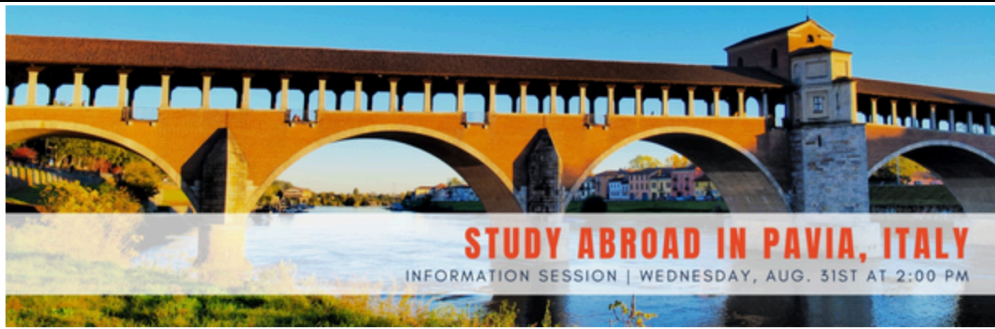


GILGAMESH, PART 2



NEXT TIME: PLATO

ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE
CRITO



STUDY ABROAD IN PAVIA, ITALY

INFORMATION SESSION | WEDNESDAY, AUG. 31ST AT 2:00 PM

Illinois in Pavia Information Session

Event Type Informational

Sponsor LAS International Programs & Italian Department

Location Hybrid (See event description)

Date Sep 1, 2021 2:00 - 2:50 pm

Contact Kyle Schmude

E-Mail kschmud2@illinois.edu

Views 29

Originating [Illinois Abroad Week Events Calendar](#)

Event description: Join Eleonora Stoppino, Undergraduate Advisor for Italian, and LAS International Programs to learn more about the Illinois in Pavia Programs. This information session will provide students with an overview of the program and an opportunity to hear from students who have recently studied abroad in Pavia. We encourage students to explore the course catalog at the University of Pavia and the various program tracks:

- LAS: Humanities + Social Sciences in Italy
- LAS: ECON in Italy
- LAS: MCB in Italy

This program is multidisciplinary and open to students in all majors!

Note: this event will be synchronously held in-person and over Zoom. Please feel free to attend in the way that suits you and your schedule best!

Format: Hybrid (in-person and virtual)

Location: Lucy Ellis Lounge/1080 FLB

GILGAMESH & ENKIDU

- A way of exploring two boundaries: human and divine on the one hand (Gilgamesh), and human and animal, on the other (Enkidu)
- Already this is science fiction: *Gilgamesh* is trying to figure out what it means to be human
- There is another category to explore here, as well: the divine, the human, the animal and the *monstrous*



HUMBABA

- A *chimeric* demon: face of a lion, teeth like tusks, breathes fire, super-powered hearing
- From god to man (Gilgamesh), from man to animal (Enkidu), from animal to demon (Humbaba)
- The monstrous is a different way of exploring something that is innate to the human: we are part of the natural world, and yet we are also *unnatural* (all aspects of culture: speech, sexual repression, hairstyling, etc.)



HUMBABA

- All of the battles that are fought are primarily verbal (Gilgamesh convinces Enkidu; Enkidu convinces Gilgamesh; Humbaba insults them, etc.)
- A 2015 tablet found in Iraq added new lines to Book V: a description of the Cedar Forest ("cedar resin oozed out, drizzling like rain"), and indications that Humbaba and Enkidu were friends when Enkidu was still wild, and before he became human
- Are all humans former monsters?



OVERVIEW

- Book VI: Gilgamesh insults Ishtar, who unleashes Bull of Heaven (Taurus)
- Book VII: Enkidu dreams he is marked for death; dies
- Book VIII: Grieving for Enkidu
- Book IX: Gilgamesh seeks Utnapishtim, the immortal
- Book X: Urshanabi, the ferryman
- Book XI: the story of the Flood; the plant of youth



DEATH OF ENKIDU

- narrative slows (dreams, long process of dying, death)
- narrative stops (book VIII: grieving); Enkidu as still image
- we need a new narrative impetus: Gilgamesh acquires psychological depth, fear (becomes like a mortal man)
- to find Utnapishtim, new borders and boundaries must be crossed





VOYAGE OF GILGAMESH

- strangely, in seeking eternal life, Gilgamesh becomes a shade, a shadow of his former self
- ragged, a vagabond, dressed in animal skins, separate from civilization, on his way to an inevitable death—he becomes Enkidu
- This is how Gilgamesh falls away from the divine, and ends suspended between the divine and the animal — that is, as a human being







