

# ANCIENT SKIES

*"Come Search With Us!"*

## Official Logbook of the Ancient Astronaut Society

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### ANCIENT ASTRONAUT SOCIETY: A PROGRAM

By DR. HARRY O. RUPPE\*

It is with great pleasure that I accept the invitation to write a contribution to "Ancient Skies". I want to give some thought to what I feel is the main problem of this Society: to develop a balanced and coordinated program.

This is not too different from the goal to establish proof for any new concept in science: you check whether there is any contradiction to established knowledge (i.e. the probabilistic approach: the new concept could be right), and you try to find positive proof. For both possibilities, you should develop practical approaches and then plan a strategy for each approach, preferably by working groups. These groups should try to operate in cooperation with other scientific activities in the field, where it is not necessary that those other scientists agree fully with the main objective: they should just be sufficiently broadminded to find the question intriguing and not utterly impossible: I include myself - as should be well-known by now - amongst them.

This Society should be knit together by the usual, proven means: common objectives, challenging work, mutual respect, scientific credibility, an informative regular journal and (presently, just annually one) scientific meetings. The journal is no easy task these times: funding is just one problem. The other consists in quality of publications. I just state the obvious saying that within the scientific community we have an uphill struggle. We would have to establish a platform on which any scientist can join without fear of losing the respect of his peers, not to mention his self-respect. Too much nonsense has been published in our field; happy about any support we could obtain, our criticism has often been lulled - I need not go into this any further.

For the probabilistic approach, I see the following possibilities: we should continue to investigate ancient myths for elements, which we can explain with our new hypothesis. We should compare our explanation with that given by the traditional experts, and draw conclusions - if possible, together with them. In case of controversy, we should not hesitate to publish both points of view in order to permit the reader to draw his own conclu-

sions. Let us humbly admit that we work in interpretations - but so does anyone else!

What I have said here, goes - cum grano salis - for written records, too. I would also include drawings, works of art, etc. Obviously, we will but rarely be concerned with new facts, rather with a new interpretation of known ones! We will not exclude the new discovery, the artifact proving our hypothesis - but frankly, I do not expect this to be derived from such work. Earth climate, geophysics and human history were too violent to leave much hope.

Very basic to our assumption is the existence of extraterrestrial culture(s). So we should follow relevant scientific work closely:

- how did planets originate?
- have other suns planets?
- what is life?
- how did life originate?
- how did intelligence originate?
- will intelligent life survive? For how long?
- do we expect other planets to provide conditions suitable for life?
- under which conditions will "culture" arise from "life"?

I am well aware of the educated speculations going on in these fields. Even formulae have been derived, giving numerical answers. Let's be very skeptical - inputs being guesses, the reply is not much better. But we could help getting the fundamental questions in better perspective, and obtaining a more clear view on the relevance of partial answers: what, for example, is the importance of the more recent discovery of organic molecules in space? Of what consequences are Viking results?

Let me now turn to what I would label "certainty" or "proof": this could come from a firm and proper artifact, which I would rather expect - if at all - from astronomical activities: space and some of the surfaces of celestial bodies within the solar system provide such a benign environment that conservation of artifacts seems more probable.

Communication via radio with extraterrestrial intelligences is not utterly impossible - CETI is a relevant activity in this field. We should be aware of those developments. On the other hand, I would not like to even consider so-called "occult" means of contact - only if the basic soundness of such methods were established beyond reasonable doubt should we make use of them also.

I was invited by my friend Erich von Daeniken to write a contribution on "Interstellar Flight" for a forthcoming book. Much to my own surprise I had to revise my quite hard, old position of "impossible" - I found now (based largely on work performed within the British Interplanetary Society, under the direction of Mr. Alan Bond) that minimum interstellar missions to no more than about 10 lightyears distance become marginally feasible, based on nuclear fusion power.

(Continued on next page)

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So I would like to suggest that interstellar flight possibilities should be considered from time to time - this topic is of importance both from the point of going there and from the point of being visited.

This brings me to the subject of UFOs: I know of hardly any other subject where so much nonsense abounds. But could there be an element of reality in all this noise? Not very probable, I would argue, if you read Philip Klass' book "UFOs Explained" - but I would be willing to listen if information "pro" were presented on as high a level. So, possibly, we have here another job for a "task force".

My survey of ways to establish probabilities and certainty is not necessarily complete, and I made no particular attempt to be so. I rather wanted to show rational, systematic approaches, to come to better grips with our main topic, the Ancient Astronaut Hypothesis. A task at hand would be to outline and complete this approach in chart form, where names could be attached to the topics; the persons so chosen would have to try to form small, broad "task groups", which then formulate programs (goals and ways of realizing those, against a time schedule). These would have to be (at least, broadly) coordinated between the groups, since some overlap is unavoidable (and desirable, if I may say so).

