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Enigma of the Crystal Skulls



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GENETIC MATERIAL CAME FROM SPACE

When ancient meteorites rained down on earth they brought more than fire and rocks from the sky. They brought the raw genetic material for life. That, at least, is the conclusion of scientific researchers from Europe and the USA.

Freshly published in the journal *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, the new study is based on a careful study of the Murchison meteorite which crashed in Australia in 1969. In its materials scientists found the molecules uracil and xanthine which are precursors to the molecules that make up DNA and RNA. After ruling out that they could have come from earth, the study says they came from space, and that means, it says, that life on earth is extraterrestrial in origin.

Conventional science holds that about four billion years ago meteors like the Murchison rained down on earth just when primitive life was getting started. Lead author Dr Zita Martins, of the Department of Earth Science and Engineering at Imperial College London, says that the research may provide another piece of evidence explaining the evolution of early life. "We believe early life," she says, "may have adopted nucleobases from meteoritic fragments for use in genetic coding which enabled them to pass on their successful features to subsequent generations."

The new research buttresses the argument of those who believe in panspermia, the notion that seeds of life exist already all over the universe, and that life on earth originated through these seeds, and that they may deliver or have delivered life to other equally hospitable planets.

So, if life on earth started somewhere else, just how did it get started *there*? Whether *here* or *there*, science still has a lot of explaining to do. ■

Water Ice Is on Mars

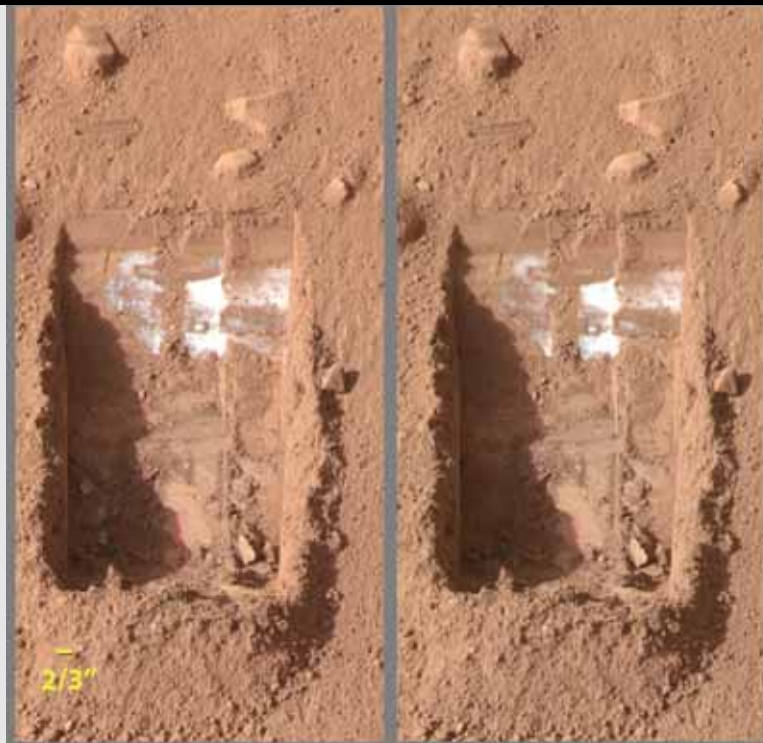
While the matter of whether there is, or ever has been, life on Mars is still—insofar as NASA is concerned—unsettled, at least one question has now been answered definitively. There actually is frozen water on Mars.

As millions on earth watched over television and the Internet, the Mars Phoenix Lander settled softly on the Martian surface, near the North pole on May 25 and despite considerable suspense, everything went smoothly. This was the first time in 30 years that a rocket-assisted soft landing had succeeded. The mission: to determine if there has ever been liquid water on Mars. The presence of such water is believed to be essential to life; after all, it *is* on earth. First, though, it was necessary to establish that the Lander was actually positioned over ice.

Photos beamed back to earth showed some kind of white substance just beneath the dirt scraped away by the Lander's scoop. But at first, it was impossible to say whether they were looking at ice or some kind of salt. Over the next few days though, as chunks of the white stuff slowly disappeared, NASA scientists became convinced that it was indeed ice which could melt and not something else.

The next step is to analyze the ice and the water obtained by melting, which will, hopefully, answer many more burning questions about the status of life on Mars, both then and now.

