## CYBERSCRIBE-193

Menhedj, Volume Two, Number 3 (September 2011)

The CyberScribe would like to begin this column with a look backwards to a very important man to all of us who love ancient Egypt. I refer, of course, to Zahi Hawass. Admired, loved, hated, reviled, accused of terrible things...he is all of these things. But, he took the office as head of the Supreme Council on Antiquities (SCA) from a seldom seen, a somewhat ineffectual, and largely politically helpless agency to a dynamic power that protected and developed Egypt for us lucky visitors.

Many people believed him to be a power and glory hungry person, and that may have been true in part, but modern day Egypt is far the better for his term in office. He has funneled huge sums into upgrading the sites, opening new areas and new museums, and has succeeded in generating a great deal of foreign currency for an impoverished Egypt.

He is gone from the scene for now, perhaps forever as a power, but we must salute him...and offer a vote of thanks for a job that was for the most part, very well done!

The Internet is filled with vicious attack websites, and laughter from those who enjoyed his fall, but that is probably the wrong tack. Yes, he has been accused of a number of criminal activities, but none of the accusations has resulted in conviction or censure.

Thank you, Zahi Hawass!

A site called 'The National' (http://tiny.cc/kuhn4) presented a nice overview, and it is presented below (with some abbreviation):

'It is finally over for Zahi Hawass, Egypt's famous, flamboyant and controversial archaeologist.

'He was shuffled out last week in a cabinet change made under pressure from protesters. The Ministry of State for Antiquities, created by Hosni Mubarak just days before his overthrow on February 11 and given to Mr. Hawass, was cancelled.

'Mr. Hawass, whose trademark Indiana Jones hat turned him into a face recognized the world over, has long been a controversial figure. His fall last week, critics say, was way overdue.

'Voted by Time magazine in 2003 as one of the world's 100 most influential people, Mr. Hawass never shied away from the fame archaeology provided him. He recently started a fashion line named after him, featuring khaki garments similar to those worn by archaeologists in the early 20th century.

'He prided himself on being the "keeper and guardian" of Egypt's heritage. In 2009, he told an Egyptian magazine that George Lucas, the creator of the Indian Jones films, had come to visit him in Egypt "to meet the real Indiana Jones". He engineered much of his work to promote his image, perhaps with financial gain in mind.

'However, it was not Mr. Hawass's flamboyance that caused his downfall. It was the perception that he was too close to the Mubarak regime.

'In the new Egypt, the careers of nearly all public figures, from politicians to pop singers, are being decided by whether they were deemed as close to the ousted regime. And Mr. Hawass is no exception, although he has passionately denied having done anything that went beyond the duties of a senior government official.

'Looters also bedeviled Mr. Hawass. On the night of January 28, looters ran free in Cairo after a day of deadly clashes between anti-regime protesters and Mr. Mubarak's security forces. The Egyptian Museum, on the edge of Tahrir Square, was broken into and ransacked just hours after army troops were deployed. The soldiers did nothing to stop the criminals. Mr. Hawass initially sought to play down the value of the artifacts damaged or stolen. But he later acknowledged the seriousness of the losses, which included at least one piece from the King Tut collection.

That the museum was not adequately protected further hurt Mr. Hawass, who by then had been at the helm of the Supreme Council of Antiquities for a decade.

'Mr. Hawass's woes were compounded by the yet-unexplained disappearance of police across the nation on January 28. Dozens of warehouses where thousands of artifacts were kept had no police protection. Looters took advantage. Mr. Hawass made plea after plea for the police to send men to guard the warehouses, but to no avail. Finally, he posted on his website the location of the looted warehouses and a list of the items missing

'The looting may have hurt Mr. Hawass's campaign to win the return of Egyptian artifacts that had been taken out of Egypt over the years. He had repeatedly claimed to have brought back some 5,000 pieces, but the future of that campaign is now in serious doubt with Egypt's ability to protect its heritage questioned after all the looting.'

Moving on...a number of sites reported on the apparent analysis of a moisturized used by the Queen Pharaoh Hatshepsut, a cosmetic that might have had serious, perhaps fatal side effects. In one of these sources 'Discovery.com' (http://tiny.cc/zo569) the discovery was given a general telling (below, with some abbreviation):



Corpus delicti? Hatshepsut's tiny flask of lotion contained a cancer-causing tar residue. credit: Barbara Frommann/University of Bonn

'Queen Hatshepsut, Egypt's greatest female pharaoh, might have moisturized herself to death, according to controversial new research into the dried up contents of a cosmetic vial. Researchers at the University of Bonn, Germany, found a highly carcinogenic substance in a flask of lotion housed at the University's Egyptian Museum.

