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Ancient Aliens, Speculation, Conjecture and Fabrication

Posted on **2 April, 2013** by **Martin Clemens** —

Over the years I've written on a wide spectrum of topics, some more popular than others. Among those varied subjects I have endeavoured to keep my personal opinion out the mix, with some pointed exceptions. Some subjects beg for impartial treatment, while others lend



themselves to a more

personal critique. In those cases where I've presented the information in a more even-handed manner, often it's because my own thoughts on the subject at hand are somewhat disorganized, but today's topic suffers no such fate.

I give you...Ancient Alien Theory.

Tracing the origin of the Ancient Alien Theory –also known as Ancient Astronaut Theory and the Paleocontact Hypothesis- one is led inexorably to a list of several infamous authors, such as the late Zecharia Sitchin and Erich von Däniken, both considered to be the fathers of the theory, followed by their disciples David Childress, Georgio Tsoukalis and the late Philip Coppens, among several others.

A line of reasoning which gained much of it's popularity in the 1960's and 1970's, theories put forward by Sitchin and von Däniken suggest, in the broadest sense that extraterrestrials visited and influenced the early development of man, meddling with our cultural and even genetic progress.

Both men have their own pet theories, Sitchin claims that the Anunnaki, a supposed race of aliens who call the fictitious planet Nibiru home, are charged with interfering with human development in the era of pre-history, to make a hybrid race of beings called the Nephilim, for, shall we say, commercial means.



— Erich von Däniken

Von Däniken, however, is much less specific in his hypotheses. He claims that ancient art and iconography throughout the world illustrates air and space vehicles, non-human but intelligent creatures, ancient astronauts, and artefacts of an anachronistically advanced technology. Von Däniken also claims that geographically separated historical cultures share artistic themes, which he argues imply a common origin. Certain artefacts and monumental constructions are claimed by von Däniken to have required a more sophisticated technological ability in their construction than that

which was available to the ancient cultures who constructed them. Von Däniken maintains that these artefacts were constructed either directly by extraterrestrial visitors or by humans who learned the necessary knowledge from said visitors. These include Stonehenge, Pumapunku, the Moai of Easter Island, the Great Pyramid of Giza, and the ancient Baghdad electric batteries.

Von Däniken and Sitchin are both prolific writers, and both are most famously known for their original works titled *Chariots of the Gods* (1968) and *The 12th Planet* (1976) respectively. Through those books, both men have amassed a huge following of die hard fans, most of whom are utterly convinced that the two are almost infallible, which unfortunately is not true.

I have written about Sitchin's shortcomings in the past ([here](#) and [here](#)) and I'm not about to duplicate that work, other than to say that Sitchin, who taught himself to decipher ancient Sumerian cuneiform, is widely regarded as having mistranslated certain ancient Sumerian texts, which ultimately formed the basis of his theory. He is also widely criticised for his erroneous astronomical and scientific interpretations and literalism of myths. Having died in 2010 at the age of 90 with more than 14 books under his belt, Sitchin's legacy is bound to live on for many years, in spite of the fact that the scientific community views his theory as far more fiction than fact.

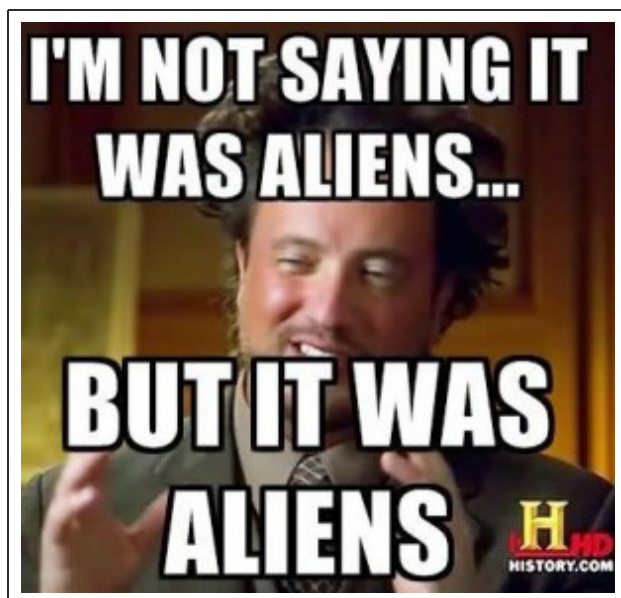


— Zecharia Sitchin

Von Däniken has suffered similar scientific criticism and is actually more prolific with an amazing 32 books published in multiple languages, though critics are quick to point out that much of his written work is unfounded pseudoscience. Von Däniken has travelled the globe on so-called archaeological expeditions, supposedly giving him unique insight into the cultures and artefacts of many parts of the world. In 1973, von Däniken claimed to have stumbled upon a vast underground cave network under the small South American country of Ecuador. He claimed that the tunnels covered an area spanning the length of the country and that within the

