



Unravelling Ancient Myths & Legends



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4

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The 'Myth' of the Plumed Serpent

By Carl Johan Calleman



The Plumed (or Feathered) Serpent is a Mesoamerican myth that has fascinated modern people for quite some time. Among the Aztecs and Toltecs this divinity went by the name of Quetzalcoatl and to the Maya it was known as Kukulcan. It was a much-revered god who was believed to bring good tidings and civilization to humankind. His preeminent role in ancient times is evident from the fact that not only whole temples, but in fact whole cities were built as centers of worship for this entity. Most well-known of these may be the so-called pyramid of Kukulcan at Chichen-Itza, which recently was included among the seven wonders of the world and is the most well-known of all Mayan pyramids.



Fig 1. The pyramid of the Plumed Serpent at Chichen-Itza. Note the seven triangles of light projected onto the staircase as scales on the back of the plumed serpent that descends into the earth. (photo by Carl Calleman)

Descent of the Plumed Serpent

The descent of the Plumed Serpent (shown in Fig 1) is one of the most remarkable light shows created in the ancient world. The seven triangles of light (alternating with six triangles of darkness) can only be seen projected onto the staircase of the pyramid for about 20 minutes at the Autumn and Spring equinoxes (and maybe two adjacent days as well). It is an event that attracts some 100,000 visitors and to the local Mexicans it is a celebration of the advent of Spring. It is hard to convey how awesome this occurrence actually is for someone who has not had the chance to experience it firsthand. The reason it is so spectacular is that it is almost incomprehensible how the pyramid could be built so that the projection of the triangles only occurs on a specific day. This is not something you can build by trial and error as you cannot move the

pyramid a little bit if does not have the correct position. It must be built right from the beginning and when you realized this, it is something that really goes into your marrow. The Maya had a cosmic resonance that we have now essentially lost.



Feathered serpent sculpture at the base of one of the stairways of El Castillo. (CC BY 2.0)

Serpent, the Central Creator God

This raises the question why the Maya about a thousand years ago built a pyramid – in fact their most impressive pyramid – with the purpose of worshipping a serpent. It does not quite make sense to modern people, who tend to look upon a snake as a low-level reptile, which does not seem worthy of any form of religious worship. For this reason, we have tended to dismiss the Plumed Serpent as a “myth” that lacked basis in reality and was made up by an ignorant people. And yet, the Plumed Serpent was the central deity in ancient Mexico.



*Quetzalcoatl in feathered serpent form, Codex Telleriano-Remensis.
(Public Domain)*

Not only that, in the Popol-Vuh, which is sometimes called the Bible of the Maya, the Plumed Serpent was seen as the central creator God, the One that the other gods went to when the creation of this universe was to begin. According to the Mexican lore we also know that the Plumed Serpent among other roles was regarded as the bringer of civilization and the calendar.

In their view, when the Plumed Serpent disappeared, their civilizations would suffer, but as he returned they would go through a rebirth and flourish. For this reason, it was a beloved god whose return they would long for. This particular aspect of the mythology of the Plumed Serpent came to play a central role in Spanish conquest of the Aztec empire in

1519-1521. It is said that as the Aztec emperor Montezuma had word of Hernan Cortez' landing at Santa Cruz, he believed him to be the returning Quetzalcoatl, whom he feared as he knew that this deity and its human embodiments would not approve of their large scale human sacrifices.



Quetzalcoatl, God of Wisdom (CC BY 3.0)

According to legend, an embodiment of the Plumed Serpent (a priest in the city of Tula by the name of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl) had been expelled from his city about five hundred years earlier, but had sworn to return. Because he feared this return, Moctezuma was very accommodating to Cortez and allowed him to enter his capital Tenochtitlan (today's Mexico City). This became the beginning of the conquest of this mighty empire by Cortez, his 600 men, 16 horses and native allies who remarkably defeated an emperor who was capable of raising an army of 100,000 men. This defeat is often attributed, at least partially, to the power the myth of the Plumed Serpent had over the Mesoamerican peoples, including the Aztec emperor.



***Fall of Tenochtitlan, in the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire.
(Public Domain)***

There are many other aspects of the myth of the Plumed Serpent as well. He had been given the calendrical signature of 9 Wind and represented a positive spiritual force to the ancient peoples of Mexico, and was in conflict with his dark nemesis Tezcatlipoca, the “smoking mirror.”

Global Serpent Mythology

Before we go into what the Plumed Serpent actually may have symbolized we should take note of the fact that the Serpent played a very significant mythological role in many other ancient cultures as well. What for instance may be the world’s oldest preserved object of art is a giant python in current-day Botswana that has been estimated to be 70,000 years old. This is believed to symbolize a creator god revered by the ancestors of today’s Bushmen. Similarly, to the aborigines in Australia the Rainbow Serpent was the main creator god and in the Amazonas the great anaconda was seen as the creator of the human beings. In fact, all over the world (including in the Book of Genesis of the Bible) we find the serpent revered as an especially powerful animal. This does not match what a modern person would think of as a snake, and it makes us wonder why the serpent has played such a significant role in ancient myths.



Midgard Serpent wooden carving, detail. (CC BY NC-SA 2.0)

The Waves of Creation

It then seems that there must be some more profound reason that the Serpent, and in particular the Plumed Serpent, by ancient peoples would be recognized as a central creator deity. As I have elaborated on in two books of mine: *The Global Mind and the Rise of Civilization*, and *The Nine Waves of Creation*, a serpent is the most natural symbol to use by anyone who would like to represent a mathematical sine wave. And what the ancient peoples of Mesoamerica and elsewhere were aware of was that history, including the rise and fall of civilizations, was driven by waves of creation. There were in fact nine waves of creation that

created the universe and the pre-set direction of its evolution. The reason that the Plumed Serpent went by the name of 9 Wind was that there were nine such sine waves creating spiritual winds corresponding to nine levels of creation as symbolized by the terrace-formed pyramids.



Maya Calendar: From the Mayan display inside the National Museum of the American Indian. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

What the ancient peoples were aware of was the nine underlying waves in the quantum field that was driving the evolution of the universe, our planet, as well as humankind. They did not use the same language for them as we would have and instead came to call this wave form the Plumed Serpent, that they perceived as a living deity. Their entire calendar came to be developed in order to chart the movements of this Plumed Serpent. If it indeed was this wave, which they perceived as and symbolized as the Plumed Serpent, that was behind the rise and fall of civilizations then it of course became of utmost importance to chart he

ups and downs of this wave movement by means of the use of a calendar. If the predictions would fail (and this was indeed the case when the Aztecs became aware that the Spanish had arrived) then the consequences would be disastrous. The problem of the Aztecs was then that the true Mayan calendar called the Long Count which accurately described the ups and downs of civilization (Fig 2) was not used by them.

The Sixth Wave of Creation

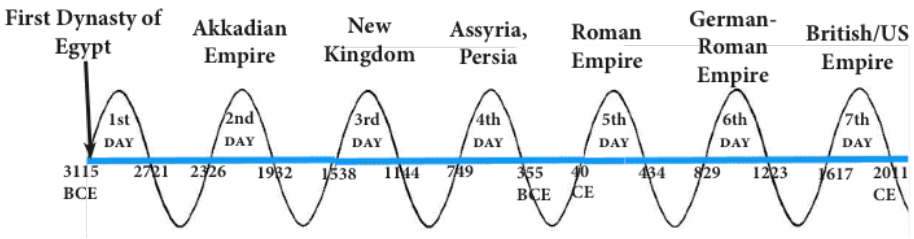


Fig 2. The Seven days and six nights of the Mayan Long Count (Sixth Wave of Creation) from 3115 BCE up until 2011 CE. (Diagram: Carl Calleman)

As we can see from Fig 2, the wave movement of the so called Long Count (the sixth of the nine creation waves) leading up to our own time, in principle displays the same pattern as the seven triangles of light and six triangles of darkness of the Plumed Serpent of Chichen-Itza that we can see in Fig 1; Much like a Serpent history which moves like a wave with its ups and downs that makes the pendulum often swing with them. What may be even more remarkable is the fact that the wave movement in Fig 2, which covers seven peaks – each of a duration of a so-called baktun of 3943 years – remarkably well reflects the rise and fall of major empires and civilizations in other parts of the world. While modern people (who are generally unaware of this wave movement) wonder why ancient civilizations have mostly disappeared, this no longer is an enigma if we recognize that upon peaks follow valleys that

often, but not always, tend to bring the already existing civilizations down.



The Fire of Rome (Public Domain)

Cycles of Creation and Destruction

The Plumed Serpent, i.e. the wave movement of creation generating the alternating rise and fall of civilizations, is thus not a myth in the sense of being something false. The rise and fall of civilizations that this movement describes reflects a very profound truth of our existence and the power that drives its evolution. The ancient peoples worshipping serpents knew that history went up and down and sometimes tried to chart this movement in mythological terms or harbor the spiritual powers these were believed to embody. There were, in other words,

reasons for the Aztecs who saw themselves as living in a dark age (a valley) to fear the shift into a peak. Likewise, they would be aware that the Plumed Serpent would sometimes molt its skin and disappear as it set an end to a civilization. However, most people today have misunderstood not only the message of the Plumed Serpent but also its underlying truth. We may call the Plumed Serpent a myth, but in reality, it is a truth and I believe it is a truth whose time has come and may play a critical role for those that seek a path out of our civilizational crisis.

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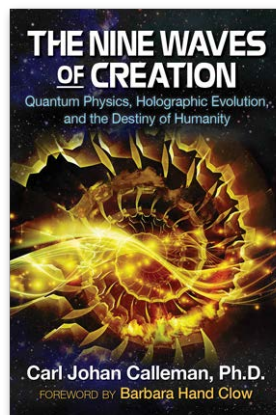
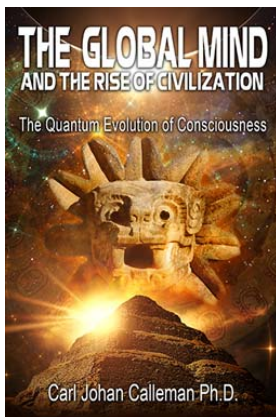
(Top Image: Quetzalcoatl – Public Domain, and El Castillo at Chichén Itzá – CC BY-SA 4.0)



Dr Carl Johan Calleman

[Dr Carl Johan Calleman](#) is the author of five books based on the Mayan calendar that have been translated to fifteen languages and his known as the main proponent of the idea that the Mayan calendar reflects the evolution of consciousness. He holds a Ph.D. in Physical Biology from the University of Stockholm. He has also lectured about the Mayan Calendar in more than twenty countries and has helped the Maya get their own message to the world. This year are released [The Global Mind and the Rise of Civilization- The Quantum Evolution of Consciousness](#) and [The Nine Waves of Creation - Quantum Physics, Holographic Evolution and the Destiny of Humanity](#), both from Inner Traditions. | [Calleman.com](#)

Dr Calleman has been a welcome and fascinating guest speaker on [Ancient Origins Premium](#).



History Versus Legend: In Search of Aeneas, the Trojan Refugee

By Petros Koutoupis



Roman mythology designates Aeneas as the founder of the great nation of Rome and ancestor to its peoples. In fact, his story begins long before Rome came into existence. While the Romans lay claim to what should be considered a purely mythological patriarch, is there any historical basis to the man and the epic in his name?

The Aeneid: Wanderings of Aeneas

Born on October 15th, 70 BCE, Publius Virgilius Maro or Virgil, would be regarded as one of Rome's greatest poets. Commissioned under Augustus, his incomplete and finest work, the *Aeneid*, would be published and well received, posthumously. On his deathbed, Virgil gave clear instructions to destroy all copies of the epic. Obviously, this did not happen. Virgil died on September 21, 19 BCE.



Virgil reading the Aeneid to Augustus, Octavia, and Livia. (Public Domain)

What made the Aeneid so special? The Aeneid records the wanderings of Aeneas, alongside his fellow Trojan refugees, from Troy to eventually colonizing Italy and uniting all of Latium. Aeneas would become the legendary forefather of Romulus and Remus and in turn, the Romans. His tale would be heralded as a national epic.

The Iliad alludes to Aeneas and his survival of the Trojan War, when the Trojan warrior was pitted in face to face combat with the vengeful Achilles following the loss of his dear and close friend, Patroclus, to Hector. Book 20.300-308 of the *Iliad* reads:

“But come, let us lead him out from death, lest the son of Cronos be angry in some way if Achilles slays him; for

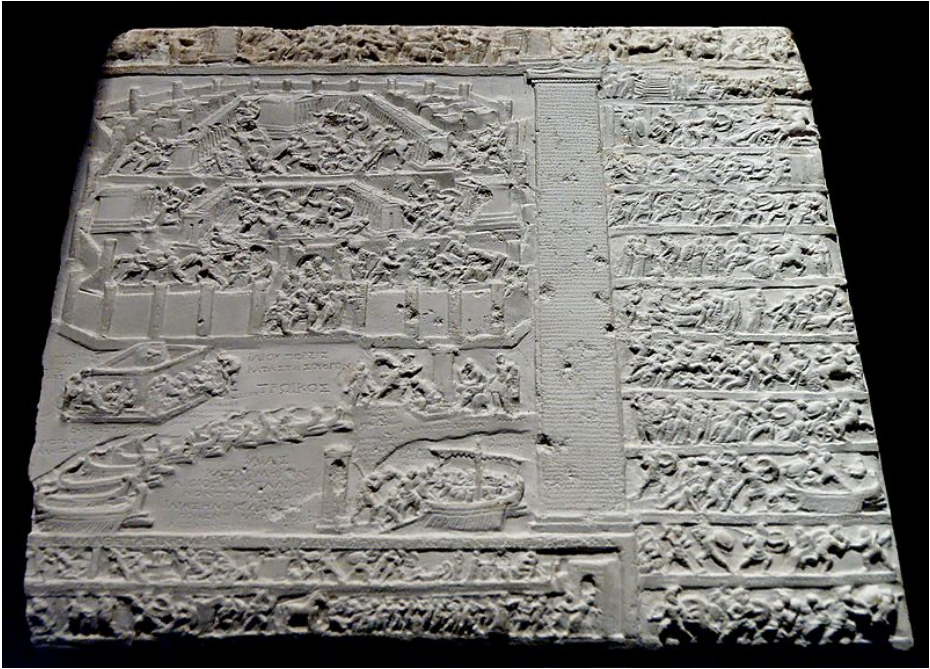
it is fated for him to escape so that the race of Dardanus may not perish without seed and be seen no more - Dardanus whom the son of Cronos loved above all the children born to him from mortal women. For now has the son of Cronos come to hate the race of Priam; and now surely will the mighty Aeneas be king among the Trojans, and his sons' sons who will be born in the days to come."

Traditions of Aeneas and his migration from the Dardanelles spread throughout the Roman world. The first connection between Aeneas, his travels, and the founding of the Roman civilization can be dated to as early as the writings of third century Latin poet, Naevius. It is generally believed that the works of Naevius greatly inspired Virgil.



Aeneas' Flight from Troy. (Public Domain)

We also have the *Tabula Iliaca*, a Roman monument dating to the Augustan era and originally erected at Bovillae, 12 miles Southeast of Rome, illustrating scenes from the fall of Troy.



Tabula Iliaca: relief with illustrations drawn from the Homeric poems and the Epic Cycle, first century BCE. (Public Domain)

Under the scene depicting Aeneas and his father Anchises, who is carrying the “sacred objects”, and departing for *Hesperia*, an inscription reads “Sack of Troy according to Stesichorus.” Now, modern scholars remain skeptical with this citation. Part of the Trojan Cycle, the *Iliupersis* (or Sack of Ilium) is a lost ancient Greek epic and survives only in fragments. Was it originally composed by the sixth century BCE poet Stesichorus? Its original author remains a mystery and whether or not there is poetic text alluding to Aeneas remains to be validated.

Traditions such as these among the others circulating at the time would have produced assorted legends in which Virgil wove together into a single and comprehensive narrative; of course, with artistic liberties.



Dido and Aeneas (Public Domain)

It goes without saying that the Aeneid was also greatly inspired by Homer and his Iliad and Odyssey. For instance, Aeneas' love affair with Dido shows many parallels to that of Odysseus and Calypso in the Odyssey. The funeral games of Patroclus in Book 23 of the Iliad mirror the competitions held by Aeneas on the anniversary of his father's death. Aeneas' descent into the Underworld shows many similarities to that of Odysseus and his voyage to the realm of Hades.

Historically, the literary evidence does not stretch as far back in time as we would like. This leaves us with the archaeology of the Mediterranean during what has been considered a very volatile period in our human history.

The Mysterious Collapse of the Bronze Age

At around 1200 BCE, the world of the Eastern Mediterranean would bring about a change like no other. The great civilizations of the Bronze Age collapsed and in some cases disappeared completely from the historical record. The Iron Age marked a new beginning. The Hittite empire immediately dissolved to give rise to the Neo-Hittite city-states. The Canaanite cities faced inner turmoil as its inhabitants resettled into the highlands and more isolated communities. The Phoenicians, Israelites, Moabites, among others rose from the ashes of old. Egypt barely survived but never retained its former glory.

In Greece, however, a different story is told. The Mycenaean Greek empire and its sphere of influence came to an abrupt end around 1100 BCE, and by 1050 BCE almost all traces of the Mycenaean culture had completely vanished. Writing in the Linear B script ceased. The palatial centers, towns, and villages were abandoned. Vital trade links with the outside world vanished. This dark age continued to the end of ninth century BCE. Our primary sources for this period are from excavated graves, the Homeric epics, and Hesiod's *Works and Days*. The cause of this decline is still greatly unknown, although scholars have attributed it to earthquakes, famines, economic and political instability, piracy, invasions of foreign ethnic groups, etc.



Now only ruins - The Bronze Age Lion Gate at Mycenae. (Andreas Trepte/CC BY-SA 2.5)

Classical writer, Thucydides, paints a picture in which cities became small and were weak and poverty stricken. There was a lack of communication or trade. Piracy and insecurity were prevalent which required the need to carry arms. There was constant migration and disturbance among the peoples. How much of this reflected reality?

Was there Ever a Trojan War?

Was there ever a Trojan War? That is, an almost legendary battle fought between Greeks and Trojans. If we read from Homer and the later composed Trojan Cycle, the literature would say that it did indeed occur, but what does the archaeology have to say on this matter?

Heinrich Schliemann, a wealthy entrepreneur by profession, spent his early retirement years discovering and excavating the sites of Troy (at modern day Hisarlik, Turkey) and Mycenae (in the northeastern part of the Peloponnese, Greece) during the late 19th century CE; albeit through unorthodox and disastrous methods. He was not a trained archaeologist. Schliemann was only a simple man with a passion for Homer. In 1868, he befriended the American vice-consul of Turkey, Frank Calvert, who himself believed that the legendary city of Troy lay underneath the Classical Greco-Roman ruins at Hisarlik. Calvert had the location and Schliemann, the money. The digging commenced and would continue for years. What was discovered was a complex, multilayered city that existed from the Early Bronze Age and which was eventually abandoned during the Iron Age. Each layer met its end in some form or another, be it from earthquake or war, giving way to resettlement and new construction.



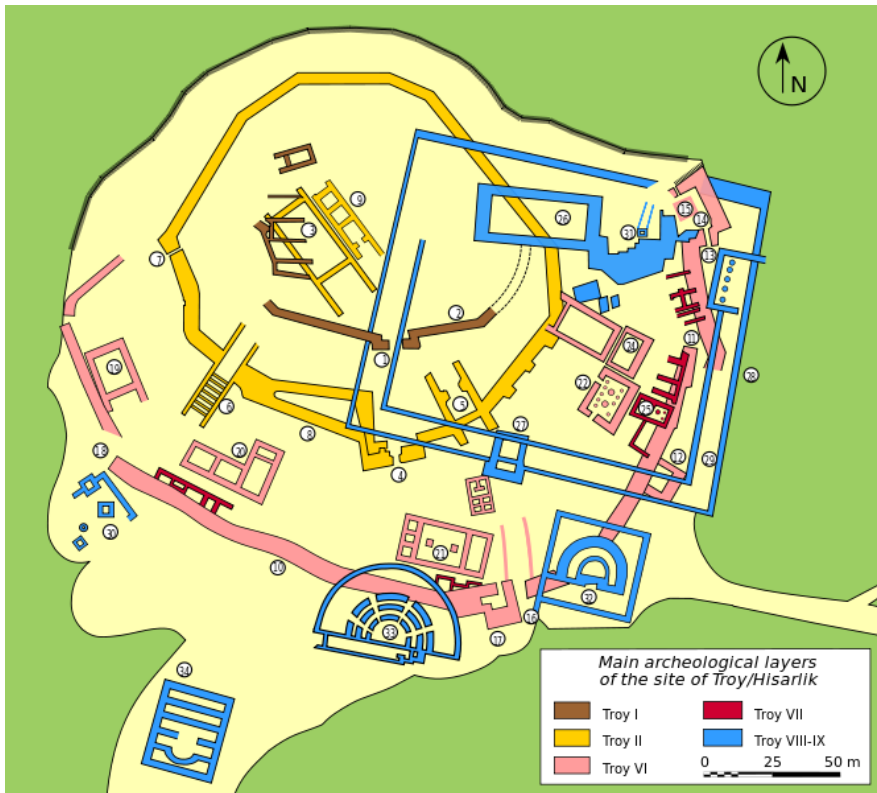
Walls of Troy, Hisarlik, Turkey. (CherryX /CC BY-SA 3.0)



The Mask of Agamemnon is an artifact discovered at Mycenae in 1876 by Heinrich Schliemann. It has been referred to as the 'Mona Lisa of prehistory'. (CC BY-SA 2.0)

During Heinrich Schliemann's excavations and the excavations by others that followed, identifying Homer's Troy became problematic. For instance, Troy Level VI matched Homer's descriptions of a large and wealthy city with slanting large walls circling the citadel, but Level VIh was destroyed by an earthquake ca. 1300 BCE. Troy Level VIIa (1230 - 1190/80 BCE) didn't seem as grand as the one described by Homer but did however fall to war. It also showcased evidence for a possible siege

in which many had to live in uncomfortable and cramped conditions for some time before eventually succumbing to captors. It is unclear as to whether the opponents to Troy VIIa were Mycenaean Greeks or another group of Aegean peoples (based on the discovery of Aegean style arrowheads). Excavations at the site continued on to the early 21st century CE. With each excavation, the site revealed more clues, although there still remained too many unanswered questions. We needed to look elsewhere.



Plan of the archeological site of Troy/Hisarlik. (Public Domain)

To the East of Troy ruled the Hittite empire over most of Anatolia, centered at Hattusa, near modern day Boğazkale (formerly, Boğazköy), Turkey. Discovered within the ruins of the mighty Hittite citadel were piles of baked tablets. Each was written in a cuneiform script, but in

what was at the time an undeciphered language, until scholars in the mid-20th century CE uncovered the Hittite language to be that of an early Indo-European type. With its code cracked, these tablets would rewrite the history of the Late Bronze Age. Written within the translated texts were activities and negotiations between two world powers, the Hittites and the Ahhiyawa.



Mycenaean tablet inscribed in linear B coming from the House of the Oil Merchant, Mycenae. The tablet registers an amount of wool which is to be dyed. Male figure is portrayed on the reverse. (CC BY-SA 3.0)

At first the origin of these Ahhiyawa puzzled scholars but before long, they were to be identified as Homer's Achaean, or the Mycenaean Greeks. From the 15th century BCE to as late as the 12th century BCE, the Mycenaean were involved in assorted activities all along the Western Anatolian coast, both for and in opposition to the Hittite

empire. Another key piece of evidence is the reading of a small vassal kingdom to the northwest of Anatolia routinely referred to as Wilusa. Wilusa was immediately identified with Homer’s Ilios, which was another name for Troy. These tablets would continue to provide a cast of characters which would later be reflected in the Homeric epic, such as Atreus, Alexandros (another name for Paris), and even a possible rendering of Priam.



The Hittite Empire, approximate extent of the maximum area of the Hittite rule (light green) and the Hittite rule ca. 1350-1300 BC (green line) (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Here we have evidence of Greeks on Anatolian soil but can we find Homer’s Trojan War? Sadly, no. At least not yet. The destruction of Troy layer VIIa fits well into Homer’s time frame and while it yields evidence for its end being the result of war, again, we cannot appropriately place the Mycenaean as the opponent. What we do find however, is Mycenaean pottery dating up to the end of VIIa. As for the Hittite tablets, most of these texts date generations earlier which also

coincides with Troy layer VI. Reiterating the note from earlier that this layer ended from an act of mother nature, that is, an earthquake.

When modern scholars attempt to piece this puzzle together what they do find is a series of separate events which could have inspired later storytellers. Some scholars have even concluded that the war did not occur between the Mycenaeans and Trojans but instead the Mycenaeans with the Hittites over the land where Troy resided. Troy stood at an economic center, joining the Eastern and Western worlds. It also stood as a gateway between the Mediterranean and Black seas. Having control over this land would have brought great economic wealth to its rulers.

This collection of activities involving the Mycenaeans would eventually form a single and fluid narrative to be sung by traveling bards such as Homer. The role of the bard was to entertain. Guided by the Muses and taking artistic liberties where necessary, the bard would weave mythology into his or her story. It was the mythology that organized historical facts, be it from separate historical eras. Will we ever truly identify a Trojan War? Maybe not, but we do have the pieces to collectively create a series of events that would inspire such a war.

