

The Builders of the Pyramids

by
Zahi Hawass



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Prologue

The discovery of the tombs of the workmen who built the pyramids at Giza showed to the world that it was indeed the Egyptians who built the pyramids, not by forced labor, but with love and out of deep, religious conviction. I cannot even begin to describe the supreme joy that we all felt at this discovery, and how every excavation over the last ten years has provided a piece of the puzzle as to how the ancient Egyptian peasants and workers lived, who helped to build this great civilization.





Chapter I

The Poor Man's Tomb is Safer



The Wall of the Crow, dated to the Old Kingdom, that separates the pyramids from the tombs of the workmen on the Giza Plateau.

The Story of the Discovery

We began excavating southeast of the Sphinx, behind the stone wall known as the Wall of the Crow. King Khufu built this 10 meter high and 200 meter long wall with only one doorway to separate the workers from the royal cemetery. The reason that we began our excavations in this location was that our study of the area south of the wall showed it to be the only place with workers' tombs and villages.

We began our dig in January and February of 1990, finding human bones in one area and grains of wheat in another location. Here, we were faced with our first dilemma; how could there be evidence of burials next to what had clearly been a living space?

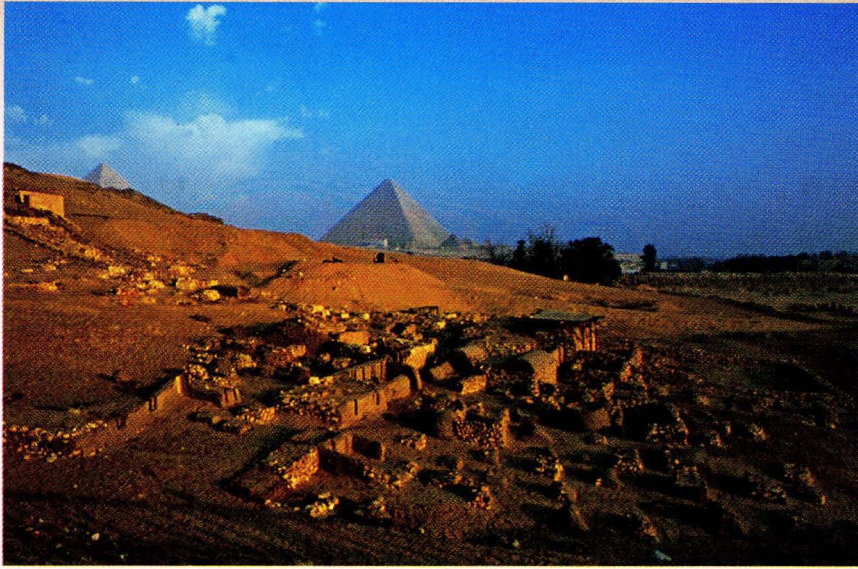


View of the Lower Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.

On a very hot afternoon on the 14th of August of the same year, I was working in my office near Khufu's pyramid when Sheikh Mohamed Abdel Razek, the chief of the guards at Khafra's pyramid, rushed in to tell me that a tourist had fallen off her horse because the horse's hoof got caught in a mud-brick wall about ten meters from our excavation site. As soon as I arrived where the horse had stumbled on a large sand dune, I declared: "these are the tombs of the builders of the pyramids."

We began working in this area, and I was assisted by the young archaeologist Mansour Bureik and a team of draftsmen, photographers, restoration specialists, and architects. We were very lucky because these tombs were safer from the hands of thieves than the tombs of wealthier Egyptians in the area which must have contained gold and other precious objects.

We first excavated the enormous Lower Cemetery, which belonged to workers who came from different parts of Egypt, including Upper Egypt and the Delta, to transport the stones used in building the pyramids, but died while working there. Other workers were buried in their own villages, after completing their civic duty of constructing the pyramids and tombs. The Upper Cemetery, which is directly located above and to the west of the Lower Cemetery, belonged to the craftsmen and artisans who held higher status positions. These skilled workers used to be ordinary workmen whose architectural and artistic talents elevated them to these new positions.

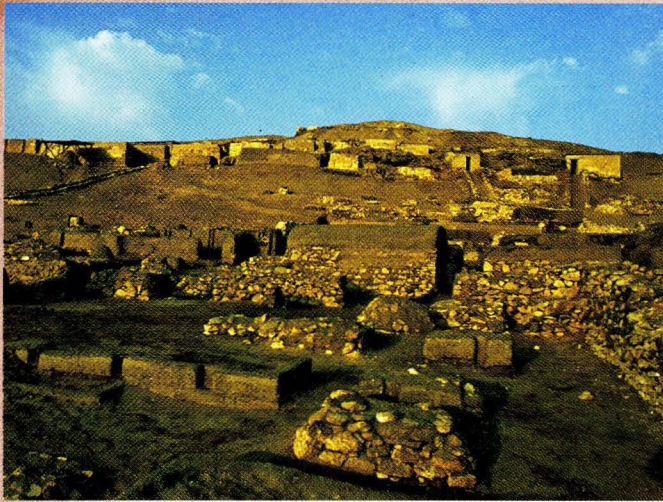


View of the Lower Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders, located southeast of the Great Pyramid at Giza.

The Primordial Mound

Most of the tombs in the Lower Cemetery were built of mud brick, but the walls were supported with a variety of materials that were also used to build the pyramids and temples, such as small chunks of granite, limestone, and diorite. The workers kept these leftover materials for building their own tombs to ensure their stability over time and also their own immortality.

In addition to 60 large tombs probably reserved for the head workmen, there are also around 600 small mud-brick tombs for the workers in the Lower Cemetery. These tombs contained false doors, which are rectangular blocks of stone carved to look like a door, below which the workers were buried in a squatting position. The tombs are constructed in a variety of architectural shapes, measuring about 1 x 0.5 meters each; dome-shaped tombs cover the burial pits below the surface of the ground, giving the tombs the appearance of small pyramids.



General view of the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza with the Lower Cemetery in the foreground.

Several of the tombs are similar, although somewhat simplified in their shape, to the tombs of the nobles and officials, known as *mastabas*. Excavators working with the French archaeologist Auguste Mariette gave the term *mastaba* (Arabic word for “bench”) to these tombs based on their similarity to the typical benches located in front of modern homes in Egyptian villages. Several titles belonging to supervisors were found in these tombs, including “Inspector of tomb builders” and “Overseer of tomb builders.”

We named one of the dome-shaped tombs in this cemetery, “The Egg-Dome,” since it was an oval dome constructed of mud brick and plastered smooth with *tafla*, a desert clay.

Egyptologists have believed for a long time that the ancient Egyptians built their tombs in the shape of a mound of rubble during the First Dynasty, around 3000 BC. It is also thought that the pyramids of later dynasties are a development of the idea of the primordial mound of creation, which is related to the cosmic origin of the world, the gods, and human beings. It appears that this idea influenced the builders of the tombs that are shaped as egg-domes, and that the pyramidal shape was not exclusive to kings’ tombs but also belonged to the people, deriving from the courtyard of the poor, Egyptian household.

Our eyes shone and our hearts fluttered every time we discovered another tomb. This was not just a great archaeological find; it was particularly emotional for us, as Egyptians, to be standing amidst the builders of the pyramids as their discoverers. The wonderful find of the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders was reported by international news agencies from around the world, who had flooded into Egypt to record our amazing discovery.



One of the pyramidal-shaped tombs in the Lower Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.

Chapter II

False Doors



General view of the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.

The Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders consists of two levels dating to the Old Kingdom, which are separated by a road; the tombs of the Lower Cemetery being much smaller than those in the Upper Cemetery.

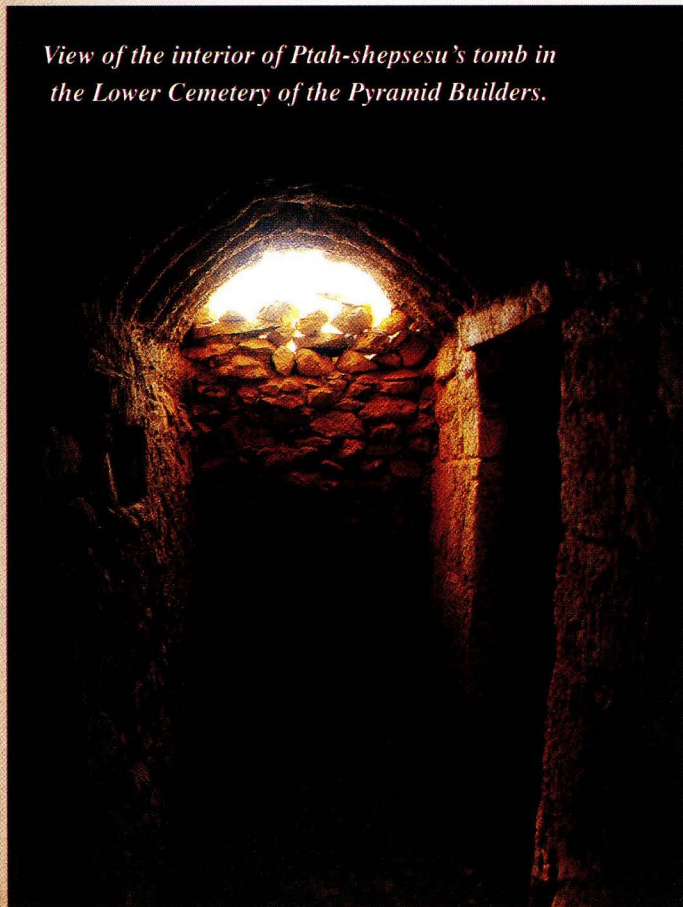
The Lower Cemetery contains about 60 large tombs, perhaps for overseers. The tombs come in a variety of forms: stepped domes, beehives, and those with vaulted roofs. Measuring two to six feet in height, the domes covered simple, rectangular burial pits and resembled simplified pyramids.

Naturally, the first tombs we uncovered were the ones where the horse had stumbled on a mud-brick wall that turned out to be the uniquely constructed tomb of Ptah-shepsesu. After removing the rubble and sand, we noticed that the cemetery extended further west, and we proceeded towards a mound. Excavations revealed that there were a number of shafts beside each large tomb.



General view of a tomb in the Lower Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.

View of the interior of Ptah-shepsesu's tomb in the Lower Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders.



Inside the shafts were squatting skeletons, all facing to the east towards Ra, the sun god, as he appeared at sunrise.

Most tombs were designed as open courtyards, while the smaller ones were preceded by entrances that resembled simple false doors through which the dead could commune with the living and receive offerings.

The tombs are generally constructed with a great, open courtyard with a southern entrance on the east wall. A number of mud-brick ovens for cooking were found in the courtyard. At the back of the courtyard in Ptah-shepsesu's tomb was a mud-brick, rectangular chamber below which a child was buried. The child was probably around four years old, as molars were found in his jaw.



Detail of the false door in Ptah-shepsesu's tomb with inscriptions giving his name and titles.