To be continued. ■



Images from NASA's Phoenix Lander on June 15 (left) and 19 show sublimation of ice. (NASA and University of Arizona)

THE SPACE ARCHAEOLOGISTS

NASA's Aster satellite images EGYPT in 15 different wavelengths. The data is processed so that fields are red, cities blue and ancient ruins are green. (Photo: NASA/JPL/University of Sydney)

The advances of civilization have been compared to climbing a mountain. As we reach new heights, we are able for the first time to see the long path we have travelled stretched out beneath us, and with the advantage of altitude we can see where we have gone right and where we have gone wrong. Moreover, we can see patterns in our progress of which we might have been unaware at the time we passed through. While that notion may seem to be strictly metaphorical, a new breed of archaeologist is literally taking the concept to new heights these days...like to outer space.

According to popsci.com the web site of *Popular Science Magazine*, the new archaeologists are carrying out their researches without getting their hands dirty, learning more from above the atmosphere than from the bottom of any dig. In a piece called "Space Archaeologists" writer Mara Hvistendahl details the work of Damian Evans and Bill Saturno who, with the help of radar im-

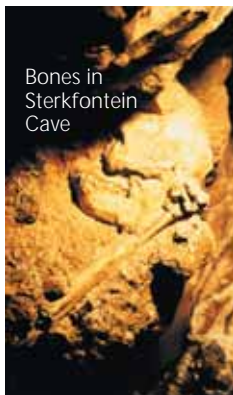
aging satellites, have uncovered many previously undiscovered details to Cambodia's great temple complex at Angkor Wat. Thanks to such techniques scientists are unearthing whole civilizations and rewriting history books. In issue #70 of *A.R.*, Frank Joseph told of how satellite imagery was used to locate Ubar, a.k.a. "The Atlantis of the Sands," on the Arabian peninsula. Similar stories are coming from Mexico, South America and every corner of the world.

For many readers of this magazine, eager for the discovery of a lost prediluvian civilization, such research appears very promising indeed. The ability to see what lies beneath the oceans is constantly improving. For those who would like to see some of the remarkable anomalies that are, at last, rising to the surface, visit the web site satellitediscoveries.com where publicly released satellite imagery reveals many remarkable and previously unrecognized features of our planet. ■

100,000-Year-Old Tools Found

Workers in Pretoria, South Africa, have unearthed stone tools said to date back 100,000 years. The artifacts turned up in a swimming pool excavation and included a number of flaked cutting tools believed to have been used to extract marrow from bones. There was also a stone which had been brought in from another area, considered an unmistakable sign of human activity.

Dr. Francis Thackeray, director of the Transvaal Museum,

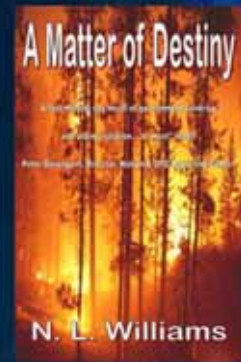


Bones in Sterkfontein Cave

told reporters visiting the site that the tools were similar to ones he himself had turned up at other sites such as Kromdraai in the Sterkfontein valley, the region which, according to conventional anthropology, is the cradle of humanity.

For another take on the artifacts from Sterkfontein cave see Michael Cremona's *Forbidden Archaeologist* column in *A.R.* #59, "Sterkfontein: Cradle of Humanity or of Lies?" ■

A Department of Energy And Alien Connection?



A Matter of Destiny

by N.L. Williams

Though billed as science fiction, this novel depicts an actual Nov. 22, 1992 event at

Brookhaven National Laboratories, New York.

Only the locale, characters, and backwater stories have been fictionalized.

This novel reveals the actual development and use of a quark weapon by the D.O.E. with enough destructive power to annihilate the earth. Evidence points to its ongoing use as a "defensive" weapon against at least one alien culture. Mind boggling implications!

"A must-read for anyone with a modicum of concern for man's future, safety, and continued existence on earth!" says Peter Davenport, Director, UFO Reporting Center.

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REPORT FROM THE FRONT

Tracking the News of the Coming Energy Revolution

Could the Wave of the Future Be in Water?

