

CyberScribe 159 - November 2008

Egypt news is a little thin this month, but there are a few items of great import. Not least among these is the concern among the world community about the planned changes along the Corniche at Luxor.

Word is out that the government plans to do massive changes in Luxor to develop what almost seems like an ancient Egyptian theme park anchored on one end by Luxor Temple and the other end by the Karnak temple complex.

The CyberScribe will offer you some insights and comments on this controversial plan. The first was a note sent out to the Egyptology community from Egypt.

"It has come to our attention that a new development program is about to be launched in Luxor by the Government of Egypt that focuses on the east bank Corniche Boulevard. The goal is to double the width of the Corniche to alleviate traffic congestion, create a pedestrian walkway along the Nile, and establish a four-kilometer touristic zone along the riverfront between Luxor Temple and Karnak Temple. If the current plan is implemented this zone will be at the expense of most of the buildings presently along the Corniche boulevard, most of which will be demolished or cut back to accommodate the widened street. Exceptions are the Luxor Museum, which will only lose its front parking area, and the University of Chicago's headquarters in Luxor, Chicago House, which will remain where it is, but will lose its entire front garden area to the new street.

"It is hoped that the Luxor City authorities will reject this unnecessarily extreme plan for a less radical approach that is also being discussed. Building the riverbank outward would allow room for a widened Corniche but still preserve the buildings and gardens presently along the Nile that give Luxor so much of its charm and character.

"Slated for removal are several older gardens: one part of a military club, one in front of a mosque, and another in the front of a Coptic Catholic rest house. The historic Chicago House garden in particular would be a terrible loss. Over 75 years old, its 24-meter palm trees and dozens of trees and flowering bushes were donated as cuttings from the botanical gardens of Cairo and Aswan in the 1930s, and are unique in Luxor. Two rows of royal palms along the front walk imitate the 14 open papyrus columns of the great Colonnade Hall of Luxor Temple, and symbolize the archaeological preservation work this institution has accomplished in partnership with Egypt for over 84 years.

"It may not be too late. Comments in support of a less radical plan for the Luxor Corniche can be sent to the office of Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif."

Another view came from Bob Partridge (Editor "Ancient Egypt" magazine "<http://www.ancientegyptmagazine.com>")

"As far as the clearance around Karnak and Luxor temples are concerned, most Egyptologists and certainly those on the spot seem to think it is good for the monuments in the longer term.

"The vision of the temples standing in splendid isolation, as in the case of Karnak, has enabled the new excavations to take place in front of the temple, which, ironically perhaps, have revealed that in antiquity they were actually surrounded by buildings - certainly baths and workshops and probably houses, proving that the temples were at the very heart of the ancient community. It is perhaps though a shame that they have now been isolated from the modern community in Luxor.

"As regards to the Corniche, which I understand is to be pedestrianised and also widened, I personally cannot understand why this is actually necessary. If the cruise boats are moved, as is the intention, then the amount of traffic will be greatly reduced anyway. The proposed demolitions will affect banks, schools, hotels and private houses, some only recently completed. In the case of hotels this is seen as a good opportunity to upgrade and redevelop, but the affects on the Luxor museum and Chicago House will be dramatic.

"Both stand to lose their gardens, and in the case of the museum this will mean a new ticket office and entrance and also some ground along a side road is also being lost. The concern is what it might mean for the long term future and expansion plans for the museum.

"Chicago House is a little gem, with its wonderful gardens and it deserves to be preserved in its own right as an important part of the more recent history of Luxor and Egyptology.



View of Chicago House

"Tourists visit Luxor for the monuments it is true, but also to experience the real Egypt and meet the people. There is a real danger that tourists will see only the monuments and new buildings and little else. With many tour groups being told not to go to visit Luxor on their own or eat out (unless to tour-approved shops and restaurants) and this especially applies to the boats, then the very heart of the Luxor many of us know and love will vanish for ever and this would be very sad.

"I would like to think our voices will be heard, but things seem to move very fast in Luxor and the Corniche widening has in places already started. We can only hope it will not be too late."

Yet another voice on the topic stated:

"I fear that the planned changes for Luxor may not stop with the "remodeling" of the Corniche. I have just returned from Luxor, where I got the impression that it appears to be intended to continue the current excavations of the Avenue of Sphinxes to the north of Luxor Temple all the way up to Karnak, regardless of what may stand in its way. Whereas this may seem a nice idea in abstract from the point of view of exposing more of this unique complex, it appears to take little account of the fact that Luxor is not a museum but a living city populated by people with everyday practical needs.

