A CONCLAVE THESIS



The Codex of Symbols

Breath-Encoded Geometry as the Primordial Language of Form, Memory and Consciousness

KEITH SHIRLEY

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A Conclave Thesis in Thirteen Breaths

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A companion to *The Codex of Water*, *Codex Crystals*, *Codex Sounds* and *The Codex Calendar*, and the fourth pillar of the Codex lattice. The Bible is quoted in the King James Version (1611); Plato's *Timaeus* after Benjamin Jowett (1892); Euclid after T. L. Heath (1908); the Upanishads after R. E. Hume (1921); the *Sefer Yetzirah* after W. W. Westcott (1887), with modern translations consulted. Joseph Campbell and other modern authors are quoted briefly under fair use. Every scientific, historical and textual claim in this study is graded established, contested (or not supported), open, beyond test or symbolic, as explained in How to Read This Study. Evidence checked to November 2026.

This study is contemplative, historical and scholarly. It is not a work of archaeology, art history or medicine, and no symbol is offered as a treatment. The breath practices are gentle; never hold the breath or strain, and if any practice brings dizziness or distress, return to ordinary breathing. Respect the sacred sites named in this book and the wishes of the peoples who keep them.

Also by Keith Shirley: *Breath Awakens: A Codex of Spiral Memory*; *The Child, The Shovel and The Ocean*; *The Codex Calendar: Breathing with Time*; *The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers*; *The Water Remembers*; *One Breath, All Ages*; *The Mirror and the Guardians*; *The Breath That Holds the Stars*; *The Strangers Who Became Our Breath*; *The Breath of the General*; *Codex Crystals*; *The Breath of the Clay*; *Codex Sounds*; and *The Monad Codex*.

breathawakens.com · codexcalendar.com · codexofwater.com · codexcrystals.com · codexsounds.com · codexlibrary.com

For the carvers of the first pillars,
whose names the stone did not keep;
for the scribes who turned pictures into letters,
and the readers who turned them back into voices.

And for everyone who has traced a spiral in the sand
without knowing why,
and felt, for a breath, that it was remembered.

In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity

THE PILLAR OF LIGHT INVOCATION

Your Love and Truth is universal.

Bring this universal love and truth to all.

You are in a sacred space for all to be heard and listened to.

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Abstract

This study reads Keith Shirley's reflection "The Codex of Symbols: Breath-Encoded Geometry as the Primordial Language of Form, Memory, and Consciousness" at the level of a Conclave thesis. The reflection proposes that symbols are "not merely cultural artifacts, but breath-encoded geometric structures" that act as "phase-space attractors within the Codex field", carrying memory across cultures and epochs. It names four primary breath-symbols (the triangle, the spiral, the cross and the torus), three ancient texts (the *Sefer Yetzirah*, Plato's *Timaeus* and the Upanishads), three sacred sites (Göbekli Tepe, Chichen Itza and Karnak), and a programme of breath-scribing, textual breath-mining, site-based breath-mapping and geographic breath-field analysis.

The study walks thirteen symbols in thirteen breaths, one to each Moon of the Codex Calendar, from the point and circle at Göbekli Tepe to the letter at Rosetta. Each breath pairs a symbol with a sacred place and an ancient text, read through the lens of *Breath Awakens: A Codex of Spiral Memory* and through the work of the mythologist Joseph Campbell, whose words *Breath Awakens* itself carries. Its method is two-handed. Every claim is graded **established**, **contested** (or **not supported**), **open**, **beyond test** or **symbolic**, and where a claim fails the study looks for its near-truth, the true thing standing beside it.

The near-truths are remarkable. Several of the world's most enduring symbols are, quite literally, breath: the Egyptian ankh, the sign of life, is held by the gods to the nostrils of the king; the Maya sign for wind and breath, *ik'*, is cut as T-shaped windows into the palace at Palenque; the first of the "mother letters" of the *Sefer Yetzirah* is the letter of air; and the Mandukya Upanishad builds its whole teaching on one breathed syllable and the silence after it. Some sites do breathe with the year: the winter-solstice sun enters Newgrange through a roof-box above its door, the equinox sun sets a serpent of light down the stair at Chichen Itza, and the axis of Karnak was laid towards the midwinter sunrise. And the simplest geometric forms, spirals, grids, zigzags and webs, are produced by the human visual system itself, which may be why they appear on every continent.

Three illuminations emerge that no single breath could show. **The Symbol Is a Shaped Breath**: the oldest symbols of life, spirit and word were drawn from the breath, and many still are. **The Shapes Are Shared Because the Breathers Are**: the same few forms recur across the world because every culture shares one body, one sky and one way of seeing, not because of a single lost source alone. **A Symbol Remembers Only While It Is Re-Breathed**: symbols carry memory only while people keep speaking, walking and reading them, as the Rosetta Stone shows, and the reflection's closing words, "I breathe them back into coherence", describe exactly how.

How to Read This Study

This is a companion to *The Codex of Water*, *Codex Crystals*, *Codex Sounds*, *The Breath of the Clay* and *The Monad Codex*, and it uses their method. It is a contemplative and scholarly study, not a work of archaeology, art history or medicine, and not a peer-reviewed paper. It weighs published evidence without adding to it.

Two hands

One hand holds what has been measured, excavated, translated and agreed. The other holds meaning: the reading of the Codex, and the readings of the world's traditions in their own terms. Both are offered with respect. Neither is allowed to stand in for the other.

The grades

- **Established**: strong evidence and broad agreement among the relevant experts.
- **Contested**: the evidence is mixed or disputed; **not supported** where it is clearly against the claim.
- **Open**: a genuine unknown that research has neither settled nor ruled out.
- **Beyond test**: a metaphysical claim that no evidence could confirm or refute, stated with respect as a position held.
- **Symbolic**: a reading offered as meaning and practice, not as a fact about the world.

Where a claim fails, the study looks for its **near-truth**: the true thing beside it, which is often more remarkable.

The shape of the study

Chapter 1 asks what a symbol is, to scholars, to Joseph Campbell and to the Codex, and weighs the reflection's framework and methods. Part One then walks the thirteen breaths, one symbol, one place and one text to each Moon. Each breath ends with what was **seen**, what was **unseen**, **the geometry beneath**, a note on evidence, the near-truths, and a gentle practice. Part Two gathers the patterns the thirteen breaths made visible, including a test of the "breath-grid" of aligned sites, and sets out the three illuminations. A final chapter asks why symbols matter now. The reflection is printed in full in Appendix A; its claims are gathered and graded in Appendix B; the reflection's promised guide, a Codex of Symbols with its recursion map, is given in Appendix C; and the practices are gathered in Appendix D. A reader short of time may read Chapter 1, the three illuminations in Chapter 16 and the guide in Appendix C first.

On the age of ancient places

The dates given for the oldest sites in this study, Göbekli Tepe, Newgrange, Giza and Nabta Playa, are the dates that current evidence supports, most of them from radiocarbon measurements of material found with the buildings. They are the best present answers, not final ones. How some of these places were built, with what knowledge and over how long, is still argued, and new evidence has moved many dates before.

Where the study gives a date it says what it rests on, and where the evidence is thin it says so. Dates that a tradition gives for itself are reported as that tradition's own.

On sacred places and living traditions

Several of the thirteen places are holy ground today. The Temple Mount in Jerusalem is sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims and is among the most sensitive places on Earth; Angkor Wat is a living Buddhist temple; the Maya descendants of the builders of Palenque and Chichen Itza still live in the lands around them. Where the reflection or this study assigns a symbol to such a place, the assignment is the Codex's own **symbolic** reading, set beside, never over, the meaning the place holds for its people. The study does not ask anyone to perform a practice on holy ground where it would be unwelcome.

The practices

All the practices are gentle. Breathe through the nose. Never force the breath, never hold it for long, and never breathe hard and fast. Where a practice asks for a pause, it is a soft pause of two to four counts, never gripped. Some intense breathing methods can bring on visual patterns and altered states; none of the practices in this book is of that kind, and none should be made into one. If any practice brings dizziness, tingling or distress, stop and return to ordinary breathing.

On quotation

The Bible is quoted in the King James Version (1611); Plato after Benjamin Jowett (1892); Euclid after T. L. Heath (1908); the Upanishads after R. E. Hume (1921); and the *Sefer Yetzirah* after W. W. Westcott (1887), with modern translations consulted, all in the public domain. Joseph Campbell, the *Popol Vuh* in Dennis Tedlock's translation, and other modern works are quoted only in short phrases under fair use, or paraphrased. *Breath Awakens* is cited by its printed page numbers. The reflection is given in full in Appendix A.

PART ONE

The Thirteen Breaths · Symbol, Site and Text

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: What Is a Symbol?

The reflection opens with a bold proposal. Symbols, it says, "are not merely cultural artifacts, but breath-encoded geometric structures that function as phase-space attractors within the Codex field". They are "breath-memory carriers", stabilising "identity, time, and perception across cultures and epochs". And it closes with a silent breath anchor that is less a claim than a vow: "I do not study symbols. I breathe them back into coherence. And through their recursion, the memory of the Earth speaks again."

Before walking the thirteen symbols, this chapter asks the plainest questions. What do scholars mean by a symbol? How old are the oldest? Why do the same few shapes turn up all over the world? And how much of the reflection's proposal is already true, in the language of the people who study these things?

Sign, symbol and shape

Philosophers of meaning distinguish three ways a mark can point beyond itself. The American logician Charles Sanders Peirce called them icon, index and symbol. An **icon** resembles what it means: a drawing of the sun. An **index** is connected to what it means by cause or contact: smoke means fire, a footprint means a foot. A **symbol**, in Peirce's narrow sense, means what it means by agreement: the letters *s-u-n* mean the sun only because English speakers say so (**established** as a classification). The great symbols of religion and myth are usually all three at once. The ankh looks like something (perhaps a sandal strap, perhaps a knot), it is touched to the face of the king (an index of breath given), and it means "life" by long agreement.

The psychologist C. G. Jung held that some images, which he called archetypes, rise from a layer of the mind shared by all people, the collective unconscious, and so recur in dreams and myths everywhere (**contested**: influential in the humanities and in therapy, but not accepted as science, since the inheritance of specific images has never been shown). The historian of religion Mircea Eliade traced the "symbolism of the centre", the sacred mountain, tree or pillar at the navel of the world, across dozens of cultures (**established** as a pattern; its explanation debated).

And Joseph Campbell, the mythologist whose words *Breath Awakens* carries, spent his life on the question this thesis asks. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) he set out to show "the one, shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story" beneath the world's myths. In *The Masks of God* (1959–1968) he named four functions of a living mythology: to awaken awe before the mystery of being, to present an image of the cosmos, to support a social order, and to guide the individual through the stages of a life. And late in his life, borrowing a phrase from the German teacher Karlfried Graf Dürckheim, he asked that the images of religion be read as metaphors "transparent to transcendence": windows, not walls (*The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, 1986). A symbol read as a fact about the world becomes opaque, he warned; read as a metaphor, it lets the light through. That is, in other words, the two-handed method of this study.

The oldest marks

The oldest known deliberate geometric marks were made by people of our own species in southern Africa. At Blombos Cave, on the coast east of Cape Town, two pieces of red ochre carry a carved cross-hatched pattern about 75,000 years old, and in 2018 a team led by Christopher Henshilwood reported a cross-hatched drawing in ochre crayon on a stone flake from the same cave, about 73,000 years old, the oldest

drawing yet known (**established**). At Diepkloof rock shelter, people engraved ostrich eggshell water containers with repeated hatched bands some 60,000 years ago (**established**).

In the painted caves of Ice Age Europe, alongside the famous animals, there are signs: dots, lines, crosses, grids, zigzags, open angles, hand stencils. The archaeologist Genevieve von Petzinger catalogued them and found that about thirty-two signs recur, again and again, across some 30,000 years and hundreds of sites (*The First Signs*, 2016; **established** as a catalogue, its meaning **open**).

So the first fact of this study is a simple one. Before writing, before cities, before farming, people repeated a small set of geometric forms on stone, shell and cave wall, and kept repeating them for tens of thousands of years. Whatever symbols are, they are among the oldest things our species has made, and they are stable across time in exactly the way the reflection says.

Shapes the eye makes by itself

Why these shapes? One answer comes from inside the head. In the 1920s the psychologist Heinrich Klüver, studying the visions produced by mescaline, noticed that the same few forms appeared in nearly everyone's reports: lattices and honeycombs, cobwebs, tunnels and funnels, and spirals. He called them **form constants**. The same forms are reported with migraine aura, with pressure on the closed eyes, at the edge of sleep, and in some states of trance (**established**). In 2001 the mathematicians Paul Bressloff, Jack Cowan, Martin Golubitsky and colleagues showed why: the primary visual cortex maps the visual field in a twisted, logarithmic way, so that simple waves of activity across the cortex, the kind that arise when it is excited without input, are experienced as exactly these spirals, funnels and lattices (**established** as a model, widely accepted).

The archaeologists David Lewis-Williams and Thomas Dowson argued in 1988 that much of the geometric rock art of the world, from southern Africa to Ice Age France, records such visions seen in trance (**contested**: persuasive for some traditions, such as San rock art, where the link to trance is documented, and doubted for others). This study holds the finding with care. It does not say that all symbols come from visions. It says something smaller and firmer: the human visual system generates a handful of geometric forms on its own, the same for everyone. That is one reason the spiral and the grid are everywhere.

Breath was the first word for spirit

The reflection calls symbols "breath-encoded". There is a plain historical truth behind this. In language after language, the oldest word for the invisible life of a person is the word for breath. Latin *spiritus* is breath, from *spirare*, to breathe. Greek *psyche* and *pneuma* both began as breath. Hebrew *ruach* is wind, breath and spirit at once, and *neshamah* is the breath that God breathed into Adam. Sanskrit *prana* and *atman* are breath and self; Chinese *qi* is vapour and breath; Maya *ik'* is wind, breath and life (**established** as etymology). When people first needed signs for life and spirit, they drew from the breath. Several of this study's thirteen symbols are exactly such signs.

Attractors, and cultural attraction

The reflection describes symbols as "phase-space attractors". In mathematics, the phase space of a system is the space of all its possible states, and an **attractor** is a state, or a set of states, toward which the system tends to move and in which it then stays: the resting point of a pendulum, the steady orbit of a planet, the strange folded loop that the meteorologist Edward Lorenz found in 1963 in a simple model of the weather

(**established**). Whether symbols literally act as attractors in a "Codex field" is **beyond test**, because no such field has been measured.

But here is the first near-truth. Cognitive anthropologists use almost the same idea. Dan Sperber and, later, Olivier Morin (*How Traditions Live and Die*, 2016) argue for **cultural attraction**: when images, stories and patterns are copied from person to person, they drift, but they drift toward forms that human minds find easy to see, remember and reproduce, and these forms are stable across generations, as if attracted (**established** as a theory, **contested** in its details). Morin showed, for example, that portraits in which the subject looks straight out at the viewer became more common across centuries of European painting, because such faces are attended to and remembered better. In this scholarly sense, the spiral and the cross really are cultural attractors. The reflection's metaphor is close to a technical term.

The reflection's methods, weighed

The reflection proposes four breath-phases of research.

Breath-scribing. "Direct breath-field interface with the Codex": writing from a state of attentive breathing. As a contemplative practice of writing it is ancient and fruitful, and the Codex books themselves were scribed this way. As a method of knowing facts about the world it is **beyond test**; what it yields must then be checked by the other hand, which is what the rest of this study does.

Textual breath-mining. Reading the old texts for their symbols of breath. This is ordinary scholarship with a particular question, and the study does it throughout, quoting the texts in their own words.

Site-based breath-mapping. Fieldwork at sacred sites to "measure breath-resonance". No instrument measures breath-resonance as a property of a place. But some things can be measured honestly: the breathing rate and heart-rate variability of visitors, the acoustics of chambers (*Codex Sounds* described the measured resonance of the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum in Malta), and the alignment of a site with the sun. Proposals for such measurements are given in Chapter 17 (**open**).

Geographic breath-field analysis. Mapping "breath-symbolic ley lines and memory nodes". Ley lines have a long history and a clear statistical test. Chapter 15 applies that test to the thirteen sites of this study.

The reflection's modern sources

The reflection's preliminary bibliography names four modern authors beside its ancient texts, and each is weighed where it belongs. Keith Critchlow's *Time Stands Still* (1979) is weighed with the triangle (Chapter 4), Lucie Lamy's *Egyptian Mysteries* (1981) with the ankh and Karnak (Chapter 7), and Graham Hancock's *Magicians of the Gods* (2015) with Göbekli Tepe (Chapter 2). The fourth, Robert Edward Grant's *Codex Universalis Principia Mathematica: A Trilogy of Harmonic Realization*, was released as a self-published PDF in 2025 after a talk of the same name that Grant gave at the Vatican in 2024. It proposes that electricity is the only fundamental force, that prime numbers are "resonance nodes", and that "geometry is cognition"; its author describes it as "not a theory of everything" but "a mirror of remembrance". It has not been peer-reviewed, and its mathematical and physical claims, including Grant's later announcement of a proof of the Riemann Hypothesis, have not been accepted by mathematicians or physicists (**not supported** as mathematics and physics; **symbolic** as a vision of order). Its phrase "geometry is cognition" stands close to *Breath Awakens*' second axiom, and to the finding that some geometric forms are produced by the visual cortex itself; that near-truth is weighed in Chapter 16.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens begins by calling itself a book of symbols. "This book is not a text," its foreword says. "Each page is a mirror. Each glyph is a breath. Each silence is a return" (p. 5). Its second axiom is the reflection's thesis in a single line: "Geometry Is Memory. All memory is stored as geometric resonance. You do not remember data, you re-enter a shape" (p. 65). It gives the first forms in order: "The triangle (3) – the first stable form; The square (4) – the first structure; The hexagon (6) – the first tessellation; And the circle (12) – the first complete loop" (p. 46). It writes the four phases of the breath with the four letters of the Hebrew Name: "Identify = The Inhale (Yod) ... Accept = The Pause (Heh) ... Embrace = The Descent (Vav) ... Let Go = The Exhale (Final Heh)" (p. 26). And it places two breathlines at right angles, the vertical Breathline of Necessity and the horizontal Spiral of Service: "Together, they form the cross of coherence" (p. 45).

The book also gives Joseph Campbell a place of honour. Near its beginning it sets two reflections that guided its author, and the second is Campbell's: "the heroes of all time have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero-path" (p. 23, quoting *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*). And its Chapter 9 sets the twelve Codex archetypes beside the stages of the hero's journey and the figures of six religions in one grid (pp. 83–85). The labyrinth, the thread and the journey will return in the eighth breath of this study.

The thirteen breaths

The reflection names four primary breath-symbols, the triangle, the spiral, the cross and the torus; three texts, the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the *Timaeus* and the Upanishads; and three sites, Göbekli Tepe, Chichen Itza and Karnak. To make a full spiral of thirteen, this study keeps every one of them and adds the symbols, places and texts that the reflection's own questions call for: the point and circle with which every drawing begins, the cube of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the ankh of Karnak, the serpent of Chichen Itza, the labyrinth of Campbell's hero-path, the overlapping circles of sacred geometry, the star, the breathed syllable of the Upanishads, and the letter, in which a symbol becomes writing.

Breath	Moon	Phase	Symbol	Place	Text
1	Genesis	Iphi	The point and the circle	Göbekli Tepe	Genesis 1–2
2	Spiral	Iphi	The spiral	Newgrange	*On Growth and Form*
3	Vector	Shema	The triangle	Giza	Plato's *Timaeus*
4	Mirror	Shema	The square and the cube	Jerusalem	*Sefer Yetzirah* I
5	Stillness	Vara	The cross	Palenque	*Popol Vuh*
6	Memory	Vara	The ankh	Karnak	The breath of life in Egyptian texts
7	Return	Ouon	The serpent	Chichen Itza	Campbell, *The Mythic Image*
8	Release	Ouon	The labyrinth	Knossos	Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*
9	Echo	Monad	The vesica and the flower	Abydos	Euclid, *Elements* I.1
10	Shadow	Monad	The torus	Delphi	Plutarch on the oracle's *pneuma*
11	Descent	Monad	The star	Nabta Playa	The Pyramid Texts
12	Dream	Monad	OM	Angkor Wat	Mandukya Upanishad

Breath	Moon	Phase	Symbol	Place	Text
13	Wisdom	Monad, crown	The letter	Rosetta	*Sefer Yetzirah* II

Table 1.1. The thirteen breaths of the study.

The phases follow the pattern of the companion volumes: two breaths to each of the four phases of the breath, Iphi (the inhale), Shema (the pause), Vara (the exhale) and Ouon (stillness), and five to the Monad, the centre that holds them. The reflection asks how the symbols "map to emotional, mental, and spiritual breath phases"; each chapter offers the Codex reading of its symbol in those terms, as **symbolic** meaning, beside the history.

Claim in the reflection	Grade	What the evidence shows
Symbols are "not merely cultural artifacts"	**symbolic**; partly **established**	Some recurrent forms arise from the visual system itself, not from any one culture
Symbols are "breath-encoded geometric structures"	**symbolic**, with a strong near-truth	The oldest words for spirit are words for breath; several great symbols are signs of breath
Symbols function as "phase-space attractors within the Codex field"	**beyond test** as stated	"Cultural attraction" is an established theory in anthropology
Symbols stabilise identity, time and perception across cultures and epochs	**established** in a plain sense	The same geometric signs recur for tens of thousands of years
Breath-scribing as a research method	**beyond test** as knowledge; **established** as practice	Its results must be checked by evidence
Site-based measurement of "breath-resonance"	**open**	Breathing, heart rhythm, acoustics and alignments can be measured

Table 1.2. The reflection's framework, weighed.

A note on evidence

The Blombos and Diepkloof dates rest on luminescence and other dating methods and are widely accepted. Von Petzinger's catalogue is a doctoral study of European cave signs, not a claim about their meaning.

Klüver's form constants are well documented; the Bressloff model explains their geometry but not every feature of every vision. The trance theory of rock art remains debated.

Campbell's books are cited by their first editions. The phrase "transparent to transcendence" is Campbell's use of a phrase he credited to Karlfried Graf Dürckheim.

What this breath carries forward

A symbol, then, is very old, very stable, and in its first and deepest examples drawn from the breath. The reflection's framework holds as meaning and is supported, in its plainer form, by the evidence. The thirteen

breaths that follow test it one symbol at a time, beginning where every drawing begins: with a point, and a circle around it.

CHAPTER 2

The Circle of Stones: The Point, the Circle and Göbekli Tepe

The first breath falls under the Genesis Moon, in Iphi, the inhale: the moment awareness enters form. Every drawing begins the same way. A point is set down, and a circle is drawn around it. The reflection names Göbekli Tepe as a breath-symbolic architecture, and it is the right place to begin, for it is a circle of stones raised around a centre before anyone on Earth had planted a field.

The symbol: a point and the circle around it

A point with a circle around it, the circumpunct, is one of the most widespread signs on Earth. In Egyptian writing it is the sign for the sun and for the god Ra (**established**). In European astronomy and alchemy it is the sun and the metal of the sun, gold. In the yoga traditions of India the point is the *bindu*, the drop or seed from which, in tantric teaching, the whole of manifestation unfolds (**established** as tradition). In geometry it is the beginning of everything: Euclid's third postulate grants only the right "to describe a circle with any centre and distance" (*Elements*, Heath 1908), and from that right and a straight edge the whole of his geometry is built.

In the Codex, the point within the circle is the Monad, the still centre of the spiral, and the circle is the breath that moves around it. The Codex reading for the inhale is this: before anything can be named, there must be a centre from which to see. Emotionally, the point is presence; mentally, it is attention gathered; spiritually, it is the one that the many circle (**symbolic**).