BY
JEANE
MANNING

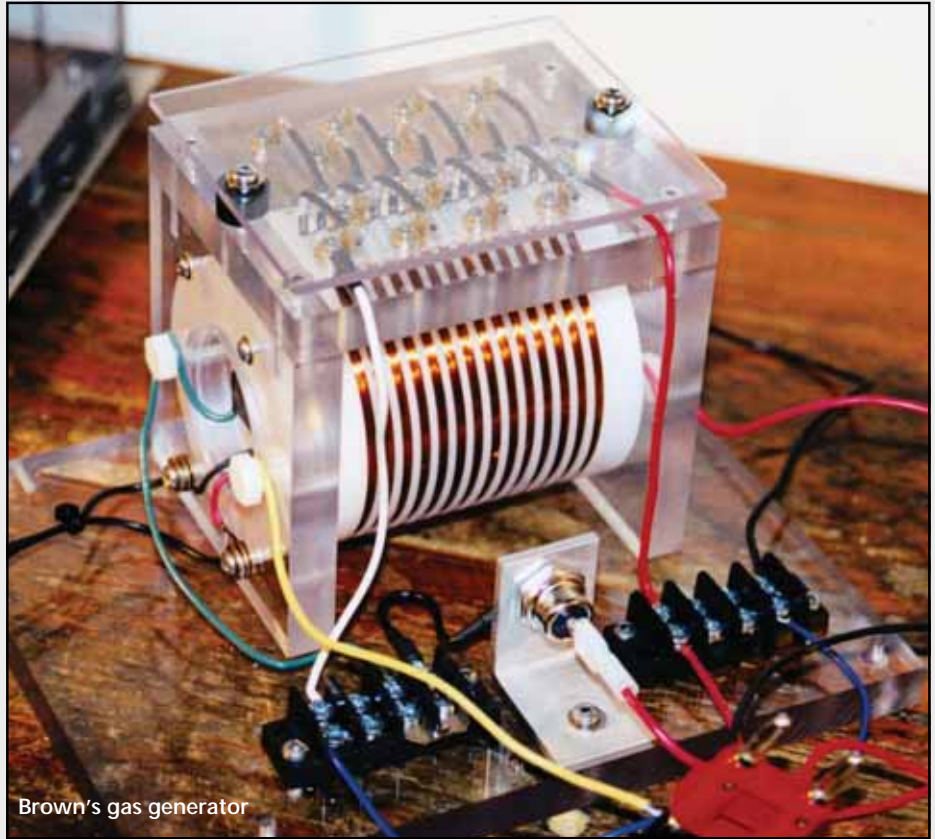
In the 1967 film *The Graduate*, at a party an industrialist takes the college-grad character aside and indicates he has a secret to impart as his graduation gift. The audience knows the young man has not yet settled on a career direction. The middle-aged man whispers one word of advice. "Plastics." That scene was enjoyed as a classic comic moment, heightened by the rebellious anti-establishment mood of many in the 1960s audiences. The youthful character played by Dustin Hoffman was confused, but not about to devote his life to plastics no matter how exponentially that industry would grow.

More than forty years later, the ultimate word for career advice could be "water." Unlike the plastic garbage being ground into nano-particles while plastics weather on beaches and in landfills, when water breaks down, its components are harmless to life. Oxygen is better than harmless; it sustains life. Hydrogen is a carrier of energy and is being considered as a vital part of the coming energy revolution and one key to reducing our dependence on carbon fuels such as gasoline.

Water is the film star of Youtube videos today. Recently one video featured what was said to be a 1978 El Camino vehicle that runs on water alone. Someone who at this time remains anonymous and uses a pseudonym online had developed what is being called the "S1r9a9m9 exploding water system," and there's a link to another Youtube video of a car running on an independent replication of that system. By the time this column is published there will no doubt be further news developments. I'm just trying to convey the rapid progress of this emerging area of guerrilla science and of energy independence.

Unlike the mid-twentieth-century culture of industrial secrets and social-climbing pool parties glimpsed in *The Graduate*, the twenty-first-century Open Source era is, for many young people, about sharing information. However, as in the case of the mysterious inventor of the water system, open sourcing does not always mean stepping into the spotlight as a public personality.

Taking a cue from the computer software developers who write programs and give their work to everyone else to tweak and perfect, a number of inventors on the energy frontier are freely sharing what they learn. George Wiseman of Eagle Research pioneered that approach by writing how-to books about methods of saving fuel. Instead



Brown's gas generator

of patenting his inventions he sells books. His readers try out his advice and reply to him. Their experiences and suggestions improve the next editions of Wiseman's books. His no-patent philosophy is a win-win approach. Wiseman wrote two editions of a *Brown's Gas Book*, which contain some of the most important contributions to the field, with research data, practical analysis and discussions of the implications of the technologies.

