

ATLAS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

General: the early Dynastic Period fits between 3250 and 2685 BC. These dates are approximate. Three dynasties fit within these centuries: Dynasty 0 with Scorpion, Iryhor, and others, lies between ca. 3300 and 3100 BC; the First Dynasty (Narmer, Aha, Den, Djer, Wadj and others) extends from 3100 to about 2900 BC; the Second Dynasty, whose most important king was Khasekhemwy (KHA – SEKHEM – WY), occupies the years 2900 to 2685 BC.

The early Dynastic Period is also called: (1) the Archaic Period (2) the Proto-Dynastic Period.

- p. 14 The major point is that it is likely a mistake to believe that some famous king like the legendary "MENES" imposed unification up and down the Nile. Egypt became unified first in the cultural and economic domain; political unification followed gradually, as local districts created integrated trading networks and the administrators of the regions were able to organize agriculture and labor on an ever larger scale. Local kingdoms, like the confederacy of Thinis, or of Nekhen, or Nagada, competed among themselves to gain the greatest benefits, but whoever emerged at the top had land areas which in culture and in the experience of living with the Nile had already evolved to become a single people.
- p. 15 The official title of the Proto-dynastic kings was HOR (us). The great falcon was their protector, and they were on earth the embodiment of his power. In the Second Dynasty the god SETH became important. Khasekhemwy included Seth in the official royal titles, along with Hor. Seth is a god of the desert and of chaos; his sacred color is red. In the later Pre-Dynastic era, and in the Archaic Period (Dynasties 0,1,2), Seth was honored as a divine hero. He commanded the laser-light with which the Sun could chase off the great serpent which always threatened to swallow him as he traveled through the chambers of darkness every night. The serpent's name is APEP, or APEPI, or APOPHIS. The god OSIRIS (AUSIR) also posed danger to the night passage of the Sun. Osiris initially was a demon in the underworld. The mythology which sets Seth as evil against Osiris as good develops out of this earlier gratitude to Seth for defeating what was scary down below! In other words, the roles of Seth and Osiris became reversed.

Did Egyptian rulers bury attendants alive to join them in death?
Verdi's opera "AIDA" features the living interment of two lovers.

The largest tomb at Abydos is that of King Djer. 600 people were buried with him – the largest number known. The postures of these corpses, with a hand covering their eyes, and with their necks elongated up and backward as they strained to draw in some final draft of air, or as their heads were bent down to hide their vision from what was coming out of the darkness, are significant evidence to support the view that these people were not dead when they were entombed.

Burial alive did not continue after the First Dynasty, except in Nubia (Sudan) where, as it happens, Verdi's AIDA is set. It soon made no sense to kill off people of the leading families as a regular burial policy: the state would quickly become impoverished for the abilities of those trained to guide it.

The huge size of King Djer's tomb soon led Egyptians to believe that a great god had been given his temple at Abydos. A long canyon opens up to the west of Abydos, and this was thought to be the entrance to the underworld. UP-WA-WET ("Opener of the Ways"), a gray wolf or hyena, and AN-PU ("Anubis"), the black jackal were gods of Death associated with Abydos. And even earlier, far back in the Pre-Dynastic era, the first god of Death inhabited this spot, HENTI AMENTIU ("First of the Westerners"). Abydos and Djer's tomb now became a destination for religious pilgrims making their journey to the holy site of OSIRIS. Osiris had now become a god who welcomed those who passed over to the other side of life

Scottish spiritual researchers in the last of the 1800's spent much time in measuring the proportions of the Great Pyramid. Like our own Founding Fathers, these men belonged to a movement called Masonry. Through study and personal discipline they believed that they would become more worthy of the ancient knowledge known to the architects and stone masons who built the Great Pyramid – a knowledge the Greek philosopher Plato appears to have acquired in Egypt (as did Pythagoras) –that as a builder transfers abstract proportions into material form, he is bringing a mental image into physical embodiment. For this to succeed requires the discipline and guidance of mental energy. When such mental energy is powered by the builder's commitment to serve ideals understood and felt at a still higher level, like Beauty, Perfectness in Balance and Arrangement, Love, we may speak of SPIRITUAL energy. The builder becomes an artist. The Greek word for "Art" is TECH-NE, which we see materially as the engineering required for a computer to function with TECHN-ological correctness. But Plato understood something more. The Egyptian hieroglyphic for "Work" shows a person hoisting a weight, and beside this figure is the KA-sign, the upraised arms and hands, which show that what the figure is doing is "spirit"-work. A stone structure, in this way, became a living entity, vibrating in response to the spiritual force its builder concentrated into it. The Egyptian doctors, as well, believed that healing injuries to the material body could be successful only if the physician's personal intelligence was obedient to divine spiritual power. By the Dynastic Period, Egyptians worshiped a goddess called MA-AT (her symbol was the Ostrich Feather) who represented the mason's goal – evenness, perfect balance and proportion, JUSTICE.