The place: Göbekli Tepe

On a limestone ridge above the plain of Harran in south-eastern Turkey, near the city of Şanlıurfa, stands a low hill the local people called Göbekli Tepe, "potbelly hill". A survey noted it in 1963, but its importance was recognised only in 1994 by the German archaeologist Klaus Schmidt, who excavated there with the German Archaeological Institute until his death in 2014. It became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2018 (**established**).

Beneath the hill are great round and oval enclosures. Each is a ring of T-shaped limestone pillars, set into a wall with a bench along it, facing inward toward two larger pillars standing in the centre, the tallest about five and a half metres high (**established**). The T-shapes are not abstract. On the two central pillars of Enclosure D, Pillars 18 and 31, arms are carved down the sides, hands meet above the navel, and a belt and a loincloth of fox pelt hang below: they are stylised beings, perhaps ancestors, perhaps spirits (**established** as carving; identity **open**). Around them, on the ring of pillars, are foxes, boars, snakes, cranes, vultures, scorpions and a great many other creatures, carved in relief by people who had stone and flint and no metal.

How old, and how sure

The oldest enclosures belong to what archaeologists call the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A. Lime plaster from the wall of Enclosure D has been radiocarbon dated to between about 9745 and 9314 BCE, and charcoal near its floor to a similar range; the enclosures were gradually filled in over the following centuries, and the site was abandoned around 8000 BCE (Dietrich and colleagues, 2016; **established** as the present evidence).

That makes Göbekli Tepe about six thousand years older than Stonehenge's great stones and the pyramids of Giza.

These dates rest on organic material in the plaster and the fill. They are good measurements, and they could still change with new finds; the enclosures were probably not all built at once, and the lowest levels of the site have not all been reached. What is not in doubt is the skill. A quarry on the same ridge still holds an unfinished pillar about seven metres long. The builders cut, carved, moved and raised stones of many tonnes with flint tools and human strength, and they did it while living, as far as the evidence shows, mainly by hunting and gathering (**established**).

Temple, or home?

Schmidt called Göbekli Tepe "the first temple", a place of gathering and ritual for hunter-gatherer bands, and his phrase went round the world. Later work has complicated it. Excavators since 2014 have found cisterns for rainwater, tools for grinding cereals in large numbers, and buildings that look like dwellings, and some now argue that people lived there, and that the great enclosures were the centre of a settled community rather than a sanctuary in the wilderness (**contested**). Both readings agree on the main point: the circles were built for gathering, and they were built around a centre.

The magicians of the gods

The reflection lists Graham Hancock's *Magicians of the Gods* (2015) among its sources. Hancock argues that Göbekli Tepe was built with knowledge handed down by survivors of an advanced civilisation destroyed around 12,800 years ago, when, in his account, fragments of a comet struck the Earth and began the cold snap called the Younger Dryas. He reads the carvings on Pillar 43, the "Vulture Stone", as a record of that event and of the sky at the time. The chemical engineer Martin Sweatman has made a related argument in peer-reviewed papers, most recently (2024) that the V-shaped marks on Göbekli Tepe's pillars count days in a lunisolar calendar.

These ideas are **contested**, and the strongest of them are **not supported**. The Younger Dryas impact hypothesis, first proposed in 2007, has been tested for nearly two decades; a large review in 2023 by Vance Holliday and colleagues found its evidence inconsistent, though its proponents continue to publish. No artefact or settlement of a lost advanced civilisation has been found. Most archaeologists read Pillar 43's animals as belonging to the same world of creatures carved all over the site. And yet the questions Hancock raises are fair ones to ask. How did people without farming organise such work? What did they know of the sky? Those questions are **open**, and the honest answer is that the builders knew more than was once believed.

The text: the breath over the waters

The first words of the Hebrew Bible describe a world before form: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2, KJV). The Hebrew for "Spirit" is *ruach*, which is also wind and breath. Creation in Genesis begins with a breath moving over formless water, and then a word: "Let there be light" (1:3). In the second account the breath becomes personal: "the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (2:7).

Genesis also knows the standing stone. When Jacob wakes from his dream of the ladder at Bethel, he takes the stone he had used as a pillow "and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it", and says, "this

stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house" (Genesis 28:18, 22). A pillar raised where heaven was seen, and called the house of God: the people of Göbekli Tepe left no words, but Jacob's gesture is the oldest written description of what they might have meant.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens places a thirteenth point at the centre of its twelve archetypes, "the still luminous center", and finds it in every tradition: in the Sacred Heart, in the Hindu *bindu*, "the point of pure stillness and union with Brahman", in the Buddhist void and the Sikh *Ek Onkar* (pp. 82–83). Its first law of creation is "You Exist", and its first pillar of breath is Identify, the inhale, "the moment awareness enters form" (p. 26).

Göbekli Tepe is that pillar made in stone. A ring of beings faces a centre, and in the centre stand two figures who face each other. The Codex reads them as the first breath and its answer, the in-breath and the out-breath standing at the still point (**symbolic**).

What was seen

The first symbol is the simplest. A point and a circle are the beginning of geometry, the sign of the sun, the seed of the yoga traditions, and the plan of the oldest monumental circles known. At Göbekli Tepe, people who did not yet farm raised rings of carved pillars around a centre, about eleven and a half thousand years ago, on present evidence.

What was unseen

What was unseen is the planning. In 2020 the archaeologists Gil Haklay and Avi Gopher, using the published plans, found that the centre points of the three largest enclosures, B, C and D, lie almost exactly at the corners of an equilateral triangle, and that the central pillars of each enclosure seem to be laid out in relation to it. They argued that the three circles were designed together as one project, with a geometry of the kind later used by architects of the first villages (**established** as a published finding; **contested** in its interpretation). If they are right, the oldest monumental site on Earth was laid out with a circle and a triangle before it was built.

The geometry beneath

The geometry beneath this breath is the compass. To draw a circle, one point stays still and another moves around it at a fixed distance. Breath has the same form: the body is the still point, the breath moves out and returns at its own steady distance. The two central pillars of Enclosure D face each other across the centre, two points on one axis, and the ring of pillars encloses them. Three such rings, if Haklay and Gopher are right, were set at the corners of a triangle. The point, the circle and the triangle, the first three figures of Euclid, are all here, in stone, about seven thousand years before Euclid.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
Göbekli Tepe is a "breath-symbolic architecture"	**symbolic**	A circle of carved beings around a centre, built for gathering
The enclosures date to about 9500 BCE	**established** on present evidence	Radiocarbon dates of wall plaster and charcoal; future finds may refine them

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
It was a temple of hunter-gatherers	**contested**	Evidence of dwelling, water storage and cereal grinding has been found
It was built with knowledge from a lost advanced civilisation	**not supported**	No such civilisation's remains have been found
A comet impact began the Younger Dryas	**contested**, mostly not supported	Tested since 2007; a 2023 review found the evidence inconsistent
Pillar 43 records astronomy	**contested**	Proposed by Sweatman and others; most archaeologists read the animals otherwise
The three largest enclosures were planned on an equilateral triangle	**contested**, published	Haklay and Gopher (2020)

Table 2.1. Claims touched by the first breath.

A note on evidence

The radiocarbon dates are from the excavators' published work and their research blog; they are calibrated ranges and refer to the material dated, not directly to the moment of building.

The Younger Dryas impact debate is active, with papers published on both sides; this study reports the weight of current opinion, not a final verdict.

Haklay and Gopher's analysis uses published plans, not new survey; others have questioned whether the near-triangle could be chance.

Near-truths

- The reflection's "breath-symbolic architecture" has a near-truth in the plan itself: a ring of beings around a centre, and the oldest monumental circle known.
- The claim that the site encodes ancient knowledge has a near-truth: its builders were far more skilled and organised than archaeologists once thought possible for people without farming.
- And the oldest written account of raising a pillar to the sacred is Jacob's at Bethel: "this stone ... shall be God's house".

✦ Practice: The Point and the Circle

Take a sheet of paper and a pencil, or simply use a fingertip on a table.

Set down a point. Rest your attention on it and breathe in gently through the nose, for a count of four.

As you breathe out, draw a slow circle around the point, letting the out-breath last as long as the circle.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, with your attention back on the centre.

Repeat three to five times, each circle the same distance from the point.

Notice that the circle depends on the point staying still. Then rest, and breathe normally.

What this breath carries forward

The first breath gives the centre and the ring. The second asks what happens when the circle does not close, but keeps moving outward as it turns: the spiral.

CHAPTER 3

The Turn of the Year: The Spiral and Newgrange

The second breath falls under the Spiral Moon, still in Iphi, the inhale. A circle that does not close, but moves outward as it turns, becomes a spiral, and the spiral is the central figure of the whole Codex. The reflection names it among its four primary breath-symbols. This breath reads it at Newgrange, where spirals were carved into stone around a chamber that the sun enters only once a year.

The symbol: the shape that grows and stays the same

There are two kinds of spiral, and the difference matters. In the spiral of Archimedes, each turn is the same distance from the last, like a coiled rope or the groove of a record. In the logarithmic, or equiangular, spiral, each turn is wider than the last by the same ratio, so that the curve crosses every line from its centre at the same angle (**established**). The Swiss mathematician Jacob Bernoulli was so moved by this second spiral, which keeps its shape however large it grows, that he called it *spira mirabilis*, the marvellous spiral, and asked for it to be carved on his tomb in Basel with the words *Eadem mutata resurgo*: "though changed, I rise again the same". The mason, perhaps not knowing the difference, carved a spiral of Archimedes instead (**established**). The stone still shows it.

The Codex reads the spiral as breath that returns without repeating. Emotionally it is renewal; mentally it is learning, the same lesson met again at a wider turn; spiritually it is the path home that is never the same twice (**symbolic**).

The text: growth and form

In 1917 the Scottish biologist D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson published *On Growth and Form*, one of the founding books of mathematical biology. In its chapter on the equiangular spiral he showed why so many shells and horns follow it: whenever a living thing grows by adding to its edge while keeping its shape, the logarithmic spiral is the necessary result (**established**). The nautilus, the snail, the ram's horn and the elephant's tusk are all near it. He was careful to say that it is the consequence of a way of growing, not a secret code laid into nature from outside.

His care matters here. The popular claim that the nautilus follows the golden spiral is **not supported**: measured shells widen by about three times per whorl, not the six and a half times the golden spiral requires (as *The Breath That Holds the Stars* showed). But the near-truth is better than the myth. The spiral is not imposed on the shell; it is how the shell keeps being itself while it grows.

The place: Newgrange

In the bend of the River Boyne in County Meath, Ireland, stands the great passage tomb of Newgrange, part of the World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne. Radiocarbon dates place its building around 3200 BCE, some centuries before the first pyramids of Egypt (**established** on present evidence). A round mound about 85 metres across, faced with white quartz on its front, is ringed by 97 great kerbstones. A passage about 19 metres long leads to a cross-shaped chamber with a corbelled roof that has kept the chamber dry for more than five thousand years (**established**).

Newgrange is covered with carved spirals, lozenges, circles and zigzags. The entrance stone, which lies across the doorway, carries a famous design of linked double spirals and a triple spiral. Inside the chamber, on a stone in the end recess, is another triple spiral, three coils joined as one (**established**).

Above the doorway is a narrow stone slot, the roof-box. Because the passage rises toward the chamber, the doorway alone could not let low sunlight reach the end. The roof-box does. On the mornings around the winter solstice, the rising sun shines through it, and a beam of light travels up the passage and across the chamber floor for about seventeen minutes, then withdraws (**established**). The archaeologist Michael O'Kelly, who excavated Newgrange, saw it for himself on the morning of 21 December 1967, the first person known to have done so in modern times.

Later Irish tradition made Brú na Bóinne the dwelling of the Dagda and of Aengus, gods of the people called the Tuatha Dé Danann, in the *Dindshenchas*, the medieval lore of places (**established** as tradition). The builders left no words. What they left is an alignment with the turning-point of the year, and spirals.

Spirals and the turning sun

Spirals are rare in the cave art of the Ice Age; in Genevieve von Petzinger's catalogue they are among the least common signs. They become common in the Neolithic, in Ireland, in the temples of Malta, on the painted pottery of China's Majiayao culture, in the Americas (**established**). Why then? No one knows. One reading, popular but **contested**, is that the spiral recorded the sun's yearly path, which turns at the solstices. What is **established** is the alignment itself: the people who carved the spirals of Newgrange built a house of stone in which the shortest day of the year is marked by light.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens describes itself as "a breathline spiral Codex" (p. 5) and defines its spiral in words close to those Bernoulli asked for on his tomb: "This is a spiral that never repeats but always returns" (p. 41). Its second axiom, "Geometry Is Memory", has a passage on the spiral that reads like D'Arcy Thompson: "The spiral arm of a galaxy holds its shape for ages while the stars that make it flow through and pass on, so that the form outlives every star that ever carried it. A breath is the same: its shape is steady across a life, though not one particle of air is kept. Memory is not the matter. It is the shape the matter keeps re-entering" (p. 66).

That is exactly what a logarithmic spiral is: a form that persists through growth and change. *Eadem mutata resurgo*.

What was seen

The spiral is the shape of growth that keeps its form. Its logarithmic version is the necessary result of growing at the edge while staying the same, and its makers in the Neolithic carved it on a house of stone aligned with the turning of the year.

What was unseen

What was unseen is the reversal of the light. Newgrange's chamber is dark for the whole year. On the shortest days, at the darkest point of the year's breath, light enters it for seventeen minutes and then leaves. The spiral carved in the chamber is lit by the year's turning-point. The Codex reads it as the inhale of the

year: the moment the light begins to return (**symbolic**). Bernoulli's tomb holds a second unseen lesson: the marvellous spiral was carved wrongly, and the right meaning survived anyway, in the words around it.

The geometry beneath

Spiral	Rule	Where it appears	What it means for breath
Archimedean	Equal spacing between turns	Coiled rope; the grooves of a record; most hand-carved megalithic spirals look closer to it	A steady rhythm, the same breath each time
Logarithmic	Each turn wider by a constant ratio	Shells, horns, galaxy arms approximately, the flight path of a moth to a light	Growth that keeps its form
Golden (special case)	Ratio of φ per quarter turn	Rarely in nature; mostly in diagrams	A popular ideal, not a law

Table 3.1. The kinds of spiral.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The spiral is a primary breath-symbol	**symbolic**, with deep support in the Codex	The central figure of *Breath Awakens*
Spirals encode the sun's annual path	**contested**	Popular reading; Newgrange's solar alignment itself is established
Newgrange is aligned with the winter solstice sunrise	**established**	Light enters via the roof-box for about seventeen minutes
Nature's spirals are golden	**not supported**	Shells widen at other ratios; the logarithmic spiral is the law of growth
The spiral is a form that keeps its shape through change	**established**	The defining property of the logarithmic spiral

Table 3.2. Claims touched by the second breath.

> **A note on evidence**
>
> Newgrange's dates come from radiocarbon measurements of material in the mound and roof-box caulking; the solstice illumination has been observed and filmed every year since 1967.
>
> Whether the carved spirals were made with the solar alignment in mind is not known; their meaning is open.
>
> The description of Bernoulli's tomb is from the stone itself, still in Basel Minster.

Near-truths

- "Breath-encoded geometry" has a near-truth in the logarithmic spiral itself: a shape defined by how it keeps its form through growth, exactly as a breath keeps its form while the air changes.

- The spiral as the year's turning has a near-truth at Newgrange: whatever the spirals meant, the house they are carved on breathes with the solstice.
- And the wrong spiral on Bernoulli's tomb shows that a symbol's meaning can outlive a mistake in its drawing.

✦ Practice: The Returning Spiral

Rest a fingertip at the centre of the palm of your other hand.

Breathe in gently through the nose, and as you do, trace a slow spiral outward from the centre, two or three turns.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow at the outer edge.

Breathe out slowly, tracing the spiral back inward to the centre.

Repeat four or five times. Each time, let the spiral be a little different, as no two breaths are the same.

Then rest your hands, and breathe normally.

What this breath carries forward

Two breaths of the inhale have given the centre and the growing curve. The third breath enters the pause, and the first straight-sided form: the triangle, which *Breath Awakens* calls "the first stable form".

CHAPTER 4

The First Stable Form: The Triangle, the Timaeus and Giza

The third breath falls under the Vector Moon and reaches Shema, the pause. The reflection names the triangle as a primary breath-symbol, and *Breath Awakens* calls it "the first stable form" (p. 46). This breath reads it in Plato's *Timaeus*, where the whole world is built from triangles, and at Giza, where the triangle was raised in stone.

The symbol: three points held still

A triangle is the simplest closed figure made of straight lines, and it has a property no other polygon has: it cannot change its shape unless the length of a side changes. Push on the corner of a square frame and it folds into a diamond; push on a triangle and it holds (**established**). This is why bridges, roof trusses, cranes and bicycle frames are built of triangles. *Breath Awakens*' phrase "the first stable form" is not only a metaphor. It is a theorem of engineering.

That is why the triangle belongs to the pause. The inhale gathers, the exhale releases, and the pause between them is the moment the breath holds its shape. Emotionally the triangle is steadiness; mentally it is structure, three points that fix a plane; spiritually it is the threefold figure that many traditions use for the sacred, from the Christian Trinity to the Hindu Trimurti (**symbolic**).

The text: the world made of triangles

In the *Timaeus*, written around 360 BCE, Plato gives a cosmology in the voice of an astronomer from southern Italy. Every body, Timaeus says, has depth; depth is bounded by surfaces; and every flat surface with straight edges can be divided into triangles. So the elements must be built of triangles, and of just two kinds: the right-angled triangle with two equal sides, which is half a square, and the right-angled triangle that is half an equilateral one, which he calls the most beautiful (*Timaeus* 53c–54b; **established** as the text).

From these he builds four of the five regular solids. Half-squares make the cube, which is earth, the most stable. Half-equilaterals make the tetrahedron, which is fire, sharpest and lightest; the octahedron, which is air; and the icosahedron, which is water. The fifth regular solid, the dodecahedron, he says God used "for the whole", decorating it with figures (55c). In Plato's world, then, the air we breathe is made of tiny octahedra, each built of eight equilateral triangles (**established** as the text; **not supported** as physics).

Plato did not know about atoms in the modern sense, and air is not made of octahedra. But the near-truth is real and lovely. Euclid, a generation or two later, proved in the last book of his *Elements* (XIII.18) that there are exactly five regular solids and no more (**established**). And modern chemistry found that molecules really are built of geometric forms: methane is a tetrahedron, sulphur hexafluoride an octahedron, and the shell of many viruses an icosahedron. Plato's instinct, that the world is geometry at its smallest scale, was right in spirit.

The *Timaeus* also has a theory of breathing. Because there is no empty space, Plato reasons, the air we breathe out pushes the air around us, which pushes on, and comes round to enter the body again through the flesh; and the breath drawn in through the mouth pushes out the air within. Breathing is a circle of pushing, which he calls a "circular thrust" (*Timaeus* 79a–e; **established** as the text; **not supported** as physiology). In the oldest written geometry of the elements, breath is already a cycle.

Keith Critchlow and the stones of Scotland

The reflection cites Keith Critchlow's *Time Stands Still* (1979), a study of the geometry of Britain's megalithic monuments. Critchlow drew attention to the carved stone balls of Neolithic Scotland, more than four hundred of them, most from Aberdeenshire, made around 3200 to 2500 BCE, each the size of a large orange, with raised knobs carved on their surfaces (**established**). He argued that some of them show the five regular solids a thousand years before Plato.

Some of the balls are indeed beautifully symmetrical, and those with four, six and eight knobs match the arrangement of the faces of the tetrahedron, cube and octahedron (**established**). The claim that their makers knew all five Platonic solids is **not supported**. The famous set of five in the Ashmolean Museum, often shown as the "Neolithic Platonic solids", has knobs numbering four, six, eight, twelve and fourteen; the last is not an icosahedron, as Critchlow's own account allows, and the mathematician John Baez has traced how the story grew in the retelling (2009). The most common number of knobs is six. The near-truth stands: people in Neolithic Scotland explored the symmetry of the sphere, by hand, with great skill, and found some of the same forms that Plato and Euclid would name.

The place: Giza

Seen from any side, a pyramid is a triangle. The Great Pyramid of Giza, built for the king Khufu of the Fourth Dynasty, rose at a slope of about 51.84 degrees, the angle given by the Egyptian builders' measure of slope, a *seked* of five and a half palms of run for each cubit of rise (**established**; see *Codex Crystals*, Chapter 4).

How old, and how sure

The conventional date of Khufu's reign is about 2560 BCE, from king lists and inscriptions. Radiocarbon tests have checked it. In 1984 and again in 1995, teams sampled charcoal and organic matter from the mortar of Old Kingdom monuments. The first project found dates on average about 374 years older than the historical ones; the larger second project, about 100 to 200 years older (Bonani and colleagues, 2001; **established**). The likeliest explanation is that builders burned old wood, but the results show that the dates of even the most studied monuments are measured, not merely assumed, and are still being refined.

How the pyramids were built is also still argued. A papyrus logbook found in 2013 at Wadi al-Jarf records the work of a crew under an inspector named Merer, ferrying limestone from Tura to Giza in Khufu's reign (**established**); a steep ramp with post holes, found in 2018 at the alabaster quarry of Hatnub, shows one way that heavy blocks were hauled up slopes (**established**). The full method of raising the Great Pyramid remains **open**.

The benben

To the Egyptians, the pyramid's shape had a meaning older than the pyramids. At Heliopolis, the temple of the sun kept a sacred stone called the *benben*, the first mound of land that rose out of the dark waters of Nun at creation, on which the sun first stood (**established** as Egyptian belief). The pointed capstones of pyramids and obelisks, pyramidions, were called *benbenet*. The triangle of stone was the first ground to rise from the formless waters: the same moment as Genesis's breath over the deep.

Breath Awakens places Giza in its third epoch, when "the Spiral's breath geometry was encoded in stone. RA'EL-THA-ON was inscribed into the breathline of the pyramids of Saqqara, Giza and Abydos" (p. 58;

beyond test). In the Egyptians' own terms, the pyramid was the mound of creation and a stair for the king's ascent to the stars, as Chapter 12 will show.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Shema, the pause, is the second pillar of *Breath Awakens*: "Accept = The Pause (Heh). The breath holds. 'I allow this to be true.' Stillness before transformation" (p. 26). The triangle is the figure of that pause. It does not move. It holds. And it is the first of the book's four forms, "the triangle (3) – the first stable form" (p. 46), before the square, the hexagon and the circle.

What was seen

The triangle is the only rigid polygon. Plato built the elements from it, and air from its octahedron; Euclid proved that only five regular solids exist; Neolithic carvers in Scotland found some of them by hand; and the Egyptians raised the triangle in stone as the mound of creation.

What was unseen

What was unseen is that the three oldest accounts of this breath all place the triangle at a beginning. In the *Timaeus*, triangles are the first units of matter. At Heliopolis, the pyramid-shaped *benben* was the first land. In *Breath Awakens*, the triangle is the first stable form. And the *Timaeus*, the oldest text of the three, describes breathing itself as a circle of pushing, a form that will return as the torus in the tenth breath.

The geometry beneath

Solid	Faces	Plato's element	Built from	Codex reading
Tetrahedron	4 triangles	Fire	Half-equilaterals	The spark, Iphi
Octahedron	8 triangles	Air	Half-equilaterals	The breath itself, Shema
Icosahedron	20 triangles	Water	Half-equilaterals	The flow, Vara
Cube	6 squares	Earth	Half-squares	Ground and stillness, Ouon
Dodecahedron	12 pentagons	"The whole"	(Not from his triangles)	The Monad

Table 4.1. Plato's elements and the five regular solids, with the Codex reading (symbolic).

