



Image 1 Ark of the Covenant, 9th-10th Century. ARAS Record 5Ck.054

Why ARAS?

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Part One: Anima Mundi

Part Two: Flood

Part Three: Ark

Part Four: Treasure

Part One: Anima Mundi



Image 2 Tree of Souls, James Cameron's Avatar

Most of us, at one time or another in our lives, have had Plato's thought that the world is "a living being endowed with a soul and intelligence." In James

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Cameron's film *Avatar*, this notion is projected into the future of the mid 22nd century in the form of the "[tree of souls](#)" which has the capability of direct neural link with living creatures.

This is a vision of a unified world in which all living things are interconnected through a world soul.

In 1970, when I was finishing medical school, I had such a dream:



Image 3 Author's drawing, 1970

I am attending a United Nations session and the discussion is focused on setting up a colossal cistern or water storage facility that will sit on top of the world. Whoever needs water in the world at a given time will be determined by a computer (this was long before computers were sitting on top of the world)—so that water for the whole earth will be regulated and distributed equitably.

I thought to myself, “I don’t like computers very much but maybe they could do a better job distributing water fairly than politicians have done. It was a global watering hole (“whole” as I misspelled it in my dream book, where I also sketched the dream image on page 3).

At the time, I did not think of this as a representation of what Jung called the “anima mundi”. In fact, I didn’t know a thing about the concept. I took the dream quite literally and thought about it in terms of finding a way to actually distribute the world’s water equitably. It was only several months ago, in early 2016, when I was preparing to give a talk in Sydney on ARAS and cultural complexes that a distant memory of the dream compelled me to go back and consult it again.

When we set out on life’s journey we seldom have a real clue about where we are heading or what may, in the background or unconscious, be guiding us. Forty six years after first having the dream, it occurred to me for the first time that a great deal of my creative energy has gone into trying to realize that dream, but in a symbolic rather than concrete way--even though the so called concrete reality of distributing water equally around the world is even more of a dire necessity now than it was then. But, if we also imagine the dream to have a symbolic meaning, the water can be seen as the realm of the creative unconscious and the dream can be seen as promoting the global distribution of life giving, creative energy through visions and imagery originating in the collective psyche—conscious and unconscious. This brings us pretty close to the vision of ARAS whose goal is to share with the world through the miracle of computer technology curated symbolic imagery from all cultures of the world and from all eras of

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human history. At ARAS we believe that there is a central, symbolic cistern which is the source of life-giving and sustaining imagery/energy that should be shared globally. We also affirm the idea of the anima mundi—of there being an underlying and unifying fluid reality of world soul that may find very different expressions in different cultures and in different eras, but shares in a source of common and deep meaning throughout time and place.



Image 4 Crossed Rivers Mandala by Martha Oliver Smith

I have chosen Martha Oliver-Smith's "Crossed Rivers Mandala" to illustrate the spiritual sense of a world infused with a flow of interconnectedness, of all things participating in a world soul. As in this image, one can imagine it as a

place where two rivers intersect, flowing together in and out a single source, from the center of a white flower.

This is a vision of the anima mundi, of a world that is truly united through a deep well of vitality. This vision of the anima mundi should not be confused with globalization, although there is a hope that globalization might contribute to a realization of equally shared resources—concretely and symbolically around the world. ARAS is truly part of the global watering “hole/whole” in its goal of sharing from the deepest wells of the human imagination those images that are part of the anima mundi.

How does one connect to the Anima Mundi through ARAS? ARAS is a state of mind that embraces the whole world through symbolic imagery. Entering the ARAS state of mind often begins with a single image that grabs one with its numinous attraction and which triggers a search for understanding and meaning that has its source in a sense of non rational mystery. ARAS encourages and facilitates that search, at times a meandering circumambulation and at other times a highly focused and specific search—often both at the same time. In this presentation, I will draw on the deep waters of ARAS imagery to demonstrate why ARAS is so valuable and meaningful.

Why ARAS? Part Two: The FLOOD in the World Today



Image 5 The Flood. Early 5th Century. ARAS record 5Bk.022.

Each one of us and all of us in today's world are caught up in a swirl of flooding forces that threaten to drown us in confusion, fear and doubt.



Image 6 The Flood by J.M.W. Turner, 19th Century

The flooding that we feel comes from many different sources that can be both internal and external. Turner's version of the flood evokes the awesomeness and intensity of the flooding swirl.

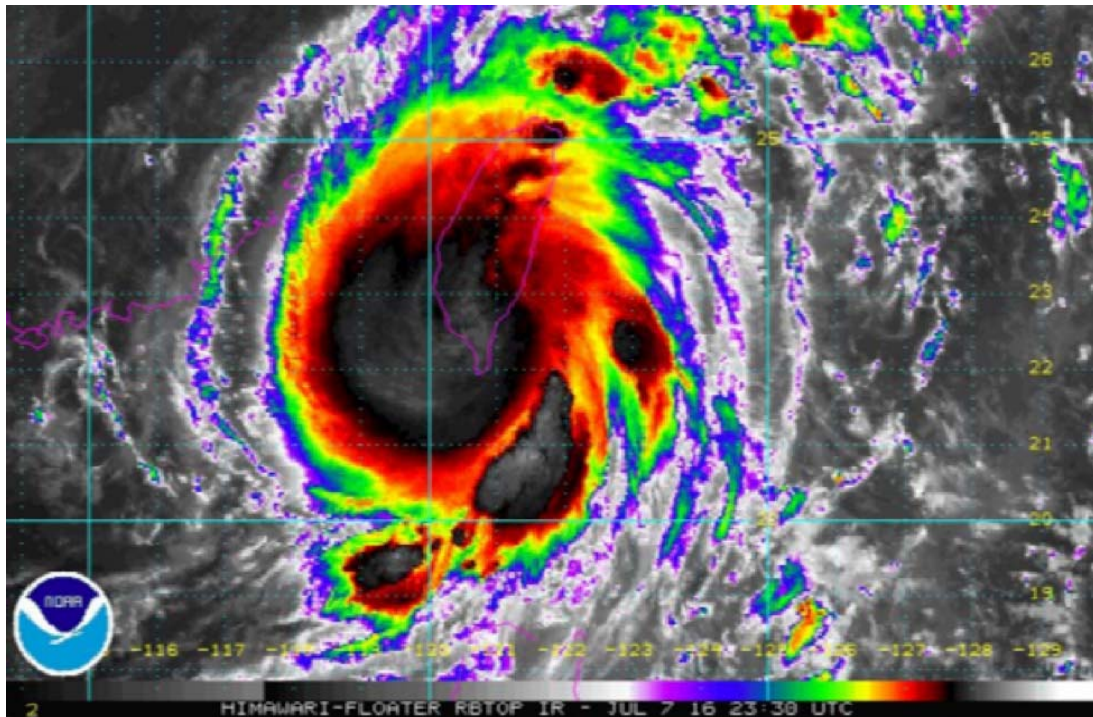


Image 7 Satellite Imagery of Storm

A contemporary radar screen highlights the swirl of the flooding storm with the emotionally charged density of intense color.

In this second part of my presentation, I want to explore some of the multiple ways in which we are flooded that can result in paranoia, feeling overwhelmed, or simply the wish to withdraw from the world.

1.



Image 8 Raging Flood, Japan 2015

First there is the actual flooding that is going on around the world. You might wonder if this flooding has actually increased or simply that we tend to hear more about it because we are being flooded with news of the floods.

