



# THE ANCIENT ALIEN QUESTION

By Philip Coppens

## *“We Were Not Alone”*

**H**ave we been visited by extra-terrestrial beings in the past? Did these “ancient aliens” contribute to the birth of human civilization? Do our ancient monuments contain evidence of their presence?

In 1968, Swiss hotelier **Erich von Däniken** posed these questions and sold more than 63 million copies of his book, *Chariots of the Gods*. 35 years on, the “ancient alien question” has still not been answered by science, though it is clear that there is tremendous popular interest in the subject. The series *Ancient Aliens* is continuously rated as *The History Channel’s* most watched documentary. But despite media and public interest, the phrase “ancient aliens” remains taboo within the scientific community. The closest topic explored by science is the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI), executed by radio astronomy. But SETI merely investigates whether there are extraterrestrial civilizations somewhere out there, in the depths of the universe, their existence detectable through powerful radio telescopes. It is far less controversial than the question about ancient aliens, about which science states that it *knows* that there were no alien interventions in our past. Is science right?

In *Chariots of the Gods*, von Däniken posed more than 230 questions: could this or that structure, artifact or legend be evidence of an alien visitation or intervention? There are the pyramids of Giza in Egypt, the phenomenally intricate walls at many of the Peruvian archaeological sites, like Sacsayhuaman, where the most odd-shaped stones, some weighing over 100 tons, fit perfectly together, as if first designed on a computer screen. There are the quaint descriptions in the bible, as to how Lot’s wife could possibly turn to salt when looking back at Sodom being destroyed by God. And what to make of Genesis 6, where there are references to giants and “the sons of God” coming down to mate with “the daughters of men”? The question of alien intervention in our Earth’s history was and has continued to be posed since.

Skeptical scholars have claimed that since 1968, von Däniken has been proven wrong. Not so: more than forty years later, most of the 230 questions posed by von Däniken remain unanswered by science. Certain sites, like the famous Nazca Lines, were hardly explored by scientists at the time von Däniken brought them to global attention. The Nazca lines are hundreds of lines drawn on the desert sands of Peru, somewhat resembling the layout of a modern airport. Could it be an ancient airport, von Däniken pondered? The suggestion has since become one of the most famous examples of the Ancient Alien Question.

Science refuses to pose the Ancient Aliens Question. Still, the question needs to be asked again for a number of monuments and artifacts, for today, there is even more evidence than in 1968 that “they” might have been here. Not only do many of the old questions remain, since 1968, many new archaeological discoveries have been made. Some, like the pyramid complex outside of the Bosnian capital Sarajevo (discovered in 2005), have clearly illustrated the stand-off between traditional historians and more liberal-thinking archaeologists. Many of the leading archaeologists are also often embarrassingly unaware of the latest archaeological findings their colleagues make. I participated in a scientific conference on pyramids in August 2008, which was attended by more than fifty academics, including twenty leading Egyptologists, amongst them the Director of Archaeology of Ain Shams and Cairo University. During the debates, the audience was astonished to learn that these leading Egyptologists did not know that officially a) the oldest pyramid is now in Peru (dated to 3200 BC, almost a millennium older than those of Egypt) and b) the largest pyramid is in Mexico (Cholula). When the leading archaeologists of our time do not even know, or can accept, the latest hard scientific material, is there any hope that they will ever be willing, let alone be comfortable, with addressing the Ancient Alien Question?

Equally, what astronomy is discovering is that the building blocks of life itself did not originate on Earth, but came here from outer space. This theory was proposed by Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of the structure of DNA. In the early 1970s, he argued that DNA was too complex and intricate to have been accidentally created in primordial ooze on Planet Earth. Half a century on, he is being proven correct. Scientific juggernauts like the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory are now proposing that comets brought amino acids to our planet. British astrophysicists Sir Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe have even shown that a number of viruses – including the common flu virus – comes from outer space, arriving on our planet riding on passing comets whose dust settles in our upper atmosphere.

All life on earth is therefore likely to be of extra-terrestrial origins, with the building blocks of DNA, according to the latest scientific research, even spontaneously creating

in interstellar space. It suggests that DNA-based life is intrinsic to the fabric of the universe; it means that somewhere out there, the odds are on that we can find life like it exists on our planet. The Ancient Alien Question should therefore today be formulated as whether someone found us, before we found them, and whether we are a species that is in denial.

Science scoffs at stories and legends. But hundreds of legends exist about deities that descended from the skies and interacted with Mankind and taught them civilization. This is a cross-cultural phenomenon, including civilizations that officially never had any contact between them. To pose the Ancient Alien Question is “merely” asking that if the legends are proving to be true in so many cases, whether these legends could therefore be true as well. And there is substantial evidence, from the Giza Plateau to the mountainous heights of Peru, that the answer to the question is “yes” – we were not alone.

*Philip Coppens is the author of “The Ancient Alien Question,” published by New Page and due out November 15, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-60163-198-5 List Price: US \$19.95 , Canada \$22.50*