

Astrotheology for Life

Unlocking the Esoteric Wisdom
of Ancient Myth

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Introduction

The ancient mythology given to the human race holds wisdom vital to our present lives.

Many of us instinctively sense the truth and beauty contained in the world's ancient texts and sacred stories, but when we try to approach the myths themselves we often find them bizarre, circuitous, and difficult to fathom.

Unless we come from an upbringing within a traditional culture unsullied by extensive contact with the implacable spread of "modern western civilization," we find ourselves cut off from the sacred stories which were given to our distant ancestors for their benefit and guidance. They are speaking in a language we no longer understand.

We are like the descendants of immigrants to a new country who were not taught the language of the old country. We may have a longing to reconnect with our heritage, but when we try, we find everything unfamiliar and incomprehensible, and the aching void inside us remains unfilled.

To be sure, there are plenty of voices standing ready to translate the ancient texts – particularly those speaking the language of literal interpretation of the scriptures – but as we will soon see, there is abundant evidence that the ancient myths of humanity are speaking a *celestial* language, and unless we are able to listen to them in the language that they are actually speaking, we are likely to misinterpret their message, or miss it altogether. And there are very few today, among all those offering to translate the ancient texts for us, who actually speak that celestial language.

Even worse, if there are translators who do indeed understand the language of the myths, unless we know that language as well, we are at their mercy regarding their translations. In other words, unless we speak the language as well, it is possible that they could mistranslate or misinterpret the ancient myths – either by mistake or on purpose, for some reason.

There is some evidence that misinterpretation – even deliberate misinterpretation – has in fact taken place over the centuries.

Because of this possibility, I would argue that what we need most is not a translator, but rather the ability to go to the ancient stories themselves and listen to them in their celestial language. If we can learn how to speak their language, then this is exactly what we will be able to do. Instead of depending upon an interpreter who knows the language while we do not, we will become capable of speaking the language of celestial metaphor and dialoguing with the myths directly.

That is what this book is designed to help you to do.

Fortunately, as I have attempted to document in my previous books, there is also abundant evidence pointing to the conclusion that all the various ancient myths and sacred stories across the globe and across the millennia, from virtually every culture on every inhabited continent and every inhabited island, use the same worldwide system of celestial metaphor.

They all speak the same esoteric language, clearly recognizable despite significant regional, cultural, and epochal variations.

It is a language that is built upon the motions and cycles of the sun, moon, and visible planets – and perhaps most of all, upon the cycles of the stars and their constellations. The ancient

myths, scriptures and sacred stories of humanity – including the stories collected into what have come to be called the Old and New Testaments of the Bible – can be shown to be built upon this same worldwide system.

I have detailed hundreds of examples found in myths from around the world in my most-recent books, the multi-volume series *Star Myths of the World, and how to interpret them*, presently at three volumes reaching to a collective total of nearly 2,000 pages and including hundreds of diagrams and star charts, supporting the conclusion that the same system of celestial metaphor informs them all.

This book, while covering some aspects of the system which have been included in previous books, will add much that is brand-new. It has been conceived with the purpose of teaching you the ancient system in the clearest and most straightforward way possible, with the benefit of everything that I have learned about that system up to this point.

It is also intended to explore more deeply the meaning and purpose of the ancient esoteric message, and its direct application for our lives to this day. It may very well be that the ancient myths and traditions direct us to practices we should be incorporating in our daily lives, practices whose importance we might completely fail to appreciate without the understanding conveyed by the secret language of the ancient wisdom.

And, if you already practice one of these ancient disciplines, you may well find that the wisdom included in the ancient myths can shed new light on what you are doing – once you understand the language they are speaking and how to converse with the myths for yourself.

Instead of grouping our examination of the ancient myths by separate cultures or traditions, as in the *Star Myths of the World* series, in this volume we will explore certain specific themes or motifs which turn up again and again in myths spanning the globe, and use our investigation of those themes to gain insight into the urgent and beneficial message that the ancient wisdom encoded in the sacred stories may be trying to convey to us.

Pioneering Swedish folklorist Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1878 - 1952) coined the term "oicotype" (sometimes spelled "oikotype") in 1927 to describe variations upon a story-pattern found in different cultures or different parts of the world. In doing so, he was borrowing a term from botany, describing local or regional variants in a plant species.¹

Some of the recurring Star-Myth themes or oicotypes we will explore include the motif of the "failed baptism," the "retrieval from the dead," the "forcing of the smile," the "passage through the flood to achieve immortality," the theme of "doubting and withdrawing," and the theme of the "re-establishment of the Djed" (the *Djed* or *Djed-column*, sometimes called the *Tat* or *Tat-pillar* in earlier centuries, is a specific Egyptian manifestation of a pattern that can be shown to repeat throughout many other sacred traditions literally around the globe and across the millennia). By observing numerous such myth-patterns, you will begin to develop the ability to detect the patterns in the world's ancient myths, their connections to certain regions of the sky, and their possible interpretation for yourself.

