The Mystery of Göbekli Tepe and Its Message to Us

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What were our ancestors like 10,000 or more years ago? The most common image is one of small nomadic bands endlessly in pursuit of the next meal. Men hunted game while women and children gathered fruits, seeds, roots, shoots, insects, and other edibles.

The height of technology was a finely worked stone knife blade or spear point; nets, baskets, and cordage were also put to good use. Permanent structures were superfluous, for the group never stayed in one place very long. Material goods were sparse as possessions had to be limited to those easily carried. Jewellery (perhaps beads, animal teeth, or shells strung on a cord) and personal decoration (body paint, tattoos) were prized. In colder climates appropriate clothing was fashioned from animal skins. Social institutions were minimal. Not until the Neolithic Revolution, beginning about 10,000 years ago, did agriculture and domestication appear. This in turn allowed permanent settlement, leading to specialisation of labour, the development of crafts (including pottery and metalworking), the building of substantial structures, long-distance trade, and the slow and gradual evolution of complex societies.

Based on radiocarbon analyses, the site goes back to the period of 9000 to 10,000 BCE, and was intentionally buried circa 8000 BCE.

None of this happened overnight. It took thousands of years, and it was not until around 4000 to 3000 BCE that true signs of high culture first appeared, such as fine artistry in decorative crafts, written records, scientific observations of the heavens, complex political organisations, and megalithic building projects. This level of achievement was reached in Mesopotamia, the Nile Valley, and the Indus Valley by the beginning of the third millennium BCE. A well-known example is the rise of dynastic Egypt about 3200 to 3100 BCE and the building of the Djoser pyramid circa 2630 BCE. Stonehenge in England dates from the same period.

Although accepted as dogma by many, this nice neat scenario may be completely wrong.

Questioning Accepted History

Back in 1991, I had the temerity to announce that the Great Sphinx of Egypt, conventionally dated to 2500 BCE (the reign of Pharaoh Khafre), actually has its origins in the 7000 to 5000 BCE range, or possibly earlier.

My announcement was done via a presentation at the October 1991 annual meeting of the Geological Society of America (this was allowed only after a formal abstract, submitted with my colleague John Anthony West, was accepted based on positive professional peer review).[1] I made my case utilising scientific analyses, comparing erosion and weathering profiles around the Sphinx to the ancient climatic history of Egypt.

In brief, the Sphinx sits on the edge of the Sahara Desert, a hyper-arid region for the past 5,000 years; yet the statue shows substantial rain-induced erosion. The original structure must date back thousands of years prior to 3000 BCE (the head was re-carved in dynastic times).

I had pushed the Great Sphinx, arguably the grandest and most recognisable statue in the world, back into a period when humanity was supposedly just transitioning from a hunter-gatherer economy to a sedentary life. People 7,000 or more years ago were still brutish and unsavoury, at least by modern civilised standards. Certainly they were not carving giant statues (the Sphinx is about 20 meters tall by over 70 meters long) out of solid limestone bedrock. Immediately after my announcement of an older Sphinx, I was under attack. Archaeologist Carol Redmount (University of California, Berkeley) was quoted in the media, "There's just no way that could be true." The article continued, "The people of that region would not have had the technology, the governing institutions or even the will to

build such a structure thousands of years before Khafre's reign, she said."[2]

The initial hoopla peaked in February 1992 at a "debate" on the age of the Great Sphinx held at the Chicago meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.[3] As the *New York Times* put it, "The exchange was to last an hour, but it spilled over to a news conference and then a hallway confrontation in which voices were raised and words skated on the icy edge of scientific politeness." Egyptologist Mark Lehner could not accept the notion of an older Sphinx, personally attacking me by labelling my research "pseudo-science." Lehner argued, "If the Sphinx was built by an earlier culture, where is the evidence of that civilisation? Where are the pottery shards? People during that age were hunters and gatherers. They didn't build cities."[4]

At the time I lacked any pottery shards. But I was sure of my science, and I persisted. Two decades later, we have something better than pottery shards, and even earlier than my conservative Sphinx date of circa 5000 BCE to 7000 BCE (I now currently favour the older end of this range, or an even earlier date for the original Sphinx). Göbekli Tepe dates from over 10,000 years ago.

