

Re: Meteoric and Cometary impacts in historical times – Observations in History

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.archaeology/2004-11/0078.html>

From: Eric Stevens (*eric.stevens_at_sum.co.nz*)

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On Sun, 31 Oct 2004 23:01:57 GMT, Joe Jefferson
<jjstrshp@mindspring.com> wrote:

>Eric Stevens wrote:

>>

>> On Wed, 27 Oct 2004 00:04:41 GMT, Joe Jefferson

>> <jjstrshp@mindspring.com> wrote:

>>

>>>

>> >None of this in any way contradicts what I said; that multiple

>> >Tunguska-size impacts, all visible from a single location and occurring

>> >within a human lifetime, probably has not occurred since the earliest

>> >days of the solar system.

>>

>> That's a conclusion which might be drawn from the experience of the

>> last few centuries. However, it is contradicted by the cratering

>> record and astronomical research.

>

>Ah but it isn't. The cratering record and astronomical research both

>*strongly* support my contention.

I don't intend to turn this into an argument about the current state
of astronomical knowledge. I can only recommend you read some of the
more recently published works on the subject.

>

>> >> >> <snip of Hesiod quote>

>> >> >

>> >> >Very poetic, but how does this compare to the total body of Greek

>> >> >religious texts from that era?

>> >>

>> >> Possibly in much the same way that an eyewitness account of 9/11

>> >> compares to the total body of US religious texts.

>> >

>> >You know better than to say something like that. Hesiod never claims his

>> >_Theogony_ is an eyewitness account of *anything*. It is a religious

>> >work from beginning to end, which Hesiod himself attributes to divine

>> > *inspiration.*

>>

>> *It's a religious work in that it is talking about battles between the*

>> *gods. Real physical 'gods' which could be seen.*

>

> *But which were *not* seen by him, or by any human being he'd ever met.*

> *Hesiod explicitly credits his story to divine inspiration.*

See <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/OMACL/Hesiod/theogony.html>

"(Il. 139–146) And again, she bare the Cyclopes, overbearing in spirit, Brontes, and Steropes and stubborn–hearted Arges (6), who gave Zeus the thunder and made the thunderbolt: in all else they were like the gods, but one eye only was set in the midst of their fore–heads. And they were surnamed Cyclopes (Orb–eyed) because one orbed eye was set in their foreheads. Strength and might and craft were in their works.

(Il. 147–163) And again, three other sons were born of Earth and Heaven, great and doughty beyond telling, Cottus and Briareos and Gyes, presumptuous children. From their shoulders sprang an hundred arms, not to be approached, and each had fifty heads upon his shoulders on their strong limbs, and irresistible was the stubborn strength that was in their great forms. For of all the children that were born of Earth and Heaven, these were the most terrible, and they were hated by their own father from the first.

And he used to hide them all away in a secret place of Earth so soon as each was born, and would not suffer them to come up into the light: and Heaven rejoiced in his evil doing. But vast Earth groaned within, being straitened, and she made the element of grey flint and shaped a great sickle, and told her plan to her dear sons. And she spoke, cheering them, while she was vexed in her dear heart:"

If you have read 'The Cosmic Serpent' you would be aware of Clube and Napier's cometary interpretation of all of this.

Consider the Cyclopes – 'one orbed eye was set in their foreheads'.

Then ' From their shoulders sprang an hundred arms, not to be approached, and each had fifty heads upon his shoulders on their strong limbs'.

And then, but not so immediately obvious, 'shaped a great sickle'.

The interesting thing is that as Clube and Napier point out, in one form or another all these things (and many others) may be found in the theology of many widespread religions of that time. This is not 'divine inspiration'. It is a widespread retelling of events almost beyond comprehension to the people of that time.

>
>> *Exactly what were the*
>> *gods? Why is there so much in common between the earliest descriptions*
>> *of the gods of Scandinavia, Greece, Israel, Egypt, Mesopotamia, India*
>> *and possibly even China? Is it possible that they share a common*
>> *inspiration and if so, what was the inspiration?*
>
>*Is it *possible* that they share a common inspiration? Of course it's*
>*possible. But possible is a very long way from likely, and you have to*
>*get at least as far as likely before you know enough about the*
>*commonalities to even make a start at trying to identify the source.*

You haven't read the book, have you? Nor have you read anything else on the subject. I'm not trying to be derogatory but I suggest you do read some of the publications I've listed. It may help modify your views.