THE FUTURE OF GILGAMESH

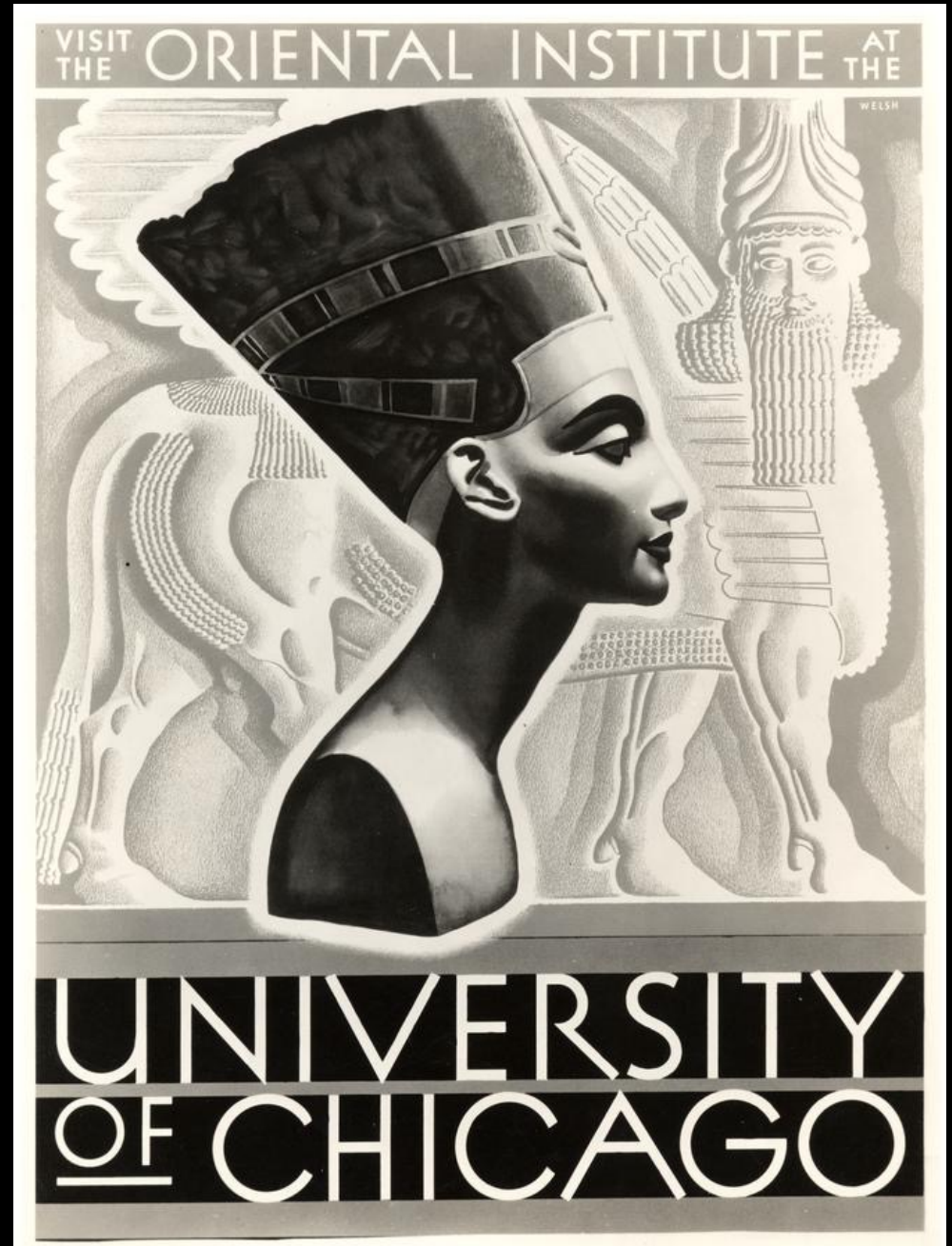
THE FUTURE OF GILGAMESH



MI NOMBRE ES
GILGAMESH.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

- the re-discovery of *Gilgamesh* takes place in 1853: *romantic modernity*
- romanticism = fascination with “authentic” ancient folk cultures and mythologies (antidote to modernity): Egypt, Sumer, Norse myths, Greeks (esp. Homer), etc.
- these become loaded with mysticism, spirituality and fantasy



BACK TO THE FUTURE

- by the 1920s, wave of Neo-Babylonian architecture (the ziggurat, Babylonian and Assyrian motifs, Berlin's Ishtar Gate) goes hand in hand with obsession over pyramids and mummies
- these images become curiously linked to the future, a kind of "paleo-science-fiction"
- they even served as markers of modernity, but an alternative modernity



"The Ziggurat," Sacramento, California



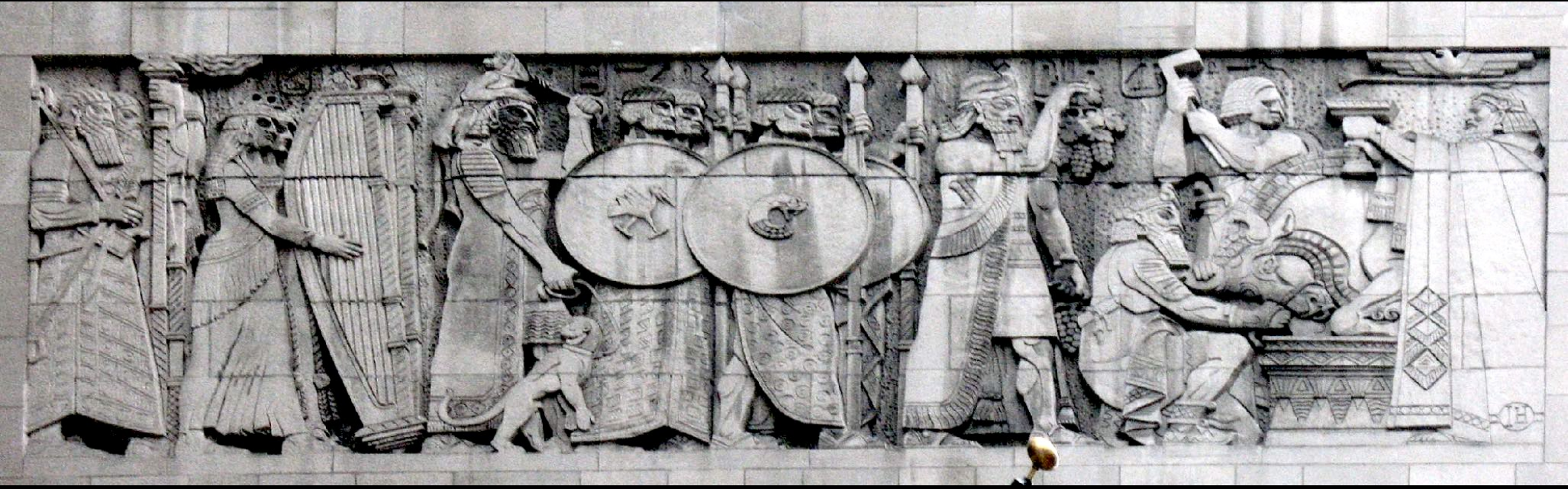
"Hanging Gardens" apartments, Birmingham, UK



