

Liberating Artemis

Long before the daughters of Earth's northern hemisphere were taught that a Father God reigned supreme in the sky, we were taught that a Universal Female ruled life, death, and the whole movement of the cosmos, and that life on earth was ordered in the likeness of her natural laws. Among other things, she appeared unmistakably in the female bear, and in the stars held sacred to the female bear and her female offspring, those now referred to in the Eurocentric west as the Big and Little Dippers. In this paper I will take several small steps to trace the survival of the northern hemispheric universal Female in pre-Christian Greek tradition, where she survived under the name Artemis.

This introductory inquiry into the identity of the northern hemispheric Universal Female as Artemis will consist of two broad movements. At first, we will descend to a kind of underworld, one swimming with points of view on the human drama of historical evolution in terms of matriarchal and patriarchal social order. We will enter Artemis's natal family, specifically, her relationships with her mother Leto and her twin brother Apollo. After all, Artemis is basically circumscribed by her patriarchal family in pre-Hellenic, classical Greek and contemporary women's spirituality texts. By way of sweetening the pot, this section will include speculation as to the birth mysteries of Artemis, which were celebrated for many centuries. Then, on a kind of parallel tack, I will also present the argument that the famed Attic play, the *Oresteia*, is a dramatic rendition of Apollo's birth mystery.

In the second movement of this essay, we will begin to refocus our lens of inquiry, moving quite beyond any sort of concern with the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy. Here, we will simply honor Artemis by asking what she can tell about nature and cosmic law, and our place within it today. Since this topic could take years to unpack, I will simply make a few leading comments in hopes of developing them more thoroughly in the future. Our appreciation of her will be loosely linked to an exploration of the mysterious syllables of her name, as well as her solar-lunar nature, her stars, and her animal, the she-bear along the way, a few theories will be advanced about the cosmic representation of her body as preserved in her famed statue at Ephesus.

Hopefully, this second movement, one unpreoccupied with historical evidence of emanation, will be a far more liberating, refreshing, ecstatic, and rewarding read. I think this section would be far more pleasing to Artemis herself: it seems that natural law is all she has ever stood for, or been interested in.

Introduction: Artemis of the Bookstores

Artemis is typically presented in three primary dimensions on our bookshelves today. To begin with, she is usually written of as “Mistress of the Animals” and cosmic midwife. She is understood to have “power over” the biological life force of animals and humans, whether this force circulates within the creatures of the forest of human females in childbirth. Her animals may also be regarded as the totems of her clans. Feared and respected as one with the power to protect life or bestow death - whether as silver-bowed huntress or midwife hovering over the laboring mother and child. Artemis also seems to have a vengeful streak, killing countless animals and other innocents, as well as those who cross her or fail to pay proper respect. Clearly, of all the Greek goddesses in the Olympian pantheon, Artemis is the most formidable, even more so than warriorress Athena.

Secondly - although she is often strangely referred to as a “mother” or “fertility” goddess - Artemis is presented as one utterly hostile to sexuality, marriage and motherhood. She takes no (male) lovers, marries not, bears no children, and her implacable arrows are invariably launched against female companions who express sexuality and become pregnant.

Finally, she is routinely labeled as a Moon goddess. As an astrologer, I have always been profoundly suspicious of this attribution, given her aloofness from emotional, passionate, sexual, and reproductive commitments, all of which triumph at the Full Moon, when solar and lunar lights are in their most powerful mutual alignment.

At any rate, the composite of Artemis that emerges from a cursory survey of Classical Greek and contemporary literature is that of a remarkably cold and distant

goddess whose profile is limited to the biological forms of the natural world, to judgments of life and death, and oddly enough, to the Moon alone. I would argue that this extremely limited reception of Artemis - one that seems to be universally accepted by the women's spirituality community - is a profile that could only emerge after the consolidation of patriarchy; that it is but a dim reflection, if not a caricature, of her archaic glory; and that by perpetuating this profile today, we not only fail to worship her properly, but nourish the syndromes of patriarchal dominance, carrying them unwittingly into the future.

Therefore, in this essay, I hope to take a few modest steps in the direction of celebrating her dignity and majesty by reconnecting our reception of Artemis to pre-patriarchal features such as the power of her name, her sacred body, her archaic planetary and stellar identity, and her terrestrial epiphany in the she-bear. *Hail Artemis!*

Her Family

One of the first steps in getting to know someone is to courteously inquire as to their family, and should an acquaintanceship become deeper, developing into friendship, love, or partnership, one invariably discovers that family relationships, especially natal configurations, are hugely telling, and moreover, that patriarchal conditioning dies very hard indeed.

So as we begin our acquaintance with Artemis here, we will pay her the same courtesy, in the hope that our relationship with her might deepen, by asking about the ancestry and nature of her mother Leto; her relationship with her mother; the circumstances of her birth, as well as her brother Apollo's birth; and finally, the themes that were likely to have been celebrated during festivals that were based on their respective birth mysteries.

Artemis, Her Mother Leto and Her Brother Apollo

Leto's Mother was Phoebe, the Moon, while her father was Coeus, or Mercury, so Artemis is actually the granddaughter of two planets! Phoebe and Coeus were Titans, two members of the most ancient Greek pantheon. The 14 Titans—one male and one female for each of the seven planets—were created by Eurynome, the pre-Hellenic prime creatrix. Eurynome rests in the historical strata that is as far back in written history as one can go in Greek civilization. Interestingly, Eurynome is also one of the many Goddesses that served as exact models for the subsequent triple-god of male monotheism, Yahweh/Gog/Allah: her Sumerian name was Iahu, a name stolen by Yahweh. Her people were the primordial settlers of Greece, the Pelasgians or Danaans who came from the south, reportedly around 3500 BCE, but perhaps much earlier,¹ as the daughter of Leto and the great-granddaughter of Eurynome, then Artemis seems to be rooted in neolithic, if not Paleolithic culture.

From the vantage point of Leto's august ancestry, let us now move to Leto herself. A highly cosmopolitan mother, as primal tree goddess—especially of the date palm and olive—and as guardian of all the arts, Leto seems to have been recognized from Europe through Egypt and Arabia. She was known as Lat in Egypt and Palestine. Lat, worshiped in the Kaa'ba along with two other goddesses, was suppressed and supplanted when Allah—one aspect of the later triple-god of male-monotheism—stole her name (Al'lat) and took over her sacred Arabian precinct. According to Robert Graves, Leto is also Egyptian Isis, and Queen Latona of Italy; she is also "indistinguishable" from Celtic Brigit.² As an aside, given Athena's tie to Leto's olive tree and the civilized arts, I strongly suspect that Athene may have originally been the warrior aspect of Artemis, or it may simply be, as Graves believes, that Artemis was "originally the same goddess as Athene."³

The Birth of Artemis

Despite her august ancestry and global reach, Leto seems to have been one of Zeus's many rape victims, although there is some chance that they were actually lovers;

interestingly, during copulation, he turned them both into quails. And then, like so many of Zeus's other conquests, pregnant Leto had to escape the deathly curses of his wife, Hera, whose marital dignity had been violated. Fleeing from the menacing snake Python—the totem of Mother Earth and the Delphic Oracle, and thus the stubborn ally of proud wife Hera—Leto was borne aloft on the south wind to an island near Delos called Ortygia. On this island, named after the quail who stop there to rest on migration, Artemis was born.

