

Ancient Astronauts Modern Mysteries

JOHN A. KEEL

Hardly a month passes that some scientist or member of the academic community doesn't pontificate for the press and chew a bit on his own shoe. The latest candidate for the coveted Foot-In-Mouth award is a retired British physicist named Dr. Kurt Mendelssohn. At a recent meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (an organization that seems headed by Alfred E. Neuman), Dr. Mendelssohn soberly announced that he thought Egypt's "six major pyramids" were all built in a single century by 70,000 unemployed farmers. One, the Meidum pyramid, according to Mendelssohn, was redesigned in mid-construction when it partially collapsed.

It is quite possible that Dr. Mendelssohn has never been to Egypt, or that he may have done his research in the air-conditioned lounge of the Mena Hotel at Giza. I lived in Egypt for a year during which time I explored desert ruins and visited most of Egypt's 90 pyramids. I have spent several days inside the Great Pyramid at Giza alone. I have been continually appalled by the pseudo-scientific rubbish spouted by "experts" concerning the ancient structures. I am particularly annoyed by the huge amount of nonsense that has been published about the Great Pyramid.

The ancient Egyptians left us complete records on everything from weddings to crop failures but for some mysterious reason they didn't bother to produce a single papyrus explaining *how* the pyramids were built, *when*, or by *whom*. So, archaeologists have been engaged in a great guessing game for centuries, often ignoring all the known facts, in their struggle to fit unknown data into their hypotheses. Scribbles on random stones—graffiti left by ancient work gangs—have often been accepted as conclusive evidence of the identity of the tombs' occupants. A drawing of a horde of workmen hauling a huge statue with ropes is regarded as proof of how the huge stones in the pyramids were moved.

The workmanship in the Great Pyramid is impressive, and is generally superior to the workmanship found in the other pyramids. Much has been made of the fact that the largest single block in the Great Pyramid weighs about 80 tons and the question remains: how did

the ancient Egyptians move these enormous blocks from quarries hundreds of miles away?

Most pyramidologists overlook other, smaller pyramids which contain stones weighing almost *twice* as much as that Great Pyramid monolith. Several pyramids pose questions far more puzzling than those offered by the Great Pyramid.

THE PYRAMID AGE

We now know that pyramid building was once a universal practice throughout the world. Over 6,000 years ago unknown peoples were assembling great pyramids in Mexico. Gigantic man-made mounds were constructed in China, Great Britain, North America, and on remote Pacific islands while the Egyptians were still living in mud huts along the Nile. During WW II pilots flying "The Hump" reported seeing one or more massive pyramids standing silently in isolated Himalayan valleys.

Most of these early mounds were built slowly, in layers, over a long period of time. Each year, on special religious holidays, the natives would gather to laboriously haul baskets of dirt and stone to the mounds and complete another layer. From Babylonia to South America it was the practice to erect a special temple on the summit of the mound or pyramid. The choicest local maiden was then selected to wait in the temple for a visit from some mysterious god. The god was supposed to descend from the sky and have sexual intercourse with the sacrifice. Tables, chairs, and beds made of solid gold were placed in these cosmic bridal chambers, according to legend, because the gods were attuned to the frequency of gold. (This is also emphasized in the Bible; the wandering tribes of Israel went through a lot of trouble to build gold artifacts which they left on mountaintops for the gods.) Children born from the supernatural liaisons were given special status as rulers. They were man-gods in the eyes of their followers.

Who were these sexy gods of yesteryear? Were they astronauts from some other planet who viewed our world as a kind of celestial Playboy Club among the stars?

Gold in itself was a totally worthless ore to early man. It was too soft for use

in metal tools and cook ware. It was rare and difficult to mine. But all over the ancient world it was regarded as a *sacred* metal. The gods put us to work mining the metal from Africa to Brazil. We fashioned holy objects from the gold and left them in temples and tombs where, supposedly, the gods appeared and carted them away.

So from the very beginning man's purpose was to provide slave labor to supply the gods with gold, plus female companionship. All of this is spelled out in countless legends from every part of the world.

The pyramids and mounds were part of a worldwide system to serve the gods, not just worship them. There was one exception. So far as we know, the Egyptian pyramids were not part of this system. There is no record indicating that Egyptian virgins were left in pyramid chambers surrounded by gold furniture to await the arrival of sex-hungry astronauts.

The residue of these ancient beliefs is still with us. We still furnish our churches with gold artifacts and even coat their roofs with gold leaf. Emperors and kings in many parts of the world (such as Japan) still claim to be direct descendants of the ancient sky gods.

Gradually, over a long period of time, the temple system degenerated and demonology intervened. Sacrifices became bloody. The young maidens now had their hearts cut out by wild-eyed priests on the steps of the old pyramids. Some cultures sacrificed animals. Abraham of the Bible was ordered to take his son to a mountaintop and cut out his heart. (The voice of God intervened at the last minute and said, in effect, "I was only kidding, Abraham.")

