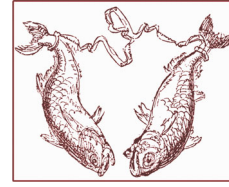


Mother Earth, Pisces and the Two-Tailed Mermaid



Lloyd D. Graham



A fascinating paper by Nikos Chausidis in a recent *British Archaeological Report*¹ traces the development of “Mother Earth” iconography in a trans-historical and pan-geographic synthesis that identifies five conceptual types. The category that concerns us here is that of the “zoomorphised female figure,” an archetype consisting of a birth-giving goddess whose lower anatomical features (most obviously, legs) are represented by creatures of the lower earth – snakes or fish. It occurred to me that some other imagery not mentioned in the paper could represent additional embodiments of this template, or could at least be influenced by it. Reciprocal interactions (in which the Mother Earth imagery becomes modified in response to independent but visually related motifs) are also likely. The purpose of the present essay is to explore some of these possibilities.²

Mother Earth, Sirens and mermaids

Many of the illustrations of the fish-legged Mother Earth offered by Chausidis are medieval depictions of creatures that are more conventionally identified as Sirens, two-tailed mermaids or melusines. In classical mythology, the Sirens – famed for luring sailors to their death with their irresistibly seductive song – were usually taken to be half-woman/half-bird, but their association with the sea meant that later, especially in the Christian era, they came to be seen as half-woman/half-fish.³ In many Romance languages, the word for “mermaid” is actually a derivative of “siren.” Since fish symbolise the lower earthly realm, the piscine portion of the chimera is invariably its lower half. Depicted with either one or two tails, it is the latter creature – the so-called *Sirena bicaudata* – that conforms to the birth-giving Mother Earth template (Fig. 1). The connection to pregnancy is underlined by the bulging female abdomen that often features in the representations (Fig. 1a). The two tails, which are usually shown folded back towards the mermaid’s head (Fig. 1a,b), are transformations of the legs of the earth goddess which are spread either in coitus or in childbirth.⁴ While no longer part of the popular imagination, a twin-tailed mermaid in this classical pose is the basis of the logo used by the Starbucks Coffee Company.⁵

Melusine is the name of a composite human/fairy individual in medieval European folklore who, at least for one day of each week, was a snake from the waist down.⁶ The story has her hybrid form being discovered by her human husband who spies on her while she takes a bath, and in pictorial representations of this scene she looks very much like a mermaid. She flees his scorn by flying away; wings on the upper body (a feature of the classical Siren or bird-woman) are not an uncommon embellishment of the animal-legged Mother Earth archetype.⁷ While originally the name of an individual, the word melusine is now used as a generic term to describe a woman/snake or woman/fish hybrid. The latter is distinguished from the Sirens and mermaids by having her origins in fresh rather

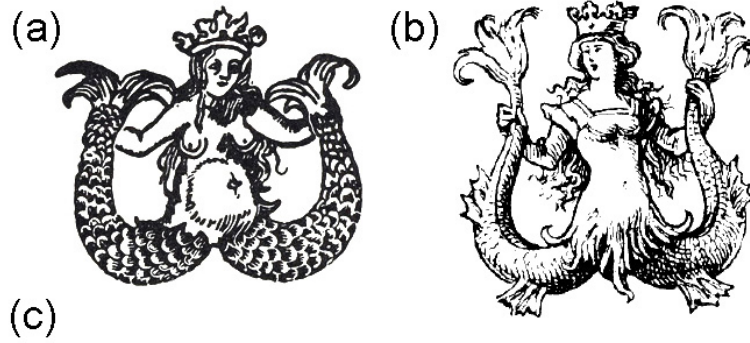


Fig. 1. Two-tailed mermaid. (a) Mermaid, fifteenth century Norse woodcut, and inspiration for the Starbucks logo.⁸ (b) Melusine, heraldic crest of the De Ritter family, Nuremberg.⁹ (c) Siren, 12th century, Monestir de Sant Pere de Galligants, Girona, Catalonia, Spain,¹⁰ with thanks to the Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya, Girona. (d) Siren, Musée Alsacien, Strasbourg. Photo courtesy of Fiore S. Barbato, Naples.¹¹

than salt water. In heraldry, the melusine is usually depicted with two tails and is indistinguishable from the twin-tailed mermaid (Fig. 1b). The mermaid/melusine emblem is considered to symbolise eloquence in its positive aspect (presumably in deference to the irresistible song of the Sirens) and vanity in its negative one, which is accentuated when the creature holds a mirror and comb.¹²

Snake-legs and a Gnostic god

The snake/fish equivalence of the melusine legend is just one instance of the interchangeability of these species in terms of mythic iconography. Chausidis gives many examples of snake-legged depictions of the Earth Mother. These are particularly common in Scythian culture, whose origins lie in Classical Antiquity and whose range spans from Eastern Europe to Central Asia. One is immediately reminded by these snake-legged hybrids of the Gnostic god/archon/aeon named Abrasax (sometimes Abraxas), who is typically shown as having a human torso, the head of a cock, and a pair of snakes as legs (Fig. 2).¹³ From the 2nd century CE onwards,¹⁴ we find many amuletic gemstones engraved with his image and name. As with Sirens and melusines, we find bird anatomy (a symbol of air, the upper earth) at the top of the body and snakes (a symbol of the lower earth) at the bottom; these features indicate that the origins of Abrasax lie in the Mother Earth archetype. The switch in gender is not unprecedented; Chausidis notes that the template often receives masculine features in medieval Germanic cultures, and a Scandinavian example of a twin-tailed merman is shown.¹⁵