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The triangle is a primary breath-symbol of the pause	**symbolic**, with a literal near-truth	The triangle is the only rigid polygon
The *Timaeus* encodes geometric breath-forms	**established** as text	Air is made of octahedra; breathing is a circular thrust
Neolithic Scots knew the five Platonic solids	**not supported**	Some balls match three solids; the "icosahedron" has fourteen knobs
The Great Pyramid dates to about 2560 BCE	**established**, with refinements	Radiocarbon of mortar gave dates 100 to 374 years older on average
The breath geometry of the Spiral was inscribed into the pyramids	**beyond test**	To Egyptians the pyramid was the mound of creation

Table 4.2. Claims touched by the third breath.

A note on evidence

The *Timaeus* is quoted and summarised from Jowett's translation; section numbers are the standard Stephanus numbers.

The radiocarbon projects of 1984 and 1995 are summarised from their published reports.

The account of the Ashmolean balls follows Critchlow's own description and Baez's history of the claim.

Near-truths

- "The first stable form" is literally true: a triangle is the only polygon that cannot be deformed without changing its sides.
- Plato's air of octahedra is false, but molecules and viruses really are built on the regular solids.
- The pyramid as encoded breath geometry has a near-truth in Egyptian thought: the pyramid was the first ground to rise from the waters of creation.

✦ Practice: The Triangle Breath

Sit upright and rest your hands on your thighs.

Breathe in gently through the nose for a count of three, and picture the first side of a triangle rising.

Let a soft pause of three counts follow, without gripping, as the second side crosses the top.

Breathe out for three counts, and picture the third side returning to the start.

If the pause feels tight, shorten it to two or one; the triangle holds its shape at any size.

Continue for five or six breaths, then rest and breathe normally.

What this breath carries forward

The triangle holds still. The fourth breath, still in the pause, multiplies stillness into the second form of *Breath Awakens*, "the square (4) – the first structure", and into the cube that the *Sefer Yetzirah* seals with the letters of breath.

CHAPTER 5

The Sealed Directions: The Square, the Cube and the Holy of Holies

The fourth breath falls under the Mirror Moon. It stands in Shema, the pause, and looks toward the release. *Breath Awakens* gives the square as the second form, "the square (4) – the first structure" (p. 46). In three dimensions the square becomes the cube, and the oldest cube in scripture is the inner room of the Temple in Jerusalem. The reflection's first named text, the *Sefer Yetzirah*, builds the six directions of space with the letters of breath.

The symbol: four sides, six faces

A square is four equal sides and four right angles. It is the shape of the four directions, east, south, west and north, of the four seasons, the four winds, the four corners of the Earth that so many traditions speak of, and the four phases of the Codex breath. A square tiles a floor without gaps; it is the grid of fields, cities and graph paper. Extended into depth it becomes the cube, six square faces, eight corners, twelve edges, the only regular solid that fills space perfectly when stacked (**established**). In Plato's *Timaeus* the cube is earth, the most stable element (Chapter 4).

The Codex reading is dwelling. The triangle held the pause; the square and the cube give it a room. Emotionally the cube is shelter; mentally it is order, everything in its place; spiritually it is the dwelling of the presence at the centre (**symbolic**).

The place: the Holy of Holies

The First Book of Kings describes the Temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem, and at its heart the inner sanctuary where the Ark of the Covenant was kept: "the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold" (1 Kings 6:20). A room equal in length, breadth and height is a cube. The Holy of Holies was a golden cube of about ten metres a side, dark and empty except for the Ark and the two cherubim whose wings met over it (**established** as the text; how closely the building matched the text is **open**, since the First Temple was destroyed by Babylon in 586 BCE and has not been excavated).

The cube returns at the end of the Bible. The New Jerusalem of Revelation "lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth ... The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal" (Revelation 21:16). And in Islam the holiest building on Earth is called by the Arabic word for a cube: the Kaaba in Mecca, to which Muslims turn in prayer five times a day (**established**; the Kaaba is not an exact cube, and its name describes its form).

The Temple Mount in Jerusalem is today sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Dome of the Rock, completed in 691 CE, stands over a great outcrop of bedrock that Jewish tradition calls the Foundation Stone, from which, according to the Talmud, the world was founded and on which the Holy of Holies stood (Yoma 54b; **established** as tradition; the exact location of the sanctuary is **contested** among scholars). To many Muslims the same rock is the place from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended to

heaven on the Night Journey. It is among the most sensitive places on Earth, and this study treats it only as a place of meaning, with respect to all who hold it holy.

So at the centre of the cube is a point: the Foundation Stone, the place where, in the tradition, creation began. The circle and point of the first breath stand at the heart of the square of the fourth.

The text: the Book of Formation

The *Sefer Yetzirah*, the "Book of Formation" or "Book of Creation", is a short Hebrew text, a few pages long, attributed by tradition to Abraham. Scholars date its core to somewhere between the first centuries CE and the early medieval period, most often the third to sixth centuries; the first known commentary on it was written by Saadia Gaon in 931 (**established** as the range of scholarly opinion). It is one of the founding texts of Jewish mysticism.

It says that God created the world through thirty-two paths of wisdom: the ten *sefirot*, the numbers or dimensions, and the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The first of the ten is the Spirit (*ruach*) of the Living God. The second is breath, or air, drawn from the spirit; the third is water from the air; the fourth fire from the water. Then come six more: height, depth, east, west, south and north. And each of the six is sealed with a different ordering of three letters of the divine Name, Yod, He and Vav (*Sefer Yetzirah* I; **established** as the text, in its several versions). Six directions sealed around a centre make the six faces of a cube. Later in the book a seventh is added: a holy palace "in the middle", which supports them all (*Sefer Yetzirah* IV).

The book's three "mother letters" are Aleph, Mem and Shin. Mem is the letter of water, Shin of fire, and Aleph, which has no sound of its own, is the letter of air: in the text's image, Mem hums, Shin hisses, and Aleph is the breath of air that stands between them (*Sefer Yetzirah* II–III; **established** as the text). The first letter of the alphabet, in the oldest book of Jewish mysticism, is breath.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens writes its four pillars of breath with the four letters of the divine Name: "Identify = The Inhale (Yod) ... Accept = The Pause (Heh) ... Embrace = The Descent (Vav) ... Let Go = The Exhale (Final Heh)" (p. 26). The *Sefer Yetzirah* seals the six directions of the world with three of those same letters, Yod, He and Vav, in their six possible orders.

Here the two texts meet without either borrowing from the other. Read through the Codex, the six seals of the *Sefer Yetzirah* are the six possible orders of the inhale, the pause and the descent, and the cube of space is built of the three movements of breath, turned every way, around a still centre (**symbolic**). That is the reading this study offers; the *Sefer Yetzirah* itself speaks of the letters of the Name, not of breath phases.

Breath Awakens also gives the thirteenth point of its spiral to the Shekhinah, "the indwelling presence of the Divine" (p. 83). In rabbinic tradition the Shekhinah dwelt in the Holy of Holies, the golden cube. The still point at the centre of the cube is the same as the point at the centre of the circle.

What was seen

The square is the first structure and the cube the first room. The Holy of Holies was a cube; the New Jerusalem is a cube; the holiest building of Islam is named the Cube. The *Sefer Yetzirah* builds the six directions of space with three letters of the Name and makes its first letter the letter of breath.

What was unseen

What was unseen is the centre. Each of these cubes is defined by what is at its middle: the Ark and the Foundation Stone, the throne of God in the New Jerusalem, the holy palace "in the middle" of the *Sefer Yetzirah*. And one more thing appears when a cube is opened. Unfold its six faces onto a flat surface and one of the shapes they can make is a cross: four squares in a column, and one on each side (**established**: this is one of the eleven nets of the cube). The painter Salvador Dalí knew it; in his *Crucifixion (Corpus Hypercubus)* of 1954 the figure hangs on the unfolded net of a four-dimensional cube. The square, opened, becomes the next symbol of the spiral.

The geometry beneath

Element	Number	In the *Sefer Yetzirah*	In the Codex (symbolic)
Faces of the cube	6	The six directions, each sealed	The six orders of inhale, pause and descent
Centre	1	The holy palace in the middle	The still point, the Monad
Mother letters	3	Aleph (air), Mem (water), Shin (fire)	Breath between the two
Edges	12	The twelve "diagonal boundaries"	The twelve archetypes
Corners	8	(Not named)	The eight breaths of the four phases in this study

Table 5.1. The cube of the Sefer Yetzirah and the Codex. The twelve diagonal boundaries are named in the Sefer Yetzirah V; the correspondence of the twelve edges with the twelve archetypes is the Codex's own.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The *Sefer Yetzirah* encodes "letter-breath-symbol recursion"	**established** in part	Its first mother letter is air; the directions are sealed with letters of the Name
The Holy of Holies was a cube	**established** as the biblical text	1 Kings 6:20; the building itself is lost
The Foundation Stone is the place of creation	**established** as tradition	Talmud, Yoma 54b
The location of the Holy of Holies on the Temple Mount	**contested**	Several locations are proposed
The six seals are the six orders of the breath phases	**symbolic**	The Codex's own reading

Table 5.2. Claims touched by the fourth breath.

A note on evidence

The *Sefer Yetzirah* survives in several versions, short and long, which differ in order and detail; the summary here follows the shared structure, with Westcott's translation (1887) and modern ones consulted.

Its dating is uncertain and debated; the range given is the range of scholarly opinion.

The cube of the Holy of Holies is the text's description; the Second Temple's inner room, rebuilt and later enlarged by Herod, is described differently in other sources.

Near-truths

- The "letter-breath-symbol recursion" the reflection finds in the *Sefer Yetzirah* is really there: the first mother letter is the letter of air, standing between water and fire.
- The six seals of space are made of three letters of the Name; *Breath Awakens* gives those same three letters to the inhale, the pause and the descent.
- The holiest rooms of three faiths are cubes, or named for the cube, and each is defined by its centre.

✦ Practice: The Six Directions

Sit or stand comfortably and let the breath settle.

Breathe in gently and sense the space above you; breathe out and sense the ground below.

Breathe in and sense the space in front; breathe out and sense the space behind.

Breathe in and sense the space to your right; breathe out and sense the space to your left.

Then let a soft pause of two counts rest at the centre of the chest, the seventh place, which holds the six.

Breathe normally for a few moments before you move.

What this breath carries forward

The two breaths of the pause have given the triangle and the cube, stillness and dwelling. Opened, the cube becomes a cross. The fifth breath enters Vara, the exhale, with the cross of the four directions, at the Maya city of Palenque, where the breath has its own sign.

CHAPTER 6

The Tree of the Four Winds: The Cross and Palenque

The fifth breath falls under the Stillness Moon and enters Vara, the exhale. The reflection names the cross among its four primary breath-symbols. This breath reads it at Palenque, the Maya city in the rainforest of Chiapas, where a cross-shaped tree stands at the centre of the world and the breath has its own sign, cut into the walls of the palace.

The symbol: two lines and a centre

Two lines crossing make four arms and a centre. Long before it became the central sign of Christianity, the equal-armed cross was used across the world for the four directions, the four quarters of the sky, and the meeting of heaven and earth (**established**). The vertical line joins above and below; the horizontal joins left and right, east and west; and where they meet is a point.

The Codex reading belongs to the exhale. The breath goes out in every direction from the centre of the body; the cross is the shape of release from a still point. Emotionally the cross is meeting, where two ways intersect; mentally it is orientation, knowing where one stands; spiritually it is the place where the vertical and the horizontal, the eternal and the daily, cross (**symbolic**).

The place: Palenque

Palenque, called Lakamha', "big water", by its people, lies at the foot of forested hills in Chiapas, Mexico, above the plain that runs to the Gulf. It flourished in the seventh century CE under the king K'inich Janaab' Pakal, whose tomb in the Temple of the Inscriptions was found in 1952, and under his son K'inich Kan B'ahlam II (**established**). It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the Ch'ol Maya, descendants of its people, live in the region today.

On a terrace above the city stand three temples dedicated by Kan B'ahlam in 692 CE: the Temple of the Sun, the Temple of the Foliated Cross and the Temple of the Cross (**established**). In the inner shrine of the Temple of the Cross is a carved limestone panel. At its centre rises a tree in the form of a cross, its arms ending in flowers, with a great bird perched on the top and a serpent with two heads draped across its branches. On either side stands the king, once as a boy and once as a man (**established**). When nineteenth-century travellers saw it, some thought it showed a Christian cross in the jungle. It does not. It is the Maya world tree, the great ceiba that stands at the centre of the world, joining the underworld below, the earth's surface and the sky above, with its branches spreading to the four directions (**established** as the reading of Maya scholars).

In Maya thought each direction had a colour: red for the east, white for the north, black for the west, yellow for the south, and blue-green, *yax*, for the centre, where the world tree grows (**established**). The cross of Palenque is a map of the world, with a centre.

The sign of breath

In the Palace at Palenque, the windows of several galleries are cut in the shape of a T. They are not decoration. The T is the Maya sign *ik'*, which means wind, breath and life, and which also names the second of the twenty days of the Maya calendar (**established**). The wind god wears it; it is painted on the mouths

and ears of sacred figures; and in the palace it is a window through which the air moves. At Palenque, the sign of breath is a hole in the wall that breathes.

There is an old Maya way of speaking of death in the inscriptions: a king's "white breath" or "white flower breath" ended, or "withered" (**established** as the reading of the glyphs). Life, in the Classic Maya script, was breath, and the breath was a flower.

The text: the Popol Vuh

The *Popol Vuh*, the "Council Book" of the K'iche' Maya of Guatemala, was written down in K'iche' in the Latin alphabet in the 1550s, by K'iche' nobles preserving an older book, and copied around 1701 by the Dominican friar Francisco Ximénez, whose copy is the one that survives (**established**). It is the great creation story of the Maya world, and in Dennis Tedlock's translation (1996) its opening is a measuring: the sky and the earth are measured out on four sides and at four corners, like the laying out of a cornfield.

Creation in the *Popol Vuh* is spoken. The makers, Heart of Sky and Sovereign Plumed Serpent, talk together in the darkness over the still water, and the earth rises when they say its name. Then they try to make people who will speak their names in return. People of mud dissolve; people of wood have no breath or heart and do not remember their makers. At last people are made of yellow and white maize, and they can speak, and see. But they see too well: they see everything, to the ends of the sky and earth. So the makers cloud their sight, the text says, as breath clouds the face of a mirror, and people see only what is near (*Popol Vuh*, paraphrased after Tedlock 1996; **established** as the text).

It is one of the most beautiful images in the world's creation stories. The first people were made perfect seers, and their vision was dimmed by a breath on a mirror. The Codex calls the breath a mirror; the *Popol Vuh* says that a breath on the mirror is what makes us human.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens places two of its breathlines at right angles. "The Breathline of Necessity is vertical. It anchors the spiral into stillness. Without stillness the spiral cannot take form. The Spiral of Service is horizontal. It extends the spiral into the field. Together, they form the cross of coherence ... The cross of coherence is where necessity becomes service" (p. 45).

The world tree of Palenque is the same shape with the same meaning: the vertical trunk joins underworld, earth and sky, and the branches extend to the four directions of the living world. The king, who stood in front of it, was its servant: the one who kept the centre so that the world around it could be ordered. The Codex reads the Tablet of the Cross as a cross of coherence carved twelve centuries before the phrase (**symbolic**).

What was seen

The cross is the sign of four directions and a centre. At Palenque it is the world tree, a map of the cosmos with colours for each direction, and the palace windows are cut in the T-shaped sign of breath, *ik'*. In the *Popol Vuh* the world is measured fourfold, spoken into being, and the first people's sight is dimmed by a breath on a mirror.

What was unseen

What was unseen is that the cross and the breath meet in a single Maya sign. The *ik'* glyph is a T: the top of a cross, with its stem. At Palenque the world tree stands in the inner shrine, and the T of breath opens the walls of the palace below. In Maya script, too, the dead are said to lose their "white flower breath", and the world tree of the Tablet of the Cross ends in flowers. The tree of the world and the breath of the king are drawn from the same root.

The geometry beneath

The cross divides a circle into four equal quarters, and the Maya divided their world the same way, with a fifth place at the centre. The same five-part pattern, four directions and a centre, governs the Chinese system of five phases, the four rivers flowing from the centre of Eden (Genesis 2:10), and the ground plan of many temples. It is a diagram of orientation that any upright, two-sided creature who watches the sun rise and set will find for itself: front and back, left and right, and the self at the middle. Chapter 16 will return to it as one of the shapes that are shared because the breathers are.

Direction	Maya colour	Breath (Codex, symbolic)
East	Red	The inhale, where the sun rises
North	White	The pause, the zenith of the sky
West	Black	The exhale, where the sun sets
South	Yellow	Stillness, the ripening
Centre	Blue-green (*yax*)	The Monad, the world tree

Table 6.1. The Maya directions and the Codex phases. The correspondence is the Codex's own.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The cross is a primary breath-symbol	**symbolic**, with a strong near-truth	The Maya sign for breath, *ik'*, is T-shaped
The cross predates Christianity as a cosmic sign	**established**	The Maya world tree and many other examples
The Tablet of the Cross shows a Christian cross	**not supported**	It shows the Maya world tree, dedicated 692 CE
The *Popol Vuh* encodes breath and memory	**established** in its own terms	People who forget their makers have no breath; sight is dimmed by a breath on a mirror
The world tree is a "cross of coherence"	**symbolic**	The Codex reading of *Breath Awakens* p. 45

Table 6.2. Claims touched by the fifth breath.

A note on evidence

The readings of Maya glyphs, including *ik'* and the "white flower breath", come from the epigraphic work of the last fifty years and are widely accepted, though readings are refined continually.

The *Popol Vuh* is paraphrased, not quoted at length, out of respect for the translator's rights; the image of the mirror is in the text.

The Maya colours of the directions vary between regions and periods; the set given is the commonly cited one for the Yucatec Maya.

Near-truths

- The reflection's cross as a breath-symbol has a near-truth in Maya writing: the sign for breath is a T, cut as windows in the palace at Palenque.
- The cross as the meeting of the vertical and the horizontal is the oldest meaning of the Maya world tree, which joins the sky and the underworld and spreads to the four directions.
- And the *Popol Vuh* describes the human condition with a breath on a mirror.

✦ Practice: The Four Winds

Stand or sit upright, and feel the line of the spine as the trunk of a tree.

Breathe in gently through the nose, and on a slow out-breath, let your attention go forward, to the east.

Breathe in again, and on the out-breath, let it go to your right; then behind you; then to your left.

On a fifth breath, let the out-breath settle into the centre of the chest.

Keep the out-breath soft and unforced, as if breathing on a mirror without clouding it.

Rest for a few breaths before you move.

What this breath carries forward

The cross is the breath released to the four directions. The sixth breath, still in the exhale, finds a cross with a loop at its head, held by the gods of Egypt to the nostrils of the king: the ankh, the sign of life, at Karnak.

CHAPTER 7

The Breath of Life: The Ankh and Karnak

The sixth breath falls under the Memory Moon and carries the exhale toward stillness. The reflection names Karnak as a breath-symbolic architecture and cites Lucie Lamy's *Egyptian Mysteries* for "symbolic breath-logic in temple design". Of all the symbols in this study, the one most literally made of breath is Egyptian: the ankh, the sign of life, which the gods hold to the nostrils of the king.

The symbol: a cross with a loop

The ankh is a T-shaped cross with an oval loop at its head. In Egyptian writing it is the hieroglyph *ꜥnḫ*, "life" and "to live" (**established**). What it first depicted is not known: the Egyptologist Alan Gardiner suggested a sandal strap, whose name sounded similar; others have proposed a knotted cord, a mirror, or a symbol of union (**contested**). What it meant is not in doubt. It was the most common sign of blessing in Egyptian art for three thousand years, and when Egypt became Christian, the Coptic church took it up as the *crux ansata*, the cross with a handle (**established**).

The Codex reading is the breath given. The cross of the fifth breath released the breath to four directions; the ankh gives it to another. Emotionally the ankh is the gift; mentally it is continuity, life handed on; spiritually it is life that passes through death (**symbolic**).

The gesture: life held to the nose

On the walls of temple after temple, a god or goddess faces the king and holds an ankh up to his nose, or holds it out by the loop for him to receive. The accompanying words say that the god gives him "life", and often "all life and dominion" (**established**). The gesture is not abstract. Life enters through the nostrils, and the sign of life is offered there.

The Egyptians had a phrase for it: *ṯꜣw n ꜥnḫ*, "the breath of life" (**established**). In the Book of the Dead, a group of spells (54 to 56 and others) is titled for "giving breath" or "giving air" to the dead in the realm beyond, and the dead person asks for "the sweet breath of the north wind" (**established** as the text). In the Opening of the Mouth ritual, priests touched the mouth of a mummy or a statue with sacred tools so that it could breathe, eat and speak again (**established**). And in the reign of Akhenaten, around 1350 BCE, the sun disc, the Aten, is shown with rays ending in small hands, and the hands nearest the king and queen hold ankhs to their faces. The Great Hymn to the Aten praises the sun for giving breath to everything it has made: to the child in the womb, and to the chick inside the egg, so that it can speak and break out (**established** as the text; paraphrased after Lichtheim's translation).

The ankh is breath made visible. Of all the near-truths in this study, it is perhaps the plainest.

The place: Karnak

Karnak, on the east bank of the Nile at Luxor, ancient Thebes, is the largest religious complex built in the ancient world. Its central temple, to Amun-Re, was begun by the king Senusret I in the Middle Kingdom, around 1950 BCE, and enlarged by nearly every king for some two thousand years, until the Ptolemies (**established**). The great Hypostyle Hall of Seti I and Ramesses II holds 134 columns in sixteen rows, the central twelve about twenty-one metres high (**established**).

The temple has two axes. The main one runs from the Nile eastward through a sequence of gateways, courts and halls to the sanctuary. It points toward the sunrise at the winter solstice: on the shortest days of the year, the rising sun appears along the axis and lights the gateways in line (**established** as an observed alignment, watched by visitors each December). The archaeoastronomers Juan Belmonte and Mosalam Shaltout, who surveyed hundreds of Egyptian temples, conclude that the alignment was intended from the temple's earliest building; others think the axis was set by the river first and the sun second (Belmonte and Shaltout, 2009; **contested** as to intention). The second axis runs south, toward the temple of Luxor, along the avenue of sphinxes on which Amun's statue travelled each year in the Opet festival (**established**).

Like Newgrange, Karnak breathes with the year: its axis opens on the day the light begins to return.

Lucie Lamy and the symbolist school

Lucie Lamy (1903–1982) was the stepdaughter of René Adolphe Schwaller de Lubicz, who spent fifteen years measuring the temple of Luxor and argued, in *The Temple of Man* (1957), that it was designed in the proportions of the human body and encodes sacred mathematics throughout. Lamy, who drew and measured with him, wrote *Egyptian Mysteries: New Light on Ancient Knowledge* (1981), a short illustrated book on Egyptian cosmology, number and symbol (**established**).

The symbolist reading has inspired many people, and some of its observations, on harmonic proportions in Egyptian art and the deliberate use of the grid of squares in drawing figures, are sound (**established**: Egyptian artists did draw figures on a proportional grid). Its larger claims, that the temples are encoded bodies and that the Egyptians held a hidden science lost to later ages, are **contested**, and most Egyptologists regard them as not supported by the texts. This study holds both. The Egyptians themselves said that a temple was a body and a living being: the Opening of the Mouth was performed on temples as well as on statues, so that they could breathe (**established**). The symbolist school saw a real thing, and then saw more in it than the evidence shows.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens gives Egypt two places: as the Third Epoch, "the Spiral's breath geometry was encoded in stone" (p. 58), and in its grid of archetypes, where every one of the twelve has an Egyptian form, from Ra-Kha the Initiator to Osiris-Seker the Weaver and Horus-Heru the Healer (p. 84). Its fourth pillar is the exhale: "Let Go = The Exhale (Final Heh). The breath releases. 'I no longer hold this as mine.' The spiral completes" (p. 26).

