

## Stargazing, Myths & Ancient Folklore!



Larry McHenry

Good Evening,

Tonight I am going to introduce you to some of the ancient myths and folklore of the night-sky. Before we get into the mythology, let's start off by giving you a little background about what is a 'Constellation'. Constellations are the invention of the human imagination, and are not natural. Basically, a constellation is like a 'connect-the-dots' picture, with the stars being the dots. They are a human attempt to organize the wilderness of the Night Sky.



Ancient peoples had plenty of reasons for doing so:

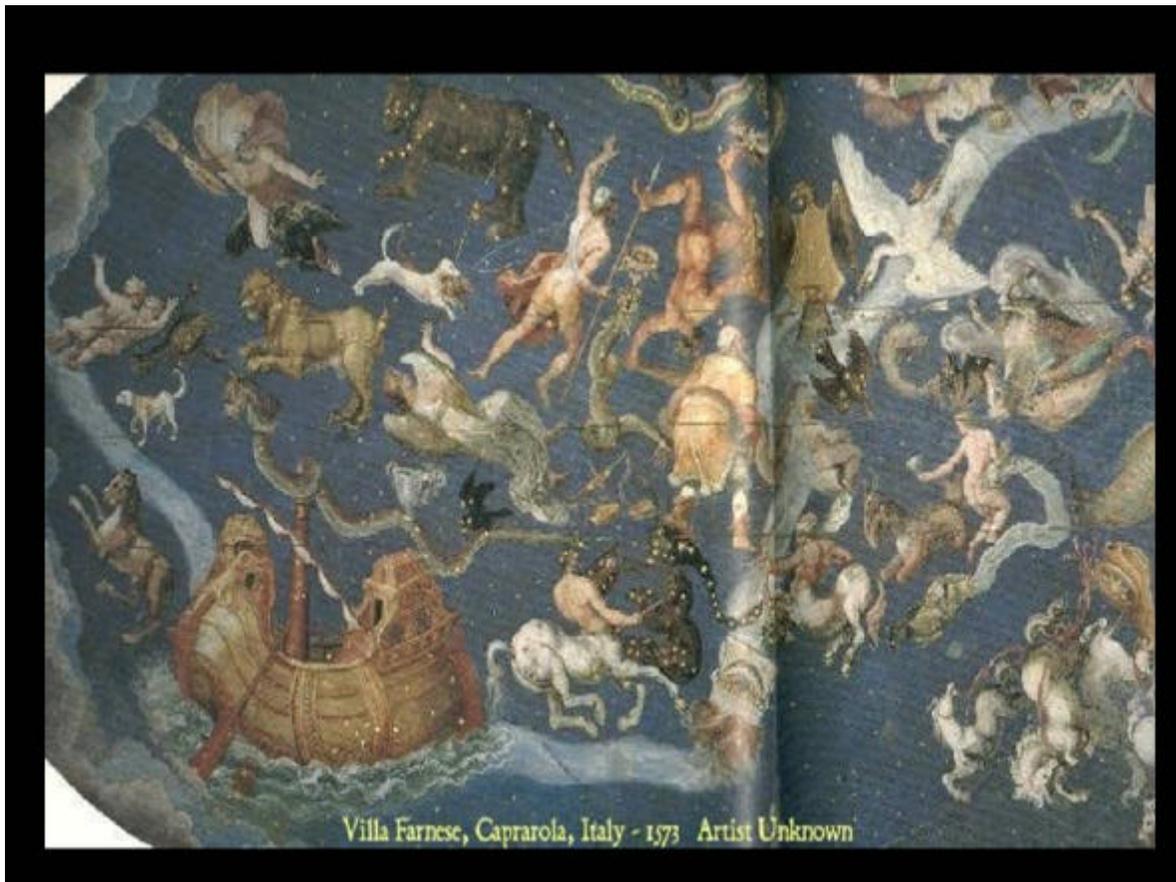
Seafarers and caravan travelers needed a way to find their destinations.

Farmers and Herders needed a way to keep track of the seasons to help them figure out when to plant & harvest their crops, or move their animals from summer to winter pastures.



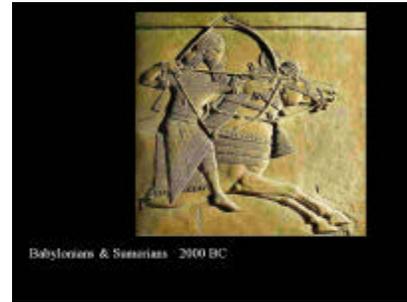
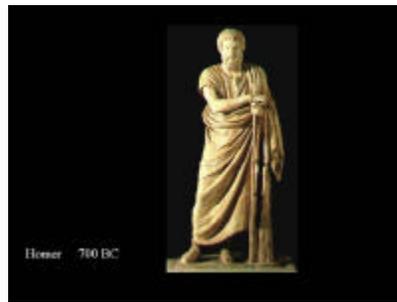
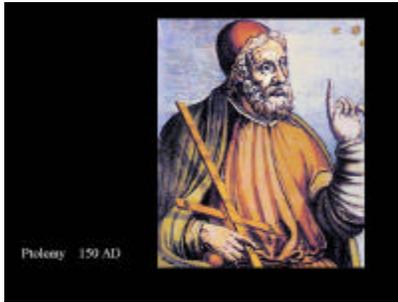
Therefore people devised ‘sky pictures’ or ‘constellations’ to help them remember these things and as an attempt to explain the natural phenomena of the night sky.

The great majority of constellations have very little resemblance to the figures they’re supposed to represent. They are mostly symbolic representations of the deeds, gods, sacred animals, and morality tales of the ancient peoples who invented them.

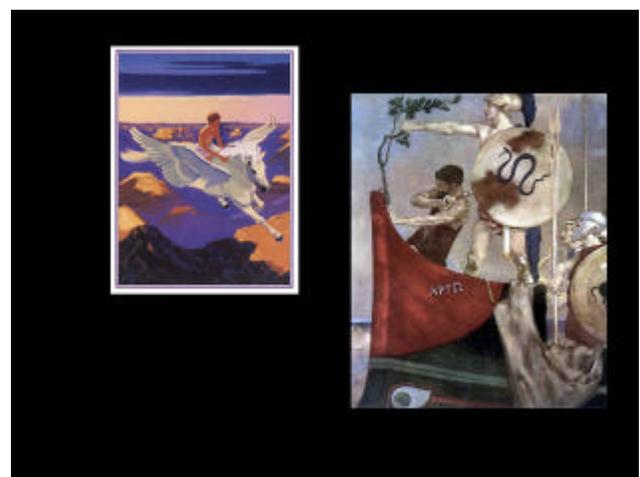


Modern astronomy currently recognizes 88 constellations that divide up the night sky. ‘A’ for Andromeda. thru ‘V’ for Vulpecula.

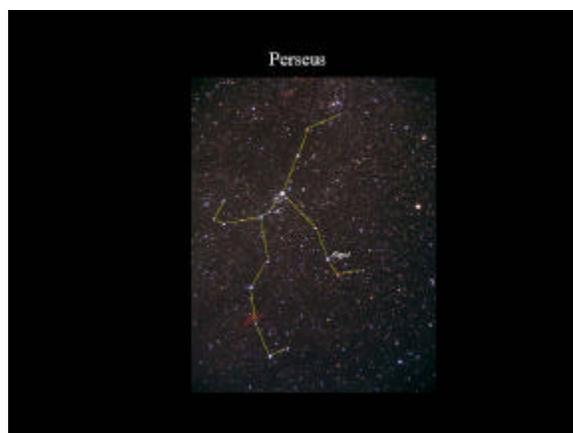
The constellation system we use today goes back to a list of 48 original constellations published around 150 AD by the Greek scientist Ptolemy. Ptolemy did not invent the constellations that he listed. They are much older than his era. Some of the constellations, (the Great Bear & Orion) we can trace back to the time of Homer (700 BC). Others such as Taurus the Bull, we can find mentioned by the ancient Babylonians and the Sumerians around 2000 BC.



