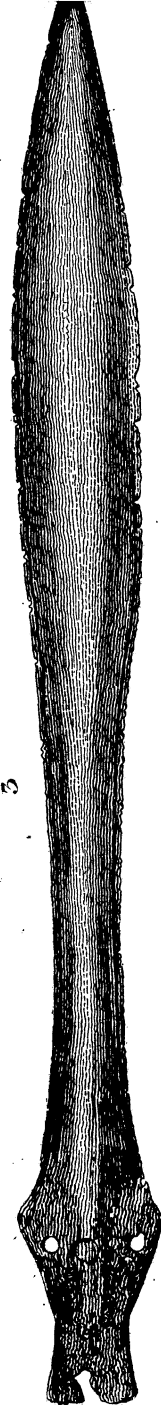


IM MINITIFONI VIRCO CATIES  
 TI S IIV SPICIFERA IVSTIN  
 VENTRIX VRBIVM CONDITRIX  
 EXQVIS MVNERIBVS NOSSE CON  
 TICIDIOS IRCOEADEMMAERDIVW  
 PAX VIRIVS CRES DE ASYRIA  
 LANCEVITAMETIVRAPENSITANS  
 INCAHOVISVMSTRIASIDVS EDI  
 DIT LIBYAE COLENDVM MINDE  
 CVNCTIDIDICIMVS  
 ITAINTHEXITNVMINEINDVCTVS  
 IVO MARCVSCAECILIUS DO  
 NATIANVS MILITANS TRIBVNS  
 INPRAEFECTODONO PRINCIPIS



*Remarks on the Inscription to the Zodiacal Ceres, lately discovered at Caervorran, on the Roman Wall, in a Letter to the Rev. JOHN HODGSON, Sec. by GEORGE STANLEY FABER, B. D. Rector of Long Newton, in the County of Durham.*

IMMINET LEONI VIRGO CAELESTI SITU,  
 SPICIFERA, JUSTI INVENTRIX, URBIVM CONDITRIX,  
 EX QUIS MUNERIBUS NOSSE CONTIGIT DEOS;  
 ERGO EADEM MATER DIVVM, PAX, VIRTUS, CERES,  
 DEA SYRIA, LANCE VITAM ET JURA PENSITANS.  
 IN CAELO VISUM SYRIA SIDUS EDIDIT  
 LIBYÆ COLENDUM INDE CUNCTI DIDICIMUS.  
 ITA INTELLEXIT, NUMINE INDUCTUS TUO,  
 MARCUS CAECILIUS DONATINUS MILITANS  
 TRIBUNUS IN PRAEFECTO DONO PRINCIPIS.

*See Plate IV. Fig. 1.*

MARCUS Cæcilius, the author of the curious inscription to Ceres, lately discovered at Caervorran, on the Roman wall, identifies that goddess with the zodiacal constellation *Virgo*: and, both in this identification, and in the character which he ascribes to her, he displays an intimate acquaintance with the old theological notions of the Gentiles.

I. He pronounces her to be the corn-bearing divinity, the inventor of justice, the founder of cities, and thence the author of the worship of the deities. Such being her character, he determines her to be the same person as the Universal Mother of the Gods; the same also as

the Syrian goddess, respecting whom we have a curious treatise from the pen of Lucian; and, viewing her under her benignant aspect, as contradistinguished from that vindictive aspect which she bears under the name of *Demeter-Erinnys*, he celebrates her as being essential Peace and Virtue.

1. The old mythologists agree, that Ceres, Cybele, Venus, the Syrian goddess Derceto, the Phœnician Astarte, and the Egyptian Isis, were all one and the same deity: and this deity they describe, as comprehending within her womb all the hero-gods, and as either bearing the form of a ship or as closely connected with one. She is also said to be the same as the Universal Mother Earth; but then there was a notion, that the earth itself resembled in form a vast ship, and that it floated upon the surface of the great abyss. She is further identified with the moon; but, if we inquire in what manner, we shall still find the prevailing idea of a ship again apparent. The boat of Isis, within which the Egyptian Osiris was inclosed, exhibited the semblance of the lunar crescent: hence, with mystical indifference, he was said either to have entered into a ship, or to have entered into the moon; a mode of speech which Plutarch obviously explains to mean only that he entered into a boat shaped like the moon. Hence, as a ship was the symbol of the great mother, the lunar boat or crescent was made her astronomical representative.

2. Just the same ideas have prevailed both in Hindostan and in ancient Celtic Britain. The Isi and Iswara of the Brahmins, are plainly the Isis and Isiris of Egypt; for *Osiris*, as it is well known, was perpetually written *Isiris*. At the time of an universal deluge, Isi assumes the form of the ship Argha, and thus conveys Iswara over the ocean; precisely as Isis is acknowledged to be the same as the lunar ship Argo, which bore Isiris over the inundation of the Nile, by the Egyptians denominated *Oceanes*: and, when the waters retire, Isi and Iswara fly away in the shape of two doves. In a similar manner, the British Ceridwen or Esaye is fabled, to have once taken the form of a ship well stored with corn, and thus to have conveyed her mystic

consort over the great deep, when the whole earth was laid under water.

