

THE DISC OF NEBRA

IMPORTANT SAILING ROUTES OF THE BRONZE AGE DISPLAYED IN RELIGIOUS CONTEXT (NEBRA, SACHSEN-ANHALT, GERMANY, c.1600 BC)

by

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Summary

In 1999 a gold-plated bronze disc was found in central Germany, dated c.1600 BC. In view of the sun, moon, and stars shown on the disc, an astronomic interpretation seemed logical. However, close inspection showed a relation with the Egyptian Sunreligion. The whole disc turns out to be the face of the SunGod Ra, but also the Ocean with the Sunbark sailing via the Southern Crossing to the land in the west, at the other side of the waters, where the sun sets. It is the Realm of the Dead, at the civilization in Central America. The stars on the disc encode the holy latitude of the Tropic of Cancer at 23 degrees north, and other latitudes of the Southern Crossing, and Central America, supporting this explanation of the disc.

Introduction

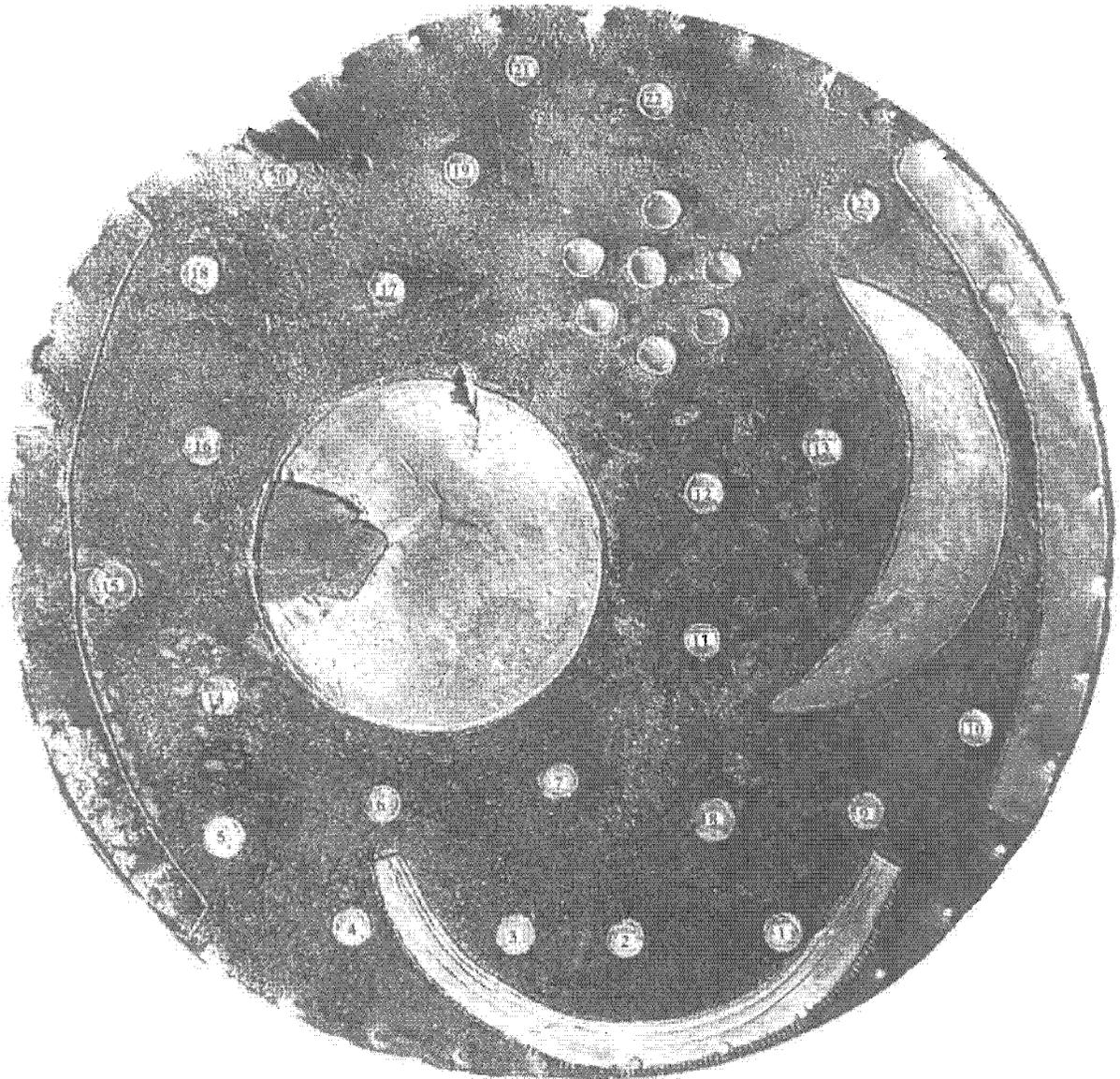
IN 1999 a bronze disc was stolen from a prehistoric grave in the neighborhood of Sachsen-Anhalt, in the Harz Mountains, in Germany (Ref.1). Three years later, in 2002, it was recovered. Figure 1 is reproduced from The New Rotterdam Newspaper, where an article about the Disc appeared on December 7, 2002. It caught our interest, and this article was written to explain the object. Recently (Nov.24,2003), a color (mostly gold and green) photograph of the disc has appeared in

