

**Author Preface:** This is the lecture I gave January 16, 2020 at the opening of the FAA International Conference. I have added some tables as well as the chart of the lunar eclipse that occurred the week before. There was much anxiety in the lead up to the conference due to the devastating bush fires, smoke pollution, flight cancellations and delays. In retrospect I look back and reflect on how lucky we were to have the opportunity to gather and be together, given the current times.

- Brian Clark



## **2020 Crossroads and Conjunctions:** The Climate of the Times or the *Climes of the Times*

### ***Crossroads***

To our ancient ancestors, crossroads were invested with meaningfulness, sometimes scary, sometimes sacred. Located at these *nodal* points where paths and roadways crossed over one another were portals to the other world. Spirits, souls or ghosts often lingered here waiting for contact with embodied others. Or divine presences appeared as seers or guides to support the new direction. Crossroads were regarded as in-between places, 'betwixt and between', a place neither here nor there. Therefore, they were associated with threshold crossings and the process of liminality. This work comes from the Latin word *limen* - a 'threshold'. When we are at a crossroads, we stand on the threshold of change. We may experience uncertainty or feel out of control being pulled back by the ghosts of the past, yet also pushed forward by divine sentience.

At crossroads, on the threshold, travellers, participants or initiates experience the process of transition. In transition the participant no longer can be identified with the prominence or persona they relied upon before they arrived at the crossroads. Neither do they know what awaits them at the end of their passage across the threshold. These moments in between, when something is afoot and not yet complete, are periods of disquiet, unease and waiting, as personal identity, attachments, beliefs, truths, values and routines are rearranged. They are also times of expectation and disappointment, emotional uncertainty and soul-making. Crossroads locate these junctions in space experienced through events and encounters, often meetings with significant others. At crossroads paths come upon each other: the paths of the past and the future intersect with the present. We are compelled to be in the present, powerless to forces beyond our control.

In Greek myths, crossroads were places where important encounters changed the hero's destiny.



Jason carries Hera across the river;  
illustration from *The Heroes* by Charles  
Kingsley (1901)

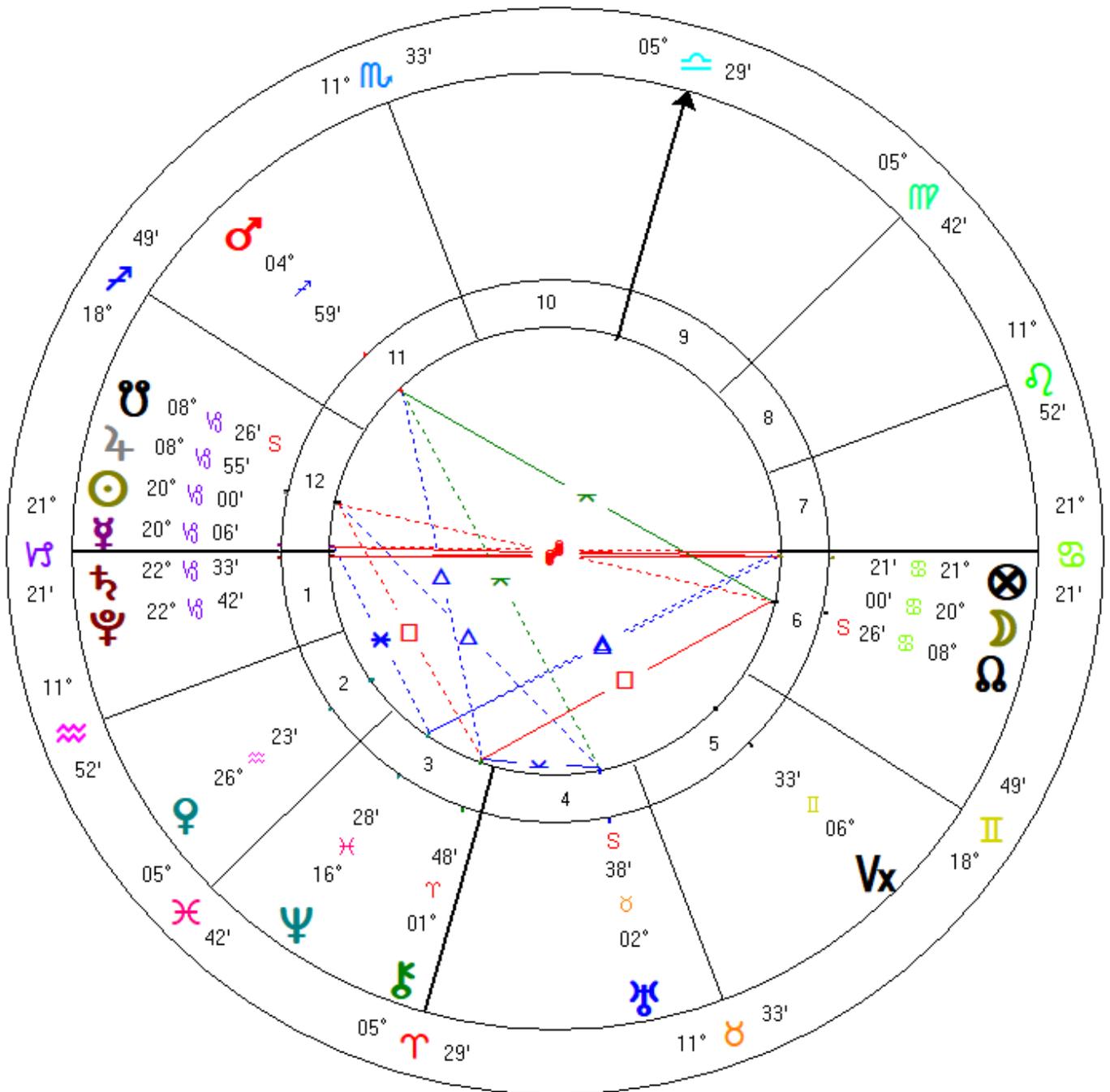
Jason met Hera at the crossroads after leaving Chiron's cave to descend down Mt. Pelion in order to claim his inheritance. Here at the crossroads near the river, he met the goddess Hera disguised as an old woman. Unaware she was the goddess, Jason carried Hera across the river thereby gaining her favour on his heroic quest. And Oedipus unwittingly met and killed his father where the three roads cross near Delphi. Priam encountered Hermes on the threshold of dusk as he descended to the camp of his enemy Achilles. Embedded in the folklore of crossroads is the image of meeting a god, a significant other or a partner. On the Ponto Vecchio, Dante met Beatrice; on the road to Damascus, Saul met Jesus - some of the most important determinants of our life path occur at crossroads, during liminality.

