

OUR QUARRY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPUTY GRAND MASTER
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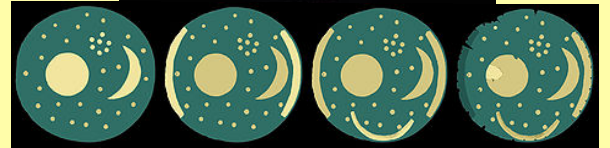


Astronomy Religion and Freemasonry

Archaeology has revealed that the development and practice of operative Freemasonry mirrors the evolution of the human race. The remains of ancient stone structures in the fertile crescent of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Mesopotamia and in the Nile Valley of Egypt are ample evidence of the intimate relationship that exists between Freemasonry and the rise of civilization. The enduring relationship between ancient astronomy, religion and Freemasonry is reflected in many well-known structures of archaeological significance around the world, of which the stone circle of Stonehenge and the great pyramids of Egypt are superb examples. These structures illustrate the remarkable wisdom of the ancient astronomers and the incredible capabilities of the Freemasons who converted abstract religious concepts into practical monuments to reflect those concepts.

The temple-tower or ziggurat known as Tower of Babylon is the first sacred building mentioned in the Bible which is believed to have been constructed prior to 4000 BC. During the period when the King of Babylon was Nimrod who was renowned as a prodigious builder. Carbon test dates indicate that the earliest cities in Mesopotamia were constructed during the fifth millennium BC. Egypt is famous for its outstanding religious complexes. The earliest are the pyramids of the Old Kingdom, from about 2685 BC until about 2180 BC.

The First Cosmos: The Sky Disk of Nebra



The disk, two bronze swords, two hatchets, a chisel, and fragments of spiral bracelets were discovered in 1999 by Henry Westphal and Mario Renner while they were treasure-hunting with a metal detector.

The Nebra sky disk is a bronze disk of around 30 centimeters (11+3/4 in) diameter and a weight of 2.2 kilograms (4.9 lb), having a blue-green patina and inlaid with gold symbols.[1] These symbols are interpreted generally as the Sun or full moon, a lunar crescent, and stars (including a cluster of seven stars interpreted as the Pleiades). Two golden arcs along the sides, interpreted to mark the angle between the solstices, were added later. A final addition was another arc at the bottom surrounded with multiple strokes (of uncertain meaning, variously interpreted as a solar barge with numerous oars, the Milky Way, or a rainbow).

The disk has been attributed to a site in present-day Germany near Nebra, Saxony-Anhalt, and was originally dated by archaeologists to c. 1600 BCE. Researchers initially suggested the disk is an artifact of the Bronze Age Unetice culture, although a later dating to the Iron Age has been proposed as well.

If its Bronze Age dating is accurate, the Nebra sky disk features the oldest concrete depiction of the cosmos yet known from anywhere in the world. In June 2013 it was included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register and termed "one of the most important archaeological finds of the twentieth century."

Of Masonic significances the grouping of the 7 stars or the Pleiades is used throughout older masonic ritual and tracing boards. Used to represent the "7 Sisters" or the Liberal Arts and Sciences.



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The Phoenicians had become the greatest developers and builders around the Mediterranean around 1200 BC and probably even earlier. They constructed many temples in the traditions of a religious system that had been practiced for at least 2,000 years. The temples constructed by the Phoenicians were the pattern for King Solomon's Temple, which was completed at Jerusalem in about 950 BC. The intimate association of Freemasonry with religion and the essential contribution it made in the construction of religious buildings that began during the ancient dynasties of Babylon and Egypt, continued unbroken through the Phoenician period into the classical eras of Greece and Rome. This association only abated at the end of the remarkable period of cathedral building in medieval Europe. Similar associations existed in India, South East Asia and Central America, all of which produced many world-famous temple-like structures.

Also of great significance are the ancient stone circles found in the Britain, Ireland and Brittany. Remnants of almost 1,000 of these structures still exist. Although the stone circles are not constructed with closely fitted hewn stones like the temple complexes, they are older and emphasize the part played by Freemasonry in the development of religion by the Neolithic and Bronze Age peoples.