Beyond the great courtyard, we came to a slope that led to a second open courtyard defined by various sized walls where the actual tomb probably began. An entrance on the northwest side of the courtyard led to a third courtyard where the false door on the west side was uninscribed. From an entrance on the southeast, we came to the tomb's central chamber that had a mud-brick ceiling consisting of a palm tree motif of twenty-six logs. On the west wall of the chamber were two limestone false doors with remnants of a white, plaster coating; the first door was uninscribed, while the second was inscribed with the name and titles of the tomb owner. The name Ptah-shepsesu is well-known from the Fifth Dynasty.



The vaulted roof in Ptah-shepsesu's tomb.

Before this second false door is a special serdab for the entry and exit of the soul, much like the serdabs found in Old Kingdom tombs that contain a statue of the tomb owner.

Despite the fact that the tombs were built of simple mud bricks for the poor pyramid builders, we nevertheless found a number of false doors inscribed with hastily etched hieroglyphs.

Tombs of the Artisans and Sculptors



View of the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza, including the Lower Cemetery and the Upper Cemetery.

As we were excavating the Lower Cemetery, we came upon a ramp that lead up the slope to the west to an upper level of burials. The tombs on this upper level, so far numbering forty-three, are larger and more elaborate than those in the Lower Cemetery. Many are completely rock-cut, or have a stone facade in front of the low cliff face.

The size and style of the tombs indicate that those buried in the Upper Cemetery were artisans of a higher status than the people buried below, whose smaller and simpler tombs imply a humbler status.

Limestone and mud-brick tombs, similar to *mastabas*, have been discovered in the Upper Cemetery. The tombs contained false doors decorated with scenes and hieroglyphs that are more sophisticated in style than those found in the Lower Cemetery. Well-made tools, pottery, and stone utensils were also found in association with these tombs.



Mastaba style and beehive tombs in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.



General view of Ni-ankh-Ptah's tomb with its ramp in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.

Ni-ankh-Ptah's Tomb

Ni-ankh-Ptah's tomb is considered one of the most important rock-cut tombs in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders, partially because of its uneven limestone ramp that measures 1.10 meters in width, which leads further up the Upper Cemetery.

At the end of the ramp, we find ourselves before the burial chamber of this tomb with an entrance on the east.

The chamber is rectangular in shape, and its ceiling consists of four limestone blocks.

There are two windows in the burial chamber's north wall to light

and ventilate the tomb. There is also a large air vent on the east face of the west wall that leads to the roof of the tomb.

The burial chamber is entirely carved into the bedrock and contains five shafts, indicating that it is a group burial chamber.

Above the main chamber of the tomb is an upper terrace that could have been used by the relatives of the deceased during their visits to the tomb to present offerings.



General view of Weser-Ptah's tomb with its ramp in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.

Weser-Ptah's Tomb

The second limestone tomb belongs to Weser-Ptah, which also has a ramp that extends from east to west, and is paved with chunks of various kinds of stone.

On the north and south sides of the entrance into the tomb is relief decoration showing Weser-Ptah wearing a wig, beard, and a short kilt. On the north side, he holds a scepter in his right hand and a long staff in his left.

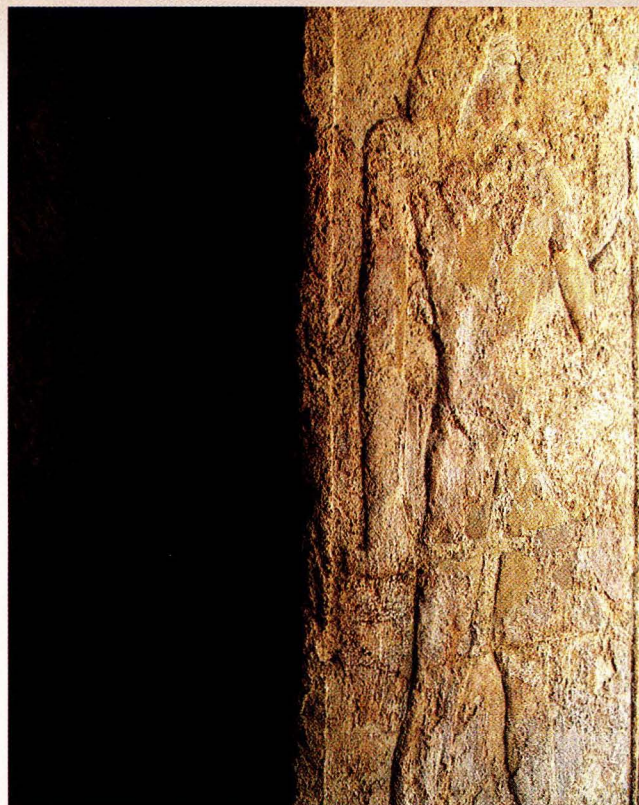
Above both images of Weser-Ptah is a rectangular slab with poorly preserved hieroglyphic inscriptions; the second line of which gives Weser-Ptah's title.

The west wall of the limestone chamber beyond the entrance leads directly to Weser-Ptah's burial chamber, and is adorned with reliefs showing Weser-Ptah's with his wife and children. Above the entrance into the burial chamber is an architrave in poor condition, featuring an offering formula.

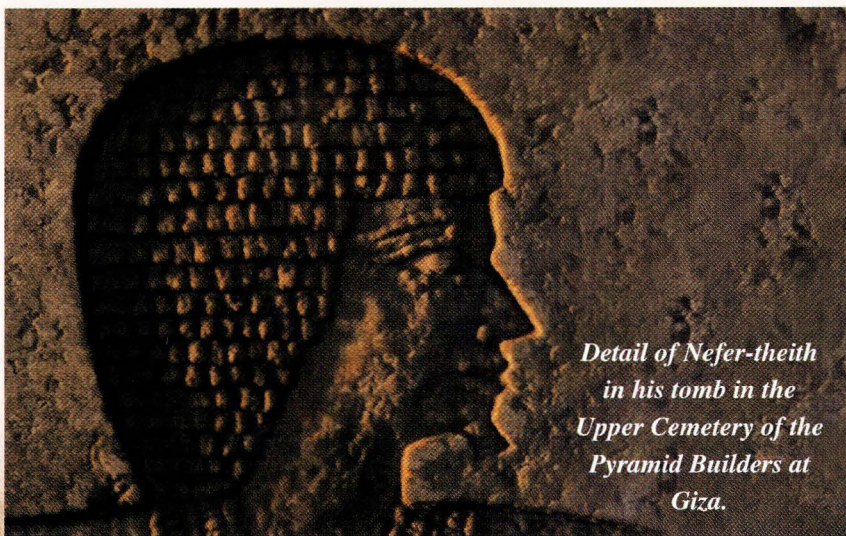
Nefer-theith and his Wives

Nefer-theith enjoyed more than one title; one of these was "Overseer of the palace." It appears that Nefer-theith's titles were not merit titles but honorary

ones. What is unusual about his tomb is that it seems as though he had two wives: the first named Ni-ankh-Hathor, and the second Nefer-hetepes. Nefer-theith's tomb was the first one discovered in this cemetery where a man had two wives.

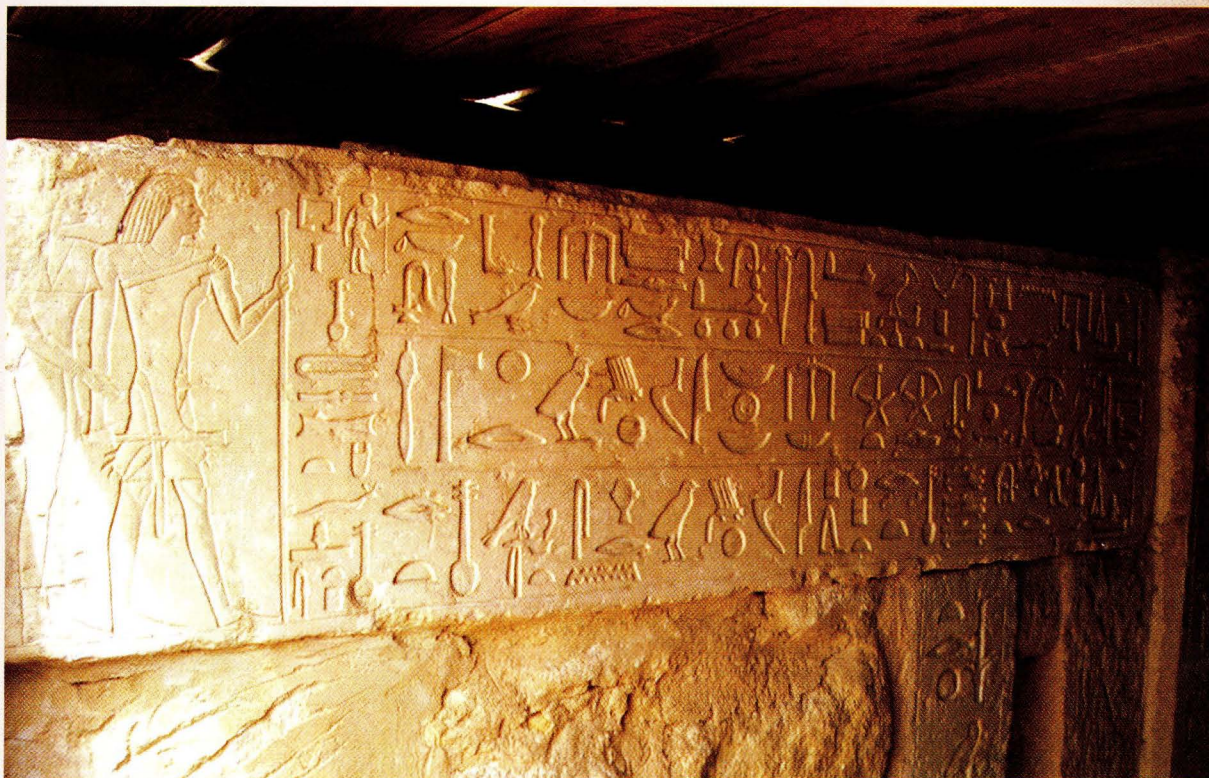


Relief decoration showing Weser-Ptah standing with a staff in his left hand and a scepter in his right. Inscriptions above give his titles.



Detail of Nefer-theith in his tomb in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.

Each of Nefer-theith's wives had a false door inscribed with the names of her children. Nefer-hetepes, his second wife who had the title of "Midwife", bore eleven children: eight boys and three girls.



A limestone slab with an offering formula in Nefer-theith's tomb at Giza.

The second false door belonging to the first wife, Ni-ankh-Hathor, has inscriptions which indicate that she bore four boys and three girls. We do not know if Nefer-theith kept both wives simultaneously, or whether he took his second wife, Nefer-hetepes, upon the death of his first wife.

The false doors in this tomb are unique for their scenes of grinding grain, in addition to bread and beer making. From these scenes, we can deduce that Nefer-theith may have been the supervisor of the bakery.



