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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,000

Tonight, impressive and mysterious,

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00:00:03,000 --> 00:00:06,000

they are among the wonders of the ancient world.

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00:00:06,000 --> 00:00:10,000

These are the monuments that define innovation

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00:00:10,000 --> 00:00:13,000

and technology that were meant to last forever.

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00:00:13,000 --> 00:00:16,000

But to this day, no one fully understands

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00:00:16,000 --> 00:00:18,000

how they were built or why.

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00:00:18,000 --> 00:00:22,000

Despite how much we've learned from the writings on the pyramid,

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00:00:22,000 --> 00:00:25,000

it's not always very complete or specific.

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00:00:25,000 --> 00:00:29,000

Now we are going to look at the history of the world

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00:00:29,000 --> 00:00:33,000

Now we explore the top theories surrounding these

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00:00:33,000 --> 00:00:36,000

4,600-year-old puzzles.

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00:00:36,000 --> 00:00:39,000

The pyramids really have nothing to do with the afterlife at all.

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00:00:39,000 --> 00:00:44,000

Are these markers left for aliens arriving to Earth from space?

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00:00:44,000 --> 00:00:48,000

The pyramids could have been built to provide a road map to paradise.

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00:00:48,000 --> 00:00:54,000

Can we ever decipher the true purpose of Egypt's astonishing pyramids?

16

00:01:00,000 --> 00:01:04,000

Tooud

17

00:01:14,000 --> 00:01:15,840

their

18

00:01:19,000 --> 00:01:25,280

O'K Scottish

19

00:01:25,280 --> 00:01:27,280

a pyramid.

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00:01:27,280 --> 00:01:30,920

We can't definitively say which was the very first Egyptian pyramid,

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00:01:30,920 --> 00:01:33,520

but JOSERS is certainly one of the first.

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00:01:33,520 --> 00:01:39,280

It's 205 feet tall with a base of 358 feet by 397 feet,

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00:01:39,280 --> 00:01:41,960

the size of two football fields side by side,

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00:01:41,960 --> 00:01:46,280

and it's an amazing feat of engineering and technology.

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00:01:46,280 --> 00:01:48,920

Many others are built in the same area.

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00:01:48,920 --> 00:01:50,160

There are probably even more,

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00:01:50,160 --> 00:01:52,960

but we know of at least 118 Egyptian pyramids

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00:01:52,960 --> 00:01:56,040

that still exist today with extensive ruins.

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00:01:56,040 --> 00:01:57,600

Most of them have been intact,

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00:01:57,600 --> 00:02:00,120

almost perfectly preserved over the millennia.

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00:02:00,120 --> 00:02:02,520

Including the largest ever built,

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00:02:02,520 --> 00:02:04,840

the Great Pyramid of Giza.

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00:02:04,840 --> 00:02:09,040

The Great Pyramid is equivalent to the Empire State Building of its day.

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00:02:09,040 --> 00:02:11,200

It reaches 480 feet tall,

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00:02:11,200 --> 00:02:12,920

and for about 4,000 years,

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00:02:12,920 --> 00:02:16,080

it is the tallest man-made structure on the planet

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00:02:16,080 --> 00:02:20,480

till it's finally dethroned by England's Lincoln Cathedral in the year 1311.

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00:02:21,480 --> 00:02:26,040

It's composed of an estimated 2.3 million blocks of stones,

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00:02:26,040 --> 00:02:29,200

weighing an estimated 6 million tons.

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00:02:29,200 --> 00:02:33,640

And some of these stones individually are 50 to 80 tons each.

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00:02:33,640 --> 00:02:38,600

The workforce that was needed to lift these stones must have been massive.

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00:02:38,600 --> 00:02:41,240

According to ancient Greek and Roman historians,

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00:02:41,240 --> 00:02:47,000

it is suggested that it was a labor workforce of around 100,000 enslaved people.

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00:02:47,520 --> 00:02:51,280

And it's not just the size that's impressive.

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00:02:51,280 --> 00:02:54,760

The Great Pyramid is probably one of the most unique

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00:02:54,760 --> 00:02:58,080

and most precise buildings that has ever been built.

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00:02:58,080 --> 00:03:02,480

It is aligned to true north within one twentieth of a degree.

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00:03:02,480 --> 00:03:07,840

That is remarkable when you consider the time period when the Great Pyramid was built.

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00:03:07,840 --> 00:03:12,920

The entire base of the Great Pyramid is nearly a perfect square,

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00:03:12,920 --> 00:03:19,640

with the western side being only 5.5 inches longer than the eastern side.

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00:03:19,640 --> 00:03:23,160

This is 0.01% difference.

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00:03:23,160 --> 00:03:29,840

This is an amazing amount of accuracy for a structure this big this long ago.

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00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:35,120

The Great Pyramid dates back to the year 2570 BC.

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00:03:35,120 --> 00:03:37,280

Within a span of 100 years,

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00:03:37,280 --> 00:03:41,120

ancient Egyptians have gone from the seemingly modest pyramid of Jozer

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00:03:41,160 --> 00:03:44,360

to this stunning masterpiece.

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00:03:44,360 --> 00:03:47,960

But soon after, the period of pyramid building in ancient Egypt

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00:03:47,960 --> 00:03:51,240

just stops right around 2500 BC.

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00:03:51,240 --> 00:03:54,040

And we're not sure really why that is.

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00:03:54,040 --> 00:03:58,880

Eventually, the knowledge of how these buildings were built is lost.

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00:03:58,880 --> 00:04:03,520

Also lost, the reason why they were built.

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00:04:03,520 --> 00:04:05,960

Starting thousands of years ago,

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00:04:05,960 --> 00:04:09,920

people were already trying to find out the purpose of the pyramids.

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00:04:09,920 --> 00:04:14,160

You can imagine the first explorers crawling in by torchlight.

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00:04:14,160 --> 00:04:18,360

The first thing they would see in these narrow chambers

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00:04:18,360 --> 00:04:24,200

would be these thousands of lines of hieroglyphic inscriptions carved into the stone.

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00:04:25,480 --> 00:04:27,040

Can you imagine?

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00:04:27,040 --> 00:04:30,440

You go in to solve the mystery and all of a sudden

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00:04:30,440 --> 00:04:32,840

you're given a brand new mystery that you have to work on.

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00:04:32,840 --> 00:04:35,760

What is all of this?

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00:04:35,760 --> 00:04:38,840

At this point, no one understands what these hieroglyphics mean,

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00:04:38,880 --> 00:04:42,000

but there's more than just writing inside.