caves was an ancient alien library complete with books made of metal. This *proof* of an extraterrestrial presence in the distant past garnered von Däniken a good deal of celebrity, but in 1974 he admitted, under fire, that he had fabricated that *evidence*, calling it poetic license.

In addition to his scientific credibility woes, von Däniken has come under fire for plagiarising a good portion of his work in *Chariots of the Gods* (as well as other work), eventually succumbing to a lawsuit wherein he agreed to a legal settlement to give credit to Jacques Bergier, Louis Pauwels, Robert Charroux, and other authors who accused him of stealing their work without credit.



The ancient alien world is no stranger to these kinds of shenanigans, what with people like Georgio Tsoukalis proclaiming that he's the publisher of a magazine called *Legendary Times*, when that "magazine" is actually just the news letter for the Archaeology, Astronautics and SETI Research Association, now called the Ancient Alien Society. Of which he is the current director and claims to be the founder (which is also in dispute as von Däniken is thought to be the actual founder).

These people are self-congratulating, self-appointed experts, whose knowledge of ancient history and science is at best flawed, if not completely fabricated. Of those mentioned, only Sitchin has any real post-secondary education, even though his

degree from the University of London was in economics and not archaeology or ancient languages. They do tend to be well travelled, but visiting a place no more makes you an expert on its history and nature than looking up makes you an astronomer.

As I've mentioned before, I find it insulting that most of their theories reduce the real history and science of many archaeological sites to a steaming pile of wild speculation and conjecture. They diminish the achievements of our ancestors and demean our long lived legacy. I don't deny that the idea of extraterrestrials visiting our ancestors is an attractive one, hell, I'm prone to believe that aliens are visiting us now, but if we're accepting the flawed and often times fraudulent opinions of people who's own past is peppered with plagiarism and "poetic license", we're accepting a lowered standard of evidence that can only lead to embarrassment.

In the future, I plan to do a series of pieces on the various ancient alien theories that have been proffered by these people, paying close attention to the facts of the matter, rather than the conjecture that we're typically asked to believe.

What do you think of the ancient alien theory? Voice your opinion in the comment section below.



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Writer, Canadian, Fortean Addict...and lover of science and history. "As for me...I know only, that I know nothing..."

I also blog at mysteriousuniverse.org, check it out!

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15 thoughts on “ANCIENT ALIENS, SPECULATION, CONJECTURE AND FABRICATION”



CHilton

on **3 April, 2013 at 8:02 am** said:

Satanael as being the prince of the Grigori who was cast out of heaven, rebel or fallen angels, the god of this world~ a”third of the angels fell from heaven.”

We are also told that one third of an “innumerable company of angels” (Hebrews 12:22) chose to rebel with him. John saw this great wonder in heaven, “...an enormous red dragon...His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth...the great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him” (Revelation 12:3-9)

Strange Ancient Aliens~Lucifer and his angels cast down to earth.



Martin J. Clemens

on **3 April, 2013 at 2:19 pm** said:

OK, but how is that relevant, in any way, to the topic at hand?



Gerard James

on **4 April, 2013 at 2:07 pm** said:

I guess all I can add is there are really only two questions to ask one why did early man give up the hunter and gather lifestyle and develop this almost fetishily insane drive to build things on monumental scales very early on, and two if there are other intelligent beings out there why do we give them credit for having even come here if they came here or superseding us if they are from here, yet simultaneously feel we can based on earthly evidence some how come to a definitive of their past and or present activities in regards to earth if any or in other words then believe we are smarter then they? (that's a jab at the both camps)

All work is guess work even mainstream archaeologist because we are stuck looking through our lens of today. I don't applaud frauds and swindlers but when for instance I read that golbeki tepe is some how a ritual or even burial ground with no concrete evidence and only a fraction of the site actually having been excavated, I think "sitichin was doing no different... imaging" The thing is he n dankien were just alot better at it because they didn't let 'all' the evidence get in the way...

because we can never truly understand WHY there will always be speculation so pick ya poison, mainstream or fringe stream, after all does anyone actual learn practical things from the past and apply to their lives...last I checked were still doing the exact same only calling what we do, wars, religion, societies, etc, by a different name



neal

on **4 April, 2013 at 2:53 pm** said:

Even today, when exposed to a certain level of technology, the public is encouraged to direct attention to theories about ET. Why would that psy op be anything new?