Scampia housing projects, Naples, Italy

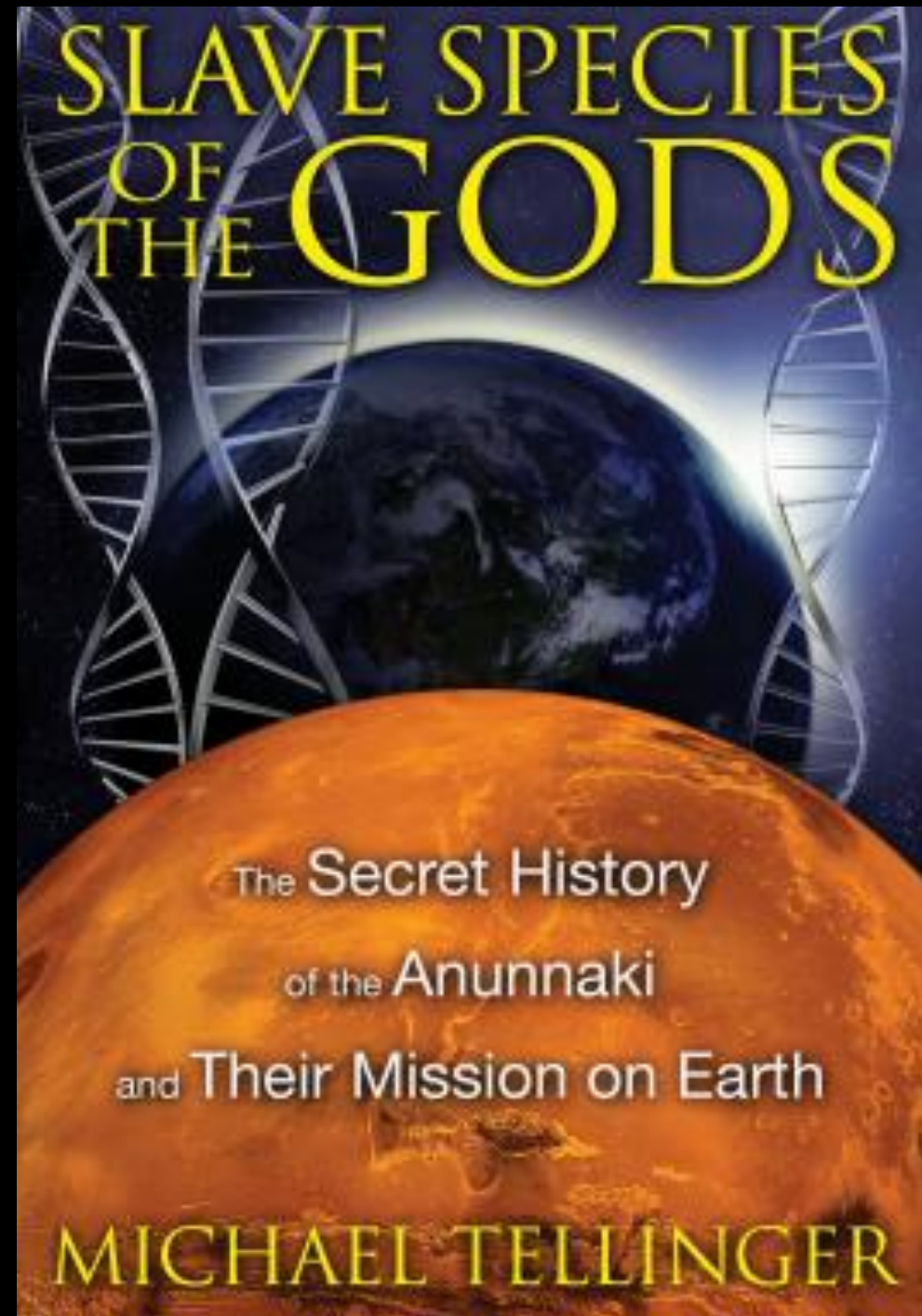


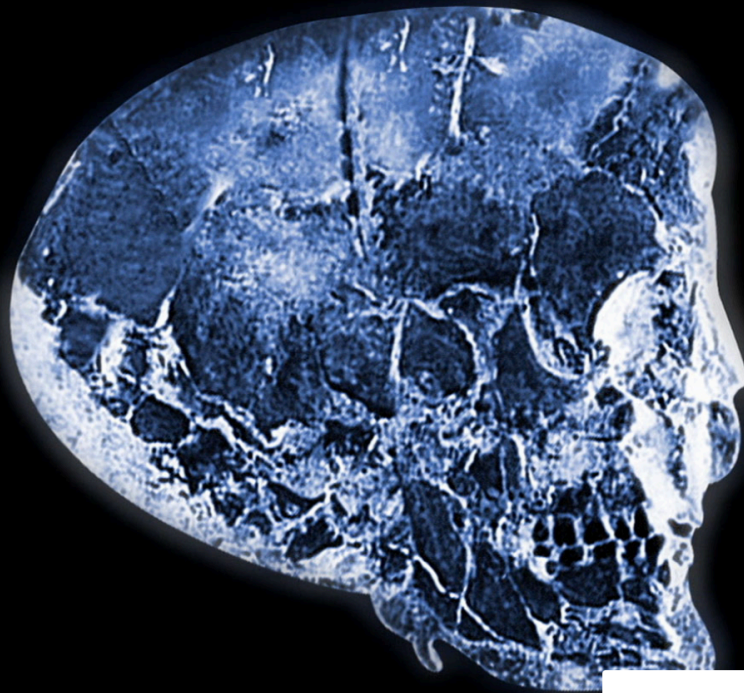
"Hotel Intercontinental," Chicago, Illinois



THE PAST AS PARANOIA

- Sumer, Egypt, Atlantis: the past as fantasy future easily slipped into paranoid fantasy
- aliens built the pyramids—and they're coming back!
- Atlantis was destroyed by nuclear energy run amok!
- the Anunnaki of *Gilgamesh* are actually space aliens who once enslaved us all!
- secret Bible codes reveal all!





17
15
13
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3

Start Streaming

< Ancient Aliens

S 6 E 3

The Anunnaki Connection

Oct 14, 2013 | 44m 11s | TV-PG | CC

The Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia achieved over one hundred "firsts" for human civilization. Advances in writing, agriculture, science, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, transportation, building, military, schools and city planning, all originated in Sumer. The Sumerians credit these achievements to The Anunnaki--giant, winged gods, who are only found in ancient cuneiform texts. Could these gods be more than legend? Is it possible that civilization made sudden, huge advances in development 5,000 years ago as a result of the Anunnaki's presence on Earth? Could the human race have been jump-started or even genetically created by extraterrestrial beings in the remote past? Might the Sumerian texts describing the Anunnaki be proof of this controversial theory? And if so, could we someday reunite with these celestial visitors?

