resides in another governorate. The officials said police found four men digging inside.

‘The officials said the lawmaker's sons face charges of illegally digging in the artifact-rich area of el-Karnak in the city of Luxor. Officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to reporters. Antiquities theft is a persistent problem for Egypt, which is rich in ancient Egyptian and Greco-Roman artifacts. The problem has intensified since last year's uprising and the security lapse that has followed.

‘Gahlan is a member of the ultraconservative Gamaa Islamiya party and was part of the Salafi Nour Party's coalition before parliament was dissolved.’

The same source discussed a few other embarrassments to the government, such as: at least a quarter of the newly elected members of the Salafi Nour Party appear to have been illegally elected; a man described as a former lawmaker and religious scholar has been on the run from police after a court found him guilty of public indecency. Police say they found him fondling a woman in a parked car at night; and the most prominent scandal came when the Nour Party was forced to issue an embarrassing apology after one of its lawmakers, Anwar al-Balkimy, was reported to have lied to cover up a nose job. He belonged to a sect called the Salafis, who oppose cosmetic surgery. He left the hospital where he had the nose job and checked himself into another one that same day, claiming he sustained injuries to his heavily bandaged face from a carjacking and beating. A few days later, he was kicked out of the party and resigned from parliament.

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Guess what makes up the next item for discussion? Yes, you're right, another unsupportable and unprovable theory on what killed King Tutankhamen. This one involves a trail of logic and medical suggestions, all of which leave no trace after death. Not only does the author of this idea try to suggest why the king died, the extensive theory attempts to explain the death of the 18th dynasty and the origins of monotheistic religion.

Wow! Quite a bit of territory to cover with one idea. The report came from an Internet source called "NewScientist" ([tinyurl.com/8nfjqux](http://tinyurl.com/8nfjqux)) and tells us (somewhat condensed):

'Since his lavishly furnished, nearly intact tomb was discovered in 1922, the cause of Tutankhamun's death has been at the center of intense debate. There have been theories of murder, leprosy, tuberculosis, malaria, sickle-cell anemia, and a snakebite - even the suggestion that the young king died after a fall from his chariot.

'But all of these theories have missed one vital point, says Hutan Ashrafian, a surgeon with an interest in medical history at Imperial College London. Tutankhamun died young with a feminized physique, and so did his immediate predecessors.

'Paintings and sculptures show that Smenkhkare, an enigmatic pharaoh who may have been Tutankhamun's uncle or older brother, and Akhenaten, thought to have been the boy king's father, both had feminized figures, with unusually large breasts and wide hips. Two pharaohs that came before Akhenaten - Amenhotep III and Tuthmosis IV - seem to have had similar physiques. All of these kings died young and mysteriously, says Ashrafian. "There are so many theories, but they've focused on each pharaoh individually."

'Ashrafian found that each pharaoh died at a slightly younger age than his predecessor, which suggests an inherited disorder, he says. Historical

accounts associated with the individuals hint at what that disorder may have been.

"It's significant that two [of the five related pharaohs] had stories of religious visions associated with them," says Ashrafian. People with a form of epilepsy in which seizures begin in the brain's temporal lobe are known to experience hallucinations and religious visions, particularly after exposure to sunlight. It's likely that the family of pharaohs had a heritable form of temporal lobe epilepsy, he says.

'This diagnosis would also account for the feminine features. The temporal lobe is connected to parts of the brain involved in the release of hormones, and epileptic seizures are known to alter the levels of 'hormones involved in sexual development. This might explain the development of the pharaohs' large breasts. A seizure might also be to blame for Tutankhamun's fractured leg, says Ashrafian (*Epilepsy & Behavior*, [doi.org/h8s](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yebeh.2014.08.008)).

'Tuthmosis IV had a religious experience in the middle of a sunny day, recorded in the Dream Stele - an inscription near the Great Sphinx in Giza. But his visions were nothing compared with those experienced by Akhenaten. They encouraged Akhenaten to raise the status of a minor deity called the "sun-disk", or Aten, into a supreme god - abandoning the ancient Egyptian polytheistic traditions to start what is thought to be the earliest recorded monotheistic religion. If Ashrafian's theory is correct, Akhenaten's religious experiment and Tutankhamun's premature death may both have been a consequence of a medical condition.

"People with temporal lobe epilepsy who are exposed to sunlight get the same sort of stimulation to the mind and religious zeal," says Ashrafian.

"It's a fascinating and plausible explanation," says Howard Markel, a medical historian at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. However, the theory is almost impossible to prove, he adds, given that there is no definitive genetic test for epilepsy.'



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## PLANETARY ALIGNMENT WITH THE GIZA PYRAMIDS, IT ONLY HAPPENS ONCE IN 2,737 YEARS



Well, this month has been a little light on Egypt stories, but the CyberScribe wishes to end his column with a new and wonderful idea linking the great Pyramids at Giza with an astronomical phenomenon.

