

Tales of Wandering Stars

(Historias de estrellas errantes)

Inca Mythology

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It is said that the sky has many secrets and that our dreams and worries are represented by the stars.

There are five wandering stars called the Pichcaconqui. One of them is very bright, the brightest of all. It sometimes appears at dawn and sometimes at dusk. This star is called Chasca, which means wild-haired, since she has the tousled looks of the prettiest of women.

There is another very bright star and his name is Pirua. He is believed to be the guardian of the Empire and all its possessions. Perhaps this is because he barely moves and looks as if he were always keeping watch.

The little star that accompanies the Sun is called Catuilla. He protects traders, walkers and voyagers. Maybe this is because the Sun is associated with gold and commerce.

Haucha is the slowest star. When he is really bright he causes famine, sickness, thunder and lightning. This must be because of the suspicious way he moves so slowly.

People really start to worry when the red star, Aucayoc, appears in the sky because it is then that wars and soldiers come.

They think this because they say the colour of the star has nothing good about it.

It is also said that the Maker of everything put a princess in the sky with a jug full of water to pour over the world. The princess's brother, who also inhabits the sky, carries a catapult and a club. He sometimes breaks the jug and this causes thunder and lightning. So they say, this is because men are fierce and women are tender. The princess is said to make the rain, the hail and the snow.

An Inca poet is believed to have written these stories.

Planets

The Solar System is formed by the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, and the star they all go around: the Sun.

In ancient times, man observed how some of them moved against the stars in the background. This is why they were called "wandering stars". The five brightest planets were known then: Mercury, closest to the Sun, Venus, the star of dawn and dusk (because it was the first object to be seen in the sky at dusk and the last to disappear at dawn), Mars with its reddish colour, Jupiter, the brightest of all, and Saturn, the slowest.

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maria vidal