A limestone slab in Nefer-theith's tomb inscribed with offerings.

Above the first false door is an inscription giving the rituals involved in the presentation of offerings on certain festival days. There is also another limestone panel between the second and third false doors with the offerings that the deceased desires in the afterlife. The artist who carved the panel used the west wall of the neighboring tomb of Moro as part of the passage with the tomb's façade and three false doors.

The first false door on the north belonging to Nefer-theith is flanked by a scene showing Nefer-theith wearing a short kilt with three of his sons. Below this scene is another one depicting a servant named Khanut grinding wheat, while another servant is shown baking bread. The third false door, located south of the two previous ones, belongs to Nefer-theith and Nefer-hetepes.

Petety's Tomb

The tomb of a man named Petety has relief decoration with inscriptions giving his name and the names of his wife and children, as well as other reliefs with curse inscriptions against trespassers and gravediggers. Based on Petety's titles, he may have supervised young apprentices who were artisans.

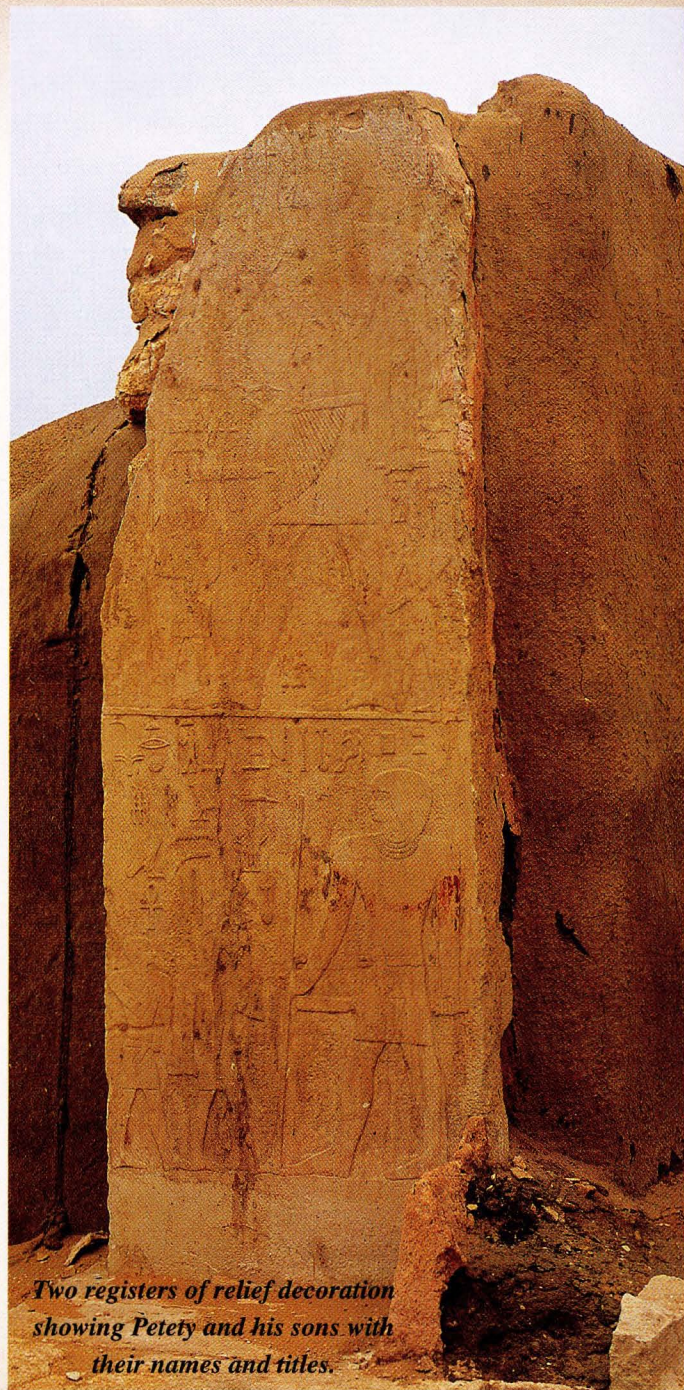
The most valuable find from this tomb is a small statue of unbaked mud with a monkey's head and a human body. The statue has his right hand placed across his chest. This statue may be a talisman, placed by the owner, against visitors that might disturb the tomb. The statue holds what appears to be a knife or sword in his right hand, ready to defend the tomb.



General view of Petety's tomb in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.

In the first chamber of the tomb are scenes of Petety wearing a unique wig, an amulet around his neck, and a short kilt. He holds a long staff in his right hand. In front of him stand two of his sons also in short kilts.

The most important scenes in this tomb are two unusual depictions: one of Petety and the other of his wife, Nesy-Sokar.



Two registers of relief decoration showing Petety and his sons with their names and titles.

The first scene shows Petety, the owner of the tomb, with two of his sons; one son is shown standing in front of him with his right hand on his chest, while his left arm is down by his side. The second son is shown standing between Petety's legs. The son in front is identified as: Men-ni-ankh.

As for the curse inscription below, it reads:



Interior view of Petety's tomb

“As for any person, any prophet of Hathor, any musician who strikes (?).

Who shall enter this (tomb) and shall do any evil thing inside, it is the god

who will protect me from them because I am one rewarded of his master

and I have never made an evil thing against any man. If he does something against me regarding it, it is the crocodile, the hippopotamus, the lion who shall eat them (=him).”

On the other side of the entrance is another curse inscription belonging to Petety's wife, Nesy-Sokar.

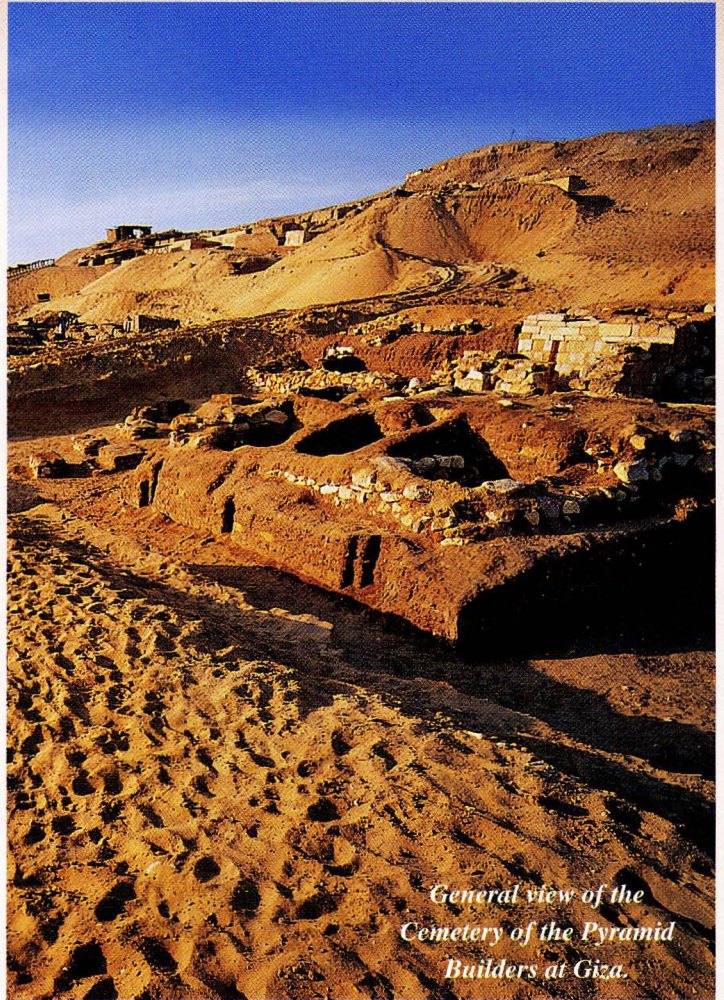
Nefer-ef-nesu's Tomb

Although the owner of this tomb bore the title, "Supervisor of artisans," Nefer-ef-nesu's tomb was nevertheless a simple affair with a limestone façade, a serdab, and a niche.

A limestone double statue of Nefer-ef-nesu and his wife, Nefer-menekh-es, sitting on a seat with a back was found in the niche. She has her right arm across her husband's shoulder, while her left hand rests on her knee. She wears a wig and a woven, white dress with a net-pattern. Around her neck hangs a necklace consisting of several rows of green and blue beads. Upon closer examination, it is obvious that the artist has sculpted the wife beautifully; her right hand is slightly raised above her right breast and her right foot is raised slightly above her left foot as she embraces her husband. Inscribed by the wife's left foot is her name, Nefer-menekh-es, meaning "beautifully clothed."

The husband, who wears a wig, necklace with colored beads, and a short kilt, has his right hand flat on his right leg, while his left hand is in a fist holding an object. Inscribed by his right foot is his title, "Supervisor of artisans, Nefer-ef-nesu."

The artist painted the limestone red with black dots in imitation of granite.

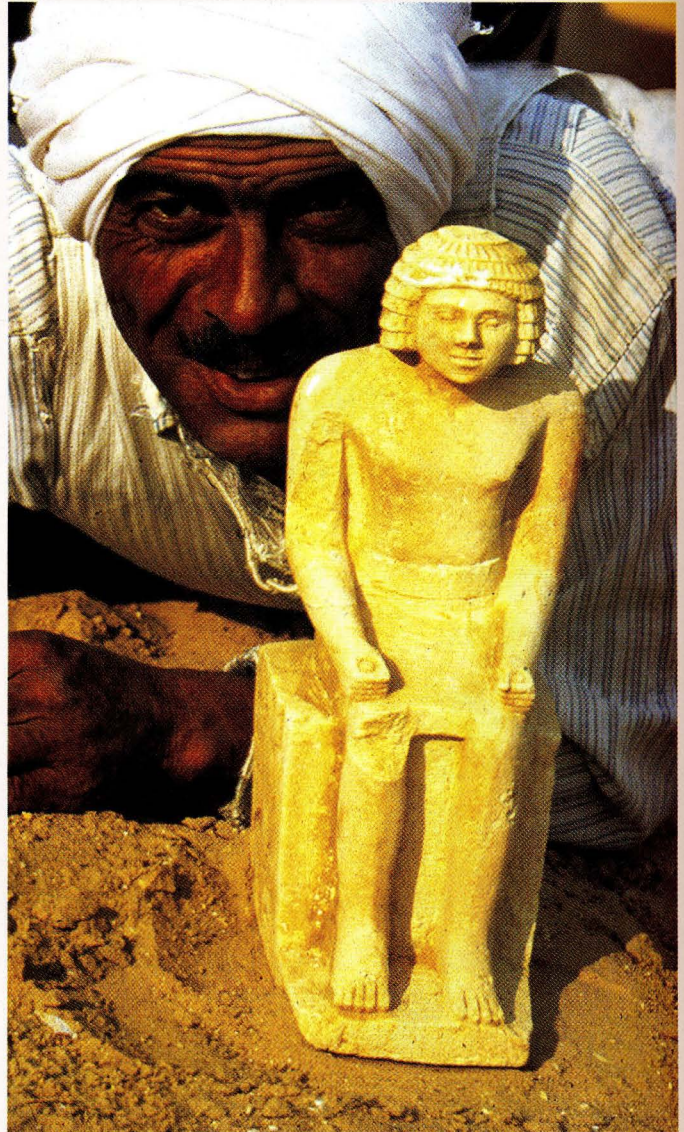


*General view of the
Cemetery of the Pyramid
Builders at Giza.*



*A limestone statue of Nefer-ef-nesu, "Supervisor of artisans,"
and his wife.*

The statues found in the Upper Cemetery are unique despite their belonging to the Old Kingdom, which had its own artistic standards that include showing the similarity between the likenesses of common people and statues. The discovery of the statues in the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders provides the lower class counterpart to the statues of the elite. The difference between the statues found in the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders and those of the princes and noblemen, however, is akin to the difference between two brothers; one who was raised and lived in a village versus another who went to the city, received an education, and held high office. They are still brothers, but their environments have shaped their features differently. It is important to note that some male workers are depicted with mustaches, which were rare in the Old Kingdom. Perhaps a glance at modern Egypt can provide some answers: villagers wear mustaches more than city-dwellers.