But the reality is that flooding is increasing around the world.

Increase in Flood Losses

According to the study, the rise in floods will only continue. The study expects flooding instances to increase by seventeen-fold by 2080. More rain will fall as the years pass because of climate change, which will contribute to about one fifth of future flood damage. But the majority of the cause will be from building on wetlands.

Annual flood losses can be expected to increase fivefold by 2050 and up to 17-fold by 2080. The major share of this increase (70–90%) is estimated to be attributable to socio-economic development as the economic value of the assets in floodplains increases, and the remainder (10–30%) to climate change.

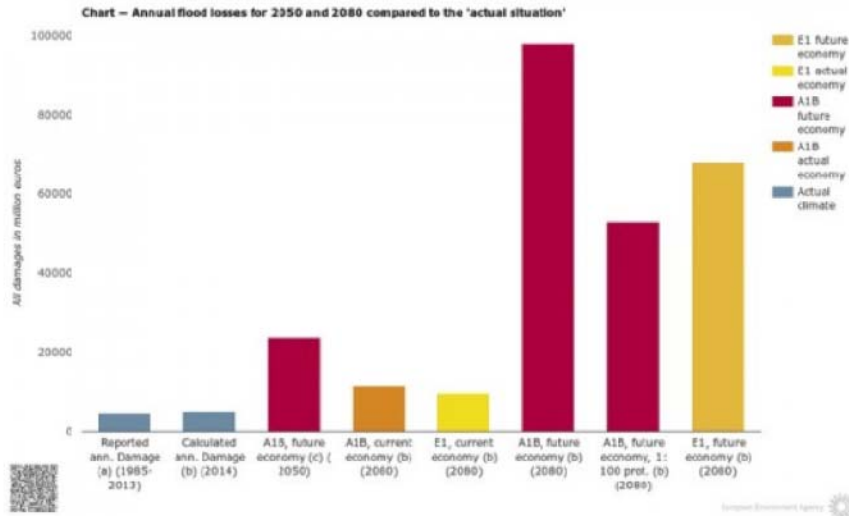


Chart — Annual flood losses for 2050 and 2080 compared to the 'actual situation. Image: European Environment Agency.
 Note: For SRES scenarios A1B and E1 and for current and future economies. The SRES scenarios cover a wide range of the main driving forces of future emissions, from demographic to technological and economic developments (IPCC, 2000; van der Linden and Mitchell, 2009).

Image 9 Increase in Flood Losses

In Europe, for instance, the expectation is that the incidence of flooding will increase by five fold by 2050 and by eighteen fold by 2080.

2.

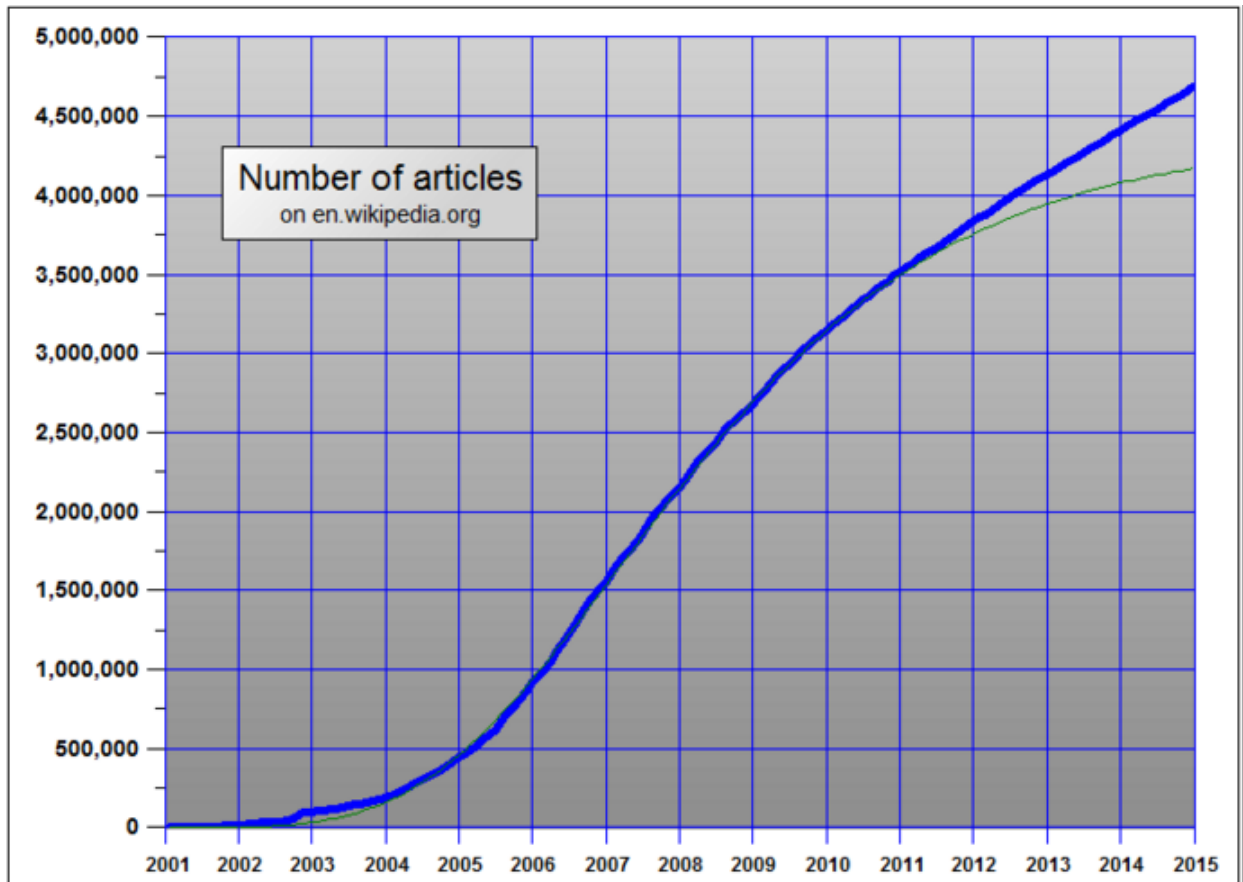


Image 10 Increase in Articles Submitted to Wikipedia

Second, there is the flooding of information about flooding and everything else. Here is statistical documentation from Wikipedia that exemplifies the flood of information to which we are all subjected. Wikipedia gets around 1500 new articles/day, of which close to 100% are judged to be without any quality to them.

3.