"I also heard about plans to demolish the houses nearest to Medinet Habu temple, destroying the best part of a small village in the process, presumably to create open space and coach parking. I would be interested if any of you know more about this.

"When I came across a sign from the Luxor municipal authorities apologizing for road works etc in the winter 2006/2007 which stated their intention to turn the town into an open-air museum, I laughed -- however, I now fear that they may be serious.

"Birgit Schoer, London"



She goes on to add further comments in another e-mail, addressing yet another rumor...that the government intends to destroy the shops, homes and cafes in front of the Temple at Medinet Habu.

Those of us who have been there will miss those sites, but the government states that it wishes to develop a broad court in front of the temple, similar to the one it built in front of the Temple at Edfu:

"In my opinion, the needs of long-established small businesses in a country without social security provisions and in a town devoid of significant employment opportunities beyond subsistence agriculture and direct or indirect participation in the tourist business, just demonstrates the problem with the approach taken by those responsible for the current redevelopment of Luxor town.

"What (is described) will benefit a vanishingly small minority of people, whereas the great majority of Luxor residents cannot afford to be concerned with coach parking and upmarket shopping opportunities at a time of economic crisis.

"I strongly disagree with comments about Medinet Habu: any demolition of the local houses would DESTROY part of the ambience of the place. Perhaps we should remember that these temples were surrounded by buildings when they were functioning. And above all, I very much doubt whether the residents of the local village would appreciate their homes being decried as "dilapidated" and not worth preserving! I think we need to show a bit more empathy with the ordinary Egyptians in considering such schemes. What if some consultants arrived at our shores and informed us that certain residential areas near monuments would be demolished to enhance the "experience" of visiting tourists?

"I would also suggest that the measures currently in progress in Luxor will only aggravate the tendency to separate the average tourist even further from the real Egypt and real living Egyptians."

The CyberScribe wishes to conclude these comments and concerns with a note of caution. First, the comments above are the views and opinions of their writers and there has been very little information from the Egyptian governmental bodies involved.

Secondly, things are actually happening rapidly in Luxor. Hotels, public and private buildings are falling, there is a plan to expose the remainder of the avenue of Rams between Luxor and Karnak temples, the buildings in front of Karnak temple are being removed...but it is their country and the Egyptian government does indeed have the right to do what they feel is best.



Published general plan for the Luxor temple complexes

Published plans have been disseminated that show the extent of this new 'theme park' version of Luxor. Those that know the area can clearly see that many, if not all of the buildings between the top of the figure (above) to the river banks will be destroyed, people will be displaced from their homes and the area will apparently be a broad, open controlled space.



GoogleEarth view of Luxor with the planned demolition areas outlined.

The same area can be viewed in a different light when the other view is considered. This second picture is a GoogleEarth photo of the same area as that in the general plan illustration, but this time the red lines outline areas that seem slated for destruction. Note all the public and private buildings within the red

outlines. One hopes that the governmental bodies involved can find compromises that preserve both the character of the city and the need to preserve the ancient monuments.

(By the way, perhaps you wondered about the word 'Corniche'. The CyberScribe checked it out and it comes from the French 'route à corniche' or 'road on a ledge'. The general use is for a road along the side of a mountain where the land falls away to one side and rises on the other. In Egypt, however, the word is used for a waterfront promenade, generally combined with a main road.



This last usage certainly describes the lovely corniches in Cairo and Luxor. What a shame if these roadways were to be lost or changed in such a way as to lose their present charm).

Changes are definitely in the air of Egypt. The item below from 'Al-Ahram Weekly Online' (<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2008/890/eg2.htm>) (edited for length) shows how other areas are also in the crosshairs as revisions, clearings and restorations are happening in other important temple areas. The opening parts of this month's column deal with the view from the eyes of foreigners. For the Egyptian view of these projects, read on:

