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“Lines Knots, and Dragons: Astronomy as a Key to Cross-Cultural Mythology”, *Conference: Mente, corpo, realtà, Rieti, 18- 20 May, 2006*, Rome, 2006.

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1. Introduction

Western Culture has traditionally been seen in strictly Western terms with its roots in Greece and to some extent in Egypt. The 19th and 20th centuries widened the scope of these roots to the Near East and especially Sumer. Aby Warburg created his famous institute to explore the continuity of these traditions (*Das Nachleben der Antike*). The 19th and 20th centuries also explored the traditions of India and China. It was assumed that these developed in parallel and in isolation. A few individuals such as Blavatsky¹ claimed that there were deeper connections, but dubious practices undermined their work.

Study of the history of astronomy suggests that these possible connections deserve new attention. The cultures of China, India and the Near East all developed systems with 7 days in the week, 12 months and larger cycles 25, 920 years (precession of the equinoxes). These cycles of the seasons were linked with cycles of development in the human being. Essential aspects of such microcosm-macrocosm analogies are shared by the great cultures of the East and West. Following a brief outline of essential elements of these analogies, this paper explores the cycle of the four seasons. The two equinoxes and two solstices marked crucial times of the year. In China, for instance, these key events were linked with the trigrams and later the hexagrams of the *I Ching*.

The main part of the paper focuses specifically on the visualization of one event: the spring equinox on 21 March. It is shown that this event was sometimes represented as an X, sometimes as a knot; that this knot became both a symbol of female fruitfulness bringing life into the world in Hinduism and a symbol of spiritual separation from the world in Buddhism. In a number of cultures, this event was represented as two intertwining dragons. We shall examine in some detail a series of early Egyptian examples dating back to the earliest dynasties. Our analysis will show that the *Palette of Narmer*, generally assumed to be a great artistic breakthrough as a first expression of high culture in Egypt is, instead, the culmination of something that began much earlier. This example implies that we need a new approach to cultural history, which explores the pre-history of the European Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian heritage (*Das Vorleben der Antike*) and shows that there are indeed universal themes shared by the great traditions of the world.

2. Microcosm-Macrocosm

As scholars, and especially members of the Warburg school have shown, the history of microcosm-macrocosm analogies is enormously complex. Hence, a detailed discussion of this tradition is clearly far beyond the scope of this essay. Even so for the purposes of our analysis

it is important to recall a few essential themes by way of introduction. It was assumed that the structure of the universe (macrocosm) was reflected in the human body (microcosm) and conversely. The human body was seen as having three columns: a central spine (*shushumna*), which was surrounded by two intersecting columns or channels of energy (*nadis* or *meridians*), which in the Indian tradition were called Ida and Pingala and were typically represented as two intertwining serpents. Ida was represented as female and dark, while Pingala was represented as male and light. In the West, the combination of these three elements evolved into the caduceus. This was a starting point of further analogies: e.g. air and lungs; water with arteries and rivers.

These three key elements of the human body were applied at various scales. The intersections of the two serpentine columns of Ida and Pingala contained seven specific energy points, known as chakras. These became linked with seven stages of enlightenment in the human body. In Siberia, such energy points were also applied to trees. At the cosmic level, the seven points were also linked with the seven days of the week and the seven planets. The male and female forces were also represented as two intersecting triangles. Their combination produced a hexagram called the Seal of Vishnu in India and the Seal of Solomon in the Near East. The end points were joined by two lines, which became a vertical (male) tree of life and a horizontal (female) tree of knowledge. The seven stages of enlightenment could then be represented as seven points on the lower triangle. Conceptually, this introduced the idea of a descent into the underworld (later hell) as a necessary stage in development on the way to salvation. In the *Sephiroth*, the seven points were expanded to 9, 10, 22 and 33. In the Cabala this schema served to explain creation and various levels of being. The tree of life became a metaphor for both physical and spiritual enlightenment. The central column of the human spine (*shushumna*) has 33 vertebrae. Accordingly it was posited that there were 33 heavens and potentially 33 levels of enlightenment. Probably not by co-incidence, Dante structured his *Commedia* as three books with 33 chapters each.

Through such analogies objects at different scales were related: the spinal column of the human body, the physical tree (which was sacred and symbolized the world tree); the river; and the line of the equator on earth and the line of the equator in the heavens. The three columns of the human body became the two columns or pillars (Boaz and Jachin) and the central door in architecture. In the sky, these three columns became the central equator flanked by the tropics of Capricorn and Cancer. Accordingly the two intersecting serpents of the human body, which became represented as the caduceus, had their parallel with two intersecting serpents or dragons in the heavens. These dragons sometimes represented Draco; the path of the sun (i.e. the path of the ecliptic), which was also the path of the Milky Way. Balance in the human body was linked with balance in the heavens. The quest for a middle way at the human level, (*in media via tutissima*), controlling the inner serpents was paralleled by a quest to keep the heavenly serpents within the bounds of the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn and to strive towards balance of the equinoxes.

Within this framework, various levels of symbolism evolved. In some versions, the entire area of life between the two crucial tropics was represented as a great mother of the sky (e.g. Nut). In other versions, the male (equator) was straight, the female (path of the Milky Way) was an S like curve. In other versions, the male was a strong, straight line, while the female was a weak, broken line. The zodiac sign Libra became a symbol not only for the equinox but for balance physical, metaphysical and spiritual.

3. Lines.

This trend towards abstraction in terms of weak and strong lines was particularly developed in the *I Ching* in China. The male was seen as strong lines linked with light and the sun. The female was seen as weak lines linked with darkness and the moon. The male was seen as a trigram of three strong lines. Globally, these could symbolize the three lines of the Tropic of Cancer, the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn. They could symbolize the line of the sun and area of power to the right and the left abstracted as three parallel lines. Temporally these three strong lines were associated with the time of maximal light, namely the summer solstice (21 June). By analogy, the three weak (broken) lines were associated with the period of maximal darkness, namely, the winter solstice (21 December). Extending this logic, the spring equinox (21 March) had two strong, outer lines and one weak, inner line; while the autumn equinox (21 September) had two weak, outer lines and one strong inner line. Adding another four trigrams for the intervening half points between these extremes leads directly to the arrangement known as the Earlier Heaven diagram of the *I Ching*.

While we typically associate such trigrams with the Chinese tradition, it is instructive to note that in India there are traditions whereby a (strong, male) line is intersected by a female, dot (*bindu*) and that there are frequently configurations of three lines linked with their symbol of the *tribundra* and their versions of tridents (*trishula*). Indeed, examples of three lines which are sometimes three arrows, three inverted Vs or three Xs are found in cultures around the world. For the purposes of our introduction a more general principle is of interest. Basic aspects of both the human body (microcosm) and the heavens (macrocosm) were sometimes treated abstractly in terms of discrete, number symbolism (arithmetic) and sometimes as continuous, line symbolism (geometry). Alternatively, the same aspects were sometimes personified as persons or creatures.

4. Knots and Creation Myths

An understanding of this basic logic of personification and abstraction leads us to look afresh at basic symbols in cultures around the world. The three basic male lines familiar from the trigrams of the *I Ching*, can be rendered as three arrow heads as we find in classic representations of the Irminsull in the Teutonic tradition, a symbolism found also in Sumer. Alternatively the male can be represented as an X. Accordingly triple X (aside from its connotations in the film industry; or as a symbol of Amsterdam), becomes an international variant of the three strong lines. This male X is associated with the sun because the path of the sun along the ecliptic goes upwards as it crosses the equator at the spring equinox and goes downward as it crosses the equator at the autumnal equinox. If we join the ends of this X together we arrive at the figure eight. In serpent form this becomes the *ouroboros* and is also a symbol of infinity, because the annual cycles of the sun are linked with the much longer cycle of precession of the equinoxes (25, 920 years) and the (theoretically endless cycles of eternity). This figure eight is also implicitly a knot.

