



ANCIENT SKIES

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COSMIC TRADITION OF THE ANCIENT MYSTERY SCHOOLS

BY ANDREW TOMAS*

The Mystery Schools of antiquity claimed to be the guardians of a secret science to which nothing was impossible. The sages of these esoteric schools went to inconceivable extremes to make certain that their knowledge should be preserved in symbolism and allegories unintelligible to the profane; the uninitiated.

The Greek philosopher, Socrates, assures us that the founders of the Mysteries were "men of great genius". The most enlightened thinkers of ancient history such as Plato, Plutarch, Pindar, Euripides, Aristophanes, Cicero and others joined their voices in praising the institution of the Mysteries. Classical writers reveal that there was a Hierarchy of Knowledge in the Mysteries which was unknown to the outside world. What is more, the different Mystery Schools of the past were united by common knowledge in spite of the distances which separated their countries.

The Mystery Schools can be defined as academies, because the progress through them was graded and depended upon individual attainment.

Plutarch, a Greek writer of the 1st century A.D., affirms that it was Isis who established the early Mysteries of Egypt and gave revelations about the universe by means of symbolism thousands of years ago. Isis is often depicted with wide wings landing from the sky. Both she and her husband-brother, Osiris, appear to have had some connection with the star Sirius on which the Egyptian calendrical system was based.

Isis left a declaration identifying her as a cosmic civilizer. Plutarch recorded it in his work On Isis and Osiris: "There is no place in the universe where I have not offered to bestow my benefits and make known my discoveries."

The scriptures of ancient Egypt state that Isis and Osiris were accompanied by Thoth, who taught men the arts and sciences on Earth for 3,226 years. He is said to have hidden "books of wisdom" in a crypt.

According to the Phoenician chronicler, Sanchoniathon (11th century B.C.), Thoth had a skyship "in which he rested while he flew", suggesting weightlessness in space. Anyhow, the god is reputed to have made a long voyage to his home star after completing his work on our planet.

The Greek historian Herodotus, in his Histories, actually mentions the time of the appearance of Isis and Osiris in prehistoric Egypt. During his journey to Egypt in 455 B.C. Herodotus was told by

the priests that the gods came to the land of the Nile 15,000 years before Amasis, who reigned in Egypt about a century before Herodotus' time. He was a reliable historian and when faced with such a distant date, Herodotus made the following remark: "The priests claim to be quite certain of these dates because of their written records."

The so-called Emerald Tables of Hermes, or Thoth, came to medieval Europe presumably from the Middle East as its language is old Phoenician, a Semitic language like the Hebrew. The Tables were accepted by the alchemists of the epoch. Although worded in Phoenician, the original is thought to be ancient Egyptian. Actually, an Egyptian copy of the Emerald Tables of great age was found in the tomb of a priest at Thebes on the Nile in 1828. It is now part of the Leiden Papyrus, preserved at Leiden, the Netherlands. An opening sentence reads: "What is above is like what is below, and what is below is like what is above..." A similarity between the infinitely small nuclear world with its electrons whirling around protons and the planets revolving around the Sun has been noted by science.

Another passage: "Separate the earth from fire, the fine from the crude carefully with great skill" suggests isolating atomic energy from matter.

The Greek philosopher Democritus (5th century B.C.) is considered to be the founder of the atomic theory. However, it should not be overlooked that he studied for seven years under the wise priests of Egypt who may have had the original Emerald Tables. Another source of Democritus' instruction has also been disregarded - his Phoenician mentor Moschus, who had a more perfect image of the atom than Democritus himself.

These teachers imparted to him great wisdom, as we can see from Democritus' postulates: "In reality there is nothing but atoms and space"; "Markings on the Moon come from high mountains and deep valleys"; "There are more planets than the ones we see"; and finally, "The Milky Way is a vast swarm of distant stars." One can hardly believe today that these scientific "assumptions" were made 2,500 years ago.

The memory of the Egyptian god, Thoth, eventually reached Greece where he was known as Hermes (Mercury) portrayed in a winged hat and winged sandals, with a winged staff around which two serpents are entwined. These symbols probably referred to his astronomical abilities, for he was "a messenger of the gods" in the stars.