I spent years in some indigenous North American medicine societies, and the old men would laugh about the stories told to invading forces. I think the old myths were, and are, a way to ensure the viability of breakaway civilisations. Everything gets encoded, Uncle Bob shows up as a Star Person, it is like one of those comic books that focuses on the pagentry, but leaves the engineering out. I do not know about aliens, but I suspect that there are various groups of homonids, from the past, all involved. Of course, that could mean that the non Homo Sapiens, the ones that still exist, are by definition breakaway, in one form, or another.

So, if the family of humanity is like that, then it is just sensible to keep certain knowlege from the masses, mainly Homo Sapiens, one would have to admit that may be the only reason this strain has not blown this place up, again, so far.



Don



on **4 April, 2013 at 3:22 pm** said:

I feel there were some visitors in ancient times but at the same time some of the things I read are a bit far out there. I look at the small airplane, bagdad battery, glass in the desert, strange looking devices pictured on the walls of the pyramids, and so on. I see some things that should not be there unless those people saw something.



O. Pagan

on **5 April, 2013 at 3:31 pm** said:

I must confess that I used to be very much entertained by the ancient alien theory, TV shows, etc. Some of the information really gives me pause and makes me think, and that's the key, to "think". After the obvious logical information was used in the series, it went downhill really fast, blaming aliens for absolutely *everything*. I is a little bit like saying "... Is there a possibility that leaves fell from the tree in front of my yard because of aliens?" Well, I suppose, but winter is a very much more likely explanation... My two cents... (-)



Martin J. Clemens

on **5 April, 2013 at 5:42 pm** said:

Thank you, everyone, for reading and commenting. It's true, interpretation of the past is tinted by the customs of our modern society. We are faced with a choice, to believe the scientists or the pseudoscientists, and while there may be some funny business going on with von Daniken and others, some of the theories do deserve a closer, more rational look. Science isn't always impartial, or right...it's always best to think for yourself.



Carrie Bailey

on **8 April, 2013 at 1:19 pm** said:

Has anyone watched "Exposed?" I was swayed by Ben Stein's argument against aliens explaining everything unexplainable in science, evolution and history. Curious if anyone else had any thoughts on that.



Martin J. Clemens

on **9 April, 2013 at 12:16 am** said:

Hi Carrie, thanks for reading and commenting.

I haven't personally seen Exposed but i am familiar with Ben Stein's arguments, and I agree with him to a point.

There is a theological argument called "the god of the gaps", which argues that religion inserts god into areas of mystery, areas that haven't yet been explained by science, The argument suggests that this ideology is simply derived from an inability to say "I don't know", to always require an answer, by whatever means.

Pseudoscience, and specifically ancient alien theory, seem to be guilty of the same logical flaw. But instead of "God did it", they say "aliens did it". This is lazy intellectualism, and to my mind is the biggest problem with this subject.



AJ Moore

on **22 April, 2013 at 3:05 pm** said:

Hey

I am fascinated by this subject, and as your Twitter account reads 'I know only that I know nothing'. I would agree wholeheartedly with this statement, (not you personally – we as a collective lol) and from reading the comments above generally people seem to agree.

The so called experts on the show are entertaining if nothing else, my only knowledge of these chaps is from their books and AA. If they're as you say, a bunch of plagiarism prone fringe science enthusiasts, with nothing but conjecture and speculation to thrust their promethean beliefs into the public eye. We must at the very least admire their drive and enthusiasm for the subject, and if it does nothing else but perpetuate speculation and conjecture within our own train of thought this surely can be no bad thing.



Martin J. Clemens

on **22 April, 2013 at 3:45 pm** said:

Thanks for reading and commenting Mr. Moore, I'm glad my writing struck a cord for you.

