

# CULTURE AND COSMOS

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## Editorial

Welcome to this issue of *Culture and Cosmos*, slightly delayed. The focus in this issue is on the ancient and Medieval worlds. We begin with Marcello De Martino's paper '*Hestia: The Indo-European Goddess of the Cosmic Central Fire*'. De Martino examines Philolaus's theory that there was a central fire at the heart of the universe, around which orbited all the other astronomical bodies, including the Sun. He concludes that Philolaus was actually inspired by Agni, the Vedic fire god, and Hestia, the Greek goddess of the hearth.

Marinus Anthony van der Sluijs continues with his paper, 'Joshua's Celestial Miracle was not an Eclipse: the Long and the Short'. The story of Joshua commanding the Sun and Moon to stand still in Joshua 10.12 is well known as a celestial miracle, and astronomers and astrophysicists continue to promote the theory that the tale records a solar eclipse, as they have since the late nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Van der Sluijs comprehensively critiques such views and concludes emphatically that the miracle was not an eclipse.

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<sup>1</sup> For recent claims, see Colin Humphreys and Graeme Waddington, 'Solar eclipse of 1207 BC helps to date pharaohs', *Astronomy & Geophysics*, Volume 58, Issue 5, October 2017, Pages 5.39–5.42, 01 October 2017 [Accessed 13 June 2020]. See also, Lorraine Boissoneault, 'How Scientists Identified the Oldest Known Solar Eclipse ... Using the Bible', *Smithsonian Magazine*, 7 November 2017, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-scientists-identified-oldest-known-solar-eclipse-bible-180967135/> 2017 [Accessed 13 June 2020].

Lastly, Ivana Lemcool's paper "'Gates of Heaven": Significance of the Signs of Cancer and Leo on French Medieval Portals', explores zodiacal imagery in medieval French churches, asking why two signs, Cancer and Leo, appear to be prominent.

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