Savitree's Library

Partially Reconstructed Copy of the 1924 Ritual

Savitree's journals-- the recordings of her private thoughts over the past decade-- turn time and time again to the night of the ritual Echavarria performed in Los Angeles in 1924. It was a time of confusion and horror for her, extended by the frenzied flight from Los Angeles to Bangkok which immediately followed and deepened by her belief immediately prior to the ritual that it was the culmination of something wonderful and the opening of a new chapter in her life. Instead, the book of her life was ripped away from her and burned by "selfish men."

More important than the immediate trauma of what happened was the fact that the events of that night upturned her entire view of life:

> *Ramon had been the beginning and the end of my ouroboros. He was the ideal of what I thought all men and women should aspire to be. I believed there was a purity in his limitless drive for power. Now I realize that he was a fool. A careless man. A child playing with matches in a field of tinder.*

Savitree concluded that Ramon had made dangerous mistakes:

> *He stood in communion with the Great Entity. And there was power there. And truths that could transform us into something more than the meager things we are. But to the Great Old Ones we are like ants scattering from an ant-pile. They will not make us one of Them. They will not make us king among men. When we serve, we serve purposes we do not understand and that do not care for us at all. It would have been better if the Thing with a Thousand Mouths had never been summoned at all.*

Even from her earliest journal entries, it's clear that Savitree suspected that Echavarria knew more of the "God of the Black Stone" than he shared with Savitree or her fellow cultists. Her only real key to Echavarria's secret knowledge, especially in those early days immediately after August 1924, was the ritual itself.

Unfortunately, the ritual proved as obscure as the entity at its center. Savitree quickly exhausted the common tomes of such lore and found nothing. It seemed clear that the goal had been to summon (or manifest) Echavarria's God, but there were endless complications upon the basic theme which baffled Savitree's efforts to reconstruct the ritual.

In the afternoon before the ritual had been performed, for example, Savitree had walked around Echavarria's farm, meditating to calm her excitement. She saw that, in addition to the preparations being made in the barn, Echavarria had also placed a circle of stones around the barn with various occult symbols. From what she could later recall of these symbols, they were clearly linked to the inner ritual and were designed in order to control or contain some force. But only in part: there was some other function, connected to the inner ritual, which escaped her understanding.

There was also the oddity of Lev Aarons:

> *Why should he have been chosen? Was it his relationship with Ayers? Ayers was a member of the Inner Circle, yes, but could that favor have spoken so loudly to Ramon? And yet, at the moment of our greatest triumphs, Lev Aarons was singled out above all and Echavarria's spell placed upon him.*

Even more puzzling, however, was the function the spell placed on Lev Aarons had to the rest of Echavarria's ritual. It was not connected in any way to the rites of summoning which had filled the barn with the screams of sacrifices.

The readings from the secret book of the Key of Solomon, combined with the records that Braunlich brought back from the Isle of Pillars, at least serve to confirm that the Thing with a Thousand Mouths is, in fact, at the center of the ritual. Echavarria sought to summon a liar and he concealed much, but it seems he was not lying to us completely.

In 1930, Savitree begins studying the Revelations of Dagon. Shortly thereafter, she appears to have become convinced that the Prisoner of Dagon, who is referenced throughout the Revelations, is a strong candidate for the true identity of what she now calls the Liar From Beyond.

But when she attempts to apply that conclusion to her reconstruction of Echavarria's ritual, she is immediately frustrated:

> *The Revelations are filled with rites of communion and summoning for the Prisoner. But they bear no resemblance to Echavarria's rite! I feel as if the mouths have crawled inside my skull! My brain is consumed with fire! There is truth here. I know there is truth here. But it slips like rotten blood through the fingers. What is the Liar he sought to venerate? And what means of veneration did he seek?*

Frustrated again, there is a gap of nearly half a year in Savitree's work on the ritual. But she returns to it again from time to time thereafter, revisiting it like a familiar friend; a puzzle that she turns over in her hands again and again in the hope that some new combination of patterns will reveal itself to her eyes.

Isle of Pillars (1926)

Following the trail of strange iconography in the Jiangzi Province of China, Savitree discovered a strange account recorded by shipwrecked survivors of the Battle of Lake Poyang in 1363 AD. Their ship was sunk during the third day of battle and they washed ashore on an island. Unfortunately, the island became a no man's land during the Ming's naval siege of the Han Fleet. The siege lasted for more than a month, during which the survivors explored the eldritch island thoroughly in an effort to survive.

Of particular note to Savitree were the strange stone pillars which the survivors said were scattered in seemingly random locations around the island, with a great concentration in a "field of pillars" near the center of the island. The survivors learned to use them for navigation (the island proving quite resistant to navigation), and they recorded some of the symbols that were carved into the pillars (allowing them, with practice, to recognize specific pillars).