'The vessel, which featured an inscription saying it belonged to Hatshepsut, was long believed to have held perfume.

"After two years of research, it is now clear that the flacon was a kind of skin care lotion or even medication for a monarch suffering from eczema," the University of Bonn said in a statement.

'The skin lotion's ingredients included large amounts of palm and nutmeg oil, polyunsaturated fats that can relieve certain skin diseases, and benzopyrene, an aromatic and highly carcinogenic hydrocarbon.

"Benzopyrene is one of the most dangerous substances we know," said pharmacologist Helmut Wiedenfeld.

'Banned in today's cosmetics, the cancer-causing tar residue can be found in burnt substances and foods such barbecue, coffee, cigarette smoke, and coal tar.

"If you imagine that the queen had a chronic skin disease and that she found short-term improvement from the salve, she may have exposed herself to a great risk over the years," said Wiedenfeld.

'Hatshepsut's mummy was long lost, and some scholars even hypothesized that Tuthmosis III destroyed it. But in 2007, Egyptian authorities announced they identified the female pharaoh's mummy in KV60A, a mummified female body found by Howard Carter in 1903 as he entered tomb KV60.

'The mummy showed an overweight woman just over 5 feet tall, bald in front but with long hair in back, who died at about 50.

'It appeared that the powerful woman who challenged ancient Egypt's tradition of male supremacy, experienced poor health, at least in the last part of her life. Obese, plagued with decayed teeth, the mummy also suffered from cancer, as a metastatic deposit in the pelvic bone revealed.

'However, other experts are not convinced that Hatshepsut poisoned herself to death while trying to soothe her itchy skin.

"The finding of the substance in an oil she used is not the same as to autopsy the body and find traces of the same substance poisoning in the bone marrow," said Paula Veiga, a researcher in Egyptology.'

And speaking of cosmetic products, how about this short bit from 'Nature.com' (http://tiny.cc/Olsph) that presents the early analysis of ancient Egyptian hair gels?



High-status ancient Egyptians, such as Queen Nodjmet, may have used fatty products to carry their hairstyle into the afterlife. Landmann/Getty Images

'The ancient Egyptians styled their hair using a fat-based 'gel', an analysis of mummies has found. The researchers behind the study say that the Egyptians used the product to ensure that their style stayed in place in both life and death.

'Natalie McCreesh, an archaeological scientist from the KNH Centre for Biomedical Egyptology at the University of Manchester, UK, and her colleagues studied hair samples taken from 18 mummies. The oldest is around 3,500 years old, but most were excavated from a cemetery in the Dakhleh Oasis in the Western Desert, and date from Greco-Roman times, around 2,300 years ago.

'Microscopy using light and electrons revealed that nine of the mummies had hair coated in a mysterious fat-like substance. The researchers used gas chromatography-mass spectrometry to separate out the different molecules in the samples, and found that the coating contained biological long-chain fatty acids including palmitic acid and stearic acid. The results are published in the Journal of Archaeological Science1.

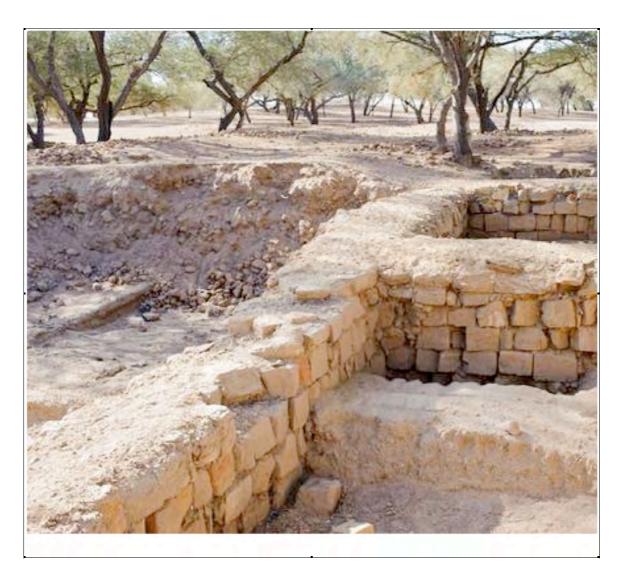
'McCreesh thinks that the fatty coating is a styling product that was used to set hair in place. It was found on both natural and artificial mummies, so she believes that it was a beauty product during life as well as a key part of the mummification process. 'Egyptian texts and art contain no mention of hair products, although ancient Egyptians are known to have used scented oils and lotions on their bodies.