So this is the big job ahead - but I'm afraid less will not suffice in order to make proper use of the best tool ever developed by mankind: the scientific method. Presently, the Ancient Astronaut Society has a few individuals working largely at random in subject areas where they expect fun or hope for relevant results. These individuals have laid a good base from which a systematic, coordinated, long-term investigation could originate. If the Ancient Astronaut Society cannot accept this challenge - who can?

## CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!

The Ancient Astronaut Society accepts Dr. Ruppe's challenge and we will gather, analyze and interpret our evidence in a manner which should satisfy most scientists. We will, however, deviate from traditional science in one respect - we will always keep an open mind! Gene M. Phillips, Founder

RECENTLY, Dr. Harry O. Ruppe wrote to Ancient Skies as follows:

I would like to draw attention to a recent publication (1). Based on reasonable assumptions, the main conclusions are:

1. Number of technological civilizations in our galaxy, at present:  $\sim 5 \times 10^8$
  2. Average spacing of technological civilizations in solar vicinity:  $\sim 35$  lightyears
  3. Average time between visits of advanced technological civilizations to our solar system, at the present time:  $\sim 7.5 \times 10^5$  years
  4. Total number of visits to our solar system by advanced technological civilizations:  $\sim 650$ , during the last  $500 \times 10^6$  years
- Of course, all these figures are "best estimates" and in no way firm numbers. Still, I feel they are of great interest to our work.

- (1) Journal of the British Interplanetary Society, Vol. 29, Nos. 7 & 8, July-Aug. 1976, p. 445-464, James R. Wertz, The Human Analogy and the Evolution of Extraterrestrial Civilizations.

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## FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE IN BRAZIL

The Fourth World Conference on Ancient Astronauts will be held at the Hotel Nacional Rio, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on June 22-26, 1977. The official languages will be Portuguese and English, with simultaneous translation facilities.

The Nacional Rio is a modern, first-class resort hotel with deluxe accommodations, fully-equipped rooms (air-conditioned, radio, television, telephone), with a large swimming pool, varied bars and excellent restaurants, and an ocean-front beach. The Hotel has a large, modern conference hall with a capacity of 2,000.

Rio de Janeiro, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, is a world-renowned resort city with white, sandy beaches, lofty, gray mountains and wide, clean boulevards. The combination of stately colonial buildings and bustling modern structures can be described only as strikingly picturesque. The city itself, with all its charms and attractions, will lend to the Conference a mood of relaxation, which is so essential for the minds of the participants to concentrate and function at their best during the working hours of the Conference.

A group flight will leave Zurich, Switzerland on Wednesday, June 15, 1977 and return on Wednesday, June 29, 1977. For details write to AAS, 8906 Bonstetten, Zurich, Switzerland.

There will also be a group flight leaving Chicago on Saturday, June 20, 1977. Persons on this flight will have an option to either return to Chicago on Saturday, June 27, 1977, or, immediately following the Conference, to depart Rio for La Paz, Bolivia to begin a Society Field Expedition of Peru and Bolivia. This expedition will explore the mysterious ruins of Tiahuanaco, Bolivia, and in Peru, and ancient Inca capital of Cuzco, the lost city of Machu Picchu and other fascinating sites, and fly over the plain of Nazca, as well as visit the modern cities of La Paz, Bolivia, and Lima, Peru. Persons interested in either the Conference flight from Chicago or the extension to Peru and Bolivia should write to AAS, 600 Talcott Rd., Park Ridge, IL 60068.

## ANGEL ARCHITECTS?

World-traveller Richard Halliburton, writing about Machu Picchu in 1937, states: "Many of the huge granite blocks used for building the city (situated 2,000 feet above the canyon floor) were quarried at the bottom of the canyon, and dragged up these terrific cliffs. Such a task today, with all our modern machinery, would be very difficult. How did the ancient Incas manage it? The present-day Indians say their ancestors had angel architects to help." (Emphasis added.) Richard Halliburton's Book of Marvels: The Occident.

## NEW BOOKS:

GODS AND SPACEMEN IN GREECE AND ROME, by W. Raymond Drake. Sphere, London (Pb).

JESUS CHRIST: HEIR TO THE ASTRONAUTS, by Gerhard R. Steinhauser. Pocket Books, New York (pb).

