

Search for the Origin of the Crescent and Star

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1. INTRODUCTION

The word "**crescent**" is associated with the moon and is used to describe the moon's shape in its early phase of the first quarter. Historically, it was a religious symbol from the earliest times. It has been used alone or together with a star or sun symbol on war standards, ancient seals, coins and monuments. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the earliest that it has been used by the Ottoman Turks was on the standards of Turkish infantry units under Sultan Orkhan (c1326 - 1360) [EB, p.726].

The **star** used in the 'crescent and star' motif represented the Sun and hence the sun-god most of the times. In other times it represented the planet Venus and hence the goddess "Inanna" of Sumerians also known by the name "Ishtar" to Babylonians. Particularly when the planet Venus makes conjunction with the moon in its crescent phase, it makes an unusual celestial crescent and star appearance that must have awed the earliest believers of astral objects as their gods, believing that their gods were sending a message for them to understand.

In the modern literature, the crescent alone or 'the crescent and star' symbols have been associated with the Ottoman Empire and after its collapse, with the successor states and the Islamic world in general.

On the other hand, there are some evidences supporting the view that the roots of "crescent", "star" and the "crescent and star" symbols that Turks have used on their flags and standards for more than a thousand years in the recent past go back to Central Asia and seems to be associated with the religious and shamanistic beliefs of the ancestors of Turks. In this paper I will show some evidences that point to the existence of this link.

First of all, it is important to clarify the name "Turk" as applied to Turks and their ancestors. It seems that some writers use the word "Turk" to represent only those Central Asiatic people who became known by this name around the year 600 A.D. and their descendents who founded many empires and states in historical times up to the present.

Also, some western world dictionaries define the people of present day Turkish Republic of Turkiye had all those Turks outside the borders of this limited definition as "Turkic" peoples. This rather restricted view of Turks does cover neither the ancestors of Turkish peoples nor all of the Turkish peoples who are in Asia and other parts of the world. In this paper, I use the terms "Turk" and "Turkish" to mean all Turks everywhere inclusive. Similarly, to avoid any vagueness, where the term "Turkic" may have been used, it is equivalent to the meaning of "Turkish".

The ethnic name "Turk" as used by Turkish peoples, includes not only the above definition but also the ancestors of Turks who, although, were known with names other than the "Turk", but were Turkish themselves, were from Central Asia, spoke a form of Turkish language and appeared on the stage of history much earlier than 600 AD. Some people have called them proto-Turks, but nevertheless they were "Turks" ethnically, culturally and linguistically.

During much earlier times, as the climatic and geographic conditions changed and the population increased above sizes that the natural resources of their homelands could not support the population, some of the ancestors of the Turkish peoples moved from Central Asia to Europe as well as to other parts of Asia. Since Turks and their ancestors were a most mobile people, due to their domesticating and riding the horse and with a lifestyle of animal husbandry-based economy, they moved readily from place to place and are found in many unexpected places.

2. ALTAIC SHAMANISM

Traditionally Turks' ancestors were nature believers and nature worshippers in their homelands in Central Asia and Siberia. Through their Shamanistic and other cult beliefs, they revered astral entities and the natural forces on earth that were important for them in their daily life. In the ancient Turkish world as it is now, the word for god is "Tengri". This word has variations in the form of "tengir", "tengere", "tangara", "tangri" and "tanri". In their religious beliefs, the sky is identified with "Tengri" and therefore the sky-god is called "Kok Tengri". Tengri is considered to be the "Only God" who created every thing in the sky (universe) and on earth. In addition to this sky god, they also had other secondary gods such as the moon god "Ay Tengri", and the sun god "Kun Tengri" as their most sacred gods as part of the pantheon of Altaic shamanism.

Ancient Turkic peoples had strong beliefs in their shamanic gods and cosmic beliefs. The qaghans of Turkish peoples believed that their qaghanship (kingship) was given to them by their gods, [IK, p.37-46]. Even some Turkish qaghans deified themselves as the representative of the Gok Tengri and other subsidiary gods on earth and used the names of these gods as part of their official titles. This belief was a tradition which had its roots in the Altaic shamanism and cosmic beliefs that lasted thousands of years in the past.

For example, we have the Tangriquts of the Huns such as: "Tumen Tangriqut" (240-210 BC), "Batur Tangriqut (210-174 BC), Kokkhan (174-161 BC), Kunkhan (161-126 BC), [TA, p. 180-185].

