

CADMUS SLAYS THE SERPENT

PART 2

THE ATLAS MOUNTAIN, THE TRIPLE ROW OF TEETH OF PERUVIAN ANDES AND THE ORIGINAL SPOT, MENTIONED BY HOMER, WHERE TWO GREAT RIVERS OF THE UNDERWORD MEET.

Enrico Mattievich

Petrópolis, RJ, Brazil, February 24, 2014



PHOTO FROM JIM BARTLE, "PARQUE NACIONAL HUASCARÁN", ANCASH PERÚ, 1985

There are few places in Peru where the views of the Cordillera are so majestic and imposing as those in the Department of Ancash. In the southern part of the Department, the snow-covered Cordillera widens extensively and the traveler who passes through this high region finds himself surrounded by immense mountains covered with perpetual snow, whose inaccessible peaks..., seem to form a meeting point between the earth and the sky. A. Raimondi, "El Departamento de Ancash y Sus Riquezas Minerales", Lima-Peru-1873.

"CADMUS SLAYS THE SERPENT" PART 1: <http://www.migration-diffusion.info/article.php?year=2012&id=338>

MY ARCHAEOMYTHOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN PERU

My initiation in archaeomythology began in 1981, during my first visit to the labyrinthine galleries of Chavín de Huántar, when I faced the "Peruvian Sphinx", an imposing stone pillar of four and half meter high, representing a gorgonic deity – which archaeologists call it "Lanzón" – still standing in middle of the labyrinth, bellow the sacrificial room. Facing it I imagined how impressive it must have been to see it covered in blood. I felt the same sensation as the Theban Oedipus must have experienced facing the Sphinx, a monster that provoked conundrums, slaying those who could not resolve them. The "Lanzón" challenged me to undertake an incredible journey in search of the Underworld.

Before proceeding with the present study, reexamining archeology and geography under the faint light of Greco-Roman mythology and the pseudo-historic narratives of the ancient Andean civilization conserved in the Peruvian chronicles, allow me to open a parenthesis in order to mention the difficulties and the support I received to accomplish this project.

At that time I was already living in Brazil, carrying out academic activities in the Physics Department at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. It was rather difficult to travel abroad; since 1976 the Brazilian government demanded a deposit of US\$ 1,000 only refundable after a few years. On the other hand, a wave of terrorism had unleashed in Peru, organized by the subversive group called "Sendero Luminoso", an armed group of

the Peruvian Communist Party, which in 1980 initiated a series of violent actions against the State and the Peruvian society. Besides this group there was another one called the Revolutionary Movement Tupac Amaru inspired by leftist guerrillas from other countries.

Of the seven trips I carried out in Peru in that period the most awaited and risky was the trip to the Pongo de Manseriche; I wished to see with my own eyes Ulysses Rock described in the Odyssey, despite the high risk and danger due to the terrorism against the armed forces and their installations. The trip to the Pongo de Manseriche was performed in July 1989, thanks to the efforts of a good friend, General Max Verástegui Izurieta. After making inquiries with the Peruvian Army authorities, Verástegui informed me that the Army's commander in chief, General Artemio Palomino, sensitive to the scientific importance of my project, had approved my request, providing military transport and lodging facilities in their jungle headquarters. Fig. 1.

I considered necessary to include this parenthesis so that the reader can have an idea of the dedication to carry out the present work, with the most profound scientific spirit. I also have the satisfaction of manifesting that I did it with the greatest enthusiasm and joy. Writing this parenthesis, I feel fortunate to have dedicated part of my life to this research.



Fig. 1: From the left to the right it can be seen this author, the pilot Major Felipe de la Rosa and a crew member of the huge Russian helicopter, Mi-8, at Chiclayo's airport, prior to our flight over the Cordillera, headed to Teniente Pinglo's Military Base, at the western entrance of the Pongo de Manseriche gorge.

THE PERUVIAN ANDES AND ITS TRIPLE ROW OF TEETH

The Andes is the longest continental mountain range in the world (1). It is a continental range of highlands of about 7,000 km long, extending along the western coast of South America. The central part of the Andes, from the high plateau (Nudo de Loja) in Ecuador, toward South - the Peruvian Andes - split into three main branches or ranges: the western, central and eastern ranges (2). These branches or cordilleras (C. Occidental, C. Central and C. Oriental), with an approximate extension of 1,500 km, join at the high plateau of Pasco (Nudo de Pasco), in the central region of Peru and, in the South, at the high Plateau of Vilcanota (also known as high Plateau of Apolobamba, a Quechuan name spelled Apolo-pampa = Plateau of Apollo) on the Bolivian border where lake Titicaca is located, at 3,810 m.a.s.l.. In Peru there are more than fifty peaks surpassing an altitude of 5,000

meters. The Cordillera Central, also called Cordillera Blanca, at North of the Nudo de Pasco, has the highest Peruvian peaks, ranging 6,768 m.a.s.l. in the Nevado Huascarán. These three Cordilleras, with its toothed peaks covered with perpetual snow, present an impressive vista. According to the hypothesis presented in Part 1 of this paper, it is the origin to the triple row of teeth attributed to the dragon conquered by Cadmus (Fig.2). In fact, the denomination “Dents” or teeth given to the multi-summitted mountains of the Alpes, or “tooth” for each peak, is millenary (3).