Up until recent years experimenters around the world used the term "Brown's Gas," but that term is rarely used any more to describe an oxy-hydrogen gas. The Bulgarian/Australian inventor Yull Brown is no longer with us and there is widespread recognition that a physicist named William A. Rhodes discovered the process for making and using atomic (in the form of separate atoms and no longer combined in molecules) hydrogen and oxygen before Brown did. Welding torches are one of the most apt applications for the gas.

Good news for all

The pain of paying high prices for fuel is motivating a fast-increasing number of tinkerers who had not previously been obsessed about energy alternatives, and the results of

their activities are most apparent in the water-as-fuel areas of the energy frontier. For instance, the experimenter who developed an "exploding water system" under the name "S1r9a9m9" is part of the ongoing discussion on a Yahoo web site e-group. When he builds an experimental model he eventually publishes the new parts list of electronics so that anyone in the discussion group can try building it themselves.

"Yes, it is an exciting time to be alive," an energy researcher writes to me in an email today. "John Bedini just posted advice to the JBCX6 S1r9a9m9 replicator guy...I am seriously thinking this system is *the big break*. It is so cheap and easy for the common person to replicate once we get all the bugs out (and have a list of the parts needed)."

Charles Michael Couch had been writing articles on the Pure Energy Systems network about inventor Bob Boyce, who gives the world free benefit of his own super-efficient water-into-fuel electrolyzer system. Couch said he was now thankful to have seen the video of a replication of the "S1r9a9m9" system and was grateful that now both systems are available to experimenters around the world, along with John Bedini's motor, a

Continued on Page 58

TIME TRAVEL EVIDENCE

Does a 16th-Century Painting Show Technology from the Future?

• BY JOSEPH ROBERT JOCHMANS

Our world is filled with many anomalies, most of them well documented and incontrovertible, which demonstrate that space and time are not what we think they are. One of the strangest of these is an enigmatic object which appears in a painting in the little church of Montalcino in Italy, dating to over four hundred years old. The object can be classified as a genuine “out-of-place” artifact, because it incorporates several apparently advanced aspects in its design.

But the context in which it was placed in the painting and portrayed in detail opens up a whole different level of technological inquiry and potential achievement. The item's existence raises not only the question of where did it come from, but more importantly, when did it come from? For here we are faced with something that is more than out of place, it also appears to have come from a totally different time.

In essence, what we may be looking at could be the first real evidence for time travel.

At this point, we cannot be sure if the item in question manifested from our future or if it represents some kind of time-traveling technology, which was the product of the unknown past, built and sent forward to our period from some prehistoric civilization now lost to us. Let the readers judge for themselves.

In 1595, Italian artist Bonaventura Salimbeni (1567-1613) was commissioned to produce a painting for the right-hand altar of the Church of St. Peter at Montalcino, located within a few miles of Florence. He was a member of a prominent family of artists from nearby Siena, and the goal of his commission was that his work be completed for the Christian Jubilee Year of 1600. According to the message accompanying his signature, Salimbeni's painting was finished right on schedule.

The Montalcino art masterpiece is entitled “The Glorification of the Eucharist,” and features a vertical work divided into three segments. The lower third depicts a number of worshipping figures seated before the altar, including priests, cardinals and one individual wearing a papal crown believed to represent Pope Clement VII.

The middle third shows the altar itself, and prominently displayed in its center is the Cup of the Eucharist emblazoned in glowing light.

The upper third of the painting symbol-



izes heaven, dominated by the three Beings of the Holy Trinity who are looking down on the earthly scene below and giving their blessings—God the Father depicted as a Moses-like bearded old man, God the Son as Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit portrayed as a Dove hovering above the center.

What immediately catches the viewer's attention, however, is something pictured in among the Trinity members that to modern eyes seems very familiar, but not from the right time period. The first impression is

that it looks exactly like a spheroid satellite with two antennae, something akin to the old Russian sputniks or American vanguard orbiters of the late 1950s. But what is it actually supposed to be?