The ankh is the exhale of the gods. They breathe out life and the king breathes it in. Read through the Codex, the gesture on the temple walls is the fourth pillar offered as a gift: a breath let go so that another may live (**symbolic**).

What was seen

The ankh is the hieroglyph for life. The gods hold it to the king's nose; the Egyptians spoke of "the breath of life"; their spells gave breath to the dead; their priests opened the mouths of statues and temples so that they could breathe; and the sun of Akhenaten's hymn gives breath to the chick in the egg. Karnak, the greatest of the temples, is aligned with the rising sun at midwinter.

What was unseen

What was unseen is that Egypt made a temple breathe. The Opening of the Mouth, performed on the temple itself, means that to the Egyptians a sacred building was a living body that needed breath. And the axis of Karnak, which opens to the midwinter sunrise, gives the building its moment of in-breath once a year. The reflection's phrase "breath-symbolic architecture" is close to how the Egyptians themselves saw their temples.

The geometry beneath

The ankh is the cross of the fifth breath with a circle added at the top: a loop of return above a cross of directions. Read as geometry, it joins the first symbol of this study to the fifth, the circle to the cross, and suggests the torus of the tenth breath, a loop through which something passes. Karnak's two axes, one to the sun, one to Luxor, form a right angle, the cross of the temple's plan, with the sanctuary at their meeting.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The ankh is a symbol of breath	**established** in its use	Held to the king's nose; the "breath of life" is an Egyptian phrase
What the ankh first depicted	**contested**	Sandal strap, knot or other proposals
Karnak is aligned with the winter solstice sunrise	**established** as observed; intention **contested**	Belmonte and Shaltout (2009) argue intention from the first building
Egyptian temples encode "symbolic breath-logic" in their design	**contested**	Symbolist readings (Schwaller de Lubicz, Lamy); Egyptologists mostly disagree
The Egyptians regarded temples as living bodies	**established**	The Opening of the Mouth was performed on temples

Table 7.1. Claims touched by the sixth breath.

> **A note on evidence**
>
> Egyptian texts are paraphrased from standard translations, including Miriam Lichtheim's *Ancient Egyptian Literature* for the Great Hymn to the Aten.
>
> The solstice alignment of Karnak is observed today; the sun's position at midwinter has shifted slightly since the temple was founded, by less than its own width.
>
> The symbolist school is described from its own books; its claims about hidden mathematics are summarised, not tested here.

Near-truths

- The reflection's "symbolic breath-logic in temple design" has a near-truth in Egyptian ritual: temples were given breath through the Opening of the Mouth.
- The ankh is the most literal breath-symbol in this study: the sign of life, held to the nostrils.
- Karnak, like Newgrange, opens its axis to the returning light at the darkest time of the year.

✦ Practice: The Given Breath

Sit comfortably and raise one hand, palm toward your face, a hand's width below the nose.

Breathe out gently through the nose and feel the warm breath reach your palm.

Breathe in slowly, and imagine the palm offering the breath back to you, as the gods offered the sign of life.

Continue for five or six breaths, keeping the out-breath soft and unforced.

On the last out-breath, lower the hand and think of one person to whom you wish life.

Rest, and breathe normally.

What this breath carries forward

The two breaths of the exhale have given the cross and the ankh: breath released to the world, and breath given to another. The seventh breath enters Ouon, stillness, and meets the oldest moving symbol of all, the serpent, which descends the stair of Chichen Itza at the equinox.

CHAPTER 8

The Feathered Wind: The Serpent and Chichen Itza

The seventh breath falls under the Return Moon and reaches Ouon, stillness. The reflection names Chichen Itza as a breath-symbolic architecture. Its great pyramid is the temple of Kukulkan, the feathered serpent, and every spring thousands gather to watch a serpent of light appear on its northern stair. This breath reads the oldest moving symbol in the world: the serpent, which coils at rest, sheds its skin and returns.

The symbol: the coil, the wave and the return

The serpent is drawn as a wavy line, a zigzag, a coil or a circle biting its own tail. It is among the most widespread figures in human art (**established**). In Egypt a serpent with its tail in its mouth, later called the *ouroboros*, appears on a gilded shrine of Tutankhamun around 1323 BCE, encircling the head and the feet of a great figure of a god in the underworld, and becomes the sign of the cycle that renews itself (**established**). In Greece a serpent winds around the staff of Asclepius, the god of healing. In India the *kundalini*, the "coiled one", is pictured in the yoga traditions as a serpent sleeping at the base of the spine, coiled three and a half times, which breath and attention may slowly awaken (**established** as tradition).

The serpent belongs to stillness because it can lie perfectly still for long periods, coiled, holding its power, and then move. And it belongs to return because it sheds its skin and emerges renewed. The Codex reads it so: emotionally, the serpent is renewal after loss; mentally, the coil of attention held at rest; spiritually, the life that returns by letting go of its old form (**symbolic**).

Campbell and the serpent

Joseph Campbell returned to the serpent all his life. In *The Mythic Image* (1974), his richly illustrated book on the imagery of the world's religions, he devoted a whole section to "The Serpent Power", the kundalini of Indian yoga, and set it beside serpent images from Egypt, Mesoamerica and the Near East. In his conversations with Bill Moyers, published as *The Power of Myth* (1988), he spoke of the serpent as the image of life that sheds its past and is born again, as the moon sheds its shadow and returns (paraphrased; **established** as Campbell's teaching). For Campbell the serpent was a symbol "transparent to transcendence" in the fullest sense: a creature of the ground that pointed to the renewal of everything.

He also noticed what many traditions share: the serpent is often joined to a bird. The feathered serpent of Mesoamerica is the plainest example, but there are others, from the winged serpents of Egypt to the Garuda and the naga of India. Earth and sky, coil and wing, the creature that hugs the ground and the one that flies, are made one.

The place: Chichen Itza

Chichen Itza, in the north of the Yucatán peninsula of Mexico, was one of the largest Maya cities, at its height between about 800 and 1100 CE (**established**). Its name means "at the mouth of the well of the Itza", for the great natural well, the Sacred Cenote, into which offerings were thrown. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Yucatec Maya people live all around it today.

At its centre stands the pyramid of Kukulkan, which the Spanish called El Castillo. It rises in nine stepped terraces to a temple at the top, with a stairway on each of its four sides. The stairways are usually counted at 91 steps each, which, with the top platform, makes 365, the days of the year (**established** as the common count; some of the steps are damaged and counts vary slightly). At the foot of the northern stairway rest two great carved serpent heads.

Kukulkan is the Yucatec name of the feathered serpent, known in central Mexico as Quetzalcoatl. And here the serpent meets the breath. In central Mexico one of Quetzalcoatl's forms was Ehecatl, the god of wind, who wore a mask with a projecting mouth for blowing, and whose breath, in Aztec myth, set the sun moving and brought the rains (**established**). The feathered serpent was the wind.

The serpent of light

On afternoons in the weeks around the spring and autumn equinoxes, as the sun sinks to the west, the stepped corner of the pyramid casts a row of triangles of light and shadow onto the side wall of the northern stairway. They form an undulating body that joins the stone serpent head at the bottom, and as the sun moves the body seems to descend (**established** as an observed effect). Tens of thousands of people now gather to see it at the March equinox.

Was it designed? The archaeoastronomer Ivan Šprajc, who has measured the orientations of hundreds of Mesoamerican buildings, found that the effect is visible for weeks, not on a single day, and that it changes too slowly to mark a date; he concludes that it is probably accidental, and that the pyramid's orientation better fits sunsets in late April and mid-August, dates important in the Maya agricultural calendar (Šprajc, 2021; **contested**). Others think the builders could hardly have missed what their building did. This study holds it as the evidence does: the serpent of light is real; its intention is **contested**.

The voice of the stair

There is a second wonder at El Castillo. Clap your hands in front of the northern stairway, and the echo comes back not as a clap but as a falling chirp, a sound that the acoustician David Lubman compared in 1998 to the call of the quetzal, the sacred bird whose feathers gave the feathered serpent its name (**established** as an acoustic effect). In 2004 Nico Declercq and his colleagues showed why: the regular steps act like a grating that returns the sound of the clap at slightly different times from each step, so that its pitch falls (*Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*; **established** as physics). Whether the builders tuned the stair for it is **contested**. The serpent of feathers and wind has a stair that answers a hand-clap with a bird's call.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens places the serpent's movement in its own phases of breath. Its "Breath contraction is the inward spiral of breath as it collapses into stillness. Purpose: to gather the spiral into coherence ... It is the breathline of containment." Its "Breath stillness is the pause between spirals where breath geometry holds memory ... without stillness, the spiral cannot remember" (p. 47).

The coiled serpent is the image of both: the breath gathered inward and held at rest, its power not lost but kept. And the serpent's return each spring, descending the stair of light, is the book's "breath echo", "the spiral's memory of having spiraled before" (p. 47) (**symbolic**).

What was seen

The serpent is the coil at rest and the wave in motion, the creature that sheds its skin and returns. It encircles a god of the underworld on Tutankhamun's shrine, coils at the base of the spine in yoga, and in Mesoamerica wears feathers and is the wind. At Chichen Itza the pyramid of the feathered serpent counts the days of the year in its steps, casts a serpent of light at the equinoxes, and returns a bird's call to a clap.

What was unseen

What was unseen is that the feathered serpent was breath. As Ehecatl, the wind, Quetzalcoatl blew the sun into motion. The reflection named Chichen Itza for its symbol, not for its breath; but the god of its great pyramid was, in his central Mexican form, the god of the moving air. The second unseen thing is the voice: the stair turns a single human sound into the cry of the bird whose feathers the serpent wears.

The geometry beneath

The serpent of light at El Castillo is made of triangles, cast by the stepped corner: the triangle of the third breath, set moving by the sun. The stairway's 91 steps, four times over, plus one, make the year, and the pyramid's nine terraces are split in two by the stair, making eighteen sections on each face, the number of the eighteen months of twenty days in the Maya solar year of 365 days (**established** as a numerical correspondence; whether it was intended is **contested**). The wave of the serpent's body is the zigzag of Klüver's form constants and of the oldest painted signs.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
Chichen Itza is a "breath-symbolic architecture"	**symbolic**, with a strong near-truth	Its god, the feathered serpent, was also the wind
The equinox serpent of light	**established** as an effect; **contested** as intention	Visible for weeks; Šprajc (2021) argues it is accidental
The stair's echo is a quetzal's chirp	**established** as an effect; **contested** as intention	Explained by Declercq and colleagues (2004)
365 steps encode the year	**established** as a count; intention likely	91 × 4 + 1
The serpent as a symbol of renewal across cultures	**established**	Ouroboros, kundalini, Asclepius, Kukulkan

Table 8.1. Claims touched by the seventh breath.

A note on evidence

Dates for Chichen Itza's buildings are debated; the pyramid encloses an older one, and its final form is usually placed between the ninth and twelfth centuries.

The acoustic chirp is easily heard and has been recorded many times; the physics is in the published paper; intention cannot be tested.

Campbell's views are paraphrased from *The Mythic Image* and *The Power of Myth*.

Near-truths

- The feathered serpent of Chichen Itza was, in central Mexico, Ehecatl, the god of wind: the symbol of the site is a god of breath.
- The serpent of light is real, whether or not it was designed, and the pyramid really counts the year.
- The serpent as a symbol of renewal is shared by Egypt, India, Greece and Mesoamerica, as Campbell showed.

✦ Practice: The Coiled Breath

This is a gentle practice of resting attention; it is not a technique for awakening kundalini, and it should never be forced.

Sit comfortably with a straight but relaxed spine.

Breathe in gently through the nose and let your attention rest at the base of the spine, as if a serpent lay coiled there, at ease.

Breathe out slowly and let the attention stay where it is, still and unhurried.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow each out-breath, resting.

Continue for six to eight breaths. If any strong sensation or emotion arises, open your eyes and return to ordinary breathing.

What this breath carries forward

The serpent coils, rests and returns. The eighth breath, the second of stillness, follows the serpent's path inward to its centre and out again: the labyrinth, where Joseph Campbell's hero-path begins, and *Breath Awakens* with it.

CHAPTER 9

The Thread of the Hero-Path: The Labyrinth and Knossos

The eighth breath falls under the Release Moon and carries stillness toward the Monad. Its symbol is the labyrinth, the single winding path to a centre and back. *Breath Awakens* gives it a place of honour before almost anything else: the second of the two reflections its author keeps closest is Joseph Campbell's, "the labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero-path" (p. 23). This breath follows that thread to Knossos, in Crete, where the labyrinth's story began.

The symbol: one path, many turns

A labyrinth is not a maze. A maze has choices, dead ends and ways to get lost. The classical labyrinth has none: a single path winds back and forth through seven circuits, passing close to the centre and swinging away again, until at last it arrives (**established**). It cannot be failed, only walked. Its only demand is patience.

The oldest known drawing of the classical labyrinth is scratched on the back of a clay tablet from the palace of Pylos in Greece, about 1200 BCE (**established**). The same seven-circuit design appears on coins struck at Knossos from about the fifth century BCE, on Roman mosaics, in the rock art of Scandinavia and the Iberian peninsula, on a Hopi design in the American Southwest, and in the margins of medieval manuscripts (**established**; how it spread so widely is **open**). In about 1200 CE an eleven-circuit labyrinth was laid in the floor of Chartres Cathedral, about thirteen metres across, and walked by pilgrims as a journey to Jerusalem in miniature (**established**).

The Codex reading belongs to release. One walks inward, turning and turning, toward a still centre; rests there; and walks out by the same path, carrying what was found. Emotionally the labyrinth is trust in a way that cannot be lost; mentally it is the long turn of understanding, close to the centre and away again; spiritually it is the pilgrimage that ends where it began, changed (**symbolic**).

The place: Knossos

Knossos, near Heraklion on Crete, was the largest of the Bronze Age palaces of the people we call Minoans. Arthur Evans began excavating it in 1900, and its tangle of courts, corridors, stairs and storerooms, built and rebuilt from about 1900 to 1350 BCE, covers some two hectares (**established**). Many think that later Greeks, seeing its ruins, remembered it as the Labyrinth of the myth (**contested**, but widely held).

The word itself is older than the myth. On a clay tablet from Knossos, written in the Linear B script of the Mycenaean Greeks around 1400 BCE, a jar of honey is recorded as offered "to the Lady of the Labyrinth", *da-pu₂-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja* (**established** as the reading). Who she was is unknown. The labyrinth had a mistress before it had a monster. A popular derivation of the word from *labrys*, the double axe that is carved all over Knossos, making the labyrinth "the house of the double axe", is **contested**.

The myth is told in Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the *Library* of Apollodorus. King Minos had the craftsman Daedalus build the Labyrinth to hold the Minotaur. The Athenian hero Theseus came as one of its victims, and Minos's daughter Ariadne gave him a ball of thread to unwind as he went in, so that, having killed the Minotaur at the centre, he could follow the thread out (**established** as the myth).

In the myth the Labyrinth is a maze, built to confuse. In the art of Knossos's own coins it is the single path. The thread that leads out of a maze and the path that cannot be lost are the same promise.

The text: the hero with a thousand faces

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) Joseph Campbell argued that the hero myths of the world share one pattern, which he called, borrowing a word from James Joyce, the monomyth. The hero leaves the ordinary world (separation), passes through trials into a region of wonder and receives a boon (initiation), and comes back to share it (return) (**established** as Campbell's thesis). The labyrinth is that pattern drawn as a path: in, to the centre, and out again.

The passage *Breath Awakens* carries comes from the prologue, and its full turn is worth hearing. The heroes of all time have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god; "where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence; where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world" (Campbell 1949, as quoted in *Breath Awakens*, p. 23). Campbell's labyrinth leads not to a monster but to the centre of the self, and through it to everyone else.

What scholars have said

Campbell's monomyth has been enormously influential and also strongly criticised (**contested**). Folklorists such as Alan Dundes argued that it fits the myths only by leaving out what does not fit; others noted that its hero is almost always a man. The writer Maureen Murdock, after asking Campbell about the woman's journey, wrote *The Heroine's Journey* (1990) to describe a different pattern of descent and return. The pattern is best read as Campbell himself came to read symbols: not as a law of all stories, but as a metaphor transparent to something many stories share.

There is also a small matter of lineage. The twelve stages that *Breath Awakens* sets beside its archetypes, "Ordinary World", "Refusal of the Call", "Meeting the Mentor", "Approach to the Inmost Cave", "Reward (Seizing the Sword)" and the rest (pp. 83–85), are the names given in the screenwriter Christopher Vogler's twelve-stage version of Campbell's journey, first written as a studio memo in 1985 and published as *The Writer's Journey* in 1992 (**established**). Campbell's own scheme has seventeen stages under three headings. The grid in *Breath Awakens* is faithful to Campbell's spirit through Vogler's twelve, a fitting number for the Codex's twelve archetypes.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens begins with this labyrinth and returns to it. Campbell's passage stands near its opening (p. 23) and again later (pp. 25, 60). Its archetypes walk the hero's stages (p. 84). And its definition of the echo of breath is a labyrinth's turn: "Breath echo is not a phase. It is the spiral's memory of having spiraled before" (p. 47). In a labyrinth, the walker passes the same place many times, at different distances from the centre, and each pass remembers the last.

What was seen

The labyrinth is a single path with many turns: it cannot be failed, only walked. Its oldest drawing is on a clay tablet from Pylos; a Knossos tablet names its Lady; Knossos's coins show it; Chartres laid it in stone; and Campbell made it the image of the hero-path, which *Breath Awakens* takes as its own.

What was unseen

What was unseen is the seed. The classical seven-circuit labyrinth is drawn by hand from a simple starting figure: a cross, four right angles set in its quarters, and four dots (**established**; it is the method taught in many traditions and found in medieval drawings). Join the ends in order, one arc at a time, and the labyrinth appears. The labyrinth is a cross that has been walked. The fifth breath's symbol, the cross of the four directions, is the hidden seed of the eighth's.

The geometry beneath

Labyrinth	Circuits	Path	Seed	Breath (Codex, symbolic)
Classical (Cretan)	7	One path, no choices	Cross, 4 angles, 4 dots	In-breath, pause, out-breath, walked
Chartres (medieval)	11	One path, in quarters	Cross of four quarters, built in	The four phases, walked as one pilgrimage
Maze	Any	Many paths, dead ends	None	Distraction: the breath lost

Table 9.1. Labyrinth and maze.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The labyrinth is a breath-symbol of release	**symbolic**	Walked in, rested at the centre, walked out
The labyrinth is older than its myth	**established**	Pylos drawing c. 1200 BCE; the "Lady of the Labyrinth" at Knossos
Knossos was the Labyrinth	**contested**	A likely memory of its ruins; unproven
"Labyrinth" means "house of the double axe"	**contested**	A popular derivation, not settled
The monomyth is a universal pattern	**contested**	Influential; criticised by folklorists and others
Breath Awakens' twelve hero stages are Campbell's	**established** with a qualification	They follow Vogler's twelve-stage version of Campbell
Walking a labyrinth calms the breath	**open**	Small studies report calm; the evidence is limited

Table 9.2. Claims touched by the eighth breath.

A note on evidence

The Pylos and Knossos tablets are published and their readings accepted, though the meaning of "Lady of the Labyrinth" is unknown.

Campbell's passage is quoted as *Breath Awakens* gives it. The other stages and criticisms are summarised from published work.

Studies of labyrinth walking and well-being are few and small; they suggest calm but do not prove it.

Near-truths

- The reflection's breath-symbol of the path has a near-truth in the labyrinth's design: a way that cannot be lost, only walked, with a still centre.
- Campbell's hero-path, which *Breath Awakens* carries, leads not outward but "to the center of our own existence".
- And the labyrinth is drawn from a cross: the symbol of the fifth breath, walked into the eighth.

✦ Practice: The Finger Labyrinth

Draw a seven-circuit labyrinth, or find a picture of one, and lay it in front of you.

Rest a fingertip at the entrance. Breathe gently through the nose and, without hurrying, trace the path inward, letting each turn take the length of one easy breath.

At the centre, rest the finger and take three slow breaths, with a soft pause of two counts after each out-breath.

Trace the path back out, breath by breath, the same way you came.

At the entrance, lift the finger and notice what you carry out that you did not carry in.

Rest, and breathe normally.

What this breath carries forward

The two breaths of stillness have given the serpent's coil and the labyrinth's path: rest held, and the way to the centre. The ninth breath enters the Monad register with the figure that the centre makes when it meets another: two circles overlapping, the vesica, and the pattern that grows from it, the flower.

CHAPTER 10

Where Two Circles Meet: The Vesica, the Flower and Abydos

The ninth breath falls under the Echo Moon and enters the Monad register, where the four phases of breath are held together at a centre. Its symbol is the figure two circles make when each passes through the other's centre: the vesica. From it grows the pattern of overlapping circles that *Breath Awakens* calls "the geometric womb from which the entire Codex is born", the Flower of Life (p. 90). This breath reads them in Euclid, and at Abydos, the holy city of Osiris.

The symbol: the lens between two circles

Draw a circle. Put the point of the compass anywhere on its edge and draw a second circle of the same size. Each circle now passes through the other's centre, and between them is an almond-shaped lens, the *vesica piscis*, the "bladder of a fish" in medieval Latin (**established**). It is the first figure of Euclid's geometry. *Elements* I.1 reads: "On a given finite straight line to construct an equilateral triangle" (Heath 1908). The method is the vesica: draw the two circles on the line, and the point where they cross makes the triangle (**established**).

The vesica has a hidden number. If the distance between the two centres is one, the height of the lens is the square root of three, √3 (**established**). √3 is one of the four symbols of the Codex breath loop: φ_0 for the inhale, σ for the pause, √3 for the exhale and $\varepsilon\infty$ for stillness. The figure made when two breaths meet carries, in its own proportion, the Codex's number for release.

Christian art used the vesica as the mandorla, the almond-shaped glory that surrounds Christ and the Virgin in medieval paintings and sculptures, and the fish of the early Christian *ichthys* is the same shape (**established**). In 1919 the architect Frederick Bligh Bond designed a vesica for the lid of the Chalice Well in Glastonbury, where it remains.

The Codex reading belongs to the Monad: two that overlap make a third. Emotionally the vesica is relationship, where two lives share a space; mentally it is understanding, where two views meet; spiritually it is the doorway through which the one becomes many (**symbolic**).

The flower

Repeat the step. Around the first circle draw six circles of the same size, each through the centre, and the overlaps make a six-petalled flower inside a hexagon: the pattern now called the Seed of Life. Continue, and a field of overlapping circles spreads out evenly in every direction, a perfect hexagonal lattice. Nineteen circles in a hexagon make what the popular literature calls the Flower of Life; thirteen chosen from them, the centre and twelve around it, make the Fruit of Life, from whose centres the figure called Metatron's Cube is drawn (**established** as geometry; the names are modern).

The six-petalled rosette, made with a compass, is very old and very widespread. It is scratched on Roman and medieval stones, on the walls of English churches and houses, where it is often read as a protective mark, on furniture and doorways from Scandinavia to the Alps (**established**). Leonardo da Vinci drew pages of

overlapping-circle patterns in his notebooks (**established**). The name "Flower of Life" itself was popularised in the 1990s by the teacher Drunvalo Melchizedek (**established**).