THE SIRIUS MYSTERY, by Robert K.G. Temple. Sidgwick & Jackson, London. Mr. Temple is an astronomer and a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. Seven years in the writing, the book examines the question of whether Earth was visited by intelligent beings from a planet in the system of the star Sirius, by examining the beliefs of the Dogons, a tribe in Mali, Africa, and their uncanny knowledge of the dwarf star Sirius B.

THE FIRE CAME BY, by Baxter and Atkins. Doubleday, New York. An analysis of the cataclysmic explosion in Siberia in 1908, now believed by many scientists to have been nuclear in origin.

## SOCIETY PREPARES FOR MAYAN ADVENTURE

With over thirty people participating, the Ancient Astronaut Society's group will travel deep into the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico to visit many archaeological sites, some still virtually untouched by man.

The itinerary, prepared by Society Member Enrique Burmeister of ABC Travel Service, Mexico City, will take the adventurers on a ten day trek to three cities and eleven archaeological ruins. The tour will originate in Merida on Friday, November 19, 1976 and end on Sunday, November 28.

After arriving in Merida, the group will proceed to the ruins at Chichen Itza. This center of ancient Mayan culture, is believed by many scholars to have been founded before the birth of Christ. The style of architecture at Chichen Itza was influenced by two major cultures - the Maya, and the Toltec.

Great artistic and architectural advances were made by the Toltecs. They constructed the Temple of the Warriors and introduced the column to Mayan structure.

The inhabitants abandoned the city and many buildings collapsed as they deteriorated. However, the city has been restored by Mexican and American scholars.

Important sites at Chichen Itza include the 78 foot high Pyramid known as El Castillo, which is arranged as a great calendar. The total number of steps from the four sides, and the platform on top, equals 365.

The Temple of Kukulcan rests on top of El Castillo. When archaeologists began to reconstruct the pyramids, a second temple was discovered under Kukulcan. Today, it is accessible through a long gallery. It is perfectly preserved and looks as it did when the ancient priests abandoned it one thousand years ago!

A very interesting building is the Caracol, Chichen Itza's only round structure, also called the observatory. Astronomical data was gathered by looking out of sighting holes located in a chamber at the top of the dome. Besides being the oldest Toltec-style building in Chichen Itza, the Caracol even has a spiral staircase inside.

After Chichen Itza, the Society group will visit the relatively unexplored areas of Balancanche and Dzibilchaltun as part of the journey to Uxmal. From Uxmal, the group embarks by jeep over rough clay roads through an arid scrub forest. After this treacherous journey the explorers will arrive at Kabah, Sayil, Xlapak and finally, Labna, with its exquisite arch.

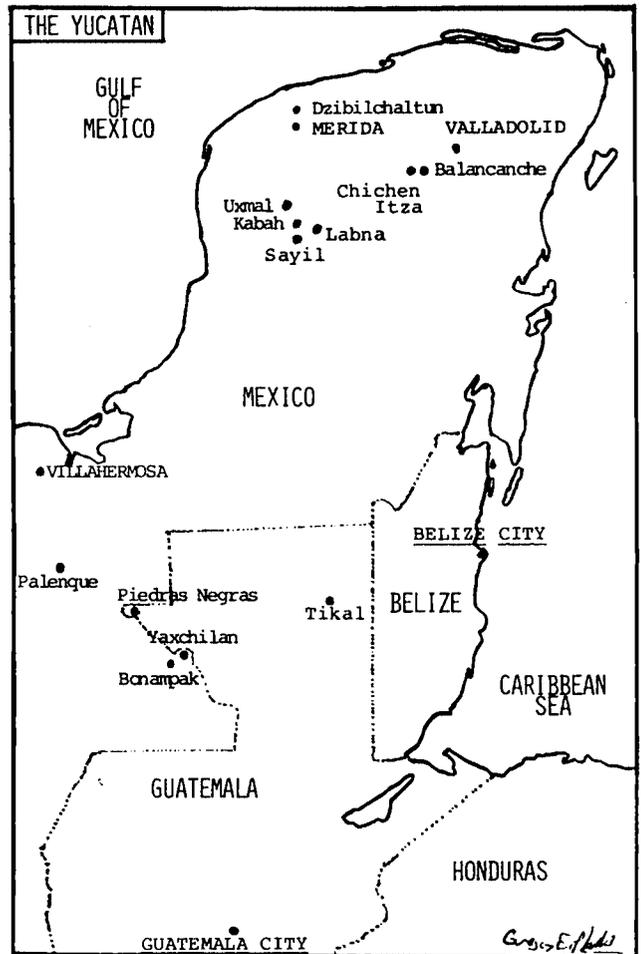
Uxmal is considered to be the oldest of the Mayan cities in the Yucatan, occupying an area of about 250 acres. Again, the Mayan builders were influenced by the Toltecs, resulting in beautiful architecture and decorative buildings.

