

CyberScribe 184 – December 2010

Let's start out with a blatant advertisement or a long-time member our Chapter...Roxanne Sanders Wilson. Roxanne was with the Chapter from the beginning, but left us physically years ago when she moved east to Atlanta and other locales. She has now moved back to the DFW area and has resumed attending out sessions.

One of her more interesting tasks over the past few years was to be a member of the team under Dr. Otto Schaden when they discovered the famous site of what came to be known as KV-63. We still don't know exactly what that deep shaft and pit were for, but it held an amazing number of enigmatic objects.

Part of Roxanne's duties involved writing press releases, maintain a website to tell the rest of us what was happening, and top meet with the press as new information needed to be disseminated. You may also have read her several articles in the popular Egyptology magazines.

The out come of her efforts has resulted in a book, which has just now been released: 'KV-63: The Untold Story of the New Tomb in Egypt's Valley of the Kings', authored by Roxanne Sanders Wilson. The book is not on the main source outlets or local bookstores yet, but the text that follows is from Roxanne and describes what you'll see and how to get your own copy. Read on:

"In February 2006 the astonishing discovery of a new tomb, KV-63, in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt sent ripples of surprise and excitement around the globe. KV-63 was the first tomb to be discovered in the Valley of the Kings in 84 years ~ since the discovery of Tutankhamen's Tomb!

"As part of Roxanne's own journal, this book, shares with the readers the day-to-day operations and discovery of KV-63. Not only will the reader be immersed in the excitement, but also the suspense, drama, politics, and the highs and lows experienced by the team during this remarkable discovery.

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The book is available and can be ordered from these sources:

www.KV-63.com

Ebay.com with secure link: <http://snipurl.com/1qzj92>

Retail Price: \$32.99

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Softcover, 368 pages, 90 Photos and Illustrations

And as long as the CyberScribe is pandering, let's do one more. Karlene Schoonover, the editor of Menhedj, is a fancier of Basingi dogs, one of the breeds that have been thought to be the dogs of the pharaohs. The possible answer to the identity of the ancient Egyptian dogs is controversial, to say the least, but a recent pair of stories appeared to relate how researchers are trying to solve the riddle.

Possible the better of the two articles was the one that appears below (abbreviated) from the German new source 'Der Spiegel'

(<http://snipurl.com/1qzomg>) and translated to English by Christopher Sultan:

“Scientists are still trying to explain how the gray wolf could evolve into over 400 breeds of dogs, ranging from the pug to the pinscher. One aid in solving this riddle has been found in an unlikely place: a giant animal shrine from ancient Egypt.

“Later, in 1897, French adventurer Jacques de Morgan found himself standing in a dark crypt in Egypt, knee-deep in bones that crackled and snapped with every step he took: He had discovered the world's largest dog cemetery. De Morgan's pioneering discovery was soon forgotten in professional circles. But now, more than a century later, researchers from Cardiff University, in Wales, have turned their attention to the dog mausoleum once again and are conducting excavations at the site. Paul Nicholson, a lecturer in archaeology from the university who is leading the dig, says that thousands of mummified dogs were once placed into niches in the cavern.



Thousands of mummified dogs were once placed into niches in the cavern. Most of the canine corpses date back to the period after 748 B.C., when black pharaohs ruled along the Nile and animal cults took on bizarre forms.



A dog's coffin. When dog owners died, their beloved pets were often constrained to join them in the afterlife -- by being either strangled or bludgeoned to death.



A mummified cat. More than 180,000 cats have been found buried in a single mass grave near the village of Istabl Antar.



Researchers are now using the bones to help elucidate the mysterious family tree of the dog.

“Most of the canine corpses date back to the period after 748 B.C., when black pharaohs ruled along the Nile and animal cults took on bizarre forms. In Saqqara, a village just south of Cairo, there were two ritual sites for dogs. The one currently being investigated lies directly beneath the Temple of Anubis, the jackal-headed Egyptian god of the underworld. Priests would descend a staircase to the stone-lined cellar, where they would have made sacrifices to Anubis with victims taken from a kennel in the temple district.