Renaissance art experts interpret the strange sphere as representing the universe, showing the faint lines of celestial longitude and latitude, plus the images of an obscure sun and an exaggerated crescent moon

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• BY JAN WICHERINK

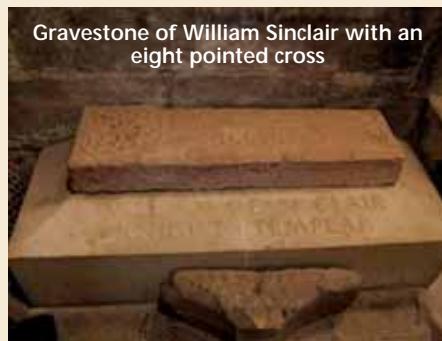
The inscription on William Sinclair's grave in Rosslyn Chapel reads: William de St. Clair, Knight Templar. On his gravestone a mysterious key with an eight-pointed cross is depicted. The official coat of arms of the Sinclair's is a four-pointed cross in a stitch pattern, and it's well known that the Knights Templar used both four- and eight-pointed crosses in their coat of arms. So the question is: what does this key on William Sinclairs grave represent? Could this key possibly unlock some of the mysteries surrounding the chapel?

In this article I will argue that these four- and eight-pointed crosses have a deep esoteric and astronomical significance that must have been well known to the Scottish freemasons.

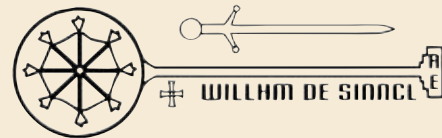
On the gravestone besides the eight-pointed cross a four-pointed cross is also depicted. The name of the founder of Rosslyn Chapel is spelled in Lombardic letters 'Willhm de Sinncler'. It's remarkable that the last two letters ER are set apart and are reversed in spelling. It reads RE. RE most likely is a reference to Amen-Re or Amen-Ra, the Egyptian solar deity. This makes sense since Rosslyn Chapel is in fact a solar temple. Inaugurated on the fall equinox in 1450 as the Collegiate Church of St. Matthew, the chapel is perfectly aligned to the cardinal points of the compass in a manner



Templar Crosses



Gravestone of William Sinclair with an eight pointed cross



Depiction on the gravestone of William Sinclair, founder of the chapel.

similar to many ancient solar temples.

In fact, according to Robert Lomas and Christopher Knight, Rosslyn is actually a copy of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. They argue that the Master and Apprentice Pillar correspond with the two pillars, Boaz

and Jachin, that stood in front of Solomon's Temple.

In *The Stone Puzzle of Rosslyn Chapel* Philip Coppens describes the initiation rituals of the freemasons and claims that the famous pillars in Rosslyn, in fact, correspond with the three degrees in freemasonry. In Masonic initiation rituals the pillars mark the solstices and equinoxes, the four quadrants of the year. The novice initiated into the "Entered Apprentice" degree is placed in the Lodge near the pillar in the northeast corner (Jachin). This pillar corresponds to the summer solstice. A freemason initiated into the "Fellow craft Mason" degree is placed in the southeast corner (Boaz) corresponding to the winter solstice. A freemason who is finally initiated into the Master Mason degree is placed in front of the central pillar corresponding to the equinox. During the latter ritual the candidate dies, symbolically, but is eventually resurrected. At the moment of his resurrection, a light with a five-pointed star is lit. According to Coppens, this five-pointed star is the morning star, Venus.

These Masonic rituals clearly refer to the annual death and 'rebirth' of the sun. The sun dies each year on the *cross* of the zodiac on the winter solstice, only to be fully reborn on the following vernal equinox, the beginning of spring, in the annual cycle. At this point the sun is fully raised from death and, as it revives, nature starts to blossom

Continued on Page 66

Can We See into the Future?

A Scientist Looks for Evidence of Precognition

• BY ROBERT SCHOCH, Ph.D.

On 21 October, 1966, at 9:15 in the morning, a huge pile of coal slag and debris, precariously perched on the side of a mountain and destabilized by underground water and rainfall, came crashing down on the Welsh town of Aberfan. When the tragedy was over and the final death toll computed, 144 lives were lost, most of them children attending the Pantglas Junior School, upon which the main part of the avalanche of black choking slurry descended. The Aberfan disaster was felt throughout Britain, perhaps among some people even before it actually occurred.

Dr. J. C. Barker, a psychiatrist associated with Shelton Hospital in Shrewsbury, was on the scene of Aberfan the next day to help with the aftermath. Dr. Barker was also interested in psychical research, and it occurred to him that, given the violent and shocking nature of the Aberfan disaster, perhaps someone had had a premonition of the event. He made a public appeal for any such information through the media, and as a result received dozens and dozens of responses from people who claimed to have had precognitive experiences that, at least in hindsight, may have related to Aberfan. Dr. Barker carefully researched the best of these through interviews and seeking out corroborative evidence, and found nearly two dozen reputed precognitive experiences that could be independently confirmed by witnesses as having occurred before the Aberfan disaster.

