

Illuminations
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We abandoned our excavations amongst the White Horses of the Salisbury Plain in 1972, proclaiming in an official statement that ‘no further study of the Uffington reaches will reveal anything beyond the mundane decorative truth of our forebears’, in an attempt to finally dispel the new age excitement surrounding the hill figures as overenthusiasm and fanciful romanticism. The Salisbury Plain is doubtless a landscape of the highest interest to several of our departments, but of course, in regards to interpretation of meaning amongst this picturesque landscape it was decreed that we must endeavour to avoid the trinketry and wishfulness of the Stonehenge giftshop. The rejection of this 82 year-old project (which involved extensive research into the capillary-like network of tunnels thirty-four metres below Silbury Hill, the carbon-dating of the infamous Wayland Smith handprint and the remarkable audiotectural findings at the entrance of West Kennet Longbarrow) caused considerable disappointment to Ms. Andreea Borbas, much of whose professional life involved some of the more ambitious excavations as part of a dedicated IIAL team. As a gesture of goodwill and appreciation of her academic contributions, the Institute awarded Ms. Borbas a grant with which to continue her studies from afar, to allow some distance and perspective on her chosen field. It was believed that a period of separation from the West of England would encourage a sense of the abyss, a notion of the vortex which had become invisible from an epicentre.

Ms. Borbas continued to write extensively about her attempted disconnection from the studies of the Uffington psychonautical project and claimed to have returned to her native Timisoara, Romania. Her written work remained of the highest calibre. In a telegram received in November 1995, we received news that she had undertaken a brief

return to Orthodoxy, and in particular wished to proclaim her enthusiasm for recognising the fasting practices of her family sect. It did not escape the attention of her correspondents, however, that the postal frankings were not from Romania, but instead moving rapidly eastwards through the Ukraine, onward to Odessa and across the sea to Turkey. The Institute as a whole was understandably concerned, and set to work trying to ascertain why a dedicated fellow of the order was continually posting pleasant (although somewhat uninspiring) accounts of her personal life, whilst making no attempt to disguise the fact that she was undertaking a lengthy migration to the furthest reaches of Europe, and beyond. The penultimate telegram allowed some answers, and was recorded as coming from Western Pakistan. It simply read “Bhavanê Yásas Kalk (i) Pradúr Bhavishyati”, which our languages department initially translated as ‘At the home of the worthy, he shall be born from sediment and mud’ – an appropriation of a verse from the Srimad Bhagavatam, a text which is well known to us, and has provided a valuable number of references ranging from longitudinal co-ordinates to syllables prompting paramnesiacal hematosae within certain conditions. It was not until 2002 that the Institute recognised the intention of the telegram, after hearing nothing from Ms. Borbas for seven years and allowing the archiving and encoding of her submissions and writings in their entirety. The report and following investigation into this prompt is now complete.

Linguistic Reverie

Kalk is recognised to be a simple shortening of Kalkiavatara, the final descending incarnation of Visnu (recognised by more than 800 religious groups to be the ‘supreme godhead’) to earth, set to bring the age of darkness (Kali Yuga) to its end, along with all life in this mode of existence. The origins of the name Kalki have been debated for centuries – the Sanskrit is unclear, garbled through a persian tongue-shift that evades clear translation. Through our correspondance with Sri Sri Bhismadev, temple guard of Madana Mohan, Navidweep, Bengal, we have been able to discern two clear translations into English, with a linguistic bridge conjoining two potential dialectic routes. Firstly; Kalk I, ‘That which is cut from soil’. It was long considered that this referred

to the vengeance the avatar would bring upon the ‘unclean/soiled ones’ at the end of the yuga, at the time of death. Secondly; Kalki; translates through Ugric as ‘White Horse’. Sri Sri Bhismadev has confirmed that both of these translations are accurate, intentional and transmutable, and arise linguistically as both ‘Soil which is cut from the white horse’ and ‘white horse which is cut from the soil’.

Investigation

What follows are the heavily abridged notes collected after the volunteer team returned from their fieldwork in seventeen different countries, attempting to complete the final chapters of Borbas’ Opus.

