The Evidence of Earth's Lost Civilization

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE SIGN AND THE SEAL

GRAHAM HANCOCK

FINGERPRINTS OF THE GODS

Also by Graham Hancock

Journey Through Pakistan
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The Sign and the Seal: A Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant The Message of the Sphinx (with Robert Bauval)

Fingerprints of the Gods

Graham Hancock

Photographs by Santha Faiia

Three Rivers Press New York

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Published by Three Rivers Press, a division of Crown Publishers, Inc., 201 East 50th Street, New York, New York 10022. Member of the Crown Publishing Group.

Originally published in Great Britain by William Heinemann, Ltd., an imprint of Reed Consumer Books Ltd., in 1995. First American hardcover edition published by Crown Publishers, Inc., in 1995.

Random House, Inc. New York, Toronto, London, Sydney, Auckland www.randomhouse.com

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Printed in the United States of America

Line illustrations by R. J. Cook

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Hancock, Graham.

Fingerprints of the gods / by Graham Hancock.—1st American ed. Includes index.

1. Lost continents. 2. Civilization, Ancient. 3. Antarctica-Discovery and exploration. 4. World maps—To 1800. I. Title.
GH751.H293 1995 930-dc20 95-6964

ISBN 0-517-88729-0 15

14 13 12 11 10

For Santha ... for being there. With all my love.

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Acknowledgements

Fingerprints of the Gods could not have been written without the generous, warm-hearted and sustaining love of my partner Santha Faiia—who always gives more than she takes and who enriches the lives of everyone around her with creativity, kindness and imagination. All the photographs in the book are her work.

I am also grateful for the support and encouragement of our six children—Gabrielle, Leila, Luke, Ravi, Sean and Shanti—each one of whom I feel privileged to know.

My parents, Donald and Muriel Hancock, have been incredibly helpful, active and involved through this and many other difficult times and projects. Together with my uncle James Macaulay they have also patiently read the drafts of the evolving manuscript, offering a wealth of positive suggestions. Thanks, too, to my oldest and closest friend, Peter Marshall, with whom I have weathered many storms, and to Rob Gardner, Joseph and Sherry Jahoda, Roel Oostra, Joseph and Laura Schor, Niven Sinclair, Colin Skinner and Clem Vallance, all of whom gave me good advice.

In 1992 I suddenly found that I had a friend in Lansing, Michigan. His name is Ed Ponist and he got in touch with me soon after the publication of my previous book, *The Sign and the Seal*. Like a guardian angel he volunteered to devote a hefty chunk of his spare time to helping me out in the US with research, contacts and the collection of documentary resources of relevance to *Fingerprints of the Gods*. He did a brilliant job, always sending me the right books just when I needed them and finding references that I didn't even know existed. He was also an accurate weather-vane on the quality of my work, whose judgement I quickly learned to trust and respect. Last but not least, when Santha and I went to Arizona, to the Hopi Nation, it was Ed who came with us and who opened the way.

Ed's initial letter was part of an overwhelming deluge of mail that I received from around the world after writing *The Sign and the Seal*. For a while I tried to answer all the letters individually. Eventually, however, I got swamped with the new work on *Fingerprints* and had to stop replying. I feel bad about this, and would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who wrote to me and to whom I did not write back. I'm intending to be more systematic in the future because I enormously value this correspondence and appreciate the high-quality information that it frequently turns out to contain ...

Other researchers who have helped me on *Fingerprints of the Gods* have been Martin Slavin, David Mestecky and Jonathan Derrick. In addition I would like to thank my Anglophone editors on both sides of the Atlantic,

Tom Weldon at Heinemann, Jim Wade at Crown and John Pearce at Doubleday Canada, as well as my literary agents Bill Hamilton and Sara Fisher, for their continuing commitment, solidarity and wise counsel.

My warmest appreciation also to those co-researchers and colleagues who have become my friends during the course of this investigation: Robert Bauval in Britain (with whom I shall be co-authoring two future books on related subjects), Colin Wilson, John Anthony West and Lew Jenkins in the United States, Rand and Rose Flem-Ath and Paul William Roberts in Canada.

Finally I want to pay tribute to Ignatius Donnelly, Arthur Posnansky, R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz, Charles Hapgood and Giorgio de Santillana—investigators who saw that something was badly wrong with the history of mankind, who had the courage to speak out against intellectual adversity, and who pioneered the momentous paradigm shift that is now irrevocably under way.

