

# ANCIENT EGYPT

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Karnak Temple



More discoveries in  
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 Hatshepsut in the temple of Amun at Karnak.*  
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Many *AE* readers will be familiar with the series of novels written by Elizabeth Peters, featuring the exploits of Victorian archaeologist-sleuth Amelia Peabody. They are gripping tales, in which sound Egyptological fact (Elizabeth Peters is really Egyptologist Barbara Mertz) and fiction blend seamlessly.

In 2003, *Amelia Peabody's Egypt: A Compendium* was published, which is a collection of articles and features on the real world of nineteenth/early twentieth century Egyptology, with biographies of all the real characters mentioned in the books as well as all the fictional characters. It is an amusing and splendid publication, but one where fact and fiction are so closely interwoven that at the time of its publication, *AE*'s Editorial staff did discuss their concern that this distinction might not necessarily be clear.

So ... within the space of a week or so recently, I was not unduly surprised to receive two emails enquiring if I knew the exact location of "Amarna House" (Amelia Peabody's fictional home in the UK) and, if it was open to the public, its opening hours. My response, that the house doesn't exist and never existed, was met with surprise, if not horror, and the *Compendium* was quoted as the source of the confusion.

Other fictional works set in modern or ancient Egypt make no specific claims to be anything other than fiction, but sometimes the author's credentials are an implied reference for the accuracy of the "historical" information in the text.

In the novels of French author Christian Jacques, for example, who is described on the cover of his early novels as "one of France's leading Egyptologists", but in the more recent ones as "one of the *world's* leading Egyptologists", one would expect a degree of authenticity. However, the novels, such as *Beneath the Pyramid*, feature such absurdities as a donkey with some kind of built-in satellite navigation system: the donkey, travelling for the first time from Thebes to Memphis, is able to go straight to the door of a specific house, even when the person riding on its back doesn't know where to go. I have heard that some donkeys in Egypt can be trusted to make their way alone from the fields to their stables (and evening feed), but from Thebes to Memphis?

I have read most of Christian Jacques novels and perhaps they lose something in translation from the French; or perhaps the French are more willing to suspend disbelief. Whilst *Beneath the Pyramids* is full of oddities and inaccuracies, which even a novice to the subject of ancient Egypt would spot, one description in the book is so amazing that it actually prevented me from continuing to read past that point.

The plot features a female physician, who can cure almost all ailments (unlike her male counterparts). Picture the scene: she is treating a patient who has been severely injured having been attacked by a bear whilst on a military campaign. The physician has administered a general anaesthetic(?) and prepared an ointment, which she has "applied locally to reduce the pain". She then "checks how long the substances has worked by consult-

ing the clock she wears on her wrist". Mmm, a wrist watch, perhaps? Am I completely missing something here? Has one of the "world's leading Egyptologists" made a hitherto unknown and amazingly significant discovery?

Fact is often stranger and more interesting than fiction. As work progresses in clearing KV-63 in the Valley of the Kings, the main question asked when the tomb was first discovered, "Who was buried there?", has been replaced by "Why are there no bodies so far?"

However, many new and possibly significant discoveries have been made: pots filled with collections of smaller pots and linen; a small gilded coffin; and several pillows (or cushions). Imagine, if you can, the excitement that the team who are working in the tomb must be experiencing, examining objects and opening coffins and pots that were closed by ancient Egyptians over three thousand years ago, and never seen again until now.

Clearing the tomb has been an enormous challenge; making sense of the finds will be as great a one. There has already been a great deal of speculation about the tomb, but hopefully the facts will provide the answers.

