



# ANCIENT SKIES

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## Official Logbook of the Ancient Astronaut Society

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### NEW LIGHT ON STONEHENGE AND MACHU PICCHU

BY ALAN F. ALFORD\*

In June 1996, English Heritage made an astonishing announcement - they revealed that the earliest phase of Stonehenge, previously dated to 3000 BC, had now been dated to 8000 BC.(1) The evidence for this amazing claim is a radiocarbon dating from charcoal (formerly pine trees), which was found in numerous circular pits measuring 4 feet across and 5 feet deep. What could be the significance of such a remote date? A thesis published by the chief archaeologist, Dr. Geoffrey Wainwright, suggests that 20 feet high wooden "totem poles" were erected and worshipped at the site. However, this ignores the fact that Stonehenge is situated in a unique position for the eight key points of lunar observation.(2) It is therefore too much of a coincidence to believe that a group of primitive people just happened to select this particular place for religious worship. On the contrary, the "totem poles" of "Woodhenge" must surely have been astronomical markers, forerunners of what was to come just over 5,000 years later.

The new dating of Stonehenge to 8000 BC takes us back to a most interesting period in human prehistory, for it was approximately at that time, according to the geological evidence, that the Great Sphinx was carved at Giza in Egypt.(3) The theory which I am about to present, concerning Stonehenge, in southern England, and Machu Picchu, in Peru, South America, will offer an intriguing explanation for this "Egyptian connection".

Although it is now widely recognized that Stonehenge was aligned to the cycles of the Sun and the Moon, the theory that it was a lunar-solar observatory makes little sense. The unique positioning of the site indicates that whoever built it already had a highly sophisticated knowledge of lunar and solar cycles beforehand, so why would they build an observatory to tell them what they already knew?

\*Mr. Alford is a 35 year old chartered accountant. This article is partly extracted from his recently published book, Gods of the New Millennium, which is available from Eridu Books via the World Wide Web, <http://www.eridu.co.uk>. Further information can be obtained by faxing England (+44)(0)1543-370453 or writing to P.O.Box 107, Walsall, WS9 9YR ENGLAND.

Mr. Alford will be a speaker at the 24th Anniversary World Conference of the Ancient Astronaut Society to be held on August 3-8, 1997 at the Sheraton Plaza Hotel at the Florida Mall in Orlando, Florida USA. He will present a slide-illustrated lecture on his 1995 expedition to the ancient ruins of Baalbek in Lebanon.

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An often-overlooked feature of Stonehenge is its 2 mile long "Avenue", which dwarfs the stone circle itself, and stops only when it reaches the River Avon. No one has yet offered a satisfactory explanation for this Avenue, which seems superfluous to the functions of a solar-lunar observatory. In my view, its significance can be put down only to the need for extreme accuracy, just as a rifle with a long barrel facilitates a more accurate aim at a target. Why was such an extreme accuracy necessary at Stonehenge and what was being measured? The answer to these questions can, I believe, be deduced from the site of Machu Picchu in Peru, which is the main focus of this article.

The ruins of Machu Picchu lie on a narrow, saddle-like ridge between two spectacular mountain peaks, Macchu Picchu and Huayna Picchu. The site is so well-hidden that it eluded discovery by the Spanish conquistadores, only being "discovered" in 1911 by the American, Hiram Bingham, then a Yale University history professor.

It is commonly assumed that Machu Picchu was built by the Incas during the last half of the 15th Century. However, earlier this year, I visited Machu Picchu with the Ancient Astronaut Society and came away with an impression of two very distinct phases of construction of the site - a later phase which was possibly Incan, and an older phase of far superior stonemasonry, which was almost certainly pre-Incan.

Some scientists have seen signs of a very high technology at Machu Picchu. In the 1930s, Dr. Rolf Muller, a professor at the Astrophysical Institute of Potsdam in Germany, made the first detailed astronomical study of the site. Muller focussed his attention on an unusual stone known as the "Intihuatana" - "The Hitching Post of the Sun", which has been precision-carved out of a natural rock outcrop. (See Fig. 1) Applying the then controversial theory of archaeoastronomy, Muller concluded that the astronomical alignments of the Intihuatana (and also the Torreón at the site) were consistent with a 24-degree tilt in the Earth's axis, thus dating them to around 2300-2100 BC. Muller's findings were confirmed in the 1980s by more precise measurements taken by the astronomers Dearborn and White.