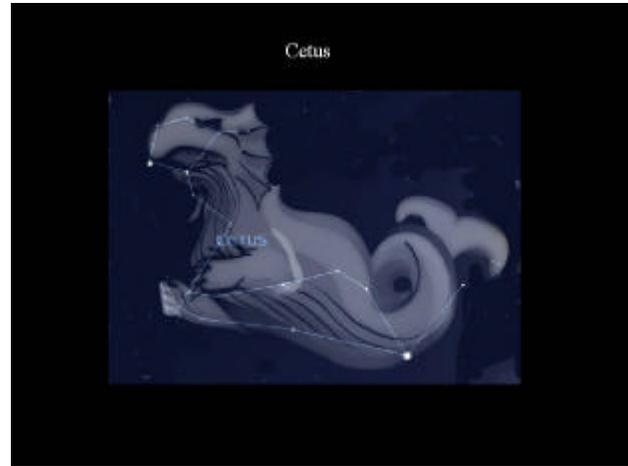
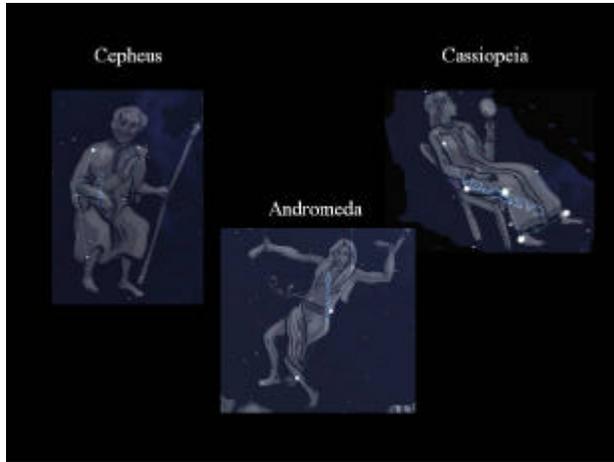
So, in a way, you can think of constellations as linking us, here in the present (21<sup>st</sup> Century AD), back in time over 4000 years to the earliest civilizations and peoples. Constellations also tell us the stories and myths of the ancient peoples who invented them. Every Night, a parade of Greek and Roman mythology circles overhead. Perseus flies to the rescue of the princess Andromeda. Orion and his dogs are on the hunt. The ship of Jason & the Argonauts sails in search of the Golden Fleece. The Greek hero Hercules marches off to his many deeds. Many of the great Greek and Roman heroes and their stories can be found in the night sky.



One of my favorites is that of Perseus and Andromeda! Perseus is one of the most famous Greek Heroes, and there are several myths concerning him. But the one that I am going to tell you about tonight has all of its main characters represented as constellations in the night sky.

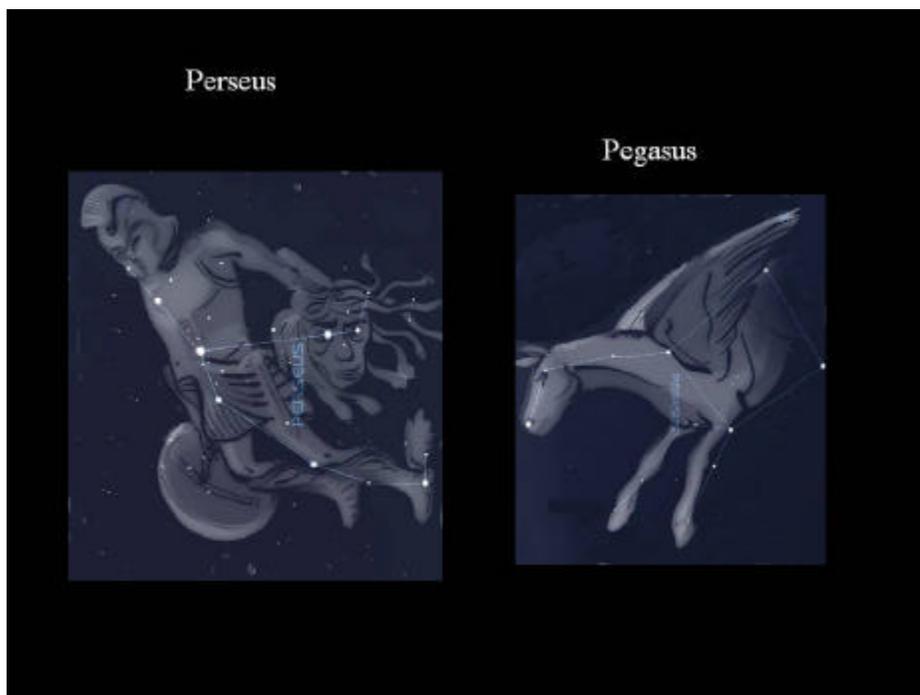


Long ago, in the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, there lived a King and a Queen. (King Cepheus and Queen Cassiopeia). They had a beautiful daughter named Andromeda. Queen Cassiopeia was a very vain and boastful person, and was always getting into trouble. One day, she went too far and dared to boast that her daughter Andromeda was more beautiful than all of the daughters of the Sea God Poseidon. The Sea God decided to punish the Queen, so he sent a sea monster (named Cetus) to attack the coast of the King's country. The monster defeated the King's navy, sunk his ships, and destroyed his port cities.



King Cepheus, not knowing what else he could do, appealed to the oracle of the gods for help. He was told that the only way to make up for Queen Cassiopeia's insults to the Sea God's Daughters and save his people was to sacrifice his own daughter, Princess Andromeda, to the sea monster.

So Andromeda was chained to the rocks on a cliff to await the monster. About that time, the Greek hero Perseus showed up. Some say he was riding – or – flying Pegasus, the winged horse. Perseus had just gotten thru killing another monster named Medusa, whose hair was made up of snakes, and who could turn people into stone when they looked at her. (Perseus had slain her by using a shield as a mirror, and cutting off her head with his sword). Perseus was on his way home, carrying the head of the monster in a bag.



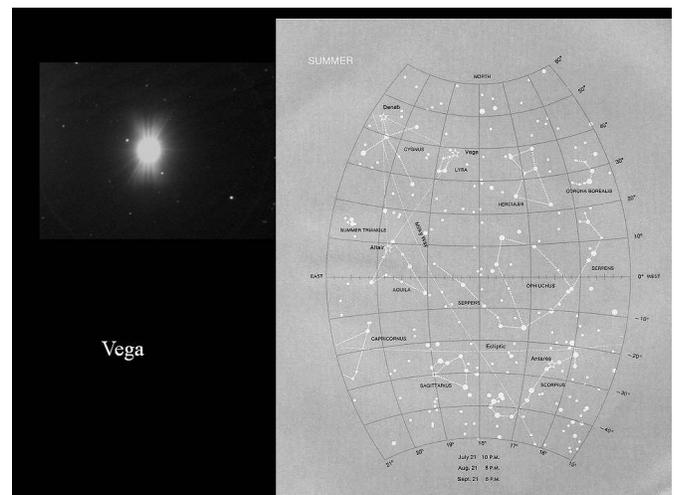
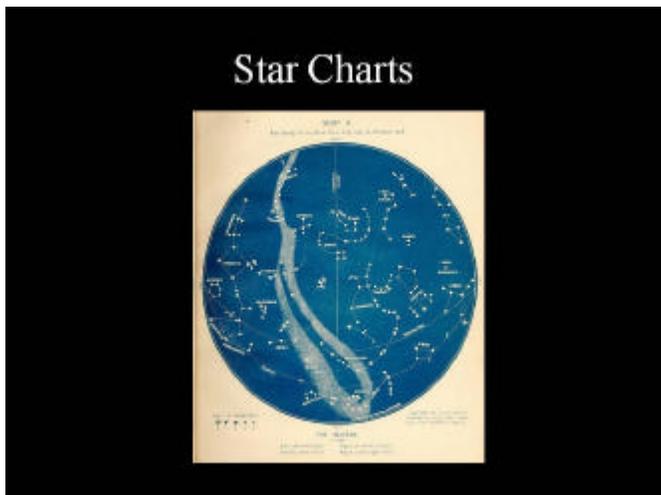
Perseus took one look at Andromeda, and fell in love. He flew over to the King and Queen and asked to marry Andromeda. They agreed, if Perseus could save Andromeda and the kingdom from the sea monster. When the monster Cetus appeared, Perseus swooped down on it with his sword, and began fighting it. But he was only able to kill the monster by pulling the head of Medusa out from the bag, and turning Cetus to stone. Perseus saved Andromeda, and the King and Queen, and their country. And they all lived happily ever after. The End.



These myths are represented by some of the brighter Fall constellations. With a little practice, you can go out and locate them up in the night sky. Now that you know what Constellations are made of and what they represent, how do we go about locating them up in the night sky? By using Starcharts!

If I wanted to find out where a particular city or state was located, how would I go about doing that? By using a road map or atlas. From the map, I would find the state, and then the city I was interested in.

Now, if I wanted to find a bright star named 'Vega', what would I do, how would I find it? The same way that I would find a city here on the Earth. Only now, I would use a star map. I would find that the star 'Vega' is in the constellation of 'Lyra'.

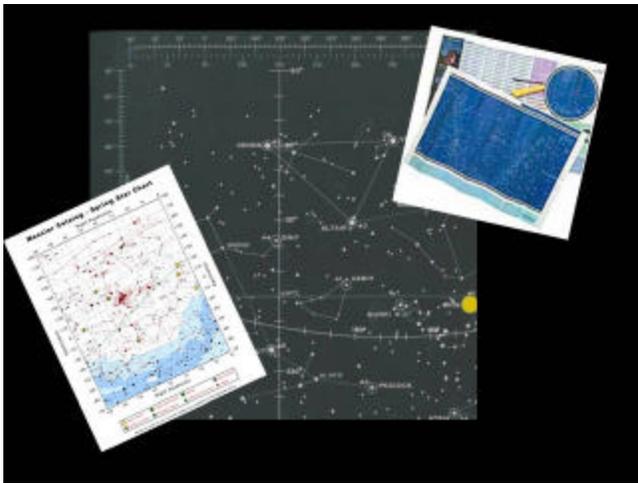


Reading and using star charts is no different than reading a road map. The symbols are a little different, but the basic concepts are the same. You figure out where you are in relation to the map. You find the object you are looking for on the map. Then you find the best way to get to that object using the map.

