



NEW NONFICTION · COMPARATIVE RELIGION

THE DIVINE SERPENT

The Lost Science of Spiritual Transformation

CORNELIUS M. CLAY II

THE SERPENT WAS NEVER A SYMBOL OF EVIL. IT WAS NEVER A SYMBOL OF ASCENT. IT WAS A WARNING.

FROM THE DIVINE SERPENT

Paperback \$29.99 · Hardcover \$54.95 · 475 pages · 6×9 · Published August 29, 2026

THE BOOK

Seventy thousand years ago, people traveled for days through predator-filled terrain to stand before a python carved into living rock in the Kalahari Desert. They brought offerings. They returned across generations. They left no explanation.

Source: "Ritual: Organised Activity Identified as World's Oldest," Current World Archaeology, issue 22 (2007), on Sheila Coulson's research at Tsodilo Hills, Botswana. The interpretation remains debated.

Across nine civilizations and cultural traditions that never met (Southern Africa, Sumer, India, Egypt, Mesoamerica, Aboriginal Australia, East Asia, Greece, and Mali) the serpent appears wherever transformation is described. *The Divine Serpent* argues that this is not symbolic coincidence but may be evidence of accuracy: these traditions repeatedly encode a strikingly similar sequence of change. Transformation unfolds under constraint, regeneration precedes release, and vulnerability precedes renewed strength.

Drawing on archaeology, anthropology, neuroscience, and comparative religion, the book sets out what ancient cultures understood about profound change, and why it matters now that the structures that once carried people through it (initiation, ritual, shared sacred story) have largely dissolved.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cornelius M. Clay II is a writer and independent scholar. For more than twenty years he has pursued one question through comparative religion, anthropology, neuroscience, and the phenomenology of transformation, drawing on primary texts, archaeological records, and living traditions across six continents. *The Divine Serpent* is his first book.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS

ISBN PB	979-8997780500
ISBN HC	979-8997780517
TRIM · PAGES	6" x 9" · 475
PRICE (USD)	\$29.99 PB · \$54.95 HC
CATEGORY	Spirituality / Comparative Religion / Philosophy
BISAC	REL000000, PHI000000, OCC019000
PUBLISHER	Black Sage Press
DISTRIBUTOR	Ingram Content Group
PUB DATE	August 29, 2026
RETURNS	Yes, returnable
TERRITORY	Worldwide

COMPARABLE TITLES

Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (Ballantine Books)

Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (Harcourt)

Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary* (Yale University Press)

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