

# **Contents of *The Great Ages and Other Astrological Cycles***

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## **Extracts**

Page 9 (from the Age of Taurus)

### **Mesopotamia**

The most obvious congruence between the meaning of Taurus and the civilisation that flowered in the third and fourth millennia BC in Mesopotamia, the land now occupied by parts of modern Iraq, Iran, and Syria, is wealth. It seems that for the first time in history we have individuals

with resources at their command far beyond individual need. By about 2600BC the kings of Ur, in the southern part of Sumeria, were wealthy enough to set themselves up as rulers over the whole country, so we have a link between wealth (Taurus) and power (Scorpio). The wealth of the early dynastic rulers of Ur was revealed by the discovery in modern times of the royal cemetery, which was in use between 2600 and 2400 BC. Seventeen tombs furnished with spectacular gold and silver work, jewellery and other highly crafted objects have been excavated.

There was luxury and plenty in other parts of the ancient world. The wealth of the early Bronze Age settlements that grew up in Anatolia was built upon copper deposits (the essential constituent of bronze), while the great building projects of Old Kingdom Egypt were indicative not only of great confidence in working with the materials of the world, but also of wealth, a surplus over and above the requirements of everyday need.

Mesopotamian wealth, like that of Egypt, was derived from a fertile land irrigated by a great river system. The Tigris-Euphrates did not flood regularly like the Nile, but needed an elaborate system of locks and canals to ensure the land was properly watered. This period, both in Egypt and the ancient Near East, saw the birth of civic spirit, the co-operation and peaceful co-existence (Venus) necessary to achieve great and essential undertakings in the common interest, such as the irrigation and cultivation of the land. A number of historians have suggested that at this time in mankind's development the realisation dawned that there was the potential in the world for a better and richer life, although, at the same time, this required commitment, effort and co-operation if it was to be realised. The astrologer Alan Oken<sup>2</sup> suggests the Age of Taurus entailed 'the merging of the resources of the people with the resources of the land,' which sums it up well and is a description that accords with the widely accepted meaning of Taurus.

One historian, uses similar terms to describe the character of the Egyptian Old Kingdom, in which period the Nile Valley was first cleared for habitation and the passion for great building projects materialised, as one of 'material success gained by the shrewd employment of a man's abilities in a well-ordered society.'<sup>3</sup> This sounds very Earthy, very Venus, very Taurean.

## Page 20-21 (part of the Aries Age)

The religions that emerged and thrived in the Aries Age can be well differentiated from those that belonged to the ages before and after. Aries religions are of the here and now, little concerned with salvation or an afterlife. The followers of the Aries Age religions did not consider themselves unworthy, nor did they pray for mercy and forgiveness. Rather, they spoke man-to-man with their gods and were peremptory in their demands, which were sometimes for prosperity, but most often for victory. There is about many Piscean religions a sense of despair seeking relief in a supernatural world, but in the Aries Age man is possessed of spiritual and moral qualities, able to overcome evil and make the world a better place. In Aries religions fire is common in ritual while motifs of conflict and combat are common in their mythology.

Equally the religions of this period were ethical, with right and wrong sharply delineated, and questions of how one *should* live to the fore. We think of the Ten Commandments that have their origin here. The majority of the ten relate to what *not* to do (only observing the Sabbath and honouring mother and father relate to positive action). In other words, the Commandments are telling us that the way to healthy social living is through individuals voluntarily putting curbs on selfish and destructive actions. Many, if not all, ethical systems are founded upon this balance of individual and society, which points once more to the Aries-Libra polarity.

... The **Vedic** religious outlook on life, as expressed in the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, for example, is likewise in accord with the astrological nature of Aries. Figures like Indra, Mitra, Agni, and Savitri were patriarchal warrior gods associated with fire, energy and the life force. The name 'Savitri', Campbell<sup>15</sup> informs us, derives from the Sanskrit *su*, to excite, stimulate, incite, repel. Savitri is the stimulator of everything, but particularly of thought. Indra is the greatest of the battle gods. Known sometimes as 'he with a thousand testicles', he is a potent symbol of the life force, and also of the heroism and courage that is held up as the ideal of the Vedic world.

