

LIBRARY STACK
INVESTIGATES

ANCIENT
ENGINEERS

Mark von
Schlegell

***Library Stack Investigates:
Ancient Engineers***
Story by Mark von Schlegell.

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PRELUDE

In 1901, a free diver surfaced off the island of Antikythera, excitedly reporting a bizarre underwater massacre. But his Captain soon found he'd discovered not a stack of bodies, but of ancient statuary. On these rocks an enormous Roman trophy ship sank in the first century AD, packed full of looted art and artifacts. It took a year for divers to bring up what would become the first inklings of its most famous cargo. Wedged into limestone, and not entirely degraded, it took more than seventy years for the so-called Antikythera Mechanism to be properly identified. Today it is on display at the National Archaeology Museum in Athens, proudly presented as the single extant example of a lost ancient art of mechanical engineering analogous to clock-making, going back it is thought at least as far as Archimedes (287–212 BCE), greatest of the Hellenistic engineers. This example, perhaps built by the workshop of Hipparchus (190–120 BCE) of Rhodes, is clearly fashioned for a specific owner. As the remnants continue to be explored it becomes clear it was intended for a Macedonian in the first century BCE.

The mechanism as it has been successfully reconstructed simulates so many complex calculations via engineering that it can be justly called an analogue computer. Consisting of at least thirty-seven interlocking gears and wheels, it is an astonishingly accurate orrery, or model of the Solar System. The mechanism displays the relative positions of Earth's Moon, the Sun, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn so that any time can be located, and from there the constellations observed, and various other precise data points that cross the line into the imaginary, not just lunar and solar eclipses, both partial and full, but the wind patterns and numerological resonance of any point in time, past or future.

The amount of material hitting the antiquities markets began to hit flood levels in recent years. Among other spectacular finds such as the caves where Jesus turned water into wine, the apparent discovery of a second, more spectacular Antikythera-type mechanism stood out enough to become a temporary internet sensation. Surfacing in a disputed region of Kurdistan near the border of Turkey and Syria, the object claimed to be a Babylonian original, and more

complicated than the first.

A bizarre scam? Or a genuine glimpse into the lost realities of history and the multiverse with implications that stretch far beyond even our time and technology? The young antiquities investigator with whom our story begins came closer than anyone else to answering that question.

WARNING: this is a story without an ending, but with various disputed beginnings. It ties together the most ancient philosophical and historical mysteries with the future of technology and the mores of Silicon Valley, and a conflict currently raging on the borders of at least three current empires, depriving the shared globe of its archival history.

After the bombing I saw this gleaming coming from the ground. Just where archaeologists had told me to look.

—Kawa Kuranyi, in conversation with Apple Jones Worthison, 2019.

An ancient orrery-mechanism was allegedly unearthed when a disputed US airstrike ended fighting in Southern Turkey, near the border of Syria, in a region under the control of Kurdish militia fighters, Syrian rebels and the Turkish Army. It is presumed that, since the governments of neither Syria nor Turkey have officially initiated investigations of their own into the existence and possible location of the find, it is now lost to the black market.

“Ancient artifact. Syrian Kurdistan.”

The find was put up for bidding on a mainstream internet auction site by “moveablestock”—a user later identified as Kawa Kuranyi, a Kurdish dentist from Urfa, a mixed ethnic Anatolian city with more competing creation myths than an anthology.

“Partially intact, orrery or astrolabe, classical epoch, Babylonian/Hellenistic. Like ‘Antikythera Mechanism’—but bigger, larger, more detailed. Recovered from Afrin battlefield August, 2019. 48 plus broken toothed discs, many geared to rotary mechanisms in various states of deterioration. With etchings of animal life and ancient scripts. Some jewels. Possible brass, with gold and silver inlay.”

Photographs showed that part of the original housing seemed to have survived, showing jeweled inlay, and precious stones still standing for the Moon, Mercury and Jupiter. The metal discs gleamed as silvery as golden.

