

Title:

Restoring the Great Sphinx of Giza

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Summary:

The Egyptian Government has decided to begin a full restoration of one of the most important monuments from Ancient Egypt, the Great Sphinx of Giza. This article comments this new, and also gives a bit of information about the Sphinx

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Article Body:

4500 years under the desert sun, suffering infernal days, cool nights, sand storms, the feared khamsin, and the successive invasion of Greeks, Romans, plunders and tourists are extremely stressful, even for an impressive, forceful, 60 feet tall creature, half lion, half human. So the Egyptian Government has decided to begin a full restoration of one of the most important monuments from Ancient Egypt, the Great Sphinx of Giza, focusing on its chest and neck of the colossal statue. In addition, a group of experts will create a reproduction of the now lost nose, a decision that surely will take controversy.

About the Sphinx of Giza

A sphinx is in concept a creature with lion body and human head. There is no direct reference to its religious significance until the Middle Kingdom, when this figure is identified with the god Harmakhis. The Great Sphinx of Giza is the largest representation of this creature in the entire Egypt , and its authorship and chronology are still not fully clarified, although the theory that places its construction during the reign of Pharaoh Khafre (2558-2532 b.c.) is the most accepted right now. Nevertheless, there are hypothesis that attributes the Sphinx to Pharaoh Kheops, and even visionaries and dreamers that assert that the creature existed before the Egyptians.

In modern times, and despite the erosion and the multiple aggressions, its state of preservation is acceptable, and is one of the most visited places of Egypt . Needless to say, it was declared World Heritage by the UNESCO

Myth and reality

Ancient Egypt is the land of legends and mysteries, too many and too often exaggerated by cinema and literature, bringing to us tales of curses, pyramids full of tricky and deadly traps, bad-tempered mummies and even alien pharaohs. Needless to attend to such ridiculous stories, the serious and well documented Egyptology can offer us enough mysteries to satisfy our legends-thirsty minds. And, of course, many of them directly or indirectly related to the impressive Sphinx, arguably -with the exception of its three pyramidal neighbours- the most famous monument from its civilization.

Well known by Egyptologist is the Dream Stele , erected by Tuthmosis IV (18 th dynasty) after a dream in which the Sphinx offered him the throne of Ancient Egypt in return for the promise of retire the sand that covered the statue. The future Pharaoh kept his promise and, perhaps thanks to the Sphinx's intervention or perhaps as it happens, the young Prince became Pharaoh despite being not the previous Pharaoh's firstborn son.

Another famous legend (real for many) is that story that refers to some supposed tunnels dug out of the Sphinx, connecting it with the three Pyramids or even with an ancient Library buried in the desert sands (surely Lovecraft will love this theory...) Few years after the World War two, Prince Faruk, perhaps envying Tuthmosis luck, decided to spent one night besides the Sphinx, and when he returned, he told a story about how he find a strange and large room guarded by an automaton (?). In recent times, a group of holes or cavities have been found in the Sphinx, and some Egyptologist says that they will form a complicated tunnel labyrinth. But if these cavities are made by ancient Egyptians, intrepid plunderers, or are just fanciful forms caused by the powerful desert erosion; it is still no clarified