The central mythical theme of the Vedas is of some primeval feat performed by gods or heroes, generally the slaying of the monster Vrtra,

who seems to be a manifestation of inertia or obstruction. What, in essence, is required of the heroes is vigorous action to release life, which in the myths usually takes the form of setting the sun in motion, or releasing waters from the rock. The word *soma* occurs frequently in Vedic texts and signifies both a drink which induced heightened physical and mental energy, and as something more abstract. Norman Cohn<sup>16</sup> equates it with Savitri, the stimulating life force, present in semen, but also the animator of nature. 'In fact', he notes, '*soma* was the power that ensured the continuation of the cyclic process on which all life depends. The process of reproduction.'

### **Pages 25-26 (part of Age of Pisces)**

Piscean empires are characterised by the imposition of a 'superior' order, whether this is Roman law, or Christian or Islamic faith. They involve something of an exchange. A conquered people might lose its right to self determination, but at the same time, submission brings its reward, in the form of the gifts of a superior culture: civilisation, law, peace. This differs from Aries empires, where there was no sense of mission, little in the way of administrative structures, no principle that could unite diversity, no or little attempt to give. As we noted earlier, with Aries conquests, it was almost always a case of an inferior, even barbaric, power wanting and taking a share of a more developed civilisation.

### **The beginning of the age**

What marks the beginning of the Piscean Age is not the birth of Christ, but the emergence, about three centuries prior to that singular event, of a Jupiterian urge to unity and expansion.

In the late stages of the Aries Age India was, like Greece, made up of conflicting monarchies and republics. But by about 250 BCE Ashoka the Great ruled a great empire that stretched between Persia and southern India. The process of transformation was gradual, although was catalysed by the invasion of the north-west regions by Alexander in 326 BCE. The Maurya Empire of Chandragupta formed not long after this date in response to the Greek threat is commonly regarded as the first political unification of the greater part of India.

In England, 1066 is a date embossed upon the memory of the populace.

In America it is 1492 or 1776. The equivalent date in China is 221 bce. This marked the foundation of the first Chinese Empire, under the Ch'in Dynasty. Prior to the unity of empire there was fragmentation and prolonged strife. The latter part of the Chou Dynasty (403-221 BCE) is termed the Period of Warring States. At the start of this period there were about 170 fiefdoms, which in the course of two centuries were destroyed or amalgamated through almost perpetual warfare, so that by 221 BCE there remained only seven principalities which, for the first time, came under the central control of an emperor. An inscription on the monument erected to honour this first emperor reads: 'He has been the first to achieve a single great peace.'<sup>1</sup>

... Unity and expansion took place not only in India and China, but also in Greece. Following the first ripple that was Persia came a more pronounced one, in Hellenism and the empire of Alexander the Great. By about 350 BCE the civilisation we know as ancient Greece had entered its final phase. The warring city states slowly moved towards the idea of political and military unity, which culminated, in 338 BCE with the Hellenic League, under the hegemony of Philip of Macedon, which embraced all the states save Sparta. But it was Philip's son, Alexander, who more obviously heralded the onset of a new age.

By 326 BCE, his empire stretched from northern Egypt to the north-west of India, embracing large areas of modern Turkey, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It also included parts of the Balkans, the eastern end of the Mediterranean and all of a hitherto divided Greece. Alexander dreamt of Hellenising the world, of spreading Greek culture and uniting it under a single polity. This was the so-called oecumene. This urge to expansion, and the idea of embracing a great number of peoples with myriad philosophies, religions, customs, cultures and languages, under a single banner, equates very much to Jupiter and Pisces.

