

ZEITGEIST: THE MOVIE

COMPANION SOURCE GUIDE

Part One: The Greatest Story Ever Told

DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

Zeitgeist: The Movie - Part 1: "The Greatest Story Ever Told" presents historical data relating to the astronomical/astrological origins of the Judeo-Christian theology (which can be extended to Islam as well), along with the understanding that these respective stories, beliefs & traditions are really an adaptation-extension of prior Pagan beliefs. In other words, evidence shows that these modern religions are really composites of earlier religions with their stories and symbolisms "borrowed" as the new traditions evolved. Of course, believers of theistic religions have an inherent, self-preserving interest to disagree with such a notion, for it brings their religion out of the context of the supernatural and novel - and into the context of a singular, serial intellectual evolution of information where many religions begin to share a common symbolic and literary basis. From such a perspective, naturally, the idea that "Jesus" or "Osiris" or "Dionysus" were real, supernatural figures of a larger order metaphysic becomes a distant reality. Regardless, this section isn't really about whether "God" exists or any such issue - it is about the firm reality that religions have been borrowing and building upon each other, while the central origin of these theologies almost always comes back to stellar and solar fascination, in part.

When we track these literary/ritual characteristics, we find that most religions of the world have been spawned from the interpretation/misinterpretation of the natural world and its dynamic phenomena. Of this phenomena, it is found that the sun, the stars and the general stellar array have been a powerful source of allegorical and hence mythological meaning since the dawn of humanity. The term to describe this is "Astrotheology" and it will be explained in the pages that follow.

I want to thank D.M. Murdock, aka Acharya S, for her profound and deeply brave commitment to this complex issue. She has been very kind to review and update the following data presented here. I would like to point out that many who disagree with the following material often work to condemn the messenger as the originator. Of course, this is a common tactic of those in denial or those who simply don't have the interest to investigate thoroughly. While Acharya is an expert in her field and does generate conclusions which are extrapolated from the sources she researches - just as any good scholar should for the sake of progress - her work is also a powerful collection of scholar/historian documentation which has occurred for the past 2000+ years. In other words, the idea that all of these ideas about comparative religion are "Acharya's ideas" is beyond incorrect. Again, this is a tactic used by some to avoid actually reviewing sources. Another common accusation is that all these ideas are from an "esoteric" egyptologist names Gerald Massey. This is also nonsense. Massey is simply one of many Egyptologists who recognized the obvious relationship of Christianity to earlier religions, specifically the Egyptian.

At end of this section is the Bibliography for Part 1. Everyone is encouraged to examine the sources denoted and research the nature of those scholars. The fact is, while this topic has been very controversial and "taboo" for a very long period of time, it doesn't change the facts apparent - as inconvenient as they may be to the current prevailing assumptions about the origins of modern religious beliefs.

A MESSAGE FROM DM MURDOCK:

When Peter Joseph asked me to help out on this lengthy project, I readily agreed, even though the material contained herein had already been validated repeatedly in my other efforts. In this day and age, it is obvious that many people are not inclined or available timewise to read large tomes of scholarly writings in order to "figure it all out." This fact of time-constraint as well as difficulty in subject matter is the major reason "ZEITGEIST" was so successful in the first place, as it provided a short and easily digestible summary of the issue at hand: To wit, the origins of some of our most cherished religious ideas. So, here we have put together a resource that is hopefully more readily available to all who are interested but find it difficult and time-consuming to wade through huge chunks of information.

When Peter first asked me to pitch in on this specific project, he was not aware of how much work it would turn out to be, because—as many who have read my work will know—I am very diligent and meticulous in not only my writing style but also the subject matter.

In any event, as I try to do, I have put my all into this work, so I hope you will benefit from it greatly. This effort includes new source material drawn from primary sources as well the works from credentialed authorities in a variety of relevant subjects. - D.M. Murdock aka Acharya S

The Greatest Story Ever Told



1. This is the sun. As far back as 10,000 B.C., history is abundant with carvings and writings reflecting people's respect and adoration for this object.

Numerous artifacts prove these points, such as from the sun-worshipping cultures of the Egyptians, Indians, Babylonians and Greeks, among many others, including the peoples of the Levant and ancient Israel. Concerning the antiquity of sun worship, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Dr. Madanjeet Singh relates:

The tool-making hominids, as anthropologists call them, emerged about one-and-a-half million years ago. But the sun's identification with the animals they hunted became evident much later as in the striking circular engravings representing the sun, discovered in the Central Asian regions (thirteenth millennium BC) in Siberia and western Turkistan. They seem to have eventually influenced the earliest artifacts made in Iran and Mesopotamia... Apart from the animals depicted in the Lascaux caves in France, at Altamira in Spain, at Adduara in Sicily (15,000 to 10,000 BC), and at the prehistoric Tassili N'Ajjer in the Sahara region (7000 to 4000 BC), are also strange human figures such as the dancing man with horns on his head and a stallion tail, as in the cave paintings at Trois Frères in Ariège. These are comparable to similar figures seen on the third-millennium-BC Mohenjo-daro seals found in the Indus Valley—symbols that are identified with the sun....¹

Describing this ubiquitous of sun worship, professor of Archaeology at Cardiff University Dr. Miranda J. Aldhouse-Green remarks:

The evidence for the sun cult manifests itself in Europe from as long ago as the fourth millennium BC, when Neolithic farmers recognized the divine power of the solar disc...

...Solar religion manifested itself not only in acknowledgement of the overt functions of the sun—as a provider of heat and light—but also in recognition of influences that were more wide-ranging...

