

The Saros Cycle - Eclipses come in Families

Bernadette Brady - 1995

In predictive astrology eclipses can give very mixed outcomes often they seem to vary dramatically from one eclipse to another. In the past astrologers have taken to examining the chart of a particular eclipse. However, far better results can be achieved by stepping back and looking at the geometry of how eclipses occur, not on the individual level but rather on the larger cyclic playing field of life. For each seemingly isolated eclipse belongs to a larger pattern, each eclipse is a member of a family and each family has particular characteristics.

The Geometry of a Saros Cycle

These families or cycles have beginnings, middles and ends, and were first discovered by the Babylonians. Any one cycle will run for well over a thousand years, making the study of individual eclipses equivalent to sitting and watching a giant hardwood tree grow. The tree may be involved in some activity which, because our period of observation is so small compared to the life of the tree, would appear to be a random, unconnected event. However, if we sat there for a thousand years, the random event may well fall into an organised pattern, slowly unfolding over hundreds of years. But how much better if the long wait is by-passed and the very the nature of the tree itself, its species and its characteristics is studied.

The Babylonians pursued this path and by 747 bce. could accurately predict the timing of a lunar and solar eclipse. Indeed, by the 4th Century bce they had recognised that eclipses occurred in Series. These Series were name Saros Series or Cycles by the Greek lexicographer Suidas in the 10th century ce, the word "saros" meaning repetition or to be repeated. Each saros series produced a solar eclipse every 18 years plus 9-to-11 days (depending on the number of leap years occurring in the 18 year span).

Each Solar saros series starts as a tiny partial eclipse at either the North or South Pole. This eclipse has an orb of between 15° and 18° "in front" of the nodal axis in terms of zodiacal longitude. During the course of the life-span of a particular saros series, each member eclipse will occur closer to the nodal axis, (north or south node) slowly reducing the orb between the eclipse and the axis. As this slow closing of the orb occurs over hundreds of years, the eclipses within a given series move from being partial to total as they get to within 90 to 110 of the Nodal axis. After approximately 650 years, the eclipses of the series will occur conjunct the nodal axis and then continue on their journey, drawing away from the nodal axis until the eclipses in the series once again become partial at 90 to 110 behind the axis.

