

Reflections on the Great Conjunction as a Turning Point:

On August 21, 2017, thousands of people gathered together across the United States to witness an event that had not occurred since 1918: a total solar eclipse whose pathway crossed from coast to coast of the contiguous United States. With well-deserved hype emerging throughout digital media, this eclipse came to be called the “Great American Solar Eclipse.”



(Image from <https://www.space.com/35171-great-american-solar-eclipse-coming-in-2017.html>)

I can remember this eclipse quite vividly. At this point in time, I was still living at Plowshare Farm in Greenfield, New Hampshire. Since 2014, I had become increasingly involved with a local group of Sophians and Hermeticists, some of whom might be known to quite a number of readers, as they have been long-time friends and facilitators of Sophianic work: Richard Reho, Gail Dupre, Jim Wetmore, just to name a few. All told, there were nine of us locally who had been working together.

Specifically, our work centered around the Grail Knight's Practice, a mantric distillation of Valentin Tomberg's *Lord's Prayer Course*, to which Robert Powell had given eurythmic movement. We also focused on a new form of working with the Tarot of Marseilles, which came to be called "Hermetic Conversation." Eventually, I would

present something of the work with Hermetic Conversation at the Sophia Foundation's Annual Meditation Retreat in Santa Fe in 2019.

In both 2014 and 2015, this New Hampshire group had periodic retreats facilitated by Robert Powell and/or Estelle Isaacson. However, after 2016, Robert Powell entered into a much less intense travel and workshop schedule (see here: https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Choreocosmos_ConsiderationsEaster_2016.pdf). He has not traveled to the United States since then. Our group had a weekend intensive with Estelle Isaacson in the summer of 2016, and as we looked to the summer of 2017, we decided we wanted to have another intensive with Estelle.

This was not to be, however—the weekend we chose to have our event was centered around this Great American Solar Eclipse. This happened to be at exactly the same time as the Sophia Foundation's Annual Meditation Retreat in Idaho—and Estelle had already made the commitment to co-facilitate this retreat with Karen Rivers. Due to health reasons, as well as massive shifts in her spiritual life, this was to be the last year that Estelle was able to attend a Sophia Foundation event, at least up through the present time.

And so, undaunted, we decided to carry on and co-create a retreat of our own. We invited friends like Kevin Dann and Ian Clyne. We left the evenings open-ended, during which Ian (a professional jazz pianist) guided us through musical experiences of our birth horoscopes. In the mornings we had Hermetic Conversation on the The Devil, Temperance, and Death. In the afternoons we experimented with more improvisational forms of Choreocosmos, and entered deeply into the Grail Knight's Practice. The weekend culminated with experiencing the Solar Eclipse, the cosmic configuration of which created the foundation for our improvisational Choreocosmos (more on configuration below). All the while, we kept in consciousness that we had another group of Sophians actively engaged in complementary spiritual work on the other side of the country—like the two pillars of the 4th Apocalyptic Seal.

