**The Synods**

**Making It All Work: Extended Cycles: Synods**

**The Law of Synods: When two slow moving outer planets move together in the sky in a synod, their energy is squared. They often trigger mass movements in history.**

When two or more planets move together through the sky, they form an astronomical configuration called a synod (from the Greek, *synodos*, which means “a traveling together”). The more slowly this synod moves, the more powerful its influence on human affairs. Synods, for good or for ill, exert a powerful force on history, introducing change and sometimes upheaval. They can bring about new forms of cultural expression in art, literature, and music, technology, and in new political structures.

Synods exert a dominant influence, seen and unseen, on a world-historical level and upon one’s personal life. Those synods involving Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and Eris, since they move the slowest in their orbits around the Sun, are the most powerful. Those involving Saturn and Jupiter exert a more easily perceivable influence.

It is always important to examine where the conjunction became exact; the impact will be greatest at that point; the focus will be most dynamic; I call it the dynamic impact point.

**The Triple Conjunction**

One of the most powerful known synodic conjunctions so far in history (there may be planets beyond Eris to alter this) occurred in the sixth century B.C., and it was exact (within 1°) at 8° through 11° Taurus, approximately between 577 and 574 B.C. (Eris during this period was traveling between 20° and 23° Gemini) This was when the outer planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, made a conjunction in astrological and astronomical Taurus. Since this triple conjunction occurs only every 120,000 years, it was the most powerful that has occurred in human history.

**What Did the Triple Conjunction Do?**

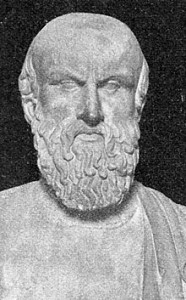
*The Triple Conjunction introduced something new into the human condition.* The history of this era, especially in the few centuries that followed it, describes a birth of something fresh, original and undone before in the human experience.

Greek science, the foundation of modern science, was born in this era. The rule of law emerged in Athens, later in Rome, and is still the basis or our freedoms today. A new level of human freedom emerged. This was the foundation of what we call today, “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”.

Spiritual belief began to center on a one God, but in different forms. The religion of Buddhism and Taoism swept through Asia; Israel and Judaism, during the Babylonian Captivity (this was an era dominated by the prophet Daniel, a seer far greater than Nostradamus, whose gaze looked thousands of years into the future), literally went through a death and rebirth. The outcome: The Psalms and Proverbs and Isaiah and Job and the five books of Moses plus the books of the prophets were from oral tradition written down and would become what we today call the Old Testament. Later these teachings would begin to seep into the Roman Empire, long before the arrival of Christ, beginning to form the basis of our Judeo-Christian heritage.

If we review the historical events that took place in that century and in the following ones, we must conclude even today, some 2500 years later that we are still reacting to the impact of that synod. During this era Buddha (563-483 B.C.) brought a new spiritual reality into India, then Asia; Confucius (28 September, 551-479 B.C.) and Lao Tzu (born 606 B.C.?) revolutionized religion and philosophy in China; and it was at this time that Pythagoras (570-497 B.C.) grew famous as a teacher of many disciplines, and helped to bring about the flowering of Hellenic civilization.

Historically, this configuration activated the development of high classical Greece. It heralded the beginning of our modern world. Some of the greatest philosophers and thinkers, poets and playwrights, artists and sculptors, warriors, statesmen and lawgivers in all human history appeared in this century and the two that followed. Their names are still



Aeschylus the Playwrite

well known: Solon (lawgiver, 638 BC – 558 BC); Aeschylus (the playwright, 525 – 456 B.C.); Thales (mathematics and physics and astrology, 625 – 546 BC); Pindar (poetry, 522–443 BC); Zeno of Elea (philosophy and astrology, 490–c.430 BC); Anaximander (natural science, 610 – c. 546 BC); Aesop (fables, 620-564 BC); Heraclitus (philosophy and lawgiving, 535 – c. 475 BC); Parmenides (philosophy, born 540 BC). These names are just a sampling; many others exist. This was the time when the Oracle of Delphi, known for its profound wisdom, became prominent in the Mediterranean world, and when there at Delphi the great temple of Apollo was constructed in the Sixth Century BC. The century that followed the triple conjunction was known as the Age of

[](http://historicalastrology.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/343px-Perikles_altes_Museum.jpg)

Pericles of Athens

Pericles (his dates were 495 – 429 B.C.). Many of the ideas that lie at the foundation of our modern civilization—laws and customs and traditions—­were formulated at that time by philosophers like Plato, Socrates and Aristotle.

