

The origin of the word INDIGO and ANILA.



Source: Wikipedia *Indigofera tinctoria*

The plant that delivers the most Indigo pigment is *the Indigofera tinctoria* and only grows in tropical conditions with dry and hot seasons.

There are two words for the magical blue pigment: *Indigo* and *Anila*. The latter is mostly used in the Arab and Spanish speaking countries although in the Middle Ages , indigo was known as *An-nila* in countries around the Mediterranean Sea. The word Indigo is from later origin. When Britain and Holland owed the VOC and conquered India and the Asian Islands they did anything to trade and deal with Indigo and became the most important indigo worldtraders.

But have you ever thought of the origin of the words? I tried to find out what *Indigo* and *An-nila* means etymologically and I found most interesting things. It is believed the word Indigo descends from the Latin *Indicum* and the Greek *Indikon*. But there are not many references that declare were Indicum and Indikon descends from. Greek and Latin are languages that did not fall from the sky so they have an origin too. Yet scientists do not look further then these ancient languages although in a Dutch etymologic dictionary it is said, Indigo has something to do with the Sanskrit word *Nili*, a name for the plant that delivers the pigment. It is also believed that Sanskrit is the oldest written language but what about the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt? Isn't that a written language as well?

Today, *An-nila* is a Semitic word for river. Any river can be called An-Nila but in ancient times An-nila meant The Nile. The interesting part of this name is that it consists out of two words and that is significant. In ancient Egypt the word *AN* or *NA* meant: two or double. And it was put in front of Nila,

the most important river in Egypt. The Egyptians were aware of the double sources of this river. In those days, ancient Egypt extended into Africa, the so called hinterland.

A British autodidactic Egyptologist Gerald Massey (1828-1907) found a very old word for river: *K-ARU*, *K-ALU*, hence it became *ARU*, *ALU* and *AUR*. While the Nile being so special for nurturing the land and so important for life itself, the Egyptians put *NA* before the word *ALU* and so it became *Na-Alu*, *Na-Ali*, *Na-Ru* to make a distinction between just a river and the Nile. The Nile or Nili, their God, their double God, man and woman, sun and moon at the same time.

Now, in West Africa in Yoruba land Indigo was called *ELU* or *ALU*, the plant and the pigment. Maybe the oldest word for indigo was indeed *Alu* or *Elu* used by West Africans when the Portuguese set foot on their land.

Arabs who conquered West Africa before the Europeans turned the word *Na-Alu*, *Na-Ila* into *An-Nila* or *An-Nalu* still remembering the godly roots and while Islam and the one-god religion came into being the word became *anila*. When discovering this blue pigment and its 'strange' quality it must have been so magical for them they called the plant and pigment together, after their Gods: *Alu*, *Elu*, *Nili*.

So, *Indigofera tinctoria* the species that delivers the true indigo could have been called *Anila tinctoria* as well but that is a different story.

Now, let's explore the word *Indigo*. Like I said, Scientifics think it descends from *Indicum* (Latin) or *Indikon* (Greek). After knowing the old Egyptian word *An*, is it farfetched to relate *IN* to the word *AN* with the ancient meaning of two or double? *Dia* is a well known word in our language. *Dia*, *Dio*, *Dieu*, *Dios*, *Theo*, *Thia*, meaning two or God. . *Diego* is an old Spanish word for God and at the same time a forename. *Diego* is also a patronymic in Spanish and still used today. It is said it comes from *Jacob*, the twin brother of *Esau*! *The Digo*, a tribe, a minority living between *Mombassa* (Kenia) and *Tanga* (Tanzania). *Lake Victoria* is the border between *Tanzania* and *Uganda* and one of the two sources of the Nile.

'*n Digo* is a very old Flemish word for a traitor and it might be possible that after the Spanish wars in *Belgium* and the *Netherlands* it became an abused word, infected so to say.

But there is another important issue almost forgotten; the land of *Ethiopia* (*Utopia*) in very ancient times was called *India* and stories, legends and even in writings of *Virgil* and *Tacitus* it is called the land of milk and honey. I see a relation with the double nature of the ancient Gods in the word *INDIA*

So, according to this little exploration of mine, *India* literally means: Two-God. *India* was called *Hindustan* (land of the double nature of Gods) before the Europeans 'discovered' present *India* and they might have thought they found the land of milk and honey not knowing *Ethiopia* already was called this way a long way back. Or was it the 15<sup>th</sup> century conquest mentality, the white man's conquest the, we-are-the-Caucasian-race-and-therefore-superior-race mentality that left out *Africa* as maybe being the root of everything *Indigo*, plant and pigment?

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