It is my hope that this book, and the interaction with the ancient myths that it enables, will be a blessing to you.

A Brief Survey of Astrotheology in Modern Times

The study of the evidence that our world's ancient myths, including the accounts in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, rest upon a foundation of celestial metaphor is frequently termed *astrotheology*.

The term itself will not be found in many dictionaries, although it has certainly begun to gain popular currency, especially following the release of a widely-watched internet video called *Zeitgeist* in 2007, which advances some arguments that the gospel accounts of Jesus are based on stories of earlier solar deities from earlier myth-systems, such as those involving the falcon-god Horus of ancient Egypt.

Unfortunately, pointing out a connection of mythological characters or events to the motions and cycles of the sun (and perhaps at times the moon) is about as far as most popular "astrotheology" analysis goes.

This shallowness of analysis is unfortunate for a few reasons.

First, although it *does* go far enough to cast some doubt upon the validity of the literalistic interpretation of the same myths and stories, noting a few connections between a Biblical text (for example) and the behavior of the sun around the point of winter solstice does not decisively establish the allegorical nature of the stories. One could still argue that the stories contain literal accounts of actual historical and terrestrial figures, whose cultural celebrations down through history were celebrated upon and identified with certain parts of the annual cycle (such as a solstice or an equinox), without having to acknowledge that the persons and events in the stories

themselves can be shown to be based on heavenly figures from the outset.

Because the literal interpretation of ancient myth and scripture tends to externalize and thus invert their message, this is a serious concern. We will see that many ancient thinkers, even those who have been presented to us as early Christian leaders, believed very strongly that literalizing the sacred texts was a grave error, emptying them of their true meaning.

Secondly, shallow astrotheology that goes only as far as making connections to the cycles of the sun and the moon does not really provide enough structure to glimpse the purpose of the great esoteric system to most of those exposed to this type of popular astrotheological analysis.

In other words, it goes far enough to undermine the foundations of the literal-historical interpretation (although not far enough to decisively refute the literal and historical approach), while not going far enough to reveal the incredible outlines of the esoteric system and its glorious purpose.

Shallow astrotheology thus serves a primarily *negative* purpose (casting doubt upon the framework of literalism) without a corresponding positive purpose to replace the decrepit structure.

This brings us to a third and related point -- shallow astrotheology as it is usually presented in popular works does not provide much of direct value to our daily lives. Perceiving that there might be a connection between the events in this or that mythological story and the sun's behavior at a solstice or an equinox does not generally translate into specific, applicable

knowledge which we can use in our day-to-day journey through this incarnate life.

Once again, this means that shallow astrotheological analysis plays a basically negative role here as well, taking away the perceived applicability of the literalistic interpretation (flawed as that might have been) without offering much insight into the ways in which the ancient myths actually use the awe-inducing heavenly motions and cycles to convey teaching which is simultaneously both practical and profound.

However, if we begin to dig deeper into the great theme of *the celestial metaphor which forms the basis for the world's myths*, we will find an abundance of incredible thinkers and teachers from previous centuries who can help remedy all of the problems described above.

Primary among these is probably Alvin Boyd Kuhn (1880 - 1963), whose penetrating analysis illuminates the outlines of the great cycles of the sun and moon to such a degree that he is in fact able to trace out the mighty esoteric structure and purpose of the world's ancient myths without ever really getting into the specific constellational connections which support and enhance the message that Kuhn demonstrates through his analysis of the cycles of the sun and moon alone.

Of equal importance is the celestial analysis presented in the lectures or sermons of Robert Taylor of England (1784 - 1844). He focused primarily upon the evidence that all the characters and stories of both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible can be shown to be built on celestial metaphor (and in many cases to relate to other ancient myths as well). He is noteworthy for going far beyond the connections to the solar and lunar cycles which often form the bulk of such arguments,

and instead uncovering connections to specific constellations in the characters and events described in the Bible episodes.

As we will see, the ability to get to the constellational level of detail in such analysis is absolutely essential.

Robert Taylor actually uses the term "astronomico-theological" in the titles of some of his lectures or sermons, in which he would present to packed audiences in the Rotunda in London his analysis of the celestial underpinnings of familiar Biblical passages and personages.

