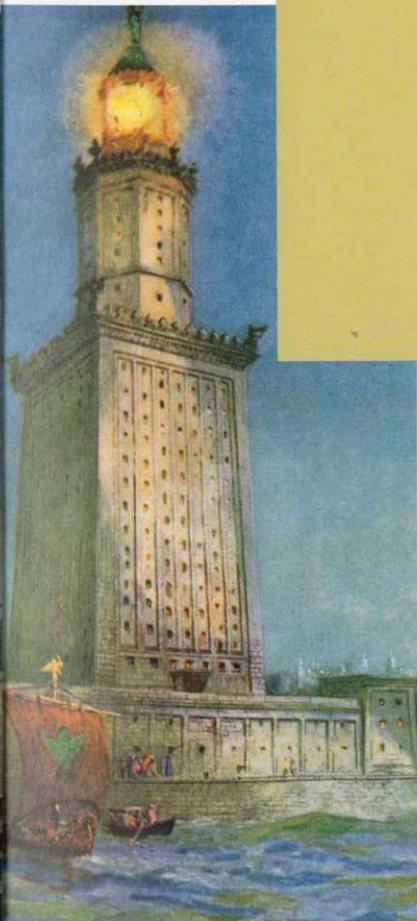


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Introduction



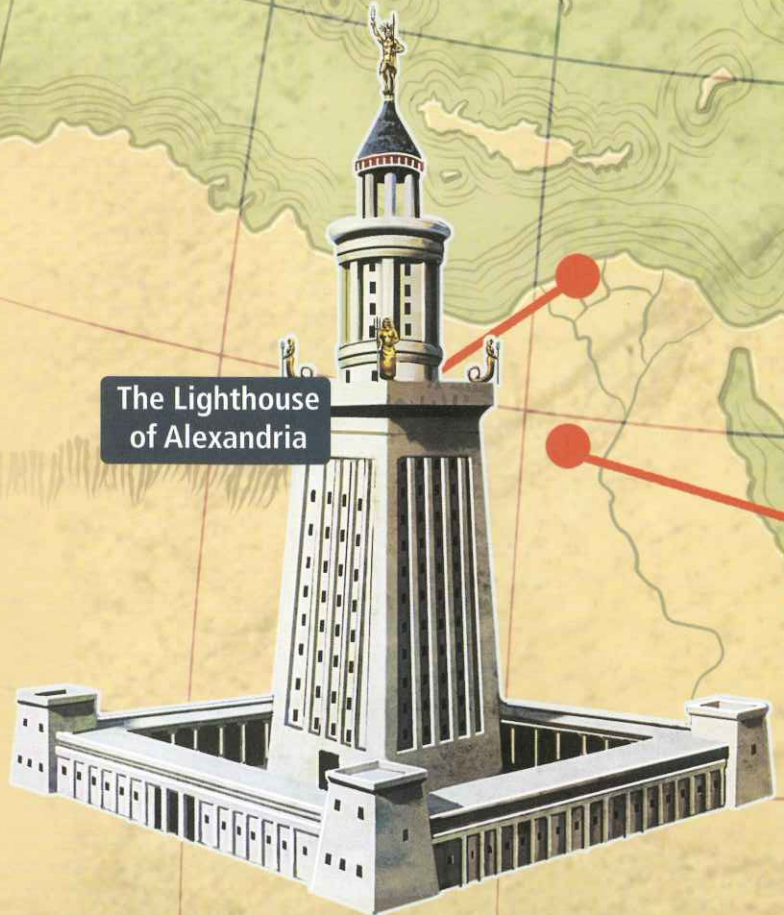
The Statue of Zeus



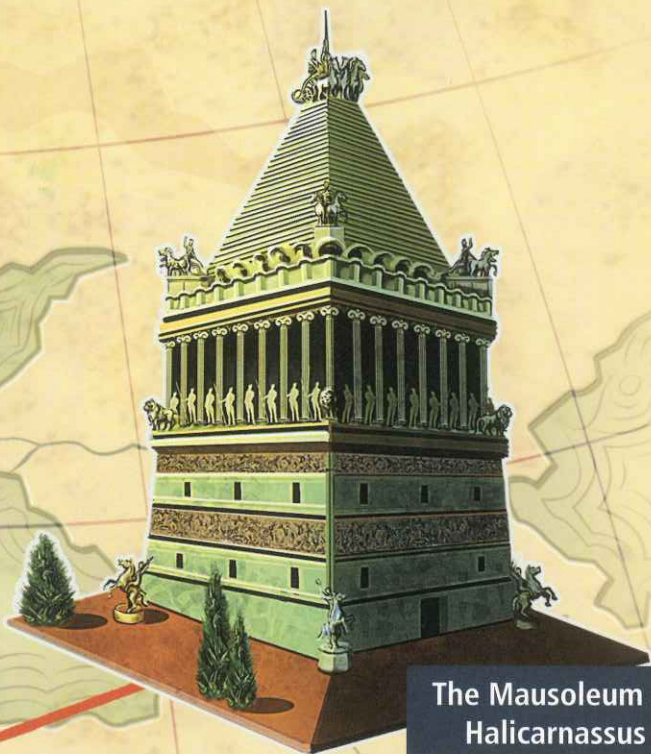
The Temple of Artemis

A first list

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World are monuments which represent the most wondrous examples of human achievement in art, architecture, and engineering. They were all located around the Mediterranean and they were all huge, impressive, and beautiful, inspiring awe and admiration. The first list of these monuments first appears about 2000 years ago in a short poem by Antipatrus, a Greek poet. Today we call them the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and sadly all but one of them can now only be found in history books.

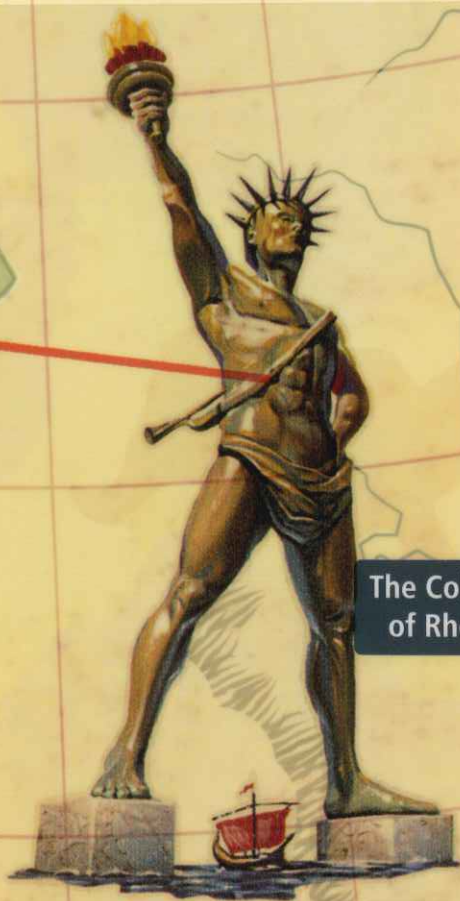


The Lighthouse of Alexandria



The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus

The Great Pyramid in Egypt is the only wonder that survived to the present day. All the others, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Temple of Artemis, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes and the Lighthouse of Alexandria, were destroyed by earthquakes or fire and have disappeared or are in ruins.



The Colossus of Rhodes



The Hanging Gardens of Babylon



The Great Pyramid of Giza

Originally, the list was called the Seven Sights of the World and so it was a kind of ancient travel guide.

The Great Pyramid of Giza

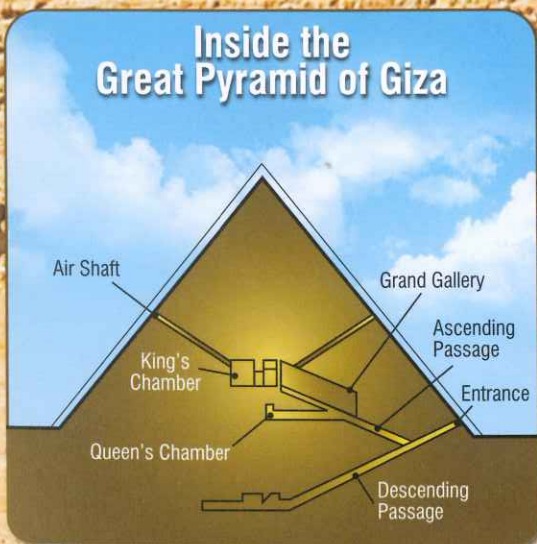
In the suburbs of Cairo, one of the world's most famous sights rises from the desert. The large stone structure towers over its surroundings. It is, after all, 450 feet tall and made up of over 2.3 million individual blocks of stone. Researchers and historians are still puzzled about this enormous masterpiece of ancient engineering. It is the Great Pyramid of Giza, completed around 2560 BCE. Throughout the ages, this pyramid has inspired awe and curiosity in all who have seen it.