Part I

Introduction

The Mystery of the Maps

Chapter 1

A Map of Hidden Places

8 RECONNAISSANCE TECHNICAL SQUADRON (SAC) UNITED STATES AIRFORCE Westover Airforce Base Massachusetts

6 July 1960

SUBJECT: Admiral Piri Reis World Map

To: Professor Charles H. Hapgood, Keene College, Keene, New Hampshire.

Dear Professor Hapgood,

Your request for evaluation of certain unusual features of the Piri Reis World Map of 1513 by this organization has been reviewed.

The claim that the lower part of the map portrays the Princess Martha Coast of Queen Maud Land Antarctica, and the Palmer Peninsula, is reasonable. We find this is the most logical and in all probability the correct interpretation of the map.

The geographical detail shown in the lower part of the map agrees very remarkably with the results of the seismic profile made across the top of the ice-cap by the Swedish-British Antarctic Expedition of 1949.

This indicates the coastline had been mapped before it was covered by the ice-cap. The ice-cap in this region is now about a mile thick.

We have no idea how the data on this map can be reconciled with the supposed state of geographical knowledge in 1513.

HAROLD Z. OHLMEYER Lt Colonel, USAF Commander

Despite the deadpan language, Ohlmeyer's letter¹ is a bombshell. If Queen Maud Land was mapped before it was covered by ice, the original cartography must have been done an extraordinarily long time ago.

How long ago exactly?

Conventional wisdom has it that the Antarctic ice-cap, in its present extent and form, is millions of years old. On closer examination, this notion turns out to be seriously flawed—so seriously that we need not assume the map drawn by Admiral Piri Reis depicts Queen Maud Land as

¹ Letter reproduced in Charles H. Hapgood FRGS, *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings*, Chilton Books, Philadelphia and New York, 1966, p. 243.

it looked millions of years in the past. The best recent evidence suggests that Queen Maud Land, and the neighbouring regions shown on the map, passed through a long ice-free period which may not have come completely to an end until about six thousand years ago.² This evidence, which we shall touch upon again in the next chapter, liberates us from the burdensome task of explaining who (or what) had the technology to undertake an accurate geographical survey of Antarctica in, say, two million BC, long before our own species came into existence. By the same token, since map-making is a complex and *civilized* activity, it compels us to explain how such a task could have been accomplished even six thousand years ago, well before the development of the first true civilizations recognized by historians.

Ancient sources

In attempting that explanation it is worth reminding ourselves of the basic historical and geological facts:

- 1 The Piri Reis Map, which is a genuine document, not a hoax of any kind, was made at Constantinople in AD 1513.3
- 2 It focuses on the western coast of Africa, the eastern coast of South America and the northern coast of Antarctica.
- 3 Piri Reis could not have acquired his information on this latter region from contemporary explorers because Antarctica remained undiscovered until AD 1818,4 more than 300 years after he drew the map.
- 4 The ice-free coast of Queen Maud Land shown in the map is a colossal puzzle because the geological evidence confirms that the latest date it could have been surveyed and charted in an ice-free condition is 4000 BC.⁵
- It is not possible to pinpoint the *earliest* date that such a task could have been accomplished, but it seems that the Queen Maud Land littoral may have remained in a stable, unglaciated condition for at least 9000 years before the spreading ice-cap swallowed it entirely.⁶

_

² Ibid., pp. 93-98, 235. The period lasted from about 13000 BC to 4000 BC according, for example, to the findings of Dr Jack Hough of Illinois University, supported by experts at the Carnegie Institution, Washington DC. John G. Weiphaupt, a University of Colorado specialist in seismology and gravity and planetary geology, is another who supports the view of a relatively late ice-free period in at least parts of Antarctica. Together with a number of other geologists, he places that period in a narrower band than Hough et al.—from 7000 BC to 4000 BC.

³ Ibid., preface, pp. 1, 209-211.

⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1991, I:440.

⁵ Maps of The Ancient Sea Kings, p. 235.

⁶ Ibid.

6 There is no civilization known to history that had the capacity or need to survey that coastline in the relevant period: between 13,000 BC and 4000 BC.⁷

In other words, the true enigma of this 1513 map is not so much its inclusion of a continent not discovered until 1818 but its portrayal of part of the coastline of that continent under ice-free conditions which came to an end 6000 years ago and have not since recurred.