Fig. 2. Depictions of the Gnostic deity Abrasax. **(a)** Details from an illustration by Bernard de Mont-Faucon, 1722.¹⁶ **(b)** Amuletic gem, illustration by Charles King, 1887.¹⁷

Pisces

The fish-legs in depictions of the two-tailed mermaid or melusine are not always fully integrated into the human figure (Fig. 3).¹⁸ In such cases, the pair of fish are very much reminiscent of the two fish in the Zodiac sign Pisces (Fig. 4). In terms of correspondence with the body, Pisces rules the feet, so it is natural to associate the two fish with human legs.

The Pisces fish can be tethered either by the tail or by the mouth, but it seems that the former has somewhat older roots. In his *Phaenomena*,¹⁹ Aratus (315 – 245 BCE)

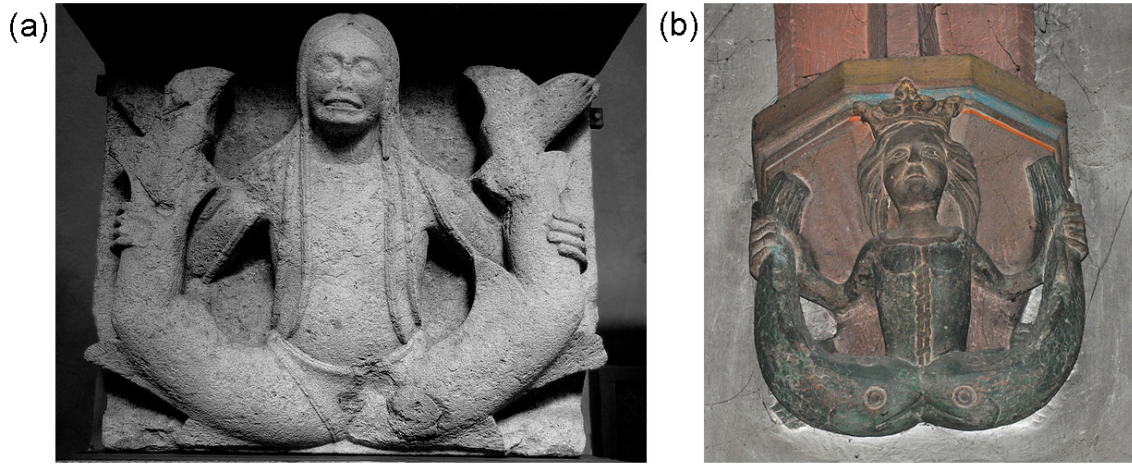


Fig. 3. Two-tailed mermaid/Melusine depictions with incomplete or no assimilation of the fish. **(a)** Twin-tailed siren, Museo Lapidario di Duomo de Modena, Italy; note the fish mouth and eye on the right limb (lower), and the human foot as part of the tail on the same side (upper). Photo²⁰ by kind permission of © Francesco Santo, Parma, Italy. **(b)** Pfarrkirche St. Valentin, Kiedrich, Germany, where the fish are completely separate from the female torso. Photo courtesy of Andreas Praefcke.²¹

