



The Secret of the Great Pyramid: How One Man's Obsession Led to the Solution of Ancient Egypt's Greatest Mystery

By Bob Brier, Jean-Pierre Houdin

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The Secret of the Great Pyramid is a thrilling intellectual adventure story about the most exciting discovery in Egyptology in decades. Bob Brier, along with French architect Jean-Pierre Houdin, tells the remarkable true story of Houdin's obsession with Egypt's Great Pyramid, one of the Seven Wonders of the World: how, in an ancient agrarian society not long removed from the Stone Age, such a remarkable structure could have been envisioned and constructed. At once the story of Houdin's determined search for answers to the puzzle that have eluded scientist and Egyptologists for centuries and a fascinating history of the planning and building of the magnificent edifice, *The Secret of the Great Pyramid* is an extraordinary work that puts the mystery to rest, once and for all.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Since its construction 4,500 years ago for Pharaoh Khufu, the Great Pyramid of Giza has remained an engineering mystery. According to Egyptologist Brier (*The Murder of Tutankhamen*) and architect Houdin, the monument was designed by Khufu's brother Hemenu, an architectural genius, and built in two decades by 25,000 paid Egyptian construction workers. Having studied the structure minutely and using computer graphics to visualize every aspect of the pyramid and its construction, Houdin offers a radical proposal of how the huge limestone and granite blocks were raised: the pyramid was built from the inside out around a mile-long ramp corkscrewed up to the top, which remains in the pyramid's walls. The authors' prose is lucid, aided by drawings and photos, and the theories are intriguing but inconclusive until permission can be obtained from Egyptian authorities to thermally photograph the pyramid and determine its internal structure. The highly technical nature of some of the architectural and engineering material makes this book more suitable for experts in archeology and architecture than for buffs. (*Oct.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

A specialist on Egyptian mummies, Brier relates that he receives many a missive purporting to have solved the mystery of the Great Pyramid's construction. In one day's e-mail, a plausible idea caught his fancy. Unlike theories that aliens lent Egyptians a helping hand, this message dwelt on the central engineering problem concerning the type of ramp the tomb's architect used. Brier's communication came from coauthor Houdin, a French architect who devoted years to studying the problem. Rather than immediately bowl readers over with Houdin's proposal, Brier cleverly entices them by alternating Houdin's quest with the trial-and-error development of pharaonic pyramids. Photos and computer-generated graphics illustrate the authors' explanation of designs and building processes, in the course of which they describe defects in the theories that the ramp was a mile-long straightaway or an external corkscrew. Houdin adopted an inspiration of his father's, that the ramp was indeed a corkscrew, but one that rested inside the pyramid. His search for supporting evidence, culminating in a public presentation of his theory in 2007, fills out a book to fascinate pyramid fans. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

"Houdin's theory solves many mysteries about the huge structure." (Scientific American)

"The authors' prose is lucid, aided by drawings and photos, and the theories are intriguing." (Publishers Weekly)

"It's a plausible theory, well-illustrated, and makes a useful addition to the always seductive study of pyramids...An intriguing new twist to an old enigma." (Kirkus Reviews)

"Great fun for Egyptophiles." (Barbara Mertz, author of *Temples, Tombs, and Hieroglyphics*)

"A serious attempt at a new explanation for one of the oldest Egyptological mysteries." (Peter Der Manuelian, Giza Archives Project Director, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

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From reader reviews:

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