

CyberScribe 180 – August 2010

Well, muses the CyberScribe...it's 'Hats and Horns' time. This issue is number 180, and therefore this one completes fifteen years of the column. When I started, I thought I'd do it for maybe a year...and then let it die. But the CyberScribe is still here...and will probably remain aboard as long as there is interest from the readers.

Now...where to start this month's column. How about the ever popular and notorious Cleopatra VII? There are three main reports in the press this time, but they really fall into two subjects. First...what about that huge pearl she supposedly dissolved in her drink that night she had the hot date with Anthony...the dissolved pearl she then supposedly drank to impress him with how little she cared for wealth.

Of course, the story comes from Pliny, a Roman, who just might have stretched the truth a tad. Or did he? This first item from 'USAToday' (<http://snipurl.com/zyfrv>) is an account (abbreviated) of how the trick might have been done.

"To win a bet, the story goes, Cleopatra quaffed a vinegar martini made with a dissolved pearl, "the largest in the whole of history," according to an ancient scribe. Doubted by scholars for centuries, Cleopatra's canny chemistry trick may have actually come off, suggests one researcher, based on her own experiments.

"Cleopatra won a wager with her befuddled Roman consort, Marc Antony, by consuming her pearl cocktail to create the costliest catering bill ever. Her 10 million sesterces (sesterces were the nickels of the ancient world) banquet bill, thanks to the destruction of the pearl, set a pretty early mark on extravagant consumption.

"I think there was a fairly good understanding of practical chemistry in the ancient world," Jones says, by email.

"Pearls were a popular adornment for the wealthy in the Roman era. Because in antiquity the only pearls in existence were natural ones, they were considerably rarer than they are today, making dissolving one a truly wasteful act.

"The classicist B.L. Ullman of the University of North Carolina noted in 1957 that some experiments suggested that vinegar could indeed dissolve pearls, made of acid-unfriendly calcium carbonate by oysters. But the news never

made it to most classicists, says Jones, author of *Cleopatra: Life & Times*. So, "I began to wonder if there was any truth behind it and started trying some experiments, at first with calcium supplement tablets and pieces of oyster shell and then with pearls," she says.

"To experiment with large pearls, Jones found a jeweler who had a couple of 5 carat ones that had been removed from pieces of jewelry. "They were not perfectly round and so were not suitable for other settings and were going to be disposed of," Jones says. "He was willing to donate these to my experiment."

"So what did she find? "Experiments reveal that a reaction between pearls and vinegar is quite possible," concludes the study. Calcium carbonate plus the vinegar's acetic acid in water produces calcium acetate water and carbon dioxide, for chemistry fans. Jones finds a 5% solution of acetic acid, sold in supermarkets today and well within concentrations produced naturally by fermentation, takes 24 to 36 hours to dissolve a 5-carat pearl. Boiling the vinegar, or crushing the pearl, or both, greatly speeds up the reaction, perhaps to under 10 minutes.

"I think the most likely explanations for the discrepancy between the experiment and the (legend) Pliny describes, during a banquet, are that the story compresses events for dramatic effect," Jones says, "or that Cleopatra drank the cocktail with the pearl only partially disintegrated, having satisfied her guests that it was destroyed."

"And there is always the chance, Furuhashi suggests, that she just palmed the pearl and duped Antony. Cleopatra was no fool, after all."

On a more somber note, two other interesting pieces explored the real nature of Cleopatra's demise. How did she off herself before the Roman's caught up with her/ The asps in the basket of figs don't work...unless there was a really big basket and a really big snake. Unlikely, thinks the CyberScribe. The two articles are about the same researcher, so let's start with this one from 'MailOnLine (<http://tiny.cc/ud6js>) (abbreviated):

"The Queen of the Nile ended her life in 30 BC. Legend has always held that it was the bite of an asp - an Egyptian cobra - which caused her demise. Now Christoph Schaefer, a German historian and professor at the University of Trier, presents evidence that he claims will prove that drugs and not a snake were the cause of death.