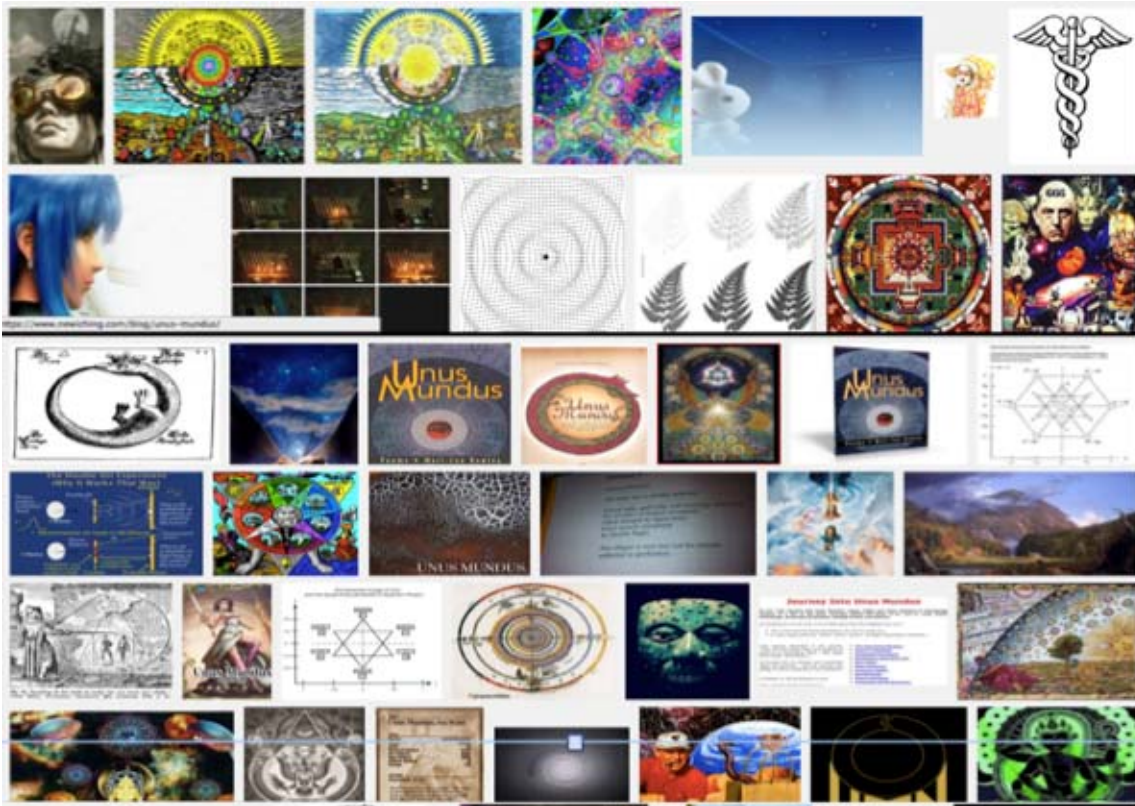


Image 11 Uncurated Google Images of Unus Mundus

Third and closer to the ARAS mission, we are all being flooded by waves of uncurated imagery. For instance, here is a sample of a small fraction of what you get when you Google "unus mundus"—there is an uncurated flood of images that drowns rather than enlightens.

4.



Image 12 Shopping Mall as Sacred Place

Fourth, we are being flooded by advertising and consumerism which invade every corner of our daily lives. Here is an image of the seductive flood of consumerism which has become the most sacred altar of contemporary life.

5.

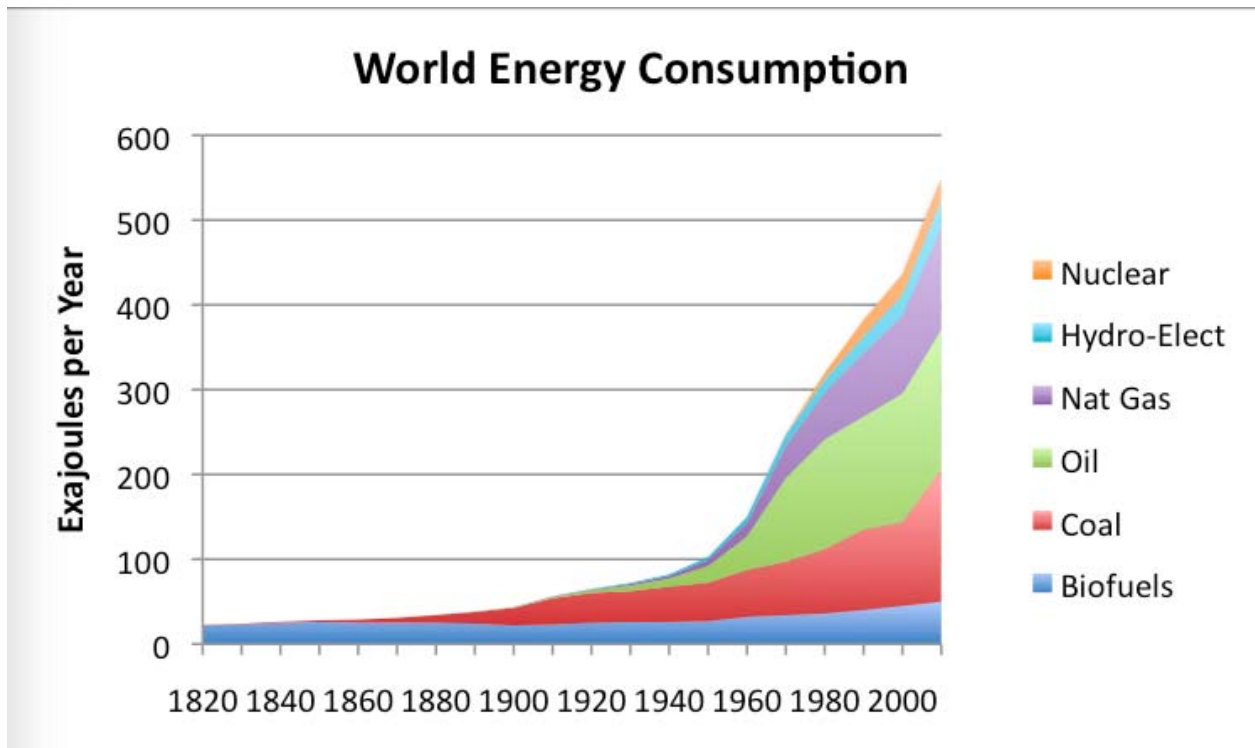


Image 13

Fifth, we are consuming the world’s natural resources at a staggering and ever increasing rate. Here is a graph showing the increase in the global consumption of energy from 1820-2000, as just one example of the exponential rise in mass consumption of all goods and natural resources.

6.

Worldwide displacement hits all-time high as war and persecution increase

One in every 122 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum.

By: UNHCR | 18 June 2015 | Français

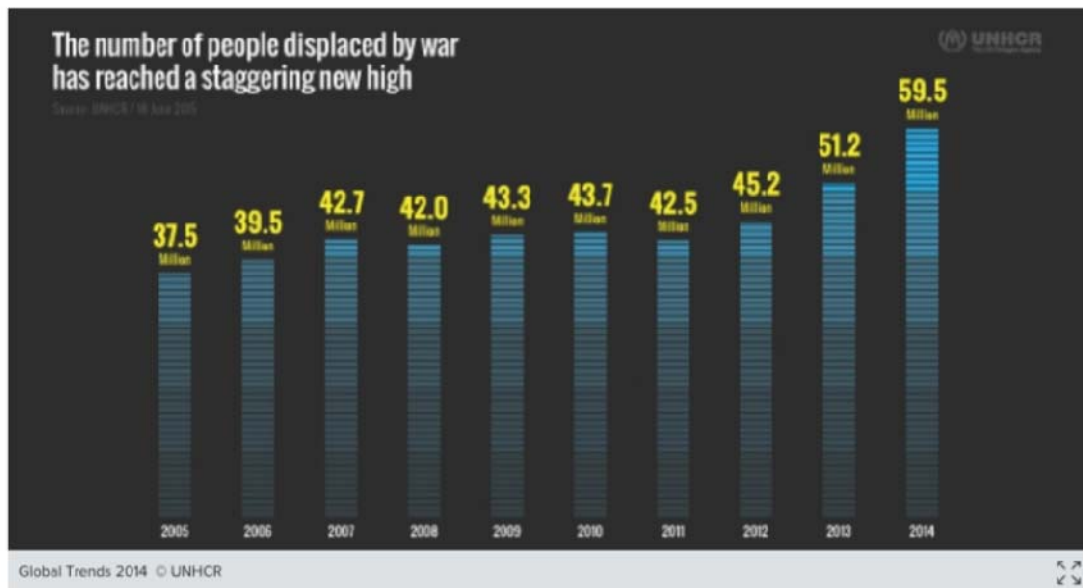


Image 14

Sixth, we are experiencing a flooding of immigrants and people displaced by war and persecution around the world. This has become a major cause of increasing social unrest and political upheaval in the developed as well as undeveloped world.