We are immediately given evidence of a strong complicity between mother and daughter with respect to sexual passion, if not passionate rites and traditions, since quails are notoriously amorous creatures. Artemis was not only conceived by two quails, but born on Ortygia, island of quails, which was also her mother's birthing refuge. Also, at Ephesus—a city in current-day Turkey that also claims to be Artemis's birthplace—the mysteries of Artemis revolved around her divine birth, and there were long celebrated in a sacred grove of trees names Ortygia, yet another crucial reference to an island of quails. Intriguingly, we learn from Graves that Artemis was an “orgiastic Aphrodite” with a male consort at Ephesus, and that the “lascivious” quail was her divine bird. ⁴ Graves also teaches that Artemis dates from an epoch when “women mated promiscuously (sic) outside their own clans.” ⁵

From these clues as to Artemis's honeyed birth, however, one passes immediately to a nearly punitive scene of initiation: upon emerging from her mother's womb, Artemis was pressed into hard labor. Amazingly, she began to serve as her own mother's midwife, for Leto was in labor with a second child. Clearly, her instant rapport with her highly aristocratic and cosmopolitan mother was extremely sympathetic: Artemis guided her mother across the narrow channel of water to the nearby island of Delos, then assistant her during nine additional, and presumably difficult, days of labor, until finally, her twin brother Apollo was born. Instantly, his Delian birthplace was pronounced off limits to the infirm and pregnant; from then on, the vulnerable ferried instead to Ortygia, island of quails and birthplace of Artemis. ⁶

The Presumed Birth Mysteries of Artemis

Just as biblical verses about Jesus's birth are traditionally recounted at Christmas, the annual Ephesian rites of Artemis centered on her divine birth. It is therefore an interesting exercise to reflect upon the details of her birth story, and upon the presumed content of her ancient mysteries. Of course, such an exercise may also have some bearing upon the celebration of Artemis's mysteries in the future.

Based on my reading of the story of her birth, I suggest that the mysteries of Artemis may have celebrated solidarity between daughters and mothers in terms of one or more of the following ten themes:

1. The necessary maternal flight from the threat of a biological father, his wife, or his clan, in order to seek a peaceful start elsewhere;
2. By extension, the necessary flight of mother-worshipping peoples from patriarchal conquest of their communities and shrines;
3. The erotic joys of frankly amorous folks, since Artemis's conception and birth-place—be it island or forest—was tied by name to the passionate quail, and since Ephesian Artemis was traditionally associated with quails, sexual rites and pre-patriarchal marriage;
4. The sense of freedom and migration, albeit under threat, since the escaping mother and daughter floated to a island favored by loving birds;
5. The female birthright as healer, shaman, and religious leader, since newborn Artemis instantly assumed responsibility as her own mother's midwife within the most dangerous context of life, death, and the spirit world;
6. The contrast—as a kind of cautionary tale—between the sweetness of sexual passion, and the harshness of actually birth, since the story is full of references to quails, but concludes with Leto's nine long days of labor;
7. The celebration of female (precedence_MK) predominance, since Artemis is born prior to her twin brother Apollo;
8. The legacy that Goddess traditions are more ancient than God traditions, since Artemis was born prior to her twin Apollo;

9. The acceptance of a comparative difficulty or distance with sons, since Apollo's subsequent birth is exceptionally belabored;
10. The understanding that daughters are more willing and able than sons to utilize genuine healing power on behalf of others, since Artemis's birth island was ever after a zone of assistance for the weak, while Apollo's birth island was instantly set apart from the taint of human infirmity, in spite of his subsequent status as God of medicine during the classical period.

We will now broach the topic of brother Apollo in terms of his origins, nature, birth, relationship to Leto and Artemis, and presumed mysteries.

Her Twin Brother Apollo

Although Graves calls Apollo's history "confusing," he regards his origin as essentially that of the sacred male child found in the pre-patriarchal Hyperborean ("beyond-the-North-Wind") cosmology, traced as far from Greece as Palestine and Britain. In such religious systems, a divine son is always born to avenge the death of the father, who was formerly the sacred king and lover of the ruling Goddess. For example, Horus, the Egyptian divine son, was born to avenge Set's murder of his father, the sacred king Osiris and beloved of Queen Isis. Although one might say that originally, Apollo was a sort of Greek Horus, Robert Graves warns that as Greek culture moved into the Hellenic period, political pressures dictated that the myths be changed, and Apollo became far less friendly to the ancient goddesses, a state of affairs to which we shall presently turn.

However, to the best of my knowledge, Apollo and Artemis are typically presented as friendly twins, and mirror images nicely complementing one another, as follows:

1. In terms of intrinsic power, Artemis is to nature as Apollo is to culture. Just as Artemis goes to extremes in her awesome natural authority "over" (sic) the biological powers of life and death, Apollo is cultured, civilized, controlled, and contained. Preaching moderation in all things, he is thus crowned and revered

as the Classical god of virtually all of the arts and sciences: astronomy, mathematics, science, medicine, philosophy, music, poetry, and prophecy. In shorthand, one might say that Artemis is given the “natural body,” and Apollo is given the “cultural head.”

2. In terms of emotional life and sexual passion, Artemis and Apollo have just one thing in common: they both guard their autonomy and refuse to marry. However, from here on out, the codes scramble and go into reversal, since with respect to love, sexuality, and reproduction, Artemis moves from her “natural body” into her “head,” remaining absolutely controlled, contained, and aloof. In spite of her rulership of the biological domain, including childbirth, she neither falls in love, expresses her sexuality, nor gives birth. Apollo, normally ruling the heady cultural domain, here abandons his famed control and moderation, and wings into his “natural body” to seduce numerous females, and even males, and to sire many children, following in the libidinous footsteps of his father Zeus. So, in terms of with respect to love, sexuality, and reproduction, their respective positions as female and male twins are—except for their common coldness to marriage—still opposed and ostensibly complementary.
3. In terms of planetary associations, just as Artemis is associated with the Moon, Apollo is associated with the Sun, creating the impression that the twins are in balance, even as day follows night, with Sun and Moon in balance.

These dualistic oppositions between the twin siblings Artemis and Apollo seem to be universally regarded as beautiful and just, and have proven to be extremely popular, at least during the past few thousand years of patriarchy. Still, a deeper look into the details and the presumed mysteries of Apollo’s birth may prove to add a more troubling dimension to the story of his purportedly peaceful and balanced twinship with Artemis.

The Birth of Apollo

The birth of Apollo was diametrically opposed to that of Artemis. To begin with, his birth was difficult: for nine full days his mother labored, while his sister was initiated into midwifery. Then, on the fourth day thereafter, his first act was to request weapons. He sped to Mt. Parnassus near Delphi and made war on Python, the snake sent in pursuit of his pregnant mother Leto by Hera, bent upon vengeance. (After all, Hera was Mother Earth, albeit in a jealous state of wifely violation.) Apollo then followed the wounded snake to the Oracle of Mother Earth at Delphi, and made so bold as to kill it inside the shrine! Such an outrage against Mother Earth, and such a violation of sacred tradition, that even his normally permissive father Zeus commanded that he seek purification at Tempe. With typical arrogance, Apollo defied his father, sought purification elsewhere, and skipped off to Crete, presumably to wage more war. He then made his way to Arcadia, arguably the heart of archaic mainland Greece, and persuaded Pan to teach him the art of prophecy. With this crucial skill, Apollo was able to return to Delphi and capture the Delphic Oracle, retaining his priestess, the Pythoness, in his own service. Next, he cruelly killed Marsyas, follower of Cybele, the Great Goddess of Anatolia, by flaying him alive. I shall now dispense with this account of his violence, hopefully having made the point that not for nothing has the origin of his name usually been traced to the Greek verb *apollunai*, which means to destroy. Apollo's reputation for moderation was earned much later in life. Obviously, the story of Apollo's birth contrasts absolutely to the birth of his sister Artemis, one painted in the delicate tones of fleeing conflict and seeking peace, aiding and healing the mother, mother-daughter solidarity, erotic legacies, midwifery, a quail island of permanent solace, and female predominance, if not outright worship of mothers and Goddess. In fact, one might well call their sibling relationship into question at this point: would one expect such a diametrically opposed birth and nature to pertain to a genuine twin? In spite of the fact that many classical Greek myths, and much contemporary literature, present these two siblings as a peaceful set, I take the categorical opposition between the birth stories of Apollo and Artemis to signify that their relationship as deities was profoundly adversarial in nature from the jump, and thus, that their respective worshippers were long at war, an argument which will gain further support as we proceed.