A German scientist says it is unlikely renowned beauty Cleopatra (famously played by Elizabeth Taylor, left) committed suicide via the bite of an Egyptian cobra (right) as this would have been 'agonizing and disfiguring'

“He will say that the bite of an asp would have given her an agonizing death over several days. Toxicologists and zoologists believe she took a drug cocktail instead. 'Queen Cleopatra was famous for her beauty and was unlikely to have subjected herself to a long and disfiguring death,' said Schaefer, the author of a best-selling book in Germany called Cleopatra.

“In most depictions, Cleopatra is portrayed as a great beauty and her successive conquests of the world's most powerful men are taken to be proof of her aesthetic and sexual appeal.

“'Cleopatra wanted to remain beautiful in her death to maintain her myth,' he says on the Adventure Science show screened by ZDF entitled Cleopatra's Death; How did the last female Pharaoh really die?

'She probably took a cocktail, which, back then was a well-known mixture that led to a painless death within just a few hours whereas the snake death could have taken days and been agonizing.

“Dietrich Mebs, one of those poison specialists, said he thought the drug cocktail was 'much more a favorite than the snake. She would have had to drink it because there was no method of injecting oneself at the time.'”

Pursuing this rather gruesome theme a bit further, a second article in ‘The Telegraph’ (<http://tiny.cc/tz3iw>) discussed some of the possible toxins she might have employed (abbreviated):

“Cleopatra did not kill herself in 30BC by letting an asp sink its poison-laced fangs into her delicate flesh, as everyone thought. Instead she swallowed a lethal cocktail of drugs — opium, hemlock and aconitum. At least, that is what Professor Christoph Schaefer of the university of Trier says. “Back then this was a well-known mixture that led to a painless death within just a few hours, whereas the snake death could have taken days and been agonizing.”



Cleopatra expires languidly in the painting *Cleopatra's Last Moments* (1892) by the artist Pauvert.

“Mind you, of those three poisons, Opium just sends you to sleep — into the arms of Morpheus — and in high doses shuts down respiration; that’s how you die. The other two, though, could feel extremely nasty.

“Aconitum, aka wolfsbane, stimulates the heart and can kill as a result. You’d feel terrible, with palpitations, fever probably, terrible nausea and angor animi — that’s the feeling of acute anxiety and fear of death that presages actual

death. Aconitum is a flower from the ranunculales (buttercup) family, and an ancient medicine. Medea used it when she attempted to murder Theseus. She mixed it in a bowl of wine. It appealed to the Romantics, or the idea of it did anyway.

“It’s a common misconception, which the Romantics may have encouraged inadvertently, that all these toxins kill you by sending you into a nice sleep. They don’t, usually. Most poisons that kill you do not cause you to doze pleasantly as you expire. You are likely to be wide awake, and suffering.

“As for hemlock, this is Conium maculatum, a leafy shrub containing the neurotoxin coniine. It works similarly to curare. When Socrates took it after being condemned to death, he slowly lost sensation in his body as he died, with numbness starting in his feet and moving upwards through his legs. So Plato describes it in the *Phaedo*. It doesn’t sound quite as bad as aconitum, but still hardly instantaneous: plenty of time to work oneself up into a state of high anxiety.

“Any one of those drugs on its own would be enough to kill, in the right doses. So perhaps the Queen of the Nile was applying a “belt and braces” principle. In the same way executioners in the USA employ a barbiturate to knock out the victim, then follow up with other drugs such as potassium to stop the heart dead, even though the barbiturate would be enough to kill the patient on its own.

“It’s certainly no surprise that Cleopatra was familiar with mind-bending substances. Many cultures used chemicals extracted from plants, which I wouldn’t recommend because they’re nearly all horribly toxic and produce little discernible benefit.”

Moving on...the CyberScribe doesn’t feel that the next few items have earned much space in the column, but some of the readers might find them interesting. The opinions are those of the various authors, and the CyberScribe refuses to enter this battleground.

