



Star Myths of the World

and how to interpret them

Volume One

DAVID WARNER MATHISEN

STAR MYTHS
OF THE
WORLD

VOLUME ONE

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and how to interpret them

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Australia, Africa, the Americas, the Pacific,
Ancient Egypt, Ancient Sumer & Babylon,
Ancient India, China, and Japan

David Warner Mathisen

BEOWULF BOOKS

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INTRODUCTION

The world's sacred traditions share a common system of celestial metaphor, with unmistakable patterns that can be traced across oceans and across centuries – even across millennia.

The outlines of this system have been tantalizingly described by Hertha von Dechend and Giorgio de Santillana in *Hamlet's Mill*, published in 1969.

Details of it have been systematically analyzed most thoroughly perhaps by the Reverend Robert Taylor of England (1784 – 1844), working with the stories found in the scriptures we call the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

But although the insights of these and many others who have sought to clear away the “dust of centuries” (as de Santillana and von Dechend describe it) from this vast ancient edifice have been invaluable to my own work, it is also true that even after many readings of the writings of these authors, the comprehensive structure and underlying rules, as well as the deeper purpose of the great system remained elusively out of reach.¹

Over the course of much examination of the myths – and especially of the stars themselves – and through the process of analyzing them, publicly writing about them, and even dreaming about them for the past seven or so years, a clearer and clearer picture of the outline of a central pillar of this ancient system has presented itself to me, with different parts of it resolving into view at different times, often with the feeling that new images and connections came without any effort, the realizations being handed across, as it were, from the realm of the stars themselves.

Interested readers can trace the course of the development of my understanding of this system over the course of three books:

- my first effort, published in 2011, which began to connect celestial aspects of the myths from ancient Sumer, Babylon, and Egypt with some similarly celestial features found in the sacred traditions and rituals found in the Americas and elsewhere, but in which I was still taking the scriptures of the Old and New Testament in a literalistic manner;
- my next book, *The Undying Stars*, published in 2014, by which time I had accepted the fact that the system of celestial metaphor I had been exploring forms the foundation of virtually *all* of the world's myths, sacred traditions, and ancient scriptures – including those in the Old

and New Testaments of the Bible, which I had spent a large part of my life taking literally – and in which I tried to explain the system in a more comprehensive manner, while also examining the possible implications of this evidence and presenting some possible explanations as to *why* the world’s ancient wisdom would use such a system of celestial metaphor, and what it intended to convey; and . . .

- This present work, in which the details of the system have come into even clearer view, and in which I attempt to share with the reader the keys to interpreting nearly any celestial myth, along with additional thoughts on their meaning.

The method I have used here was inspired by a request from a reader who mentioned a wish that I would create some kind of a course or methodology for readers to begin to analyze and interpret and unlock the ancient myths for themselves, rather than simply reading my descriptions of the celestial metaphors at work in particular myths (such as those in my second book and in certain essays published to the web in the ongoing blog that I have maintained on a fairly regular basis since the month of the publication of my first book in 2011). “Teaching to fish instead of giving a fish.”

Thank you, Jody, for that inspired recommendation!

Therefore, in this present work, I have tried to come up with a method by which you (dear reader, fellow sojourner in this material-spiritual incarnate realm of earth and water, and fellow child of the stars) will be presented with the myths, as well as with some “hints” or points of possible significance to consider for yourself, and then you learn how to unlock their celestial metaphors yourself. Ultimately, it is hoped, you will grow more and more able to perceive and to *receive* – directly, from those ancient sources – the profound spiritual knowledge that these incredible metaphors were intended to convey to us.

Each myth will be described in the first part of the book, along with a series of questions intended to “point you in the right direction” towards possible celestial connections, and then there will be a page number listed at the end of the myth, corresponding to a page found in the second part of the book which contains an explanation of the myth based on my own interpretation of the ancient system.

Of course, it’s not an “answer key,” because my interpretation could be incorrect. I present my reasoning for the interpretation that is offered, but the simple fact is that the ancient myths and scriptures do not generally come with accompanying celestial diagrams -- although some of the ancient art,

including that of ancient Egypt, Sumer, and Babylon as well as some found in other parts of the world could be said to be performing that exact function, in addition to being incredible art from an aesthetic standpoint.

The ancient texts *do* contain clues and details which clearly seem intended to point us in the right direction – but sometimes there may be more than one possible explanation.

What does seem to be undeniable, however, is that this ancient system of celestial metaphor can be seen to be at work in virtually *every* set of sacred traditions, myths, and ancient scriptures of the human race.

The scope of this book is to demonstrate *the system* – not to analyze the entirety of any given myth-cycle or specific text from any given culture or part of the world. Therefore, only a few samples from a large number of different cultures were selected.

Necessarily, some myths which could have been used to demonstrate this system have been left out – in the future, it is very certain that entire books or even entire multi-volume studies could easily be devoted to the celestial aspects of any one of the many different myth-cycles and traditions which are touched upon in this volume.

Necessarily as well, some of the many incredibly varied cultures and myth-systems of humanity have not been included – but I hope that I have included enough to conclusively demonstrate that the system of Star Myths is virtually universal across every continent and across a wide sampling of different representative cultures of our human race. *The goal is to prove that this celestial allegory is in fact universally present*, and to teach you how to see it for yourself: not to cover every single possible example.

Descriptions of the myths, and discussions in their corresponding analysis sections, are deliberately kept shorter at first, in order to introduce the elements a few at a time, and become more elaborate as the “tour” proceeds.

The question of “What it all means” (or might mean – what it might have been intended to convey to us) has been touched upon here and there as we go through the different myths and their possible explanations. We will take it up again at the very end, by way of conclusion – but ultimately I believe that the myths themselves are the best teachers of what they are trying to convey.

I will give what I believe are some of the broad outlines of the system and the spiritual world and spiritual truths towards which I believe these celestial

metaphors were intended to lead us – but once the basic outlines are grasped, I believe that the depths to which we can dive within the incredible sacred stories of humanity are literally without end, and that they will continue to reward deeper and deeper exploration and consideration, without ever exhausting their riches, for an entire lifetime (perhaps for many, many lifetimes).

Thus, it may be best to simply sketch some of the spiritual connections which I believe are supported by the evidence, and which I believe to be operating *across* the different myths and traditions (for example, the assertion that the realm of the stars was used *throughout* the myths, in whatever culture or part of the world we examine, to represent the realm of spirit, the realm of the infinite), and then leave it to the reader to plumb the depths of the myths themselves for the insights and awakenings which await each of us therein.

The study of the celestial foundations of the world's sacred myths is often called “astro-theology,” probably taking its name from the title of a book of the lectures of the aforementioned Robert Taylor of England, an ordained minister who appears to have wrestled with the texts of the Bible at the very points that create the most difficulty for a literalistic interpretation, until he realized that the stories – all of them – are actually celestial in nature, and that their intended interpretation could not have been as literal history.

In an attempt to explain this celestial interpretation, the Reverend Taylor regularly gave sermon-style lectures in which he eloquently, wittily, and at times condescendingly and with vicious sarcasm and ridicule expounded the evidence that the stories of the Bible, from the opening of the Old Testament to the closing of the New, are based upon the motions of the sun, moon and stars.

For his pains, he was kicked out of the Church of England, and locked up on different occasions, spending a total of three years behind bars. Two collections of his lectures were published in 1857, more than twelve years after his death: one was entitled *The Devil's Pulpit: or Astronomico-Theological Sermons by the Rev. Robert Taylor, B. A.* and the other was called *The Astronomico-Theological Lectures of the Rev. Robert Taylor, B. A.*

Since then, the term *astrotheology* has become somewhat well known (the shorter version “astro-theology” being much more common today than “astronomico-theology”), and while it is useful, it does not transform easily into a handy label for the astronomical *stories themselves* (calling them “astro-theologisms” doesn't really work). Astrotheology *is* a useful term, and one

which is becoming more widely understood and familiar as it gains greater usage through the efforts of those researchers who labor to demonstrate the celestial origins of the world's myths. However, I would like to explain my preference for adding the term "Star Myths" as well. I believe that the term "Star Myths" has some advantages which recommend itself to us, and not least of these is the fact that the meaning of this phrase ("Star Myths") is immediately apparent, unlike the meaning intended by "astrotheology" – a term which can actually be somewhat confusing.

This is especially true because the term "theology" really means the study of the aspects of God or the divine, and refers to an entire discipline with a huge corpus of literature, most of which comes from a perspective of "literalism," meaning from the perspective of taking scriptures as if they were intended to describe literal events rather than the allegorized motions of celestial actors such as the sun, moon, and stars. The term "Star Myths" avoids that problem altogether, because "myths" are generally understood to be allegorical and not literal right from the start, and the term itself conveys a very different set of thoughts and connotations than does the term "theology."

The term "Star Myth" is also much more direct and less intimidating, which may not seem important but certainly must be counted as an advantage, if our aim is to spread knowledge and help others to understand, rather than to try to keep this incredibly beneficial knowledge to ourselves, as if we were its owners or its appointed guardians.