## **Extracts from *Jupiter and Mercury an A to Z***

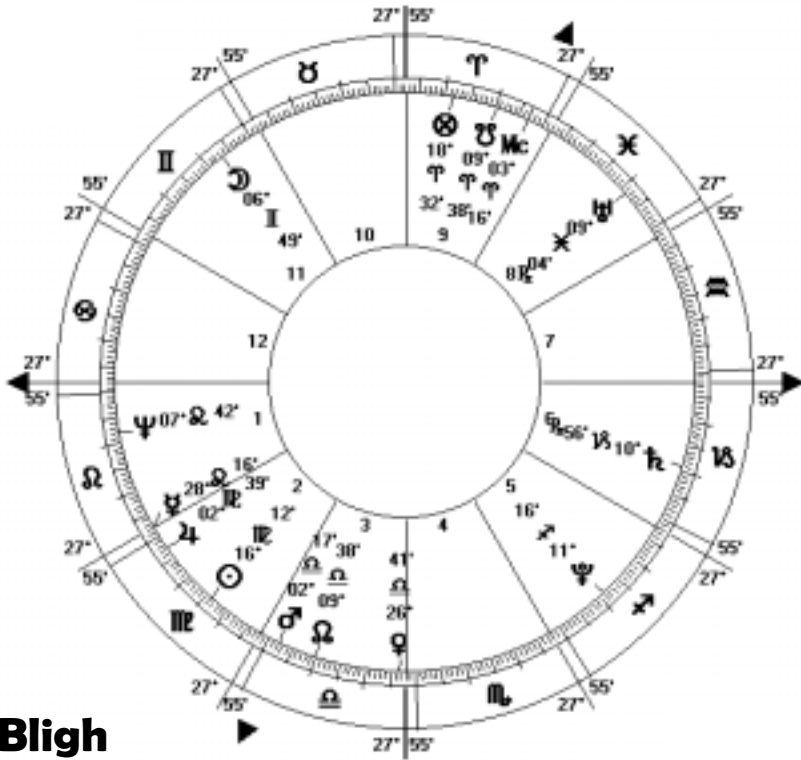
**A** is for **absolutes**, non-relative and unconditioned truths uncorrupted by time or modified by expediency. Jupiterians may be desperate for such truth, or in rare cases may speak or embody it. A also stands for **authority**, particularly of the moral or intellectual sort. Jupiterians may see themselves as authorities; equally they are readier than most to proclaim authorities, and be obedient to them. Those astrologers considered the most authoritative generally have a strong Jupiter/Sagittarius element in their natal charts. Sometimes they are worthy of the accolade, sometimes not.

A also stands for **anticipate**, which means looking to account for future possibility, usually with a view to forestalling mishap or calamity. Although a future-oriented term, it relates to Mercury – particularly Virgo – rather than Jupiter, because it is an aspect of fear and control, rather than intuited awareness of unfolding potential. Jupiter is quite happy letting the future take care of itself. It's the adventurer of the zodiac, ready to trust in chance and confident that everything will turn out well in the end. But Virgo has an uneasy relationship with chance and uncertainty. It craves the predictability of routine. Mercury (particularly its Virgo face) will often run ahead of itself and prepare for future events with rehearsal and contingency plans. The anxiety and stress associated with the sign is connected with this: fear of coping with what is yet to happen. Of the two Mercury signs, Gemini is probably better at adapting, responding creatively to unforeseen circumstances. The saying 'everything is going smoothly', so vital for Virgo comfort, is an aspect of anticipation.

### **Astrological profile, Captain Bligh (page 43)**

William Bligh, of Bounty fame, is a good example of Virgoan anticipation in action. His chart, is strongly Mercurial, with Moon in Gemini and Sun in Virgo, and this is mirrored in biographical statements such as: 'his insatiable appetite for discovery and observation'<sup>1</sup>. And:

Bligh was an enquirer. He was ... deeply infected by the eighteenth century enthusiasm for knowledge, and for recording it ... he was also diarist and observer, botanist, astronomer, geographer, artist and anthropologist ...



## Bligh

**Born: 9 September 1754, 01.00 LMT, Plymouth 50n23/4w10**

the log of The Bounty ... becomes a fascinating account of all that he sees and hears. Nothing escapes his observation.<sup>2</sup>

I think we also see the Mercury signs reflected in his remarkable skill as a navigator, and his ability as a cartographer. The Mercury part of human nature seeks to impose order upon what is vast and complex. In the case of navigation, or map-making, this uses the division of a circle into compass points, plus lines of latitude and longitude, to simply and unambiguously define any point on the globe and one's own position relative to any other. Very efficient, very effective, and without it, man

could not have accomplished his Jupiterian voyages of world discovery.

When we examine biographical accounts of Bligh's character – and there have been many – we see him labelled as a great worrier and a man who paid obsessive attention to detail. He would leave nothing to chance when setting out on a voyage:

Bligh's main strength as a commander was to prepare for eventualities and to check details; his main weakness was to nag until he got his way and to nag if he thought his officers were not being particularly diligent ... a dictatorial insistence on trifles, everlasting fault-finding.