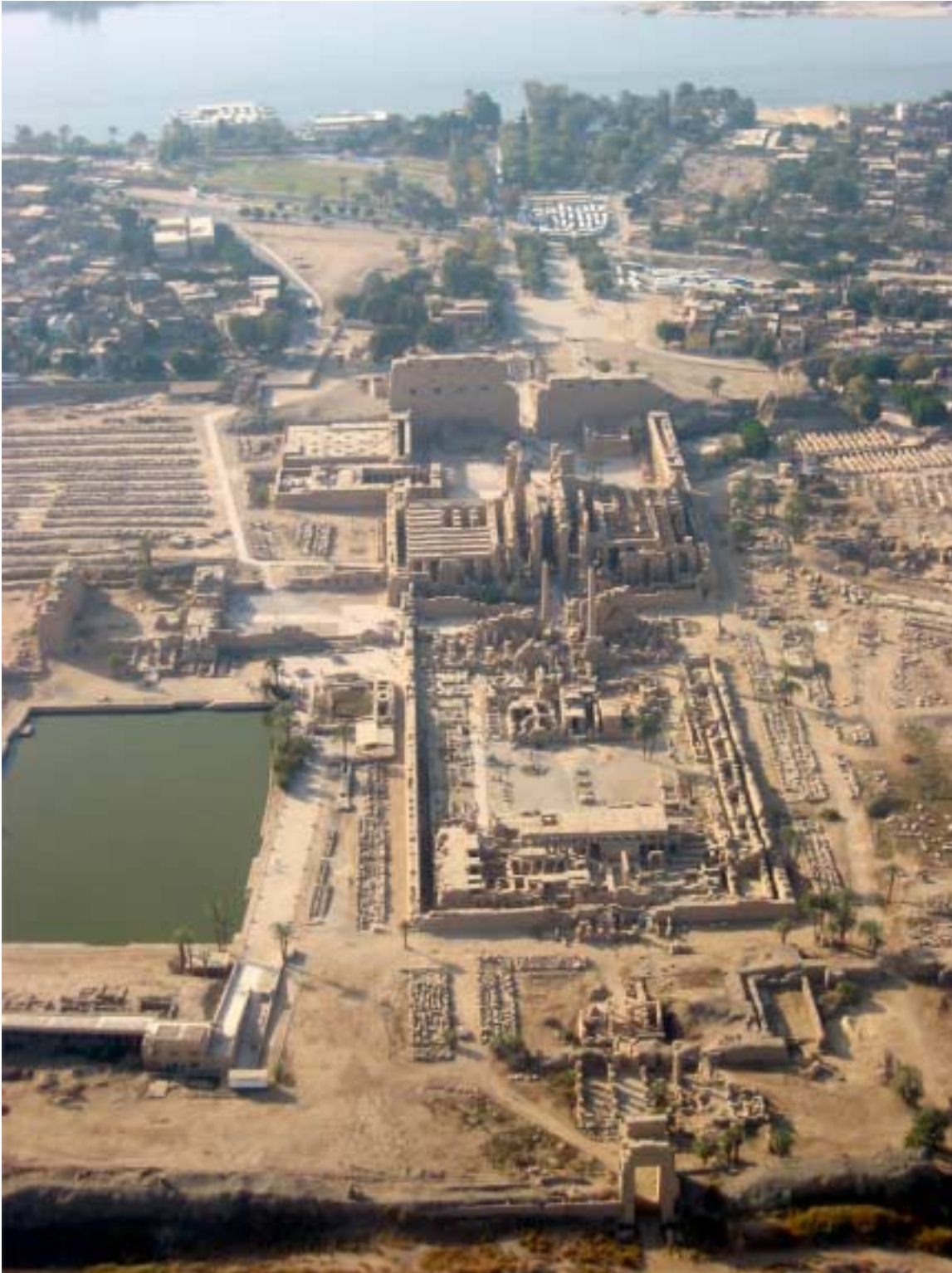
"The heat wave that hit Egypt last Sunday did not deter Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif from going ahead with his planned two-day tour of Luxor to view the progress achieved so far with the project to develop the whole area, including the town itself, into an open air museum.

"Luxor has been under major development since 2005 under President Hosni Mubarak's program to improve services for the residents of Upper Egypt and to develop and promote tourist projects, which will in turn fuel the local economy and provide job opportunities. Buildings that encroached on ancient

monuments were cleared, making way for excavations that revealed the full route of the Avenue of Sphinxes, once the royal path between Luxor and Karnak temples.

"After three years of makeover, Luxor is looking more alluring than ever. New houses and shops have been built to replace those that were forcibly demolished. All the buildings along the Corniche have been repainted in earth colors, and the city's streets and squares have been given a facelift, including the planting of large numbers of trees and flowers.

