THE MISSINGLINK



POWERFUL EVIDENCE OF AN Advanced "Golden Age" Culture in Prehistoric Antiquity



RICHARD CASSARO

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CONTENTS

Introduction – New Archaeological Discovery

- Chapter 1 Decoding Ancient Triptych Temples
- Chapter 2 The Esoteric Meaning of Twin Guardian Lions
- Chapter 3 GodSelf Icon in Masonic Art & Architecture
- Chapter 4 GodSelf Icon in Egypt
- Chapter 5 GodSelf Icon in the Peruvian Andes
- Chapter 6 GodSelf Icon in Africa
- Chapter 7 GodSelf Icon in the Americas
- Chapter 8 GodSelf Icon in Ancient Persia
- Chapter 9 GodSelf Icon in Mesopotamia
- Chapter 10 GodSelf Icon in Greece
- Chapter 11 GodSelf Icon in Ancient Europe
- Chapter 12 GodSelf Icon in China
- Chapter 13 GodSelf Icon in India
- Conclusion



INTRODUCTION New Archaeological Discovery

Imagine what might happen if tomorrow a great cataclysm wiped out all civilization and killed every human being, save for a new illiterate Adam and a grunting fertile Eve who eventually managed to re-start the human race.

After thousands of years or more, the "Dr. Zaius" of the new civilization would eventually dig his way down to the thin layer that represents our time, and he would come across one symbol perhaps more than any other: *the Christian Crucifix.*

As future archaeologists sift through the ruins of our long-forgotten culture, they would find the crucifix everywhere—on buried churches; in underground castles; on cathedrals poking above the waterline; and in the debris-covered ruins of schools, shops, homes, government buildings, monuments, and cemeteries.

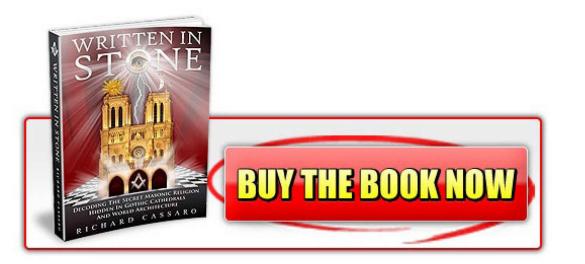
Not just on one continent, but across the entire world.

While there might be more crosses in the Americas and Europe than in Africa or Asia, there would certainly be quite a few found in odd places like Korea and Nairobi.

"The crucifix was the chief symbol of a global religion"—our future archaeologists might think. And they would be right: aside from the Islamic world and the vast reaches of East, Central and South Asia, Christianity is everywhere.

In Chapter Nine of my 2011 book, Written in Stone, I published my

account of a similar scenario, but one based on a close study of monuments and artifacts as remote from us in the other direction of time as we would be to our postulated descendants of thousands of years hence.



The result of my investigation was the discovery that many of the world's earliest cultures, including the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Hindus, Chinese, Maya, pre-Inca, and pre-Christian Europeans, shared the *same* ubiquitous religious icon, which I have labeled the "GodSelf Icon."

I first recognized the GodSelf Icon in the late 1990s, and I began publishing information on it online in 2001. Note the parallel pose, and keep in mind these figures were found all across the globe:



Above: The GodSelf Icon exists worldwide, in almost every ancient center of high civilization. It does not appear only once, but multiple times in each culture.

The GodSelf Icon depicts a single god or goddess, with both arms outstretched in opposite directions (right and left), holding "twin objects"

in each hand, symmetrically. These objects are usually animals, often serpents, and sometimes vegetation or magical staffs. The artwork is almost always perfectly symmetrical, just like the icon's pose.

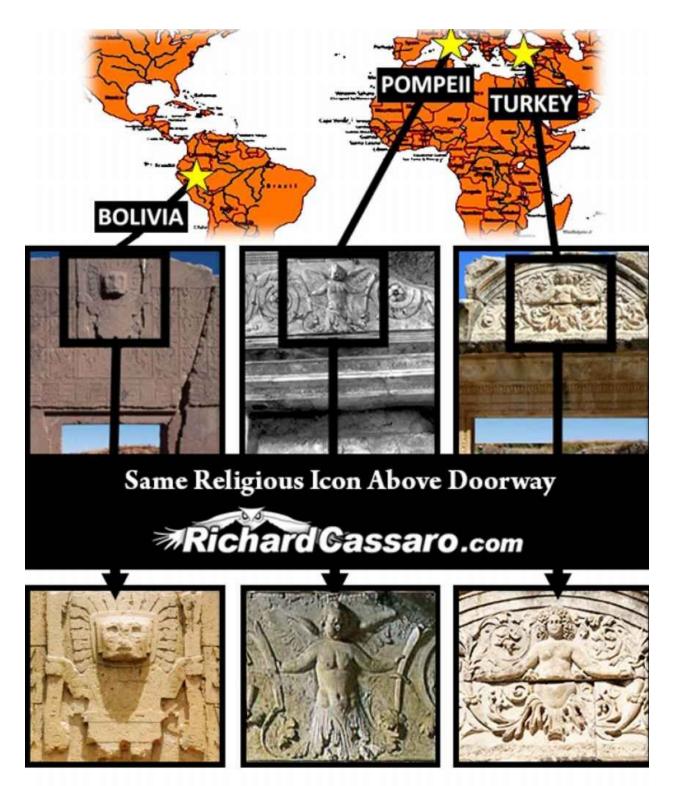
What does this mean? How could this same religious icon exist in the ruins of the world's most ancient cultures if these ancient cultures evolved independently, separated from each other, as scholars tell us? Could the mainstream academic view of the ancient past be wrong?



Above: The GodSelf Icon exists worldwide.

After I published *Written in Stone,* many readers contacted me asking for more information.

In October 2013, in response to these demands to expand on my research, I published an updated article on my www.RichardCassaro.com website. That article was followed by a second website article in January 2014.



GodSelf Icon etched in stone atop temple doors in different parts of the world. Image from www.RichardCassaro.com article of January 2014. Left: Gate of the Sun in Tiahuanaco, Bolivia. Middle: Residence in Pompeii, Italy. Right: Temple of Hadrian in Ephesus, Turkey.

Reader response was overwhelming; both articles went viral, and I received hundreds of emails with questions, comments and congratulations. Variations of my articles were published in journals and magazines across the Americas and Europe, in several different languages. I was invited to discuss my findings on radio shows and podcasts from Mexico to Malaysia.



Left: Author Graham Hancock carried a link to the story on his Facebook page. Right: The first officially published article on the GodSelf Icon appeared in the Dutch journal Bres.

Today, I know more than ever about the GodSelf Icon, so much so that I feel that sharing the fruits of my research requires this stand-alone eBook.

Among scholars of Old World cultures (i.e., cultures in the Eastern Hemisphere), the icon is either male or female and known by various names:

- Lord of the Animals or Lord of Animals
- Master of Animals
- Master of Beasts
- Mistress of Beasts
- Mistress of the Animals
- Mistress of Wild Animals
- Potnia Theron

In Wikipedia's entry for "Lord of the Animals," we read the following:

"The Lord of the Animals (also known as Master of Animals) is a generic term for a number of deities from a variety of cultures... They sometimes also have female equivalents, the so-called Mistress of the Animals. The implication being these all have a Stone Age precursor..."

—Wikipedia

Along with this quote, the "Lord of the Animals" page provides the following photo:



Above: Wikipedia provides this photo for its "Lord of the Animals" entry, along with the caption: "...gold pendant showing the Lord of the Animals, Minoan (British Museum)..."

What does this mean?

It means scholars have already recognized the repetitive "pose" of the GodSelf Icon among Old World cultures—cultures of the *Eastern* Hemisphere.

But what Old World scholars *haven't* yet recognized is that the very same icon, the very same "pose", was a widespread presence among New World cultures or cultures of the *Western* Hemisphere of the Americas. The GodSelf Icon is known to scholars of the ancient Americas, who call the GodSelf Icon "the *Staff God*." Here is the Wikipedia entry for "Staff God":

"The Staff God is a major deity in Andean cultures. Usually pictured holding a staff in each hand...his other characteristics are unknown, although he is often pictured with snakes in his headdress or clothes. The oldest known depiction of the Staff God was found on some broken gourd fragments in a burial site in the Pativilca River Valley...and carbon dated to 2250 BC. This makes it the oldest image of a god to be found in the Americas."

—Wikipedia

Here is the photo provided on the Wikipedia page:



Above: The Staff God Icon of Tiahuanaco, Bolivia, in the form of Viracocha.

So, despite recognizing the icon in their respective disciplines, scholars of Old World cultures and scholars of New World cultures have:

(a) failed to recognize the icon's presence worldwide

(b) failed to understand the icon <u>holds the same meaning worldwide</u>

(c) failed to connect (a) and (b), and thus remain unaware that <u>THE</u> <u>"GODSELF ICON" IS THE LOST SYMBOL OF AN ANCIENT</u> <u>UNIVERSAL RELIGION</u> once known worldwide

As the evidence in this eBook will show, the GodSelf Icon's global existence is proof of a Universal Religion in the remote past—with the icon itself being the chief symbol of this Universal Religion.

Just as the simple crucifix symbol unites millions of Christians worldwide

under one Universal Religion, so the simple GodSelf Icon symbol did the same for our ancient ancestors.

And just as a simple crucifix conveys a complete metaphysical doctrine expressing complex themes like "sacrifice," "life," "death," and "resurrection," so the GodSelf Icon encodes a single multi-faceted metaphysical doctrine or Universal Religion.

This Universal Religion has been handed down through time. The more popularly known aspects of its teachings fall under the heading "Perennial Philosophy." This religious tradition reveals truths regarding who we are, where we came from, and why we're here.

Richard Cassaro Madrid, Spain June 2016



CHAPTER ONE Decoding Ancient Triptych Temples

The Egyptian pyramids are among the most prominent and enigmatic remnants of ancient times. The secrets of their construction and mysteries related to their intended purpose and significance have inspired fantastic and implausible stories about pyramid codes, pyramid secrets, pyramid messages and pyramid prophecies.

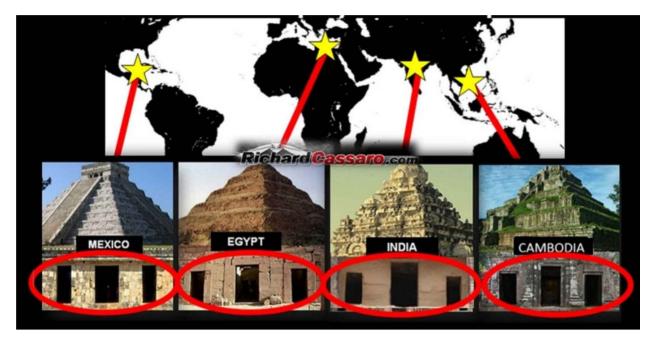


And it is not just Egypt.

Pyramids and pyramidal structures have been found amid the ruins of civilizations that arose in Mexico, Columbia, China, Peru, Cambodia, India, Iran, Italy, Ireland, the United States, and many other places. Such widely scattered structures with similar designs and parallel purposes seem to indicate a connection; if there was no communication between the cultures during their respective development phases, we might reasonably look for a common source pre-dating these cultures.

Enter the Triptych Temple discovery.

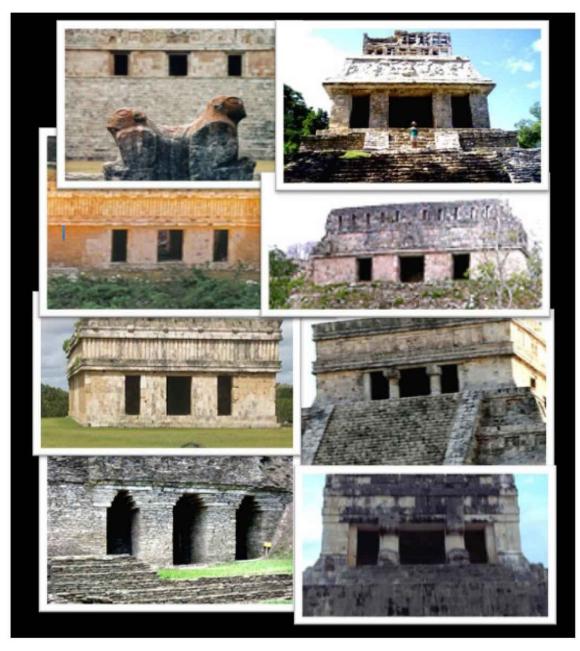
In *Written in Stone,* I presented evidence for a major interpretive archaeological discovery I made—a series of parallel "Triptych Temples" built by the first civilizations, the pyramid cultures. I showed how these Triptych Temples were strikingly similar in their size, shape and design because, like the GodSelf Icon, they all encode the same teaching—a "Universal Religion" once practiced worldwide:



"Triptych" (Three-Door) Temples, built by the pyramid cultures, show that they shared the same Universal Religion.

Note the parallels—three distinct doors or windows at the entrance, usually with the door or window in the center being larger than the outer two. In each example the same concept was followed, as if the ancient temple masons were working off the same *blueprint*.

The Triptych Temple pattern was a ubiquitous temple design that was common to cultures as far away as the Maya in Mexico and the Khmer in Cambodia. Shown below are eight Mayan Triptych Temples. Clearly, the Triptych Temple was not just a one-time, chance or random creation there was something important about the Triptych design for the ancient Maya:



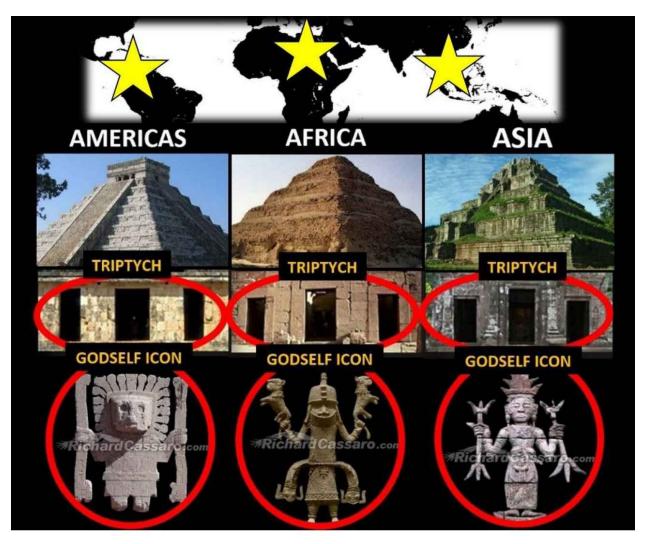
The Triptych Temples are a signature of the ancient Maya.

The pyramid cultures all used many forms of the Triptych Temple design. They repeated the Triptych Temple design over and over again, just like the Maya.

The fact that structures—*temples*, no less—in widely separated locations have the same "blueprint" argues not only for a common origin or common heritage, but for a shared wisdom or shared wisdom-tradition. In

Written in Stone, I described this common heritage and shared wisdom as a "Universal Religion."

The ubiquity of the GodSelf Icon in these same pyramid cultures is another important indication of the existence of the Universal Religion.



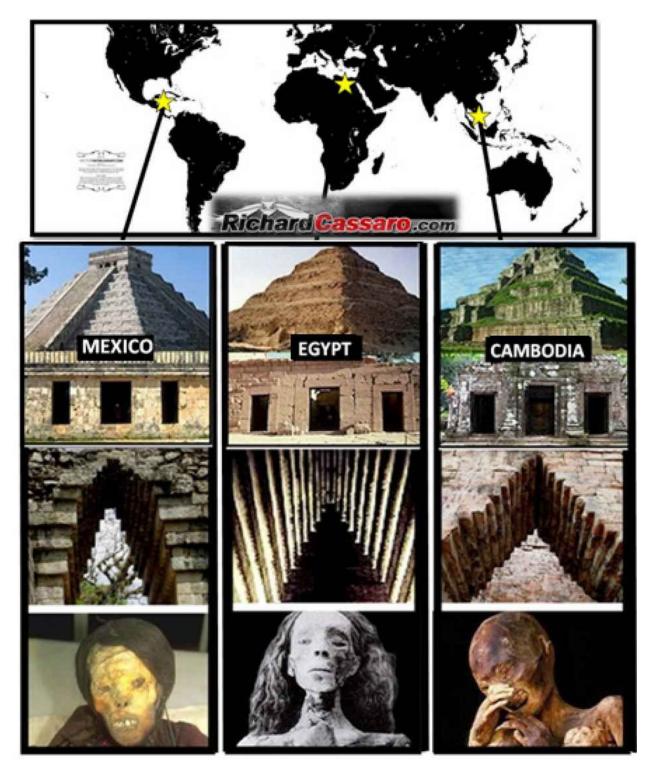
My Triptych Temple discovery fits in with the GodSelf Icon as evidence of a "Mother Culture" Atlantis.

The goal of this book is to help you recognize the importance and decipher the message of the GodSelf Icon, which is one of the most common and powerful images that has survived from ancient times. As we'll see, the central tenet of the GodSelf Icon was to teach initiates that they are spiritual beings beneath their corporeal clothing. The aim was also to help followers cultivate "higher spiritual powers" to accomplish what we might call "finding the soul" or "finding the spiritual center within ," a goal pervasive among ancient peoples all over the earth.

As shown in the previous chapter, the GodSelf Icon is visible in the ruins of Egypt, Panama, Columbia, Bolivia, Mesopotamia, Sumer, Persia, Peru, China, India, Greece, Rome, China, Indonesia, Italy and many

other places. There are only two plausible explanations why this should be so: either the GodSelf Icon is an *a priori* feature of the human brain, like time, space and causality; or a "Mother Culture" in the remote past invented the GodSelf Icon image and used it as the central figure of their religion, and from there it was inherited by later cultures (i.e., a Universal Religion).

In *Written in Stone*, I presented evidence supporting the idea that a very ancient Mother Culture now lost to time—a highly advanced antediluvian "Golden Age" civilization—may have once existed in the remote past and may have used the GodSelf Icon as the pinnacle of their religion.



My Triptych Temple discovery fits in with other parallels—pyramids, corbelled arches, and mummies—cited by Victorian scholars as evidence of a "Mother Culture."

The story of an antediluvian "Mother Culture" in remote prehistory was first set forth by the Greek Philosopher Plato, who called it "Atlantis." According to Plato's account, the peoples of this Mother Civilization were not *technologically* advanced but *spiritually* advanced. This is an important distinction. As Plato explains, the Atlanteans grew weak due to their materializing tendencies, weak enough that they began to lose touch with the inner divinity that granted them their power:

"For many generations...they obeyed the laws and loved the divine to which they were akin. ...they reckoned that qualities of character were far more important than their present prosperity. So they bore the burden of their wealth and possessions lightly, and did not let their high standard of living intoxicate them or make them lose their self-control... But when the divine element in them became weakened...and their human traits became predominant, they ceased to be able to carry their prosperity with moderation."

—Plato, *Timaeus*

According to Plato, the Atlanteans were sophisticated because of their identification with their own "divine" nature, rather than their "human" traits. Plato and the Greeks called this divine nature within man the "soul," and they described the soul as having almost "godlike" qualities. The Greeks often contrasted the soul (*spiritual*) with the body (*physical*) that surrounded it, like a shell surrounds a pearl.

As I explained in *Written in Stone*, the idea that we each have a spiritual "soul" which transcends our physical body is the very essence of the Universal Religion of the Triptych Temple. As we'll see in the present chapter, this was the shared religion of the pyramid cultures. After the pyramid age had come to an end (i.e., during the era of Greek and Roman civilization) the Universal Religion of the Triptych Temple was contained and kept alive in what modern scholars call the ancient "Mystery Schools." The teachings of the Mystery Schools, held in the highest secrecy and reverence, were said to contain the secrets of the soul.



Pagan "Triptych" Triumphal Arches were in use long after the pyramid age" and long before Christianity became the official religion of Rome.

Members of the Mystery Schools were endowed with extraordinary insight and superhuman qualities and abilities. Some of the great forefathers of modern Western thought—*Homer, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle* —were alleged to be initiates of the Mysteries.

With the dawn of Christianity came a period of great change. In a quest to gain authority over the masses, the Church began to root out all traces of the wisdom of the Mystery Schools. Even Plato's famous Academy, which had flourished for over 900 years, from 387 BC until 529 AD, was closed down by Emperor Justinian, who claimed the Academy was Pagan.

As a result, students of the Mystery Schools went into hiding. The ancient knowledge waned a little more with each successive retelling, and as Christianity grew to empire status, these teachings began to die out in the face of relentless persecution. It appeared that many, if not all, connections to the original source were severed or so diluted that the Universal Religion of the Triptych Temple was about to become lost.

As ancient Triptych Temples fell into ruin, so did much of the spiritual knowledge that brought them into being.



These ruined Triptych Temples indicate a Universal Religion shared worldwide, inherited from the same Mother Culture.

To safeguard the wisdom, some have claimed, persecuted heretics shrouded their ancient secrets in allegories and symbols and placed it all under the guardianship of "esoteric" societies. It was in this context that a powerful Secret Society called the Masonic Fraternity stepped onto the stage of history and began their quest to keep the details of the Mystery School teachings alive, and to pass the torch on to a new generation.

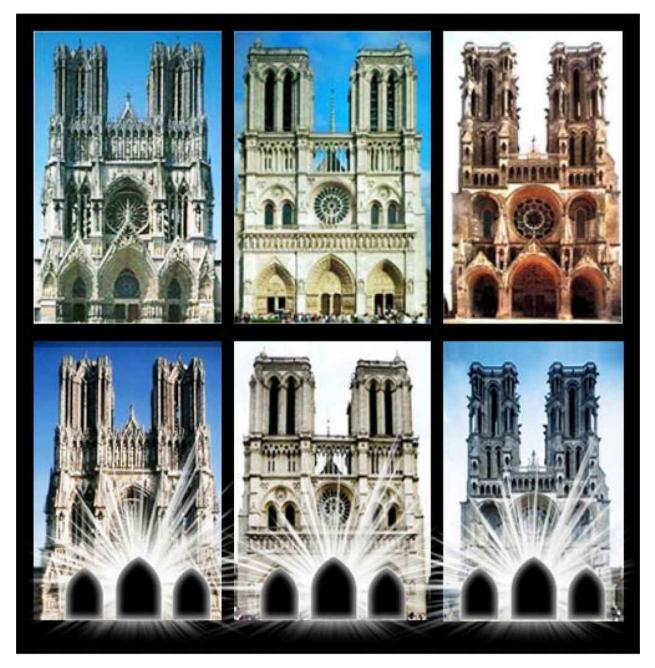
The vast majority of Masonic halls, temples and lodges display Triptych architecture in one form or another, very often right on the building's façade. It is ridiculous to ignore this or try to explain it away:



Triptych architecture decorates the facades of Masonic temples.

It is my contention that during the Middle Ages, masons who were commissioned by the Church to build Europe's Gothic cathedrals secretly encoded the Triptych's wisdom into the facades of churches, castles, cathedrals, stone landmarks, reliefs, monuments, and statues, where it remains concealed today.

Countless medieval Gothic cathedrals built by the Freemasons all share the *same* master blueprint—a mystifying "Cathedral Code," with the Triptych pattern as its focus:

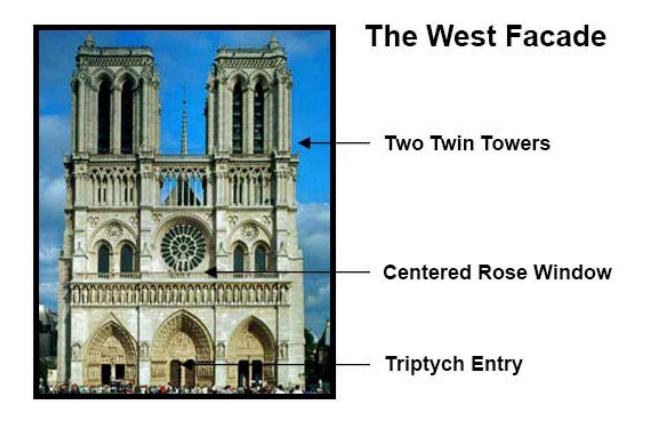


These Gothic cathedrals all share the same basic blueprint, the Cathedral Code.

"...Freemasons have a secret which they carefully conceal... Masonry is derived from some very ancient religion...At what period of antiquity, or in what nation, this religion was first established, is lost in the labyrinth of unrecorded time..."

—Thomas Paine, The Origins of Freemasonry (1818)

The Gothic cathedrals are among the greatest masterpieces of world architecture, and among the chief reasons for their universal appeal are the following key aspects of their design:



Together these elements form the Cathedral Code. This repeating "Cathedral Code" is a message from the church-building "operative" Masons, encoded in stone and concealed in plain sight. This façade is shared by countless Gothic cathedrals built during the Middle Ages. When decoded, the façade is clearly a memorial to the lost Universal Religion of the Triptych Temple—a way to record the Triptych religion in stone.

Unfortunately, all good things must end. In the wake of the Protestant reformation and the equally vigorous Counter-Reformation, there was a new focus on eradicating ties to the pagan ancestry of Europe. One of the sad consequences of this was the Church's very abrupt about-face in her support for the Masons. The Church stopped hiring them, and instead started to call for the eradication of the Masons in the 1700s. Starting with Pope Clement XII (1652 – 1740), the Church began hammering the Masons with encyclicals and other documents calling for their destruction. In 1884, Pope Leo XIII published an Encyclical equating Freemasonry with Satanism, and said that a person who joined a Masonic lodge is thereby excommunicated.

"The purpose and aim of the Masonic sect having been discovered from plain evidence is easy to understand...to try to revive after eighteen centuries, the manners and institutions of Paganism...we intend to turn our attention to the Masonic society...to illustrate more and more this wicked force and stop the spread of this contagious disease..."

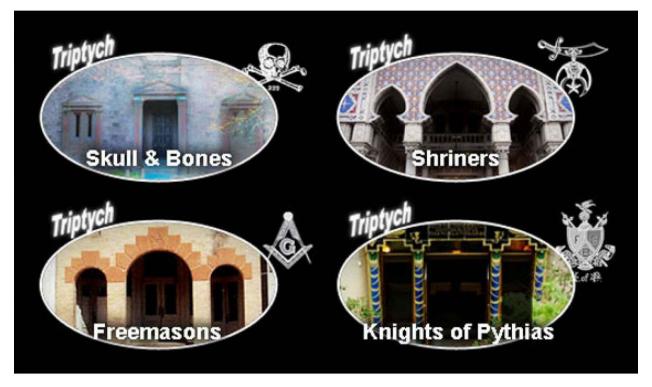
—Pope Leo XIII, *Humanum Genus Encyclical (Condemnation of Freemasonry)*

This "rift" has not exactly been mended. As recently as 1983, then littleknown Cardinal Ratzinger—later Pope Benedict XVI—wrote:

"The faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion."

—Cardinal Ratzinger, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

As explained in *Written in Stone*, all the great Secret Societies, perhaps in emulation of Freemasonry or perhaps because these Secret Societies were "offshoots" of Freemasonry, once shared the same Universal Religion of the Triptych; hence the universality of the Triptych entrance:



Secret Society headquarters with Triptych entrances, including those of the Shriners, Knights of Pythias, Freemasons, and Skull & Bones.

Readers of *Written in Stone* will already be familiar with my description of the Triptych, but it is important to review it once more before presenting the GodSelf Icon material. The reason is because the GodSelf Icon and the Triptych Temple pattern represent exactly the same Universal Religion. The main difference is that the Triptych Temple expresses the Universal Religion in architecture, while the GodSelf Icon expresses it in an icon depicting the human body.

If indeed the Masons inherited an ancient pagan wisdom, and if they encoded this wisdom into cathedral architecture, it is easy to see why increasingly systematic and intolerant theologians could conclude that such a practice amounts to heresy, and would therefore constitute a direct threat to the Church.

Over the past two centuries, numerous claims have been made about the nature of pagan symbolism encoded in Masonic architecture.

"It is generally believed in occult circles that...medieval masons had inherited esoteric knowledge...and that this knowledge was

incorporated into the sacred architecture of the cathedrals."

-Michael Howard, The Occult Conspiracy

In 1831, Victor Hugo, the great French poet and author of the novel *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, explained:

"...from remotest antiquity...the human race has employed architecture as its chief means of writing...Sometimes an entrance, a front, or even an entire church presents a symbolic meaning wholly foreign to religion, or even hostile to the Church...Only the initiated can decipher these mysterious books."

In 1910, American architect and writer Claude Bragdon (1866–1946) wrote:

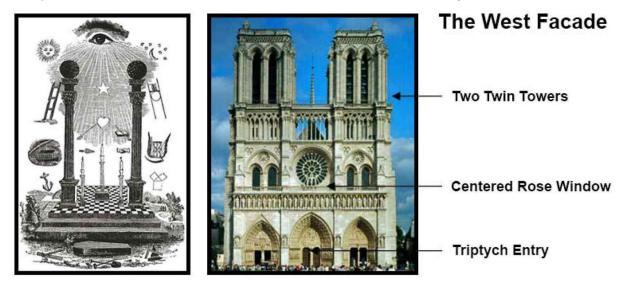
"In Mediaeval Europe...fragments of the Secret Doctrine transmitted in the symbols and secrets of the cathedral builders determined much of Gothic architecture."

- Claude Bragdon, The Beautiful Necessity

In 1926, the French alchemist and hermeticist known as "Fulcanelli" published *Le Mystere des Cathedrales,* in which he described alchemical secrets in French cathedrals. The work is detailed but dense, and has been criticized as very difficult to follow (a quality he seems to have intended). When I read Fulcanelli's book, I was stunned to see no mention of the Triptych, which seemed to me a pretty glaring omission. That is why I decided to publish *Written in Stone,* where I presented my ideas about the meaning of the Triptych Temple design. Without an understanding of this key concept, it is hard to have a true appreciation of just how pervasive Masonic/pagan ideas were in the design and execution of Europe's cathedrals.

My research shows that Masonry (in the sense that we understand it) is a Pagan organization that knows about and has been safeguarding what I regard as the ancient Universal Religion of the Golden Age for many centuries. This reference to a Golden Age is intended to refer to a prehistoric (perhaps antediluvian) period where spiritually advanced concepts that I discuss throughout this book—concepts such as "balancing the opposites" and "awakening the Third Eye"—were initially formulated and developed in a form that influenced the development of civilization in areas throughout the world.

To understand what the Cathedral Code is telling us, we must first realize that the code has a blueprint that can be found in most Masonic lodges. This blueprint is a sketch or drawing called a "Tracing Board," and we can see in the side-by-side comparison below how the Tracing Board shares many points of resemblance to the Gothic Western façade:



Left: Masonic Tracing Board titled the "Masters Carpet," from The Masonic Monitor in 1820. The images depict Freemasonry's key symbols: the Sun, Moon, and Mystical Eye.

For all its ubiquity, the Tracing Board is an enigma to modern Masons, esoteric authors, and even occult researchers; they are unsure of its purpose and unaware of its symbolism. We can start to understand the Cathedral Code by looking at the two tall Twin Towers flanking the main entrance. When comparing these Twin Towers to the Twin Pillars on the Tracing Board, which Masons call "Jachin" and "Boaz," we find a match.

A century ago, Masonic historian Walter L. Wilmshurst (1867 – 1939) explained:

"The [Twin] Pillars...have been incorporated into Christian architecture. If you recall the construction of York Minster or Westminster Abbey, you will recognize the pillars in the two great towers flanking the main entrance..."

-W.L. Wilmshurst, The Meaning of Masonry (1922)



Left: Westminster Abbey, London, England. Right: York Minster, York, England.

Clearly the Twin Pillars held great importance for medieval stonemasons, who went to great lengths to memorialize them in architecture. Newly initiated Masons are told that these Twin Pillars once decorated the facade of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem:

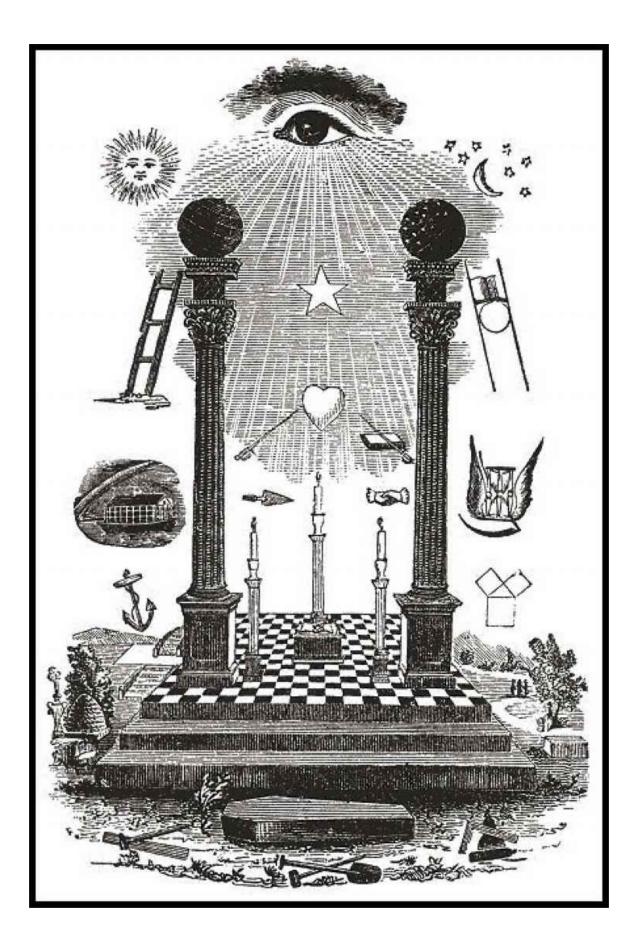
"The pillars...were the two erected by Solomon at the porch of the Temple... on the right hand...Jachin and the other at the left hand... Boaz."

—Albert G. Mackey, Encyclopedia of Freemasonry (1873)

Most Masons are satisfied with this explanation. They don't realize there 's a much deeper, more profound meaning behind these twin pillars. It is my contention that these Twin Pillars form the foundation of the ancient Universal Religion. They enshrine a very mysterious "secret of the number two"—what I call the "Doctrine of Duality." This is easily apparent when we reexamine the Tracing Board.

Note how:

- the right-hand Pillar, Jachin, is capped by the Sun
- the left-hand Pillar, Boaz, is capped by the Moon



The sun and moon, as depicted in the Tracing Board, are critically important symbols. The world's first cultures all perceived the Sun and Moon as "perfect opposites" or perfect "pairs of opposites."

Everything here in the visible universe (in which we live and move and have our physical existence) has an equal "opposite"—*just like the Yin / Yang symbol; just like the twin Jachin & Boaz pillars in Freemasonry, which are of equal size and shape; and just like the twin "S" shapes on the Swastika:*



Swastika found in Tibet, formed by two "S" symbols opposing each other. One "S" symbolizes the SUN, the other "S" symbolizes the MOON.

But *how* exactly do the Sun & Moon convey "opposites"? They do so by the following formula:

- The <u>SUN</u> rules the *Day* —but the <u>MOON</u> rules the *Night*.
- The <u>DAY</u> brings *Light* —but the <u>NIGHT</u> brings *Darkness*.
- The LIGHT brings Hot —but the DARKNESS brings Cold .
- The <u>HOT</u> brings *Dry* —but the <u>COLD</u> brings *Moist*.
- The <u>DAY</u> symbolizes *Life* —but the <u>NIGHT</u> symbolizes *Death*.
- LIFE is considered Good —but DEATH is considered Evil .

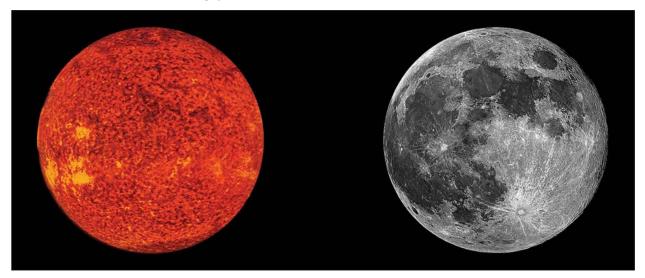
Note how these are all "pairs" of "opposites": SUN / MOON, DAY / NIGHT, LIGHT / DARK, HOT / COLD, DRY / MOIST, LIFE / DEATH, GOOD / EVIL. By this chain of associations, the Sun & Moon *engender* and *denote* all the "pairs of opposites" in the universe!

There's more.

Both heavenly bodies show their faces for an average of 12 out of 24 hours daily—*exactly* half each! This fits in perfectly with the "opposites" being "equal" and "opposing" yet complementary and balancing! The idea that both the Sun & Moon show their faces on average 12 hours each out of a 24 hour day (half each) is more than "just a bit odd." To ancient people, this must have seemed an *interesting* coincidence.

There are even more striking parallels.

When viewed from earth, the sun and full moon *appear exactly the same size in our sky* —as if they were perfect opposites! The sun is larger, but the moon is much closer, ensuring both orbs appear the same size in the sky. This is exceedingly unlikely, and astronomers of all ages have marveled at this strikingly odd coincidence.



The sun and full moon appear to be the same size when viewed from earth.

Not only do the Sun & Moon engender and denote all the "pairs of opposites" in the physical universe, but they appear to us to be exactly

the same size in our sky!

Wilmshurst said that the Twin Pillars on the Tracing Board, which are capped by the Sun and Moon:

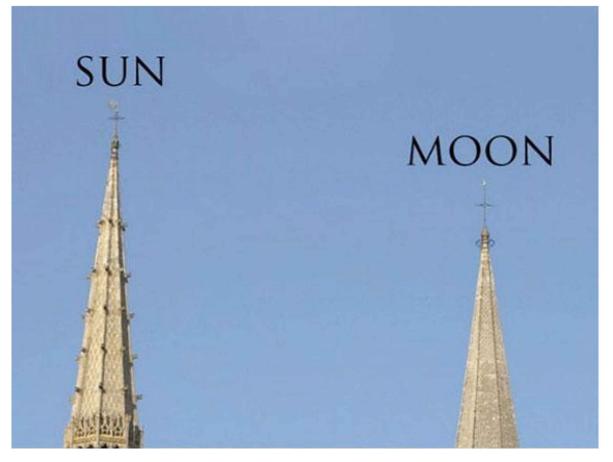
"...stand for what is known...as the "pairs of opposites." Everything in nature is dual and can only be known in contrast with its opposite..."

-W.L. Wilmshurst, The Meaning of Masonry

In *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, Freemason Manly Hall (1901 – 1990) explained:

"Jachin–the white pillar of light...Boaz–the shadowy pillar of darkness...These two pillars respectively connote also the active and the passive...the sun and the moon...good and bad, light and darkness."

As Jewish mystic Warren Kenton (Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi) tells us, the twin columns of France's Chartres Cathedral are capped with iron plates of the sun and moon.



The Sun & Moon on the twin towers of France's Chartres Cathedral.

"Erected by the masons...the west front of each church had two towers representing the twin columns...the masculine and feminine aspects, the active and passive forces, flowing down from Heaven. Called, in Chartres Cathedral, the sun and moon towers..."

-Warren Kenton, Introduction to the Cabala

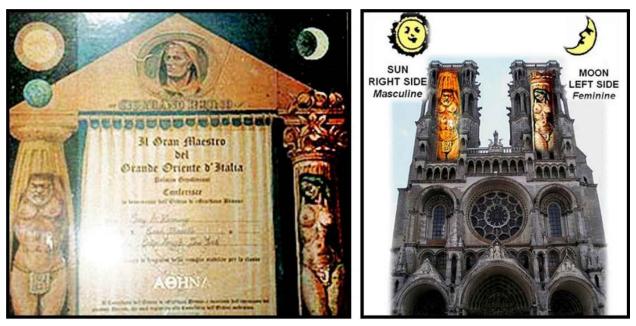
Note how Kenton here mentions the "masculine and feminine aspects." That's because man and woman also fall into this "pairs of opposites" category. In the early 20th century, architect Claude Bragdon wrote:

"...man, like the sun, is lord of day; he is like fire, a devastating force; woman is subject to the lunar rhythm; like water, she is soft, sinuous, fecund...

The Masonic guilds of the Middle Ages were custodians of the esoteric... The north or right-hand tower ("the man's side") was

called the sacred male pillar, Jachin; and the south, or left-hand tower ("the woman's side"), the sacred female pillar, Boaz..."

Looking at the Grand Master Certificate of the 16th century "heretic" Giordano Bruno below, we see a "male" pillar crowned by the Sun on the right side and a "female" pillar crowned by the moon on the left:



Left: Giordano Bruno's Grand Master Certificate. Right: The Twin Columns on the Gothic Cathedral symbolize male and female, as well as all the other "pairs of opposites" in the physical world.

This is the same "pairs of opposites" symbolism encoded in the twin towers of the Western facade of Gothic cathedrals. The Masons did this because the great wisdom of the "pairs of opposites" doctrine lies not only in the fact that the universe is composed of "pairs of opposites," but also in the fact that, like the universe, Man is also formed by opposites.

"As above, so belo w" is an esoteric / occult phrase used by many, who yet fail to grasp its deeper meaning: Man lives inside the universe, not separately from it, and thus our physical bodies are made of the same "pairs of opposites" as the universe.

"Our life is a mingled yarn, good and evil together..."

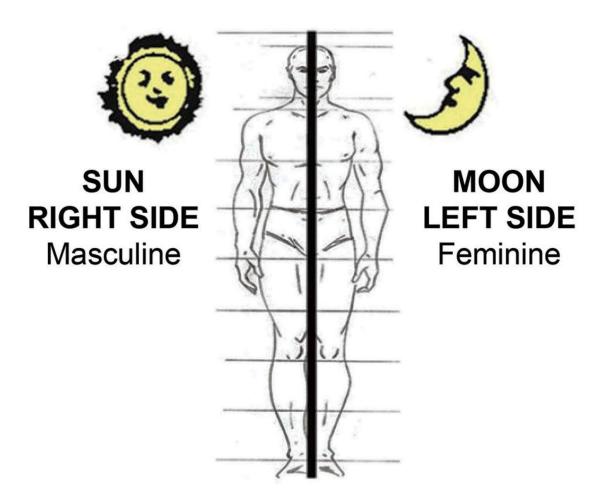
—Shakespeare, All's Well That Ends Well

The Gothic facade seen above is not only a depiction of the polarity of

the universe, it is a symbol of the polarity in the physical human body as well. Each person has two hands, two arms, two legs, etc. and so forth, split into symmetrical halves—the sun half and moon half. The human body's bilaterally symmetrical appearance is a product of the duality of the universe:

"Man has been called the microcosm, or little world, in contradistinction to the macrocosm, or great world...by reason of a supposed correspondence between the different parts and qualities of his nature and those of the universe."

—Albert Mackey, An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry



Man is a symmetrical being with a moon half and a sun half.

The ancients believed that the right side of our body is male and solar, while our left side is female and lunar. Freemason Manly Hall, who is widely recognized as an expert on ancient symbolism, wrote:

"In ancient times men fought with their right arms and defended with their left arms...the right side of the body was considered masculine and the left side feminine."

—Manly Hall, The Secret Teachings of All Ages

Magician and Freemason Harry Houdini (1874 – 1926) said in *The Metaphysical Magazine* :

"According to Hindu Astrology the Sun represents the right half of the body and the Moon the left half. ... This is the most general

division."

You, me, all of us, are formed of "pairs of opposites," and this fundamental dynamic infiltrates every aspect of our lives. This recalls the age-old trope of the "*Devil-On-Our-Left-Shoulder*" tempting us to do evil, and "*Angel-On-Our-Right-Shoulder*" imploring us to do good:



But is this the sad fate of man? Condemned to strut and fret our hour upon the stage in a world of duality, and then be heard from no more?

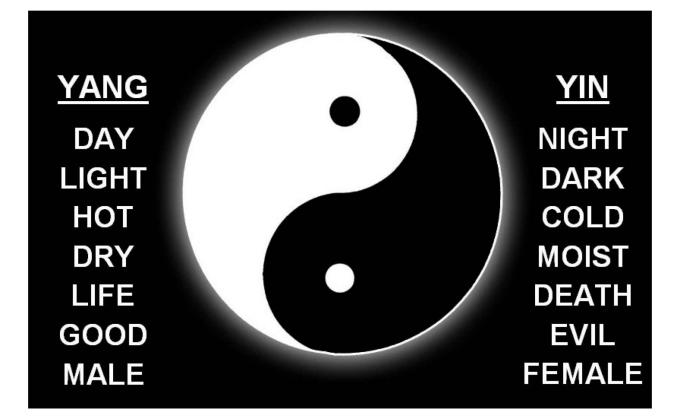
According to ancient and esoteric philosophy, we can transcend the number two, the duality of good and evil, and all the other pairs of opposites, by using the magic Masonic number *Three*. The number Three is an important aspect of Freemasonry. It symbolizes an ancient three-in-one "Trinity" that predates the Christian Trinity by thousands of years. We read in Jeremiah How's book, *The Freemason's Manual* (1862), that...

"In Freemasonry the number Three is the most important and universal in its application of all the mystic numbers, and we find it pervading our whole ritual..."

The Masonic number Three teaches that we are much more than just the twin opposing halves of an animal body. These twin halves don't constitute the whole man—only our *physical* part; the part that lives and dies on earth. The Masonic Three teaches that deep down there is a spiritual part of us—a divine soul or eternal Self that *animates* our physical body.

This divine soul or higher Self is who you really are. It's the *inner* you. The non-physical *spiritual* you that was never born and never dies. The part you don't see in the mirror and can't detect with your five senses. It's your soul, the highest and deepest part of your being.

This Masonic three-in-one religion, or Triptych religion, was inherited from ancient cultures worldwide, and we can still see it in ancient symbols. In the ancient Taijitu, also called the "Yin/Yang" symbol, for example, "Yin" and "Yang" represent, in part, the twin halves of our physical body:



The "yin" and the "yang" aspects of this symbol together express duality. We read in *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan:*

"The Sun is the chief visible manifestation of the yang, as the moon is of the yin."

However, the Yin / Yang is clearly a tripartite symbol. It has three parts. It's made up of twin dualities, yin and yang, with the third part being the circle or Tao. This circle or Tao is the higher unity that encompasses the duality of Yin and Yang. Ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu tells us:

"The Chinese trinity, being the duality of yang and yin organized into a higher unity...is regarded as the source of all existence, and its symbol...[the Yin/Yang]...possesses a deep religious significance for the Chinese heart."

— Lao-Tzu , Táo Te Ching

The higher unity being described is symbolized by the geometric Circle; *with no beginning and no end*, the circle symbolizes "eternity"—and it always has since the dawn of human civilization.

This Circle is a symbol of your soul. It's called "Tao" in Chinese thought. The Circle is the eternal part of you, your true higher Self out of which all existence arises, and inside which the pairs of opposites live and move and have their being. Lao-Tzu tells us:

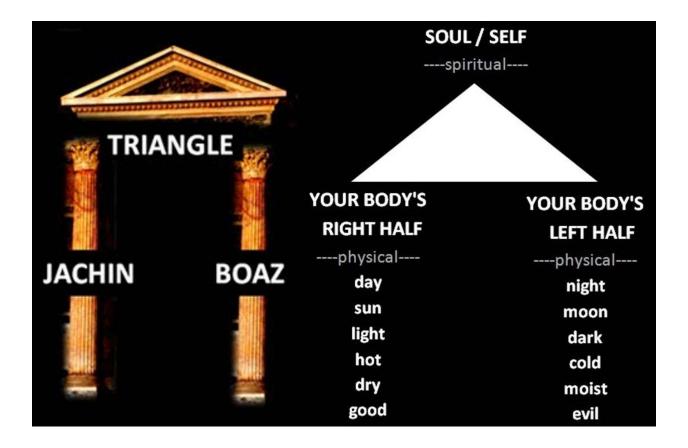
"He who follows the Tao is one with the Tao."

- Lao-Tzu, Táo Te Ching , Verse 23

"Being at one with the Tao is eternal, though the body dies, the Tao will never pass away."

- Lao-Tzu, Táo Te Ching , Verse 16

With this ancient Chinese symbol in mind, it is easy to see how the idea that a "third force" of "unity" ties together "twin opposites" was inherited by Freemasonry. It's the secret of the Masonic number Three. However, in Freemasonry, its symbol is not a *circle*. In Freemasonry, its symbol is a *triangle* —the triangle that unites the twin pillars of Jachin and Boaz in precisely the same way the circle unites yin and yang:



As the Triangle's apex is *higher than* and *centered midway between* its twin lower points so your soul is higher than and centered midway between the dual halves of your animal body—the right and left, good and evil, and so on.

The Triangle's apex *transcends* its two lower points—just as your soul *transcends* your two lower animal halves. This is because your soul is older than and higher than your body. Your soul is also the source of your body.

According to the Biblical tale of the Garden of Eden, we have come down to this lower world after eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which is the Tree of Knowledge of the Opposites. Joseph Campbell tells us:

"...the fall [of your soul] from perfection into duality...was naturally followed by the discovery of the duality of good and evil...This is the Biblical version of a myth known to many lands ..."

—Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth (1984)

You have *fallen* from your higher spiritual home in the heavens and you've *landed* down here in the material world of "opposites." 19th century English Freemason, author, and occultist John Yarker tells us:

"According to this mystic doctrine...all souls have pre-existence and have descended from the spiritual world into the earthly prison of the body..."

—John Yarker, The Arcane Schools (1909)

In other words, you are divine *already* you existed before your body's birth and you will survive your body's death.

Having fallen, you are now, in a sense, *imprisoned* inside your *animal* body that mimics the duality of the universe in which your body temporarily lives. Esoteric scholar Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn tells us:

" Man is a god in the body of an animal according to the pronouncement of ancient philosophy ..."

—Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Who Is This King of Glory? (1944)

For the ancients, your fall into the human body could be perceived as a tragedy. Nineteenth century mathematician Olinthus Gregory, one of the founders of the Royal Astronomical Society, explains:

"...the Platonists in general believed in a pre-existent state, in which all souls had sinned, and thus lost their wings...and so they sunk into these bodies partly as a punishment for former follies."

—Olinthus Gregory, *The Fall of Man and the Depravity of Nature* (1815)

It means you've descended down so deeply into the material world from your spiritual heavenly home that you've forgotten your true Self and spiritual origin entirely. You have *amnesia* of who you really are. You've lost sight of your eternal "god within" or "soul within," which is the real you.

"A man is a god in ruins."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature (1836)

Your soul is thus imprisoned in these conditions over which the soul apparently has no control. *Man must till the soil, women must give birth in*

travail. However, *and this next bit of wisdom is tremendously important*, your soul is not completely powerless.

Because it is eternal, *the soul comes complete with its own inherent powers* —powers that can be rediscovered and activated right here in the material world. Though in a "fallen state" you, your soul, never *lost* these powers; they have merely been "covered up" by the body, rendering them unrecognizable.

Masonry exists not only to reveal to Man the truth that he is a spiritual soul, but to help him rediscover its higher powers—powers that have been covered up by the physical body.

To *spark* these powers, to turn these powers "on", you need to employ a formula involving the Masonic number Three. It's a magic formula related to the "pairs of opposites" and known for centuries in occult circles by one word—*balance*. Balancing the "pairs of opposites" will lead you to your soul. As Joseph Campbell tells us:

"As soon as it [the soul] enters the field of time, it breaks into pairs of opposites, the one becomes two. Now, when you have two, there are just three ways in which they can relate to one another: one way is of this one dominant over that; another way is of that one dominant over this; and a third way is of the two in balanced accord."

—Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth (1984)

This balance of opposites is also known as the *harmony* of opposites, *union* of opposites and *reunion* of opposites. Even the often-used term *reconciliation* of opposites works. We're told by the occultist Israel Regardie, who served as Aleister Crowley's secretary:

"...only by the reconciliation of opposing forces is the Pathway made to true occult knowledge and practical power..."

—Israel Regardie, The Eye in the Triangle (1970)

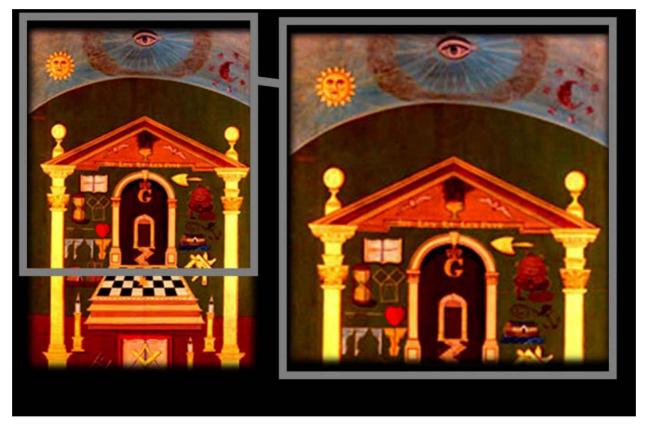
In other words, you need to "join" your male "right-half" and your female "left-half", the twin sun and moon aspects of your physical nature, to make the magic happen:

"...Join the male and female and you will find what you are

seeking "

— Aphorisms of Zosimus

When you balance the opposites, a mystical awakening occurs, akin to the illumination of a light bulb wired to the positive and negative ends of a battery. This awakening involves our suddenly becoming aware of a human organ and human faculty hitherto unknown to us. We can see this hidden organ concealed in plain sight on this Masonic Tracing Board, which looks like an ancient Pagan temple.



Tracing Board from Union Lodge in Boston, Massachusetts (1796).

First, look at how the Twin *Jachin & Boaz* Pillars align with the sun and moon directly above them. Second, note how the *tops* of the Twin Pillars form the two lower halves of a triangle. Third, look at the apex of that triangle and notice the luminous Eye directly above it.

Why an Eye? What does the Eye stand for?

The answer is, when you *transcend* the opposites, you suddenly become *illuminated* and *awakened*. When this happens, a mysterious hidden eye suddenly opens in you. Plato called it the "*Eye of the Soul.*" We see the Eye here inside a luminous triangle on a centuries-old Masonic lodge in Prague, Czechoslovakia.



Freemasons Lodge, Prague, 18th Century.

According to Plato:

".. in every man there is an Eye of the soul which...is far more precious than ten thousand bodily eyes, for by it alone is truth seen."

"The Eye of the soul...is alone naturally adapted to be resuscitated and excited by the mathematical discipline..."

-Plato, The Republic

Plato's "Eye of the Soul," located in the center of our brains, has historically been called the *Divine Eye, Mind's Eye*, and *Inner Eye.* Its real name, however, is the *Third Eye*, and it once had colossal importance in Freemasonry.

Occultists believe the awakened Third Eye endows its possessor with:

- higher consciousness
- a deeper understanding of life and death
- expanded perception

- enhanced capacity for self-healing
- clairvoyance, intuitive and psychic abilities

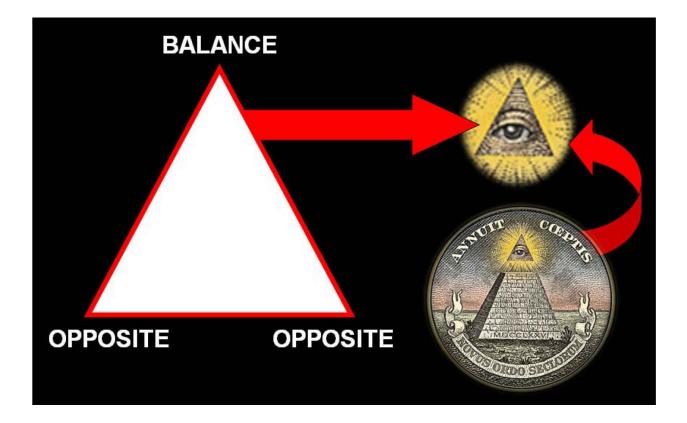
The *Third Eye* is not recognized by Western medicine, but occult tradition maintains that the pineal gland is a vestige of that once-powerful organ. The pineal gland secretes melatonin, a hormone involved in the regulation of sleep cycles. Webster's Dictionary gives the following definition for "Pineal Gland":

"A conical appendage of the brain of all craniate vertebrates that in a few reptiles has the essential structure of an eye...and that is variously postulated to be a vestigial third eye, an endocrine organ, or the seat of the soul..."

— Webster's Dictionary

The "Seat of the Soul" is exactly how some Renaissance and Enlightenment Western philosophers once described the pineal gland. René Descartes called the pineal gland a bridge that connects man's soul and body.

This idea is rooted in Antiquity. In fact, the farther back in time we look, the more we see the Third Eye, and not just in one civilization, but among many ancient cultures worldwide.



As we can see here, the Masonic Triangle, which derives from ancient symbolism, denotes more than just balancing life's dualities; it stands for the awakened Third Eye that occurs when life's dualities are balanced —a design the Founding Fathers sketched on The Great Seal of the United States.

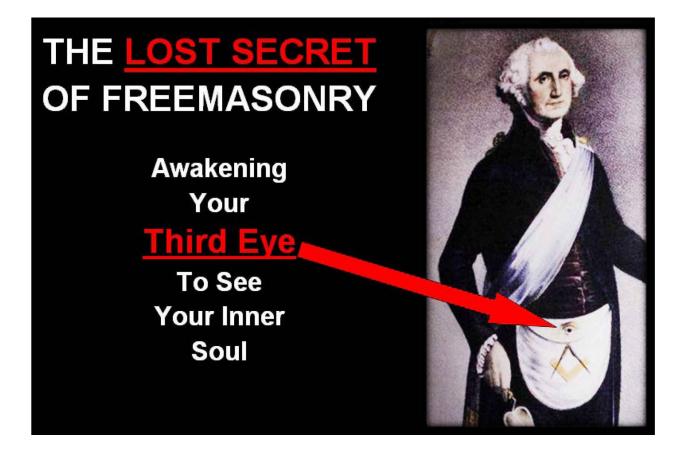
The Third Eye in the Triangle signifies an illuminated human being who has balanced his opposites, and who is now able to see his inner soul, and consequently knows he is an eternal "god" temporarily inhabiting an animal body, a god who was never born and will never die.

This idea sounds strange to many of us in the West, but deep thinkers like psychologist Carl Jung understood the antiquity and universality of these ideas:

"Unfortunately our Western mind, lacking all culture in this respect, has never yet devised a concept, nor even a name, for the union of opposites through the middle path, that most fundamental item of inward experience...It is at once the most individual fact and the most universal, the most legitimate fulfillment of the meaning of the individual's life."

-Carl Jung, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung (1945)

The reason why we in the West have not "yet devised a concept, nor even a name for the union of opposites through the middle path" is because the art of balancing opposites, forming the Triangle and awakening the Third Eye is nothing short of the Lost Secret of Freemasonry. The Order was the torchbearer of this Pagan ancient practice during Europe's Dark Ages—when being "outside" of Christianity meant death by Inquisition:



When you awaken your Third Eye, you suddenly realize that you are divine and eternal *already*. You don't need a go-between in the form of a priest or Church to help you reach heaven; you understand that heaven is inside you, it *is* you.

This Third Eye wisdom is precisely the "Great Secret" that has been *excised* from Freemasonry. Many American authors, living and writing a century or more ago, understood the link between the Third Eye and Freemasonry. In 1918, American physician George Washington Carey wrote:

"...the All-seeing eye...This is the eye of freemasonry, the third eye. While I am credibly formed that few Masons understand their own symbols, the fact remains that they use them..."

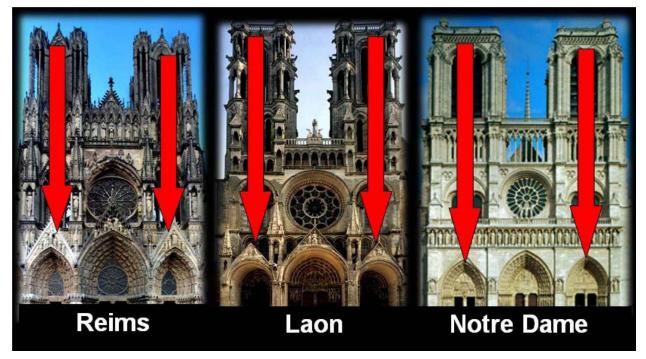
—Dr. George Washington Carey, *The Wonders of the Human Body* (1918)

In 1924, American author and Eastern Star leader Grace Morey wrote:

"The All-Seeing Eye...also emblematic of the...third eye of the human being...has been found amid the ruins of every civilization...."