the popular American magazine U.S. News and World Report (Ref.23).

Though Figure 1 is much smaller, the actual object is reported to have a diameter of 32 cm, and a weight of about 2 kg. The Disc is partially covered with pieces of goldplate, though in some places, the gold plating is gone. Originally, around the edge, there probably were 39 small holes. The backside status is not reported. The grave from which it was taken is located within a circular-shaped wall system of c.200 to 350 meters, on the Mittelberg mountain at Nebra, close to



Fig.1: The bronze Disc of Nebra with pieces of gold plate is the complicated face of the Egyptian SunGod Ra, with the Sun, Moon, and the Sunbark, sailing to the west. (Actual Diameter 32cm, weight 2 kg.) Reprinted from the Rotterdam Newspaper (Ref.1). (Nebra, Sachsen-Anhalt, the Harz Mountains, Germany, c.1600 BC)



**Fig.2: The bronze Disc of Nebra, figure rotated 180 degrees,
stars numbered by the authors.
(Nebra, Sachsen-Anhalt, the Harz Mountains, Germany, c.1600 BC)**

a tributary of the Weser River, at a distance of 250 km from the coast of the North Sea (Atlantic Ocean). The bronze Disc contains a relatively high quantity of arsenic, and the gold is contaminated with other substances. From these content data, as well as the strong corrosion of the bronze surface, and from the depth and type of the original grave, it was deduced that the disc dates from c.1600 BC. This is almost a thousand years after the discovery of America via the Atlantic, c.2500 BC (Refs.2,3).

Astronomic Interpretation

On the front side of the disc we see a large golden sun, with damage to its gold plating, and a crescent quarter Moon in the sky, as seen from the earth. On two sides, were strips of gold plating, now obviously gone on one side. Looking at the object astronomically, these could be seen as the eastern and western horizons, usually imaged as land or mountains in ancient pictographs. There is a cup, or bowl-shaped object at the top or bottom, possibly symbolizing the Milky Way, and a number of golden "stars", including a group of seven, that might represent the 7 stars of the 7 star constellation, the Pleiades. There are 23 other stars, so the stars total 30. The Newspaper article says there are two more stars under the gold plating of the edge horizon, but only one is clearly visible in the reproduced photo.

Anthropomorphic Interpretation

THE DISC OF NEBRA might represent the head of a person (Fig.2). At one side we see a complete eye, and beside it, a crescent of the other eye. Below might be a mouth, with a smile. At the sides, might be hair, or ears, or earpools. The disc of Nebra is late megalithic. Sometimes, petroglyphic images can appear to be faces of the SunGod, but we have shown that such petroglyphs (and also monuments) of this time period often have additionally religious, political, and geographic meanings (Refs.2,3).

Religious Meaning

THE WHOLE DISC is the Realm of the SunGod, and is about the sunreligion which became highly developed in Egypt. In Egyptian images, the sun is usually shown rising from the Eastern horizon, and the moon is shown over the Western horizon, the Land of the Dead. Each day, the Sun traverses the sky to the West, and each evening the God sails west in his Sunbark to the Other Side of the World, the Realm of the Dead. Sometimes this Sunbark is shown as an upside-down boat in the sky (like Fig.1), and at other times as an upright Sunboat on the water (like Fig.2). So there may be no "up" or "down" to the Disc, as it may be intended to be 3-dimensional (the 4 cardinal directions, plus up to the sky, above the earth).

