WORMWOOD: ORION’S IMPENDING “SUPERNova BETELGEUSE”

by Gary A. David
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[Note: The following essay is a continuation in a different vein
of my previous essay titled “Seeing Red: Will Betelgeuse Go Supernova in 2012?”

Part 1: Alpha Orionis to Omega Terra

“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it
were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of
waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the
waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were
made bitter.” Revelation 8:10–11

This famous passage from the Bible identifies Wormwood as a large star that will fall upon
the earth in the End Times, poisoning the waters. During the course of this essay I will explore
the possibility that this stellar body may refer to Betelgeuse (Alpha Orionis), the right shoulder
of Orion. I cite examples of its importance in primarily the Mayan, Hopi, Hebrew, Egyptian,
Hindu, and Tibetan cultures. In the second part of the essay, I will discuss the role that the metal
copper plays in regard to this constellation.

Wormwood is mentioned many times in the scriptures, usually in the context of bitterness,
and is frequently linked with gall. This metaphorical meaning refers to the plant Artemisia
absinthium, the leaves of which are particularly bitter. Thus, wormwood (lower case) signifies
bitter sorrow and calamity.

The Hebrew word for wormwood is la’anah, which literally means “curse.”¹ The Akkadian
word Uri-anna, or “Light of Heaven,” refers, significantly perhaps, to Orion.²

Another biblical reference to wormwood includes a reference to Orion in the same sentence.

“And The Lord saith, Because they have forsaken My Law which I set before
them, and have not obeyed My Voice, neither walked therein; But have walked
after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: Therefore thus saith The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them.” Jeremiah 9:13–16

The term Baalim, referring to biblical “false gods,” is the plural of Ba’al, which was the Phoenician god of the rain, thunder, fertility, and agriculture. The name literally means “master” or “lord.” Baal was also the Canaanite storm god.3

Ba’al stele from Ugarit (Ras Shamra, Syria).  
142 cm. high, circa 18th-15th century BCE, Louvre.  
He raises a club in his right hand and holds a sprouting spear in his left hand instead of a shield or lion’s skin like that of Orion (see below).  
A sword is attached to his belt. Note the waves beneath his feet.
In his excellent essay “The God With the Upraised Arm,” author Greg Taylor makes the case for the specific physical stance of Orion as being exemplified in artifacts and monuments from Egypt through the Fertile Crescent to Anatolia. The classic pose that we associate with the constellation—upraised weapon in right hand, left foot forward, left arm extended, etc.—was apparently known throughout the Old World (and, as noted in my previous essay, in the New World as well.)

Orion in bronze armor with cudgel and sword. The river Eridanus is at his left foot.

In the three biblical passages cited above, we see three consistent themes: [1] wormwood (a star or a plant), [2] water (on earth as polluted or in the sky as rain), and [3] the constellation Orion (or its deific variations, such as Baal).

As previously mentioned, the right shoulder of Orion is Betelgeuse, which astrophysicists have recently determined may soon turn into a supernova. (For more on this, read my online essay “Seeing Red: Will Betelgeuse Go Supernova in 2012?” linked at the beginning of this essay.) The Arabic term for the star is yad al-jawzā, which means either “hand of the central one” or “armpit of the central one”—i.e. Orion. Another Arabic term is Bait al-Jauza, or “house of the central one.”

Astrologer Alan Oken refers to “strong-armed Betelgeuse,” which was the primary star in Babylonian constellation Ungal, or “the King.” This indicates the regal or imperial nature of Orion.

The Persian name for Betelgeuse is Bašn, or simply “the Arm.” The Hindi term for this star, Bahu, also means “arm.” “In Punjabi, Hindi and Sanskrit languages, the meanings of Bahu are: Arm, Strength, The one who has [the] right. It also contains the meanings of: One who helps and gives support. In Persian language, the meanings of Bahu are: The one who remains with God.”
The Sanskrit term *Bahu* denotes “arm” too, but it has a few alternate denotations: “many, abundant, numerous” and also “mighty, large, great.” It can additionally refer to the “post of a door” or the “bar of a chariot-pole.”

Hindu astrology identifies Betelgeuse as located in the *nakshatra* (lunar mansion) of *Ardra*, literally meaning “moist one,” with its presiding deity being Rudra, the red storm god. Its symbol is a teardrop or a human head. Here we see another of our criteria, water.

The particular notion of defiled water can be found in the very name Orion. “It is named ‘Orion’ from urine (*urina*), that is, from a flood of waters, for it rises in the winter season, and troubles the sea and the land with waters and storms.”

As we have seen, many of the terms from diverse cultures referring to the stalwart star Betelgeuse begin with the prefix *ba-*: *Bait al-Jauz*, *Bašn*, *Bahu*. It is therefore interesting to see the number of revelant terms in the Mayan language.