It may appear striking that a social ideal was seen to be present in the activity of building. If we remember the film "Building the Great Pyramid", however, we can understand that each mason had to make each stone block perfect so that it would fit perfectly together with the stone blocks dressed by other masons (within 1/50th of an inch). Clearly the personal ideal of every mason was to meet the ideal standard which guided every other member of the building team. In this way the art of each individual fitted into a near-perfect relationship with the art of all the other artists. JUSTICE, the social ideal, is defined by EVENNESS OF PROPORTION extending everywhere among laborers who dedicate themselves to crafting what will fit harmoniously together with the work of fellow laborers.

In later studies, we shall see how Egyptians believed that, after death, they would stand before Osiris and the other gods to be judged. The judging was done by laying the heart of the dead person in a balance, to be weighed against the Feather of MA-AT. To pass this test, the individual heart had to

balance exactly the weight of the single feather! To such an extent was JUSTICE defined as an equal and balanced relationship of individuals everywhere within the society and , within each person, a lightness of heart! The Great Pyramid was the perfect embodiment of MAAT.

Motivated by the desire to discover more exactly the pyramid builders' basis of proportion, archaeologists – many of them Masons (members of the Masonic movement) - repeatedly measured the pyramid during the end of the 1800's and the early years of the past century. This led them to the claim that a slightly different unit, the "Pyramid Inch", just over a standard inch, supported the mathematical organization of the monument. Using multiples of this base and recording carefully the points at which different building materials were introduced into the pyramid – for example, red granite in place of limestone, "Pyramidologists" proposed that the Great Pyramid is encoded with prophecies for specific dates since the time of Moses right up to the present. A recent book, *DECODING THE GREAT PYRAMID* (Barnes and Noble), sets out carefully the assumptions for such an interpretation. Numerology in the pyramid's structure is a favorite subject.

At least one number IS notable. The entrance into the Great Pyramid's north face occurs up off the ground on the 19th level. The number 19 is important in Archaeoastronomy, for example in the placement of the monoliths at Stonehenge. Every nineteen years, eclipses of the Sun and Moon return to the point overhead at which they appeared originally. In other words, 19 is a number associated with the ending of one cycle and the beginning of a new cycle. In addition, every eclipse is a symbolic phenomenon, for as it takes place LIGHT is lost and DARKNESS grows over the sky. Then, as the eclipse passes, the darkness withdraws and light returns. That is: the bringing of the dead king to that point at which a new cycle was to start in the heavens is appropriate. The eclipse symbolism is positive, for new light, a new cycle, will be his. **SECONDLY**, as we have noticed before, to the early observers the North marked the point where the Sun, in its daily rounds, came to the end of one cycle and then began a new day. The dead king, therefore, entered the pyramid just at that point where, for a second reason, we should think of darkness and the passing of light , but find reassurance in the universe's promise of a new beginning.

Within the Great Pyramid, the direction of passages is significant. Soon after entering, we reach a point where we must choose whether to bend left, which takes us on a gentle slope downward toward the East, or whether to begin a steep ascent toward the South. This choice, whether to turn left and follow an easy path, or to turn right and climb a steep and difficult path toward moral improvement, was known as the "Choice of Herakles" in Greek mythology, and it was often referred to in the religious writings we hear associated with the cult of Orpheus. On the day John Kennedy was killed, underwater explorers in the Bay

of Naples , Italy, reported finding an entrance under the ground where a pathway reached a fork in which the left way turned downhill and the right path began to climb steeply upward. The Bay of Naples saw the blending of many diverse peoples, from Greece, from the Near East, from many different Latin tribes. The mystery religions from Greece and Egypt were popular. The underwater discovery was of a cult center connected with one such mystery religion. Given the much earlier age of the Great Pyramid, and the Egyptian studies of philosophical and spiritual leaders like Pythagoras and Plato, we wonder about its influence as a model for the initiation of neophytes (newcomers to a group) much later in the West (Pythagoras taught in south Italy, ca. 520 BC, and Plato worked in Sicily, ca. 360's ? BC)