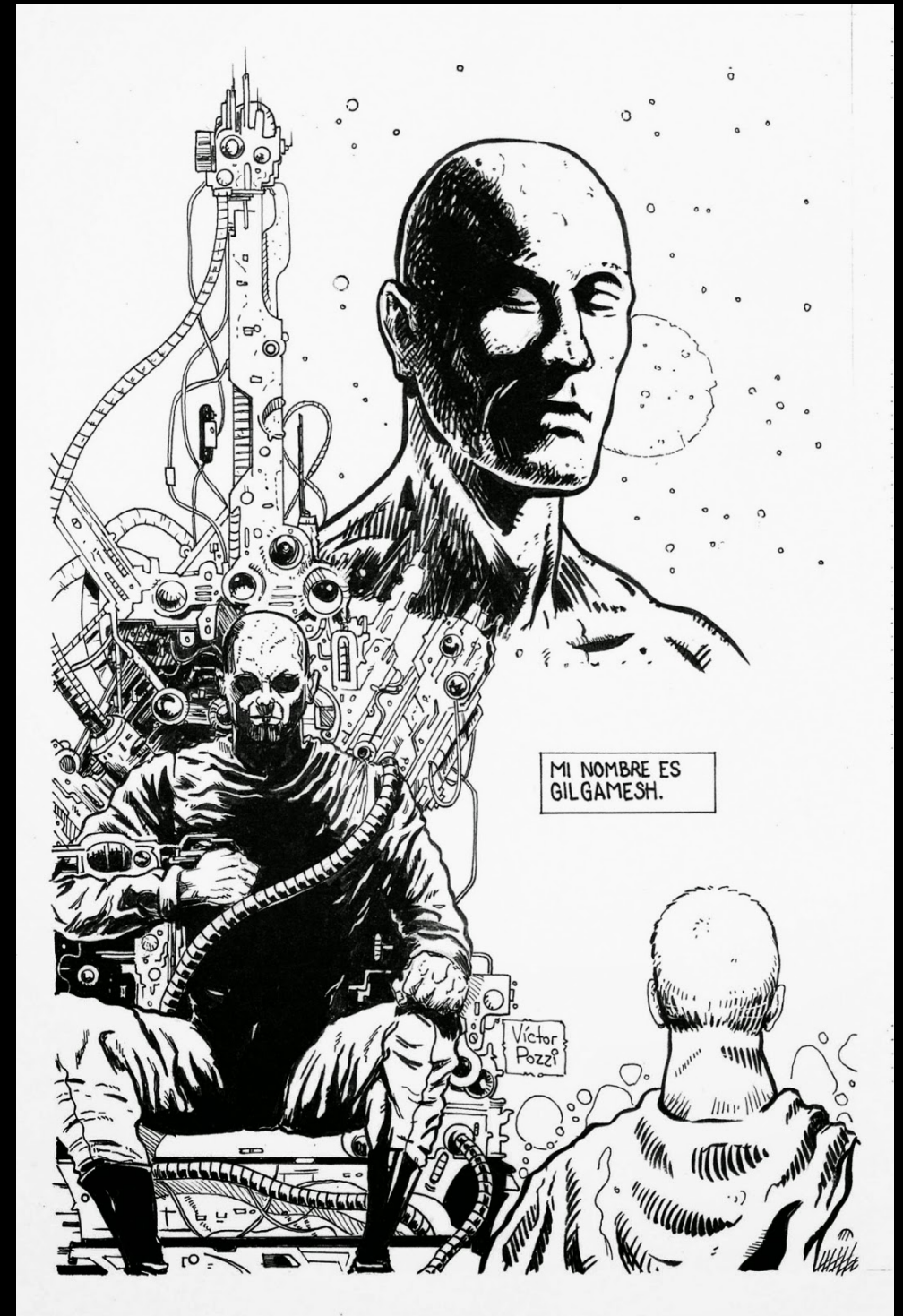


"Ancient Aliens is some of the most noxious sludge in television's bottomless chum bucket."

-RILEY BLACK, THE SMITHSONIAN

SUMERIAN SCI-FI

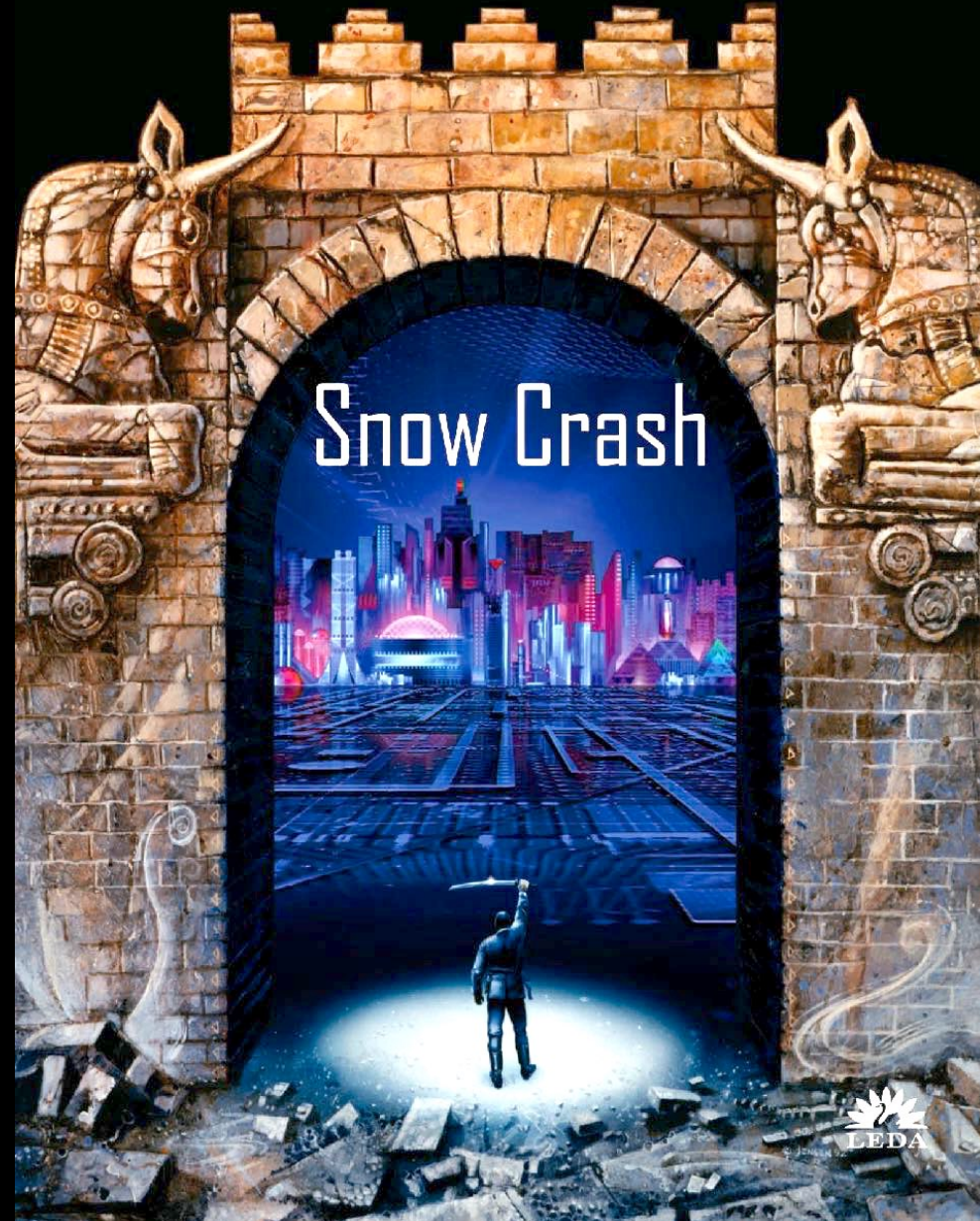
- a remarkably active field also for science fiction
- ancient world is a way of staging our encounter with an alien other—the ancient world is indeed alien to us
- it is also—like every encounter with the other—a way of staging an encounter with ourselves (we came from that same world)



SNOW CRASH

- a hyper-capitalist future in which many live much of their lives in a networked virtual reality
- a computer virus in this internet infects the human brain; it is written in Sumerian, the “root language” of the mind
- we had formerly been protected by an anti-virus program created by the god Enki, which made us all speak different languages (Babel)