“Researchers are now trying to determine the breeds, ages and genders of the animals sacrificed at this site. But their efforts aren't aimed at solving any Egyptian riddle per se, but to helping elucidate the mysterious family tree of the dog. Scientists now have genetic proof that dogs derive from wolves, fellow members of the *Canis* genus. Scholars believe that wolves first started to have peaceful interactions with Stone Age humans about 30,000 years ago. A canine jawbone recently discovered in Switzerland and estimated to be 14,000 years old already bears clear signs of domestication: smaller fangs and a shorter snout than the wolf's.

“Reliefs, grave paintings and statues indicate that the ancient Egyptians played a major role in this development. The first known depictions of dogs come from rock carvings along the Nile River dating back almost 5,000 years ago. Not long thereafter, the pharaohs were already hunting with slender

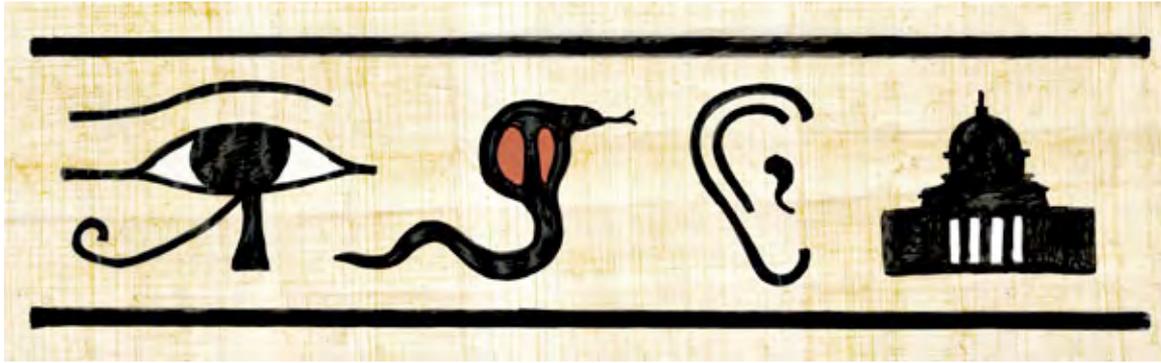
greyhounds. A leashed dog with black-and-white spots that vaguely resembles a Dalmatian is painted on a sarcophagus from the 6th dynasty, or roughly 4,000 years back.

“Around 1500 B.C., small, bowlegged mutts and lapdogs were already scurrying around the palaces of the pharaohs. Brawny hunting dogs were bred for the battlefield, and mastiffs imported from Assyria were crossed with the domestic breed. A bronze figure from the grave of King Tut strongly resembles a dachshund.

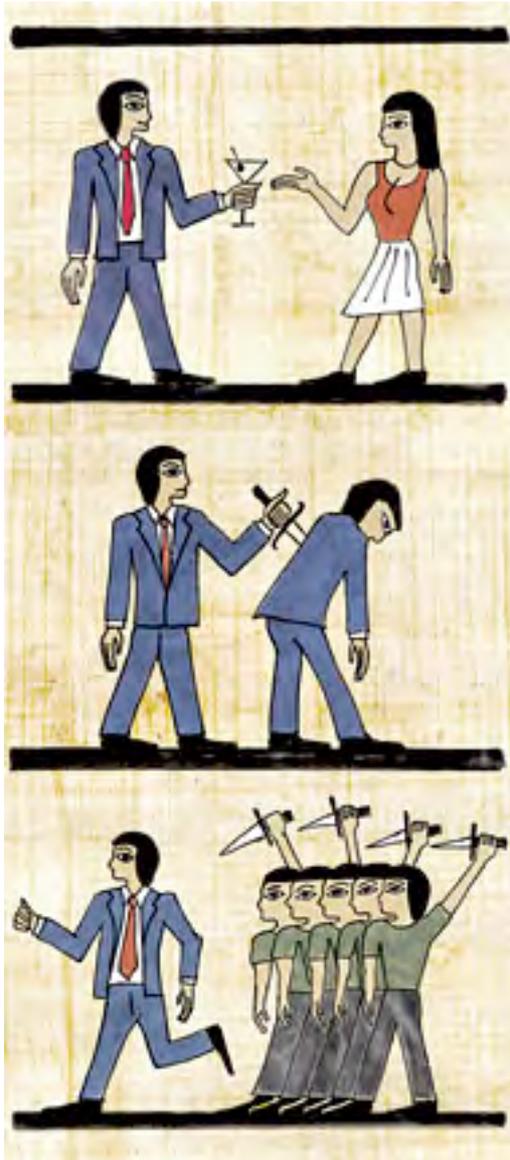
“The underground cult temple at Saqqara is now revealing the kinds of dogs created in the process of uncontrolled mating as well as how many different breeds the Egyptians already had. The archaeologists are facing a daunting task: They have mountains of brownish bones to sort through, including the ones of jackals, foxes and hyenas found in initial analyses. And they will use CT scanning devices to examine the dogs that were found mummified.”