This astronomical evidence has led some writers to suggest that the Temple of the Three Windows (Tres Ventanas) at Machu Picchu was used as a solar observatory, whilst the niches and stone pegs in the Torreón and Principal Temple were used as a solar-lunar calendar. These theories, however, leave much to be explained. First, why was such a calendar so important? And secondly, why would anyone construct such an observatory at a remote and inaccessible location?

During the Ancient Astronaut Society expedition to Peru in May 1996, I came across a number of clues

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which may help to solve the mystery. My lead came from a book by Johan Reinhard, who had highlighted an exact north-south alignment between the Intihuatana and the mountains of Huayna Picchu and Salcantay.(4) Reinhard suggested that this alignment was not a coincidence, since the Intihuatana had been carved to symbolically represent the mountain of Huayna Picchu, which overlooks the ruins. My photograph in Figure 1 illustrates Reinhard's point - the contrast between sunshine and shadow is identical on the mountain and the Intihuatana.



Figure 1. The Intihuatana seen against Huayna Picchu.

Huayna Picchu lies within a horseshoe formed by the Urubamba River, and the steep gorge around the mountain has been known since time immemorial as "the Gateway of Salcantay", signifying its close relationship with that distant mountain. Indeed, Salcantay, a sacred mountain since pre-Inca times, dominates the skyline at Machu Picchu and is one of the two largest mountains in the entire region, with a height of 20,600 feet.



Figure 2. V-shaped groove atop Huayna Picchu.

At the highest point of Huayna Picchu I found an artificial platform (now delapidated) and a v-shaped groove cut into the stone. (See Fig. 2) This groove points exactly due south towards both the Intihuatana and the distant peak of Salcantay. Slightly below this grooved stone, I found another triangular platform with one corner also pointing exactly due south. What could be the significance of these alignments? At the time of my visit to Machu Picchu, I was working on a theory that the primary purpose of Stonehenge in England was a stellar observatory. As I sat on top of Huayna Picchu, catching my breath from an exhausting one hour climb, my mind

thus turned to the stars. I was immediately struck by the thought that this was a perfect position from which to measure the precessional movement of the stars, for the series of jagged mountain peaks on the horizon formed perfect ready-made markers for stellar observation.

Is there any evidence to suggest that Machu Picchu was actually used for such a purpose? First, we should note that the ancient people of the Andes worshipped the stars. An interest in the stars is of course not unique to the Americas, but the degree of interest here is unusual, for the Incas and their Andean predecessors recognised two different types of constellations. The first comprised star-to-star formations, named after animals in a similar manner to the zodiac. The second, however, was based on so-called "dark clouds" - the clouds of interstellar dust between the major stars. This most curious form of astronomy may well be a legacy from an ancient obsession with tracking precessional movements.

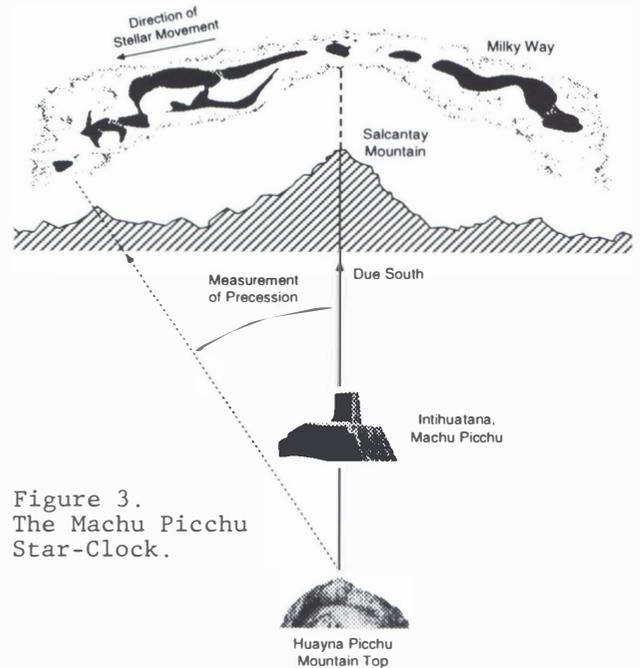


Figure 3. The Machu Picchu Star-Clock.