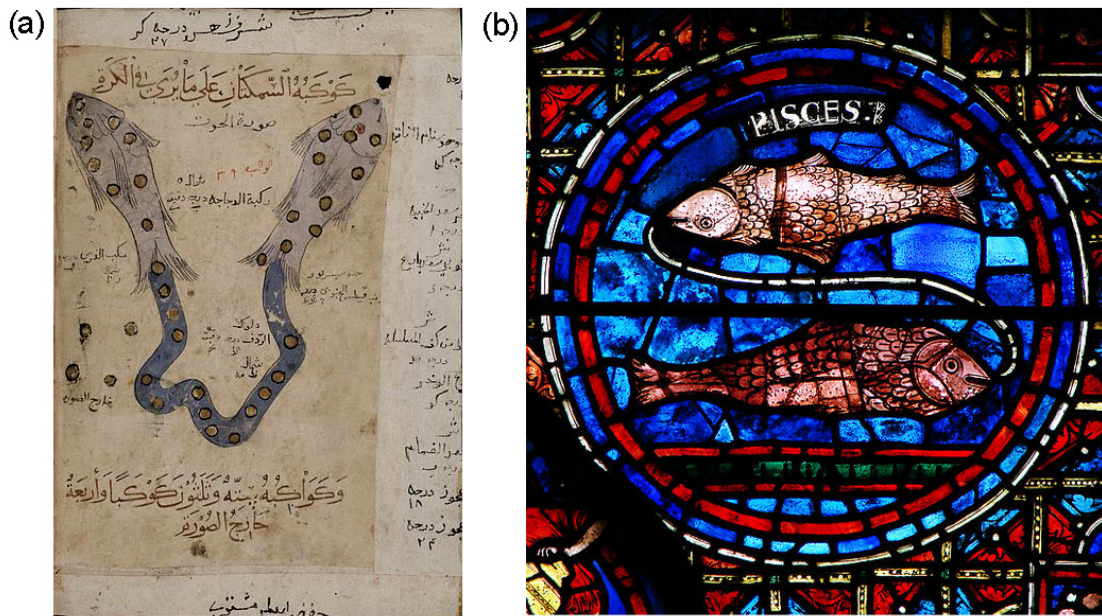


Fig. 4. The two fish of Pisces. **(a)** Tethered by tail and facing approximately the same direction: *Kitab al-Bulhan*, 14th century Arabic text, Bodleian Library, Oxford. **(b)** Tethered by mouth and facing opposite directions: Zodiac window, Chartres Cathedral, France, ca. 1220. The reciprocal combinations are also possible (see text).

describes the constellation as follows:

Still further in front of the Ram and still in the vestibule of the South are the Fishes. Ever one is higher than the other, and louder hears the fresh rush of the North wind. From both there stretch as it were, chains, whereby their tails on either side are joined. The meeting chains are knit by a single beautiful and great star, which is called the Knot of Tails.²²

Depictions of the Piscean fish tethered by the tail include the Dendera Zodiac of 50 BCE,²³ a woodcut print by Guido Bonatti (*ca.* 1282) in his *Decem Tractatus Astronomiae*,²⁴ and a 14th century illuminated manuscript of the Arabic *Kitab al-Bulhan* (Fig. 4a). Depictions of the fish tethered by the mouth include a Roman coffin-lid from the 2nd century CE,²⁵ and the Zodiac window of Chartres Cathedral (*ca.* 1220) (Fig. 4b). The Mother Earth/two-tailed mermaid iconography supports both alternatives, insofar as the heads of the fish connect at or within the base of the female torso, while their tails are gripped and bridged by the female's hands and arms (Figs. 1 & 3). In the latter instance, the "Knot of Tails"²⁶ corresponds to the mermaid's chest or head.

Independent of the position of the tether, the Pisces fish can be shown as swimming in the same direction, as seen in the Roman coffin-lid, Dendera Zodiac and *Kitab al-Bulhan* (Fig. 4a), or as swimming in opposite directions, as in Bonatti's woodcut and the Chartres Zodiac window. Once again, the Mother Earth/two-tailed mermaid template accommodates both forms; in more spread-legged poses, the leg-fish face towards each other almost horizontally and thus point in opposite directions; in less splayed positions, both heads point up towards the torso and the fish face approximately the same direction.

Leviathan, Behemoth and Ouroboros

The Pisces fish may also have a parallel in Leviathan and Behemoth, the huge creatures described in the Old Testament's Book of Job (Job 40). In apocryphal literature, both were originally sea creatures (II Esdras 6:49-53). Even though Behemoth is described in the Old Testament as a land animal, it is described as "drinking up a river" (Job 40:23) and has long been identified with the semi-aquatic hippopotamus,²⁷ whose closest evolutionary relatives are whales, dolphins and porpoises.

The two giant beasts are sometimes shown graphically in Ethiopian magic scrolls (Fig. 5a-c), which are talismanic Christian amulets intended to cure illness and ward off evil. The Ethiopic church is unique in having preserved many archaic elements which give it a strongly Jewish flavour and result in an emphasis on Old Testament motifs.²⁸ In some scrolls, the two beasts look more like snakes and resemble a double Ouroboros, in that they face opposite directions and form a circle by biting each other's tails (Fig. 5c).²⁹ In circular form they are said to "wall out evil" by forming a protective enclosure.³⁰ In other scrolls, similar-looking snake/fish/dragons form a circle flanked in the four quadrants by the symbols of the four evangelists, but here their tails are tied together and their faces (each with a large central eye, prominent ears, long parted jaws and a protruding tongue) are directly opposed (Fig. 5a,b).³¹ In some instances, their tongues intertwine so that they appear tethered by the mouth as well as the tails (Fig. 5a). There are uncanny echoes of the jaws, tongues and ears of the two opposed animals in versions of the Tarot trump