Today when someone hears a voice in his head urging him to do destructive things we toss him into an asylum and brand him insane. But in earlier times such people were often considered to be holy prophets and they were elevated to positions of leadership. Long periods of history were dominated by crazed fanatics who led their people into horribly destructive wars.

TOOLS OF THE GODS

Until very recent times religion was the most important single force on this planet. Men suffered incredible hard-

(Continued on page 68)

ANCIENT ASTROS

(Continued from page 14)

ship and voluntarily performed the most arduous kind of labor to prove their faith. The building of the mounds and pyramids was undoubtedly just another demonstration of faith. The gods of the ancients were feared more than loved and whole societies revolved entirely around religious rites and practices. Nearly all of the great monuments and structures of the ancient world left standing were of a purely religious nature. Men lived in grass huts while they built mighty stone and gold temples for their gods. Great cities were erected, not as centers of commerce, but as centers of worship. Each year the believers traveled for many miles to these centers to add their labor to the local pyramid project. Perhaps they also witnessed mysterious manifestations which increased their belief.

Studies of thousands of modern UFO sightings have uncovered the fact that the enigmatic "flying saucers" tend to appear around the 21st-24th of the month. This pattern was true in 1897 as well as in 1967. Strange lights and aerial objects were frequently seen in ancient times, too, and were probably concentrated around the same days of the month. Coincidentally, the biggest holidays in ancient times were the summer and winter solstice (June 22nd and December 22nd). These are the

days when the sun has no northward or southward motion and seems to reverse itself (the days grow longer or shorter). The winter solstice became the most important single holiday in most cultures and was generally celebrated on December 24th, two days after the actual event. Stonehenge and many other ancient monuments were carefully aligned with the movements of the sun and stars so priests could pinpoint the time of the solstice. The probable appearances of mysterious lights and objects concurrent with the holiday were undoubtedly viewed as godly activities.

Where men had once gathered in holy places to offer sacrifices on the solstice, modern worshippers unwittingly continued the ancient tradition by gathering in buildings with roofs of gold on the same date. In some religions, wine replaced the blood that was drunk during the solstice ceremonies and new legends replaced the old.

ANCIENT OBSERVATORY

The builders of the Great Pyramid at Giza undoubtedly raised it slowly, in layers, like the mound and pyramid builders of the Americas. The layout of the Grand Gallery and other interior features suggest that the partially built pyramid served for years as an astronomical observatory, using aligned stones in the same way that the henges and burrows of northern Europe acted as computers. The only object in the

Great Pyramid, a crude stone bathtub-like sarcophagus, was installed in the uppermost chamber during construction and may have served a purpose other than that of a coffin. The so-called ventilation shafts leading into the chamber from the outside walls were lined up with the star group known as the Pleiades. Other features of the pyramid are aligned to the position of the sun during the solstices. The structure probably served as an observatory platform for years—even centuries—before it was completed. It was never used as a tomb but it may have served as a storage place for some special religious relic. There are theories that the Ark of the Covenant of Moses was once stored there, or the mysterious Black Rock of the Moslems was kept in that stone bathtub.

We do know that the Great Pyramid survived a number of earthquakes and that it was even repaired after one quake. One fanciful theorist has suggested that the Egyptian priests foresaw some horrible disaster and built the pyramid to house scrolls containing all ancient knowledge. After the disaster passed, the scrolls were removed again. Traces on the walls of the inner chambers indicate that great quantities of salt were once stored there. Salt? Could it be that the pyramid area was once underwater?

How were the enormous stones in the pyramids quarried? Primitive copper tools have been found and ar-

chaeologists believe that the soft metal served the pyramid builders. But a number of pyramids have inner chambers carved from yellow quartzite, a very tough substance. Copper tools would be useless for cutting it. Skillfully carved blocks of quartzite weighing more than 100 tons were used for the tomb of Imandes and others. The Mortuary Temple of Mycerinus contains blocks weighing *200 tons!*

Obviously the ancient Egyptians had methods that have been lost. They were able to transport the huge blocks hundreds of miles and then lift them into place without much trouble. The same methods must have been used to move the giant stones of Stonehenge in England, and the building blocks of the mysterious structures found in the Andes Mountains in South America. There *had* to be a single worldwide culture at one point in ancient history. We do our ancestors a great injustice by singling out one solitary project—the Great Pyramid—for our awe and admiration. Some *thing* or *someone* inspired the ancients to perform incredible feats of construction. Was the source of this inspiration godly apparitions or astronauts from across the cosmos? Were men—and all mankind—once the total slaves of the mysterious gods? ★