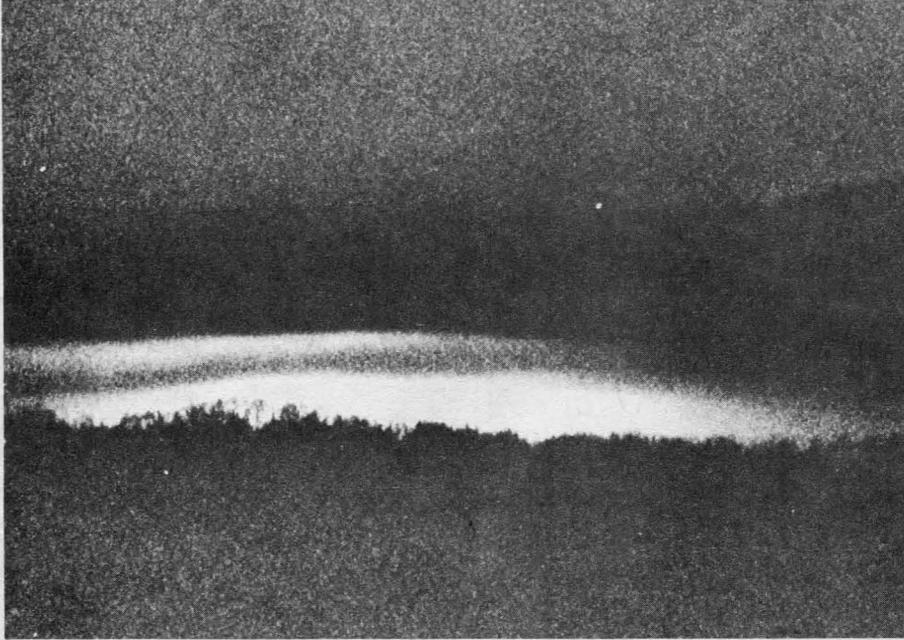


Ancient Astronauts Modern Mysteries

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THE AMBROSIA FACTOR

According to mythology, when mortal men were ushered into the presence of the gods in ancient times, they were invariably handed a goblet containing a thick, syrupy liquid and were told to drink it. If they were suffering any ill effects from their visits to the palaces of gods (usually on top of some mountain), their symptoms vanished as soon as they drank the concoction. So the first legend to spring up around this "ambrosia" claimed that it had medicinal powers, that it was a magical cure-all. Later this was greatly embellished. Ambrosia was supposed to make the drinker immortal, and it rendered divine powers . . . the ability to communicate directly with the gods.

Even though belief in the gods of the Romans and Greeks gradually faded away, the "Ambrosia Factor" remained an integral part of supernatural manifestations. During the Middle Ages, most of Europe was engulfed in an epidemic of little people and fairies. Thousands swore they saw the diminutive creatures and some even claimed to have been kidnapped and taken into their underground palaces. Some men even returned with bizarre tales of having been forced to mate with the Fairy Queen, presumably to introduce a human strain into the fairy world. As in ancient times, those selected for these palace visits were plied with food and drink . . . especially drink; a thick, sweet substance identical

(apparently) to the ambrosia of the ancient gods of the mountain tops.

Scholars, historians, and priests who investigated the fairy manifestations decided that the little people did not really exist. The witnesses, they speculated, had been "enchanted" by some mysterious force. Little was known about hypnotism in those days, and even less was known about hallucinogenic drugs, but the voluminous descriptions of these fairy episodes clearly indicate that the victims were exposed to one or both. The fluids forced down their throats may have been a forerunner of LSD, opening their minds to complex hallucinations and clouding their memories of what *really* happened. It was not uncommon for an "enchanted" man to stagger home like Rip van Winkle, thinking only a few hours had passed but finding that several days—even weeks—had elapsed since he had entered the fairy domain. This compression of time is a sure sign that the victims had been hypnotized in some way, and had a completely false memory introduced into their minds to account for the period in which their bodies had somehow been used by the enchanting force. It could be a form of possession—the occupation of the human body by an outside intelligence.

