



Wonders in the Sky: Unexplained Aerial Objects from Antiquity to Modern Times

Jacques F. Vallée , Chris Aubeck

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One of the most ambitious works of paranormal investigation of our time, here is an unprecedented compendium of pre-twentieth-century UFO accounts, written with rigor and color by two of today's leading investigators of unexplained phenomena.

In the past century, individuals, newspapers, and military agencies have recorded thousands of UFO incidents, giving rise to much speculation about flying saucers, visitors from other planets, and alien abductions. Yet the extraterrestrial phenomenon did not begin in the present era. Far from it. The authors of *Wonders in the Sky* reveal a thread of vividly rendered-and sometimes strikingly similar- reports of mysterious aerial phenomena from antiquity through the modern age. These accounts often share definite physical features- such as the heat felt and described by witnesses-that have not changed much over the centuries. Indeed, such similarities between ancient and modern sightings are the rule rather than the exception.

In *Wonders in the Sky*, respected researchers Jacques Vallee and Chris Aubeck examine more than 500 selected reports of sightings from biblical-age antiquity through the year 1879-the point at which the Industrial Revolution deeply changed the nature of human society, and the skies began to open to airplanes, dirigibles, rockets, and other opportunities for misinterpretation represented by military prototypes. Using vivid and engaging case studies, and more than seventy-five illustrations, they reveal that unidentified flying objects have had a major impact not only on popular culture but on our history, on our religion, and on the models of the world humanity has formed from deepest antiquity.

Sure to become a classic among UFO enthusiasts and other followers of unexplained phenomena, *Wonders in the Sky* is the most ambitious, broad-reaching, and intelligent analysis ever written on premodern aerial mysteries.

Wonders in the Sky: Unexplained Aerial Objects from Antiquity to Modern Times Details

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From Reader Review Wonders in the Sky: Unexplained Aerial Objects from Antiquity to Modern Times for online ebook

Bridget says

I have always found UFO sightings intriguing and Wonders in the Sky just magnified my curiosity. Paranormal investigation must be an exciting field of work and reading this book made me feel like I was experiencing the unexplainable. It's very well written and makes you wonder about what exactly is in the sky.

Mack says

i couldn't finish this. the tries to use wikipedia as a scholerly resource. That is something i cannot abide by.

Lawrence says

this is an interesting book co-authored by my favourite author on the topic (in fact, really the only one i still read on the subject).

jacques vallee's most important contribution to the field of 'ufology' was to change the debate from "are ufos real", as in, "are aliens and their spaceships visiting earth" to "there is a well-documented physical and emotional phenomena, with consistent characteristics that has been going on for much of recorded human history. what is it?"

he frustrates many of those inclined to believe the extra-terrestrial hypothesis (eth) but he's a scientist, and what anyone else thinks is not really his concern.

i quibble with the format of this book, and it is not necessarily required reading, but it has a place in your library along his 'trilogy' of dimensions, confrontations and revelations.

in the end, this book is really just one more in his 'call to arms' to scientists and researchers to ignore the noise of the eth adherents and start to treat this phenomenon as something worthy of serious study. sadly, almost 50 years into his work, it doesn't seem like we are any closer to this happening.

J says

This book is a very good catalog of UFOs prior to the invention of human flight, which makes the study of UFOs all that much more difficult. It features a few lines to a page on each UFO sighting from thousands of years of human history everywhere where written records have survived. [return]Unfortunately there are only a few pages about what it means at the very start of the book. The authors have compiled, translated and

verified all this information but didn't do much with it. This was very disappointing to me, a casual reader, rather than someone looking to do research.

Peter Ek says

Interesting.

Joe says

The co-author, Jacques Valle, a French computer scientist, was the inspiration for the character Lacombe played by Francois Truffault in "Close Encounters of the Third Kind". Spielberg gave Valle a cameo toward the end of the film. This book is worthwhile simply for the introductory chapters and conclusions drawn from the encyclopedic listings which form the bulk of the matter. Other Valle books a much better read.

Dan Pfeiffer says

The final chapter of the book consists of light data analysis of attributes of the described phenomena. One would hope for deeper analysis and insight but it's understandable that such brevity was required given the data compiled reaches as far back as 1460 BC.

Kate says

Meh. The format was really aggravating - strange font and random layout, not organized at all, just little blurbs with badly-reproduced images. But, the blurbs were interesting, I just couldn't stand looking at the horrible layout/design anymore. It's more of a bathroom book than one you "read."

