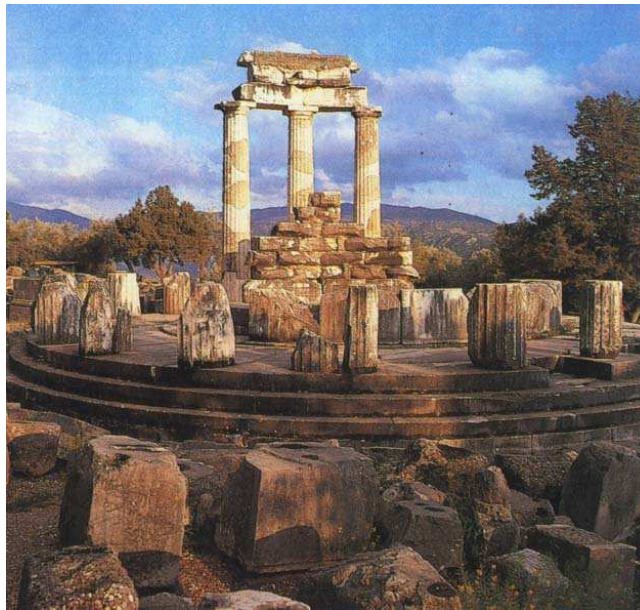


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The return of the oracles

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We will begin with some reflections on the origin of oracles and their nature. We shall then look at different types of oracles from the past and how they appear in our days. And last but not least we shall consider their role in our world, why they came back and why it is not at all obsolete to consult oracles in our days.

But let us first do a very little excursion into the world of basic psychology. There are certain terms that are very frequently used like catchwords, but I doubt that everyone of us has the same understanding of their meaning.

1. Background

All that we know about ourselves is what is within our consciousness; and the Ego is defined as the centre of the conscious personality. All what belongs to us although we do not know anything about it is part of the unconscious – in contrary to the unknown which is outside of ourselves. “Below” the unconscious or on its deepest level we find what C.G. Jung called the collective unconscious. It is that area to which the roots of our nature reach. This is the common level of all human beings. Jung said: To the same extent as every person may be recognized immediately as a human being notwithstanding the age, gender or race, there is also something inside us that we have in common with all human beings. Here on this level we find our instinctive nature that let us know instinctively what do to.

Now the question is: Is the collective unconscious limited to human beings? Or does it include the instinct nature of animals as well?

Does it say to the ants, how to build their state?

Does it tell the bee how to dance?

Does it let the pigeon know, in the middle of the sea, where to find the shortest way to the land? This is by the way the reason why sailors in the old days always had pigeons on board.

Can it be that collective unconscious is only another name for a higher intelligence, which is to the largest extent unknown to us because it is unconscious?

As Jung showed there are archetypes active in the area of the collective unconscious. What is an archetype? It is a prime image of the human soul. An image where there is no need to get it to know from the outside. It is within ourselves from our birth on, may be even before. Archetypes are inner forces that are much stronger than our ego. Therefore they have often been experienced as angels, demons, devils, Gods or Goddesses.

Now *our* consciousness is far away from this deep inner level and we have only a very vague understanding of it.

But this separation was not always so.

There was a time when human mind had not yet emerged that far.

It was connected with all what was around.

Humans felt not being separated from nature. Like the threads within a carpet their mind was woven into the surrounding nature.

Their consciousness was young and still very close to COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS. It seems that this is the reason why until antiquity humans heard voices of Gods, Goddesses, angles or demons that gave them instructions:

Old texts like the Iliad or the Old Testament tells us this phenomenon like the most natural thing. Achilles is protected and instructed by Thetis, Odysseus by Athena , Hector by Iris and by Apollo and the Old Testament tells us that God spoke frequently to Abraham, Moses and to Jonas.

To understand this early level of consciousness I will give you an example: Imagine you ride a car on a high way. After a while your mind goes its own way, gets a bit dizzy and you think about heaven and hell. Now all of a sudden there is a danger. You wake up instantly and your mind tells you what to do. In a similar situation folks in the old days would have heard a divine voice speaking loudly: Go left, go right etc.

