

# EARTHQUEST NEWS

Andrew Collins and Questing Conference Newsletter Vol. 7, No. 2, Autumn 2004

Just to let you know that Virgin Books have now published my new book TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GRAIL, which is available in shops and from Amazon. Signed copies are available from me either using the website's secure online ordering service or by post. For full details, plus two breakdowns of what the book is about, one long the other briefer, go to [www.andrewcollins.com](http://www.andrewcollins.com).

## CROWLEY'S BACK

In addition to this, I have placed online an article entitled 'Calling Mr Crowley' which outlines my 25 year love-hate relationship with Aleister Crowley, which led in 2001 to the sequence of events that culminated with the Grail quest outlined in TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GRAIL. This is a very personal account, which involves ongoing activities in much of our psychic questing work spanning one entire generation. Yes, it has been that long. In addition to a stunning cover image from Sheerfaith, who produce the artwork for Fields of the Nephilim/Nefilim albums and products, TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GRAIL has a much-appreciated cover quote from Kenneth Grant, the one-time secretary to Crowley, who has just celebrated his eightieth birthday. Happy birthday to you! His theories of communication with non-human intelligences, which follows on from that of Crowley, embraces many psychic questing ideals, something he acknowledged in his latest book THE NINTH ARCH (2003).

## TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GRAIL

The Grail book does away with old out-of-date theories on the nature of this most precious of holy vessels. For instance, it dismisses the medieval stories concerning Joseph of Arimathea coming to these shores bringing with him either the Grail or two cruets containing the blood and sweat of Christ. It shows that the original guardians of the Grail were John the Evangelist, whose symbol is the Poison Chalice out of which emerges the Gnostic serpent of wisdom, and Mary Magdalene, whose vessel containing the spikenard used to anoint Jesus before the Crucifixion, became a container for Jesus's blood. Both individuals, as well as both vessels, merged as one in the Early Church, creating virtually an androgyne figure holding the cup or chalice. Moreover, John's followers might even have seen Mary Magdalene as the writer of the proto-form of the Fourth Gospel, traditionally John's Gospel, which was revered by the Gnostics, Templars and Cathars. In here it refers to the writer only as the Beloved Disciple, who leans upon Jesus's breast during the Last Supper, and witnessed the Crucifixion from the base of the Cross. Although I would not go so far as to accept this hypothesis it at least shows the close relationship between the two figures, who are so intimately concerned with each other in apocryphal lore (their marriage at Cana, their retirement together in Ephesus, their identity as Jesus's Disciple). It was this dual relationship which filtered into renaissance Europe and was exploited by the likes of painters such as Leonardo da Vinci in his The Last Supper and Albrecht Durer.

These ideas form just one small part of the Grail book, which is a personal quest to discover the Holy Grail, which culminates with me becoming guardian of what is arguably the most authentic Grail cup in Britain today. I will leave the story for now, as I don't want to spoil the ending for everyone. All I can say is that book is the first questing style book I have done since THE SECOND COMING back in 1993. It is in hardback format, and since there is no guarantee that it will appear in paperback I do suggest that if you want a copy it is purchased now. Judging by the obscene prices of my other questing books such as THE BLACK ALCHEMIST and THE SEVENTH SWORD, I surmise this would be a worthy investment.

## COMING TALKS

In addition to my presentation on the Holy Grail at the upcoming QuestCon04 (see below), I shall be giving just two talks this year, and both of them are on the subject of the Grail. The first of these is on Tuesday, 12th October at the London Earth Mysteries Circle (LEMC), The Diorama Centre, 34 Osnaugh Street, London NW1 between 7.30 pm and 9pm. Admission is £3.50 for non-members and £2 for members (concessions available). The nearest tube stations are Great Portland Street (4 mins), Regents Park (5 mins) and Warren Street (6 mins). Buses are - 10, 18, 24, 27 29, 30, 73, 134, 135 & C2. For further information contact Rob Stevenson, the LEMC organiser, on [lemc@ic24.net](mailto:lemc@ic24.net)

The second talk will take place at The Book Inn, 49 Broadway West, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, on Thursday, 14th October between 7-9 pm. Admission is £2 (redeemable against the purchase of a copy of TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GRAIL from The Book Inn).. For further information contact the shop on + 44.1702.716614 (01702.716614), email [thebookinn@btconnect.com](mailto:thebookinn@btconnect.com) Tickets will be available from the shop in advance, and I strongly advise you to get one.

