Abstract

It is common knowledge that the individual constellations of the sky are linked with myths in the form of anecdotes about the lives of the gods. It is often assumed that there is no underlying story with a coherent narrative. One such a coherent narrative exists and is linked with the Bible. Scholars have claimed that both the cultures of Sumer and India copied this basic model in order to explain why there are parallels between the Bible, Gilgamesh and Vedic Texts. This essay offers evidence to claim that the influence was the other way round: that an older, original story began in India and China and that it had significant implications in the West for a) constellations of the heavens; b) religions; c) mythology and literature. It shows how the Western 7 days of the week, 12 months of the year and 12 signs of the Zodiac are directly linked with the 12 year cycle of animals associated with China but found equally in India. It claims that the cult associated with Mithra offers a key to understanding connections between East and West. It demonstrates how an understanding of these connections reveals unexpected links between Western mystery religions, Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism. It shows how these connections lead us to interpret anew the foundations of our beliefs and meaning of our myths and literature. It concludes that we need a new, more comprehensive, comparative approach, linking astronomy, religion and mythology in order to regain insight into basic expressions and symbols of culture and civilization.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Psalms 19:1

"I blessed the Lord of glory, who had made those great and splendid signs, that they might display the magnificence of his works to angels and to the souls of men; and that these might glorify all his works and operations; might see the effect of his power; might glorify the great labor of his hands; and bless him forever." Enoch 35:3.
Contents

1. Introduction

2. Prajapati and Western Horned Gods

3. Seasons and Stages of Development
   3.1. Three Stages of Woman
   3.2. Three Stages of Man
   3.3. Seven Stages of Development
      3.3.1 Stage Five and Protogonos
      3.3.2 Stages Six and Seven in the Bacchic Initiation
   3.4 Three Signs and Three Crosses
   3.5 Indian Zodiac and the I Ching

4. Divisions of Time and Sections of Sacrifice
   4.1 Venus, Moon and Saturn
   4.2 Buddha and Seven Steps
   4.3 Numbers 7, 14 and 13
   4.4. Chakras, Nadis and Marmas
   4.5 Spots and Leopards

5. Basic Story of the Night Sky
   5.1. Capricorn
   5.2 Aquarius and the Fish
   5.3 Pisces and the Knot
   5.4. Lakshmi
   5.5. Buddhism
   5.6 Balance
   5.7. Festivals and Rituals
   5.8 Loss and Renewal
      5.8.1 Elixir of Immortality

6. Cycles and Evolutions
   6.1 Earth Mother
   6.2 Woman and Man
   6.3 Priest and King
      6.3.1 Saturn and Jupiter
      6.3.2 Sin to Sun
   6.4 Stages
      6.4.1 Wild and Tame
      6.4.2 Christian Polarization
      6.4.3 Three Stages

7. Myth, Religion and Literature
   7.1 Gods
   7.2 Animals as Metaphors
   7.3 Believing and Acting

8. Conclusions
1. Introduction

When we look up at the Sistine Chapel ceiling, if we are familiar with the Bible, there is a clear story line. It begins with the opening scenes of creation from Genesis and ends ultimately behind the altar with the Last Judgement on the East Wall of the Chapel. When we look up at the night sky there are individual constellations (88 in Ptolemy’s classic compilation), many of which are linked with persons, animals, anecdotes and myths but the story line seems absent: many snippets, but no clear story. We are told that there was once such an integrating narrative, that there was once a:

primeval astronomy formulated by Noah's righteous ancestors before the flood. In the original this system depicted by means of constellations the story of Satan's rebellion and the war in the heavens, his subversion of mankind, the fall of Adam and Eve, the promise of One to come who would suffer and die to relieve man from the curse of sin then be installed as Lord of Creation, and the final re-subjugation of the cosmos to God through Him.\(^{i}\)

This Biblical story of the sky has been minutely studied (figure 1). Some claim that the culture of Sumer corrupted this story with an alternative whereby a “great dragon is depicted as the rightful lord of the universe whose throne has been temporarily usurped by One whom we can recognize as the God of the Bible.”\(^{ii}\) Another view, championed by Dr. Werner Papke after a detailed study of the history of astronomy claims that the basic stories of the Bible such as Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel are all reflected in the constellations and that these served as a basis both for other cultures such as Sumer and other religions such as Mithraism and even Hinduism.\(^{iii}\) A third view, championed by Gerald Massey in his monumental Natural Genesis (1898) claimed that Egypt was the source of all these stories,\(^{iv}\) an idea pursued by E. Valenta Stratton in her Celestial Ship of the North (1927). From all this emerged a very wide ranging approach, which was ultimately still Eurocentric in essence: “The Egyptians were worshippers of Nature; the Greeks revelled in Beauty; the Romans demanded Law and the Northern races reverenced Courage.”\(^{v}\)

First Book. The Redeemer. (His first coming).

A | Virgo. The prophecy of the promised seed.
B | Libra. The Redeemer's work (grace).
B | Scorpio The Redeemer's conflict.
A | Sagittarius The prophecy fulfilled.

Second Book. The Redeemed. (His work and its results).

C | Capricorn The prophecy of deliverance.
D | Aquarius Results of work bestowed.
D | Pisces Results of work enjoyed.
C | Aries The prophesied deliverance fulfilled.

Third Book. The Redeemer. (His Second Coming).

E | Taurus The prophecy of coming judgment.
F | Gemini The Redeemer's reign in glory.
F | Cancer The Redeemer's possession safe.
E | Leo The prophecy of triumph fulfilled.
Figure 1. Correlation between the Signs of the Zodiac and the three Main Books of the Bible.\textsuperscript{vi}

A fourth view, presented by 19\textsuperscript{th} century theosophists such as Madame Blavatsky assumed that everything came from the East in her \textit{Secret Doctrine} (1888).\textsuperscript{vii} Rumours of forged documents and irregular practices tarnished her reputation. Missing from her work was clear evidence that the Indian sources could explain dimensions of Western myths which were not otherwise comprehensible.

This essay explores evidence to suggest that there was indeed an older narrative in the skies that began in India\textsuperscript{viii}: That basic story is also about creation: how there were originally immortal waters of life, which came down to earth; how the flow was interrupted and how, through sacrifice, first the Creator, as a Good Shepherd, and then his son found a way of restoring the waters of eternal life. Some elements of this story have parallels with traditions, which we now associate with paganism. Other elements of this story have parallels with Buddhism, and with the \textit{Bible}, so much so that that the story told by the starry heavens offers an original source older than the two testaments.

While it is easy to state that this view put forth more than a century ago deserves to be reconsidered, such a suggestion immediately raises formidable challenges. There will inevitably be an initial gut reaction of outrage that there could be a story older than the book we use to account for our beginnings and this will lead some to reject the idea outright. A second group will justifiably ask: so what? What is the advantage of such a discovery? Quite simply it can reveal that there are universal truths, which go far deeper than the sectarian squabbles that often arise in religion which, in its original sense, is about binding and union. If we are to find new bases for understanding one another, we need to rediscover common roots, universal themes to see afresh our common humanity, to bring a truly binding dimension across different cultures. At a very practical level it implies that trying to discover or define identity in Europe cannot be limited to collecting a few local symbols in France, Germany, Italy, and member states or their equivalents The same holds true for equivalent efforts elsewhere. The essence of major cultures lies not only in the symbols but also in the frameworks within which they are developed and nurtured.

If we look beyond the narrow barriers of our own traditions and beliefs we are confronted by unexpected parallels between microcosm and macrocosm, which are not limited to a single culture. What at first appeared to be coincidence begins to look like something else. For instance, all the sides on Josep Maria Suborach’s magic square on the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona add up to 33 which,\textsuperscript{x} as Zimmerman has noted is also the number of years in Christ’s life. There are 33 vertebrae in the human spine. There is a famous meteor shower with a peak every 33 years.\textsuperscript{x} In India, there are 33 levels of gods, and 33 levels of heavens. Buddhism also has 33 heavens. This number 33 plays an important role in the construction of Angkor Wat.\textsuperscript{xi} There are 33 stars in the Babylonian astronomical text on the path of Enlil (God of the Sky). There are 33 levels of the Sephiroth and 33 levels in the York Rite of freemasonry.\textsuperscript{xii} There are 33 cards in the \textit{Tarot des Heroes} (\textit{Des Aventuriers du Graal}) linked with the Grail legend and 33 Cantos each in the \textit{Inferno}, \textit{Purgatorio} and \textit{Paradiso} of Dante’s \textit{Divina Commedia}.\textsuperscript{xiii} Leonardo da Vinci develops 33 different ways of making rectilinear quadrates equal in quantity to circles.\textsuperscript{xiv} There are similar parallels with multiples of 7 (14, 28, 56, 112 linked with phases of the Moon, cycles of Saturn and phases of Venus) and numbers such as 13, 72 and 108.\textsuperscript{xv} Sceptics may dismiss this as pure co-incidence, but the possibility that nothing is co-incidence, that Jung’s insistence on synchronicity has some basis, that there might be underlying patterns, challenge us at least to consider the evidence.
Methodologically this study poses enormous problems. In traditional scholarship it is assumed that every claim is proven, documented and footnoted with the appropriate references. When the object of study is a passage in a given manuscript or the analysis of a single painting or work of art such an approach is warranted, necessary and often essential to ensure that the claims have a firm basis are not just wild hypotheses. In the case of symbolism, there is an immediate problem that multiple interpretations are possible and in the case of important symbols this multiplicity of interpretation is the norm. When one is dealing with objects in the course of centuries across multiple cultures, there are no handy guidebooks telling us what each symbol means. In many cases even the original documents, which would allow such guidebooks are missing, lost, or long since destroyed. In this context, the comfortable certainty of assertions and even hypotheses of traditional scholarship are not possible.

Inherent in these dilemmas are deep problems that have fuelled scholarly debates for the past two centuries. How does one reach understanding of another person or another culture? In the 19th century German scholars such as Ranke developed an ideal to write history as it actually happened (wie es eigentlich geschehen) and preached the need for scholars through sitting in the life (Sitz im Leben) of others and thus put themselves in the place of the those whom they were studying. The ideal was noble. Its practice was elusive. In the history of science, this led gradually to a fundamental debate between internal and external history. Internalists claimed that without a detailed understanding of a (scientific) culture it could not be understood. Externalists argued that since science is about universal truths of nature one could look back on earlier cultures and effectively give them marks as to how much they had understood of the picture we have today.

Extreme versions of both approaches are problematic. If one seeks to understand the world view of an earlier culture on their terms alone, then even their limitations and blindspots are ignored and theoretically there is no incentive for a more comprehensive approach, which is typically linked in some way with the problematic idea of progress. The extreme version of this internalist approach insists that one must learn in detail the language and the dialect of the culture and that one must then live for a time in that culture. This inspired an important tradition of field studies in religion, ethnology, anthropology, sociology and related fields. Taken in a strict sense this approach excludes the possibility of wide-ranging comparative cultural studies. A gifted scholar may reasonably master 5-20 languages but no one can hope to master all the great cultures of the world, let alone all the 6,500 languages. Hence the extreme internalist approach insists a) that the only way to real understanding is a cumulative approach that builds on our collective memory but at the same time implies b) that large scale comparative cultural research by individuals is impossible.

One understandable reaction to this dilemma was to look for common threads, universal patterns in different cultures. Some asserted that these exist at the level of the unconscious (Jung); others at the level of customs (Levy-Strauss); others in terms of language (Chomsky). The 20th century revealed two inherent dangers of extreme versions of this approach: 1) that one becomes the equivalent of an armchair philosopher, believing one can understand from the comfort of one’s ivory tower, without descending into the messy details of everyday life and 2) that one risks falling into a kind of god complex, whereby one assumes to know the truth and dismisses all other approaches as naïve, primitive, barbaric and hence requiring neither comprehension, or respect, let alone study and careful research. Hence, the externalist position denies the importance of cumulative memory, claims that one can dismiss everything outside one’s own culture and in its extreme form denies claims that there is really nothing
worth knowing outside our own position, like the 19th century don: “My name is Benjamin Jowett, I'm master of Balliol College, Everything there is to know, I know it and what I don't know isn't knowledge.”

Spengler’s *Decline of the West* (1925) and Husserl’s *Crisis of European Sciences* (1935), were symptomatic of something much deeper. The dilemmas posed by the extreme versions of internalism and externalism were so profound that they effectively led to an impasse, which rocked and undermined European and Western scholarship and learning throughout the 20th century as the factions of many schools claimed to have their own, new solution: positivism, neo-positivism, modernism, constructivism, constructionism, and their various de-, re- and post-forms.

Our approach lays no claim to dramatic new methods. It proposes a pragmatic way forward through an inductive approach. One can gather the evidence. One can show parallels. One can demonstrate in some cases that understanding these parallels from another culture helps to explain what was inexplicable if one tried to understand the object or symbol only within that culture. This does not yet prove conclusively that there was an influence from one culture to another, let alone precisely how that influence was conveyed from one to the other. In a world where we have learned to assume discontinuity to attempt this would be premature at this stage.

In the past half century, Europe has tended to favour a view whereby cultural expressions spread possibly from a common source. Thor Heyerdahl’s voyages were perhaps the best publicized examples, but there has been continuing debate whether that common source was Egypt, Sumer or somewhere in India or China. Meanwhile, there has been a trend in North American archaeology/anthropology to emphasize parallel invention and parallel expressions in different cultures. In this approach, pyramids in Egypt and similar pyramids in Mayan or Aztec cultures neither require or even imply necessary connections between Africa, and Middle- and South America. On reflection, we can recognize that the diffusion theory of culture is linked with the traditions of continuity and collective memory, while the independent expression camp is clearly related to the externalist position that claims discontinuity. But the scholarship in both camps is too substantial to reveal a simple victory of either the diffusion or the independent expression camp. The jury is still out.

We suggest that the way forward is to collect detailed evidence, humbly and patiently; to explore parallels without presuming to know whether these were a) independent expressions or b) possibly from a common source. Once enough evidence has been gathered whereby possible common strands of a big picture can be discerned, more detailed studies can examine whether these connections are sufficiently detailed to permit bolder claims. Our essay on the story of the sky does not pretend to resolve these debates. It suggests that if we are looking for evidence of our common humanity, the stars and astronomy are one area that all cultures have in common and that these may help us to look afresh at our past, present and future.

2. Prajapati and Western Horned Gods

Unexpected evidence of parallels between different myths and religions of the world came from a discovery of a connection between the Indian creator God, Prajapati and the Scandinavian horned god, Cernunnos. A survey of this evidence provides a useful introduction to the our study and serves a double function of acquainting us with some of the main themes that will concern us later.
In the Indian pantheon, three gods are usually given priority: Brahma (the creator in the heavens), Vishnu (the preserver on earth and the waters) and Siva (the destroyer often in the underworld). This has parallels with other trinities such as in Greece: Zeus (Heavens), Poseidon (Earth and Waters) and Hades (Underworld) or Zeus (Jupiter, Sagittarius); Chronos (Saturn, Capricorn) and Ouranos (Aquarius).

