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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT CECIL B. DEMILLE'S 1923 *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* FILM SET, GUADALUPE-NIPOMO DUNES, CALIFORNIA

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ABSTRACT

The movie set used to film the prologue of Cecil B. DeMille's 1923 silent movie classic The Ten Commandments was constructed in today's Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve in California. Featuring a replica of a pharaonic Egyptian city, archaeologists from Applied EarthWorks, Inc. investigated the ruins in 2012 and again in 2014.

A curious advertisement ran in the October 8th, 1922 *Los Angeles Times*. It began: "A Thousand Dollars for an Idea; Got one?"[1] Film director Cecil B. DeMille was seeking a theme for his next production. The winning concept, "You cannot break the Ten Commandments—they will break you," came from F. C. Nelson of Lansing, Michigan,[2] and around this DeMille and writer Jeanie Macpherson[3] structured a script that was part biblical epic, part modern drama: *The Ten Commandments*, which would premiere a little more than a year after the placement of the ad. Unlike DeMille's later (1953) film of the same name, only the first third of the original *The Ten Commandments* is set in pharaonic Egypt. It is this ancient prologue, however, that would guarantee its fame and eclipse the modern tale that followed.

From papyrus to paparazzi, Egyptomania fueled public interest for millennia with Egypt's reputation for secret knowledge, biblical connections, demanding gods, despotic kings, and awe-inspiring ruins. These were among the notions Cecil B. DeMille presented on film in exotic splendor: his vision can be seen as a physical statement outwardly focused on presenting an historical Egypt but entrenched in the phenomenon of Egyptomania. DeMille's portrayal of the City of Rameses and of the Israelites fleeing the Egyptian tyrant would influence Egyptomania into the future. Edwin Schallert wrote of the film in the *Los Angeles Times* of December 5th, 1923, "The biblical prologue is glorious beyond measure, and will live in the memory of the public forever."[4]

Bob Brier notes that Egyptian-based silent movies had been popular since the early 1900s.[5] Others recognized Christian themes and the emergence of a visual market that facilitated the spread of Egyptomania, with its "exoticism, strangeness, foreignness, and difference."[6] Similarly, the artifacts DeMille created and deposited at the Lost City of Rameses archaeological site testify to this multi-millennial phenomenon, perceived and interpreted through the visual imagination of French designer Paul Iribe and the lenses of Cecil B. DeMille.

To mirror conditions in Egypt, DeMille needed sand dunes with no visual impairments to suggest that his set was not in the land of the Nile. DeMille and his cohorts searched for a setting that would remind the viewer of an ancient Egyptian city. They researched several deserts worldwide, finally settling on the Guadalupe Dunes in central California.[7]

The particular site selected lies within today's Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve, a protected habitat owned and/or managed by multiple state, county, and federal agencies. The Chumash lived and hunted in the region as early as 11,000 years ago,[8] millennia before the rise of pharaonic civilization. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Portuguese navigator and explorer for Spain, was the first European to see the dunes as he sailed up the California coastline in 1542,[9] but it was not until 1769, when the Gaspar de Portolá land expedition crossed the dunes, that Europeans entered the area.[10] In 1852 a Mexican land grant



Figure 1: DeMille's 1923 *Ten Commandments* movie set: front gate of the walled city. Photograph courtesy of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dune Center.

was issued establishing Rancho Guadalupe and included the dunes,[11] and in the 1870s American farmers acquired the surrounding lands. This would become DeMille's Egypt.

From 1923 until the 1950s, the dunes would host six movies, among them *The Sheik* (1921), *Son of the Sheik* (1926), *Morocco* (1930), and DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*.[12] In the 1930s, a group of artists and alternative thinkers, called the Dunites, inhabited the area just north of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Preserve.[13] After the World War II the area returned to ranching and farming. Later sand quarrying and oil extraction would penetrate the region. All these activities had impacts on the site, leaving their scars on the landscape and idiosyncratic artifacts left behind.