The fairy faith died out after 1848 with the introduction of spiritualism. Spirit mediums lapse into an unconscious state and willingly turn their bodies over to

forces professing to be the spirits of the dead. The rapid spread of spiritualism made the old fairy game unnecessary. The enchanting force now had a growing army of willing victims.

RETURN OF THE GODS

During the 1930s, a Polish emigre named George Adamski began as a teacher of universal truths and mysticism in California. He served as the guru to a small following of a few hundred people and would have remained totally obscure in a state filled with countless obscure cults if flying saucers had not suddenly appeared in 1947. Soon strange aerial objects were appearing nightly over Adamski's home on the slopes of Mt. Palomar.

Adamski was already steeped in the lore and practices of self-hypnosis, spiritualism, and the esoteric religions of the Far East. His mind was already trained to accept cosmic interlopers. He embraced the UFO mystery with enthusiasm. Within a few years huge cigar-shaped objects were landing on the desert near Mt. Palomar and tall, long-haired Venusians were holding face-to-face meetings with the aging guru. Modesty not being one of Adamski's virtues, he gleefully told his followers about his experiences and soon his story was appearing in newspapers and magazines.

Adamski's new friends were quite obliging. They invited him aboard their craft and flew him to the moon. But, of course, before they whisked him into outer space they offered him a drink. One of the beautiful Venusian women on the space craft handed him "a small glass of colorless liquid." It tasted like water, he later wrote, but was "a little denser, with a consistency something like a very thin oil."

Since he was one of the first UFO contactees to publicize his alleged experiences, Adamski quickly became the center of controversy. The self-styled "scientific ufologists" who were then few in number frothed at the mouth each time his name appeared in print. He was denounced as a liar and a fraud despite the fact that he produced photographs to back up his story and, on a number of occasions, other witnesses were present when he met with the saucer pilots. He was taken more seriously in Europe, where he traveled in the late 1950s, and was accorded meetings with kings and

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ANCIENT ASTROS

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queens, and a private audience with the Pope.

In 1965 he was stricken with a heart attack and died.

ROUTE TO THE STARS

Throughout the 1950s, the flying saucer phenomenon paralleled the well-known fairy games of old, frequently pausing to draw water from streams and wells in front of astonished witnesses (an old fairy practice), and indulging in the kind of mischievous pranks which had led the American Indians to label the little people "Tricksters." (Indians were seeing the "wee folk" long before the Europeans arrived on this continent.)

More and more UFO contactees bravely followed Adamski's example and revealed their experiences publicly, often to their everlasting regret because they were usually ridiculed and harassed into silence.

A sign painter in New Jersey, Howard Menger, claimed that UFOs were landing on his farm and on one occasion he met a tall entity in the suit of shining armor who sounded exactly like one of the ancient Greek or Roman gods. In another age Adamski and Menger would have probably been elevated to the rank of High Priest and their tales of these encounters would have been carved into stone. But in these "enlightened" times the general public viewed the contactees as clowns and lunatics while the believers in UFOs and extraterrestrial intelligences snarled that they were publicity-seeking charlatans.

As more and more contactee stories surfaced, a number of interesting facts and similarities developed. It was especially common for the contact experience to begin with a sudden, almost blinding flash of light, then the object or entity would materialize in front of the startled witness. (This same factor was present in many of the fairy stories, and in many religious miracles.) Often the witness would find himself rooted to the spot, unable to move. This is a clear indication

that he or she was in a trance state after the light flashed. After the object departed, the witness would cease to be paralyzed and would discover that several hours had passed even though it had seemed like only a few minutes.

Dr. Jacques Vallee, a French statistician, Gordon Creighton, a leading British UFO authority, and other serious students of the phenomenon now advocate an interesting hypothesis; that the same force(s) which generated the myths of the gods in ancient times is still active and is now propagating the worldwide belief in flying saucers from outer space; what the witnesses see is not nearly as important as *what made them see it*.