Saros Series Solar 16 North

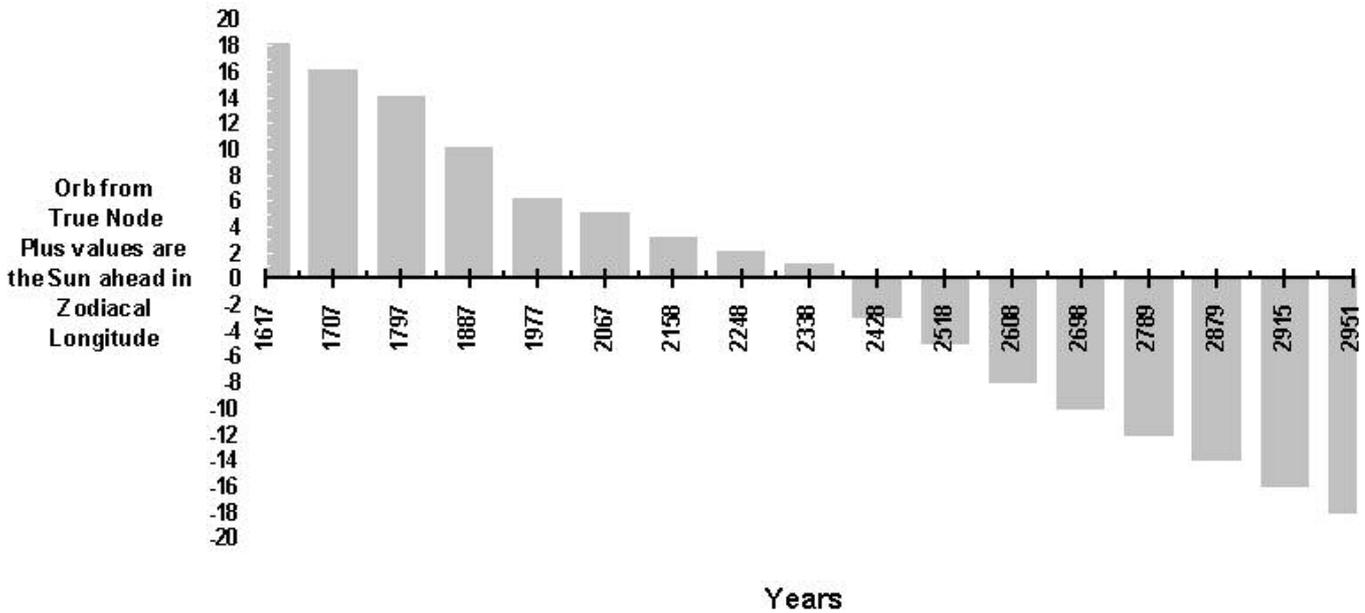


Figure 1 - SS 16 North - orb with Node

The Solar Saros Series are also geometrically balanced. A solar eclipse occurs if a New Moon forms within an 18° orb of the transiting Nodal axis - represented as the 0° line in the graph. Each eclipse in the series moves about a half a degree retrograde through the zodiac. Thus, it eventually catches and retrogrades passed the node. SS 16 North started in 1617ce and will complete it geometric dance by 2951 ce

The end of the cycle is when the series finally produces a tiny partial eclipse approximately 18° behind the nodal axis. This eclipse will occur on the Earth at the opposite Pole to where the series started. If the saros series was born, or commenced, with a tiny partial eclipse on the North Pole then it will finish some 1300 years later as a tiny partial Eclipse on the South Pole.

At the same times as any one particular saros series is running from a Pole, as in the above example, imagine another 19 to 21 series also running from the same Pole, all at different stages of their lives. As the saros series is born and begins its journey, there may be another half way through its cycle. Others started only several hundred years earlier, and still other series nearly finishing will be part of this wave across the planet. Now duplicate the situation by adding another 19 to 21 saros series running at the same time from the South Pole. At any given period there are about 42 saros series active, half of them running from North to South Pole and the other half running from the South to North Pole. All these series are, as it were, washing over the globe.

This may appear confusing but these waves are quite regular. In any given year there are two eclipse seasons, one occurring as the transiting Sun conjuncts the transiting North Node, and the other occurring as the transiting Sun conjuncts the transiting South Node. The Saros Series that are chasing, overtaking, and then pulling away from the South Node originate at the South Pole and are called Saros Series South. The series active around the North Node originating at the North Pole are called Saros Series North. In any one year we have an eclipse from a North Series and also an eclipse from a South Series.

Thus there are North Saros Series and South Saros Series. Each Series contains 71 to 73 eclipses as it runs, or should I say crawls, from one Pole to the other.

Imagine the whole concept as a forest. Each Saros Series is a tree in the forest and each individual eclipse is a leaf from a particular tree.

To help distinguish the 19 to 21 Series which originate from the same Pole each is allocated a number. These numbers are from 1 to 19 and are allocated not by order of

birth but by actual years in which the Saros Series will produce an eclipse. The system labels two series as Saros Series 1 South and Saros Series 1 North because they will

both be producing eclipses within six months of each other. It does not matter if the two series are at different stages of their development; what is important is the timing of their eclipses.

For example, in 1965 the two Solar eclipses were from Saros Series 3 North and Saros Series 3 South. Eighteen years further on in 1983 there were also two Solar eclipses one

from Saros Series 3 North and the other from Saros Series 3 South. These two saros series were "born " at different times, 3 North in the year 991 ce and 3 South 1208 ce but because their 18-year patterns coincide so that their eclipses occur in the same year, or always within six months of each other, they are allocated the same number.

Sometimes a saros series will be ending as another is starting. When this occurs there are two solar eclipses in the same eclipse season. When this occurs, the two over-lapping saros series responsible for the solar eclipses are both given the same number. There will be an overlapping period of a hundred years or so. At the moment there are two Saros Series 9 North producing Solar eclipses in one eclipse season. However, one Series would be called Old and the other New. Thus we have names like Saros Series 9 New North and in the same year Saros Series 9 Old North. Once the transition has occurred between the incoming and the outgoing, the word "New" is dropped from the name.

So we have a forest of trees, each tree at a different stage of development, half the forest originating from the South Pole and growing towards the North Pole and the other half originating from the North Pole and growing towards the South Pole. Each tree has a name based on its Pole of origin (and therefore the Node on which its eclipses will occur) and a number. The number is derived from the sequence in which that "tree" or series will produce an eclipse.

Given that this is a forest of related eclipses, working with them as individual events is like picking up a handful of leaves from our forest floor and trying to discover

the history of the tree without ever knowing that the leaves in your hand belong to more than just one tree. Not only is there this dilemma but examining the effects of an eclipse one year and applying that knowledge to an eclipse happening in the following year is like working with a maple leaf to give you knowledge of a pine tree.

