

CyberScribe 182- October 2010

What a fine bunch of Egypto-Trivia this month! The CyberScribe hardly knows where to begin. So let's start out with the one he found most interesting.

Remember when you read almost any book on the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, and came to the dramatic phrase that described the first look into the tomb? And remember that the books all said "When Carnarvon asked him if he saw anything, Carter replied: 'Yes, wonderful things'."

Well, it is probably untrue and you now have a means of finding out the true story of that great discovery. Carter's diary of the event is now online, thanks to the Griffiths Institute at Oxford (<http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4sea1not.html>).

Here you can read what Carter said that he actually spoke: "There was naturally short suspense for those present who could not see, when Lord Carnarvon said to me `Can you see anything'. I replied to him yes, it is wonderful. I then with precaution made the hole sufficiently large for both of us to see."

Not nearly so dramatic, but more truthful. Carter and Mace probably fluffed things up to make the sentence more dramatic, but the whole diary is here to be perused. Carter was a man of few words but the diary is quite fascinating.

And speaking of excavations, there is a fine and detailed report on work done on the landscape and hydrology of Karnak Temple. The work involved core drilling and underground mapping, a specialty of the CyberScribe, himself. The report can be found here (<http://tiny.cc/yi0i6r9m6w>). The work was done by Matthieu Ghilardi and states (abbreviated here):

"The affiliation of Matthieu Ghilardi helped to define the landscape history of ancient Karnak. Multidisciplinary researches in which he was involved mainly consisted in a geomorphological prospection of the Karnak temples, and of the Sphinxes Avenue of Luxor.

"One of the aims of his researches in Karnak was to reconstruct the landscape dynamics around the ancient fluvial harbor located westward of the first pylon (from October 2008 until May 2009). Several boreholes were

drilled in the excavations conducted by the SCA (figure 1) in front of the ramp accesses of the ancient harbor, and they revealed the depositional history in the area. Approximately 80 m of sediments were extracted and analyzed (at intervals of 10 to 20 cm) for their grain-size distribution and magnetic susceptibility values.

“Part of Ghilardi's researches was also concentrated within the perimeter of the Karnak temples, in the Open Air Museum. Two boreholes were drilled in a trench dug by the CFEETK with a hand auger, down to a maximal depth of 4.60 m. Two important layers were identified and can be described as follows: from the surface down to 2.00 m deep, a stratum composed of a mixture of pottery sherds/red bricks (anthropogenic layers), and fine sediments (from silts to fine sands). The second layer, from 2.00 m down to 4.60 m is composed of sandy deposits (probably river channel sediments) where no human activity was detected (lack of sherds).

“The researches conducted on the ancient harbor of Karnak were completed by a full study of the samples collected during the construction of two wells for the extraction of the water table in the subsoil. The thickness of sediments studied (by Matthieu Ghilardi and Mohamed Hatem, SCA inspector) was about 20 m. In order to establish a landscape reconstruction around the Karnak temples, wood samples (*Acacia* sp.), bone fragments and charcoals were collected for later radiocarbon dating (institutional partnership between the IFAO and the CFEETK). At a depth of 20 m, a bed of pebbles (more or less rounded) was clearly identified. From 20 to 16 m below the surface, regular flooding was observed corresponding to wadi dynamics and sediment accumulation linked to the Nile River activity. From 16 m to the present ground level, a thick layer of fluvial sediments was revealed, and the variations of the grain size distribution clearly indicated important changes in the river-transport capacity.