What would Egyptologists, readers and writers of ancient Egyptian topics, and all the rest of us, do without the famous Queen Cleopatra VII? Once again she emerges in two quite different articles, which will be reviewed here. First is one dealing with Cleopatra’s “guide to good governance”. In this piece written by Stanley Sheff author of “Cleopatra: a life”(<http://snipurl.com/1qztzy>).

In this report, author Sheff treats Cleopatra as a modern corporate Director, who uses corporate rules, deceit, threats, and promises as ways of managing Egypt and her portion of the ancient world in much the same way as a moderate corporate runs a modern business. Depending on which version of the story you believe, she was either a raving beauty, or as most modern scholars believe, an entrepreneur who was not a terribly pretty woman but an extraordinarily gifted leader of her country and a politician almost without equal in the ancient world. The cyber scribe believes that you will enjoy this abbreviated version of the article:



“Let’s say you can’t readily lay your hands on “Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun” or those of Winnie the Pooh. And let’s say the political mood around you is bleak; gridlock is the order of the day. Why not turn to a different management guru, a woman who left some 2,000-year-old teachable moments, each of them enduring and essential?”



“At 18, Cleopatra VII inherited the most lucrative enterprise in existence, the envy of her world. Everyone for miles around worked for her. Anything they grew or manufactured enriched her coffers. She had the administrative apparatus and the miles of paperwork to prove it. From the moment she woke she wrangled with military and managerial decisions. The crush of state business consumed her day. Partisan interests threatened to trip her up at every turn; she observed enough court intrigue to make a Medici blush. To complicate matters, she was highly vulnerable to a hostile takeover. Oh, and she looked very little like the other statesmen with whom she did business.

“Obliterate your rivals. Co-opting the competition is good. Eliminating it is better. Cleopatra made quick work of her siblings, which sounds uncouth. As Plutarch noted, however, such behavior was axiomatic among sovereigns. It happened in the best of families.

“The royal rules for dispensing with blood relatives were as inflexible as those of geometry. Cleopatra lost one brother in her civil war against him; allegedly poisoned a second; arranged the murder of her surviving sister. She thereafter reigned supreme.

“Don’t confuse business with pleasure. The two have a chronic tendency to invade each other’s territory.

“If you’re going to seduce someone, set your sights high. Cleopatra fell in with the most celebrated military commanders of her day, sequentially allying herself and producing children with her white knights, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. As she demonstrated, the idea is to kiss your way up the ladder. Along the same lines, there was an ancient world equivalent of the hire-an-assistant-of-whom-your-spouse-can’t-be-jealous wisdom. Cleopatra surrounded herself with eunuchs. They got into less trouble than did other aides, or at least different kinds of trouble.

“Appearances count. You may campaign in poetry, but you are wise to govern in pageantry. Deliver carnivals rather than tutorials; a little vulgarity goes a long way. Just wear the flag pin already.

“Leadership is a trick of perception. If you intend to command, look the part. Work boots with a suit are always a nice touch when you’re the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority in an occupied Middle Eastern country, for example. Make something of a spectacle of yourself. Yes, you can do that in jeans and a black turtleneck. Literally or not, the idea is to create and star in your own reality show.

“Go big or go home. Cleopatra appeared before Antony at an age when, according to Plutarch, “women have most brilliant beauty and are at the acme of intellectual power,” a moment every woman knows to be several years behind her. But no matter. Cleopatra took with her extravagant gifts, chests of money, rich textiles. She traveled on a gilded barge with purple sails, amid a cloud of incense. She laid out carpets of roses. To Antony’s officers she handed around gem-studded vessels, couches, sideboards, tapestries, horses, torch-bearing Ethiopian slaves. It was not surprising that the most astute of Antony’s generals should several years later vouch for her military genius.

