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Recovering the Lost World, A Saturnian Cosmology -- Jno Cook Chapter 27: Sibylline Star Wars.



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The Sibylline Star Wars

The information below bears on the blazing of Venus and Mercury in 685 BC, the relocation of the polar axis, and the change in the location of the equinox. It is from a document written 800 years later, but clearly from extant sources. It is probably also the most spectacular confirmation of the reality of the events of 685 BC.

Franz Xavier Kugler, an early 20th century translator of Babylonian cuneiform astronomical tablets, in a book titled *The Sibylline Battle of the Stars and Phaethon Seen as Natural History* (1927), analyzed the ending of the fifth volume of the Sibylline Oracle Books, originally completed (it is today estimated) in about AD 115 in Egypt. He suggests that the text deals in specifics, of a yet-to-come event, for which details were garnered from older records, although in his opinion the details date from 1500 BC. In my opinion the details date from 685 BC.

The *Sibylline Oracle* books were written in Greek in lower Egypt between 100 BC and AD 200. They are mostly Jewish in sentiment and philosophy, as they are in politics. Using an established style for prophecies, as in the Delphic oracles and in the writings of the prophets of Israel, "Babylon" is substituted for Imperial Rome, while "Rome" might be a substitute for the real name of an Emperor. This makes interpretation difficult at times. The Books were still in circulation in the 16th century as manuscripts. German and English translations (from the original Greek) appeared late in the 19th century.

Livio Stecchini, in "Cuneiform Astronomical Records and Celestial Instabilities" in *The Velikovsky Affair* (1966), reiterates Kugler's idea that the Sibylline prophecies were based on extant data from antiquity. He also notes that the scientific philosophies which had developed by this time (100 BC to AD 100), required specifics in prophecies. There are additional comments by Malcolm Lowery in the

article "Father Kugler's Falling Star" in *Kronos* (1977), and by Bob Kobres in "The Path of a Comet and Phaethon's Ride" in *The World & I* Volume 10, No. 2 (1995). Stecchini writes, about Kugler:

"Kugler wanted to indicate that the writers of the oracle were so preoccupied with solid astronomical facts that they described the successive phases of the episode of Phaethon according to what they knew about the position of the heavenly bodies in the several months of the year. It is his contention that the writers of this oracle, far from being maniacs breathing gibberish, were trying to make their prediction (based on a past historical occurrence) credible by framing it in an accurate astronomical timetable."

Stecchini then continues to promote his own viewpoint:

"This group of philosophers was fathering modern uniformitarianism, because they were fitting the historical tradition of 'catastrophes' into a cyclical pattern of phenomena recurring at fixed intervals of time, past and future, according to an absolutely unchangeable and predictable order of the heavenly cosmos."

That is so modern to say. The "unchangeable and predictable order" is totally missing. Just read the poem once and you will be convinced. I also disagree with the date of 1500 BC, as if some celestial disruption happened at that time, for it is doubtful if such detailed data was recorded that far back, or that it would have survived as astronomical data, when the social milieu of that remote time still held fast to attributing all such events to the Gods. And I do not think we could hope for a clear calendrical record if the land had been devastated repeatedly and the skies were obscured for years. Much more likely the specific data records the blazing of Venus in 685 BC. By 685 BC, Babylonian astronomical records had appeared and observation of the heavens was well established.

The Great Year

I should first note a related numismatic oddity among the coins of the Roman Imperial period. This involves the reverse side depiction of an upfacing crescent with seven stars above. These occur in the reigns of the Roman emperors Hadrian (reigned AD 117 to AD 138), Commodus, reigned to AD 192, and the Severan dynasty (AD 193 to AD 235) with dates late in the second century AD and early third century. These coins thus coincide or closely follow the writing of the Sibylline Star Wars text. [note 1]

I looked at hundreds of coins from the Roman Imperial era. All the coins depict a head (generally the emperor) in profile and the scene of a full-sized figure on the reverse -- at times mythological, at times as allegorical personifications (Victory, Africa), at times a temple structure or sacrificial devices. One even shows the double-ended triple-tined thunderbolt of the Eastern Mediterranean on the side of a cart drawn by four horses. There are also infrequent depictions of a star within an upturned crescent. In one case this is sitting directly above a pillar of sorts.

There are also some Parthian coins with the crescent and seven stars of the same dates. And then, after the third century AD, it fades, except for occasional uses into the current era. In antiquity Isis, holding baby Horus, is shown standing on the crescent with seven stars surrounding her head, as Mary holding baby Jesus is today.



[Image: Roman coin of the Imperial era after Hadrian.]

Curtis L Clay, posting at <http://www.forumancientcoins.com/board>, in November, 2005, writes, with respect to Roman coins with a "crescent and seven stars" design on the reverse:

Strack, noting that the same type is labeled SAECVLI FELICITAS, "The Happiness of the Age", on Eastern denarii of Septimius Severus [reigned AD 192 to AD 211], interprets Hadrian's type as indicating the return of the seven movable heavenly bodies to their original positions, signaling the beginning of a new golden age.

He cites: (1) Festus: "The mathematicians call it the Great Year when the seven wandering stars complete their individual courses and return to harmony with each other", and (2) Servius [4th century Roman grammarian] on Virgil's Eclogues: "At the completion of the Great Year all of the stars return to their places and begin the next cycle of identical movements. If the movements of the stars are repeated, it follows that everything that happened will recur again, since it is obvious that everything is determined by the motions of the stars. For this reason Virgil says that the Golden Age will return and everything that happened before will be repeated."

I cannot find the related text in Virgil. Clay continues with:

On this interpretation, we have to assume that the moon is depicted twice in the type: it is represented not only by the crescent, but also by one of the seven stars above the crescent, since it is one of the seven wandering heavenly bodies, but is also by far the most prominent of them at night, and the only one that waxes and wanes.

But I suspect that the Moon is *not* depicted twice. The upturned crescent has nothing to do with the Moon. Although the seven stars are grouped in various ways to reflect graphic convenience and representative shorthand, the crescent is always shown as upturned -- a condition which the Moon never achieves, except in the tropics.

The crescent is the backlighted portion of Saturn, last seen in 3147 BC. It has no significance for 2349 BC or 1492 BC, or for June and July of 685 BC, except to signify the endpoint or the start of creation -- the destruction of the heavens. The grouping together of all the planets was still remembered or understood as significant from before 3147 BC, although during the "Era of the Gods" the seven objects grouped together were probably the satellites of Saturn. In the third century

AD these were the seven planets. The crescent below the stars is part of the standard depiction, and has nothing to do with the Moon.

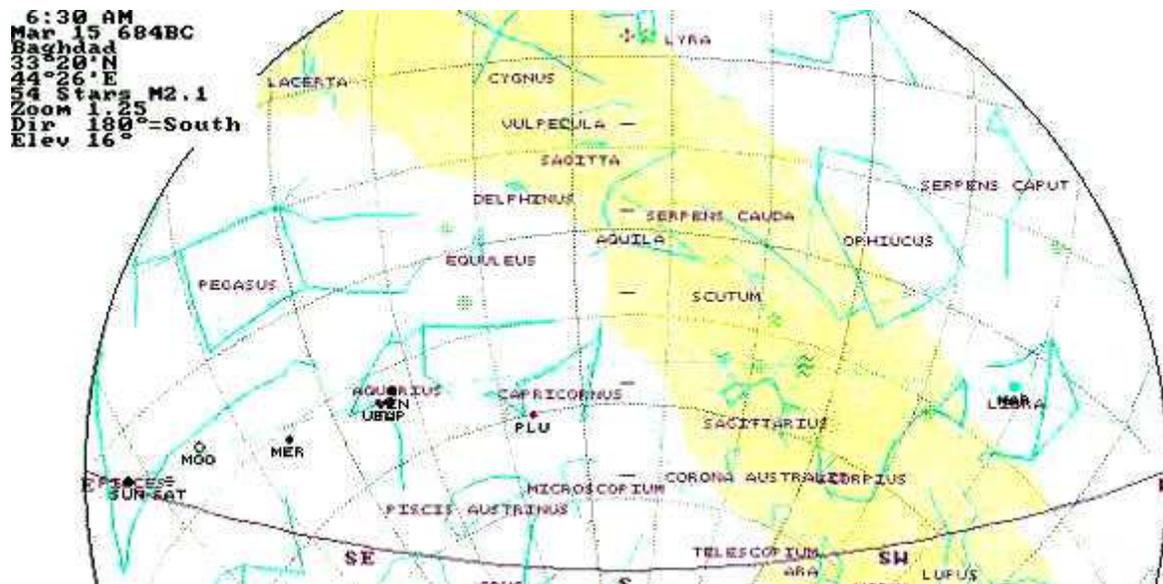
This idea of "grouping together" and the start of a new epoch was reinforced at the beginning of the calendar year following the nova event of 685 BC. In spring of 684 BC, on the day of the equinox, all seven planets presented themselves in the eastern sky just before sunrise.

On March 8th, Gregorian (the equinox in the previous era), the planets extending from the east horizon were: the Sun (before rising), Saturn, the new crescent Moon, Mercury, and Jupiter and Venus (almost conjunct), then a large gap and Mars over the southwest. The first six were all grouped in two houses, Pisces and Aquarius. Geometrically the center of the distance between the Sun (at the far east) and Mars (at the west end) is located in the constellation Capricorn.

Berosus

Berosus, a priest from Babylon who moved to Greece after 300 BC, had noted that planets in Capricorn of the Great Year are associated with a deluge, and when these appeared in Cancer the catastrophe would be fire.

In the previous year -- the year of the nova event of 685 BC -- early in June (June 15, Gregorian) the planets Venus, Mercury, plus the Moon, Sun, and Mars straddled the constellation Cancer (all within 45 degrees). This was the starting day of the blazing of Venus and Mercury. This may be the reference to Cancer which Berosus had in mind. Jupiter and Saturn were nowhere near, however.