Fig. 2 The three main Cordilleras of the Peruvian Andes.
Designed by Carmen Chavarri Dupuy

The etymology of the word Andes derives from the Quechua word *anti*, which means eastern region, may be related with the Greek root *αντί* (*anti*) in front of, and the word *αντηλιος* (*ant-ilios*) eastern region, toward the east.

Ovid's description of the Andes as “golden crest of a dragon with gleaming eyes of fire” may be poetic, but is not devoid of topographical accuracy. Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, III, 32-34: *the snake of Mars, distinguished by its golden crest; its eyes gleamed with fire, all its body swelled with venom, its three tongues flickered and its teeth stood in triple ranks. Its three tongues, that is, its three main rivers (Ucayali, Huallaga and Marañón) with its fluttering motion, flowing between the three main Cordilleras. The gleaming eyes of fire on the dragon's crest may be a poetic description of volcanoes. The world's highest volcanoes are in the Andes, including Ojos del Salado on the Chilean - Argentinean border which rises to 6,893 m. Over fifty other Andean volcanoes also rise above 6,000 m.*

THE ANDES AND THE ATLAS MOUNTAIN

The following is a brief summary of the second chapter of “Journey to the Mythological Inferno” where I defend the thesis on the geographical interpretation of Hesiod's

Theogony, pointing out that the Peruvian Andes is the origin of the Atlas-Hesperides myth.

According to Hesiod, next to the Hesperides – who guarded the golden apples – beyond renowned Okeanos, somewhere in the western limits of the Earth, which the Greeks believed to be Tartarus, the son of Iapetus – Atlas – transformed into a high mountain, supports the Sky on his shoulders (TH: 211-216 and 517-519). The Gorgons are identified with the Hesperides and, like them, they also lived “beyond the glorious Ocean” (TH: 274-277). This place, situated at the extreme western frontiers of the Earth, could be identified on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. But in Hesiod’s time the western extremities of the Earth ended on the Atlantic Ocean. So the binomial Atlas-Hesperides was sought in vain by geographers and travelers who searched the remote western regions.

Three centuries after Hesiod, Herodotus – the Father of History – claimed to have located the mythological Atlas in north western Africa (Book IV, 184). Ponponius Mela (50 A.D.) elevated the mountain even higher which Herodotus claimed to have found in northwestern Africa (4):

In the middle of the sandy region is Mount Atlas, elevating its enormous Mass, steep, inaccessible, due to the sheer rocks that surround all sides; As it rises ever so high its breadth diminishes; its summit is so high, that it is possible to see it loosing itself in the clouds, so that its head not only touches the sky and the heavenly bodies, but it also sustains them.

Strabo (66 B.C. – 24 A.D.) describes the geography of Africa and indicates that, on passing through the Strait of Gibraltar, there is a mountain which the Greeks called Atlas, the same one which the barbarians called Dyris (5). Malte-Brun states that it was known as Daran by the Arabs (6).

This is the brief history of the mountain called Dyris or Daran by the natives of Libya, which, after Herodotus, was known as Mount Atlas. Today, this name belongs to a mountain range crossing Morocco from southwest to northeast. Fig. 3a and Fig. 3b. The most impressive range within the Atlas system is the High Atlas, which extends some 560 km through central Morocco and has an average elevation of 3,050 m. Many High Atlas peaks are snow-clad for much of the year. Jabal Toukal, south of Marrakech, reaches 4,165 m and is the highest peak in the High Atlas as well as in North Africa (7).



Fig. 3a. Toubkal Mountain is the highest peak (4,167 meters of elevation), in the Atlas Mountain range of Morocco.



Fig. 3b. Northwest Africa with the Atlas mountain range crossing Morocco.
Plate V, from Gosselin, P.F.J., Tome Premier, Recherches sur la Géographie des Anciens

Herodotus' report permits us to consider the credibility of mythological narratives of the time. Paradoxically, with that episode, he contributed in such a way that, later, the Atlas-Hesperides myth was considered a fable. There is no place in western Africa that fits the description of the mountain that Herodotus claimed to have found, neither the topography described by Hesiod. If Atlas, the Hesperides, and the topography of Tartarus – or something representing them – had really existed, then in Herodotus time, these places were not found within the borders of the western world.

The stone sculptures carved with mythological images of Western divinities, as: Gorgons, Hecatoncheires and Kerberos, the hideous hound of Hades, identified at Chavin's Palace, allowed its identification with the "Gloomy house of Night", also called "The Resounding Palace of Hades and Persephone", a labyrinthine palace situated at the foot of Atlas. There is convincing evidence in Hesiod's Theogony that the Peruvian Andes was the origin of Atlas-Hesperides myth.

