

Hypothetical Cosmogonic Conception of the World Order in the Tagar Culture

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Abstract

The article analyses two works by V.E. Larichev, where he reveals a potential occult astral aspect of the petroglyphs dating back to the Tagar culture of the late I millennium BCE in Northern Khakassia, namely, in the foothills of the Kuznetsk Alatau at the southern submontane extremity of Chetvyorty Sunduk. Professor Larichev's astral compositions provide the opportunity for further archaeo-astronomical research. The characters of the pictorial petroglyphic compositions represent ancient cosmic symbols of not only the Tagar culture, but also of many Eurasian peoples' cultures. This is the cosmic unity which joined minds of ancient representatives of various Eurasian cultures and generated in each of them the idea of a Heroic epos, Heroes bearing different names, but the plotline being actually the same, including fighting, development and defeating similar enemies. The plot is the same and it was suggested by the circumpolar pattern of the northern stellar sky, similar for all the inhabitants of the northern hemisphere of the Earth at the same Age. The petroglyphs of Chetvyorty Sunduk prove ancient people's knowledge of such phenomena as the precession, the motion of the celestial pole among stars and the location of the pole of the ecliptic near Draco's «head».

Keywords: Dragon, the precession, the celestial pole, the pole of the ecliptic.

Searching for the causes of the Tagar culture downfall under the attacks of the Central Asian nomads, V.E. Larichev determines two crucial factors in his article entitled «Structures and inhabitants of the Universe viewed by the South Siberian Tagar priests»:

1. The state of military science on the eve of the national collapse.
2. Religious, spiritual and moral attitudes in the Tagar society [1, 2].

As a result of his research, V.E. Larichev put forward the idea that for the Tagar culture representatives what did matter in the war were not the weapons or outfit, but a specific morale and a singular divine weapon «handed over» by some cosmic beings to the leaders and heroes depicted in the petroglyphs of Chetvyorty Sunduk¹. Exaggerating the divine power of

¹ Sunduki is a mountain range in Khakassia, consisting of 8 mountains. Chetvyorty Sunduk is the fourth mountain in the range.

traditional weapons together with an inability to adopt in time their enemies' advanced fighting methods might cause the postulated military weakness of the Tagar culture representatives.

Thus, both alternatives to solve the problem are mostly likely to come to the only solution, namely, the state of the ideological superstructure of the ancient society and this state is not supposed to be the worst.

In this situation, what seems to matter was not the warriors' spiritual weakness, but, on the contrary, their heroic power arising from their great patriotism and abiding faith in their Gods who would punish their enemies in the Lower World, and killed Tagar warriors would stay victors in the Upper World. This is the way V.E. Larichev describes the events reflected in the petroglyphic composition of Chetvyorty Sunduk. To perish as a hero means to win in the Upper World, like the young Gods won to take the place of their predecessors. Why was the heroic idea so irrefutably powerful in the spiritual and ideological state of the society?

To answer this question, V.E. Larichev's postulated astral scenario of the Tagar epic Hero's development requires a number of additional archaeo-astronomical points arising from determining the roles of the characters depicted in the petroglyphic compositions, namely, a Young Hero, «an Old man handing over a divine weapon», «an Escaping Giant», a Dragon or a Snake looking into the sacrificial cauldron, a Shaman, an Elk and a Ram. The general composition of the petroglyphs contain some details which may refer them to more ancient epochs, namely, the fact that depicted assumed enemies «being vanquished» possess similar weapons (bows, arrows, daggers). There are no depicted horsemen or chariots accompanying representatives of the Central Asian tribes. In other words, the petroglyphs of Chetvyorty Sunduk are most likely to bear an ancient oral narrative tradition of the Tagar epic Hero's development.

The characters of the pictorial petroglyphic compositions represent ancient cosmic symbols of not only the Tagar culture, but also of many Eurasian peoples' cultures. This is the cosmic unity which joined minds of ancient representatives of various Eurasian cultures and generated in each of them the idea of a Heroic epos, Heroes bearing different names, but the plotline being actually the same, including fighting, development and defeating similar enemies. The plot is the same and it was suggested by the circumpolar pattern of the northern stellar sky, similar for all the inhabitants of the northern hemisphere of the Earth at the same Age. We cannot consider to be occasional the conformity of ancient linguistic roots of some cosmic denominations in languages of genetically different nations inhabiting the Eurasian territory. The development of an identical cosmic situation generated elements of an identical international figurative symbolic language understandable, to a certain extent, to nations speaking different languages. The result of this cosmic unity is now found in available fragments of folk legends and myths, ancient religions, some petroglyphic compositions, geometrically structured archaeological monuments [3, 4, 5, 6, 7].