“Never get involved in a land war in Asia. Millenniums before Wallace Shawn delivered up that pearl of wisdom in “The Princess Bride,” Cleopatra seems to have intuited as much. She nonetheless financed Antony’s military expedition

to the restive area east of the Tigris, a multiethnic, multicultural region of shifting alliances, one that had resisted 30 years of Roman efforts at organization. The Roman general who had last ventured that way had not returned. His severed head wound up as a prop in a royal production of Euripides. His legions were slaughtered. Antony fared only marginally better. Asian allies double-crossed him. Guerrilla tactics and treacherous geography undid him. At the conclusion of a demoralizing campaign and a disastrous retreat he had lost some 24,000 men. Cleopatra bailed him out.

“Underpromise and overdeliver. Cleopatra comported herself flamboyantly and delivered on drama. But occasionally — despite a huge staff that included pages and scribes, masseurs and tasters, lamplighters and pearl-setters — something slipped through the cracks.

“Alas such was the case in her dealings with Cicero, who left only damning lines about the Egyptian queen, whom he would not deign even to mention by name. He had little reason to be inclined toward a rich and foreign female sovereign. But the animus derived from something else. Cleopatra had promised Cicero a manuscript — it may have been one from her library in Alexandria — on which she failed to deliver. The oversight sealed her fate for posterity. No one has ever paid so lasting a price for a forgotten library book.

“If you can’t pay your debts, debase your currency. Egypt’s economic affairs were dismal when Cleopatra ascended to the throne. She devalued the currency by a third. She issued no gold and critically lowered the value of her kingdom’s silver. And she ushered in a great innovation: she introduced coins of various denominations. In an early prefiguring of paper currency, the markings rather than the metal content determined their value. A coin might feel light in the hand, but if Cleopatra said it was worth 80 drachmae, it was worth 80 drachmae. The arrangement was both lucrative to her and encouraged an export-driven economy.

“A friend of a friend may well be an enemy. Cleopatra’s charm was said to be irresistible, her presence spellbinding. But one person on whom she failed to work her magic was Herod. Well before religion clouded the picture, the Queen of Egypt and the King of Judaea were rivals for Rome’s friendship. Cleopatra did everything in her power to frustrate Herod. She kept him as far from Antony as possible and claimed proceeds from Judaea’s most lucrative natural resources. At one point she incited a war between Herod and his Arab neighbors the Nabateans, ordering her commander in the region to prolong the contest as long as possible. She counted on them to destroy each other, which they did not. Cleopatra did supply Herod with further reason to malign her in Rome, however.

“Good neighbors make good fences. Shortly after the war between Herod and the Nabateans, Julius Caesar’s adopted son Octavian soundly defeated Cleopatra at the battle of Actium. She retreated to Alexandria, from which she attempted several escapes. In one particularly bold maneuver, she dragged her Mediterranean fleet 40 miles overland in order to relaunch it, via the Gulf of Suez, into the Red Sea. Both the bravado and the engineering were staggering. Cleopatra essentially anticipated the Suez Canal.

“Control the narrative. Cleopatra understood well that the storytelling mattered as much as the decision-making, and that the best narrative is the easy-to-follow narrative. She discovered early on that it helps to have a god on your side — or to claim to speak for one. She remained at all times on-message, truthfully and not. She cruised the Nile with Julius Caesar, a splendid advertisement of Egyptian abundance to her Roman visitor and of Roman military might to her people. After her defeat at Actium, she sailed back to Alexandria with head high, passing off a mission entirely botched as one expertly accomplished.

“The problems came later. Her enemies wrote her history, reducing her shrewd politics and managerial competence to sexual manipulation. As one contemporary noted, “How much more attention people pay to their fears than to their memories!” It’s rarely about the library book, but so much easier to claim it is. And you never know who’s going to end up addressing posterity.

“It could be Newt Gingrich.”

Anyone who has ever worked in a museum knows that there are some secrets hidden deep inside the bowels of the institution, which would cause a great deal of trouble they were generally known. For a very long time Egyptologists, and other insiders, knew very well that there were objects in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which, almost without question came from the tomb of Tutankhamen. These facts can hardly be denied, as some of the objects were well known, and had even been published with excellent photographs. The problem now, was how to get the secret out, and not look like the bad guy.

Recently the Metropolitan decided on the obvious step. Just simply admit that they had the objects, and offer the back the country of Egypt.