7.



Annual growth continues apace, particularly in the number of mobile social users, which hit 17% last year.



Image 15

Seventh, perhaps we feel the flooding in modern daily life most through the increase of interconnectivity: phones, computers, social media.

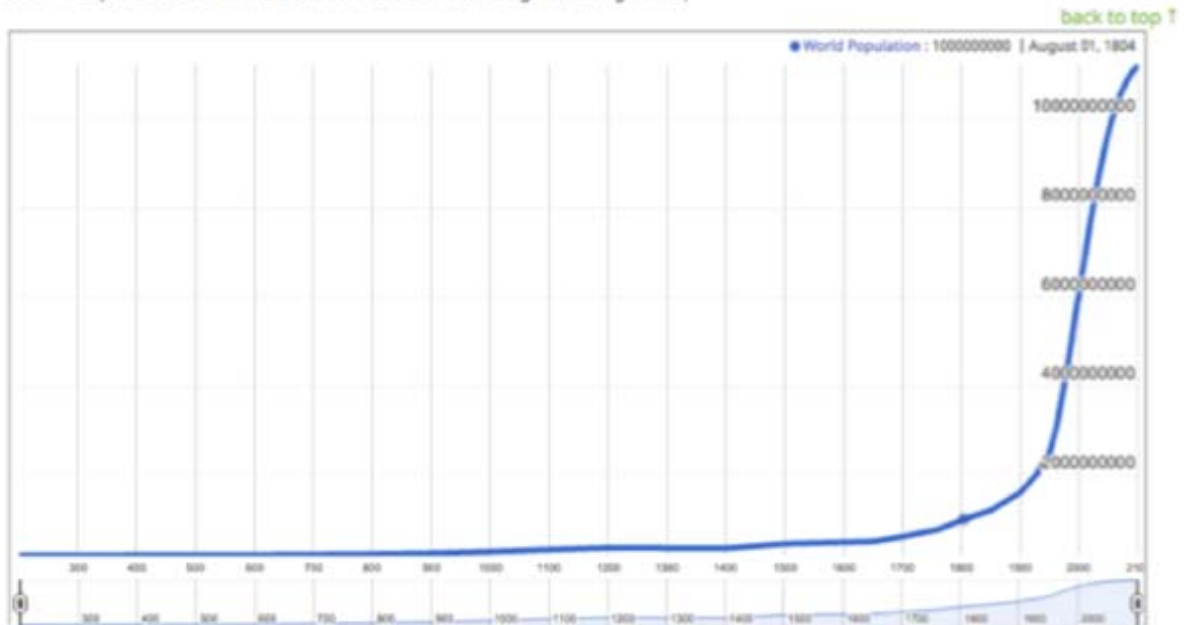
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8.

The world population (the total number of living humans on Earth) was **7.4 billion** as of June 2016 according to Worldometers and based on the latest estimates provided by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division ^[1]. World population is projected to reach 8 billion in 2024 and 10 billion in the year 2056.

World Population: Past, Present, and Future

(move and expand the bar at the bottom of the chart to navigate through time)



The chart above illustrates how world population has changed throughout history. [View the full tabulated data.](#)

At the dawn of agriculture, about 8000 B.C., the population of the world was approximately 5 million. Over the 8,000-year period up to 1 A.D. it grew to 200 million (some estimate 300 million or even 600, suggesting how imprecise population estimates of early historical periods can be), with a growth rate of under 0.05% per year.

A tremendous change occurred with the industrial revolution: whereas **it had taken all of human history until around 1800 for world population to reach one billion**, the second billion was achieved in only 130 years (1930), the third billion in less than 30 years (1959), the fourth billion in 15 years (1974), and the fifth billion in only 13 years (1987).

- During the 20th century alone, the population in the world has grown from 1.65 billion to 6 billion.
- In 1970, there were roughly half as many people in the world as there are now.
- Because of declining **growth rates**, it will now take over 200 years to double again.

Image 16

Eighth, most of us have been aware of the flooding of world population growth for some time. Look at this horrifically clear graph of that phenomenon.

<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

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9.

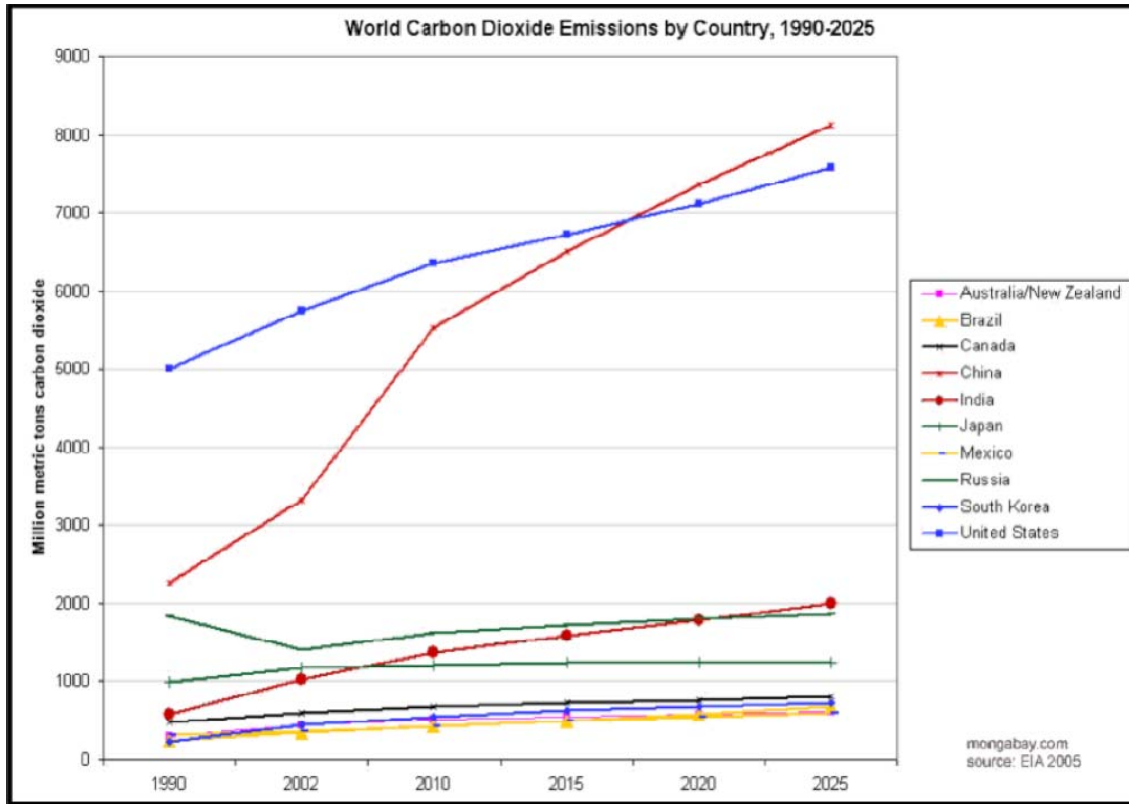


Image 17

Ninth, with the flooding growth of population and global consumption, we are all becoming increasingly aware of how our environment (land, sea and air) is being flooded with pollutants.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pollution#/media/File:CO2-by-country--1990-2025.png>

10.