A limestone, seated statue of a hired worker alongside the worker who discovered him.



Detail of the architrave above the entrance into the tomb of Nesu-weseret in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.

Nesu-weseret's tomb, located northwest of Weser-Ptah's tomb and about 8.75 meters away from it, has a length of 8 meters (east to west) and a width of 6.5 meters (north to south). Its ramp is located north of Weser-Ptah's ramp. Nesu-weseret bore several titles including, "Acquaintance of the king," as well as "Overseer of the administrative area."

The ramp is exactly aligned with the tomb's entrance as well as the burial chamber on the west side of the tomb, making Nesu-weseret's tomb the most architecturally precise of the three tombs with ramps. Nesu-weseret's ramp is also the longest and widest of the three.



Detail of the architrave above the entrance into the tomb of Nesu-weseret showing the tomb owner and his wife seated.

The ramp leads to a simple, open courtyard whose west side is the tomb's façade, which has an architrave featuring an inscription with the name and titles of the tomb owner, in addition to a typical offering formula.

This architrave is 2.75 meters long and 38 centimeters high. On the left side of the architrave is a depiction of Nesu-weseret sitting in front of his wife on a simple seat with animal legs. He wears a wig, short beard, leopard skin, and kilt. He holds an object in his right hand.

The entrance of the tomb leads to a chamber that is almost entirely carved out of the bedrock. Its west wall is on the same axis as the tomb's entrance, and leads to the burial chamber with five shafts, each one measuring 1 meter deep, with carved flooring. A crude, limestone coffin containing a skeleton was found in the last shaft.

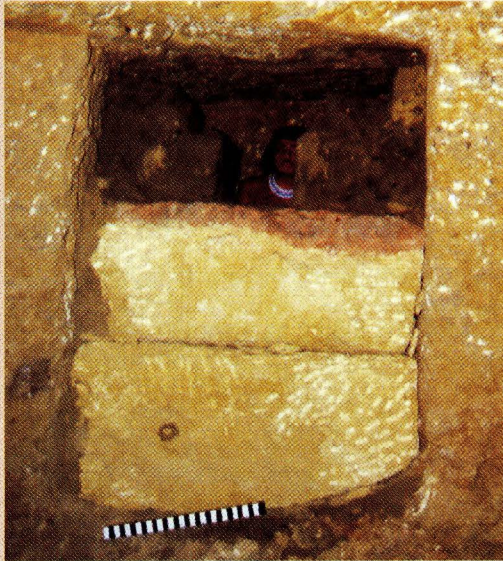
Head Carpenter: Inty-shedu



*The discovery of the statues of Inty-shedu
in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid
Builders at Giza.*

An archaeologist's life is a series of adventures; his life is an endless struggle against the sand which competes with him for the artifact. The work consists of long days of fruitless labor under the burning sun and scathing winds interspersed with moments of truce with the sand that occasionally yields an artifact. It is only then that time stops, and the archaeologist experiences history first hand, feeling that a great civilization has beckoned him after thousands of years and that he is now a guest amongst its people's possessions.

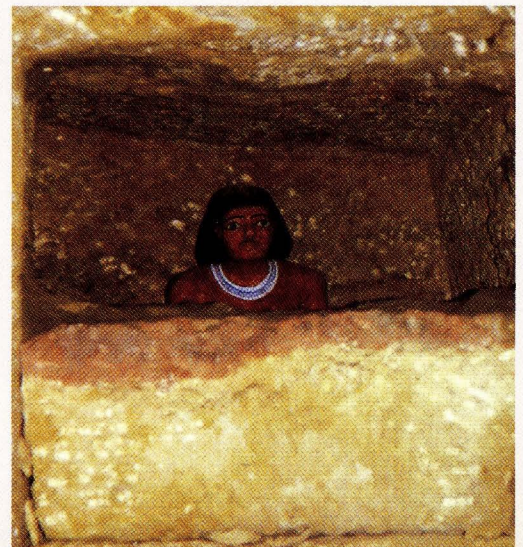
With this introduction, I will now recount the story of my most significant excavation - that of Inty-shedu, “Overseer of carpenters” and one of the builders of the pyramids during the Fourth Dynasty. Inty-shedu was not an ordinary worker; he was part of the carpentry crew that made all the tools required for the building of the pyramids, such as wooden rollers and sledges to transport the stones, in addition to furniture and funerary objects. This gave Inty-shedu a great deal of personal prestige, and earned him a tomb with the great artisans buried in the Upper Cemetery.



Uncovering the statues of Inty-shedu during excavation.

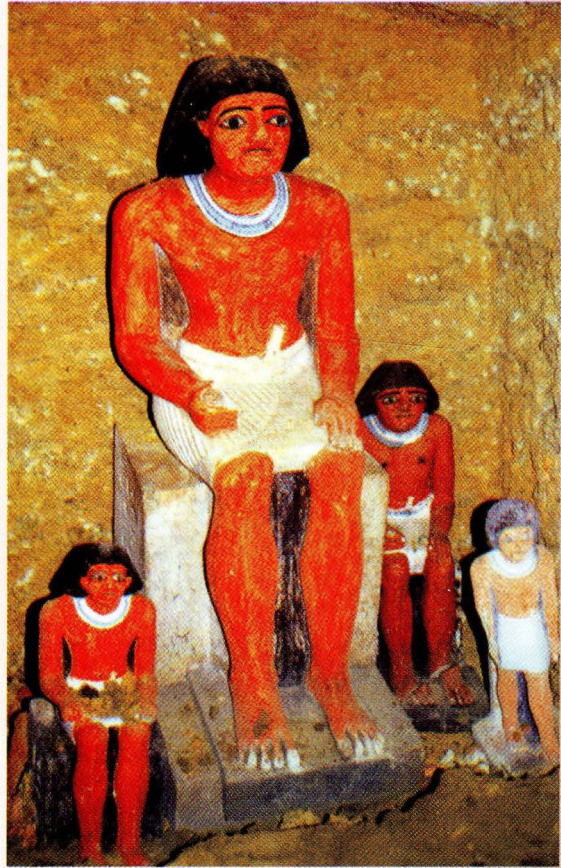
We had just grabbed our brushes and began cleaning the wall when the brilliantly colored eyes of a statue peered at us from behind the stones. My feelings of excitement and wonder that day are best described as those of a father welcoming his newborn into the world. We immediately photographed and recorded the niche before removing the blocks of limestone in the doorway.

We began excavating Inty-shedu’s tomb uncovering its door. We baled out the sand for ten days until we reached the chamber’s floor where we found a number of skeletons alongside pieces of pottery dating to the Old Kingdom. We thought that the tomb was empty until we found a niche in the wall of the serdab covered over by mud bricks, which was further concealed by several limestone blocks, stacked one on top of each other.



View into the niche with a statue of Inty-shedu.

The second surprise came when the statue was fully revealed. It was of a man of about forty-five years of age with shining eyes and a tidy mustache. The artist had painted a beautifully colored collar (an amulet of the god Ptah, the Mennefer), which served as a talisman to help the deceased in the afterlife. The statue returns the onlooker's gaze as that of a true Egyptian who has drunk from the waters of the Nile, which he had sworn in the afterlife never to have polluted during his lifetime. We resumed the process of recording the find; and, in the third stage of removing the limestone blocks, we were surprised to find not one statue but four! The first statue was seated with a standing statue and another seated statue to his left. To the right of the central statue was another seated statue. At this point, we became suspicious as the ancient Egyptians were dedicated to the principle of symmetry in their artworks. It would seem logical for the standing and seated statues to the left of the main, seated statue to be counterbalanced on the right side by the same arrangement. Nevertheless, we recorded our findings with the supreme joy of having welcomed someone new into the world.



The surprise at finding four statues of Inty-shedu.

The fourth stage of stone removal fully revealed the four statues to us for the first time. The gleaming eyes of the statues almost called out to us: “we are the builders of the great pyramids... we built the pyramids...” I thrust my head inside to examine what was in the left hand corner behind the seated statue.

We found what we had expected. There was another seated statue made of wood that did not weather well because of the nature of wood. However, we were very careful to avoid over-ventilating the area, thereby accelerating the rate at which the colors faded, before we had a chance to restore the statues. We began to take pictures of the statues and, in our excitement, took over 300 photographs and slides to record the event.

Finding the statues in a tomb niche was not a unique event in the world of archaeology; many such statues were found at various locations during the course of our excavations. What made these statues unique was that they depicted several stages of one person's life. We only realized this when we took the statues out and had the restoration expert, Mostafa Abdul Kader, chemically strengthen the statues and stabilize the colors. We could clearly see the hieroglyphs, which gave his name, Inty-shedu, on each statue, along with his title, "Overseer of the boat of the goddess Neith." This was the first time that we discovered statues in a tomb that unquestionably all belonged to the same person; the one to the right of the large, central statue depicts Inty-shedu at the age of ten, the two statues on its left depict him at the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five, and the central statue itself being Inty-shedu at the age at which he died. We believe that Inty-shedu was the head carpenter in charge of building boats for the gods, hence his title: "Overseer of the boat of the goddess Neith."

The first statue, the largest and discovered in the center, was clearly the most important in the group of Inty-shedu's statues. The figure is seated on a backless seat, and is wearing a shoulder-length wig and a short kilt. Inty-shedu's left hand is laid flat on his left leg, while his right hand holds an object in a fist, perhaps a piece of linen. His name, Inty-shedu, and title, "Overseer of the boat of the goddess Neith," are inscribed on the right side of the seat.



The second statue, found immediately to the left of the central statue, shows Inty-shedu on a seat without a back that was discovered broken below the legs, and restored a long time ago. Again, the name, Inty-shedu, and the title, "Overseer of the boat of the goddess Neith," are inscribed on the right side of the seat.