But the God and Goddesses did not give only harmless jobs. They did not give orders that always served the well-being of the individual, the well-being in the sense to survive. We know that for this reason some heroes began to rebel against this voice:

You remember Jonas, the one who was swallowed by the fish. God instructed him to go to Ninive to prophecy to the people that God will erase their city. Such a job meant a big risk of life as nobody likes to hear such an apocalyptic prediction. And so Jonas decided no to do so, but rather to run away into the opposite direction to Greece. For



a similar reason Gilgamesh resisted the temptation of Ishtar the Babylonian Goddess of Love. And that was, by the way, not such a bad idea. At least in the Mediterranean world there is a strict law. When a God makes love with an earthy woman, she is in no danger, unless she is too curious. But whenever a man makes love with a Goddess he is bound to die. Without any exception. And so Gilgamesh was well advised to say: No – thank you. - even to the almost irresistible Goddess of love.

Homer tells us similar stories from the war of Troja, where heroes have been misled by disguised Gods or Goddesses who were allies of the enemies. And we find the same conflict in the Bible where

John warns: do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

Such conflict meant the end of unity, the unity that existed before between mankind and nature. The mind began to distrust the voices from the collective unconscious. And that means that the paradise of simplicity and unity was lost forever.

With the growing consciousness the voice became calmer and calmer until it was not heard anymore. In the Bible it is the book of Job (at the latest 2nd BC) that tells us for the last time that God speaks to a human being. Since then mankind felt to be lost, because it lived in an such a big distance to God. This was – by the way - the time when Gods and Goddesses disappeared from earth and moved to heaven. Due to this ever growing distance religion became necessary. The word religion derives from re-legiare which means re-bind or bind back. And so the priest became “bridge-builder”, they built the bridge between mankind and God. Until today the Pope has the title *Pontifex Maximus*, the highest bridge builder.

It is very likely that early priests were people who still heard the voices and that they did their job as seer, as inspired prophets. But later they lost the direct contact as well. Even they could not hear the divine voices any longer.

This was the time for oracles to come up. They became necessary as there was no other way left to explore the will of God. The word oracle derives from the Latin orare = speak, lat. oraculum = message of a God. And divination = lat. view of the divine will

2. WHAT FOR

Since the first humans ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge, we are conscious, but we also know that we are bound to die. With this recognition the paradise of innocence and ignorance was lost for ever. Since that time we human beings have a privileged but very painful position in creation. We are between the animals, which are mortal, but they do not know, and the Gods on the other side, which are immortal and, of course, they know it. In that moment we became the only creature that is able to distinguish between good and evil and only we know terms such as fate and future. As the only creature we humans became able to make decisions against our nature. Only for us there is a freedom of choice, which makes us responsible for the consequences of what we do, and only we are really conscious of our enormous dependency on the very mighty nature.

So early man knew that life was full of danger. And he believed that he was only safe when he lived in compliance with the will of God and within the order that was made by God. And that means: that the right one does the right thing at the right time in the right place in the right way. It is that easy! But then everything is in order, then we may feel safe and protected. For this reason humans developed in all cultures various methods of divination to explore the will of their Gods.

3. How

We will have a look at 4 different techniques

1. the lot oracles,

2. the interpretations of Omen,
3. the reading of forms and
4. the spontaneous divination.

They all show the divine will by a "coincidental" constellation, whereby one should know that there was no such term for mankind in the old days. Old languages do not know a word that corresponds with our understanding of "coincidence". At least the German equivalent the word "Zufall" was created only in the 14th century in order to name the unforeseeable, which had before always been considered as the will of God. Whatever could be calculated was human work, while the acts of God were unpredictable and often beyond human understanding. There was only one way to get the divine will to know: If the right one asked the right oracle at the right time and in right way.

Now let us see how the oracles worked – and how they appear in our days.

LOT ORACLES were spread all over the world. Some are the ancestors of what we have as games, such as the dice or playing cards. The Old Testament mentions several times Urim and Thummin, which were oracle instruments of the high priests of old Israel. The Bible does not give any information what Urim or Thummin really was. But there is reason to believe that they were stones, probably precious stones or sticks been thrown, and that the High Priest read JHVH will out of the incidental constellation.

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD. Proverbs 16,33

We also know from the story of Jonas that a lot was used to find out who was guilty for the stormy sea. The lot said it was Jonas who than was thrown over board and swallowed by the fish.

This kind of oracle is always an interpretation of a constellation that has been unconsciously produced, by throwing sticks, stones, dice or by drawing cards. In its simplest form we find this oracle today by throwing a coin. In addition, Tarot, the I Ching and the Rune oracle have here their roots.

