



EXCERPT:

Islands in the Pacific

By Erich Von Däniken

Ancient humans had the natural urge to document the world in which they lived, a fact that is evident in the cave paintings from various sites around the world that all seem to depict the same things. Did the peoples of the prehistoric world have contact with each other? Is it possible that some were transported to far-flung locations in what our ancestors could only have described as “flying chariots”? Here is an excerpt from his latest book giving the reader a taste of von Däniken’s most convincing and thoroughly entertaining work yet.

Boulders on the Beach

North of Dunedin in New Zealand, there are about 100 spherical boulders lying on Moeraki Beach. The largest has a diameter of 3.16 meters. These giant geodes are literally flushed out of the rock, roll a few meters, come to a halt, and are then washed over by the daily tides. Many have broken apart, crumbling away as the result of the action of wind and waves. No one has any idea how many of the boulders have already been swallowed by the surf, worn down over thousands of years. Yet the rock keeps flushing out new boulders from the sediment as if a rock mother were laying eggs.

Geologists assure us that this is a perfectly natural process. The boulders are formed through the deposit of calcite in soft sandstone. This calcite forms a core around which the rock solidifies over millennia, rather like a pearl around a grain of sand. The comparison is flawed, however, because the oyster with the pearl is constantly in motion in the water; the rock, by contrast, does not move. Why, actually, does this geological miracle not happen on many other beaches around the world? And why would rock solidify around the calcite core as a ball?

The Maoris, the original inhabitants of New Zealand, call these boulders Te Kai-hinaki. The composite word consists of kai, meaning food, and hinai, meaning basket. An infinitely long time ago, the ship Arai-te-uru had been destroyed while searching for valuable gems. A hill

not far from the beach showed the petrified hull of the vessel. The boulders which keep emerging from the rock contain the food (energy?) which fell out of the baskets when the ship was destroyed. Strange story.

Impossible, Yet Real

Even stranger is the story of a spherical rock which was found on February 13, 1961, 6 miles north-east of Olancho at the edge of the Amargosa desert in California. At the time, Mike Mikesell, Wallace Lane, and Virginia Maxey were looking for minerals and were particularly on the lookout for geodes. The three owned a souvenir shop in Olancho, and they knew very well that geodes could be sold for a lot of money. This is because there are magnificent crystals inside a geode. About 120 meters above Owens Lake, the three discovered an irregularly shaped geode and laboriously hauled their find home. The next day, Mike Mikesell wanted to saw the rock in half to get to the crystals on the inside. As always, he used a diamond saw. Suddenly the saw snapped. A new saw blade suffered the same fate. Now the hard-working finders suspected that there might be a particularly valuable mineral inside the geode, perhaps even a diamond. They finally succeeded in splitting the geode in half with a great deal of effort and the assistance of a hammer and chisel. Their surprise could not have been greater: The outer skin consisted of a layer of sea fossils. This was followed by a layer which reminded them of petrified wood. Finally, there were two rings of a porcelain-like material, which in turn contained a plain pin 2 millimeters in diameter and 17 millimeters in length. That is what had broken the diamond saw. Geologists, none of whom want to reveal their name, estimate the age of the geode at about 500,000 years.

What is it that does not fit about the earth's past? It is completely impossible that the plain pin, whose composition has never been discovered, could have entered the geode from the outside. After all, the pin assumes a high level of knowledge of metallurgy of some kind—and of a workshop—500,000 years ago.

Brazil

In the vastness of Brazil, prehistoric finds are often the discovery of amateurs. The Austrian Ludwig von Schwennhagen was an amateur with an obsession. He lived as a philosophy and history teacher in Teresina, the capital of the northern Brazilian state of Piauí. He discovered a giant area with rock drawings, divided the region into seven districts, and called them Sete Cidades, or seven cities. His book about Sete Cidades¹⁴ appeared in 1928, but it generated no great interest. Ludwig Schwennhagen died as an impoverished school teacher.