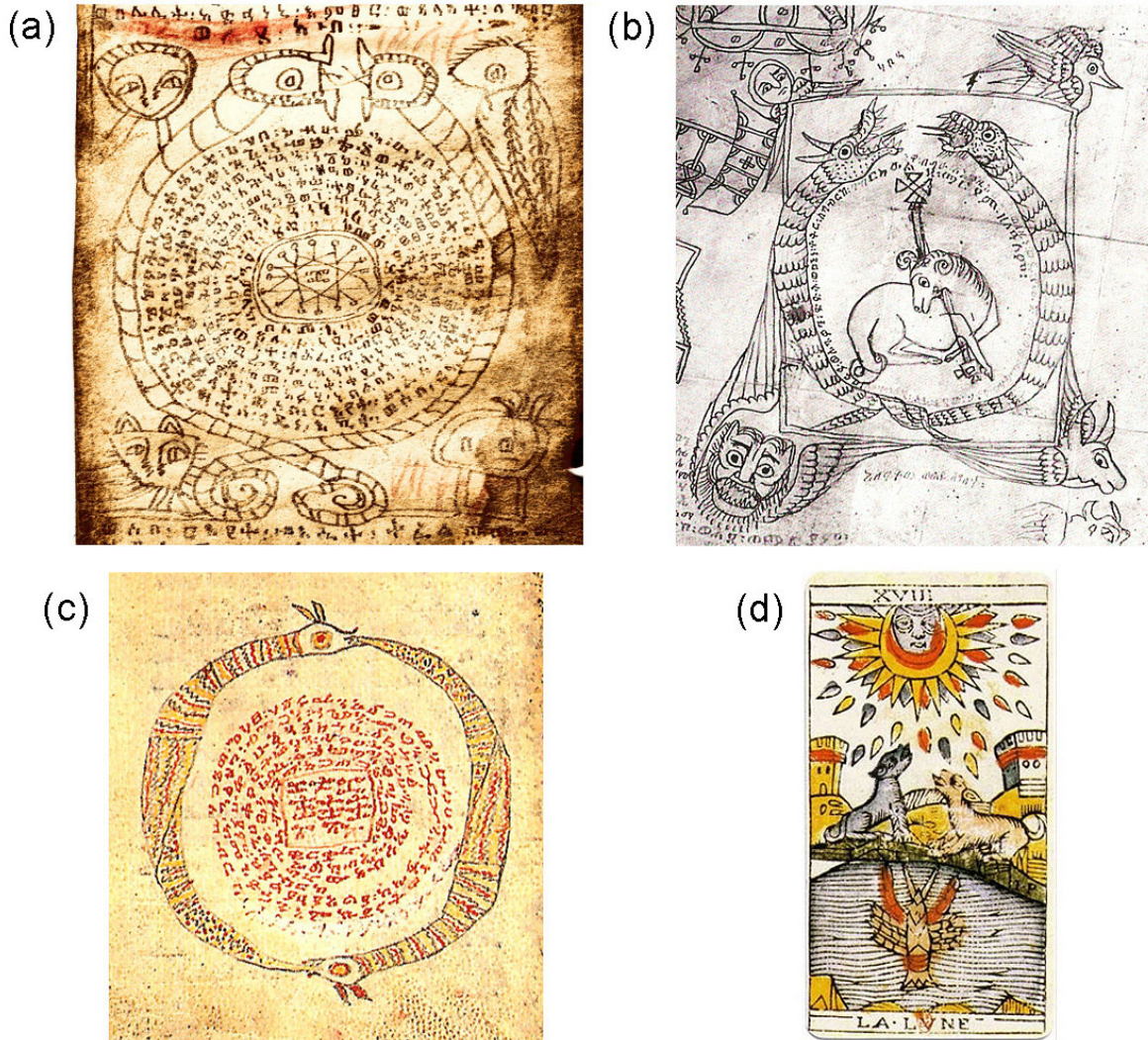


Fig. 5. Behemoth and Leviathan in Ethiopian magic scrolls, and a possible echo in a Tarot trump. **(a)** This scroll³² is relatively crude, but comparison with the next panel reveals that the circle in the centre of each worm-like beast's head (top centre) is an eye, the feet-like projections are parted jaws, and the intertwined filaments are protruding forked tongues. In the centre of the circle formed by their bodies is a spiral invocation in the liturgical language, Ge'ez.³³ The symbols of the four Evangelists (clockwise from top left: man, bird, ox and lion) appear in the four corners. **(b)** A less abstract depiction of the same animals framing a published talismanic design.³⁴ Photo © Guy Vivien, used with permission. **(c)** A published motif showing a snake-like Behemoth and Leviathan arranged head-to-tail in a circle around a spiral prayer in Ge'ez.³⁵ Photo © Guy Vivien, used with permission. **(d)** *La Lune* (Moon) card in the Marseilles Tarot deck; it corresponds to Pisces. The dogs' heads are reminiscent of the beasts' heads in the panel above.

titled Moon, whose Zodiacal counterpart is Pisces. In the 18th century Marseilles and 20th century Rider-Waite decks, an opposed dog and wolf straddling a circular pool bay at the moon (Fig. 5d),³⁶ a motif for regeneration that – surprisingly – dates back at least to the Cucuteni culture of ca. 3700 BCE.³⁷ In the 15th century Charles VI deck, the jaws take the form of two opened callipers wielded by astrologers.³⁸ In many Tarot decks, there is a sub-echo of the two jaws in the two pincers of the crustacean emerging from the pool.