This unity of the symbols can be observed in the monuments of the Bronze Age (the monuments older than the Bronze Age are considerably less numerous) since IV millennium BCE, when Thuban (Draco's alpha star) began approaching the celestial pole. Later, in 2800-s BCE, it became the immovable pole star designating the direction of the rotation axis of the Earth in the space. In other words, it helped generate the equatorial coordinate system indicating the diurnal rotation of the Earth round its axis. Before this discovery, the humankind mainly used the ecliptic coordinate system visible for terrestrial observers due to the motion of stars and planets along the ecliptic through 27-28 lunar mansions, 12 Jupiter stations or solar monthly constellations (signs of Zodiac). This very principle of observing ascents and descents

of stars, planets and constellation stations on the ecliptic in relation to the skyline suggested the basis for dualistic perception of the laws of the Universe, i.e. the principle of the binary code, the shift of light and dark, the unity of opposites in everything real and material. The monuments characterized by the binary coding usually require interpreting symbols in the ecliptic coordinate system. But once the human determined the direction of the Earth rotation axis pointing at the immovable pole star, they revealed the area of the non-setting circumpolar constellations referred to as a light, upper, never-setting heaven. Since then, a ternary structure has been traced in ancient monuments: traditional Upper and Lower Heavens (the binary ecliptic coordinate system) in the viewing direction of the south in compliance with the motion path of the stars and planets along the ecliptic, and an Upper Heaven in the north (the equatorial coordinate system). The new equatorial system made people define another initial point and a new method of determining celestial coordinates. The ancient binary ecliptic system is traced in the monuments through spatial, planar and field characteristics in the images of the immovable World waters, a Turtle swimming in these waters, bearing on its back the World mountain, where a Snake is sleeping (the pole of the ecliptic being near Draco's «head»), in the female images of the Mother of the World, fertility symbols, numerous dualistic images, lunar symbols, even numbers, etc. The equatorial coordinate system is traced in the ancient monuments through punctate and axial characteristics of the object orientation to the north, as well as through symbols of the single target orientation, usually due to some missile weapons or small arms (arrows, spears), spring waters (springs), an axle and spokes of a wheel, odd numbers, symbols of observing the diurnal rotation of the Earth, i.e. solar gnomons. This fact must allow considering the equatorial system as solar one, as in ancient times people believed the sun to rotate round the axis of the Earth. Even the male phallic symbol in the form of the solar gnomon is not occasional here, because if we observe Draco, we will discover that in III millennium BCE Thuban (Draco's alpha star) which was the pole star at that time and where the rotation axis of the Earth was directed, was located below Draco's «waist». The phallic symbol denoting the celestial pole is present in numerous sculptural monuments in the form of the solar gnomon. Another evidence of this can be found in the Rigveda describing the battle between Indra and Vritra, where as a result Vritra becomes «emasculate» (RV, I.32.7)². We may assume that on the territories where the symbolic phallus appeared as an ancient gnomon, the picture of Draco could be such as we know.

The Heroic epos of various Eurasian nations follows the similar plot: a Young Hero, who is often a thunderer, often accompanied by a horse (a deer, an elk), often in the chariot, armed with some weapon (a bow and arrows, a spear, a cudgel, a club, a vajra [thunderbolt]), comes to vanquish a Snake or a Dragon and make Old dualistic Gods give preference to him.

The Rigveda contains one of the best descriptions following this scenario. The new Young Hero (the pole star in the celestial pole) is represented by Indra, and Vritra – the defeated Snake – symbolizes the pole of the ecliptic which is located near Draco's «head» and constitutes the centre of the coordinate system defined earlier. In other words, watching the circumpolar pattern of the northern stellar sky at the Bronze Age, ancient people imagined and figuratively described the Star Wars between two main basic systems of astronomical coordinates, their poles located in the non-setting area of the circumpolar constellations. Moreover, they left that to their descendants as a Heroic epos kept in oral legends or fixed in various information-carrying media. The Rigveda represents an incomparably rich source of such information:

² The Hymns of the Rigveda. Translated by R. T. H. Griffith. Kotagiri (Nilgiri), 1896.