Savitree noticed strong correspondences between these symbols and symbols she had seen during Echavarria's ritual in 1924. She dispatched Carsten Braunlich to track down the island in 1926.

Braunlich fully recorded the symbology of the pillars, creating a detailed survey map of the entire island. This record appears to have contributed significantly to Savitree's attempts to reconstruct the 1924 ritual.

In addition to the pillars, however, Braunlich's team found petrified mouths on trees all over the island. He also recorded the archaeological remains of a burned structure, possibly a monastery of some kind, which he tentatively dated to the 8th century AD.

According to Braunlich's reports, several of his workers were killed by wild animals on the island in attacks that left them "partially gnawed." In one instance, a worker claimed to have entered a tent and seen a "bodiless hand" that was eating the face of another worker.

The Black Stone (1927)

Ramon Echavarria often referred to the Great Entity which spoke through its Many Mouths as the "God of the Black Stone." While Braunlich was on an expedition to China in 1926, Savitree finally found a reference to the Black Stone in Otto Dostmann's Remnants of Lost Empires. Dostmann places the Black Stone in Hungary, but he dismisses it as being relatively modern, a remnant of the Hunnish invasion possibly erected to commemorate a victory of Attilla over the Goths.

With the Black Stone possibly located, however, Savitree is able to track down references to it in passages copied from the Dusseldorf edition of the Unaussprechlihen Kulten. The author, von Junzt, does not devote much space to it-- the bulk of his work concerned cults and objects of dark worship which were still active in the 19th century, and it seems that the Black Stone represents some order or being lost and forgotten centuries ago. Von Junzt dismisses Dostmann's "amateurish theory" regarding the Stone, and refers to the Black Stone as "one of the keys" (a phrase whose meaning is occluded).

Savitree was unable to immediately afford the costs of a fresh expedition when Braunlich returned from China, but in the autumn of 1927 she dispatched him to Hungary.

The expedition, however, was unsatisfactory. Braunlich made precise measurements of the Black Stone, but his exploratory digs in the area turned up nothing of interest. He was able to collect bits of strange folklore from the nearest village (Stregoicavar), describing dark and ominous events which the Stone was variously associated with. There were also references to a local trickster figure referred to as "the Fisher from Outside," who is also associated with the Black Stone.

The latter appellation was of great interest to Savitree because it was another of the titles Echavarria used. She was frustrated, however, because she could not draw any connection between the mythology of the Stone and the Great Entity they worshipped in Los Angeles: There were no references in Hungary to mouths or nectar. And there was a certain desperation to her research.

> "I am frightened that the ritual in 1924 may have violated the first principle of the occult: do not call up that which you cannot put down. We have invited some mysterious entity to lurk within the bowels of the earth for purposes we know not what. I must embrace the Nectar, for without its wealth I would not be able to continue my work with Braunlich, and it gives me the strength to continue these labors deep into the night. But I will seek a different flavor. I have found, through accident and experimentation, that Nectar fed on victims of violence in an environment of sadism and barbarity makes the user violent, even when they are no longer using it. I fear what the standard flavor of Nectar may do. Better to be certainly cruel than a slave to the God whose Will I do not understand."

Braunlich's report describes the Stone as such: "Octagonal in shape. Sixteen feet in height. About a foot and a half thick. Signs that it had once been polished, but surface now marred as if efforts had been made to demolish it." He was utterly baffled by the substance of the monolith, which he described as "behaving oddly translucent", but he does record a number of strange characters written in lines which spiral up the monolith, although those too have been heavily damaged. Savitree was unable to relate them to any of the symbols Echavarria used.

Tunguska Crater (1927)

Among Savitree's earliest research notes in the spring of 1925 are references to a legend originating in Ptolemaic Egypt regarding the birth of a volcano. A "mouth of the earth" got into an argument with a farmer or goat-herder (depending on the version of the story). The topic of the argument varies considerably, but in each case the "mouth of the earth" loses the argument and, in a fury, explodes.

Savitree eventually discounted the Ptolemaic origin of the story as a later accretion designed to give the story a sense of antiquity. She instead tracked the story to a period at least two centuries after the death of Cleopatra VII, and in those earliest versions of the story she found even stronger iconography which caused her to believe that the "mouth of the earth" was almost certainly a manifestation of the "many mouths" (Echavarria's Gol-Goroth).

What she couldn't do, unfortunately, was assign a location to the story: the explosion of the Mouth was said to have created a volcano, but there are no volcanoes in Egypt. "Is it possible the myth is not Egyptian at all?" she wrote at one point. "Did it transition from some neighboring nation?" These lines of research, unfortunately, also proved fruitless.

She instead turned her attention to the massive explosion which "ripped the Mouth apart and buried it at once, so that its voice might be stilled and it would shift no more" (as one version of the story, translated from the Arabic, put it).

