

UFOs OVER ANCIENT ROME

BY W. R. DRAKE

"But I return to the divination of the Romans. How often has our Senate enjoined the decemvirs to consult the books of the Sibyls! For instance when two suns had been seen or when three moons had appeared and when flames of fire were noticed in the sky; or on that other occasion when the sun was beheld in the night, when noises were heard in the sky, and the heaven itself seemed to burst open, and strange globes were remarked in it."

(Cicero. "On Divination." Book 1, Chap. XLIII.)

IF the literature of antiquity could prove that spacemen visited our Earth long ago, would this wondrous revelation not transform the past, inspire the present, give hope to the future, bring new meaning to man himself? Our religions, philosophies and culture were based on the belief that our world was the centre of the universe and mankind the sole preoccupation of God. Would proof that Earth was once ruled by beings from other planets not seem the fundamental discovery of our century?

Students of antiquity are desolated by the scanty records bequeathed by civilisations of the past. Initiates like Pythagoras distrusted writing, their wisdom was preserved orally within the secrecy of the Mystery Schools. The famous library at Alexandria was accidentally burned to the ground by Julius Caesar; the early Christians destroyed most pagan writings. Livy's *History* comprised 142 books, only 35 are extant; Varro composed 490 books, yet only two survive. For thousands of years the astrologer-priests studied the skies; of the countless celestial objects they must have sighted what evidence remains?

A century ago a German grocer, Heinrich Schliemann, with the *Iliad* as guide-book, defied the ridicule of the professors and dug up Troy. Can we not dig from the Classics records of spaceships? Do those dry pages conceal the key to flying saucers? Suspecting that our conventional thought seemed some confidence trick, I selected about fifty writers of antiquity and scrutinised their main works through a UFO "lens." At the outset I sat baffled like Champollion studying the Rosetta Stone. Then as records of extra-terrestrials accumulated, the jigsaw clicked into a glorious picture, a blinding revelation which revolutionised theology, philosophy, our whole conception of man's past. In reaction, such grandiose conclusion struck me as absurd. Scholars had studied the Classics for centuries; could the old truths suddenly shine

new? Commonsense denies that our fundamental beliefs are wrong. Yet I wonder? Let the ancient writers speak for themselves.

Priests, poets and mythologists prove the widespread, deep-rooted influence of the "Sky Father" with his pantheon of Gods on all the peoples of antiquity. Everyone regarded the Gods as supermen living just out of sight, and welcomed their descent from the skies to educate or entertain the mortals on Earth. Homer and Virgil depicted the Gods as taking sides in the Siege of Troy; Diogenes Laertius and Ovid lyricised their scandalous love-affairs; Hesiod and Apollodorus described the War between Gods and Titans, recorded in legends all over the Earth. Our own theologians dismiss the ancient Gods as anthropomorphisms of natural forces, as if entire races for hundreds of years would base their daily lives on lightnings or thunderbolts. A Schliemann versed in our saucer lore would say the old stories meant just what they said: the Gods from heaven were spacemen.

A new perspective

Viewed through our UFO perspective the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes approximate classical science-fiction. Was the "Deus ex Machina" appearing and delivering judgment to close Greek dramas actually a race-memory of those spacemen, who once did intervene in human affairs? Manetho recorded the God-Kings of Egypt; Berossus, the divine rulers of Babylon 432,000 years before the Flood; Sanchoniathon hinted at Gods waging air-battles over Phoenicia. Ovid and Varro recalled that Italy was known as Saturnia ruled by Saturn in a Golden Age followed by a Silver Age under Jupiter, suggesting domination by space beings, who after War with the Giants and natural calamities returned to their own planets, thereafter visiting Earth only occasionally to survey man's evolution and perhaps to land individual

Missionaries in secret to teach chosen Initiates. Race memories coupled with ancestor worship all over the world deified the departed Space-Kings as Gods.

"But the Gods have appeared to us, as to Posthumius at the Lake Regillus, and to Vatienus in the Salarian Way; something you mentioned, too, I know not what, of a battle of the Locrians at Sagra."

(Cicero, *Of the Nature of the Gods*, Book III, Chap. V.)

While UFO students hail lights in the sky as ships from other worlds and cheerfully demolish conventional science for a blip on some radar-scope, they tend to feel outraged at the romanticism of the poets, ancient or modern, so it is timely now to submit evidence perhaps more scientific from the classic historians.

More references

The Egyptians apparently did not write history, each generation merely boasting the glory of its own Pharaoh; the cuneiform tablets of Babylon extolled warlike Kings, though references to "God" and "Angels" in the Old Testament and the Talmud seemed to associate the Middle East with visitors from space. Thucydides, Xenophon, Tacitus and Caesar, like our historians today, were too immersed in wars and politics to heed celestial objects overhead. Livy and Plutarch mentioned a "comet" (a UFO?) seen in 480 B.C. during the Greek naval victory over the Persians at Salamis, recalling the "comet" over the Battle of Hastings and the "foo-fighters" of the Hitler war. Plato, Aristotle and the Philosophers gossiped about the Gods as though they lived next door. Pliny the Elder said the Greeks designated the world as "kosmos" meaning "ornament," the Romans named it "mundus," "elegant," because of its perfect finish and grace. He agreed with Varro that "coelum" ("heaven") came from "cavum," meaning "hollow." Aristotle explained that the seven wandering stars ("planetai") shone because of the friction caused by motion through the air. If the intelligentsia believed this, what views did the ignorant hold?