Astronomy is a natural science that studies objects and phenomena. It applies mathematics, physics, and chemistry in an effort to explain the origin of those objects along with their wonder and evolution. Objects of interest include planets, moons, stars, galaxies, and comets. They also includes supernova explosions, gamma ray bursts, and cosmic microwave radiation. More commonly, all phenomena that originate outside Earth's atmosphere are within the purview of astronomy.

It is the science of astronomy that studies the laws of the stars and is the natural science that studies celestial objects and phenomena. It is one of the oldest natural sciences. Early civilizations made methodical observations of the night sky. These include the Babylonians, Greeks, Indians, Egyptians, Chinese, Maya and many ancient indigenous peoples of the Americas. In the past, astronomy included disciplines as diverse as astrometry, celestial navigation, observational astronomy, and the establishing of calendars. Nowadays, professional astronomy is often said to be the same as astrophysics.

Professional astronomy is now split into two main courses of study: observational and theoretical. Observational astronomy is focused on acquiring data from interpretations of astronomical objects. This data is then analyzed using basic principles of physics. Theoretical astronomy is oriented toward the development of computer or analytical models to describe astronomical objects and phenomena. These two fields complement each other. Theoretical astronomy seeks to explain observational results and observations are used to confirm theoretical results. Astronomy is one of the few sciences in which amateurs play an active role. This is especially true for the discovery and observation of transient events. Amateur astronomers have also helped with many important discoveries, such as finding new comets.

The Sun in Freemasonry is an emblem of the call to labor. It also represents the progress of human life from infancy, through manhood, to old age, and the coming of a better day. An analogy of this is found in the work of the Lodge. The figurative time of its opening is the dawn of the day and this is done by the Master. But it is the Junior Warden who calls the Brethren from labor; symbolically at high noon. The Senior Warden's station in the West symbolically represents the setting of the Sun.

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The complimentary symbol of the Moon in Freemasonry may be said to enforce the doctrine that “the highest saints of earth and heaven, and the most glorious angels, only reflect the Light of the Sun of Righteousness.” Whether this spiritual luminary is the Great Architect of the Universe under the aegis of Craft Masonry or Christ in Christian Masonry. In these and other manners it is intimated that “Heaven is the mirror of the human soul and when we think that we are reading the stars it is in ourselves we read.”

This is the sense in which every Lodge is shown to be a measure of the universe: “in length East to West, in breadth from North to South,” while at the opposite pole of that zenith extends the immeasurable depths. It has been said well that the astronomy of man’s soul is greater than that of the starry heavens. That true heaven is within, a firmament of possibility of central and celestial light.

The light of the Sun also signifies the influx of God into our soul while the Moon is the soul principle within us which receives that glory from beyond. In another form of symbolism the Moon is the reflected light of mind. It is the reasoning and logical faculty while the Sun corresponds to the higher mind. It is the inspired part of our nature, our imagination in its creative state.

The Pleiades



The name of the Pleiades comes from Ancient Greek, Πλειάδες. [12] It probably derives from plein (“to sail”) because of the cluster’s importance in delimiting the sailing season in the Mediterranean Sea: “the season of navigation began with their heliacal rising”. However, in mythology the name was used for the Pleiades, seven divine sisters, the name supposedly deriving from that of their mother Pleione and effectively meaning “daughters of Pleione”. In reality, the name of the star cluster almost certainly came first, and Pleione was invented to explain it.

The Pleiades are a prominent sight in winter in the Northern Hemisphere, and are easily visible out to mid-Southern latitudes. They have been known since antiquity to cultures all around the world,[16] including the Celts (who call them Tŵr Tewdws), Hawaiians (who call them Makali’i[17]), Māori (who call them Matariki), Aboriginal Australians (from several traditions), the

Persians, whence in Hindi and Urdu (who called them پروین Parvīn or پروی Parvī), the Arabs (who called them الثريا al-Thurayya[19]), the Chinese (who called them 昴 mǎo), the Quechua, the Japanese (who call them 昴 / スバル Subaru), the Maya, the Aztec, the Sioux, the Kiowa,[20][21] and the Cherokee. In Hinduism, the Pleiades are known as Krittika and are associated with the war-god Kartikeya. They are also mentioned three times in the Bible.