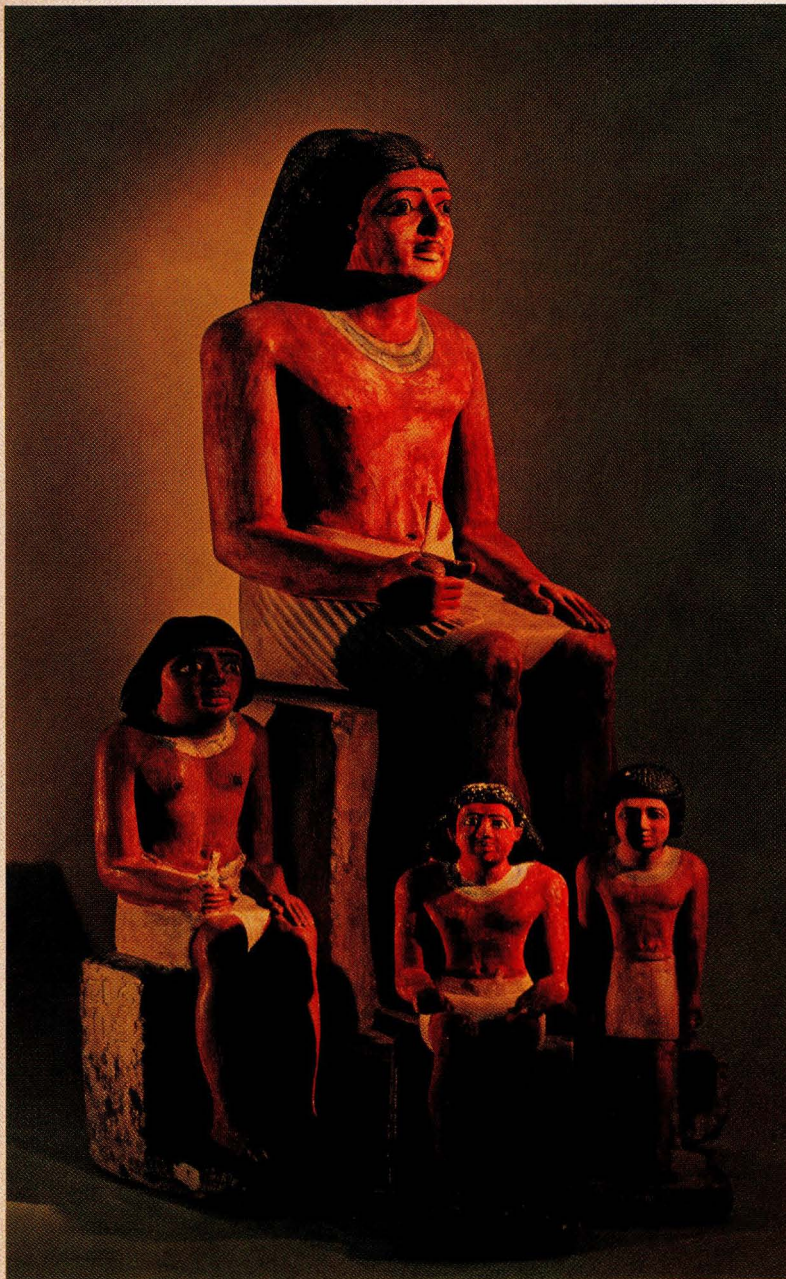
The third statue was also discovered to the left of the central statue. It shows Inty-shedu standing and wearing a short kilt. Once again, his name and title are inscribed on the base of the statue. All three statues have painted mustaches.



The fourth statue was found to the right of the central statue, and similarly depicted. An inscription giving Inty-shedu's name and title are also located on the right side of the seat.



The phones rang off the hook when we reported our find to the antiquities officials and, sure enough, Mr. Farouk Hosni, Minister of Culture, scheduled a visit to the site on the 12th of October in 1992, the day of the great earthquake in Cairo. When the earthquake hit, I was at my desk finishing up some office work. As soon as it ended, I rushed out, first to check on the Sphinx and then on Inty-shedu.



The painted limestone statues of Inty-shedu following excavation. Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

The earthquake was the beginning of a series of strange events that followed the discovery of Inty-shedu. It was almost as though the deceased did not appreciate being taken out of his final resting place to live as part of an antiquities collection, far from the place he had chosen to enter the afterlife! It was only later that Mr. Farouk Hosni arrived to view Inty-shedu with the eye of an artist appreciating the work of another artist from the great, Egyptian past who had created these exquisite pieces.

Inty-shedu had suddenly become a celebrity much like Tutankhamun or Ramesses II: his face gracing the covers of both Egyptian and international magazines. The eyes of those attending lectures would shine with admiration for ancient Egyptian culture whenever the photographs of Inty-shedu were shown.

Egyptian Women and the Building of the Pyramids



The pyramids of Giza, Sound and Light Show.

The discovery of the tombs of the pyramid builders helped to uncover two important facts.

1). Firstly, the Egyptians built the pyramids.

The discovery confirmed that there was no link between the pyramids and any other lost civilization, or the Jews. In fact, in the wake of the Hyksos invasion, the Jews became little more than servants in Egyptian households.

2). Secondly, the pyramids were built as an act of faith, not by forced labor.

A study of the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders shows that most women were buried with their husbands, or given independent tombs, mostly in the Lower Cemetery. To the right of Ptah-shepsesu's tomb is the tomb of a woman named Hayi, consisting of an open courtyard that leads to the tomb's entrance on the northwest side. This, in turn, leads to what might have been an egg-dome-shaped chamber, as is suggested by the west wall.

Four mud-brick false doors are located on the west wall of the chamber, and only a thin layer of plaster remains on them.



A limestone offering basin belonging to Hayi.



A limestone offering basin belonging to Repyet-Hathor.

Among the deceased's titles carved on the offering basin beneath the eastern side of one of the false doors include: "Priestess of Hathor, Lady of the Sycomore." In another tomb belonging to a woman named Repyet-Hathor, we found a small offering basin in front of her false door. These tombs may have belonged to unmarried women that participated in the building of the pyramids, or to the water-carriers, brewers, bakers, fishmongers, medical staff, or even the seamstresses that made the workers' clothes.

Other false doors had the names and titles of their owners, including Hated-Repyet and Hay, who had the title, “Priestess of Hathor, Lady of the Sycamore.”



Relief decoration showing two servant girls performing household chores.

In the Lower Cemetery, we also found the tomb of a woman named Nubi, who was a “Priestess of the goddess Neith.” After studying the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza, it was evident that close to 60 women bore this title, which along with the title, “Priestess of Hathor,” were the two most important goddesses of the Old Kingdom. As was previously mentioned, an important worker bore the title “Overseer of the boat of the goddess Neith.”

I believe that the role of women in the Old Kingdom helped to maintain its stability, and that women participated in the building of the pyramids. Hence, these discoveries highlight the role of women in the construction of the pyramids, both as independent builders or as supporters of male builders.





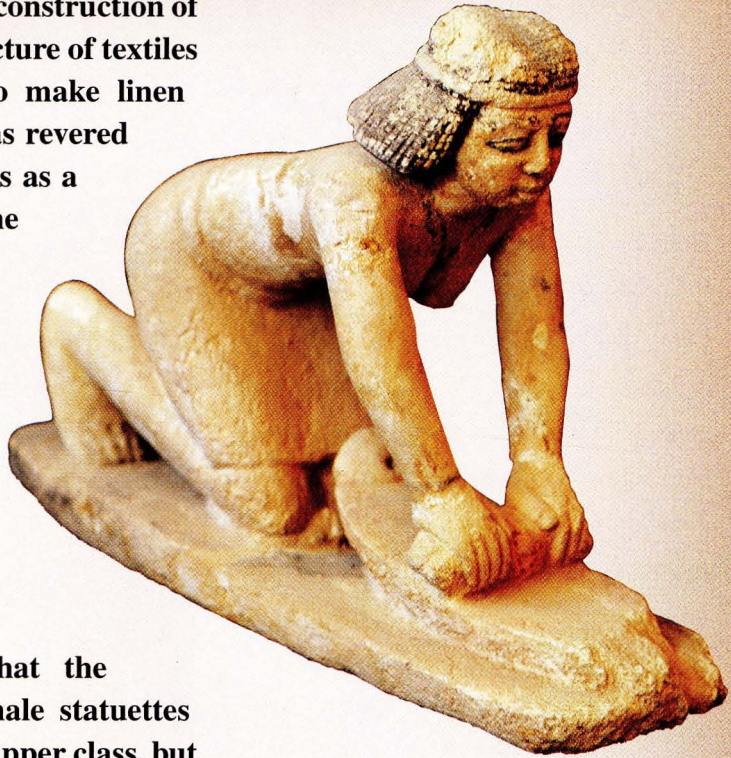
In the southeastern corner of the excavation area, the tomb of a man named Kai-hep, and his wife, Hepny-kawes, was found. In a small niche of this tomb formed by three, limestone slabs were three statuettes: one depicting the wife seated on a simple, square seat wearing a shoulder-length, black wig and a long, white dress. Her hands are placed on her thighs. Her name and titles are inscribed on the sides of the seat.



*Limestone statues of
Hepny-kawes (left) and her
husband (right).*

The second statuette, unfortunately badly damaged by salt, depicts Kai-hep, her husband, standing and wearing a wig in addition to a short kilt. The third statuette belongs to the category of “servant statuettes,” and is of a kneeling woman grinding grain. The statuette is carefully rendered and in good condition; the figure is bare-chested and wears a short skirt that often appears on statuettes of servants performing their work. She wears a short, black wig with carefully rendered locks held in place by a band of white cloth tied around her head, a beaded collar with a pendant, and a bracelet on her right wrist. The oval grinding stone that she uses has traces of red paint, probably to represent granite, which is painted white in the middle to indicate flour. The sculptor successfully depicted the force required to grind the grain in his positioning of the shoulders and arm muscles; the right arm appears slightly extended, while the grinding stone seems to slide gently forward during the process of grinding.

Egyptian women involved in the construction of the pyramids helped in the manufacture of textiles and straw mats. They would also make linen clothing for the artisans, which was revered in the eyes of the ancient Egyptians as a symbol of cleanliness and purity. The production of linen was under the protection of the goddess Neith, patroness of weaving. There are numerous references to the shrouding of the god Osiris in linen which was woven by Isis. Thus, the value of linen is as a shroud, priestly attire, and as garments worn by temple statues.