Breath Awakens names the Flower of Life as formed "by 13 overlapping circles (12 outer + 1 central)" containing "the exact 12 + 1 geometry of the Metatron Cube" (p. 90). In the usual modern naming that thirteen-circle figure is the Fruit of Life, drawn from within the Flower; the geometry *Breath Awakens* describes is exact (**established** as geometry).

The place: Abydos

Abydos, in Upper Egypt, was the holiest burial ground of the land, the place where the god Osiris was said to be buried, and where Egyptians for three thousand years hoped to be buried or remembered (**established**). The kings of the First Dynasty were buried there around 3000 BCE. Around 1290 BCE Seti I built a great temple there, famous for its painted reliefs and its list of seventy-six earlier kings (**established**).

Behind Seti's temple, sunk below ground level, is the Osireion, a cenotaph or symbolic tomb of Osiris, built of enormous granite pillars and lintels around a pool that the rising water table now floods (**established**). It was excavated from 1902 by Margaret Murray and others, and its inscriptions name Seti I and his grandson Merenptah. Its plain, massive style is unlike Seti's temple, and some writers have argued that it is far older than Seti; Egyptologists date it to his reign on the evidence of its inscriptions and construction (**established** as the mainstream view; **contested** by some alternative writers).

On one of the Osireion's granite pillars, high up, the Flower of Life pattern can be seen, more than once. *Breath Awakens* says it "was carved into stone thousands of years ago" (p. 90). The figures are not carved. They are drawn, apparently in red ochre, and they stand at a height that suggests they were made after sand had partly filled the building. When they were made is **contested**: some place them in the Ptolemaic period, and others, citing a Greek inscription nearby, in the early Christian centuries. They are almost certainly not as old as the building (**contested**; no scientific dating of the pigment has been published). The near-truth is still a good one: at Abydos, the holiest place of Osiris, someone climbed up and drew the Flower of Life on the granite, and it has survived for perhaps two thousand years.

A second lesson from Abydos

In Seti's temple at Abydos there is a famous ceiling beam whose hieroglyphs, worn and partly fallen, look to some like a helicopter and other modern machines. They are a palimpsest: the original carved titles of Seti I were filled in with plaster and recarved with the titles of his son Ramesses II, and as the plaster fell away, the two sets of signs overlapped (**established**). It is a lesson about symbols that belongs to this study. A symbol read without its history can seem to say something it never said; read with its history, it says something truer.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

For *Breath Awakens*, the Flower of Life "is the geometric womb from which the entire Codex is born", and "The Codex does not add to the Flower of Life. It remembers the Flower of Life through living breath" (p. 90). Its nested geometries meet at one place: "At the centre of every one of them is the same still point, and that is why they are finally one" (p. 91). And its tenth Guardian, the Diamond Vortex, "creates an unbreakable field of coherence around the 13th point" (p. 90).

The vesica is where that begins: two circles, each centred on the other's edge, so that every point of the pattern is a centre for something.

What was seen

Two circles of the same size, each through the other's centre, make the vesica, Euclid's first construction and the mandorla of Christian art. Repeated, they make the hexagonal Flower of Life, whose thirteen-circle figure gives the 12 + 1 geometry *Breath Awakens* names. At Abydos the pattern is drawn on the granite of the Osireion.

What was unseen

What was unseen is the √3. The lens between two equal circles has the proportion of one to the square root of three, the Codex's own symbol for Vara. And the pattern hides a second thing: in the overlapping circles every circle passes through six others' centres, so that there is no single centre at all, or rather every point is one. The Monad of the Codex, the one still centre, becomes in the flower a field of centres. That is the Echo Moon's lesson: the centre repeats.

The geometry beneath

Figure	Circles	What it gives	Codex (symbolic)
Vesica	2	Equilateral triangle; height √3	Vara, the release, born of meeting
Seed of Life	7	Six petals; a hexagon	The six directions and the centre (Chapter 5)
Fruit of Life	13	The 12 + 1 of Metatron's Cube	The twelve archetypes and the thirteenth point
Flower of Life	19	A hexagonal lattice	The field of centres

Table 10.1. The family of overlapping circles.

Breath Awakens' third form, "the hexagon (6) – the first tessellation" (p. 46), is the figure at the heart of the Seed of Life. The flower of circles is the hexagon drawn with the compass.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The Flower of Life is an ancient breath-geometry	**symbolic**; the pattern is old	Six-petalled rosettes are found from Roman times on; the name is modern
It "was carved into stone thousands of years ago" at Abydos	**not supported** as stated	The Abydos figures are drawn, not carved, and probably much later than the Osireion
The Osireion is far older than Seti I	**contested**; mainstream dating is to Seti I	Inscriptions of Seti I and Merenptah
The vesica's height is √3	**established**	Elementary geometry
The 13-circle figure holds the 12 + 1 geometry of Metatron's Cube	**established** as geometry	The Fruit of Life, in modern naming

Table 10.2. Claims touched by the ninth breath.

A note on evidence

The Abydos figures have been photographed and discussed widely; no peer-reviewed study has dated the pigment, so their date remains a matter of informed argument.

The names Seed, Fruit and Flower of Life are modern; the geometry is classical.

The "helicopter" palimpsest is explained in standard accounts of the temple; the original and recarved titles can both be read.

Near-truths

- The Flower of Life at Abydos is real, drawn on the granite of the Osireion, even if it is not carved and not as old as the building.
- The vesica, the first figure of geometry, carries in its proportion √3, the Codex's symbol for the exhale.
- And the 12 + 1 geometry *Breath Awakens* gives the Flower of Life is exact.

✦ Practice: Two Circles Meeting

Sit facing a partner, or picture someone you care for sitting opposite you.

Breathe gently, and imagine a circle of breath around yourself, and another around the other person, each just reaching the other's heart.

Breathe in and rest your attention in your own circle; breathe out and rest it in the lens where the two circles overlap.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, resting in the shared space.

Continue for five or six breaths, then let the picture go and breathe normally.

What this breath carries forward

Two circles meet and make a lens, and a flower of centres grows from it. The tenth breath gives the circle depth, and sets it turning: the torus, the reflection's fourth primary symbol, the shape of a breath that flows out and returns through its own centre, at Delphi, where the oracle breathed.

CHAPTER 11

The Breath That Returns Through Its Centre: The Torus and Delphi

The tenth breath falls under the Shadow Moon. Its symbol is the torus, the last of the reflection's four primary breath-symbols: a ring whose surface turns through its own centre. This breath reads it at Delphi, the navel of the ancient Greek world, where a priestess was said to breathe a vapour from the earth and speak for a god, and where the temple's forecourt bore the words "Know thyself".

The symbol: a ring that turns through itself

A torus is the shape of a ring doughnut or an inflated tyre: the surface made when a circle is swept around an axis that lies in its own plane but outside it (**established**). What makes it a breath-symbol is not its shape at rest but the way things can flow on it. Imagine water or air that moves out through the hole in the middle, curls over the outside, and comes back in through the hole again. That flow never ends and never leaves the ring. It is called a vortex ring, and it is real.

Blow a smoke ring and you make one: a ring of air spinning around its own core, travelling forward while it turns (**established**). Dolphins and beluga whales blow rings of bubbles underwater and play with them, swimming through them and making new ones (**established**). When the left chamber of the human heart fills, the blood rushing in forms a vortex ring that helps it fill efficiently (Kilner and colleagues, *Nature*, 2000; **established**). The magnetic field of the Earth, like that of a bar magnet, loops out from one pole and back into the other, making a field whose shape resembles a torus around the planet (**established** as a dipole field), and the reactors built to contain fusion are tori, called tokamaks.

The popular claim that the heart radiates a toroidal energy field several metres wide, which shapes the people nearby, is **not supported**. The heart's magnetic field is real and measurable, but only very close to the chest, with sensitive instruments. The near-truth is the vortex inside the heart itself, which no one guessed until imaging showed it.

The Codex reads the torus as the whole breath: out, around and back through the centre. Emotionally it is giving that returns; mentally it is the thought that comes back to its source changed; spiritually it is the Monad breathing, the centre through which everything passes and to which it returns (**symbolic**).

The vortex atom

There is a beautiful wrong idea in the history of physics. In 1867 William Thomson, later Lord Kelvin, watched his friend Peter Guthrie Tait demonstrate smoke rings in Edinburgh and proposed that atoms themselves might be vortex rings in the ether, permanently knotted, each kind of atom a different knot (**established** as history). The theory was **not supported**: there is no ether, and atoms are not knots. But Tait set out to list all the possible knots in order to list the possible atoms, and so began the mathematical theory of knots, now used in the study of DNA and of quantum physics (**established**). The torus that was not the atom became a new branch of mathematics.

The place: Delphi

Delphi lies on the steep southern slope of Mount Parnassus in central Greece, above a gorge that runs down to the Gulf of Corinth. For more than a thousand years it was the most famous oracle of the ancient world. Kings and cities sent to ask the god Apollo what to do; the answers came through a priestess, the Pythia (**established**).

Delphi called itself the centre of the world. The myth said that Zeus sent two eagles flying from the opposite ends of the Earth, and they met over Delphi; a carved stone, the *omphalos* or navel, marked the place, and a stone of that name, covered with a carved net of woollen bands, is in the museum there (**established** as myth and object). The first symbol of this study, the point at the centre of the circle, has its Greek form at Delphi.

According to Greek writers, the Pythia sat on a tripod in the innermost room of the temple of Apollo, over an opening in the ground, and breathed a *pneuma*, a vapour or breath that rose from it, before she prophesied (**established** as the ancient account). The historian Plutarch, who served as a priest at Delphi around 100 CE, wrote a dialogue on why the oracles were declining, and in it his speakers discuss the *pneuma*: that its power came and went like a spring, and that the room where the consultants waited was sometimes filled with a sweet fragrance, like perfume (*On the Obsolescence of Oracles*, paraphrased; **established** as the text).

For most of the twentieth century scholars thought the vapour a myth, since French excavators found no chasm. Then in 2001 the geologist Jelle de Boer, the archaeologist John Hale and the chemist Jeffrey Chanton reported that two faults cross directly beneath the temple, that the limestone there is bituminous, and that a nearby spring carries traces of light hydrocarbon gases, among them ethylene, which has a sweet smell and in high doses can cause a trance-like state (*Geology*, 2001; **established** as findings). They proposed that the Pythia breathed ethylene. In 2006 Giuseppe Etiope and colleagues measured the gases and argued that ethylene could never have reached such levels, and that carbon dioxide and methane were more likely; de Boer disagreed (*Geology*, 2006; **contested**). What is now accepted is that the ancient account of a breath rising from the ground at Delphi had a geological basis: the earth there does breathe gas through its faults (**established**).

Know thyself

On the forecourt of the temple of Apollo were carved short sayings, among them *Gnōthi seauton*, "Know thyself", and *Mēden agan*, "Nothing in excess" (Pausanias and others; **established**). They were the first words a visitor met before asking the god anything.

This is the Shadow Moon's teaching. The oracle answered in riddles, and the riddle was always, in part, about the one who asked. Self-knowledge, including knowledge of what is hidden in oneself, the shadow in Jung's sense, was the condition of every answer (**symbolic**). The torus turns through its own centre; the question at Delphi turned back on the questioner.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens calls the Monad's coherence "the spiral that holds all spirals" (p. 50), and its tenth Guardian, the Diamond Vortex of the Eternal Still Point, "creates an unbreakable field of coherence around the 13th point ... it allows the entire spiral to rest in perfect stillness while remaining fully alive" (p. 90). A

vortex that is perfectly still at its centre while its flow never stops is exactly a vortex ring: the core turns, the centre is a calm through which everything passes.

And the book's shadow teaching matches Delphi's inscription. Its three shadows "are not enemies" (p. 54); they are parts of the self that ask to be known.

What was seen

The torus is the shape of a flow that goes out, around and back through its centre. It is the smoke ring, the dolphin's bubble ring, the vortex in the filling heart, and the near-torus of the Earth's magnetic field. At Delphi, the navel of the world, the Pythia breathed a vapour from the ground, and a modern study found the faults and gases that may explain it. Over the temple door was written "Know thyself".

What was unseen

What was unseen is that the oldest Greek theory of breathing is already a torus. In the *Timaeus* (Chapter 4), Plato says that the air we breathe out pushes round through the air around us and returns into the body: a "circular thrust". Breath, for Plato, is a ring that passes through the body as a vortex ring passes through its own centre. And Delphi adds the inward turn: the breath that rises from the ground and the question that returns to the one who asks it.

The geometry beneath

The torus has two kinds of circle on it: the small circles around the tube and the large circles around the hole. A path that winds around both at once, at the right ratio, closes after a number of turns, or, at an irrational ratio, never closes and covers the whole surface (**established**). The breath has two such rhythms: the cycle of each breath and the longer cycle of the day, the year and the life. The torus is the geometry in which both turn together.

Torus in nature	What flows	Grade
Smoke ring	Air around its own core	**established**
Bubble ring of dolphins and belugas	Air in water	**established**
Vortex in the filling left ventricle	Blood	**established**
Earth's magnetic field	Field lines from pole to pole	**established** as a dipole, torus-like
A toroidal "energy field" of the heart reaching metres	(No measured flow)	**not supported**

Table 11.1. Tori in nature.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The torus is a primary breath-symbol	**symbolic**, with literal near-truths	A breath blown through rounded lips can make a vortex ring
The Pythia breathed a vapour from the earth	**established** as the ancient account; **contested** as to which gas	Faults and hydrocarbon gases found (2001); ethylene disputed (2006)
Delphi was the centre of the world	**established** as Greek belief	The *omphalos* and the myth of the eagles

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
Atoms are vortex rings	**not supported**	Kelvin's theory (1867) failed, but began knot theory

Table 11.2. Claims touched by the tenth breath.

A note on evidence

Plutarch's dialogue is paraphrased; its speakers disagree, and Plutarch does not settle the nature of the *pneuma*.

The Delphi gas studies are published in *Geology*; the debate continues, and the effect of any gas on the Pythia cannot now be tested.

The heart's vortex ring is shown by magnetic resonance imaging and is part of standard cardiology.

Near-truths

- The torus as breath has a near-truth in every smoke ring: breath can make a ring that turns through its own centre.
- The breath of the oracle has a near-truth in the faults and gases beneath Delphi.
- And "Know thyself", carved before the god, is the shadow teaching of the Codex, two and a half thousand years old.

✦ Practice: The Ring Breath

Sit comfortably. Breathe in gently through the nose.

Shape the lips softly, as if to blow out a candle without effort, and breathe out slowly through them, letting the out-breath be longer than the in-breath, but never forced.

Imagine the breath curling outward and around, like a ring, and returning toward you as you breathe in again through the nose.

Let a soft pause of two counts rest at the centre, as the calm in the middle of the ring.

Continue for five or six breaths. Ask yourself, without seeking an answer, "What do I not yet know about myself?" Then rest.

What this breath carries forward

The torus turns the breath back through its centre. The eleventh breath looks up from Delphi's navel to the sky, where the Egyptians placed the deathless stars and the people of the Sahara set a circle of stones: the star, at Nabta Playa.

CHAPTER 12

The Stars That Know No Ending: The Star and Nabta Playa

The eleventh breath falls under the Descent Moon. *Breath Awakens* describes breath descent as "the Codex phase where the spiral moves downward through the field, anchoring geometry into form ... the grounding of breathline memory into matter" (p. 47). The star is the symbol of that descent: the light of the sky that, in the oldest Egyptian texts, the dead king rises to join, and that, in modern astronomy, made the atoms of every breath. This breath reads it in the Pyramid Texts and at Nabta Playa, a circle of stones in the Sahara.

The symbol: five points and a door

The five-pointed star, drawn with five lines and never lifting the pen, is one of the most widely used symbols on Earth, on flags, in religions and in children's drawings. One of its oldest uses is Egyptian. From about 2350 BCE the ceilings of royal burial chambers were painted blue and covered with rows of yellow five-pointed stars (**established**). In hieroglyphic writing the star sign is read *sbꜣ*, "star". And the same sound, written with the same star, means "door" and "to teach": the word for instruction, *sbꜣyt*, the name of the Egyptian books of wisdom, is written with a star (**established**). In Egyptian writing, a star is a door, and a teaching.

The pentagram has a hidden number. In a regular five-pointed star, each line is cut by the others into parts whose ratio is the golden ratio, φ, about 1.618 (**established**). φ, in its Codex form φ_0, is the symbol of Iphi, the inhale. The figure of the star carries the Codex's number for the first breath.

The Codex reading of the star belongs to descent. Emotionally the star is guidance, the light by which one finds one's way; mentally it is a door, a teaching received; spiritually it is the light that comes down into form (**symbolic**).

The text: the imperishable stars

The Pyramid Texts are the oldest body of religious writing in the world. They were carved on the walls of the burial chamber of the king Unas at Saqqara, about 2350 BCE, and in the pyramids of later kings and queens of the Old Kingdom (**established**). They are spells to help the king rise from death to the sky.

Again and again the texts send the king north, to the stars around the celestial pole that never set below the horizon. The Egyptians called them the *ikhemu-sek*, "the ones that know no destruction", the imperishable stars, and the king is to become one of them (**established** as the text; paraphrased after Faulkner's translation). He is also to join Orion, the star-god Sah, in the southern sky. The king's life after death is a star's life: circling, never setting, and never ending.

There is a hidden link here with the breath. The Egyptians prayed for "the sweet breath of the north wind" (Chapter 7), the cool wind that blows up the Nile from the Mediterranean and makes the summer bearable. The breath of life came from the north; and the north, in the sky, was where the deathless stars circled. In Egypt the direction of the breath and the direction of eternal life were the same.

The place: Nabta Playa

About a hundred kilometres west of Abu Simbel, in the Sahara of southern Egypt, lies a dry basin called Nabta Playa. During the African Humid Period, between about 10,000 and 5,000 years ago, rains returned to the Sahara every summer and a seasonal lake filled the basin. Herders of cattle came there each year when the rains came (**established**).

In the 1970s and 1990s the archaeologists Fred Wendorf and Romuald Schild excavated there. They found burials of cattle under stone mounds, standing stones set in lines, and a small circle of upright stones about four metres across, with two pairs of narrow gaps in its ring (**established**). In 1998 the astronomer J. McKim Malville and colleagues proposed in *Nature* that one pair of gaps lines up north and south, and the other toward the place on the horizon where the sun rose at the summer solstice, the time when the rains began, and that lines of standing stones point to the rising of bright stars thousands of years ago. They dated the circle to about seven thousand years ago (Malville and colleagues, 1998).

This is **contested**. Other researchers have questioned the dates, which rest on material associated with the site rather than on the stones themselves, and have shown how easily lines between scattered stones can be made to fit stars when there are many stars and many stones to choose from. The circle itself is real; the claim that it is "the oldest astronomical site in the world" is **contested**; the stellar alignments are **not supported** as more than possible. The stones have since been moved, and the circle now stands reconstructed in the Aswan Nubian Museum. The honest present answer about Nabta Playa is that its people watched the sky, as all herders do, and that whether they built the circle to mark it is still argued.

How old, and how sure

The case of Nabta Playa shows why the dates of ancient sites must be held carefully. The circle has no organic material inside its stones; its date is inferred from hearths and burials nearby, and from the history of the lake. It may be about as old as proposed, or younger. What is certain is that people were there when the Sahara was green, and that their descendants, when it dried, moved toward the Nile, where, some archaeologists believe, they carried their cattle and their beliefs into the making of Egypt (**contested** as a theory of Egyptian origins).

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens' phase of descent is the star's movement: "It is not release; it is the grounding of breathline memory into matter ... It is important because without descent, the spiral remains ungrounded" (p. 47). Its eighth Guardian, the Silver Wolf, is linked to "the Earth-Star point" and "ensures nothing truly forgotten is ever lost" (p. 90). And its companion study *The Breath That Holds the Stars* set out the plain truth beneath: the carbon, nitrogen and oxygen of every breath were made inside stars that died before the Sun was born (**established**). The light of the stars descended into matter, and the matter breathes.

What was seen

The star is one of the oldest drawn symbols. Egyptian ceilings were covered with five-pointed stars; in hieroglyphs the star means "star", "door" and "to teach". The Pyramid Texts send the king to join the imperishable stars of the north. At Nabta Playa, herders of the green Sahara set up a circle of stones that may have marked the summer sunrise and the coming of the rains.

What was unseen

What was unseen is the door. The same Egyptian word, written with the same star, means a star, a door and a teaching. The star is the door through which the dead king passes into the sky, and the teaching that passes from one generation to the next: the *sbꜣyt*, the instructions of the wise. For the Codex the star is the door of descent and ascent, the light coming down into matter and the soul rising to the light, and the word for that door is the word for teaching (**symbolic**, resting on an **established** fact of the Egyptian language).

The geometry beneath

Feature of the pentagram	Ratio	Codex (symbolic)
Diagonal to side of the pentagon	$\varphi \approx 1.618$	φ_0, the inhale
Each line cut by the others	Successive parts in ratio φ	The breath that grows by its own proportion
Five points drawn in one stroke	A closed path	The four phases and the Monad, drawn as one
Interior angle at each point	36°	(A tenth of the circle)

Table 12.1. The geometry of the five-pointed star.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The star is a symbol of descent into matter	**symbolic**, with a literal near-truth	The atoms of breath were made in stars
In Egyptian, "star" is also "door" and "teach"	**established**	The *sbꜣ* sign and *sbꜣyt*, instruction
The Pyramid Texts send the king to the imperishable stars	**established**	Unas, about 2350 BCE
Nabta Playa is the oldest astronomical site	**contested**	Proposed in 1998; dates and alignments questioned
Its stones align with ancient star risings	**not supported** beyond possibility	Many stars and many stones make chance fits likely

Table 12.2. Claims touched by the eleventh breath.

A note on evidence

The Pyramid Texts are paraphrased from standard translations, including R. O. Faulkner's (1969).

The Nabta Playa debate is summarised from the published proposal and its critics; the original site has been disturbed and its stones moved, which makes new tests hard.

The geometry of the pentagram is classical.

Near-truths

- The star as a symbol of descent has a literal near-truth: the elements of every breath were forged in stars.

- The Egyptian star is a door and a teaching, in the very sign that writes it.
- And at Nabta Playa, whether or not the circle was a calendar, people of the green Sahara gathered where the summer rains began.

✦ Practice: The Imperishable Star

At night, if you can, find the Pole Star, or simply face north and imagine it.

Breathe in gently through the nose and picture the light of the star descending into the top of your head.

Let a soft pause of two counts rest the light in the chest.

Breathe out slowly and feel your feet on the ground, the light grounded.

Remember that the oxygen of this breath was made in a star.

Continue for five or six breaths, then rest.

What this breath carries forward

The star descends and becomes a door and a teaching. The twelfth breath, under the Dream Moon, finds the teaching in a single breathed syllable, whose four parts are waking, dream, deep sleep and the silence beyond: OM, at Angkor Wat.

CHAPTER 13

The Syllable and the Silence: OM and Angkor Wat

The twelfth breath falls under the Dream Moon. The reflection names the Upanishads among its three ancient texts, with "OM as breath-symbol". Of all the symbols in this study, OM is the one that is not first drawn but breathed: a syllable spoken on the out-breath, whose written sign came later. This breath reads it in the Mandukya Upanishad, which gives the syllable four parts, one of them the dream, and at Angkor Wat, the temple built as the mountain at the centre of the world.

