

# Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century

Proceedings  
of the Eighth  
International Congress  
of Egyptologists  
Cairo, 2000

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• Archaeology

• With a preface by Zahi Hawass

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Volume 1  
Archaeology



Edited by  
**Zahi Hawass**

In collaboration with  
Lyla Pinch Brock

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# Preface

Zahi Hawass

The Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists, held in Cairo in March 2000, marked the opening of the new millennium as an opportunity to evaluate and redefine the focus and goals of Egyptology in the twenty-first century. Through the Millennium Debates and the papers of other participants published here, we are made aware that now more than ever, Egyptology is facing a period of change and challenge and we must meet these challenges if our field is to remain relevant to the modern world. The Congress was attended by some 1,400 scholars, and of the 400 papers delivered, 248 were selected by our scientific review committee to be published in these volumes. It is notable that this Congress included a higher number of Egyptian Egyptologists than we have seen in many years. In fact, some 500 Egyptian Egyptologists attended the conference. Their inclusion with the more well-known names in Egyptology is an indication of one of the frequently mentioned themes in the Congress: the need for education and training of more Egyptian scholars and excavators to study and maintain their country's monuments as part of the world's heritage.

The enormous quantity of submissions to the Proceedings led to the decision to publish them in three volumes. Volume One contains all the archaeology papers; Volume Two, those dealing with history and religion; and Volume Three covers the topics of language, literature, museology, and conservation. Each volume of these Proceedings opens with the text of the corresponding Millennium Debates and their respondents, and the papers of the specific subjects follow in alphabetical order by the contributor's name.

The Millennium Debates formed a special focus for this Congress. Chaired and responded to by eminent experts in the field, the Debates covered archaeology, art, history, language, literature, museology, religion, site management, and conservation. In his paper (opening the Debates in Volume One) on "Egyptology in the Twenty-first Century," David O'Connor provides a cogent summary of the trends in field work in Egyptology in the last forty years and discusses three points crucial to the future of Egyptian archaeology: the changing attitudes of Egyptians toward

their archaeology, the need for comprehensive mapping (rather than excavation) of the national archaeological landscape, and theoretical issues and their impact on archaeology, epigraphy, and other scholarly disciplines.

Volume Two continues with keynote speakers addressing the Millennium Debate issues of history, art history, and religion. In his paper, "Writing the History of Ancient Egypt," Donald B. Redford challenges the appropriateness of new approaches to historiography such as retrospective economic theory, Egyptology as anthropology, deconstruction, and 'history from below,' as he characterizes the tendency to use anecdotal evidence to draw far-reaching conclusions about the 'common people' in Egyptian history. Edna R. Russmann, in her contribution to the Millennium Debate on the study of the art of ancient Egypt laments the failure of Egyptian art scholarship to coalesce into a recognized subdiscipline with an academic tradition of acknowledged interests and methods of its own. She goes on to give a summary of the most urgent needs facing the study of Egyptian art as well as possible solutions. In the last Millennium Debate paper in Volume Two, Herman te Velde writes on "The History of the Study of Ancient Egyptian Religion and its Future," which he considers one of the most urgent topics in Egyptology today, since the core of ancient Egyptian culture is its religion. He speculates that although Egyptologists with various special interests will contribute to the study of religion, the most progress should be expected from those willing to focus their research specifically on religion and its accompanying issues, such as polytheism versus monotheism, pharaonism versus local religions, and religion in life as well as death.

Perhaps the most challenging of Millennium Debate papers come in Volume Three. John Baines' comprehensive examination of the current and future possibilities for research on Egyptian literature is complemented by Antonio Loprieno's notes on the problems and priorities in Egyptian linguistics. Baines provides extensive analysis and definition of the Egyptian literary corpus, its relation to the wider stream of tradition and range of written forms, and the social and ideological situation and status of what was written. Loprieno concentrates on the achievements of Egyptian linguistics over the last fifteen years and considers the impact of recent developments in linguistic research on Egyptian phonology and lexicography. Regine Schulz's paper, "Museums and Marketing: A Contradiction" is a timely examination of the pressures facing museums around the world to provide "blockbuster entertainment" while maintaining their five basic mandates of collecting, preservation, research, presentation, and mediation. Finally, my own contribution to the Millennium Debates, "Site Management and Conservation," addresses some of the principal problems and threats to the conservation of Egyptian heritage sites and makes recommendations, some perhaps controversial, for improving site management methods and protection as well as giving suggestions for salvage and excavation over the next ten years.