Cultures wholly unrelated to Ethiopian Christianity, such as the Udegejcy people of Siberia, also use pairs of curved elongated fish or snakes to form an outer circle in their traditional cosmographic designs, in which the creatures represent the waters that surround the earth.³⁹ Once again, the animals may be arranged either head-to-tail or head-to-head.⁴⁰

The Woman of the Apocalypse

In the New Testament's Book of Revelation, a celestial woman in childbirth is menaced by a dragon with multiple heads who "stands before her;" ready to devour her child as soon as it is born (Rev 12:1-4). Prof. Bruce Malina has compiled much evidence to support the identification of the pregnant sky-woman with the constellation Virgo.⁴¹ "The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent" (Rev 12:9) establishes the equivalence of the dragon with the snake, while another dragon with the same physical features (seven heads and ten horns) is unequivocally assigned to the sea (Rev 13:1). Pisces is located directly



Fig. 6. Two-tailed mermaids/melusine depictions where the fish-legs could be seen as entities threatening to an emerging child. (a) Siren with crown, Acerenza Cathedral crypt, ca. 1524; photo courtesy of Petrus Agricola.⁴² (b) Late Gothic fresco, San Egidio church, Valdaora-Mitterolang, Italian Tyrol; two photos by Wolfgang Sauber, stitched.⁴³ (c) Pseudo-Sirena *bicaudata* on ceiling boss, Ardagger Stift, Austria.

opposite Virgo in the Zodiac, and in that sense “stands before her.” The zoomorphic appendages of a snake- or fish-legged Earth Mother in childbirth could easily be misinterpreted as water-monsters, dragons or snakes poised to devour her newborn child (Figs. 3 and Fig. 6), and it would not be difficult to conflate these to form a single multi-headed beast. Interestingly, in addition to the “groin-feeding fish-legs” of Fig. 6b, a demon with two horned heads has been placed between the splayed tails of the mermaid.

Since the pregnant woman in Revelation wears a “crown of twelve stars” (Rev 12:1), it is interesting to note that many depictions of the twin-tailed mermaid show her wearing a crown (Fig. 1a,b; Fig. 3b; Fig. 6)^{44,45} or with star-like adornments around her head,⁴⁶ or with both – as in the current Starbucks logo.^{47,48} In Ethiopian magic scrolls with a similar design, the central crowned figure (shown only to the waist) is identified as Solomon and this king is flanked, in the exact position of the mermaid’s legs/tails, by two scaly and tentacle-like demons that he has summoned.⁴⁹ An 18th century Greek marble shows a crowned two-tailed mermaid with a lunar crescent under one tail – cf. Rev. 12:1, “the moon under her feet” – and with a dragon-head staring intently between her legs/tails.⁵⁰ More generally, we should note that the splayed mermaid tails form a crescent-shape below the female figure (Figs. 3 & 6).

The remaining descriptor of the woman in Revelation 12:1, “clothed with the sun,” has a parallel in Chausidis’ observation that many depictions of the fish- or snake-legged Mother Earth display, between the zoomorphic legs, a rayed disc which seemingly represents the re-emergence of the sun from the earth at sunrise.⁵¹ This configuration also bears an uncanny resemblance to the astrological concept of the ecliptic dragon, a bipartite or two-headed dragon thought to devour the sun or moon during solar and lunar eclipses, respectively.⁵² Probably arising from Late Antique adaptations of the ancient Egyptians’ sun-quenching Ouroboros,⁵³ the visual motif of the ecliptic dragon was well established in the medieval Islamic and Hindu worlds.⁵⁴ Although inexplicably overlooked⁵⁵ or dismissed,⁵⁶ it seems inevitable that this concept also underpins the East Asian visual paradigm of the dragon – sometimes shown as a fish⁵⁷ – holding a flaming sun-ball or moon-like “night-shining pearl” in its mouth.⁵⁸ Indeed, Chinese and Japanese depictions often show two dragons facing each other, with the luminous disc floating between their jaws.^{59,60} The possibility of a connection between the ecliptic dragon and the one that menaces the Woman of the Apocalypse has been raised previously.⁶¹ We may see an echo of the threat to the celestial woman and her child in the zodiac adorning the Mithraeum of Ponza (*ca.* 3rd century CE); this shows an ecliptic snake encircling both the Great and Little Bear, who form the centre of the composition.⁶²

While it is unclear whether John of Patmos would have had much exposure to imagery that (despite its ancient roots) seems to have reached its zenith during the medieval and post-medieval period, it is nevertheless tempting to feel that there may be some connection – psychological if not historical – between the woman of the Apocalypse and the Earth Mother/mermaid mythos (Fig. 7).

