

SOME ANCIENT AND SOME
LESSER KNOWN SACRED PLACES

Africa

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Dogon village on the Bandiagara Escarpment near Timbuktu, Mali, West Africa.

- For the Dogon their rugged homeland is alive with the spirits of their ancestors.



Legendary Timbuktu.

- Location.



Approximately where the
“M” of the word MALI
occurs.

There are approximately 700 Dogon villages, most with fewer than 500 inhabitants.

- Dogon People, Mali.



The precise origins of the Dogon, are lost in the mists of time.

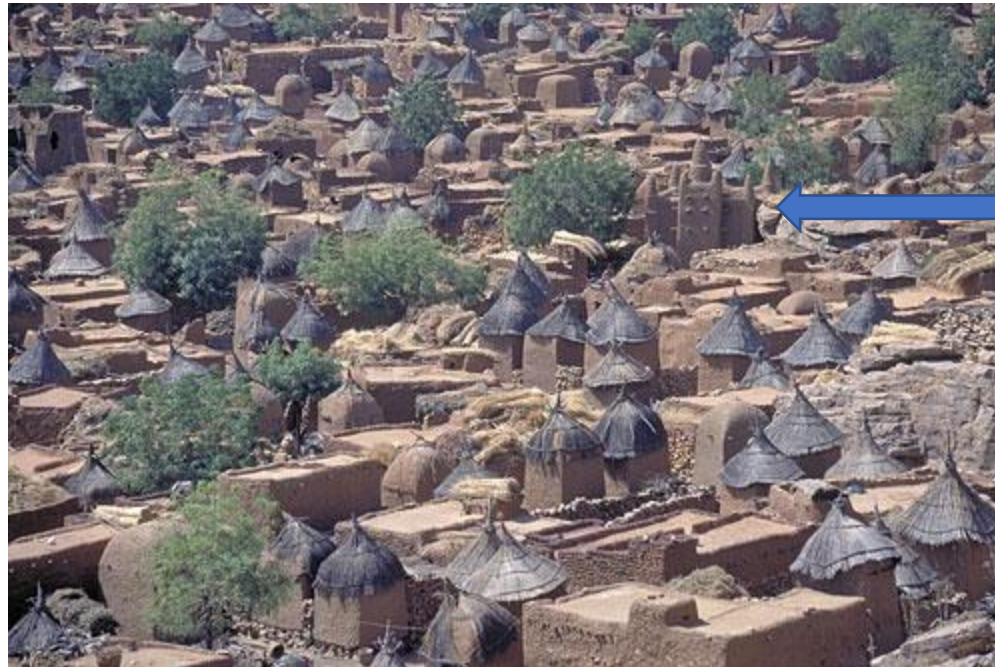
- The early histories are informed by oral traditions (that differ according to the Dogon clan being consulted) and archaeological excavation (much more of which needs to be conducted).

- Binu shrine, Bandiagara escarpment, Mali.



Originally from Libya, they first migrated south to the region of Burkina Faso, Guinea or Mauritania.

- Around 1490CE, fleeing invaders and/or drought, they migrated to the Bandiagara cliffs of central Mali.
- Dogon village of Songo, with mud mosque, Mali.



Mosque, I think.