Like road maps, star charts can come in various sizes and the amount of detail that they can show.

They run anywhere from a few pages showing only the brightest stars to charts having hundreds of pages showing stars, galaxies, and clusters visible only with a telescope.

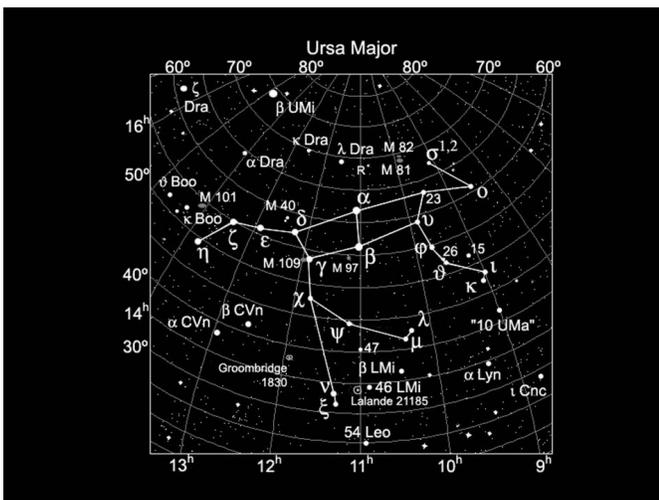
There's also a type of star chart called a 'Planisphere' or 'Star Wheel' that shows the brighter stars visible above the horizon at any time of the day or year. Several examples of these are the monthly charts in 'Sky & Telescope' or 'Astronomy' magazines. So remember, one of the best tools to have in stargazing and learning the constellations is a good beginner's star chart!



## The Big Dipper!

If you think of the constellations as a giant puzzle in the sky, then the 1st piece you would start with is the Big Dipper. It is the key to the puzzle. Because of its bright stars and distinctive pattern, the Big Dipper is one of the easiest constellations to find. Also, because it is located near the North Pole of the sky, it never sets, and can be found all night as it rotates around the pole. This type of constellation is called 'Circumpolar'. The brightest stars that make up the shape of the Big Dipper are known as an 'Asterism', and are not a true constellation. There are many asterisms in the night sky, some of which you may have heard of, such as the Summer Triangle, or Northern Cross. We will talk more about those later.

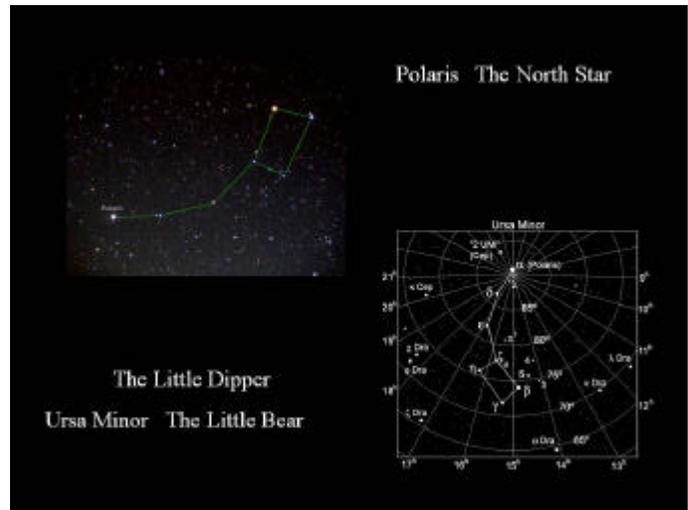
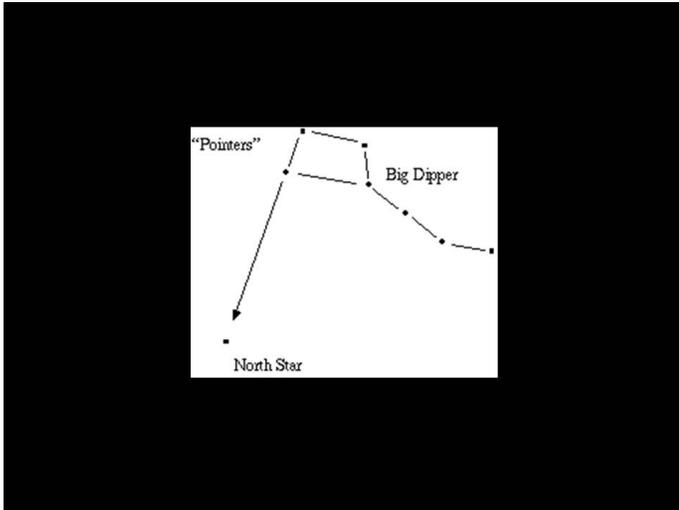
The Big Dipper is part of the constellation 'Ursa Major', the Great Bear. Several ancient cultures saw the shape of a bear among these stars. However, some middle age European peoples also saw what looked like a wagon or wain, and you might see this asterism referred to as the Great Wain in old English literature.



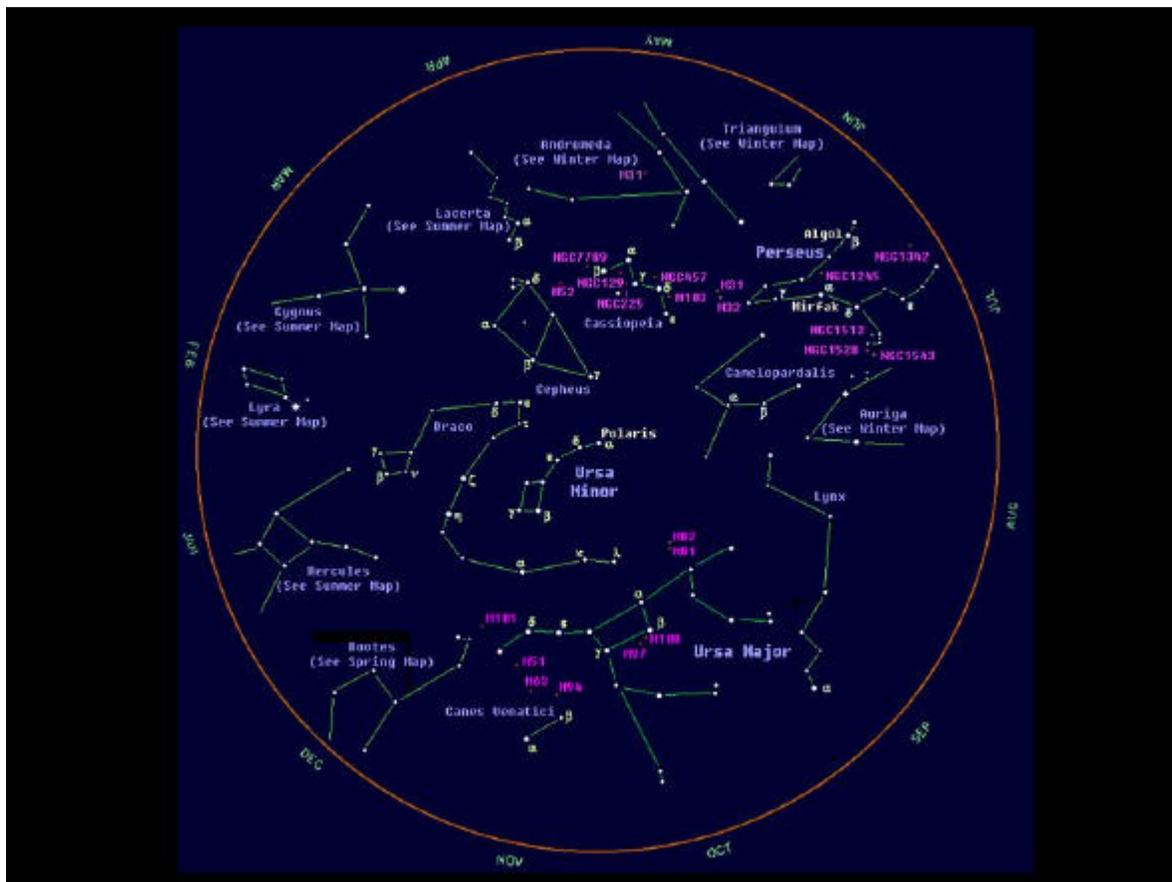
Getting back to the puzzle, once you can find the Big Dipper, you can use it to locate other stars and nearby constellations. The first is the North Star, called 'Polaris'.

Polaris is the brightest star of the constellation 'Ursa Minor', or Little Bear.

Because it is located at almost the exact center position of the north pole of the celestial sky, all the stars and constellations appear to rotate around it. This of course, is actually caused by the Earth rotating on its axis.



Now, the pieces of the puzzle can start to fall in place. Using the Big Dipper and Polaris, you can find the other nearby constellations. Then using these star patterns, you can star hop your way around the night sky.