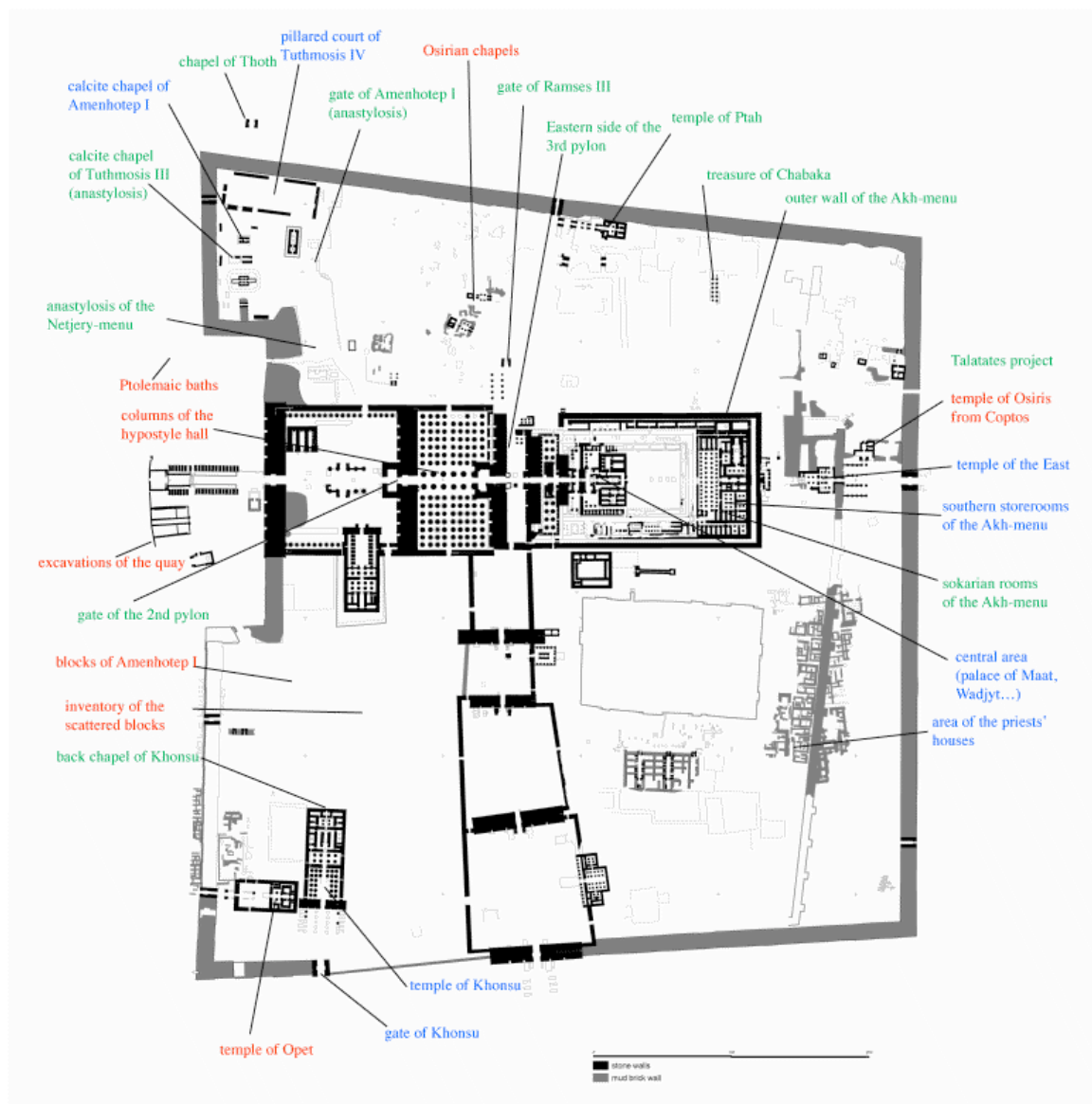


Figure 1

“The partnership with the SCA (Mansour Boraik) was also conducted in the Sphinx Avenue of Luxor: a geomorphological prospection was done close to the temple of Luxor, at 350 m to the north. Boreholes were drilled and stratigraphic profiles were established, in order to reveal the Nile River sediment accumulation in this area. Rich organic layers (maximum thickness of 1.50 m) were found overlaying fluvial deposits.”

Another excavation made news when a former speaker at NT-ARCE, Elena Pischikova, working with Egyptians rediscovered a major "lost" tomb, with great paintings. The report appeared in a number of places, but the version by Zahi Hawass is perhaps the best

(<http://tiny.cc/dcnqe>). He stated:

“An Egyptian-American expedition has found the burial chamber of a priest named Karakhamun (TT223). The tomb dates to Dynasty 25 (c. 755BC) and was uncovered during conservation and restoration work on the west bank of Luxor.



Location of TT223

“Farouk Hosny, Minister of Culture, added that the restoration work of this tomb is part of a much larger initiative, known as the South Asasif Conservation Project (ACP). The el-Asasif area is a very important site, which contains nobles' tombs from the New Kingdom as well as the 25-26th Dynasties.

“Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), said that the team found the burial chamber of Karakhamun at the bottom of an 8m deep burial shaft. The chamber is in very good condition and contains beautifully painted scenes. The entrance to the chamber is decorated with an image of Karakhamun and the ceiling is decorated with several astrological scenes, including a depiction of the sky goddess, Nut.

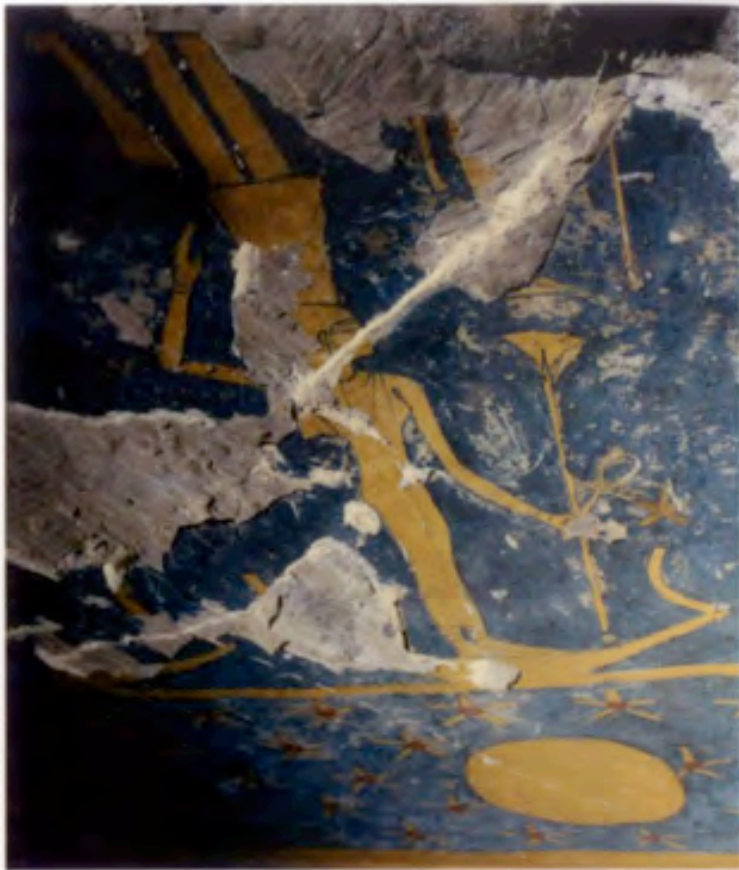


Painted ceiling of Karakhamun's burial chamber, depicting the sky goddess, Nut. (Photo: SCA)

