

## **A Case for Tall Papa being Trinimac-Who-Came-Before**

The Yokudan and Redguard pantheon is one of the least-known, least-explored, and least understood of the pantheons in the Elder Scrolls universe. Those who know me know I am fascinated by them and constantly try to unlock their mysteries and secrets and metalore. One of the great travesties rendered unto the Redguards and Yokudans is to simply assume that there are direct equivalents with the mainstream Imperial Pantheon. You have no doubt read comments or entries along the lines of “Tu’whacca is just Redguard Arkay” and “Sep is Lorkhan, and Tall Papa is Akatosh/Auri-El.” I’m going to discuss the latter, as I find it to be increasingly untrue based on my studies and research. I believe - among many other heretical thoughts - that there is a case for Tall Papa being Trinimac-Who-Came-Before.

First, we need to talk about something that has been brought up in the community before; Trinimac and his seeming connection to Mithra/Mithras. I want to stress that the Roman cult god Mithras is not at all like the Persian divinity Mithra. Roman Mithras was definitely inspired by Mithra, but the iconography, rituals, stories, and cosmic spheres are all wildly different except for their common association with the Sun in some capacity. Related to his position as protector of truth, Persian Mithra is a judge (ratu), ensuring that individuals who break promises or are not righteous (artavan) are not admitted to paradise. Persian Mithra is a member of the ahuric triad; Ahura Mazda, Mithra, and Apam Napat. I’m going to assume that most people in this community have some awareness of Mithra/Mithras and Ahura Mazda, but most have probably not heard of Apam Napat.

Apam Napat is the “child of the waters” and is described as the creator of all things in the Rigveda, one of the four main Vedas of Hinduism. He also shares an association with Hara Berezaiti, the legendary mountain around which the stars and planets revolve. Hara Berezaiti is the “High Watchpost,” and she is the source of all mountains and all the waters of the world (hence the connection to Apam Napat, the “child of the waters”).

On a related note, Mithra is also in Hinduism, known as Mitra or Mitra-Varuna in the Rigveda. In the Rigveda, he shares the same attributes as Varuna which means he is seen as a principal guardian of truth and order. In later Vedic texts and the Brahmanas, Mitra becomes more associated with the light of dawn and the morning sun, whereas Varuna becomes more associated with the evening and night. From the Rigveda:

“Mitra-Varuna are conceived as young, they wear glistening garments, are monarchs and guardians of the whole world and their palace is golden, with a thousand pillars and a thousand doors. They support (and are frequently invoked next to) heaven and earth, and the air between heaven and earth. They are lords of rivers and seas, and they send rain and refreshment from the sky. They wet the pastures with dew of clarified butter (ghee), and rain abounding in heavenly water comes from them. Their domain has streams that flow with honey, and their pastures have cattle that yield refreshment. They afflict those that disregard them with disease. They are asuras, and (like all asuras) wield their power through secret knowledge

(māyá), which empowers them to make the sun traverse the sky, and to obscure it with clouds. Their eye is the sun, and they mount their chariot in the highest heavens, which they drive with the rays of the sun as with arms. They have spies that are wise and undeceivable. They are maintainers of order (ṛtá, "truth"), they are barriers against falsehood, which they punish. They are leaders of the seven Ādityas (the celestial sons of Āditi)."

Hopefully this extreme crash course in Indo-Iranian Mithra representations have shown the stark difference between Mithra as loyal oathkeeper, truth-teller, judge, punisher, and maintainer of order versus Mithras, the Roman military cult god, bull-slayer, and his association to the Roman god Sol Invictus. Michael Kirkbride himself has said "Trinimac is probably one of the least understood underpinnings of the whole pantheon. I like him that way, but I would study Mithras if you really want to find out more." I can see how a lot of people would want to default to the Roman Mithras due to his association with the sun and being a god worshipped by warriors, or in this case, Roman legionaries. The tauroctony, the slaying of the bull, would also be easy to accept at face value with regards to Trinimac slaying Lorkhan, even though the context and comparisons are wildly different and not in any way appropriate. I hope I've shown that Mr. Kirkbride was likely referring to the Indo-Iranian Mithra as an important underpinning, rather than the Roman Mithras. After all, Truth, or rather what you make of Truth, is very important in the Elder Scrolls universe.