IN SEARCH OF THE CONFLUENCE OF RIVERS WHERE ODYSSEUS EVOKE THE DEAD

Where does Homer locate the realm of Hades? In the whole broad field of Homeric scholarship it would be difficult to find a more fascinating question. The literature of the subject is itself almost a library. No mythologist, no commentator on the poet, no classroom interpreter can even evade the question; and yet, in their answers, the Homeric authorities of all modern times, whatever their nationality, present only a pitiable spectacle of helpless (8).

The Styx (or Stige) have always been quoted by Greek and Latin poets as the principal watercourse and one of the entrances to the underworld. Following Hesiod's Theogony I

identified the Styx with the Amazon River, from the source of Marañón River (that crosses the Cordillera Central and Cordillera Oriental of the Andes at the Pongo de Manseriche. Fig. 2 and Fig. 4) to the Atlantic Ocean (9).

The description of the Styx is so thorough, to the point of mentioning the impressive Pororoca, a strange wave phenomenon that propagates upstream for hundreds of miles from the mouth of the Amazon, as one or two large and destructive waves. Theogony, 775-777: *There dwells a goddess loathed by the gods, dreadful Styx, eldest daughter of Ocean, whose stream flows back on itself; she dwells apart from the gods.* Virgil, Aeneid, III, 215 and VI, 385 mentioned the wave phenomenon as “Stygian Wave”.

Homer provides other hydrographical data of the Underworld, who called “the land of the dead” through the lips of the sorceress Circe. See chapter V of my book for detailed discussion. *Odyssey*, X, 504-515:

CIRCE: “Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
let no need for a guide on your ship trouble you; only
set up your mast pole and spread the white sails upon it,
and sit still, and let the blast of the North Wind carry you.
But when you have crossed with your ship the stream of the Ocean,
you will find there a thickly wooded shore, and the groves of Persephone,
510 and tall black poplars growing, and fruit-perishing willows;
then beach your ship on the shore of the deep-eddying Ocean
and yourself go forward into the moldering home of Hades.
There Pyriphlegethon and Kokytos, which is an off-break
from the water of the Styx, flows into Acheron. There is
515 a rock there, and the junction of two thunderous rivers.”

It is not surprising that the same river was called Styx by Hesiod and Acheron, Styx, Cocytus, and Pyriphlegethon, by Homer. It is the destiny of this river-sea to have different names. In Peru, starting from one of its principal source down to its confluence with the Ucayali River, it is called Marañón; from there to the ocean it is called Amazon. In Brazil, from the Peruvian border until its confluence with the majestic Rio Negro, it is called Solimões, down to this point it is known as the Amazon.

In chapter V of my book, I suggest two possible candidates for the Phryriphlegethon River: The Santiago River, which increases the water of Marañón River before the Pongo de Manseriche, and the Ucayali River, which joins the Marañón after the Pongo de Manseriche. Fig. 4. This last river with the name Vilcamayo (which means “sacred river” in Quechuan) originates in the frozen Cordillera Vilcanota, and passes near Cuzco (Fig. 2). By reasons I will exposed further, it is the most outstanding “river of fire” that inspired the Greek name Phryriphlegethon or the Roman Phlegethontal River of the Underworld.

As the Styx in Hesiod’s Theogony was identified with the Marañón River, there is only one geographical point in the Amazon Basin that satisfy the previous description of the Odyssey, and this point is the Pongo de Manseriche; a narrow gorge in the Cordillera where two rivers meet, and a black rock emerge in the middle of the stream. During the summer months, when defrosting of the snow-covered Cordilleras accelerates, and the

tropical rains increases, the rising waters of the Marañón jointly with those of the Santiago River, turns the pongo thunderous and fearsome. Pongo de Manseriche is the Spanish corruption of the Quechuan *Puncu Mancharichiy*, which means the dreadful gateway (10).

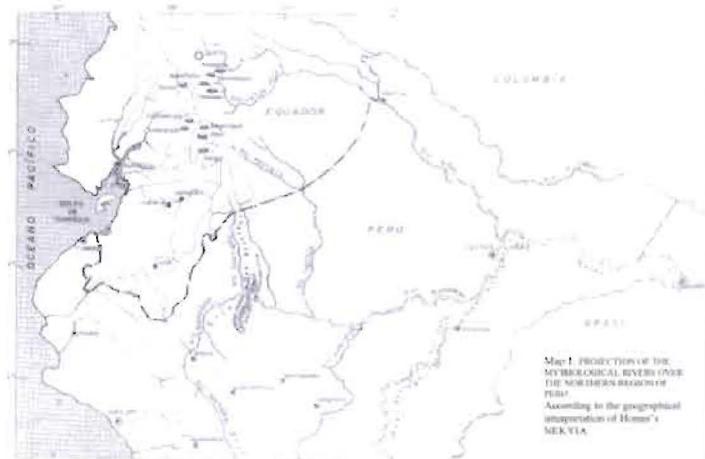


Fig. 4



Fig. 5 White limestone rocks on the left bank of Marañón River, nearby from the pongo's entrance.