First, in an Internet posting by Patrick Philpott (eef@lists.yale.edu), this short statement was posted. Most of us do not have access to the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, so this might prove worthy of note:

- 1) mtDNA (unpublished by Hawass et al.)from ancient mummies is practically irretrievable for analysis purposes, and Y-DNA (published) is even more so
- 2) More recent capture approaches should have been used
- 3) Avoidance of the influence of contamination, both before and during the study, is not sufficiently described
- 4) There is a lack of reported quality control measures
- 5) There is no substantiation for claiming KV55 is much older than previously believed
- 6) It is not clear that Tutankhamun had club foot
- 7) Reports of inherited disorders among the Amarna family are inconsistent
- 8) Visual observation rules out brachycephaly for KV55 and Tutankhamun, and rather suggests the opposite, i.e. dolichocephaly
- 9) The Discovery program shows poorly developed interdigitated cranial sagittal sutures on KV55 and Tutankhamun, indicating ages of 20 or less
- 10) The JAMA authors mention macroscopic and radiologic inspection of the mummies, but fail to describe these analyses
- 11) By the age of his death Tutankhamun should have developed an immunity to malaria
- 12) Certain lesions on his body should be ascribed to sickle cell disease

“In their reply, Gad, Selim and Pusch address numbers:

- 1) Printing Figure 1, showing strong traces, at least to my untutored eye (but why wasn't it published in the original report?)
- 3) With reference to possible contamination during the study
- 4) By simply stating that all accepted controls were adhered to

5) By basically saying that CT scans are best, period

6) The allegations are based on the photos printed in the JAMA article, which in themselves are not enough

11) By assuring us that they are currently looking into the possibility of SCD

“Personally, I believe that if the original article³ had limited itself to the DNA and family relationships aspects, and devoted more space to justifying its findings with concrete data (and much more of it), rather than diving into a series of speculations on Tutankhamun's health problems, it would not have aroused so much skepticism as it has.”

The second article this time on the Tut findings went a different way altogether, and popped a new theory out for our consideration. A German press release (<http://tiny.cc/7o77x>), (unfortunately for most of us, it was written in German. Therefore, you will have to rely on the CyberScribe's possibly faulty translation):

Entitled:

“A new theory about Tutankhamun's illness, hypophosphatasia (HPP).

“The last in February in the journal JAMA published findings on the health of the most famous ancient Egyptian ruler's (forced researchers) at the Federal HPP Germany e.V. to object ... 'After examining the original JAMA article and other sources I am to the conclusion come for some evidence to believe Tutankhamun could be due to the low incidence of disease hypophosphatasia (Have short HPP suffered). ”

“This theory is based [says the chairman of the Federal HPP Germany e.V. Gerald] Brandt e.g., on the following arguments:

- The radiological findings in the feet of the Pharaoh, especially the necrosis, deformation and the areas found to have different bone density.
- Kohler's disease affects mostly boys between the ages 6 and 10 years, and usually heals with self restoration.

- A fracture of the thigh just above the knee, as with Tutankhamun is rather unusual for a young man. Köhler's disease harms the feet, less often the great bones.
- Tutankhamun and his family also show other skeletal abnormalities, such as spinal curvature (scoliosis) or Madonna finger (Often inflammatory/rheumatic origin, similar to HPP).
- Tutankhamun himself had apparently stiffened several cervical vertebrae.
- The graceful, athletic little body of Tutankhamun and his father Akhenaten could also be attributed to an HPP because they are typical of this disease.
- Also a deformation of the chest may occur in HPP - such as has already been suggested for Akhenaten, but can be attributed to other diseases (Marfan's, Klippel-Feil or Klinefelter syndrome).
- The whole family was not very tall, only about 1.60 m for Akhenaten, and Tutankhamun 1.67 m. Similarly, in patients with HPP.
- The mummy of Tutankhamun also exhibits abnormalities in the skull base, which can also occur in HPP.
- The family were always married siblings; favoring the appearance of recessive hereditary diseases, such as the HPP.
- Tutankhamun and his half-sister Ankhesenamun had two children, both of which were stillborn. This also is unfortunately found in HPP. One of the girls may show an abnormal skull shape.”

and the fun goes on...