It is my belief that Machu Picchu functioned as a star clock, as shown in Figure 3. How did the clock work? First, it would be necessary to identify the star that appeared above the tip of Salcantay. Then, at a fixed point during the year, a measurement would be taken to show how far that star had moved to the left as a result of precession. Adjacent mountain peaks would provide ideal reference points to determine when a particular number of celestial degrees had been reached. By co-ordinating these observations with a solar or lunar calendar, the rate of precessional change could be expressed in terms of so many degrees in so many years (it would be approximately one degree in 72 solar years).

Further support for my Machu Picchu star-clock theory comes from Johan Reinhard, an expert in Andean mythology. Reinhard discusses the sacred traditions of Peru in a symbolic context and makes the following comment only in passing, but to me it appears as a ringing endorsement of Figure 3:

"Still today stars...are believed to acquire a greater amount of power when they become associated with a sacred mountain."(5)

Since Salcantay cannot be seen from the Intihuatana, the purpose of the Intihuatana seems to be two-fold. First, it could have maintained, in a convenient location, a record of the stellar positions seen from Huayna Picchu. Secondly, it could have

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been used to establish an accurate alignment of the measuring equipment used on Huayna Picchu. I am referring here to the need to ensure that the angle of precessional change is measured exactly from the original starting position. This would be achieved by using an electronic signal from the Intihuatana to confirm the exact bearing which had been used from Huayna Picchu for the earlier measurements.

What then should we conclude from the claimed solar alignments of the faces of the Intihuatana? The validity of these alignments actually remains unaffected since the solar and stellar functions can easily co-exist within the same stone. Indeed, measurements of the annual solar cycle would have been essential to determine the exact day when the stellar observations were taken. In my view, however, the primary purpose of the Intihuatana was stellar and it should perhaps be renamed as "The Hitching Post of the Stars".

Why was it so important for someone to measure the Earth's rate of precessional change in ancient times? In my recently published book, Gods of the New Millennium, I have set out the considerable evidence that ancient flesh-and-blood "gods" took turns for "Lordship" over the Earth, according to twelve divisions of the Earth's 26,000-year precessional cycle. It is therefore my conclusion that Stonehenge and Machu Picchu were built to determine the position of the stars which would indicate the beginning of the era of Aries, and to make predictions on how soon that era would arrive. In order to do this, the speed of precession had to be expressed in terms of a stable yardstick - hence the need for a solar or lunar calendar.

Let us now return to Egypt, where we find an intriguing connection to the star-clock. I am not the first to suggest that the Great Sphinx, carved with the body of a lion, might represent the precessional era known as Leo. The geological evidence, cited earlier, now takes on an intriguing significance, for scientists conventionally date the era of Leo to around 10900-8700 BC. Was the Sphinx carved to commemorate the end of this era?

In the third century BC, an Egyptian priest named Manetho was ordered to set down the histories of Egypt. Manetho claimed that there were four dynastic periods before the pharaohs ruled in Egypt. If we calculate backwards from the accepted date of 3100 BC for the first pharaoh, Menes, we find that the ruling god of Egypt c.8700 BC was named Thoth. Although Manetho's histories are still regarded with a degree of suspicion, his dating of Thoth coincides with an era which saw the carving of the Sphinx and the laying out of the Stonehenge star-clock site. Can it therefore be a coincidence that Thoth was referred to in the Pyramid Texts as "he who reckons the heavens, the counter of the stars and the measurer of the Earth"?

Let us now move forward in time some 5,000 years and return to the site of Stonehenge. A few months prior to the astounding "totem pole" announcement, the British authorities released the results of a new and detailed 2 year study on the chronology of the site. (6) Using innovative mathematical analysis and the latest radiocarbon dating technology (accurate to within 80 years) the scientists concluded that Stonehenge had experienced a sudden burst of activity c.2965 BC. This phase comprised the digging of a circular ditch and the erection of four "Station Stones", positioned to mark out the key points of the 19-year cycle of the Moon. It is believed that the 56 Aubrey Holes were also dug at this time, but were immediately filled in, at which point the site was abandoned for 300 years.

