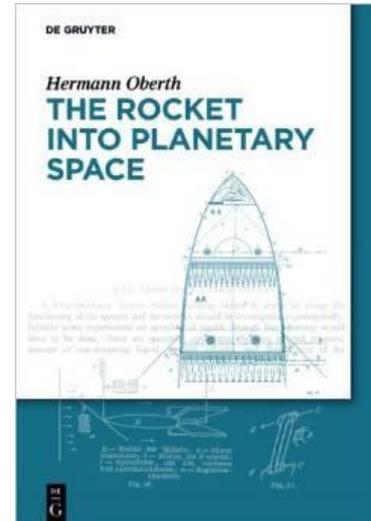




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Hermann Oberth: “The Rocket into Planetary Space”

“Under certain economic conditions, the construction of such machines may even become profitable. Such conditions might arise within a few decades. In the present document I intend to prove this statement.”
(“Die Rakete zu den Planetenräumen”, Hermann Oberth 1923).

With this revolutionary statement, physicist Hermann Oberth proved to be one of the most visionary and ingenious pioneers of rocketry. Fundamental and scientifically solid, his ideas were not only comprehensive, but he also conducted meticulous investigations about all possible rocket parameters. His proposals included spacecraft instrumentation for scientific missions, and novel ideas for launch and test facilities. Oberth did not limit himself to robotic rockets, but also looked closely at the various technical, physiological, and psychological problems and challenges that would be encountered with sending humans into space.



Fundamental and scientific-technically solid were not only his comprehensive, meticulous investigations and optimization trade-offs of all possible rocket parameters, but also his proposals for spacecraft-instrumentation for manned and scientific missions as well as his novel ideas for launch- and test facilities. Oberth’s “Outlook” (§17) provides a prophetic “blue-print” of the many space applications which followed in the years to come and culminated in the implementation of today’s permanent manned space station which followed Hermann Oberth’s conceptual descriptions very closely.

The book, thoroughly and expertly translated and now first published in English allows also all non-German readers to go back to the beginning, appreciate the problems associated with space travel and understand the never ending quest for space exploration.

“This book is still of interest today in the same manner that we still have an interest in Einstein’s papers on special and general relativity and Darwin’s On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection in their original form—it places us at a critical moment in the development of a revolutionary concept that is firmly established today. Reading this book is a humbling experience that places into perspective the extraordinary progress that we have made in our exploration of space”, observed Michael L. Ciancone,

Chair, History Committee American Astronautical Society, who - together with Trevor C. Sorensen (Team Lead/Translator, Hawaii Space Flight Laboratory) initiated this translation effort. Additional support was provided by Dr. Michael Griffin (Chairman and CEO Schafer Corporation President, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Former NASA Administrator) who took the time to read the draft of this translation and write an insightful preface for the book; Karlheinz Rohrwild of the Oberth Museum, located in Feucht/Bavaria, for providing additional research support; and Jim Kirkpatrick, Executive Director of the American Astronautical Society for facilitating the contract with the publisher, R. Oldenbourg/ De Gruyter, thus contributing to the wonderful opportunity to bring this important book to the attention of the English-speaking world and in particular to the international space operations community.

"For the human mind there is no Never, only a not yet" (Woman in the Moon, Fritz Lang, 1929)

If you are interested in a visualization of Oberth's Model-B rocket you are kindly referred to a clip from "Woman in the Moon": [The Rocket](#).



Joachim J. Kehr, Editor SpaceOps News