

CyberScribe 158 - October 2008

Hang onto your nemes headdress...the Tut-tsunami is about to break over Dallas! The exhibit materials have arrived and are installed...with a few new pieces not seen in earlier versions...and its stating to get weird out there!

The State Fair of Texas has started with all the usual nonsense and fanfare...silly displays...huckster vendors...horrible fried foods...a midway...and oddities too numerous to mention. It is, after all, the largest State Fair of them all!

One of the major attractions is the butter sculpture. Why is there a butter sculpture? Who knows...but there is always one tucked into an out of the way corner of one of the exhibit halls. This year the sculpture is, well of course, King Tut himself. At this writing, no photos have been released, but it boggles the mind. Maybe the 'Tut curse' will manifest itself...remember a few years ago when the butter sculpture came apart and collapsed?

Well so far the state fair has just placed a huge statue of Anubis alongside the usual grotesque figure of 'Big Tex'...surely the strangest of all mascots. This little article from the Texarkana Gazette (<http://www.texarkanagazette.com/news/WireHeadlines/2008/09/23/big-tex-goes-up-state-fair-opens-in-dall-64.php>) tells us that:



"In this photo released by the Dallas Museum of Art, the jackal-headed god Anubis, 25 feet and weighing 5 tons, is erected Monday on the midway at the State Fair of Texas next to Big Tex in Dallas. The Dallas Museum of Art is making final preparations for the Oct. 3 premiere of 'Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs', an extensive collection of more than 130 treasures from the tomb of King Tut and other Valley of the Kings tombs. Anubis is believed to be the guide and protector of the dead in ancient Egypt."

A few words on the butter sculpture might seem in order. This note from the Dallas Morning News (<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/localnews/stories/090608dnmetfairbuttersculpture.4842b730.html>) informs us that:

"As its butter sculpture this year, the State Fair of Texas will introduce an 800-pound unsalted King Tut accompanied by ghee servants and Egyptian relics.

"The King Tut show opens at the Dallas Museum of Art on Oct. 3 and runs through May 17, 2009. The State Fair opens Sept. 26 and goes through Oct. 19.

"The State Fair's iconic butter sculpture – synonymous with state fairs countrywide – started in 1922 with renditions of milkmaids, cows and other butter-related creations. It's since diverged. Elvis and his hound dog were featured at the fair in 2005, and Marilyn Monroe and her flailing dress took the stage in 2006."

With the opening of the show at the Dallas Museum of Art (October 3, 2008 through May 17, 2009) comes the avalanche of tacky souvenirs. The Dallas Morning News (http://www.guidelive.com/sharedcontent/dws/ent/kingtut/stories/DN-tut_shop_00gl.State.Edition1.44fa7cc.html) gives us a hint of what is to come:

"The word "kitsch" comes pretty close to describing the state of the souvenir industry. Whether Virgin Mary bobblehead dolls or Sept. 11 snow domes, the question arises: Where have all the boundaries gone?

"Here's a quick inventory:

- A tissue box that allows you to pull the tissues right out of the boy king's nostrils.
- Tutty-Tutty bears (\$16.95), Tut DVDs (\$35), and bookcases and wine chests in the shape of Tut's sarcophagus (\$450).
- A one-of-a-kind scarab necklace that costs \$5,000. That's the highest-priced item. The lowest-priced would be a postcard. Those go for 95 cents.
- There's Tut umbrellas (\$35), Tut T-shirts (\$19.95), Tut refrigerator magnets (\$4) and Tut dog collars (\$85).
- Tut bobbleheads (\$8.95), of course. Playing cards (\$9.95), key chains (starting at \$3.95) and note cubes (\$9.95).
- Tut-shaped crème brûlée, white-chocolate wedges (\$8.95).

"Upon hearing this, you might not be able to wait until October. If that's the case, Tut offers an online component to gift-buying at www.kingtut.org. The cyber store is divided into categories: new arrivals, custom cartouches, "on sale," collectibles, official merchandise, museum replicas, media, stationery, books, jewelry, gifts and kids.