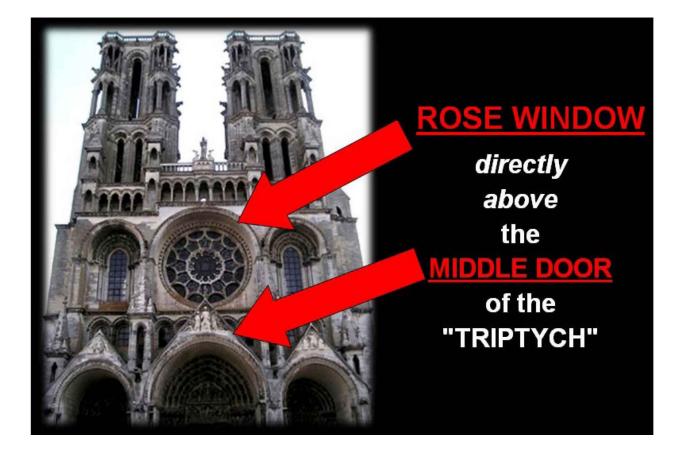
—Grace Morey, Mystic Americanism (1924)

We've seen how the Twin Towers of Gothic cathedrals symbolize the "pairs of opposites." If we follow the Twin Towers down to the ground, we see they terminate in the *twin outer doors* of the Triptych. I call these *"The Doors of Opposites."*



A third, larger door is *centered* midway between these twin outer doors. This third, *larger* door *unites* the "Doors of Opposites" into a Three-In-One "Trinity"—just as the apex point of a Triangle *unites* its two twin lower points—and just as the circle *unites* the twins yin and yang.

In fact, a massive circle, a rose window, crowns the center door of the Triptych, signifying the soul:



The Rose Window is circular because a circle has no beginning and no end—a perfect symbol of our eternal soul, centered as it were, between the Twin Towers of our body's right and left "halves."

Beams of flowers, light, and life radiate from the rose window as all life radiates outward from our soul or source. Author Michael Rose, who has devoted his life to studying rose windows, tells us:

"the rose window is...a representation of perfection, balance and harmony of the purified soul."

-Michael Rose , Ugly As Sin (2009)

Prince Charles, in a passage describing Chartres Cathedral from his 2010 book *Harmony*, explains how the "duality" of the "two soaring towers" is united by the rose window:

"The entrance into the building is through the West front, which comprises two soaring towers, one with the symbol of the Moon upon it and one...bearing the symbol of the Sun....

...And beneath them sits one of the most spectacular of all rose windows, symbolizing the uniting of the apparent duality represented by the symbols of the Sun and the Moon."

— Prince Charles , Harmony (2010)

The Triptych's *center* door thus signifies the "soul within" us or the "god within" us, resting, as it were, between the "doors of opposites," between the twin opposing halves of our physical body.

The Triptych is, in fact, a Three-In-One symbol, just like the Triangle and just like the Taijitu or Yin / Yang. The entire Triptych itself, this three-door entrance into Gothic cathedrals, represents Carl Jung's "*union of opposites through the middle path*."

When we unite the opposites by taking the middle path, we find our soul within or god within. Hence the "god" image in the center doorway between male / female opposites on Rockefeller Center's main facade, one of the most striking esoteric Triptychs in modern times.



It seems to have been commissioned and designed by brilliant minds of the past who understood Masonry's authentic Sacred Science of Three (almost a century ago).

See the male and female atop the doors of opposites? A male on the right, female on the left—*male and female opposites* ! These "doors of opposites" flank a "god" in the third, center door (*third* = Masonic Three). *Incredibly*, the god holds a Compass—a key *Masonic* symbol!



Who is this "god"? *Why* is he in the center? What hidden wisdom is this saying about the Triptych's Third—*middle* —Door?

The answer is that the god in the center is *you!* The *real* you. The *inner* you. The *eternal* you. The non-physical *spiritual* you that was never born and never dies. The god is the part you don't see in the mirror and can't detect with your five senses.

It's *your soul*, between the male and female halves of your animal body. In this portrait, the "god within" is using a Masonic compass to balance the opposites, practicing the Sacred Science—*which is what you must do!*

The same three-in-one depiction, complete with male on the right, female on the left and "god" (Buddha) in the center, is featured on this brilliant

sculpture of the Buddha shown below, carved in the 8th century inside a sacred cave in Mumbai, India:



Trimurti statue from the Elephanta Caves in India.

Joseph Campbell explained the statue in his video series titled *The Power of Myth* :

"The mask represents the middle and the two [male and female profiles] represent the opposites. Whenever one moves out of the transcendent, one comes into a field of opposites. These two pairs of opposites come forth as male and female from the two sides. One has eaten of the tree of the knowledge not only of good and evil, but of male and female, of right and wrong...they always come in pairs. And put your mind in the middle!"

The Buddha here is in fact opening his *ajna chakra* or "Third Eye" chakra, according to the Yogic practice of Kundalini Yoga. *Kundalini* in Sanskrit means "enlightenment" —a reference to the "illumination" one experiences when seeing the soul.

Dr. Lee Sannella, psychiatrist and co-founder of the Kundalini Clinic in California, tells us:

"...Kundalini, is the real cause of all so-called spiritual and psychic phenomena...the secret origin of all esoteric and occult doctrines, the master Key to the unsolved mystery of creation, the inexhaustible source of philosophy, art and science, and the fountainhead of all religious faiths, past, present and future."

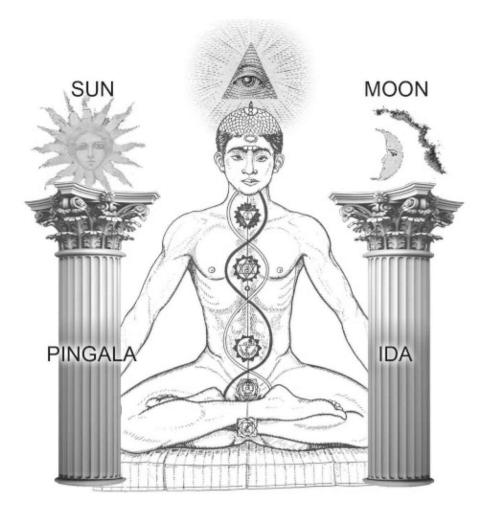
In Western terminology we'd call it "union with God"—a blasphemous practice in Christianity, punishable by death during the Dark Ages in Europe.

The Third Eye or ajna chakra forms the sixth of seven major "chakras." The chakras are energy centers aligned in ascending order from the base of the spinal column in the pelvis to the top of the head.

All the chakras are connected, from the lowest to the highest, through a central channel called the *Sushumna*, which parallels the spinal column.

Two opposing channels, *ida* and *pingala*, run to the left and right of the Sushumna but do not connect with the chakras. Negatively charged "Ida" is our left channel, lunar and feminine. Positively charged "Pingala" is our right channel, solar and masculine.

Ida and pingala correspond to the Boaz & Jachin columns, the Yin and Yang of Taoism) as I show from this image which I put together and published in *Written in Stone* :



Interestingly, there are 33 vertebrae in the human spinal column which explains the Masonic hierarchy of "33"—the highest level in the Order, reached when one becomes a 33rd degree Mason.



Kundalini Yoga was once a key part of the "Great Work" of Secret Societies, like Freemasonry. Third Eye symbols on some Oddfellows regalia seem to confirm this:



The Oddfellows, like the Freemasons, not only depicted the Eye symbol in their regalia, but they also encoded the Triptych pattern in their lodges and temples:



Triptych architecture decorates the facades of Oddfellows temples.

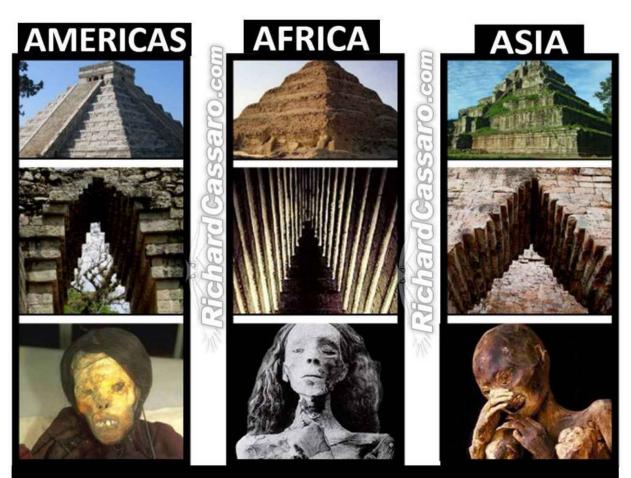
The Triptych very elegantly conveys the ancient "balance of opposites" practice outlined above. In *Written In Stone*, I showed how all the Triptych Temples of Antiquity reveal this same Middle Path wisdom, and I showed how they correlated with constructions, images and ideas found in Freemasonry.

In this book, I want to take things a step further, by showing that the GodSelf Icon expressed the same idea as the Triptych in a way that is much more accessible to us today.



CHAPTER TWO The Esoteric Meaning of Twin Guardian Lions

In the last chapter, we used the term "pyramid cultures" to describe the "pyramid age," an era when ancient cultures around the world mysteriously created the same pyramid and pyramidal monuments, and used the same architecture and symbolism. The many intriguing similarities shared by these pyramid cultures—*including pyramids, corbeled arches, and mummification* —indicates that they were "celebrating" the same wisdom-tradition. As we can see in the following photo collage, which shows parallel ruins that have been found from the Americas to Africa to Asia, ancient people on different continents seem to have somehow shared the same religion:



EVIDENCE OF THE GOLDEN AGE

Though the "pyramid age" was a very ancient and mysterious epoch, it was *not* the Golden Age. That's to say, the pyramid age was *not* the antediluvian period of Plato's "Atlantis," which I suggested in *Written in Stone* might be a "Mother Culture" to these pyramid cultures. The pyramid cultures were *children* of this Mother Culture, *offspring* of the Golden Age who celebrated the wisdom of their ancestors.

There is, in fact, another "class of ruins" that, like the cultural parallels listed above, we find worldwide in Antiquity—an even greater Antiquity than the pyramid age.

This older "class of ruins" consists of various megalithic stone monuments that exist globally—*menhirs, rocking stones, dolmens, and the like* —and that stretch back even further than the pyramid age,

perhaps even as far back as the Golden Age (or shortly thereafter). Otherwise said, while pyramids, corbeled arches, and mummification are "memories" of the Golden Age, these megalithic stone ruins may very well be "artifacts" of the Golden Age, built by people who either lived in the Golden Age or lived during an era that was much closer to the Golden Age.

These nameless, inscription-less monuments have left archaeologists scratching their heads as to their origin. Of these megalithic structures, *dolmens* are a particularly mysterious category of stone constructions worth mentioning. A dolmen consists of a single-chambered megalithic tomb, with two or more vertical megaliths supporting a large flat horizontal capstone (giving it the appearance of a "table"). Dolmens appear in widespread locations on earth. Scholars have dated most of these stone monuments to the Neolithic (4000–3000 BC) period. Since it is impossible to date stone by conventional radiocarbon isotope methods, these dolmens could have been made centuries or even thousands of years earlier than archaeologists have proposed. If this were so, that would bring their dating much closer to the "heart" of our proposed Golden Age.



Top Down, Left to Right: Dolmen in Ganghwado, South Korea. Dolmen in Marayur, India. Dolmen of Oleiros, Spain. Poulnabrone dolmen in the Burren, County Clare, Ireland. Lancken-Granitz dolmen, Germany. Dolmen in North Salem, NY, USA.

Because of their sheer size, mysterious appearance, and unknown function, the world's dolmens—which bear no written language or inscriptions—evoke awe and wonder. *Who built them? How were they built? Why were they built? How far back in time do they stretch? Why did ancient people worldwide all build precisely these same structures?*

Our dolmen-building ancestors, who had not yet developed a written language, apparently were able to cut and move mammoth blocks of stone and shape them into a recognizable standard form. These dolmens bear no inscriptions to tell us how or why they were built. Perhaps we should not be surprised to see such prodigies of lifting and engineering among prehistoric people. What looks to us like magic may have been achieved by methods not nearly as primitive as we suppose. Perhaps the best way to think about dolmens is to realize that these stone monuments were their equivalent of written language. What use is writing compared to glorious stone monuments like these ancient dolmens, seemingly put together by magical means to communicate to us that the peoples of prehistory were great and strong and spiritually complex?

In his *Phaedrus* dialogue (370 BC), the Greek philosopher Plato described how the invention of writing was not a "progress," not a step forward, but a "fall" of sorts. In fact, this enigmatic Platonic description never fails to infuriate the students of Plato. Nothing puzzles or perplexes them quite like Plato's repeated condemnation of writing.

"For this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory. Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise."

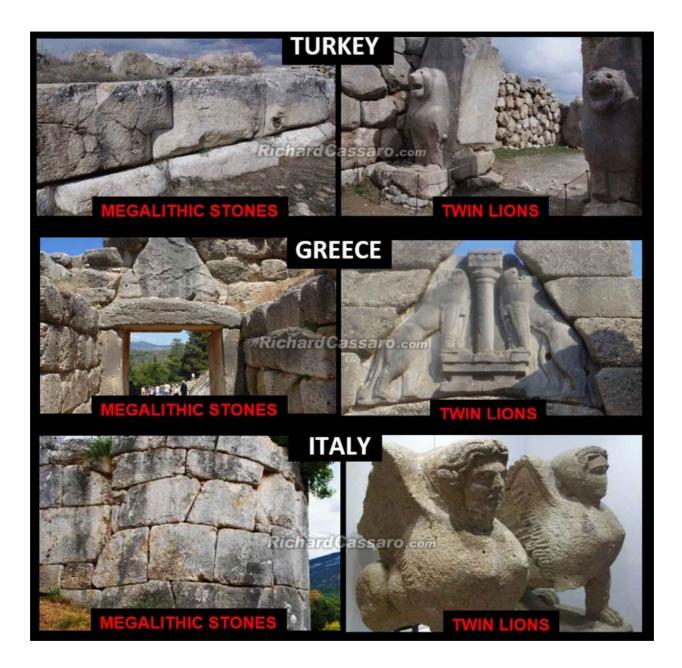
The great-grandchildren of the dolmen builders, who were one step closer to us in time and one step further from the Golden Age, continued to build megalithic stone monuments. But they stopped building dolmens and they started building what today we call *megalithic, polygonal* and *cyclopean* stone ruins, which, like the dolmens of their forefathers, we find all over the world.

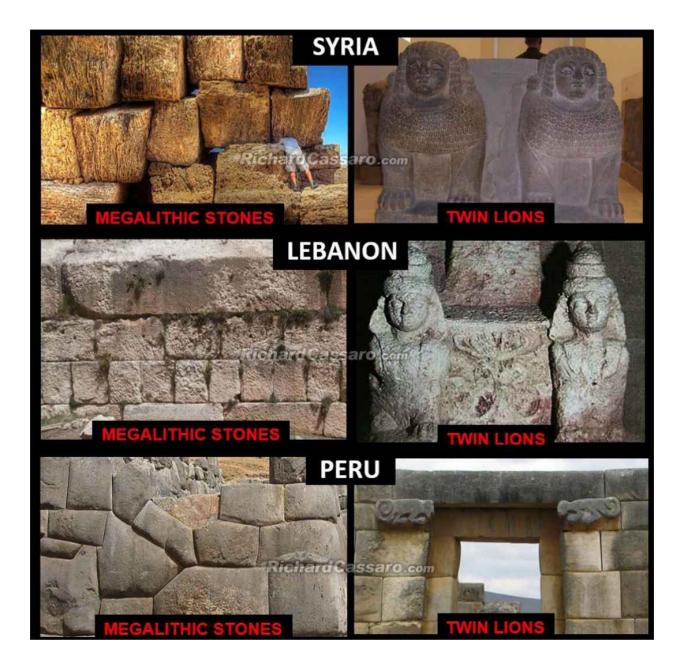
Archaeologists pay little attention to the mystery of the worldwide presence of these stone ruins. However, with the advent of the Internet,

more and more researchers are becoming interested in the enigma. Yet what these researchers have not yet recognized is that there is a common thread that links these megalithic monuments together.

Having personally traveled to visit these megalithic landmarks throughout most of my life, I've noticed an anomaly that no one else has noticed, discussed or detailed in writing: *Many of the world's megalithic, cyclopean and polygonal monuments display twin lions (or twin sphinxes, i.e., twin feline creatures).*

In fact, this repeated usage of twin lions can even be described as the first symbolic language ever recorded, utilized by cultures all around the world, including Turkey, Greece, Italy, Syria, Lebanon, and Peru:





These "twin lions" symbols seem to be a link connecting two paradigms the faceless and nameless "megalithic dolmen stonemasons" of prehistory and their great, great grandchildren, the "megalithic cyclopean / polygonal stonemasons" of the more recent and identifiable past, who used twin lions in their stone constructions.

There is a natural reason why lions, symbolic of strength, courage, and leadership, would be so important in prehistoric cultures. During the period of glacial melting following the Ice Age, from 10,500 to 8,000 BC, the constellation Leo was recognized throughout the ancient world as the

dominant constellation in the night sky:

"Leo was one of the earliest recognized constellations, with archaeological evidence that the Mesopotamians had a similar constellation as early as 4000 BCE. The Persians called Leo Ser or Shir; the Turks, Artan; the Syrians, Aryo; the Jews, Arye; the Indians, Simha, all meaning "lion"."

—Wikipedia

As the Ice Age was ending, and human beings started to spend more time under the open sky, they saw the lion as one of the most ferocious and at the same time majestic predators in the environment. Being able to dominate the lion marked an important achievement for humankind. It is no wonder that this period, the Age of Leo, which saw the emergence of many of the elements we now call civilization, would be regarded as a kind of Golden Age when everything that was important to them had seemingly reached its highest stage of development. By depicting the lion symbol in their monuments, the ancients were commemorating the Age of Leo, the Golden Age.

Look again at the dolmen photos above, built by the dolmen builders. Then look again at the cyclopean and polygonal cultures, who encoded twin lions into their constructions. We can see the evolution of the mysterious and advanced dolmen builders *becoming* the megalithic cultures whose constructions all consisted of the twin lion symbol in stone.

Of course, it took time—thousands of years—for one generation to evolve into the next, and for one paradigm to change or shift into another paradigm, but the rough pattern of evolution seems clear.

As time continued to march forward, leaving the Golden Age even further behind, our ancestors created civilizations in different parts of the world, often constructing temples and sacred sites directly on top of the megalithic ruins of their forefathers. In time, pyramids and pyramidal monuments (ziggurats, mounds, temple towers and the like) began appearing everywhere. These pyramid cultures continued to promote, incorporate and revere the symbolic "twin lions" motif in their temples and religious stone structures.



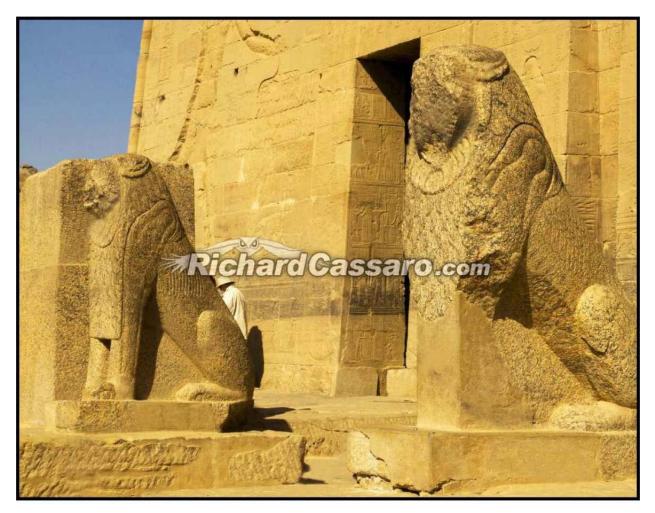
Chavín, Peru.



Foo Dogs, China.



Carved sandstone lions at the steps of the ancient sun temple at Konark, India.



lsis Temple, Egypt.



Lion Gate in Hattusa (Turkey).



Lions of Durbar Square the Bhaktapur, the old Newar city of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal.



The Lions of Pre Rup Temple, Cambodia.



A pair of Lamassu guarding the Gate of All Nations.



Basalt Lions from the Aramean Kingdom of Bit-Bahiana.



The Udvada Atash Behram is the most sacred of the Zoroastrian fire temples in India.

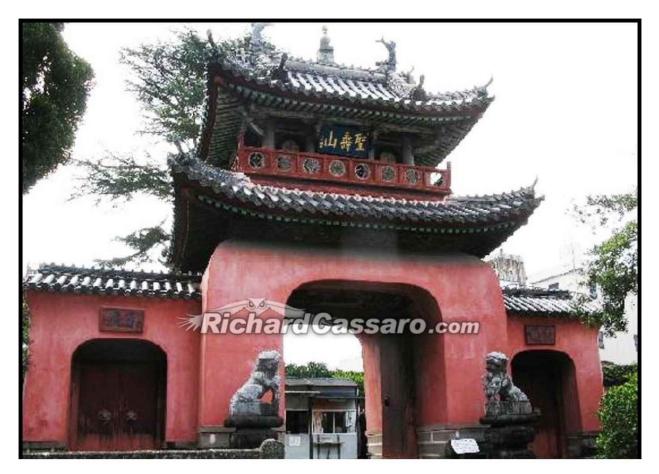


Etruscan sphinxes, Italy.

A mysterious pattern of twin lions guarding temples is clearly at work among the world's first known cultures, which evolved into the great centers of civilization. It seems abundantly clear that this pattern had a deep spiritual significance in relation to the temples that these twin lions guarded.

In an amazing coincidence or common practice inherited from remote antiquity, every culture seems to have linked the twin lions to the very same self-empowering universal spiritual wisdom teaching linked to the Triptych Temple.

As we can see in the following images, a pair of twin feline animals, usually lions, jaguars or pumas, stand guard outside Triptych Temples:



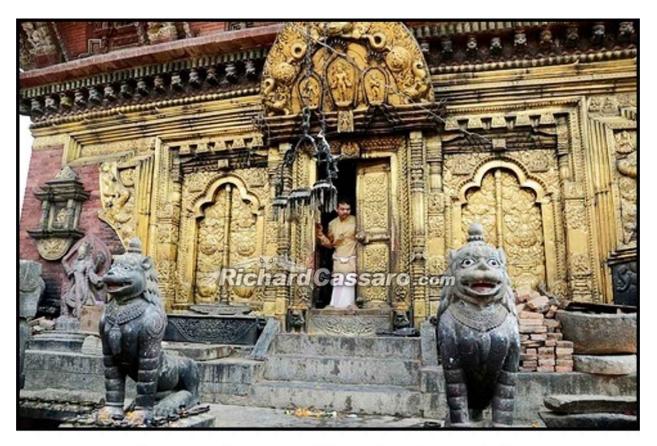
Triptych Temple (called Sofukuji) with twin lions in Nagasaki, Japan.



Konark sun temple in India is a Triptych Temple (missing the horizontal stone over the center door) protected by twin guardian lions.



Chinese guardian lions in front of the Triptych entrance gate of Zhaoling Tomb.



Two snow lions guard the main entrance to the Changu Narayan Temple, which has a Triptych entrance. Note also the Triptych above the center door.



Eastern Mebon Temple in Cambodia is a Triptych Temple with twin guardian lions.

This "*twin-lions-guarding-Triptych-Temples*" motif is a mysterious parallel shared by many cultures. *So what, then, do the "twin lion" symbols mean?*

I began to explore the meaning of this guardian lion symbolism in *Written in Stone*. In February of 2013, I published the article "The Occult Symbolism of the Bronx Zoo" detailing and expanding upon the lion symbol research previously published in *Written in Stone*.

I showed how one of the most mysterious parallels shared by ancient cultures worldwide (cultures never in contact, according to most scholars) is the similar use of twin lions, often standing in front of and guarding temples or sacred buildings.

As we'll see in the present chapter, these twin "right" and "left" side lions

hold the key to the ancient GodSelf Icon. Unfortunately, no written records describing the meaning of these twin ancient feline symbols have survived from ancient times, if indeed such records ever existed. Thus, no easy answer lays in front of us in our quest to decode their meaning. Nevertheless, we can still piece together the symbolism at work on this motif and with this foundation, and we can begin to see a common thread.

A crucial key for us to understand the twin lions is to recognize that in (comparatively) recent history the Freemasons have also used this same "twin lions guarding temples" motif in their art and architecture.

As I explained in *Written in Stone*, the Masons didn't just encode their Triptych secret into the High Gothic cathedrals; they also adorned castles, lodges, temples, and multitudes of other buildings with the Triptych entrance, memorializing the meaning and power of the Triptych for future generations.

Furthermore, the architecture surrounding these Masonic Triptychs also encodes esoteric and metaphysical information. For example, many Masonic Triptych patterns—*especially those designed onto the facades of churches, castles, and cathedrals* —are guarded by twin lions:



Duomo's Triptych facade with two lion statues, Parma, Italy.



The entrance to the Pierpont Morgan library is a giant Triptych, behind twin guardian lions.



Exterior of the medieval church of Santa Maria Assunta.



The cathedral of Ruvo di Puglia.

CHINA – FOO DOGS

Among the most familiar of these pairs of guardian lions are the "foo dogs" of China. They are often depicted flanking the main entrance to China's Buddhist temples:



A longstanding tradition in China says that the twin lions symbolize Yin and Yang, the twin "opposing" and simultaneously "complementary" forces in the universe, from which everything is made. As tradition dictates, the male lion (right in photo above) stands with his right paw atop the globe or pearl of wisdom; and the female stands with her left paw resting on a lion cub.

The following section of a Wikipedia entry on the subject reads as follows:

"The lions are always presented in pairs, a manifestation of yin and yang, the female representing yin and the male yang. The male lion has one paw (may be right or left) on an embroidered ball called a "xiù qiú" which is sometimes carved with a geometric pattern known in the West as the "Flower of life." The female is essentially identical, but has a cub under the other paw to the male, representing the cycle of life.

—Wikipedia

It has been widely asserted that the guardian dogs symbolize duality:

"Symbolically, the female fu lion protects those dwelling inside, while the male guards the structure. Sometimes the female has her mouth closed, and the male open. This symbolizes the enunciation of the sacred word "om". However, Japanese adaptions state that the male is inhaling, representing life, while the female exhales, representing death. Other styles have both lions with a single large pearl in each of their partially opened mouths. The pearl is carved so that it can roll about in the lion's mouth but sized just large enough so that it can never be removed."

—Wikipedia

<u>JAPAN – KOMAINU</u>

In Japan, the twin lion guardian statues/figures are called *Komainu*. These lion-like creatures either guard the entrance or the inner room of Japanese Shinto shrines, or are kept inside the inner shrine itself:



Komainu, the twin lion statues in Japan, are said to "ward off evil spirits."

One Komainu statue is shown with its mouth open, the other with its mouth closed. Twin Komainu statues are a very common characteristic of

Japanese temples and shrines. The pattern is described by scholars as being Buddhist in origin and refers to the pronunciation of the primordial sound "*Aum*" that denotes non-duality. The lion with an open mouth is pronouncing the first letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, "a", while the lion with the closed mouth is uttering the last letter, which is pronounced "um." Together they form the sound Aum" (om), a sacred sound in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism because it represents the beginning and the end of all things.

BURMA & MYANMAR – CHINTHE

In Myanmar, the twin guardian lions are called *Chinthe*, ("leogryphs," depictions of lion-like creatures). They are often seen flanking the entrances of pagodas and temples in Burma and other South and Southeast Asian countries:



Unique pair of Burmese marble guardian lions called Chinthe, 19th Century.

The chinthe is featured prominently on the kyat (the currency of Burma) and the Sri Lankan rupee. They are almost always depicted in pairs, and they "serve to protect the pagoda." They typically appear as animals, but they sometimes have human faces.

"The chinthe is revered and loved by the Burmese people and is used symbolically on the royal thrones of Burma. Predating the use of coins for money, brass weights cast in the shape of mythical beasts like the chinthe were commonly used to measure standard quantities of staple items."

—Wikipedia

OKINAWA - SHISA

In Okinawa, the twin guardian lion statues are known as *Shisa*, described in Okinawan mythology as mystical creatures resembling a cross between a lion and a dog. The shisa are also often depicted in pairs:



Photos of Shisa.

From the Edo period (1603 – 1868), they started to be called "guardian dogs" in mainland Japan. When in pairs, the left shisa traditionally has a closed mouth, the right one an open mouth. Some Okinawans believe the female has a closed mouth to keep bad out of the home and to keep the good in, while the male has an open mouth to share goodness and to "scare away the bad." Like the *komainu* ("lion dogs"), the shisa are a variation of the guardian lions ("foo dogs") from China.

"According to feng shui, correct placement of the lions is important to ensure their beneficial effect. When looking out of a building through the entrance to be guarded, looking in the same direction as the lions, the male is placed on the left and the female on the right. So when looking at the entrance from outside the building, facing the lions, the male lion with the ball is on the right, and the female with the cub is on the left."

—Wikipedia

TIBET - SNOW LIONS

In Tibet, the twin guardian lions are called Snow Lions, which are regarded as celestial animals:



Tibetan statues of snow lions.

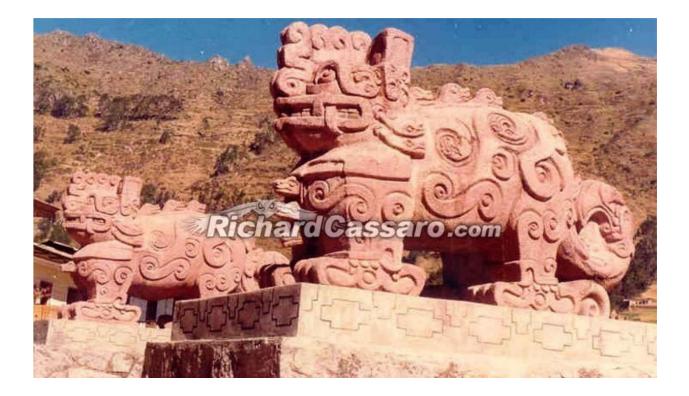
The body of the Snow Lion is white, while its flowing mane of hair, its tail and curls are blue or green. Interestingly, most Snow Lions are genderneutral, though some depictions in Buddhist art show some male and some female.

These Snow Lions from Tibet are the final link we need to connect a string of parallel "twin guardian lion" motifs that assign "duality" to the lions. Starting with the Chinese foo dogs, these images just described span thousands of years and thousands of miles of Asian history and geography.

<u>CHAVIN – JAGUARS</u>

The twin lion motif seems to have crossed oceans. It appears in the Ancient Americas in the image of twin jaguars from the Chavín culture *—twin felines that perfectly match the twin lion motif we've been discussing.*

It seems the exact same kind of "duality" of "yin" and "yang" assigned to the foo dogs in China (and neighboring Asian countries, as discussed above) is also the ancient meaning of the Chavín twin jaguars statue at the pre-Inca site of Chavín de Huantar, as shown below:



"A careful study of primitive traditions and of the mythologies of the more advanced cultures has enabled us to draw the conclusion that most of them incorporate the symbol of the twins...as lions (that is, the wild lion and the tame lion, or day and night)..."

— J.E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols

As the renowned symbolist J.E. Cirlot explains, the idea of duality (day/night, sun/moon, hot/cold, etc.) was associated with twin lions in Antiquity in general. Cirlot offers us various pairs of opposites associated with the lion, including "wild lion" and "tame lion." If this indeed applies to these twin Chavín feline guardians, then we can draw a clear parallel to the symbolism of the foo dogs in China.

If we take a closer look at the Chavín, we see that their entire civilization revolved around the concept of duality, making it even more likely that these twin jaguars symbolize duality:

"A dual scheme is represented in some of the earliest Andean imagery... The...great golden altar in the Incas' Temple of the Sun that was destroyed by Spanish conquistadors...depicted a universe structured in terms of dual oppositions: Sun is parallel to Moon,

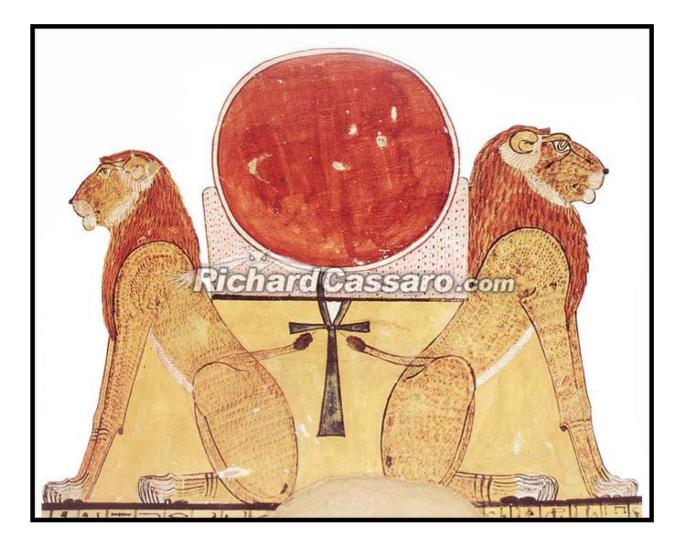
Morning to Evening, Male to Female, Dry Season to Rainy Season.

Visual expressions of duality abound at the site of Chavín de Huantar. Pairs of what are probably shamans transformed into jaguars...were arranged in procession around the perimeter of the circular plaza of the Old Temple."

—Paul Richard Steele and Catherine J. Allen, *Handbook of Inca Mythology*

Despite the fact that the ancient cultures that flourished in Asia and South America evolved on different continents thousands of miles away from each other, separated by the Pacific Ocean, and were never in contact (according to most reliable scholars), it seems their parallel "twin guardian felines" motifs were based on the same idea of duality, where one lion symbolizes "yin" and the other symbolizes "yang."

Amateur Egyptologist Lewis Spence, a Rosicrucian author, occultist, mystic, and founder of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC), noted the existence of twin lions guarding temples, and attempted to decipher it by pointing to Egypt as the origin and source of this ancient global motif. In particular, he noted a certain Egyptian "hieroglyph" or "god" or "motif" called *Aker* :



"Aker appears as a pair of twin lions, one named Duaj (meaning "yesterday") and the other Sefer (meaning "tomorrow")...When depicted as a lion pair...a sun disc was put between the lions; the lions were sitting back-on-back."

—Pat Remler, Egyptian Mythology, A to Z

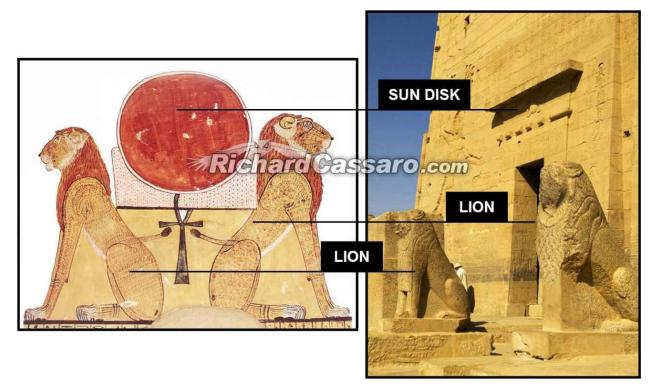
For Spence, the Aker symbol holds the origin and meaning of the twin guardian lions:

"The outstanding characteristic of the lion was that of guardianship, and this is to be found in the part played by the ancient lion-god Aker, who guarded the gate of the dawn through which the sun passed each morning.

...[These] two guardian lions...were called Sef and Dua—that is,

'Yesterday' and 'To-morrow.' From this was derived the practice of placing statues of lions at the doors of palaces and tombs as guardians..."

— Lewis Spence, *Myths and Legends of Ancient Egypt* (1915)



Left: The twin Aker Lions flanking the solar Aten. Right: Two Lions or Sphinxes flank the entrance to the temple door, which is crowned by the solar Aten. Temple of Isis at Philae.

Spence's idea that the twin guardian lion statues in front of temples originated with Egypt's *Aker* symbol is interesting.

Digging a bit deeper, we find that the Aker Lions "Yesterday" & "Tomorrow," which face opposite directions, are something of a mystery to Egyptologists, most of whom seem to fail to understand their true inherent meaning:



The Aker lion symbol is abundant in Egyptian papyri.

A famous explanation was provided by the analysis and interpretations of Schwaller de Lubicz, a student of Egyptian symbolism known for his twelve year study of the Temple of Luxor, who wrote that the image represents the "present" moment in time (symbolized by the solar Aten symbol) in comparison to the "past" and "future" (symbolized by the twin lions).

The *lion* on the left corresponds to "*yesterday*" and faces west, the *lion* on the right faces east and represents "*tomorrow*." With the eternal sundisk (symbolizing the "soul within or "higher Self") centered between the dual opposing lions, the entire Aker Lions hieroglyph clearly signifies the "Eternal Now" moment, according to de Lubicz.

The sundisk itself symbolizes the soul, but here placed the soul is balanced between Yesterday and Tomorrow, and so centered. In other words, to locate this eternal present is to find our higher Self within. This is Mastery, and this is our task in life, according to the Egyptians. Where the present moment is "eternity" the past and future are outside of the present, and therefore do not truly exist in the sense that man thinks they do:

"....There is this moment which cannot be located in Time...I call it

the Present Moment...This [Egyptian] symbol...is the eternal Present Moment...the Present Moment is Eternity...The Present Moment...is outside of Time."

-Schwaller de Lubicz, Symbol and the Symbolic (1951)

Using this Aker Lions symbol, the Egyptians were trying to tell us that when we focus on the Now moment, something magical happens. We begin to understand that we are the god of the heavens, and that all of creation, including the creation of "time," is our own construction. This ancient wisdom later became a major underpinning of hermetic teachings and occult philosophy.

"Nothing can be more inaccurate than to apply the terms, past, present, future, to real Being, which is immovable. Past and future are expressions only suitable to generation which proceeds through time."

— Benjamin Franklin Cocker , *Christianity and Greek Philosophy* (1870)

The idea of an "eternal present" moment or the "eternal now" moment is a central concept in Eastern spiritual teachings and occult philosophy. This is the ancient teaching of non-duality, the common ground of Advaita Vedanta, Ch'an Buddhism, Zen, Taoism and Sufism, the same common ground which is at the core of the message left behind by the founders of all the great religions.

Writers, philosophers, scientists and intellectuals of all ages have referred to and described the "eternal now" moment:

"...the meeting of two eternities, the past and future...is precisely the present moment."

-Henry David Thoreau, Walden

"I have realized that the past and future are real illusions, that they exist in the present, which is what there is and all there is."

— Alan W. Watts

"Remember then: there is only one time that is important—Now! It is the most important time because it is the only time when we have

any power."

-Leo Tolstoy, Three Questions

The doctrine of non-duality teaches, basically, that there is no power greater than the present. We should not look to the past or the future, because they simply do not exist. Focus on the now. This is all we have, and this is all we will ever have. The now moment is eternal.

As noted above, twin lions flank the main door of Egypt's Temple of Isis, which is itself a kind of "Sun Door" because it is crowned with the famous solar "Aten" or sundisk symbol etched in stone. This Aten or sundisk later became *personified* into the various "Sun Gods" of ancient history and across multiple nations (i.e., Ra, Apollo, Sol Invictus, and so on).

The personification of the Sun God is nothing less than a personification of the "soul within" or higher Self within. In other words, Ra is your higher Self. So is Apollo. Both were the Sun God of their people. Most of our ancient ancestors knew this. But not all, and not always.

We can see how this personification of the Sun took place in the following comparison showing how Egypt's solar Aten symbol, flanked by twin lions, was transformed into the sun god Apollo, riding across the sky in his chariot, flanked by twin horses.

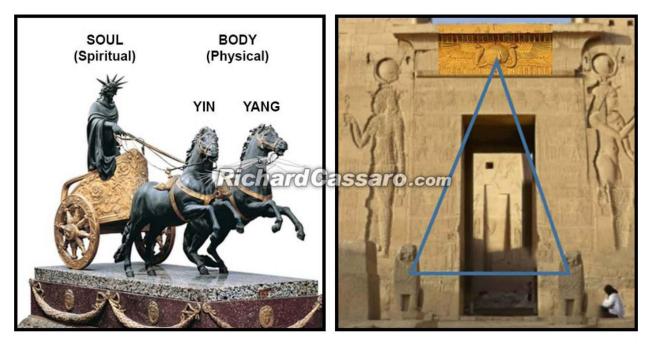


The concept of the sun god in his golden chariot is of course associated with Plato's famous Chariot Allegory, a metaphor that depicts man as a celestial chariot driver of a team of twin horses. One horse is a milder, fairer one, naturally straining upward. But the other horse is a wilder, darker one, ever pulling downward.

"...the charioteer of the human soul drives a pair...one of the horses is noble and of noble breed, but the other quite the opposite in breed and character."

— Plato , Phaedrus

The driver, the soul, must keep the two horses working together on a straight road through the sky, a task made difficult by the wild nature of the dark horse.



The sun god Apollo driving his twin horses.

So difficult is the challenge, Plato explains, that the best the driver can aim for is to keep the disparate horses working with some compromise as a functioning team.

"The allegory of the Chariot ... represents the lower or inferior part of man's nature ... as dragging the Soul down to the earth, and subjecting it to the slavery of corporeal conditions. Out of these conditions arise numerous evils that disorder the mind and becloud the reason, for evil is inherent to the condition of finite and multiform existence into which we have fallen. The earthly life is a fall. The soul is now dwelling in the grave which we call the body. In its incorporate state, and previous to the discipline of education, the rational element is "asleep." Life is more of a dream than a reality. We resemble those captives chained in a subterraneous cave,' so poetically described in the seventh book of 'The Republic'; their backs turned to the light, so that they see but the shadows of the objects which pass behind them, and 'to these shadows they attribute a perfect reality.' Their sojourn upon earth is thus a dark imprisonment in the body, a dreamy exile from their proper home."

— Benjamin Franklin Cocker, Christianity and Greek Philosophy

Plato's "Chariot" allegory is where we get "The Chariot" tarot card:



Plato's Chariot is an ancient universal symbol of the Great Work.

The Chariot card teaches initiates how to transcend the world by showing the example of a powerful Prince who has already done so. The Prince stands in harmony with the cosmos above him inside a magnificent Chariot pulled by two contrasting sphinxes equally balanced—a clear reference to Plato's "Chariot" fable, where the twin horses represent the dual aspects of the soul when incarnated as man. One side is good and obedient, the other is shadowy and disobedient. The goal is to harmonize the two into a kind of "balanced" Yin/Yang like symmetry, which is exactly what the Prince has done. In doing so, he has undergone a spiritual transformation, symbolized by the alchemical emblems on his tunic and the laurel and star crown on his head.

The city is behind him, with water separating himself and the city, indicating purification by self-exile from civilization, materialism, and the cares of the world, in order to engage in the Great Work.

The Prince has exalted himself above the world, using the "duality" and "transcendence of duality" information symbolized by the very Chariot card that depicts him in the center. The message of this Tarot card is that you must do the same.

This concept was retained in also another ancient system of spiritual initiation, the Masonic Fraternity. The image below from the Freemasons' Hall, The United Grand Lodge of England, depicts Apollo driving Plato's Chariot, while the glowing Eye above symbolizes the concept of illumination (the Third Eye):



Left: An awakened Third Eye above Helios in the Grand Temple, Freemasons' Hall, the United Grand Lodge of England. Right: Black figured neck amphora, 510-500 BC, Attic Archaic Greek.

It is largely through Freemasonry that these ancient ideas have survived into the present era. Many Masonic lodges depict the twin guardian lions, as we can see in the two massive sphinx statues guarding the entrance into the Masonic Temple on South Temple in Salt Lake City.

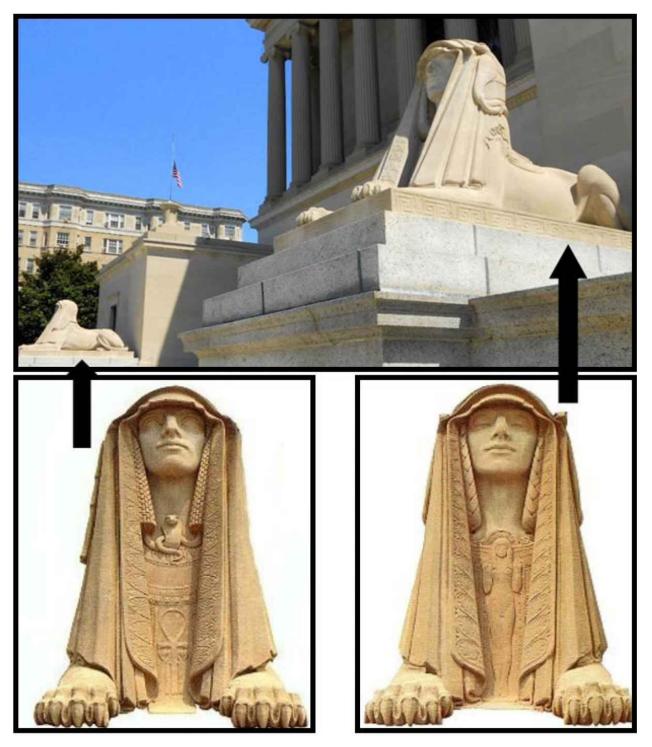


Here are a parallel pair of twin sphinxes guarding the entrance into the El Paso Scottish Rite Temple and Museum:



El Paso Scottish Rite Temple and Museum.

The sphinxes that guard the entrance to the temple are the largest singlecast *terra cotta* sculptures in the world. They are even bigger than the two massive marble sphinxes that flank the main entrance of the Scottish Rite Masonic temple in Washington, D.C.:



Scottish Rite Masonic temple in Washington, D.C.

As you walk into the Scottish Rite Masonic Temple, the lion on your left is a male lion, with its eyes open. The lion on your right is a female lion, with its eyes closed. This is clearly a reference to the "twin guardian lions" motif of antiquity, and also a memorial showing how these twin lions denote "pairs of opposites," in this case *male* vs. *female* and *sleeping* vs. *awake*. Egyptian symbols, including serpents, ankh crosses, and goddess Isis depictions, are inscribed on these sphinxes.

The Masonic lions in Washington D.C. are echoed by the twin lion statues featured on the Bournemouth War Memorial, built in 1921, located in the United Kingdom:



As with the twin sphinxes in Washington, these two lions are shown as sleeping and awake. There are thousands and perhaps even tens of thousands of examples of the sleeping vs. awake lions in modern Western architecture.

The twin lion statues featured on the Bournemouth War Memorial are said to be a copy of the two lions (one sleeping, the other awake and roaring), which guard the tomb of Pope Clement XIII:



Two lions (one sleeping, the other awake and roaring) guard the tomb of Pope Clement XIII.

We've already seen how these twin guardian lions, in general, are symbolic of all the "pairs of opposites" that constitute the physical world. Here, in these sleeping lion vs. awake lion motifs, there is clear emphasis on one particular "pair" of opposites—sleeping and awake.

Why is one lion sleeping and the other lion awake?

One possible answer might be found in Plato's Atlantis model, which proposed a legendary period called the "Golden Age," described by Classical historians who followed Plato's lead as the pinnacle of human civilization. During this supposed Golden Age, man enjoyed high consciousness. Civilizations were spiritual-minded, rather than materialist.

The Golden Age was followed by a slow decline into barbarism, with man increasingly beset by pains and evils, symbolized by metals of decreasing value.

- The Greek poet Hesiod (700 BCE) spoke of the Golden, Silver, Bronze, Heroic, and Iron ages in *Works and Days* (lines 109-201).
- The Roman poet Ovid (1st century BC) tells of Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Iron ages in Book 1.89-150, *Metamorphoses*.
- Hindu and Vedic writings describe four declining ages, Satya

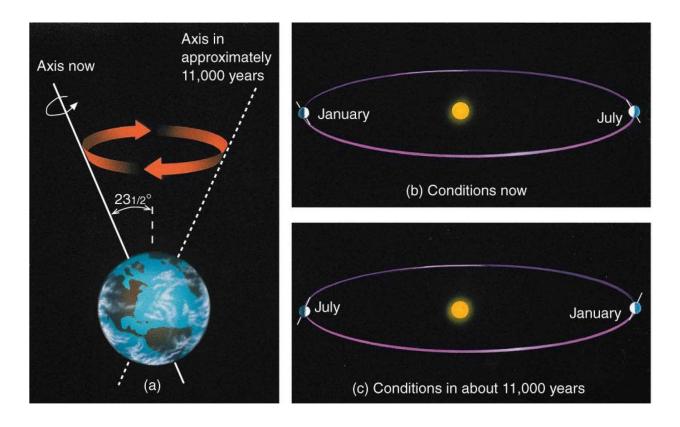
(Golden), Treta (Silver), Dwapara (Bronze) and Kali (Iron), totaling 12,000 declining years.

• Parallel references to the Ages of Man are found in Hopi (worlds), Mayan (suns) and other cultures.

20th Century professor Giorgio de Santillana co-authored *Hamlet's Mill* (1969), which mentions close to thirty ancient cultures that believed in declining world ages and the fall of human culture, starting with an original Golden Age.

According to the occult doctrine proposed by Plato and some of the other ancient Greeks, civilization doesn't just fall—it *rises and falls* in a cyclical manner. Time is not *linear*, but *circular* or, rather, *cyclical*. It runs in an identifiable and even predictable circuit, like a giant circle.

The ancients believed that this cycle is related to, if not rooted in, the precession of the equinoxes, an almost imperceptible, gradual shift in the movement of the earth over a 24,000-year (or 26,000-year) period, which is roughly the amount of time it takes for the sun to rise in the same place twice relative to the other stars as viewed from Earth.



"Thus we see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress. The great kingdoms and empires of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended; till, having reached the lowest point, humanity reasserts itself and mounts up once more, the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended."

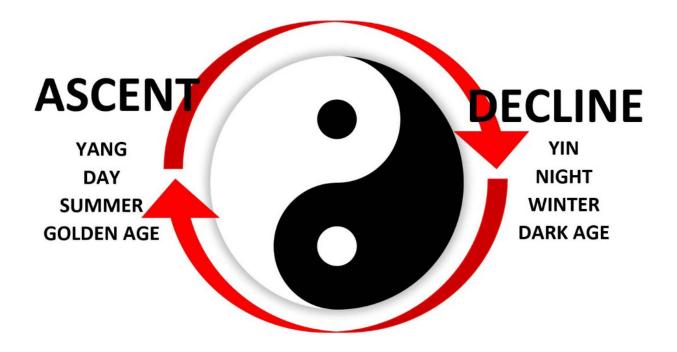
— Helena P. Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled (1877)

The ancients believed that Time moves in a great cycle corresponding to the precession of the equinoxes, and during this cycle, humanity alternates through two twin contrasting ages—a Golden Age and a Dark Age. Think of it like traveling through a giant Yin/Yang cycle, back and forth.

These ages are caused by two twin cycles of "Consciousness" that are inherent in Man's spiritual being—Awakened Consciousness and Sleeping Consciousness, which man must shuttle back and forth through, and which is somehow linked to the precession of the equinoxes. The Awake part of the cycle, when man's consciousness is at its peak, is reflected in the Golden Ages on earth, when civilization reaches its pinnacle of peace and prosperity. During this time, we are fully aware of our divinity, and we recognize the fact that we create our own reality. The Asleep period of the cycle, when man's consciousness is in its deepest slumber, is reflected in the Dark Ages on earth, when civilization reaches its lowest depths of despair and depravity, as we lose consciousness of our divinity.

Plato called this cycle of the slow precession of the equinoxes through the twelve houses of the ancient zodiac the "Great Year," a period that takes a total of about 25,600 years. Different cultures refer to this cycle by different names including: the Platonic year, Perfect year, Yuga cycle, Ages of Man or just the equinoctial cycle.

Philosophically, our (eternal) souls pass through this cycle, just as our souls pass through the day and the year cycles. It makes perfect sense if you think of it in terms of opposites.



- One single complete "Day" has both a LIGHT HALF (sun) and DARK HALF (moon)
- One single complete "Year" has both a LIGHT HALF (summer) and DARK HALF (winter)
- One single precession cycle or "Great Year" has both a LIGHT HALF (awake) and DARK HALF (sleep)

In their understanding of the precession of the equinoxes, the ancients believed that the rise and fall of consciousness, which causes the rise and fall of high civilization, was yet *another* cycle of light and dark to whose rhythms man is subjected.

Just as man sleeps at Night and during the Winter, so there is an Asleep cycle associated with the Great Year. And these Awake and Asleep states of human consciousness are visible during the Great Year because they manifest in the rise and fall of human civilization.

"Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson , Nature

This idea seems to have been recorded in architecture worldwide, usually in Masonic architecture, and mostly in front of memorials and buildings,

like the Bournemouth War Memorial mentioned above, where a pair of twin lions known as "Awake" and "Asleep" flank the entrance. In one sense, these twin lions signify "duality," balancing the monument behind them. When looked upon this way, the three form a Trinity or three-in-one pattern, with the memorial behind providing the "balance" of the duality formed by the twin lions.

These twin lions don't *just* signify the "Doctrine of Duality" or even the "Balance of Duality"; they *also* signify the cycle of alternating "Asleep" and "Awake" periods that the soul must shuttle through across the 25,600-year precession cycle.



Twin Lions called "Awake" and "Asleep" signify the twin states of consciousness man cycles through. Bournemouth War Memorial, Bournemouth, England. The lion on the left is the "sleepy" lion and the lion on the right is the "awake" lion.

It has become a commonplace among the few who still subscribe to the Great Year paradigm that the culture of Atlantis was the Golden Age culture, and that present-day culture is the Dark Age culture, a time during which we have amnesia of who we really are, and where human consciousness has reached its lowest slumber. This Dark Age has lasted for thousands and thousands of years. That we are currently living in the "Dark Age" is an idea supported by, among others, the Greek poet Hesiod, the Roman poet Ovid and various Hindu and Vedic writings.

By uncovering the strange and mysterious parallels shared by ancient cultures, cultures that were much closer to the Golden Age than ourselves, we move one step closer to rediscovering an important treasure—*the spiritual wisdom of the Golden Age.*

Knowing what we now know about the twin guardian lions like China's foo dogs symbolizing "opposites," it is now clearer that the meaning of the god Aker symbolizes the "pairs of opposites." Everything about the posture of the twin lions screams *opposites*, and they were even given "opposite" *names* by the Egyptians—*Yesterday* and *Tomorrow*.



The fact that these lions very *names* signify opposites, is, in my opinion, clear evidence that this motif is instructing us to "find the center" and recognize your "higher Self", which higher Self is symbolized in the picture by the solar "Aten". The motif further instructs us that this feat is achieved by realizing that the twin opposites are an illusion; only the spiritual center is real. That's to say, *Yesterday* and *Tomorrow* are nothing but abstract concepts, and so are all the "pairs of opposites," and our Great Work in life is to focus on the here-and-now (solar Aten in the center) not on the abstract (the lions).

Note how, in the following images of GodSelf Icons made by ancient cultures across the world, there is a definite parallel to the Aker Lions hieroglyph, with two lions (felines) being held in each hand by the GodSelf Icon.



Persia



Egypt



Babylon



Benin



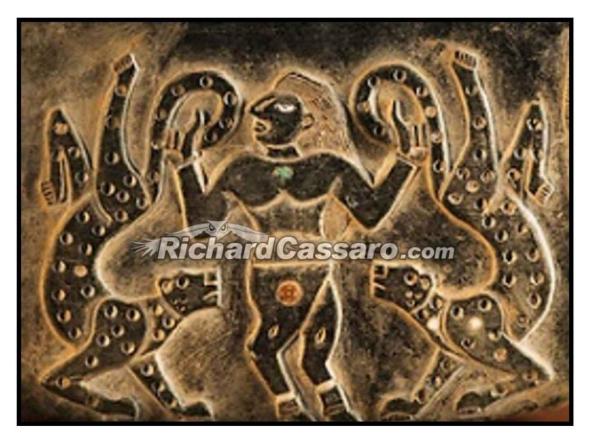
Israel



Etruscan



Hittite



Jiroft



India



Mesopotamia



Rhodes



Moche



Chachapoyas

When we look at these ancient GodSelf Icons from different parts of the ancient world, are we seeing the same spiritual idea, Carl Jung's "union of opposites through the middle path," that was conveyed by the ancient and modern Triptych Temples?

Is the GodSelf Icon telling us not to focus on the "pairs of opposites" in life (symbolized by the lions) but instead focus on the center or higher Self in the middle—which is who we really are?

As we'll see throughout the remainder of this book, this is precisely the doctrine of the GodSelf Icon.



CHAPTER THREE GodSelf Icon in Masonic Art & Architecture

And this Equilibrium teaches us, above all, to reverence ourselves as immortal souls..." —Albert Pike

Just as medieval craftsmen—*architects, engineers, and builders* —who later established what we today call Freemasonry encoded the ancient Pagan "Triptych" pattern into the Gothic Cathedrals they designed and built, so they also encoded the ancient Pagan "GodSelf Icon" into these very same structures.

We can assume that the Masons encoded the GodSelf Icon into their architecture for the very same reason they encoded the Triptych: to commemorate, memorialize and observe the Universal Religion of the Golden Age, and to ensure that the Universal Religion of the Golden Age survives for posterity.

The following images of the GodSelf Icon from various churches and cathedrals provide clear evidence that the medieval operative stonemasons knew about the GodSelf Icon:



Church of Sainte-Madeleine, La Clisse. Middle Ages.



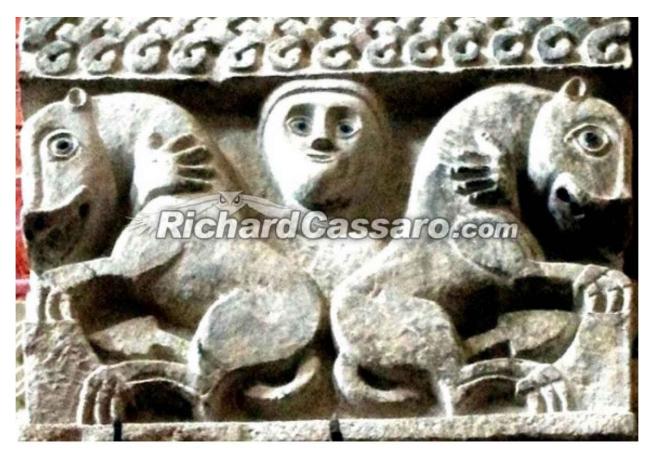
Nuestra Señora de la Junquera, Treviana (La Rioja).



The Church of Saint-Pierre d'Aulnay, 12th Century.



Relief carving on a stone tympanum, parish church of Charney Bassett, near Faringdon, England.



Milan, The Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, c. 1000 AD.



Santa Maria Church in Arezzo, Italy, c. 1000 AD.



In the Maison de l'Art Roman in Loudun.



Church of Vouvant, Notre Dame, France.



Church of Le Dorat, Collegiale Saint-Pierre, France.



Church of Retaud, Saint-Trojan, France.



Church of Gensac-la-Pallue, Saint-Martin, France.



Caen, La Trinité, capital showing Daniel in the Lions´ Den.



Daniel in the Lions´ Den (Maria Maggiore, Pavia, c. 1030 AD).



Clearly, medieval stonemasons purposely encoded GodSelf Icons into church architecture. Their aim seems to have been to venerate and memorialize a wisdom-tradition that predates Christianity—namely, the GodSelf Icon wisdom-tradition.

Even the traditional depiction of Jesus Christ on the cross is a perfect example of how one can strike the GodSelf Icon pose in life to find the higher Self within, as understood esoterically by initiates of the Universal Religion.

Note how, in the following works of art, Christ is esoterically depicted as striking the GodSelf Icon pose. Both arms are outstretched in opposite directions, with Christ's right hand aligning with the sun and left hand with the moon—*clear evidence linking the two hands to duality:*



Left: Crucifixion (Città di Castello Altarpiece) by Raphael, 1502-03. National Gallery, London. Christ's right hand is paired with the sun; his left hand with the moon. Right: Romanesque Crucifix. Right hand sun, left hand moon.



Left: The Crucifixion by Francesco Pesellino, c. 1440–45. Right: The Crucifixion by Bramantino, c. 1510 – 1520.