While this trinity of gods (known as the *trimurti*) guides creation in India, the actual Lord of physical creation has a quite different name: Prajapati. In early representations (plate 2a), he is shown as a horned god, seated in a yoga position called the cowherd (*gorakshasma*), on a bench which is supported by drums and surrounded by four animals, which have been identified as elephant, lion, boar and rhinoceros. Beneath the bench are deer, animals linked directly with the Vedic texts in Hinduism. Scholars have noted that the animals in this representation of Prajapati have a symbolic function: they are linked with the five senses and as “base” animals represent lower natures of man, which need to be overcome. This symbolic use of animals is widespread in India and by no means exclusive to Prajapati. It applies equally to the animals associated with Shiva.

This notion of using animals as symbols to express the lower instincts in humans, which is a fundamental point of departure in Indian thought, was developed in the Persian tradition and
becomes a common theme in world cultures. In its simplest form, the three gods Zodiac signs, Aquarius, Capricorn and Sagittarius are used to distinguish three kinds of animals: 1) those which are wild, such as the ram, ibex or the boar; 2) those which are semi-domesticated such as the donkey and finally, 3) those which are domesticated such as the cow or the lamb. In Sumer, for instance these become linked with heavenly bodies define the paths of Ea, Anu and Enlil respectively. On the human plane, this leads to three and subsequently many more levels of development, beginning with a beast (bull) and progressing via a man-lion to a god.

To return to the figure of Prajapati: Immediately below the seated god are two drums (dumaru), which can be seen as complementary to singing bowls as means of re-enacting creation, which began from the word (in the sense of logos): in the form of harmonious sounds. These are reminiscent of an hour-glass in shape. They effectively consist of a downward turned and an upward turned triangle laced together. In popular literature, such as the Da Vinci Code, these intersecting triangles are called the blade (male) and the chalice (female), but their profound symbolism goes much deeper. Implicit in the drums is a joining of the male and female forces in the fourth chakra: heart (anahata chakra), which forms a hexagonal shape known in India as the star of Vishnu or the Ganesha Yantra and known in the West as the Seal of Solomon. In India, this acknowledgment and integration of female and male dimensions within an individual was called ida and pingala. It is the basis of all yogic quests for development of consciousness. Its Chinese equivalent is yin/yang. In addition, the author of one of the Upanishads, used the:

symbolism of a down-turned bowl to represent Prajapati's head in its role as the dome of the firmament. 'Manifold glory has been placed into it (the bowl). On its lip sit the Seven Rishis [i.e. the seven wise men which in India are also shown as the seven stars of the Big Dipper turning around a pole star which they see as a lotus blossom], the tongue as the eighth communicates with Brahman.' What is called the cup having its mouth below and its bottom above is this head, for its opening (the mouth) is below and its bottom (the skull) is above.

This passage is important for two reasons. First, it reminds us that the Indian concept of creation is integrally linked with the word and speech. Vishnu is called the Lord of speech. Second, it alludes to a link between the bowl and water. Hence, it is linked with central rituals involving a pitcher (kulasa or khumbha as in Khumba mela and purna-khumba), which as we shall see, is the underlying theme in the Indian story of the sky.

The representation of Brahma in his form as Prajapati is paralleled by a representation showing him as a Pashupati, Lord of the Animals (plate 2b). This representation of Pashupati is over 6,000 years old, comes from Harappa and has stimulated discussions of how these Northern cultures related to the rest of India. Again there is a yoga posture. Again there are four animals and, as before, those on the right, are clearly an elephant and a tiger. The animals on the left could be an antelope and a bull. Or they could be the male and female of a rather special species known as the black buck (antelope cervicapra). While the female of this species looks much like antelope elsewhere, the male has two horns which are closely intertwined and effectively provide a natural version of what the West knows as the caduceus.

In 1891, archaeologists in Northern Jutland in Denmark discovered another image of a horned god on the Gundestrup Cauldron (dated 4th -1st c. B.C.), which has become one of the most famous symbols of pagan art (figure 2c). Scholars have duly examined the striking
similarities between the Indian figures of Prajapati/Prashupati and the Scandinavian figure of Cernunnos. There is debate about the precise identification of the animals. Even so two observations can be made with some certainty. First, bulls, stags, swine, and tigers are typically linked with a lower “animal” nature of man/woman that needs to be overcome. Second, the two lions were typically linked with the summer solstice (Leo); the man-like form sitting on an animal (makara that began as a human/crocodile and eventually became the sign of Capricorn) is a symbol for the winter solstice (21 December), with which Cernunnos was also associated. Cernunnos could also be a representation of spring—a man’s *Primavera.*

Beyond dispute is that both Cernunnos and Prajapati are in a yoga position. Both shared a common quest of self-mastery and enlightenment.

### 3. Seasons and Stages of Development

On closer study we discover that this explicit depiction of the seasons in the macrocosm is also implicitly linked with stages of development in the microcosm of an individual. In his left hand, Cernunnos holds a circular object that looks like a snake biting its own tail (*ouroboros*). In his right hand he holds a serpent. These are symbols for the female and male reproduction organs familiar, albeit in a more stylized form, in typical portrayals of Brahma. We note that the yoga position of Cernunnos is different from that of Prajapati/Pashupati. If we return to the first of the seven chakras: the *Muladara,* we discover that the Prajapati/ Pashupati figures reflect the pose of Brahma, whereas Cernunnos reflects the pose of Indra, the “father of all the gods.” Hence, these two poses are closely connected in the Indian system of thought of the first of the seven chakras in spiritual development. All this is common knowledge for experts in the field. In our case, it serves as background and as a useful point of departure for our real voyage.

The horns of the Cernunnos figure are clearly intended to parallel those of the stag. On closer inspection of the Prajapati and Prashupati figures, we note that their horns follow a very different model. Superficially, they remind us of the horns of an Indian Brahma bull. Between the two horns we see stalks of grain. The horns themselves remind us of two crescent moons. The horns are also reminiscent of a bow. All these are symbols which are intimately connected with the Indian creation stories and the beginnings of new life. They point to links with fertility and vegetation goddesses/gods.

If we invert the horns of Prajapati, we note that they very much resemble the natural flow of new plant life. This might seem a forced interpretation. But if we return to the *Muladara* chakra, which is literally at the base of being in Indian thought, we discover that the Sanskrit letter, which effectively grows out of the back of the elephant has the same form. If we combine the upward and the downward turns in a single image we arrive at a form familiar in most depictions of the Babylonian tree of life, which is clearly a stepping stone for the Nordic image of Irminsul. This Germanic world tree, Irminsul is linked with depictions of Ursa Major, which confirms a clear link with astronomy. The fluid equivalent of this naturally expanding flow of life is the fountain. Alchemical treatises focused specifically on one kind of fountain where the waters of life of sun and moon diverge to create a new child, but ultimately this image of waters going upwards and parting is the basis of all water which reflects an original fountain of life. In its fixed form, the Sanskrit letter amounts to the letter M in English as in mother, another root concept of life in all cultures.

If we go to second chakra, (*Vadisthana*), we see that there is again an accompanying letter. Together these letters are AU of the sacred word AUM (OM), which was the beginning of
Indian story of creation. The idea of Alpha and Omega as steps in human development was explicitly taken over by the Serapis cult, and subsequently acquired new significance as the familiar Christian Alpha and Omega. The Sanskrit model gives a more universal meaning to: “In the beginning was the word (logos).” There are further parallels to be found with the letters Alef, Shin, Mem used in the Hebrew Sephirot, and with the Celtic alphabet where the first letter corresponds to the fir “tree of birth” and the final letter of the alphabet corresponds to the yew tree, associated with death. Hence, although their approaches are very diverse, each of these major cultures has basic letters of their alphabet connected with creation to tell a story of linking upper and lower worlds.

We mentioned earlier that the chakras have a developmental dimension. This can be illustrated most effectively as an ascending pole that reflects the spine in an individual at the microcosmic level and as the world tree at the macrocosmic level. These chakras also have a temporal dimension although the first chakra, (Muladara), which represents the base, and serves as the zero point, does not enter into this temporal story. It is a given and the one elephant actually stands for the eight elephants at the eight points of the compass which typically form the support beams on the back of a cosmic turtle. Simpler variants have four elephants, which then become the four pillars of the world. These are often complemented by and sometimes replaced by guardians of the four directions or eight guardians of the winds.

The second chakra (Vadishtana), the sacred chakra is accompanied, not only by a letter but also by a crocodile with a rather unfamiliar upward pointing tail – possibly in order to make its shape function as a visual play on the concept of a crescent moon linked with a new beginning. The crocodile, usually drawn as a combination of man or Capricorn and fish known as a makara, represents the first of ten incarnations of Vishnu—which have rightly been compared as a summary of Darwinian evolution avant la lettre. The makara became the basis for the zodiac sign Capricorn. As such it stands, quite clearly for the winter solstice on 21 December, when the longest night passes, and the days begin their slow return to ever longer light. It is an appropriate symbol for a first milestone in spiritual development. It is intriguing that the word Pharaoh should become the Arabic word for crocodile. Implicitly, there is a connection between Vishnu the preserver of the heavens and Pharaoh as preserver of the order of the heavens on earth.

Chakra 3, solar plexus (Manipura), shows a fiery red downward pointing triangle which is a symbol of fire and the planet Mars. In the foreground, stands a ram of Aries, a familiar from everyday zodiac, as a symbol of the spring equinox beginning on 21 March. Chakra 4, the heart (Anahata), has a black buck (antelope cervicapra, the Latin title of which offers a fitting play on Capricorn). In terms of the vertical spine we have now reached the heart. In terms of temporal development we have reached the summer equinox: the point where the descending and ascending triangles have combined to create the miracle of new life symbolizing a sign of Vishnu, a yantra of Ganesha or a Seal of Solomon depending on one’s tradition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Years 2-12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring equinox</td>
<td>Matsya (one-horned fish)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter solstice</td>
<td>Kurma (mighty turtle)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autumn Equinox</td>
<td>Varaha (fierce boar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Solstice</td>
<td>Narasimha (man-lion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Vamana</td>
<td>(clever dwarf )</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Parashurama</td>
<td>(warrior-priest)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Rama</td>
<td>(dutiful prince)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Krishna</td>
<td>(righteous cowherd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Buddha</td>
<td>(compassionate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Kalki</td>
<td>(messiah)</td>
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Next, chakra 5, the throat (Vishuddha) corresponds to the autumnal equinox. A similar approach can be applied to the incarnations of Vishnu and leads to a series of stages beginning with a one horned fish and leading to a righteous cowherd (figure 3). There is also a ninth stage of Buddha and a tenth stage of Messiah which is yet to come. Of interest for our purposes is first that parallels between stages of spiritual development (chakras) and chronological cycles in the seasons (signs of the Zodiac), both lead to a Righteous Cowherd, which can be closely linked with the idea of a Good Shepherd. Second, it is noteworthy how the basic sequence (1-4) lends itself neatly to twelve month cycles and how the crucial first six stages lend themselves neatly to a 12 year cycles such as the Khumba Mela, or into much longer yuga cycles.

The Scandinavian Gundestrup Cauldron confirms that Indian ideas had an impact on one western cauldron. So too does the simple fact that the days of the week in India and the West, aside from being in a different language, reflect a common source (cf. §3.5). A number of scholars have focussed on differences between lunar and solar calendars to insist that there was no interplay. Another group has typically assumed that the direction of influence must have been West-East. The example of Alexander the Great is typically mentioned. Such West-East influence undoubtedly existed. Even so, our interest lies in exploring the converse: to examine evidence of East-West influence, whereby Indian ideas left traces on the constellations of stars, cosmologies, religion, mythology and literature of the West. Before we can compare narratives, we need to understand the Western equivalents and then to learn the basic story of the sky in the East.

3.1. Three Stages of Woman

Greek mythology in its later stages often reflects male domination: with Zeus dominating most scenes in more senses than one. It an earlier phase, women played a much more central role. For instance, until relatively late in the Roman Empire, the Bacchanalia in honour of Bacchus on 16-17 March, were only accessible to women. There was a parallel festival of Liberalia for men on the same days, when young men were first allowed to wear the toga virilis. Only gradually were these two events integrated before being banned altogether in 186 B.C. for taking bacchanalia too literally.

The Bacchanalia in honour of Bacchus were symptomatic of a much larger and more fundamental trend in society associated with mystery religions. The number three played a key role. Hence, the three graces, the three fates (Erinyes) and the (three times three) nine Muses. Hence, also a tendency to class three ages of woman: as young woman dominated by desire (Aphrodite); mature woman linked with power, wealth and good fortune (Juno) and old woman associated with intellect and wisdom (Minerva). This Western trinity of goddesses was paralleled by a Eastern female trinity of Lakshmi, Durga and Sarawati.

In both West and East such trinities were especially connected with the moon. The goddess Durga has a magic triangle which entails three sets of three. The goddess Durga has three main manifestations: Mahakali, her dimension of goodness where she helps immunity from diseases, poverty and grief; Mahalakshmi, where she fosters wealth, happiness and prosperity; and Mahasarasvati, where she promotes purity of thought, intellectual eminence and spiritual bliss. These are celebrated as 3 x 3 days to form a Navaratri of 9 days plus one in the Dashera festival: 3 x 3 x 13 months = 108 which is the number of names of Durga and is also a number linked with distances between the earth and moon. In Egypt, Isis has 9 names plus a
In Greece, in some versions of the Persephone story, the goddess eats nine seeds of the pomegranate, which leads to her symbolically being married to Hades. In Rome, the Day of Selene (Semele, the moon) on 7 February entailed the sacrifice of a yearling bull representing Dionysius, which was cut into 9 pieces and “represented the original number of orgiastic moon-priestesses who presided over the ceremonies.” In Christianity, the Virgin Mary, who is also associated with the pomegranate, also has novenas of nine days devoted to her.

In the West, there was the moon goddess Selene, associated with youth and desire; the moon goddess Artemis (Diana) associated with virginity (cf. Sati in India) and the goddess Hecate, associated the old age. Alternatively, these goddesses were linked with upper, middle and under worlds. This threefold dimension of goddesses may help explain why the goddess Demeter explicitly makes love three times; and why Hecate, the goddess Isis and Celtic goddesses are typically represented as having three heads.

This tradition of three ages of woman, may also throw new light on the story of Persephone. The basic myth is well known. The virgin Persephone was happily busy when suddenly the earth opened up and she was taken prisoner by Hades, the god of the Underworld who offered her a pomegranate. She accepted and was therefore bound unwittingly in marriage. Demeter was thrown into such anguish that everything stopped growing. Mercury was sent to intercede and finally a deal was reached whereby Persephone would stay in the underworld for four months (or one half of the year) and then spend the rest of the time as a regular living person.

This seems a purely fictitious and unlikely story until we look at the sky and note that in the Northern Hemisphere, the constellation Virgo is situated just above the equator (figure 6a). In metaphorical terms everything above the equator belongs to earth and everything below the equator belongs either to the underworld or the heavens. Hence, as the constellation of Virgo disappears below the horizon, in symbolic terms, she theoretically goes to the underworld and dies. If one takes it from the autumnal equinox to the beginning of Aquarius after the winter solstice, then it is four months. If one takes this to be from the beginning of the autumnal equinox to the beginning of the spring equinox then the temporary death takes six months. What happened to Persephone was a sophisticated version of a more basic story that applied to the Earth Goddess herself in her various guises as Demeter, Astarte, Semiramis in Babylonia or Durga in India. It is generally agreed that this voyage to the underworld was a symbolic “death” and played a key role in the Eleusinian mysteries. Without pretending to know precisely what happened in this secret initiation rites, it is easy to intuit the main intent of these activities. They were linked with both agriculture and fertility. The key idea was that one “died” and was reborn again in the manner of plants in nature. This cyclical rebirth was linked to beliefs of long term salvation.