3. Thus the great mother was the *Dea Spicifera*: thus, as the inundation, with which we ever find her connected, is said to have been an act of retributive justice, she was viewed as the goddess of justice: thus, as a preserver of her allegorical children, and as a destroyer of the wicked, she was universally beheld under the double aspect of a benignant genius and of a relentless fury: and thus, since a new period was thought to have commenced with her own figurative birth from the ocean, surrounded by aquatic animals and attended by doves, she was esteemed the builder of all subsequent cities, and the institutor of all religious worship.

II. What Cæcilius says respecting the star of the Syrian goddess alludes, I conceive, to the star of *Astartè* or *Astoreth*, which is mentioned by *Sanchoniatho*, and of which *Nonnus* says so much in his curious account of the Phœnician *Beroë* or *Berith*. That poet gives just the same account of his *Beroë*, that Cæcilius does of his *Ceres-Virgo*.

*Astoreth* was the *Virgo-Astrèa* of the Greeks: and, however contradictory may be the two characters of a *virgin*, and an *universal mother of the hero-gods*, these two apparently discordant characters were, nevertheless, perpetually applied by the old mythologists to the same person. The goddess of the lunar ship was said to be the parent both of all the gods, and even of the whole world: but then she was often likewise said to have born her offspring without the co-operation of any husband. When her character was viewed under this aspect, she was, of course, esteemed a virgin.

III. But it is time to consider her elevation to the sphere in the zodiacal catasterism of *Virgo*.

1. This constellation was variously thought to represent *Themis*, or *Astrèa*, or *Ceres*, as we find from the old writers on poetical astronomy: but all these were one and the same character, the goddess of the ship; who, in allusion to her elevation to the sphere, was feigned

by the poets to have flown from earth to heaven, at the precise epoch of the deluge.

The arrangement of the present constellation, and indeed of the whole zodiac, must inevitably be ascribed to the most remote antiquity: for, since the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Hindoos, use the very same zodiacal signs, and place them in the very same consecutive order; such an arbitrary coincidence cannot be ascribed to mere chance. They plainly must have all derived their zodiac from a common origin: and, since the only connection (with which we are acquainted) of the Hindoos with the Egyptians, is through the mean of the Indo-Scythic Shepherd-Kings, and since the Greeks were doubly connected with Hindostan and Egypt, through the means of the Pelasgi or Palli from the north-east, and of the Danai and Cadmians from the south-east; their common zodiac must have been constructed prior to the emigration of the Palli Shepherds from Upper India. Now, as the shepherds continued several years in the region of Babylonia, where they established themselves about the close of the first Assyrian dynasty, and as they entered Egypt six years before the birth of Abraham, we shall find ourselves compelled to ascribe the common zodiac of Greece and Egypt and Hindostan, to an era considerably prior to the birth of that patriarch. But this will bring us so near to the dispersion from Babel, that we have great reason to believe the zodiac to have been originally constructed by the astronomical Chaldéans in the time of Nimrod. Such an opinion will lead us to assign the rise of idolatry to the same era: for, the zodiac being altogether founded upon the prevailing system of paganism, the system itself must have existed *prior* to the construction of the zodiac. Accordingly, we find the same system established in every quarter of the globe, which could not have happened, unless the system itself had been excogitated *previous* to the dispersion.

2. With respect to the particular constellation of Virgo, the Greeks, who supposed it to represent their Astréa or Ceres-Demeter, depicted the female figure as a woman bearing ears of corn and a blazing lamp,

the latter in reference to the Eleusinian mysteries: the Egyptians, who pronounced it to represent their Isis, whom all the old mythologists identify with Ceres, depicted the female, as a woman holding ears of corn and the sistrum: and the Hindoos, who still claim it as the zodiacal representative of their Isi, depict the same female figure, as a woman holding ears of corn and floating on a raft, agreeably to the notions which they entertain of their navicular goddess, in the character of the genius of the ship Argha. This last I take to be the primeval and authentic form of the pictured constellation: and, as the ship of Ceres and of Isis was no less familiar to the Greeks and the Egyptians, than the ship of Isi to the Hindoos, I feel strongly persuaded, that the two former nations once painted the constellation in the same manner.

3. I may add, that the ram of the sphere is Ammon or Dacsha: the bull, Isiris, or Iswara, or Molech, or Zeus: the lion, Mithras: the piscine goat or capricorn, Egi-Pan: the water-bearer, the Dea Multimammia: the fishes, the companions of the Syrian goddess, when she was born from the floating egg, surmounted by doves; or, when the constellation is depicted as a woman ending in the tail of a fish, the Syrian goddess Derceto herself: and so forth. It is not unworthy of notice, that some supposed aquarius to be Deucalion, because he lived at the time of the flood.

In making these remarks, I have thought it superfluous to give any references; because the subject is treated so very much at large in my *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*, with which I find the inscription of Cæcilius to Ceres in the most perfect unison.

G. S. FABER.

*Long Newton, Nov. 3, 1816.*