"The best clue comes from Egyptian wigs," says Taylor. "The hair is often coated with beeswax." Such wigs, which have been found in Egyptian tombs, would have been expensive and probably restricted to the nobility, says McCreesh. "The majority of the mummies I've looked at have their own hair," she says.

'The Egyptians might have also used beeswax on their own hair. The wax contains fatty acids such as palmitic acid, although McCreesh says that her results so far don't show any evidence of beeswax. "It was a fat, but we can't tell you what type of fat," she says.

'She points out that beeswax would be difficult to wash out of hair, compared to, say, animal fat. She now plans to analyze the samples further, to try to pin down the hair-gel recipe.'

Sudan and the ancient nations of Nubia generally get little press attention, but Krzysztof Grzymski from the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto has made a very interesting discovery...an ancient palace in the city of Meröe. The report from 'Live Science' (http://tiny.cc/lx9e5). By the way has been a guest at North Texas-ARCE, giving a lecture some years ago. Here is the report (condensed slightly):



Only a small portion of the structure, possibly an ancient palace, has been excavated so far (part of it can be seen in the photo's bottom foreground) in central Sudan beneath another ancient palace. The structure is the oldest building ever found in the ancient city of Meröe.

CREDIT: Photo copyright Royal Ontario Museum

'Hidden beneath an ancient palace in what is now central Sudan, archaeologists have discovered the oldest building in the city of Meröe, a structure that also may have housed royalty. The capital of a vast empire that flourished around 2,000 years ago, Meröe was centered on the Nile River. At its height, the city was controlled by a dynasty of kings who ruled about 900 miles (1,500 kilometers) of territory that stretched from southern Egypt to areas south of modern-day Khartoum.

'People of Meröe built palaces and small pyramids, and developed a writing system that scholars still can't fully translate today. Although Meröe has been excavated off and on for more than 150 years, archaeologists are not yet clear on how it came to be. The city seems to have emerged out of nowhere.

"In the region of central Sudan, we have an interesting research problem," said team leader Krzysztof Grzymski, a curator at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada. "We are acquainted with the prehistory cultures, from Stone Age all the way through Neolithic, let's say until about 3000 (or) 2500 B.C." But after that "we have nothing, then out of the blue in 800 B.C., we have Meröe culture," Grzymski told LiveScience.

"Architectural elements from what may have been an early Amun temple dating back to at least the seventh century were found during Garstang's excavations in areas later occupied by the Meroitic Royal City," writes David Edwards, of the University of Leicester, in his book "The Nubian Past: An Archaeology of Sudan" (Routledge, 2004).

'If the temple exists, Grzymski said it would be the oldest temple in the city, a find that would offer clues to the religion of the civilization's first people. His team tried to find the structure using magnetometry, a technique that can detect archaeological remains by searching for anomalies in the magnetic field. The attempt was unsuccessful so in January 2012, they plan to launch a major dig to search for it. "The only way to search for this early Amun temple will be by excavating," said Grzymski.

'It won't be a quick discovery; Grzymski said that he will take a yearlong sabbatical from the museum to search for the temple.'

Of course we cannot have a CyberScribe column without at least one mention of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun...so we'll put two such items in here this month.

The first uses DNA studies done a while ago, and makes some very interesting claims about the boy king's impact on the world that came after him. The claims are made in the 'International Business Times' (http://tiny.cc/j1x6b) (abbreviated somewhat below):



A detailed view of the Coffinette for the Viscera of Tutankhamun is shown at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in Los Angeles . Top of Form

'According to geneticists at Switzerland-based iGENEA DNA genealogy test center, up to 70 percent of British men and half of all Western European men are related to King Tut. iGENEA reconstructed the DNA profile of the boy king in 2009 after carrying out extended DNA-tests with the mummy of Tutankhamun and other members of his family, including his father Akhenaten and his grandfather Amenhotep III.

