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# A Ruby and Triangled Sign upon the Forehead of Taurus: Modalities of Revelation in Megalithic Archaeoastronomy and James Joyce's Novels *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*

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**Abstract:** This paper proceeds from the concurrent interpretation of two distinct, apparently unrelated disciplinary contexts, at the crossroads of the positivism of archaeology and the imaginary world of literature. The character of the reciprocal relationship between megalithism in Neolithic Portugal and the writings of the twentieth-century author, James Joyce, is transfigured through the introduction of a third element of interpretation, a deeply paradoxical current of Jewish thought, with messianic dimensions, antithetical to the forces of mythic reconciliation present in Joyce's fiction and in archaeological conceptions of 'symbolic systems' in antiquity, which tend to erase the innumerable singulars of experience. Applying a cryptotheologically-inflected exegesis immanent to the materials of text and archaeology in the light of their respective orientation to the same astral phenomenon, I seek to generate insights unanticipated within interpretations restricted to the disciplinary boundaries, theories and methodologies of archaeology and literary criticism as discrete entities. Within allegorised readings of archaeology and an archaeologised reading of Joyce's texts I bring into play non-synchronous elements which both disrupt the idealised harmonies of social and religious conformity and illuminate hitherto unseen connections between diverse, seemingly incommensurable contexts, beyond the discursive conventions of detached objectivity, without relinquishing irreducible remnants to a totalising synthesis.

**Keywords:** archaeoastronomy; megalithic; prehistory; Portugal; kabbalah; Marrano; James Joyce; *Ulysses*; *Finnegans Wake*

## 1. Introduction

In this paper I draw upon the 'deeply paradoxical religious sensibility' (Scholem 1971, p. 95) of the Marrano phenomenon to explore parallels between modalities of revelation at play in James Joyce's novels, *Ulysses* (Joyce 1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (Joyce 1939), and that *implicit* in an archaeoastronomical interpretation of a group of Neolithic dolmens dating to around 4000 BC in the Mondego valley of central Portugal (Silva 2013, 2015). With a strong resonance in the Iberian context, the 'hidden faith' of the Marranos, the Sephardic Jewry who were converted by force to Christianity (Scholem 1971, p. 95), is the ultimate source for antinomian perspectives introduced to the configuration central to this study. This is the constellation formed between an episode in *Ulysses* involving Leopold Bloom's epiphanic vision of Aldebaran, the brightest star of the constellation of Taurus, and the orientation of the Carregal do Sal cluster of Neolithic dolmens upon the same star. The serendipitous conjunction of the latter two contexts manifests a dialectical encounter first staged between *Finnegans Wake* and Neolithic archaeology in north-west Europe (Crook 2004). However, by activating an antinomian current of the Marranic tradition as a third element I aim to interrupt any synthesis between contexts often too easily integrated in the closed circuit of myth. Regarding revelation as 'the first enlightenment,

disenchanting the world from the pagan cosmic gods' (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 9), means not stopping at the interpretation of aspects of Neolithic archaeology in Iberia through Joyce's 'usylesly unreadable' (FW 179.26)<sup>1</sup> texts, and interpreting his texts reciprocally through archaeology. Rather, beyond this I seek the spectral trace of revelation—where 'all Marrano characteristics apply to its secret works' (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 191)—on the astral paths of the corridors of the megalithic dolmens and the sombre ground of Joyce's writing.

The antinomian current, as reconfigured in a recent speculative intervention in modern philosophy (Bielik-Robson 2014a), is evident in the critical thought of writers such as Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, Theodor Adorno and Ernst Bloch, identified as 'philosophical Marranos' who are convinced that the antinomian message constitutes the very essence of their own 'hidden faith' (ibid., p. 23). It is the thought of this milieu in particular that I employ to subject archaeology and Joyce's texts to a *cryptotheological misreading*. This means converting the context of archaeological enquiry to a field of allegory, a plane where the corridors of the Carregal do Sal dolmens are coterminous with the corridors of the Holles Street Maternity Hospital in *Ulysses*, where Leopold Bloom experiences his epiphany. By dislodging these megalithic structures from their exclusive association with either the discipline of archaeology or the harmonious cycles of antique and modern mythologies, I invoke the unquiet shekhinah-spirit—cognate with the character, ALP, in *Finnegans Wake*—who 'tries to breathe life into the stony cosmos of indifference' (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 12). This evinces a 'swerve of concern', out of the sources of Judaism, confronting a philosophical idiom 'that merely mirrors the neutral status quo of what is' (ibid., p. 14). Defined as an 'affective pathos that rebels against the submission to the rules of existence' (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 21), revelation is antithetical to the 'mythical consciousness' ascribed to people in prehistory in archaeological accounts which privilege an overarching 'symbolic system'.<sup>2</sup> In the effort to dismantle the mythic totality of prehistory projected from the alienated logic of the capitalist present,<sup>3</sup> consists a kind of redemptive criticism of 'the inner core of myth' (Habermas 1979, p. 44). This is conducted against both the instrumental reason of positivist 'deritualisation' with its concomitant undialectical destruction of the aura (ibid.), and the atavistic submission to 'mythical fatality' characteristic of romantic neopaganism. This strategy resonates with what Walter Benjamin in 1914 considered as the historical task to 'give absolute form in a genuine way to the immanent condition of fulfillment', redeeming 'elements of the end condition . . . embedded in every present as endangered, condemned, and ridiculed creations and ideas' (quoted in Wolin 1994, p. 49). Such elements, 'not present as formless tendencies of progress' (ibid.), I locate in the allegorical field of Joyce's novels and megalithic architecture. The kabbalistic thought of Isaac Luria (1534–1572)—along with that of Abraham Abulafia, and the *Zohar*—assumes a level of prominence in this field of interpretation. According to Scholem, Luria's thought invested Jewish history, especially the expulsion from Iberia and the situation of exile, with profound messianic significance (Idel 1992, p. 128).

The messianic register of this reading lends an 'exodic thrust' to the capricious dialectical leaps generated in a structured conjunction, avoidant of and not directed towards a reconciliation of the kind realised either in the 'eternal return' of myth or in the teleology of the Hegelian progress of the spirit. Indeed, the Hegelian narrative may be considered as complicit with the triumphal procession

<sup>1</sup> Quotations from *Finnegans Wake* are indicated by the initials, FW, followed by page and line number.

<sup>2</sup> Some arguments in this article were advanced in my Ph.D., *The World's End: Rock Images, Altered Realities, and the Limits of Social Theory* (Crook 2004), directed partly against social constructionist models of subjectivity which posit a 'discursive structure' or 'symbolic system' into which the subject 'must insert itself . . . in order to become a "self"' (Thomas 1996, p. 46).

<sup>3</sup> The tendency to ascribe an economic rationale to people in prehistory, categorised as hunter-gatherers, pastoralists or agriculturalists, extends to the identification of *labour* as a transhistorical category, such that social activities of a qualitative character like the making of rock art are characterised as a form of 'symbolic labour' (Biesele 1983), a concept derived from the Marxist anthropology of Maurice Godelier. Georg Lukács remarks on the essential methodological difficulty of applying historical materialism beyond the classical terrain of its application in capitalist society, 'to earlier societies antedating capitalism' (Lukács 1971, p. 232). Conceived as a transhistorical state, such capitalist alienation would demand its own negation as 'an objective historical order in which the exile continued in full force' (Scholem 1971, p. 121).

of history's victors in Walter Benjamin's messianic understanding of history (Benjamin 1968, p. 248). His perception of history's 'chain of events' as 'one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage' (ibid., p. 249) chimes with Stephen Dedalus' complaint in *Ulysses*: 'History ... is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake' (*U* 2. 377).<sup>4</sup> The Latin *fin negans* in *Finnegans Wake* indicates that Joyce too 'negates any suggestion of teleology or ends in history' (Sidorsky 2001, p. 305). On the horizontal axis of historical time in Hegel's philosophy of history, observes Franz Rosenzweig, 'nothing radically new can occur, especially not that qualitative leap into an absolutely other reality implied by Redemption' (Mosès 2009, p. 51). As 'the privileged moment taken out of the temporal flow' (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 190)—whether the circularity of myth or the forward march of progress—revelation restores the singularity of individual experience which, in Bloom's epiphany, gives the title of this paper.