Image 18 Truck Goes on Deadly Rampage in France, 2016

Tenth, and most horrifically, we are being flooded with seemingly ever increasing acts of random violence and calculated acts of terrorism. Some days it feels as if the whole world is running amok.

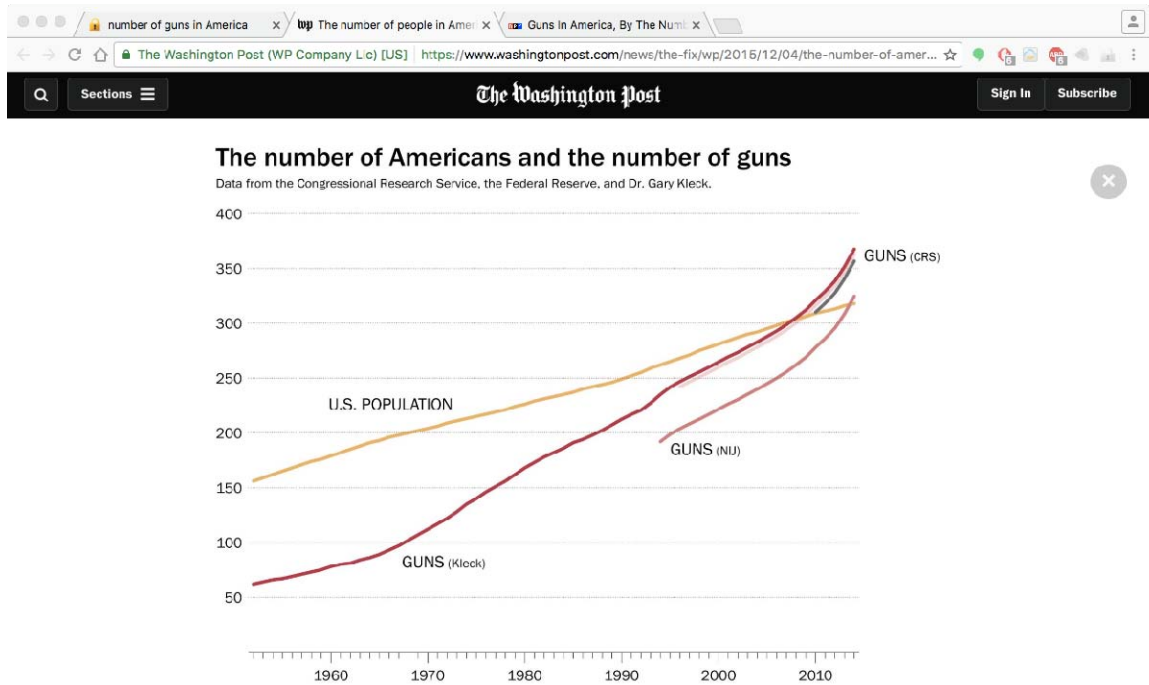


Image 19

There are now more guns in America than there are all men, women, and children combined. The current population of **the United States of America** is **324,430,398** as of Friday, August 19, 2016, based on the latest United Nations estimates. The estimated number of guns in the United States is over 350 million. We are drowning in guns, bullets, and blood in the US...

To summarize, we are being flooded by an increase in:

1. actual flooding
2. flooding of information
3. flooding of uncurated imagery
4. flooding of consumerism

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5. Flooding of global consumption of natural resources
6. flooding of immigrants and displaced people
7. flooding of interconnectivity: mobile phones, computers, social media
8. flooding of population growth
9. flooding of environmental pollution
10. flooding of violence, terrorism and running amok

Why ARAS?

Part Three: ARAS AS A MODERN ARK



Image 20

The archetypal story of the flood is always about the effort to preserve life in the midst of being washed away by events beyond our control. Building an ark, a safe container, is imagined as the way to survive the flood—whether the survivalist builds an underground “ship” on land or a sea worthy vessel to float on top of the flood water.

An ark is the real and symbolic container for preserving life and its treasures.

There are several responses to the many forms of flooding that we are experiencing in the modern world. One is to deny that it is happening at all. Second is to jump in the waters and lap it up enthusiastically, even manically and compulsively (such as with interconnectivity). Third is to actually feel that we are drowning in the multiple floods occurring all around us. For those of us who feel we are drowning, we try to build whatever ARKs we can to weather and survive the floods as well as to save what is most valuable to us. ARAS is such an ark whose goal is to preserve, nurture and grow what is most valuable and meaningful to us and our multiple cultures. Let’s follow for a moment how the ARK has appeared as a “sacred container’ over the ages.

1.



Image 21 Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky 2016

ARAS's concern with the flood and the ark is not unique. One knows an archetype is alive and well, when there is concrete, contemporary evidence of its presence in the world. On Thursday, July 7, 2016, a \$100 million replica of the ARK, the largest timber frame structure in the world, was opened to visitors at the Christian theme park, ARK Encounter in Williamstown Kentucky. The park was built as an "evangelical tool aimed at teaching creationism, the literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis.

2.