That there is a geolinguistic connection between the West of England and the writings of the ‘golden age’ of North Indian Vaisnavism is surprising, but easily dismissable as coincidence. What caused this research team to initially travel to Jerusalem was the increasingly persuasive evidence put forward and promised in the final correspondence from Ms. Andreea Borbas in January 2003, urging a group from the IIAL to analyse the consistent petrosomatoglyphic trail forged between Western Europe and Northern India, connected by the images of the horse imprinted in earth and the reverence awarded to them in places where ordinarily such occurrences would be considered heretical. Andreea Borbas’ character and professionalism suggested an intention and discovery which was deemed investigatable, and a research group was quickly dispatched eastwards. It was quickly decided to overlook the geoglyphs of Western Europe until the conclusion of the investigation, if they were to be considered at all, and to begin our journey at a meeting point of conflicting visual cultures. Thus, we began in Israel.

The Jerusalem trip was necessary to record the evidence of the most recent earth-horse on the very outskirts of the Kalki/Uffington tradition, that of the El Buraq hoofprint of 7th century Islam; the foundation of the vital ending of the initial story arc of the Koran, that of Mohammed’s ascension of his winged steed. We were fully aware of the hoofprint burned into the holy rock, despite having no completed

written investigation on the subject in our archives. The relic attracts an unusual congregation, an Islamic branch initially believed to be the product of academic convenience, but who are evidently in existence – those who view the avatars of Visnu as not only worshipful, but facets of Allah. The tilak smeared on their foreheads is covered by hands held in prayer, their kneeling mats stained with sandalwood and placed carefully on the western side of the geological icon. On arrival at the foot-smooth plateau, we noted all that we could; that the sigil stands out clearly from the arid rock of Temple Mount, the fore of the hoofprint angled deeply into the stone, giving the impression of weight being thrown forward onto the foot, and presumably propelling the horse into the air with its divine passenger. This literal and physical representation of a divine being in Islam is rare, especially in the vicinity of an area which is worshipful as space itself, nothing more. It is unknown (and perhaps unknowable) what created the hoofprint in the rock of Temple Mount – be it erosion, purposeful representative carving or otherwise. It is, in our opinion, irrelevant. The fact that it exists is not of interest to us, but merely the fact that meaning and importance has been bestowed upon it in a tradition that transcends its own origins. Such a viewpoint was considered the foundation for the manifesto of this journey. We left Jerusalem confused, an endlessly conflicted city hiding the traces of harmony it has never existed without, the riotous noise and cadence of violence disguising the city's hidden shame – that prayers had hung in the air of this space and burrowed themselves into the stones long before Christ or Allah were conceivable. The instincts of myself and my colleagues instructed us to travel further in eastward miles and years.

The second location mentioned by Borbas brought us to the borders of Iran and Afghanistan, a cultural no-mans-land today, but once the historical centre of the region of Zabulistan (for more information may I direct you to Barusa's writings on the subject 'Abyssal Life of Arachosia' 1932) where we get a sense of the origins of the figure of El Buraq in the Persian Rakhsh, the 'great horse' of the Zoroastrian poets, who have an earth-equine tradition that predates Islam by centuries and sets up the stage for the adoration of the eternal hoofprint in Jerusalem. The Rakhsh was symbolically nondifferent from its Islamic equivalent

– a vehicle for the last earthly moments of a deity, a means for approaching heaven – and it's hoofprints can be seen in their dozens as one approaches the Afghanistani territories, supposedly imprinted in the rock in the same fashion as those of El Buraq, and revered in the same way by the remaining Zoroastrians who populate the area. What fascinated the researchers I was travelling with was that the enormous, solitary hill-carving of the horse in the area not only appeared to pre-date the poetry concerning the Rakhsh by several centuries, even millenia, but was situated in an area which appeared to be geologically unique. The creators of the 250 foot horse which adorns the northern side of the Vale of Kabisa chose to carve their deity in an expanse of rock which is not only uniquely grassy as a result of mountainous micro-climates and rising areas of moisture, but also whose stone is uncommonly pale in colour; a pinkish, chalk hued hillside which holds the calcific residue of a long-dead inland sea. The result is stark, striking, and uncannily resemblant of Uffington's rolling greenery and brilliant whiteness here, in the arid Middle East. On viewing, the etymology of Rakhsh suddenly becomes clear; the name of this vast horse is translatable as 'Illuminated'.