'The result of the DNA-tests showed that King Tut belonged to haplogroup R1b1a2, which more than 50 percent of all men in Western Europe belong to, iGENEA said in a statement.

'The R1b1a2-lineage is believed to have originated about 9,500 years ago in the Black Sea region, researchers said, adding that the haplogroup began to migrate to Europe with the spread of agriculture since 7,000 BC. "Since paternal ancestry of King Tut is unknown, therefore it is not clear at this point of time, how this lineage came from its region of origin to Egypt," according to iGENEA, which is using DNA testing to search for last or closest living relatives of Tutankhamun's male lineage in Europe.

'In Egypt, the haplogroup R1b1a2 is estimated to be less than one percent, which researchers believe was "partially" caused by European immigration during the last 2,000 years.'

And then there is this article suggesting that the initial DNA work was fatally flawed! The story below is actually related to the previous item.

'CBS News' (http://tiny.cc/njy5c) broke the story with the article below (abbreviated somewhat) where they claim that the Pharaoh Tutankhamun came from the Black Sea region. Needless to say, a lot of people are up in arms and attacking this group. See for yourself:

'A personal genomics company in Switzerland says they've reconstructed a DNA profile of King Tutankhamen by watching the Discovery Channel, claiming the results suggest more than half of Western European men are related to the boy king. But researchers who worked to decode Tut's genome in the first place say the claim is "unscientific."

'Swiss genomics company iGENEA has launched a Tutankhamen DNA project based on what they say are genetic markers that appeared on a computer screen during a Discovery Channel special on the famous pharaoh's genetic lineage.

"Maybe they didn't know what they showed, but we got 16 markers from the Y chromosome from these pharaohs," Roman Scholz, the managing director of iGENEA, told LiveScience.

'If the claims were true, it would put King Tut in a genetic profile group shared by more than half of Western European men. That would make those men relatives — albeit distant ones — of the pharaoh.

'But Carsten Pusch, a geneticist at Germany's University of Tubingen who was part of the team that unraveled Tut's DNA from samples taken from his mummy and mummies of his family members, said that iGENEA's claims are "simply impossible." Pusch and his colleagues published part of their results, though not the Y-chromosome DNA, in the Journal of the American Medical

Association (JAMA) in 2010. The Y chromosome is the sex chromosome found only in males, and looking at the genes in this chromosome would show Tut's male lineage.

"Dr. Albert Zink from the EURAC [European Academy of Bolzano, an independent research center] in Bolzano and co-author of the 2010 JAMA publication screened the footage and confirmed that the company acts very unscientific," Pusch wrote in an email to LiveScience. "The Swiss company did not try to get into contact with us prior to launching their new Internet page."

'The alleged Discovery Channel markers put Tut in a genetic profile group, or haplogroup, that also includes more than half of the men in Western Europe. Scholz said the company is now searching for the closest living relatives of Tutankhamen, men who share all 16 genetic markers on the pharaoh's supposed Y chromosome.

'The haplogroup R1b1a2, which iGENEA claims includes King Tut, arose 9,500 years ago in the Black Sea region. How Tut's ancestors would have gotten from that region to Egypt is unknown, but Scholz said iGENEA hopes to learn more by collecting more close and exact matches from modern people of Western European descent.

'But people hoping to prove that they've got an ancestor in common with the notoriously sickly boy king should take iGENEA's claims with a grain of salt, Pusch said.'

The column so far has been rather light in nature, but things in Egypt are sometimes very serious and the CyberScribe needs to make them available to his readers as well. A source called 'The Media Line' (http://tiny.cc/omOsk) used this headline "Egypt's Brotherhood Declares War on the Bikini". It seems that, not surprisingly, many Muslims are offended by the behavior and garb of westerners when they visit Egypt.

The CyberScribe generally agrees, remembering seeing a woman entering the Valley of the Kings wearing a short cut-off stretch top with a bare midrOff, and thong bikini bottoms. In face, the CyberScribe found her a little offensive. He can't help but believe that ordinary Egyptians were embarrassed and disgusted. Read the story below and give it some thought. This could be the face of Egypt in the future if cooler heads are not heeded.