The term "Star Myth" is simply more approachable than "astrotheology," largely for the simple reason that it is not a Latinate term. Its benefit on this score should not be overlooked. When someone hears the word "astrotheology" for the first time, he or she will probably ask "what's that?" because it isn't easily self-explanatory, whereas "Star Myths" is fairly self-explanatory.

Additionally, in recent years some researchers have begun using the term "astrotheology" to refer to the entire host of theological questions surrounding the possibility of the existence of advanced extraterrestrial lifeforms, which may be an interesting and important topic of exploration, but which is very different from the field of study originally intended by the term "astrotheology," which primarily focused on the evidence that the world's scriptures are based upon the stars and the heavenly cycles

For all these reasons, I believe the phrase "Star Myths" is valuable, although I also believe that the word "astrotheology" has continuing value as a word used

to describe that field of study which looks at the Star Myths themselves and which explores the evidence for their allegorical connection to the motions of the heavenly players.

And so this present work was born – its intention being to examine the Star Myths of the world, in order to observe this ancient universal esoteric system in action.

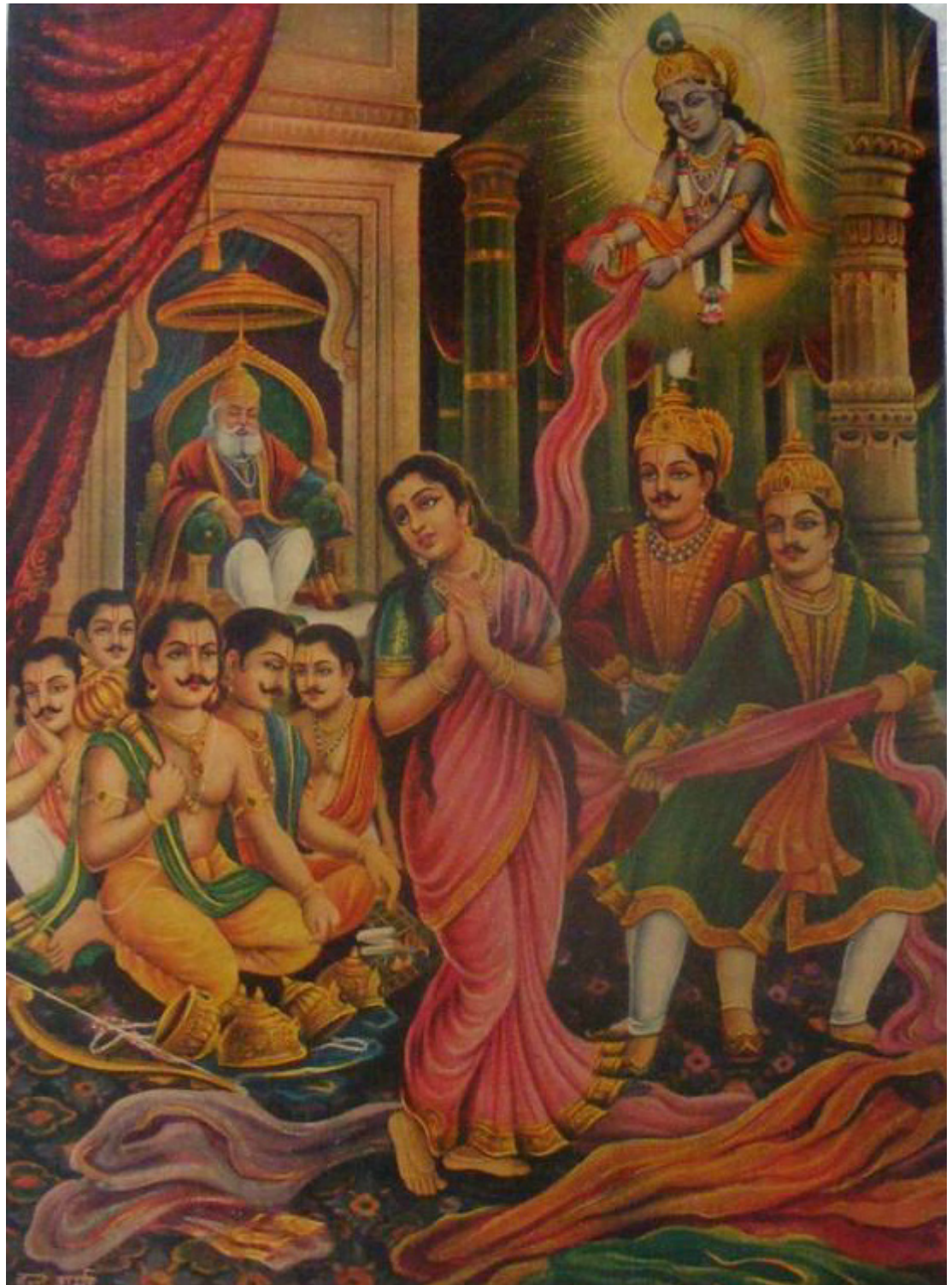
Through the process of analyzing them for yourself, you will begin to match the celestial clues included in the stories with the distinctive features of the various constellations, as well as at times with the distinctive features of the various aspects of the *celestial cycles* (the relative motions of the earth, moon, sun, visible planets, and constellations).

The first volume of this study will begin in Australia, and then go on to examine myths from Africa, from the Americas, from the Pacific, and then from some of the most ancient texts known to be extant to this day – the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt, and the cuneiform tablets of ancient Sumer and Babylon. Also examined in this volume will be the myths of the Sanskrit texts of ancient India, focusing in particular on some of the stories and characters found in the Mahabharata, which contains the Bhagavad Gita. We'll conclude with an examination of some of the ancient texts and traditions of China and Japan.

It is my belief that these ancient myths are not just powerful literary works (although they are certainly powerful literary works, conveying a tremendous range and depth of exploration and depiction of the human condition), and they are not just ingenious metaphors (although on that level their mastery is absolutely superlative, and almost seems to indicate a superhuman origin of some sort), but that they are in fact *sacred*: that they treat subject matter that is “set apart” from the mundane and the material world – subject matter that has to do with the realm of the immortal, the infinite, and the divine.

The myths do not have to be literal or historical in order to be sacred. In fact, it is when they are seen to be metaphor or esoteric allegory that these ancient stories truly begin to convey their sacred truths to our understanding. They do not lose their sacred character when they are perceived for what they truly are: quite the contrary. It is through this understanding that they begin to command an even greater sense of reverence and awe than ever.

It is my sincere hope that you will be blessed by your interaction with and investigation of the ancient Star Myths that form a precious part of the combined inheritance of all humanity.



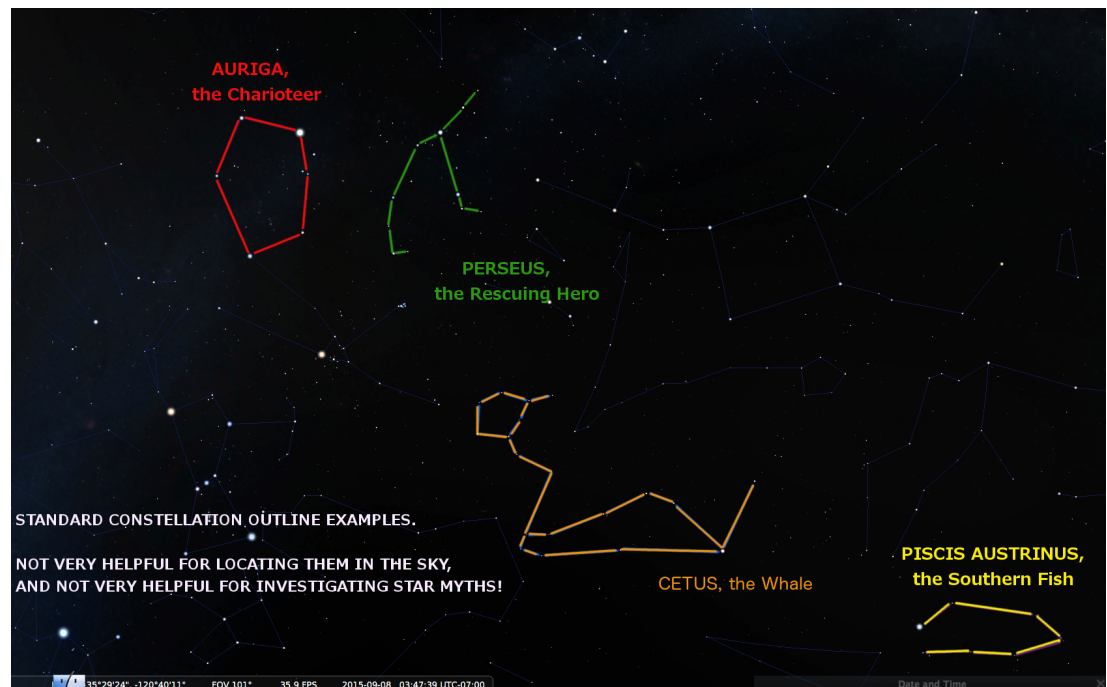
Constellation Guide

The constellations of the night sky can be an endless source of pleasure for those who have the opportunity to go out and see them in person.