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00:04:42,000 --> 00:04:46,680

There are these sarcophagus-shaped stones that are cut right into the central chambers.

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00:04:46,680 --> 00:04:50,000

And they're also the right size to hold a human body.

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00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:51,760

Now, the bodies are not there.

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00:04:51,760 --> 00:04:56,000

And that's because maybe they were stolen at a certain point in time.

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00:04:56,000 --> 00:04:59,520

We do know that this evidence has been found by the 5th century BC

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00:04:59,520 --> 00:05:04,760

because it's at this time that we get the very first written theory about the pyramids.

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00:05:04,760 --> 00:05:08,520

Because in the 5th century BC, Greek historian Herodotus describes

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00:05:08,520 --> 00:05:12,200

the sarcophagi and he writes that the pyramids are burial chambers.

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00:05:16,600 --> 00:05:19,800

Other pyramids provide more clues.

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00:05:19,800 --> 00:05:23,000

Herodotus visits Egypt and speaks with many of the local guides

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00:05:23,000 --> 00:05:25,640

who have been taking people to the pyramids for years.

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00:05:25,640 --> 00:05:30,240

And they describe seeing mummified remains, sarcophagi, wooden coffins,

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00:05:30,240 --> 00:05:34,800

enough evidence to support the theories of Herodotus that these are tombs.

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00:05:34,800 --> 00:05:40,280

For centuries, this remains the accepted theory on why the pyramids were built.

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00:05:40,280 --> 00:05:43,280

But without understanding what the hieroglyphics say,

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00:05:43,280 --> 00:05:49,520

this is all somewhat speculative because they might describe these buildings as something totally different.

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00:05:49,520 --> 00:05:54,320

Then a visit to Egypt by a famous emperor changes that.

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00:05:54,320 --> 00:05:58,680

In a way, we have Napoleon Bonaparte to thank for our current knowledge of the pyramids.

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00:05:58,680 --> 00:06:01,840

The emperor has a great appreciation for art and culture.

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00:06:01,840 --> 00:06:06,160

During his campaign in Egypt, he orders a team of scholars to take possession

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00:06:06,160 --> 00:06:09,520

of key artifacts for the glory of France.

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00:06:09,520 --> 00:06:15,040

In 1799, you've got Napoleon soldiers that are digging out the foundation of a fort

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00:06:15,040 --> 00:06:17,120

near the Egyptian town of Rosetta.

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00:06:17,120 --> 00:06:26,960

And they come across this four-foot-long black stone that's just embedded right into the wall.

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00:06:26,960 --> 00:06:30,960

It's completely smooth on one side and covered with three different languages.

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00:06:31,040 --> 00:06:36,880

Ancient Greek and Ancient Egyptian Demotic Script and Hieroglyphics.

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00:06:36,880 --> 00:06:41,200

But this time we have two accompanying languages telling the same story.

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00:06:41,200 --> 00:06:44,320

The Greek and Demotic texts are the same.

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00:06:44,320 --> 00:06:51,280

Translations of a royal decree from Egyptian king Ptolemy V in 196 BC.

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00:06:51,280 --> 00:06:58,720

The message is essentially royal propaganda and it's declaring how wonderful and how generous

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00:06:58,720 --> 00:07:01,440

the newly coronated king was.

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00:07:02,480 --> 00:07:05,040

But that's not the real importance.

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00:07:05,920 --> 00:07:10,000

What is important is that we have the same story written in three different languages.

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00:07:10,000 --> 00:07:12,720

All of a sudden, after thousands of years of wondering,

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00:07:12,720 --> 00:07:16,080

we finally have the ability to translate Egyptian hieroglyphics.

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00:07:16,080 --> 00:07:19,520

We can use the ancient Greek inscription to finally understand what they had to say.

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00:07:20,480 --> 00:07:26,400

It is not an overstatement to say that this is probably one of the most important historical

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00:07:26,400 --> 00:07:28,240

finds of all time.

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00:07:29,120 --> 00:07:36,480

The Rosetta Stone, as it's called, becomes the key to unlocking ancient Egypt and perhaps

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00:07:36,480 --> 00:07:38,560

the secrets of the pyramids.

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00:07:39,360 --> 00:07:46,880

Jean-François Champollion is able to crack the code hidden within the hieroglyphs

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00:07:46,880 --> 00:07:53,040

and it took him 20 years to decipher what the Rosetta Stone actually said.

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00:07:53,040 --> 00:08:00,000

Champollion published his findings in 1822 and he had actually created a decoder ring for

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00:08:00,000 --> 00:08:01,520

Egyptian hieroglyphics.

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00:08:01,520 --> 00:08:06,640

According to the hieroglyphic texts, the pyramids are indeed tombs.

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00:08:06,640 --> 00:08:09,600

But we get a lot more insight into the nature of the tombs.

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00:08:09,600 --> 00:08:12,800

Finally, for the first time, we know who the tombs were built for.

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00:08:13,360 --> 00:08:18,240

As the hieroglyphics describe, these buildings are meant to be much more than just a burial place.

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00:08:18,240 --> 00:08:21,600

They're massive monuments built to the power of the Egyptian kings.

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00:08:23,840 --> 00:08:28,320

The hieroglyphics identify each one of the pyramids with the pharaoh who commissioned it.

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00:08:28,320 --> 00:08:32,640

And according to these hieroglyphics, each pyramid is given a boastful name like,

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00:08:32,640 --> 00:08:38,240

enduring are the places of Nicaeri, great is Kafre, or Minkare is Divide.

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00:08:38,880 --> 00:08:43,600

These were designed to be big boastful monuments to each of the pharaoh's power and permanence.

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00:08:44,480 --> 00:08:47,760

But could there be more to the pyramids?

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00:08:47,760 --> 00:08:51,040

Despite how much we've learned from the writings on the pyramids,

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00:08:51,040 --> 00:08:54,400

it's not always very complete or specific.

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00:08:54,400 --> 00:08:58,240

That's the reason why some suspect we don't really have the full picture.

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00:08:59,360 --> 00:09:03,040

This has been suspected since long before hieroglyphics were translated.

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00:09:03,040 --> 00:09:07,280

In fact, during the 10th century, AD, the Arab historian Al-Masudi

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00:09:07,280 --> 00:09:09,920

theorizes that these pyramids are more than likely tombs.

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00:09:09,920 --> 00:09:14,960

However, he also posits that they could contain a wealth of scientific,

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00:09:14,960 --> 00:09:17,520

mathematical, and astrological knowledge.