Whilst historians and archaeologists are trained to disregard "prehistory" and not to make connections between distant sites, we in the Ancient Astronaut Society have the intellectual freedom to ask some searching questions. And the question which I would like to ask is this: in view of my star-clock

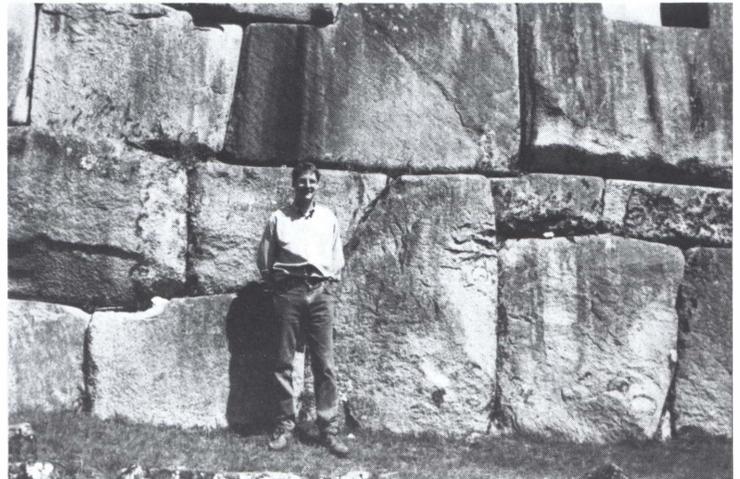
connection between Stonehenge and Machu Picchu, and the chronological connection between Stonehenge and the Sphinx, are the points which follow purely coincidental?

- The Egyptian god Thoth was known as "the counter of the stars", but also known as the Moon god.
- Stonehenge was uniquely positioned to record lunar cycles.
- An ancient Egyptian tale records a calendar dispute between Ra and Thoth which resulted in Thoth leaving (Stonehenge?) for a distant land.
- The 56 Aubrey Holes (linked conclusively to a lunar counting mechanism by Gerald Hawkins) were filled in and Stonehenge was abandoned c.2965 BC.
- The Andean calendar began (according to Montezinos) in 2900 BC.
- Archaeologists found 56 vessels along with a mysterious layer of fine white sand in the Principal Temple at Machu Picchu. (7)

During the recent Ancient Astronaut Society expedition to Peru, members noticed that serious subsidence had occurred at the Intihuatana and at the Principal Temple, located some 200 feet south-east of the Intihuatana. Figure 4 shows how the stones of the Principal Temple, which stands opposite the Temple of the Three Windows, have sunk several feet into the ground. Could this subsidence be caused by a hidden chamber lying beneath the Machu Picchu acropolis? Amazing as it may seem, my on-site investigations at Machu Picchu revealed the possible existence of a "doorway" in the stone terrace directly beneath the Three Windows. (See Fig. 5) Two



Figure 4 above. Subsidence at the Principal Temple. Figure 5 below. The stone to the right of the author could be blocking a doorway to a hidden chamber.



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(Continued from previous page) clues suggested to me that one of the stones could be a door. First, it is the only stone in the wall which can be removed without disturbing the adjacent stones. Secondly, this stone protrudes from the wall by several inches on all sides, suggesting that it has been taken out and not fully reinserted. The possibility of a pre-Incan secret chamber in Peru presents an intriguing parallel to the detection in 1991 of a large rectangular subterranean chamber hidden 20 feet beneath the paws of the Sphinx at Giza in Egypt. (8) Both sites could yield vital new evidence for the ancient astronaut hypothesis and may well offer confirmation of my star-clock theory.

References:

- (1) London Daily Mail, June 28, 1996.
- (2) Fred Hoyle stated that: "The builders of Stonehenge might have come to the British Isles from the outside, purposely looking for this rectangular alignment...just as the modern astronomer often searches far from home for places to build telescopes."
- (3) The evidence is the weathering of the limestone bedrock out of which the Sphinx was carved, which could only be caused by rainfall from around 8000 BC when the climate of Egypt was much wetter.
- (4) J.Reinhard, "Machu Picchu: The Sacred Center", Nuevas Imagenes, 1991, ch.2.
- (5) Ibid., p.30.
- (6) R.Cleal, L.Walker & R.Montague, "Stonehenge in its Landscape: The 20th Century Excavations", English Heritage, 1995. See: <http://www.eng-h.gov.uk/stoneh>.
- (7) J.Reinhard, op.cit., pp.45-6.
- (8) A team led by Dr. Robert Schoch discovered the chamber using remote-sensing equipment. For a complete update see R.Bauval & G. Hancock, "Keepers of Genesis", William Heinemann, 1996.