[Image: The sky on March 15, 684 BC, Julian, the signs in the sky of the first "Great Year" after the plasmoid of 685 BC. From SkyGlobe 3.6.]

I should note that March 8, Gregorian (March 15th, Julian), is the "old date" of the vernal equinox, which had moved to March 21 in 684 BC, as I have shown elsewhere. This was the first instance of the new date of the spring equinox (although using the old calendar date). The conjunction was also not a unique event. By the end of the same year another conjunction showed up on December 15th: the Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury (these two both in Capricorn) and the setting Sun.

The initial conjunction includes all the elements of the "Great Year" from antiquity: a long interval between catastrophic destructions of the world (or so it was assumed), the grouping together of all the planets so that they will restart their orbits, the first day (the equinox) of the first year in the new era (at the conclusion of the previous era when Phaethon was bolted by Zeus), and, lastly, the identification of the start of the Great Year with the constellation Capricorn.

van der Sluijs

Marinus van der Sluijs, in "A Possible Babylonian Precursor to the Theory of Ecpyrosis," *Culture and Cosmos* (2005), in an analysis of a Babylonian text *Erra and Isum*, suggests a precursor to the concept of a Great Year as shown in the poem's dialog between Marduk (Jupiter) and Erra (Mars). Mars has usurped Marduk's power but relents after being warned how the world will end with fire if he persists. It does, of course, nearly end with fire, although in 685 BC Marduk (as Jupiter) takes control again.

The narrative compares the "water catastrophe" of Marduk with the "fire catastrophe" of Erra -- as if these two directly followed each other. They did not, of course, as we know. The fall of the Absu in 2349 BC would be the "water catastrophe," but the Exodus event intervened.

The crucial details of a common element allowing for the comparison, and the reason for selecting the 2349 BC "fall of the Absu" event rather than Exodus, is that in both instances, 2349 BC and 685 BC, Jupiter (Marduk) is involved in an identical gesture -- he gets up from his seat, then sits down again. The moment he rises, creation starts to come undone.

"Getting up from his throne," in the *Erra and Isum* narrative is an up-country version of the same incident recorded in the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*: the disappearance and reappearance of Marduk's garment. In both cases -- in the *Enuma Elish* and in *Erra and Isum* -- this was the disappearance of the lower mountain-shaped plasma expulsion of Jupiter. In these two instances, in 2349 BC and 685 BC, as I have detailed already, there was the sudden reappearance of the lower coma expulsion or "throne" of Jupiter after the catastrophe -- as if to suggest that the act of reseating Jupiter stabilized creation. The sequence in both cases is extensive because the time lag between unseating and reseating is measured in decades or centuries, but a causality was affirmed.

This is among the details brought forward by vd Sluijs, although without reference to actual events and dates, which he is unaware of. We possess only portions of the narrative, and thus we do not know how the conflict between Jupiter and Mars was resolved, although we could guess. The *Erra and Isum* text is thought to be dated to the period of 1200 BC to 600 BC. Because of the revolt by Mars and the warning of devastation to come, I would opt for a creation date for the document after 650 BC.

What we have here is an example of myth creation (narratization) for two historic events which identify the agents involved. We know both the events and the protagonists, having met them already in the text I have so far presented. Most interesting is that the author is willing to tie together events 1500 years apart with the single gesture of the reseating of Jupiter. The reseating we know of already also. The number of years between these events is certainly much longer than the 684-year span of the Great Year as suggested directly below.

Even in antiquity (as we know from texts in the first century AD), the length of the Great Year was in question. Why this was so will soon become clear. There are some obvious values for the span of time of a Great Year which could be calculated. Some are patently obvious.

Clube and Napier

Victor Clube and Bill Napier, in *The Cosmic Serpent* (1982), use a Great Year of 684 years. It is a value based on B.L. van der Waerden's *Science awakening II: the birth of astronomy* (1974). Van der Waerden found this as a frequently encountered number in ancient Babylonian sources. Clube and Napier go to some rather extensive numerological contortions to pick up a time span of 684 years. They use the date of the second Earth shock (686 BC) identified as due to Mars by Velikovsky, along with a made-up date for the Exodus, 1369 BC, to fit the time span of 684 years (counted inclusively), and use it to suggest that the next catastrophe would be in 2 BC.

This is based on the fiction of a new date for Exodus, which, however, is not needed. The span between the more generally accepted date of 1492 BC for the Exodus, and the first "attack" by Mars in 806 BC (which Clube and Napier were not aware of), spans 686 years -- close enough to van der Waerden's (and the Babylonian) value of 684.

What is interesting, of course, is that the Babylonians were attempting to impose some order to the planets in the sky. The dreadful 120 years of assaults by Mars were real, and were remembered. So were the 684 quiet years which preceded that period. The date of 2 BC might have been viable for a long time as forewarning of another catastrophe, but apparently nothing happened.

I looked for 7-planet conjunctions between 7 BC and AD 1 (Julian astronomical dates, thus to AD 4), checking month to month during the time of a new Moon. These conjunctions are not uncommon. A list of the five found during this 8-year period is shown in the endnotes. [note 2]

I should note that likely the Babylonian astrologers did not use Clube and Napier's math to obtain the number 684. But, assuming "684" was indeed known and was correct, then adding 684 years to 806 BC (the first time Mars devastated the Middle East) will result in scheduling the next catastrophe for the year 122 BC -- when also nothing happened. But adding 684 years to 685 BC makes the next event fall in 1 BC. The dates are astronomical, so that 1 BC represents AD 4 in Eastern Mediterranean chronology. Either date will do.

Hadrian

Meanwhile, conjunctions just kept on coming, without any apparent catastrophic effects. I checked, but no conjunction happened anywhere near the death of Julius Caesar, despite his deification in response to a sighted comet. I also started to check for the time period of the emperor Hadrian from the year AD

100 on. Conjunctions of all the planets spread across the sky happen on the following Julian dates (I may have missed some).

- AD 107, Sep 19, Moon (rising), Sat, Mar, Mer, Ven, Jup, Sun (setting)
- AD 109, Oct 27, Moon (rising), Mar, Sat, Ven, Jup, Mer, Sun (setting)
- AD 115, Jun 5, Sun (rising), Jupiter, Venus, Mercury, Saturn, Mars, Moon.



[Image: The sky on June 5, AD 115, Julian (AD 119 in Eastern Mediterranean chronology).
From SkyGlobe 3.6.]

The last of these (AD 115) corresponds to AD 119 in Eastern Mediterranean chronology. Hadrian became emperor in AD 117, two years before this conjunction. The first coinage of the crescent and seven stars occurs in AD 119 or 120, although I have not been able to verify this from other sources. Hadrian was in Britain at this time, busy with Hadrian's Wall.

I would suggest that the frequent conjunctions were worked into the propaganda of political discourse. The Romans were acutely aware of astrology, and nothing would have been missed. Additionally, the future locations of the planets in the sky could at this time be accurately calculated in advance. [note 3]

"There was an obsession with astrology," writes Tom Bugey, "during the reign of Septimius Severus and successors, the reliance on astrology became a mania." (At <http://tjbuggey.ancients.info>.) Bugey means the Severan Dynasty, AD 193 to AD 235, which followed directly after the emperor Hadrian.

In AD 126 Hadrian completed the building of the Pantheon in Rome -- the temple to all the Gods, all seven -- an absolutely magnificent and sturdy building, which still stands today. On June 30 of astronomical year AD 122 (which is AD 126), there was a clear conjunction (another "Great Year" lineup) with Jupiter in Sagittarius in the southeast, Mars and the new Moon in Libra, and Venus, Saturn, and Mercury in Leo, with the Sun setting in the northwest. All the Gods stood in the sky. Perhaps dedicating the Pantheon at this time had prevented the end of the world.

Stecchini

It thus seems likely that the prophecies of the *Sibylline Books* accomplish what Livio Stecchini proposes, that is, to present a "cyclical pattern of phenomena recurring at fixed intervals of time," even though Stecchini offers no indication of the measure of the repeating cycle. Stecchini wrote, paraphrasing Kugler:

"It appeared in the east sky more brilliant than the Sun,"

He writes, additionally:

"The lines purport to describe the circumstances of the coming end of the world; they were written in the century before the birth of Christ [but collated with other texts in the second century AD] by Greek-speaking inhabitants of Egypt, when the ancient world was agitated by the Messianic expectation of a cosmic upheaval. But the lines give an account that is so exact and technical that it must be something more than a mere mystical vision of coming destruction. Such precise astronomical details are given that, calculating by the position of the constellations around 100 B.C., the crisis began in September and reached a climax in seven months ... after the 7th or the 8th of April."

"... According to Kugler, the crisis described as the Battle of the Stars began with the appearance in the eastern sky of a body as bright as the sun and similar in apparent diameter to the sun and the moon. The light of the sun was replaced by long streams of flame crossing each other."

"After the mention of these streams of flame that replaced the sun as a source of light, there follows the line, 'the Morning Star fought the battle riding on the back of Leo.'"

Stecchini explains, after Kugler, that "Venus [the Morning Star] riding on a lion" was a well known and "feared emblem for disaster" in the Eastern Mediterranean region, and gives examples of unconnected goddesses all depicted as riding on lions. I would point out, of course, that the "emblem" was well known because it had been experienced in 685 BC. Phaethon appeared not in remote antiquity, but in 685 BC. And the "Morning Star" was not Venus, but Mercury.

In the Star Wars description we again find Jupiter (Zeus) coming to deliver a mortal thunderbolt, as in the "legendary" event of Phaethon. Although in our current concepts of the solar system the honor of being the Morning Star goes to Venus, in 685 BC, and since the prior year already Mercury was the Morning Star.