4 O Indra marvelously bright, come, these libations long for thee,
Thus by fine fingers purified.
5 Urged by the holy singer, sped by song, come, Indra, to the prayers,
Of the libation-pouring priest.
6 Approach, O Indra, hasting thee, Lord of Bay Horses, to the prayers.
In our libation take delight.
7 Ye Visvedevas, who protect, reward, and cherish men, approach
Your worshipper's drink-offering. (RV, I.3.4-7)

1 As a good cow to him who milks, we call the doer of fair deeds,
To our assistance day by day
3 So may we be acquainted with thine innermost benevolence:
Neglect us not, come hitherward.
4 Go to the wise unconquered One, ask thou of Indra, skilled in song,
Him who is better than thy friends.
5 Whether the men who mock us say, depart unto another place,
Ye who serve Indra and none else;
6 Or whether, God of wondrous deeds, all our true people call us blest,
Still may we dwell in Indra's care. (RV, I.4.1, 3-6)

1 They who stand round him as he moves harness the bright, the ruddy Steed
The lights are shining in the sky.
2 On the both sides to the car they yoke the two bay coursers dear to him,
Bold, tawny, bearers of the Chief.
3 Thou, making light where no light was, and form, O men, where form was not,
Wast born together with the Dawns.
4 Thereafter they, as is their wont, threw off the state of babes unborn,
Assuming sacrificial names.
5 Thou, Indra, with the Tempest-Gods, the breakers down of what is firm
Foundest the kine even in the cave.
9 Come from this place, O Wanderer, or downward from the light of heaven:
Our songs of praise all yearn for this. (RV, I.6.1-5, 9)
2 Indra hath ever close to him his two bay steeds and word-yoked car,
Indra the golden, thunder-armed.
3 Indra hath raised the Sun on high in heaven, that he may see afar:
He burst the mountain for the kine. (RV, I.7.2, 3)

1 I will declare the manly deeds of Indra, the first that he achieved, the Thunder-wielder.
He slew the Dragon, then disclosed the waters, and cleft the channels of the mountain
torrents.
2 He slew the Dragon lying on the mountain: his heavenly bolt of thunder Tvastar fashioned.
Like lowing kine in rapid flow descending the waters glided downward to the ocean.
3 Impetuous as a bull, he chose the Soma and in three sacred beakers drank the juices.
Maghavan grasped the thunder for his weapon, and smote to death this firstborn of the
dragons.

7 Footless and handless still he challenged Indra, who smote him with his bolt between the shoulders.

Emasculate yet claiming manly vigour, thus Vrtra lay with scattered limbs dissevered.

8 There as he lies like a bank-bursting river, the waters taking courage flow above him.

The Dragon lies beneath the feet of torrents which Vrtra with his greatness had encompassed.

10 Rolled in the midst of never-ceasing currents flowing without a rest for ever onward.

The waters bear off Vrtra's nameless body: the foe of Indra sank to during darkness.

11 Guarded by Ahi stood the thralls of Dasas, the waters stayed like kine held by the robber.

But he, when he had smitten Vrtra, opened the cave wherein the floods had been imprisoned.

15 Indra is King of all that moves and moves not, of creatures tame and horned, the Thunder-wielder.

Over all living men he rules as Sovran, containing all as spokes within the felly. (RV, I.32.1-3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15)