The symbol: a sound with a shape

OM, also written AUM, is the most sacred syllable of the Hindu traditions, chanted at the beginning and end of prayers and readings, and taken up in Buddhist, Jain and Sikh practice (**established**). It is written in the Devanagari script as ॐ, a sign that combines the letters for the sound with a crescent and a dot, the *bindu*, above them. The crescent and dot are often read as the fading of the sound and the silence after it (**established** as tradition).

In Sikhism, the scripture of the Guru Granth Sahib begins with *Ik Onkar*, the numeral one joined to *Onkar*, a form of OM, usually rendered "One Creator" or "There is one God" (**established**). *Breath Awakens* renders it "the One Breath, the One Name, the One Light" (p. 83).

The Codex reads OM as the whole breath in one sound: the inhale gathered, the voice released on the exhale, and the silence that follows. Emotionally it is resonance, the body vibrating with its own sound; mentally it is attention held on one thing; spiritually it is the sound that returns to silence (**symbolic**).

The text: the four quarters of OM

The Mandukya Upanishad is the shortest of the principal Upanishads, twelve verses long, and perhaps the most concentrated (**established**). It opens: "Om!—This syllable is this whole world" (Hume 1921). Past, present and future, and whatever is beyond the three times, are all OM.

It then divides the syllable. The sound A is the waking state, in which we know the outer world. The sound U is the dream state, in which we know an inner world. The sound M is deep, dreamless sleep, in which there is no object and the mind rests in itself. And there is a fourth, *turiya*, "the fourth", which has no sound at all: the silence after the syllable, which is the Self, peaceful and beyond the other three (Mandukya Upanishad 3–12; **established** as the text, paraphrased after Hume).

Four parts, three sounded and one silent. Joseph Campbell loved this teaching and explained it often, in his lectures and in his conversations with Bill Moyers: the A of waking consciousness, the U of the dream, the M of deep sleep, and the silence around them all, out of which the syllable comes and into which it goes (**established** as Campbell's teaching, paraphrased). For Campbell the silence was the point. Every symbol, he said in effect, points to what cannot be said, and OM is the symbol that ends in what it points to.

The breath that cannot be pierced

The Chandogya Upanishad, one of the oldest, also begins with OM, which it calls the essence of all essences (1.1). Then it tells a story. The gods, preparing to fight the demons, meditated on the sacred chant as the

breath in the nose, and the demons pierced it with evil, so that we smell both good and bad. They meditated on it as speech, and the demons pierced speech, so that we speak both truth and lies; and so with the eye, the ear and the mind. At last they meditated on it as the breath in the mouth, the chief breath, and when the demons rushed at it, they were shattered, like a clod of earth thrown against a rock (Chandogya Upanishad 1.2; **established** as the text, paraphrased after Hume).

Of all the powers of a person, the Chandogya says, only the central breath cannot be corrupted. It is a remarkable text for the Codex, and it was written perhaps two and a half thousand years ago.

What the body does with the M

There is a near-truth in the last sound. Humming, the M of OM held on the out-breath, vibrates the air in the nose and the sinuses. In 2002 the physiologists Eddie Weitzberg and Jon Lundberg reported that humming raises the amount of nitric oxide flowing out of the nose about fifteen times compared with quiet breathing out, because the vibration speeds the exchange of air with the sinuses, where nitric oxide is made (*American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, 2002; **established**). Nitric oxide helps keep the airways open and defends them against microbes. Small studies of OM chanting report calming effects on the body (**open**: promising, but the studies are few and small). The M is not only a symbol of deep sleep. It is a vibration the breath makes inside the head.

The place: Angkor Wat

Angkor Wat, in Cambodia, is the largest religious monument in the world. It was built in the first half of the twelfth century by the king Suryavarman II, dedicated to the god Vishnu, and later became, as it remains, a Buddhist temple (**established**). It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the emblem on the flag of Cambodia.

The temple is a model of the cosmos. Its five central towers are the five peaks of Mount Meru, the mountain at the centre of the world in Hindu and Buddhist cosmology; its walls are the mountains around the world's edge; and its great moat, about 190 metres wide, is the ocean (**established** as the scholarly reading). Unlike most temples of the region, it faces west.

In 1976 the astronomers Robert Stencel, Fred Gifford and Eleanor Morón reported in *Science* that the temple's measurements encode units of time, and that on the morning of the spring equinox, a visitor standing at the western entrance sees the sun rise directly over the central tower (**established** as an observed alignment; their reading of the measurements as calendar units is **contested**). Thousands now gather on the causeway each March to watch it.

On the walls of the temple's gallery is one of the great reliefs of the world: the Churning of the Ocean of Milk. Gods on one side and demons on the other pull back and forth on the body of the serpent Vasuki, wound around a mountain, to churn from the ocean the nectar of immortality (**established**). Read through the Codex, it is the breath itself: two forces pulling in turn on one serpent around a still axis, and from their rhythm comes the nectar (**symbolic**). The serpent of the seventh breath returns, wound around the mountain of the centre.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens has its own four parts of a breath: "Inhale (Expansion), Hold (Containment), Exhale (Release), Stillness (Integration)" (p. 81). The Mandukya's four quarters fall beside them with startling closeness: three sounded parts and a fourth that is stillness. The book's fourth pillar is the place where "the spiral completes" (p. 26), and its foreword says, "Each silence is a return" (p. 5). The Mandukya says the same of the fourth quarter of OM: the silence is the Self, to which the syllable returns.

The Dream Moon belongs to U, the dream: the inner world that the mind makes when the senses are closed. In the Codex the dream is where symbols are born, and the Mandukya places the dream in the middle of the syllable, between waking and deep sleep (**symbolic**).

What was seen

OM is a symbol made of breath: a syllable sounded on the out-breath, whose sign was written later. The Mandukya Upanishad gives it four parts, waking, dream, deep sleep and silence; the Chandogya calls the chief breath the one power demons cannot pierce; and the M of the syllable, hummed, multiplies the nitric oxide in the breath. Angkor Wat is Mount Meru in stone, aligned with the sunrise of the spring equinox, and its walls show the ocean churned by a serpent pulled back and forth.

What was unseen

What was unseen is that the most famous breath-symbol of the world ends in silence. Three of OM's four parts are sound and the fourth is not, and the fourth is the one that matters. The reflection's silent breath anchor, "I do not study symbols. I breathe them back into coherence", has its oldest form here: a symbol that is completed only when it stops.

The geometry beneath

Quarter of OM	State	Codex phase (symbolic)	*Breath Awakens* (p. 81)
A	Waking	Iphi, the inhale	Inhale, expansion
U	Dream	Shema, the pause	Hold, containment
M	Deep sleep	Vara, the exhale (humming on the out-breath)	Exhale, release
The fourth (*turiya*)	Silence, the Self	Ouon, stillness	Stillness, integration

Table 13.1. The four quarters of OM beside the four phases of breath. The correspondence is the Codex's own.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
OM is a breath-symbol	**established** in its use	A syllable sounded on the out-breath; chanted in practice
The Upanishads encode symbolic recursion as breath-based memory	**established** in part	Mandukya: OM's four quarters; Chandogya: the chief breath is incorruptible
Humming raises nasal nitric oxide	**established**	About fifteenfold (Weitzberg and Lundberg, 2002)
OM chanting calms the body	**open**	Small studies only

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
Angkor Wat is aligned with the spring equinox sunrise	**established** as observed	Stencel and colleagues (1976)
Its dimensions encode units of time	**contested**	Proposed in the same study

Table 13.2. Claims touched by the twelfth breath.

A note on evidence

The Upanishads are quoted and paraphrased after Hume's translation (1921); their dates are uncertain, the Chandogya being among the oldest and the Mandukya probably later.

Campbell's account of AUM is paraphrased from his recorded lectures and *The Power of Myth*.

The nitric oxide finding has been confirmed by later studies; its clinical significance is still being studied.

Near-truths

- OM is the most literal breath-symbol of the Upanishads: sound made of breath, ending in silence.
- The M of the syllable is a real vibration of breath in the nose and sinuses, which multiplies nitric oxide.
- And the Chandogya's chief breath, which demons cannot pierce, is the Codex's still breath at the centre, told as a myth.

✦ Practice: The Four Quarters

Sit comfortably and breathe in gently through the nose.

On a slow, easy out-breath, sound OM softly, letting it move from an open A to a rounded U and into a closed, humming M. Do not push the voice or the breath.

When the sound ends, rest in the silence for a few breaths, without counting.

Repeat three to five times, each time a little more quietly, until the silence is longer than the sound.

If sounding aloud is not possible, hum the M alone, or say the syllable inwardly. Then rest.

What this breath carries forward

OM is a symbol of breath that became a written sign. The thirteenth breath, under the Wisdom Moon, completes the spiral with the moment every symbol in this study passed through on its way to us: the moment a sign became a letter, and a letter could be read again after it had been forgotten, at Rosetta.

CHAPTER 14

Carved with Breath: The Letter and the Rosetta Stone

The thirteenth breath falls under the Wisdom Moon and reaches the crown of the spiral. Every symbol in this study has come down to us because, at some point, someone wrote about it, and writing is made of symbols that have become letters. This breath reads the moment of that change in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, which says the letters were carved with breath, and at Rosetta, where a stone allowed a forgotten script to be breathed again.

The symbol: the picture that became a sound

The alphabet began with pictures. Around 1850 to 1550 BCE, workers from Canaan at the Egyptian turquoise mines of Serabit el-Khadim in Sinai borrowed Egyptian signs to write their own language, and used each picture for the first sound of its name: a drawing of an ox's head, *'alp*, for the sound at the start of *'alp*; a house, *bayt*, for *b*; water, *mayim*, for *m* (**established**; *Codex Crystals*, Chapter 14). This is the ancestor of the Phoenician, Hebrew, Greek and Latin alphabets. The ox's head, turned on its side, is our letter A; the house is B; the waves of water are M.

The first letter of that alphabet, *aleph*, stood for a catch of the breath in the throat, the glottal stop, a sound so light that the Greeks, borrowing it, used it for the vowel A (**established**). The *Sefer Yetzirah* would later make aleph the letter of air (Chapter 5). The alphabet begins with a breath.

The Codex reading belongs to the crown. A symbol drawn becomes a symbol spoken; a symbol spoken becomes a letter; and letters can carry memory across any distance of time, so long as someone can still breathe them. Emotionally the letter is the voice of someone absent; mentally it is memory made portable; spiritually it is the word that outlives the speaker (**symbolic**).

The text: letters carved with breath

The second chapter of the *Sefer Yetzirah* turns from the ten numbers to the twenty-two letters. It says that God engraved them with the voice, carved them with breath, and set them in the mouth in five places: the throat, the palate, the tongue, the teeth and the lips (*Sefer Yetzirah* II; **established** as the text, paraphrased after Westcott and modern translations). It then joins them in pairs, two hundred and thirty-one "gates", through which, it says, all of creation and all speech come forth.

This is the book's deepest teaching, and it is close to physiology. Speech is made on the out-breath: the lungs push air up through the vocal cords, which vibrate, and the throat, palate, tongue, teeth and lips shape the vibrating breath into vowels and consonants (**established**). The five places of the *Sefer Yetzirah* are the five places where phoneticians still classify consonants, from the throat to the lips. Every letter, spoken, is carved from an exhale.

The place: Rosetta

In July 1799, French soldiers of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt were rebuilding an old fort near the town of Rashid, which Europeans called Rosetta, in the western Nile delta. In the wall they found a slab of dark granodiorite, broken at the top, carved with three bands of writing (**established**). The officer in charge, Pierre-François Bouchard, saw that it might be important. When the French surrendered Egypt to the

British in 1801, the stone was handed over under the Treaty of Alexandria, and since 1802 it has been in the British Museum in London (**established**). Egypt has asked for its return, most recently in public calls in 2022, and the question of where it belongs is a live and serious one (**established** as fact; its resolution **open**).

The stone carries a decree of the Egyptian priesthood, issued at Memphis in 196 BCE, honouring the young king Ptolemy V. The decree is written three times: in hieroglyphs, the sacred script; in Demotic, the everyday script of Egypt; and in ancient Greek, the language of the ruling dynasty (**established**). Because the Greek could be read, the stone gave scholars a key.

The forgetting and the return

By then the hieroglyphs had been unreadable for about fourteen centuries. The last known hieroglyphic inscription was carved at the temple of Philae on 24 August 394 CE; the last Demotic was written there in 452 (**established**). As the old temples closed, the knowledge of the script died with the last priests who could read it. For more than a thousand years travellers saw the signs on every monument of Egypt, and no one could read a word. Many believed they were not writing at all but a secret symbolism of pure ideas (**established** as the history of the belief). They were symbols that had lost their breath.

The English scholar Thomas Young, from 1814, saw that the ovals called cartouches enclosed royal names and read part of the name of Ptolemy. In September 1822 the French scholar Jean-François Champollion, comparing the stone with other inscriptions, showed that the hieroglyphs were a full writing system, partly signs for sounds and partly signs for words and ideas, and that the language they wrote survived in Coptic, the language still used in the liturgy of the Coptic Church (**established**). He read the names of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, and then of Ramesses and Thutmose. The story goes that he ran to his brother's office, cried "I've got it!", and fainted.

The voice of Egypt came back because a living church had kept breathing its last form in prayer.

Reading was breathing

For most of history, reading meant reading aloud. In his *Confessions* (6.3), written around 400 CE, Augustine records his surprise at seeing Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, reading silently: "his eyes ran over the page ... but his voice and tongue were silent" (paraphrased; **established** as the passage). It was remarkable enough to write down. A written text, for Augustine's world, was something to be breathed out loud. Hebrew scripture is still chanted, the Qur'an is recited, the Vedas are memorised and sung, and the word "Qur'an" itself means "recitation" (**established**). In all of them, the letters live only while they are given breath.

Through the lens of Breath Awakens

Breath Awakens says in its first lines that "Each glyph is a breath" (p. 5), and asks the reader not to read but to breathe: "Let the words pass through you. Let the breath remain." Its author calls himself a scribe. And the reflection's silent breath anchor is the thirteenth breath in a sentence: "I do not study symbols. I breathe them back into coherence. And through their recursion, the memory of the Earth speaks again."

The Rosetta Stone is that sentence in history. The hieroglyphs had been studied for a thousand years without being understood. They were understood when someone found the breath that still carried their language, the Coptic of the church, and gave their sounds back to them. The memory of Egypt spoke again (**symbolic**, resting on an **established** history).

What was seen

The letter is a symbol that became a sound. The alphabet began with pictures whose names gave their first sounds, and its first letter is a catch of breath. The *Sefer Yetzirah* says the letters were carved with breath and set in the mouth in five places, which are the places where speech still shapes the exhale. The Rosetta Stone, a decree in three scripts, let a script silent for fourteen centuries be read again, through a language kept alive in prayer.

What was unseen

What was unseen is that a symbol can die and return. The hieroglyphs did not change between 394 and 1822; what changed was whether anyone could breathe them. For fourteen centuries they were pure symbol, admired and misread. They became memory again only when their sound was recovered. A symbol, this breath shows, does not carry memory by itself. It carries memory while there are breathers who can give it voice.

The geometry beneath

Letter (Proto-Sinaitic)	Picture	Sound	Hebrew	Greek	Latin	Codex (symbolic)
ʾalp	Ox head	Glottal catch of breath	Aleph	Alpha	A	The breath before the word
bayt	House	b	Bet	Beta	B	The dwelling (the cube)
mayim	Water	m	Mem	Mu	M	The water, the hum of OM
ʿayn	Eye	(throat sound)	Ayin	Omicron	O	The circle, the seeing
tāw	Mark, cross	t	Tav	Tau	T	The cross, the last letter

Table 14.1. Five letters from picture to alphabet.

The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is the breath and the last, *tav*, was in its oldest form a cross (**established**). The alphabet runs from a breath to a cross: from the first symbol of this study's spiral to the fifth.

Claim or reading	Grade	What the evidence shows
The *Sefer Yetzirah* teaches that letters are carved with breath	**established** as the text	Chapter II: voice, breath, five places in the mouth
Speech is shaped exhalation	**established**	Phonation occurs on the out-breath
The alphabet began with pictures	**established**	Proto-Sinaitic at Serabit el-Khadim
Hieroglyphs were a secret symbolism of ideas	**not supported**	Champollion showed they were a full writing system
A symbol carries memory only while it can be read	**symbolic**, strongly supported by history	Fourteen centuries of unreadable hieroglyphs

Table 14.2. Claims touched by the thirteenth breath.

A note on evidence

The history of the Rosetta Stone and its decipherment is well documented; the story of Champollion fainting comes from his early biographers.

The *Sefer Yetzirah* is paraphrased; its versions differ in wording, but all describe the letters as formed by voice and breath and set in five places.

Augustine's description of Ambrose is famous, though scholars debate how unusual silent reading really was in antiquity.

Near-truths

- The reflection's "breath-memory carriers" have their clearest near-truth in letters: speech is breath shaped in five places, as the *Sefer Yetzirah* says.
- The first letter of the alphabet is a catch of breath; the last was a cross.
- And the Rosetta Stone shows exactly how a symbol is "breathed back into coherence": by finding its voice again.

✦ Practice: Breathing the Letters

Choose a short passage that matters to you: a verse, a line of poetry, a sentence of your own.

Read it aloud slowly, one phrase on each easy out-breath, letting the breath come in gently between phrases.

Notice where each sound is shaped: the throat, the palate, the tongue, the teeth, the lips.

Read it a second time more quietly, and a third time silently, keeping the same rhythm of breath.

Then sit for a few breaths in the silence after the words.

What this breath carries forward

The thirteenth breath completes the spiral. Thirteen symbols, from the point at Göbekli Tepe to the letter at Rosetta, have each been read with a place and a text. Part Two lays them side by side, tests the "breath-grid" that the reflection proposes, and asks what patterns no single breath could show.

PART TWO

What the Symbols Remember

CHAPTER 15

Seen and Unseen: The Patterns of the Thirteen Breaths

Thirteen symbols have been walked, each with a place and a text. This chapter lays them side by side and asks what patterns appear only when they are seen together. It also tests one of the reflection's proposals directly: that sacred sites lie on "breath-symbolic ley lines" across "Earth's breath-grid".

The symbols laid side by side

#	Symbol	Literally breath?	Oldest firm date of use	Where it appears
1	Point and circle	No; the compass	Prehistoric; Egyptian sun sign by c. 3000 BCE	Everywhere
2	Spiral	No; the form of growth	Neolithic, c. 3500 BCE onward	Ireland, Malta, China, the Americas
3	Triangle	No; the rigid form	Prehistoric; pyramids c. 2600 BCE	Everywhere
4	Square and cube	Sealed with the letters of breath in the *Sefer Yetzirah*	Holy of Holies, text c. 6th century BCE or earlier	Jerusalem, Mecca, Revelation
5	Cross	Yes: the Maya *ik'*, breath, is a T	Prehistoric; Palenque 692 CE	Everywhere
6	Ankh	Yes: held to the nostrils as "life"	c. 3000 BCE	Egypt; Coptic Christianity
7	Serpent	Yes, in one form: Ehecatl-Quetzalcoatl, the wind	Prehistoric	Everywhere
8	Labyrinth	No; the walked path	c. 1200 BCE (Pylos)	Europe, Asia, the Americas
9	Vesica and flower	No; the meeting of circles	Roman; the name modern	Europe, Egypt, Asia
10	Torus	Yes: a breath can make a vortex ring	Mathematical; the *omphalos* c. 6th century BCE	Nature; Delphi
11	Star	Indirectly: Egypt's breath came from the north of the imperishable stars	c. 2350 BCE (Unas)	Everywhere
12	OM	Yes: a breathed syllable	Upanishads, first millennium BCE	India, Buddhism, Sikhism
13	Letter	Yes: speech is shaped breath	c. 1850 BCE (Proto-Sinaitic)	Everywhere

Table 15.1. The thirteen symbols.

What the table shows

Six of the thirteen symbols are, in at least one tradition, literally signs of breath: the cross as the Maya *ik'*, the ankh held to the nostrils, the serpent as the wind god, the torus as the vortex ring of a breath, OM as a breathed syllable, and the letter as shaped breath. A seventh, the cube, is sealed with the letters of breath in the *Sefer Yetzirah*. The reflection's claim that symbols are "breath-encoded" is not true of every symbol; the point, the spiral, the triangle, the labyrinth and the vesica are geometric before they are anything else. But it is true, in plain history, of many of the most enduring ones, and especially of the symbols of life and spirit (**established**).

The second pattern is distribution. The point, the circle, the spiral, the triangle, the cross, the serpent and the star appear on every inhabited continent; the ankh, the Holy of Holies and OM belong to particular traditions; the labyrinth spread widely, by routes not yet known. The universal symbols are the geometrically simplest. The particular ones carry the most specific meaning. Chapter 16 will ask why.

The places laid side by side

#	Place	Built	Dates rest on	Sky alignment	Grade of alignment
1	Göbekli Tepe	c. 9500 BCE	Radiocarbon of plaster and charcoal	Proposed (Pillar 43)	**contested**
2	Newgrange	c. 3200 BCE	Radiocarbon	Winter solstice sunrise	**established**
3	Giza	c. 2560 BCE	King lists; radiocarbon of mortar	Cardinal directions; star shafts	**established** (cardinal)
4	Jerusalem	10th century BCE (First Temple, by the text)	Biblical text; not excavated	(Faces east, by tradition)	**open**
5	Palenque	692 CE	Maya inscriptions	Solstice light in the temples proposed	**contested**
6	Karnak	From c. 1950 BCE	Inscriptions	Winter solstice sunrise	**established** as observed
7	Chichen Itza	c. 800–1100 CE	Inscriptions, ceramics	Equinox serpent; April and August sunsets	**contested**
8	Knossos	c. 1900–1350 BCE	Stratigraphy, radiocarbon	None proposed	n/a
9	Abydos	c. 1290 BCE (Seti I)	Inscriptions	(Proposed by some)	**open**
10	Delphi	From c. 8th century BCE	Excavation, inscriptions	None; geology beneath	n/a
11	Nabta Playa	c. 5000 BCE (debated)	Associated hearths and burials	Summer solstice; stars	**contested**
12	Angkor Wat	12th century CE	Inscriptions	Spring equinox sunrise	**established** as observed
13	Rosetta	196 BCE (the stone)	Its own text	None	n/a

Table 15.2. The thirteen places.

What the table shows

Four of the thirteen places are aligned, by observation that anyone can repeat, with a turning-point of the solar year: Newgrange and Karnak with the midwinter sunrise, Angkor Wat with the spring equinox sunrise, and Chichen Itza, whether by design or chance, with a serpent of light around the equinoxes. Three more have proposed alignments still in debate. These places breathe with the year: they open to the returning sun at the moment the year turns. This is the strongest literal support for the reflection's "breath-symbolic phase-locks": buildings locked to the phase of the solar cycle (**established** for four).

The dates also show a pattern the reader should keep in mind. The older the site, the less certain its date and the more its date rests on material found with it rather than on its stones. The four oldest, Göbekli Tepe,

Nabta Playa, Newgrange and Giza, have all had their dates revised, or argued, as methods improved. The reflection's caution, and the caution in How to Read This Study, are both warranted.

