Who Built the Pyramids?

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/pyramid/explore/builders.html>

It is traditionally believed that the labor force that built Khufu totalled more than 100,000 people. But this figure was an educated guess, based on hearsay. Modern Egyptologists believe the real number is closer to 20,000.

Modern Theories by:

MARK LEHNER, Archaeologist, University of Chicago, and Harvard Semitic Museum

ZAHI HAWASS, Director General of Giza:

It is believed that Giza housed a skeleton crew of workers who worked all year round. But during the late summer and early autumn months, during the annual flooding of the fields with water from the annual inundation of the Nile flooded the fields, a large labor force would appear at Giza to put in time on the pyramids. These farmers and local villagers gathered at Giza to work for their god kings, to build their monuments to the hereafter. This would ensure their own afterlife and would also benefit the future and prosperity of Egypt as a whole. They may well have been willing workers, a labor force working for ample rations, for the benefit of man, king, and country.

**Why the “New Age Theories” don’t hold up:**

LEHNER: First went to Egypt in 1972 and ended up living there 13 years. He was thinking of Atlantis, Chariots of the gods etc. BUT everything he saw, day by day, year by year, indicated that real ancient people made the pyramids.

340 stones a day, would be needed to build Khufu Pyramid in 20 years. Using modern cutting tools it would take 400 to 500 men to do it by hand.

Modern experiments, using similar technology and methods available to Egypt found that 12 men could pull a 1.5 ton block on a slick surface from the local quarry to the pyramid easily. In 21 days, 12 men in bare feet, living out in the eastern desert, opened a new quarry and in 21 days they quarried 186 stones. Only modern tools were iron winch and cable. If they quarried 186 stones in 21 days, then it would require.

Modern researchers think that if you give great leeway for the iron tools, all 340 stones could have been quarried in a day by something like 1,200 men. And that's quarried locally at Giza. You see most of the stone is local stone.

Modern experiments indicate that 1200 men would be needed in the quarry and 2000 would be needed delivering stones to the pyramid. A total of 5000 would be needed to get the stone, transport it and set it.

These estimates were backed up by modern construction experts, who after being advised by Egyptologists what the ancients had to work with, estimated that 4 to 5,000 men could build the Great Pyramid within a 20 to 40 year period. And they have very specific calculations on every single aspect, from the gravel, for the ramps, to baking the bread. The best researchers and construction engineers do not opt for lost civilizations, extraterrestrials, or hidden technologies. No, they say it's a very impressive job, extraordinary for the people who lived then and there, but it could be done. They are human monuments.

**Who built the Pyramids?**

Graffiti on the pyramids shows that work gangs were not slaves and in some cases were competing against each other with insults

And in the Old Kingdom in the time of the Pyramids of Giza, the gangs were named after kings. So for example, we have a name, compounded with the name of Menkaure, and it seems to translate 'the drunks or the drunkards of Menkaure.' There's one that's well attested, actually in the relieving chambers above the Great Pyramid, the Friends of Khufu gang, the Drunks of Menkaura gang, and then you have the green phyles and then the powerful ones. None of this sounds like slavery, does it?

The modern evidence is that the work crews would be rotated in and out from different villages in Egypt. Almost everyone owed a labour tax to the Pharaoh.

Working on the Pyramids would make the image of the Pharaoh even stronger to the workers. They would see these stupendous, gigantic things thrusting up to the sky, polished white limestone, blazing in the sunshine. They would see thousands of people for the first time in their life. When the workers would be rotated back home they would not be the same.

They have seen the central accomplishment of the first nation state in history, the pyramids, the centralization, this organization. **And so they must have been powerful socializing forces.**

ZAHI HAWASS, Director General of Giza:

After excavating local living centres and he believes that the total number of permanent and temporary workers was closer to 36000. 600 local graves were found in the early 1990s showing the workers were local Egyptians.

They found that the age of death for those workmen were from 30 to 35. They died from accidents, parasitic diseases and cancer for the most part.