Among the kings of the Uigur, we have: Etimish Bilge with title of "Tengride Bolmish El, Qutluq Bilge Qaghan, (742-747 Ad); Bayanchur with the title of "Ay Tengride Qut Bolmish, Tutmish Bilge Qaghan", (747-759 AD); another one (name unknown) with the title of "Kun Tengride Ulugh Bolmish, Kuch Kuchluk Bilge Qaghan", (821-824 AD), [TA].

About the Altaic Shamanism, M. A. Czaplicka [1, MAC, p. 30] writes the following: "The religion of the Turks who were responsible for the inscriptions found in the Yenisei and Orkhon valleys, seems to have been the same Shamanism which is still to be found in a comparatively vital state among many Turanians, especially the Altai 'Tatars' and the 'Yakuts'. If we take Shamanism as a form of animistic religion which originated in Asia, and which differs from the animistic religions of other parts of the world in its conception of the gods and in the nature of its propitiatory ceremonies, then we shall not find in any other part of Central and Northern Asia a more typical and more highly developed form of it than among these people. At the same time it must be remembered that Shamanistic conceptions underlie many of the high religious systems of the Asiatic continent."

To this view, in the opinion of this author, one can also add the view that the Sumerians were one group of Central Asiatic peoples who helped to spread the Central Asiatic cosmic beliefs and Shamanistic conceptions as the underlying foundation of the religious systems developed in Mesopotamia and the Middle East.

It is also important to mention that in the Central Asiatic culture (Turkish Turfan Textes, regarding the structure of the cosmic system), concepts of four, five, eight and ten directions were known [EE, p. 76-108]. Additionally, four colors were associated with four directions. Namely, "gok = blue" with the "East", "ak = white" with the "west", "kizil = red" with the "south" and "kara = black" with the north [EE, p. 79]. The five directions represented the four cardinal directions and the direction towards the "zenith" where the Gok Tenri resided. The number of directions and the colors associated with celestial directions were important concepts that were represented in various flags of Turkish peoples throughout the Central Asia. Such colors have been used as background colors in different flags and the number of cosmic directions have been used in defining the number of points of the star motifs that were used in the crescent and star representations.

3. MOBILE LIFESTYLE OF TURKISH PEOPLES

Due to climatic and geographic conditions of Central Asia, Turkish peoples had developed a mobile lifestyle which was best suited to their economic requirements in the steppes of Central Asia. During winters, they would live a sedentary life in "kishlak" areas, their wintering grounds where villages were made of "yurts", i.e., tents that were made of felts and during summers, they would go to "yaylak", i.e., the higher grounds where they would find cooler and agreeable weather conditions as well as good grazing grounds for their animal herds. They had to be able to move fast from place to place and for that reason they had to be light in most of their belongings. Even the representations

of their sacred gods had to be on light carryable objects. Their flags, standards, shields, tents, carpets, cloths, wood carvings, and even their shamanic costumes and drums were used as medium for such purposes.

Flags and standards were sacred objects to the Turkish peoples since these emblems represented their gods, kings, people and homelands in Central Asia or in their new homelands. For example, in Oguz Epic writings, Oguz Qaghan declares: "Sun is standard and sky is royal tent", [IK, p. 136]. In this declaration there is the link between Turkish flag and the Sun as a star in the heavens and as the sun-god of shamanism. Therefore, these standards and flags required utmost respect and dignity by Turkish peoples at all times.

In war times, Turkish peoples' flags and war standards would not only reveal their identity to the opposing sides, but would also bring along the representations of their gods to give them courage and moral help needed in their struggle with their enemies. One unfortunate aspect of this kind of medium, from the point of view of modern man, was that these objects were easily destroyed in time by environmental conditions. Hence, they could not be historical message carriers from past into the present. Additionally, the history of ancient Turkish peoples most often was relayed into the future in a more oral form than written. Anything written on heavy durable media could not be readily transported from place to place. It was simply not practical.

4. TRACING THE ORIGIN OF CRESCENT AND STAR SYMBOLS

The origin of the "crescent", "star" or the "crescent and star" symbols used in the Turkish flag does not start with the Ottoman Turks, but it seems that it goes back to the Shamanistic culture that the ancient Central Asiatic peoples, including the ancestors of all Turkish peoples, had developed during pre-historic times.

