**ANCIENT CULTURES and BELIEFS**

A TIMELINE OF HUMAN ORIGINS

 By ALAN G. BUTTON

 ’After on the mountain of heaven and earth,

 *An* (heaven) had caused the *Anunnaki* to be born…’

 *A Sumerian Myth*

When… where…

It was a special moment in ancient history, perhaps during a mesmerizing trance, perhaps during the first ensoulment of mankind, more than 200,000-years-ago, when the concept of Time had been realized. With a thought, and then a simple belief or question, a long journey of enlightenment had begun. A tremendous awareness had now taken place—the realm of spiritual recognition [within its most primitive state] had been born.

What follows is a collection of works and writings, of theories and discoveries, and of scientific and religious anomalies—laid out as both a visual aid and research companion. And, I admit, it is also a personal decipherment relying heavily on: mounds of evidence I have discovered in numerous books and websites, religions I’ve joined, ceremonies I’ve experienced, and lectures I’ve attended. I do not profess that what you find is in anyway complete. Nor do I submit that dates and comments are entirely accurate (archaeology is of course an ongoing and quite flexible discipline).

In regards to early man and the earliest of migrations: extensive site studies, lab tests on skull formation, and rDNA sequencing encourage continued disagreements as to what exactly happened between 600,000 and 200,000 BCE. Some believe several earlier migrations took place between Africa, Europe, and Asia (and perhaps beyond) and that inter-breeding of area populations between different races occurred in perceptible steps. Others maintain this was a continual process, over thousands of life-times. I have attempted to outline the most accepted, and the most obvious.

Over the last twenty or so years important advancements in ancient archeology have brought new light to ancient origins in Africa and South America. Although much of the information is refuted by mainstream scientists, overwhelming evidence points to a need to push back origin dates. I take note to three major cultures here:

* South Africa: Called the ABZU, hundreds-of-thousands of stone enclosures throughout the Horn of Africa present an incredible mystery—round stone-structures without windows or doors Photo 14, pathways lined by 1-3 meter high rock-walls that run on for miles, dolmans, megaliths, stone circles, in a cave a large snake effigy carved out of solid stone and an undetermined number of ancient gold mines.
* Southwest Sahara: Several sites have been re-found and studied, with stone circles, cave paintings, Pharaonic cartouches, cow burials, and evidence to star-worship.
* South America: Along with the pre-Clovis Delahey site at Monte Verde, numerous other sites continue to be found within the desert coast of Peru, the Amazon Jungle, and the flood-plains of Bolivia.

To seek knowledge, to search for the roots and understanding of where we have come from, leaves a burning desire to obtain. But to know why? I leave this question to a wiser conscience…

 “We have become like zoo animals—caged within our own urbanized world.” Carl Van Essen, M.D.

“In relation to the Earth, we have been autistic for centuries…” Thomas Berry

“The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the Mystical. It is the source of all true science.” Albert Einstein, 1930

# **Related Vocabulary**

**Animist**: one who believes that all things in nature have a spirit within, as followed by indigenous cultures throughout the world even today.

***Huaca***: within the natural landscape, a point, shape or radiating lines that have special powers—as indicated by the Nazca lines at Cuzco, Peru, and at Chaco Canyon in Arizona. Considered to be spiritual walk-ways these sacred sites can appear like a maze, where one seeks harmony and healing. A drum, chanting, music, or even a hallucinogenic, may be used to invoke a trance-like state. Found around the world, one smaller form, a labyrinth, can be found within some European churches today.

**Hypogeum**: “below the Earth”, an artificial temple site constructed below ground within caves (as at Malta) that became communal mausoleums for thousands.

**Inipi Ceremony**: a long practiced ceremony in North America to summon and communicate with the Elders and the spirit world. Often involving a two day event (or longer) participates build a conical lodge (the womb of Mother Earth), an alter (from dirt removed from within the lodge depression where heated stones will be placed), and a fire (where logs are built up around selected stones, and then set afire). During this four-part ceremony (which may take place over an entire night), drums and chants summon the ancient spirits. Heated stones are brought in and deposited within a depression, where sweet-grass is burned and water is poured over them. Summoned spirits move from the fire-pit, across the alter (where effigies have been placed), and into the lodge. An individual within the lodge may feel a presence (a breath on the back of the neck), or simply sense their nearness. After the ceremony the lodge is torn down and burned, along with ‘prayer-ties’ that had been hung within the lodge. A ‘potlatch’ (meal) is shared after. Note: women during their ‘Moon Time’ are not allowed in or near the lodge, but may help in the preparation of the meal.

**Psychopomp**: a buried effigy used to assist the spirit of the dead. As in Europe, during the 1300’s, an entire model carriage pulled by ducks (into the next world) has been recovered.

**Myth**: Ancient beliefs (often religion-based) were heavily influenced by and through even older stories that had been passed down over generations through Oral Tradition (an orated story conveyed by an elder to a group or family). Whether it was through the use of fictional icons (Herakles holding up the sky while battling a nine-headed water-monster), or natural forms (Coyote stealing the first fire), mythological stories provided the listener with information about an actual event that has been ‘crunched-down’ into a more memorable experience. Paul & Elizabeth Barber (*When They Severed Earth From Sky*) make an accurate statement when they reveal “…myth can be understood better through understanding the close relationships between myth, language, and cognition.” Leaving us with what we might determine as ‘fairy-tails’, it is up to us to decipher their encoded messages and meanings.