The whereabouts of the next location was debated internally amid our camp for weeks. Many of my esteemed colleagues insisted that we travel north into the Russian lowlands, where the early Magyar people cut small horses into rocks as they travelled across Siberia on their way to their settling ground in Hungary. After almost two months of deliberation, I delivered the final verdict that the Magyar could not be considered into this investigation – a fundamentally godless tribe of horsemen marking their territory with a personalised equine signature could not be considered in the same sense as gargantuan horses being slashed and burned eternally into hillsides, or a continued worship and legendary tradition founded by a semi-circle pushed into stone – the Zabulistanis were not leaving messages for each other, they were creating a wonder. The Muslims of the mount were not regarding a calling-card, they were recognising a miracle. After much contact with the Institute, I announced that the company would move onward to India, towards the believed current location of Andreea Borbas. India

possesses surprisingly few geoglyphs of considerable scale, despite its vast collection of deified handprints, footprints, undying trees and sacred dust. Our initial decision was to travel to the battlefield of Kurukshetra, the location for the speaking of the Gita – a well renowned site of the most commemorative earthworks in the Eastern hemisphere, but upon re-examination of Borbas’s telegrams, the company declared there to be no reason to look to commemoration and remembrance of stories. Borbas herself had time and time again expressed a slight disdain for such things – the hill figures and sigils we sought were those which belonged to the impulsive, the visionary and recognised, not the nationalistic or celebratory reminders of an epic. It was agreed that we would find Borbas amongst the some of the oldest and most continually significant artworks in the world.

The Bhimbekta caves in Madhya Pradesh delivered some sense of the immense timescale in which man has been marking stone with the image of a horse. The caves have been inhabited by man for over 100,000 years, and the oldest visible paintings, some of which are vast in scale and still visible to this day are in excess of 30,000 years old. Upon our arrival and viewing of the paintings, none in our company were surprised after the evidence collected between Afghanistan and India that the first period Upper Paleolithic images were those of horses, vast horses with swollen undercarriages which billowed outwards with the swellings in the cave walls. stratified cracks in the sandstone had been incorporated into unusually conceptual details which appeared to have been embellished over the centuries – glaring eyes nestled in the manes, phallic lingam erupt from the hindquarters and mirror the stalagmitic ground we walked through. The contemplation of the unseen images lasted for approximately thirteen days.

(Editor’s note: Further descriptions and studies of the Bhimbekta cave paintings are available on request from the IIAL archives).

The notes made by the research team were lengthy and inconclusive, fit

only for archiving and contextual reproduction here. The IIAL have decided to include the final letter sent from Ms. Andreea Borbas, dated November 19th, 2008 to provide an attempt at a conclusion for this sprawling and unseemly branch of geotheology. No further word has been received from her since, and no further correspondence is expected.

For the attention of the Dept. of Geotheology,

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The decades spent in the northern foothills of the Himalayas have rendered me literally speechless. The Kalkites are a silent sect, who accentuate their stillness of voice with regular ingestions of a viscous hallucinogenic liquid derived from the sap of young trees and a cold-water extraction of muscara agaric fungi, a psychoactive ingredient I first became aware of when studying the cutting ceremonies of pre-medieval England. The agaric fungus has long been associated with the pre-vedic and Zoroastrian Soma – that legendary ambrosia which elevated Mitra to godhead, and which undoubtedly had a hand in accelerating the nature of poetic devotion during the initial settling of the Indus. The Kalkite's ceremonial nectar is a vocal restrictor, which over several years has a powerfully soporific effect on the larynx, resulting in complete vocal paralysis, thus allowing the senses of vision and hearing to sharpen, to come into the fore. I was initiated at the beginning of April, on the south-facing side of a vale unknown to myself in the region. The ritual which took place was unique – here was an enforcement of visions, and encouragement of hallucination which demanded no chanting, no music, no sacred gesture or dance. Merely slow, intense observation in the blindingly direct sunlight which bounces from meltwater through the elephant grasses at the edge of the rain-shadow plains. Utter silence is observed; the sanyassi have lost the ability to make any noise other than the rustling of linen, the thatchety whisper of eyelashes closing, the steady hum of their arteries fills the