Many crucifixion paintings done in the Byzantine style show the sun and moon on either side of the cross. These sun and moon crucifixion scenes are also found in the work of painters like Dürer, Crivelli, Raffaello, Bramantino, and in illuminated medieval manuscripts.

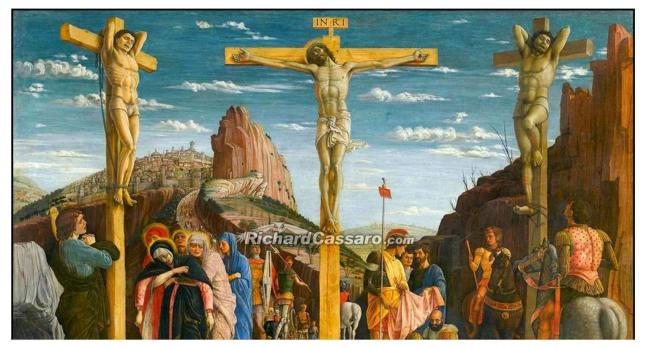
The secret message of these portraits is that it's not just Jesus who can

achieve the balance, but all of us can achieve it; Jesus is only the local representation of it, the local model.

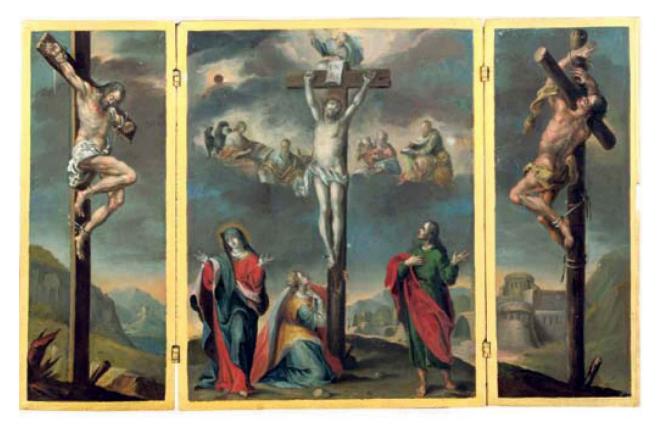
If we follow him and do as he has done, we too can remember who we are (our "Christ within"); we too can recognize the gnosis of our own inner godhood, which is our birthright. We too can become conscious of our true "god" Self when we balance the opposites (as Jesus did, as shown here).

The very same idea is conveyed in Triptych portraits that depict Jesus between two thieves. Recall how the thief to Christ's left was the "bad" thief, unremorseful, while the thief to Christ's right was the "good" thief, filled with remorse and

In the painting below, we see Jesus crucified between two thieves who are also crucified, forming a typical Triptych pattern. Note how the thief on Christ's right or solar side is more lit up than the darker thief on Christ 's left or lunar side:



Similarly, Christ is often depicted in the center of a Triptych pattern, with the good or "penitent" thief to his right (occupying the solar door) and the bad or "impenitent" thief to his left (occupying the lunar door):



A Crucifixion Triptych, by Januarius Zick, showing the "good (penitent) thief" to Christ's right and the "bad (impenitent) thief" to Christ's left.

Of course, Christ is framed in the center pane of one of the most famous Triptych paintings in the world—*The Last Supper*. Despite the intense amount of study it has inspired, few have focused on the Triptych architectural design directly behind Jesus:



The Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci. Painted on the refectory wall of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Italy, between 1495 and 1498.

The center is where we find the "soul within" or "god within," as opposed to the outer two windows, which stand for opposites. This means that Jesus, an ordinary man like you and me, found his mystical "Christ within" (his "god within") by discovering the middle between pairs of opposites. Thus, we too must take this path, to follow his footsteps, to uncover our spiritual souls or inner god. Our inner Christ is just another name for our soul or god within. There are six apostles on each side of Christ, making da Vinci's expression of balance clear.

This is entirely in keeping with the teaching of Jesus himself:

"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?"

—John 10:33-34

Though Jesus said we all have an "Immortal Spirit" or "Christ" within us (referring to our "Source" or "god" Self), the Church, distorting his message, exalted Jesus the man, turning him—and him only—into world history's single great "Immortal Spirit" and "Christ."

According to 19th and 20th century writers like Alvin Boyd Kuhn (1880 – 1963), a leading proponent of the "Christ myth" theory and Gerald Massey (1828 – 1907), an English poet who wrote interestingly about spiritualism and ancient Egypt, this was a huge and hideous mistake:

"...Christ was the Immortal Spirit in man... It did not and could not depend on any single manifestation in one historic personality... Historic Christianity originated with turning the...teachings inside out and externalizing the mythical allegory in a personal human history...a huge and hideous mistake..."

-Gerald Massey, Gerald Massey's Lectures

More recently, Rhodes Scholar Tom Harpur, a Canadian theologian who believes that Jesus did not exist, but was simply a mystical figure, echoed this idea:

"...the Christ principle is potentially in every one of us."

"Christ of the myth became a flesh and blood person identified with

Jesus."

-Tom Harpur, The Pagan Christ

By denying the soul's divinity and pre-existence, Christianity wiped away a valuable fragment—indeed the key principle—of the ancient Universal Religion. As a result, the true power of the "soul within" or "GodSelf" teaching became lost. Instead of relying on their own inner spiritual strength, people for centuries clung to the Church, which played the role of malevolent stepmother to those who challenged its authority:

"Christianity took the type figure of the divine in man for the Divine Man. It exalted the alleged Divine Man...but left the divine in man to grovel in the dust...it shifted the center of gravity, so to say, from the cult of the Christ within to that of the Christ without, or from the Christ as principle to Christ as a man."

-Alvin Boyd Kuhn, The Lost Light

Christianity changed the message of the GodSelf—which is the central teaching of the ancient universal icon—and by changing this message, Christianity changed humanity.

The idea that we, like Jesus, can acquire the gnosis that leads to Christhood was suppressed. This is why today we (Westerners) believe there is only one God in heaven (and He is not you) and there is only one manifestation of God on earth, and that's Jesus Christ (and He is not you either).

By placing itself as the intermediary between an external "God" and the masses, the Church built an empire, while simultaneously covering up ancient and ancestral spiritual wisdom. This was an ingenious but sinister move.

The rise of the Church marked the death of human divinity. It sent shockwaves through a once-flourishing Europe, leading directly to the Dark Ages. Western history under Christianity could be summed up as the story of the spiritual suppression of a large part of humanity.

Despite this suppression, many tried to keep the lost light glowing and the ancient tradition alive. During the reign of Christianity, there emerged Secret Societies—artists, poets, and philosophers—that kept the GodSelf wisdom from dying. They did this by encoding the secret wisdom in art, architecture and literature.

Paintings like those shown above hid the truth in plain sight. Even Europe 's most famous works of art, like Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling painting, included images of the GodSelf Icon. Michelangelo depicted "God" striking the balance of opposites between the sun and the moon:



The Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo. It says 'Godhood is achieved by balancing the opposites (of sun and moon).

God's right hand points to the luminous sun, while his left points to the dimmer moon—illustrating the "doctrine of duality." Centered between them, yet leaning toward the light, God is shown striking the balance between the two contraries.

This centuries-old image indicates that Michelangelo, like many painters before and after him, understood the occult significance of the pairs of opposites. It also shows that Michelangelo understood that "God"—or, rather, our own "god within"—can be found centered between the opposites, which is the basic meaning of the GodSelf Icon.

Note the sun and moon's parallel size and shape. Michelangelo clearly understood that in order to artistically convey their "balance," and thus be considered a "pair" of opposites by the viewer, the sun and moon needed to have equal diameters. The equilibrium of their opposition now established, the sun and moon's duality is balanced by the third power centered between them—(the) God himself. The sunny half of God is bright while the lunar half is darker, which Michelangelo may have used to convey the idea that while we are human, we—our eternal "soul within" or the "god within" us—now has a "bright" and "dark" side, the result of our manifesting into the material world; the bright side being more aligned with our true nature, and more reflective of the inner soul.

For many, the idea that man is a "god" or a "soul within" his physical body may not sound "logical" or scientific enough to be substantiated or believed, but there is a longstanding esoteric tradition in the West that the "GodSelf" or inner soul is indeed a real part of the human condition.

"A man is a god in ruins."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature

" Man is a god in the body of an animal according to the pronouncement of ancient philosophy..."

— Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Who is the King of Glory? (1944)

"Be relentless in your looking, because you are the one you seek."

— Rumi

"Every man is a divinity in disguise, a god playing the fool."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson, Self-Reliance

According to authentic Masonic traditions, life is an illusion, akin to a dream, a *vivid* dream, but a dream just the same. Deep down, we're gods dreaming that we're alive on earth:

"This place is a dream. Only a sleeper considers it real. Then death comes like dawn, and you wake up laughing at what you thought was your grief."

—Rumi

"Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream...Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream."

—Nursery Rhyme

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."

— Shakespeare, The Tempest, Act IV, Scene 1

"All composed things are like a dream, a phantom, a drop of dew, a flash of lightning. That is how to meditate on them, that is how to observe them."

-Buddha, The Diamond Sutra

" The Universe is a dream dreamed by a single dreamer where all the dream characters dream too."

-Schopenhauer, as quoted by Joseph Campbell

The idea that life is a dream that we as gods are dreaming survives as a central belief in Hinduism. It also forms a key part of the occult tradition, which teaches that man is a god having a dream that he is not a god, but just a man. This idea was well-described by Alan Watts (1915-1973) who held both a master's degree in theology and a doctorate of divinity, and who is best remembered as an interpreter of Zen Buddhism in particular, and Indian and Chinese philosophy in general:

"Now when God plays hide and seek, and he pretends that he is you and I, he does it so well that it takes him a long time to remember where and how he hid himself. But that's the whole fun of it—just what he wanted to do. He doesn't want to find himself too quickly, for that would spoil the game. That is why it is so difficult for you and me to find out that we are God in disguise, pretending not to be himself. But when the game has gone on long enough, all of us will wake up, stop pretending, and remember that we are all one single Self—the God who is all that there is and who lives for ever and ever."

— Alan Watts , The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are (1966)

Awakening to one's inner spiritual GodSelf is done *not* by turning one's back to the bad and only seeing the good in life, but by holding both sides of life, by grasping both "pairs of opposites" of life. This idea is conveyed by the outstretched arms and clenched fists of the religious icon, with the

right hand often grasping a solar or positive "light" or "right hand" object and the left hand often grasping a lunar or negative "dark" or "left hand" object.

This *awakening* to the inner Self by reconciling opposites brings on a profound transformation. In particular, it endows a seeker with precious knowledge of the centuries-old idea that we are the ground and substance of our own being. In other words, we are, in our deepest and simplest summation, a god, and this means we are a "three-in-one" or "Triptych" being: the "center door" leads to our inner "GodSelf," while the twin outer doors correlate with our twin *physical* natures, Yin and Yang, the left and right sides of our bodies, the part of us that's dreaming.



GodSelf Icon image beneath a Triptych pattern, from the Pena National Palace in Portugal, 19th century. The two hands align with the twin doors of duality.

To better convey this "three-in-one" or "Triptych" idea, the Masons used a stylized image of the GodSelf Icon that's become known as the "twin tailed siren." Note how, in each of the following cathedral images of the twin tailed siren, the legs are held in the hands, forming a kind of three-in-one image:



Carving of a two-tailed mermaid at Holy Trinity Church, Much Wenlock, England.



Acerenza Cathedral in Acerenza, Italy.



St. Francis church in Zadar, Croatia, c. 1280.



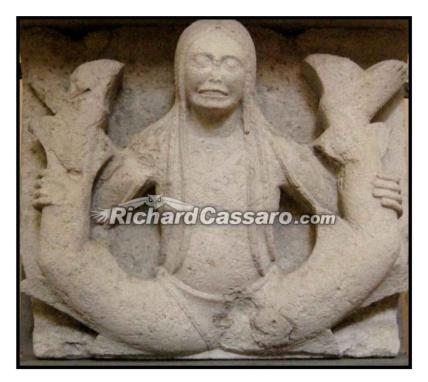
Basel Minster (built between 1019 and 1500).



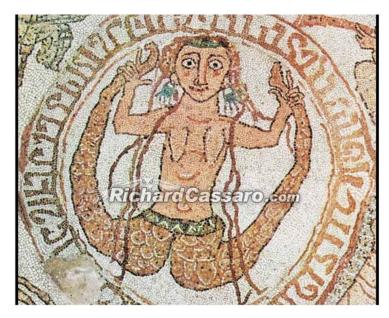
Church of Santa Maria Dettaglio, Rome, Italy.



Church of San Secondo in Cortazzone, Italy.



Duomo, Modena, Emilia-Romagna, Italy.



Otranto, Puglia, Cathedral.



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève Library.



Church of Corsignano in Pienza, Italy.



Near the Tomb of Rotary at the Church Monte Sant'Angelo.



Santa Maria Basilica, Cremona, Italy.



Santa Maria of Cerrate, Lecce, Italy.



Ducale Palace, Venice, Italy.

Alchemically, the siren's two tails represent duality—the duality of the material world, the dream world (the Yins and Yangs of the phenomenal world)—while the siren herself is the embodiment of the soul within.

"...this starts already back in the ninth and tenth centuries B.C. They realized that the whole phenomenology of the world is a projection of a mystery ground. And that mystery ground is the ground of your own being.

You are that mystery which you are seeking to know. But it's not the you that you fancy. It's not the aspect that your friends are enjoying, that thing in the phenomenal world that is moving around. It is that ground of being that was there, will be there, is what you are to refer to.

One might say that the function of a ritual, and of a mythology, is to put the conscious mind—which is in touch only with the phenomenology of the world—in touch with the ground of those phenomena...So that you act not as an ego, but as a carrier of a process that is transcendent."

—The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work, Joseph Campbell, Phil Cousineau, Stuart L. Brow Centuries after the Freemasons encoded the GodSelf Icon into Gothic Cathedrals, an image called the "Androgyne," which is quite similar to the GodSelf Icon, mysteriously appeared in an array of esoteric and alchemical manuscripts.



Christian Androgynes (Alchemical), 17th & 18th centuries. Here, the icon has two heads, one male, one female. Sun in the right hand, moon in the left hand.

The creators of these manuscripts featuring the Androgynes clearly understood the GodSelf Icon's meaning and significance. When looking at their art, iconography and symbolism, it also seems clear that the creators of these manuscripts were trying to preserve the GodSelf Icon's ancient meaning for posterity.

In chapter thirty-nine of Freemason Manly P. Hall's *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, he provides an example of a mystical GodSelf Icon (Androgyne), flanked by sun and moon, taken not from an ancient culture, but from a mysterious Alchemical treatise titled: *The Hermetic and Alchemical Figures of Claudius de Dominico Celentano Vallis Novi From A Manuscript Written And Illuminated At Naples A.D. 1606:*



The GodSelf Icon shown here holding twin objects associated with sun (right hand) and moon (left hand).

Hall did not recognize the presence of the GodSelf Icon around the world, but he did understand the power of "balance" that the GodSelf Icon (the symbol above) evokes. He said that the alchemical text in which this figure is depicted is:

"...as enigmatic as are its diagrams; but to him who will meditate upon the profound significance of both, the deeper issues of mysticism in due time will be made clear. An unknown person through whose hands this manuscript passed wrote thus of it:

"Because of its drawings and illustrated expositions, the manuscript is of preeminent importance to the Rosicrucians and the contemporary order of Freemasons." Beneath this drawing is the following text:

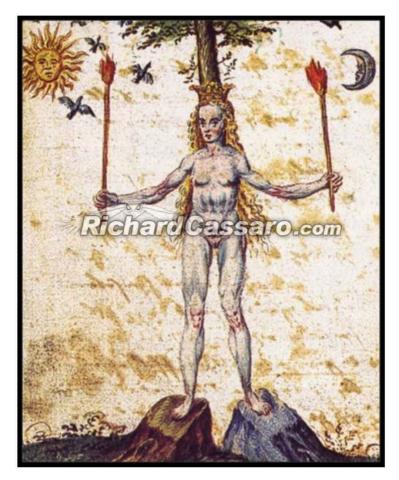
"The hands hold the symbols of the spiritual [sun] and material [moon] elements..."

It is evident that the figure's head contains a solar radiance—the same solar radiance, in fact, that is emanating from the sun itself (visible in the GodSelf Icon's right hand). It's almost as if the figure is the "sun-god" himself/herself.

Many alchemical depictions published in the last several hundred years similarly depict the GodSelf Icon with arms outstretched, holding twin solar/lunar symbols symmetrically in each hand.



The alchemical Mercury, from Tripus aureus (The Golden Tripod) by Michael Maier, c. 1618, showing a balancing of the sun and moon.



From a 16th-century alchemical treatise called "The Rosary of the Philosophers." Sun associated with the right hand, moon with the left hand.



Esoteric design. Origin unknown. Sun in the right hand, moon in the left hand.



The "Azoth" series of Basil Valentine — 1613.

A comparable esoteric drawing called the Rebis, which is a variation of the androgynes, was depicted in Albert Pike's *Morals & Dogma*. Note how the design is essentially a GodSelf Icon, with the two arms outstretched and holding twin opposites symmetrically in each hand:



Rebis from Theoria Philosophiae Hermeticae (1617) by Heinrich Nollius. Sun (and Masonic compass) in the right hand, Moon (and Masonic square) in the left hand. The icon has two heads. Male right, female left.

Describing the image, Pike referred to it as:

"...an old Hermetic Symbol, copied from the "MATERIA PRIMA" of Valentinus, printed at Frankfurt, in 1613... Upon it you see a Triangle upon a Square, both of these contained in a circle; and above this, standing upon a dragon, a human body, with two arms only, but two heads, one male and the other female. By the side of the male head is the Sun, and by that of the female head, the Moon, the crescent within the circle of the full moon. And the hand on the male side holds a Compass, and that on the female side, a Square."

As Pike tells us, the "two sides" hold the twin opposites of the *sun* (right hand) and *moon* (left hand)—a great and powerful *clue of clues* that reveals how the Rebis is a perfect example of the GodSelf Icon!

In an article subtitled *Secrecy and Symbolic Power in American Freemasonry*, which appeared in the Journal of Religion & Society (Volume 3, 2001), Hugh B. Urban of Ohio State University describes the *Androgyne*:

"Ultimately, at the highest level of initiation, the Mason comes to learn the most profound, most secret essence of the Brotherhood... what Pike cryptically calls the "Mystery of Balance" or coincidence of opposites. Pike takes this mystery from the traditions of alchemy and Kabbalah, and, in fact, the frontispiece of chapter thirty-two of Morals and Dogma is a famous alchemical engraving of the Rebis or Androgyne...This is what the Kabbalist treatise...describes as the secret of universal equilibrium between good and evil, light and darkness. All contraries emanate from a single God. Male and female, sun and moon, light and dark—symbolized by the Masonic compass and square, and by the two pillars Jachin and Boaz—all come from the same source, and all re-unite in the highest initiation."

Where we see above, "All contraries emanate from a single God," we may read, "All contraries emanate from the "god within" (the GodSelf) which is the essence of each one of us." In understanding the different connotations between these ideas, we are recognizing the difference between faith (in God) and gnosis (in the GodSelf) as well as the tremendous barrier that separates Western religion (God) and authentic Eastern religious principles (GodSelf).

More images from Renaissance alchemical texts feature similar Rebis depictions. As with the depictions shown above, these Rebis images portray the GodSelf Icon with arms outstretched symmetrically holding sun and moon, and the compass and square:



Cabala chemical in Theatrum chemicum, 1659.

An occult tradition holds that the Rebis was the first human being, perfect and divine. Unlike us, the Rebis was fully conscious of its own inner *divine* nature. The Rebis knew that its inner divine nature was different than its outer temporary *human* shell. This knowing or *gnosis* made the Rebis godlike; or, rather, made the Rebis conscious of its own godlike nature. But then something happened, and the Rebis "fell" into becoming...who we are today.

To explain this fall, the ancient Gnostics—forerunners of the Freemasons —are said to have disseminated a story in which God created the Rebis, but became jealous that the Rebis was as powerful as him, because the Rebis knew about his own eternal godhood. For this reason, God divided the Rebis into two sexes, two independent beings weaker than the original and imperfect. One sex became predominantly male, with emphasis on solar qualities like day, light, hot, fire, and dry. The other sex became predominantly female, with emphasis on lunar qualities like night, dark, cold, water and wet. However, buried in their unconscious memory was a sense of their true essence and lost perfection—a vague memory of a past splendor when they were the Rebis.

It is for this reason that humans are attracted by the opposite sex and unite in love and marriage, always seeking to return to their primordial state of unity, perfection and divinity (that, ironically, they never lost to begin with).

"According to Greek mythology, humans were originally created with...a head with two faces. Fearing their power, Zeus split them into two separate parts, condemning them to spend their lives in search of their other halves."

-Plato, The Symposium (c. 385 BC)

How can we interpret this esoterically?

The Rebis lives at the center inside each one of us; it is your "GodSelf," your soul, or the divine spark in you.

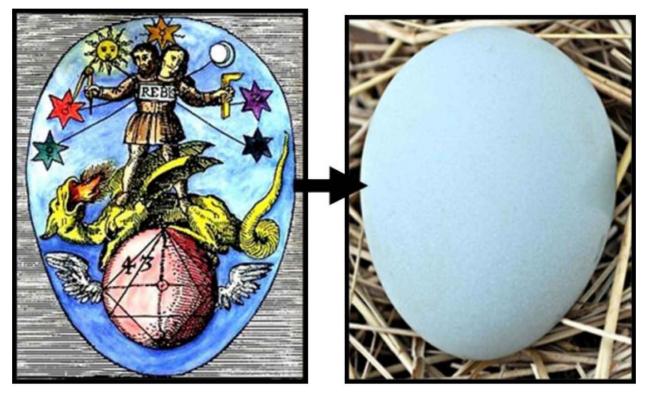
As the primordial human, the Rebis is neither masculine nor feminine. It is neuter or neutral, before the sexes separated. (Spirituality is "pre-materiality"—indeed it is the "source" of materiality—*before* masculine

and feminine.)

In addition to the masculine/feminine heads, this neutrality of the Rebis is expressed by the two-hand balance of the solar compass on one side (in the right hand) and the lunar square on the other side (in the left hand). These are the Masonic Square & Compass.

Holding them together—balancing them or uniting them, you might say—the Rebis embodies a "balancing/uniting" of the opposites of sun and moon, day and night, light and dark, hot and cold, fire and water, dry and wet, male and female, spirit and matter, soul and body, and so on, *as all opposites were united in the beginning.*

The intact "egg" shape on which the Rebis is drawn further symbolizes the Rebis' primordial essence of unity. This is the so-called "world egg," a common motif found in many ancient cultures. The egg is the seed of the cosmos, before the Big Bang, you might say, holding the entire universe inside it (in potential):



The egg shape, on which the Rebis is depicted, references the "primordial state" of man, unified, before the sexes separated.

"A world egg or cosmic egg is a mythological motif found in the creation myths of many cultures and civilizations. Typically, the world egg is a beginning of some sort, and the universe or some primordial being comes into existence by "hatching" from the egg..."

— Wikipedia

The Rebis (your GodSelf) existed in the beginning when all the dualities in the universe were still united in the egg; thus, in order for a human being to return to that pristine state of unity—to return to the consciousness of, and to more lucidly acquire the powers of, our eternal "godhood" (the powers of the Garden)—we must willfully unite all the opposites in our own life, *as everything was united in the beginning*.

That is to say, the Rebis is not merely a *depiction* of the primordial human, it is also an *instruction*, teaching us how to remember our true GodSelf and to remember the original state of "perfection," "divinity," "wholeness," and "completion" within ourselves that the Rebis

symbolizes.

This primordial condition, our GodSelf (or "Source"), can be achieved by every last one of us, not just the Christs and Buddhas of history who are famous for having done it. The only way to do it is to unite the twin polarities within us and bring them back together by our own willpower.

"In this way you will reach the fullness, the unity... How is that done? By union with each other and union within oneself...let perfect unity take the place of primitive dissociation and "division"...in other words, let the "outside" become as the "inside", the "upper" like the "lower", the male like the female; let the first become last and the last first: in short, let there be reunion of opposites..."

— Jean Doresse , The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics

This is the great secret knowledge of alchemy and of all the other hermetic disciplines and ancient traditions, most of which survived through Secret Societies:

"...the "active" and the "passive" aspects of life, which on their own may lead to imbalance and disharmony, must be...brought together in harmony..."

-Prince Charles, Address to the 2006 Sacred Web Conference

The Rebis is what we must all strive for: to "masterfully" unite all the opposites in our lives—a "mastery" symbolized by our "holding" or "mastering" the two sides (i.e., the "sun/right" side and "moon/left" side) in life:

"The Rebis...is the end product of the alchemical "great work." After one has gone through putrefaction and purification, separating opposing qualities, those qualities are united once more in what is sometimes described as the divine hermaphrodite, a reconciliation of spirit and matter, a being of both male and female qualities as indicated by the two heads within a single body."

—Wikipedia

Note that the Rebis is depicted standing atop a dragon, as if having conquered the wild beast. Here, the dragon represents the conquering of

our lower base desires that keep us attached to our ego bodily self. The dragon is also a representation of the shadow underworld that must be transmuted and raised in the form of Kundalini energy. The figure standing on the dragon represents symbolically victory over the earthly impulses. In Egyptian art they use a crocodile, as we'll see in the next chapter:

"Dragons represent greed, really. The European dragon guards things in his cave, and what he guards are heaps of gold and virgins. And he can't make use of either of them, but he just guards. There's no vitality of experience, either of the value of the gold or of the female whom he's guarding there. Psychologically, the dragon is one's own binding of oneself to one's ego, and you're captured in your own dragon cage...The real dragon is in you. That's your ego, holding you in."

—Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth

Like all of these drawings, the Rebis' right hand is associated with the sun and left hand with the moon. The Rebis additionally holds a "compass" tool in the "solar" (right) hand balanced by a "square" tool in the "lunar" (left) hand.

When combined, the compass and square form the chief symbol of history's most powerful and prolific Secret Society—the Freemasons:



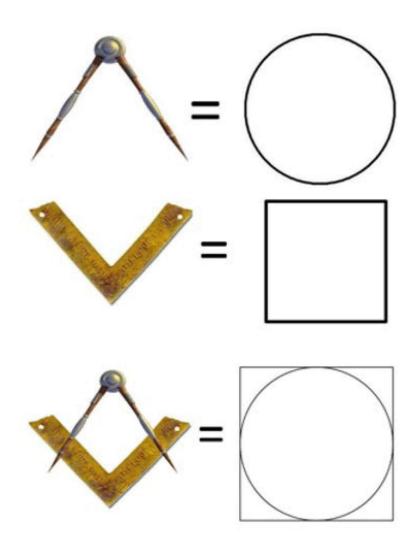
The solar compass is held in the right hand and the lunar square in the left hand. Together the compass and square form the supreme symbol of Freemasonry.

The *compass*, since it draws a *circle* or *spiritual* symbol, denotes our "spiritual" nature, as humans. Similarly, the *square*, since it draws a *square* or *material* symbol (the four seasons, the four elements, the four cardinal points of the compass) denotes our "material" nature.

"...the compasses stand for...the spiritual side of man, while the square appertains to the material..."

-J. S. Ward, Interpretation of Our Masonic Symbols

Holding the compass and square is thus a reminder that when we are man we are not just material (body) we are spiritual (soul) too; we are part human, part divine.



- The *eternal* "spiritual" (soul) part of us...the circle...reflects solar qualities—*right, yang, masculine, give, light, eternal, hot.*
- The *temporary* "material" (body) part of us...the square...reflects lunar qualities—*left, yin, feminine, receive, dark, temporary, cold.*

We *know* we are human, of course. We see this in the mirror each day. But *divine* too? Are we *really* divine, eternal, immortal...as well as human, temporary, mortal?

The answer intended by those who created these symbols is *yes.* Man is a combination of human (moon) and divine (sun). The six-pointed star symbol directly above the head of the Rebis is a symbol of the integration of these opposing forces (sun and moon) *and their balance in the Rebis.*



The hexagram that appears over the head of the Rebis also appears aligned over the Triptych's center doorway of the Santa Croce cathedral in Florence, Italy.

The Rebis icon is an instruction that teaches us to integrate our own opposing forces in order to transcend the body and discover the divine eternal Self within/above.

The Rebis is a revelation and an affirmation of our own divinity and eternity—just like Masonry's chief symbol:



Masonic Compass and Square.

Freemasonry's logo, the Compass and Square, is a sign of the union of your (temporary physical) body and (eternal spiritual) soul, both of which constitute your essence as a human being.

"There is one sign which has never changed its meaning anywhere in the civilized world—the Compass and the Square. A sign of the union of the body and soul."

—Deman Wagstaff, Wagstaff's Standard Masonry (1922)

The Rebis is the Philosopher's Stone, the Gold of Alchemy, the pearl inside the Oyster, and so on; the Rebis is all the hidden gems of all the lost sacred sciences and secret societies. The Rebis reveals who you really are. But it also reveals something more: *How to get there. How to find your true Self.*

According to the Masonic author Albert Pike, who is regarded in America as an eminent and influential Freemason, the Rebis symbol encodes the lost secret of Freemasonry:

"In every human being the Divine and the Human are intermingled...

You see at the beginning of this reading, an old Hermetic Symbol, copied from the "MATERIA PRIMA" of Valentinus, printed at Frankfurt, in 1613...

Upon it you see...a human body, with two arms only, but two heads, one male and the other female. By the side of the male head is the

Sun, and by that of the female head, the Moon, the crescent within the circle of the full moon. And the hand on the male side holds a Compass, and that on the female side, a Square...

From the Heavens come the spiritual and immortal portion of man; from the Earth his material and mortal portion

The COMPASS, therefore, as the Symbol of the Heavens, represents the spiritual, intellectual, and moral portion of this double nature of Humanity; and the SQUARE, as the Symbol of the Earth, its material, sensual, and baser portion.

FREEMASONRY is the subjugation of the Human that is in man by the Divine... a continual effort, struggle, and warfare of the Spiritual against the Material...

...To achieve it, the Mason must first attain a solid conviction, founded upon reason, that he hath within him a spiritual nature, a soul that is not to die when the body is dissolved, but is to continue to exist...through all the ages of eternity.

...It is the Secret of the UNIVERSAL EQUILIBRIUM. Of that Equilibrium between Good and Evil, and Light and Darkness...

...And this Equilibrium teaches us, above all, to reverence ourselves as immortal souls, and to have respect and charity for others, who are even such as we are, partakers with us of the Divine Nature, lighted by a ray of the Divine Intelligence, struggling, like us, toward the light; capable, like us, of progress upward toward perfection, and deserving to be loved and pitied, but never to be hated nor despised; to be aided and encouraged in this life-struggle, and not to be abandoned nor left to wander in the darkness alone, still less to be trampled upon in our own efforts to ascend."

Such, my Brother, is the TRUE WORD of a Master Mason; such the true ROYAL SECRET, which makes possible, and shall at length make real, the HOLY EMPIRE of true Masonic Brotherhood.

— Albert Pike, Morals and Dogma (1871)

Albert Pike's words, which better than any other explanation I know convey the true meaning of the Rebis symbol, allow us to understand

why the Rebis is so important to the Masonic Fraternity, and to history.



CHAPTER FOUR GodSelf Icon in Egypt

For centuries, Egypt was considered by many to be the cradle of civilization. Stories from the ancient world exalted Egypt's greatness, her magnificent wisdom and her profound spiritual insight. The Greek philosophers asserted Egypt's age and influence. Pythagoras and Homer traveled there and are said to have been initiated into her ancient Mysteries. Egypt has been celebrated in medieval art and architecture, and in Renaissance poetry, pageantry, and ideas.

When the hieroglyphics of Egypt were deciphered by Jean-François Champollion in the mid-1800s, it was considered only a matter of time before the world rediscovered the greatest wisdom of the ages—the lost secrets of the mummifying, pyramid-building, sun-worshipping Egyptians.

Yet, between then and now something strange occurred. In the second half of the 20th century, waves of Egyptologists and other scholars systematically tore down this enigmatic aura that since ancient times surrounded Egypt, scoffing at even the slightest hint that the Egyptians were in possession of extraordinary (spiritual) insight. In doing so, they have taken the mystery, mysticism, and magic out of Egypt completely, leaving one of history's greatest and most unexplained civilizations as dry and desolate as the desert that surrounds it.

Does Egypt have more to offer than Egyptologists claim?

Much more ! There is one basic mistake Egyptologists are making when it comes to Egyptian civilization: They believe the Egyptians were "preoccupied" with death. Egyptologists repeat this over and over again

like a mantra. They're wrong—the complete opposite is true. The Egyptians were profoundly focused on "life," which they took to be the "spiritual" being within them, the part that was never born and never dies. They believed much more strongly than we do that this non-material Self, the "soul within" or "god within," was the "vital force" and the source of consciousness. They saw this soul as their real Selves, the real "Life" eternal, which they symbolized with the ankh cross, today found everywhere among the ruins.

The Egyptians also believed in the transmigration of souls or "metempsychosis," a belief common to many cultures, in which the soul passes from one body to another, either human, animal, or inanimate. We're told by English traveler, writer and "pioneer" Egyptologist, Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797 -1875), who is known as "the Father of British Egyptology":

"The Egyptians, according to Herodotus, were the first to maintain that the soul of man is immortal...The doctrine of transmigration is mentioned by Plutarch, Plato, and other ancient writers as the general belief among the Egyptians, and it was adopted by Pythagoras...as well as other philosophers of Greece."

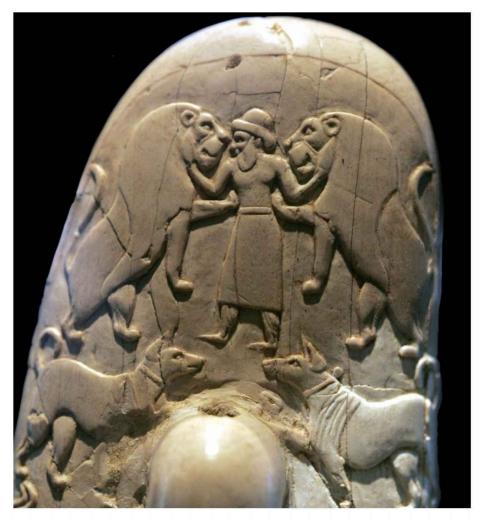
—Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, F.R.S, A Second Series of the Manners and Customs of The Ancient Egyptians

The evidence that proves the Egyptians believed in the eternal soul is abundant in Egypt, from their texts (Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, Book of the Dead) affirming a hereafter, to their intricate temples rich with spiritual symbolism. The most compelling evidence, however, is the existence across Egypt of the GodSelf Icon, which can be traced back to one of the earliest eras of Egyptian history.

GEBEL EL-ARAK KNIFE

One of the earliest examples of the GodSelf Icon is depicted on the socalled Gebel el-Arak Knife, dating from circa 3300 to 3200 BC (the late pre-dynastic period in Egypt), which is said to have been found at the site of Gebel el-Arak, south of Abydos.

Does this simple design encode evidence of the Egyptian belief in the immortality of the soul?



Gebel el-Arak Knife, dating from c. 3300 to 3200 BC (the late pre-dynastic period in Egypt).

Note the man's two outstretched arms, depicting the quintessential GodSelf Icon pose. He's holding twin lions symmetrically, making it appear as though he's "balancing" them on both sides. The twin dogs beneath the twin lions are also symmetrically balanced.

This left-side/right-side symmetry of the lions on top and the dogs below is important. The symmetry symbolizes the concept of "opposites," and in doing so, it automatically attaches the idea of "balance" to the person in the center. The fact that the twin lions *and* the twin dogs are *both* facing inward, both "pairs of opposites" looking inward toward the center, is also significant. It is telling us that we, too, must imitate the GodSelf Icon pose and attitude and "look inward" if we are to find the same balance as the hero in the portrait.

In his 1939 book *The Making of Egypt*, English Egyptologist Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie described this image as:

"...a figure of a hero or divinity subduing two lions...we see that the idea is not the restraint of violence, but the assumption of power over all Nature, however untamable..."

This concept of "power of all Nature" or the "taming" of "wild things" is consistent with the Great Work of spiritual transformation which, as we discussed in the last chapter, is a main focus of Secret Societies like the Freemasons, who used the GodSelf Icon in the form of the Rebis and similar esoteric drawings to match these GodSelf depictions of the ancients.

Note how the "hero or divinity" (as Flinders Petrie describes him) is facing to the right. This detail is important. The Egyptians paid very close attention to the "left" and "right" sides of things. For them, left and right was a manifestation of "duality," an idea that played an important role in their culture. Dr. Emily Teeter, Assistant Curator at the oriental institute Museum at the University of Chicago, and specialist in ancient Egyptian religion, wrote:

"The prominence of ritual in ancient Egypt is intimately related to the Egyptians' world-view, which perceived the universe in dualistic terms. A permanent tension existed between cosmic opposites, such as good and bad, light and dark, barrenness and fertility, and, above all, between cosmos, or harmonious order (ma'at), and chaos (isftet)."

— David P. Silverman , editor Ancient Egypt

Dr. Wilkinson, who teaches Egyptology at Arizona University, explains how the Egyptians saw duality in the human body:

"As is the case in many ancient and modern cultures, the right side was deemed to be more auspicious than the left...The texts speak of the king's powerful right hand; the right ear is associated with hearing and wisdom; and the right eye is the more important, with the right eye of the god of the heavens being the sun and the moon the left...During the Old Kingdom, the male figure often stands or

sits to the right of the female ... "

-Dr. Richard Wilkinson, Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art

The Egyptian belief in duality, which they saw manifested in the human body (e.g., solar/right side vs. a lunar/left side), supports the theory that the Egyptian GodSelf Icon's right and left hand held symbolic significance.

ANKH CROSS

The following Egyptian symbolism all but screams spiritual "eternal life" at us by synchronizing the ankh cross (which symbolizes the eternal life of the soul) and the GodSelf Icon pose. The message is clear: the "eternal life" symbolized by the ankh cross is achieved via the GodSelf Icon pose:





The ankh symbol does not just stand for life; it stands for immortality or the eternal life of the soul within, of which we as human beings partake. This is why the Egyptians used an anthropomorphized version of the Ankh cross in place of a human being striking the GodSelf pose: The staffs held in the outstretched arms of the Ankh are called *was -scepters*; like the lions in the previous example, these was-scepters are shown symmetrically balanced.

The was-scepter usually takes the form of a stave or staff, with an open fork at the base. The head sometimes appears to be that of a gazelle, a bird, and a snake. The fork at the base seems to be intended for controlling serpents, but this is just conjecture. Egyptologists describe the was-scepter as being a visual representation of the concept of "power" or "dominion".

THE GOD BES

Bes is an ancient Egyptian god who was depicted in various forms of Egyptian art and etched in relief in many ancient Egyptian temples. He most often took the shape of a grotesque bowlegged dwarf with a large leonine head, flat nose, and a protruding tongue. He is usually bearded, with long, shaggy hair and eyebrows. He was normally represented fullface, whereas almost all other gods were drawn in profile only.

The god was a protector of women and children, and particularly of women at childbirth. Scholars say he was also the patron of war and the protector of hunters. He was clad in animal skins, bore a tail, and wore a diadem.

As we can see below, Bes was often depicted in the GodSelf Icon pose:



Bes depicted in the GodSelf Icon pose, holding twin lotus flowers in each hand.

Most Egyptologists believe that Bes was originally a foreign god adopted at some point by the Egyptian people, but his origin is uncertain and a matter of some controversy.

Bes can be seen striking the GodSelf Icon pose carved onto an Egyptian temple called the "Birth House of Mammisi," the earliest surviving building at the archaeological site of Dendera. The composite capitals of the columns carry high pillars with Bes figures:



Birthhouse of Mammisi at Dendera.

The Birth House of Mammisi, which is said to have been built by the Roman emperor Trajan, largely follows the traditional Ptolemaic model. It is decorated with some of the finest carvings in Egypt.

Incredibly, the image of Bes at Dendera bear a strong resemblance to the "staff god" icon—*who scholars believe is Viracocha* —on the Gate of the Sun in Tiahuanaco, Bolivia:



Not only the overall shape, but even the small details are a perfect match —we see parallel hands, elbows, squat body, and elongated "staffs" in each hand symmetrically.

Here is a closer look:



The ancient Egyptian master masons who created this Bes image and the ancient Tiahuanacan master masons who created the staff God image in Bolivia seem to have been working from the same model. This parallel has remained undiscovered until now; but once pointed out, the parallel seems obvious.

Were the ancient stonemasons who created these twin masterpieces referring to the same GodSelf Icon religion, which was somehow shared across the Atlantic Ocean?

As with many Egyptian gods, the imagery of Bes was not confined to Egypt. His following extended overseas, with his iconic face and squat body clearly visible in Phoenician art and ancient Cypriot artifacts. Images of Bes were also spread across the Persian Empire, and can be seen at the Persian capital of Susa. Incredibly, these Persian images depict a squatting Bes, facing forward, holding twin serpents, one in each hand—amazingly parallel to Viracocha in Bolivia and Peru:



Cornelian scaraboid image of Bes from Persia, holding two snakes symmetrically.

Over time, the image of Bes became more Persian in style, as he was depicted wearing Persian clothes and headdress.

CIPPUS OF HORUS

In addition to being depicted in the GodSelf pose, the god Bes was also often associated with the god Horus, when Horus took the form of the GodSelf Icon:



Cippus of Horus Limestone, Roman Period Egypt.

Bes was shown over Horus in a recurring motif that has become known by Egyptologists as the "Cippus of Horus," shown above in a "house talisman" typical of the period. On the front of such a talisman was sculptured in relief a figure of Horus the Child (Harpokrates), standing on two crocodiles. Above his head was the head of Bes.

Cippus of Horus depictions were abundant in Egypt. Numerous examples of this talisman are extant in museums around the world:



One of the most famous Cippus of Horus artifacts is called the Metternich Stela, which was discovered in the Alexandria in 1828. On it, Horus is featured naked, facing front, wearing the braid of a child, standing on two crossed crocodiles with their snouts pointing up. (In the previous chapter the Rebis stands upon a dragon, representing the ego or lower self. Here the crocodiles take the place of the dragon.) The child-god holds in each hand a scorpion and three snakes, including a large one undulating to the top of the monument. The whole is dominated by a mask of the god Bes.



Metternich Stela (left) placed side-by-side to a Chavin staff god (right).

The depiction of the god Horus in the GodSelf Icon pose bears a striking resemblance to many parallel ancient figures all over the world, and to one in particular. In the comparative image above, a barefoot Chavin staff-god is standing almost naked, with one bare foot higher than the other, holding twin "serpent staffs" in each hand. The serpents face outward, to the left and right.

With allowances made for the totally different artistic style, this is virtually the same image as the depiction of Horus as the GodSelf Icon on the Metternich Stele!

Note how, in both images above, the snakes are shown in exactly the same way—*long vertical snakes, like "staffs", with their heads facing opposite directions.*

THE GOD HEH

At some point in Egyptian history the GodSelf Icon "pose" became so powerful that a deity was created to assume it. That deity was named "Heh." Heh is not just another Egyptian variation of the GodSelf Icon; he 's the very embodiment of it. As we can see, Heh was depicted as a deity holding twin palm branches, one in each hand. Images of Heh are abundant in Egypt:



The god of eternity, Heh, had no cult center or sanctuary; rather, his veneration revolved around symbolism and personal belief.

Heh is known to Egyptologists as a separate and stand-alone "god." His name means "lord of eternity" and the image of Heh symbolized *eternity* in Egyptian hieroglyphics. In *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, Egyptologist E. A. Wallis Budge describes the word *heh* as "*eternity, the Eternal, endless or limitless eternity, for ever and ever.*"



This limestone stele depicting Heh, found in Egypt, is dated to c. 380 BC to 200 BC. The top of the stele shows a sun disc flanked on each side by a pair of uraeus cobras. Below the sun disc is the male figure of Heh striking the GodSelf Icon pose, wearing what appears to be a Masonic-like decorative apron. He kneels on a *nebu* -sign, the hieroglyph for "gold." There is a sun disc crowning his head, and he holds a notched palm frond in each hand.

"... Heh was...the Egyptian god of infinity (as seen here), by association with the symbols for year and for rebirth. The god is shown in his usual guise as a kneeling man holding notched palm ribs (hieroglyphic symbol for 'year') in each hand..."

—Veronica Tatton-Brown, *Ancient Cyprus, 2nd ed.* (London, The British Museum Press, 1997)

Twin palm branches thus thrust apart in either direction symbolized the

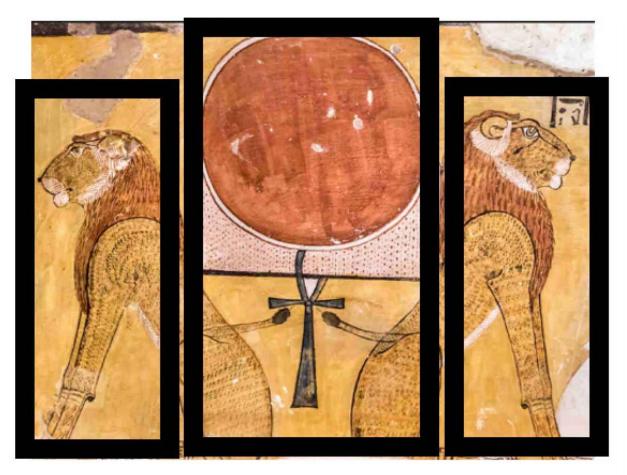
idea that man (who lives in the field of "time") must balance the outer duality of his material nature in order to reach "eternity" (within). Doing so, one finds their center or true *being* (eternity) between the dual aspects of one's physical *becoming* (time). Having the figure hold twin palm branches outward in both hands suggests the idea of "mastery" as the theme.

The "Aten" or "sun disc" symbol crowning the head is an important and frequently-used Egyptian motif, especially when depicting the god Heh. The Egyptians placed the Aten symbol directly over Heh—*as if crowning him with spiritual light* —because the "Aten" symbolized the soul within, and Heh (the GodSelf Icon) symbolized the act of *finding* the soul within.



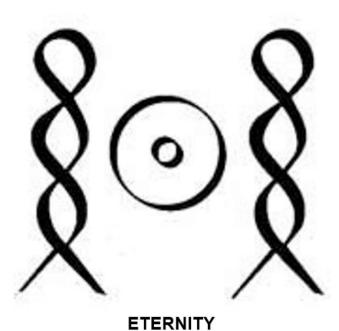
The Aten crowning Heh is oddly shaped to look like the loop of the ankh cross, while Heh's twin arms look like the twin arms of the ankh cross.

As described in chapter two, the Aten is centered between the twin lions of Yesterday and Tomorrow signifying the eternal "present" moment. This "present" is precisely where we find the "soul within" (i.e., in the form of pure consciousness, pure being, and pure existence). The center is the source, the soul itself. The Aten corresponds to the center door of the Triptych, while the twin lions correspond to the twin outer doors:



The Aten symbolized the soul in Egypt, shown by the ankh cross of eternal life hanging from it. The Aten is the center door of the Triptych, and the twin lions the twin doors flanking the center door.

As further evidence that the "present" moment represented *eternity* —and thus the eternal "soul within"— to the Egyptians, the Aten was used in the actual Egyptian word for "eternity," shown below. We can see the basic shape of the Aker Lions; we can also see the GodSelf Icon:



The eternity glyph is similar to the Aker lions glyph and the glyph for Heh. The Aten (which symbolizes the sun, the Self) is flanked on both sides symmetrically by replicas of twin DNA strands (i.e., material life).

The Aten itself is a symbol of the soul (higher Self) for many reasons. First, the Aten is a circle; with no beginning and no end the circle has for thousands of years and across many cultures symbolized *eternity*, just like the soul. Second, the Aten is luminous, just like the soul, being that it 's a symbol of the sun. Third, the Aten, being associated with the sun in the sky, was considered the supreme life-giver of all the earth, just as the soul is the life-giver of the body. For these reasons, the sun and the soul were equated in Antiquity; both were considered the *source* of life.

In art, a solar image crowning the head signifies illumination, enlightenment, and finding one's center—not just in Egypt, but around the ancient world. Being thus illuminated, one finds eternity in the form of one's higher Self or soul (i.e., one's "solar" or "soul-ar" nature). This is part of the meaning of the Aten symbol crowning Heh.

This solar symbolism persisted into later Christian art, where it took the form of a halo. Esoterically, if we consider "the Christ" as synonymous with "the soul", then the halo can be understood as marking the initiate who has found his "Christ within" (i.e., "soul within"). Manly Hall wrote:

"The golden halos around the heads of both pagan gods and Christian saints refers to their being bathed in the glory of the sun and also to the fact that a spiritual sun within their own natures is radiating its glowray and surrounding them with celestial splendor."

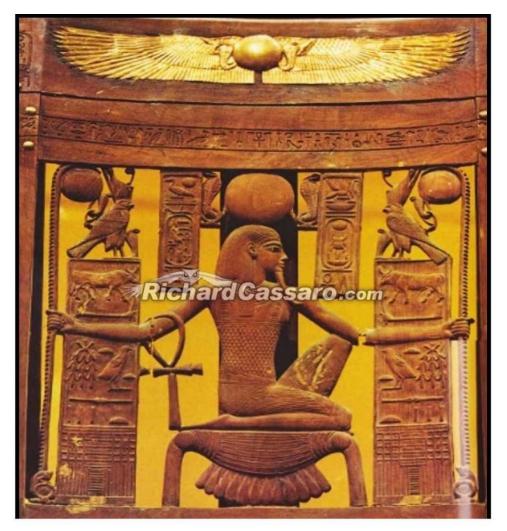
— Manly Hall , The Secret Teachings of All Ages (1928)



Left: Painting of Jesus Christ with solar halo, Saint Catherine's Monastery. Right: Image of the pagan god Helios, a personification of the sun in Greek mythology.

In this side-by-side comparison between Jesus and the Pagan god Helios, we can see how in esoteric Christianity this halo symbolized the same "finding the soul within" idea:

Returning to Egypt, the solar halo crowns the head of the god Heh who is shown striking the "GodSelf" pose on the back of an Egyptian chair, found by Egyptologist Howard Carter in the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1923:



The god Heh (or possibly Osiris striking the GodSelf Icon pose) crowned with a solar disc atop his head.

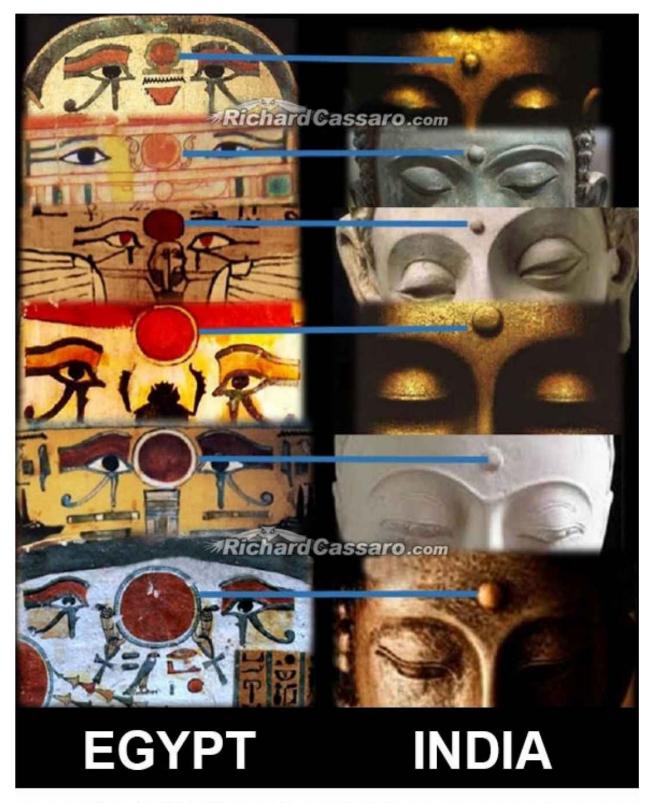
The Aten is depicted directly above the god Heh because the GodSelf Icon "pose" is a spiritual stance that allows a seeker to "commune with" or "see" the soul within or god within.

Note how the figure is androgynous, with long hair (female) and a beard (male). This symbolizes the "neutral" state between genders. Also, note the ankh cross looped around his arm, symbolizing eternal life—the same eternal life one finds when they have grasped both sides of existence (Solar and Lunar), which is exactly what this GodSelf Icon pose is telling us.

In addition to the soul, the Aten also has another meaning. This other

meaning is a kind of "missing piece" Egyptologists have failed to recognize when it comes to the ancient Egyptian religion. This missing piece, which played a central role in the artwork, culture and history of ancient Egypt for thousands of years, is today visible and present in the world's oldest living religious tradition, the Hinduism of India, which was contemporary with ancient Egypt.

It's called the Third Eye, and it's been a main subject in my lectures, book, videos and published articles for almost twenty years:



Egypt's solar "Aten" symbol forms the Third Eye, centered between two eyes. This is identical to Hinduism's Third Eye "forehead dot."

As I explained in *Written in Stone*, the Egyptians used the same exact "forehead dot" as the Hindus to symbolize the Third Eye. In India the forehead dot is called "Bindu;" in Egypt, the forehead dot was called "Aten," the sun symbol. The Egyptian forehead dot signifies the *same* "Third Eye" concept as the Hindu "forehead dot".

The Aten was often depicted as a "Third Eye" above and between the two eyes. The "Aten" stands for the awakened Third Eye that sees the "soul within" or "sun within" which "soul" or "sun" is really the "higher Self" or "divine spark" within us. The Aten is thus a symbol of *both* the "Third Eye" *and* the "Soul Within" that the awakened Third Eye sees.



The overwhelming majority of Egyptologists seem not to be familiar in detail with the age-old Hindu tradition surrounding the Third Eye, so it should come as no surprise that, as a group, they seem largely unaware of the Third Eye's central importance in the Egyptian religion.

The Third Eye is a key concept in Hinduism's Kundalini Yoga, which teaches initiates to "balance" or "unify" our lunar "ida" left bodily side with our solar "pingala" right bodily side. This "balance" or "unity" of our twin opposing natures stimulates a third channel, the "Sushumna," which is centered between ida and pingala, and which runs vertically along our spinal columns. Balancing ida and pingala and awakening the centered Sushumna makes us whole again—just as the balance or unity of China 's twin opposing *Yin* and *Yang* halves completes the perfect circle. This "balance" or "unity" also awakens a serpentine power which rises up our sushumna / spine (through seven invisible "chakras" or energy centers) and activates a "Third Eye" hidden in our foreheads.

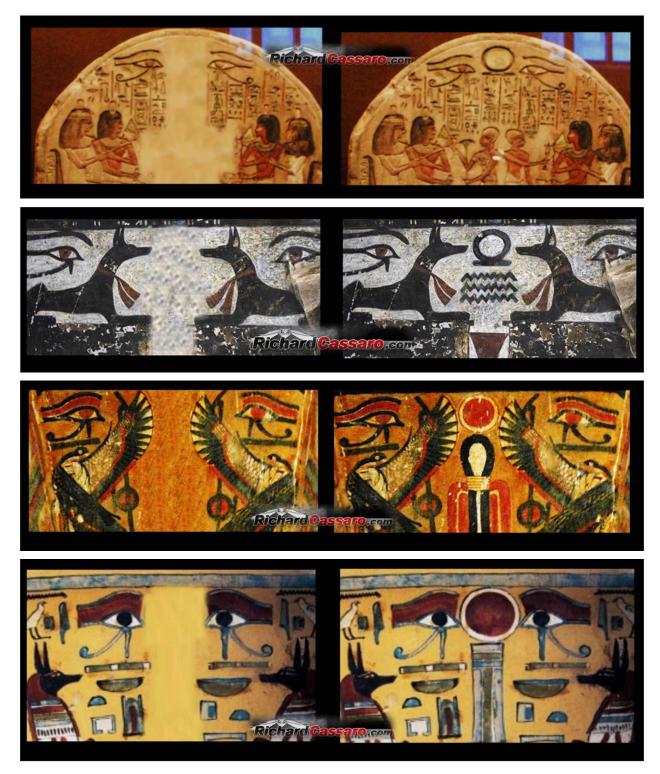


Kundalini ascending through the seven chakras, by "balancing" the "pairs of opposites," symbolized by the sun and moon in equilibrium.

With this concept in mind, it is easy to see how the idea of "balance" is conveyed in the following depictions of the Third Eye in Egyptian art, which show a perfect left-side/right-side equilibrium.

In each example, a "sushumna" running down the middle reconciles the twin sides; the sushumna is topped with the *aten* or *shen* symbol, both symbolizing the Third Eye. (NOTE: the Aten was sometimes encapsulated inside the Shen symbol of *eternity*):





Left: "Altered" images, digitally touched to be missing the "Sushumna." Right: "Authentic" images, with the "sushumna" in the center.

These Egyptian images depict what in ancient and modern India would be called Kundalini yoga's *ajna chakra* or Third Eye chakra. Visual comparisons of images from both civilizations make this seemingly radical idea overwhelmingly clear.

"The phenomenon of duality pervades Egyptian culture and is at the heart of the Egyptian concept of the universe itself. But rather than focusing on the essential differences between the two parts of a given pair, Egyptian thought may stress their complementary nature as a way of expressing the essential unity of existence through the alignment and harmonization of opposites..."

- Dr. Richard Wilkinson, Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art

Here Dr. Wilkinson tells us the ancient Egyptians believed in "duality" and the "harmonization of opposites." *These are nothing less than the basic foundational principles of Kundalini Yoga!*

The Egyptian Third Eye becomes more relevant to our inquiry when we see that it was a common practice among the ancient Egyptians to depict the Third Eye directly above a GodSelf Icon!



GodSelf Icon holding twin ankh crosses, depicted beneath Third Eye image in the form of the solar Aten.

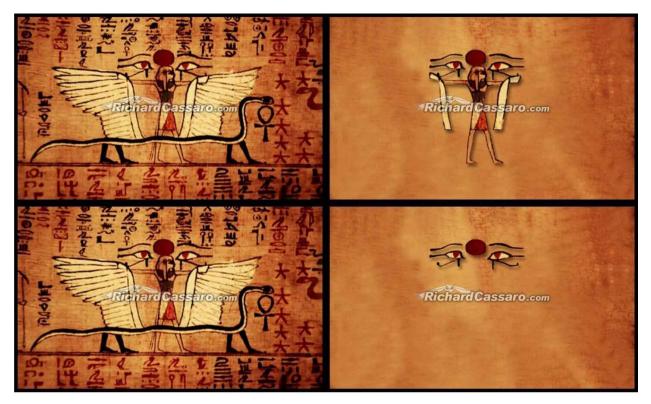
This motif is visible in the following images, taken from Egyptian papyri and sarcophagi:



GodSelf Icon depicted beneath Third Eye image, with two eyes flanking the solar Aten symbol (the Third Eye).



GodSelf Icon depicted beneath Third Eye image.



GodSelf Icon depicted beneath Third Eye image.



GodSelf Icon depicted beneath Third Eye image.

These images of the GodSelf Icon shown crowned by two eyes flanking

the Third Eye (Aten) are a recurring motif in Egyptian art.

THE NILE – A RIVER OF RECONCILIATION

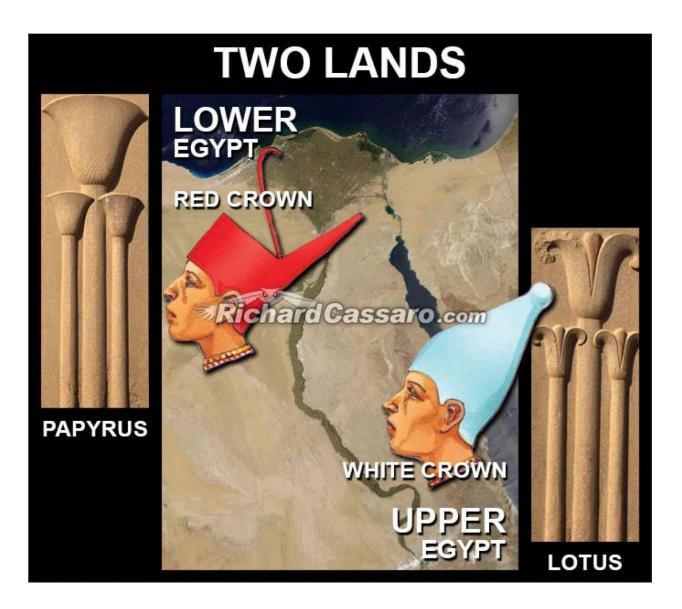
On a macro scale, the entire Egyptian empire formed a magical "balance of opposites"—a truth hidden in the geography of Egypt, and the actual flow of the River Nile!