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00:09:18,160 --> 00:09:23,120

One of the greatest minds of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, Sir Isaac Newton,

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00:09:23,120 --> 00:09:26,400

also believes that the pyramids had additional secrets hidden within.

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00:09:27,120 --> 00:09:32,160

Newton was really only speculating in his day, but thanks to modern research and technological

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00:09:32,160 --> 00:09:37,360

advances we now have available, we're still uncovering new information about these incredible

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00:09:37,360 --> 00:09:41,280

buildings. And as it turns out, Newton may have been right.

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00:09:41,280 --> 00:09:47,360

There's in fact a lot more to the pyramids than meets the eye.

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00:09:47,760 --> 00:09:55,280

When hieroglyphics are first translated in the 1820s, it unlocks a trove of new information

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00:09:55,280 --> 00:09:59,360

about the pyramids of Egypt and why they were built.

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00:09:59,360 --> 00:10:03,360

They were long suspected to be tombs for pharaohs, and the hieroglyphics confirm this,

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00:10:03,360 --> 00:10:09,040

but as more of these hieroglyphics are translated, we find out that maybe these pyramids had another

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00:10:09,040 --> 00:10:14,640

function as well. There's a group of hieroglyphics that line the subterranean chambers of the

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00:10:14,640 --> 00:10:21,440

pyramids at Sakara, and these dates are around 23 or 2400 BC, and they've become known as the

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00:10:21,440 --> 00:10:28,560

pyramid texts. They're written in vertical lines, and they cover the walls of almost every single

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00:10:28,560 --> 00:10:33,600

room of these pyramids. Most Egyptian hieroglyphics, even the ones inside the pyramids, they're

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00:10:33,600 --> 00:10:38,000

offering you names, they're offering you dates, they're offering you legacies of the pharaohs,

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00:10:38,000 --> 00:10:42,240

who the rulers were, they're talking about the afterlife a little bit, but in terms of

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00:10:42,320 --> 00:10:45,200

why these pyramids were built, we don't seem to have that information.

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00:10:46,000 --> 00:10:52,320

But these particular texts are different. These hieroglyphics suggest a potential purpose for

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00:10:52,320 --> 00:10:57,520

the pyramids, and it starts with a fundamental ancient Egyptian belief. Like many other world

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00:10:57,520 --> 00:11:04,480

traditions, these texts reveal that they believe in an eternal soul, which the Egyptians call the Ka.

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00:11:04,480 --> 00:11:09,360

The hieroglyphics suggest that the Egyptians believe that the pharaoh's Ka travels to the

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00:11:09,360 --> 00:11:15,040

starry heavens, where he'll live in eternity amongst the gods. To some, that means the pyramids

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00:11:15,040 --> 00:11:24,960

could have been built to provide a roadmap to paradise. In 1994, Belgian engineer Robert Baval

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00:11:24,960 --> 00:11:30,240

and British historian Adrian Gilbert published their book *The Orion Mystery*, which becomes an

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00:11:30,240 --> 00:11:35,760

international bestseller. The central crux of the book is what is known as the Orion Correlation

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00:11:36,080 --> 00:11:40,640

theory. The authors propose that the pyramids of Giza are designed to match a star alignment in

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00:11:40,640 --> 00:11:47,440

the belt constellation of Orion. If you look at an overlay of the Giza pyramids and line them up with

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00:11:47,440 --> 00:11:56,400

stars in Orion's belt, they almost line up. It's uncanny. According to Baval and Gilbert,

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00:11:56,400 --> 00:12:03,600

this alignment isn't accidental. It could also help answer a long running question about the

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00:12:03,600 --> 00:12:10,240

pyramid's design. Inside the great pyramid of Giza, there are four long narrow shafts that

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00:12:10,240 --> 00:12:16,720

lead out from the kings and the queens chambers up towards the sky. Now, that's a strange design

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00:12:16,720 --> 00:12:22,320

element supposedly for ventilation. But why would the tomb need ventilation? If that was the goal,

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00:12:22,320 --> 00:12:27,760

there are much easier ways to achieve it. These shafts required a much more intricate construction

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00:12:27,760 --> 00:12:32,240

and engineering techniques. The Egyptians went to a lot of extra trouble to build them.

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00:12:33,120 --> 00:12:38,000

Baval, Gilbert, and a few other authors proposed the idea that these aren't ventilation shafts at

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00:12:38,000 --> 00:12:43,840

all and instead that they're windows that align specifically with the stars in Orion's belt.

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00:12:43,840 --> 00:12:51,360

Sirius, El Natak, and Kocha. According to references in ancient Egyptian texts, those stars are where

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00:12:51,360 --> 00:12:57,920

the pharaoh's Ka is supposed to join the father of the gods known as Sa in the afterlife. In addition

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00:12:57,920 --> 00:13:02,960

to being the home for the gods and for the pharaohs that make it to the afterlife, Orion's

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00:13:02,960 --> 00:13:08,320

appearance in the night sky serves another very important purpose for Egyptians. Every year,

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00:13:08,320 --> 00:13:12,160

when the stars of Orion would appear in the sky, the Nile River would overflow,

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00:13:12,160 --> 00:13:17,120

bringing life-renewing irrigation to the crops. So through the hieroglyphics, we actually have a

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00:13:17,120 --> 00:13:23,200

written record that the Egyptians believe their pharaoh is traveling to Orion after his death.

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00:13:23,200 --> 00:13:27,040

And then we also have a potential correlation between a pyramid's design

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00:13:27,040 --> 00:13:31,680

and the stars in that constellation. So it's as if the pyramid was specifically built to

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00:13:31,680 --> 00:13:39,280

aim to that region in the night sky. However, some think it's more than just souls that travel.

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00:13:39,840 --> 00:13:45,200

In 2012, Belgian author Philip Coppens takes the idea of the Orion Correlation Theory

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00:13:45,200 --> 00:13:49,280

and expands on it. He supports the idea that the builders of the pyramids may have

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00:13:49,280 --> 00:13:55,440

aimed their pyramid shafts directly at Orion. But rather than transport the Ka of the pharaoh to the

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00:13:55,520 --> 00:13:59,200

heavens, he suggests that they could have actually been transporting the physical bodies.