¹ Singh, 12-13.

To early communities, the sun was an enigma, with its nightly disappearance from the sky and the withdrawal of its heat for half the year. The sun's value as a life-force was revered....²

This solar religion continued for millennia, well into the common or "Christian" era. As stated by Dr. Lee I.A. Levine, a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary:

On the religious plane, belief in the supremacy of the sun god was widespread. The cult of Mithra, as well as other Oriental cults in the late Roman era, identified the supreme deity with the sun. In fact, the tendency in Late Antiquity to unify the creeds allowed [the Greek sun god] Helios to be identified in many circles as the highest deity. On an intellectual level, Neoplatonic thought throughout these centuries likewise addressed the centrality of the sun... Closer to Palestine, sun-worship is amply attested...in Palmyra, among the Essenes, in Nabataea, as well as on a plethora of coins, statuettes, altars, busts, and inscriptions from the first centuries of our era.³

Dr. Levine also says:

In the late Roman era, the figure of Helios, or Sol Invictus, occupied a central role in a variety of settings, from the Imperial circles of Rome to the eastern provinces... Throughout the Greco-Roman period generally, and especially in the first centuries of the Common Era, the cult of this sun god enjoyed enormous popularity.⁴

Sun worship persists to this day, as described in Dr. Singh's *The Sun: Symbol of Power and Life*, an extensive survey with many images of solar religious traditions and iconography from the earliest periods into the modern era. For more information on the "Astrotheology of the Ages" and "The God Sun," see also *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled* by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock.



'Anthropomorphized sun-god images in Saimaly Tash rock drawings' Bronze Age (c. 3000-600 BCE) Tien Mountains, Kyrgyzstan (Singh, 15)



'Babylonian King before the Sun God Shamash,' c. 2000 BCE (Musée du Louvre, Paris)



Irish 'Sun Disc' c. 2000 BCE (N. Museum of Ireland, Dublin)

2. And it is simple to understand why, as every morning the sun would rise, bringing vision, warmth, and security, saving man from the cold, blind, predator-filled darkness of night. Without it, the cultures understood, the crops would not grow, and life on the planet would not survive. These realities made the sun the most adored object of all time.

Concerning the ancient reverence for the sun, UNESCO Director-General Dr. Federico Mayor remarks:

As the bestower of light and life, ancient cultures generally identified the sun as the symbol of Truth, the all-seeing "one eye" of justice and equality, the fountainhead of wisdom, compassion, and enlightenment, the healer of physical and spiritual maladies, and, above all, the fundamental source of fecundity, growth, and fruition, as well as of death and the renewal of life.⁵

² Singh, 295.

³ Kalmin, 106.

⁴ Kalmin, 103.

⁵ Singh, 7.

An Egyptian hymn from the era of the pharaoh Akhenaten (d. c. 1336 BCE) expresses the intense ancient reverence for the sun:

You appear beautiful,
You living sun, lord of Endless Time,
are sparkling, beautiful and strong,
Love of you is great and powerful.
Your rays touch every face...
Your radiant skin animates hearts.
You have filled the Two Lands [of the horizons] with love of yourself.⁶



Pharaoh Akhenaten and wife Nefertiti worshipping the sun
c. 14th century BCE

3. Likewise, they were also very aware of the stars.

Naturally, the ancient practice of “astrotheology” incorporated reverence for not only the sun but also the moon, planets, stars and constellations. In *Prehistoric Lunar Astronomy*, Indian scholar Dr. S.B. Roy remarks:

To the ancients...heaven was the land of gods and mystery. The sky...was itself living. The stars were the abode of the gods. The shining stars were indeed themselves luminous gods. Astronomy was the knowledge not of heavenly bodies, but of heavenly *beings*: It was the heavenly, celestial cosmic or divine knowledge—knowledge of *devas*—the bright luminous gods.⁷

Ancient stellar symbols and star maps have been found dating to many thousands of years ago, including in cave paintings and carvings. As the BBC reports in “Ice Age star map discovered”:

A prehistoric map of the night sky has been discovered on the walls of the famous painted caves at Lascaux in central France.

The map, which is thought to date back 16,500 years, shows three bright stars known today as the summer Triangle...

According to German researcher Dr. Michael Rappenglueck, of the University of Munich, the maps show that our ancestors were more sophisticated than many believe.⁸

In “‘Oldest Star Chart’ Found,” astronomer Dr. David Whitehouse states:

The oldest image of a star pattern, that of the famous constellation of Orion, has been recognised on an ivory tablet some 32,500 years old.

⁶ Assman, *ESRNC*, 94.

⁷ Roy, 1.

⁸ “Ice Age star map discovered,” news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/871930.stm

The tiny sliver of mammoth tusk contains a carving of a man-like figure with arms and legs outstretched in the same pose as the stars of Orion...⁹



Ancient star map
c. 16,500 years old
Lascaux, France



Ivory star chart
c. 32,500 to 38,000 years old
Ach Valley, Alb-Danuba, Germany

4. The tracking of the stars allowed them to recognize and anticipate events which occurred over long periods of time, such as eclipses and full moons. They in turn catalogued celestial groups into what we know today as constellations.

