

Noah's Wife

RESEARCH NOTES

Although *Noah's Wife* is a work of fiction, there is scientific evidence to support the theory that a great flood nearly wiped out a relatively advanced civilization living along the shores of a fresh water lake we now know as the Black Sea. Marine geologists William Ryan and Walter Pitman proposed this theory and cited significant geological and archeological evidence in their book, *Noah's Flood, The New Scientific Discoveries About the Event that Changed History*. This theory is supported by the exciting explorations of Paul Ballard, the famous adventurer who discovered the sunken *Titanic*. Ballard has found evidence of the remains of a civilization beneath the Black Sea, corroborating previous radiocarbon dating and paleontological evidence from shells and sediment. From these sources, the date of the flood was set at approximately 5500 BCE. Further research around this time period established the setting for this novel, which takes place in Anatolia, current day Turkey.

Stories about a flood are found in almost every civilization on earth, the oldest written one being the Sumerian story of *Gilgamesh*. Many scholars believe that the Genesis tale “borrows” from this much older work. In the Genesis story, Noah's wife is barely mentioned and not directly named, however, some Hebrew scholars believe a later section giving the genealogy of a woman named Na'amah, refers to Noah's wife. I drew on the Biblical story primarily for the names and relationships of Noah and his family. From there, the tale is my own.

Evidence supports the primacy of the goddess religion for thousands of years in the Levant and especially in Anatolia. Small statuettes of female deities are the oldest physical evidence of human worship. Similarly, excavation at one of the world's most ancient sites of civilization, Çatalhöyük, has uncovered a society that primarily worshiped a goddess. Michael Balter explores this fascinating dig in *The Goddess and the Bull: Çatalhöyük — An Archaeological Journey to the Dawn of Civilization*. The goddess as the Earth/Sea Mother (often represented with her son/lover) was absorbed into the pantheon of later cultures, such as the Hittites. Gradually, her powers were usurped and eventually repressed by a patriarchal interpretation of history and worship, which culminated in the compilation of the Hebrew Bible. Even so, evidence exists that she played a significant part in early Hebrew culture, as Raphael Patai documents in *The Hebrew Goddess*, and she has reappeared in many guises and forms throughout history.

For thousands of years, societies in the Black Sea area were transitioning from hunter-gatherer/herder to agricultural cultures. I take responsibility for using the concepts of Father God and Mother Goddess to represent the possible conflict this engendered and to foreshadow the eventual clash of religious views. Father God (storm god) as the predominant deity does not appear to have taken permanent root in the area until sometime near the end of the third millennium and into the second.

In *Noah's Wife*, I made Na'amah an Asperger savant. The term “Asperger Syndrome” (AS) or “Asperger's” was, of course, unknown in ancient times, but there is no reason to believe that the disorder did not exist. Most experts put it on the high-functioning end of the autism spectrum, although there is some disagreement about whether it is a form of autism or an independent developmental disorder. AS and autism, in general, exist on a spectrum and individuals' experiences and symptoms vary along that continuum.

Many persons with Asperger's are highly intelligent. Some have extraordinary recall and obsessive knowledge about areas that capture their interest. Na'amah's obsessive interest was sheep. While savant skills are not universally present in persons with AS, they are common and generally include prodigious memory and/or skills with numbers and math. Some have heightened sensory perceptions and some experience synesthesia, a condition where one type of stimulation evokes the sensation of another. For Na'amah, the hearing of a sound produced color and sometimes shape visualizations, and she had savant abilities of memory recall.

I took literary license to extend Na'amah's sensitivity to sound to include the infrasound, low frequency vibrations below the audible range. Infrasound has been known to cause symptoms of nausea, discomfort, and wavering in the peripheral vision. It is theorized that infrasound is produced prior to earthquakes, and that this might be the explanation as to why some animals seem to predict major quakes. It was also my

“theory” (or Na’amah’s) that the discomfort many persons with this condition feel when looking at another person’s face is related to an overload of information, as some persons with autism and AS do not seem to have the ability to screen or synthesize information as “normal” people do. On the flip side, this may give them the ability to notice details that others do not.

Research has identified a cluster of genes that may be responsible for autism and AS. When the genes express in one way, a person may be severely handicapped. Expressed in another way, the result may be creativity or even genius. There is some evidence that Einstein and Hemingway, for example, had AS. It is possible that we all have some degree of this condition/abilities. Perhaps these gene clusters are part of nature’s exploration of survival characteristics. If so, we should be respectful of that and very careful about genetically “curing” it, as we might be curing the human race of creativity.

Any historical errors are mine. I do not have Asperger’s and therefore have relied on information from those who do and from researchers (with the exceptions noted) but take responsibility for any missteps there, as well.

T.K. Thorne

author of *Noah's Wife*

ForeWord Review's Historical Fiction Book of the Year

www.tkthorne.com

Blogging at www.tkthorne.wordpress.com

Noah's Wife Selected Bibliography

“Asperger’s Syndrome.” Child Development Institute, LLC. 1998-2008

<http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/disorders/asperger.shtml>

Attwood, Tony and Temple Grandin, et al. *Aspergers and Girls, World-renowned experts join those with Asperger’s Syndrome to resolve issues that girls and women face every day!* Future Horizons, 2006.