>
>> *>If you want to argue that it was influenced by something*
>> *>Hesiod experienced, then go ahead and make that argument, but don't*
>> *>waste bandwidth with silly comparisons to eyewitness accounts of modern events.*
>>
>> *Why not? It is likely that Hesiod either saw some of these events or*
>> *relied on eyewitness accounts.*
>
>*Given that there's no evidence that those events ever actually happened,*

But in the orbit of comet Encke, there is definitely evidence that they could have happened. Further, there is an enormous amount of apocryphal writing which suddenly becomes intelligible if one views it in that light.

>*I'd say it's extremely unlikely that he actually witnessed them.*
>*Particularly when Hesiod himself never claims to have seen them. If*
>*you're going to take Hesiod's descriptions of events seriously, why do*
>*you not do the same with his account of how he got the information?*

I am allowing him some poetic license. :-)

>
>> *>> But Hesiod wasn't the only one writing in such a tone. Lucretius much*
>> *>> later wrote [<http://www.american-buddha.com/luc.cosm.soc.htm>]:*
>> *>>*
>> *>> "For fire was victorious and went round scorching many parts of the*
>> *>> earth when the galloping steeds that draw the chariot of the sun*
>> *>> swept Phaethon from the true course, right out of the zone of ether*
>> *>> and far over all the lands. Then the Father Almighty, in a fierce*
>> *>> gust of anger, struck down the aspiring Phaethon with a sudden*
>> *>> stroke of his thunderbolt, [41] down out of the chariot to the*
>> *>> earth. But the sun intercepted his fall and took up the everlasting*
>> *>> torch of the firmament, and brought the trembling steeds back to*
>> *>> the yoke from their stampede and, guiding them along their proper*
>> *>> course, restored the universe to order. Such is the story as*

>>> *recited by the ancient bards of Greece, [42] a story utterly*
>>> *rejected by true doctrine. What may really lead to the triumph of*
>>> *fire is an increase in the accumulation of its particles out of*
>>> *infinite space. Then comes the crisis: either its forces for some*
>>> *reason suffer a setback, or the world shrivels in its parching*
>>> *blasts and comes to an end".*
>>>>
>>>> *>I'm reminded of a time years ago when I saw a book that claimed two gold*
>>>> *>artifacts from Colombia represented an airplane and a piece of earth*
>>>> *>moving equipment. And I'll admit, they looked that way to me too.*
>>>> *>However, shortly afterward I happened to find a big book filled with*
>>>> *>pictures of hundreds of different gold artifacts from Colombia and*
>>>> *>Panama. After spending about two hours looking at those pictures I went*
>>>> *>back to the original book, and suddenly the artifacts looked to me very*
>>>> *>much like a manta ray and a jaguar. The difference was that I had become*
>>>> *>more accustomed to the artistic conventions of that time and place.*
>>>>
>>>> *I accept that point. However, I suspect that we now are faced with the*
>>>> *need to accept that our present interpretations of these ancient*
>>>> *documents is wrongly coloured by the conventions of this time and*
>>>> *place.*
>>>>
>>>> *You may suspect that, but so far your posts indicate that you've been*
>>>> *the one taking excerpts from ancient accounts out of context and trying*
>>>> *to fit them into a thoroughly modern interpretive framework. I've seen*
>>>> *nothing whatsoever that implies you've even tried to compare these*
>>>> *ancient works to other works in the same genre from around the same time*
>>>> *and place.*
>>>>
>>>> *I'm not going to try and do that from scratch in the news group.*
>>>>
>>>> *Or at all, it seems.*

Not really. That's not my field. But I have read works by those who have compared them.

>>> *There*
>>> *is far too much material to enable the subject to be properly covered*
>>> *in a mere news group article. However, Clube and Napier have*
>>> *identified the many points common to such a wide range of accounts.*
>>>>
>>>> *That's very nice, but I thought you said that Clube and Napier were*
>>>> *astronomers. That's hardly the specialty I'd go to for a detailed*
>>>> *understanding of classical literature.*

It might be if you are looking for an astronomical interpretation.