The Grecian Mysteries were established by the legendary Orpheus, who brought them from Egypt. Orpheus, son of Apollo, is supposed to have been the inventor of the lyre. He was the possessor of secret knowledge that was thousands of years ahead of his time. According to J.E. Gore's Astronomical Essays (London, 1907), "among the Greeks, Orpheus is said to have been the first to consider the probability of life in other worlds."

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The first-century Greek biographer Plutarch was an initiate of the Mysteries of Dionysus and a priest of Apollo. He is the reputed author of the Vision of Aridaeus, which describes a swift voyage in space traveling as smoothly "as a ship in calm weather." Remarkable astronomical observations were made during this space flight: "Aridaeus saw nothing but the stars - they were, however, of a stupendous size and at enormous distances from one another." Was this correct scientific information, recorded in the first century of our era, a revelation from the storehouse of the Mysteries?

The extant writings of Orpheus and Pythagoras state that the gods of antiquity instructed the ancient peoples in astronomy. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras (586-506 B.C.) founded his school in Cretona in southern Italy under the sign of a five-pointed star which he brought from Egypt. The Pythagorean Academy had three grades. Pythagoras correctly conceived the Earth as a globe. Remarkably, he believed that each star was a world in itself, floating on the ocean of cosmic space.

The Essenes of Israel were a mystical fraternity described by the Jewish historians Philo Judaeus and Josephus Flavius, who had personal knowledge of their communities.

The Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran offer a wide field of study of the Essene beliefs. Importantly, Josephus compares the Essenes with the Pythagoreans. They also had three degrees in their system of instruction and practiced similar ascetic discipline.

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which represent the earliest copies of all biblical books as well as of the scriptures that were arbitrarily dropped by the Jews at the Council of Jamnia in A.D.90, and then by the Christian Church in A.D.397, are found the two Books of Enoch, called the Ethiopic and Slavonic. Book I contains a treatise on the Courses of the Heavenly Luminaries and Book II on the Signs of the Zodiac. Both books were revered by the Essene Brotherhood. Book II, or the Secrets of Enoch, includes an amazing story. Enoch once met "two tall men such as he had not seen on Earth" who told him that "he would ascend with them into heaven."

In his flight Enoch saw clouds below their "celestial chariot" which soon receded as the craft rose above the atmosphere. Eventually Enoch met "rulers of the stars" face to face. Is this a historical account of a contact of a man of Earth with astronauts from another world in space?

The Mysteries of Mithra, which originated in Persia, spread widely through the Roman Empire when Christianity first appeared. They had seven degrees related to the seven planetary spheres.

The cosmic tone of the Mithraic Mysteries can be gleaned from the Zodiacal constellations which decorated the grotto temples of Mithra and from the mantles covered with stars which the initiates wore.

The Eleusian Mysteries of Greece, which descended from the Orphic and Egyptian Mystery Schools, were founded in 1423 B.C. While rising Christianity was embraced by the lower classes of society in the Roman Empire, the Mysteries accepted only men of culture and education.

The tenets of the Mysteries were continued by the philosophers of the so-called Neoplatonic School - Ammonias Saccas (A.D.160-242), Plotinus (A.D.205-270), Porphyry (A.D.233-304) and Iamblichus (d.A.D.330).

Ammonias Saccas of Alexandria was the founder of Neoplatonism who propagated the basic teaching of the Mysteries. Although he left no writings, his disciple, Plotinus, recorded the doctrines of his mentor.

Plotinus' writings and lectures on Neoplatonism were of such excellence that they captured the Platonic Academy at Athens and lasted until the time of its closure in A.D.529. Although born in Egypt, Plotinus lived and taught most of his life in Rome. In fact he had the appellation of "a voice of the Mysteries in Rome."

The advanced scientific views maintained by Plotinus in the Third Century of our era are disclosed by the following thought from one of his writings: "nor is Earth alone adorned with an endless variety of plants and animals, the celestial spaces are, indeed, filled with illustrious souls." A positive statement of this kind could have come only from one who had access to the secret science of the Ancient Mysteries.

