

The Ark of the Covenant

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The Ark of the Covenant has a very close relationship with Cryptic Masonry especially in relation to the Royal Master & Most Excellent Master degree, where it forms a focal point of the working.

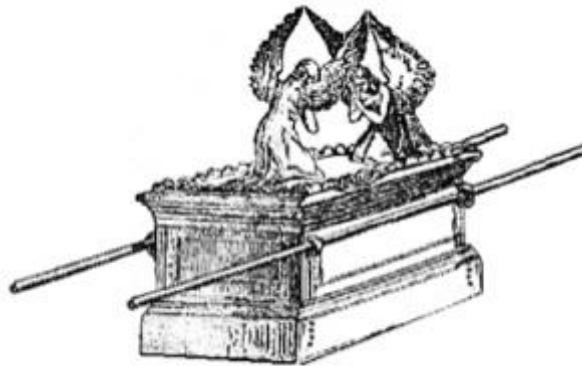
The Ark of the Covenant has an allure about it that has spawned a great number of books and movies such as Indiana Jones and the Lost Ark. It has an attraction that is surpassed only by the modern day Da Vinci code phenomenon. I intend to uncover some of the fascinating history and legend surrounding this ancient biblical artifact.

According to the bible -

The Ark of the Covenant ([Hebrew](#): אֲרוֹן הַבְּרִית *ārōn hāb'rīt*, Modern *aron habrit*) is described in the [Bible](#) as a sacred container, wherein rested the [Tablets of stone](#) containing the [Ten Commandments](#) as well as [Aaron's](#) rod and [manna](#). According to the Biblical account, the Ark was built at the command of God, in accord with [Moses'](#) prophetic vision on [Mount Sinai](#) ([Exodus 25:9-10](#)). God communicated with Moses "from between the two [cherubim](#)" on the Ark's cover ([Exodus 25:22](#)).

Moses was directed to have the Ark made by [Bezalel](#), son of [Uri](#) of the [tribe of Judah](#), and by [Aholiab](#), the son of [Ahisamach](#) of the [tribe of Dan](#) (Ex. 31:2-7). Bezalel the artist made the Ark (Ex. 37:1); and Moses approved the work, put the testimony (the ten commandments?) in the Ark, and installed it. Bezalel and Aholiab being names well known to us in the Excellent Masters degree working, or the 'Passing of the Veils'.

It was said to possess many magical properties - when the Ark was borne by priests into the bed of the [Jordan](#), the river was separated, opening a pathway for the whole of the host to pass over (Josh. 3:15-16; 4:7-18).



Description

The Bible describes the Ark as being made of [acacia](#), known to the [Egyptians](#) as the [Tree of Life](#) and an important plant in traditional medicine. It was a [cubit](#) and a half broad and high, and two and a half cubits long, about 130 cm x 78 cm x 78 cm (.79 m³) or 4.27 ft x 2.56 ft x 2.56 ft (27.93 ft³). The Ark was covered all over with the purest [gold](#). Its upper surface or lid, the [mercy seat](#) ([Hebrew](#): כַּפֹּרֶת, *Kaporet*), was surrounded with a rim of gold.

On each of the two sides were two gold rings, wherein were placed [two wooden poles](#) (with a decorative sheathing of gold), to allow the Ark to be transported (Num. 7:9; 10:21; 4:5,19, 20; 1 Kings 8:3, 6). Over the Ark, at the two extremities, were two [cherubim](#), with their faces turned toward one another ([Leviticus](#) 16:2; Num. 7:89). Their outspread wings over the top of the Ark formed the [throne of God](#), while the Ark itself was his footstool (Ex. 25:10-22; 37:1-9). The Ark was placed in the "[Holy of Holies](#)"

In comparison the Book of [Deuteronomy](#) describes the Ark as a simple wooden container with no mention of ornaments or gold. Similarly, the [Quran](#) makes a reference to the Ark as a wooden box with holy relics inside it. Perhaps there were two different Arks, being referred to in different parts of the old testament?

According to the Bible, the two tablets of [stone](#) containing The Ten Commandments were kept within the Ark itself. A golden jar containing some of the [manna](#) from the Israelites' trek in the wilderness, and the [rod of Aaron](#) that budded, were added to the contents of the Ark (Ex. 16:32-34; Heb. 9:4), but apparently were later removed at some point prior to the building of Solomon's temple, as I Kings 8:9 states that there "was nothing in the Ark save the two tablets of stone."

The Ark went before the Israelites into battle until it was housed in the Holy of Holies (1 Kings 6:19) in King Solomon's Temple in approximately 950BCE, where it remained hidden except once a [year](#) on a designated day, called The Day of Atonement, when the High Priest entered and performed certain ceremonies there (Lev. 16), including pronouncing the ineffable name of the Lord.

The Ark of the Covenant is mentioned in both the [Bible](#) and the [Qur'an](#)

When the [Babylonians](#) destroyed Jerusalem and plundered the temple, in approximately 586BCE, the Ark exited the bible and entered the domain of legend. Most historians suppose that the ark was probably taken away by [Nebuchadnezzar](#) and destroyed.