Uxmal's main pyramid, instead of being built along classical Mayan design, is oval in shape. Called the Sooth-Sayer Pyramid, this structure is actually composed of five pyramids which were constructed on top of one another during rebuildings. Each pyramid's temple is intact, and contains many ornaments and masks.

The Governor's Palace is another architectural masterpiece, which features a ten foot high mosaic frieze. It is comprised of almost 20,000 dressed stones, each weighing between 55 and 185 pounds.

The Nunnery Quadrangle is a magnificent building made of white coral limestone, the same material used for all of Uxmal's structures. The Quadrangle consists of four groups of edifices surrounding a squared courtyard. Mosaics also decorate the Nunnery Quadrangle, and figures such as the plumed serpent, sculptured human forms, and a canopied throne have been carved in the stone.

The group will then fly to Villahermosa to visit the LaVenta Museum and the Maya Tabasco Museum. The open air museum at LaVenta features



artifacts placed in their natural surroundings amid jungle growth. Olmec stone heads up to nine feet high can be found here and first-hand theories can be made as to what they represent. Carvings on the heads appear to resemble either space helmets or wrestling helmets. All of the heads have negroid features, which include thick lips, a flat nose and deep-set eyes. One Olmec head even has teeth! Other carvings include stone relief work depicting Mayas presenting objects to one another. Many of these works are being deteriorated by the elements to the point of indistinguishableness.

After Villahermosa, the tour reaches its apex - Palenque. This relatively small collection of excavated and unexcavated temples and pyramids is located at the foot of the dense tropical jungle. One of the most knowledgeable guides at Palenque, Lito Morales, said that "there is a waterfall deep in the jungle as big as Niagara". Perhaps this time the group will be able to see it first-hand!

The existence of Palenque was first recorded by the Spaniards in the 17th Century. Unfortunately, they lost their records of the discovery and the ruins were forgotten. In 1840, John L. Stephens, an archaeology buff, and Frederick Catherwood, an artist, rediscovered Palenque on an expedition and wrote two books about their findings. Among the structures at Palenque are: the Palace, and the Temples of the Sun, Cross, Foliated Cross, and Temple of the Inscriptions.

The Palace is 200 yards long, and rests on a 40 foot high terrace. A four-storeyed observation tower stands in the middle of the complex and has been restored. The Palace has many carvings show-

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 ing Mayan figures and ornamental objects. An architectural feature originally thought to exist only in China, the corbel or "false" arch, is used extensively at the Palace ruins. The arch is not rounded at the top, but flat.

The Temple of the Inscriptions, so named because of the proliferation of Mayan glyphs on the walls, contains the most conclusive evidence to support the ancient astronaut theory. This Temple, which is 75 feet high, was believed to be a solid structure until Dr. Alberto Ruz Lhuillier, a Mexican archaeologist, found an entrance to a passageway at its summit in 1949. He had noticed saucer-sized stone plugs on the Temple floor, and while removing them, had found a pit filled with stones. Complete excavation of the passageway required twelve months of tedious work, spanning a four year period. The Ruz Lhuillier party had to dig more than 65 feet beneath the Temple floor. In June, 1952, Ruz Lhuillier discovered a cavity, to the left of the newly dug-out stairway, which had been blocked by a triangular stone door. He looked in, and as he later recalled, "The interior sparkled and glistened with the effect of snow crystals. Delicate festoons of stalactites hung like tassels of a curtain...above the floor was an enormous carved slab in perfect condition...." Ruz Lhuillier had discovered the Palenque Slab. (See figure at right.)

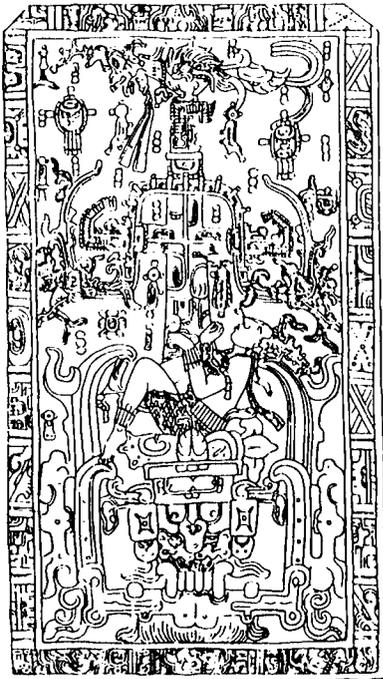
Measuring ten feet long, seven feet wide, and eight inches thick, the slab weighs five tons and is of limestone. On the slab is carved the now-famous relief which Erich von Daniken calls a "space traveller". A Mayan is shown sitting in a very unusual position. His feet and hands appear to be working levers and controls. The man's body is in a position that suggests great speed. Also, he appears to be wearing a protective suit complete with cuffs and helmet, and is seated on a padded cushion.

