Переклад статті фрілансер Садовська Маргарита

Topic : HOW DID THE ZODIAC SIGNS COME TO BE? History of origin.

To the first sky explorers, these constellations appeared to resemble the outlines of animals. That’s why the belt of constellations is known as the zodiac, derived from the Greek word «zodiakos» meaning «circle of animals».

The division of the sky into 12 sections traces back to the Sumerian civilization and the ancient Babylonian system of calculation and astronomy based on the number 60. The Babylonian system was later adopted by the ancient Greeks, giving rise to the 12 signs of the zodiac, corresponding to various constellations.

Each sign of the zodiac corresponds to its own legend originating from ancient Greek myths.

Aries the first sign of the zodiac in myths Aries always appears as a courageous, agile and energetic animal, capable of overcoming obstacles.

With this sign is associated the ancient Greek legend of Titanida, not Fella. She saved her children from an evil stepmother by planting them on a golden ram, which was supposed to carry them to Colchis. However, on the way, the girl did not stay on the ram's back and fell into the sea, where she drowned. The boy, upon arriving in a safe place, offered the ram as a sacrifice, which was accepted by Zeus himself. Zeus then placed the ram in the sky, creating the first constellation of the ram.

The second sign of the zodiac Taurus is a kind animal always symbolizing strength and sexuality. According to legend, the ancient Greek god Zeus fell in love with Europa, a Phoenician girl. To possess her, he transformed into a white bull and abducted her, carrying her to the island of Crete. There, Zeus revealed his true form and united with Europa. The image of the mighty bull's head was then immortalized in the sky, becoming the constellation Taurus.

Gemini, the third sign of the zodiac, is symbolized by twins who are humans, not animals. According to legend, Zeus had two sons, Castor and Pollux, born to him by Princess Leda. These brothers were mighty and brave, accomplishing many feats. However, when one of the brothers died, the surviving twin asked Zeus to take away his immortality so they could be reunited. Zeus granted the request, placing both brothers in the sky, immortalized as the constellation Gemini.

The fourth sign of the zodiac is depicted as Cancer, symbolized by creatures that inhabit both bodies of water and land. Cancer, as a zodiac symbol, originated about 500 years before the beginning of our era. Its name is linked to the second labor of Hercules when he battled the Hydra in the waters. During the fight, Hercules was clamped in the leg by Cancer, weakening him. However, Hercules swiftly defeated Cancer and ultimately emerged victorious in the battle. Displeased with Hercules, the goddess Hera admired Cancer's bravery and, as a result, lifted the Crayfish into the sky, giving rise to the constellation.

The fifth sign of the zodiac is represented by the Lion, the king of beasts. Hercules' first labor was to vanquish a fierce and fearless lion residing in a German valley. The lion's skin was impervious to any human weapon, even arrows proved ineffective. Determined to succeed, Hercules decided to confront the lion bare-handed, utilizing his extraordinary strength to grip the creature's neck and strangle it. The constellation of the lion immortalizes Hercules' courage displayed during his single combat with the mighty German Lion.

Virgo is the sixth sign of the zodiac, and the second sign, the personification of which is a person, not an animal. It symbolizes the goddess of fertility, Demeter. Virgo is associated with innocence and purity, and its constellation is linked to the myth of Pandora's box. Pandora, against the orders of Zeus, brought a box to Earth that she was forbidden to open. Yielding to curiosity one day, she lifted the lid, releasing all misfortunes and human vices that scattered away, leaving only hope at the bottom of the box. Subsequently, dark times descended, and the gods gradually left the earth. The last to depart was Astrea, the goddess of innocence and purity, who has resided among the stars ever since, transformed into the constellation of Virgo

Libra is the seventh sign of the zodiac, and it is the only symbol that does not represent a human or an animal. The scales in Libra personify balance, justice, and harmony. In ancient Egyptian belief, the scales of justice were exclusively owned by the god Anubis. Anubis stands beside the large scales, using them to weigh the heart of the deceased. On one side of the scales is the heart of a person, and on the other is the feather of the goddess Maat, symbolizing truth according to Egyptian beliefs. If the person's heart is in balance with the truth, they were believed to be eligible for a second life.

The eighth sign of the zodiac is represented by Scorpio, a creature that paralyzes its victim with poison. The name is associated with a conflict involving Artemis and the hunter Orion. In this myth, Orion was sent by Artemis to deal with Scorpio, who poisoned him with its venom. Following Orion's demise, Zeus immortalized the characters by creating the two constellations Scorpio and Orion in the night sky

Sagittarius is the ninth sign of the zodiac, represented by a centaur—a mythological creature that is half man and half horse. According to legend, Charon, the wise centaur, possessed various arts such as healing, hunting, playing musical instruments, and predicting the future. Heracles once wounded Charon with a poisoned arrow. As Charon was immortal, Heracles promised to find a way to relieve his suffering. During his exploits, Heracles encountered the unfortunate Prometheus, whom Zeus had bound to a rock where an eagle devoured his liver. In an act of nobility, Charon agreed to take Prometheus's place, and as a reward, Zeus immortalized the centaur by placing him among the stars, thus creating the constellation Sagittarius.

The tenth sign of the zodiac is Capricorn, represented by a creature with strong hooves capable of climbing mountain steeps and clinging to every ledge. This image is associated with the great god of Mesopotamia, Ea, who brought knowledge and culture to these peoples. In ancient Greek mythology, Capricorn became linked with the god Pan, a fun and lustful creature who ruled over forests and fields, as well as flocks and shepherds.

Once, while escaping the pursuit of the terrible monster Typhon, the god Pan jumped into the river. However, during the transformation, he didn't complete it in time. As a result, the part submerged in water turned into a fish tail, while the upper part remained as a goat.

The symbol of the eleventh sign of the zodiac, Aquarius, is a man pouring water from a pitcher. In the ancient Greek epic, Aquarius is associated with the myth of the only person who escaped suffering during the great flood. After the rains subsided, the sole survivors, the righteous Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, found refuge on Mount Parnassus. At Zeus’s command, the waters retreated, and the couple was instructed to collect as many stones as possible and throw them over their shoulders without looking back. Pyrrha’s thrown stones transformed into women, and those thrown by Deucalion became men. Thus, Deucalion became the progenitor of mankind

The twelfth sign of the zodiac is depicted as two fish tied to each other, swimming in opposite directions. The two fish in the water symbolize opposing emotions. Legend has it that once the goddess of love, Aphrodite, and her son, Eros, were walking along the riverbank. Suddenly, a huge fire-breathing monster Typhon appeared before them, emitting the roar of a bull, the roar of a lion, and the hissing of snakes. Fearing for their lives, Aphrodite appealed to her father, Zeus, who transformed them both into two fish. They jumped into the river, thus managing to save themselves.

As we can see, the formation of the zodiac signs occurred gradually. The ancient Greeks incorporated the signs they received from the Sumerians into their worldview, creating a system that has endured to our days.