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December 10, 1991

THE GODDESS TIMELINE

Welcome to the GODDESS TIMELINE! We have all seen historical timelines; they are a marvelous visual device for condensing and displaying a vast amount of data. This timeline is different from those you have seen before and so a few comments are in order about how it was designed and what information was selected for inclusion.

Most historical charts focus upon great political events and show a distinct bias towards events that happened as Western Culture developed. The classical world of the Near East and the Mediterranean thereby received great emphasis. This bias is not entirely due to Eurocentric First World arrogance, as currently political thinking would have it, although there is an element of cultural blindness in such products. Writing did arise first in the ancient Near East and so the time depth of written records is greatest for this region and classical cultures in Europe. Furthermore, historical and archeological research, as we know it, did arise first as deductive, analytical disciplines in Europe and the United States and it was only natural that expeditions and scholars went first to those cultures that are our immediate forebearers. It is an intuitive and instinctive priority to study first that which seems closest to us, both in personal and broad historical-cultural terms. Furthermore, scholars in classical Asia when interested in history did not conceive of it as we do in the West. History did not exist as an objective narrative of events in secular time. History meant the establishment, through oral epic poetry, of one's mythological ancestry (and thereby credibility) and the accurate recitation of the mythological ancestors from the time of creation to the present. Such a process contacted mythological space-time, the sacred time of Mercea Eliade, and enabled the participants to transcend the cares of everyday life and be uplifted, renewed and momentarily feel the greatest of their potential. History, as we conceive it, did not exist and by comparison it is certainly a one dimensional intellectual exercise however, valuable from a data acquisition point of view. 'History' was mythic and ritualistic and so retrieving what we in the West need for an informational timeline from such records is extremely difficult. Nonetheless, the work has begun and the rewards are flowing in. As Westerners, I do not propose rejecting our heritage. I do propose assimilating it and then widening our vision to integrate other dimensions. Therefore I begin as a Westerner with an informational, fact filled, timeline.

Only in this second half of this century has a broad , based,

systematic, global effort begun to understand the Neolithic, classical and medieval history of continental and northern Europe and Asia. I have made a serious effort to incorporate much of this work into the timeline and as a result there is a great deal of information collated here for northwest Europe, the Indian subcontinent and Tibet, China and Japan that does not appear in any other published timeline as of this date. As a result, you have a more balanced view of history, albeit the great wealth of data that fills the column for continental Europe and the Near East.

As no timeline can contain every published, dated event for the period in question, a word about the data selection process is in order. My larger, overriding project concerns the history of mythology and religion with a particular focus upon the mytho-poetics of the Great Goddess. This timeline is designed for that project and will be one of several files in the Goddess package when it is published sometime in 1992. With those objectives in mind, the timeline emphasizes and highlights (literally in the decision where to use bold type) events critical to the historical narrative of evolving mythologies and the history of religion. Important political and cultural developments are here as well, for they form the essential secular context against which mythologies and rituals are to be explored. The timeline begins at 10,000 B.C. as the great Wurm ice sheets of the last glaciation began to melt and recede northward, setting the stage for a global warming and the Agricultural Revolution of the early Neolithic. My closing date is certainly atypical. I chose 900 A.D. in order to reduce further the Eurocentric bias; 1056 A.D. (Norman Invasion and the birth of a familiar England) is a more obvious choice to a Westerner if the timeline is designed to stop before the high Middle Ages of Europe when Christianity had solidified its hold over a vast region. About 900 A.D, the great Islamic empire was at its zenith, the enormous Tibetan empire over Central Asia was under attack and beginning to disintegrate and the Russian state had just been formed around Novorogod and Kiev. These observations point to a feature of this timeline that speaks to our own times. Many of the republics that chose to assert their independence in this century have national identities based upon ancient ethnic integrity that has a cultural validity of great time depth. Hidden within this compacted data are many examples: notice the origin points for the Slavs and Magyars for example. Above all, reflect upon the Chinese invasion and continual occupation of Tibet. In the eight and ninth centuries A.D., Tibet was the imperial power of Central Asia and invaded China, captured the capital and dictated treaty terms. The Chinese have never forgiven the Tibetans, who are a distinct ethnic group as well, and they now have their revenge. The time clock runs very differently in the orient.

This timeline is designed to stand alone; it is self contained. You may construct a large single chart by the following procedure. Overall, the timeline consists of 22 printed pages, two columns to a page as you can see. The single chart is two pages across and 11 pages deep. Arrange pages 1

through 11 in a vertical row and then adjacent to them line up pages 12 through 22. Cut off the footers on pages 1 and 12. Cut off the headers and footers on all other pages, align and tape together or glue down on a piece of poster board. Final dimensions are approximately 20" x 75", depending upon exactly where you cut. A singly chart will give you a majestic sweep of a vast period of history, but due to the small type size, it is unsuitable as a wall chart.

The next edition of TIMELINE will explore one of the most fascinating and mysterious observations contained in the data. Over a period of some seven centuries (700 B.C. to 0 A.D.), the world was changed irrevocably by interaction with all but one of the "sons of god". During this period the following were born and lived: Zoroaster, Siddharta Gautama, Vardhamana, Confucius, Lao-Tzu and Jesus Christ. Only Mohammed's life lies outside this time period. If we take the beginning of recorded history to be c.3000 B.C., then there is a span of some 4000 years to consider within this timeline, approximately 5000 years if we wish to bring our observations up to the present. It is impossible to imagine a mechanism that would structure the birth of extraordinary human beings ("sons of god"); the probability of such a 'person' appearing in one year or another should be random. One year, or century, should be just as likely as any other to contain such divinity. Yet the dull recitation of historical fact say otherwise, however mysterious the underlying mechanism may be! There was something extraordinary special about the first millenium B.C. in that it produced 6 of the 7 global religious geniuses known to history. Why this clustering of such lives at this time? This clustering has been noted before by historians and mention of it is buried in many books. My further comment will not attempt an explanation, but will subject the numbers to statistical analysis in order to demonstrate how improbable, in quantitative terms, these events of the first millenium B.C. were.

As mentioned above, this timeline also accompanies an extensive electronic publishing project about the history and mythology of the Great Goddess for it forms an invaluable historical context against which to assess those documents. Please contact us to receive a flyer about this "book" which will exist only on disc and is accompanied by an extensive bibliography and thought provoking flow charts. If you have thoughts or comments about this timeline, please write! I do want to hear from you, and while all letters will not be answered, all will be read and thoughtfully considered I assure you.

Here is the bibliography I consulted. If you wish to explore history beyond the ancient Near East and classical/medieval Europe, several of these references may be unfamiliar and extremely valuable.

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