First of all, let us examine the recent times. We have:

4A. Flags of Some Turkish Empires And Other Artifacts of the Recent Past.

a) The flag of the Turkic White Hun Empire (420-552 AD) had three five-pointed gold stars on a white background, [NE];

b) The flag of the Turkic Khazar Empire (602-1016 AD) had five five-pointed white stars on a blue background, [NE];

Not a flag but an archeological artifact found in Vorobyevo in Russia and attributed to Khazars has a sun disk with 10 triangular rays emanating from it. On the face of this sun disk, there is a crescent with light rays to its right.', [BO, p. 235].

c) The flag of the Turkish Gazneli Empire (962-1183 AD) had a crescent and a peacock on a green background, [NE];

d) Many monuments of the The Great Seljuk Empire (1040-1157 AD) and the Seljuks of Rum (1077-1308 AD) [TTR] had 'crescent and star" on them, [TTR, plates: 5, 40, 55,

79].

A selection of Seljuk coins had five, six and eight-pointed stars on them, [TTR, plate 79 and p. 271].

Additionally, a crescent embracing a sun disk with eight rays emanating from the disk is shown on the top right hand corner of an arch door used in an Seljuk hospital (about 1217 D) in Sivas belonging to the Seljuks of Rum period, [FK, p. 47-47].

e) The flag of the Golden Horde Empire (1224-1502 AD) had a red crescent together with a "white balance figure on a black disk" all of which on a white background, [NE];

f) The flag of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922 AD) had a "crescent with an eight-pointed star" on a red background, [NE]. Initially the crescent symbol alone has been used on the Ottoman flags, standards, on the very tops of mosques and many other monuments throughout the Ottoman Empire. We have the following from Tamara Talbot Rice which states: ".... It was with real pleasure, therefore, that the young sovereign watched Osman, son of Tugrul, who had succeeded to the chieftainship of the Osmanli tribe, harass the Byzantines, in 1281 extending his fief at their expense. Keyhusrev marked the occasion by investing him with the title of Uc Beg, meaning Protector of the Border, giving him the drum and the horse-hair standard consisting of a red pennant with a white crescent upon it which accompanied the title;", [TTR, p. 80];

In the case of the Ottoman flag, as seen in this description, the origine of the Ottoman flag's red colour and the crescent on it probably starts with this event where Giyaseddin Keyhusrev III son of Kilicarslan IV, the Ruler of the Seljuks of Rum grants an emblem to the new Turkish Uc Beg Osman in appreciation of his services; and,

g) Finally the flag of the Turkish Republic of Turkiye has the white "crescent and a five-pointed star" on a red background. It should also be mentioned that presently all the other Turkish Republics have variations of crescent, star and crescent and star configurations on their flags.

h) In addition to all these given above, five, six and particularly the eight-pointed stars and its many variations have been used by the Turkish peoples as decorating motifs on carpets throughout the Turkish world.

i) One should also note that there are many cemetaries in Central Asia where the tombs are made in the style of Turkish yurts at the top of which an amblem in the form of a crescent or a crescent and star shape is attached to the very top of the yurt-shaped tomb [ND, Figures 10 to 17]. Nejat Diyarbekirli indicates in his article that this was a custom followed by Turks over a long period of time.

4B. Clan Crests of Turkic Peoples

Another place where we could search for the earlier traces of crescent and star symbol is the 'clan crests' of the Turkic peoples, known as 'tamgas' [HNO, p. 962]. Among some of the Turkish clan-crests inscribed on rocks in Central Asia, are the 'crescent and star' symbols which use a curved line for the crescent and a dot or a disk for the star. Additionally there is the sun symbol in the form of a disk with eight rays. These are some of the known ancient crescent and star symbols not as elaborately done as the ones found in elsewhere such as Mesopotamia, nevertheless, they are definitely 'crescent and star'

symbols probably representing Shamanistic celestial gods of Turkish peoples.