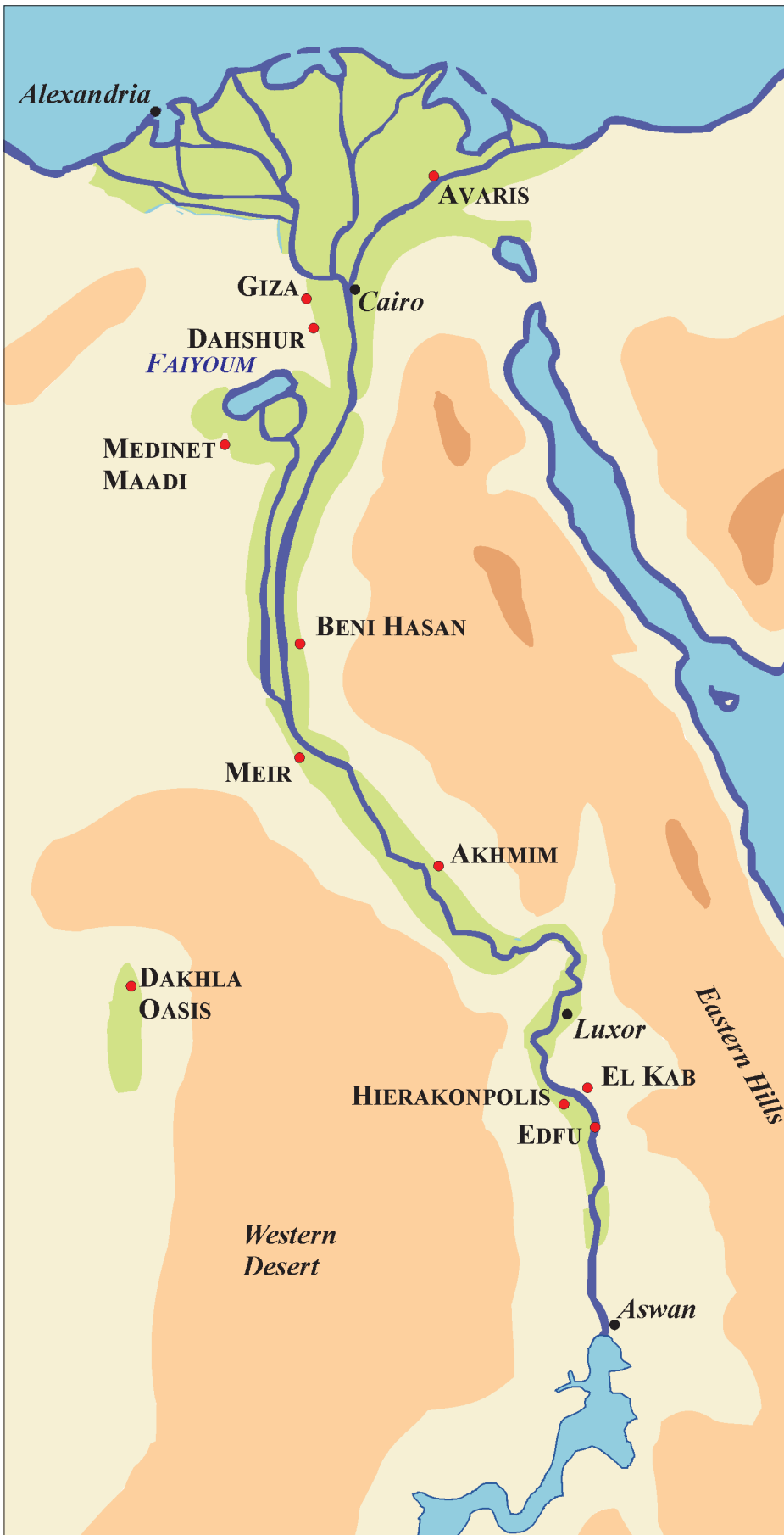
Novels set in ancient Egypt can sometimes be good, and I am sure *AE* readers will know of many examples, but the real world of Egyptology has some amazing stories to tell based on sound facts and the diligent hard work of excavators. The story of the discovery of KV-63 and the clearing of the tomb will, I am sure, be included in future non-fiction books about the history of excavations in Egypt.

The work of teams of Egyptologists in many sites in Egypt today, at places like Hierakonpolis, the various excavations in the Delta, and even in places that have already been excavated extensively, such as the Temple of Karnak, will continue to add to our knowledge and understanding, and we will continue to bring their stories to you in the pages of *AE*.

RP

## Detailed Map of Thebes





Periods	Dynasties	Famous Pharaohs
500AD		
250AD <i>Roman Period</i>		
AD BC		Cleopatra VII
<i>Ptolemaic Period</i> 250BC		Alexander
500BC	27th	
<i>Late Period</i> 750BC	25th-26th	
<i>3rd Intermediate Period</i> 1000BC	22nd-24th	Sheshonq I
	21st	
1250BC	20th	Rameses II
<i>New Kingdom</i>	19th	Tutankhamun
1500BC	18th	Hatshepsut
<i>2nd Intermediate Period</i>		
1750BC	13th-14th	
<i>Middle Kingdom</i>	12th	Senusret I
2000BC	11th	
<i>1st Intermediate Period</i>		
2250BC	6th	Unas
<i>Old Kingdom</i>	5th	
2500BC	4th	Khufu
	3rd	Djoser
2750BC	2nd	
<i>Archaic Period</i> 3000BC	1st	Narmer
3250BC <i>Predynastic Period</i>		
5500BC		

Maps and Time-line  
by Peter Robinson.

# bits and pieces

## “New” and “Old” faces at the British Museum

Many well-known objects in the British Museum considered to be among the finest in the collection have not been on view to visitors for some time.

Some were removed from display because the side galleries were lost when the Great Court of the museum was developed and, since 2001, over a hundred and forty objects have been touring the United States of America. This tour was so popular it was extended and was followed by a reduced-scale version, to enable it to visit smaller venues.

The situation regarding the return to the UK of the objects is complex. Many are back in the UK, but some of these are waiting to leave again for a new touring exhibition; some are in the USA awaiting return and others will go directly from the USA to new exhibitions.

It is, however, good to see some familiar and well-loved objects back in the museum.

The splendid gilded mummy-mask of Satdjehuty (*see below*) of the New Kingdom is back in the funerary galleries, and, in the main sculpture gallery, a granite statue of Senusret III (*see right*) of the Middle Kingdom is back with its two companion pieces.