The article appears in an Internet site called "DiscoverMagazine" ([preview.tinyurl.com/9j5ybyr](http://preview.tinyurl.com/9j5ybyr)) under the title of "planetary alignment pyramid scheme". The expanded URL address also shows that this magazine listed the item in their category called "bad astronomy". Does this suggest that perhaps they didn't believe the story? Well yes, that is exactly the right conclusion.

Some of you may well remember the foolish ideas put forth by Hancock and Bauval dealing with pyramid alignment schemes. This new idea is every bit as goofy as the ones they proposed. The CyberScribe thinks that any further explanation on his part would be wasted, and suggests that his readers check out the item below (slightly condensed):

'And now a new slice of oddness enters the field: a picture of a planetary alignment over the Giza Pyramids, saying this only happens once every 2737 years. Because planetary alignments and the pyramids play such a large role in New Age/astrological beliefs, there is clearly some sort of spiritual message implied here.

'Well, I hate to be a thrice-bursting-bubble person, but here we go again, again. Let me be clear: while there *will* be an event more-or-less like this in December, and it should be pretty and quite cool to see, the claims being made are somewhat exaggerated. The picture itself isn't real, and the planets won't really look like that from Giza. Also, alignments like this happen fairly often, though to be fair getting them spaced out to fit over the pyramids in this way probably is relatively rare.

'Here's the picture making the rounds:

'It clearly shows the three pyramids in Giza, Egypt, with three planets above them. There are various versions of this picture I've seen; most are like this with almost no explanation. Some say the planets are Mercury, Venus, and Saturn, and some mention this is what it will look like on December 3rd, 2012, just before sunrise.

'First, this obviously cannot be an actual photo *if the event hasn't happened yet!* This must be a Photoshop job. That's fine if it's only to show what things are supposed to look like, and no one is claiming this is an actual photo. However, it hardly matters. There are lots of other problems with this planetary alignment claim.

'The first thing I did when I saw this was ask: is there really going to be a close conjunction of three planets on December 3rd? The answer is yes! Mercury, Venus, and Saturn will all be within a relatively small distance of each other in the sky on that date. This isn't a particularly tight configuration like Venus and Jupiter were earlier this year – in this case, they'll be 14 degrees apart, nearly 30 times the width of the full Moon on the sky – but it's still pretty nifty.

'The second thing I did, though, was ask myself: will they *really* look like that in the sky as seen from Giza?

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‘The answer this time is no. I used the software planetarium program SkySafari to show what the three planets would look like in the sky before sunrise on December 3rd as seen from the location of the pyramids, and got this:



In this picture, the yellow line is the ecliptic, the path of the Sun in the sky through the year. The green horizontal line is the horizon, and the three planets are labeled.

‘Note the angle of the planets: in the picture going viral, the planets are much closer to horizontal, but in reality the line connecting the planets is at a *much* steeper angle. It’s nearly vertical, in fact. This may not seem like a big deal, but having the planets closer to horizontal like in the viral picture is more spectacular than what will really happen, exaggerating the claim.

‘Not only that, but in the pyramid picture the planets are almost exactly on a line, like beads on a string. But as you can see in the picture above, they’re not nearly that collinear. Again it’s looking like the pyramid picture is exaggerating the situation.

I noticed something else funny as well. Here’s a satellite view of the three pyramids, courtesy Google maps:



‘In this picture, north is up and east is to the right. The planetary conjunction happens before sunrise, and as you can see from this satellite view you would have to face southeast to see it. That means to see the planets and the pyramids together you’d have to be to the *northwest* of the pyramids. I added an arrow to the picture here to show that. From that position to the northwest, the biggest of the three pyramids (Khufu) will be on your left, and the littlest (Menkaure) on your right (this map may help).

‘You may see where I’m going with this. Look back at the viral picture, and you’ll see *they got the pyramids backwards*. The little one is on the left (the one in the middle looks like it’s the biggest, but , but that’s because it’s built on ground 10 or so meters higher than the big pyramid), which means this picture was taken to the southwest of the pyramids, facing northeast.

‘In other words, if you were standing in the spot where the viral photo was taken and faced the pyramids, the planets would be behind you.

