

The Night Sky by Another Name: Myths

Orion – Ancient Greece



The Orion constellation
Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

The ancient Greeks told the story of Orion. Orion was a giant and very handsome hunter. He went to an island to drive out the wild beasts that were terrifying the islanders. While he was there, he fell in love with the princess of the island, Merope. Her father, the king, did not approve of Orion and made him blind to keep Orion from marrying his daughter. Orion learned that he could get his sight back if he travelled east and let the sun shine on his eyes. He did this and got his sight back. Then Artemis, the goddess of the moon, fell in love with Orion. Apollo, god of the sun, was so jealous of Artemis's love for Orion, that he tricked her into shooting Orion with an arrow. To save Orion, Artemis put him in the sky.

Story adapted from:

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (2007, November 30). Orion: Greek Mythology. Retrieved June 9, 2016.

Grey, K. (n.d.). The Myth of Orion. Retrieved June 9, 2016.



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Osiris - Ancient Egypt



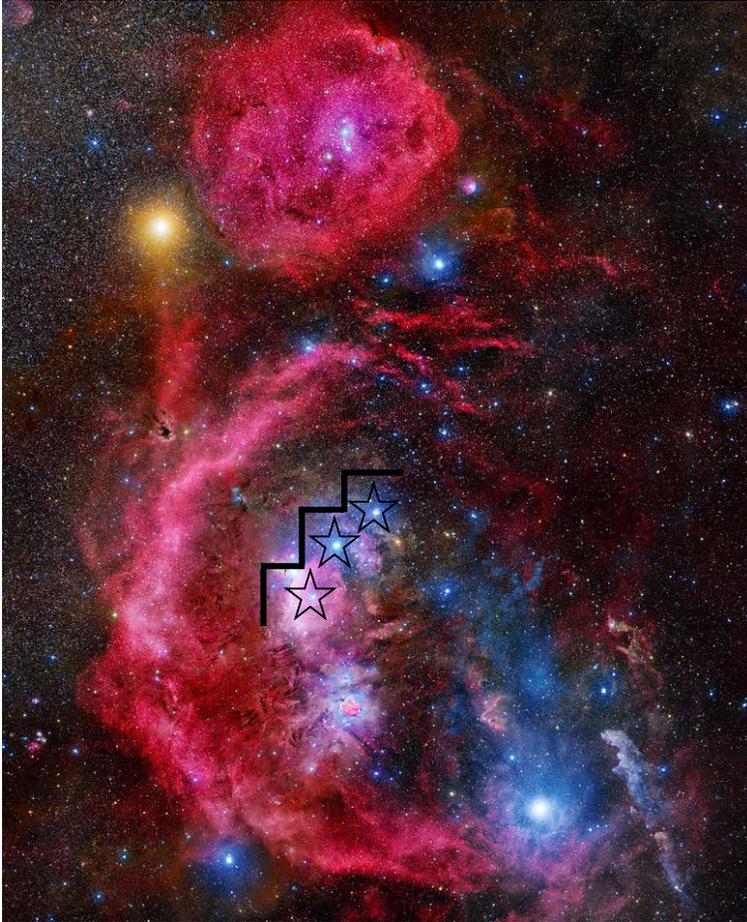
The ancient Egyptians worshipped the god Osiris. Osiris was the oldest son of the first king and queen of Egypt. He became pharaoh and married Isis. Osiris's younger brother, Set, was very jealous of him and his position as king of Egypt. Set was so jealous that he killed Osiris and cut him into pieces. Set put his brother in a coffin and threw it into the Nile River. The coffin travelled along the Nile and across the sea, where it landed on the coast at the foot of a tree. As the tree grew, it enclosed Osiris and the coffin in its trunk. Isis found Osiris and his coffin and brought him back to Egypt. There, Isis and her son Anubis put Osiris back together. Osiris could not go back to being the king of Egypt, so he became a god of the dead and ruler of the Egyptian underworld. He can be seen in the sky, his body made up of stars.



Story adapted from:
<http://www.landofpyramids.org/osiris.htm>
<http://www.historyforkids.net/egyptian-gods.html#osiris>

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Stairway - Dogon



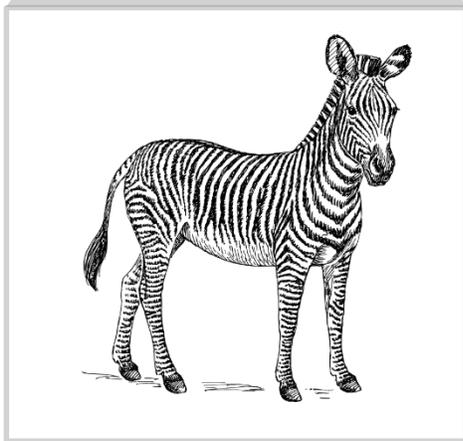
The Dogon people of central Africa thought of the world as being organized into the form of a grain storage building. This building has four stairways, each facing either north, south, east or west. The east stairway holds birds, the west stairway is for wild animals, the north stairway holds humans and fishes, and the south stairway (that they identified as these three stars) is for domestic animals. (87-88)

Story adapted from:
Womack, M. (2005). *Symbols and meaning: A concise introduction*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.



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Zebras – Ju/Wasi



The Ju/Wasi people of Africa told a story about the god Old/Gao. One day, he went out with his bow and arrow to hunt zebras. He finally saw three of them lined up in a row. He took aim and shot his arrow, but missed his target. The three zebras escaped and can now be seen lined up in the sky. The arrow the god shot can still be seen where it fell, just below the three zebras facing away from them.

Story adapted from:

Heifetz, M. D., & Tirion, W. (2012). *A walk through the southern sky: A guide to stars, constellations and their legends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. page 94

