

Archaeologists to raise ancient Egyptian ship

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Egyptian workers remove a rock from the burial site of the second "Sun Ship" for King Khufu, who was the second pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty of the old kingdom of ancient Egypt, during the announcement of a project that will unearth the ship in collaboration with a Japanese archaeology mission in the area of the Great Pyramids on the outskirts of Cairo.

Egyptian and Japanese archaeologists on Thursday began to unearth an ancient boat belonging to King Khufu and buried near the Giza pyramids for more than 4,500 years.

A mission from Japan's Waseda University, the Japanese Institute of the Solar Boat and Egypt's antiquities ministry have been preparing to lift the boat from its underground pit for the past two years.

The project is "one of the most important" archaeological projects, antiquities minister of state Zahi Hawass told reporters at the site.

It is one of two boats belonging to King Khufu, or Cheops, a fourth dynasty ruler who built the Great Pyramid of Giza.

Solar boats were buried with the Pharaohs in the belief that they would carry them to the afterlife.

The boat was first discovered in 1987 in a large pit covered by 41 limestone blocks, weighing 16 tons each.

On Thursday, scientists lifted the first stone slab and are expected to remove parts of the wooden boat for restoration and reassembly.

The finished [boat](#) will be exhibited at the Giza plateau along with its sister vessel which went on display in 1982 following 13 years of reconstruction.

Hawass said he hoped the project would give a much-needed boost to the country's vital tourism industry which was paralysed by the uprising that toppled president Hosni Mubarak and has been struggling to recover ever since.

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