Mythological stories general fall within these categories:

* The Heavens: star movement—astrology
* Natural disasters: floods, volcanic eruptions
* Origin/creation gods, and what they did
* The afterlife: Inner-world, Underworld
* Human morality
* Unexplainable events: fire-breathing dragon in cave (ignited methane gas)

**Necromancy**: communication with the dead--although most often associated with the dark arts of black-magic (practiced during early Greek & Roman times) and “witchcraft” (of the dark periods), in its antiquity, as well as today, Necromancy (the veneration or calling of the dead) is more closely associated with Shamanism; i.e. as in prayer to ask assistance from departed elders during times of strife, or to bring healing to those in sickness.

**Scapulimancy**: “prophesying with shoulder blades,” divination practiced by Chinese kings who acted as both orator and god. Using either a sheep or ox scapula, or a turtle shell, a question was written, the shell/bone heated with a hot poker causing it to crack, the crack interpreted by the oracle, the answer written next to the question, then at a later time the outcome prophesied was then written on the same shell/bone. Thousands of these have been found.

***Sipapu***: found within the Mississippi complexes, as well as among the Pueblos in the American southwest, the *sipapu* is a mythical hole found in the floor of a kiva where the ancestors emerged from the underworld led by a figure playing a flute known as Locust. It is believed that katcinas emerge through these holes, protected by the Coyote deity. Features within the natural landscape, like water holes, are also seen as *sipapus*. This practice probably migrated from Mesoamerica.

***Skan***: [here Native American] an energy that permeates and flows through all things. Believed by indigenous people throughout the world—each culture with its own name (*mana* in the South Pacific; *ka* in Egypt).

***Tapu***: in the South Pacific, a person, place, or thing considered so sacred by religious authorities that it must be left alone and untouched—thus our modern usage “taboo.”

**Tengrism**: practiced by the Huns and Mongolians, and today in Turkey and Kazakhstan, it is in general a combination of animism, totemism and shamanism. In better words however: “The meaning of life is seen as living in harmony with the surrounding world, sustained by the ‘Eternal Blue Sky’, the spirit *Eje* (fertile Mother Earth), and a ruler who is regarded as the holy spirit of all natural things…” (Excerpt from Wikipedia)

**Totemism**: an animal, structure, or symbol taken on by an individual or group, to represent an object within the natural world--often used to project the energy of that object so as to empower the user of its wisdom and strength (*skan*).

**Shamanism**: [from *saman* or *shaman*: Siberia] one who invokes the spirit world (through trance, tobacco juice, mind-altering drugs, drums, and/or ceremony) to perform acts of healing, communication with the spirit world, astral travel, witch-craft, and magic. Solitude and suffering are often required for the mind to seek this wisdom and a shaman is often viewed as an alternated member of a tribe—a ‘Contrary’. An individual may become possessed, thus emitting strange sounds and actions (taking on the form of an animal or some spirit form--’shape-shifting’). The shaman can be either a man or woman and is often regarded as an important part of their group. For true believers Shamanism is not a pathological manifestation, but a technique of communication with the spirit world that is quite normal in the eyes of the group. Note: a shaman cannot perform acts of healing on him or herself.

**Animism**: From the Latin *anima*, “spirit” or “breath,” a belief that all natural things—animal, plant, rock, water, wind, or a celestial body—has its own spirit.

Example: A hundred years ago the Inuit of Greenland would hunt the Polar Bear (a fearsome adversary) with dogs and spears. Once killed it was believed that the spirit of the animal would be angry and needed to be appeased. While the skin was being stretched and dried, pieces of metal were offered in ceremony (bears liked metal). In a few days the spirit of the bear would depart, along with the spirit of the metal. Note: since metal came from ore (a birthing or creation process), which came from mines (caves, the fog, fire, or a pool of water were seen as portals), it was believed that metal originated from the otherworld.

During the Bronze Age in Europe, swords (not widely owned) were often venerated. If they were made locally they were placed in a grave. However if they came from afar, then they were placed into water, often broken to release their spirit, and accompanied by human bones.

A note about gods and goddesses: Among the diverse pantheon of beliefs, a single effigy may have several names depending on culture, time, a cult or sect within a culture (Christianity today has some 20,000 sects), historical writer, or language usage. Case-in-point is this widely revered goddess:

 Inanna: 5000-3000 BC, Sumeria, love, war, fertility, Venus

Isis: 5000 BC, Egypt, patron of nature, magic, great lamenter

Hathor: 4500 BC, Egypt, feminine love, motherhood

 Aphrodite: 3500 BC, Greek, love, beauty, fertility (from Cyprus)

 Venus: 3500 BC, Roman, love, fertility

 Ishtar: 3000-2000 BC, Assyria, Babylon, love, fertility, war, Lion

 Astarte: 3200-2000 BC, Minoan & Phoenician, fertility goddess, snake goddess

 Ashteroth: 3000 BC, Canaanite, male figure with wings (evolved from Astarte)