“The leader of the expedition, Dr. Elena Pischikova, said that the tomb of priest Karakhamun was discovered in the 19th century in an unstable condition. It continued to deteriorate, and only parts of it were accessible to visitors in the early 1970s. It later collapsed and was buried under the sand. Dr. Pischikova's team rediscovered the tomb in 2006 and has been carrying out conservation work since then. She believes that the tomb of Karakhamun could be one of the most beautiful tombs from Dynasty 25 because of the preservation of the color and the unique quality of the scenes.



Stars painted on TT223 ceiling (Photo: SCA)



The next item is not exactly new, but it is a nice summary of the results of a CT-Scan of the fabulous bust of Queen Nefertiti. We all grew up with this statue, remarking on the exquisite beauty it displayed, but until very recently, no one knew that it hid a very different queen's face inside, under the mark of a surficial layer of plaster. Now that overlay has been rendered temporarily transparent and the real queen shines through!

The report was ungraciously titled "The ancient Egyptian facelift: 'Beautiful' Queen Nefertiti had a 'bent nose and wrinkled eyes'" and appeared in the Daily Mail Reporter (<http://tiny.cc/2w04e>). Abbreviated, this somewhat amusing story relates:

"The 3,300-year-old carved bust of Queen Nefertiti with her aquiline nose and high cheek bones has won her admiring fans around the world. But a delicately carved face in the limestone core of the famous bust suggests the royal sculptor at the time may have smoothed creases around the mouth and fixed a bumpy nose to depict the "Beauty of the Nile" in a better light.



Facelift: Queen Nefertiti's famous sculpture may have been altered at the time to hide her bent nose and wrinkled eyes

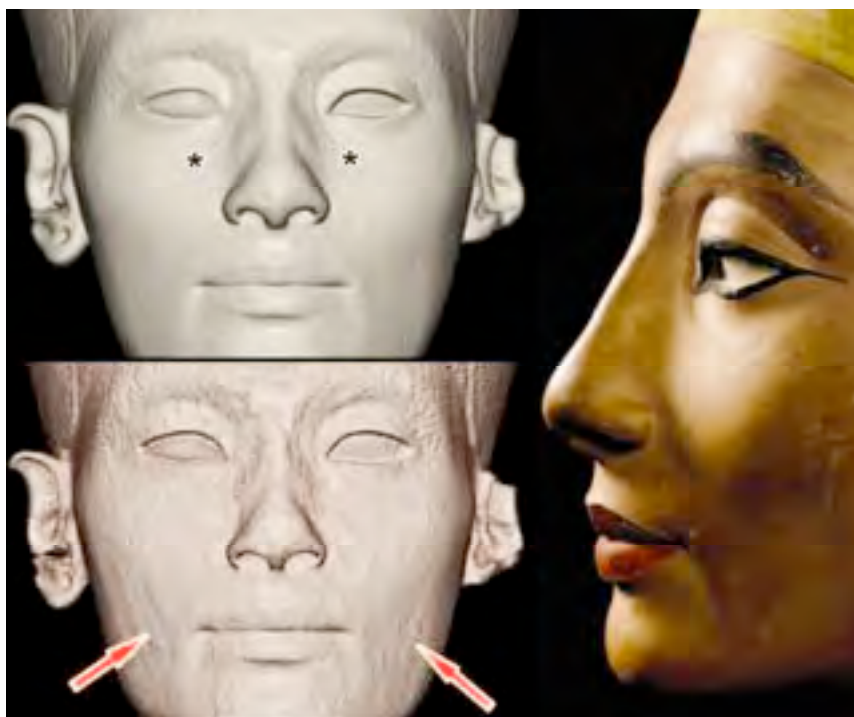
“Bettany Hughes and her team carried out a CT scan of the bust and discovered a second limestone model with a bent nose and wrinkles around the eyes which may have been used as a template for the bust.

““That statue is still very beautiful but not as beautiful. It showed her nose was bent, and that she had wrinkles around her eyes. It's a real portrait of a real woman,” Ms Hughes told The Independent Woodstock Literary Festival on Saturday.

“Ever since its first public exhibition in 1923, the precision of the 3,300-year-old sculpture's symmetrical lines and its finely wrought features have drawn thousands of admirers from around the globe. But the first suggestion that she may have had the ancient equivalent of Botox and a nose job came in March last year when German scientists analyzed the limestone carving with CT scans.