"In online "collectibles," there's a Limoges porcelain mask that sells for about \$300 and a Limoges porcelain sarcophagus, also about \$300.

"A Tut bust sells for about \$350, a sarcophagus CD cabinet is \$480, a wine rack is \$900 and a Tut server sells for about \$450.

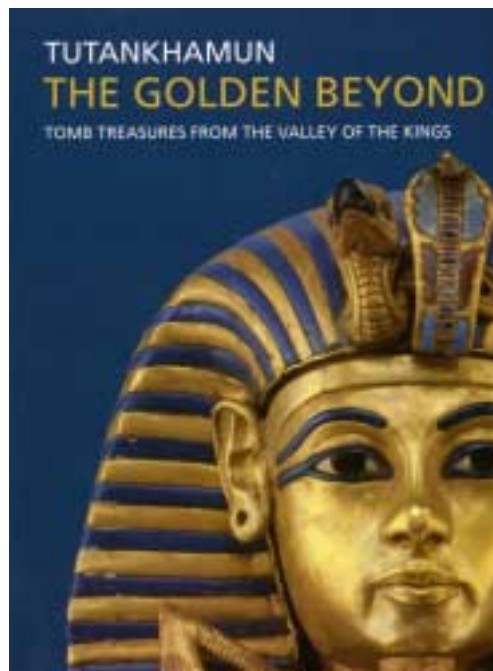
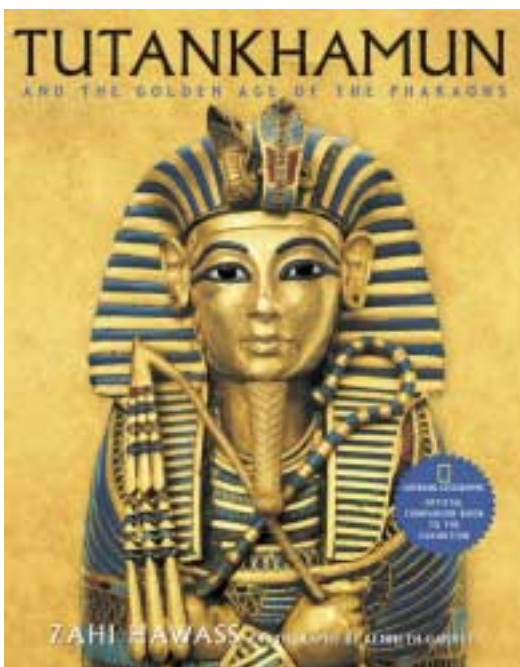
"Zahi Hawass is the Egyptian official who acts as his government's liaison to the Tut exhibition. He always wears an Indiana Jones-like hat, which you can buy. It sells for about \$45 online and benefits a good cause. Proceeds go to the Suzanne Mubarak Children's Museum building fund, established to help create Cairo's first children's museum.

"Official merchandise also includes the exhibition catalog, the official DVD, the exhibition soundtrack, which won't be used at the DMA, wall calendars, tote bags, mouse pads, mugs, playing cards, shot glasses and a kids' "kooky pen" collection, with each pen selling for about \$9.

"Tut was, after all, a kid himself and loved playing an Egyptian board game called Senet. You, too, can buy one. But kids, save your pennies: It retails for about \$56."

Speaking of the official catalog...caveat emptor...beware... The book touted most places as the catalog is most certainly not the real article. Its a National Geographic Society book written by Zahi Hawass...'Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs', the one with the gold cover. This is just another Tut book.