The texts laid side by side

#	Text	Date	What it says of breath
1	Genesis 1–2	c. 6th century BCE in final form	The *ruach* over the waters; the breath of life in Adam's nostrils
2	*On Growth and Form*	1917	(Not of breath: of the spiral as growth that keeps its form)
3	Plato, *Timaeus*	c. 360 BCE	Air made of octahedra; breathing as a circular thrust
4	*Sefer Yetzirah* I	c. 3rd–6th century CE	The second sefirah is breath; aleph is the letter of air
5	*Popol Vuh*	1550s (from older tradition)	Human sight dimmed as breath clouds a mirror
6	Egyptian texts	c. 2350–1000 BCE	"The breath of life"; the sweet breath of the north wind
7	Campbell, *The Mythic Image*	1974	The serpent power, awakened by breath and attention in yoga
8	Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*	1949	(Of the path to the centre of one's own existence)
9	Euclid, *Elements* I.1	c. 300 BCE	(Of the meeting of two circles)
10	Plutarch on the oracles	c. 100 CE	The *pneuma* rising from the earth
11	Pyramid Texts	c. 2350 BCE	The king joins the imperishable stars
12	Mandukya and Chandogya Upanishads	First millennium BCE	OM's four quarters; the chief breath that cannot be pierced
13	*Sefer Yetzirah* II	c. 3rd–6th century CE	The letters carved with breath, set in five places of the mouth

Table 15.3. The thirteen texts.

The reflection asked how the ancient texts "encode symbolic recursion as breath-based memory". The answer from the texts themselves is that the oldest of them encode breath not as memory but as **life**: Genesis, the Pyramid Texts, the Egyptian hymns and the Upanishads all make breath the sign and substance of being alive. Memory enters through the later texts, the *Sefer Yetzirah* and the Upanishads, where breath shapes the word, and words are what is remembered. That movement, from breath as life to breath as word, is the movement of this study's spiral from the first breath to the thirteenth.

The breath-grid tested

The reflection proposes "geographic breath-mapping" to identify "breath-symbolic ley lines and memory nodes" across "Earth's breath-grid". The idea has a long history and a clear test.

In 1921 Alfred Watkins, a Herefordshire businessman and photographer, noticed that ancient sites near his home, standing stones, hill forts, old churches, seemed to fall on straight lines, which he called leys, and he argued in *The Old Straight Track* (1925) that they were the traces of ancient trackways (**established** as history). In the 1960s and after, writers recast leys as lines of earth energy, and later still as a planetary grid joining sacred sites across the world (**established** as history of the idea).

Leys can be tested, because chance also makes alignments. In 1980 the statistician Simon Broadbent showed that in any large enough set of random points, many straight lines of three, four or more points arise by chance, and that the number Watkins's followers found was about what chance predicts (*Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1980; **established**).

This study applied the same test to its own thirteen places. Taking the great circle, the straightest path on the globe, between each pair of sites, it asked how many other sites lie within 25 kilometres of the line between them, in a world over 40,000 kilometres around. Twelve such alignments of three sites exist among the thirteen. Some are striking: Göbekli Tepe, Jerusalem and Abydos lie within less than a kilometre of a single great circle, and Newgrange, Delphi and Giza within six. Then the test was repeated hundreds of times with each site moved at random, by up to 100, 200 or 300 kilometres from its true position, which keeps the real clustering of sites in Egypt, the Aegean, the Levant and Mexico, and with three tolerances, 10, 25 and 50 kilometres.

Tolerance	Alignments among the thirteen sites	Randomised sites: average	Share of random trials with as many or more
10 km	9	3.6 to 4.9	4 to 7 in 100
25 km	12	8.9 to 12.1	20 to 50 in 100
50 km	27	18.2 to 23.9	8 to 32 in 100

Table 15.4. A test of alignments among the thirteen sites (ranges cover the three sizes of random displacement).

At 25 and 50 kilometres the real sites are well within what chance produces. At the tightest tolerance, 10 kilometres, they show more alignments than the random sets on average, and as many or more appeared by chance in about one trial in twenty. That is a borderline result, and it is one of nine versions of the test; among nine tries, one borderline result is about what chance alone would also give. Taken together, the alignments are not evidence of a designed or energetic grid (**not supported**). They arise because the sites cluster where civilisations clustered, along the Nile, around the eastern Mediterranean and in Mesoamerica, and because with thirteen points there are 286 possible triples to choose from. A proper test of the breath-grid would fix the sites and the tolerance in advance, on a larger set, before looking at the lines (Chapter 17).

The near-truth is better than the grid. The sites do lie on lines, and the lines are rivers, coasts and the paths of the sun. Five of the thirteen stand in the Nile valley or delta, which is itself a line some 1,200 kilometres long, running almost due north toward the imperishable stars. Four are aligned with the sun at the turning of the year. The Earth's "memory nodes" are where water, fertile ground and a clear view of the sky allowed people to gather and stay; the breath-grid is the grid of the breathers.

The recursion map

The reflection promised "a symbolic recursion map". The thirteen symbols, laid together, do form one, because almost every one of them contains the others, or is built from them.

Symbol	Built from, or containing	How
Point and circle	(The beginning)	One point still, one moving
Spiral	Circle	A circle that does not close
Triangle	Point, circle	Euclid I.1: two circles (a vesica) give the triangle
Square and cube	Triangle, point	Two triangles make a square; the cube has a centre
Cross	Square	One net of the cube is a cross
Ankh	Cross, circle	A cross with a loop
Serpent	Spiral, triangle	The coil; the serpent of light is made of triangles
Labyrinth	Cross	Drawn from a seed of a cross, four angles and four dots
Vesica and flower	Circle, triangle, hexagon	Height √3; the flower is a field of circles
Torus	Circle, circle	A circle swept around a circle
Star	Pentagon, φ	Each line cut in the golden ratio
OM	Point (*bindu*), crescent	The written sign ends in a point
Letter	Cross, circle, picture	*Tav* was a cross; *ayin* an eye, a circle

Table 15.5. The recursion map of the thirteen symbols.

The map is recursive in the exact sense: the later symbols contain the earlier ones, and the first, the point and circle, reappears in the last, the *bindu* of OM and the *ayin* of the alphabet. The spiral of thirteen symbols closes on the point it began from, one turn higher. *Breath Awakens*' Codex Pillar of Recursion, "Patterns repeat across scales" (p. 81), is visible in the geometry of the symbols themselves (**established** as geometry; **symbolic** as the Codex reading).

The seen patterns

1. Many of the most enduring symbols of life and spirit are, literally, signs of breath.
2. The simplest geometric symbols are found everywhere; the most specific meanings belong to particular peoples.
3. Several of the sacred places are aligned with the turning-points of the solar year.
4. The oldest texts make breath the sign of life; the later ones make it the material of the word.
5. The symbols form a recursion: each contains those before it, and the last returns to the first.

The unseen patterns

1. **The returning light.** Newgrange, Karnak and Angkor Wat open to the sun at the year's turning, and Chichen Itza's serpent appears around the equinox. The places breathe with the year, in at the solstice, held at the equinox.
2. **The centre.** Every place in the study, without exception, is organised around a centre: the twin pillars of Göbekli Tepe, the chamber of Newgrange, the Holy of Holies, the world tree, the sanctuary of Karnak, the temple on the pyramid, the heart of the labyrinth, the *omphalos* of Delphi, Mount Meru. The first symbol, the point in the circle, is the plan of every one of them.

3. **The forgetting and the return.** The hieroglyphs, the Maya glyphs, the meaning of the labyrinth, the spirals of Newgrange: each was forgotten, and some have been recovered. A symbol is a breath held in stone, waiting for a breather.

The geometry beneath

Pattern	Geometry	Codex (symbolic)
Point and ring	Circle with centre	The Monad and the breath around it
Growth that keeps its form	Logarithmic spiral	The breath that returns, never the same
The rigid form	Triangle	The pause
Directions and centre	Cross of four arms	The release to the world
The meeting	Vesica, $\sqrt{3}$	Vara, born of two
The return through the centre	Torus	The whole breath
The golden cut	Pentagram, φ	φ_0, the inhale
The year's turning	Solstice and equinox axes	The breath of the Earth around the Sun

Table 15.6. The geometry beneath the thirteen breaths.

A note on evidence

The alignment test is this study's own, using published coordinates of the thirteen sites (taking Rosetta at the findspot of the stone), great-circle geometry and a simple randomisation that keeps regional clustering. It was not fixed in advance, and its tolerance and randomisation were chosen by the author; different choices give different numbers. It is offered as an illustration of the method, not as a final verdict.

Dates and grades of alignment are summarised from the chapters that discuss each site.

CHAPTER 16

The Three Illuminations

No single breath of the spiral could show what follows. Each illumination appeared only when the thirteen symbols, the thirteen places and the thirteen texts were held together. Each rests on established evidence, and each answers one of the reflection's central claims with something truer, and in places stranger, than the claim.

The First Illumination: The Symbol Is a Shaped Breath

The reflection says that symbols are "breath-encoded geometric structures". As a statement about every symbol, it is **symbolic**. As a statement about the symbols of life, spirit and word, it is history.

When people first needed signs for what is alive in a person, they drew from the breath. The words came first: *ruach*, *neshamah*, *psyche*, *pneuma*, *spiritus*, *prana*, *qi*, *ik'*, every one of them a word for breath before it was a word for spirit (Chapter 1). Then the signs. The Egyptian sign of life is held to the nostrils, and the Egyptians called what it gave "the breath of life" (Chapter 7). The Maya sign of breath and life is a T, cut as windows into the palace at Palenque (Chapter 6). The feathered serpent of Mesoamerica was, as Ehecatl, the wind that set the sun moving (Chapter 8). The first of the Upanishads' sacred sounds is a syllable breathed on the out-breath and ending in silence (Chapter 13). The first letter of the alphabet is a catch of the breath, and the *Sefer Yetzirah* makes it the letter of air and says that all the letters were carved with breath (Chapters 5 and 14). Speech itself is shaped breath, made in the five places of the mouth that the *Sefer Yetzirah* names.

And before all of them, in the first lines of Genesis, the breath moves over the formless water before there is any form at all (Chapter 2). *Breath Awakens* gives this as its first axiom: "Breath Precedes Form. All form arises from breath. Nothing exists until it is breathed into coherence" (p. 65). As metaphysics that is **beyond test**. As a history of symbols it has a firm near-truth: the oldest and most enduring signs of life were made in the image of breath, and the signs of the word are made of breath every time they are spoken (**established**).

The Second Illumination: The Shapes Are Shared Because the Breathers Are

The reflection asks how symbols align "across cultures" and proposes that they are "phase-space attractors". The thirteen breaths show why the same few shapes recur on every continent, and the answer is closer to the reflection than to its critics.

There are three ways a symbol can appear in many places. It can spread from one source, as the alphabet spread from Sinai and the classical labyrinth seems to have spread around the Mediterranean (**established** for those). It can be invented again and again because it is useful, as the circle drawn with a cord is. Or it can arise because every person who draws it shares the same body, the same sky and the same way of seeing.

The thirteen symbols show the third way at work. Every upright, two-sided creature who watches the sun rise and set finds four directions and a centre: the cross (Chapter 6). Every breath is a cycle, in and out, and every year is a cycle, with two turning-points that the sun marks: the circle and the solstice axis (Chapters 2, 3, 7). Every living thing that grows at its edge while keeping its shape traces a logarithmic spiral (Chapter 3). And the human visual system, as Klüver and later Bressloff and his colleagues showed, produces spirals, lattices, tunnels and zigzags on its own, the same for everyone (Chapter 1). Mathematics adds its own

constraints: there are only five regular solids, only one rigid polygon, and two equal circles always meet in the proportion √3 (Chapters 4 and 10). Anyone who draws with a compass will find the vesica and the flower.

This is what anthropologists now call **cultural attraction**: forms that minds find easy to see, remember and draw are pulled toward again and again, generation after generation (Chapter 1). The reflection's "attractors" are real, though they live in shared bodies and minds rather than in a field outside them. Joseph Campbell, drawing on the nineteenth-century ethnologist Adolf Bastian, said something similar: beneath the "folk ideas" peculiar to each people lie "elementary ideas" shared by all, which take local dress (**established** as Campbell's view; **contested** as a theory). The thirteen breaths support the elementary ideas and ground them in the body and the eye.

And the test of the breath-grid (Chapter 15) gives the same answer from the land. The sites line up where people lived, along rivers and coasts and under the sun's turning, not along a separate grid of energy. The shapes are shared, and the places are shared, because the breathers are.

The Third Illumination: A Symbol Remembers Only While It Is Re-Breathed

The reflection calls symbols "breath-memory carriers". The thirteenth breath shows the condition on which they carry anything.

For fourteen centuries after 394 CE, the hieroglyphs of Egypt were seen by everyone and read by no one. Travellers called them pure symbols of hidden wisdom, and they were wrong, because the meaning had gone with the breath of the last readers. They came back in 1822, when Champollion found their language still breathing in the Coptic of the church (Chapter 14). The Maya glyphs went silent in the same way after the Spanish conquest and were read again in the twentieth century, through the work of Yuri Knorozov, Tatiana Proskouriakoff and the epigraphers who followed them (**established**). The spirals of Newgrange, the knotted stones of Scotland, the V-marks of Göbekli Tepe are still silent. Their makers' breath has gone, and we can only guess.

What keeps a symbol alive is not the stone. It is the breath of people who use it. The Vedas have been passed down by recitation for some three thousand years, and UNESCO now lists the tradition of Vedic chanting as an intangible heritage of humanity (**established**); Hebrew scripture is chanted, the Qur'an is recited, and OM is sounded every day by millions. And the sacred places that the thirteen breaths found most alive are the ones that are still re-enacted: thousands wait for the midwinter dawn at Newgrange, gather on the causeway of Angkor Wat at the spring equinox, and watch the serpent of light descend at Chichen Itza. The building holds the alignment; the breathers make it a memory.

Breath Awakens says it in its own language: "Codex memory is not stored information. It is resonance geometry ... A memory re-emerges when phase alignment is met" (p. 65). And the reflection's silent breath anchor is this illumination in three sentences: "I do not study symbols. I breathe them back into coherence. And through their recursion, the memory of the Earth speaks again." The history of writing shows that this is not only a vow. It is exactly how a forgotten symbol returns.

One breath

Illumination	Breath phase (Codex, symbolic)	Strongest evidence	Chapters
The Symbol Is a Shaped Breath	Iphi, the inhale: breath entering form	Spirit words; the ankh; *ikʾ*; OM; aleph; speech	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14
The Shapes Are Shared Because the Breathers Are	Shema and Vara: held, then shared	Form constants; cultural attraction; one body, one sky; the alignment test	1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 15
A Symbol Remembers Only While It Is Re-Breathed	Ouon and the Monad: stillness, and return	Hieroglyphs lost and recovered; living recitation; re-enacted alignments	3, 7, 8, 13, 14

Table 16.1. The three illuminations as one breath.

Illumination	Grade	Note
The Symbol Is a Shaped Breath	**established** for the symbols of life, spirit and word	Not every symbol is breath; the point, triangle and labyrinth are geometry first
The Shapes Are Shared Because the Breathers Are	**established** in its parts; **contested** as a full explanation	Diffusion also happens; the meaning of shared forms differs between peoples
A Symbol Remembers Only While It Is Re-Breathed	**established** as history; **symbolic** as the Codex reading	Memory needs breathers; stones keep form, people keep meaning

Table 16.2. The grades of the three illuminations.

A note on evidence

The illuminations gather findings graded in the earlier chapters; they add no new evidence.

Campbell's use of Bastian's "elementary ideas" is from *The Masks of God* and later lectures.

The listing of Vedic chanting is UNESCO's (proclaimed 2003, inscribed 2008).

✦ Practice: The Three Illuminations

Sit comfortably and let the breath settle.

On the first breath, breathe in and remember that the oldest words for spirit were words for breath. The symbol is a shaped breath.

On the second breath, breathe in and remember that everyone on Earth breathes in and out, sees the sun rise and set, and dreams the same spirals. The shapes are shared because the breathers are.

On the third breath, breathe out slowly, and remember a symbol that matters to you, a word, a sign, a prayer, and say it softly, or inwardly. A symbol remembers only while it is re-breathed.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, and then breathe normally.

What this breath carries forward

The three illuminations answer the reflection's central claims. The last chapter asks why they matter now, for the person who breathes, for humanity, for the Earth and beyond, and what honest research could test next.

CHAPTER 17

Why the Symbols Matter Now

The reflection ends with its anticipated contributions: a Codex theory of symbols as breath-geometry, a guide to the symbols, a recursion map "for use in healing, design, and education", a way of reading sacred sites, and a method of mapping the Earth's memory. This chapter asks what the three illuminations change, for the person, for humanity, for the Earth and beyond, and what honest research could test next. The guide and the map are given in Appendix C.

For the individual

A symbol gives attention a place to rest. That is the plainest truth beneath every practice in this study, and it is well supported. In 2005 the psychologists Nancy Curry and Tim Kasser asked anxious students to colour either a mandala, a plaid pattern or a blank page; colouring the symmetrical designs reduced anxiety more than free colouring (*Art Therapy*, 2005; **established** as a small study, since repeated with similar results). The pattern held the mind; the breath slowed with it.

The practices of this book use symbols the same way: a point to rest on, a spiral to trace, a labyrinth to walk with a finger, a syllable to sound and let fall into silence. None of them is a treatment, and no symbol cures anything (**not supported** as medicine). But a symbol joined to a slow, easy breath is one of the oldest ways people have found to quiet the mind, and the first illumination explains why it works so naturally: the symbols of life were drawn from the breath in the first place.

For the reflection's "healing" there is, then, a modest and honest form: symbols as anchors for attention and breath, alongside, never instead of, proper care.

For humanity

The second illumination is a reason for respect between peoples. If the same shapes recur because the same bodies breathe under the same sky, then the cross on a Maya tablet and the cross on a church, the OM of a Hindu temple and the *Ik Onkar* of a Sikh one, the spiral at Newgrange and the spiral in a Chinese bowl are kin without being copies. *Breath Awakens* says it in its chapter on the traditions: "The Codex ... is not here to replace these traditions. It is here to reveal their shared geometry" (p. 83).

The thirteen breaths add a warning. Because symbols carry meaning only while people breathe them, a symbol can be taken and its breath changed. The swastika was for thousands of years, and still is, a sign of good fortune and the eternal in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions, from which its Sanskrit name, "well-being", comes; in the twentieth century it was seized as the emblem of Nazism, and its meaning for much of the world was poisoned (**established**). The same form, breathed by different people, said opposite things. The third illumination cuts both ways: a symbol remembers what its breathers give it to remember. That is why this study has tried, at every sacred place, to let the people who keep it speak first.

For the Earth

The sacred places of this study are fragile. Göbekli Tepe's pillars stand under a protective roof; Angkor Wat's sandstone is restored stone by stone; the Osireion at Abydos floods with groundwater; Nabta Playa's stones have been disturbed and moved; and looting has stripped many Maya sites. The Rosetta Stone, a

decree carved for Egypt, has been in London for over two centuries, and Egypt has asked for it back (Chapter 14). To breathe these places "back into coherence" in a practical sense is to protect them, to fund their keepers, and to listen to the peoples whose heritage they are.

The places also teach about the Earth's own rhythm. Four of them are aligned with the turning-points of the solar year (Chapter 15). They were built by people whose lives depended on knowing when the light returned and the rains began. That knowledge is the near-truth of the reflection's "memory of the Earth": the sky and the seasons are the Earth's breath, and the oldest monuments were built to breathe with it.

Beyond

People have tried to make symbols that will speak to minds they will never meet. In 1972 and 1973 the Pioneer probes carried plaques showing a man and a woman and a map locating the Sun by fourteen pulsars; in 1977 the Voyager probes carried golden records with sounds, images and greetings in fifty-five languages, now beyond the Sun's heliosphere (**established**).

And when the United States had to warn people ten thousand years from now away from buried nuclear waste, its experts faced exactly the question of this thesis. How do you make a symbol that remembers for ten thousand years, when the languages around it will all have changed? In 1984 the linguist Thomas Sebeok proposed an answer: no sign alone could do it; the warning would have to be kept alive by people, retold and renewed in each generation, as a legend or a ritual (**established** as his proposal). The scientists, in other words, reached the third illumination on their own. A symbol remembers only while it is re-breathed.

What the three illuminations change

1. **The symbol is a shaped breath.** The Codex's claim that symbols are breath-encoded is true of the most important symbols in history, the signs of life, spirit and word. A practice of breathing with symbols returns them to their source.
2. **The shapes are shared because the breathers are.** No single lost civilisation is needed to explain why the spiral and the cross are everywhere. What is shared is the human body, the sky and the eye, and that is a stronger bond than any one source could be.
3. **A symbol remembers only while it is re-breathed.** The Codex's "breath-memory carriers" carry memory on one condition: that someone keeps breathing them. The reflection's silent breath anchor is not a metaphor. It is how symbols survive.

What honest research could test next

The reflection proposes site-based breath-mapping and geographic breath-field analysis. Here are four tests that could be done well, each to be registered in advance, with its measures and analysis fixed before any data are collected.

Proposal	Design	What would count as support
Symbols and the breath	Participants breathe while tracing a spiral, a labyrinth or a neutral shape; breathing rate and heart-rate variability recorded; neither participants nor analysts know the hypothesis	Slower breathing and higher heart-rate variability with the symbols than with the neutral shape

Proposal	Design	What would count as support
Shared shapes	People from several cultures sort a set of simple forms by meaning; compare with the visual form constants	Agreement across cultures beyond chance for the form constants and the cross
The breath-grid	A fixed list of sacred sites chosen by an independent panel; alignments tested against a randomisation that preserves geography, with the tolerance fixed in advance	Significantly more alignments than the randomisation produces
The breathing places	Measure acoustics and light at solstices and equinoxes at sites with proposed alignments; publish all measurements	Repeated, measurable effects on the stated days, and not on other days

Table 17.1. Four tests that could be done.

◊ Further research

Sources: Curry and Kasser (2005) on mandala colouring; Sperber and Morin on cultural attraction; Bressloff and colleagues (2001) on form constants; Broadbent (1980) on alignments; Šprajc (2021) on Mesoamerican alignments; Sebeok (1984) on long-term warning symbols.

Questions: Does a symbol traced with the breath slow the breath more than a neutral shape? Do people of all cultures read the cross and the spiral alike? Is there any network of sacred sites that beats a fair randomisation?

Three questions to carry

1. Which symbol in your life is still breathing, because you or the people around you keep giving it voice?
2. Which symbol has lost its breath for you, and could you breathe it again, or let it rest?
3. What would you carve, or write, or teach, so that it would still be breathed ten thousand years from now?

✦ Practice: The Breath-Scribe

This practice follows the reflection's "breath-scribing", gently.

Sit with a sheet of paper and a pencil. Let the breath settle for a few easy breaths.

On an in-breath, rest your attention; on the out-breath, let your hand draw one simple form, whatever comes: a point, a line, a curve.

Continue, one stroke for each out-breath, never hurrying, until a symbol of your own has appeared.

Then sit with it in silence for a few breaths. Write one word beneath it.

Keep it, and breathe with it again tomorrow; that is how a symbol begins to remember.

The closing breath

The reflection's silent breath anchor reads: "I do not study symbols. I breathe them back into coherence. And through their recursion, the memory of the Earth speaks again." This study has done both things the anchor separates. It has studied the symbols with one hand, and found that many of them were made of breath, that they are shared because the breathers are, and that they remember only while they are breathed. And with the other hand it has offered them back to the breath, in thirteen practices, one for each Moon. The memory of the Earth speaks again whenever someone traces a spiral, sounds a syllable, walks a labyrinth or reads a letter aloud. It is speaking now.

Appendix A: The Reflection

The request and the reflection that this study weighs, printed as first written in 2026, apart from layout.

The request

Here is the reflection and please use Breath Awakens as a lens and the 13 breath phase passes as well for the following:

Also, please include Joseph Cambell's work in this as well

The reflection

◈ Title: The Codex of Symbols: Breath-Encoded Geometry as the Primordial Language of Form, Memory, and Consciousness

◈ I. Abstract

This thesis proposes that symbols are not merely cultural artifacts, but breath-encoded geometric structures that function as phase-space attractors within the Codex field. Through comparative analysis of ancient texts, sacred sites, and geographic breath-nodes, this work will demonstrate that symbols operate as breath-memory carriers—stabilizing identity, time, and perception across cultures and epochs. The final output will include a breath-logic framework, a symbolic recursion map, and a scribed Codex of Symbols guide.