There is no question that the Phaethon legend describes the nova event of Venus and Mercury in June and July of 685 BC, although the Roman author Ovid (before AD 17), who narratized the "legend," places all the action in the span of one day rather than 40 days. Some descriptive details stand out. Ovid notes that large regions of the Earth were burned up with "*Ignis Coelis*" (fire falling from the sky), that Phaethon had to struggle against "the whirling poles" (which may have been a reference to a polar plasma plume) and was swept away by the "swift axis" (the polar axis?), that the normal path of the Sun through the skies was not followed, that the northern constellations attempted to dip into the sea (as the equatorial moved), and ends with the note that the Earth "sank back a little lower than her wonted place" (as paraphrased by Velikovsky).

Plato (circa 300 BC) quotes Solon to the effect that Phaethon's ride ended when he was hit with a thunderbolt delivered by Jupiter. Hesiod (circa 650 BC) mentions the birth of Phaethon to Eos (Dawn) and his abduction by Aphrodite (Venus). Phaethon is Mercury. Aphrodite here is the planet Venus, not the Moon.

A year earlier Mercury had been involved in a plasmasphere contact with Earth which had reduced its orbit to fall entirely within the orbit of Venus. With this in mind, his "birth" as a Morningstar -- "the child of Dawn" -- plus his spectacular "abduction" by Venus will start to make sense.

Mercury's abduction is the near conjunction of Venus and Mercury on June 15th of 685 BC. It was seen as an abduction (also understood as a birth) because Mercury had previously only been seen just above the horizon before sunrise or after sunset (four times a year). It would not have been seen as traveling across the sky with the Sun, except that on June 15th, while very near each other in the sky, both Venus and Mercury started to blaze like suns during the day.

The two planets looked like comets, with shafts of light streaking across the sky -- directed both toward the sun and away from it, and likely at right angles as well. This is what comets do under the electric stress of approaching the Sun. Later astronomers, inspecting ancient records, came to the obvious conclusion that comets are generated when planets meet in conjunction. This opinion was held from Roman times through the Middle Ages.

A Starting Date

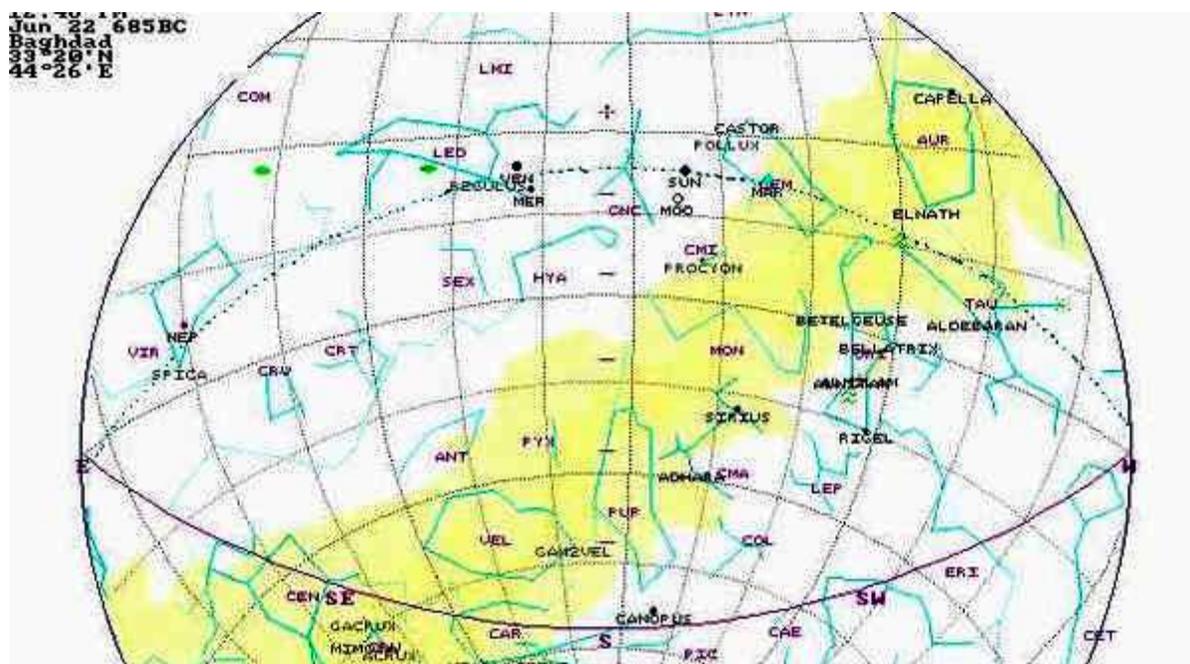
My estimate, made before I ran across the text by Stecchini, was also of an initial appearance in the east and a course of 8 months. Originally I selected a period starting at the earliest in March/April and lasting to January of the following year (rather than Kugler's September to April of 100 BC). At the first writing of this text I had no idea at all of when Venus would first have started to blaze, and used the first date of its appearance in the east, going by ephemeris information. Only in early 2008 did I manage to derive a reasonable set of dates for the event, based on diverse records. At this time I would hold that the blazing of Venus started on June 15, Gregorian, and ended on July 25th Gregorian (June 22 to August 1, Julian). The general details of these two dates were presented in a previous chapter. (Fine detail is presented in the chapter "The Chilam Balam Books.") Finding these dates simplified a reading of the *Sibylline Oracle* texts, which I will address below.

What is of greater interest are the specifics of the prophecies, not the dates. I disagree with Stecchini's evaluation (after Kugler) that the information "is so exact and technical that it must be something more than a mere mystical vision." I should explain that Kugler sees the progression of the Sibylline description as simply recording the path of the Sun through the constellations between September and April, and that this becomes the basis for his assumed Phaethon event of circa 1500 BC by inference (which was actually the Typhon event, and points up how little is really known of the Exodus).

What I see, instead of a play-by-play, is an opening and closing statement which encloses a long list of damages in terms of relocations of the constellations, which range over all except a few of the zodiacal constellations. The effect is not unlike the trail of constellated animals which follow the depiction of the killing of the bull (Taurus) in the temples of Mithras, or the list of celestial damages presented in the play *Thyistes* by Seneca. Both of these are contemporaneous with the Sibylline prophecies.

There is an opening statement: the account of the visionary, how the star-war progressed (at which point dates come into use), what the main weapon was, and a summary of the lasting damages. At the end of the text we find a resolution and a windup signifying the end of creation. Enclosed by these is a long list of alterations in the constellations of the zodiac (and some others), which are neither complete, nor make all that much sense except when the new skies are compared with the old skies -- the dome of the stars before and after 685 BC. But I suspect that the list was not meant to be complete; the main purpose was to suggest the utter derangement and confusion of the stars resulting from the battle.

For Kugler to have used 100 BC is reasonable, since in 1927 it was the best guess for a date for the Fifth Book, and since Kugler only sees an association with the normal path of the Sun. I will not pursue this. I am more interested in obtaining data for the actual event of 685 BC. I will thus shift attention to an ephemeris for the year 685 BC.



[Image: The sky on June 15, 685 BC, Gregorian. Looking south, at noon, a day of the new Moon. Venus and Mercury are in Leo, to the east of the Sun and Moon, which are in Cancer (CNC). (Not corrected for the change in the Earth's axis.) From SkyGlobe 3.6.]

The location of the planets and the constellations with respect to each other remains the same before and after 685 BC, but the polar axis and the equatorial both shift. The constellations all appear in the skies in the wrong places, that is, in the wrong locations with respect to the horizon and the zenith of the earlier ephemeris. Additionally, the starting date of the year (the vernal equinox) after 685 BC had shifted 15 days into the future.

The Opening Text

The text in question, representing lines 688 through 711 of Book Five of the *Sibylline Oracles*, is from a translation by Milton S. Terry in 1899. The text starts with: [note 4]

*"I saw the threatening of the shining Sun
Among the stars,"*

*"and in the lightning flash
The dire wrath of the Moon; the stars travailed
With battle; and God gave them up to light."*

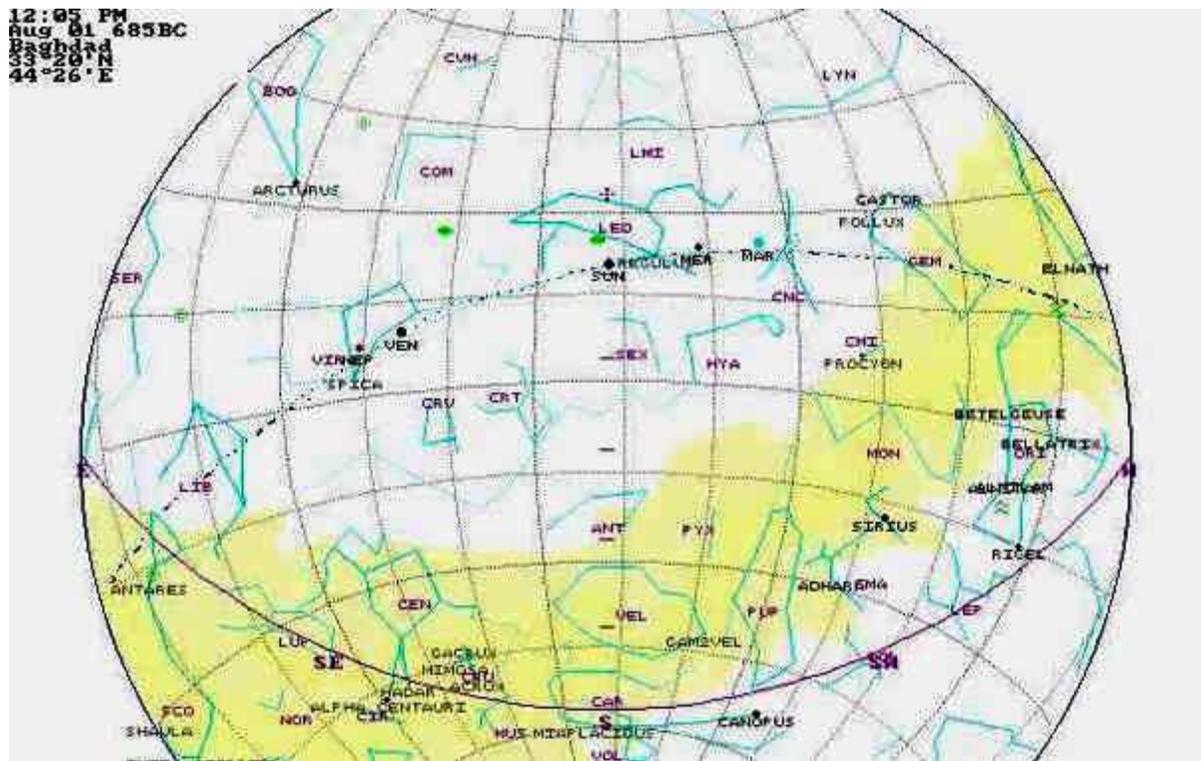
It is the Sun which is threatened by another body or bodies. The "travail of the stars" involves the relocation of the constellations of the zodiac after the battle is done. This becomes fact only after the 40-day battle is completed. More on this below.