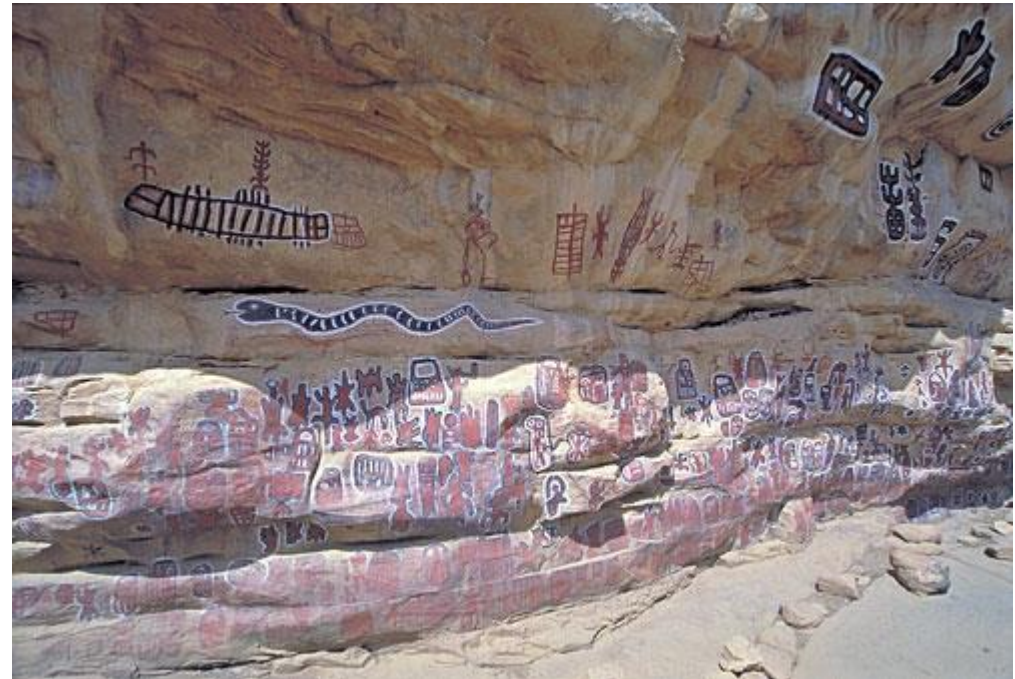
The only information I have(a book) states that the Tellem were pygmies who dug caves in the cliffs.

- Carbon-14 dating techniques used on excavated remains found in the cliffs indicate that there were inhabitants in the region before the arrival of the Dogon; these were the Toloy culture of the 3rd to 2nd centuries BCE, and the Tellem culture of the 11- 15th centuries CE.
- Another(?)Binu shrine near Arou-by-Ibi, Bandiagara, Mali.



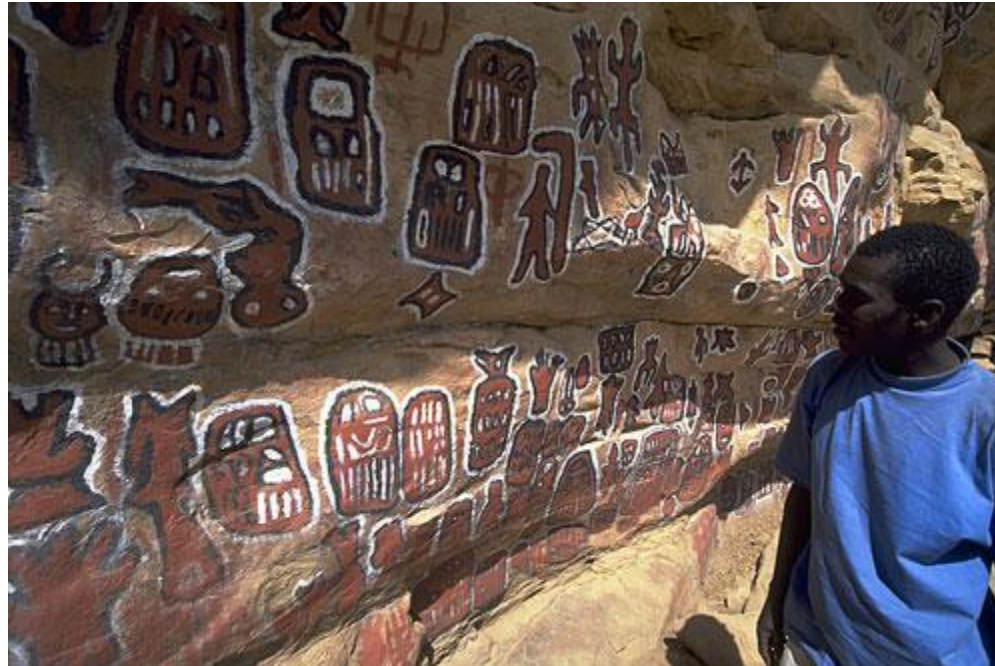
A significant minority of Dogon are Muslims.

