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Provisional

Symbols of the Occult

Mark Stavish

Covering astronomy, demonology, witchcraft, ancient magic and much more, this directory decodes over 500 signs, symbols and icons of the occult

c.500 illustrations

23 x 17cm

256pp

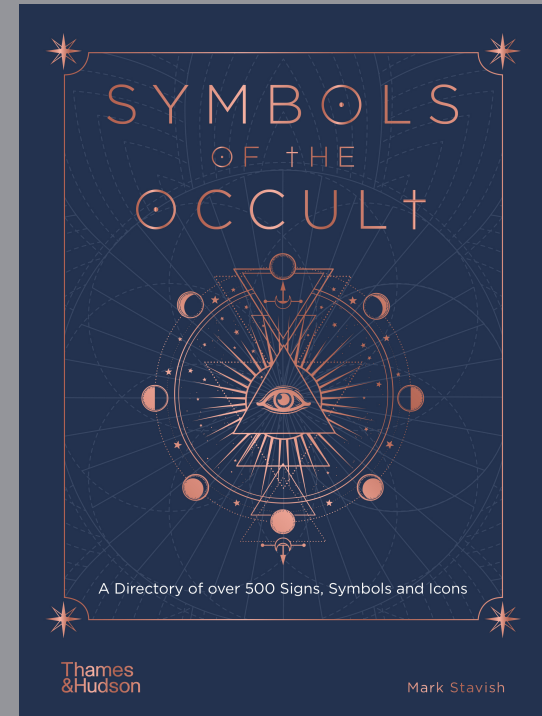
ISBN 9780500024034

BIC Occult studies

PLC

£16.99

April 2021



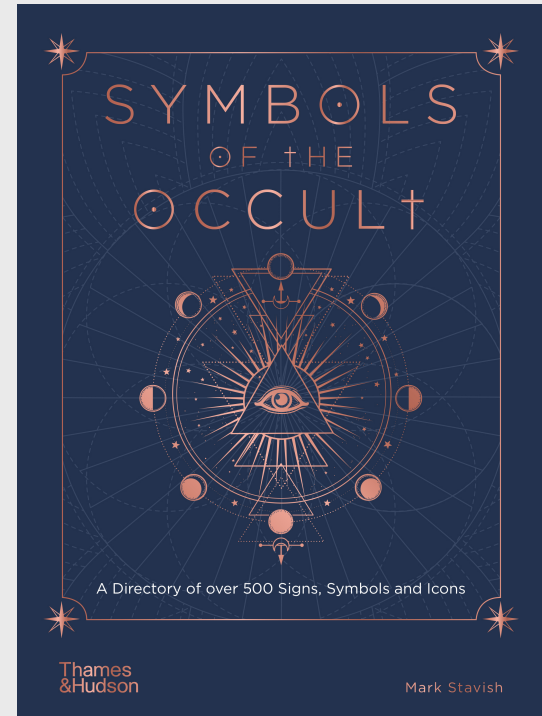
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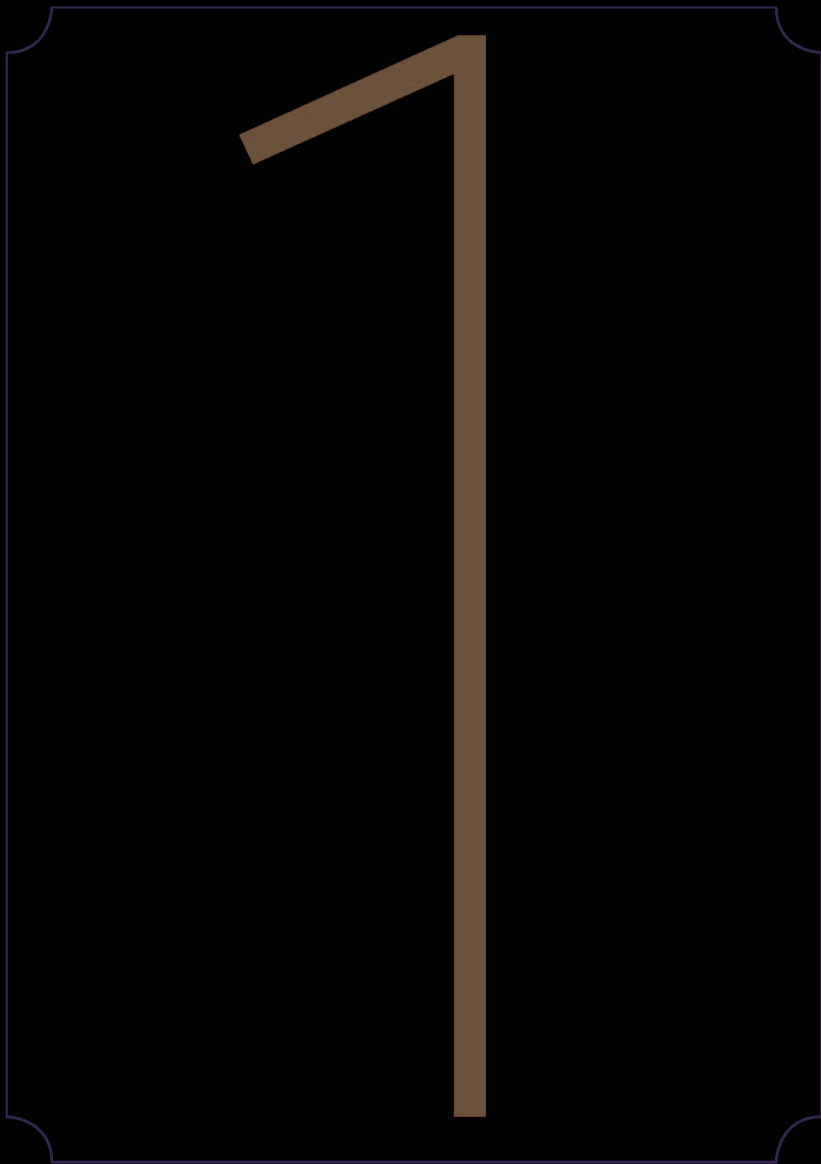
Book