The presented text should be commented on to throw light on the Tagar petroglyphs. Those making a sacrifice and squeezing the Soma constitute traditional priests and shamans who used to make sacrifices, but with the discovery of the new coordinate system they began to make them for the Upper Heaven. In the petroglyphs of Chetvyorty Sunduk they are presented as shamans boiling meat in the cauldron near the Snake's «head», i.e. near the centre of the older ecliptic coordinate system [8] (Fig. 1). The Rigveda says that somebody made it the way that Indra «as is their wont, threw off the state of babes unborn». This event is presented in a petroglyph of Chetvyorty Sunduk in the viewing direction of the north. According to V.E. Larichev's interpretation, the Young Hero receives a weapon from an Old man with a symbolic phallus. The depicted event may imply that the new pole star gets the right to be the centre of the equatorial coordinate system from the former pole star symbolized by the Old man. Thus, the role of «somebody» in the Rigveda is played by the law of the solar and lunar precession making the celestial pole rotate according to the cyclic law (as a peg-top) round the pole of the ecliptic (near Draco's «head») with the period of 26 thousand years. As a result of this precession motion the celestial pole sometimes comes upon some stars, so that, for some time, they become immovable pole stars [9]. It is worth noting that another petroglyph entitled by V.E. Larichev as «The hero's first deed: vanquishing the giant» [10] (Fig. 2) also depicts (may be, by accident?) the precession circle along which the Young Hero «chases» the old Giant from the location of the precession. There it remained a shadowy humanlike symbol of the former pole star which disappeared from the celestial pole for several millennia, as in this time there were no other immovable pole stars between the pole stars of Thuban (Draco's alpha star) in III millennium BCE and Kinosura (Ursa Minor's alpha star). The only exceptions can be some stars of Draco, Camelopardalis (or the Giraffe) and Ursa Minor which rotated closely to the pole in II millennium BCE – I millennium CE and were considered as the pole stars by some nations. In this picture, under the assumed «precession» line, one can discern an image of a Hero riding a deer or an elk. In fact, in the stellar sky this is the location of Ursa Major, and many Siberian peoples called this constellation the Deer or the Elk. Thus, in the expected location of the pole of the ecliptic in the centre of the «precession» circle, one can see a defeated being, probably a Snake or a Dragon. There is only one inaccuracy in the interpretation of these petroglyphs: if the Young Hero is born after the Old man, he should

appear from the right, since in the observed northern sky the celestial pole moves counter-clockwise as a result of the precession, and new pole stars are expected from the right, the former ones leaving to the left. In the picture with the assumed «precession» (Fig. 3) the Giant is running to the direction where new pole stars appear. This Giant may be not an enemy, but a greater symbol of an agent of the precession law, who is handing on the baton to the next pole stars. This phenomenon becomes evident due to the comparison of the pictures illustrating two articles by V.E. Larichev. In the picture depicting handing over the weapon to the Young Hero (Fig. 1) and taken from the article entitled «Armament and protective equipment of the Tagar epic heroes (the petroglyphs of Northern Khakassia)» [11], the honourable Old man looks like the Giant in the picture (Fig. 2) from the article entitled «Structures and inhabitants of the Universe viewed by the South Siberian Tagar priests» [12] – they both are wearing similar «short panties». In this connection, it is worth mentioning another picture presented by V.E. Larichev, depicting the heaven area in the middle sector of the Proto-Temple [13] (Fig. 3). There among symbolic stars, one can figuratively show the constellations of the Young Hero and the Elk the way they are located in the sky under the precession line in the well-known constellations of Hercules and Ursa Major. Besides, in the Young Hero's hands one can see a «swastika» with its four legs bent clockwise, i.e. the Young Hero holds in his hands the equatorial pole symbol of the solar visible diurnal rotation. Looking at the precession map [14] (Fig. 4), one can see that in the late VIII millennium BCE in the constellation of Hercules the pole star was Tau Herculis (according to the accepted astronomical calculations), so the Young Hero could remain forever young under different names in different cultures (Indra, Hercules, Heracles, etc.), his role consisting in transferring knowledge connected to the axial data of the equatorial coordinate system in the historical periods when immovable pole stars appeared again to show the rotation centre of this coordinate system. This explains why the Young Hero is depicted on the path of the precession, which has already been walked over. Therefore, in the picture of handing over the weapon, the Hero of Hercules constellation must hand over the bow and arrows to the Giant who is in the place of the pole star following him, which is Thuban (Draco's alpha star) – the phallic symbol provides us with this information. The other picture depicting the «escape» of the Giant along the «precession» shows how the pole star of Thuban left the celestial pole, and the future location of the Giant is not given, as it should pass 4900 years since the exact location of Thuban in the celestial pole in 2800-s BCE till the exact polar position of Kinosura (present pole star, Ursa Minor's alpha star) in 2100-s CE.