“Autistic Children Can Interpret Mental States When Facial Expressions Are Animated.” Adapted from materials provided by Society for Research in Child Development. *Science Dailey*. 27 March, 2007.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/03/070326095410.htm>

Balter, Michael. *The Goddess and the Bull: Çatalhöyük --An Archaeological Journey to the Dawn of Civilization*. Simon & Schuster, 2005.

Bertman, Stephen. *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

“Bird Intelligence.” *Science Daily*. 2008 http://www.sciencedaily.com/articles/b/bird_intelligence.htm.

Canby, Jeanny Vorys, ed. *Ancient Anatolia: aspects of change and cultural development: essays in honor of Machteld J. Mellink*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1986.

Cassin, Jack. “Archaeology and Anatolian Slit-Tapestry Weaving.” The Weaving Art Museum and Research Institute. 1998. http://www.weavingartmuseum.org/ex1_main.htm.

- “Çatalhöyük, Excavations of a Neolithic Höyük.” Çatalhöyük Research Project, Institute of Archaeology. 20 April, 2009. <http://www.catalhoyuk.com/>.
- Durant, Will. *The Story of Civilization Part I, Our Oriental Heritage*. Simon & Schuster, 1935.
- “Eye Contact Triggers Threat Signals In Autistic Children's Brains.” *Science Daily*. 10 March, 2005. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/03/050309151153.htm>
- “Food Preservation, Ancient Methods.” *Science Clarified*. Advameg, Inc. 2008. <http://www.scienceclarified.com/Ex-Ga/Food-Preservation.html>.
- “Flora and Fauna” [Turkey]. Tuizim.net. 1998-2007. <http://www.turizm.net/turkey/info/flora.html>.
- Grandin, Temple and Catherine Johnson. *Animals in Translation, Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior*. Scribner, 2004.
- Grandin, Temple. *Thinking in pictures and other reports from my life with autism*. Doubleday, 1995.
- Haddin, Mark. *The Curious Case of the Dog in the Night-time*. Doubleday, 2003.
- Hill, Amelia. “Doctors are Failing to Spot Aspergers in Girls.” *The Observer*, 12 April 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/apr/12/autism-aspergers-girls>
- Hoopman, Kathy. *All Cats have Aspergers*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006.
- Johnson, Richard. “A Genius Explains.” *The Guardian*. 12 February 2005. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2005/feb/12/weekend7.weekend2>
- “Kangal Dog.” Wikipedia. 17 April 2009. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kangal_Dog.
- Kirby, Barbara L. *What is Aspergers?* Crown, 2005.
- Krause, Lisa. “Ballard Finds Traces of Ancient Habitation Beneath Black Sea.” *National Geographic*, 2000. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2000/12/122800blacksea.html>.
- Kurlansky, Mark. *Salt, A World History*. Penguin Books, 2003.
- Lloyd, Seton. *Ancient Turkey, A Traveller's History*. University of California Press. 1989.
- “Mesopotamia: The Sumerian Story of the Great Flood.” Howstuffworks, Inc. 1998-2009. <http://videos.howstuffworks.com/hsw/8815-mesopotamia-the-sumerian-story-of-the-great-flood-video.htm>
- Mitchell, Stephen. *Gilgamesh, a New English Version*. Free Press, 2006.
- Nash, Madeleine. “The Secrets of Autism.” *Time Magazine*. 15, July 2002. <http://www.time.com/time/europe/magazine/2002/0715/autism/scautism.html>
- “Olive Oil History.” The Global Gourmet®. 2009. <http://www.globalgourmet.com/food/egg/egg0397/oohistory.html>.

- Patai, Raphael. *The Hebrew Goddess*, Wayne State University Press, 1990.
- Pepperberg, Irene M. *Alex and Me, How a Scientist and a Parrot Uncovered a Hidden World of Animal Intelligence—and Formed a Deep Bond in the Process*. HarperCollins, 2008.
- Peterson, Daniel C. "Nephi and his Asherah." *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* Volume: 9 Issue: 2. Provo, Utah: Maxwell Institute, 2000.
- "Pitch (Resin)." Wikipedia. 30 March 2009. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitch_\(resin\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitch_(resin))>.
- Robinson, John Elder. *Look Me in the Eye, My Life with Aspergers*. Crown Publishers, 2007.
- Ryan, William and Walter Pitman. *Noah's Flood, The New Scientific Discoveries About the Event that Changed History*. Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- Scott, David C. "Predynastic (5,500 - 3,100 BC)." *Egyptian History*. 1996. <http://www.touregypt.net/ebph5.htm>.
- Shoenian, Susan. "Sheep 101.com." 30 April 2009. <http://www.sheep101.info/index.html>.
- Treffert, Darold A., MD. "Asperger's Disorder and Savant Syndrome." *Wisconsin Medical Society*. 2009. http://www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org/savant_syndrome/savant_articles/aspergers
- Viegas, Jennifer. "World's Oldest Boat Found in Desert." *Discovery News*, 17 June 2002. Free Republic. Posted 22 June 2002. <<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/704398/posts>>
- Yakar, Jak. *The later prehistory of Anatolia: the Late Chalcolithic and early Bronze age*. Oxford B.A.R, 1985.
- Yakar, Jak. *Prehistoric Anatolia: the Neolithic transformation and the early chalcolithic period*. Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University. 1991.
- Walker, Barbara G, "Shekina." *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*, New York, HarperCollins, 1983. <http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/s/shekina.html>.

Note: The texts above are a partial list, but represent the main sources used in this novel.--TKT