There is no doubt that character traits like this – again, very Virgoan – made Bligh difficult to abide in the claustrophobic confines of a small ship like *The Bounty*, yet he was by no means the tyrant depicted in the 1935 or 1962 films of the story. (The 1984 version, *Bounty*, featuring Anthony Hopkins, is a more accurate portrayal of the real Bligh.) Indeed, when it came to discipline, he inclined to leniency, and was much less of a flogger than either Cook or Nelson. He was something of a verbal bully, noted for his foul language, and did have a harsh manner, both of which might be attributed to the strongly-placed Mars, conjunct the IC. But he was not an evil man, or a sadist.

'Obsession with cleanliness,' notes one biographer.<sup>21</sup> He ensured his crew cleaned themselves and their clothes, and whenever possible he aired his ship, washed it down with vinegar solution, and pumped away the stagnant and unhealthy bilge waters. All this is classical Virgo.

And there were other ways in which his Virgo nature catalysed the mutiny for which he is remembered. Part of the essence of Virgo is to distance itself from the teeming, vital world of Nature, which is necessary if one is to tame and harness it, and if it is to be defused of its threat and danger. Tahiti, where the crew of the *Bounty* spent some months collecting and cultivating bread fruit, was a primitive paradise, where the people lived much closer to Nature, in a hedonistic and promiscuous way. It was all harmless enough, but it unsettled Bligh, perhaps in a way that he didn't really understand and he was determined that he would not succumb to their earthy ways, and equally that his crew would not. He was pleased to leave Tahiti. Fletcher Christian, his first mate, was not. We don't know Christian's full chart, although we do know he had the Sun in Libra (and

probably the Moon also). Libra is a Venus-ruled sign and I have written elsewhere<sup>23</sup> about its connection with Eden and the Fall. Christian found his paradise in Tahiti; he did not want to leave the island or the love he found there. Faced with another journey around the Horn, and months of the acerbic tongue of Bligh, the pull of paradise on this Venusian man was too great. He intended at first simply to desert, but events dictated otherwise.

Bligh's birth time is recorded to the hour, and it would not take many minutes to move the ascendant on to Leo. At first sight this seems appropriate because of the tyrannical, bullying image created by early films. However, biography creates a strong case for Cancer. He was moody, one minute arrogant and insulting, the next kind and considerate. There was also a rough, awkward paternalism, a concern with his men's comfort and welfare over and above his duty. 'Bligh fussed over his men,' notes one biographer, and Bligh noted in *The Bounty's* log: 'They [the crew] must be watched over like children.' He was irascible and very touchy, particularly when people questioned his decisions.

While a very able seaman, he was not a natural leader of men. Virgo's confidence, such as it is, is based upon the possession of skills, rather than self-belief, and it is easy enough to see in Bligh a man over-compensating for an ingrained inferiority complex. Saturn sits strong in Capricorn, which reflected in a marked vein of ambition. He was keen to make a name for himself, and frustrated when recognition was slow in coming.

Neptune is conjunct Bligh's ascendant, which suggests the calumnies and false images which surrounded him for many years. It might also symbolise the fact that Bligh's story is one (like that of The Titanic) that has passed into myth, that has become infused with the magic of storytelling. A case of reality transfigured to fantasy.

On the day the crew of *The Bounty* mutinied, 28 April 1789, Uranus was positioned at 0deg 59min of Leo, close to Bligh's natal ascendant. It seems a simple and accurate statement regarding the overthrow of authority. There is a strong planetary configuration in this chart, perhaps not evident at first sight. Sun and Jupiter are 14 degrees apart in Virgo. This is rather wide for a conjunction, yet if we take the midpoint, it falls at 9 degrees Virgo, exactly opposed by natal Uranus, which once more

seems a simple statement about a man who was the focal point of a revolt in exotic circumstances that became much celebrated. We can note too that the opposition falls square to Moon in Gemini and Pluto in Sagittarius, forming a grand cross.

Also on the day of the mutiny, Jupiter was positioned at about 23 degrees of Cancer and approaching the ascendant. It would cross it about 2 June, a few days before Bligh's craft reached East Timor and safety. In other words, it seems to mirror his salvation. Bligh had the faith to persevere in what must have seemed a hopeless situation. As we said earlier, he was a man who, through his anticipation, his foresight, was always trying to be one step ahead of Fate. Adrift on the Pacific for 41 days, Bligh could maintain discipline amongst his crew, he could navigate, but taken alone, these would not be enough to save him. He had to submit to and trust Providence, God, Fate, Luck call it what you will. Had he not humbly accepted the fact that he was not master of the situation, he would likely have perished.<sup>24</sup>

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