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00:13:59,840 --> 00:14:05,040

I mean, it's a pretty fantastical interpretation. How do the bodies levitate and stay up there in

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00:14:05,040 --> 00:14:09,600

the sky? Coppens doesn't explain that, but he does cite what he claims is evidence that the

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00:14:09,600 --> 00:14:15,440

pharaoh's bodies were somehow transported. As Coppens describes, a great many of the sarcophagi

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00:14:15,440 --> 00:14:20,800

inside the pyramids are found empty. This is true, and Egyptologists generally attribute that to

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00:14:20,800 --> 00:14:27,360

grave robbers. But Coppens cites multiple examples of completely untouched burial chambers inside

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00:14:27,360 --> 00:14:32,960

pyramids. No grave robbers have accessed them, and yet when modern archaeologists finally open

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00:14:32,960 --> 00:14:38,880

these chambers, bodies are nowhere to be found. Coppens states that after the pharaohs are laid

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00:14:38,880 --> 00:14:45,040

to rest, their sarcophagi and burial chambers are sealed up, and then the pyramid somehow

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00:14:45,040 --> 00:14:52,160

moves their actual bodies, and you're left with an empty tomb. Coppens also points to another

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00:14:52,160 --> 00:14:58,080

ancient Egyptian burial practice as further proof. As we've seen inside many pyramids,

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00:14:58,080 --> 00:15:02,160

along with the pharaoh's body, the ancient Egyptians often left thousands of physical

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00:15:02,160 --> 00:15:07,520

objects as well. Egyptian burial chambers are large because they need to be able to hold quite a

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00:15:07,520 --> 00:15:13,920

few things. Inside of these chambers, we have found all of the things that a pharaoh would need to be

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00:15:13,920 --> 00:15:20,880

happy in the afterlife. His pets were often mummified. His slaves were often killed and mummified

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00:15:20,880 --> 00:15:26,160

along with him because he's going to need servants in the afterlife. It's not uncommon to find large

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00:15:26,160 --> 00:15:32,000

quantities of beer and bread so that the pharaoh could have something to eat and drink in the

afterlife

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00:15:32,000 --> 00:15:38,000

as well. Coppens asks, if the journey to the afterlife is only a metaphorical trip by one's

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00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:43,200

soul, then why pack up all this stuff? You know, why leave it there to be wasted? Again, to him,

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00:15:43,760 --> 00:15:46,800

this could prove that the Egyptians intended the voyage to be literal.

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00:15:47,440 --> 00:15:51,920

This of course fails to account for all the many mummies that we have found inside the pyramids.

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00:15:52,960 --> 00:15:58,480

Is it likely that physical bodies were actually being shot up to the stars? Probably not. But what

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00:15:58,480 --> 00:16:02,880

we can see though is that these pyramids were designed with the afterlife in mind, specifically

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00:16:02,960 --> 00:16:08,320

a journey to the afterlife. Whether it's the Ka or something else entirely, the Egyptians believed

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00:16:08,320 --> 00:16:12,960

in the pharaoh's ability to make it to their place in the heavens with the help of these buildings.

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00:16:16,560 --> 00:16:20,640

For thousands of years, scholars have debated why the pyramids were built.

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00:16:21,440 --> 00:16:28,480

But few questioned how they were built. Assuming vast numbers of slaves were forced to construct them.

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00:16:28,480 --> 00:16:34,160

The ancient Greeks estimated that the Egyptians had used a labor force of 100,000 slaves to build

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00:16:34,160 --> 00:16:42,320

the Great Pyramid. Then in the late 1990s, a surprising archaeological find upends that notion.

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00:16:43,040 --> 00:16:48,000

Egypt's chief archaeologist, Zahi Halas, is responsible for countless amazing discoveries in

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00:16:48,000 --> 00:16:53,840

the country. But starting in 1990, he embarks on a 20-year-long dig at the Great Pyramid.

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00:16:54,400 --> 00:17:00,720

He makes an incredible discovery that makes us rethink how the pyramids were constructed.

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00:17:01,840 --> 00:17:07,680

He locates the tombs of the people who built the Great Pyramid and he learns two things. First,

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00:17:07,680 --> 00:17:13,680

they weren't enslaved people. And secondly, it wasn't 100,000 people, it was more around 10,000.

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00:17:14,560 --> 00:17:20,080

The evidence he finds is that these men were buried according to Egyptian religious burial

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00:17:21,040 --> 00:17:26,560

customs, meaning that the men who built the pyramids were from working-class Egyptian families.

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00:17:26,560 --> 00:17:31,120

The tombs are built right next to the King's pyramid. Now, the workers are buried more modestly,

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00:17:31,120 --> 00:17:36,400

but they are entombed with beer and bread for the afterlife and on or not provided to slaves.

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00:17:36,400 --> 00:17:40,960

The tombs also have graffiti on their walls, calling them Friends of Kufu, the Pharaoh.

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00:17:40,960 --> 00:17:44,960

According to Hawass, there's no way that would have happened if these were slaves.

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00:17:45,600 --> 00:17:50,400

Hawass also finds evidence of how well these people lived. They were given a great quantity

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00:17:50,400 --> 00:17:56,160

of food and luxurious food, like meat. So here we have a labor force that is skilled,

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00:17:56,160 --> 00:18:00,880

they're well taken care of, they're not enslaved, and there's only 10,000 of them.

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00:18:00,880 --> 00:18:08,640

How does this make any sense? How exactly do 2.3 million gargantuan stone blocks get cut,

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00:18:09,360 --> 00:18:15,360

moved, and fit together so precisely that it's literally impossible to slide even a credit

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00:18:15,360 --> 00:18:22,720

card between them, all by 10,000 people? Did the Egyptians use ramps? That seems implausible,

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00:18:22,720 --> 00:18:27,600

since a ramp with a low enough slope would have to be over a mile long. It would be bigger than

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00:18:27,600 --> 00:18:33,120

the great pyramid itself. Had the Egyptians built canals capable of raising water levels high enough

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00:18:33,120 --> 00:18:38,320

to allow some of these massive stones to float to the top, again at the very least, that would take

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00:18:38,320 --> 00:18:46,400

many more than 10,000 individuals. According to author Eric von Daniken, there's only one possible

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00:18:46,400 --> 00:18:52,560

explanation. In his best-selling 1968 book, *Cherry to the Gods*, Eric von Daniken writes that the

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00:18:52,560 --> 00:18:58,080

Egyptians didn't build the pyramids all on their own. They might have had help from extraterrestrials.