Sete Cidades lies to the north of Teresina, between the towns of Piripiri and Rio Longe (about 3,000 kilometers north of Rio de Janeiro). The landscape is flat and of an intensive green, the roadsides lined with bushes. It alternates with sections of rainforest. Wild pigs,

wild cows, and even wild horses make driving hazardous. Though Sete Cidades is almost at the equator, the climate is nevertheless bearable, because a light breeze is constantly blowing from the Atlantic coast 300 kilometers away. Sete Cidades is reached from Piripiri by a 16-kilometer-long road.

The visitor unexpectedly comes up against the rock walls. It is as if one were standing amidst burning chaos, torn apart like the Biblical Gomorrah, destroyed by fire and brimstone. A hill lies hidden beneath the shell of a tortoise—that, at least, is what it looks like, but science assures us that these are unusual forms of glacial deposits. Glacial deposits? Here? By the equator? When is that supposed to have happened? My escort, an official from the state of Piauí, offered another explanation: in earlier times, Sete Cidades had been an ocean basin and the strange rocks were nothing more than eroded rocks. Wind and weather had sculpted the curious forms over millennia.

Even if the origin of the strange landscape formations remains a mystery, the rock drawings are a fact. There are tens of thousands of them. They cling to overhanging rocks or salute us from walls at a height of 15 meters. Once again, the same questions arise as in the rock cauldron of the Hopi near Oraibi, Arizona: Did the artists build scaffolding? Descend on ropes? Pile stones on top of one another? Why so many colored drawings in a single place at all? A Stone Age meeting point? And, as if by agreement, those "gods" on the rock walls with their haloes, rays, or helmet-like forms around their heads.

Once again, even the cleverest mind under the sun does not know who painted or engraved the paintings on to the walls. Yet it quickly becomes clear that the prehistoric artists preferred the same motifs as their colleagues on the other side of the world: circles, wheels with spokes, suns, squares, hand prints, crosses, stars, and highlighted beings. Additionally there are a few paintings which do not occur anywhere else. There are red and yellow circles, which today would be assigned signal character, bright red rings arranged above one another, or a round structure with a root-like outgrowth. In the round object, there is something like a small window. A UFO? Heaven help us! I cannot think of any reasonable explanations, the exception being my adored "gods." They greet us from the walls also in Sete Cidades, like everywhere. And all we can come up with for such a worldwide concurrence is a psychological angle? Our Stone Age ancestors are hardly likely to have all visited the same painting school. So where does the initial spark for these depictions of the gods come from? The gods are the ones with the rays!

You might think that Sete Cidades, with its impossible motifs on the rock walls, was probably a singular aberration of the Stone Age artists. What do we know about the Stone Age anyway? Maybe there was some kind of painters' convention every few years near the equator in Sete Cidades, and a few whiz-kids managed to get from California to Sete Cidades and back. Or perhaps they sent their latest creations around the world on some kind of hocus-pocus telepathic wave. I know that such a suggestion is ridiculous. That is why the question bothers me all the more as to why various rock paintings southeast of Santa Barbara

in California are similar to those in Sete Cidades. The art gallery of Santa Barbara is just as incomprehensible for us thinkers of the 21st century as the one in Sete Cidades. What else can one say except that in Santa Barbara, too, the large figures with the rays indicate the gods, no matter whether they are called "Great Manitou" or "Rongomai."

The people thousands of years ago left their god-like messages not just in rock drawings but also on the ground and on mountain slopes. The best-known example of this is the Nazca plains in Peru. I have written a separate book about the runway-like lines in the desert sand.¹⁵ I will therefore refrain from discussing the kilometer-long lines. Here I will present a comparative study of similar motifs worldwide. The unsolved riddle lies in the little word "worldwide." It simply does not fit into the Stone Age.

