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Pythagorean Taboos ('Symbols') on the Tablet HT 117

Linear A ku-ra-mu = Greek ksurēsmos, 'shaving' and Linear A tu-ju-ma = Greek thuōma, 'animal's sacrifice'

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Homeric, Hesiodic, Orphic, and Pythagorean sacral astronomy: an overview

The highest level of ancient Greek astronomy preserved by Homer, Hesiod, the Orphics and Pythagoreans was a basis of high precision chronology

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Greek Cosmos

2p

Highest level of ancient Greek astronomy

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HOMERIC, HESIODIC, ORPHIC, AND PYTHAGOREAN SACRAL ASTRONOMY: AN OVERVIEW

3 p
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The highest level of ancient Greek astronomy preserved by Homer, Hesiod, the Orphics and Pythagoreans was a basis of high precision chronology

Astronomical discoveries of the Greeks. Homer knew the northern celestial pole (the peak of *Olympus*, 'rotating' while terrestrial mountain could not rotate; twelve Olympic gods were related to the northern unsetting constellations) and the northern pole of the ecliptic (*Ida*, 'visible' as 'a mother of animals', i. e. the center of the zodiac, 'a circle of animals'), the sky under the horizon (*Hades*, 'invisible') and the sky near the southern celestial pole (Tartarus). Zeus flying between Olympus and Ida and Hera on the throne might be related to Cepheus near the northern celestial pole and the northern ecliptic pole and Cassiopeia on the throne but the detail astronomical interpretation of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* pointed to Arcturus and Spica as the stars of Zeus and Hera (and important stars in Minoan Crete, according to M. Ridderstad, and in the Bible). Acheront (of Phoenician origin, cf. Arabic *ahret*, 'ultimate') and other rivers in Hades¹ or Tartarus² were related to the southern circumpolar river-shaped constellations of Sculptor, Horologium, Dorado, and perhaps Hydrus while the Acherousia lake / swamp might be the Large Magellanic Cloud near the southern pole of ecliptic (Minoan sailing?). Charon (Etruscan Charu, Ugaritic Horon) in his bark might be related to Canopus in Argo. The Oceanus river was the circular Milky Way.

Hesiod described three celestial zone, *Ether*, *Uranus*, and *Pontus*, as correlates of three Sumero-Babylonian ones, *Enlil*, *An*, and *Enki*.³ The mount of *Helicon*, 'rotating' might denote not only a terrestrial object (which could not rotate!) but also the circumpolar zone of the sky, cf. Greek *Helike*, 'Ursa Major' while nine *Muses* (**mont-*, 'of mountain') denoted circumpolar constellations; ten Idaean Dactyls as the first inhabitants of Crete⁴ might be the same circumpolar constellations. Twelve Titans under the reign of Cronus who were then hidden in Tartarus were the southern constellations located under (southward of) sickle-shaped Scorpius (the sickle of Cronus) including the Milky Way (Oceanus who was not punished) and southern constellations which became invisible during 3rd - 2nd millennia BCE (e. g., Guis, Microscopium, Indus, Telescopium, Pavo, Triangulum Australis, Apus, Musca, and Crux). The Hekatonkheires ('hundred-handed') who guarded the Titans were Ophiuchos and Sagittarius which looked like many-handed while the Cyclopes ('round-eyed') were round Corona Australis and their guardian Campe ('curved')

¹ *Odyssey* x 513.

² Virgil, *Aeneid* vi 297.

³ Sumerian *En-ki*, 'lord of earth' was Greek *Poseidon* < **Poti-chthon*, 'lord of earth'.

⁴ Diod. v 64, 3.

was Scorpius. Hesiod knew the constellations of Pegasus and Aquarius (Pegasus the horse, from *pege*, 'stream,' i.e. Aquarius), sword-shaped Boötes with reddish Arcturus (Chrysaor, 'golden sword'), Orthrus the dog (Canis Minor) and his younger brother Cerberus (Canis Major which rose after Canis Minor), Hydra (Echidna, Typhon, Lernean Hydra), Leo (Sphinx, Nemean Lion), Sagittarius (Eros, 'Love' with a bow and arrows, cf. Old Indian *Kama*)⁵ etc.