“Their analysis showed that compared to the outer stucco face, the inner face had less prominent cheekbones, a slight bump on the ridge of the nose, creases around the corner of mouth and cheeks, and less depth at the corners of the eyelids. The changes were possibly made to make the queen adhere more to the ideals of beauty of the time, the researchers said.”

A bit more along these lines, showing the under surface, comes from the National Geographic. You can see the narrow nose bridge, the kink in the nose and the sallow cheeks:



The Brooklyn Museum Has posted another of its interesting works on ancient papyrus and the information they carry. This one details what is currently known about the nature of the pigments used (<http://tiny.cc/iokh1>). Rachel Danzing spent time on their collection and her results (abbreviated below) make for fascinating reading:

“The two most common pigments seen on papyri are black and red. The black ink you see most often is used for writing the letters of the hieroglyphs or hieratic text and is almost always a carbon black ink.



Fragment from the Book of the Dead of the Goldworker Amun, Sobekmose. New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, ca. 1479-1400 B.C.E. Ink and pigment on papyrus. Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 37.1777E.

“The ink is made by burning organic materials such as wood or oil, and then pulverizing the material before mixing it with water. To keep the particles from clumping together, the black is mixed with a binder, probably a plant gum from the Acacia tree family. As a valuable source of timber in Egypt, its branches may have also been used as the source for the charcoal. As well as keeping the carbon particles suspended in the water solution, the gum binder helps to keep the ink adhered to the papyrus surface. This ink is very stable,

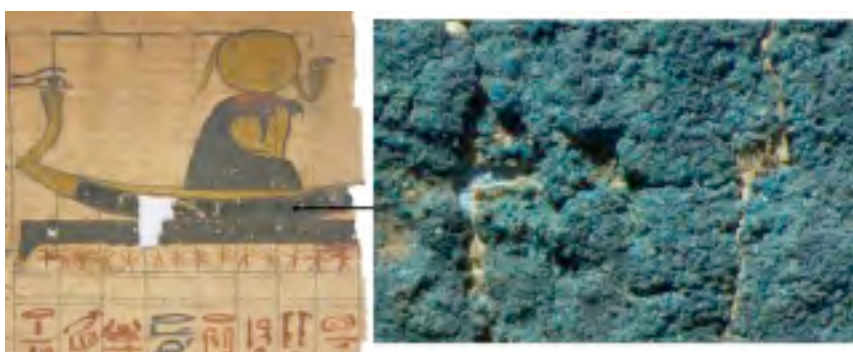
does not fade, and does not deteriorate the papyrus below as some metallic inks can do.

“Another predominant color seen on the papyrus is red, derived from the pigment iron oxide. Like most pigments used in ancient Egypt it is made from a naturally occurring mineral, rather than an organic material derived from living sources such as plants. The mineral iron gives it its color. The red was often used for rubrics such as titles and headings to distinguish them from the rest of the text.

“The basic palette used to paint the vignettes, or illustrations, comprised a range of pigments either mined from the earth or extracted from minerals, including blue, green, black, white, red and yellow. It is interesting to see that the vignettes are often painted in one color within an outlined area, rather than layered to create highlights or shading.



In addition to naturally-occurring pigments, the ancient Egyptians are credited with making the first artificially made pigment, Egyptian Blue.

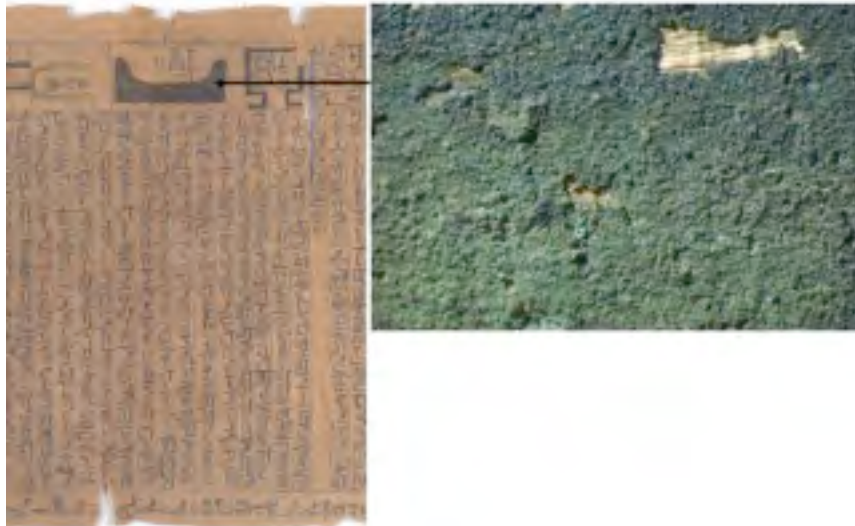


and photomicrograph of Egyptian blue pigment, 2.7X magnification

“Egyptian blue is a glass-like pigment which was made by heating together quartz sand, copper, calcium oxide, and an alkali such as natron, which was found naturally in the waters of Egypt. This crystalline material is then ground into a pigment and is often referred to as blue "frit". It was often

thickly applied and coarsely ground, visible under magnification, due to the fact that it appears paler the more it is ground. The presence of Egyptian blue in our vignettes is indicated by recent analysis with x-ray fluorescence.