On the Disc are a group of 7 stars, and 23 separate stars. The 23 correspond to the latitude of the Tropic of Cancer, at 23 degrees North. This latitude is holy to the sunreligion because at noon on midsummer day the Sun is directly overhead at this latitude, having moved up from the south. After staying at this latitude a couple of days, the sun turns, and begins a slow movement back to the south. Most megalithic petroglyphs and monuments contain this holy number or 23, so we are sure the Sunreligion was widely believed, and a prominent feature of the society.

The 23 separate stars also corresponded to the latitude of the Southern Egyptian Empire, at 23 degrees North. This was the geographical center of the sunreligion. So, from the 23 stars, we know of the Disc of Nebra represents the face of Ra, and the details of the Disc are about the Sunreligion, centered on Egypt. Together with the group of 7 stars, the total is 30 stars, the latitude of the Nile Delta, the center of the Northern Egyptian Empire, at 30 degrees North. The group of 7 stars may also represent the seven degrees of latitude of the United Egyptian

Empire, from 23 degrees N to 30 degrees N, again confirming that the Sunreligion originates in Egypt.

Political meaning

IN EGYPTIAN religious hierarchy, below the SunGod Ra are two other gods, the moongod Osiris, and the sungod Horus, indicated on the Disc by the two eyes of Ra. The Pharaohs (Kings) on earth were considered living personifications of Osiris and Horus (Refs.4,5). On the Disc of Nebra, if one sees the moon as placed close to the eastern (Old World) horizon (Fig.2), it might be concluded that this item was fabricated during the reign of an Osiris-King. The complicated Egyptian religion then predicts that this Pharaoh will be succeeded by a Horus-King (the Sun), who rises from the east, while the Osiris-King (the Moon) sinks in the west, the Land of the Dead. The whole political procedure of resurrection and accession is thus symbolized by a voyage around the Earth, across the Ocean. This led to a profound interest in the Realm of the Dead on the west side of the Ocean for thousands of years, as shown by the benevolent expression on the face of Ra on the Disc.

Geographic Meaning

Each day the Sun moves to the west, and each day the God Ra sails in his Sunbark in that direction. So, the round disc, the head of Ra, also represents the spherical Earth, and especially the North Atlantic Ocean, which is located in the west. So the mouth of Ra is also the Sunbark, sailing on the Ocean to the West.

Details of the crossing may be encoded in the placement of the stars on the disc. Let us assume that the "boat" is upright on the Ocean (Fig.2), with the moon near the eastern horizon, and the Sun moving to the west. Usually, in megalithic petroglyphs, the center of the eastern horizon is the Strait of

Gibraltar, on the coast of the Old World. The Tropic of Cancer leaves the continent of Africa at 23 degrees North, encoded by the 23 stars. This is the historic place they wanted to cross the Ocean in honor of the SunGod Ra (Refs.2,3). Unfortunately this proved to be impossible, due to the contrary winds and currents at that latitude. We are sure some brave people lost their lives in the doldrums of the Sargasso Sea, trying to cross it (Ref.2). These attempts did, however, result in the early discoveries of the Cape Verde Islands and the Azores. After many years, and actual discovery of the Americas from the other side (Ref.2), the wind and the current patterns became known. Finally these people had learned how to cross the ocean with the tradewind and the currents at their back, via the Southern Crossing, from the Cape Verde Islands to South America (Refs.2,9-13).

IN THE BOWL or "boat" image on the Disc of Nebra are 3 stars (# 1,2,3) (Fig.2), which may represent the 3 island groups of the Cape Verde Islands. The boat actually represents the Cape Verde Islands, literally, which actually have this shape in the Ocean. Below the sun and moon are 10 stars (#1-10), encoding the ten islands of the Cape Verde Archipelago. Below the centers of the sun and the moon are 15 stars (#1-15), the latitude of the most southern Cape Verde Islands (15 degrees N), and the sailing direction from there, 15 degrees WSW, to South America, as well as Cape Gracias a Dios, the east Cape of Honduras, also at 15 degrees N. The 15th star touches the western horizon, so the culture of Central America starts at this Cape. In total there are 30 stars on the Disc, encoding the correct length of the Southern Crossing, 30dl (distance lines), or 30 degrees, equal to 3333km (Ref.2). In front of the boat are 2 stars (#4,5), which combined with the 3 in the boat, could indicate a landing target on the shore of British Guyana, at 5 degrees N. The 4 southernmost stars (#1-4) form a line pointing to the southernmost point of the

western horizon, so it appears that Cape Caciporee, Brazil, at 4 degrees N may have been a favorite landing spot in this time period.

