

Interpreting 5 Ancient Constellations Across Cultures

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Civilizations come and go, with some lasting mere decades while others endure for millennia. But what rarely changes, at least on human timescales, are the stars above us. Nonetheless, past cultures have often [connected the dots of various stars](#) in different ways — representing everything from the myths of creation to legendary figures and godlike animals, depending on the viewer.

Some of these cultural references go back thousands of years, and are possibly even older. They represent early examples of humanity's preoccupation with symbolism in the world around us, as well as how even vastly different cultures have sometimes interpreted the sky in similar ways.

“Cultures around the world organize stars into [constellations](#) or [asterisms](#), and these groupings are often considered to be arbitrary and culture specific,” wrote the authors of a recent [paper](#) published in *Psychological Science*. “Yet there are striking similarities in asterisms across cultures, and groupings such as Orion, the Big Dipper, the Pleiades, and the Southern Cross are widely recognized across many different cultures.”

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