"Nazif's visit started with an inspection of the road leading to and from Luxor international airport which has been revamped and lined with trees and flowers. The prime minister then stopped at Karnak Temple to check on work being undertaken on the temple foreground and its surroundings. All encroachment has been removed from the forefront of the temple in an attempt to allow excavation to uncover the ancient harbor and a canal that was once connected to the Nile. According to ancient maps, the ancient Egyptians used a canal to access the Nile and cross to the West Bank in a position corresponding to Hatshepsut's Deir Al-Bahari Temple, which was built on the same axis.



"Over the last 20 months, excavations in front of the temple have uncovered a Ptolemaic ceremonial bath, a private ramp built for Pharaoh Taharqa of the 25th Dynasty (690-664 BC), a large number of bronze coins, an ancient dock and the remains of a wall that once protected the temples of Karnak from the rising Nile flood.

"Later on the first day of his visit, the prime minister viewed the progress at Luxor Temple where shanty houses, bazaars and rubbish dumps have been cleared and a small public garden opened. The unregulated building around the temple had been described by Culture Minister Farouk Hosni as "a time bomb waiting to explode". Now, Hosni said, the clearances had opened up to view a small Coptic church and the Al-Haggag Mosque, providing a new aspect to the temple.

"On his second day Nazif visited the West Bank, where stands a 3.62-metre tall statue of Queen Tiy, wife of Pharaoh Amenhotep III of the 18th Dynasty. It was discovered on the site of the massive Colossi of Memnon, the twin statues that command the road to the Valley of the Kings. Two sphinxes representing Tiy and Amenhotep III, as well as 10 statues in black granite of the lion-headed goddess Sekhmet, who protected the Pharaohs, were also unearthed at the site. He told the Weekly that the newly-discovered statues would be re-erected and placed on public view next year. They will be joined by two 15-metre-high statues excavated in recent years that will be placed 100 meters behind the Colossi of Memnon as part of an open air display.

"The prime minister was then driven north along the West Bank of the Nile, in the direction of Qena, to visit Dendera Temple, a massive pile of awe-inspiring ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman architecture.

"A few years ago the temple was closed to visitors, and its cafeteria and gift shops were almost derelict. Now the SCA's site management policy to rescue Egypt's archaeological sites and make them more tourist-friendly has brought new life to Dendera. The temple has been resurrected not only as an ancient temple but a comprehensive tourist complex providing visitors with various cultural and entertainment facilities.

"Hosni told the Weekly that one of the main goals of the development project was to reduce the number of visitors roaming around the temple chambers and corridors, as well as the time they spent inside the temple. In order to control the movement of tourists and to protect the temple reliefs, plans have been set in motion for tour guides to lecture their groups outside the temple in front of a three-dimensional plan of the corridors, the chambers and the sanctuary, and to show photographs of the most noteworthy scenes on the temple walls.

"The temple we see today was built on the ruins of the old temple during the late Ptolemaic period. Ptolemy XII Auletes (father of Cleopatra VII), whose name is found in the crypts, is associated with the foundation of the temple. During the Late Period and Graeco-Roman period several hypostyle halls, columns, kiosks and birth houses were added to the temple area by Nectanebo I, Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy X, and Ptolemy XI as well as by the Roman emperors Augustus, Tiberius and Nero."

Speaking of temples, here is a surprise. A new Egyptian temple has been announced from the shores of the Black Sea in Bulgaria. The report from 'Sophia Echo' (http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/temple-to-iris-and-osiris-unearthed-near-the-bulgarian-black-sea/id_32427/catid_70) tell us:

"Archaeologists have uncovered what is thought to be the remains of a temple complex dedicated to Isis and Osiris in the Paleokastro area, near Pomorie on the Bulgarian Black Sea. The temple has been dated to the middle of the second century CE, though it was built itself on the remains of a sanctuary from the Thracian era. The Thracians were an Indo-European tribe that occupied the lands of present-day Bulgaria, northern Greece, part of the Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, eastern Serbia and north-west Turkey from about 2000 BCE to about the sixth century CE.

"Until the discovery of the temple plot, the only evidence of worship of Isis and Osiris to have been found on Bulgarian territory had been in written form. Along with the remains of the building, ceramic vessels, lamps and coins were found on the 200 sq m site.

"The archaeologists were reported to have said that temple was built during the era of Emperor Antoninus Pius (139-143 CE).

Medical news from the world of Egyptology reported that the oldest demonstrated cases of malaria have been recognized in a pair of mummies. The report from the 'Discovery Channel'

(<http://dsc.discovery.com/news/2008/10/23/mummies-malaria.html>) briefly explain what was found:

"Two Egyptian mummies who died more than 3,500 years ago have provided clear evidence for the earliest known cases of malaria, according to a study presented this week in Naples at an international conference on ancient DNA.