In his book *In Search of Ancient Astronomies*, astronomer Dr. Edwin C. Krupp remarks:

At Stonehenge in England and Carnac in France, in Egypt and Yucatan, across the whole face of the earth are found mysterious ruins of ancient monuments, monuments with astronomical significance... Some of them built according to celestial alignments; others were actually precision astronomical observatories... Careful observations of the celestial rhythms was compellingly important to early peoples and their expertise, in some respects, was not equaled in Europe until three thousand years later.¹⁰

One of these ancient observatories—one of the world's oldest yet discovered—is found in Goseck, Germany:

A vast, shadowy circle sits in a flat wheat field near Goseck, Germany... The circle represents the remains of the world's oldest observatory, dating back 7,000 years. Coupled with an etched disk recovered last year, the observatory suggests that Neolithic and Bronze Age people measured the heavens far earlier and more accurately than scientists had imagined.¹¹

In "Oldest solar Observatory in Americas Found in Peru," NPR reports:

Archeologists may have uncovered what they say is by far the oldest astronomical observatory in the America: a series of towers near a temple in coastal Peru, built in the fourth century B.C...

The towers at Chankillo mark the sun's progress across the sky... This suggests the sun may have played an important role in religious and political life long before the appearance of the famous Inca sun cult...

[Archeologist Ivan] Ghezzi says, "The Inca claimed to be the offspring of the sun. But now we have a society that is 1,800 years before the Inca that is clearly using the sun as a way to make a political, social and ideological statement."

Many more such discoveries have occurred over the past several decades.

⁹ "‘Oldest Star Chart’ Found," [news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/2679675.stm](https://www.bbc.com/news/science-nature-2679675)

¹⁰ Krupp, *ISAA*, xiii.

¹¹ Mukerjee, "Circles for Space." Mukerjee mentions here what is called the "Nebra Disk."



Astronomically aligned stones,
6,000 to 8,500 years old
Nabta Playa, Egypt



Solar circle observatory
c. 7,000 years old
Goseck, Germany
(Ralf Beutragel)



The Thirteen Towers
c. 14th century BCE
Chankillo, Peru
(Ivan Ghezzi)

5. This is the cross of the Zodiac, one of the oldest conceptual images in human history. It reflects the sun as it figuratively passes through the 12 major constellations over the course of a year. It also reflects the 12 months of the year, the four seasons, and the solstices and equinoxes. The term Zodiac relates to the fact that constellations were anthropomorphized, or personified, as figures, or animals.

The antiquity of the idea of a zodiac is disputed, but it may have been formulated as early as 4,000 or more years ago. As D.M. Murdock says in *Christ in Egypt: The Horus Jesus Connection*:

...the zodiac certainly existed in Mesopotamia millennia ago, worked over by the famed Chaldean astronomers, with the Greeks further polishing it. In this regard, several sources—such as royal astronomer Dr. Edward Walter Maunder..., the devout Christian author of *The Astronomy of the Bible*—have indicated an origin of the zodiac, including the popular signs, to some 4,000 or more years ago. We also possess the relatively recent find of the “Karanovo Zodiac” from Bulgaria, which has been dated to around 6,000 years ago and which seems to bear rudimentary renditions of the constellations found in the Western zodiac.¹²

The zodiac as it appears to us today was refined by the Greeks several centuries prior to the common era.

Karanovo Tablet



c. 6,000 years old
Nova Zagora, Bulgaria



Dendera zodiac
1st century BCE
Dendera, Egypt



“Hieroglyphic Plan, by
Hermes, of the Ancient
Zodiac”
(Kirchner, *OEdipus
AEgyptiacus*)

6. In other words, the early civilizations did not just follow the sun and stars, they personified them with elaborate myths involving their movements and relationships.

The meanings of many myths can be traced to a number of origins, the most prominent of which is nature worship and astrotheology, whereby the gods and goddesses are essentially personifications of earthly forces and celestial bodies. As concerns the anthropomorphization of the celestial bodies, in *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled*, Murdock relates:

¹² Murdock, *CIE*, 265-266. The Karanovo Tablet has also been interpreted to be crude Egyptian hieroglyphs. See “The Sacred Tablet from the village of Karanovo,” www.institutet-science.com/en/karanovoe.php

Ancient peoples abundantly acknowledged that their religions, dating back centuries and millennia before the common era, were largely based on astrotheology, with their gods representing the sun, moon, stars and planets. One of their focuses was the sun...and the story of the sun became highly developed over a period of thousands of years, possibly tens of thousands or more. The observations of the sun and its daily, monthly, annual and precessional movements have led to complex myths in which it was personified as a god...¹³

We can see this astrotheological and nature-worshipping religion in the writings of ancient historians such as Herodotus, Berossus and Diodorus, as well as in the Bible, both overtly and covertly, and in Jewish apocryphal texts.¹⁴ The writings of the Church fathers also discussed the Pagan astrotheology, sometimes fairly extensively.

One ancient source for the true nature-worshipping and astrotheological meaning of many Greek gods and goddesses is the writer Porphyry (c. 235-c. 305 AD/CE), who (according to early Catholic Church father/historian Eusebius) related:

The whole power productive of water [the Greeks] called Oceanus... the drinking-water produced is called Achelous; and the sea-water Poseidon...

...the power of fire they called Hephaestus... the fire brought down from heaven to earth is less intense...wherefore he is lame...

Also they supposed a power of this kind to belong to the sun and called it Apollo... There are also nine Muses singing to his lyre, which are the sublunar sphere, and seven spheres of the planets, and one of the fixed stars...

But inasmuch as the sun wards off the evils of the earth, they called him Heracles [Hercules]... And they invented fables of his performing twelve labours, as the symbol of the division of the signs of the zodiac in heaven; and they arrayed him with a club and a lion's skin, the one as an indication of his uneven motion, and the other representative of his strength in "Leo" the sign of the zodiac.

Of the sun's healing power Asclepius is the symbol...