Eric Wojciechowski says

The present volume is more of an encyclopedia, or collection of UFO reports combed from the most ancient sources up to the year 1880. It includes five-hundred UFO reports the authors found most important to study. The purpose of stopping circa 1880 was because prior to that, we can be fairly certain nothing in the skies was man-made. And if no reports prior to 1880 could be man-made, it is possible we can find some form of "contact" or "other" in them. On the other hand, the further back we go in time, the less man knew of what was in the sky. So many reports turn out to be ordinary meteors, asteroids, etc.

I didn't read this book cover to cover. Like I said, it's a collection of stories so doing so would be akin to reading an encyclopedia. I see this as a great reference that when you hear of these old stories in other venues, you can go to them in this book for some source material and/or analysis. This is the book you wanna look over for ten minutes here, fifteen there.

Some sighting reports are only granted four or five lines. Some get a few pages of analysis. What is nice is the authors attempt to track down original sources and in doing so, find that some originate from hearsay and/or out right hoaxes. Commentary is also granted to observer/recorder bias and the over all times they lived in.

The point is that from at least the time man started writing, from the very foundations of civilization, man was seeing things in the sky. And, man was also reporting interaction with strange beings. Interacting for realz? We don't know. We know people report interactions with the "other" all the time. But is it real or all in our head or serious misinterpretations?

Each paranormal case, past or present, must be investigated individually. And that is what this book does. And does well. One of my favorite short cases in the present volume is allegedly from 330BC and addresses the report of "two strange craft...seen to dive repeatedly at Alexander's army". That is, Alexander the Great. And the "craft" were described as flying shields, they flew in triangular formation. Impressive, right? But the authors do the detective work and find that no books about Alexander the Great contain the story. It originated with Frank Edwards in 1959. Sooooo, completely made up! Too bad. But that's the nature of the UFO field.

Another case(s) I've always found fascinating are the similiar stories, originating in the eleventh-century and having an equal as late as 1897 in Texas, are those where airships get their anchors caught on church doors, tombstones, railroad tracks. Then an occupant of the airship either descends to try to free it or the rope is cut and the ship flies off. And in some cases, the occupant dies as if drowning in our air. These are all folktales for sure. But really, anchors caught in church doors?!

In the end, all of these cases remain anecdotal. And because of that, prove nothing other than the fact that modern UFO and alien encounters are similar to ones dating back to the the founding of civilization and writing. The only thing new to modern UFO reports is the dressing and cosmetics. UFO reports, old and new, seem to forever be out of the reach of hard evidence. UFO reports remain part of Arthur C. Clarke's, Cabinet of Curiosities; Charles Fort's, Collection of the Damned. Doesn't mean the topic isn't fun or worth researching.

Tim says

This was an interesting book - it's a collection of historical accounts of unexplained objects in the sky. But ultimately, it has too many accounts and far too little discussion or analysis as to what the objects could have been. I did question the inclusion of a handful of accounts as they were less stories about objects in the sky and more fictionalized accounts of angels or white lights shining down on the church upon the death of a local bishop.

Abraham Ray says

Good book about weird stuff in the sky of yeasteryear,I hope to get this for my pastor as some of the items are in biblical times.

Kaiser Penderschloß says

A nice work of scholarship on a subject that's been seriously lacking it. Simultaneously shatters simplistic "Ancient Aliens"-style ideas and the modern myth that the phenomenon only really got going in the wake of WWII. The use of modern, digitized research tools reveals a plethora of accounts of strange aerial phenomena from a variety of sources, especially from the 16th century on with the greater body of preserved writing. They be cast as dragons, or signs from the divine, or demons, or the souls of the departed, or craft piloted by otherworldly visitors, or simply as 'something strange' but still core similarities run through them all, pulling at the limits of human imagination.

The fact that most of the text is summary accounts means it's not an interesting cover-to-cover read, but I think this is ultimately a good thing. Whereas most material on UFOs in antiquity is prone to grand extrapolations from a few data points, the authors here stick to the data and keep speculation to a minimum. This allows the full richness and bizarreness of the phenomena themselves to come into focus. One sees that no simple explanation can encompass such a dazzling array of sights and encounters, and also that we owe serious consideration to what our past has to say. One of my favorite passages is the ending to a Chinese poem from 1277 describing strange lights seen flying "in a zig-zag, like a dead leaf":

"After the event, I reflect on it very much but do not find a reasonable explanation. I have the impression I have come out of a long dream. I hasten to write down all that I have seen at the time so whoever understands these events can give me an explanation."