## The Legend of Ursa Major:

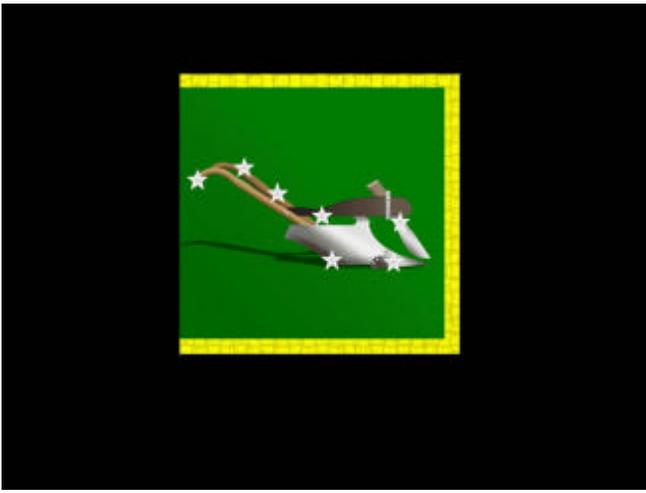
Among all the stars of the heavens, there is none so well known as this seven-starred figure. This constellation is probably the most easily recognizable star pattern in the entire sky. Almost every culture around the world throughout the ages had stories about the seven stars that we call the 'Big Dipper'.



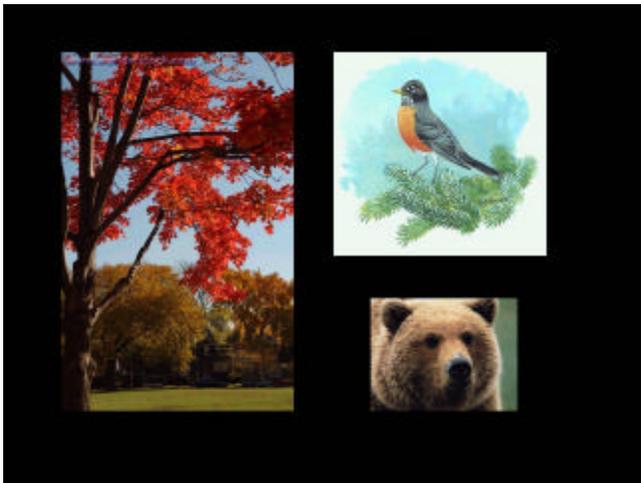
The Sumerians thought of these stars as a 'Celestial Wagon' or chariot. Across Europe, you'll find these stars called by the old name "Charles' Wain" (wagon) and according to folktale that it was named after the great King Charlemagne. In the Northern European countries of Viking descent, it was commonly called 'Odin's Wain', after the Norse king of the gods.



In England and Ireland, this pattern is still commonly called 'the Plough' or Starry Plough referring to a farmer's plough used to break the ground for planting crops. Today, in North America, it is universally known as the 'Big Dipper' because the major stars can be seen to follow the rough outline of a large ladle or dipper. This figure actually comes from Africa, where it was seen as a drinking gourd. In the pre-Civil War era, runaway slaves used the celestial 'Drinking Gourd' to point the way to the north and freedom.



Several Native American legends exist concerning the stars of Ursa Major as a bear. One of my favorites is from the Iroquois. The Bear is represented by the four stars of the bowl in the Big Dipper. Bear is being hunted by three warriors named after birds, Robin, Chickadee, and Cowbird, as represented by the stars of the handle of the Big Dipper. In the early spring, Bear awakens from hibernation and leaves her Den in search of food. The Hunters spot her tracks and begin the pursuit. They stalk her all spring and summer; slowly following her northward, up into the sky country, high above the Earth.



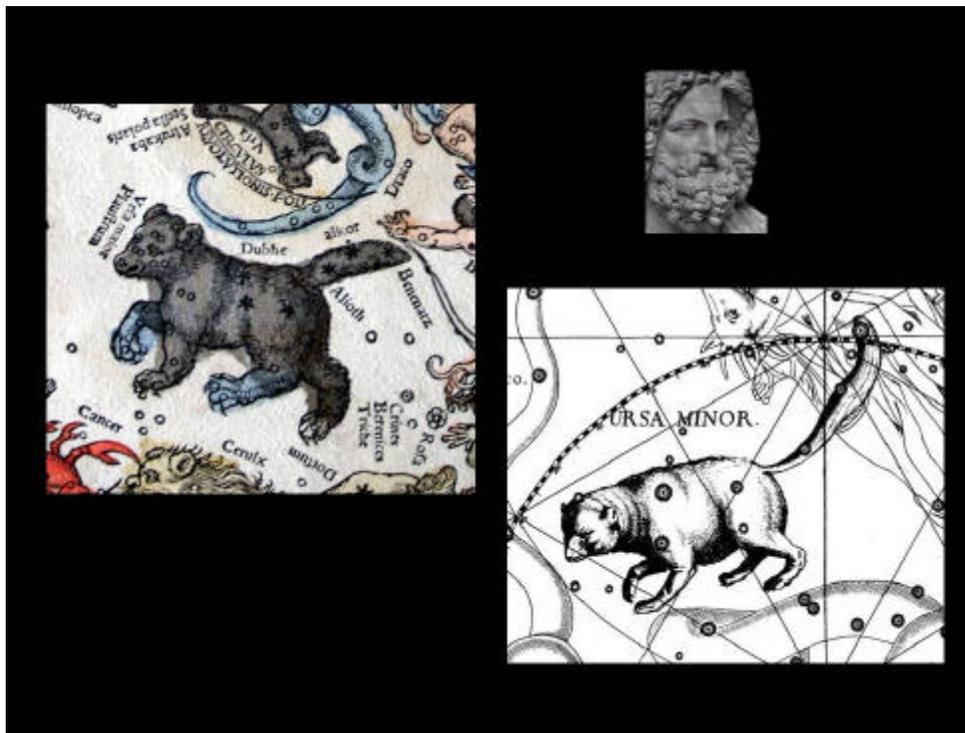
In late autumn, the Hunters finally catch up to Bear, down near the bottom of the sky country, close to the Earth, and slay her with an arrow. Blood from Bear's wound sprinkles down on the forests of the land below and stains the leaves red. This is why tree's leaves change color in the fall. Some of the blood stains Robin's chest, and this is why these birds are red. All thru the Winter, Bear's skeleton remains in the sky low on the horizon. But, her spirit has already entered another Bear hibernating in her Den. Once again in the spring, the hunt begins anew, repeating each year for all eternity.



The Greeks also saw a shape of a bear among the stars of the Big Dipper, and another smaller bear nearby. These bears named by the Greeks are Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. The story of how these bears got up into the sky goes like this. Long ago, there was a beautiful daughter of the king of Arcadia named Callisto, who became the lover of the great king of the gods, Zeus. In time, Callisto gave birth to Zeus' son Arcas. As punishment, the goddess Hera, wife of Zeus, turned Callisto into a bear and banished her to roam the wilds.



Over the years, Arcas grew into a great hunter. One day, while hunting far into the woods, he came upon an unusual bear in that it didn't turn and run from him. Seeing the bear approaching, Arcas grabbed bow to shoot the bear. Unknowing to him, it was his mother Callisto. To protect the son from killing his own mother, Zeus changed Arcas into a bear as well. Zeus placed both of the bears high up in the sky out of Hera's reach. It is said that the bear's tails are longer than normal because of the fact that in order for Zeus to get them up into the sky, he grabbed them both by their tails and swung them over his head flinging them upward. The tails stretched as the bears whirled around the great god's head.