"Pathologist Andreas Nerlich and colleagues at the Academic Teaching Hospital München-Bogenhausen in Munich, Germany, studied 91 bone tissue samples from ancient Egyptian mummies and skeletons dating from 3500 to 500 B.C. Using special techniques from molecular biology, such as DNA amplification and gene sequencing, the researchers identified ancient DNA for the malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum* in tissues from two mummies.

"We now know for sure that malaria was endemic in ancient Egypt. This was only been speculated on the basis reports by [the 5th century B.C. Greek historian] Herodotus and some very faint evidence from ancient Egyptian papyri," Nerlich told Discovery News."

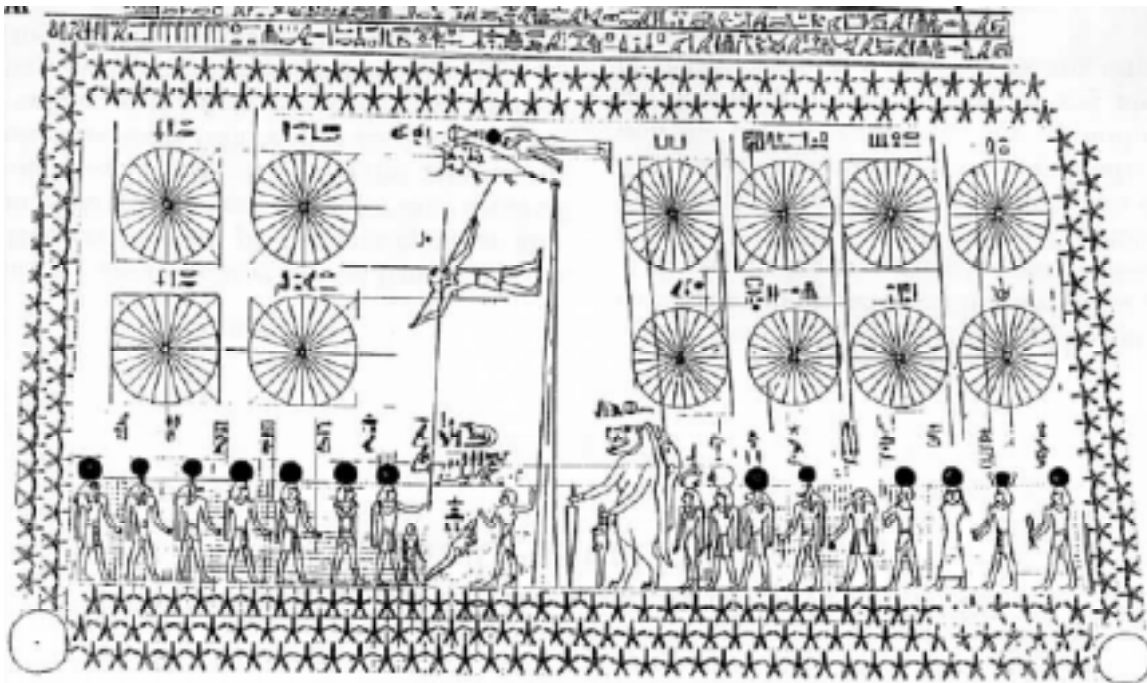
The CyberScribe got a question from a colleague just as the following article on ancient Egyptian astronomy appeared in 'Innovations Report' (http://www.innovations-report.de/html/berichte/physik_astronomie/ancient_egyptian_astronomy_120456.html). Abbreviated slightly, we learn:

"The constellations we are currently familiar with originate from "Ptolemy's 48 constellations" compiled from ancient Greek constellations by Claudius Ptolemaeus (from 90 A.D. to about 168 A.D.). He was a Greek astronomer flourishing in Alexandria, Egypt in the second century A. D. Though it is believed these constellations originate from Mesopotamia or ancient Greece, there are still various views on the origin of constellations. Ancient Egypt had its own constellations.

"1. Constellations specific to ancient Egypt: Ancient Egyptians called the northern stars around the circumpolar star "Ikhemw-sek" (imperishable stars) and the southern stars "Ikhemw-wredj" (unwearying stars). This naming (tireless stars) is probably because the southern stars especially on and about the celestial equator travel a very long distance after they rise above the East horizon before they sink below the West horizon, while the northern stars move counterclockwise around the celestial north pole.