For example, a sermon delivered on November 27, 1830 at the Rotunda was subtitled "An Astronomico-Theological Discourse on the Temptation of Christ."²

In one lecture, he even refers to himself as the master of "this course of astronomico-theological science."³

These sermons were published in 1857, thirteen years after Robert Taylor's death – and his publisher apparently decided that the phrase "astronomico-theological" could be shortened to "astro-theological" instead, and used that term in the subtitle and the introduction to one of the two volumes of Taylor's discourses.

The two collections of his sermons were published in 1857, one under the name *Astronomico-Theological Lectures*, and the other under the name *Devil's Pulpit*. These two volumes will be referenced under those two titles in this volume.

However, the text which this volume will refer to as *Devil's Pulpit* is actually titled in full as follows: *The Devil's Pulpit: or Astro-Theological Sermons, by the Rev. Robert Taylor, B. A.,*

Author of the "Diegesis," "Syntagma," &c., with a Sketch of his Life, and an Astronomical Introduction.

Thus, we see that Taylor himself used the term "Astronomico-Theological," and that after his death his publisher used the shorter term "Astro-Theological." I personally would prefer the term *astronomy*, as being more accurate and less prone to misinterpretation, but in deference to Taylor (and to popular usage) will employ the term *astrotheology* in this volume.

In fact, the introduction to the volume entitled *Astronomico-Theological Lectures* tells us that:

Taylor never approved the title "Devil's Pulpit," which the London publisher has, nevertheless, affixed to all his lectures. He was for naming them, (as the American publisher has their second series) "Astronomico-Theological Lectures."⁴

The genius of Robert Taylor's analysis lies in his facility for connecting specific characters and episodes from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible to specific constellations and celestial cycles. There are many specific identifications where I differ from Taylor's suggestions, but on the whole I have not seen any other proponents of astrotheology who come anywhere close to Taylor's ability to connect to specific constellations. His work thus greatly expands our understanding of the "vocabulary" of the ancient system of celestial metaphor, by introducing hundreds of connections to specific constellations, rather than simply pointing to parallels with the cycles of the sun and the moon.

I am convinced that we must get to the level of *constellational* detail in order to develop our own "vocabulary" to the point at which we can approach the myths for ourselves and ask them

what they mean – and at which we can then hope to understand their answer.

Although the system of correspondence between the myths and the constellations must have been known for thousands of years – as we will see from some of the surviving artwork from ancient times which clearly displays evidence of understanding of this system – I am unaware of any writings prior to the work of Robert Taylor who attempted to articulate it to the degree of detail which we find in Taylor's sermons.

The works of Volney and especially of Charles-François Dupuis (both of France) deserve mention in their exploration of the same broad theme, but once again they focus primarily upon the cycles of sun and moon, and when they do address connections between the myths and the stars, the analysis lacks the detailed level of constellational specificity which we find in Taylor's analysis.

Their particular genius was to show the parallels between the episodes contained in the Bible stories and the myths of ancient other cultures, and arguing some connection or even common origin based on the undeniable correspondences. As some of those other cultures (such as ancient Egypt and ancient Sumer and Babylon) can be shown to have been in full flower before the alleged Exodus described in the Pentateuch, the argument can be made that the Biblical texts are not the original source of these stories or patterns.

Volney (1757 - 1820) and Dupuis (1742 - 1809) were both alive at the same time as Taylor, Volney being 27 years of age when Taylor was born, and Dupuis being an additional 14 years older than Volney. Their most influential books were *The Origin of All Religious Worship* (*Origine de tous les Cultes*)

The Failed Baptism

In her collection of myths and sacred stories about the semi-divine culture-hero Maui, entitled *Maui of a Thousand Tricks: His Oceanic and European Biographers* and published in 1946, Katharine Luomala presents stories and oral traditions about the life of Maui collected from islands scattered across thousands of miles of the mighty Pacific Ocean, from Hawai'i to Aotearoa, from the Tongan and Fijian and Samoan Archipelagoes to Rotuma, the Tuamotus, Pukapuka, and Rakahanga.

One of the important episodes in the life of Maui, found in many versions of the Maui cycle, concerns the baptism of Maui by his father. In one of these versions, related by the Arawa tribe of Aotearoa (New Zealand), Maui and his brothers notice that their mother disappears into the ground each night – so Maui makes note of the spot where she always goes, and then turns himself into a beautiful wood pigeon and flies down the long, narrow cave-tunnel that leads straight down into the underworld, where he eventually perches in a tree and sees his parents below him, his mother lying down beside his father on the ground beneath the tree, according to the story.