In addition to being a forum for debate and report, the Congress honored several prominent Egyptologists for their outstanding contributions to the field, including Abdel-Aziz Saleh and Sayed Tawfik from Egypt; Harry Smith of England; William K. Simpson from the United States; Rainer Stadelmann from Germany; Jean Leclant of France; Sergio Donadoni from Italy; Kazimierz Michalowski of Poland; and the late Gamal Mokhtar, former Chairman of the Antiquities Organization of Egypt and Member of the Supreme Council of Culture.

I took great pride in the many complimentary comments I received regarding the organization and success of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists, but credit for this must be shared with the many people whose efforts made that success possible. I would like to thank the members of the different committees who planned and executed the many aspects involved in holding such a large conference. The Congress was held at the Mena House Oberoi Hotel in

the shadow of the Giza Pyramids and thanks to its General Manager, Rajiv Kaul, everything ran smoothly in the day-to-day operations. The Congress would also not have been possible without the financial support of many Egyptian business corporations. Another important contributor was the American University in Cairo Press. Its director, Mark Linz, and the Press's editorial staff were of great help in completing the Congress's mission by publishing the Abstracts, edited by Angela Jones, and of course these final three volumes of Proceedings edited in collaboration with Lyla Brock.

In conclusion, I would urge the International Association of Egyptologists to review and expand its activities in the future, with the aim of making itself better known to the general public and potential sponsors. This would enable it to raise the funds to undertake and complete valuable projects, many of which are discussed in these volumes. I would also urge that scientific studies and research programs should be geared less to the personal interests of the researcher, but should follow an overall action plan targeting those areas where monuments are especially endangered, such as the Delta and the great deserts of Egypt. I believe that all who participated in the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists and all those who read these volumes of Proceedings will take wise and positive action in regard to these concerns.

# The Great Sphinx of Giza

Rainer Stadelmann

*Director Emeritus of the German Archaeological Institute, Cairo*

The exact period of the construction, or better creation of the Great Sphinx is still one of the great enigmas of the Egyptian art history. In the nineteenth century, different ideas were prevailing, ranging from the Prehistoric up to the Middle Kingdom and even later. Today, however, Egyptologists and art historians have given enough archaeological and written evidence that could definitely prove to an intelligent public that the Sphinx is a work of the Old Kingdom, more precisely, the Fourth Dynasty. Only some stubborn and unreasonable writers, like Antony West and the geologist Robert Schoch, still insist for sensational reasons on arguing that the Sphinx is a remnant of an older prehistoric civilization, ignoring the historic surrounding and background of the Egyptian society.

The approval of a Fourth Dynasty date for the creation of the Sphinx leaves open, however, the question of which of the kings residing at Giza could have been the one who has envisaged and ordered this unique sculpture, one of the greatest ever made by man. We have the choice between four kings, the great Khufu/Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid, or one of his sons Djedefra, Khafre/Khephren, or Menkaure/Mykerinos. Djedefra who constructed, but not completed, a pyramid on top of the marvelous hill of Abu Ruwash, has only been suggested because he might have had several sphinxes of normal size in his pyramid complex at Abu Ruwash—these would be the first sphinxes—but this is definitely not a strong argument. The pyramid complex of Menkaure lies too far away from the location of the Sphinx. So both kings, Djedefra and Menkaure, can be eliminated and only Khufu and Khafre remain.

