

MEXICO'S PYRAMID OF THE MOON



Teotihuacán,
Mexico

▲ Teotihuacán was one of the first urban centers in the Americas.

1 A Mysterious City

Teotihuacán (tay-o-tee-hwah-KAHN) was once one of the world's most important cities, but many things about it are still unknown today. How did the people live, and why did they abandon their city? For years, answers to some of these questions have been buried in the Pyramid of the Moon. Now, findings in this ancient **structure** are helping archeologists learn more about Teotihuacán's people and their culture.

10 Clues in the Pyramid

Until recently, many **experts** thought Teotihuacán was a peaceful society, mostly ruled by gentle and **wise** leaders. But recent findings in the Pyramid of the Moon **indicate** something else. Archeologists discovered a number of headless bodies. Most were foreigners. Many had their hands tied and were buried alive, along with animals, weapons,¹ and other objects of power. **Apparently** the people and objects found inside the pyramid were **offerings** to the gods.



▲ An archeologist working inside the pyramid unearths human bones—evidence of ancient sacrifice.

20 However, the findings in the pyramid are difficult to **interpret**. “[These findings] are like sentences,” says archeologist Leonardo Lopez Lujan, “but we don't have all the words . . . so they're hard to read.” Despite these problems, several archeologists have **concluded** this: Teotihuacán was not a society **governed** by peaceful rulers. In reality, **officials** used human sacrifice,² says archeologist Saburo Sugiyama, “to control the people.” The city probably also had a powerful army.³

The Search Goes On

30 Who were the city's leaders? Scientists don't know. They have not found a king buried in the pyramid or any statues of Teotihuacán's rulers. But archeologists continue to search for them. They hope to learn more about the pyramid's creators and one of the world's most powerful ancient cities.

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¹ A **weapon** is an object used to kill others, like a gun or a knife.

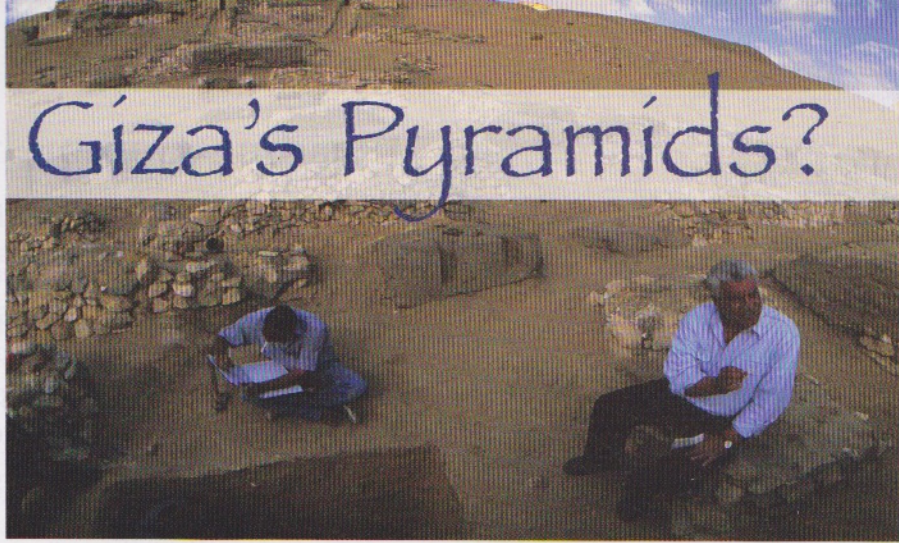
² **Human sacrifice** is the killing of a person as an offering to a god.

³ An **army** is a group of people who fight in a war.

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, we did not know for sure. But
5 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 builders' 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.



▲ To build the pyramids, teams of workers carried huge stone blocks up a long ramp.

Life for these workers was hard. "We can see that in their skeletons," says Azza Mohamed Sarry El-Din, a scientist
25 studying bodies found in the cemetery. The bones show signs 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
30 tougher: male workers lived to age 40–45, but women to only 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.