DeMille viewed the dunes as an ideal desert setting for his production. It resembled the Sahara and was near enough to Hollywood to simplify logistics and costs of transporting this spectacular set. DeMille reported:

> We set up a veritable tent city and compound for the 2500 people and 3000 animals engaged for these scenes. It seems unbelievable that the credits on the film list only one assistant director, Cullen B. Tate, as helping me with the direction of that mass of people, but "Hezzie" Tate was something of an army in himself; and in those days everyone did a little of everything.[14]

A major difficulty would be climate. Fierce winds whipped up late each day, leaving actors shivering in their scanty, desert-themed costumes.[15] Building of the set started in May 1923. Reported as the "biggest picture-house



Figure 2: ***Israel in Egypt*****, oil painting by Sir Edward John Poynter (1868). From Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1867_Edward_Poynter_-_Israel_in_Egypt.jpg.**

movie ever made,"[16] this motion picture set was designed by Paul Iribe, who styled it to resemble an ancient Egyptian city (Figure 1). Clearly Iribe was influenced by Sir Edward John Poynter's 1868 painting *Israel in Egypt* (Figure 2),[17] with its massive walls decorated in reliefs, obelisks, and statuary.[18] These Iribe replicated in concrete and plaster laid over a wooden frame measuring 800 feet (c. 243.5 m) long by 120 feet (c. 36.5 m) tall (Figure 3). Construction of the City of Rameses, as designated by DeMille,[19] was completed in a little over a month with 1,600 workers using 550,000 bd ft (c. 1298 m^3) of lumber, 300 tons (c. 272 metric tons) of plaster, 25,000 lbs (11339.8 kilogram**)** of nails, and 75 miles (c. 119 km) of reinforcing cable.[20] The gate and walls were adorned with huge bas-reliefs of the pharaoh driving a chariot. To complete the set, replica statues of pharaoh Rameses 35 feet (c. 10.7 m) tall were modeled in clay and plaster, and a jet-black pharaonic colossus was situated on each side of the gate.[21] Hieroglyphs and figures adorned the walls of the city, and a pyramid to the west of the set firmly placed the site in Egypt, minus perimeter clues to suggest otherwise.

Twenty replica sphinx statues, each measuring 10 by 20 feet (c. 3 by 6 m) and weighing 5 tons (c. 4.5 metric tons), were situated along the road leading to the main gate of the city. An additional sphinx was mounted on a platform that could be lifted by "slaves" and carried around the massive set. These sphinxes and statues of Rameses were built in Hollywood and delivered to Guadalupe in open trailer trucks. DeMille described unanticipated problems during transportation to the site:

> Pharaoh almost had to get along without sphinxes, however. They were made in Los Angeles and transported by truck to Guadalupe; but no one had thought to measure the clearances of the bridges along the route. There were some anxious moments when our majestic and mysterious sphinxes were ignominiously halted by a bridge too low for them to pass under. No one lost his head, though, except sphinxes, who were decapitated long enough to pass under the bridge and then had their heads restored for the remainder of their progress.[22]

Construction costs for the production ultimately would be in the $1.5 million range.[23] According to the *LA Times*[24] the production required carpenters, technical aides, horses and camels, chariots, wigs, costumes, and tack (Egyptian style) employed as necessary over a five-month period.[25] Perhaps echoing his penchant for the spectacular, DeMille imposed "no class distinctions where the extras were concerned." They came from all corners, "well fed and hungry" in their midst.[26]

The film premiered in Los Angeles on December 4, 1923, suitably in the brand-new Grauman's Egyptian Theatre,[27] an extravagant Egyptian Revival movie palace, before an audience that had been primed by a year of news of Howard Carter's excavations of Tutankhamun's tomb. A little later in the month, the film opened more widely. A review in the New York weekly *Variety* describes the