Searching for similarly apocalyptic explosions, she eventually turned her attention to the Tunguska event of 1908. She became increasingly convinced that this explosion could have been caused by the destruction of a Mouth (although this simultaneously fed into her paranoia regarding the dangers of venerating an unknown entity).

By mid-1926 she had entered into a correspondence with a Russian mineralogist named Leonid Kulik, who she had learned was planning an expedition to the Tunguska region. Kulik was convinced that the Tunguska event had been caused by a meteoric impact, but Savitree was able to convince him to allow Braunlich and his team of ethnologists to join the expedition in order to facilitate communication with the isolated population of the Tunguska region.

Braunlich's true goal, however, was to search for mouth-sign. On a 1921 expedition to the basin of the Podkamennaya River, Kulik had observed thousands of square kilometers of trees which had been flattened by the explosion. The scope of the incident suggested an "unconstrained" version of the explosion described in the Egyptian myths, and if that was the case Savitree thought it likely that Braunlich would be able to find petrified mouths on the fallen trees of Tunguska, as he had found in China the year before.

The reports Braunlich sent back from the 1927 expedition, however, made it clear that there was no mouth-sign to be found. The local Evenki hunters proved obstinately reluctant. They apparently believed that the blast had been a visitation from the god Ogdy and that the land was now cursed. Ogdy's "shout" originally interested Braunlich, but he eventually dismissed the claims as local superstition.

After several false starts, Braunlich's ethologists were able to convince a local Evenki guide to lead Kulik and the rest of the team into the interior of the blast zone. But once there, a significant rift opened up between Kulik's and Braunlich's teams. Kulik and his men were becoming strangely secretive, and they were once witnessed entering a cave complex which Braunlich's team was unable to approach due to seemingly paranoid territoriality. There were also unreliable reports that Kulik's team may have been removing material from the cave complex.

It was around this time that the disappearances began. No bodies were found and, in several cases, it appeared that the missing persons had simply wandered off into the snow. Kulik thought that some sort of "hypothermic paradoxical undressing" was to blame but Braunlich was skeptical. Hal Becker, Braunlich's head of security, eventually captured a strange Old Man patrolling the area. Becker was convinced that the Old Man was responsible for the murders and found his claims to be a surviving member of a 1908 expedition to the area to be ludicrous.

Braunlich met privately with the Old Man for a little over half an hour. At the end of that time, Braunlich came stumbling out of the tent they were holding the Old Man in. Several members of the team claim that he was mumbling about a "Black Thing." Braunlich apparently collected several firearms and left camp. His body was found the next morning, crushed between two of the fallen trees. During the night, the Old Man had somehow escaped. Becker mounted a search for him that ultimately proved unsuccessful (although some of the searchers reported "strange luminosities emanating from the direction of Lake Cheko").

The Oracles of Sebek

According to Savitree's research, the Oracles of Sebek were recovered from the Temple of Montu by Fernand de la Roque during his expedition to Karnak in 1925.

The presence of Sebek imagery in the Temple of Montu is anomalous, but Savitree's scholarship draws a sharp association between the iconography of the crocodile-headed Sebek and the hawk- or bull-headed Montu. From this, she draws the conclusion of a secret order within both priesthoods that "listened to the whispers of the unseen mouth."

This immediately arrests her attention and she draws upon disparate sources in tracking the "secret halls of Karnak." When she becomes aware of the oracles in 1926, she hires a man named Carsten Braunlich to secure them from de la Roque.

Providing her own translations of key passages from the Oracles (based on theories regarding how the secret priesthood encoded true meaning within obscure texts), Savitree was drawn to key passages concerning the "binding of

the angles of Tagh-Clatur.” Extremely complicated stellar cartography is used to indicate two precise points in “mirrored time.” Each is a period of 117 years in which specific rites (not detailed within the Oracles) must be performed at a “sacred isle” whose location is given in relation to “the lake of starfall” (which is also referred to as “the throbbing worldheart”).

Savitree was unable to identify the periods of time or the locations indicated in the text and she appeared to eventually lose interest in the Oracles around 1929.

Hang Maden (1929)

In 1927, Savitree began a correspondence with Frederick Jones, an associate curator at the British Museum. They quickly built a remarkable rapport and began working closely together in the study of Savitree’s material. Jones was convinced that the Thing with a Thousand Mouths cannot be Gol-Goroth: “Look to the Legendary of Bal-Sagoth,” he wrote in one letter. “The altar of Gol-Goroth is described in the Fragments and it bears no mouth. Nor does he corrupt the flesh of his chosen people, instead demanding pure and unadulterated sacrifices.”

By late 1928, Savitree agreed with him. “If my studies of the Black Stone have yielded any fruit, it is that Gol-Goroth does not seek a summons to our world. He forges bridges of his own and brings his chosen people unto himself. And from what I have reconstructed of Echavarria’s ritual, there is no doubt that it was not aimed at any servitor. He sought no Son or Daughter of the Thing with a Thousand Mouths, but rather sought to clothe the Thing itself in mortal flesh.”

