

Just how were the Egyptian Pyramids actually built?

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Despite our modern technology and the research of our brilliant modern minds, there are still several great unsolved mysteries in the world.

The KFC recipe, the Loch Ness Monster, and the Egyptian pyramids of Giza all rank near the top, but the pyramids definitely take the biscuit as the biggest mystery of them all.



The Egyptian pyramids of Giza are some of the most impressive manmade structures in history, hands down. It's estimated that they were built over 4,500 years ago with over 2 million stones and took 20 to 30 years to make.

But how were the Egyptian Pyramids built exactly? It's still a secret. There is no evidence, no ancient plans and certainly no shortage of conspiracy theories.

But that doesn't stop us from donning our historian hats and doing some digging...

After watching countless YouTube videos and reading what feels like a million blogs, we've discovered that there are two major theories floating around – the Ramp Theory, and the Water Shaft Theory. So what's the difference?

The Ramp Theory

The Ramp Theory (RT) is probably the most generally accepted and has the most evidence to back it up.

In a nutshell, it discusses that the pyramids were made with sheer man power and tens of thousands of workers. Stones were supposedly pulled across the desert with ropes and sleds, and it's only recently that the RT was updated to include that they would also wet the sand to reduce friction. The wet sand made the stones a lot easier to drag and this practice can actually be seen in some ancient wall paintings.

Once the stones were dragged across the desert, it's believed that one of a series of ramp options were erected to drag the stones to the top as they built upwards. With sand, workers created either a straight ramp up one side, a spiralling ramp that wrapped around the pyramid or a combination of the two. Levers were also supposedly used once a significant height was reached and ramps were no longer feasible.



This theory is supported by the fact that sleds are well documented in ancient wall paintings, as are images of giant statues being pulled by hundreds of men. These ramps would have however been very time-consuming to construct.

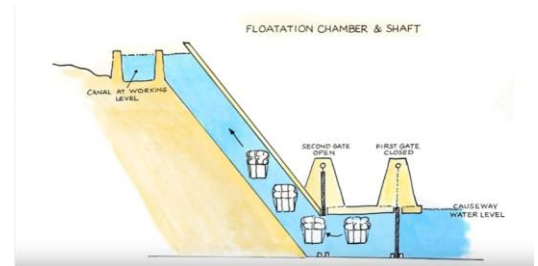
The Water Shaft Theory

The Water Shaft Theory (WST) differs from the Ramp Theory at most points, starting with how the stones were transported. While the RT discusses dragging stones across the desert, the WST outlines that special canals were constructed all the way to the build sites, allowing the stones to float all the way there.

Floats were supposedly made of cedar wood or inflated animal skins wrapped in papyrus, and when attached to the stones would allow them to be pulled from the shore. The canals lead to a moat that went all the way around the build site perimeter, allowing blocks to be floated to the side where they were needed.

Four water pipelines were then supposedly used to float the blocks uphill and were extended as the pyramid grew. A series of gates controlled how the blocks moved upward from the moat to the top, and a pool of water on the top of the build site allowed for further floating and positioning without any dragging or real heavy lifting.

In this theory, these canals and water elevators allowed the stones to be moved pretty easily. Although there is no concrete documented evidence of this theory, traces of water throughout the structure and imperfections along the middle of all four sides have been identified to support the WST.



Making the blocks

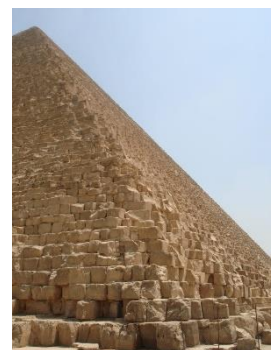
There's no real consensus on how the blocks were made either, and the WST has its own theory on block creation.

Copper chisels or saws were used to cut the limestone, but the creation of precise cuts and angles without modern technology could have been done in a few ways. Some (WST supporters) say Egyptians used the surface of the water as a level and worked on the stone underwater, making it easier to manipulate. Others cite the use of simple tools such as wooden levels, paint and string to measure the angles and detect spots that weren't level.

Other Theories

Although the above are the most widely accepted theories, there are some intriguing alternatives floating around as well. Extraterrestrials, long lost technologies, time travel, they go on and on.

Regardless of what you believe, there's no arguing that the Egyptian pyramids are ridiculously impressive for the time period and that we'll probably never get a concrete answer as to how they were built. We can all agree that it took an insane amount of intelligence and manpower and that we're so fortunate to have them still standing after all these years.



For now, we'll continue to listen to the newest theories, marvel over the pyramids themselves and keep them on the top of our travel bucket lists indefinitely.