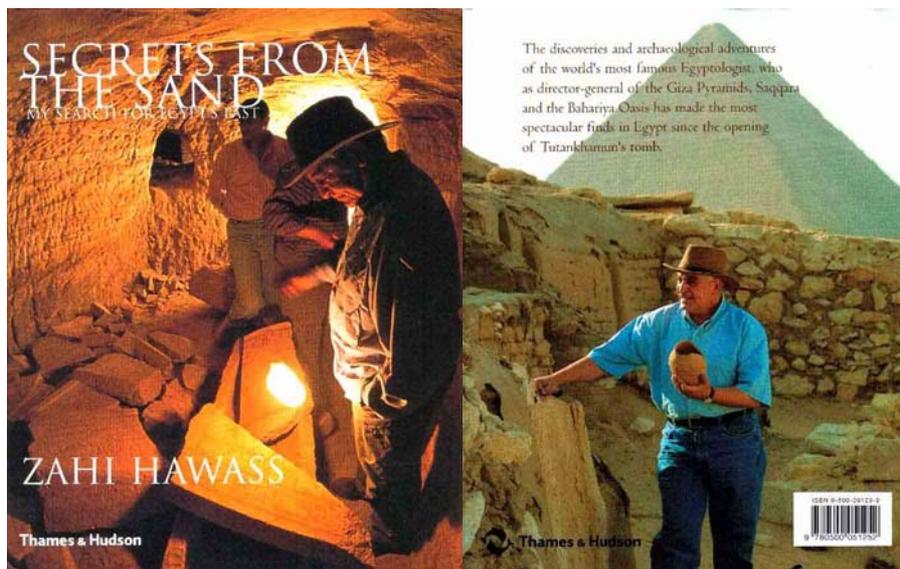


**Hawass, Z. 2003. Secrets from the sand. My search for Egypt's past. – London, Thames & Hudson**

Book review by M.A. de Weerd



Reading the back cover which tells us that this book is about “the discoveries and archaeological adventures of the world’s most famous Egyptologist” and, at the same time, looking at the page filling photograph of the author, gives you already a good idea what type of book you are holding. It is a biography of the author starting from his days as a student and filled with little anecdotes and lots of photographs, mostly of the author himself.

In the first chapter the author tells us how he became an Egyptologist and, more importantly, an inspector of antiquities. He mentions the numerous people he encountered and worked with over the years and describes several excavations he directed before he accepted the position of director general of the Giza pyramids, Saqqara and the Bahariya Oasis.

Chapter 2 tells us about the author’s new discoveries at the Giza plateau, in the surroundings of the complexes of Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure. Besides giving detailed information about his discoveries the author mainly presents his “official site management plan” to save the monuments from all the dangers of modern times (urbanization, tourism, traffic) and to create a sensible plan for excavation.

In chapter 3 the author writes about new explorations at the sites of Saqqara and Heliopolis and all the problems these sites face such as illegal building of residential houses.

The most recent and well-known discoveries of the author in the Bahariya Oasis are described in chapter 4. This part is the most spectacular because of the great numbers of mummies and their grave goods found there.

The author concludes his book by contemplating about the future and the problems it brings, caused by increasing tourism, urbanization, theft and improper archaeology. As addenda, the book contains a chronology of Ancient Egypt and a glossary.

Despite the fact that the book contains many stories of the author in a heroic role, catching thieves and untrustworthy workers, saving the monuments and building new houses for the locals, in order to excavate, it is a pleasant book to read for the amateur who has an interest in Egyptology. It is a combination of romantic stories and a scientific analysis of the excavations carried out in the areas mentioned. The book is illustrated with 262 illustrations, of which many are colour photographs. Nevertheless for those who are professionals in the field of Egyptology or more scientifically interested, this book probably holds not much interest.

Hawass, Z. 2003. Secrets from the sand. My search for Egypt’s past. – London, Thames & Hudson. 272 pp. ISBN 0500 051259. Price € 47.65 (hardback). Imported by Nilsson & Lamm ([www.nilsson-lamm.nl](http://www.nilsson-lamm.nl)).