



A detailed illustration of the motions of the Trigon of Great Conjunctions from 1583-1763.

## Pluto and the Great Conjunction of 2020

As the 12 Holy Nights of this year are behind us, we now enter the dynamic relationships of the cosmic intelligences (or the planetary spheres) for the coming year, which culminate in a Great Conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter at Christmas, 2020. The exact conjunction occurs on solstice, December 21, 2020. However due to the slow movements of Saturn and Jupiter, we can consider this great conjunction to stretch out for several weeks around solstice 2020. One of the important considerations

in a new star wisdom, or astrosophy, is to enter the flow of rhythm in the life of the planetary spheres. In so doing, we must consider the rhythms that even now are shaping the theme of this Great Conjunction as the planets engage and prepare for this meeting. One can view Saturn and Jupiter as the great keepers of the divine evolutionary plan for humanity. Saturn is that sphere who is the keeper of the plan from its inception, the great Father Time, who continually reminds us through karma, of the beginnings of our Earth and the great plan laid out for human evolution. In this sphere is the world memory, or the akasha, of existence, which often can seem to lay down the law of karma as a strong reminder of whether we are staying true to this plan. Jupiter on the other hand, is Father Life. In this sphere the expansive living wisdom envisions the future. The beings of this sphere carry the ideals and great cosmic thoughts that live as the creative shaping of life into the future, eventually towards our next evolutionary cycle, called in esotericism, Future Jupiter. The meeting of these two great keepers of our solar cosmos who carry that which arose from the most High Trinity and the most High Sophia, can be seen as a kind of cosmic conference, evaluating how we are unfolding the cosmic plan into the future as creative partners in evolution. These great conjunctions unfold in a pattern over time, occurring every twenty years at 120 degrees equidistant from each other, weaving in the heavens around us a great equilateral triangle, called the Golden Triangle, or Golden Star, a symbol used in many esoteric schools. This Golden Triangle remains intact but over time slowly rotates forward in the zodiac by 8 to 10 degrees every 60 years when one trinity of conjunctions has been completed. The fourth conjunction returns to the same point to begin the cycle again, a bit further along. These points of the triangle can therefore be traced back in time to reveal historical events related to humanity's spiritual evolution. Willi Sucher has followed this Golden Star in history and his research has revealed, among other things, that the corners of this Great Triangle can be traced back and have a relationship to the events around the time of Christ, which have imbued their conferences now with new meaning for the Earth. These events are the Great Conjunction of 6 BC, which according to Willi Sucher's research, is the actual so-called Star of Bethlehem, pre-announcing the birth of the child who would become the Savior of the world. This "star" observed by the magi, was their tool for knowing the time and place of the reincarnation of their great Teacher, Zoroaster (meaning Golden Star), or Zarathustra, in Bethlehem in Israel. Thus they made their journey, with the wisdom of the ancient clairvoyant star knowledge, to seek their great Teacher. Therefore this corner of the zodiac carries the "great Annunciation" theme, calling for humanity to awaken to birth of the new in the world, often revealing in history, events of new revelation, new annunciations for humanity.

**This is the corner which corresponds to the Great Conjunction of 2020.**

The other two corners represent a Great Conjunction in 14 AD, which Willi Sucher corresponds to the event described by Rudolf Steiner as the merging of the two streams of the Jesus boys – the shepherd stream from the story described in the Luke gospel and the magi stream described in the Matthew gospel. This corner then carries the theme of a union of two streams in humanity. The third corner corresponds to the Great Conjunction of 34 AD, which Willi Sucher associates with the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus, which was according to Rudolf Steiner, the first of the new experience of the Christ, and a foreshadowing of the new experience of Christ available to humanity now. Therefore this corner carries the theme of "world Damascus" which last occurred in 2000. Each of these themes could be elaborated at great length, but for this article we will move on to the events now leading us towards the Great Conjunction of "world annunciation" in December, 2020. Both Saturn and Jupiter for

many months have been passing through the so-called dark zodiac. Rudolf Steiner elaborates on this in his Mystic Lamb lecture:

*We think of the forces which are now involved in the ascending line of evolution, collectively, as Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra — because they actually belong to these constellations. These seven constellations comprise the ascending forces. The descending forces are comprised, approximately speaking, in the five constellations of Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces. Thus forces rain down from the Zodiac and ascend again: seven constellations of ascending, five of descending forces. The ascending forces also correspond, in man, to the higher members of his being, to his higher, nobler attributes. The forces which are in the descending phase of evolution have first to pass through the human being and through this attain to the stage at which they too can become ascending forces. (GA 102)*

Those constellations, which are yet to be transformed, are associated with the “will” human being, or lower human, from Scorpio (the reproductive systems) on through Pisces (the hands and feet). Both planets are currently in the stars of the Archer (Sagittarius) where they will continue to approach each other over the coming year, until they meet, just at the transition out of Archer into Capricorn stars. So what can this tell us?