From time immemorial, the Nile has divided Egypt into a *duality* of "Two Lands"—so-called "Upper" and "Lower" Egypt. From Upper Egypt in the country's South, the Nile flows downstream towards the Mediterranean Sea into Lower Egypt in the North. Upper Egypt is called "upper" because the land is elevated and closer to the source of the Nile in the highlands. Lower Egypt refers to the marshy swamps in the lowlands, where the Nile flows into the Mediterranean.

More than just geographically separated, the Two Lands were politically at odds as well. During the "pre-dynastic" period, before Egyptian history officially began, the country was divided into two kingdoms:

- Upper Egyptian Kingdom (Lotus)
- Lower Egyptian Kingdom (Papyrus)

The line of kings who ruled in the North (Lower Egypt) had their capital at Botu and wore the so-called "Red" Crown. The line of kings who ruled in the South (Upper Egypt) had their capital at Nekhen and wore the "White" Crown:



According to Egyptologists, a ceaseless rivalry encompassed the Two Lands from time immemorial. Upper & Lower Egypt were bitter rivals, always in opposition and conflict—i.e., *as if they were perfect opposites.*

This is the doctrine of duality. All that is needed is the reconciliation power of the number "Three" uniting them.

RECONCILING THE TWO LANDS

In fact, the Two Lands of Upper & Lower Egypt *did eventually reconcile*, uniting into a single harmonious kingdom. The late Egyptologist E. A. Wallis Budge explained:

"...there were kings reigning in both Upper and Lower Egypt about

BC 5000...There must have been frequent fights between the South and the North, and the rivalry between the King of the South, and the King of the North, did not cease until Men, or Mena, the legendary Menes, a King of the South, vanquished the King of the North and united the two kingdoms under his rule. Probably this was not effected as the result of a single battle, but only after a long struggle which lasted for years."

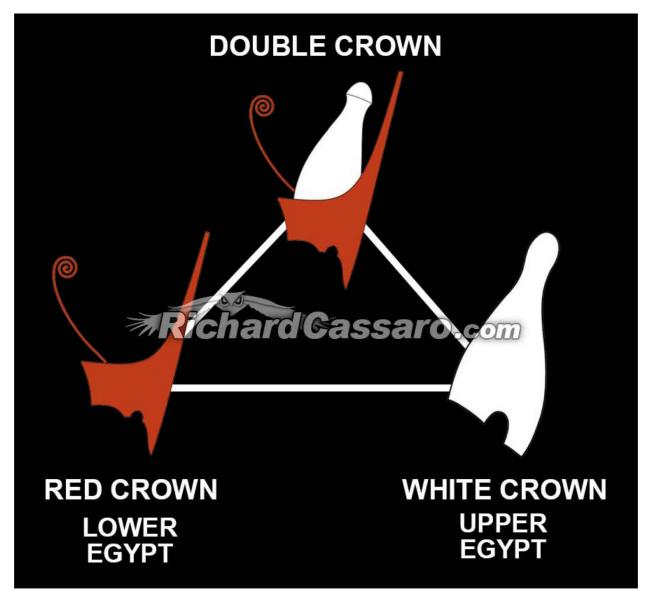
- E. A. Wallis Budge, Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, Vol. I

Around 3100 B.C., King Menes (sometimes called King "Narmer") of the South vanquished the King of the North and *united* the "Two Lands." This is considered the single most important event in Egyptian history. Writing in the 1940s, Henri Frankfort, a professor of pre-classical antiquity at the University of London, explained that the unification of the Two Lands:

"...expressed in political form the deeply rooted Egyptian tendency to understand the world...as a series of pairs of contrasts balanced in unchanging equilibrium...When Pharaoh assumed dualistic titles or called himself "Lord of the Two Lands," he emphasized not the divided origin but the universality of his power. The dualistic forms of Egyptian kingship...embody the peculiarly Egyptian thought that a totality comprises opposites."

- Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods

Narmer founded the capital city of Memphis precisely on the border between Upper & Lower Egypt. This laid the foundation for an era Egyptologists have dubbed the "First Dynasty" of kings, which followed in succession until the 30th Dynasty. Together, all the dynasties comprise the history of ancient Egypt as we know it.



Egyptian Pharaohs soon became known as "Lord of the Two Lands," an appellation that continued for thousands of years.

Narmer combined the twin crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt into a single crown, called the "Double Crown" or "Pschent."

"For most of... [Egypt's] long history, pharaoh wore the double crown, combining the Red Crown of Lower (northern) Egypt and the White Crown of Upper (southern) Egypt."

-Mark Lehner, The Complete Pyramids

Turned on its side, this new "Double Crown" of unified Egypt bears a

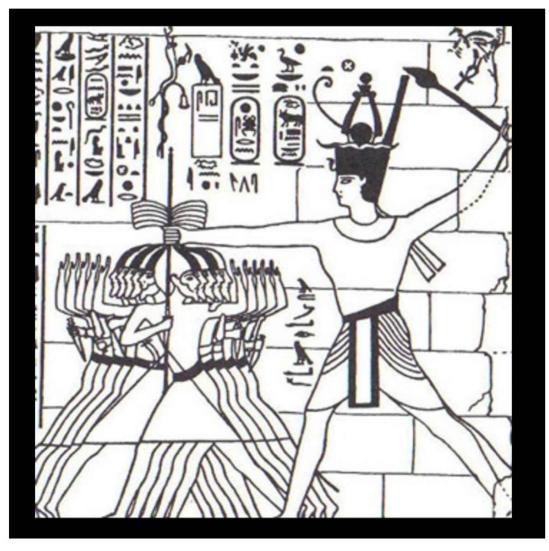
mysterious resemblance to Egypt's *udjat* "single Eye" symbol:



Left: Udjat, Eye of Ra. Right: Pschent, Double Crown.

This resemblance is uncanny. If this was intentional, the message is clear. Reconciling opposites (the Two Lands) opens the hidden Eye organ in the *crown* of the head. This idea is inherently logical because the Double Crown symbolizes precisely a unity of duality (Two Lands), which is exactly the Way to awaken the Third Eye.

Support for this theory is evident in Egyptian friezes and sculptures. The following image appears in Egyptologist E. A. Wallis Budge's *Osiris & The Egyptian Resurrection I*. Note the Eye protruding from Pharaoh's head in the form of the Double Crown:



King Senka-Amen-Seken "slaughtering prisoners."

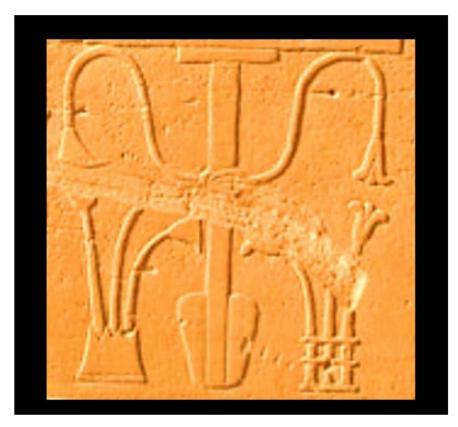
Not long after Narmer, the hieroglyphic representation of a person's *windpipe* —which means *to unite*— came to stand forevermore as the reconciliation of Upper & Lower Egypt, the union of the North & South:



The glyph at left, a windpipe and lungs, means "to unite."

A windpipe was chosen because the windpipe is vertically centered between "twin" lungs—a perfect "three-in-one" or "balance of opposites" symbol. This is interesting because in Kundalini Yoga the art of "finding our center" by "unifying opposites" is achieved by meditation and breath control.

The windpipe was usually decorated with hieroglyphs of the Papyrus & Lotus tied together on either side in unity:



Sema Tawy, depicting Papyrus & Lotus tied to each other.

This "Union of the Two Lands" hieroglyph is called *Sema Tawy*, and it's a perfect symbol for the "Balance of Opposites" or "Unification of Opposites," the Great Work we all must perform in order to find our center and awaken to our true divine Self, according to Egyptian teachings. If we look closely, we can easily see the GodSelf Icon "shape" inside this symbol, with the lotus and papyrus of the Two Lands forming the two staffs flanking the GodSelf in the middle.

Comparative religion scholar Alvin Boyd Kuhn, author of *Lost Light*, understood this spiritual dimension of the union of Upper and Lower Egypt quite well:

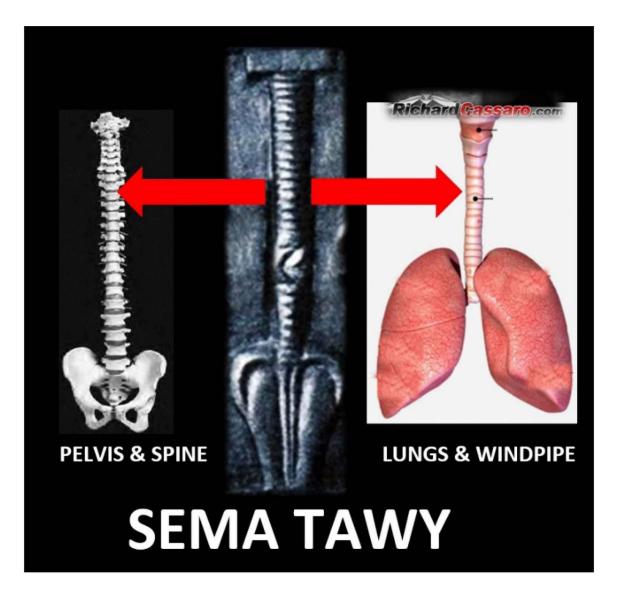
"Man's sovereignty extends across both sides of life's total area. He occupies the Two Lands, or Upper and Lower Egypt. And after long cycles it will be his prerogative to settle the aeonial warfare between these two provinces of his nature, reconcile them in harmony, and finally unify them under his single spiritual lordship. Straight and clear is Egypt's proclamation of this sterling truth: "He cultivates

the Two Lands; he pacifies the Two Lands; he unites the Two Lands... Spiritual and not political history is being recorded."

—Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Lost Light (1940)

There is little doubt that Kuhn is on to something when he suggests that the Egyptians came to see their own spiritual "opposites in balance" religion/philosophy personified in their own political history.

I've long taken note that, while the *Sema Tawy* glyph portrays an image described by Egyptologists as the *lungs/windpipe*, it can also be seen as the *pelvis/spine*:



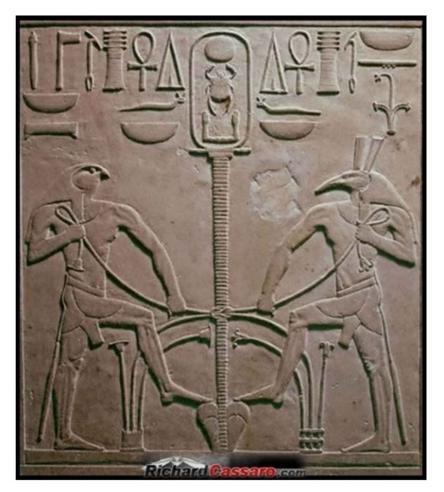
In this interpretation, the Sema Tawy depicts not just one but two parts of the human anatomy...the "lungs/windpipe" and the "pelvis/spine"... simultaneously. Viewed this way, and with the Lotus/Papyrus opposites attached on either side, this glyph depicts a roadmap and/or set of instructions to awakening our Third Eye by balancing the right and left sides of our body through breath control and raising the sexual energy from our pelvic region up our spine and towards our head.

This is precisely what's being conveyed artistically by the perfect symmetry of the twin *Hapi* deities shown below, who are often depicted flanking the *Sema Tawy*, and who mimic and parallel the symmetry of the *Sema Tawy* itself:



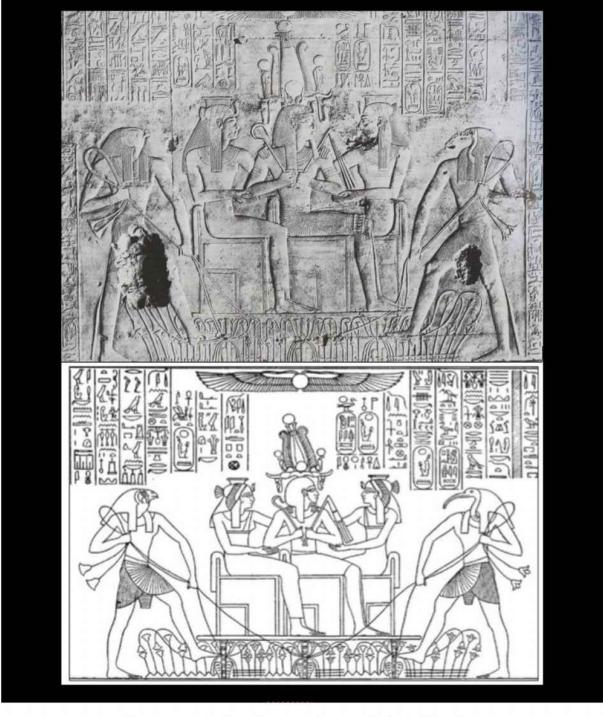
This is an ancient representation of the process of unifying opposites!

Together, twin beings tying the Sema Tawy signify "balanced duality," which is why they're depicted symmetrically "tying the knot" in a kind of "alchemical marriage" of Male/Female, Right/Left, Light/Dark, and all the other pairs of opposites. Sometimes the deities flanking the Sema Tawy were the gods Horus and Set, classic rivals (opposites) in Egyptian lore:



Horus and Set (twin contraries) binding the plants of Upper and Lower Egypt.

The tying of the Sema Tawy was a scene often depicted by the ancient Egyptians in their art. As we can see in the image below, the Sema Tawy was (purposely) aligned directly beneath the Aten or Third Eye symbol:



Representation from a bas relief at Abydos.

The Aten is aligned directly above the Sema Tawy because the Aten is the symbol of the Third Eye, which awakens when we "balance" or "harmonize" the Two Lands of Upper and Lower Egypt—*the very idea*

being expressed by the "tying" of the Sema Tawy!

The scene is telling us that all of Egypt, the entirety of the nation itself, is laid out upon the same principles of "harmony" and the "balance of opposites" on which the Universe is laid out (*maat*), and that in order to balance our own lives, we must live in a way that is in harmony with the Universe.

By aligning their monuments to astronomical events like the solstices and equinoxes, the Egyptians and the ancients in general were pulling that heavenly harmony down to earth and into their own lives. They knew that old astrological Wisdom Teaching that "Man is the Microcosm" and the "Universe is the Macrocosm" and they certainly practiced the concept of "As Above, So Below," aligning their monuments astronomically.

The Egyptians believed that everything, all of existence, is neatly expressed in this simple Aten symbol, which ultimately signifies the soul:



In addition to symbolizing the Third Eye, the "circular" Aten or Sundisk symbolizes the "soul with." The circle, with no beginning and no end, always symbolizes eternity and things eternal.

Twin serpents issue from the Aten. They denote "duality," the pairs of opposites. Of equal size and parallel shape, the serpents face opposite directions, signifying their "corresponding yet contrary" natures:



The twin serpents were often depicted wearing the White and Red Crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt, showing us that Egypt's Aten perfectly parallels China's Taijitu or Yin/Yang symbol:



The serpent of Upper Egypt, wearing the White Crown, parallels Yang. The serpent of Lower Egypt, wearing the Red Crown, parallels Yin. And just as Yin and Yang are encompassed by the Tao circle of eternity, so the Aten circle organizes Egypt's twin serpents into a higher unity, balancing them in perfect equilibrium.

The Aten was thus much more than the sun in the sky. The Aten was the eternal principle inside every human being— the "god within" or "soul

within" us...our eternal higher Self. It was also the Third Eye on the forehead, which, when awakened, sees this higher Self or divine spark within:



In addition to being depicted on the Egyptian forehead, the Aten always crowned the facades of Egypt's "Triptych Temples."

A "Triptych Temple" is a temple with three main doorways or apertures, with the doorway in the center slightly taller or wider than the twin doors or apertures flanking it. Triptych Temples were built by all the pyramid cultures, including the Egyptians.

Note the Aten symbol crowning the center door of these three Triptych Temples:

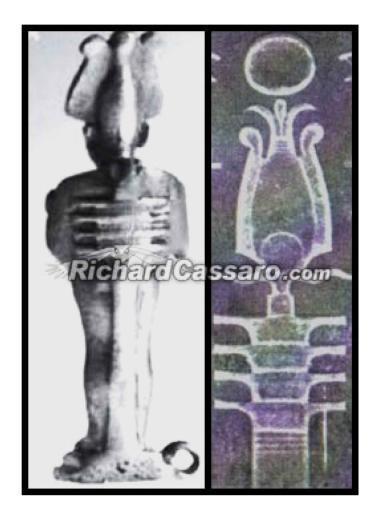


Egypt's Triptych Temples with the Aten (Third Eye) crowning the center doorway. It's not hard to envision these as temples dedicated to Third Eye awakenings.

Just as the Sema Tawy depicts "transcendence of opposites" via the "middle path," so these Triptych Temples symbolically depict twin opposite windows or doorways flanking a centered "sun-door."

The twin serpents match the twin outer doorways, and the Aten's circle matches the centered door. The middle door is *centered* and *enlarged*, revealing its higher importance.

Often depicted directly beneath the Aten is an object Egyptologists call the *Djed Pillar*, a roughly cruciform fetish symbol with four crossbars. This icon is famously known as the "backbone" or "spinal column" of the god Osiris. The Aten, then, isn't missing a rod at all—the Egyptians depicted beneath it a spinal column!



Remember that kundalini energy travels up the spinal column to awaken the Third Eye; in this case, this is symbolized by the Djed and the Aten, respectively. These symbols have a complementary meaning, raising spiritual energy up the spinal column to awaken the Middle and resurrect the "god within".

Rosalie David, Professor and Keeper of Egyptology at the Manchester Museum, describes what scholars know of Osiris' Djed Column in her book, *The Ancient Egyptians: Beliefs and Practices* :

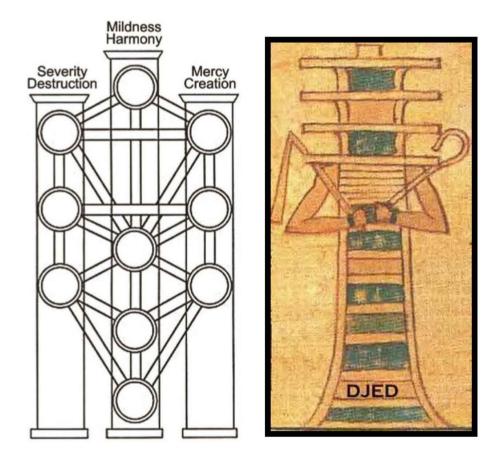
"The scenes on the walls in this area depict the rites which culminated in the raising of the djed-pillar, which probably symbolized the climax of the festival, when the god was believed to return to life.

The origin and meaning of this symbol remains obscure but the djed-pillar came to represent strength and permanence to the

Egyptians and to be an essential symbol of the god's resurrection."

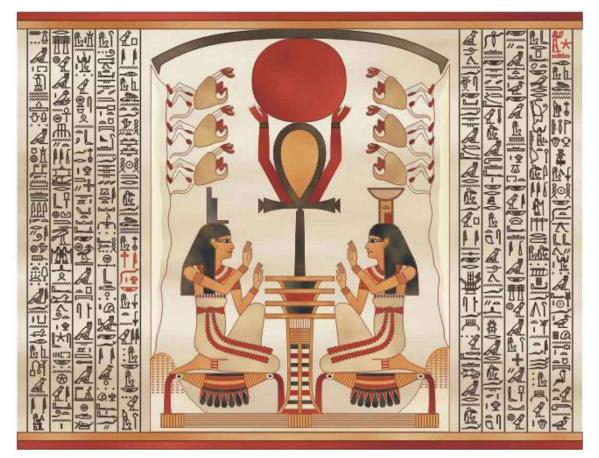
The god here described is actually our higher eternal Self or "god within." And, as we've seen, there was a definite balance that was needed in order to "bring him back to life" or "resurrect" this god—a balance which is the instructional focus of the Djed, and is depicted in symbols of it.

The Djed figures, often portrayed as anthropomorphic image (which means the icon carries instructions on the human condition), holds both arms symmetrically. His hands hold twin "opposites"—shepherd's staff (guidance/mercy) and flail (punishment/severity)—in perfect balance. Both instruments are used to subdue animals. Here they symbolize mastery over one's lower "animal" nature, and in this sense we can see a direct parallel to the Kabbalistic Tree of Life diagram, which depicts a MIDDLE PILLAR OF BALANCE flanked on both sides by a PILLAR OF MERCY and PILLAR OF SEVERITY:



The shepherd's staff is used to pull stray animals by the neck without hurting them (MERCY). The flail is used to beat animals into submission (SEVERITY). Mastering these symbols means mastering your lower animal nature to find your true Self in the center (MIDDLE PILLAR / BALANCE)."

The instruction of the Djed Column, then, must have been to awaken to the "god within" or "center within," our inner Self. This is the meaning of the Djed, as much as it's the meaning of the Aten, which is why the Djed and the Aten are often depicted complementing each other. Finding this balance is the way to ankh's eternal life. We see this in the Egyptian image below, from a papyrus. The ankh is above the Djed holding the Aten:



We should not be surprised, then, to see the Djed column as the GodSelf Icon, with arms outstretched, balancing two staffs (called *was* scepters) symmetrically:



In *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, edited by D. T. Potts, Professor of Middle Eastern Archaeology at The University of Sydney, we read:

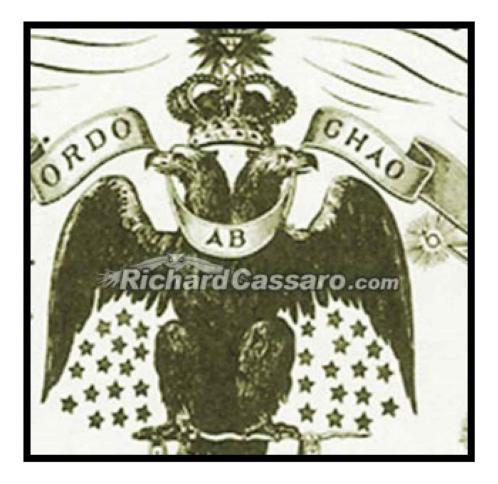
"The so-called "lion tamer" or "master of the animals" seems to be the classic iconography of humans controlling the wilderness – i.e..."order vs. chaos"..."

—D. T. Potts , A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East

It's interesting how scholars interpret the GodSelf Icon as a "lion tamer" whose "mastery" over the animals brings about "order" from "chaos." In the world of the occult, these concepts of "Mastery" and "Order from Chaos" refer to the awakened adept who has transcended duality and

now acts out of the Will of his awakened higher Self.

In like manner, the concept of "Order vs. Chaos" or "Order from Chaos" (ORDO AB CHAO in Latin) is very common in the occult. This term was invented by Freemasons and is the actual motto of the 33rd Degree of Scottish Rite Freemasonry.



The concept of "Ordo Ab Chao" evolved from the ancient Egyptian concept of Maat, which when translated means exactly "Order Out Of Chaos."

"The ancient Egyptians made a universal cosmic distinction between order and chaos. Order, personified by the goddess Maat, governed every good thing from the regular rising and setting of the sun to the cycle of human life..."

—Edna R. Russmann, *Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum* (2001)

It's interesting how the Masonic twin eagle head topped by a regal crown that is in turned surmounted by a triangle recalls so much of the ancient Egyptian symbolism we have explored in this chapter. In my view, this image shows that the designers of these symbols were consciously recalling the symbols and traditions of ancient Egypt.

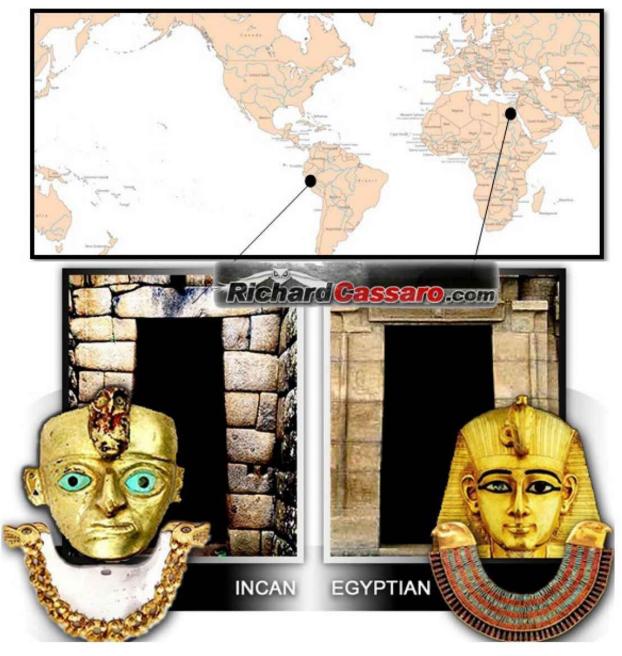


CHAPTER FIVE GodSelf Icon in the Peruvian Andes

Many baffling and unsolved similarities link the ancient Egyptians and the ancient pre-Inca/Inca cultures of South America—*even though both cultures evolved on opposite sides of the planet, separated by oceans*. Both cultures mysteriously possessed the same strikingly identical body of ancient art, architecture, symbolism, mythology and religion.

Victorian-era scholars, faced with this enigma, believed both cultures inherited the same high wisdom from the same exceedingly older source —a shared "parent civilization" now lost to history. For the Victorians this common parent hypothesis explained the parallels well. These Victorian scholars called this common parent "Atlantis," following Plato and the Classical historians.

Today most scholars reject the idea of Atlantis, while the intriguing parallels shared by the ancient pre-Incas/Incas and the ancient Egyptians are ignored. In *Written in Stone*, I published some of the many Egypt / Peru parallels I've researched and discovered. In November 2012, I published the article "*Suppressed By Scholars: The Mystery Of Twin Cultures On Opposite Sides Of The Atlantic*", where I posted more than two dozen images online depicting many of these parallels:



Cover image of my November 2012 article, "Suppressed By Scholars: The Mystery Of Twin Cultures On Opposite Sides Of The Atlantic"

The Incas were the most advanced and powerful civilization in South America when the Spanish conquistadors arrived. The Incas called themselves "sons" of the Sun God, "Inti," and their gold-arrayed Sun temple, the "Corichancha," displayed Inti's sacred image in the form of a golden disk embossed with a human face—*reminiscent of the Egyptian* sun god Ra's golden Aten or solar disk:



Top: The sun god Ra in Egypt. Bottom: The sun god Inti in Peru.

Inti was a masculine deity, depicted with rays emanating. The sun god's High Priest, often the Inca ruler himself, was the most powerful spiritual leader in the Andes. He led ceremonies and festivals dedicated to Inti, and all major settlements throughout the empire had a Sun temple.

As we can see in the image below, the Incan king wore a semi-circular "sun" on his head. Though clearly a reference to Inti, the image seems also to be a reference to the Third Eye and the "sun within" religion we saw in Egypt. In other words, the Third Eye and Inti may have been interchangeable—as with Ra's Aten in Egypt, as we saw in the previous chapter:



Left: Portrait of King Urco (ninth Inca king), based on a 1615 Spanish engraving. Right: Tumi showing the entire head inundated with "solar" (read "spiritual") light.

Ceremonial knives called *tumis*, which may depict the Inca king (compare the two images above), showed human beings crowned with a semi-circular "solar halo," which portrayed them as being illuminated by solar light around their heads.

Such representations implied that sunlight (or soul-light) resides inside every man, waiting for the morning of its rising or resurrection. This is our first indicator that the Incas, like the Egyptians, simply were not concerned with worldly wealth. They thought of life as the soul's temporary sojourn on earth; they were more interested in the mystery of the soul's continued existence beyond the physical body, life beyond death—which for them was an "inner light" of spirituality that they could see while still in the body; a "force" or "energy" with which they sought constant contact.

As evidence for this interpretation, the solar image is linked to the head in another motif from Peru—the GodSelf Icon, which is arguably the most revered symbol of all the pre-Colombian cultures in Peru and Bolivia:



Moche coccyx, a hip or loin protector, also known as a caudal shield.

This GodSelf Icon is essentially the same symbol Egyptologists call "Heh," that Mesopotamian specialists call "Lord of the Animals" and that most scholars of New World cultures call the "Staff God." Note how an image of what appears to be the sun forms a Third Eye dot on the forehead. This is reminiscent of Egypt, in that the Egyptians depicted the sun, the Aten symbol, as a Third Eye between the two eyes; it is also symbolic of the "solar halos" of Christian art, which, continuing the Egyptian tradition, express spiritual illumination

The GodSelf pose in the above Moche artifact depicting the famous "Decapitator Deity," shown on a gilded copper bell from a tomb in Sipán. In the right hand he holds a human head, in the left a crescent-shaped tumi knife. This is a common theme in Moche art. It seems brutal, at first glance. But rather than depicting the killing of a human enemy, the design seems to show the killing of one's lower self—*one's vices, bodily passions, anguish, greed, anger, ambition, lust, confusion, and so on* — that stand in the way of spiritual ascendancy.

As I explained in *Written in Stone*, the Inca and pre-Inca people of Peru

believed that only one who has balanced the opposites in life, can fully awaken attain perfection, and hold the beautiful vision of his inner and true Self. The Incas and pre-Incas had a clear understanding of the doctrine of duality, just like the Egyptians. Duality formed the foundation of the Incas' "solar symbolism." Their recipe is, at least for us, a familiar one pitting two opposite and contrasting forces in equal balance: Their moon goddess (Quilla) was the female sister and wife of the male sun God (Inti).

In her book *The Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilizations*, American archaeologist and anthropologist Zelia Nuttall (1857 – 1933), an honorary special assistant of the Peabody Museum, and honorary professor of the National Museum of Mexico, wrote:

"In Peru...a silver image of the moon, associated with the female sovereign, was the complement to the golden effigy of the sun, associated with the Inca..."

Like the ancient Egyptians, the Inca and pre-Inca peoples understood duality, affirming the Egyptian dualistic belief that the Sun was spiritual and masculine while the Moon material and feminine. it was on the basis of this male/female relationship between the sun and moon that the Incas perceived the entire universe as a duality, which scholars call *hanan* and *hurin*. Hanan expressed the Sun, High, Strong, Aggressive, right, and Masculine. Hurin denoted the Moon, Low, Weak, Passive, Left, and Feminine. These are opposites that should sound very familiar to us, and in Music in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Encyclopedic History, published by the University of Texas Press, Malena Kuss tells us:

"A more general aspect of Andean sensibility stresses the synthetic joining or fusion of complementary or opposing entities: large/small, male/ female, insider/outsider...human/divinity, hanan (high)/hurin (low), sometimes around a central point or entity..."

Peruvian cultures, from the very earliest days, were marked by a strong emphasis on dualities of opposition. We're told by Laura Laurencich Minelli, lecturer on Pre-Columbian History and Civilization in the Department of Letters and Philosophy at the University of Bologna:

"…duality…probably has its origins in the earliest days of Peruvian culture: the universe and all its beings (including things which we

would consider inanimate) were divided into two opposite parts, in constant conflict, but always tending toward completion and unity. Every being was thus composed of two parts, male and female, high and low, hot and cold, light and dark, positive and negative, and so forth."

— Laura Laurencich Minelli, The Inca World

The Staff God—which is the name pre-Columbian scholars use for the GodSelf Icon—is a depiction of the hero or sage who has learned to balance or integrate these twin opposing forces, transcending them and thus finding his higher Self as a result of this transformation. The Staff God is a depiction of a stylized human or human-like figure holding a staff in each hand, and often with snakes in his headdress or robes, is a prominent feature of early Andean cultures. Many examples can be found in the Tiahuanaco Empire (which scholars claim flourished from about 300 AD to 1000 AD, but which I believe dates back thousands of years B.C.) one of the most powerful pre-Incan empires.

TIAHUANACO CULTURE

The Staff God image is arguably the most revered and celebrated motif of Tiahuanaco culture, although we now know that this symbol predates the establishment of the Tiahuanacan Empire by at least 2000 years. (In 2003, relics bearing images of the Staff God found at a Pativilaca River Valley burial site were carbon dated to 2250 BC.) On the 10-ton monolithic "Gateway of the Sun" in Tiahuanaco, Bolivia, where there is archaeological evidence of human settlement from as early as 1500 BC, the Staff God atop the central portion of the gate, which holds a stylized staff in each hand, is one of the most famous representative images of Tiahuanacan culture:



The Gateway of the Sun in Tiahuanaco, Bolivia, depicts the GodSelf Icon, which New World scholars call "the Staff God" because he carries twin staffs in each hand.

Some historians and archaeologists believe, judging by the rays emitted from its head, that the central figure represents the "Sun God," while others have identified it with the Inca god Viracocha:

"Several scholars...believe that the...Staff God was the forerunner of principal gods of the Inca pantheon..."

— William Isbell and Helaine Silverman, Andean Archaeology III: North and South

Note in the Gate of the Sun how solar rays—*symbolizing enlightenment* —glow from the Staff God's face and head in all directions.

Joseph Campbell wrote of Viracocha:

"As the person of the sun door, he is the fountainhead of all the pairs of opposites."

—Joseph Campbell, The Hero With A Thousand Faces

The parallel to Egypt is shown below.



The Egyptians and Tiahuanacans.

These designs were created at the same time by two transatlantic cultures that (we are told) were never in contact. The images practically mirror one another: note the matching bend in the arms and grip of the hands, as well as the parallel "vertical" nature of the lengthy implements both "gods" are holding.

(The god Viracocha is shown in the New World holding what scholars describe as "twin serpent/ thunderbolt-staffs." The god Heh—*who seems to be depicted here as an aspect of Osiris* —is shown in the Old World holding twin palm leafs.)

Though these artifacts were created by different civilizations, I believe that this matching Staff God pose conveys the same deeper meaning. Both gods appear to be kneeling motionless in a sort of meditative posture. As a result of this meditation, both deities appear to be "striking a balance" by "symmetrically" holding twin staffs in opposite hands. Both deities are crowned with a solar halo—the Aten above the head of Osiris/Heh and the solar radiance emanating from the head of Viracocha/Staff God.

The conscious "illumination" both deities appear to be mentally experiencing here seems to be the result of their bodily meditative "balance" posture, as in yoga.

The Staff God pose, like the pose of the Egyptian god Heh and like the

Cippus of Horus poses we saw in the previous chapter, communicates the message of Triptych by pointing to balanced duality. Since man is a symmetrical being, thrusting one's arms outward transforms one's body into a living symbol of balanced opposites.



Left: Egyptian Painted Terracotta Cippus depicting Horus clutching serpents, Ptolemaic Period, 332-30 B.C. Right: Peru pendant depicting god or sage clutching serpents from the Tiahuanaco culture, cast gold, c. 800 - 1000 AD.

Achieving such an equilibrium, according to the Hindu religion, requires that the primal serpent energy flows up the spinal column and radiates outward from the crown chakra atop the head. This is a fundamental principle of kundalini yoga. The Hindus sometimes expressed this idea in the form of a head lit by a solar glow. The ancient Tiahuanacans seem to have understood and expressed this radiance as a crown of light in the form of the sun halo.

The ancient Egyptians expressed the same ideas as conveyed in Hinduism's kundalini yoga by depicting a solar Aten above the head of the hero:

SOLAR HALO



Left: Solar radiance around Viracocha´s head. Gold. Tiahuanaco, 500 – 900 AD. Right: Solar radiance above Osiris/Heh in the form of the Aten.

From the lower world of time and becoming, Osiris/Heh and Viracocha are depicted here raising themselves up onto the higher plane of eternity and being. Time and becoming are the twin opposites, the yin turning into yang and back again, symbolized by the two hands and the staffs the two hands hold. Eternity and being are represented by the centered "god," the vertical line in the middle balanced between the twin opposites on either side.



Stone carving of Viracocha, Tiwanaku, Bolivia.

"Osiris" or (Heh) and "Viracocha" are two different names for the same spiritual tradition that teaches man to balance his right/left opposites in order to awaken the Third Eye, illuminate the crown chakra, and discover the eternal soul hidden within.

CHAVIN CULTURE

The GodSelf Icon is the "Supreme Deity of the Chavín" culture (900 BC - 200 BC), an extinct, prehistoric Paleo-Indian civilization, named for Chavín de Huántar, the principal archaeological site at which its artifacts have been found, which has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Here is a famous image of the GodSelf Icon (aka Staff God Icon), the "Supreme Deity of Chavín":



Chavín GodSelf, or Staff God, usually dated to about 1,000 BC.

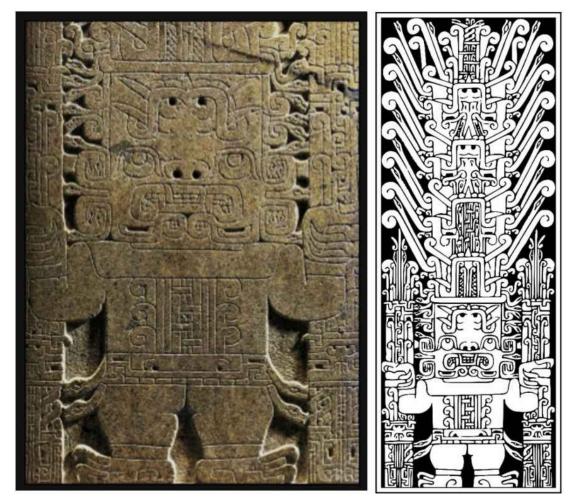
Note the twin staffs, one staff held in each hand. Together these twin serpent staffs appear almost perfectly symmetrical. The deity wears a triangular hat, which seems to be made of twin serpents. Note also the twin serpents issuing from what looks like the belt of the icon. The Deity's Eye looks centered, almost like a single Third Eye.

While there is no evidence available that would allow us to confirm that the Chavín Staff God represents the concept of "balancing duality" to "find the center within," there is plenty of academic support for the idea that the iconography and symbols of the Chavín culture represented duality:

"...the concept of complementary opposites (dualities) is an essential aspect of Chavín iconography...wild vs. domesticated, animals vs. plants, rainy vs. dry seasons, day vs. night, and ocean vs. sky..."

—Frank Salomon, Stuart B. Schwartz, *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*

Another important Chavín example of the Staff God pose, where we also see the same idea of complementary opposites, is on one of the Chavín culture's most important religious and ritualistic artifacts, today considered one of the greatest archeological treasures in all of Peru, the so-called Raimondi Stele. It depicts a human-like jaguar deity known as the Staff God:



The famous Raimondi Stele is a sculptured monolith from Chavín de Huantar, now in the Museum of Lima.

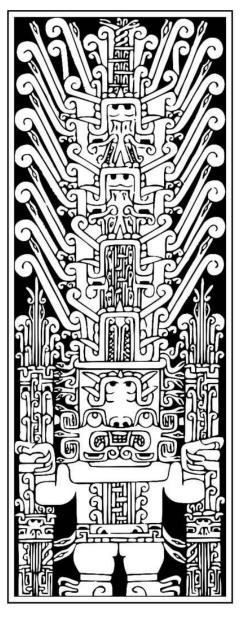
The design appears to be a deity armed with thunderbolts or elaborate wands, with a monster head surmounted by an elaborate headdress. If the figure were to be viewed upside down, the headdress would be seen to consist of a series of masks, each pendent from the protruding tongue

of the mask above, a motive frequent in Nazca pottery (cf. Plate XXXII). The figure strongly resembles the central image of the Tiahuanaco monolithic gateway, which we saw at the beginning of the present chapter.

Professor Rebecca Stone-Miller of Emory University has suggested that the Raimondi Stele is an image of duality:

"Stone-Miller suggests that the culminating expression of duality is found in the Raimondi Stela. Two radically alternate views of the same monument are possible by turning the Stela on its head. The standing figure holding two vertical staffs includes vegetation and has strong agricultural and fertility associations. When inverted, the staffs plunging from the sky may represent the Lightning deity. The towering headdress now becomes infested with animal faces as do the staffs, as if harboring a strange group of supernaturals. Thus, distinct earthly and celestial deities are one and the same depending on its position."

-Paul Steele, Handbook of Inca Mythology



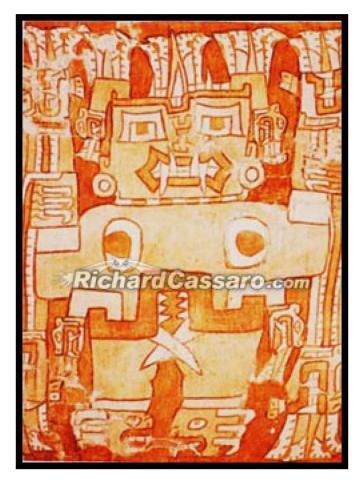
The faces on the Raimondi Stele can be seen when viewed up-side down as well as right-side up.

Stone-Miller suggests that the viewer could be taught to perceive the two versions through mental and physical effort. Dr. Frank Salomon, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, said:

"...the complex representations on the Raimondi Stela, and other carvings stylistically and physically associated with the Old and New Temples, embody the...importance of cosmic duality (male vs. female, and underworld vs. living world)...the Staff God, in its variant forms...would reappear in modified form in later prehistory, particularly in the Wari, Tiahuanaco, and Sican religions."

—Frank Salomon, Stuart B. Schwartz, *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*

Other examples of the GodSelf Icon in Chavín art and iconography include the following:



Female deity figure, Chavín, painted textile.



Ironwood vessel may be lime container with image of deity with staff.

In an article titled "Dualism in Andean Art," published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, we read:

"Chavín architecture also includes conceptual and visual dualism. The temple of the ceremonial center Chavín de Huantar is adorned with a massive half-white, half-black staircase flanked by engraved columns. The column on the black north side shows a male anthropomorphized bird, while the opposite one on the white south side shows its female counterpart."

-Hélène Bernier, Dualism in Andean Art

The Chavín culture, which scholars date between 1500 and 300 BC, is thought to be a mother culture to later Peru. One of the cultures the Chavín influenced seems to have been the Paracas culture.

PARACAS CULTURE

The Paracas culture (800 BC- 100 BC) is best known for its magnificent textiles. These designs often feature iterations of the GodSelf Icon:



Paracas Mantle with GodSelf Icon, 50-100 AD. Wool plain weave with stem-stitch embroidery.





Detail: Paracas textiles with GodSelf Icons.

The Paracas textiles, found at a necropolis in Peru in the 1920s, depict several example of the GodSelf Icon. The necropolis, which held 420 bodies who had been mummified and wrapped in embroidered textiles, is dated to 200–300 BC. In the following textile, one GodSelf Icon is standing upright, while the other GodSelf Icon is upside down:



More examples of the GodSelf Icon on Paracas textiles.

According to popular art history lecturer Hélène Bernier, the artists created these "pairs" or doubles to express a religious feeling she calls dualism, and what we have been calling "duality":

"Pairs, doubles, and visual oppositions are noticeable in portable arts of most cultures throughout Andean prehistory and reflect the prominence of symbolic dualism in religions, ritual performances, and social order. Finely woven textiles were privileged means of expressing complex messages and often feature paired, opposite, and inverted images that create a visual dualism...Subtly or clearly expressed in art, opposite doubles and mirror images reflect the ancient heritage of symbolic dualism in the ideologies, world visions, and social structures of Andean people."

-Hélène Bernier, Dualism in Andean Art

NAZCA CULTURE

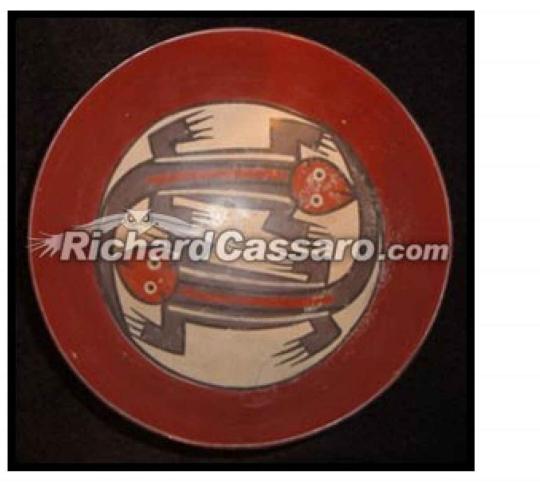
The Nazca civilization (100 BC to 800 AD) is best known for the enigmatic Nazca Lines, geometric and animal symbols etched indelibly into the desert, depictions that are so vast they can only really be appreciated from high above. But many GodSelf Icons appear in Nazca art. We can also plainly see the concept of duality in the iconography of the Nazca culture. The two fishes in the following bowl evoke a kind of yin / yang balance:



Bowl with fish.



A Nazca plate depicting two mythical killer whales.



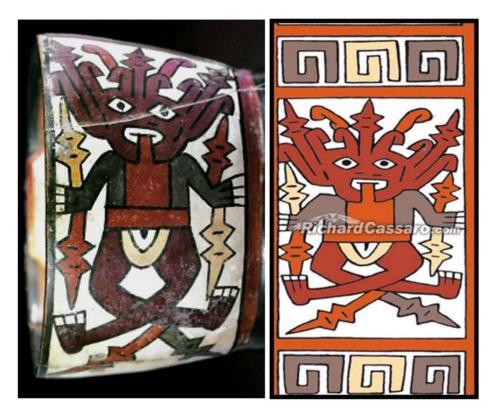
Twin lizard-like animals, virtually parallel and facing opposing directions. An Andean Yin/Yang.



Nazca plate depicting twin fishes (400 BC) were interpreted as stylized representations of duality.

Just as the concept of duality is visible in the Nazca culture, the Staff God Icon—essentially the same image we have been calling the GodSelf Icon —could be described as the quintessential image that "balances" that duality.

In this Nazca vase with a horizontally drawn Jagged-Staff God, the god is depicted with a red-headed human body with crossed legs. It holds jagged rays in its two hands. It is associated with spirals above and below.



Nazca vase, early Intermediate Period

This next images, from Nazca effigy vessels, portray GodSelf Icons holding various objects and in differing stylized poses:



Nazca effigy vessel portraying GodSelf Icon, early Intermediate Period.



Nazca effigy vessel portraying the Staff God Icon.



Red-faced GodSelf Icon with crossed legs. From a Nazca double-spout-and-bridge bottle.



Bowl depicting GodSelf Icons, ceramic and pigment, 180 BC, Nazca

MOCHE CULTURE

The Moche was a civilization that prospered in northern Peru from around 100 AD until 700 or 800 AD. They were a heterogeneous mix of loosely-related agricultural people, and are best known for their irrigation networks and their pottery.

The Moche civilization of pre-Columbian Peru depicted a deity known as "The Decapitator," a grim-faced god brandishing a blade and a human head (pictured below). As explained earlier in this chapter, the Decapitator Deity seems to show the killing of one's lower self—*one's vices, bodily passions, anguish, greed, anger, ambition, lust, confusion, and so on*. This lower self or "ego" as we call it, stands in the way of one 's personal quest for spiritual ascendancy.



Thus, don't let the fierce name "Decapitator Deity" fool you—this is one of the most spiritual artifacts ever to emerge from Peru, and from the world for that matter. The decapitated "ego" or lower self is the animal self, the part of us that "gives in" to the myriad appetites and desires of man. Not only is the Decapitator Deity striking the GodSelf pose; if you look closely, you'll see he has a Third Eye "dot" blazing at the center of his forehead. Like similar artifacts in Egypt and India, this design seems intended to show us how balancing the twin opposite sides—i.e., killing the lower ego— leads to higher spiritual awakening.

This similar piece has an even clearer Third Eye dot on the forehead:



Peruvian Pre-Columbian style Moche silver grave bell.

Not surprisingly, the concept of duality was particularly important to the Moche—so much so, in fact, that Andean artists and jewelry makers incorporated gold (solar/male) and silver (lunar/female) as symbols of duality:

"Andean artists who created elaborate metal objects sometimes exploited the contrasting colors of silver and gold to produce a visual effect of symmetry and dualism. According to an Inka belief, silver came from the moon, a female entity, and gold came from the sun, its male opposite. A millennium earlier, the complementarity between silver and gold was used by Moche people (1–800 A.D.). At the site of Sipán, members of the religious or military elite were buried with sumptuous body adornments, masks, and ceremonial weapons...Some of these funerary offerings, which were probably once worn in life, are half-silver, half-gold along a longitudinal axis. In their tombs, the Lords of Sipán wore necklaces, nose ornaments, and backflaps made of silver on one side and gold on the opposite side."

— Hélène Bernier, Metropolitan Museum Website

Below we see some fascinating examples of these works of "duality" art.

It's important to keep in mind here that the emphasis is not on duality, but on the third power of "balance" that is created when opposites are in balance. It's this third power of balance that allows a man or woman to "know themselves." What you see below is a series of Moche *narigueras* (nose rings) that convey this message very effectively, by depicting gold (male) and silver (female) in balance and harmony:



Narigueras.

The Moche are held in high esteem for their elaborately painted ceramics, their monumental constructions or "huacas," and their gold work. They also engaged in making textiles, using wool from vicuña and alpaca for this end. As with earlier cultures, the Moche conveyed the same concept of "duality" and "duality in balance" in their art, jewelry and textiles:

"Finely woven textiles were privileged means of expressing complex messages and often feature paired, opposite, and inverted images that create a visual dualism...

— Hélène Bernier , Metropolitan Museum Website



Moche textile.



Moche textile.



Moche textile, 800 A.D.



Moche Decapitator Deity, striking the GodSelf pose.



Moche Decapitator Deity, made of hammered gold and copper alloy metalwork.



Sipan culture gold necklace.

WARI CULTURE

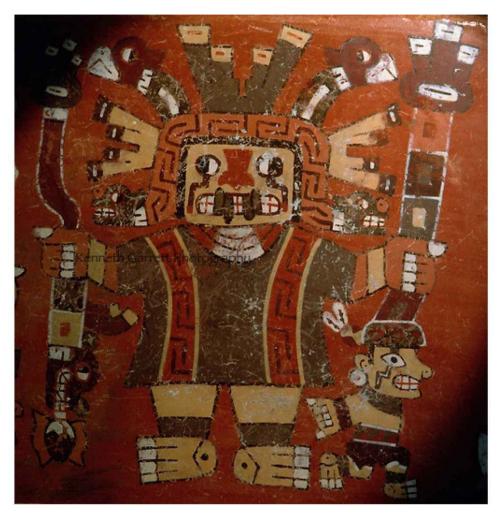
The Wari culture, which supplanted the Moche people, flourished in the south-central Andes and coastal area of modern-day Peru, from about AD 500 to 1000. Whether their hegemony was achieved by force, by religious persuasion or by superior agricultural technology has been hotly debated by South American archaeologists. Like all the cultures close to it in time and space, the Wari have left us numerous artifacts depicting elaborate variations of the Self God Icon:



Wari urn.



Wari pottery.



Wari pottery.



Globular vase with high relief from the Wari culture.

In 2012, there was an exhibition of Wari artifacts in Cleveland:

The Wari Exhibition is a collection of 150 pieces of ceramics, tapestries and jewelry artifacts that have been assembled together for the first time for showing in North America. "We in Cleveland are the first," said Diane DeBevec, engagement specialist at the museum. She explained the importance of the largest piece on exhibition, a communal beer vase that features the deities, a distinctive feature of the Wari.

"Their art is about duality," she said, noting the inverse female figure of the deity on the inside of the vessel. "We assume all civilizations conquered through domination and war, but the Wari's invited their neighbors to large parties with lavish food and drink," she said. These alliances allowed them to create monumental structures and advance.

— Arooj Ashraf, *La Prensa*

An unknown Wari artist expressed the idea of duality very clearly by means of parallel and symmetrical "yin/yang" style objects being held in the Staff God's hand:



Vase painting of the sky-god, Tiahuanaco style, from Pachacamac. Note the Yin/Yang effect conveyed by the twin symmetrical objects held in each hand.

CHIMU CULTURE

The Chimú civilization, otherwise called the kingdom of Chimor, represents the second-largest empire in the ancient Andes. Their art and architecture influenced the Incas, who "conquered them" (as we´re told by archaeologists) in 1470. Archaeologists suggest Chimor grew out of the remnants of Moche culture; early Chimú pottery had resemblance to that of the Moche. Their ceramics are all black, and their work in precious metals is very detailed and intricate. It could be a case of both civilizations growing up in tandem, or it could even be that one generation simply evolved from their parents and grandparents (e.g., Did you "conquer" your great, great grandparents or did you evolve from them? with the same traditions, customs, diets, etc.?) It seems that both civilizations are much older than the age archaeologists conservatively estimate.

Many Chimu artworks, such as the bust below, depict Third Eye symbolism:



Chimu face with Third Eye "dot" on forehead.

Chimu ceramic art, jewelry, textiles and cooking vessels are all decorated with the GodSelf Icon in the form of anthropomorphic figures in slightly different guises.



Chimu ear ornament depicting the Staff God. Hammered, cut and chased gold 1100 - 1450 AD.



Mirror handle, c. 850-1470. Chimú artist. North Coast, Peru. Wood, gold, turquoise, red pigment.



Chimú textile said to be a royal Chimu wall hanging.



Chimu pendant.



Bronze and copper wall art featuring Chimu figure, with rising sun on his forehead.



Chimu textile.



Earthenware jar, between 1100 and 1550.



Chimu figure on gold plate.



Chimu textile, c. 1100-1400 A.D.



Chimu warrior wearing a feathered helmet and holding twin staffs.



Chimu ritual chalice featuring warrior.



Chimu textile c. 1100-1470 AD.

CHANCAY CULTURE

The mysterious Chancay civilization, which lacked centralized governance but is known for its prowess at trade, rose to power along Peru's Pacific coast upon the collapse of the Wari around 1000 AD, and was in turn supplanted by the rise of the Inca Empire early in the 15th century. The Chancay, who made some fine pottery, are best known for their bright and colorful textiles, which are often decorated with interesting and elaborate designs executed in a virtuosic manner. It is believed that many of the images on Chancay artifacts served religious purposes. As we see from the examples below, Chancay pieces featuring the GodSelf Icon are among the greatest masterpieces of Peruvian textile work ever produced.



Viracocha. Chancay culture, 13th century AD.



Chancay culture, 13th century AD.



Chancay Culture, 13th century AD.



Chancay Culture, 13th century AD.

The Chancay clay figure below, like the textiles above, exemplifies how the GodSelf Icon could be varied by the use of stylized patterns. It is a hauntingly beautiful and aesthetically powerful piece of work:

SICAN-LAMBAYEQUE CULTURE

The Sican or Lambayeque culture flourished on the north coast of Peru from 750 – 1375 AD, in areas previously dominated by the Moche people. Like Chancay culture, Sicán culture developed gradually from Moche culture. For the Sicán elite, objects made of gold were often marked by the presence of the ancestor god Naylamp, also known as the Lord of Sicán, who was depicted in a way that echoed the GodSelf Icons that were the basis of much of Peruvian native art.



Gold earflares, c.11th–13th century Sicán (Lambayeque).



Lambayeque gold disc.



Sican nose ornament.



Sican-Lambayeque jewelry from the North coast, c. 750 – 1375 AD.

The chief god of the Lambayeque culture, Naylamp, arrived, according to legend, in a fleet of ships. This myth has sometimes been related to the Atlantis myth. Fittingly, Naylamp is typically depicted as a Staff God or GodSelf Icon:



Lambayeque Naylamp.

<u>INCA</u>

The Inca Empire was the largest and best-known empire in pre-Columbian America. Inca artifacts, which build on the craftsmanship and design excellence of their predecessor civilizations in Peru, are today regarded as among the most impressive treasures of world culture.

Scholars tell us that the Incas worshipped a sun god called Inti, and that they considered their king, the Sapa Inca, to be the "son of the sun." It is my contention in *Written in Stone* and here that Inca sun worship is the kind of sun worship I described in the chapter on Egypt. The sun represented not only itself, but also and more importantly, the Third Eye, i.e., it was a symbol linked to the practice of a Native American form of the same Kundalini yoga practiced by the Egyptians.

Although she ignored all the other South American cultures, Madame Blavatsky famously included the Incas in her list of ancient cultures with shared religious roots ostensibly deriving from Atlantis. As with the Egyptians, this South American sun-worshipping society, besides creating the magnificent sun-emblazoned golden fertility statue just below, has left numerous GodSelf Icons to posterity. It is apparent from the images below that the GodSelf Icon, which is featured in many elaborate and highly sophisticated versions of the Incan pantheon and which is completely embedded in Incan design tradition, powerfully exemplified the Incan approach to life, which indeed seems to have much in common with Egyptian culture:



Inca gold artifact depicting GodSelf Icon.



Inca gold artifact depicting GodSelf Icon.



Inca gold artifact depicting GodSelf Icon.



Inca gold artifact depicting GodSelf Icon.



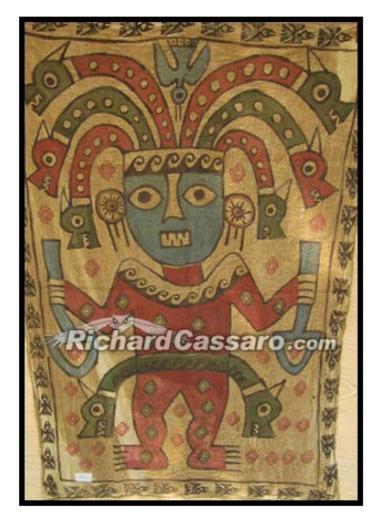
Inca gold artifact depicting GodSelf Icon.



Inca textile from Cusco.



Inca textile.



Inca textile.



Inca textile.



Inca textile.



Inca textile.



Inca textile.



Inca textile.



Inca textile.



Inca textile.

As the above photos demonstrate, the GodSelf Icon retained its fascination all the way through the Inca empire. The Incas continued to depict Viracocha holding snakes and with snakes coming out of his head even to the latest period of their civilization.



CHAPTER SIX GodSelf Icon in Africa

While religious persons claim that the human race was planted by God in a dinosaur-filled Eden or spawned by colonizers from outer space, most scholars believe that *Homo sapiens sapiens* arose in Africa about 100,000 years ago, from whence our remote ancestors presumably spread out around the globe.

Outside of Egypt, ancient African civilization is not generally known for giant stone monuments and epochal contributions to civilization (although it is to the Yoruba people of West Africa that we owe many of the central elements of pan-American popular music and dance), but what little traces remain of ancient African life indicate that the ubiquity of the GodSelf Icon from earliest recorded times in Africa is no less evident than in Egypt and the Andes.

Within the present-day state of Nigeria and neighboring Benin, a trio of kingdoms, "Owo," "Igbo," and "Benin," grew and developed into powerful societies. These three kingdoms shared many aspects of courtly culture, including titles, ceremonial paraphernalia, and art forms.

Historians trace the beginnings of these kingdoms to c. 900 AD, but this is an extremely conservative estimate; some independent writers, researchers and historians believe their heritage dates back many thousands of years:

"...The Edo, Igbo and Yoruba...all...had a common heritage that dated back several thousand years."

-Daryl Peavy, Kings, Magic and Medicine (2010)

The Edo, Ibgo and Yoruba all knew about the GodSelf Icon and depicted it in their art, a fact still visible in their artifacts. In the present chapter, we shall examine the GodSelf Icon artifacts that were created mainly by the Edo people of the Benin Empire. By the 15th century, the Edo had expanded into a thriving city-state.

"[The Benin Empire] was one of the oldest and most highly developed states in the coastal hinterland of West Africa…"

-Robert W. Strayer, Ways of the World

The great "Oba" of Benin, as he is called, was the traditional ruler of the Edo people. The Oba, loved by all, was often depicted in art in various guises. Sometimes he was depicted in a GodSelf Icon pose that is virtually identical to the GodSelf Icons of the ancient Andeans. So strong is the resemblance, in fact, that it almost seems as if the pre-Inca master craftsmen themselves came across the Atlantic to Africa and fashioned the GodSelf Icon here!