- For the majority of Dogons, religion is defined primarily through the worship of the ancestors and the spirits that they encountered as they slowly migrated from their obscure ancestral homelands to the Bandiagara cliffs.
- Rite of passage ceremonial site for Dogon boys becoming men, near village of Songo, Bandiagara.



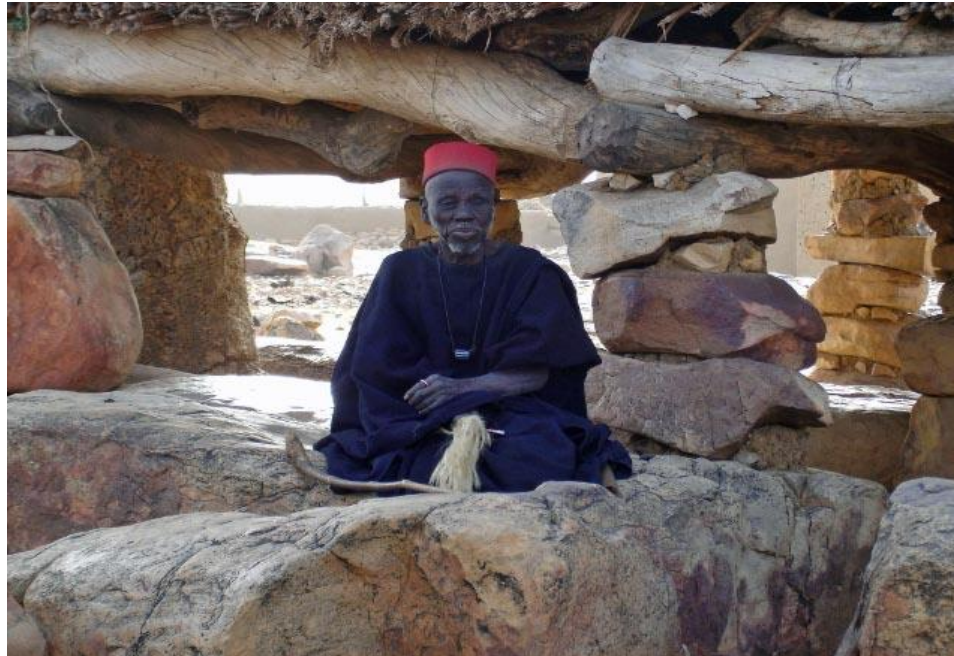
Cave paintings related to circumcision and other religious rites.

- Boys and girls are circumcised.



The Hogon is the spiritual leader of the village.

- He is elected from among the oldest men of the enlarged families of the village.
- After his election he has to follow a six-month initiation period, during which he is not allowed to shave or wash.
- After his initiation, he wears a red fez.



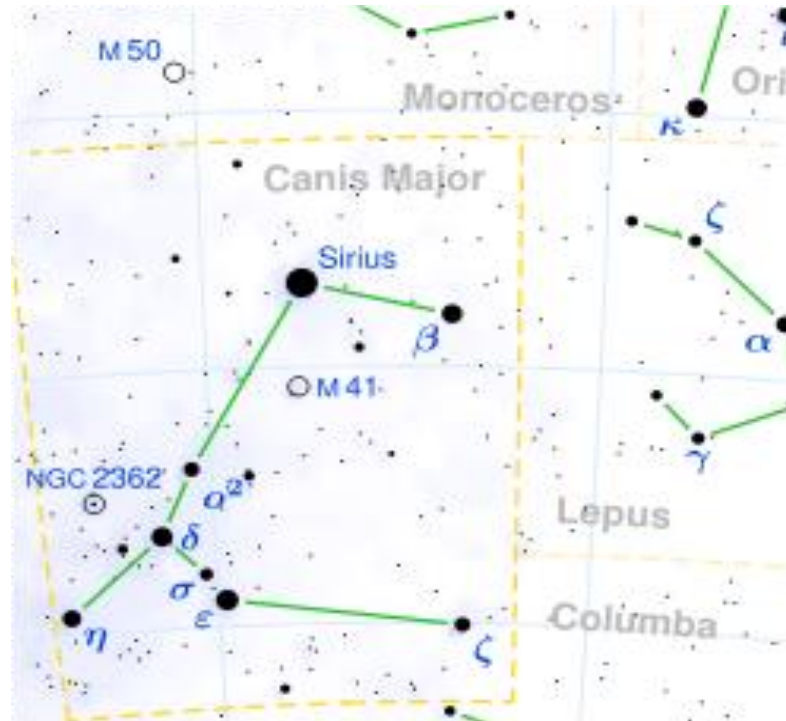
Unexpected knowledge.