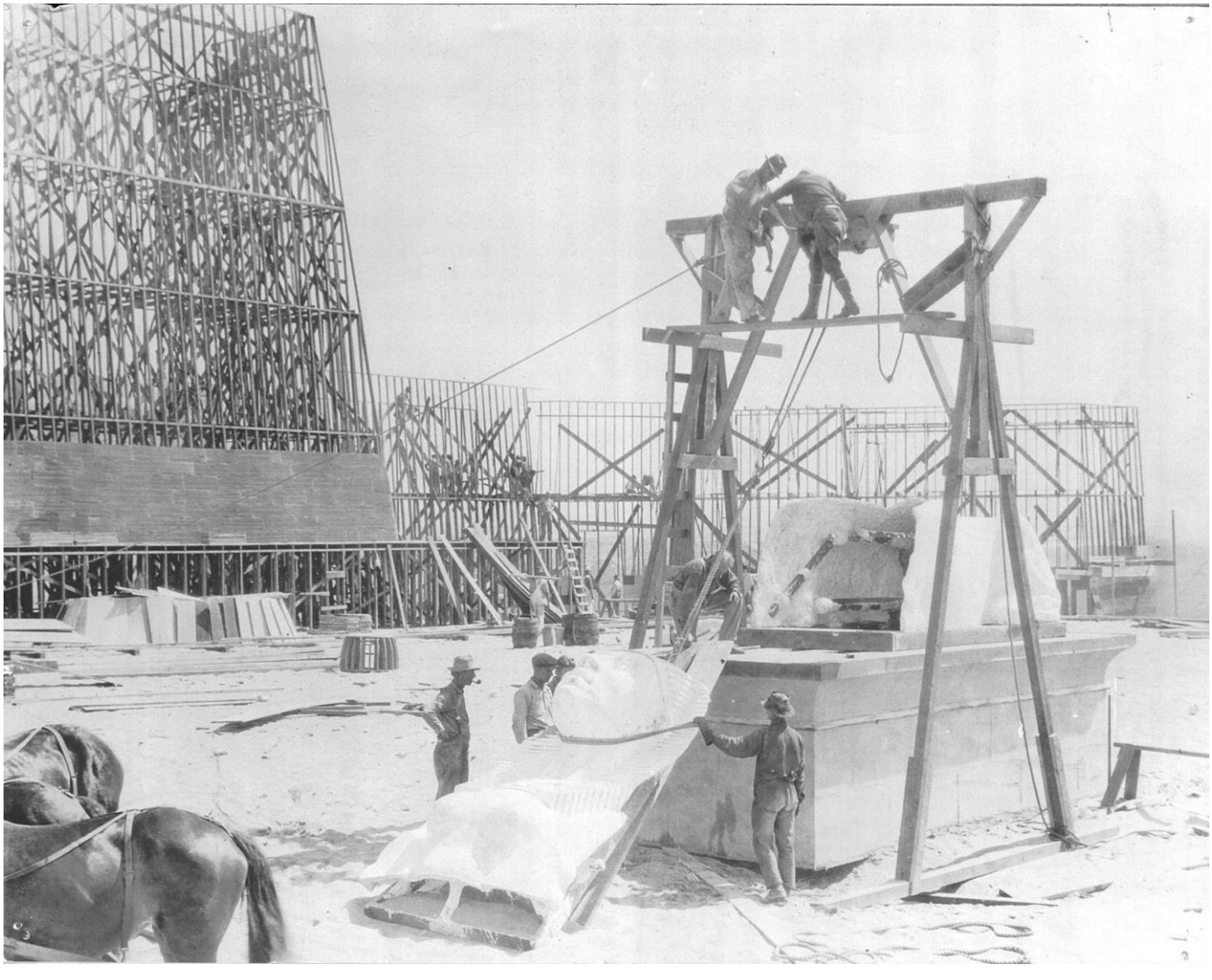


Figure 3: Building DeMille's 1923 *Ten Commandments* movie set. Photograph courtesy of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dune Center.

reporter's impression of the scenes, which included portions in the Technicolor 2 process: "irresistible in […] assembly, breath, colors, and direction; they are enormous and just as attractive."[28] A reporter with the *LA Times* used the words "Superpicture" and "Event of the Year" to describe a production full of "barbaric and highly spiritual motifs."[29] During the intermission after the prologue, the reporter took the opportunity to "recuperate from the effects of the grandeur;" those who had achieved the special effects were, in his mind, "the real stars" who created "new splendors of photography and theatrical wonders hitherto unrevealed."[30] Others praised the Technicolor 2 process but criticized the overemphasis of uninteresting detail in the second segment of the story, which, in their estimation, did not give the public what it wanted.[31]