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Key Sales Points

- Examines over 500 symbols from history, art and culture by decoding their iconography and exploring their historical background and significance.
- Ordered by topic, the book explores the key areas of astrology and cosmology; witchcraft and mysticism; satanism and demonology; science and alchemy; maths and sacred geometry; the natural world; and symbols of ancient, religious, and secret societies.
- Each topic is introduced by a short overview before featuring the key signs and symbols and exploring the variations available.





ASTROLOGY & COSMOLOGY



Nearly every culture in recorded history have studied the stars, making it humanity's oldest science. Through astrology adepts sought to understand their place in creation thereby creating the first known cosmologies or theories of the origin and purpose of the universe.

ASTROLOGY

Astrology and its symbols form one of the most ancient of the occult arts and sciences. The practice is primarily concerned with divination or foretelling of future events though an analysis of the position of the seven ancient planets and their relationship to the surface of the Earth.

Astrology has four primary areas of concern: natal charts, horary (predictive) astrology, mundane astrology (concern with political affairs), and electoral astrology (the selecting of propitious timing for events and activities).

The premise of astrology is that the planets, or 'stars' emanate unique and distinct psychic energies that form a complex web of relationships and associations. These create the prevailing conditions on Earth. Careful study of the movements of the planets and knowledge of how the different energies interacted with one another is thought to allow adepts to predict possible and probable events and their outcomes.