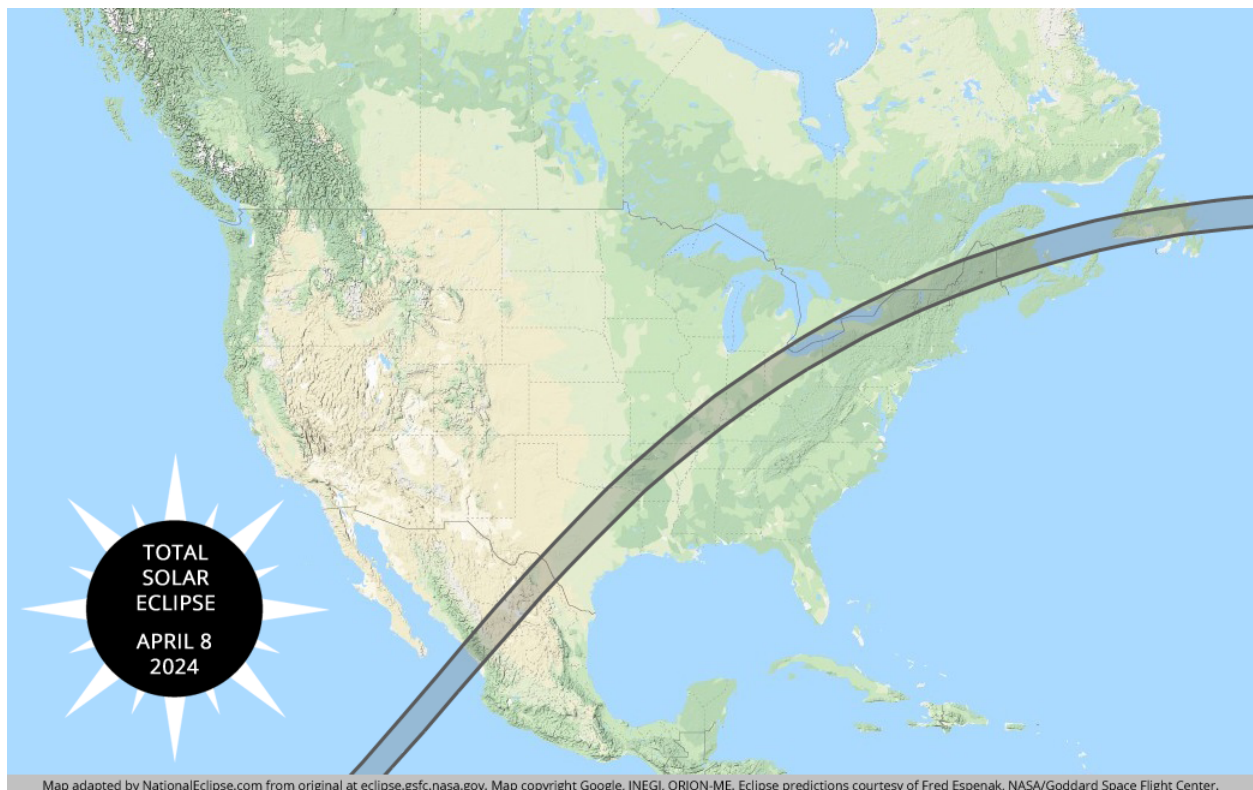


It was an incredibly rejuvenating weekend. We had begun to engage in content and processes that felt totally brand new, yet natural continuations of the work with which we had all become so deeply familiar. And yet, although it felt like a new beginning, it proved to be in actuality the fruition of that which we had been cultivating together for the past three years. By the year's end, five of our nine would move—four of them to Ecuador, where Robert Powell and Lacquanna Paul had found their new home. Two of them would become more heavily involved in their external vocation, making it difficult to meet anymore with regularity. In hindsight, it feels as though this particular group of people were meant to come together to bring something to full expression at the time of this Solar Eclipse, and then go their separate ways. By the summer of 2019, I and my family moved away from New Hampshire to Copake, New York to join Camphill

Village—and yet the work begun in New Hampshire carries on, with myself and my spiritual brother Phillip Malone continuing our work on Hermetic Conversation up to the present day.

And why do I write all of this? Because I wonder if others, too, perhaps feel as though they entered a different *realm* as of this Great American Solar Eclipse—particularly, but not limited to, my friends known and unknown here in the United States. It may be that we stand in the midst of—yes, right now, *exactly* in the midst of—a 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ -year long period.

In an extremely rare turning of events, the total solar eclipse that was visible from coast to coast of the United States on August 21, 2017 will be followed by *another* total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. This eclipse will be visible not just across the United States, but all the way from Mexico to Canada (see here: <https://www.greatamericaneclipse.com/april-8-2024/>).



The above shows the path of the 2024 eclipse, which might be called “The Great *North* American Solar Eclipse.” Below shows the intersecting point of the two paths, from 2017 and 2024:



(Image from <https://www.wlky.com/article/cities-that-will-have-a-total-solar-eclipse-in-2017-and-2024/10378429>)

Notice that the midpoint of these two American Eclipses is December 14-15, 2020, less than one week before the Great Conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter on the Winter Solstice (December 21). In fact, there is a total solar eclipse visible in *South America*, in Chile and Argentina, at the exact midpoint: <https://www.greatamericaneclipse.com/2020-dec-14>. From this we can see that this third week of Advent leading up to the Great Conjunction is a kind of turning point or pivot in this $6\frac{2}{3}$ -year time period. We might imagine the $3\frac{1}{3}$ years from August 21, 2017 through December 21, 2020 as the winding up of a clock, with the $3\frac{1}{3}$ years from now until April 8, 2024 as the clock beginning to mark the time—of that which has been seeded to begin sprouting and revealing itself. The image of entering a *vortex*, of traveling one spiraling arm on the way in; entering the center point (the “eye of the storm”); and then traveling the other spiraling arm on the way out, presents itself to the eyes of our minds and hearts.