- *batab* – “chief, leader”
- *bal-kab-winik* – “man”
- *bateel* – “soldier”

These terms are completely consistent with the character of Orion as warrior, giant, and ruler. On the other hand, a number of other Mayan terms containing *ba* are associated with water, especially in the form of thunderstorms.

- *tzabal-ha* – “to rain”
- *kil-ba* – “thunder”
- *lemba* – “lightning”
- *baab* – “to swim”

Other Mayan words point to a variation of the tool that Orion employs as well as the result of its usage.

- *baat* – “ax”
- *bah-ab* – “hammer”
- *bah* – “to nail”
- *bak* – “bone”
- *baq* – “meat”

The last term here, *baq*, alternately refers to the number 400. This reinforces the Sanskrit term *Bahu*, which means “numerous.”

A few other Mayan *ba*-terms seem oddly appropriate in this context.

- *qaba* – “name”—a homonym of the Kaba, the black cube in Mecca, the most sacred site in Islam. (This geometric shape will be discussed in Part 2 of this essay.)
- *bal-kah* – “world,” which is sometimes represented by a square.
- *balam* – “tiger” or “puma”—more specifically, a jaguar?

It is worth remembering that the ancient Egyptian word *ba* meant “soul.” In addition, the name Ba referred to the Ram-god of virility. Note the ram horns on the stele of Ba’al pictured
above. Bār is the actual name the Egyptians used for the Phoenician god, who was sometimes identified with the Egyptian god Set. Futhermore, Ba alternately designated the Leopard-god, which resonates with the Mayan term for feline, *balam*.

The Egyptian word *bah* referred to “phallus of a man or animal.” The word *bahu*, homonym of the Hindi/Sanskrit term for Betelgeuse, meant “men” or “people.” The word *baba* meant “drink” or “liquid”, while the word *bāh* referred to both “flood, inundation” and “lion” — the latter again being associated with the Mayan word *balam*.

The syllables *ba* and *pa* are very close linguistically and are sometimes interchangeable. Two Mayan *pa*-terms denote the male and highlights Orion’s extreme masculinity.

- *pal* – “boy”
- *tepal* – “ruler”

The Mayan word *paak*, which means “square things, things with four edges,” corresponds to the Arabic term *Bait*, or “house.” The Mayan term *pakab* refers to “lintel.” This may obliquely correspond to the Sanskrit *Bahu* in its definition as “doorpost.”

In the ancient Egyptian lexicon, *pa* meant “to exist,” while *pā* meant “ancestor.” It also had the meaning of “flame, fire, spark”—the scintillation of the star mentioned in Revelation, which will burn like a lamp. On the other hand, *pa-t* referred to “liquor, drink,” which, depending on the potency, can also burn.

Considering the Tibetan *pa*-words, we find that the term for “wormwood” is *khan-pa*. The Red Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism is headed by the Karmapa (*karma-pa*, as opposed to the Yellow Hat sect headed by the Dalai Lama). In 1974 the 16th Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpei Dorje (1924–1981), visited the United States, including the Hopi Nation in Arizona, where he performed a number of sacred rituals.
He was fulfilling an 8th century prophecy given by Padmasambhava, founder of Tibetan Buddhism. (Note the first syllable of his name.) “When the iron bird flies [airplanes] and the horse runs on wheels [cars], the Tibetan people will be scattered like [red?] ants across the face of the Earth, and the Dharma [doctrines and teachings of Buddhism] will come to the land of the red men.” We don’t need to be reminded of the repression and exile that the Tibetan people have suffered at the hands of the Communist Chinese since the 1950s. The phrase “red men,” of course, refers to Native Americans.

A few Hopi words are also relevant in our Betelgeuse/Wormwood connection. Paakungya is the term for wormwood (Artemisia glauca or Artemisia dracunculoides), literally meaning “water-mountain-sagebrush.” Mountain Sagebrush (Artemisia frigida) is frequently attached to a type of Hopi prayer stick called a paho.

Pahu is the word for “water” (in nature). The prefix pala- means “red” (the hue of Betelgeuse), while the suffix -pala means “moisture” (a traditional attribute of that star). Paalata means both “shine a light” and “to make moist.” Is it any wonder, then, that the Hopi syllable pa, in addition to meaning “water,” also refers to “wonder, surprise”? Furthermore, would we really be surprised to discover that the same Sanskrit syllable, pa, means not only “the act of drinking” but also “guarding, protecting, ruling”? The color red, water, a shining light, wonder or awe, and kingship or leadership—these are all characteristics of Betelgeuse in Orion.

In addition to ba and pa, the syllable sa can be added to the linguistic nexus of our discussion. The ancient Egyptian word sam referred specifically to the plant wormwood, which was used medicinally as a vermifuge (a medicine that expels intestinal worms). However, the word sâm meant “darkness” or “rainstorm,” and sâms meant “club, cudgel,” an accouterment of Orion. In addition, the distinguished co-authors of the classic book Hamlet’s Mill, Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, state with confidence that the biblical Samson (Sam-son) is an analogue of mythical Orion. Both Samson and Orion, incidentally, had the misfortune of being blinded during their lifetimes.