“On our papyrus, we see a green called malachite, a mineral pigment composed of copper carbonate. This green was probably also used as a source of copper for Egyptian Blue mentioned above.



Detail of mineral green pigment, probably malachite, 2.7X magnification

“Blues and greens on this papyrus have darkened over time and look almost black to the naked eye, but when viewed under magnification blue and green particles are visible, indicative of what these pigments originally looked like.

“The Egyptians also created an artificial green pigment, called a green frit, very similar in ingredients and manufacture to Egyptian blue. Other green mineral pigments have been found on ancient Egyptian materials, including copper chlorides also familiar as the bright bluish green corrosion products seen on bronze metals, as well as mixtures of Egyptian blue with yellows to create greens.

“The most common yellow found on Egyptian materials is a yellow ochre which is seen in the disc above the falcon and other yellow areas. It is colored by iron-containing minerals and contains clay and silica.



Photomicrograph of yellow and red area below falcon's eye, 1.6X magnification

“It can be difficult to identify the pigments with certainty due to several factors including the difficulty in obtaining a viable sample and also changes in the pigments over time.”

And speaking of papyrus, here's a discovery that no one ever anticipated...an ancient Egyptian papyrus found in an Irish bog! A publication called PhysOrg presented the announcement (<http://tiny.cc/hadt3>). It turns out that the discovery brings more information than one might first imagine:

“Irish scientists have found fragments of Egyptian papyrus in the leather cover of an ancient book of psalms that was unearthed from a peat bog, Ireland's National Museum said on Monday. The papyrus in the lining of the Egyptian-style leather cover of the 1,200- year-old manuscript, "potentially represents the first tangible connection between early Irish Christianity and the Middle Eastern Coptic Church", the Museum said.

“O Floinn told AFP the illuminated vellum manuscript encased in the leather binding dated from the eighth century but it was not known when or why it ended up in the bog where it was preserved by the chemicals in the peat. "It appears the manuscript's leather binding came from Egypt. The question is whether the papyrus came with the cover or if it was added."

“O Floinn said the psalter is about the size of a tabloid newspaper and about 15 percent of the pages of the psalms, which are written in Latin, had

survived. The experts believe the manuscript of the psalms was produced in an Irish monastery and it was later put in the leather cover.

“The cover could have had several lives before it ended up basically as a folder for the manuscript in the bog,” O Floinn said. “It could have travelled from a library somewhere in Egypt to the Holy Land or to Constantinople or Rome and then to Ireland.””

Another story had less information, but presented some great photos (Red Ice Creations, <http://tiny.cc/hadt3>):



Cover of the Book of Psalms found in an Irish bog



Careful easing back of the text block from the front cover revealed a tantalizing glimpse of the highly decorated first page. ©National Museum of Ireland



An orpiment border and a capital letter were among the exciting features visible before conservation commenced. ©National Museum of Ireland

A very brief announcement appeared recently relating how a Muslim preacher has declared that it is perfectly legal for Egyptians to dig up stuff on their own property and sell it to anyone they wish. Obviously this is upsetting a lot of people. One can suspect that Zahi Hawass was one of the most incensed. The story appeared in an article in Al-Masry Al-Youm (<http://tiny.cc/9eb1z>). It is very brief and is presented intact below:

“A group of Egyptian citizens have filed a complaint to the office of the attorney-general demanding the cancelation of a Salafi preacher's television program after he issued a fatwa (a religious edict) on the sale of antiquities. Sheikh Mohamed Hassan, a prominent preacher, currently presents a program on the Salafi affiliated al-Rahma channel.

“In response to a telephone call regarding Islam's position on selling antiquities, Hassan said, "If it is found on land that you own, or in your house, then it is yours by right and you are not doing anything wrong."

“As for antiquities which are found on a public land, Hassan explained, a Muslim is prohibited from selling them, advising that he should re-bury them.

“The people who filed the complaint argue that this fatwa means that all antiquities discovered on private land are the possessions of the owner of that land, and that he has the right to sell and profit from them. This contradicts the law, which punishes any private circulation of antiquities.

“They argue that the fatwa poses a serious threat to Egyptian history and its national heritage. They consider the ruling as an affirmation of the looting and theft of Egyptian antiquities that are by extension, a part of the world's heritage.

“In Egypt the trade in antiquities, especially those found on the land of private citizens has been traditionally a common practice although it's punishable by law.”