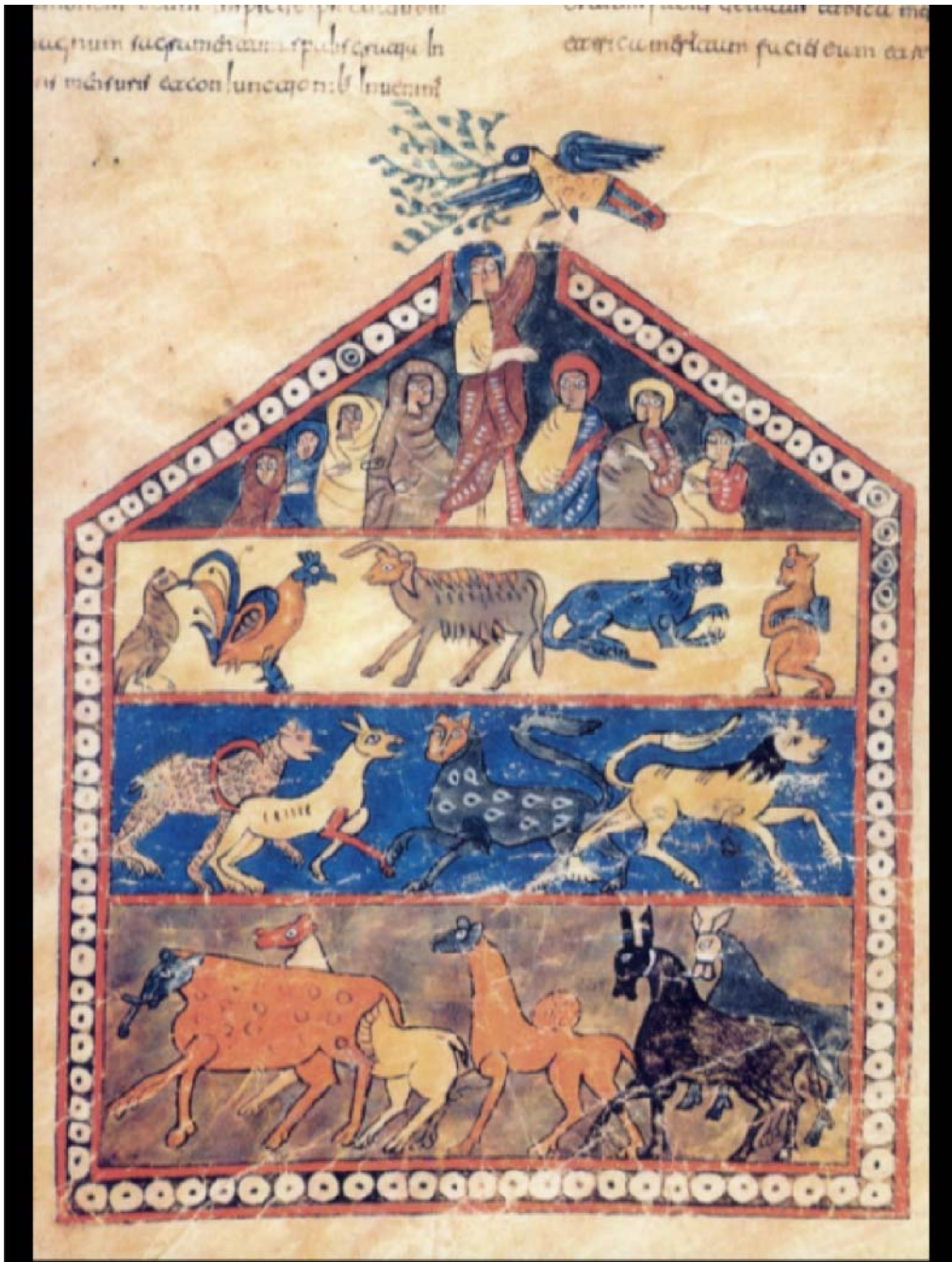


Image 22 Ark of Noah, 970. ARAS Record 5Ck.157

There are less literal responses to the Biblical Flood Story. There are other ways of bringing to life the old flood story and its life preserving ark than that constructed at the ARK Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky. Preserving life

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against the storms of war, pestilence, hunger, poverty, and natural disasters has been the concern of every generation who wants to bring new life into the world in the hopes that it may have a better existence in the future.



Image 23 Noah's Ark, Northern India (Mughal Court), 1590. ARAS Record 6Ca.073

3. The flood motif is not unique to any one culture. Many different cultures have their own version of the flood story and their own way of representing the ARK, as in this gorgeous vessel from the 16th century Northern Indian Islamic imagination.

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4. ARAS is a different kind of ark. What we keep alive are the living beings from the symbolic imagination of humankind throughout history. We, too, are deeply concerned with the proper construction of our ark so that every species in creation has its proper place.

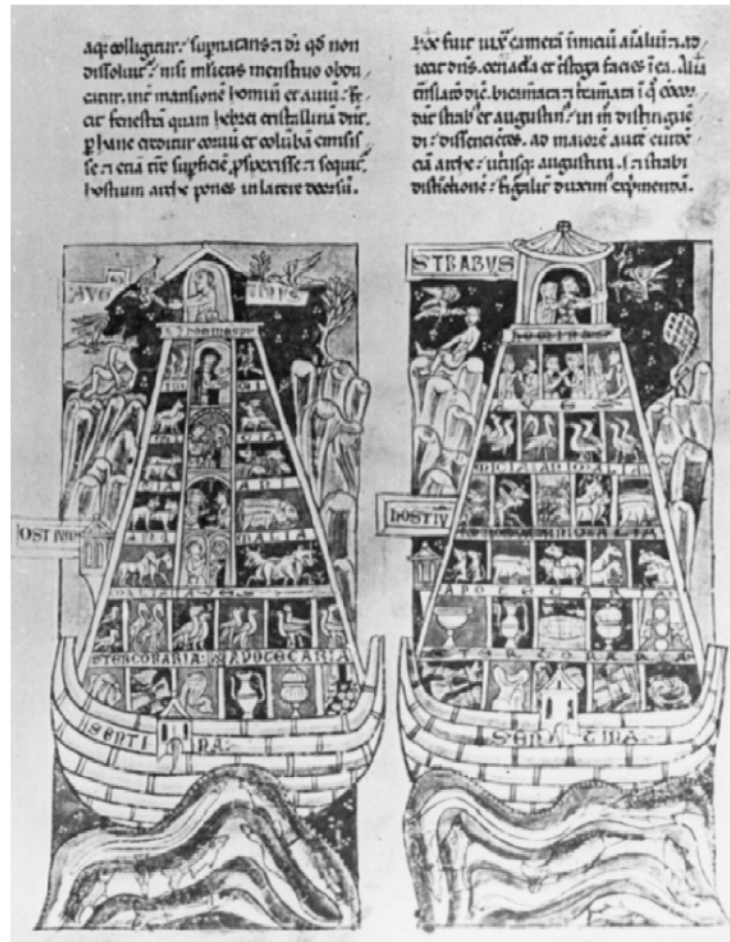


Image 24 Two Depictions of Noah's Ark: St. Augustine and Strabo

11-12th Centuries. ARAS Record 5DK.334

The structure of our digital ark, its system for ordering and keeping alive our most precious cargo, is not exactly like those described by St. Augustine on the left and Strabo on the right in these medieval (11-12 century) images of the

ark. But, we have structured our ark so that there is ready access to all symbolic images and easy movement from one image to another, from one culture to another, from one era to another, from one symbol to another.

5.

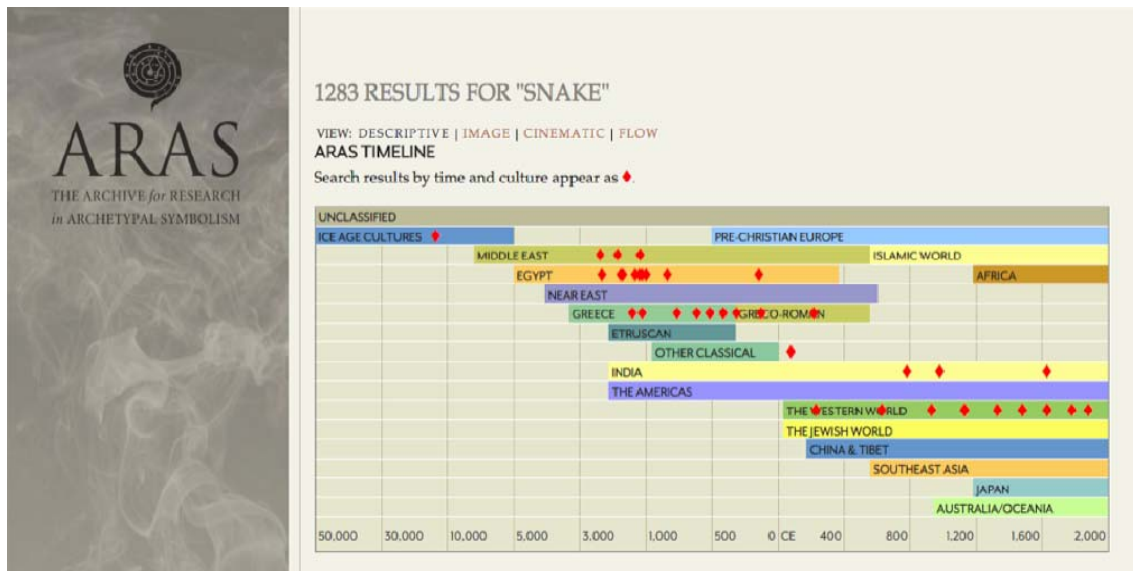


Image 25 1283 Images for "Snake" on ARAS.org

We can find anything, anywhere on the ark in its interconnections to all other creatures on the ark through our state of the art navigation system (SEARCH) and our unique cultural time line which allows one to locate and circumnavigate the collection of 17,000 symbolic images almost instantaneously. And this easy navigation is based on the underlying interconnectedness of all living beings through the World Soul or anima mundi.