In the Archer we have a kind of mirror in a more internal sense of the opposite constellation of Gemini. They both represent an imagination of duality or polarity, but in reality can also be seen as representing a threefoldness. In the Twins, you have the story of Castor and Pollux in Greek mythology, Castor the mortal twin, who was born of Leda and the King of Sparta, and Pollux, the immortal twin who was born of Zeus and Leda, both of whom were conceived on the same day by a God and a human king. But due to their love for each other, they alternated time in the world of the gods and in the world of Hades. However, if we look at the image of the symbol for Gemini, we have a picture of two worlds, the above and below, connected by a bridge or column. This bridge was broken during evolution as humanity descended and lost the “bridge” between the worlds. However due to the Christ event, (Saturn began the Three Years in the stars of the Twins and Jupiter culminated at Easter in the stars of the Twins), that bridge has been restored in a new form, through the I AM. We can now perhaps carry a new image for the Twins, which I think is best pictured in Rudolf Steiner’s sculpture, Representative Man. The two worlds of the heights and the depths held together and in proper balance by the Human Being. So let us move to the Archer, opposite the Twins, with another image of duality...or one could also say threefold. Here we have a similar theme to Gemini but now in the Archer we can say that as the Twins represents a historical picture, the Archer represents the working out of this polarity within the human being which is our evolutionary story now and into the future. In the Archer we have the imagination of the Centaur, half human and half animal (horse). Here we can see the duality we all experience in our soul life, between the lower instinctual nature (which in earlier times was still carried by the wisdom of the gods but is today more handed over to the conscious handling of human beings) and our humanness arising out of it. However we can add a third element to the Archer, for this human being holds a bow and arrow aiming for the future. Thus in a sense we have again the lower world of the animal nature which surges with passions and instincts and the bow and arrow aiming towards our true human goals, with the human between the two.

In fact in Willi Sucher’s research (see Isis Sophia II) he correlates the zodiac with the great evolutionary rounds described by Steiner in Occult Science. He here associates the dark zodiac with a process which

occurred on Ancient Moon, which began with the great rebellion and the separation of the Sun from the Earth (in Scorpio). This was followed by the human being living in a dual nature between Sun existence and Earth existence in a more hardening form (in the Archer, notice the dualism theme). This was then followed by the great battle which took place to re-unite the Earth with the Sun (in Capricorn) resulting in the cosmos of wisdom at the completion of the Ancient Moon cycle.

So here we have a kind of cosmic background in the zodiac which can help us understand better the journey now of Jupiter and Saturn through the Archer in these many months. Humanity is going through a struggle to “work out it’s humanity” in the face of dark instinctual forces that seek to arise out of the past and threaten our aiming for the higher human in us. The Great Conjunction will culminate just as Saturn and Jupiter step out of Archer and into Capricorn, that constellation which carries the memory of the great battle which led to the re-union with the Sun in Ancient Moon. How can we see this reflected in the call and challenge of this Great Conjunction of Annunciation at Christmas 2020? Will we achieve a new awakening, a breakthrough to the “new”? As a side note, of course one cannot help but connect the question of this approaching Great Conjunction in December with the American presidential election in November of 2020 and the inauguration of the new President the following January 20th. These great events of Saturn and Jupiter of course span the approaching and following month as they are in orb of conjunction for a longer period.

But let us now look more closely at the events in this current month and into spring, which, if we consider the rhythms of time in the planetary spheres, are already preparing the way for the Great Conjunction of December.

1. This past January 10th there was a Full Moon at Castor (who interesting to note was called “a tamer of horses”, think Sagittarius). This means of course that the Moon (and Earth) were in Twins, opposite the Sun and Mercury in Archer.

2. This Full Moon occurred when Mercury was in superior conjunction with the Sun (meaning behind the Sun from Earth) in the Archer. It will complete its loop coming into inferior conjunction on February 26th.

3. On January 12th, though approaching for many days, the exact conjunction of Saturn with Pluto occurred in the body of the horse of the Archer. Within the next day, Mercury and Sun joined in this conjunction, so we had a clustering of these significant planets with Pluto.

4. Then on March 23rd Mars and Jupiter come into conjunction with Pluto (Jupiter exact on April 5th, Palm Sunday). Jupiter then through retrograde activity will again conjunct Pluto on June 30th.