3.2. Three Stages of Man

Men were not allowed to attend either the rites of Demeter or (initially) the rites of Bacchus, but had their own variant of the same tradition. Again men had three key stages in life: a young man associated with desire; a grown man associated with power and old man associated with intellect. In the simplest cases one was symbolically a young man for four months from 21 January (Aquarius) to 21 April; a grown man for the next four months and old man for the last four months. As the Roman calendar evolved these dates were adjusted such that one was a young man from the winter solstice (21 December) to the spring equinox.
(21 March); a man between the equinoxes (from 21 March to 21 September) and an old man from autumnal equinox to winter solstice (21 September to 21 December).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mithraic</th>
<th>Bacchic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Heliodromus</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for control</td>
<td>Bull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Persian</td>
<td>Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Serpent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Miles (Soldier)</td>
<td>Mars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for war</td>
<td>Horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Corax (Raven)</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for communication</td>
<td>Lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Leo (Lion)</td>
<td>Jupiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for abundance</td>
<td>Young Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nymphus (Bridegroom)</td>
<td>Venus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for beauty and love</td>
<td>Chronos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pater (Father)</td>
<td>Saturn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for material stability</td>
<td>Zeus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. List of seven stages of initiation in the Mithraic and the Bacchic traditions.

Metaphorically, every boy needs to die in order to be reborn as a man, whence the elaborate initiation rites in many “primitive” societies. In Egypt, Greece and Rome this metaphorical death took another form: the idea that one needed to sacrifice a young man, who was buried and then reborn. In the Bacchic tradition this entailed a) a person who was symbolically buried and said to rise again three days later; b) a person who was said to be reborn nine months later (e.g. 21 December) and c) a fir tree which symbolized both rebirth and continuity. If one were dealing with a symbolic person who was potentially 100 years old, then 1/3 of his life would be 33 1/3 years.

3.3. Seven Stages of Development

In the Bacchic tradition (cf. the Pythagorean tradition) these three stages had distinct names: Young Man (Protogonos), Zeus and Chronos. In the Bacchic there were seven stages through which a person passed. In the Mithraic tradition there were also seven stages. The names were different but the essential idea was the same. One ascended from a “beastly” state to a more divine condition (figure 4).

The names of the animals seems very strange until we read Porphyry’s *On Abstinence*. He explains that in the Persian tradition one typically used names of animals to specify various stages of moral and spiritual development. Hence, Bull is the most base (stage 1) and Zeus (stage 7) is the most divine. If we turn to astronomy we find further clues. In Ptolemy’s map of the Southern constellation (figure 6b) we find the monster Cetus linked with the spring equinox, which is variously described as a sea monster, beast or Leviathan. On closer inspection we see that its lower half is fish and its upper half is animal (stage 2). Opposite it, at the autumnal equinox is Chiron, the Centaur: its lower half is animal and its upper half is human (stage 3). Next comes a man-lion (stage 4). Hence these four stages are a miniature resume of Darwin’s evolution of the species. This series is the more striking because the same basic stages recur with a) the Earth Mother, Taueret; b) the parts of the demon of the underworld; c) the evolution of the Buddha (figure 5) and even the demons that the earth mother combats. Thus the same animals used in series for stages of development are used in combination as symbols of the underworld and/or evil.

| 1. Lion                  | Lion<sup>xliv</sup>  | Lion     | Lion   |
| 2. Serpent              | Crocodile<sup>xliv</sup> | Crocodile<sup>xliv</sup> | Bull   |
| 3. Horse                | Hippopotamus (=Water Horse) | Hippopotamus | Horse  |
| 1. Bull                 |                     | Elephant |
Figure 5. First Four Stages in Bacchic Initiation;  a) Parts of Taueret (Tawaret, Taurt, and Apet, Ipet) Great One; b) Parts of the Demon of the Underworld, Ammut and c) first four stages of Buddha.
Figure 6 a-b. Ptolemy’s treatment of the Northern and the Southern Hemispheres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Pillar of Water Power</th>
<th>Pillar of Air Intellect</th>
<th>Pillar of Fire Desire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Intellect</td>
<td>Desire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Stages 1-7 in the development of a person in the Bacchic tradition and parallels with stages 1-4 in the yogic tradition.

As we noted earlier, Vishnu has a similar evolution in the course of his ten avatars. Indeed, his first avatar Matsya (one-horned) fish was associated with both Piscis Austrinus and with Cetus. Accordingly some Western representations of Cetus have a single horn. Moreover, Vishnu’s fourth avatar, Narasimha (man-lion), clearly has parallels with the Mithraic man-lion. Vishnu’s fifth avatar, clever dwarf, has parallels with Young Man. His sixth avatar, Parashurama (warrior priest), is one of the Indian epithets for Saturn (Capricorn) and thus synonymous with Chronos in stage six of the Mithraic system and Vishnu’s seventh stage as Rama (dutiful prince) is the Indian source of Jupiter (Sagittarius). If we go to the Vastu Purusha Mandala we find that Mitra is one of the four key gods linked with Brahma.

In the West, the received wisdom is that Bacchus is supposed to have traveled to the East and exported his products of wine and philosophy of pleasure to India there. However, already in the second century, scholars such as Philostratus (c.170-c.247A.D.)\textsuperscript{xlvi} were very conscious of serious claims to the contrary: namely, that Bacchis was an Indian who exported his habits of
winemaking and revelry to Greece. In retrospect, we know that the “first evidence of wine having actually been made from grapes comes from a clay pot found in Persia (now Iran) dating from around 10,000 years B.C.”

We know that in Ur there was a Geshtinanna, a Babylonian Goddess of wine (and consort of Dumuzi), which might provide an historical explanation why the followers of Dionysius and Bacchus (two gods with very male connotations) invariably wore women’s clothing.

We know also that there were close connections between Persia and India; that wine was an integral part of early Asian civilizations and that in India, soma, associated with the moon, mushrooms and the nectar of immortality was closely associated also with wine. In this context, the realization that the seven stages of Bacchic initiation, are essentially identical to the seven stages of Serapis, Mithra and ultimately identical to the seven stages of enlightenment in yoga as found in India, offers serious evidence that Bacchus is an import from India rather than conversely. This would also account for the evidence that Dionysius (Bacchus) was seriously resisted when first introduced.

If we attempt to see the first four stages of Bacchic initiation chronologically in an astronomical context, the bull (Taurus, stage 1) is likely to have corresponded to what was the summer solstice; the “serpent” sea monster corresponds to 21 March; the centaur to 21 September and the lion to 21 June of the following year. If we see the annual cycle of the year as one phase, then this evolution over two years corresponds to two phases – which could then be linked with the sequence of male and female, night and day, summer and winter etc.

This sequence also offers a starting point for bringing order to the universe. The four animals correspond to the four elements in the sequence: earth, water, air, fire respectively. Astronomically and astrologically they also have anatomical correspondences. Taurus (bull) is linked with inner hearing centres; Aquarius (young man) is linked with the ankles; Scorpio (here the centaur horse and later the eagle) is linked with the reproductive system and Leo is linked with the spine. In terms of Indian yoga we noted that the base chakra is linked with the elephant (muladhara) which is also linked with the A of AUM. So the bull is effectively a beginning linked with Alpha and the lion is an end corresponding to Omega. This explains why the symbol for Leo is Omega, an end that is also the beginning of summer.
Figure 9. a) Basic connections between the night sky, b) Zeus (Northern Hemisphere) and Chronos (Typhon, Southern Hemisphere) and c) example in Sumeria.

3.3.1 Stage Five and the Protogonos

Such comparisons between Eros and yoga could readily seem forced. We need to see the zodiac, the young man (Protogonos) and the basic yoga figure side by side in order to understand the underlying parallels, which inspire the microcosm macrocosm parallels. The world egg of the Protogonos corresponds to a madorla egg in a circle that embraces the circles of both Northern and the Southern celestial hemispheres. In this analogy, the first three animals of the first stages correspond to the Southern hemisphere. They belong to a wild, beastly part of man which is literally cut off from the nobler part of man which is in the Northern part of the hemisphere. Symbolically the cutting off of the lower part amounts to castration. This is a deeper significance why Chronos castrates his father Ouranos and why Zeus castrates Chronos (figure 9a-b). We are told that to escape Typhon, the Greek god Pan jumped into the Nile, and became half-man and half-fish in the form of Capricorn, a story also found in Sumer (figure 9c) and which goes back to the Matsya avatar of Vishnu (figure 3).

The fourth animal, the lion, corresponds to the centre or heart of the celestial circle. Accordingly the Protogonos has a lion in the position of his heart which aligns with the fourth chakra (anahata) in yoga. (Richard Coeur de Lion and Corleone had precedents). In Indian astronomy, there is also a heart constellation, called Auriga in the West. Auriga is positioned right near the horns of the bull, is linked with Venus and with the Pleiades, and thus with the beginnings of life. The orbit of Venus describes a pentagram the inner boundaries of which define a pentagon. Significantly the shape of Auriga is also a pentagon.
In the West, Auriga is associated with the charioteer, Phaeton, who lost control of the sun and plunged to earth or more specifically into the Eridanus, a celestial river that ends there. In India, the source of the Eridanus is associated with the creator Prajapati, and the star sign Capricorn (21 December). Hence, the winter solstice is associated with creation, a new stream of life (Eridanus), which continues until the summer solstice when the unlicensed driver Phaeton causes the stream to dry up. Thus the five sided constellation Auriga which becomes associated with the six-sided heart (anahata) chakra, where the downward female triangle and the upward male triangle join to create new life in the seal of Vishnu and Solomon, is also like a six-sided well that has dried up, and which needs to wait for new life at the time of Capricorn/Aquarius six months later. The strivings of the followers of Bacchus to progress through seven stages of initiation and the seven chakras of yoga are part of a much larger story of literally astronomical proportions. Conquering the beast in oneself is somehow linked with maintaining the divine order of the entire cosmos.

3.3.2 Stages Six and Seven in the Bacchic Initiation

Once we understand the Bacchic approach it is easy to revel in the logic of their reasoning. At the level of the gods, the Protogonos is associated with the first generation of gods corresponding to the sky: Brahma in India, Re-Atum in Egypt and Ouranos. In the West, sky (Ouranos) joins with earth (Gaia) to produce the twelve Titans, which correspond to the twelve signs of the zodiac, of which six are female and six are male ending in Chronos, which is the starting point of time, chronology and the next generation.

The fourth level in the Bacchic system is synonymous with the heart of the Protogonos but also with the spine of the next generation. Hence what was East-West for the first born becomes the North-South axis. And since there are two hemispheres there are now twins (Gemini). The original twins are Chronos (Saturn, Geb, Typhon) and Zeus (Jupiter, Horus). These begin as equal (figure 9). Stages six in the Bacchic evolution is Saturn who is half-man and half serpent. With the triumph of Jupiter (the lion of the sun), Saturn is castrated symbolically, i.e. his lower, animal half is cut off and only his human part remains.

The original Protogonos had a length of entire Milky Way. Chronos, equal to the diameter of the Southern hemisphere of the celestial circles began as ½ that original length. When Zeus cuts him in two he is down to ¼ his original length. In moral terms the beastly side of man as thereby reduced to 25%.

In the seventh phase of initiation, the surface interpretation is that Zeus kills Python and theoretically the beast in man has been completely killed. This official version of the success story becomes one of the leit-motifs of Western and indeed world religions and literatures. To take some obvious examples, in Persia the triumph of light over darkness is the triumph of Ahura Mazda. In Greece, it becomes the triumph of solar Apollo who kills the Pythian serpent – a local version of Typhon. Symbolically only the upper half remains and hence the omphalos at Delphi shows only the upper half of the world egg. This story becomes linked with most of the stories that involve killing dragons and serpents: e.g. Cadmus, Perseus and Hercules.

At another level, evil is not simply killed. The opposition between good and evil is further split into four. In one version, Isis and Osiris (water and fire) are linked with day and opposed
to Typhon and Nephthys (earth and air). John Opsopaus has considered other combinations in his study of the Greek esoteric doctrine of the elements. In one such combination, Osiris, Isis and Nephtys become creator, preserver and destroyer (cf. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva) while Nepthys holds sway over death and rebirth. In another, Dionysius, the god of sacrifice, becomes linked with the goddesses Rhea, Persephone and Demeter: a combination wherein both male and female must go the underworld to ensure continuity of life (figure 9).

At a more profound level the so-called triumph of good over evil is much more problematic. The day of triumph, the summer solstice (21 June) may have the good news about being the first day of summer. But the bad news is that on this day the sun begins its downward course in the direction of shorter days, winter and death. Man’s moment of self-mastery is nature’s moment of defeat. On the surface, the sun may have triumphed, but beneath the surface, the sun’s six month ascendancy is over and the second phase of six months is dominated by the moon. The sacrifice of Bacchus is to address a very big challenge: nothing less than saving the order and harmony of the universe.

The seven stages in the Bacchic initiation are paralleled by seven stages in the Mithraic tradition, where they are explicitly connected with the seven days of the week, which are based on the sequence of the planets in a specific order: Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn. There are other connections with astronomy. In a representation of the world egg (figure 11a) we see clearly how the zodiac is divided in two. On our left is the first half of the year, linked with the sun, male imagery, and linked with a sword (war). On the right is the second half of the year dominated by the moon, female imagery and linked with a torch (peace). The second representation (figure 11b) links the first period with a torch pointing upwards and the second period with the torch pointing downwards: Freudian imagery avant la lettre.
3.4. Three Signs and Three Crosses

In the Pythagorean tradition there are only three levels of initiation. In this case, one begins with by being a lion (Leo). In stage two, one becomes a centaur (Sagittarius) and in stage three one becomes a water carrier (Aquarius). This model is significant for at least two reasons. First, if one takes a circle of the zodiac, one goes from Leo to Sagittarius (1), ascends vertically from Sagittarius to Aquarius (2) and traces the hypotenuse of a Pythagorean triangle to return to Leo (3). Hence, development of the person is linked somehow to Pythagorean sacred geometry and number symbolism. Second, it is noteworthy that whereas the Bacchic initiation theoretically entails an upward recapitulation of evolution from beast to man, this model suggests that we need to descend back down the ladder of creation in order to make real spiritual progress. Dante’s theme of the *Commedia* goes back at least one millennium and possibly two to a time when going to Hades, the Inferno or Hell was still a good thing.

In order to appreciate this paradox we need first to look more closely at this sequence: Leo, Sagittarius, Aquarius. In religious terms, these three signs of the zodiac reflect the pillar of fire, the pillar of air and the pillar of water. In the Greek pantheon, they entail going from modern Zeus (Jupiter) back to the beginning of time Chronos (Saturn) and back to before the beginning of time (Ouranos). In the Indian pantheon, this journey entails a route via Shiva (the destroyer), and Vishnu (the preserver) back to Brahma (the creator). The upright section of the Pythagorean triangle thus entails much more than number symbolism. The seeming descent is actually an ascent to the primary force of creation. It is linked with the mysteries of the trinity and with cosmic order.

To gain insight into this deeper significance of the three signs of the zodiac linked with a trinity of gods and with cosmic order we need to recall that these signs of the zodiac are also linked with the three crosses, associated with the building blocks of Western astrology, namely, the mutable, the cardinal and the fixed signs and crosses. The mutable signs are linked with water, the cardinal signs with air and fixed signs with fire. In the West, the crosses are known by their uppermost sign, namely, the Gemini, Aries and Taurus crosses respectively.