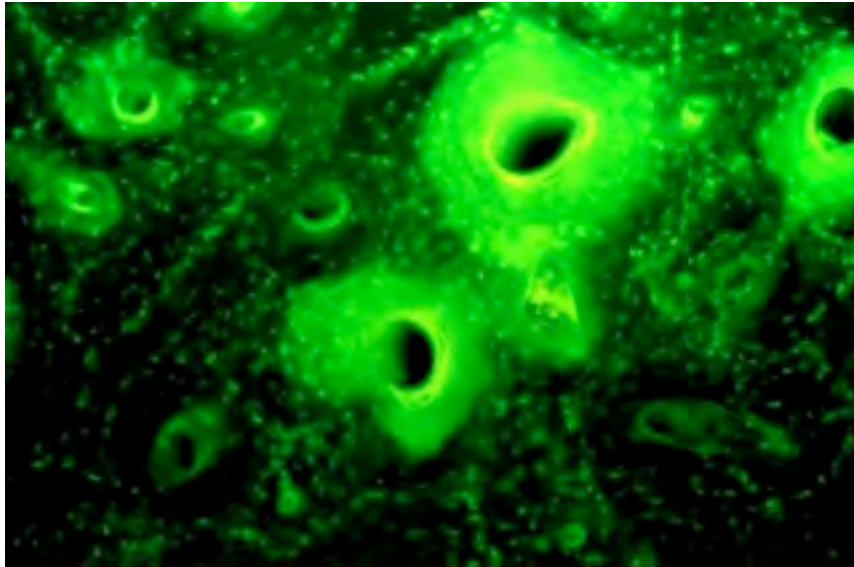
There are a few items of minor interest, because they really don't bring much new to the table, or because they are probably off base. First of these is another quick look at that story of Nubian antibiotics. There are numerous problems with this announcement.

One of the better stories appeared in Wired (<http://tiny.cc/xx6wm>) and (abbreviated) it states:

“Chemical analysis of the bones of ancient Sudanese Nubians who lived nearly 2000 years ago shows they were ingesting the antibiotic tetracycline on a regular basis, likely from a special brew of beer. The find is the strongest yet that antibiotics were previously discovered by humans before Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin in 1928.

“Nelson found large amounts of tetracycline in the bones tested from the ancient population, which lived in the Nubian kingdom (present day Sudan) between 250 A.D. and 550 A.D. and left no written record.

““The bones of these ancient people were saturated with tetracycline, showing that they had been taking it for a long time,” Nelson said in a press release August 30. “I'm convinced that they had the science of fermentation under control and were purposely producing the drug.”



Yellow-green appearance under ultraviolet light, indicative of tetracycline

"This discovery will provide a whole new framework for understanding the relationship between microbes and antibiotics," said anthropologist Dennis Van Gerven of University of Colorado at Boulder. "There might have been other populations that were also doing the same thing, anywhere that there were these microbes. This is going to drive other scientists to start this search, and that is incredibly important."

"Armelagos, who specializes in reconstructing ancient diets, proposed that the Nubians made the tetracycline in their beer. There is evidence they knew how to make it, he says. Tetracycline is produced by a soil bacteria called streptomyces, which is how it was discovered by modern society in the 1940s. Streptomyces thrives in warm, arid regions such as that of ancient Nubia, and likely contaminated a batch of beer.

"They must have known how to propagate the beer because they were doing it to make wine, Nelson says. There was also so much of it in their bones that it is near impossible that the tetracycline-laced beer was a fluke event.

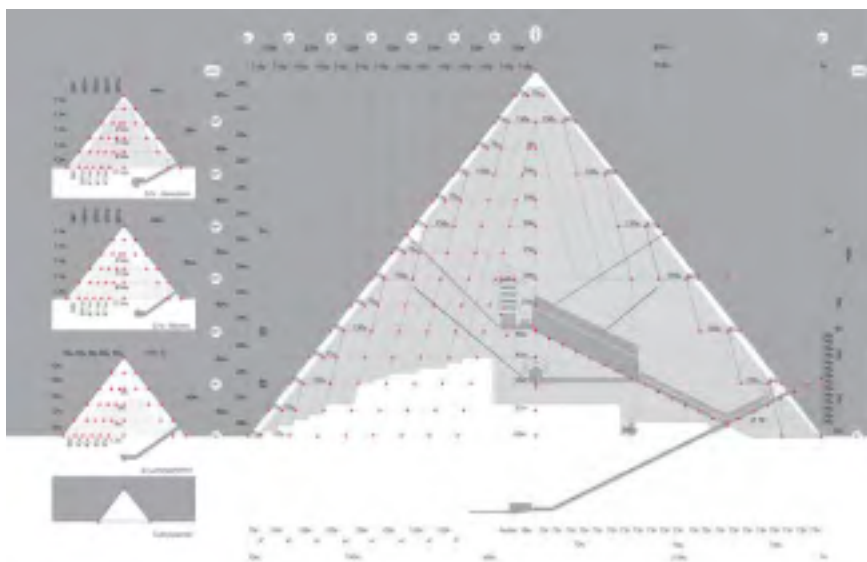
"When and why the antibiotic beer secret was lost is a mystery. It is not the first technology to disappear with the disappearance of cultures. Armelagos is continuing to look for the tetracycline in the bones of different cultures. He says he has already found preliminary evidence it is in bones of people who date to as late as 1300 to 1400 A.D."

The CyberScribe is moved to ask several question regarding this hypothesis. He takes tetracycline antibiotics and one of the dangers is exposure to

sunlight, which causes bad side effects. Since the ancient Nubians went around nearly naked and lived in an area of intense sunlight, why would this be an advantage to them? Further, if they consumed lots of antibiotics for their entire life, why weren't they producing loads of resistant infectious agents? This happens today, and would have happened then. It doesn't seem like this sort of antibiotic beer would be much of an advantage to them.