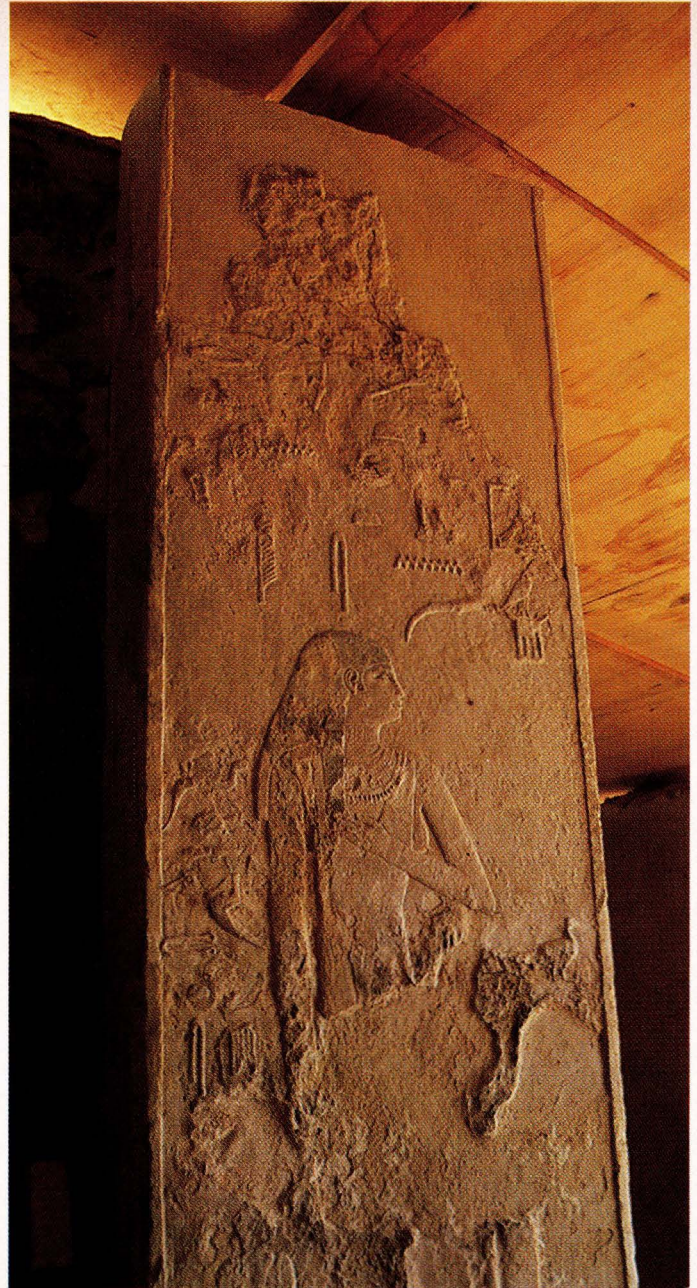
A limestone statue of a woman grinding grain.

Researchers once thought that the delicate features and build of female statuettes represented the female ideal of the upper class, but modern findings show that the Egyptian worker's wife was no less beautiful and graceful than the upper class wife of the artist who designed the tomb.

The ancient Egyptians venerated women and gave them a high, social position, as stability in society depended on striking a balance between male and female roles, incompatible as this may be with modern theories of equality between the sexes. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that men and women were not, at that time, full of modern notions of independence and equality.

The Story of a Woman who was a Builder of the Pyramids!

One of the strangest tombs ever uncovered was that of the artisan Petety, an overseer, and that of his wife, Nesy-Sokar. The relief decoration in this tomb is unusual as compared with that usually found in noblemen's tombs where the wife is usually depicted smaller than her husband, at times even sitting at his feet or holding onto them. We do not know whether the wife was satisfied with her diminutive size, either standing below or grasping his legs. The relief of Petety and his wife depicts the couple at the same height, since they worked equally hard, thus her self-confident pose. This is undoubtedly what her husband wished to project, as it was he or a fellow artist who executed the relief. Petety ordered that two separate curses be used to protect the two tombs. Nesy-Sokar's curse reads as follows:



Relief decoration showing Nesy-Sokar with her titles in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza.



*The curse inscription in Petety's tomb
in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid
Builders at Giza.*

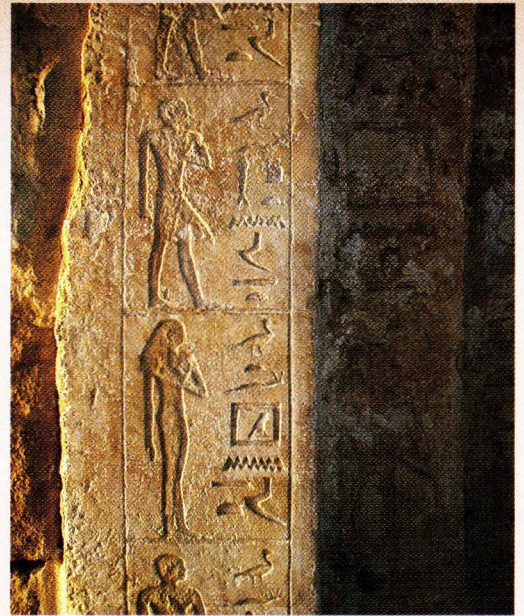
**“As for any person who shall do
any evil thing against this (tomb)
and who shall enter therein:
A crocodile shall be against
him in the water; a snake shall
be against him upon land; a
hippopotamus shall be against
him in the water, and a scorpion
shall be against him upon land.”**

The husband considered the mention of crocodiles, snakes, and hippopotamuses a sufficient enough threat against trespassers; but his wife also reminded potential gravediggers that, in addition to these curses, she was under special protection from the gods as a “Priestess of the goddess Hathor, Lady of the Sycomore.” Even her name, Nesy-Sokar, indicates an affiliation with Sokar, a patron deity of the Saqqara area, which derives its name from the god.

The reliefs show scenes of her with Nesy-Sokar daughter holding a mirror and a bag, emphasizing the boldness and strength of the tomb owner’s character.

Nesy-Sokar’s curse inscription attracted major attention in my lectures on the pyramid builders: firstly because there is general interest in pharaonic curses and the imaginary myths surrounding them, and secondly because the mention of predatory snakes and scorpions is in agreement with a woman’s traditional reputation as a vengeance seeker! At a lecture in Pittsburgh in the USA, I responded to just such a question, explaining that it was important for the ancient Egyptians to preserve their tombs and, in this respect, their bodies for the afterlife. For this reason, there was a necessity for such tomb warnings. But the deceased’s fervent desires have no effect, in my opinion, on those who actually enter the tomb.

The discovery of the tomb of Nefer-theith and his two wives is one of the most important made in the cemetery. It is clear that one of his wives was a weaver and seamstress of garments for the artisans. She is depicted standing beside her husband, equal in size, with her hand resting on his shoulder. We are not certain whether Nefer-theith was married to both women at the same time or was married to one and then the other, as polygamy was only common among kings at that time, not amongst commoners. In fact, only two instances of polygamy from the Old Kingdom are known to us. It is also important to note that the ancient Egyptians did not marry their siblings or children, contrary to what some Egyptologists claim. This practice was limited to their kings, who were considered gods, such as Osiris, god of the afterlife, who married his sister Isis. I believe that the source of the error is that “brother” and “sister” were used as elevated terms of endearment between lovers.



The children of Nefer-theith in his tomb in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders.

The discovery of the tombs of the pyramids builders allowed us to see, piece by piece, the vital role played by women in ancient Egyptian civilization and the greatness of its people. For the women belonged to a society that recognized their indispensable nature. In this respect, she participated with great honor and pride alone or alongside her husband in building the greatest architectural monuments - the pyramids. In this, she was not enslaved by the king, but worked on her own accord and received fair wages from the king, who even allowed her to build her tomb near the great pyramids. She was sometimes buried with her husband or in a nearby tomb, or sometimes with her son. We also found two tombs of women buried on their own, one belonging to Repyet-Hathor based on the offering basin discovered near her false door.

Ni-Nobi's tomb

The other tomb was relatively larger than the first, and belonged to a woman named Ni-Nobi, a “Priestess of the goddess Neith,” the patroness of Sais, Neith’s cult center located in the Nile Delta. The discovery of her tomb leaves no room for doubt as to the contribution that women were capable of making to the national project of the building of the pyramids, without their sons and husbands, that included: baking, brewing, weaving, salting of fish, water-carrying, and even as medical assistants.

Ni-Nobi’s tomb is simple in its architecture; its eastern façade is uneven and indented in the center. Her burial shaft is located behind it. The other burial shafts are surrounded by haphazard slabs of limestone.



Nefer-hetepes, Nefer-theith's wife, who bears the title Inaat, "Midwife."



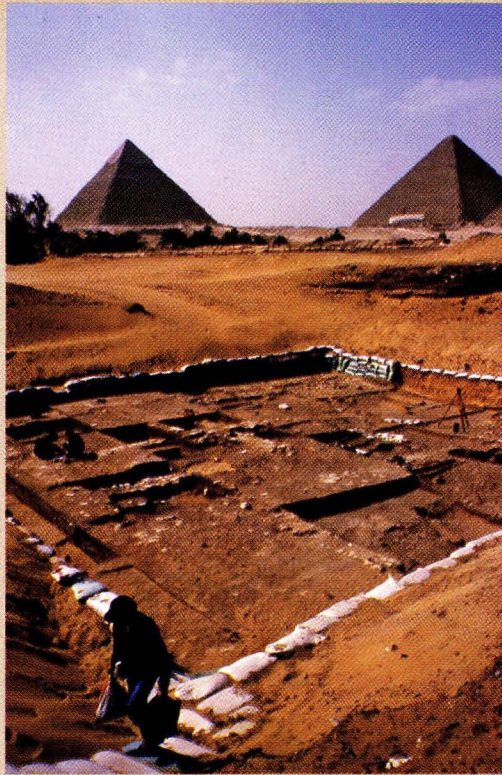
*Relief showing Hetep-heres,
a daughter of Nefer-theith.*

Two offering basins were also found in the indentation on the eastern façade carved with Ni-Nobi's name and titles, the edge of the first was chipped in the process of carving and had been restored.

Two especially interesting burials were those of female dwarves, little more than ninety centimeters tall, one of whom who had apparently died in childbirth as the skeleton of an infant was found within her remains. Dr. Mohamed Abul Ghar, Cairo University's renowned gynecologist, asserts that the death rate among women in ancient Egypt was extremely high, and most prevalent in childbirth. There is no written evidence from medical papyri that the ancient Egyptians knew how to perform caesarean deliveries. In fact, archaeologists have discovered many skeletons of women who had died in childbirth, which were found during the excavations of cemeteries.

Chapter VI

Towns and Villages



General view of the excavations by the University of Chicago at Giza.

A team from the University of Chicago, led by the eminent archaeologist Dr. Mark Lehner, discovered the workers' administrative area where the "Chief of all the king's workers" was in charge of building the pyramids. This man held the most important position in ancient Egypt after the king, and sent daily reports to the king concerning the progress of the building of the pyramids.