## Summer Constellations:

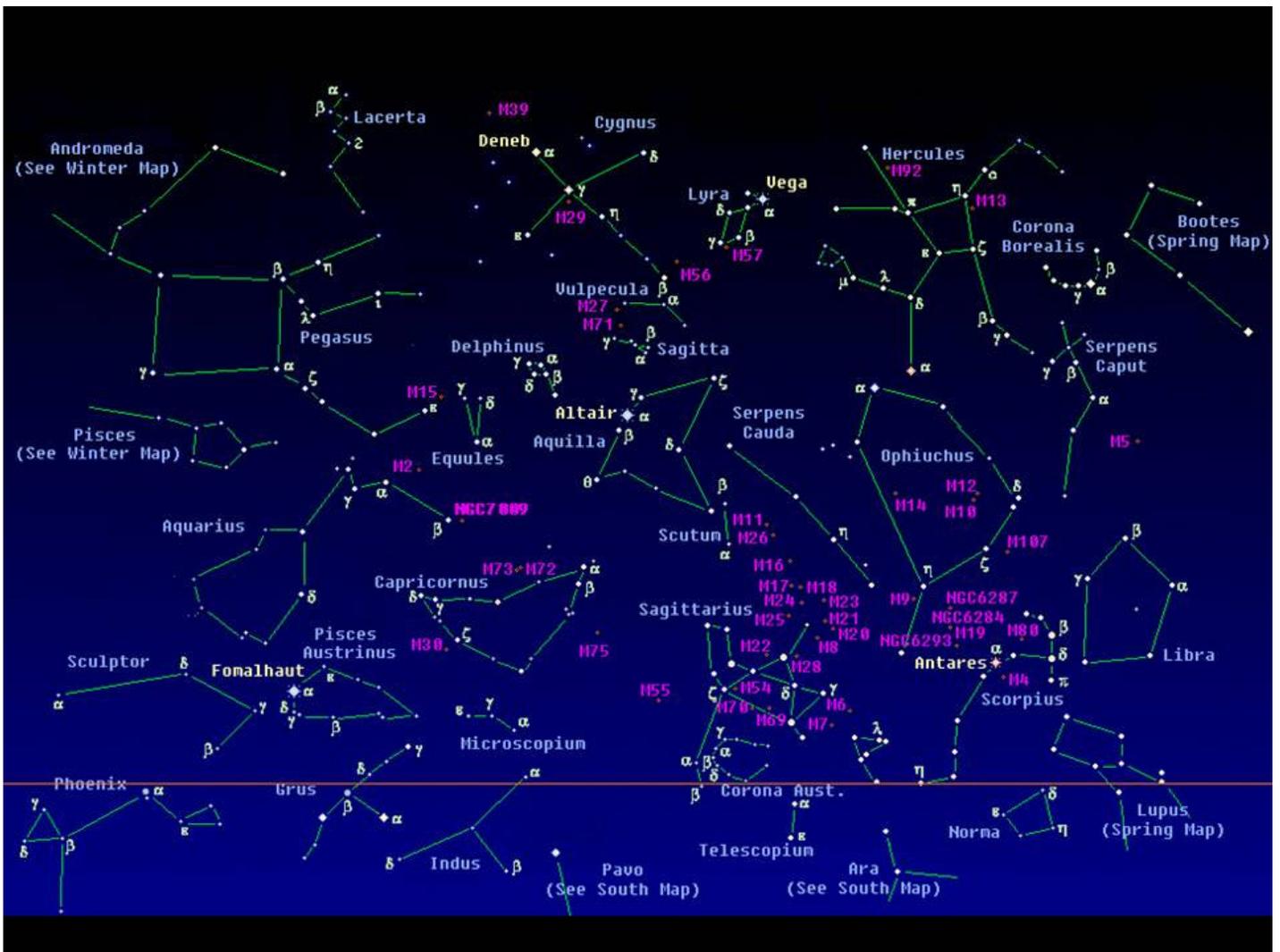
**Lyra:** *'The Lyre (or Harp)'* - from ancient Greeks. The musical instrument invented by the god Hermes. Star Pattern resembles a small 'rectangle'. Home of the bright star 'Vega'.

**Scorpius:** *'The Scorpion'* - from ancient Sumerians. Represents the scorpion that stung to death the great hunter Orion. Star Pattern resembles a 'Fish Hook'. Home of the bright star 'Antaries'.

**Sagittarius:** *'The Archer'* - from ancient Sumerians. Represents a half man, half horse centaur. Star Pattern resembles a 'Tea Pot'. Home of the brightest Milky-Way star clouds and center of our galaxy.

**Cygnus:** *'The Swan'* - from ancient Greek. Represents the god Zeus in one of his many forms. Star Pattern resembles a 'Cross'. (nickname is the 'Northern Cross') Home of bright Milky-Way star clouds and the bright star 'Deneb'.

A prominent asterism of the summer sky is the 'Summer Triangle'. Three bright stars: Deneb, Vega, Altair, connects the constellations of Cygnus, Lyra, and Aquila, and can be used as a guide in locating many nearby constellations.



## The Legend of the Milky-Way:

Living today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century's light polluted skies, we can seldom see and enjoy the beautiful splendor of the Milky Way, which can be viewed on a clear, moonless night from the countryside. The light from any nearby city will obliterate much of the faint haze like glow in the night sky that we know of today as our own home galaxy. But people living just a few hundred years ago, before the age of electricity or gas lamps had little trouble viewing the Milky Way.



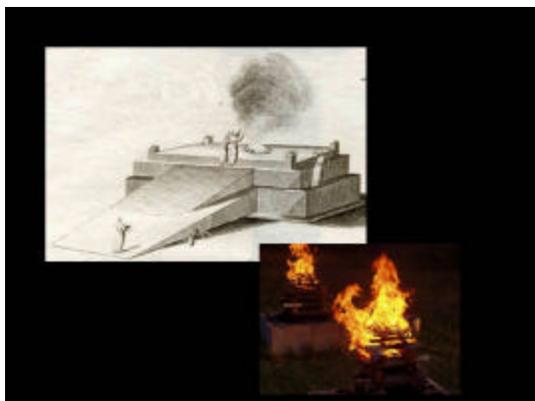
Across the ages, various peoples and cultures attempted to explain what the Milky Way was. Some thought it was a great mass of luminous vapor. Then there were those who claimed it marked the sun's path across the sky. And still others who thought it was the seam in the sky where the celestial vault didn't quite fit. Finally, there were a few who speculated that it was thousands of suns that were extremely far from the Earth and not very bright. (Hmmm, not bad, a pretty accurate theory!)

Some of the more 'non-scientific' myths of the Milky-Way:

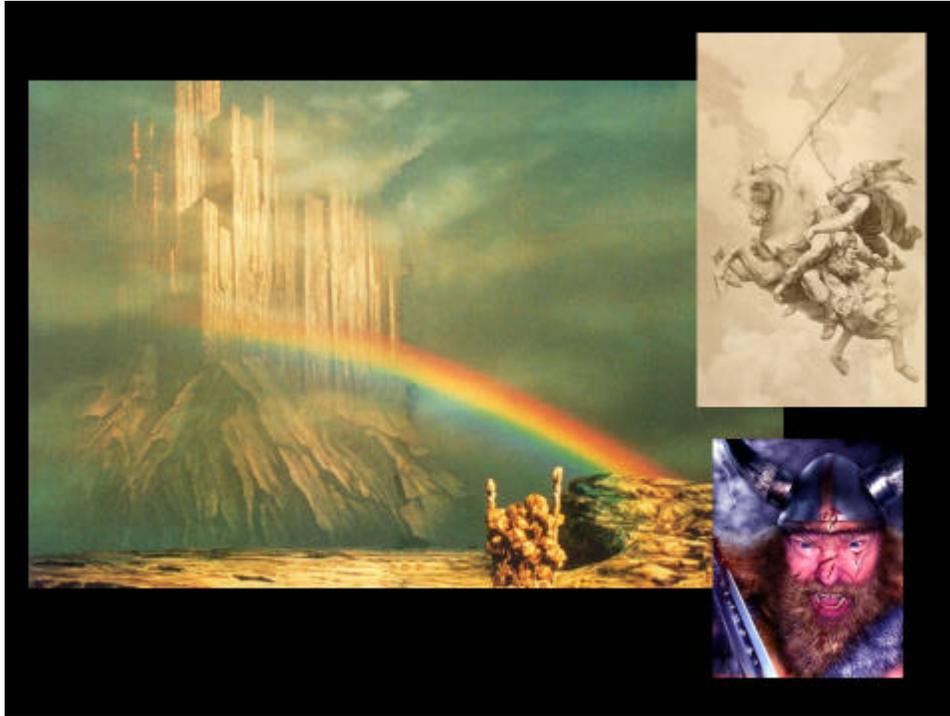
Mesopotamian cultures thought of the Milky Way as that of smoke rising to the gods from sacrificial offerings.

The Egyptians saw it as the Great River Nile extended into heaven by the goddess Isis.

The Chinese thought of the Milky Way as the River of Heaven, where the mothers of the sun and moon bathe their children before they enter the sky.

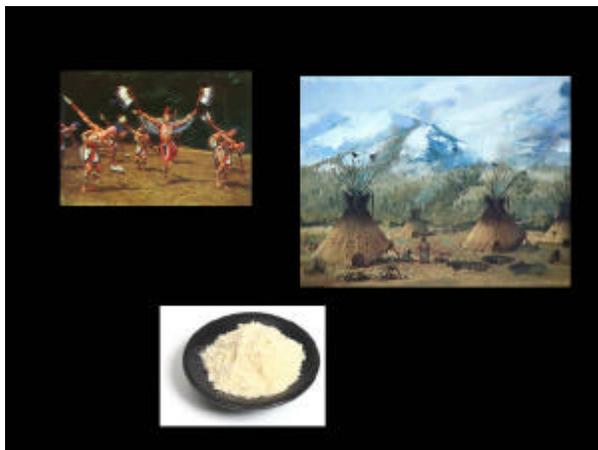


The Norsemen saw it as the path that souls take on their way to the afterlife. A cosmic bridge linking Heaven and Earth used by the Valkries as they carried the souls of slain warriors to feast in honor in Valhalla. They called it 'Odin's Way' or sometimes the 'Asgard Bridge'.



The Cherokee tribe saw the Milky Way as a trail of ground cornmeal scattered across the night-sky by a dog spirit that was stealing it. As the spirit was being chased away, the cornmeal spilt out of his mouth behind him, and magically rose up into the sky. The Cherokee's name for it means: 'Where the Dog Ran'.

The Navajo of the southwest desert had a similar creation story involving one of their main gods, named 'Black God' and the trickster god Coyote! On the first evening, the gods of creation met to discuss what they had made in the world that first day. Black God arrived last with a leather bag full of colorful crystals. The other gods asked him to fill the dark sky with his crystals to make it beautiful and to provide humans with guides for living on the earth. So Black God reached into his bag and pulled out crystals of various sizes and colors. One at a time, he placed them in the sky and named them. Coyote, arriving late to the meeting, decided he too wanted to help put stars in the sky. So while Black God was busy looking up at his creations, Coyote grabbed the bag in his mouth and ran. But his sharp teeth caused the bag to tear, spilling out thousands of tiny crystals all along the way. These tiny crystals rose up in a jumble into the sky, forming a glowing path behind Coyote, creating the Milky-Way!