Having the same prefix, the Egyptian word Sahu referred to the “star-gods in the constellation Orion,” while sahu meant an unspecified “plant”—another term for wormwood, by any chance?

In Gnostic literature we find that the evil Demiurge named Ialdabaôth has a few alternate names that are relevant here. He is also known as either the first Archon Samael or Sacla—names that resonate with the Egyptian prefix sa just discussed. He is also identified with both the god Osiris (Orion) and the planet Saturn. (Sa-turn? In Part 2 of this essay, Saturn will be discussed.) Furthermore, Ialdabaôth is also called Ariael, which literally means “lion of God”—reiterating the feline motif. In fact, he appears in a monstrous physical form with the body of a snake and the head of a lion—the latter, of course, being another attribute of Orion.

Among the Hindu legends compiled in the Rigveda, the figure of Prajapati (Praja-pa-ti) is associated with Orion. “Prajapati, as represented by Orion, may also be naturally supposed to commence the year when the vernal equinox was in Orion [viz. 4000–2500 BC]. Rudra [the storm god mentioned above] killed Prajapati, and as I have shown before, Prajapati, Samvatsara, and Yajna were convertible terms. Rudra therefore killed Prajapati or Yajna at the beginning of the year; and Yajna also meant sacrifice.” Here we see one alternate name for Orion, Samvatsara, echoed by the Egyptian syllable sam or sâms. The similar Sanskrit term samsara means either “the world of illusion” or the “cycle of rebirth.” Prajapati was also god of the dead who lived in the mountains.
Rudra presides over Ardra, or Betelgeuse, the right shoulder of Orion. The fact that Rudra, the bowman, slays Prajapati (Orion, the hunter) demonstrates an element of self-sacrifice. What prompted the killing was that Prajapati, in the form of either a stag antelope or deer, desired his daughter Rohini, in the form of a doe (Aldebaran, in Taurus); his murder was thus the result of that incestuous impulse. Orion’s belt stars represent the three-jointed arrow shot at him.

The Sanskrit meanings for the name Prajapati are varied: “lord of creatures; creator; supreme god above or among the Vedic deities; Time personified, the sun, fire; a king, prince.” “Prajapati’s world” is “situated between the sphere of Brahma and that of the Gandharvas.” The Sanskrit praja means both “people, offspring” and “wisdom.” The Sanskrit pa, as we have seen, means both “to drink” and “to protect.” Most of these semantic variations could, in one way or another, refer to the constellation Orion.

Prajapati is also directly identified with the god Soma and his divine potion of the same name. Soma is the copper-colored god of the Moon, who rides through the sky, trailing a red pennant from his chariot that is drawn by either a pair of antelopes or ten white horses. He had 27 wives—all sisters, which correspond to the 27 nakshatras, or lunar mansions. However, he began to lose interest in all of them except one, Rohini, whom we previously encountered. Their father, King Daksha, decided to kill him due to his spousal neglect, but his wives interceded in order to allow him to wither and then be reborn every 28 days—just like the waning and waxing of the moon.

The libation soma is known as the elixir of the gods. Bestowing immortality and supreme power, this divine nectar is made by pressing the stalks of a certain plant between a pair of millstones in order to squeeze out their juice. Opinions vary as to what the actual species is. Some believe it was cannabis or ephedra, while others claim that it was certain psychoactive mushrooms such as Amanita muscaria or Psilocybe cubensis.

The terrestrial aspect of soma by other accounts is considered to be a plant with golden flowers—perhaps even wormwood, a species commonly found in the mountainous regions of Kashmir and Tibet, just the sort of place Prajapati inhabited.

“From the texts it appears that the plant was of a yellowish colour and that it was to be found in the mountains: from its juice an intoxicating liquid was prepared which was believed to give strength and long life to gods and men: it was the drink of immortality. In the hymns to Soma the pressing of sacred juice through a woollen filter into a vat containing milk and water is likened to all manner of celestial phenomena with which it would appear to have nothing to do.”

The last sentence of this quote can only be true if we forget the hermetic dictum: “As above, so below.”
A majority of the hymns from Book Nine (also called, incidentally, Mandala Nine) of the *Rigveda* are devoted to Soma Pavamana (Pa-vamana, “purified Soma”).

“In the stream’s wave wise Soma dwells, distilling rapture, in his seat,  
Resting upon a wild cow’s hide.  
Far sighted Soma, Sage and Seer, is worshipped in the central point  
Of heaven, the straining-cloth of wool.  
In close embraces Indu [the Moon?] holds Soma when poured within the jars,  
And on the purifying sieve.”

If Prajapati is another version of Orion, which according to Hindu astrology is located at the most auspicious portion of the heaven, then it also makes sense that Soma would reside at the navel of the sky. The woolen cloth through which the liquid is purified may be symbolic of clouds. Some claim that the celestial aspect of *soma* is the “seed (semen) of Prajapati,” which formed a giant lake we know as the Milky Way.