An Egyptian team discovered the villages and camps that the workers lived in during the project of the building of the pyramids. A salvage archaeology team was assembled to oversee the digging of the sewage system in the village of Nazlet el-Samman and neighboring villages east of the Giza Plateau. We found mud-brick walls that indicated the existence of a workers' residential area beneath the village homes. The skeletal remains of domesticated animal, such as cows and goats, were also found; what led us to conclude that the animals were domesticated were the butchers' slaughter marks on their bodies. Finally, pollen seeds found on site were analyzed to determine what type of plants grew at that time, providing information on the ancient climate. I believe that the area was divided into two separate villages: one for the artisans who were buried in the Upper Cemetery, and one for the workers that transported the stones and who were buried in the Lower Cemetery.

The fish drying area in the worker's area served their daily food requirements: the fish that was salted and dried was of the same variety as the *feseekh* still popular today. The fish would arrive at the pyramids area fresh, and the workers would salt and preserve it there.

I believe that the administrative system that supervised the workers was more important than the actual building of the pyramids. It is overwhelming to imagine the magnitude of the effort required to transport the workers from the Delta and Upper Egypt, house and feed them, then wake them up at sunrise and make sure they are home by sunset; also to supervise the workers that cut the stones and those that transported them; and organize the supervisors of each side of the pyramid (there was a supervisor in charge of a team of workers assigned to a specific side of a particular pyramid). In my opinion, this is the real miracle: the administration of the pyramid builders.



Excavations showing the area of the bakeries of the pyramid builders. Excavations of the University of Chicago at Giza.

A storage area was also found during the excavations. This area served as a granary, a place for tools, and also a place to store dried fish. The tools were valuable as they were made of syenite, copper, or diorite, and were state property.

Discovering the Oldest Bakery in History

Now we come to the final discovery made by young, Egyptian and American archaeologists, who worked through the bitter winter and scorching summer sun to uncover the workers' tombs and living quarters, proving that it was the Egyptians, and no others, that built the pyramids.

The American team led by Lehner began its work east of the workers' tombs, and uncovered seals bearing the names of King Khafre and King Menkaure, establishing the importance of this area and its relationship to the workmen's tombs that we excavated.

The team found the remains of walls made of small chunks of limestone that resemble the walls surrounding the pyramids. They also found two massive bread vats made in the Old Kingdom style in a pit in the southeastern corner of two parallel rooms in a building. Lehner was sure that this was the location of an Old Kingdom bakery, especially since the team had found a shallow trench in the northeastern side, filled with straw and stones for a fire, as well as ceramic vats known as *magooors* that were once filled with sourdough. A hearth was used to heat the sourdough in the trench, while low stone walls and grinding stones all indicate the existence of a bakery.



Ceramic vats used to bake bread



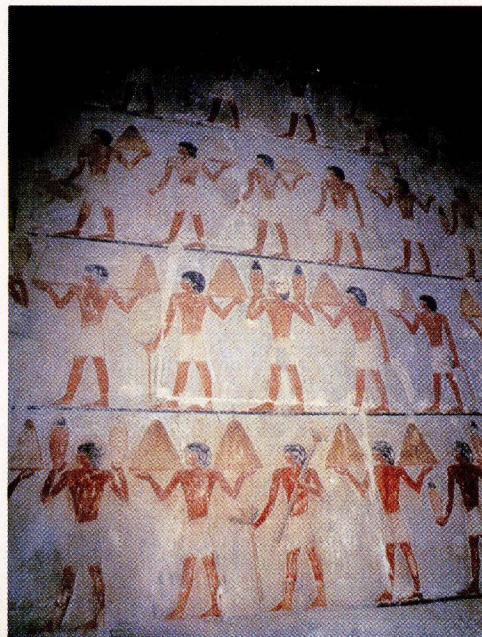
View of a reconstructed ancient Egyptian bakery, replicating methods used by the pyramid builders at Giza. Experiment conducted by the National Geographic and Mark Lehner.

We know that the ancient Egyptians knew fourteen varieties of bread, some of which are still popular in rural Egypt today, such as *shamsi* bread and *bataw*; these were prepared and distributed among the workers.

Ancient Egyptian women excelled at baking. Women from the more modest classes ran every aspect of their household affairs, and used bakeries in their own homes that did not differ much from the larger ones belonging to the wealthier households where servants did the baking.

Bread was and still is the staple of the Egyptian diet, both in life and the afterlife. It is interesting to note that the pharaohs named it *ankh* meaning “life,” while modern Egyptians use the word *aish* meaning “living.”

If we go back 4600 years ago to Khufu’s time and sit by a bakery abuzz with activity that is producing the bread for the workers that will be eaten after a long day of hard work, we conjure up images of groups of women winnowing to remove the chaff from the grain, and men joining in the threshing process before returning the grain to the women for sieving in large, round sieves for extra purity. During the milling process, the women turn the grain into flour in much the same way that bread is prepared today in rural Egypt.

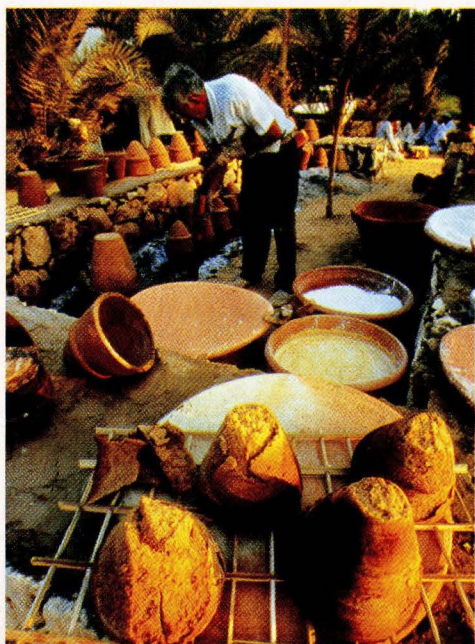


Various types of bread are depicted in Ti’s tomb of the Fifth Dynasty at Saqqara.

The flour that the ancient Egyptians used, however, was quite different from that used by the modern Egyptians in making their bread today. While the dough fermented, the hearth was preheated, and the ashes were brushed aside. Then the dough patties were placed in heavy baking vats covered by conical, clay lids to trap the heat and moisture. If the vats were placed directly onto the burning ashes, the high temperature would burn the bread. Precautions like this made the bread edible.



Two ceramic baking vats



The National Geographic's experiment to replicate the production of bread similar to that discovered at Lehner's site.

The American team also discovered a fish salting area where the remains of dried fish that resemble the *tilapia nilotica* (bolti fish), popular in rural Egypt today, were found. Another variety, known as Tubara in my hometown of Abeyda, Damietta, was also found salted in clay vessels in exactly the same way as *feseekh*. This was the only way to feed the workers, as salted fish remained edible for months.

Small barracks for workers were set up close to the bakeries in addition to the fish salting and metalworking areas, so that the bakers who baked bread day and night could meet the enormous demand.

The team also found a number of basins filled with parts of fibrous plants, fish bones, and seeds in a courtyard that extends north and west of the excavations.



A scene from Nefer-theith's tomb in the Upper Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders at Giza showing the preparation and storage of beer.

Chapter VII

A Day in the Lives of Khufu's Friends



Ongoing excavations still uncover new tombs and artifacts in the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders.

The cemeteries of the workers and artisans in addition to the workers' barracks and villages did not provide any written information concerning the workers' daily lives, their hopes, their fears, their problems, and their struggles. In spite of this, I would like to invite you to live through a typical day in their lives, by piecing together information from the archaeological remains in order to reconstruct what may have taken place during the building of the pyramids. I will close my eyes and travel back in time to relive those wonderful, legendary times that renew our pride in the ancient Egyptians, who ruled the ancient world with enlightenment and knowledge thousands of years ago.

The supervisors arose at dawn every day to make sure that the workers responsible for cutting and transporting the stones were awake.

At sunrise, they would all file out through the central doorway in the Wall of the Crow. One phyle (group of workers) would head towards the quarries, while another would go about setting the stones uniformly, using diorite and syenite tools. The phyle of workers who dragged the stones from the quarry to the site was known as “The Great One,” while those who lubricated the wooden rollers with water on which the stones were moved were named “Friends of Khufu.” Other phyles received and set the stones. Each phyle worked under an overseer in charge of one side of the pyramid. Suddenly, a worker cried out in pain; a great stone had fallen on his arm, and the doctor and his team of medical assistants rushed the worker to the emergency center where a wooden sling was made for his arm. The worker was ordered to rest in the barracks until the bones had healed. At the center, we also see a doctor amputating part of a worker’s leg.



Pyramids of Giza at sunset.

After hours of working under the blazing sun, every worker receives a one hour break in which he has a snack of bread, onions, garlic, and beer before resuming work and then breaking again for lunch. Finally, at sunset, he returns to the barracks. At the barracks, the workers drink beer and sing love songs before going to sleep early. Some workers leave the barracks and return to their villages, while others from the Delta and Upper Egypt take their place in an organized rotation. If we look around, there are workshops filled with artisans creating reliefs and carving hieroglyphic inscriptions, while the sculptors are busy in their own workshops carving beautiful statues.



The Pyramids of Giza built during the Fourth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom.

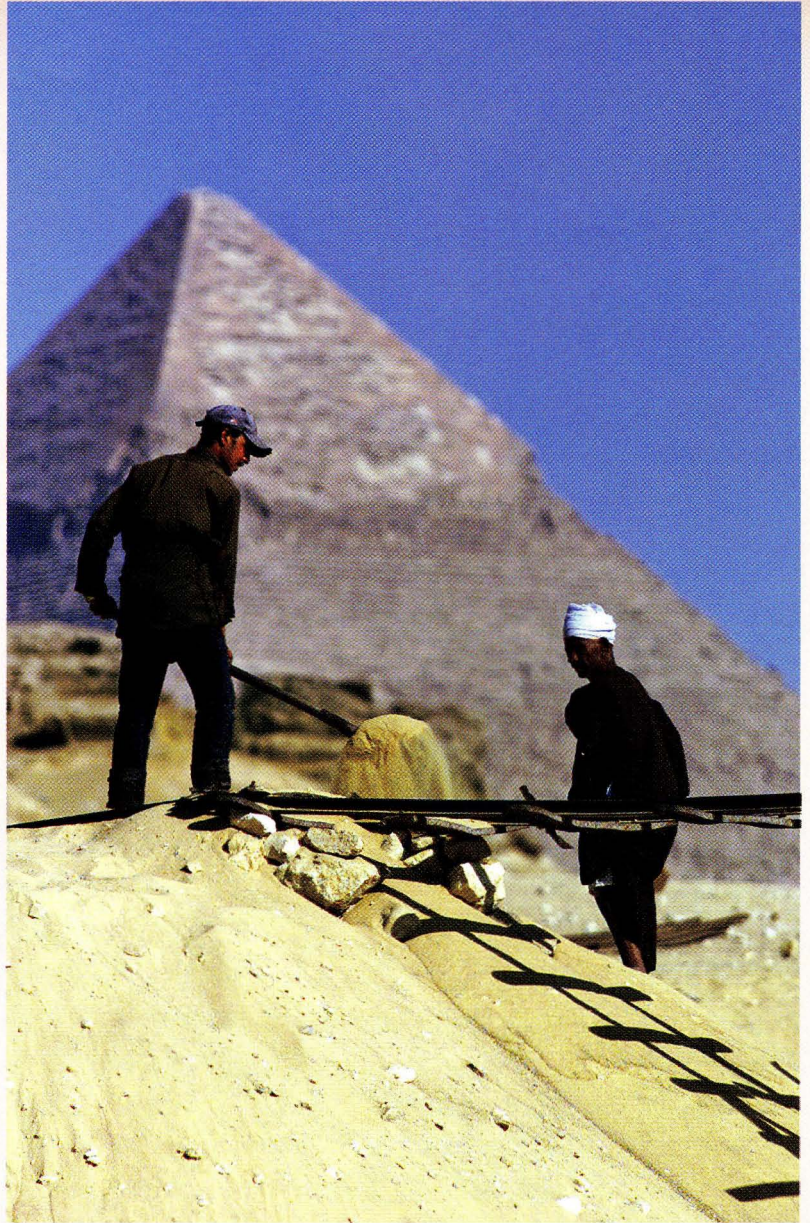
Our eyes still closed - we continue to relive the days of Egypt's glory. Some workers joke and others chant as they transport the stones, while others enjoy an evening beer. Their overseer arrives to tell them to turn in early, while the women weave and sew the workers' clothes.