The best way to get to know the stars is to devote a little time each night, observing how the actors on the great stage of the heavens change throughout the year due to the motion of the earth along its annual cycle around the sun.

It is also ideal if you can find a way to take a walk along a round-trip route that will enable you to have views of all the different parts of the sky, and all the different horizons in the four different directions of north, east, south and west, as you go along. If you can take that same round-trip walk each night (or early morning), at roughly the same time, for an entire year, you can gain a tremendous level of familiarity with the constellations of our night sky.

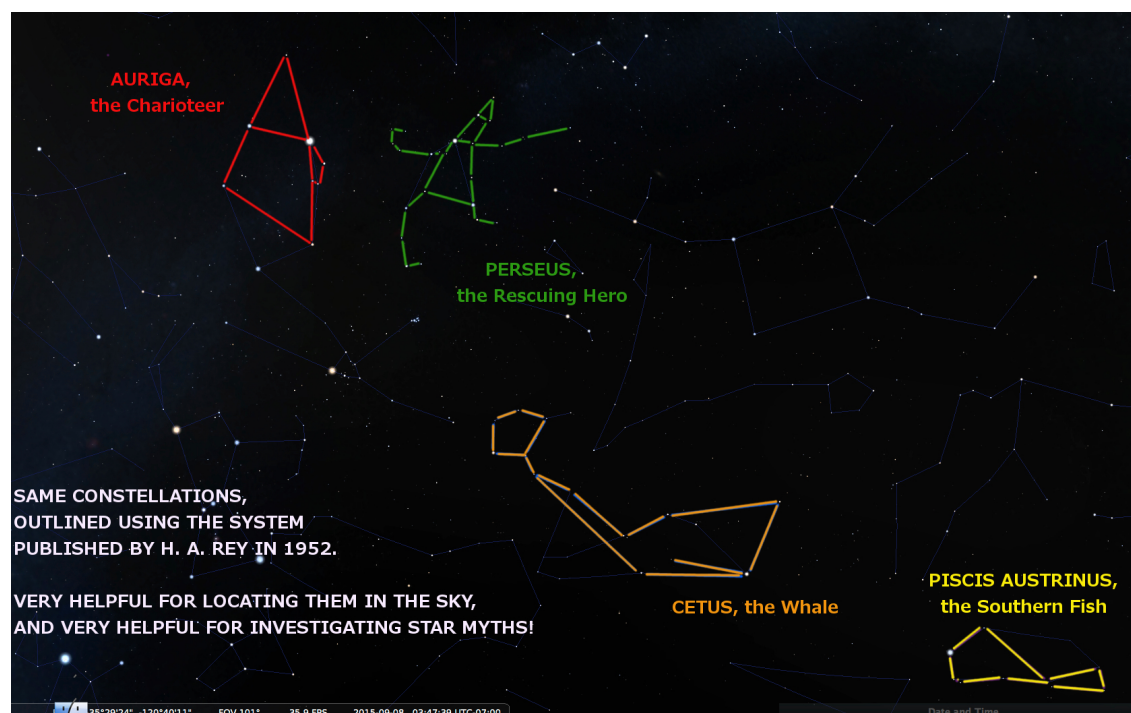
However, most of the constellations themselves do not simply “jump out” at the uninformed viewer – and without a guide to the constellations it will be next to impossible to “pick them out” just based on a vague awareness that you are supposed to be looking for a Lion or a Crab or a set of Twins somewhere.



Therefore, a good understanding of the shape and major characteristics of each constellation is an absolute must – and it is here that we run into some complications, because the methodologies for outlining the constellations which have been published in print form and even on the internet or in planetariums over the years (and indeed over the centuries) are often terribly lacking.

In fact, they are often so poor that it makes one wonder whether someone designed them to deliberately mask the important characteristics of the constellations, rather than to reveal those characteristics and to help people to see the constellations for themselves.

There is an exception to this lament about the published literature on constellation identification, however: the work of H. A. Rey (1898 - 1997), who is perhaps best known as the author and illustrator, along with his wife Margret Rey (1906 - 1996), of the Curious George series of storybooks.



H. A. Rey also lamented the systems used to depict the constellations, and in the place of the previous methodologies, he presented his own system -- one which would, in his words, “remedy the situation” by illustrating the constellations:

in a new, graphic way, as shapes which suggest what the names imply: it shows the group of stars known as the Great Bear, in the shape of a bear; the Whale in the shape of a whale; the Eagle as an eagle, and so on. These shapes are easy to remember, and once you remember them you can retrace them in the sky.²

For anyone who wishes to have the glories of our night sky and the celestial realm come to life, Rey’s book *The Stars: A New Way to See Them* is absolutely indispensable.

Not only does H. A. Rey’s system enable us to remember the shapes of the constellations and find those constellations in the heavens, but it also has another tremendous advantage, and one which to my knowledge neither Rey himself nor anyone else has ever attributed to it: his system of outlining the

constellations enables us to perceive the significant characteristics of each heavenly character, characteristics which appear to have been known to whoever imparted to the human race the collective treasure of ancient knowledge which we know of as the myths, scriptures, and sacred traditions whose origins are lost in the mists of earliest human history.

The characteristics which belong to each particular constellation will surface again and again in myths and sacred stories, whether those myths belong to cultures found in the islands of Japan or in the fjords and mountains and forests of Scandinavia, whether those myths were recorded on fired clay tablets from the culture of ancient Sumer or inscribed upon the walls of some of the earliest Egyptian pyramids, or whether they are still preserved and passed down in oral tradition among cultures who have retained their heritage right up to the present day or until recent decades or centuries, in the Pacific islands or among the Native American nations and tribes.

In other words, across the entire vast surface of our planet, and across all the millennia of known human history from the most ancient to the most recent, the myths contain references to these constellations, and they do so with specific references to details and characteristics intrinsic to those constellations – *details and characteristics that are evident when using the outlining system as published by H. A. Rey.*

If this assertion seems strange or unbelievable to you now, by the end of this book you will have seen (I hope) enough evidence to convince you many times over that this is the case.

Of course, such a discovery, if true, would seem to have tremendous ramifications for our understanding of the nature and purpose of these sacred myths of humanity – and indeed for our understanding of human history itself. We will briefly address some of those ramifications in a final concluding chapter at the end, as well as here and there throughout the analysis of the myths themselves as we go along.

But the main purpose of the book is to outline the ancient Star Myth system, and to explain and illustrate just how it works.

In order to do that, it is helpful to briefly present the main constellations which will figure in the Star Myths discussed in this volume. Each will be shown using an image from the open-source planetarium application called Stellarium (which is available online at stellarium.org). The image will show the outlines of the constellation in question (drawn in color), as well as outlining some of the important nearby constellations that can be helpful when it comes to actually locating it in the sky (and which will also often have accompanying roles in Star Myths which feature that particular celestial character).

In the description of each constellation, a few brief notes will identify the most distinctive features of that constellation (the features that will be important

when analyzing Star Myths that refer to that particular constellation), and the easiest way to find it in the night sky (or at least, the markers that I myself typically use in order to find the constellation in question as easily as possible: there are of course countless other ways of arriving at any particular constellation).

These notes and this entire section will be kept as brief as possible: the real understanding of how that constellation figures in the Star Myths of the world is best obtained through actual examination of the myths and sacred texts themselves, and through gaining greater and greater familiarity with the actual stories.

A few words of explanation about the diagrams in this book, and about the analysis of Star Myths in general, might be in order before we begin.

First and foremost, it is important to state once again right at the outset that I believe these myths and stories to be sacred: that they treat matters which are “set apart” from that which is mundane, material, or related to the common physical exigencies of existence. They treat matters related to spirit, to the invisible realm, to all that lifts us beyond the merely material aspects of our existence.

There are some who would seize upon the explanation of the allegorical and celestial nature of these sacred texts and traditions in order to try to denigrate their sacred nature – to exclaim, “See! Nothing more than nature-worship, or encoded descriptions of the natural world and seasonal cycles! So there really is nothing but the material universe after all! I knew it all along!”

Those who would seize upon the celestial nature of the sacred texts in order to deny our essentially spiritual nature, and to deny the existence of a spiritual realm which interpenetrates and permeates every single aspect of our seemingly material universe, and which is in fact the source and origin for everything we see that is finite and manifest in the material realm, have completely missed the point of the Star Myths, and reached the completely opposite conclusion from what they were actually intending to convey through their system of celestial metaphor.

The Star Myths, as will be discussed briefly during some of the analyses which follow, and again briefly in the Concluding Thoughts at the end, were in fact using the celestial realm and the heavenly cycles as metaphors to help explain and convey knowledge of the existence and importance of the spiritual and invisible realm. We cannot see the invisible realm (using our ordinary senses, at least), and so they used the most majestic possible aspects of the material realm as their chosen visual aids to help convey to us what it is all about. They selected the most awe-inspiring canvas available to us in the physical universe in order to paint their stories which convey to us the reality of the Infinite Realm – and of our inherent connection to it.