The images also seemed to show a gear for the planet Neptune, named Enki in cuneiform, not properly deduced until the 19th century. The discs appeared to be inscribed with both Akkadian cuneiform and Koine Greek. Imagery showed typical but also unfamiliar astrological signs, some similar to the imagery discovered at Gobekli Tepe in recent years. Some of the constellation symbols come from outside the tradition.

The platform Gittidiyor, Turkey's ebay-clone, lit up this day as well, with bids cresting one million Lira in hours. It went quickly viral. Not all commenters assumed it to be a fake; some paid tribute to the extraordinary workmanship evidenced in the two detailed images, thinking it might be a Renaissance or Medieval marvel brought here from elsewhere. The workmanship showed astonishing precision. It was clear that if a forgery, it was the work of an artist, not just a craftsman. This mind intended to alter received history, locating such an object in Babylonian tradition, radically implying, for instance, that the Antikythera mechanism was a later, devolved and Hellenistic example of the art.

Twenty-four hours after its appearance, with bidding at 1.7 million Turkish lira, the auction was withdrawn. Ordinarily, one would have expected it to hit the black market, with a price-tag a lot higher than 1.7 million. Archaeology has always been a way for impoverished guerilla armies to raise cash. Now, just by its celebrity alone, the mechanism had made a splash. Investigations, as is possible when the flow of information is precisely controlled, would be thenceforth redacted from the mainstream.

In a surprising enough event that occasioned this Library Stack investigation into these matters, a U.S.-based authenticator with London connections was later found to have checked in at the Urfa Hilton Garden Hotel one day before the posting. Yet Dr. Kuranyi made no mention of authentication.

AUTHENTICATION

Milton T. Fanglinn's presence on the scene would only be revealed after his apparent suicide days after; the subsequent hacking and leaking of his "cyberwallet" and adjoined messaging account (which he apparently believed to be "perfectly secure") would open debates about technology and its futures to a mainstream unprepared to accept its implications. Fanglinn was a typical renegade expert and authenticator on the antiquities scene. With an Ivy league doctorate in Classics and the typical digging experience of many a student, he might have expected a happy career in academia with summer time expeditions. But during his studies, the humanities collapsed as a

viable career discipline. Now he found work authenticating and investigating various pieces for Davies Street antiquities dealers. He solicited work on a bulletin board on a private, so-called “dark web” network, which has been using already publicly available peer-to-peer networking and “smart contract” technologies to create the infrastructure for a “grey” antiquities market since 2017.

This grey web market was specifically designed so that ‘archaeologists’ and other ‘experts’ like Fanglinn could extract precious information from transactions destined to be lost to history in subsequent black markets, and share it on an ostensibly open, yet decentralized and private (for paying-users) network. Many expect these practices to be outlawed. But until they were, travelling and making use of his knowledge paid Fanglinn handsomely, and allowed people and governments equal access to intelligence he produced across borders and cultures.

Since 2017, he had been working exclusively with smart contracts, allowing unknown parties to pay him and communicate anonymously, without possible discovery. He was paid in currencies impossible to trace. His work was limited to specific report-based messages, secure and notarized. With his Ivy League Ph.D., Fanglinn was apparently trusted enough that payments impossible to undo were made on his word alone. It is generally believed that he knew his email account held the keys to his still-unopened messages from “Control”, and he left them there as insurance, a gesture of good will toward any intelligence agencies that might be peeking in. Because he never officially “closed” the contract for the Urfa visit, its information has not been, nor ever will be, shared with the network.

The contract he received was copied in his email account’s drafts folder. It came two weeks before Kuranyi’s posting. It was followed by secure messages, giving the coordinates of Afrin, Syria and dates (a full week) for his travel. But on the day he was to leave, due to renewed hostilities in Afrin his flight was changed to Urfa, Turkey. A message suggested a particular hotel.

Exactly on his check-in, a fifty thousand dollar equivalent of Cytherium, a cryptocurrency with traction enough that it had survived a recent market downturn, was transferred anonymously to his wallet.