But the fiery power of his revolving and circling motion whereby he ripens the crops, is called Dionysus... And whereas he revolves round the cosmical seasons [Grk. *horas*] and is the maker of "times and tides," the sun is on this account called Horus.

Of his power over agriculture, whereon depend the gifts of wealth (Plutus), the symbol is Pluto...

Cerberus is represented with three heads, because the positions of the sun above the earth are three—rising, midday, and setting.

The moon, conceived according to her brightness, they called Artemis...

What Apollo is to the sun, that Athena is to the moon: for the moon is a symbol of wisdom, and so a kind of Athena.

But, again, the moon is Hecate, the symbol of her varying phases...

They made Pan the symbol of the universe, and gave him his horns as symbols of sun and moon, and the fawn skin as emblem of the stars in heaven, or of the variety of the universe.¹⁵

Porphyry's explanations include many other divine figures, relating them to additional nature-worshipping elements such as air, wind, fruits and seeds, and he names the earth as a virgin and mother:

In all these ways, then, the power of the earth finds an interpretation and is worshipped: as a virgin and Hestia, she holds the centre; as a mother she nourishes...¹⁶

¹³ Acharya, SOG, 60.

¹⁴ For more on these subjects, see Murdock/Acharya's *Suns of God*.

¹⁵ Eusebius, *Evangelicae Praeparationis* ("The Preparation for the Gospel"), III, XI, 112d-115a; Eusebius/Gifford, 122-125.

Here is clearly one source in antiquity of the virgin-mother concept, which was so obviously adopted into Christianity from Paganism. As can be seen, the Greek religion was perceived in ancient times to be highly astrotheological and reflective of nature worship. The same can be said of many others, such as the Babylonian, Egyptian, Indian and Roman.



Hercules and the Hydra
Roman mosaic
Valencia, Spain
(Photo: Zaqarbal)



Disk with Dionysus and 11 signs of the zodiac
4th cent. BCE?
Brindisi, Italy
(Kerenyi, fig. 146)¹⁷



Sun god Apollo riding in his chariot
pulled by four horses
Mosaic

7. The sun, with its life-giving and saving qualities was personified as a representative of the unseen creator or god—"God's Sun"

We have already seen that the ancient cultures have considered the sun as divine; hence, it is either God, a god, or a son of God/a god. Indeed, this "sun of God as son of God" motif is common in the mythology of India, Greece, Rome and Egypt, to name a few of the more well-known nations. In Egypt, this "son of the sun" is the god Horus, among others, while in Greece it is Apollo, son of Zeus, whose name means "God." This same tradition was discussed by Plato, as related in *The Book of the Sun* (1494) by Neoplatonic-Christian philosopher Marsillio Ficino:

According to Plato [*Republic*, VI, 508c¹⁸], he called the Sun not God himself, but the son of God. And I say not the first son of God, but a second, and moreover visible son. For the first son of God is not this visible Sun, but another far superior intellect, namely the first one which only the intellect can contemplate. Therefore Socrates, having been awakened by the celestial Sun, surmised a super celestial Sun, and he contemplated attentively its majesty, and inspired, would admire the incomprehensible bounty of the Father.¹⁹

In a chapter (2) entitled, "How the light of the Sun is similar to Goodness itself, namely, God," Ficino summarizes the "god" characteristics projected upon the solar orb by ancient cultures extending into modern times:

...Above all the Sun is most able to signify to you God himself. The Sun offers you signs, and who dare to call the Sun false? Finally, the invisible things of God, that is to say, the angelic spirits, can be most powerfully seen by the intellect through the stars, and indeed even eternal things—the virtue and divinity of God—can be seen through the Sun.²⁰

Concerning the "son-sun" play on words—which is *not a cognate* but a mere happy coincidence in English that reflects the mythological "reality"—in *Jesus as the Sun throughout History*, Murdock states:

¹⁶ Eusebius, *Praep.*, III, XI, 110c; Eusebius/Gifford, 120-121.

¹⁷ Concerning this disk, Dr. Kerenyi (386) states: "The Brindisi disk includes the earliest known representation of the zodiac on Greek or Italian soil. To the artisan who fashioned it, the zodiac was still new. He inscribed it on the edge of the disk but did not understand its figures.... He also changed the order of the constellations but surely followed a very early model, for like the original Babylonian zodiac his has only eleven signs and a double-length Scorpio."

¹⁸ See Plato/Ferrari, 215. See also Pico della Mirandola (163): "...when Plato in the *Republic* calls the sun the visible son of God, why may we not understand it as the image of the invisible Son?"

¹⁹ Voss, 211.

²⁰ Voss, 190.

...this sun-son word play has been noted many times previously in history by a variety of individuals, including English priest and poet Robert Southwell in the 16th century and English poet Richard Crashaw in the 17th century. English poet and preacher John Donne (1572-1631) and Welsh poet and priest George Herbert (1593-1633) likewise engaged in the son/sun pun as applied to Christ. In discussing Donne, Dr. Arthur L. Clements, a professor at Binghamton University, remarks that the “Son-sun pun” is “familiar enough.” Comparing Christ to the “day star,” famous English poet John Milton (1608-1674) was aware of the “sun/son of God” analogy and “revel[ed] in the sun-son pun.”... Puritan minister Edward Taylor (1642-1729) engaged in the same punning by describing Christ as “the onely [sic] begotten Sun that is in the bosom of the Father...”

Furthermore, in describing the actions of the Church fathers in adapting sun myths to Christianity, Thomas Ellwood Longshore declared in 1881, “They merely changed the visible ‘Sun of God’ for the invisible ‘Son of God,’ or for this personage they called the ‘Son of God’...”