One explanation as to their provenance makes appeal to the precession of the equinoxes. We are now entering into the age of Aquarius, i.e. when the sun enters spring (21 March) against the backdrop of Aquarius. For about the past 2100, years the sun entered against the background of Pisces. Before that March 21 was successively in Aries, Taurus and Gemini.
Figure 12a) A Yin-Yang figure in China. Note how the reversed S of the spiral imitates the curve of the Milky Way in figure 9; b) An Indian equivalent linked with fire (Agni); c) the same pattern used to arrange the seven planets or d) as a world egg for alchemy by John Dee (1564).

Hence the Gemini quartet reflects a period some 6300 B.C. when, it is claimed, the first alignment was proposed, and then successively replaced with each new sign into which the zodiac entered. This is theoretically fine but implies that there should have been advanced astronomy some three millennia before we find evidence of high civilization in Egypt and Babylonia. This suggests that we should look eastwards.

3.5 Indian Calendar and the I Ching

The Indian zodiacal calendar is generally acknowledged to be very old although its first appearance is not recorded. It takes a very different approach than Ptolemy to the challenge of visualizing the heavens but has more links with both the East and the West than we might suspect. India has a variation on the Chinese Yin-Yang diagram (figure 12a-b), which inspires parallels in Western alchemy (figures 12c-d). In the West the zodiac is represented around a circle or, as we have seen with the Protogonos, around an egg shape. In India, the zodiac of 12 squares is represented around a form of four squares. If we draw diagonals from the four end points we arrive at an X shaped figure defining four triangles (cf. figure 13b). The two triangles on the left correspond to the Northern hemisphere while those on the right correspond to the Southern Hemisphere.

What would happen if we simply imposed the Western crosses (or quartets) on to this “simple” pattern? This began as a thought experiment. The results are shown in figure 13. As we examine these diagrams several unexpected points come to light. First, the mutable signs align themselves symmetrically to mimic the X traced by the path of the ecliptic, with one notable difference between the Western and Eastern versions. The Western version is effectively a mirror image of the original. Second, each of these crosses respectively link the three signs of water with the three signs of earth in different combinations. Third, we note that the mutable signs are linked with Sagittarius; the cardinal signs with Capricorn and the fixed signs link up with Aquarius, which it will recalled represent the gods Zeus (Jupiter), Chronos (Saturn) and Ouranos (Uranos), or Siva, Vishnu and Brahma respectively. Hence these sixteen squares effectively offer a systematic view of early creation and thus summarize at a glance the journeys of initiation and spiritual improvement linked with Bacchus, Mithra and ultimately also the yogic quest for enlightenment in the East.

On closer inspection we recognize further parallels between the West and this unfamiliar diagram of the East. Sagittarius (i.e. Shiva, Zeus, Jupiter) on the bottom left is flanked by Venus (Ushas, cf. vanas; Aphrodite) on the bottom right (figure 14a). Horizontally the four central squares are bisected with the line of the solstices. On the left side, Saturn (Vishnu, Chronos, Typhon, Geb, Dionysius) rules over Aquarius and Capricorn. On the right side, the Sun (Surya, Apollo) rules over Cancer and Leo. Vertically the four central squares are bisected by the equinoxes at the equator dominated by Mars who rules over Aries and Taurus. On the upper left and right we have the Moon (Sati, Artemis, Diana) and Mercury (Budha, Hermes). The lines joining Mercury - Jupiter and Moon – Venus define the mutable signs and the trace the path of the ecliptic (cf. figure 14b).

There are further unexpected parallels between this Indian zodiac and the Western system. Sagittarius (i.e. Shiva, Jupiter) on the bottom left is flanked by Venus (Ushas, cf. vanas;
Aphrodite) on the bottom right (figure 14a). Horizontally the four central squares are bisected with the line of the solstices. On the left side, Saturn (Vishnu, Chronos, Geb, Typhon, Torn. On the right side, the Sun (Surya, Apollo)
Figure 13. The mutable, cardinal and fixed cross in Western astrology and Eastern Cosmology corresponding to Sagittarius, Capricorn and Aquarius respectively. If we reverse the figure for Capricorn (Chronos, Saturn), we arrive at the 4 symbol associated with Saturn.

Figure 14. a) The basic squares of the Indian system, b) the Hebrew Sephiroth inverted and mirrored; c) the regular Sephiroth; d) the downward female and upward male meeting in the heart (anahata) chakra, rules over Cancer and Leo. Vertically the four central squares are bisected by the equinoxes at the equator dominated by Mars who rules over Aries and Taurus. On the upper left and right we have the Moon (Sati, Artemis, Diana) and Mercury (Budha, Hermes). The lines joining Mercury - Jupiter and Moon - Venus define the mutable signs and trace the path of the ecliptic.
Standing back, if we begin at the centre left we have Saturn then Sun. We then go up and find the sequence Moon – Mars - Mercury. We then go down to the bottom and have Jupiter – Venus. This order is identical with the sequence of our days of the week: Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and thus confirms that the days of the week as we know them in the West is found in the same sequence in India. If we go to Saturn (Vishnu, Chronos) and go upwards in sequence we have the zodiac signs corresponding to our annual sequence of the months beginning in January: i.e. Aquarius, Pisces, etc. If we go the AUM sign and then to the square above it (i.e. top row second from the left we see Aries: the first month in many traditional calendars. Then reading sequentially to the right we have the twelve months of the year. If we take this same point Aries and read in the other direction we have the sequence of the twelve years as they are found in the Chinese calendar: i.e. year of the rat, ox etc.\footnote{something}

Both the Chinese and the Indian New Year begin with the sign of Aquarius (21 January-20 February). In the Orphic tradition, the first born (Protogonos) emerges from a world egg in/as Aquarius (figure 11a). In the West, New Year theoretically began with the summer solstice (Egypt); autumnal equinox (Israel); or winter solstice (Rome). However, if we look to an Egyptian sarcophagus (figure 11d), we note that the sequence of constellations begins clearly in the lower left with Aquarius in a sequence that continues to the right for the first half of the year and then continues above inverted for the rest of the year. Both the Egyptians and the Greeks in the Orphic tradition were clearly drawing on an older source which they continued to privilege even if it contradicted the calendar fashions in their own country.

Thus the compact set of Indian squares is an aide mémoire for the weekly cycle of seven days; the annual cycle of 12 months and the 12 year cycle of Jupiter, which defines the number of signs in the zodiac in India, China and the West. We shall show presently (§ 5.5) that this cycle is also crucial for the festival of the Khumbha Mela celebrated once every 12 years in order to restore order in the universe, replenish the sacred waters, the key to rebirth and regeneration and ultimately the elixir of immortality. The story of the sky is clearly a very big story that inspires both sacred quests for the Holy Grail and secular quests for alchemy.

We noted earlier that the Pythagorean triangle was connected with their initiation rights and leads back via number and geometrical symbolism to the three creator gods; The quest for self discovery was linked with discovery of the order of the universe and that it involved a descent into the Inferno for purposes of self improvement and enlightenment. We noted that the Mithraic system linked this development with the seven days of the week and seven planets.

One version of the Sephiroth follows the same pattern. This begins (figure 14c) on Saturday (1); descending to a metaphorical Inferno on Sunday (2); Monday (3) and Tuesday (4); then ascending through Wednesday (5); Thursday (6) and Friday (7). We can follow these same numbers on the Indian Zodiac diagram. If we now invert and mirror the Sephiroth diagram (14b) we can see clearly how the positions of Jupiter – Rex (King) and Venus – Regina (Queen) co-incide and how the horizontal row (4-5-6) in the Indian diagram becomes a row heading upwards in the aligned mirrored Sephiroth and a row leading downwards in the more familiar version (figure 14c). This is the same pattern related to the meeting of the male and the female, the blade and the cup in producing new life (figure 14d).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greece</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
<th>Sumer</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ouranos</td>
<td>Menat/Hapi</td>
<td>Anu (60)</td>
<td>Brahma Kumbh</td>
<td>Tiger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2. Saturn    Capricorn   Mendes   Enki (Ea, 40)   Vishnu   Makar    Rabbit  
3. Jupiter    Sagittarius  Set or Shu  Enlil (50)  Shiva   Dhanus    Dragon  

Figure 15. Correspondences between creator gods and astronomy.

Figure 16. Trigrams as a) Tripundra; b) trishula in India c) on a tree of life in in Sumer and d) on a Djed in Egypt.

These parallels between the Indian calendar square, a basic Sephiroth diagram and the stages of Mithraism confirm that the Pythagorean stages of initiation were but one expression of a common quest shared by other great cultures. There are connections between a) theories of creation entailing the meeting of a downward female and upward male triangle; b) their use for personal development and enlightenment and c) their use with respect to seasons and order in the universe. This means that it is no co-incidence that the seal of Vishnu, also called Shatkona in India, is identical to the secret seal of Solomon and the Star of David. The descent into the underworld by Demeter/Persephone; by Osiris, Dionysius and Bacchus is linked with Mithras and an older tradition. Moreover, the so-called Greek trinity is something that has parallels in Egypt and is linked with India and China in a system that goes back to at least 3000 and possibly 6000 B.C. (figure 15).

We have already noted that the Indian zodiac diagram also accounts for the 12 years sequence of animals associated with the Chinese calendar. We might suspect, therefore, that there are further parallels between the Indian and the Chinese systems and indeed they exist. If we look closely at the Indian calendar diagram (figure 16a), we note that the central horizontal line is the male line that runs along the equator and defines the central path of the sun and is linked with Saturn (Vishnu, Chronos, Geb, Typhon, Dionysius). The horizontal lines that define the upper and lower boundaries of the four central squares relate directly to the other two gods of the trinity, namely, Brahma (Re-Amun, Ouranos) and Shiva (Set/Shu, Zeus, Jupiter).

Hence, in a way that is as fascinatingly simple as it is profound the four central squares entail three parallel lines, which are effectively a trigram. In some interpretations these three horizontal lines effectively become the Tropic of Cancer, Equator and Tropic of Capricorn respectively (cf. figure 9). By implication, the vertical lines are in this case female, are intersected by the male lines and thus generate either a trigram of three broken lines or five vertical lines. The implication is that India must have been aware of trigrams. Evidence is not lacking. For instance, the tripundra (figure 16a) shows three strong, white horizontal lines of which one is “interrupted” by a dot (bindi). These three lines symbolize the soul’s three bonds (anava, karma and maya). The trishula (figure 16b) shows this approach of strong horizontal lines interrupted by a dot even more clearly. Examples from Sumer and Egypt confirm that the idea travelled westwards (figures 16c-d).
Figure 17 a) Indian zodiac; b) detail from older Pa Kua diagram of I Ching; c) same earlier version Pa Kua diagram of I Ching diagram in contextlxv; d) variant of samelxv; e) later version Pa Kua diagramlxvi and f) "The Unification of the Yellow River Diagram, the Lo Writing, and the Primal and Temporal Eight Trigrams" on the perimeterlxvii
Following this logic, a trigram of three unbroken lines is male, is implicitly a symbol of the trinity of the three gods that create, preserve and destroy and, in terms of astronomy, corresponds to maximum light, i.e. the tropic of Cancer. By contrast, a trigram of three broken lines is female and corresponds to a maximum of dark, i.e. the tropic of Capricorn. If this logic is more than conjecture it should help us to see the *I Ching* in a new light and it does. This arrangement is precisely what we find in the earlier version Pa Kua diagram (figure 17c). To understand these parallels more fully we need to compare the Indian and Chinese approaches in more detail.

If we look closely at the centre of this diagram (figure 17b) we see a symbol for earth create two lines of two points each are joined, and intersect to create a fifth point. If we extend the outer lines of these four points we merely have to join the lines to create a central section of 4 squares. Hence, the central four squares of the Indian calendar diagram that contains the AUM sign and the implicit four squares of the Chinese earlier version Pa Kua in the form of five dots are symbolically equivalent (i.e. the centre of 17a = the centre of 17b).

Even so, the 16 squares of the Indian calendar seem at first to have nothing to do with the series of 15 dots which we find in the complete older Pa Kua diagram relating to the *I Ching*. On closer inspection we realize that the Indian solution is in terms of continuous quantity (geometry), whereas the Chinese solution is in terms of discrete quantity (dots corresponding to arithmetic). As a result the four red squares of the Indian system have their abstract equivalent as a cross with five dots (which is a pyramid in three-dimensional terms). If we literally connect the dots we see that the five dotted cross produces four equal squares. By the same logic, we see that the four squares on the perimeter of the Indian calendar become five dots in the Chinese approach, with a corresponding five dots at the bottom. Again joining the dots of the Chinese system is a key to reconstructing the 16 squares of the Indian zodiac figure and recognizing that they are identical (i.e. the whole of figure 17a = 17b).

In the Chinese approach, strong, horizontal lines become male; weaker, interrupted vertical lines become female. These three strong horizontal lines become associated with light and the three vertical, interrupted lines become associated with darkness. Accordingly the three strong horizontal lines become associated with 21 June, the summer solstice when the sun/light is at its maximal height. Consequently, the weak interrupted lines become associated with 21 December, the winter solstice when the sun is at its lowest point and the darkness is greatest. Accordingly the equinoxes are medians between these extremes. Hence the spring equinox, 21 March, has two strong lines with a weak line in the centre. The autumn equinox, 21 September, has two weak lines with one strong line in the centre. As a result we recognize that the Pa Kua figure associated with the *I Ching* is not just an abstract configuration of trigrams. It is an abstract “portrait” of the heavens showing the sun (as three lines representing the three gods) in eight phases throughout the year. A later diagram (figure 17d) confirms this reading.

This insight offers a first step in beginning to unravel the deeper principles of the *I Ching*. The earlier Pa Kua diagram (figure 17c) is complemented by a later Pa Kua diagram (figure 17e). This effectively rotates elements of the original configuration. A subsequent diagram of "The Unification of the Yellow River Diagram, the Lo Writing, and the Primal and Temporal Eight Trigrams" on the perimeter helps us to understand how the trigrams evolved into hexagrams.
Figure 18a) An ornamental decoration on a carpet from China; b) a Srivasta diagram from India and an ankh from Egypt.

The three strong lines at the top of the earlier Pa Kua are now turned 90 degrees. The trigram relating to fire in the later Pa Kua are placed above the three strong lines (figure 17f). This principle is extended in constructing the other seven hexagrams.

Confirmation of this reading comes from an unexpected source, namely, ornamental patterns on traditional Chinese carpets (figure 18a). A strong line of the equator is surrounded by two other strong lines defining the path of the Milky Way. The curves indicate how the path of the Milky Way moves upwards and downwards to the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn before reversing. The line below the Equator combined with the two weak lines in the Southern hemisphere produces the trigram Ken. The line above the Equator combined with the two weak lines above it, produces the trigram Chen. The upper of these two lines is part of a semicircle.