It turned out that Fanglinn believed his employer was a futures market that had predicted a find in this time and place. With powerful computation possibilities, was it possible for predictive algorithms to incorporate local and global erosion, artificial density, lawlessness enough to make it worthwhile for their designers to put Fanglinn on the spot in Urfa the day the news broke? Did a human even enter into the picture? Either way, it was a person or A.I. with a lot of Cytherium.

He received a new message minutes after the find was posted with the name of a dentist. After visiting, he seems to have filed one single report. It initiated a 25,000 payment. The report is notably non-specialist in tone. As this is the only set of professional transactions and messages Mr. Fanglinn preserved in his email accounts, we have no way of knowing if it is his usual tone, or if he was already in a mental state leading up to his suicide. The fact that he was paid promptly, and presumably in a half installment suggests the former.

“I found my way to the dentist’s makeshift office—his old mother was nominally his assistant, but operations on the line of locals waiting for treatment at his place had already begun at nine in the morning. As this phone will no doubt tell you, he took me out the back over the rooftop. In this old part of the city, structures are built up and atop one another just as they were eleven thousand years ago, back when communities like those at Çatal Hüyük formed to survive together a coming desert, no longer teaming with game and wild crops.

“One of these stone interiors contained members of the Kurdish YPG militia. Several female guards stood about, armed with new US guns. A woman commander approached me and spoke in English. A stairway led downstairs to a long enchambered dirt-floored basement where a heap of metal and debris was laid about on tables.

“I was left alone to examine and photograph the material under a single light. There was too much for one day to report. But I say this: yes, it appears to be an authentic artifact. Possibly 2nd or 3rd century BC. Possibly earlier. I am only not more than 50 percent certain because of its astonishing state of partial preservation. I also say this without hesitation, and I believe it is why the YPG brought in the Dentist to begin with: the object is radioactive. I will return

tomorrow and prepare a final report.”

But the next day, our sources say, a joint task force of U.S. military police and Turkish intelligence officers took in Milton T. Fanglinn for questioning. The orrery, if that’s what it was, and the YPG unit both disappeared.

INVESTIGATION

Library Stack tracked down the only person known to have spoken to Fanglinn face-to-face after his viewing: American Sgt. Dolores Ensenadas, a U.S. military police officer with a specialty in antiquities, then currently overseeing an unrelated investigation out of the Incirlik air base. Orders came from above to investigate the American, whose presence was already known. “I interrogated him, along with a Turkish Colonel, and a translator. Once we were convinced he was not lying to us, we drove him back to the hotel. I told him he was not to leave until morning, when we’d take him to the flight. I left a guard to make sure.”

“It was clear,” said Ensenadas, “that he was here under suspicion of antiquities trafficking, and needed to be evacuated for further questioning. But Fanglinn never boarded that plane. Leaving a note, and somehow disposing of his phone, he leapt off the hotel rooftop to his death.

“I would have volunteered to come down,” Ensenadas remembers Fanglinn explaining, “because I’m an archaeologist. Are you kidding? A new antikythera mechanism?”

“He was quite enthusiastic about the possibility that it could be real. He suspected it might have been 17th century until he noted that the cuneiform was exact, and not understood at that time. He also claimed there were discs for Uranus there, and Neptune, and some other phenomena whose periods are so long they have not yet been witnessed by astronomy. There was no way to prove who he worked for. He appeared to be genuinely convinced the thing was real, and that we would never see it again.”

“No, he did not tell me anything about it being radioactive.”

Fanglinn did disclose the Dentist and the YPG. But it was later found that both Kuranyi, the mother and the militia unit had all left

town. “CLOSED INDEFINITELY” said a sign outside his practice. The MPs questioned Fanglinn’s presence in the area. “There are no jobs in my field. For the discreet and scientifically minded archaeologist,” he explained, with a wisdom in his eyes beyond his years, “zones in some type of, say, transition, like the Gaza strip, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Congo or North Korea offer a realistic function. Much of our shared inheritance is being lost.” The amount of antiquities discovered in these regions due to conflict and climate change would only increase, Fanglinn explained. “It is the archaeologist’s scientific duty to record, catalog what was seen. But first I must discover ways to be paid.” The nation states want it all to come their way; but they invest nothing to remove it. Collection, in this context, has been privatized. Fanglinn believed, and Ensenadas to some extent backed him up, that he was not doing anything illegal. He didn’t know whom he served. But he now knew that the ancient world was capable of analog computation, and metalwork ‘the likes of which we have not dreamed.’