The third item is actually a great announcement for any of the readers who had wondered just what Howard Carter recorded as he excavated that fantastic tomb. This effort to help all of us comprehend what happened there so long ago, has been on going for quite a while. An article in 'The Guardian' (<http://tiny.cc/2p43p>) gives an overview of what has been accomplished (abbreviated):

“One of (The Griffith Institute’s) most prized collections incorporates the notes, photographs and diaries of the English archaeologist Howard Carter, who discovered Tutankhamun's resting place in 1922.

“Jaromir Malek is the soft-spoken keeper of the archive whose own Tutankhamun project is nearing completion. By making all of Carter's notes available online, Malek wanted to ensure that the public would have access to the full extent of the discovery. The effort has taken even longer than Carter's grueling excavation. It began in 1993, when Malek says he realized that fewer than a third of the artifacts from Tutankhamun's tomb had been properly studied and published, a situation he describes as "unacceptable".

“Carter recorded his finds on more than 3,500 densely written cards, with additional notes by Carter's chemist and conservator Alfred Lucas, and more than 1,000 images taken by his photographer Harry Burton. There are also around 60 maps and plans of the excavation site, plus hundreds of fragile pages from Carter's journals and diaries.

More than 15 years later, the internet has been transformed: a Google search for Egyptology now returns more than 3 million results. And Malek's project is almost complete. Around 98% of the material is available, with the last pages to follow within the next three months.

“Among the highlights is Carter's diary from the period in which he discovered Tutankhamun's tomb. When I ask to see it, Malek's assistant Elizabeth Fleming pulls the yellowed notebook from a stiff cardboard case, and with white-gloved hands settles it on a pillow on the table in front of me.

“The real meat of the archive, however, is in the notes and photographs that record every item found in the tomb in painstaking detail. Any other archaeologist working in the 1920s might have bundled the treasures out of the tomb in a matter of hours, but Carter worked methodically and meticulously.

“For Malek, a principal aim of the project is to bring the forgotten details of the tomb to as many people as possible. "We felt this was important because the discovery is so well-known," he says. "This doesn't belong to Egyptologists only, or even to Egypt only. Everybody should have the right to see what's there."

“Although researchers will always want to study objects directly, gaining access to many of the most priceless items from Tutankhamun's tomb can be difficult. Carter's archive is a useful source of back-up information. But it

also provides a lot of data that would be difficult or impossible to glean from studying the objects today.

“Sitting in front of those grey rolling stacks, Malek tells me that after going through every single page of Carter's excavation notes he has a new appreciation of the archaeologist's strength of character. "He was not easy to work with," says Malek. "He was quite often short tempered, perhaps not always tactful. But what I find really impressive is that there was this massive task, and in spite of all the difficulties, he finished it." Something that Malek himself hopes to live up to within the next few months.”

And then there is this news story which is more or less a Tutankhamun item...did you ever want to purchase Highclere Castle, home of the Earl of Carnarvon...finder of the famous tomb? Well don't get too excited, just yet. In an article in the 'Telegraph' (<http://tiny.cc/n2og2>), quite a fuss was stirred up by even the suggestion of such a sale. Read on (abbreviated, somewhat):

“In its 331-year association with Highclere Castle, the Carnarvon family has survived such perils as war, political intrigue and even the curse of Tutankhamun without ever losing its grip on its ancestral home.



Lady and Lord Carnarvon outside Highclere Castle, family seat since 1679



Lord Lloyd-Webber has designs on Highclere Castle in Hampshire

“But now the famous dynasty is fighting a rearguard action against a rather unlikely new threat in the form of Lord Lloyd-Webber. The composer, who lives just a few miles from Hampshire’s grandest stately home, has said he would like to buy it to house his £100 million art collection after the Carnarvon’s announced they needed to find £11.75m for essential repairs.

“The Earl and Countess of Carnarvon responded with a terse rebuke to their neighbor, saying: “We are not selling up to some rich man,” and has insisted the family seat is “not for sale”.