The Amazon River Basin is upon an extremely flat alluvial plain. From the Atlantic Ocean to the Peruvian Andes, the only navigable gateway is the Pongo de Manseriche, at an elevation of only 175 m.a.s.l. The forest along the Amazon Basin presents an extremely monotonous landscape. In this world of water, green foliage and mud, the presence of a stone, a simple pebble, is as rare as a diamond. One can imagine how the ancient navigators felt after months of navigation on seeing the first barrier of the Andes on the horizon. After crossing the vast green basin “the Swamp of Hades”, seeing the rocks from afar a voice echoed from the river, shouting with admiration and relief: *Leukas Petra!* (White Rock!) as quoted in Homer’s *Odyssey* XXIV, 11. In the “Handbook of Greek Mythology”, H. J. Rose, p. 79, quotes this rock as “the landmark entrance to the Kingdom of Hades, Aïdoneous or Pluton, a realm usually conceived as being underground, placed in the western extremities, somewhere beyond the Ocean streams.

Its entrance is after a landmark called White Rock (*Leukas Petra*) in front of the Gate of the (setting) Sun, where two great rivers of the Underworld meet”.



Fig. 6 Entrance to the Pongo de Manseriche, looking westwards, toward the setting sun. *Puncu Mancharicuy* in Quechua means “The gate that causes fear”. Called “The gate of Helios the (setting) Sun” in Homer’s, Odyssey, XXIV, 12.



Fig. 7. Homer describes this rock, in the middle of the Pongo de Manseriche gorge. I propose it should be named “Odysseus Rock”.

After crossing the Ocean stream and navigating upstream the Acheron, until the encounter of Pyriphlegeton, Kokytos and the waters of the Styx, you will reach the White Rock (Od. XXIV, 11). Entering through the Gates of the setting Sun (Od. XXIV, 12) there is a rock there at the junction of two thunderous rivers (Od. X, 515).



Fig. 8. "Odysseus Rock" is an emergent point of a geological folded stratum, inclined at about 45° . It is a hard rock of high silica content and of fine texture, with small brown grains of manganese mineral. Its external dark color is due to black deposit of pyrolusite [MnO_2].

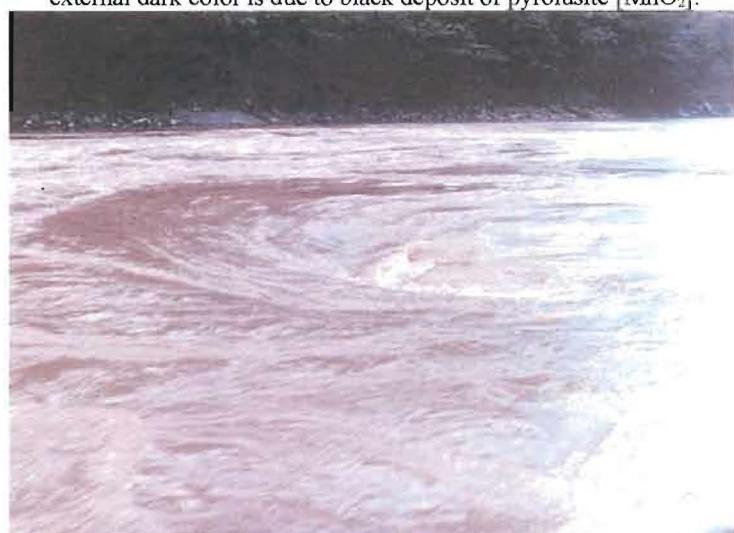


Fig. 9. When I crossed the pongo for the first time, on the 27th of July 1989 (two days before I took the photos of figures 7 and 8), where Ulysses' Rock should be I was confronted by this dreadful whirlpool.



Fig. 10. At its narrowest, the pongo is only 30 m wide between cliffs.

Further information on the navigability and other infernal behaviors of the pongo can be found in Up De Graff's book "Head Hunters of the Amazon". This author explored the gorge of Manseriche in 1899 with a small canoe, during the succeeding months of August, when the rising and falling of Marañón and Santiago rivers happens very quickly owing to heavy rains. In these conditions, a mass of turbulent waters propels loose boulders dispersed randomly at the bottom of the river colliding against each other in the rocky bottom, producing a roaring thunderous sound, like an express locomotive inside the narrow gorge of the pongo.