In India this becomes the inverted triangle of srivasta (figure 18b cf. figure 12) and in Egypt this recurs as the ankh (figure 18b). Hence, the three horizontal lines (figure 17a) that define the boundaries of the four red squares effectively define three strong lines, corresponding to Aquarius, Capricorn and Sagittarius, and by implication to the gods Ouranos, Chronos and Jupiter, which have their Indian equivalents in Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. In terms of vertical lines, the 16 squares of the Indian zodiac figure (figure 17a) are five vertical lines intersected by the three strong horizontal lines. In the West, these become the five spiritual arrows to triumph over death, namely, truthfulness, purity, contentment, compassion and faith.\(^{\text{lxix}}\)

In India, the three strong, horizontal lines become associated with the trisula (trident) of Shiva.\(^{\text{lxx}}\) In spiritual terms, they become the three gunas: mobility, purity and inertia (sattvya, rajas and tamas) and have western parallels in the three pillars of water, air and fire; the pillars of judgement, benignity and mercy. Metaphorically, they become the three arrows of Jupiter (Sagittarius), which are often horizontal. When they are held by Saturn and point downward they become a symbol of death. Sometimes they are associated with the three arrows in Aquarius.\(^{\text{lxxi}}\) Astronomically, these three strong lines (columns, arrows) can be read in at least two ways. As noted earlier, in general terms, they are the tropic of Capricorn, the Equator and the tropic of Cancer respectively. In more specific terms, these three lines represent the central line and two boundaries of the ecliptic.

In this context, the trinity of gods begins to assume a practical purpose in the cosmic order. Vishnu (Saturn, Chronos) is a) the equator; b) the centre of the path of the Milky Way; c) the sun’s path and thus d) the central line uniting, separating and keeping in balance the upper and lower worlds. Brahma (Ouranos) and Siva (Zeus, Jupiter) represent the two extremes of this path. Their challenge is to keep the path of the Milky Way and the path of the sun within
bounds, preventing it from going too far South into extreme darkness or too far North into extreme light respectively. Hence, the three creator gods use the three lines, centre and two extremes to keep the universe in balance. Similarly, the individual has his own three lines: central spine (shushumnah) and two extremes of male (ida) and female (pingala). Personal development and enlightenment are about mastering these extremes and finding balance, but this process also has a deeper significance: it is a key to maintaining harmony in the universe. Hence, self-improvement is not just do-it-yourself salvation. It is a key to maintaining and saving the universe. This is the a deeper reason for microcosm-macrocosm analogies.

This basic analogy in turn becomes of seminal importance for the development of symbolism in both East and West. The seven days of the week could be represented as seven serpents, seven columns or seven arrows. The intersection of the ecliptic at the equator could be formalized into a) an ouroboros snake that bit its own tail; b) a snake in the form of a figure eight representing infinity; c) as a mystic knot that became one of the eight auspicious symbols ands one of the leitmotifs of Buddhism. Alternatively, it could be reduced to the X form of two intersecting arrows (cf fig. 11b). In this mindset, the quest for the equinoxes became a struggle to hold in balance the two serpents of the sky (leading to light and dark), first in the form of snake goddesses; then as Ophius (Latin Serpentarius, Aesculapius; cf. Dhavantari and Edumban in India) and ultimately in abstract terms as the Balance (Libra).

Alternatively one could represent the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn as two swords and use lions or leopards to keep within bounds two spiralling serpents, symbols of Draco tending towards light and dark. Symbolically these could be reduced to the caduceus linked with the god of medicine (Aesculapius, Dhavantari) and subsequently with Mercury (Budha). At the personal level the spiralling serpents became the spirals linked with the seven chakras in yoga. In architecture, this posed the challenge of buildings with a central door between the extremities of a pillar of water and a pillar of fire.

Figure 19a-c) Four squares, eight squares and nine squares and their symbolism.
This architectural dimension deserves more attention. If five dots leads to four squares, by implication, nine dots leads to eight squares (8 x 8 = 64), which is also the number of squares in a chess board and number of hexagrams of the *I Ching* and ten dots leads to nine squares (9 x 9 = 81 which is another number of heaven, the number of scales of the dragon etc.). Hence, four, eight and nine squares become the three crucial ground plans of the Indian system, linked with the *Vasta Purusha mandala* corresponding to the three zodiac signs of Aquarius, Capricorn and Sagittarius respectively and reflecting the three creator gods Brahma, Vishnu, Siva (i.e. Ouranos, Chronos and Zeus. The squares relating to Aquarius (Brahma) are upright and show no figure (cf. Yahweh in the Hebrew tradition). Astronomically and astrologically they also define the fixed cross (cf. crucifix, *croce fisso*). The squares relating to Capricorn (Vishnu) show a figure at 45 degrees towards the left, and shows the orientation of the cardinal cross. The squares relating to Sagittarius (Siva) show a figure at 45 degrees towards the right and shows the orientation of the mutable cross. These squares also have unexpected properties. If we multiply the 5 (dots) of the first square times 64 (8 x 8) of the second square and 81 (9 x 9) of the third square we arrive at 25,920 which is the number of years in the precession of the equinoxes (figure 19a-c).

Such connections between human figures and ground plans in Indian architecture confirm that ideas of anthropomorphic architecture associated in the West with Vitruvian man have much earlier precedents and are part of a much bigger programme. Sacred architecture is a way of visualizing the three strong lines, arrows, pillars, which unite man as microcosm with the universe as macrocosm. Sacred buildings are bridges between man and the heavens. Nimrod’s tower of Babel was symbolic of something more universal.

### 4. Divisions of Time and Sections of Sacrifice

Meanwhile, what might at first seem like a trivial detail points to much more profound connections. The Egyptians also linked the number 25,920 with the precession of the equinoxes. One of their ways of arriving at this number was by noting that it took 72 years for the earth to pass through one degree of precession: i.e. 72 x 360 = 25,920. There is also a story in Egypt how Set (also called Geb= Typhon = Chronos = Saturn = Vishnu), with the help of 72 assistants cut Osiris into 14 pieces. Typhon, in turn, is explicitly associated with the number 56 which is stated to be one half of the perfect number, 112. This suggests that there must be a connection between the division of dots and squares in making ground plans in architecture, time reckoning and the division of persons into a number of pieces during sacrifices in the both the Eastern religions and the Western mystery religions.

#### 4.1 Venus and Saturn

To unravel this puzzle, we need once again to turn to astronomy. First clues come when we relate these numbers to Venus, Saturn and the Moon. An orbit of Venus around the sun is 224 days. Hence, the visible half of an orbit of Venus is 112, which co-incides with the perfect number. Venus requires 13 orbits around the sun in 8 earth years to produce a full cycle. This gives us the numbers 8 and 13 (cf. below figure 22). This complete cycle comprises five heart shaped ellipses (figure 20a ). When we join the extremities of these forms we arrive at a pentagram (figure 20b), which is also one of the central images of the pagan tradition (figure 20d), which also shows symbols of male and female (e.g. triangles) of the sun, and the moon.
Returning to the pentagram we see that it in turn defines a pentagon. This pentagon corresponds to Auriga (figure 20c), which is positioned at the tip of Taurus and is associated with Venus as well as the Pleiades. We saw that the Sanskrit for Auriga is Anahata, i.e. heart as in the heart chakra, which in turn helps us to understand Western images associated with the solstices whereby pagan symbols for Venus (a star of six sides as in the anahata chakra) and the heart are combined (figures 20 d-e). In the story of the Protagonos (Eros) we found that the heart was linked with a lion symbol of the sun. In the rituals of Zagreus, Baachus and Dionysius we found that all the bodily parts were eaten except for the heart, which was then used to impregnate Semele. The heart is simultaneously a symbol of love, of the impulse to life, and of the sun.

For the Greeks 112 was the perfect number. It thus corresponds to the combined diameters of the North and South celestial heavens. Half this number, i.e. 56, i.e. the diameter of the South celestial heaven alone was the number of Typhon (Geb, Chronos, Saturn, Vishnu, cf. figure 6). A cycle of two orbits of Saturn makes 56, which is the cycle of years associated with Saturn to determine the nodes of the eclipses (called rahu and ketu in Sanskrit and linked with the Greek sign for Omega, Ω in the West). Half of 56 is 28, which is also the number of years in one orbit of Saturn. 28 is also the number of days in a cycle of the moon. We are beginning to see that divisions and multiples of a few numbers are a starting point for some dimensions of ancient chronology and that these numbers are also linked to the number of pieces into which persons are cut during sacrifices.

4.2 Moon, Buddha and Seven Steps

The days of the week and phases of the moon offers further clues concerning this approach. A week has 7 days. The rites of Bacchus or Zagreus (Iacchus) entail 7 stages. The ancient rites of Mithra also have 7 stages of initiation corresponding to the 7 days of the week and the 7 planets. Twice 7 is 14, is a fortnight and also the time between a new and full moon. Two such phases of 14 make 28 days. Followers of Bacchus were symbolically cut into 7 pieces and all the parts were eaten except for one part: the heart or the virile member.
Followers of Dionysius, Osiris and other mystery religions were cut into 14 pieces and one piece invariably went missing. If we take two circles with a diameter of 7 (corresponding to the seven stages of initiation in figures 3 and 4), and join them so that the two diameters join at the circumferences of the two circles, we find that the extremities overlap such that the 14 pieces become 13. There are 13 moon months in an earth year. (There are 13 orbits of Venus in a complete cycle. There are also 13 semi regular Archimedean solids). 13 x 4 = 52 weeks in a year; 13 x 28 = 364 days in a year. 4, 8 and 13 are also linked with plant symbolism, earth goddesses and pagan calendars (figure 18). This confirms that both in the East and the West, the cutting up of squares and metaphorical cutting up of persons (Osiris, Dionysius, Bacchus) was intimately linked with methods of chronology that entailed the cycles of days of the week (7), phases of the moon (14, 28) and orbits of the planets (e.g. 12 for Jupiter, 28, 56 for Saturn).

There are parallels between such phases of the moon and the famous seven steps made by Buddha (figure 21a). The figure shows the four points of the compass plus up (zenith) and down (nadir): i.e. six directions. The central yellow point corresponds to the pole star (Dhruva). Buddha is at once one of the seven wise men (Sapta Rishi, which is the Sanskrit name for the Big Dipper, Ursus Maior) and the place of the polestar (Dhruva Lok).

Hence his seven steps in motion imply an eighth “step”, which is the equivalent of an unmoved mover and thus point to a deeper meaning of the eightfold path: not just steps on earth, but steps that imitate the cosmic harmony of the heavens. If we begin in the North it takes 7 days to approach the centre, then another 7 to reach the South which would correspond to the full moon. A further 14 days would see the waning of the moon in a passage from West to East. To return to its original position would require reversing this process, i.e.
twice 28 = 56 days. This cruciform cycle can also be drawn as a square (figure 21b) or alternatively as a perfect number as a pyramid of 28 dots (figure 21c). Thus the numbers 7, (13), 14, 28, 56, 112 link days of the week, phases of the moon and orbits of planets.

The Ancient Greeks were interested in both continuous quantity (geometry) and discrete quantity (arithmetic). In arithmetical terms, 28 is a perfect number because it can be arranged pyramidally in seven lines such that the first line has 1, the second has 2, and the following lines have 3, 4 and 5, 6 and 7 respectively (figure 21c). Two of these triangles positioned opposite one another add up to 56. Four of these triangles add up to 112 which would correspond to two egg shaped lozenges in the Northern (celestial) and Southern (terrestrial) hemispheres (figure 21d). In terms of regular solids, there is a polygon called the zonohedron (figure 18e), which has 112 sides and which would theoretically correspond to the original egg of the young man (Protagonos. Eros).

4.3 Numbers 14 and 13

The number 14 is almost universally connected to a special day, 14 February, which is associated with love, with the heart, and with cupid’s bow and arrow. The day is in honour of Saint Valentinus, from the Latin valens meaning strong or mighty/great – an epithet also given to rulers such as Nimrod of Babel fame. In Rome, it was associated with the feast of Lupercus on 14-15 February, which often entailed riotous feasts. The feast is also associated with Bacchus and Dionysius. Its precedents take us to Pan (Greece), Osiris (Egypt), Baal (Phoenicia) and Nimrod (Sumer) and ultimately to India where the feast of Shivaratri on the 13-14 February celebrates the day that Shiva married Parvati.

Also associated with Osiris is a rather frightening story how his brother, S(h)em (Seth), aided by 72 accomplices killed him and cut him up into 14 pieces: “When Isis, Osiris' sister-wife, tried to reassemble the pieces she could not find the phallus, it had fallen into the river Nile and had been swallowed by the Southern Fish [i.e. Piscis Austrinus or Piscis Notius, which we shall encountered later]. Thereafter the Southern Fish, known as Oxyrhynchus, became sacred to the Egyptians.” In an alternative version Osiris, the sun god [male] was killed by Typhon and cut up into 14 pieces. In another alternative, Set as well as Osiris are said to have been torn in pieces after a reign of eighteen days, which was commemorated by an annual festival of the same length. The figures vary. Another source speaks of Osiris reigning for a “perfect” 28 years,” which is the number of years in one orbit of Saturn.

By now we can see that the plot thickens because in some mysterious way there is a connection between the fishy stories linked a) with astronomy (cf. § below); b) the number 14, as well as with c) 14 minus one vital part = 13. The mention of 72 accomplices is also interesting. King Solomon also locked up 72 devils, the chief of whom was able “take the form of a leopard, a human or both.” 72 is one of those key numbers mentioned earlier. In geometry, it is one of the three angles in a pentagram along with 36 and 108 degrees. In astronomy, it takes the sun 72 years to go through one of the 360 degrees of precession of the equinoxes. The sacrificial pieces of Osiris, are pieces of a much bigger puzzle.

Osiris was by no means alone in being “all cut up.” Dionysos, (the Demiurgos), like Osiris, “was killed by the Titans and dismembered into fourteen parts…. Dionysos was born at Nysa or Nissi, the name given by the Hebrews to Mount Sinai (Exodus xvi. 15), the birthplace of Osiris, which identifies both suspiciously with ‘Jehovah Nissi’. Meanwhile, in Sumer, Queen Semiramis is said to have married Nimrod and helped him to build Babylon with its
Sacred Object/Person | Quantity (Pieces) | Variants
---|---|---
Sacred Plants | 4 | 
Vasus, Plants, Spokes of the year | 8 | 
Tree Signs | 13 | 
Sacred plants known as twelve constellations | 14 | 
Chronus (Saturn) cuts Uranus (Sky) | 7 | 
Nimrod, Osiris, Set, Dionysius, Creator cuts universe | 14 | 12, 15, 16
Vishnu cuts Durga, Sati, | 52 | 51
Vishnu cuts Sati | 108 | 

Figure 22a) Some basic numbers with respect to sacred plants and b) Gods and number of pieces into which they are cut.

tower of Babel. Nimrod is then said to have been killed by a boar or by an enemy and torn into 14 pieces. “Jewish scholars teach that Nimrod was executed by Noah’s righteous son, Shem, his body cut into 14 pieces, and the pieces subsequently distributed to his followers as an acute warning of rebellion.”xciv (An alternative version claims that Nimrod (Nebrod), was torn into 14 pieces by the judges of Egyptxci). What happened next will, by now, sound familiar:

Semiramis had all of the parts gathered, except for one part that could not be found. That missing part was his reproductive organ. Semiramis claimed that Nimrod could not come back to life without it and told the people of Babylon that Nimrod had ascended to the sun and was now to be called “Baal”, the sun god.xcii

In commemoration of this tragic event, Semiramis instituted a feast which involved using a sort of stone lantern which entailed two candles: one for Nimrod and one for his son, Damu (Damuzu, Tammuz). Inscribed on the lantern, were a six pointed star, symbolizing Venus and a heart (figure 17d). Other versions show this six pointed star and a heart on top of an Irminsull symbol (figure 17c). Celebration of this feast became associated with the equinoxes and the solstices.xciii Through this unlikely series of connections, the 14 parts into which the protagonists are cut, the heart of the goddess/god of love and a feast on 14 February are related. The basic idea involved of keeping the flame alive and rekindling a flame invites comparison with many other practices around the world: the Indian festival of lights, Diwali, where candles are brought into every home, and Christian feasts such as Halloween, St. Martin’s where persons carry candles, Candlemass and Easter, where the Easter vigil sometimes entails lighting a fire, the flame of which is then spread to candles held by all the participants.

