The Great Pyramids of Egypt – Tombs or Primarily a Socio-Economic Development Project?

The Great Pyramids of Giza have long been recognized as the tombs of pharaohs with deep religious significance. Egyptologists acknowledge that their construction also had an impact on the economic and social life of the state; however, these aspects are generally considered secondary to the primary religious purpose.

Meanwhile, Polish economist and entrepreneur **Jacek Krzysztoń** proposes a reversal of this hierarchy. According to his theory, presented in the book *Egyptian Pyramids: Big Tombs or Big Business?*, it was precisely the process of building the pyramids—long-term, costly, and engaging the entire economy—that constituted the actual goal of the undertaking. The pyramid functioned as a tool for economic development and social integration, while the tomb served as a kind of pretext, legitimizing this collective effort in the eyes of society. This symbolic function was an indispensable part of the broader strategy—without it, the pyramid projects could not have succeeded.

These conclusions are also presented in the documentary film *The Pyramids – Tools of Power* (available on YouTube), which portrays the pyramids as state-driven megaprojects—constructed not only for eternity, but above all for the here and now.

Organization of Labor and Logistics

Archaeological discoveries—including the famous diaries of Inspector Merer—confirm the extraordinary logistical operations behind the construction of the pyramids. Merer was a foreman of a group of about 200 workers who, for several months, transported massive stone blocks across Egypt to Giza. His diaries describe the daily work: sailing barges loaded with limestone, repeating routes from southern Tura to the construction site, and the administrative procedures for weighing and recording materials.

This evidence suggests that the scale and organization of the project were comparable to modern-day engineering efforts—similar to the construction of highways, bridges, or canals—carried out under national infrastructure programs.

Redistribution of Resources and Social Integration

The construction of the pyramids required the mobilization and coordination of resources from across all of Egypt. Building materials came from distant regions: limestone from Tura, basalt from Fayum, granite from Aswan, and even copper from the Sinai Peninsula. To streamline transport, special canals and river ports were created around Giza, enabling efficient delivery of materials by water.

It is worth emphasizing that the construction process also served a sociological purpose—it was a monumental collective endeavor that brought together people from different regions and social classes. Participation in such a vast and symbolic project provided a sense of

purpose, pride, and community. From the perspective of labor psychology, this phenomenon can be compared to the so-called **Hawthorne Effect**—increased productivity resulting from engagement and being observed while working toward a shared goal.

Administration, Finance, and State Management of the Economy

Ancient papyri from the time of Pharaoh Khufu—especially the diaries of Inspector Merer—contain not only transportation records but also administrative data, including inventories of food deliveries, wages, and redistribution of goods. These documents reveal that the state maintained detailed accounts of expenses and revenues collected from various regions of the country (known as nomes), using a form of commodity-based currency, most often measured in units of grain.

These records indicate the existence of an efficient financial system that enabled the centralized management of the national economy. Supply lists included quantities of sheep, fish, and vegetables allocated to the workers, along with precise rations assigned to specific tasks and individuals. The laborers were not only a workforce, but also beneficiaries of state-led redistribution policies—helping foster social cohesion and mitigating unrest during off-season periods such as post-harvest months.

Analogous Concepts in Modern Times

From an economic perspective, the pyramid projects invite comparison with state-driven development strategies in modern history. For example, the **New Deal** programs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s aimed to reduce unemployment and stimulate demand through massive public investments—in roads, schools, dams, and airports.

Pharaoh Khufu, by concentrating a large workforce around the pyramid project, pursued a similar goal: to create employment, unite people in a common effort, and stimulate economic activity. The motivations of the workers were not purely material. **Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs**, often depicted as a pyramid, shows that once basic needs are met, people seek recognition and belonging. Participation in a meaningful, symbolic enterprise may have addressed those higher social needs.

Similarly, **Michael Porter's theory of clusters** emphasizes that concentrating specialized activities in one region creates synergy—enhancing information exchange, inter-workshop cooperation, and regional innovation. Giza, with its nearby quarries, river ports, and workshops, functioned as a proto-industrial cluster of raw materials and services, potentially fueling technological and economic development—even with transregional reach.

Finally, the **Hawthorne Effect** suggests that working together under shared goals and oversight improves productivity. In this light, the pyramid was not merely a physical structure—it was a **"social project"**, a strategic tool for managing people and state resources.

Summary

The thesis proposed by **Jacek Krzysztoń** sheds new light on the Great Pyramids by connecting Egyptological, economic, and sociological perspectives. Discoveries such as Merer's diaries and studies on workforce organization reveal that pyramid construction had a profound infrastructural and social dimension.

From this point of view, the pyramid was a symbol of power and a **means of achieving social stability and economic balance**—a true "tool of power" in every sense of the word. The presented concept—supported by archaeological evidence and modern theoretical parallels—may attract the interest of Egyptologists, economists, and sociologists alike. It opens the door for further interdisciplinary research, linking ancient history with theories of governance, economic planning, and regional development.

These conclusions, along with the documentary *The Pyramids – Tools of Power*, invite reflection: were the greatest stone monuments of antiquity truly built as tombs first and foremost—or as consciously designed instruments of social economy?

Krzysztoń's Theory on the Socio-Economic Purpose of Building the Great Pyramids in Egypt (2023)

The Great Pyramids of Egypt, often described in history primarily as tombs, were in fact a perfect tool in the hands of the pharaohs, used both for executing a well-planned economic development strategy of their nation and for maintaining an extensive social welfare program, while mitigating the cultural, social, and economic tensions that existed between the inhabitants of Upper and Lower Egypt following their unification.

Moreover, historical evidence suggests that many rulers were aware of the risks associated with revealing their burial sites, which is why their bodies, along with their treasures, often rested in more discreet locations.

This highlights that the Great Pyramids played a more functional rather than ceremonial role, and the success of the pharaohs was not in the rapid completion of the monuments but in the very process of their prolonged construction.

Publication Details:

Version: July 2025

Keywords: pyramids, Egypt, economic theory, state projects, ancient economy, Khufu, Giza

Author: Jacek Krzysztoń – economist, entrepreneur, and author of *Krzysztoń's Theory on the Socio-Economic Purpose of Building the Great Pyramids in Egypt* (2023), which has been formally registered and published in the form of a book, a scientific article, and a

standalone theory statement. He is the author of several books on business and real estate – including *Egyptian Pyramids: Big Tombs or Big Business?*. Based on his theory, the documentary film *The Pyramids – Tools of Power* was also created and is available on YouTube**.**

► Book: https://www.amazon.com/dp/8396765642
► Film: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw17_BcBB_Q