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00:18:59,360 --> 00:19:04,800

So if we can't figure out how 100,000 Egyptians built the pyramids, then we certainly have an

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00:19:04,800 --> 00:19:10,640

issue with trying to figure out how 10,000 could have done it. In that regard, maybe von Daniken

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00:19:10,640 --> 00:19:19,200

has a point. He calls it the ancient astronaut hypothesis. It states that extraterrestrials

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00:19:19,200 --> 00:19:26,960

came to Earth in ancient times and helped human beings build these various architectural marvels.

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00:19:26,960 --> 00:19:31,680

In this case, they taught advanced engineering techniques to the ancient Egyptians

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00:19:31,680 --> 00:19:38,480

and instructed them on how to build the pyramids. According to this theory, the pyramids were built

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00:19:38,480 --> 00:19:46,160

as a navigational tool, not to help the pharaohs reach heaven, but to help extraterrestrials reach

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00:19:46,160 --> 00:19:53,360

Earth. With the help of modern photography from satellites and the International Space Station,

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00:19:53,360 --> 00:19:58,480

we know that the pyramids of Giza are indeed visible from space. And if you look at the pyramids from

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00:19:58,480 --> 00:20:03,520

that vantage point, I mean, you can't help but wonder if that's how they were intended to be seen.

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00:20:03,520 --> 00:20:09,040

Could they be markers for aliens visiting from outer space? This could also explain why the

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00:20:09,040 --> 00:20:16,160

pyramids may be aligned with certain stars. It's the final stop of a landmark-based navigational

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00:20:16,160 --> 00:20:23,200

system, helping aliens reach our planet from their homeworld somewhere beyond the constellation of Orion.

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00:20:24,160 --> 00:20:29,840

These theorists also point to alleged evidence of alien encounters.

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00:20:29,840 --> 00:20:33,920

According to Von Daniken and many other authors who follow this hypothesis,

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00:20:33,920 --> 00:20:38,480

at the time of their arrival, extraterrestrial beings would have been considered gods by the

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00:20:38,480 --> 00:20:43,600

ancient Egyptians. This notion actually mirrors what we see in the ancient hieroglyphic texts.

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00:20:43,600 --> 00:20:50,240

Many hieroglyphic inscriptions do tell us that the ancient Egyptians believed that their gods came from the stars.

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00:20:50,880 --> 00:20:56,880

The story sounds a lot like what Von Daniken is writing about. According to Egyptian mythology,

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00:20:56,880 --> 00:21:03,600

the gods lived among them on Earth and had a great impact on their daily life. Then after a time,

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00:21:03,600 --> 00:21:10,320

the gods left Earth. Where did they go? The hieroglyphics are pretty clear. They went back beyond the stars.

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00:21:11,520 --> 00:21:16,240

Some also believe this Egyptian encounter wasn't an isolated incident.

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00:21:16,240 --> 00:21:20,960

It may have been one of the first visits from aliens, but it wouldn't be the last.

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00:21:20,960 --> 00:21:25,520

Because ancient astronauts theorists believe this has happened all over our planet.

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00:21:26,160 --> 00:21:32,160

Now, to date, you have 118 pyramids that have been found all across Egypt. But you can double

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00:21:32,160 --> 00:21:37,280

that number for Sudan. They've been found all across China, the Middle East, and the Americas

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00:21:37,280 --> 00:21:43,440

contain more pyramids than all other parts of the world combined. There's another great pyramid

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00:21:43,520 --> 00:21:49,440

complex at Teotihuacan in Mexico. Just like at Giza, these pyramids are astronomically aligned to

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00:21:49,440 --> 00:21:55,600

certain stars. There are three main temples. You've got the pyramid of the Sun, the pyramid of the Moon,

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00:21:55,600 --> 00:22:03,120

and the pyramid of Quetzalcoatl. Just like at Giza, these pyramids appear to align with the stars

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00:22:03,120 --> 00:22:10,240

in Orion's belt. And here again, just like Giza, the smallest temple, the pyramid of Quetzalcoatl,

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00:22:10,240 --> 00:22:15,840

is offset from the others and aligned with Mentaca, the faintest star in Orion's belt.

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00:22:15,840 --> 00:22:21,200

They're mapped according to the very same principles and display the same astronomical

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00:22:21,200 --> 00:22:27,200

message. So it's easy to wonder, were these pyramids designed by the same beings,

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00:22:27,200 --> 00:22:32,400

the same alien civilization based somewhere around the constellation Orion?

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00:22:34,000 --> 00:22:38,960

If these structures were designed by extraterrestrials, and of course I'm not saying that they were,

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00:22:38,960 --> 00:22:44,320

but if so, it's easy to see the parallels. And you could see how some people might believe they're

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00:22:44,320 --> 00:22:53,200

connected. Most Egyptologists, however, reject this theory. There's simply no real proof. It is all

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00:22:53,200 --> 00:23:00,240

speculation. See, for me, the alien theory detracts from something that's way more inspiring. The

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00:23:00,240 --> 00:23:07,200

ability of human beings, especially at such an early time in our history, to come together and to

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00:23:07,200 --> 00:23:11,520

design and to build these architectural marvels is a wonder.

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00:23:14,560 --> 00:23:20,160

When it comes to solving the mysteries of the pyramids, the biggest challenge is the lack of

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00:23:20,160 --> 00:23:28,560

recorded evidence. But in 1947, new writings are discovered that suggest a surprising purpose.

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00:23:30,000 --> 00:23:34,400

There are two primary sources of information about the pyramids. First, there are the Greeks.

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00:23:34,400 --> 00:23:38,400

But when you read their histories, you can see that they're just as mystified as we are.

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00:23:38,400 --> 00:23:44,160

They're mostly guessing. Then we have the hieroglyphics, which have taught us a tremendous amount about the

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00:23:44,160 --> 00:23:49,440

ancient Egyptian cosmology and their myths. But there's nothing in these inscriptions, nowhere,

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00:23:49,440 --> 00:23:54,560

that says why they had to build the biggest and most durable structures anywhere on the planet.

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00:23:55,360 --> 00:24:00,640

There is, however, one ancient text that may provide an explanation.

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00:24:00,720 --> 00:24:08,480

In the spring of 1947, an amazing trove of Hebrew scrolls is discovered on the northwest shore

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00:24:08,480 --> 00:24:14,160

of the Dead Sea. A Bedouin shepherd boy is out tending his sheep, and one of his sheep walks up

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00:24:14,160 --> 00:24:20,320

into a cave, and he's trying to get his sheep out of the cave so he throws a rock. And instead of

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00:24:20,320 --> 00:24:26,160

his sheep coming out, he hears a crash. The noise scares him and he runs away. But later, he comes

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00:24:26,160 --> 00:24:32,240

back with a friend and both of them enter the cave. They find a number of long, clay jars,

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00:24:32,240 --> 00:24:39,040

but then they look inside and they see this dark object. They bring the jars out into the light,

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00:24:39,040 --> 00:24:44,080

and they see that the objects are wrapped in a layer of fine linen, and they're covered in wax.