"I saw ... in the lightning flash, the dire wrath of the Moon." The author here jumps to the climax of the event, the delivery of the plasmoid lightning bolt of Jupiter on July 25th. Before July 25th (Gregorian), Europe and Asia had seen the bolt approaching from Jupiter for days. The bolt had passed directly by Earth on the day side, but only Mesoamerica had witnessed it at full size. On the 25th of July (August 1, Julian) the bolt was seen approaching Venus and the Sun.

As night fell, and Europe turned away from the path of the plasmoid in the day sky, nothing was seen except the Moon standing in the south, in its first quarter, probably after 9pm in the evening (it set at 1:30am). With the plasmoid traveling at an estimated speed of 40 million miles per day (64 million km per day) it would have reached the Sun in a half day after it disappeared from view to Europe. That is when the plasmoid hit the Sun. It would have been 3am in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Sun rose the next day at 5am, engulfed in a cloud of plasma (to last an additional 7 hours as the 15-million-mile (24-million-km) long plasmoid crashed into the Sun), which also occluded Mercury, Mars, and perhaps Venus. Venus rose late, but may have lost its coma already, in which case it was not likely to have been seen.

I have previously proposed that the plasmoid would have had a diameter of perhaps 1.5 million miles (2.4 million km). That is twice the diameter of the Sun. The plasmoid would have engulfed the Sun. At an estimated length of 15 million miles, the flash of the first contact might have lasted 9 hours. The *Popol Vuh* suggests that additional smaller plasmoid bolts continued to arrive from Jupiter for four days.



[Image: The sky on July 25, 685 BC, Gregorian (August 1, Julian), the concluding day of the blazing. The Sun is in Leo, Venus is in Virgo. From SkyGlobe 3.6.]

It must have been seen all around the horizon, and the Moon, rising the next day in the east after 3pm, while the Sun was still engulfed in plasma, would have lit up spectacularly. This describes the concluding event.

"God gave them up to light" obviously is meant to poetically tell that the battle happened during the daytime, which agrees with ephemeris information, or that a lot of light was produced for days. The narrator now drops back to the beginning of the battle.

*"For long fire-flames rebelled against the Sun;
 Lucifer treading upon Leo's back
 Began the fight; and the Moon's double horn
 Changed its shape;"*

The starting position is now indicated as defined by the text, "Lucifer treading upon Leo's back." This was "Venus riding on a lion," the well known and "feared emblem for disaster" in the Eastern Mediterranean region, as per Kugler. On June 15 (June 22, Julian), Venus and Mercury are in Leo, to the east of the Sun and Moon, which are in Cancer. Lucifer is Mercury, but could be Venus.

The "long fire-flames" are the plasma expulsions of Venus and Mercury (and somewhat later also of Mars). The "long fire-flames" probably extended both away from the Sun and toward the Sun, as well as at right angles to these. This has been seen for comets. The crossed beams in the sky presented a triple crucifixion. Mercury, in the center, would have been recorded with his spiked crown. [note 5]

Before and after sunrise the "flames" would reach up from below the horizon. Stecchini writes of the plasma plumes as "long streams of flame crossing each other" (quoted from Kugler). Rising up from the horizon where the Sun has set, these are the pointed sticks planted in the ground by Kirkin (Venus). Jupiter (Wyju) jumps into the same section of the horizon about 6 hours later with both feet.

Almost at once after mid-June, Mercury starts to move toward the position of the Sun, and passes it by July 3 (July 10, Julian). At that point Mercury, also ablaze, might have sent streams of plasma directed at Earth, for being in front of the Sun, its plasma tail would have pointed at Earth.

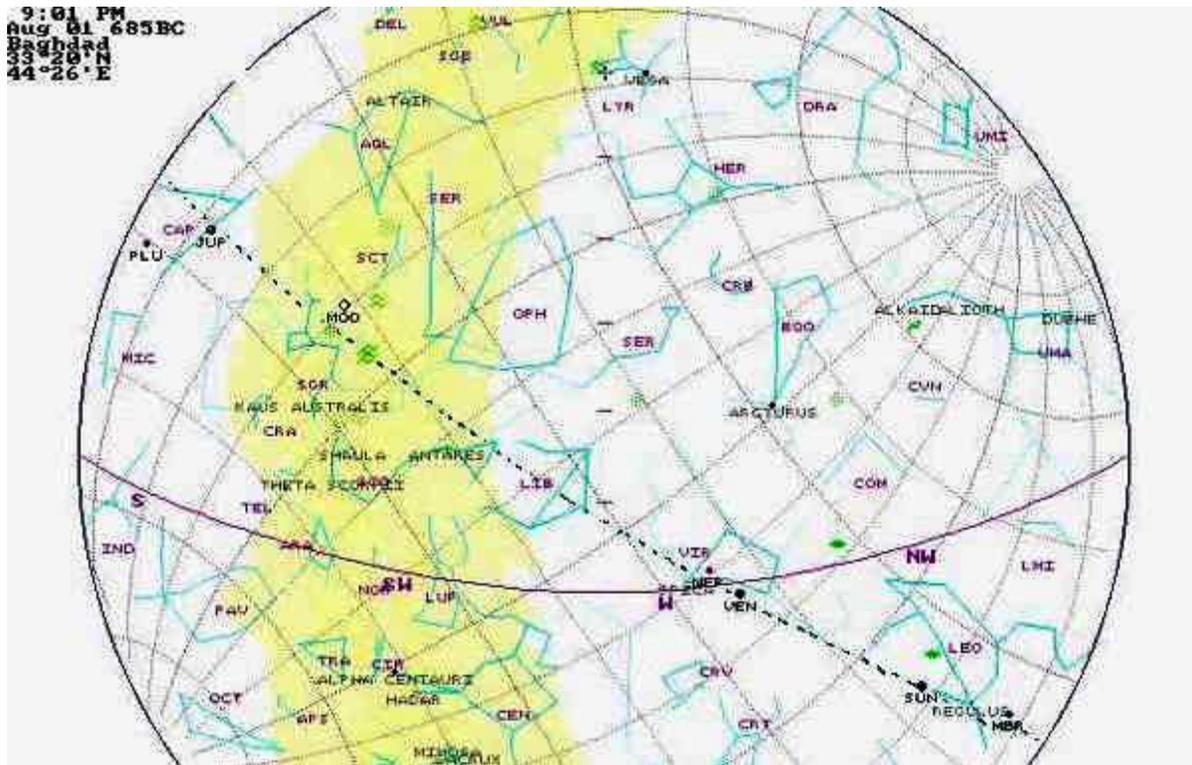
The coma, the plasma expulsions, and the distorted view of the plasma tail of Mercury when it extended toward Earth (easily confused with the Sun which Mercury was close to), are described by Isaiah and Ezekiel.

I would also suggest, in fact, that if the two inner planets were in flames and Jupiter reacted similarly a half month later, then certainly the Earth also would have been subject to such a condition. Plasma expulsions from the Earth may have been seen moving up into space. In a previous endnote I wrote:

"... the Earth also would have ended up erupting, but because of the Earth's magnetosphere and enclosing atmosphere, the Earth might have been spared the creation of thousands of electric burn craters, as on Venus and especially Mercury. There is the contemporaneous statement by Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, about Ishtar (Venus) 'raining fire over Arabia.' Later Roman writers make the same claim of the Earth burning up because of the close approach of Phaethon, as does Plato."

The Moon (at night after June 15) would be lighted by the Sun, and the bright Venus and Mercury, so that its crescents ("horns") would be misshapen from its normal form. The Moon would normally have had sharp waxing horns after June 15. Now, with the blazing of Venus and its extended light, the horns might have reached further around the edges of the Moon, or the opposite edge of the Moon would have been lighted, "the Moon's double horn changed its shape."

During the days of the late summer, with the steep gradient of the zodiac, the plumes would point down at the horizon, since Venus would be below the Sun most of the day. Only late in the day would the flame become horizontal. After nightfall a stream would come up from below the western horizon at a 45-degree angle, lighting up a large portion of the night sky.



[Image: The sky on July 25, 685 BC, Gregorian (August 1, Julian), the concluding day of the blazing, after about 9pm. The Sun and Venus have set. Sun in Leo, Venus in Virgo. Not shown is the plasmoid arriving from just below the western horizon. From SkyGlobe 3.6.]