Part 2 of this paper is concerned with elucidating the elements of archaeology and kabbalah which constitute the textual architecture of *Finnegans Wake*, which revolves around the microcosm of the prehistoric mound in which the book's everyman figure, HCE, is interred. Formed of the shattered remnants of the Divine withdrawal, in Joyce's reworking of the Lurianic narrative of the contraction of the divine light, the mound is also the 'Golgotha of the Spirit' in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, itself a philosophical transformation of Lurianic motifs. Correlating this archetypal structure with Neolithic dolmens in Iberia, I contrive in part 3 the crucial encounter between the archaeoastronomy of the Portuguese dolmens, as presented by Fabio Silva, and Bloom's epiphany in *Ulysses*. Here the cosmological dimensions of the seasonal movement of herds to and from mountain pastures is configured as a metaphor for the movement of souls occurring in *Ulysses*. In part 4 I then consider the 'messianic geometry' of this encounter as represented in the ALP diagram that forms the kernel of *Finnegans Wake*, embodying womb symbolism consistent with both archaeological interpretations of the dolmen corridors and kabbalistic iconography. The architecture and decorative repertoire of the dolmens is then configured as the performative space for the conflict between the tragic reenactment of astrological myth and the exodic thrust of an inchoate messianism, embodied in the person of Leopold Bloom, whose entanglement within the competing forces of myth and messianic redemption is explored in part 5 of this paper. This raises the ultimate—and unanswered—question of whether Joyce's characters, active in an allegorised archaeological context, can carry the burden of messianic hope invested in them or are doomed to be recurrently submerged in the mythic flux.

## 2. Archaeologies of Text

James Joyce's novels are said to explore a purportedly transcendent truth in the immanence of experience (Franke 2006, p. 157), drawing from an epic tradition that proposes 'the experience of the individual subject as a definitive revelation of the ultimate reality of human existence and thereby also of divinity' (ibid., p. 156). *Ulysses* (Joyce 1922), set on one day, records the interior monologues of different characters, particularly Leopold Bloom, Molly Bloom, and Stephen Dedalus, constituting a stream of consciousness, shot through with 'divinatory-intuitive' moments, epiphanies that reveal 'a wonder of being that is, for an instant only, taken out of the rules of the mythic cycle' (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 309). According to Richard Ellmann, Joyce conceived of *Ulysses* as 'a silent, unspoken portrayal of an archetypal man who would never appear and yet whose body would slowly materialize as the book progressed, linguafied as it were into life' (Ellmann 1972, p. 73), a figure 'later baptized Finnegan in Joyce's last work' (Manganiello 1987, p. 196). In *Finnegans Wake* this stream of consciousness is the 'moanalotho inturnd' (*FW* 254.14) of the fallen Finn, also known as Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker (HCE). His collapsed state by the banks of the River Liffey, the riverine form taken by his spouse, Anna Livia Plurabelle (ALP), is homologous with other falls in Biblical narrative, myth and history, including the Fall from Eden, the fall of the Tower of Babel, the fall of Finnegan in

<sup>4</sup> Quotations from *Ulysses* are indicated by the initial, *U*, followed by episode and line number.

the song, 'Finnegan's Wake', and the great fall of Humpty Dumpty. In the clangour of the Fall resounds the *shevirath ha-kelim*, the 'shattering of the vessels' in the Kabbalah of Isaac Luria, the 'scrambling' of the cosmic order ensuing from the *tsimtsum*—the contraction of the infinite light, *Ein Sof*.

In the *coincidentia oppositorum* structuring *Finnegans Wake*, this is a 'Happy Fault', the motif of *felix culpa* repeated throughout the book in various forms. This dialectic is legible in the turn of Joyce's avatar, Stephen Dedalus, from seeking the 'absolute satisfaction' of a transcendence, divorced from life, to a consciousness of 'the beauty of mortal conditions' (Price 1983, p. 312). Notwithstanding Stephen's implicit reconciliation with 'the circle of nature', a similar dialectic is mobilised in a reading of Luria seeking to confirm finite being as *finite* 'without inscribing it automatically into a divine tragedy' (Bielik-Robson 2017, p. 44). Repeating the Gnostic motif of the crisis in the Godhead—transfigured by Hegel into the 'death of God' philosophy (ibid., p. 42)—Luria 'paves the way to a new metaphysics of finite being' in which 'the time of the world becomes the time of God's reconstitution' (ibid., p. 43), where, since the primordial crisis, 'all being has been a being in exile, in need of being led back and redeemed' (Scholem 1965, p. 112). Joyce too transfigures this crisis in the way Finnegan/HCE 'fell from story to story like a sagasand to lie' (FW 374.36–375.1), 'lying high as he lay in all dimensions' (FW 498.28), like the cosmic archetype of Kabbalistic theosophy, Adam Kadmon, the anthropomorphic representation of the *sephiroth*, ten aspects of the divine that emanate from the *Ein Sof* (Fine 2003, p. 56). The 'cranial head' (FW 7.29) of this 'Headmound, king and martyr' (FW 135.9), condenses the entirety of *Finnegans Wake* as '*Omnitudes in a knutshedell*' (FW 276.L2), introducing the motif of Hegel's 'Golgotha of Absolute Spirit', the *Schädelstätte*, the 'Place of the Skull' which concludes *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, written 'entirely as he continues highly-fictional, tumultuous under his chthonic exterior' (FW 261.17–18). Hegel's concept of recollection or interiorisation, *erinnerung*, is a recurrent motif in *Finnegans Wake*, most obviously in ALP's 'riverrun' (FW 3.1) commencing the book. Identified as a revelation of some structure transcending the merely fragmentary, repetition 'produces a sort of eternal time of the text, whose end is at the same time its beginning' (Franke 2006, p. 162). In the simultaneity of all elements (ibid.) of *Finnegans Wake*, 'the seeds of any part of history may be present in any "event"' (Hart 1962, p. 77), dispersed from 'the eversower of the seeds of light to the cowl'd owld sowls' (FW 593.20), and condensed in the nutshell, the microcosm of the 'moppamound' (FW 464.26–27) (Lat. *mappa mundi*—map of the world) in and around which, and of which, the novel is constructed: 'who in hallhagal wrote the durn thing anyhow?' (FW 107.36–108.1).

The fallen 'litterish fragments' (FW 66. 25–26) of 'Reverest Adam Foundlitter' (FW 420.35) configure the 'oxhousehumper' (FW 107.44), '*the Mound of a Word*' (FW 175.12) comprised of letters of the Hebrew alphabet, including *aleph* (ox), *beth* (house) and *gimel* (camel), a 'hermeneutic archaeology' pregnant with the interpretive number and letter mysticism of the Kabbalah, and its theosophical transmutations: 'Can you rede . . . its world?' (FW 18.18–19). Its motivated nature ensures that 'Every letter is a godsend' (FW 269.17), implying both God's gift and God's end. This re-situating of theological revelation in the existence and consciousness of an individual results in 'the shattering of revelation into an open set of reenactments or repetitions' (Franke 2006, p. 157), *shattering* evoking Luria's cataclysmic differentiation of the *Ein Sof* from the finite world, sexualised by Joyce as *Ainsolph*, *this upright one, with that noughty besighed him zeroine* (FW 261.23–24).