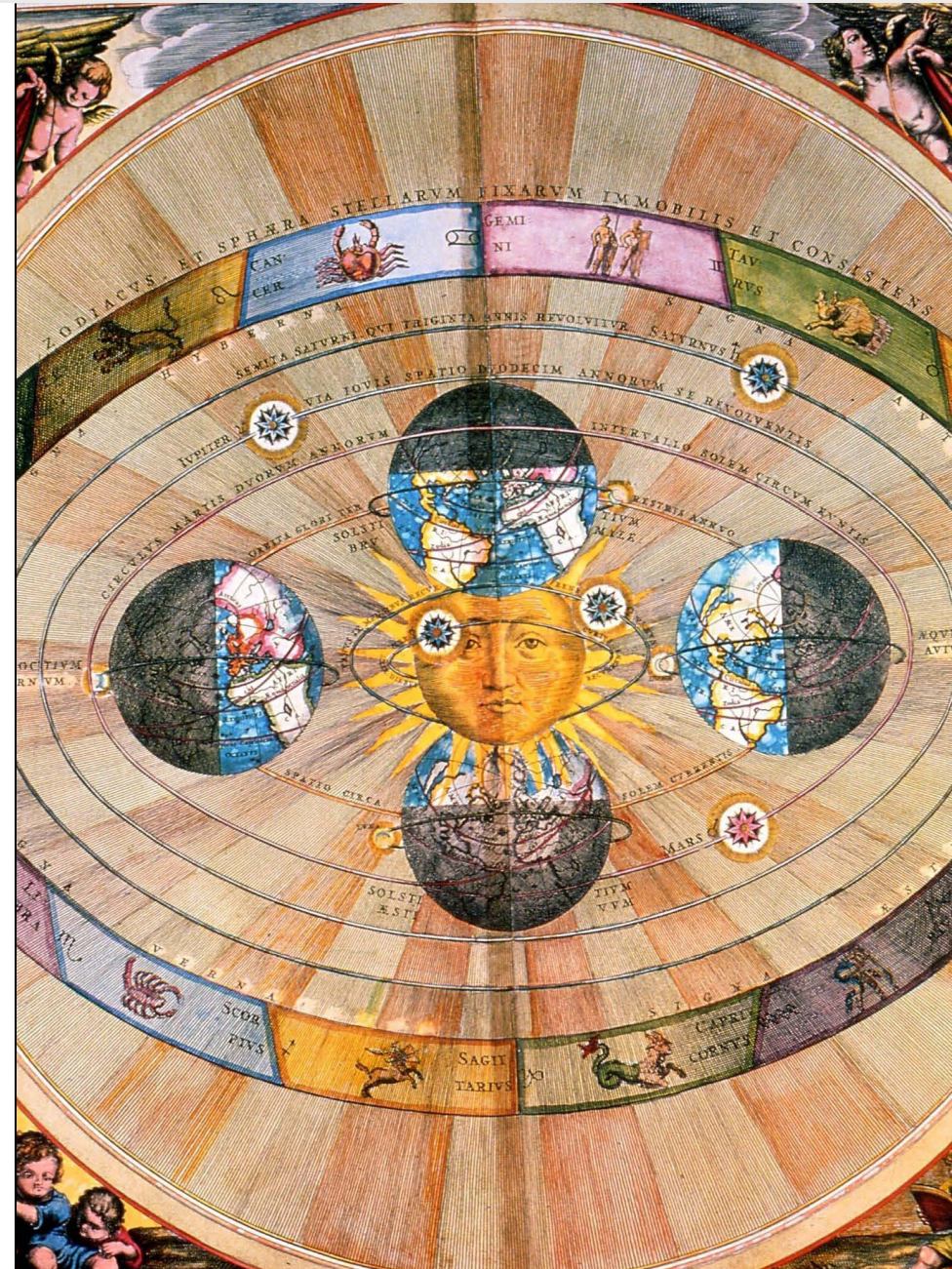
The planets' energies are thought to form a web and a 'Great Chain of Being' and the energies penetrate every plant, animal, mineral, and even the individual organs of the physical body. Each creature also has its own unique relationship or correspondence to a planet, zodiacal sign, or both. It is through a careful understanding of these correspondences that predictions can be made, as well as magical operations undertaken to avert less desirable conditions from coming to fruition. This Doctrine of

Correspondences is the fundamental basis to astrology and all occult arts and sciences

The oldest horoscopes or maps of the astrological configuration are Babylonian and are dated to the end of the 5th century CE. Improved trade routes, and extensive use of the Greek language during Greek dominance allowed the ideas of astrology to spread widely through the Mediterranean and Middle East while it was under the control Alexander the Great.

Originally the planets included just the ancient planets, which were the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. However, modern astrologers would eventually bring Pluto, Neptune and Uranus into the fold in an effort to keep their 'science' current.

Print of the Copernican system (heliocentric) with the planets and the sphere of the zodiac.





1. SUN



2. MOON



3. MERCURY



4. VENUS



5. MARS



6. JUPITER



7. SATURN

THE PLANETS

In classical astrology all celestial bodies that move in orbit are called planets, including the Sun and the moon. Classical astrology originally included just Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, the planets visible with the naked eye but the invention of the telescope challenged modern astrologers to find a home for Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto among the existing zodiacal signs. The names of the planets are derived from the Roman naming practices, adopted from the Greeks, and ultimately the Babylonians.

1. SUN

There are various representations of the Sun, from a simple circle with a dot in the centre, to complex solar arrays emanating from it. The simple symbol has a central point that represents its origin and the circle around it depicts completion, as well as a defined realm of action.

2. MOON

Due to its cycle, the moon can be depicted by various crescents or semi-circles. The partial symbol indicates the role of the moon in transmitting only part of the solar energies. The use of semi-circles represent the Lunar Nodes and the left facing moon (Waxing) is considered positive while the right facing crescent (Waning) represents something negative.

3. MERCURY

Mercury is illustrated with the head and winged cap of the Greek god Mercury atop his staff. It represents a synthesis of the planets and the union of lunar and solar energies which lends itself to the Greek god's role as 'messenger of the gods.'

4. VENUS

The symbol for Venus is similar to the Egyptian hieroglyph, the ankh, the symbol for life and Venus is known as the 'Mother of Creation.'

5. MARS

The symbol for Mars shows the focus of the solar energies to a single point. This concentrated beam is the arrow that extends outward and upward from the solar circle. Earlier images of Mars used an extended cross, signifying its terrestrial aspects.

6. JUPITER

Theories for the origin of this symbol range from an ancient Egyptian hieroglyph of the eagle to an abbreviation of the name of the Greek god Zeus. The abbreviation is indicated by the line drawn through it.

