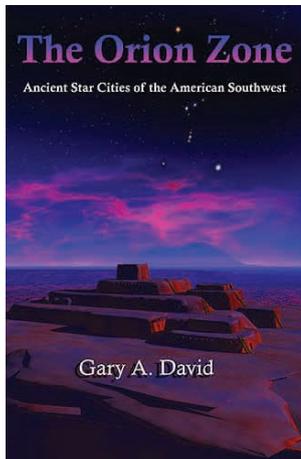


The Orion Zone

Gary A. David



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“Who were the Anasazi, how did they come to inhabit the American Southwest, and why did they leave?” asks author Gary David in his pioneering book *The Orion Zone: Ancient Star Cities Of The American Southwest*. He leaves no petroglyph-carved stone unturned in his quest to solve the Anasazi mysteries. Readers who follow David’s path will pass through the fields of archaeology, anthropology, astronomy, theology, linguistics, mythology, poetry and history. Just as the constellation of Orion is free to walk across the entire world, so too is *The Orion Zone* unrestricted by academic borders and obstacles.

Inspired by Robert Bauval’s groundbreaking theory that the Giza Pyramids of Egypt were designed in alignment with the belt stars of the Orion constellation, Gary David applies the same thinking to the Anasazi. Throughout *The Orion Zone*, he presents evidence that suggests the Anasazi specifically placed their villages and sacred sites to align with all the stars in the constellation of Orion. Yet David’s research is more than this, exploring solstice alignments and a pattern of sites connected to the Chakra system. From the incredible adobe village complexes of Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde National Park to the enigmatic symbols carved

into desert rocks, the evidence David compiles is both compelling and convincing.

The Orion Zone isn’t just limited to the ruins of a missing culture. As fascinating as this is, David’s writing really gets interesting when he explores the Hopi culture, the most well-known surviving ancestors of the Anasazi. David looks to the ancient traditions the Hopi have kept (and continue to keep) alive, sensitively exploring the customs and knowledge the Hopi have preserved for glimpses of the Anasazi. Some of the comparisons he makes, such as the Hopi god Masau’u with Middle Eastern mythological figures, are startling.

Yet the author rarely claims answers set in concrete, preferring to ask questions and promote further discussion. This is the charm of David’s research. He purposefully avoids the narrow-minded compartmentalisation of academia and skilfully sidesteps the traps of scientific dogmas and ethno-politics. David explores his interests with a healthy balance of objectivity and open-mindedness. And like the poet Yeats, he treads softly in thoughtful sensitivity to the traditions and beliefs of the Hopi, Navajo and Pueblo Native Americans, respecting their wishes for certain customs and rituals to remain private. David also consults resources that court controversy and have caused division amongst cultural and academic Native America. Frank Waters’ *Book Of The Hopi*, first published in 1963 and reprinted many times since, has been savagely criticised in recent years, but as David says, to dismiss it entirely would be a case of “throwing the proverbial baby out with the bath water”. It is this unbiased and objective curiosity that nourishes *The Orion Zone* with insights, just as water brings life to a desert.

Many experts and laypeople alike will scoff at this book merely because David discusses the possibility of extraterrestrial contact. Considering the Hopi’s cosmology, their Katsina dolls and “flying shield” imagery, it’s no great leap of the imagination to make a similar connection. Gary David’s *The Orion Zone* is an extremely important book that winds through Anasazi lands like the tracks of a snake, towards a destination somewhere above the horizon where Orion walks.

Review by Rick M. Gned