According to the *Puranas*, Soma was born from what was called the “Churning of the Milky Ocean,” or *Samudra manthan*. (NB: Here we find another *sam* word, like those discussed on p. 6 of this essay. In this case, *samudra* refers to both a geographic and an atmospheric ocean. It is also interesting to note that the term “semen” is etymologically related to the O.H.G. *samo*.)

Although this legend is too complex to describe here in depth, the king of serpents named Vasuki served as a churning rope that was wrapped around a churning dasher, or vertical pivot (*axis mundi*), which was in fact Mount Mandara (Mt. Meru?). The gods grabbed the snake’s tail while the demons grabbed his head, and they alternately pulled, thereby producing the celestial nectar in much the same manner that earthly *soma* was produced.
However, the mountain soon began to sink into the sea, causing a deluge. To remedy this, the mountain had to be placed on the back of the turtle or tortoise named Kurma (a variation of karma), whose name refers to “the earth considered as a tortoise swimming on the waters.” This reptile is especially significant due to fact that the Maya considered the turtle/tortoise as a celestial representation of Orion.

In addition, the ancient Egyptian word Abesh referred to “one of the seven stars of Orion” (which one, we are not sure), as well as to “a benevolent serpent-god.” On the other hand, Apesh was the name of the Turtle-god. Hence, we find three elements of the Hindu scenario – Orion, turtle, and serpent – in these two linguistically similar Egyptian terms.

In the process of producing the sacred soma by churning the sea, the serpent – due to all the tugging on his body – spewed forth poison upon the waves, which was consumed by the Hindu god Siva and thus rendered harmless. Again we find the theme of poisoned waters.

Bas-relief depicting the Churning of the Milky Ocean, Angkor Wat, Cambodia. Vishnu the Preserver is seen the center, similar to his central place in the Hindu Trinity. As Vishnu’s incarnation, the turtle Kurma is at the bottom submerged in milky fluid. Asuras (gods, on the left) and devas (demons, on the right) pull upon the snake.

The co-authors of *Hamlet’s Mill* are convinced that this myth from India joins a multitude of others from all over the globe to function as an allegory of the precession of the equinoxes. If we reduce the concept to its most basic sense, the gradual shifting of the sunrise point of the vernal equinox backward through the constellations of the zodiac at the rate of one degree every
72 years causes the stars of the uranusography, or “skyscape,” to alter their positions basically once every 2,160 years—one-twelfth of the Great Year (25,920 years.) This is universally depicted in various mythological systems as world cataclysms at the conclusion of each Age or Era—for instance, the transition from the Age of Pisces to the Age of Aquarius. (Some predict mass destruction in 2012, for instance.)

The wheeling heavens are conceptualized as a colossal mill, revolving around the Pole Star. In his book *Heaven’s Mirror*, Graham Hancock describes the inexorable grinding of this cosmic mill of time: “The prime image used by these as yet unidentified archaic astronomers ‘transforms the luminous dome of the celestial sphere into a vast and intricate piece of machinery. And like a millwheel, like a churn, like a whirlpool, like a quern, this machine turns and turns endlessly.’”

Long ago this celestial mill had ground out gold, then in the next age it produced salt, but now it only grinds sand and stones. “That things are not as they used to be, that the world is obviously going from bad to worse, seems to have been an established idea through the ages. The unhinging of the Mill is caused by the shifting of the world axis. Motion is the medium by which the wrecking is brought about.”

When this mill is finally wrecked, it is cast into the sea, where it keeps spinning uselessly as a massive whirlpool. Only after a new Pole Star is chosen as the fiducial axis can the mill begin to function properly again.

One example that Santillana and von Dechend provide to make their case comes from the national epic of Finland called the *Kalevala*. In this tale, the mill is named Sampo (Sam-po), which rested inside a Mount of Copper. (In regard to this metal, see Part 2 of this essay.) In the context of either churning or grinding, the syllable *sam* seems to recur—this time derived from the Sanskrit *skambha*, which means “pillar” and “pole” but also “prop” and “Fulcrum of the Universe.”

The *Rigveda* uses that exact term to refer to the god Soma.

> “The lake is brightened in the floods. Soma, our Friend, heaven’s prop and stay, Falls on the purifying cloth.”

Like the Egyptian phoenix that cyclically rises from the ashes of the past epoch, the world must be reborn after each of these “End Times.” The Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, Chapter 83, contains a “Spell for becoming the *Benu* Bird [i.e. phoenix]. In it *ba* (the soul) proclaims:

> “I flew up as the Primeval God and assumed forms—
I grew in the seed and disguised myself as the Tortoise,
I am the seed corn of every god,
I am yesterday . . .
I am Horus, the god who gives light by means of his body . . .
I come as day, I appear in the steps of the gods,
I am Khons (the moon) who proceeds through the universe.”