The Society group will have the opportunity to re-experience Ruz

Lhuillier's fantastic discovery and to behold the original Palenque Slab, which makes the tortuous climb and descent worth the effort.

Smaller temples stand on unexcavated hills where the outlines of tiers suggest large pyramids. One of these temples is located near the Temple of the Inscriptions and is not restored. On visiting Palenque last year with the Society's first Mayan adventure, sea shells were discovered at this site. Also, after Ruz Lhuillier's expedition, more holes have been found in temple floors and it is suspected that more finds will be made.

Because of Palenque's importance, Thursday, November 25 will be completely devoted to exploring the ruins. The Society group will have ample time to observe all of Palenque's sites and to visit Ildefonso Vega, an artist and sculptor who reproduces various Palenque objects and reliefs in stone. November 26 will be a free day at Palenque,



but an all-day optional charter flight in small planes (4 passenger Cessna aircraft) to visit Bonampak and Yaxchilan, will be offered.

Bonampak, discovered in 1946, is the location of the best primitive murals in North America. The ruins are in a dense rain forest and include the Temple of the Murals. Yaxchilan is larger than Palenque and considered to be just as beautiful, with jungle-choked sculptures and bas reliefs.

Reservations are being accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and anyone wishing to join this experience of a lifetime should contact the Society office immediately. Jorge M. Phillips

#### SUGGESTED READING FOR MAYAN ADVENTURE:

IN SEARCH OF ANCIENT GODS - Erich von Daniken (pb)  
 WORLD OF THE MAYAS - Victor W. von Hagen (pb)  
 IN SEARCH OF THE MAYA - Robert L. Brunhouse (pb)  
 A GUIDE TO ANCIENT MAYAN RUINS - C. Bruce Hunter (pb)  
 MEXICAN CITIES OF THE GODS - Hans Helfritz  
 THE BURIED PAST - Henri-Paul Eydoux  
 MEXICAN AND CENTRAL AMERICAN MYTHOLOGY - Irene

Nicholson  
 ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARCHAEOLOGY - Larousse  
 ANCIENT AMERICA - Jonathan N. Leonard  
 SCIENCE DIGEST - August, 1976  
 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC - Several issues - consult index  
 PRIMERA MESA REDONDA DE PALENQUE, Parts 1 and 2.

Robert Louis Stevenson School  
 ART, ICONOGRAPHY & DYNASTIC HISTORY OF PALENQUE,  
 Part 3. Robert Louis Stevenson School  
 MAYA SCULPTURE, Lederer, Street & Zeus Co.

FIFTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, I spent five years in Egypt and Palestine and became deeply immersed in ancient history. I was there when the tomb of Tutankhamen was opened. When I first saw the Sphinx and Pyramids, the former was drifted up with sand and the head dress was striated with wind and sand erosion. Very shortly afterwards the department of antiquities went to work and cleared all the drift sand away and filled the erosion with compo. That work was carried out by both male and female labour, some filling and a huge chain of people carrying baskets of sand, anything up to 100 lbs. I was there, I saw it happen. When it was all finished, I pondered that huge monument, cut from the solid limestone cliff upon which stand Khufu and Kephren and wondered how the archaeologists would explain how such an excavation was made with copper tools.

Having always been intrigued by the biblical story of the Sons of God, giants on the earth and in general, the generations of Adam, I formed the opinion even then, before the worthy Von Daniken was born, that a greater civilization existed on Earth, founded by visitors from space. It amazes me that Hoerbiger's theory is so consistently overlooked in connection with the so-called Deluge, which would have drowned out all traces of any great central colonization located anywhere in the tropics. E. Dance, News Road, Werombi, N.S.W., Australia.

YUGOSLAVIA was a good choice for the first encounter between Western and Eastern countries to discuss the ancient astronaut hypothesis and the Third World Conference was an extremely interesting confrontation because it merged both technical and speculative currents on the theory. The excellent organization of the Conference by Dr. Josip Kotnik and the splendid quarters of the Hotel Omorika enabled all of us to return to our home countries with enjoyable memories of the event.

Probably the most important role of the Ancient Astronaut Society is to promote a universal understanding and cooperation to throw light on, or at least to ignite a spark on, the past of our planet, which traditional science does not care to expound upon and chooses to ignore. Dolly Di Reburdone, Via De Cristofaro 12, Catania 95126, Italy.