Obviously, this “devotional pun” was widely recognized centuries ago by the English-speaking intelligentsia and educated elite....

To reiterate, while the mythical “truth” is that in antiquity the sun was perceived as the “son of God,” the claim is not being made that the words “sun” and “son” are related or cognates. Or that the NT writers knew English, or that this phonic coincidence in itself provides any evidence whatsoever of the thesis it illustrates. As we can see, however, great English writers have happily glommed onto the notion that the “Sun of Righteousness” is the “Son of God” and have utilized the “son/sun” pun or play on words with glee.

8. ...the light of the world, the savior of human kind. Likewise, the 12 constellations represented places of travel for God’s Sun and were identified by names, usually representing elements of nature that happened during that period of time. For example, Aquarius, the water bearer, who brings the Spring rains.

The notions of the sun as the “savior” and the “light of the world” are understandably common in ancient religious history:

...The *Sun* was looked up to as the grand omnipotent nucleus, whose all-vivifying power is the vital and sole source of animative and vegetative existence upon the globe—the glorious foundation out of which springs all that man ever has, or ever can call good; and as such, the only proper object of the homage and adoration of mankind: hence the Sun, as we are informed by Pausanias, was worshipped at Eleusis under the name of “The Saviour.”²¹

In his description of a sacred precinct in Arkadia that apparently practiced the Eleusinian mysteries, famous Greek historian of the second century AD/CE, Pausanias, (8.31) remarks:

There are these square-shaped statues of other gods inside the enclosure: Hermes the Leader, Apollo, Athene, Poseidon, the Saviour Sun, and Herakles.²²

To describe the sun as “savior,” Pausanias uses the word *Soter*, a title commonly applied to many gods and goddesses at different places.

The sun’s role as savior and light is exemplified in the following ancient Egyptian solar hymn:

You are the light, which rises for humankind;
the sun, which brings clarity,
so that gods and humans be recognised and distinguished
when you reveal yourself.
Every face lives from seeing your beauty,
all seed germinates when touched by your rays,
and there is no-one who can live without you.



²¹ Mitchell, 62.

²² Pausanias/Levi, 451.

You lead everyone, because they have a duty to their work.
You have given form to their life, by becoming visible.²³

With regard to the “12...places of travel for God’s Sun,” *The New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* relates:

In Russian Folklore the Sun possessed twelve kingdoms—the twelve months or signs of the Zodiac. He lived in the solar disk and his children on the stars... The daily movement of the Sun across the celestial sphere was represented in certain Slavonic myths as a change in his age: the sun was born every morning...²⁴

The notion of the sun moving, passing or traveling through the zodiacal circle was expressed by the Greek philosophers Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle.²⁵ Neoplatonist Ficino may be echoing their sentiment, when he says:

The Sun, in that it is clearly lord of the sky, rules and moderates all truly celestial things... Firstly, it infuses light into all the stars, whether they have a tiny light of their own (as some people suspect), or no light at all (as very many think). Next, through the twelve signs of the zodiac, it is called living...and that sign which the Sun invigorates actually appears to be alive.²⁶

This idea of the sun—or moon—“traveling” through the signs of the zodiac was common among several peoples, including the Anglo-Saxons, as demonstrated in the *De temporibus anni* of Ælfric Puttoc (d. 1051), who personifies the moon (“old and tired”) and relates:

Truly the moon year has twenty-seven days and eight hours... This is the moon year, but its month is more, which is when the moon travels new from the sun until it returns to the sun again, old and tired, and is displayed again through the sun [i.e. new moon]. In the moon month are counted twenty-nine days and twelve hours, this is the moon month, and its year is when it travels through all twelve star signs.²⁷

So too is this knowledge of the sun passing or traveling through the signs included in the highly astrological work by famed Jewish philosopher Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1167) in *The Book of Reasons* (Sefer ha-Te’amim), in which he writes: “The six signs were designed northern because the Sun travels through them when it is on the northern side of the equator, and the opposite applies to the southern (signs).”²⁸

The meanings of the signs of the zodiac have been interpreted variously over the centuries, ranging from constellations to seasonal qualities, such as Virgo and Aquarius. In *The Christ Conspiracy*, Murdock summarizes these astrotheological meanings of the zodiacal signs as we currently have them and as they would have been during the several centuries before the common era:

Aries is represented as the Ram/Lamb because March/April is the time of the year when lambs are born. Taurus is the Bull because April/May is the time for ploughing and tilling. Gemini is the Twins, so-called for Castor and Pollux, the twin stars in its constellation, as well as because May/June is the time of “increasing or “doubling” of the sun, when it reached its greatest strength... Virgo, originally the Great Mother Earth, is the “Gleaning Virgin, who holds a sheath of wheat,” symbolizing August/September, the time of the harvest... Aquarius is the Water-Bearer because January/February is the time of winter rains.²⁹

²³ Assman, *ESRNL*, 78.

²⁴ *Larousse*, 285.

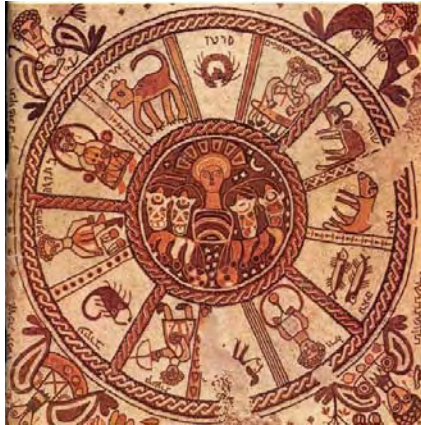
²⁵ Mansfield, 701.