air. The initiate is pushed gently onto their back and instructed to look only at the sky, to relax their eyes in order to avoid blinking as much as is possible. Slowly, the viscous fungal sap was dripped into my mouth, staining my face a crimson ochre, the cardamom leaving a sweetness on my tongue, and marred by an earthy, peppery residue. Again, stillness. Silence. The procedure lasts approximately three hours in full consciousness, before one's stomach begins to gradually bloat from the muscara, and the unchanging sky has seeped into the very periphery of vision. The effect is a juxtaposition; one of insignificance coupled with centrality – the blue void is at once unreachably vast, whilst appearing to gradually turn on an axis balanced in the retina, the being and the gaze are sluggish and weak, and yet inseparable. The novices gather around, and one will gradually place indigo sheets onto the eyes, gently simulating a blindness which is revelatory and yet unnecessary; blindness is in essence comparative, and the hallucinogen and sky-staring have done their job; I could not claim to see anything if I had wished to. One blindness is blue, the other is black. I began to experience a sense of the non-corporeal which begins beneath my fingernails and spreads with minute coldness through my extended body. I am supported, and sat upright, and the fabric is removed. It is gestured that I look silently and intentional at the valley I sit in, and I see.

In much the same way that a ceremony based on drumming or mantra becomes deafening with time, my eyes vibrate and shudder with the intensity of sight. The movement in the still vale is so intense as to be blinding; grasses quiver with ecstasies, grasshoppers scrape their knees and stones continue their glacially slow journey downwards. Lines have become obvious, contours leap from the soil. Here, an eye. An impossibly lengthy number, a sum of the days in which a mountain is made by laying a feather on an anthill once every thousand aeons lies stretched between the solitary tree on the horizon, ending with the figure '7' just in front of my bare feet. I see dictionaries of letters from fourteen alphabets. I see myself, cross legged between branches. I see a horse.

After many years of living alongside the sanyassi of Kalki, I have begun to understand the purpose of their sect, and to appreciate the subtleties of their mission which recognises a common symbology with the western world, and reveres the shape of the horse as the secondary illuminated mode of recognition. Secondary, because it is forever beneath the primary symbol of the unblinking eye, the sun, which cradles civilisation and allows the terrestrial to recognise itself. It was during my return to Timisoara and a brief period working in the cognitive research station that I recorded the horse (or, at the most abstracted, the quadruped animal) as the most illuminated figurative symbol in an overwhelming majority of the brain scans conducted, behind basic numbers and letters, and the circle. This led me through Jerusalem and Afghanistan, to northern India and the Bhimbekta, where hill figures and petrosomatoglyphs are not only discovered, but consistently created and recreated, and thus revered for millenia. My initial writings preceding my arrival described the horse as chariot, consistently associated with the birth and death of deities, acting as both herald and harbinger, stork and ferryman. I spent months collecting data to support the theory I was gradually building and reinforcing, before I allowed my voice to wither and curl inwards beneath my tongue. I was, of course, looking at too big, too busy a picture.

Uffington, The Mount, The Vale of Zabulistan, Bhimbekta, countless others and here; at the northern Himalayan foothills – the hill figures share an impossibly blatant and infinitely subtle feature which has been enthusiastically overlooked by all of those who sully the forefront of their vision with the vibrations of speech. Before any man or woman took a flint to the chalk, or smoothed out the inner grooves of a footprint, the image already existed. The horse was already there, alongside the door, the man in the door and his two staffs, a broken outline forged from the hooves of migrating cattle, a geological rorschach image etched as comprehensively into the spaces between grass ridges and the shaded blades of calcific stone as in the eyes of those who recognised them. Upon visiting the most ancient of paintings, surely nobody can look at the contours of the vast cave glyphs and fail to comment on how the artist incorporated the strata into

the image, and yet, look again – the strata (and the splits, the stacks) is the image. A brief scan of the spaces above, below and everywhere else may reveal a menagerie of recognisable symbols, be they Christ, The Empire State Building or the ceremonial wig of Cabot.

Just as some of the more rapidly advancing civilisations looked to the cosmos and saw Pegasus and Equuleus, others looked to the hills in silence, and set about illuminating the spaces between what was never there, but which was clearly seen. The earliest art may have been the eye, but the eye went on to see the beast.

I am sending the corrected results of my lengthy sabbatical to the IIAL, and shall continue to seek the image of Kalkiavatara in these hills, safe in the knowledge that this geological cloudgazing is the earliest and most complete form of that which prompted art in its prehistoric infancy. The Upanisads tell us that the universe was formed from the belly of a horse whose feet touched earth, and the earth is at once that foot and all other things. Thus, the merest suggestion of a semi-circular indentation in any number of impressionable stones has shaped the world as we know it, has prompted a way of seeing what is already behind our eyes.