Savitree, therefore, turned away from seeking lore of Gol-Goroth and instead focused on the much more difficult task of tracing the known properties of the Thing with a Thousand Mouths.

Her attention was drawn to Vietnamese legends surrounding Hang Maden, a cave in the Quang Binh Province. These legends were strictly local in character and had thus attracted little attention outside of Vietnam, but Savitree established a correspondence with the Duchess Anne Marie von Havener, the author of Drei Jahre in Vietnam. The countess had recounted a number of local myths, including one about helpful forest spirits who would manifest in the form of animated mouths (which was what had attracted Savitree’s attention in the first place). The story of Hang Maden had not been published, but the countess shared her accounts with Savitree.

Hang Maden is the Cave of Black Specters. The spirits of the cavern are said to belong to the “grandfathers of the grandfathers” from a time “before our skins were lightened or the hills were walked.” The spirits are said to be capable of granting immense and powerful favors, but always with a horrific price attached (Countess Anne Marie describes it as a “quaint depiction of Mephistopheles” in her notes). In fact, it is said that they cannot manifest or “touch the world” beyond the “heart of their cavern” unless given agency by a human hand or until such a time as “all the suns have turned in the sky.” By granting them agency through your flesh, you grant them the power to make your dreams come true.

What attracted Savitree’s attention, however, was the ruou tien, the “white milk of the cavern,” which is also described as the “nectar” of the specters. The countess elided her recounting of the stories surrounding the behavior of those who consumed the Nectar (describing it only as “unspeakable cruelties”), but what she was willing to hint at in her letters to Savitree was highly suggestive of the sort of power-hungry cruelty characteristic of the Mouth’s honey.

In 1929, Savitree hired Frederick Jones to replace Carsten Braunlich, who died in 1927, and officially formed the Emporium of Bangkok Antiquities under his leadership. Arriving from England in April 1929, Jones quickly organized an expedition and departed for Vietnam in August of that year.

Jones’s journey inland from the coast was plagued by outbreaks of intransigent malaria among his porters, but he persevered and eventually confirmed the stories collected by the countess. Hang Maden itself, however, proved a disappointment. Jones described “vast, bleak halls of unrelenting darkness. At times it is almost impossible to believe that we remained confined within the cave. It seems as if we have instead wandered out upon the broken plains of some alien world where the sky lacks the fire of the stars.” His team explored literally miles of labyrinthine corridors studded with massive cavities in which entire skyscrapers could be raised. In one such chasm, a “slit of roof” had

collapsed and in the “light which creeped through that distant sliver” a “swelling, impossible growth of tangled jungle had erupted within the cavern itself.”

But Jones found neither specters nor any sign of the Thing with a Thousand Mouths. Furthermore, his inquiries among the locals regarding their myths failed to reveal any particulars matching the ethnography they had hoped to find. If the ruou tien did exist, Jones concluded, it had nothing to do with the Mouth.

Wind Cave (1930)

Savitree’s interest in Hang Maden (the Cave of Black Specters) excited a general interest in mammoth caves all around the world. The Thing with a Thousand Mouths must manifest as it does-- must consume as it does-- because of an insatiable hunger. “That which the Mouth eats does not remain with the flesh of the Mouth. It is taken by the Thing and digested in some more-than-mortal Maw. If one would seek the truth of the Thing, one must find the Maw. And to find the Maw, one must follow the gullet.”

Savitree believed that the 1924 summoning ritual had caused the Maw to physically manifest-- or perhaps transdimensionally manifest-- somewhere “beneath the bosom of the Earth.” It followed, therefore, that there might be a physical path to “the Maw which is the Thing itself; the dissolution of all things.” And Savitree became convinced that the “passage to the Maw” was a cave or could be found within a cave.

Amidst a general survey of the great caverns of the world, Savitree became fascinated with Wind Cave in South Dakota upon observing that the boxwork mineral structures within the cavern exhibited “patterning similar to the scarification inflicted on those with lesser mouths.” Furthermore, the cave itself was known to “breathe”: a regular cycle of inhalations and exhalations over the course of days.

She traced the history of the cave through the myths of the Lakota and the Cheyenne, discovering that “much had been obfuscated through cycles of repetition.” From various fragments preserved across multiple stories, however, she managed to tease out the image of the “cave’s bite” (taking, in one case, the form of “malformed wolves” who emerge from the cave). Certainly there was a general caution to be found against anyone entering the cave for fear it would “swallow” them. And there was the pattern of mysterious disappearances in the 1890s and again around 1915.