This resonates with the Prajapati (Orion) *cum* Soma (Moon god) *cum* Turtle (cosmic tortoise) complex of Hindu mythology. For instance, in the *Rigveda*, Prajapati is referred to as a “Golden Seed” (*Hiranyagarbha*) or “Mystery Egg”—the latter reminiscent of the Primal Egg of ancient Egyptian cosmogony. As a personified universal germ, Prajapati is accompanied by a fiery seed (Agni) that vivifies the primeval waters and allows for the creation of all material forms. The concomitant heat may be the result of the friction caused by the revolving quern-stone.
If we consider both the terrestrial and celestial forms of *soma*, or “…in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10), problems might arise. In some cases what is ambrosia to the gods is poison to humans.

“We must remember that Soma as the nectar of the Gods can be poison to mortals. Mortals who are not prepared can be killed by drinking Soma, which is a force that the ordinary human nervous system cannot handle, like the awakening of the Kundalini that requires a high power of awareness to endure. Therefore, the Soma-poison opposition reflects a meaning everywhere in the Milky Way which as the milk of heaven is a drink that mortals are barred from taking, unless they develop special divine qualities within themselves.”

In the first section of this essay, we used the biblical Wormwood as a starting point in order to discuss how the syllables *ba* and *pa* correspond in many cultures across the globe to either Betelgeuse in particular or Orion in general. We also found that the syllable *sa* is associated with Orion. In addition, we dealt with the constellation’s connection to both the potentially destructive capacity of water and the possibly tainted aspect of the liquid. The feline concept also seemed to recur in the context of Orion. The bitter quality of wormwood was a further dimension of our semantic constellation, as we considered its relationship to the Hindu god Prajapati (Orion) and the nectar *soma*. Now we will explore relationship between Betelgeuse and a particular metal.

[Continued on the next page.]
As we can see, the flags of Tibet and Arizona are similar in form and color. The six rays of both red and blue on the Tibetan flag reflect the six yellow rays of the Arizona flag. The white pyramid on the former flag represents the Himalayas with the pair of snow lions facing the middle. The Yin-Yang symbol is rendered in copper. The central flaming jewels correspond to the three objectives of Buddhist refuge: Buddha, Dharma, and Sanga. The triad, however, could just as well correspond to copper-colored Betelgeuse, white Alnilam (middle star of the belt), and blue Rigel (the left foot) of Orion.
The Hopi term for constellation is *Hotòmqam*, literally “beads on a string,” which refers not to his belt but rather to three stars in Orion: *Betelgeuse*, Alnilam, and Rigel. This star pattern ranks as the most important in the Hopi ritual system.

The yellow and red rays of the Arizona flag exoterically correspond to the original 13 counties of the State. Coincidentally or not, these colors are the same as those on the robes of Tibetan monks. The copper-colored, five-pointed (i.e. Egyptian-style) star suggests the many copper mines found in Arizona.

As I have previously written, the star Sirius in the constellation Canis Major was traditionally associated with copper. However, both red Sirius (the Egyptian goddess Isis) and red Betelgeuse (right shoulder of the Egyptian god Osiris) are connected to the heretofore mentioned Hindu lunar mansion of *Ardra*, so it is likely that both stars are associated with copper.

Scientists have, in fact, recently determined that almost all of the copper on Earth originated from stars like Betelgeuse. “Most of the copper in pennies and pipes arose in supergiant stars like Rigel and Betelgeuse, say astronomers in Italy. The stars then exploded, casting the copper into space. The new finding means that gold, silver, and copper all owe their existence to massive stars.” Thus, red giant stars and the red metal are causally linked.

The crystal structure of copper is technically called a face-centered cubic, which recalls the Mayan word *paak*, or “square things.”

![Face-centered cube: the crystal structure of copper.](image)

Astromomer, mathematician, and mystic Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) claimed that each of the Platonic solids corresponds to one of then-known planets as well as to one of the classical elements. To the cube, he assigned the planet Saturn and the element earth.
Saturn is also variously known as Kronos (Chronos), Father Time, the Grim Reaper, and Lord of Karma. Sharing the first syllable of his name, he was furthermore associated with Satan, Lord of the Earth. Saturn was also deemed Lord of the Mill, as discussed in Part 1 of this essay.

Although the planet is sometimes associated with lead, it is interesting to note that Saturn’s orbital period averages 29.5 years. In the periodic table the metal copper is, coincidentally (not!), number 29.

Anthropologist Francis Huxley makes a direct correlation between Saturn and Orion. “He [Saturn] is also to be found in the constellation Orion, who wields that sickle-shaped sword called a falchion and which farmers call a billhook…. For the Egyptians Orion was associated with Horus and the soul of Osiris; in the Hindu Brahmanas he is seen as Prajapati in the form of a stag; several nations in the Middle East refer to him as the Giant, or the hunter Nimrod mighty before the Lord; and he was Saturnus to the Romans.”