The image above is for 9pm of July 25 (Gregorian). It is the early night sky of the concluding event, as seen from the region of the Eastern Mediterranean. Jupiter's plasmoid lightning bolt is headed for the western horizon. In the diagram above the plasmoid travels along the circle of the ecliptic. As Europe turned toward the night, the bolt was seen approaching Venus -- thought by some to be the errant Phaethon -- to strike him down. In actuality the bolt passed by Venus and struck the Sun, but the contact was not seen. The plasmoid landed at the Sun at about 3am. The morning would see the Sun, Mercury, and Mars all engulfed in a haze. The *Popol Vuh* claims the turmoil lasted four days.

It is quite possible that the people of the Eastern Mediterranean got it right, and knew the thunderbolt struck Mercury, who was primarily identified as Phaethon. But an error remains, for the target was the Sun, not Mercury, which was within 11 degrees of the Sun. By next morning Venus and Mercury must have quieted down, although the skies remained obscured for days. [note 6]

Mesoamerica did not see the massive explosion at the Sun either, because it happened a few hours after sunset. It was assumed that the bolt was destined for Mars, standing just to the right (west) of the Sun (about 30 degrees). The explosion at the Sun would have visually engulfed the location of Mars in the sky, as well as Mercury. The next day the Sun was still in place, so it was assumed (at least by some of the many literate people of Veracruz and the Valley of Mexico) that Mars had been hit. Mars did not again come close to Earth, but primarily because the orbit of the Earth became nearly circular (as noted by Rose and Vaughan) before the time that Mars might have returned again.

(Assigned to 670 BC, in Eastern Mediterranean chronology.)

The Maya *Book of the Chilam Balam* states that the Sun left its normal path for three Uinal months of twenty days. This is counted inclusively, however. The actual period would be 40 days -- June 15th to July 25th, Gregorian. The *Chilam Balam* also places the arrival of the lightning bolt from Jupiter, which ended the affair, exactly on July 25, 685 BC (Gregorian), which may also be calculated (from the same text) from the last close pass of Mars 520 days earlier.

From the *Sibylline Oracle* it might be suggested that the end of the drama happened with the Sun and Venus both in Capricorn, which would have been January of the next year. The *Sibylline Oracle* reads:

*"Capricorn smote Taurus's neck;
And Taurus took away from Capricorn
Returning day."*

But this might also simply suggest the most obvious aspect of the list of changes which will have been wrought with the war -- the change in the equinox. Jupiter was in Capricorn when the plasmoid was released. So it was Capricorn (in the typically displaced wording of prophecies) that "smote Taurus's neck." The phrase "returning day" is the fact that Taurus has been shifted to below the horizon at the vernal equinox with the change of the zodiac, thus giving up some 15 days.

That prediction will be true for the coming years. Taurus's neck was broken, it would no longer be the constellation that the Sun rose in at the equinox. In the typical stylishly metonymical metaphor of the *Sibylline Oracle*, whatever "Taurus," the constellation, took away from "Capricorn," Taurus was giving up -- calendar days.

The wording, "smote Taurus's neck," is reminiscent of the Tauroctony of Mithraism, the slaying of the bull Taurus, depicted as having its throat cut. In antiquity the constellation Taurus was depicted only as the head of a bull, not the complete body, as is done today, which is also how the constellation was first depicted in the temples of Mithra circa AD 100.

Before 685 BC, with the Sun rising between Aries and Taurus at the vernal equinox, it is the head of the bull which was already (or soon was) above the horizon at the equinox. After 685 BC, with the Sun rising at 15 degrees of Aries at the vernal equinox (using the divisions of the ecliptic of antiquity), the head of Taurus no longer appeared above the horizon as the Sun rose to announce spring. His throat had been cut.

Capricorn is here the agent of change. Jupiter is in Capricorn throughout the 40-day period. In early January of the following year the Sun and Venus were also both in Capricorn. By this time the blazing of these two planets had subsided long ago, and this condition probably has nothing to do with the lines about Capricorn (and despite my earlier note about Berossus).

The *Sibylline Star Wars* document is obviously based on an ordered record of changes, and the travels of Venus, but that is no guarantee that it correctly incorporates the starting and completion dates. [note 7]

The display in the sky is nicely wrapped up in the closing lines of the poem (I'll detail the center section below):

*"And the strength of the mighty Shining One
Aquarius kindled. Uranus himself
Was roused, until he shook the warring ones;
And being incensed he hurled them down on earth."*

"Shining One" translates to "Phaethon," and thus refers back to Mercury or Venus. But if it is Aquarius (the constellation) who "kindles the strength," then it was Jupiter who was invigorated. However, Jupiter is not in Aquarius during the 40 days of battle. In July Jupiter was in Capricorn, the next constellation to the west of Aquarius.

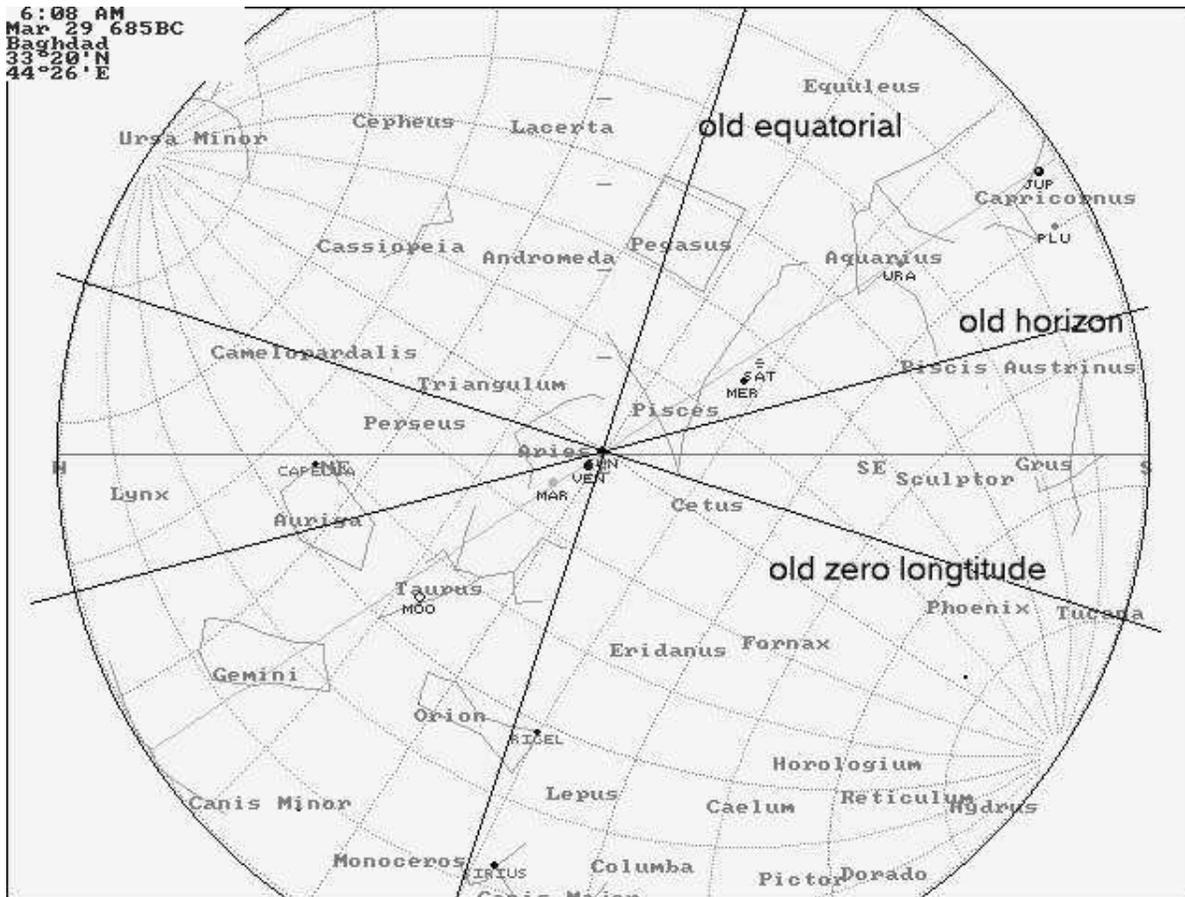
This is the same displacement we see for the record of the Sun and Moon on June 15th. They are not in Cancer, but somewhat west of Cancer. Likewise Venus and Mercury are not exactly riding the back of a lion, but just west of Leo.

Then "Uranus," who is Jupiter of the family of Uranus, entered the fray, and throws both the Sun and Venus to Earth, that is, below the horizon. It is possible that Saturn is meant by "Uranus." Saturn is the son of Uranus. (The planet we have named "Uranus" since AD 1781 has nothing to do with the identification of planets in antiquity.)

The oracle (which is a vision of future events) claims that then the world will be set on fire, and the stars will disappear:

*"Then swiftly smitten down upon the baths
Of Ocean they set all the earth on fire;
And the high heaven remained without a star."*

We should be able to imagine what this looked like. The "baths of Ocean" is the zodiac or the region below the zodiac, but also might be the actual ocean, the Mediterranean. In most of the retellings of late antiquity, which all apparently take some 5th century BC play or tale as their source, possibly a lost play of Aeschylus, *The Heliades* ("Daughters of Helios"), Phaethon falls into the river Eridanus, which was identified as a constellation at an earlier time. [note 8]



[Image: East hemisphere of the sky, after 685 BC. From SkyGlobe 3.6.]

But in the later retellings Eridanus is simply localized in the west, in the land of the Celts, also often identified as the Po in Northern Italy (which was under Celtic occupation in the early days of Rome), or in Spain, another well-known Celtic region. A location in the west would have been correct, for the splashdown of the plasmoid of Jupiter would have happened after the Sun had set north of directly west, and would have brilliantly lit up the western skies for hours. Setting the world aflame and the disappearance of the stars is also correct, for the stars would have disappeared in the light of the nine-hour-long flash.