To make sense of the universe, the basic microcosm-macrocosm analogy was developed considerably. The moon had a cycle of 28 days (4 x 7 days). Accordingly the heavens were divided into 28 mansions² of the moon. In China, these were called Shiu. In India, they were called nakshatras. In Egypt, they were called Nomes. (In the later Arabic world they were called Manazil, the Arabic word for houses). In Egypt, there was one set of Nomes for Upper Egypt and another set of Nomes for Lower Egypt. In general terms, this tradition of mansions of the moon is one of the unifying threads of major cultures. For the purposes of this essay we

shall focus on a single Nome of Lower Egypt, number 17, which relates to the zodiac sign, Taurus and the star, Aldebaran. The nome is called *Zm³-bhd*, "united Behedet".³ As scholars have noted the united element refers to the crossing of the ecliptic and the celestial equator. Hence Lower Egypt's nome 17 is a concrete historical example of the trend to render natural phenomena in terms of abstract geometrical symbols such that X literally marks the spot of an event on 21 March.

Aquarius	2000 AD.
Pisces	160 BC
Aries	2320 BC
Taurus	4480 BC
Gemini	6540 BC

Figure 1. Basic correlations between the equinox (21 March) and signs of the zodiac due to precession of the equinoxes.

Today the spring equinox (21 March) is associated with Aries. Given, the precession of the equinoxes, we know that the first day of spring shifts one sign of the Zodiac approximately once every 2,160 years; which explains why we are now moving into the age of Aquarius; why this point was in Pisces around the time of Christ and was previously in Aries, Taurus, Gemini etc. The modern zodiac starts with Aries. But modern astrology assumes fixed cardinal and mutable signs, which entails a combination of three different periods when the equinox was in Aries, Taurus and Gemini respectively. As is typical among scholars there are debates about exactly when these cycles begin. Even so, if we assume that the age of Aquarius began at the turn of the millennium in 2000 AD, then we can readily work backwards to see that today's astrology goes back to a period around 6540 BC. This date is more than two millennia before Egyptian high civilization is assumed to have begun. The standard histories of Egypt focus on the commemorative slate Palette of Narmer which:

was carved circa 3168 B.C. (Dynasty 0) for King Narmer and was found at Hierakonpolis. This palette may be commemorating the unification of Egypt; Narmer may in fact be Menes, the legendary unifier of Egypt. The Narmer Palette is notable for being one of the earliest depictions of the standard elements of canonical art including a smiting scene, the use of registers to organize the picture, a depiction of both the red and white crowns, the use of hieroglyphic writing – including the use of the serekh to write the king's name – and the use of the bull as a symbol of kingly power.⁴

The story of nome 17 is interesting for our purposes because it immediately brings us back to a time when the equinox (21 March) was in Taurus, namely, c. 4480 B.C. There is further evidence to suggest an even earlier time, when the equinox was in Gemini some two millennia earlier, i.e. c. 6540 B.C. The name of nome 17 is United Behedet or Behdet and is a place. In ancient Egypt, Behedet was also associated with the Festival of the Beautiful Reunion at Behedet:

Het-Hert was regarded as the wife of Heru (Horus) and Her Temple at Dendera celebrated the joint "Festival of the Beautiful Reunion," *heb en sekhen nfr* ("heb en sekhen nefer") of Het-Hert and Heru with the Temple of Heru at Edfu....Once a year during the third month of Shomu, the season of Harvest, Het-Hert would travel in Her sacred barque more than 100 miles to the south to be reunited with Heru. The journey lasted four days, and five smaller boats with unfurled sails would tow upstream the

great Barque of Het-Hert, carrying the sacred processional boat with its holy icon of the Golden One.... The name of Her-Hert's golden barque was nb mrwt, meaning "Mistress of Love."

In the cosmological texts of Edfu, Wetjeset-Hor is the original site of the primeval mound of creation, where a reed was planted and upon which Netjer settled to perform the act of creation. The temple developed around this sacred spot. It is appropriate that the meeting of Het-Hert and Heru occurs at this holy place, because the fruit of their conjugal union symbolizes new life, fertility and regeneration.⁵

The Per Ankh calendar of the ancient Egyptian religion tells us that: "Shomu III is the third month of the harvest season of Shomu. It extends from May 29th to June 27th."⁶ In terms of modern calendars this corresponds the zodiac sign for Gemini. If this event of the Beautiful Reunion at Behedet were linked with the United Behedet of nome 17, then the enactment of creation with Het-Hert as a Mistress of Love would go back to a time when the equinox was in Gemini rather than Taurus, namely, c. 6540 B.C. To appreciate the evidence for this will require a considerable detour via creation myths, dragons and serpopards.

Creation Myths

Creation myths vary considerably. Many share a notion of a world egg. In the Greco-Roman tradition, creation myths often speak of Eros as a Protogonos. Others speak of a union between Aphrodite (cf. Mistress of love) with Eros. These myths are interwoven with older traditions. Sometimes Aphrodite is linked with Astarte who has an egg of creation. Sometimes there is first one fish (*Piscis Austrinus*) and then two fish (*Pisces*). Frequently, the two fish of Pisces are linked with Aphrodite and Eros. Sometimes Aphrodite and Eros are associated with one of the two fish. In older traditions, an egg falls from the sky and is brought ashore by two fish. There are usually two persons in the egg. Sometimes there are two eggs, three eggs or even multiples of three eggs (e.g. 6, 12, 18).

The many discrepancies in these stories might easily lead us to overlook important details which are constant throughout. In both Western and Eastern astronomy/astrology the sign of Pisces is characterized as two fish with a curious characteristic. Their tails are joined via two lines or rather a cord begins at *Alpha Piscium* which "represented the place where a cord binding the two fishes of Pisces met."⁷ In the Babylonian tradition, it was definitely a cord. In the Roman and subsequently in the Arabic tradition, *Alpha Piscium*, was explicitly a knot (*nodus coelestis*, *Al Uqdah* or *Al Risha*).

While not one of the brightest constellations, Pisces is said to be one of the oldest in the heavens. But there is something else that makes it special. The knot of Alpha Psichium or Al Risha lies almost precisely on the celestial equator. Today its position lies somewhat to the left of the ecliptic. At the time when Pisces defined the equinox, the knot would have been precisely at the meeting point of celestial equator and celestial ecliptic, and corresponded to the X of United Behedet (*Zm³-bhd*), which was previously in Taurus and was once in Gemini.

Such links between creation myths, fish with a knot and an X type knot associated with the spring equinox (21 March) suggest that the Greco-Roman myths linking Aphrodite and Eros (Venus and Cupid), are linked in some way with the much older tradition of the Reunion of Behedet. In any case, they suggest that the creation myths are linked with astronomical and astrological traditions. All this becomes the more striking when we note that in China, Fuxi

and Cang Jin, who are said to be the founders of Chinese Civilization in 3332 B.C.⁸, are typically represented as two fish, whose tails are tied in a knot (cf. *Al Risha*). In India also, we find traditions which link fish, knots and creation.⁹ We noted that the ecliptic could be represented as a single oblique line or as the meeting point of two oblique lines in the form of an X. We noted that the dominant lines of the sun could also be represented as three straight lines. These three parallel lines can also be drawn as two sets of three intersecting Xs. If one joins the lines one again arrives at a knot.