Better than Pot Shards

A short drive from Urfa (alternatively Sanlıurfa), south-eastern Turkey, atop a mountain north of the Harran Plain, sits Göbekli Tepe. Since 1995 Prof. Dr. Klaus Schmidt of the German Archaeological Institute has been excavating the site.[5] Recently I visited it for myself. I was amazed.

At Göbekli Tepe immense finely carved and decorated T-shaped limestone pillars, many in the range of two to five and a half meters tall and weighing up to an estimated 10 to 15 tons, stand in Stonehenge-like circles. The workmanship is extraordinary, with clear sharp edges that would do any modern mason proud. It may be a cliché, but I cannot help but think of the opening scene of the classic 1968 movie *2001: A Space Odyssey.* A group of ape-like proto-humans discovers a giant monolith; influenced by it, they learn to use tools, leading to civilisation.[6]

Various pillars at Göbekli Tepe are decorated with bas-reliefs of animals, including foxes, boars, snakes, aurochs (wild cattle), Asiatic wild asses, wild sheep, birds (cranes, a vulture), a gazelle, and arthropods (scorpion, ants). The carvings are refined, sophisticated, and beautifully executed. Not only are there bas-reliefs, but also carvings in the round, including a carnivorous beast, possibly a lion or other feline, working its way down a column, apparently in pursuit of a boar carved in relief below. In the round, carvings of lions and boars have been uncovered, now housed in the Museum of Sanlıurfa, as is a life-sized statue of a man, which, though from Urfa, apparently dates to the Göbekli Tepe era.

Also from Göbekli Tepe are perfectly drilled stone beads. And, according to Prof. Schmidt, while some of the stone pillars were set in the local bedrock, others were set into a concrete- or terrazzo-like floor. Looking only at style and quality of workmanship, one might easily suggest that Göbekli Tepe dates between 3000 and 1000 BCE. How wrong one would be. Based on radiocarbon analyses, the site goes back to the period of 9000 to 10,000 BCE, and was intentionally buried circa 8000 BCE.[7] That is, the site dates back an astounding 10,000 to 12,000 years ago!

This was supposedly the time of the brutish, nomadic, hunters and gatherers who, according to many academics, did not have the technology, governing institutions, or will to build structures such as those found at Göbekli Tepe. Clearly there is a disconnect between what conventional historians and archaeologists have been teaching all these years and the clear evidence on the ground.

As Stanford University archaeologist Ian Hodder commented, Göbekli Tepe is "unbelievably big and amazing, at a ridiculously early date... huge great stones and fantastic, highly refined art... Many people think that it changes everything… It overturns the whole apple cart. All our theories were wrong."[8] Like my redating of the Great Sphinx, Göbekli Tepe forces us to reconsider our antiquity.

And like my work on the Sphinx, the specialists are perplexed by Göbekli Tepe. Patrick Symmes wrote in *Newsweek*, "But the real reason the ruins at Göbekli remain almost unknown, not yet incorporated in textbooks, is that the evidence is too strong, not too weak. 'The problem with this discovery', as [Glenn] Schwartz of Johns Hopkins puts it, 'is that it is unique'. No other monumental sites from the era have been found. Before Göbekli, humans drew stick figures on cave walls, shaped clay into tiny dolls, and perhaps piled up small stones for shelter or worship. Even after Göbekli, there is little evidence of sophisticated building."[9]

In a nutshell, we have evidence of high culture and civilisation circa 10,000 to 8000 BCE, but then an apparent decline or hiatus for thousands of years, until the "rise" of civilisation once again in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and elsewhere. What happened?

A Record of Precession at Göbekli Tepe

A hallmark of civilisation is precise scientific observation. Astronomy is often considered the earliest yet most sophisticated of the sciences. A particularly subtle astronomical phenomenon, the discovery of which is generally credited to Hipparchus of Rhodes in the second century BCE,[10] is the slow movement of the stars relative to the equatorial coordinate system. This is commonly referred to as the precession of the equinoxes. The entire cycle, with stars returning to their "starting points," takes somewhat under 26,000 years. Some researchers suggest that precession was known to the ancient Egyptians and other early civilisations, and is reflected in myths worldwide.[11] Others dispute such assertions. I found evidence of precession at Göbekli Tepe, adding another layer of sophistication to this remarkable site.