New Locations of the Stars

The intervening lines of the text deal with the new locations in the sky of the zodiacal constellations plus Orion, Draco, and the star Sirius. All the changes relate to the location of the ecliptic, the equatorial, and the horizon. The change in the starting point of the year was probably noted by the next year, 684 BC. But the change in the location of the polar axis was noticed immediately. The change would move some constellations up in the sky and would move others down. Two lines indicate this clearly:

"Draco disavowed his zone."

Conclusions About Dates

As I have pointed out elsewhere, these were not minor changes. It is for this reason, plus the lighting up of the day sky by the nova event of Venus and Mercury, plus the enormous flash on the 25th of July, that the event was understood as a war among the stars. When it was over every constellation had moved -- to where it should not be.

After blazing up in 685 BC, and then failing to disappear in front of the Sun in the west (in late December), Venus showed again as the Morning Star in early January of the next year. So say the *Venus Tablets of Ammizaduga*, or, as Mesoamerica has it, "Quetzalcoatl rose in the east as the Morning Star."

I have no question at this point that the shift of the polar axis and the change in the equinox happened, and happened suddenly, especially when combined with such comments from other sources.

I will maintain that the main "event" concluded on July 25th of 685 BC, with a plasmoid strike from Jupiter. I have detailed the derivation of this date in earlier chapters. The Guatemalan *Popol Vuh* suggests that the ecliptic remained obscured for four days after Hunahpu and Xbalanque jumped into the oven of the Xibalbans. Ovid suggests that the Sun did not show for a day (but then, Ovid places all 40 days in one day).

The descriptions of the phenomenon as a "throne," as a "horse without hips," or, as in Ezekiel's vision, of "brass glowing like fire in a furnace" and a "fire with encircling radiance," all speak to a display with much shorter plasma outpourings ("flames"). This would be the condition of Mercury as it reached inferior conjunction with Earth, and its plasma stream was directed towards Earth, and therefore visually foreshortened.

The *Chilam Balam*

An accurate Mesoamerican source, the Maya *Chilam Balam* books, reads that the Sun "moved from its place for three months," in Katun 3-Ahau (688 to 668 BC) and would return after "three heaps of years," or at least by the end of Katun 3-Ahau, that is, before the end of a twenty-year Katun period.

As I have pointed out, all five time spans recorded in Book 10 of the *Chilam Balam* use inclusive counting. So the "three months" represent a span of two Mesoamerican Uinal months of 20 days, a total of 40 days. From the *Popol Vuh* it is obvious that Venus and Mercury need to be close together in the sky (they hold hands) at the start of the nova event. June 15 (Gregorian) qualifies, and is, in fact, 40 days before July 25th.

The second remark in the *Chilam Balam* (about three heaps of years) reads as follows:

"After three years [three heaps of years] it will come back into place in Katun 3-Ahau. Then another Katun will be set (in its place)."

We do not really know what "heaps of years" are, but I would guess that they are groups of five, as used on Maya counting boards, and further, that these are Tzolkin cycles of 260 days, and therefore we should count an interval of 14 (three times 5 less one), not 15 (three times five).

The "place of the Sun" would be measured by its setting location along the horizon and matched against calendar records of when and where this was expected. After the disturbance of the orbit of Earth in 685 BC, and after quiescence had returned, the Sun would rise and set again where expected, that is, on the proper date of our calendar, but not on the same date on the Mesoamerican Tzolkin calendar. But it turns out that 14 cycles of 260 days are exactly correct in "returning" the zenithal passage of the Sun to the same Tzolkin calendar day-name for a latitude of 17 degrees north. What was important for Mesoamerica in this instance was the fact that the Sun obeyed the Tzolkin.

Of course, the Sun did not return to its proper horizon setting location on the same dates. Normally with the Mesoamerican calendar, the same Tzolkin day-name and day-number corresponding to the same Gregorian calendar date happen only after 20 Tzolkin rotations. Fourteen rotations will be 12 days short. It did return to the same horizon locations for zenithal passage over the sites in Mesoamerica, from which we receive the fiction perpetrated by the Olmecs that the Sun had returned to its proper place. I discuss this in the chapter "Olmec Alignments."

Nonnos's *Dionysiaca*

The writers mentioned above who have commented on Kugler's work have gone on at some length about the fact that Kugler's book does not reach the conclusion it might have originally intended to have. The book is, after all, about Phaethon. Kugler does not place the appearance of Phaethon in 100 BC, but only suggests by the accuracy of the description that we should not neglect the "legends" from circa 1500 BC, or what is thought to be 1500 BC -- that is, the Exodus of 1492 BC.

In fact Kugler supplies a series of sources for the dates of the fall of Phaethon which solidly place the event at the time of Moses. I have no disagreement with this as long as it is recognized that the events at the time of Moses (that is, in 1492 BC) are described by the Typhon legends, not the Phaethon legend. But what we also see, of course, is the Typhon legend reworked to fit the later event of 685 BC. The Star Wars prophecy is not the only instance. Another instance used by Kugler is the *Dionysiaca*, written another 300 years later, in circa AD 450, under the name of Nonnos.

This is a poem detailing the complete adventures of the God Dionysus, composed in the antique style of Homer and Hesiod (as was the style in Greek literature). Book 38 has a description of the Phaethon legend, which again describes changes in the sky overhead, with claims of all the constellations moving to different locations. The details of the description are almost incomprehensible in terms of an exact reading, unlike the *Sibylline Book*, with the zodiacal animals growling and clawing at each other, but the concluding lines are of interest. It reads:

"No longer did the stars in the Bear, moving in a circle fastened around his hips, dance up high near the northerly pole, but moved to the southwest and wet their dry feet in the Lake of Hesperia at the unaccustomed Oceanos."

Hesperia is a mostly fictitious ocean in the sky, probably based on the Absu, and adjacent to the river Oceanos, which is probably the last red ring below the equatorial. These particulars are mostly a poetic formulation. But more important, here we have the Phaethon legend tied to the change of the dome of the stars, like in the *Sibylline Book*. This is preceded, earlier in the description, with:

"Even the axis, which turns in the centre, began to totter through the whirling ether."

And:

"But winged Virgo sped past Arcturus, approached the Axis and collided with the Wain. The Morning Star sent erring rays to the western rim, and was even then pushing away the Evening Star, which stood opposite."

This actually describes the concluding dates of the event. Venus (Virgo) stood in the sky below Arcturus, maybe 17 degrees further west, while, with the Sun set already, Mercury (now the Morning Star west of the Sun) was already below the horizon and indeed stood opposite Venus (now identified as the Evening Star, for it followed the setting Sun).

Two Meteors

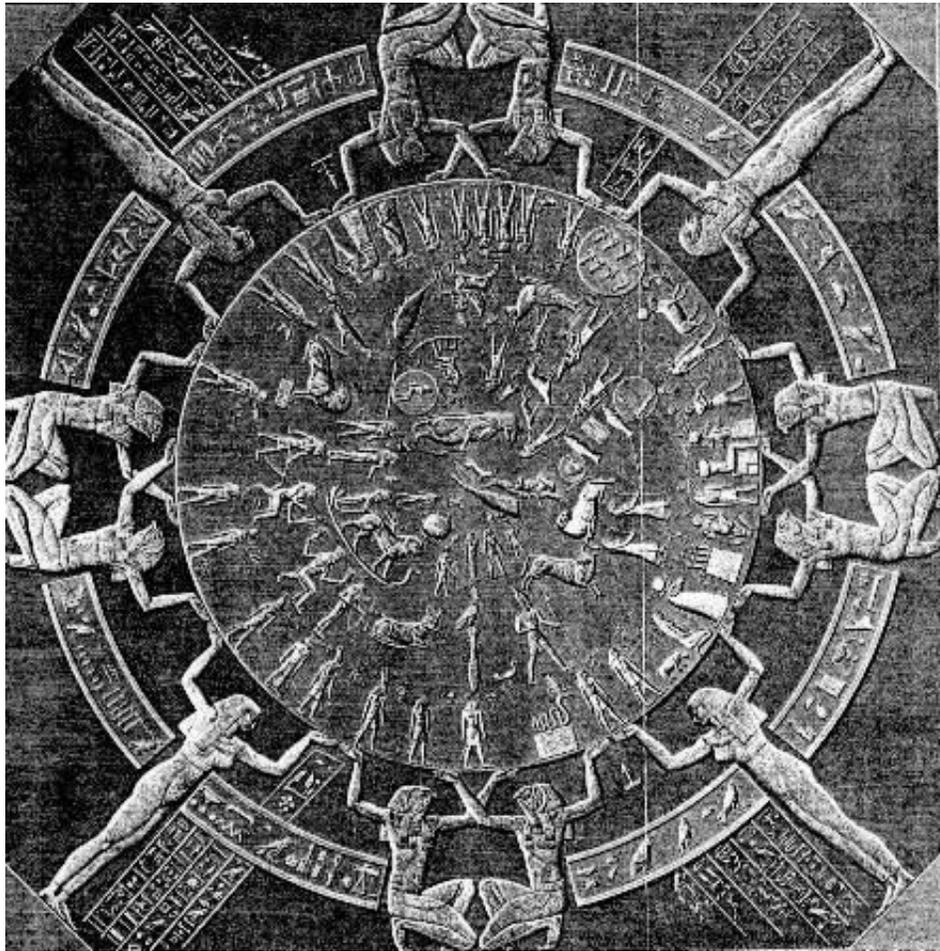
Kugler sees in the *Sibylline Star Wars* a description of the arrival of two meteors, but takes this information no further, perhaps suggesting that these phenomena would have disappeared in a few days. Malcolm Lowery wrote:

"Kugler recognizes in lines 512, 513 and 515 a description of the arrival of 'two enormous meteors of the apparent size and form of the sun and the moon . . . with their characteristic accompanying features', but is happy to leave them out of the further action, accepting them, presumably, as no more than the excuse the ancients needed to write a poem about the events following."