Finally, classical Greek mythology describes the Milky Way in a number of colorful stories.

One story described it as mother's milk left after the infant Hercules nursed from the goddess Hera, to gain her wisdom. When Hera realized that the child was the illegitimate son of Zeus, she pushed the baby away and spilt milk across the heavens to become the 'Milky Way'



Another popular Greek explanation says the Milky Way is the burned scar across the sky formed when Phaethon, son of Apollo, tried to drive the chariot of the sun and couldn't control the horses.

The chariot weaved back and forth across the sky, sometimes coming too close to the Earth, turning the lands below into great deserts and boiling the oceans. Other times it rose too close to the dome of heaven, scorching a wide band across it. Zeus, fearing that Phaethon's uncontrolled flight would even burn up Mount Olympus, the home of the gods, took out one of his thunderbolts and zapped the chariot, killing the driver.

Apollo was able to regain control of the chariot's horses, and returns the sun chariot to its proper celestial path. Ever since, no one else other than Apollo has been allowed to ride in or drive the sun chariot!



## Fall Constellations:

My four favorite are from the 'Perseus & Andromeda' myth:

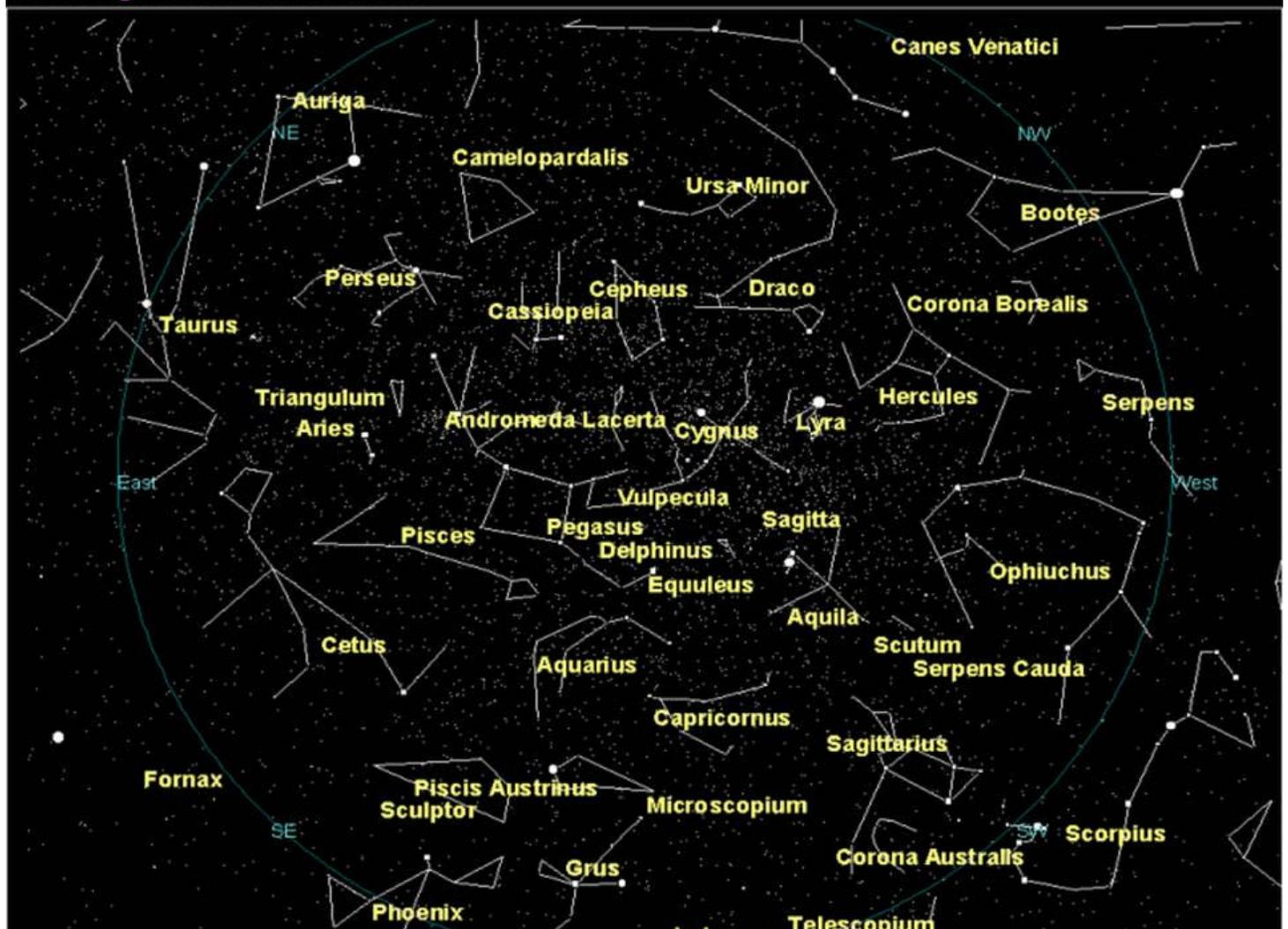
**Perseus:** *'The Hero'* - from ancient Greek. The son of the god Zeus, slayed the monster Medusa, who turned people into stone. Star Pattern resembles the letter 'K'.

**Cassiopeia:** *'The Queen'* - from ancient Greek. Associated with one of the myth about Perseus. Star Pattern resembles the letter 'W', or 'M'.

**Andromeda:** *'The Princess'* - from ancient Greek. Associated with one of the myth about Perseus. Contains the popular deep sky object M31, 'the Andromeda Galaxy'.

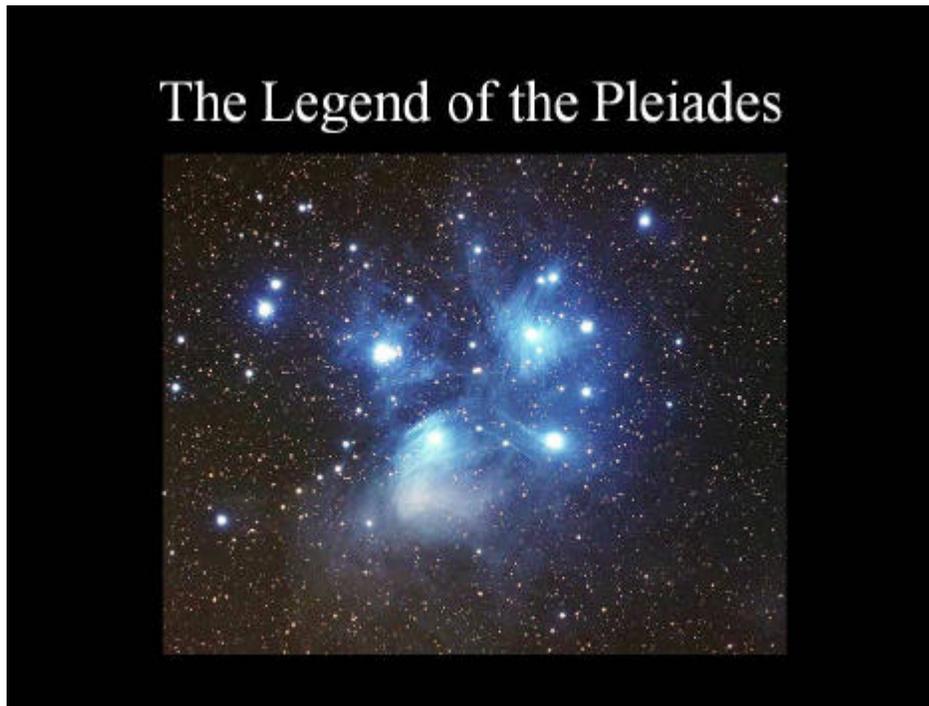
**Pegasus:** *'The Winged Horse'* - from ancient Greek. Associated with several myths, including Perseus. Star Pattern resembles a square, and is often called 'the Great Square'.