The excavated portions of Göbekli Tepe lie on the southern slope of a hill looking out to the southern skies. Thus far, the better part of four stone circles (enclosures) has been excavated in an area measuring about 40 by 40 meters square. Additional, later and smaller, pillars and structures have been partially uncovered both 20 to 30 meters north and about 80 meters west of the major area of circles,[12] and

eighteen or more stone circles still under the earth have been identified. Enclosure D is located furthest north. To the southeast lies Enclosure C, and to the south of Enclosure D lies Enclosure B and finally A. The enclosures are very close to each other, almost abutting. Each enclosure possesses a pair of tall central parallel pillars ringed by a circle of shorter pillars with later stonewalls between the pillars. If at some point the enclosures were covered over, they may have been entered from above; indeed, possible carved stone "portals" have been found that may have been set in a roof.

The central pairs of pillars are oriented generally toward the southeast, as if forming sighting tubes toward the sky. The central pillars of Enclosure D include arms and hands, with the hands holding the belly or navel area, and it is clear that the anthropomorphic pillars are facing south. The orientations vary from enclosure to enclosure, however. For Enclosure D the central pillars are oriented approximately 7º east of south. Those for Enclosures C, B, and A are approximately 13º east of south, 20º east of south, and 35º east of south respectively.[13] These varying angles suggest the builders were observing stars and building new enclosures oriented progressively toward the east as they followed particular stars or star clusters over hundreds of years.

What were the builders observing? This is a difficult question to answer, but we can hypothesise. On the morning of the Vernal Equinox of circa 10,000 BCE, before the Sun rose due east at Göbekli Tepe, the Pleiades, Taurus, and the top of Orion were in view in the direction indicated by the central stones of Enclosure D, with Orion's belt not far above the horizon (as seen from the best vantage points in the area) as dawn broke.[14] A similar scenario played out for the orientation of the central stones of Enclosure C in circa 9500 BCE and for Enclosure B in circa 9000 BCE. Enclosure A is oriented toward the Pleiades, Taurus, and Orion on the morning of the Vernal Equinox circa 8500 BCE, but due to precessional changes, the entire belt of Orion no longer rose above the horizon before dawn broke. By about 8150 BCE the belt of Orion remained below the horizon at dawn on the morning of the Vernal Equinox. These dates fit well the timeframe established for Göbekli Tepe on the basis of radiocarbon dating.

The Vernal Equinox is easily observed and noted, and since the beginning of recorded history has been an important marker, celebrated with festivities. It marks the first day of the year in numerous calendars, and is tied to cosmological creation stories. I suspect that these traditions go back to Göbekli Tepe times, and even earlier.

The Orion-Taurus region of the sky has been a focus of ancient humans for tens of thousands of years in Europe and the Middle East. Here are located the asterisms of Orion's belt and the Hyades, as well as the Pleiades. Researchers such as Michael Rappenglueck, Frank Edge, and Luz Antequera Congregado have identified the constellation Taurus and the Pleiades among the paintings of Lascaux cave, France, dating back 16,500 years ago.[15] Additionally, Rappenglueck asserts that a tiny tablet from Germany, carved of mammoth ivory and dating back at least 32,500 years, depicts the constellation Orion in the familiar guise of a narrow-waist male with outstretched arms and legs.[16]

Given such evidence, it is reasonable that the Göbekli Tepe people recognised Orion as a human figure, even as a hunter. The mammal remains found while excavating Göbekli Tepe (including numerous gazelle, aurochs or wild cattle, wild ass, fox, wild sheep/goat species, and boars), as well as the reliefs on the pillars, can be taken to indicate a hunting society. Indeed, studying the anthropomorphic pillars of Enclosure D, they may represent, in stylised form, Orion. Not only do they have arms (which could be interpreted as the arms of Orion brought down to the body), but also prominent belts (the belt stars of Orion) and fox pelt loincloths that may represent the Orion Nebula and associated features.