Oriented by Circe, Odysseus and his companions crossed the Ocean. After directing themselves to a notable point in the domains of Hades - where two turbulent rivers meet thunderously at a rock amidst the river – she explains how they should proceed in order to find their way back. Here, Odysseus has to dig a pit of approximately one cubit on each side, over which he will practice necromancy to invoke the spirit of the soothsayer Teiresias, who will show him the way back. Odysseus should perform three libations around the pit: first with milk and honey, then with sweet wine and, lastly, with pure water. After sprinkling the pit with white flour, he will invoke the dead, Od. X. 516-525:

*There, hero, you must go close in and do as I tell you.
Dig a pit of about a cubit in each direction,
and pour it full of drink offering for all the dead, first
honey mixed with milk, then a second pouring of sweet wine,
520 and the third, water, and over all then sprinkle white barley,
and promise many times to the strengthless heads of the perished
dead that, returning to Ithaka, you will slaughter a barren
cow, you best, in your place and pile the pyre with treasures,
and to Teiresias apart dedicate an all-black
525 ram, the one conspicuous in all your sheepflocks.*

Also, at the confluence of the rivers, he has to sacrifice a ram and a black ewe, Od. X, 526-529:

*But when with prayers you have entered the glorious hordes
of the dead, then sacrifice one ram and one black female,
turning them toward Erebus, but yourself turn away from them
and setting thy face toward the stream of the river.*

Finally, Circe advised him, Od. X, 538-540:

*Then, leader of the host, the prophet (Teiresias) will soon come to you,
and he will tell you the way to go, the stages of your journey,
and tell you how make your way home on the sea where the fish swarm.*

Odysseus and his companions could have evoked the dead on the spur of soil and stones, on the confluence of the Marañón and Santiago Rivers, at the western entrance to the pongo - where a dense forest once lay - Figs. 11 and 12.



Fig. 11. View of the western entrance of Pongo de Manseriche, from Teniente Pinglo Military Base, on the left bank of the Marañón River, at the confluence with the Santiago River.



Fig. 12. Western entrance of the pongo view from the spur, at the confluence of the Santiago River, coming from left, and the Marañón River, coming from the right. Teniente Pinglo Militay Base is seen at left.

MY TRIPS TO GREECE

A year and a half after publishing “Viagem ao Inferno Mitológico” in Rio de Janeiro, 1992, I fulfilled a pilgrimage to Greece in order to visit the principal archaeological sanctuaries and pay homage to Cadmus and Hesiod. I do manifest the gratitude and emotion I felt while visiting the olive groves and vineyards at the foot of Mount Helicon, near the village of Ascri, Beotia, where Hesiód had the encounter with the Muses. On the way North I visited Thebes, Orchomenós and Delphi. At the entrance of the archaeological museum of Thebes there was an exhibition of artifacts found during the excavations of Cadmus’s Palace; I kneeled and kissed the ground there, repeating what was done by the founder of Cadmea before setting off on his glorious conquest immortalized by the circumpolar constellation of Draco.

To clarify once and for all where was the place Odysseus arrived after crossing the ocean, as indicated by Circe, I felt necessary to see with my own eyes the chthonic shrine of Persephone, best known as the Oracle of the Dead, in Thesprotia, Epirus, northwest of Greece. In this region are flowing the Acheron River and their tributaries: Pyriphlegethon, Styx and Kokkytos, identified as the rivers of the underworld by Herodotus, Thucydides, Strabo and Pausanias, considered by modern scholars as the place Homer was referring to in his account of Odysseus trip to Hades.

More than fifty years ago the Greek archaeologist Sotirios Dakaris, Honorary Professor at the University of Ioannina, discovered a remarkable building complex on the hill of St. John Prodromos (John the Baptist) dated from the late fourth or early third century B.C., which rises above the confluence of the Acheron and Cocytus rivers, in the western part of Epirus, north-west of Greece, Fig. 13. Its central structure was 72 feet square with extraordinary thick (about 11 feet) walls of enormous polygonal stone blocks, shaped and fitted so closely that a knife blade cannot be inserted into the joints, like the Incan stone masonry. He identified the building as the famous Nekromanteion (Νεκρομαντεῖον) or Oracle of the Dead, to which Periander, tyrant of Corinth in the sixth century B.C., sent emissaries to consult his deceased wife, Melissa, as recounted in Herodotus. Dakaris believed this was the place Homer had in mind in his account of Odysseus journey to Hades, a spot where the rivers Pyriphlegethon and Cocytus, the latter gushing from the Styx, meet the Acheron with a mighty, tumultuous roar (11).

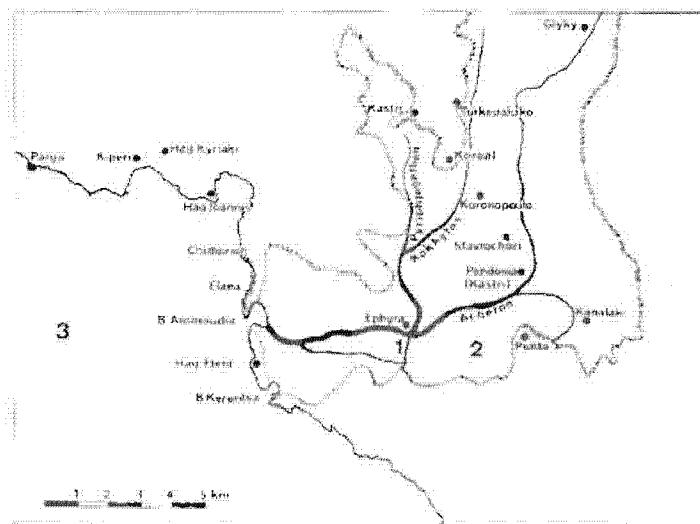


Fig. 13. Map of the Acheron river and its tributaries showing: 1. The Oracle of the Dead near Ephyra. 2. Drained remains of lake Acherusia. 3. Ionian Sea. After "The Oracle of the Dead", Sotirios Dakaris (11).