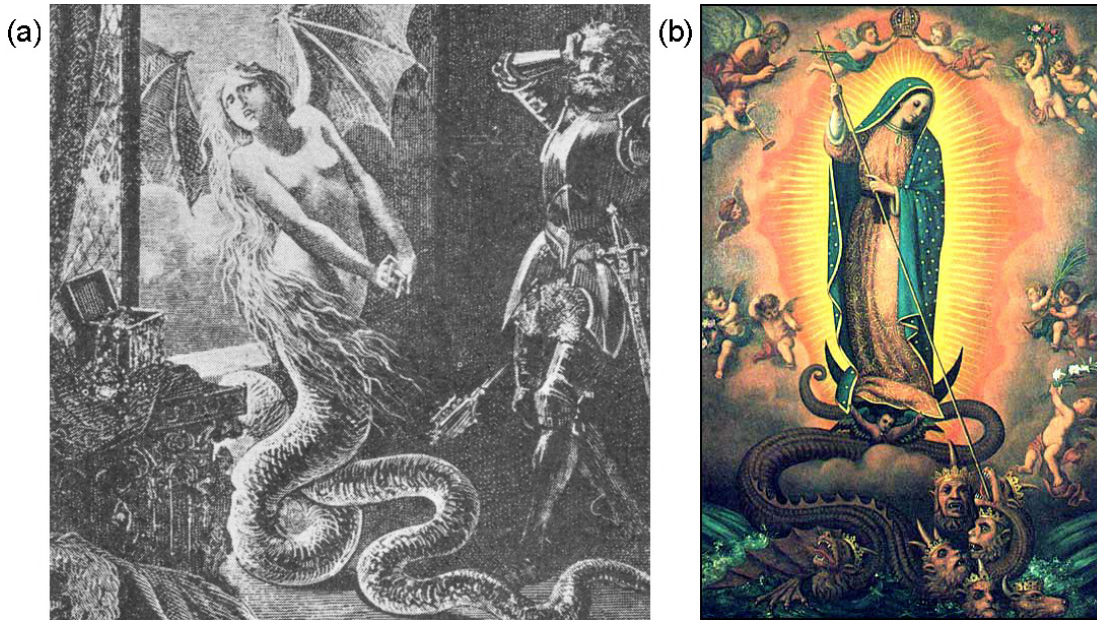


Fig. 7. Depictions of mermaids and melusines with their legs/tails lowered can resemble the scene in Revelation 12:1-4. **(a)** Melusine prepares to take flight after being discovered by her husband, Raymond de Lusignan; engraving, 1870.⁶³ **(b)** Imagery familiar from the Mexican icon *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, here showing the sky-woman of Revelation fighting the dragon.^{64,65,66}

Conclusion

We have taken a visual Odyssey that began with a birth-giving Mother Earth and – fittingly enough, given their Homeric connections – ventured first through the ocean world of Sirens and mermaids, then visited the rivers and bathtubs of melusines, and were drawn thence to lands ruled by a snake-legged Gnostic god. The seductive two-tailed mermaid morphed into Pisces, whose fish in turn yielded Behemoth and Leviathan, which led us to Ouroboros and the Tarot. Like the original Melusine, we finished by taking to the sky, where we found the child-bearing Woman of the Apocalypse being menaced by a dragon.

The connections between these archetypal images are of course suggestive rather than conclusive. Some will suspect that this essay uncovers ancient visual resonances, while others will see it as an indulgence – just so much cultural cappuccino-froth from the Starbuck of Revelation. Either way, I hope that you enjoyed the adventure as much as I did.

Text and Fig. 5a © Lloyd D. Graham, 2013; v06_05.12.14

All websites accessed 23-31 March, 2013.

¹ Nikos Chausidis (2012) “Mythical Representations of ‘Mother Earth’ in Pictorial Media,” In: *Archaeology of Mother Earth Sites and Sanctuaries through the Ages – Rethinking Symbols and Images, Art and Artefacts from History and Prehistory*, BAR International Series 2389, Archaeopress,