Porphyry studied in Rome under Plotinus. He produced a work on the Life of Pythagoras whose way of life he tried to imitate. Iamblichus, a disciple of Porphyry, who died shortly after Emperor Constantine made Christianity a state religion, was the author of On the Pythagorean Life and On the Egyptian Mysteries reflecting the philosophy of his teacher and predecessors.

While the doctrines of the Mysteries were carefully disseminated among the worthy candidates from the limited upper class of Roman society throughout the Mediterranean region, the political power of the new religion of Christianity was growing among the less educated majority. Finally in A.D.364 the Emperor Valentinian, motivated by his attachment to the new Christian faith, issued a decree ordering the closure of the Mysteries.

However, the Mysteries were so deeply rooted in the Roman intelligentsia and the Academy of Plato at Athens that the tradition continued for another 165 years when Emperor Justinian at last succeeded in closing the ancient Academy in A.D.529. The policy of the Athenian Academy makes it one of the greatest scholarly institutions in world history. The guidelines of the Academy were recorded in writing by Cicero: "The characteristic of the Academy is never to interpose one's judgment, to approve what seems more probable, to compare together different opinions, to see what may be advanced on either side, and to leave one's listeners free to judge without pretending to dogmatize."

A successor of the Neoplatonists endeavored hard to preserve the system of the Ancient Mysteries. Proclus (A.D.410-485) was the head of the Platonic Academy when it was nearly nine centuries old in his time. His biography indicates affiliation with the Mystery Schools of Egypt and Babylon. Proclus' writings mention the following astronomical facts that were unknown or considered inconceivable in modern history before Galileo, Herschel, Hubble and Humason:

- Each planet or star is a world.
- The planets all rotate on their own axes.
- The planets have invisible satellites which revolve around them.
- The Moon is made of earth.
- Certain stars have planets.
- The stars are all ablaze.
- The Milky Way is a conglomeration of distant stars.

This correct knowledge of astronomy of Proclus in the Fifth Century, the opinion of Plotinus about the multiplicity of inhabited worlds in space, the tales of Enoch regarding his trips into space, the stellar voyage of Aridaeus and other evidence tend to corroborate the standpoint that the Mysteries were the custodians of a cosmic tradition. Alas, the Ancient Mysteries disappeared in the Dark Ages leaving faint echoes of their enlightening activity over the course of centuries.

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THE EASTER ISLAND - PERU CONNECTION

BY WILLIAM TRAVIS*

That there was a direct physical connection between ancient Peru and Easter Island seemed to have escaped the notice of those ethnographers, archaeologists and philologists who have spent their entire lives researching these territories. A great deal, in fact, has been written concerning the cultural link that seemed to embrace both vanished civilizations, but this has been based largely upon "accidental civilization" brought about by oceanic drift. Thor Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki being a case in point. But the conclusive evidence of one-time physical contact is very plain to see, at least for oceanographers who, almost one hundred years ago, discovered a submerged peninsula running out into the abyssal Pacific from the region of Pisco Bay on Peru's west coast, to an above-water reef area named Sala-y-Gomez and thence to Easter Island, where it joined the north-south Easter Island Cordillera. This submerged peninsula is aptly named the "Nazca Ridge." In this connection it is worth noting that Mdme. Helena Blavatsky, author of the controversial Secret Doctrine (1888), also refers to this land-bridge and states that a major city once existed some thirty miles west of Easter Island, which ties in with the latest ocean-bed surveys. Either this voluble lady was extremely lucky in her guess-work, or she was privy to information not then available to 19th Century Western science.

Both Peru and Easter Island are famed for their respective enigmatic glyphs, but because several thousand miles of Pacific Ocean separate them in space, and a factor of several thousand in relative size, little attention has been given to their interrelation or common meaning. Yet a close examination shows several of the more puzzling Peruvian megaglyphs to be quite similar to their Easter Island counterparts.

The surviving glyphs of Easter Island are found only on a few remaining wooden tablets, some twenty-two in number, which are now scattered throughout museums and religious archives around the globe. These boards have the name of "rongo-rongo", which has been variously translated as "singing" boards, or "story" boards, but which in fact means "history-teaching" boards. [Ed. Note: For more on the "rongo-rongo" boards, see Ancient Skies 8:6.]