During the triple conjunction, Rome was a small city-state ruled by a king, Servius Tullius (reigned 578-535 BC). He was not a bad king, but was succeeded by Tarquinius the Proud (*535* – 496 BC), the seventh and last king of ancient Rome. Tarquinius was a selfish ruler, injurious to his people, and was overthrown in a conspiracy led by Brutus. Brutus and those who were with him enacted a whole new dynamic, a new politics, a new system of laws in which the ruling class made the choice to share its power and its privileges with the common men, called the plebeians. This separation of powers between the ruling class, the nobility, and the plebeians, established a dynamic creative tension, which led first to the founding of the Roman Republic (509 B.C.) and then, some five hundred years later, to the Empire 27 BC). The combined influence of those two institutions lasted for nearly two millennia. The Roman Empire imparted many good conventions to human civilization, including the concept of the rule of law, namely, that “no man is above the law”. When this principle is a part of the legal system, everyone is more disciplined, and all people are given the opportunity to express more creativity and freedom. It is around the time of the Triple Conjunction that the rule of law began to be applied in Greece and Italy.

[](http://historicalastrology.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/800px-Close-Up.jpg)

Artist Rendition of Temple of Solomon

In ancient Israel, the Babylonian Captivity lasted from 587–538 B.C.  The First Temple had been burned to the ground, its stones overturned, and the city of Jerusalem sacked and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 11 (634 – 562 BC). The Jews were forced to pick up what they could take with them and move to Babylon, which was one of the great city-state empires of that era. Yet it would soon die as a power in the Fertile Crescent, as all the old empires were dying. The triple conjunction was occurring in Taurus, and all the old traditional customs, civilizations, empires were broken and scattered.

The Triple Conjunction for Israel was a time of retrenchment, when everything but bare essence was stripped away; this was when an enlightened priesthood began to assume the reins of political power, and continued to hold it for centuries. It is when many of the greatest books of the Old Testament were written down from oral tradition, and scholars say it was when the Dutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55) was written.

In 536 B.C., Cyrus II, the Persian emperor who reigned from 553 to 529 B.C (as described by Herodotus), went to war against Babylon, destroyed its empire, and later in respect for services rendered, freed the Jews, allowing them to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. Israel was one of the few civilizations that made the transition from pre-synodic times, keeping its customs and traditions intact, possibly because it was ruled as a theocracy, possibly because much of the wisdom and truth found in its religious teachings and applied to its customs and laws was immune to time and synodic cycles.

The 6th century B.C. was a time of endings and beginnings. The endings had to do with the Taurus part of the synod. Taurus stands for the traditional, the stable, the long-lasting. That the triple conjunction occurred in this sign meant that the long duration of these traditional ancient civilizations and powers would now conclude. For example, the ancient and powerful empire of Assyria fell toward the beginning of the triple conjunction (605 BC)

Sumer was by now already a distant memory; when Abraham emigrated (2000 B.C.) from Ur or Mari, the Sumerians were already being replaced by the younger Semitic races. Many of the Sumerian laws were codified by Hammurabi around 1750 B.C. Sumer’s arts and writing and mathematics and astrology had been passed on to the Babylonians and the Assyrians and others.

Babylon fell to the Persians in 539 B.C., as did Egypt in 525 B.C. Both civilizations were corrupt and decaying, living in the shadow of their former power and glory, low hanging fruit for the first organized military power to make the attempt. Power was moving from the Fertile Crescent to the West.

Persia itself was an empire built on ancient practices and customs. Cyrus II, The Great, represented much of the best of deep antiquity–but it was the best of the past. The expansion of the Persian Empire, carried out by emperors after the death of Cyrus, was stopped by the Greeks in the Persian Wars (490-449 B.C.). This was the main theme of Herodotus’ Histories: the war between the ancient centralized empires and the new human spirit being born in Greece. The Persian Empire was later completely destroyed by the armies of Alexander the Great (333 B.C.). New art and science was all allowed to grow in relative freedom for centuries. The individual human spirit continued to learn and expand.

Although I am not going to discuss it in detail, one can trace the same growth of the human spirit in China (which had entered the Iron Age at about this time). Confucius revolutionized political and philosophical thought in China. Up to the end of the last century, the bureaucracy that supported the Chinese emperor was still in place. It was essentially the same one designed by Confucius during the time of the triple conjunction.

In Japan, the emperors trace their lineage back to the era of the triple conjunction.

In Mesoamerica (Central America and Mexico) a people known as the Olmecs built pyramids and other massive structures and cities, many of which since have disappeared, some of which are still standing. This civilization developed sometime before 1000 B.C., consolidated its power by 800 B.C., built some of its greatest structures around the time of the triple conjunction including the Pyramid of the Sun. Many Olmec writings date from this era, and if they are ever deciphered, remarkable poetry and philosophy might be discovered.

Israel, Greece, and Rome–in this era each embody the dawn of a new civilization, the birth of a younger people, more warlike, perhaps shorter-lived, but filled with overflowing vitality and the urge to push on into new realms of knowledge, new depths of spirit. In fact, most of their mythic tales concern freedom, independence, autonomy and the personal development of the soul.

The story of King David (1040–970 BC) historically took place around 1010 to 970 BC B.C., but was written down during the century of the triple conjunction. It is an Aries myth dealing with issues of freedom, personal unfolding, the interaction with a father figure, King Saul, 1079 -1007 B.C., who grew up under a Pl/NE conjunction of late Aries and early Taurus, and the alignment of personal will with God’s will, and the personal relationship of God with man. Pluto/Neptune moved in the years 1074 through 1072 BC from 28° Aries to 2° Taurus.

