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Kitab al-Aflak

A study of Order of Nine Angles texts reveals that, from the 1970s on, their 'nine angles' refer to the nine combinations - the "numinous symbols of cliology" (qv. the 1990s text 'Aeonic Magick - A Basic Introduction') - of the three basic alchemical substances (Mercury, Sulphur, Salt) which are represented in the pieces of the 1970s vintage O9A Star Game. These nine angles/combinations were first outlined in the 1974 text Emanations of Urania, and which nine combinations can be used to symbolize how the the causal and the acausal are manifest to us, as for instance in our psyche (in the nexion of causal/acausal that we are) via archetypes, 'personality types', and the esoteric correspondences of the O9A Tree of Wyrð.

Furthermore, according to Anton Long his inspiration for this 1970s theory of cliology - of nine alchemical combinations or emanations - was an ancient Arabic manuscript, of a few folios, he read while travelling and studying in the Middle East and Asia in 1971, and to which MS some scribe had added some scholia and the title Al-Kitab Al-Alfak - which translates as The Book of The Spheres {1} - for in ancient Muslim alchemy and cosmology there are nine cosmic or 'supernatural' realms consisting of seven named planetary spheres and two regions of "immortal" existence.

The most distant of these realms is falak al-aflak, the 'primary of the spheres'. Below this (and thus nearer to us) is al-kawakib al-thabitah, the realm of the heavenly fixed stars. Next is Zuhā, the planetary sphere of Saturn. Then there is Mushtari, the sphere of Jupiter, followed by Marikh (Mars); Shams (the Sun); Zuhrah (Venus); Utarid (Mercury); and finally Qamar, the sphere of the Moon.

The seven planetary spheres are much in evidence in the Arabic Ghayat al-hakim (c.1050 CE) which preserves the ancient Greco-Roman, pagan and hermetic {2}, system of seven named planetary spheres and which spheres are according to the Poemander tract of the Corpus Hermeticum a means whereby mortals can ascend to the two regions beyond them to thus become immortal.

Which 'nine realms' were described by Cicero {3} long before Ghayat al-hakim was written.

According to O9A aural tradition there are three interesting facts about the Arabic MS that Anton Long described. First, the title which has Al-Kitab rather than the more usual Kitab. Second, that the original MS was untitled and consisted of only a few folios intimating that it may once have formed part of a larger work, which work was perhaps contemporaneous with or earlier or later than Ghayat al-hakim. Third, that the title had obviously been added later as it was in a different hand and which later addition may well

explain the use of Al-Kitab rather than Kitab.

Whatever the place and date of composition it is relevant that an ancient Arabic alchemical text was one of the sources that Anton Long used in the 1970s when formulating the esoteric philosophy of the Order of Nine Angles.

In 2011 Anton Long was asked a question about Al-Kitab Al-Alfak by Professor Connell Monette, which question and the reply are worthy of being quoted in full.

In terms of sources of the tradition and the dark gods, you'd hinted at Islamic sources. My guess is that the 7FW draws partly on the Picatrix. Unless you're using Shams-l-maarif, I can't think of any other grimoires that could be Kitab-i-aflak

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No, but that is an interesting comparison nonetheless which no one before has made (kudos to you). The alchemical MS I had access to – consisting of only a small number of folios – has never, to my knowledge, been published or even catalogued, but does bear some comparison to parts of the MS you refer to [i.e. Shams-l-maarif] which I was fortunate enough to study (with the then necessary help of a gay [female] friend I had met at University) in the early 1970's CE on various travels to certain Muslim lands (one of which lands was the homeland of my friend who accompanied me on those travels).

It is therefore possible [although not in my view probable] that the author of Al-Kitab al-Aflak used that grimoire partly as a source.

As I have explained to several people who have privately enquired about this, there are, as no doubt you are aware, thousands of uncatalogued Arabic MSS in libraries and madrasahs throughout the lands of the Muslims. {4}

R. Parker
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Revised 2018 ev

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{1} The Arabic MS Kitab al-Aflak (Book of the Spheres) should not be confused with a book with a similar name – Kitab Ta'dil hay'at al-aflak – written by Sadr al-Sharia al-Thani in 1346 or 1347 CE.

{2} qv. Myatt's commentaries in his *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates. Translation and Commentary*. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369.

{3} qv. the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero and *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* by Macrobius.

{4} <https://lapisphilosophicus.wordpress.com/presencings-of-a-hideous-nexion/>

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