

17 lost pyramids discovered in Egypt by space scientists

The recent fantastic discovery of unknown underground pyramids and lost cities in Egypt is nothing short of a miracle. As excavation works proceed, the country hopes to restore its peace and boost local tourism.

This year's political unrest in Egypt has had a very deep impact on the country's economy. Tourism, which accounts for 11% of the country's income, has suffered massively and many of formerly frequented resorts are struggling to attract as little as 10% of original numbers.



*The country is on its way to recovery, however, desperately needs to attract more visitors. When times were hardest, a US Egyptologist Dr Sarah Parcak of the University of Alabama made an **incredible discovery of 17 previously unknown underground pyramids as well as approximately 1,000 tombs and 3,000 settlements.***

The timing could not be better; the discovery has been made thanks to infra-red images acquired by satellites orbiting 400 miles above the earth. While studying these in great detail, Dr Parcak and her team praised this new technology which has the capacity to detect objects less than a meter long.

The excavation works have been launched only recently, however, have already produced valuable evidence. Two pyramids have already been uncovered and many findings date back some 3,000 years.

*The excavation works are currently under way in Saqqara, and as the news spreads, tourists with passion for ancient Egypt will hopefully start coming back. **In an attempt to lure back tourists, some previously inaccessible sites, such as seven tombs of leading retainers of Pharaoh Tutankhamun, have now opened to the public.***

The country is desperate to get local tourism back on its feet and is prepared to make every foreign visit worthwhile. It is safe to say, that never before have there been so many ancient treasures available to explore freely. Hopefully, many visitors will appreciate that.

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New tombs opened

Meanwhile, the tombs of seven men, including several who served King Tutankhamen and his father, the pharaoh Akhenaten, were opened to tourists after restoration.

Egypt's minister of antiquities, Zahi Hawass, said that two of the men who built tombs for themselves — Maya, the treasurer of King Tutankhamen, also known as King Tut — and Horemheb, a general under King Tut who later became king himself, "were very important men during one of Egypt's most tumultuous periods."



Akhenaten, who lived some 3,300 years ago, closed down the temples where Egyptians worshipped in Luxor and moved his capital to a site in the desert known as Amara.

After he died, King Tut tried to restore order in Egypt by moving the religious capital back to Luxor and re-establishing worship of the traditional god, Amun.

Under King Tut, "Maya was responsible for restoring order in Egypt, while his colleague Horemheb restored order abroad," the antiquities ministry said in a statement.

A tomb built for Meryneith, who was temple steward under Akhenaten, was of mudbrick encased in limestone blocks. A scene on a rear wall shows metal workers plying their trade.

Other tombs were built for Ptahemwia, who was the royal butler to both Akhenaten and King Tut; Tia, a top official under Ramses II who ruled from 1303-1213 B.C.; and Pay and his son, Raia. Pay was the overseer of the harem under King Tut, and Raia was a soldier who later took over his father's post.

Some of these tombs were first discovered in 1843 by German explorer Richard Lepsius, but were not fully excavated until an Anglo-Dutch mission began excavating there in 1975. Now a Dutch team from Leiden University excavates at the site and has been restoring the tombs.

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Start of the Project in the Archeological City of Mady in Fayoum

The second phase of the project to develop the archeological area in the city of Mady in Fayoum has officially begun. This project is in the framework of the Italian-Egyptian partnership to protect archeological sites by respecting the environments and the archeological finds.



The project also includes the creation of the first archeological park that connects the two archaeological sites of the city of Mady and Wadi Ryan to Fayoum through a 27 km long natural corridor that respects the distinctive features of this geological, desert and natural area. The project, which began in 2005, also includes the preparation of the archaeological site in the city of Mady through sand removal and examination of the ruins, as well as the drawing and preparation of maps for the visitor's center. The visitor's center is one of the pivotal points of the project that has been built with the use of

local natural materials.
 It includes a natural hotel and a cafeteria that can also serve as a hall for the holding of lectures and conferences. The hotel consists of twenty simple tents. It is worth mentioning that the city of Mady is a very important archaeological site in Fayoum and it was established by Kings Amnahat the Third and Amnahat the Fourth from the twenty-second dynasty (1981-1802 B.C.). In that period, the temple dedicated to Sobek the crocodile god was established and the city remained popular in the Greek, Roman and Coptic eras. The temple of the twenty-second dynasty was enlarged during the Ptolemaic period and the city continued to grow and blossom. Arabs gave the city the name of Mady. The University of Pisa (Italy) began excavations in the area in 1978 and its activity focused mainly in the south of the city (the Coptic area) and since then around 10 churches have been discovered dating back to probably between the 5th and the 7th century A.D.

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Suez National Museum Tells of Seven Thousand Years of Suez Epics

The Suez National Museum opened on May 19th, 2011, on an area of 5,950 m² in Suez City. The museum cost E£ 42 million, and tells the story of Suez City, with a history of nearly 7,000 years spanning from prehistoric times to the modern era. The museum tells the story of the Suez Canal from the time of Sesostris through the era of the King Senusret III (1840 – 1878 B.C.). The canal linked the Mediterranean and the Red Seas through the Nile River, and the museum displays many artifacts, paintings, imaging and detailed maps that help to demonstrate the path that was created between the two seas, as well as the stages of development throughout the centuries, as well as its impact on the trade between Egypt and neighboring countries. The museum also shows the evolution of Suez City after the drilling of the canal, which has become one of the most important in the history of global navigation as a link between the East and West. Suez’s important role during the history of Egypt as a strategic location since Pharaohnic, Greek, Roman, and Coptic times is also displayed with an emphasis on its evolution with the Islamic conquest of Egypt.



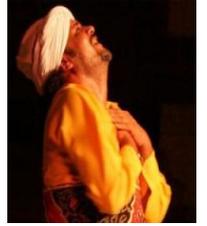
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Cairo events in June

- Traditional Tanoura Dance

When 18 Jun 2011 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Where alghory palace al azhar street Cairo, Egypt



- Egyptian International Modern Dance Festival

When: 16 Jun - 3 Jul 2011 (annual)

Where: Cairo Opera House

Connecting local and world talent, the Egyptian International Modern Dance Festival explores the latest trends in modern dance. Interesting performances emerging from the collaborations between Egyptian and foreign guest artists appear on stage at the Cairo Opera House.

- Oscar Song Festival

Organized by Cinema and People Magazine

Cairo events in July

- Arab Music Festival

When: 3 - 9 Jul 2011 (annual)

Where: Cairo Opera House

The Cairo Opera House bursts into life when the Arab Music Festival is in town. It attracts top instrumentalists, singers and established ensembles, and provides visitors with a great opportunity to enjoy music from the Arab world at its very best.

- Moulid of Abu el-Haggag

Ancient ruins at Luxor, Egypt. Courtesy of the Egyptian State Tourist Office London

When: 17 Jul 2011 (annual)

Where: Luxor

Two weeks prior to the beginning of Ramadan, the Moulid of Abu el-Haggag celebrates Luxor's patron sheikh with a street festival. Horse races, music, dance and *tahtib* (stick fights) precede the parading of large boats in the crowded streets.

The parade resembles the solar barque processions of the Pharaonic era; in Islamic symbolism boats represent the quest for spiritual



enlightenment.

Yussef Abu el-Haggag, the sheikh himself, was born in Damascus, then moved to Mecca and eventually settled in Luxor, where he founded a *zawiyah* (spiritual retreat).

- *Al-Ahram International Tennis Championship*

Organized by Al-Ahram Agency for Publicity



Cairo events in August

- *Camel Race Competition in North Sinai*

Organized by North Sinai Governorate



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