



The Worship of Jupiter

“From Zeus let us begin; him do we mortals never leave unnamed; full of Zeus are all the streets and all the marketplaces of men; full is the sea and the heavens thereof . . . He it was who first set up the signs in heaven . . . Wherefore him do we men ever worship first and last.” [\(1\)](#)

In these words Aratus (fl. -310) pictured the place the planet-god Jupiter occupied in the thoughts of men. Nobody today in the streets and marketplaces mentions the planet Jupiter.

St. Augustine, seven centuries after Aratus, asked:

But since they call Jupiter king of all, who will not laugh to see his star so far surpassed in brilliancy by the star of Venus? . . . They answer that it only appears so because it is higher up and much farther away from the earth. If, therefore, its greater dignity has deserved a higher place, why is Saturn higher in the heavens than Jupiter?[\(2\)](#)

Marduk, the great god of the Babylonians, was the planet Jupiter;[\(3\)](#) so was Amon of the Egyptians;[\(4\)](#) Zeus of the Greeks was the same planet; Jupiter of the Romans, as the name shows, was again the same planet. Why was this planet chosen as the most exalted deity? In Greece it was called “all-highest, mighty Zeus,” [\(5\)](#) in Rome “Jupiter Optimus, Maximus” ;[\(6\)](#) in Babylon it was known as “the greatest of the stars” [\(7\)](#); as Ahuramazda it was called by Darius “the greatest of the gods” [\(8\)](#); In India Shiva was described as “the great ruler” and considered the mightiest of all the gods[\(9\)](#); he was said to be “as brilliant as the sun.” [\(10\)](#) Everywhere Jupiter was regarded as the greatest deity, greater than the sun, moon, and other planets.[\(11\)](#)

Homer makes Zeus say that all the other gods together could not pull him down, but he could pull them along with the Earth.[\(12\)](#) “That is how far I overwhelm you all, both gods and men.” Commenting on this passage, Eustathius wrote that according to some ancient authorities Homer meant the orbits of the planets from which Jupiter could drive the rest of them, but they could not drive it.[\(13\)](#) This sentence of Homer is close to the truth. Jupiter is greater and more powerful than Saturn, its rival, together with Mars, Earth, Venus, and Mercury. Jupiter is more than a thousand times greater than the Earth or Venus in volume, and six thousand times greater than Mercury.[\(14\)](#) But it appears that one could not guess this from observation with the naked eye. Even through a very powerful telescope Jupiter looks like an inch-large flat disc, surrounded by its four larger satellites.[\(15\)](#)

The ancients knew something unknown to the moderns when they asserted that Jupiter can overpower all other planets, the Earth included.[\(16\)](#)

References

1. Aratus, *Phenomena*, transl. by G. R. Mair (London, 1955).
2. *The City of God*, VII. 15, transl. by M. Dods (Edinburgh, 1872).

3. Bartel L. van der Waerden, *Science Awakening*, vol. II (Leyden, 1974), p. 59; cf. P. Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier* (Strassburg, 1890), pp. 131, 134. [Marduk was called “the great lord of the gods” and also “the Enlil of the gods.” See L. Legrain, *Royal Inscriptions and Fragments from Nippur and Babylon*, (Philadelphia, 1926), p. 38.]
4. [Herodotus II. 41; Diodorus Siculus I. 13. 2; Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, IX:] *Amen*, used at the end of a prayer in Hebrew and in European languages that borrowed it from Hebrew, was the name of the Egyptian deity Jupiter. It is part of the names of many Egyptian kings—Amenhotep, Tutankhamen; of the same root is *amen*—“to believe.” It is beyond the scope of this work to find which of the words—as the name of the deity or as a word in vocabulary, precede, and which is derived.
5. *The Iliad* VIII. 22. [In Book II of the *Iliad* (lines 410f.) Agamemnon addresses the god thus: “Zeus, most glorious, most great . . . that dwellest in the heaven.” Plato wrote: “Zeus, the mighty lord, holding the reigns of a winged chariot, leads the way in heaven, ordering all and taking care of all.” (*Phaedrus* 246e, transl. by B. Jowett [1871]). The stellar aspect of Zeus is discussed by A. B. Cook, *Zeus, A Study in Ancient Religion* (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 751, 760.]
6. [“Optimus Maximus Caelus Aeternus Jupiter” was the planet’s appellative in its official cult. Cf. Cumont, *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans*, p. 115. Seneca called Jupiter “exalted ruler of the sky, who sittest in majesty upon the throne of heaven.” Vergil termed him “the mightiest of all gods” *The Aeneid* 20, 243.]
7. Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, p. 117. [Cf. Lehmann in *Zeitschrift fuer Assyriologie* II. 214ff. and M. Jastrow in *ibid.*, 353f.]
8. Herzfeld, *Altpersische Inschriften*, no. 6, quoted in A. T. Olmstead, *The History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago, 19xx), p. 255. [In the *Bundahis* (transl. by E. West, *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. V [1880], pt. I, p.), the planet Jupiter is called Ahuramazda. Also in the inscriptions uncovered by Th. Goell at Nemrud Dagh, Oromazdes (Ahuramazda) is equated with Zeus. Dio Chrysostom wrote that the Persian Magi considered Zeus “as being the perfect and original driver of the most perfect chariot. For the chariot of Helios, they claim, is relatively recent when compared with that of Zeus” (“The Thirty-sixth Discourse,” transl. by J. W. Cohoon [London, 19xx].)].
9. [For the identification of Shiva with Jupiter, see *Lippincott’s Universal Pronouncing Dictionary of Biography and Mythology*, ed. by J. Thomas, 4th edition (xxxx), p. 2203. Cf. F. Wilford, “On Egypt, etc. from the Ancient Books of the Hindus,” *Asiatick Researches* III (Calcutta, 1799), p. 382: “. . . Many of the Hindus acknowledge that Siva, or the God Jupiter shines in that planet [Jupiter] . . .” *The Skanda Purana* also tells of a special relationship between Brihaspati, the astronomical designation for the planet Jupiter, and Shiva.]
10. J. Dowson, “*A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*,” seventh ed., (London, 1950), p. 296.
11. [The Incas of Peru regarded the planet Jupiter as “the guardian and ruler of the empire.” See the seventeenth-century chronicle *De las costumbres antiguas de los naturales del Piru*, published in 1879. Cf. Jan Sammer, “The Cosmology of Tawantinsuyu,” KRONOS.]

12. *The Iliad* VIII. 18-26.
13. *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem* 695. 5 (Leipzig, 1828), Vol. II, p. 184: "Others believe the golden chain to refer to the orbits of the planets . . . for when the planets come together on those orbits, many are the changes that universally arise."
14. Jupiter has about 70 percent of the mass of the solar system not contained in the Sun.
15. [Jupiter's four Galilean moons may have been known to the ancients. Marduk was said to be accompanied by four dogs. Cf. Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, p. 131: "Die vier Hunden des Marduk. 'Mein Herr mit den Hunden.'" In Egyptian mythology Horus, or Jupiter, was often associated with his four sons. Cf. S. Mercer, *Horus, the Royal God of Egypt*, (1942).]
16. [A similar idea is expressed in *Enuma Elish*. Marduk, or the planet Jupiter, threatens to "alter the ways of the gods"—"I will change their paths." (Tablet VI). In Tablet VII it is said of Marduk: "For the stars of heaven he upheld the paths, he shepherded all the gods like sheep." (L. W. King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation* [London, 1902]). Cf. F.-X. Kugler, *Sternkunde und Sterndienst in Babel*, Vol. I (1907), p. 7.]

