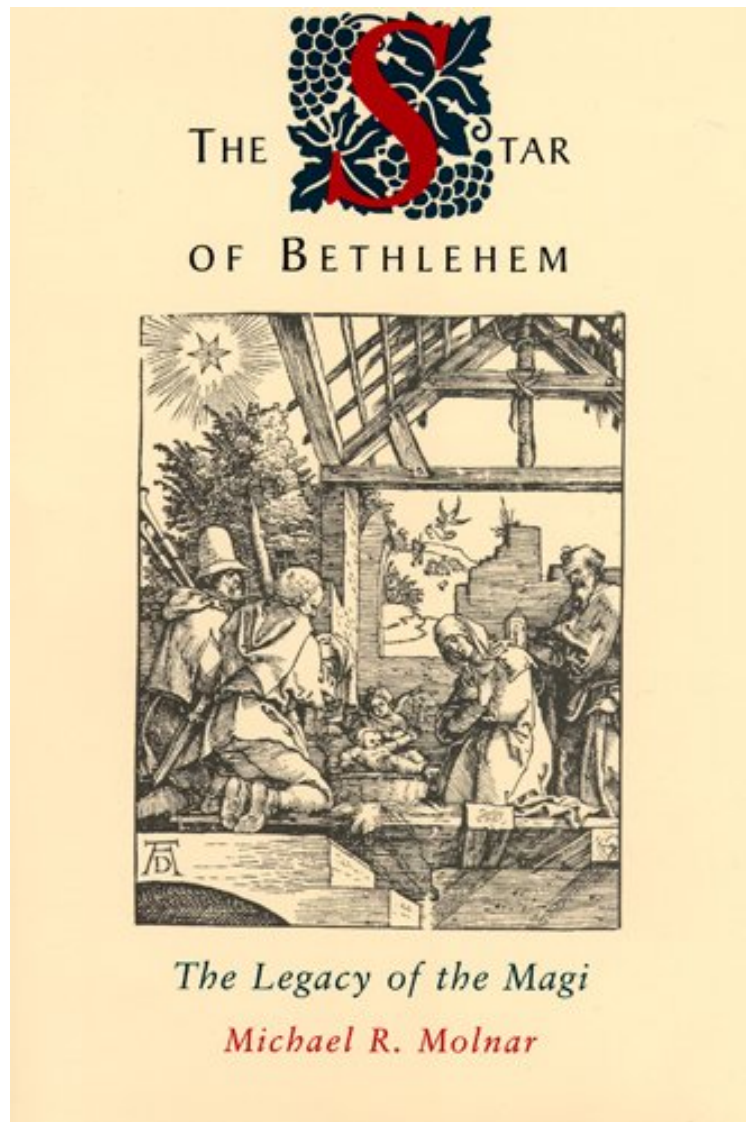


(Mobile ebook) The Star of Bethlehem: The Legacy of the Magi

The Star of Bethlehem: The Legacy of the Magi

Michael R. Molnar

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#1412016 in Books Michael R Molnar 2013-09-20 2013-08-23Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .48 x 5.511, .60 #File Name: 0813564719208 pagesThe Star of Bethlehem | File size: 66.Mb

Michael R. Molnar : The Star of Bethlehem: The Legacy of the Magi before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Star of Bethlehem: The Legacy of the Magi:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Is it April 17, 6 BC?By ReadalotsProfessional astronomer Michael Molnar's "The Star of Bethlehem: The Legacy of the Magi" (2000) is destined to become a classic in star studies. This 187-page (hardback) book is well documented with 16 informative pages of endnotes, a helpful 11-page glossary, and a 5-page chronology. Molnar also completes this work with an interesting 9-page appendix entitled "Defining the Position of the Zodiac".This fascinating book was a quick read for me (I completed it in only a few days). I've also