Figure 1 depicts a two-inch wide character found on one of the "rongo-rongo" tablets. A comparison of this with the 450 foot wide marking on the Peruvian Plain of Nazca shown in Figure 2 reveals that the two are almost identical.

Another example of the Peru/Easter Island link is a comparison of certain "rongo-rongo" glyphs with the famed "Trident", or "Candelabra", at the Bay of Pisco in Peru, some 120 miles to the northwest of the Nazca Plain. Although somewhat more esoteric, the similarity of the examples shown in Figures 3 and 4 is readily apparent. Figure 3 shows two glyphs from the Easter Island script, some one inch high. Figure 4 depicts the famous 700 foot high Trident in the sand-covered bluff above Pisco Bay.

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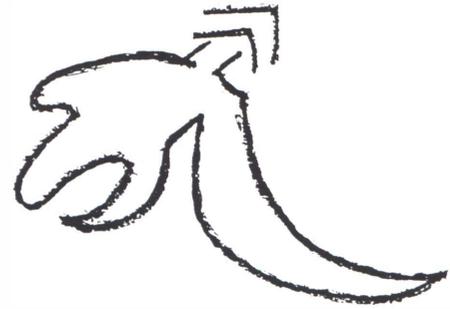


Figure 1. Easter Island glyph.

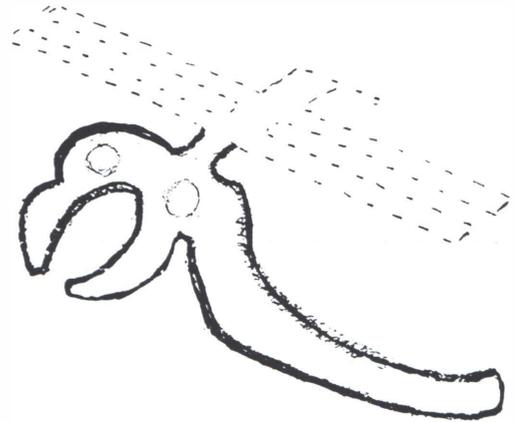


Figure 2. Portion of marking on Plain of Nazca, Peru. The "eyes" are less distinct and may have been added.

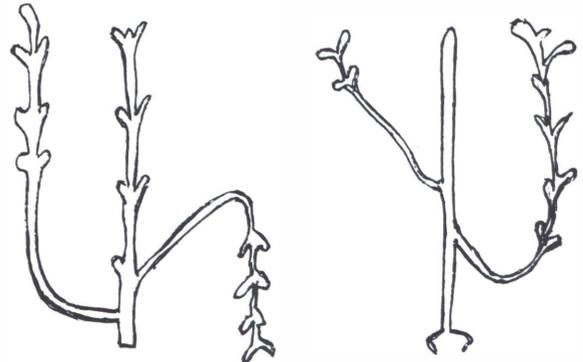


Figure 3. Easter Island script.

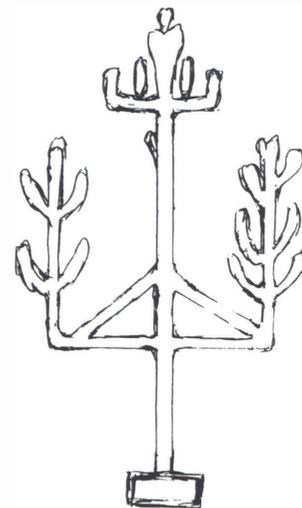


Figure 4. "Trident" marking in sand-covered bluff at Pisco Bay, Peru.

