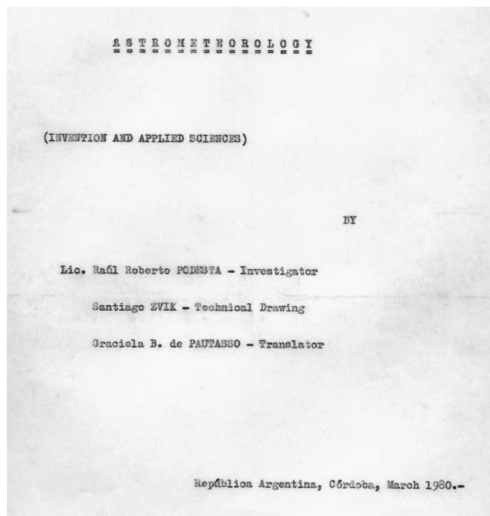


Story of a Scientific and Technological project

It was the beginning of the 80s. One day I learned about a contest called "Rolex Awards for Enterprise". This contest awarded five prizes for innovation. The jury was made up of personalities.

I picked up the instructive for the contest from the official Rolex store in Córdoba. I immediately met with my friend, Prof. Raúl Roberto Podestá. With him we had previously been conducting astronomical observations, weather forecasting, and rocketry. All of which was exciting for us. Together, we decided that we would do the project. We also needed to deliver it in English, therefore we summoned the ideal person for doing that. We had strict requirements and deadlines.



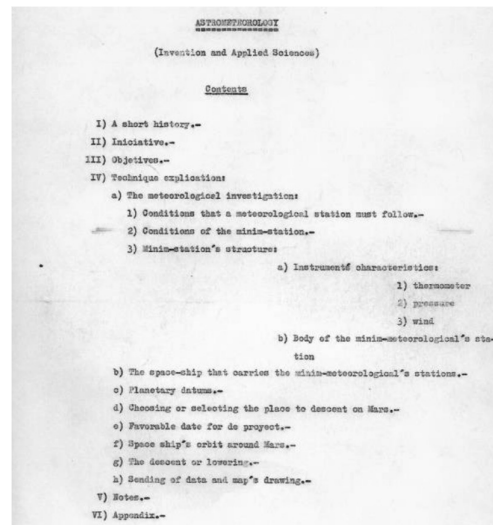
Our team

The person chosen was Graciela Antonina Bernardon de Pautasso, who was an English language teacher and University Librarian. She immediately joined the group. She was extremely passionate about details and brought her point of view to the project. She died very young. These lines are for her too.

In 1980 there was no color photocopier, we didn't have access to personal computers, and of course there was no Internet. Getting specialized books was difficult and we couldn't afford to have CAD / CAM either.

These Rolex awards had subject categories. Ours fitted under Sciences and inventions.

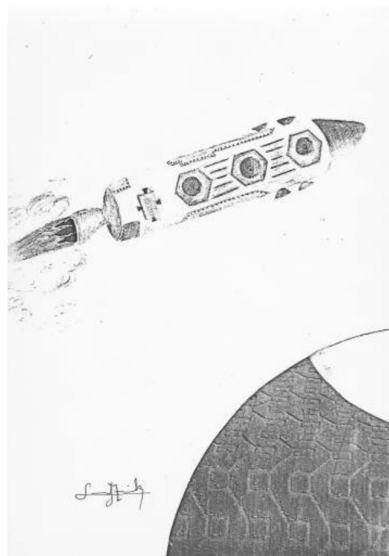
Its title was "Astrometeorology" which was a neologism for the science that studied meteorology at the planetary level. Of course this specific branch was enriched by Astronomy.



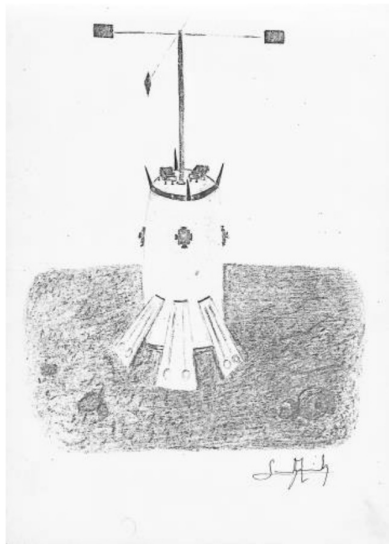
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The project consisted of sending a mothership that inside would contain several meteorological stations which would be arranged throughout the planet Mars. In this way, a single trip would be used to arrange these stations and also have them work simultaneously reporting to Earth.

To date, we do not know of another project that had the characteristic of being a mothership that delivered cargo as a courier while orbiting Mars.

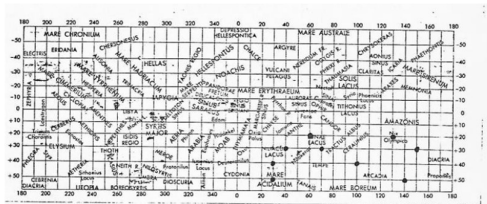


Mothership circling Mars



Mini weather station

One of the tasks of the project was to select strategic points to land on Mars. The map we used as a base was taken from the book "A field guide to the Stars and Planets" (Menzel / Pasachoff). Below I attach the points chosen on the map. The total of images sent to Switzerland were thirteen.



Map of Mars. Dots represent chosen points to land in

Interest in the planet Mars began in 1877, when the Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli claimed to have seen canals all over the planet. Man has tried dozens of times to reach the red planet. Only a third of those missions have succeeded as it is an extremely difficult mission.

The remarkable thing about our work, made over 37 years ago and without available technology, is that among the chosen points there is one that is only 700 kilometers from the Jezero crater where the "Perseverance" Mission will land as part of the mission planned for 2020.

A short time ago, during the success of the InSight mission, NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said: " (...) every milestone is something that happened eight minutes ago,

because that's the timelag to get a signal from Mars to Earth, so it's exciting, but then you have to step back and realize that this has already occurred in history, so it's an unique experience, incredible (...)".

In conclusion, I want to say that these words are, in line with recent progress in space exploration, a tribute to those two friends who once planned to probe the reddish sidereal companion of the Earth, in an eternal harmony.



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