The 'zeroine', the sighing void from which God has withdrawn, is the last of the ten emanations, or *sephiroth*, the *Shekhinah* (Dwelling), or *Malkuth* (Foundation), the *sephira* in which the feminine potencies of God attain their fullest expression (Scholem 1965, p. 104). In his kenotic vision of God's self-contraction, as reconstructed by Scholem—'He exiled Himself from boundless infinity to a more concentrated infinity' (Scholem 1971, p. 44)—Luria 'pioneers the new modern religious sensibility of *Shekhinah*-Spirit which, as Hegel puts it in the preface to the *Phenomenology*, abides only in and through its externality' (Bielik-Robson 2017, p. 42). Here, in 'the immediacy of finitude' left by the departure of God, it is the task of the Spirit to 'storm through the dispersed and disoriented material realm in order to turn it into a free, conscious, and self-assertive mode of existence' (ibid.). In *Finnegans Wake* ALP flutters furiously as *Shekhinah*/Fairy Godmother, in her reconfiguration of the fragmented HCE/Humpty,

'getting umptyums gatherumed off the skatterert' (FW 345.18), evoking, simultaneously, the restorative activity of *tikkun* and the end of God: 'Well, this ought to weke him to make up. He'll want all his fury gutmurdherers to redress him' (FW 617.17–19). Her gathering/scattering of 'rhunerhinerstones' (FW 207.7), repeating the Hegelian *erinnerung* in 'hegelstones' (FW 416.33) scattered like 'rainstones ringing' (FW 279.2) in her persona of a world-making giantess. In this, ALP accompanies otherworldly females seen as legendary builders of megaliths across Europe, 'a skittering kitty skattering hayels' (FW 243.17–18), falling in 'Countlessness of lifestories' as 'litters from aloft' to be 'all tombed to the mound' (FW 17.26–29), just as, during her dark exile in the abyss, the Shekhinah gathers the 'sparks' that fell into the demonic realms after God's withdrawal (Halperin 2001, p. 36).

Joyce's writing is infused with the linguistic theories of Jewish kabbalah, particularly that of Abraham Abulafia (c1240–91), Leopold Bloom being himself accused of being 'the false Messiah! Abulafia!' (U 15.1907). Abulafia believed that human beings are unable to see the 'true stream of cosmic life' other than through *written language*, which is the absolute object of meditation capable of stimulating the soul's deeper life, freeing it from ordinary perceptions (Cormack 2008, pp. 78–79). The 'stream of cosmic life' flowing through *Finnegans Wake*, where 'the world, mind, is was and will be writing its own wrunes for ever' (FW 19.35–36), has an Abulafian tenor, in which creation is 'an act of divine writing' (Jacobson 2003, p. 148). The microlinguistic speculation of Abulafia's 'science of prophecy' (ibid., p. 13) is comparable to 'the modern attempt to split the atom into its integral parts' in that 'the words that formed God's message were to be split open to reveal their letters' (ibid., p. 141), tantamount to 'the abnihilation of the etym' (FW 353.22) in *Finnegans Wake*'s 'sameold gamebold adomic structure' (FW 615.6). 'Building blocks of revelation', the letters themselves were to become the centre of speculation (Jacobson 2003, p. 141). As Joyce averred, the words of *Finnegans Wake* are 'not fragments but active elements and when they are more and a little older they will begin to fuse of themselves' (Joyce 1957, p. 205). Joyce's 'Dumlat' (FW 30.10)—to be read right to left, like the Talmud—is 'not about something, it is that something itself' (Beckett 1929).

A geographical correlate of the archetypal 'darkumound' (FW 386.20–21) of *Finnegans Wake*, written 'from his Inn the Byggnig to whose Finishthere Punct' (FW 17.22–23), is Cape Finisterre (Fisterre) in Galicia, once considered the westernmost point of the known world. Ultimate exteriority here turns simultaneously to the darkest interiority of *erinnerung* in the obscure transit of the sleeping giant, Finn/HCE, 'transmarried' (FW 50.11) from 'his funster's latitat to its finsterest interrimost' (FW 50.17). The merging of interiority and interment bolsters the connection to Finisterre, dominated by Mount Facho, an eminence once crowned by a dolmen, built by the enchantress Orcavella, beneath which she entombed herself with a shepherd (Lindström 2014, p. 61), aligning with the sexual archaeology of the mound where ALP and HCE are buried, 'Humperfeldt and Anunska, wedded now evermore in annastomoses by a ground plan of the placehunter' (FW 585.23).

### 3. Porta Coelorum: Aligning the Dolmen Corridors and Bloom's Epiphany

'Any object, intensely regarded, may be a gate of access to the incorruptible eon of the gods' (U 14.1166–1167). In 1600, contemplating the gleam of light reflected on a pewter vessel, Jacob Boehme had a sudden revelation in which he felt himself able to peer into the inner essence of all things: 'For I saw and knew the Being of all beings; . . . also the birth or eternal generation of the Holy Trinity; the descent and origin of this world' (Magee 2001, p. 36). Boehme's vision anticipates Leopold Bloom's in the 'Oxen of the Sun' episode of *Ulysses*: 'The voices blend and fuse in clouded silence: silence that is the infinite of space: and swiftly, silently the soul is wafted over regions of cycles of generations that have lived' (U 14.1078–1080). Indeed, the object of Bloom's contemplation, is an emblematic allusion to 'the birth or eternal generation of the Holy Trinity' of Boehme's vision:

*During the past four minutes or thereabouts he had been staring hard at a certain amount of number one Bass bottled by Messrs Bass and Co at Burton-on-Trent which happened to be situated amongst a lot of others right opposite to where he was and which was certainly calculated to attract anyone's remark on account of its scarlet appearance. (U 14.1181–1184)*

The red triangle of Bass and Co., as a symbol, has a pedigree in the alchemical-theosophical current of which Boehme was a part, drawn from the number and letter mysticism of Christian Cabbala, derived from Pythagoreanism and the Jewish kabbalah. An upward-pointing red triangle looms above a page of one of the most important books of theosophical alchemy (Forshaw 2006, p. 195), Khunrath's *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom* (1609), its engravings displaying 'a sort of Dantean ascent to a magical passage' resembling 'Christian Rosencreutz's tomb in the Fama' (Umberto Eco 1989, p. 13, cited in Forshaw 2006, p. 196).

Leopold Bloom's portentous meeting with Stephen Dedalus is presaged by a thrice-repeated incantation that implicates a horned animal/star in the incarnation of new life: 'Send us bright one, light one, Horhorn, quickening and wombfruit' (U 14.2). Bloom has visited the Holles Street Maternity Hospital to ask after Mrs Purefoy, who is in the third day of a difficult labour. In the corridor he encounters Dr. Dixon—who had dressed his bee-sting weeks before—and he is invited to join carousing medical students in the common room. Detached from the raucous insensitivity of the drunken students, Bloom drifts into a reverie in which he seems to be in some sort of telepathic communication with Stephen about reincarnation:

*Theosophos told me so, Stephen answered, whom in a previous existence Egyptian priests initiated into the mysteries of karmic law. The lords of the moon, Theosophos told me, an orangefiery shipload from planet Alpha of the lunar chain would not assume the etheric doubles and these were therefore incarnated by the rubycoloured egos from the second constellation. (U 14.1168–1173)*

The second constellation, source of the 'rubycoloured egos', is Taurus, as becomes clearer in Bloom's continuing astrological vision:

*And, lo, wonder of metempsychosis, it is she, the everlasting bride, harbinger of the daystar, the bride, ever virgin. It is she, Martha, thou lost one, Millicent, the young, the dear, the radiant. How serene does she now arise, a queen among the Pleiades, in the penultimate antelucan hour, shod in sandals of bright gold, coifed with a veil of what do you call it gossamer! It floats, it flows about her starborn flesh and loose it streams emerald, sapphire, mauve and heliotrope, sustained on currents of cold interstellar wind, winding, coiling, simply swirling, writhing in the skies a mysterious writing till after a myriad metamorphoses of symbol, it blazes, Alpha, a ruby and triangled sign upon the forehead of Taurus. (U 14.1099–1109)*

Upon the forehead of Taurus, Alpha, is the star, Aldebaran, Alpha Tauri, forming a ruby and triangled sign with the cluster of stars known as the Hyades, together forming an unexpected constellation with a cluster of Neolithic dolmens in Portugal.