In 1930, Jones organized an exhibition of the Emporium of Bangkok Antiquities to investigate the cavern for Savitree. He consulted the 1902 United States Wind Cave Survey (USWCS) to plan his spelunking, but by 1930 the upper reaches of the cave were swarmed with tourists and the Civilian Conservation Corps were, in fact, already making a trail system to make these areas even more accessible. If there was anything hidden within Wind Cave, Jones knew it would be within the unexplored depths. (And there was, in fact, a curious reticence for further surveying among the government officials who had assumed control of the cave in 1913 under the auspices of making it a national park.)

Jones gained an academic permit under the pretenses of investigating primitive cave paintings. (Although none had been recorded in Wind Cave, Jones used his studies of Lakota legends to present a strong case that they might exist, even going so far as to assert that indicative ‘entrance paintings’ had been deliberately obliterated by the McDonald family in the 1880s.)

As they pushed into the depths of Wind Cave, the team’s mineralogist-- Professor Milo Kaufer-- began recording incredible speleothems he called “frostworks.” Bearing the appearance of ice crystals, the brilliantly white acicular growths of the frostworks were formed from some form of aragonite or perhaps calcite. Professor Kaufer, however, was baffled by the mechanism of their formation and by the small egg-like nodules which often accompanied them. Over time, however, he became convinced that the frostworks were emanating from some location deeper within the cave.

Following Professor Kaufer’s hunch, the team eventually reached a formation they referred to as the “Pharynx”: a black, almost circular gash in the rock through which the “chilled breath of the cave” was strong and fast. Rather than immediately passing through the Pharynx, Jones decided to pull back for the day and resupply. That night, Kaufer reported strange dreams “through which blue-white shadows danced.” In the morning, they found Hal Becker’s body. It appeared that he had overindulged and wandered away from the campsite and into a crevasse.

Becker’s death delayed a return to the cave, in no small part because a number of locals (particularly those of native descent) were increasingly opposed to the team’s exploration for some reason. Jones eventually hired Joan Kramer, a local woman, to replace Becker and secure their camp against vandalization.

A week later, Jones decides to permanently solve the problem by establishing a base camp within the cave itself, choosing for his location a large cavity on the far side of the Pharynx. Once situated in the new base camp, however, Kaufer’s dreams grew more frequent and he began experiencing seeming hallucinations while studying rock formations. In his journal he wrote, “I had the sense of a negative extrudence which pushed into our world. In the recesses of the cave there is a photo negative of reality: light becomes the absence and the darkness etches out the sharp-edged curves of all that is.” Then the camp watchers reported seeing blue lights in the darkness beyond their lights. And there are the dim, haunting suggestions of voices which “drift up on the chilled breath.”

In mid-August, Jones made a final effort to discover the Maw within Wind Cave, taking a small team to “follow the howl of the wind.” The team is assaulted by “hiemal wights.” Jones and several others are killed. The remnants of the team are forced to flee, eventually escaping through a small cave opening near the base of the Elk Mountain, “the breath of that dark abyss blowing stiffly on their backs.” Without any clear leadership left, they flee the area, narrowly avoiding the inquiries of local officers of the law.

With further research, Savitree concludes that the entities within Wind Cave are chillbanes, the existence of which she finds attested among certain obscure Norse eddas (as well as other places). Satisfied that everything mystical about Wind Cave can be laid at their feet, she dismisses it as being of no further interest.

Catacombs of the Pompeii Basilica (1931)

In tracing the Vietnamese legends which eventually led her to the Cavern of Black Specters, Savitree found a version of the tale recorded in the chronicles of a Vietnamese order of Vigencian monks. Their specific recounting of the story revealed little, but what struck Savitree about the 1890s chronicle was the familiarity it showed with the same depths of hidden mystery and dark history she was plumbing.

She tracked the obscure order back to its original monastery in Le Vigen, France. Studying its earliest records, she discovered that its founders had come from Syria and that they used Saint Alexius of Rome, patron saint of hunger, as a mask for their secret worship of the Thing with a Thousand Mouths. The Vigencians specifically used a two-faced depiction of Saint Alexius, and Savitree was able to use this iconography to track down a variety of illuminated manuscripts which had been created by the monks.

Encoded within the manuscripts, she discovered a secret lore: the Vigencians had begun their history as pre-Christian practitioners of the occult in ancient Rome. Persecuted by the Roman authorities, the elders of the cult had fled to Syria and only returned to western Europe c. 960 AD when Ali Saif al-Daula, the Emir of Aleppo, drove them out.

The medieval Vigencians recorded caches of secret lore which had been left to “await them” when the order had fled Rome. Savitree, however, was only able to identify the location of one of these caches: the catacombs of the Pompeii Basilica. And although the basilica had been excavated from the volcanic ruins in the 19th century, no catacombs had been discovered.