The Sea Peoples and Migrations to the Tyrrhenian Sea

With their cities and nations collapsing, the people took to both the land and seas in search of a new life and opportunities. This mysterious group was commonly referred to as the Sea Peoples, a title given to them by the ancient Egyptians, and they were a confederation of migrants that played an influential role during the Late Bronze Age period of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Shardana (sometimes referred to as the Sherden) were a warlike group of Sea Peoples that occupied the Levant from around the 14th century BCE and later. They are fairly well documented across multiple

sources. While their exact origins are unknown, they are believed to have come from the general Aegean region. We see evidence of their occupation in the general Near East as early as the Amarna Letters (EA 81, EA 122, and EA 123) dating to the 14th century BCE. Here they served as part of an Egyptian garrison in Byblos.

Scholars have been able to isolate similarities between the Egyptian depictions of the Shardana and the 11th - 6th century BCE bronze statuettes excavated from the island of Sardinia, located to the West of the Italian mainland. Furthermore, a 9th/8th century BCE stele from the ancient Sardinian city of Nora bears the words *Srdn* in Phoenician symbols. Did Shardana migrants leave the Eastern Mediterranean to resettle on the island of Sardinia, and eventually lend their name to the island itself?

Another and more obscure group of Sea Peoples were the Shekelesh. They are only mentioned in passing in the ancient texts of both the Egyptians and Ugarits, first making their appearance in the Nile Delta at approximately 1220 BCE. They are likely to originate from the Western parts of the Anatolian mainland, more specifically, Sagalassos (notice the similarities between the names). It has also been speculated that they migrated Westward and resettled on the island of Sicily, described in later texts as the Sikels. Much like the Shardana, it is believed that they too lended their name to the island.

Origins of Aeneas

Can we validate, to some extent, the travels of an Anatolian group of migrants Westward, departing from the Eastern Mediterranean and eventually settling somewhere in the Tyrrhenian Sea? Did the migrations of the Sea Peoples inspire later stories of Aeneas? We do have some of the pieces of this archaeological puzzle which may allude to such an event or series of events. However, there is still much left to

discover and the strong potential for new clues waiting to be dug out from the dirt.

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(Top image: Soldier Aeneas – Public Domain, and ruins at Hisarlik, Turkey – CC BY 2.0)

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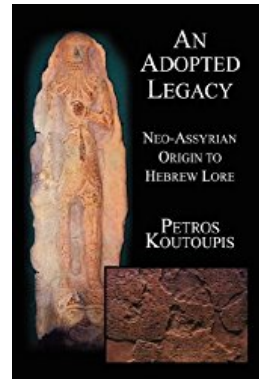
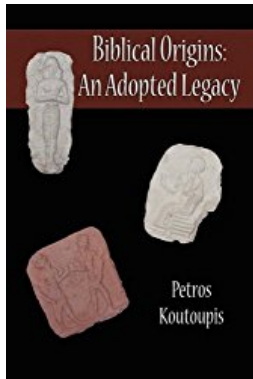
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By profession, [Petros Koutoupis](#) is a software developer and an entrepreneur. During his free time, Petros enjoys immersing himself with topics of ancient history and theology. He is fluent in Greek, while also a self-taught student of Septuagintal Greek and Biblical Hebrew; with additional knowledge in Aramaic, Ugaritic, and Akkadian grammar. His recent work focuses predominantly on the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Eastern Mediterranean, leading to a quest to unravel the mysteries of our history.



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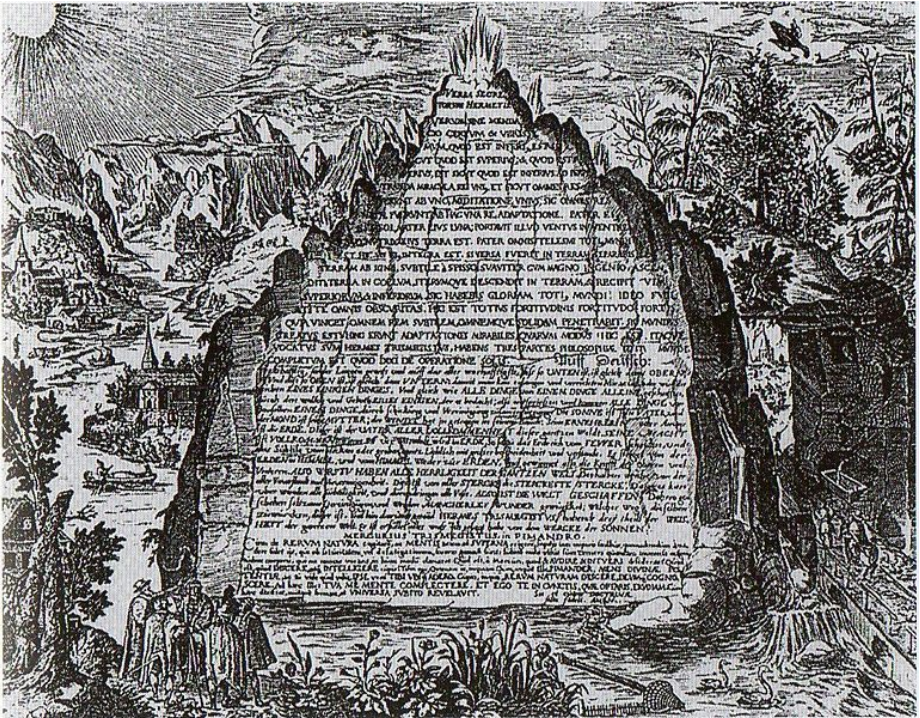
Who Really Built the Pyramids of Giza? Thoth's Enigmatic Emerald Tablets

By Armando Mei



The Emerald Tablets are one of the greatest enigmas of archaeology. They can be considered an obscure side of Egyptian mythology, characterized by events where myth seems to meet history.

Scholars consider the Emerald Tablets a legend concerning the gods of Ancient Egypt, revealing mysteries involving the ancient societies that survived the Great Flood. The tablets are known as a cryptic Hermetic inscription said to contain the secrets of alchemy and the foundation of the Hermetic tradition.



An imaginative 17th century depiction of the Emerald Tablet from the work of Heinrich Khunrath, 1606. (Public Domain)

The Mythical Origins of the Tablets

According to the myth, Thoth - the Gods' scribe - compiled the tablets. He divided his knowledge into 42 plates of emerald, codifying the great scientific principles ruling the Universe. The legend tells that after the gods' fall, the Hermetic tablets were cleverly hidden so that no human being might find them. Only Thoth, on his return to that dimension, was able to recover the mysterious book.



A figure of Thoth carved on the back of the throne of the seated statue of Rameses II. (Jon Bodsworth/Public Domain)

According to other interpretations, the tablets were kept in the so-called Hall of Records and then later hidden within the Library of Alexandria until they were lost forever, after the terrible fire which destroyed the ancient building and its legendary books.



A 17th-century edition of the Emerald Tablets, as created in legend by 'Hermes Trismegistus'—a combination of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth. (Public Domain)

A very interesting legend told by Jewish mystics connects Thoth's Tablets to Abraham's wife, Sarah. According to the myth, she found the

Egyptian God's tomb and his precious manuscripts during their escape into Egypt, fleeing a starvation afflicting Canaan.

In that case, if the narrative is historically accurate, we can assume that the Emerald Tablets' origins may refer to an ancient time, substantially before the Bible's Great Flood. Therefore, the origins of the Egyptian gods and the Zep Tepi (a Golden Era or time where gods ruled in Ancient Egypt) may have an intriguing connection, confirmed by other civilizations' legends.

It was only during the Middle Ages that the Hermetic documents were translated into Latin from Arabic, while the first European printed version was published in Nuremberg, in early 1541. The title was "De Alchimia" written by alchemist Johannes Baptista Montanus Veronensis Patricius. Thanks to his work, the ancient documents have survived until now.

Fact or Fiction?

Analyzing the legendary texts, questions surface: can we assume that the Hermetic document is a real historical fact and not a myth? What should we make of the contents and scientific codes inscribed into the tablets? Is there a possible connection between the god Thoth and the Pyramids Civilization?

According to the mysterious document, can we state that Thoth was the builder of Giza?

In my two decades of experience, I learned to trust in objective facts, as a result of a precise model of investigation. Starting from a study of the myths, I aim to propose a new point of view concerning the possibility that the myth of Thoth is a true story.

"Built I the Great Pyramid, patterned after the pyramid of earth force, burning eternally so that it,

too, might remain through the ages. In it, my knowledge of 'Magic-Science' so that it might be here when again I return from Amenti. Aye, while I sleep in the Halls of Amenti, my soul roaming free will incarnate, dwell among men in this form or another.”
– Emerald Tablet 1

Emerald Tablet I – The History of Thoth

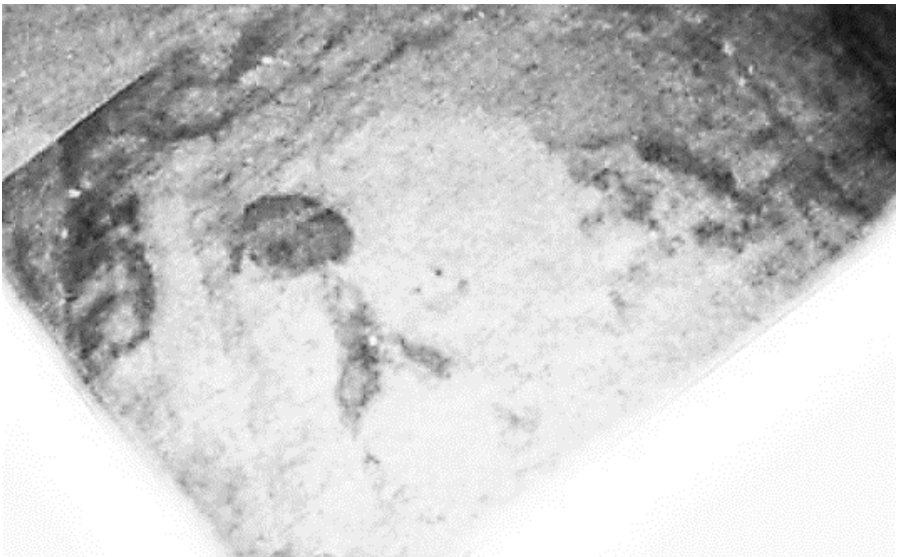
If the Emerald Tablets are reliable, what might the relationship between Thoth and the Great Pyramid look like?



Djehuty (Thoth) in the Luxor Temple by night. (CC BY-NC 2.0)

The first line, *“Built I the Great Pyramid”*, is a clear expression concerning an unambiguous assignment of the project ownership. Have findings confirmed this possibility, least of all for the Great Pyramid, within which no inscription referring to the builders was ever found?

The only exception are some symbols found on the back of the Gantenbrink's door—a limestone door with two eroded copper handles found in shafts in the Great Pyramid's Queen's Chamber, discovered by German engineer Rudolf Gantenbrink. In my opinion, and by analyzing the signs, I can assume that the marks cannot be assigned to a well-known Ancient Egyptian writing, although Egyptologist Luca Miatello related the obscure handwriting to Hieratic, and its meaning to a sequence of numbers and measurements by which to build the conduits into the Queen's Chamber. I consider his theory unfounded because of the lack of correlation among clues and hieratic writing. It could be a kind of unknown writing, increasing the mystery on the origins of the Giza Pyramids.



Markings on Gantenbrink's door. (via author)

In 2013, I achieved a very interesting result, which might prove a possible relationship between the Hermetic Emerald Tablets and the Giza Plateau. Something happened quite by chance during my archaeological campaign at the Sphinx and its temples.



Map of the Giza Plateau (via author)

During a moment of peace, in the shadow of the Valley Temple, I observed a Giza map taken from above, thinking that each pyramid looked like a microcosm, as the satellite pyramids, fences, temples and other constructions characterize each one. Considering the pyramids altogether, I perceived an order of factors making them an independent form of architectural expression.

In fact, pyramids, seen from above, look like three very large stylus-wedges embedded in the ground. Their very special shape enlightened me, suggesting an intriguing hypothesis. Just out of curiosity, I traced some guidelines starting from the corners of the major pyramids, toward the center of the monuments, following the satellite pyramids' orientation. Then I drew the same lines for the satellite pyramids, according to their cardinal direction.

Therefore, I obtained the following image.

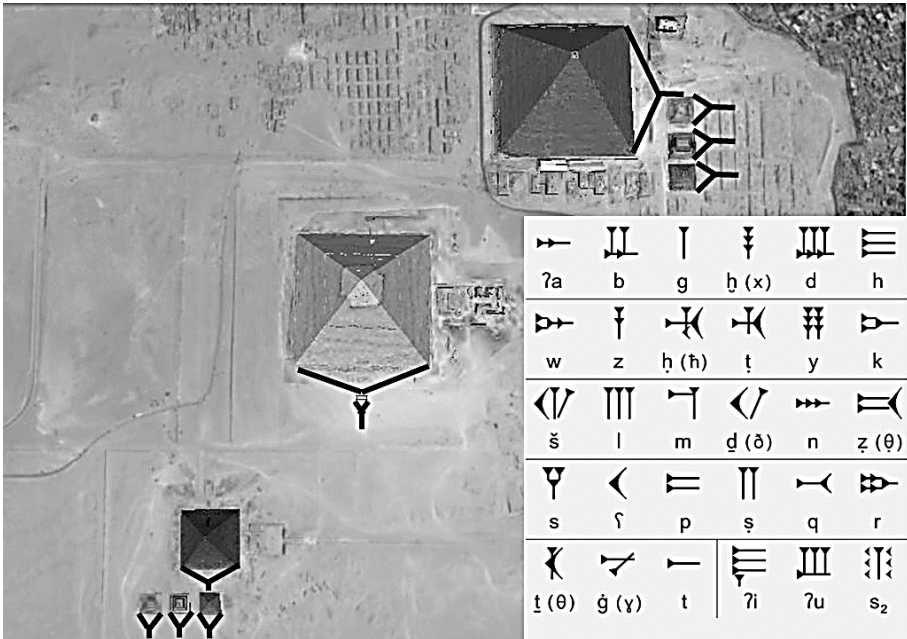


Pyramids look like enormous wedges. (Image via author)

Ancient Scripts Tell a Tale

It is curious to observe how a very easy geometric exercise might instill a deep doubt, challenging the foundation of humankind's history and the origins of modern societies. In fact, to detect the possible existence of cuneiform writing in the land of hieroglyphics can be considered a crazy idea. As presently known, academic considerations about Sumerian and Egyptian civilizations story are very precise; in fact, they assume that during their time the two cultures had never been in contact.

With this in mind, I should have given up my curiosity; however, I wanted to listen to my own instincts because I found the possible connection between pyramids and cuneiform writing very compelling.



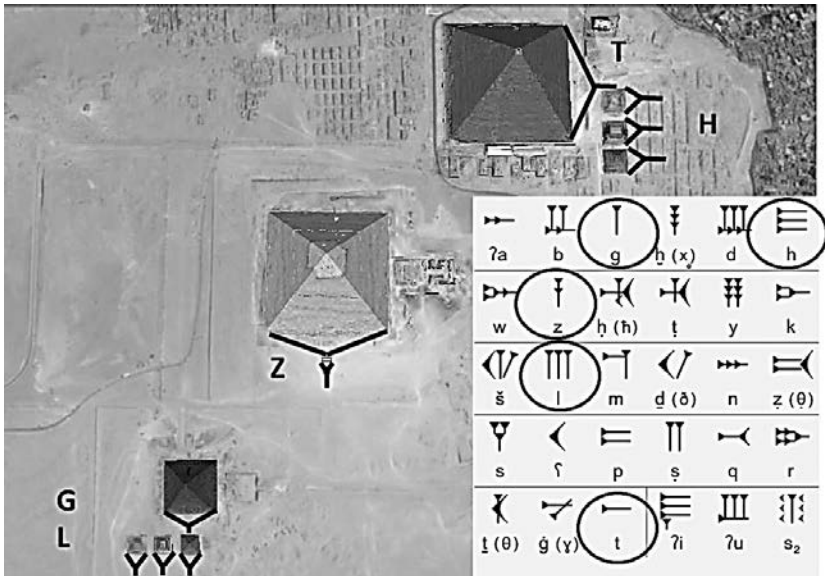
Cuneiform alphabet and their geometric forms, and possible relationship with the Pyramids of Giza. (Image via author)

A comparison between the pyramids' geometric forms and cuneiform writing is possible by analyzing the Sumerian alphabet, containing the symbols of each letter.

Sometimes, you begin the game for fun, but during the conduct of the pastime, you feel that something is changing, a realization is coming, and you are enchanted. I felt those same emotions, analyzing results of my 'game' that over time revealed themselves.

The possible coincidence slowly became something different, perhaps a detailed concept. Despite the fact that I was confident that scholars' theories were well anchored, in my core something pushed me to improve a hypothesis never examined before. Observing the following image, it is astonishing to note the unbelievable correlation between some Sumerian letters and the signs I obtained while drawing the lines at the pyramids base.

For example, Mycerinus Pyramid (Pyramid of Menkaure, the smallest of the three main Giza Pyramids and at the bottom of the map) – with a triangle projection towards its satellite pyramids – has a geometrical form very similar to the cuneiform letter for “G”; i.e. a wedge downward. Equally, I can state that Mycerinus’ satellite pyramids look like the cuneiform letter for “L”, having three wedges downward.



The relationship between tridimensional wedges of the pyramids and cuneiform letters from the Sumerian alphabet. (Image via author)

I followed the same procedure for all pyramids of Giza. Khafre’s Pyramid, for example, (the second-largest of the Ancient Egyptian Pyramids, and in the middle of the map) has a little peculiarity, because of the position of its satellite pyramid, very close to the major monument. It is a very unusual architectural technique, compared to the other pyramidal complexes, showing the precise builders’ will to meld the monuments into having a single and homogeneous design. As result of this, the graphic sign is very similar to the Sumerian letter for “Z”.

Finally, the Great Pyramid (the largest of the plateau and at the top of the map) and its satellites give very exciting symbols, perfectly connected to cuneiform letters, i.e. to the letter “T” as a cuneiform towards the right side, and to the letter “H”, characterized by three cuneiform symbols towards right side.

Therefore, I obtained the following sequence:

GL – Z- TH

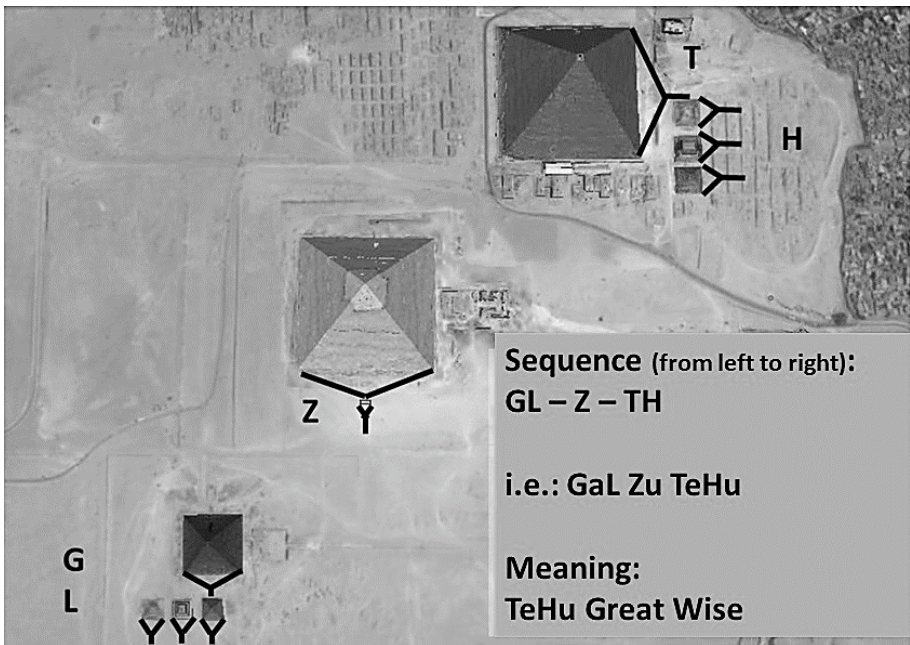
Originally, cuneiform writing was inscribed vertically, and in the event of more lines, they were aligned from right to left. It is interesting to note that pyramid position on the Giza Plateau develops in accordance with a vertical orientation – from the highest place, i.e. the Great Pyramid, until the lowest, i.e. the Mycerinus Pyramid – and in different lines. Moreover, as the Sumerian writing was characterized for a lack of vowels, so is for the geometrical symbols obtained by the pyramids.



Letters sequenced from West to East, observing the pyramids from South. (Map via author)

So far, we have observed some technical characteristics of the Sumerian writing and its homogeneity with symbols coming from graphics processing of the Giza buildings. Now, let us look to the complete sentence, with vowels, searching for a possible meaning of the ancient message:

GaL Zu TeHu



Finding meaning in the message. (Image via author)

The meaning of the message is: **TeHu the Great Wise**

It is very clear that the word TeHu refers to a proper noun, very probably to the designer of the Giza Project.

To unveil the name, I studied the Egyptian Book of Dead (as translated by Wallis Budge and also Boris de Rachewiltz) where the name of TeHu refers to Thoth. In fact, one of the Egyptian words indicating the Ibis is

Tekh, which sounds like the name TeHu; that word refers to the Moon as Measurer of the Time, and that is why Egyptians depict Thoth as Ibis.



***Thoth is often depicted as an Ibis. Egypt, Late Period, 712-332 B.C.
(Public Domain)***

Language of the Ancient Gods

The analysis is very fascinating, but proposes a series of questions:

- 1) The message indicates that Thoth was the designer of Giza, as reported in the Emerald Tablets. Does it mean that the Book of Thoth really exists?
- 2) If the Sumerian correlation with the monuments has a scientific validity, the question is why, in the distant past of Egypt, did the population use the Sumerian writing?

When one studies the origins of cuneiform writing, we find that archaeologists date it to 3500 BC. Nevertheless, it's very interesting that when the writing appeared it was characterized by an extraordinary complexity, consisting of over a thousand phonetic symbols. Over time,

the writing had a rationalization process and it reduced to hundreds of symbols. So, we can suppose that Sumerian writing was born in a very full form, and experienced a process apart from all other writing forms which display real signs of evolution. Only cuneiform is considerably convoluted – or, as archaeologists suggest, “rationalized” – as if it followed its founders’ decline.

Can we argue that the Sumerian was the language used by the ancient Gods? Can we state that Middle Eastern and Egyptian cultures, during the pre-dynastic age, were influenced by an ancient and unknown Civilization?



***Sumerian inscription in monumental archaic style, c. 26th century BC
(Public Domain)***

According to historians, due its geography, Egypt was isolated from the outside world until the First Intermediate Period, around 2000 BC—without experiencing any kind of influence from other civilizations. Therefore, the possible ‘corruption’ could have happened a long time before the pre-dynastic age. Furthermore, one of the most interesting pieces of evidence could be the numbers of Egyptians gods that are very

similar to the Sumerians ones. Indeed, the story of the Sumerian Gods is very similar to the Egyptian Neteru, and the great part of religious traditions of eastern civilizations.

An unknown civilization seems to have bequeathed symbols we can find everywhere around the planet; for example, the winged sun, or caduceus, even the gods who have different names but similar functions. It is possible that this civilization could have inspired the Sumerian and Egyptian cultures, uncontacted, and likewise shared many symbols and divinities. It is undeniable that the two cultures originated from a “matrix” which lived in the distant past.

If Egyptian and Sumerian civilizations have deep cultural and religious correlations, it may mean they were generated by a lost civilization, maybe the same who built pyramids all around the planet.

The Legendary Emerald Tablets

Lastly, did the Emerald Tablets really exist? Maybe we will never have a confirmation, but it is thrilling to show the relationship between the god Thoth and the Giza Plateau, as the result of an easy geometrical game, which gave an unexpected answer to one of the most fascinating mysteries of the past. It is also interesting to suppose that the Sumerian writing system offered a Hermetic link with the Ancient Egyptians, which was historically never detected, but clear in my proposal.

All these indications can be considered very important clues and may be regarded as the starting point to understanding the scientific meaning of the pyramids and the Knowledge of which they are keeper.

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(Top image: The Giza Pyramids - CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, and Egyptian god Thoth – CC0)

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Segreto" with a Preface by Ph.D. Lloyd Knutson (Entomologist-Scientist). In scientific terms, the book describes a revolutionary discovery about one of the possible functions of the Pyramids of Giza.

In October 2013, Mei co-authored with Semir Osmanagich, the book (Italian version): "*Visoko: La Scienza occulta delle Piramidi*".

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Torn Apart & Together Again in Death: Tragic Legends of the Kitchen Gods

By Martini Fisher



For many of us, the kitchen is very important place. Apart from its role as a place for family members to gather, the kitchen often represents the warmth, happiness and harmony within the family. Vietnamese scholar Huỳnh Ngọc Trảng expresses the importance of the kitchen in Vietnam as follows: “The kitchen stove is like the sun: it brings people close together and gathers them around because of its warmth, heat and light . . . the kitchen is the place where food is cooked, so it is the center of life, it is from the kitchen that life is granted.”

From the Kitchen to Heaven

The strong relationship between the kitchen and the familial relationship is shown by the legendary existence of special deities of Asian mythology presiding in household kitchens. Traditionally, just before the Lunar New Year, the kitchen gods would go to Heaven to report to the Heavenly Emperor on his family’s activities during the year.



Chinese painting of Portraits of Jade Emperor and the Heavenly Kings. (Public Domain)

In China, the family 'send off' their kitchen god to heaven to make their report by burning the paper image that had hung over their stove for the entire year. The smoke rising to the heavens symbolically represents his journey to heaven, while fire crackers are lit to speed up the kitchen god's travel. To ensure a good report before the Heavenly Emperor, honey was rubbed on the lips of the paper god so that the kitchen god would have only sweet things to say to the Heavenly Emperor—or so that the sticky honey would prevent him from opening his mouth and no bad news would be told!