Part of a broader phenomenon of megalithism across Europe, megaliths dot the landscape of Iberia from the northern Atlantic coast of Galicia to the platform of the Mondego river of central Portugal (Silva 2015, p. 120). Dolmens (*antas* in Portuguese) have a central polygonal chamber, composed of megalithic orthostats. The chamber might then have an entrance with or without a corridor, also megalithic in nature. Both chamber and corridor were roofed with cover-stones, the whole structure being surrounded by a tumulus: a mound, typically of earth, but covered with stone (ibid., pp. 120–21). The raising of ovicaprids—sheep and goats—suggests that winters were spent on low grounds and the spring and summer on the high pastures of Serra da Estrela (Silva 2015, p. 122). Archaeoastronomical analyses of the orientation of entrances of dolmens in the Carregal do Sal area of the Mondego river basin in central Portugal bolsters this 'seasonal model', suggesting this megalithic cluster marked the winter territory for people who had 'a high seasonal mobility' (Silva 2015, p. 123).

The view of the reconstructed horizon from within the dolmens displays a single feature towards the east: Serra da Estrela (ibid., p. 127), the high pastures aimed for in the spring and summer, and the mountain range that contains the highest peak in continental Portugal (ibid., p. 121). Anta da Arquinha da Moura, discussed below, is typical of the cluster of dolmens in the Carregal do Sal district which shared this orientation of the entrance. This mountain range acted as a foresight for an astronomical

event significant to these Neolithic communities, observed from the aperture formed by the dolmen entrance within a region of the sky corresponding to azimuth range 98–111°. At the time of dolmen construction, circa 4300–3700 BCE, Aldebaran, the brightest star of Taurus, would have risen exactly within the band of the horizon visible from within all corridor dolmens (Silva 2015, p. 131) after a period of invisibility from late February to late April. The dolmenic alignments suggest that Neolithic communities here observed the heliacal rise of Aldebaran as a signal for the seasonal movement of their flocks to the high pastures (ibid., p. 132). The restricted scope of the aperture capturing the ‘orange fiery’ star, Aldebaran, configures it as a form of ‘revelation’ reserved for that person or those privileged to be in the passage. Silva suggests that social memory of the importance of this star may survive today as toponymical folktales of Serra da Estrela, which means ‘the mountain range of the star’ (Silva 2015, p. 133).<sup>5</sup>

In *Ulysses* Joyce configures a topographical correspondence between the triangular island of Trinacria—isle of the sacred oxen in the *Odyssey*—the triangular Bass insignia upon which Bloom’s ‘astrological epiphany’ has settled (Seidel 1976, p. 58), and the triangle formed by Aldebaran and the asterism known as the Hyades. The presence of the Hyades, is considered significant in the context of the Portuguese dolmens, as it gives Aldebaran a ‘different shine’ (Silva 2013). The heliacal rising and setting of the Hyades, ‘the rainy ones’, was believed by the Greeks to be always attended by rain (Anthon 1847, p. 648). They are sisters who mourned their elder brother, killed in a hunting accident, so vehemently they died of grief (ibid.). A constellation can be drawn between the grieving Hyades and the Blooms, mourning for their lost son, Rudy, who died nearly eleven years before at eleven days old. When Leopold envisions Rudy in ‘Circe’ he is perceived as if he has aged in the intervening years, wearing a suit with ‘diamond and ruby buttons’ (*U* 15.4965) with a white lambkin in his waistcoat pocket (*U* 15.4966), suggesting the sacrificial connotations of the lamb, recalled when Bloom reads ‘Blood of the Lamb’ (*U* 8.9) on a leaflet. In ‘Oxen’ Mrs Purefoy’s labour cries put Bloom in mind of Molly, who ‘had borne him an only manchild which on the eleventh day on live had died’ (*U* 14.265–266). Griefstricken, she had knitted ‘a fair corselet of lamb’s wool, the flower of the flock’ (*U* 14.268–269), in which Rudy was buried. Stephen Dedalus seems to possess some unconscious awareness of the connection between wool and the Blooms’ lost son when he imagines a woman walking along the strand holding a bag is a midwife, the bag containing ‘A misbirth with a trailing navelcord, hushed in ruddy wool’ (*U* 3.36–37), the phrase evoking Rudy’s name.

The tears of the Hyades would be apposite to the proposed connection between the dead and Aldebaran as the heavenly abode of the dead ancestors, or their escort towards the afterlife, established at the time of its heliacal rising with the enactment of funerary rites’ (Silva 2015, p. 133). The dolmen’s corridor and entrance could serve as a conduit for the dead soul to be transported to the horizon and henceforth to the sky with the assistance of Aldebaran (ibid.), ‘an opening in the passage of time, in which the same ghostly image constantly reappears’ (Benjamin 1998, p. 135). The seasonal movement between the winter territories marked by the dolmens and the summer pastures of Serra da Estrela (Silva 2015, p. 130) likely had cosmological dimensions, expressed in the Irish saying, ‘this life is merely booleying (summer pastures) and heaven our old township (permanent dwelling) for eternal life’ (Lucas 1989, p. 65).<sup>6</sup> In the life of ‘booleying’ the Milky Way is, in most parts of Ireland, ‘the path

<sup>5</sup> Walter Benjamin’s comments on ‘aura’ seem apposite here: ‘What is aura, in fact? A gossamer fabric woven of space and time: a unique manifestation of a remoteness, however close at hand. Lying back on a summer’s afternoon, gazing at a mountain range on the horizon . . . until the moment or the hour shares in the manifestation—that is called breathing in the aura of those mountains’ (Benjamin 2009, p. 175). While ‘breathing’ means ‘the original prehistorical situation of harmony and peace’ cognate with Hölderlin’s concept of the unity of antagonistic dispositions (van Reijen 2001), under the conditions of a capitalist economy, a society that can be defined as ‘false’, the ‘shine’ of unity and harmony represented by the aura has to be shattered by Benjamin’s dialectical image, to reveal the hidden forces of antagonism (ibid.).

<sup>6</sup> In a world where any radical change no longer seems possible, where any hope consists in denouncing the existing totality as an ‘untrue’ one (Martins 2016, p. 187), perceptible in the Mondego dolmens is the opportunity of transcendence that *overwinters*, hidden in profane critique, according to Adorno’s postulate of profanisation, directed not against Kabbalah but derived from it (ibid.).

of the white cow', (Doniger O'Flaherty 1980, p. 241). In Lancashire the Milky Way was believed to be the path by which departed souls went to Heaven and was called 'Cow Lane' (Hardwick 1872, p. 182). According to Pindar, Hades drives the dead down the hollow road with the *rhabdos*, like cattle (Vermeule 1979, p. 243). Porphyry reports that Pythagoras believed souls were 'assembled in the Milky Way', the heavenly bovine from which souls emerged being none other than the celestial constellation of *Taurus* the bull (Rigoglioso 2009, p. 158), known in Germany as *der Stier*, evoked in Joyce's allusion to Hegel's ghost story, the *Phenomenology*: 'their joke was coming home to them, the steerage way for stabling, ghustorily spoeking' (FW 323.35).