What is astonishing is the probability of the human knowledge to be so ancient together with the human ability to keep this knowledge in the oral tradition, but it may have been caused by a short life of many information-carrying media which could be used to save information. In this case, transferring the traditional knowledge orally through myths, as well as by means of petroglyphs and stone sculptures actually constitutes the only way of getting ancient cultural and cognitive information the humankind possessed. For example, the ancient Hellenic tradition brought us a myth about how Heracles went far to the north in Hyperborea, searching for the Hesperides' apple-tree gardens guarded by a Dragon, and came to Atlas (the Giant), who carried the Heaven on his shoulders (obviously, in the celestial pole). As we know from the narration, Heracles carried the Heaven for Atlas for some time, but resorted to a trick to escape this hard fate [15]. This myth describes in a simple allegorical form the event when approximately in the late VIII millennium BCE Tau Herculis (Hercules is the Roman Heracles) became the pole star for some time. In the archaeological monuments, the traces of the Hellenic culture disappear in obscurity due to the lack of clear traces of this culture's characteristic

features; however, the descendants holding sacred their traditions depicted on the amphorae Heracles' deeds and wrote down this information in later sources.

Partly similar cosmogonic information concerning apple-tree gardens can be found in the Bible which describes the paradise with two World trees [16]. One of them is the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil guarded by a Serpent, representing features of the ancient binary ecliptic coordinate system. The other is an ideal Tree of life near which Adam and Eve could live forever, sinless, and this description represents features of the highest, non-setting, «divine» celestial pole in the equatorial coordinate system. The Bible calendar initial point refers to 5507 BCE, but the symbol of the heavenly apple-tree garden in the sky among circumpolar non-setting constellations, as well as the figurative information about the poles of two main astronomical coordinate systems presented as two World Trees, were traditionally kept and interlaced somewhere in ancient times with their deep cultural, but not necessarily genetic roots.

The phenomenon of the precession was discovered in the days of the vernal equinox, when the equinoctial sunrise was before the expected point in the ecliptic (the precession of the equinox). The precession is believed to have been discovered in II century BCE by Hipparchus, Hellenic astronomer, but in fact, ancient written and archaeological monuments prove that this phenomenon was familiar to people since very ancient times. More than once, the Rigveda mentions hidden cows that Indra set free. Taking into account the fact that the newly discovered (and regularly «forgotten») equatorial coordinate system allowed to precisely define the length of the year, for example, with the Egyptians in 28 century BCE [17], i.e. when Thuban the pole star (Draco's alpha star) reached the celestial pole, together with the fact that this defining could take place in the vernal equinox, the cows found by Indra mean defining the precise quantity of days in the year, symbolizing the cows in the constellation of Taurus, when vernal equinoxes took place in this constellation (the Age of Taurus lasted from 4450 to 2300 BCE). The fact that in the Rigveda Indra is sometimes called the bull and Vritra is called an ox also concerns the vernal equinox, as it is in the vernal equinox that the celestial equator crosses the ecliptic in one point. At the early and middle Bronze Age, this point was located in the constellation of Taurus, i.e. in the equinox Indra appeared as a bull and Vritra – as an ox. However, petroglyphs of a much younger Tagar culture and V.E. Larichev's quoting the sacrificial skin of a ram can make us conclude that the Tagars linked the vernal equinox with the constellation of Aries in the Indo-European tradition, when the sacrificial animals of the late Bronze Age and the early Iron Age were rams (the Age of Aries lasted from 2300 to 150 BCE), though sacrifices to Taurus could still remain, according to the more ancient tradition.

The question is: what could happen to the traditional religious cults in the periods of the precessional ideological changes of Ages, including the Tagar culture? These periods of changes are represented by the shifts of the pole stars (their appearance and disappearance) and the periods when the equinoctial point moves into another ecliptic constellation. The Tagar culture collapse falls into the period when the equinoctial point moved from Aries into Pisces. The solution of this problem is not univocal, as representatives of various cultures have different approaches to the problem of keeping the knowledge. Nowadays the situation is the following: the inhabitants of the eastern half of Eurasia, i.e. the Asians, keep the ancient knowledge at any cost and do their best to respect ancient cults and religions, while the representatives of the western half of the continent, i.e. the Europeans, are relatively fast to reject the traditional knowledge and beliefs, quickly forget their traditions and adopt new knowledge. This is a philosophical problem requiring an ambiguous approach, since both ways

are necessary to provide the progress of the human cognition. The oriental way of accumulating knowledge allows keeping the genetic code of human cognitive memory, requiring, however, great memory capacities and depriving of the ability to adopt new information. The occidental mentality is based on the «negation of negation» principle [18] and allows developing new cognitive areas. Western people keep their memory free and open to new information, while eastern people keep there all the knowledge received from their ascendants.