With all this out of the way, we can finally get back into our universe and talk about Trinimac, Tall Papa, and Sep. But first, a bit of background and a heretical thought; Akel, 'The Hunger', is more like AKA and it's implied in Satakal the Worldskin that 'The Hunger' equals the advent of time. Also, the Redguards and Yokudans viewed the Anu/Padomay dichotomy as a fused singular concept or entity that became Satakal.

"As the old world died, Satakal began, and when things realized this pattern so did they realize what their part in it was. They began to take names, like Ruptga or Tu'whacca, and they strode about looking for their kin. As Satakal ate itself over and over, the strongest spirits learned to bypass the cycle by moving at strange angles." So these are spirits, and the Redguards and Yokudans hold the view that the Aldmer have; these are our ancestors, we got tricked into staying on this ball in mortal form, therefore we need to break free from it.

Aldmeri belief holds a similar story; that Time begins with the advent of Auri-EI which allows for other spirits and aspects to understand their natures, limitations, and roles. So if time begins with Akatosh/Auri-EI, then he's part of the Worldskin according to the Redguards and Yokudans, and not a separate ancestor spirit. Trinimac was also more popular than Auri-EI in some places, and was recognized by some as the strongest of the ancestor spirits. Even the Monomyth mentions the Yokudan particularity with regards to a part of the Worldskin:

"Anuiel is also perceived of as Order, opposed to the Sithis-Chaos. Perhaps it is easier for mortals to envision change than perfect stasis, for often Anuiel is relegated to the mythic background of Sithis' fancies. In Yokudan folk-tales, which are among the most vivid in the

world, Satak is only referred to a handful of times, as "the Hum"; he is a force so prevalent as to be not really there at all."

This is rather fascinating as it reveals a fundamental difference between the Yokudan and Aldmeri view of Auri-El/Akatosh and that of the other races of men. For the native races of Tamriel, Akatosh is an ever-present and venerated force. To the Yokudans and Aldmeri of old, he's barely there, in the background of the world; present, albeit barely. We also need to remember that the Yokudans and Redguards view things differently; Satak and Akel were two who became One after the first cycle, rendering them fused into a single entity whereas Tamrielics view them as two separate and opposing forces. This should also change how we see Anuic and Padomaic subgradients through the eyes of the Redguards and Yokudans, as they hold a different place and importance.

So after the first cycle, we have these spirits trying to figure things out. They do eventually get the idea, and Tall Papa ends up needing help with all his spirits. And he's called Tall Papa because he sired lots of children (i.e. spirits), because he's an ancestor, like Trinimac was. And this is happening separate from the AKA/LORKH dichotomy we have going on with Satakal the Worldskin. Needing help, Tall Papa creates a helper, Sep, out of previous skins. If we're trying to subscribe to the idea that Tall Papa is the Akatosh equivalent, this is basically saying that he created Lorkhan which is just plain wrong, so who are these two? Sep, second serpent, is basically a living husk of multiple AKALORKHS. After all, "Sep had much of the Hungry Stomach still left in him, multiple hungers from multiple skins." This means that right from the get-go, there can't be a "battle between Akatosh and Lorkhan" because they are combined into the singular deity Sep. Again, I want to stress that Tall Papa is clearly an ancestor spirit, and not a subgradient.

Now let's look at how Trinimac and Lorkhan (and the daedra) interacted and how Tall Papa and Sep interacted and evaluate the striking similarities. Lorkhan 'lies' to the spirits, trapping them in Mundus. Sep lies to spirits, trapping them on the skin-ball (Nirn/Mundus). Trinimac calls Lorkhan and the Velothi liars and disagrees with them. "Tall Papa just shook his head." Lorkhan is struck down by Trinimac, and has his Heart removed "with more than hands." Tall Papa squashed Sep with a big stick for leading so many into a place where they could not reach the Far Shores, and Sep's hunger fell out.