We are still in awe of the coordination and systemization required to organize and administrate the building of the pyramids. This intricate system should be recorded in bold letters and taught at schools in order to educate this generation on how the ancient Egyptians managed over twenty thousand workers, all working on the greatest building project. It is important that every Egyptian child know how his forefathers accomplished this monumental feat. Children ought to be told the story of the builders of the pyramids, their lives, and their administrative abilities to show them the value of the Egyptian worker and peasant on whose shoulders this civilization was built, and how every "Overseer of the king's affairs," considered the architect/engineer of the king, organized the phyles, supervised the sites, and solved all the workers' daily problems as well as monitor the stone cutting, transportation, and setting process.



Ivory statue of King Khufu, the builder of the Great Pyramid at Giza. Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

The construction of these architectural marvels, without doubt, requires a strong, firm, and successful administrative system. The builders of the pyramids have occupied the minds of scientists, researchers, and adventurers everywhere, and now recent discoveries assert the true identities of the builders of this great civilization: none other than the ancient Egyptian who left behind remains of his body, clothes, and tools as the finest evidence of his greatness and power. Recording these processes and administrating the workers' affairs fell on the shoulders of the educated class, while the soldiers and officers were in charge of securing the quarries and mines that provided the stones for the project.



The discovery of the workers' tombs yielded information on how 80% of the ancient Egyptian population of workers and peasants labored.



Khufu's pyramid ("The Great Pyramid") at Giza.

If we are in awe of the ancient Egyptian genius that built the pyramids, we should be in even greater awe of the administrative system that ran this monumental project. The pyramids are often considered the pinnacle achievement of ancient Egyptian civilization. There are a number of carved and inscribed Egyptian artifacts and monuments, other than the pyramids, that display creativity and genius that the pen cannot do justice to. It is as the late thinker Gamal Hemdan said: "the modern Egyptian must be proud of what his forefathers achieved, for he is the great-grandchild of great-grandparents."

Glossary of Terms

Afterlife	The afterlife is the place to which the deceased traveled following death. In order to achieve this afterlife, the deceased had to pass the Weighing of the Heart ceremony, in which the deceased's heart was weighed against the feather of the goddess Maat, or truth.
Amulet	An amulet is a small charm that is worn to magically protect its wearer against evil. Certain amulets may possess specific qualities, such as strength or power, based on the type of amulet.
Antechamber	This room precedes a chamber.
Antiquities	These are artifacts from previous civilizations.
Archaeologist	This person is someone who excavates and studies artifacts.
Archaeology	It is a study of the past through artifacts left by different cultures. Information about the lives of the people is collected from the monuments, objects, and through excavations.
Bahariya Oasis	Located southwest of Cairo, the Bahariya Oasis is well-known for its Valley of the Golden Mummies, where hundreds of mummies decorated with gold were found intact. The cemetery dates to the Graeco-Roman period.
Book of the Dead	A funerary text, known as "spell for coming forth by day," was usually placed in the tomb on papyrus. Scenes from the over 200 spells or chapters were also painted on the walls of royal tombs. The text was intended to aid the deceased in the afterlife.
Burial Chamber	This chamber is where the body of the deceased was placed.
Cairo	This is presently the capital of Egypt.
Canopic jars	These jars contained the mummified organs of the deceased. In later periods, the four jars were put under the protection of the four sons of Horus who guarded specific organs: human-headed Imsety (liver), baboon-headed Hapy (lungs), jackal-headed Duamutef (stomach), and falcon-headed Qebehsenuef (intestines).
Causeway	A causeway is one of the architectural components of the royal pyramid complex, which connects the pyramid to the valley or lower temple. A "poor man's" version of a causeway are the ramps found in the Cemetery of the Pyramid Builders.
Cemetery	A cemetery is where the dead are buried. In ancient Egypt, many cemeteries are located on the west bank of the Nile, as the west was considered the "land of the dead."
Civilization	This term refers to a particular culture or advanced group of people.
Coffin	A coffin is a container used to hold the body of the deceased following mummification. It can be rectangular or anthropoid in shape (human-shaped).
Culture	A culture is defined by an established set of ideas, customs, and traditions that identify a specific group of people.
Curse	A curse is a spell that is intended to do harm to someone.
Delta	This term identifies an area of Egypt located in the north of the country. The Delta is fan-shaped, and is a fertile region of Egypt.
Egyptologist	This person is someone who studies ancient Egypt.
Excavations	Fieldwork is conducted by an archaeologist that involves digging in the ground for traces of artifacts.
False door	The false door is an architectural feature of tombs that is usually located on the west wall of the offering chamber. It consists of a rectangular piece of stone that is carved in imitation of a door. At the top is the false door stela which usually shows the deceased seated at an offering table. It is believed that the dead could communicate and receive offerings from the living through this door.
Funerary temple	This temple was decorated with reliefs and statuary of the king, and was intended to commemorate the deceased king through rituals performed by priests.
Giza	A site close to Cairo where the famous pyramids of Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure were constructed. It is also the location of the Great Sphinx.

Hieroglyphics	This system of writing was used by the ancient Egyptians, and consisted of symbols based on recognizable objects.
Inscriptions	Inscriptions are texts that use a system of writing. In ancient Egypt, these texts may include the name and titles of the deceased, offering formulas, or biographies. Inscriptions can occur on monuments or other types of surfaces.
Memphis	This was the capital of Egypt during pharaonic times, and is now known as Mit Rahina.
Middle Kingdom	This is a period of strong, centralized government. In the Eleventh Dynasty, Mentuhotep II reunified the country after a period of political weakness. The Middle Kingdom ranges from the mid-Eleventh through the Fourteenth Dynasties (c. 2061-1665 BC).
Mummification	The process of mummification was intended to preserve the body of the deceased in the afterlife. During this process, the brain and organs were removed, and the body was packed in natron, a naturally occurring compound, which would dry out the body. The natron was then removed, and the body was packed with linen. Finally, the body was thoroughly bandaged in linen.
New Kingdom	An important period in ancient Egyptian history in which Egypt's rule extended over much of the ancient Near East. This period includes the Eighteenth through Twentieth Dynasties (c. 1569-1081 BC). The famous King Tutankhamun of the Eighteenth Dynasty reigned from c. 1355-1346 BC.
Old Kingdom	An early period in ancient Egyptian history that is well-known for the construction of royal pyramid complexes, such as at Giza. This period includes the Fourth through Sixth Dynasties (c. 2687-2191 BC).
Papyrus	This plant, which grew primarily in the Delta region, was used for a variety of purposes. Papyrus was used as a writing material. Symbolically, it represented Lower Egypt.
Primordial Mound	This mound arose during the process of creation from the waters of Nun. Its shape influenced subsequent architectural forms. The shape of the pyramids may have derived from the primordial mound.
Priest	This person was involved in the rituals associated with the deceased king, individual, or god. These rituals were performed in temples and tombs, and were usually associated with statues of the deceased. Priests are usually depicted with shaven heads and sometimes wear leopard skins.
Pyramid	This architectural form was used for the burials of kings, primarily during the Old and Middle Kingdoms. The pyramidal shape may derive from the primordial or primeval mound, which was associated with creation and resurrection.
Rites	A rite is any ritual activity that is performed on the behalf of the deceased or a god.
Sanctuary	The sanctuary is usually the chamber where the god's statue is located.
Saqqara	This important site, located west of Memphis, is the location of pyramid complexes and tombs that range in date from the Early Dynastic period through the Graeco-Roman period.
Temple	A temple is a structure that was used for the worship of a deceased king or god.
Thebes	Located in southern or Upper Egypt, Thebes is the Greek name of the city now known as Luxor. In pharaonic times, this city was known as Waset. Thebes with its great temple of Amun became the administrative and religious center during the New Kingdom. There are many temples and tombs, such as the Valley of the Kings, located on the west bank.
Tomb	This architectural structure houses the body of the deceased as well as necessary items for the afterlife. A tomb can take many forms, including a <i>mastaba</i> (Arabic for bench) which has a rectangular superstructure with burial shafts, or it can be rock-cut. The focus of the tomb is the false door, usually located on the west wall of the offering chamber.
Ushabti	Also known as shabti, shawabti, or ushebti, this funerary figurine was included in the burial of the deceased. The function of these figurines was to perform any work on the deceased's behalf in the afterlife. Many ushabtis are decorated with a chapter from the Book of the Dead. By the New Kingdom, there could be as many as 365 figurines, one for every day of the year, in addition to 36 overseers.
Valley of the Kings	Located on the west bank of Luxor, the Valley of the Kings is a royal necropolis for the kings of Egypt. There are 62 tombs in the cemetery, which range in date from the Eighteenth through Twentieth Dynasties of the New Kingdom. The most well-known tomb in the valley belongs to Tutankhamun (KV 62).





Zahi Hawass is one of the most famous Egyptologists around the world. He made a lot of adventures in the realm of the pharaohs which is full of mysteries & magic. He examined the mummy of the Golden king "Tut" by the CT-Scan, as he discovered the Valley of the Golden mummies at the Bahareya Oasis. He also discovered the tombs of the Pyramid builders at Giza. His last adventure was discovering the secrets of the Great Pyramid as from 3 years ago when we all followed the TV live show when the robot entered the Great Pyramid to reveal the secrets beyond the secret door, as he found another two doors. Nowadays, Hawass is preparing to send another robot to reveal the mystery of the Great Pyramid.

Hawass was awarded by many international awards as he was chosen within the most 100 effective characters in the world. He also wrote many books with different languages.

If you want to know new secrets about the pharaohs, you can enter the children Fan Club at his website:

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