As an example of just one such person

with apparent precognitive knowledge of the event we can cite Mrs. Constance Miller who “saw” the disaster about a day or so before it happened. Seven witnesses could testify that Mrs. Miller had related her premonition to them before the event. In her own words (quoted in Archie Roy, *A Sense of Something Strange*, 1990, p. 129), “First, I ‘saw’ an old school house nestling in a valley, then a Welsh miner, then an avalanche of coal hurtling down a mountainside. At the bottom of this mountain of hurtling coal was a little boy with a long fringe looking absolutely terrified to death. Then for a while I ‘saw’ rescue operations taking place. I had an impression that the little boy was left behind and saved. He looked so grief-stricken. I could never forget him, and also with him was one of the rescue workers wearing an unusual peaked cap.” Mrs. Miller was not from Aberfan, and the argument that she had a personal interest in, and subconscious worries about, the slag pile as a potential threat does not apply. Very importantly, as we will discuss below, Mrs. Miller reported that, after the event, she recognized on a television program covering the Aberfan disaster the little boy and the rescue worker she “saw” so vividly in her premonition.

For thousands of years, going back to the Biblical prophets and the classical oracles of ancient times (and probably much earlier) there has been a belief that at least some gifted people can gain glimpses of the future. The Greeks regularly consulted their oracles,

such as that of Apollo at Delphi, and all cultures seem to have their methods of divination, whether it be the inspection of the entrails of animals, gazing into a crystal ball, looking at patterns among tea leaves, or consulting the Tarot or I Ching.

In the book of Genesis it is recorded that Joseph correctly interpreted pharaoh’s precognitive dream (seven fat cows eaten by seven lean cows, meaning there would be seven good years of harvest followed by seven years of famine). Daniel, in the book named after him, interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great image or statue and a tree hewn down to indicate that the king and his kingdom would be destroyed, as was the case. St. John, in what is commonly referred to as the *Book of Revelation*, or *The Apocalypse*, relates many prophecies that appear to refer to the End Times. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, found in chapter 6, have household name recognition. Might these events yet unfold?

Closer to our own times, perhaps the greatest (or at least most famous) seer of the last five centuries is Nostradamus (Michel de Nostredame, 1503-1566). Trained as an astrologer and physician (he was very successful at treating outbreaks of the plague in southern France), he was heavily steeped in Jewish mysticism. To this day admirers and detractors argue over the accuracy of his forecasts. It seems clear, however, that in his own lifetime Nostradamus had achieved a

Continued on Page 67

• BY DAVID H. CHILDRESS

With the opening of the movie *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, millions have been learning for the first time about one of the most remarkable stories in the annals of archaeology, the mystery of the crystal skulls. The movie may be fiction, but the tale of the crystal skulls is not only filled with plenty of Hollywood-style adventure, a lot of it is true.

One of the most fascinating substances in nature, crystal lends itself uniquely to various adaptations, including information storage. Today crystal technologies are at the cutting edge of advancements in nanotechnology and computing. As for the skulls, themselves, does the fact that they are carved from crystal enable them to store information and interact with human thought waves? Strangely, there is evidence to suggest this could be so.

Moreover, the history of Mesoamerica, where the skulls are said to originate, is rich with the mystical, magical sorcery of the Olmecs, Zapotecs, Maya and Aztecs. Indeed, the turbulent times of the Mexican Revolution form the backdrop for much of the most recent part of the tale, including the saga of F. A. Mitchell-Hedges, the notorious adventurer who emerged from the jungles, it was said, with the most famous of the crystal skulls—the so-called “Skull of Doom.”

There are genuine enigmas associated with crystal skulls. Some seem outlandish, while others would appear to make sense but aren't necessarily true either. Studies of crystal skulls run from exacting scientific examinations to bizarre psychic readings that could never be proven. Much of the material on crystal skulls may be fabricated or deceptive, and the age and origins of the objects obscured—but one thing is certain: crystal skulls are real!

The second most abundant mineral on the earth, after feldspar, quartz has even been found in meteors. It is a large component of sand and sandstone, and is part of almost every rock, be it igneous, metamorphic or sedimentary. It is the main mineral in most gemstones.

Quartz is extremely hard rock, with a Mohs scale of 7. Since diamonds are one of the few minerals that exceed quartz in hardness, diamond-tipped tools or dust are thought to have been used to make most crystal skulls.