Now let's also evaluate their following actions and their spheres. Trinimac was this sword-wielding warrior ancestor god. The Redguards and Yokudans pride themselves as a martial people. Malacath, the being Trinimac was twisted into, is a harsh deity who demands strength and generally makes life difficult. This is something Tall Papa does as well. When Tall Papa's son Zeht (an agricultural deity) renounced him, he made it hard to grow food. Leki is his goddess daughter, and the goddess of aberrant (i.e. abnormal) swordsmanship. This kind of implies that Tall Papa was a warrior of some kind, and his interactions with Sep more closely mirror those of Trinimac than Akatosh/Auri-El.

I'm going to go out on a limb and assume that the 'big stick' is the Yokudan equivalent of Adamantia tower, implying Convention and therefore an inability to 'return', hence the "new ways" they need to find to reach 'Heaven' again. However, this brings up new, difficult, and very interesting questions. First off, what's the enantiomorph in this case? Who is the Rebel, the King, and the Observer? I believe that Tall Papa AE Trinimac is the King, 'The Hunger' is the Rebel, and Sep is the Observer. After all, Sep has "multiple hungers from multiple skins" and he's kind of a "two for one" deal in this regard. It is 'The Hunger' that drove him mad and made him create the skin-ball. It is 'The Hunger' that falls from Sep's mouth and it is Sep that is maimed in the story, for he is forced to "slink around in a dead skin." Tall Papa the victor, the Hunger defeated (and was the only thing left of the Second Serpent), and Sep maimed. Again, things are a little different in the Redguard view.

I also want to address that it's only the Forebears who have equated some -but not all - of their gods with Tamrielic ones. There are connections made between Zehk and Zenithar, Morwha and Mara, and Tu'whacca and Arkay though these appear to be limited to the Pocket Guide to the Empire, which do appear to be written from the perspective of an imperialistic and somewhat ignorant Cyrodiilic outsider. However, they do make some degree of sense with regards to their spheres and to the established lore tidbit that the Forebears more readily adopted the ways, language, and beliefs of Tamriel for better relations with their neighbours. Again, let us remember that most Forebear lands are on the coasts that are close to High Rock and Cyrodiil. Curiously absent so far is Trinimac.

Another interesting question raised by the idea that Trinimac is Tall Papa is how does he die? In fact, does he die at all? Well, this is tricky and sadly open to wild interpretation as there is simply not enough information on the subjects at hand. On the one hand, some say that Trinimac clearly 'dies' in Tamriel's history since he's twisted into the new being Malacath. Others might argue that he doesn't die but undergoes a form of transformation not unlike one of the Walking Ways. In any case, we know of no such story that exists in Redguard folk tales, nor are we given any reference to a similar event in Yokudan history. At least, not in any official sources...

In the out of game text known as Lord Vivec's Sword-Meeting with Cyrus the Restless, it is revealed that Vivec is the Ansu-Gurleht, a renowned demon warrior and greatest student of the Ansei. Again, there aren't many details and this comes from an out of game book, but the idea that Vivec could have filled the space of a Daedra in Yokuda is a thought you are more than welcome to explore. It was necessary for Trinimac to die in Tamriel so that we could have Malacath, the Orsimer, and the Dunmer. In Yokuda, would that have been necessary? Perhaps not, but we do not know for sure. What we do know is that the Redguards have an enemy god named Malooc who led the goblins against the initial Ra Gada invasion of Hammerfell. This is all we know of the god. We don't know where he came from, how he came to lead the Goblins, or if it just a form of cultural allegory with the goblins actually being Orcs and Malacath being appropriated into the Redguard pantheon as an enemy god along the lines of Sep.

Do I myself believe that Tall Papa is Trinimac? I don't know. It's certainly a topic worth exploring and one where there is a decent amount of evidence. Sadly, there just isn't enough information either way, which is part of what makes Elder Scrolls lore so fascinating and fun. New secrets and revelations and connections are being made all the time by members of the community, with new and interesting heresies being met with thoughtful nods and beard-stroking as others mutter "hmm, interesting" instead of scoffing "that's not canon." Is Tall Papa Yokudan Trinimac? Maybe. Would I love to be invited to lunch with Kirkbride, Kuhlman, Schick, and Tuttle and pick their brains over this? Maybe.