A few days after launching the first edition of my book in Greek, in October of 1995 (see the Preface of the English Edition of "Journey to the Mythological Inferno"), Mr. Antonis Nicolaras gave me an airline ticket to travel to Ioannina accompanied by his personal secretary, Mrs. Ioanna Mavrou, who, besides being an interpreter, arranged all the contacts with the authorities of that city. I was carrying two brand new copies of the Greek edition: one for the Mayor of Ioannina, Mr. Eleftherios Glinavos, fig. 14 and the other for the archaeologist Sotirios Dakaris, who unfortunately I did not get to know personally due to his failing health. Mr. Glinavos attended us magnificently, offering us his personal car and chauffeur, taking us to interesting archaeological places. We visited the sanctuary of Dodona and the Nekromanteion, Fig. 15. At the foot of the rocky hill, where Dakaris conducted excavations that unearthed the Nekromanteion oracle, on the drained remains of Lake Acherusia, is the confluence of the Cocytus (Kokkytos) and Acheron. With a small outboard boat we sailed along the Acheron River, Fig. 16. I observed that the river flows towards the west, draining its fresh waters into the bay of Ammoudia, in the Ionian Sea.



Fig. 14 Mr. Eleftherios Glinavos, Mayor of Ioannina, at left of this author

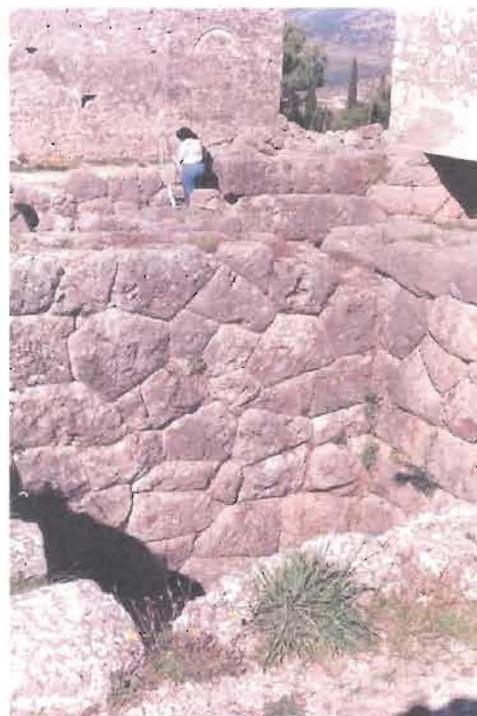


Fig. 15. The Nekromanteion exhibiting a wall of carefully fitted polygonal stone blocks

The Epirus region is rugged and mountainous. It comprises the land of the ancient Molossians and Thesprotians and a small part of the Chaonians. It is largely made up of mountainous ridges, part of the Dinaric Alps. The periphery's highest spot is on Mount Smolikas, at an altitude of 2,637 meters above sea level. By the East, the Pindous Mountains form the spine of mainland Greece separating Epirus from Macedonia and Thessaly. Further East is the Mount Olympus, between Macedonia and Thessaly. Most of Epirus lies on the windward side of Pindus. The winds of the Ionian Sea offer the region more rainfall than to any other part of Greece.



Fig. 16. Sailing up the river Acheron, toward East.



Fig. 17. The entrance to river Acheron-Epirus, looking eastward, towards the rising sun.
Image from: <http://www.cim.mcgill.ca/~vianis/Photography/GREECE/grecepic.html>
Compare with the western entrance to the Pongo de Manseriche, Fig.6.

The resemblance between Pongo de Manseriche's topography, in the Andean-amazonian tropical border, with the setting of Epirus Rivers near the Nekromanteion is astonishing. Most likely Odysseus himself noticed these amazing similarities after his return from the far-off regions of the Andes, when he went to Dodona through the marshy Lake Acherusia, about 90 miles north of Ithaka, to listen to the prophetic oak tree, *Odyssey, XIV, 329-330: For how he could come back to the rich countryside of Ithaka, in secret or openly, having been by now long absent.*

I conclude that the rivers of Epirus, by its resemblance to Amazonian rivers, conserved the epic journey of Odysseus to America in its own topography. As constellations that shows up bellow the horizon in Greece and in South America were at Zenith, in mythological narratives South America was considered a world below they are living, the inferior side of the globe, and was called underworld or Inferno.