The second of these not-too-interesting items is yet another person who has "found" the secret way the Egyptians built their pyramids. As usual, it is the application of a modern building technique applied to the ancients, not the other way around. The story got a lot of coverage, but here is enough to get the flavor (<http://tiny.cc/tt3g1>) (abbreviated):

“Ole J Bryn, an architect and associate professor the Norwegian University of Science and Technology's (NTNU) Faculty of Architecture and Fine Art, believes researchers were needlessly preoccupied with the weight of the stones. In the bargain, they overlooked two problems: How did the Egyptians know exactly where to put the enormously heavy building blocks? And how was the master architect able to communicate detailed, highly precise plans to a workforce of 10,000 illiterate men?”



Bryn's drawing illustrating his theory

“What Bryn discovered was quite simple. He believes that the Egyptians invented the modern building grid by separating the structure's measuring

system from the physical building itself, thus introducing tolerance, as it is called in today's engineering and architectural professions.

“Bryn delved into the plans of the thirty oldest Egyptian pyramids, and discovered a precision system that made it possible for the Egyptians to reach the pyramid's last and highest point, the apex point, with an impressive degree of accuracy. By exploring and making a plan of the pyramid it is possible to prepare modern project documentation of not just one, but all pyramids from any given period.

““As long as the architect knows the main dimensions of a pyramid, he can project the building as he would have done it with a modern building, but with building methods and measurements known from the ancient Egypt,” Bryn pointed out.

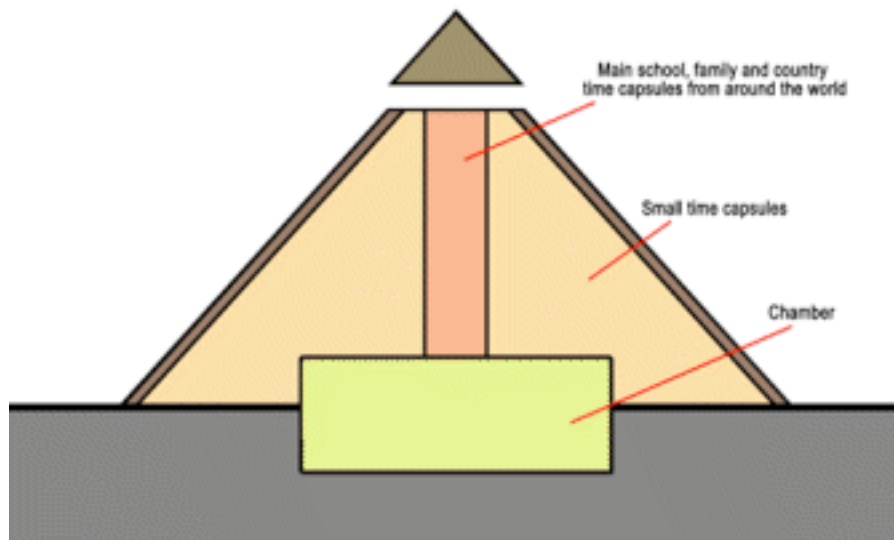
“If the principles behind Bryn's drawings are correct, then archaeologists will have a new "map" that demonstrates that the pyramids are not a "bunch of heavy rocks with unknown structures" but, rather, incredibly precise structures.”

Another slightly goofy pyramid story involved yet another plan to built a giant pyramid to house the remains of a great many mortals. This one is proposed by the city of Leeds, England (<http://www.leedspyramid.com/>). Little comment is needed. The piece speaks for itself, and will surely never be built...or even attempted. Abbreviated, it tells us:

“The aim of the project is to construct a giant time capsule with every country in the world contributing to it. By doing this we hope it will be a great way to get the world working together on a positive venture and give ordinary people around the world a chance to feel like their opinions matter and can be heard for generations to come. It will also get people thinking about what our world will be like in 1,000 years and what we can do to help protect it. With the threat of global warming our, planet will be a very different place in 1,000 years so to capture a moment in time of our unique world and its different cultures would be an amazing thing.

“Pyramids have been around for thousands of years and have proved they are an ideal structure to hold important artifacts. For this reason we decided that it would be an ideal structure to house the hopes and information of our world and its people as we are today. By making it out of stone from all over

the world it would make it a truly global structure and as you can see by the illustration, that was kindly created for us, it would make for an impressive sight. All the time capsules will be enclosed within it and we hope it can be built with methods that will have a reduced impact on the environment. The construction process itself would be a great opportunity to learn and bring new ideas into the building world. Only the outer shell will be made of stone. The interior of the structure can be filled with an eco friendly material.



Lee's Pyramid Design

“We hope that every country will fill 3 time capsule boxes for the project. 1 from the country's leadership, 1 from a school in that country and 1 from a family in that country. This way we hope to capture a good cross section of the people that make up the countries of the world. They will be housed in the central shaft of the pyramid. During construction smaller boxes can be built into the main body of the pyramid for people to find as the pyramid decays. These smaller boxes will be given out to random families around the world to fill as they see fit. The chamber at the base of the structure will be filled with cards from the children of the world. More details about the chamber are covered on a separate page.

“Where to build it? When we first started the project we thought that it would be great if it was built in Leeds, England because we live here and we thought it would make a great attraction for the city. But as countries started replying to our letters we decided to research each culture to find out a little more about the people involved in the project.

