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Movie Script.

Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure. Three great Egyptian pharaohs whose legacies stem from their time ruling over their great empire within Egypt during the era of the Old Kingdom. But for these great leaders, death was the ultimate chance to leave a lasting monument to their legacy. From this desire to usher themselves into death with grandeur and luxury, they left behind them what is now one of the seven wonders of the world: The Great Pyramids. Alongside the pyramids is the giant statue of the sphinx, missing part of its face but an imposing figure nonetheless. Let's now look into the history behind these great monuments.

To fully understand the majesty of these pyramids, one must understand the religious traditions and cultural climate of Egypt during the era of the Old Kingdom. The Old Kingdom is defined as the third millennium BCE when civilization along the lower Nile Valley was at an all time high.

At the zenith of the Egyptian hierarchy during the period of the Old Kingdom was the pharaoh, the divine King. The power of the pharaoh was derived from the pharaoh's descendance from the most mighty of the Egyptian gods, Ra: the King of all the gods and the sun. Egyptian religion was a part of every aspect of Egyptian life. There were gods that they prayed to that represented every aspect of their life as well: the river, farming, and the weather, as a few examples. Egyptians thought of death much differently than we do today: to them, death was the next stage of their existence. Osiris was known as the god of the afterlife, and when an Egyptian died, it was known that they would travel to the afterlife and their heart would be weighed on a scale against Ma'at, the Egyptian concept of truth and justice. If their heart proved

true, they would be able to continue on to an afterlife in the lush underworld with Osiris.

However, it was understood that Egyptian royalty would make the daily travels of the sun with the Sun-King Ra in his boat day after day, symbolizing their high status and their relation to the god. From this tradition, and the traditional beliefs that Egyptians held of the afterlife, we can achieve a better understanding of their funerary traditions. Because although at first sight, the pyramids may just seem like giant monuments to the gods, they were actually tombs where the Egyptian Pharaohs would be laid to rest with preparations for their afterlife.

The largest of the three pyramids is known as the Great Pyramid, the one created by the pharaoh Khufu. Khufu ruled Egypt from 2589-2566 BCE. As a ruler, Khufu is difficult to characterize, for the records from his reign are poorly preserved, and the only primary source of his reign comes from his pyramid at Giza. Later documents written by Greek writers characterize Khufu as a poor ruler and cast him in a negative light, by contrast, the documents written about Khufu including his obituary from his lifetime paint him as a wise and fair ruler, leading to historians having a very muddled view of the Emperor Khufu. The second pyramid was created during the fourth dynasty of the Old Kingdom, and was created as a funerary temple for the Pharaoh Khafre. There are few historical accounts about Khafre, but the most widely accepted one that exists characterizes him as a cruel, heretic leader. The Pyramid of Menkaure was also created during the fourth dynasty during the period of the Old Kingdom, for the Pharaoh Menkaure. Menkaure succeeded Khafre, and was considered a just and pious king, a stark contrast from his father before him.

The creation of the pyramids is still surrounded in mystery, historians disagree over how many workers would have been needed to build it; some argue that there were not enough workers and not enough hours in the day for them to have ever been completed. Modern architects have

discovered that the Great Pyramids are all constructed with near-perfect right angles, an incredible fact considering the time period in which they were constructed. Not only that, the Great Pyramid of Khufu is lined up within three-sixtieths of a degree with true magnetic north south. How the Egyptians would have understood and learned of this concept is still unknown, and widely debated. Another interesting aspect of the pyramids is that the three pyramids line up exactly with the three stars that make up Orion's belt, showing an extremely advanced knowledge of astronomy. We may never truly know how the pyramids were constructed.

Now I shall move on to the pyramid's shape. The reason for the pyramid shape is that it mimics sun rays, a tribute to the god Ra. Some earlier pyramids were constructed as though made of steps, meant to symbolize that the Pharaoh could walk up the steps to the sun.

I shall now examine the contents of the pyramids. Within the pyramids were labyrinth-like structures that were meant to confuse and obstruct those who were attempting to come and loot the pyramids. Within the inner chambers contained the sarcophagi of the pharaohs. Not only that, but there were also elements from their lifetimes that they would take with them into the afterlife because they were buried with them. Oftentimes, Egyptians would have their servants or beloved pets killed at the same time as them in order to have them mummified so that they could bring them to the afterlife. In Khufu's pyramid, there was a giant boat placed within the tomb, meant for Khufu's use in the afterlife. Riches abound within the tombs and adorned the sarcophagi of the pharaohs; the pyramids were meant to be resting places worthy of the kings.

The Great Sphinx is also at the site of the Great Pyramids, though that name can be considered a bit of a misnomer. A sphinx is a Greek mythological creature with the body of a lion, wings of

an eagle, and the face of a woman. Because this name was ascribed to the Sphinx at a later date, it is not entirely accurate. The Great Sphinx, and all other Egyptian sphinxes do not have wings, and they were mostly male faces. The Great Sphinx is thought to have the face of Khafre; the nose and part of the chin are broken off of the Sphinx's face, but archaeologists have been able to determine that the face was a pharaoh's because the chin likely held the beard that signified a pharaoh in Egyptian symbology. In Arabic, the Sphinx is referred to as "The Terrifying One," and it is unknown what the the ancient egyptians referred to it as, because it does not show up in any Egyptian writings. The Sphinx is a truly imposing figure, representing the power of the Pharaoh.

The Great Pyramids are one of the seven wonders of the world, and rightly so. Their mysterious origin only adds to their mystique, and remains one of the most fascinating and beautiful structures in the world.