

COSMOKRATOR NEWSLETTER 2012 © Asia Haleem

I give below the text for a short blog I did for my astrologer colleague on www.lanawooster.co.uk regarding the **2012 Transit of Venus**. There may be other items on her site that you would like to read, including my fuller blog on this momentous transit called 'Babylonians, Mexicans and the Total Count', also relevant for 2012!

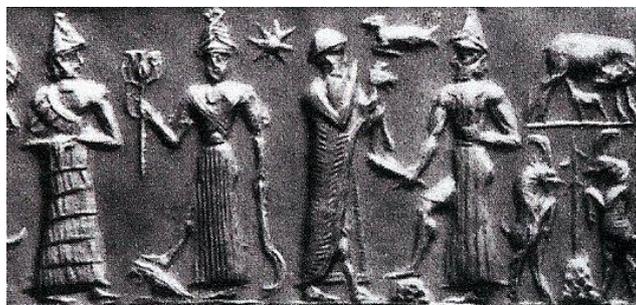
VENUS AND THE BEARS

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At the heart of ancient near eastern art 3000-500BC lies a visual language expressing the passing of cycles of time, actively used to keep abreast of the calendar in centuries long before clocks. Astronomer priests' main role was to measure time (*tempus/temple*) by direct observation of the planets against the backdrop of the stars. As we come up to the Transit of Venus - which will occur during the evening of 5 June up to the early hours of 6 June* – I would like to pinpoint one interesting aspect of Venus that appears on Mesopotamian seal designs during the Second Millennium which is intriguing because it links in to our own Glastonbury Zodiac in Somerset. Due to space constraints I can only give a brief summary of what I explain with full references in the *Lion and Prey Rear Attack Catalogue* at www.layish.co.uk - relying on the pictures to speak for themselves.

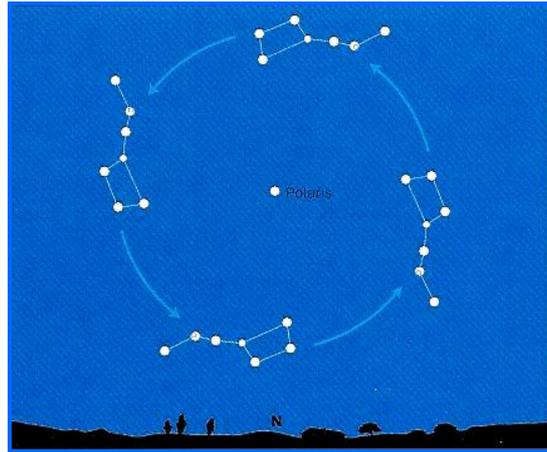
* See my earlier blog on this website about the 2012 Venus Transit in the Mexican calendar.

In the seal impression below, Venus stepping up onto the back of a lioness holds a double lion-headed mace in her right hand, and in her left a dog-leg shaped weapon (*harpé*) which I believe deliberately refers to the outline of Ursa Major. Behind her, a king offers respects to the Sun, Shamash, rising over the back of a lion.



Miniature harpé (top) as held in the left hand of Istar on a seal from Tell Asmar (bottom)

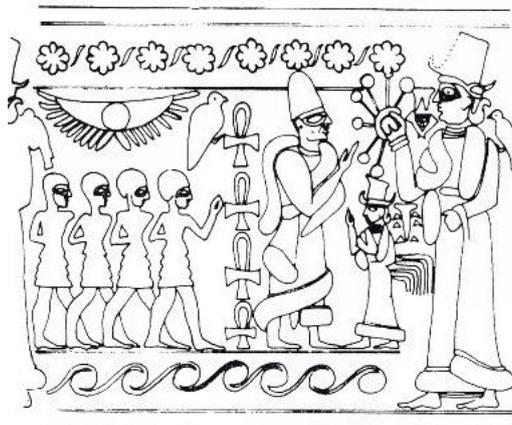
I see the scene as referring to Venus and Sun rising together - but what may the role of Ursa Major be?



III.19- 1 Ursa Major's position on any one night gives the time of year and the sidereal time for that day

One answer is that it is possible to tell the time of year not only by the rising of the Sun against the Signs of the Zodiac, but at a higher level of the sky - as a double-check - by the degree of turn of Ursa Major from a fixed viewpoint at the same time (midnight) every day (this is a different matter from the 360° circuit Ursa Major makes every 24 hours - for at each round there is a slight slippage backwards).

We know that because 5 Venus cycles equal 8 Earth years (almost to the day), the Venus cycle was important for cross-checking New Year Day – hence for the Babylonians ranking with the Sun and Moon. When Archaic Greece adopted the eight-year cycle for their calendar they instituted athletic Games at key temple sites such as Delphi and Olympia as a reminder, and to celebrate it – later making them every four years to mark the half-way point also. But a cross-check to the cross-check was to notice the position of Ursa Major in the sky and the fact that Venus holds it downwards points to the time of year the Year Start would be measured from. There are Mesopotamian texts that specifically link Venus to the Sibitti (the Seven-star group which can refer not only to the Great Bear, but also to the Seven-day week which the Mesopotamians lived by (inherited by us).



A Syrian king pays respects to Venus with dove on her shoulder and holding a seven-fold mace (one merges with the flower on the border)

Above is a drawing of a 2M seal from Alalakh, Syria, where Venus has a square hat. Apart from the Ankh signs referring to her, she holds in her upheld right hand a symbol of the Sibitti (Seven-Star) but she also has a pigeon or dove on her shoulder – a well-known symbol for Venus.

At this point we jump briefly to look at the main outline of the Glastonbury Zodiac (I have reversed the image to our more habitual Earth-view). It is said to date at least to the Second Millennium BC, if not to the late Third Millennium – and clues that it was inspired by Sumer come from the word Somerset itself, as well as other place-names – the River Parrot in the county is the name of the Euphrates for example. At the centre of this land zodiac is a bird - which we could call a dove - marking the Polar Centre.



Ill.7-1 Mary Caine's reworking of the Glastonbury Zodiac (1989), reversed (the addition in red of the head to the Aquarian Phoenix is mine)

Does the Dove here mark the position of Ursa Major – or Ursa Minor? Anyone ignorant of astronomy today still knows how to find the Pole by using the stars at the side of Ursa Major to run a line up to the tail of Ursa Minor at the Centre. Let us not get into the displacement of the Polar Centre over the millennia – the basic indicators of that fixed zone of the sky have since the Second Millennium been the Two Bears – and it is feasible that Venus's dog-leg weapon refers as much to Ursa Minor's seven stars.

I have a sense of several calendrical dovetails coinciding in the first week of June when not only is the Queen's Jubilee Bank Holiday of Tuesday 5 June marked by the Transit of Venus with an Olympic celebration in London following, but also a lunar eclipse the day before (4 June, reconciling lunar and solar years), accompanied by a cumulative gathering of nations in the Capital that starts with the performance of all Shakespeare's plays in different languages at the Globe Theatre (a circular building representing The World) and ends with the Games after a Grand Eight-Year cycle of Venus marked by rare Transits of Venus (2004 and 2012). I recommend you on June 5 at midnight you check the position of the Great Bear and then wait up for the end of the Transit of Venus at dawn on June 6 (via its reflection in a bucket of water) – and you should have lined up the benchmarks for the World to make a new beginning! I deal you *The World* Tarot card!