This is the kind of puzzle where we would expect enlightenment from cultural anthropology. Not surprisingly we discover that Sir James Frazer explored the problem in the Golden Bough. He draws attention to connections with fertility rites in agriculture including extant practices of tearing a figure of death into pieces and burying these pieces to help the crops.xciv He traces such customs to traditions of ritual sacrifice of human beings and especially divine kings. All this is certainly fascinating but brings us no further in understanding why there should have been an exact number of pieces into which the bodies were torn. To find an answer will require detours and patience as we explore connections between cutting bodies into pieces, calendars, plants, yoga, and number symbolism.
If we look to other cases of gods cutting up or being cut up, Chronus (Saturn) cuts Uranus (Sky) into 7 pieces. When we turn to India we find further examples. At the macrocosmic level, we learn from the Paitalagga Upanishad that the Creator initially created 14 worlds. We also find references to other numbers. There is, for instance, a story of how the goddess Sati (Durga, the mother goddess) was forced to commit suicide and, in order to save the world, her husband Vishnu had to cut her into pieces. In the Vedas, there is a famous story of how Vishnu cut the goddess Sati’s body into 108 pieces:

Rudra slays Prajapati and secures his place at the sacrifice. He wins the title "Lord of Animals (pashupati). From the Shatapata Brahmana: Daksha, father of Sati, gives a banquet without inviting son-in-law Siva. Sati in protest burns herself on the funeral pyre - hence, widows die on pyre in "sati" Siva cuts off Daksha's head and later replaces it with a goat's head Carrying Sati's corpse, Siva wanders without meditation. The universe devolves into chaos. Vishnu slices Sati's corpse into 108 pieces. These fall to earth and become seats of worship to the goddess, Saktapitha (Sati).

In light of the astronomical tradition we can see that this story is an allegory which relates to the motions of the planets. Daksha is the equivalent of Chronos (Saturn). He is the father of Sati (in this case the moon). He gives a banquet without inviting Zeus Jupiter in his associations with the sun and daylight. The moon (Sati) burns herself on the funeral pyre in protest: i.e. the moon is eclipsed or immolated by the sun. Siva (Jupiter) cuts off one of Daksha’s (Saturn’s) heads: i.e. Saturn can now only “see” in three directions. Vishnu cuts Sati’s corpse into 108 pieces. As Kak has shown, this number is related to both the relative size of the sun and moon and their distances from the earth:

It is because of this equivalence that numbers such as 108 and 360 are important in the temple design. The number 108 represents the distance from the earth to the sun and the moon in sun and moon diameters, respectively. The diameter of the sun is also 108 times the diameter of the earth, but that fact is not likely to have been known to the Vedic rishis. This number of dance poses (karanas) given in the Natya Shastra is also 108, as is the number of beads in a rosary (japamala). The “distance” between the body and the inner sun is also taken to be 108, and the number of marmas in Ayurveda is 107. The total number of syllables in the Rigveda is taken to be 432,000, a number related to 108. The number 360, the number of days in the civil year, is also taken to be the number of bones in the developing foetus, a number that fuses later into the 206 bones of the adult. The centrality of this number in Vedic ritual is stressed in the Shatapatha Brahmana. The primary Vedic number is three, representing the tripartite division of the physical world into the earth, the atmosphere, and the sky and that of the person into the physical body, the pranas, and the inner sky.

Other versions of the story claim that Vishnu cut the Goddess Durga into 52 pieces. Each place where they fell became a holy place. 52 is also the number of weeks in a year. Other versions speak of 51 places of which 14 are in West Bengal and 7 are in Bangladesh. These numbers are clearer in tabular form (figure 19). In terms of the calendar, there are 7 days in a week. There are 14 days in a fortnight. A lunar month is 28 days. This is either by adding four weeks (7+7+7+7 = 28) or two fortnights (14 + 14 = 28). In mathematics, 28 is also the first perfect number, whereby each new product is the equal to the sum of the earlier numbers: i.e. 28 = 1+2+4+7+14. This perfect number is also called a triangular number because it can be arranged in rows such that each row has one more dot than the previous row.
Two of these triangles of perfect numbers make (28 x 2 =) 56. By now the series of doublings is clear: 7, 14, 28, 56, 112, 224. Peter Aleff has drawn attention to connections of these multiples of 7 with calendar reckoning and with the life of Osiris, who reigned for 28 years, was cut into 14 pieces, was embalmed, kept for 7 days and spent 7 days in the womb of the sky (Nut). Meanwhile, Seth who killed him is linked with 56 (=28 x 2), and with polygons of 56 sides. The lunar orbit nodes that determine eclipses of the moon also have a 56 year cycle. Multiples of 7 (14, 28, 56, 112 etc.) thus appear to be linked with the male: e.g. Osiris and Set(h).

Meanwhile, multiples of 13 (26, 52 etc.) appear to be linked with the female: e.g. Devi, Sati, Durga. The Celtic tradition linked with earth goddesses, has a 13 month lunar calendar, where there are 13 sacred tree signs (each lasting 4 x 7 = 28 days) starting from the Winter Solstice. In Mayan culture, there are 13 heavens. In the Yucatan four persons (voladores) swing 13 times around a symbolic world tree: 13 x 4 = 52 weeks of the year. In India, there are 13 temples, (the number of lunar months), devoted to Devi, the earth goddess. There are 52 (13 x 4) temples devoted to Sati, which is also the number of the 52 weeks in a year. There are 108 names of Durga as well as 108 temples or abodes of Vishnu. There are also 108 degrees in the pentagram connected with Shiva. The goddess Sundari, (Hrim, a combination of Hari, Hara, and Virinchi), who is also called Vishnu Maya, the great illusion, is described in 108 letters. From the study by Kak, cited above, 108 also has astronomical significance in India. 108= 3x3x3x2x2). The phrase “name of the Lord” appears 108 times in the King James Version of the Bible.

Chopping Nimrod, Osiris, Dionysius and others into 14 bits with 13 bits found, 14 day phases of the moon, 13 month lunar calendar reckoning and construction of 13, 52 and 108 temples are connected in some way. In any case, the associations of 13-14 clearly go far beyond the body of Osiris and his colleagues.

Amongst the North American Indians there are four sacred plants. In Sumer, the earth goddess Ninhursag plants Enki’s eight seeds. Nine days later eight plants begin to grow. Enki eats the seeds and grows ill. Then he seeds the plants in Ninhursag and she creates eight gods. In Egypt, the Goddess Seshat, the great one, has a symbol with eight branches on her head. In India, there is a link with 8 vasus or plants, linked with the eight spokes of the year and eightfold path. Thus sacred plants again take us to the numbers 4, 8, 13 and 14 (figure 19a).
In India, there is a special connection between the moon and Aditi, the Mother of the Gods. Indra acknowledged her as mother, and Vishnu, after receiving the adoration of Aditi, addressed her with 13 words: "Mother, goddess, do thou show favour unto me and grant me thy blessing." In isolation, this choice of 13 words would be insignificant. If we look more closely at the bow associated with Aditi, with Lakshmi and with Kama, the god of love, we note that it has 13 dots (figure 20a). Once again we have links between the bow (cf. Sagittarius, Eros) and the number 13 (cf. Appendix x).

### 4.4 Chakras, Nadis and Marmas

At the microcosmic level, Western books typically refer to 6 basic chakras (and above these a 7th, the sahasrara). Meanwhile, some Hatayogis claim that there are 13 major chakras. In addition, there are lesser streams of energy called nadis. There are 14 nadis, each of which is linked with a specific body part. (Some claim that there are 13 primary nadis and 13 breakthrough levels). In addition, the body has power zones known as marmas where three lines intersect. There are said to be 108 marmas in the body. In China, the nadis are called meridians or channels for healing energy, also linked to specific body parts, which serve as the basis for acupuncture. There are 14 meridians.

In short, Indian yoga initiates (and Chinese acupuncture experts) divided a) the human body; b) temples and c) the heavens into a set number of parts. Key divisions included 7, 13, 14. The Mithraic tradition, and the Middle Eastern mystery religions beginning with Nimrod and including Osiris, Dionysius, Pan, Bacchus invariably divided bodies of their initiates into the same basic numbers 7, 13 and 14. Both in the East and the West, the numbers 18, 36, 49, 64, 72, 81, 108 were also important.

One of the principal goals of yoga is to master the potentials of one’s body, more specifically to overcome the distractions of lower sexual energies and re-channel these for higher spiritual activities. Figuratively speaking one could say that if the body initially has 14 parts, that one effectively cuts off or loses one part and thus reaches higher enlightenment with the remaining 13 parts, a number which corresponds as we have seen with the number of parts of Osiris that can be found after the dismemberment. The cutting into pieces is thus a metaphor for moral and spiritual development of the individual using series of numbers which are also important for calendar reckoning.

The example of Buddha’s seven steps linked with an unmoving eighth step (figure 18a) offer an essential clue why this overlap between the numbers for dividing time and metaphorical divisions of sacrificed bodies was no-coincidence. Yoga was ultimately about something much more profound than going to the gym and getting the body into shape. The quest for self-mastery and enlightenment was integrally linked with harmony and balance a) in the body; b) between the body and the universe (microcosm-macrocosm) and ultimately c) to understand and hold in balance the cosmic forces of nature and the universe. In this context, saving oneself and saving the universe were not two alternatives: they were one and the same grand challenge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Body Part</th>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Geometrical Shape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Ears</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Nostrils</td>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>Semi-Lunar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Mouth</td>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>Triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Fingers</td>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spotted Eyes   Sight  Spot, Spotted
Figure 24. Correspondences between colours, body parts, senses and geometrical shapes. cxxiii
In this context it is of no surprise that the symbolic cutting up of persons which we associate with the Western mystery religions (Osiris, Dionysius etc) goes at least to the time of Buddha in 6th c. B.C. It is said that Prince Siddhartha, the Buddha, donated his own eye to cure someone's eyesight; on encountering a hungry tiger he fed it with pieces of his own flesh. On another occasion he did the same for a hungry eagle. cxxiv The king Meghrath also cut pieces from himself to feed a falcon and save a pigeon. cxxv Buddha is also said to have demonstrated how he could cut himself to pieces. cxxvi In a variant story Buddha was cut up into pieces by King Kalinda. cxxvii

In the West, trees cxxviii play a role in this cutting. Frazer noted connections between cutting the body into pieces and artificial insemination of a fig tree. cxxix Others have connected these practices of chopping up humans with chopping down a palm tree or a fir tree. They have noted similarities between Baal-bereth-- "Lord of the Fir tree," and Baal-berith -- "Lord of the Covenant, cxxx and have used this to explain the origin of cutting the yule log at Christmas. cxxxi The fir tree used at Christmas has also been linked with the Saturnalia around the god/planet, Saturn. "In the Celtic alphabet, the first letter was represented by the silver fir, called the birth-tree, which also represented spring. The last letter of the alphabet was represented by the yew tree, the death tree, which also stood for winter." cxxxii

Others have connected the death and rebirth myths of Attis-Adonis-Adonai-Christ, noting that Attis was worshiped in the form of a cut pine tree in orgiastic rituals that plainly harken back to an earlier shamanic ecstatic religion, while Cybele, the distant, all-powerful, incomprehensible Great Mother, watched silently from her Leopard Throne. cxxxiii These spots on Cybele’s throne brings us to yet another ingredient of the puzzle.

4.5 Spots and Leopards

The leopard may not change its spots, but the spots of leopards may change their meaning. All the protagonists of the mystery religions, especially Dionysius, and Bacchus are linked with spotted animals such as tigers, panthers and leopards. In Egypt also, the priests typically wore leopard skin. cxxxiv Some link this with Cybele, the Great Mother, a magical goddess who has leopards at her side and is said to have been raised by panthers and lions. Etymologically, Cybele is said to be connected with Catal Hüyük, one of the oldest seats of civilization in Anatolia. cxxxv

Other learned explanations have been found. For instance, scholars have noted that the name of Nimrod, who was torn into 14 pieces, was also written as Nebrod, which sounds almost the same as the Greek for spotted fawns (nebroi). We are assured that “The tearing in pieces of the nebroi [or spotted fawns] was an imitation of the suffering in the case of Dionysus or Bacchus, cxxxvi and thus commemorated their sacrifice. Using similar etymological reasoning, others insist that the name Nimrod means literally "The subduer of the leopard," being derived from nimr "a leopard," and rad "to subdue." This has led scholars to an eloquent explanation:

In these ancient days much significance was attached to names, as students of the Bible are aware. Nimrod's name, therefore, implied that his fame as a hunter rested mainly on the fact that he had discovered the art of training the leopard to aid him in hunting the other wild beasts. A particular kind of leopard, named the cheetah, is used for hunting in India even at this day. When we find that Osiris and his priests are
represented arrayed in leopard's skins, we may be sure that deep meaning was attached
to this costume; we believe that it was intended to convey to the initiates the
understanding that their god Osiris was in reality Nimrod, the renowned "Leopard-
tamer." It is well known that Nimrod or Ninus, on becoming mighty, extended his
dominion, conquering Egypt, in addition to other countries.  

Similar reasoning is used to explain why there are sculptures showing Nimrod with a spotted
deer in his hand. Many associations with leopards have been noted, including controversial interpretations. For instance, John Allegro would have us believe that the leopard’s spots refer to the spotted amanita muscaria mushroom.

If we turn to India we find further explanations. One is very straightforward. With respect to Shiva, for instance, we are told: “Tiger represents lust; His sitting on tiger’s skin indicates that he has conquered lust. His holding a deer on one hand indicates that He has removed the Chanchalata (tossing) of the mind. Deer jumps from one place to another swiftly.”

In the story of Chitrabhanu we are told of a man who goes to the forest to hunt animals and then told that this is an allegory: “The wild animals that the hunter fought with are lust, anger, greed, infatuation, jealousy and hatred. The jungle is the fourfold mind, consisting of the subconscious mind, the intellect, the ego and the conscious mind. It is in the mind that these "wild animals" roam about freely. They must be killed. Our hunter was pursuing them because he was a Yogi. If you want to be a real Yogi you have to conquer these evil tendencies.” An unexpected further explanation also comes from yoga. Each colour, body part and each sense is linked with a specific geometrical shape. In addition to the usual colours, yellow, white, red and blue there is a colour “spotted” linked with the eyes and sight (figure 21). Spots were also linked with the moon.