Quartz has a lattice of “silica tetrahedra” and ideally forms into a six-sided prism terminating with six-sided pyramids at each end. Its crystals can grow together and become intertwined and therefore show only part of this shape, looking like a giant crystal mass. But the underlying crystalline structure, one in which internal patterns of molecules are regular, repeated and geometrically arranged, gives quartz many of its striking properties, and makes it possible for one to believe that crystal skulls may actually be the depositories of ancient wisdom.

Eric Smalley, in an article about quantum computers in *Technology Research News* (online at trnmag.com) reports that a research team from the U.S. and Korea succeeded in storing a light pulse in a crystal, and then reconstituting it. This was significant because quantum information is notoriously fragile, and the ability to store it in a crystal would advance the feasibility of building a quantum computer (which would theoretically work at far faster speeds than are now possible).

Although there is much work to be done to develop a quantum memory chip, experiments with crystal seem promising. More recent research takes the use of crystals in information processing a step further, experimenting with perhaps the ultimate material in information storage, DNA.

According to *Science Daily* “Crystals promise a new way to process information.” An article in February, 2003 reported, “A team led by Richard Kiehl, a professor of electrical engineering at the University of Minnesota, has used the selective ‘stickiness’ of DNA to construct a scaffolding for closely spaced nanoparticles that could exchange information on a scale of only 10 angstroms (an angstrom is



(Above) F. A. (Mike) Mitchell-Hedges in the lost city of Lubaantun, circa 1924

British Museum Crystal Skull



one 10-billionth of a meter).”

More incredible research involving DNA and its crystal structure has been carried out in an attempt to solve the mysteries of evolution and the origins of life. In the meantime, IBM, in conjunction with DARPA, the Defense Advanced Projects Research Agency, has been involved in developing holographic data storage systems. Through a process of shooting laser beams into the crystal, they have successfully stored thousands of holograph images on a single lithium niobate crystal.

Clearly, on the cutting edge of science, crystals of various types

Enigma of the Crystal Skulls

The Mitchell-Hedges "Skull of Doom"



The True Story that Preceded the Hollywood Fantasy Offers No Shortage of Mystery and Drama on Its Own Account

An Aztec Crystal Skull



Toltec Ceremonial Skull

are being used to store and process information, and success is due to the very nature of crystals themselves. Information can be stored in an orderly fashion, replicated and retrieved. Is it then so farfetched to think that a technologically advanced earlier civilization could have developed these capabilities, and perhaps used crystal skulls to record information? Or even that the same ends may have been met intuitively?

In order to make a large-size crystal skull, say, one nearly the size of a human skull, the crystal carver would need a pretty large piece of quartz crystal—some can reach several meters in length, and weigh

tons. Obtaining large, translucent quartz crystals could be very difficult, especially in ancient times. Deposits of large crystals of different grades occur in Brazil, Peru, Mexico, California, Arkansas and other areas of the Americas. Deposits of large quartz crystals are also found in Africa, Europe and Asia, but much of the high quality, translucent quartz crystals today come from Brazil.

Gold and silver are often found around quartz, and quartz crystals can have beautiful gold threads inside them, having grown with the crystal. Quartz crystals have an axis of rotation and they have the ability to rotate the plane of polarization of light passing through them. They are also highly piezoelectric, becoming polarized with a negative charge on one end and a positive charge on the other when subjected to pressure.

Quartz crystals vibrate when an alternating electric current is applied to them, and for this reason they have proven to be highly important in commercial applications. Quartz oscillators were developed in 1921 and one early use was in phonograph needles. Their piezoelectricity also makes them ideal for use in making microphones, speakers, pressure gauges, actuators, resonators and clocks.

The many astonishing qualities of quartz seem to make it an ideal material for "psychic" and "light" experiments. In theory, a piece of crystal quartz, or a crystal skull, could and would react to what was around it, including light, electricity, pressure, sound, vibrations of all sorts, and possibly human thought waves and the human electrical field.

Marcel Vogel, an IBM researcher, spent seventeen years testing crystals and their interaction with human energy. He perfected the "Vogel-cut" of crystals to maximize their ability to convey psychic and healing influences. His work is perhaps best summarized in this quote from him: "The crystal is a neutral object whose inner structure exhibits a state of perfection and balance. When it is cut to the proper form and when the human mind enters into relationship with its structural perfection, the crystal emits a vibration which extends and amplifies the power of the user's mind. Like a laser, it radiates energy in a coherent, highly concentrated form, and this energy may be transmitted into objects or people at will."