Note the following three examples of the GodSelf Icon created by the Edo:



Edo kingdom of Benin, brass plaque of an Oba holding leopards and with mudfish legs and feet. Benin City, Nigeria, 16th-17th C.

This GodSelf Icon is a depiction of the great Oba or King of the Benin Empire, shown here swinging a leopard in each hand, symmetrically, perhaps symbolizing duality. The Oba has serpentine legs and mudfish feet.

"Leopards, sometimes in pairs, are a metaphor for the royal power of kingship in Benin art."

— Alisa LaGamma *, Echoing Imag*es

The next example below is a similar depiction of the Oba striking the GodSelf Icon pose, again swinging leopards symmetrically. Here, twin

serpents with mudfish heads issue from the Oba's sides:



Edo kingdom of Benin, brass plaque of an Oba holding twin leopards. with serpent legs and mudfish feet. Benin City, Nigeria, 16th-17th c.

In the third and final example below, we see the same image of the Oba striking the GodSelf Icon pose, again with twin serpents issuing from the Oba's sides:



Brass plaque of the Oba holding leopards and wearing a mud-fish belt. Benin, Nigeria 16th Century AD.

Why was the Oba depicted as the GodSelf Icon? Was he considered a "perfect ruler" or "divine king"—a kind of "living Osiris," "living Christ," or "living Buddha" on the throne?

Indeed, he was; the Edo believed the Oba was "divine," and it is for this reason that they often depicted him in the GodSelf Icon pose:

"African kingdoms have been characterized as "divine kingships..."

— George Ayittey, Indigenous African Institutions

"The tradition of the Edo people of the region of Benin in Nigeria is rich in the appellations which are used to refer to the divine king, the Oba of Benin. In fact, the expression "Ovbi'Adimila" harks back to the ancient Egyptian "sa Ra" and means "the son of God."...the king's divinity is protected at all times.

— Molefi K. Asante and Emeka Nwadiora , Spear Masters

The Edo, in general, believed that our universe is an ever-changing *physical* realm of duality that is informed and animated by a higher divine, *spiritual* and *eternal* realm—home in the heavens. The world, for the Edo, was a magical and sacred place, whose divinity and sanctity could be tapped by human beings:

"The Edo people believed that the physical realm (agbon) was a mirror image of the spiritual world (erinmwin). The spiritual world was the permanent abode of all living creatures...The Edo believed that both the spiritual and physical realms had to be in harmony with each other according to a divine plan."

"The Edo people believed that the earth was divine in nature...the earth was sacred ground and should be revered. Through its sacredness, the earth was the ultimate communication device to the spiritual realm..."

— Daryl Peavy, Kings, Magic and Medicine

We've already looked at three Benin Bronzes, each of which depicts a different GodSelf Icon. As already noted, the depictions on these Benin Bronzes share striking similarities with similar GodSelf Icon images from the ancient Andes. For starters, note how the "serpentine" belt around the waste terminates in twin, symmetrical and virtually identical serpent/mudfish heads:



Left: Andean GodSelf Icon displaying serpentine belt terminating in twin heads. Right: Nigerian GodSelf Icon displaying serpentine belt terminating in twin heads.

The parallel nature of the GodSelf Icon, in and of itself, is amazing; now add this "serpentine belt" similarity, and this gets pushed to "far beyond coincidence."

Another strong resemblance to the ancient Andes is the fact that the objects held in each of the Oba's hands are sometimes animals, as shown below:



Left: Andean GodSelf Icon holding twin animals in each hand symmetrically. Right: Nigerian GodSelf Icon holding twin animals in each hand symmetrically.

A third similarity to the ancient Andean GodSelf Icon is the fact that both the ancient Andean and ancient Nigerian GodSelf Icons depict Third Eye "dot" symbols emblazoned on the forehead:



Left: Ancient Andean GodSelf Icon with Third Eye forehead dot. Right: Ancient Nigerian GodSelf Icon with Third Eye forehead dot.

Many artworks from the Benin Empire also depict the Third Eye "dot" on the forehead. Scholars who are familiar with the importance and vast antiquity of this symbol in Hinduism fail to recognize the presence and probably identical meaning of this same Third Eye "dot" symbol in various ancient and indigenous cultures worldwide.

Very often it was the great Oba himself who was depicted with the Third Eye forehead dot:



Benin art depicting Oba king with Third Eye symbolism.

These images depicting the Oba with a Third Eye forehead dot are fascinating. As discussed earlier, the spiritual art of "balancing" the "opposites"—*the meaning expressed by the GodSelf Icon pose* —leads to the awakened Third Eye; it's our ability to "balance" the duality in our bodies and in our lives that powers the Third Eye's awakening.

Perhaps not surprisingly, these ideas, which we normally find in Hinduism associated with the Third Eye, are also present in Benin religion:

"In Edo philosophy, the universe is divided into...good and evil forces, each seeking control. Similarly, humans are made up of powerful forces of good and evil, each acting against the other. Both forces are found in...the body..."

— Chukwuma Azuonye, Edo: The Bini People of the Benin Kingdom

Similar doctrines describing man's divinity within the duality of the universe are present in *Gnosticism*, a prominent heretical movement of the 2nd-century, partly of pre-Christian origin. Gnostic doctrine taught that esoteric knowledge (*gnosis*), based on a deep understanding of the duality inherent in the universe and in man, enabled the redemption of the human spirit.

This may begin to explain the parallel depictions of the snake legs that are shared by the Oba and a key Gnostic god, Abraxas:



Note the similarity of serpentine legs. Left: Abraxas depicted with a cock's head, holding a shield and whip, his body clad with armor. The artwork was done by famed occult artist John Augustus Knapp, who illustrated Occult and Mystical Ideas for Manly P. Hall.

Abraxas, for the early Gnostics, was the embodied form of God. In Abraxas depictions, like the one here, Abraxas is shown as a god who incorporates both Good and Evil in one entity. The sun rises directly over Abraxas' right shoulder, while the moon rises directly over his left shoulder. This signifies "duality," but, more importantly, it signifies the "balancing" of duality mastered by the Abraxas figure, who is perfectly centered between both sun and moon.

Carl Jung described Abraxas as a God higher than the Christian God and Devil, who combines all opposites into one Being:

"Abraxas speaketh that hallowed and accursed word, which is life and death at the same time. Abraxas begetteth truth and lying, good and evil, light and darkness in the same word and in the same act."

-Carl Jung , Seven Sermons to the Dead (1916)

Images of Abraxas striking the GodSelf Icon pose decorated good luck charms, seals and amulets in antiquity. Often the objects held in each of Abraxas' hands are identical and symmetrical:



Abraxas as GodSelf Icon on an amulet, a protective device worn around the body, or placed next to other objects, to protect people from various evils.

"The bird fights its way out of the egg. The egg is the world. Who would be born must destroy a world. The bird flies to God. That God's name is Abraxas."

—Herman Hesse, Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth

When the Benin depicted their Oba striking the GodSelf Icon pose and endowed with the same "serpentine legs" as the Gnostic Abraxas, were they expressing the same "transcendence of duality" wisdom known to the Gnostics and associated with Abraxas?

Below are more GodSelf Icons depicting the Oba in Benin art with "Abraxas-style" twin serpent legs:



Ancient figure striking the GodSelf lcon pose with "Abraxas-style" serpentine legs.



Ancient figure striking the GodSelf Icon pose with "Abraxas-style" serpentine legs.

Among the Edo people, these twin serpent legs symbolize *duality* —the same duality referenced in the overall GodSelf Icon image itself:

"In Africa, enormous brass pythons slithered...over the entrances to the royal palace of Benin...Paired pythons served as a COMPLEMENTARY DUALITY, representing the king's dangerous and beneficent nature."

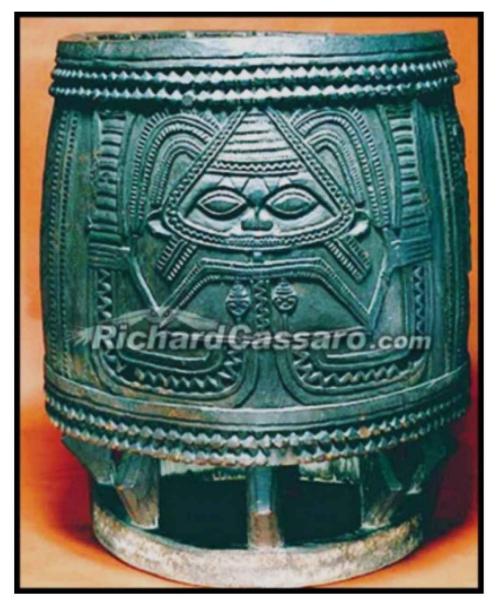
— Hope B. Werness, Continuum Encyclopedia of Animal Symbolism in Art

Thus, this next Benin artifact, which apparently depicts the Oba striking the GodSelf Icon pose clutching twin serpents (pythons?) symmetrically, is expressing the "balance of opposites," with the snakes here symbolizing opposites and their handler in the middle "balancing" or "mastering" them:



Benin Ivory Armlet. Edo Peoples, Benin, Nigeria.

More Edo and Yoruba depictions of what appear to be serpentine legs are visible in the images below of ceremonial drums with GodSelf Icons on them:



Yoruba wooden drum.

Yoruba philosophy, according to artist Rudi Carstens, is deeply grounded in the principles of duality, particularly as represented by the opposition of male and female:

"Duality has a significant symbolic and philosophical importance in Yoruba art...The issue of twoness or doubling is important to Yoruba philosophy which is based on the tensions between various opposites. This balance between opposing forces is maintained in other opposites such as; male/female, dark/light, left/right, silence/noise, nature/culture, action/inaction. This philosophy based on tension between opposing forces manifests itself in the occurrence of duality in many Yoruba artworks."

— Rudi Carstens, *The Symbolic and Philosophical Importance of Duality in Yoruba Art*

Carstens goes further: he says that the Ogboni elders of Yoruba society constitute a secret society whose main "secret" sounds a great deal like the secret of the lost universal religion I postulated in *Written in Stone:*

"The Ogboni elders consists of the oldest and wisest members of the community. The Ogboni is a secret society...It is believed that the secret of the society is its members knowledge of a primordial unity which transcends the opposing forces that characterizes human experience. This unity is emblemized by the unification of opposing forces to create a third and more powerful force."



Yoruba wooden drum.

According to Carstens, the elaborately carved drums and the brass figures known as "edan" are intended to symbolize the process by which male and female forces combine to create a higher force:

"Two art works typical of the Ogboni cult are the carved drums and small brass figures called "edan". Each Ogboni member's house has a series of four or more drums ranging in height from one meter to less than half a meter. The largest drum is almost always carved in low relief around all its sides. The central figure on the larger drum is usually a figure with mudfishlike creatures where his/her legs should be. Each Ogboni house also has at least one pair of "edan". The "edan" is handed to an initiate into the higher ranks of the Ogboni society. The "edan" is a twin brass image of a male and a female joined together with a chain. The joining of the males and females by the chain represents the Ogboni philosophy of joining two opposing forces to create a third more powerful one."



Yoruba wooden drum.

It is astonishing that the Yoruba people, whose roots go back at least a thousand years, seem to have hit on the idea of the Rebis, a combination of the GodSelf Icon with male and female features, long before this image came to represent esoteric or alchemical ideas.



Yoruba wooden drum.

In these GodSelf Icons we see not only the serpentine legs of Abraxas, but also the tell-tale characteristic of yet another ancient and esoteric European image—the twin-tailed *siren* or mermaid depicted with a hand holding each tail, a symbol we examined briefly in Chapter Three.

We discussed how the twin legs being fish-tails "held" in each hand conveyed the idea of "mastering" the ground of one's own being. This may very well be what these GodSelf Icons, upholding a similar posture, symbolize as well.

The GodSelf Icon was depicted on various Benin and Yoruba cultural items, like ceramics, jewelry, combs, etc.; it was also depicted on various artworks, like sculptures, reliefs, carvings, etc.



Yoruba vase depicting two GodSelf Icons carved on highly-prized Ivory, from the 16th Century.

In the Yoruba vase shown above, we see two GodSelf Icons, one on the

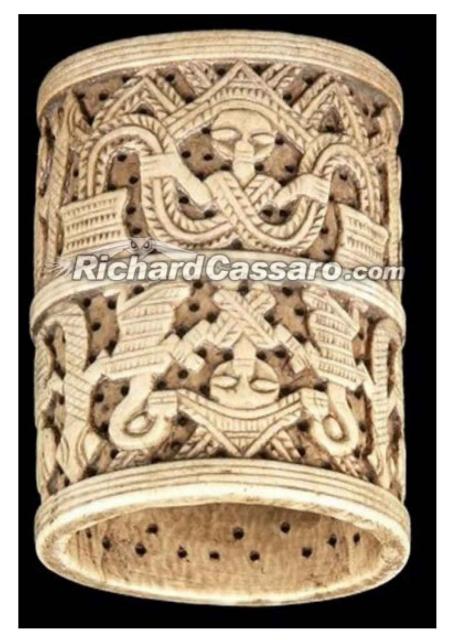
top, one on the bottom. The GodSelf Icon on top is holding twin alligators upside-down, symmetrically. Beneath, another GodSelf Icon, this one holding twin branches (apparently) of a tree behind him.

The next two images depict the same artifact (vase). The first image is right-side up. It shows the GodSelf Icon holding onto and flanked by twin, symmetrically balanced animals, each of which holds onto a snake.



Yoruba vase depicting two GodSelf Icons carved on highly-prized Ivory, from the 16th Century.

Here is the same vase, only upside-down. Here we see the second image, also a GodSelf Icon. This image is doing some type of rope trick. If you look closely, you'll see there's an optical illusion at work here, where the arms appear to change sides, as if the arms quickly become crossed and uncrossed.



Yoruba vase.

Many more GodSelf Icons are visible across Edo, Yoruba and Igbo art:



Yoruba ivory comb from Owo, Nigeria.



Wooden Yoruba mask with metal and pigments.



Yoruba altar shrine carved from a single tree trunk, depicting priests holding ceremonial wands.



Yoruba Shango Dance Wand used in special festivals and processions.



Edo metal waist pendant, equestrian, 16th–19th Century. Note the figure "8" symbols signifying eternity next to the GodSelf Icon's head.



Edo metal waist pendant, equestrian, 16th–19th Century



Yoruba lidded bowl made of ivory.



Yoruba drum.



Yoruba drums.

It is interesting to note, when reviewing these artifacts, the researches,

travels and investigations of the famous German archaeologist and ethnologist Leo Viktor Frobenius (1873–1938).

In 1911, Frobenius claimed that he had found proof of the existence of the lost continent of Atlantis. This was based on some sculptures belonging to the Yoruba culture that he discovered in Nigeria. The statues were made in bronze and terra cotta, and were so brilliant in perfection that Frobenius concluded that they could not have been made by Africans, but rather by some advanced unknown civilization. He believed that a great civilization had existed in the heart of Africa, and that it had gradually disappeared. He saw evidence for his claims in local vegetation, architecture, and even local myths and fairy tales. Many of the artifacts found by Frobenius, and used to support his now-discredited claims of a white precursor civilization in Africa, belonged to the Yoruba and Edo peoples.

GERMAN DISCOVERS ATLANTIS IN AFRICA

Leo Frobenius Says Find of Bronze Poseidon Fixes Lost Continent's Place.

GULF

NEAR

OF GUINEA

Leader of German Expedition Into Togo Hinterland Declares Famous Region of Greek Legend Is There.

Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BERLIN, Jan. 29.-Leo Frobenius, author, leader of the German Inner-African exploring expedition, sends word from the hinterland of Togo, according to information reaching THE NEW YORK TIMES correspondent, that he has discovered indisputable proofs of the existence of Plato's legendary continent of Atlantis. He places Atlantis, which he declares was not an island, in the northwestern section of Africa, in territory lying close to the equator.

New York Times article of Jan. 29, 1911, announcing Frobenius' Atlantis discovery.

In his writings, Frobenius stated his belief in "an earlier civilization which permeated and dominated the world by its stimulating force." He saw in the Yoruban artifacts remnants of the advancement and sophistication of this earlier civilization, which he believed was Atlantis.

"This remarkable Yoruban religion is not unique. It is definitely linked to the perfected system of a primeval age."

— Leo Frobenius, The Voice of Africa

Frobenius' pivotal works on African culture represented a landmark in ethnography. His writings, when discovered by young African intellectuals in the early 1900s, reverberated through the community of Africans in search of cultural legitimacy. Frobenius was credited with giving Black Africa back its soul and its identity in the early part of the last century.

"...Frobenius was a prodigious collector of data an artifacts and one of the first Europeans to try to reconstruct the history of pre-Islamic Africa. After the Great War, his...bitter attacks on Eurocentric historiography and western 'materialism' appealed powerfully to many of his contemporaries; his works caught the attention of, among others, Ezra Pound, Johan Huizinga, the exiled German Kaiser, and an important group of African students in Paris..."

— Suzanne Marchand , Leo Frobenius and the Revolt against the West

This next bronze plaque of sculpture depicts a man, which we believe is the King with his legs stretched and feet in the form of mudfish. There is a person on each side of the King, flanking the King in a kind of "balanced symmetry." The mudfish or serpentine legs provide support on top of which stand to the attending figures:



Yoruba plaque.

This depiction seems to repeat the same symbolism as the twin-tailed siren; where the siren is always depicted in the middle holding a tail in each hand, here the king in the middle is holding one of the arms of the attending figures in each hand. Thus, not only is this a GodSelf Icon, but it's a Triptych "three-in-one" design as well.

There are many depictions like this that form both a "God Self Icon" and "Triptych" pattern together-in-one. Like Jesus on the cross flanked by twin thieves, the following Benin art pieces are a testament to the religion of "balancing opposites" by finding the "middle way":



Benin Bronze pendant of Oba, Nigeria, Africa.



Waist pendant. Edo peoples. Benin kingdom court style. Benin city, Nigeria, Ivory.



U-shaped plaque showing King with mudfish or serpentine legs, on which stand twin symmetrical attendants supporting the King.



Benin plaque made of brass cast using the 'cire perdue' (lost wax) technique.



Benin plaque made of brass.



Benin plaque made of brass.



Shrine and altar made by Edo, Nigeria, Benin City, c. 19th Century.



Bronze altar, Benin, Nigeria.



17th–18th Century Yoruba bone/ivory containers.



Yoruba ivory bracelets made between the 16th to 18th Centuries.



Edo carved elephant ivory gong bell decorated with figures.

The images presented in this chapter clearly show the central importance of the GodSelf Icon, the Triptych and the Third Eye in traditional African culture. What's more, African art is so rich in symbolism and creative power that a German archaeologist thought he had discovered the original Atlantis!

Unlike Egypt, where the hot, dry climate facilitated the preservation of ancient ruins, West Africa is a place where the tropical weather and the historical wrongs of the slave trade conspired to wipe out much of the heritage that managed to survive into the modern world. Based on the small window we have acquired into the early days of African civilization, it is nonetheless easy now to imagine before us a contemplative group of noble gentlemen with their eyes shut, at one with the universe, sitting in the Lotus position before a large image of a GodSelf Icon, living in peace and harmony with their lion-hunting brethren.

The African GodSelf tradition, like the American traditions described in the preceding and the succeeding chapters of this book, is quite as elaborate and coherent as a symbolic expression of the Triptych Religion as anything we have seen from Egypt, Mesopotamia or Sumer.



CHAPTER SEVEN GodSelf Icon in The Americas

"The Aztecs' view of the past was determined by their relatively late arrival on the Mesoamerican scene...They had a strongly romantic view of their predecessors, who, they imagined, lived in a Golden Age."

— Time-Life Books, The Magnificent Maya

We saw in Chapter Five how the GodSelf Icon was prevalent for thousands of years throughout the territory of modern Peru (and Tiahuanaco in Bolivia). Pre-Columbian cultures that flourished in presentday Mexico and in the rest of the Americas also left an incredible variety of artifacts celebrating their own unique versions of the GodSelf Icon.

Most of the written records of the Aztecs were destroyed by the missionaries who arrived with Cortez. Because of a paucity of decipherable written accounts of pre-Columbian civilizations, there is considerable uncertainty about the chronology and longevity of the major ancient cultures in the Americas. The dates scholars have set for the beginning of civilization in Mesoamerica appear far too conservative; it sometimes seems that the dates get pushed further back into the past with each new textbook.

It was not only religious texts that were destroyed. The Spanish missionaries did everything in their power to destroy all traces of what they considered paganism. They melted down metal objects, tore down or re-purposed architectural monuments, and destroyed invaluable documents that might have answered many of the questions we have about the origins and history of these communities. Even today, the poverty of many Latin American societies has a detrimental effect on the quality of archaeological investigations.

I believe that the true age of ancient American cultures will eventually be recognized as much older than currently estimated; given the evident sophistication of the ruins and artifacts we have examined, it may very well be that civilization in the Americas stretches back to several thousand years BC.

I also believe that the true spirituality of ancient American cultures will eventually be revealed. Unfortunately, most people, when they hear the word "Maya," conjure images of a priest-king ripping out the still-beating heart of his helpless victim. They imagine the Maya and their predecessors as a bloodthirsty people, hungry to spill sacrificial blood to placate their vicious inhuman gods.

Sacrifice was clearly an element of ancient cultures like the Maya. However, it did not necessarily hold the same negative connotations as we today assign to it. Sacrifice had a spiritual element, as Joseph Campbell explained in his video series *The Power of Myth* :

"I think the great model of sacrifice is the Mayan Indian ball game. You know they had a kind of basketball game, there's a loop there up in the stadium wall, and the idea was to get this big heavy ball through that. I don't know how they did it, with their shoulders or heads or something or other. And the captain of the winning team was sacrificed on the field by the captain of the losing team, his head was cut off. And going to your sacrifice as the winning stroke of your life is the essence of the early sacrificial idea...When you go to your death that way as a god, you are going to your eternal life. What's sad about that?"

In fact, some scholars have already begun to recognize the deep spirituality of the pre-Columbian peoples of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. Linda Schele (1942 – 1998), an expert in the field of Maya epigraphy and iconography, played an invaluable role in the decipherment of many of the Maya hieroglyphs. In her book, *Maya Cosmos*, co-authored by David Freidel and Joy Parker, we're told that:

"...ch'u and ch'ulel [are] Mayan words for "god," "divinity," and the

"inner soul."

This Mayan word "ch-u / ch-ulel" fits precisely with our definition of the GodSelf Icon. As we'll see, the existence of an "inner soul" was as much a reality to the peoples of ancient Mesoamerica as to any other culture in the ancient and modern world. The Maya believed that they were divine; they believed they had an existence before they were born and that they would continue to live on after they die.

The authors prefaced *Maya Cosmos* with the following words, knowing their expression of Maya spirituality would meet some resistance among their peers:

"Maya reality places human beings at the center of the Cosmos... Birth and death are just especially overt examples of the capacity of spirit to move through material forms...We of the modern world come from a society in which mystical knowledge is sometimes admired and honored, but is more often regarded as lunatic and irrational...A convergence of the spiritual and the material domains is perhaps disturbing to some scholars in their citadels of Western rationality..."

Linda Schele's work represents a revolution in Mayan scholarship. The spirituality of the Maya is articulated in the many artistic representations throughout pre-Columbian Mexico of the GodSelf Icon, and we find many GodSelf Icons in one of the most famous cities the pre-Columbian peoples left behind—Teotihuacan, the "city of the gods."

MEXICO (MAYA, OLMEC, TOLTEC, MIXTEC, AZTEC)

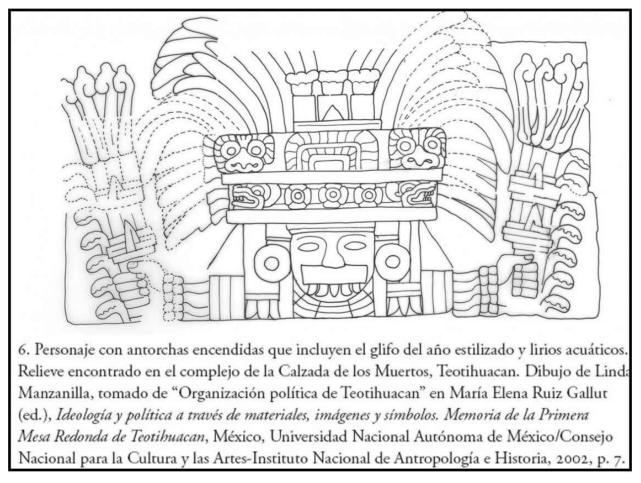
Though archaeologists have long been fascinated with Teotihuacan, the city's culture and history are still largely mysterious.



Pyramid of Teotihuacan.

Though the city is known for its impressive pyramids and other buildings, next to nothing is known about the civilization that built these monuments. We have no written records and few artifacts of everyday life from the era during which the city flourished. Even the names of their buildings came from the Aztecs, and shed no light on how the city came to be. The Toltec and then the Aztec peoples succeeded the original inhabitants of Teotihuacan; most of the artifacts we have from the site have been attributed to these successor civilizations.

Throughout Teotihuacan, a variety of GodSelf Icons have been found; many of these are easily identifiable as such. The following image was published in the article "*Political Organization of Teotihuacan,*" by Mexican scholar Maria Elena Ruiz Gallut. Her sketches are based on an ancient mural at Teotihuacan, which depicts a GodSelf Icon:



Mural depicting the GodSelf Icon found at Teotihuacan and published in a Mexican scholarly journal.

The published caption, written in Spanish, describes the two items held symmetrically in the hands of the GodSelf Icon as "torches."

This next GodSelf Icon is similar to the example shown above. Here, the GodSelf Icon is female. She's often called the "Lady of Teotihuacan" and "the Goddess." She is depicted on a mural in a temple near the Avenue of the Dead, and she seems to be holding flowering branches in each hand:



Mexico: Teotihuacan, Metepec, Goddess holding flowering branches. c. 650-750 AD.

Below is another GodSelf Icon, this one depicted on a vase or bowl. The dual items held symmetrically in each hand appear to be torches, as in the first example above:



Vase or bowl from Teotihuacan.

In the following depictions, the GodSelf Icon image is shown on an artifact called the Tlaltecuhtli disk, a heavy stone disk carved on its flat surface and also around its circumference. Its central figure resembles an image of Tlaltecuhtli, a pre-Columbian Mesoamerican deity, identified from sculpture and iconography dating to the Late Postclassic period of Mesoamerican chronology (c. 1200–1519), primarily among the Mexica (Aztec) and other Nahuatl-speaking cultures:



Tlaltecuhtli's head can be seen at the top side of the disk, with rounded eyes and a long tongue hanging from his mouth, giving him an appearance similar to Tlaloc. Although the deity's name is masculine in Nahuatl, some modern scholars point out that Tlaltecuhtli exhibits female characteristics, particularly his typical pose which they interpret as the characteristic position of a woman giving birth.

These Mayan depictions of the GodSelf Icon indicate that the Maya were familiar with the doctrines the GodSelf Icon symbolizes—the doctrine of duality and the balance of opposites. In the book *Wind in the Blood*, written by Mexican physicians Hernan Garcia, Antonio Sierra and Gilberto Balam, we are told that the Maya believed in the doctrine of duality:

"The Mayan cosmovision has the world divided in two—heaven and earth—in which various other relations of contraries are at play. The superior half is high, hot, positive and active, while the inferior is below the earth, cold, negative, and passive. This duality finds its most common and useful expression in the notions of hot and cold. Practically everything in the Mayan world is classified according to its thermal nature..."

— Hernan Garcia, Antonio Sierra and Gilberto Balam, Wind in the Blood, 1999

This statement suggests that Mayan philosophy bears extraordinary similarities to ancient Hindu and Chinese teachings, which depict the world as made up of "pairs of opposites." In the Kundalini Yoga of the Hindus, it is held that even our physical bodies are comprised of opposites. According to Garcia, Sierra and Balam, this same teaching was true for the ancient Maya:

"The human being as well, is composed of elements hot and cold, harmonized in a state of equilibrium. This equilibrium can be lost due to external or internal forces, and can be regained as well by actions, medications, or external factors affecting the body.

The basic duality of the Chinese world view, in accord with that of the Mayan view, is the notion of yin and yang, the principle of opposites intertwined which permeate every aspect of the Chinese medical and metaphysical system. The concept finds its roots in a meticulous vision of the dualities of natural phenomena such as day-night, heat/cold, heaven/earth, and wet/dry. The theory of yin and yang holds that all phenomena in the universe are formed by the union of opposing elements, which find themselves at once in a state of contradiction and interdependence..."

— Hernan Garcia, Antonio Sierra and Gilberto Balam, Wind in the Blood, 1999

In *The Blood of Kings*, Linda Schele and co-author Mary Ellen Miller explained how this same duality was visible in the Mayan language itself:

"...paired oppositions, such as light and dark. Such paired oppositions – analogous to the yin-yang concept in Chinese thought – are an important component in Maya languages and are often found in hieroglyphic inscriptions."

Can it be proven that Mayan representations of GodSelf Icons deliberately symbolized duality?

Perhaps not with direct evidence. However, Dr. Joel W. Palka, Assistant Professor of Anthropology & Latin American Studies at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee, explained that the doctrine of duality at the heart of Mesoamerican cosmology extended to the human body's left and right halves. He explained how these left and right halves were seen as "opposites," with the right denoting masculine, sun, power, positive, etc., and the left denoting feminine, moon, weakness, negative, etc.:

"Throughout Maya history the left and right sides of the human body, left/right spatial orientation, and handedness have had important cultural and symbolic meanings... For the Classic Maya, as with contemporary Maya peoples, the right hand or side of the body often signified "pure, powerful, or superordinate," and the left frequently symbolized "weaker, lame, or subordinate" in particular cultural contexts."

According to another writer, Sylvia Marcos, the concept of the "balance" point between the opposites was what the Mayans were searching for, demonstrating in their temple architecture, and questing for in their metaphysical journeys:

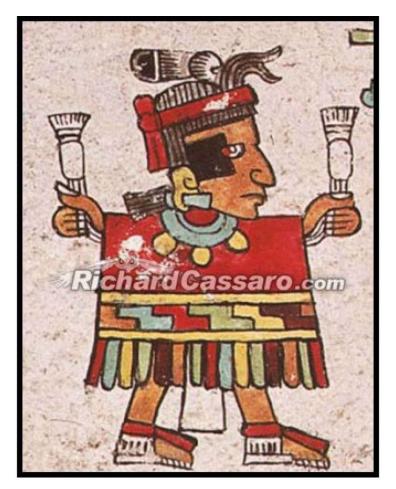
"...the idea of duality was enhanced by still another concept...that of equilibrium and balance. Rather than the static repose of two equal weights or masses, it can be conceived as a force that constantly modifies the relation between dual and/or polar pairs. Like duality itself, equilibrium or balance ...was the condition for the preservation of the cosmos...The existence of Mesoamericans was thus the constant pursuit of an ever-to-be regained balance that called not for a compromise between static opposites, but rather for a dynamic equilibrium..."

— Sylvia Marcos, Taken From The Lips: Gender and Eros in Mesoamerican Religions

In her book, *Maya*, the well-respected Mayanist Mercedes de la Garza explained Mesoamerican dualism by telling us exactly what we're looking for:

"…the basic concept of the Maya religion (and that of Mesoamerica in general) is harmony of opposites…"

The word Mixtec, which is used to denote a group of indigenous people living in areas of the Mexican states of Puebla, Oaxaca and Guerrero, is derived from the Nahuatl word for "cloud." Their capital, Tututepec, became a major force in the 11th century, and was an important cultural center until the arrival of the Spaniards in the 15th century. Images of the GodSelf Icon were recorded by professional scribes in various Mixtec codices. The follow examples are from the Codex Zouche-Nuttall, which derives its name from famous archaeologist Zelia Nuttall, who first published it in 1902, and Baroness Zouche, its donor:



Codex Zouche-Nuttal.



Codex Zouche-Nuttal.



Codex Zouche-Nuttal.



Codex Zouche-Nuttal.

Carolyn E. Tate, Professor of Art History at Texas Tech University and former Associate Curator of Pre-Columbian Art at the Dallas Museum of Art, asserted that duality was a central feature of Mixtec culture:

"Among the...Mixtec, the sky tends to be gendered male and the earth female...At least some groups...refer to the aspects of nature in terms of a balance of gendered forces...Sylvia Marcos...follows Lopez Austin in describing their relation [by saying that]...all elements and natural phenomena were construed as a balance of dual valences."

—Carolyn E. Tate, *Reconsidering Olmec Visual Culture: The Unborn, Women, and Creation*

These Mixtec depictions of the GodSelf Icon indicate that, like the Maya, the Mixtec were familiar with the doctrines the GodSelf Icon symbolizes—the Doctrine of Duality and the Balance of Opposites.

The GodSelf Icon depictions below, which are quite different in style from

the Mixtec examples, are among the rare surviving pieces of Aztec art. These are from the Codex Borgia, which is now part of the Vatican Library collection:



Aztec Goddess (part of a duo named "Toci and Xochiquetzal").



Borgia Group Codices.



Borgia Group Codices.



Borgia Group Codices.



Borgia Group Codices.



Borgia Group Codices.



Xolotl. Aztec God. Borgia Group Codices.

The depictions of the GodSelf Icon that these codices present are many hundreds of years old, and they were written by a people who were using a symbolic vocabulary that we cannot fully understand. Despite their surface differences with images we have seen in other cultures, there is no denying how the basic pattern of balancing opposites is maintained.

This next depiction from the Codex Borgia bears a strong resemblance to the Rebis:



Design from Codex Borgia.

At left we see Mictlantecuhtli, god of death and lord of the Underworld, while at right we see Quetzalcoatl, god of wisdom, life, knowledge, morning star, patron of the winds and light, the lord of the West. Together, scholars tell us, they symbolize the duality of life and death. Their resemblance here to the Rebis is quite evident:

"This depiction of the two opposed gods shows them almost as two aspects of the same person. A sense of duality of opposites (life and death, day and night) is central to Mesoamerican religious thought. The highest heavens were ruled by Ometeotl, the god of duality, who was both male and female."

-Neil Philip, Myths and Legends Explained

This concept of duality and balance of opposites in Mesoamerican iconography long predated the establishment of Aztec civilization in Mexico, and manifested itself in other design motifs besides the GodSelf lcon:

"At Tlatilco, a large village established around 1200 B.C., numerous individuals were found buried with figurines and other funerary offerings. Some of these figurines, especially those with two heads or with split faces depicting attributes of both the living and the dead, represent early expressions of duality, or the combining of opposing but complementary forces, a pervasive theme in all subsequent central Mexican religions."

—Archaeology of Ancient Mexico and Central America: An Encyclopedia edited by Susan Toby Evans, David L. Webster



Tlatilco mask depicting life on one side and death on the other, representing the shifting nature of duality.

These and many similar Tlatilco masks evidently represent the dualism of nature, like the ancient Chinese idea of yin and Yang; this dualism was a powerful concept to their way of thinking. Yet it wasn't just the dualism that was important, but, rather, the combining of the opposites to create a kind of third force of balance that seemed to evoke the magic. This concept was incorporated into pottery pieces and various other works of art.

Aztec gold artifacts from many centuries later depict the GodSelf Icon in a way that continues to stress the fundamental concept of duality:



Aztec figurine clearly depicts the GodSelf Icon. Note the similarity to the Palm Branches held by the god Heh of Egypt.

"For the Aztec, the world was alive and all things had impacts on all other things...In all things there was a duality at work, which was best when balanced: hot/cold, male/female, up/down, order/chaos, creation/destruction...Health was the proper balance of various dualities and forces of the body (tonocayo), and illness was imbalance."

— Joseph P. Byrne, *Health and Wellness in the Renaissance and Enlightenment*



Figurine from Central Mexico (who some say depicts the Aztec god Xochipilli) shows a figure meditating with closed eyes, striking the GodSelf pose.

The Time-Life book series on the Aztecs tells of a people whose considerable artistic and architectural talents were based on religious and design principles of the peoples who preceded them in Mexico:

"The Aztecs' view of the past was determined by their relatively late arrival on the Mesoamerican scene...their landscape was littered with magnificent ruins of cities with monumental architecture and sculpture. They had a strongly romantic view of their predecessors, who, they imagined, lived in a Golden Age."

— Time-Life Books, *The Magnificent Maya*

It is not surprising that the late Aztecs, like Plato and his contemporaries

in Greece, believed in a prior Golden Age. Their religious culture, expressed in their widespread adoption of the GodSelf Icon, has many parallels with Taoism:

"The peoples of Mesoamerica held a similar view; for them, the vitality of the natural world had its source in the world of the spirit, the domain of the mysterious life-force. This force was the ground of being, the animating and ordering principle that explained every aspect of earthly life...

For Mesoamerica, the world of the spirit, mysterious and inaccessible, was synonymous with the life-force, while the world of nature was inextricably involved with death. Permanence was found in the other world; this world offered only change culminating in death, which permitted entrance to the other, an entrance characterized as deification in the case of great leaders and culture heroes. This fundamental distinction between life and death, spirit and matter, permanence and flux threads its way through Mesoamerican thought from the earliest times to the time of the Conquest: at the beginning of the development of Mesoamerican spirituality, that distinction was basic to shamanism with the shaman as the mediator between the worlds...

The conclusion was inescapable that "beyond is the place where one lives." Permanence was to be found in the world of the spirit; this world offered flux ending in death."

— Peter T. Markman and Roberta H. Markman, Masks of the Spirit

To find the true self, then, to regain the world of the spirit or home of the soul, was a matter of the utmost importance to the Mesoamericans. What 's more, they believed that there is a way this could be done "right here and now" through spiritual practices, rituals, ceremonies, chants, meditation, and alignments with natural cycles. These spiritual practices are embodied in the GodSelf Icon:

"...life for the pre-Columbian inhabitants of Mesoamerica culminated in the funerary ritual that marked the beginning of the passage back to the realm of the spirit from whence the individual's life came...Death, for the peoples of Mesoamerica as for all peoples, was the great mystery. The Aztec account of the metaphoric journey...after the body's physical death suggests that...death was seen as a gradual fading of the individual identity of the person into the anonymity of the life-force."

— Peter T. Markman and Roberta H. Markman , Masks of the Spirit

COSTA RICA

Costa Rica lies between the Mesoamerican and Andean civilizations. Scholars tell us that pottery in the form of pot shards, cylindrical vases, platters, gourds and other forms of decorated vases dated to around 2,000 to 3,000 BC have been found. While relatively little is known about the history of ancient Costa Rica, and it appears that the country lacked a strong native civilization, there is no shortage of pre-Columbian Costa Rican images depicting the GodSelf Icon. In the figure below, the male figure sits with his knees bent, feet extended over the curved lower bar. With both hands he clutches the heads of a stylized snake, the rope-like body of which is draped over his lap and groin area above his exposed genitals:



Gold pendant of a shaman holding a double-headed snake.

Images of the GodSelf Icon have been found across Costa Rica:



Figurine pendant, c. 1000-1550, Western Panama, or Diquís, Costa Rica.



Costa Rica, Diquis Zone.



Figurine pendant, Diquís, Costa Rica.



Figurine pendant, Diquís, Costa Rica.



Bat-Head figure pendant.

Scholars typically regard the Costa Rican gold objects as a mystery:

"In pre-Hispanic America, gold was associated with secular and religious power. While some objects clearly functioned as jewelry, most works in gold embodied a complex religious iconography whose meaning was understood by members of a particular society, but is no longer accessible."

—Wikipedia

The theory of a GodSelf Icon permeating ancient cultures around the world is an important step in understanding the religious practices of a people who have left few other traces of their way of life.



Figurine pendant, c. 1000-1550, Western Panama, or Diquís, Costa Rica.



Figurine pendant, c. 1000-1550, Western Panama, or Diquís, Costa Rica.



Pre-Columbian gold figure.



Gold pendant of a Shaman. Costa Rican/Panamanian border, c. 500 AD to 1550 AD.



Gold pendant of a Shaman, c. 500 to 1550 AD.

Despite the lack of the monumental structures that normally indicate the presence of an advanced civilization, the Costa Rican GodSelf Icon images are every bit as expressive and interesting as their Aztec and pre-Aztec counterparts, this despite their allegedly much greater age! There is even a Costa Rican image that looks much like the Rebis:



Pendant designed in the classic Diquis style.

"The dramatic pose of the figure, the slightly curved upper band, symmetrical balance, and design of the snake heads are characteristic of the inventive Diquis goldsmiths...The double heads suggest the principal of duality, (good and evil forces), characteristic of shamanic belief. However, the snake image is crucial to the understanding of the pendant's significance as a ritual object. The figure holds a snake in each hand, and his penis is cleverly shaped like a snake's head. This is an overt symbol of sexuality, as the serpent was directly associated with the male member and used to represent fertility. This pendant may have been worn by a shaman who specialized in matters related to procreation. The artistry and inventive flair is as powerful as the pendant's symbolism, and both these elements merge with the brilliant gold to form a work of art of outstanding beauty."

PANAMA (COCLE)

Although not as old a center of human settlement as Costa Rica, the Gran Coclé area of Panama has been a center for human settlement since at least the 2nd century BC. Tragically, the damage wrought by the Spanish conquerors of the 16th century was compounded by unprofessional archaeologists who ravaged some of the area's most interesting sites in the 1920s. In many of the objects that have come to us intact, the prominence of the GodSelf Icon is unmistakable.



The deity displays serpent staffs in both hands and also has pairs of serpents on his headdress and his belt.



Embossed gold plaque, c. 500-900 AD, Conte, Panama.



Tonosí-Cubitá Style, Gran Coclé Region, South Coastal Panama.



Human effigy pendant, Panama, gold, 600 AD.



Bat-shaman effigy pendant 900-1550 AD, Veraguas.



Bat-shaman effigy pendant 900 to 1550 AD.



Shaman figure holding rattles, Diquis, c. 700 to 1500 AD.

According to contemporary art historians who specialize in the subject, the art of the Panamanian cultures was reflective of their spiritual belief that reality is to be found only in the higher spiritual realm, where all duality is transcended:

"Binary opposition is a central precept of ancient Panamanian cosmology, which viewed the cosmos as the pairing of opposites: male-female, light-dark, spirit world-natural world. The universe was composed of three levels-the upper sphere, the middle sphere, and the lower sphere. The latter was associated with the female domain and was mirrored in the upper sphere, the domain of the male principle. Decorative motifs, especially certain geometric forms frequently found on painted ceramics, likely had symbolic meanings, although their significance has largely been lost. Perhaps, too, some forms encompassed esoteric knowledge that was not intended for the uninitiated."

—The Walters Art Museum



Panamanian (Joaquín Polychrome) AD 600-800.



Pedestal plate (5th-8th century), recovered at Conte.



Panamanian (Joaquín Polychrome) AD 600-800.



Cocle Bowl, 1200 AD.



Greater Coclé footed plate with crocodile design, 850–950 AD. Río de Jesús, Veraguas Province, Panama. Pottery, paint. National Museum of the American Indian.



Pre-Columbian Coclé polychrome dish, Panama.

In Panama, we find other depictions that are not quite "GodSelf Icon" depictions in the fullest sense of that term, but which nonetheless seem to convey the very same idea of transcending duality as the GodSelf Icon. Among these is the Crocodile God:



Plaque with Crocodile Deity, c. 700-900. Sitio Conte, Coclé Province, Panama.



Coclé Province, Panama.



Hammered gold alloy breastplate, Panama, Azuero Peninsula, 1200 AD.

COLUMBIA

The Calima culture in Columbia, which left traces at least as far back as 1000 BC, is remarkable for the number and quality of GodSelf Icons found among its splendid gold artifacts, which were produced beginning in the second century BC. Another of Columbia's major pre-Columbia civilizations, the Tolima, began to produce fine art objects around the time of Christ's birth. Archaeology in Columbia has been somewhat stymied in recent years by the drug trade, but Columbian museums are full of Calima and Tolima artifacts depicting the GodSelf Icon:



Columbia. Museo del Oro.



Calima, ceremonial tweezers, Columbia.



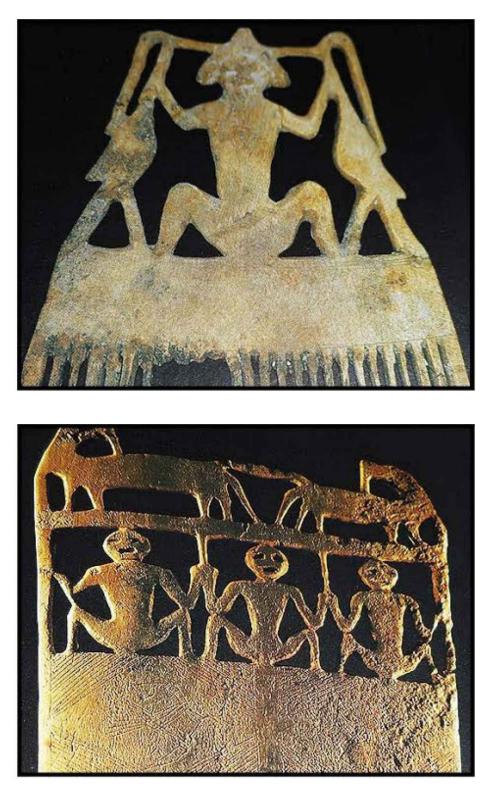
Gold and copper (alloy tumbaga) breastplate molten lost wax, depicting a human figure showing two palm trees. Artifact originating from Tolima (Colombia). Pre-Colombian Tolima Civilization, 10th Century.

NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN (NAVAJO, SENECA)

The GodSelf Icon was as important a presence in ancient North America as in Central America and South America. The artifacts of the Navajo and Seneca tribes provide some of the best examples.



The Seneca tribe, a member tribe of the Iroquois federation, occupied a large swath of territory south of Lake Ontario. While their presence in North America can be dated back only to the 12th century, the fact that they left so many pieces with depictions of the GodSelf Icon suggests either the possibility of cultural influence from areas further south or the presence of an older native tradition in North America that has not left other traces of its passage. The two Seneca images below are very consistent with GodSelf Icon depictions elsewhere:



GodSelf Icons created by the Seneca Nation of Indians.

The Navajo people, who live primarily in the Southwestern United States and are the second largest surviving Indian, were traditionally nomadic people who first left traces of settlement in the 16th century. The Navajo are best known for their magnificent blankets. Their sacred Yei rugs, which have been described as "prayer rugs," are among their most remarkable textile productions:

"The Navajo Yeii or Yei (Navajo: yéí or yé'ii) means something along the lines of spirit, god, demon or monster. The most benevolent of such beings are the Diyin Diné'e or Holy People who are associated with the forces of nature."

-Wikipedia

While it is difficult to make a direct connection with any ancient culture, it is certainly noteworthy that many of the Navajo Yei rugs and similar Navajo images depict highly stylized GodSelf Icons.



Navajo Yei rug.



Navajo Yei rug.



Navajo Yei rug.



Navajo Yei rug.



Navajo Yei rug.



Navajo wall tapestry.



Vertical rectangular presentation in sand of a single Yei figure.



Yei petroglyph.

As we can see, the GodSelf Icon was a prominent feature of civilizations that stretched across North, Central and South America. The peoples of the New World, far from being savages as many believe, were evidently as spiritually sophisticated in their religious beliefs as peoples of the Old World. It is a pity that because of the unfortunate destruction of all their written records, we do not have access to their thoughts about these marvelous icons they created. I'm grateful that my work has brought me to a point where I can understand the inner nature of these people and present them for their noble values.



CHAPTER EIGHT GodSelf Icon in Ancient Persia

Human settlement in Iran has a long and glorious history, much of it unknown and unknowable due to a paucity of written records. Even though Iran developed a writing system as early as 3200 BC, the first figure to make a major impact on world history was Cyrus II ("Cyrus the Great"), who unified the Medes and the Persians to create a powerful dynastic government, the largest empire ever created up to that time, known to history as the Achaememid Empire, in the 6th century BC. Cyrus was lucky in his timing, as his rise to power happened within the historical memory of and in a setting familiar to the authors of the Bible, the most influential book ever written. The story of the Persian Empire is also familiar to us from the works of Herodotus and later Greek historians, for whom Persia was the great rival.

Providing a detailed account of Persian history is far beyond the limits of my expertise and the scope of this book; even a cursory explanation of Persian culture and influence would require a book the size of an encyclopedia. I recommend A.T. Olmstead's 600-page *History of the Persian Empire,* and *Forgotten Empire,* edited by two British Museum scholars, John Curtis and Nigel Tallis, as a great shortcut to understand the world of Cyrus the Great and his successors.

Persian history before Cyrus is *Terra Incognita*. Explaining key events and personalities before Cyrus is nearly impossible due to lack of written evidence, a fact that makes early Persian history a specialty characterized by intense polemical debates no less fierce than those that surround the Islamic Revolution and the embattled life of present-day Iran. This lack of written historical evidence makes the analysis and interpretation of early Iranian artifacts a vitally important task. Fortunately, because of the knowledge and experience I gained from studying the relics of other ancient civilizations, I find that this approach, while much more difficult than the simple compilation and analysis of historical documents, pays off magnificently. The parallels I point out in this chapter, while highly controversial and necessarily lacking a strong foundation of written evidence, are nonetheless all but undeniable to anyone with working eyes and a strong reservoir of common sense. It will be abundantly evident from the examples presented in this chapter that the GodSelf Icon is an important clue in understanding the nature of early Iranian religious practice, which seems to be consistent with that of all other ancient peoples discussed in this book.

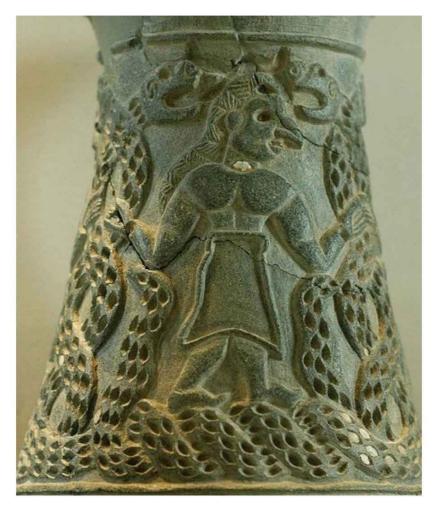
Prehistoric sites across the Iranian plateau indicate the presence of advanced ancient cultures and urban settlements in the 4th millennium BC. Archaeologists in Iran have excavated many *tepes* or artificial mounds, some of which hold the most ancient ruins in the country; many of these oldest tepes have yielded GodSelf Icons.

The following two GodSelf Icons were found in the so-called *Giyan Tepe*, a large archaeological mound located in western Iran, excavated for two seasons in 1931-32:



GodSelf Icon found on Stamp Seal at Tepe Giyan, Iran, 4000-3000 BC.

The ancient stamp seal above depicts a GodSelf Icon holding what appear to be twin serpents undulating rythmically in each hand. Also found in Tepe Giyan was the vase below, which again depicts the GodSelf Icon as a figure holding two snakes:



Vase with carved "Master of Animals" motif (GodSelf Icon) shown mastering pairs of entwined snakes. Found in Tepe Giyan, Iran, probably 3rd millennium BC.

Mystery surrounds the next two GodSelf Icon examples, both of which are found on artifacts from ancient Persia that entered the private collection of the legendary banker John Pierpont Morgan (1837 – 1913).

The first artifact depicts a deity striking the GodSelf Icon pose. The deity has a colossal Third Eye awakened in the center of his forehead, as we can see in the close-up image on the bottom:



GodSelf Icon with awakened Third Eye depicted on the forehead. The artifact is from the Morgan Pierpont Library in NYC and has been dated to 3100 BC.

It's a bit hard to see, but the person shown here is striking the GodSelf pose, holding twin lions symmetrically in each hand. The Morgan Library & Museum describes this piece as:

"...nude one-eyed hero holding two reversed lions, two more lions forming a pyramid above him."

—The Morgan Library & Museum, NYC

Here is a second example of a similar Third Eye God Self Icon like the one shown above, also from The Morgan Library & Museum, and also dating to 3100 BC. As with the GodSelf Icon above, there is a giant single Eye decorating a large part of the Icon's forehead:





GodSelf Icon with awakened Third Eye depicted on the forehead.

It's hard to make out, but there is a GodSelf Icon here with a single Third Eye opened in his or her forehead. Like the previous artifact, this artifact is officially titled by the museum "One-Eyed Hero with Lions Flanked by Enclosures" and dated to 3100 BC.

These two artifacts stand out because they perfectly depict the *"balanced-opposites-to-awaken-the-Third-Eye"* theme, which I claim represents the meaning of the GodSelf Icon.

They are the oldest examples in Iran of the GodSelf Icon motif, which became ubiquitous as Persian civilization took root.

<u>JIROFT</u>

The social science we call history originated with Herodotus in the middle of the 5th century BC. As Herodotus practiced the craft, it is hard to distinguish historical scholarship from myth, hearsay and storytelling. Although there has been considerable progress since the time of Herodotus in refining the art of writing history, this art has been much abused over the intervening centuries. It has often been noted that history is largely written by the victors, and that one of the ways the victors assure that this will always be so is by obliterating the material traces of vanguished cultures. To get around issues such as this, field researchers in the form of trained professionals called archaeologists have painstakingly supplemented our knowledge of the past with materials unearthed, scientifically dated and carefully interpreted to confirm and flesh out our knowledge of the past. Many of the great archaeologists were famously dependant on financial support and pressure to show results, meaning that they would call a gold mask "the mask of Agamemnon" rather than "gold mask of undetermined origin."

The people modern scholars call "Jiroft" are believed to have emerged between 3000 and 2500 BC in southeastern Iran. Their economy was based on agriculture, mainly date palms. The discovery of this civilization is quite recent, occuring in the past two decades. The very idea of a "Jiroft civilization" rests on somewhat shaky ground. Many of the artifacts associated with this hypothetical culture were bought from "destitute villagers" who had destroyed their archaeological context by digging them up. A team directed by archaeologist Yusef Majidzadeh began work on a site near Jiroft in 2001. Majidzadeh's group maintains that the Jiroft people constitute a distinct civilization.

The ruins of the main Jiroft city, a regional commercial center, include a two-story citadel and a pyramidal ziggurat. The people adorned their ceramics and art with fantastic GodSelf Icon decorations, mixing precious

stones from India and Afghanistan into their designs. The amazing GodSelf Icons below were created by, or at least have been credited to, the Jiroft civilization. Note the spectacular symmetry encoded into each GodSelf Icon; not just in the GodSelf Icon itself, but in the surrounding designs:



Jiroft artifact depicts the GodSelf Icon with the lower body of a bull holding twin cheetahs symmetrically, National Museum, Tehran, Iran.



Jiroft bowl, Tehran, Iran.



Jiroft artifact, Tehran, Iran.



Jiroft bowl, Tehran, Iran.



Jiroft chalice, Tehran, Iran.



Jiroft artifact, Tehran, Iran.

The above depictions from "Jiroft" are very similar to each other in that they all share the following GodSelf Icon attributes:

- Single Person Centered
- Arms Extended Outward
- Elbows Bent
- Holding Twin Animals On Both Sides
- Animals Are Symmetrically Shown (Mirror Images)

Comparing these Jiroft Icons to those found in Egypt shows remarkable parallels. As we can see below, the GodSelf Icons of both cultures are holding scorpions symmetrically:



Left: Ancient Egyptian Cippus of Horus striking the GodSelf Icon pose. Right: Jiroft priest as a GodSelf Icon.

At left, the ancient Egyptian Cippus of Horus wears the "sidelock of youth," standing on two overlapping crocodiles, holding snakes and scorpions aloft, with a lion hanging from his right hand and an antelope from his left. At right, a very similar Jiroft artifact illustrating the same GodSelf Icon pose depicts what appears to be a priest holding twin scorpions symmetrically.

BACTRIA

Bactria, the birthplace of Zoroaster in the 7th century BC, was the northernmost province of the Persian Empire; archeological artifacts dating back as far as 2500-2000 BC have been unearthed there. It is believed by some scholars today that Bactria was originally part of a Mede empire stretching into Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Bactria, which like the rest of Iran is predominantly Shiite Muslim now, is of interest for this study because of the rich store of GodSelf Icons that have been excavated in the region.



Very unusual faience plaque of Bactrian origin.

In the image above, the central figure, unusually dressed perhaps in official robes, holds at bay two large felines. Another Bactrian example of the GodSelf Icon, below, seems to depict twin serpents in each hand:



Openwork stamp seal shows figure holding snakes, c. late 3rd–early 2nd millennium BC.

The date of composition of the Old Avestan *Gathas*, which form the basic "scriptures" of Zoroastrianism, is unknown. Although the consensus among specialists today is that these writings were set down after Zoroaster's death around 551 BC, classical writers such as Plutarch and Diogenes proposed dates that were radically older, i.e., prior to 6000 BC. While it would be irresponsible to accept such early dates, given the complete lack of evidence to substantiate them, there is no denying that Zoroastrianism has much in common with beliefs we have associated and attributed to the Universal Triptych Religion.

The original Zoroastrian worldview depicts the world as an arena for the

struggle of the two fundamentals of being, Good and Evil, represented in two antagonistic divine figures: *Ahura Mazda* on the side of good against *Ahriman* on the side of evil.

"Ahura Mazda...is the eternal source of all blessings and benefactions...he is all merciful...In contrast...the evil in the world is the creative work of Ahriman...For every one of Ahura Mazda's benevolent spiritual powers, Ahriman conjured up an opposing malevolent creature of equivalent rank and power as aides to counter-balance every good creation of Ahura Mazda... Thus, the phenomenal world exists of a pair of conflicting opposites: light/dark, truth/falsehood, health/sickness, rain/drought...life/death, heaven/hell.

— Karigoudar Ishwaran , Ascetic Culture: Renunciation and Worldly Engagementedited

Ahura Mazda is strongly associated with the soul. Ahura Mazda was depicted as emerging from a *Farvahar*, one of the best known symbols of ancient Iran. As we can see in the image below, it has an obvious parallel to the Egyptian Aten, which also symbolizes the soul:



Persepolis, Ahura Mazda relief.

"The Sun Throne, the imperial seat of Persia, has strong relations

from the Farahavar. The sovereign would be seated in the middle of the throne, which is shaped like a platform or bed that is raised from the ground. This religious-cultural symbol was adapted by the Pahlavi dynasty to represent the Iranian nation. In present-day Zoroastrianism, the Faravahar is said to be a reminder of one's purpose in life, which is to live in such a way that the soul progresses towards frasho-kereti, or union with Ahura Mazda, the supreme divinity in Zoroastrianism."

—Wikipedia

A particularly powerful "staff-god" Icon related to Zoroastrianism is evident in Persia. The primeval "Creator" deity of the Persian religion *—which had Aryan origins and lasted for thousands of years* —was an "androgynous" figure named "Zurvan," depicted in the center below.

Zurvan, the "god of time and eternity," is described as the "neutral father" of the "good" god Ahura Mazda and the "evil" god Ahriman. These twins are born and emanate from either side of him, as shown in the image below from an ancient silver plaque. With his children representing the two opposites, Zurvan is "centered" between them, facing forward:



The androgynous figure of Zurvan, Lurestan, Persia, c. 7th BC.

Zurvan's neutrality between opposites is personified here by his striking the staff-god pose. He appears to share an arm with both Ahura Mazda (good) and Ahriman (evil), and he is said to be passing along one flame in his "good" hand and one in his "evil" hand.

But Zurvan, the "creator deity" of this ancient Persian religion, is neither good nor evil; he is the eternal being *between* these two temporal opposites. He is neutral. In fact, those aren't *his* arms, though they appear to be. They are the arms of his two lower halves—his left and right sides, good (Ahura Mazda) and evil (Ahriman), that appear to be emanating from him, like the twin male and female faces that emanate from the Buddha.