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- Oxford, p.5-19. Copy available online at http://www.academia.edu/3086116/Mythical_Representations_of_Mother_Earth_in_Pictorial_Media.
- ² Teaser thumbnails below the essay title are: *left*, Melusine from Pucé Church, Gironde, France, in Sabine Baring-Gould (1868) *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, Rivingtons, London, p.206; *right*, Pisces symbol modified from William Hone (1826) *Hone's Everyday Book*, London.
- ³ Gail-Nina Anderson (2009) "Mermaids in Myth and Art," *Fortean Times*, Nov 2009, online at http://www.forteanimes.com/features/articles/2401/mermaids_in_myth_and_art.html.
- ⁴ Chausidis, "Mythical Representations of 'Mother Earth.'"
- ⁵ Online at <http://www.starbucks.com/>.
- ⁶ Anderson, "Mermaids in Myth and Art."
- ⁷ E.g., Chausidis, "Mythical Representations of 'Mother Earth,'" Plate 7, Figs. 5, 6 & 10.
- ⁸ Logo designed by Terry Heckler; online at <http://creativerepository.com/2009/11/14/famous-brands-logo-designs-and-designers/>.
- ⁹ John Vinycomb (1909) *Fictitious and Symbolic Creatures in Art*, Chapman & Hall, London, p.245.
- ¹⁰ A frontal representation of the siren adjacent (at left) of this one is shown by Chausidis, "Mythical Representations of 'Mother Earth,'" Plate 9, Fig. 2.
- ¹¹ CC BY-SA 2.0 licence
- ¹² Online at <http://www.heraldryclipart.com/symbolism/m.html>.
- ¹³ After publication of this article, Prof. Chausidis kindly drew my attention to another paper of his in which he draws parallels between the snake-legged Mother Earth and Cadmus (Kadmos) of Greek mythology, who is sometimes depicted with snakes for legs and with a bird's crest on his head; he observes in that paper that such portrayals in turn resemble depictions of Abraxas/Anguipede. See Nikos Chausidis (2010) "Требенишките кратери и митот за Кадмо и Хармонија" [The Trebenište Crater and the Myth of Kadmus and Harmonia], *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 19, 157-175, at p. 168 & Plate 4, Fig. 10-12.
- ¹⁴ E.A. Wallis Budge (1978) *Amulets and Superstitions*, Dover, New York, p.208
- ¹⁵ Chausidis, "Mythical Representations of 'Mother Earth,'" p.16 & Plate 8, Fig. 11.
- ¹⁶ Bernard de Montfaucon (1722) *L'antiquité Expliquée et Représentée en Figures*, vol. 2, part 2, F. Delaulne, Paris, p.358.
- ¹⁷ Charles W. King (1887) *The Gnostics and their Remains: Ancient and Mediaeval*, 2nd ed., David Nutt, London, p.244 (Fig. 10).
- ¹⁸ Chausidis, "Mythical Representations of 'Mother Earth,'" p.13 & Plate 9, Fig. 1.
- ¹⁹ Bernadette Brady (2009) "The Knot of Heaven: Its Story and its History," *Visual Astrology Newsletter*, Issue 52 (April), online at http://www.zyntara.com/VisualAstrologyNewsletters/van_April%202009/VAN_April2009.htm
- ²⁰ Online at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/metacinetics/2397926759/in/pool-1102568@N24>.
- ²¹ CC BY 3.0 licence.
- ²² Aratus (1989) "Phaenomena," In: *Callimachus, Lycophron, Aratus*, trans. A.W. Mair & G.R. Mair, Harvard University Press, p. 227.
- ²³ Musée du Louvre, Paris; online at <http://www.louvre.fr/en/mediainages/zodiac-dendera>.
- ²⁴ Guido Bonatti (ca. 1282) *Decem Tractatus Astronomiae*, printed Erhard Ratdolt, Augsburg, 1491; online at <http://garybrandaastrology.com/articles/echo/MetaphysicalPisces2-16-2006.html>.
- ²⁵ Bruce J. Malina (1995) *On the Genre and Message of Revelation: Star Visions and Sky Journeys*, Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, p.79 (sketch); photograph online at http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_image.aspx?image=ps135403.jpg&repage=15386.
- ²⁶ Brady, "The Knot of Heaven."
- ²⁷ Samuel Bochart (1663) *Hierozoicon*, vol. 3, London, p.705.
- ²⁸ E. Ullendorff (1956) "Hebraic-Jewish elements in Abyssinian (Monophysite) Christianity," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 1, 216-256.
- ²⁹ Jacques Mercier (1997) *Art That Heals – The Image as Medicine in Ethiopia*, Museum for African Art/Prestel, New York, p.55, Fig. 48, left-hand side; Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (1992) *Le Roi Salomon et les Maîtres du Regard: Art et Médecine en Éthiopie*, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, p.131.
- ³⁰ Mercier, *Art That Heals*, p.95.