#### QUESTCON04

Other than this it should be a quiet autumn making plans for QuestCon04, which will take place on Saturday, 6th November and Sunday, 7th November. The speakers' list remains as given on the flyer and online, with other key speaker/authors from all over the world asking whether they could take part. However, what they don't realise is that these events are planned a year or more in advance, and that I am now booking speakers for 2005. Already I have three top people lined up - two of them novices to the event. No details until next year.

Tickets for QuestCon04 are £30 in advance and £32 on the day (with further breakdowns for those wishing to attend the special Green Stone 25th Anniversary event in the evening). These can be obtained either by credit card from Atlantis Bookshop on +44.1702.405.2120 (0207.405.2120), by secure online ordering service via the website, or direct from me at PO Box 189, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1NF (10 percent discount available for ticket bookings of four or over). Take a look at the website as it is all there, complete with a breakdown of all presentations and the speakers behind them. [www.andrewcollins.com](http://www.andrewcollins.com)

#### ASHES SEQUEL

With the promotion of the GRAIL book and QuestCon04 out the way, I look forward to commencing my next book, which I can exclusively reveal will be the long-awaited sequel to FROM THE ASHES OF ANGELS. Recently, I had the chance with my wife Sue to go to eastern Turkey, former Kurdistan, where we visited what can only be described as the oldest temples in the world. I speak of 11,000 year old megalithic complexes that display a level of sophistication unattested until several thousand years later. A full diary report of our trip there in May-June is soon to be posted online, and this will give you a taster of where exactly I am going next. It is hoped that I can return out there within the next year to complete the research begun already.

#### MOTHMAN, MOUNDS AND MEMPHIS

In addition to going to Kurdistan this summer, Sue and I were also able to spend some quality time in the United States, after I was asked to deliver a key series of talks and meditations on psychic questing at the headquarters of the ARE (Association for Research and Enlightenment), the public branch of the Edgar Cayce Foundation in Virginia Beach, VA. With our friends Greg and Lora Little, we travelled on to Point Pleasant, West Virginia, home of Mothman, before taking time to examine the extraordinary earthworks and mounds constructed by the Hopewell peoples mostly in Ohio and Kentucky during the first millennium BC. From here we went on to Memphis, where Greg and Lora live, and visited Gracelands and Sun Studio. A full account of this trip will be posted online in due course.

#### CAN YOU HELP

Since I shall be going into some specialist fields for my next book, I do require some assistance with certain areas of research, and wondered whether there is anyone out there who might be able to help me about any of the following subjects:

- a) Asian-Indian and East Asian starlore,
- b) the most ancient Chinese records and sacred texts with particular reference to cosmology and star mythology,
- c) Australian aboriginal starlore and cosmology.

#### THE BLACK ALCHEMIST

That's it for the moment. Please excuse me if you have sent me an email or letter over the past few months, as I haven't had the chance to answer any queries. This has stemmed from a preoccupation in other areas, which has set me back almost a year. For this I apologise. I do appreciate receiving correspondence, and do read everything, but only occasionally am I in a position to reply directly.

I also apologise for not having done anything about producing a new version of THE BLACK ALCHEMIST. I simply have not had the time, and can only hope that this will be available to me over the next year or so. I thank the

hundreds of you who have written in asking me to secure them copies. To you I can say only bear with me. One day it will happen. I promise!