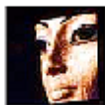
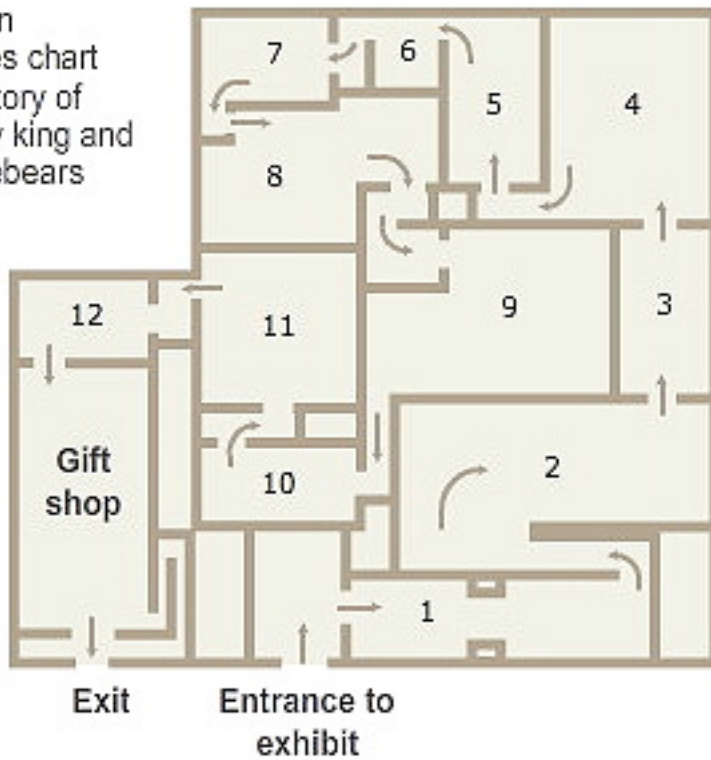
The REAL catalog is called "Tutankhamun - The Golden Beyond, Tomb Treasures from the Valley of the Kings". Both are shown below, but if you can only afford one, get the blue one..." Tutankhamun - The Golden Beyond...".



The Dallas Morning News did publish a floor map of the exhibit:

A room-by-room look at Tut's world

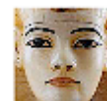
A dozen galleries chart the history of the boy king and his forebears



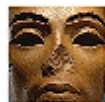
Gallery 1:
Introduction Theater



Gallery 5:
Religious Revolution



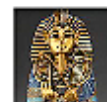
Gallery 9:
Tutankhamun's Tomb



Gallery 2:
Egypt Before Tutankhamun



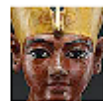
Gallery 6:
Discovery of Tutankhamun's Tomb



Gallery 10:
Causing His Name to Live



Gallery 3:
Traditional Beliefs



Gallery 7:
The Boy King



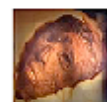
Gallery 11:
The Burial Chamber



Gallery 4:
Death, Burial and the Afterlife



Gallery 8:
Daily Life in Tutankhamun's World



Gallery 12:
New Discoveries

At first glance, the Dallas layout looks more interesting than the layout seen earlier in Chicago. We shall see, quoth the CyberScribe!

'Earth Times'

(<http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/atlanta-becomes-tutlanta-as-tickets,533271.shtml>) reminds us that there will be TWO Tut shows running simultaneously this winter. One here in Dallas and the other starts out in Atlanta...with the nickname 'Tutlanta'. The story below tells some more information about the Atlanta show...a venue that had been very tight-lipped about their materials. Abbreviated somewhat, the story says:

"Tutlanta" launched as tickets became available for "Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs," a new exhibition featuring more than 130 treasures from the tomb of celebrated pharaoh King Tutankhamun and other ancient Egyptian sites. The exhibition will premiere at the Atlanta Civic Center from November 15, 2008, to May 25, 2009, and is presented by the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University.

"To kick off fall's golden celebration, exhibition organizers announced a slate of Egyptian-themed activities and initiatives. The "Egyptomania in Atlanta Bus Tour" will transport visitors on a chartered coach to explore Egyptian revival art and architecture in Atlanta with the Michael C. Carlos Museum's curator of Egyptian art, Dr. Peter Lacovara, as their guide. "TUT Trivia!" will incorporate King Tut-themed questions into trivia nights at select Atlanta locations. In January 2009, the Atlanta Opera and Emory University's Flora Glenn Candler concert series will present Philip Glass' opera "Akhnaten," which explores the great pharaoh's reign just before that of Tutankhamun.

"Tutankhamun's magic still captures the hearts of people all over the world, even though more than 85 years have passed since the discovery of his amazing tomb," said Zahi Hawass, secretary general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities. "America has welcomed the golden king, and now he returns, bringing with him all the great pharaohs of Egypt." Proceeds from the tour will go toward antiquities preservation and conservation efforts in Egypt, including the construction of a new grand museum in Cairo.