About 200 B.C. Polybius wrote: "The characteristic for which in my opinion the Roman Empire is superior to all others lies in its religion. This, which in other nations would be considered deplorable superstition, here in Rome is the very corner-stone of the State." The Romans worshipped the Gods for a thousand years and their augurs prophesied the future from signs in the skies. Julius Obsequens recorded 63 celestial

phenomena, Livy 30, Pliny 26, Dio Cassius 14, Cicero 9, confirming their psychological impact on the educated Roman mind. Lycosthenes, writing in 1552 A.D., collated 59 heavenly portents in Roman times.

Analysis of the fifty classical writers studied (including Lycosthenes) may be summarised as follows:

Lights etc. in sky, 39. New star, 10.
Shields etc. in sky, 11. Falling lights etc., 5.
Fiery globes in sky, 6. Falling star, 2.
Ships in sky, 7. "Gods" down to earth, 11.
"Men" in sky, 7. "Men" from earth to sky, 5.
"Armies" in sky, 1. Skyships, 9.
Two or more moons, 8. War in skies, 5.
Two or more suns, 12. Possible UFO, 7.
Sun at night, 5. Unknown voice, 6.

Obsequens and Lycosthenes anticipated Charles Fort by quoting numerous incidents of stones, blood, milk and earth falling from the skies.

Two thousand years ago a Roman FLYING SAUCER REVIEW would have published the following sightings by most distinguished contributors:

222 B.C. "Also three moons have appeared at once, for instance in the consulship of Gnaeus Domitius and Gaius Fannius." (Pliny, *Natural History*, Book II, Chap. XXXII.)

218 B.C. "In Amiterno district in many places were seen the appearance of men in white garments from far away. The orb of the sun grew smaller. At Praeneste glowing lamps from heaven. At Arpi a shield in the sky. The moon contended with the sun and during the night two moons were seen. Phantom ships appeared in the sky." (Lycosthenes - Obsequens, *Prodigiorum Libellus*, Chap. XXXI. Livy, Book XXI, Chap. LXII, and Book XXII, Chap I.)

214 B.C. "At Hadria an altar was seen in the sky and about it the forms of man in white clothes." (Livy, Book XXI, Chap. LXII.)

213 B.C. "At Ariminum a light like the day blazed out at night in many portions of Italy. Three moons became visible in the night-time." (Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, Vol. II, page 46.)

175 B.C. "Three suns shone at the same time. That night several stars glided across the sky at Lanuvium." (Obsequens, Chap. LXVI.)

122 B.C. "In Gaul three suns and three moons were seen." (Obsequens, Chap. XLII.)

91 B.C. "Near Spoletium a gold-coloured fire-ball rolled down to the ground, increased in size, it seemed to move off the ground towards the east and was big enough to blot out the sun." (Obsequens, Chap. CXIV.)

85 B.C. "In the consulship of Lucius Valerius and Gaius Marius a burning shield scattering sparks ran across the sky." (Pliny, *Natural History*, Book II, Chap. XXXIV.)

66 B.C. "In the consulship of Gnaeus Octavius and Gaius Suetonius a spark was seen to fall from a star and increase in size as it approached the earth and after becoming as large as the moon it diffused a sort of cloudy daylight and then returning to the sky changed into a torch. This is the only record of its occurrence. It was seen by the proconsul Silenus and his suite." (Pliny, *Natural History*, Book II, Chap. XXXV.)

42 B.C. "In Rome light shone so brightly at nightfall that people got up to begin work as though day had dawned. At Murtino three suns were seen about the third hour of the day, which presently drew together into a single orb." (Obsequens, Chap. CXXX.)

These celestial objects were seen and recorded two thousand years ago by people who had never heard of flying saucers. Can they be glibly explained away by the double-talk of Air Force experts? If the UFOs of antiquity were real, so must those be today!

The "Angels," the celestial voices, the lights from heaven, the translations to the skies, the intervention of a "God" in human affairs, the very substance of our Bible, are paralleled by similar phenomena quoted by Livy. If we so readily believe the "wonders" of Israel, should we not accord equal credence to the "prodigies"

of Rome? The Mystery of Christ shines with new meaning in the light of our spacemen. In A.D. 312 near Rome (or in the Alps?) the pagan Constantine and all his army marvelled at a fiery cross in the sky under which flamed the words "In hoc signo vinces." Constantine welcomed this omen, allied with the Christians, defeated Emperor Maxentius and established Christianity as the State religion three hundred years after the death of its Founder. Did Christianity owe its establishment to a UFO? Was the alleged writing phenomena of the UFO's force-field?

Similar analyses of British legends, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" suggest that spacemen surveyed Ancient Britain and Saxon England.

I submit that the word "God" has at least two distinct meanings. The Absolute imagining the universe in Whom we live and move, and the local "Gods" or space beings, who originate from some advanced planet and from time to time manifest themselves among men.

Today we realise our Earth is not the centre of Creation but a grain of dust in a space-time universe including universes of various dimensions co-existing within our own, all paralleled by a possible universe of anti-matter.

In all humility I suggest that many of our fundamental conceptions are based on false premises. We should sweep away the dust and dogma of centuries and study phenomena as they really happened. The classical sightings of the past confirm the UFOs of the present.

Sighting reports . . .

From England, Eire, Scotland, South Africa,

New Zealand, Canada and Australia

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