Ensenadas and her team also interviewed a local artisan, jeweler, and allegedly experienced forger Reynolds Aburdjian, said to have done work for every armed force that has passed through Anatolia in the past two decades. Aburdjian reported the YPG brought the mechanism to him, ‘shrouded in lead’ and asked his opinion as to whether it could be a fake. He told Ensenadas’ team it was a fake, “it had to be.” But at times his testimony implied otherwise: “I know fakes because I make them. The metal work alone—whether or not it was a uranium alloy, as they’d claimed—the fineness of the interlocking gears and wheels, it was beyond intricate. It seemed neither machine-made, nor hand-crafted,” he said. “It wasn’t actually bigger than the original Antikythera mechanism; I believe it was the same exact size, just with more bits—or perhaps the other is incomplete. . .” Ensenadas didn’t follow up. “Despite our investigations, it was widely believed and reported, even leaked later by anonymous sources, that the work was eventually sold to an oligarch, and was now in some region outside our jurisdiction. Frankly, it was probably certainly a fake. We found what appeared to be Fanglinn’s suicide note. It seemed to show he was someone out beyond his proper place in space and time; he had lost sanity.”

How can I explain the end of time?

This is different than the original machine. The Antikythera is but an imperfect glimpse of this mechanical brain.

Has it killed me already? I or it—one must be real.

No doubt Babylonia. No doubt Greek. Perhaps some sort of collaboration between lost generations and technologies?

There will be no time here to describe the mechanism. There will only be the mechanism. The predictor perfect of past and future. The first time machine we've been waiting for, at last revealed millennia in the past. Two forks resolved—universes artificially re-fused.

No molecular tests necessary. This, the original. The steel real. Many worlds confirmed. By the ancient engineers.

See if I will not survive its touch. . .

THE END OF TIME

Though mainstream interest ceased, private and amateur investigation and theorizing continued. Apple Jones Worthison, noted documentary filmmaker and investigative reporter on the paranormal scene (and host of the web series StarFiles) was already in the region filming a kickstarter-supported investigation into the Göbekli Tepe site. It was Worthison's contention that the Garden of Eden was located in these valleys in prehistory and that the building of the famed First Temple—now a site protected by overlapping Kurdish militias—occasioned the end of the old happy ways of prehistoric Earth. Today's conflict-scarred and desert-like conditions were the direct result of the first agriculture that began here, supporting ancient pilgrimages to this architectural and religious site.

During her investigations of alien craft imagery at the site and possible cover-ups, Worthison received a tip that there was an old shepherd who claimed to be the original discoverer of the Urfa Orrery, or what the comment boards had termed the Eden Machine. Meeting him, she later claimed, left her certain it was real.

"I came to the cradle of civilization, Eden, between the Tigris

and Euphrates, knowing that secrets would be buried all about. Evidence on the site of massacre shows that it was systematically erased from our history. The bodies were stacked; the temple and all the area surrounding were covered up with earth and forgotten for more than ten centuries. But the women who ran that old world and built those old roof-top cities, representing matriarchal traditions going back into the deep past, are still patrolling these streets. I do not doubt that the Kurdish people represent the descendents of those first times, and it was a Kurdish shepherd, an occasional archaeological worker employed by Professor Schmidt, who found the Machine.”

Henderson had a photograph of an old toothless man, confirmed to have told stories to his nephews.

“It was found in Turkey, not Syria. The place where he found it was off to the side of a little road, where a no-longer flowing river had cut an ancient furrow in the plain, so that here it was edged with a sudden surprise slope. He said it was near the border; right at the little crest of one of the rugged plains running toward Göbekli Tepe from the village.” He said that Professor Schmidt had told him to look out for antiquities wherever the ground was disturbed. A “lucky looker,” as he described himself, he was accustomed to keeping his eyes on the ground.