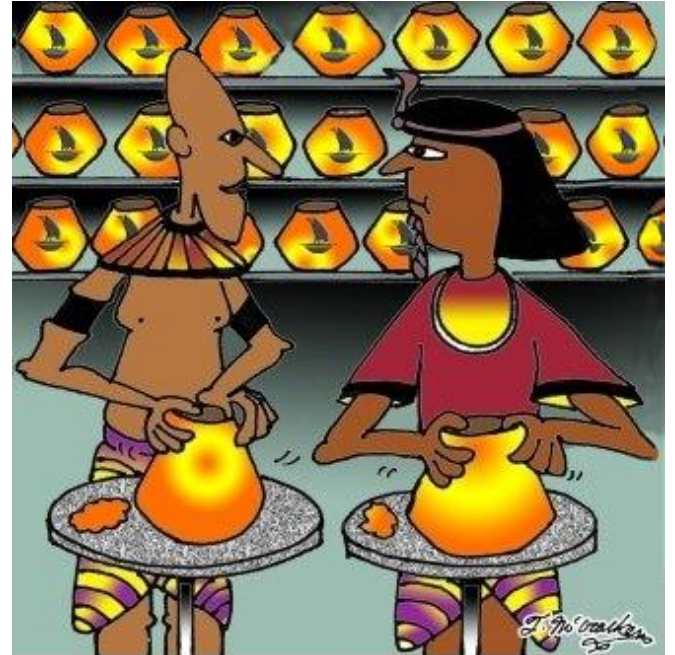
‘Oops.

‘But even forgiving the inaccuracies of the picture, I find it very difficult to find this anything more than coincidence. There are many, many landmarks on the Earth, and many ways the planets can arrange

themselves in the sky. Why not ask how often planets will be near each other and rising near the heelstone at Stonehenge as seen from some particular angle, or aligned with the ziggurats in Central America, or the Moai at Easter Island?

‘The point is, things like this seem almost supernatural, but part of that is because you’re choosing the location *after the fact*. If you ask how many places there are like this, and how many times the planets "align", it doesn’t seem quite as mystical.’

And, the CyberScribe has decided that this bit of nonsense makes a good place to conclude his month's column. See you here next month!



“Thank goodness next week we’ll be in a new dynasty and we can make some other style of pottery.”





And, something that must be true...because the CyberScribe found it on the Internet:

# ANCIENT EGYPTIANS FLEW PLANES — 3,300 YEARS AGO!

**SCALE MODEL, above, of an ancient Egyptian glider soars over the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx.**

**But that's not all! Experts say King Tut died in history's first airplane crash!**

**Egyptian bigwig King Tut was killed in an aircraft crash more than 3,300 years ago.**

That's the amazing conclusion of historian William Deiches who says the ancient Egyptians were soaring above the clouds in hot air balloons and crude gliders thousands of years before the Wright brothers made their historic flight.

Since flying was considered "godlike" by Egyptians, this ability was reserved for wealthy people and royalty. Deiches says flying was the original sport of kings and believes King Tut was the tragic victim of history's first plane crash.

"I think that we must look upon these ancient craft as more of a sporting activity than as a means of travel.

"I suspect that they were the objects of a royal pastime. In this context, it is interesting to note that lots of ancient Egyptian royalty, including King Tutankhamen, died with broken ankles and multiple injuries, as if killed in a glider crashing to Earth."

Deiches' 20-year exhaustive study of ancient Egypt led him to an astonishing conclusion. He realized that many drawings and carvings of weird figures with wings were actually the plans for early flying machines. He now believes that the Egyptians launched their first hot air balloon as early as 3225 B.C. and were soaring in crude gliders 200 years later.

"Egypt started this craze among its royalty, wealthy and privileged, but it soon spread to what nowadays is known as Tibet, India, Mexico, Turkey, China and Guatemala — all countries where hot air currents were sufficient to keep the gliders in the air," he said.

Deiches believes drawings of godlike figures with wings are actually sketches of what these early gliders looked like.

He built models of many of these early gliders and found many flew with ease.

Deiches believes the balloons and gliders were constructed from papyrus — the substance Egyptians used for paper — and may have had wingspans of up to 60 feet.

They were launched from the top of a cliff or a high structure such as a pyramid, Deiches said, and attained flights of up to 50 miles.

**TOP RESEARCHER** William Deiches holds the model of the papyrus plane he believes beat the Wright brothers into the sky more than 3,000 years ago!

**By THEO DORISOPOLIS**

**MAN SURVIVES SIX BULLETS IN HEAD**

Joe Blackburn, 24, wandered around for an hour before walking into a local hospital complaining that he'd been shot six times in the head!

"Apparently some of the bullets just went around the skull under the skin," said Sheriff Freddie Conn of Coffee County, Tenn., where the bizarre shooting occurred. "It's the darndest thing."

— NATE DANIELS

**DEATH MASK** of boy-king Tutankhamen. An expert says he died in a plane crash thousands of years before the Wright brothers got off the ground.

43 WEEKLY WORLD NEWS January 1, 1991

(The CyberScribe reminds you that if you ever wish to see the entire, unabbreviated, text of one of these stories, contact him and he will provide that access. Some articles may no longer be on the Internet sites, but the CyberScribe usually can recover the item of interest from his files.)