In another sense, humanity at large—and certainly the United States—stands at a crossroads. The time for choosing is before us: Christ or Ahriman. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—or Surveillance, Technocracy, Plutocracy. As this Great Conjunction occurs on the darkest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, we can feel the spiritual world holding its breath as humanity enters into the time of deepest darkness, wondering if they will choose for the Light to be reborn. Indeed, there are historical indications that are quite encouraging in this regard; for those who would wish to read further about these indications, turn to the last few pages of this article, where I have attached selections from my “Editorial Foreword” to last year’s *Saturn—Mary—Sophia: Star Wisdom, Volume II*.

By turning our hearts and our thoughts to the cosmic memories of the cosmic configurations of these two eclipses and the Great Conjunction, we make ourselves more receptive to the intentions of the spiritual world for this time. The Great American Solar Eclipse from August 21, 2017 was monumental in this regard: the occultation of the Sun by the Moon occurred at 3° Leo, conjunct Eta Leonis. This very closely recalled the seventh healing miracle of Christ from the Gospel of John, the Raising of Lazarus from the Dead. This miracle also occurred during a New Moon (every solar eclipse is a New Moon) conjunct Eta Leonis, one of the most powerful megastars, on July 26, AD 32 (all of the dates from the life of Christ in this article are drawn from the work of Robert Powell in *Chronicle of the Living Christ and Christian Hermetic Astrology*).

Looking to the Great Conjunction, this meeting of Saturn and Jupiter occurs at 5° Capricorn. This is only 3° shy of the Sun's position at the *first* healing miracle, the Changing of Water into Wine, during which the Sun was 8° Capricorn, on December 28, AD 29. Notice that both of these miracles have an emphasis on drawing the cold light of the spiritual heights of the Father down into the darkest, warmest depths of the Mother in the heart of the Earth—the fusion of the furthest extremes. We can feel, then, that the time period from 2017 through 2020—the first spiral of the vortex—is a movement in reverse through the seven healing miracles from the Gospel of John. This movement backwards is taken up by Valentin Tomberg in his final work, published posthumously as *Lazarus, Come Forth!*, in which he brings into relationship the healing miracles with the seven days of Creation in the Book of Genesis. The final healing miracle of the Raising of Lazarus is a recapitulation of the first day of Creation—“Let there be light!”—while the first healing miracle of the Changing of Water into Wine is a recapitulation of the seventh day of Creation, during the primal Sabbath, when the Elohim declared all of Creation to be “very good.” During these past three years, therefore, we have had the opportunity to become a new Creation through Christ.

The Great Conjunction is even more closely related to another event in the life of Jesus—the Adoration of the Magi. While the Solomon Jesus was born on March 5, 6 BC, it took the Magi over nine months after his birth for them to arrive at the house of Jesus and his family. The three Magi bestowed their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh on December 26, 6 BC, to the nine-month old child they knew to be the reincarnation of their great spiritual teacher from prior incarnations, Zoroaster (Zarathustra). On this day, the Sun was 6° Capricorn, only 1° away from the alignment of Saturn and Jupiter in this year's Great Conjunction.

And what about the Great North American Solar Eclipse that we look forward to on April 8, 2024? On this day, the Sun and Moon will conjoin at 24° Pisces. This too recalls the incarnation of the Solomon Jesus. The year 7 BC also saw a Great Conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter—but this year was special; as sometimes happens due to retrograde motion, the two of them were conjunct not once but *three* times. It was this series of conjunctions that awoke the Magi to the reality of Zarathustra's descent once again into an earthly body. In particular, it was the first of these conjunctions, which occurred on May 27, 7 BC, at 24° Pisces—the same position as the Sun and Moon on

April 8, 2024. It was shortly after this Great Conjunction that Zarathustra was conceived and began his descent to Earth, on June 7, 7 BC.

