ForeWord Reviews

Before the Pharaohs: Egypt's Mysterious Prehistory
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On Egypt's Giza plateau, not far from Cairo, sit three giant pyramids and their constant companion, the colossal statue known as the Great Sphinx. These ancient structures, along with their enclosure walls and a couple of nearby temples, represent perhaps the largest, most ambitious, long-term construction project in the history of mankind. According to conventional Egyptian history, the complex was built approximately 4,500 years ago, around 2500 BC. The author, who has also written *Sons of God: Daughters of Man*, disagrees with that estimation.

A software developer and historical researcher, Malkowski believes that the Sphinx was constructed long before, arguing that the beginnings of Egyptian civilization occurred thousands of years earlier than is traditionally believed. While provocative and seductive, Malkowski's work is crowded. He takes on too much, exhaustively synthesizing the data of several researchers and ultimately failing to wrap the disparate pieces of evidence into one persuasive theory.

The heart of Malkowski's argument is what he believes to be inaccurate dating of the construction of the Sphinx. He cites geologist Robert M. Schoch's conclusions that severe water erosion on the Sphinx had to have been caused by rain. Other research indicates that the last time it rained in Egypt with sufficient intensity and over a long enough period of time was between 7000 and 3000 BC. Asserting that there must have been a sophisticated civilization before the Egyptians, Malkowski presents evidence that at the end of the last Ice Age, the Mediterranean Sea would have been nearly 400 feet lower than it is today. He suggests that the remains of a sophisticated civilization located near the coast would now be under water and proposes a cataclysmic flood as explanation for the disappearance of this prehistoric civilization.

Malkowski's credibility is weakest when he strays into the more remote areas of unconventional Egyptology. For example, citing a lack of evidence that the pyramids were tombs, he promotes a theory that the Great Pyramid of Giza was constructed as a power plant to transform the earth's tectonic vibrations into electrical energy. Of course, if he is right, Malkowski's theories do pose problems for traditional Egyptologists. An older Sphinx and the existence of a sophisticated pre-Egyptian civilization upend conventional wisdom as to when and how civilization developed in the Nile Valley and force a radical rethinking as to exactly

who dynastic Egyptians were and where they came from, culturally as well as geographically.