The Presumed Birth Mysteries of Apollo

If one were to create mysteries centered upon the birth of Apollo, I suggest that his mysteries would celebrate one or more of the following twelve themes:

1. Birth as a flight from the ways of the fathers, or a form of defiance against them, since Leto was escaping his biological father, and since he disobeyed his father's command to seek purification at Tempe;
2. Birth as battle, since Apollo's nine-day birth was undeniably his first crusade;
3. A primal orientation to battle, since his first act was to ask for weapons;
4. A primal orientation to religious war, since each of his first six battles and related forays targeted what I take to be the most archaic and profound religious centers of pre-Hellenic Greece—Delos, Mt. Parnaassus, Delphi, Arcadia, Crete, and Anatolia;
5. The political centrality of the conquest of Delos, as well as the difficulty with which the island was turned over to Apollo, since he was born there, and since his difficult birth took nine days;
6. A willingness to profit from the sexual and reproductive powers of the amorous, unmarried, and vulnerable female—in his care, to be delivered with great difficulty by his mother Leto—but not to evidence loyalty, since he immediately abandoned his mother and sister in favor of the warpath;
7. A victorious war against the dignity and prerogatives of legal wives and stepmothers, since he murdered the serpent ally—the Python—of his stepmother Hera, who was legally married, however unhappily, to his father Zeus;
8. A victorious war against the divine reality of Mother Earth, since he murdered the Python who lived in the shrine of the Oracle of Mother Earth, and who, when badly wounded, took refuge there, and also since the Python's ally, Hera, is also Mother Earth;
9. A victorious war against the unspeakable religious and political significance of the Delphic Oracle, since his very first battle killed the Python;
10. An appropriation of the Delphic oracle for one's own religious and political purposes, since Apollo retained the Delphic Priestess in his service;

11. A willing defiance of law, since so many of his outrageous acts were illegal;
12. A legacy of wars that started on Delos and subsequently spread to Crete, Arcadia, Delphi, and Anatolia, since after his purification, and in very short order, he traveled to Crete, assumed Arcadian Pan's powers, took over the Delphic Oracle and its Priestess, and savagely murdered Anatolian Cybele's devotee.

The Actual Birth Mysteries of Apollo

However, in truth, there is little need to speculate upon, or create mysteries centered upon the birth of Apollo. In some sense, they came to be marked in western civilization every winter solstice when the mysteries of Jesus's birth were celebrated at Christmas. The parallels between Apollo and Jesus are overwhelming: for centuries, Eurocentric historians worshipped Apollo as their most popular Hellenic hero, adoring him as the "pagan" precursor of Jesus, and indeed, Apollo's purely solar nature, attractive rulership of cultural truth, and highly principle bachelorhood neatly prefigured Jesus, the son of the Christian God, the gentle bearer of light who carried a messiah's truth beneath a golden halo on his solo voyage. Admittedly, Jesus was, and is, a prince of peace, and the same could never be said of Apollo; still, Apollo was the son of Zeus, and his father's perpetual rapes, rampages and conquests harmonize with much of the legacy of the exclusively-male monotheistic triple-god, Yahweh/God/Allah, a deity who, after thousands of years, is still enthusiastically deployed to justify the holy wars of global imperialism.

From yet another angle, the actual core of Apollo's birth mystery was the stupendous crime of "killing the Python." This snake is usually interpreted as female sexuality and its reproductive consequences, and I would not disagree with this line of analysis, but to my way of thinking, it is too limited in scope. I rather envision "The Python" as the celestial intelligence of our very largest, and perhaps our oldest, constellation: Hydra, the female water snake, her body twisting from tail to jeweled head beneath five zodiacal signs, from Scorpio to Cancer. For many years now, I have been asking myself if this stellar range might now be the celestial zone of the Neolithic or Paleolithic prime creatrix - universal female energy as source, sustenance, and

regeneratrix - and the one who later manifested as maiden, mother and crone, and as Eve's highly communicative snake winding every day around the world-tree. At this point, I'm pretty much convinced that for at least five millennia, oracular snake priestesses - the Pythonesses - meditated upon the intelligence of this enormous stellar circuit as it was transmitted during new and full Moons, particular the Pythonesses— meditated upon the intelligence of this enormous stellar circuit as it was transmitted during new and full Moons, particular during the female-centered mysteries during the first lunar cycle, after the autumn and spring equinoxes. In so doing, the Pythonesses could prophesy, heal, guide, schedule, and communicate with the unborn and the dead. In other words, they could maintain the order of hunting and gathering as well as agricultural civilization. The single act of cultural destruction that would be absolutely required for the political and religious consolidation of patriarchy would be precisely the dismemberment of the collective knowledge of the primordial female power of these five zodiacal constellations and their extra-zodiacal references, with innumerable implications for reproductive, domestic, agricultural, civil and religious life. There is no question in my mind but that the celestial Python would be the first metaphysical target of the patriarchs; Apollo was just a foot soldier for an irrepressible rising class of solar kings.

This theory will be further developed elsewhere; however, in this essay, I prefer to develop the idea that the mysteries of Apollo's birth may have been celebrated, albeit unconsciously, in hidden form, in the *Oresteia*, the Classical Greek tragedy. In this drama, Apollo's pitched battle with Artemis is only indirectly exposed, for reasons to which we shall presently turn, but shall see, in more ancient versions of the story line, Artemis and Apollo, the supposedly well-matched twins, directly square off against one another, on opposite sides of a tremendous conflict that has yet to resolve.

The Hidden Birth Mysteries of Apollo: The *Oresteia*

At first, the notion that an Attic play could be the birth mystery of Apollo may seem farfetched, if not an absurd, idea. However, I've noticed that major Greek pilgrimage sites always seem to include huge theatres; it seems that sacred lessons

were regularly transmitted through drama. Moreover, the *Oresteia* certainly justified, in theatrical terms, the birth of the civilization that was ordered in Apollo's name: one that denied the sanctity of motherhood, and proclaimed fatherhood more divine. Also, note that Artemis was a pivotal, if officially camouflaged, player in this corpus of myths, and his passionate adversary as well, entirely in keeping with the way in which her own birth mystery diverged from his.

I was introduced to the *Oresteia* as a student of classics at the University of California, Berkeley; I also once attended a performance at the theatre of Asclepius at Epidauros, Greece. On both occasions, I basically witnessed a morality play describing the just desserts of a vicious trollop who sexually betrayed and murdered her husband: in cahoots with her lover, the wicked Queen Clytemnestra killed King Agamemnon. Clearly, such a woman deserved the death sentence, so her son Orestes killed her in retribution, properly avenging his father's death. Naturally, he was supported by the divine Apollo every step of the way—and at critical moments by Athena and Zeus as well—since killing his mother was the only way to uphold healthy (patriarchal_MK) values, and any civilization based upon them. The only strange creatures who complained were the ghostly female Erinnyes, also known as the Furies, but in the end they too fell silent, tamed into a compassionate acceptance of the overall situation.