THE INTERPRETATION OF OMEN (lat. signs) was the attempt to observe an individual case and to bring it into a system of rules. In view of the complexity of our reality that was not only a very hard job but in the long run it was in vain. There is no chance to reduce our complex world on one formula. Especially the old Babylonians were working very hard on this project. They tried to bring a system into the chaotic variety of the life with a collection of omens on thousands and thousands of tone boards, that were all linking phenomena together with "If – Than". For example: "If a men steps on a lizard unintentionally, then he will defeat his enemy". Of course, the Babylonians ended up in a big inflation of such rules. The library became so over boarding that there was no more chance to find the right omen at the right time.



This method lives on until today in the faith, that there are signs promising luck or misfortune, such as the chimney sweep, the black cat or in peasants proverbs like: If it rains in May then April is away.

The most important oracle however that derives from such observations is astrology. And in contrary to the inflated Babylonian attempt which was bound to fail, Astrology works - for a simple reason: it uses a symbolic language and is thus able to describe the variety of the experiences and events in a life. But as soon as it attempts to equate a specific chart constellation with one event only it will end up in the same irrelevance as the great omen collection of Babylon.

THE INTERPRETATION OF FORMS

We all know the word augur, which is Latin and means bird watcher. They read the future from the flight of the birds. It was believed that birds of passages spent the winter near the counsel of the Gods and that they eagerly listened, what the Gods and Goddesses decided for the coming year. When flying back they spelled their knowledge to those augurs who could read their formations.

To inspect the organs, especially the livers of sacrificed animals was another common practice to interpret form. It was always the deviation from the norm where the handwriting of the Gods was seen.

But there were also much simpler methods:

From the movement of the smoke, which ascended from a sacred bowl, one could read the divine will. And just as well from the form of wax that dripped into cold water, or from the structure of the ash that was left from a fire.

A very popular practice was the oil oracle, for which oil was poured onto the surface of water, and the answer was taken the forms that it made.

What is left from this type of oracle is the reading of tea leaves or of the coffee ground, the pouring of lead at new years eve and, of course, the use of the pendulum that is also an interpretation of a form.

SPONTANEOUS DIVINATION is an oracle, that everyone has practiced sooner or later in life especially as a child. The conditions are set up freely and spontaneously. For example like this: If the number of the steps of this stairs is odd, it means yes. Or, you close the eyes, turn your face to the window, open your eyes and what you see first, is the sign which can be interpreted. You may just as well open a book, tap with your finger on a page and the word that you touch has the message. In times where oracles were forbidden or considered as a heathen or even satanic ritual this method was the only one that could be used even by pious Christians. They tapped with their finger in the Bible and were sure to receive an answer from God because the devil would not dare to speak through the holy book.

VISIONS, TRANCE AND DREAM INTERPRETATION

Especially in pre-Christian times divination was one of the major tasks of all priests and the temple was always an oracle place where trance and the interpretation of dreams was common practice.

Originally all oracles – as well as all cult - was entirely in the hands of priestesses, until the beginning of the patriarchate which starts about 3000 bc. From there on priests overtook more and more all sacred things like the service of sacrifices, the

calculation of the calendar, the teaching of writing and the oracles. But even when Apollo became the lord of the oracle in Delphi, which before belonged to the earth Goddess Demeter, priestesses continued to serve as trance medium to announce the divine will.

Pythia was the name of the prophesying priestess, who set on a tripod over the earth gap in the oracle cave, where she felt in trance. That was either due to steams, which penetrated from that earth gap in those days or due to smoke from burned laurel leaves, the holy plant of Apollo. In this state the God took possession of her tongue and answered all questions speaking in the I form in stuttered sounds that had to be translated by the priests. These translators were called *Prophetes*, from which our word Prophet derives.

