Twitter Thread by Rauðgrani ■■■■■■■■■



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3rd-4th century mosaic. The Sun God Sol. He is holding the sphere of the heavens in his hand. What makes this notable is that this is from a Jewish synagogue. I could have said this was Jesus, and people would definitely believe it.



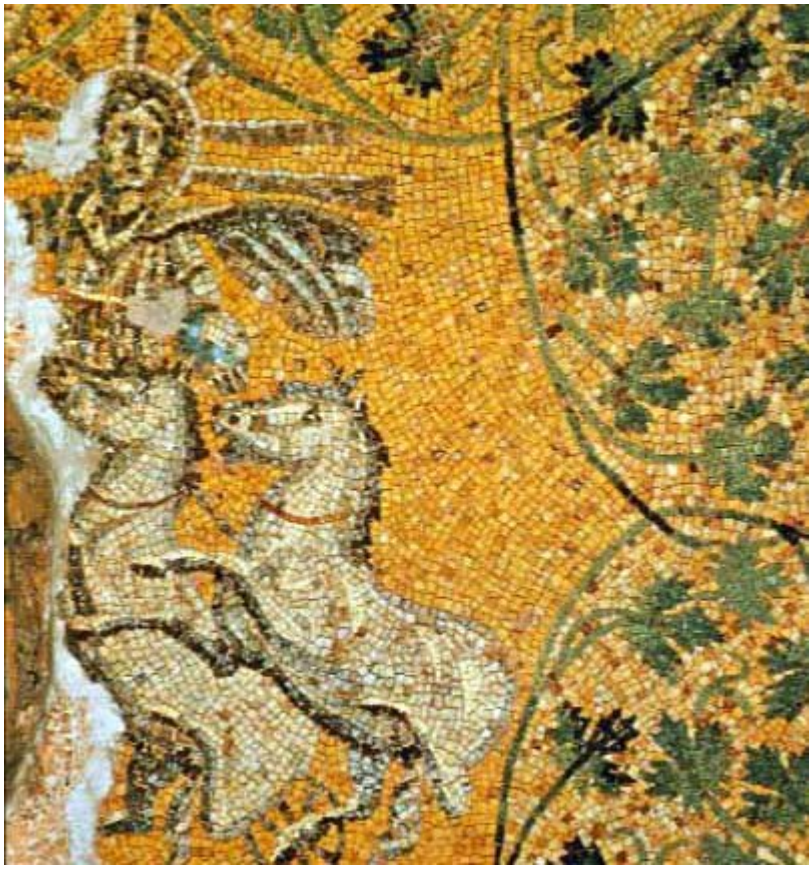
You can see there that Sol is in the middle of a zodiac wheel, a common motif in the Roman empire. And above, there are two menorahs and a Torah shrine. The zodiac signs are labeled in Hebrew, but Greek is also present.



Here are two more examples of Sol with the Zodiac wheel, also from synagogues. Just to show it was not an isolated usage. It was common.



Here is an early Christian depiction of Jesus as the Sun God. In the 4th century, Christian art was retooled pagan art. Patronized by Constantine and his successors at first. Constantine himself worshiped Sol Invictus.



What I want to focus on here is this. The orb shows up all over the place. It represents the heavens or the whole cosmos. And the cross or X running through it is also important. I will show many examples of it to prove the point.



This is a coin of the emperor Domitian(81-96). The figure sitting on the left is his son, sitting on the cosmic orb with the 7 planets. This commemorates the deification of his dead son. Domitian enrolled several of his family members into the official imperial cult.



A coin of the emperor Carinus(283-285). The goddess Victoria is shown standing on the celestial sphere.



A coin of Constantius, a son of Constantine. It a phoenix, standing on top of the orb and X. The phoenix was used as a symbol of Roman revival. The last century hadn't been good for the empire, but after that was even worse.



Another example from the reign of Valentinian II.



Constans, another son of Constantine, holding the celestial sphere.



A coin of Constantine. Sol Invictus can be seen holding the celestial sphere.



More simple gold coins of Vespasian and Augustus and Nero(1st century or earlier). They are victory commemorations with Victoria standing/sitting on the globe. But they are simpler, so no X.



Constantius coin, altar and globe can be seen. Altars commonly appear on Roman coins, an that is a typical Roman one. Christian symbolism starts to be seen on some coins at this time, too. Usually the Chi-Rho.



Constantine II coins. He is holding the celestial sphere with Victoria standing on top of it. Much like Jupiter.



A coin of Crispus, son of Constantine. Crispus was executed by Constantine, along with Constantine's wife.



Jupiter shown holding the celestial sphere. It says that Jove is giving something.



