# Theme : HOW THE ZODIAC SIGNS CAME TO BE? History of origin.

To the first explorers of the sky these constellations seemed similar to the outlines of animals, so the belt of constellations is known as the **zodiac** from the Greek word zodiac meaning circle of animals.

Division of the sky on 12 windows goes back to Sumerian civilization and 60 personal system of calculation and astronomy of ancient Babylon. As a result of acceptance of the Babylonian system by ancient Greeks and **12 signs of zodiac** on number of constellations were born.

Each sign of the zodiac consistent its own legend from ancient Greek myths.

**Aries** The first sign of the zodiac in myths **Aries** always appears as a courageous, agile and energetic animal, able to overcome obstacles.

With this sign is associated the ancient Greek legend of **Titanida not Fella**, who saved her children from the evil stepmother by placing them on a golden ram. The ram was supposed to carry them to **Colchis**, but on the way, the girl could not hold onto its back and fell into the sea, where she drowned. Upon arrival in a safe place, the boy offered this beast as a sacrifice, which was accepted by **Zeus** himself. He placed the beast in the sky, creating **the first constellation of the Aries.**

The second sign of the zodiac is **Taurus** – a gentle creature always symbolizing strength and sexuality. According to legend, the ancient Greek god **Zeus** fell in love with a Phoenician girl named **Europa**. In order to possess her, he turned into a **white bull** and kidnapped her. He carried her to the island of **Crete**, where he possesed her. The enormous **bull's** head was reflected in the sky and **turned into the constellation Taurus.**

**Gemini** is the third sign of the zodiac, symbolized by **humans** rather than animals. According to legend, **Zeus** had two sons born to him by the princess **Leda**. They were named **Castor** and **Pollux**. They were mighty and brave brothers who accomplished many feats, but when one of the brothers died, the other asked **Zeus** to take away his immortality so they could be reunited. **Zeus** granted his request and placed both brothers in the sky.

The fifth sign of the zodiac is represented by the **Lion**, the king of beasts. The first feat of **Heracles** was supposed to be the destruction of a fierce and fearless **Lion** that lived in the German valley. No human weapon could penetrate it's skin. **Heracles** attempted to kill the **Lion** with arrows, but this method also yielded no positive results. The hero decided to defeat the **Lion** with his bare hands, possessing incredible strength, he managed to squeeze it's neck with his fingers and strangle it. The constellation of the **Lion** immortalizes the courage of **Heracles** displayed during the battle with the mighty German **Lion**.

**Virgo** is the sixth sign of the zodiac and the second symbol of which is a **human**, not an animal. It is known that **Virgo** symbolizes the goddess of **fertility, Demeter**. The sign is a symbol of **innocence and purity** with the appearance of the constellation Virgo, it is associated with the myth of **Pandora's box.** Pandora brought a box to Earth, which she was forbidden to open. One day, succumbing to curiosity, she lifted the lid, contrary to **Zeus's** order. When she opened the box, all misfortunes and human vices flew out, leaving only hope at the bottom of the box. After this, dark times came and the gods, one by one, left the Earth. The last to leave was Astraea, the goddess of **innocence and purity.** Since then, she has lived among the stars, turned into the constellation **Virgo**.

**Libra** is the seventh sign and the only one whose symbol **is neither a human nor an animal.** Libra represents balance, justice and harmony. In ancient Egypt, the scales of justice were exclusively presided over by the god **Anubis**. **Anubis** stands by the large scales, using them to weigh the heart of the deceased. On one side sits the heart of the person and on the other the feather of the goddess **Maat**, symbolizing truth. According to Egyptian beliefs, **if the person's heart balances with truth, they can attain a second life in Greek mythology.**

The eighth sign of the zodiac is represented by the **Scorpion**, which paralyzes it's prey with venom. It's name is linked to the quarrel between **Artemis** and the hunter **Orion**. When the latter sent **Scorpion** to him to poison him with it's venom. After **Orion's** demise, **Zeus** placed both **Scorpion** and **Orion** as constellations in the sky.

 **Sagittarius** is the ninth sign of the zodiac. **Sagittarius** is a **centaur, a mythological creature that is half-man, half-horse.** According to legend, it was the wise **Chiron** who possessed many skills. He was skilled in **healing**, **hunting**, **playing musical instruments**, and **predicting the future**. Once, **Heracles** wounded **Chiron** with a poisoned arrow, but as the wise centaur was **immortal, Heracles** promised to find a way to ease his suffering and when, during his labors, **Heracles** found the unfortunate **Prometheus**, whom **Zeus** had bound to a rock where an eagle ate his liver, the centaur **Chiron** agreed to take his place. As a result, **Zeus rewarded him for his nobility by placing the centaur among the stars.** That's how he became the constellation Sagittarius.

**Capricorn** is the tenth sign of the zodiac, represented by an animal with strong hooves that climb up steep mountains, gripping every protrusion. This image is associated with the great **Mesopotamian god Ea**, who brought knowledge and culture to these peoples. In ancient Greek times, **Capricorn became associated with the lively and lustful god Pan, the ruler of forests and fields, herds and shepherds.**

Once saving from the pursuit of the terrible monster **Typhon**, god **Pan** jumped into the river, but diving into the water he did not have time to finish the transformation and **as a result the part that remained underwater turned into a fish tail, while the upper part remained as a goat.**

The symbol of the eleventh zodiac sign, **Aquarius**, is a person with a water pitcher from which water pours out. In ancient Greek mythology, **Aquarius** is associated with the myth of the only man who did not suffer during the great flood. After the rains subsided, the only surviving righteous man, **Deucalion**, and his wife **Pyrrha** found refuge on Mount **Parnassus**. **Zeus** commanded the water to recede, then he ordered them both to gather as many stones as they could and throw them without looking back over their shoulders. **Deucalion** and Pyrrha did as instructed. **The stones that Pyrrha threw turned into women, and those thrown by Deucalion turned into men. Thus, Deucalion became the forefather of humanity.**

The twelfth zodiac sign is depicted as two **fish tied together, swimming in opposite directions.** **The two fish** in the water symbolize conflicting emotions. The legend goes like this: once, the goddess of love Aphrodite and her son Eros were strolling along the riverbank. Suddenly, a gigantic fire-breathing monster named Typhon emerged before them, roaring like a bull, growling like a lion, and hissing like a serpent. **Frightened, Aphrodite turned to her father Zeus for help. He transformed both of them into two fish, and they leaped into the river, thus managing to escape and survive.**

**As we can see, the formation of the zodiac signs happened gradually, and all the signs that the ancient Greeks adopted from the Sumerians, they merged with their worldview and managed to create a system that has come down to our days.**