Such a knot entails two very different sets of symbolism. On the one hand, it is associated with Lakshmi, the Indian goddess of abundance, who is also associated with the original female creator of the universe. This version of the knot emphasizes the curved lines. In this case, the cord of the knot is also the umbilical cord, the first initial separation which is simultaneously birth.¹⁰ In some versions, this knot is simplified. Lakshmi is shown carrying a knotted snake, almost pretzel-like, in the manner of an ouroboros form. Examples of the ouroboros, the symbol of infinity that also ties us to life, is found in most cultures of the world. In the Middle East, for instance, we find examples in Ur dating back to c. 2600-2400 B.C. In her right hand (on our left), she holds a vase (*khumba*), which links to the elixir of life and recurs in traditions around the world in multiple forms as the fountain of youth, nectar of immortality, ambrosia of the gods, holy grail etc.

Underlying this multiplicity of imagery is a basic theme of the annual renewal of life. In symbolic terms, the north is barren and dry. The south has the waters of the oceans. The arrival of the equinox is thus much more than the advent of spring. It links the southern waters of life with the barren land to produce new life; re-enacting the original creation and primeval birth.

In the Buddhist tradition the same imagery of a knot, becomes linked with symbolism for dissolution from the bonds of physical life. If we take the two intersecting sets of three parallel lines, join their extremities and emphasize the straight lines we arrive at the infinite knot also known as the mystic knot of Buddhism. This might seem pure co-incidence until we examine more closely the other seminal symbols of Buddhism. One of these is a vase (*khumba*), which in the East is the original symbol for Aquarius (*Khumb*): i.e. the water pitcher independent of the water bearer. Another of these symbols entails the two fish of Pisces. The mystic knot corresponds to *Al Risha* of Pisces.¹¹ In the Buddhist tradition, the eight auspicious symbols are also represented as a combined symbol known as the *Ashtamangala* or *Tashi Tagey*.¹²

Although the goal of Buddhism is disattachment from, rather than attachment to new life, the fundamental imagery parallels that associated with Lakshmi. At the bottom of the *Astamanagala*, symbolically in the oceans below, is a sacred vessel, which is the source of all life and is associated with the vase (*khumb*) of Aquarius. The water ascends via the mystic knot, which is symbolically the spring equinox associated also with Pisces. The fountain of water from the vessel of Aquarius is an annual symbol of a larger cycle. Every twelve years (one cycle of Jupiter) there is a festival of the great vessel (*Khumba Mela*), when this revitalization of the waters of life is re-confirmed.

It would be vain, of course to pretend that the whole of Buddhism is merely a commentary on the signs of the zodiac. This is but one dimension of a multi-dimensional story. In addition to the eight auspicious symbols, Buddha also had eight defining experiences in eight places which inspired eight kinds of stupas. The Buddha took seven steps which corresponded to the

days of the week, and the cycle of months and seasons. Symbolically, Buddha was the equivalent of Dhruva, who was equivalent to the pole star, an astronomical version of the unmoved mover. He achieved this seated beneath a tree, which was simultaneously a symbol of his own spine and of the world tree. Hence, the Buddha's quest for knowledge of self (microcosm) was simultaneously a quest to understand the regularities, patterns, cycles and balances of the universe (macrocosm).

Fertility

In the introductory discussion of microcosm-macrocosm we mentioned the symbolic use of lines whereby, as Freud would predict, the male is vertical and the female is horizontal. In Egypt there is a tradition whereby this vertical male and horizontal female line becomes a symbol of fertility, or rather the fertility god, Min, whom the Greeks called Pan. Hence, the symbolism, which shows a simple intersection of vertical and horizontal lines to form a Greek cross, or an intersection of oblique lines, which are joined to create a knot becomes associated with the act of (pro-)creation (namely the initial meeting of male and female), the place of procreation (Behedet) and the time of procreation (spring equinox at 21 March). These connections become all the more fascinating when we recall that, in old Tamil in Northern India, the word *Min* (cf. modern Hindu *Meena*) means both glittering object and a fish; such that the Pleiades become represented as six fish; Ursa Maior as seven fish etc.¹³

5. Dragons

An Arabic talismanic bowl of the 9th century AD reminds us that this association between mystical knot and the equinox found in Egypt, China, and India also occurs in the Arabic tradition. A fine study of Arcangela Santoro¹⁴ has rightly related this knot with: a) two intertwined dragons from Pendzikent (Pendzikent Museum); b) two intertwined dragons from Gandhara and c) two intertwined dragons from Qal'eh- i Yazdigird. Santoro's analysis proceeds carefully on stylistic grounds. Our suggestion is that these examples need to be viewed in a much ampler context, whereby they are seen as one expression of the annual cycle of the sun linked with larger cycles (12 years as with the cycle of Jupiter; 28¹⁵ years as with the cycle of Saturn; 56 years as in the eclipses; etc.). We find the same imagery of intertwined dragons on the so-called decorative frieze of Filarete's Ospedale Maggiore, now the Università Statale of Milan. We find variants in the form of a caduceus and flippant versions in Kurdistan, and Maastricht.

A variant of this tradition focussed on the autumnal equinox. The earliest versions focus on female serpent goddesses holding two snakes in balance: e.g. the Cretan snake goddesses, Tanit in Carthage etc. At a later stage these are replaced by men: Ophiucus (Serpentarius, Aesculapius) keeping *Serpens caput* and *Serpens cauda* in balance at the time of the autumnal equinox, a theme that received a technological version in the form of the scales of Libra, and is found in all the great traditions Christian and pagan. If we are right, however, our approach can take us much further and throw new light on a series of objects in early Egyptian culture, which have thus far eluded a serious explanation by scholars.

6. Leopard, Giraffe, Camel, Camelopardalis

By way of orientation, it is useful to return for a moment to ancient Sumer, where there is a famous image of two leopards holding in check two coiled serpents. Where we see Ursa Maior and Ursa Minor, or Big Dipper and Little Dipper, the Sumerians tended to visualize

two leopards standing on their hind feet keeping Draco in place. Viewed in terms of the cosmic symbolism explored earlier, the swords held by the two leopards correspond to the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. Symbolically, to keep the serpents in place, is to keep the course of the sun (and the other planets) within their balanced orbits.

There were various ways of representing these themes. A Sumerian Cylinder Seal, from Ur, (c. 2700BC, now Louvre)¹⁶ again shows two intertwined dragons. Here the mystic knot of the equinox takes the form of two knotted necks. Similar creatures are found earlier in Egypt. For instance, a palette (c. 3300 B.C.)¹⁷ shows two related creatures. They have been dismissed by some as purely fanciful creatures. In the context of our analysis, we suggest that these are an Egyptian variant of standing leopards. They have astronomical connotations that need to be read at different scales and levels. At the terrestrial level, the palette can be seen as a symbolic view of the two Egypts. The lower part of the palette represents Upper Egypt characterized by winter, arid, wild, death. The upper part represents Lower Egypt characterized by summer, fruitful, tame life (hence the new litter). The part where the two trunks of the beasts bifurcate into two long necks corresponds to the knot, Behedet at the equinox. Hence, the division between Upper and Lower Egypt is paralleled by the division above and below the equator.

There were variants on this theme. The so called *Dogs Palette*¹⁸ also shows such a strange dragon-like creature except this time it is confined to the bottom of the palette. In this case, a bird and feline, tiger-like creature in the upper part is contrasted to a monster in the bottom part: again the theme of tame or rather tameable vs. wild. We need to turn the palette on its side to recognize how it fits into older traditions. We now see an upward facing dragon on the left and a downward facing tiger-like creature on the right. If we go back to the oldest known representation of a celestial map from China we find the same basic pattern: Draco on the left (winter solstice at 21 December) and Tiger/Lion on the right (summer solstice at 21 June).¹⁹ This contrast between dragon and tiger takes many forms. In the folk museum of Khabarovsk, the dragons are on top and the tigers below; in Kurdistan we find tiger and dragon curled around one another; in Babylon the lion stands over the serpent; in Sumer, the leopards hold the serpents in check. All of these are variants on the theme of a cycle, which is simultaneously struggle and balance.