“The shepherd claims he spotted golden shining discs gleaming from the path a hundred yards distant. It shone out like a rainbow of possibility from that crack in the earth. He actually said that, according to my translator.

“He dislodged the pieces with his bare-hands, unsure what to do with the thing and figuring it might be one of these modern computers or compact discs. It was only when the dentist, visiting his village, needed a bit of metal to use for fillings that the old man showed him his find. Kuranyi paid handsomely for it (100 lire) and drove away.

“The site where it was found is now filled with concrete. My geiger counter gave inconclusive evidence of any radioactivity in the area. But when I found Kuranyi he was in a UN hospital north of Afrin, suffering from radiation burns all up along his arms. It had spread and he was near death. He came in and out of reason, but was happy enough to get his thoughts on the orrery on the record:

“I believe it is real, was real and that with it we have arrived at the end of time. That is why I am dying through the arms that touched it. It is time to loop out of this reality.

“We are on in time—we make time, together with all the other events. What you call a clock is in fact the only thing not really moving. Everything else ticks but the clocks. The mechanism ticks. It talks.”

“I believe Kuranyi meant that the Mechanism presents time as the infolded and unfolding possible motions of all the bodies. From here one can stand and watch the future and the past turn around you, showing the shape of the future.

“It tells weather patterns,” he said to me as I left him going under medication to the point of no return. “Even today. Hot! It says! Very Hot!”

“Is the universe itself an enormous orrery, calculating by motions what are really a series of relations in space, entirely reversible and determined? What then of the Machine, the metal of its stars and the laws of physics it makes anagously possible?”

* * *

The original investigation into the Eden Machine’s disappearance and Fanglinn’s suicide was terminated from all directions, before Sgt. Ensenadas and her team pursued every lead. They left one wide open, Sgt. Ensenadas told us when we tracked her down in McAllen, Texas, where she was now a US attorney. A private jet had landed late on the same day as Fanglinn’s arrival. It was painted strange colors, with an unlisted registration number. It turned out a number of flights had been rerouted to that airport the same time as Fanglinn’s. This one remained on the tarmac all night and most of the text day, with zero passengers deplaning, though a food delivery truck was spotted at the craft’s rear door. The plane then departed early on the morning of Fanglinn’s death. Upon investigation, it turned out to belong to the Swiss venture capitalist Myrus Blostender, CEO of CYTHEREA, the corporation putting out Cytherium, the cryptocurrency token “closest to the real”, with which Fanglinn was paid so ‘handsomely’.

“Coincidences abound in crisis areas.” Apple Jones Worthison

shrugged, “You have no idea of what goes down when there’s no government authority, no trust. Trees fall down, even though no one sees. It’s like nothing even needs to pretend to be real anymore. History’s what you want it not to be.” A last thread took Worthison across the western oceans from Babylon, to the far side of that decimated once utopic land first looted by St. Brendan, or Lief Erikson, or Cristobal Colon, and to its most recent apotheosis: Silicon Valley.

CYTHEREA

CYTHEREA is one of the many 2016 startups created to exploit the possibilities of blockchain technology. But despite its rhetoric of group-shared crypto- and parallel- futures profitability, unlike most such efforts it is firmly rooted in the real world. Apple Jones Worthison managed to arrange an interview appointment at their offices in San Jose, CA with Majorica Stineway, the COO, who began as an information technologist for XANTAL, a private futurist firm contracted to NASA, the NSA, Microsoft and Citibank, and is now a senior developer in research and architectures at CYTHEREA.

“I worked in mainstream systems administration for ten years, before becoming restless at the lack of interest in the new world that peer-to-peer networking signalled as coming into being. The New Age, really. I was an economics major at Radcliffe, with a minor in Classics, so I was naturally attracted to Myrus and his greater project.”

“Myrus Bostender is Cytherea. He is what distinguishes us from other players on the market. Myrus, as you know, entered the sector not for ideas or profit, but for ease of operation and convenience.”