Under the new leadership of Mariam Soliman, a doctoral graduate of Oxford College, the Emporium of Bangkok Antiquities was dispatched to Pompeii in 1931. Obfuscating the true nature of their excavations within the ruins was difficult and the initial location which Savitree thought she had identified proved to be wrong, further delaying their work.

Soliman, however, noted that there were several peculiarities in the pre-Vitruvian construction of the basilica. She studied several columnar reliefs within the basilica’s nave and combined them with Savitree’s research to ascertain the true location of the Vigencians’ hidden catacombs. Finally, in November of 1931, Soliman broke through into the subterranean chambers.

Unfortunately, much of the lore of the early Mouth cult had been destroyed. Papyri had been rendered to ash-hardened carbon. Wax tablets liberated from the library of Ashurbanipal had simply melted away.

Some material did survive, however, the most significant of which were strange orrery stelae looted from Egypt. Soliman's notes (and later Savitree's) are able to correlate them to known celestial cartography, but a vast quantity of "dark stars" have been included which cannot be viewed in the night sky. Soliman postulates that these are, perhaps, distant stars that could only be observed through powerful telescopes (although this would suggest that the Egyptians were possessed of astronomical technology far beyond any known to them). Savitree, however, seems to intimate that these "dark stars" are of a wholly different character.

Mount Ararat (1932)

In her collection of rare occult tomes, Savitree came into possession of a rare copy of *The Key of Solomon* in a Greek text purportedly translated directly from the Babylonian. Although she obtained the book in 1928, it sat on her shelf largely undisturbed as an occult curiosity. It was only in 1931 that she realized that the book contained not only the commonly known Book I and Book II of The Key of Solomon but also a previously unknown Book III.

Fraud or perhaps the ancient accretion of some other book of lore were the most likely culprits, of course, but as Savitree translated the text she discovered that it dealt almost entirely with the summoning of *eidola ton stomon.* Phantom mouths.

Although the *eidola ton stomon* do not seem to have exactly the same properties or behavior as the mouths manifested by Echavarria and his successors, Savitree discovered that the summoning rituals described shared several key points in common with the summoning ritual Echavarria performed in 1924. Unfortunately, the rituals are also frustratingly incomplete, requiring-- like much of *The Key of Solomon*-- an additional key or cypher to unlock.

Savitree also paid close attention to the Key's strict warnings regarding the mouths: they were liars and could not be trusted unless you knew the identity of "the master above them" and used it to bind him (using combinations of the demon-binding rituals found in Book I of *The Key of Solomon*). The identity of the Master of the Mouths is, of course, left as a mystery, most likely confined to the same lock text as the ritual keys.

The book claims that its lore regarding the *eidola ton stomon* is venerably derived from "the teachings of Noah, from those who spoke to the Nephilim." It tells of the legendary peak, the Precious Jewel on which hung a "Wreath of Mouths." During the time before the Flood, the "nectar of bliss" was said to flow down the sides of the mountain and the air was filled with truth through the songs of the *eidola ton stomon.* In its descriptions of that time, *The Key of Solomon* waxes Biblical in its condemnations of the wickedness of the people, their greed and impiety and pride and disregard for the poor and helpless.

God grew angry at the sins of the world and flooded it. The Great One and its many Mouths drank the water of the flood and drowned. To show the completeness of His victory, God had His chosen survivors on their ark land on the very mountain which the Great One had once conquered.

By 1932, Savitree was convinced that the Precious Jewel had, at the very least, been a prehistoric site of worship for the Liar from Beyond. And it even seemed likely that it might be the true site of the Maw itself. Furthermore, *The Key of Solomon* gave her enough information to identify its likely location: Mount Ararat, the mountain where (tradition holds) Noah's Ark landed.

Under the leadership of Mariam Soliman, the Emporium of Bangkok Antiquities mounted an expedition to Mount Ararat in 1932. Their team climbed a number of faces of the mountain, but they found no mouth-sign, nor did they find any evidence of cavities or cave-works within the peak. Joan Kramer became increasingly convinced there was something "odd" about a sort of rift near the northwest side of the mountain and mounted repeated climbs in the area, which ultimately found nothing.

Soliman herself was not particularly enthused by these sorts of physical exertions, and she spent much of her time performing a wider anthropological and archaeological survey of the area. With the assistance of Inaaya Khadpo, a “mystical expert,” she was able to locate several ancient, heavily worn tombs in an isolated rift a few miles from the mountain. When Soliman excavated them, she found sealed caskets of lead. Most of the caskets were found to contain only dust, but inside of one she found the partial remains of a mouth carved from stone. Unfortunately, the stone of the mouth turned out to be extremely fragile (most likely from age, or perhaps from some environmental condition within the tomb) and it crumbled to dust shortly after the casket was opened.