Extract from ONE WEEK IN KURDISTAN by Andrew Collins

Finally, so many years after writing a book which identified the mythical Garden of Eden with the geo-political region known as Kurdistan, I was on the way to its northern-western extremity, known today as eastern Anatolia, Upper Mesopotamia or plain south-east Turkey. I had been invited at the very last minute to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> Festival of Culture and Arts in Diyarbakir, the capital city of Turkey's Kurdish region, where I would deliver a key presentation on the human origins of the Watchers, the name given to the angels in Judaeo-Christian texts such as the Book of Enoch, found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some of their number are said to have rebelled against their brethren, who inhabited an elevated realm variously termed Eden, Paradise or Heaven, where the four great rivers of the world were said to have had their source. The rebel Watchers descended among humanity and they took mortal wives, tasted human blood and revealed the forbidden arts and sciences of heaven, including astronomy, metallurgy, divination, the use of weapons, the power of herbs to cure diseases, and how women might beautify themselves, or abort babies. As always, I would argue that this was simply a distorted memory of events surrounding the Neolithic world that began as the climate warmed following the cessation of the last Ice Age sometime around 9500-9000 BC. It is a unique view of prehistory presented for the first time in my books FROM THE ASHES OF ANGELS (1996) and GODS OF EDEN (1998), both recently published in Turkish language editions.

So my wife Sue and I flew out to Turkey on Friday, 28 May, and were met at Diyarbakir's airport, really a well-protected military airbase, by Halil Baynan, a mature student and member of the local office of human rights. He had been appointed our guide and interpreter for the visit, scheduled to last exactly one week. Moreover, he had arranged for us to see whatever historical or archaeological sites that were of interest to my work, an opportunity I had yearned for ever since I started working on ASHES back in 1994. For me, it was a chance in a lifetime, and there was no way that I was not going to use my time wisely.

Clean-faced and quiet, Halil listened to all of our pressing questions as we were whisked off by taxi to Hotel Turistic in Elazığ Caddesi, via a local café cum restaurant, where Sue and I attempted to learn the rudiments of the local Kurdish language, as well as the equivalents in Turkish and Arabic. All three languages are spoken in the region, depending on where exactly you are at the time. However, it is forbidden for Kurdish to be taught any more in schools, and so children and adults must learn it by word of mouth alone.

The situation in Turkish Kurdistan had been a little more stable over the previous five years. Principally, this was down to the Kurdish *peshmerga*, 'freedom fighters', the PKK, announcing an armistice, whereby they laid down their arms and publicly relinquished their call for an independent Kurdistan that would have embraced not only south-eastern Turkey, but also northern Syria, northern Iraq, western Iran and even parts of the Russian republic of Azerbaijan. Even though the Iraqi Kurds managed to attain some autonomy through their valued cooperation with the Allied Coalition in the war against Saddam Hussein, Turkish Kurds are now content to accept that force is no longer the viable option to keep alive their rich and thriving culture. This is now achieved through important events such as Diyarbakir's Festival of Culture and Arts, which helps increase international awareness of Kurdish heritage.

### **Diyarbakir's Archaeological Museum**

Following a bite to eat, which included a yogurt dish and goat's cheese wrapped in local bread, all washed down with copious amounts of *che*, that is black tea taken with sugar, it was on to Diyarbakir's Archaeological Museum. Here, for the first time, we came face to face with physical evidence of Upper Mesopotamia's extraordinary early Neolithic culture, which thrived in this region as early as 9500 BC, thousands of years before its development in other parts of the ancient world. In front of us were two two-metre tall standing stones removed from Çayonu (pronounced *chay-on-u*), a Neolithic site dating back to 7500 BC located some 60 kilometres north of the city. There were originally several such stones found within or around the site's rectilinear rooms and buildings, some even positioned in rows. One of them is said to have represented 'God', *khuda* in Kurdish, although why this should have been seems unclear, since it does not possess an anthropomorphic form.