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00:24:44,080 --> 00:24:49,360

And when they start enrolling them, they find long pieces of parchment covered in writing

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00:24:49,360 --> 00:24:55,360

that have been sewn together. They have just stumbled upon the Dead Sea Scrolls.

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00:24:55,840 --> 00:25:01,040

Dating back to the third century BC, they're the oldest surviving biblical texts.

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00:25:01,840 --> 00:25:07,360

It's an archaeological and religious revelation beyond compare. Some would even say it's the most

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00:25:07,360 --> 00:25:12,960

important archaeological find in history. The Dead Sea Scrolls expand our knowledge of the

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00:25:12,960 --> 00:25:16,800

ancient world in countless ways. One of those ways has to do with Egypt.

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00:25:17,760 --> 00:25:22,320

Among these scrolls is a very old version of the book of Genesis. This ends up, of course,

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00:25:22,320 --> 00:25:28,240

being the first book of the Jewish Torah and the Christian Bible. And in it is the story of Jacob

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00:25:28,240 --> 00:25:37,200

and his son Joseph. According to Genesis, Jacob has 12 sons, whose descendants eventually become

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00:25:37,200 --> 00:25:43,120

the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob favors his most beloved son Joseph, which causes tremendous

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00:25:43,120 --> 00:25:48,880

friction with his brothers. In a fit of jealousy, they sell him into slavery. Where is he taken?

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00:25:48,880 --> 00:25:55,200

To Egypt. There in Egypt, Joseph is able to turn his luck around by interpreting a dream for the

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00:25:55,200 --> 00:26:00,400

Pharaoh about an approaching famine. And Joseph warns the Pharaoh to start stockpiling grain as

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00:26:00,400 --> 00:26:06,800

soon as possible. Some biblical scholars believe that this grain ends up being stored in the pyramids.

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00:26:10,080 --> 00:26:14,160

There are two versions of this theory. Some theorists believe that the pyramids were always

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00:26:14,160 --> 00:26:18,640

meant to be used for grain storage. That was one of the reasons why they were designed.

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00:26:18,720 --> 00:26:22,800

Others believe that they weren't built for that purpose at all, but got enlisted to store grain

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00:26:22,800 --> 00:26:28,880

because of the impending famine. Religious historians have long proposed that the pyramids were built

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00:26:28,880 --> 00:26:35,760

by Joseph as grain silos. In the fifth century, Julius Honorius, a renowned Christian grammar and

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00:26:35,760 --> 00:26:40,640

rhetoric teacher, creates a geographical manual to help his students understand the world.

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00:26:40,640 --> 00:26:45,680

His research is compiled into a book called the *Cosmographia*, and it explicitly references the

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00:26:45,680 --> 00:26:52,800

pyramids of Egypt as the *Orea Eosa* for the Granaries of Joseph. In the sixth century, this theory

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00:26:52,800 --> 00:26:58,000

pops up again. This time it's found in the work of Gregory of Tours. He's a historian who also

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00:26:58,000 --> 00:27:04,080

becomes a saint in the Catholic Church. In the first volume of his masterwork, *Decim Libri*

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00:27:04,080 --> 00:27:12,320

*Historium*, Gregory of Tours explains, quote, Joseph built granaries of wonderful workmanship

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00:27:12,320 --> 00:27:18,400

made of square stones and cement. They're constructed in such a way that they are very

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00:27:18,400 --> 00:27:24,480

broad at the base, but narrow at the top, so that corn could be poured into them through a small

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00:27:24,480 --> 00:27:32,160

aperture. These granaries are still to be seen to this day. Gregory of Tours has to be talking

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00:27:32,160 --> 00:27:35,920

about the pyramids. He's even referencing those enigmatic shafts that appear at the top of the

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00:27:35,920 --> 00:27:41,280

Great Pyramid. Now, due to the degree of incline, it is plausible that these kernels of corn could

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00:27:41,360 --> 00:27:46,560

have been poured in from above. You can see that this theory is represented visually in Christian

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00:27:46,560 --> 00:27:51,840

artworks as well. The pyramids are very clearly depicted as grain silos in a prominent 12th

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00:27:51,840 --> 00:27:59,840

century mosaic in St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. What's more, the granary idea does not just exist

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00:27:59,840 --> 00:28:05,760

in European circles. In fact, we find it both in Islamic and in Byzantine texts. The etymological

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00:28:05,760 --> 00:28:12,080

magnum, the Byzantine Empire's largest encyclopedia, explicitly references the pyramids as royal

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00:28:12,080 --> 00:28:19,520

granaries constructed by Joseph. As further proof of the alleged theory, some authors cite the fact

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00:28:19,520 --> 00:28:25,680

that grain has been found inside Egyptian pyramids. Now, to an outside observer, you can kind of see

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00:28:25,680 --> 00:28:30,560

how this theory makes sense. Think about it. The pyramids sort of have a shape similar to, like,

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00:28:30,560 --> 00:28:34,640

the salt domes that you'll see on the side of the highway when you're driving, right? The idea is

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00:28:34,640 --> 00:28:40,400

that these grains will be poured in from the top, and as they go in, they'll form, like, a mound-like

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00:28:40,400 --> 00:28:47,120

shape structure similar to, like, sand in an hourglass. Modern Egyptologists, however, find a

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00:28:47,120 --> 00:28:52,800

glaring flaw in this argument. If the pyramids were hollow inside, this theory would fit like a

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00:28:52,800 --> 00:28:58,240

glove. But unfortunately, they're not. They're mostly solid rock, so there's very little storage

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00:28:58,320 --> 00:29:05,360

room inside. But there is evidence that the pyramids were used to provide sustenance to the

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00:29:05,360 --> 00:29:11,600

community, just in a different way. The Nile River couldn't always be relied on to flood and irrigate

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00:29:11,600 --> 00:29:18,320

crops. As it says in the Book of Genesis, it references times of both feast and famine. In times of

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00:29:18,320 --> 00:29:23,920

famine, Pharaoh doesn't want his subjects to starve, but he also wants to keep them busy because they're

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00:29:23,920 --> 00:29:29,440

not working out in the fields. So in exchange for payment in the form of grain, he puts them to

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00:29:29,440 --> 00:29:34,160

work on government projects, and one of these projects may have been building the pyramids.

