

Dust Of Faraway Lands

September 22, 2004



Egyptian vase with Egyptian dust

When I opened the large package that came all the way from Cairo, Egypt, I was amused to find Egyptian dust on the shapely brass vase. I fingered it, thinking of the desert lands there, and how our word for 'desert' must surely have derived from theirs, *dshrt*, or 'red land'.

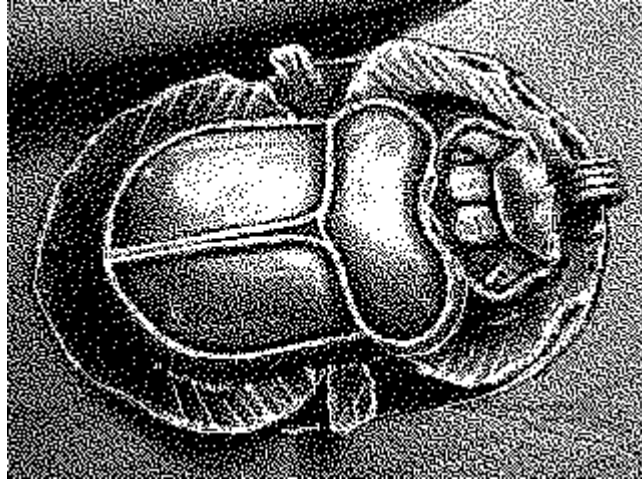


Hieroglyph for 'desert'

The dust on the vase does not look of a reddish hue, though many desert lands have that hue, in particular New Mexico. I think also of the red rock of Sedona, Arizona. But this is Cairo dust, and although Cairo is quite close to the Nile river, its eastern edge borders the desert.

I put my finger to the dust thinking, ***"I am not able to go to Egypt, yet tiny particles of its land have come to me."***

Later last night, while perusing articles archived from *Ancient Egypt Magazine*, I came across a story on [Egypt's Gold Country](#) and the modern day jewelers who work with gold. *"The two methods the ancient Egyptians used to bond gold together were welding and soldering."* The modern craftsmen also use these techniques, for as I examine my silver and gold scarabs, I see they are each made of two layers of metal welded together.



Cairo has "*one of the world's most active precious metal markets.*" As I read of the hundreds of workshops "*tucked away in Old Cairo's winding, dusty alleys,*" I smiled as I remembered the dust on my vase.

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quotes from Egypt's Gold Country by Lorraine Chittock

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<http://www.ancientegyptmagazine.com/gold23.htm>