The report (condensed somewhat) reads as follows:

'Egypt's tourism industry has suffered a severe blow since the outburst of anti-regime demonstrations in January. But that did not stop the Freedom and Justice Party, the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, from demanding stricter regulations over what tourists can do and wear while visiting the country. The party is urging officials to ban skimpy swimwear and the consumption of alcohol on Egyptian streets.

"Beach tourism must take the values and norms of our society into account," Muhammad Saad Al-Katatny, secretary-general of Freedom and Justice, told Egyptian tourism officials on Monday. "We must place regulations on tourists wishing to visit Egypt, which we will announce in advance."

'The call for new strictures on tourists comes as Egypt debates the role of Islam in the post-Mubarak era. Freedom and Justice is competing in elections scheduled for this autumn for parliament and opinion polls show a majority of Egyptians favor a greater use of Islamic law and mores. But a vocal minority worries that Egypt risks becoming an Islamic republic.

'Finance Minister Hazem Al-Beblawi told the Reuters news agency earlier this month that revenue from tourism would likely total \$10 billion in the financial year that started on July 1, compared with \$11.6 billion in 2009/10.

'Khafagy stressed that tourists would be free to do as they please in specially designated areas, adding that his party supported incoming tourism to the country. But that did not satisfy the heads of Egypt's tourism industry, who met with the party's secretary-general Al-Katatny for a heated debate on Monday.

"Without alcohol and bathing suits, no tourists will come and we will loose \$13 billion a year," Hussam A-Shaer, head of the tourist company association, told Al-Masry al-Youm.

'But bathing suits are not the only worry of Egypt's Islamists. Abd Al-Munim A-Shahhat, a spokesman for the Salafi group Dawa, has said that Egypt's world-renowned Pharaonic archeology – its pyramids, Sphinx and other monuments covered with un-Islamic imagery – should also be hidden from the public eye.

"The Pharaonic culture is a rotten culture," A-Shahhat told the London-based Arab daily A-Sharq Al-Awsat on Wednesday, saying the faces of ancient statues "should be covered with wax, since they are religiously forbidden." He likened the Egyptian relics to the idols which circled the walls of Mecca in pre-Islamic times.

"Some parties want to ban tourism, or allow it while banning alcohol, certain foods and certain clothes. [A couple] renting a room will require documents proving they are married," wrote the coalition administrator on the group's Facebook page. "These proposals don't bode well, as many of you know."

But Al-Kantatny said that the Muslim Brotherhood regards Egypt's archeology as belonging to all of humanity, and should therefore be safeguarded.

"This heritage belongs to everyone, and one can't simply remove something he doesn't like," he told Al-Ahram daily."

The CyberScribe began this column with a thank you to Zahi Hawass, and he'd like to bring it to a close with an odd set of observations and a sort of conspiracy theory. The CyberScribe wants to make it very clear that he is not taking a position on this interesting point. The source is sometimes known for satire, and also ran a recent story about a rampaging rogue giant panda terrorizing Arizona residents.

The photos below from 'News Flavor' (http://tiny.cc/5nr33) are most interesting, but the CyberScribe would like to allow the words and photographs to speak for themselves:

'Former Egyptian Minister of Antiquities "Zahi Hawass" could be in trouble yet again, evidence has emerged that he may have staged a false project, live on T.V. to fool the people of Egypt, and the world!

'In 2002 a robot was sent to explore a shaft within the Great Pyramid, it was aired on the National Geographic Channel on September the 17th. Millions of viewers watched as the robot entered the shaft, at the end of which was a mysterious door, with two protruding copper handles (pictures below).

'The robot which was aptly named The Robot Explorer, and was built at the University of Leeds, England, was to work its way through the shaft, via soft brace pads that grip the walls, much like the technique that rock climbers use

for ascending chimneys, The robot had a fiber optic camera to navigate and film its journey through the shaft. Once it reached the end of the shaft, it was assigned the job of drilling a small hole through the door that sealed the chamber, literally giving it means to poke its fiber optic camera through the hole, and view what lies beyond.



'So what's so controversial about this you may ask? Well it appears that Zahi Hawass may have deceived us all, pictures taken of the chamber show something out of the ordinary, at first glance it isn't all that apparent, upon second glance something suddenly doesn't look quite right.

'Like a game of "Spot the Difference" your eyes soon pick up the problem, or "problems" so to speak, there are numerous photos, and videos of the shaft before and after the robot was deployed.