In Latin *trivia* literally means three ways and referred to the places where three roads meet. Trivia enters the English language from *trivialis* - that which is in, or belongs at the crossroads - but by 20<sup>th</sup> century parlance, intersections had become common places, pedestrian so to speak, to be found everywhere; hence, trivia came to be associated with what was commonplace, basic, simple, prosaic and insignificant.

Ironically, the goddess of the crossroads Hecate was known in Roman myth by her epithet *Trivia*, a stark reminder that by the modern age the mysteries of the crossroads are no longer sacred and that we no longer honour the Goddess of the Crossroads. We have forgotten that Fortune and Tyche (Chance) are also goddesses of the crossroads and that Fortuity and Possibility are critical aspects of our lives. So as astrologers you are not surprised that the asteroid Fortuna joins the stellium in Capricorn right now and Tyche is retrograding opposite in Cancer. Hecate will be in Capricorn later in the year.

I mentioned 'nodal points' previously in context of crossroads, as the word node also applies to intersections. Astrologically the crossing of the paths of the lamps of heaven are called nodes, as are all planetary orbits crossing the Sun's ecliptical path. While the Moon's South Node is in Capricorn conjunct Jupiter at present, the South Node of Jupiter is also in Capricorn conjunct the South Node of the Moon. And also, the South Node of Saturn and Pluto are in Capricorn conjunct their zodiacal positions; therefore images of intersections and crossroads abound.

Given the meaning of the word 'node' we can categorize the angles of the horoscope as nodes, as each angle whether that be the Ascendant-Descendant, the MC- IC or the Vertex-Anti-Vertex are directional lines that cross the ecliptic. When planets or other angles intersect with these angles, a crossroads is formed. Hence the following chart of the January lunar eclipse set in Melbourne is a powerful indicator of crossroads in so many ways.



*Lunar Eclipse*

*11/01/20*

*6 21 am*

*Parkville, Victoria*

### **Conjunctions**

Our word conjunction seems to have originally referred to the meeting of planets or stars but later the word applied to a joining or meeting of individuals. Its roots are in the Latin *conjunctio*, an important concept in alchemy and archetypal psychology when referring to a sacred union. In a way of thinking, all planetary conjunctions are a sacred union as they are the meeting of not only physical bodies, but an archetypal and cosmic union. The most celebrated of these was the union of the Sun King and Lunar Queen, the sacred marriage – but we could imagine this image permeating all conjunctions.