Legendary *Orpheus* closely related to Egyptian religion⁶ and solar cult⁷ might be connected with Egyptian *Hor-pa-kherd*, 'the new-born sun.' Orpheus' head might be related to head-shaped Equuleus, his conflict with Dionysus and impossibility to unit with Eurydice might reflect the opposition of Equuleus and Virgo with the star of Vindemiatrix, 'vine-dresser.' Apollo the Orpheus' patron and the Orpheus' lyra were related to Sagittarius and Lyra. The Orphic generations of the gods might reflect the moving of the northern celestial pole from Draco (Ophion, 'he-snake') via Ursa Minor (Rhea) to Cepheus (Zeus) or rather the precessional moving of the Sun in autumn equinox and the full moon in the spring equinox from Ophiuchus to Arcturus. The Orphic idea of the Cosmic Egg reflected the location of the sun (egg) or egg-shaped Equuleus under Cygnus (swan) in the winter solstice (the birth of the sun). Orphic *Protogonus*, 'the first-born' who was born from the egg and had golden wings⁸ might be compared with Old Indian *Prajapati* as the name of Brahma who was born from the golden egg.⁹ Orphic Phanes with the faces of bull and lion¹⁰ like bull and lion in the Orphic hymns interpreted by K. Chassapis reflected the observations of the spring equinox in Taurus and the summer solstice in Leo during 4th – 3rd millennia BCE. Orphic Chronus and Protogon, the cognates of Iranian Zurvan and Indian *Prajapati* as well as Orphic bull, lion, and Ophion similar to Mithraic bull-lion, and snake in the zodiacal circle might reflect common astronomy of Paleo-Balkan and Indo-Iranian peoples.

Pythagorean Hestia as a center of the Universe was called 'a tower of Zeus'¹¹ and resembled tower-shaped Cepheus near both the northern celestial pole and the northern pole of ecliptic; cf. *Tapas*, 'warm' in the cosmogony of *Rigveda* and the Scythian goddess of hearth, *Tabiti*.¹² Ursa Major and Ursa Minor as the nurseries of

⁵ The cosmogonical role of Lowe might be related to the cardinal point of the sun (the autumnal equinox) in Sagittarius during 6th – 5th millennia BCE.

⁶ Diod. Sic. iv 25, 3.

⁷ Eratosth. *Catast.* 24.

⁸ *Гимн. Орф.* vi 1; *Гимн. Орф.* vi 2.

⁹ Cf. the golden egg of Prajapati, *Shatapatha-Brahmana*, comments: Шейнман-Топштейн С. Я. *Платон и ведийская философия*, М., 1978, с. 36. See the hymn to Prajapati: RV x 121: the golden fetus in the cosmic waters, cf. RV x 82.5–6.

¹⁰ Orph. fr. 79 Kern.

¹¹ *Ζανὸς πύργος*: Arist. Fr.204.

¹² Cf. many other parallels of Pythagorean and Old Indian ideas, Шредер, Л. Ю. Пифагор и индийцы, *Журнал Министерства народного просвещения*, 1888, № 10; Шейнман-Топштейн С. Я. *Платон...*

Zeus¹³ are located near Cepheus. The Pythagorean names of the planets resemble the names of the Helios' horses. The Pythagorean formula of harmony in the universe, *tetractis*, might reflect the Titius-Bode law basing on the naked eye observations of Ceres or Vesta and Uranus.

Perhaps, the Greeks and their neighbours correlated celestial and terrestrial images, not only small as the sickle-shaped island of Kerkyra and the sickle-shaped constellation of Scorpius but also large as Phoenicia with the fish cult and Pisces, Crete with the bull cult and Taurus (cf. Talos), Egypt as a double country and Gemini, Mycens with the Lion Gates and Leo (cf. the Nemean Leo near Mycens),¹⁴ Troy and Virgo etc.

So the highest level of ancient Greek astronomy preserved by Homer, Hesiod, the Orphics and Pythagoreans was a basis of high precision chronology

¹³ Hyg. *Astron.* II 2, 1.

¹⁴ Cf. Biblical Dan as a snake (*Gen.* 49:16), possibly Hydra which rose with Leo and was depicted with Leo in Babylonian astronomy, Dan as a lion (*Deut.* 33:22) and related to ships (*Judg.* 5:17); ship-related *Dan* was traditionally interpreted as the Greek *Danaoi*, but. cf. also the constellation of Hydra as a ship in Minoan art.