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Background

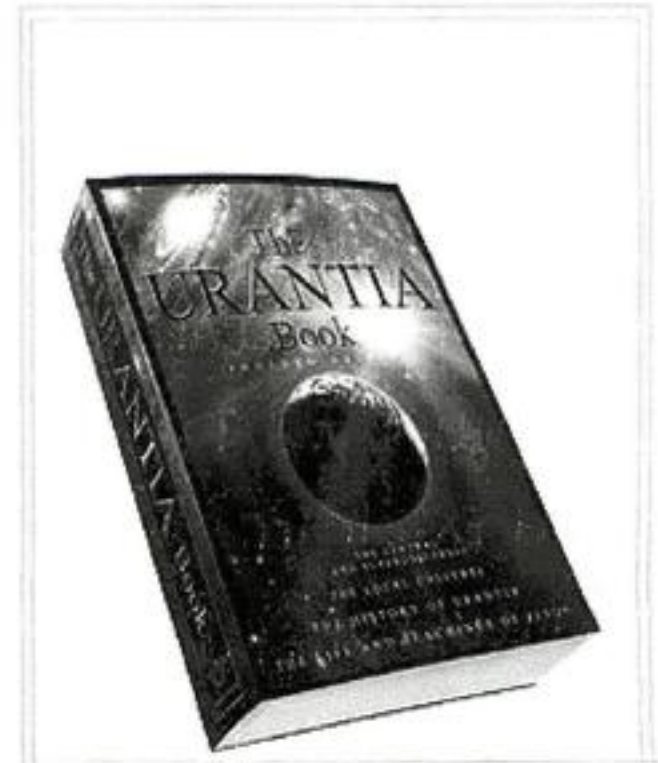
Authorship

The exact circumstances of the origin of *The Urantia Book* are unknown. The book and its publishers do not name a human author. Instead, it is written as if directly presented by numerous celestial beings appointed to the task of providing an "epochal" religious revelation.^{[9][10]}

As early as 1911, William S. Sadler and his wife Lena Sadler, physicians in Chicago and well known in the community, are said to have been approached by a neighbor who was concerned because she would occasionally find her husband in a deep sleep and breathing abnormally.^{[11][12]} She reported that she was unable to wake him at these times. The Sadlers came to observe the episodes, and over time, the individual produced verbal communications that claimed to be from "student visitor" spiritual beings.^{[13][12]} This changed sometime in early 1925^[13] with a "voluminous handwritten document," which from then on became the regular method of purported communication.^{[13][14]} The individual was never identified publicly but has been described as "a hard-boiled business man, member of the board of trade and stock exchange."^[12]

The Sadlers were both respected physicians, and William Sadler was a debunker of paranormal claims, who is portrayed as not believing in the supernatural.^[15] In 1929, he published a book called *The Mind at Mischief*, in which he explained the fraudulent methods of mediums and how self-deception leads to psychic claims. He wrote in an appendix that there were two cases that he had not explained to his satisfaction:^{[16][17]}

The other exception has to do with a rather peculiar case of psychic phenomena, one which I find myself unable to classify. ... I was brought in contact with it, in the summer of 1911, and I have had it under my observation more or less ever since, having been present at probably 250 of the night sessions, many of which have been attended by a stenographer who made voluminous notes. A thorough study of this case has convinced me that it is not one of ordinary trance. ... This man is utterly unconscious, wholly oblivious to what takes place, and, unless told about it subsequently, never knows that he has been used as a sort of clearing house for the coming and going of alleged extra-planetary personalities. ... Psychoanalysis,



The cover of *The Urantia Book*, published by Uversa Press and designed by artist Gary Tonge, ISBN 9780965197236.



William S. Sadler