“Absolute propaganda!” sputters Robert Graves, insisting that the origins of this conflict had been obliterated for political purposes, and it is quite true that more ancient versions of this myth reveal another story entirely, as we shall soon see. According to Graves, the Classical playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripedes were not faithful to tradition, but were instead writing religious propaganda in service to the Athenian triumph of patriarchy over matriarchy. In other words, Attic dramatists were paid to celebrate the *definitive end* of the old crusade to eradicate matrifocal marriage and kinship, matrilinear inheritance, mother-centered law, and the preeminence of Goddess. In the *Oresteia*, they did so most economically, by trouncing mother-right and by eclipsing a son's loyalty to his mother.

In the old days of pre-Hellenic matriarchy, explains Graves, a mother never would be punished—much less killed—for her sexual activity, since it was one way for her to serve Goddess. Her prerogative as a woman was to take a lover, period. It would be unthinkable, under any circumstances, for her son to take her life. Naturally, a son would avenge his father's death by dispatching his mother's lover: in the old days, a divine son *always* avenged a sacred father whose death occurred right on schedule. For example, Horus, the Egyptian divine son, was born to avenge Set's murder of his divine father, King Osiris, the beloved Queen Isis. But times change, the Nile Valley is far from Athens, and Attic dramatists created a new version of the story. Now, a son could kill his mother with absolute impunity. ⁷

To go a bit further than Graves, to continue to explore the notion that the Oresteia Apollo's birth mystery, and to restore great Artemis to her rightful position as a key player and Apollo's adversary in the story, we must first be properly introduced to the "wicked" Clytemnestra. On three strong grounds, she was an intimate of Artemis.

Clytemnestra, Artemis, and the Age of Taurus

Clytemnestra's mother was Leda—as in Leda and the Swan—whom Graves associates with Leto, the mother of Artemis, and her other forms as Lat, Latona, and so forth. If Graves is correct, Clytemnestra and Artemis would then be sisters in mythic terms. Next we read that Clytemnestra was of royal blood, and a princess, as the daughter of King Tyndrereus of Sparta. This tells us a great deal, since mother-right endured far longer at Sparta than it did at Athens; a major reason, I suspect, for the hostility toward Sparta found in Athenian lore. Also, Spartans were renowned for their loyalty to Artemis; to this day, their archaeological museum boasts the finest collection of her treasures that I've ever seen, all finds drawn from the riveting local sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. Finally, and most significantly, Clytemnestra belonged to the House of Thyestes, a clan backed by Artemis, a clan that made a point of not worshipping Zeus. In its longstanding struggle for the Mycenaean throne, her clan's prime adversary was the

intimidating House of Atreus, backed by Zeus, and known for its fabulous golden wealth, drawn from the tribute of many kings.

Bluntly put, just as today we are acquainted with the Bush regime and its right wing imperialistic alliances under the aegis of God the Father Almighty and his solar son—Jesus as well as its adversary, a network of left-wing populist adversaries, loosely confederated under the aegis of Gaia!—so were the ancient Greeks acquainted with the wealthy House of Atreus under the aegis of Zeus the Father and son Apollo, as well as its adversary, the house of Thyestes. Given the extent to which kings would be pressured to side with one or the other in terms of tribute, perhaps this longstanding rivalry amounted to a civil war, which the text of the Athenian play, the *Oresteia*, purported to resolve.

It seems quite plausible that this fratricidal struggle would also be a code for the revolution in Mycenae that would have accompanied the gradual shift from the Age of Taurus to the Age of Aries in terms of the procession of the equinoxes. To begin with, we are taught that *the conflict between these two houses, or clans, originated when Artemis herself was not given her due*. As the story goes, Atreus once vowed to sacrifice his finest animal to Artemis, but when a magnificent horned lamb appeared in his flocks, he simply could not bear to give up its golden fleece to Goddess as promised. Instead, he stuffed it like an idol and kept it in a chest, boasted about his treasure and made other men jealous, whereupon the golden fleece was taken by his brother-in-law Thyestes, who, with a bit trickery, became the rightful king of Mycenae. At this point, Zeus intervened on the side of Atreus, causing the “Sun to go backward on the dial,” and Atreus was restored to the throne.⁸

A precession occurs, shifting every few thousand years, our solar system gradually reorients itself with respect to the galaxy, so that *the Sun literally goes backward on the dial, moving* to a set of four previous zodiac signs during the equinoxes and solstices. When we are told that a golden horned lamb suddenly appeared, we hear a religious code for the backward movement of the Sun into Aries at the spring equinox; for the horned lamb (ram) is one symbol of that sign, and the golden Sun is there exalted, The Universal Female, e.g. Artemis, the leader of the previous age of

Taurus, is no longer given the finest forms of wealth; instead, men violate their promises to her, become greedy, stuff their fantastic wealth in secret chests at home, brag about their treasures, make other men jealous, and create long-standing fratricidal wars. At this point, the spring equinox no longer occurs in Taurus, the matriarchal, goddess-preeminent Age of Taurus (circa 4400-2200 BCE) is bound to fade, and Zeus will slowly come to “control the Sun” along with his son Apollo. As Graves tells us:

Lucian and Polybius write that when Atreus and Thyestes quarreled over the succession, the Argives were already habitual stargazers and agreed that the best astronomer should be elected king. In the ensuing contest, Thyestes pointed out that the sun always rose in the Ram at the Spring Festival—hence the story of the golden lamb—but the soothsayer Atreus did better: he proved that the sun and the earth travel in different directions. Socrates took the myth more literally: regarding it as evidence of his theory that the universe winds and unwinds itself in alternate cycles of vast duration...”⁹

As an aside, the ancients associate the Moon with Artemis not because the Moon is exclusively female, but because Artemis (and her many sisters) predominated during the Age of Taurus, and the Moon is exalted, at its strongest, in Taurus.¹⁰

At any rate, Clytemnestra carried the blood of generations of loyalty to the precessional Age of Taurus, to its leader Artemis, to its loyal city Sparta, and to its defender, the House of Thyestes—all of which would have probably amounted to witchcraft for Athenian playwrights of the Classical era.

But let’s focus in a little more on her actions, and from her point of view. Before you agree that as Queen, she deserved to die at her own son’s hand, remember that the ostensibly noble man she killed in the Oresteia—her current husband King Agamemnon—was a king who began his courtship by murdering her first husband and their new-born child; a king who then married her by force, presumably abducting and raping her in so doing; a king who quickly proceeded to desert her in favor of an endless military crusade; a king who, completely taken by war, demonstrated an absolute willingness to kill the female fruit of their marriage—Iphigeneia--on behalf of his career; and finally, a king who not only conspicuously committed adultery himself, but had two

sons by his mistress, and clearly intended to set up housekeeping with his new family in his lawful wife Clytemnestra's home. ¹¹

Clytemnestra seems to have been all but killed by her husband Agamemnon. He did not even begin to fit the description of a sacred King under the ways of her lineage. Unfortunately, under the misogynistic tide of the Age of Aries, her courageous attempt to restore matriarchal justice could only fail. She took the law into her own hands to avenge the wrongful deaths of her firstborn, first husband, and daughter Iphigeneia, and her own rape and abduction, and most importantly, to restore female rule to Mycenae. She ruled for years, but in the end she was murdered by her own son, and successfully framed by the propagandists of patriarchy: Clytemnestra has gone down in history, for thousands of years, as a wanton bitch, merely intent upon removing her husband from the picture that she might schedule future trysts in an ongoing illicit relationship, but to me, Clytemnestra will always be an Amazon at Artemis's side, putting her life on the line to fight the murders, rapes, abductions, hoarded wealth, warfare, and conspicuous extramarital children of freshly-minted solar kings and their upstart dynasties, as well as their complex allegiances and corresponding civil wars, and challenging the patriarchal assumption of the female prerogatives of sacred and secular law.