Maui, still in the form of a bird, then throws berries down at his father until his father throws a rock that knocks the bird out of the tree, and Maui turns back into his original shape. At this point in the story, Katharine Luomala tells us:

Then the lad was taken by his father to the water to be baptized. And after the ceremony prayers were offered to make him sacred and clean from all impurities. But when it was completed, his father Makea-tu-tara felt greatly alarmed, because he remembered that he had,

from mistake, hurriedly skipped over part of the prayers of the baptismal service to purify Maui. He knew that the gods would be certain to punish this fault by causing Maui to die. His alarm and anxiety were therefore extreme. At nightfall they all went into his house.⁴¹

Some analysts have seen in this episode clear evidence of Christian influence upon the myths of the Maui cycle, since baptism is supposedly a Biblical concept that must have arrived from outside visitors -- but we should not be overly hasty in accepting this assertion as the only possible explanation for the evidence we find.

In fact, we find a story with remarkable similarities to this "failed baptism" (which results in Maui's mortality and susceptibility to eventual death) in the story of the semi-divine Achilles and *his* parents, who also attempt to "baptize" their infant son in order to confer invulnerability upon the child, only to have the process spoiled by a failure to dip his heel in the baptismal source (fire in some versions, and the River Styx in other versions).

Of course, the Achilles stories are not "Biblical" in their source -- and thus it is quite impossible to argue that every myth and story around the world which follows this pattern must necessarily have gotten it from Christian missionaries!

Another argument against the certainty of a later Christian influence upon the story of Maui's failed baptism is the fact (not widely known but demonstrable using the evidence in the stars themselves) that the entire "failed baptism" motif can be shown to reflect patterns in the night sky. Would Christian missionaries be likely to have suggested those aspects of the "failed baptism" episode to the originators of the Maui story?

We can agree that this possibility seems most unlikely (as does the suggestion that Christian missionaries suggested the outline of a story that parallels more closely the myth of the godlike hero Achilles than any story we find in the Old or New Testaments of the Bible).

The story of the "failed baptism" of Achilles is very well known and was clearly well known in antiquity. Although the baptism of Achilles is not a feature in the *Iliad*, the oldest textual source of our knowledge of the Achilles tradition, it was described or mentioned in passing by numerous other ancient authors, including Apollodorus, Lycophron, Statius, and many others. In most accounts, Achilles is dipped into fire by his mother, the divine Thetis, in order to render him immortal – but is pulled out of the fire by his horrified mortal father, Peleus, thus leaving him mortal and eventually leading to his death in battle at Troy.

In other accounts, Achilles is dipped instead into the River Styx by his mother, also in order to render him mortal. In this version, Achilles' heel remains vulnerable, because when his mother dipped him into the dreaded waters of Styx, she held him by the heel, and thus that heel remained the one part of his body where an enemy could deliver a mortal wound. According to accounts preserved by some ancient authors, the god Apollo guided Paris the son of Priam of Troy to aim his arrow at this one point on Achilles' anatomy, and thus brought down the hero.

The similarity to the failed baptism of Maui should be self-evident. The similarity is especially pronounced in the versions of the Achilles myth in which the infant is dipped in the fire by his divine mother, but pulled out prematurely by his mortal

father, because in the Maui myth it is the father whose oversight during the baptismal recitation leads to the mortality and eventual death of the semi-divine Maui.

It is also appropriate to bring up another story in the Maui cycle of myth, earlier in the life of Maui – when he is just newly born. In many islands, there is a received oral tradition that Maui's parents threw him away when he had just been born (in some versions of the story, it is because Maui has eight heads). But he is rescued and resuscitated by his grandfather, who hangs the baby up to dry among the rafters of his home, above a great fire for warmth.