4C. Shamanism of Central Asia and North America

The ancestors of the Native Peoples of Americas are known to have migrated from Central Asia and Siberia to their new homelands in the Americas. Like the ancestors of Turks, they also have shamanistic beliefs. This is another area in which one can search for the representations of shamanistic sky, moon and sun gods. Since the Native peoples of the Americas have migrated from Asia to these continents, it is likely that we may find representations of these astral deities being the same or similar to those found in Central Asia. In searching their culture, we find, for example, the following shamanistic representations:

a) An Altaic shaman's map of his visionary journey to the god "Ulgen" is shown in a figure by Joseph Campbell, [JC, p.158, Fig. 276]. In this figure, the shaman's journey starts from his tent and goes via a world (cosmic) tree, then ascends toward the god Ulgen which is shown at the very top of the ascending path. The god Ulgen is represented in the form of a man radiating light all over like the sun.

b) In another figure, "A Chukchi map of the heavenly ways" is shown by Joseph Campbell, [JC, p.158, Fig. 277]. In this map, a sun, a crescent moon, Pole star together with other stars and the Milkyway are illustrated.

c) In the words of Joseph Campbell, we have: 'a colorful yarn painting of the shamanistic visionary journey is given as a New World counterpart to that of the Central Asian Altaic shaman', [JC, p. 159, Fig. 280]. This painting which belongs to the Shamans of the Huichol Indian tribe of Nayarit in western Mexico shows a crescent and a five pointed white star which is attached to one tip of the crescent. There are four wavy rays emanating from the star and also four wavy rays to the left of the star are the "fiery curtain of solar rays through which the shaman had to pass". The path of the shaman's ascent is indicated by footsteps shown on a crescent. This painting is by Ramon Medina.

According to the description given by Joseph Campbell: "this painting by Ramon Medina is of a journey inspired by a supernatural summons to bring back to earth, in the form of a rock crystal, the soul of an ancestral shaman wishing to return. The star is the rock crystal to be found. This visionary journey of a shaman from Mexico obviously resembles that of the shaman from Central Asia (276), even to the detail of the tree, which appears in the Altaic map at the start of the shaman's flight into space, and here in the Huichol painting at the center of the composition."

d) In the words of Mircea Eliade, we have: "The designs ornamenting the skin of the drums are characteristic of all the Tatar tribes and Lapps. Among the designs, are always the most important symbols, as, for example the World Tree, the sun and moon, the rainbow and others. In short, the drums constitute a microcosm: a boundary line separates sky from the earth, and in some places, earth from the underworld", [ME, p. 172].

e) To support this description of a shaman's drum, we have a picture of Lapp drumhead from northern Sweden, c. 1800, [JC, p.176, Fig. 306]. The drum's skin is divided into three segments by two horizontal lines. It is described by Joseph Campbell: "In the Upper World: the sun and moon (or, perhaps the sun setting and rising) are seen along with heavenly beings and their tent. In the middle (left to right): the Mistress of the Beasts

sends animals to be hunted; a hunter shoots a reindeer; and a shaman, riding upward in a sleigh drawn by a reindeer, is followed by a dog. In the Lower world: three goddesses suggesting the Norns are pictured."

f) Again we have from Joseph Campbell's book the picture of the Yakut (Karagasy) shaman Tulayev, of Irkutsk, wearing his reindeer-leather swan costume. "On his cap of green cloth is sewn a wolf's muzzle with the moon above and stars on each side.", [JC, p. 177, Fig. 307].

g) Four buckskin tipi models, collected from the Cheyenne (Native Peoples) in 1904, are shown by N. Bancroft-Hunt and W. Forman [NBHWF, p. 106-107]. These tipi models show the types of sacred images applied to Medicine tipis. One of them, entitled as "Shining Bell's tipi" bears the images of Sun, Moon and Star and the sacred Eagle that carried prayers from Earth to the Sky, [NBHWF, p. 107].

On this tipi, the sacred images of Sun, Moon and a star are vertically arranged on the side of the tipi. Shown are a four-pointed star at the top, a crescent moon in the middle and a sun disk at the bottom. In this illustration of the shamanistic beliefs of astral gods by Cheyenne Indians, we again observe the crescent and star motif.

h) In a book entitled, "**Myths of the World Gods of the Maya, Aztecs, and Incas**" by **Timothy R. Roberts, MetroBooks, 1996**, [TRR, p. 56], there is shown an Aztec headdress, which is said to be the only surviving example of Aztec feather work and is made of hundreds of quetzal feathers, is adorned with many golden or gold colored crescents and sun disks. This headdress is presently in the Museum fuer Voelkerkunde, Vienna, Austria. In the same book, twelve major Aztec gods are depicted by pictures [TRR, p. 58-59], one of which (#6) has a sun symbol where between the rays showing the four directions, there the three-pointed sun rays between four directions. Similarly, on the Aztec god represented in this (#7), there is the eight-pointed star symbol. So, it is seen that these sun, crescent and eight-pointed star symbols are all associated with Shamanic religious concepts.