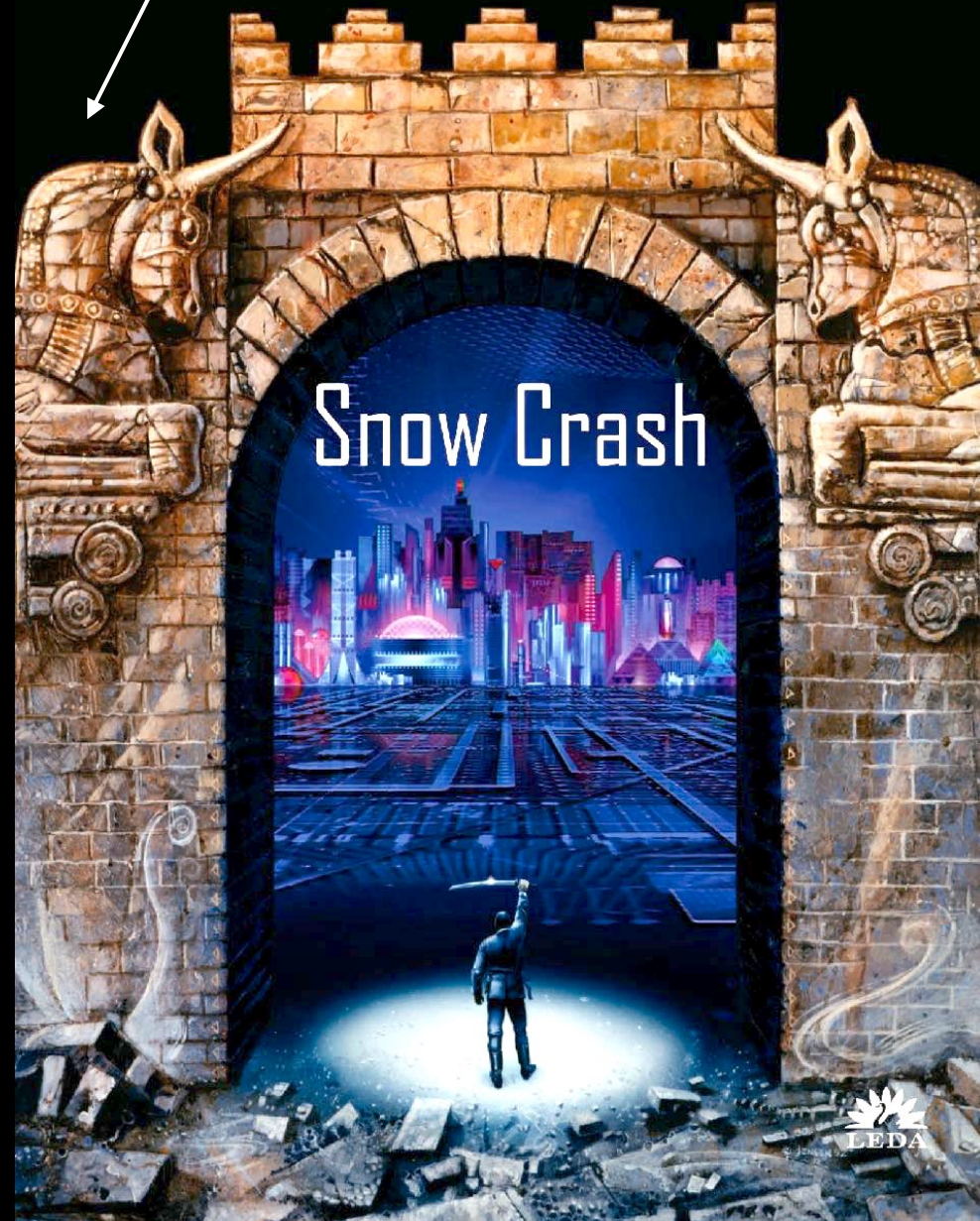
NEAL STEPHENSON



SNOW CRASH

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the Bull of Heaven that
Gilgamesh and Enkidu fight!



MOVIES & TV

- *Ghostbusters* (1984: Sumerian gods and demons invade NYC)
- *Stargate* (1994) and its many TV successors (*Stargate SG-1*, *Stargate Infinity*, *Stargate Atlantis*, *Stargate Universe*)
- *Babylon 5* (1994-98)
- ...goes all the way back to 1927, and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (tower of Babel: a cautionary tale of human hubris, a favorite of romantic modernity—and sci-fi): the city of the future is the city of the distant Babylonian past