“The extraordinary row broke out after the Earl applied to the local council to build houses on the 5,000 acre estate to finance the repairs to the Castle. Because the area is designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty, Basingstoke and Deane Council can only grant planning permission for what is termed enabling development if the Carnarvon’s can prove there is no other way of raising the money.

“Lord Lloyd-Webber has written to the council, and to the Earl, to “declare an interest” in buying the estate and paying for the repairs himself, without any need for houses being built.

A clearly furious Countess said: “It is definitely not for sale. We are just trying to use 30 or 40 acres of woodland for development. We value the

estate hugely. We have every intention of being here for the next 150 years.”

“Highclere, the home of the Carnarvon family since 1679, was redesigned by Sir Charles Barry in the 19th century after he had built the Houses of Parliament, and is regarded as one of the finest Victorian mansions in England.

“Lord Lloyd-Webber, who lives at Sydmonton, has made it clear he would keep the Castle open to the public, and display his art collection, which includes a large number of Pre-Raphaelite and other Victorian paintings. He said in the letter: “I am longing to provide a permanent home for my art collection. I must declare an interest bearing in mind that I could provide a secure future for the castle without any development of this kind.””

On a more excavation oriented direction, there are discoveries to announce! A fine double tomb has recently been in the news, and the discovery site is that never ending mine of tombs and chapels...Saqqara. ‘Yahoo News’ (<http://tiny.cc/dshpx>) produced a nice over view of the discovery and was accompanied by some great photos, The article (abbreviated) states:

“Egyptian archaeologists unveiled a newly-unearthed double tomb with vivid wall paintings in the ancient necropolis of Saqqara near Cairo, saying it could be the start for uncovering a vast cemetery in the area. The tomb includes two false doors with colorful paintings depicting the two people buried there, a father and a son who served as heads of the royal scribes, said Abdel-Hakim Karar, a top archaeologist at Saqqara.

““The colors of the false door are fresh as if it was painted yesterday,” Karar told reporters. Humidity had destroyed the sarcophagus of the father, Shendwas, while the tomb of the son, Khonsu, was robbed in antiquity, he said.

“Also inscribed on the father's false door was the name of Pepi II, whose 90-year reign is believed to be the longest of the pharaohs. The inscription dates the double tomb to the 6th dynasty, which marked the beginning of the decline of the Old Kingdom, also known as the age of pyramids.

“The paintings on the false doors identified Shendwas and Khonsu as royal scribes and “supervisors of the mission,” meaning they were in charge of

delegations overseeing the supply of materials used for pyramids construction.

“A single shaft from the surface led down to the father's tomb, from which a side passage led to that of the son, with the false door with paintings of Khonsu in front of an offering table.

“Hawass pointed to a handful of duck-shaped artifacts and a small obelisk made of limestone. Such obelisks were often buried with the dead in the 5th and 6th dynasties to show their veneration for the sun god, Ra.”









The Supreme Council and Hawass have recently repeated an announcement that states that they will shortly open a large number of new sites for tourists...among them will be some rather challenging and dangerous pyramids. One such site is the Bent Pyramid. Having been inside this pyramid, the CyberScribe thinks that it will be a very poor choice for general tourism. The interior is challenging, dirty, hot, and most especially hard and dangerous.

In a story published by 'Gadling.com' (<http://tiny.cc/476ed>), they present the following (abbreviated):

"Visitors to Egypt have always flocked to the pyramids of Giza and Saqqara. Many people don't realize, however, that these are only the most famous of more than a hundred pyramids in the country. In fact, there's a whole "pyramid field" to the west of Cairo that includes Giza, Saqqara, and numerous other groupings across a long swath of desert. Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities is now opening some of them to visitors for the first time.

“At Dahshur, more than a dozen pyramids give an interesting lesson in pyramid construction. The largest of these were built in the Fourth Dynasty (c. 2613 to 2494 BC) just prior to those at Giza. The founder of this dynasty, the Pharaoh Sneferu, was quite the pyramid builder. His first attempt was at Meidum, 100 km (62 miles) south of Cairo. It collapsed, and he moved his workmen to Dahshur for his next try.