In the case of the Tagar culture we must deal with the representatives of the oriental mentality, who reflected in petroglyphs their ancient epos, like the Hellenes did on their amphorae. They aspired for keeping ancient knowledge at any cost and were unable to quickly adopt new information, including fighting techniques. Belief in their Higher Gods and Their limitless justice even after the human's death let the Tagars disappear without practically any traces in subsequent cultures, though L.S. Marsadolov assumes in his correspondence that they dissolved in neighbouring nations. Another relevant factor could be the fact that the tradition of making sacrifices of rams to Aries had not had any cosmogonic ground since 150-s BCE, and that was the reason why the cults held sacred by the Tagars were not respected by neighbouring tribes. This prevented the local tribes from gathering together to resist invaders represented by the Central Asian nomads. The Tagars may be assumed not to have disappeared but to have dissolved in an ancient ideological system which was close to them. And a new ideology accompanying the vernal equinox in the constellation of Pisces was created by other nations united by the idea of altruism and rejecting sacrifices, as Jesus Christ symbolically fed them with Fish.



Figure 1. Handing over the divine symbols of power in the framework of an ancient system of traditional beliefs [11].



Figure 2. The assumed picture of the polar Giant leaving along the «precession» [12].



Figure 3. The Elk and the Young Hero with a «swastika» in his hands under the postulated precession line [13].

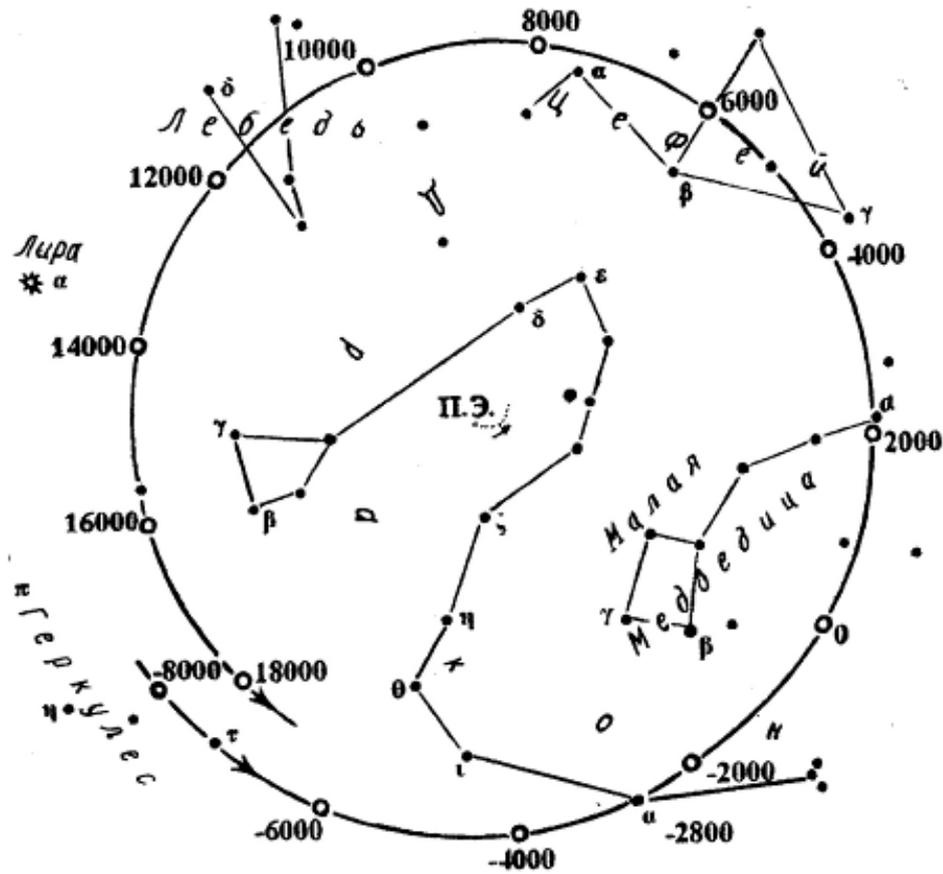


Figure 4. The precession among non-setting circumpolar constellations [14].

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