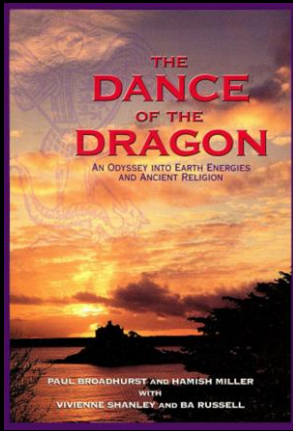


THE DANCE OF THE DRAGON

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THE DANCE OF THE DRAGON

An Odyssey into Earth Energies and Ancient Religion

Throughout the ancient world the most widespread means of communication with the spiritual realms was achieved through dreams. Whether in deep sleep, or that hypnogogic trance-like state between waking and sleeping, it was known and understood that dreams were a means of directly accessing spiritual truths that could otherwise never be known by the rational mind. For this reason, the dream-oracles of antiquity were many, varied and of enormous significance.

Caves, cracks or fissures in the living rock, holy wells and other natural features where the earth energies are strong were all hallowed by thousands of years of use as centres where people could experience direct knowledge of the unseen. They were places where, quite literally, the Earth spoke. It may be no coincidence, then, that a dream was the starting point for a project that has, over the last ten years, led us to some of the most remarkable oracular sites of Europe.

The dream in question was experienced by the French researcher Jean Richer, who, whilst living in Greece, experienced a vivid nocturnal vision that gave him a clue to the questions that tantalised him: why were Temple and Oracle sites often located in such inaccessible places, far from human habitation? Why did he feel there to be some profound but inscrutable link between them?

The answer to these deeply perplexing questions came in a sudden revelation. Half-awake, he saw a statue of Apollo turning towards him as if to indicate a direct connection between the Greek Sun God and his main sanctuary at Delphi, and Athens, where Richer was living. He immediately awoke, and, grabbing a guide book lying on his bedside table, drew a straight line from Delphi to Athens. He was amazed to find that this line continued directly to the isle of Delos, the legendary site of Apollo's birth. The line also passed through Kamiros on Rhodes, the site of the oldest temple of Apollo on the island. Richer had discovered, in an intuitive flash whilst in the dream-state, that these sanctuaries were all in direct alignment with one another. Perhaps it was no coincidence either that he was at the time living on Mount Lycabettos, overlooking the Parthenon on the Athens acropolis. The Parthenon was the foremost Athena site of Ancient Greece, and Lycabettos had, in antiquity, been sacred to the Earth Goddess Gaia.

Richer spent many years exploring the significance of his discovery and eventually, in his book *Sacred Geography of the Ancient Greeks* (available in an English translation by Christine Rhone, published by the University of New York Press 1994) detailed his many years of work.

He claimed that the Greek landscape was divided into astrological segments centred on various important sanctuaries, and that temples were frequently located to mark these divisions. The Delos-Athens-Delphi line that gave him the first clue to this revelation was, he found, one of the main axes of a zodiac whose hub was at Delphi, the centre of the ancient Greek world. This alignment of Temple sites was characterised by the shining figure of Apollo, who had been born on Delos and later located his main sanctuary at Delphi.

A further, and even more remarkable development was when Jean Richer's brother, Lucien, discovered that if this 'Apollo' line was projected outside the confines of Greece, it led to a chain of other sanctuaries across Europe. Using a Mercator projection of the globe, which takes into account the spherical geometry of the Earth, he found that the original Apollo Line passed through some of the most notable sites of pre-Christian times. These had once been dedicated to ancient Sun Gods and the Earth Goddess, whose traditions had been absorbed into early Christianity. Legends and accounts of their subsequent rededication tell of a series of miraculous visions of a luminous being hovering above rocky, mountainous outcrops or appearing in dreams, instructing that a church or chapel be built at that very spot. The visions were reported as being of St Michael, the Archangel of Light and the Cosmic Being charged with human evolution.