My suggestion that the Göbekli Tepe people were observing the Orion-Taurus-Pleiades region of the sky on the morning of the Vernal Equinox is simply a hypothesis. If they were observing stars (versus the Sun, for instance), then they needed to readjust their observations over the centuries due to precessional changes. And maybe they were observing something more than just the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars.

Göbekli Tepe, Easter Island, and the Plasma Connection

Having returned from Easter Island (January 2010) not long before visiting Göbekli Tepe (May 2010), I was surprised to see numerous iconographic similarities between the two. I believe these similarities are real, but I might have missed them if I had not been to both sites in succession. Furthermore, both Easter Island and Göbekli Tepe may relate to powerful plasma events in the skies at the end of the last ice age.

The outstanding feature of Easter Island is the *moai*, those huge stone heads and torsos that dot the island. In the case of Göbekli Tepe, stone pillars dominate the scene. Amazingly, both the moai and the anthropomorphic central pillars of Enclosure D at Göbekli Tepe have arms and hands positioned similarly against the body, with hands and fingers extended over the belly and navel region. The moai are looking up at the skies, and I believe the Göbekli Tepe pillars are also looking towards the skies. Are they looking to identical phenomena?

As I have discussed elsewhere,[17] the indigenous Easter Island rongorongo script may record a major plasma event in the skies thousands of years ago, at the end of the last ice age. Plasma consists of electrically charged particles. Familiar plasma phenomena on Earth today include lightning and auroras, the northern and southern lights. In the past, much more powerful plasma events may have taken place, perhaps due to coronal mass ejections from the Sun or emissions from other celestial objects. Powerful plasma phenomena could cause strong electrical discharges to hit Earth, burning and incinerating materials on the planet's surface.

Los Alamos plasma physicist Anthony L. Peratt and his associates have established that petroglyphs found

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(Top) Panoramic view (produced from a composite of several photos) of Göbekli Tepe looking toward the northwest corner.

(Left) Robert Schoch at Göbekli Tepe.

(Below left) View of Enclosure D at Göbekli Tepe, looking toward the southeast.

(Below) View of Enclosure D looking toward the southwest.

Photographs courtesy of R. M. Schoch and Catherine Ulissey

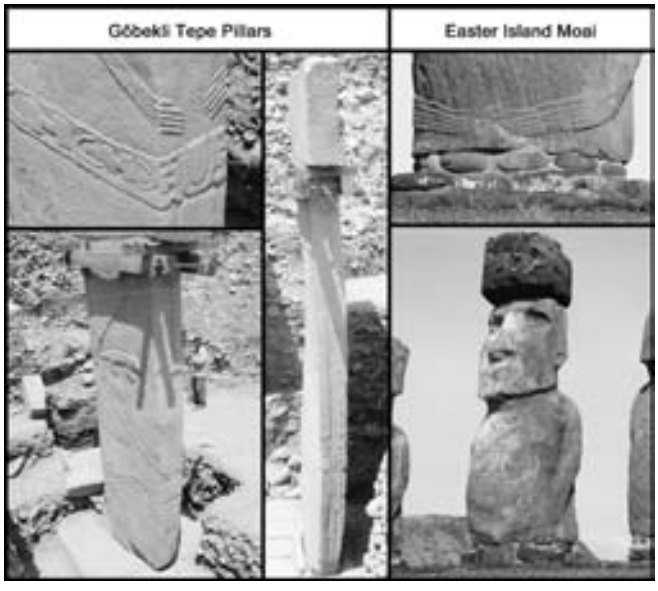
(Top left) Pillar in Enclosure A with an aurochs (wild cattle), fox, and crane.

(Top) Pillar in Enclosure C with unidentified animals, wild boar, and fox(?).