Farce

The progression from ape to intelligent human is a farce with thousands of open questions and thousands of incomplete answers. Every few years, the relevant science sells us the latest "assured knowledge" about the origin of species. The kind of pseudo-arguments which are used in textbooks to fill the gaping void in our knowledge is a sad sight to behold. I read, for example, that pre-hominids lived in packs and as a result developed intelligent and social behavior. Gruesome! Many animal species, not just apes, lived and live in packs. But apart from a hierarchy and pecking order, they have not developed any cultural intelligence. It is eternally argued that human beings are intelligent because they adapt better than other species. That objection is so much hot air. Why have other primates such as gorillas, chimpanzees, or orangutans not "adapted"? According to the rules of evolution, these cute animals would also have been "compelled" to develop intelligence. You cannot apply evolution selectively to one chosen species. The fact that we are intelligent really only says in comparison to the non-intelligent species that we should not be intelligent either. Furthermore, there are much older life forms than the primates. Scorpions, cockroaches, or spiders, for example, have been shown to have existed more than 500 million years in the past. The same applies to various species of reptiles, some of which are even said to have descended from the dinosaurs. Now we know that crocodile mothers care lovingly for their young, but crocodile culture is nevertheless lacking, despite all the millions of years in which they have "adapted." Because they all survived so bravely, these species should have squirmed through much better than the incomparably younger Homo sapiens. Where are the art objects or burial sites of these creatures?

When I read that humans do not have fur because they learnt to cover themselves with other furs, I feel that someone is pulling my leg. The pre-hominids are said to have descended from the trees for climatic reasons. What a thought! As if an ape species had realized that in evolutionary theory, it might be needed for humans at some point in the future! It climbed down from the trees but left its compatriots—don't they imitate everything?—swinging from

branch to branch in the trees to the present day. The social attitude of our ancestors left something to be desired.

The Trick With the Line

Nonsense, that is not how it was, there was something else, the clever articles say. Fear of stronger animals as well as easier nourishment had forced the pre-hominids to get up on their hind legs. What a laugh! The ape-like drive to imitate has become proverbial. Why did none of the other ape species follow this intelligent behavior? Were they less afraid of wild animals? And if such logic forced them develop intelligence, then giraffes, which can see and smell any enemy from miles away, should really have developed a giraffe religion a long time ago. Finally, it is argued that all these changes only affect one particular line. The primates in our line had begun to eat meat to feed themselves better and more easily. As a result, our line achieved a significant advantage over other apes. Mama mia! Since when is it easier to kill a gazelle or salamander than pick fruits off a tree? Furthermore, wild cats or fish of prey have been eating meat for millennia, including the brain. Did they develop painting or mathematics as a result?

In a remarkable article in the specialist journal *Sagenhafte Zeiten*, the director of studies, Peter Fiebag, raises the question about the "human creative big bang": "Some experts believe a change in the 'wiring of the brain' had triggered the 'human creative big bang.'" And he adds, "A section of DNA was, by mistake, copied from the X chromosome to the Y chromosome."⁶ Really, "by mistake," Fiebag asks? Or did it happen with the aid of extraterrestrial genetic engineering?

Fiebag's thought has a great deal of merit, even if anthropology has not quite caught up. There, in the salon of the sciences, we are served each year with the latest contradictions. Why not? Science is a living thing and the latest knowledge revises previous findings. Everyone is in agreement that we are unique. That also applies to other animals. But we are more unique than all the others because we have culture: painting, imagination, religion, mathematics, and the ability to plan for the future. (Though, the latter could be relativized, because a spider also plans for the future when it weaves its web.)

The lines of humans and chimpanzees had already been divided from before Eden, says Dr. David Reich from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Then the two species had begun exchanging genes again: "After the pre-hominids had already lived as their own species for hundreds of thousands of years, they suddenly started to interbreed with their knuckle-walking relatives again."⁷

I have some difficulty with the idea of a hominid with an upright gait suddenly spurning the members of his own species and preferring to have sex with an ape lover. And why the resulting bastard should possess better genetic factors remains just as much of a riddle as the

question of whether the chromosomes of the disparate pair would be compatible at all.

Things become even more confusing: mysterious bones were found in a cave in the Altai Mountains in central Asia, and analyzed at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig: "The clearly human bones from the Denisova cave are not the same as the human genome. Sensationally the genetic material of the Denisova hominid differs from Homo sapiens by more than twice as much as from the Neanderthals."⁸

In the name of all that is Milky Way! Perhaps our venerable anthropology might dare to take a creative leap toward the Director of Studies Fiebag. It can be proved, after all, that the Stone Age people mastered the high art of mathematics and geometry and demonstrated it on site. Or do we all have to think differently? Do different types of humans perhaps exist alongside one another, the more stupid ones and the knowledgeable ones? The latter left examples of their skills, which are ignored by society to the present day, although any fool could verify them.