This new dimension to Jean Richer's original discovery has considerable implications for the study of ancient science and the knowledge that originally determined the precise location for such significant sites, so closely linked to the changing patterns of religion and spirituality through the ages.

Underlying this revelation is the fact that all these places are thus related to each other, and form an axis that suggests a profound principle of earthly existence, once understood by ancient priesthoods but long banished to the twilight world of ancient spiritual science. At an angle of virtually 60 degrees west of north, this 'Apollo/St Michael axis' links the major St Michael sites of Europe with the Apollonian centres of Greek tradition, providing a unifying principle behind both Christian and pagan religions. The main sanctuaries located on this axis are, from the north-west to the south-east:



Skellig Michael, eight miles off the Atlantic coast of south-western Ireland, where an impressive Celtic Christian monastery of beehive huts still survives in one of the most remote and storm-lashed locations imaginable.



St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, a place once inhabited by a legendary giants, and a centre of former Druid Sun-worship, where a glowing vision of St Michael was reported by local fishermen sometime around the 5th century. In medieval times the Mount became an important pilgrimage centre where miraculous healings were commonly observed.



Mont St Michel, just off the coast of Normandy, a place where, according to Druidic tradition, another earth-giant once lived. Its foundation as a place dedicated to St Michael was brought about by the Archangel who appeared in a dream to a local bishop, St Aubert, touching him on the forehead and making a hole in his skull to emphasise the reality of the encounter.



Sacra di San Michele in the Italian Alps, a formidable monastery perched on the summit of a mountain guarding the natural route from Italy into France. Again, a vision of St Michael appeared and instructed that a chapel be built in his honour, which grew to become one of the greatest sanctuaries in the region.



Monte Sant' Angelo on the Gargano peninsula of Italy, one of the greatest of all the St Michael shrines, where he was reputed to have personally consecrated a cave deep in the mountain, formerly a dream-oracle to the Earth Goddess.

Situated on a main route to the Holy Land, it was an important stopping-off point for Crusaders and had been famous throughout Europe as possessing a unique property; in the cave was a chasm into which, according to tradition, all the sins of mankind could be cast.



Delphi, the site of Apollo's main sanctuary on the slopes of Mount Parnassus in Greece. Formerly an Oracle to the Earth Goddess, it was here that according to legend the Sun God slew the serpent guardian of the shrine with golden arrows. Believed by the ancients to have been the centre of the world, an Omphalos stone marked the place of the navel of the Earth Goddess.



Athens, with its famous Acropolis dedicated to the Goddess Athena now dominated by the ruined Parthenon. A prehistoric site of great antiquity and spiritual significance, the hill is studded with remains of earlier temples and caves, including one dedicated to Apollo. Still surviving is a Temple to Erichthonios, a half-human, half-serpent godlike being who became the first King of Athens.



Delos, a small island at the centre of the Cyclades, renowned as the birthplace of Apollo. Tethered to the sea floor by Poseidon, it provided refuge for Apollo's mother Leto who travelled the Earth in search of a place to give birth to the Sun God. So sacred that in later times no birth or death was allowed on its soil, it became a place of enormous influence throughout the Mediterranean.

This alignment of ancient sanctuaries dedicated to the Christian and Greek personifications of Light cannot fail to intrigue modern minds and compel us to wonder what such an extraordinary phenomenon could possibly mean. The mystery is deepened further when it is realised that beyond Greece, the line extends to Mount Carmel in the Holy Land, the place where according to Biblical accounts, the Hebrew God Yahweh supplanted the God Baal during a magical battle between the pagan priests and the prophet Elijah.

It seems that this corridor of primordial sacred sites has had a profound influence on the currents of human evolution that have manifested in successive ages. It appears as a channel of spiritual energies determined by Nature itself. But what of Apollo and St Michael?



The similarities suggest that they are in reality different versions of the same archetypal force, symbolised by the Greek Sun God Apollo and the Christian Angel of Light, Michael. Exploring this idea provides us with further clues to the enigma that leads us to a deeper understanding of this most intriguing of mysteries.

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