***Paper hung in flowering branches for Vietnamese Lunar New Year
(Public Domain)***

However, the kitchen gods of Asian mythology, also known as guardians of the harmony of the households, were once regular people who suffered in their own family lives. Behind the New Year festivities of sending off the kitchen gods to heaven lie dark legends of heartbreak, abuse and death.

The Blind Man and the Virtuous Woman: Plagued by Ill-Fortune

The most popular story of the Chinese kitchen god dates back to the 2nd Century BCE. The kitchen god was once a mortal on earth named Zhang Lang. Zhang Lang married a virtuous woman, but later left her to be with a younger woman. As a punishment for his adultery, the heavens afflicted Zhang Lang with ill-fortune—Zhang Lang became blind and, not long after, his young lover abandoned him. His misfortunes continued until he had to resort to begging to support himself.

One day, when he was begging for alms, Zhang Lang came upon a simple house of his former wife. As he was blind, he did not recognize the woman he betrayed. However, she recognized him, took pity on him and invited him in. She cooked a meal for Zhang Lang and tended to him kindly. As Zhang Lang told her his life's story, he began to weep remembering his former wife and his treatment of her. Hearing this, Zhang Lang's former wife gently told him to open his eyes and his vision was restored.

When he could finally make out the woman sitting in front of him, Zhang Lang recognized her as the wife he abandoned. However, it appeared that bad luck followed him to the end of his life, as Zhang Lang felt such shame that he threw himself into the kitchen hearth without realizing that it was lit. Despite the virtuous woman's best efforts to save her former husband, she could only salvage one of his legs. To this day, a fire poker is sometimes referred to as *Zhāng lǎng de tuǐ* ("Zhang Lang's Leg").



An actor portrays Zhang Lang/Zao Jun, the Kitchen God. (CC BY-SA 2.0)

The devoted wife then created a shrine to Zhang Lang above the fireplace. The Heavenly Emperor took pity on Zhang Lang's tragic story and saved him from becoming a hopping corpse— the usual fate of suicides. Zhang Lang was then given the new name of *Zao Jun* (“Stove Master”) and was made the god of the Kitchen. When his faithful former wife died, the couple was finally reunited.



Zao Jun - The Kitchen God. (Public Domain)

Together in Death: The Wife, the Beggar and the Hunter

The Vietnamese ceremony of *Tet Tao Quan* (“Kitchen Gods’ Day”) is held at every Vietnamese household. The women of the family cook delicacies such as steamed sticky rice or plain porridge, altars are cleaned and decorated with fresh flowers and fruits, and large bowl of water containing live golden carps is kept aside. The carps are freed into a pond, lake or river after the worshipping ceremonies are finished. It’s

believed the three kitchen gods can only travel up to the heavens with the help of golden carps, as a carp is believed to be heaven's animal and is a very good swimmer. However, behind this celebration is another tragic story.



A Golden Carp (CC BY 2.0)

According to legends, in a forest lived a woodcutter named Trọng Cao and his wife, Thị Nhi. They were very poor and Trong Cao was often unable to earn enough to buy their food. Frustration and worry drove him to drink, leading him to inflict all manner of abuse on his wife. One day, Trong Cao's abuse became too much for Thi Nhi. She fled their cottage and never came back.

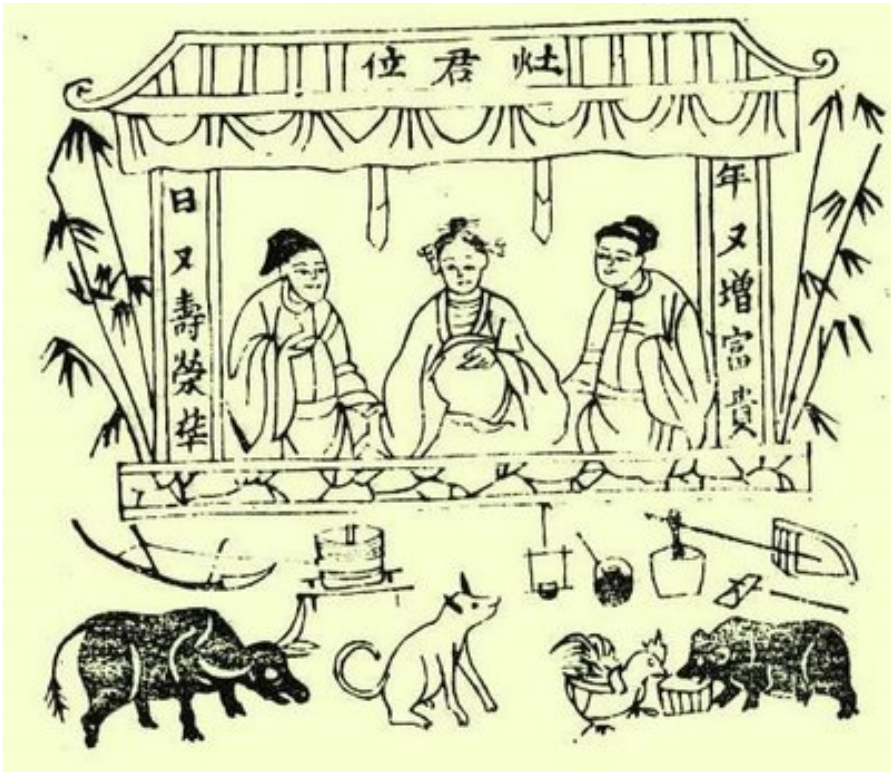
Thi Nhi wandered in the forest for weeks until she came upon a hunter's home. The hunter was a kind man; he gave her food and permitted her to rest in his home. Thi Nhi stayed and kept house for him as she had nowhere else to go. After some time, Thi Nhi and the hunter were married and lived together peacefully.

One day, when *Tết Nguyên Đán* ("Feast of the First Morning of the First Day") was approaching and the hunter was out in the forest, a beggar knocked at the door of the cottage and asked for some food. Thi Nhi prepared a meal for him and, while he was eating, suddenly recognized him as her former husband, Trọng Cao.

Thi Nhi did not have much time to react to this new knowledge as Trọng Cao was still eating when she heard the steps of her returning second husband. Thi Nhi panicked and hid Trọng Cao under a haycock near the house. Unaware of the beggar's presence, the hunter set fire to the hay to use the ashes as fertilizer.

When Trọng Cao found himself ablaze, his first impulse was to cry out. However, he remembered the lady's kindness and feared that her husband might harm her if he discovered him there. Therefore, Trọng Cao remained silent. As fire consumed the haystack, Thi Nhi was torn with grief. She realized that her former husband was meeting death for her sake, but she could neither save Trọng Cao from the fire nor tell her new husband. In her guilt, she threw herself into the fire to die with Trọng Cao. As Thi Nhi threw herself into the fire, her shocked husband unsuccessfully tried to pull her back. Not giving up, the hunter rushed into the fire to save her. However, it was too late and the fire consumed him as well.

The Heavenly Emperor saw this sad event and was so moved by the three mortals' devotion to each other that he decided to help them live together forever. He changed them into the three hearthstones around the cooking fire, where they became the *Tao Quan* ("Kitchen Gods"), giving them the task of looking after all household affairs on earth.



Vietnamese Kitchen Gods (Public Domain)

Every year, on the 23rd day of the 12th lunar month, the night before the New Year became a time to bid farewell to the family's kitchen gods, who then return to heaven to report on the family's doings in the past year to the Heavenly Emperor. After the ceremony, the three gods ride on cars provided by the family to the heavens.



Chinese Kitchen Gods (Public Domain)

The Violence Behind the Comfort: A Lesson in Duality

It may seem strange that something so warm as the kitchen and something as happy as a celebration could be centered around tales of

heartbreaks. However, the symbolism of the Japanese god of the stove may give us a clue on the philosophy behind these stories.

Kōjin, or Sanbō-Kōjin, is the Japanese god of fire, the hearth and the kitchen. He is sometimes called *Kamado-gami* (“the God of the Stove”). Although images of Kōjin do not appear widely until the Muromachi Era (15th century CE), Kōjin’s origin may predate the introduction of Buddhism to Japan.



Sanbō-Kōjin, Japanese god of fire, the hearth and the kitchen (CC BY-SA 3.0)

The name *Sanbō-Kōjin* means “three-way rough deity”, and he is considered a deity of uncertain temper. Kōjin appears as a wrathful deity, commanding 98,000 demon attendants while subjugating the wicked. He hates uncleanness and is worshiped in kitchens as the deity of fire. Kōjin has various forms, including three faces and six arms, or one face and four arms, or eight faces and eight arms. He is said to destroy all impurity and is responsible for watching over the household and reporting any misdeeds to the god of the village or city. These reports are then discussed, and the according rewards or punishments are assigned by an assembly of gods in the tenth month of the traditional lunar calendar.

Although Kōjin represents fire, a destructive force, he embodies fire that is controlled and turned toward a good purpose. Therefore, Kōjin represents violent forces that are turned toward the good of humankind. This representation is very similar to sufferings of the mortals in the Chinese and Vietnamese mythology which, in the end, were turned towards a good purpose for mankind. Another interpretation is this: suffering cleanses one’s heart and it is a necessary part of development.

Clean the Kitchen and Make a Fresh Start for the New Year

In order to establish a fresh beginning in the New Year, families in Asia are traditionally organized both within their family unit, in their home, and around their yard to clean. This custom of a thorough house cleaning and yard cleaning is another popular custom relating to the Kitchen Gods stemming from the philosophy that they embody. It is believed that in order for the deities to depart to heaven, the family home and "persons" must be cleansed. This ritual continues until after the ceremony where old decorations are taken down and new posters and decorations are put up for the following Spring Festival.



A woman makes an offering to a Chinese Kitchen God shrine. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

To further illustrate the relationship of the kitchen and family relationships, to this day traditional Chinese families are classified according to the stove they possess. In circumstances of a divided household, kitchens are shared but never the stove. In the case of a father's death, the sons divide their father's household. The eldest son inherits the stove and the younger brothers transfer the coals from the old stove to their own new stoves to invite the kitchen gods to join their

newly formed households. This process is called *pun chu* (“dividing the stove”) which also indicates the division of the ‘soul’ of the family. As the stove is divided, each family members could then keep a part of their family’s soul in their new homes.

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(Top image: A statue of a Kitchen God - CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 with flames)

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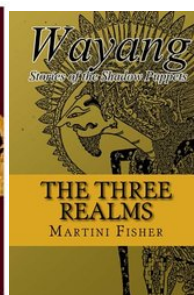
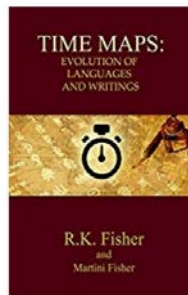
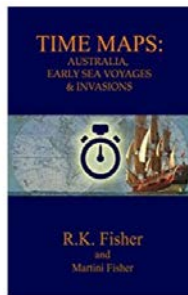
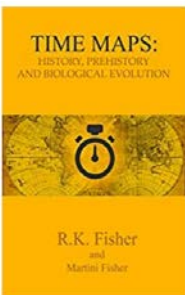
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Origin Myths of the Inca Civilization & Piecing Together Royal Heritage

By Brien Foerster



According to most historical accounts, especially those collected by the early Spanish chroniclers of the 16th century, and just after the destructive efforts of the conquistadors, the Inca were believed to have originated in the area of Lake Titicaca, south of present day Cusco Peru. More specifically, archaeological evidence suggests that the Inca developed as a cohesive group on the Island of the Sun and Island of the Moon on what is today the Bolivian side of Lake Titicaca, as well as the nearby town of Copacabana. This is thought by many scholars to have begun around 100 BC to 100 AD.



Lake Titicaca, Peru (Public Domain)

Over the course of the next number of centuries, the Inca evolved as a rather complex society, especially in regards to agricultural cultivation, mainly in the form of terracing systems called Andene. Almost the entire Island of the Sun was developed with these Andene, which can be witnessed to this very day, though they are largely no longer in use.



Andenes at Moray, Peru. (CC BY 3.0)

The Navel of the World

Lake Titicaca was once part of the Pacific Ocean, and over the course of millions of years, due to friction between the Pacific and Nazca tectonic plates, it slowly rose to its present elevation of approximately 13,000 feet. Slowly, over time, the saline content of the lake was reduced from millions of years of rainfall, and a major or several major tectonic shifts caused the Altiplano area to tilt, rising in the north and sinking in the south. The last of these catastrophic movements likely occurred between 45,000 and 12,000 years ago, creating the largest salt flat in the world at Uyuni, south of Lake Titicaca, and shrinking the lake's size by 90 percent.



The Salar Salt Flats of Uyuni (Public Domain)

The lake still has a high enough salt mineral content that the water cannot be used for irrigation, and that would have been true during Inca times as well; thus, they were dependent on rainfall to water their crops. Around 900 to 1000 AD, there was a 40-year drought, the result of local climate change, perhaps exacerbated by an excessive El Nino event, which put great hardship on the Inca people. This was further complicated by the invasion of indigenous Aymara Natives, who plotted to, and eventually ran the Inca out of the territory.

Again, according to most accounts, especially those of the Spanish chronicles, the Inca then ventured north, and over the course of time established themselves in what was to become their capital city of Cusco. In the Inca language, called Runa Simi which means the “peoples’ voice” and not Quechua which most presume, Cusco means “navel”, and was the navel or core of their world from its inception to the destruction by the Spanish in about 1532 AD.



Inca terraces at P'isaq. (Public Domain)

Children of Viracocha

Oral tradition states that the Inca “rose from the waters” of Lake Titicaca at the behest of their creator God Viracocha, who had previously made a race of giants, but they were stupid and cumbersome, so he destroyed them in a great flood. In most of the accounts four pairs of twin brothers and sisters were created, the two most prominent of them being Manco Capac (royal founder) and his sister/wife Mama Ocllo, who became the first official Inca rulers, likely by the time they reached and established Cusco.



Viracocha (Public Domain)

Another account, taught to the author by Cusco-based anthropologist Dr. Theo Paredes, is that this first ruler's name was Mallku Capac, which could be translated as "of royal wisdom." Dr. Paredes, who is an expert of the Runa Simi Inca language believes that the reason why the Inca first arrived in Cusco was not that they had been chased out of the Lake Titicaca area by the Aymara people, but that ancient wisdom keepers, who were carriers of very ancient traditions lived in Cusco, and that Mallku Capac had to go there to complete his education in order to become the first high Inca.



Part of the Inca Trail system (Public Domain)

In other legends, Manco Capac (also known as Ayar Manco) was the son of Viracocha of Paqariq Tampu (six leagues or 25 km south of Cusco). He and his brothers (Ayar Auca, Ayar Cachi and Ayar Uchu) and sisters (Mama Ocllo, Mama Huaco, Mama Raua and Mama Ipacura) lived near Cusco at Paqariq Tampu, and they united their people with other tribes encountered in their travels. They sought to conquer the tribes of the Cusco Valley, and these legends also incorporate an important golden staff, thought to have been given to Manco Capac by his father.



Manco Cápac holds a shining staff. First Inca, 1 of 14 Portraits of Inca Kings (Public Domain)

It was said that where this staff was thrust into, and sank completely into the ground, they would establish a new home. Accounts vary, but according to some versions of these legends, Manco Capac got rid of his

three brothers, trapping them or turning them into stone, thus becoming the leader of Cusco.

Shifting Genetics of the Noble Line

The "Inca" does not refer to the general population, but to the highest class of the society, who protected their royal bloodline by breeding with each other. Garcilaso de la Vega was a Peruvian writer of the 16th and early 17th centuries, and was half Inca and half Spanish. In De La Vega's accounts, just after the arrival of the Spanish in Peru, they found that a civil war among the Inca was raging.



Garcilaso de la Vega, a famous Peruvian writer. (Public Domain)

The Inca world, erroneously called an empire (which is a European term) had been divided into two by the last of the great Inca rulers named Huayna Capac. Just prior to his death in 1527 (likely the result of smallpox), he divided the land between his northern son Atahuallpa,

and his Cusco-based son, Huascar. After five years of unease between the brothers, Atahualpa's army moved rapidly from their base in the northern city of Cajamarca, entered Cusco, and wiped out all the royal Inca people that they could find, which was most of them.

That means that the genetic 'purity' of the Inca began to dissipate from that time afterwards, and presently there are not many people who can claim a high Inca blood quantum. Two ladies that the author has met live in Cusco and have documentation showing that they are direct descendants of the 6th high Inca ruler named Inca Roca (magnanimous Inca.) According to their family's stories the Inca did not originate in one place, but were an amalgam of different people of noble heritage. It is quite clear that inbreeding over time causes birth defects, and thus they may have introduced other people of noble blood into their lineage both to reduce genetic problems, and also as a way to strengthen ties with other indigenous groups.



Inca Ruler Lineage (Public Domain)

The Red Hair of the Inca

In the earliest of the Spanish chronicles, the accounts of one of the brothers of the head conquistador Francisco Pizarro states that some of the Inca he saw had reddish hair, and pale complexions. As most of the Inca royal family had been wiped out at the orders of Atahualpa prior to the Spanish entering Cusco, this is the only account we have of such a genetic variation from the common Native people of the area. However, another ancient society that had genetically auburn red hair, and likely light skin color, were the Paracas people of the coast of modern-day Peru. The Paracas existed from about 800 BC to about 100 BC or perhaps 100 AD, and evidence is strongly suggesting that a culture called the Topara invaded Paracas territory around 100 BC to 100 AD and exterminated the noble classes of the Paracas. These ancient people are most famous for having elongated skulls, as well as dark red hair.

Such characteristics disappear from the archaeological record around 100 AD, and thus it is the author's belief that the Topara, who later became known as the Nazca, exterminated the Paracas. However, it is highly unlikely that all of the Paracas perished during this onslaught, and that some were able to escape. There is a modern highway, laid on top of an ancient Inca road that goes from the Paracas area east and into the highlands, ending in Cusco. Any of the Paracas that were able to escape from the Topara attack would likely have fled on this route.

Elongated Skulls

Also, what is little known is that the Inca performed artificial cranial deformation on their royal children in order to physically distinguish themselves from the common people, and, as stated earlier, some of them appear to have red hair. Thus, it is not a stretch to consider that the Paracas may have been part of the foundation of the Inca. Aside from the Runa Simi language, which was the common one used during the time of the Inca up until the Spanish conquest, the Inca royalty also

had a secret language that they used only amongst one another called Qapaq (or Capac) Simi, which means the “noble speak.” Interestingly enough, this was also the language that most scholars believe the Paracas spoke.



Paracas elongated skulls (CC BY 2.0)

Qapaq Simi faded out of existence after the atrocities committed by Atahualpa, and was further reduced by the Spanish trying to wipe out any vestiges of the Inca culture. The conditioning of the Inca into becoming Spanish subjects was not done through persuasion, but persecution. Luckily for modern researchers, what was able to be saved from extinction of the Inca cultural ways was kept secretly by the descendants of the Inca, and other people.

So, the story of the Inca and their origins is likely not as is written in most text books today. Rather than the simple movement of a people from the shores of Lake Titicaca about 1000 years ago, it is likely far more complex, as has been shown in this article. To complicate matters

even more, the writings of Fernando de Montesinos adds another wrinkle to the whole story.

He arrived to Peru from Spain in 1628, and over the course of decades compiled vast manuscripts about the plight of the Native people of the Andes regions. Being a Jesuit, he was able to access the first records made by the Spanish of what they had learned from the Inca and other Native people soon after contact. Among these accounts included a list of 93 Inca or pre-Inca rulers that supposedly existed in Cusco prior to the time of Manco Capac. As the latter and his family were either likely related to, or amalgamated with these earlier noble people, that would make a royal heritage not of 12 Inca, but a total of 105.



Inti Raymi (Festival of the Sun) at Sacsayhuaman, Cusco (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Weaving History Back Together

The high or Sapa Inca ruled on average for 30 years, being replaced at death by his first-born son in most cases. That would mean that the Inca heritage, rather than being about 500 years in duration, was more on the order of 3500 years. More facts and evidence will be revealed as the author continues to weave back together the heritage of the Inca, thanks to sources and friends in the Cusco area.

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(Top image: Hatun Tópac; Viracocha, Portraits of Inca Kings, and Inca Tunic – Public Domain, Machu Picchu – CC BY-SA 3.0)

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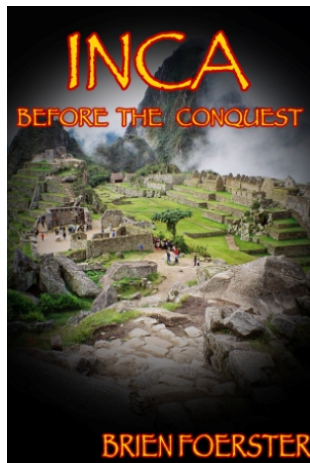
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Brien Foerster

Brien Foerster was born in Rochester, Minnesota, U.S.A. but grew up on the west coast of Canada. At age 11, he became fascinated with the Native art of the Haida native people, and began carving totem poles, and other related art forms, learning from Native teachers. After completing an Honours Bachelor of Science degree, Brien decided to take up carving and sculpture full time, at the age of 25. This included the creation of 13 full size totem poles, dugout canoes, masks, bowls, boxes and other Native style works.

He has become an authority on the megalithic works of South America and the perplexing ancient Elongated Headed people of the area, and divides his time between Paracas and Cusco, Peru.



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Lady Cormorant and Her 3 Sons: Sacrifice, Rulership

By Leonide Martin



In the mountain rain forest of Chiapas, México, sits the ruins of Palenque, considered the most beautiful ancient Maya city. Silhouetted against a backdrop of natural hills and valleys, the elegant pyramids and palace offer fine Maya bas-relief carvings of high-grade limestone and stucco. Palenque's artists created a unique style of flowing, cursive hieroglyphs and realistic, graceful portraits. Orange-red pigment was applied to buildings, while figures and symbols were painted in bright contrasting colors.

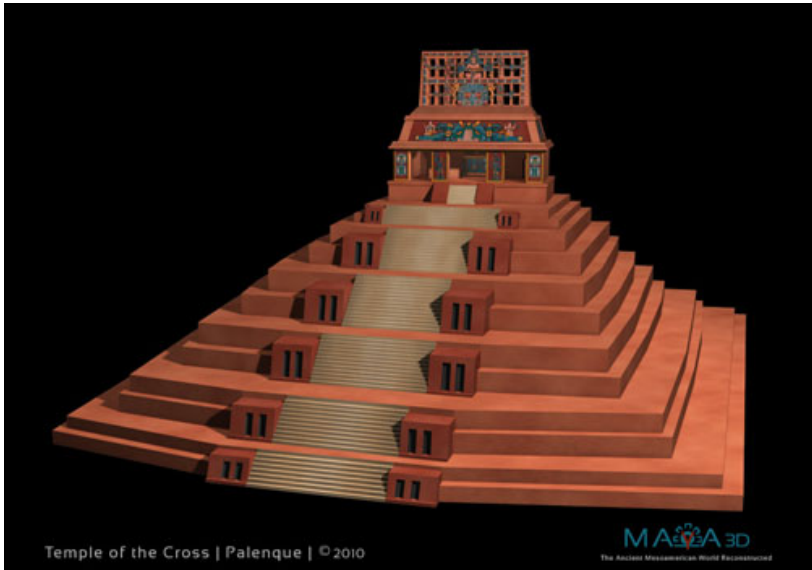


Temple of Inscriptions at Palenque, Chiapas, México. (CC BY 3.0)

Classic Period Mayas called their city Lakam Ha, "Place of Big Waters" because many streams traversed the ridge, cascading down cliffs to join large rivers below. Blessed with natural abundance, this city flourished for 700 years and produced a remarkable number of hieroglyphic texts, well-preserved over the succeeding centuries. Lengthy hieroglyphs carved on stone panels mounted on interior walls of chambers gave archeologists texts that enabled them to determine the "king list" and learn the history, mythology, and religion of the Mayas—written in their own words.



The Cross Group: Temples of the Cross (left), Foliated Cross (far background), and Sun (right). Photo by permission, Thomas F. Aleto.

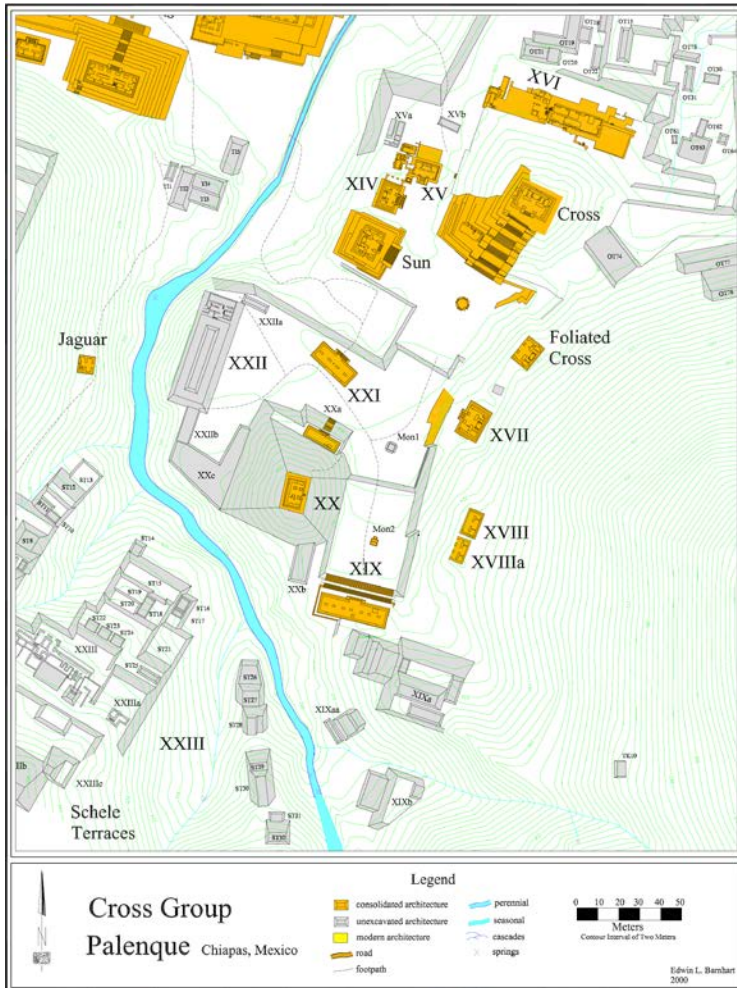


Temple of the Cross. Reconstruction by permission of Maya 3D

The Cross Group and Cosmic Creation

The Cross Group is a treasure of Maya mythology, comprised of three main structures: Temple of the Cross, Temple of the Foliated Cross, and Temple of the Sun. They form a triangle around a plaza with a low center platform whose four sides symbolize the four-sided universe of Maya cosmology. The three temples represent the hearthstones of creation, three stars of Orion which set the pattern for hearths in Maya homes. The Cross Group temples are an earthly reflection of this cosmic creation event, reinforced by their natural setting at the base of a sacred mountain *K'uk Lakam Witz*, whose peak offers vistas over the entire city. The largest temple faces a spring emerging from the mountain, its stream flowing across the main ridge.