Adamski and Menger both sincerely believed they had been aboard a spaceship and had even flown to the moon. But were the memories of their experiences any more reliable than the memories of the men who had been seduced by the Fairy Queen in her underground palace?

DON'T DRINK THE WATER

Contactees the world over have enjoyed liquid refreshment aboard space craft. Some have described the liquid as tasteless, like thick water. Others found it heavy and sweet. A few have claimed it was brackish and unpleasant.

Some of the scholarly investigators of the Middle Ages warned that if you were taken underground by the fairy people you should refuse whatever food and drink they might offer you. This is still good advice, but UFO passengers apparently don't often have that option.

The story of Antonio Villas Boas of Brazil is now very well-known. In 1957, he was allegedly taken aboard a UFO and introduced to a blonde space woman with whom he had sexual intercourse. Before his X-rated adventure began, the little men on board the craft took off his clothes and bathed him with a wet sponge. "The liquid was as clear as water," he later told Dr. Olavo T. Fontes, "but quite thick, and without smell. I thought it was some sort of oil, but was wrong, for my skin did not become greasy or oily."

The Greeks and Romans believed that the gods used ambrosia as an ointment

when they bathed. In many ancient cultures, human sacrifices were anointed with oil before they were killed. This practice overlapped into Christianity. Christ's followers rubbed Him with an expensive oil before He was crucified, and, in fact, the very name Christ comes from the Greek *Khristos* which means "the anointed one."

It is intriguing that Boas underwent the ancient anointing ceremony aboard that spaceship in Brazil.

Larry Foreman of California didn't receive a cosmic bath, but during a series of UFO contacts near Socorro, N.M., in the 1960s he claims to have tasted ambrosia. To him it was "some kind of punch, a berry of some kind, I think." Foreman's story includes a variety of obvious hallucinations common to the victims of enchantment.

More recently, in May 1969, a Brazilian soldier named Jose Antonio, underwent a remarkable experience when he was kidnapped by a group of tiny humanoids and transported to a cavern-like room of stone. There his captors offered him a drink from a stone cube with a pyramidal-shaped cavity in the center. It was a dark-green liquid with a bitter taste. But he said he felt better after drinking it.

Woodrow Derenberger, a contactee in West Virginia, also felt better after he drank a liquid given to him by an alleged ufonaut in 1967. Derenberger had been suffering from a stomach ailment and he claimed the outer space potion cured it.

CAN THESE THINGS BE?

Those who drank ambrosia on Mount Olympus were supposed to have enjoyed increased intelligence and heightened perceptions afterwards. In modern UFO cases many of the contactees have undergone dramatic changes after their initial experience. Their I.Q. increases, they develop psychic abilities, and they suddenly acquire new knowledge of science, astronomy and ontology. Others, unfortunately, undergo reverse changes. They become nervous wrecks, get divorces, lose their jobs, go bankrupt, and have a very hard time in all

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personal relations. But the ancient gods had a nasty reputation for causing the same kind of havoc in the lives of those who were privileged to meet them.

Could it be that the modern UFO phenomenon is nothing more than an updated version of these ancient games? The gods of old were accepted as *residents of this planet*. It is unnecessary to assume they were visitors from some far-off planet. They have always been right here, manipulating us, muddling our

lives, fostering our beliefs in spiritual and supernatural matters. The rites of many modern religions are nothing more than slightly modified versions of the rites of the ancient Druids and other cults which dealt directly with the gods. The fairies of the Middle Ages were also regarded as residents of Earth. One popular belief was that they lived under the seas. And, as these columns have pointed out before, there is a considerable amount of evidence suggesting that modern UFOs come from the world's oceans, not from

outer space.

We are trapped into basing our speculations about the phenomenon on the testimony of scattered witnesses who, no matter how sincere and truthful they might be, are seeing only what they are supposed to see and remembering only what they are supposed to remember. Their trips to other worlds may be trips of another kind altogether, produced by sips of ambrosia rather than the roaring rockets of some advanced extraterrestrial civilization. ★