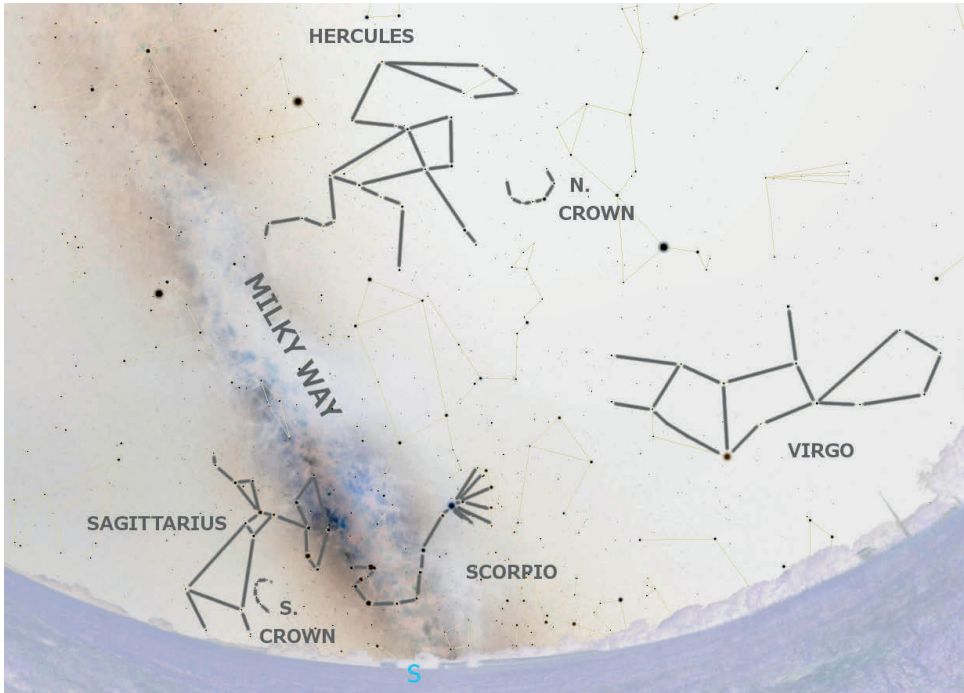
Here is the account as told among the Arawa of Aotearoa and recorded in Katharine Luomala's *Maui of a Thousand Tricks* – Maui is speaking to his mother:

"I knew I was born at the side of the sea, and was thrown by you into the foam of the surf, after you had wrapped me up in a tuft of your hair, which you cut off for the purpose. Then the sea-weed formed and fashioned me, as caught in its long tangles the ever-heaving surges of the sea rolled me, folded as I was in them, from side to side. At length the breezes and squalls which blew from the ocean drifted me on shore again, and the soft jelly-fish of the long sandy beaches rolled themselves round me to protect me. Then again myriads of flies alighted on me to buzz about me and lay their eggs, that maggots might eat me, and flocks of birds collected round me to peck me to pieces. But, at that moment, appeared there also my great ancestor Tama-nui-ki-te-Rangi. he saw the flies and the birds collected in clusters and flocks above the jelly-fish. Behold, within there lay a human being. Then he caught me up and carried me to his house, he hung me up in the roof that I might feel the warm smoke and the heat of the fire. Thus I was saved alive by the kindness of that old man."⁴²

All of this snatching up of infants and suspending them in rivers and above fires can be seen to be related – and related by reference to the same set of constellations in the heavens, according to my analysis.

It is not inherently obvious to the casual observer, but the glistening arc of the Northern Crown (Corona Borealis) plays the role of an infant in numerous Star Myths from around the world – often an infant who is "snatched up" by a character corresponding to the powerful figure of the constellation Hercules, which is located very close to Corona Borealis in the sky, and facing towards it (such that it only takes a little imagination to envision a line connecting the forward-side arm of Hercules reaching out to grasp the Crown, as shown on the following page).

That the constellation Corona Borealis would not normally suggest itself as an infant is a very strong argument against the theory that all these various Star Myths in different cultures simply "sprang up" independently of one another – because the Northern Crown shows up in so many different cultures in the form of a baby. We might expect it to show up as a crown, or as a necklace, in different myths independently, because its shape suggests those items without question (and it does show up in numerous myths as a necklace, for example). But the fact that it shows up multiple times as a dangling infant suggests some sort of ancient connection between the myths of these various cultures spread around the globe – most likely, in my opinion, a common source of even greater antiquity, perhaps a common world-wide culture or civilization predating known history by thousands of years.



The above star-chart shows the important region of sky where the Milky Way rises between Scorpio and Sagittarius and proceeds up past Hercules. Constellation outlines have been added for those three constellations, as well as for Virgo and for the Northern and Southern Crowns. The outlines mainly follow those suggested by H. A. Rey – but Scorpio has been shown in an alternate outline to illustrate the reason that this constellation appears in many ancient myths as a serpent with multiple heads (sometimes seven, sometimes eight, and sometimes nine).

Recall that in the Maui cycle of myths, Maui is thrown by his mother into the sea-foam as soon as he is born – and then note the figure of Virgo to the right of the form of Scorpio as we face the page. The position of Virgo, and the fact that in the northern hemisphere she appears to be positioned on her back

The Divine Twin

As we begin to delve deeper into the subject of how the ancient wisdom encoded in the myths may apply to our own lives, in ways that are at once both practical and profound, we begin to see that this entire metaphorical system – in which the infinite heavenly realm of the stars becomes a visible representation of the Invisible Realm of "pure potentiality" (the realm of the gods) – points us towards an awareness that this universe or cosmos in which we find ourselves is intertwined and interpenetrated at every point by that Infinite and Invisible Realm . . . and that *we ourselves* must therefore have an invisible and infinite component as well.