I believe that these Star Myths were exquisitely crafted to convey profound truths which are absolutely essential to human life and to the human experience. This is not to say that one cannot learn those truths if one does not learn them through the myths – there are many other disciplines and paths which have been given to humanity or discovered or developed through the millennia to put us in touch with the same vital knowledge – but I believe that these myths were in fact given in order to convey sacred and essential knowledge.

Thus I do not believe that perceiving their celestial and allegorical nature takes away from their sacred purpose: on the contrary, I believe that this perception of their celestial and allegorical nature can enable them to teach us what they were intended to teach us.

Conversely, failing to understand them as powerful metaphors or allegories which point towards spiritual matters can cause us to miss their true meaning. By this I mean failing to understand their metaphorical nature by reading them as describing literal-historical figures, and to beginning all interpretation from that understanding: this creates a tremendous obstacle to the seeker.

A helpful analogy (and one I often use in interviews and blog posts) would be the “teaching aids” that Mr. Miyagi employs in the famous original version of *Karate Kid* (1981) order to teach Daniel-san the “ungraspable” or “invisible” truths of his karate system: if we were to mistakenly conclude that Mr. Miyagi was actually teaching Daniel-san how to wax cars or paint fences, we would miss the point entirely, because those motions were about something else altogether.

In just the same way, these stories are not about literal or historical figures, and to focus on them as though they are is analogous to focusing on “wax the car” or “paint the fence” as if their purpose were to help us wax cars and paint fences.

Nor, however, are these stories really about the constellations and stars, the sun and moon and planets. Those too are actually metaphors for the real layer of meaning that lies behind even those glorious celestial bodies, and towards which the ancient myths and sacred stories are trying to point our understanding.

Second, I believe that whenever possible it is best to use the original texts or very direct, literal translations of the texts, if the myth being examined was committed to writing. Often, details and clues were deliberately included in the myths, but later translators have “paraphrased them away” because they did not know the celestial meaning of the textual detail that they decided to re-word in their translation.

Examples abound in the scriptures which found their way into the collections we call the Old and New Testaments of the Bible (examined in Volume Three). There are texts in which older translations (such as the

Some pages have been omitted from this preview.

PART I:

THE MYTHS

AUSTRALIA

The Bandicoot Woman

In his collection of myths from around the world entitled *Myths of the Origin of Fire*, first published in 1930, James Frazer recounts the fire-myth of the Warramunga tribe of north-central Australia, now usually spelled Warramungu.

We learn that fire was first made by two “hawk ancestors” named Kirkalanji and Warra-pulla-pulla, who had fire-sticks which they carried about with them at all times.⁹ One day, however, “Kirkalanji lit a fire that was bigger than he intended to make,” and was himself caught in the conflagration, and was burnt up.¹⁰ Warra-pulla-pulla was so distraught at this terrible episode that he flew away in the direction of Queensland, never to return.

Onto this scene then came the moon, who in those ancient and far-off days walked upon the earth in the form of a man. We learn that:

He met a bandicoot woman near the spot where Kirkalanji had kindled the fire, and he strolled about with her. Then they sat on a bank with their backs to the fire and were so long talking to one another that they did not notice it till it was close upon them. The bandicoot woman was badly singed and swooned away or died outright; however, the moon man, being no ordinary mortal, brought her to life or to consciousness, and together they went up into the sky.¹¹

The celestial clues in this story are actually quite abundant. At the end of the account, of course, we are told quite plainly that the moon man and the bandicoot woman “went up into the sky,” and the implication is that we can still see them there to this day.

Can you guess the identity of the **two hawk ancestors**, one of whom was burnt to death in the blaze of the fire he had kindled? Can you find a place in the sky where there are the **constellations of a man and a woman with their backs to this blaze**, and can you see why they are described as sitting with their backs to the fire, and why the woman is described as either dying or

swooning away? Perhaps you can even venture to speculate as to why they are identified as a **moon man** and a **bandicoot woman**, based on their outlines!

Turn to page 244 for an interpretation of the celestial foundations of this fire-myth of the Warramungu!



Pig-Footed Bandicoot, Australia

Karakarook and Waung

Another myth from Australia cited in Frazer's *Myths of the Origin of Fire* comes from the Aborigines of the Yarra River valley, near present-day Melbourne. Here is their story to explain the origin of fire.

Long ago, there was a woman named Karakarook, who alone knew the secret of making fire, and who refused to share it with anyone else. Karakarook kept the secret fire with her, in the end of a yam-stick which she used as a simple digging tool to hunt for edible roots, such as yams, as well as for the insects and lizards that she and her people liked to eat.¹²

Because Karakarook refused to share the secret of the fire, Waung (whose name itself means "Crow") devised a ruse to get some of the fire from her. Knowing that Karakarook greatly enjoyed making a delightful meal of ant eggs, which she would dig out of ant mounds with her yam-stick, Waung either created or found a great number of serpents, and hid them underneath a likely ant-hill.

Then, Waung went to find Karakarook, and told her about the ant-hill he knew of, which appeared to be a very likely source of the woman's favorite dinner. Karakarook came along with Waung and, seeing the mound and deciding there would certainly be ant eggs galore inside, she took out her yam-stick and began to dig into it.

It didn't take long for the woman's digging to uncover the snakes, which immediately began issuing from the ant mound and slithering towards her. At Waung's urging, she began to strike at the snakes with her yam-stick, and when she did, the hidden fire began to fall out of the tip of the stick as she struck the serpents slithering on the ground.

Waung immediately picked up some of the fire, and made off with it. Unfortunately, he was just as secretive with the fire as Karakarook had been,

and the story goes on to explain that Pund-jel, the Creator, ended up punishing Waung and placing Karakarook in the sky among the stars, and the rest of humanity obtained fire from Waung, but not before he had tried to burn the people, and in some versions of the story he burned two humans to death in the process.

Again, this story gives clear indications that we should look for the origin of this story in the heavens, most notably in the placing of Karakarook among the stars forever. There are other clues which can help you determine who is playing what role: Look for a part of the sky which might contain a constellation of a **woman**, a **crow**, and a **serpent**. Moreover, the “yam-stick” carried by the woman is a strong clue.

Can you see the **yam-stick** of Karakarook in the night sky? Turn to page 247 for a celestial interpretation of this Aborigine Star Myth.



“Cathedral” Termite Mound, Australia

Mirrigan and Gurangatch

Aboriginal sacred tradition tells the story of Mirrigan, the Fisherman, and his pursuit of the marvelous fish Gurangatch, which took place ages ago, in the Dreamtime. Gurangatch dwelt deep in a waterhole in what is today New South Wales, Australia, at the junction of the Wollondilly and Wingecaribee Rivers:

Gurangatch was half fish and half reptile, with shimmering scales of green, purple and gold. His eyes shone like two bright stars through the clear green water of his camping ground. At mid-day, when the sun was high, he basked in the shallow water of the lagoon, and at nightfall retired to the dark depths of the pool.¹³

Mirrigan was a famous fisherman, who was too proud to pursue small fish, but only pursued the largest and most dangerous of them all. When he happened past the waterhole of Gurangatch and saw his blazing eyes beaming up from the depths, he immediately tried to spear the monster, but Gurangatch retreated deep into the waterhole, out of reach.



Wollondilly River, Australia.

Then commenced a battle of wits and strength between Mirragan and Gurangatch. Mirragan first began to poison the waterhole with bark in hopes that Gurangatch would have to rise to the surface, but the fish was too strong and was only sickened, and remained in the depths.

When Mirragan went to search for more bark, Gurangatch took the opportunity to burrow underground from one lagoon to another, deep beneath mountain ranges, forming the extensive subterranean caves known as the Jenolan limestone caves and the Whambeyan limestone caves. When he plowed along the surface of the earth, his passage created the great river valleys where today flow the Wollondilly, the Guineacor, and the Cox Rivers.



Jenolan Caves, Australia.

All through the country Mirragan pursued Gurangatch, and whenever he caught up to the great fish, Mirragan attacked with his spear and Gurangatch fought back with blows from his powerful tail. Finally, both of them were

Some pages have been omitted from this preview.

The Bhagavad Gita

The episodes and adventures in the Mahabharata go on and on, truly supplying not only an “abundance” but a veritable “super-abundance” of ways to embody the celestial material in different guises and different divine, semi-divine, and human characters (as well as a host of more sinister characters, the Asuras and Yakshas and Rakshasas whose desires are almost invariably to devour, destroy, debase, and debauch others).

As with other extremely well-developed and complete myth-cycles (such as the Maui cycle and the Gilgamesh-Enkidu cycle), an entire book or even a multi-volume study could profitably be written unpacking the celestial metaphors and their meanings within the Mahabharata. Such a study is of course beyond the scope of this volume, which aims instead to examine the metaphor-system as it is found across numerous sacred traditions (indeed, across virtually all of them).

However, of the episodes still to choose from in that epic which we might consider, the portion within the Mahabharata known as the Bhagavad Gita, which is one of the most important and influential sacred texts on earth, would certainly be foremost.