I would suggest that the blazing Venus seen next to the blazing Mercury would be sufficient to explain "two enormous meteors," especially if they are suggested to be of the same size as the Sun and the Moon (the Sun and Moon are the same apparent size). There are Chinese sources in antiquity which recall that at one time "two Suns" were seen battling in the sky.

Dating the Denderah Zodiac Ceiling

(May 2007) The temple of Hathor at Denderah in southern Egypt contains a very unusual circular zodiac ceiling panel in one of the auxiliary buildings. The temple was rebuilt under Roman rule sometime in the first century. The zodiac panel may have been started under some of the Ptolemies, perhaps a hundred years earlier.



[Image: Denderah zodiac ceiling; Approximately 8 feet (2.5 meters) across. Collection of Louvre Museum.]

Since its discovery in 1799, various researchers have attempted to determine what date might be depicted by this star chart. The zodiac of the Denderah ceiling is not very accurate, however, as others have noted. But accuracy was never an issue in Egyptian depictions of the stars. It was all about religious symbolism. The iconography of the zodiac is solidly Ptolemaic Greek, however. It politically gives recognition to earlier Egyptian astronomy with an outer border of decans. Decans are a series of stars that rise every hour at night, marking time. There are 36 for use throughout the year, one every ten degrees.

I am using a portion of the locations of planets as determined by Julie Gillentine in "The Zodiac of Dendera" (*Atlantis Rising*, 2001), and Joanne Conman in "The Round zodiac Ceiling of the Temple of Hathor at Denderah" (*The Secret Chambers of the Sanctuary of Thoth*, 2002, on line).

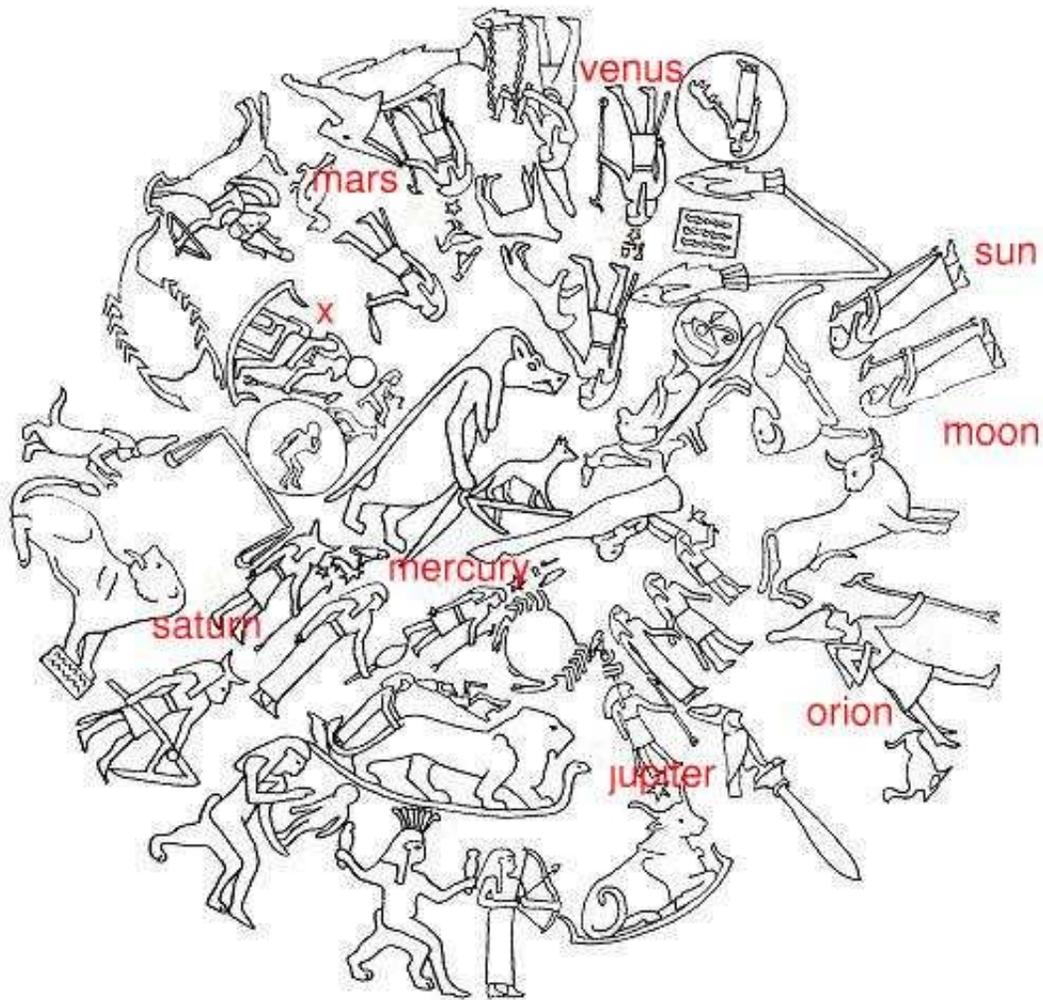
Gillentine made the selection without recourse to the identification of certain figures as planets, so that, for example, I disagree with her selection of Jupiter and Saturn. I selected the duck between Sagittarius and Capricorn as Jupiter. The duck has always been identified as Ra, and Ra is Jupiter.

Conman identifies a number of figures with Gods and Goddesses of southern Egyptian nomes, which I do not think is called for. This is a notion first brought forward in the 19th century. This is just unlikely. There are many more nomes than there are figures in the ceiling zodiac. And it certainly also does not apply to the figures of the decans, for these were well established, and had nothing to do with local temple concerns.

The time depicted by the zodiac chart would be about midnight, with Jupiter almost directly south and the full moon in the south-southwest. Sirius (the ox in the boat) is shown directly north, but this would be below the Earth and only rotate into the daytime as the skies turned.

From the ceiling zodiac the locations of planets can be read as presented in the text below. Some of the constellations have been turned, shrunk, or dislocated, however. The example which everyone will recognize at once is that Aries is reversed, facing Taurus, and looking over his shoulder toward the west. Some of the planets are erroneously or haphazardly placed. Mars, for example, seems to be placed early in Gemini, away from where it ought to be in Cancer. But Sirius is also below Cancer, which cannot be, because Sirius and the constellations are immovable stars. Sirius belongs below Gemini.

Finding the year and date for this configuration of planets is thus problematic, but it can be done. If Saturn is in Pisces, there are only two or three years which need to be inspected out of every thirty years to find Jupiter in Capricorn. In all cases the month of July or August has to be selected, since the Sun must be in Leo. Mercury will be there also, and Venus should be close by. The appropriate year can be located from the requirement of having Mars in Gemini or between Gemini and Cancer.

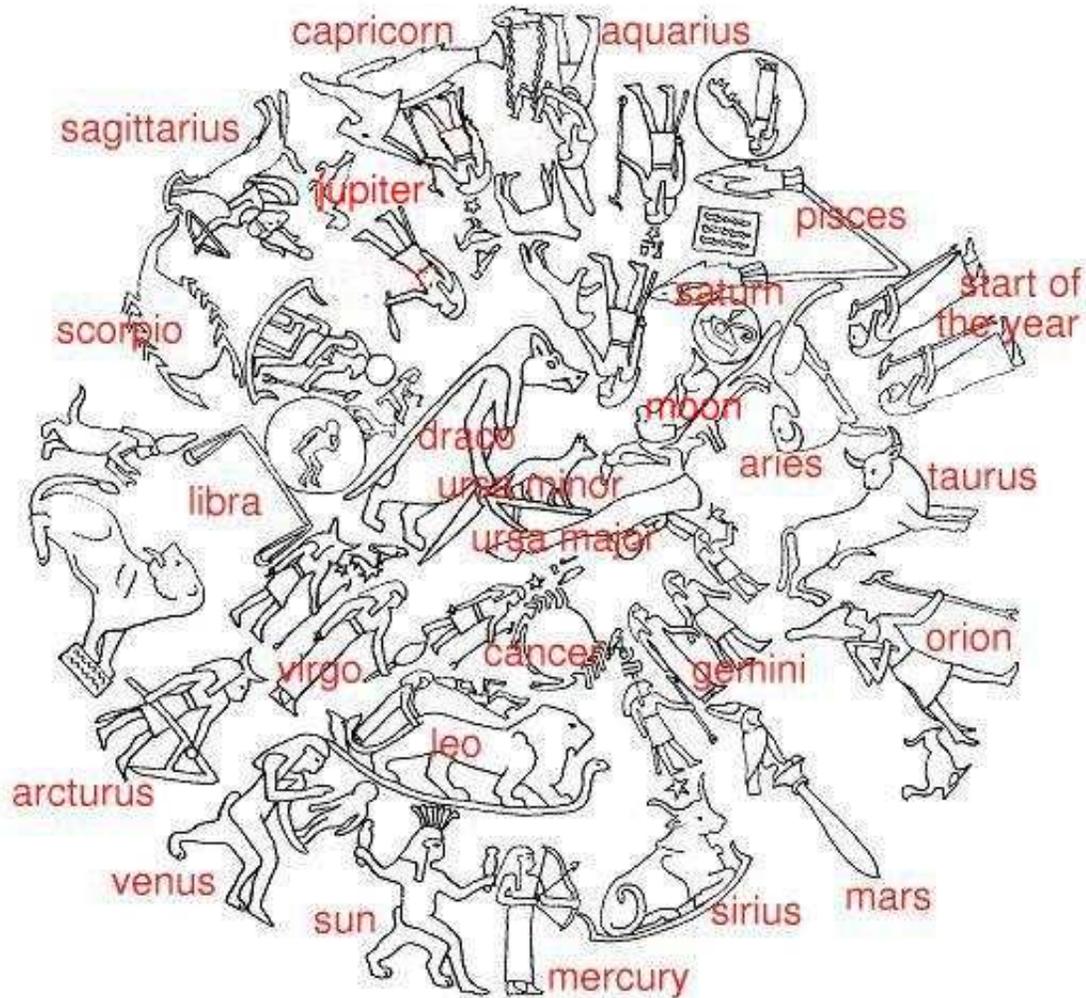


[Image: Figures with Was scepters at Denderah, incorrectly attributed to planets. Decans not shown. Original after Conman.]