Joyce once told the poet AE (George Russell) that he thought it possible an avatar might be born in Ireland (Ellmann 1982, p. 99). The anecdote reveals Joyce's fascination with the theme of *metempsychosis*, a word that 'reverberates through *Ulysses* like the thunderclap in *Finnegans Wake*' (Tymoczko 1994, p. 44), central to the novel's 'mythic architectonics' (ibid.). Tymoczko suggests *metempsychosis* in *Ulysses* is of an Irish rather than Greek character, emphasised by Joyce's attitude to the body, which is not considered an encumbrance by the reincarnated figures of *Ulysses*, in contrast to the moralism of the Pythagorean view that the souls of the just are not burdened with a body (ibid., pp. 45–46). Joyce repudiated the social purity discourse inherited from this view, typified in Theosophists' revulsion from sex, that 'degrading demand of nature' (Mullin 2003, p. 117). As he told Frank Budgen, 'my book is the epic of the human body' (Budgen 1972, p. 21), declaring, 'If they had no body they would have no mind . . . It's all one.' (ibid.). This parallels a rabbinic understanding of the self, whereby 'soul and body form a whole rather than a polarity' (Goshen-Gottstein 1994, p. 177, cited in Lachter 2014, p. 70). From Theosophy, Joyce draws the idea that 'only the plasmic substance can be said to be immortal' (U 14.1281), the 'plasmic memory' being the total memory of the soul's journey through successive incarnations (Gifford and Seidman 1988, p. 430).<sup>7</sup>

Another source for the doctrine of *metempsychosis* is the kabbalah, the 'general rule' of reincarnation 'up to a thousand times' being mentioned for the first time in *Sefer Ha-Bahir* (Elior 1995, p. 259), exceeded in the multiple selves of HCE, for whom 'only the caul knows his thousand and first name, Hocus Crocus, Esquilocus' (FW 254.19–20). Ernst Bloch, in *The Spirit of Utopia* (1918) discusses the absurdity of the notion of absolute death, identifying in *metempsychosis* the doctrine that could unite the two metaphysical 'puzzles'—memory and hope—to understand that motion and life exist not only in this world' (Boldyrev 2014, pp. 148–49). In *Finnegans Wake* ALP is the '*Amnium instar*' (FW 287.8), the 'Ensouling Female' who sustains HCE's 'Agonising Overman', prefigured in 'Our grandam, which we are linked up with by successive anastomosis of navelcords' (U 14.299–300), imagined by Stephen as a generational telephone cable (Ramsey 1998, p. 62): "Hello! Kinch here. Put me on to Edenville. Aleph, alpha: nought, nought, one" (U 3.39–40), which connects to Eve: 'Spouse and helpmate of Adam Kadmon: Heva, naked Eve. She had no navel. Gaze' (U 3.41–42). The patterning of the human soul, 'in the image of its divine ancestor whom Paracelsus calls "the star in us"' (Woodman 1983, p. 51) is suggested in *Ulysses* in the appearance of Dignam's ghost at a spiritualist séance:

*In the darkness . . . a faint but increasing luminosity of ruby light became gradually visible, the apparition of the etheric double being particularly lifelike owing to the discharge of jivic rays from the crown of the head and face. Communication was effected through the pituitary body and also by means of the orangefiery and scarlet rays emanating from the sacral region and solar plexus. Questioned by his earthname as to his whereabouts in the heavenworld he stated that he was now on the path of pralaya or return. (U 12.338–346)*

The discharge of light from the crown of Dignam's head and face conjures up representations of Adam Kadmon, anthropomorphic configuration of the ten *sephiroth*, the highest *sephira* being *Keter* (Crown). The emanation of orangefiery and scarlet rays and the luminosity of ruby light heralds the

<sup>7</sup> The phrase, 'plasmic memory', appears in Joyce's notes on embryological development, compiled while planning 'Oxen' and listening to his daughter, Lucia, inside Nora's womb (Herring 1972, p. 171).

return of Rudy with his 'ruby buttons' (U 15.4965–66), reflected too in the reddish glow of the orange giant, Aldebaran, the eye of Taurus, perhaps the 'ireglint's eye' (FW 6.35) doubling as the island called Ireland's Eye in *Finnegans Wake*.

#### 4. Messianic Geometry

In 'cycloannalism' Joyce condenses the repetition of Viconian cycles that informs the structure of *Finnegans Wake* with *psychoanalysis*, a term first used by Sigmund Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams*: 'and we are recurrently meeting em, par Mahun Mesme, in cycloannalism, from space to space, time after time, in various phases of scripture as in various poses of sepulture' (FW 254.25–28). On the map of Jewish thought, psychoanalysis is immersed in the tragic paradigm which closes the individual's life in the past-oriented, cyclical and fatalistic eternal return of the same and, as such, offers no future and no hope (Bielik-Robson 2014b, p. 86). In *Minima Moralia* Theodor Adorno accuses Freud of failing to see the messianic potential of his psychoanalytic theory, which could reach beyond the conformist 'disgrace of adaptation' (ibid.). Benjamin's concept of the *constellation* may afford some escape from this, in its consonance with Freud's method of free association in dream interpretation, which utilises the dreamer's free associations, insisting that 'by a circuitous route they guide him back to the hidden meaning of the dream' (Frieden 1993, p. 103). Both moving configurations are redolent of Abulafia's technique called *jumping*: jumping from one conception to another, using associations as a way of meditation, every 'jump' opening a new sphere (Scholem 1974, p. 136). The temporal indeterminacy of dreaming, 'at no spatial time processly which regards to con crude chronology' (FW 358.5–6), subverts archaeologists' custody of the past in a way consistent with Benjamin's 'not-yet-conscious knowledge of *what has been*', in which 'its advancement has the structure of awakening' (Benjamin 2002, p. 883). The messianic charge of this advancement Joyce formulates as the 'sleeper awakening, in the smalls of one's back presentiment . . . a flash from a future of maybe' (FW 597.26–28).

*Finnegans Wake*'s 'Grandmère des Grammaires' (FW 256.20), 'uptenable from the orther, for to regul their reves by incubation' (FW 397.33–34) is the artist-prophet, Shem's 'traumscrap' (FW 623.36), a dream narrative obtained from the ether, 'bespaking the wisherwife . . . A Laughable Party' (FW 66.15–17), written at the behest of his mother, ALP, the *aleph* of her name expressed as laughter. With her 111 children, ALP transliterates the system of gematria in kabbalah, whereby a numerical value is assigned to each letter of the word which is the name of the letter in the Hebrew alphabet (Ifrah 1998, p. 255): 'Anna Lynchya Pourable! One and eleven' (FW 325.4–5). Aleph, the name of the first letter, 'the spiritual root of all other letters' (Scholem 1965, p. 30), 'an allforabit' (FW 19.1–2), has the value  $1 + 30 + 80 = 111$  (Ifrah *op. cit.*): 'Allaliefest, she who pities very pebbles, dare we not wish on her our thrice onsk?' (FW 562.7–8). As Shem writes for ALP, so the 'divine element in revelation, the immense *aleph*, was not in itself sufficient to express the divine message, and in itself it was more than the community could bear' (Scholem 1965, p. 31); only 'the prophet was empowered to communicate the meaning of this inarticulate voice to the community' (ibid.). Shem the Penman, Joyce's alter ego, residing at the 'house O'Shea or O'Shame . . . no number Brimstone Walk' (FW 182.30–31), inhabits 'the proper element of the created being' (Bielik-Robson 2017, p. 48), a finite realm separate from God, 'cloaked in the dark "Luciferic" colours of Fall, Sin and Evil' (ibid., p. 44), denigrated by the upstanding bourgeois, Shaun, as a 'Negoist Cabler . . . whom 'tis better ne'er to name, my said brother, the skipgod' (FW 488.21–22). Denied the dignity of a name, Shem, scapegoat escapee from God, and 'first till last alshemist' (FW 185.34–35), is the 'unseen blusher in an obscene coalhole' (FW 194.12), his 'rosy gnoses glow' sliding 'lucifericiously within an inch of its page' (FW 182.4–5). Embodying Agrippa's *humor melancholicus*, which 'attracts certain demons into our bodies, through whose presence . . . men fall into ecstasies and pronounce many wonderful things' (Yates 1979, p. 62), Shem the 'Shamman' (FW 192.23), 'driven by those numen daimons' (FW 142.23), falls into such ecstasies:

*the whirling dervish, Tumult, son of Thunder, self exiled in upon his ego a nightlong a shaking betwixtween white or reddr hawrors, noondayterrorised to skin and bone by an ineluctable phantom . . . writing the mystery of himsel in furniture. (FW 184.5–10)*

Writing the ‘untireties of livesliving being the one substance of a streamsbecoming’ (FW 597.7–8) Shem universalises the materiality of altered consciousness (*substance*), in ‘various phases of scripture as in various poses of sepulture’ (FW 254.28) within the cranial architecture of the chambered tomb, Hegel’s ‘Golgotha of the Spirit’. The scriptural exegesis of archaeology’s ‘jetsam litterage of convolvuli of times lost or strayed’ (FW 292.16) configures pastoralism—practiced in the Mondego valley and Serra da Estrela—as a metaphor of the transmigration of souls:

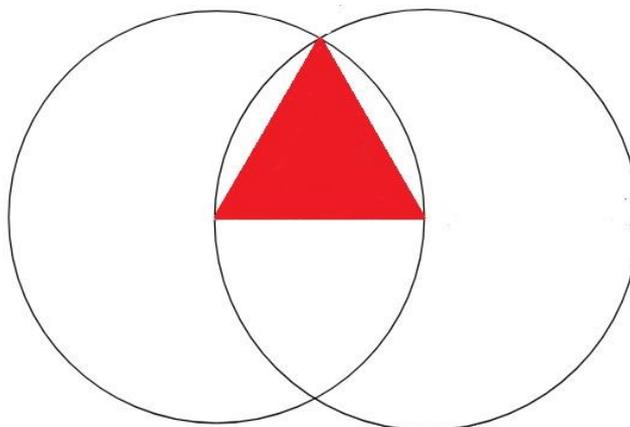
*Yed he med leave to many a door beside of Oxmanswold for so witness his chambered cairns a cloudlitter silent that are at browse up hill and down coombe . . . a testament of the rocks from all the dead unto some the living. Olivers lambs we do call them, skatterlings of a stone, and they shall be gathered unto him, their herd and paladin. (FW 73.28–35)*

In a paragraph imbued with number and letter mysticism, ‘Olivers lambs’ evokes *Aleph Lamed*, the first two letters of ALP’s name, meaning ox and ox-goad, respectively, illustrative of the congruence of grazing animals, tombs and reading. The first word, ‘Yed’, evokes *Yod*, the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, having also the numeric value of 10. It is the letter that symbolises God and the first letter in the Tetragrammaton (YHWH), often inscribed within an upward-pointing equilateral triangle with the *yod* at the apex, a symbol derived, via the kabbalists, from the Pythagorean tetraktys, a triangular figure consisting of ten points (Potts 1982, p. 74): ‘the first praisonal Egoname Yod heard boissboissy in Moy Bog’s domesday’ (FW 485.5–6). Appropriately, in *Finnegans Wake*, ALP is identified by a triangular siglum:  $\Delta$ . The *Ma’ayan ha-Chokhmah*, ‘the fountain of wisdom’, describes *yod* as the source of all linguistic motion, both infinitely extending but returning to its centre and origins in its ‘unfolding’ (Jacobson 2003, p. 142). A translation of Knorr von Rosenroth’s *Kabbalah Denudata* (1677–1689) available to Joyce, emphasises the linguistic potency of ALP’s triangle: ‘Yod, at the end of the Tetragrammaton denotes the synthesis, the circular movement by which the end returns to the beginning . . . Yod is represented by three circles at the angles of an equilateral triangle with the apex uppermost’ (MacGregor Mathers 1926, p. 63). The ‘creating motion’ of *yod* Scholem reads as an attempt to split open the atomic core of the divine name, ‘unleashing a “magical” power locked at the root of spoken, linguistic motion’ (ibid.), a literal potency embodied in ALP in *Finnegans Wake*, whose ‘birthright pang . . . would split an atam like the forty pins in her hood’ (FW 333.24–25). Considered as *separate* from the divine world of transcendence, the world of immanence ‘is destructively impregnated with the idea of infinity that explodes it from within’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p.133), seen in the *Wake*’s ‘Accusative ahnsire! Damadam to infinities’ (FW 19.30).

The suggestion that the dolmen’s chamber acted as a ‘womb’ where initiates would spend the night in a vision quest that would culminate in Aldebaran rising in ‘the penultimate antelucan hour’ (U 14.1102–3) before sunrise (Silva 2015, p. 135), accords with the ‘Night Lessons’ chapter of *Finnegans Wake*, additionally to the maternal context of Bloom’s epiphany. Here ALP’s son, Shem (as Dolph) initiates his brother, Shaun (as Kev), in the embodied mystery of their mother, observed by their sister, Issy. Dolph instructs Kev in the construction of ‘an equoangular trilitter’ (FW 286.21–22), the latter word suggesting the trilithic structure of two portal stones and a lintel which forms the opening of chambered tombs. In the left margin looms a verbal evocation of the ‘ruby and triangled sign’ and ‘everlasting bride’ of Bloom’s vision, including portmanteau allusions to the stellar bovine, *bos*, and the proud/brewed/broad/bride of the Mullingar Inn: ‘The boss’s bess bass is the browd of Mullingar’ (FW 286.L). Joyce’s sexualised adaptation of Euclid’s first proposition, the ‘elementator joyclid’ (FW 302.12), ‘first of all usquilateral threeingles’ (FW 297.27), is ‘the whome of your eternal geomater’ (FW 296.31–297.1), ‘the maidsapron of our A.L.P.’ (FW 297.11), ‘Mother of us all!’ (FW 299.3). The brothers’ ‘trancedone boyscript’ (FW 374.3–4), chiasmically rendered with bovine connotations as ‘Boston transcribed’ (FW 617.23), radiates from ‘ann aquilittoral dryankle Probe loom’ (FW 286.19–20) which climaxes with the ‘ALP diagram’ (Figure 1) on page 293.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The *vesica piscis* formed by the overlapping circles of the ALP diagram has a striking parallel in the esoteric drawings of the Christian Kabbalist, Paul Yvon (Wilke 2017), particularly his *Mathematical Propositions* of 1638. A ‘feminist turn’ is noted in

The ovoid form known as the *vesica piscis*, signifying an ‘unspeakable mystery’ and ‘a symbol of the womb’ (Stirling 1897, pp. 12–13), means ‘astronomically at the present day a starry conjunction’ (ibid., p. 13), ‘the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter’ (Benjamin 1968, p. 255). In Babylonian mathematics it is the ‘ox-eye’ (Friberg 2007, p. 212), *īni alpi* (Horowitz 1998, p. 42), an iteration of Aldebaran, the eye of Taurus, and a further linguistic echo of ALP.



**Figure 1.** The First Proposition from Euclid’s *Elements*, the inspiration for the ALP diagram in *Finnegans Wake*. The ovoid shape formed by the overlapping circles is the *vesica piscis*.

This geometry lesson correlates with the geometric construction of the Sabbath in the anonymous kabbalistic text, *Sefer ha-Mafteah*, in which she is described as ‘a singular and glorious queen possessing six radii’ (Lachter 2014, pp. 124–25). With an obscure reference to a ‘Book of Euclid’, the author demonstrates the elevated status of the Sabbath, who occupies an inner point at the intersection of six radii. Emanated from the *sephira*, *Binah* (the Supernal Mother), seven *sephiroth* are broken down into three pairs (forming three patterns like the paired circles of the ALP diagram), while the *Shekhinah*, as the seventh, has no partner (ibid., p. 125). The purpose for this emanation is to create the space for the Sabbath to dwell (ibid.): ‘That she seventip toe her chrysming, that she spin blue to scarlad till her temple’s veil, that the Mount of Whoam it open it her to shelterer!’ (FW 562.9–11). In Moses de Leon’s *Sodot*, the Sabbath, being called ‘first’, is accompanied by six radii (*kitzvot*), which are above, below, and the four directions, ‘a perfected adornment’ for ‘a singular and perfected *sefirah*’, for ‘as it is said, “six wings for each one” (Isa. 6:2)’ (Lachter 2014, p. 125).