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- ³¹ Mercier, *Art That Heals*, p.54, Fig. 47, right-hand side.
- ³² Unpublished; author's collection, no date.
- ³³ Such designs are reminiscent of Aramaic incantation bowls or "demon traps" (6-8th centuries CE); see, for example, Schøyen Collection MS 1911/1, online at <http://www.schoyencollection.com/aram-heb-syr.html>.
- ³⁴ Mercier, *Art That Heals*, p.54, Fig. 47, right-hand side (small image online at <http://www.superzeko.net/tradition/IMiracoliDiAbbaGarima.html>).
- ³⁵ Cf. Mercier, *Art That Heals*, p.55, Fig. 48, left-hand side.
- ³⁶ Rider-Waite deck, online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:RWS_Tarot_18_Moon.jpg; Marseilles deck, online at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jean_Dodal_Tarot_trump_18.jpg.
- ³⁷ Cucuteni vase paintings (Tripolye culture, Romania) of 4000-3500 BCE depict pairs of dogs that, facing each other, jump up and bark at the moon. Marija Gimbutas (1999) "The Living Goddesses," ed. Miriam Robbins Dexter, Univ. California Press, p.33; see especially Fig. 25.
- ³⁸ Online at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Moon_tarot_charles6.jpg
- ³⁹ Chausidis, "Mythical Representations of 'Mother Earth,'" p.16. See also note 60.
- ⁴⁰ Chausidis, "Mythical Representations of 'Mother Earth,'" Plate 9, Fig. 14-15.
- ⁴¹ Malena, *On the Genre and Message of Revelation*, p.155-160.
- ⁴² Administrator for Flickr group "Fish-Sirens – Two-Tailed (*Sirena bicaudata*)"; photo at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/28433765@N07/2965869547/in/pool-1102568@N24>.
- ⁴³ CC BY-SA 3.0 licence; photostitch by present author. The fresco is an outdoor representation of St. Christopher by Simon von Taisten, d. 1515. The image shown in the figure panel is a detail from the water in which the saint is standing; his lower legs and ankles are visible at either side.
- ⁴⁴ This is probably a survival of the Neolithic practice of portraying the snake-goddess as wearing a crown-like headpiece. The belief in crowned snakes lives on in Baltic and other European folklore, where the crowns are symbols of wisdom and wealth; see Gimbutas, "The Living Goddesses," p.204.
- ⁴⁵ For additional examples, see illustrations in alchemical texts, such as those online at <http://symboldictionary.net/?p=1153> and <http://www.unexplainable.net/info-theories/the-origins-of-starbucks-volatile-snake-goddess-logo.php> (15th century).
- ⁴⁶ Scylla with twin fish-tails, gold pin, ca. 630 BC. Musée du Louvre, Paris: Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, Sully, ground floor, room 19, case 3. Online at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/28772513@N07/6988222373/in/pool-1102568@N24>.
- ⁴⁷ Chausidis, "Mythical Representations of 'Mother Earth,'" Plate 9, Fig. 1.
- ⁴⁸ Fresco, Sorrento Cathedral, Italy, online at http://www.flickr.com/photos/fiore_barbato/3418230180/in/pool-1102568@N24.
- ⁴⁹ Jacques Mercier (1979) *Ethiopian Magic Scrolls*, George Braziller, New York, Plate 27 (p.92-93); scroll from Axum, 1903.
- ⁵⁰ Marble relief, late 18th century, Greece; online at <http://www.bridgemanart.com/asset/271922/>.
- ⁵¹ Chausidis, "Mythical Representations of 'Mother Earth,'" p.13 & Plate 7, Figs. 6 & 10.
- ⁵² Oya Pancaroğlu (2004) "The Itinerant Dragon-Slayer: Forging Paths of Image and Identity in Medieval Anatolia," *Gesta* 43 (2), 151-164, at 160.
- ⁵³ Marinus A. van der Sluijs (2009) "The Dragon of the Eclipses—A Note", *Culture and Cosmos* 13 (1), 62-74.
- ⁵⁴ Pancaroğlu, "The Itinerant Dragon-Slayer;" van der Sluijs, "The Dragon of the Eclipses."
- ⁵⁵ "Why did concept of a ball or the pearl arise? deVisser, when discussing the subject, says that he is 'obliged to say *non liquet*;' in other words, the reason for the association of a ball or pearl with the dragon is not clear." Roy Bates (2007) *All About Chinese Dragons*, China History Press, Beijing. The work cited is Marinus W. de Visser (1913) *The Dragon in China and Japan*, J. Müller, Amsterdam.
- ⁵⁶ Helmut Nickel (1991) "The Dragon and the Pearl," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26, 139-146.
- ⁵⁷ Lloyd D. Graham (2013) Koji Pottery Fish, online at <http://lloydg.deviantart.com/art/Koji-pottery-fish-390321432>.
- ⁵⁸ Bates, *All About Chinese Dragons*, p.6-8.
- ⁵⁹ "Two dragons are often depicted facing one another in the air, and apparently rushing, as if in eager play, toward a pearl floating between them. Japanese designers like to form the handles of bells, whether big temple-bells or small ones, from two dragons facing each other, with the ball between them." Bates, *All About Chinese Dragons*, p.7.

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- ⁶⁰ Of course, circular depictions of the two ecliptic dragons facing each other, and alternative images showing them in a circular head-to-tail arrangement (e.g., van der Sluijs, “The Dragon of the Eclipses,” Fig. 4), bring us back to the double-Ouroboros motifs of Fig. 5a/b and 5c, respectively.
- ⁶¹ Nickel, “The Dragon and the Pearl,” 142.
- ⁶² van der Sluijs, “The Dragon of the Eclipses,” 67-68 and Fig. 1.
- ⁶³ Pitois Christian (1870) *Histoire de la Magie*, Furne, Jouvet & Cie, Paris, p.421.
- ⁶⁴ Image courtesy of http://www.sancta.org/cgi/display.nor?image=defending_children2_1.jpg.
- ⁶⁵ For what appears to be a modern refraction of this theme through a Surrealist lens, see *Le Tombeau de Prince Elizabeth* by Danny Malboeuf (North Carolina), online at <http://kolaboy.deviantart.com/art/Le-Tombeau-de-Prince-Elizabeth-19362354>. An earlier title for the painting was *The Vision of Terra Sirenum*, which (apart from locating the artist’s vision on the planet Mars) establishes a verbal connection between this image of a star-crowned woman and the Siren/mermaid mythos. This (and, to a lesser extent, Fig. 7b) seem to owe a debt to Hans Memling’s *Allegory of Chastity* of 1475, online at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans-Memling-allegory-chastity.jpg>, which in turn belongs to another of Chausidis’ categories of Earth Mother iconography, that of “Mother Earth as an anthropomorphic mountain” (Chausidis, “Mythical Representations of ‘Mother Earth,’” p.9 & 13; Plate 6, Fig. 9).
- ⁶⁶ A counterpart to this image which conveys us from Siren to Apocalypse (the direction opposite to that in the previous note) is found in the background of the work *Lacrimae* by the Spanish Surrealist Dino Valls, online at <http://www.dinovalls.com/es/galeria/77/>. In the fresco on the rear wall of the painted scene, two-tailed mermaids are backed by their radiating golden hair such that each appears to be standing in front of the sun, a winged cherub head (suggestive of a baby’s head emerging from the birth canal) floats between each pair of spread tails, and each mermaid directs a spear downwards in a manner analogous to the elongated cross in Fig. 7b. The dragon is absent from this image, but not from the artist’s visual repertoire; see, for example, his *Dies Irae*, online at <http://www.dinovalls.com/es/galeria/5/>.