Metropolis, 1927



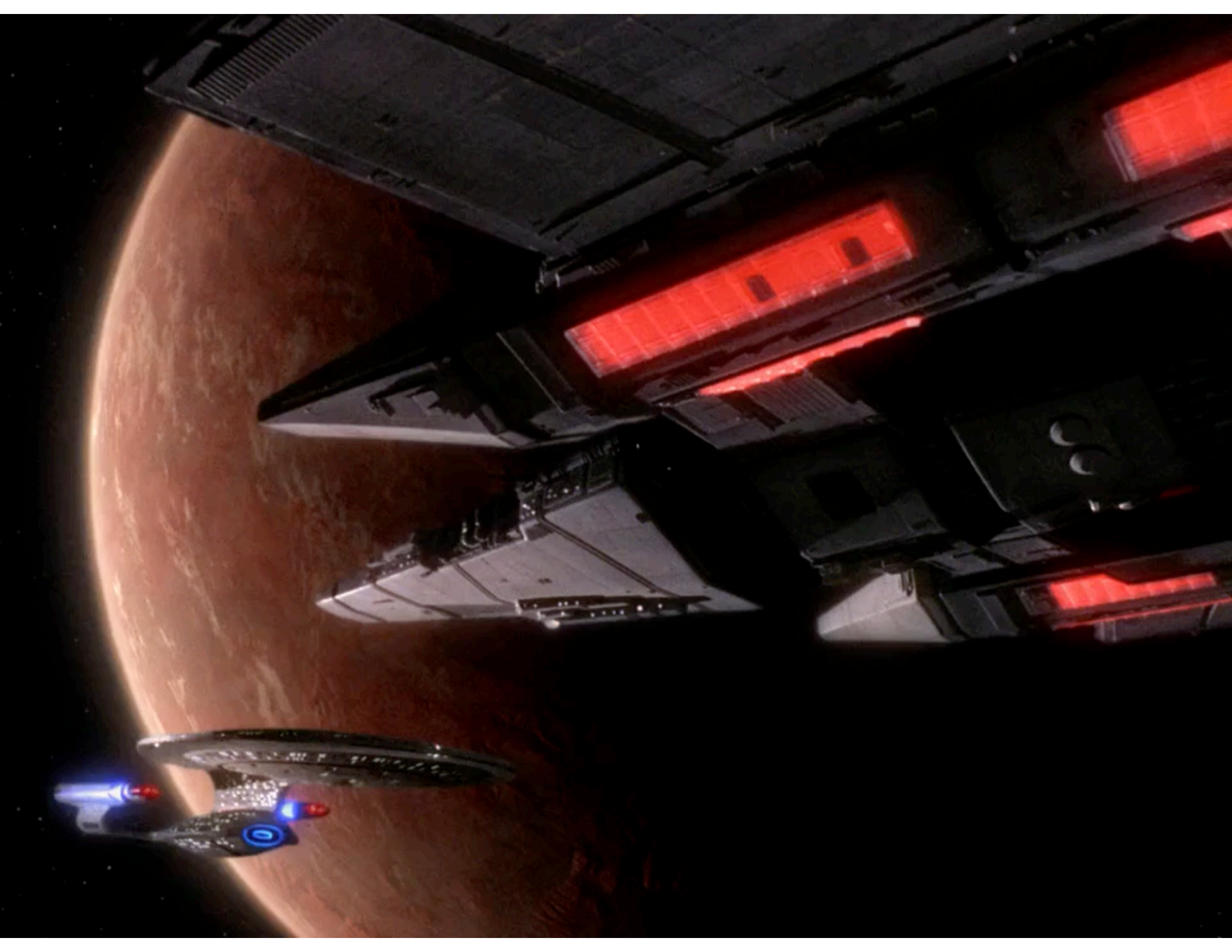
Stargate, 1994



“ DARMOK ”

- Quick plot summary
- Tamarian language consists entirely of mythic and epic situational references
- Similar, but not identical to, modern “citational speech” (“eww, David” “you know nothing, John Snow,” “just the tip”). Tamarian is about the situation, not the speech—it is, in other words, not a quote, but an *allusion*
- It is, not incidentally, similar to the language of the epic: repeated, ritualistic phrases, epithets





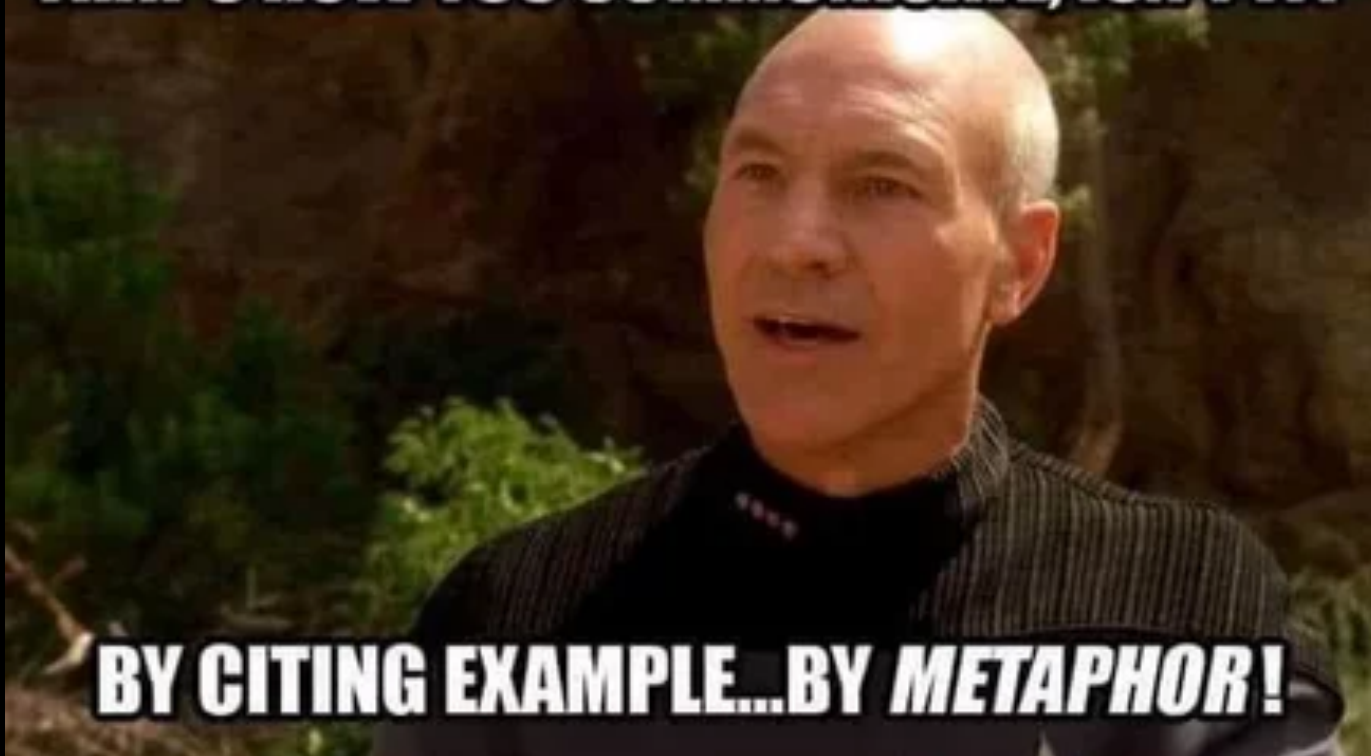
"DARMOK"

- linguists went crazy, still writing articles, giving talks today
- ditto the cultural critics (see Bogost's "Shaka, When the Walls Fell," *The Atlantic*, June 18, 2014)
- fundamentally a thought experiment about possible forms of language, thought (see *Arrival*)
- still all over the internet, owing to a perception that the Children of Tama speak in memes.