So one part of the story of the *Dogs Palette* (side a) is the annual cycle of the months and the seasons, which also reflects contrasts between North- South; summer-winter; fertile-arid; tame wild. But more is clearly involved. The reverse of the same palette (side b) shows two camel-like creatures standing around a palm tree that is simultaneously a trachea and symbolically also a river. If side a) focuses on the annual cycle on earth; side b) focuses on the eternal cycle of the heavens. The palm tree is at once a trachea, a palm, a river (Nile), a world tree and the Milky Way as a symbol of the eternal river of life. The two camel-like animals have the same function as the leopards in Sumer. They correspond to the Ursa Maior and Ursa Minor. They keep the eternal in balance.

If there is a contrast between the tameness of the upper part and the wilderness of the lower part of side a); there is also a contrast between the general wilderness of earth (side a) and the peace of the heavens (side b). This contrast is found elsewhere and is quite clear even in the case of fragments such as the *Vulture Palette* or the *Prunkenplatte 2 Palette* (Berlin).²⁰ The *Spiegelberg Palette* (Berlin) is a fragment which shows only the upper half. On side a) we see the dragon-like creatures with extended necks. On side b) we see camel-like creatures on both sides of a palm-like tree. Here, however, we notice two rather unexpected details. The camel on the left has a bird-like creature on its back; the camel on the right has a crocodile on its

back. A Cylinder Seal from *Helwan Tomb 160 H 3* confirms that this is not something idiosyncratic. Here, the camel-like creatures are unequivocally standing as on side b) of the *Dog's Palette*. Except that the camel on the right has a crocodile on its back, while the one on the left is flanked by a bird and cage.

A first clue as to the meaning of this strange imagery comes from images at Denderah²¹ and the Tomb of Seti I.²² Here we see Taueret, the Hippopotamus god with a crocodile on its back. Taueret²³ was another of the animals associated with what Europeans think of as Ursa Minor or the Little Dipper. In Egypt, the new year began at the time of the summer solstice. This was linked with the reappearance of Sirius (the South Pole star). But it was also associated with the time of the rains and the flooding of the Nile. At the Summer Solstice (21 June) the sun is at its northernmost point at the Tropic of Cancer. If Ursa Minor is Taueret or a camel, then a crocodile on its back is a symbol of the Nile and releasing of waters.

There were various ways of visualizing this. One was simply to place the mother of creation (Nut) in the space between the tropics and place the first signs of the zodiac (beginning with Aquarius-Cancer) in the South; and to place the others (Leo-Sagittarius) in the North, with Cancer and Capricorn in an intermediary position. A magic wand from Egypt shows a variation on this theme.²⁴ On the left and going towards the right we recognize some of the signs of the zodiac as would be expected, namely Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Cancer, Leo. Then something curious happens. Where we would expect to find Virgo we find instead our camel-like creature with a bit of crocodile on its back. The subsequent signs are all on stilts ending with the hippopotamus god with a crocodile on its back. Hence, on this wand, those signs corresponding to when the sun is nearest the tropic of Capricorn in winter are shown normally, whereas those corresponding to when the sun is at its highest point at the tropic of Cancer have elongated necks or are on stilts. The position of Taueret on the magic wand is paralleled by her position on the ceiling at Denderah.

7. Upper and Lower

We are now in a position to read afresh the puzzling images on the tomb at Helwan, west of Memphis. The image shows the winter solstice (21 December): the time when the gods have theoretically gone most northernmost. It can also be seen as a series of dichotomies: air, civilization and life on the left; water, wilderness and death on the right; spring on the left; winter on the right; female on the left; male on the right. It is instructive to compare this tomb at Helwan with a palette at the Metropolitan Museum (New York). In the *Metropolitan Palette* the bird and cage have moved to the upper part of the palette (Lower Egypt); the wild animals have moved to the lower part of the panel (Upper Egypt). The upper part is associated with birds and air. The lower part of the panel is associated with animals and especially those connected with water. A survey of palettes from the early periods confirms a whole series with these features.²⁵

A reconstructive sketch of the *Metropolitan Palette* makes these contrasts even clearer. The feline, tiger-like creatures at the top are giving suck to their cubs. Below the coiled serpent, which corresponds to the circle of the knot, are the dragon-like beast with its long neck now stretched horizontally and other wild animals. Here the monster clearly belongs to the bottom, winter part of the palette as in the so-called²⁶ *Dogs Palette*.

We would suggest that the associations of these symbols gradually evolved. First, there was a simple opposition between winter and summer, arid and fertile, south and north, dragon

versus tiger/lion. At a next stage, the dragon became combined with the camel and the leopard to become a *camelopardalis*. In terms of the heavens this represented *Ursa Maior*. In terms of Egypt it represented a unification of Upper and Lower Egypt; a unification or rather a balance between the wild, arid south and the tame, fertile north.

The recently found *Minshat Ezzat Palette* (Manshiyet el-Ezzat)²⁷ shows us a further variant on this theme. Here, the main body part of the two dragon-like creatures are in the south; their necks are in the North. At the point of the equinoxes we find a circle that has taken the place of a coiled serpent or a mystic knot in other examples. In the *Minshat Ezzat Palette* there are no images on side b). So the symbolism associated with front and back is here shifted to left side-right side. The left side becomes the temporal wilderness of earth. The right side becomes the peacefulness of the eternal heavens.

The overall shape of the palette is also noteworthy. Some have interpreted this to be a heart, claiming that a bit was broken off the upper left. On closer inspection we see that no large section is missing. The overall shape is closer to that of a lung. Where we would expect the head of the gazelle is effectively the place where the lung leads to the trachea. The gazelle is thus symbolically the life spirit, the breath of life in more senses than one, which links with the palm-tree like trachea on the right. Interestingly enough in astrology the lungs and trachea are associated with Gemini.²⁸

Scholars have rightly suggested that this image is associated with the unification of the two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt. From our analysis, however, this is something much more than a meeting of the two beasts and creating a variant of mystic knot. The unification is not of two beasts, but rather of two parts, lower and upper of what is ultimately a single beast. And the unification is not just about joining territories. It is about the replenishment of the waters of life in the daily, monthly, annual and other cycles to reflect the secret of eternal life. On the surface the imagery may look totally different from the auspicious symbols of the *Astamangala*, but ultimately both sets of symbols reflect a common quest of renewing life annually and finding a key to immortality.

If we return now to the famous *Palette of Narmer* we see it in a fresh light. On the one hand, it makes a remarkable step forward. Earlier palettes had shown two images of the heavens: one with temporal cycles (side a) and one with eternal view (side b). In the palette of Narmer, the heavens (eternal above and temporal below) dominate side a. The actions of man now dominate side b, although scholars have seen in these depictions also a deeper astronomical symbolism, whereby the dominant figure also symbolizes the constellation, Orion.²⁹ Scholars have rightly dwelt at length on the details of this innovation. In terms of astronomical imagery, however, the Palette is much less original than we might have assumed. Yes, it does add some features. The dragon-like animals have now evolved into serpo-pards. The upper parts of their necks are symbolically held on a leash by two ancestors of the lion tamer. The contrast between a tame, fertile Lower Egypt and a wild, arid Upper Egypt has now come clearly into focus (Appendix 1).

An unexpected further clue comes from an image, which is literally thousands of years later. It is an early modern image from the alchemical tradition.³⁰ On the surface it merely repeats the age-old analogies, which we have explored in this paper. It shows the caduceus in the centre. To the left and right it offers a series of well-known contrasts/oppositions: left and right; female and male; dark column and light column, moon and sun. One item is slightly unexpected: unicorn versus lion, until we recognize that the unicorn was historically linked

with Capricorn and was a symbol for winter (hence a variant of the dragon) just as the lion was a symbol for summer.

