

Egypt scours bed of Lake Qarun in search of antiquities

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Khaled Saeed, who heads the department of pre-historic affairs at the Supreme Council of [Antiquities](#), said the team under his supervision hopes to pinpoint "huge basalt rocks" at the bottom of Lake Qarun.

According to Saeed, the discovery of the rocks was first made by Egyptian-American scientist Faruq al-Baz, a veteran of NASA's Apollo programme, five years ago.

Baz, who now runs the Centre for Space Studies at Boston University, was carrying out a satellite survey of Egypt's Western Desert when he and his team discovered in the Lake Qarun area "a large number of huge blocks of rock."

"I believe that these huge slabs are made of basalt ([volcanic rock](#)) which were eventually moved upstream to the Giza plateau for the construction of the Great Pyramid," Saeed said.

Teams of divers are examining a 10-kilometre (6.2 mile) long stretch of [sea bed](#) in Lake Qarun, Saeed added.

The lake is the third largest in Egypt and is part of the Fayyum Oasis, more than 100 kilometres (62 miles) south of Cairo, and part of the ancient [Lake](#) Moeris, once a body of sweet water.

Fayyum is known for a series of colourful funerary portraits -- masks painted on wood tablets and dating from the Roman period (1st to 3rd centuries AD) which were used to cover the face of the deceased.

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