- In the late 1940's, Dogon priests greatly surprised the French anthropologists Griaule and Dieterlen by telling them secret Dogon myths about the star Sirius (8.6 light years from the earth).
- The priests said that Sirius had a companion star that was invisible to the human eye.
- Sirius(the dog star) is the brightest “star” in the night sky.



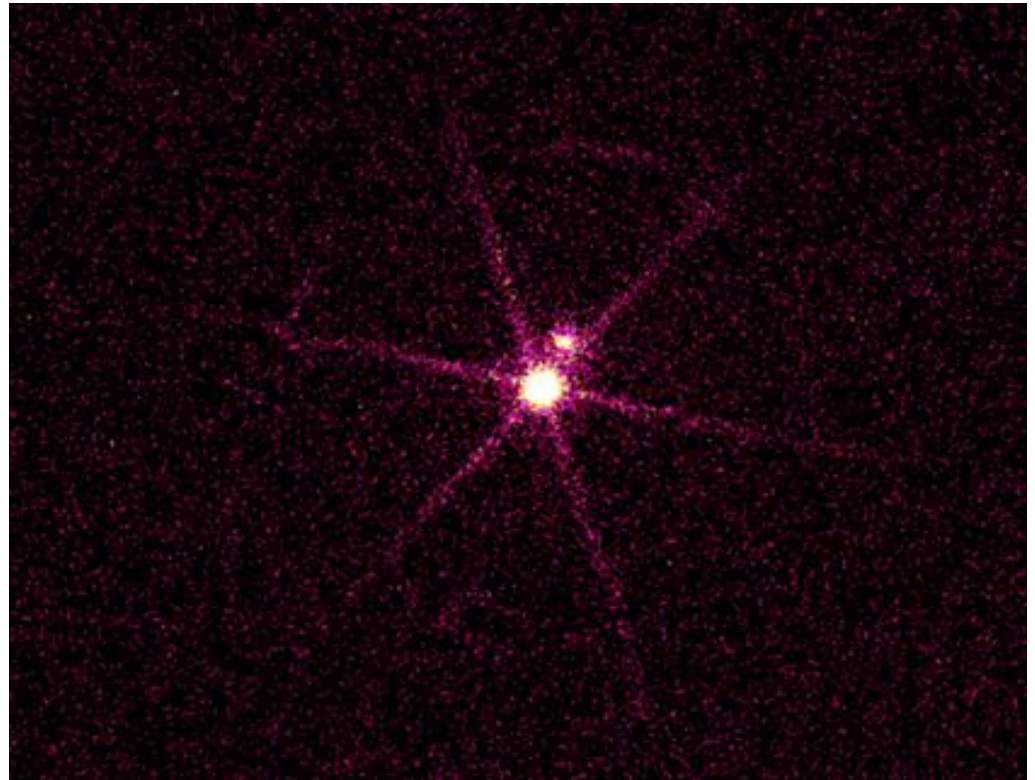
Known by Ancient Egyptians and Greeks.

- Sirius is also known colloquially as the "Dog Star", reflecting its prominence in its constellation, Canis Major (Greater Dog).



Secret knowledge that is claimed to be ancient knowledge.

- They stated that the companion moved in a 50-year elliptical orbit around Sirius, that it was small and incredibly heavy, and that it rotated on its axis.
- X-ray image of the Sirius star system. The brighter star is Sirius B.
- The spikes are caused by the X-ray equipment and are not emitted by the star.