Octavia, sister of Augustus. Oldest coin here. 1st century BCE. CAESAR DIVI, Divine Caesar, with a foot on the celestial globe.



A coin of Vespasian(69-79). Capricorn with the sphere.



Very similar coin of Titus, son of Vespasian.



A coin of Hadrian(117-138). This celebrates him as the successor of the Divine Trajan. One is handing the globe to the other.



Coins with Antoninus Pius(138-161), Marcus Aurelius(161-180_, and Macrinus(217-218). The goddess Italia sitting on the sphere is the one that sticks out most to me. The bottom right says "Providentia deorum". Providence of the gods, with a goddess and cornucopia.



Below are some resources to read. They will explain the point I have belabored here. I have had this in mind for a while, and time and inspiration means I make threads.

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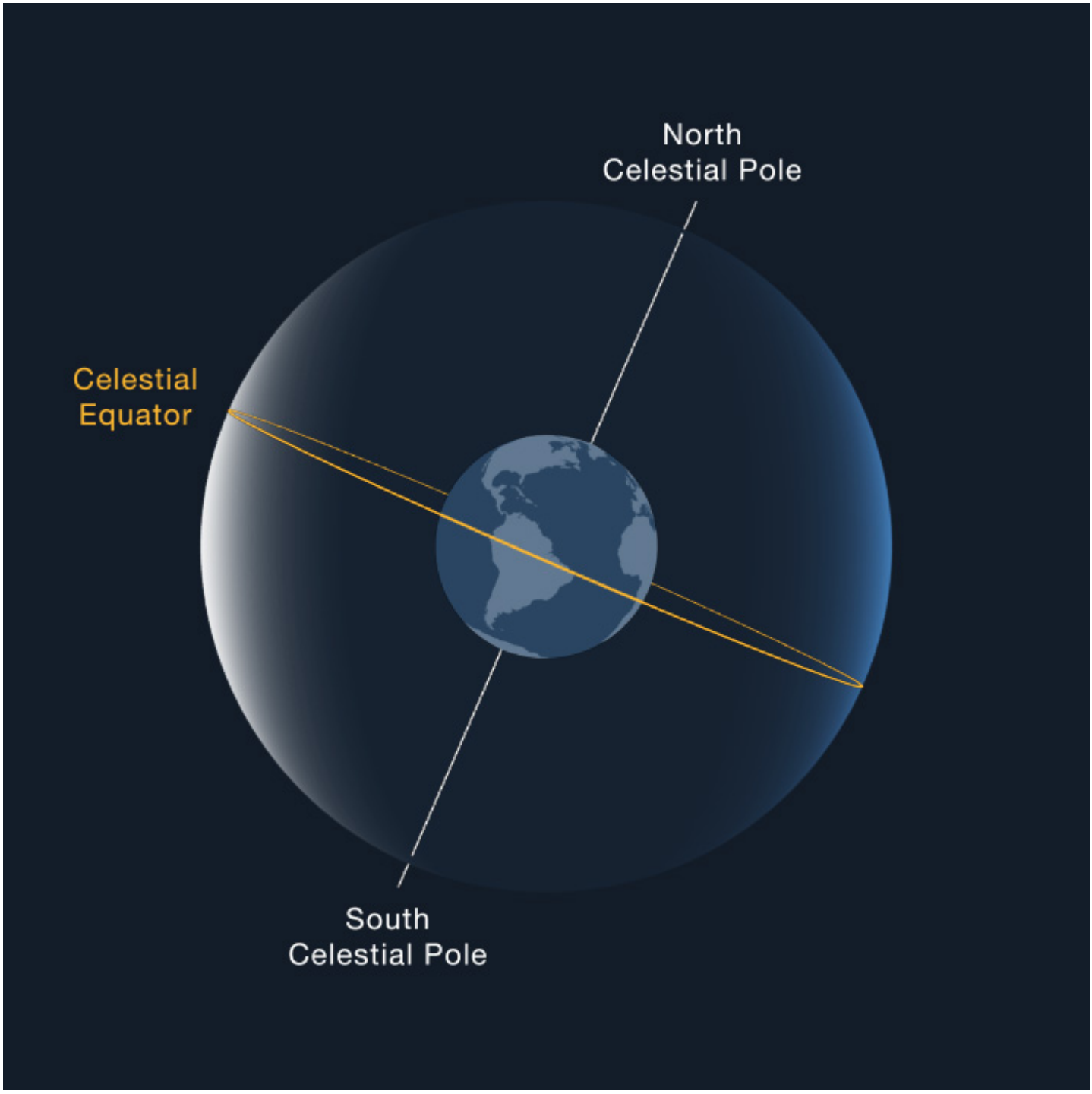
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In Timaeus, Plato talks about the world soul as shaped like an X. The world soul is exactly what it sounds like, the soul of the cosmos(which Plato considered a god in itself). And the source of lesser individual souls.