Most of the Egyptologists agree rather superficially on Khafre, arguing that his name is mentioned on the Dream Stela of Thutmose IV in a context with the Sphinx. This is, however, only partially true. This large and elaborate stela—found by Caviglia 1818—was erected by King Thutmose IV in front of the Sphinx after he had become king. In the long inscription Thutmose reports that once, when he still was a prince and head of the royal charioteers, he was hunting in the desert of Memphis near the pyramids. At noon he fell asleep in the shadow of the Sphinx and was told in a dream that if he cleared the sand away from the flanks of the Sphinx he would



Fig. 1: The Great Sphinx with the Pyramid of Khufu behind.

become king of Egypt. Of course he obeyed and after having become king he asks the people of Egypt to praise, "Osiris of Rasetau [the area of the pyramids] the goddess Bastet [who was traditionally the goddess of the valley temples] and the gods and goddesses of the resting place or sanctuary of [and here is a lacuna] Khaef" which can be complemented to Khaef<Ra> Khephren or Khafre. This part of the inscription has disappeared today completely, eroded by the subterranean water before the last restoration. It was and is the only proof for the identification of the Sphinx with Khafre. In the upper register of the stela, Thutmose makes offerings to the Sphinx, which is called Horemachet/Harmachis, "Horus in the Horizon." This name of the god Horemachet/Harmachis is an innovation of the New Kingdom which retains, however, the old Achet "Horizon" of Khufu/Cheops.

More than one hundred years later, Selim Hassan found during his excavations a stela of Amenhotep II, father of Thutmose IV. Amenhotep also visited the area of the pyramids and admired the wonderful buildings of—and here the text on the stela is completely preserved: the resting place, or sanctuary of Khnum-Khufu/Kheops and Khafre/Khephren. Thus, we have in a same context both kings mentioned, Khufu/Cheops and Khafre/Khephren, but this is by no way a certain identification of the Sphinx with Khafre. But as very often in our discipline, old and seemingly certain statements rest forever without further verification.

As there is no clear philological ascertainment for the creator of the Great Sphinx we have to look for archaeological ones.

One is the attribution of the larger pyramid complex and its nearby quarries, in which the Sphinx is located. Here we should, however, keep in mind that it was Khufu/Cheops and his chief architect who chose the commanding position on the ridge above what is now Giza. We should not under estimate the fact that he is the great originator in Giza and that each of his creations was somehow new: his pyramid layout, his cult temple, the cemeteries, and even his statues, as the surviving fragments show, are at once innovative and supreme achievements. He had the whole terrain for his disposal and could also choose the most convenient quarries for his pyramid. His



quarries are firmly identified at the northern ridge and the eastern slopes of the terrain. Recent excavations by Dr. Hawass have even brought to light the remains of a construction ramp leading to the southern side of the Great Pyramid. This ramp is situated south of the Great Pyramid and north of the causeway of Khafre in a depression that was once part of the quarries. The southern limitation of the quarries is clearly defined by the preserved rock on which Khafre later built his causeway. This extension of Khufu's quarries is the reason why Khafre's causeway does not run straight to the east and his valley temple is not situated in the axes of the pyramid complex, but to the south. This means that Khafre had to take account of something earlier, something very important, that already stood there. From the situation as we can see it, this important object can only have been the Sphinx. Thus also the large rectangular ditch, in the center of which the Sphinx was hewn, belongs surely to the quarries of Khufu. This can be proven by a comparison of the different members of the rock formation of the body of the Sphinx and the walls of the ditch with the layers of core stones of Khufu's pyramid. The sequence of the stones quarried from the different members and put on the pyramid can be exactly observed and recognized by their erosion.



Fig. 2: The Sphinx and the Sphinx ditch within the quarries of Khufu.

Originally the ground into which the Sphinx ditch was cut must have been considerably higher than the rock plane to the south; it was perhaps as high as the ridge to the north on which the mastabas of the royal princes are standing, or as high as the hill to the south which is the remnant of the quarries of Khafre and Menkaure. All the stone material from this ancient original promontory, from the level in front of the Sphinx ditch up to the 20 m higher level of the pyramid plateau has been quarried away for the core stones of Khufu's pyramid.