However, if an astrologer can sort the leaves and know each tree in the forest, then there is a much better chance of being accurate in terms of predicting the outcomes of any given eclipse.

Sorting Leaves

By back-tracking along the trail of eclipses within a given saros series one can find the very first eclipse of the series and therefore the exact moment that that eclipse occurred. This gives a "birth chart" for a particular saros series and this chart sets the theme of expression of every other resulting eclipse in the series. For once the first eclipse occurs, the rest of the series over 1300 years is a geometrical forgone conclusion.

For example, in 1979 there was a solar eclipse on the 22nd of August at 29° Leo. This solar eclipse belonged to Saros Series 18 North. In examining this series it can be found that the first eclipse was on the 4th February 1060 ce (o.s.) at a time of 21:06:29 GMT at the North Pole. The series will end on the 8th March 2304. By casting a chart for that moment and ignoring the angles and the houses, for the latitude of the chart is 90° North, the following planetary combinations are found.

The New Moon 21° 34' Aq
Mercury 27° 19' Aq
Venus 25° 09' Cap
Mars 28° 34' Ta
Jupiter 26° 57' Cap
Saturn 3° 52' Ge
Uranus 1° 26' Sag
Neptune 6° 20' Ta
Pluto 26° 15' Aq
Node 3° 37' Aq

In working only with the tightest aspects and midpoints, one can see that the basic essence of the eclipse series is a Pluto Mercury conjunction with Uranus on the Mars/Saturn midpoint.

A Mars/Saturn combination is not easy and, expressed through Uranus, talks of sudden difficult times placing a large drain on the individual, which can result in exhaustion. It also has a flavour of brutality about it and, indeed, Ebertin even goes so far as to suggest "a case of death". Add to this the Pluto Mercury conjunction: obsessiveness about news or information, or intense worry.

This is a tree, a saros series which has been producing eclipses every 18 years 9 to 11 days since 1060 ce. In this century Saros Series 18 North will or has produce an eclipse in 1907, 1925, 1943, 1961, 1979 and 1997. Each time it produces an eclipse it will occur about 10- 11° further along in Zodiacal longitude. So in 1907 its eclipse was at 17° Cancer ; 1925 it was at 28° Cancer; 1943 at 8° Leo; 1961 at 19° Leo; 1979 at 29° Leo and in 1997 at

10° Virgo. Each time one of these eclipse occur it will be of the energy of the original planetary combinations. i.e. a Pluto Mercury conjunction and Uranus on the Mars/Saturn midpoint.

For a given individual to experience this eclipse they would need to have a natal planet or point at one of these degrees. For them to experience this Saros Series more than once in their life they would need to have at least two of the above degrees occupied in their natal chart . Even then, if they were in sequence, there would be an 18 year gap between manifestations. Indeed for most people who were unlucky enough to experience SS North 18, for it is a difficult eclipse family, it is likely they will never experience that particular saros series again.

A simple case study.

One of my clients did experience this eclipse family in 1979. Her natal Moon is 29° Aquarius in her 11th house (Chart A) and the eclipse of the 22nd August was therefore opposed to this Moon.