Piling coincidence on top of coincidence in this story, Myrus Bostender’s first start-up was a publicly financed effort to bring to the surface all remaining material of the two wrecked vessels now understood to be below the surface of the island of Antikythera. His deal with Athens was the first example of a system his company would go on to exploit, whereby a national government, trading security and access for the technical research and archaeological labor, could begin to gather some of the cultural inheritance it was losing to looters and environmental decay. There was not enough

money to finance the trip at home. Bostender's backers created the CYTHEREA Foundation, a nonprofit entity giving access to all the information to paying users (images, notarized authentic imagery and information), and ensured that the most significant pieces would be donated to the Greek State. The Greek government gave to the Foundation itself, as climate change was threatening to erode what was left in those wrecks.

* * *

“Myrus is an authentic visionary. Right away he understood that peer-to-peer chains could create a market perfectly suited for the antiquities scene, as it has always been essentially a place where provenance and privacy of transaction were as important as transparency. The three points of the great Triangle, he calls it: our symbology is explicitly Pythagorean. Notice how the present stands up front and the past and the future are the bottom, the foundation. Myrus was able to see that if enough anonymous sources were to be able to bid on future possibilities it would one day be possible to profit from the slice of free will that multiverse theory allows us and effectively game the future to profit from that prediction. I came on board when he decided to create a currency for those futures, from out of the material of the past itself.

“We've designed Cytherium as a non-traceable and truly 51 percent protected unhackable transaction system, which mines reality in a realistic fashion. We've found the true meaning of value, overlooked by the age of oil companies with their will to burn up the physical archive of our living planet. It is the past itself, shed of information.

“Of course we've used a fork off the public networks to offer a fully private, secure nontransferable reality-based currency. We also offer a messaging system, entirely secure, notarized and private. But of the many innovations Cytherea is spearheading in this revolutionary era, perhaps none is as distinguishing as the mining system.

“Whereas most blockchain networks encourage the mining of complicated encryption algorithms, and grow increasingly costly as they demand more and more computing power to grind onward,

our miners mine information from the antiquities market world wide, especially that market chained by the participating servers. All you need is a fragment, an image and notarized authorization—we offer worldwide experts able to travel and investigate, with discretion if need be, by any party.”

“Is it true Milton Fanglinn used Cytherium?” asked Worthison. “And can you comment on the so-called Eden Machine?”

“It’s obviously a fake,” Stineway sighed. “Trust us, we know the original mechanism intimately. Mr. Fanglinn appears, like many archaeologists, to be a Cytherium user and collector. He has authenticated for networks based on our software on the past. We’ve looked into it. A picture came into view of Mr. Fanglinn: brilliant but shy, a thus undistinguished graduate student from Missouri who had a Yale Ph.D. in Classics and a Masters in Archaeological Science from there as well. He freelanced at the behest of numerous high-end London-based antiquities dealers who currently make use of our networks and cloud applications. Many of them no doubt use Cytherium, and are participants in Cytherea’s meaning-mining: that’s the third stage in our triangular system between antiquity cataloging and those who analyze that work, the proof of which generates tokens on various private chains. Fanglinn had clearly been authenticating for Cytherea for some time.

“I should stop there; I can tell you no more. That’s the point of CYTHEREA’s mission, you see. There is no central authority. We have no way of knowing who uses our services or forks from our chain, or how, and whether they continue to use our platform or not. We only guarantee the accuracy of notarized provenance within our system, gathered by our miners, and the total anonymity of all outside users. The Foundation itself holds no Cytherium coin. Check our vision statement.”

When Apple Worthison asked if hackers might someday be able find that protected information by simply hacking into the email account of any user, she found herself promptly escorted out of the offices by security, passing by the prominent wall-mounted display of that corporate vision statement on her way out.

CYTHEREA: IT'S A WHOLE NEW OLD EARTH.
TODAY OUR FUTURE IS ONLY OUR PAST.