Consider the profound symbolism of her murder of Agamemnon: Clytemnestra chose the full Moon, the thirteenth day of the month, as her time to strike. *Her travel weary partner Agamemnon was just emerging from a silver-sided bath—between the worlds, neither on earth or water—and eager to feed on a banquet spread out in his honor, when Clytemnestra threw a net over him that she had woven herself.* A perfect recapitulation of the story of birth, for when a newborn, travel-weary from journeying down the birth canal, finally emerges from the “silver-sided” lunar womb, it is still disoriented and thus “between the worlds.” First, it must be bathed, and then its hunger for the milky feast of the breast must be assuaged, but first, it must be lightly clothed; if possible, it is wrapped in a sacred cloth woven by the mother herself. So, the story quietly tells us that when Queen Clytemnestra caught her enemy like a fish in her hand-woven net, she arranged the scenario in ritual terms by first symbolically giving birth to, bathing, clothing, and preparing to feed her husband. At this point, and asserting the

traditional cosmic power of biological mothers over life *and* death, and the wisdom of the two matriarchal female prerogatives of sacred and secular law, she fed him the food of death. When beheading her enemy, she chose the double axe as her murder weapon, the Cretan symbol of religious and political sovereignty, redolent with its associations of female immortal and mortal sovereignty.¹²

I can only imagine, and pay tribute to, the generations of Greeks who passed down Clytemnestra's story in the oral tradition, knowing that by including these potent details, they were demonstrating a profound loyalty to the wisdom of their powerful female ancestors, and to their epoch of leadership and Universal Female Artemis. I also imagine that Clytemnestra—for she was no fool—that given the political context in which she operated, she was also committing suicide, since her own death would only be a matter of time; in this sense, her husband's death was also her martyrdom. *Hail Clytemnestra!*

To conclude our exploration of the idea that the *Oresteia* might be Apollo's birth mystery, we must become acquainted with poor Orestes, and his intimate relationship with Apollo, and finally, with the fascinating judgment of the Delphic Oracle: that after the holocaust of the *Oresteia*, only the worship of great Artemis could bring peace.

Orestes, Apollo and Artemis Tauropolos

Although the *Oresteia* is named after Orestes, it is Apollo's birth mystery because Apollo initiates and concludes all of action, practically deploying Orestes as a human pawn. First, Apollo told him that if he didn't kill his mother Clytemnestra, he would be outcast, debarred from all temples, and afflicted with leprosy. After aiding and abetting the poor man every step of the way, at his final Athenian trial, Apollo became his lawyer! And there, in order to honorably acquit his client, Apollo denied motherhood, proclaiming females as mere inert furrows and fathers as the only genuine parents. Here, at the climax of Apollo's birth mystery, we find the ugly root of misogynistic cosmology, one that would inexorably grow into a monstrously towering tree in the subsequent theory and practice of western philosophy and theology.

Apollo may have triumphed, but mortal Orestes had been placed in an impossible position, for when the gods change from one processional era to the next, humans are caught in the gap, and we suffer. Even after Orestes had been honorably absolved for the murder of his mother by the highest court in Athens, he wandered desperately for another year, fighting bouts of insanity, making heartfelt sacrifices, seeking purification in ponds, streams, rivers. My heart goes out to Orestes: he speaks for the quiet unhappiness, depression, even insanity of men who officially triumph—having benefitted profoundly from institutionalized patriarchy—but who drift through life in pain, conscious that something tremendous is terribly out of whack, that they play a role making it so, and that they feel helpless to right the balance. Enter Artemis! an extremely important player in the older versions of this myth, although she was omitted from the Attic version of the *Oresteia*. As we shall see, only Artemis has the potential to resolve, or balance, the whole situation. Only Artemis can end the woes of Orestes and bring peace.

One year after the trial, Orestes was still going out of his mind from the tortures of the Black Erinyes. These three matrons—or myriad wraiths with goddess heads, snaky hair, and bat wings—appeared every few hours to sting him with accusations and speak ill of him to others. Perhaps the Erinyes, or Furies, were pangs of conscience, but they were probably also an echo of the ancient triple-goddess of Athens, for the old gods do die hard. Beside himself, Orestes sought guidance at Delphi for the last time. For once, Apollo had nothing to say, but his priestess told Orestes that *the only way for him to find peace would be to bring the worship of Artemis to Greece*. Specifically, the only way to appease the Erinyes, or Furies, would be to sail up the Bosphorus and proceed to the north coast of the Black Sea, to the Tauric Chersonese, now known as the Crimea. An ancient wooden statue of Artemis once fell from heaven, and it could be found there at her temple.¹³ Orestes was told to find peace by carrying this statue back home and then establishing her worship in Athens or Mycenae. He did.

It would be lovely to find her today. So many sanctuaries in the Mediterranean later claimed to be the place where Artemis was carried, among them Brauron, Susa, Syria, Seleuceia, Lydia, Cappadocia, Sparta, and Aricia in Italy. Forms of this statue are

conserved today in Ephesus, Cos, Munich, Jerusalem, Tripoli, London, Rome, and the Vatican.¹⁴

Sadly, as a final note, older versions of the story insist that Orestes found only death, and no peace. In these versions, although he obediently and successfully brought her statue from the Black Sea and set up her worship in Greece, in the end *Artemis killed Orestes anyway*, showing that she did not see eye to eye with Apollo's Delphic Oracle. Here Artemis guided the hand of her priestess, Iphigenia, to slice open Orestes' throat at her temple at Brauron, the site near Athens where he had established the worship of Artemis.

Therefore, an unforgiving Artemis stands forth within older versions, which maintain an enduring and profound enmity between her lineage and that of Apollo. At this point, at least to me, the purported divine twinship of Artemis and Apollo seems to look like a dangerous lie rather than a harmless myth, since it obscures far too much of their historic conflict. Now, we will begin to refocus our inquiry, moving beyond any concern with the wars of patriarchy, in order to appreciate the cosmic representation of Artemis's body as preserved in her famed statue at Ephesus. In a word, we will share just a bit of the peace promised to Orestes, and do our part to overcome this war.

THE POWER OF HER NAME: HER BODY, NAME, STARS, AND SHE-BEAR

Finally, Artemis will be peacefully honored in terms of a few receptions of her natural laws. I will be brief, and content myself with a series of leading comments and theories, in hopes of developing these teachings more systematically in the near future.

In the main, we will explore the power of her name in three steps-[ark], [arktos] and [themis]-peeling away the skins of these mysterious syllables that their hidden fruits might be savored. Along the way, her name will be seen to be embodied in her famed statue at Ephesus, which no doubt resembled the ancient wooden treasure carried from the Black Sea by Orestes. Her name will also appear in the natural and astrological laws of the solar system, the stars, the two constellations Ursa Major and Ursa Minor,

and her animal, the she-bear.

apx-[ark] = THE BEGINNING, SOURCE, ORIGIN, GENESIS

Artemis's initial syllable is drawn from the Greek root apx-[ark] one of the first syllables memorized by any student of the language, and signifying "beginning, source, origin, genesis."¹⁵ This root knows no limits; it simply stretches in all directions. The instant that we begin to pronounce or examine her name, then, we are given the strongest of signals that Artemis far outstrips the Moon, as well as Earth's biological plane. Of course, her astounding scope is to be found in the Moon, and in the Earth, and it is at least suggested in the stereotypical notion that she has power "over" all things in nature, the fashion in which patriarchal thinking imposes 'itself upon her dimensionality. Still, I prefer to conceive of Artemis-as beginning, source, origin, and genesis-as *the female intelligence within, yet beyond all things*.