noticed that much of the information herein has been featured on various television documentaries about history's most famous star. I have used its material often in discussions, and for teaching, about Christ's Nativity. From an ancient numismatic study, Molnar suggests that the arrival of the Magi to Jerusalem and then later in Bethlehem (Matthew 2) may be pinpointed with certain amount of accuracy. Syrian coins, minted just before the birth of Christ, sport a ram together with a star. This coinage discovery led Molnar to consider the power of the star in the world of late antiquity. Documenting (from ancient star charts and other records) Jupiter as the royal planet in the ancient mind and Aries (the Ram) as a symbol of Judah in the ancient Zodiac, Molnar identifies Jupiter's passage through Aries (in the western sky) during the spring of 6 B.C. (chapter 4). This portent may have convinced the Magi (as avid stargazers east of Palestine) of an imminent regal birth in Israel (page 101). Molnar's extensive research among the ancient documents leads him to an exciting conclusion- the Magi arrival occurred on April 17, 6 B.C. (the date Jupiter was most prominent to the naked eye in Aries)! Could this date be Jesus of Nazareth's birthday? Molnar seems convinced. Molnar also talks about various ancient topics (i.e. the Roman Saturnalia, the origins for the official date for Christmas as December 25th, the dating of Herod the Great's death, and much more). The book, additionally, offers several black and white ancient coin photos, a number of ancient zodiac/star charts, maps and drawings of key people from his research. Molnar's writing style is non technical and persuasive. His coin study is fascinating and the star charts are informative. This is an excellent book and a good gift candidate. It is recommended to all astronomy buffs, teachers, Bethlehem star studiers, students of late antiquity, biblical researchers, and history readers. Order your copy soon.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Star of Bethlehem Nailed By A customer Molnar nails it! Finally, a definitive explanation for the elusive Star of Bethlehem. The prior reviewer's criticism about the wobble in the Earth's axis is sour grapes. The fact is, Molnar has tangible evidence for his theory - coins showing the star in Aries on one side, and the Roman province of Judea on the other. Excellent work Molnar! You should be at the Keck!

45 of 46 people found the following review helpful. A novel approach to a perennial enigma. By Mark E. Miller The Star of Bethlehem is a perennially favorite topic for planetarium shows, articles, musings, sermons, and books. What could be left at this late date to say about it? Quite a lot, actually. Enough so that two new books, both titled "The Star of Bethlehem" (How original!) and both copyright 1999 are on my desk as I write. The story about the Star is found only in the Gospel of Matthew. There are three possibilities: 1) The star was a myth - invented by the writer of Matthew or earlier Christians whom he followed, in order to give Jesus appropriately royal auspices for his birth. 2) The star was a miracle provided by God to guide the Magi, even perhaps visible only to them. 3) The star was a natural astronomical event or events. These three are obviously mutually exclusive and exhaustive. If either of the first two possibilities are correct, there is little more to be said; therefore both of our authors give them short shrift. Both books cover some of the same material in about the same way. Jesus was *not* born on December 25 of 1 BC as worked out by the Scythian monastic scholar Dionysius Exiguus (Denny the Dwarf) in 525 AD. King Herod, of whom the Magi inquired about the birth, died in 4 BC. For other reasons, the birth is fairly firmly dated to between 6 and 4 BC. If the shepherds were 'abiding with their flocks by night', the birth did not take place in December. For various reasons, these authors agree that Spring is more likely. "The Star of Bethlehem - An Astronomer's View", by Mark Kidger, gives a review of all the various suggestions that have been made over the years, finally settling on a combination of events being the sign: a triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces (the sign Kidger says is associated with the Jews - more on this later) between May and December of 7 BC, with Mars approaching this pair in February of 6 BC, followed by a near-occultation of Jupiter by the Moon in Pisces in February of 5 BC, and then, possibly a nova in March/April 5 BC, as suggested by some Korean and Chinese records. I would have found this scenario plausible were it not for the second, and to my mind more interesting, book: "The Star of Bethlehem - The Legacy of the Magi" by Michael R. Molnar. There are two problems, as pointed out by Molnar, with the kinds of solutions reviewed, and those eventually suggested, by Kidger. Firstly, they tend to focus on what we as moderns would find to be visually compelling sights in the heavens. But this neglects the fact that the Magi were certainly *astrologers*, most likely Hellenistic rather than Babylonian in their astrological theories. Most of the events put forward would not have been significant to contemporary astrology. Kidger himself makes this point but does not seem to follow through with a close study of Hellenistic astrology as Molnar has made. Secondly, we have the advantage over the Magi of *knowing*, at least approximately, what the correct time frame is, then sifting through a small number a years to find the most significant events during those years. We have to imagine an ongoing community of astrologers, scanning the skies for generations perhaps, and imagine what would have been absolutely unique over many years, and compelling enough to make them undertake an arduous journey. In this light, Kidger's series of events are not so special. Molnar made a key discovery, beginning with a study of ancient coins, which often incorporated astrological symbols, that Aries was the constellation contemporary astrologers believed controlled the Levant, of which Judea was a part. The identification of Pisces with the Jews is Medieval and hence anachronistic in this context. When the Magi say "...we have seen his star in the east...", they would have been referring to the helical rising of a star or planet - that is, when it is newly visible in the morning sky rising ahead of the sun. Jupiter had its heliacal rising on April 17 of 6 BC in Aries. On that same day, the moon occulted Jupiter for the second time in a row (previously on March 20). This would have greatly increased the astrological significance of kingly Jupiter. Molnar covers about half a dozen other astrological

