

The Sumerian Tree of Life^[1]

By Sam Kerr

There are several later paintings and drawings of the Tree of Life, but this Sumerian Clay tablet (however crude it might appear) is one of the earliest, if not the first. It is among the original Sumerian Cylinders and clay tablets excavated circa 2,500 BCE.



The 'Holy Bible' - The Reader's Digest Association Inc., Sydney 1971

The clay tablet is prepared by rolling the carved metal seal on wet clay, which is then baked. Once baked the tablet cannot be altered. The original Sumerian (Indo-Iranian) concept was that wisdom is likened to a tree whose fruit endows those who eat it with health and longevity. The symbol of an elixir of life had already been well established in antiquity by the Indo-Iranian cultures long before Judaism, Christianity, Islam and other cultures had the opportunity to recognise it.

This 4,500 year old clay tablet shows a man and a woman seated below the Tree of Life. Behind the woman is seen a serpent allegedly 'tempting' the woman.

This concept was expurgated in the Bible as the tree of life in the Garden of Eden by the Jews and Christians. The Book of Genesis 3.22 mentions such a tree as 'the giver of eternal life.'

^[1] This article was posted on vohuman.org on July 11, 2005. It has been printed courtesy Spring 2005 issue of the *FEZANA Journal*.