

A CRITIQUE OF CHARIOTS OF THE GODS

Introduction

Von Däniken's theory: earth visited frequently in past centuries by visitors from outer space

His evidence: strange art; massive structures beyond human ability; accounts of miracles
Will critique this theory using evidence from archaeology

Baalbek, Lebanon: Space Travel Center?

Von Däniken says this is ancient space travel center, refers to platform with stones weighing 2000 tons

Stones are huge, but not that big; architecture and historical info indicate structure is temple built by Romans in 2nd cen AD

Somebody moved stones weighing 800-1500 tons

Athens, Greece: Sophisticated Building Design

Parthenon shows ancients not stupid: know details on builders, etc.: Pericles, Phidias, 447-438 BC

Sophisticated corrections to optical illusions incorporated in building design

Jerusalem & Caesarea, Israel: Impressive Size of Stones

Herod the Great used stones over 50 feet long, weighing hundreds of tons, building temple and breakwater

Herod was not as wealthy as Romans

Gizeh, Egypt: the Pyramids

Von D. emphasizes designed-in secrets (π , distance to sun); impossibility of moving stones with wooden rollers; too much time needed to build (he estimates 664 yr)

Egyptians must have known π to make chariot wheels

Distance to sun off by 5%. Pretty good for Egyptians, pretty bad for astronauts!

Evidence from antiquity on Egyptians and Babylonians moving large stones

Dated stones show pyramid building took 10-20 years

Evidence for developing technology of pyramid building

Easter Island: Giant Heads

Von D.: impossible to set up several hundred 60-ton stone heads with only 200 inhabitants!

See Thor Heyerdahl, *Aku-Aku*:

6 men could carve head in one year

Whole population could move to site in day or two

12 men were able to erect one in 18 days

Nazca, Peru: Spaceship Landing Site?

Von D.: runways of spaceport; large animal-figures only viewable from air;
arrow on coast

But runways cross hills, deeply furrowed at intersections

Ground too soft anyway

Each large figure is made of one continuous line, perhaps a path for dancing in a
sympathetic magic ceremony

Space travelers need arrow?

Conclusions

No evidence here for supertechnology beyond known ancient abilities

No evidence here for visits by extra-terrestrials