Why should Khufu have left this high rock formation on the southern limitation of his quarry for Khafre and his artists to carve the Sphinx? This is surely by no way convincing. It must, however, be admitted that even the fact that the area where the Sphinx is standing now, was originally part of the quarries for Khufu's pyramid, is not definite proof that it was Khufu who envisaged and ordered the carving of the Sphinx.

We have therefore to search for other criteria to solve this problem.

There are firm stylistic and iconographic considerations that point

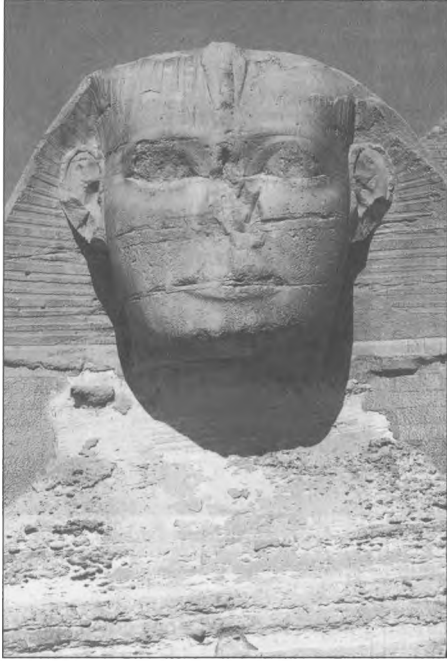


Fig. 3: The Great Sphinx. En face.

undisputedly toward Khufu. It is rather amazing that such an iconographic investigation was never undertaken before I brought the subject into discussion. This is again an indication how much Egyptology tends to believe in written sources, even if they are not evident. The only attempt until now was not a serious one in the sense of art history: In his painstaking investigation on the Sphinx and its history, and the excavations and restoration of it, Mark Lehner tried to put the contours of the head of Khafre's famous statue with the falcon Cairo Museum CG 14 on that of the Sphinx. As you can observe at once, neither the contours of the face, nor those of the nemes headdress fit. Amazingly enough Lehner saw this, however, as a convincing proof for the identity and the authenticity of his thesis that the Sphinx is of the œuvre of Khafre.

We should remember that the idea to create a sculpture of these dimensions, which is part lion and part man, a creature metamorphosed into a divine being by the combined strength of the most powerful wild animal and the intelligence of a human being, is a great intellectual innovation. Two-dimensional images on slate palettes of the Dynastic

Period—some 300 to 400 years earlier—already depict the king as a cruel wild lion or griffin destroying the enemy. In the sculpture of the Sphinx the animal power is tamed by human intelligence and is thus transformed into divine magisterial calm. This magnificent intellectual metamorphosis points more at Khufu, the great originator, than at Khafre, who was—without underestimating his celebrity—an imitator of his father Khufu.

According to fragments from the pyramid temple to the east of the Great Pyramid, Khufu had already invented all the types of statues except the kneeling figure type. The great part of his statuary is surely still hidden in his valley temple, which had been traced ten years ago, but not been excavated until now. So the comparison has to proceed from the small ivory statue and two heads ascribed to Khufu, one in red granite, with the white crown, in the Brooklyn Museum and another rather small head in limestone, wearing the white Upper Egyptian crown, in Munich.

I admit that it is difficult to compare a colossal sculpture like the Sphinx with statues of normal size or even with a statuette like the small ivory statue of Khufu from Abydos. But any art historian from other disciplines would not hesitate to accept this in principle. Some famous art works are firmly dated by comparison with portraits on coins. Even the structure of the world's most famous lighthouse, the Pharos, is only known from pictures on antique coins.

Of Khafre, several life-sized statues and hundreds of fragments are preserved, which give us all together about 60 to 70 statues; Reisner estimates even about 200. Among these is the famous statue Cairo Museum CG 14 with the falcon behind his head. Proceeding from this statuary we can try to make a stylistic and iconographic identification of the Sphinx.