There are many parts to ARAS' preserving and nurturing the World Soul contained within symbolic imagery, one of which is our digital archive at ARAS.com. If we think of ARAS.com as a digital ark, then its well-conceived

construction is essential for the proper identification and understanding of all its different parts. In the case of ARAS, the parts include time, cultural context, and meaning of an image for a specific place and time that can be explored as part of an interconnecting web of eras, cultures, and symbolic meanings. In our construction of ARAS as an ark, our cultural time line serves at both the differentiating and interconnecting function of the container.

6. Another kind of ark, The Ark of the Covenant, links us to the next section--the precious and sacred cargo of what the ark contains.



Image 26 Ark of the Covenant 9th-10th Centuries. ARAS Record 5Ck.054

4. Why ARAS?

Part Four: The TREASURES in the ARK



Image 27 Animals Leaving Ark, 1422. ARAS Record 5Fk.110

We know from the story of the Flood that Noah's ark offered safe passage for a pair of all living creatures. As they disembarked from the Ark, they were released to a new life after the flood had destroyed the old world. The animals

had been kept alive and nourished through the flood. This was the treasure that was preserved

What are the treasures that ARAS is protecting in the flood of modernity:

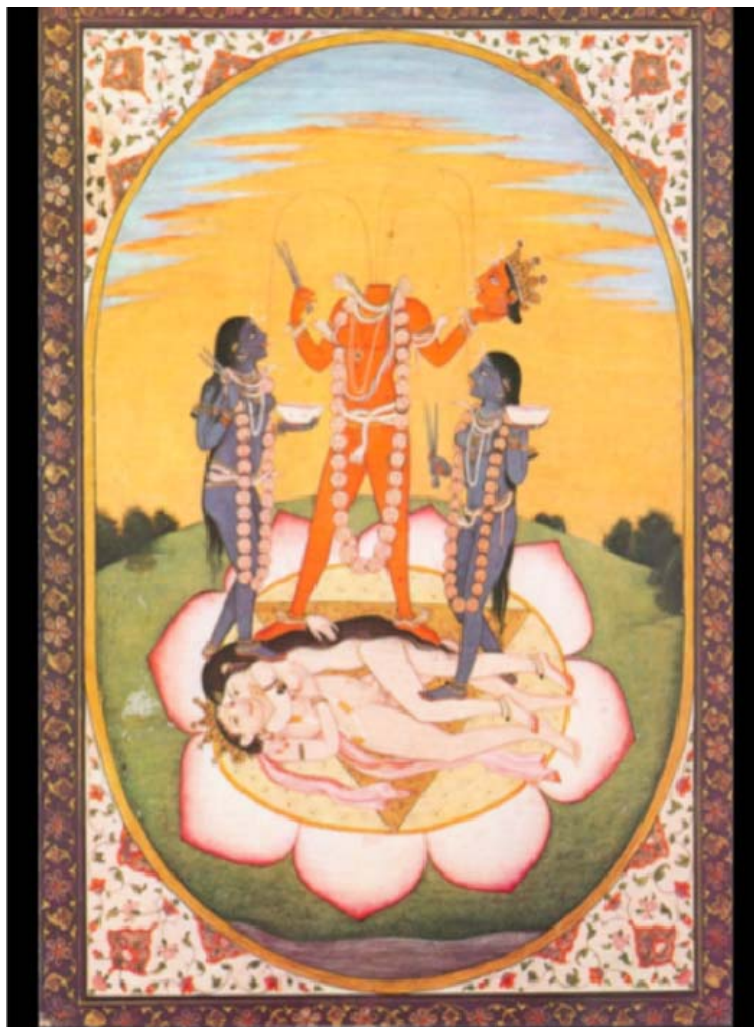


Image 28 The Goddess Chinnamasta, 1800. ARAS Record 7AR.085

TREASURE OF ARCHIVE ITSELF

1. The treasure at the heart of ARAS is the archive itself with its online curated content and its unparalleled search capacity that links over 17,000

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images and accompanying commentary. The key word in this description is “curated”. We are flooded by uncurated images in which we are overstimulated without a chance to absorb and digest. In the ARAS collection, each image is accompanied by a description of the image itself, a placing of the image in its cultural context, an archetypal commentary about the image that points to underlying and sometimes universal themes. In addition, archetypes appearing in each image are identified with links to related archetypal images from other eras and cultures. ARAS truly explores the anima mundi by identifying and linking the worldwide interconnected nature of symbolic imagery.

2.