And so this second 3½ year period, leading out of the vortex of 2020, draws our gaze to the individuality of Zoroaster or “Radiant Star”, yet again moving backwards through time, from the Adoration of the Magi when he was nine months old, to the time just before his conception. We might imagine this, on the one hand, to indicate a resurrection of the ancient Star Wisdom of Babylonian Astrology—a “moving back” to the Solomon Jesus’s incarnation as Zoroaster in the 6th century BC. The April 8, 2024 solar eclipse also very closely recalls the miracle of the Feeding of the Four Thousand (March 15, AD 31; Sun 25° Pisces); Peter receiving the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven (March 19, AD 31; Sun 28° Pisces); and the Triumphant Entry to Jerusalem on “Palm Sunday” (March 19, AD 33; Sun 29° Pisces). All of these star memories combine to give the strong impression of the “Return of the King”—of true Authority overcoming false authority, putting things into their proper order.¹

The following are reflections on the Great Conjunction, as well as the Saturn-Pluto and Jupiter-Pluto conjunctions which preceded it this year. They are taken from *Saturn—Mary—Sophia: Star Wisdom, Volume II*, published November 2019 by Lindisfarne Books. These selections are taken from pages 17-21.

...at the end of the 16th Letter-Meditation on the Tower of Destruction, the Anonymous Author draws a connection between the classical spiritual identities of the planetary spheres (e.g. the Titan Chronos with the Saturn Sphere) and the leading spiritual beings of the Christian faith. He notes that rather than Chronos, it is the Virgin Mary who is now the ruler of the Saturn Sphere.... We wished to emphasize this Saturnine aspect of the Divine Feminine in light of the two major conjunctions of this year: the year begins in January with a conjunction of Saturn and Pluto, which only occurs every 34 years on average, and it ends with a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in December, which occurs approximately every 20 years.

It is quite rare for both of these aspects to occur in the same year, and it portends to be a dynamic one because of that. Historically, the gesture of

¹ This year is also reminiscent of the legendary stories from the life of Tecumseh, who predicted American Solar eclipses in 1806 and 1811, during which a bright comet was visible in the sky, recalling the appearance of the comet Neowise in the summer of 2020. Similar to the meaning of Zoroaster (“Radiant Star”), Tecumseh means “Shooting Star.” He is also attributed with “Tecumseh’s curse”, by which each president elected in a year ending with a zero dies while in office. This curse held true until Ronald Reagan, who survived an assassination attempt; and George W. Bush did not die in office—rather the horrific experience of the attack on the Twin Towers occurred. It is interesting to note that these Presidents were all in office during Great Conjunctions, which recur approximately every 20 years. For further information, see: <http://troytaylorbooks.blogspot.com/2016/11/panther-across-sky.html>; <https://www.eclipse-chasers.com/article/history/tse1806.shtml>; <https://periodicpresidents.com/2013/06/11/what-is-tecumsehs-curse/>. Who knows...maybe this is the moment the so-called “curse” lifts?

Saturn-Pluto conjunction is rather dire, full of doom, constriction and restriction, death, and the deep shame that arises in the communal recognition of our failings as humanity. On the other hand, Saturn-Jupiter conjunctions tend to demarcate shifts in cultural consciousness, miniature cultural waves bringing in a new overall *Gestalt* of insights, experiments, discoveries, and creations.

In between these two is a Jupiter-Pluto conjunction, which takes place roughly every 13 years, and generally portends enthusiasm and positivity on both a cultural and individual level. So we are taken from the depths of despair and conflict at the beginning of the year, to the heights of flaming enthusiasm in the midst of the year, to finally be brought across the threshold of a new equilibrium at the end of the year—and the Virgin Mary, the Divine Mother, carries us with her abundance of grace through it all.