In light of our discussions one item in the painting is very striking. Coiled around the two columns are two dragons, which then meet to create a knot. As we have shown this knot is linked with Nome 17; with United Behedet at the time of the spring equinox, which is at 21 March in our era, but which the Ancient Egyptians associated with Taurus (i.e. 21 April in today's calendar). In our discussion we found that the festival of the Beautiful Reunion of Behedet was linked with Shomu III, namely, (29 May -27 June), which in today's calendar links with zodiac sign Gemini. The early modern picture is remarkable because that it shows the Behedet knot of the spring equinox, in connection with Gemini. In so doing, it implicitly connects the United Behedet of Egyptian astronomy with the reunion of Behedet of Egyptian mythology concerning their creation myth. As noted earlier (figure 1) this entails a time when the equinox was in Gemini, i.e. c. 6,540 B.C.

8. Conclusions

To appreciate the full import of this it is useful to summarize briefly our findings. The spring equinox is at 21 March. In today's calendar, the spring equinox is associated with Aries. Given the precession of the equinoxes this arrangement shifts by one sign of the zodiac every 2160 years. We examined evidence that links the equinox with a knot in Pisces. In terms of precession, this would correspond roughly to a period c. 160 B.C. We showed that this idea of a knot linked with the equinox was found in many cultures around the world and has many connotations. It is associated with the original earth mother (in the form of Lakshmi) and with the auspicious symbols of Buddhism. It recalls the original knot of the umbilical cord. It links the two fish, which are associated with Aphrodite and Eros, who also commemorate the primeval tying of the knot whereby human life began. We found that in China this knot linking two fish was explicitly linked with the origins of Chinese civilization in 3332 B.C.

We found that in Nome 17 (one of the mansions of the moon) in Upper Egypt, the spring equinox is associated with both a knot and Taurus. In terms of precession, this implies a date c. 4480 BC. Our study of early Egyptian and other examples revealed a number of ways of representing this knot ranging from a simple X, or a knot to two intertwined serpent-like creatures, which relate to the *camelopardalis* –Egypt's version of what we call *Ursa Major* in modern astronomy and corresponds to the upright winged leopards of Sumer. This astronomical context of the *camelopardalis*, sometimes called the serpo-pard is of considerable interest in itself. It confirms that the so-called fanciful animals of the early Egyptian dynasties have a deeper cosmological significance. In retrospect, they also confirm that the *Palette of Narmer*, which is typically seen as a radical start in Egyptian high civilization is at the same time a culmination of astronomical associations that go back centuries and probably several millennia.

As a clue in this direction, we found that an older creation myth linked this event of the Beautiful Reunion at Behedet --linked with both a knot and the equinox, -- with Shomu III, which in today's calendar corresponds to the zodiac sign Gemini. A much later alchemical picture confirms that this idea was somehow passed on in a secret tradition. The painting explicitly shows the intertwined dragons in a knot from which emerge the twins of Gemini. In terms of the precession of the equinoxes this implies a period c. 6540 BC, when Gemini was the zodiac sign at the time of the equinox (21 March). In simple terms, there are many stories in Egypt and around the world which link the ideas of a) the equinox, b) a knot and c) initial

creation of human life. The question is when these connections began. Nome 17 in Upper Egypt leads us to a date c. 4480 B.C. Meanwhile, the story of the Beautiful Reunion at Behedet describes, and the much later alchemical painting represents aspects of these links between equinox, knot and creation, implying a date when the knot of the equinox was in Gemini (cf. Appendix 2), namely 6540 B.C. Hence, those who told the Egyptian creation story were using imagery with complex astronomical associations associated with high civilization. We might have expected this event to be linked with the time of their early nomes, which at least refer to a date c. 4480 B.C. Paradoxically they were alluding to a specific event that occurred more than two millennia earlier in 6540 B.C. This antedates the advent of high civilization associated with the *Palette of Narmer* by 3372 years.

One possibility is that our entire chronology of Egyptian civilization, the fruit of hundreds of years of careful archaeological work is “off ” by more than three millennia, which is extremely unlikely. This leads to a conclusion, which is no less earthshaking in its ramifications. When the Egyptians told their story of creation, they were drawing on a foreign source, which had worked out the connections between equinoxes and knots at least three millennia before the Egyptians achieved their high civilization with the *Palette of Narmer*, c. 3168 B.C. Since the Chinese associate the beginnings of their own civilization with 3372 B.C. there would appear to be only one serious candidate, Northern India. This provokes us to look to astronomy as cyclical “struggles” between Saturn and Jupiter (Appendix 3) and ultimately implies unexpected parallels between Indian and European gods -- the topic of a future essay.

In the early 20th century, Aby Warburg launched on a quest to understand the heritage of the classical world. He focussed on the survival of classical tradition (*Das Nachleben der Antike*) in the centuries after the Greco-Roman Empire. This noble and important quest needs to continue. Our essay suggests that the original scope needs to be expanded, not just the effects of Ancient Greco-Roman Civilization, but also the roots thereof (*Das Vorleben der Antike*). This quest ultimately cannot be solved by the efforts of a single individual or even a single institute. Needed is a new approach of networked centres of excellence, led by a University such as the Sapienza.

Appendix 1. Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt: Dualities and Trilogies

a. Geographical	North (Polaris)	South (Sirius)
	Lower Egypt	Upper Egypt
	Fertile	Desert (Infertile)
	Black Land	Red Land
	Agriculture, Farming	Shepherd, Hunting
	Settled City	Nomad
	Civilization	Wilderness
b. Temporal	Sun	Moon (Sin)
	Day	Night
	Summer	Winter
c. Physical	Female	Male
	Water	Air
	Life	Death

Figure 2. Different kinds of polarities evolving from the divisions of the seasons and their cycles.

Lower Egypt is traditionally North of Cairo in the fertile land of the Nile Delta. Upper Egypt is traditionally South of Cairo and is associated particularly with the arid land of the desert. On the surface, the unification of Egypt is the story of the how the two territories are joined into a united kingdom. It is noteworthy, however, that this story of uniting Upper and Lower Egypt is much more than mere geo-political history. The contrast between the two territories inspires a series of polarities and oppositions (figure 2).

These contrasts are oppositions which are of interest in themselves and also set the stage for a series of struggles, whereby the more primitive kills the more civilized (e.g. the nomadic shepherd Cain kills the agricultural farmer, Abel). In other cases, the “murder” goes the other way, as when Romulus, who is more docile and civilized kills the more primitive Remus (etymologically, the slow one, also an epithet for Saturn). These oppositions are also important for the bigger picture, because the potential unification has a cosmic dimension, whereby the gods are in struggle with one another and yet somehow, ultimately achieve harmony.

Lower Egypt	Upper Egypt
Min	Seth
Horus	Seth
Isis-Osiris	Set-Nephthys
Horus (loses eye)	Seth (loses testicles) ³¹

Figure 3. Upper and Lower Egypt and cosmic conflicts.

In addition, there is a dimension connected with life. The river Nile is more than a physical river. It is symbolic of the trachea and lungs whereby the body breathes. The killing of Osiris, cutting him up into 14 pieces, which are then gathered together anew by Isis relates on the one hand to the moon and its phases. At another scale, it relates to the rejuvenation of the human body. As such the unification of Lower and Upper Egypt, in addition to its obvious geo-political significance and symbolism, is a metaphor for well being of the human body and ultimately the processes that secure its immortality. Hence the ritual of the *sema taouy* of the unification of the two kingdoms entails a combination of lungs (*sema*, lungs; means reunite, junction) and heart (*nefer*, beautiful as in *nefer-tari*, *nefer-tete*; i.e. heart and trachea).³² For this reason many of the images associated with the *sema taouy* literally look like snapshots of the vital organs of the body.