This suggests that in India the original taming had nothing to do with wild animals such as tigers, leopards or cheetahs per se: it has to do with taming the beast within oneself, which was symbolically represented by the skins of slain tigers, leopards or cheetahs. Hence, a primary reason why Siva and other gods wear such animal skins is to confirm their self-mastery and enlightenment. In addition, the spots symbolize that they have controlled their sense of sight i.e. learned to look but not touch; to see temptation but not to act. This deeper reason for wearing specifically the skins of spotted animals helps to explain why Siva’s insight is linked with his “third eye” which is also a very particular, spot where the three channels (nadis) of ida, pingala and shusumnah intersect. This spot seems to be connected to the geometrical figures, cf. figure 16b) and explains also why the spots of a peacock’s feathers become a starting point for images of Siva’s 1000 eyes. When this image travels to Greece which has litotes, Argos has only 100 eyes.

The quest for self-mastery is thus ultimately much more than conquering the beast in oneself. It is a quest to transform oneself from a beast, to a man, to a god, whereby one’s own salvation becomes inseparably linked with a quest to understand, bring balance and ultimately to save the world. This may sound very reasonable, but has fundamental implications for our views on the history of religions and cultures.

A standard view has told us how a world of paganism was gradually converted by the world religions notably Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity and subsequently Islam. This view sees
the great religions as alternative options. Some (e.g. Huntingdon) would have us believe these were competing and mutually exclusive alternatives. We have discovered that persons in China, India, Zoroastrians and so-called pagans in the West had much more in common than is generally assumed: pagans were aware of yoga already in the pre-Christian era. This quest for balance between extremes at the personal level was linked with cosmological efforts at the universal level. In China, this quest found expression in the balance of ying and yang; in the balance between two dragons struggling to acquire the flaming pearl and between the tiger, rabbit and the dragon, their version of the three creator gods (linked with Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius), whose initial effects occur in the months linked with Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces.

Theoretically the pagan traditions of horned gods such as Cernunnos were primitive and backward compared to great religions such as Buddhism and Christianity. Yet as we have seen the horned gods of Northern Europe (e.g. Cernunnos) and the horned gods linked with Hinduism and Buddhism in Asia had yoga in common to keep in balance the microcosm. Meanwhile, the horned god of the Gundestrup Cauldron (Cernunnos) and Christianity also had common quest to keep the macrocosm in balance. Indeed, the same struggle of serpents that we find in China and India recur in Sumer, Babylon and on the facades of both Christian churches and Renaissance facades (§ 5.6 below).

These pagan traditions were not identical with the mystery religions or great religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity. Even so our analysis thus far has shown that the quest for human improvement, becoming less bestial and more godly, was linked with astronomical and cosmological frameworks. These were taken up by Christianity, but did not begin at the time of the New Testament (1st c. A.D.) or even at the time of the Old Testament (which some scholars trace back to the 7th c B.C.), a century also associated with Zoroaster (688-581 B.C.). They were fully in place sometime between the 11th and 13th century B.C. when the I Ching was composed.

Indeed, there was a much older story of the sky that was in place when Chinese civilization began officially in 3332 B.C. (figure 23a), that is reflected throughout both the East and the West. We shall show that this was linked with theories of creation by an earth mother, that it inspired the basic symbols of Buddhism and indeed many key symbols in the great religions of the world. Behind this story was yet another: of waters of life and elixirs of immortality, which were stolen and then restored. In this sense, the oldest story of all is very modern: it is a story of continual struggle, where pretenders usurp the throne and universe alike and where, after struggles of titans, all is again safe once more.
Figure 25. Two views of the heavens a) Dinosaur National Park (Utah) and b) Villa Farnese, Caprarola.
To establish the message of God's Bible in the sky, the Lord selected three of the most
godly and eminent of men at the beginning of history--Adam, Seth and Enoch. It is not
our purpose to go into the wearisome trail of historical evidence in support of the fact I
have just stated--but it does exist. According to Arabic tradition the signs came from
Seth and from Enoch. This is the same tradition that the Greeks have, only they knew
Enoch as "Atlas." This is the same tradition the Egyptians have, only they knew Enoch
as "Hermes." But all these go back to the grandson of Adam and say that Enoch and
his father Seth were the founders of this ancient understanding of the heavens. In the
divine record of the fourth creative day the sun, moon, and stars were arranged as
lights in the sky, and these lights were designated to be for SIGNS, so that night after
night, year after year, in the purple depths of the midnight sky, those burning suns
show forth and silently but ceaselessly proclaim the Great Revelation. There is only
one system in the universe where STARS and SIGNS are united together and that is in
the SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC, also called the Celestial Signs and the Twelve Signs.
Ancient and modern civilized nations have called them Signs. The renowned Jewish
historian, Josephus, mentions Seth as the first astronomer, or arranger of the Zodiac.
The ancient Egyptians said SET (Seth) was the inventor of astronomy--and astronomy
in ancient times was not by the study of the Signs of the Zodiac. And according to
Gen. 4:25-26 it was directly through the ministry of Seth that MEN BEGAN TO
CALL upon THE NAME OF YAHWEH. The method by which Seth taught the
knowledge of God was by the stars of heaven, for there was no written scripture in that
early time. Seth gave a name to each star group, designating them by the attributes of
Jehovah and the characters and events involved in the great scheme of redemption. He
named the first sign VIRGO--for the Redeemer of the world would come forth as a
child, born of a Virgin. The last sign he named LEO--the figure of a great rampant
lion, leaping forth to rend, with his feet over the writhing body of Hydra, the Serpent,
which is in the act of fleeing. The Lion of the tribe of Judah prevails. The Serpent of
that long ago Eden is defeated. Christ IN US is Victor. The conflict ends, the warfare
is brought to a successful conclusion, all strife ceases. Sin, error, sickness, pain,
sorrow and death forever flee away. Victory is secure! All things are restored! Man
lives again tall and magnificent in the image of God!

These eternal truths were corrupted by her (rather, quite obviously, by the evil one
controlling her) into a mythic cycle wherein the great dragon is depicted as the rightful
lord of the universe whose throne has been temporarily usurped by One whom we can
recognize as the God of the Bible. The serpent creates man in his present miserable
state, but promises that a child would one day born of a divine mother--which child
would supplant God, become a god himself, and return rulership of the Earth to the
serpent. These fables were based upon the then widely-known story of the
constellations, and were introduced under the guise of revealing the hidden esoteric
knowledge concealed in them (regardless of the fact that the original was quite
straightforward).
vi http://www.therain.org/appendixes/app12.html
ix http://www.markfarrar.co.uk/gzimmerman01.htm

At the centre is a massive tower meant to represent Mount Meru, the city of Brahma and the home of the gods. Its upper portion is divided into seven major levels and subdivided into 33 lesser tiers (the 33 heavens). Indra sits in the 33rd, presiding over the universe. By virtue of its physical height the central tower pierces the sky, becoming one with the heavens themselves. In legend the tower was surrounded by 13 concentric circles: seven oceans and six mountain ranges, the last dropping into the great primordial ocean. In Angkor, architects contented themselves with fewer than 13 rings but did not stint in creating grandeur on a scale worthy of heaven's giants - the outer wall of Angkor is 12 kilometers on a side!

xii 33 Mysteries Facts: http://home.earthlink.net/~acb_33/33facts1.html
Cf. The Syrian king Theias slept with his daughter Myrrha for 11 nights. On the twelfth he discovered who she was and she was turned into the myrrh tree. The 11 nights refer to the emanation of cosmic energies from Capricorn through the other 11 signs of the zodiac. The three decans (10 degree divisions) of these 11 signs give the 33 degrees of masonry and the 33 vertebrae of the spine. http://members.aol.com/maatmythology/part6.htm

CA 170° (463°, c. 1516):
Di queste mia superfizie curvilinie molte ne son quadrabile in se medesime colla trasmutazione delle sue propie parte nel suo tutto, e molto ne son che colle sue propie parte sono in quadrame, ma si da quadrati equali loro, tolti d'altre superfizie. E con queste si compone l'ultima mia opera di cento 13 libri da me composti nella quale è 33 modi variati di dare quadrati rettilini equali a circoli, cioè equali in quantità.

On the Number 28: http://www.wisdomportal.com/Numbers/28-1.html. Numbers 1-100. This is part of: The mathematical, scientific, literary, and philosophical significance of numbers. Compiled & Edited by Peter Y. Chou: http://www.wisdomportal.com/Numbers/Numbers.html


There are 108 steps in the Dance of Creation. This number is of great significance and is generally considered highly auspicious. There are 108 names of Shiva, and 108 rudraksha beads on a mala (rosary) for Shiva worship. The south Indian Bharata Natyam dance is also made up of 108 steps, as is the Karali Paittu, the Kerala system
of self-defence. It is noteworthy that the Chinese T’ai Chi system of self defence also comprises of 108 postures. Therefore we may wonder whether there is a transcultural connection, or whether the number is of intrinsic significance within these separate systems.

Cf. www.khandro.net/mysterious_makaras1.htm:
At Muktnath, Nepal, which is a site sacred to Shiva, bathing is considered a meritorious act and there are 108 makara spouts from which the pilgrim can choose.

108 = 3 * 3 * 3 * 2 * 2 (five factors)

The phrase ‘name of the lord’ occurs in 108 verses in the KJV Bible.

Marma. Power zone on the human body. There are said to be 108 of them. On the Shri Yantra, as related to the human body, a marma is said to exist where 3 lines intersect. Chandrakalas. The 108 Navamshas. See Navamshas. Navamshas. 200' of arc in Sidereal Astrology. Each constellation has 1800' of arc. Therefore, there are 9 (nava) navamshas in a sidereal constellation. Since there are 12 constellations in the Sidereal zodiac there are 9 times 12 or 108 navamshas.

xx Brahman as Prajapati: Lord of Creation sitting in a yoga posture called 'Gorakshasana', the cowherd according to Dr. Jonn Mumford (Swami Anandakapila Saraswati).

www.geocities.com/indianpaganism/hornedgod.html

The animals are, namely, elephant, musk deer, buffalo, tiger and rhinoceros. These five animals are often identified with the five senses, and the five associated elements, namely, fire, water, space, wind and earth (or soil). These elements that go to make up the material universe are known in the Vedic literature as panca maha-bhutas or the Five Great Elements. The reading on the seal is ishadyatah marah. Mara is the force opposed to creation namely, one that causes the destruction of the universe. The seal message means: Mara is controlled by Ishvara. The seated deity is of course a representation of Ishvara

xxi http://www.divyajivan.org/articles/siva/symbolism_shiva.htm
The crescent moon indicates that He has controlled the mind perfectly. The flow of the Ganga represents the nectar of Immortality. Elephant represents symbolically pride. His wearing the skin of the elephant denotes that He has controlled pride. Tiger represents lust; His sitting on tiger’s skin indicates that He has conquered lust. His holding a deer on one hand indicates that He has removed the Chanchalata (tossing) of the mind. Deer jumps from one place to another swiftly. His wearing of serpents denotes wisdom and eternity

xxii The singing bowls of Tibet
http://www.frankperry.co.uk/Tibetan%20Bowls.htm
xxiv www.borobudur.tv/survey_3.htm
xxv It has played a certain role in debates about possible Aryan origins of Indian culture which need not concern us here For instance, on the basis of this image, Sir. John Marshall came to the conclusion that Saivism was the oldest religion in Bharat and the deity was the prototype of historic Siva.

www.geocities.com/indianpaganism/hornedgod.html
By the time this form made its way to the Roman catacombs, the early Christians made an understandable compromise: they showed a regular female antelope standing next to a caduceus form.

The basic connections between these three objects have been admirably discussed by S. B. Dangol:

xxvi http://www.geocities.com/indianpaganism/hornedgod.html

xxvii The two horned animals in the upper right and left could represent autumn. In India there were traditionally only three seasons so this tradition may have simply been copied.

xxviii http://users.ap.net/~peacenjoy/Serapis.jpg; french.tsl.org/.../maitres/serapis/serapisf.html

xxix http://www.goldenarrowbonsai.com/Trees.htm

xxx These eight elephants (Pundarika, Vamana, Kumudu, Anjana, Pushpadanta, Sarvabhauma, Supratika and Aparanta) emerge from Garuda’s egg.

http://www.khandro.net/animal_elephant.htm

xxxii http://www.crystallotus.com/vishnu/04.htm

xxxv We are leaving aside, for the moment, Vishnu’s ninth appearance as the compassionate reformer (Buddha) and his future 10th appearance as a Messiah (Kalki).

xxxvi Durga, magic triangle:

http://www.luckymojo.com/durgatriangle.html


xxxviii www.crystallotus.com/vishnu/04.htm

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http://www.luckymojo.com/durgatriangle.html


xxxviii www.crystallotus.com/vishnu/04.htm

Isis = Sept = Sirius as the
light-giver at this season of the year  Khut
mighty earth-goddess her name  Usert
Great Goddess of the Underworld  Thenenet
power which shot forth the Nile flood  Sati, and sept
embracer of the land and producer of fertility by her waters  Anqet
producer and giver of life  Ankhet
goddess of cultivated lands and fields  Sekhet
goddess of the harvest  Renenet
goddess of food which was offered to the gods  Tcheft
great lady of the Underworld, who assisted in transforming the bodies of the blessed dead into those wherein they were to live in the realm of Osiris, her name  Ament, i.e., the "hidden" goddess.

xxxviii 7 February: http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/w/x/wxk116/RomanCalendar/feb06.htm

In Greece, this feast was called the Lenaea and celebrated at Athens as the Festival of Wild Women.

xxxix In terms of sacred geometry Ausar (Osiris) was three, Auset (Isis) was four and Heru (Horus), who united the two Egypt, was five in a Pythagorean triangle.


xli These four stages recur on the Pillars of Ashoka:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pillars_of_Ashoka

Here they correspond to the four directions: East, South West and North respectively and have the following symbolism:

“The Elephant represents the Buddha's conception in reference to the dream of Queen Maya of a white elephant entered her womb.

The Bull represents desire during the life of the Buddha as a prince.
The Horse represents Kanthaka, the horse the Buddha rode for his Great Departure from palatial life.

The Lion represents the attainment of Buddhahood.”

The exact order differs. In this case it is: Water buffalo, lion then a man, elephant, water buffalo. On other occasions the order is: elephant, then a buffalo and a bull, then back again as demon. See: Navratri: [http://www.hinducounciluk.org/navratri.asp](http://www.hinducounciluk.org/navratri.asp)


In other accounts she confronts no less than six monsters:

Stage 1: Madhu and Kaitabhu
Stage 2: Mahishasura and Raktabija
Stage 3: Shumbha and Nishumbha

See: Navratri: [http://members.tripod.com/holy_98/navratri.htm](http://members.tripod.com/holy_98/navratri.htm)

"[The Indians] who inhabit the district between the Indos and the Hydroatos [Hydapses] and the continental region beyond which ends at the river Ganges, declare that Dionysos [a local Indian wine-god identified with the Greek god] was son of the River Indos, and that the Dionysos of Thebes having become his disciple took to the thyrsos and introduced it in the orgies; that this Dionysos declared that he was the son of Zeus and had lived safe inside his father’s thigh until he was born, and that he found a mountain called Meros or 'Thigh’ on which Nysa borders, and planted Nysa in honour of Dionysos with the vine of which he had brought the suckers from Thebes." - Philostratus, Life of Apollonius of Tyana 2.6-10

"Now the Hellenes disagree with the Indians, and the Indians among themselves, concerning this Dionysos [the wine-god worshipped in India]. For we declare that the Theban Dionysos made an expedition to India in the role of soldier and reveller, and we base our arguments, among other things, on the offering at Delphoi, which is preserved in the treasuries there. And it is a disc of Indian silver bearing the inscription: ‘Dionysos the son of Semele and of Zeus, from the men of India to the Apollon of Delphoi.” - Philostratus, Life of Apollonius of Tyana 2.6-10


Celestial Planisphere with Path of Zodiac. See:


Satis Chandra Vidyabhusana, Persian Affinities of the Licchavis The Indian Antiquary, Vol.XXXVII (March 1908) p.78-80

http://www.iran chamber.com/history/articles/persian_affinities_licchavis_review.php


There are further connections with the mandorla and vesica piscis symbolism. See: [www.nick2211.yage.net/ pisces.htm](http://www.nick2211.yage.net/pisces.htm)

Celestial Planisphere with Path of Zodiac. See:

lvi Detail from Royal Lyre of Sumer: http://www.cnn.com/interactive/world/0302/iraq.antiquities/content.1.10.html

lv Gods of Orphic Mysteries

www.cs.utk.edu/~mclennan/BA/AGEDE/Fire.html

lvii Egyptian Sarcophagus:

http://freepages.history.rootsweb.com/~catshaman/14Egyptian/04Egyptian3.htm

lxi Gods of Orphic Mysteries

www.cs.utk.edu/~mclennan/BA/AGEDE/Fire.html


In the older traditions Brahma is always included even in the squares relating to Capricorn and Sagittarius.