Looking back historically, we can see that the Jupiter-Pluto conjunctions have occurred during important moments in the evolution of our modern Grail Spirituality:

2007: Inauguration of the Grail Priesthood
1994: Founding of the Sophia Foundation
1981: *Meditations on the Tarot* is translated into English by Robert Powell (finished in 1982)
1968: The original manuscript of *Meditations on the Tarot* is completed in French (in 1967)
1956: The seed-idea for what will become *Meditations on the Tarot* is formed (in 1957)
1943: The end of the Valentin Tomberg's "Lord's Prayer Course" in Amsterdam
1931: The beginning of Tomberg's anthroposophical publications (in 1930)
1918: The first presentation of the Threefold Social Organism (in 1917)
1906: Start of Anthroposophical Christology in the form of "Theosophical Rosicrucianism"
1894: Publication of *The Philosophy of Freedom*
1882: Rudolf Steiner's first exposure of Goethe's *Fairy Tale*, and the start of a lifetime of writing and publication.

This continues back into the centuries, with Jupiter-Pluto conjunctions occurring around the birth of King Ludwig of Bavaria (1845), the deaths of Goethe and Kaspar Hauser (1832-3) and the death of the Count of St. Germain (1784). One might wonder what this year's conjunction in Sagittarius portends? The last time the conjunction occurred in Sagittarius was in 1771, around the birth of Novalis and the beginning of the public career of Goethe. This time period marked the beginning of the Romantic Movement, a cultural renaissance that swept Germany and England in particular. In France it saw the intersection of the careers of Louis Claude de St-Martin, Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, and Martinez de Pasqually, resulting in the creation of the Martinist stream of French Hermeticism. And it was just after this time period that the American and French

Revolutions would begin. The Jupiter-Pluto conjunction in Sagittarius inaugurated a time of cultural revival in many parts of the world.

The previous Jupiter-Pluto conjunction in Sagittarius took place in the years 1521-22. Interestingly, the last time *Saturn* and Pluto were conjunct in Sagittarius was a few years prior, in 1518. This time period saw the end of the lives of Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael, the zenith of the artistic phase of the Renaissance. The years between 1518-22 were the very beginning of the Protestant Reformation, with Martin Luther's 95 theses and the resulting Diet of Worms. This time period also inaugurated the Age of Discovery, with Ferdinand Magellan accomplishing the first circumnavigation of the globe during exactly this time period. The years immediately following the 1520s would see the first major scientific revolution, hinging on the astronomical observations and deductions of Galileo, Copernicus, Brahe, and Kepler. Once again, Jupiter and Pluto in Sagittarius seemed to herald a brand new global culture, bolstered by the Saturn-Pluto conjunction in this same sign...

And what about this Great Conjunction? When were Saturn and Jupiter last conjunct in Capricorn, as they are this year? This is a tricky question. In the year 1961, something very unusual happened. While geocentrically, Saturn and Jupiter were conjunct in Capricorn, *heliocentrically* they were conjunct in Sagittarius. Therefore, in one sense one could say the last Capricorn conjunction was in 1961, but from another perspective it hasn't occurred for a much longer time period, nearly 800 years. Around the time of the 1961 conjunction, a spiritual battle manifested itself on the physical plane in the conflict between President Kennedy and his strivings for peace, and the ever-looming threat of the intelligence agencies and their lust for war with Russia. It is difficult to say how consciously President Kennedy was operating as a public representative of the emerging Grail Culture; however, I can aver after a great deal of struggle in the "inner forum" of intuitive conscience that the intelligence agencies, both then and now, were conscious agents of the so-called "dark brotherhoods of the West" referred to many times by Rudolf Steiner.

At that time, there was a mismatch between the geocentric and the heliocentric; something attempted to manifest on Earth (geocentric) that wasn't actually ready in the spiritual world (heliocentric). President Kennedy took his stand: after the CIA failed to embroil him in war with Cuba in the Bay of Pigs debacle, he vowed that he would "splinter the CIA into a thousand pieces and scatter them to the winds." The intelligence agencies won in the end: their assassination of John F. Kennedy (with those of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Bobby Kennedy soon to follow) stood as a warning to any future President and other influential public figures that they hold all of the power, and the consequences of making decisions independent of them are deadly.² We stand at a similar

² See for example James W Douglass's excellent and comprehensive *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters*.

juncture at this time.³ Perhaps with Saturn and Jupiter conjunct in Capricorn both geocentrically *and* heliocentrically, that which attempted to manifest in 1961 can make a second, successful attempt. (Footnote: one could make similar queries and comparisons in regard to the Catholic Church ca. 1961 vs the modern day; e.g. see the writings of Malachi Martin [we might see Carlo Maria Viganò as carrying on the work of Martin in modern times])....