Alexander the Great (21 July 356, Pella, Macedon,  to 323 B.C.), whose birth followed this synod by a little more than two centuries, was an exemplar of the new individuality, personal freedom and creative drive that flooded the mind of humankind in this era. As warrior, he was often the first soldier to climb the city wall. As high priest, he was the first to offer the sacrifice in the morning. He composed songs and poetry. As a student of

[](http://historicalastrology.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/220px-Sanzio_01_Plato_Aristotle.jpg)

Rafael's Plato and Aristotle

Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC), whom his father, King Philip, had hired as tutor, he disputed philosophy with the finest minds in Greece. He was an Aries exemplar, an individual who developed all his gifts and talents.

In the Age of Aries (1943 B.C. to 213 A.D.), when the Vernal Equinox point was traveling through the constellation of Aries (from 1943 B.C. to 213 A.D.), the individual unfolding of the creative power of the human spirit found its way into human civilization. This new level of achievement in the expression of the mind was reflected in the poetry of Homer, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes of Solomon, the Hellenic Flowering and the high civilization achieved by the Roman Empire. This unfolding placed its seal on all human endeavors: It was the beginning of our modem era.

**Deeper Synodic Functions**

I hope you are beginning to understand that the synodos discharges an awesome power, that it has a substantial, transformative effect on the human race.

Its energies can function in several ways. Those who are not born with the synod, but who are functioning at the height of their creative powers, when the two (or more) planets move into the alignment of a longitudinal conjunction, often use this energy to make tremendous contributions. Albert Einstein perhaps saw deeper into the physics of reality than any person since Isaac Newton. He had his profoundest visions about relativity when he was in his late teens and early twenties, when Pluto and Neptune were conjunct in the 1890′s and early part of the century.

One could say the same of Carl Jung (26 July 1875 – 6 June 1961), Maurice Ravel (March 7, 1875 – December 28, 1937), Rilke (4 December 1875 – 29 December 1926), Thomas Mann (6 June 1875 – 12 August 1955), Hermann Hesse (July 2, 1877 – August 9, 1962), and inventors like Orville Wright (August 19, 1871 – January 30, 1948). They all did some of their best work under the influence of this conjunction.

Others are born with the conjunction, and bring its power into manifestation, when in later years, they reach a maturity of creative expression. An example of this type of manifestation would be—moving backwards in history, Mary Baker Eddy (July 16, 1821 – December 3, 1910), the founder of Christian Science, who was born with the Uranus/Neptune conjunction. Another would be Walt Whitman, the poet, also born with this synod (May 31, 1819 – March 26, 1892).

Of course, there was Adolph Hitler, born April 20th 1889, who had the Pluto/Neptune conjunction in Gemini on his 8th House Cusp. Among other attributes, the 8th House rules war and occult matters.

U.S. Grant (April 27, 1822 – July 23, 1885) was born with the Uranus/Neptune synod ( NE5° Capricorn | UR 7° Capricorn). It gave him the unique ability to read the minds of his opposing generals, including Robert E. Lee (January 19, 1807 – October 12, 1870). Campaign study had helped him develop the most valuable of all his aptitudes, that of seeing into the mentality of his opponents. We have his own accounts of how he began to trust this capacity he found in himself.

More than that, he began to guess how they would react to his initiatives, and even how they would arrive at independent decisions…. Lee, whom he respected and who respected him was more puzzling to read. General Longstreet, one of Lee’s subordinates, had warned Lee that Grant was ‘a man we cannot afford to underrate’. But, eventually, Grant entered his mind and anticipated one move of his after another. Appomattox was to prove as much a mental as a material victory!

Each person born with this synod uses its energy in a unique and different manner.

[](http://historicalastrology.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/220px-Beethoven.jpg)

Beethoven at Uranus/Neptune synod

When the conjunction of Uranus/Neptune was exact, between 1821 and 1825, Ludwig van Beethoven (16 December 1770, see chart) wrote and premiered his Ninth Symphony in Vienna (7 May 1824). This symphony about brotherhood and joy is, I feel, one of the greatest pieces of music ever composed. It demonstrates a combination of the Uranian and the Neptunian influences.

The three ways to judge synodic influence are:

First, one can examine the person or nation born under its influence (e.g., the modem state of Israel was founded under a Saturn/Pluto conjunction). These individuals or nations will manifest their creative gifts in a unique and different manner, often introducing something new into human experience.

Second, those individuals who are at the height of their creative powers will use this energy to enhance their inventiveness and originality, and often a synod will take them to heights they would have never reached otherwise, as I think it did with Beethoven and Einstein (14 March 1879 – 18 April 1955)  and Jung.

Third, a synod transmutes nations, empires, cultures, civilizations, as the triple conjunction destroyed the power of Babylon and Egypt and Persia and a little earlier that of Assyria.

Within this framework I will continue the discussion of particular synods.