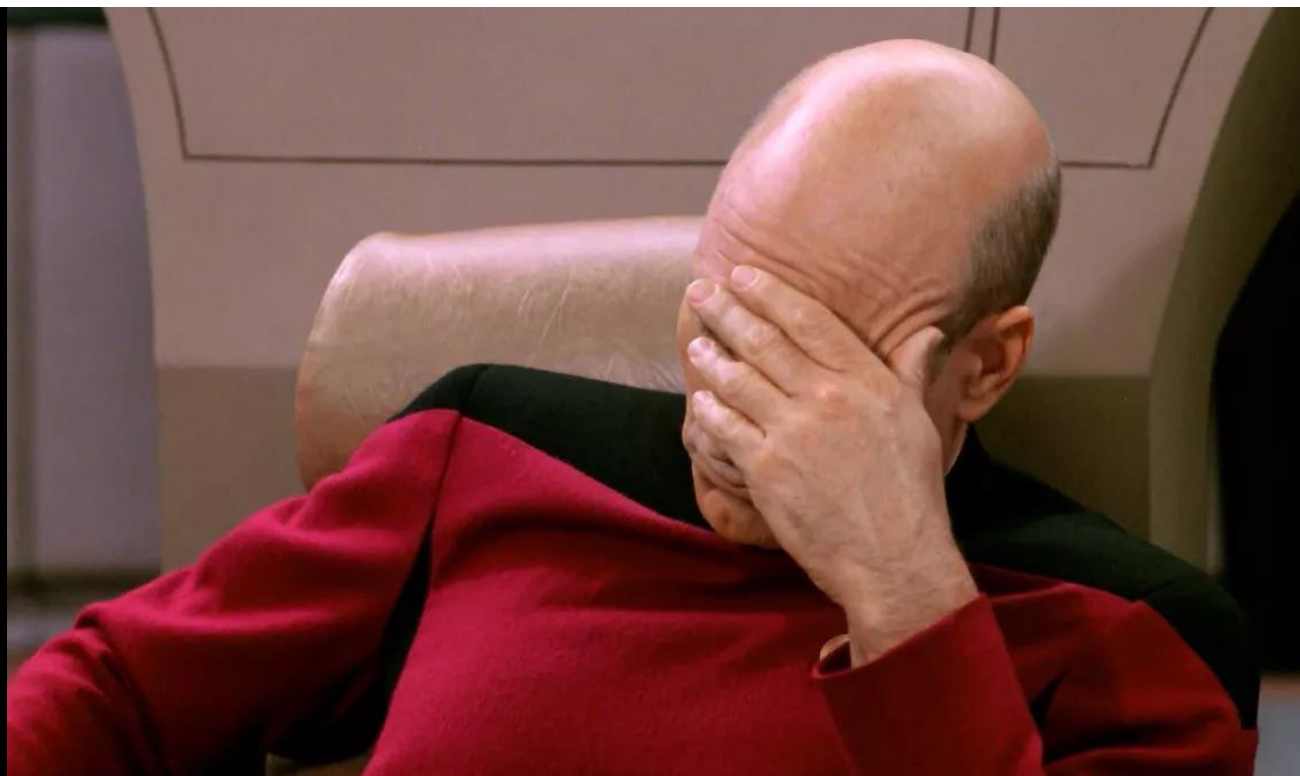




THAT'S HOW YOU COMMUNICATE, ISN'T IT?



BY CITING EXAMPLE...BY METAPHOR!



PICARD, FACE IN PALM



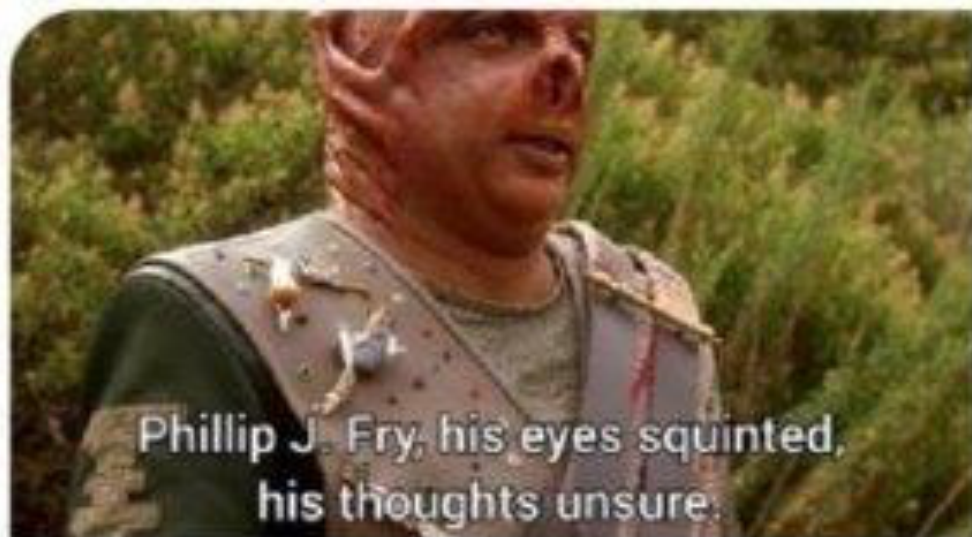
Neil Shyminsky

@neilshyminsky



I've commented before that Star Trek's most prescient prediction was communication via memes in 'Darmok'. So it was only a matter of time before someone started making these:





Phillip J. Fry, his eyes squinted,
his thoughts unsure.



Troy Barnes returning with pizzas,
his face fallen



A couple, the boyfriend distracted,
the girlfriend shocked.



Leonardo DiCaprio, his glass raised

darmok and jalad
at tinagra



i seriously have no
idea what you're saying
and it's annoying



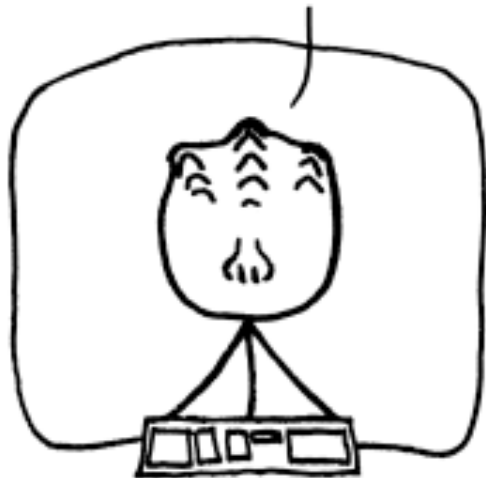
i can has
cheezburger



never
gonna
give you
up



DARMOK AND
JALAD AT
KALENDA'S!



THEIR LANGUAGE MUST
BE BASED ON FOLKLORE
AND METAPHOR!

COMPUTER! SEARCH
CULTURAL ARCHIVES FOR
DARMOK-JALAD-KALENDA!



IN TAMARIAN LEGEND,
DARMOK AND JALAD
GOT TOTALLY WASTED
AND HOOKED UP AT A
PARTY AT KALENDA'S.



WIIIIINK



“Darmok” is itself a meme. In July of 2017, *Jeopardy* featured a category about a famous Zulu king from the early 1800s. They also featured a category about famous military defeats. Pretty typical *Jeopardy* trivia. But when the two categories were placed next to each other...

Jeopardy, 7/11/2017

ITALIAN COMPOSERS	THE WOMAN IN THE MOVIE	COWBOY TALK	FILE UNDER "OZ"	SHAKA	WHEN THE WALLS FELL
\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400
\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800
\$1200	\$1200	\$1200	\$1200	\$1200	\$1200
\$1600	\$1600	\$1600	\$1600	\$1600	\$1600
\$2000	\$2000	\$2000	\$2000	\$2000	\$2000

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Jeopardy, 7/11/2017

SHAKA

**WHEN THE
WALLS FELL**

"DARMOK"

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- ditto the cultural critics (see Bogost's "Shaka, When the Walls Fell," *The Atlantic*, June 18, 2014)
- fundamentally a thought experiment about possible forms of language, thought (see *Arrival*)
- still all over the internet, owing to a perception that the Children of Tama speak in memes.