In Hebrew Babel typically means confusion but the word has also been translated to mean literally Door of Lord (El).

Set and 72 conspirators: [http://members.aol.com/egyptart/osie.html](http://members.aol.com/egyptart/osie.html)

Russian Yule Tree: [seidr.woods.ru/vule2.htm](http://seidr.woods.ru/vule2.htm)


For a religious-philosophical interpretation of this symbolism see: [http://members.aol.com/maatmythology/part6.htm](http://members.aol.com/maatmythology/part6.htm)


Zonohedron: [http://math.arizona.edu/~models/Miscellaneous_polyhedra/source/3.html](http://math.arizona.edu/~models/Miscellaneous_polyhedra/source/3.html)

The feast takes place at the beginning of the dark half of Phalgun. See: Shivaratri: [http://www.dlshq.org/religions/shivaratri.htm](http://www.dlshq.org/religions/shivaratri.htm)

For instance, Indra pierces and cuts Vrita into 2 pieces. [http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6696/mythology.html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6696/mythology.html)

Paingala Upanishad, pg. 905

He (the creator of the world) desireous of creating, embracing the quality of tamas (inertia) desired to change the subtle elements into gross ones. Dividing each of the
elements measured at the time of creation into two and again subdividing each (first equal part) into four equal parts each and mixing each of the four subdivided equal parts with each of the four (escound) equal parts of the other four elements and thus forming Five heaps (of five sorts each); out of the elements thus quintuplicated he created many crors of brahmandas (macrocosms), fourteen worlds appropriate to each (of these macrocosms).

xcviii http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Atlantis/3425/page094.htm

  Of these 52 places, (called Saktapithas or simply pithas), 6 are in Bangladesh, 2 in Pakistan, 1 in Nepal, 1 in Sri Lanka and the remaining 42 holy places are in India http://members.tripod.com/cruelbengalbeast/reports/52%20pieces%20of%20the%20goddess.htm

Legend has it that the god Shiva started dancing cruelly carrying the dead body of goddess Durga after her sacrifice of life at the Vedic sacrificial ceremony of Dakhsa. At that time god Vishnu dissected the dead body of the goddess by his discus (sudarshan chakra). The places where the various dissected parts of the body of goddess Durga felt on are treated as the holy places to the Hindus.

For other versions of this account:
http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Atlantis/3425/page094.htm
http://www.sivanandadlshq.org/download/temples.htm
http://www.dlshq.org/download/temples.htm
ci http://www.dollsofindia.com/read/indian_dolls.htm

He is carrying the dead body of his beloved wife Sati, who went to her parental home to attend the yagna, performed by her father Daksha. Daksha invited all the Gods and Goddesses except Shiva, his son in law. During the yagna, Daksha insulted Shiva in presence of Sati. Sati could not bear the insults and plunged into the pyre of the yagna and emolated herself. Shiva got enraged and killed Daksha, took the dead body of Sati on his shoulder and moved round the universe destroying everything on his way. To save the world, Lord Vishnu cut the body of Sati into fifty one pieces with his chakra. The places where these fifty one pieces fell became Sati peeth, the sacred places where hindus built temples.

S'a_kta Pi_t.ha. Pilgrimage sites of S'akti, Devi, Mother Goddess. Based on D.C.Sircar, The S'a_kta Pi_t.has, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1973:

Sakta-pitha a general term given to a collection of Hindu sacred places scattered throughout the subcontinent. It is usually called pithasthan or mahapitha in Bengali. The word pitha means altar or seat where the body parts of the goddess sati (another name for the goddess Durga) fell to earth after she had been cut to pieces by the discus of Vishnu. Tradition has it that there are fifty-one places of sakta-pitha. There is, however, no consensus on the exact locations of these pithas. The most popular text that mentions the names of these pithas is an old manuscript called the mahapithanirupana (1690-1720 AD).

http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6696/mythology.html
ciii If one juxtaposes two triangles of 28 dots, to make a hexagon (symbol of Vishnu or Seal of Solomon) their boundaries intersect at four points (56 - 4= 52 which is again the weeks of the year and number of Sati temples).
civ http://www.recoveredscience.com/const139Osirisdeath.htm
cv http://cura.free.fr/xv/14boutet.html
She is the greatest seductress there is, continuously assuming new forms, and highly procreative and blissful like a sixteen year old girl.

In astronomy there are 108 Navamshas. A Navamsha is 200' of arc in Sidereal Astrology. Each constellation has 1800' of arc. Therefore, there are 9 (nava) navamshas in a sidereal constellation. Since there are 12 constellations in the Sidereal zodiac there are 9 times 12 or 108 navamshas.

If we turn to consider official temple sites of the main Hindu gods we encounter something unexpected. Siva has 12 major temples Devi (another form of Durga the mother goddess) has 13 temples. Vishnu, in addition to 8 major temples (6 in India, 2 in Sri Lanka), has 54 official shrines Vishnu is said to have 108 (i.e. 54 x 2) abodes

Four Sacred Plants are assigned to the cardinal points, and amongst the Navajos Maize is the plant of the North, Beans of the east. This means that both are male and as both are grown for edible seeds, recognition of the physiological function of the male was probably involved in the selection. This is entirely possible since the convention could have been established only very late, after settlement in America. Squash, for the Navajos, is the plant of the South, which is fitting since its fruit is called "eight-sided" and the eight-sided earth (an alternative to the square earth, taking account of the diagonal directions) is female. Also the stalk is angled in sections, a feature deliberately exaggerated when the plant is depicted in sand paintings, and crooked things are female. Tobacco, which the Navajos put on the west, is female because it is used to make smoke which is blown out with the breath, and that is female. Below the Plants are white roots, the significance being that these plants still have their roots in the lower world.

There are also a 21 minor chakras Older sources speak of 49 or even 144 chakras

In the space outside the Merudanda (spinal column) placed on the left and the right are the two Nadi Ida and Pingala, the Nadi Sushumna is in the middle. Ida starts from the right testicle and Pingala from the left testicle. They meet Sushumna Nadi at the Muladhar Chakra and make a knot. This junction is called Mukta Triveni. Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati dwell in Pingala, Ida and Sushumna. This meeting place is called Brahma Granthi. These meet again at the Anahata and Ajna Chakra. Ida flows through the left nostril and Pingala through the right nostril. Ida [Sasi, Lalana, Pitryana] is called Chandra (Moon) Nadi, in its course it
conveys lunar energy. Pingala [Mihira, Rasana, Devayana] is called Surya (Sun) Nadi, as solar energy flows through it. Ida is of pale, Shakti Rupa; Pingala is of fiery red, Rudra Rupa. It’s to remember that Ida and Pingala carry the prana and the apana. Ida and Pingala indicate Kala (time, death) and Sushumna swallows time.

The Chinese have mapped out a complete system of meridians (called nadis in India), or channels of energy that flow throughout our bodies. There are 14 major channels and each one connects to a different organ in our body and gives it its vital energy called chi. If a channel gets blocked, so does the life energy to the corresponding organ, and its function is impaired. Today modern science can tell which ones are blocked and which ones are flowing, by measuring the resistance of each channel with a sensitive ohmmeter; it's called electro-acupuncture or bio-energetic regulatory techniques (B.E.R.).

For instance, if we take 14 (half a phase of the moon), add this to Seth’s 56 we arrive at 70, which is the number of days that the star Sirius disappears before re-emerging at the time of the inundations of the Nile in June. Osiris died on 17 March. 70 days later is when the inundations come.

By the practice of Yoga the Yogi masters the tatwic changes of his body. Time is cheated. If he pushes the germ of disease out of his body no epidemic will ever affect him.

When the falcon did not yield, Meghrath said at last, "O falcon! As long as I exist, I will not allow you to die. I will cut out flesh from my body equivalent to the weight of this little pigeon and give it to you. You may satisfy your urge to eat. But under no circumstance I shall allow you to kill the bird that has taken refuge with me."

The falcon agreed to this proposal and the king put the pigeon in one pan of balance and in the other started putting pieces of flesh cut out from his own body. Surprisingly, the weight of the pigeon continued to increase as the king went on putting his flesh in the pan. Witnessing this pathetic scene, the queens and the members of the assembly were moved to tears. They requested the king not to sacrifice his precious life for a mere pigeon. The falcon, was also requested relent but he too declined.

The Falcon continued to cut flesh from his body and put it in the pan of the balance. At last, when the pieces of flesh were not enough, the king got up from his seat and sat down in the pan. Everyone present was dumb struck at this lofty compassion and chivalry displayed by the king. Suddenly there was a flesh of divine light and a divine personage appeared. The pigeon and the falcon disappeared.

How else are we to interpret the story of the Buddha returning to his native city, Kapilavastu, the first time after his Grand Illumination? He is said to have
demonstrated "miraculous powers" in order to win his kinsmen over. Before the eyes of his astonished audience, he rose into the air and cut his body to pieces. All of the pieces fell to the ground, and then he put them back together. Linguistically, "shaman" seems to have entered our European lexicons by way of Russian, but only subsequently as received from the language of the Tungus, a Mongolian people widely spread across Eastern Siberia. But associations with the word may be derived from the Aryan languages of Northern India where the Sanskrit term shrāmana pertains to a movement of ascetic wanders that developed in India from the 6th century BCE. See Mircea Eliade, Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy (1964), 311-41

For an introduction to sacred trees in India: M. D. Subash Chandran Madhav Gadgil, “Sacred Groves and Sacred Trees of Uttara Kannada”: [http://www.ignca.nic.in/cd_08008.htm](http://www.ignca.nic.in/cd_08008.htm)

According to one story Romulus, the first king of Rome, was cut in pieces by the senators, who buried the fragments of him in the ground; and the traditional day of his death, the seventh of July, was celebrated with certain curious rites, which were apparently connected with the artificial fertilisation of the fig. Again, Greek legend told how Pentheus, king of Thebes, and Lycurgus, king of the Thracian Edonians, opposed the vine-god Dionysus, and how the impious monarchs were rent in pieces, the one by the frenzied Bacchanals, the other by horses. The Greek traditions may well be distorted reminiscences of a custom of sacrificing human beings, and especially divine kings, in the character of Dionysus, a god who resembled Osiris in many points and was said like him to have been torn limb from limb. We are told that in Chios men were rent in pieces as a sacrifice to Dionysus; and since they died the same death as their god, it is reasonable to suppose that they personated him. The story that the Thracian Orpheus was similarly torn limb from limb by the Bacchanals seems to indicate that he too perished in the character of the god whose death he died. It is significant that the Thracian Lycurgus, king of the Edonians, is said to have been put to death in order that the ground, which had ceased to be fruitful, might regain its fertility.

Further, we read of a Norwegian king, Halfdan the Black, whose body was cut up and buried in different parts of his kingdom for the sake of ensuring the fruitfulness of the earth. He is said to have been drowned at the age of forty through the breaking of the ice in spring.

Briefly -- the putting of the "Yule Log" into the fire on Christmas eve, and the appearance next morning of the Christmas tree laden with gifts, represented the consuming of the great god, who, like the log, had been cut in pieces, and his after birth in newness of life as the "Branch of God," or the Tree that brings gifts to men. The Egyptians used the palm for their Christmas tree, but the people of pagan Roman used the fir, because the fir tree covertly symbolized the risen god as the Baal-berith of old Babylon; for Baal-berith -- "Lord of the Covenant," differs only one letter from Baal-bereth-- "Lord of the Fir tree."

Attis-Adonis-Adonai-Christ are all versions of the dying and resurrected God mythos, an omnipresent vegetation deity theme found in agricultural civilizations. Many scholars have drawn connections between the rather similar mystery stories of the death and rebirth myth of
Attis. who was driven to self-sacrifice by his jealous mother-lover Cybele, and the death and rebirth of Christ, driven to self-sacrifice by his father-lover Yahweh. Traces of Catal Huyuk religion may still be found in a renewed analysis of this Anatolian Cult of the Great Mother.

cxxxiv [http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/cults.htm](http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/cults.htm)

www.civilization.ca/civil/egypt/egcl06f.html

cxxxi [http://www.dhushara.com/paradoxhtm/fall.htm](http://www.dhushara.com/paradoxhtm/fall.htm)

Some have suggested that the cult of Magna Mater (Great Mother) originated in Çatal Hüyük. The famous statue of a woman giving birth upon a throne with two leopards at her side, is the form she is known for in Phrygia as Cybele. Later in Rome, Cybele would come to be known as Magna Mater, the magical goddess raised by panthers and lions. The leaders of her cult were female priestesses and castrated male priests called Galli.

cxxxv [http://www.agsconsulting.com/menub7.htm](http://www.agsconsulting.com/menub7.htm)

This cites: Photius, *Lexicon*, pars. i, p. 291.


cxxxv [http://www.theenk.blogspot.com/](http://www.theenk.blogspot.com/)

John Allegro, in his disputed book "The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross", suggests another connection of the leopard image, and especially the leopard's spots, m the spotted amanita muscaria mushroom. Both Allegro and R. Gordon Wasson, in his classic "Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality", connects the motif of 'spots' with the amanita cult. Spots are the ultimate distinguishing sign of divine authority in Catal Huyuk, whether the spots are on a leopardskin cap, on a statute of a god, or painted on an erupting volcano goddess.

cxl [http://www.divyajivan.org/articles/siva/symbolism_shiva.htm](http://www.divyajivan.org/articles/siva/symbolism_shiva.htm)

His wearing of serpents denotes wisdom and eternity.

cxli [http://www.dlshq.org/religions/shivaratri.htm](http://www.dlshq.org/religions/shivaratri.htm)

cxlii [http://students.washington.edu/prem/mw/z.html](http://students.washington.edu/prem/mw/z.html)

śatacandra

○ *candra* mfn. adorned with a hṭundred moons (or moon-like spots) MBh, BhP.

• (scil. *asi* or *carman*) a sword or a shield adorned with a hundred moons BhP.

• m. N. of a warrior MBh.

cxliii Mystical creature Known as a Dragon:

http://www.asiatravelinfo.com/china/picturesandsights.asp


cxvi Dinosaur National Monument: www.usi.edu/.../geol390-Utah/geol390-Utah.html