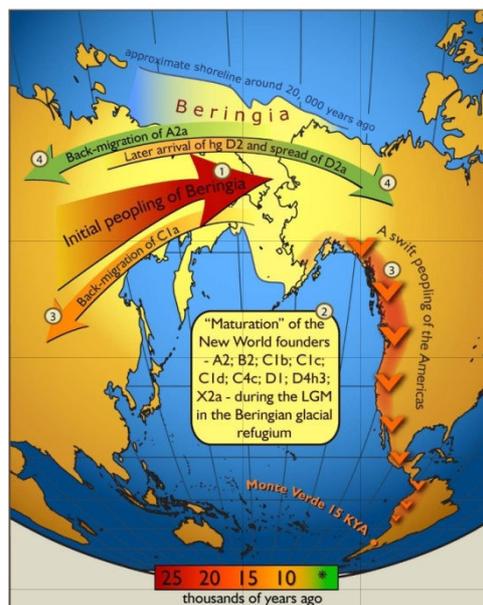


The Atlatl

Doç. Dr. **Haluk Berkmen**

In article **36 – Olmec Toltec and Maya** (1) I mentioned that Mesoamerican cultures had a lot of similarities with the Asiatic and Sumerian cultures. Their pyramids are very similar to the ones found in Asia and Mesopotamia and their language are agglutinant. Agglutinative languages keep the root word and form new words by adding suffixes to the root word. Agglutinative languages are very regular, with very few irregular verbs. For example, in Turkish, Japanese and Quechua all ordinary verbs are regular (2). Quechua, which is the language of the Inca, is spoken in the Andes region of South America.

It is now proven genetically that all indigenous people of North, Central and South America emigrated from Asia, crossing the Bering Land Bridge, which was exposed during the last Ice Age. The map below shows that people crossed the Bering Land Bridge some 25,000 years ago.

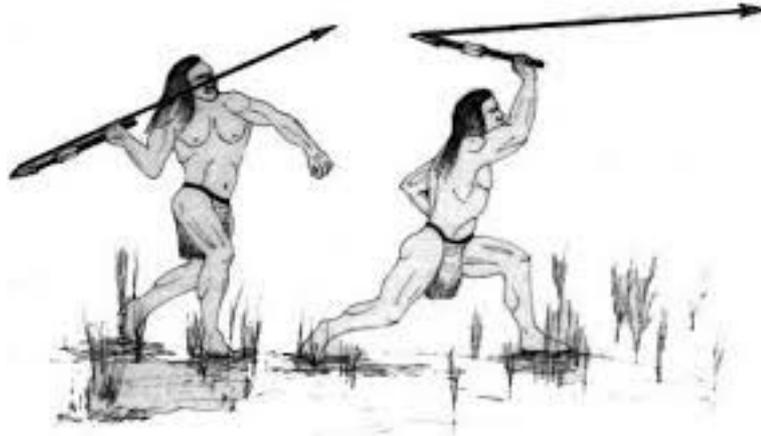


These people brought with them a special weapon called the **Atlatl**. The Atlatl is believed to have been in use since 30,000 years before present (3). The Atlatl is a tool that adds leverage to achieve greater velocity in spear throwing. It is also defined as a spear-thrower (4). In this reference it is said:

"A spear-thrower is a long-range weapon and can readily impart to a projectile speeds of over 150 km/h (93 mph). Spear-throwers appear very early in human history in several parts of the world, and

have survived in use in traditional societies until the present day, as well as being revived in recent years for sporting purposes."

From these words we can guess that the Atlatl is an Asiatic weapon and its name should have an Asiatic origin. If we separate Atlatl into its root words we get Atl-Atl. Atl or 'atıl' in Turkish means "run forward" as well as "launch ahead", which perfectly fits the use of this tool. The repetition of the root word **Atl** indicates that this tool has the capacity to add extra power to the throwing arm. Below we see how this tool is used for hurling a spear.



The Maya gods, who were powerful and were believed to create havoc among people have been drawn holding this tool. Below we see two drawings of Maya-Aztec gods. Quetzalcoatl is also known as Kukulcan, and means the "Plumed serpent" in Nahuatl and Quechua. The word **kuk** means 'feather' and with the suffix **-ul**, becomes **kukul** meaning *feathered* (5). In Turkish the word **kuyruk** means 'tail' and any serpent appears exactly as an ox tail. **Kan** (read it as Caan) on the other hand means 'related to' or 'having the ability to' in Turkish and therefore, **Kukul-Kan** means "Having the ability to punish like a serpent". Its feathered characteristic is connected to its ability to fly, or to exist in the 'spiritual sky above'.



Hutzilopchtli

Quetzalcoatl

Thus the Atlatl in the hands of these Mesoamerican gods represents a tool that can hurl spears and arrows to the humans in order to punish them. The same symbolism is found in the ancient Greek and Viking Mythologies, where the gods Zeus and Odin hurl spears to punish humans. Below we see these symbolic drawings.



The Atlatl was also a spiritual tool, used during religious ceremonies by the Mesoamerican kings and rulers. Below we see a ceremonial Atlatl used by an Inca king of Peru (6).



References

- (1) <http://www.halukberkmen.net/pdf/192.pdf>
- (2) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agglutinative_language
- (3) <http://copperculture.homestead.com/atlatl.html>
- (4) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spear-thrower>
- (5) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kukulcan>
- (6) Ref. (4).