TO MINE THE PALIMPSEST
TO COLLECT WITHOUT OWNERSHIP
TO SHARE WITHOUT DISCLOSURE
TO RESERVE THE PAST
TO STAKE OUT THE FUTURE
TO PRESERVE THE ARCHIVE AND PUT
IT TO THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

And below it, a message from Myrus Bostender to his devoted employees:

Everywhere we stand is memory. CYTHEREA looks forward to stepping out of the smear of the forgotten and no longer possible.

Cytheria steps into the post-anthropocene, where the future is dynamic. Our models begin to understand and predict climate transformation and popular political improvisation as dynamic generators of the wealth of tomorrow. We are one planet. We share one history. As the surface of our world warms, we see the the etchings interventions on its skin. Here we may still mine our already clocking demise.

CODA

Months after the incident in San Jose, hackers leaked the private emails of Milton T. Fanglinn. Library Stack, a collective researching the relationship between antiquities trading and blockchain prediction systems, messaged Apple Worthison and asked what she thought about the revelations that some futures market had initiated Fanglinn's flight to Syria.

“My understanding is that people on that network were creating and selling shares for possibilities of future events and that the algorithms themselves—now that their servers had absorbed so much

of the Syrian and Turkish archive—had initiated, and perhaps even paid for, Fanglinn’s trip. There seemed to be no human agency at work. Is it made with a uranium alloy? It seems possible. Though why didn’t the algorithms predict that?

“Anyways, I believe the dentist; I believe the shepherd. Why shouldn’t I believe Fanglinn? After all, his original description online was on target. It is a clock, but from inside. A clock understood geometrically, physically, as a function of the universe and its entire book of laws. The clock that Einstein and Dali liked making fun of presumed itself separate from the experiment and lost its mind.

“Archimedes studied in Egypt. He had access to the deeper Babylonian traditions. We never had a chance to study from where this orrery would be best perceived. Do you know that to calculate such a machine, one needs only that perfectly defined position, from where the motions of the heavens can be viewed and received as a whole? Well, you also need two sticks and a bit of string taut between them. It’s obvious that this is what the temple of Göbekli Tepe could do, with its tall, aligned posts, to the nth degree. I am convinced this piece was from 9000 B.C. or earlier.

“Spend time as I have in this true cradle of civilization. You will see where you are, relative to the moon, the fixed stars, the sun, and the planets—Mercury included. But I’m not a theorist and others can do that work. I’m more interested in the human results: the cover-ups, the conspiracies.

“To a temple of the past. Death worship. Have you noticed how backward-looking our technology really is? With its ‘scrolling’, its ‘tablets’ and its ‘blockchains’ it insists on moving backwards into the future. Even now we’re at the mercy of the ancient engineers. Where does a missing mechanism lead? I mean, exactly to where we built the first temple ever? The Babylonians were an infinitely more scientific people than the Egyptians. They had a natural disposition to make systematic inquiries. Don’t you know the first math we have in the tradition comes from Egypt, and a scribe named Ashmes refers to the fact that it’s coming at the very end of a long and mostly forgotten tradition? Is it not safe to assume that the engineers of the debauched age of the Caesars, who trampled freedom underfoot, and promoted slavery and looting to the centrality it has today in the

imperial traditions, that they were unable to match the achievements of the days of Archimedes, when a scientist, by art alone, defended Syracuse for decades from the sea? Why then might Archimedes not be a step back from the Pythagoreans? Who passed on mathematical formulae secretly through the generations until they were forgotten? Pythagoras was a Christ to his brilliant, elitist intellectual followers. I believe he worked on this piece himself, in Babylon where he doubtless studied astronomy for the first time with the makers of this piece. Notice the exquisite rendering of the Sun.”

We asked Worthison if she thought there were other wonders out there on the Turkish plains, where the cutting down of a once teeming forest had first initiated the Anthropocene, back when the Temple was first constructed.

“What we need to find there is peace,” she replied. “Archaeology can’t exist under these conditions. Nor authentic investigative reporting. Actually, I’m shelving Babylon for a while. I am actually in Iceland right now, looking into sightings of Giants—somehow recently on the increase, likely in close proportion to rising temps. . .”