AT THE LEFT side of the Sun is another star (#16), for a total of 16 stars, corresponding to the culture along the North Coast of Honduras, Belize, and Guatemala, at 16 degrees N. Above these are two more stars, (#17,18), encoding the center of the Olmec Civilization on the river mouths around the southern basin of the Gulf of Campeche ("Egyptian Gulf") at 18 degrees North (Refs.14-21). Above these, are two more stars, (#19,20), showing the northern border of this civilization, at 20 degrees N. The center of the western horizon (formerly in gold) corresponds to this southern coast of the Gulf of Campeche, and is clearly situated on the disc to the WSW of the center of the eastern horizon, in agreement with the latitudes (Gibraltar is at 36 degrees N). This is confirming of the discovery of America before the c.1600 BC date of this Disc of Nebra, and the importance of ancient Central America (the Land of Punt).

At the top of the Disc is the 21st star, encoding the NE Cape of Yucatan, at 21 degrees north, and the 22nd star gives the latitude of SW Cuba at 22 degrees north. The last two stars (#22,23) could provide the sailing distance from the Cape of Yucatan to the SW Cape of Cuba, 2ld, or 222km, at a direction of 10 degrees ENE (#21,22,23 + 7). The total of 23 stars again provide the Tropic of Cancer, this time, along the North Coast of Cuba. The group of 7 stars also represent the areas of South Florida with this shape, 7 degrees above the south point of the Gulf of Campeche, at 18+7=25 degrees N. The 30 total stars of the Disc confirm the importance of the mouth of the Mississippi River, and its Poverty Point trading center for Michigan copper at 30 degrees north, the economic engine of the Bronze Age. Since the Nebra Disc is dated to c.1600 BC., it was made prior to the abrupt ending of the Michigan

copper mining at c.1200 BC, coincident with the worldwide catastrophes of that date (Ref.22).

The return route to the Old World runs with the winds and the Gulfstream off Newfoundland (not shown) to the Azores and Madeira (Refs.6-13). The Sun, appearing in the center of the Ocean on the Disc, represents the importance of the Azores on this return route, because following their discovery, c.3600 BC, these islands had been revered as the western home of the SunGod for a thousand years (Ref.2). The edge of the Disc probably had 39 small holes, corresponding with the West Azores at 39 degrees N. The group of 7 stars may also represent the star group called the Pleiades. If so, its appearance in the sky may have indicated the end of the sailing season in the autumn. The group of 7 stars plus two western stars (#17,19) represents the 9 islands of the Azores, illustrating the importance of the western two Azores islands (Corvo and Flores). These islands were the sailing goal for ships leaving Cape Race, Newfoundland, returning with their holds full of copper. The moon here represents Madeira, with two stars near it (#12,13), the actual two islands of Madeira. It is possible that the group of 7 stars might also be representing the 7 Canary Islands. For more graphic megalithic maps of these islands and sailing routes, see the petroglyph in Ref.2.

THE DISC WAS found in Nebra in a circular wall system, at 52 degrees N, the same latitude as the westernmost point in Europe (Dunmore Head, Ireland). This also is the latitude of Cape St. Charles, the East Cape of mainland North America. The Azores, represented by the Sun on the Disc, are situated at the complementary latitude (90-52) of 38 degrees north. If there are two more stars behind the gold eastern horizon, the total stars would then be 32, encoding the latitude of Bermuda, at 32 degrees north, an alternative in late date return routes (after c.1700 BC).

Discussion

Through the use of encoded latitudes, combined with graphic design, the Disc of Nebra indicates routes on the Ocean that are the most common ones in other Bronze Age

petroglyphs (Ref.2). The finding of this large, beautiful gold and bronze relic in Germany is an important piece of confirmatory evidence regarding the religion and trading routes of the Bronze Age.

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