“This was the famous Bent Pyramid, pictured above in a photo from Jon Bodsworth's excellent collection at the Egypt Archive. Check out the gallery below for more of his work. The architects started building the pyramid at a 55 degree angle, but when the structure showed signs of weakness they chickened out and built the rest at a more stable angle of 43 degrees. This gives the pyramid unique appearance.



“The pyramid's two interior passages will open for the first time to visitors in December. A third passage leads 25 meters (82 ft) to a nearby smaller pyramid of Sneferu's queen so the two could have conjugal visits in the afterlife. His third try was the Red Pyramid, built at the safer 43 degree angle. It held up nicely and is the third largest pyramid in Egypt at 104 meters (345 ft) tall.”

Let's finish off with a series of somewhat lighter topics. First, did you know that Egypt, well, at least part of Egypt, is full of whales? A brief article in the

BBC (<http://tiny.cc/pee9l>) tells us that there are whales, and they sometimes get into odd situations. Read on:



Basilosaurus Isis fossil whale skeleton excavated in Wadi Hitan. Image: Prof Philip Gingerich The Basilosaurus Isis skeleton was excavated and reassembled in Michigan. Pic: Prof Philip Gingerich

“Its name in Arabic is Wadi Hitan but it is known as the Valley of the Whales. For years archaeologists have been unearthing a remarkable collection of whale fossils, all the more surprising because the area is now inland desert in upper Egypt. 40 million years ago the area was submerged in water, part of the Tethys Sea. As the sea retreated north to the Mediterranean it left a series of unique rock formations and also a cornucopia of fossils.

“One of the most exceptional finds was a 37 million-year-old whale from the species Basilosaurus Isis, unearthed by a team led by Prof Philip Gingerich of the University of Michigan in the United States.

“But now it has become the subject of a bizarre customs wrangle at Cairo airport.

“Prof Gingerich explained that this was the only complete specimen from this species of whale. It provides evidence of how whales evolved from being land-based creatures to go back into the sea - a reverse of the usual evolutionary process.



Basilosaurus Isis retained tiny feet, a useless reminder of its evolution from land animal to sea-dweller. The limbs are human sized, even though the creature is 15m-16m long.

“For the past two years Prof Gingerich and his team have been painstakingly reassembling the skeleton back in Michigan. It is now being returned to Egypt for a new museum, planned for the Valley of the Whales.

“But according to the Egyptian media the whale skeleton is stuck at Cairo airport. Customs agents are demanding a \$40,000 fee. It is not clear how they came to that figure as prehistoric fossils have no agreed market value.

“In any case the Egyptian authorities who are importing the fossil are refusing to pay. A senior official from the ministry of tourism has warned that the issue needs to be resolved speedily, otherwise it could cause a "big scandal" for Egypt, he said.

“Prof Gingerich joked that it had taken two and a half years to be allowed to export the fossil to the United States, and it could take another two and a half years to get it back.”

Under the caption “Oldest Written Document Ever Found’...a story emerged that was actually entitled “Oldest Written Document Ever Found in Jerusalem’. It turns out to be a clay tablet fragment, which sounds a little underwhelming, but here it is from ‘ScienceDaily’ (<http://tiny.cc/e2wff>) (abbreviated):

“The find, believed to be part of a tablet from a royal archives, testifies to the importance of Jerusalem as a major city in the Late Bronze Age, long before its conquest by King David, they say.



“The clay fragment was uncovered recently during sifting of fill excavated from beneath a 10th century B.C.E. tower dating from the period of King Solomon in the Ophel area, located between the southern wall of the Old City of Jerusalem and the City of David to its south.

“The fragment that has been found is 2x2.8 centimeters in size and one centimeter thick. Dated to the 14th century B.C.E., it appears to have been part of a tablet and contains cuneiform symbols in ancient Akkadian (the lingua franca of that era). The words the symbols form are not significant in themselves, but what is significant is that the script is of a very high level, testifying to the fact that it was written by a highly skilled scribe that in all likelihood prepared tablets for the royal household of the time. Horowitz has interpreted the symbols on the fragment to include the words "you," "you were," "later," "to do" and "them."