The 19th century poet identified as simply T. S. (not Eliot, of course) evokes the presence of the Trojan hero Aeneas, with his curved falchion.

“Meanwhile, Æneas, shining
   In martial trappings rich,
Stood like a god, reclining
   In some temple’s niche :
His mantle was the lion’s,
   In all its tawny bars,
His falchion, like Orion’s,
   Was gemmed with golden stars.
Upon his lofty helmet,
   A brazen Terror rode ;
No sword could overwhelm it
   When in the fight it glowed…”
Not the most moving verse (hence the poet’s obscurity), these lines nonetheless associate Aeneas’ weapon with that of Orion, additionally linking this renowned warrior to the motifs of both the lion and bronze.

Also related to the Grim Reaper, the sickle, when affixed to a cross (a variation of the square), is the astrological symbol for Saturn.

In the particularly stunning series of crop formations of 2009, a cube appeared at Knoll Down near Beckhampton in Wiltshire, England on June 28th.

This brings to mind the sphere within a cube of Kepler’s model. In addition, the three-dimensional cube can also be seen as a two-dimensional hexagon due to the fact that a cube is a six-sided polyhedron. It is interesting, then, that astronomers have recently discovered a counterclockwise rotating hexagonal wave pattern in the atmosphere above the northern pole of the planet… Saturn. This mysterious cloud-hexagon measuring 13,800 kilometers on each side is surrounded by a number of huge concentric circles.
As previously mentioned, Orion’s name may derive from *urina*, or “urine.” One version of Orion’s birth involves the three Greek gods: Zeus, Hermes, and Poseidon. While traveling together on Earth, they were warmly greeted by Hyrieus, King of Boeotia, oldest city in Greece. This childless widower, however, desired to have a son. In gratitude the gods proceeded to urinate on the hide of a bull (Taurus?)—or in some versions the hide of either a heifer or an ox—and then buried it in the ground. Nine months later the newborn Orion emerged.\textsuperscript{71}

In this context it interesting to note the morphology of copper ingots, which were traditonally formed like a animal skin.\textsuperscript{72} The shape—also hexagonal—additionally reflects that of Orion.
The Greek trinity of gods previously mentioned may correspond to the Hindu Trimurti: Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Some Vedic scholars claim that Betelgeuse is the abode of the third deity, Siva (Shiva)—a later and less violent form of Rudra, referred to above. “Orion was supposed to come into being when Shiva assumed the form of a hunter and took out one of Brahman’s heads with his arrow.” Given the Greek myth just cited, it is noteworthy that another aspect of Rudra is “Lord of Cattle.” In addition, we recall from the Rigveda passage cited above that Soma was seen sitting on a wild cow’s hide.

The Sanskrit word for “copper,” ambaka—note middle syllable, am-ba-ka—is also called Siva’s Eye—corresponding to his Third Eye, or pineal gland. “In Siva temples, a pot made up of copper or brass, with a hole in the centre, is kept hanging over the image or Linga [phallas] of Siva, and water is falling on the image throughout day and night…. Lord Siva drank the poison that emanated from the ocean and wore the Ganga and moon on His head to cool His head. He has the fiery third eye.” This quaffing of toxic liquid took place during the Churning of the Milky Ocean, described above. Here we are back to the motif that started this essay: a poisoned ocean. We also recall that the moon god Soma, who was born during this process, had copper-colored skin.

Incidentally, the Hopi word for copper is sivapala (Siva-pala), literally “metal-red.” In addition, one of the ancient Egyptian terms for copper is bâa—another pa / ba variant discussed in the first part of this essay.

In Homer’s epic The Odyssey, Odysseus witnesses the shades in the underworld:

“…I was aware of gigantic Orion
in the meadow of asphodel, rounding up and driving together
wild animals he himself had killed in the lonely mountains,
holding in his hands a brazen club, forever unbroken.”
In other words, the club that Orion holds in his upraised right arm, which starts at his shoulder (Betelgeuse), is made out of bronze, an alloy consisting of copper and tin or zinc. But another connotation of “brazen,” of course, is boldly impudent, which the giant Orion certainly was.

We recall as well that the biblical giant Goliath had a helmet and armor made of brass. In addition, the Book of Revelation describes the wrathful, fiery presence of the Redeemer: “And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars [the seven churches? the seven stars of Orion?]: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shines in his strength.”

The Koran also describes the sky and earth on Judgment Day: “On that day the sky shall become like molten brass, and the mountains like tufts of wool scattered in the wind.” This parallels the Old Testament passage that conveys the consequences of disobedience to Yahweh: “And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.”

Regarding the 28th degree of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, the Masonic writer Albert Pike comments on what is called the “Brazen Sea,” which refers to a laver (i.e. large basin for ablutions) located in the original Temple of Solomon. In this degree a series of “operations” strive to bring forth the alchemist’s hermetic gold. The fourth operation deals with the “Cubical Stone,” which is submitted the “third Degree of Fire.” This recalls the face-centered cubic crystal structure of copper and the planet Saturn as designated by Kepler. Then, the fifth and final operation incorporates the “Flaming Star.”