We stand at a threshold: for 200 years, the Great Conjunctions occurred in Fire Signs (Leo, Aries, Sagittarius). Over the course of the 20th century, they transitioned from Fire to Earth Signs. As of this year's conjunction, this transition period will be over; the last Fire Sign conjunction was in the year 2000, in Aries. For the next 200 years or so, they will be in Capricorn, Virgo, and Taurus.... the last time period in history during which the Great Conjunction occurred in Capricorn and subsequently inaugurated a series of conjunctions solely in Earth Signs...covers the 12th-13th centuries AD: the height of the Middle Ages, with its Gothic architecture, Knights Templars and Cathars, Saints Francis and Thomas Aquinas, the Troubadours and Minstrels.

Going further back, the previous change from Fire Sign conjunctions to Earth Sign conjunctions occurred in the 3rd-4th centuries AD. This was the time of the Prophet Mani, of the Neoplatonists, and of the great theologians of Alexandria. Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, and Byzantium became the new center of the Roman Empire as Constantinople.

Prior to this was the 6th-5th centuries BC, the heart of the Axial Age. Here we see the beginnings of Greek philosophy, architecture, sculpture, drama and social forms. It is the age of Buddha, Zarathustra, and Pythagoras. The Hebrew people were taken into captivity; Daniel and Ezekiel became pupils of Zarathustra at this time—at the origin of ancient astrology. Cyrus the Great set the Hebrews free, and they returned to their homeland, rebuilding the temple under Zerubbabel.

The Capricorn Great Conjunction that set off the sequence of Earth Sign conjunctions prior to this occurred in October/November 1516 BC. According to the research of Paul Marx,⁴ this coincides more or less with the birthdate of Moses—therefore, the life of Moses and the Exodus of the Hebrews out of Egypt

³See for example Glenn Greenwald's work for *The Intercept*: <https://theintercept.com/2019/04/18/robert-mueller-did-not-merely-reject-the-trump-russia-conspiracy-theories-he-obliterated-them/>; <https://theintercept.com/2019/04/11/the-u-s-governments-indictment-of-julian-assange-poses-grave-threats-to-press-freedoms/>; <https://theintercept.com/2019/02/08/jeff-bezos-protests-the-invasion-of-his-privacy-as-amazon-builds-a-sprawling-surveillance-state-for-everyone-else/>; <https://theintercept.com/2019/02/03/nbc-news-to-claim-russia-supports-tulsi-gabbard-relies-on-firm-just-caught-fabricating-russia-data-for-the-democratic-party/>; <https://theintercept.com/2019/01/14/the-fbis-investigation-of-trump-as-a-national-security-threat-is-itself-a-serious-danger-but-j-edgar-hoover-pioneered-the-tactic/>

⁴ Marx, Paul. "Evolutionary Streams Accompanying Christ's Descent," *Journal for Star Wisdom* 2014. Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2013.

and back to the Holy Land unfolds under the Earth Conjunctions of the 2nd millennium BC.

And prior to this, we have the 24th-22nd centuries BC. This was the end of the Early Dynastic Period of ancient Mesopotamia, when Sargon of Akkad united the Akkadians and Sumerians into the first ancient empire of Mesopotamia. This was a culture dedicated to the Divine Feminine, Inanna. The first poet in history whose name is known comes from this culture and time period: the princess and priestess Enheduanna. This culture would later become Assyria and Babylonia, and Inanna would become Ishtar, the goddess of Love—known in Greece as Venus. This time period also saw the Sixth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom of ancient Egypt—the Dynasty that would transition out of the height of Egyptian culture that constructed the pyramids, sun temples, and the Sphinx, into the tumultuous and unstable Middle Kingdom.