“As an example when Madagascar contacted us we went onto the internet to try and learn more about the country. When we saw an satellite photograph showing the deforestation and how much rain forest was actually left it made us realize that our project would be a great way for children to learn about all the countries in the world and the environmental difficulties each one is facing.

And finally a trio of goofy items. First there is a short item on the curse of Pediamenopet's tomb, written by Zahi Hawass. The curse seems to mainly be that there is no cover over the shaft and people keep falling in (<http://tiny.cc/zb09j>).

“Pediamenopet was an Ancient Egyptian priest who built a tomb for himself in the region known as al-Asasif, west of Luxor. It is generally believed that Pediamenopet was one of the most important magicians in ancient Egypt, where witchcraft and magic was part of the ancient Egyptian priesthood. In fact, the skills and powers of ancient Egyptian priests in witchcraft and magic have even been referred to in the holy Quran. Researchers and archeologists have had numerous accidents in this tomb, especially in the vertical shaft that must be traversed in order to reach Pediamenopet's burial chamber. This vertical shaft descends for approximately 7 meters in depth, and there have been a number of accidents here, with people falling down this vertical shaft and harming themselves, resulting in archeologists speculating that this vertical shaft is cursed.

“The first recorded story of an accident taking place in this tomb was in 1798, when French scholars attached to the French Campaign in Egypt were recording and studying the antiquities of Upper Egypt. The story goes that one French scholar entered Pediamenopet's tomb, carrying only a candle in order to observe the engravings and hieroglyphics on the tomb's walls, however he fell down this vertical shaft to his death. Approximately two centuries later, a German archeologist was cataloguing the tomb in 1874, as part of research into a book he was writing on the importance of the engravings and hieroglyphics on the walls of the tomb, when he also fell down this vertical shaft.

“There is no historical record of what happened in this tomb following the death of the French scholar and prior to the death of the German archeologist, however a similar such event also took place recently. Egyptian

archeologist Professor Ali al-Asfar was recently accompanying some foreign archeologists on a tour of Tomb 33 when he also fell down this vertical shaft, however thanks to divine providence he was not killed in this incident, instead suffering multiple broken bones.

“Al-Asfar was sent to Germany for medical treatment, and we thank God that he has recovered, although this is not a full-recovery and he still suffers the after-effects of some of these fractures till this day. I don't think that he will ever resolve to descent a vertical shaft again, whether this is 7 centimeters underground or 7 meters!

“After this incident, al-Asfar asked those responsible for Tomb 33 why this vertical shaft was not covered, as is the case with other shafts in other ancient Egyptian tombs. The answer was that a metal covering was made to cover this shaft on more than one occasion, but over time, as the shaft has had to be re-opened to allow archeologists and researchers to descend in order to reach Pediamenopet's burial chamber, this metal covering has been misplaced, and - for one reason or another - the shaft has remained uncovered.”

The second goofy story involves erection of a brand new obelisk. Where? In Southern California, where else! (<http://tiny.cc/d10cf1yk49>):

“The ancient Egyptians erected obelisks out of hundreds of pounds of stone as a form of magical protection for their temples. Modern Americans erect obelisks out of hundreds of bicycles (and one tricycle) as a form of artistic display for street corners. At least that's the case in Santa Rosa, California.



Bicycle Obelisk is Santa Rosa, California

“Crowned "Cyclisk," this stand-out sculpture measures up at six stories tall, 10,000 pounds, and approximately 340 total bicycles (and that one trike, of course). But don't worry about hundreds of Santa Rosa cyclists looking around for their rides stolen in the night, the bicycles making up the obelisk were all previously unusable and donated by the community.

“Not to poke fun, but does that really help "solidify Santa Rosa as bike-friendly"? Or is this giant community art member just, ahem, compensating for something?”

And lastly, Christmas is coming and there is always weird old Uncle Clyde who is so hard to buy for. Read and maybe this will appeal to you (<http://tiny.cc/2qq7y>):



Sale NH1005 Lot 281 I.M. Chait Gallery

“This remarkable artifact is the actual hand of a human Egyptian mummy. Although its provenance can be traced back only as far as a New Jersey dealer in the 1960s, who sold it to a private collector, its authenticity is in no doubt and the excellence of its preservation suggests a date somewhere between the New Kingdom and the Ptolemaic Era. Mummies have been a feature of civilizations throughout the world for centuries, from Peru to China, but those from Egypt have done most to capture the popular imagination. Indeed, one could almost take this present specimen as emblematic of their place in popular culture, immortalized in the 1940 Universal horror film *The Mummy's Hand*.

“Remarkably, given that the wrappings are not present, it displays a superb level of preservation, with a wonderful aged patina in brown, tan and orange, and superb details such as the long slender fingernails and the protruding lunate bone with a fringe of muscle. The distinctive position of the fingers may suggest that it belonged to a high status individual, prepared in careful fashion for their journey to the next life, and it makes for a dramatic display piece with the forefinger extended and the thumb curled over, originally perhaps to hold some ceremonial object. A remarkable and remarkably preserved piece, it measures 7 inches long and stands 10 3/8 inches high on a custom metal display stand.

“Auction estimate \$5,000-6,000.”

That's enough. Next time you meet a mummy, offer him a hand!