Therefore, for a number of years, a quiet survey was done of the Egyptian objects owned by the Metropolitan Museum, and a small number were identified which certainly have been derived from the famous tomb of Tutankhamen.

There weren't very many of them, some of them were very nice, and some are not particularly attractive, but all were clearly illegally derived. The legality is somewhat dicey, because Carter, discover of the tomb, and Lord Carnarvon, who financed the discovery team, had been promised a large number of objects in the tomb once the clearance was completed. Unfortunately time and politics entered the equation, and the Egyptians claimed the entire contents of the tomb.

By this time however, Carter and Lord Carnarvon, and perhaps a few others, had already taken pieces out of the tomb. They never gave them back, and the ones taken by Carter eventually ended up mostly in the collection of the Museum of Art.

Not unexpectedly, numerous articles immediately appeared telling the tale of the discovery, the confession, and the plans for repatriation of the purloined objects. Perhaps the best of these reports was by Kate Taylor (<http://snipurl.com/1r06ey>) in the New York Times (abbreviated below):

“The Metropolitan Museum of Art is voluntarily returning 19 artifacts to Egypt that had been in its collection for decades and that Met curators recently determined came from Tutankhamen's tomb, the museum said on Tuesday.



Figurine of a dog made of bronze with a gold collar (Photo Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Nails from King Tutankhamen's tomb, also to be returned.

“Zahi Hawass, the secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Egypt, was scheduled to announce the transfer in Cairo on Wednesday. The 19 objects are small in scale. Among the more significant are a tiny bronze dog, less than three-quarters of an inch tall, and a small sphinx from a bracelet. The objects will be on display until January as part of the Tutankhamen exhibition in Times Square. After that, they are to be exhibited at the Met for six months and then sent to Egypt to be shown at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and the Grand Egyptian Museum at Giza when it opens in 2012.

“Most of the Met's Egyptian collection came to it through partage, the early-20th-century practice of dividing the finds of excavations between the host country and the archaeological teams carrying out the digs. But the Egyptian government considered Tutankhamen's tomb, which was discovered in 1922 by the British archaeologist Howard Carter, to be so significant that it had Carter sign a waiver stating that all of the excavation's finds would stay in Egypt.

“There has been speculation over the years that some objects from the tomb had ended up in foreign collections. In 1978 Thomas Hoving, a former director of the Met, stirred the pot by asserting in his book “Tutankhamun: The Untold Story” that many objects in the Met's collection had come from the tomb.

“Recent research by two Met curators found that only these 19 objects came from the tomb. The bronze dog and bracelet fragment were acquired

from Carter's niece, who inherited them from Carter; two other objects, part of a handle and a collar accompanied by additional beads, were bequeathed to the Met as part of the contents of Carter's house at Luxor."



Lapis lazuli bracelet inlay in the form of a sphinx (Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Reconstructed faience broad collar (Photo Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The end of the year invites a little silliness, so the CyberScribe will engage you in a pair of wild, spooky, and downright stupid final pieces. Enjoy!!!

The tale below is presented too late for the CyberScribe's readers who might wish to have attended, but perhaps one of the Chapter's members will have been in there and can give us review of the performance? A group calling themselves 'Here Come The Mummies', performed at Dallas's Majestic Theatre on Wednesday, December 1.

Note that the piece below claims that the "Mummies swear up and down that they are in fact a band of 5,000-old musicians who were cursed after their music got the Pharaoh's daughters all hot and bothered."

Abbreviated, here is the blurb that was used to describe the performance:

"Here Come the Mummies is an incredibly tight and saucy 12-piece R&B band that, just as the name suggests, perform shows with all the members dressed as Egyptian mummies. That's right, they lay down tasty James Brown-style grooves on stage while dressed head to toe in moldy bandages.



“In fact, the members of Here Come the Mummies swear up and down that they are in fact a band of 5,000-old musicians who were cursed after their music got the Pharaoh’s daughters all hot and bothered. (There’s another backstory that claims the band members are a group of Grammy-winning Nashville-based session players, but how plausible is that?)

“True to mummy form, the band members only do interviews in character, and since they can only grunt and groan in conversation, usually use an “interpreter” named Baron Von Doompfwagen when talking to reporters. Luckily, the mummies seem to have adapted to e-mail pretty well, as drummer/vocalist Java Mummy was able to answer a few questions via e-mail.