"Premiering November 15, 2008, to May 25, 2009, "Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs" will feature striking objects from some of the most important rulers. Derived from a variety of contexts, including temples and royal and private tombs, many of these artifacts have never before visited the United States.

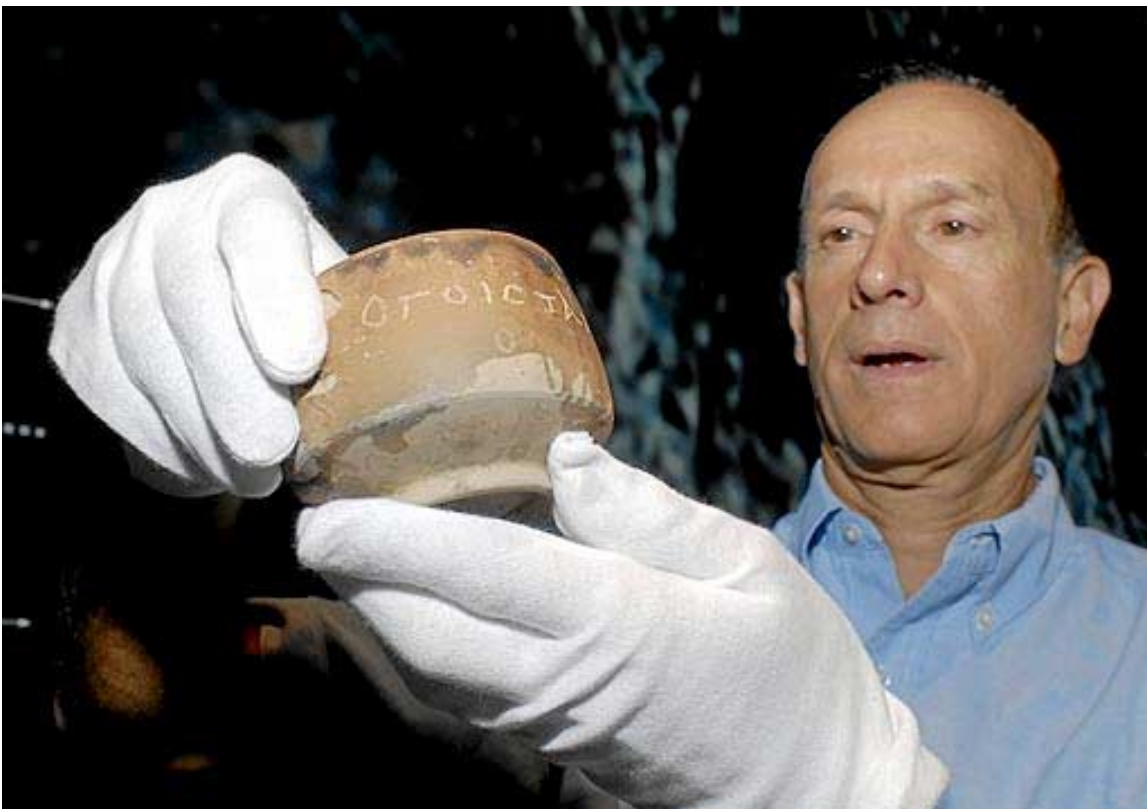
"The exhibition will highlight more than 50 treasures from Tutankhamun's tomb and more than 70 artifacts representing other pharaohs and notables, along with the latest scientific research about King Tut. Four galleries devoted to King Tut will correspond to the four rooms of his nearly intact tomb, where the treasures were discovered by British explorer Howard Carter in 1922. Legendary artifacts from the antechamber, the annex, the treasury and the burial chamber will include Tutankhamun's golden sandals, jewelry, furniture, weaponry and statuary."