“In the Brazen Sea we are symbolically to purify ourselves from all pollutions, all faults and wrongful actions, as well as those committed through error of judgment and mistaken opinion, as those intentionally done; inasmuch as they equally prevent us from arriving at the knowledge of True Wisdom. We must thoroughly cleanse and purify our hearts to their inmost recesses, before we can of right contemplate that Flaming Star, which is the emblem of the Divine and Glorious Skelinah, or presence of God; before we may dare approach the Throne of Supreme Wisdom.”

At this point the process of spiritual purification of all earthly pollution is a familiar theme. Although the Masons sometimes refer to the “Blazing Star” as Sirius, in this case the “Flaming Star” may in fact refer to the cleansing aspect of Betelgeuse as it goes supernova.

In the context of alchemical calcinato (purification by burning), it is interesting to note that the word “wormwood” comes from the Old English “wermōd,” which literally means “man-courage.” Another connotation of “mettle” (homonym of “metal”) is courage or fortitude—a requisite for the forthcoming global trial-by-fire. This word “wermōd” is similar to the German Wermut and is related to the English “vermouth,” an absinthe-flavored liquor.

The plant wormwood is, of course, used to make absinthe. Due to the green hue of the herb’s chlorophyll, this dangerous alcoholic drink has been called the Green Goddess. Because the particular color is similar to the oxidized state of copper, disreputable manufacturers, especially in the 19th century, tried to fabricate the green coloration more cheaply by adding copper sulfate. “…symptoms of absinthism include; delirium, nausea, hallucinations and epileptic attacks. Many of these absinthism symptoms are identical to the symptoms for copper toxicity, and were
possibly signs of poisoning from the various colorants used."85 Again we see the apocalyptic motif of poisoned liquid.

The genus of wormwood is *Artemisia*, which refers to the venerable Greek goddess Artemis, the virgin huntress. She became a hunting companion of Orion, whom she eventually shot dead with an arrow—as one legend goes—for brazenly trying to violate her or, in another version, her attendant Oupus. (His death by an arrow seems a constant theme across different cultures.) In effect, Artemis (or *Artemisia*, wormwood) causes the demise of Orion on Earth, allowing for his resurrection as a constellation in the sky.

As we have seen, the syllables *ba* and *pa* are a universal currency that refers either specifically to Betelgeuse or generally to the bellicose character of Orion. Astrophysicists have recently speculated on the imminent possibility of a “Supernova Betelgeuse.”86 This copper-colored star, which along with other supergiants created the copper deposits on Earth, serves as the house of the Hindu Destroyer and Transformer, Siva/Rudra. Recalling one of the Arabic terms for Betelgeuse (viz. *Bait al-Jauza*), we might ask: Is this the “house” of the biblical star Wormwood?

### A Hopi Coda

According to author Frank Waters, the previous Hopi Third World (Era), which they call Kuskurza, has east or southeast as its symbolic direction, red as its color, and *copper* as its metal.87 Due to human iniquity, sorcery, and both social and spiritual chaos, this age was destroyed by a flood of biblical proportions. The Third World may correspond to the Greek notion of the Bronze Age, the third successive stage of humankind. The Hopi also conceptualise the Third World as being spatially located below the current Fourth World—our earth plane. In other words, the Third World is a subterranean underworld to which departed spirits journey after death.

Pahana (Pa-hana, also spelled Bahana) is the name for the Lost White Brother or Elder White Brother who will return at the end of the current age, much like the Mayan Kukulkan or the Aztec Quetzalcoatl. Most Hopi spiritual elders say that the conclusion of the Fourth World is very near. Hopi prophecy predicts that at the end of this age, the Red Star Kachina—perhaps Supernova Betelgeuse—will act as the Great Purifier of Planet Earth.88

Wearing a red hat or red cloak (like the Tibetan Karmapa), Pahana meanwhile will arrive from the East at the homeland of the Hopi (i.e. Arizona) with two helpers, who among them carry a total of three symbols: the Native American swastika, the Sun, and a Red Symbol—the last one listed being the agent of purification. One Hopi spiritual elder, the late Grandfather Dan Evehema, enigmatically says that Pahana’s population is great89, which reinforces the Sanskrit definition of *Bahu* as “numerous.”

The red-garbed Pahana (with all his *pa* and *ba* permutations), the Red Star Kachina, and the Red Symbol may be different manifestations of the same force. In any event, this crimson or copper-colored agent might trigger the harrowing process of spiritual cleansing that will ultimately allow transition to the new, pristine Fifth World.