Kev objects furiously to Dolph’s geometric revelation of the ‘sixuous parts’ (FW 297.22) of their mother, striking his brother so hard that he ends up ‘seeing stars’: ‘I can’t say if it’s the way you strike me to the quick or that red mass I was looking at but at the present momentum, potential as I am, I’m seeing rayingbogeys rings round me’ (FW 304.05–09). Painted in the polygonal chamber of Anta da Arquinha da Moura—the Ark (treasury) of the Enchanted Moor—is a circular configuration redolent of the ‘red mass’ of ‘rings round’ perceived by Dolph, with paintings of quadrupeds and anthropomorphs. When the chamber was excavated fragments of red ochre were found, of a colour similar to the paintings. Disarticulated human remains had been unusually grouped, with skulls on one side of the chamber and long bones on the other (Cunha 1995, p. 135). The tomb/womb dialectic, continually at play in the ‘doubling bicirculars’ (FW 295.31), the crossed Os (letters *and* bones) of *Finnegans Wake*, linked to the utterance of the inarticulate voice of *aleph*, is suggested by ‘*Uteralterance or the Interplay of Bones in the Womb*’ (FW 293.L), the marginal phrase accompanying the ALP diagram.

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the Hebrew inscription beneath one etching, *immenu El*, which translates as ‘God is our Mother’ (Wilke 2017, p. 200). This is followed by the genital imagery of a globe within which opens a vaginal *vesica piscis*, ‘the merciful womb of the intelligible world’ (ibid., p. 201). A ‘mathematical drawing with some discourses’ by Paul Yvon was found in the house of João Pinto Delgado when an entire community of Portuguese Marranos in Rouen was accused of apostasy by French authorities in January 1633 (ibid., p. 185). For ‘unknown reasons’, Yvon was held in some esteem by the secret Jews of Rouen (ibid., p. 186).

This interplay coincides with the words of that ‘Hailfellow some wellmet boneshaker’ (FW 447.30–31), Hegel, for whom the life of the Spirit:

*is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself.* (Hegel 1979, pp. 18–19)

In the ‘ossuaric’ context of the tomb, where ‘Spirit is a bone,’ according to Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel 1979, p. 208), ‘when you cannot fall any further, you can only begin to rise’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 264). This message ‘rests in the figure of aleph’, which contains ‘the dialectical identity of Spirit and bone,’ being, on the one hand, the breath-word from which creation sprang, and on the other, ‘an allegorical scheme of a creaturely form, reduced down to a bone-like structure, aiming in a gesture of desperate prayer to its creator’ (ibid.). Indeed, the ALP diagram, its ‘owlglassy bicycles’ (FW 208.9), triangles and lozenge, resembles the bone idols found at Almizaraque in south-eastern Spain, tibiae carved with paired-circular ‘eye’ motifs, lozenges and triangles, imagic forms incorporated to perceptions of goddess worship and a postulated Mediterranean ‘owl goddess’, the owl of Minerva that, in the preface to Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, ‘spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk’ (Honderich 1995, p. 638) (Figure 2). In Benjamin’s ‘melancholy immersion’, the ultimate objects handed down to us by tradition, uncanny, undecipherable, turn into allegories that:

*fill out and deny the void in which they are represented, just as, ultimately, the intention does not faithfully rest in the contemplation of bones, but faithlessly leaps forward to the idea of resurrection.* (Benjamin 1998, p. 233)



**Figure 2.** Carved tibiae with ‘owlglassy bicycles’ (FW 208.9) from Almizaraque in south-east Spain (Luquet 1911, p. 443, after Siret 1908).

Evidence for ceremonies at the dolmens in the forecourt outside the dolmen entrance, interpreted as a ‘scenic space’ (Silva 2015, pp. 134–35), reveals a dramaturgic dimension, ‘stage to set by ritual rote for the grimm grimm tale’ (FW 335.5), with closed, possibly reserved, spaces (the chamber and corridor) and open spaces for the general audience (the frontal atrium) (Silva 2015, p. 135) where ‘the heavenly one with his constellatria and his emanations stood between’ (FW 157.18–19). The ‘impossible leap’ to escape the fate determined by the circularity of astrological myth, implicit in the arrangement of the dolmens, can be explored through Benjamin’s ‘messianic misreading of the tragic genre’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 87), illuminating both the Joycean epiphany in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* and the megalithic ‘moment-place’ of the dolmens.

As a word, the Greek τραγούδια (*tragoudia*) may recall the hypothesised ritual origins of the tragic genre, as the ‘goat-song’ accompanying the sacrifice of a goat (Burkert 1966, p. 115). The agon between Benjamin and Nietzsche is centred on Nietzsche’s *aesthetization of tragedy*, which pushes tragedy back into the world of myth and away from the world of history, the tragic hero being turned into a mere appearance, *a priori* doomed to *untergehen* (going under) (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 87). Conversely, Benjamin perceives a sense of historical novelty hovering over every ancient tragic drama; a silent, spectral pregnancy of a yet unknown word, of a yet unknown God (ibid.). This difference is seen as primarily reflected in the opposition of two concepts: *birth* versus *origin* (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 113), whereby Benjamin responds to Nietzsche’s ideas about the birth (*Geburt*) of tragedy by choosing the word *Ursprung* (origin), which is deciphered as ‘an initially silent and inarticulate, predominantly bodily, action of the *first leap*’ (ibid.). His attitude to tragedy is influenced by Christian Florens Rang, for whom ‘Tragedy is the astrological break-through but also an escape from the fate determined by the stars’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 113). In tragedy the circular movement of the cosmos, retraced by the circular movement of the sacrificial victim around the altar ‘is transected by the diametrical, diagonal straight line, the willed path of the tragic subject who has found a means of breaking through out of the circle’ (Asman 1992, p. 613, cited in Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 113). Here one may detect an anticipation of Benjamin’s dialectical leap ‘in the open air of history’ (Benjamin 1968, p. 253). Jumping to the Anta da Arquinha da Moura, its red-painted imagery depicts just such an *ursprung*, if ‘read’ vertically, from bottom to top. Initially, the apparent confinement of a caprid in an enclosed space; then, concentric rings surrounding a void; finally, at the apex, the leaping caprid in what may be described as its ‘agonistic moment of escape from the iron cage of astrological myth’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 113), the passage of the dolmen forming the ‘willed path’ to Serra da Estrella and Aldebaran (Figure 3). Translating the ‘exodic thrust’ of the Biblical escape from Egypt from the collective to the individual in Greek tragedy, Benjamin performs an allegorical move in which Greek tragedy offers a personalised version of the messianic exodus, ‘planting it truly and traumatically in the “heart of man”’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 111). Thus tragedy re-emerges as ‘a recurrent pattern-*eidos* of an original anti-mythic struggle’ (ibid.) in ‘the cosmic tug of war between the antinomian forces of redemption and the mythic forces of reconciliation’ (ibid., p. 95). Would humour offer an escape from or reconciliation with the circle of fate, as Bloom carries the sins of the people as part of the staging of the scapegoat ritual in ‘Circe’ and ‘All the people cast soft pantomime stones at him’ (U 15.1902)?



**Figure 3.** Representation of an ink drawing by the author of paintings within the chamber of Anta da Arquinha da Moura, showing the movement of caprids through a confined space.

