

Archaeoastronomy

For archaic man, reality is a function of the imitation of a celestial archetype.

Mircea Eliade, historian from

The Myth of the Eternal Return: cosmos and History, 1971: 5. Princeton University Press.

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Nam and Muh are us, but need an after coat...

I propose that the presence of the skyscape was a most, if not THE most aspiring feature of Nam and Muh's human condition. The Revolutions of thought, mind, lifestyle, ethos, habitation, and culture were motivated by the continual bombardment of the celestial presence and wonder of outer space - the skyscape. Social cultures, symbolic reference, and ritual were expressions of our intelligence that shaped humans' unique form of communication, and which signify our special identity as Earth's most intelligent species set apart from the rest of its life forms.

However, when they looked up into the sky, Nam and Muh always saw a most mysterious, often stressful and unattainable domain. This experience elicited a mind full of curiosity, stress, tension. and a heightened awareness that the 'others' were often directing their actions. They were aware that the light by which the Earth's surface and land below could be seen and felt came from the sun above. In nature's ritualistic display they witnessed the cycles of light each day and the tiny shimmers of patterned lights that each night filled the sky (Earth's rotation). And they quickly developed awareness that these cycles, patterns, and shimmers moved around the sky in longer cycles themselves. All but one of the stars moved in this way, the North Star, and some of them disappeared altogether for a while before reappearing again in the next yearly cycle. (Earth's orbit around the sun) An additional aspiring awareness came about when they saw that those same shimmers of starlight not only moved around and sometimes disappeared, but that groups of them would come to occupy a different segment of the night sky grid and a different star would seem to stop motionless for a duration much longer than their lifetime. (Precession of the Equinoxes) Nam and Muh were profoundly aware of the above world and its rhythmical patterns and cycles but were prevented from touching the sky themselves like their interactions with the rest of their eco-environment. This exasperating feature drove the existential need, navigated by the function of their mind's perception and cognition pathway, to create an entire worldview and ethnocentrism according to the directives of the cosmic skyscape and its physical representations.

The changing patterns of the celestial grid were perceived to be the ‘writing of the Gods,’ a stage populated by laws and knowledge that were dictated to Nam and Muh and their people in profound and meaningful ways. Ancient treasures contain an uncountable number of such examples. In this production, the human mind concocted numerous skyscape symbolisms from the pattern-making perception and cognition pathway of man’s brain. Today we identify many of these symbolisms with carryover names from early language like the Pleiades, Orion, Leo, the Zodiac signs, Hercules, Milky Way, etc. Perhaps a provenance to the creation of language came from the perception of these illustrations, perhaps from elsewhere. Certainly, many other forms of communication resulted from the locking of the mind’s eye with the theatre of space; a magnificent interstellar mural that has inspired and enlightened you and I and to which caused the Revolutions of Homo sapien sapiens in the unique ways they did. Existence of the celestial realm, THE most referenced natural environmental platform by all ancient civilizations, purposed the social dynamics of semiotics, bonding, engineering, ritual, language, religiosity, and the eschatology of life and the afterlife. Our engagements today at star parties, eclipses, and planetarium night sky talks, in part, are a direct reflection on this ancient astrology and folklore, that was originally purposed as a first symbolic modern textbook of spiritual life and learning, with the same brain hardware, software and programming, and the same mnemonic patterns our ancestors used for recall and understanding.

Space today contains the same features and characteristics that were so worshipped by our ancestral kin. The most prominent celestial objects, in order of luminescent magnitude, to both modern and historical observers include: 1 – Sun; 2 – Moon; 3 – Milky Way; 4 – Constellations. This order of visual saliency is due to both the brightness and geometric appearance of the sun and moon, being the largest and most visible, easily defined in the minds’ eye as immediate due to their awareness of its physical proximity. Its celestial motions evoke characteristics of repetitiveness, rigidity, and redundancy in Xygalatas’ ritual concept (2022, 66-69). Humans are compelled to ‘describe what they saw,’ and the brightest objects they saw were the daytime sun and nighttime moon. Their minds - like ours in this example - took these attitude cues and developed the cognitive behavior pathway that is the ritual function. Their purpose, for our ancestors, was developed from this celestial agency.

This celestial agency was important in providing Neolithic man with spatial, environmental, and temporal dimensions of intellect as well as sociologic metaphorical transfer of new knowledge and meaning contexts that I call a four-dimensional axis of perception and cognition. The spatial and environmental dimensions represent the three-dimensional environment while the fourth, time, made up the mindset of this celestial agency. With these thoughts captured, our ancestors could use what they saw in the heavens to create the agency that helped them understand their place in the moment, the environment around them in that moment, and the historical and future aspects of ‘what was,’ or prospects of ‘what could come to be,’ respectively. It also allowed for the growth and maturity of humankind’s historical memory intelligence; the part that drove their behavior for remembering things and most importantly, people from their past, the latter of which is suggested by the semiotic cultural traditions of life, death, and the afterlife. This apparatus enabled the creation and practice of the symbolic representations embodied by communication and social relations, the latter of which is supported

by archaeologist Stanislaw Iwaniszewski, “Human societies often people their skies with super naturals, ancestors or mythological heroes to whom they become related through family ties, mythological narratives, political alliances or power relationships” (Iwaniszewski 2011, 31).