The Spanish source 'El Mundo'

(<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/09/17/ciencia/1221645751.html>) opened the new story on what has been called the 'Christ Cup' and the 'Holy Grail'...a pottery cup discovered in Alexandria. Or it might just be an old cup that once belonged to a guy named Chrèstos. The German newspaper called it 'Heiliger Gral vom Nil', or the 'Holy Grail from the Nile'. Of course, it wasn't found in the Nile...whatever...

Here is the most useful report to date:

" In the harbor of Alexandria, the team of Franck Goddio has found a cup with the Greek text "dia chrestou o goistais" or "dia chrestou ogoistais". It dates to the 1st c. AD, probably before 50 AD.



"One of the theories is that it relates to a form of popular 'white' magic that invokes Jesus Christ -- in which case it would be the oldest written reference to Christ. It should then be read as "by Chrestos the magician" or "mage through Chrestos" (cp. Acts 19:13-14).

"But of course there are several other theories possible-- it could refer to another christos/messiah/anointed one, or it could be the common Greek personal name Chrèstos, or it could

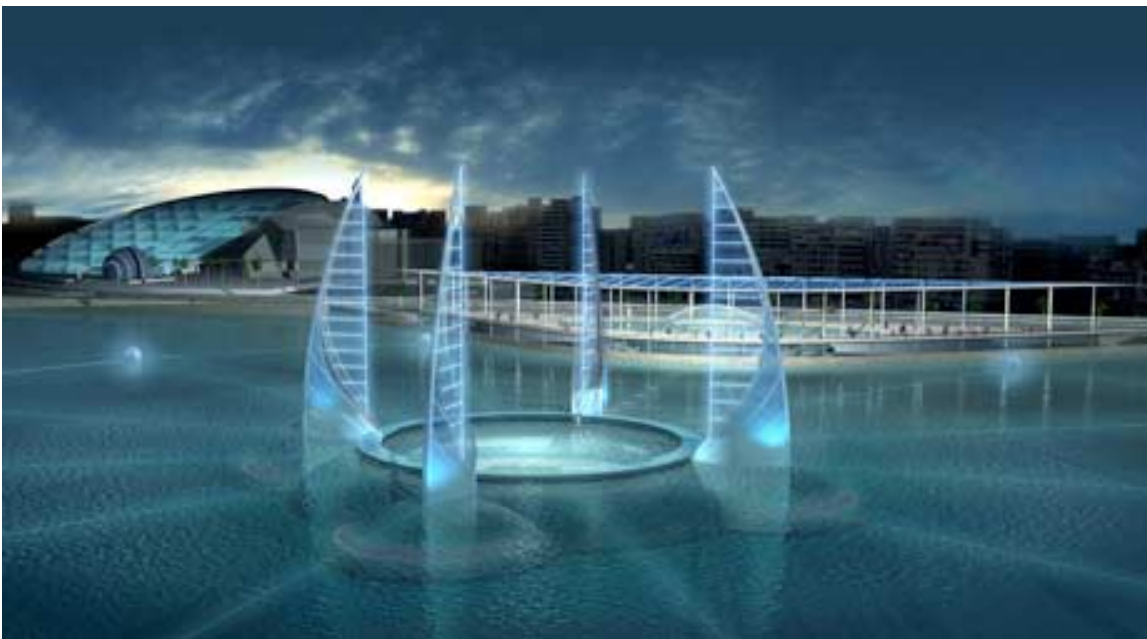
refer to a Carian godhead Ogo, or be some mundane phrase referring to the use of the cup. The jury is still out."

The 'National Geographic Society'

(<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2008/09/080916-underwater-museum.html>) reopened a long-going set of announcements on how to allow ordinary visitors see the great discoveries littering the sea floor of Alexandria's harbor...remains of the sunken portion of the ancient city. The latest in a series of wild statements involves an underwater museum where visitors would walk through tunnels to stay dry as they view selected finds.

Abbreviated somewhat, the story proposes:

"Cleopatra's palace sank long ago into the Mediterranean, but visitors to Alexandria, Egypt, may eventually view the complex's remnants via the world's first underwater museum.



A proposed underwater museum (illustrated above) in Alexandria, Egypt, came closer to reality in September 2008, when the UN established a committee to aid the design process with the Egyptian government.