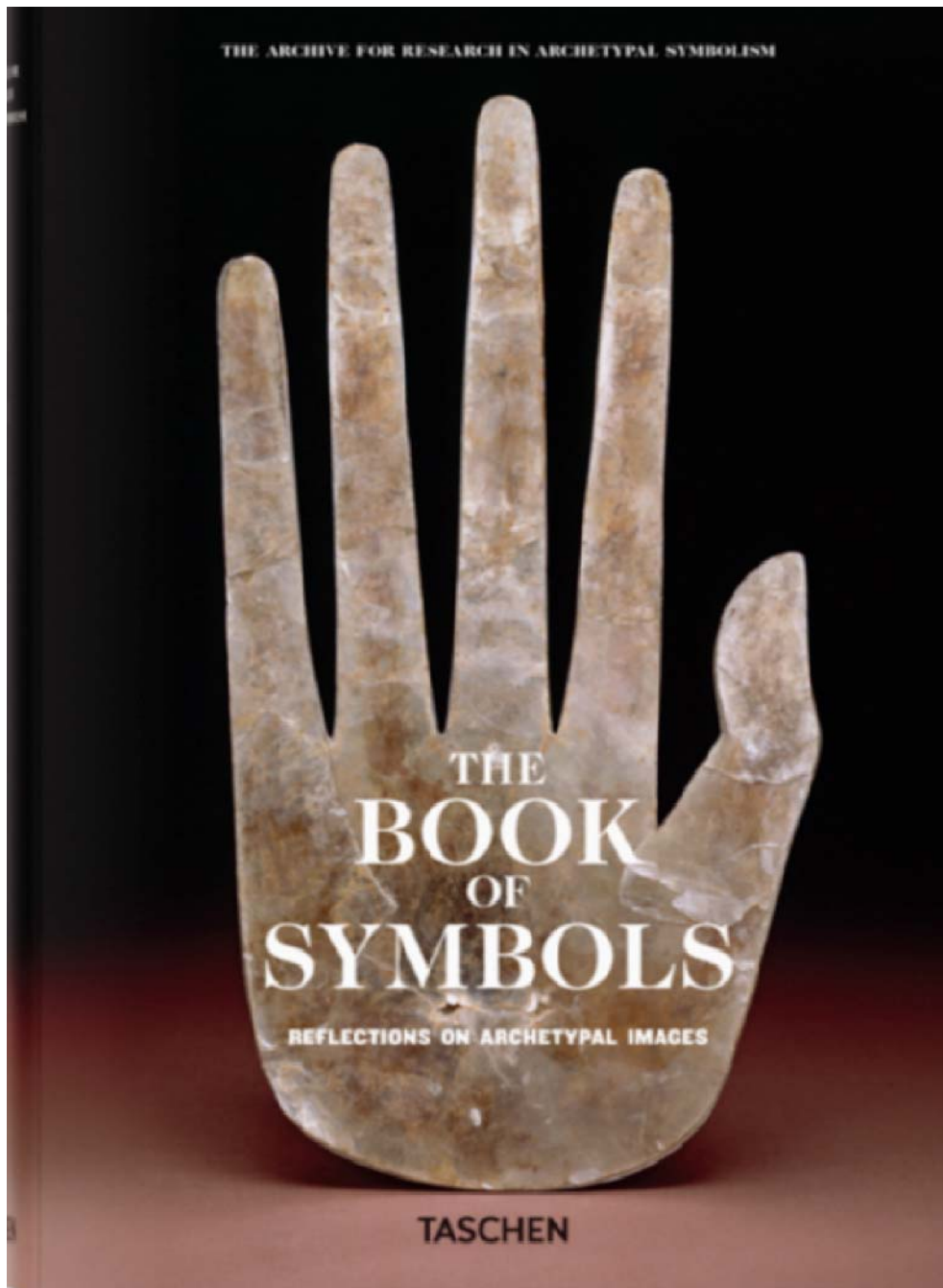


Image 29 The Book of Symbols cover.

A most magnificent treasure from the ARAS ark is *The Book of Symbols*. Published by Taschen in 2010, it has been translated into seven languages and sold over 200,000 copies as Taschen's worldwide best seller for several consecutive years. This worldly success suggests a global hunger for meaningful

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exploration of symbolic imagery. The book contains over 800 full-color images and 350 essays to guide the reader in an exploring the human imagination.

3.



"The walls are black with smoke. There are drawings." said Kore. "These are to teach you," replied Hades. "Drawings of bison, gazelle, goat... Here are the roots of things, the seedbed... All these things die. And begin again. I am the continuing of things."

Image 30 Persephone's Dog Craig san Roque, Australia

story: https://aras.org/sites/default/files/docs/00093%20SanRoque_0.pdf

photo essay: <https://aras.org/sites/default/files/docs/00094%20Walsh.pdf>

Another treasure contained within the ARAS ark is ARAS Connections, a quarterly newsletter, that features the presence of timeless symbolic imagery in the context of contemporary society. This image is from the ARAS Connection special coverage of Craig san Roque's *Persephone's Dog*, a modern version of the ancient Demeter/Persephone mythic ritual performed in Alice Springs, Australia.

4.

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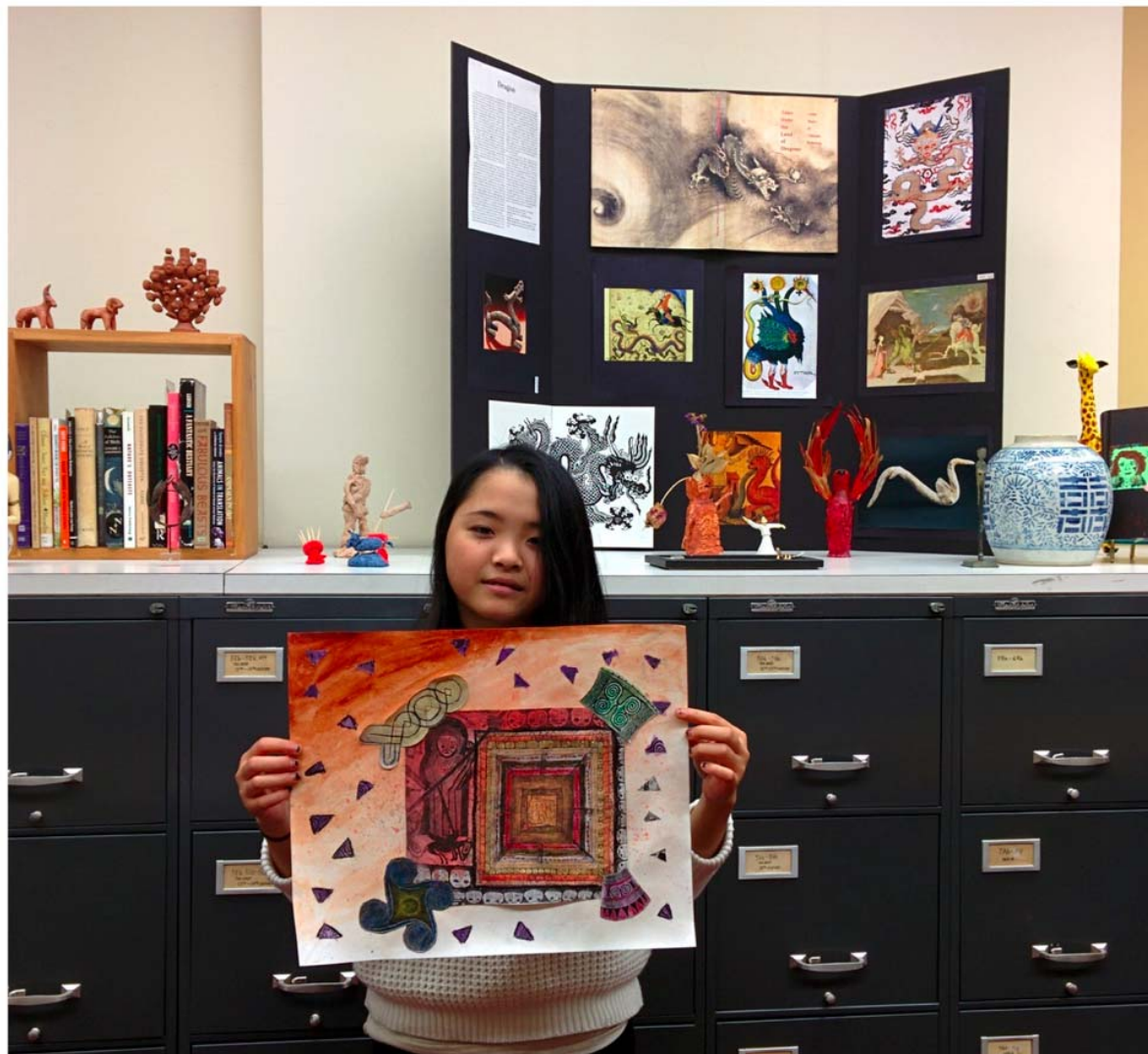


Image 31 Pioneer Teen Program, ARAS

Finally, the most precious treasure to be protected and nourished through the ARAS Ark is the future in the form of our children and their capacity to respond in depth to what is meaningful and valuable in life, including their capacity to respond to symbolic meaning, imagery, and thought. Through our Teen Pioneer Program, this is accomplished one child at a time.

The ARAS ark, then, exists to protect, sustain, and grow what is of deep sustaining value to civilization over time, to bring the Anima Mundi in all its different forms and its interconnected soulfulness, into the world in a way that is alive, accessible, and rich in meaning to all who enter its ark and wish to drink deeply of its treasured waters.