“ DARMOK ”

- There’s a lot to unpack here, but we can say that the Children of Tama speak a language that is composed of something like a blend of allusion, metaphor, and analogy
- All these figures of speech gesture at likeness or similarity — the very thing that the episode wants to demonstrate: the other is in fact like me, like Enkidu and Gilgamesh
- This is perhaps the principal message of *Star Trek* in almost all its franchises
- Important for thinking about language more broadly: it tries to find a commonality between us



BUT WHY *GILGAMESH*?



cuneiform, ca. 2400 BC



cuneiform, ca. 2400 BC



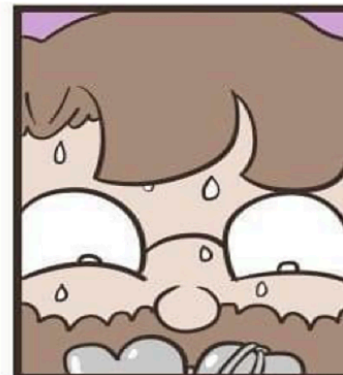
cuneiform, ca. 2400 AD

"DARMOK"

- tells a version of the story of Gilgamesh and Enkidu *three* times without you realizing it —but with important differences
- # 1: Gilgamesh and Enkidu have to fight with each other before becoming friends; one dies, and there is much grief. This suggests fundamentally that we are watching an *epic*: it is about friendship, battle, loss and grief.

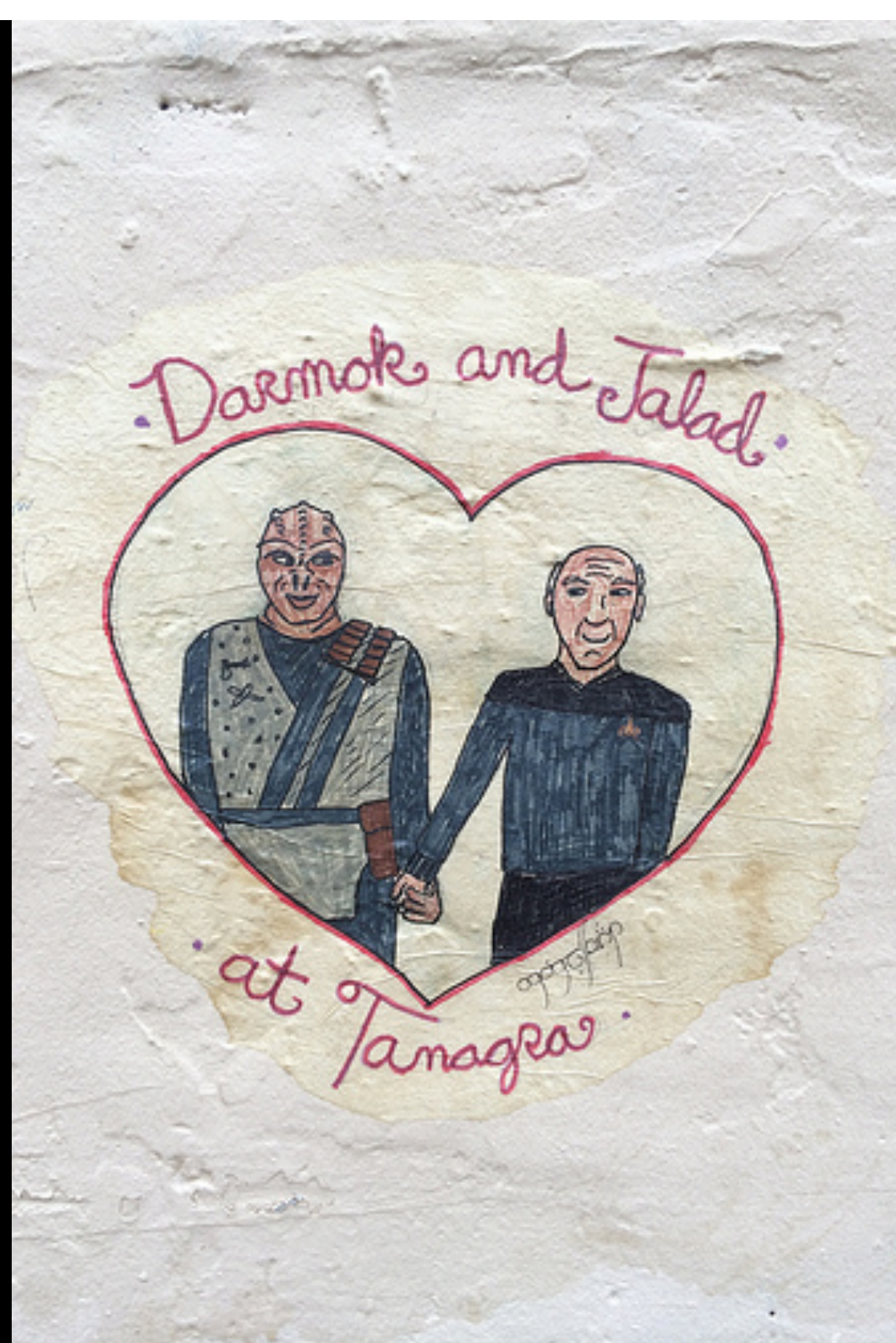


Ronnie Filyaw 2018 WHOMP.COMIC.COM



"DARMOK"

- tells a version of the story of Gilgamesh and Enkidu *three* times without you realizing it—but with important differences
- # 2: two strangers can learn to cooperate in the face of a common threat (the story of Darmok and Jalad). This is a "very special episode" where we learn about co-operation and friendship, kids!



"DARMOK"

- tells a version of the story of Gilgamesh and Enkidu *three* times without you realizing it—but with important differences
- # 3: Picard and Dathon initially fail to understand each other; Dathon's self-sacrifice leads to a bigger understanding: not personal, but two whole civilizations can now speak to each other. This is an "philosophical ethical drama"—fear of the other, the value of the other's culture and language

"Pooh?" said
Piglet.

"Yes, Piglet."
said Pooh.

"Darmok and Jalad
at Tanagra," said
Piglet.

"Shaka, when the
walls fell," said
Pooh





“ DARMOK ”

- Picard must “learn the narrative from which we draw our imagery” in order to have meaningful dialogue with the other
- We must learn the “root metaphors of our own culture” to know the other, also to know ourselves, *know what story we are in*
 - This is *literally* the purpose of this class
- Like Picard, one must begin at the beginning—*Gilgamesh*—and then proceed to the next step: Homer (Picard reads ancient Greek fluently, of course!)



- In other words, to prepare for the alien shocks and incomprehensions that the future holds for us, you must take this class, learn other languages, study literature and culture, from the beginning to the present
- (shockingly, LaZebnick (co-author of the episode) was a classics major at Harvard)



NEXT TIME: PLATO

ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE
CRITO