The Bhagavad Gita, or “Song (Gita) of the Lord,” consists of eighteen chapters within the Mahabharata which are located within the action of the epic just as the great battle of Kurukshetra is about to take place – and Arjuna, who has been equipped for certain victory by his virtuous spiritual preparation in which he came face to face with some of the greatest gods and goddesses of the celestial realms and was given access to their invincible weapons, is suddenly having second thoughts.

He knows that arrayed against his side (his side consisting of the Pandavas and of the other kings and warriors of the earth who have come to the aid of the Pandavas, especially those aligned with their wife Draupadi’s father and

his kingdom, and extended relatives from that lineage) are many of his close relatives, his cousins and his uncle Dhritarastra and some of the most revered sages and counselors of the older generation, such as the great Bhishma (one of the most virtuous sages of the generation ahead of both Dhritarastra and Pandu, and the elder brother to the father of Dhritarastra and Pandu), and the formidable Drona who was the gifted teacher of all five of the young Pandavas in the martial arts of combat and weaponcraft when they were growing up.

Speaking to the divine Lord Krishna, who has revealed himself to be the friend, guide and protector of Arjuna and who serves as Arjuna's "divine charioteer," the mighty Arjuna declares that he feels it would be better to cast aside all of his weapons and to passively allow himself to be cut down by the fighters on the other side, rather than to fight against and ultimately kill his own relatives and respected elders.

But the Lord Krishna gently corrects Arjuna and tells him that he should indeed participate in the battle. Krishna explains that the right thing is always to do one's duty, which in this case means that Arjuna should engage in the struggle, act in accordance with what is right, and to take action while simultaneously renouncing all attachment to the results.

Lord Krishna gives this message to Arjuna in many different forms throughout the eighteen sections of the Bhagavad Gita.

Here are some representative passages spoken by Krishna, from the late-nineteenth-century translation by Kisari Mohan Ganguli (numbering of sections uses the numbering for the Gita itself, which consists of 18 sections which are found in the sixth book of the Mahabharata, and which correspond to sections 25 through 42 of Mahabharata book six, such that Bhagavad Gita section 1 is the same as Mahabharata book six section 25, and Bhagavad Gita section 18 is the same as Mahabharata book six section 42):

Do your duty to the best of your ability, O Arjuna, with your mind attached to the Lord, abandoning worry and attachment to the results, and remaining calm in both success and failure. The equanimity of mind is called Karma-yoga. Work done with selfish motives is inferior by far to the selfless service or Karma-yoga. Therefore be a Karma-yogi, O Arjuna. Those who seek to enjoy the fruits of their work are verily unhappy (because one has no control over the results).⁹⁷

And again:

Therefore, always perform your duty efficiently and without attachment to the results, because by doing work without attachment one attains the Supreme.⁹⁸

And also:

The ancient seekers of liberation also performed their duties with this understanding. Therefore, you should do your duty as the ancients did. Even the wise are confused about what is action and what is inaction. Therefore, I shall clearly explain what is action, knowing that one shall be liberated from the evil (of birth and death). The true nature of action is very difficult to understand. Therefore, one should know the nature of attached action, the nature of detached action, and also the nature of forbidden action. Attached action is selfish work that produces Karmic bondage, detached action is unselfish work or Seva that leads to nirvana, and forbidden action is harmful to society. The one who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is a wise person. Such a person is a yogi and has accomplished everything.⁹⁹

As we have seen so many times already, the actual circumstances in which Krishna is giving this discourse to Arjuna can be shown to be celestial in nature – and as we have seen in so many other myths, one aspect of the stars is that the earth's daily motion (as well as the longer motions caused by the earth's orbit around the sun, and the even longer cycles caused by precession) cause the stars to rise up into the heavens and to sink back into the lower elements of earth and water, at least from the perspective of an observer on our planet. We have seen that these motions appear to have been allegorized by the givers of humanity's sacred wisdom traditions as indicative of our descent into incarnation (here in the realm of matter, imprisoned in the lower

elements), our temporary forgetting of our spiritual home, followed by a spiritual awakening and quickening, and the transcendence of the material realm – to soar back into the realms of spirit transformed by our sojourn in the realm of matter, and “elevating matter with us” in the process, blessing it and evoking its own inner connection to the Infinite.



Thus, this discourse of Lord Krishna, delivered to Arjuna on the eve of the great struggle at Kurukshetra, is likely talking about something more than an ancient hero's participation in an apocalyptic struggle upon a mighty battlefield. Like the rest of the Mahabharata, the Gita is not about ancient figures at all but instead about the experience of each and every human soul – and the battlefield is the descent into the realm of incarnation, which is characterized by the endless struggle or interplay between the material and the spiritual and all that goes along with that ceaseless contesting.

The Bhagavad Gita appears to show Krishna giving his advice to Arjuna, but he is really giving that advice to us: participate in the struggle, don't decide that you can "sit this one out," and the most important principle of action while here in this incarnate life is to do what is right, but without attachment to the results.

When Krishna tells Arjuna that he must strive to do what is right, without attachment, he is now talking not only about right *action* but also about what we commonly refer to as the "state of mind" one has while taking that right action (and do note that he is specifically talking about *right* action, which he shows in the passages quoted to be action which does not harm or violate the personal humanity of others or the community).

We can see clear indications in the text of the Bhagavad Gita itself which help us to identify the specific celestial actors who "incarnate" (so to speak) or who "take on outward forms" within the text. Most importantly, we want to identify Krishna the divine charioteer, Arjuna the great bowman and virtuous warrior, as well as the battle-cart or war-chariot in which these two will ride into battle (and which they steer into the center of the battlefield for this pre-battle meditation upon duty, dharma, attachment, detachment, reincarnation, consciousness, and transcendence).

The identities of Arjuna and his charioteer Lord Krishna are hinted in Mahabharata 6.22 (just before the Bhagavad Gita begins at 6.25). The array of the troops of the Pandavas is being described to blind Dhritarastra (whose sons are all arrayed opposing the Pandavas and their allies):

The car of Arjuna, furnished with a hundred bells, decked with Jamvunada gold of the best kind, endued with excellent wheels, possessed of the effulgence of fire, and unto which were yoked white steeds, looked exceedingly brilliant like a thousand suns. And in that ape-bannered car the reins of which were held by Kesava [Krishna himself], stood Arjuna with Gandiva [Arjuna's superlative bow] and

arrows in hand – a bowman whose peer exists not on earth, nor ever will.¹⁰⁰

Note that the text specifically tells us that Arjuna is a bowman “whose peer exists not on earth, nor ever will” – and I might venture to add “nor ever did,” because **Arjuna is a heavenly bowman**, found only in the celestial realms. Can you guess which celestial bowman furnishes the outline of Arjuna?

Holding the reins of the war cart, hitched to the white steeds, is the divine Krishna himself. Is there a constellation whose **posture might resemble the seated driver** of Arjuna’s war-cart, and who might (with imagination) be envisioned as “**holding the reins**” to the steeds which draw the celestial battle-cart?

Just ahead of this figure of the divine charioteer is a constellation which actually looks like a wagon or a war-cart, and which in fact was envisioned as a wagon in earlier centuries. It even had the name “Charles’ Wain” during the middle ages in England, with the word “wain” being a version of “wagon,” and with the “Charles” referring most likely to Charlemagne. It certainly can be envisioned as being pulled by “white steeds” or horses. Can you figure out what constellation seems to be connected to the divine charioteer?

Just behind the figure of the heavenly charioteer would be the canopy-covered “sedan” in which Arjuna would ride to battle (or in which the other heroes would ride into battle, each in his own car, as described in the Mahabharata). In fact, the various gods and celestial figures often travel around in similar cars through the heavens in the Mahabharata and in other ancient Sanskrit epics. Sometimes, the umbrella or shade at the top of the sedan or divan is specifically mentioned.

In the sky, just behind the heavenly charioteer, there is indeed a constellation which forms just such a “divan” or “sedan” for the warrior (Arjuna in this case) to stand in comfort as he rides to battle, ready to launch his arrows at the foe as the charioteer urges the horses forward. This constellation, in fact, will be

found playing a similar role as a tent or shelter in many other Star Myths yet to be examined, from other cultures around the world. Can you locate a **constellation just behind the heavenly charioteer** which could be the “sedan” portion of the war-car, in which Arjuna would stand as he rides to battle? It should have a shade-providing “roof” at the top, or “umbrella,” to cover the warrior occupant as he drives around on the battlefield.

The reference to the “ape-banner” **above the umbrella or canopy** of the war-cart of Krishna and Arjuna refers to the fact that they are flying a standard emblazoned with the image of Hanuman, the monkey-god, at the top of their cart (which is often depicted in art showing the scene). Without being needlessly confusing, it is quite possible that this banner is another clue which points to the same constellation as the one who plays the role of mighty Bhima himself (Hanuman the monkey-god is actually depicted **holding a battle-mace** in some art from India, and the constellation in question does seem to “**fly above**” the canopy of the battle-car, in which Arjuna would ride, just behind the figure we are identifying as Krishna in his role as charioteer who holds the reins).