Interior chambers of these temples hold panels relating the Palenque creation myth: Birth of the Triad Gods (Palenque's patron deities), creation of the world during mythic times, each God's cosmological symbolism, and how these Gods became forebears of Palenque kings. Panels in each temple tell the story of Lady Cormorant and Her Three Sons, the Triad Gods. This set of three panels is the only long written narrative of Classic Maya mythology. Each temple is "owned" by one of the Triad Gods and expresses the deity's prominence, symbolism, and functions within Maya society and religion.

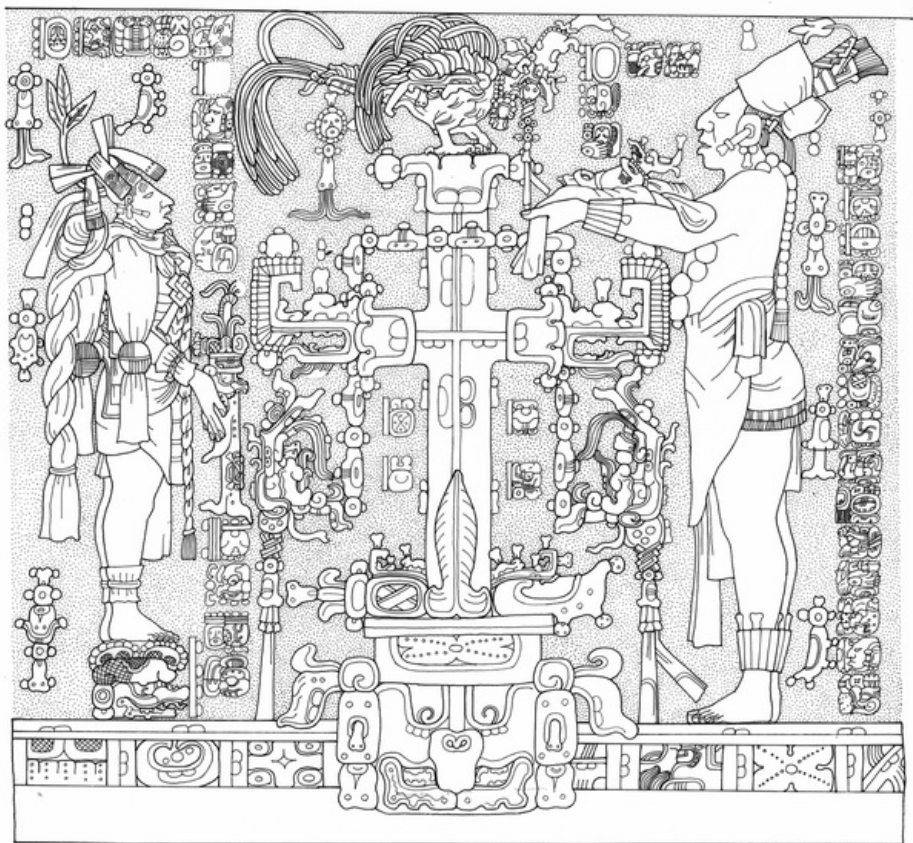


Cross Group Diagram. Palenque Mapping Project, Edwin Barnhart, 1999. FAMSI-sponsored project

The Cross Group was built by the 12th ruler of Lakam Ha, K'inich Kan Bahlam II, son of famed ruler K'inich Janaab Pakal who is considered the greatest Mayan king. Kan Bahlam created a vivid image of the Maya universe with its three divisions of sky, water, and caves. The panels made a statement about how these divisions were aspects of his own political authority through ancestors, agriculture, and warfare; and how his lineage descended from the creator goddess/gods. Each tablet has a

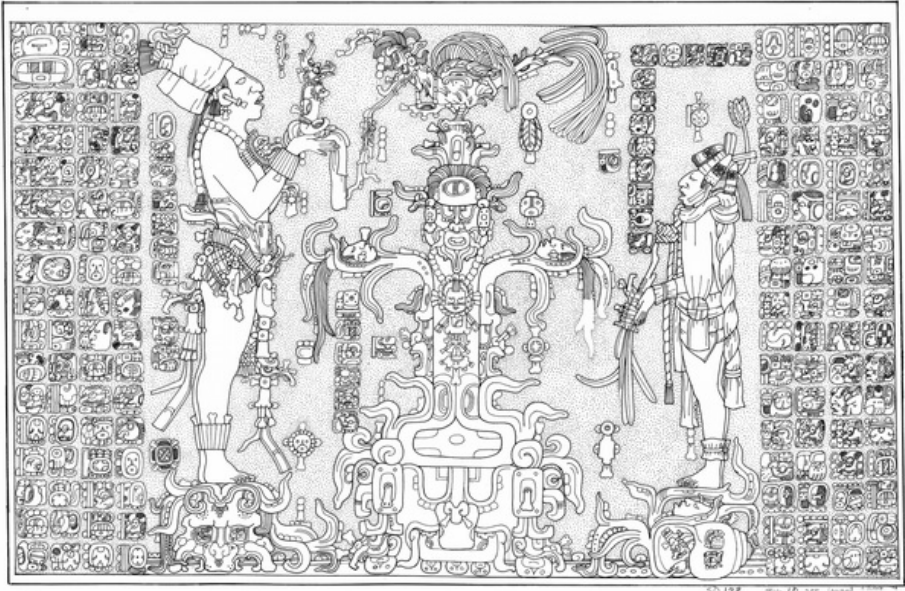
remarkable double portrait of Kan Bahlam, once as a child of six (641 CE) when he was designated as *ba-ch'ok* (heir), and later as ruler, *K'uhul Ahau*, at age 48 (684 CE) when he ascended to the throne. The figures face each other venerating a central symbol expressing his fate and royal duties:

- **Temple of the Cross** – the largest and highest structure, a sky temple associated with solar rebirth and ancestral authority, owned by One Lord, *Hun Ahau*, first born of the Triad (God I). The central symbol is a large cross representing the sacred world tree/cosmic tree of the Milky Way called the *Wakah Chan Te'* (Sixth Sky Jeweled Tree), with flowering branches, decorated with jewels, with the celestial bird (animal spirit of the Creator God Itzamna) perched on top. Hun Ahau represents a "rebirth" of the original First Father-Creator God.



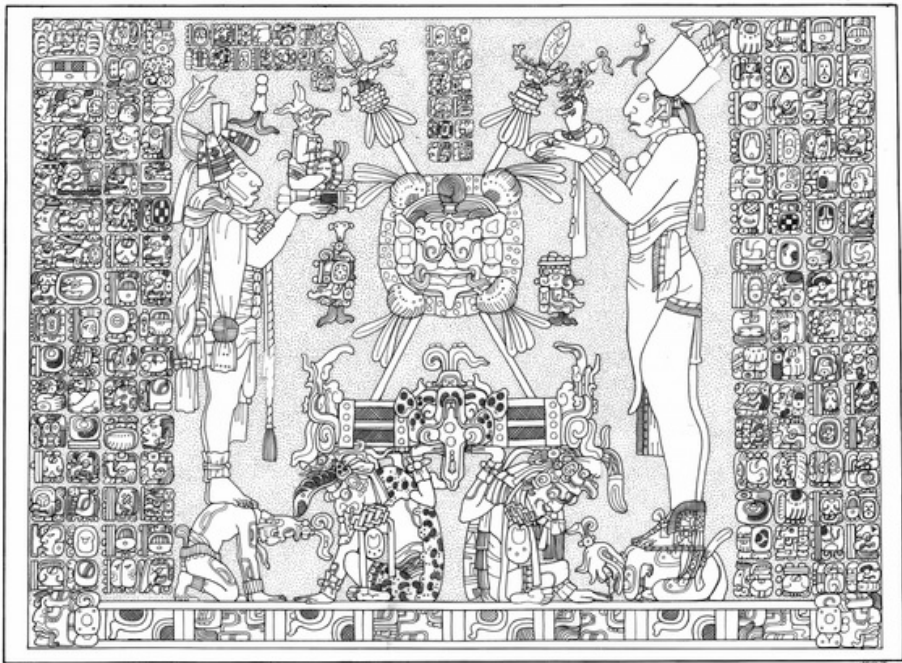
Panel Temple of the Cross. Linda Schele Drawing. Courtesy of Ancient Americas at LACMA

- **Temple of the Foliated Cross** – the mid-size structure, an earth temple associated with water and agriculture, primarily maize, symbolizing the king's procreative powers, owned by Infant K'awiil, *Unen K'awiil*, third born (but second ranking) of the Triad (God II). The central symbol is a tree with foliations representing sprouting corn, called *K'anal Te'* (Yellow Corn Tree). It rises from a monster head with sea shells and water motifs, and sacred mountain symbols. As patron deity of royal lineages, Unen K'awiil adds fertility and rainmaking through lightning to themes of rebirth and germination.



Panel Temple of the Foliated Cross. Linda Schele Drawing. Courtesy of Ancient Americas at LACMA

- **Temple of the Sun** – the lowest and smallest structure, an underworld temple depicted as a cave within a mountain, associated with warfare and military authority, owned by "night sun" deity Sun Lord, *K'inich Ahau*, second born of the Triad (God III), who symbolizes the warrior. The central symbol is a ceremonial shield and two crossed spears, supported on the hunched backs of underworld deities. The sun-eyed face in its center rises over a four-cornered royal dais representing the four-sided earth, and a small figure symbolizes the spirit of sacred warfare.



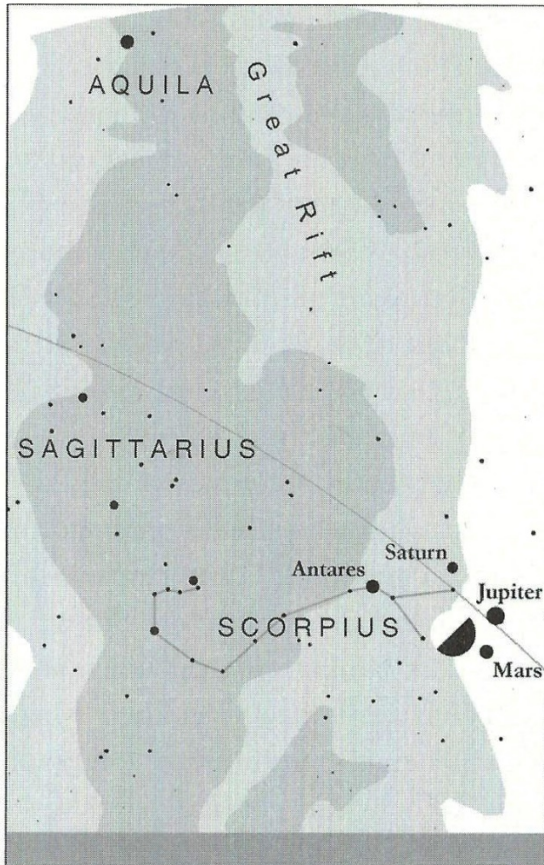
Panel Temple of the Sun. Linda Schele Drawing. Courtesy of Ancient Americas at LACMA

Kan Bahlam dedicated the temples in a 3-day ceremony starting July 21, 690 CE, honoring the Palenque Triad while making a statement about his legitimacy to rule and his creative abilities. The Cross Group became Palenque's ritual centerpiece, perfectly symbolizing the Maya cosmos as the realms of celestial/sky, water/earth, and underworld/cave. Each temple was a station in the ritual cycle performed by the king on important calendar dates.

The Astronomy and Mythology of Creation

Each Cross Group temple features the supernatural birth or "arrival" of one Triad God at a watery place called *Matawiil*, origin place of the Gods and ultimately the Palenque dynasty. The story told by hieroglyphs reaches far back into mythic times and is expressed in movements of stars identified with the Gods. Columns of hieroglyphs on the panel's

left side recount mythic deeds of Gods, and columns on the right side provide historical accounts of Lakam Ha rulers. An astronomical thread links the narrative making an allegory between eras of Gods and humans—as stars rise again after disappearing below the horizon, so royal persons rise after death and rejoin their successors as ancestor spirits.



Milky Way standing upright 690 CE. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars conjunction near Moon. With permission of Dennis Tedlock, 2000 Years of Mayan Literature

Astronomical events in the night sky when the temples were dedicated anchor the creation myth. The Temple of the Cross faces southwest with an open view across the plaza. Around midnight, the Milky Way appeared standing upright on the horizon, an enormous Celestial World Tree between constellations Scorpius and Sagittarius. On top of the celestial tree was the star Aquila, called "Lady of Split Place" because of its proximity to the Great Rift dividing the Milky Way in two. Aquila corresponded to the Goddess Cormorant, *Muwaan Mat* to the Mayas. At the foot of the celestial tree was Scorpius, a constellation the Mayas called *b'akal*, bony/segmented. The region which Lakam Ha dominated was named *B'aakal*, polity of the bone. They called this area of the sky *Wakah Chan Nah*, Sixth Sky House, because it was sixth among the Maya Zodiac thirteen signs.

Goddess Cormorant's Three Sons

That night the temples were dedicated, the guardian spirits of Lady Cormorant's three sons were visible as planets grouped near Scorpius: Mars, guardian of Hun Ahau; Jupiter, guardian of K'inich Ahau; and Saturn, guardian of Unen K'awiil. Mars was in forward motion; both Jupiter and Saturn had recently completed retrograde periods and appeared motionless, waiting to join Mars in moving eastward. The guardian spirits came together at the bony constellation; the Triad Gods joined B'aakal. The moon joined them, considered guardian spirit of the Goddess Cormorant. To commemorate this auspicious celestial event, Kan Bahlam drew his own blood in ritual sacrifice and conjured the spirit of an ancestor, the "namesake of the lady of the sky" who was his grandmother, Sak K'uk (White Quetzal), also called Cormorant.



Lady Cormorant, Maya Goddess Muwaan Mat from Dresden Codex

First Son's Birth. The Temple of the Cross left hieroglyphic panel establishes mythic Long Count dates. In 3121 BCE the Goddess Cormorant was born in the previous era. Interval dates move action forward to early days of the present era, when the Progenitor God who was already in the sky turned around in Sixth Sky House, corresponding to Mars moving from its first to second stationary point. Mars completed retrograde motion and ended visibility in the night sky just after sunset. The disappearance of Mars is expressed in two ways: the God arrived at Matawiil (invisibility), and he touched the earth (Maya

way of saying he was born.) Lady Cormorant does penance as Mars becomes invisible, fasting and letting blood so her first son can be reborn in Matawiil as *Hun Ahau* (first Triad God) on October 21, 2360 BCE. She brings about his spiritual rebirth through sacrifice (penance). Shortly after, on September 5, 2325 BCE, Cormorant receives the white paper headband giving her authority to rule.

In the right side glyphs, the story leaps ahead thirteen centuries into early human history. On March 9, 996 BCE, the first quasi-human is born, named U K'ix Kan. He is "made and modeled" from corn, brought forth by spirit power, and ties on the white paper headband March 26, 967 BCE, named a lord of the dynasty producing rulers of Lakam Ha. U K'ix Kan lives for 1200 years, straddling mythic and historic times. Next, the text covers the succession of Lakam Ha lords. The first fully human ruler is K'uk Bahlam, born March 29, 397 CE and ascending the throne in 431 CE. The second through sixth lords are named, and the tablet ends with the seventh in succession, Kan Bahlam I, namesake of K'inich Kan Bahlam II who built the Cross Group. The first Kan Bahlam accedes on April 6, 572 CE, but the text references an earlier event in 541 CE, when the moon, Venus, and Saturn were in conjunction in the Sixth Sky. This conjunction foreshadows the one occurring when the Cross Group temples were dedicated 150 years later.

Second Son's Birth. The Temple of the Sun panels tell the story of Lady Cormorant's second son. After reiterating events of the first panel, and establishing the beginning of the current era as August 11, 3114 BCE, the left panel relates the birth of *K'inich Ahau* on October 23, 2360 BCE, four days after the first birth. On this date, there is a "theoretical" eastern rise of Jupiter after a period of invisibility. Inconsistencies in dates have long puzzled scholars; recent interpretations suggest adjustments were made to incorporate synodic periods of Jupiter, and set precedent for a ceremony done by Kan Bahlam in 688 CE on the

same Tzolk'in date, 1 Ik 10 Tzek. Jupiter and the Sun have close connections due to the planet's brightness and size, and its visibility cycle of 367 days, close to a solar year.

K'inich Ahau is portrayed as a headless jaguar located in the *Sak B'ak Nah* (White Bone House). This connects him with the *Popol Vuh* Hero Twin *Xbalanque*, who lost his head in Underworld trials and stayed in a house full of bones. This link is strengthened by both mythic characters being twins: Hun Ahau—K'inich Ahau; Xbalanque—Hunahpu. Having four days between the twin Triad Gods' births is perfect symbolism: the sun has four stations (two equinoxes and solstices), and it defines the four corners/directions of earth. Both deities are aspects of the sun. Hun Ahau born on the day Ik' (wind) and K'inich Ahau born on Kimi (death) contrast the breath/soul of the sun with the sun's death in the Underworld.

A long interval date takes the story back to the hearthstone event, when K'inich Ahau (Jupiter) turned around at the heart of Sixth Sky; exactly 690 Jupiter periods plus extra days for Jupiter's retrograde time. When Jupiter arrives at invisibility, Cormorant again lets blood and fasts to birth her second son in Matawiil.

Time moves forward to historical events of July 21, 690 CE in the right side glyphs. Jupiter appears motionless along with Mars and Saturn, joined by the moon, as Kan Bahlam also "turned around" in an ancestral temple. On the third night of his temple dedication ceremony, the moon moves into the middle of the celestial tree and he summons Cormorant's human namesake, his grandmother Sak K'uk, in a cave channeling the river that runs past the three temples. The text recounts two rulers acceding and ends with the first Kan Bahlam tying on the white headband, with Mars and Jupiter in conjunction near summer solstice.



[Left] K'inich Kan B'alam II, at Palenque (Public Domain) [Right] Sak K'uk, grandmother of Kan Bahlam II, Called Lady Cormorant, Drawing by author's artist

Third Son's Birth. The Temple of the Foliated Cross left glyphs set the time frame for birth of Lady Cormorant's third son, *Unen K'awiiil*, occurring fourteen days after his brother, on November 6, 2360 BCE. On this date his guardian spirit (Saturn) rose in the sky and became visible. To bring about his birth, Lady Cormorant does penance by letting blood and fasting, just as she did for his brothers. The sacrifice done on "First Corn Tassel Mountain" links the temple to primordial acts.

The right glyphs recount temple dedications in 690 CE, when the planetary guardian spirits of the brothers were in conjunction "delayed and caught" in Scorpius. The moon, guardian spirit of Cormorant, joins on the second day of dedication and on the third day moves east of the planets into the middle of the celestial tree (Milky Way) just below the Great Rift—seen as a portal between the realms of living and dead. That night, Kan Bahlam lets his blood and summons his ancestor, Sak K'uk, namesake of Cormorant. From her spirit he receives the white

headband of rulership; the same one handed to Cormorant in mythic times making her the first dynastic ruler. These events happen at the temple "where the river is channeled by the cave" and are linked to the Sixth Sky cave (Great Rift) where Thunderbolt deities join Cormorant who "offers gems for the Four Hundred," referring to the multitude of observing stars. The text states that Kan Bahlam experienced all these things related to the birth of the Triad Gods, reiterates that he has tied on the headband of rulership, and implies he has rebuilt the sky cave of Lakam Ha.

The final text in Unen K'awill's tablet draws together all three panels, restating dates of Kan Bahlam's birth and accession, and tying them to his three-day ceremony dedicating the Triad God's temples in the Cross Group, when he went into seclusion, the "Lord who makes offerings for his dynasty." Now he will complete a period ending for the 13th katun (March 16, 692 CE) to seal his position in the dynasty as *juntan*, beloved of the patron Gods.



Sak K'uk offering symbol of rulership to her son K'inich Janaab Pakal, father of K'inich Kan Bahlam II. Lady Cormorant in her bird spirit form guides them. Artist drawing for author's book cover.

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(Top image: Sak K'uk/Lady Cormorant – Public Domain, Palenque, Mexico, Jiuguang Wang - CC BY SA 2.0)

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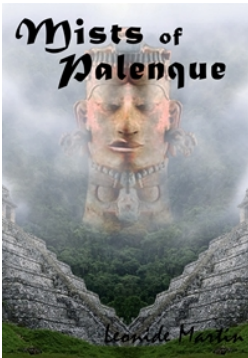
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Leonide Martin

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(Book 1)

[The Controversial Mayan Queen: Sak K'uk of Palenque](#)
(Book 2)

[The Mayan Red Queen: Tz'aakb'u Ahau of Palenque](#) (Book 3)

The Prophetic Mayan Queen: K'inuuw Mat of Palenque
(Book 4, June 2017)

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Leonide is a welcome and fascinating guest author and speaker on [Ancient Origins Premium](#).

Thinking Critically about Myths and Legends

By Ken Jeremiah



A legend is a tale regarded as historical even though it has not been proven, and the term “myth” can refer to common yet false ideas. Many myths and legends describe our history, but they are often treated skeptically. This is because many of them, while explaining a phenomenon, involve divine or supernatural beings. However, despite the fact that many disbelieve such stories, they do not disappear; they are passed down to future generations. Some parents tell their children that the stories are true. Others explain that they are likely untrue but important. And for human beings, they are significant.

Needing to Know

Psychologically, humans despise ignorance, even though they do not know much about planetary history. Nevertheless, due to this psychological need, historical accounts (which function in the same manner as myths) are filled with what the top minds (at the time) believe are the most logical course of events, and then their suppositions are treated as facts and taught to children. This leads to children believing that certain hypotheses are facts, and if a teacher who can think critically questions those facts, the students often have a psychological aversion to the topic. They need to “know” what

occurred. If history textbooks contained empty sections in which the author stated, “We are not certain what occurred during this time,” students would likely be insecure because “knowing” what happened provides security. Myths and legends fill in knowledge gaps. People want to know what they do not know, and myths thereby provide comfort. They are happier on a calm sea than an agitated one. However, people’s reliance on myths have distorted their historical views, and such myths are so much a part of their psychological makeups that questioning them is threatening; they will lash out and do anything they can to stop their beliefs from shattering.



The caravan of Marco Polo traveling towards the Indies. Illustration c. 1375 (Public Domain)

Mention that an individual named Marco Polo who went to China in the 1200s likely did not exist and people will get angry. They will lie and use deceit to try to prove he existed, even though outside of one book

written by the fiction author Rustichello da Pisa, there is no evidence of his existence. What is it about people that makes his existence important? It is the desire to “know” history, and because of this need, willful blindness appears.

Similarly, evidence exists that suggests human beings are millions of years old, but since this is not the history most people learned in school, they are generally opposed to it. Because of such opposition, views of history are distorted, likely untrue, and ethnocentric. How could Christopher Columbus have discovered the Americas if there were already millions of people there? Most students don’t even know what he was called (Colón), despite the fact that some countries’ money is named after him (colónes).



Landing of Columbus (12 October 1492) (Public Domain)

Similarly, students will learn some basic information about Chinggis or Genghis Khan but never learn his name (Temujin). These are just some basic examples of a much more widespread problem: history is misleading and, quite literally, *chosen* for inclusion in history books.

Facts that do not support the widespread view of historical events on this planet are discarded and even ridiculed. Some archaeologists have even publicly stated that if the evidence does not fit the established theory, it must be discarded.

The Truth of History

As a result, the majority of citizens are stuck in a rut, and they find it difficult to consider alternative historical possibilities. The only way to fix this problem is for people to assume that many historical events are distorted, even unknown, and then try to see things anew. The great Dao De Jing informs us that when great people perceive the truth (or Way), they will study it and never stop. Mediocre people will pursue it for a bit and then forget it, while inferior people, upon hearing about the truth, will laugh aloud, and if they did not laugh, it would not be the truth.

Astounding Ancient Engineering in Egypt

The following historical accounts should be seriously reconsidered to establish a more accurate view of planetary history: Numerous megalithic sites defy mainstream explanations. Human beings created such structures, and today, even with our modern technological advances we cannot duplicate their achievements. Such structures include the Great Pyramid in Egypt, insofar as its creation and precision.