In summary: the Jupiter-Pluto conjunction in Sagittarius heralds a time similar to the late 18th century and the early 16th century. Saturn and Pluto in Sagittarius also recalls the early 16th century. And a Great Conjunction in the early degrees of Capricorn recalls the Middle Ages, the Neoplatonists, Pythagoras, Moses, and ancient Egypt. We are entering into a massively propitious time period—one that reminds us of the words of the Anonymous author from the 11th Letter-Meditation on Force:

The Virgin, the Force of our Arcanum, is the principle of springtime, i.e. that of creative spiritual élan and spiritual flourishing. The prodigious flourishing of philosophy and the arts in ancient Athens took place under the sign of the Virgin. Similarly, the flourishing of the Renaissance at Florence was under the vernal sign of the Virgin. Also, Weimar at the beginning of the nineteenth century was a place where the breath of the Virgin perceptibly moved hearts and minds.

In ancient Egypt the woman of the mysteries of death was attributed to Osiris, and that of life—including language, writing, law and the arts—was attributed to Isis. Thus, Isis was the soul of the civilization of ancient Egypt, which we are still admiring after more than twenty centuries.⁵

Perhaps Saturn as Virgin—as Isis, Mary, Sophia—is the key to understanding “the sign of the Virgin” referred to above. We are entering a time that is also under this sign. Rudolf Steiner spoke (in the tradition of Trithemius of Sponheim) of 355-year time periods ruled over by seven archangels in succession. The time of 1524 through 1879 was under the rulership of Gabriel, the Lunar Archangel. This time saw the development of man’s intellectual powers, the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment that led to an exact perception of nature. Yet this time period led to the Cartesian split between the so-called “objective” outer world—a world that was considered “real”—and the “subjective” inner world—a

⁵ Anonymous. *Meditations on the Tarot*, page 291. New York, NY: Tarcher/Penguin, 2002.

world considered “arbitrary.” This latter sphere became the realm of the Romantics and revolutionaries. Two spheres developed that had no relation to each other: romantics and revolutionaries on the one hand, and scientists and technocrats on the other; neither sphere any longer had a relationship to the sphere of morality, to the spiritual world.

Rudolf Steiner saw that this Cartesian experience of the world achieved full maturation in the mid-19th century. Since then, it has been a backwards, retarding force on human spiritual progress. Since 1879, we have been in the time of Archangel Michael, the *Solar* Archangel. We must discover a new fundamental paradigm, one that is a “Sun” to the “Moon” of the scientific, abstract intellect. It is this new paradigm that was experienced and described by Rudolf Steiner, Carl Jung, and the Anonymous author of *Meditations on the Tarot* —amongst many others. This is described in vivid detail in Richard Tarnas’s *Cosmos and Psyche*—what is needed is a leap into the realm of the transpersonal, the archetypal, and the synchronous: a realm in which art, science, and morality find their mutual source.

Steiner emphasized that the opening of the window to make this leap was a relatively brief period of time—unlike prior developments in cultural evolution, this would not be a step that would happen unconsciously and automatically; it would require the conscious choice of participatory human beings. Perhaps the year 2020 heralds a *kairos*, a “now or never” moment. The first 140 years of the 355 year-long Age of Michael have been a struggle to relinquish the past, to tear ourselves away from the claws of the Dragon. Perhaps this struggle has been directly tied to the vacillation of Great Conjunctions between Fire Signs and Earth Signs. Perhaps only now can we truly take our shared destiny in hand, and move forward into a time under the “vernal sign of the Virgin.”

I also include here the commentary for December 21, 2020, from pages 216-18 of the same volume:

December 21: Jupiter conjunct Saturn, 5°22' Capricorn.

Today concludes the journey of Saturn—Mary—Sophia and Jupiter—Holy Spirit over the course of 2020. We began with Saturn conjunct Pluto, the meeting of the Virgin Mary, the Mother, with the Divine Love of the Father. Often in human history, the meeting of these two is a difficult time for humanity as a whole. We come to realize how far we have abandoned the path laid out for us by the Wisdom of the Cosmos; we find out how little we have honored our Father and our Mother, and are induced to return to the path.