The quote you referred to from my twitter profile is from Socrates, it comes from a paper Plato wrote about the nature of justice. In the paper Socrates chastised his debate opponent for being arrogant enough to think he knew what justice means to everyone.

The phrase, commonly known as Socrates' Paradox, is meant to say that one cannot know anything with absolute certainty but can feel confident about certain things. It is something I try to keep in mind in life, and I think it applies nicely to the topic at hand.

Thanks again for visiting.



Jorge Grünwaldt

on **25 April, 2013 at 12:20 am** said:

I must confess that the Ancient Aliens theory is at least an amusing possibility to me. Obviously some arguments and claims are so inextricably elaborated that sometimes make me laugh. But on the other hand, it opened a wide spectrum of new ideas and presented little or unknown places and facts around the globe that seem to deserve a closer look. The enormous blocks and flawless joints of Pumapunku and Tiahuanaco, together with the glazed ones are undoubtedly mind blowing for many of us. I am not saying that they were actually built by aliens, melt or through levitation. But why bother moving 50 or 100 tons blocks, make rounded walls and pursue perfect joints instead of simply piling a greater number of smaller blocks cut in a decent way -let's say one inch tolerance-?

The inability by mainstream scholars to explain and justify such works -or better said to ignore most of these issues fearing discredit- have lead an increasing number of individuals to look for other explanations. Regarding the faith in the existence of ancient visitors, well, with several hundred million people devoting many different deities around the globe, the aliens seem rather modest. Nobody can prove the negative.



Ezmerelda Sinclair

on **27 April, 2013 at 12:28 am** said:

Just because we cant explain WHY early civilizations did stuff doesnt mean that aliens did it....MDH(once a fully-paid up toking member of the "believe it if its published in a book" brigade – we even had a book from the 50's on how the earth is hollow and green men live within,operating the thoughts of humans with machines) was adamant that the building of the pyramids and stonehenge was impossible without non-human intervention.....Two

things made it possible that we have a hard time wrapping our heads round in modern times – slaves and time.....The ancients had loads of both.Great website – sorely needed with the plague of BS out there....



Pedro S.

on **28 April, 2013 at 5:32 pm** said:

I watch every episode of the show. I'm not such a believer to idolatrate everything said on the show, but at the same time I'm not such a skeptic to believe in nothing.

I believe that other intelligent live forms exist in the Universe, probably much more older than humans.

I'm not a historian or archaeologist, so I must interpret what scientists and pseudoscientists write and tell.

On other hand, I'm a Civil Engineer, and I must say that most of the ancient buildings that are talked about on the show, are impossible to replicate even with today's technology. Unlike what Ezmerelda Sinclair said, was not a matter of number of slaves, or even time. Is the level of perfection that is unbelievable. The rocks of Tiwanaku are impossible to build with the tools that we have today.

I can't say that ancient aliens did help to shape our history, and also can't say that they didn't. I wasn't there...

What I believe is that history, like I was told on portuguese school, is not the real one. I believe that some ancient technological civilization lives on this planet and we have no written proof about it.



hans

on **15 October, 2013 at 6:20 pm** said:

Being a Dutch viewer of ancient aliens, I must say that I can understand their theories and discussions. They ask questions for things, events in the past, there has never been given a good answer for. The problem is, we don't know much about our past. Just a few artifacts has been left behind. Then there are the old tales from the past, just in a few cases written down in books. Important question: did they (our ancestors) actually give a correct prescription about what has happened or do they also give just a story about what their ancestors did say? It is a good thing, that we are looking for (any) answers from the past though. I mean, a lot of people do believe absolutely everything what has been written down in the New Testament. Although, we also know that almost no one could write or read in that time of the history of mankind. Only just a few Roman civil servants. We have almost five similar stories from five different disciples in the Bible about the days of Jesus but in fact none of them wrote anything at all. Also nothing about what has been written down in the New Testament has been confirmed anywhere else. But almost anyone will say it's true, what has been written in the Bible. Because it is our history and it is the foundation of Christianity. And how is it possible that absolutely out of nothing in Egypt suddenly people knew everything about mathematics, astronomy and engineering so that they could build a pyramid? Of course this is really odd. But I never heard a theory that explains it all. So I support everything to find out and the

believers of ancient aliens have at least some things from the past you can look at. Though it's probably not enough for important conclusions . Our history is not about believing. I want to know what really has happened.

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