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00:29:35,760 --> 00:29:41,120

So the pyramids did provide grain, but in a different way than what early Christian theorists

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00:29:41,120 --> 00:29:47,120

thought. The fact that a theory is widely believed doesn't mean it's actually feasible. We assume

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00:29:47,120 --> 00:29:51,120

the Egyptians had many better options for storing their grain than the pyramids,

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00:29:51,200 --> 00:29:53,120

which included actual grain silos.

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00:29:56,720 --> 00:30:03,600

There is no more iconic representation of the might of ancient Egypt than its famed pyramids.

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00:30:03,600 --> 00:30:08,720

The pyramids might be the most famous and remarkable aspect of the Kingdom of Egypt,

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00:30:08,720 --> 00:30:14,080

but they were only being built for a relatively short time. You have a civilization that's around

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00:30:14,080 --> 00:30:19,040

for about 2,000 years, yet they only spent about three to 400 years designing these magnificent

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00:30:19,040 --> 00:30:24,400

structures. So among the many mysteries surrounding the pyramids, one important question is,

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00:30:25,200 --> 00:30:32,320

why did they stop being built? In the late 90s and early 2000s, an all-new theory emerges that

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00:30:32,320 --> 00:30:36,640

attempts to explain what might have happened. And according to this theory, the pyramids were built

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00:30:36,640 --> 00:30:42,560

with a very specific purpose in mind. And once this purpose was fulfilled, the Egyptians didn't

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00:30:42,560 --> 00:30:48,960

need to make any more. In 1998, engineer Christopher Dunn publishes a book, and in that book he posits

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00:30:49,040 --> 00:30:54,400

that the pyramids really have nothing to do with the afterlife at all. They're there to serve the

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00:30:54,400 --> 00:31:00,160

everyday life of the people of Egypt living throughout the Kingdom by providing electrical power.

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00:31:04,240 --> 00:31:09,920

Dunn's theory starts with one significant word. When you consider the word pyramid,

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00:31:10,480 --> 00:31:16,800

you've got pie, which is a fire, and then mid, which is the middle. So when you bring the two

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00:31:16,800 --> 00:31:21,520

together, you've got fire in the middle, and that is essentially what I'm proposing for the great

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00:31:21,520 --> 00:31:28,400

pyramid, except that it's not a fire of combustion, but it's an energetic environment. With that in

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00:31:28,400 --> 00:31:33,440

mind, modern-day engineers like Dunn start to examine the layout of the pyramid's internal structures.

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00:31:34,240 --> 00:31:38,960

Inside of the Great Pyramid of Giza, you have three chambers. You have a subterranean chamber,

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00:31:38,960 --> 00:31:43,520

you've got a chamber that's been named the Queen's Chamber, and one that's been called the King's

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00:31:43,520 --> 00:31:48,800

Chamber. Traditional Egyptologists have been long focused on this building as a tomb, so they've

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00:31:48,800 --> 00:31:53,200

taken the conventional view that the pharaoh's body was placed in the King's Chamber, and the other

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00:31:53,200 --> 00:31:58,880

two could have been used if the pharaoh died before the pyramid was finished. However, no human

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00:31:58,880 --> 00:32:04,320

remains or funerary objects have ever been found inside of the Great Pyramid of Giza, but that

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00:32:04,320 --> 00:32:10,560

might be the point. When you look at these chambers through the eyes of an engineer, you see that

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00:32:10,560 --> 00:32:16,160

they might be serving a different function. American engineer John Cadman also supports this

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00:32:16,160 --> 00:32:21,680

theory. Cadman is looking into this problem at the same time as Dunn in the late 1990s,

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00:32:21,680 --> 00:32:26,000

and he really seizes upon the idea that this building has a mechanical function

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00:32:26,640 --> 00:32:32,240

as some kind of pump. Water would flow in via the tunnels from an ancient lake at a higher

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00:32:32,240 --> 00:32:37,680

elevation. The water would then flow through a duct up into the Queen's Chamber and then exit

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00:32:37,680 --> 00:32:42,960

through an outflow tunnel to the Nile River. The next question is, why a water pump?

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00:32:43,760 --> 00:32:49,040

To find out, Cadman makes his own model of the pyramid's subterranean chambers.

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00:32:49,920 --> 00:32:55,840

In the year 2000, Cadman uses a 500-pound block of cement to carve out a smaller replica of the

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00:32:55,840 --> 00:32:59,840

Great Pyramid to study the fluid dynamics that were happening inside the chambers.

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00:32:59,840 --> 00:33:05,280

Incredibly, when he runs water through, the block actually starts shaking with long and then short

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00:33:05,280 --> 00:33:10,960

pulses. Now, if you scaled up this experiment to the full size of the pyramid, Cadman believes

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00:33:10,960 --> 00:33:15,440

the system would have created a heartbeat-like vibration that shook the entire structure.

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00:33:16,560 --> 00:33:22,640

Eventually, Dunn further expands on this idea. He outlines that the Great Pyramid is actually

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00:33:22,640 --> 00:33:29,920

a coupled oscillator which transforms vibrations into energy, and that generates power. Dunn's

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00:33:29,920 --> 00:33:33,840

hypothesis also could account for findings in the Queen's Chamber that have never been fully

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00:33:33,840 --> 00:33:39,120

understood. Those twin shafts diagonally extending upwards from this chamber were once thought of

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00:33:39,120 --> 00:33:44,160

as air ducts, and others have hypothesized that they target certain stars in the night sky.

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00:33:45,280 --> 00:33:52,320

Now, Early Explorers reported that the walls and the ceilings of the Queen's Chamber were covered

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00:33:52,320 --> 00:33:57,200

with up to about an inch of salt and that there was gypsum coming out of the cracks in the limestone.

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00:33:57,840 --> 00:34:03,600

Nobody knew what to make of this at the time. According to Dunn, it's evidence that the Pyramid

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00:34:03,600 --> 00:34:10,560

served as a chemical reactor. My theory on the Queen's Chamber is that chemicals were delivered

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00:34:10,560 --> 00:34:17,840

to the chamber through shafts. Those solutions were dilute hydrochloric acid and a hydrated zinc

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00:34:17,840 --> 00:34:24,000

solution. Those two chemicals brought together would boil off hydrogen. This hydrogen would cause a

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00:34:24,000 --> 00:34:29,440

chemical reaction with the chamber's limestone, which would explain the presence of salt and gypsum.