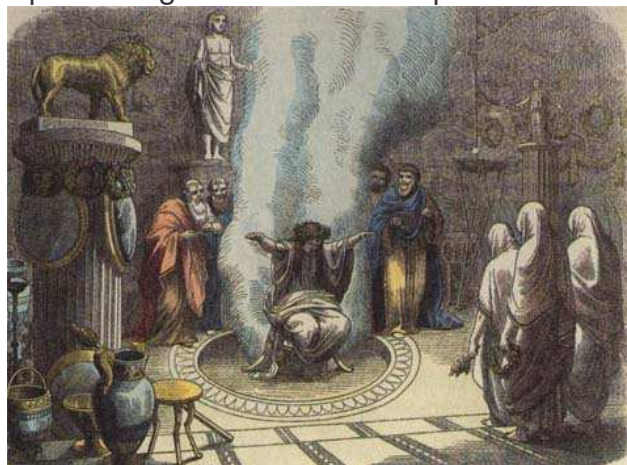
The best prophets knew that the most important part of the interpretation was *not* to interfere intellectually but simply to watch and to listen. It was necessary to allow all what was heard and seen to discover its meaning.

This very famous oracle enjoyed an extraordinary high estimation all over the old world. Thousands of pilgrims came year by year, and, of course, it was regularly consulted for all important affairs of the state. Even *Plato*, the philosopher who was extremely sober in political affairs praised this oracle when he said: " The prophetesses at Delphi and the priestesses in Dodona contributed many and beautiful things in private and in public affairs of our Hellas in the state of the insanity, in that for the sobriety however only little or nothing." Other philosophers, such as *Socrates* and *Heraclit* shared this high appreciation. And - at the beginning of the 6th century bc - it was no one less than *Thales of Milet*, who is called the eldest of the 7 wise man of the old world, who had the famous inscription be placed over the entry of the temple in Delphi which said: "Know thyself!" Thus he made the deeper sense of all oracles obvious and clear.

With the spreading of Christianity the great oracles became more and more silent. And when in the year 363 AD. the Roman emperor *Julian* came to Delphi to ask for advice, even this oracle spoke for the last time - after a glorious history of more than 1000 years. Through the mouth of his priestess Apollo told the emperor that he will never again prophesy. And also this last prophecy became true.

In the following centuries oracles were forbidden in the christianised world. The observation of stars was reduced to what was necessary to calculate the calendar. Self-recognition was no longer valued as a precious goal due to the deep conflict between Gnostic and Christian ideas that cannot be solved.

The word gnosis means knowledge and Gnostics believed that knowledge leads to salvation, and to know yourself is a way how you can salve yourself. Whereas Christianity taught that only faith can lead to salvation which is however always an act of divine grace. Now oracles that serve the imperative "Know thyself" grow obviously on a



Gnostic soil, and this was from a Christian point of view a vain if not a sinful attempt.

In addition oracles became a bad reputation due to their ambiguity. There is that famous answer that Delphi gave to the question of *Croisos*, an emperor who had asked if he would win a war against Persia. The answer was: "If you cross the river Halys you will destroy a big empire." *Croisos* understood this statement premature and in his favor. But when he crossed the Halys it was his own empire that was destroyed.

So oracles disappeared and went down into the underground. And it was only after the 12th century and especially in the time of the Renaissance that they had a great come back that lasted until the time of enlightenment in the 17th century. With the triumph of rationalism it seemed that their time was definitively over. Oracles were dismantled as superstition and Astrology was banned from universities. I have to say that this was not so unjustified. Especially the astrologers had made a big mistake.

In 1781 something very extraordinary happened. Uranus, a new planet was discovered. This was something impossible. For thousands of years mankind was sure that there were 12 signs of the zodiac and 7 planets just as there are 12 months in a year and 7 days in a week. This was the order as it was made by God. Now all of a sudden this eternal truth turned out to be wrong. The cosmos was no longer limited by the orbit of Saturn. Space had doubled over night. And the same happened with the order on earth few years later in the French revolution. The kings who believed to be empowered by the grace of God were thrown from their thrones. With the discovery of Uranus men discovered individuality and a personal freedom that was far beyond any imagination of all the times before. But astrologers did not see nor read the signs of this time. They went on practicing astrology the same narrow minded way as they had done before. Well, in the middle age it was much easier to predict what a certain constellation would mean for person. The spectrum of self-realization was very tight. If the father was a carpenter the son would become a carpenter as well. For the daughter it was only the question if she will marry or go into a monastery. And if she marries to how many children she will give birth. So it was quite easy in those days to speculate what a transit would bring. But all of a sudden there was an unbelievable freedom of decision and a permanently increasing number of options. It seems like astrology tried to move backwards, and astrologers tried to meet this challenge by producing rules that became stricter and stricter. So if you read books from the 19th century you will feel very happy that this kind of narrow minded astrology was no longer taken serious. And with the other oracles it was not better at all.