Indeed, it would be a grievous omission if we were to examine all these myths from around the world, seeing all of their incredible connections to the stars and all of their astonishing parallels with one another, and fail to perceive that one of the central themes running through the ancient wisdom imparted to cultures on every inhabited continent and island of our globe involves the integration of our ordinary, uncontroversial, mortal and physical selves with an invisible, infinite, immortal and spiritual nature – a nature which might be called the "higher self" (and which in some cultures is explicitly given a name which means exactly that).

While the concept of the higher self has now been talked about enough in some circles to risk becoming cliché, especially if it is not explained or understood in a way that enables us to actually apply its powerful meaning to our own lives, the ancient myths provide us with a plethora of illustrations and metaphors that can enable us to grasp the teaching at a very deep and practical level.

Any student of myth who has examined a wide range of sacred stories from many cultures will soon realize that there is a "superabundance" of myths involving "twinning" -- tales in which actual twins, or very close and intimate pairs who may not have been born twins but who function very much like twins, feature prominently or play a central role. The list of such twins in myth is almost endless, and would include the following (as well as many more):

- Gilgamesh and Enkidu in ancient Mesopotamia
- Jacob and Esau in the Hebrew scriptures
- the Ashvins in the ancient Vedas
- Castor and Polydeuces in ancient Greece
- Achilles and Patroclus in the Iliad
- Jesus and Thomas Didymus in the New Testament
- Hunahpu and Xbalanque in the Popol Vuh of the Maya
- Taiwo and Kehinde of the Yoruba
- Romulus and Remus of ancient Rome
- Amphion and Zethus of the ancient cult of Thebes
- David and Jonathan in the Hebrew scriptures

Very frequently, one of the two twins will be divine (or at least semi-divine) and the other will be mortal. Sometimes, one will be described as having a divine parent, while the other will have two mortal parents.

For example, the hero Heracles (or Hercules) is a son of a divine father, Zeus, and a mortal mother, Alcmene (or Alcmena). Heracles in ancient myth also has a twin-brother, Iphicles, who is not semi-divine, being the son of a mortal father, Amphitryon (who is the foster father of Heracles as well), and Alcmene.

Similarly, Kastor and Polydeuces (or Castor and Pollux, to use the Latin form), are described in some versions of the myth as

being mortal (Castor) and immortal (Polydeuces). This is because, like Heracles and Iphicles, Polydeuces is the son of the divine Zeus and the beautiful mortal woman Leda, while Castor is the son of Leda and her mortal husband Tyndareus, king of Sparta.

Note that Leda is famously seduced by the god when Zeus takes on the form of a swan – and the constellation Cygnus is located immediately adjacent to the constellation Hercules (who plays the role of Zeus in most of the Greek myths, as discussed in *Star Myths of the World, Volume Two*). Cygnus is a constellation which appears to be flying "downwards" in the Milky Way, towards Sagittarius and Scorpio; Leda probably corresponds to Sagittarius in the story of Leda and the Swan.

In the most famous part of the myths of Castor and Pollux (Polydeuces), the mortal brother, Castor, is slain in a battle, and Polydeuces appeals to Zeus to allow Polydeuces to share some of his own divine nature with Castor, in order to save him. Here is how the ancient poet Pindar (c. 517 BC - c. 437 BC) describes the arrangement, from the tenth Nemean Ode, as translated by Diane Arnson Svarlien:

Swiftly Polydeuces the son of Tyndareus went back to his mighty brother, and found him not yet dead, but shuddering with gasps of breath. Shedding warm tears amid groans, he spoke aloud: "Father, son of Cronus, what release will there be from sorrows? Order me to die too, along with him, lord. A man's honor is gone when he is deprived of friends; but few mortals are trustworthy in times of toil to share the hardship." So he spoke. And Zeus came face to face with him, and said these words: "You are my son. But Castor was begotten after your conception by the hero – your mother's husband – who came to her and

sowed his mortal seed. But nevertheless I grant you your choice in this. If you wish to escape death and hated old age, and to dwell in Olympus yourself with me and with Athena and Ares of the dark spear, you can have this lot. But if you strive to save your brother, and intend to share everything equally with him, then you may breathe for half the time below the earth, and for half the time in the golden homes of heaven." When Zeus had spoken thus, Polydeuces did not have a second thought. He opened the eye, and then released the voice of the bronze-clad warrior, Castor.⁷⁹

Here we encounter a strikingly powerful image: the divine twin who rescues the mortal twin, sharing his immortality with his mortal counterpart. I am convinced that this pattern is given to us as an illustration of the reality of our condition while passing through this incarnate life. We are encased in a mortal form, but we have access to a "divine twin" who is ready to lift us up and allow us to share in that same divine nature. In fact, in the story of Castor and Polydeuces, Castor also becomes a divine figure – and the Twins of Gemini are of course visible in the night sky in the zodiac constellation whose two brightest stars bear the names of Castor (the dimmer of the two) and Pollux (the brighter).