In 1923, DeMille signed a contract with the Union Sugar Company, who owned the property on which the set was to be built. Following production, DeMille would be responsible for clearing the site and leaving it in good condition:

> [T]hat said second party will leave the road across the first party's land in good condition when they leave. That said second party [DeMille] will dismantle all buildings erected on the property of first party [Union Sugar Co.] and will remove there from all said material from said buildings, and all other refuse and rubbish within 30 days of completion of said filming […] and will remove all power and water lines […] within above specified time.[32]



Figure 4: Ruins of the Lost City of Pharaoh: 1923 *Ten Commandments* movie set, Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve, October 2012. Photograph by Leeann Haslouer, Applied EarthWorks.

A letter of release to the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation suggests that the Union Sugar Company seemed satisfied with the clean-up result.

After completion of the film, DeMille dismantled the set, but rather than remove the remains, he buried them on site to prevent reuse by competitors.[33] DeMille described the dismantling:

> If, a thousand years from now, archaeologists happen to dig beneath the sands of Guadalupe, I hope that they will not rush into print with the amazing news that Egyptian civilization, far from being confined to the valley of the Nile, extended all the way to the Pacific Coast of North America. The sphinxes they will find were buried there when we had finished with them and dismantled our huge set of the gates of Pharaoh's city.[34]

The main set of the City of Rameses was dismantled by cutting overhead support cables. The set collapsed, although it is not clear whether it fell backward, forward, or in all directions. It is rumored dynamite was used. Addressing this, DeGasparis noted:

> I spoke to Mrs. Chapman, the wife of the guy who was responsible for demolition, and she remembers that they dug a long straight trench and buried the major part of the set. They actually buried them [the sphinxes] in a ditch. [Referring to the Main Set] […] There were cables all over the place. There must have been a hundred miles of cable holding all this thing up. Because the wind blows from the west here, it blows pretty hard. And if that thing wasn't held down it would be like a sail, it would be like a lightweight sail, and it would come down. As a matter of fact, Alan Chapman […] talking […] about the set out here one time and he told me that they cut the cables and dropped the set. Now whether they dynamited it […] they might have dynamited the legs and made it fall.[35]

Most of the set pieces were smashed, and heavy equipment ran over some to flatten them. To finish, Chapman dug a long trench, pushed the sphinx statues in, and covered them with sand. Again according to DeGasparis,

> Alan Chapman was a guy who had pretty good sized pieces of equipment for farming, large tractors and so forth. And we were talking one day about some work he was doing and the 10-Cs came up. He volunteered that when he was working out here with the 10Cs, he had cut the cables and dropped the face of the structure. And that he had run over a lot of the stuff and buried it out here. I said you must have made a hell of a hole to put all that stuff under the sand. He said that most of it was smashed pretty flat. And that he had dug a ditch going south from this place and then just shoved all the stuff into a ditch and covered it up [. . . .] But he said he covered it up with, seems to me, several feet of sand, more than level. So there must have been humped up. That may be one of the reasons why the stuff may not be buried as deep as it could be, because it wasn't actually submerged.[36]

Far fewer than DeMille's thousand years passed before archaeologists became curious about his movie set (Figure 4). Freelance journalist and aspiring director Peter Brosnan was introduced to the existence of the remains of the original set by a friend.[37] Following research, in 1983 Brosnan visited the site, where he found the film set strewn with rubble exposed by wind and shifting dunes.[38] His research and documentary filming prompted archaeological investigations in 1990, excavations that located physical remains of the movie set and possibly the location of its sphinxes.[39]

That year, Brosnan returned to the site to film archaeological investigations being directed by John Parker, whose work suggested that the main wall of the set had toppled northward, onto its back. Parker speculated:

> It is likely that the wood from this structure was scavenged and that the structure was eventually buried by wind blown sand. The Ramses statues appear to have been toppled off their supporting platforms southward where they broke at manufacturing joints and were buried by wind blown sand.[40]