But then – in the first haft of the 20th century – in a time where it was least expected, the oracles returned. People like *Hermann Hesse*, *Carl Gustav Jung* and *Richard Wilhelm* were fascinated by the I Ging. The old lady astrology came back an married a child of the 20th century with the name psychology. That was the beginning of modern astrology that has the focus on understanding oneself. And people started again to study Tarot, the runes and other oracles.

WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR THIS RETURN?

The 20th century is the century of the fall of Christianity and the raise of nihilism and atheism. But these two cannot answer the strong longing for meaning that is deep in

every human being. So when there was nothing left to believe in, except capitalism, people traveled from the western world to India and were excited about the wealth of tradition that you can find in that region everywhere. It was only when they came back that they realized that we have old and good traditions in the west as well. And this is when astrology and tarot started to boom.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THIS RETURN?

First of all: it gives us back an old understanding of time. In the modern world time had been reduced to a mere quantity. Now we learn again that time has a quality. That there are moments that are right and moments that are wrong. And we come to a new understanding of incidents. We see that they are not absurd but meaningful.

It is especially astrology that reminds us – in opposite to science – that we live in a cosmos that is full of meaning and that everyone is part of the whole. Look at this illustration: In the old world the earth was in the center surrounded by a cosmos that was alive and full of meaning. Now this is the left over in the modern world. The cosmos is almost empty. No life. Just a few stones without any meaning. But Astrology reminds us that there is a meaning out there and that we see something significant in the sky

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR AN INDIVIDUAL?

That depends on how the oracles are used

Do I consult the oracle out of strength or out of weakness?

Do I consult it in the right way?

Do I get addicted from the Omen? Do I blindly obey? Do I leave my flat only when I have the permission of the cards?

In such moments it is important to remember:

»An oracle is a wonderful servant but a terrible master!« It is very helpful to listen to its advice, but it becomes a tyrannical system if you make it your boss.

Or am I looking for an esoteric luck insurance that guarantees permanent happiness?

Do I want to make sure that whatever I do turns out to end up good?

That has nothing to do with esoteric. Someone who asks the cards for every decision and every action is probably not a spiritual seeker but much more a very anxious person looking for guarantees.

Do I try to immediately understand the meaning of the oracle intellectually straight without any ambiguity? Then I should better remember what the old Greeks said:

Words of an oracle are like seed. Tightly filled with meaning they have dimensions inside that become visible only in the course of time.

Or

Am I looking for a deeper understanding?

Do I consult oracles to better know myself and to understand why something happens to me?

Do I use them as an advisor without transferring my responsibility?

In all these cases oracles do enrich our life.

How reliable is the advice of an oracle?

Is it absolutely and always binding and true?

Probably not, as the future is not determined.

Time is more like a rope that is made of threads. The rope is the past The threads are the possibilities of the future. Some of these threads we can see as trends. But some are pulled off while others are new.

I do not believe that there is something like a book of life where all our future has been written down. But the future is not fix, we form it permanently. All day long we make decisions and that is how the rope growth.

But, of course, we are not absolutely free. We all have our horoscope that we cannot return. It shows us how we are meant to be and we are free to make the very best out of it. We arrived here with a certain potential that is reflected by the horoscope. And there is an inner, unconscious urge that pushes us to unfold our individual nature. But this is often enough not in compliance with the ideas of our ego that is striving for other goals like wealth, fame, power etc. Now as the inner urge is stronger than our ego we often feel that something happens to us that we do neither want nor understand. And this is what we call fate. It is an inner law that pushes us to develop our unique individuality instead of the standard models.

Do you know the saying:

We are all born as originals, but most people die as a simple copy?

If we use oracles for a better knowledge of ourselves we learn to understand our own way through life. And than fate is no longer a blind and cruel law but an inner ally that helps us to become the individual that what we are meant to be.

IS THERE AN EXPLANATION HOW ORACLES WORK?