If someone gets a fleeting glance of an Unidentified Flying Object soaring across the skies of New York City, does that make the famous Big Apple weird? If a hairy, eight foot tall Bigfoot briefly and enigmatically appears in the thick forests outside of Seattle, does that make the city weird? And if a chain-rattling member of the living-dead club materializes for a second or two in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, London, England, does that make the residence of Queen Elizabeth II weird? The answer is no, it does not, to all three of the above scenario.

What we have in each of these instances is a singular, stand-alone, strange event that has occurred in one particular locale. But, by definition, the place itself is not weird. Only the thing that decided to put in a one-time, brief appearance was weird. That is not always the case, however. On far more than a few occasions, it is the place itself – and not just the mysterious phenomena that manifest in its midst – that is weird, and incredibly richly so, too.

Expanding on the above, if that same Bigfoot, UFO, and chain-rattling ghost all appear in one particular, concise location, time and again (and quite possibly even for centuries, too), and along with a fantastic range of other bizarre things too, such as nothing less than lake-monsters, poltergeists, strange energies and vortexes, werewolves, occult activity, aliens, and enigmatic entities including fairies, elves and goblins, then this is all highly suggestive that the place is truly weird in the extreme!

But the definition of that very emotive word – weird – is most certainly wide open to interpretation. For some, it may simply mean odd or eccentric. For others it might imply terror, fear, panic, and sheer, unrelenting horror. A significant number of people might be inclined to suggest the word equates to unspeakable foulness and revulsion of the highest order; the type of awful thing that lurks in the shadows of the woods on the proverbial dark and stormy night. Or, that it's a most apt term to use when describing matters of a

supernatural or occult nature, such as life after death, alien encounters, and fantastic monsters.

It's not enough, however, to simply record the fact that our planet seems to have far more than its fair share of certain, specific areas that act as veritable magnets for mysterious events, strange creatures, UFOs and aliens, enigmatic entities like fairies and goblins, and an absolute multiplicity of spectral figures of a wide and dizzying nature. The bigger question that requires a solid answer is surely this: why, exactly, do these magnet-like beacons for all things supernatural even exist in the first place?

To answer that question, there is a need to dig deep into what are known in particle-physics-based research as wormholes. Imagine, if you will for a moment or several, a kind of cosmic version of New York's Subway System, or London's sprawling underground railway. Just like its terrestrial equivalents, the cosmic variety allows you to jump on at one point and get off at another of your personal choosing. But, this one also allows you to do something else, too; something near unique and astonishing. Namely, it provides you with the ability to completely bypass the cumbersome and time-consuming major problem of having to travel from Point A to Point B in linear, minute by minute fashion. This is where the wormhole concept comes into play in undeniably spectacular fashion.

In essence, a wormhole is nothing less than a theoretical shortcut that has the ability to cut a definitive swathe through the very fabric of both space and time, not unlike the scenario famously portrayed in the 1994 movie *Stargate*, starring Kurt Russell and James Spader. In the movie, the U.S. military secretly deciphers a series of codes and hieroglyphics adorned on a huge, ancient, stone ring found at Giza, Egypt back in 1928 – codes and hieroglyphics which turn out to be nothing less than coordinates for far away stars and galaxies. And, by entering those same coordinates into the *Stargate* of the film's title, the Universe is, quite literally opened up to Uncle Sam.

There's one particular type of wormhole called the Lorentzian Traversable Wormhole that may play a role in all this. So-called Lorentzian Traversable Wormholes might, physicists speculate, not only permit travel from one part of the universe to another, but also at an incredibly fast rate of speed, and possibly even near-instantaneously, too. Moreover, the two points of connection may very possibly be static, stable and unchanging.

In other words, we would have a situation where strange entities from strange worlds, realms and dimensions – entities possibly deeply adept and skilled at negotiating our very plane of existence via the advanced science of wormholes - might pop up time and time again at certain, specific locales on our planet. Those same locales could allow for nothing less than potential permanent connection with the domains of the mysterious others that have for so long been staple parts of our culture, history, mythologies, folklore, religions and belief-systems, and perceived variously as aliens, demons, monsters, gods, or as countless other paranormal conundrums. Definitive weird places, indeed!



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