At the crossroads we are at a juncture. Chance abounds, directions and destiny are altered. At the conjunction, a new cycle emerges out of the old, the knot of time is tied so that the ending becomes the beginning. Archetypal forces occupy the same time and place and insist, or perhaps invite us, to honour their archetypal nature. This year of 2020, the two social planets Jupiter and Saturn conjoin Pluto as well as themselves. The year is bookended by two important conjunctions: the Saturn – Pluto conjunction in

January and the Jupiter – Saturn conjunction in December. Both meetings are potent: the two planets of endings merge in Saturn's Capricorn domain, while the social planets Jupiter and Saturn conjoin in Saturn's Aquarian domicile. This also scores a seminal conjunction, marking the shift into the 20-year conjunction in Air signs.<sup>1</sup> In between, during 2020, Jupiter conjoins-Pluto.<sup>2</sup> It is the time of Capricorn, a year of conjunctions and crossroads.

## *Climate*

On our minds is climate change, not just its literal reference to 'human-caused global warming' but the symbolic meanings that the climate of Capricorn conveys, like global leadership and governmental changes as well as its qualities of integrity, responsibility, accountability and hard work that are the bedrock of this archetype. How is the climate of our times about to change in ways that affect the parameters, structures, routines and regulations of our lives? And what adjustments do we need to make in this time of transition as we stand at the crossroads?

Our word climate finds its roots in the ancient Greek *klima* 'slope, zone'. The term originally denoted a zone of the earth between two lines of latitude, then any region of the earth, and later, a region considered with reference to its atmospheric conditions. Our word climate has had a long association with weather, regions and place, but its beginnings referred to an inclination of the slope of the earth, literally the slope of the earth from equator to pole. But by the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, climate became a synonym for atmosphere and by the mid-1970s, the word became paired with change – climate change. The suffix means 'to lean' and this year we will be on a slope and need to lean into it! Climax also shares the same root as climate and our year certainly began climatically with so much tension in the wake of the bushfires.

Ancient geographers divided the earth into zones based on the angle of Sun on the slope of the earth's surface and the length of daylight. Ancients suggested the world could be divided into seven distinct zones, ruled by a planet, and later considered twelve, which corresponded to the zodiacal signs. These zones were called *climates* based on the slope of the celestial pole when moving north from the equator. I found this of interest as it led me to the astrological image of declination, the distance a planet is north or south of the celestial equator. Therefore, planetary declination locates the climate of a planet, to borrow from this ancient way of thinking.

The degrees a planet is above or below the celestial equator are not zodiacal degrees, but measurements of this distance north or south of the celestial equator. Saturn and Pluto are not only conjunct by zodiacal longitude and near their South Node, but they are also parallel each other in their southerly declination. This is a powerful trinity of alliances that speak to the times we are in.

When the Sun approximately  $-23^{\circ}26'$  declination this is the Southern Summer Solstice. As northern Australia is in the tropics this line of longitude, the Tropic of Capricorn, runs right through Australia. Close to this declination is also Saturn and Pluto. We were witness to Australia burn. The planetary parallels remind us of the climes of the times.

So, it not just climate change that we face at these crossroads marked out by these major planetary conjunctions. Yes, our literal atmosphere is under threat, but so too is our global, political, social and personal atmosphere.

We are in the Clime and Time of Capricorn.

## Planetary Positions at 11 January 2020

Planet	Longitude	Notes	Declination	Notes
Sun	20♊00	Lunar Eclipse on 11 January at 6.21 am	-21°56'	
Moon	20♌00		+22°59'	
South Node	8♊26		-23°10'	
Mercury	20♊06	Superior conjunction of Sun & Mercury on 11 January at 1.19 am	-23°50'	Mercury is parallel Jupiter
Mars			-20°50'	Mars is parallel Saturn
Jupiter	8♊55	conjoins the South Node	-23°03'	Jupiter is parallel Pluto
Saturn	22♊33	Saturn Pluto conjunction on 13 January at 2.59 am	-21°30'	Saturn is parallel Pluto
Pluto	22♊42		-22°10'	

## Planetary Nodes at 11 January 2020

Planet	South Node	Notes
Jupiter	12♊08	Note Jupiter's will be conjunct the South Node of the Moon and its own South Node (Descending) in January
Saturn	23♊29	Saturn and Pluto are close to their own South Nodes approaching their conjunction
Pluto	20♊32	

<sup>1</sup> I have used the word 'score' as a reminder that a score is 20 years, the length of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction. The 2020 Jupiter Saturn summer solstice conjunction marks the great mutation of its cycle into the air signs.

<sup>2</sup> See my article on the Jupiter-Pluto conjunction at <https://www.astrosynthesis.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Sky-and-Underworld-Jupiter-Pluto-Conjunctions-2020.pdf>