Generic beginners star chart for October

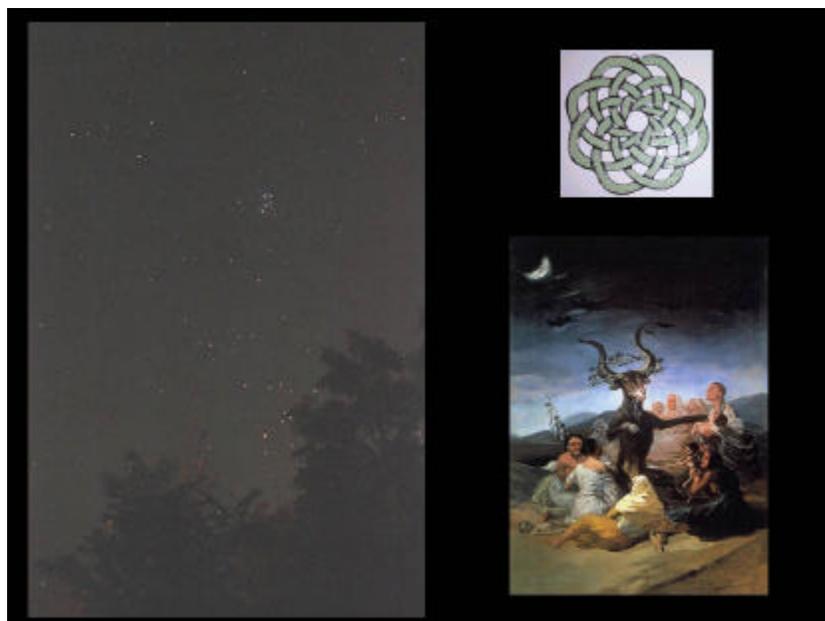


## The Legend of the Pleiades:

Glittering like a swarm of fireflies, there is a grouping of small stars in the late fall sky that are so distinctive, that many cultures regard it as it's own mini-constellation. The Pleiades or 'Seven Sisters' is actually a nearby open star cluster located within the Winter constellation of Taurus the bull.



There are ancient temples erected all over the world that are aligned with these stars. Some cultures have considered them the center of the universe or the destination of the soul when a person died. Texts from ancient Egypt, Greece, and elsewhere link this fuzzy patch of stars to all sorts of religious matters and even more practical things such as when to plough the fields and plant crops, and when to sail on the sea. The start of winter was marked in some cultures by the Pleiades first appearance in the evening sky. The Celts thought this marked a period (centered on the date around November 1<sup>st</sup>) as where the boundary between the living world and that of the dead crossed. Like a doorway opening, this allowed visitors to travel to either side. In the Middle Ages, this became known as the fearsome Witch's Sabbath, or Black Sabbath. This led to our present day holiday of Halloween!



Within the Great Pyramid at Giza there is a tunnel directed toward the south that aligns with the meridian crossing of the Pleiades, and whose passing across that opening, at midnight, marked the beginning of the year, and renewal of the Pharaoh's soul.

The Mayan people considered the midnight meridian crossing of the Pleiades as a very significant and dangerous time, as the world could come to an end during that crossing! In fact, their sacred history tells them that the world has already been destroyed and re-created four separate times in the past!

So to prevent this from happening, they held many great religious ceremonies involving numerous human sacrifices to appease the gods.



Other cultures had a more practical use for watching the celestial movements of the Pleiades. Japanese fishermen, who called the star cluster 'Subaru', saw a kind of fish net made of stones and bamboo. They used rising and setting of the bright "net" to determine when to cast their own nets into the sea. They liked the name so much; they named a car after it!



Common European names for the Pleiades:

The Finns called it the 'net. The Swedes had a name that translates as 'Fur in Frost'.

The Welsh referred to it as the 'Dog Pack'. In Germany, they were called 'Hen and her Chicks'.

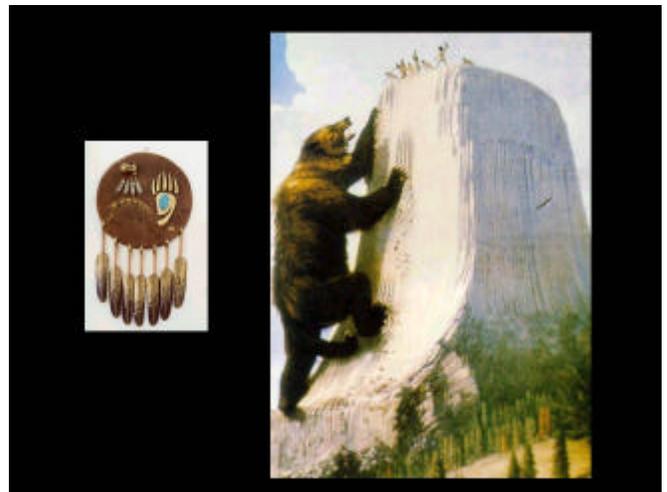
The Danes called it the 'Eve Hen. Russian farmers named it the 'Sitting Hen'.

The Pawnee tell a story that the stars that make up the Pleiades are six brothers who saved their little sister from an evil rolling skull. The Cherokee tell about seven boys who so loved to play a game called 'chunky' (involving rolling a stone with a stick), that they became so light headed from playing the game that they floated up into the sky country. The Cheyenne (have a legend that connects the Pleiades and the eroded volcanic mountain core in Wyoming called "Devil's Tower".

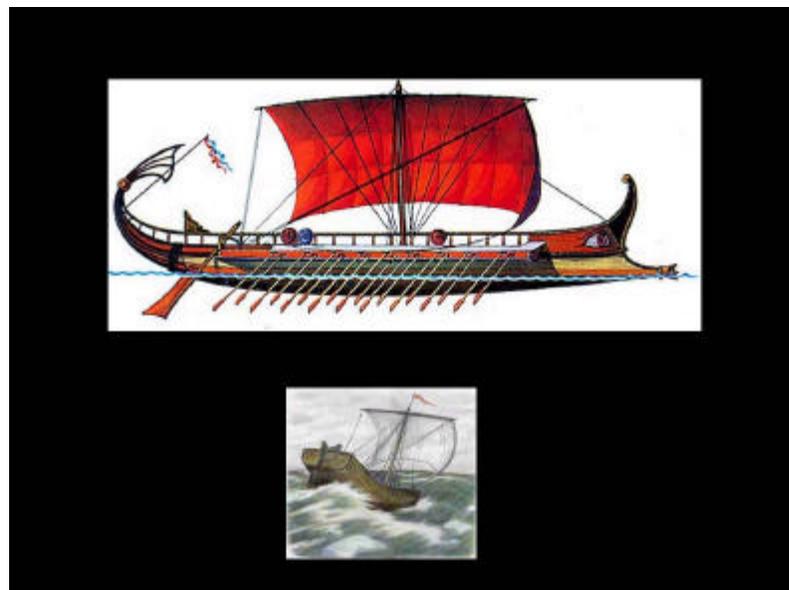
(if you ever watched 'Close Encounters', that's the mountain).

According to legend, the Great Spirit raised up the mountain to protect seven Indian maidens who were being pursued by giant bears. But the bears were so persistent that the Great Spirit had to place the maidens up into the sky country to finally save them.

The marks of the giant bear's claws can still be seen to this day on the sides of the mountain!



The Greeks referred to the Pleiades as the 'Sailing Ones', as they were visible all night during the sailing season. When the Pleiades disappeared from the sky, the Greeks knew it was time to beach their ships in preparation for the storm season.



In Greek mythology, the Pleiades are the seven daughters of the sea nymph Pleione, the 'Queen of Sailing', and the giant Atlas, who was condemned by Zeus to hold the weight of the world on his shoulders.

All seven sisters are named and each has their own stories:

- ? Alcyone - '*queen who wards off evil storms*', is the brightest star of the cluster.
- ? Asterope - '*starry, twinkling*', one of the lovers of Zeus.
- ? Celæno - '*swarthy*'
- ? Electra - '*brightly shining*', mother of the first king of Troy.
- ? Merope - '*eloquent*', only Pleiad to marry a mortal.
- ? Taygete - '*long-necked*', mother of the founder of Sparta.
- ? Maia - '*most beautiful*', the eldest of the sisters, mother of the god Hermes.

In modern times, two fainter members of the star cluster have been given the names of Atlas & Pleione to honor their parents.



Only six stars are easily visible within the star group.

The seventh is considered the 'Lost Pleiad'. This sister is said to be Electra, who veiled her face at the sack & burning of Troy, (the great city, founded by her son)

Short version of how the Pleiades were placed up in the sky goes like this:

One day as the sisters were traveling in the countryside, they were chased by Orion, who had fallen in love with them at first sight. In their fright they prayed to Zeus to save them. In pity he turned the sisters into doves that flew up into the sky. But Orion didn't still didn't give up following them

So Zeus had to change them into stars and place them high up in the night sky where Orion could see them, but never catch them.

## Winter Constellations:

**Canis Major:** *'The Great Dog'* - from ancient Greek. Orion's hunting dog..

Star Pattern resembles a dog.