Also, owing to the details of her birth on Ortygeia and immediate initiation into midwifery, I suggest that Artemis be received in particular as the female intelligence within, yet beyond *birth* and the entire *female role in human reproduction*, that is, from sexuality, to pregnancy, to labor, to birth, to lactation, to education.

Finally, I suggest that Artemis be received in terms of the female intelligence within, yet beyond *the astrological configurations that obtain at birth*. As an astrologer who meditates regularly upon natal charts, I have concluded that astrology-however poorly it may be practiced, and however maligned it may be in our scientific, secular culture has long been the patriarchal theology of birth. (Fortunately, astrology is also the once and future *theology* of birth!) Astrologers begin with the astronomical figures of birth charts-the apparent, physical, "cosmetic" order of reality, that is, the material world-and are able to read ways in which the material world is inextricably and perfectly coordinated with a vast, dynamic, invisible world order. Over the years, I have obtained so much experiential proof that, during gestation and especially at the moment of birth, as a species we are absolutely *wired* to the unfathomably dynamic original, creative plane of the cosmos, and that we remain connected to this plane, regardless of the vicissitudes of life. Some portion of this miraculous rapport can be measured astronomically, and

some portion can be spoken of astrologically, but the whole, of course, can only begin to be encompassed in poetry.

Evidently, the adjective most frequently used to describe the statue of Artemis at Ephesus, or the realm that she inhabited, was *kosmos*. I suggest that her devotees were using proper poetic shorthand for *the astronomical and astrological dimensions of birth, and of the universe*, when they revered her as cosmic, and (referred) to her cosmic realm. Hilariously, given the prejudices of patriarchy, her “*cosmos*” has usually been taken to mean her “cosmetics”-her makeup, costumes, adornments-but we can sure improve, with reason, upon that.

However, I would not have the courage to make any of these suggestions, were it not for the pioneering work of scholar Jean Richer. Twice awarded the highest honors by the prestigious Academie Francaise for his work on sacred geography and astrological symbolism in Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Phoenicia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome,

Richer was convinced that astrology was the common denominator of ancient religions throughout the world. In his view, astrology was a kind of religious Internet, a way that people could communicate spiritually across distances, whether they were Celts, Hindus, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Persians, Chinese, and so forth. He received his first inspirations along these lines one day, unexpectedly, at Delphi, and then worked for years to make the astrological heartbeat, especially of the Greek, Roman, and Christian religions, something that western academicians would have to take seriously.¹⁶

According to Richer, every aspect of ancient Greek religion-art, ritual, architecture, landscape-was shamanistically coded with stellar reference points, points which celebrated the mysterious synchronicity of heavenly and earthly orders. He took Artemis of Ephesus very seriously indeed: in some sense, all of his theories were epitomized in her famous statue, the one that no doubt resembles the already-ancient wooden treasure that Orestes brought from the Tauric Chersonese. Let us turn, then, to his reception of her majesty.

Jean Richer's Reception of Artemis of Ephesus

Artemis is "the law of the cosmos ... goddess of the circle or of destiny," Richer mused, "the ruler of the whole movement of the sky... the whole zodiac and the calendar."¹⁷ For this reason, he had some difficulty orienting her on land: "I believe that images of this goddess, in Greek archaic art from the seventh century onwards, are much more frequent than is generally recognized, but have not been identified for what they are. Artemis is a goddess of complex origins in whom at least three more ancient goddesses were merged."¹⁸ He describes these as an Anatolian Artemis, a Great Goddess of Crete and the Cyclades, and an earth-moon goddess native to the Peloponnese, associated with Laconia, Taygetus, and Arcadia. In other words, he sort of sees her everywhere he looks! *Indeed, Artemis is misunderstood, she is all over the land, but no one looks to her true home in the sky, and her true home in time.*

Richer presents the statue of Artemis of Ephesus-and all other extant statues of this type-to be her epiphany of the zodiac and of the Moon, as follows.¹⁹

Richer and the Zodiac. Like many others, Richer discusses her necklace of zodiacal signs, making a few original comments of his own. But his brilliant contribution is to analyze the animals appearing on her skirt and headdress in terms of their zodiacal signs. While to our own ears, the animals he cites may not seem to refer to the signs in question, unfortunately, we have grown up with an impoverished astrological vocabulary. In contrast to our ignorance, Richer gathered evidence for years on end proving that the Greeks associated numerous animals with just one zodiacal sign, representing them repeatedly on coins, architecture, and works of art. At any rate, he writes that the Sun's progress through the zodiacal sign of Leo is symbolized by the three lions, since in western astrology, each sign is divided into three decans, or segments. Moving downward along the front of her skirt, the second level is the sign of Scorpio, symbolized by three griffins with bull's heads; the third is Aries, symbolized by three griffins with ram's heads; the fourth is Aquarius, with three panthers; the fifth is Libra, with three deer; and the sixth is Taurus, with three bulls. (See Fig. 5 for a diagram of Richer's grid, accompanied by six further observations of my own.*** We may need to renumber this as Fig. 1, etc.)

Richer and the Moon. In a startling insight, Richer writes that the Moon is represented just beneath her neck, where four female figures stand—the four quarters of the Moon! The two figures at the center are rather corpulent, indicating the New Moon and the Full Moon, the "pregnant" times of greatest lunar power. These two also hold, or pass to one another, an indistinct object shaped like a crescent. (I would surmise that the crescent symbolized the power of the lunar cycle, and the way women marked time, menstruation and pregnancy by the Moon.) The two figures to the side are thinner, indicating the First Quarter and Third Quarter Moon, which are of comparatively marginal importance. Of course, all four figures are winged; the Moon "flies" through the zodiac. Richer admits that several statues do *not* include these winged female figures holding or passing a crescent, but in these cases, the emblem for Cancer is always found, and Cancer is ruled by the Moon, so his argument is strong indeed.

To his theory about the Moon, I would only add that since Artemis's maternal grandmother is Phoebe, the Moon, the necklace of "*bubbles*" just beneath the Moon—here, the four winged lunar females—may be a representation of female reproductive eggs: the egg from which a human being grows is literally contained within the body of its maternal grandmother. That is, a human female is born with all of her eggs fully formed in her infant ovaries, but all of these eggs were fully formed within her mother's body prior to her birth, when she was still swimming in her own mother's womb. In other words, the egg that became Artemis was inside Leto before Leto's birth, and as such, in an interesting facet of her divine birth, *the egg that became Artemis swam in Phoebe's, or the Moon's, womb.* Moreover, on many of these statues, a kind of "*acorn*" necklace swings below the "bubble" necklace; I take this as a possible sacred code for sperm, which also brings life.

Richer's position is that the Artemis of Ephesus, and all other statues of this type, speak primarily of her relationship to the Moon, to the zodiac in general, and to six zodiacal signs in particular. Based upon his courageous lead, I'd like to extend his observations in several directions, and suggest that Artemis of Ephesus strongly carries the Sun, as well as the Moon; that she carries the solar message of equinoctial precession, since Richer's six zodiacal signs epitomize the Age of Taurus; that the three sym-

bols flanking her skirt pertain to the lives of her priestesses, whether at Ephesus, Brauron, Delphi, Sardis, or any of her other oracular sites; that the wool she holds refers to cosmic weaving; and finally, that the highly-debated orbs on her mid-torso may be medicine bags.