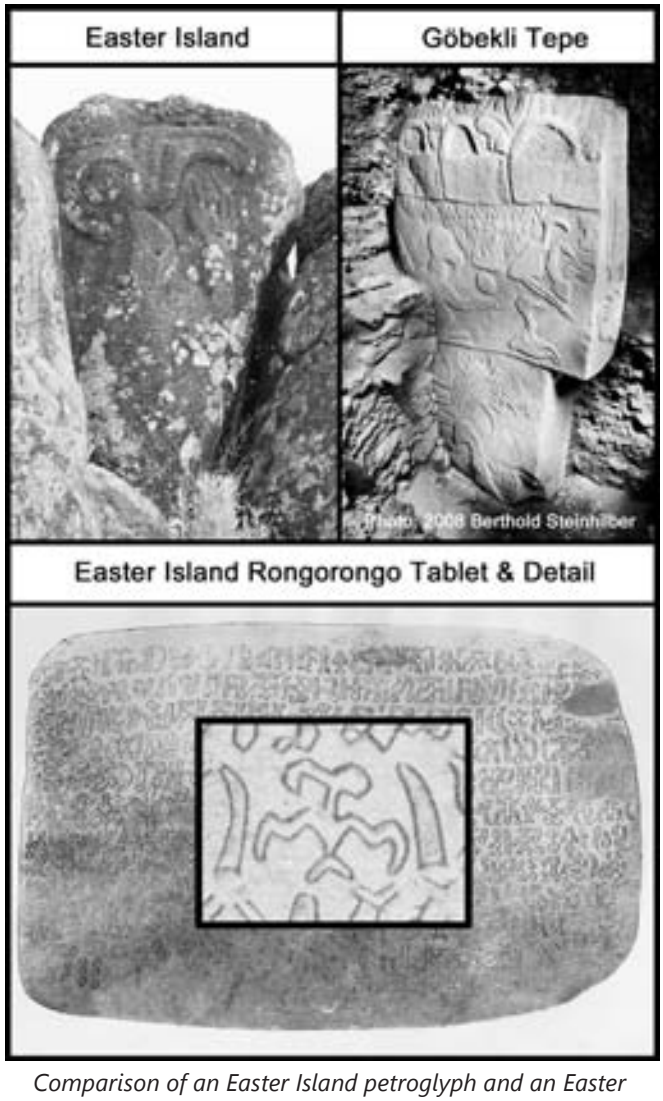
(Left) Robert Schoch at the Museum of Sanlıurfa standing next to the statue of a man found in Urfa that is believed to date back to the general time of Göbekli Tepe.

(Below) Pillar in Enclosure D with birds and other animals.

Photographs courtesy of R. M. Schoch and Catherine Ulissey



Comparison of pillars at Göbekli Tepe with Easter Island moai.



Comparison of an Easter Island petroglyph and an Easter Island rongorongo glyph to carvings at Göbekli Tepe (Photograph of Göbekli Tepe pillar courtesy of Berthold Steinhilber, 2008).

worldwide record an intense plasma event (or events) in prehistory.[18] Peratt has determined that powerful plasma phenomena observed in the skies would take on characteristic shapes resembling humanoid figures, humans with bird heads, sets of rings or donut shapes, and writhing snakes or serpents – shapes reflected in the ancient petroglyphs. Plasma events may be a dominant theme found among the ancient remains of Easter Island. Likewise, plasma may be important to understanding Göbekli Tepe.

One of the strange and perplexing aspects of Göbekli Tepe is that it was not simply abandoned and left to oblivion, but intentionally buried around 8000 BCE. Furthermore, before its final burial, stonewalls were built between the finely wrought pillars. These walls are, in my opinion, clearly secondary as in many cases they cover over the fine relief carvings on the pillars. They are also much cruder than the pillars. Additionally, some pillars appear to have fallen over and broken, and were subsequently repaired or re-erected when the walls were built. In several cases the bases of the broken pillars are missing or lying horizontally under the tops of the broken pillars that were set to the correct height on a pile of stones. At this late stage the walls and pillars may have been roofed over.

Among the oddities of Easter Island are the low-lying, solid, thick-walled stone buildings with narrow entrances that look like bunkers or fallout shelters. These stone "houses" of Easter Island are similar to the structures formed by the walls and pillars of Göbekli Tepe. Could they, in both cases, have been protection from some type of phenomena emanating from the skies, such as plasma strikes?