One of the Arabic names for Betelgeuse is *Mirzam*, the Roarer or the Announcer90—the exact meaning of the name of the Hindu god Rudra, who rules over it. At the End of Days perhaps this star will roar like a lion to announce the passage from one age to the next. May the bitterness of Wormwood transubstantiate to the sweetness of “a new heaven and a new earth.”
“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”

Revelation 21:6

Endnotes

Part 1: Alpha Orionis to Omega Terra
10. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nakshatra In my original essay dealing with Betelgeuse (http://www.theorionzone.com/betelgeuse_supernova_2012.pdf), I discussed a crop circle that appeared in Wiltshire, England on June 21, 2009—the summer solstice. One of the primary shapes in this formation was an ovoid or teardrop, which resembled a human head or skull. Another author comments on this symbol: “There is sadness as the symbol of the teardrop suggests. There is a very destructive quality here, but the destruction is necessary to save grace for the future. They [persons affected by Ardra] create destruction and havoc wherever they go, sometimes even destroying themselves. This is the place of the dark night of the soul, for there is a new dawn or new beginning after the seeming tragedy. After the worse storms comes the beautiful sunny day, for the following nakshatra (Purnarvasu) [Gemini] means ‘return of the light’. “ http://ashwani99999.wordpress.com
14. Budge, ibid., p. 213a
15. Budge, op. cit., p. 200b.
16. Budge, op. cit., p. 204b
17. Budge, op. cit., p. 205a
18. Budge, op. cit., p. 202a
19. Budge, op. cit., p. 211a
21. Budge, op. cit., p. 230b
22. Budge, op. cit., p. 233b
23. Budge, op. cit., p. 234a
27. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8a-OwheAEk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8a-OwheAEk)
31. Malotki, op. cit.
32. [http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil](http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil)
34. Budge, op. cit., p. 642b
35. Budge, op. cit., p. 643a
37. Budge, op. cit., p. 638b
38. Budge, op. cit., p. 638a
40. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Orion: A Search into the Ancientness of Aryan-Vedic Culture* (Delhi, India: Vijay Goel, 2005, Millennium Three / 21st Century Edition, originally published 1893), p. 90. The period of Orion, which the author Tilak states is 4000–2500 BC (p. 115), may be similar to the Western astrology’s Age of Taurus, approximately 4000–2000 BC.
41. [http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil](http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil) Gandharvas are male messengers that travel between the gods and humans—similar to the Hopi katsinam (kachinas).
42. [http://spokensanskrit.de](http://spokensanskrit.de)
49. [http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil](http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil)
51. Budge, op. cit., p. 118b, p. 119b.
52. Precession of the equinoxes: “...a slow westward shift of the equinoxes along the plane of the ecliptic caused by precession of the Earth's axis of rotation.” [http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=precession%20of%20the%20equinoxes](http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=precession%20of%20the%20equinoxes)
Or: “In astronomy, precession refers to a gravity-induced slow but continuous change in an astronomical body's rotational axis or orbital path. In particular, it refers to the gradual shift in the orientation of the Earth's axis of rotation, which, like a wobbling top, traces out a conical shape in a cycle of approximately 26,000 years (called a Great or Platonic year in astrology).”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precession_(astronomy)

56. http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil

**Part 2: The Copper Connection**

66. Kepler also assigned the following: to the tetrahedron, Jupiter and fire; to the dodecahedron, Mars and ether; to the icosahedron, Venus and water; to the octahedron, Mercury and air; and to the sphere, heaven. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Johannes_Kepler
74. http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil
78. 1 Samuel 17:4–6
81. Deuteronomy: 28:23

**A Hopi Coda**
88. In Hopi cosmology, a kachina (also spelled katsina) is a spirit that can assume the shape of any object or force in the universe.
89. Dan Evahema, “His Final Message to Mankind,” [http://www.hopiland.net/prophecy/dan-1.htm](http://www.hopiland.net/prophecy/dan-1.htm)
90. Allen, op. cit., p. 311.

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Gary A. David has been intrigued by the Four Corners region of the United States for over twenty years. In 1994 he moved to Arizona and began an intensive study of the ancestral Pueblo People and their descendants, the Hopi.

In late 2006 after more than a decade of independent research and investigation of archaeological ruins and rock art, his book *The Orion Zone: Ancient Star Cities of the American Southwest* was published by Adventures Unlimited Press.

The 2008 sequel is titled *Eye of the Phoenix: Mysterious Visions and Secrets of the American Southwest*. Both books are available from [www.adventuresunlimitedpress.com](http://www.adventuresunlimitedpress.com) or by calling toll-free 1 (815) 253-6390. Autographed copies of the books can be obtained from [www.theorionzone.com](http://www.theorionzone.com).

Mr. David's articles or interviews have appeared in *Fate*, *World Explorer*, *UFO*, *Atlantis Rising*, and *Ancient American* magazines. He continues to give lectures and international radio interviews. In addition, he is a published poet and professional musician.

Gary has lived for nearly 15 years in northern Arizona, where the skies are still relatively pristine.