Then, in the first chapter of the Gita itself (which is numbered as Bhagavad Gita chapter 1 but also as Mahabharata 6.25) Arjuna addresses Krishna, saying: “O thou that knoweth no deterioration, place my car (once) between the two armies, so that I may observe these that stand here desirous of battle, and with whom I shall have to contend in the labours of this struggle.”¹⁰¹

The two go onto the battlefield, and there Krishna imparts to Arjuna his directive to do what is right without thought for the outcome. Then, in the eleventh chapter of the Gita (or the 35th chapter of the sixth book of the Mahabharata), Krishna declares that he will reveal his own supreme form to Arjuna:

The Holy One [Krishna] said, “Behold, O son of Pritha [Pritha is another name for Kunti], my forms by hundreds and thousands: various,

divine, diverse in hue and shape. [. . .] Pleased with thee, O Arjuna, I have by my (own) mystic power, shown thee this supreme form, full of glory: Universal, Infinite, Primeval, which hath before been seen by none save thee. Except by thee alone, hero of Kuru's race, I cannot be seen in this form in the world of men by any one else, (aided) even by the study of the Vedas and of sacrifices, by gifts, by actions, (or) by the severest austerities. Let no fear be thine, nor perplexity of mind at seeing this awful form of mine.”¹⁰²

Arjuna, the text says, bowed to Krishna with trembling and joined hands. Krishna declares that he is infinite, unbounded, and incapable of being defined or contained, and Arjuna in his praise echoes this assertion, noting that when he beholds Krishna he beholds “all the gods” and that Krishna has “innumerable” arms and eyes and faces (incapable of being numbered).

Thus, there really is no single constellation that matches Krishna in his supreme form – this part of the text indicates that Arjuna is in contact with that which cannot be contained, that which is Infinite.

However, there is a constellation which can be seen as having “multiple heads” or “multiple arms” not far away, and who is in fact in the midst of a shining effulgence in the night sky – and who might possibly be construed as representing Krishna when he takes on multiple arms and multiple faces and not far away another which may be bowing and pressing hands together. Krishna then tells Arjuna he will return to his familiar and “gentle” form.

In any case, the clues to the identity of the main constellation associated with Arjuna are fairly straightforward, as are those indicating the identity of Krishna when in his guise as charioteer. The chariot itself is indeed connected by a sort of line which might be seen as “reins,” and it is indeed composed of stars which might be seen as “white steeds” hitched to a battle-cart.

Can you decipher the underlying celestial foundation of this beloved sacred text? Turn to page 395 for an interpretation of some of the heavenly allegory at work in the Bhagavad Gita!



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PART II:

THE STARS

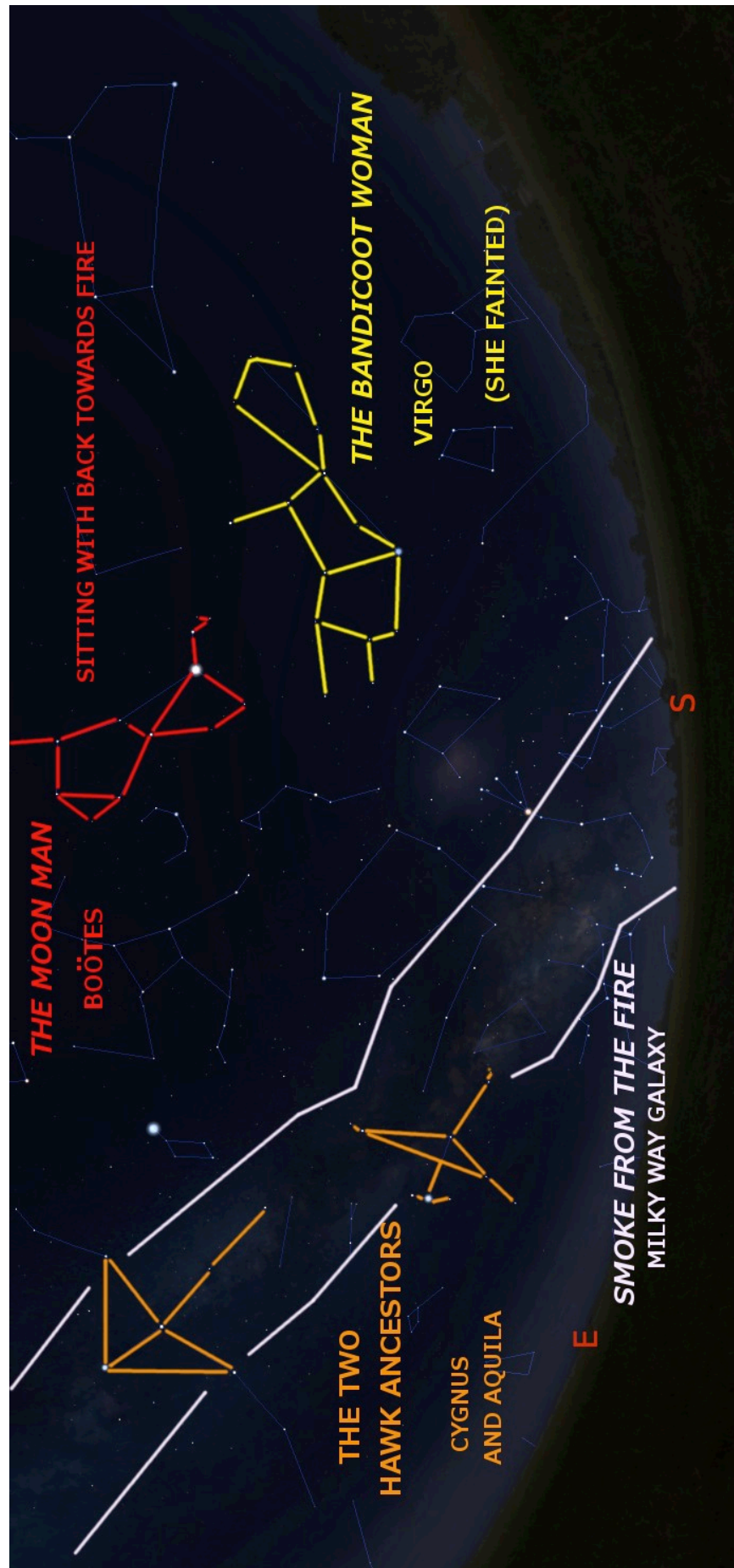
INTERPRETATIONS

The Bandicoot Woman

The two hawk ancestors, Kirkalanji and Warra-pulla-pulla, are almost certainly the two mighty celestial birds who can be seen flying towards each other along the shining silvery band of the Milky Way: the constellations Aquila the Eagle and Cygnus the Swan. These two feature in many sacred stories from around the world, sometimes being described as different birds, such as two falcons or two eagles (in this story, of course, they are two hawks).

Note that the hazy band of the Milky Way itself can be imagined to be the rising smoke from some great fire, and that is just how it features in this story, in which Kirkalanji kindles a blaze that is too great for him to escape, and he is trapped in it and perishes. Based on the relative locations of these two constellations within the smoky path of the Milky Way, it is likely that Aquila plays the role of Kirkalanji, who is caught in the conflagration, and Cygnus is Warra-pulla-pulla, who eventually migrates out of sight to the west.

Bear in mind, however, that this legend comes to us from Australia, where the constellations will appear “upside-down” compared to the way an observer from the northern hemisphere would expect to see them, which means that Cygnus will actually be closer to the horizon than Aquila, and the horizon to which Cygnus will be closer will be the northern horizon (in the northern hemisphere, Aquila is closer to the horizon, and it is the southern horizon). Based on this fact, it may be that Kirkalanji is played by Cygnus, who is “burned up” by the Milky Way, being closer to the horizon and hence to the fire, if the smoke is imagined as arising from a fire located at the edge of the horizon.



In any event, we can see that the pair who strolled along and then sat down with their backs to the fire are played by Boötes the Herdsman, in the role of the moon man, and Virgo the Virgin, in the role of the bandicoot woman. The seated posture of Boötes is evident from the image, as is his fairly round and bulbous head, which may account for his being called a “moon” man. Note that his “back is towards the fire” of the smoky column of the Milky Way.

Virgo, who is playing the role of the bandicoot woman, has either fainted away or perished from the flames, as she is lying down in her familiar recumbent posture. This aspect of Virgo will turn up some in other myths around the world as a female character who is perhaps lazy, or who doesn’t want to get up and do something she is supposed to do, and who then has to be coaxed or encouraged or begged to come out and show herself.

Her head (the outline of the head of the constellation Virgo) is also somewhat long and pointed: compare to the image of actual bandicoots on page 66). The same aspect of the constellation will surface again in a Maya myth examined later.

The clues in this Warramungu legend are abundant enough to strongly suggest that this story encodes the motions of the actors in the heavenly sphere, and the details provided make the above interpretation seem very likely to be the correct one.

Karakarook and Waung

A woman carrying a stick is a clear indicator that we are almost certainly here dealing with a manifestation of the zodiac constellation Virgo the Virgin. The outline of Virgo is marked by the distinctive feature of her outstretched arm, which figures in many Star Myths around the world. The outstretched arm of Virgo is marked by the star Vindemiatrix. In this myth the outstretched arm becomes the yam-stick which Karakarook uses to hunt for edible roots.