The Great Pyramid of Giza. (Mgiganteus1/CC BY-SA 3.0)

Between 2.3 and 2.6 million white limestone blocks weighing between two and 15 tons each were moved across great distances and cut with laser-like precision. They were then stacked to create a highly polished, shiny pyramid. Moving such weights more than 100 feet into the air would prove difficult and dangerous today, yet the pyramid's builders were able to do so with astonishing precision and (if the Egyptologists' consensus of a 20-year building process is correct) speed. If workers labored 10 hours every day, yearly, without a single day's break, and provided that there were no errors or accidents that set them back, they would have to move 31 perfectly-cut blocks into the mathematically precise positions every hour. This is not possible today, so we have no idea what technology was used in its creation. We also do not understand how the blocks were moved and lifted, because every theory involving ramps and cranes is discredited if weights and numbers alone are considered.

When Christopher Dunn explored the Temple of Amun Mut Khonsu he noticed that all the statues of Ramses were identical: the faces' left sides were exactly the same as the right ones. After using computer graphics and drafting tools, he wrote, "It becomes clear that the statues must have been cut with the assistance of mechanical devices that caused the cutting tool to move along predetermined boundaries to produce an accurate representation in granite of the specific design". Their very creation makes them out-of-place artifacts: they do not neatly fit into the mainstream historical record. Therefore, a new *history* should be considered: one that takes into account all anomalous finds.



Statue of Ramses II at Luxor Temple, Egypt. (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Other structures in Egypt, including the Sphinx, which has tantalized archaeologists and historians for years, were likely built c. 10,500 BCE even though no historical texts used in schools would ever suggest that fact. According to what has occurred in modern Egyptology, if evidence

supports established theories, it will be accepted, but if it undermines them, it will be rejected.

Mysterious Ancient Builders of Peru

Another amazing site is Sacsayhuaman in Cusco, Peru, which the Incans claim they did not build but mainstream archaeologists and anthropologists insist that they did. When the fortress walls were built, giant boulders weighing more than 200 tons were quarried from a site 1,500 miles (2400 km) away, maneuvered over mountains, and then carved on site to fit perfectly with other megalithic stones in a puzzle-like interlocking pattern.



Sacsayhuamán, situated to the north of Cusco, Peru. (Public Domain)

Some of the blocks weigh more than 360 tons. Today, such-sized stones could be moved by heavy-lift cranes, but not up and down mountains without roads. Another inexplicable oddity about the stones is that the ones at the fortress have perfectly consistent textures with no imperfections or micro-skeletons, despite the fact that others at the

quarry from which they came *do* have such imperfections, as do most sedimentary rocks. Finally, the stones show evidence that they were once subjected to temperatures as high as 1100 degrees centigrade (Hancock, 2015). This perhaps leads some credence to the Incan and European accounts that the stones were actually liquefied and then poured into molds: an ancient form of concrete.

Unbelievable Ancient Feats in Lebanon

The ancients' similar skills are seen in the construction techniques of other megalithic sites, including the Temple of Jupiter in Lebanon. Three particular stones weigh approximately 1,200 tons. Moving them today would require 21 heavy-lift cranes working in unison. Of course, there is no way to maneuver 21 of them around the same object with the necessary counterweights and yet have them all work together and move in the same direction. Yet, the ancients seemingly had no problem accomplishing such feats.



***The incredible columns of the Temple of Jupiter in Baalbek, Lebanon.
(CC BY-SA 2.5)***



***Ralph Ellis stands on the largest quarried stone at Baalbek, Lebanon.
(CC BY-SA 4.0)***

Early European Colonies Dispute Columbus Story

Consider megalithic structural designs and historical accounts and it becomes clear that something is missing in our perception of history. Returning to Christopher Columbus and how he could not have *discovered* the New World because they were already millions of people there, someone might argue that his appellation is apt because he was the first European to arrive, but to make such an assertion, such people have to disregard evidence that contradicts their view: evidence that Europeans were in North America in the 1300s and that Templar colonies were also there. One such colony was most likely in Newport, Rhode Island.

More evidence that history is ethnocentric is found just by looking at history books. How many American History texts are based on Native

Americans? (They generally center upon the Europeans who came to the Americas instead.) And how many people know that Native Americans traveled by boats to Europe at approximately the same time Europeans first traveled to America? Similarly, cocaine and hashish were found in ancient Egyptian mummies, and recent tests demonstrate that the substances were ingested. Since mainstream historical accounts hold that Egyptians did not go to America and the Americans did not travel to Egypt, it is a dangling, inconvenient fact that they have not yet been able to comprehend. Doesn't intercultural communication on a worldwide scale in the ancient world make more sense?

Going Forward by Questioning Historical Myths



Think critically and keep an open mind about history, myth and legend. (CC BY 2.0)

The only thing people should do to think critically is to keep an open mind and stop (mentally) discarding historical finds. This is difficult, as non-conforming ideas are typically discouraged. In classrooms, students are rarely presented with contradictory information or

alternative historical accounts. They do not generally read, for example, accounts of Columbus in which he is depicted as a slave trader, or accounts of the Hiroshima holocaust written by Japanese survivors. This is because such inquiry threatens the established social order. Hufford wrote, “A teacher should be encouraged to doubt, to recognize and build upon discontent, and to actively question, rather than passively accept, officially-sanctioned, transmitted knowledge”. Such questioning might be considered radical, but it can lead to forward progress. Let’s charge ahead!

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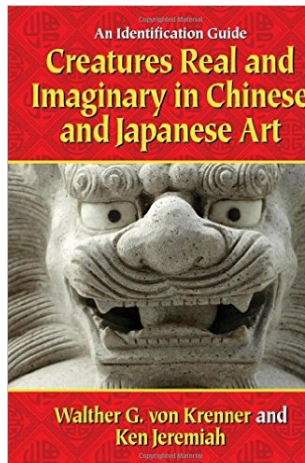
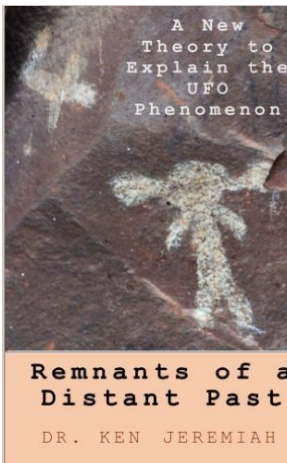


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The Night Mare and Being Ridden by the Hag

By Vincent Ongkowitzjo



Most people today who have heard that ‘the Nightmare’ is an actual being in European folklore and not just a certain type of dream-state, associate the being with horses. A mare is indeed a horse—but this interpretation is not correct. The mare of ‘the nightmare’ is a demon; and the word for horse and the word for nightmare derive from a different root.



A nightmarish vision of a demon horse (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Mara – Evil Spirits and The Night Horse

In Dutch, the nightmare is known as the *maar* or *mare*, sometimes called *nachtmaar* or *nachtmare*, analogous to the English word. Over time, the Dutch word changed into *nachtmerrie* where *merrie* means female horse. We see that the folk etymology of ‘night horse’ was very common.

The German word is *Mahr*. This is seldom used and sometimes rendered as *Nachtmahr*, but there is no confusion with a female horse because modern German has lost the corresponding cognate of ‘mare’ or *merrie*. The common German word for nightmare, however, is of interest. They speak of an *Alptraum* or *Alldruck*. Both words relate the phenomenon to elves. Modern German *Alb*, *Alp*, or *Alf* is literally translated as ‘evil spirit’ although the connection with ‘elf’ is clear.



Alptraum perches on woman, Nachtmahr – The Nightmare, circa 1790. (Public Domain)

In Swedish, the night demon is called *mara*. Old Icelandic has the same word. The being appears in *Ynglingasaga* and causes the death of king Vanlandi. Although the motif is particular to Germanic folklore, the

mare's name forms the basis of the French word for nightmare, *cauchemar*.

What is the Nightmare?

Then what is the nightmare exactly? Nowadays, the word designates a bad dream. When we experience strong, frightening emotions while dreaming, the sensation is so overwhelming that we wake up from the dream. The impression is so strong that we have trouble sleeping again. Some of the dream sensation lingers and makes us experience presences in the room, regardless whether this is true or not. The whole phenomenon is explained psychologically.



The strong, frightening emotions of a nightmare can be overwhelming. (CC BY-SA 2.0)

In the old days, nightmares visited people in their sleep and caused bad dreams. At least, that is the idea we have. If we compare actual accounts, which in this case are necessarily folk tales, then we must

conclude that a nightly visit by the mare was rather different from what we call a bad dream. Reports about the nightmare are recorded up until a hundred years ago. Stories are found in Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Scandinavia and Great Britain. I will draw mainly from Dutch and Belgian sources.

Being Hag-Ridden by the Night Mare

Either people or horses are ridden by the nightmare. When a person goes to bed, he suddenly feels a pressure on the body, usually in the area of the chest. Sometimes the pressure travels from the feet to the head. The person cannot breathe. When he wants to scream, from shock, he perceives that he cannot. When the crisis is over, the person sweats and feels tired. Victims are both men and women.



A woman is being 'ridden' by the evil spirit nightmare. (Public Domain)

When horses are taken by the nightmare, their manes get tangled. The horses become restless and they sweat. They don't sleep all night. In my opinion, the nightmare has become a scapegoat for the state of such horses because of the confusing folk etymology.



Horses were blended into accounts (Public Domain)

What happens according to eye-witness accounts is that the person or the animal has been ridden by a woman. Sometimes she was a spirit or witch, but often she was recognized by the victim. In many cases the mare was a real person who suffered from a certain affliction which involved her travelling out-of-body to attack horses or people. The victim was usually known to the 'mare woman'. When the mare woman attacked someone, she became very still—even in the middle of an activity. There is an account from Belgium in which a girl worked for a bakery and while she was kneading dough she suddenly stopped. Miles

away someone familiar to her was ridden by the mare. We see a sort of out-of-body experience developing.

I believe that the phenomenon might have been part of the training among witches within a Germanic context. We know from Norse myth and saga that certain women practiced this kind of out-of-body techniques. The practice is known as *seiðr*, although *seiðr* comprises more than just this. An example is found in *Friðbjófs saga* in which two women practiced *seiðr* to control a whale at sea. It appeared to onlookers that the women were riding the whale. In Icelandic folklore, this particular technique is known as a *sending*.

In *Ynglingasaga*, chapter 7, Odin is said to possess the same ability. From Lee Hollander's translation: "Odin could shift his appearance. When he did so his body would lie there as if he were asleep or dead; but he himself, in an instant, in the shape of a bird or animal, a fish or serpent, went to distant countries..." The passage implies that he could be at two places simultaneously. We see the motif recur in the nightmare stories.



The Norse god Odin on his horse Sleipnir, featured on the Tjängvide image stone in Vallhalla. (Public Domain)

Only a few pages later we find the story of Vanlandi. In chapter 13 of *Ynglingasaga*, Huld is asked to perform her sorcery to compel Vanlandi to return to Finland or else kill him. According to the text, when Huld exercises her *seiðr*, Vanlandi is overcome by sleep and senses somebody atop of him. He identifies the presence as a *mara*, but the weight is so heavy that it crushes his legs. Eventually it kills the king. Clearly, the *mara* has been sent by Huld.

In folk stories the nightmare is identified by a particular technique. When the victim complains of being ridden by the mare he is usually given the advice to hold a knife to his chest on the following night. The person does this but consciously or subconsciously misunderstands the advice and holds the knife pointed upwards. When the mare attacks him in the night, she screams and disappears. On the following morning, the woman who is the mare is found injured or dead. She is usually the one who gave the advice about the knife in the first place. The motif with the knife is very common in Belgium.

Nightmares only Sleep Paralysis?

In all instances the nightmare phenomenon is experienced as a pressure. A heavy weight is felt on the chest or on the whole body. The victim is unable to move, breathe or scream. In my opinion, the phenomenon occurs naturally when a person wakes up during a certain part of the sleep cycle. It is well known that the human body rests in a condition of paralysis or near-paralysis during the REM or dreaming phase; this is called REM atonia. It is explained by the fact that the sleeping person would otherwise walk, move, and act according to the impulses in the dream state. The inhibition of movement prevents the person from harming himself unknowingly. I believe that a person who wakes up suddenly during his sleep and cannot move his body, is coming

straight out of an REM phase. Why the person would suddenly wake up remains a mystery.

All the nightmare concepts seem to indicate paralysis. The word 'mare' would be cognate with the Old Norse verb *merja*, which means 'to crush', related to English 'to mar'. The German terminology indicates the same. '*Druck*' in *Alpdruck* means 'push'. Even the French word for nightmare refers to pressure. The old French word *cauchier* means 'to press' and forms the first part of *cauchemar*. The traditional expression for experiencing this sudden nightly pressure is 'to be ridden by the mare'. In Dutch, the expression is *door de mare bereden*. German folklore has *Mahrreiten*.

The victim experiences a being on top of him. It means that the person lies on his back. Most folklore reports seem to indicate the same. I wonder whether this position somehow encourages this strange phenomenon. Besides REM atonia there is another experience which might shed light on the subject, and this is sleep paralysis. In these cases, the person incidentally experiences paralysis when falling asleep. According to experts, sleep paralysis occurs mostly when the person lies on his back.

How to Drive Out the Demons

In beating the nightmare, we have already mentioned the motif of the knife. But the nightmare seems to have been so common that a whole load of remedies existed to keep the demon out. One of the most fascinating techniques was to swap your shoes, or slippers, in front of the bed; the right one where the left would be and the other way around. Similarly, bricks were hung crosswise in front of the house or barn. The intention was to confuse the mare.

Verses were sung before going to bed. They are similar in wording to charms against witches. The verses ask the nightmare to count all the

blades of grass, for instance. This and similar actions keep the demons occupied all night.



***A man is hag-ridden or plagued by the mare in this illustration, 1854.
(Public Domain)***

A few more remedies are worth mentioning. One of them is the mistletoe. The plant was hung under the roof to protect against the mare. In Dutch, the mistletoe is called *maretak*, 'mare twig'. This is possibly the reason why mistletoe features in the myth of Balder's death. One day Balder wakes up from a dream which foretells his own death. Thereupon his mother attempts to protect him, but eventually Balder is killed by the mistletoe.

Another means of protection is the pentagram. We know this, because the symbol is named after the nightmare. In Dutch, the pentagram is called *marevoet*. According to a German tradition, the same symbol, the *Mahrfuss*, is applied on the threshold and doorframe of the bedroom for protection on May-Eve.



The pentagram is applied on the threshold and doorframe of the bedroom for protection. (Public Domain)

In German, the same symbol is better known as *Drudenfuss*; the Dutch equivalent being *droedenvoet*. In Belgium and Holland, the *droede* is almost never heard of. According to the German folklore, the *Drude* is explained as a night demon or elf. The word is supposed to derive from a word meaning 'to tread' and may in fact be cognate with it. It is related to Gothic *trudan* and Old Norse *troða* with the same meaning. The etymology of *Drude* conveniently ties in with the nightmare experience of pressure. Nonetheless I would like to link the word with a member of the Norse gods. The daughter of Thor is called Thrud; in Old Norse *þruðr*. Her name seems much closer to *Drude* and *droede* than the Gothic verb *trudan*. Unfortunately, her name has never been satisfactorily explained.

Thrud is a woman and a character of legend, but not much is known about her. She figures in *Alvissmal*, a poem from the Edda. In the story, Alviss, a dwarf, visits Thor's house and asks Thrud's hand. Thor is not pleased with the proposal and tries to stall the dwarf. The god is delighted when at last the sun rises, because Alviss cannot suffer sunlight. This motif occurs in folklore quite often and might indicate that Alviss and his kind only live at night. The fact that he chooses Thrud as his bride might mean that she, too, is a creature of the night. At least, dwarves were associated with elves. In Norse mythology, they were called dark elves or black elves. Analogously, the nightmare creatures in Germany were called elves. Thrud might well be the mother of a whole class of female beings who operate at night. In passing, it should be noted that the German words *Alp*, *Mahr* and *Drude* could refer to both men and women.

We have established that many folktales explain the nightmare as a projection of a woman's supernatural powers, whether intentionally or not. In spite of that, she might still be a supernatural being in origin, known as the *mara*, and of elf-kind.

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(Top image: *The Nightmare*, circa 1790 by Johann Heinrich Füssli; Deriv - Public Domain)

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A Hopi Hero's Journey: How the Snake Clan Came to Arizona

By Gary A. David



Joseph Campbell, in his classic book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* explores in depth the universal mythic narrative of the culture-hero (traditionally male) who goes forth not to conquer but ultimately to bring back some sort of aid that benefits his people. The elements of these legends are consistent in cultures all across the globe.

“The standard path of mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation—initiation—return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth. A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”



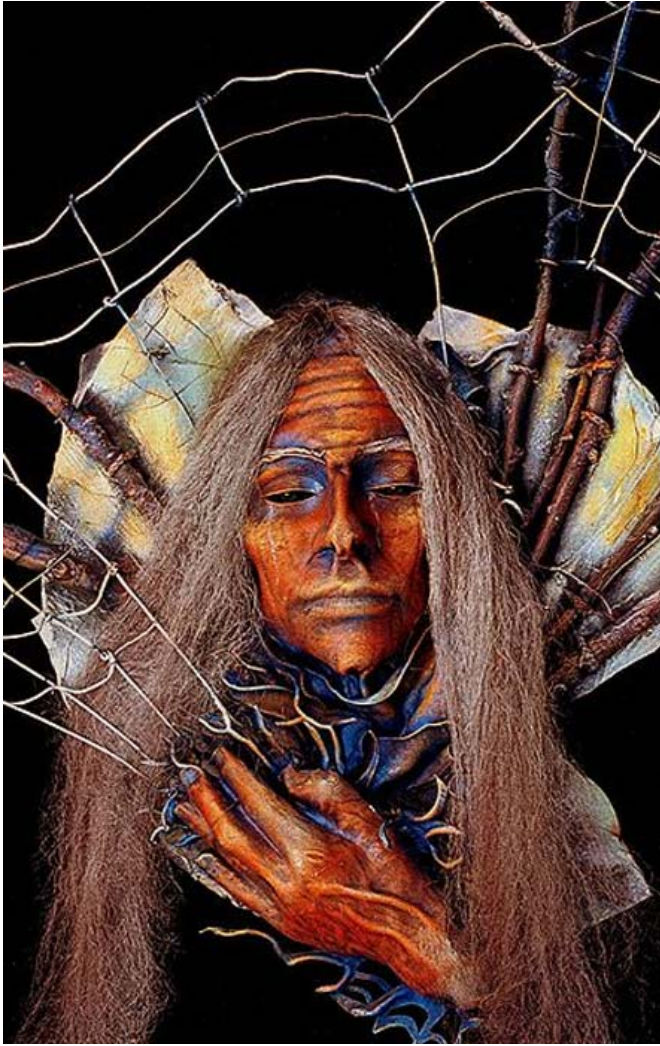
SakwaWakaKatsina (Katsina-Blue-Cow), a Hopi Kachina figure (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Snake Clan Mythology and a Hero's Journey

The Hopi clearly possess this mythological framework. The members of the Snake Clan (*Tsu'*) recount a lengthy legend of their clan's origin, which entails a trip across the sea. According to oral history, in the village of Toko'navi (near Navajo Mountain in southern Utah) lived a youth named Tiyo, whose name literally refers to an adolescent boy. This ever-pensive, curious lad was accustomed to sit on the banks of

Pisisvayu (the Colorado River) and ponder where its waters flowed. Why, he wondered, when the people's corncocks grew to only the length of a man's finger, would this precious life force simply disappear in the direction of the south? He asked if anyone knew what was at the end of the river where all those waters went. "His father said, 'No, we do not know. But in the end, it must join somewhere with Patowahkacheh, the Great Water. *Some of our grandfathers were there in ancient times* [italics added], but no one now living is familiar with all the land through which the river passes.'" Finally, the boy resolved to embark upon a journey to solve this mystery.

Inside a hollowed-out cottonwood log sealed at both ends with piñon pitch to resemble a drum, Tiyo floated downstream until he came to the great ocean. Soon he drifted to the island of Kòokyangwso'wúuti (Spider Grandmother), within whose *kiva* (or subterranean prayer chamber) he solicited her aid. "The Hopi regard Spider Woman as a major deity of their mythology, second in importance to Masau'u... [Late 19th century ethnographer and archaeologist] Jesse Walter Fewkes writes, 'She is the goddess of wisdom; she can change her form at will.'" (Masau'u is the Hopi god of the underworld, death, fire, and the earth-plane. In his book Campbell cites the Navajo version of the monomyth. The Navajo, or Dené, traditionally lived and still live in areas adjacent to the Hopi.)



Grandmother Spider or Spider Woman of Native American lore. (CC BY-SA 3.0)

In the distance lay another *kiva* on an island belonging to the Snake People. After walking between islands upon a rainbow bridge that Spider Grandmother had created, Tiyo used a special medicine she had given him to pacify, each in its turn, the following animals: a mountain lion (symbolic of the northwest), a bear (the southwest), a gray wolf (the southeast), a wildcat (the northeast), and finally a gigantic rattlesnake

(the underworld). He then descended the ladder of the *kiva* whose walls were covered with ceremonial snakeskin costumes and found a group of men with faces painted a metallic black (*yaláhahi*, specular iron). They were dressed in blue kilts, the color symbolic of the southwest (the direction of the ocean), and wore many necklaces of shells and coral beads.



Hopi Snake dancer, 1924, northern Arizona (Public Domain)

Testing his stamina, the Snake People tried to make Tiyo dizzy by offering strong “tobacco” (marijuana?), but Kòokyangwso’wúuti helped him by drawing off the smoke through—incredibly—his anus. “The young man described his journey. After that the kikmongwi [chief] said, ‘Well, you have discovered what lies at the place where the river meets the Great Water. We are Snake People. We are different from other people you know. Now we will show you something.’” These alien people then donned their snake costumes and turned into all sorts of

angry snakes—rattlesnakes, bull snakes, king snakes, etc. Among the men there were also some maidens, who likewise turned into hissing, slithering serpents. Perched behind his ear, Kòokyangwso'wúuti urged Tiyo to keep up his courage, after which the Snake People reverted to their human form and accepted him as one of their own. They then taught him the Snake Ceremony, which is still danced every other year in August on the Hopi Mesas. In addition, he took the prettiest snake maiden as his wife.



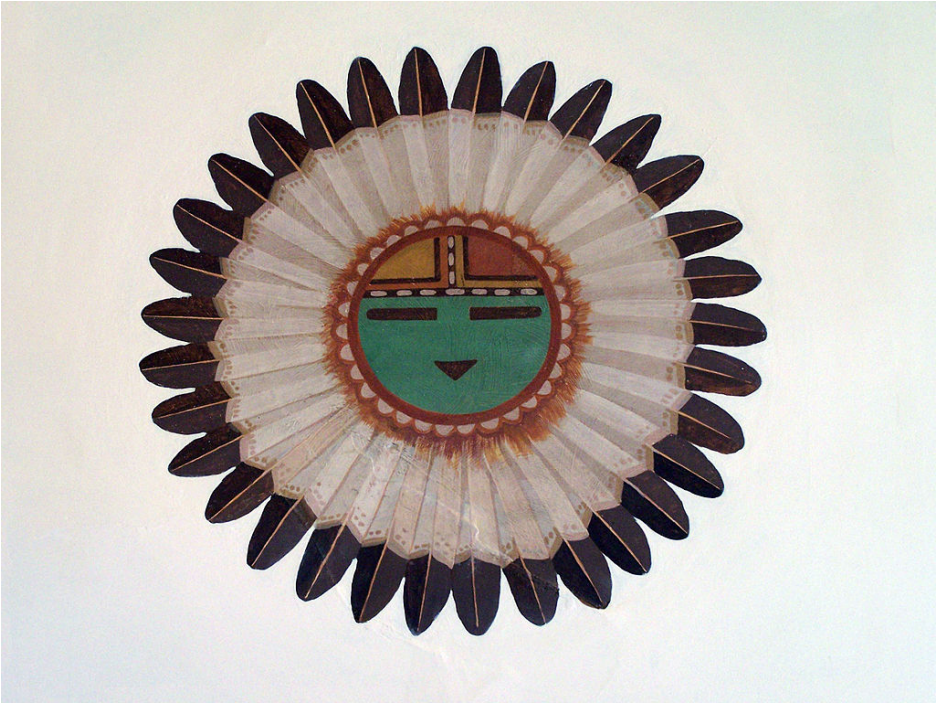
Front row, Snake dancers near foot-drum, Oraibi village, Third Mesa, 1898, next row Antelope dancers, one with cottonwood wreath, medicine bowl, and water-sprinkler. Kisi (leaves of “snake house”) in the background. (Public Domain)



Palulukang (Horned Water Serpent) emerging from pottery jar, wrestling with a Koyemsi, or Mudhead kachina clown, Hopi drawing. Kachinas are spirit messengers. (Public Domain)

Maiden and Crone, Hard Beings Woman

In other versions of the myth, Tiyo visits the island *kiva* of Hurúing'wúuti (Hard Beings Woman). During the day while Tawa (the sun) is aloft, she appears as a withered crone.



Tawa, the sun spirit and creator in Hopi mythology. (Public Domain)

But at night when he returns to this western house, she transforms into a beautiful woman. Alternate versions describe Tiyo spending the night with the lovely Hurúing'wúuti in order to win her favor, thereby receiving many coveted turquoise beads, red coral, and seashells. In the morning, however, she (as in the previous variant) reverts to a repulsive hag. "Hurúing Wuhti owned the moon, the stars, and all the hard substances, such as beads, corals, shells, etc." This statement demonstrates that the western goddess is related not only to marine shells and coral but also to lunar and sidereal "hard objects." Hopi scholar Harold Courlander believes that Hard Beings Woman and Spider Grandmother are merely variations of the same archetype, namely, Mother Earth. He goes on, however, to identify the special role of the former deity in the early maritime history of the Hopi: "Huruing Wuhti is associated with the myth that the Hopis came to their present world

by a voyage across the sea rather than through the sipapuni.” By some accounts the subterranean *Sipapuni* is the Hopi “Place of Emergence” from the previous Third World (or epoch) to the current Fourth World. Located at the bottom of Grand Canyon on the Little Colorado River, it is actually a geological feature called a travertine dome. This circular limestone structure gradually deposited by mineral waters measures about 75 feet (23 meters) in diameter and can be seen on Google Earth.