²⁶ Voss, 192.

²⁷ Chardonnens, 395.

²⁸ Sela, 37.

²⁹ Acharya, CC, 152, as paraphrased from Hazelrigg’s *The Sun Book*, 43.



Zodiac with sun god Helios in the center
6th century AD/CE
Mosaic, synagogue
Beit Alpha, Israel

In order to understand how the ancients personified the celestial elements and told stories about them, we can turn to the myth of Hercules, which has been recognized to be both astronomical and astrotheological:

...The Labors of Hercules which chiefly interest us are: (1) The capture of the Bull, (2) the slaughter of the Lion, (3) the destruction of the Hydra, (4) of the Boar, (5) the cleansing of the stables of Augeas, (6) the descent into Hades and the taming of Cerberus. The first of these is in line with the Mithraic conquest of the Bull; the Lion is of course one of the most prominent constellations of the Zodiac, and its conquest is obviously the work of a Saviour of mankind; while the last four labors connect themselves very naturally with the Solar conflict in winter against the powers of darkness. The Boar (4) we have seen already as the image of Typhon, the prince of darkness; the Hydra (3) was said to be the offspring of Typhon; the descent into Hades (6)—generally associated with Hercules' struggle with and victory over Death—links on to the descent of the Sun into the underworld, and its long and doubtful strife with the forces of winter; and the cleansing of the stables of Augeas (5) has the same signification. It appears in fact that the stables of Augeas was another name for the sign of *Capricorn* through which the Sun passes at the Winter solstice—the stable of course being an underground chamber—and the myth was that there, in this lowest tract and backwater of the Ecliptic all the malarious and evil influences of the sky were collected, and the Sungod came to wash them away (December was the height of the rainy season in Judæa) and cleanse the year towards its rebirth.

It should not be forgotten too that even as a child in the cradle Hercules slew two serpents sent for his destruction—the serpent and the scorpion as autumnal constellations figuring always as enemies of the Sungod—to which may be compared the power given to his disciples by Jesus “to tread on serpents and scorpions.” Hercules also as a Sungod compares curiously with Samson...but we need not dwell on all the elaborate analogies that have been traced between these two heroes....³⁰

9. This is Horus. He is the Sun God of Egypt of around 3000 BC.

Concerning the antiquity of Horus, Egyptologist Dr. Edmund S. Meltzer remarks:

Horus is one of the earliest attested of the major ancient Egyptian deities, becoming known to us at least as early as the late Predynastic period (Naqada III/Dynasty 0) [c. 3200-3000 BCE]; he was still prominent in the latest temples of the Greco-Roman period [332 BCE-640 AD/CE], especially at Philae and Edfu, as well as in the Old Coptic and Greco-Egyptian ritual power, or magical, texts.³¹

As is the case with many gods in other parts of the world, several Egyptian gods (and goddesses) possess solar attributes, essentially making them sun gods. These Egyptian sun gods included not only

³⁰ Carpenter, 48-50.

³¹ Redford, 165.

the commonly known Ra or Re, but also Osiris and Horus, among others. In the first century BCE, the Greek writer Diodorus Siculus described Osiris as the sun, while his sister-wife, Isis, is the moon:

Now when the ancient Egyptians, awestruck and wondering, turned their eyes to the heavens, they concluded that two gods, the sun and the moon, were primeval and eternal: they called the former Osiris, the latter Isis....³²

Concerning the nature of certain Egyptian gods, Dr. James P. Allen, Curator of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, remarks:

...Ruling over the universe by day, the Sun was identified with Horus, the god of kingship; at sunset he was seen as Atum, the oldest of all gods. The Sun's daily movement through the sky was viewed as a journey from birth to death, and his rebirth at dawn was made possible through Osiris, the force of new life...

...In the middle of the night the Sun merged with Osiris's body; through this union, the Sun received the power of new life while Osiris was reborn in the Sun.³³

These gods are often interchangeable, and their attributes and stories may overlap. As stated by Egyptologist Dr. Erik Hornung:

Many Egyptian gods can be the sun god, especially Re, Atum, Amun, and manifestations of Horus. Even Osiris appears as the night form of the sun god in the New Kingdom. It is often not defined which particular sun god is meant in a given instance.³⁴



Horus or Rā in his disk.

Hieroglyph representing either Horus or Ra in his Sun Disk
(Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, cxiv)

These gods' interchangeability is evident from Egyptian texts, such as chapter or spell 69 of the Book of the Dead:

...I am Horus the Elder on the Day of Accession, I am Anubis of Sepa, I am the Lord of All, I am Osiris.³⁵

Moreover, there were several Horuses, including Horus the Elder, whose eyes are the sun and the moon, as well as also Horus the Child, a number of whose attributes may be found in the gospel story and Christian tradition. Eventually these "various Horuses blended together until there were only two left; Horus the Sun God and Horus the son of Osiris and Isis."³⁶

Concerning these different Horuses, Egyptologist Dr. Henri Frankfort says:

It is therefore a mistake to separate "Horus, the Great God, Lord of Heaven," from "Horus, son of Osiris," or to explain their identity as due to syncretism in comparatively late times. The two gods "Horus" whose titles we have set side by side are, in reality, one and the same.³⁷

³² Diodorus/Murphy, 14.

³³ Allen, *AEPT*, 8.

³⁴ Hornung, *CGAE*, 283.

³⁵ Faulkner, *EBD* (1967), 107

³⁶ Jackson, J., 112.