"2. Northern constellations, imperishable stars: These stars are called "Ikhemw-sek" (imperishable stars) because they are generally assumed to be "northern circumpolar stars" never sinking below the horizon. The oldest existing northern constellation is a constellation named "Meskhetyw." It was drawn as a forefoot of a bull on the interior lid of the wooden coffin for the man named Idy which dated from the First Intermediate Period (from 2145 B.C. to about 2025 B.C.) and was excavated in Asyut. This constellation corresponds to our "Big Dipper." On the left of the foreleg, hieroglyph showing "Meskhetyw m pet mehetet" (Meskhetyw in the northern sky) was vertically written.

"As for northern constellations, the tomb of Senenmut, an official for Hatshepsut, is widely known. On the top of the center pole, a bull having short legs was drawn together with Meskhety written in hieroglyph. We can see Selket, scorpion-goddess with a sun disk on her head, behind the bull, and a constellation named Anu, a falcon-headed man harpooning the bull, below the bull. Further on the right of the pole, there is a female hippopotamus carrying a crocodile on her back and the astronomical instrument called Merekhket as well as a crocodile in her hands. Also a lying lion, crocodile, and human beings were drawn on the left.



Roof of a chamber in Senenmut's tomb with his zodiac

"Northern constellations were also found in the Valley of the Kings. Among them, the constellations drawn on the ceiling of the burial chamber in the tomb of Seti I in the 19th Dynasty are famous. Compared to the northern constellations in the tomb of Senenmut in the 18th Dynasty as described before, almost same figures were drawn, but all the figures were not located in the same positions. This implies it makes little sense to identify current constellations with the northern constellations in the tomb of Seti I. This is why it is difficult to determine correspondence between ancient Egyptian constellations and our current constellations.

"3. Southern constellations, unwearying stars: There are two famous constellations among the southern stars called Ikhemw-wredj (unwearying stars): a constellation called Sah corresponding to the current Orion's Belt and Sirius called Sepdet. The figures of Sah and Sepdet were also drawn on lids of wooden coffins between the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. Since Sah represented in hieroglyph was positioned above the head, the Orion's Belt was assumed to be crown on the head of Sah. Further Sepdet (Sirius) opposed to Sah was drawn as goddess with was scepter in her hand.

"The tomb of Senenmut as described before also shows a man on board as a figure representing Sah. This man holds Was scepter in his left hand and "Ankh", symbol of life, in his right hand. Due to his long beard, he is believed to be a god. In ancient Egypt, a male figure with a long beard represents either king or god. Around Sah in the tomb of Senenmut, a constellation composed of big three stars was drawn, which corresponds to the Orion's Belt. In the lower right position of these three stars, rather little nine stars were aligned vertically toward under Sah's boat. From this point, we can presume Sah was the constellation containing some stars in addition to the Orion's Belt.

"Sah was also drawn on the uranometry in the Dendera temple constructed at the end of the Ptolemaic Dynasty (around first century B.C.). Though this Sah figure is a man with Was scepter in his hand, he wears an elongate Upper Egyptian king's crown "white crown." From the fact that he holds a flail in his right hand and wears a bull's tail, we can determine this figure represents Osiris."

One thing we can always say is that Zahi Hawass likes to get things done...and he also like to stay in the center of controversy. 'Al-Ahram Weekly Online' (<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2008/917/he2.htm>) let him tell about his plans and thoughts concerning the two very tiny babies found in the tomb of Tutankhamun. He has plans to try and investigate whether are the children of the king...or whether they represent some other hypothesis. Read what he has to say (shortened a little for space reasons):

"For the latest project, I went to the University of Cairo and met with my friend Ahmed Samen, dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Cairo University. Faculty members cooperated with the SCA to carry out a CT-scan and to examine, for the first time, the fetuses buried with King Tut. Many stories have surrounded these fetuses over the years. Fawzi Gaballa, who has been taking good care of them, considers them to be the king's babies. Before I met Samen, I investigated the story of their discovery.

"Howard Carter found the mummified fetuses buried in the tomb of King Tut. We do not know exactly when the fetuses were transferred to the Faculty of Medicine, but it must have been after 1930. There are two fetuses; one was seven months old and the other five months. We are uncertain of their gender. I used to believe that they were not the children of King Tut and his queen Ankhesenamun, but rather that they were placed inside the tomb as symbols to represent the king's and queen's rebirth in the afterlife.