Brosnan also located a photograph showing one of the Rameses statues being toppled by means of a rope or cable. It appears to have been difficult; only the top of the statue broke away.[41]

The 1990 archaeological work demonstrated a large portion of the original movie set still remained beneath the shifting dunes. Parker's investigations, coupled with ground-penetrating radar (GPR) work conducted by Lambert Dolphin, identified 41 wooden posts embedded along the length of the film set still in situ, nine areas of exposed plaster indicating the buried remains of statuary and wall reliefs, and 37 anomalies indicating the buried remains of at least 23 other historical objects beneath the dunes.[42] Parker summarized his observations:

> *The Ten Commandments* Site contains a wealth of plaster statuary, in-situ artifacts and set materials which, in addition to their artistic value, could be used to provide information about this early period of development within the film industry. The portion of the set (the Main Set) which remains undisturbed by the eroding sand dune is in good condition with most materials in their original "dismantled" location.[43]

In October 2012, Applied EarthWorks (Æ) joined with the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center and Brosnan's Lost City Production Company to undertake further archaeological investigations at what he dubbed the "Lost City." Specifically archaeologists were to locate remains of DeMille's set, recover a sphinx if found intact, and define the current condition of the site; efforts were to be recorded for a documentary film. Dolphin's data files were not available, but a map he prepared indicates the approximate locations of GPR readings in relation to the 1990 site grid. At the time, the site was known to consist of buried remains of the main gate to the City of Rameses and the roadway that led to it, once lined by 20 monumental sphinxes. All artifacts or statuary excavated were to be donated to the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dune Center for permanent display. Santa Barbara County permitted these excavations.

At the onset of the 2012 excavations, the condition of the site was fragile, having been subjected to years of looting and fierce coastal winds that resulted in periodic exposure and reburial of the set. Recognizing these limitations, 2012 exploratory excavation took fifteen field days with six archaeologists. A Chumash Native American monitor was present to represent tribal concerns. On-site camera staff recorded progress daily and an augmented film crew visited the site regularly.

Building on Brosnan's and Parker's research, Æ staff searched for remains of a sphinx statue and relief elements that had once decorated the main gate to the City of



Figure 5: Selected artifacts from excavation, March 2014. Photograph by Cari Inoway, Applied EarthWorks.

Rameses. During the initial site visit, painted wooden hieroglyphs were found strewn across the northwestern dune face.

Excavations were hampered by wind, rain, and logistics. No wheeled vehicles were to be permitted in an effort to protect endangered plants and nesting birds. Much like the director, film crew, and actors decades before them, archaeologists were limited to use of hand tools and equipment, and, to remove statuary and artifacts from the site, through the use of a sled.[44]

Excavations uncovered the body of a sphinx minus its head. Sufficient remains of the face were recovered from mounds of surface plaster debris south of the main film set to reconstruct the face and headdress. This sphinx now gazes at visitors from a display case at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center.

As planned, the approach was to conduct exploratory excavations in the probable locations of the film set to retrieve artifacts such as statues of the sphinxes and lions and bas-relief of horses. If time permitted, exploratory work also was to be conducted at the buried remains of the Rameses statues. Excavated plaster remnants with recognizable form were to be stabilized by an onsite conservator before curated at its final destination, the Guadalupe Dunes Center.

Archaeological investigations at the main set revealed fragile remnants of a bas-relief horse's head and fragments of the feet of a Rameses statue. Encountered elements were exposed, documented, and reburied on site because their fragile condition did not allow full recovery. Archaeologists found other, smaller artifacts on the surface of the site, including bits of costumes such as beads and coins (Figure 5), bottle glass, tobacco tins, and facial-makeup tins.

Despite the fragile condition of the surface plaster and other elements of the DeMille film set, the site still contains identifiable ruins. Archaeologists working at the east end of the city wall and gate, for example, discovered a staging area. The locations of stacked wooden boxes were represented by decomposing boards and lines of nails in the sand. In this area archaeologists found ceramic sherds and bottle shards. The porcelain ceramics were painted with Asian decorative patterns and generally could be identified as rice bowls, likely evidence of those who worked on set during filming. Makeup and paint tins were scattered throughout.