Based on the reports from the Emporium’s team, Savitree’s final conclusion was that Mount Ararat was a dead end. It was even possible that her identification of the mountain was incorrect: while the Bible says Noah landed in the mountains of Ararat, scholars believe the Ark could be anywhere in that mountain range. She was as far from the Maw as she had ever been.

Sunken City of Nan Madol (1933)

Increasingly desperate to identify the Liar from Beyond, in 1932 Savitree reinterpreted certain rites within her rare copy of The Key Of Solomon to enrich several doses of Nectar. She took the enriched Nectar to “the Great Mouth in the sewers directly beneath the Phikhat Hwan” and consumed it in meditation before “the majesty of the Mouth.” The enriched Nectar caused her “mouth to split,” which she describes as doubling her jeopardy, but it also “turned her vision” through the Great Mouth, granting (as she had hoped) visions of its other sites of worship throughout history.

Of these visions, however, Savitree only succeeded in tracking down one with enough specificity to follow up on it. She had seen two tall, gray-skinned brothers with a curiously inhuman character to their features carrying the remains of a Great Mouth on a long sea voyage. She identified these figures as Olisihpa and Olsohpa, the legendary sorcerers who founded the Saudeleur Dynasty of the Pohnpeian people of Micronesia.

According to Pohnpeian legends, the twin sorcerers come from Kanamwayso, the “kingdom of glittering splendor” which had been destroyed by falling stars and earthquakes and sunk to the bottom of the sea. Arriving at the island of Pohnpei, Olisihpa and Olisohpa created a city in a single night, using a “flying dragon” to levitate huge stones and raise mighty walls of basalt. The brothers named the city Soun Nan-Leng (the Reef of Heaven) but the Pohnpeians named it Nan Madol (which means “the spaces between”).
Something went wrong either during or shortly after the building of Nan Madol, and Olisihpa died of “old age.” Olisohpa became the first Saudeleur. Under the Sixteen Saudeleurs, the Pohnpeians conquered a vast empire of islands. The wisdom of the Saudeleurs was spread through the empire, and cities modeled upon Nan Madol were constructed in many locations.

And in the heart of each of those cyclopean cities, Savitree believed, a Great Mouth held court.

The Pohnpeians believe that if they tell everything they know, they will die. As a result, they guard their knowledge very carefully. In addition, many threads of their oral tradition were broken by the smallpox epidemics which blighted their populations in the mid-nineteenth century. But according to the oral histories which survive, as recorded by German ethnologist and archaeologist Paul Hambruch during his 1910 expedition, the Sandeleurs became corrupted by their “secret voices” and grew ever more isolated in the inner recesses of their basalt citadels, “afraid to show their bare flesh to those they held in contempt.” According to those histories, a great hero named Idzikolkol raised a rebellion which “purified” the city of Lelu on the island of Kosrae. Crowned under the royal name of Isokelekel (the “shining noble”), Idzikolkol rallied the other cities and eventually laid siege and war upon Nan Madol itself. The Pohnpei remained a great people, but the rule of the Sandeleur and their “hidden mouths” (a “sycophantic class of nobility,” Hambruch explains) was broken forever.

In 1933, an expedition to Nan Madol was mounted through the Emporium of Bangkok Antiquities. They sought the lost Tomb of the Twin Sorcerers. As Savitree suspected, Soliman discovered that the original construction of Nan Madol extended far beyond the ruins which remained today. A number of underwater expeditions were mounted. Soliman was upset with the destructive nature of these expeditions (as artifacts raised from the water did not survive long after exposure to air), but they were successful in pointing towards several possible sites for the Tomb, which was eventually located within Nindol, the rounded central hill of Temwen Island.

Within the Tomb, Soliman and her team found the petrified remains of a Great Mouth, a startling confirmation of the ancient worship of the Thing with a Thousand Mouths which had been hinted at in Vietnam. A vast quantity of inscriptions were found on the walls of the Tomb. Unfortunately, the name of the entity which had been worshipped by the Twin Sorcerers had been blotted out and replaced with the seal of Isokelekel whenever it appeared, apparently in the belief that this would lock away the power which had been venerated here.

Savitree appears to have been consumed with rage that “such precious knowledge would be lost to the petty superstitions of SAVAGES.” But the inscriptions recorded by Soliman from the Tomb were invaluable, and she worked to salvage what she could from the travesty. The most promising of the lines of inquiry she pursued were similarities between the inscriptions on the Tomb and the Revelations of Dagon.

RITE OF NECTAR ENRICHMENT

This rite enriches Nectar, creating a potent drink which gives the imbiber “the view of God.”