Client

Natal Chart

29 Jul 1942

11:09 PM AEST -10:00

Sydney NSW

33S52 151E13

Geocentric

Tropical

Topocentric

True Node

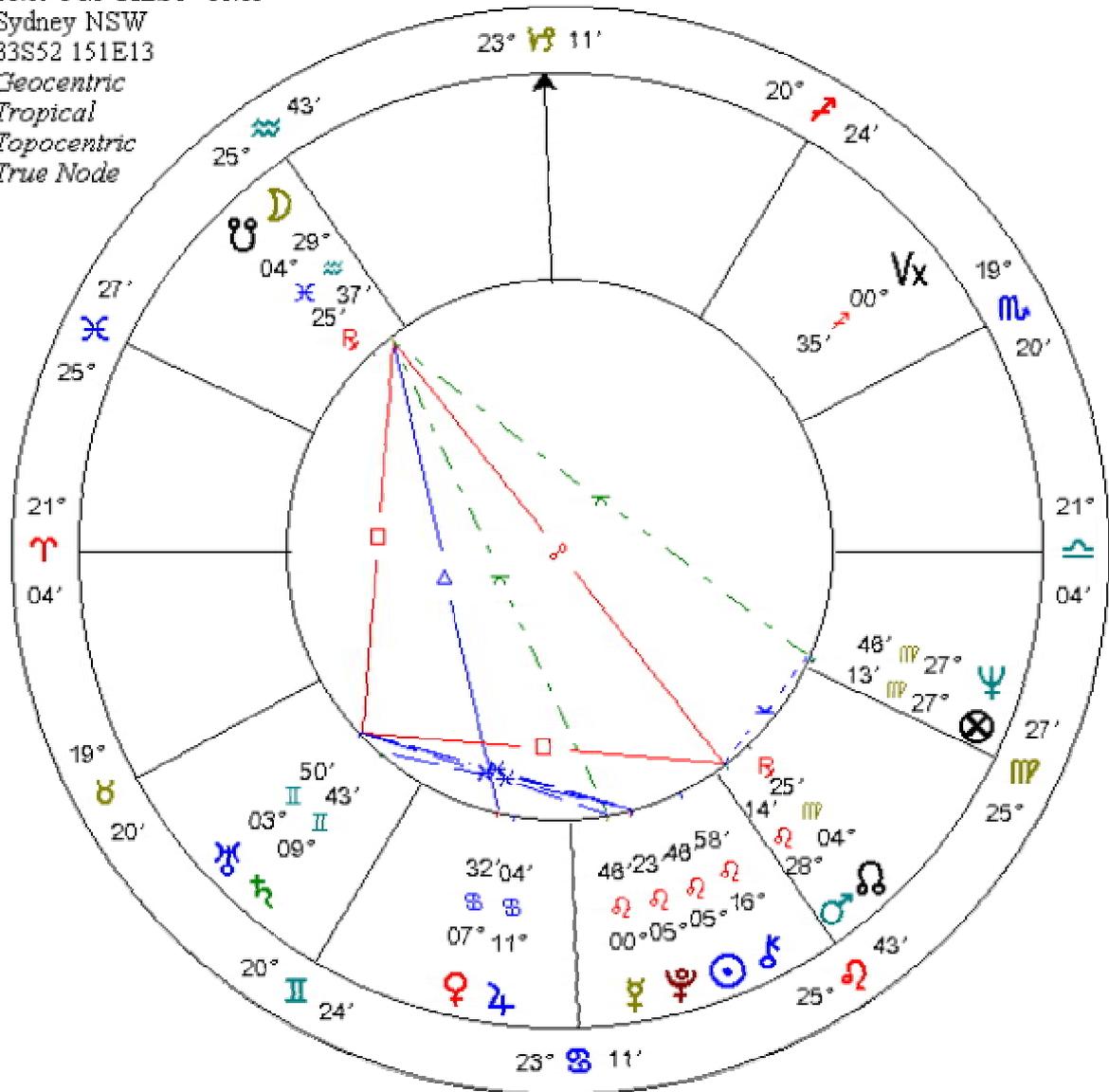


Chart A

The Solar eclipse directly affecting the 11th house Moon suggests that there will be events concerning a female friend or a friend towards whom the client feels very nurturing. This friend may even be connected to the household or be "family" in some way, as the Moon is ruling the fourth house in the client's chart .

As the eclipse season started, a very close female friend who lived in the same house as the client, went missing. The client spent some weeks in a high state of anxiety awaiting news of the missing friend. The news came at the end of the eclipse season that the friend had driven into a remote place and suicided.

Here we see the full expression of the Pluto conjunct Mercury - the worry and the anxiety - as well as the difficult Uranus to the Mars/Saturn midpoint.

But was this just my client's Moon rather than the effects of SS 18 North? Well the following year another solar eclipse conjuncted her natal Moon. This eclipse was a different Saros Series. It was Saros Series 18 South. Born 20th August 1096 o.s. at 18:24:19 GMT, South Pole.

S.S.18 South is described by a Venus Jupiter quincunx with the Node sitting on the midpoint of the New Moon, Neptune and the Venus/Saturn midpoint. This Saros Series is quite different to SS 18 North and is about partings which, although upsetting, are Venus Jupiter in flavour implying they are occurring for a positive reason.

At the time of the eclipse the client was in a state of depression concerning the death in 1979. A female friend who lived in another city suggested the client visit her for a holiday. The client went on the holiday and while there met and fell in love with a person in the healing profession. She decided to move to this new city, a decision full of joy yet containing some distress as she would be parting from a lot of good friends.

The above is a simple example of how different eclipses from different series will express different energies. In both cases the client's Moon was being aspected by the eclipse, yet the outcomes were expressed by the delineation of the particular Saros Series involved. (I have not included here the transits and progressions but these would, of course, be a very necessary to reveal the overall picture).