Figure 6: Excavation and Stabilization of sphinx, September 2014. Photograph by Leeann Haslouer, Applied EarthWorks.



Figure 7: Excavation of the portable sphinx, March 2014. Photograph by Leeann Haslouer, Applied EarthWorks.



Figure 8: Removing the hindquarters of the portable sphinx, September 2014. Photograph by Leeann Haslouer, Applied EarthWorks.

Near the main gate opening, excavators found remnants of a figure in a *shendyt*, the short, pleated, and belted kilt associated with royalty and divinity. This figure could not be identified in available photographs of the city exterior walls. A close review of DeMille's movie showed that the interior of the gate, generally invisible from the outside, was also highly decorated, and here researchers found the figure in question. This evidences the rigor of DeMille and Iribe in creation of the walled city.

In 2012, archaeologists located remains of two sphinxes in varying states of preservation. The bodies of the statuary were filled with sand, which aided in preservation of the exterior shell. Excavations revealed that inside each molded body was a wooden framework over which the plaster had been applied. This shell varied in thickness, depending on the exterior detail. Subtleties in exterior red-hued slip also were seen on the surface of each statue body. While each piece was prepared for removal, attempts were made to improve its condition. Plaster adhesive and cheesecloth were applied to the exterior to maintain the integrity of fragile statuary (Figure 6).

In one area of the site, artifacts were limited to the intact body of a sphinx. Only selected pieces were recovered and stabilized for later reconstruction. In 2014, the Dune Center requested that Æ return to the site to remove the sphinx body for use in a display. Over the two years since initial excavation, the statue had deteriorated substantially; all efforts to stabilize it failed. Fortuitously, nearby another sphinx had emerged from the shifting sands (Figure 7). This was found to be the portable sphinx transported during filming of the movie in 1923—and again by archaeologists in 2014 (Figure 8). This figure is now on display at the Guadalupe Dunes Center.

Features and artifacts from this site reveal clues about the technological story of changes in set construction techniques during the past century; the logistics of how necessities were provided for cast and crew; the personal story of what it was like to be a cast or crew member on location during the early days of filmmaking; and the cultural story of how the film industry itself operated within the American moral and political system at that time. In an era of prohibition, crewmembers resorted to other avenues to procure liquor. Apparently DeMille, who was not particularly known as a prude, had "booze police" wandering around the site scouting for alcohol consumption.[45] In later years locals recalled finding cold syrup bottles on the site, speculating they were consumed for purposes other than medicinal.[46]

As Brosnan has observed, the history of the site and its current documentation on film encompass the history of the film industry from the use of hand-cranked cameras of the early DeMille era and canistered film by Eastman (Figure 9) to modern digital cameras and sound equipment used to prepare the documentary.[47]

Since its abandonment, both human and natural factors have affected the remains of the demolished set. Early twentieth century photographs depict tourists climbing on sphinx statues not yet consumed by dunes. In one photograph filed at the Motion Picture Library, four women poise on a sphinx's head.[48] During excavations in 2012, spent shotgun shells and rifle round casings were found around the site and bullet holes were observed in the sphinx body initially exposed in 2012 suggesting vandalism has occurred through the years.[49]

Wind-blown sand preserved the set, and the row of sphinxes remains among the shifting dunes. But plaster pieces found at the surface eventually erode, sometimes to the point of disintegration. Pigments adorning elements of the film set have faded, and only a small portion of what Brosnan and Parker found on site just a couple of decades ago is visible today. Nonetheless, shifting sands continue to reveal artifacts, allowing new discoveries each time the site is visited. Deeper excavations, for example, have revealed the two rows of sphinxes buried in their original locations. GPR results show many readings that might be locations of additional buried sphinxes and other set elements. Clearly more of the City of Rameses waits beneath the dunes.