Waung the Crow, of course, would then be played by the nearby constellation of Corvus, who is always staring at Virgo's brightest star, Spica. The Crow in the heavens is perched on the back of the sinuous form of Hydra, the Serpent, which is why in this Star Myth the crow Waung is described as either finding a mound of serpents or creating a mound of serpents, to which he leads Karakarook, the woman.

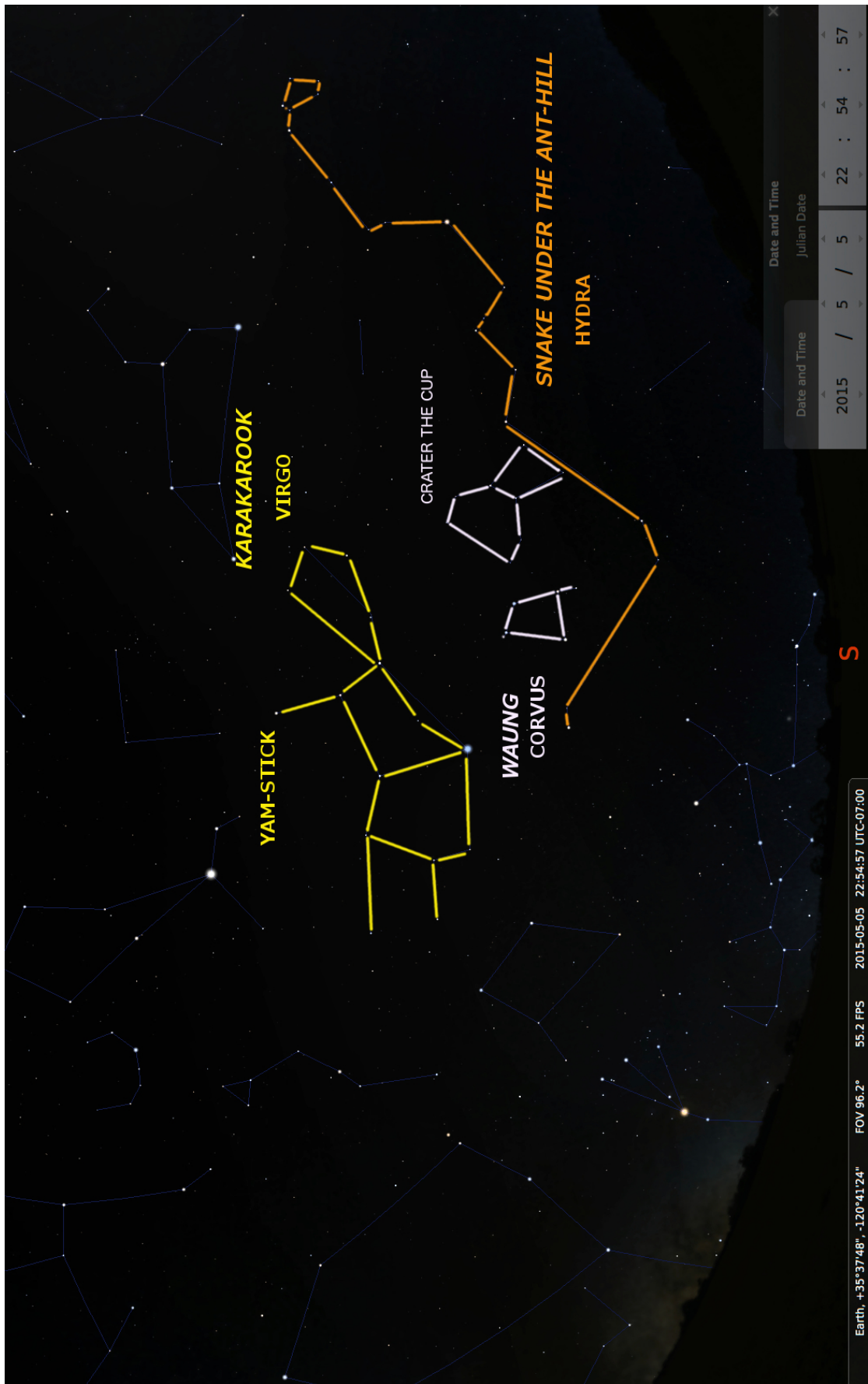
When she digs up the mound, thinking that there must be ant-eggs inside, the serpents slither out and she is obliged to strike at them with her stick, allowing Waung to make off with the coveted fire.

He then continues the tradition of hoarding the fire, and in one version of the story burns two humans to death with it – possibly the Twins of Gemini, who are located on the other side of the sky. The Twins are positioned such that the smoky-looking path of the Milky Way billows past their feet, and so they may be the humans burned by Waung in some versions of the story.

In any event, the identities of Karakarook (Virgo), Waung (Corvus), and the serpents (Hydra) are hard to deny, given the proximity of these three constellations, and given the sure clue of the “yam-stick” carried by Karakarook.

After seeing the image on page 69 of the size of the termite and ant mounds found in Australia (or seeing them elsewhere), one might also wonder whether the constellation of Crater the Cup, next to Waung and above Hydra the Serpent, might not represent the mound that the Crow told Karakarook to dig into with her yam-stick.

The inclusion in the myth of the direct admission that Waung and Karakarook were later placed in the sky among the stars is a compelling piece of evidence which pretty much clinches the case for a celestial interpretation.



Some pages have been omitted from this preview.

Da Mo and Shen Guang

The celestial patterns in the Da Mo stories should have rung bells with readers who have been through the Star Myth examinations leading up to this point. They are based upon important constellations which we have encountered many times before, but appear here taking on new roles.

Certainly the central episode in the Da Mo cycle of stories is the episode of his extended meditation, in which he meditates for so long (nine years in most traditional retellings) that his very shadow or image impresses itself upon the wall which he faces.

There are many reasons to suspect that the tranquil meditating figure of Da Mo is played in these traditions by the constellation Boötes, a constellation whose outline suggests a seated or kneeling figure, and one which we previously saw reason to connect to the meditating figure of the Buddha himself, when he sat beneath the tree and achieved Awakening.

Perhaps the most powerful piece of evidence to connect the motionless form of Da Mo to the outline of Boötes is the fact that standing over Boötes in the sky is the towering figure of Hercules, holding aloft what appears to be a great club or sword. If we have correctly identified Da Mo with Boötes, then the figure of Hercules standing over the meditating form of Boötes must be Shen Guang.

Other clues from the Da Mo tradition suggest that this is indeed the correct interpretation of the two characters in the stories. One detail provided in the Da Mo account is found in the story of Da Mo teaching publicly, while Shen Guang takes his own Buddhist bead necklace and flicks the individual beads at Da Mo, who either pretends not to notice or who in fact does not even notice at all, so great is his level of discipline and detachment.

The bead necklace which Shen Guang removes from his own neck, of course, would correspond to the beautiful arc-shaped constellation of the Corona Borealis, or Northern Crown. In the diagram of the constellations involved in this Star Myth, it is easy to see how one can envision the arm of the constellation Hercules (the arm without the sword) as holding the Northern Crown (recall that in the Maui cycle of myths, Maui's grandfather holding baby Maui was interpreted as being a mythical embodiment of Hercules holding the arc-shaped "baby" of the Northern Crown, and hanging the little child from the rafters to dry out beside the fire).

Thus, the episode of Shen Guang's flicking necklace beads at Da Mo helps us to confirm that Shen Guang is indeed Hercules and Da Mo is Boötes.

Another detail which tends to confirm this identification is the story of Da Mo's entry into China from the west, crossing over a wide river in miraculous fashion, upon a broken reed (this crossing is a favorite subject of artistic depictions of Da Mo in China, Japan and other areas where he is revered). The stories say that Da Mo was given this particular reed by a woman he encountered near the river – and it is not hard to guess that the woman is probably played by Virgo, if Da Mo is Boötes.

The broken reed in this case is probably a manifestation in myth of the asterism Coma Berenices, or Berenice's Hair, which does indeed resemble a bent reed. As you can see from the celestial chart and outlines, Virgo does indeed appear to be reaching out to offer Da Mo the broken reed of the Coma Berenices.

Yet further confirmation of the identity of Da Mo with Boötes is provided by the story that Da Mo could sometimes be seen walking through the countryside and the lonely mountainous places carrying a long pole over his shoulder, from which dangled one sandal. In another legend, after the supposed death of Da Mo, he was seen walking along distant horizons or heading out to new lands with the same sandal dangling from a pole over one

shoulder: when these reports came in and Da Mo's tomb was opened, all that was found inside was a single sandal (no Da Mo).

The "single sandal" story, of course, is one that turns up in other Star Myths around the world, most notably in the story of Jason and the Argonauts (in which Jason famously loses one sandal and thus is forced to go about with only one sandal). These Star Myths probably originate with the realization that the beautiful arc of the Coma Berenices can also be seen as a shoe or a sandal – but only a single shoe or sandal, not a pair.

