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**HERACLITUS F 120 = STRABO I, 1, 6:  
READ *QOPOΣ*, NOT *OYPOΣ***

ἡοῦς καὶ ἑσπέρας τέρματα  
ἢ Ἄρκτος καὶ ἀντίον τῆς Ἄρκτου οὐρος αἰθρίου Διός

Strabo<sup>1</sup> quotes this fragment<sup>2</sup> as proof that ἡ Ἄρκτος could have really meant *Arctic circle* and not *Bear* to Homer. This is the only relevant piece of information given by our source, rejected as erroneous by a majority of critics.

*“The fragment is partially obscure, because we don’t know what οὐρος αἰθρίου Διός means... [Strabo] probably understood ‘The ends (limits) of the distinction between dawn and evening (viz. between the rising and setting both of the sun and the stars) are the Arctic circle and, opposite, the Antarctic circle’. This interpretation must be rejected on the ground that Heraclitus is not likely to have known of the celestial Antarctic circle (South Pole)” (Marcovich, l. c.)*

Likelihood/unlikelihood is the weakest type of argument and here it already falls short of proof, e. g., if we accept “Aetius’s” attribution to Thales of the distinction between the various zones of the celestial sphere (II, 12, 1 = *Dox* 340). But even if this attribution is correct and regardless of whether Heraclitus accepted or rejected it, this does not solve the problem of the meaning of οὐρος αἰθρίου Διός.

<sup>1</sup> P. 3 Casaub. = I, 67-68 Aujac = I, 6, 8 Radt. Full context with French translation, see Mouraviev, *Heraclitea* II.A.1 (1999), text T 344 ; shorter context with commentary, see Marcovich fr. 62 (*Heraclitus Editio Maior* [1967, 2001] p. 336-40 = *Eraclito* [1974] p. 236-8) ; very short context with commentary, see Kirk, *Heraclitus. The Cosmic Fragments* (1954, 1962) 289-93.

<sup>2</sup> F 120 with full apparatus (*Heraclitea* III.3.B/i-iii [2006]) [where ‘1-6’ should be corrected to ‘1-4’ (app. II)] = fr. 62 Marcovich (*HEM* p. 336, *E* p. 236) = 22 B 120 Diels-Kranz (= DK).

Now the Ionian οὐρός can have a lot of meanings, neither of which, though, seems to be fully appropriate: *border, guardian, mountain, wind* (see the commentaries of Kirk, Marcovich and others). Incidentally, this polysemy is partly due to the fact that its old Ionian orthography, ΟΡΟΣ, lended itself to quite a number of later Attic transcriptions.

On the other hand, αἴθριος Ζεύς, as already stated by many, is likely to have meant “the bright blue sky” (cf. Aratus 899, Theocr. IV, 43, [Arist.] *De mundo* 401<sup>a</sup>17) : “*bright Zeus is the bright part of the sky*” (Kirk 291)<sup>3</sup>). Most scholars accepting this meaning translate οὐρός as *boundary* and interpret this difficult word as denoting here “the culmination point of the daily course of the Sun” (Kranz ap. DK *ad loc.*). Yet Marcovich *HEM* 340 confesses this is not clear enough to him for lack of evidence in favour of such a meaning of οὐρός.

There is but little unanimity between critics (when they have something to say on the subject) as to the precise Heraclitean purport of the fragment. The only point of agreement is that it is “astronomical.”<sup>4</sup>

My reading is based precisely on that: the supposed purport. What was it about ? The reconstruction of Heraclitus’ book<sup>5</sup> shows that the fragment most certainly belonged to the proof, directed against Hesiod, of the identity of day and night (F 57), a proof containing a *definition* of what we call the astronomical day in combination with F 99 = no. 41, F 13A = no. 45 (Chrys. ap. Philod. *de piet.* 7 = T 262) and F 70B = no. 43 (Macrob. *Somn.Sc.* I, 20, 3 = T 783).

*Limit* is to be understood temporally. The limit between one “day” and the following night is the evening, while that between night and the following “day” is dawn. This truth belongs to the human common stock and Heraclitus had no need to state it. What he did state is that conversely *the limit between evening and morning is the so-called night*, i. e. the starry Arctic circle *which ne-*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (31933) 135 n. 5 ; Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, (61920) 845 n. 1 (et Nestle *ibid.* 846 n.); Marcovich *HEM* p. 338-9.

<sup>4</sup> In the above paragraphs I deliberately omitted mentioning all the interpretations which I believe to lead us astray, including my own previous one (see n. 1 and 2 above).