i) In the same book by Timothy R. Roberts, [TRR, p. 90], there is the picture which depicts "Coya Mama, the wife of Manco Capac, the last Inca ruler". In this picture, Coya Mama is holding a mirror reflecting the sun and the mirror represents her husband as the descendent of the sun. This is a Shamanistic concept. Additionally, Coya Mama has a white robe over her shoulder. On the right shoulder, there is a "an eight-pointed star embraced by a crescent symbol.

In all of these examples of shamanic beliefs, both in Altaic Shamanism and the Shamanism of North America, the sacred representation of sky, moon, sun, star or Venus are illustrated on shaman's maps, tipis, drums and costumes. The crescent and star motif seems to be a prominent motif among the sacred representations. Additionally, in all of these cases, the North American Shamanism and the Altaic shamanism seems to point to a common origin in Central Asia. Since the ancestors of the Native Peoples of Americas have migrated from Central Asia and Siberia to the Americas, finding this common origin among them is quite natural and expected.

4D. Sumerian Religious Artifacts

The ancestors of Turks, being a very mobile people, have moved into and settled in many

new lands out of the boundaries of Central Asia. In tracing the origin of the crescent and star motif on the Turkish flag, we may also examine the cultures of some of these outside settlements. Particularly in areas where conditions were conducive for the Central Asiatic peoples to move in and establish a new sedentary lifestyle rather than carrying on with the nomadic mobile lifestyle. In Mesopotamia, Sumerians and Elams fulfill this requirement very well. Now we look for the relation between the Sumerian and Turkish peoples.

5. SUMERIAN AND URAL-ALTAIC KINSHIP

The Ural-Altai languages are related to the Sumerian language. According to Hymes list of 100 common root words of Ural-Altai and Sumerian languages used as tests for comparing these languages, any language that has 47% of the root words given in the list can be considered a direct descendant of the Sumerian language, [FH]. This test takes into account the fact that Sumerian and the present day Ural-Altai languages are separated from each other in time by a duration of five thousand years. Turkish and Hungarian passes this test with results far better than 50% and hence can be considered as direct descendants of Sumerian. In view of the Hymes test, the proto-Ural-Altai language and Sumerian must have been one and the same.

For these comparisons, the reader is suggested to visit [Fred Hamori's](#) web page on Internet [FH]. Reader are also invited to visit my [200-words Hymes list, conceptually grouped Sumerian and Turkish comparisons](#), **in this home page**.

It should also be noted here that even the language of Elams was an agglutinative language like that of the Sumerians and Turks.

6. SUMERIANS ARE NOT INDIGENEOUS PEOPLE TO MESOPOTAMIA

It is well acknowledged that the Sumerians are not indigeneous people to Mesopotamia. In view of the existing close kinship of Sumerian and the Ural-Altai languages and additionally many cultural evidences showing direct kinship between the Sumerians and the Central Asiatic peoples, it can be said that in order for this affinity to exists, the ancestors of the present day Altai peoples (such as Turks and Hungarians) and those of the Sumerians must have been in direct contact with each other before Sumerians migrated into Mesopotamia. In other words, the Sumerians must have been a Central Asiatic people and must have been speaking the same or a dialect of a proto-Ural-Altai language that Ural-Altai peoples spoke then. That proto-Ural-Altai language must have

been either the same as the Sumerian or a version of the Sumerian language that the linguists have been able to read from thousands of Sumerian tablets. The very fact that the present day Turkish and Hungarian are Sumerian-like languages, is a strong indication that the speakers of these languages are the descendants of an Ural-Altaiic people who must have been members of a group that the Sumerians were also a member.

A plausible area for the original homeland of Sumerians may be the part of Central Asia which is bounded between southern tips of Ural mountains in the north, the Caspian Sea in the south, Irtysh river at the east and Idil (Volga) river at the west. Only in this area, as a most likely original homebase for Sumerians, they could have had close contact with all Ural-Altaiic peoples linguistically and culturally.