Map of travertine dome at Grand Canyon. (Source: Google Earth, 2017)

The Hero Returns

Tiyo eventually returned with his snake *mana* (maiden) to Toko’navi. “At that time only the Divided or Separated Spring (Bátki) clan [also spelled *Patki*, or Water Clan] and the Póna (a certain cactus) lived at that place, but with the arrival of this young couple a new clan, the Snake clan, had come to the village.” After the couple’s return, Tiyo’s wife gave birth to a brood of snakes, which began to bite so many Hopi children that he was forced to return to the Snake People in order to proffer them his herpetological offspring. Thereafter the woman bore only human children.



Two Hopi Indian kachina dolls (male and female), ca.1900. (Public Domain)

Later the Snake Clan migrated to Kawestima, which are the cliff dwellings known as Betatakin and Keet Seel located in the Navajo National Monument in northern Arizona. Incidentally, the name of this national monument is actually a misnomer because the Navajo neither built the two villages nor ever inhabited them. Instead the ruins belong to the ancestral Hopi known as the *Hisatsinom*, or Ancient Ones. Subsequently the Snake Clan moved to the village of Walpi on First Mesa, where they reside to this day.

This legendary oceanic voyage that led to the origin of the Snake Clan clearly exemplifies the essential monomyth of the “hero’s journey” about which Joseph Campbell has extensively written. The fact that its first two members, Tiyo and his anonymous serpent-wife, joined the Water Clan at Toko’navi village merely emphasizes their common

maritime tradition. Two other names for the Water Clan are the Houseboat Clan and the Dwelling-on-Water Clan. It is interesting to note that the so-called “serpent effigies” of the god Palulukang, the Horned or Feathered Serpent, are kept by these two clans. At Walpi, the Snake Clan was responsible; at Sichomovi also on First Mesa, the Water Clan was responsible. The Hopi Palulukang is analogous to the Mayan Kukulkán and the Aztec Quetzalcóatl.



Right: Moqui (Hopi) Snake Dance, Hualpi (Walpi) plaza, 1899. Photo by Ben Wittick. Note observers standing on top of “snake rock.” Upper-left: Walpi village in the distance, First Mesa. Lower-left: Hopi maiden with butterfly whorl hairstyle and pot.

Serpent Seafarers

In addition to Hopi legends of sailing eastward on reed rafts across the Pacific Ocean from the previous Third World, which was destroyed by a deluge, to the current Fourth World, many cultural and linguistic similarities exist between the peoples of the South Pacific and those of

the American Southwest. I will leave you with just one example. The Samoan word *sua* and the Hopi word *tsu'a* both mean “snake.” The sound and the sense are the same. Contrary to the mainstream academic paradigm, it was the collective ingenuity of the peoples of both North and South America together with the peoples of Oceania that allowed them to make landfall on distant shores in very early times. The astronomical and navigational skills possessed by these globally dispersed serpent seafarers (sometimes called the Nagas) must have been the common currency of the day.

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(Top image: Hero standing – CC BY 2.0, Tawa – Public Domain ;Deriv)

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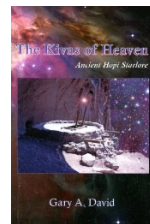
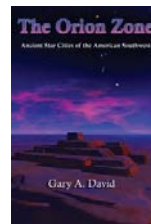
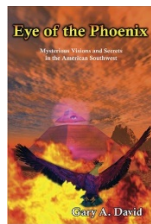
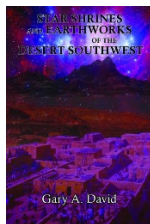
Gary A. David

Gary A. David is an author and independent researcher who has studied Southwestern archaeological ruins and rock art for nearly thirty years. His books about the Hopi and other ancestral Pueblo cultures of Arizona and New Mexico include:

- **[The Orion Zone](#) (*Ancient Star Cities of the American Southwest*)**
- **[Eye of the Phoenix](#) (*Mysterious Visions and Secrets of the American Southwest*)**
- **[The Kivas of Heaven](#) (*Ancient Hopi Starlore*)**
- **[Star Shrines and Earthworks of the Desert Southwest](#).**

His most recent book titled **[Mirrors of Orion](#)** (*Star Knowledge of the Ancient World*) was released by CreateSpace. Most books available in Kindle editions. His forthcoming book to be published in 2017 is titled ***Journey of the Serpent People: Hopi Migrations and Star Correlations.***

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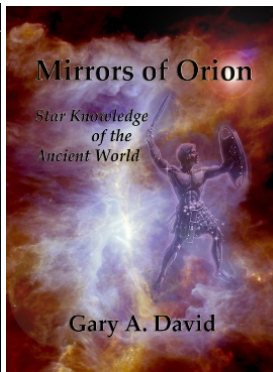
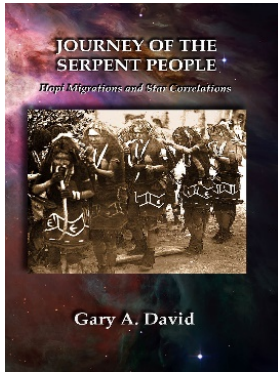


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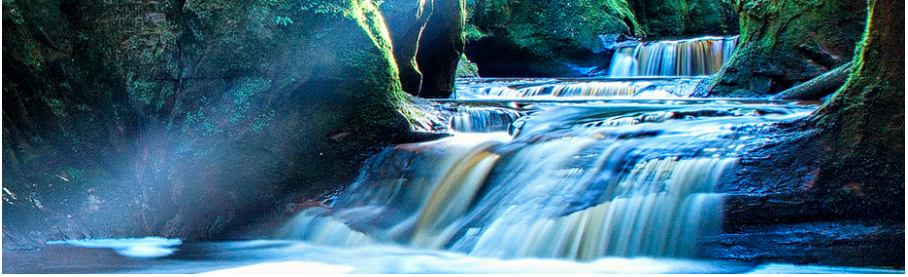
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The Secret of Long Life: Sacred Springs & Holy Wells

By Dustin Naef



The belief in sacred springs and holy waters goes far back into the earliest religious myths of humankind, and is ubiquitous across every continent. An ancient primordial connection between water and spirituality has always existed in some form.



***Ney Springs (Mount Shasta), photograph copyright Dustin Naef.
“Ruins of an old spring hidden in the wilderness around Mount
Shasta, California”.***

It’s thought that one of the earliest shrines ever built by human hands was probably a rock-cairn to mark the site of a bubbling spring. And even in our modern era, you would be hard-pressed to find a church or temple which does not have a water-shrine occupying a place of special reverence, whether it’s a fountain, a pool, a holy well, or a natural spring.



Oceanides, Gustave Dore (1860-1869). (Public Domain)

Something in the Water

The traditions of ancient religions and water cults gave birth to a vast expression of folklore, spirits, deities, and occult beliefs which are intimately connected to bodies of water; it is still widely believed that occult forces are concentrated in places where waters bubble up from

the depths of the earth, which become mirror-like windows and portals where one might glimpse something of another reality, separated from us by only the thinnest of barriers.



The Sorceress, Jan van de Velde II (1626). “The imagery of a witch’s cauldron may relate back to ancient pagan beliefs surrounding springs as being repositories of occult power and conduits to another world”. (Public Domain)

In the old countries throughout Europe, some sources of water have been venerated for untold generations, sometimes to the wonderment of modern people, as noted in the following quote by a nineteenth-century traveler:

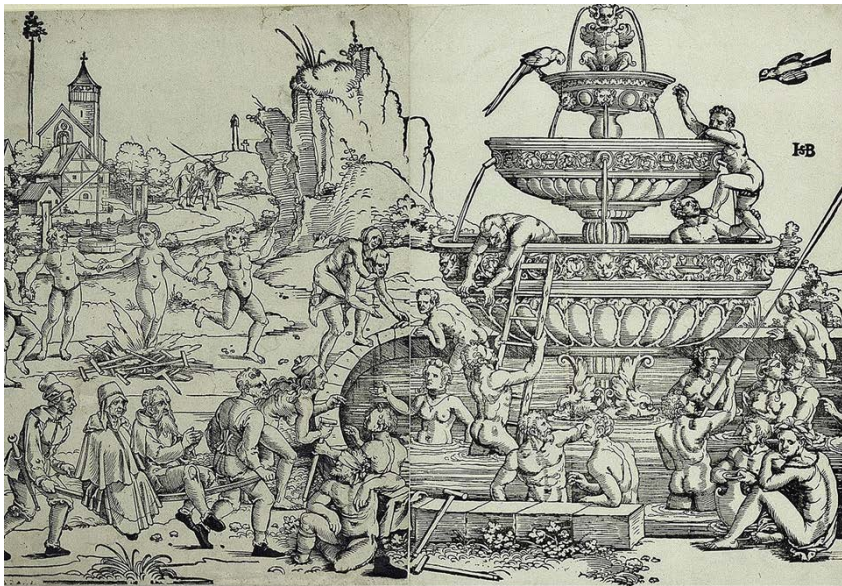
“The unnoticeable smallness of many of these consecrated wells makes their very reminiscence and still semi-sacred character all the more remarkable. The stranger in Ireland, or the Highlands of Scotland, hears rumors of a distinguished well, miles on miles

off. He thinks he will find an ancient edifice over it, or some other conspicuous adjunct. Nothing of the kind. He has been lured all that distance, over rock and bog, to see a tiny spring bubbling out of the rock, such as he may see hundreds of in a tolerable walk any day. Yet, if he searches in in old topographical authorities, he will find that the little well has ever been an important feature of the district; that century after century it has been unforgotten; and, with diligence he may perhaps trace it to some incident in the life of a Saint, dead more than 1200 years ago, whose name it bears.”



Castle Rock Well, photograph copyright Dustin Naef. “A bubbling mineral spring located along the Upper Sacramento River, south of Mount Shasta.”

The belief in supernatural powers latent in bodies of sacred waters—their curatives, rites, charms, and the lore of water-worship picked up from elders living near them—has been a preoccupation of wise men and women of every religious faith throughout history. Over the centuries, countless secret quests and lonely pilgrimages have been made in search of a lands legendary healing waters, and its redolent fountains of youth. Some of these ancient springs and wells are still in existence today, bubbling vigorously; while others have been destroyed through neglect and lay stagnant and barren, their naiads and magic depleted.



Woodcut: Hans Sebald Beham - Fountain of Youth and Bathhouse (1536). (Public Domain)

The Fountain of Youth

The poet Y.B. Yeats famously said that an old man is but a paltry thing; a tattered coat hanging upon a stick. A recent article published in Business Insider revealed that many of the world’s leading tech-billionaires are generously funding life-extension technologies in a

gambit to try to defeat death—or at least delay its onset for as long as possible. This should come as no surprise, because youth is the one thing that cannot be purchased with all the wealth in the world; and with each passing moment, a little bit more of it is taken away from us forever.

The yearning for immortality is nothing new in the annals of history and exploration, the eternal quest for the fountain of youth has been an obsession of Kings, nobles, and Rulers for thousands of years, and many oceanic voyages have been launched in search of fabled lost Edens—most often ending with much bloodshed, and the further spreading of human misery.

In the age before medical science developed, eternal life and longevity was often sought through the medium of the occult sciences, and mythic legends which hinted of the existence of rejuvenatory natural springs. These legends, however far-fetched they may seem to people today, carried the full weight of thousands of years of occult belief and religious conviction in the reality of their existence behind them.



The Fountain of Youth: Lucas Cranach the Elder (1546). (Public Domain)

During the European Age of Exploration, the Fountain of Youth became a popular artistic motif, the imagery of which was influenced by even more ancient tales. The standard idealization of the fountain is fairly consistent: old people, often carried or hobbling along on crutches, strip off their clothing and enter a pool on the left. Some of the old people, after bathing in the pool, are shown stepping out of the water on the right, glowing and youthful again.

Christopher Columbus was keenly interested in discovering the Garden of Eden during his voyages; the language of some of his writings suggests he believed himself close to finding it. And the fountain of youth also became enmeshed in the explorations of the conquistador, Juan Ponce de Leon, who may have also accompanied Columbus in his 1493 voyage to the New World, and was himself rumored to have discovered the fountain in Florida in 1513, after hearing about

mysterious local legends. It was said that the native people made regular visits to these fountains, and lived remarkably long and vigorous lives, and that a frail old man, if he bathed or drank from one of the fountains, could become so completely restored that he could resume all his manly exercises, take a new wife and beget children again.



Mount Shasta Reflected in the Lake, photograph copyright Dustin Naef.

Mount Shasta's Legendary Waters

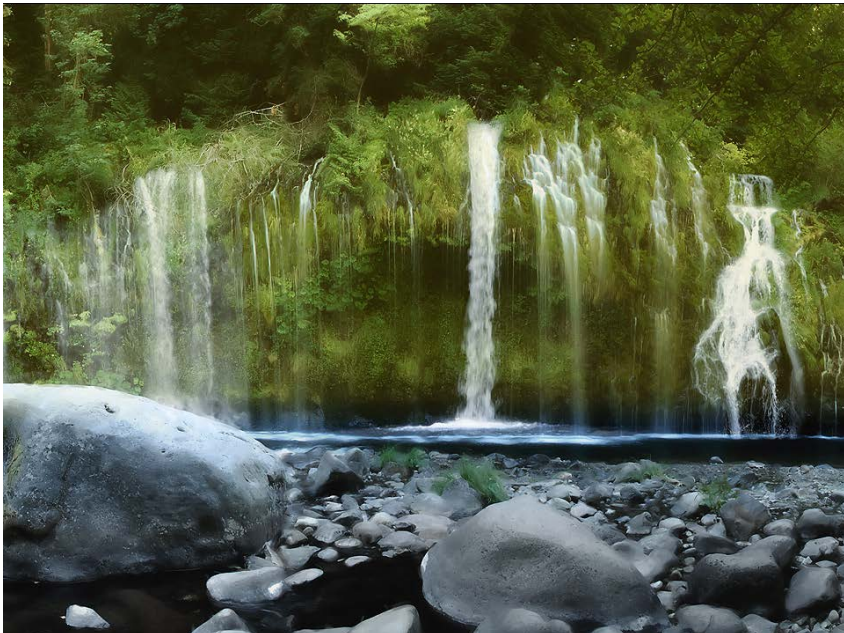
Northwestern Native Americans traditionally revere the regions great rivers, lakes, and springs as sacred and holy places. Along with the accounts of glittering rivers lined with gold which seduced miners, there were also tales about healing waters and springs which were consistent with other legends from other lands.

Some of the lore about Mount Shasta's healing waters may have first reached Euro-Americans through early fur-trappers, who explored the

territory in the decades leading up to the California Gold Rush. These early explorers kept detailed journals about the lands flora and fauna, and they collected intelligence during their interactions with different tribes who they established trading relationships with.

Much of this intelligence was later used by the U.S. military against Native Americans during the invasion of California and the Pacific Northwest. Tragically, indigenous people had no reason to fear or distrust the early explorers; and had no idea that the knowledge they shared with them about the land and their culture would later be used to betray them, and dispossess them of their way of life.

After gold, one of the most highly-prized resources to be seized from Native Americans around Mount Shasta were natural springs renowned to possess medicinal waters, which have been used by indigenous people for thousands of years. Many of these natural springs are still in existence today, and they contain different spiritual and mineral characteristics.



Mossbrae Falls, photograph copyright Dustin Naef. “Mossbrae Falls located south of Mount Shasta is a Native American sacred site whose waters attributed health and long life to those who drank from them.”

Healing Waters

Before tales of mystic Lemurians living beneath Mount Shasta came into existence, it was tales of Mount Shasta’s legendary healing waters which attracted droves of urban tourists to the area from the 1850s, who came to bathe in and partake of the waters, and spread the stories to others.

The completion of the railroad in 1887 lead to the founding of the town of Dunsmuir—south of Mount Shasta, and situated beneath a towering granitic mountain named Castle Rock—and the town quickly became famous for Castle Rock’s healing springs and waters, which from the late 1880s it bottled and sold to prestigious clientele around the world.



Shasta Springs, early historical photograph published in 1895. (Public Domain)

One of the most famous resorts of that era was called Shasta Springs, located directly above Mossbrae Falls. Its waters had been known and used for their magic and medicinal qualities since antiquity; legend credits the waterfall and springs as being created by the Great Spirit. They reside in the traditional territory of the Winnemem Wintu. The springs were venerated as an abode of good spirits and were also known as a source of powerful healing, where one would enjoy a long life and good health by drinking and bathing in the pool beneath the waterfall. A semi-crippled Freemason, Prof. Charles H. Allen, identified Shasta Springs as a “fountain of youth” and wrote glowingly about its virtues.



Boilard Engraving - Crowds of old and infirm people arrive at the fountain of youth to pay an aristocrat for the privilege to drink from

the rejuvenating waters; to the left are a group of youthful people dancing and singing, rejuvenated by the healing water.

Although most of Shasta Springs resort has fallen into ruins today, Mount Shasta's "Fountain of Youth" is still in existence, but regrettably the public is forbidden access to it. The trail leading to Shasta Springs and Mossbrae Falls resides on private property owned by the Saint Germain Foundation, who have surrounded it with chain-link fencing, security cameras, and razor wire.

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(Top image: Finnich Gorge, Scotland; Detail – CC BY 2.0)

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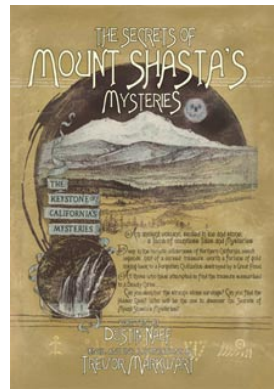
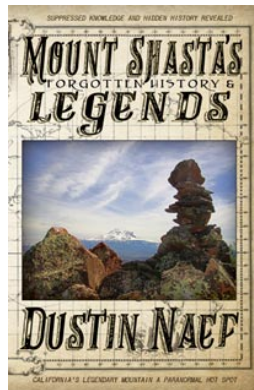


Dustin Naef

Dustin Naef is the author of two forthcoming books: *Mount Shasta's Forgotten History and Legends*, and *The Secrets of Mount Shasta's Mysteries* (2016).

He became interested in Mount Shasta's history and mystique after moving to the area over a decade ago. Years of research led him to conclude that the mountain's true legacy has never been told before in

modern times—not by historians, not by the press, and not by modern spiritualists. Very little factual history about the mountain has ever been widely published before; and he hopes that his upcoming books will prove that



California's legendary mountain is older and far more mysterious than previously imagined. His primary fields of interests are history, the occult, mysterious legends, and folklore. He has appeared on the Travel Channel in *Mysteries at the National Parks* ("The Land of the Lost"), and looks forward to participating in other venues in the future.

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Dreams of Human-Powered Flight: The Myth of Daedalus

By Adrienne Mayor



*“Once you have tasted flight,
you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned
skyward,
for there you have been, and there you will always
long to return.”*

— Anonymous (often attributed to Leonardo da Vinci)

Daedalus, the legendary inventor of ancient Greek myth, joined the court of Minos, the ruler of Crete, as the king's star engineer. Daedalus was credited with creating myriad marvels, from carpenter's tools to animated statues. It was Daedalus who designed and built the bewildering Cretan Labyrinth as a prison for Minos' monstrous son, the Minotaur. Every year, the Athenians were compelled to send fourteen young men and women to be sacrificed to the cannibal with the bull's head. But the Athenian hero Theseus managed to kill the Minotaur and escape from the twisting passages of the maze, thanks to a ball of string given to him by Princess Ariadne. It was Daedalus who gave the string to Ariadne and explained how Theseus should unwind the string as he entered the Labyrinth and then follow it back out.

Enraged by the killing of his son and Theseus's escape, King Minos imprisoned Daedalus and his young son Icarus in the Labyrinth.

Necessity, Mother of Invention

Gazing at the horizon from their prison window, Daedalus mused. If only they could simply fly away like birds! The brilliant inventor dreamed up a bold scheme to liberate himself and his son from Minos's grasp. One of the most beloved myths of classical antiquity, the tale of Daedalus and Icarus soaring aloft on wings made of feathers and wax has been recounted by storytellers and illustrated by artists over the centuries. It has also given wings to dreams of human-powered flight ever since the tale was first told.



***Daedalus making wings for himself and his son Icarus. Relief, Villa
Albani, Rome, 1912. (Public Domain)***

According to the myth, Daedalus and his son secretly collected heaps of bird feathers. Then Daedalus layered them according to size and shape. He used beeswax or glue—one of his inventions—to construct two pairs of wings for himself and his son.



Bronze Icarus fitted with wings. (Public Domain)

Daedalus warned Icarus to be careful not to fly too high, because the sun's heat might melt the wax. But the young boy was so enchanted by the amazing experience of flying, he soared too high. The sun's rays melted the wax, the feathers fluttered down, and Icarus plummeted into the Aegean Sea. The island where he fell is still called Icaria.

Legend Lives on in Art

Daedalus sorrowfully buried his son and flew west, to Italy. According to some versions of the myth, Daedalus landed at Cumae and dedicated his wings in a temple to Apollo there. It was said that he painted his life story on the temple's walls. This variant probably arose to explain ancient murals at Cumae depicting the myth of Daedalus. Most versions say that Daedalus landed in Sicily, where he was welcomed by King Cocalus, ruler of Camicus. Cocalus protected Daedalus from King Minos, who was pursuing the inventor across the Mediterranean. Settling in Sicily, Daedalus became the court engineer and builder and created another set of wondrous inventions for Cocalus.

It is interesting that the most ancient references we have to Daedalus' escape from Crete by his human-powered flight are not written, but artistic illustrations. Surprisingly, the first example, discovered in 1988, is Etruscan, not Greek. The image appears on an Etruscan engraved wine jug made in Etruria, Italy, in about 630 BC. On one side of the vase we see a winged man labeled "Taitale," which is Daedalus' name in the Etruscan language. This provides important evidence that story of Daedalus' flight must have already reached Italy by word of mouth by the seventh century BC, long before the myth was ever preserved in writing. On the other side of the vase is the mythical sorceress Medea. She is identified by her Etruscan name "Metaia." This pairing of Daedalus and Medea is unique in ancient art. It seems likely that the Etruscans connected these two mythical figures because of their wonderful bio-technical abilities. Another unusual ancient Etruscan

artifact, a beautiful golden locket for carrying tokens or perfume was made in about 475 BC. The artist engraved images of Daedalus and Icarus on each side of the vessel, labeled with their Etruscan names, Taitle and Vikare. They are wearing wings and each figure carries two tools (saw, adze, axe, and square).

More than a hundred ancient artistic images of Icarus and Daedalus are known. Many of the artists showed Daedalus at work surrounded by his tools, or making the wings. Others show him fastening the wings to Icarus and Icarus falling from the sky. The earliest Greek artistic representation of Icarus appears on a fragment of black-figure Athenian pottery painted in about 560 BC. It shows the lower half of a human figure with winged footgear, clearly labeled "Icarus." A fragment of a red-figure vase painted in about 420 BC depicts Daedalus attaching the wings to his son. Icarus is shown plummeting into the sea on another fifth century BC vase attributed to the Icarus Painter. A poignant image of Daedalus carrying his dead son Icarus appears on a fragment of a fine red-figure vase painted by the Black Fury Group, in about 390 BC.



The fall of Icarus, circa 1635. (Public Domain)

In ancient Roman times, the story was a favorite subject for artists. They illustrated the tragic myth on carved precious gems, reliefs on molded clay lamps, in bronze figurines, and painted frescoes. A large group of Roman cameos and glass gems contain scenes from the myth. Several beautiful murals preserved in the ancient ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum capture the moment of Icarus's death, with a sorrowful Daedalus hovering high above Icarus's broken body on a beach.



"The Fall of Icarus," 17th century relief. (Public Doman)

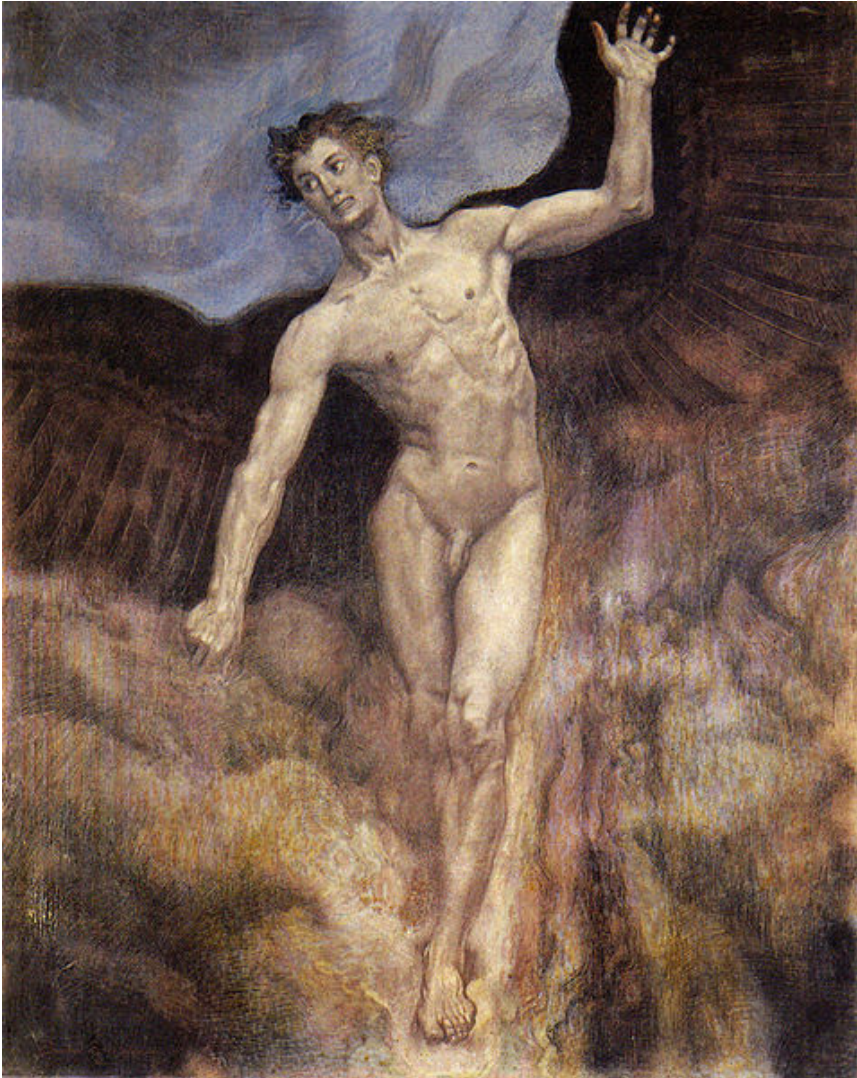
The way that the myth merges optimism and despair made it a popular allegorical subject for artists in the Middle Ages. The story of Daedalus and Icarus has become a cliché today but it is easy to appreciate how it once expressed hopes for man-made technology to augment mere human capabilities. The myth warns that the risks of exceeding human bounds can exact a high price. Icarus did not survive the experiment, so his hopes were dashed by hubris, and unanticipated consequences.