Artemis of Ephesus strongly carries the Sun, or the Daystar. Flanking her four lunar figures, proposed wreath of eggs, and zodiacal necklace, four huge lions crouch on her upper arms. These Leonine presences are symbols of solar rulership; I believe they also commemorate the four positions that the Daystar appears to take each day as Earth revolves on its axis: sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight. Artemis also carries the Daystar because during her Age of Taurus, Leo was the summer solstice position, when the northern hemisphere received the most light, when photosynthesis and thus plant growth was at its height. Why, then, did Richer ignore these four immense lions? On a statue such as this, nothing is decorative; everything means something, having been transmitted for centuries, if not thousands of years. Most likely, as a highly lauded male intellectual who had not been raised with the benefit of feminist consciousness, Richer had been conditioned to think that females only connect to the Moon, and that the Sun or Daystar is for males. Yet the primary engine of patriarchal propaganda was to suck stellar and celestial power from goddesses, women and girls, enabling only gods, men and boys to celebrate the full circuit of cosmic dimensionality that stretches between heaven and earth. In pre-patriarchal cosmology around the world, the solar side of Goddess is paired with her lunar side; only later, under patriarchy, is the solar realm successfully appropriated by male gods like Apollo, and by men and boys on earth.

She epitomizes the Age of Taurus, carrying the solar message of processional time. Richer's six zodiacal signs seem to me to be correctly identified, although he did not mention that the terms. Yet once again, Artemis was carved to capture the female intelligence within and beyond the Daystar: *processional time is solar*, and four out of the six signs identified by Richer were the four solstitial and equinoctial points during Artemis's Age of Taurus (circa 4400-2200 BCE). Proceeding from top to bottom-and in perfect zodiacal order, according to the Daystar's progress during a calendar year, one

starts at the top of her skirt with Leo, the summer solstice position, when light is at its height, then moves down to Scorpio, *skips Aries*, moves further down to Aquarius, *skips Libra*, and finally, at the base, finds Taurus, the foundational spring equinox sign, the sign for whom the age was named. Most interestingly, the two signs skipped Aries and Libra-were actually fused with Taurus and Scorpio in pre-patriarchy. That is, the signs of Aries and Libra were artificially created by the rising solar kings in order to justify their assumption of power during the Age of Aries (circa 2200 BCE-O). Before, during Artemis's Age of Taurus, *Taurus and Scorpio were enormous double constellations that included Aries and Libra*, the other two signs here displayed: Aries was the rear half of the bull or cow, and Libra was considered the claws of the scorpion! Remarkably, the codes of her zodiacal body preserve this era of history reminding worshippers of the time when her worship was most passionate, when agricultural and cultural prosperity was remarkable, when society was still largely matriarchal, and when Goddess was preeminent.

Her priestesses, and their work and rewards, are encoded along the sides of her skirt, as well as around her feet. I also propose that *Artemis is flanked and surrounded by her priestesses*, their labors, and its rewards. These appear in the *bees, five-petaled roses, and winged females* proceeding down the sides of her skirt, and in the *ring of roses* circling her feet at the base. For clarity, I will describe these in order:

1. Bees. Her holy women, who worked at Ephesus, Brauron, Delphi, Sardis, and presumably her numerous other oracular sites of healing, were known as *melissae*, literally, as "bees." As an aside, the Delphic Oracle, reportedly selected on the basis of her affinity with Artemis, was referred to as a bee, while the word "Ephesus"-a city still said to have been founded by Amazons, followers of Artemis - also means "bee." A book could easily be written supporting this association alone!
2. Roses. Although the rose is the bloom most commonly associated with the sacred female-especially Aphrodite/Venus and Mary-in western civilization, its meaning seems to be far more specific in this case, owing to the presence of the bee. As we explore up her sides, from the bees to the five-petaled roses, we must remember

that *bees primarily work by flying to gather pollen from flowers, such as the wild five-petaled rose*, and by bringing pollen back to the hive. Bees work symbiotically with flowers: were it not for bees, plants would die out, unable to propagate. So, the wild five-petaled rose—a species around 40 million years old—as the mysterious target, or destination, of the holy women's work. The rose is where priestesses must go; it is what they must find and encounter, just as bees approach roses. The rose also suggests that, were it not for priestesses, their oracular and healing work would die out, just as plants deprived of bees' labor would waste away. I suspect that the rose also acknowledges that the human species would die out if not for the sexual attractiveness and reproductive labor of women. Clearly, the rose refers to sexual pleasure and reproduction, as a flower often signifying the vulva; moreover, Artemis of Ephesus unmistakably stands on a six-sided ring of roses, and figures with six sides—such as the Greek tetractys, Jewish Star of David, and Hindu yantra—symbolize the sacred union of male and female. Also, the honeycomb created through the bee's successful labor has six sides, suggesting the sweetness of labor, sexuality, and reproduction.

3. Winged females. Finally, the bees and the roses are surmounted by winged females, suggesting that as they work, the bee priestesses "encounter the rose" and finally grow wings. That is, they labor symbiotically with the rose on behalf of the community and for their own reward, just as bees do, but in a third and final step, the pollen is brought back to the Queen Bee—in other words, the fruits of labor are dedicated to Queen Bee Artemis—whereupon the sweetness of honey results. In this final step, the bee priestesses become magical women with wings, empowered to fly to plants, commune, and bring back their specific medicines, empowered to ascend on shamanic flights to the stars, and bring back astrological knowledge, that they might serve by predicting events, selecting the best times to do things, and communing with unborn and the dead. By treading the winged path of Artemis's priestesshood, as intermediaries between chthonic, terrestrial, and celestial realms, airborne women are rewarded by Artemis: she allows them to embody the union between heaven and earth, and this is the taste of honey.

The wool she holds refers to cosmic weaving. Artemis's outstretched hands are said to have held long, thick strands of wool that dangled to the floor, while I have noticed that verbs relating to weaving are incessantly utilized in ancient Greek astrological texts. Such verbs are well-chosen. They flawlessly express the sense in which diverse astrological factors are seamlessly "woven together" in time and space, as well as the weaving of destiny. The outstretched arms of Artemis of Ephesus offer a stupendous weave, indeed, a magic carpet woven in the woof of time, space and destiny, and in the warp of the zodiac, the Moon, the Sun, solar precession, the Age of Taurus, and the good works and rewards of her priestesses.

The celebrated orbs on her mid-torso: I do not think that these celebrated orbs are *either* breasts or bulls' testicles, since none of her other symbols seem to be biological body parts, and I feel that their sudden and conspicuous introduction-be they fantastically multiplied as breasts, or dismembered as bull's testicles-would be rather disrespectful to Artemis, and quite disorienting to the worshipper. The clue, to me, is that *these orbs are suspended between Artemis's outstretched forearms and hands*, an unusual, if not completely unique, position for a deity's arms to maintain. I think it signifies that Artemis is offering something, that is, if you worship her properly, she will offer something back. Her offering might be symbolized by the orbs because they are between her forearms and hands and because they protrude from her body toward the worshipper. What does Artemis offer? Going back to her birth story, I believe that she offers practical, serviceable healing magic, whether in terms of medicines or oracles. I therefore speculate that the orbs on the front of her torso are representations of magic medicine pouches or bags. Since they are six-sided, they might also relate to the six-sided ring of roses on which she stands, as well as the honeycomb of the bees, the tetractys, and the union of female and male.

This concludes our discussion of the first component of Artemis's name, apx-[ark], where her identity was explored in terms of this syllable's literal meaning-beginning, source, origin and genesis-and in terms of how such themes inhere within her cosmological statue at Ephesus.