A simulated image of Sirius A and B using the computer software Celestia.

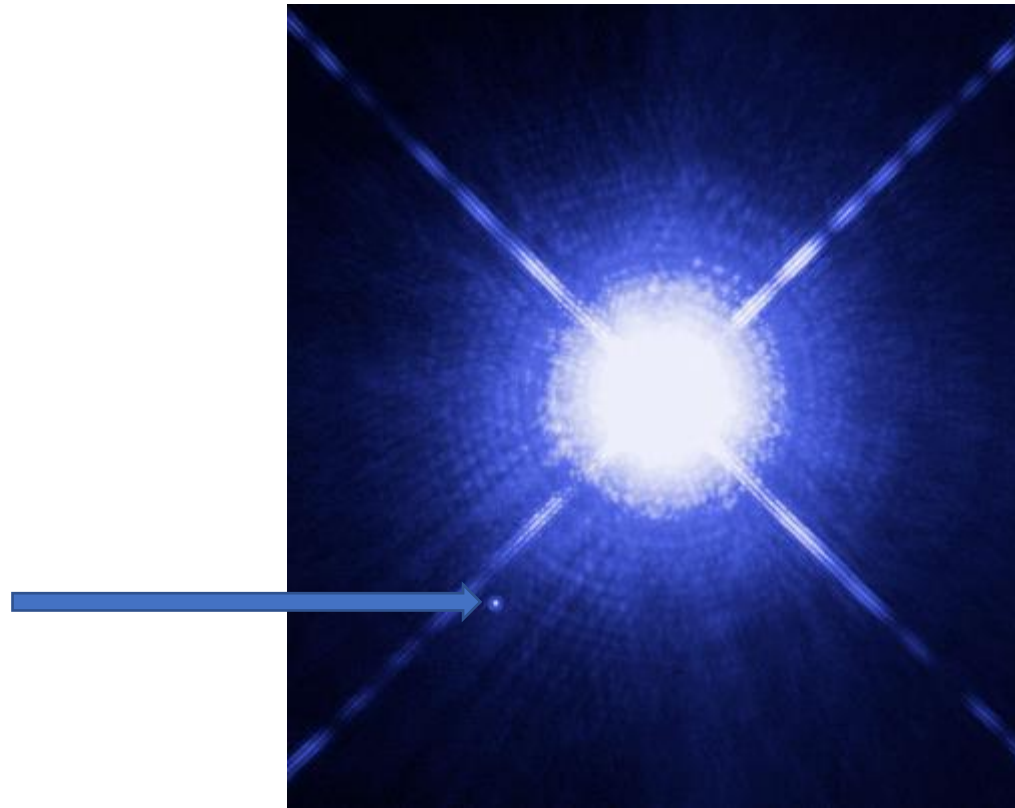
- Not until 1926 did Western science discover that this tiny star is a white dwarf, a category of star characterized by very great density. The time f orbiting is 50.04 +/- 0.09 years.



The image of Sirius A and Sirius B taken by the Hubble Space Telescope

- While astronomers began to suspect Sirius B's existence around 1844, it was not seen through a telescope until 1862.

Sirius A.



A mud mosque and minaret.

- Articles on the web say that the Dogon have other “ancient” knowledge of astronomy.
- I am a little sceptical.
- Some of them are Muslims and it is possible that knowledge transfer has taken place not so long ago.



Another site.



Limpopo's Lake Fundudzi.

- The lake is sacred to the Venda people who live in the area – the Vhatatsindi, or People of the Pool.



In the Soutpansberg, between Thohoyandou and Louis Trichardt



Thathe Vondo forest.

- The lake is surrounded by the mythical Thathe Vondo forest - so full of spirits that few Venda people venture into it for fear of hauntings and a lightning bird called Ndadzi.



Being in the lake does not seem to be consistent with the publicity!