Magnificent Man and Their Flying Machines

Nevertheless, the dream of somehow flying like birds high above Earth did not die with Icarus. After all, Daedalus and Icarus did take off and they were able to fly with their fabricated bird wings. And despite the high cost of his innovation, at least Daedalus survived the flight to Sicily and he continued to invent marvels. In the second century AD, the writer Lucian of Samosata, sometimes called the first science fiction novelist, wrote a story titled "Icaro-Menippus or The Sky Man." In his popular tale, a philosopher named Menippus emulates Daedalus and makes himself a pair of wings to fly up to the Moon. Peering down on Earth, Menippus sees that human beings appear to be tiny ants rushing

about. In other ancient works, such as Aristophanes' comic plays, in Aesop's fables, and in ancient Persian legends, characters hitch rides on giant insects and cling to birds to experience flight.

A memorable flying "machine" was described in the *Alexander Romance* legends, a collection of traditions that arose about Alexander the Great after his death (fourth century BC to sixth century AD). In one legend, Alexander is consumed by the desire to explore the great unknown—the Heavens. Alexander harnesses the power of birds to allow him to fly high above Earth. The story was wildly popular in the Middle Ages. Pictures of Alexander "piloting" his fabulous flying machine appear in literally hundreds of illustrations in manuscripts, mosaics, sculptures, and tapestries from about AD 1000 to 1600. In the legend, Alexander's flying machine was powered by two huge vultures, or in some versions, four winged Griffins. The vultures or Griffins were encouraged to fly higher and higher as they tried to reach hunks of meat that Alexander in his cockpit dangled on poles above them. The fantasy idea plays on the old folklore theme goading a donkey onward using a carrot on a stick. As Alexander flies higher, the air becomes colder and colder. In this interesting detail about lower temperatures at high altitudes, this later legend differs from the archaic Greek myth in which the heat of the sun's rays intensify as Icarus rises in the sky.



Sascha Schneider, "Icarus" (1906) (Public Domain)

Alexander gazes down at the Earth, which now resembles a small ball resting in the blue bowl of the oceans, seemingly insignificant compared to the vastness of the Heavens. This story expresses Alexander's many different wishes to surpass the limits of human capacities, seeking knowledge "beyond the world." At last, satisfied with his bird's-eye perspective from the stratosphere, Alexander returns to Earth.

Lessons of Morality

As with the fall of Icarus, a "moral" was often attached to the medieval *Romance* traditions. This tale of Alexander's flying machine supposedly cautions men against the hubris or arrogance of seeking to overreach human limits. But in fact, the excitement and sheer audacity of Alexander's space adventure—to go where no human had gone before—overpowers such a message. And again, despite the great risks, this bold explorer lives to tell the tale, much like Daedalus in the Greek myth.



Icarus and Daedalus modern sculpture, Aghia Galini, Crete. (Public Domain)

The experiments by Daedalus and Alexander reflect the age-old fascination with technology's potentials, envisioned in early myth, legend, and folklore, to surpass human boundaries with audacious inventions and optimistic derring-do.



Icarus and Daedalus, by Charles Paul Landon, 1799. (Public Domain)

In the Daedalus myth, the "impossible" human-powered flight involved simply imitating birds. Daedalus and Icarus flew by flapping feathered wings that were attached to their backs and arms. Notably, in about

1500 the great thinker and inventor Leonardo da Vinci created designs for human-powered ornithopters, mechanical wing-flapping devices modeled on feathered bird and membraned bat wings. The drawings exist but there is no evidence of any test flights.



Model of one of Leonardo's flying machine designs, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2006. (Public Domain)

Flying Like Daedalus

The glorious notion of flying by human power alone has inspired numerous intrepid modern inventors to find ways to overcome the problems of aerodynamics and power-to-weight ratio. One clever suggestion was to find a way to use foot-pedaling energy. The notion was long considered to be impossible. Aeronautical engineers believed that no aircraft could be light enough to fly on such a limited source of power and yet be robust enough to carry a pilot, who of course would

have to possess extraordinary strength and endurance. One of the first attempts was a "cycleplane" built in 1923 but it only achieved 20-foot (six meter) hops. In 1977, advances in fashioning strong, lightweight materials allowed the US aeronautical engineer Paul MacCready to build a human-powered plane, flown by an amateur cyclist and hang-glider pilot. He reached the modest altitude of 10 feet and flew just over a mile.

What if Daedalus could have invented a lightweight sail-wing apparatus, something like a modern hang glider? Early modern versions had low lift-to-drag ratios, but now thanks to aluminum alloy and composite frames covered with ultra-light laminated polyester film, hang glider pilots can soar for hours on thermal updrafts at altitudes of thousands of feet, simply shifting their body weight, with little exertion, much like the dynamic soaring ability of albatrosses. It's interesting that ancient Chinese experimented with human soaring aloft with large, streamlined kites, a primitive type of uncontrolled "hang gliding." With a modern hang glider, Daedalus could have island hopped from Crete to Sicily.



The Daedalus 88 on its last flight for the NASA Dryden Flight Research Center, Edwards, California. (Public Domain)

In 1988, inspired to replicate Daedalus's flight pattern in the Aegean, the Greek Olympic cycling champion Kanellos Kanellopoulos skimmed over the Aegean Sea from the island of Crete to the island of Santorini in an ultra-light craft, *Daedalus 88*, propelled by pedals. The record-setting flight of 72 miles (116 km), at an altitude of 15-30 feet (4.5-9 meters), took four hours of intense pedaling. The experiment was sponsored by the MIT Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics. In 2012, the Icarus Cup was established by the Royal Aeronautical Society in England, to promote the sport of human-powered flight. How amazed Daedalus would be if only he could witness the continuing legacies of his epic flight to freedom.

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(Top image: *Daedalus and Icarus*; detail – Public Domain)

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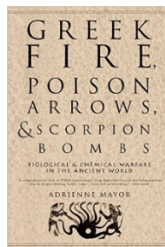
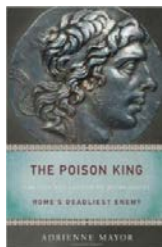
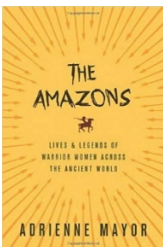
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Egyptian Demons & Magic: Exorcising Evil Spirits

By Chris 'Mogg' Morgan



Most of us are familiar with the images of the deities, kings and queens of Egypt; but for every one of the famous scenes reproduced from those times, smaller, more obscure supernatural figures are far more numerous. Many of these entities fall into a category of supernatural beings known as demons or daemons. They also have an ongoing existence after the pharaonic culture, the end of Paganism, the rise of Christianity, the coming of Islam and even into our own modern era. There is a clear continuity for these entities through time. When it comes to the old Egypt, the study of these supernatural entities is still in its infancy. Swansea university hosts a *Demon Things* database, established in 2016 and for budgetary reason has a restricted timeline of 2000-1000 BCE but already it has thousands of entries.



Egyptian scene with demons (Image via author)

Historically, the existence of something recognizable as demonic is first recorded even before written records, in images from Ice Age rock art. These entities have human bodies but with an animal head, the so-called “goat demon” being one of the earliest. Perhaps because this could also be a human wearing an animal mask, we call them demons rather than monsters. Monsters first make an appearance much later after the invention of writing and are usually human-headed but with an animal’s body. For instance, the terrifying *Pazuzu* as seen in the first few frames of the horror movie *The Exorcist*.



Bronze statuette of Pazuzu, circa 800 BC – 700 BC (CC BY-SA 3.0)

My first exploration of the role of the demon in Egyptian magic was published in my book, *Supernatural Assault in Ancient Egypt*. Here demons are discussed alongside an Egyptian exorcism cult known as “Zar”. The meaning of Zar is uncertain but is likely from a north African language transplanted into Arabic as a loan word meaning “to visit” or “a visitation”.

Magical Folk Tradition of Zar

The Zar cult is a folk magical tradition from the North African and Near Eastern world, principally Egypt and Sudan; but also Iran. It makes use of music and dance to “exorcise” intrusive spirits or Djinn. I first learnt of the cult from I. M. Lewis’s classic study of *Ecstatic Religion a study of shamanism and spirit possession*, I was also much inspired by a chapter in Jan Fries’ book on European trance technique known as *Seidr* which he found analogous to the Zar tradition. In his book he reproduced an important foundation myth, as told to anthropologist Enno Littman’s in the 1950s. A female practitioner, known as Mama (Baba for male) told him that Zar was first performed in ancient Egypt to cure a King’s daughter of a mysterious ailment.

These days Zar rites are still very much practiced in Egypt but tend to be seen as a women’s mystery. In fact, I’ve even been told that the tradition is only really accessible to women, but in as far as this is true, which it definitely isn’t in Iran or Sudan, it would be a modern development. In Egypt, the Zar tradition is entangled with “Belly”, more accurately Beladi dancing. Beladi means “village dancing” a style of dance originally practiced in Upper Egypt by men in combination with a martial arts tradition of stick fighting.



Ecstatic Dance (Image via author)



Manjour, an instrument used in Zar ritual dance. Made of goat hooves attached to a cloth, the belt rattles when shaken. (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Possessed by Ghosts

In the 1930s Hans Winkler met several spirit mediums in Egypt and was able to record their stories in a lively account as “Ghost Riders of Upper Egypt”. His principal informant was Abd al-Radi, a man regularly possessed by the ghost of his uncle from which state he passed messages to those who came to seek his help. Winkler combined this work with groundbreaking research on desert rock art, Sigils and “Characters” of Islamic sorcery, thus connecting the Islamic and pre-Islamic world of magical signs and symbols. As a Nazi, he soon returned to Germany and died in military service.



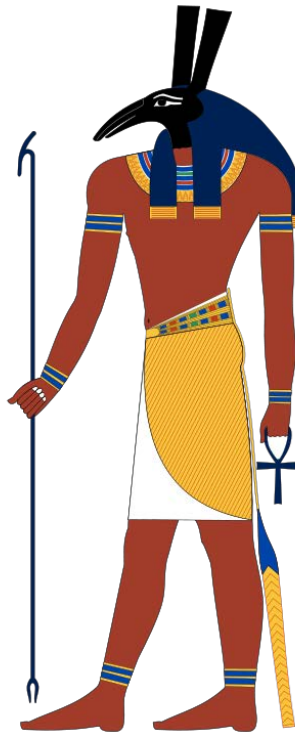
Islamic stamped amulet, 19th-century India. Executed on a very thin white paper, the amulet comprises a number of magic squares, Qur'anic verses, and divine or holy names all intended to bring good luck or provide protection to its owner. (Public Domain)

Over the last few years, several new studies have extended this work. Since the 1980s the academic study of magic has been revolutionized by practitioners and academics such as Robert Ritner. He unraveled the details of Ancient Egyptian demonology and showed how it eventually emerged as the driving force of all Egyptian magic.

Gods and Their Demonic Emissaries

The god Seth or Set is often advanced as the archetype of the demonic entity and leader of the demonic horde. Seth's "trickster nature" is well-

known, but many of his “ambiguous qualities can be shared by other gods.” So, for example, in what is arguable the world’s oldest dramatic text, *The Contendings of Horus & Seth*, the otherwise good god Osiris threatens a demonic attack against the other gods in a celestial tribunal if they do not hurry and make a decision! The lioness goddess Sekhmet can also bring disease, being responsible for the annual epidemics of plague to strike Egypt in the dangerous interregnum between the old year and the new.



Set, an ancient Egyptian deity. (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Those who succumbed were struck down by one of her seven deadly arrows often personified as demonic emissaries. Demons such as Hatayw, Shamayw and Akhw are common names in the Egyptian language. Hatayw is often translated as ‘Knife bearers’, ‘murderers’, ‘night spirits’. In the Late Egyptian language, the term is shortened first

to Hawet, then Demotic Hayet, finally Coptic Shayet all meaning 'inspiration', 'exorcism', 'doom', 'fate', 'fury', or 'curse', depending on the context. Shamayw are 'wandering demons'. Akhw variously as the 'undead', 'transfigured dead', 'ghosts,' rather like vampires. So perhaps Anne Rice's fictional placement of the original vampire myth in ancient Egypt does have some basis in the mythology.



Ram-headed demon, hands outstretch probably to hold two snakes. From a royal tomb in the Valley of the Kings, Thebes, Egypt. End of the 18th Dynasty, around 1325 BC. (Jon Bodsworth/Public Domain)

In the final millennial of ancient Egyptian history these demons became protectors in personal names such as Pa-na-hatayw or Nas-na-hatayw (both meaning “he of the slaughtering demons”). In Ptolemaic Thebes there was a full-blown cult of the Hatayw (genies) that had its own dedicated prophet or Hem-neter. Later still one finds the cult of syncretic deity Tutu (twtw), originally an oases god who rose to national popularity in Egypt. Tutu’s name means “image” of the “collectivity” of disease-bringing demons!

Horrible Plague-Bringers

Magic often involves interactions with disease entities, supernatural or divine personifications of terrible plagues or smallpox. Late classical cultures of Hindu Tantra and Kaula have the same deeply ambiguous, “daemonic” goddesses. This is a clear example of where one fights fire with fire. So although “the Egyptians did not live in terror of their gods’ capricious whims nor was Egyptian theology fixated on the vindictive or jealous nature of a god in the manner of Genesis 20:5,” even so healing spells often paired demons and gods together as possible causes of disease.

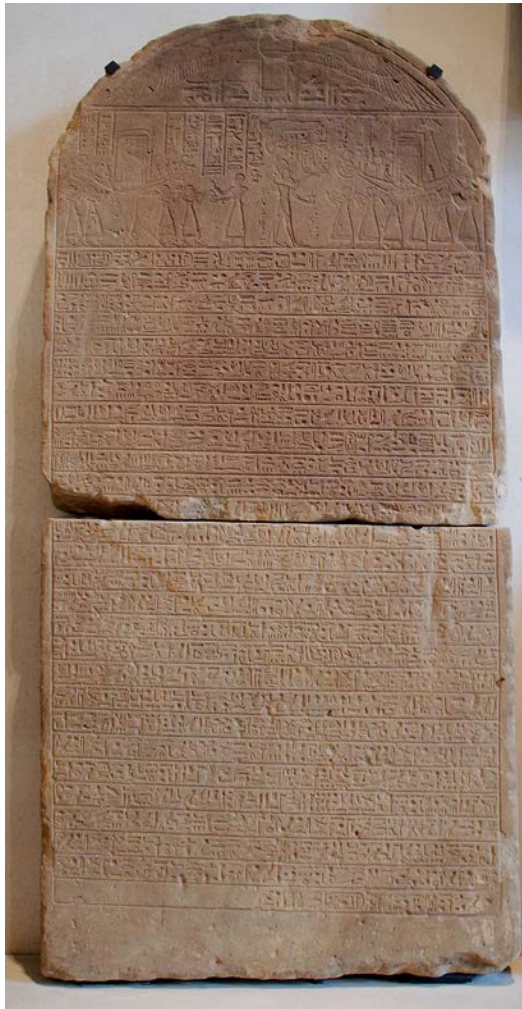


Illustration of the Biblical 'Fifth Plague of Egypt'. (Public Domain)

The late Egyptian tale or Report of Wenamon has an episode in which Hatayw is translated as 'frenzied', and used in a significant way to mean becoming possessed by a spirit, which then issues instructions to Wenamon to flee the city:

"when he sacrificed to his gods...the god seized one of his noble youths, [a medium] making him frenzied, so that he said: "Bring [the god] hither! Bring the messenger of Amon who hath him. Send him and let him go." Now, when the frenzied youth continued in frenzy during this night, I found a ship bound for Egypt, and I loaded all my belongings into it. I waited for the darkness, saying: "When it descends, I will embark the god also, in order that no other eye may see him."

Hatayw is also used in the account of the Bentresh Stela, a monumental inscription of Persian times although falsely ascribed to Ramesses II, presumably to give it extra clout. Evoking the name of a famous ancestor is standard practice in magical texts, Solomon being the most widespread example; see for example the pseudo-eponymous *Testament of Solomon*. It serves to give extra authority, that those hearing the contents, including spirits, will not risk contradicting—just in case.



The Bentresh Stela (CC BY 3.0)

The Possessed Princess

This stele contains a long account of the relationship between Great King Ramesses and the distant principedom of Bakhtan, perhaps Bactria on the Pakistan/Afghan border. After a successful diplomatic exchange between the two kingdoms, they cement the relationship with a marriage of the Bactrian prince's sister, who becomes one of Ramesses many royal wives. Years later, news arrives from the young queen's homeland that a mysterious malady had seized the body of her younger sister Bentresh who is possessed by a spirit called an *Akhw*.

Ramesses summons priests from the Theban *House of Life* attached to the temple of the moon god Khonsu, experts in magic and demonology. One is dispatched to Bactria to investigate and reports that the princess Bentresh is indeed possessed by a spirit and that he is an enemy whom he can defeat, although the priest first needs a special statue to finish the job. This kind of image-magic involving statues is the bread and butter of ancient sorcery. A statue representing a special form of the moon god called "Khonsu-who-determines-fate" is duly dispatched from the temple to Bactria.



Khonsu, an ancient Egyptian god depicted as a mummiform child with a moon disk on his head. (CC BY-SA 4.0)

After a very long journey the “god” arrives and preparation are made for a magical protection to cure the stricken princess. Then the spirit speaks to Khonsu, saying: “welcome in peace, great god, who expels disease demons! Bactria is your home, its people are your servants, and I am your servant! I shall go to the place from which I came, so as to set

your heart at rest about that which you came for. May your majesty command to make a feast day with me and the prince of Bactria.” Then the ‘god’ *motioned* approval to his priest, saying let the prince of Bactria make a great offering before this spirit.

While all this was happening the prince and his soldiers were very frightened, but they did what was required, organized a great feast for the entire day and at the end of it the spirit departed and the princess was cured. The technique of animating statues with divine entities is a core technique of Egyptian magical practice. The way the statue indicates its desire usually involves some kind of forward or backward movement, rocking or change of position.

How to Exorcise Demons: Say the Magic Word

The story is remarkable similar to the foundation myth of the modern day Zar cult as told to Enno Littman in the 1930s! It again shows that the “exorcism” in antique magic does not involve violent expulsion of a spirit, at least not as the preferred option. “Exorcism” is much more of a dialogue or transaction, which in this instance ends in a wild party at which all participants, including the sick person, undoubtedly had fun.

Both texts, the Voyage of Wenamun and the Bentresh Stella use a similar technical magical word for the process of expelling the demon. This is the Hatayw – which has connotations of frenzied fury but also ecstasy leading to catharsis. It can be a power the magician casts or throws at a hostile entity, or a power that possesses the magician bestowing the ability to conjure and prophesize. From earliest times in the Old Kingdom it denoted a class of disease entities but later, in the twilight of Egyptian culture, it meant the magician’s power to enchant and conjure. It is from this base that the technique passed westwards into the grimoire traditions of Europe and eastwards to fuse with the religious impulse that in about the eighth to ninth century became Kaula and Tantra.

Demonology may well be making a comeback in our time as a complimentary therapy, an older version of the talking cure perhaps. Some research shows that Christianity's "Manichean" approach to demons may be bad for one's mental health. The ancient documents above demonstrate a more nuanced approach to a demonic reality, so the jury is still out as to whether this had a positive or negative effect on the ancient mind.

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(Top image: Bronze head of Pazuzu, 900-612 BC – Public Domain; Detail)

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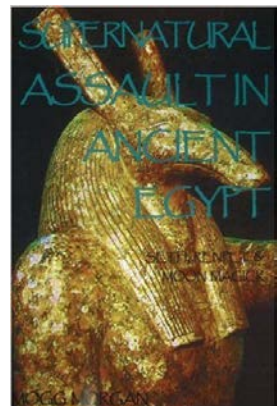
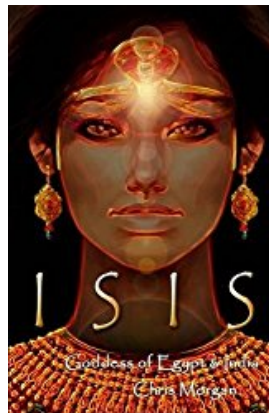
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Chris 'Mogg' Morgan has guest contributed fascinating articles to [Ancient Origins Premium](#).

From Saxon Sirens to Sacred Orchards: The Modern Traditions and Pagan Origins of Wassailing

By Charles Christian



Every January, in parts of rural England, people still gather to celebrate Wassailing, a tradition with distinctly Pagan origins intended to bless the coming year's apple crops and protect orchards from evil spirits. It's an intriguing part of the ongoing connection between the present day and folklore but the roots of Wassailing stretch back even further. Back to the time when the Roman Empire's hold on their province of Britannia was collapsing and how, in the years before King Arthur, a Saxon princess seduced a British king and opened the way to an invasion that changed the country forever!

Wassailing Today

Wassailing can be a confusing concept as it actually applies to two separate traditions: the house-visiting wassail and the orchard-visiting wassail. The house-visiting wassail was the pre-Christmas/Yuletide practice of people going from door-to-door in a village singing songs in exchange for food, or a few coins and, ideally, the offer of a drink (usually mulled cider) from the wassail bowl.

Some of you may recall the Christmas carol...

*Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green,*

Which also includes the lines:

*We are not daily beggars who beg from door to door
But we are friendly neighbors whom you've seen before.*



A pot of wassail (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Not surprisingly, in bygone days the local wealthy farmers and lords of the manor were the prime targets for visits by wassailers although if they refused to donate anything or were felt to have been stingy, they risked being abused or even having their property vandalized, in much the same way disgruntled Halloween “trick or treaters” might egg someone’s house.

However, during the Victorian era (the Victorians were great ones for sanitizing old customs, particularly those that could get out of hand)

Yuletide wassailing gave way to the more genteel style of “caroling” (or carol singing) we have today.



Wassailing revelers (Public Domain)

And then there is the orchard-visiting wassail. This usually takes place on either Twelfth Night (in the UK the 5th of January) or on Old Twelfth Night (or “Old Twelvey”) on the 17th January, which is when Twelfth Night would have taken place before the current Gregorian Calendar was introduced in 1752. (Yes, over 260 years later these things still matter in the UK.) To add to the confusion, in some areas orchard wassailing takes place on Plough Monday (the first Monday after Twelfth Night and the traditional resumption of agricultural work after the Christmas break). And, this being the modern family-friendly world, in reality the festivities now frequently take place on the nearest Saturday!

The nature of the festivities varies from location to location, as do the numbers attending, varying from dozens to hundreds in some instances. The hot-spots for celebrations are the traditional apple growing areas

of the West of England (Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire), along with Kent, and East Anglia (Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex). In fact, the oldest recorded mention of apple wassailing took place at Fordwich, Kent, in AD 1585.

Wassailing involves music, singing, cider drinking, bonfires, and varieties of “mumming” (including performances by “Molly Men”, “Morris Dancers”, and/or traditional plays.) However, the core element common to all orchard wassailing is the ritual of waking up the spirits of the apple trees from their winter dormancy for the new growing season, while simultaneously scaring away any evil spirits or witches that might blight a good harvest of fruit the following autumn.



Wassailing at the orchard (Public Domain)

Proceedings are led by a wassail king and queen, with the wassail queen first “dressing” a favorite apple tree by tying either ribbons or strips of colored cloth onto its branches along with cake or toasted bread soaked in cider or “wassail” (mulled cider) as a gift to the tree spirits and to

show appreciation for the fruits of the previous year. In some areas, the toast and ribbons are hung on the branches of a sapling rather than a mature tree and there is a suggestion the toast was originally to attract the birds that would help pollinate the apple blossom.



Tree decorated with bread and ribbon (Via author)

The wassail king will then lead the crowd in chanting the following incantation, there are widespread regional variations however this one dates from 1791:

*Here's to thee, old apple tree
That blooms well, bears well.
We all come to wassail thee!*

Hats full, caps full
Three bushel sacks full
A little heap under the stairs
And my pockets full too!
Hip! Hip! Hooray!