“The tablet fragment in Jerusalem is most likely part of a message that would have been sent from the king of Jerusalem, possibly Abdi-Heba, back to Egypt, said Mazar.”

The next item is a little odd. It involves the burial of a cremated Egyptian mummy...in Vermont. The publication, by 'Atlas Obscura' (<http://tiny.cc/7podb>) relates:

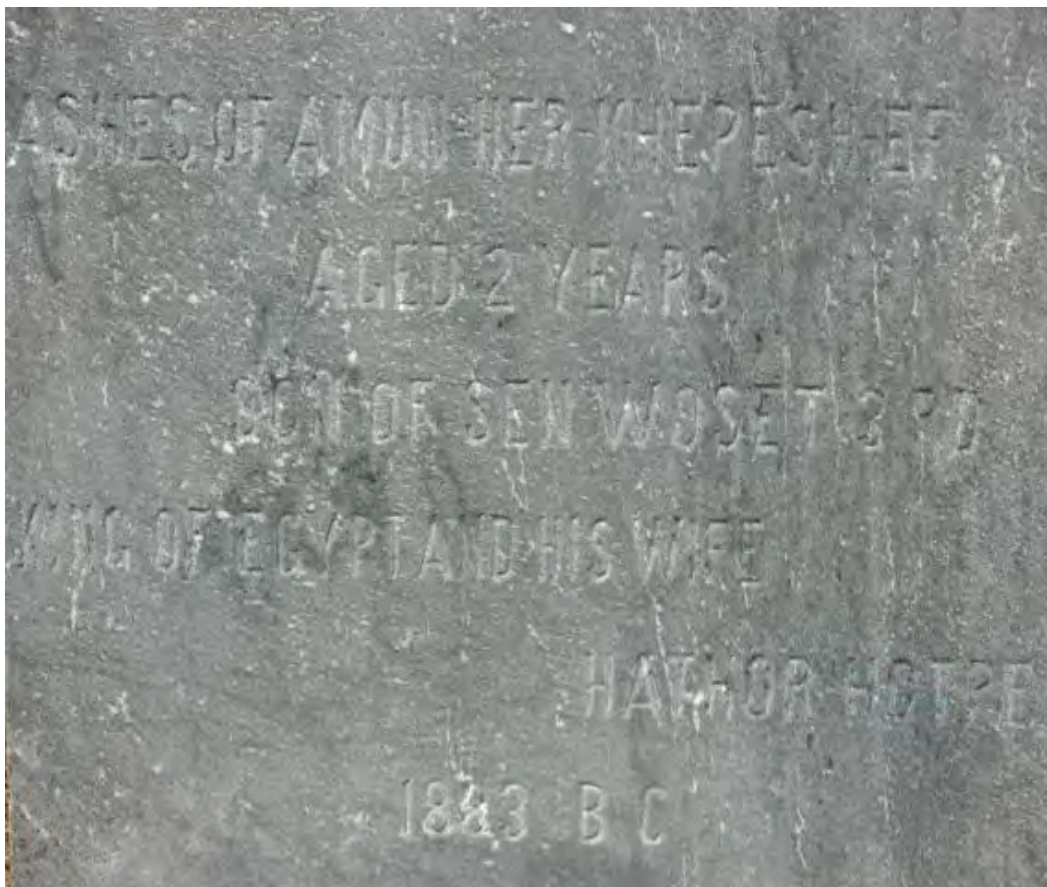
“Harry Sheldon was a collector in the late 1800s in Middlebury, Vermont. After his death, his collection remained in his house at 1 Park Street and became the Harry Sheldon Museum. One of his most interesting pieces, however—an infant mummy prince—did not end up in the museum, but was instead buried in a cemetery about half a mile away.



The gravestone of the mummy.



A close-up look at the symbols on the gravestone.



A close-up photograph of the inscription on the gravestone.