It should be noted that as an eclipse occurs I am not using the original birth chart in synastry with the client's chart. I am firstly observing if a particular eclipse is going to aspect a person's natal chart using only the degree of the transiting eclipse. If that is the case, then I use the planetary combinations at the birth of the series to tell me what are the energies that are going to be dropped into this person's life.

Summary of Points

Each eclipse belongs to a Saros Series.

Each Saros Series produces an eclipse every 18 years 9 to 11 days.

Each eclipse in a Saros Series will occur 10° to 11° further along in Zodiacal longitude.

Each Saros Series has a precise birth time and then runs for approximately 1300 years.

Each eclipse of a given Saros Series expresses the energy of the original eclipse of the series.

The Best and the Worst Saros Series

With 38 to 41 different Saros Series active on the planet at any one time and each one carrying a theme of planetary energies, a natural question arises; which are the "good" Saros Series and which are the "bad"? Any such judgment is of course subjective so the following is purely my own opinion.

I feel that the best Saros Series is SS 5 New South. Born on the 14th July 1787 at 23:03:14 GMT at the South Pole, It does not complete its journey until 3031 ce

The New Moon 22° 16' Ca

Mercury 17° 17' Leo

Venus 27° 10' Ge

Mars 22° 05' Ta

Jupiter 15° 15' Ge

Saturn 27° 50' Aq

Uranus 25° 39' Ca

Neptune 16° 15' Li

Pluto 15° 33' Aq

The Node 4° 21' Cap

The planetary combinations are:

New Moon = Mercury/Venus

Node = New Moon/Jupiter

A joyful happy series. A sense of good news, falling in love or some form of peak experience that is filled with happiness and expansion.

This series produced eclipses in; 1913 at 6° Libra, 1931 at 17° Libra , 1949 at 28° Libra, 1967 at 9° Scorpio and 1985 at 20° Scorpio. The next eclipse in this series will be in 2003 at 1° Sagittarius.

The worst or most difficult series in my opinion is Saros Series 8 South. Born on 1st April 1718 at 0:15:02 GMT at the South Pole, it will not complete its journey until 2962 ce.

The New Moon 10° 54' Ar
Mercury 19° 52' Pi
Venus 23° 21' Ar
Mars 20° 19' Ta
Jupiter 24° 27' Can
Saturn 29°42' Li
Uranus 3° 16' Li
Neptune 14°25' Ta
Pluto 12° 45 Li
The Node 24°27 Vi

The planetary combinations are:

Saturn = New Moon/Mars

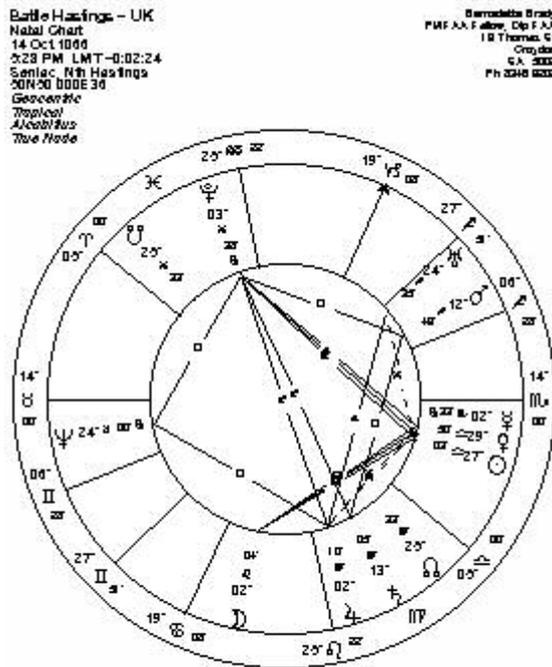
This series carries a theme of separation and loss, bodily injury and or upheavals with authority figures.

This series produced eclipses in; 1916 at 7° Leo, 1934 at 17° Leo, 1952 at 28° Leo, 1970 at 8° Virgo and 1988 at 19° Virgo. The next eclipse in this series will be in 2006 at 29° Virgo.

If an eclipse from this series, SS 8 South, is forming a conjunction or opposition to a personal point in a client's chart, then it is a very strong indication of difficult times. However, if it was an eclipse from SS 5 South, then it is an indication of great joyfulness. By knowing to what series any particular eclipse belongs, then the actual expression of the eclipse can be understood and most importantly delineated correctly.