With witness to the night sky’s rigid, repetitive and redundant nature, our ancestors left us many reminders of how their minds manifested this reality. A keen recognition of the celestial patterns and cycles reinforced practice of the social cultures and their subsequent symbolic documentation for educational/historical purposes. For example, the sun, as the only celestial object whose appearance did not change except during a solar eclipse, was intuitively reasoned as giving life, and as a life form of a superpower. Its light and warmth caused all life to exist on Earth; this was part of their instinctive consciousness. Observation of the sun’s cyclical daily reappearance and disappearance was a part of that critical writing of the gods because when a cloudy day, an earthquake, or an eclipse event occurred, the sun went away. The perceived chaos disrupted nature’s homeostasis, so its occurrence was stress and fear-producing. Sometimes the event disrupted food sustenance; the longer events produced famine situations. Famines in the Neolithic drove a ritual behavior response strategy because they were otherwise physically powerless to control the sun’s activities for their purposes. They could not touch the sun, and that motivated their minds to develop a worship cult of the sun as a god. The best and maybe only strategy to interact with the sun was, in their minds, to appeal to this god for survival as a means of stress, fear, and tension relief.

Perspectives such as this also applied to relationships with the moon. Its nightly visitation was erratic in appearance due to its ecliptic light-shielding characteristics but was recognized as possessing its own cyclic patterns; and, because it could not be touched, also became adorned as a god. The periodic full moon drowned out visibility from a lot of other stars in the night sky. God was giving more instructions for them to follow. It motivated and enabled our ancestors to conduct ritual activities on dates of the full moon for a variety of purposes, including appeals and strategies designed for greater food harvests, giving thanks, and to honor, and encourage. It was also considered a conduit for a safer path to eternity and to heaven for dear departed souls.

The Milky Way was, to prehistoric man, another manuscript of the “divine creators” that also appeared differently because of its spatial orientation in the sky. Its annual cycle of appearance was due to the simultaneous forces of various physics influencing Earth’s orbital trajectory. Their perceptions and cognitions of the constellations were conceived as the most prominent objects of the ritualistically organized night sky as their intelligence again utilized the pattern-making mental neurology that we use today. To summarize, the common characteristics and attributes of these four cosmic phenomena remain there now from millennia ago for your inspection. I encourage you to visualize yourself observing the sun, moon, Milky Way and constellations over time. You will note their constant movements, consistent with what was seen for over a million years; and, only after repeated study, all of them will be observed to resonate with a cyclical nature that harmonizes with your existence and that of all other matter in the Universe. The interface of all these cosmic objects was perceived and became known to our ancestors as the most quintessential tapestry of creation, birth, life, and afterlife to them and to their souls.

A much older, but similarly enriched landscape example of archaeoastronomy focus is situated in southeastern Turkey at the location of Gobekli Tepe. Investigating the details of Gobekli Tepe from the collective perspectives of anthropology, archaeology, architecture, engineering design, etymology, psychology and archaeoastronomy, assimilates all the evidence and features of its existence, meaning and purpose to conclude the most accurate determination ever presented. I start this investigation utilizing such a strategy.

The book of inquiry and insight advancing the depth and reliability of meaning at Gobekli Tepe remains divergent within the dialogue of updated discovery. Contributory factors include that, to date, over 95 percent of this Early Neolithic “city” remains unexcavated. The hundreds of sites in the Turkish Tepe region share this scenario. Access to archaeology and anthropology, believed to have existed with many other neighboring sites in this region of the ancient Levant, currently influence the path of these inquiries, as do the consequences of modern sociopolitical decisions. For example, the 1991 decision by the Turkish government to create the Atatürk Dam that flooded the Nevalı Çori and nearby ancient sites for use as a modern dam aquatic reservoir (Atatürk Dam, *Britannica* 2025). Ramifications of these decisions, as well as the recurring challenges of cultural situational bias that will remain present among human research, serve to retard the progress of inquiry that led to meaning and knowledge.

The Tepe of the Levant maintain their fascination among all research communities because their known dating alignments, from 6,000 to over 13,000 BCE, are currently correlated as the earliest depictions of many Early Neolithic cultural characteristics. These characteristics include Revolutions of sedentary lifestyle, archaeoastronomy, socialization attitude-behaviors, and the perception and cognitive intelligence as practiced by the contemporary human being. It is left to a future enduring consensus that many of the tepe locations also served as residential habitations, specialized workshop areas, and open courtyards as communal living spaces (Peters and Schmidt 2004, 180).

The spatial landscape of Gobekli Tepe, as correlated with prevailing universal attitudes and behaviors throughout ancient times and today, and practiced as such, is situated at the highest altitude in the surrounding landscape. The attitude and behavior of the mindset to be “closer to god(s)” confirms the psychology embedded with the meaningful construction of structures in high places that is confirmation of a purposeful functionality of a temple. The indigenous Gobekli Tepe cultures also opted to purposely situate these buildings on high places as ritual places and cosmic projections that served as power platforms and to be closer to the gods and heaven for worship practices (Peters and Schmidt 2004,209).