Is it possible that Zurvanism (described as a now-extinct branch of Zoroastrianism in which the divinity Zurvan is a First Principle who engendered equal-but-opposite twins) is in fact the oldest religious tradition in Persia? Scholars recognize that Zoroastrianism's most distinctive feature is its dualism, which depicts an ongoing battle between the two primal powers of good & evil, light & dark, and so on. Zurvan was renowned for balancing the good with the evil, the light with the dark, etc., seeing these and all the other contraries merely as temporal apparitions. Zurvan is for this reason referred to by modern scholars as the god of light *and* darkness, good *and* evil, right *and* wrong, and so on.

Zurvanism is said to be the product of one man, the seventh century BC prophet Zoroaster (c. 630-551 BC), also known by his Avestan name, Zarathustra. The historical facts on Zoroaster come from the *Gathas*, a body of hymns and prayers included in the Zoroastrian scriptures (the Avesta) written in Avestan, which is similar to Sanskrit. A commentary was added in the third century AD to form the Zend-Avesta.

Ahura Mazda is not a personal god like the God of the Bible, but more of a template that encodes wisdom pertaining to the physical and spiritual constitutions of every man and woman. Zurvan is also a model that the masses should strive to follow. Worship is centered on this idea, not on a personal relationship with a God or gods.

Zurvan is the god of infinite time, space, and matter. Zurvan, as the parent of the two opposites of good and evil, is regarded as a neutral god; a passionless being without gender (neuter), one for whom there is no distinction between opposing forces. Zurvan is thus a kind of "god of destiny," of both light and darkness. Zurvan's name derives from the Avestan word *zruvan* ("time" or "old age").

"Ahura Mazda's spiritual powers (sometimes thought of as archangels) consist of a group of six celestial beings called Amesha Spenta...who stand second in rank to Ahura Mazda, and together with Ahura Mazda at their head form a heptad...

Just as there are six Amesha Spenta, so there are six archdemons... Ahriman produced each of these six archdemons in exact opposition to Amesha Spenta for their diabolical work in disrupting the entire plan of Ahura Mazda."

— Karigoudar Ishwaran, Ascetic Culture: Renunciation and Worldly Engagementedited

An interesting passage in Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma* relates Ahura Mazda and Ahriman to the Great Year (discussed above), the alternating cycles of light and darkness that correspond to the rise and fall of human consciousness and human civilization:

"The Persians said that Ormuzd [Ahura Mazda], born of the pure Light, and Ahriman, born of darkness, were ever at war. Ormuzd produced six Gods, Beneficence, Truth, Good Order, Wisdom, Riches, and Virtuous Joy...Ahriman, in his turn, produced six Devs, opponents of the six emanations from Ormuzd.

...The twelve great Deities of the Persians, the six Amshaspands and six Devs, marshalled, the former under the banner of Light, and the latter under that of Darkness, are the twelve Zodiacal Signs or Months; the six supreme signs, or those of Light, or of Spring and Summer, commencing with Aries, and the six inferior, of Darkness, or of Autumn and Winter, commencing with Libra...

It is comprehended in a period divided into twelve parts, each subdivided into a thousand parts, which the Persians termed years. Thus the circle annually traversed by the Sun was divided into 12,000 parts, or each sign into 3,000: and thus, each year, the Principle of Light and Good triumphed for 3,000 years, that of Evil and Darkness for 3,000, and they mutually destroyed each other's labors for 6,000, or 3,000 for each: so that the Zodiac was equally divided between them."

— Albert Pike , Morals and Dogma (1871)

Pike's description of Persian religion, which relies on some of the major concepts of astrology such as the Zodiac, is clearly informed by his awareness of the Hindu concept of Yugas and the up and down cycles of civilization, an idea related to Plato's concept of the Great Year.

From the doctrine of the two Principles, Active and Passive, grew that of the Universe, animated by a Principle of Eternal Life, and by a Universal Soul, from which every isolated and temporary being received at its birth an emanation, which, at the death of such being, returned to its source.

<u>AFGHANISTAN</u>

Bactrian civilization, as noted above, spilled into Afghanistan. In 1978,

archaeologists from the Soviet Union and Afghanistan discovered a nomad cemetery dating from the first century AD. The graves were full of gold objects inlaid with semiprecious stones.

Some of the objects discovered by Soviet archaeologists are among the most representative and beautiful examples we have of the GodSelf Icon. They are worthy of further study not only for their intrinsic beauty and spiritual power, but also because they seem to confirm links with an ancient belief in the Third Eye, which is an important related concept in both the Egyptian and the Hindus Valley cultures.



One of a pair of gold pendants showing the "Dragon Master," from the second quarter of the first century AD, found at Tillya Tepe in northern Afghanistan.

The National Geographic website describes the artifact above as follows:

"This gold pendant with turquoise, garnet, lapis lazuli, carnelian, and pearls depicts a dragon master...The pendant, dating from the first century A.D., was found at one of four Afghan archaeological sites that yielded the works of art in the exhibition.

The ornament was part of the some one hundred gold objects taken from the graves of six Bactrian nomads. Many of the Bactrian objects reflect local artisans' distinctive blend of motifs known from Greek, Roman, Indian, and Chinese art."

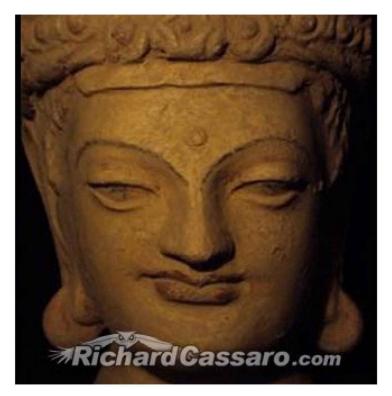
-National Geographic Website

Note the Third Eye forehead dot:



Close-up of previous photo. Note the Third Eye forehead dot.

There are other depictions of the Third Eye forehead dot across Afghanistan:



Forehead dot, symbolic of the Third Eye, depicted on a Bactrian head in Afghanistan.

LURESTAN

Lurestan is a part of Western Iran located in the Zagros Mountains. Culturally, it was linked with the Medes before the area came under Persian domination. Lurestan-based metalworkers were known for their skill as early as the third millennium BC. Many "Lurestan Bronze" pieces dating from 1000 to 650 BC depict the GodSelf Icon:



Iran, Lurestan, Lurestan bronzes, c. 1000-650 BC.



Iran, Lurestan, Lurestan bronzes.



Finial Standard Lurestan Bronze, 3000-1200 BC.



Lurestan Bronze, 2000 BC.



Bronze Plaque from Lurestan, Iran.

We can read a description of the piece shown above on the Bryn Mawr College website:

"One of the most interesting pieces from this region...is the bronze plaque depicting a "Master of the Animals" motif. This motif is common to Iran and the Near East in antiquity...Numerous parallels of this motif can be found in collections of Lurestan bronzes."

-Bryn Mawr College Website

The website goes on to compare the GodSelf Icon piece above to another piece from Lurestan also featuring the GodSelf Icon (which they call "Master of the Animals"), shown below:



Left: Bronze Plaque from Lurestan, Iran. Right: An old Hermetic "Rebis" symbol, from the "Materia Prima" of Valentinus, printed at Frankfurt, 1613.

"...this piece...dates to...roughly 1200-750 BCE. It is a rectangular plaque...Inside the rectangular borders is a double-headed master with twice outlined almond-shaped eyes...He holds the front legs of the two animals flanking him."

-Bryn Mawr College Website

With two heads atop a single body that's striking the GodSelf Icon pose, this looks very much like the esoteric Rebis portrait described in Chapter Three.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the Rebis is symbolic of the Doctrine of Duality and the balance of opposites. *Is it really too much of a leap to infer from this juxtaposition that these Lurestan Bronzes symbolize the same idea?*

Here are another group of "Lurestan Bronzes" that depict the GodSelf Icon motif, but in a very highly stylized form:



Lurestan Bronze, 2000 BC.



Lurestan Bronze, Iran, c. 2000 BC.



Lurestan Bronze, Iran, c. 2000 BC.

Each one of these Lurestan Bronzes depicts the same highly stylized GodSelf Icon motif, with each GodSelf Icon possessing the very same characteristics:

- Main Person Is Centered
- Main Person Appears Elongated Vertically, As If Body Is A Vertical Pole
- Arms Extended Outward

- Elbows Bent
- Holding Twin Animals On Both Sides
- Twin Animals Have Elongated Necks, Like Serpents
- Animals Are Symmetrically Shown (Mirror Image)

Symmetrized animals—they look like snakes or dragons—are held in each hand. These artistic masterpieces appear to be "local" artifacts of a Universal Religion that was once shared globally, but now forgotten, a religion which teaches that deep down we are divine eternal beings dreaming we are alive on earth.

We can begin to detect this Universal Religion in the unique stylization of this GodSelf Icon motif. On all the Lurestan Bronzes, look at the way the body forms an elongated *vertical* pole. Special emphasis is clearly being placed on what we might call the "vertical" principle here.

Why?

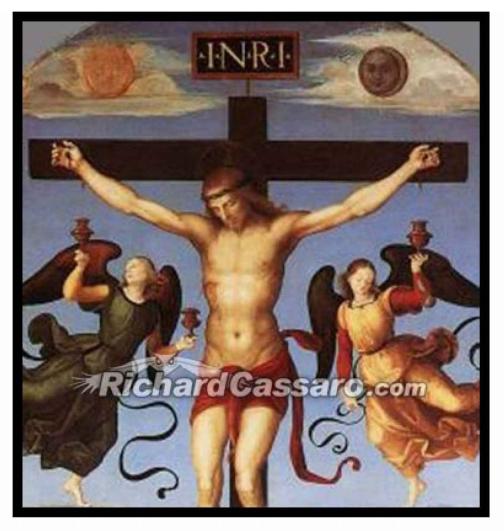
The reason is because, in symbolic terms, anything vertical symbolizes *spiritual* while anything horizontal symbolizes *physical*. Man alone among earth's animals stands erect, his spine is erect; the divine within him keeps him morally erect, so the vertical line symbolizes his divinity.

According to this same teaching, the vertical line also simultaneously symbolizes the "spinal column," which is itself a symbol of the "divinity" in man. In esoteric portraits of the Christian "cross," the vertical beam of the cross symbolizes the eternal soul and the horizontal beam symbolizes the field of passing time.

This is actually the meaning of the ancient cross symbol, which predates the crucifix by several thousand years, and examples of which have been found across Antiquity.

We can see how this esoteric symbolism was encoded by Raphael in his famous *Crucifixion* painting. In his book *A Dictionary of Symbols*, the Spanish painter, poet, and symbologist J.E. Cirlot (1916-1973) tells us:

"...the cross...affirms the primary relationship between the two worlds of the celestial and the earthly...wedding the spiritual (or vertical) principle with the principle of the world of phenomena."



This Renaissance masterpiece, "Crucifixion" by Raphael (1483-1520 AD) shows the Sun aligned with the right hand of Jesus and the Moon aligned with his left.

Look at how Jesus' hands line up with the horizontal beam—which signifies opposites and passing time. His spinal cord (representing the divine vertical principle within him), however, lines up with the vertical beam, an emblem of unity and eternity.

The vertical axis signifies not only the divinity within, but also the "now" moment, as opposed to past/future, left/right, etc. The "now" moment is the only thing that's real, because it is spiritual. The past/future, left/right, etc. is not real, because it is physical and part of the "*maya*" or illusory physical realm.

Crucifix images with sun and moon appear frequently in Renaissance paintings, friezes, stone sculptures, and stained glass windows worldwide. They tell us this: By striking a balance between opposites Jesus (the man) was able to discover the eternal god or soul (the Christ) within himself.

With their emphasis on the vertical and thus spiritual principle, these Lurestan Bronzes are saying the same exact thing!

The Lurestan GodSelf Icon motif also seems to be pointing to another important principle of the occult—the *axis mundi* principle.

How?

Note how each single Lurestan Bronze GodSelf Icon is a kind of "pole" or "long vertical stick," as if the artist started with nothing but a long pole in front of him.



At the core or "source" of the GodSelf lcon motif on these Lurestan Bronzes is a kind of "pole" or vertical "axis" out of which everything in the design emerges.

The pole represents the axis mundi inside every human being, which basically symbolizes the "soul within" us—that still, centered part of us that remains silent and motionless while the rest of us (our bodies) spins around changing and moving in the field of time.

Think of the axis of a planet. The axis is the core, the center or source. Note how in these Lurestan GodSelf Icons, everything is "emerging" from the pole or axis—like a tree growing branches. This is the ancient symbolism expressed in all the "Cross" and "Tree of Life" diagrams created by the ancients.

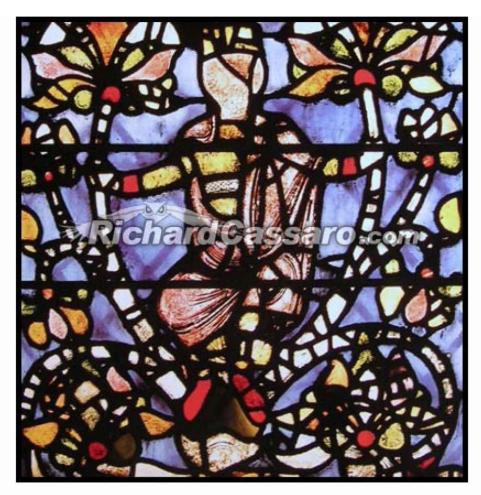
In a Christian motif titled the "Tree of Jesse," the twin branches symmetrically flanking the trunk of the tree symbolize duality. The trunk is formed by the vertical aspect of the human body. Esoterically, this portrait shows how our spinal column or the divine vertical principle within us is like a pole. It's our *axis mundi*, and from it our body (formed of duality) grows outward.



Left: "Tree of Jesse," symbolizing Jesus' descent from the house of David, illuminated page from Rabanus Maurus's De laudibus sanctae crucis from Anchin, mid-12th century; in the Municipal Library of Douai, France. Right: Lurestan Bronze, Iran, c. 2000 BC.

The "Tree of Jesse" was created nearly 3,000 years after the Lurestan Bronze GodSelf Icon on the right. The Tree of Jesse is described by scholars as being a depiction of the ancestors of Christ, shown in a tree which rises from Jesse of Bethlehem, the father of King David. This is said to be the first use of the family tree as a schematic representation of a genealogy.

There are several versions of the Tree of Jesse. This GodSelf Icon from York Minster is similar to one of twelve that adorn the Jesse Tree at Chartres Cathedral:



The fragment of a Jesse Tree window from York Minster, which is probably the oldest panel of stained glass in England, c. 1170.

Instead of a pole, some Lurestan Bronze GodSelf Icons use a giant circle to signify the eternal "soul within" us. The circle is a classic symbol of the eternal within us because, as described in Chapter Three, the circle has no beginning and no end. Note how in the following Lurestan Bronze GodSelf Icon motifs, there is a giant transparent circle at the center of each design. This similarity is shared by each GodSelf Icon:



Iran, Lurestan, bronze.



Iran, Lurestan, Lurestan bronzes, c. 1000-650 BC.



GodSelf Icon from Lurestan.



Exhibit of a Bronze Horse Cheekpiece, c. 700 BC, from Lurestan.

The circle, visible at the center of each portrait, could very well stand for the "soul within" each of us, which the GodSelf Icon himself or herself is seeking to find. This motif is saying that everything in existence starts from nothing, "0" (zero), the circle. It's from this source that everything emerges; and this source is within or inside us. The soul is the source of everything, and by striking the GodSelf Icon pose, we can find the soul within.

If indeed the circle symbolizes the soul, then these four artifacts are related to the last piece we'll look at from Lurestan—a bronze that depicts a GodSelf Icon with the Third Eye dot on the forehead. Note how large the forehead dot is, located above and between both eyes:



Openwork Pinhead, Lurestan Bronze, Iran c. 1000-650 BC.

ACHAEMENID

The Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC), founded by Cyrus the Great, was the first of the Persian empires to rule from the Balkans to North Africa and also Central Asia. Its territory spanned three continents from their seat of power in Persis (Persepolis). It was the largest empire of its day and the first truly "world empire."

Even though cylinder seals had by this time already been carved for over three thousand years, the form was by no means exhausted by the time of the Achaemenid kings. Some of the most exquisite cylinders were produced in the Achaemenid workshops, as we can see on the following designs:



Achaemenid stone-cylinder seal 6th–5th century BC, Iran.



Achaemenid stone-cylinder.



Achaemenid stone-cylinder.



Achaemenid stone-cylinder.



Achaemenid stone-cylinder.



Achaemenid stone-cylinder.

Here it is no longer the nude bearded hero of the Jiroft culture or Lurestan bronzes who dominates the animals, but the Achaemenid king himself, in a beautifully balanced yet artificial composition in which all elements are subservient to and a reflection of the king's majesty.

Take a closer look at this next design. It shows a familiar GodSelf Icon pose, perhaps an Achaemenid king. But notice something: Above the twin dualities are twin symbols that appear to be the sun and the moon!



Conoid stamp seal, 6th–5th century BC, Iran.

The caption below this piece reads as follows:

"King mastering two rearing lion-griffins, star and reversed crescent with sun-disc."

— Metropolitan Museum of Art

This is interesting: Are these twin symbols actually the sun and moon being depicted over the flanking dual animals?

Like the Rebis symbol, and like many esoteric Renaissance designs displayed in Chapter Three, which show the sun over the right hand and the moon over the left, this depiction shows what appears to be the sun and moon over the right and left sides of the duality. This is strong evidence of a link between the GodSelf Icons in modern times with the GodSelf Icons of the past.

In the GodSelf Icon below, the Achaemenid king strikes the GodSelf Icon pose with the so-called "sundisk"—which we saw in Chapter Four symbolizes the soul—depicted directly above him.



Modern impression on clay of Achaemenid cylinder seal, 5th. Century BC.

This figure is traditionally described as follows:

"A winged solar disc legitimizes the Persian king who subdues two rampant Mesopotamian lamassu figures."

—Wikipedia

The link here to Egypt is very clear and very direct insofar as the sundisk is an Egyptian symbol. Both the Egyptians and the Achaemenid kings used the solar disk symbol. Though the Egyptians used it first; it seems clear that both cultures used it for the very same reason—to symbolize the "soul within," that higher Self which is being "summoned" by the GodSelf pose.

In Chapter Four, we showed how the Aten or sundisk is a symbol of both the "soul within" and the Third Eye that sees the soul within. This Third Eye is visible on the Egyptian forehead (similar to the Hindu "forehead dot"); when awakened, it sees the soul within, which is itself.

It's interesting how we should now find this same symbol here aligned directly above an Achaemenid king who is striking the GodSelf pose. In a religious sense, as it would have been understood by the initiated ancient masses, this portrait is saying:

"He who balances the opposites within himself awakens his Third Eye and uses his Third Eye to see inward and find his inner Soul."

Note how the King's face is reflected in the faces of the twin lower selves of the king. This seems to be showing how the king has subdued his lower animal nature, his lower animal "halves," the twin sides that make up every human being. It's reminiscent of the crucified Jesus who is flanked on his left and right by twin crucified thieves, one good (penitent) and one bad (impenitent).

Another link to Egypt is the god Bes, as discussed in Chapter Four. Bes is often depicted by the Achaemenid dynasty in the GodSelf Icon position, as we see here:



Pendant with Egyptian god Bes subduing two goats. Gold, Achaemenid artwork.



Earring with Egyptian god Bes subduing two goats. Gold, Achaemenid artwork.

The Achaemenid Empire was succeeded by the Seleucid Empire, the Parthians and the Sassanians, who governed Iran for almost 1,000 years, and would put Iran once again among the leading powers in the world, only this time alongside her arch-rivals, the Roman Empire and its successor Byzantine Empire.

As we shall see in the next chapter, the Persian GodSelf Icon drew inspiration from and was clsely related to similar artifacts discovered in Mesopotamia ("land between two rivers"), the area often considered to be the "birthplace of civilization."



CHAPTER NINE GodSelf Icon in Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia ("between the rivers"), where writing, irrigation canals, the wheel and the plow were said to have been invented, was the home of several great civilizations whose names will be familiar to avid readers of the Bible. According to legend, the mythical Garden of Eden was located somewhere in this area, an area that now serves as the killing field for the Islamic State caliphate, whose soldiers have kept busy blowing up, smashing and obliterating the great ancient monuments of the Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian Empires on their rare days off from their preferred occupations of rape, terrorism and senseless brutality.

SUMER

The Epic of Gilgamesh, transcribed from an oral tradition in about 2100 BC, contains the earliest version of the Great Flood legend. A new page of this oldest of all classic works of literature, which tells the story of Gilgamesh's encounter with the beast-man Enkidu, was saved from the hands of Isis in 2011 and translated into modern languages just a few years ago.

Below are three Sumerian cylinder seals that may depict a god or hero *—perhaps Gilgamesh —*in the GodSelf Icon pose:



Sumerian seal (carved cylinder), early dynastic period (Third Millennium BC). A depiction of what scholars call the "Master or Mistress of Animals" theme.



Sumerian cylinder seal, early dynastic period (Third Millennium BC). A depiction of what scholars call the "Master or Mistress of Animals" theme.



Sumerian seal (Third Millennium BC).

As we can see here, the "master of animals" or "mistress of animals" theme was frequently used in Sumerian cylinder seals. These three particular examples share the same "motif"—i.e., *the same stylized details are visible in the details of each hero*. The hero is depicted in the center, facing forward from the torso up. He holds a bull in each hand. The bulls are depicted symmetrically, in "balanced" form. Six "rays of light" beam out from the hero's head. There appears to be a Third Eye "cavity" on the hero's forehead.

In ancient Sumer, as in many other ancient cultures, the "hero" story was associated with a "heroic feat" or "heroic feats," and in the case of Gilgamesh, one of the most important of these feats was his "Descent to the Underworld."

"I will proclaim to the world the deeds of Gilgamesh. This was the man to whom all things were known; this was the king who knew the countries of the world. He was wise, he saw mysteries and knew secret things, he brought us a tale of the days before the flood. He went on a long journey, was weary, worn-out with labor, returning he rested, he engraved on a stone the whole story."

—The Epic of Gilgamesh



Left: Gilgamesh in GodSelf pose, from roughly 2500 BC. Right: Chavin GodSelf Icon dates to roughly 1500 BC. Note the striking similarities, especially in the bent arms and serpents' heads.

This GodSelf Icon is very likely an early depiction of Gilgamesh, who because of his heroic "Descent to the Underworld" was accorded great knowledge, reverence, and illumination.

Note how in the following Godself Icon depicting Gilgamesh, which was painted onto a Sumerian harp instrument, the twin "lower selves" are identical to the higher Self in the middle:



GodSelf Icon in a panel from an inlaid harp from Ur, Mesopotamia, showing "Gilgamesh" holding two bull-men on either side.

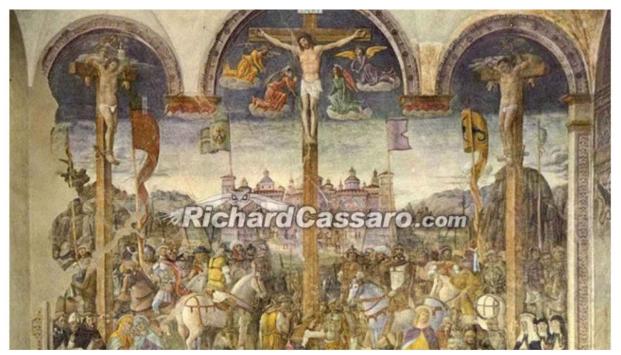
In Written in Stone, I explain how this image:

"...seems a clever way to depict the opposites. Our lower "animal" self (which is dual, with one good side and one bad) attempts to trick the centered soul into believing that it, and not the soul, is our true being, the true Gilgamesh. By embracing them both, Gilgamesh shows he's in charge of—or "master" of—himself. He is centered between the opposites, and he has a good grasp of both, like the apex of the triangle. His face is similar to the faces of his dual lower selves, because in the occult our lower physical self is said to mirror qualities of our eternal higher Self; also because it isn't always easy to distinguish the true Self within from the changing, physical self on the outside."

-Richard Cassaro, Written in Stone

We see the same concept played out in the scene shown below of Christ

's crucifixion, where twin crucifixes flank Christ's "third" crucifix in the middle. All three together form a Triptych with Christ in the middle, and the two thieves on either end. The "twin thieves" form a perfect symmetry and balance of opposites:



Giovanni Donato Montorfano´s Crucifixion.

This depiction of the crucifixion as a Triptych is quite common. The cross symbolizes the voluntary self-sacrifice of the man Jesus. Because of this chosen death, he was able to find his god within (his "Christ within").

The esoteric crucifix is often flanked by sun and moon, as we have seen. The two orbs around his hands mean Jesus willfully destroyed or crucified his lower dual self or ego—the good and evil halves—through the sacred science of the reconciliation of opposites.

It also means that each one of us must do the same if we are to find our eternal Christ within. This is *gnosis* or knowledge.

Had Christ not struck the balance, his ego would have stolen his soul by tricking the soul into believing that it (the darkness) and not He (the eternal soul or light) was the real and eternal essence behind the human being.

Jesus was crucified between two thieves at Calvary—a perfect Triptych

with Christ in the middle!

"Dying to our lower self," the message of the crucifix, is not a physical death, but a willful "self-destruction" of our "ego." The ego is half good and evil, the physical pair of opposites.

The sacrifice of the lower self allows the higher Self to gradually rise from its burial deep within us. In this way, we begin to act from our "center" or soul, which expands our consciousness by elevating it to be a function of our higher being.

This is the meaning of the mysterious "living resurrection" in Freemasonry. St. Paul said "I die daily" in I Corinthians 15:31. He understood dying to the duality of one's lower self allows regeneration or resurrection of the higher Self, the real Self. Jesus expressed this message in a parable:

"Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life shall lose it, and he who hates his life shall keep it unto life eternal."

— Jesus Christ, John 12:24

The Gilgamesh poem, like the Gospel, is profound in its symbolism and rich in meaning. Much of the tragedy in the poem arises from the conflict between the desires of the divine part of Gilgamesh (from his goddess mother) and the destiny of the mortal man (his mortality conferred on him by his human father).

The wild man Enkidu was created by the gods both as a friend and companion for Gilgamesh, but also as a foil or "balanced counterpart." Interestingly, Enkidu's progression from wild animal to civilized city man represents a kind of biblical "Fall" in reverse, and an allegory of the stages by which man reaches civilization.

"Western civilization originated from that place...where Gilgamesh was written – the oldest story in the world, a thousand years older than the Iliad or the Bible. Its hero was a historical king who reigned in the Mesopotamian city of Uruk in about 2750 BCE....

Part of the fascination of Gilgamesh is that, like any great work of literature, it has much to tell about ourselves. In giving voice to grief

and the fear of death, perhaps more powerfully than any book written after it, in portraying love and vulnerability and the quest for wisdom, it has become a personal testimony for millions of reader in dozens of languages.

...The epic has an extraordinarily sophisticated moral intelligence. In its emphasis on balance and in its refusal to side with either hero or monster, it leads us to question our dangerous certainties about good and evil."

-Stephen Mitchell, Gilgamesh

Ishtar, also known as Inanna, was the Sumerian goddess of love, fertility, sex and war. The mythical story of her "Descent into the Underworld," which is contained in the Babylonian creation myth Enuma Elish and the Epic of Gilgamesh, perhaps the world's oldest piece of literature, dating from as early as 2100 BC, echoes the story of Demeter and Proserpina in ancient Greek mythology.

The Descent to the Underworld is a universal theme found in a diverse number of religions across the globe. The hero or "Upper World Deity" (as scholars refer to him or her) journeys to the "Underworld" or "Land of the Dead" and returns, often with a quest-object or a loved one, or with heightened knowledge.

For our purposes, the Descent to the Underworld can be symbolically understood on two interrelated levels:

- THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL FROM ITS HEAVENLY HOME The "descent" of the soul from its heavenly home down to the present plane of earthly existence, followed by the soul's return home to heaven after the body's death.
- **THE DESCENT OF THE CONSCIOUS INTO THE UNCONSCIOUS** The descent of the *conscious* into the *unconscious* for the purpose of assimilation (i.e., putting the opposites in balance by reconciling the *conscious* and *unconscious*).

In the first sense, the Descent to the Underworld is nothing short of a description, in mythological terms, of the eternal soul's manifestation onto the material plane and its picking up an earthly body—but only for a season, before the soul returns to its heavenly home.

The soul is, in fact, a god, the "Upper World Deity" descending down into the Underworld or Land of the Dead; death and "Land of the Dead" is a perfect and very ancient and worldwide definition of human existence. Man, limited by his five senses and bound by death, lives in the Land of the Dead. The Descent from Heaven, followed by the Return to Heaven, expresses the true nature of our inner godhood, and the immortality of the soul:

"The ability to enter the realm of the dead while still alive, and to return, is a proof of the classical hero's exceptional status as more than mortal. A deity who returns from the underworld demonstrates eschatological themes such as the cyclical nature of time and existence, or the defeat of death and the possibility of immortality."

— David Leeming, The Oxford Companion to World Mythology, 2005

In a related and intertwined sense, the Descent to the Underworld is also a description of the willful "descent" of the *conscious* into the *unconscious* . The goal of this descent is the sublimation of the dark forces of the unconscious in an effort to shed more light on the "whole" being.

The Descent to the Underworld story is no mere fable for children; its profound inner meaning recalls the ancient admonition of the Oracle at Delphi to "know thyself." This spiritual journey of self-discovery can best be understood by a myth relating the heroic feats of the goddess Inanna, Sumer's most prominent Goddess, and Gilgamesh's equal.

"To Gilgamesh's journey to the realm of the dead we may compare the descent-myth of the Sumerian goddess Inanna."

— John R. Maier , Gilgamesh

Her temple was in the city of Uruk, a major city in ancient Sumer and later Babylonia.

"According to the myth of Inanna's descent to the underworld... Inanna (Ishtar in the Akkadian texts) set off for the netherworld... which was ruled by her sister Ereshkigal...She passed through seven gates and at each one was required to leave a garment or an ornament so that when she had passed through the seventh gate she was a simple woman, entirely naked."

-Wikipedia

We can detect here a spiritual journey of initiation that's being described. Exactly what Inanna discovers about herself and about life itself as she makes her descent is not implicit in the texts. However, by the time she relinquishes her final garment, she has increased her power and understanding.

This step-by-step initiation or purification is reminiscent of a later Buddhist teaching called the Tathagatagarbha Sutra:

"The Tathagatagarbha Sutra is a short but extremely influential... Buddhist text...that introduced...the notion of the tathagatagarbha, the idea that all beings have latent within themselves all the virtues of a buddha (tathagata), but that those virtues are hidden by a covering (garbha) of passion and anguish (the so-called klesas of greed, anger, lust, confusion, and so on). The central message of the sutra is that when those klesas are removed, the buddhahood that is potential in all beings will be revealed."

-William H. Grosnick, Buddhism in Practice

Inanna's Descent to the Underworld thus seems to be a description of a transformation that must be undertaken on the part of the initiate, as part of his or her engagement in the Great Work:

"...the myth may be described as a union of Inanna with her own "dark side", her twin sister-self, Ereshkigal...It is in many ways a praise-poem dedicated to the more negative aspects of Inanna's domain, symbolic of an acceptance of the necessity of death to the continuance of life. It can also be interpreted as being about the psychological power of a descent into the unconscious, realizing one's own strength through an episode of seeming powerlessness, and/or an acceptance of one's own negative qualities, as is discussed by Joseph Campbell."

— Wikipedia

For these reasons, Inanna was often depicted in the form of the GodSelf Icon:



Inanna depicted in the GodSelf Icon pose, holding twin ibexes symmetrically and being flanked by twin ibexes, symmetrically. Ancient Sumer, 3rd millennium BC.

The following two images depict Inanna striking the GodSelf pose:



Inanna as "Mistress of Animals" holding twin snakes symmetrically, from Sumer, c. 3000 BC.



Inanna as "Mistress of Animals" holding twin lions symmetrically, from Sumer, c. 3000 BC.

The following is a Sumerian depiction of Inanna holding lotus flowers symmetrically in each hand. It was carved in ivory on the back of a chair:



Sumerian Inanna holding lotus flowers symmetrically in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In the chapter on ancient Egypt, we explained the Aten or Sundisk symbol as denoting both the "Third Eye" and the "soul within" that the awakened Third Eye sees. We also saw how a goddess image (perhaps lsis) was portrayed as a GodSelf Icon:



Below is another example of the Aten or Sundisk in Sumer linked to the GodSelf Icon pose, but this time instead of Inanna, it's a male deity, perhaps Gilgamesh:



AKKADIAN EMPIRE

To the north of the Sumerian city-states were the Akkadians, an ancient Semitic people. The Akkadian and Sumerian cultures were culturally quite interdependent, and the Akkadian Empire eventually subsumed Sumer under the leadership of Sargon of Akkad (2334–2279 BC), who also conquered the Levant and a portion of Iran.

Little information has been published about Akkadian religious beliefs, which are usually assumed to resemble closely those of the Sumerians.

One thing we know is that there was a great focus on the Akkadian sun god, Shamash. Like Ra in Egypt, Shamash's chief symbol was the Aten or Sundisk. Unlike Ra, however, the Akkadian sun god was depicted "emerging from" or "manifesting from" the Aten:



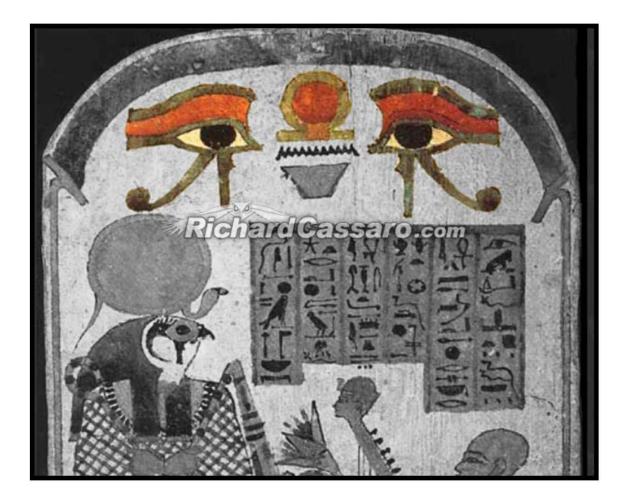
Sumerian Shamash appearing in the Aten.

"Now let us see what the conception of our divinity as a Sun-god in reality meant to the sages of old, and what it should mean to us. It meant that the divinity within us, our divine soul or Self, was itself the Sun-god, or solar deity. And what does this signify in concrete terms for us? Just this; that the god within us is constituted of the imperishable essence of solar light and energy! In short, we ourselves, in our higher nature, are solar gods...We are Sun-gods."

-Alvin Boyd Kuhn, The Great Myth of the Sun Gods

If Alvin Boyd Kuhn is correct, and the Aten is a symbol of the human soul, then the deity or god manifesting "from" the Aten in human form is likely a depiction of the human being born from the soul.

In Chapter Four, we saw that Egypt's Aten symbol often took the form of the Shen symbol of eternity when depicted as the Third Eye:



The Sumerian sun god Shamash was often depicted holding the Shen symbol of eternity in his hand. Rays of light also shine from Shamash and shine over the king, who had his divinity attributed to him this way.



Shamash holding the famous Egyptian "Shen" symbol of eternity.

References to Shamash can be found in the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh:

"When Gilgamesh and Enkidu travel to slay Humbaba, each morning they pray and make libation to Shamash in the direction of the rising Sun for safe travels. Gilgamesh receives dreams from Shamash, which Enkidu then interprets, and at their battle with Humbaba, it is Shamash's favor for Gilgamesh that enables them to defeat the monster. Shamash gifted to the hero Gilgamesh three weapons (the axe of mighty heroes, a great sword with a blade that weighs six score pounds and a hilt of thirty pounds and the bow of Anshan)."

— Wikipedia

The saga of Gilgamesh was as much a part of the Akkadian Empire story as it was a part of the Sumerian story. Akkadian depictions of Gilgamesh as the GodSelf Icon are numerous:



The seal of Gilgamesh, Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin.

The depiction of Gilgamesh as the GodSelf Icon shown above is one of the most famous, but it's not the only one. The following depictions of Gilgamesh striking the God Self Icon pose provide additional evidence about how interwoven the Akkadian and Sumerian cultures were:



Gilgamesh Motif cylinder seal impression, Akkadian period, c. 2,400 BC.



Gilgamesh Motif cylinder seal impression, Akkadian period, c. 2,400 BC.



Gilgamesh motif cylinder seal impression, Akkadian period, c. 2,400 BC.

As mentioned above, the Akkadian Goddess Ishtar is the Akkadian counterpart to the Sumerian Inanna.



In the image above, an unclothed, winged Ishtar stands holding the Shen symbol of eternity and the Third Eye in each hand. There is a lion on each side. The boxed inscription is in two horizontal registers; the top a linear cuneiform, but the bottom appears to be Egyptian hieroglyphics.



Burney Relief, Babylon (1800-1750 BC).



Akkadian seal of Ishtar riding lions, with snakes or lightning bolts in her hands, the *me* or attributes of power.

After the fall of the Akkadian Empire, the Akkadian people of Mesopotamia eventually coalesced into two major Akkadian-speaking nations: Assyria in the north and, within a few centuries, Babylonia in the south.

ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

Assyria existed as an independent city-state as early as 2600 BC, but like Sumeria and Akkadia, was conquered by Sargon the Great. The height of Assyrian power was reached during the Neo-Sumerian Empire phase in the 8th century BC; for a brief period, Assyria was more powerful than Egypt or Babylon.

Assyrian religion was in many respects quite similar to Egyptian religion. Ashur was the chief god and his main symbol was the Aten. We find myriad examples of the GodSelf Icon in Assyrian public art:



Bearded Hero with Daggers Between Two Ibexes Facing Tree. Cylinder seal and impression, Mesopotamia, Middle Assyrian period.



Cylinder Seal with a Hero Holding Two Beasts, 1000-612 BC.



Cylinder Seal with a Hero Holding Two Beasts, 1000-612 BC.



Cylinder Seal with a Hero Holding Two Beasts, 1000-612 BC.



Cylinder Seal with a Hero Holding Two Beasts, 1000-612 BC.



Cylinder Seal with a Hero Holding Two Beasts, 1000-612 BC.



Master of animals or Hero with two griffins on Assyrian cylinder seal, c. 700 BC



Cylinder seal showing male figure dominating human-headed winged lions. Neo-Assyrian, c. 8th–7th century BC.



Cylinder Seal with a Hero Holding Two Beasts, 1000-612 BC.



Cylinder Seal with a Hero Holding Two Beasts, 1000-612 BC.



Cylinder Seal with a Hero Holding Two Beasts, 1000-612 BC.



Mesopotamia Assyrian cylinder seal impression of Hero wrestling winged griffins.

In this next image, we see the Aten symbol depicted over the Hero:



Cylinder seal and impression from Mesopotamia, Middle Assyrian period, c. Fourteenth Century BC.

The image below is a strikingly beautiful depiction of a female GodSelf Icon. The Aten symbol—*denoting the awakened Third Eye that sees the soul within* — is depicted directly above her:



Horse frontlet with a nude goddess holding lotus flowers and lions, Mesopotamia, 9th - 8th century BC. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Throughout this chapter, we have seen numerous examples of the close connections among Mesopotamian and Egyptian religious practices. Despite the vast differences in the artistic expressions of ancient civilizations, the GodSelf Icon is a common denominator that allows us to understand the closely-correlated inner meaning of practices that appear widely disparate.

BABYLON

Babylon, a small Akkadian city that gained independent status in 1894 BC, became one of the leading cities of ancient Mesopotamia. Babylon was the largest city in the world in the 18th century BC; it is said to be the first city to exceed a population of 200,000.

Even for the most accomplished students of Mesopotamian art, neo-Assyrian and neo-Babylonian artifacts are virtually indistinguishable in technique and content. The GodSelf Icon is a constantly recurring figure in Babylonian art:



Marduk holds the waters of life in opposite hands.



Marduk slays the chaos dragon, Tiamat, in the Babylonian creation epic (British Museum, London).



Marduk slays the chaos dragon, Tiamat.



Neo-Babylonian Stone-Cylinder Seals, c. 8th–7th century BC.



Neo-Babylonian Stone-Cylinder Seals, c. 8th–7th century BC.



Hero Grasping Two Male Sphinxes. Cylinder seal and impression. Mesopotamia, Neo-Babylonian period (c. 1000–539 BC).



Neo-Babylonian Stone-Cylinder Seals, c. 8th–7th century BC.



Neo-Babylonian Stone-Cylinder Seals, c. 8th–7th century BC.



Neo-Babylonian Stone-Cylinder Seals, c. 8th–7th century BC.



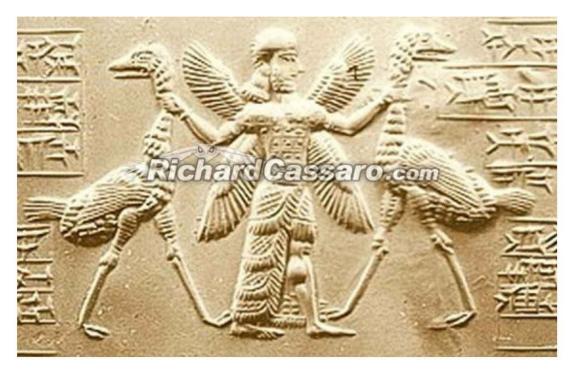
Neo-Babylonian Cylinder Seals, c. 8th–7th century BC.



Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian Cylinder Seal, c. 8th–7th century BC.



Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian Cylinder Seal, c. 8th–7th century BC.



Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian Cylinder Seal, c. 8th–7th century BC.



Lamashtu was a Mesopotamian female demon who was on terms of bitter enmity with all the other gods. She was blamed when women had trouble during childbirth. Despite her reputation for ferocity, she too was usually represented in the form of a GodSelf Icon:



Assyrian Dark Diorite Lamashtu plaque.



Lamashtu plaque.



Lamashtu amulet.



Lamashtu plaque.



Lamashtu plaque.



Lamashtu amulet with incomplete cuneiform inscription; representation of the demon Lamashtu standing on an ass suckling jackal and wild pig. Neo-Assyrian 800 BC-550 BC.

MITANNI KINGDOM

The GodSelf Icon is a prominent feature of art produced during the Mitanni Kingdom period (1500 BC-1300 BC). The Mitanni represent a virtually forgotten Hurrian-speaking empire that had first competed with and then allied with Egypt. Their cultural influence was transmitted to the Hittites, who were their biggest enemies during long periods of their dominance in a region that roughly corresponds with Northern Syria and Southern Anatolia. For all their linguistic and political differences with their Semitic neighbors, an examination of the images below makes it apparent that their symbolic vocabulary closely parallels that of other Near East cultures:





Drawing and seal impression of seal of Saustattar, son of Parsatattar, King of Mitanni, c. 1420 BC.





SYRIAN

Syria was part of the Fertile Crescent, where agriculture, writing and cattle breeding first originated; politically, the region we know as Syria today was integrated into the great empires described earlier in this chapter. The Syrian region reached its highest influence during the period of Neo-Assyrian ascendance.

Archaeologists have discovered human-made tools and religious relics in Syria that go back as far as 10,000 BC. There are numerous examples of the GodSelf Icon among the ancient Syrian treasures preserved in the world's great collections.





Minet el-Beida, N. Syrian coast, c. 1300 BC.



Uluburun shipwreck, c. 1318 BC.



Tell ed-Duweir (Lachish), Palestine.



Beth Shemesh, Palestine.



Worshiper holding hare. Cylinder seal and impression Syria (c. 1720–1650 BC).



Winged goddess from Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana) in modern northeast Syria, c. 10th-9th century BC.



Syria, Seventh Century BC.

Above is a bronze artifact depicting naked female figurines, believed to be from Syria in about the 7th century BC. It combines elements of the GodSelf Icon, the Triptych, the Third Eye and the Aten in a way that unmistakably points to the centrality of these ideas in the territory of ancient Mesopotamia.

Below, you will find images from three other major civilizations in the region that also employ the GodSelf Icon to similar ends.

CANAANITE

The term "Canaanite" refers to settlers living in an Egyptian colony in the Near East. The Canaanites are mentioned a great deal in the Bible as a Semitic-speaking people whom the Israelites claim to have destroyed; later, it has been claimed, they became known by the Greeks as Phoenicians. The Canaanites were a distinctly minor civilization compared to the others discussed above; nevertheless, given the fact that they were mentioned so much in the Bible, it is important to recognize that the GodSelf Icon was a vital ingredient of their religious symbolic vocabulary:



Gold plaque depicting a naked goddess on a horse, probably Astarte or Anat Lachish. Late Canaanite period, 13th Century BC.



Figurine plaque, 14th–13th century BC.



Figurine plaque of a naked goddess, used in household rituals. Tel Batash. Late Canaanite period, 14th–13th century BC.



Detail from The Taanach cult stand, Israel.



Asherah, Canaanite goddess of fertility.



Ashtarte, Semitic Goddess of love.



Canaanite deity in GodSelf pose.



Canaanite deity, Asherah.



Canaanite deity atop a lion.



Qetesh relief plaque (Triple Goddess Stone).

HITITTE KINGDOM

The Hittites represented the first great empire in the land of present-day Turkey. The Hittite Empire was established around 1600 BC; it splintered apart a little more than four centuries later. They were a formidable fighting force: they are best known for introducing the chariot as a vehicle of war. Monumental Hittite sculptures present impressive variations on the GodSelf Icon:



Hittite bird-man with lions on either side.



Hittite "Master of Animals."

ANATOLIA

Anatolia is an umbrella term for the civilizations of Asia Minor, of which the Hittites were one of the most prominent examples. Below are two images of non-Hittite Anatolian depictions of the GodSelf Icon:



Ivory Horse Frontlet. Late 9th Century BC. Gordion, Turkey (Anatolia).



Arimaspian or a winged-deity holding griffins by their horns, St Petersburg's Hermitage Museum.

The style of the Anatolian sculpture above seems to be a cross between Persian and Babylonian, with a Greco-Roman acanthus-leaf skirt.

PHOENICIANS

The Phoenicians were the same people as the Canaanites, but seen in reference to the Greeks. The Phoenicians introduced the galley ship, and were a mighty trading force. Their name comes from the purple dyes they supplied to the Greeks. Phoenicia was situated on the western, coastal part of the Fertile Crescent and centered on the coastline of what is now Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria. It was a sea-based civilization that spread across the Mediterranean from 1500 BC to 300 BC. The primitive GodSelf Icons we saw in the section on "Canaanites" gave way to much more elaborate and complex forms that express exactly the same message as the art of their ancestors.





Phoenician GodSelf Icons.

Although the peoples of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East were known by many names and were further splintered into a myriad of rival tribes and sub-tribes, all these peoples seemed to share the common heritage of the GodSelf Icon. This cannot be an accident.



CHAPTER TEN GodSelf Icon in Greece

Athens in the 5th century BC witnessed a flowering of civilization unlike anything before or since. The Greeks established the basic principles of disciplines such as history, drama, music, philosophy, and politics. Among the intellectural and physical monuments they left us are the Parthenon, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the Pythagorean theorem, and tremendous works of sculpture that bring the ancient world to life. The pantheon of Greek achievement includes an incredible roster of towering names: Demosthenes, Thucydides, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Praxiteles, Sappho and Alexander the Great.

Greece is perhaps most famous for being home to many of the greatest philosophers of Antiquity, and one of the most interesting tenets held by many of these philosophers was the idea that a human being, deep down at his or her core and center within, is composed of a divine and eternal soul (which is spiritual) and that this soul is something distinct from the physical human body (which is material). In his 2014 book, *Philosophy of Religion and Religious Ethics*, published by Oxford University Press, Dr. Robert Bowie explained how Plato, Greece's most influential thinker, looked upon the soul:

"Plato believed the soul existed before the body...After death, the soul leavest the body and lives on in a cycle of life and death and life. The soul is...incorruptible and eternal. The philosopher's soul lives on after the body, immortal and in a state of bliss and wisdom. The souls of those focused on bodily demands are reborn as lower creatures. Plato held that the true philosopher should strive to free

herself or himself from physical slavery. The mind must be separated from the body and the distortions of pain and pleasure that come from it."

Greek myth, history and religion are intertwined, together encompassing such a broad topic that it's impossible to cover even the highlights in the short space of this chapter. Rather, we seek to provide here a very basic overview, showing how an advanced ancient religion that was focused on *"finding the soul in the center by uniting opposites"* was strongly linked to the GodSelf Icon image that is visible in the oldest layers of ancient Greece.

DEMETER

One of the most powerful and meaningful GodSelf Icon images ever created is that of the ancient Greek goddess Demeter:



Demeter Relief (440 BC), Goddess of Harvest. Bas relief of Demeter rising from the ground with sheaves of wheat and poppies, Roman, Augustan period. The association of the poppy with the goddesses Demeter and Persephone was widespread throughout ancient Greece.

Demeter, the goddess of the harvest, was strongly linked both to motherhood and to the fertility of the earth. She presided also over the sacred law, and over the cycle of life and death. The loss of her daughter Persephone to the underworld instilled such grief in Demeter that earth whithered away without her attention. This myth was the foundation of the ancient Eleusinian Mysteries that were conducted in Greece for more than 2,000 years.

The Eleusinian Mysteries predate the Olympian pantheon, giving us some idea of the vast antiquity not only of the story, but also of the GodSelf Icon pose that Demeter strikes in the ancient representation shown above. This may indicate that the Universal Triptych Religion was the egg from which the Olympian gods hatched.

The Eleusinian Mysteries have been described as the "most famous of the secret religious rites of ancient Greece." The rituals of the Eleusinian Mysteries, which were held in and near the Greek city of Eleusis (a day's walk from Athens), were based on Demeter and her daughter Persephone, who was called "Kore" ("maiden"). These rituals culminated in mystical initiation. The ceremonies and beliefs were kept secret and consistently preserved from remotest antiquity.

Despite the fact that the Eleusinian Mysteries flourished for thousands of years and attracted initiates from across the Hellenistic world, very few details are known because of this secrecy. As noted above, the Mysteries are based on a story about the abduction of Persephone from her mother Demeter by the king of the underworld, Hades. The story contains three dinstinct phases—the "descent" (death), the "search"

(seeking/awakening) and the "ascent" (resurrection), with the main theme being the "ascent" of Persephone and the reunion with her mother.

As the story goes, Persphone strayed one day from her home in Arcadia (heaven) while picking flowers in the fresh, green fields. Suddenly, the beautiful young Persephone "fell" into the Underworld; Hades below had made the ground open to swallow the fair maiden. Overcome with sorrow, Demeter searched for her missing daughter ceaselessly, preoccupied with her loss and her grief. The seasons halted; living things ceased their growth, then began to die. When she finally discovered the terrible fate that had befallen Persephone, a desperate Demeter pleaded with the Supreme God, Zeus, to free her. Zeus concluded that if Persephone had not eaten of the fruit of the lower world, she could return to Arcadia. But if she had, she would have to live a third of each year in the Underworld with Hades. Persephone had indeed eaten a pomegranate while in the Underworld, condemning her to return below for a fraction of each year. Persephone's time spent in the underworld is thus linked to the unfruitful seasons of the ancient Greek calendar, and her return to the upper world with springtime.

A Jungian interpretation of this myth describes how initiates may have witnessed a "ritual drama" or may have even participated in a reenactment of Demeter's search for Persephone after her abduction by Hades. The drama may have been drawn from the story as it was told in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* or the Orphic hymns.

Some believe that during the Mysteries, to amplify the drama, initiates consumed a ritual drink called *kykeon* (which may have contained a hallucinogen), triggering the intense experiences alluded to by the participants at Eleusis. Extraordinary experiences, trance or ecstatic states, were likely achieved through a combination of kykeon mixed with other spiritual practices like fasting, dancing, meditation, etc.

To interpret this myth correctly, it's necessary first and foremost to understand that the myth does not describe anyone or anything external to you. The myth is all about you. It simultaneously describes the dichotomy of your immortal spiritual condition and your mortal human condition. Demeter symbolizes your soul while Persephone symbolizes your body. Demeter, your soul, is eternal, powerful, wise and divine. Persephone, your body (who is the offspring or "child" of Demeter just as much as your body is the offspring or "child" of your soul), is naïve, unwise, playful and blissfully ignorant; as such, Persephone is subjected to, and indeed becomes a victim of, the pull and passions of material earthly existence.

As evidence of this Demeter/Soul vs. Persephone/Body interpretation, the myth clearly compares and contrasts the higher world of heaven *where Demeter resides* with the "underworld" or lower world of earth, *where Persephone eventually resides.*

The myth teaches that we've fallen from Heaven down to the Underworld (earth), just like Persephone. We have eaten—and we continue to eat—the fruit of this lower world, with its myriad seeds. When we die, we are called from labor to refreshment, leaving this place and ascending back to the source. But, having eaten of the fruit, the soul will necessarily gravitate back down again because, in the words of Socrates, *"it is always full of body when it departs, so that it soon falls back into another body and grows with it as if it had been sewn into it."* This is the cycle of reincarnation, a central teaching of the Mysteries. It is an almost endless cycle that will continue until, after learning "the lessons of material/earthly life" we cease to identify with the material bodies we acquire during incarnation and begin to find our true inner Self—the soul.

The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates says that the key "lesson of material/earthly life" is to recognize that earthly existence is made up of "pairs of opposites," which imprison the soul in the body by preventing it from knowing itself. To elucidate this idea, Socrates uses a certain "pair" of opposites, namely, "pleasure" and "pain":

"...every <u>pleasure</u> and every <u>pain</u> provides, as it were, another nail to rivet the soul to the body and to weld them together. It makes the soul corporeal, so that it believes that truth is what the body says it is. As it shares the beliefs and delights of the body, I think it inevitably comes to share its ways and manner of life and is unable to reach...a pure state; it is always full of body when it departs, so that it soon falls back to another body and grows with it as if it had been sewn into it. Because of this, it can have no part in the company of the divine, the pure and uniform."

— Plato , Phaedo

The duality of the world and human existence is taught in Hinduism using the same "pairs of opposites"—*pleasure* & *pain* —incorporated by the ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates. The *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads* are filled with descriptions of these two chief contraries. A passage from the *Upanishads* reads:

"It is true that the body is mortal, that it is under the power of death; but it is also the dwelling of Atman, the Spirit of immortal life. The body, the house of the Spirit, is under the power of <u>pleasure</u> and <u>pain</u> and if a man is ruled by his body then this man can never be free."

Another passage from the Bhagavad Gita says:

"...he who is above the two contraries soon finds his freedom.... When <u>pleasure</u> comes he is not shaken, and when <u>pain</u> comes he trembles not...For the pleasures that come from the world bear in them sorrows to come. They come and they go, they are transient: not in them do the wise find joy."

In Freemasonry, this fall of the soul and imprisonment in the body is symbolized by the chains and pomegranates carved into the Jachin & Boaz pillars, which symbolize the duality of material existence. The chains are a warning for us to take heed that, though we think we are free, we are really chained to the animal body and this lower world of opposites. Pursuing one, we also "catch" the other. Pomegranates, containing many seeds, represent the multiplicity of our material desires (as well as their negative opposites) that brought us down here in the first place. The word pomegranate comes from the French words "pomme" and "grenate," meaning "apple with many seeds." Remember, it was precisely the forbidden apple or pomegranate of Eden that caused man's fall!

The Masonic author Albert Pike equated the myth with Freemasonry:

"As you learned in the 24th Degree, my Brother, the ancient Philosophers regarded the soul of man as having had its origin in Heaven. That was...a settled opinion among them all; and they held it to be the only true wisdom, for the soul, while united with the body, to look ever toward its source, and strive to return to the place whence it came. Among the fixed stars it dwelt, until, seduced by the desire of animating a body, it descended to be imprisoned in matter. Thenceforward it has no other resource than recollection, and is ever attracted toward its birth-place and home. The means of return are to be sought for in itself. To re-ascend to its source, it must do and suffer in the body.

— Albert Pike, Morals and Dogma (1872)

As we saw in an earlier chapter, the concept of "opposites in balance" is a central teaching of many of the most famous ancient Greek philosophers:

"What we call pleasure, and rightly so, is the absence of all pain."

—Cicero , De Finibus bonorum et malorum ("On the ends of good and evil")

By depicting Demeter as "holding" or "mastering the twin sides, we are seeing the ancient Socratic teaching of the "mastery" of the opposites (pleasure and pain) come to life. The myth teaches us to make a distinction between the higher *spiritual* Self, symbolized by Demeter, and the lower *animal* self, symbolized by Persephone.

The Eleusinian Mysteries, then, are designed to teach the initiate how to realize his own divinity and inner godhood; for what better sign of

godhood could there be than a human being in whom his own godhood has been realized, or what better guide to his own perfection could there be than a human who has realized his own perfection.

Describing the Eleusinan Mysteries, the Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-143 BC) explains:

"For among the many excellent and indeed divine institutions which your Athens has brought forth and contributed to human life, none, in my opinion, is better than those mysteries. For by their means we have been brought out of our barbarous and savage mode of life and educated and refined to a state of civilization; and as the rites are called "initiations," so in very truth we have learned from them the beginnings of life, and have gained the power not only to live happily, but also to die with a better hope."

— Cicero , Laws II

The concept of Demeter holding twin symmetrical pillars or columns or snakes in each hand is echoed in yet another ancient Greek motif, that of the goddess Hecate.

HECATE

In fact, according to the Eleusinian Mysteries, Demeter and Hecate are directly related to each other, as is apparent from the following GodSelf Icon image of Hecate:



Hecate holding twin torches.

In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, Hecate assists in the search for Persephone and later becomes Persephone's underworld attendant.

"According to the personal mythology of Robert Graves, Persephone is not only the younger self of Demeter, she is in turn also one of three guises of the Triple Goddess – Kore (the youngest, the maiden, signifying green young grain), Persephone (in the middle, the nymph, signifying the ripe grain waiting to be harvested), and Hecate (the eldest of the three, the crone, the harvested grain), which to a certain extent reduces the name and role of Demeter to that of group name. Before her abduction, she is called Kore; and once taken she becomes Persephone ('she who brings destruction')."

— Donnell Lefort, The Esoteric Codex

Many believe that together the three goddesses Demeter, Persephone and Hecate represent the "three phases of woman" as maiden, mother and crone. "...Hecate plays...a crucial role in the Demeter story...she witnessed the abduction of Persephone and was able to act as mediator when Demeter tried to negotiate with Zeus to rescue her daughter. Thus, she has the function of bringing together lost parts of the self...Hecate can be seen as presiding over Persephone's initiation and descent into her unconscious, accompanying her return and spiritual integration. In Hecate we have the completion of the trinity: the Crone is united with Maiden and Mother, the three faces...come together."

— Judy Hall, The Hades Moon

In Athenian society, Hecate was invoked as protector of the household against evil spirits or as guide through difficult transitions such as childbirth and death. Praying to Hecate could also promote household prosperity. Hecate is typically represented as a Goddess who guards doorways and at crossroads and guides people through change.

Hecate is depicted as the guardian of the doorway to the sanctuary on a Greek vase found at Eleusis, and shown carrying torches in a sculpture just outside the sanctuary. This may be evidence that Hecate acted as spiritual guide for the Initiates in the Mysteries.



Persephone ascending from the Underworld. Hermes, wearing a headdress, stands beside the spot where she emerges, while Hecate carries two torches to escort her to Demeter, waiting on the far right.

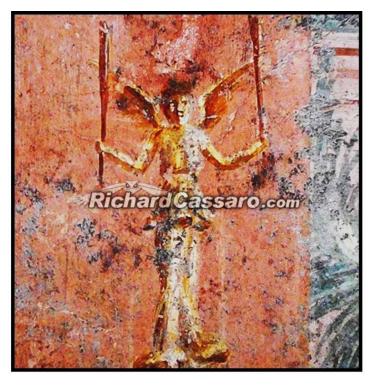
In classical sculpture, Hecate was depicted in one of two ways: either as a woman holding twin torches; or as three women standing back to back and facing in three directions. According to Pausanias, Alkamenes was the first sculptor to portray her in this so-called Triformis style. There is a good example of a *Hecate Trimorphis* in the Vatican Museum and also one in Antiquities Museum of Leiden.

Images of Hecate commonly depict her holding twin flaming torches in each hand in the GodSelf Icon pose:



Greek marble stele depicting Hecate holding twin torches. Eastern Mediterranean, c. 4th-1st century BC.