>>> *I*
>>> *can't give you a detailed survey of the territory but I can tell you*
>>> *where to find maps. The two best map guides I know are the Clube and*
>>> *Napier work, and the proceedings of the 1997 Cambridge conference*

>> described at <http://www.knowledge.co.uk/sis/cambproc.htm>

>>>

>>>> * A more accurate translation may just be 'bolt'.

>>>>

>>>> >Based on what, exactly?

>>>>

>>>> Some translations leave out the 'thunder' bit and just stick with
>>>> 'bolt'. I understand that 'bolt' is a more accurate translation of the
>>>> older writings. I can't give you a reference off the cuff but I have
>>>> several times noticed that while one transtaion will say 'thunder
>>>> bolt' an other will merely say 'bolt'. Mind you, the ancient authors
>>>> could have been justified to use the term 'thunder' to describe the
>>>> sound of

>>>>

>>>> >IOW, you don't know what the original Greek term actually means, you're
>>>> just making a guess based on the way some (unnamed) translators have
>>>> handled a religious poem.

>>>>

>>>> In many case, the translators don't seem to know what the term
>>>> actually means either. Otherwise there would not be the differences in
>>>> translation.

>>>>

>>>> >That doesn't follow. Translators have to balance the formally correct
>>>> translation with an artistically correct rendering in the new language.
>>>> >Some translations are so technically accurate that they're unreadable.
>>>> >Others are paraphrases. Most fall somewhere in between. And if you're
>>>> going to challenge any accepted translation without having a very
>>>> thorough understanding of the language in question, don't be surprised
>>>> if you're dismissed as a kook.

I'm not challenging any particular translation. I'm pointing out the
apparent substitution of 'lightning bolt' for 'bolt' or even 'thunder
bolt'.

>

>>>>> Have you ever heard 'the vast forests in the fire screamed...'?
>>>>> They do just that as all the trees flash into flame at the same
>>>>> instant. Its a terrifying sound if you are anywhere near when that
>>>>> occurs.

>>>>>

>>>>> What do you think the author was talking about?

>>>>>

>>>>> >When in doubt, begin with the obvious. Hesiod was describing the origin
>>>>> of the gods.

>>>>>

>>>>> Yes, we all know that that is how the gods came into being. We can
>>>>> reproduce the phenomenon in the lab. :-(

>>>>>

>>>>> >Your comment makes no sense whatsoever. Surely you can't be telling me
>>>>> you believe that Hesiod was unable to describe something he hadn't
>>>>> actually witnessed? Modern authors do that all the time.

>>>>>

>> *What you should have said was Hesiod was describing what he *thought*
>> to be the origin of the gods. My little burst of irony was directed to
>> the point that if gods in the modern concept exist then neither Hesiod
>> nor anyone else knows how they came into existence. However, if Hesiod
>> was describing real events then he wasn't describing the birth of
>> Gods. Mind you, that doesn't mean that he didn't *think* they were
>> gods. But if they weren't gods. What were they?*
>
>*Your question is logically flawed. You say "if Hesiod was describing
>real events", then immediately what those events were as though it were
>settled that he was actually describing real events. But that has not
>been settled, and in fact you have so far not presented even one piece
>of evidence to show that he was doing anything other than what he
>claimed he was doing.*

You seem to overlook my use of the conditional 'if'.

>
>> >> > *(And I think we are entitled to doubt that anybody has ever
>> >> >seen all the trees around them in a forest literally "flash into flame
>> >> >at the same instant" and survive to tell us about it.)*
>> >>
>> >> *I've spent quite a few years in the forest industry and do know
>> >> something of forest fires. In the right conditions fires advance in
>> >> leaps and bounds and large areas of tinder dry forest can burst into
>> >> flame more or less simultaneously. I agree few unprotected people
>> >> caught in this can survive but it is more common for the observer hear
>> >> this as the fire moves towards or around them*
>> >
>> > *Just out of curiosity, what percentage of forest fires that you've
>> > experience have been associated with meteor impacts? What percentage
>> > have been started by lightning?*
>>
>> *None by meteors. None by lightning. One from machinery. Five by arson.
>> One by a runaway cooking fire (illegal).*
>
>*None by lightning? That's interesting. I live in Southern California
>where wildfires are common, and here lightning is the number one
>non-human cause.*

You asked about my personal experience. Nobody needs an investigator if the fire has been started by lightning.

Eric Stevens