'Now the problem is, if you take a photo of the shaft before the robot was deployed, and a photo whilst the robot is being deployed, you'll see that something isn't quite right. The shaft has seemed to have taken on a surprisingly different quality. The walls appear smoother, the door is a different shape, and the copper handles are nothing like the ones shown in the previous photograph.



Photo 1. Before the robot was deployed, notice the rough textured walls, and the elongated copper handles.



Photo 2. Whilst the robot is deployed, notice the smooth walls and the short, stumpy copper handles.

'It appears that there isn't just one shaft, there is in fact two shafts, one original, and a second counterfeit shaft.

'So the original shaft was filmed prior to the robot being deployed, then with a switch of the cameras, the second and fake shaft was filmed whilst the robot was sent in to drill.

'Well its a slight of hand trick, the old swap the card while the eye isn't looking game, Zahi Hawass had us believe that the chamber was going to be drilled, and its secrets would be revealed, live on TV., before the world. When in actually fact he used a fake chamber, a fake door, which was drilled, revealing nothing but a coarse slab, fooling the world into believing that nothing of any interest lay behind the mysterious door, thus keeping the original and real chamber for himself, and also the secrets that lay beyond it.



Photo 3. The coarse slab that lay beyond the fake chamber.

'Now just to show and highlight the inconsistencies of the chambers when under scrutiny, I have posted a photo pointing out the differences for you, for those who couldn't see them before, you can not really miss them now.

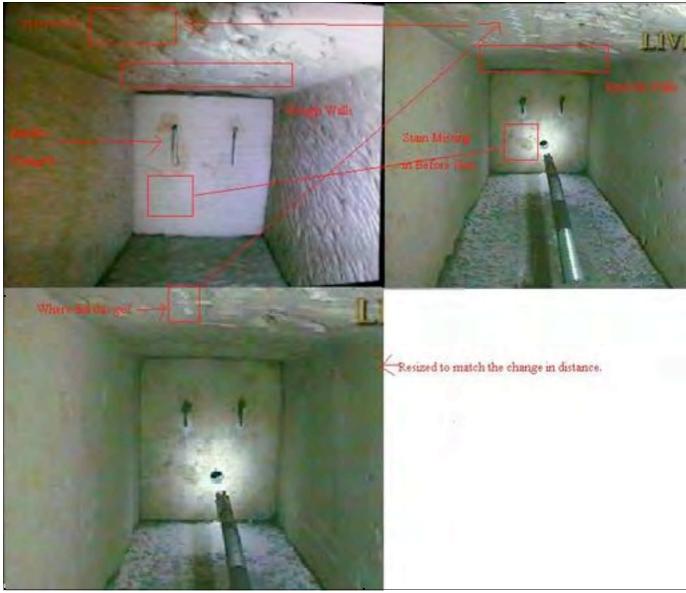


Photo 3. The Inconsistencies are apparent.

And to finish with few harmless giggles, here is a story telling about a genuine sorceress (are there any other types these days?) who mummifies animals for a fee. She is shown here teaching people to mummify frogs...for no apparent reason. The story appeared in the 'Park Slope Patch' (http://tiny.cc/01tvo). Oh, and by the way, Gowanus is part of Brooklyn, NY. Read on:

'In a dimly lit Gowanus space, a middle-aged woman laid out 18 frogs, dried and shriveled from their current state — 32 days into the process of mummification. The woman, known to the public as Sorceress PD Cagliastro, introduced herself to a morbid class of students as not only a necromancer, but a blood sorceress, licensed funeral director and pet mummifier.

'She was, she said, "experienced in all realms of death."

'Cagliastro, adorned in black and purple, stood in front of the 18 frogs, prepared to describe her carefully researched interpretation of the Ancient Egyptian practice of mummification. "Everyone knows what it is, but no one knows how it is done," she said.



Dissecting a frog for mummification



Sorceress PD Cagliastro and her daughter



Wrapping the frog



The final product: a mummified frog (Note the toes hanging out of the wrappings)

'After years of working with human death, Cagliastro said it occurred to her that "the American way of death was just one of the ways that people experienced this particular phenomenon." When, 15 years ago, she was incapacitated by a serious car accident, she took her rehabilitation time to research mummification, and extensively study texts on it at the Brooklyn Museum.