Some might criticise comparisons between Easter Island and Göbekli Tepe not only on the basis that they are on opposite sides of the globe, but are also ostensibly separated by thousands of years (Göbekli Tepe dating from 8000 BCE and before, whereas according to standard chronologies Easter Island was not inhabited until a mere millennium and a half ago). In counterargument, I question whether we really know when Easter Island was first colonised. Even if surviving Easter Island antiquities and structures are from a relatively late period, they may reflect earlier traditions and styles, perhaps brought by settlers from elsewhere, that date back to a time of intense plasma outbursts. The rongorongo tablets may carefully preserve ancient texts that were copied over and over.

Just as I have argued that the Easter Island rongorongo script records plasma events in the ancient skies, so too might certain carved motifs found at Göbekli Tepe. Peratt has made the connection between birdman petroglyphs and plasma phenomena around the world. On Easter Island we find birdman petroglyphs as well as birdmen and bird symbols among the rongorongo hieroglyphs. At Göbekli Tepe a very similar bird form was carved into one of the pillars. Peratt records many plasma phenomena that can be interpreted as having the appearance of snakes. An abundance of snakes are found on the pillars of Göbekli Tepe, slithering vertically up and down the ends of some of the columns. Could these represent huge bolts of plasma?

Buried for Posterity

Based on the evidence slowly being pieced together, it appears there may have been a major plasma event, or events, in antiquity. In a previous article (see *New Dawn* 121)[19] I posited that a major plasma event, circa 9700 BCE, helped bring about the end of the last ice age. If the radiocarbon dating of Göbekli Tepe, to circa 10,000 to 8000 BCE is correct, perhaps the first-built stone circle was initiated in response to this plasma event of circa 9700 BCE.

The plasma phenomena were observed originating from the south, the direction toward which the Göbekli Tepe complex is oriented. Plasma events may have continued for centuries, and they may correlate with the additions and elaborations – stonewalls and more stone circles – seen at Göbekli Tepe. Perhaps ultimately the plasma was too much for the Göbekli Tepe people to bear, and they abandoned the site, but not before carefully covering it over. Whether their intention was to return once the skies calmed down, or to preserve their work for posterity, we do not know.

What happened at Göbekli Tepe? What were the people of that time doing? What were they experiencing? Why did they bury their creation and leave? Where did they go? These may be more than simple academic questions. I suspect that the Göbekli Tepe people experienced something dramatic, something so important they felt compelled to memorialise it in a record of stone that could last for over ten thousand years. They expended enormous resources to leave a message, possibly a warning, for us. Now it is time to fully uncover it and decipher what they had to say.

Footnotes

1. Robert M. Schoch and John Anthony West, "Redating the Great Sphinx of Giza, Egypt", *Geological Society of America abstracts with programs*, vol. 23, no. 5, A253 (1991). For further discussion of the date of the Great Sphinx, see: Robert M. Schoch. "Redating the Great Sphinx of Giza", *KMT, A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt*, vol. 3, no. 2, 52-59, 66-70 (Summer 1992); Robert M. Schoch, "Geological Evidence Pertaining to the Age of the Great Sphinx", in *New Scenarios on the Evolution of the Solar System and Consequences on History of Earth and Man* (Eds. Emilio Spedicato and Adalberto Notarpietro), Proceedings of the Conference, Milano and Bergamo, June 7-9th, 1999, Università degli Studi di Bergamo, Quaderni del Dipartmento di Matematica, Statistica, Informatica ed Applicazion, Serie Miscellanea, Anno 2002, N. 3, 171-203 (2002); Robert M. Schoch, "Life with the Great Sphinx: Some Personal Reflections", *Darklore*, vol. 1, 38-55, 291 (2007); Robert M. Schoch with Robert Aquinas McNally, *Voices of the Rocks: A Scientist Looks at Catastrophes and Ancient Civilizations*, New York: Harmony Books, 1999; Robert M. Schoch with Robert Aquinas McNally, *Voyages of the Pyramid Builders: The True Origins of the Pyramids from Lost Egypt to Ancient America*, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2003; Robert M. Schoch and Robert Aquinas McNally, *Pyramid Quest: Secrets of the Great Pyramid and the Dawn of Civilization*, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2005; Robert M. Schoch and John Anthony West, "Further Evidence Supporting a Pre-2500 B.C. Date for the Great Sphinx of Giza, Egypt", *Geological Society of America abstracts with programs*, v. 32, no. 7, A276 (2000); T. L. Dobecki and R. M. Schoch, "Seismic Investigations in the Vicinity of the Great Sphinx of Giza, Egypt", *Geoarchaeology*, vol. 7, no. 6, 527-544 (1992).