DeMille's depiction of ancient Egypt stands as testament to Egyptomania and the timeless influences it exerts on modern culture. Excavations at his City of Rameses provide a glimpse into artifacts associated with a spectacular cinematic iteration of American Egyptomania. The original monuments that spawned Egyptomania millennia ago still loom large in contemporary society; this site is a monumental benchmark of an epic episode not so far in our past. Real or simply perceived, the view of ancient Egypt brought to life on the screen by DeMille endures in the modern world.



Figure 9: Eastman film canister recovered from the site, March 2014. Photograph by Cari Inoway, Applied EarthWorks.

Notes

[1] Cecil B. DeMille, *Autobiography*, edited by Donald Hayne (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1959), 246–247 (illustration).

[2] "A Thousand Dollars for an Idea; Got One? Cecil DeMille Offers Fat Prize for Real Notion for His Next Film Play," *Los Angeles Times* (8 October 1922): n.p.

[3] Jane Gaines, "Profile: Jeanie Macpherson," *Women Film Pioneers Project*, **https://wfpp.cdrs.columbia.edu/pioneer/ccp-jeanie-macpherson/**, accessed 1 November 2015.

[4] Edwin Schallert, "De Mille's Film Thrills. 'Ten Commandments,' Given Premiere at Hollywood, Declared Producer's Masterpiece," *Los Angeles Times* (5 December 1923): 2.

[5] Bob Brier, *Egyptomania: Our Three Thousand Year Obsession with the Land of the Pharaohs* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 191.

[6] Anonymous, "The Slave Market," *American Egyptomania*, **http://chnm.gmu.edu/egyptomania/sources.php?function=detail&articleid=52**, accessed 10 January 2016.

[7] Charles Higham, *Cecil B. DeMille: A Biography of the Most Successful Film Maker of Them All* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 111.

[8] Clayton G. Lebow, Douglas R. Harro, Rebecca L McKim, Chalres M. Hodges, Ann M. Munns, Eerin A. Enright, and Leeann G. Haslouer, *The Sudden Flats Site: A 10,910–10,600-Year-Old Coastal Shell Midden, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Santa Barbara, California*, prepared for 30th Engineer Squadron, Installation Management flight, Environmental Section, Environmental Assets (30 CES.CEIEA), Vandenberg Air Force Base, California (Lompoc, Calif.: Applied Earthworks, Inc., 2014).

[9] Bruce Linder, *San Salvador: Cabrillo's Galleon of Discovery*. Maritime Museum of San Diego, 2011. Pp. 51

[10] Herbert E. Bolton, *Fray Juan Crespi: Missionary Explorer on the Pacific Coast, 1769–1774* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1927), 180–202.

[11] University of California Berkeley, Bancroft Library, No 39., n.d., Diego Olivera *et al*. Guadalupe, San Luis Obispo County, 1002.

[12] "Guadalupe Sand Dunes," *Movie Making Locations Plus*, **http://movielocationsplus.com/guadalup.htm**, accessed 1 January 2016.

[13] N. Hammond, *The Dunites* (Arroyo Grande, Calif.: South County Historical Society, 1992).

[14] DeMille 1959, 252.

[15] "Old Testament Ways Revived by Players: De Mille and Company on Location in Desert. Chants And Old Songs When Portraying Exodus," *Los Angeles Sunday Times* (June 17, 1923): 1.

[16] "Review: 'The Ten Commandments,'" *Variety* (31 December 1922), **http://variety.com/1922/film/reviews/the-ten-commandments-1**, accessed January 2016.

[17] See David J. Shepard, *The Bible on Silent Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 230, fig. 8.4.

[18] Shepherd 2013, 230.

[19] Per, e.g., the theater program issued for showings of the film at Roseland [no location], 10–12 December [1923].

[20] *Peter Brosnan, Co-Starring: The Guadalupe Dunes: 85 Years of Hollywood Movies in the Guadalupe Dunes*, with introduction by John Parker (Montebello: P. Brosnan, 2006), 11.

[21] Ann Edwards, *The DeMilles: An American Family* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1988), 9.

[22] De Mille 1959, 253.