The overall form of the Sphinx' face is broad, almost square. The chin is broad. On the other hand, the features of Khafre were long, noticeably narrower and the chin almost pointed. The

Sphinx has the earlier, one could say: old fashioned, fully pleated type of nemes headcloth, like that of Djoser's statue. The same nemes, fully pleated, can be seen on the fragment of a statue of Khufu in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which comes from Khufu's pyramid temple. This is, by the way, the fragment with the falcon in the back, the earlier prototype of Khafre's statue. Very remarkable and important: the nemes has no band in the form of a raised hem over the brow. This is again the older type, like Djoser's. From Djedefra onward, the raised hem band over the brows becomes the norm. Under Khafre, only the lap-pets of the nemes headcloth are pleated but never the nemes head or the nemes wings. The side wings of the nemes headcloth of the Sphinx are deeply hollowed, but with Khafre hardly at all. With Khafre the headcloth corners curl up, but they do not do so with the Sphinx.

The Sphinx has a uraeus cobra placed on the lower edge of the headcloth. In contrast to those of Khafre and Menkaure it shows high relief with naturalistic detailing of the serpent's neck and the scales of its hood. The eyebrows of the Sphinx bulge powerfully forward, and they are pitched high and slope down toward the temples. The eyes are deep-set, but strongly modeled. They are large and wide open, to which perhaps the monumentality of the head owes something. These wide-open eyes are absolutely typical of sculptured heads from the time of Khufu. The ears are fundamentally different from those of the statue of Khafre. The ears of the Sphinx are very broad and folded forward, while those of Khafre are elongated and situated closer to the temples.

A decisive criterion is the absence of a beard. The sphinx has no indications of hair on its chin. There is also no trace of a break under the chin. Consequently, there would not have been a beard on the Sphinx in the Old Kingdom. The fragments of a plaited god's beard which are now in the British Museum and in the Egyptian Museum are certainly of New Kingdom origin, added to the Sphinx, when it was identified with and adored as the god Harmachis. Certainly, the rounded god's beard is an innovation of the New Kingdom and did not exist in the OK or the MK. When this beard was added, a small platform was carved out of the Sphinx's chest on which the beard and a royal statue rested.

The beard is a royal attribute. Some kings wear a beard, others not. In the OK it is an absolute and strict rule. If a king wears the beard, it appears in all representations, round plastic and relief, in UE and in LE, there is no exception. In the Fourth Dynasty one can observe: Snofru never has a beard, nor does Khufu, neither on his small ivory statue nor on the Brooklyn or the Berlin head. From Djedefra on, however, all kings, including Khafre and Menkaure wear the ceremonial beard in relief and in round plastic. Userkaf, the first king of the Fifth Dynasty, however, abandons the beard again, but has a moustache.

The Sphinx had certainly no beard. This is strong evidence that adds to my suggestion that the Great Sphinx is an original creation of Khufu, as innovative and original as the Great Pyramid itself.

The Great Sphinx was carved out of a high, spectacular rock that dominated the southeast corner of Khufu's quarries. We will perhaps never know how Khufu and his master artist envisaged the idea and the form of the Great Sphinx. There must have been a prototype, perhaps in



Fig. 4: The small ivory statue of Khufu. Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

Heliopolis, the city of the sun god. Later texts mention the great Sphinx of Heliopolis. Whenever sphinxes were placed in front of Egyptian temples, they have a solar aspect and connotation. Thus the idea of a creature in form of a sphinx which is the form of appearance, the phenotype of the sun god might have existed already in Heliopolis from the time of Djoser or Snofru who was the sun god as Neb-ma'at, Lord of the Right World Order.

The Pyramid Complex of Khufu is called Achet-Khufu, The Horizon of Khufu. I therefore firmly believe that the Great Sphinx is the monumental manifestation of Khufu as sun god in his Horizon.