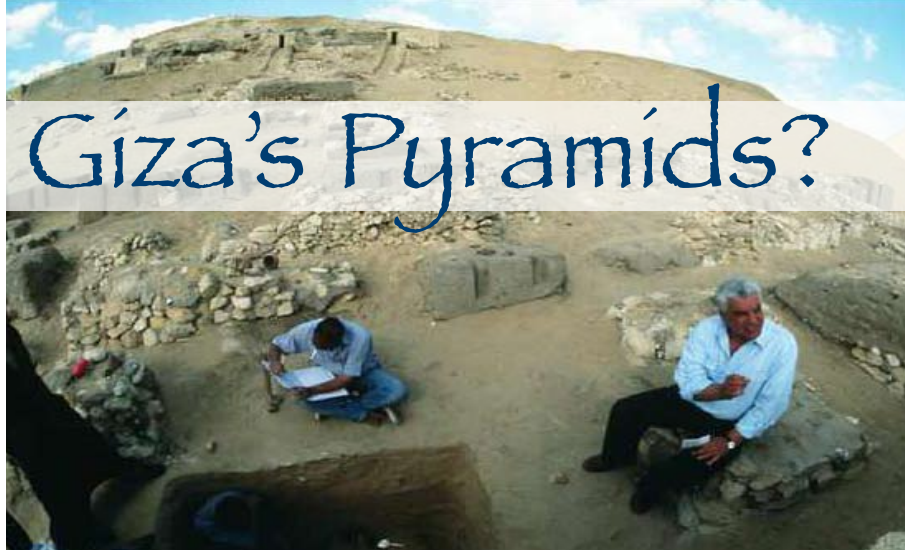


Who Built

Giza's Pyramids?

1 For centuries, the pyramids of
Giza have been **timeless** symbols
of Egyptian culture. But who
actually built them? For years,
5 we did not know for sure. But
archeologists recently discovered
an ancient village near the
pyramids. Close by, there was
also a cemetery where pyramid builders were buried. From
10 studying these places, archeologists can now **confirm** that
the pyramids were not built by slaves or foreigners (or space
aliens!). **Ordinary** Egyptians built them.



▲ Archeologist Dr. Zahi Hawass led the team that discovered the pyramid workers' tombs.

It took about eighty years to build the pyramids.
According to archeologists, about 20,000–30,000 people
15 were **involved** in completing the **task**. The workers had
different **roles**. Some dug up¹ the rock, some moved it,
and some shaped it into **blocks**. People also worked on
different teams, each with its own name. On a wall in
Khufu's Great Pyramid, for example, a group of workers
20 wrote "Friends of Khufu." Teams often **competed** to
do a job faster.

Life for these workers was hard. "We can see that in their
skeletons," says Azza Mohamed Sarry El-Din, a scientist
studying bodies found in the cemetery. The bones show signs
25 of arthritis,² which developed from carrying heavy things for
a long time. Archeologists have also found many female
skeletons in the village and cemetery. The damage to their
bones is similar to the men's. Their lives may have been even
tougher: male workers lived to age 40–45, but women to only
30 30–35. However, workers usually had enough food, and
they also had medical care if they got sick or hurt.

The work was challenging, but laborers were **proud** of their
work. "It's because they were not just building the tomb of
their king," says Egyptian archeologist Zahi Hawass. "They
35 were building Egypt. It was a national project, and everyone
was a participant.³"

¹ If you **dig up** something (or, **dig** something **up**), you take it out of the ground.

² **Arthritis** is an illness that causes the hands, knees, or other joints to hurt.

³ A **participant** is a person who joins a certain activity.