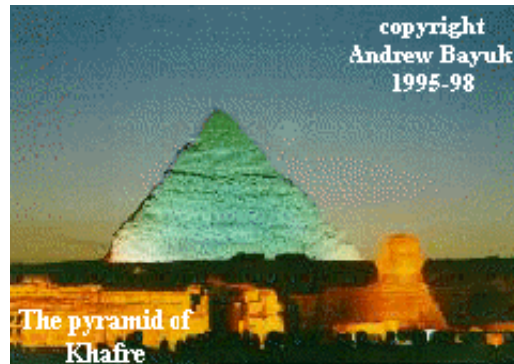


Giza



Egypt is known for its fascinating history. Everyone is probably familiar with the great pyramids. After all, they are the only "Wonder of the World" that is reasonably intact today. These monumental pyramids exist in a place known as Giza. Giza is located in Lower Egypt (which is actually northern Egypt) near the Nile River. It is next to the present-day capital city of Cairo

The history of Giza goes back to over 5,000 years ago. During the time in which the pharaohs lived, they built a fascinating funerary complex that included various temples and the three great pyramids. For many centuries, it was not known that the pyramids were the tombs of early Egyptian pharaohs. An example of one of the many theories were that the pyramids were storage places for grain during droughts and famine! Little did they know that these great pyramids were tombs built for three rulers: Menkaure, Khafre, and Khufu. These three rulers were of the 4th dynasty, (approximately 2601-2515 BCE



The Great Pyramid of Giza is the oldest and largest pyramid at the site. This pyramid was probably built by the cousin of Khufu, named Hemiunu. The Great Pyramid of Khufu covers 13 acres at its base and is approximately 137 meters (450 feet) in height. It was originally cased with polished limestone, creating a smooth exterior. Over the years, the smooth limestone was looted and used in other parts of the world. The pyramid of Khafre is slightly smaller than Khufu. Some of the original limestone casing is still visible at the top of this pyramid. Menkaure's pyramid is smaller than the other two. The pyramids were built with huge red granite blocks that weighed about 2 ½ tons. The workers probably transported these blocks with small logs as rollers or by pouring water on the sand to create a slippery surface over which they could drag the blocks on sled-like structures. How they were raised is still a mystery. It involved mathematical calculations that we still cannot figure out! The entire funerary complex also has symbolic astronomical calculations in how the pyramids

are oriented. This reflects the importance for the Ancient Egyptians to keep these
. (three kings "immortal." (Click here for Kufu's funerary boat

The designers of the pyramids tried to make sure that the king and the tomb "home" were never disturbed. During this time, it was believed the soul of the deceased always lingered. For example, offerings of food and beverage by family members were brought to the deceased. In the Great Pyramid of Khufu, the builders (who were slaves) placed his tomb chamber in the heart of the pyramid. A long, narrow, steeply rising passageway led to this tomb chamber. There were three false passageways, which were probably meant to fool looters or any unwelcome visitors. Unfortunately, despite the builders' precautions, looters had managed to break in to the tomb chamber. In it were extravagant funeral treasures, including works in gold, gems, and
.stone

The Giza plateau also includes the Great Sphinx. To the Ancient Egyptians, the sphinx was a lion, which was a guardian to the sacred monuments. The lion had the head of a pharaoh who wore the royal headdress. Today his nose is
.missing

All the pyramids can be seen from thirty miles from Giza itself. The site is truly spectacular. The walls are covered in fabulously incised hieroglyphics. From the outside, if you are standing right next to the pyramid, you will not be able to see the top. It is a pity to see that the Great Pyramids are in danger because of its neighbor, the ever-growing metropolitan city of Cairo. The pollution is causing the pyramids and the Great Sphinx to slowly
.deteriorate



Today, if you visit Giza, you will find tons of other tourists in the area. You can even take a ride on a horse or camel around the Giza desert. The site of Sakkara is right next to Giza. Sometimes the tour guide will show you both sites. Giza today is known for its infamous "Sound and Light Show", which uses narration, and different colored
.lights similar to a play. The show depicts the history of the characters

Reference

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