Lower Egypt	Upper Egypt
Jupiter	Saturn
Sun	Moon
Horus	Set
Osiris	Seth (Sutekh)
Isis	Nephthys
Papyrus (Palm)	Lotus
Sema	Taouy
Lungs	Heart, Trachea
Liver	Lungs
Stomach	Viscera of lower body ³³

Figure 4. Upper and Lower Egypt and reunion of the body.³⁴

Hence, the *sema taouy* is a re-enactment of the picking up the pieces of Isis, a pasting together of the body, a reconstruction both physical and metaphysical entailed in gaining immortality.

The unification of Egypt is linked, ultimately, with the secret of life itself. It is no coincidence therefore that the god, Min, who is synonymous with potency, is synonymous also with the word for the united Egypt. In addition to their fascination with dichotomies, the Egyptians explored the potentials of trichotomies. An important study by Schulz and Seidel has analyzed thoroughly the *Abydos Palette* to establish a set of parallels between the *Abydos Palette*, three major star charts of the Sumerians and three kinds of animals: namely, domesticated, semi-domesticated and wild.³⁵

Once one enters into this logic it is easy to see how the twofold dualities (Upper Egypt-Lower Egypt; North -South as in figures 2-4), could quite easily evolve into a threefold contrasts. The dualistic logic of day-night, light-dark could now evolve into a threefold phase reflecting the three stages of the moon; which could then be linked with a chronological scale (the three ages in humans: young, adult and old) and a three step cycle or evolution of culture (semi-domesticated and domesticated or civilized). This three-step cycle could then be linked with a moral scale: beast, human, divine. This could then be linked with the three primeval creator gods: Eros, Zeus and Chronos, which had their origins in the Indian pantheon of Indra (Brahma), Siva and Vishnu.

	1.	2.	3.
Astronomy	Path of Enlil	Path of Anu	Path of Ea
Animals	Domesticated Cow	Semi-Domesticated Donkey	Wild Ram
Level of Civilization	Farming, Agriculture	City	Hunter, Nomad
Gods	Brahma Mithra Eros Min	Siva Zeus Ra (Horus)	Vishnu Varuna Chronos Seth
Geography	Africa Min (Ham)	Europe Japeth	Asia Shem

Figure 5. Parallels between astronomy, levels of civilization and gods.

The threefold partition when applied to the three stages of life became: Eros, Zeus, Chronos in the West (sequence 1, 2, 3). In terms of civilization, the sequence was slightly different. Eros and Chronos were seen as extremes between which Zeus offered a middle way (sequence 3, 1, 2). Once the threefold approach existed, it too could be given a racial and geographical dimension. The opposition of black soil versus red soil now became an opposition between black skin (Eros, Min, Africa) and tawny skin (Seth, Shem, Asia). Between these two extremes came white skin and blond hair (Japeth, Europe). These contrasts again had Indian precedents, where there contrasts between the boundless (Aditi) and the limited (Diti); which in human terms became the two wives of Kasyapa: one Vinata who was associated with light and brilliance; the other, Kadru, literally meaning “meaning tawny, brown, reddish brown.”

In subsequent models, these three higher stages came at the end of four lower stages where the animal tendencies were mastered, overcome and effectively cut off (or metaphorically castrated). This use of animal symbolism for the moral is evident in some early Indian

examples but was, as Porphyry explains, much developed by the Persians.³⁶ The four lower animals were typically:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 4. Lion | Leo |
| 3. Horse (Eagle) | Sagittarius, (Scorpio) |
| 2. Serpent (Young Man) | Aquarius |
| 1. Bull | Taurus (Capricorn) |

Figure 6. The four lower passions linked with four animals.

In terms of our story, this combination of four animals takes us back to a time (c. 4480 B.C. when the spring equinox (21 March) occurred in the zodiac sign of Taurus. Culturally, this so-called Taurus quartet is of greater interest because it invited a series of combinations. The bull could be seen as a first stage independent of the regular life cycle. This became linked with the bull sacrifices associated with Mithras. Phases 2, 3 and 4 could then be linked with the three ages of man. In some versions, the serpent (2) could be replaced by a young man: Ganymede – as the young assistant to Zeus, or as Aquarius in terms of zodiac figures and as a young Angel in the Christianized version. The horse (3), associated with the adult male in the Indian tradition,³⁷ could be replaced by the Eagle as the symbol of Zeus. Finally the Lion (4)—which went back to the fourth avatar of Vishnu became the next stage. This combination of four animals became associated with the four points of the compass and with the Four Evangelists: Luke, Matthew, John and Mark.

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| 7. Chronos | | Sahasrara |
| 6. Zeus | | Ajna |
| 5. Eros | | Vishuddha |
| 4. Lion | Leo | Anahata |
| 3. Horse (Eagle) | Sagittarius, (Scorpio) | Manipura |
| 2. Serpent (Young Man) | Aquarius | Vidhistana |
| 1. Bull | Taurus (Capricorn) | Muladhara |

Figure 7. The four lower passions linked with four animals.

A next logical step was to combine the 4 animal stages with the 3 higher stages to produce seven stages which conveniently linked with the seven chakras. In this alignment, the fourth stage of the lion, became linked not just with the fourth avatar of Vishnu (as a man-lion) *Nara-Simha*) but also with the heart chakra. This explains why Western representations of the Protogenos (Eros as in stage 4) have a lion placed on their heart, long before epithets such as Richard Coeur de Lion; Heinrich der Löwe or Corleone became popular in the West.

In the cult of Mithras, these seven stages were explicitly linked to both the days of the week, which themselves reflect the sequence of the seven planets ending with Saturday (Saturn Day). In Rome, these seven phases also became linked with the manifestations of Bacchus. As these ideas moved westward from the polyvalent mentality of India to the either/or mentality of Zoroastrianism and then to the either/or mentalities of Judaism and Christianity, the continuity was obscured as the same phenomena received very different names. Hence, the intersecting upward and downward triangles, known as both the heart chakra and the Seal of Vishnu in India became the Seal of Solomon. Many adjustments also needed to be made as one shifted back and forth from lunar to solar calendars. The basic sequence of the seven days remained intact but in some versions the sequence now began with Saturday, going down the lower triangle as Sunday Monday, Tuesday, before ascending on the right side through Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. This basic sequence of a symbolic descent into Hades (Hell)

and subsequent ascent (through Purgatory) to Heaven became famous in the West through Dante's great *Commedia*. But this was only one version of a much older story which the West associated with Persephone and Hades (Kore and Pluto), and which was also found in India in the story of Savitri and Sayavam, where it was related to another story, which took this process back to the first humans, Yama and Yami (cf. Adma and Eve), where the story of descent into the world of death is explicitly linked with the introduction of time into the cycle of the universe. In the West, this introduction of time was linked with Chronos, who was associated with drinking and wine.

This seven fold division of time corresponding to the seven day of the week linked with seven fold steps to enlightenment was a first stage in more complex systems where two weeks were treated together as a fortnight (14 days), which could then be doubled into a month of four weeks (28 days). This system could then be linked with the phases of the moon.

We are told that the original Indian time reckoning divided each day into 15 parts and each night into 15 parts. Even today this number 15 is used with respect to the cycles of the moon: i.e. three phases of 5 to reflect waxing, (nearly) full and waning moon; which is then linked with the three ages of woman as: Kali, Lakshmi and Durga (or Lakshmi, Durga and Saraswati). In the West, where the pattern of solar weeks became more important than in the Indian lunar context, the lunar number 15 became replaced by the number 14. Hence, Osiris was divided into 14 pieces. These numbers were also applied to Nimrod, Dionysius and sometimes associated also with Pan. The number 14 was conveniently twice the number 7. So the division of Bacchus in 7 pieces and the division of Dionysius in 14 pieces was clearly related.