“As is understandable even to non-collectors, Sheldon wanted to add a bona fide Egyptian mummy to his collection, so he arranged to have the mummy of a two-year-old Egyptian prince shipped to him from across the ocean. But it arrived in such a degraded condition that Sheldon never put it out on display, instead “archiving” it in his attic.

“Decades after Sheldon’s death, a curator at the Harry Sheldon Museum named George Mead discovered the infant mummy prince and had him cremated and buried in his own family plot in tiny West Cemetery on Route 30, across from the Middlebury College Museum of Art.

“The inscription on the simple rectangular stone includes the images of a cross, an ankh, and a bird. It reads:

Ashes of Amum-Her-Khepesh-Ef
Aged Two Years
Son of Sen Woset 3rd
King of Egypt and his wife
Hathor-Hotpe
1883 BC”

Let’s close on something so weird, so improbable, and so apparently designed to annoy almost everyone. ‘Wire Service Canada’ (<http://tiny.cc/7podb>) involves a genuine whacko who manages to upset and disturb almost anyone who dares to read her nutty writings. Basically, she loudly proclaims that Cleopatra VI, the daughter of Julius Caesar, and the virgin Mary are one and the same person. The CyberScribe is out of his league with this goof...read on (abbreviated) and see what she has to say...and please understand that the CyberScribe thinks its all a bunch of rubbish:

“After an intensive 18-month study of conventional history, conspiracy theory, secret societies, literature, religion, and myth, as well as scientific and linguistic evidence, Canadian information-sciences researcher Susan Maureen Brandt has uncovered evidence that Cleopatra and the Virgin Mary are fictionalized versions of the same woman, Julius Caesar's daughter, Julia.

“Along with thousands of examples from throughout mainstream literature, scientific theory, historical and religious texts, Brandt cites "The Da Vinci

Code" as an example of a heavily promoted film that is clearly encoded with the well-kept historical secret.

“Brandt, an independent researcher from Vernon, British Columbia, theorizes that a highly-organized cult is behind the global fraud, consisting of devoted members who believe they are the direct descendants of nobility who survived the 10,000 B.C.E. destruction of the lost continent of Atlantis, which, according to her research, was more likely known as Ros in the ancient world. Because of this connection, she argues, they encode virtually all forms of culture and media with secret symbols of their heritage, including mortal human ancestors and enemies disguised as gods, goddesses, and mythical creatures; floods, fires, and other natural disasters; a criminal underworld, caves, and underground tunnels; the use of masks, disguises, or altered appearances in connection with genetic manipulation; images of objects sinking and people drowning; heavy-handed use of the colors red and gold, often in connection with totem animals, particularly lions and other cats, large reptiles, and birds of prey; the concepts of extinction, evolution, and rebirth; and the central figure of a king with several sons of varied appearances and styles of dress who give rise to multiple cultures. The most obvious example of the latter is the Biblical figure of Noah and his sons Ham, Shem, and Japeth, who are described within Bible texts as being forefathers to, among others, the Arabic, Jewish, and Greek cultures, respectively.

“There is also a reference in the passage that follows, Genesis 11, concerning the Tower of Babel, another favorite cult symbol that Brandt says describes the widespread practice of anagramming (mixing up the letters of one word to form another) as an easy but relatively hard-to-spot method of forming and encoding everything from new languages containing the symbols of the Ros and their history, to corporate monikers, the names of countries, and philosophical concepts.

“Currently, Brandt is posting her articles on a free message forum on the internet until she finds an appropriate publisher for her controversial research.

“In an ironic twist, the owner of the site, himself a conspiracy writer for over a decade, has threatened to remove Brandt's articles, as her postings and the resulting comments, currently totaling fewer than a hundred, will cost him \$3.33 per month if she exceeds 1000.

“Brandt can be reached by e-mail at susanbluebooks@shaw.ca and her articles can be read by copying the following link “<http://tiny.cc/03qi2>”

“or by going to battleofearth.wordpress.com and clicking on "message forum".”

And concludes the CyberScribe...you have been warned.