My understanding of these sacred stories indicates that the two natures are dramatized in the myths as two distinct individuals, but that in fact the truth being conveyed is that they correspond to the two natures inherent in *one person* – the two natures which every single man and woman himself or herself possesses, a "lower self" and a "higher self," or a "mortal self" and a "divine self."

This concept is dramatically illustrated by the New Testament writer who calls himself *Paul*, and who is described in the

narrative contained in the book of Acts as having previously been called *Saul*. As Saul, he was antagonistic to Jesus, but as Paul he was integrated with and empowered by the "Christ within." His previous alienation from his divine nature is dramatized by the encounter in which Jesus appears to Saul on the road to Damascus, and asks Saul: "Why do you persecute me?" – and Saul is transformed.

The two aspects of Paul are almost like two different people – two "twins" named *Saul* and *Paul*. But they are really the same individual, and the story is intended to illustrate a profound truth for our understanding.

As the brilliant and insightful Robert Taylor notes, in a sermon he delivered on January 9, 1831 and which is recorded in *The Devil's Pulpit*, the names of Saul and Paul have undeniable celestial antecedents. The name *Saul*, of course, clearly recalls the Saul in the Old Testament, who persecuted David (David and Jonathan being another manifestation of "the Gemini or Twins" in the story, according to Taylor) – but the name also recalls the syllable *sol*, which corresponds to the sun.⁸⁰

The name *Paul*, on the other hand, corresponds to both Apollo (the sun god of ancient Greece and Rome) and to Pollux or Polydeuces!

As Taylor elaborates:

And Saul and Paul are one and the same persons, only as the Sun of November is the same as the sun of May. Only in different characters: Saul before his conversion, being the November sun, in the sign of Sagittarius, where you see the Great Persecutor, with his bow and arrow, playing havoc with vegetable nature, stripping the trees of their foliage, riding down to Damascus, and on the high road to

hell and Tommy – that is, St. Thomas's day, which is the 21st of December, the lowest point of the sun's declension: and, consequently, the lowest pit of hell.

The same Saul being, in Hebrew, the self-same word

שׂאול

which is, wherever it serves the purpose, translated hell [*Sheol*, which is translated in the King James version sometimes as "hell," sometimes as "pit," and sometimes as "grave"]: as the Greek name Paul is an abbreviation of the Greek Apollo, under whose protection the month of May is placed in the calendar of Julius Caesar, and of the name of the star Pollux, in which the sun appears in his regenerate and mild and amiable character at that delightful season.⁸¹

Taylor's analysis reveals that the "lower self" (in this case, Saul before his conversion, alienated from and even "persecuting" the divine nature) corresponds to the lowest point on the annual cycle – in which the sun is cast down into the sign of Sagittarius just as Saul in the book of Acts is cast down and blinded when he is on the Damascus Road – while the "higher self" (the transformed Paul) corresponds to the sign opposite Sagittarius on the zodiac wheel, Gemini, through which the sun travels in May and June, on its way to the highest point on the annual cycle.

As discussed in *The Undying Stars* (2014), opposite signs on the zodiac are sometimes described in myth as "adversaries" or opponents, and in this case the metaphor is especially apt, as the sun is "persecuted" in Sagittarius (just prior to the lowest point on its cycle) and "exalted" in Gemini (just prior to the highest).⁸²

And yet, as Taylor points out, it is expressly stated in Acts 13: 9 that Saul and Paul are one and the same person. The two together are intended to illuminate something about our own human condition. As we have seen in the extended quotation from Alvin Boyd Kuhn regarding the symbology of the annual cycle, the lowest point (where the sun is cast down in Sagittarius, as Saul is cast down on the road) is the great "turning point," representative of the point in our lives at which we begin to become aware of the existence of the higher nature and the importance of the Invisible Realm -- the point where the Djed column begins to be re-established after being cast down, the point at which we begin to elevate and integrate our divine nature once again, after a period of temporary alienation and disassociation.

As the quotation above from Taylor's 1831 sermon points out, the 21st of December was traditionally observed as the day of St. Thomas (and remains on that day in some Anglican churches) -- indicating an understanding at some level that Thomas in the New Testament is also associated with the "lower self," dramatized (I believe) in the well-known episode of "doubting Thomas" in the gospel accounts.