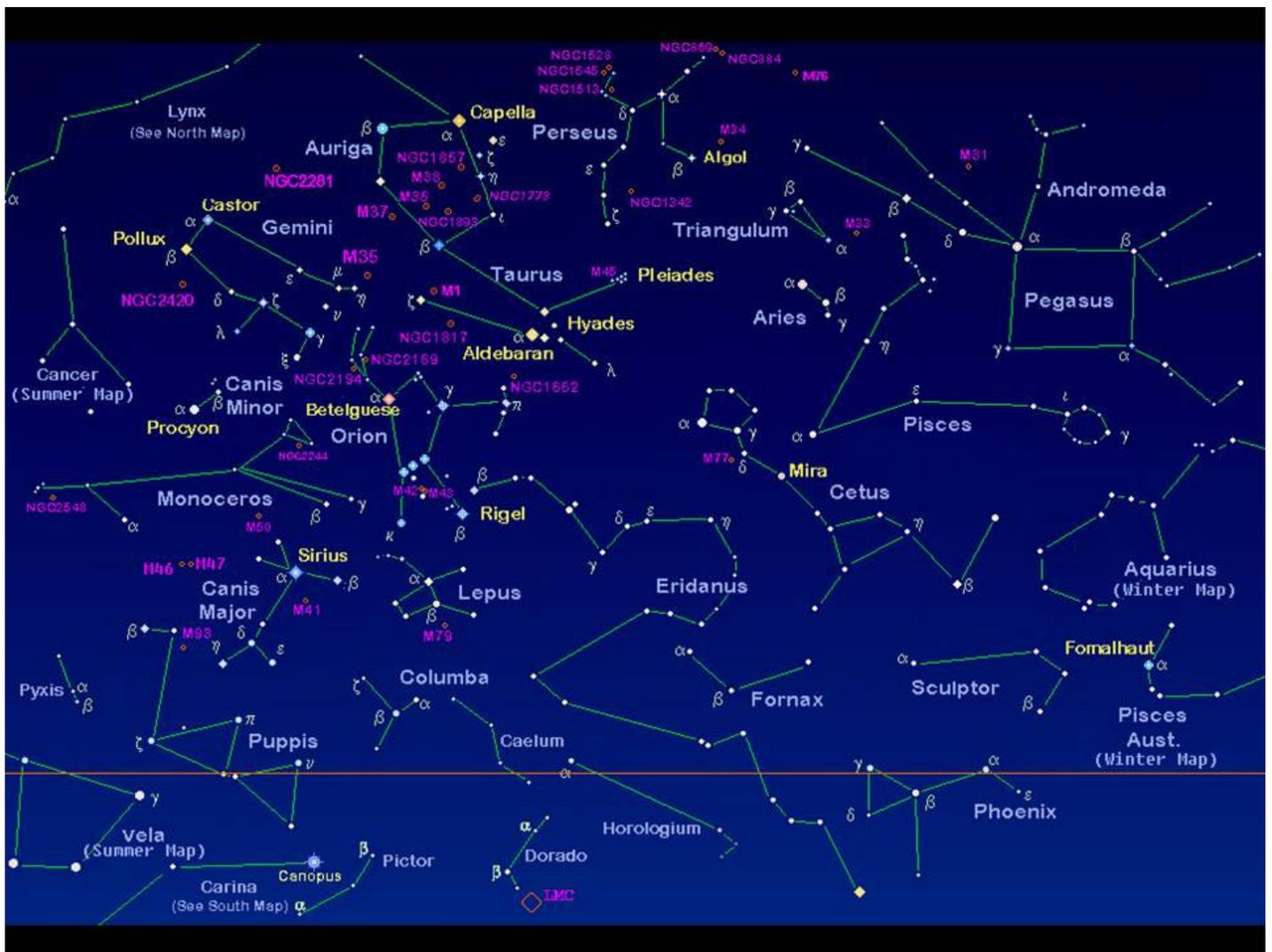
Home of the brightest star visible in the northern hemisphere – Sirius, 'the Dog Star'.

**Taurus:** *'The Bull'* - from ancient Sumerian and Greek. Several Greek myths of Taurus as the bull of King Minos of Crete. Star Pattern forms a 'V' shape.

Home of bright star Aldebaran. Contains the popular deep sky object 'the Pleiades'. ('Seven Sisters')

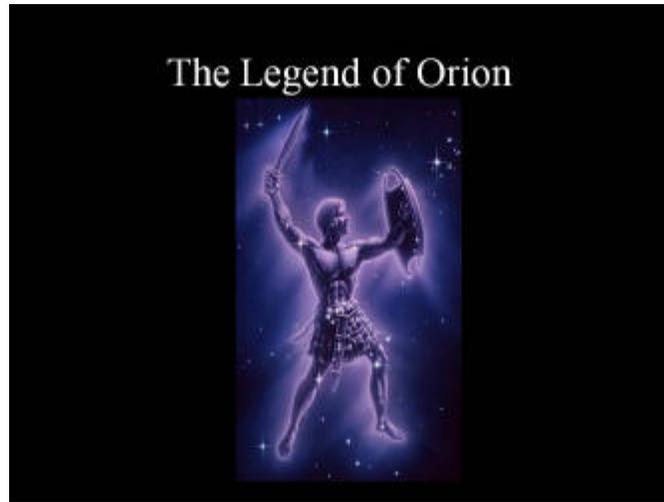
**Orion:** *'The Hunter'* - from ancient Sumerian. Represents a great hunter or warrior.

To the Greeks, he was the son of the sea god Poseidon. Star Pattern resembles a man, with the three belt stars being easy to recognize. Home of two bright stars, Rigel and Betelgeuse. Contains the popular deep sky object M42, 'the Great Orion Nebulae'.



## The Legend of Orion:

After the Big Dipper, Orion is the next most commonly recognizable constellation and is visible from every part of the globe. Almost every ancient culture associated this area of the night sky with a 'star-god' or 'great warrior'. Orion marked an important position in the skies around 4000 BC. The constellation coincided with the spring equinox and marked the first day of the year for many ancient cultures.



To the Egyptians this constellation represented the solar god Horus. In some Mesopotamian societies, Orion was considered the king of heaven.



The Native American tribes of the Pacific Northwest saw in the stars of Orion a great struggle between Winter's cold and Spring's warm 'Chinook Wind' from the west. According to legend, long ago when all stars were human beings, there lived three warrior brothers, the strongest of which was named 'Chinook Wind'. During the summer, the three brothers left for a faraway journey. They were gone all summer and fall. Late in the fall, Winter arrived from the east, and began stealing food from the brother's tribe, causing much hardship. Finally, in early spring, the three warrior brothers returned and 'Chinook Wind' began fighting with Winter, and eventually forces Winter to leave. Food once again becomes plentiful for the tribe. To this day, every spring, Chinook Wind returns and drives off Winter. You can tell that the time is near for Chinook Wind's return when you can see him and his two brothers paddling their canoe up the celestial river. (the stars of Orion's belt and sword!)



The ancient Sumerians saw in these stars their great hero Gilgamesh. Dating to over 4000 years ago, the epic of Gilgamesh is probably the most complete legend connected with this constellation. In the epic, Gilgamesh was noted for being a strong warrior, a great leader, and a lover of the goddess Ishtar. He slayed many monsters and went on great journeys.



The ancient Greeks named this grouping of stars after their hero Orion, where we get our classical representation of the great hunter kneeling with his raised arm holding a club, and a shield made from lion skin in his hand. According to Greek mythology, Orion was born to a poor shepherd whose wife had died childless. You might wonder how a man could have a child without a wife! The answer of course is the gods!

One evening the king of the gods Zeus, along with his brother Poseidon and Hermes, were traveling thru the countryside. It was getting late, and they were far from any town, so they disguised themselves and stopped for the night at a shepherd's house. Not realizing the identity of his guests, the old shepherd offered what he had, made them comfortable, and sacrificed and cooked his last cow for their dinner.

The gods, were greatly impressed by the old man's hospitality. Making polite conversation, they asked the man what one thing in the world that he wanted the most. The old shepherd replied that he wished he could have had a son. Then Zeus, Poseidon, and Hermes revealed their true selves and promised to fulfill the shepherd's wish. The gods gather around the hide of the cow that they had just eaten, performed a mystical ceremony, and bundled up the cow skin. A few months' later Orion was born! As Orion grew he became a great hunter. During his youth, he fell in love with the seven sisters of the Pleiades, pursuing them such that Zeus had to place them up in the sky out of reach of Orion's unwanted affections!



After Orion got over his love for the Pleiades, he went on to perform many deeds and feats. Thru his love of hunting, he eventually met Artemis, goddess of the hunt. They both fell in love. The god Apollo, (brother of Artemis), became jealous of Orion and killed him with a scorpion. In her sorrow Artemis begged Zeus to place Orion up in the sky among the most brilliant stars, where he could remain for all eternity with his hunting dog Canis Major, facing the snorting charge of Taurus the bull. Afterwards, Apollo insisted that the scorpion also be placed in the sky to commemorate the great hunter's downfall. Zeus agreed, but placed the scorpion on the opposite side of the sky so as one rises, the other always sets.

### **Conclusion:**

These myths that I've shared with you tonight are represented by some of the brighter stars and constellations. Using star charts, you can go out and locate them up in the night sky. While you're stargazing at them, think about the myths and stories behind them, and that for thousands of years, people just like ourselves have been gazing and wondering about those very same stars, and sharing the stories and myths handed down to us from our ancestors. This concludes my introduction to Star-Myths.



### **Credits:**

“Scientific American” Nov 2006 – ‘Origin of the Greek Constellations’ by Bradley Schaefer  
“Star Tales” by Ian Ridpath  
“They Dance in the Sky – Native American Star Myths” by Jean Monroe and Ray Williamson  
“Burnham’s Celestial Handbook” by Robert Burnham Jr.  
“The Glorious Constellations: History and Mythology” by Giuseppe Sesti  
“The Stories in the Night Sky” website: <http://www.ufrsd.net/StaffWWW/Stefanl/myths/index.htm>  
“The Constellations” website: <http://www.dibonsmith.com/stars.htm>