This marble slab is carved with the figure of Hecate, goddess of the night, dressed in long robes standing within her temple entrance flanked by low walls. She stands facing forward, holding flaming torches in each hand. Similar depictions of Hecate striking the GodSelf Icon pose can be seen across Greece:



Hecate holding twin torches symmetrically to the left and right.

Incredibly, more images of Hecate depict her not only holding twin staffs in each hand, but in Triptych "three-fold" form!



Three-headed Hecate with torches.

"Hecate is a goddess in Greek religion and mythology, most often shown holding two torches or a key and in later periods depicted in triple form."

—Charles M. Edwards, *The Running Maiden from Eleusis and the Early Classical Image of Hekate*

Various paintings and pottery pieces, some of which include images of Hecate, depict key aspects of the Mysteries, which consisted of a series of initiations held annually for the cult of Demeter and Persephone.



Goddess Hecate depicted in triple-form on a magical plate, from ancient city of Pergamon, in Anatolia, Berlin Museum.

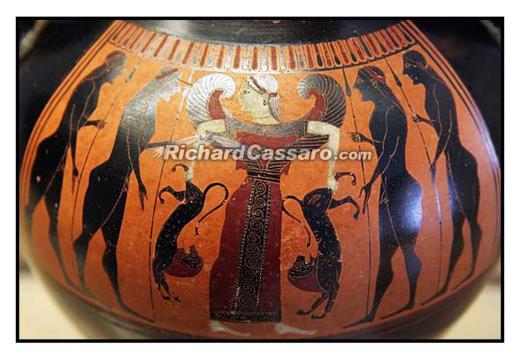


Taken in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Goddess Hecate with wings holding twin animals in each hand.

Besides the GodSelf images we can identify as Persephone or Hecate, there are many more generic "mother goddess" images that appear in very ancient Greek pottery. These images are known under the name of *Potnia Theron* ("Mistress of Animals"). This term, which comes from Homer, is generally believed to refer to Artemis, the Greek goddess of the hunt, but it should be evident by now that the image is essentially the same as other GodSelf Icons we have explored in this book.



Artemis as Potnia Theron. Image of a Greek vase from the Antiquity Museum in Basel.

It will not escape the notice of the careful reader that the story of Persephone and Demeter bears a striking resemblance in many of its particulars to Sumerian accounts of Ishtar's (aka "Inanna") descent into the Underworld, as described in the Gilgamesh epic, which dates back to at least 2,100 BC.

MINOANS

We also see the GodSelf Icon in one of the earliest civilizations to appear around Greece, the Minoan civilization in Crete, which scholars say lasted from about 2700 BC (Early Minoan) to 1450 BC, a period whose beginning overlaps with the Early Helladic period on the Greek mainland (c. 2800 BC to 2100 BC). American writer, historian and philosopher Will Durant referred to Minos as "the first link in the European chain."

The Minoans were a seafaring people famous for their wealth, which was a natural result of their centrality in ancient trade routes. Prominent supporters of the Atlantis theory have suggested that Minos was at the heart of the Atlantis legend. Part of the evidence for such a controversial claim is the extraordinary complexity and craftsmanship of ancient artifacts discovered on Crete.

The most famous legend of Crete is that of Theseus and the Minotaur, a mythical creature with the head of a bull and the body of a man which describes how the hero Theseus escaped from the Minotaur's labyrinth by cunning and courage. Theseus could be said to represent the soul or higher Self in this drama, while the image of a bull is commonly used in ancient mythologies to symbolize the lower or instinctive self.

Fertility symbols based on the GodSelf pose are quite common in Crete, as might be expected from a culture in which the idea of "balancing opposites to find the center" is apparently at the very root of their belief system.



Aigina Treasure showing gold pendant with Cretan "nature god."

The figure shown on this pendant wears a Minoan kilt, a tall head-dress, bracelets and earrings. He stands in the attitude of the 'Master of Animals', in which a central figure flanked by animals demonstrates control over them. The elements surrounding the birds derive from stylized bull's horns. Egyptian influence is seen in the lotus flowers among which he stands, and also in the five circumpunct (circled dot) symbols hanging from the piece.



Minoan cylinder seal showing a Mistress of Animals between lions/griffins, c. 14th century BC.

Sometimes the GodSelf Icon takes the form of the goddess Ariadne. As told in Greek mythology, Ariadne was the daughter of King Minos. She is quite often associated with labyrinths and mazes due to her involvement in the myths of the Minotaur and Theseus. Her father put her in charge of the labyrinth and, turning her back on him, she helped Theseus conquer the Minotaur and save the would-be sacrificial victims.

Ariadne (often called "keeper of the labyrinth" or mistress of the labyrinth) is often depicted in the GodSelf Icon pose, holding twin snakes. As a goddess of fertility, Ariadne was often connected to Ishtar (Astarte):



Ariadne with snakes.



Ariadne as fertility goddess.



Minoan image of Ariadne as Mistress of Animals.

One of the most important attempts to compile and categorize Minoan artifacts is the Corpus of Minoan and Mycenaean Seals (CMS), a project that has been in print since its establishment in 1958. The following images and descriptions have been extracted from the scholarly paper: *"The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography*," edited by Derek B. Counts and Bettina Arnold. There are eight Aegean Masters known from the seals, and each is named for the animals he subdues. The attendant animals are two fantastic creatures, the genius and the griffin; three wild animals, a lion, an agrimi (Cretan ibex, a kind of feral goat), and a stag; two domesticated animals, the bull and the hound; and the dolphin from the sea. These Master roles are seen in the paradigm types (Figs 2–9):

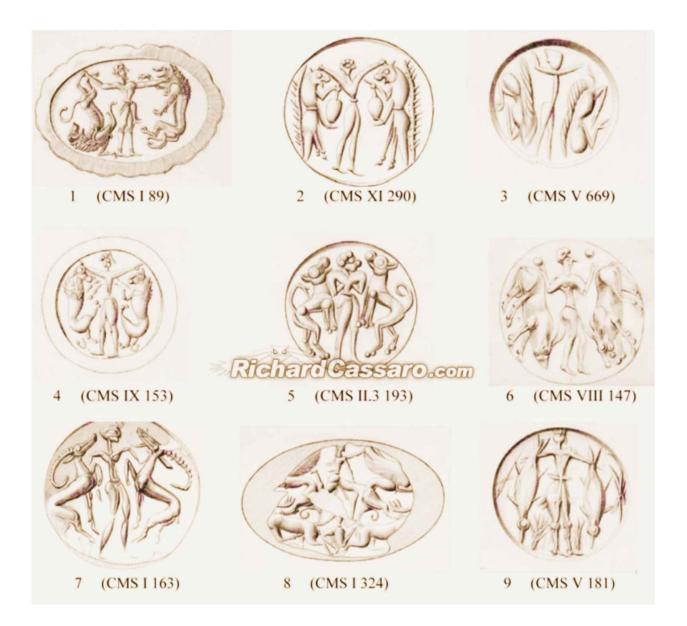


Fig. 1. Master of Animals . In this Aegean paradigm of the Master of Animals, the full spirit of the Master is on display as he grapples with wild animals and effortlessly subdues them. The antithetical group motif organizes the design content of the human and two animals. The human figure is depicted in the Aegean combination pose, head in profile with the upper torso frontal and swiveled at the waist to render the lower torso in profile, the regular pose for Master figures. He is depicted as a muscled man clothed in belt and kilt and so full of power that he holds both lions clear off the ground, one by the neck, the other inverted and suspended by a hind foot.

Fig. 2. Genius Master. In this example the Master is dressed in minimal Minoan clothing, indicated by the cinch belt, has a rounded coiffure (as does the Hound Master in Fig. 5), and shows his control over the attendant genius figures by grasping one of their ears. The geniuses are shown in their characteristic upright pose holding a vessel of particular shape, the Minoan ewer.

Fig. 3. Griffin Master . A rather more sketchily delineated Master here controls his attendant griffins by holding out his arms over them. They are couchant along the perimeter groundline, with wings barely elevated, one griffin being addorsed.

Fig. 4. Lion Master. The Master here, again wearing only the belt, holds each lion by an ear, suspending them clear of the ground as they raise three of their four paws to him.

Fig. 5. Hound Master . The Master stands hands to chest as in Fig. 15, and the hounds pose rampant facing him.

Fig. 6. Bull Master. The Master holds a "ball" in each raised hand while the bulls stand on the perimeter groundline.

Fig. 7. Agrimi Master . The two agrimia stand rampant facing the Master who holds them at the neck.

Fig. 8. Stag Master. The Stag Master below is in running pose while the stags are statant addorsed.

Fig. 9. Dolphin Master . In this rare example the Master stands with arms outstretched, holding in each hand a dolphin, diving down. Plants or seaweed are seen in the surround.

Unfortunately, scholars are not able to decipher this symbolism:

"Aegean art does not place textual comment alongside images, as is the case with the arts of the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and later Greek traditions. Where one might have expected that the art of a sophisticated palatial society from Middle Minoan times onward would tell us the meaning of its artistic symbolism, it is, in that sense, mute. We are in the same situation with the study of the Aegean Master of Animals as with so many other Master figures in prehistory (see, e.g., KENOYER, this volume), making iconographic

analysis one of our main avenues of enquiry."

—Derek B. Counts and Bettina Arnold, *The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography*

For Counts and Arnold, as for most scholars who have studied these images, decades of research leads mainly to puzzlement and frustration regarding their meaning:

"It is a pity that the absence of textual gloss prevents us from calling the Master by his Aegean name, or elaborating on just what is the nature of his control over the animal world or the full significance of the parallels with Mistresses and Lords. We must also recognize that the analysis of these images, particularly those on the seals, is still in the early stages of probing the meaning of this sophisticated polyvalent iconography. However, the images themselves declare that the Master of Animals has found a home in the Bronze Age Aegean and that he has taken on a distinctly Aegean persona."

—Derek B. Counts and Bettina Arnold, The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography

It's only by decoding the iconography and symbolism surrounding the Master of Animals figures that we can begin to understand some of the meaning imbued into them. For example, the bee was an emblem of Potnia, the Minoan-Mycenaean "Mistress", also referred to as "The Pure Mother Bee." Note the powerful symbolism shown here:



Note how carefully right and left side symmetry is maintained. In this image, there are three elements, wings, hands and flowers, on each side. The human element of hands is placed midway between the divine element of wings and the natural element of flowers. The concept of the bee was linked to the soul in ancient Greece, and especially in the Orphic Mystery teachings:

"In Orphic teaching, souls were symbolized by bees, not only because of the association with honey but also because they migrate from the hive in swarms, since it was held that souls 'swarm' from the divine unity in a similar manner...In the Indo-Aryan and Moslem traditions they have the same purely spiritual significance as in Orphic teaching."

-J.E. Cirlot, Dictionary of Symbols

MYCENEANS

The Mycenaean civilization, which flourished in the late Bronze Age, from the 15th to the 13th century BC, was greatly influenced by the advanced Minoan civilization that came before them. The Mycenaeans are often regarded as "the first Greeks," insofar as they were the first people to speak the Greek language. The Mycenaeans flourished during the time of the Trojan War, made famous in Homer's epics.



Mycenaean fresco fragment depicting GodSelf Icon, c. 14th century, BC.

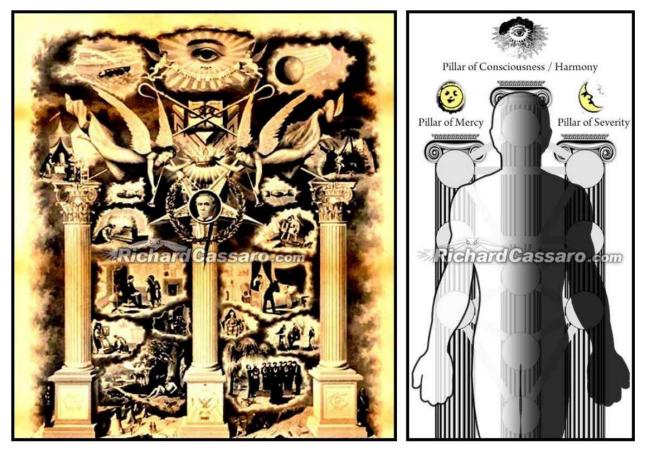
The Mycenaeans were a bit more of a warlike people than their predecessors—scholars tell us—hinting at a slight "digression" in culture, spirituality, and civility that we'd expect to see as a result of a "fall" from the high Golden Age thousands of years prior.

However, the Mycenaeans were still tremendously advanced compared to cultures that followed them. We can see this sophistication in their megalithic architecture and GodSelf Icon motifs. The famous Lion Gate (c. 13th century BC) forms the main entrance to the citadel of Mycenae:



Lion Gate, Mycenae, 13th century BC.

We earlier described the "twin lions" flanking temples as symbolic of the "pairs of opposites." This stone hewn imagery reinforces this belief. The central column or pillar that the opposing lions are flanking symbolizes the soul. In the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, it's called the Pillar of Balance, which is flanked by the twin pillars of Mercy and Severity. In Masonry, the three pillars are also popular. The twin outer pillars are capped by the sun and moon, while the middle pillar is capped by the Third Eye (i.e. Masonic "all seeing eye"):



Left: The Three Pillars of Wisdom from an Oddfellows certificate. Right: The Three Pillars as depicted in the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.

While the images above are considerably more complex than the simple GodSelf Icons we have seen throughout this chapter, there is no denying the family resemblance between Masonic symbolism and the GodSelf Icons of ancient Greece.

<u>CYPRUS</u>

Cyprus was colonized by the Mycenaeans, and culturally has a great deal in common with them. It was later settled by the Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, and Romans. There is some megalithic architecture still left on the island, and even some Minoan artifacts and remnants as well. The following GodSelf Icon is an example:



Cylinder seal: Master of Animals between lions, griffins, Minoan, c. 14th century BC, Cyprus.

Evidence of the Egyptian presence on Cyprus is also evident in the following vase, which depicts the god Heh, who was described in Chapter Four:



<u>SPARTA</u>

Sparta, a culture of ancient Greece that was heavily focused on military discipline and loyalty to the state, was the great rival of Athens. Sparta reached the height of its power after defeating Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC).

We begin to see a distinct Spartan culture beginning in about 650 BC. GodSelf Icons continue to be a major feature of Spartan civilization, which likely adopted religious practices inherited from earlier times.

Ortheia, was the chief Goddess of Sparta in the Archaic Period, 600s BC. Here she is depicted in the GodSelf Icon pose:



Archaic (pre-Classical) image of the goddess Ortheia depicted on an ivory votive offering.

Ortheia, as the goddess of Sparta, was originally called Forthasia, then Forthaia and Fortheia, and finally Ortheia. Her name means "straight, upright, standing." It is believed that Ortheia was a fertility goddess; after the fall of Sparta, she was conflated with Artemis, the goddess of the hunt.



Here Ortheia (sometimes called Artemis Ortheia, but not by the Spartans) is depicted as a winged goddess holding birds or lions.

More GodSelf Icons are visible on the island of Rhodes, famous for the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

RHODES

Scholars believe Rhodes was inhabited in the Neolithic period, though little remains of this era. According to Greek myth, a Rhodian race called the Telchines lived on the island. In the 16th century BC, the Minoans reached Rhodes, and in the 15th century BC, Mycenaean Greeks invaded. A Phoenician presence is described in traditions recorded by Rhodian historians. The Persians invaded the island, but were then turned back by Athens in 478 BC. Hellenistic age Rhodes then became a part of the growing empire of Alexander the Great in 332 BC, after he defeated the Persians. Across the history of Rhodes we note multiple instances of the GodSelf Icon, which took the form of Artemis:



Gold plaque necklace from Rhodes showing the winged Artemis with lions. Scholars believe this style of goddess between rampant animals originated in west Asia and spread into the Aegean region by the 8th century.

GodSelf Icons are a familiar aspect of artifacts surviving from ancient times not only in Sparta, but even in Rhodes, which serves further to confirm the thesis expressed at the beginning of this chapter, i.e., *that the Universal Triptych Religion was the egg from which the Olympian gods hatched.*

How the powers of self-realization expressed in the GodSelf Icon came to be dispersed among a pantheon of anthropomorphic gods is beyond the scope of the present work, but it seems likely that the essence of religious practice in Greece, just as in ancient Sumeria, Egypt and Babylon, was the cultivation of the Third Eye. The system became more complicated and indeed completely unrecognizable in many respects as successive generations built on the foundations laid by their predecessors. It was this weakening of the focus on cultivating inner strength in favor of placing human beings at the theoretical mercy of natural forces represented as gods that set the stage for the decline in civilization represented by the Greeks and Romans. Paganism in the adulterated form of polytheism eventually destroyed a noble form of civilization that had reached its apex in ancient Egypt. Christianity, which succeeded Greek and Roman polytheism, built its doctrines to an even greater extent on the differences between human attributes and those of a mystical, non-existent God. Allowing belief in a God or gods to become more pervasive and all-encompassing than the cultivation of spiritual powers within ourselves had led to a long and inevitable decline in social well-being, one that can only be remedied by going back to the true religion of our pre-literate ancestors.

Material progress and spiritual progress are diametrically opposed concepts. It will not be easy to forget everything we know about the division between God and man, but we do well to realize that the venerable traditions represented by the GodSelf Icon and the Third Eye cult served as an adequate guidepost for millennia in which our ancestors faced much harder struggles than we do. If we look within ourselves for the answers to our most pressing spiritual problems, we are more likely to be satisfied than if we hope that a god in the sky will come down to rescue us. The GodSelf Icon is us. It is that simple.

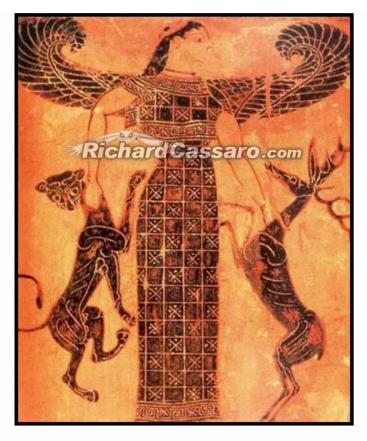
The *Potnia Theron* (Mistress of Animals), a common Greek image, is typically represented in the form of a GodSelf Icon:



Pendant with Potnia Theron (Mistress of Animals), 650-600 BC. Eastern Greece, Rhodian.



Potnia Theron, (Mistress of Animals), Louvre Museum Electrum plate from Rhodes, 630-620 BC.



Goddess of Animals. A winged, muscular Artemis with lion and stag, dressed in archaic patterned style of weaving.



Tray depicting "Potnia Theron."



Gold "Potnia" Theron piece.



Gold jewelry with Potnia Theron images.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

To give an idea of what one man, guided by the principles of the Universal Triptych religion and the rigorous self-contemplation that religion prescribes, can accomplish, one need look no further than Alexander the Great, whose image over the thousands of years since his death is inextricably linked with the GodSelf Icon we have traced in these chapters. Through his tutor Aristotle, Alexander was heir to the Greek intellectual tradition. He made his mark as the greatest military genius in history. In a short life of around 30 years, Alexander conquered most of the known world.

The collage of images below is an assortment of images of Alexander the Great through the centuries. In all of the images I have selected, Alexander is depicted in the form of a GodSelf Icon. This fact speaks both to the greatness of Alexander's achievements, and to the power of the GodSelf Icon to crystallize and commemorate them.



Tympanum of Charney Basset in Gloucestershire.

Roger Sherman Loomis (1887-1966) was an American literary scholar who has been described as one of the foremost authorities on medieval and Arthurian literature. In 1918, he wrote for *Burlington Magazine* an extensive article on the legend of Alexander the Great. The excerpts below are some of the best descriptions in print of the manner in which Alexander entered the realm of myth:

"The legend of a hero who embarked on the back of some monstrous bird, or contrived a cage or basket in which, borne up by winged creatures, he might voyage through the air, and after a survey of the heavenly regions was obliged to descend to earth, is of very ancient origin...the legend...was attached to Alexander the Great."

- R.S. Loomis , Alexander the Great's Celestial Journey (1918)



Saint Mark's cathedral relief, Venice, 12th century.

"...the subject of Alexander the Great's flight towards Heaven - in a chariot drawn by griffins...The details of the journey are, in themselves, quite extraordinary: instead of a stick & a carrot, Alexander encouraged his winged steeds with a pair of puppies spitted on two long sticks. He could make his craft dirigible by twirling the puppies—and the griffins would pursue them vigorously —but in vain!"

- R.S. Loomis, Alexander the Great's Celestial Journey

"Few themes have such an ancient pedigree or such a wide geography as the image of the "Master of Beasts" and the Griffin. In the iconography of the Fantastical Adventures of Alexander the Great we have both in combination."

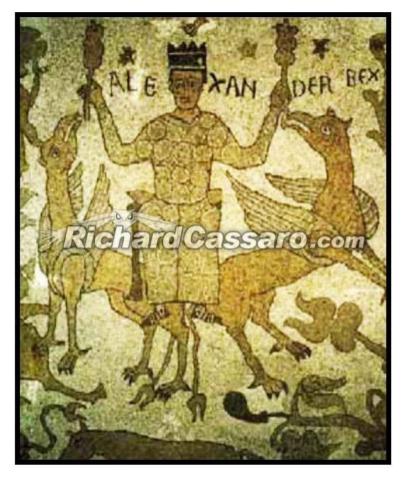
-R.S. Loomis, Alexander the Great's Celestial Journey



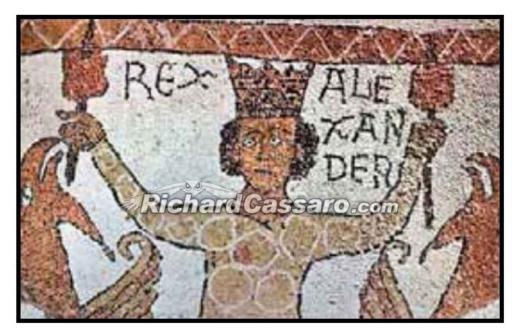
Peribletos Mistra Relief.



Jeweled headband with image of Alexander the Great, Hermitage Museum.



Detail of mosaic pavement, 1165, Otranto Cathedral.



Detail of mosaic pavement, Trani Cathedral.



Chalons-sur-Saône – capital showing the ascent of Alexander.



Thouars Museum – capital showing the ascent of Alexander.



Detail of the relief on the Saint-Dimitri church at Vladimir.



Fragment of an Alexander and Griffins sculpture, 9th century, National Museum of High Medieval Art, Rome



Tympanum showing Alexander's flight, over the entrance to the church of Santa Maria della Strada in Abruzzo, Italy.



Marble plaque with the ascension of Alexander the Great, 12th century.



Capital of Alexander the Great and Griffins, Bitonto Cathedral.

The career of Alexander the Great was the last Great Hurrah of Greek civilization. The legacy of Greece is one of unbelievable richness and diversity; from beginning to end, the GodSelf Icon was at the very heart of what it means to be Greek. Just as in Egypt, the rulers and the leading gods were all presented in this elaborately stylized manner.

The Greeks themselves were convinced that their achievements were but a pale reflection of what their distant forefathers had accomplished. It seems that the purpose of representing their leading lights in the form of GodSelf Icons was a consciously selected homage to a past Golden Age that never was fully past as long as Greek civilization flourished.



CHAPTER ELEVEN GodSelf Icon in Ancient Europe

In the last chapter, we saw how the GodSelf Icon was prevalent across the history of ancient Greece, starting from the earliest era and continuing through the historical period of Alexander the Great, whose conquest of much of the then-civilized world was celebrated and confirmed by his adopting the symbolism of the GodSelf Icon, and making it a part of his rule and iconography.

In this chapter, we'll see how the GodSelf Icon was abundant not just in Greece, but across ancient Europe. We'll start in Italy, where we'll examine the ruins of the ancient Etruscans, Pompeiians and Romans. Next, we'll move west, toward the Iberian Peninsula and then north into Great Britain. From Britain we move to the Thracians and then Rhodes and finally into Scandinavia.

ETRUSCANS

Most people believe that the Roman culture was influenced predominantly by the Greeks. Greeks, we're told, settled in parts of Italy and Sicily in the several centuries leading up to the birth of Christ. While this is true, it is far from the whole story. Before Greco-Roman society took shape, Italy was settled by a much more ancient and sophisticated society known as the Etruscans.

The Romans were the last superpower of the ancient world. From their capital, Rome, they ruled over the entire Mediterranean region. Rome's architects, engineers and strategists certainly helped shape this giant city, but when we look deeper into its history, we quickly realize that the

people we know as Romans did not found it. If you dig deep enough in Rome, you'll find traces of the buildings of an earlier, mysterious civilization that the Romans apparently tried to write out of history. Fortunately, Roman historians left just enough clues for us to pick up the trail of that mysterious civilization—the Etruscans. The ruins of their once-great empire can still be seen across the Western coast of Italy and throughout the Tuscan region of Italy.

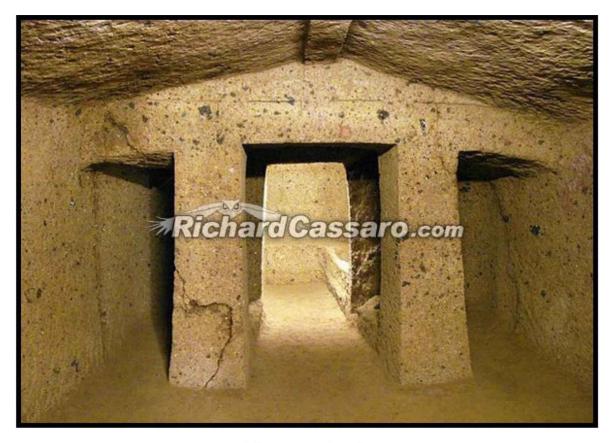
AREZZO OLTERRA CORTON PERUGI JLCI TAROUIN CERVETERI ecchio

Etruscan cities in Italy, often called Western Europe's first great civilization. A sophisticated society that came into being centuries (perhaps even thousands of years) before the Romans. The true founders of European culture. A unique civilization flourishing on the Western coast of Italy.

Until very recently, any suggestion that the Etruscans could have been in any way superior to the Romans would have been laughed at, but the Etruscans have been gaining prestige as we learn more about this mysterious people. In many respects one could make the case that the Etruscans were more advanced than the Romans. Because ancient Rome was seen as the cradle of Italian culture, especially by the archaeological authorities, the intriguing and wondrous but vanished culture of the Etruscans had been largely ignored by 20th century scholars. This situation is now changing. In recent years, it has increasingly become clear that the Etruscans played an important foundational role in establishing Roman culture. The greatest legacy of the Etruscans is the city of Rome itself. During the 6th century BC, Etruscan kings fortified the city, paved the forum, created a master sewer system (called the Cloaca Maxima, which conveyed sewage from quarters near the Roman forum into the Tiber River), and built some of the most majestic structures in all of archaic Italy, transforming an undistinguished and unimportant hamlet into a flourishing urban center by the end of the 6th century BC. The Etruscans were evidently the source of the Triptych Temple design that is so common in Italy, and that was later copied by the Romans:



Etruscan tomb with Triptych entrance.



Etruscan tomb.



Entrance of Etruscan tomb.

The social sophistication of the Etruscans, who enjoyed a reputation as a festive, sensual people, can be seen in the relative equality that women enjoyed alongside men. Etruscan women enjoyed power and freedom, freely attending banquets and public events, and apparently enjoying the same social status as men.

The racial origins and language of the mysterious Etruscans are hotly debated among scholars. Etruscan artifacts display a subtle blend of many different influences. The evidence points to an original culture open to East and West and to exchanges between cultures. Even today, some of the skills used in making Etruscan gold objects cannot be matched.

"Etruscans helped teach the Gauls, who would become the French, to drink wine."

—Larissa Bonfante

For centuries, the city of Rome was under the dominion and influence of the Etruscans. Several kings of Rome were of Etruscan origin. Activities that were previously believed to have been Roman in origin, such as construction with large stone blocks, can be seen among the Etruscans much earlier. Even the famous Roman symbol of a she-wolf suckling the legendary founders of Rome, the infants Romulus and Remus, regarded as a symbol of Rome from ancient times, seems to have had an Etruscan origin:



She-wolf suckling twin human infants, Romulus and Remus, legendary founders of Rome.

Traditional scholarship says the actual bronze "Capitoline Wolf" statue is itself Etruscan, dating back to the 5th century BC, with figures of Romulus and Remus added in the 15th century AD by Italian sculptor Antonio Pollaiuolo.

As with other ancient civilizations, the ancient Etruscans depicted images of the GodSelf Icon:



Etruscan belt buckle with GodSelf Icon.

Here we can see a clear image of a female GodSelf Icon in this Etruscan sheet silver and bronze belt buckle plaque, c. 650-600 B.C. She's wearing an ankle-length decorated robe, and her head is turned to the right. Her arms are outstretched to the sides, and she's flanked by leaping hounds and twin attendants who are each wearing a belted short chiton, with one leg advanced toward her. She's flashing a large smile and her hair is tucked behind her ears. The hounds and the attendants are symmetrically balanced, as if depicting paired opposites / polarity. The entire design is framed by a border of egg-and-dart.

The image below shows a "gorgon" flanked by two symbols that are already quite familiar to us—twin lions—which we know symbolize "duality" in various ancient cultures and esoteric traditions. Note the perfect symmetry of the lions, they are like mirror images of each other. Each lion has its mouth open, and a leg upon one of the gorgon's knees:



Etruscan "gorgon" with legs parted and arms outstretched, flanked by twin lions.

This next image, which depicts a female GodSelf Icon whose legs look like a twin-tailed siren, is reminiscent of some of the African (Yoruba culture) and esoteric (Abraxas) GodSelf Icons presented in an earlier chapter:



Etruscan sarcophagus showing female GodSelf Icon.

The GodSelf Icon here is shown holding both sides of a circular shape that forms the handle of a cup:



Handle of a cup in the form of a female divinity framed by birds and quadrupeds. Sheet bronze with cast open-worked handle. 8th Century BC.

The GodSelf Icon here is depicted as a female holding twin staffs, the tops of which form a kind of fleur-de-lis symbol, which, as I explained in *Written in Stone*, signified the Triptych "balance of opposites" concept. Twin lions, standing symmetrically, flank the female GodSelf Icon:



Decorated bracelet found at Cerveteri.

In the next example, we see the narrow end of a sarcophagus, which is decorated with a GodSelf Icon at the top.



Etruscan GodSelf Icon.

The triangular lid of the top of this sarcophagus is shaped almost like the triangular top of an ancient Greek temple pediment, with the GodSelf Icon forming the apex of the Triangle. Twin heads, shown in profile, face "opposite" directions and form the twin lower points of the Triangle. The twin lower points of a triangle form the "opposites" and the apex forms the third "unification" power.

Here a GodSelf Icon goddess symmetrically holds twin hares upside down on either side:



Goddess Holding Hares, 600-550 BC. Amber, Etruscan.

Romans and Etruscans lived together in peace for over 100 years before war between them broke out and raged for about 150 years. One Etruscan town after another was conquered. Finally, Orvieto, the Etruscan spiritual center, was destroyed. At that point, the Etruscans simply disappeared into the expanding Roman Empire. The Romans built over their towns, in many cases co-opting Etruscan homes, temples, and landmarks. Many historians also believe the Romans took the Etruscan gods and claimed them as their own.

POMPEII

Until recently, scholars had not recognized a link between the Etruscans and the ancient peoples who flourished in the city of Pompeii, which was mostly destroyed and buried under several feet of volcanic ash in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79. New archaeological discoveries are starting to shed light on this link:

"According to Strabo, Pompeii was...captured by the Etruscans, and in fact recent excavations have shown the presence of Etruscan inscriptions and a 6th-century BC necropolis."

—Wikipedia

Researchers claim that Pompeii was founded in only the seventh or sixth century BC (by the so-called "Osci" or "Oscians"). It came under the domination of Rome in the 4th century BC. By the time it was destroyed, Pompeii's population was estimated at 11,000 people, who enjoyed amenities such as a complex water system, an amphitheater, a gymnasium, and a port.

There are many Triptych Temples not only in Pompeii but in neighboring Herculaneum, which was also destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD. Scholars describe Herculaneum as a "Roman" town, but, as with Pompeii, the level of advancement and antiquity suggests to some that it may pre-date Rome. Herculaneum was a wealthier town than Pompeii, with finer houses and far more luxurious art, including elaborate mosaics.

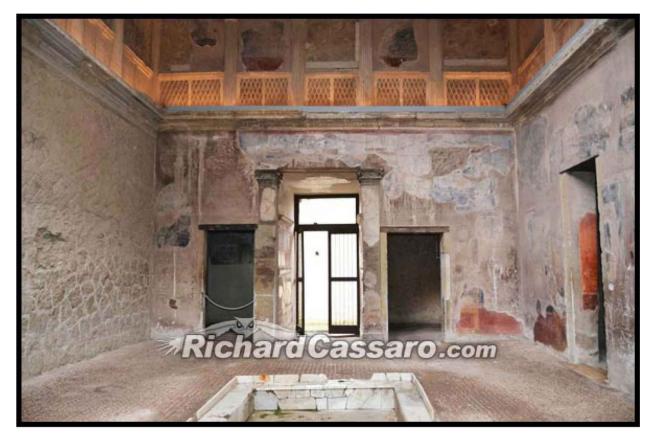
Many Triptych patterns are visible in the art and architecture of both Pompeii and Herculaneum:



Interior court with mosaic of Neptune and Amphitrite, from the House of Neptune and Amphitrite (1st century AD), Herculaneum, Italy.



The House of the Mosaic Atrium, Herculaneum, Italy.



The Samnite House, which dates from the 2nd century BC, is one of the oldest buildings so far discovered in Herculaneum.

This entryway in Pompeii is enhanced by a GodSelf image over it. The cherub fresco looks very similar to the god Viracocha depicted above the main door of the Gate of the Sun in Bolivia:

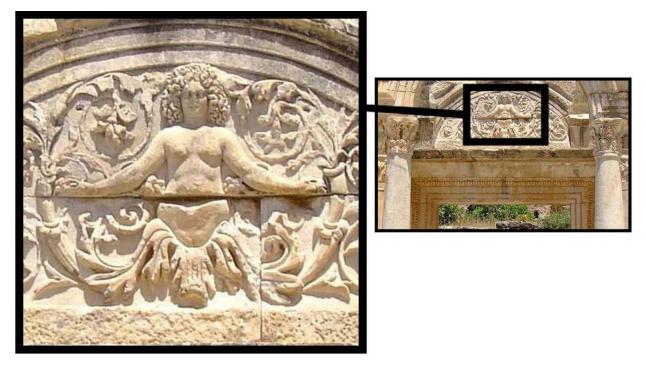


Cherub depicted above doorway in Pompeii, Italy.



Viracocha depicted above doorway in Gate of the Sun door in Bolivia.

Note the remarkable similarity here between Tiahuanaco and Pompeii! Both doors are surmounted with elaborate GodSelf Icons that amplify the grandeur and religious power of the architecture. The GodSelf Icon from Pompeii and the image of Viracocha are quite similar in their placement and import to the following image of Apollo above the doorway of the Temple of Hadrian in Ephesus:



Roman ruin of Temple of Hadrian at Ephesus in Turkey.

Even though the image at Ephesus is considerably more complicated, it uses very much the same pattern as the images in Bolivia and at Pompeii. In each of these three depictions, the same GodSelf Icon is shown centered above a doorway:



GodSelf Icons over gates.

The GodSelf Icons found at Pompeii and in Ephesus are similar to many others, most of them not as well-preserved, that grace the ruins of monuments and other public buildings in Rome and other former parts of the Roman Empire.

The GodSelf Icon was not just over home or temple entryways. The ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum were strewn with abandoned GodSelf Icons, some of them remarkably well-preserved, on wall friezes, jewelry and other ornaments:



GodSelf Icon frieze from Pompeii.

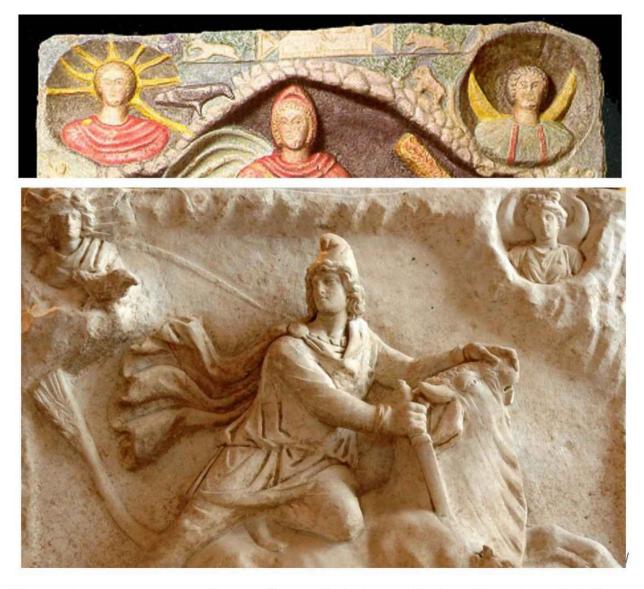


GodSelf Icon on jewelry from Pompeii.

The remarkable solid gold bracelet pictured above (which may be Roman) was found at Pompeii and is dated to the first century CE. It is fashioned in the form of two snakes flanking a round disk with a carved relief of Selene, the mythological moon goddess, with a crescent moon and stars above her head. It was found on the arm of a woman carrying a casket containing 40 *aureii* and 180 *denarii*; she was killed along with another adult and a child when a balcony collapsed in the house (now known as the House of the Gold Bracelet).

MITHRAS

Just after World War II, there was an incredible series of archaeological discoveries in the U.K. They revealed a network of Roman temples, from London in the South to Hadrian's wall in the North. They were dedicated to a religion popular among military troops, which worshipped a god, originally a Persian god, who had striking similarities to Jesus. That god, known as Mithras, was also called "the Lord of Light." Mithras was often depicted sitting on a bull he had hunted and killed, a legend that has echoes of the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. In some of these depictions, Mithras is flanked on both sides by anthropomorphized images of the sun and moon:



Tauroctony scene on a Roman bas-relief, 2nd or 3rd century, found at Fiano Romano, near Rome, now on display in the Louvre. The image above is from a more modern drawing, outlining the sun and moon in upper corners.

Depictions of Mithras, the god of light, honor and truth, often show him either attended by twin torchbearers or holding a torch. These images are nearly always shaped in the pose of the GodSelf Icon:



Mithras born from the rock (marble, 180–192 AD), striking the GodSelf Icon pose holding a sword (Sword of Truth) and torch (Torch of Light), from the area of S. Stefano Rotondo, Rome.

A stone image of Mithras emerging from an egg-shaped zodiac ring, the "Cosmic Egg", was found associated with a temple on Hadrian's Wall (now at the University of Newcastle). This association of Mithras with the zodiac is unusual; I am not aware of another example of an image showing this link.



Stone relief from Housesteads Roman Fort in England, showing the birth of Mithras from an egg while holding in his upraised hands the Sword of Truth and Torch of Light. Around him in an egg-shaped frame is the Cosmos containing the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac.

This combination of gods and concepts must have seemed particularly powerful. The fact that it is found nowhere else seems to indicate that someone with extensive learning and advanced religious and philosophical ideas led the Mithraic cult at Housesteads Roman Fort in England. Rupert Leo Scott Bruce-Mitford, who spent nearly 40 years at the British Museum, devoted considerable energy to explicating the mysterious cult of Mithras in Britain:

"As Mithras is light, so he is related to the Sun and Moon, as sources of light, and these frequently appear upon Mithraic reliefs as attributes without any reference to the special comradeship between Mithras and the Sun. Similarly, the conception of the firmament as his realm, and of the changing seasons as his recurrent manifestations, account for the frequent occurrence of the winds as his companions and the signs of the Zodiac as the cycle of his activity."

— R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford , Recent Archaeological Excavations in Britain

The GodSelf depiction of Mithras has a powerful meaning above and

beyond the typical meaning of such a figure. The myth of Mithras is related to the idea of the rise and fall of civilizations. The sword in his right hand is the symbol of destruction and the fall of civilization, while the flame in his left hand, like the flame of Prometheus, symbolizes the rise of civilization be means of life-giving fire. Walter Cruttenden, author of *Lost Star of Myth and Time* (2005), is a proponent of the idea that Plato's Great Year is a key concept for understanding world history. Cruttenden maintains that the cult of Mithras was organized around the idea of the Great Year:

"This principle of waxing and waning epochs is depicted in numerous bas-reliefs found in ancient Mithraic "mystery school" temples. The famed Tauroctany, or bull-slaying scene, is usually surrounded by two boys, Cautes and Cautopetes. One holds a torch up on the ascending side of the zodiac, indicating a time of light, and the other holds a torch down on the descending side of the zodiac, indicating a time of darkness. As the chart below shows, these time periods correspond with the Greeks' description of Earth's movement through periods of rising and falling consciousness."

— Walter Cruttenden, Ancient Cosmology: A Map of the Future?

The story of Mithras, one of the most powerful ancient Greek myths, may not provide a key to the future, as Cruttenden provocatively claims, but the fact that there was a flourishing cult of Mithras in Britain is powerful evidence of the pervasive nature of the GodSelf Icon in ancient Europe.

IBERIA

The GodSelf Icon was found on the Mausoleum of Pozo Moro, which scholars date to the end of the 6th century BC. It was discovered in 1970 in excavations in the Province of Albacete in Spain.



The Mausoleum of Pozo Moro, 6th century BC. Note the sets of twin lions.

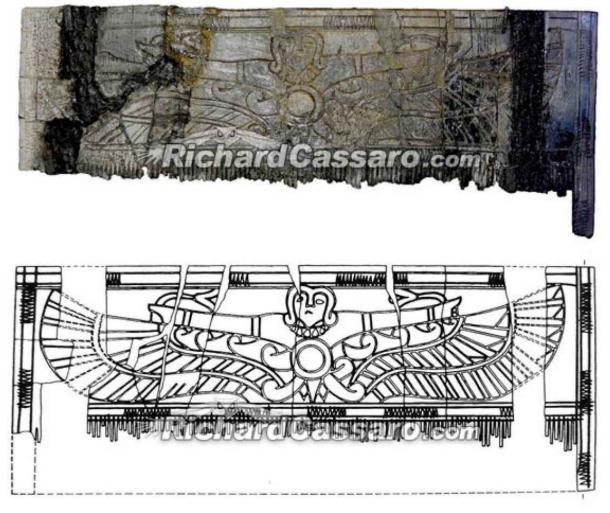
The Mausoleum of Pozo Moro is described as a tall stone tower erected to mark the grave of an important person. Archaeologists interpret it as a "soul tower" for a deified king. It is said to show "Phoenician influence" and was the center of a large Celtiberian necropolis.

The tower has felines, perhaps lions, at each corner and the sides are decorated with bas-reliefs showing cryptic scenes such as a horned figure with a knife raised over a man who sits in a cauldron. Another scene shows a two-headed boar rooting in the ground and uncovering a snake, which coils around the animal's legs while turning into a human. Most such scenes are executed as variations on the GodSelf Icon:



Pozo Moro bas-reliefs showing GodSelf Icon.

Reliefs from the Pozo Moro funerary monument, pictured above, show Egyptian and Phoenician influence in the lotus and wings, but the warrior figure is rendered in distinctively Iberian style, with similarities to Italic art. Here is another example of GodSelf Icon depictions from Medellín:



Medellín bas relief (above), with schematic cartoon (below).

Examples of the GodSelf Icon as a decorative element are found all over the Iberian Peninsula. This marble comb from the Medellín necropolis in Spain shows a goddess with outstretched wings and a lotus in each hand.

There are also Spanish examples of the "Master of the Animals" style of GodSelf Icon. The four images below show a Celtic-influenced cult related to a "horse-taming god:



"Mogon Celtiberia" – Master of Animals relief.



Spanish "Master of the Animals" relief.



Gold ornament showing double-faced GodSelf "horse tamer."



"Horse taming god" or "lord of the horses" (despotes hippon) – note how manes are echoed in hair of tamer.

While it is certainly possible to read these "horse taming" images literally, as offerings celebrating great horse tamers, this makes absolutely no sense given the stylization of the image. Taming horses is just another metaphor for taming the opposing forces in the soul.

GREAT BRITAIN

In *Written in Stone,* I mentioned a longstanding enigma related to the GodSelf Icon in Europe. A mysterious staff god image carved into a Sussex hillside, which for centuries has been called the "Long Man of Wilmington," is one of Great Britain's most enduring mysteries. This giant, holding what appear to be two staves positioned at either side of him, measures a colossal 227 feet from top to bottom, and is apparently Europe's largest representation of the human form.



The Long Man of Wilmington.

There are several prehistoric burials above the Giant, in an adjoining area that is sometimes called Giants Grave. Some say the locals drew an outline around a real-life fallen giant before burying him in the long barrow.

Some who are skeptical of the Long Man's "ancient" origins believe monks from the nearby Priory between the 11th and 15th centuries created him. It has been suggested that the monks constructed the Giant either because they were heretical or part of a secret occult society. Another theory suggests the Giant represents Beowulf fighting Grendel, while still other theories make the Giant out to be some sort of god or hero such as Woden, Baldur, Thor, Varuna, Heil, Apollo, Mercury, the Prophet Mohammad, Bel, Pol, Solomon, Samson; or some other more mundane figure such as a pilgrim, a hay maker or a Roman standard bearer, in a pose similar to that seen on certain Roman coins.

The staves the Long Man is holding have been interpreted by some as a gate, though which the giant is passing, either to Heaven, the underworld or as the "gates of dawn." This Neolithic interpretation has been made by at least one modern writer, Rodney Castleden. In his book *The Wilmington Giant,* Castleden sees the Long Man as the sun-god opening the dawn portals and letting the ripening light flood through.

Some have pointed out a striking resemblance between the Long Man and the design on the reverse side of some Roman coins bearing the heads of Vetranio, Constantius II, and Constantius Gallus:



Coin showing the Roman statesman Vetranio from 350 AD.

Although it appears ancient, the Long Man was first mentioned in a lease document in 1765. This doesn't mean that it is not ancient. Regardless of the controversy over its age, it is a matter of some interest for the present discussion that the largest human image in Europe depicts a GodSelf Icon.

<u>CELTS</u>

The Celts were a European cultural group that appeared as early as the 8th century BC, according to scholars. The Celts reached as far as the Alps during the height of their influence, in the 5th to the 3rd century BC, but were most dominant in the areas of modern-day Great Britain and Ireland. Despite the primitive nature of many of the Celtic artifacts that have survived, it is abundantly clear that the GodSelf Icon was one of their most important traditions:



Celtic relief showing GodSelf Icon.



Celtic mosaic with GodSelf Icon.



Celtic metalwork with GodSelf Icon.



Celtic metalwork with GodSelf Icon.



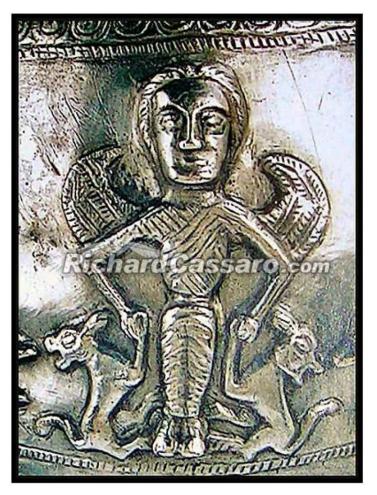
Celtic etching of Master of the Animals.

THRACIANS

The Thracians were a group of Indo-European tribes inhabiting a large area in Southeastern Europe. Although their culture was considered inferior in most technological respects to other ethnic groups in Europe, it appears that their religious consciousness was no less elevated than that of their neighbors. Many artifacts from this area depict GodSelf Icons.



Thracian Ewer with GodSelf Icon.



Close-up of Thracian Ewer.

SCANDINAVIA

Denmark, Norway and Sweden were dominated by a group called the Vikings, also known as Norsemen. It has been proven in recent years that Vikings reached modern Canada and established settlements there hundreds of years before Columbus. They are known for their polytheistic religious system, where their chief gods such as Odin and Thor are said to personify the forces of nature.

Just like the Greek gods, the Norse gods are often shown in the form of the GodSelf Icon, an image that appeared well before written texts, and may more closely represent the actual religious practices than the famous Scandinavian myths, which may have functioned in the society more as an entertainment feature than a religious text.



Thor with a hammer is depicted on a 12th century tapestry. Halsingland, Sweden.



Scandinavian GodSelf Icon artifact.



Scandinavian metal artifact in form of stylized GodSelf Icon.

The artifact below, a picture stone found in Gotland, Sweden, is said to depict a "snake witch" or "snake charmer." Discovered in a cemetery, it bears the image of a woman holding a snake in each hand. [1] Above the figure there are three interlaced creatures forming a triskelion pattern. The stone has been dated to 400–600 AD:



Viking red-colored stone carving, 4th century.

This 4th century Viking stone carving from Sweden, which is usually described as "the Goddess in her rule of the animals," is clearly related to other GodSelf Icon fertility images.



Viking stone carving, Sweden, 4th century.

The gold belt buckle below was found in a man's grave in Zamárdi, Hungary, in the late 6th – 7th century. The figure in the center is said to be the Germanic god, Tyr, and the dogs or wolves above him appear symmetrically balanced:



The GodSelf Icon at the center is said to be the Germanic god Tyr. Note the serpent slithering across his shoulders.

These finds, some of which are extremely valuable and products of outstanding workmanship, provide fascinating insights into the social situation under 6th century Avar rule. The Avars were a modern Northeast Caucasian-speaking people in the North Caucasus, Dagestan, Russia.

For thousands of years, all over the world, powerful figures were depicted as holding two objects, animals or sticks or flowers, in what we call the GodSelf pattern. This is not because ancient peoples lacked the imagination to pose or arrange their figures in different positions. It is not because the pose was a natural category of the human imagination. The only plausible explanation for the universally observed presence of the GodSelf Icon in ancient cultures all over the earth is that the image was an inherited ancient form recognized for its spiritual power.



CHAPTER TWELVE GodSelf Icon in China

China represents one of the world's oldest and most inventive civilizations. During 5,000 years of Chinese history, the Chinese produced some of the most remarkable innovations anywhere: printing, noodles, fireworks and everything in between. The Chinese writing system, based on pictographs that represent individual syllables, is the world's most complex. Chinese philosophers and artists have produced many of the great monuments of world culture.

GodSelf Icons are found in ancient artifacts all over Asia; and the concepts of "finding the center" and "balancing duality" are at the very core of Asian civilization. For thousands of years, the Chinese used a very famous "pairs of opposites" symbol—the *Taijitu* or *yin* and *yang* symbol. Together, yin and yang symbolize harmony through balancing opposites; it is in fact a tripartite or Trinity symbol, in that it is a union of opposites.

In the ancient Chinese classic text *The Tao Te Ching,* the seminal work of Taoism written by the academic, philosopher, writer and mystic Lao-Tzu (born in 551 BC), a contemporary of Confucius, we read:

"The Chinese trinity, being the duality of yang and yin organized into a higher unity under the harmonious influence of Ch'i, is regarded as the source of all existence, and its symbol...possesses a deep religious significance for the Chinese heart."



The Taijitu depicts all things as composed of two opposing but complimentary forces. These forces, called yang and yin, are in a perfect state of harmony or balance. This concept is the cornerstone of most branches of Chinese philosophy, as well as traditional Chinese medicine.

The white half, *yang*, symbolizes the universe's active, aggressive or "male" forces. The black half, *yin*, is the universe's passive, receptive or "female" forces. Like the Masonic Jachin and Boaz pillars, they are of equal size and shape; this highlights the equality of their duality as well as the ideal state of equilibrium latent within them.

We read in Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan:

"The Sun is the chief visible manifestation of the yang, as the moon is of the yin."

The circle that encompasses both yin and yang symbolizes the "equilibrium" or "harmony" that balances yin and yang. The circle is the

overarching "Third" power reconciling the yin/yang opposites. It not only contains the symbols but generates them, flowing through the yin / yang seamlessly and harmonically. This is called the "Tao" in Chinese thought; it is an all-encompassing circle—the circle being, of course, a shape that stands for eternity.

"He who follows the Tao is one with the Tao ..."

—Lao-Tzu, Verse 23

"Being at one with the Tao is eternal, though the body dies, the Tao will never pass away."

-Lao-Tzu, Verse 16

Note the small white dot of yang in yin and vice versa. It is because each opposite contains the seed of the other; each has the potential to evolve into the other. For example, winter is a yin season; it is cold and dark, a time when all life processes slow down. On the opposite spectrum is summer; it is a yang season, hot, bright, and filled with life. Though these two seasons are opposite, they each contain an element of the other; winter has spring, a season that promises warmth, light and life, while summer has autumn, a season that brings cooling, darkness, and death. As spring is the tiny white dot in yin, so is autumn the tiny black dot in yang; they are pairs of opposites that each contain a seed of the other.

The message of the yin / yang symbol is that there are no absolutes in life, just as there is no absolute movement or absolute "seasons" on earth. All of the opposites contain a seed of the other, and have the potential to become and eventually do evolve into the other. Although there is some stability giving us the appearance of a temporary reality, all things eventually change and reveal their unreal nature. The only thing that is constant or eternal is the stillness and eternity of our true inner being or consciousness, our circle or soul—the Tao—which encompasses *both* yin and yang. With no beginning and no end, the circle symbolizes eternity; all else is transitory illusion, yin and yang.

The Taijitu has also been said to represent the alternating cycles of the Golden Age and Dark Age, which we described earlier, the Yuga cycle or Plato's Great Year. This can be thought of essentially as a 24,000-year cycle, divided into two halves: 12,000 years of steadily increasing

development, which culminates in a Golden Age, followed by12,000 years of decline, culminating in a Dark Age. Yin represents the passive, lunar, dark, feminine "Dark Age" of the cycle corresponding to Night, and Yang signifies the active, solar, light, masculine "Golden Age" of the cycle, corresponding to day.



As we've noted, this (approximately) 24,000-year cycle is closely related to the Zodiacal cycle known as Plato's Great Year, corresponding to the Precession of the Equinoxes, which is divided among similar lines. (The Platonic year is actually a period of 25,920 years.) This is the time required for the Sun's position at spring equinox to traverse the complete zodiac . Each zodiac sign covers about 2160 years.

Symbolically, the Yang part of the cycle or the upper part of the cycle can be said to be the part of the cycle in which the soul is most free from the body, detached from the flesh—the time when Persephone is no longer held captive in the Underworld. Conversely, the Yin part of the cycle or the lower part of the cycle can be said to be the time when the soul is "imprisoned" in the flesh—the time when Persephone is held captive in the Underworld.

The idea of cycles has been very influential in Asian culture up to the present day. A new Korean religion called "Jeung San Do" holds that the universe creates and cultivates life through a four-fold cyclic process: birth, growth, harvest, and rest. This is closely related to the shifting and reciprocal exchange of the universe's twin polar energies, yin and yang. We can see this cycle right in front of our eyes, as it appears daily, yearly, and cosmically.

It seems this idea of daily, season and Great Year cycles was implicit in the Chinese understanding of the GodSelf Icon, which we see across China during various eras of Chinese history:



A human-like deity mounted on a beast, which resembles the ones from both Liangzhu and Shijiahe cultures of Southern China.

The image above looks as though it could have been created by one of the pre-Inca cultures of Peru or perhaps the ancient Egyptians. A forward-facing deity is shown flanked by twin birds looking in opposite directions. The deity holds twin serpents symmetrically balanced in each hand. Note the perfect symmetry; one side is a perfect mirror image of the other. The symbolism is stunning.



GodSelf Icon atop bronze taotie mask northern Wei dynasty (circa 6th century).

The Northern Wei dynasty (386-534 AD) marked the beginning of a period of increasing political and economic unification in China. The nomadic Wei invaders were increasingly subdued by the cultural heritage of China. The image above represents an example of how the GodSelf Icon, which had always been at the heart of Chinese culture, was varied and elaborated to form an impressive synthesis of old and new values. It represents a huge stylistic advance over GodSelf depictions (see below) from the earlier Warring States period and the subsequent Han dynasty, and shows how important the GodSelf Icon remained during a period of consolidation and growing Chinese power.



Ancient Chinese GodSelf icon holding twin serpents symmetrically. From the Warring States period (475-221 BC).



"Bingbi Taisui" dagger-axe Warring States period (475-221 BC). From Cheqiao dam, Jingmen.



Image of Taiyi.

The round-headed figure in the image above, known as "Taiyi" (The Supreme One or Supreme Unity) has staring eyes and an open mouth. The figure is dressed in clothes covered in small scales. In the right hand, it holds a creature with dragon heads; in the left hand is a lizard-like animal. The right foot stands on the disc of the sun and the left on the crescent of the moon (denoting duality, and the balance of duality). By the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), Taiyi was recognized as a supreme deity among the spirits of heaven and had been endowed with cosmic force.

"Taiyi Zhenren is a character in Chinese folklore. Taiyi means "primordial unity of yin and yang" and Zhenren (lit. "true person") is

a Daoist term for "Perfected Person"." —Wikipedia



Jade artifact of Liangzhu Culture, 3200BC-2200BC.

It is important to note that the GodSelf Icon appears in some of the earliest relics of Chinese civilization. In the image above, we see how the icon was interpreted by the Neolithic-period Liangzhu people. Below is a very ancient image of the GodSelf Icon placed atop a Third Eye symbol:



GodSelf Icon on stone tomb known as the Song Shaozu sarcophagus.

The GodSelf Icon above is from Song Shaozu's sarcophagus, which is inscribed with a date of 477 AD. Song Shaozu's sarcophagus is often described as one of the most impressive ancient Chinese tomb relics ever built. The tomb consists of 101 stone pieces carved with elaborate images that bring the world of 5th century China vividly to life. On the west side of the front door of Song Shaozu's sarcophagus, a voluptuous female figure grasps what appear to be the twin horns of a monster mask. This GodSelf Icon is a powerful depiction reflecting the idea of balancing opposites.

The Ming era (1368-1644) is considered one of China's most prosperous. In addition to reconstructing the new capital of Beijing, extensive masonry work was done to repair the Great Wall. Ming stonemasons either

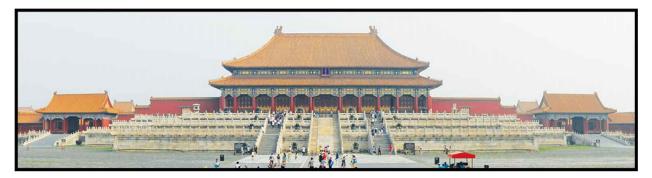
constructed or refurbished most of the structure we see today. Advances were also made in the arts and sciences, while the nation's population grew to more than one hundred million.

The Ming Dynasty represented a political and cultural renaissance in China. It was the time of the most significant contribution to Chinese culture and architecture by a modern dynasty, at least from an esoteric point of view, as that was when the famous Forbidden City was constructed. The Forbidden City, now a museum, was created entirely on the principle of harmony through balanced opposites, the same idea we find in the yin/yang, and the Great Secret of Freemasonry.

In both shots of Ming architecture below, two symmetrical buildings flank a third of its kind—forming Triptychs:



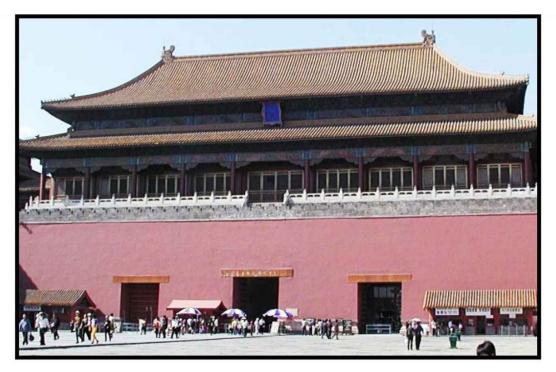
The Hall of Supreme Harmony, as it originally appeared, is a Triptych Temple.



Wide Shot Hall of Supreme Harmony.

The central monuments of China's so-called "Forbidden City" are Triptychs, located at the geometric center of the ancient city of Beijing. Construction began around 1406, shortly after the Ming came to power.

The Forbidden City served as the imperial palace during the Ming and later Qing dynasties; the ruling elite conducted all the day-to-day affairs of public administration in the palace complex.