There is a question as to which figures constitute the planets. There is a set of standing figures which each hold a *Was* scepter, which normally indicates their status as Gods. (One remains unidentified in Scorpio, plus Orion is likewise equipped with a *Was* scepter.) These are held to be the planets placed in their governing house, that is, each is located in a zodiac sign of importance to that particular planet. The concept that every zodiac sign has a "ruling" planet which has particular potential in those locations has come down to modern times in astrology, and is called the "exaltation" of the planets. The genesis of this is a complete mystery. It was already established in Babylonian times.

The location of the exaltation of the planets does not constitute a plan for a date for the zodiac, since Mercury (in particular) is much too far removed from the (assumed) location of the Sun in Aries. Mercury is located three or four zodiac signs away in this schema -- the Sun is not in Aries. I wanted to point this out.

If we are to look for another indication of a date, we have to look at a more correct set of symbols which encode planet names and locations. These are listed below.



[Image: Figures as planets and zodiac signs at Denderah; Decans not shown. Original after Conman.]

- "Venus in Virgo" -- Venus (Isis) with Horus on her hand.
- "Sun and Mercury in Leo" -- Mercury to the west, shown as an archer, the Sun holding two jars, and with a plumed head dress.
- "Mars in Cancer or Gemini" -- This is the crowned falcon on the papyrus plant. He is shown below Gemini, but should properly be below the adjacent Cancer.
- "Moon in Pisces" -- The Moon is the baboon above the Eye of Ra.
- "Saturn in Pisces" -- the figure of the *Eye of Ra*.
- "Jupiter in Capricorn" -- The duck ("Ra") between Sagittarius and Capricorn.

It is this last, the duck as Ra and Ra as Jupiter, which has consistently sabotaged all efforts at determining a date, or even a coherent listing of planets, for everyone holds Ra to be the Sun, whereas for 3000 years Jupiter was identified as Ra. And all too many researchers have thought that the duck in this zodiac is just decorative, like the corresponding *Eye of Ra* in Pisces. The *Eye of Ra* is not decorative, it is Saturn.

Now to determine a date. In the time span of the half millennium preceding the first century BC, when the zodiac ceiling was installed, only three events stand out as universally significant. The first was the lengthening of the year in 747 BC. The second was the Earth shock by Mercury and the burning tower of Babel in 686 BC. Both of these were spring events, with the Sun in Aries.

The third event was the delivery of the plasmoid of Jupiter at the Sun on July 25, 685 BC. I only reached a conclusion about this date when I realized that the baboon in Pisces was a well-established symbol for Thoth, but by Roman times Thoth had migrated its planetary association from Mercury to the Moon. Mercury had all but disappeared from the skies 460 years before the Roman rebuilding of the temple, and the assignment of the messenger of the Gods had passed to the Moon. The Moon should be in Sagittarius on July 25th. It would be in Capricorn two days later, in Aquarius in four days -- roughly two days of displacement for every zodiacal house. The Moon reached Pisces in six days. Here it is the baboon above the *Eye of Ra*.

This extension of six days after the actual delivery of the plasmoid (on July 25) reflects how soon the skies cleared of plasma at the Sun, and accounts for further events, including the delivery of subsequent smaller plasmoids.

The *Popol Vuh* suggests that the ecliptic remained obscured for four days. About the blowgunner twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque, who had just been burned up and their ground-up bones cast in the river, the *Popol Vuh* reads:

"And on the fifth day [after] they reappeared. They were seen in the water by the people. The two of them looked like catfish when their faces were seen by Xibalba."

The blowgunner twins of the *Popol Vuh* were seen as catfish. You will find later in the Chapter "The *Popol Vuh*" my comments:

"Catfish were seen, but these are more likely additional minor plasmoid bolts from Jupiter. Since these would have traveled in the ecliptic, they might easily be mistaken for Venus and Mercury, especially when it was unclear where these planets were. The catfish were seen while the day and night skies blazed with the reaction of the Sun to the initial plasmoid strike from Jupiter."

Selecting the baboon as the symbol of the Moon, places the Moon in Pisces. That would bring the close of the event to July 30, Gregorian. The close of the event was the beginning of a new creation. There were no further interferences by any planets after this date. The following spring showed all seven planets in a line in the sky -- the start of a Great Year.

Endnotes

Note 1 --

A number of numismatic sites with an interest in astronomy have suggested that the seven stars might represent a conjunction of all the planets in the sky. It is also suggested that the seven stars represent either Ursa Major or the Pleiades. And, in fact, the earliest coin of this nature dates from AD 76 and is clearly marked TRIO, short for Septentriones, a name for the seven stars of the Wain (Ursa Major) and generally meaning "north."

[return to text]

Note 2 --

Some conjunctions only last a day, some last a week. The location of the Moon is not hard and fast, since it moves 12 degrees per day.

Oct 5, 7 BC, Sat, Jup, Moon, Mar, Ven, Mer, Sun (setting)

Jul 5, 6 BC, Sun (rising) Mar, Ven, Mer, Jup, Sat, Moon

Apr 6, 4 BC, Moon, Jup, Mar, Mer, Sat, Ven, Sun (setting)

Mar 7, 2 BC, Jup, Sat, Mar, Ven, Mer, Moon, Sun (setting)

Oct 27, AD 1, Sun (rising), Jup, Mar, Ven, Mer, Moon, Sat

[return to text]

Note 3 --

To get a glimpse at how easy it is to calculate planet positions in the past or future, take a look at how Patten and Windsor make these calculations in *The Mars-Earth Wars* (1996), reaching back 2300 years. Patten and Windsor use data listed to many decimal places, but this would not be much different from what was available in antiquity, which had already accumulated 600 years of data by AD 200.

[return to text]

Note 4 --

The complete Sibylline text follows. I have broken it up into sections to clearly indicate the composition. Line numbers are in brackets.

The opening lines:

[689] *"I saw the threatening of the shining Sun*

Among the stars, and in the lightning flash

[690] *The dire wrath of the Moon;"*

The battle:

"the stars travailed

With battle; and God gave them up to light.

For long fire-flames rebelled against the Sun;

*Lucifer treading upon Leo's back
Began the fight; [695] and the Moon's double horn
Changed its shape;"*

The lasting change:

*"Capricorn smote Taurus's neck;
And Taurus took away from Capricorn
Returning day.*

The changes in the sky:

*"Orion would no more
Abide his yoke; the lot of Gemini
Did Virgo change in Aries; [700] no more shone
The Pleiads; Draco disavowed his zone;
Down into Leo's girdle Pisces went.
Cancer remained not, for he feared Orion;
Scorpio down on dire Leo backwards moved;
And from the Sun's flame Sirius slipped away;"*

The closing passage:

*[705] "And the strength of the mighty Shining One
Aquarius kindled. Uranus himself
Was roused, until he shook the warring ones;
And being incensed he hurled them down on earth.
Then swiftly smitten down upon the baths
[710] Of Ocean they set all the earth on fire;
And the high heaven remained without a star."*

[return to text]

Note 5 --

The spikes in four directions from the three planets would likely result in the later claim of the crucifixion of Christ and two robbers, or of Mithra. The down directed spikes were crossed at about half their height by the remaining red ring in the sky, resulting in a blood-red swatch on each and looking like the genital mutilation performed with crucifixions. See, for example, *The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors* (1875) by Kersey Graves. Four of Graves's saviours are dated to about 1200 BC, one in 1700 BC, and all the rest in the era of 800 BC to 500 BC.

[return to text]

Note 6 --

I have made this statement before, that Venus would have lost its tail and large coma at this time, but this is not at all certain. Only by the time of the writings of Aristotle (384 BC to 322 BC) do we see a definite attempt to separate planets from meteors and more ephemeral

phenomena (which last are classified by him as "weather"-- meteorology). Stecchini writes, "It is significant that, after having described the general topic of meteorology, Aristotle begins the treatment of it by refuting those who say that 'the comet is one of the planets'." The "comet" here is Venus.
[return to text]

Note 7 --

In fact, I have not been able to pinpoint a closing date. The document clearly records all of the travels of Venus between an unexpected blazing in June and (perhaps) the subsequent easterly reappearance -- except that there was no westerly disappearance of Venus. On this occasion, as an ephemeris will show, Venus rode about 8 degrees above the Sun as it was setting in the west, and reappeared the next day in the east at sunrise.

This would explain the missing data at the close of year eight of *The Tablets of Ammizaduga*. I would suggest furthermore that Venus may have changed its orbit with the relocation of Mercury in the previous year. That, in turn, explains perhaps the fact that Venus set a month late, as noted by Rose and Vaughan, and which remained inexplicable to them. Normalization of data does not tell one anything about orbits.

The closing date indicated with the Denderah Zodiac ceiling is five days later than August 25. See further text below.

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Note 8 --

The constellation Eridanus is identified as a series of stars hanging from the left foot (Rigel) of the constellation Orion and reaching the horizon -- like a river -- even with Orion high in the sky. In July of 685 BC Orion and Eridanus are both west of the Sun and below the horizon at nightfall, but they rise in the east 4 hours before sunrise. Eridanus is located well below the ecliptic and the equatorial. The star Rigel is at the same relative altitude (44.5 degrees at culmination for Cairo in 685 BC) as Sirius (42.1 degrees). The start of Eridanus, which dips down (toward the southern horizon), would thus be located behind the last red ring of the original Absu which also gave Sirius its red color. The blood in this river -- backlighted perhaps by the flash at the Sun, below the horizon -- would be convincing evidence of the death of Phaethon.

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