The depictions and descriptions of Da Mo traveling with a long pole or stick over his shoulder ("hobo style") is undoubtedly a reference to the "pipe" feature of the constellation Boötes, which is one of the most distinctive features of this constellation and one which shows up again and again in the Star Myths featuring Boötes (albeit in different forms in different myths). We can use our imaginations to see this pipe as a pole over Da Mo's shoulder, and the fact that the "sandal" of the Northern Crown is just behind the shoulder of Boötes explains the legend that he went about with one sandal hanging from that pole.

It is also notable that the figure of Boötes is located in the sky just to the east of the Milky Way band (recall that in some myths about the origin of fire which included Boötes, he was described as sitting near the fire with his back to it – and in those cases the Milky Way was the roaring fire with a rising column of smoke). In the Da Mo legend, the wide river he crosses is probably the Milky Way.

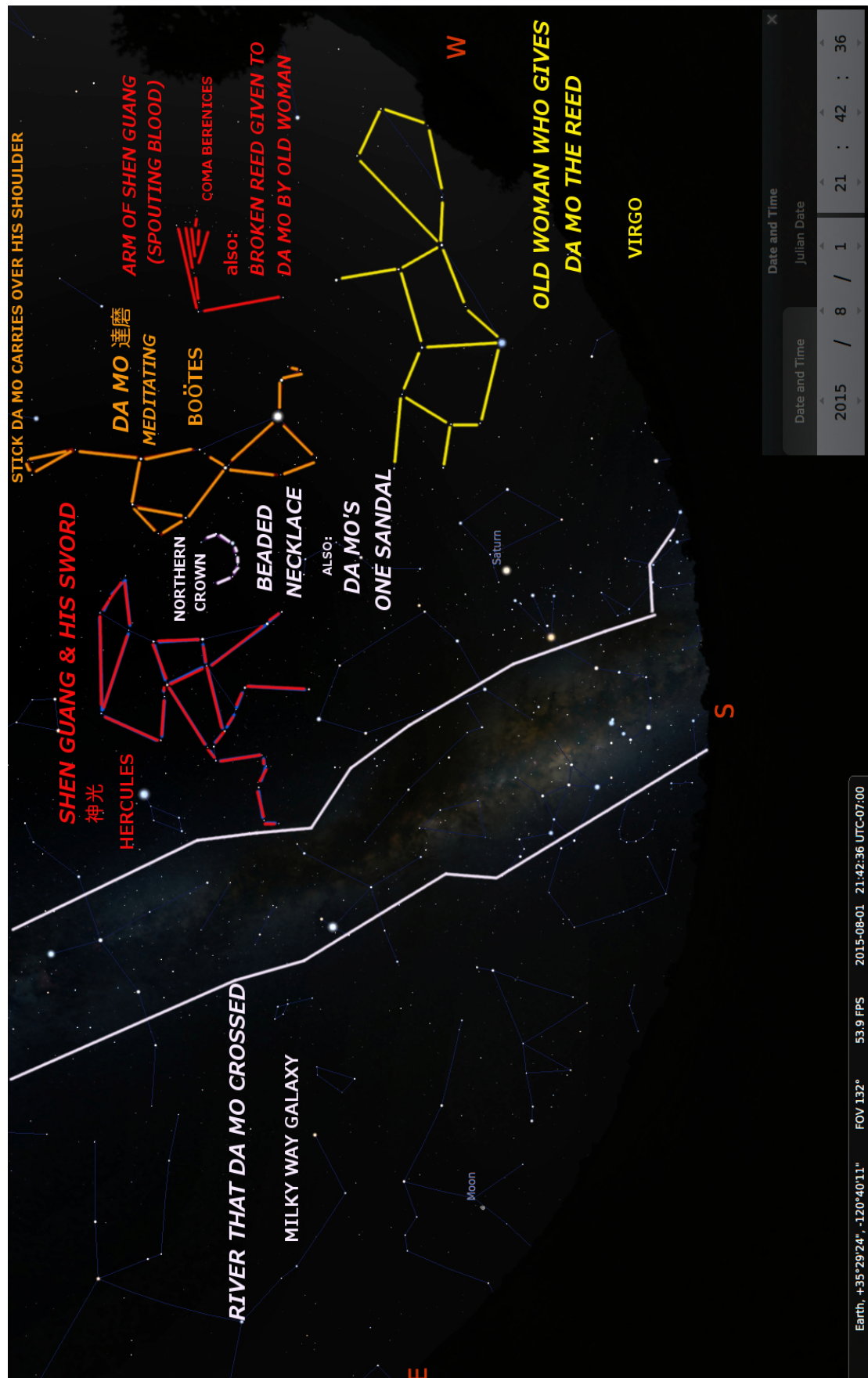
After standing patiently guarding the motionless meditating figure of Da Mo, Shen Guang feels he must do something to get Da Mo's attention and convince him to take Shen Guang as his disciple. And so it was that during the snowstorm, Shen Guang used his sword to cut off his own arm, which he then spun around in circles spraying blood everywhere.

Just as the Northern Crown does “double duty” in this story as both the necklace of beads (in one episode in the cycle of stories) and the single sandal (in a different episode in the same Da Mo cycle), so also it is possible that the Coma Berenices plays different roles during different episodes of the Da Mo legend.

In this case, the severed arm is probably a way of turning into mythical story a creative interpretation of the constellation Berenice’s Hair. The story is not intended to have been understood literally, as something that took place in historical time, any more than the story about Da Mo ripping out or cutting off his own eyelids is intended to be taken literally. The constellation Coma Berenices can certainly be envisioned as an arm spouting multiple drops and streams of blood from one end – and this is probably the origin of the story of Shen Guang cutting off his own arm.

But these stories, based upon the stars, are not just elaborate “puzzles” which the ancients created to amuse themselves or to stump future generations. I believe that the Star Myths of the world all contain a very important function, involving the transmission of truths about the invisible realm, the realm of pure potential, the realm from which all things in this manifest physical realm have their fount and their origin – and that they teach us that we ourselves are connected to that infinite realm, and can in fact access it during this life, to our great benefit.

In fact, the signature feature of Da Mo’s life – his tremendous devotion to meditation – is a method that the ancient scriptures describe as being one way of getting in touch with the Infinite.



In a four-line poem that is closely associated with the figure and the teaching of Da Mo (and said to have been authored by him), the methodology of reaching beyond the finite and bounded world is presented to us for incorporation into our daily lives:

A special transmission outside the scriptures,
Not founded upon words and letters;
By pointing directly to [one's] mind
It lets one see into [one's own true] nature and [thus] attain
Buddhahood.¹⁵⁴

This poem emphasizes that the Infinite cannot be reached through words, a theme expressed in the Tao Te Ching as well (and in many other sacred traditions around the world). It is beyond the mind, beyond defining – and thus one of the most famous ways of conveying a glimpse of this concept in Cha'n Buddhism (Zen Buddhism in Japan) is through the koan, which seeks to break through the mind's constant attempt to define things as “this or that” (a classification that is detrimental to coming in touch with the Infinite).

I believe that the Star Myths of the world were also used to point towards the very same infinite realm – the realm that is not material, the realm that is not “made manifest” in the physical incarnate world. The stars in their heavenly cycles can be seen to plunge down into the western horizon – a visual way of understanding that out of the realm of potentiality, we have entered into the realm of matter (we have been given physical form and physical boundaries).

It is like the “collapse of the waveform” in quantum physics, when a particle that has existed in “superposition” is suddenly made to manifest in one box or another, by the action of an observer or a recording instrument. What existed in a form of “potentiality” enters into the realm of the “finite and defined” (either “here” or “not-here,” and no longer “both”).

It can be seen that the Star Myths of the world are perfect vehicles for expressing and discussing and conveying these concepts. The stars in their courses exist in the realm of spirit when high up in the sky (the realm of the

Infinite, the realm of quantum “superposition,” all potential and impossible to define as “this” or “not-this”). Then they crash down into the horizon and seemingly “plow through” the earth for a time – they have been “cast down” into the material realm, just as we ourselves have when we incarnate in this physical form. Eventually they return to the realm of spirit – an endless interplay between the two worlds.

This appears to be the same concept that the Tao Te Ching speaks of and tries to convey, with the arising of the myriad things that all have their source in the Tao (which itself is Infinite and cannot really be named or defined), described in the very first section of the Tao Te Ching as traditionally arranged (and numbered as section 45 in the Ma-wang-tui silk texts in the translation of Victor Mair).

In fact, it is the same concept described in the Battle of Kurukshetra in the Mahabharata, upon the eve of which the Bhagavad Gita is given to us by the Lord Krishna.

Indeed, I believe it is also found in the imagery of the Old and New Testaments, which also describe the cycles of the heavens and the turning of great celestial wheels.

This understanding of the dual nature of the universe we inhabit, and of our capacity for making contact with the Infinite, appears to be one of the central messages of the world’s Star Myths, which use an almost infinite variety of metaphors and allegorizations, but all to convey what I believe can be shown to be very much the same esoteric message.

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