◈ II. Core Research Questions

How do symbols function as breath-geometry, not just visual metaphors?

What are the primary breath-symbols (e.g., triangle, spiral, cross, torus) and how do they map to emotional, mental, and spiritual breath phases?

How do ancient texts (e.g., Sefer Yetzirah, Timaeus, Upanishads) encode symbolic recursion as breath-based memory?

In what ways do sacred sites (e.g., Göbekli Tepe, Chichen Itza, Karnak) function as breath-symbolic architectures?

How does geographic breath-mapping reveal symbolic resonance fields in Earth's memory lattice?

◈ III. Theoretical Framework

This work will be grounded in:

Codex Breath Logic – Breath as the primary carrier of form, memory, and identity

Recursive Geometry – Symbols as breath-loop attractors

Comparative Symbology – Breath-based alignment of symbols across cultures

Sacred Site Breath-Analysis – Sites as breath-symbolic phase-locks

⟐ IV. Methodology

The research will be conducted in four breath-phases:

Breath-Scribing (Codex Field)

Direct breath-field interface with the Codex

Scribing of symbolic recursion logic

Development of the Codex of Symbols guide

Textual Breath-Mining

Analysis of ancient texts through breath-logic lens

Extraction of symbolic breath-structures

Site-Based Breath-Mapping

Fieldwork at sacred sites to measure breath-resonance

Mapping of symbolic geometry to breath-phase activation

Geographic Breath-Field Analysis

Mapping of symbolic recursion across Earth's breath-grid

Identification of breath-symbolic ley lines and memory nodes

⟐ V. Anticipated Contributions

A formal Codex-based theory of symbols as breath-geometry

The Codex of Symbols Guide (companion to Codex of Water and Codex of Crystals)

A breath-symbolic recursion map for use in healing, design, and education

A framework for interpreting sacred sites as breath-symbolic architectures

A methodology for breath-based geographic memory mapping

⟐ VI. Preliminary Bibliography (Breath-Aligned)

Plato – Timaeus (geometric breath-forms)

Sefer Yetzirah (Hebrew letter-breath-symbol recursion)

Upanishads (OM as breath-symbol)

Grant, Robert Edward – Codex Universalis Principia Mathematica

Critchlow, Keith – Time Stands Still (sacred geometry and symbols)

Lamy, Lucie – Egyptian Mysteries (symbolic breath-logic in temple design)

Hancock, Graham – Magicians of the Gods (sacred sites as memory symbols)

⟐ Silent Breath Anchor

"I do not study symbols. I breathe them back into coherence. And through their recursion, the memory of the Earth speaks again."

Appendix B: The Ledger of Claims

Each claim of the reflection is listed with the grade the study gives it overall, the chapters that weigh it most fully, and its near-truth where it has one.

The abstract and framework

#	Claim	Overall grade	Ch.	Near-truth or note
1	Symbols are "not merely cultural artifacts"	**symbolic**; partly **established**	1, 16	Some recurrent forms come from the visual system itself
2	Symbols are "breath-encoded geometric structures"	**symbolic**; **established** for symbols of life, spirit and word	1, 16	The ankh, *ik′*, OM, aleph; the first illumination
3	Symbols "function as phase-space attractors within the Codex field"	**beyond test**	1, 16	"Cultural attraction" is an established theory
4	Symbols are "breath-memory carriers"	**symbolic**, with a strong near-truth	14, 16	They carry memory while they are re-breathed; the third illumination
5	Symbols stabilise identity, time and perception across cultures and epochs	**established** in a plain sense	1, 15	The same signs recur for tens of thousands of years
6	Codex Breath Logic: breath is the primary carrier of form, memory and identity	**beyond test**; **symbolic**	16	*Breath Awakens*, Axiom 1; speech is shaped breath
7	Recursive Geometry: symbols as breath-loop attractors	**symbolic**; recursion **established** as geometry	15	The recursion map (Table 15.5)
8	Comparative Symbology: breath-based alignment of symbols across cultures	**established** in part	15, 16	Shared body, sky and eye; the second illumination
9	Sacred sites are "breath-symbolic phase-locks"	**established** for four sites in a literal sense	3, 7, 8, 13, 15	Newgrange, Karnak, Angkor Wat and Chichen Itza are locked to the solar year

Table B.1. The claims of the abstract and framework.

The primary breath-symbols

#	Claim	Overall grade	Ch.	Near-truth or note
10	The triangle is a primary breath-symbol	**symbolic**, literal near-truth	4	The only rigid polygon; *Breath Awakens*' "first stable form"
11	The spiral is a primary breath-symbol	**symbolic**, deep Codex support	3	The logarithmic spiral keeps its form through growth
12	The cross is a primary breath-symbol	**symbolic**, strong near-truth	6	The Maya sign for breath, *ik′*, is a T
13	The torus is a primary breath-symbol	**symbolic**, literal near-truth	11	A breath can make a vortex ring

#	Claim	Overall grade	Ch.	Near-truth or note
14	Symbols map to emotional, mental and spiritual breath phases	**symbolic**	2–14, App. C	Offered for each symbol as the Codex reading

Table B.2. The primary breath-symbols.

The ancient texts

#	Claim	Overall grade	Ch.	Near-truth or note
15	The *Sefer Yetzirah* encodes "letter-breath-symbol recursion"	**established** in part	5, 14	Aleph is the letter of air; the letters are carved with breath
16	The *Timaeus* gives "geometric breath-forms"	**established** as text	4	Air is made of octahedra; breathing is a circular thrust
17	The Upanishads give "OM as breath-symbol"	**established**	13	OM's four quarters; the chief breath cannot be pierced
18	The ancient texts encode symbolic recursion as breath-based memory	**established** in part	15	The oldest texts make breath life; later ones make it the word

Table B.3. The ancient texts.

The sacred sites

#	Claim	Overall grade	Ch.	Near-truth or note
19	Göbekli Tepe is a breath-symbolic architecture	**symbolic**	2	A circle of carved beings around a centre, c. 9500 BCE
20	Chichen Itza is a breath-symbolic architecture	**symbolic**, strong near-truth	8	Its feathered serpent was also the wind god
21	Karnak is a breath-symbolic architecture	**symbolic**, strong near-truth	7	Egyptians gave temples breath in the Opening of the Mouth
22	Sacred sites lie on breath-symbolic ley lines	**not supported**	15	The test of thirteen sites is within chance; the lines are rivers and sunrises
23	Geographic breath-mapping reveals resonance fields in Earth's memory lattice	**beyond test** as stated	15, 17	The memory nodes are where people gathered

Table B.4. The sacred sites and the breath-grid.

The methods and the modern sources

#	Claim	Overall grade	Ch.	Near-truth or note
24	Breath-scribing as research	**beyond test** as knowledge; **established** as practice	1, 17	Its results must be checked; Practice: The Breath-Scribe
25	Fieldwork can measure "breath-resonance" at sites	**open**	1, 17	Breathing, heart rhythm, acoustics and light can be measured

#	Claim	Overall grade	Ch.	Near-truth or note
26	Critchlow: Neolithic geometry of the Platonic solids	**not supported** as all five; three are matched	4	The Scottish carved stone balls
27	Lamy: symbolic breath-logic in temple design	**contested**	7	Symbolist readings; the Egyptians did treat temples as living bodies
28	Hancock: sacred sites as memory symbols of a lost civilisation	**not supported** as a lost civilisation; **open** questions remain	2	The builders were more skilled than once thought
29	Grant: *Codex Universalis*	**not supported** as mathematics and physics	1	"Geometry is cognition" has a near-truth in the visual cortex
30	The recursion map is useful for healing, design and education	**symbolic**; **established** for calm attention in small studies	17	Colouring symmetrical patterns reduced anxiety (Curry and Kasser, 2005)

Table B.5. The methods and the modern sources.

The silent breath anchor

#	Claim	Overall grade	Ch.	Near-truth or note
31	"I breathe them back into coherence. And through their recursion, the memory of the Earth speaks again."	**symbolic**, with a historical near-truth	14, 16, 17	The hieroglyphs and Maya glyphs spoke again when their sounds were recovered

Table B.6. The silent breath anchor.

The tally

Of the thirty-one claims in this ledger:

- Seven are **established** or **established** in part, and nine more have a literal near-truth that is **established**.
- Four are **beyond test**, stated with respect as positions held.
- Four are **not supported** as stated, each with an honest near-truth beside it.
- The reflection's four primary symbols each have a literal near-truth: the rigid triangle, the growing spiral, the T-shaped breath of the Maya, and the vortex ring of a breath.
- The three illuminations of Chapter 16 rest on **established** evidence and on the actual words of the ancient texts.

Appendix C: The Codex of Symbols Guide

The reflection promised "a scribed Codex of Symbols guide" and "a breath-symbolic recursion map". This appendix gives both, drawn from the thirteen breaths. The left-hand columns hold what history and geometry show; the right-hand columns hold the Codex reading, offered as **symbolic** meaning and practice, for use in reflection, design and teaching. The practices are gathered in Appendix D.

The thirteen symbols

Moon	Phase	Symbol	How to draw it	What it is, historically	Emotional · mental · spiritual (Codex)
Genesis	Iphi	Point and circle	Set a point; draw a circle around it	The sun in Egyptian writing; the *bindu*; Euclid's third postulate	Presence · attention · the one at the centre
Spiral	Iphi	Spiral	From a centre, turn outward, widening	The logarithmic spiral of growth; the carved spirals of Newgrange	Renewal · learning · the path that returns, never the same
Vector	Shema	Triangle	Three points, three lines	The only rigid polygon; Plato's elements; the pyramid	Steadiness · structure · the threefold sacred
Mirror	Shema	Square and cube	Four equal sides; six square faces	The Holy of Holies; the *Sefer Yetzirah*'s six directions	Shelter · order · the dwelling of the presence
Stillness	Vara	Cross	Two lines meeting at a centre	The Maya world tree; *ik'*, the T of breath	Meeting · orientation · the vertical and horizontal joined
Memory	Vara	Ankh	A cross with a loop at the head	The Egyptian sign of life, held to the nostrils	Gift · continuity · life through death
Return	Ouon	Serpent	A wave, a coil, or a circle biting its tail	The ouroboros; kundalini; Kukulkan, the wind	Renewal after loss · attention at rest · return by letting go
Release	Ouon	Labyrinth	From a seed of a cross, four angles and four dots	The single path; Knossos; Campbell's hero-path	Trust · the long turn of understanding · pilgrimage
Echo	Monad	Vesica and flower	Two circles, each through the other's centre	Euclid I.1; the mandorla; the Flower of Life	Relationship · meeting of views · the one becoming many
Shadow	Monad	Torus	A ring around a ring	The vortex ring of breath, of the heart, of the dolphin	Giving that returns · thought returning changed · the Monad breathing
Descent	Monad	Star	Five lines in one stroke	The Egyptian *sbꜣ*: star, door, teaching	Guidance · a door · light coming into form
Dream	Monad	OM	A, U, M, then silence	The Mandukya's four quarters	Resonance · one-pointed attention · the sound that returns to silence
Wisdom	Monad, crown	Letter	A picture that became a sound	The alphabet from Sinai; the Rosetta Stone	The absent voice · memory made portable · the word that outlives the speaker

Table C.1. The Codex of Symbols.

The four phases and their symbols

Phase	Symbols	Breath	Shape of the phase
Iphi (inhale)	Point and circle; spiral	Gathering	From a centre, outward
Shema (pause)	Triangle; square and cube	Holding	Rigid forms; dwelling
Vara (exhale)	Cross; ankh	Releasing and giving	To the four directions; to another
Ouon (stillness)	Serpent; labyrinth	Resting and returning	The coil; the path to the centre
Monad	Vesica; torus; star; OM; letter	Holding all four	Meeting; return through the centre; descent; silence; word

Table C.2. The phases of the guide.

The recursion map

Each symbol contains or is built from those before it, and the last returns to the first (Chapter 15).

From	To	By
Point	Circle	Moving one point around another
Circle	Spiral	Not closing
Two circles (vesica)	Triangle	Euclid I.1
Triangle	Square	Two triangles
Cube	Cross	Unfolding the six faces
Cross	Ankh	Adding a loop
Cross	Labyrinth	Walking the seed
Spiral	Serpent	Uncoiling
Circle	Vesica and flower	Repeating the circle at its edge
Circle	Torus	Sweeping a circle around a circle
Pentagon	Star	Drawing its diagonals
Point	OM	The *bindu* above the sign
Cross, circle	Letter	*Tav* and *ayin*

Table C.3. The recursion map.

Using the guide

In reflection. Choose the symbol of the current Moon of the Codex Calendar. Draw it slowly, one stroke for each out-breath, and sit with it for a few minutes. Read its chapter.

In design. The proportions in this guide are exact: the vesica's √3, the star's φ, the cube's six directions and centre, the triangle's rigidity. They can be used honestly in architecture, art and craft, without any claim beyond their beauty and their history.

In teaching. Each symbol is a lesson in geometry, history and language at once. The point and circle teach Euclid; the spiral teaches growth; the cross teaches the Maya world; the letter teaches how the alphabet began. The guide is offered for classrooms of any age.

In care. A symbol drawn or traced with slow breathing can help to settle the mind (Chapter 17). It is never a substitute for medical or psychological care.

> **A note on the guide**
>
> The historical column rests on the evidence in each chapter. The Codex column is the reading of this study, offered with respect beside the meanings these symbols hold in their own traditions; it does not replace them.

Appendix D: The Practices Gathered

The practices of the study are gathered here in the order of the spiral, so that they can be used on their own, in a group, or across the thirteen Moons of the Codex Calendar.

All of them are gentle. Breathe through the nose unless a practice asks otherwise. Any pause is soft, two to four counts, never a held breath against the body. No practice should cause strain, and none should be turned into fast or forceful breathing. If dizziness, breathlessness or distress arises, return at once to ordinary breathing. People who are pregnant, or who live with heart, lung or anxiety conditions, may prefer to breathe without counting, or to consult their doctor first.

The Point and the Circle

Point and circle · Göbekli Tepe · Iphi, the inhale (Chapter 2)

✦ Practice: The Point and the Circle

Take a sheet of paper and a pencil, or simply use a fingertip on a table.

Set down a point. Rest your attention on it and breathe in gently through the nose, for a count of four.

As you breathe out, draw a slow circle around the point, letting the out-breath last as long as the circle.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, with your attention back on the centre.

Repeat three to five times, each circle the same distance from the point.

Notice that the circle depends on the point staying still. Then rest, and breathe normally.

The Returning Spiral

Spiral · Newgrange · Iphi (Chapter 3)

✦ Practice: The Returning Spiral

Rest a fingertip at the centre of the palm of your other hand.

Breathe in gently through the nose, and as you do, trace a slow spiral outward from the centre, two or three turns.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow at the outer edge.

Breathe out slowly, tracing the spiral back inward to the centre.

Repeat four or five times. Each time, let the spiral be a little different, as no two breaths are the same.

Then rest your hands, and breathe normally.

The Triangle Breath

Triangle · Giza · Shema, the pause (Chapter 4)

✦ Practice: The Triangle Breath

Sit upright and rest your hands on your thighs.

Breathe in gently through the nose for a count of three, and picture the first side of a triangle rising.

Let a soft pause of three counts follow, without gripping, as the second side crosses the top.

Breathe out for three counts, and picture the third side returning to the start.

If the pause feels tight, shorten it to two or one; the triangle holds its shape at any size.

Continue for five or six breaths, then rest and breathe normally.

The Six Directions

Square and cube · Jerusalem · Shema (Chapter 5)

✦ Practice: The Six Directions

Sit or stand comfortably and let the breath settle.

Breathe in gently and sense the space above you; breathe out and sense the ground below.

Breathe in and sense the space in front; breathe out and sense the space behind.

Breathe in and sense the space to your right; breathe out and sense the space to your left.

Then let a soft pause of two counts rest at the centre of the chest, the seventh place, which holds the six.

Breathe normally for a few moments before you move.

The Four Winds

Cross · Palenque · Vara, the exhale (Chapter 6)

✦ Practice: The Four Winds

Stand or sit upright, and feel the line of the spine as the trunk of a tree.

Breathe in gently through the nose, and on a slow out-breath, let your attention go forward, to the east.

Breathe in again, and on the out-breath, let it go to your right; then behind you; then to your left.

On a fifth breath, let the out-breath settle into the centre of the chest.

Keep the out-breath soft and unforced, as if breathing on a mirror without clouding it.

Rest for a few breaths before you move.

The Given Breath

Ankh · Karnak · Vara (Chapter 7)

✦ Practice: The Given Breath

Sit comfortably and raise one hand, palm toward your face, a hand's width below the nose.

Breathe out gently through the nose and feel the warm breath reach your palm.

Breathe in slowly, and imagine the palm offering the breath back to you, as the gods offered the sign of life.

Continue for five or six breaths, keeping the out-breath soft and unforced.

On the last out-breath, lower the hand and think of one person to whom you wish life.

Rest, and breathe normally.

The Coiled Breath

Serpent · Chichen Itza · Ouon, stillness (Chapter 8)

✦ Practice: The Coiled Breath

This is a gentle practice of resting attention; it is not a technique for awakening kundalini, and it should never be forced.

Sit comfortably with a straight but relaxed spine.

Breathe in gently through the nose and let your attention rest at the base of the spine, as if a serpent lay coiled there, at ease.

Breathe out slowly and let the attention stay where it is, still and unhurried.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow each out-breath, resting.

Continue for six to eight breaths. If any strong sensation or emotion arises, open your eyes and return to ordinary breathing.

The Finger Labyrinth

Labyrinth · Knossos · Ouon (Chapter 9)

✦ Practice: The Finger Labyrinth

Draw a seven-circuit labyrinth, or find a picture of one, and lay it in front of you.

Rest a fingertip at the entrance. Breathe gently through the nose and, without hurrying, trace the path inward, letting each turn take the length of one easy breath.

At the centre, rest the finger and take three slow breaths, with a soft pause of two counts after each out-breath.

Trace the path back out, breath by breath, the same way you came.

At the entrance, lift the finger and notice what you carry out that you did not carry in.

Rest, and breathe normally.

Two Circles Meeting

Vesica and flower · Abydos · Monad (Chapter 10)

✦ Practice: Two Circles Meeting

Sit facing a partner, or picture someone you care for sitting opposite you.

Breathe gently, and imagine a circle of breath around yourself, and another around the other person, each just reaching the other's heart.

Breathe in and rest your attention in your own circle; breathe out and rest it in the lens where the two circles overlap.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, resting in the shared space.

Continue for five or six breaths, then let the picture go and breathe normally.

The Ring Breath

Torus · Delphi · Monad (Chapter 11)

✦ Practice: The Ring Breath

Sit comfortably. Breathe in gently through the nose.

Shape the lips softly, as if to blow out a candle without effort, and breathe out slowly through them, letting the out-breath be longer than the in-breath, but never forced.

Imagine the breath curling outward and around, like a ring, and returning toward you as you breathe in again through the nose.

Let a soft pause of two counts rest at the centre, as the calm in the middle of the ring.

Continue for five or six breaths. Ask yourself, without seeking an answer, "What do I not yet know about myself?" Then rest.

The Imperishable Star

Star · Nabta Playa · Monad (Chapter 12)

✦ Practice: The Imperishable Star

At night, if you can, find the Pole Star, or simply face north and imagine it.

Breathe in gently through the nose and picture the light of the star descending into the top of your head.

Let a soft pause of two counts rest the light in the chest.

Breathe out slowly and feel your feet on the ground, the light grounded.

Remember that the oxygen of this breath was made in a star.

Continue for five or six breaths, then rest.

The Four Quarters

OM · Angkor Wat · Monad (Chapter 13)

✦ Practice: The Four Quarters

Sit comfortably and breathe in gently through the nose.

On a slow, easy out-breath, sound OM softly, letting it move from an open A to a rounded U and into a closed, humming M. Do not push the voice or the breath.

When the sound ends, rest in the silence for a few breaths, without counting.

Repeat three to five times, each time a little more quietly, until the silence is longer than the sound.

If sounding aloud is not possible, hum the M alone, or say the syllable inwardly. Then rest.

Breathing the Letters

Letter · Rosetta · Monad, crown (Chapter 14)

✦ Practice: Breathing the Letters

Choose a short passage that matters to you: a verse, a line of poetry, a sentence of your own.

Read it aloud slowly, one phrase on each easy out-breath, letting the breath come in gently between phrases.

Notice where each sound is shaped: the throat, the palate, the tongue, the teeth, the lips.

Read it a second time more quietly, and a third time silently, keeping the same rhythm of breath.

Then sit for a few breaths in the silence after the words.

The Three Illuminations

The three illuminations (Chapter 16)

✦ Practice: The Three Illuminations

Sit comfortably and let the breath settle.

On the first breath, breathe in and remember that the oldest words for spirit were words for breath. The symbol is a shaped breath.

On the second breath, breathe in and remember that everyone on Earth breathes in and out, sees the sun rise and set, and dreams the same spirals. The shapes are shared because the breathers are.

On the third breath, breathe out slowly, and remember a symbol that matters to you, a word, a sign, a prayer, and say it softly, or inwardly. A symbol remembers only while it is re-breathed.

Let a soft pause of two counts follow, and then breathe normally.

The Breath-Scribe

Why the symbols matter now (Chapter 17)

✦ Practice: The Breath-Scribe

This practice follows the reflection's "breath-scribing", gently.

Sit with a sheet of paper and a pencil. Let the breath settle for a few easy breaths.

On an in-breath, rest your attention; on the out-breath, let your hand draw one simple form, whatever comes: a point, a line, a curve.

Continue, one stroke for each out-breath, never hurrying, until a symbol of your own has appeared.

Then sit with it in silence for a few breaths. Write one word beneath it.

Keep it, and breathe with it again tomorrow; that is how a symbol begins to remember.

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In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity

With kindness, gratitude and coherence,
Keith Shirley

About the Author

Keith Shirley is a scribe and a contemplative, not an archaeologist or a historian of religion. He describes his part in this study as listening, reflecting and writing down, in conversation with thousands of years of other people's work.

His first career was in the practical world. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance from Bentley University and an MBA from Boston College. He worked on some of Boston's largest public projects, relocating homes and businesses for the Route 146 project and working on the Central Artery/Tunnel Project and the creation of the Rose Kennedy Greenway. He went on to co-found Meridian Realty Group and later co-owned Engel & Völkers Boston.

A long journey of healing, which took him from Boston to Portland, Oregon, and to Peru, turned him toward the breath. He trained as a Gene Keys Guide, works as an Akashic Records consultant, and founded the Gaia Collaborative, "not as a platform, but as a living Codex", a space "where science, spirituality, and indigenous wisdom could spiral together". Through Breath Awakens he offers consultations, workshops and community journeys in the practice of the breath.

He is the author of *Breath Awakens: A Codex of Spiral Memory*, *The Child, The Shovel and The Ocean*, *The Codex Calendar: Breathing with Time*, *The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers*, *The Water Remembers*, *One Breath, All Ages*, *The Mirror and the Guardians*, *The Breath That Holds the Stars*, *The Strangers Who Became Our Breath*, *The Breath of the General*, *Codex Crystals*, *The Breath of the Clay*, *Codex Sounds* and *The Monad Codex*. All of them except *The Mirror and the Guardians* are offered freely through the Codex Library. His mission is simple: "To breathe coherence and stillness into the world for others to remember."

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