Close-up showing Triptych entrance leading into the Hall of Supreme Harmony.

These Ming Triptychs immediately evoke the image of European cathedral architecture, with whom they share the distinctive Triptych facade. These Ming creations and their link to the European cathedrals bring to mind some very interesting questions: *What intellectual forces were behind the Forbidden City? Is it possible they were connected in some way to the same architectural currents and underground brotherhoods that moved in Europe during the Middle Ages, and that some sort of Asian Masonic Order could be responsible for this?*

History does not give us any clear answers, and there are no extant documents confirming the existence of such. There are, however, many letters that strongly hint towards the affirmative, including a very interesting Lodge publication from 1889:

"That Masonry exists in China at the present day in the same form that it exists in Europe may be safely answered in the negative...But if we go deeper down we find that these various brotherhoods, the date of whose origin is in most cases but recent (as with the Lodges which exist with us), one and all profess 'but to revive an ancient Faith, the mysteries of which have become lost, or at the best obscured, and further, that their various rituals and signs are supposed to be in some measure founded on ancient rites and symbols which have been handed down from the earliest ages..."

—Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, Vol. II, pp. 119-122.

In that same publication, the anonymous author goes on to talk about the various symbols of the Chinese, including their architecture, and his points echo ours above. Clearly, there was an esoteric undercurrent in the Chinese architecture that even 19th century Masons perceived and wrote about.

Other, less powerful evidence of a sort of Freemasonry in China exists from very early times. Ancient Chinese manuscripts have been shown to contain Masonic expressions. One book titled "The Great Learning" (c. 500 BC) says:

"A man should abstain from doing unto others what he would not they should do unto him. This is called the principle of acting on the Square."

Other similar expressions were used by the great Chinese moral thinker Confucius (b. 481 BC) and his pupil Mencius, who wrote:

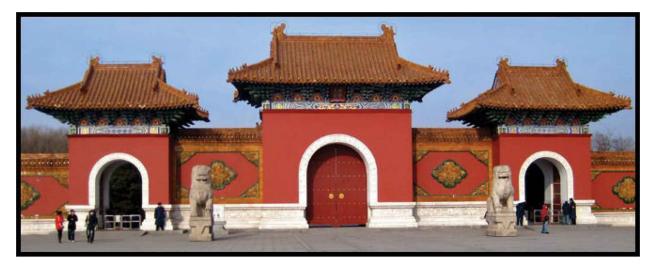
"A Master Mason in teaching his apprentices, makes use of the compasses and the square. We who are engaged in the pursuit of Wisdom, must also make use of the compasses and the square."

Mencius is also credited with stating:

"Men should apply the compass morally to their lives, and the level and marking-line besides, if they would walk in the straight and even path of Wisdom, and keep themselves within the bonds of honor and virtue."

Perhaps, then, the Masons of Victorian times were not so far off the mark in their recognition of kinship with the Chinese!

Below is an image of twin lions standing guard outside a Triptych Temple in China, an image we touched upon in Chapter Two:



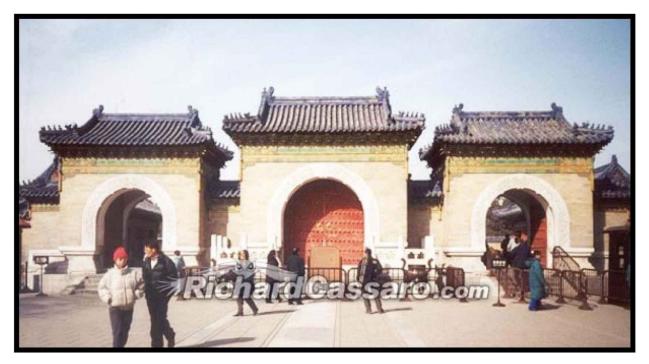
Zhao Mausoleum, 1572.

These Chinese-style twin lions, called "foo dogs" by Westerners, often flank the main entrance to temples in the Forbidden City. As discussed in Chapter Two, this is parallel to the way in which twin lions or "sphinxes" often flank the main entrance to Masonic buildings, like the New York Public Library, or like various "Scottish Rite" temples such as the House of the Temple in Washington DC and the Scottish Rite Temple in El Paso, Texas.



Chinese foo dogs, yin and yang manifest as twin lions.

Today the Forbidden City is called the Palace Museum, and houses many of China's dynastic treasures and artifacts. It remains a symbol of Chinese sovereignty, and its image appears on the seal of the People's Republic of China. Many of its 800 buildings, with a total of 9,999 rooms, have names that sound very Masonic, such as the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Central Harmony, the Hall of Celestial and Terrestrial Union, and the Palace of Terrestrial Tranquility. There's even a Temple of Heaven:



Triptych entrance gates to the imperial Hall of Heaven.



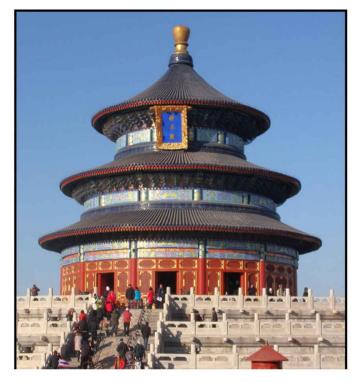
Triptych entrance gates to the imperial Hall of Heaven.

The Temple of Heaven, with Triptych gates shown in the images above and below, was constructed between 1406 and 1420, during the reign of Ming Emperor Yong Le (1403-1424), who also oversaw the creation of the Forbidden City during the same period.



Triptych entrance to the Temple of Heaven.

The Temple of Heaven was originally established as the Temple of Heaven and Earth, and was given its current name during the reign of Ming Emperor Jia Jing (1522-1567), who built separate complexes for the earth, sun and moon.

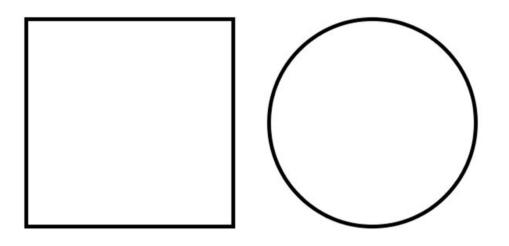


The Temple of Heaven has a Triptych entrance. Though the temple was built in 1420, the altar is said to be ancient.

As with other Ming monuments, the Temple of Heaven encodes China's age-old Tradition of Three. First, notice how three massive circular platforms with decreasing diameters of 90 feet, 150 feet, and 210 feet crown the building. Next, the building's entryway has three doorways in the form of a Triptych—a large, middle doorway centered between two smaller doorways.

The Temple of Heaven is located just a short distance from the Forbidden City. The temple complex, built in 1420 during the Ming Dynasty, is surrounded by two platform-like walls; the outer is square and higher up, the inner is round.

To denote heaven, the northern portion of the temple platform is circular and elevated. To denote earth, the southern portion is laid out on a square grid. This design, with heaven high/north and earth low/south, shows that the heaven is upper and the earth is lower, the idea reflected in the ancient Chinese conception that: *"The heaven is round and the earth is square."* In other words, to comply with principles dating back to pre-Confucian times, the buildings in the Temple of Heaven are round, like Heaven (one can even imagine the sky as a rounded dome), while the foundations and axes of the complex are square (or 2 dimensional—that is, flat), like the earth (appears to be):



SQUARE (Material/Earth) CIRCLE (Spiritual/Heaven)

Zelia Nuttall, in her 1901 book *The Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilizations,* tells us:

"Heaven is father and earth is mother. Heaven is figured by a circle and earth by a square...The sun is male and the "Temple of the Sun" is situated to the east. The moon is female and the "Temple of the Moon" is situated to the west in the sacred enclosure at Pekin [Beijing]."

This description is extremely interesting in regards to Freemasonry and the Great Secret. The Temple of the Sun, Temple of the Moon paradigm is very similar to the Masonic J + B pillars—Sun/Right/Male/Heaven vs. Moon/Left/Female/Earth. It is a "pairing of opposites."

What's more, we cannot fail to realize that the square and circle shapes, said in China to represent earth and heaven, are drawn out by Masonry's Square and Compass tools—the chief monikers of the Craft. I explained this symbolism in *Written in Stone*, and I published an online article on this topic in April 2011, titled *The Masonic Square & Compasses*—*Decoded:*



Masonic Square & Compass symbol.

Remember back to Chapter Two—the Compass draws a circle, and the Square draws a square. It's a very similar idea to the Chinese one.

"Heaven is figured by a circle and earth by a square ", so we read in the famous Huai Nan Tzu , a sprawling, encyclopedic work of Chinese thought that was compiled late in the second century BC. It says:

"The way of Heaven is termed circular, and the way of earth square. The square governs darkness (yin) and the round governs brightness (yang)."

— Huai-nan Tzu , Book of the Master of Huai-nan

Thus Heaven and Earth, here described as Circle and Square, are exact symbolic equivalents of the "Male" and "Female," whose union was the central feature of the Mysteries which brought about the candidate's deification. They are also exact symbolic equivalents of the Masonic tools, the Compass and Square, which denote the Spiritual / Material duality in balance, a symbolic image of every last one of us humans.

Masonry's chief emblem thus shows how divinity exists within each one of us! This is the Order's Secret, and it is the secret expressed here in the Chinese symbols as well; evidence of a pre-historic Three religion that modern religions have sought to quell.

In pre-Christian China, one also found the Demiurge, Fuxi and his female

counterpart, Nuwa, displaying the compass and square as symbols of their male and female creative powers.



Both male and female figures together strike the GodSelf icon pose. Fuxi holds the square in his left hand, while Nuwa holds the compass in her right hand. This is reminiscent of the white dot inside Yin and black dot inside Yang.

Compare this to the Rebis image, which we saw already in an earlier chapter:



Ancient paintings of Nuwa and Fuxi holding the tools of creation—compass and square.

Even earlier, the I Ching (ca. 720-474 BC) had described the heavens as *round* (just as the compass delineates the horizon), and the earth as *square* (with its "four corners"):

"Ch'ien is Heaven. It is round. It is the ruler, the father...K'un is the earth, the Mother...the level"

—I Ching, Appendix 5

Esoteric thought teaches that the Compass & Square symbolize the inside and outside of our being. In Masonry, it is taught that the compass draws a circle and the square a square, each representing the duality of Man's true nature—the circle his eternal soul, and the square his physical body. Amazingly, this is the very same idea espoused by the I Ching and pre-Christian Chinese esoteric thought—they even are so remarkably similar that they use the same symbolic tools and shapes to represent

Man's dual nature!

In an 1889 *Hong Kong Telegraph* article about "Freemasonry in China," it was suggested that the Compass and the Square are embedded in the very structure of the Chinese language:

"In the language...I find in the earliest works that have come down to us use the word "Kueichü," literally the compasses and square, used as the symbol of right conduct. The man who had the compasses and square, and regulated his life thereby being then as now (for the expression has come down to modern times) considered to possess the secrets and to carry out the principles of true propriety. And here I may remark that the square and compasses have a much deeper symbolic meaning than most masons associate with them, and that there can be no doubt that it was in this deeper sense the Chinese used the symbol."

The author of the *Telegraph* article, Chaloner Albaster, a British Freemason who apparently spent considerable time in China, believed that Chinese culture showed evidence of ancient beliefs that may have influenced the development of Freemasonry:

"I venture to think I shall be able to show, traces of Freemasonry in China; I have found existing there a mystic faith on which there seems some reason to believe our Craft is founded."

For many ancient Chinese, and for many other ancient cultures, the fall of the soul into the human body is a beautiful occurrence; however, it could be conceived as a tragedy if and only if during physical existence the soul loses its way back home (i.e., knowledge of how to ascend back up to the higher spiritual plane).

We in the West have lost knowledge of both the Fall and the Return. Our souls have descended into the material world and we've lost knowledge not only of the Fall but of the Return. Our soul is not, however, completely powerless; it has its own powers by virtue of its eternal nature, inherent powers that can be rediscovered and exercised here in the material world. By using the Masonic number Three or the "balance of opposites" we can remember who we are and begin to recognize who we are, where we came from, and how to remember the way home.

In ancient China, this power of Three was associated with the spiritual Tao force, informing all things, including our souls. In the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, published in 1841, an article titled *The Chinese Secret Triad Society of the Tien-ti-huih* describes the importance that this ancient Chinese Secret Society attached to the number Three:

"Tien-ti-huih. It has been called by the Chinese, the three united, from being composed of the members of a sacred triad; viz. heaven, earth, and man...There appears to be some mystic importance attached to the number three by the Chinese'; Three is the number also of the officials, or elder brethren, of the drops of blood shed during the inaugural rites, of their days of meeting during the month, and of the prescribed prostrations before the idol...The resemblance between some of the rites observed by the Tien-tihuih, their principles of mutual support in all parts of the world, their conventional signs of recognition, the mystery observed at their meetings, their styling themselves brothers, the oath of secrecy, and the mystic importance attached to the number three, remind us of the western system of Freemasonry..."

—Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 6 (1841)

The evidence for the presence of the magical concepts of duality and "reconciling the opposites" in China is overwhelming. The Chinese even use similar symbolism and terminology to the Freemasons, making it clear that the "Three" religion was present in ancient China, and has been handed down through Chinese secret societies even up to modern times.

The wisdom encoded into the GodSelf Icon was as important in ancient China as it has been in the ancient histories of Egypt, Europe and South America. The fact that the terminology of Chinese philosophers and mystics has so much in common with that of mystics elsewhere in the world, to the point that visiting Freemasons feel at home in reviewing Chinese customs, is another link of a long chain of evidence leading back to an ancient source culture that spread its message around the world.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN GodSelf Icon in India

Hinduism is a religion or way of life followed by the majority of people in India and Nepal. It also exists among significant populations outside of the subcontinent and has over 900 million adherents worldwide. Unlike most other religions, Hinduism has no single founder and no single scripture. Instead it is linked by a shared philosophy or underlying set of principles. Familiarity with certain Hindu terms is indispensable in any discussion of this culture.

Maya.

Hinduism teaches that the physical world as we experience it is made up of a shifting set of dualities, similar to the ancient China's yin and yang. These dualities shift back and forth constantly, creating a world of *maya* —a dream or illusion. Everything is constantly changing, but it stays in one position long enough to appear real relative to beings like us. Reality, then, must lie in some other order of being—an invisible, spiritual plane that cannot be measured by the senses, one that is *behind* the visible, material plane and somehow supportive of it.

Brahman.

This other order of being is called "brahman"—the eternal-spiritualinvisible plane that exists above and behind the duality of the transitorymaterial-visible plane, and that mysteriously supports it. Brahman is absolute truth, unchangeable, incorruptible, and inexhaustible, like a steady beam of light that never changes. That which is not Brahman is transient, ephemeral, and temporary; in a word, "material." Brahman is pure awareness and unending consciousness, sometimes explained by the three words sat-cit-ananda or "being-consciousness-bliss." Sparks of Brahman can be thought of as having "fallen" and landed down here in the sensory world where they've temporarily become embodied in matter. These sparks "animate" and "inform" matter—animals, people, and every aspect of Creation. When embodied in humans, these trapped sparks of Brahman are called *Atman*.

Atman.

In Western terms, Atman translates to "soul within" or "god within." In fact, Atman in Sanskrit literally means "god within"—our true Selves, total awareness, pure perception. As Joseph Campbell explained in *The Power of Myth* video series:

"In India there is a beautiful greeting, in which the palms are placed together, and you bow to the other person...The position of the palms together—this we use when we pray...That is a greeting, which says that the god that is in you recognizes the god in the other. These people are aware of the divine presence in all things. When you enter an Indian home as a guest, you are greeted as a visiting deity."

The Atman can be likened to a piece of heaven or Brahman that fell into the material world and knit itself a body. We, our souls, are that piece of heaven. Brahman and Atman are two names for the same unalterable truth. Having suffered a "fall," the Atman is temporarily "cut off" from Brahman, its source; but the Atman never loses its divinity. Like water flowing back into an ocean, the Atman rejoins the Brahman fully and seamlessly once the body perishes, and remains in the Brahman either for a short time or forever, depending on how "at home" or accustomed the soul feels in the light.

Reincarnation.

The ancient doctrine of reincarnation allows the separation of the Atman and the Brahman just described. Reincarnation implies that each life is not a one-time event, but a single "act" in a lengthy "play." The plot of this play is the soul's struggle for permanent liberation from the lower material world in which we live and ascension back home to its higher spiritual

source.

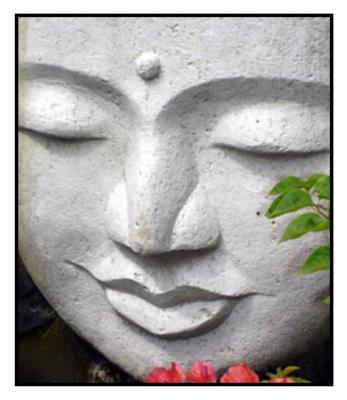
Karma.

The law of karma writes this grand drama as it unfolds. When the soul transfers itself from one body to another, it carries the good and evil deeds it has committed or accumulated. Karma teaches new lessons during newer lives by building on old lessons taught during older ones. Karma slowly chisels away all the materiality (desires, attachments, addictions, ill-will, negativity) that the soul covers itself in, one lifetime after another. It teaches virtue and conscious power over sloth and carnal pleasure. It is the moment that a person becomes truly aware of the reality of this law, aware not just intellectually but spiritually, that they can take a step forward and begin to shape their destiny, even altering future events.

Moksha.

After a certain number of births and deaths and lessons learned, the soul becomes liberated from the cycle of birth, death, and re-birth. Freeing itself from all attachments and addictions, the soul attains *moksha* or "release" from the material world. Becoming liberated or freed is the aim of all Hindus, Buddhists, and many other spiritual seekers. Once freed, the soul can willfully incarnate down here into the material world to experience a life, should it choose. Now liberated, it can do so without fear of imprisonment or forgetting its home in the higher spiritual heaven, as most of us today have forgotten. This concept of a soul incarnating on earth then ascending back up home to heaven at will is expressed in the biblical Jacob's ladder story, where one can climb up and down the ladder.

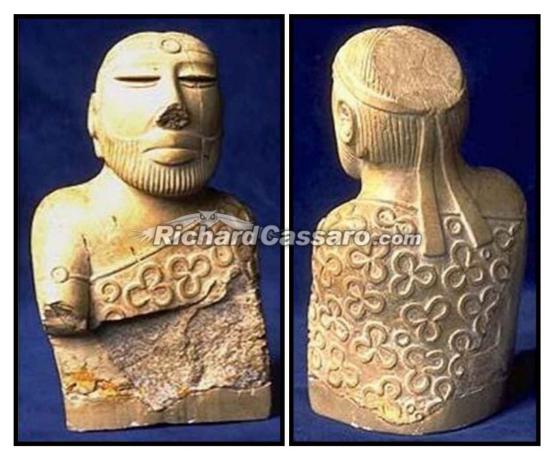
Finding the "soul within" by awakening the Third Eye is fundamental to Hinduism. Hindus place a red *bindu* dot on the forehead over the vestigial Third Eye. The dot is round and forms the apex of a triangle, with the two lower eyes signifying the lower pairs of contraries.



Awakening the Third Eye is an ancient concept in India, grounded in Hinduism, where practitioners wear a bindu dot on the forehead to symbolize the Third Eye chakra.

Indian women today wear the bindi as a symbol of their having entered into marital union—a "synthesis" of male/female opposites that denotes the power of three. Exactly when this started in India's history is unknown. But by all accounts it is very ancient, perhaps even prehistoric.

Around 500 BC, an offshoot of Hinduism called Buddhism began to take root. Buddhism was born in India, the setting of Hinduism—much like Christianity was born in Israel, the setting of Judaism. From India, Buddhism spread to China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma, Laos, and Vietnam. As we shall see, Buddhism draws much from its source religion, Hinduism. As with Hinduism, the Third Eye is a central concept in Buddhism. Buddhism's founder was Prince "Siddhartha" (563 –483 BC) meaning "he who achieves his goal." His "Middle Way" religion is completely parallel to the ancient Triptych religion and Freemasonry, though most scholars and Masons don't realize it. We see examples of the Third Eye in one of the earliest civilizations of India, the so-called Indus Valley civilization (3300–1300 BC) which flourished in northwest South Asia, extending from what today is northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and northwest India. Scholars believe that the Indus Valley civilization, along with ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, was one of three early civilizations of the Old World, and of the three the most widespread.



So-called "Priest King" statue, Mohenjodaro.

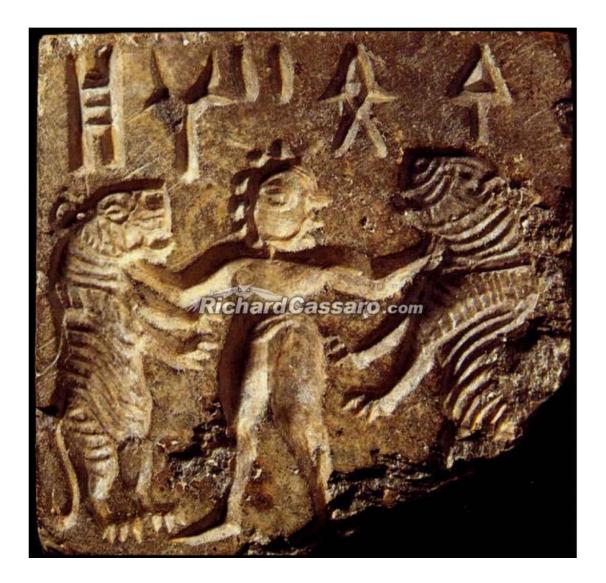
This ancient Indian statue of a "priest", which was discovered in the ancient and highly advanced "lost" city of Mohenjodaro, seems to depict one of the oldest Third Eye images known to the world. It may stand as proof that the religion and spiritual practices of the later Hindus and even Buddhists evolved from earlier times. Note the three-in-one design on the priest's clothing, which scholars call a "trefoil" motif.

Along with the Third Eye forehead dot, there is another artifact that seems to have held as much importance to the ancient peoples of the Indus Valley civilization as it now does for modern archaeologists and scholars who study Antiquity—the GodSelf Icon. We can see a clear example of the GodSelf Icon in this very ancient seal from Mohenjodaro (c. 2500 BC), one of the largest settlements of the ancient Indus Valley civilization:

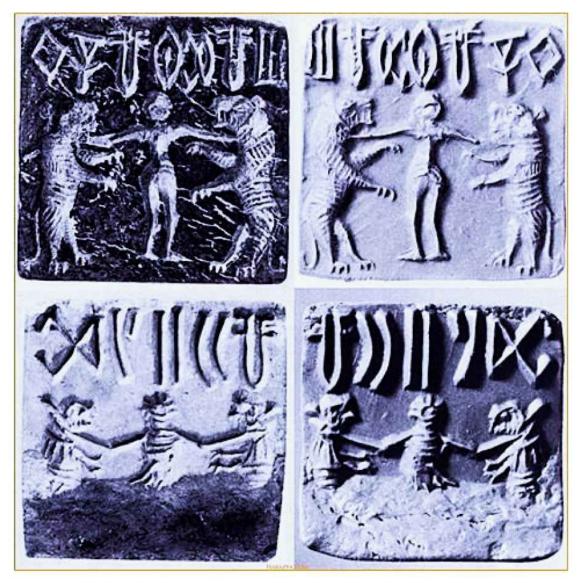


Mohenjodaro stone seal depicting GodSelf Icon mastering two rampant tigers.

A seal is a device for making an impression in wax, clay, paper, or some other medium, including an embossment on paper, and is also the impression thus made. This seal appears to be one of the most ancient known GodSelf Icons of the Indus Valley civilization. The fact that the hero is mastering twin felines in the form of tigers matches many other GodSelf Icons we've seen from other cultures. Below is another GodSelf Icon, also from Mohenjodaro:



Some scholars argue that the tigers held in each hand of this hero represent duality in nature—the night vs. day, sun vs. moon, hot vs. cold, etc. Such animal representations of duality hold an important place in the iconography and mythology of Indian civilization.



Mohenjodaro stone seals depicting GodSelf lcons.

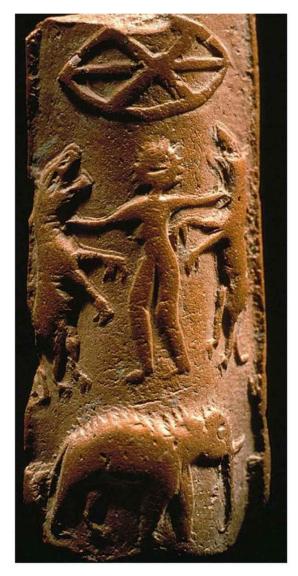
Similar ideas about duality and the synthesis of opposites such as left and right would later become a prominent feature of the Hindu religion:

"The Hindu world-view holds the cosmos to be holonomic and symmetric, but within that symmetry the existence of two opposite and complimentary principles is recognized. The Supreme Reality is an indivisible whole, but within that unity of the whole is a fundamental dualism: of a male principle Purusha and a female principle Prakriti. In Oneness there are Two, in Duality is Unity. Every point of view has an opposite point of view. To achieve a

balance of these opposites is harmony, a state of dynamic stability."

— Kirti Trivedi, *The Asymmetry of Symmetry: The Left and Right in Hindu Philosophy, Art and Life*

Another example of the GodSelf Icon from the Indus Valley civilization is shown below. This molded tablet shows a female deity mastering two tigers and standing above an elephant:



Female GodSelf Icon mastering twin tigers, standing above an elephant.

It is not unusual to see a GodSelf Icon atop a powerful or symbolic animal such as an elephant. This is a way of emphasizing the power of the image. In Egypt, the Cippus of Horus depicted Horus standing on twin crocodiles, while the alchemical Rebis stands on a dragon. A single Indus script depicting a spoked wheel is above the deity's head—*reminiscent of the Aten symbol we've seen depicted over the heads of countless GodSelf Icons stretching from Egypt to Persia to Mesopotamia.*

In his book *Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization*, Mark Kenoyer, a member of the Faculty of Archaeology at the University of Wisconsin,

described this seal:

"The thick jungles of the Indus Valley were full of tigers and leopards, so it is not surprising that the image of a ferocious feline is a recurring motif in ritual narratives on seals as well as molded tablets...The figure strangling the two tigers may represent a female, as a pronounced breast can be seen in profile. Earlier discoveries of this motif on seals from Mohenjo-daro definitely show a male figure, and most scholars have assumed some connection with the carved seals from Mesopotamia that illustrate episodes from the famous Gilgamesh epic. The Mesopotamian epics show lions being strangled by a hero, whereas the Indus narratives render tigers being strangled by a figure, sometimes clearly males, sometimes ambiguous or possibly female. This motif of a hero or heroine grappling with two wild animals could have been created independently for similar events that may have occurred in Mesopotamia as well as the Indus valley."

We can compare this tablet image with depictions of Lajja Gauri, an ancient Hindu goddess associated with fertility and abundance. In the picture below, she is portrayed in an ancient Hindu GodSelf Icon pose, where we see the sushumna or Middle Pillar displayed as her torso, while the ida and pingala opposites are represented by the twin lotus stems she holds symmetrically in each hand.



Lajja Gauri, an ancient Hindu goddess associated with fertility and abundance.

Lajja Gauri, described as the most ancient goddess form in Hinduism, is always portrayed with a lotus-head, and with her legs opened and raised in a manner suggesting either birthing or sexual receptivity. Early depictions of Lajja Gauri in Shaktism cults have been found in the Indus Valley seals, though most of her later depictions date to the 1st-3rd centuries. Shaktism is a denomination of Hinduism that focuses worship upon Shakti or Devi—the Hindu Divine Mother (lit., 'the Goddess')—as the absolute, ultimate Godhead or the Supreme Brahman itself, with all other forms of divinity considered to be merely her diverse manifestations. The goddess' body is symmetrical and her arms are bent upwards. In each hand she holds a lotus stem; these appear to be mirror images of each other, and thus seem to symbolize opposites.

The lotus flowers held in Lajja Gauri's hands call to mind the Hindu creation story, where Brahma, the Creator, is said to have been born from a lotus. The twin lotus flowers, taken together, symbolize duality but may

also symbolize creation and destruction, the Golden Age and the Dark Age, yang and yin. India's ancient Yuga doctrine, analogous to Plato's Great Year idea and to similar Mesoamerican beliefs, holds that history is cyclical in character, made up of vast repeating series of ages. Each age has its own particular qualities. Interestingly, all three civilizations— Mesoamerican, Greek and Indian—give dates that place a "Golden Age" more than 10,000 years ago!

In his book, *The Hindu Temple*, published by the University of Chicago Press, Dr. George Michell explains the Hindu concept of the ages (yugas):

"Each cycle of creation to destruction is divided into four ages (yugas) arranged in order of declining strength, peace and happiness...Man's entanglement in this cycle is likened to a spell or illusion (maya) and it is the aim of all Indian thought to learn the secret of this maya, and, if possible, to cut through it into a reality that lies beyond. In Hinduism this liberating process is evocatively termed 'release' (moksha)."

Hindu "time" is thus constituted by the periodic and infinite repetition of the creation and dissolution of the universe. This distinguishes Hindu cosmogony from that of the monotheistic / Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), which teaches that the creation and the destruction of the world is strictly linear.

Heinrich Robert Zimmer (1890 – 1943), an Indologist and historian of South Asian art who is often described as the most important German scholar in Indian Philology after Max Müller (1823-1900), studied the Yugas and described them in his book *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* :

"According to the mythologies of Hinduism, each world cycle is subdivided into four Yugas or world ages. These are comparable to the four ages of the Greco-Roman traditions, and like the latter decline in moral excellence as the round proceeds. The classical ages took their names from the metals—gold, silver, brass and iron —the Hindu from the four throws of the Hindu dice game—Krita, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali. In both cases the appellations suggest the relative virtues of the periods as they succeed each other in a slow

irreversible procession."

This Yuga doctrine is strongly connected with Indian GodSelf Icon depictions found in Hindu Triptych Temples, which are numerous in both ancient and modern India. Among many other pairs of opposites, the twin serpents symbolize the undulating rise and fall of civilization—the alternating golden and dark ages:



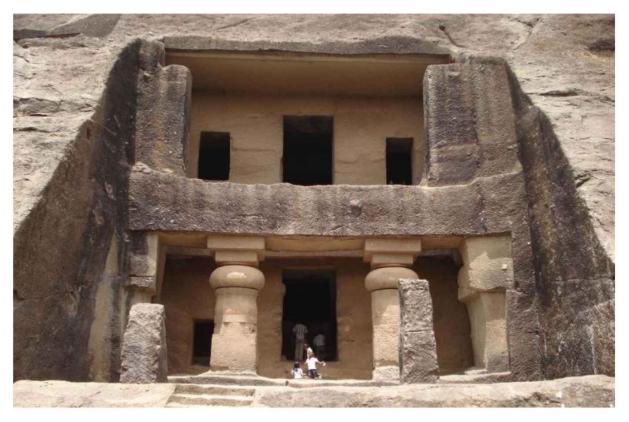
Deity holding twin serpents symmetrically.

It is in India more than in any other place that the link between a sophisticated philosophy based on balancing opposites is mostly strongly connected to an identifiable religion, Hinduism. In fact, India is the birthplace of two of the most important religious traditions known to mankind. Buddhism is effectively a variant of Hinduism, which stresses finding a "Middle Way" between two opposite paths, essentially the same idea expressed by the Triptych architectural pattern.



Ancient Triptych Temple entrance with twin animals guarding the pyramidal structure behind it. Konark Sun Temple in Odisha, India.

The entrance to Konark Sun Temple, in Odisha, India, is a three-door Triptych. In front of the Triptych are twin animals called Gajasimha (a mythical hybrid animal with the head of an elephant and the body of a lion), which guard the entrance. This touch recalls the "twin lions" motif we discussed at the beginning of this book.

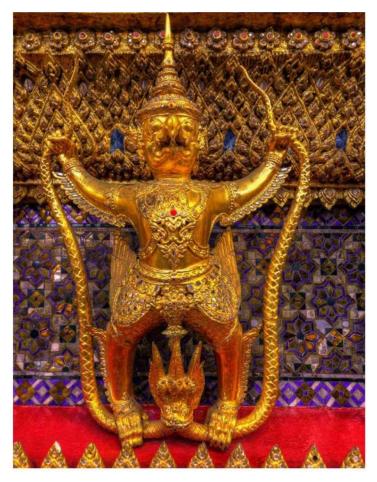


Triptych entrance into the Kanheri Caves, a group of rock-cut monuments located on the western outskirts of Mumbai.

Triptychs like the one in the photo above appear again and again throughout India, here shown adorning of the entrance into the mysterious rock-hewn caves of Kanheri Caves. Note the massive twin pillars that guard the entrance, reminiscent of the Masonic Jachin and Boaz pillars.

In *Written in Stone,* I dwelt at great length on the major tenets of Hinduism, whose concept of opening the Third Eye through the *anja chakra,* by means of a meditative practice known as Kundalini yoga, probably comes closer than any other surviving religious tradition to describing how ancient people such as the Egyptians practiced their religion. If you would like to gain a deeper understanding of Hindu beliefs and how they relate to other religious traditions, *Written in Stone* is the go-to book for background reading on the subject. In this book, I want to stick to the subject of how the GodSelf Icon has been used throughout centuries of Indian history to represent graphically how meditation and self-mastery works.

The images below, called the Garuda, represent utterly beautiful depictions of the GodSelf Icon as a vehicle to represent an instruction in how to achieve spiritual mastery:



Garuda as GodSelf Icon.



Garuda as GodSelf Icon.

The Garuda is a large bird-like creature or humanoid bird that appears in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Garuda is the mount (vahana) of the Lord Vishnu, and when they are depicted together or alone both he and Vishnu are often depicted striking the GodSelf Icon pose:



Vishnu striking the GodSelf Icon pose while riding Garuda. His two hands are depicted as facing forward, with one palm up and the other down. This is a classic Buddha posture, which denotes duality in balance.



Vishnu striking the GodSelf Icon pose while riding Garuda.

Similar to the image above, the following image shows Garuda striking the GodSelf Icon pose while holding the tails of twin serpents that meet to form a unity that arises from duality. He has a Third Eye bindi dot on his forehead:



Garuda with Third Eye.

In *Written in Stone,* I went into considerable detail about the Hindu religion because it is my belief that its teachings are closest to what the GodSelf Icon is meant to represent. Understanding the concepts and traditions of yoga carries us into the world that predated and generated advanced civilizations such as Egypt, Sumer, Mesopotamia, the Maya, the Incas, and that helped shape Greece, Rome and early Europe. Though the technologies of ancient peoples were greatly limited in comparison to those we employ today, their powerful approach to the spiritual side of existence helped them make the most out of what they had. I think we have much to learn from them about the cultivation of our inner powers in order to live life to the fullest.

Many saints and sages in relatively modern times understood how to develop these inner powers, and as a result they stand out in our history.

One such sage was Karni Mata, who is famous in India. She lived a chaste virgin life of 150 years from the late 14th century to the early 16th century. Karni Mata is worshipped at the famous Temple of the White Rats in Rajisthan. She is traditionally portrayed in the manner of a GodSelf Icon:



Silver door with image of Karni Mata depicted in a GodSelf Icon pose.

In this image, Karni Mata carries an upward-pointing trident in her right hand, with a buffalo demon impaled on the butt end; in her left hand, she holds by the hair the severed head of a man-like demon.

This Karni Mata image is reminiscent of many ancient pre-Inca GodSelf Icons, like this Moche figure where the hero holds a severed head in one hand and a sword or blade in the other:



Moche GodSelf Icon. Compare to Karni Mata image.

Countless depictions of Karni Mata show the sun and moon over her right and left hands, linking the GodSelf pose to duality. This is reminiscent of many depictions of the crucifix, as we saw in Chapter Three. It's also reminiscent of Michelangelo's depiction of God as portrayed on the Sistine Chapel:



The Karni Mata Temple in Rajasthan, India, also known as the Temple of Rats because more than 20,000 white rats live there, features a Triptych entrance flanked by two lions:



Karni Mata temple in Rajisthan.

Here is a description of a pilgrimage taken by a modern-day devotee of Karni Mata:

"Our driver was not sure where the temple was located. However we set out bright and early from Gajner palace and was guided to the temple by Her grace. The desert sun beat down on us as we walked towards the beautiful marble temple. As soon as we got in we were surrounded by hundreds of mice. They hardly seemed to notice the people who were milling around...What was most remarkable was that none of them were afraid. Normally mice will scuttle off into their holes at the approach of human feet. Here they moved about unafraid, busily attending to their own agenda, oblivious to the rest of the world."

The case of Karni Mata is far from an isolated one. There are GodSelf Icons associated with Hindu influence throughout Southern and Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia, situated between India and China, has been the birthplace of several cultures, some of which rank among the world's greatest civilizations. Most of the countries of Southeast Asia at one time or another came under the cultural and religious influence of India. The photos in the sections below, which come from all over the Hindu sphere of influence, will give you some idea of just how influential Hinduism was throughout the South Asian region.

INDONESIA

Although Indonesia is predominantly Muslim today, Hinduism and Buddhism were the dominant religions between the 4th and the 15th centuries. Sukuh Temple, which was built in the 15th century on the island of Java, is one of the most beautiful Hindu temples in Indonesia. On its outer wall, we see a GodSelf Icon holding twin vajra implements in each hand. The vajra was a ritual object that supposedly had the characteristics of both a diamond and a thunderbolt.



Sukuh temple in Indonesia.

A Triptych is clearly visible at Prambanan, the largest Hindu temple in Indonesia, which is said to be dedicated to the Trimurti, the expression of God as the Creator (Brahma), the Sustainer (Vishnu) and the Destroyer (Shiva). Prambanan is one of the largest Hindu temples in Southeast Asia:



Prambanan is the largest Hindu temple in Indonesia.

GodSelf Icons were depicted on everyday objects throughout Indonesia. Here are two well-preserved examples of ladies' combs found in Timor and Tanimbar:



A fine women's comb from the Indonesian island of Timor.

From the 9th century, the Minahasa tribes have placed their dead sitting up in stone sarcophagi called *waruga*. Since 1600 AD, these waruga graves are made of stones carved in the shape of a house. Many of them feature GodSelf Icon decorative motifs. Some local people believe that the GodSelf Icon image is an integral part of native culture dating from megalithic times. Below are several characteristic examples:



Waruga (stone tomb) in Minahasa, North Sulawesi, Indonesia.



Waruga (stone tomb) in Minahasa, North Sulawesi, Indonesia.



Waruga (stone tomb) in Minahasa, North Sulawesi, Indonesia.



Waruga (stone tomb) in Minahasa, North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Although there are no examples of waruga pre-dating the 9th century, it is interesting to speculate, as Indonesian tour guides often do, about how the GodSelf Icon came to be such a prominent feature of these tombstones. Could there have been a pre-existing Stone Age tradition that meshed with Hindu beliefs?

SRI LANKA

Hinduism came to Sri Lanka, which was under Muslim domination, via Tamil traders in the 9th Century. The country is now primarily Buddhist. Many beautiful household objects since the arrival of Tamil traders have featured GodSelf Icons:



Ivory comb depicting Lakshmi, Sri Lanka.



Ivory comb depicting Lakshmi, Sri Lanka, 18th century.



Chased Silver Box, Sri Lanka, c. 1900.

VIETNAM

Vietnam is among the Southeast Asian countries where Hinduism has very deep roots. Civilization in Vietnam, according to local tradition, goes back as far as 2879 BC, with the Hung Bang kings, whose dynasty lasted until 258 BC. The country is strewn with Triptych temples and GodSelf loons, most of which were produced in the Hindu-dominated Champa kingdom, which flourished along the coast of south and central Vietnam from to second to the 19th century.



Hindu artwork from the Cham Museum in Vietnam.



Hindu artwork from the Cham Museum in Vietnam.



Cham Museum in Vietnam, artwork depicting the Hindu presence in Vietnam.



Tympanum Depicting Vishnu Anantasayin and the Birth of Brahma, Sandstone, Museum of Cham Sculpture, Da Nang, Vietnam.

CAMBODIA

The Triptych and the GodSelf Icon played an important role among a series of Hindu kings who ruled over large swaths of Southeast Asia from 802 to 1431 AD. With their capital at Angkor City in modern-day Cambodia, these Hindu kings founded the ancient and mysterious Khmer civilization, which left a legacy of architectural splendor, including the country's cultural icon, Angkor Wat, with its intricate bas-reliefs, strange acoustics and magnificent soaring towers.

Note the mind-numbingly beautiful Triptych pattern embedded in Angkor Wat's architecture:



Angkor Wat, Cambodia, Triptych entrance, c. 12th century.

Cambodia's Angkor Wat, which is said to have been built by the mysterious Khmer people between 802 AD and 1220 AD, is the largest temple complex in the world. It is an astonishing beautiful place. In these images, the Triptych "Pattern of Three" is evident in the shape of Angkor Wat's three legendary domes or cupolas (above). A similar "Pattern of Three" is abundant throughout Khmer constructions, such as on tombs and temples.

The GodSelf Icon is a prominent feature of Khmer depictions of Hindu gods and goddesses:



Cambodia, Angkor Period, c. 12th to 13th century CE.

In the image above, a bronze female figure holds a rolled-up scroll in her left hand and the stem of a plant in her right hand. As with many other GodSelf Icons we have discussed, this image seems to be making a connection between the harvest as represented by the plant and a "balancing" object (the scroll) that apparently has an opposite and equally significant meaning. The image below of Lokeshvara ("god of universal compassion") is powerfully expressive because of the way the eye is compelled to move between the two upraised arms and the two arms at rest. Ultimately, the viewer focuses on the god's forehead, the seat of his all-knowing Third Eye.

Angkor Wat is one of history's most astonishing and enduring achievements. At its height, Angkor was home to about 750,000 people and stretched across almost 400 square miles. The empire ruled a vast territory that today crosses into Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. The word Angkor is derived from the Sanskrit word "nagara" meaning "holy city," and vatika, the Sanskrit word for temple, giving us "the holy city which is a temple." Essentially a three-layered pyramid, Angkor Wat has five distinctive towers, 64 meters high. On the outer wall are eight panels of bas-relief depicting scenes of Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. These relics of past grandeur bear mute testimony to one of the least known yet most glorious chapters in the history of mankind.

The bas-reliefs illustrate Hindu mythology, and every spare inch is carved with an intricate work of art. These carvings are of the highest quality and are among the most beautifully executed Khmer artwork—monumental, subtle, sophisticated, mature in style and unrivalled for sheer beauty anywhere in India.



Bronze figure of Lokeshvara, Khmer, Angkor period, Bayon Style, 13th Century.

The architecture exemplifies not only a profound level of mastery as far as carving stones, but it also preserves what appears to be a transcendent knowledge of harmonizing opposites—both Masonic themes.

Based on this sheer brilliance, a handful of 18th and 19th century researchers have asserted that a prehistoric "lost civilization" that flourished long before the Khmer is responsible for building Angkor Wat, and that the Khmer simply renovated and added artistic designs to the buildings. There is no evidence to support this claim, but it is very interesting to note that the Triptychs here match precisely the Triptychs that inform far more ancient temples found across Antiquity.

French naturalist Henri Mouhot stumbled upon Angkor Wat; stunned at the jungle ruins, Mouhot wrote:

"One of these temples...erected by some ancient Michael Angelomight take its place besides our most beautiful buildings—Grander than anything left to us by Greece or Rome"

— Henri Mahout , Travel Notes

From the era of King Jayavaram II (802-850 AD) onwards, Khmer kings not only ruled by divine consent, but actually came to be worshipped as gods themselves. Each king was revered as the "god-king," *deva-raja* , which stands for the "king who has found his inner godhood." The kings usually surrounded themselves with wise men or learned Khmer Brahmins as their counselors. These Brahmins are said to have acquired vast knowledge, inherited from father to son or taught within a particular tribe, clan or family over the course of centuries. Being advised by the wise counsel of the Brahmins helped the Khmer kings to administer the country efficiently, resulting in a stronger empire.



Ta Keo is a temple-mountain featuring Triptych entrances in Angkor.

Here we see indirect evidence that, when we center ourselves and concentrate on the Third Eye (as Angkor Wat's stone Triptychs visibly teaches us), we balance the opposites and create a tunnel to the eternity within us.

That the Khmer were master stonemasons there can be no doubt. Skeptics will claim that there is no clear evidence that the men who created these architectural "Patterns of Three" understood and celebrated the "Third Eye" doctrine of the reconciliation of opposites. The answer to such an objection is quite clear: The Khmer were Hindus, and the Hindus are quite familiar with the Third Eye concept of balancing the opposites.

In Hinduism and also Buddhism, Third Eye wisdom is not shrouded in

myth or symbol, as in Western civilization, but is clearly visible on the surface. Opening one's Third Eye, long veiled as the West's "Masonic Secret of Three," is a prominent feature of the main religions throughout the mystical "East," from which all light is said to come, according to Masonic lore, and where nothing is hidden.



CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, we've seen the widespread prevalence of the GodSelf Icon, and we've endeavored to show that in every major ancient center of civilization and culture the GodSelf Icon held the same meaning; namely, that of "transcending duality" to find the "soul at the center within."

This discovery goes against all the scholarly evidence so far gathered in the history of academia and archaeology, and against everything scholars have always told us about the past. We're told that after man evolved from the apes, he went from caveman to space traveler in a few short thousand years. Our technology is seen as the pinnacle of human culture. But is this true or merely an illusion?

The evidence presented here indicates instead that our usage of technology only masks the fact that we are indeed living in a "dark age," an age called "Kali Yuga" among the ancient Hindus, and that there once existed a Golden Age in human history, during which humankind in general may have shared the same Universal Religion. It appears that, as history progressed, we have experienced a slow decline in spiritual terms.

This concept of a Universal Religion based on principles described in this book was shared by the Traditionalist School of thought, who called it the Perennial Philosophy.

"The Traditionalist School was a group of 20th century thinkers concerned with what they considered to be the demise of traditional forms of knowledge, both aesthetic and spiritual, within Western society. The principal thinkers in this tradition are René Guénon, Ananda Coomaraswamy and Frithjof Schuon. Other important thinkers in this tradition include Titus Burckhardt, Martin Lings, Jean-Louis Michon, Marco Pallis, Huston Smith, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Jean Borella and Julius Evola. A central concept of this school is that of the perennial philosophy based upon an ancient belief that all the world's great religions share the same origin (in a primordial principle of transcendent unity) and are, at root, based on the same metaphysical principles. These ideas are sometimes referred to in the Latin as philosophia perennis [Perennial Philosophy]."

—Wikipedia

The future king of England, Prince Charles, talked about this idea at the 2006 Sacred Web Conference, where he said:

"The traditionalist perspective is that we are living at the end of an historical cycle. At the beginning of this cycle all and every possibility is latent. However, as the cycle evolves or unfolds, these possibilities begin to manifest themselves in the world of time and space, beginning with the highest and gradually moving towards the lower. At the end of the cycle, the very lowest possibilities manifest themselves. The traditionalists tell us that at the cosmic level this process cannot be withheld or interrupted. It must take place. The cycle, they say, must exhaust itself before a new one can replace it."

Julius Evola (1898 – 1974), an Italian philosopher, painter, and esotericist, was one of the Traditionalists who believed we're living in a Dark Age. According to Dr. E. Christian Kopff, Associate Professor of Classics and Associate Director of the Honors Program at the University of Colorado Boulder:

"It may be discouraging to think that we are living in a Dark Age, but the Kali-Yuga is also the end of a cosmic cycle. When it ends, a Golden Age will begin—what our traditionalist American Founders called novus ordo saeclorum.

... For Guénon and Evola the modern world is the Hindu Kali-Yuga, or Dark Age, that will end one cosmic cycle and introduce another. Guénon advocates enduring the modern world by apolitia (withdrawal from politics) and transcending it by spiritual askesis. Evola believed that real men do not passively accept the world they happened to be born into. His description in Revolt of the World of Tradition with its warrior aristocracies and sacral kingship hints at what is required to overcome the modern world personally and overthrow it politically."

-Christian Kopff, Julius Evola & Radical Traditionalism

According to Kopff, America's Founding Fathers believed that our Kali Yuga age would be followed by a Golden Age. We find evidence of this on the Great Seal of the United States, which was created by them to celebrate the birth of the United States. Many naïve young people have taken to believe that the phrase Novus Ordo Seclorum is announcing the birth of a "New World Order," and secretly encodes the Masonic Founding Fathers' efforts (many of America's founders were Freemasons) to take over the world, but this suggestion is ridiculous.



The motto *Novus Ordo Seclorum* is said to have been coined by Charles Thomson in June 1782. It's based on an ancient poem in Virgil's tenpoem book, the *Eclogues* (c. 37 BC), which expresses the longing for a new era of peace and happiness. The original Latin in Virgil's Eclogue IV (line 5) is: "*Magnus ab integro seclorum nascitur ordo*" or "A great order of the ages is born anew."

To get a better sense of its meaning, here's a brief translation of the passage at the beginning of Virgil's poem, a passage that refers to the Sibyl who prophesied the fate of the Roman Empire:

"Now the last age by Cumae's Sibyl sung Has come and gone, and the majestic roll Of circling centuries begins anew: Justice returns, returns old Saturn's reign, With a new breed of men sent down from heaven. Only do thou, at the boy's birth in whom The iron shall cease, the golden race arise, Befriend him, chaste Lucina; 'tis thine own Apollo reigns. And in thy consulate, This glorious age, O Pollio, shall begin, And the months enter on their mighty march. Under thy guidance, whatso tracks remain Of our old wickedness, once done away, Shall free the earth from never-ceasing fear. He shall receive the life of gods, and see Heroes with gods commingling, and himself Be seen of them, and with his father's worth Reign o'er a world at peace."

In *Written in Stone*, I set forth the idea that pyramids around the world, and the "Third Eye In the Triangle" which forms the pyramid's capstone on the Great Seal of the United States, both symbolize and celebrate the Golden Age—an era around 10,500 BC when a pyramid-building Mother Culture flourished and celebrated the Third Eye religion.

It seems to me that the Founding Fathers understood that the many pyramids scattered across the world were a memory of the Golden Age that had occurred in the past, and that they were recording the evidence for it by means of this symbol of the pyramid and Third Eye, which are both Masonic symbols, as it was clear to them that the Masonic Fraternity was the storehouse of this ancient wisdom.

The Eagle has always been a symbol of transcendence. The hexagram shape of the stars inside the cloud above the Eagle's head symbolizes the balance of opposites (balance of the upward pointing triangle with the

down pointing triangle); but perhaps the most important symbolism shown—and the most pertinent for our inquiry here—is the 13 arrows, symbolizing war, and 13 olive branches, symbolizing peace, in the clutches of the Eagle. As war and peace are opposites, the Eagle clutching opposites in both hands makes the Eagle a perfect GodSelf Icon!



We opened Chapter One with the idea that there are pyramids around the world, and how this ubiquity of pyramid cultures indicates a common origin for ancient civilization. We can now come full circle. The fact that we have pyramids around the world indicates that there was a diffusion of knowledge, and the widespread use of the GodSelf Icon in ancient times is further evidence of this.

The idea of a diffusion of knowledge across Antiquity is not new. Scholars in many fields, including archaeologists, anthropologists, mythologists, once believed (and some continue to believe) that humanity in some way started off from the same knowledge base. The Victorian era scholars believed in this model of history, which has come to be called Diffusionism. Exactly how this Universal Religion came into the hands of the world's earliest cultures—which I like to call the "pyramid cultures" is unknown at this time. Several theories exist. Twentieth century mythologist Joseph Campbell explained Diffusionism eloquently:

"...after years and years and years of reading these things, I am still overwhelmed at the similarities in cultures that are far, far apart. There are two explanations of this. Now, one explanation is that the human psyche is essentially the same all over the world. It is the inward aspect of the human body, which is essentially the same all over the world, with the same organs, with the same instincts, with the same impulse systems, with the same conflicts, the same fears.

There is also the counter theory of diffusion. Now, for instance, when agriculture is first developed, let's say, in the Near East or in Southeast Asia, I mean, these are the two big centers in the old world, then the art of tilling the soil goes forth from this area. And along with it goes a mythology that has to do with fertilizing the earth and bringing up the plants, killing the body, cutting it up, burying it and having the plant come. That myth will go with the agricultural tradition."

— Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth

In my opinion, ancient people worldwide shared a religion based on the "gnosis" or spiritual knowledge that a person's real identity is ultimately "God"—not "God" in the sense of the Bible or the Koran, but "God" in an *inner* sense. We might call this the more ancient and sophisticated concept of God, a concept more accurate than the monotheistic God we find in the Western religions.

As we explained in the preceding chapters, the realization of the GodSelf Icon, which is the discovery of our true nature, goes hand-in-hand with the mystical realization that the material world and material existence in general is illusory. Only when we see beyond the appearances of our everyday physical reality can we make this discovery; and only then can we free ourselves from the delusion that we are our physical bodies, and that our real identity transcends the material.

Across the ages, the idea that the world is an illusion was well-known. It was repeated over and over again, in folk tales, myths, legends and even in nursery rhymes. So a person's real identity is God; but though we are all God, we are God asleep. And though we think we are awake, we are really as in a dream. The awakening from this sleep or dream is the ultimate attainment described in all the world's religions as the realization of our true selves as gods.

No one explained this better than the 20th century philosopher Alan Watts, a British-born American author and speaker, who is best known for interpreting Eastern philosophy for a Western audience. "So then, let's suppose that you were able every night to dream any dream that you wanted to dream, and that you could, for example, have the power within one night to dream 75 years of time, or any length of time you wanted to have. And you would, naturally as you began on this adventure of dreams, you would fulfill all your wishes. You would have every kind of pleasure you could conceive.

"And after several nights, of 75 years of total pleasure each, you would say 'Well, that was pretty great. But now let's have a surprise. Let's have a dream which isn't under control. Where something is going happen to me that I don't know what it's going to be.' And you would dig that and come out of that and say 'Wow, that was a close shave, wasn't it?' And then you would get more and more adventurous, and you would make further and further out gambles as to what you would dream.

"And finally, you would dream where you are now. You would dream the dream of living the life that you are actually living today. That would be within the infinite multiplicity of the choices you would have. Of playing that you weren't God. Because the whole nature of the godhead, according to this idea, is to play that he's not.

"So in this idea, then, everybody is fundamentally the ultimate reality. Not God in a politically kingly sense, but God in the sense of being the self, the deep-down basic whatever there is. And you're all that, only you're pretending you're not."

- Alan Watts, The Dream of Life

The GodSelf Icon is an example of the knowledge that we are divine in our inner nature, and that by transcending the very duality that makes us human, we can find our true god within...the GodSelf.

For every GodSelf Icon you see in this book, I've found five more per culture. I have hand-selected only the finest, to remove all doubt or to help deflect skepticism.

There are many more places that I wanted to include, but I didn't have the space or the academic background to explain some of the more obscure cultural phenomena tied in with the GodSelf Icon in more remote cultures.



latmul art depicting GodSelf Icons and Third Eye imagery.

The latmul people, for example, who live along the middle reaches of the Sepik River, are among the most prolific and accomplished sculptors in New Guinea. They had a complex religion replete with GodSelf Icons and Third Eye forehead circles and dots.

So many books, explorations and careers have been based on the idea that cultures evolved separately, that the case has been closed to any alternative suggestion for decades. This 20th century "control of history" or "control of information" is something that I hope the discovery of the GodSelf Icon will be able to help loosen. I do not rule out the possibility that the truth of history is already known and that the comfortable ideas that constitute mainstream religious doctrines are simply being kept alive to suppress the true ancient wisdom, the wisdom of the GodSelf Icon, that was once shared by the earliest cultures.

We see examples of the GodSelf Icon encoded in modern advertising:



Starbucks logo.

Rockefeller Center, one of the most famous monuments of our secular civilization, is replete with GodSelf Icon images.



Encoded here is not only the doctrine of opposites, but the doctrine of the alternating Light and Dark Ages of Man, with the happy face on the left going upward signifying the Golden Age and those ages associated with it, and the sad face on the right signifying the Dark Age and those ages associated with it.

The GodSelf Icon below appears on a table at Manhattanville College in Purchase, NY, formerly the residence of New York Tribune editor and owner Whitelaw Reid, a one-time Vice Presidential candidate.



Left: Green Man as God Self Icon, from a Victorian-Era table inside Reid Castle in Purchase, New York (c. 1880s). Right: Close-up of same photo.

We see examples of the GodSelf Icon encoded into modern (Masonic) architecture:



These modern GodSelf Icon images tell us that there was a perpetuation of ancient knowledge into modern times. The GodSelf Icon is an important part of human heritage, and it serves no useful purpose to deny or minimize its significance.

I believe that this image, when analyzed in combination with other symbols that often accompany it (like the Triptych, as shown in the image below) and that are somewhat better understood, indicates that ancient people practiced a form of worship that most closely resembles the Indian practice of yoga.



Pena National Palace. The two hands, grasping opposites, are aligned with the Triptych's twin "doors of opposites."

Indian people claim that their religion makes it possible for them to do impossible things: great feats of strength and concentration are commonplace in India. I think there may be a grain of truth in this, as my own practice of meditation has enabled me to surpass in many respects what I was taught were the limits of human powers. I find that I am able to "read" ancient symbols with greater facility than most people read a book. I haven't moved any mountains or Stonehenge-sized boulders yet, but what I know about the powers of the human mind is that that they are equal to nearly any task that can be imagined.

Although the easiest pathway to the achievement of Enlightenment, the development of the pineal gland, is now but a pipe dream for most of us, the GodSelf Icon has retained its ability to ensnare and enlighten us up to

the present day.

My hope is writing this book is that it will enable readers to perceive, in monuments of art, architecture and design that surround us every day, a call to action. Life is precious and unending. By mastering and dominating the conflicts of opposite drives within us, we can channel our energies to achieve the greatness of people like Alexander the Great, Hypatia of Alexandria, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. The GodSelf Icon represents the best we can be, and points to how we can achieve the vision of our inner greatness. *Carpe diem!*



'The Missing Link presents Richard Cassaro's paradigm-shifting archaeological discovery, and builds on the theory he advanced in his 2011 book, Written in Stone.

Cassaro argues persuasively that the Old World symbol known as Master of Animals, is the very same symbol that scholars of New World cultures call the Staff God. He explains that this symbol is the central icon of an ancient wisdom tradition shared by the pyramid cultures across the world. Encoded in this image, which Cassaro calls the "GodSelf Icon," is a complete metaphysical doctrine that encodes a complex set of instructions for inner awakening. With more than 500 stunning illustrations of the GodSelf Icon, Cassaro demonstrates how this wisdom has been encoded on Gothic Cathedrals by medieval Freemasons, and preserved in hermetic and alchemical symbols like the Rebis. By contrasting ancient GodSelf Icons with these modern GodSelf Icon equivalents, Cassaro decodes the rich symbolism surrounding these images, showing step-by-step how this primeval religion is based on the concept of duality and the transcendence of duality. Cassaro makes a compelling case that these were the central concepts of every ancient and indigenous religion on the planet.

Cassaro states his case with stunning clarity, weaving together various images from cultures worldwide, like the Chavín Staff God and Sumerian Master of Animals, with incredible skill and reason. Cassaro backs up his interpretation by comparing these images to the Tao philosophy of balancing Yin and Yang, and to the geometric apex of a triangle balancing its two lower points. Throughout, Cassaro's interpretations challenge conventional scholarship surrounding these images, which he maintains are artifacts of a lost Golden Age civilization.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Russell Cassaro has studied ancient ruins on four different continents (North America, South America, Africa and Europe). Cassaro's 2011 book, Written in Stone, explores connections among Freemasons, medieval cathedral builders and the creators of important ancient monuments, in support of his theory that a spiritually advanced mother culture, lost to history, is behind many of the world's architectural and artistic traditions. Prior to the publication of Written in Stone, Cassaro enjoyed a successful career as a U.S. correspondent for a major Italian publishing house, a managing editor for a popular U.S. magazine, a consultant to print and broadcast media, and a ghostwriter for a best-selling esoteric author. Cassaro has given well-received lectures on his theories in the United States, Egypt, Italy, Spain and Peru.



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