Many unusual phenomena have been associated with crystal skulls. According to Frank Dorland, a San Francisco art expert and restorer who studied the Mitchell-Hedges crystal skull for six years, the skull would often be seen with its eyes unusually lit up. The eyes would flicker as if they were watching the observer, and visitors reported odd odors and sounds, plus various lighting effects coming from the skull. Bizarre photographs were taken of "pictures" which sometimes formed within the skull, including images of flying discs and of what appears to be the Caracol observatory at the Toltec Mayan site of Chichen Itza. The astonishing ability of crystal skulls to create unusual phenomena is now well known.

It is nearly impossible to discuss crystal skulls without looking into the life of F. A. 'Mike' Mitchell-Hedges. A fascinating individual, Mitchell-Hedges was very much the prototype for the Indiana-Jones

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GLOBAL COOLING

Is Mars Sending Us a Message about Planetary Geriatrics?

• BY SUSAN MARTINEZ, Ph.D.

Artist's rendering of the Phoenix Lander on the arctic plains of Mars.
(Art by Corby Waste, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, NASA)

"...the earth and the heavens ... all shall wax old as doth a garment."

Hebrews 1:10-11

With great expectations hinging on NASA's latest exploration of Mars—the Phoenix lander touching down smoothly on the Red Planet's northern ice plains in May—scientists are holding their breath for signs of ancient water and life on that barren world. Could success for the \$457 million-dollar mission—the first to study Mars' arctic plains—depend on finding, under polar ice, organic chemicals or perhaps "nanofossils"?

Back in '04 when Mars was last making news, NASA having landed a rover on the Red Planet, one MIT engineering student floated the idea of "terraforming" Mars by melting her polar caps to make her warm, wet and habitable once again. The quixotic sci-fi scheme reminds one of those miraculous wrinkle creams that inevitably pop up when you go online. Most of us, though, will have to settle for growing old gracefully and getting a laugh out of the latest crackpot scheme to reverse aging or bring the dead back to life. In such matters, I think of the eternal truth of Hindu theology which posits a holy trinity composed of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. These great deities in turn resolve into creator, sustainer, destroyer. And finally they represent birth, life, and death.

If planets are living things, they too, it seems, must have a natural lifespan, ending inexorably in dust and decay. But Western science and sensibility, enamored of unlimited growth, has been loathe to admit death and dissolution. Indeed, when the first dinosaurs were exhumed early in the nineteenth century, the very idea of *extinction* of species was not only brand new, it was repugnant. It was horrible. "It is contrary to the common course of providence to suffer any of his creatures to be annihilated," said Quaker naturalist P. Collinson.

At the time of the first dinosaur discovery, the world of extinct life was an unknown, still buried in the past. "Geologic time," as it is called, was just being discovered. Although the first dinosaur ("the Great Fossil Lizard of Stonesfield" at Sussex, UK, 1822) was much celebrated, the "overgrown lizard" triggered instant debate and controversy. How could a species have vanished from the good earth? Soon it would be known that "a staggering number" of other creatures, as well as plants, sang their death song to the dawning tertiary.

Shiva, or the "destroyer," as the ancient world dubbed the force-pulling-down, was nothing sinister (quite the contrary), but simply the inevitable vanishment or dissolution of all material substance. And while the sages of old knew all about the birth and death of worlds once they fulfilled their labor, we moderns seem to have forgotten

that all stories have a beginning, middle and end; instead, our "sages" would inject the patently geriatric Red Planet with their version of new life; or would interpret her moribund frigidity (-40 degrees F. on a typical summer's day) as the result of being "currently in the grip of an ice age;" or would account for her Stygian, tomblike "drought" as "some change in the planet's atmosphere...causing water to vaporize..." Or titillate the mind with recondite (and so far inconclusive) studies into "possible life on Mars."

The Red Planet, well into her dotage, is not a potential piece of real estate, nor is it likely to be making a comeback any time soon. She will, in all likelihood, get only colder and drier.

She's history, it appears.

Neither is our Mother Earth, Mars' "sister planet," a youngster. Three things are seen to happen in the life of a world—any world. Slowing, drying, and cooling, from day one.

The proto-world, we are told, began as a seething ball of liquid fire, boiling and roiling, whirling and swirling. She was still a twisting turbulent vortex of friction, gas clouds in rapid rotation slowly but surely condensing particles in solution. It would take, the argument goes, almost a billion years for the newborn world to produce the first shred of life. The molten earth, after all, before we can go for a walk in the park, must turn down the lights, slow down, cool down,

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