"Fiberglass tunnels would connect aboveground galleries, near the New Library of Alexandria, to the underwater facility, where antiquities would be visible in their natural resting places at the site of Cleopatra's now sunken palace.

"In early September the United Nations cultural agency, UNESCO, announced it is funding a team to determine if such a museum is feasible. If built, the museum could display treasures and monuments of her palace, which once stood on an island in one of the largest human-made bays in the world but were submerged by earthquakes from the fourth century A.D. onward.

"The bay is filled archaeological sunken treasures. In the 1990s archaeologist-divers found thousands of objects: 26 sphinxes, statues bearing gifts to the gods, blocks weighing up to 56 tons, and even Roman and Greek shipwrecks. Archaeologists have mapped more than 2,000 submerged objects in the area of the bay where they believe the lighthouse once stood.

"The larger, inland museum will have underwater fiberglass tunnels to structures where visitors can view antiquities still lying on the seabed. But the bay's murky waters could obscure the views of submerged monuments. The builders of the museum will either have to clean the water or replace it entirely with an artificial lagoon.

"The proposed museum is planned to be underwater not only for aesthetic value but also because it follows the 2001 UNESCO convention for the preservation of underwater heritage. The convention decided that submerged artifacts should ideally remain on the seabed out of respect for their historical context and, in some cases, because water actually preserves artifacts.

"The structural integrity of the building, however, is considered only a minor problem because the Alexandria bay is only about 16 to 20 feet (5 to 6 meters) deep, architects will not face strong water pressure on the walls of the museum."



Shown with a 2008 illustration of the proposed underwater museum (upper center), the Bay of Alexandria once contained Cleopatra's island palace and the Pharos of Alexandria lighthouse (picture), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Both of them were done in centuries ago by earthquakes.



The proposed museum's underwater facility will be difficult and expensive to build and is the focus of the just launched two-year feasibility study. But planners believe that the sunken island that once held Cleopatra's palace will be worth the trouble.



Twin sphinxes flank a statue of a priest of Isis amid fallen columns on Alexandria's sunken island of Antirhodos in a photo from the late 1990s. Similar tableaux remain on the sunken island, which was found by underwater archaeologists in 1996, and should be visible from the proposed underwater museum.



An eroded sphinx, shown in an undated photo, isn't much more than a silhouette in the Bay of Alexandria's dusky waters. The murk is driving the proposed museum's planners to propose covering the monuments, then cleaning the enclosed water.

And that's enough for this month!

If you would like to contact the CyberScribe (also known as Clair Ossian) to ask a question or to suggest an item for a future column, please send an e-mail to clastic@verizon.net or call (972) 416-5211. Don't forget to look up the North Texas Chapter of ARCE's Internet Homepage located at this address: <http://www.arce-ntexas.org/>.

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Karlene...please add the usual headers, footers and notes. And be sure that we use my new e-mail address: clastic@verizon.net

PLUS...remember that we are going to publish the answers from last month's 'Where the heck is it' contest.
Cheers...
Clair

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Where the Heck Is It?? October, 2008



Continuing in the footsteps of past Egyptology giants, Zahi Hawass has decided to use an ancient tomb for his new Luxor office...er, well, that is as soon as they get the plumbing fixed.

There is, of course, the possibility that the slide captions got confused. Do you have a suggestion for the following queries?:

- 1) Where is this site?
- 2) Who built it?

Bring your answers with you when you attend the next North Texas ARCE regular meeting. The correct answer will be divulged at that time.

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Where the Heck Is It?? The answers for the September 2008 photograph.



This was offered as a very rare photograph taken by the famed explorer and collector Giovanni Battista Belzoni. The scene is said to be the bedroom in a motel near one of his most famous discovery sites, the Pyramid of Amenhotep VII. Or, perhaps not...

If you disagree:

- 1) Who was the actual owner of this luxurious suite? Unas
- 2) Where do YOU think this photograph was taken?
Burial chamber of his pyramid. The sarcophagus is in the lower foreground
- 3) What would you have seen on the walls just outside the door to this wonderful room?
The pyramid texts are engraved into the walls and filled with blue pigment.