In view of these considerations, it is expected that within such a common background, in addition to linguistic kinship, it is highly probable that one could also find the traces of other cultural kinships, such as the use of crescent, star or crescent and star motifs as emblems, between Central Asiatic cultures and the Sumerian culture. In this context we may find in the Sumerian culture, particularly in the religious culture, traces of their Central Asiatic cultural heritage which could have been continued for long periods of time as tradition by those Central Asiatic peoples who were left behind.

7. SUMERIAN RELIGION

The Sumerian word for "god" is "dingir" and it is represented with an eight-pointed star symbol in the Sumerian cuneiform writing system. The word for "god" in the languages of Turks has the forms of "tengir", "tengere", "tangara", "tengri" and "tanri". Evidently, not only these Sumerian and the Turkish words are related to each other but also must come from the same cultural source.

The Sumerians worshipped a large number of specialized deities, as part of their religious beliefs. Among them, the four most important were the heaven-god "An", the air-god "Enlil", the water-god "Enki", and the great mother goddess, "Ninhursag", [SNK, p. 118]. In addition to these four leading deities, there were three important astral deities: the moon-god, "Nanna", the sun-god Utu and Nanna's daughter, the goddess Inanna, known also as Ishtar to other ancient peoples of Mesopotamia, [SNK, p. 122].

Ancient Turks are also known to believe the sky (heaven) god "Tengri", the astral deities such as the moon-god "Ay Tengri", the sun-god "Kun Tengri", the natural forces such as the wind "Yil", the mountains, thunder storms, etc.

Initially the heaven-god An was conceived by the Sumerians as the supreme ruler of the pantheon and later Enlil, the air-god seems to have taken his place as the leader of the pantheon.

It is seen that the Sumerians had similar beliefs in the Astral entities, such as the Sky, Moon and Sun, as did the ancestors of Altaic peoples through their Altaic Shamanism. Additionally, some Sumerian kings even deified themselves [SNK, p. 328; 5, p. 113] since they considered that their kingship had descended for them from heaven. Like the

Sumerians, the Turkish qaghans (rulers) also believed that they were the representatives of Tengri on earth and their qaganship were given them by Tengri. These were all Shamanistic religious values of ancient Central Asiatic peoples.

8. SOME OF THE EARLIEST CRESCENT AND STAR SYMBOLS

From my own research, I have found the following information that verify the point that the crescent and star motifs are related to Shamanistic beliefs. References given at the end of this paper provide additional useful information.

a) Sumerians have used the "crescent and star" motif in some of their monuments and/or documents that have been discovered so far. One of the earliest known crescent and star representation is shown on the Sumerian Ur-Nammu stele which is said to be commissioned about 2100 B.C. [SNK, illustration after p. 64; JLH p. 43 and DJH p. 107]. Ur-Nammu is the Sumerian King of Ur (2113 - 2096 B.C.), [HS p.150] and the founder of the Third Dynasty of Ur, [SNK, p. 83]. On the top panel of the Ur-Nammu stele and on the very top of the monument is shown a crescent moon embracing a twelve-pointed star. This crescent and star combination was the religious representation of their gods, in this case the Moon and the Sun. To show their due respect to these gods, the representation was placed above everything else. Ur-Nammu and a seated goddess are portrayed just below the crescent and twelve-pointed star symbol on the stele.

b) On page 25 of the Referece by Fevzi Kurtoglu, [FK], four Sumerian seals are shown. On two of them, a crescent embraces an eight-pointed star, on a third one, a crescent embraces a six-pointed star. On a fourth one, there is a crescent moon and an eight-pointed star which is on the righthand side of the crescent. On p. 28 of Ref. FK, we also have the picture of another Sumerian seal having a crescent and star symbol on it.

c) Ref. FK, also mentions as the earliest "crescent" symbol with a cross inside it found in the Elamian city of Susa belonging to Elams. Elams having a language similar to that of the Sumerians are also considered as people who have come from Central Asia, to Mesopotamia [FK, p. 23]. Also referenced [FK, p. 27] is a crescent and star symbol found on an Elam monument found in Susa and said to be belonging to King Sonnegatt (2220 B.C.). Ref. FK provides additional references for these citings.

d) On p. 25 of Ref FK, we have two seals which carry the impression of a crescent and an eight-pointed star side by side which is attributed to Hittites.

e) Finally on the same page, the very last seal impression shows two thin crescents, each embracing a star or sun in the form of a dot [7] left from Assrians.