The non canonical, or Apocrypha text called 2 Maccabees, 2:4-8 holds that the Ark was saved from the [Babylonians](#) by Jeremiah who placed it in a cave on Mount Nebo. **Fate of the Ark**

As to what became of the Ark - theories as to the ultimate fate of the Ark include:

- Capture by Pharaoh Shishak when he sacked Jerusalem (Pharaoh Shoshenq I, founder of the 22nd Dynasty of Egypt, reigned from 944-924 B.C). Reportedly, he took it back to Tanis, Egypt. This is the theory followed by the [Steven Spielberg](#) film [Raiders of the Lost Ark](#).
- Concealment by the priests under the [Temple Mount](#);
- Removal from Jerusalem in advance of the Babylonians (this variant usually ends up with the Ark in [Ethiopia](#));
- the removal of the Ark by the Ethiopian prince [Menelik I](#) (purported son of [King Solomon](#) and the [Queen of Sheba](#)) as discussed by Graham Hancock in 'The Sign & The Seal';
- removal by Jewish priests during the reign of [Manasseh of Judah](#), possibly taken to the Jewish Temple at [Elephantine](#) in Egypt;
- the miraculous removal of the Ark by divine intervention; and
- its removal by one of the 'missing tribes of Israel' finally ending up in storage in a Museum in Zimbabwe, in this case it is held that the Ark is in fact a ritual drum

Rumoured present locations

The Temple Mount of Jerusalem

Modern excavations near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem have found tunnels, but digging beneath the Temple Mount is somewhat restricted. One of the most important Islamic shrines, the [Dome of the Rock](#), sits in the location where the First Temple of Solomon once stood. King Solomon, when building the temple, is rumored to have put the Ark of the Covenant on a platform which could be lowered down into a tunnel system if the Temple were ever overrun. In 586 BCE King Nebuchadnezzar's troops destroyed the temple and carried off the temple treasures but did not find the Ark of the Covenant, which had been lowered into the cave system below and secreted away by Levite priests.

Ethiopian Orthodox Church

The Chapel of the Tablet at the [Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion](#) in [Axum](#) allegedly houses the original Ark of the Covenant.

The [Ethiopian Orthodox Church](#) claims to possess the Ark of the Covenant (or tabot) in [Axum](#). The object is now kept under



guard in a treasury near the [Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion](#), and used occasionally in ritual processions. The [Kebra Nagast](#) is Ethiopia's greatest national document, composed to legitimise the new royal line established in 1270 by claiming its descent from [Menelik I](#), the son of [King Solomon](#) and the [Queen of Sheba](#), and contains a reference to the Ark of the Covenant being brought to Ethiopia by Menelik. However, recent scholarship suggests that that reference is a later interpolation

Zimbabwe

The [Lemba](#) people, who believe they are of Jewish descent, have claimed that their ancestors carried the Ark south, calling it the [ngoma lungundu](#) or "voice of God", eventually hiding it in a deep cave in the Dumghe mountains, their spiritual home. [Tudor Parfitt](#), taking a literalist approach to the Biblical story, says that the object described by the Lemba has attributes similar to the Ark. It was of similar size, was carried on poles by priests, was not allowed to touch the ground, was revered as a voice of their God, and was used as a weapon of great power, sweeping enemies aside. In his book *The Lost Ark of the Covenant* (2008) Parfitt also states that one Lemba clan, the Buba, which was supposed to have brought the Ark to Africa, have a genetic signature called the [Cohen Modal Haplotype](#) which connects them with the ancient Jewish priesthood. The relic of the Ark eventually found its way to the Museum of Human Science in [Harare](#).

Parfitt offers the suggestion that the wooden ark may always have been a drum as well as a weapon of some sort, like the [ngoma](#). It was often found in musical processions, David danced in front of it and it was covered over with a piece of leather. Parfitt, however, offers no explanation of the original principle contents of the Ark, the stone tablets.

Languedoc

Several legends hold that the Ark was carried home to [Languedoc](#) by Templars returning from the Crusades, having removed the Ark and other treasure from below the Temple Mount.

England

In 2003, historical author [Graham Phillips](#) traced the route of the Ark through research using Biblical texts as being taken to [Mount Sinai](#) in the Valley of [Edom](#) by the [Maccabees](#), along with other religious treasures. Phillips claims it remained there until the 1180s, when [Ralph de Sudeley](#), the leader of the [Templars](#) who apparently found the Maccabean treasure at [Jebel al-Madhbah](#), returned home to his estate at [Herdewyke](#) in [Warwickshire, England](#), taking the treasure with him.

Final Resting Place

As a final note as to its whereabouts if we return to where we started- the VSL we find that in Revelation 11:19 it says that the Ark of the Covenant was last seen in the heavens.

Perhaps that is why men can't find it here on Earth?

Bibliography

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