



The Mimbres Twins and the Rabbit in the Moon

Free Online Presentation by
Archaeologist Marc Thompson, PhD

Online via Zoom (See link below)

★ Thursday April 21, 2022 ★
7 to 8:30 p.m. Arizona Time
(Mountain Standard Time,
same as Pacific Daylight Time)

This presentation documents illustrations from Classic Mimbres Black-on-white ceramic bowls (1000-1130 CE) depicting the Panamerican apologue of the Hero Twins saga. These motifs account for about 12% of Mimbres figurative bowls and can be arranged in a narrative sequence from birth, trials, tests, death, and resurrection of the Hero Twins, to apotheosis as the sun and the moon.

Following the death of the twins' father and uncle, these brothers are resurrected as Venus as evening and morning stars after being sacrificed by the Death Chiefs of the watery underworld. A similar fate awaits the Hero Twins, but they survive the tests, trials, and ballgame challenge through guile, cunning feats and as tricksters of legerdemain.

This tale, the characters, and the basic plot are known throughout the Americas: North, Central, and South. The deep, fundamental basis of the story revolves around dualities as in two sides of the same coin; they include life and death, dark and light, and male and female.

Cognate Hero Twins motifs, both graphic and recorded, are documented on Classic Maya ceramics (200-900 CE), in the 16th century Twins' saga of the *Popol Vuh* of the Maya, as well as in US southwestern traditional tales. Comparing these similar but ethnically distinct accounts allows for a fuller comprehension of these emblematic, evocative, heroic figures.



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Photo of Marc Thompson by Jimmie Cannon

This month's guest presenter Marc Thompson, PhD, was graduated magna cum laude with a BA in anthropology from the University of Colorado, Boulder. He received an MA in anthropology from the Universidad de las Américas in Cholula, Puebla, México, and was awarded a PhD from the Department of Archaeology, The University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Marc has conducted fieldwork and directed projects in México, Belize, Canada, New Mexico, Texas, Wyoming, Montana, and California. In addition to numerous reports and papers presented at conferences he chaired, co-chaired or participated in, Marc has edited and published conference volumes and papers, journal articles, and book chapters. He has taught graduate, undergraduate, and continuing education courses in México, Canada, and the US. He also led numerous university and Smithsonian Odyssey tours to México, Central America, the Southwest US, and western Canada.

Dr. Thompson retired as Director of the El Paso Museum of Archaeology, and Adjunct Professor of Anthropology, the University of Texas at El Paso.

Mimbres pottery and moon images courtesy of Marc Thompson:

> Page 1: Upper – The Mimbres lunar jackrabbit with a crescent moon; lower – Grandmother and her metaphorical burden basket, raising the Twins

> This page: Center – Younger Twin appears to decapitate Elder Twin with a turquoise rabbit stick; lower – lunar rabbit on the surface of a full moon

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