Hittite seals had crescent and star symbols. Some of them have eight sets of crescent and star symbols, four on either side of the main logo of the seal, [[FK, p,41]. Some Hittite sun disks made of cupper and bronze have eight-pointed star symbols arranged in various fashions.

f) Again in the same reference, there is reference to Parthian steles and coins carrying

crescent and eight-pointed star configurations, one of which is shown on page 28 [FK] where a crescent embraces an eight-pointed star.

g) A Babylonian cylinder-seal impression, Agade Dynasty, ruling a mixture of Sumerians and Akkadians, circa 2350 B. C. shows a crescent alone [HS plate 46].

h) A silver disk, with a crescent and star motif, is found from Afghanistan left from Alexander the Great's time, (about 330 - 325 B.C.), [AP, p. 47]. The caption describing this disc is as follows: "This silver disk, from remote Afghanistan, shows how Greek and non-Greek ideas were blended. On the left in Greek dress is the goddess Kybele. A figure in eastern dress shelters her with a parasol. Also eastern are the sun god in the sky and the priest at a fire-altar."

In this description, the "crescent and star" motif to the right of the Eastern "Sun god" is not described. In this configuration of the crescent and star, the crescent is faced to the right and to its right is a "Makedonian" star. Here the eastern star (probably "eight pointed", is replaced by the Makedonian "sixteen pointed star". This replacement of eastern star with the Makedonian star must be a representation of Alexander's conquering of the east. The northernmost part of Afghanistan that Alexander the Great conquered is also known as Turkistan. At the time Alexander's armies conquered this area, about 325 B.C., there were Bactrians, Sogdians who were ethnically Iranian peoples and also the Saka peoples who spoke a form of Turkish.

i) Central Asiatic Parthians ruling an empire in Iran seems to have used the "crescent and eight-pointed star" motif while the Sassanian Kings of Iran used crescent with a sun disk without the rays. Parthians were Central Asiatic people who ruled in Persia from about 200 B. C. until Sassanian period, for about five hundred years.

At this point it may be useful to quote the following from Tamara Talbot Rice, [TTR, p.168-170]: "In the Seljukid age many ancient shapes continued to retain their symbolic significance largely because they still figured in astrology, and this probably helps to explain the frequency with which they occur in the art of the period. Stars with from five to twelve points constantly appear, figuring even on the coins, where they may have represented Venus. In astrology Venus personified goodness and renewed life. When combined with crescent they may have signified Venus' meeting with the moon. On the other hand, certain passages in the Shahnamah suggest that representation of the sun and moon had a political rather than magical meaning, for Kay Khusraw, whose violet banner displayed both orbs, remarked that he had heard 'the Mobeds say that when the Moon of the Turans [the Turks] reaches its zenith it will be vanquished by the sun of Iran".

This ancient statement associates Turks of Turan with the moon of which the crescent is one form of it.

j) Central Asiatic Kushans (78 - 144 AD) used crescent and sun symbol in their golden jewelries worn by their women. Archaeological findings from Tillya Tepe ("tepe" is a Turkish word meaning "hill", "small mountain", "mound"), near Amu Derya (Oxus) River in Northern Afganistan show crescent and sun disk where crescent embraces the sun, made in the form of a gold hair pendant. One of these pendants is worn with a collapsible crown while the other two are used with head garments worn by Kushan ladies, [VIS, p. 50 and 64-65].

k) A stele described by Bradley Schaefer (BSc) in his article [BSc] as: "Mesopotamia's star and crescent: the symbol of the moon god (Sin) who was worshipped in the cities of Ur and Haran". On this stele are shown, a crescent moon flanked by an eight-pointed star on the left and an eight-pointed sun on the right.

l) Parthian coins (Parthians, a Central Asiatic steppe people, ruled the Persian Empire for about 475 years, {about 250 BC - 225 AD}) belonging to Mithradates II, Pharnaces I and Mithradates Eupator (240-120 B. C.) showing crescent and eight-pointed star, are given in Ref. 7, p. 32 and Ref. BSc, p. 48.

m) Moon embracing a sun disk is shown with Egyptian god Iah's image carved in 600 B. C., [BSc, p. 49].

n) In Reference by Bradley Schaefer, [BSc], the author also states that: "The earliest example of the star and crescent appearing on any coin that I have located dates from 477 BC, from the Aegean island Melos. Numerous other examples can be found in subsequent decades from Thracian city of Aenus." Bradley Schaefer also makes reference to coins found from Romania dated 200 B.C., and Etruscan coins from 3rd century BC [BSc].