An Example of a Saros Series expressing itself through its Eclipses

Battle of Hastings Chart and SS 18 North. (This example was first published in the AA Journal and has been added to this Dutch article as the examples in the original article were for the then forthcoming eclipses in 1995 and 1996)



The British royal family and The Battle of Hastings seem to have a very strong connections

Sarios Series 18 North, commenced 4th Feb 1060 o.s. which is a Pluto Mercury combination linked with a Uranus to the Saturn Mars midpoint. It is defined as causing accidents and as a very physical eclipse and considered to be one of the more violent and difficult eclipse families. (*Eagle and the Lark page 232 as well as Appendix 6*) This Saros Series has now tragically touched the current British royal family twice.

In Aug 22nd 1979 the Saros Series produced an eclipse at 2^o Virgo, which conjunct the Jupiter of the Hastings chart. On the 27th August 1979

Mountbatten was assassinated by the IRA. 18 years later the same Saros Series of eclipses has struck again, this time it has formed a conjunction to the Hastings chart Saturn and Princess Dianna has been killed in a car accident.

Other eclipses from SS 18 North to have effect this are:

5th May 1204 Conjunct Ascendant (may not be correct if time is wrong)
22nd July 1312 Conjunct IC (may not be correct if time is wrong)
23rd August 1384 Conjunct Jupiter
4th Sept 1402 Conjunct Saturn
19th Oct 1474 Conjunct Sun
1st Dec 1546 Conjunct Mars
4th May 1799 Conjunct Asc (may not be correct if time is wrong)
23rd August 1979 Conjunct Jupiter
1st Sept 1997 Conjunct Saturn
17th Oct 2069 Conjunct Sun

To be Born on an Eclipse

The knowledge of Saros Cycles also gives the astrologer an insight into the client who is born on an eclipse. If a person is born a day either side of a solar eclipse, then in a sense they become part of that Saros Series with their life interwoven with the meaning of the Series.

A note-worthy example of this occurred on the 21st June 1982. The heir to the British throne, Prince William, was born. This was also the date of a solar eclipse. The Saros Series which provided the eclipse was 2 Old North.

Saros Series 2 Old North is finishing. It is in its last stages and only has a few more tiny partial eclipses around the South Pole. It started its life in 792 ce and completes in July 2036. This completion will occur when the Prince is 54 years old.

The planetary energy of this series is:

New Moon conjunct Jupiter on the Mars/Uranus midpoint

Mercury = Venus/Saturn

This talks of endings and separation of unions. Serious decisions about separation which eventually lead to better outcomes.

To have Prince William involved in this series implies quite strongly that he is going to change the face of the monarchy or walk away from it, as his great uncle did. What lends further weight to this unfolding drama is that this Series started in the same period of history as the British monarchy itself. The first recognised King of England who could truly claim that title was the Anglo Saxon Egberht and he came to power in 802 ce. The series ends in 2036 with the heir containing this eclipse in his natal chart. I will leave it to you to draw your own conclusions.

Themes through history expressed by a Saros Cycles

There is also strong evidence to support the idea that the development of human thought or historical events in a particular field are linked to an individual Saros Series.

For example, the year that Gutenberg invented the printing press (1452), the year that Copernicus published his theory that the Sun was the centre of the Solar System (1543), the year that Newton published his Laws of Physics (1687), the year that Einstein wrote his "Theory of Relativity" (1905) were all years that Saros Series 14, North and South were producing eclipses. Whether it is Saros Series 14 North or Saros Series 14 South that is responsible would require further research. However, the years of 1452, 1543, 1687 and 1905 are all connected astrologically and astronomically to one Saros Series and, as we can see, the significant historical theme of these years is that of publications which have changed the world.

Or on another level dealing with English history, SS 6 North seems to occur in important years of expansion in English history. It started in 850 ce. with the birth of Alfred the Great and then produced eclipses which aspected the Battle of Hastings chart in the following years:

- 1066 - William the Conqueror invades England.
- 1174 - England claims Scotland (William the Lion of Scotland captured).
- 1210 - England succeeds in taking over Wales and Ireland.
- 1409 - England takes Harleech the last of the Welsh rebellions.
- 1643 - Civil War under Cromwell.
- 1733 - Foundation of Georgia USA - first English settlement.
- 1751 - Clive of India takes Arcot - beginning of English rule in India.
- 1770 - James Cook claims the east coast of Australia for England.
- 1788 - First English settlement in Australia.

Saros Series 6 North has the following planetary combinations:

Node = New Moon/Saturn

New Moon quincunx Neptune

which can be delineated as the need to take responsibility and control, as well as issues with authority figures and accepting commitments. These commitments occur due to another person's unreliability or inability to function. An interesting insight into the English colonel mind.