"When I visited my friend Samen, it was the first time that I had seen the fetuses. I was surprised at the poor state of preservation of the first one -- only bones and ashes remained. Fortunately, the second one was in better condition.

"The day of the investigation arrived. I took Ashraf Selim and his team as well as Yehia Zabara, a DNA specialist, with me to do the DNA tests and the CT-scans at the Faculty of Medicine. Most importantly, we had to guarantee the safety of the fetuses during their move to the CT-scanner in the university's radiology department, which was located about 200 meters away. I therefore also brought SCA experts who succeeded in moving the fetuses without damaging them. We put them under the CT-scanner and took DNA samples.

"This examination will prove the lineage of the fetuses, and whether or not they were the children of King Tut. If they were his children, then we will be able to identify their mother from among the unidentified mummies of KV 35 or from among the two female mummies found in KV 21. If we succeed, then we will be able to identify the mummy of Queen Nefertiti, the mother of King Tut's wife.

"The story behind the family members of King Tut will be very exciting to uncover for the first time. To discover if his father was Amenhotep III, also known as Akhenaten, will be a great achievement by the Egyptian Mummy Project."

(Ooops, says the CyberScribe, I bet that Zahi Hawass was misquoted in that last sentence. Amenhotep III was the father of Akhenaten...and possibly the father of Tut...but that is very speculative. Of the rest of Zahi's hopes...well, we don't have any tissues of Akhenaten for comparison, and while the famous genetic study on Hatshepsut, was interesting, it remains to be proven that the DNA study really identified her).

Let's finish up this month with a few odd bits.

The '24 Hour Museum'

(http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/nwh_gfx_en/ART60517.html) relates how Leeds Museum managed to transfer their mummies to a new home.



"Specialist mountain-rescue kit was called in yesterday to move a Yorkshire mummy into its new resting place at the Leeds City Museum in Millennium Square, where he is expected to be a star attraction. "Nesyamun – also known as The Leeds Mummy – was transported from his previous home in storage on Thursday September 4 to the much grander surroundings of the city's new museum.

"The major operation to move the mummy over two miles to the new museum has also revealed startling new facts relating to his death, which was initially thought to have been caused by strangulation. A combination of bulging eyes and in particular the protruding tongue in his perfectly preserved face at first led experts to believe that he had been strangled. Embalmers would ordinarily always close the mouth of a corpse. To not have done so suggests that they were unable to.



Strangled? A 3D bust of the mummy's head produced with a 360° scan will be on display next to the coffin and mummy.

"However, the fact that his hyoid bone is still intact – it supports the tongue and is commonly crushed when pressured – has largely ruled out the likelihood of strangulation. Experts now believe that a single sting from a small bee or some other venomous insect could have ended his life rather than murder: his face is contorted in a way consistent with a sudden, dramatic death. The insect's venom is thought to have caused an anaphylactic (allergic) reaction when it stung him, causing a rapid demise.

"Leeds City Council's curator of archaeology, Katherine Baxter, said: "It is quite controversial to display the mummy himself at a time when other museums are debating whether it is best to cover them up. We have thought long and hard about this and we feel we learn far more about him as a person this way."

"Our reconstructed tomb is towards the back of the gallery and is designed so that you have to make a conscious decision to go in and look at him. I think that's far more respectful than just putting him in a glass case – covered or otherwise – in the middle of a room."



Leeds Museums & Galleries curator of archaeology Katherine Baxter installing the mummy in his case alongside the sarcophagi.

"“Nesyamun is already known – on the basis of his coffin cases – as one of the finest examples of a mummy in the UK,” added Proctor. “This new display, which includes for the first time the mummy himself and the fascinating reconstruction of his head, will tell us far more about his life and who he was than we knew before.”

"Having been bought to the city by local banker John Blayds (who purchased Nesyamun and two other mummies in 1823 for the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society) Nesyamun, as the most important of the three, was moved during the war to avoid air attacks in 1941. The move proved to be a fortunate one – only a week later, both the old museum and the other two mummies were completely destroyed by bombs.

"A Quick lowdown on The Leeds Mummy

- Although his teeth are worn down through stones and sand in bread he would have eaten, Nesyamun has no signs of tooth decay thanks to ancient Egypt's sugar-free diet.
- He was a priest at the temple of the Egyptian god Amun in Karnak in ancient Thebes.
- Nesyamun is thought to have died in his mid-forties – this would be a decent life-span for an ancient Egyptian as they lived to a maximum age of around 50.
- His name means “the one belonging to Amun”.
- Scientific studies have found evidence of a variety of health problems – including arthritis, parasitic worms and an eye condition – in his remains."