[23] "*The Ten Commandments* (1923)," *IMDb*, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0014532/, accessed 1 December 2015. See also Robert S. Birchard, *Cecile B. DeMille's Holllywood* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press), Sec. 45, n.p.

[24] "De Mille is to Begin on Bible Play. Sand Dunes Surround City to be Built for Filming of Ancient Scene," *Los Angeles Times* (24 April 1923): 10.

[25] "Plan Massive Production. Complete City will be Erected for Early Filming of De Mille's 'The Ten Commandments,'" *Los Angeles Times* (6 April 12 1923): n.p.

[26] "Huge Army of Extras Leave: Cecil de Mille Transports 1250 Film Players: Massive Sets for Biblical Drama Constructed. Immense Company to Work at Guadalupe, Cal.," *Los Angeles Times* (28 May 1923): 6.

[27] "Old Testament Ways Revived by Players: De Mille and Company on Location in Desert. Chants And Old Songs When Portraying Exodus." *Los Angeles Sunday Times* (17 June 1923): 1, 8.

[28] "The Ten Commandments," *Variety* (31 December 1922): 1.

[29] Edwin Schallert, "De Mille's Film Thrills. 'Ten Commandments,' Given Premiere at Hollywood, Declared Producer's Masterpiece," *Los Angeles Times* (5 December 1923): 1, 5.

[30] Schallert 1923, 8.

[31] "'The Ten Commandments,'" *Variety* (31 December 1922): 1.

[32] Peter Brosnan, "The Site of The Ten Commandments, Guadalupe, A Compilation of Historic, Architectural and Photographic Data on the 1923 Cecil B. deMille Production" (report on file with Hollywood Heritage, Inc., Hollywood, California, 1990a).

[33] Edwards 1988, 9.

[34] DeMille 1959, 246–247.

[35] Peter Brosnan, "Atillio DeGasparis. An extra in the 1923 film at the age of 11," (interviewed by Peter Brosnan, 1990b; P. Brosnan, personal communication, February 2013).

[36] See Brosnan 1990b.

[37] See "Official Trailer 'The Lost City of Cecil B.

DeMille,' [SBIFF]," *Vimeo*, https://vimeo.com/151442490, accessed January 2016.

38 Kholood A. Abdo-Hintzman, Jack McIlroy, and M. Colleen Hamilton, *Finding the Lost City of Pharaoh, Cecil B. DeMille's 1923 Silent Movie Set: An Archaeological Investigation in Guadalupe Dunes, California*, prepared for Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center (Lompoc, Calif.: Applied Earthworks, Inc., 2014), viii.

39 John Parker, Lambert Dolphin, and Glenn Wharton Lambert, "Technical Report: Ground Radar Exploration at the Site of the 1923 Film the Ten Commandments," unpublished report on file with Hollywood Heritage, Inc. Hollywood, Calif., 1990.

40 Brosnan 1990a; see also John Parker, Lambert Dolphin, and Glenn Wharton, "The Lost City of DeMille. An Archaeological Survey of the Landmark Set from Cecil B. DeMille's 1923 Production of the Ten Commandments," unpublished report prepared for Bank of America. Sponsored by Hollywood Heritage, Inc. Hollywood, Calif., 1991.

41 Undated image on file at the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, Calif.

42 Parker et al. 1990.

43 Parker et al. 1990; see also Parker et al. 1991.

44 "Old Testament Ways Revived by Players: De Mille and Company on Location in Desert. Chants and Old Songs When Portraying Exodus." *Los Angeles Sunday Times* (17 June 1923): 1.

45 "Old Testament Ways," *Los Angeles Sunday Times* (17 June 1923): 1.

46 Jay Jones, "Hollywood Discovered Guadalupe Dunes Decades Ago," Los Angeles Times (27 January 2010), http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jan/27/travel/la-trw-sbcounty31-2010jan27, accessed 1 December 2015.

47 Peter Brosnan, personal communication, 6 October 2012.

48 Undated image file at the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, Calif.

49 "Saving the Sphinx: Archaeologists Unearth Set Piece from 'Ten Commandments,'" *Santa Maria Times* (13 October 2014): 1, 8.