<sup>5</sup> Mouraviev, *Heraclitea*, IV.A (2011), p. 6 (no. 44, text), 65-68 (comm.). Two tentative versions of it had been published earlier : see Mouraviev, *Heraclitea*, IV.A, *Héraclite d'Éphèse « Les Muses »...* (1991) and “Le livre d'Héraclite 2500 ans après. L'état actuel [2006] de la reconstruction”: *Nuevos ensayos sobre Heráclito* (México, 2009) 11-73 ; see resp. nos 42 and 44.

ver sets (cf. F 16), and the limit between dawn and evening is the so-called day, i. e. the bright blue sky (the *caelestis lux* of which Sun is the *fons*, according to Macrobius), more exactly the excess of bright sunlight standing in front of (ἀντίον), i. e. hiding from view, making invisible, the very same starry Arctic circle which it continues to be even here (cf. F 99 = no. 41). Hence basically both “night” and “day” are the same. But Night has precedence over “Day” as better reflecting its true nature (cf. F 13A = no. 42).

The Heraclitean word for *excess, surfeit* is κόρος (F 64-65, F 67, F 111), or rather QOPOΣ as it was spelled in Ionia in his time. The quotation Strabo adduces is thus up to his goal and should be read thus :

ἡοῦς καὶ ἐσπέρης τέρματα  
ἢ Ἄρκτος καὶ ἀντίον τῆς Ἄρκτου κόρος αἰθρίου Διός

*The limits between dawn and evening:  
the Bear and in front of the Bear the excess of bright Zeus*

This is one of the rare cases when the correct reading of the *text* of a Heraclitean fragment — normally based, as I stated a number of times, not on the latter's supposed/expected meaning but exclusively on its agreement with the context(s) of its citator(s)<sup>6</sup> — could be emended more or less definitively only at the stage of the reconstruction of his book, when it became clear that its present state *qua* a separate fragment — in spite of all the efforts to understand it separately (see above) and the unavoidability of its present location in the reconstructed book (too many common key elements between the seven fragments involved of block 6,<sup>7</sup> no other *existing* identifiable context) — leads to no clarification of the meaning of its most important word. While the reconstructed context does so — provided we identify the three last words with the Sun, whence the emendation.

<sup>6</sup> Latest example: Lebedev's web publication in English of a part of his new Russian edition of Heraclitus (though announced for August 2014, it is still [I write this note on October 13] inaccessible to the Russian readership. He keeps the text as transmitted, translates it thus (I stick to his English): (his fr. 55) "The turning posts of the Dawn and the Sunset\* are the constellation of Bear\*\* and at the opposite end – the limit of the bright Zeus.\*\*\*" but explains *Dawn and Sunset* as “the equinoxes” , *the Bear* as “vernal equinox, the time of the culmination of Arktos”, and *bright Zeus* as “clear sky = (period of) good weather, its «end» being the autumnal equinox”. Question: How does this hermeneutical artefact agree with (a) Strabo's context, (b) other Heraclitean fragments and doxographic accounts about the sun, (c) the opinions of other Presocratic thinkers and earliest astronomers?

<sup>7</sup> Mouraviev, *Heraclitea*, IV.A (2011) p. 66.

This reading is supported (1) by its full agreement with the citator's context whom there is no need whatsoever to suspect of having misunderstood it even if the error was his (he had access to the original context), (2) by its palaeographic probability (the omission of an extra "omicron" — in fact a qoppa — in some early copy of Heraclitus' treatise and (3) by the parallel assertion we find in Parmenides (see his fr. B 10,3, Mourelatos' commentary on p. 237-240 and his addition on p. xxxix of its second edition: "The constant and ongoing action of the sun that is significantly tied with a number of effects of stellar periodicity is *its blotting out of heavenly bodies, its 'making unseen' by virtue of its glare*" — my italics).<sup>8</sup>

Here is block 6 of my reconstruction of Heraclitus' book in a still unpublished translation into English:

39	The teacher of almost everyone, Hesiod, is reputed for knowing almost everything, he who neither day nor night did recognize. For they are one.	F 57
40	And some days he made lucky, others unlucky, ignoring that of any day nature is one <and the same>: *One day equals any day.*	F 106
41	If there were no Sun, for all the other stars it would be night.	F 99
42	<Despite the fact that> Night is, <so he said,> the foremost goddess...	F 13A
43	... the Sun is the <true> source of heavenly light.	F 70B
44	The limits of morn and of eve are: the Bear, and opposite the Bear, the abundance of radiant Zeus.	F 120

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<sup>8</sup> Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (1970, 2008)