So we have significant activity now in early January and again in March and June in relation to Pluto. For now let us focus on the meeting of Saturn and Jupiter with Pluto approaching this Great Conjunction. For the Mercury and Moon picture, it would require a bit more elaboration, but I mention them only as knowledge to consider during this time. So, we must consider the role of Pluto in this whole time frame. Pluto, the King of the Underworld, is in the stars of lower body of the Archer and has been there for several months. This is a powerful image to contemplate as we consider our times and the roaring cries of the lower instinctive life; the calls for nationalism and religious fundamentalism; the separation and polarization among peoples; and the destructive retarding forces at work to lead humans

away from their task of spiritual freedom. I have written about Pluto in a past article but will insert here an excerpt to shed some light on these current events:

“Rudolf Steiner had nothing to say about Pluto, since it was not discovered until 1930, however he did describe the so-called outer planets beyond Saturn as "newcomers" or "outsiders" to the solar system and not a part of it in the classical sense. Willi Sucher's research shed some spiritual light on these outer planets. Through them we can see a reflection of the evolving consciousness of humanity as we move towards the development of our higher faculties, spirit self, life spirit and spirit human. But since this development is left to us out of our freedom and lives more or less asleep in humanity, these spheres are also the field of work of the adversaries to human development and often reveal their activity not so much in individual humans but in the greater tasks and challenges of humanity. In the sphere of Pluto, we have that realm which is most deeply veiled and least developed. It is the transformation of the will and the physical body to its true form as the expression of the ego, as revealed in the incorruptible body. It is also the realm through which efforts are made by the third adversarial rank of the fallen Asuras, who are of the rank of the Spirits of Personality, or Archai. These beings work to so bind the ego to matter that the spiritual evolution of the Earth will not be able to proceed. Rudolf Steiner describes these beings from various perspectives in different lectures, but one perspective which has bearing on our theme comes from a lecture given in Berlin, June 2, 1907: *Egoism has a two-fold character; it is excellent and desirable or obnoxious and evil. If at that time on Saturn and on the succeeding planets the essential nature of egoism had not been again and again implanted, man would never have become an independent being who can say "I" to himself. Into your bodily nature there has been instilled ever since Saturn the sum of forces which stamps you as an independent being, cutting you off from all other beings. To this end had the Spirits of Egoism, the Asuras, to work.*

*Among them are to be found two kinds, apart from slight deviations. The one kind has elaborated egoism in a noble, self-reliant way, and has risen higher and higher in the perfection of the sense of freedom: that is the rightful independence of egoism. These spirits have guided mankind through all the successive planets; they have become the educators of men towards independence. Now on each planet there are also Spirits who have remained behind in evolution... If the most outstanding fall and commit the "great sin" of not advancing with evolution, then they become the very worst of all. The noble sense of liberty has been reversed into wickedness, into its opposite.. they lead to the evil side of egoism, even today they are still in our environment.*

And in Basel, Oct 1, 1911: *If what lives in the harmony of the spheres is thrust down farther still, into the province of the Asuras, an even more terrible force, which it will not be possible to keep hidden very much longer, is generated. One can only hope that when this force comes — a force we must conceive as being far, far stronger than the most violent electrical discharge — one can only hope that before some discoverer gives this force into the hands of humanity, human beings will no longer have anything immoral left in them."*

The sphere of Pluto is therefore connected on the one hand to the highest transformation of the physical through the spiritual ego and yet also to its opposite, an egoism that would bind the ego permanently to matter. Pluto is also connected to this "terrible force" of sub-nature, which Willi Sucher connects with nuclear energy and its potential to obliterate the Earth and thereby humanity's capacity to achieve on the Earth its task. It is interesting to note that the first atom smasher was invented in 1932, two years after the discovery of Pluto. This opened the door to the study of nuclear structure and its

destruction. This can only be a glimpse of the nature of this realm of Pluto, which reaches into the deepest nature of the will and the sub-nature forces, as well as the work of the ego upon the physical body.

Due to the current world situation, I add another quote about the Asuras from Rudolf Steiner: *The Anglo-American world may gain world dominion; but without the Threefold Social Order it will, through this dominion, pour out cultural death and cultural illness over the whole earth...a gift of the Asuric powers!*

So we have between now and March a meeting of all of the classical planets with Pluto (except for Venus which conjuncted Pluto mid December 2019 and will again meet Pluto in late January, 2021).

In astrosophy, we must come to recognize that the stars no longer shape our lives, but now await our free action to raise human consciousness and activity to its highest calling and become partners with the gods of the starry worlds. The spiritual worlds await our becoming. If we do not take up our tasks, the negative aspects of the planetary spheres will not leave us in freedom, but will act as opposing forces. This is indeed the challenge in the Archer...that we arise to our true nature out of the obstacles and challenges that present themselves and work to undermine, even to destroy, the evolutionary goals for human beings. Pluto can be revolutionary and disruptive in the world. However in this are also the seeds of Intuition and the realization of our Spirit Human. It is often only through the greatest obstacles and challenges that human beings awaken to their true nature. May we be conscious of the awakening and the call for "annunciation" with the Great Conjunction as we move towards next Christmas and even now follow the planetary rhythms preparing the way. Jonathan Hilton January 13, 2020