7. SATURN

Saturn is made up of two distinct design elements, the cross and the crescent. The cross is symbolic of intense focus and the crescent signifies receptivity. The symbol could also depict a scythe or sickle, as a mark of the Roman god of seed sowing, Saturn.

THE ZODIAC

The term zodiac is derived from the Greek *kyklos zodiakos* or 'circle of animals'. Over the centuries the number of Signs and Houses in the Zodiac have formalized into the twelve Sun Signs (signs that the Sun is in at a particular time of the year).

The 'circle of animals' is created by the Sun as it moves across the sky throughout the year. Of course, this movement is only apparent and it is the Earth orbiting the Sun that gives this impression of movement.

Astrology is geocentric (placing the Earth at the centre of the known universe). The Greek astrologer and mathematician Aristarchus of Samos proposed a heliocentric model (placing the Sun at the centre of the solar system) as early as the 3rd century BC but the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West in 476 CE resulted in the Roman Catholic Church becoming the primary repository and source of learning. The Church doctrine placed the Earth at the centre of creation and therefore a geocentric teaching based on theology rather than observation was maintained. This would be challenged by Nicholas Copernicus in the 16th century.

It is important not to confuse the Signs of the Zodiac with the constellations that share their names. The Signs each occupy thirty degrees on the wheel, whereas the constellations are of various sizes. Central

to this confusion is the Precession of the Equinoxes (a shift in the Earth's axis relative to the Sun and stars). This shift has created, over time, a change in the pole star. For example, at the height of the Egyptian and Sumerian empires the pole star would have been Alpha Draconis but it is currently Polaris and in four-thousand years from now it will be Alpha Cepheus. This shift has had a powerful impact in modern spiritual circles, as it changes (according to some sources) the date wherein the Age of Aquarius will begin.

Each sign has its own planetary ruler, as well as planets that oppose those rulers. These complex relationships are made easier to understand by personifying the planets. The concern of the astrologer was in how these forces played out in human events and qualities.

The meaning and attributes of planets, signs, and houses are nearly identical between Western and Indian or Vedic astrology, but have no apparent relationship with Chinese astrology which is based on a different animal and Elemental view. Tibetan astrology is wonderfully complex and has a Greek (by way of India) understanding of the 'Elements' while using a modified Chinese animal system.



ARIES (THE RAM)

Aries is depicted by a ram or ram's head. As rams often butt heads, the use of the ram symbolizes brashness and boldness and being ruled by the head. The sign is also related to fire and the planet Mars.



TAURUS (THE BULL)

Taurus is composed of a solar circle for the head, crowned by lunar crescent horns. The bull is associated with strength, which is one of the reasons why it was one of the earliest domesticated animals. Taurus' ruling planet, Venus, also links to agriculture.



GEMINI (THE TWINS)

Gemini is illustrated by two parallel lines known as 'The Twins'. They are connected at the top and base which shows them as united and similar but individual. Gemini is associated with air and the planet Mercury.



CANCER (THE CRAB)

The symbol for Cancer is composed of a single image, similar to the number six, mirrored against itself. Cancer is associated with Water and is ruled by the Moon, which is linked to all cycles of growth.



LEO (LION)

Leo's symbol is like a lion's tail or, if drawn more upright, it could show the head and mane. Leo is the only sign ruled by the Sun, signifying its unique relationship with fire. As the lion is 'king of the jungle' the Sun is the centre of the solar system.



VIRGO (VIRGIN)

'The Virgin' is illustrated with a peculiar letter 'M' as it is connected to the Greek goddess Astria, the last of the immortals to abandon Earth for Olympus. Her connection with agriculture associates her with the Earth.



SAGITTARIUS (ARCHER)

'The Archer' is illustrated with a simple arrow pointing upward, signifying flight and great heights. Sagittarius is associated with fire and is governed by Jupiter.



CAPRICORN (GOAT)

Capricorn has the head of a goat and the tail of a fish. This links the sign to the Babylonian deity of wisdom and water Ea. The simplified symbol represents the hoof of a goat connected to the tail of a fish.



LIBRA (SCALES)

Libra is illustrated by a pair of scales in perfect balance. These sensitive instruments are vital to social life, particularly commerce and justice, making Libra the sign of social relationships and diplomacy.



SCORPIO (SCORPION)

Scorpio is illustrated by the letter M with a tail or it could be a simple line image of a scorpion's legs and tail. In the past, a snake, eagle and even the mythological phoenix have been used as symbols for this Sign.



AQUARIUS (WATER CARRIER)

Two-way lines illustrate the movement of water in this symbol. Water represents healing and, as rain is brought on the winds, this sign is associated with air.



PISCES (FISH)

The two fish of Pisces are depicted as two curved lines facing in opposite directions, joined by a single line. This shows how the fish are connected, yet not swimming in the same direction. The sign is linked to water.