This episode of Doubting Thomas is discussed at length in *Star Myths of the World, Volume Three (Star Myths of the Bible)*.⁸³ The important insight into the significance of the identity of Thomas as it pertains to the discussion in this chapter comes from the observation that Thomas in the gospel texts is explicitly said to also be "called Didymus" -- which means "the Twin" (the prefix *di-* meaning "two"). From this, we can see that we are probably dealing with the same theme involved in the other twin stories from the world's mythologies.

The texts that were selected to be part of the New Testament "canon," however, give no indication as to the identity of the twin of Thomas. The illuminating answer is found in an ancient text which was excluded from the canon by the authorities of the church hierarchy during the fourth century, but which survived in a large sealed jar buried beneath the sands at the base of a cliff near the modern-day village of Nag Hammadi in Egypt (no doubt to escape the persecution of those same church authorities, who outlawed texts that had not been selected), and rediscovered in the twentieth century.

In the Book of Thomas the Contender (a title which itself recalls the above discussion of the "adversary" or "persecutor"), Jesus addresses Thomas and tells him directly that Thomas is "my twin and true companion."⁸⁴

This astonishing understanding, that Thomas is in some way the "twin" of Jesus, opens up an entirely new perspective on the meaning of the confrontation between Thomas and the risen Christ described in the gospel account of John chapter 20.⁸⁵

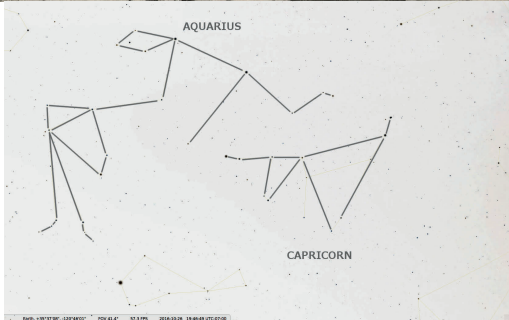
In that encounter, Thomas is filled with doubt, and declares to the other disciples: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." But Jesus appears and directs Thomas to "Reach hither thy finger" and feel the wounds, and to "reach hither thy hand" and thrust it into his side – and Thomas answers with the declaration, "My Lord and my God" (John 20: 25 - 28).

Drawing on what we have already observed in this chapter's discussion of the Twins of Gemini and of Saul and Paul, we can deduce that if Thomas is specifically said to be a twin, and if Jesus himself tells Thomas that Thomas is the twin of Jesus,

then we can conclude that we are again dealing with a situation with a divine twin (Jesus) and a mortal twin (Thomas) – and that the two are illustrating a truth about our own situation in this incarnate life. Like Saul and Paul, they are not illustrative of two different people, but of the "lower self" (Thomas) who rejects the higher self (Jesus, or the "Christ within") and who later becomes reconciled with and guided by the higher self, the divine nature.

As illustrated in *Star Myths of the Bible*, artists down through the centuries have depicted this encounter between Thomas and Jesus in ways that indicate an identification of Thomas with the outline of the constellation Capricorn – the zodiac sign which actually commences at the December 21 juncture between Sagittarius and Capricorn (traditionally Thomas's day). This fact only reinforces what we have already seen about the symbology of the "upper and lower halves" of the zodiac wheel, and the significance of the great "turning point" at the winter solstice where the Djed column begins to be restored, and our connection with the higher nature has its inception.

In the illustrations on the opposite page, we see painting by Giovanni del Giglio from the early 1500s of the *Incredulità di San Tommaso* ("Incredulity [or disbelief] of St. Thomas"), in which the outstretched fingers of the hand of Thomas and the downturned fingers of the hand of Jesus mimic the outline of the Goat of Capricorn. In fact, the outline of Capricorn in the sky appears as two triangles, and this painting contains both of them, along with the horns of the Goat and its upturned tail (the tail indicated by the hand shape of the woman behind them).



Note also the fact that the horns of Capricorn point directly towards the "forward leg" of Aquarius -- which can be seen as a spear going directly into the side of that constellation. Thomas, of course, is directed to put his hand in the side of Jesus, where the spear went in, reminiscent of the relative positions of Capricorn and Aquarius.

The understanding that the "higher twin" and the "lower twin" are in reality depicting the experience of one person is reinforced by a widespread cultural detail reported in a valuable study of the mythological significance of twins and of the myth-pattern of the divine twins typified by Castor and Polydeuces, published in 1906 and written by James Rendel Harris, entitled *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins*.

Some pages have been omitted from this preview

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