- Small Dose: The drinker gains a bonus die to Spot Hidden. The drinker automatically notices all potential trouble within range. (This may require SAN checks if the drinker perceives horrible things tracking them through the soft planes of local geometry.)
- Large Dose: The Nectar rotates the imbiber’s perception almost entirely out of this reality. In some cases this rotation takes place along a temporal axis, debinding the drinker’s perceptions from linear time. In other cases, particularly when consumed at places of transdimensional weakness, the Nectar can grant living visions of distant and alien worlds.
- Cost: 20 magic points to enrich. 0/1D4 SAN and 2 magic points to take a large dose; 1/1D3 and 1 magic point for a small dose.
  Time: Enriching Nectar takes a week. Imbibing takes one round and can be done while fleeing. Small dose lasts for POW / 5 hours. Large dose lasts for a similar amount of time from the perception of the imbiber, but from others’ perspective may be instantaneous or last as much as ten times longer.

Great Sandy Desert of Australia

In May 1934, Mariam Soliman was contacted by Stirling Henry, a former colleague from Oxford College who was now living in Perth, Australia. Henry was writing because of Soliman’s “professed interest in any archaeological oddities that might cross my path.” It seemed that a mining engineer from Port Hedland named Robert B. F. Mackenzie had been knocking on the doors of anyone and everyone in Perth trying to drum up interest in ten or twelve photographs that he had taken of “cyclopean stone blocks” out in the vast middle of the Great Sandy Desert of Australia.

If it were not for the photographs, this report (like many others) would have had little interest for Savitree. But in the damnably faint impressions left on the age-sheered stone, Savitree found clear parallels to the odd stone carvings and “little red men” described in Victor Hill’s Legendry and Customs of Invermere. Although located on the opposite side of the globe, was it possible that Mackenzie’s stone blocks were related to the same lore that had given rise to the Revelations of Dagon and therefore could lead to the identity of the Liar from Beyond?

Follow-up inquiries revealed that Savitree was not the only party to become interested in Mackenzie’s claims. In fact, Miskatonic University in Massachusetts was planning a major expedition to the region and Mackenzie was coordinating closely with them.

Much as she had done with Leonard Kulik in ‘27, Savitree reached out to the Miskatonic University team in an effort to join their expedition, which was aiming for a departure date in the spring of 1935. She is currently in contact with Professor William Dyer of the college’s geology department.

Invermere

The stelae recovered from Pompeii in 1931 were damaged and the dark star orreries they contained were, frustratingly, fragmented. However, they contained enough information that Savitree was able to begin unravelling the complicated

stellar cartography which had previously thwarted her attempts to interpret the Oracles of Sebek.

The incomplete nature of the orreries frustrated her attempts to pinpoint the specific time periods references in the Oracles, but she believed she had identified the “lake of starfall” as Deepfall Lake, a meteoric lake located on Westray in the Orkney Islands archipelago. Using her identification of Deepfall Lake, she was further able to identify a small island not far from Westray, on which lies the town of Invermere, as the “sacred isle” at which the Oracles proclaimed the “white stone must be risen.”

Given the known history of the Oracles and the rites which they describe, Savitree was fairly certain that these sites in Scotland were not, in fact, related to the Liar from Beyond and prioritized an expedition to Micronesia instead.

In 1930, however, she had obtained a copy of the Revelations of Dagon. Through a series of elaborate cross-references across all nine volumes of the Revelations, Savitree built a strong case that the Prisoner of Dagon-- a mysterious figure who reoccurred multiple times throughout the text-- was a close match for the Liar from Beyond. That-- though he had been summoned-- the Liar from Beyond was still crippled by the Wall which had been built by Dagon to circumscribe him.

By 1933, therefore, Savitree was attempting to ascertain the true origins of the Revelations of Dagon, hoping to discover more lore concerning the Prisoner of Dagon. These two lines of inquiry crossed paths when she encountered Victor Hill’s Legendry and Customs of Invermere (1896):

> Perhaps one of the most overlooked resources concerning the queer myths which cling to Invermere is the Revelations of Dagon… Although largely incoherent, seemingly written by some addict of opium or perhaps as a romantic experimental piece, much of the imagery of the Revelations seems drawn from Invermere and the island of Westray. Most notably, it seems to grow out of the odd body of meteor-crazed legends that sprang up in the late 18th century around the location of Deepfall Lake, where a variety of local storytellers all seemed to spontaneously claim that an apocryphal meteor had fallen there… These varied images may be ascribed to mere happenstance, but an ethnographic study of the text suggests that there are a preponderance of locations relating to Invermere and its immediate surroundings, making it likely that the author or authors were familiar with the area and, most likely, native to it.

If the Sebekian “lake of starfall” were somehow connected to the creation of the Revelations of Dagon (or the lore behind the Revelations) then it might be the key that will finally unlock the identity of the Liar From Beyond. From her notes, it is clear that Savitree has made preparations for an expedition to Westray, with a particular interest in both Deepfall Lake and the Isle of Invermere.

Revision #1
Created 2021-12-24 16:53:28 UTC by sphinx
Updated 2021-12-24 17:13:16 UTC by sphinx