

Satellites discover lost Egyptian pyramids

26 May 2011, by Deborah Braconnier



A view of the pyramids at Giza from the plateau to the south of the complex. Image: Ricardo Liberato/Wikipedia

(PhysOrg.com) -- In a new documentary soon to air on BBC, space archaeologist Sarah Parcak from the University of Alabama in Birmingham shares her recent discovery in the relatively new field of space archaeology. With the use of satellites and infra-red imaging, Parcak and her team have discovered 17 lost pyramids, over 1,000 tombs and 3,000 ancient settlements in Egypt.

Using [NASA](#) satellites orbiting 435 miles above Earth that were equipped with cameras capable of pinpointing objects less than three feet in diameter on the Earth's surface, Parcak and her team were able to identify materials that were just under the Earth's surface.

Because ancient Egyptians built their homes and structures, including [pyramids](#), out of mud brick, it is much denser than the sand that has covered it over time. The infra-red camera was able to highlight these areas and locate the structures.

In the area of Saqqara, Parcak had identified what she thought to be two potential pyramids. The [documentary](#) covers her journey to this area where local archaeologists began test excavations to test her findings. The pyramids were discovered and it is now believed to be one of the most important finds in Egypt.

Parcak visited another location in Tanis where here imagery had located a 3,000-year-old house. Excavation revealed the house and the measurements almost perfectly matched what was shown in the images.

The findings of actual sites gave validation to Parcak and her technology and she hopes to use it to locate many more sites in the future. Egyptian authorities hope to use the technology to aid in the protection of their national antiquities. With the recent revolution, looting has become a problem and the ability to compare images through time will allow them to alert Interpol to be on the watch for particular antiquities that could be out on the market for sale.

More information: [BBC](#)

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