

Pharaonic princess's tomb found near Cairo, Egypt (Update)

November 2 2012, by Maggie Fick



This Thursday, Oct. 11, 2012 photo released Friday, Nov. 2, 2012 by Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, shows recently discovered statues of two men and a woman in a complex of tombs, including one of a pharaonic princess, in the Abusir region, south of Cairo, Egypt. Egyptian Minister of Antiquities, Mohammed Ibrahim said Czech archaeologists have unearthed the tomb of Shert Nebti's, a pharaonic princess, daughter of King Men Salbo, dating from the fifth dynasty (around 2500 BC) along with four other tombs of "high ranking officials." (AP Photo/Egypt's Supreme Council Of Antiquities)

Czech archaeologists have unearthed the 4,500-year-old tomb of a Pharaonic princess south of Cairo, in a finding that suggests other undiscovered tombs may be in the area, an official from Egypt's antiquities ministry said Saturday.

Mohammed El-Bialy, who heads the Egyptian and Greco-Roman Antiquities department at the Antiquities Ministry, said that Princess Shert Nebti's burial site is surrounded by the tombs of four high officials from the Fifth Dynasty dating to around 2,500 BC in the Abu Sir complex near the famed step pyramid of Saqqara.

"Discoveries are ongoing" at Abu Sir, El-Bialy said, adding that the excavation was in a "very early stage" and that the site was closed to the public.

Inscriptions on the four limestone pillars of the Princess' tomb indicate that she is the daughter of King Men Salbo.



This undated image released Friday, Nov. 2, 2012 by Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, shows a recently discovered statue in a complex of tombs, including one of a pharaonic princess, in the Abusir region, south of Cairo, Egypt. Egyptian Minister of Antiquities, Mohammed Ibrahim said Czech archaeologists have unearthed the tomb of Shert Nebti's, a pharaonic princess, daughter of King Men Salbo, dating from the fifth dynasty (around 2500 BC) along with four other tombs of "high ranking officials." (AP Photo/Egypt's Supreme Council Of Antiquities)

"She is the daughter of the king, but only her tomb is there, surrounded by the four officials, so the question is, are we going to discover other tombs around hers in the near future? We don't know anything about her father, the king, or her mother, but hope that future discoveries will answer these questions," El-Bialy said.



This Oct. 11, 2012 photo released Friday, Nov. 2, 2012 by Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, shows recently discovered statues found in a complex of tombs, including one of a pharaonic princess, in the Abusir region, south of Cairo, Egypt. Egyptian Minister of Antiquities, Mohammed Ibrahim said Czech archaeologists have unearthed the tomb of Shert Nebti's, a pharaonic princess, daughter of King Men Salbo, dating from the fifth dynasty (around 2500 BC) along with four other tombs of "high ranking officials." (AP Photo/Egypt's Supreme Council Of Antiquities)



This Oct. 11, 2012 photo released Friday, Nov. 2, 2012 by Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, shows details of hieroglyphic inscriptions on one of four limestone columns in the recently discovered antechamber to the tomb of a pharaonic princess, in the Abusir region, south of Cairo, Egypt. Egyptian Minister of Antiquities, Mohammed Ibrahim said Czech archaeologists have unearthed the tomb of Shert Nebti's, a pharaonic princess, daughter of King Men Salbo, dating from the fifth dynasty (around 2500 BC) along with four other tombs of "high ranking officials." (AP Photo/Egypt's Supreme Council Of Antiquities)

On Friday, Antiquities Minister Mohammed Ibrahim said that the antechamber to the princess' tomb includes four limestone columns and hieroglyphic inscriptions. The current excavation has also unearthed an

antechamber containing the sarcophagi of the four officials and statues of men, women, and a child, he said in a statement.



This undated image released Friday, Nov. 2, 2012 by Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, shows four limestone columns with hieroglyphic inscriptions in the recently discovered antechamber of the tomb of a pharaonic princess in the Abusir region, south of Cairo, Egypt. Egyptian Minister of Antiquities, Mohammed Ibrahim said Czech archaeologists have unearthed the tomb of Shert Nebti's, a pharaonic princess, daughter of King Men Salbo, dating from the fifth dynasty (around 2500 BC) along with four other tombs of "high ranking officials." (AP Photo/Egypt's Supreme Council Of Antiquities)

The Czech team's discovery marks the "start of a new chapter" in the history of the burial sites of Abu Sir and Saqqara, Ibrahim added.

The archaeologists working at the site are from the Czech Institute of Egyptology, which is funded by the Charles University of Prague. Their excavation began this month.



This undated image released Friday, Nov. 2, 2012 by Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, shows three recently discovered statues found in a complex of tombs, including one of a pharaonic princess, in the Abusir region, south of Cairo, Egypt. Egyptian Minister of Antiquities, Mohammed Ibrahim said Czech archaeologists have unearthed the tomb of Shert Nebti's, a pharaonic princess, daughter of King Men Salbo, dating from the fifth dynasty (around 2500 BC) along with four other tombs of "high ranking officials." (AP Photo/Egypt's Supreme Council Of Antiquities)

The discovery comes weeks after the Egyptian government reopened a pyramid and a complex of tombs that had been closed for restoration work for a decade.

Egypt's vital tourism industry has suffered from the country's internal unrest in the wake of the 2011 uprising that toppled autocratic leader Hosni Mubarak. A delegation from the International Monetary Fund is currently in Egypt for negotiations over a \$4.8 billion loan aimed at bolstering the country's ailing economy.

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