## Human Sacrifice in the Neolithic

Çayonu is said to have been a centre for the production of beads, mostly of bone, but some of stone, and it was here that some of the earliest known examples of beaten copper objects were found, including a fish hook over 9,000 years old. Also from Çayonu is the earliest known example of a woven piece of fabric, found still attached to an antler bone handle. It too dates to one of the earliest building phases at the site. Yet in the museum's lower level is a grim reminder of Çayonu's more sinister past, for on the floor was the so-called Altar Stone, an enormous flat slab unearthed in a room known as the Skull Building. Here some 500 or more human skulls were found, initially suggesting a veneration for the cult of the dead, yet when blood soaked into the Altar Stone was examined it was found to come from aurochs, sheep and human beings. The discovery close by of a vicious-looking flint dagger seemed to confirm the archaeologists' worst fears that human sacrifice took place here, a disconcerting realisation which, as I mentioned in *GODS OF EDEN*, is never lingered on in excavation reports. Further evidence of human sacrifice has emerged from another Neolithic site in the region named Nevalı Çori (pronounced *nev-ar-li chor-i*), which was located on a terrace in the Hilvan district, some xx kilometres south-east of Diyarbakir, before it was engulfed by the rising waters of the Ataturk reservoir, created by blocking the Euphrates river, back the mid 1990s.

When I mentioned the clear evidence of human sacrifice at Çayonu to an archaeological student we spent time with that week, she was utterly perplexed, and seemed unable to comprehend what I meant. Not only had she never come across this theory before, but she attempted to dismiss it purely on the basis that it seemed abhorrent to the Kurdish way of life. I explained that human sacrifice, and also to a lesser degree cannibalism, was common in ancient times, especially in Central and South America. This might be so, but why, she asked, did a clearly enlightened culture who paved the way for some of the earliest advances in human civilisation, such as astronomy, agriculture, animal husbandry, building construction, fired pottery, microblade production, writing systems, fabric weaving, metallurgy, temple building, etc, etc., need to stoop so low as to sacrifice the life of other human beings?

The answer, I said, was *control*, and *power*. The construction of the various Neolithic temples scattered throughout Upper Mesopotamia would have required some kind of hierarchical system within its basic society. Evidence obtained from the sites implies that there was a ruling elite, preist-shamans, who were seen as the culture's founders, leaders and spiritual guardians. In records from across the Near East they are described as men or gods associated with birds, who wore coats of feathers, usually those of carrion or scavenger birds, most generally the vulture, buzzard or kite, the earliest avian symbols of the death cult. Moreover, from earliest times this elite group were associated with the symbol of the snake, or serpent, which regularly appears in early Neolithic art unearthed in the region. Like the feathered serpents of Mesoamerican tradition, these individuals seem to have controlled the development and evolution of the Neolithic communities across the Near East, and this would have been achieved not necessarily through mutual co-operation, but by fear. In other words, they could offer a lifestyle radically different from the existing hunter-gathering tradition, whereby the peoples of the village communities could be assured an abundance of food and free time to develop artisan skills, and yet this came at a high price. The indigenous peoples would be employed in the construction of the region's remarkable cult centres, or temples, and I surmise that every year, or every so often, individuals would be chosen as sacrificial victims. Who exactly was chosen was dependent on how well the workforce achieved their aims, or adhered to the creed or insistences of their elders. In other words, if you were good, then others less fortunate would lose their lives, but fail in your duties and you would be next in line to disappear.

In this way, they could install in people a real belief that working for them would ensure the security not just of their own life, but also those who depended upon them.

As abhorrent and amoral as this practice might seem, it can be compared almost exactly with the achievements of the Anasazi of the Four Corners country of the southern United States. They built cities with buildings aligned to celestial events, and were considered the most advanced peoples in the country. The Anasazi (Navajo for 'ancient ones') were also the direct descendants of the Hopi, considered among the most enlightened peoples of the New World. However, ample evidence is now available to show that the Anasazi made most of their advancements under the control of a ruling elite of probably Meso-American origin, who practised human sacrifice and cannibalism, meaning that the tribe's entire society was built on fear and not necessarily mutual co-operation.

Unfortunately, fear and control are awesome but terrible weapons which have probably been much of humanity's advancements in this world.