

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES THAT ARE REWRITING HISTORY



From the tombs of the ancient pharaohs to the temple of Poseidon, passing through the Viking treasures: there are several archeological discoveries that are rewriting history. Many are also must-see sights to visit.

Queen Neith's tomb: the latest excavations in the ancient necropolis of Saqqara have brought to light a priceless treasure, consisting of 100 mummies and 300 sarcophagi. **Among these, there is also that of an Egyptian queen, whose existence was unknown until today.**

"We discovered her name: it was Neith" Egyptologist Zahi Hawass, the nation's former antiquities minister, stated. "It's amazing to literally rewrite what we know about history, adding a new queen to our archives."

The Iceman: Ötzi, the Iceman was discovered in the Italian Alps 30 years ago: a mummy from the Copper Age, 5300 years old. A recent study published in *Holocene* has rewritten the story of how Ötzi came to lie down in the ravine of the Tisenjoch pass, where he was found by hikers in 1991. Previously, researchers argued that the man was rapidly covered by glacial ice after being killed by an arrow shot. The new study proposes that Ötzi did not die in the cliff, but he was carried there by ice that thawed and froze over many years. This discovery, according to scholars, would be a clue that many other mummies could be preserved in the ice.

The Temple of Poseidon: A team of Greek and Austrian archaeologists claims to have found the Temple of Poseidon, described by the ancient Greek writer Strabo in his encyclopaedic volume *Geographica*. The discovery of the sanctuary dedicated to the Greek God of the sea took place near the acropolis of the ancient city of Samikon, also known as Samicum, a center which, according to the Greek author, was the religious capital of the "deified Amphictyony", an alliance of states in the region of Triphylia in the Peloponnese.

The tunnel that leads to Cleopatra: Archaeologists have discovered a rock-cut tunnel under the ancient Egyptian temple of Taposiris Magna, which may lead to the lost tomb of Cleopatra, the last ruler of Ptolemaic Egypt from 51 to 30 BC. The 4,265-foot tunnel located 43 meters deep has been described as a "geometric miracle" by Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Early Americans: Over the past two decades, archaeologists have discovered a number of sites that show humans arrived in the Americas as early as 16,000 years ago. Some scholars have explored sites that have yielded even earlier dates, but other researchers have questioned these discoveries' legitimacy, by arguing that the recovered artefacts are unequivocally not the work of human hands. Now, radiocarbon dating of material associated with fossilized human footprints at White Sands National Park has shown that people lived in North America as early as 23,000 years ago.

Viking silver: In Täby, a municipality north of Stockholm, a hoard of Viking silver has been unearthed, described by archaeologists on site as a once-in-a-lifetime find. Archaeologists, a team of specialists under contract to the National Historical Museums of Sweden, dug under the decayed wooden floor of a building in a Viking Age settlement and uncovered a small ceramic vessel. Inside

there were eight neck rings, two arm rings, one finger ring, a pair of pearls, and 12-coin charms deposited in a linen bag.

King Teti's tomb: one hundred years have passed since the British archaeologist Howard Carter unearthed the tomb of King Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings, near Luxor. A century after that legendary find, the tombs of ancient Egyptian rulers continue to produce new precious archeological discoveries. Zahi Hawass, a well-known Egyptologist and former Egyptian state minister for antiquities, said that the latest finds concern not only King Tut's generals and advisers, but also the pharaoh himself. "Thetis was revered as a god in the New Kingdom and everyone wanted to be buried next to him" Hawass spoke of the first king of the Sixth Dynasty, who reigned for about 12 years, between 2300 and 2181 BC.

Desert Kites: In the 1920s, British Royal Air Force pilots recorded their first sightings of what they dubbed Desert Kites: huge patterns carved into the rocky terrain. Archaeologists have debated the purpose of these depictions, which appear in different geographic areas and eras, dating from the Neolithic (10,000-2,200 BC) in Jordan, to the Early Bronze Age (3,300-2,100 BC) in the Negev Desert in Israel and the Bronze Age (2,100-1,550 BC) in Armenia. In March 2022, the Journal of World Prehistory published "The Use of Desert Kites as Hunting Mega-Traps", a study able to demonstrate how kites were used as hunting traps.

Maya's Salt: The recent discovery of ancient salt kitchens found underwater in a national park in Belize provides archaeologists with new insights into the role of salt in the Mayan economy. In a study published in Antiquity, Louisiana State University anthropologists Heather McKillop and E. Cory Sills **documented four underwater post-and-tile structures in Paynes Creek National Park that would have had this function.** In addition to giving flavor to food, salt was used by the Maya also to preserve food in a tropical climate.

Date: 2023-01-15

Article link:

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