³⁷ Frankfort, 41.



Horus the Elder



Horus the Child with sidelock
Magical Stela, 360–343 BCE

10. He is the sun, anthropomorphized, and his life is a series of allegorical myths involving the sun’s movement in the sky.

We have already seen that Horus is a sun god, a fact confirmed five centuries before the common era by the Greek historian Herodotus (2.144, 156), when he equated Osiris with Dionysus and Horus with the Greek sun god Apollo: “In Egyptian, Apollo is Horus, Demeter is Isis, Artemis is Bubastis....”³⁸

Regarding Horus as the sun god, Murdock says:

In ancient Egyptian writings such as the Pyramid Texts, in which he is called the “Lord of the Sky,” along with other solar epithets such as “He Whose Face is Seen,” “He Whose Hair is Parted,” and “He Whose Two Plumes are Long,” Horus’s function as a sun god or aspect of the sun is repeatedly emphasized, although this singularly pertinent fact is seldom found in encyclopedias and textbooks, leaving us to wonder why he would be thus diminished. In the Coffin Texts as well is Horus’s role as (morning) sun god made clear, such as in the following elegantly rendered scripture from CT Sp. 255:

“...I will appear as Horus who ascends in gold from upon the lips of the horizon...”

In CT Sp. 326, Horus is even called “Lord of the sunlight.”³⁹

Egyptologist James Allen also discusses Horus’s solar attributes:

Horus was the power of kingship. To the Egyptians this was as much a force of nature as those embodied in the other gods. It was manifest in two natural phenomena: the sun, the most powerful force in nature; and the pharaoh, the most powerful force in human society. Horus’s role as the king of nature is probably the origin of his name: *hrw* seems to mean “the one above” or “the one far off”... This is apparently a reference to the sun, which is “above” and “far off” in the sky, like the falcon with which Horus is regularly associated...⁴⁰



‘The Sun Springing from an Opening Lotus-Flower in the Form of the Child Horus’
(Maspero, 193)

Illustrating certain motifs including the sun god’s movement through the night and day, Sir Dr. E.A. Wallis Budge (1857–1934), noted English Egyptologist, Orientalist, and philologist who worked for the British Museum and published numerous works, remarks:

The Sun has countless names, Ptah, Tmu, Ra, Horus, Khnemu, Sebek, Amen, etc.; and some of them, such as Osiris and Seker, are names of the Sun after he has set, or, in mythological language, has died and been buried.... All gods, as such, were absolutely equal in their might and

³⁸ Herodotus/de Selincourt, 145.

³⁹ Murdock, *CIE*, 47.

⁴⁰ Allen, J., *ME*, 144.

in their divinity; but, mythologically, Osiris might be said to be slain by his brother Set, the personification of Night, who, in his turn, was overthrown by Horus (the rising sun), the heir of Osiris.⁴¹

As we can see, both Osiris and Horus are essentially sun gods, who both also battle with the “Prince of Darkness,” the god Set or Seth.



‘Horus emerging from the corpse of Osiris, the sun disk behind him’
Burial chamber of Ramesses VI, 1145-1137 BCE
(Hornung, *Valley of the Kings*, 116)

11. From the ancient hieroglyphics in Egypt, we know much about this solar messiah. For instance, Horus, being the sun, or the light, had an enemy known as Set, and Set was the personification of the darkness or night. And, metaphorically speaking, every morning Horus would win the battle against Set—while in the evening, Set would conquer Horus and send him into the underworld. It is important to note that “dark vs. light” or “good vs. evil” is one of the most ubiquitous mythological dualities ever known and is still expressed on many levels to this day.

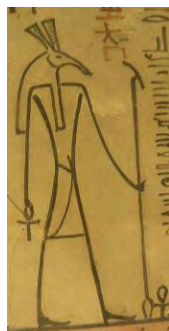
Like his father, Osiris, battling Set/Seth on a nightly basis, so too does Horus fight Seth, as related by Egyptologist Dr. Jan Assman:

First, Horus and Seth battle one another in the form of hippopotami; Isis seizes a harpoon but is unable to kill Seth, because he addresses her as sister. Horus is furious at this act of mercy and decapitates Isis. He flees into the desert, where Seth finds him and rips his eyes out. But the wounds are immediately healed and the plot continues.⁴²

Horus’s conflict with Set is also recounted by the director of the Antiquities Museum at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt, Dr. Badrya Serry:

It is known that the child Harpocrates struggled with his uncle Seth to revenge his father...and attain victory upon him. Since he overcame the powers of darkness (Seth) [he was] likened to the Greek hero Heracles who battled the powers of evilness.⁴³

For more information, see the chapter “Horus versus Set,” pp. 67-78, in Murdock’s *Christ in Egypt*.



‘Set’ as represented in the tomb of pharaoh Thutmose III (fl. 1479–1425)



Horus versus Set

⁴¹ Budge, *GFSE*, 2-3.
⁴² Assman, *SGAE*, 140.
⁴³ Goyon, 121.

12. Broadly speaking, the story of Horus is as follows. Horus was born on December 25th

It needs to be understood that the Egyptian stories were never “laid out” in a linear form; rather, they appear in bits and pieces in primary sources such as the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts and Book of the Dead, compiled and altered over many centuries, beginning as early as 7,000 years ago. Thus, it is a common misconception that the myths unfold in the same linear manner as in the Christian narrative. Most of these motifs are indeed not linear narratives, but, rather, symbolic associations derived from different Egyptian texts, as well as later mythographers’ accounts. Since this description of Horus here is obviously angled from the reference point of the Christian narrative, the subject needs to be deconstructed and reconsidered from the standpoint of each motif, rather than the overall narrative. The Christian story must, in turn, likewise be considered from the standpoint of each individual motif and not linearly, because this basic “mythicist”⁴⁴ argument is that the Christian religion is a compilation of religious motifs which existed previously—and separately.