From all this several sets of stories emerged. One linked the various energy points in the human body to describe stages of human development. These stages and their symbols were associated with specific moments in the annual agricultural cycle of planting, growing and dying. Hence, birth became linked particularly with the winter solstice (21 December). A second birth was associated with the time of the spring equinox (21 March) and a third death/birth was associated with the summer solstice (21 June). This could then be linked with the three ages in mortal life. The death of the boy, led to birth of the man. In Rome this typically happened with 14 year old boys on a very specific day of the Liberalia on 17 March. Other traditions linked this 17th of March with the death of Attis, who was then reborn a few days later on the 25th March to correspond to the beginning of spring. A related tradition spoke of a resurrection of Tammuz on the 20th of March, exactly three days after the 17th.

There is reason to believe, however, that there were much larger cycles implicit in these ceremonies. Plutarch tells us that Osiris was murdered by Seth on the 17 day of the third month, i.e. 17 March in the 28th year of his reign.³⁸ Seth was associated with Chronos, i.e. Saturn, which has a cycle of 28 years. This suggests that the "death" of Osiris is linked with cycles of Saturn. Twice 28 years is 56, which was called Typhon's number and which was half the perfect number of 112. Typhon was associated with storms and with chaos. The number 56 associated with Typhon was associated also with a 56 year eclipse cycle.

Plutarch tells us that Seth had 72 helpers, a number which, as scholars have noted, equals the number of years required to pass through one degree in the precession of the equinoxes. Hence 72 x 360 gives us 25,920, which is the number of years in a complete cycle. Hence the division into 7 and 14 linked with a) the days of the week, b) phases of the moon, c) annual cycle; d) larger cycles of 28 and 56 years, significant qua eclipses and ultimately with e) a

great cycle of 25,920 years In this context, the microcosm-macrocosm analogy evolved into a complex set of calculations linked with both calendars and astronomy.

Appendix 2. Gemini: The Identity of the Twins

It is generally agreed that the twins in Gemini are Indo-European and go back ultimately to India where they are called the Aswins.³⁹ In some of the earliest stories, the twins are seen as the first quasi-mortal beings who manage to drink the nectar of the gods; thus achieving with ambrosia that which Prometheus achieves with fire. They are linked with the creator, Daksha Prajapati.⁴⁰ They are known as physicians to the gods.⁴¹ In one of the Egyptian representations of the zodiac we see only one person representing Aquarius but he is holding two vials.

As we go westward, the twins acquire various names. In Babylon, the twins become associated with Gilgamesh and Enkidu. The contrasts between civilized and wild; between events in heaven and events on earth are found also in the Gilgamesh. Here there are contrasts between Enkidu (the so-called old, wild man) and Gilgamesh, the younger more civilized man; between the man of the forests and the man of civilization. Among the many cylinder seals of the Near East we also find examples where this old man, Enkidu-like appears as a single figure posing as Pisces and then as two old men posing as Gemini. As at the outset of this article, we are back to parallels between stories happening with respect to Pisces and those with respect to Gemini.

As we go further West, in Greece, the twins become Castor and Pollux. Castor is shown with harp and arrow. Pollux (or Polydeuces) is linked with boxing and represented as bearing a club.⁴² So Castor is civilization and Pollux represents the more primitive state. In Rome, the twins become Romulus and Remus. Both are theoretically equal founders of Rome. But Remus, which means slow one (cf. Saturn in appendix 3), is more rustic and primitive and is ultimately the one who dies. The mythological stories are not just random tales. They use the cycles of astronomy to tell tales at once of development/growth and at the same time of balance/harmony in larger cycles that mirror the eternal.

Appendix 3. Saturn and Jupiter

The above strands point to a bigger picture. The contests of the gods are allegorical. Pan enters into a contest with Apollo. Pan has his flutes, Apollo has his lyre. This is much more than a contest between two individuals. Ultimately, it is a contest between the wind instruments of primitive peoples and the string instruments of a more advanced society. Strings win, with no strings attached.

The Egyptian equivalent of Pan is Min, who is also the son of Isis and Osiris.⁴³ Min is also Orion. Prajapati, the creator is also Orion. In one sense, Prajapati is linked directly with Brahma. But Daksha Prajapati is also very much linked to Vishnu. Pan in Greek means everywhere. Vishnu in Sanskrit means pervasive. Pan, Eros, Min, Vishnu, and Vishnu's avatars are all associated with virility, In the West, the fish is also associated with virility/sexuality. In Northern India, as we have noted, Min is the root linked with both fish and brilliance.

Daksha Prajapati is "killed" and reborn as a goat—Capricorn. So the contests re: civilization take us back to an older struggle between Jupiter and Saturn, which goes back to a

competition Siva and Vishnu. The annual cycle of Saturn which has its high point in the Saturnalia of the winter solstice, effectively ends with the Lupercalia on the 14 or 15th of February, which is seen as a time of turning one's back on the wolf, which has both a literal, earthly meaning in the world of Romulus and Remus but equally an astronomical meaning of leaving behind the time when Lupus (the wolf constellation and sometimes the beasts associated with Draco in the northern sky). In the Christian period, the Lupercalia became linked with Saint Valentine's day. This seems a new thing until we again look eastwards to recall that there was an earlier precedent in India. The Lord Shiva married Parvati on the 14th day of the second month (Phalgun). The modern Valentine's story of hearts, which is linked with the 14th of February; is linked with the number of 14 pieces of Osiris, and 14 as in the number of years when a Roman youth discarded his childhood robes (i.e. symbolically dies as a child) to bear the toga virilis (and thus be a candidate for Valentines stories in real life). Through the Egyptian story of the reunion of Behedet, the first love story became linked with a creation story that went back to at least 6540 BC. Through the Indian story the first Valentine's day goes back to a love story of one of the original creator gods.

Saturn's links with the moon and the zodiac signs of Capricorn and Aquarius in the winter months of December and January associated with Osiris, Dionysos and Pan herald a new spring where Shiva, Zeus, Apollo and the solar symbols regain their cyclical dominance in an annual, 12 year, 28 year and larger cycles.⁴⁴ An astronomical/astrological context thus leads us to look afresh at a number of mythological stories in the West and the East. Implicit in this discovery is a realization that the major themes which we think of as classically Western have other sources both in the East and in the heavens. These stories of the sky are central to the human condition and the local expressions of these great themes inspired enormously rich and sometimes bewildering varieties of cultural expressions. Underlying this diversity, however, is a joint heritage of Indo-European languages, Indo-European mythology and literature, which is ultimately a reflection of our common humanity.

Notes

¹ Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*, London: Theosophical Publishing Company, 1888, 2 Vols

Gerald Massey, *The Natural genesis or Second part of a book of the Beginnings containing an attempt to recover the lost origins of the myths and mysteries, types and symbols, religion and language, with Egypt for the mouthpiece and Africa as the Birthplace*, London, 1898.

E. Valentia Stratton, *The Celestial Ship of the North*, London, 1927, p. 59. Reprint: Kessinger Publishing's Rare Mystical Reprints. For a recent study: Benson Bobrick, *Fated Sky*.

Astrology in History, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005. W. Brennan, *Hindu Astronomy*, New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan: 1988.

² There was also a tradition where this became 27 nakshatras.