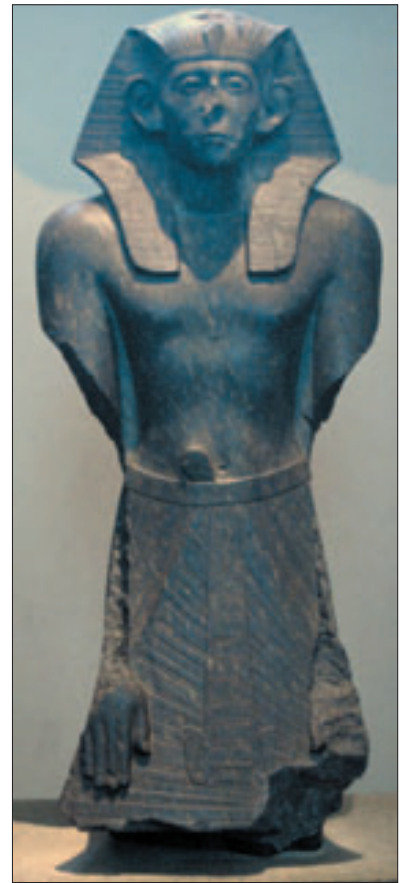
A few other large pieces are yet to be returned to the main gallery and these include a large head of Amenhotep III (this will be in the Great Court, where an excellent cast currently fills its plinth), a statue of Tutankhamun/Horemheb and the Amenhotep III Soleb Lion.



Also in the main sculpture gallery is a splendid “new statue” of a Nubian king (*see below right*).

Well over life-sized and carved from grey granite, it depicts King Anlamani. This statue formed part of the Sudanese Exhibition, including objects loaned from the Sudan National Museum at Khartoum, held in the Museum in 2004. This exhibition is currently waiting to go to another venue, but it was agreed that something from the loan exhibition should be placed on display in the meantime, and the largest object was chosen.

The statue was found at Gebel Barkal and dates to the last quarter of the seventh century BC.



RP

## Readers' letters

**Dear AE,**

I thought the readers of *ANCIENT EGYPT* might be interested to know that the fascination with Egypt has extended to the largest cruise liner in the world, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines' *Freedom of the Seas*.

I was lucky enough to spend two nights on board during her recent visit to Southampton at the beginning of May.

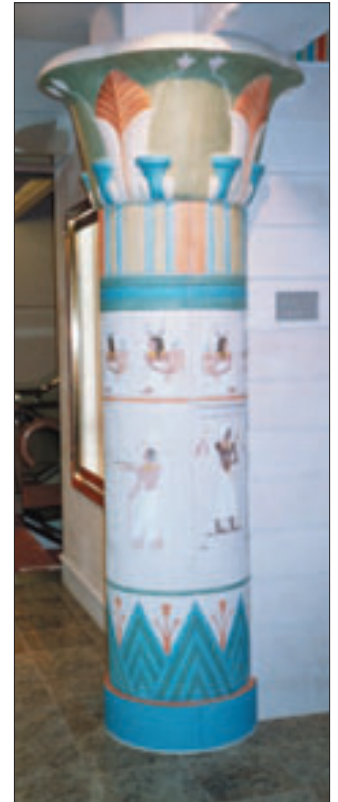
At 160,000 tons, she boasts a rock-climbing wall, a surf park, an indoor skating rink, 1,397 crew and a Pharaoh's Palace Lounge!



The entrance is marked by an obelisk and six pharaonic statues (with blue beards), painted columns and various tomb depictions including a passable one from the tomb of Nefertari.

Inside the lounge, the décor comprises several statues of Anubis, a carpet with a lotus-inspired pattern and David Roberts-style prints on the wall. It seems that the fascination with Egypt never wanes and wherever you are in the world (or on the high seas) it can be found.

**Sue Marriott**  
Southampton Ancient  
Egypt Society.





## News from Egypt

### New discoveries and work in and around the Temple of Amun at Karnak and in Luxor

In the area between the obelisk of Hatshepsut and the North Shrine of Thutmose III, the Franco-Egyptian team of archeologists has discovered important foundation deposits.



Two deposits have been found. The first contained clay vessels, axes and chisels and a faience cartouche of Queen Hatshepsut. The second deposit was found within the foundations of the chapel of Thutmose III and contained pottery and one hundred and twenty-five faience cartouches of the pharaoh.

The big surprise was the discovery of nine cartouches made of solid gold. These are inscribed with the cartouche of Thutmose III, with his coronation name of *Men-Kheper-Ra* on one side and *Meri Amun* ("beloved of Amun") on the other. Each cartouche is two centimetres long and one centimetre wide. These finds will be placed on display in the Luxor Museum of Ancient Egyptian Art.

To maintain buildings for eternity the ancient Egyptians used to bury different kinds of ritual objects

*Left: the site of the discovery of the foundation deposits, just below and to the left of the red plank. The sanctuary of the temple is to the left of the picture and out of view. The crane in the background is the one used for the restoration of the pylon of Horemheb on the south side of the temple.*

*Photo: John Rutherford.*

*Below left: one of the foundation deposits as first found.*

*Below: another view of the foundation deposit lying right at the base of the foundation walls of the temple.*

*Photos: courtesy of the the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA).*



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