Everyone drinks a toast to the health of the apple tree – English rural customs really do involve a lot of cider drinking. (Note, this is hard cider, the alcoholic drink we are talking about, not apple juice. In fact, the UK has the world’s highest per capita consumption of cider, which is why holding a wassail on a Saturday night is popular as everyone can sleep off their hangovers the following day.) Then, as the wassail king pours cider on the tree’s roots, everyone else dances around the tree in a circle making as much noise as possible (to wake up the sleeping tree spirits, as well as scare off the evil spirits) by shouting, singing, stamping their feet, banging drums if they have them, banging pots and pans if they don’t, until finally the “gunsmen” end the ritual by firing a volley of shots into the air just to disperse any lingering witches.



Gunsmen scared off ‘witches’ by firing into the night. (Public Domain)

Today, the gunmen will be local farmers firing off shotguns but members of military re-enactment groups firing “black powder” muskets are a popular alternative. Another recent innovation – apple wassailing almost died out in the mid-20th century but has made a popular comeback in recent years – is for children to dress in scary costumes (yes, an opportunity to re-use those Halloween costumes) to frighten the bad spirits away.

It is all distinctly non-Christian in tone, with a strong element of sympathetic magic involved – one early 20th century anthropologist even suggested it was more like tree worship, with the cider representing the life-giving “blood” of the sacred apple orchards. And, the fact it takes place at around the same time as so many midwinter turn-of-the year/turn-of-the seasons celebrations only underlines the fundamentally pagan origins of orchard wassailing.



A Green Man toasts the health during wassailing tradition (CC BY-SA 2.0)

That said, most people attending a modern wassailing are only there for the entertainment nevertheless many go away pondering two questions: why is cider apple growing so important? And, what does the word “wassail” mean anyway?

The Wassail Roots

The first question is easy to answer: before reliable, fresh, clean water supplies were widely available in rural areas, it was more convenient (and much safer) to take a jug of cider with you out to the fields for refreshment while you were doing manual labor than it was to drink water. In 1841, 22 percent of England’s workforce were employed in agriculture (compared with just one percent today) so that was a lot of thirsty throats to slake with cider.

As for the answer to the second question, this takes us into the realms of early English history. The Old English phrase “was hael” meant “be

hale,” “be in good health” or “be fortunate” and, while originally used as a simple salute or greeting, it very quickly developed into a drinking formula where one person would say “was hail” and the other reply “drink hail”. By the eighth century, the word was so well-known that it appeared in the epic poem “*Beowulf*” ...

*The rider sleepeth,
the hero, far-hidden; no harp resounds,
in the courts no wassail, as once was heard.*

It is also reported that on the dawn of the Battle of Hastings in AD 1066, the Saxons toasted each other with shouts of wassail before they marched off to fight the Normans.

*Rejoice and wassail
Pass the bottle and drink healthy
Drink backwards and drink to me
Drink half and drink empty.*



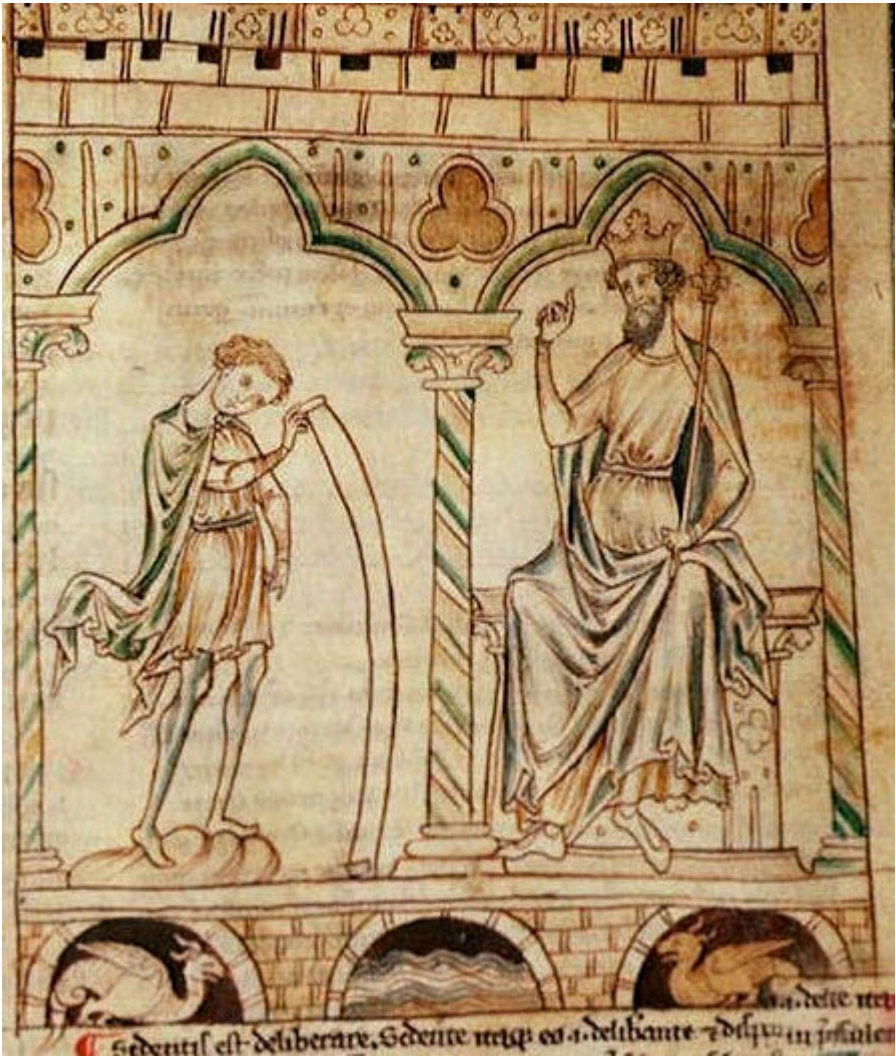
Post-medieval miniature tankard: Cast pewter ‘toy’ loving cup or wassail bowl with casting seams below the handles and across the base of cup. (The Portable Antiquities Scheme/ The Trustees of the British Museum)

However, tradition tells that the very first occurrence of the use on the word wassail in England dates back to AD 449, when the Roman Empire’s hold on its province of Britannia had collapsed.

Warlord Vortigern, The Userper King of the Britons

The rot had set in from as early as AD 383 when Magnus Maximus, a Roman general stationed in Britain, had moved his troops to Gaul in what would prove to be an unsuccessful attempt to seize the imperial throne in Rome. In the years that followed, more legions departed the island, either to reinforce the defenses of Italy or in further imperial power struggles. The culmination came in AD 410 when the Emperor Honorius wrote to the provinces Roman cities telling them they were now on their own and would have to organize their own defenses.

Into the power vacuum stepped local warlords and, by around AD 425, a shadowy character call Vortigern had established himself as the “King of the Britons” – this historian Gildas, writing less than a century later, described Vortigern as “that proud usurper”. (A later chronicler was even less flattering, calling him “a man calculated neither for the field nor the council, but wholly given up to the lusts of the flesh, the slave of every vice: a character of insatiable avarice, ungovernable pride, and polluted by his lust.”) In 447, Vortigern invited a group of “fierce and impious” Saxon mercenaries led by two brothers – Hengist and Horsa – to help him fight the Picts, who were invading Britain from north of Hadrian’s Wall.



Merlin reads his prophecies to King Vortigern. (Public Domain)

In return for their services, the Saxons (technically they were Jutes from Jutland) were granted the Isle of Thanet (at the eastern corner of what is now the English county of Kent and then still an island) as their own territory. The Saxons duly fought for Vortigern and invited more of their fellow countryman to join them, swelling the numbers of the Thanet colony. (There is a suggestion that Vortigern had formed treaty of “foederati” with the Saxons, a late Roman political practice of settling

allied barbarian peoples within the boundaries of the empire to furnish troops to aid the defense of the empire.)

Not surprisingly, the growing number of Saxons coming into Kent concerned Vortigern, who suggested that it might be time for the Saxons to now go home. However, in 449 Hengist and Horsa, joined by more Saxons from the Continent including Hengest's beautiful daughter, the Lady Rowena, invited Vortigern to a feast to celebrate their friendship.

It was at this fateful feast that Rowena (or Ronwen, the spelling differs) approached King Vortigern with a wassail bowl, greeted the king with the salute "wassail", drank from it – and then past it to Vortigern to drink from. And so the tradition of wassailing began – except the consequences were far more momentous than just a new drinking challenge.



***Meeting of Vortigern and Rowena painted by William Hamilton
(Public Domain)***



Rowena wassails King Vortigern. (Public Domain)

Vortigern became obsessed with Rowena, eventually taking her for his wife – much to the annoyance of his existing wife and his daughter, who was also his mistress. (Later chroniclers depicted Rowena as a brazen temptress who seduced Vortigern.) As part of the wedding settlement, he gave Hengist and Horsa the whole kingdom of Kent – much to the

annoyance of the existing King of Kent. And generally opened the way to the Saxons gaining more and more power.

Eventually war broke out between the Britons, led by Vortigern's sons, and the Saxons, with Vortigern reduced to a puppet monarch (some accounts say he was a prisoner of the Saxons) in the invidious position of being married to the daughter of his nation's enemy. In the fighting that followed, Vortigern's two sons were killed, as was Horsa, and, by 455, Vortigern was holed up, along with his many wives, in a fortress in North Wales.

There, they were besieged by two British leaders who had returned from exile in Brittany (France), namely Ambrosius Aurelinus and his brother Uther Pendragon (better known to history as the father of King Arthur), the fortress was set alight – one chronicle says fire fell from Heaven and engulfed the castle – and everyone inside was burned to death.

In a neat historical twist, Ambrosius and Uther are said to have been the sons of Constans, another general with ambitions to seize the imperial throne in Rome but who had been killed as a result of Vortigern's treachery.

As for Hengist, he continued to rule Kent until his death in AD 488 and sired a dynasty of Kentish kings. To this day, the emblem of Kent is a white horse (hengist is Old English for stallion) on a red background, said to be Hengist original battle flag.

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(Top image: Wassailing revelers at night – CC BY-SA 2.0)

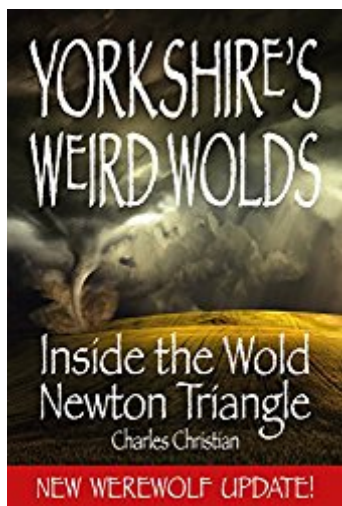
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In 2012 he started his own Science Fiction & Fantasy blog, *Urban Fantasist*, the speculative fiction genre where the weird meets the mundane in a "what if..." world that is almost (but only almost) normal. It has grown quickly and has now expanded to cover sci fi, fantasy, paranormal and horror. www.urbanfantasist.com

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The Giants of Ancient Albion & the Legendary Founding of Prehistoric Britain

By Hugh Newman



Giants are at the heart of national folklore concerning the founding of Britain, and archaic traditions state they have inhabited the country since deep antiquity. The reality of giants existing in prehistoric times is currently being researched for a new book called *Giants of Stonehenge and Ancient Britain* by Hugh Newman and Jim Vieira, the authors of *Giants On Record: America's Hidden History, Secrets in the Mounds and the Smithsonian Files* (2015). North America has many legends of the "Tall Ones," but it is on this small island where it probably all began, and we are not just talking about creation myths or fanciful children's stories, but something, well, bigger! This article investigates not only the origins of Britain. It also uncovers a lost legacy of extremely tall and powerful individuals who once ruled this part of the world.

Prehistoric giant king



Merlin being assisted by a giant at Stonehenge, circa 1150 AD (Public Domain)

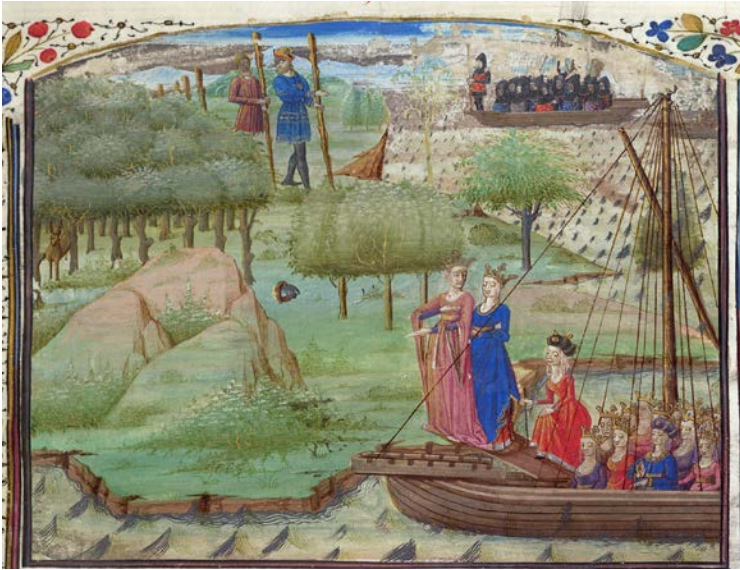
The earliest traditions agree that the first inhabitants of Britain were of the tall persuasion. Some say they were descendants of Noah's son Ham, and came from Africa about 4000 years ago. Other versions state that Noah's son Japheth, had arrived even earlier. Noah's lineage is often said to be giants. Britain's oldest acknowledged name is thought to be taken from a prehistoric giant king called 'Albion' who made his way to the island after being banished from his homeland of Greece. "He was begotten by the sea-god whom the Greeks called Poseidon, the Romans Neptune." In *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, by Raphael Holinshed, Albion and the giants were said to have gradually consolidated their position in Britain, ruling the land for hundreds or possibly thousands of years.

Albion Versus Hercules

After a long reign, Albion went to the south of France (Called Gaul at the time) to help his army defeat Hercules. To ensure winning, Hercules summoned his father Zeus and a shower of stones fell from the sky. These were used as weapons against Albion and he was defeated. However, the giant race of Britain continued for hundreds more years, although their numbers decreased and ended up at southwestern tip of Cornwall, until the arrival of Brutus after the Trojan wars. However, Britain's original name could also be from a Greek giantess called 'Albina':

"The Chronicles of Britain, written by John de Wavrin between 1445 and 1455, relate that in the time of Jahir, the third judge of Israel after Joshua, Lady Albine and her sisters came to, and settled in, an island which they named Albion after her, and which afterwards got the name of Britain. While they were living there the devil assumed the shape of a man, and dwelt among the wicked women, and by they had issue great and terrible giants and giantesses, who afterwards much increased and multiplied, and occupied the land for a long time, namely, until the arrival of Brutus, who conquered them."

Lady Albina



***Albina and other daughters of Diodicias (front). Two giants of Albion are in the background, encountered by a ship carrying Brutus and his men. French Prose Brut, British Library Royal 19 C IX, 1450-1475
(Public Domain)***

The story of Albina has variations. One version says she was taller than average, so had 'giant genes'. Her father Diocletian was either a Roman Emperor or possibly the King of Syria. Most versions agree that her father had thirty-three wicked daughters, but he managed to find thirty-three husbands to curb their unruly ways. The daughters were displeased and under the leadership of their eldest sister Alba (also Albina, or Albine) they plotted to cut the throats of their husbands as they slept.

"For this crime they were set adrift in a boat with half a year's rations, and after a long and dreadful journey they arrived at a great island that came to be named Albion, after the eldest. Here they stayed, and with the assistance of demons they populated the wild, windswept islands with a race of giants."

“Assistance” really meant, “*mated with*” and with their offspring a new ruling giant elite were founded. These giants are evidenced in the story by huge bones that were said to be unearthed in the country during the 1400s. This echoes the story of the Grigori (or Watchers) of the Bible, who mated with human women and birthed the mighty Nephilim giants, who have remarkably similar traits to their British counterparts.

History of the Kings of Britain

Geoffrey of Monmouth’s influential 12th century *Historia Regum Britanniae (History of the Kings of Britain)* has caused one of the biggest controversies regarding the founding of Britain. Thousands of years after the giants had populated the island, Brutus and other warriors fleeing the Trojan wars landed on the coast of Albion and legend states that the modern name of Britain comes from Brutus. Geoffrey asserts that he translated the *Historia* into Latin (in about 1136) from “*a very ancient book in the British tongue,*” that was loaned to him by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford. What this book was, has had scholars debating for centuries, but it could have been the *Historia Brittonum (History of the Britons)* from the ninth century, written by Nennius, a monk from Bangor, Wales. This is likely, as he covered many Arthurian myths, including the giants of ancient Albion. An important section of Geoffrey’s text has Brutus and his men realizing that Albion was already partly populated by unexpectedly tall foes: “It was uninhabited except for a few giants.... they drove the giants whom they had discovered into the caves in the mountains.”

After scaring off the giants and launching attacks on the titans, the land was then divided up and Corineus was given the southwest area of Cornwall to rule, named after the great warrior.

“Corineus experienced great pleasure from wrestling with the giants, of whom there were far more there

than in any of the districts which had been distributed among his comrades. Among the others there was a particularly repulsive one, called Gogmagog, who was twelve feet tall."

Attack of the Giants!

Other chroniclers state that he was in fact twelve cubits tall, so this would have made him 18 feet (5.5 meters) tall. Gogmagog was described as being so strong that he could uproot an oak tree and shake it like a hazel wand. Anyway, the ferocious giant attacked Corineus' camp with twenty of his kin. This turned into an all-out battle and Corineus and his men called on their local allies and eventually defeated them in a bloody conflict. Brutus chose to keep one of the giants alive, as he wanted to witness a wrestling match between Gogmagog and Corineus. During the tightly fought match, Gogmagog broke three of Corineus' ribs, and he was so enraged, he hoisted Gogmagog up on his shoulders with superhuman strength and ran to the cliff where he threw him off to his death. His body smashed into many pieces after hitting sharp rocks and stained the water red, that "*was so discolored with his blood as to continue tinged with it for a long time.*"

The cliff from which he was thrown became known as *Langnagog* or 'The Giants Leap'. It was on Plymouth Hoe that became the legendary place that the wrestling occurred because it was recorded in 1486 that a giant turf-cut figure was carved depicting two figures, one of them being Gogmagog.

Gog and Magog



Artist's impression of what the chalk-hill figures on Plymouth Hoe may have looked like. (Image via Author)

Wherever it was, the names of Gog and Magog first appear in the Hebrew Bible with reference to Magog, son of Japheth in the Book of Genesis, then Gog, the king of Magog, appears in the Old Testament in Ezekiel (38:2) as the instigator of a terrible battle. Gog was referred to as being a person and Magog was the land he was from. Similar stories are echoed in the Book of Revelation and the Qur'an. The tradition is sparse and confused as Gog and Magog are presented as men, supernatural beings (giants and demons), national groups or lands, and appear widely in other folklore and mythology. For example, Gogmagog and Gogmaegot are identified with giants in Spencer's *Faerie Queen* (1590) and in the medieval legends of Alexander. The names even reached Cambridge in Eastern England where the hilly area became known as the 'Gog Magog Hills', where interestingly, some taller than average skeletons were unearthed in the 1800s.

After defeating the giants, Brutus travelled all over the country to find a suitable spot to rule from. He decided on the River Thames and founded

the city of *Troia Nova*, or *New Troy*, which became *Trinovantum*, we now know as London, with his captured giant in tow.

Another, later version of the story describes how the giants Gog and Magog were two people and were taken prisoners and forced to become porters at the Royal Palace, now the London Guildhall. The effigies of Gog and Magog have remained at the Guildhall since the reign of Henry V. In *The Gigantick History of the Two Famous Giants of Guildhall* (1741) it proclaims that Gogmagog and Corineus were in fact two giants:

“Corineus and Gogmagog were two brave giants who richly valued their honour and exerted their whole strength and force in the defence of their liberty and country; so the City of London, by placing these, their representatives in their Guildhall, emblematically declare, that they will, like mighty giants defend the honour of their country and liberties of this their City; which excels all others, as much as those huge giants exceed in stature the common bulk of mankind.”



Gog and Magog being paraded through London in the Lord Mayor's Show every November. (Image via author)

The defeat of Gogmagog by Corineus was the beginning of the end for the remaining giants, and the few that remained turned up again the tales of *Jack-the-Giant-Killer* and *Cormoran* (mainly based in Cornwall), while others were said to have fled to Dartmoor and the mountains of Wales.

Jack the Giant Killer

Before we leave the confines of Cornwall, the stories of *Jack-the-Giant-Killer* are worthy of a mention. The violent chronicles of Britain's most famous giant hunter stretch far back into prehistory, to the times when the giants and humans were attempting to co-exist, before the arrival of Brutus. Mainly based in Cornwall, his exploits lingered across the whole of Britain. He was presented as a clever young man who often outwitted his gargantuan foes.



Jack kills Cormoran with a pick-axe. (Public Domain)

The most famous story is that he defeated the terrible Cormoran on St Michael's Mount. By blowing a horn loudly, he caused the giant to come rushing out, but it fell into a deep pit that Jack had prepared and covered with twigs. Cormoran was then hacked to death by Jack. The other stories continue in this vein, and it was only when the printing press was developed in the Victorian age that the story was toned down, and it transformed into the children's classic *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Even though there are thousands of legends of giants throughout Britain, there are a surprising amount of accounts of large and powerful people in the archaeological and historical record. Their physical strength and stature became exaggerated as their deeds pass into legend, but in a strange twist, it is often in the same locations that actual

giant skeletons and bones were reportedly unearthed. Here are a few intriguing examples:



St. Michael's Mount photographed in 1903 with added color. (Image via author)

CORNWALL

St. Michael's Mount: A prehistoric eight-foot (2.4 meter) skeleton was unearthed from a dungeon on the island 250 years ago, that may well be the giant that Jack was said to have slayed.

Tregoney: "The Annual Register for 1761 tells us that in March of that year, as a miner was working at Tregoney, in Cornwall, in a new mine, he accidentally discovered a stone coffin, on which were some inscribed characters. Within it was the skeleton of a man of gigantic size, which, on the admission of the air, mouldered into dust. One tooth, two inches and a

half long, and thick in proportion, remained whole. The length of the coffin was eleven feet three inches, and its depth was three feet nine inches."

The Killer

ST. Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, the island which Jack the Giant Killer wrested from an oversize man named Cormoran, has been given to the British National Trust, to be preserved as an historical site and tourist attraction.

There may be more truth—and history—than fiction in the old nursery tale.

The evidence: Some 200 years ago, the skeleton of a man who, in life, stood eight feet tall, was found in a narrow dungeon cut in the solid rock of the island.

To this day, the visitor can see, beside the steep cobbled path leading up to the castle, the pit where Jack trapped his foe.

News report from The Age - Jan 24, 1955 p.2 (Public Domain)

DEVONSHIRE

This is the area where Gogmagog was thrown off the cliff by Corineus: *"A stone coffin in Devonshire contained a thigh-bone belonging to a man eight feet nine inches high."*

WALES

Mold, Flintshire: *"He found by the remains, (of a tumuli), that the person interred was above the common size of men."*



***The Mold cape made of gold now on display in the British Museum.
(Image via author)***

STONEHENGE

Later in *Histories* giants reappear in the stories of the Welsh wizard, Merlin. He tells the King that in a distant epoch, giants transported huge trilithons from North Africa to Killarus in Ireland, where “The Giant’s Dance” was positioned. Later, they were transported to Salisbury Plain by mysterious means. However, huge skeletons have also been discovered in the mounds in the local landscape. In *Journey into South Wales* (1802) George Lipscomb reported: “a skeleton which measured fourteen feet ten inches in length.”

In *A Theological, Biblical, and Ecclesiastical Dictionary* (1830), it describes a nine foot four inch (284.48 cm) skeleton unearthed near Salisbury in 1719. It also recounts a mound named ‘Giant’s Grave’ next to St Edmunds Church, just a few miles from Stonehenge.

GAUL (France):

Where Albion was finally defeated in a battle with Hercules are two examples of gigantic skeletons being unearthed:

A Race of Giants in Old Gaul.
From the London Globe.
In the year 1890 some human bones of enormous size, double the ordinary in fact, were found in the tumulus of Castelnaud, (Hérault,) and have since been carefully examined by Prof. Riener, who, while admitting that the bones are those of a very tall race, nevertheless finds them abnormal in dimensions and apparently of morbid growth. They undoubtedly reopen the question of the "giants" of antiquity, but do not furnish sufficient evidence to decide it.

The New York Times
Published: October 3, 1892
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FIND OLD GRAVES

Skeletons of Giant Warriors Unearthed in France.

Men Who Lived 25,000 Years Ago Believed to Have Died Fighting—Arrow Found in Head of One.

The discovery of 25,000-year-old

Two examples of giant discoveries in old Gaul. (Public Domain)

The authors have collated over 150 accounts of giant bones, skeletons and skulls throughout the British Isles. Although the founding of Britain is still shrouded in mystery, and Geoffrey's *Histories* is clearly jumbled-up versions of older books and myths, the stories of the giants seem to go very far back. The Legends and foundations myths of Britain are so strongly associated these local titans, we hope this introduction to giant-lore gives some indication that they could be the ancestral memories of real-life giants who ruled here long before us 'Brits' ever lived here, and could have been responsible for the thousands of megalithic constructions that grace this ancient landscape.



The Burgh Castle Giant skeleton in Norfolk. A Saxon giant who lived in the sixth century AD and is 7 ft 4 in (223.52 cm). (Images via author)

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(Top image: Skull – CC BY 2.0)

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Hugh Newman

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Hugh Newman has been a welcome and fascinating guest speaker on [Ancient Origins Premium](#).

He will be speaking and hosting Megalithomania 2017 in Glastonbury on 20th-21st May 2017. Details at: www.megalithomania.co.uk

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