MICHAEL A. CREMO, co-author of Forbidden Archeology, reports: "I've just returned from a trip to Russia. I gave talks on Forbidden Archeology at a conference sponsored by the Institute for Theoretical Questions of the Russian Academy of Sciences and at a symposium hosted by the Institute for Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Pravda published a big, and favorable, article about Forbidden Archeology and another Moscow newspaper is doing a series of articles. I was invited to the Russian national television studios where they taped a two-hour interview with me and I did a live radio show in Moscow, with some call-ins. Forbidden Archeology is now being translated into Russian.

"In my lecture at Orlando, I will report on some interesting things which happened concerning my appearance on the NBC television show, Mysterious Origins of Man. The show talked about the discoveries of the 50-million year old objects found in the California gold mines. When the producers went to the museum where the artifacts are stored, they asked for permission to film them, but permission was denied. When asked why, the director said that the museum was understaffed and they would have to pay their workers overtime to assist with the filming. The producers offered to pay for all the overtime, but the director still refused to allow the filming. This is a good example of the knowledge filtration process. The show aired twice, once in February and again in June. The scientific community was outraged after the first showing and when they heard it was going to be aired again, they began a letter writing campaign to the president of NBC and the president of General Electric, which owns NBC. They asked NBC not to air the show a second time. A few years ago they might have succeeded, but this time they did not. NBC ran the show again and put out publicity inviting people to watch the show the professors wanted to stop."

Mr. Cremo's book, Forbidden Archeology, is available from Torchlight Publishing, P.O. Box 177, Badger, CA 93603 USA. Tel: (209)337-2200.

24TH ANNIVERSARY WORLD CONFERENCE - AUGUST 3-8, 1997

The 24th Anniversary World Conference of the Ancient Astronaut Society will be held at the Sheraton Plaza Hotel at the Florida Mall in Orlando, Florida on August 3-8, 1997. Nineteen speakers are now confirmed, including Erich von Daniken, world famous best-selling author of Chariots of the Gods? and 22 other books in the ancient astronaut field. His lecture will feature slides and video tape of his recent trips to Peru. Mr. von Daniken has just completed a television special which will be shown on ABC Television this fall. Watch for it.

One of the highlights of the Conference will be a report by Dr. Alkund Eenboom of Germany on some Colombian gold objects which were recently uncovered in a museum in Bremen, Germany, after being in a store-room for over 100 years! The museum dates the objects as being 1,500 years old. Seven of them are small gold "aircraft" similar to the Society's logo. Dr. Eenboom and his colleagues, Peter Belting and Conrad Lubbers, have built a model of one of the Colombian gold "aircraft" and it flies! They will give an actual flight demonstration of the model at the Conference.

Ulrich Dopatka will act as Master of Ceremonies of the Conference and will also give a report on the English version of the Society's CD-ROM, as well as other technological developments in Europe.

Gene Phillips will present a video of highlights of the Society's Member Expedition to Peru.

Other speakers include Michael Cremo, Johannes Fiebag, Peter Fiebag, George Sassoon, Peter Krassa, Walter Langbein, Alan Alford, Filip Coppens, Peter Kaschel, Hartwig Hausdorf, Joseph Gill, Dr. Thomas Dorman, Dr. Pasqual Schievella, Dr. Matest Agrest, Dell Winders, and John Zwick.

There will be two and one-half days of lectures (6 sessions), two field excursions (one to the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral and one to Disney World's Epcot Center or Magic Kingdom, your choice), and a Gala Buffet Banquet, all-you-can-eat.

The total price for the Conference is US\$250 per person, which includes admission to all lectures, the excursion to the Kennedy Space Center, the Gala Buffet Banquet and transportation only to Disney (you must pay your admission to either Epcot or Magic Kingdom). Persons not wishing to participate in all the Conference events may purchase individual tickets for the various events. The per person prices are US\$150 for all the lectures (6 sessions), US\$60 for the Gala Buffet Banquet, US\$30 for the Kennedy Space Center excursion and US\$10 for the round trip transportation from the Hotel to Disney.

The Sheraton Plaza Hotel is offering special reduced room rates for persons attending the Conference of US\$69 per night, single or double, plus tax. The reduced room rate will also apply for the four days preceding the Conference and the four days following the Conference. Everyone registering for the Conference will be sent a Special Hotel Room Reservation Form.

For a Registration Form and all details, write to the Society Headquarters now, or call 847-295-8899, or Fax 847-295-0868.

We are on the Web at <http://www.access.ch/aas>.

SEPTEMBER 14, 1996 MARKS THE 23rd ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE ANCIENT ASTRONAUT SOCIETY.

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