How can this be explained? Piri Reis obligingly gives us the answer in a series of notes written in his own hand on the map itself. He tells us that he was not responsible for the original surveying and cartography. On the contrary, he admits that his role was merely that of compiler and copyist and that the map was derived from a large number of source maps.⁸ Some of these had been drawn by contemporary or near-contemporary explorers (including Christopher Columbus), who had by then reached South America and the Caribbean, but others were documents dating back to the fourth century BC or earlier.⁹

Piri Reis did not venture any suggestion as to the identity of the cartographers who had produced the earlier maps. In 1963, however, Professor Hapgood proposed a novel and thought-provoking solution to the problem. He argued that some of the source maps the admiral had made use of, in particular those said to date back to the fourth century BC, had themselves been based on even *older* sources, which in turn had been based on sources originating in the furthest antiquity. There was, he asserted, irrefutable evidence that the earth had been comprehensively mapped before 4000 BC by a hitherto unknown and undiscovered civilization which had achieved a high level of technological advancement:¹⁰

It appears [he concluded] that accurate information has been passed down from people to people. It appears that the charts must have originated with a people unknown and they were passed on, perhaps by the Minoans and the Phoenicians, who were, for a thousand years and more, the greatest sailors of the ancient world. We have evidence that they were collected and studied in the great library of Alexandria [Egypt] and that compilations of them were made by the geographers who worked there.¹¹

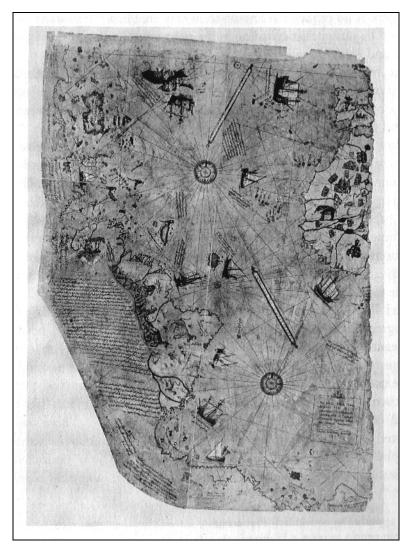
⁷ Historians recognize no 'civilizations' as such prior to 4000 BC.

⁸ Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings, pp. 220-4.

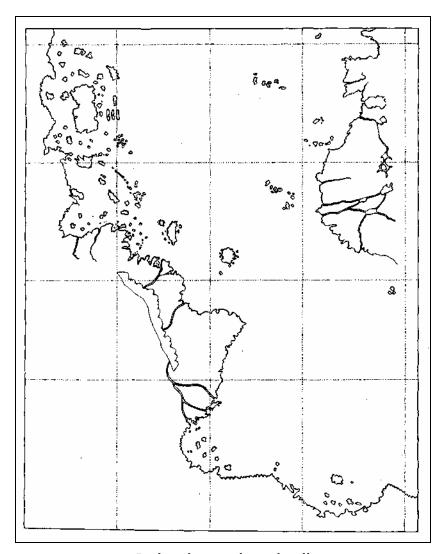
⁹ Ibid., p. 222.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 193

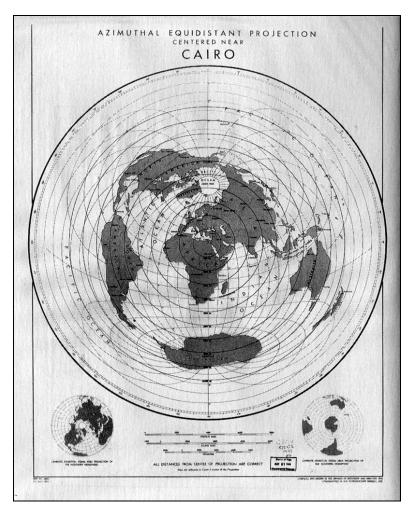
¹¹ Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings (revised edition), Turnstone Books, London, 1979, preface.



Piri Reis map (original)



Redrawing to show detail



The US Airforce map shows the probable projection that governed the layout of the ancient Piri Reis map.

From Alexandria, according to Hapgood's reconstruction, copies of these compilations and of some of the original source maps were transferred to other centres of learning—notably Constantinople. Finally, when Constantinople was seized by the Venetians during the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the maps began to find their way into the hands of European sailors and adventurers:

Most of these maps were of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. But maps of other areas survived. These included maps of the Americas and maps of the Arctic and Antarctic Oceans. It becomes clear that the ancient voyagers travelled from pole to pole. Unbelievable as it may appear, the evidence nevertheless indicates that some ancient people explored Antarctica when its coasts were free of ice. It is clear, too, that they had an instrument of navigation for accurately determining longitudes that was far superior to anything possessed by the peoples of ancient, medieval or modern times until the second half of the eighteenth century.

This evidence of a lost technology will support and give credence to many of the other hypotheses that have been brought forward of a lost civilization in remote times. Scholars have been able to dismiss most of that evidence as mere myth, but here we have evidence that cannot be dismissed. The evidence requires that all the