'The first part of mummification involves removing organs from the soon-to-be mummy's body. In Cagliastro's class, she carefully slit organs from the body of a headless frog. She opted to discard some — gall bladder, kidney — while keeping non-digestive organs such as the lungs, and heart, which might later be attached to the back of the mummified animal or in canopi (sic) jars as the ancient Egyptians might have. After the dissection is complete, the animal rests in salts for approximately 32 days.

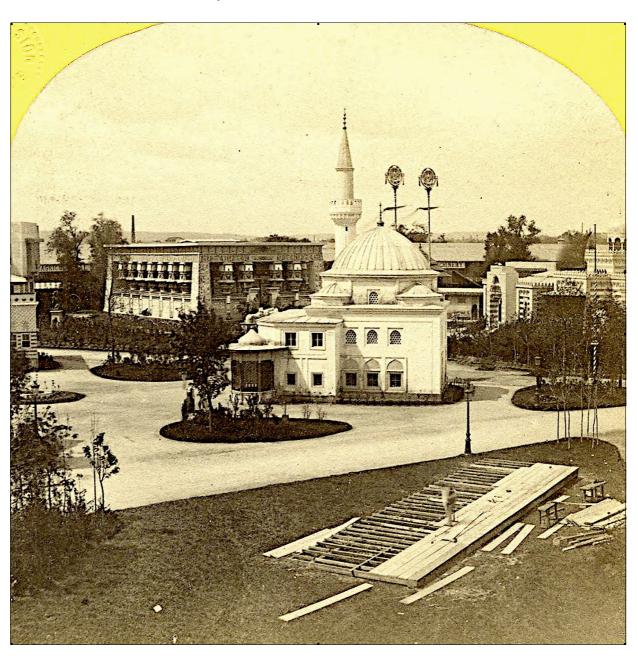
'Cagliastro insists that the animal should stay in the salt mixture for no more than seven days without changing the salts. After that, future mummifiers will know it is time to take the animal out once it reaches the ultimate putrefaction moment — "when it smells really, really bad."

'Each student was handed on of the 18 partially mummified frogs, and was directed to begin the wrapping stage of the mummification. Cagliastro used her teenage daughter's fingers to demonstrate the proper way to wrap the legs of the frog. Using linen, wax, spices and oils, each student set about to patiently create their very own mummy.'

There is so much more out there in Cyberspace, but the CyberScribe is out of space, and perhaps this is more than enough. See you next month!

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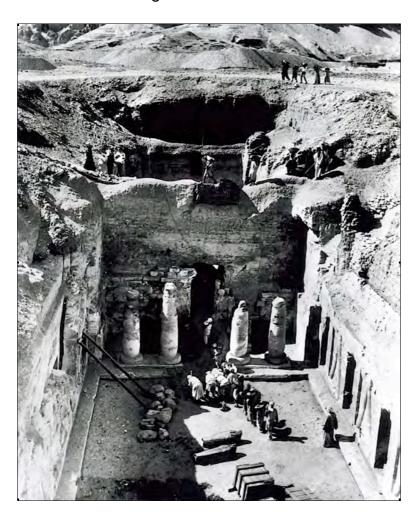
Where The Heck Is It? - September 2011



This lovely temple to the goddess Ra-Bastet, and a beautiful mosque, is a rare surviving photo of the seldom-visited Egyptian city of el-Katraz. Unfortunately, many years ago, this city located near Alexandria, sank suddenly beneath the sea. Now only the tip of the minaret can be seen...and today is used to tie up vessels of the Oxyrhynchus fishing fleet.

Or do you disagree? If so:

- 1. Where do you think this site was photographed?
- 2. When do you think the photograph was taken?



This photo comes from a series of once top-secret Nazi German archives that have recently been declassified. The scene shows a bunch of native excavators exposing one of those huge underground labyrinths, like the ones

you saw in the movie 'Indiana Jones'. Note the pair of mummies on the courtyard floor, and the wooden chest full of solid gold nick-knacks. Or do you disagree with the above explanation? If so:

What is this place called and whom was it built for?

TT-34, Tomb of Montuemhat, Mayor of Thebes (25th Dynasty)
Where is it located (be very specific in your answer)?

El Assasif (near entrance to courts in front of Deir el Bahari)