Jupiter and Pluto then met in the middle of the year. This meeting of the joyous Holy Spirit with the Plutonic Fire of Love generally results in a celebratory time for humanity; sometimes this celebration can bleed over into a kind of mania. Finally, we come to the end of the year as Jupiter (the Holy Spirit) unites with

Saturn (the Virgin Mary). The image that is created out of the meeting of these two is Whitsuntide, when the Virgin Mary became the vessel through which the Holy Spirit could descend in tongues of fire onto the circle of twelve apostles. In this event, the cosmic unity was divided into twelve. Each apostle contained within him and could bring to expression a completely personal, heartfelt iteration of what up until that point was a transpersonal, lofty spiritual reality.

Historically, the Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions—also known as Great Conjunctions—portend cultural shifts. These occur on a smaller scale, within the approximately 19.86-year rhythm of the conjunctions. More broadly, longer rhythms hold sway. The conjunctions take place for approximately 214 years in the Earth signs of Capricorn, Virgo, Taurus; then 214 years in the Air signs of Aquarius, Libra, Gemini; then Water, then Fire. After approximately 854 years, the cycle starts over again.

At the time of the Magi, and the birth of the Solomon Jesus, the Great Conjunction took place in the sign of Pisces. This took place over the course of the gestation of the Jesus child in BC 7 (he was born March 5, BC 6). By the time the Magi actually arrived at the house of Mary and Joseph, the child was already over nine months old. The three Magi brought their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh on December 26, BC 6. While the Great Conjunction had occurred the previous year in Pisces, the Sun on the date of the Adoration of the Magi was at 6° Capricorn, very close to today's Great Conjunction.

At the time of Christ, the cycle of Great Conjunctions was shifting from Water signs to Fire signs. A kind of cosmic "Changing of Water to Wine" was taking place, as the clear Water of the old Law was transformed and fulfilled through the Fire of Love into New Wine. The same transition was taking place at the time of Parzival, who was very likely born close to the Great Conjunction in Pisces on February 15, AD 789, and whose redemption took place in the first half of 810, just after the Great Conjunction in Scorpio in 809.

In our time, however, it is a transition from Fire signs into Earth signs. All that has been inculcated into humanity from fiery spiritual realms can now begin to come into earthly manifestation. The 20th century was the center of this vortex: heliocentrically, the conjunction of 1901 was in Sagittarius, a Fire sign, but then that of 1921 was in Virgo, an Earth sign. Subsequently, the conjunctions of 1940 and 1961 were in Aries and Sagittarius, respectively (again, heliocentrically). The 1981 conjunction was in Virgo, but the 2000 conjunction was in Aries. The entire century wavered back and forth between Fire and Earth. Beginning with today's conjunction, we have our first sequence ahead of us entirely in Earth signs: Capricorn in 2020, Virgo in 2040, and Taurus in 2060. Today is not just a minor cultural shift within a 20 year rhythm; it marks a transition to a greater cycle of over 200 years.

The last time humanity stood at this threshold was in 1166, just prior to the magnificent time of the Knights Templar and the awesome Gothic Cathedrals,

the Cathars, the School of Chartres, Aquinas and Francis, the troubadours and bards. The time before that was in AD 253, around the time of the rise of Coptic Christianity and the School of Alexandria, of the Neoplatonists such as Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, and Manichaeism. Somewhat later came Emperor Constantine, and the concrete institution of Christianity in Constantinople. Prior to this were the Earth conjunctions of the 6th century BC, the peak of the Axial Age—Buddha, Pythagoras, and Confucius all taught during this century. This was the time of the Hebrew exile in Babylon, as well as their eventual return.

Prior to that we come to the conjunction of BC 1516, marking the birth of Moses; before that, the 24th century BC, the height of Ancient Egyptian culture and the construction of the pyramids. What we can conclude from this vast surgery is that the transition out of the Fire signs into the Earth signs in terms of the cycle of Great Conjunctions marks an entry into a time of outer cultural flourishing, of renaissance and renewal. Under this sign, humanity has amazing prospects to fulfill the destiny laid out for them in the great age of Archangel Michael, which lasts until 2234. The first half of this age (which began in 1879) has been consumed with the struggle of transition from Fire to Earth; perhaps the second half will consist in humanity properly manifesting a truly Michaelic culture, the new culture of the Holy Grail: *Michael Sophia in Nomine Christi!*