Similarly, the oracle of the dead or Nekromanteion is not the original shrine dedicated to Persephone and later also to Hades. Instead it is just a replica of the original, whose

archaeological remains are to be found at the foot of the high snow-capped Peruvian Andes, near the headwaters of the mythological Styx, now called Marañón.

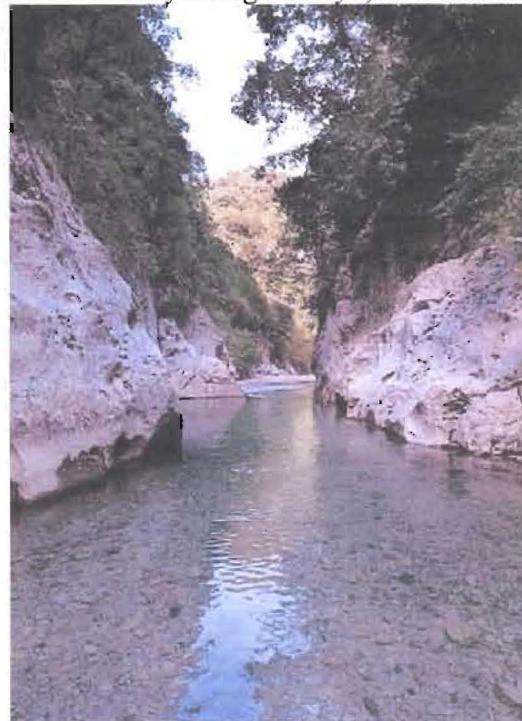


Fig. 18. Source of the Acheron River, believed to be the River Styx, Epirus.

Image from: <http://www.pbase.com/davidlr/image86807281>

Notice the comparison with the narrowest point of the pongo, Fig. 10



Fig. 19. The River Styx, Epirus. Image from:

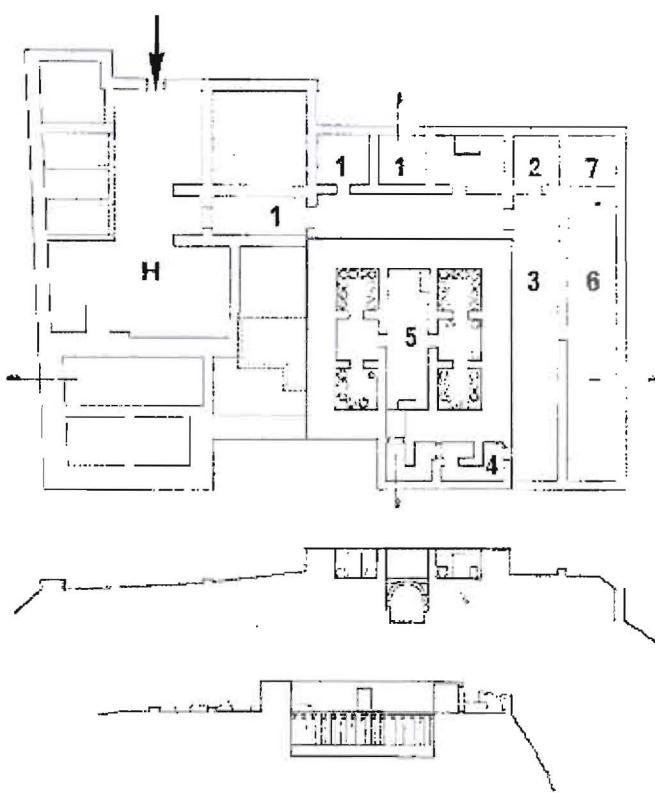
<http://www.marengowalks.com/pargareport2005.html>

The excavations of Nekromanteion, conducted by the Greek Archaeological Society and Dakaris, between 1958 and 1964, brought to light a twisting labyrinthine passage-way, with an entrance facing north, Fig. 20. This structure is divided by two parallel walls into a central chamber and two lateral aisles, each split into three chambers by transverse walls. Beneath the central chamber is a subterranean chamber of equal size, dug into the rock.

The underground structure of the Chamber of the Dead was investigated for its acoustic behavior using ISoBEM (12). A thorough numerical study reveals that advanced knowledge of interior acoustic was employed in its construction, allowing for acoustical effects, supporting the alleged communication with the dead.

In the long "eastern passage" 3, fig. 20, pilgrims pass the last stage of their preparation to the longed meeting with the dead. Inside the "eastern passage" four huge vats and several pots of clay have been recovered standing on their base.

It is very probable to that the physical and psychological preparation of pilgrims for the meeting with the dead lasted for a few days. During the excavations (11) huge vases full with carbonized fruits, wheat, barley, broad beans of the kind *Vicia faba equina*, Fig. 21, and lupine seeds *Lupinus albus* were found. It is a common knowledge that broad beans possess toxic properties and when eaten green cause indigestion as well as a sense of relaxation to the point of giddiness and hallucinations (cyamiasis). Similar effects are produced by lupines (the ancient thermoi) when eaten green (lathirism). Therefore after a long stay in the dark and segregation, magic rites, prayers, invocations, wandering about mysterious halls, special diet, pilgrims reached the right mental and psychological state to be brought into contact with the dead.



