

METAMORPHOSES OF ANCIENT SERPENTS AS A SYMBOL OF MEDICINE - A CULTURAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACH

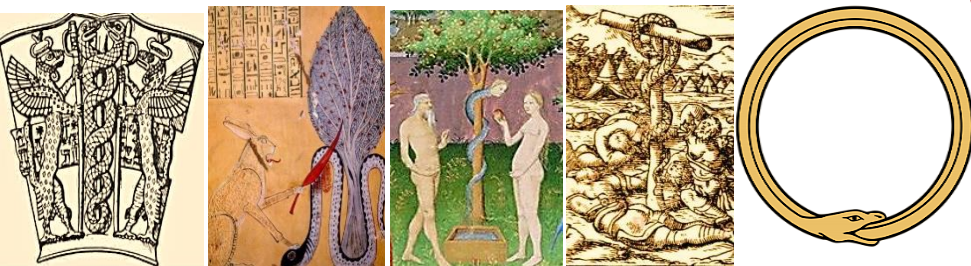
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THE SERPENT - A CULTURAL ARCHETYPE

The *serpent* revealed to be a *cultural archetype* directly connected with *life, fertility, regeneration, health and the healing art* in many ancient civilisations. Symbolic snakes in Ancient Egypt, such as *uraeus, ouroboros* or *Apophis*, the Sumerian healing god *Ningizzida*, the Biblical serpent, or the Indian *kundalini* snake-like energy are comparable and complementary examples.

The *snake-dragon pattern* was mainly a propitiatory sign, signifying *wisdom, prudence, immortality by death and resurrection or rebirth*.



Ningizzida Apophis Genesis Moses Ouroboros



Apollo Asklepios Hygieia Dacian Flying Dragon



COMPARING MYTHOLOGIES and HEALTH SYMBOLS

- In the ancient *mythology of Dacia* - today's Romania-, the *wolf-headed flying serpent* was worshipped and continued to be so in the *Romanian folklore*. A complex *immortality and vitality symbol*, the Dacian «flying dragon» flag reminds the *feathered god serpent Quetzalcoatl* of the *Aztec sky* or the *Mayan god Kukulcán*.

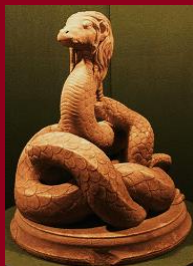
- In *Latvian mythology* the snake equally meant wisdom, resourcefulness, *rhythm and order* of things.
- Hinting at the *snake-like body dynamics*, the geometry of "energetic" mazes or *network lines* in *tatoos or masks* could stand for *paths of Heaven and Earth, life and death*, extending within the human body, soul and spirit, *protecting and connecting them to a mystical dimension*. Snakes equally expressed *duality*, symbolically embodying *satanic forces and death*, as well.

THE SERPENT - AN ANCIENT UNIVERSAL SYMBOL OF RESTORED LIFE AND MEDICINE

- In the *Romanian folklore* -tightly linked to *pagan mythologies/ religions*, dances mimicking the serpent wavy motion belonged to ancient *art therapy*, too.

- An *apotropaic motif* irrespective of its origins, the serpent *magically mastered Nature's healing power, its remedies* he revealed. A *protective sign*, it was engraved on sacred and profane objects. Famous serpent-like Dacian bracelets, e.g., used not only as ornaments, but as a defensive *insignia* or *votive offerings*, ended by *snake heads*. Coming from *agrarian, chthonic cults*, profane Romanian mythology described a «*house serpent*», guardian of homes and families. In the *IInd century AD*, in *Dobruja*, beside *Apollo and Asklepios*, the *snake Glykon* - "the Sweet One", a friendly healer or "the new Asklepios" - was worshipped, even though he probably was a "fake-god".
[Dobruja or Lower Moesia was colonised by Greek cities.]

Constantza (Dobruja, Romania). Archaeological Museum. Serpent cults: **GLYKON**, the so-called "New Asklepios" (II-nd century AD)



THE SNAKE AND REBORN LIFE

Themes. The Italian motif of the "*biscione*" - metaphorically reminding *Jonah's story* - constantly hints at a "*birth trauma*", the hero being swallowed up by a "*dragon*" - "*a disease*", then reborn in an improved condition, on a higher spiritual level.



Jonah

Quetzalcoatl, Mesoamerica

Leviathan

THE SNAKE MOTIF IN CUCUTENI CULTURE (ROMANIA)

-Part of the *Cucuteni-Trypillia Culture* - The First Civilization of Europe- (c. 5000 BC)



A scale reproduction of a Cucuteni (Iasi County) village -eneolithic period



CUCUTENI



CHINA-Pa Kua, symbol



Similarities Cucuteni-Yangshao Cultures



Dacian Bracelet from Iasi County, Romania (Cucuteni, 4th cent BC)



Cucuteni Pottery (5.000BC)



THE SNAKE - A REGENERATIVE SYMBOL, INCLUDING CYCLES, BIRTHS, DEATHS, REBIRTHS

THE SNAKE - A FRACTAL PATTERN

- The *snake-pattern* inspired art and *art therapy*, ritual dances and music mimicking the animal's wavy motion, unveiling *the divine gnosis*. The serpent expressed prudent intelligence and efficient protection against evil. The *snake venom itself* could be both a painkiller drug and a fatal poison. The *snake-dragon* was mainly a propitiatory sign. The same seems true for the *Indian kundalini's energetic dynamics*. This also happened in *Ancient China*, where this symbol was revered as well.

- *Emblem of interconnection* between the *underworld, the terrestrial and celestial kingdoms*, between *interrelated identity and alterity*, transcending worlds, *transgressing borders*, snakes magically suggested "eternal, rejuvenated, re-emergent life" by *shedding their skin* and/or *hibernating*.

- The snake was usually associated with the *tree of life and remedies, the Garden of rejuvenating springs*, delight and philosophy. A complex immortality symbol and a *destructive god and creator god*, he closely correlated with structural order and cyclic events, such as *death and resurrection*. In Christianity, *similarly to the cult of Asklepios*, that of the *snake* survived until the *III-rd century AD*.

- As if reflecting universal *fractal archetypes*, the *DNA double helix* and *RNA single stranded molecules* themselves remind the same symbolism of pervasive serpents.