Obviously, the English term “December 25th” did not exist in the ancient Egyptian calendar but simply refers to the *winter solstice*, which the ancients perceived as beginning on December 21st and ending at midnight on the 24th. We learn from one of the most famous historians of the first century, Plutarch (46-120 AD/CE), that Horus the Child—or “Harpocrates,” as was his Greek name—was “born about the winter solstice, unfinished and infant-like...”⁴⁵

Three centuries after Plutarch, ancient Latin writer Macrobius (395–423 AD/CE) also reported on an annual Egyptian “Christmas” celebration (*Saturnalia*, I, XVIII:10):

...at the winter solstice the sun would seem to be a little child, like that which the Egyptians bring forth from a shrine on an appointed day, since the day is then at its shortest and the god is accordingly shown as a tiny infant.⁴⁶

As Egyptologist Dr. Bojana Mojsov remarks: “The symbol of the savior-child was the eye of the sun newly born every year at the winter solstice.”⁴⁷

Other indications of the Egyptian reverence of the winter solstice may be found in hieroglyphs, as Murdock relates:

As [Egyptologist Dr. Heinrich] Brugsch explains, the Egyptians not only abundantly recorded and revered the time of the winter solstice, they also created a number of hieroglyphs to depict it, including the image mentioned by Budge, which turns out to be the goddess-sisters Isis and Nephthys with the solar disc floating above their hands over a lifegiving ankh—the looped Egyptian cross—as the sun’s rays extend down to the cross symbol. This image of the sun between Isis and Nephthys, which is sometimes depicted without the ankh, is described in an inscription at Edfu regarding Ptolemy VII (fl. 145 BCE?) and applied to the winter solstice, translated as: “The sun coming out of the sky-ocean into the hands of the siblings Isis and Nephthys.” This image very much looks like the sun being born, which is sensible, since, again, Harpocrates, the morning sun, was born every day, including at the winter solstice.⁴⁸


⁴⁴ The “mythicist position” or “mythicism” posits that many if not most of the ancient gods, goddesses and godmen, as well as various heroes and legends, are not “real people” but mythical figures. This perception may include not just the Greek and Roman gods, for example, who are presently viewed as myths by mainstream scholarship and the lay public alike, but also many biblical figures, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

⁴⁵ Plutarch, “Isis and Osiris” (65, 387C); King, C.W., 56; Plutarch/Babbitt, 153.

⁴⁶ Macrobius/Davies, 129. The original Latin of this paragraph in Macrobius is: “...ut parvulus videatur hiemali solstitio, qualem Aegyptii proferunt ex adyto die certa, quod tunc brevissimo die veluti parvus et infans videatur...” (Murdock, *CIE*, 89.)

⁴⁷ Mojsov, 13.

⁴⁸ Murdock, *CIE*, 94.

nen , Thes. 408, Wört. 1621, the winter solstice.

Isis and Nephthys holding the baby Sun over the Life-Giving Ankh, representing the Winter Solstice
(Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, 351)

There are many other artifacts in Egypt that demonstrate Horus's association with the winter solstice, including his temples aligned to the rising sun at that time of the year.⁴⁹

13. ...of the virgin Isis-Meri.

The virginity of Horus's mother, Isis, has been disputed, because in one myth she is portrayed as impregnating herself with Osiris's severed phallus. In depictions of Isis's impregnation, the goddess conceives Horus "while she fluttered in the form of a hawk over the corpse of her dead husband."⁵⁰ We have also seen that in an image from the tomb of Ramesses VI, Horus is born out of Osiris's corpse without Isis even being in the picture. In another tradition, Horus is conceived when the water of the Nile—identified as Osiris—overflows the river's banks, which are equated with Isis. The "phallus" in this latter case is the "sharp star Sothis" or Sirius, the rising of which signaled the Nile flood.⁵¹ Hence, in discussing these *myths* we are not dealing with "real people" who have body parts.



"Osiris...begetting a son by Isis, who hovers over him in the form of a hawk."
(Budge, *On the Future Life: Egyptian Religion*, 80)

As is often the case with *mythical* figures, despite the way she is impregnated, Isis remained the "Great Virgin," as she is called in a number of pre-Christian Egyptian writings. As stated by Egyptologist Dr. Reginald E. Witt:

The Egyptian goddess who was equally "the Great Virgin" (*hwnt*) and "Mother of the God" was the object of the very same praise bestowed upon her successor [Mary, Virgin Mother of Jesus].⁵²

One of the inscriptions that calls Isis the "Great Virgin" appears in the temple of Seti I at Abydos dating to the 13th century BCE, while in later times she is equated with the constellation of Virgo, the Virgin.⁵³ Also, in the temple of Neith and Isis at Sais was an ancient inscription that depicted the virgin birth of the sun:

The present and the future and the past, I am. My undergarment no one has uncovered. The fruit I brought forth, the sun came into being.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ For more information on the winter solstice in ancient Egypt, see Murdock, *CIE*, 79-117.

⁵⁰ Frazer, *GB*, IV, 8.

⁵¹ Murdock, *CIE*, 201.

⁵² Witt, 273.

⁵³ For more on the virgin status of Isis, see Murdock, *CIE*, 138-157.

⁵⁴ Murdock, *CIE*, 146.

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