Plan and sections showing:
1, dark passage and chamber; 2, chamber; 3, passage into which sacrificial animals were brought; 4, labyrinthine passage; 5, three-aisled central chamber; 6, east passage chamber; 7, purification chamber.
Scale 1 : 80.

Fig. 20 After "The Oracle of the Dead on the Acheron" Sotirios Dakaris (11)



Fig. 21. *Vicia faba*, broad bean. Source Nicholson et al., 1969, p. 41
1 the plant, 1A and 1B flowers, 1C opened pod, 1D seed.

As at Nekromanteion, hallucinogens played an important role in the Chavín de Huántar ceremonial life (13). The basis for this statement has been summarized by Constantino Torres in his review article “Chavin’s Psychoactive Pharmacopoeia: The Iconographic Evidence” (14).

In the circular plaza, at the head of the oldest temple, which I identified as the original temple of Persephone, the iconographic analysis of a gorgonic image was represented holding the San Pedro Cactus *Trichocerus pachanoi*, a hallucinogenic plant containing mescaline. Another iconographic identification on a stone sculpture at Chavín de Huántar, shows a supernatural human figure adorned with *Anadenanthera sp.* (Vilca), a psychoactive plant member of the leguminous family (13, pp.127-129). The pods and seeds of *Anadenanthera* are identical to *Vicia faba* or broad bean, the hallucinogen seeds consumed at Nekromanteion .

SOME REMARKS

I would like to mention Dr. Christine Pellech, a recognized Viennese ethnologist, researcher on the field of culture migration and diffusion, with more than 30 years of dedication to eposes interpretations, author of three books on this subject. Dr. Pellech does not believe that the ancient Greeks carried out the journey narrated in the *Odyssey*, as generally assumed. In the preliminary considerations of her book (15) she writes:

“La differenza fondamentale che caratterizza la mia interpretazione dell’Odissea da tutte le altre consiste nel fatto io considero autori di questo viaggio non I Greci, come generalmente si ritiene, bensì gli Egizi, o, per meglio dire, I Fenici, che erano al servizio e sotoposti all’autorità degli Egizi.”

That is, the Greeks attributed to themselves the journey, but they did not know where it took place.

Dr. Pellech considers the journey to the underworld as a trip to North America. In reference 16 she points out that:

“Kirke sends Ulysses to the realm of death or the underworld - the geographic underworld, the world below where they are living, the other side of the globe – America.”

In the same reference she localizes the underworld rivers near Niagara Falls:

“At the confluence of the Pyriphlegeton and the Kokytos, an arm of the Styx, a rock marks the entrance to the realm of death. It could be found out !bat at the point where the two rivers, the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence, an arm of the Styx - the Niagara Falls, join, there is a rock, the Scout Royal in Montreal. Here is the entrance to the realm of death. In the area of the Ontario Lake near Niagara Falls and the St. Lawrence river, Bery Fell found engravings on the rocks in Ogam and Tifinag writing. Point of time: 1750 RC. The first part of the voyage, the journey to North America, is an interpolation, referring to the navigation around the world.”

Since 2010 I maintain a friendly correspondence with Christine Pellech. I frequently get her messages encouraging me and asking me to send my works. In these four years, plus my book “**Journey to the Mythological Inferno**”, I sent her five articles, including this one. This time I would like to send her a friendly encouragement to comment the results of my investigations concerning Odysseus and his journey to the underworld, in her important blog “**Migration & Diffusion**”. I am sure her views shall be of general appeal to those interested in this fascinating subject.

Finally, I address a few words of thanks to the late Sotirios Dakaris for his discovery and excavations of Nekromanteion. As mentioned before, unfortunately I did not meet Professor Dakaris on my visit to Ioannina, in October 1995. I am sure he read with interest my book since late that year he posted me his book “*Dodona*” (17), with a generous dedication. In Greek he wrote the verse VI, 236 of Homer’s *Iliad*: *εχατομβοι εννεαβοιων*, which means “the value of hundred oxen for the price of nine oxen”.

And with a tremulous hand he wrote in English (see figure below):

*Dear Professor Enrico Mattievich
I Thank you very much for
Your important book, translated
Into Greek, about the ruins of
The Laberint of Chavin, perhaps
The key of the Hellenistic
Myths. Thank you also for
Your cordial criticism.*

*Yours sincerely
Ioannina 26.12.95 S. Dakaris*

Professor Dakaris died a few months later, in 1996.

MINISTRY OF CULTURE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH FUND

DODONA

SOTHEON D. GRANDE
Honorary Professor at the University of Tennessee.

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Correspondence address:

Enrico Mattievich

e-mail: enrico.mattievich@gmail.com