South, the upward climb following the "Grand Gallery" of the pyramid, is that point opposite North, and therefore marks the culmination of light in the Sun's path each day; likewise, the Moon and stars rise to their highest point above the earth in the south. The "Pyramid Texts" tell of Osiris climbing a ladder to reach the stars traveling overhead and on toward the "Indestructibles" in the north. The "King's Chamber" with its empty sarcophagus is the highest inner station in the pyramid. It is here where the dead king was conducted. We can therefore conclude that there is indeed a symbolic and mystical "message" within the Great Pyramid, which, however, seems to be a message for all humans everywhere, not simply for those with traditional European religious upbringing. The southeast, where the Sun rises gaining warmth and power on its climb toward Noon, was a holy direction long before Egypt. At TASHIQ TASH, on the northern border of Iraq (ca. 58,000 years BP), as well as at many other Neanderthal cave burials, both in Asia and Europe, the dead are laid in a cave with southeastern exposure, so that, as the Sun rises, light enters the cave. The mythical Shan Dynasty in China offers examples of the same kind, ca. 2700 BC: the north was the back of the cave or burial enclosure, while the opening pointed south by southeast, with the warrior's chariot and horses were entombed to the left of the entrance, where the ascending Sun would touch them with light. It was not only the Greeks who could link the climbing Sun with (Apollo's) horses and chariot!

The Great Pyramid has very narrow passages, which have been called "air shafts" built through the walls of the King's Chamber out to the outer pyramid faces. These focus upon the north pole star of that time – the "eye" of Draco the Dragon (in fact the construction of the pyramid began with a pool of water, at the bottom of the foundation, upon which a shaft allowed the north star to reflect). Our film showed how the Egyptians imagined the soul of the king to soar like Hor, the falcon god, beyond the clouds to the never-setting northern stars which his immortal soul joined to shine. But there is another shaft which goes out of the King's Chamber to the south face of the pyramid. It originally lined up with the constellation we call "ORION", as this huge form rose up off the horizon and came to the top of the sky (southward).

In class, we explored two reasons for the Egyptian fascination with Orion. First, the constellation, high overhead, resembles the profile of a warrior with upraised right arm, ready to strike his enemy who begs him for mercy. This pose we remember from King Narmer's Palette, and also from a serekh which has beside it King Den of the First Dynasty. The second reason "Orion" would have seemed important is that it looks more like a human figure than any of the other constellations in the sky, and when it first rises, it appears to be lying on its side at the horizon, and then slowly getting itself erect to move off toward the south. The "Pyramid Texts" contain many divergent references drawn from the Pre-Dynastic era and from the Proto-Dynastic (Archaic) Period. Osiris is called upon to rise up from death (his brother Seth killed him, in mythology) and mount toward the stars. Again and again we read "Get up off your side!" "Orion" offered the perfect resurrection scene, of a god-like, yet human, figure which raised itself up off its side and mounted into the sky. This constellation was called SAHU, which can mean "the One who comes" or "the Far-Strider" or, as Egyptian mothers say to their sleepy children today, "Iske SAHU" ("Get Up!").

We see in our slides how King Unas (Wenis), last king of the Fifth Dynasty, - it is in his tomb that the "Pyramid Texts" are engraved - joins his cartouche with the hieroglyphics for Osiris. The king is called "Osiris" and just as Osiris resurrects himself off the horizon, so the king will rise up and mount into the stars.

A remarkable additional fact underlines the immense significance of this constellation. All three pyramids at Gizeh are set so as to recreate, on the ground, the particular irregularity of the belt stars of Orion (SAHU), in which the two larger pyramids are set along a diagonal line which passes straight through them through their corners, with the third and smallest pyramid off-set to the left and higher than this diagonal line. But these are not the only pyramids which recreate on land stars patterns overhead. In fact, Khufu's father, SNEFERU, had already done the same thing with the Red and Bent Pyramids. In other words, when we look at the pyramids of the Fourth Dynasty, we shall see an overall plan to connect the dominant constellations over a space of 30 km., from Gizeh to Dahshur. Who were the high priests, who was the "Imhotep" to credit with such a design? We do know that the supposed builder, the chief designer of the Great Pyramid was named HEM IUNU. He was the priest-like figure who laid hands upon NAKHT in "Building the Great Pyramid" and assigned him the incredible responsibility of holding the plumb line straight so as to direct the laying in place of the pyramid stones. The name HEM IUNU means "SERVANT OF HELIOPOLIS". So not only Imhotep, but also HEM IUNU, designers and chief builders of the Step Pyramid and of the Great Pyramid after it, were men with knowledge from Heliopolis.