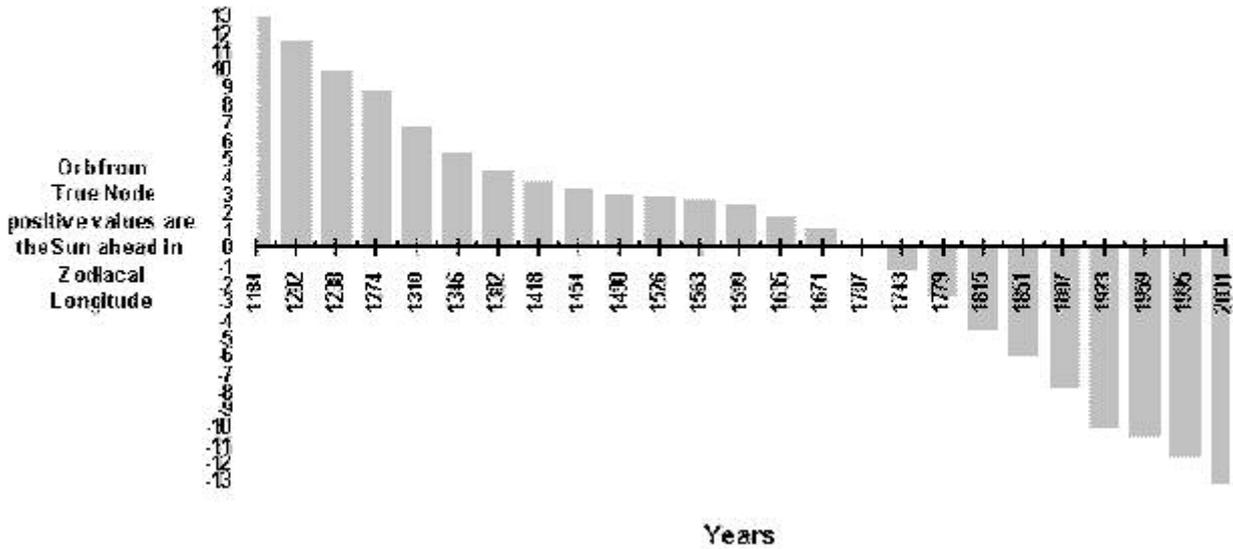
Lunar Eclipses

In the past I have always seen Lunar eclipses as a mathematical expression of the solar eclipse and so derived their meanings from the "parent" solar eclipse's Saros series. However, this never really gave satisfactory results. Recently I have started to work on the concept of Lunar Saros Series after being stimulated by an article by Sylvia Smith in the *Nov 1994 Mountain Astrologer* where she implied such a possibility but gave no methodology. This set me thinking and I have reached the conclusion that the geometry for such a cycle would seem to be that the Lunar cycle was created around the time when the Solar Saros Series was at its midpoint: it's period of producing total eclipses. For these are the Solar eclipse which produces the Lunar eclipses of the greatest orbs (The full moon occurring about 12° ahead of the transiting node and therefore producing a tiny partial lunar eclipses). Two lunar eclipses would happen at this time (a fortnight either side of the Solar eclipse) one belonging to the Lunar Saros Series which was ending and the other belonging to the series beginning.

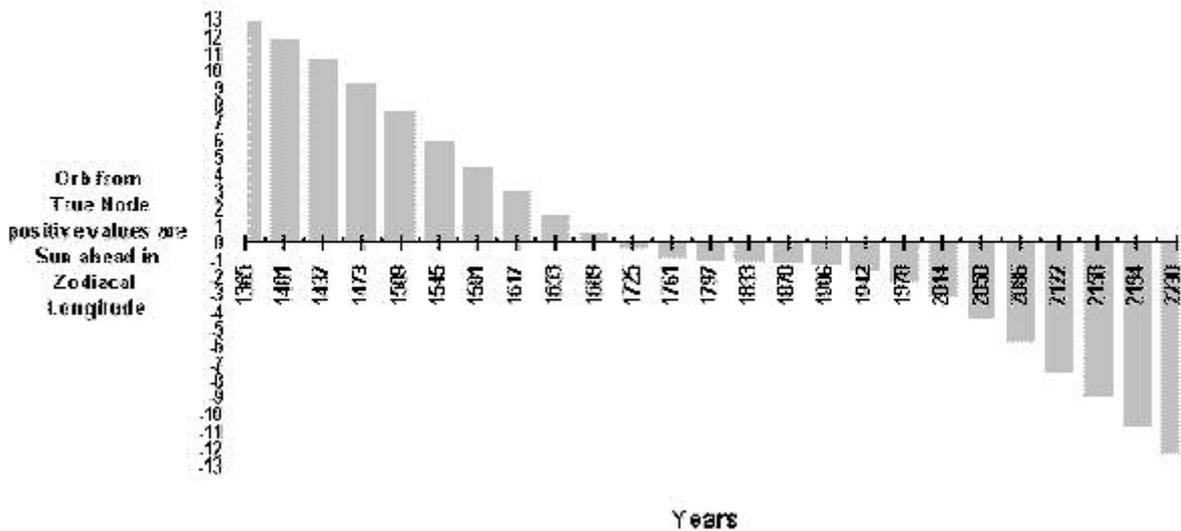
In expanding this work it would seem that the "Lunar Saros Series" are about 800 years long and contain 45 to 47 eclipses per series. Like Solar eclipses, they start as a tiny partial eclipse. However, the full moon must be within a $12^\circ 15'$ orb of the nodal axis, unlike the new moon which will produce a solar eclipse if it occurs within 18° of the sun.