³ See: http://www.tauta.net/ancientegypt/2004_05_01_ancientegyptarchive.htm;
<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/geo/nomel17.html>

⁴ www.touregypt.net/featurestories/beasts.htm

⁵ See: <http://www.hethert.org/reunion.htm>

⁶ Per Ankh calendar: www.per-ankh.org/calendars/shomu3.html

⁷ <http://www.glyphweb.com/esky/default.htm?http://www.glyphweb.com/esky/stars/alrisha.html>
<http://www.glyphweb.com/esky/stars/alrisha.html>. For a full etymology see: <http://www.winshop.com.au/annex/Alrisha.html>

⁸ <http://www.water-consciousness.com/4history.htm>

⁹ <http://www.art-and-archaeology.com/india/osian/osi8.html>

In the 17th century an Anglican clergyman, Dr. John Lightfoot, "estimated that creation occurred during 4004 BCE," a claim for which Bishop James Ussher became famous.

http://www.religioustolerance.org/ev_date.htm. Our concern here is neither to challenge or correct such calculations but rather to draw attention to further links between creation, knots, astronomy and religion.

¹⁰ In some of the Hindu creation myths the original creation begins with Vishnu lying on the snake Ananta. From Vishnu's navel emerges a cord which then lead to a lotus in which Brahma is born. Even here the implicit knot of the umbilical cord is implicit in the creation story.

¹¹ <http://www.astronet.ru:8105/db/msg/1190041>.

Aquarius and Aries: Khumba, Fishes and Knot. Once in 12 years (= cycle of Jupiter) when Jupiter = Aquarius and when Sun = Aries there is Khumbu Mela.

¹² http://www.inspired-mind.com/images/8signs_s.jpg

¹³ <http://www.geocities.com/sarabhanga/rishi.html>

¹⁴ Arcangela Santoro, "On The Two Intertwined Dragons from Pendzikent, Ērān ud Anērān," Webfestschrift Marshak 2003. <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/santoro.html>

¹⁵ This cycle is sometimes 29 years.

¹⁶ <http://www.knua.ac.kr/images/Ancient%20Near%20East/1%20cylinder.JPG>

¹⁷ Jimmy Dunn, Beasts of Ancient Egypt. See:

<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/beasts.htm>; Cf. Ottar Vendel, Dawn of Egyptian Culture Neolithic period 6.000 - 3.500 BC. Predynastic period 3.500 - 3.100 BC.

<http://www.nemo.nu/ibisportal/0egyptintro/2aegypt/index.htm>

"Mother symbols of the Nile valley? A mysterious scene from a ceremonial make up palette dated to around 3.300 BC. Two hyena-like animals with puppies, making a roof over two feline fantasy-creatures with long necks licking what seems to be a goat. The opposite side has two lions standing on their back feet and mouth to mouth against two goats. Five palettes with dog-like animals are known and others have two giraffes(?) with a palm tree in the centre. In one case an unidentified king's *serek* is shown in the middle. (See below number 8 in unidentified kings). The artistic style with two facing animals was common in Sumeria, and can be seen as a cultural import to the Nile Valley. The motif with two animals can also be taken as symbolising the North and the South."

¹⁸ nefertiti.iwebland.com/narmerspalette.htm

¹⁹ <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/archae/2marlacq.htm>

²⁰ Francesco Raffaele, Corpus of Egyptian Late Predynastic Palettes. See:

<http://xoomer.virgilio.it/francescoraf/>

²¹ <http://www.tchiya.com/celestialwisdom/celeswinter%202002.htm>

²² Caroline Seawright, *Taweret, Goddess Demoness of Birth,*

Rebirth and the Northern Sky. See: <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/taweret.htm>

²³ Cf. the tomb of Senenmut: <http://www.suziemanley.com/june/architec.htm>

²⁴ <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/beasts.htm>

²⁵ Francesco Raffaele as in note 20 above.

²⁶ We say so-called because a comparison of these creatures with those on similar palettes suggests that the animal is more feline than canine, a kind of desert lioness.

²⁷ For an analysis see: <http://xoomer.virgilio.it/francescoraf/hesyra/palettes/manshiyet.htm>

²⁸ <http://www.astrologycom.com/geminiheal.html>

²⁹ In a stimulating study Audrey Fletcher, *The Narmer Plate is a Sky Chart* (1999)

(<http://ancientegypt.hypermart.net/narmerplate/index.htm>) examines this and makes two

conclusions: "As the Nermer Plate celebrates the Dawn of the Age of Taurus in 4468BCE, it is reasonable to suggest that the Plate itself also dates back to 4468BCE. It defies logic to suggest that it dates back to 3200BCE." Our essay provides further arguments for agreeing with the first conclusion, namely that the palette entails much earlier events, but suggests that

we do not need to insist that the dating of the palette itself is necessary off by some 1200 years.

Elsewhere in her interesting study Fletcher has a section on The Osiris Legend and Precession(<http://ancientegypt.hypermart.net/osirislegend/index.htm>). Here a specific link is made between Seth and his the 72 helpers in killing Osiris and the 72 years required to pass through one of the 360 degrees of the circle. This related to the trickery that Thoth used in acquiring 5 extra days: $72 \times 5 = 360$. $72 \times 360 = 25,920$ years in the precession of the equinoxes.

³⁰ <http://www.fire-serpent.com/post/gemeos.jpg>

³¹ Cf. India where Bagha (loses eye) and Indra (loses testicles).

³² <http://www.pyramide-reconstituee.com/pyramide/en/chapitre11.htm>

³³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canopic_jar. These four basic inner organs were linked with the Four Sons of Horus:

Imset (depicted as a human) responsible for liver	Isis	(Red crown, lower Egypt)
Hapi (a baboon) for the lungs	Nephthys	(White crown, Upper Egypt)
Duamutef (a jackal) for the stomach	Neith	(Red crown, Lower Egypt)
Kebechsenef (a falcon) for viscera of lower body	Selket	(White Crown, Upper Egypt).

³⁴ There are debates whether the body was cut into 13, 14, 15 or even 16 parts.

The identification of the 15 parts is based on the site of Ananda in the Hallway of Osiris: <http://www.akasha.de/~aton/HO-OSIRIS.html>. The alignment of these 15 parts with Upper and Lower Egypt as given below is a tentative interpretation of my own.

1 torso	1 head
2 thighs	2 upper arms
2 legs	2 forearms
2 feet	2 hands
1 phallus	

In the tradition of the Cabala the body is divided into 12 parts: 2 hands, 2 feet, 2 kidneys, bile, pancreas (la milza); liver, oesophagus, stomach, intestine.

³⁵ *Ägypten, Die Welt der Pharaonen*, ed. Regine Schulz and Matthias Seidel, Köln: Könnemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1997.

³⁶ Porphyry, *On Abstinence*, Book IV, 16: <http://www.thedyinggod.com/porphyry.htm>

³⁷ E.g. in the Column of Ashoka at Sarnath:

http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/bce_299_200/ashoka/lioncapital/li oncapital.html

³⁸ There are debates about which month is involved. One tradition claims 17th day of Tammuz: Herman L. Hoeh, *Compendium of World History*, Dissertation, 1962:

http://www.cgca.net/coglinks/wcglit/hh_cmpndm1.txt.

Others claim this happened in the month of Hathor, i.e. 17 November: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/mas/md/md29.htm>

³⁹ <http://www.indiyogi.com/content/indgods/ashwini.asp>

They are associated with Vishnu, which means, he who pervades.

⁴⁰ <http://www.mypurohith.com/Encyclopedia/EnclopD.asp>

⁴¹ <http://www.pantheon.org/articles/a/aswins.html>

⁴² www.ianridpath.com/startales/gemini.htm

⁴³ “Min, Lord of the Processions, God of the High Plumes, Son of Osiris and Isis”

<http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/min.html>

⁴⁴ “notes from scholia that Aeschylus in *Rhesus* distinguished between two Pans, one the son of Zeus and twin of Arkas, and one a son of Cronos”. Karl Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, Thames & Hudson, 1951, p. 151 cited in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faunus>.