The Great Pyramid is the only ancient wonder that time and outside forces did not destroy. Despite this fact, questions about its construction and purpose still do not have definitive answers.



The Great Pyramid we see today looks nothing like it would have when it was first built over 4,500 years ago. It was about 480 feet tall and made of limestone. The outside of the pyramid was covered with a layer of smooth, polished, white limestone, and at the top of the pyramid was a capstone which may have been gold. Four smaller pyramids stood around the base of the pyramid, three of which still remain.

Inside the Great Pyramid of Giza

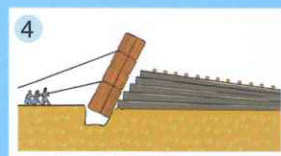
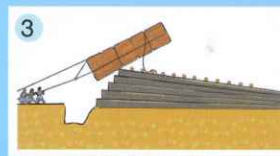
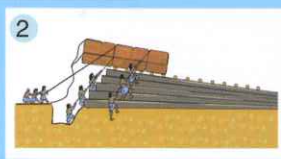
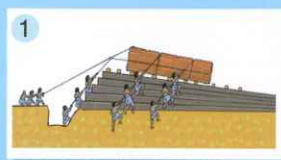


The Great Pyramid was the tallest man-made structure on Earth for thousands of years.

Building the Pyramid

The Great Pyramid was built by the Pharaoh Khufu (King Cheops in Greek) as his tomb in 2560 BCE. The ancient Egyptians were able to move and stack the pyramid's blocks almost perfectly. The average weight of each block is 2.5 tons, which is more than a white rhinoceros weighs. The largest blocks weighed up to nine tons. The workers cut blocks from quarries from as far as 500 miles away. It is likely that they built large inclined ramps to put the blocks in place. They placed the blocks on sleds and wet the ramps. This made it easier to move the blocks. Using ropes made from papyrus twine, they pulled the blocks upward and put them in place. At the top, the workers probably used levers, which allowed them to lift the blocks. It probably took them 10-20 years to complete with a workforce of 14,000-40,000 workers.

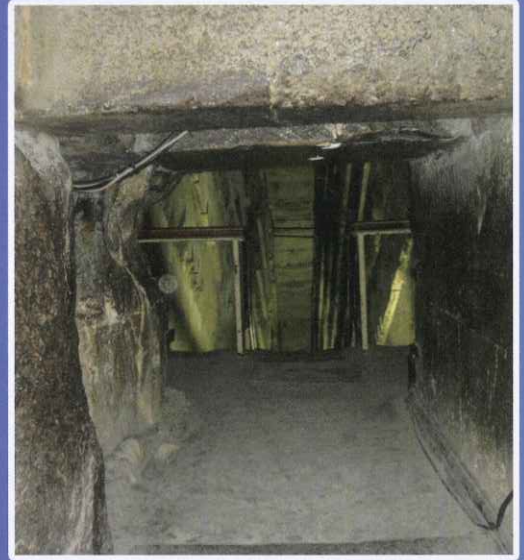
The interior of the pyramid had long narrow passageways; some of them went up, and others went down. They led to three chambers deep within the pyramid. One of them was the King's Chamber, and another was called the Queen's Chamber.



The Missing Treasure

In Ancient Egypt, modern day Cairo was called Memphis and it was the capital city of the Egyptian pharaohs. The pharaohs used Giza as the Royal Necropolis or “city of the dead”. This was where they built tombs to bury the pharaoh kings and queens of Egypt. The Egyptians believed that the pharaohs were living gods and that after they died, they would live in the afterlife with the other gods. They were buried in tombs, some above ground like the pyramids and others below ground. In the tombs were all the possessions that they might need in the afterlife.

Khufu’s treasure and body have never been found. When the tomb was raided in 820 CE by the Arabs, they found nothing. The sarcophagus, in which dead bodies were placed, in the King’s Chamber, was empty. In addition, there were no personal belongings or signs of how thieves may have got in and out of the pyramid. Archeologists presume that the pyramid may have been robbed in ancient times. However, some historians suggest that King Khufu and his architects may have outsmarted modern archeologists, and his tomb and his treasure may still lie somewhere in or below the pyramid.



To prevent thieves from robbing the tombs, Egyptian architects built passageways that could be blocked with impassable granite blocks, created secret hidden rooms, and made decoy chambers.