Under the heading ...'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing'... this odd little story popped on onto the Internet. Abbreviated for space reasons, this story from the 'Daily Star (Egypt)' (<http://dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=17050>) reports an Egyptian source who claims that there were several Rosetta Stones of equal importance:

"An Egyptology researcher has called for the display of another original version of the Rosetta Stone at the entrance of the Egyptian Antiquities Museum, dismissing the official request by Egypt to repatriate the stone from the UK as mere propaganda.

"Researcher Bassam El Shammaa, who also works as a tour guide, (said) that there are different versions of the stone, which was discovered in Rashid in 1799. The two similar stelae discovered in Kom El Hesn in the Western Delta are currently exhibited in the Greco-Roman section of the museum.

"They have never been promoted as exact copies of the Rosetta Stone despite the fact that, besides being in better condition than their counterpart, on exhibit at the British Museum since 1802, they display the same royal text," El Shammaa said.

(Notes the CyberScribe, there is a reason they have never been ' promoted as exact copies of the Rosetta Stone'. It is because they are NOT identical)



Composite picture of the Stele with the Canopus Decree with the size and shape of the Rosetta Stone outlined.

"“They are known as the Canopy Stones because they were found at an archaeological site near Canopy, the extinct estuary of the Nile located 100 km from Rashid. “Each is 220 cm high, unlike the Rosetta Stone, which currently measures 114cm after part of it was lost. Upon its discovery, the Rosetta Stone was 149 cm high.”

"“Other original versions of the stone could also be lying under the bulky stones of the temples at Edfu, Dendera and Philae — you never know,” he argued.

He explained that the text on the stone, which stipulates that temples and priests are exempt from taxation during the reign of the Ptolemaic Dynasty, was a traditional honorary religious decree distributed across all temples in Egypt each time a Ptolemaic sovereign ascended the throne.

"“I demand a sonar search be applied to all the ancient temples, especially the chamber of the ‘The Holy of the Holiest’ in each temple, where such stones are believed to have been preserved,” he said.

"This way, El Shammaa believes, Egypt will probably obtain scores of originals and bring an end the futile propaganda relating to the Rosetta Stone. “Why should we ask for it back when we have several others?”

"“The Canopy Stones are even older as they date back to King Ptolemy III, whereas the Rosetta Stone marked the ascension of King Ptolemy V to the throne of Egypt.”

When the Canopy Stones were discovered in Kom El Hesn, we found out that the hieroglyphic, demotic and Greek texts were the same as the ones carved on the Rosetta Stone, but with the only difference that the Canopy Stones were intact, said El Shammaa."

(Notes the CyberScribe, he has clearly confused the Memphis Decree (Rosetta Stone) and the Canopus Decree. They are indeed similar, but with certainly not the same/ His 'canopy stones' are the Canopus Decree stelae)

And then...showing that the CyberScribe enjoys a silly story as much as anyone...how about this for a finish to this month's column?

Hooters restaurants are going to open a branch in Dubai. Thanks to a Kuwaiti investor, the Arab world is going to be served with hot mamas with big...ahem...feminine attributes!

This report reminds the CyberScribe about a silly incident that occurred some years ago, when he and Mrs. CyberScribe stepped into a 'Victoria's Secret' store to buy some odd undergarments for our daughter's Christmas present. What caught our eye? A store clerk was busy stocking the shelves and tables...and she was wearing an Afghanistan style burkha. Everything from head to toe was covered under voluminous dull gray robes...even her eyes were hidden behind a veil.

It is hard to imagine a greater contrast in life styles...unless such thoughts involve Hooter's babes in similar burkhas...as they hustle platters of burgers, fries and beer.

And that's certainly 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

XX

Where the Heck Is It?? November, 2008



This shot reveals one of the famed, but underappreciated, Egyptologist Bartholomew Winesap's greatest finds. Here we see an early shopping mall, complete with abundantly provided chariot parking all around the shops.

Of course there is a possibility that there is another interpretation. If you have one, then let's hear your suggestions:

- 1) Who do you think built this complex?
- 2) Where do you think this place is located?
- 3) Were there any neighbors, and if so, who were they?

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 October 2008 photograph.

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? Osirion at Abydos
- 2) Who built it? Seti I, most probably