Each building at the site displays two central T-pillars on a raised altar platform surrounded by a circular geometry with up to twelve or more peripheral pillars and seating benches for ceremony participants. Extensive animal and anthropomorphic motifs are represented among the entire Gobekli Tepe temple complex, identified in the research as Buildings A through H. The most popularly depicted life form symbolism includes hooved livestock, canines, horned boars, serpents, aviary, and an occasional bear; all reasoned to be

representations of existing wildlife in the wild agrios of the time (Peters and Schmidt 2004,184-185). This motif is represented at the hundreds of other Tepe sites in ancient Turkey. They include a striking theme of violence, fear, and stress embodied within and their depictions are illustrated to communicate these themes. I noted earlier that this was an evolutionary step in humankind's reconciliation of the power and control competition between man and the wild agrios of the animal kingdom.

The central T-pillars are stelae that approach 20 feet in height. Many of them depict a single statuesque human anthropomorph, complete with many phenotypical characteristics such as arms and legs and adorned with many animal figures that suggest an animal-human duality of identity attribution or other sacred animism. This aligns with the traditions of tribal leaders depicted in younger cultures, such as Native America, by correlating personality traits of these people with similar animistic characteristics and subsequently adopting their identity attributes. The relief figures are symbolic memorial attributes of these animals as having had a significant part in the life of the honored, and as part of ancestral worship, social bonding and social behavioral ritual cult psychology. Thus, I assert that the Gobekli Tepe enclosures were characteristic embodiments of a proto-totem concept that served to memorialize the status of royalty within that culture, as well as serving other functions.

For these memorialized ceremonial activities, the central T-pillars were the totem's foundation, and the peripheral pillar designs functioned within the ceremonial complex as guardians, protectors and guides for the activities that were undertaken. These activities included, but are not exclusive to, ceremonies for The Path of Souls of their departed royalty, as well as related communal social bonding and engineering events to memorialize whatever deities and other super powerful beings they worshipped. The theme of a power and control competition is also present at the Gobekli Tepe semiotics as the creators chose to depict the power characteristics of the animals as reflections of both the wild agrios nature of the animals and their surrounding ecological environments. These mindful competitive activities had been practiced for tens of millennia, as the ancient records show.

But this direct, urbanized, close quarters rendition was new in its time and suggests a slow change in the competitive balance mindset that by now began to tangibly favor the human over both the animal and many environmental adversaries. This was due to the many technological and social advancements made, as I previously noted. The ritual cults of feasting, bonding, stress relief through deity appeals and social engineering by tribal leaders are also evident within this activity process and appear to have been unique in their design. These activities may have been comprised of common themes; ancestral worship ethnocentricity and of the skyscape phenomenon that specifically synchronizes with a certain part of the night sky. My research data suggests that this region was the Milky Way, and its many cosmic inhabitants.

These central T-pillar stelae sit atop altar platforms and contain tripartite totemic meaning showing their mindful association with a rites-of-passage ritual custom linking the underworld to the "living" world (Peters and Schmidt 2004, 210). Likewise, it has been suggested that the pillars also connected the rights of both the underworld and the terrestrial world to the skyscape, or upper world (Bischoff 2002). Data I have collected in conjunction with extensive field work

conducted at the site provide support to the notion that this upper world; the celestial world, was profoundly meaningful in the minds of the inhabitants as a link in the chain of a vertical axis mundi.

Archeoastronomical relevance at Gobekli Tepe is derived from a nuanced inspection of the architecture at Buildings A-D. Construction of buildings A, B, C, and D were believed to have been undertaken between 9,900-8,000 BCE with D being the oldest and A the youngest (Dietrich 2011; Schmidt 2012; Dietrich et al. 2013). The central T-pillar stelae, as the tallest monoliths in each building, illustrate full-bodied anthropomorphs adorned with various animal bas reliefs and a belt-like device wrapped around its waist. These belts also show many symbols strongly resembling linguistic characters or letters, as depicted in the associated photos. The pillars surrounding the outer perimeter of each building serve as the guardian/protector symbolism, show similar adornments as the central stelae, but also show human anthropomorphs with heads and features curiously absent from the central T-pillar monoliths (Schmidt 2010, 246).

I suggest that the construction of each temple building complex and the central T-pillars served tripartite purposes, motivated to depict and attribute worship to a collection of tribal leaders, the assortment of deities and super powerful beings in their ceremonial inventory, and for other feasting and social communal bonding attitudes and behavior cults within their ethnologies. While the peripheral pillars may yet be discovered to identify specific tribal royalty, each of the central T-pillars are metaphorically tasked with symbolizing more than one godhead of that culture.

The entire investigation analysis, and my discoveries, can be found in my new book title, *The Humaniverse Guide* ® *We Are Them, They Are Us: Our Ancestors, Us and ET*.