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00:34:29,440 --> 00:34:33,360

The hydrogen reaction compounds the pyramid's vibrations exponentially.

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00:34:33,360 --> 00:34:38,480

It's now really moving and can generate a lot of power. Dunn believes all of these vibrations

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00:34:38,480 --> 00:34:42,720

charge up the quartz and granite stones in the center of the pyramid. This is why they're putting

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00:34:42,720 --> 00:34:48,240

these stones that weigh 50 to 80 tons in the center. They're almost like batteries. And with that,

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00:34:48,240 --> 00:34:53,840

you have yourself an energy source. Just how would the Egyptians use that energy?

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00:34:54,480 --> 00:35:00,640

According to a 1996 book by Austrian writers, Peter Krasa and Rainer Habek,

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00:35:00,640 --> 00:35:04,000

the ancient Egyptians may have actually had electric lights.

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00:35:04,640 --> 00:35:09,040

Their theory is based on a relief sculpture that was found in the 2000-year-old Temple of

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00:35:09,040 --> 00:35:15,120

Hathor in Dendera, Egypt. It shows what they believe to be a massive light bulb with a socket,

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00:35:15,120 --> 00:35:20,800

a cable, and a filament. These so-called light fixtures appear prominently in several other

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00:35:20,800 --> 00:35:28,320

Egyptian artworks as well. Krasa and Habek also cite a 1982 experiment by Austrian engineer Walter

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00:35:28,320 --> 00:35:34,480

Garn. He sees the so-called Dendera light and decides to test if such a device could have been

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00:35:34,480 --> 00:35:40,240

built using the materials available to the ancient Egyptians. He was able to make a working model of

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00:35:40,240 --> 00:35:48,000

the device, but he used traditional electricity, not pyramid power. Did the Egyptians actually have

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00:35:48,000 --> 00:35:53,360

electricity? According to this theory, they did. And once they had built enough pyramids to light

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00:35:53,360 --> 00:35:59,760

and power their civilization, they could stop. It's out there, but hey, it's a theory.

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00:36:03,680 --> 00:36:10,000

In the late 1990s, two American engineers make headlines when they suggest that the Egyptian

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00:36:10,000 --> 00:36:15,680

pyramids were used to generate power. But they may not be the first to propose this.

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00:36:16,480 --> 00:36:22,480

There are reports of a declassified KGB operation known as Project ISIS.

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00:36:23,120 --> 00:36:28,480

It allegedly takes place in the 1960s, and the purpose was to take a look at these

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00:36:28,480 --> 00:36:32,960

ancient Egyptian artifacts and knowledge to see if they would be of use to the Soviet Union

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militarily. One alleged KGB report from scientists on the Giza Plateau stated that during inspection

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of the wall segment, we noted an odd sensation. A magnetic repulsive force seemed to be emanating

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from the rock. We were unable to find any scientific explanation. In the 1960s, you have the Cuban

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Missile Crisis happening, and right around the same time, the KGB scientists are walking around Giza.

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In the late 1980s, as the Cold War rages on, the Russian Academy of Medical Scientists

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funds additional research into the power of the pyramids. These studies are performed by

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Ukrainian scientists and defense contractor Alexander Golod. According to his research,

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the pyramids do indeed have the ability to harness energy, but he doesn't think it's

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electrical power the Egyptians were trying to use. He thinks it was used for healing.

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As part of his research, Golod builds a series of pyramids across the Soviet Union.

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Golod builds over a dozen pyramids. Each one is bigger than the last,

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and inside he does various tests measuring their vibration frequencies

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and their ability to focus and direct energy. Golod finds that the shape and size of the

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pyramid dictates its energy field. He builds his 17th and largest pyramid 25 miles north of Moscow.

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It's a whopping 144 feet tall and weighs about 55 tons. Golod conducts a research experiment in

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conjunction with the Russian Air Force, which shows that the pyramid creates an energy field

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about a mile high, easily detected by the sensors on the aircraft. Golod next sets out to test the

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energy field's effect on humans. Golod brings all sorts of test subjects into his pyramids,

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but he's not yet sure why the Egyptians built theirs or what the pyramid energy is supposed to do.

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What he finds is that after spending time at the center of the pyramid,

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people will actually have a marked improvement on their health. So he publishes report after report

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about the pyramid's energy, promoting growth, health and longevity. He claims that the subject's

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blood tests prove that standing at the center of the pyramid would actually boost the immune system.

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Over the years, Golod shares his research with a select few. Russian athletes are known to visit

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these pyramids prior to major competitions to boost their energy and endurance. Russian cosmonauts

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are even reported to have brought water from Golod's pyramids up with them to the International

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Space Station to maintain their health. Golod's pyramids still regularly draw visitors from

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across the country who are eager to experience their alleged healing energy, and Golod is happy to

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provide access to pyramid-charged water or healing pyramid trinkets for a small fee.

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Could the very same health-inducing properties have also been sought by ancient Egypt's pharaohs?

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According to this theory, yes. Golod believes that the Egyptian pyramids were used for much of

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the same reason that he's using his pyramids today. In fact, he thinks they could have been used while

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the pharaohs were still alive. This could explain a few things like why each pyramid was built as

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00:39:58,880 --> 00:40:03,280

soon as the pharaoh was crowned. Perhaps the building was meant to be used during his lifetime,

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even before it was finished, to help grant him health and longevity. It also potentially explains

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00:40:09,280 --> 00:40:15,840

why there are a few other chambers in most pyramids. Like, why is there a queen's chamber while we

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00:40:15,840 --> 00:40:21,040

don't actually have evidence that a queen was buried there? Maybe she was allowed to receive

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00:40:21,040 --> 00:40:27,840

the pyramid's healing in her own chamber, but during her lifetime. But in death, all that power is

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reserved for the pharaoh himself. Everything focused on his mummified remains to protect and

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preserve him for all eternity. Ultimately, that's the one thing we know for sure the pyramids represent.

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Permanence, strength, whether they're actually sending immune-boosting energy or electrical power,

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00:40:48,560 --> 00:40:55,520

whether they're storing grain or serving as alien landmarks. None of this can be proven at the moment,

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but what we can say confidently is that the pyramids were built to last the test of time, and that they have.

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Archaeologists in Egypt have no shortage of work ahead of them. Over a hundred active dig sites

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are currently being investigated with many more to come. As new evidence is pulled from the

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desert sands, new truths may be revealed. I'm Lawrence Fishburne. Thank you for watching

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History's Greatest Mysteries.