- Trips to the lake shore are traditionally rarely granted visitors.
- It is said to be infested with crocodiles.
- So sacred is the lake that newcomers must turn their backs on the lake and view the water from between their legs, according to the ritual after which the lake is named.



Lake is a habitat for spirits.

- Lake Fundudzi is defended by a Venda python god who lives in the mountain on a rock.
- The ancestral spirits who inhabit the lake are said to be guarded by a white crocodile.
- The fullness of the lake and its colour indicate the mood of the ancestors, and predicts the coming rainy season.



Giant python god.

- The lake has no obvious outlet and is formed from water of the Mutale River, where the giant python god of fertility is said to reside.
- He demands an annual sacrifice of a maiden every year, and the ritual domba dance - part of the initiation rites of young women - can be viewed by getting permission from the Venda people.



Another site.



Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania near the border with Kenya.

- The name itself is a mystery wreathed in clouds.
- It might mean Mountain of Light, Mountain of Greatness or Mountain of Caravans.



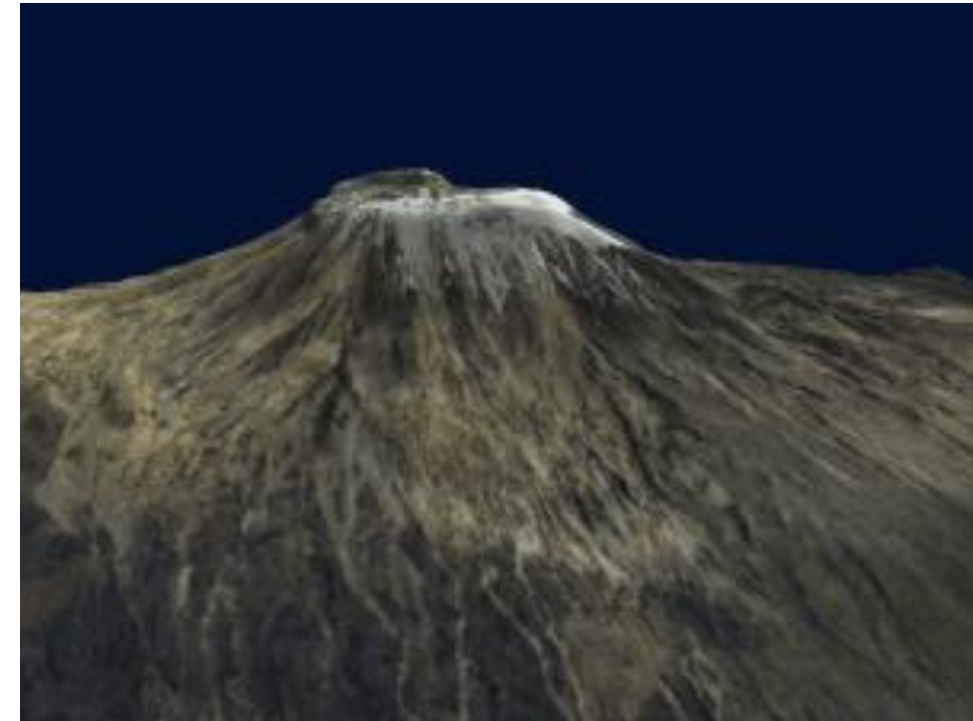
There are three volcanic cones: Kibo, Mawenzi and Shira.

- Aerial December 2009



Kibo is dormant and the other two extinct.

- Kibo is the summit at 5,895 m.
- Mawenzi is at 5,149 m and Shira at 3,962 meters.
- Uhuru Peak is the highest summit on Kibo's crater rim.
- Uhuru, Swahili for "Freedom," was named in 1961 when Tanganyika gained its independence .
- 3D model of Kibo.



The Chagga people.

- The mountain is considered sacred by the Chagga people who often bury their dead facing the mountain.
- Chagga hut.
- The name of the chief Chagga deity is Ruwa who resides on the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.
- Parts of the high forest contain old shrines with masale plantings, the sacred Chagga plant.



A majestic mountain.

- Panorama from Moshi Tanzania.



Snow at the equator.

- Kibo summit in 1938