““We have always played whatever music made the ladies dance,” Java Mummy said. “It just turns out that several thousand years into our adventures, that funk and soul were the best genre for that. It is the thousands of years of practice that have made us so tight, but we have never lost the core of what makes us play music it gets us chicks.”

“One would think that being wrapped in moldy, foul-smelling bandages would prove to be an obstacle to the band’s appeal with women. But Java Mummy insisted that’s not the case.

““We have found that everybody loves a sexy mummy, and that being wrapped has not affected our getting down at all,” he said. “I think the ladies like not being able to see us that well; I assume that we are all handsome movie stars underneath it all.”

“True to form, the band’s lyrics are at times over-the-top salacious, with titles like “Dirty Minds,” “Funky Little Baby,” and “Single Entendre.” Java Mummy makes no apologies for his band’s perpetual sex drive.

““What can I say, sexual attraction is biological, and we do not fight it,” he said. “Perhaps our curse has heightened our libidos, but we were chasing tail before the curse too.”

“Whether or not you cotton to lyrics that put the moves on every woman in the room, or gimmicks like a cowbell belt that’s played by pelvic thrusts, Here Come the Mummies still brings incredibly tight chops to the stage. Those 5,000 years of practice have paid off.

““If you have not seen us perform, then you are in for a treat. Expect to see nine mummies laying down up to 2 hours of non-stop groove, insane horn lines, dance moves, and the occasional laugh,” Java Mummy said.

“But you may not want to stand downwind of the band during the show — those decomposing bandages don’t get changed all that often.

““We are quite picky when it comes to who we enlist to help us,” he said. “Such a stringent attitude has led to our bandages getting changed every couple of decades.””

Kerry Lynn Cassidy (<http://snipurl.com/1r0971>) is a mysterious personage, who popped up on the Internet recently with stories of terrible nefarious deeds being done on the Giza plateau, no doubt result of that terrible personage Zahi Hawass, who everybody knows is up to something.

Those of us who watched the recent TV shows where Hawass worked with a group of students, saw the man running at full speed all day and almost all night as well. Now the great man clearly has a new major nighttime job.

Yes, clearly he and his evil minions, have discovered great treasures and secrets on the Giza plateau. Those treasures and secrets are being taken out quietly. This is being done so that the rest of us will never know the truth.

Even those of us who personally have met Hawass, and have seen him frequently on television, have to doubt whether he has the time and energy to manage all of those evil things. Is it possible that this new source is not very rigorous with its facts and truthfulness?

Well, if you were to go and check out the original site, you would find that it is replete with stories about aliens, flying saucers, strange monsters, stories about Bigfoot, and other things everybody knows “are true.” (<http://snipurl.com/1r0971>).

Kerry Cassidy’s statement, given here in its entirety, states:

“There are mysterious comings and goings in the cover of night on the Giza Plateau. A film has been released that shows the removal of items from underground. The clear sound of heavy machinery. The person who shot it used a cell phone and gave the film to Bill Brown and his partner Richard Gabriel. This person’s life is now in danger. They cut the film, to disguise the identity and location of the photographer. They cut the voices out, which would have revealed the photographer’s identity.

“The Giza Geomatrix members have been working out at the Giza plateau, originally as members of the Polish team from Warsaw University. Bill Brown has been to Egypt 30 times in the last 5 years. He has been working on digs around Egypt and is known to the head of the Egyptian Antiquities organization (SCA), Zahi Hawass. He has been filmed as part of a National Geographic special. They have been investigating the incident in September, where 6 people died in mysterious circumstances, were buried alive in an illegal dig.

““Their research has revealed secret burial grounds and the possible location of Khufu’s tomb. They have used ground penetrating radar to locate this as well as numerous locations of treasures hidden underground. Their interest in coming forward and releasing the film is to reveal the subterfuge, and encourage openness in regard to the discoveries being made out at the Plateau and around Egypt.

“But their purpose there is much more complex. I encourage everyone to go to their website, Gizamap.com and watch the presentation there, the intro and the one entitled “Earth Protection”. The information they are in the

process of revealing may hold the key to preventing the pole shift and survival of humanity.”

She then claims that there is a film that proves her premise. It can be seen at: <http://snipurl.com/1r0iuy>. All the CyberScribe can say is that the video is highly amusing. No too surprisingly, Hawass was less than positive when made aware of their activities. They have been banned from Egypt forever.

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