From the point of view of Turkish history this is very interesting, because during the time period between 1200 BC. to 100 BC., there were Central Asiatic Turkish speaking Saka peoples living in Eurasia. There seems to be evidences that some of these Turkish speaking peoples even lived in some of the Aegean islands during 600 B.C. and earlier, [PK]. Some of these coins having crescent and star motif and being found in Thracia and Romania and even in Greece itself may have been left by the Turkish peoples living in western end of Eurasia (please see my [Reading of the Lemnos Island inscription](#)).

o) Bradley Schaefer [BSc] also mentions finding coins from Yemen that date from 100 B.C., from Libya dated from AD 23 and from Turkey and Greece in all ages and all show the star and crescent symbol.

So we have samples of the Crescent alone, star of different configurations alone and "crescent and star" symbols belonging to Sumerians, Elams, Babylonians and other cultures of Mesopotamia and many other cultures of different areas including the Shamanistic cultures of Central Asia and the Americas. These symbols seem to represent the shamanistic beliefs of all of these peoples. Sumerians being very close relatives of the Ural-Altai peoples, particularly the Turks and Hungarians, it is very likely that the shamanist ancestors of the Turkish peoples also used the crescent moon and star representations in their cultures. As archeological research in Central Asia increases, (such research in Central Asia as compared to other parts of the world has been so far insignificant), additional crescent and star symbols, belonging to the local cultures of Central Asiatic peoples among whom the ancestors of Turks had a big say, are bound to surface.

9. SUMMARY

1. The historical and archeological evidence points to Central Asia and to Central Asiatic Shamanism, through religious beliefs of Sumerians and the shamanism among the Native Peoples of Americas, as being the origin of the crescent and star symbol.
2. The historical and archeological evidence also show that the origin of the crescent and star symbol is religious and it represents celestial gods/goddesses particularly those representing the Sky, Moon, Sun and Venus.
3. Ancestors of Turks had a Shamanistic religion and believed in gods representing the Sky, Moon and Sun, like the Sumerians. For the Sumerians, the Turkish peoples and some of the Native Peoples of Americas, the tradition of believing and worshipping these gods must have been the continuation of an ancient Central Asiatic tradition having its roots in Central Asiatic shamanism. A tradition that was also carried to Mesopotamia and to Americas from Central Asia.
4. It is undeniable that the proto-Ural-Altai language spoken by the ancestors of Turks and Hungarians must have been the same as the Sumerian language or a form of it. Hence, the ancestors of Turks having the same linguistic and religious cultural background as the Sumerians, and the Sumerians having attested forms of the crescent and star symbols representing their religious beliefs, it is highly probable that these symbols were also religious symbols representing the ancient gods of shamanistic beliefs of the Central Asiatic peoples. This is evidenced by their shamanic cultural representations on objects like shamanic drums and costumes.
5. The ancestors of Turkish people had the crescent and star symbol and the sun disk with eight pointed rays among their clan-crests engraved on rocks in Central Asia. Additionally, the crescent and the crescent and star symbols are also found as emblems on grave yard stones and constructions.
6. Turkish peoples of Central Asia along with some other known Central Asiatic peoples have used the crescent, star or the crescent and star symbols on their flags, war standards, rugs, tents, coins, jewelries, etc. in relatively recent times, i.e., about the last two thousand five hundred years. The usage of these symbols by Central Asiatic peoples, such as Parthians, Kushans, Gaznevi Turks, Khazars, Seljuks, Ottomans and the present day Turkish Republics, must be the continuation of an unwritten but ancient Central Asiatic tradition.
7. The crescent moon embracing an eight-pointed star motif seems to be the most frequently used religious symbol. It is used not only by Sumerians but also by many other Middle Eastern peoples whose culture have been influenced by Sumerians in every respect.
8. Among the users of this symbol are the Central Asiatic Turkish peoples whose language and religious culture had a common background with those of Sumerians.
9. As time progressed toward the present, the crescent and star symbol was adapted and used by some European cultures also.

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