Each Lunar series will produce an eclipse which slowly closes in on the transiting node but not at a uniform rate, as in the case of the solar series. The lunar eclipse produced by a North Node series will take about 500 years to reach totality and only about 300 years to complete, whereas the situation is reversed with the South Node series. (See the graphs) These Lunar Saros Series can be numbered with the same number as the accompanying Solar Saros Series carries.

Saros Series Lunar 16 North



Saros Series Lunar 16 South



The two graphs are for the Lunar Saros Series 16 North and South. The bar graph represents the orb between the degrees of the Full Moon and that of the transiting nodal axis which occupies the 0° line in each graph. As a Full Moon forms within 12° of the transiting node, a Lunar eclipse will occur. By 1202 16 North was fulfilling this geometric requirement. It then took until 1707 to become exact and will move out of orb after 1995. Lunar Series 16 South shows a similar pattern but reversed. It comes into orb and thus commences in 1401 and reached exactness by 1725. It then takes until 2184 to move out of orb.

The Lunar Eclipses of 1995 and 1996

8th October 1995 15° Aries (position of Moon)

This Lunar eclipse belongs to Lunar Saros Series 16 North which started on the 7th June 1202 o.s. at 11:03:55 GMT - no location - and completes in 1995. The planetary positions for that chart are:

Full Moon 22° 36' Ge (position of Sun)
Mercury 2° 52' Can
Venus 1° 28' Ge
Mars 18° 07' Ar
Jupiter 00° 43' Aq
Saturn 12° 43' Ar
Uranus 00° 11' Le
Neptune 22° 22' Pi
Pluto 28° 54' Can
The Node 11° 08' Ge

The planetary patterns are:

A Full Moon, Neptune T-square

Uranus opposite Jupiter

The Node on the Sun/Venus midpoint

What this implies is that if, and I stress if, the concept of Lunar Saros Series is astrologically valid, then the eclipse next October will bring in an energy described by the above planetary combinations. A possible delineation of these could be a rash coming together of a group or gathering of friends

which is for joyful purposes but the individual may well be disappointed or deceived by the group. Or, taking a positive look at Neptune, the group is a spiritual or artistic one.

4th April 1996 15° Libra (position of Moon)

This Lunar eclipse belongs to Lunar Saros Series 16 South which started on the 30th March 1401 o.s. at 00:28:07 GMT - no location - and completes in 2230. The planetary positions for that chart are:

Full Moon 17° 34' Ar (position of Sun)
Mercury 20° 39' Pi
Venus 18° 15' Ta
Mars 10° 26' Sag
Jupiter 5° 42' Sc
Saturn 18° 26' Cap
Uranus 27° 30' Sag
Neptune 7° 24' Ge
Pluto 4° 54' Ge
The Node 5° 46' Li

The planetary patterns are:

Uranus on the Mercury/Node midpoint

Saturn on the midpoint of the Full Moon

Once again if the Lunar Saros Series is valid astrological tool then people experiencing this eclipse on the 4th April next year will probably experience sudden ideas which, although quite exciting, will force or imply that the individual must take up greater responsibilities or become separated from parts of their family.

In Summary

Solar eclipses can be defined and delineated most precisely and accurately by an understanding of nature of each Saros Series. This work has now had over 10 years of testing and research and is giving good results regardless of the astrologer working with them. This is an important point for there is a strange phenomenon that a theory will work for just one astrologer or one culture. With Lunar Saros Series this hypotheses is untested and indeed up to this point unpublished, so let's just wait and see.