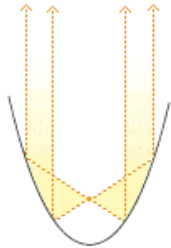
The famous word SYNCHRONICITY does explain nothing, it is just a nice word which says that there is a meaning between two things that happen at the same time. But it gives no explanation of that phenomena. So let us try to find an explanation:

1. First we have the quality of time, which means that every moment has its specific meaning. From a holistic view we may add that answer and question are not two separate things but one whole. If we put these two ideas together than we come to the conclusion that the moment in time when we ask a question inherits also the answer. Now all we need is a system to find out the meaning of the moment. And that is what every oracle does in its own way. The Astrologer looks at the sky – or nowadays in the computer – to study the stars, in old China people threw coins to consult the I Ging oracle, Tarot readers shuffle the card to create an

incidental constellation and the druids did the same with the runes, and so on. At a given point in time all these oracles will give the same answer in their own pictorial language. So it is not a question if one oracle is better than another. If the Crowley cards tell you the truth while Rider cards are liars. The only question is, which language do you understand best. The language of astrology, of the I Ging, the runes, the cards, whatever.

But there is also another idea that we should think about

2. Unconscious



We often speak about our Unconscious like it was a little black box somewhere inside of us. But no one knows where it is and how far it goes. If it has any limits at all. Perhaps it is our connection with eternity?

Let's look at a wave which is always connected with the deepest ground of the sea. Let us take the wave itself as a symbol of our individual nature. Then the white foam on top is our consciousness the

dark part is the personal unconscious and the sea the collective unconscious. That shows that we are always in connection with eternity even if we don't know because the "frequencies had to be reduced" to enable our mind to become conscious in space and time.

If we turn it (the illustration) around we come to another nice symbol

This is a parabola. If you send rays out from this focus they will all be reflected by the curve and sent as parallels into eternity. Now we know from geometry that parallels meet in eternity – even if we cannot imagine such an idea. But that means that the parabola has a focus in this world and another in a transcendent spheres. And both are permanently in contact. So even when we do not hear the voices of the Gods and Goddesses anymore, because our mind has emerged that far, we are always in contact with the higher self.

I think it will not take long time that mankind begins to understand that there are three words that describe the same although we believe that they have different meaning. And these words are: Fate – Incident/Coincidence – and the Unconscious. I believe that it is the unconscious that creates incidental events that we experience as our fate.

THE RETURN OF THE GODDESS

We have talked about the return of the oracles. But this is only a side effect of a much greater phenomenon: The return of the Goddess.

We know that about 5000 years ago with the upcoming patriarchy male Gods became dominant in religious beliefs while the great Mother Goddesses the formerly Queens of Heaven had to descend more and more into the underworld. As a parallel logos, reason and all attributes of the right side were reevaluated while soul, emotions and the left side were heavily devaluated. All cult was taken from the priestesses and given into the hands of priests. People were no longer governed by queens but by kings. And with King David who became the first King of Israel for a lifetime (1000

bc), the patriarchate had definitively conquered and destroyed the matriarchal order. Almost 3000 years later the wheel is turning. Beginning with the French revolution at the end of the 18th century one King after the other has to resign. And when in 1950 the Egyptian king Faruk had to quit his throne he made an amusing prediction. He said that at the end of the 20th century there will be only 5 kings left. The kings of clubs, spades, hearts and diamonds; and the King of England! Even if we know that there are some more kings left, it is evident that the time of monarchies is over and just as well the time of the patriarchate. The female side has been revalued immensely within the last 200 years and the return of the Goddess may be observed in many ways especially in the last century

- politically → with the rising signification of the left side
- philosophically → with the declaration of Nietzsche, the leading philosopher of his time, that God is dead – and of course he meant the patriarchal God – as there was no other
- psychologically → by the discovery of the unconscious by Freud and Jung
- in medicine and other fields → by Hahnemanns discovery of the homeopathy that shows us that not only a megadosis has a strong effect (which is obviously a male way of thinking) but also an very extreme dilution.
- and this found in 1930 a parallel in astrology → by the discovery of Pluto a very small planet who is extremely far away but has nevertheless a very strong (homeopathic) influence
- religiously → by the dogma that Pope made 1950: the declaration of Mary's ascending into heaven, which Jung called the most important religious occurrence since the reformation.
- And in every day life in the fact left-handers may write with their left hands and that it is no longer a taboo to dance leftwards.
- And of course, the return of many so-called heathen traditions, the new look at nature, and not at least the fascinating rise of interest in all esoteric fields –

this all shows that the Goddess has returned from the underworld. May her spirit be with us (not only) during this congress.

I thank you very much for having listened to me.