CONCLUSION

I hope that this introductory essay has stimulated the reader's curiosity about Artemis, and led at least somewhat beyond her Classical and New Age reception as "Mistress of the Animals," "Moon Goddess," and "amiable twin" of Apollo.

Above all, I hope it has given some sense of the peace she offers. May all those still curious about her, and all those follow her, enjoy the sweetness of honey in her fully cosmic dimensionality as a once and future Universal Female.



Zodiacal signs carved into the skirt and headdress of Artemis of Ephesus

In *Geographie Sacree dans le Monde Romain*, Jean Richer provided an astounding set of clues as to the magnitude of Artemis's pre-patriarchal identity in a simple diagram.. The following six points are a brief resume of my sense of her complex terrestrial and celestial core-her female intelligence within and beyond all things:

1. Artemis is the Sun, or Daystar, which creates photosynthesis, and thus directly sustains all plant and animal life, since animals primarily feed upon plants.
2. Artemis marks *annual* time as the Daystar by appearing to move *forward* through the zodiac as the Earth revolves around her each year, signaling the practical calendar of gathering, hunting, sowing and reaping, and its twin ritual calendar.
3. Artemis marks *cosmological* time as the Daystar by appearing to move *backward* in

the zodiac every few thousand years due to precession. Here, she determines the astrological ages, universal seasons within which annual calendars fall.

4. Artemis is the cosmological time of the Age of Taurus, since the animals Richer has here identified upon her skirt and headdress pertain to the signs of the equinoxes and solstices of the Age of Taurus, when she reigned supreme.
5. Artemis is the Moon, which also appears to move *forward* through the zodiac, reflecting the Daystar's light slightly differently each day. As she makes a full lunar circle through the zodiac, Artemis creates our month in practical and ritual terms. She is also intimately attuned to the female reproductive cycles of menstruation and pregnancy, and indeed, to the tides of biological mutation in general. (The Moon is represented by four winged female figures just beneath her neck.)
6. Artemis is the zodiac, the band of stars through which the Daystar, Moon and solar system appear to pass. "Zodiac" translates to "circle of living animals;" hence Artemis was revered as "Mistress of the Animals" for as the Daystar, she "ran with the zodiac, or circle of living animals" every year, and as the Moon, she did so every month. Her exalted truth of endlessly running with stellar animals— *and transmitting stellar intelligence to Earth*—was later "dumbed-down" in patriarchy, when she "runs with animals" on mountains and in forests, far from society. (The zodiac is also represented by her necklace of signs.)
7. Artemis is the whole range of extrazodiacal stars. As "Mistress of the Animals," Artemis was not restricted to the zodiac, which after all, is only a narrow belt of stars through which the bodies of our solar system appear to pass. Although patriarchal solar kings and priests have been obsessed with the Sun/Son and its "male" heavenly path, training our attention to the solar zodiac alone, the once and future Artemis "runs with *all* the animals" of *all* the constellations, *all* unimaginable fusions of primal intelligent energy and time, *all* swirling in a circle above us every day, *all* our intimate relations.

VALUES FOR THE SEVEN WOMBSTARS OF *URSA MAJOR*

- You control your rate of reproduction in light of your resources, so the first of your stars shines for me with the cherished value of *reproductive freedom and dignity...*
- You conserve energy in every way possible recycling your own wastes perfectly so the second of your stars shines for me with the cherished values of *living lightly on the land, and dealing brilliantly with wastes...*
- You range harmlessly in the forest, mountains, meadows, tundra, and polar ice consuming what you need, leaving clean waters in your wake so the third of your stars shines for me with the cherished value of *pure, natural land and waters...*
- You feed and shelter your offspring impeccably so the fourth of your stars shines for me with the cherished value of *nurturing the young of all ages, ending hunger and homelessness...*
- You assiduously teach the art of being a bear so the fifth of your stars shines for me with the cherished value of *diligently teaching the art of being a human, and the arts of humanity...*
- You are comfortable with the coats of many colors in your Bear family so the sixth of your stars shines for me with the cherished value of *absolutely ending racism."*
- You defend yourself and your tribe ferociously from all those who would prey upon them, or upon their liberties so the seventh of your stars shines for me with the cherished value of an *uncompromising defense of freedom from all predators and slavery...*

During this century, as Earth's celestial axis drifts ever closer to your daughter's brightest star - Ursa Minor's polestar - may many more attune to the beauty of your stars and may we continue, as quickly as possible, to order global civilization in accordance with your teachings of natural law *and may the women lead...*

Your stars spiral above always invisibly, guiding us north, or in any direction the helix of our evolution as a species the stellar Helicon, mountain home of the Muses. Hail the Great Cosmic Bearess and Child Hail Artemis

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ENDNOTES

¹ Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (London: Penguin, 1992),27-29.

² Graves, 80.

³ Graves, 177

⁴ Graves, 85.

⁵ Graves, 225.

⁶ Graves, 55-57.

⁷ Graves, 426.

⁸ Graves, 406

⁹ Graves, 411-12

¹⁰ Despite our strong cultural prejudice in favor of the Moon today, and our tendency to associate Goddess, and women, exclusively with the Moon, unfortunately, such a stance conforms perfectly to dualistic patriarchal ideology. Moreover, the Universal Female, who has no limits, cannot be fairly bound to planetary or zodiacal restrictions, and women, like men, are designed to embody the entire cosmos.

¹¹ "Clytaemnestra had small cause to love Agamemnon: after killing her former husband Tantalus, and the new-born child at her breast, he had married her by force, and then gone away to a war which promised never to end; he had also sanctioned the sacrifice of [their daughter] Iphigeneia at Aulis -and, this she found even harder to bear -was said to be bringing back Priam's daughter, Cassandra, the prophetess, as his wife in all but name." Graves, 414.

¹² Graves, 415.

¹³ Older stories relate that Iphigeneia was Chief Priestess at this temple on the Black Sea, having been rescued by Artemis from sacrifice at Aulis.

¹⁴ Graves believe that this famous Artemis from the Black Sea-known as Taurian Artemis, or Artemis Tauropolos/Tauropole-was also called Artemis Dictynna, Artemis Orthia, Thoantea, Hecate, and, in Italy, Trivia. Graves, 436.

¹⁵ Unfortunately, the archaic Greek root apx-[ark] was subsequently dropped in the West in favor of the Latin gen-, a patriarchal root *par excellence*, since it is drawn from the Egyptian root meaning phallus or penis, thus words such as gender, engender, genetic and genesis are symbolically drawn from exclusively male order.

However, even in "Genesis", patriarchal biblical mythologies of origin and survival we find the irrepressible archaic Greek root *apx-[ark]* buried within pivotal stories of origin and survival such as "Noah and the Ark" and "the Ark of the Covenant." It resurfaces in modern survival myths such as "Raiders of the Lost Ark;" in academic fields that plumb our origins, like *archaeology*, *archaeomythology*, and *archetypal psychology*. In Greek tradition, the root is everywhere: Pausanias reports that *Arcadia* was the oldest city on earth; in Attica, young girls went to Brauron for the *Arkteia*, Artemis's festival; and so forth.

¹⁶ Academicians from Hindu and Buddhist contexts, like India, Tibet, China, and Bali, are far less threatened by the idea that astrology is germane to religion: Asian culture still respects astrology.

¹⁷ Richer, *Sacred Geography*, xxxvii and 130.

¹⁸ Richer, *Sacred Geography*, 250.

¹⁹ Richer, *Geographie Sacree*, 191-237.