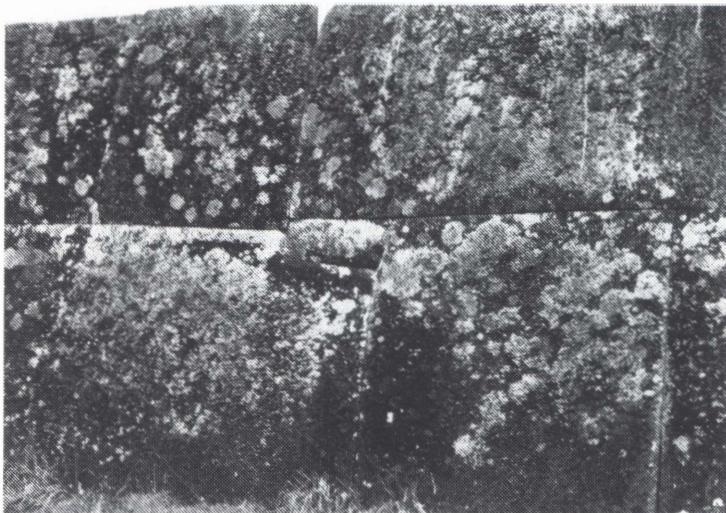
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While most writers on the subject have assumed that the Trident points directly to the Plain of Nazca, situated to the southeast of Pisco, its main axis actually is orientated roughly 5° west of geographic north. [Ed.Note: For more on the Trident, see Ancient Skies 5:1 and 5:2].

But if the Trident does not point to Nazca, nor even to Tiahuanaco, which is still further to the southeast, what then? I believe that the Peruvian megaglyph is indeed a version of the Easter Island miniglyph symbology having the meaning of "Superior Beings" in the area, as the Easter Island glyphs are interpreted. Until some new factors come to light, I must refrain from further speculation.

[Ed.Note: See the uncanny similarity of the two stone walls shown in the accompanying photographs. The top photo shows a section of a wall on Easter Island, and the bottom photo shows a section of a wall at Ollantaytambo, Peru. Both photos were taken by Gene M. Phillips.]



MYSTERIES OF THE CRYSTAL SKULLS REVEALED, by Bowen Nocerino and Shapiro. Available in oversize paperback from J & S Aquarian Networking, P.O.Box 1395, Pacifica, CA 94044 USA. Photographs and descriptions of eight known crystal skulls, including the famous Mitchell-Hedges skull. The book delves into parapsychology, metaphysics and psychic phenomena, as well as archaeology, anthropology and crystallography. THE GREAT PYRAMID SPEAKS TO YOU, by Joseph R. Gill. Available in hardcover from Philosophical Library, Inc., 200 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019 USA. A study in "mathematical archaeology", with computations, formulas and diagrams of the Great Pyramid.

THE SUBJECT OF HARRY LABELSON'S article in Ancient Skies 17:5, "The Search for Ancient Aquanauts", was something absolutely new to me. It is amazing what research has done. Although I had read about the Dogon Tribe of Mali and their uncanny knowledge of the Sirius star system, the entire article was most engrossing.

The article by Len Farra, "Genesis Seven", in the same issue was also most interesting. I have long known of the magic of mystical numbers, especially the "7", and having been born and bred in the East I have come to believe in numbers. Most people might regard this as superstition, but there is no getting away from the fact that numbers have played an important part in the world's main religions.

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BERLIN WORLD CONFERENCE August 23-24, 1991. Members who wish to attend the next World Conference of the Society at the Hotel Berlin in Berlin, Germany must register directly with: Ancient Astronaut Society, Baselstrasse 1, 4532 Feldbrunnen/SO, SWITZERLAND. The Conference fee is 160 German marks and the Banquet price is 56 German marks. Due to the overwhelming advance registration for the Conference, there are no longer any rooms available at the Hotel Berlin and you must make your own accommodations at a nearby hotel.

MEMBER EXPEDITION TO GERMANY is still being planned, with departure from Chicago O'Hare on Sunday August 11 through Sunday August 25, 1991. Included in the itinerary are Frankfurt, Heidelberg, the Rhine River valley with its intriguing castles, the Moselle River valley, Trier, Koblenz, Bonn, Cologne and Berlin. A detailed itinerary and prices are available from the Society Headquarters.

20TH ANNIVERSARY WORLD CONFERENCE will be held at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada USA on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, August 2, 3 and 4, 1993. Arrival date is Sunday, August 1 and departure date is Thursday, August 5. Prices will be available early in 1992. The Imperial Palace is located in the heart of the Las Vegas "strip", just across the street from Caesars Palace and The Mirage. Make your plans now to be a part of this exciting 20th Birthday Celebration!



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