portents for this day, involving rulers of the trines, exaltations, attendance, and beneficent planets, that space does not permit me to explain in detail. In terms of astrological import, this day is absolutely unique for hundreds of years, and Molnar makes a strong case, to my mind, that he has indeed found the origin of the curious story in Matthew. Astronomers tend to be instantly dismissive of anything having to do with astrology, even to the extent of neglecting its proper application to a historical problem such as this one. Astrology, like it or not, is an important part of the history of human thought, and of the history of astronomy itself, which grew out of it. Michael Molnar is to be congratulated for shedding light on this ancient way of thinking.

Could the \$50 purchase of an ancient coin by a Rutgers astronomer have unlocked the mystery of the Christmas Star? For years, scientists have looked, with little success, to astronomical records for an explanation of the magical star that guided the Magi to Christ's manger. Intrigued by the image he found on the latest addition to his coin collection, Michael Molnar thought there might be more to learn by looking, instead, at the teachings of ancient astrologers. Molnar argues in his book that the Star of Bethlehem was not a star at all, but rather a regal portent centering around the planet Jupiter that was eclipsed by the moon. He bases this theory on the actual beliefs of astrologers, such as the Magi, who lived around the time of Christ. Molnar found some intriguing clues to the mystery while researching the meaning of astrological symbols he found an ancient coin, which bore the image of Aries looking back at a star. He found that Aries was a symbol of Judea at the time, and that ancient astrologers believed that a new king would be born when the moon passed in front of Jupiter. Molnar wondered, could the coin have been issued as a response to the Great Messianic Portent, the Star of Bethlehem? To match the story of the appearance of the Christmas star, Molnar also knew the event had to happen when Jupiter was in the east. Using these criteria and a computer program, he was able to chart an eclipse of Jupiter in Aries on April 17, 6 B.C., a day when Jupiter was precisely in the east, which confirmed his theory. Moreover, he found that a Roman astrologer described the conditions of that day as fitting the birth of a divine and immortal person. According to Harvard University Professor Owen Gingerich, this is the most original and important contribution of the entire 20th century about the Magis star. Using clues from astronomy, astrology, and history, Molnar has created a provocative, fascinating theory on the Christmas Star. He weaves together an intriguing scientific detective story which resolves one of the world's greatest mysteries: The Star of Bethlehem at the birth of Christ.

From Booklist Christian scholars have expended considerable ingenuity in providing scientific glosses for the scriptural account of the Star that shone above Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth. Astronomer Molnar disputes such explanations precisely because they derive from a modern perspective far removed from the outlook of ancient stargazers, who eagerly scanned the heavens for signs of the Messiah's birth. Ancient texts show conclusively that no portent would have excited greater expectations of a divine birth in Judea than a lunar occultation of Jupiter in the constellation Aries. And because sophisticated computer calculations reveal that such an eclipse did occur on April seventeenth in the year 6 B.C., Molnar fixes this as the celestial event that signaled the Christ child's birth. This assertion does require pushing Christ's birth back two years earlier than the commonly accepted 4 B.C. But evidence gleaned from early Roman and Jewish sources makes an earlier Nativity plausible. The uncanny fit of all the ancient and modern pieces of this puzzle makes for a highly persuasive argument. Bryce Christensen "Michael Molnar offers the first revolution in Star of Bethlehem research since Kepler's days. Molnar's big advance comes by considering what the Magi themselves would have deemed important. . . . Don't buy any other book on the Star of Bethlehem, because the old astronomical views are guaranteed to be irrelevant. Second, the new astrological paradigm forces the realization that astrology was an important force in historical times so that the disregard of the topic by most historians is blatant chauvinism. Third, the existence of a stunning astrological horoscope for April 17, 6 B.C., announcing the birth of a great king in Judea will now force scholars of religion to reconcile the event with their own beliefs."