## 5. The Ever-Renewing Birth of a Soul

An allusion in a Latin footnote written by ALP's daughter, Issy, in the Nightlessons episode of *Finnegans Wake*, offers a key to the epiphany central to the architectonic of this paper, Leopold Bloom's vision of 'a ruby and triangled sign upon the forehead of Taurus' (U 14.1109). It reads: 'Apis amat aram. Luna legit librum. Pulla petit pascua' (FW 262.F4). This translates as "The bee loves the altar. The moon reads a book. The foal seeks the pasture" (McHugh 1980, p. 262). Issy—'pretty Proserpronette' (FW 267.10–11)—is Persephone to ALP's Demeter. Porphyry states that priestesses of Demeter were named *Melissae* (bees), while Persephone bore the epithet, *Melitodes* (honeyed) (Ransome 1937, p.96). Issy is also Isis; the first *Apis* in her footnote implicating her in the mysteries of Apis, the 'mighty bull', guarantor of fertility and abundant harvests (Myśliwiec 2004, p. 76). Representations of Apis show him with a triangle upon his forehead (see Kater-Sibbes and Vermaseren 1975), sometimes being suckled by Isis (ibid., p. 79). Simultaneously, *Apis* is implicated in an epiphanic insight, implanted 'truly and traumatically in the heart' of Leopold Bloom. His trauma may be understood in the context of Rosenzweig's starry configuration of the move from creation to revelation, thence to redemption: the 'psychotheology of the soul' in which the shock of revelation is necessary before the self could become the beloved soul (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 138). Bloom is stung on the chest by a bee as he lay sleeping in the garden on Whit Monday, the day after Pentecost, the feast that commemorates the receiving of the Torah on Mt Sinai, and the day when the Holy Spirit descends upon Christ's disciples, inducing a speaking in tongues. Bloom's trauma, necessitating a hospital admission, aligns on a passage from Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, in Thomas Taylor's translation:

*The moon . . . who presides over generation, was called by them a bee, and also a bull. And Taurus is the exaltation of the moon. But bees are ox-begotten. And this application is also given to souls proceeding into generation. The God, likewise, who is occultly connected with generation, is a stealer of oxen.* (Gilbert 1952, p. 256)

Stephen's nickname, *Bous Stephanoumenos*—'Garlanded Bull' (Gifford and Seidman 1988, p. 245)—suggests the constellation of the Bull and the mysteries of Apis, while its floral character attracts the bees, identified by Sophocles with the souls of the dead: 'The swarm of the dead hums and rises upwards' (Ransome 1937, p. 107).

The descent of a 'bee-soul' on the moon's day, implanted at a point corresponding to Bloom's heart, is explicable in the light of Boehme's twist to the orthodox typology of Whitsun (Ormsby-Lennon 1988, p. 319): at the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, 'from the opened sensuall tongue', Peter 'spake in one Language all Languages . . . Adams Language whence he gave Names to all creatures' (ibid., pp. 319–20). Benjamin associates the Messianic era with the advent of this universal language, that everyone would understand 'as children on Sunday understand the language of the birds' (Löwy 1992, p. 233). This descent of holiness characterises shamanic possession among the Nilgiris in southern Karnataka (Smith 2006, p. 138) in the process of *jāya* (the invitation to a deity to descend and possess). The deity enters the heart of the person, which 'trembles' at an increased rate, 'changing' the possessed person's mind so that it can speak through him (Smith 2006, pp. 138–39). The possession trance is induced by drumming, swaying and singing a 'deity-inviting song' in which the deity is addressed as 'one who comes riding a black bee or dragonfly' (ibid., p. 139). Emanating as bee-souls from the stellar *bos* of Taurus, the alliterative buzz of 'The boss's bess bass' (FW 286 L), 'with his drums and bones and hums in drones' (FW 485.26–27), generates the tonal 'humminbass' (FW 295.1) of 'bierhiven' (FW 315.22)—combining Beethoven,<sup>9</sup> the pub's 'beer heaven', the funerary

<sup>9</sup> Adorno's comments on the music of kabbalah 'reach their crescendo' (Wasserstrom 2007, p. 73) in his writing on Beethoven, emphasising the salvific connection between mysticism and music in his notes for his major Beethoven opus: 'Hope is always secret, because it is not "there"—it is the basic category of mysticism and the highest category of Beethoven's metaphysics . . . an image of hope without the lie of religion' (ibid.).

bier on which the-yet-to-be-revived Finnegan lies, and the beehive.<sup>10</sup> The seasonality of the bees correlates to the seasonality of Persephone Melitodes, absent for half the year, according also with the seasonal movement of the flocks between the Mondego valley and the starry summer pastures of Serra da Estrella, analogous to the circulation of souls, ‘reberthing in remarriment out of dead seekness to devine providence’ (FW 62.7–8) towards ‘red resurrection’ (FW 62.20).

A resurrection of messianic hope is staged in the pantomimetic inauguration of ‘the Paradisiacal Era’ (U 15.1630–31) in ‘Circe’, where Leopold Bloom is hailed by the ‘Bloomite’ Veiled Sibyl, but reviled by the evangelist, Dowie, as ‘this stinking goat of Mendes’ (U 15.1754) and ‘the white bull mentioned in the Apocalypse. A worshipper of the Scarlet Woman’ (U 15.1756). This white bull appears in the Animal Apocalypse of the Ethiopic *Book of Enoch*, ‘a second Adam’ emerging at the end of days as a messianic figure (Joseph 2014, p. 173). As ‘worshipper of the Scarlet Woman’ the messianic Bloom would surely qualify as an ‘archetype of the paradox of the holy sinner’ (Scholem 1974, p. 293), embodying the Sabbatian principle of ‘redemption through sin’ (Scholem 1971, p. 78), offering ‘a starry glimpse of the bliss of the eternal Shabbat that knows no suffering and hardship’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 292).

## 6. Conclusions

In the petrified unrest of this ‘starchamber quiry’ (FW 475.18–19), the chthonic goddess of myth, Bachofenian romanticism, and archaeological imagination is reconfigured in an unstable ‘Shekhinic’ formation with Joyce’s female characters, Molly, ALP and Issy. However, as a ‘chthonic solphia’ (FW 450.18), is this configuration not ineluctably entangled, as an archetypal image, in ‘the unconquerable dominion of myth’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 28), or is it possible to dislodge such images from the mythic continuum? Through the deterministic cycles, generalities and repetitions of myth, the ‘singular uniqueness’ of the epiphany, realised in ‘the starry image (*Sternbild*) momentarily detached from the oppressive totality’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 310), glimmers as a ‘phantastichal roseway anjerichol’ (FW 470.18) of angelical ascent and Jericho’s fall, illuminating individuated remnants of the ‘Jericho’ of the collapsed totality. The cryptotheological misreading of archaeology and literature, introduced as ‘the astrologer, to the constellation of two stars’ (Benjamin 1933, in Menke 2002, p. 357), defers the dialectical closure of a reconciliation that would either dissipate the antinomian charge of what remains unresolved, or shatter the ultimate coherence of irreconcilable elements. Hovering in this indeterminate space we may recognise the *messianic apprehension* crystallised in the hesitant ambivalence of ‘the brideen Alannah . . . lost in her diamindwaiting’ (FW 377.20), whose self-awareness, *contra* Gadamer, is infinitely more than ‘a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life’ (Gadamer 2013, p. 289), chiming with Ernst Bloch’s anticipatory consciousness of a possible world, adequate to ‘the soul’ (Hudson 1982, p. 28). That the corridors of the Carregal do Sal dolmens no longer align on the heliacal rise of Aldebaran registers ‘the spectral semi-presence of lost historical openings and chances’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a, p. 176), Adorno’s hopeless hope that ‘overwinters’ (Martins 2016, p. 187).

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<sup>10</sup> Rachel Murray’s article, ‘Beelines: Joyce’s Apian Aesthetics’ (Murray 2017) proved invaluable in uncovering this aspect of Joyce’s writing.

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