Now God did not make the soul after the body, although we are speaking of them in this order; for having brought them together he would never have allowed that the elder should be ruled by the younger; but this is a random manner of speaking which we have, because somehow we ourselves too are very much under the dominion of chance. Whereas he made the soul in origin and excellence prior to and older than the body, to be the ruler and mistress, of whom the body was to be the subject. And he made her out of the following elements and on this wise: Out of the indivisible and unchangeable, and also out of that which is divisible and has to do with material bodies, he compounded a third and intermediate kind of essence, partaking of the nature of the same and of the other, and this compound he placed accordingly in a mean between the indivisible, and the divisible and material. He took the three elements of the same, the other, and the essence, and mingled them into one form, compressing by force the reluctant and unsociable nature of the other into the same. When he had mingled them with the essence and out of three made one, he again divided this whole into as many portions as was fitting, each portion being a compound of the same, the other, and the essence. And he proceeded to divide after this manner:-First of all, he took away one part of the whole [1], and then he separated a second part which was double the first [2], and then he took away a third part which was half as much again as the second and three times as much as the first [3], and then he took a fourth part which was twice as much as the second [4], and a fifth part which was three times the third [9], and a sixth part which was eight times the first [8], and a seventh part which was twenty-seven times the first [27]. After this he filled up the double intervals [i.e. between 1, 2, 4, 8] and the triple [i.e. between 1, 3, 9, 27] cutting off yet other portions from the mixture and placing them in the intervals, so that in each interval there were two kinds of means, the one exceeding and exceeded by equal parts of its extremes [as for example 1, 4/3, 2, in which the mean 4/3 is one-third of 1 more than 1, and one-third of 2 less than 2], the other being that kind of mean which exceeds and is exceeded by an equal number. Where there were intervals of 3/2 and of 4/3 and of 9/8, made by the connecting terms in the former intervals, he filled up all the intervals of 4/3 with the interval of 9/8, leaving a fraction over; and the interval which this fraction expressed was in the ratio of 256 to 243. And thus the whole mixture out of which he cut these portions was all exhausted by him. This entire compound he divided lengthways into two parts, which he joined to one another at the centre like the letter X, and bent them into a circular form, connecting them with themselves and each other at the point opposite to their original meeting-point; and, comprehending them in a uniform revolution upon the same axis, he made the one the outer and the other the inner circle. Now the motion of the outer circle he called the motion of the same, and the motion of the inner circle the motion of the other or diverse. The motion of the same he carried round by the side to the right, and the motion of the diverse diagonally to the left. And he gave dominion to the motion of the same and like, for that he left single and undivided; but the inner motion he divided in six places and made seven unequal circles having their intervals in ratios of two-and three, three of each, and bade the orbits proceed in a direction opposite to one another; and three [Sun, Mercury, Venus] he made to move with equal swiftness, and the remaining four [Moon, Saturn, Mars, Jupiter] to move with unequal swiftness to the three and to one another, but in due proportion.

This is the pole and celestial equator. It forms a big X running through the Earth. Though another theory is that the visible X in the heavens referred to the Milky Way crossed with the zodiacal light. At certain times of year it was easily seen in the past.



This makes it more understandable as to what Plato was referring to. What gets really interesting is that from Justin Martyr onward, Christians insisted that Plato got this from THEM. Christ's cross was literally imprinted on the Cosmos.

I recommend this article for further context as far as early Christianity goes.

https://t.co/OpQVPnK0QH

And this for how these concepts influenced Mithraism.

https://t.co/TaaFeFYzd8

Here is an example from a Mithraeum. The god labeled Arimanius(some say it is the time god Aion) standing on top of the sphere and X.



Aion(Time) holding the Zodiac wheel. Earth and the 4 Seasons sit below him. An image of how things work in the world.



Mithra hatching from an egg or rock. Holding the Zodiac.



Phanes. The primordial god born from the cosmic egg at the beginning. Who set things in motion when before all was still. Shown here with the zodiac again. He is standing on part of his egg here.


PATER

The topic of how cosmology and astrology influenced ancient religion is a deep rabbit hole. I would say it is about impossible to understand religion, without knowing about these topics.

Here Mithras can be seen holding a sphere and putting his other hand on the zodiac.



Here are images of the Milky Way and zodiacal light. It does look like a big X in the heavens.



Coin celebrating the divinity of Augustus, meaning it was likely minted shortly after he died. Another example of this motif.