2. Lee Dye, "Sphinx's New Riddle--Is It Older Than Experts Say? Archeology: Geologists cite study of weathering patterns. But Egyptologists say findings can't be right", *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1991. Posted at: http://articles.latimes.com/1991-10-23/news/mn-183_1_great-sphinx (Accessed 14 June 2010).

3. Robert M. Schoch, "How old is the Sphinx?", *Abstracts for the 1992 Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*, Chicago, 202 (1992).

4. Anonymous, "Scholars Dispute Claim That Sphinx Is Much Older", *New York Times*, February 9, 1992. Posted at: www.nytimes.com/1992/02/09/us/scholars-dispute-claim-that-sphinx-is-much-older.html (Accessed 14 June 2010).

5. Klaus Schmidt, *Sie bauten die ersten Tempel: Das rätselhafte Heiligtum der Steinzeijäger, Die archäologische Entdeckung am Göbekli Tepe*, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2006/2008; Klaus Schmidt, *Tas Çagi Avcılarının Gizemli Kutsal Alanı Göbekli Tepe En Eski Tapınagı Yapanlar*, Istanbul: Arkeolojí ve Sanat Yayınları, 2007; K. Schmidt, "Göbekli Tepe, Southeastern Turkey: A Preliminary Report on the 1995-1999 Excavations," *Paléorient*, vol. 26, no. 1, 45-54 (2001); Joris Peters and Klaus Schmidt, "Animals in the symbolic world of Pre-Pottery Neolithic Göbekli Tepe, south-eastern Turkey: a preliminary assessment", *Anthropozoologica*, vol. 39, no. 1, 179-218 (2004). For popular discussions of Göbekli Tepe, see: Graham Chandler (photographs by Ergun Çagatay), "The Beginning of the End for Hunter-Gatherers", *Saudi ARAMCO World*, vol. 60, no. 2, 2-9 (March/April 2009); Andrew Curry (photographs by Berthold Steinhilber), "The World's First Temple? Predating Stonehenge by 6,000 years, Turkey's Stunning Gobekli Tepe Upends the Conventional View of the Rise of Civilization", *Smithsonian*, vol. 39,

no. 8, 54-58, 60 (November 2008); Patrick Symmes, "History in the Remaking: A temple complex in Turkey that predates even the pyramids is rewriting the story of human evolution", *Newsweek*, 1 March 2010, article published online 19 February 2010 at: www.newsweek.com/id/233844 (Accessed 29 April 2010).

6. Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke, directed by Stanley Kubrick, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (film), Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1968.

7. I briefly discussed the dating of Göbekli Tepe on site with Prof. Schmidt. It is based not only on calibrated radiocarbon dates of circa 9000 BCE or earlier on organic remains found in the material used to fill the site (these dates would be later than the actual occupation of the site), but also dates of circa 8000-7500 BCE on pedogenic carbonate coatings and micro-stalactites on wall stones (see Peters and Schmidt, 2004, 182 [note 5.]). These carbonate coatings and micro-stalactites would have formed only after the burial of the site and after soil formation began, thus indicating that the site itself was buried by circa 8000 BCE. Taken together, I am convinced that the evidence indicates that the site was actively used in the tenth and ninth millennia BCE and intentionally buried (as indicated by the systematic layers of the fill material and the material the fill contains, including flint tools and waste, animal and plant remains) circa 8000 BCE. The older Enclosures (A, B, C, and D) belong to Schmidt's "Layer III." Overlying Layer III is the younger Layer II, which contains smaller pillars and structures, and may date to the same period as the Neolithic site of Nevali Çori, an area northwest of Göbekli Tepe and similar in many respects to the Layer II period at Göbekli Tepe. Nevali Çori was excavated in the 1990s, but has since been flooded as a result of the Atatürk Dam built on the Euphrates River. Nevali Çori and Layer II of Göbekli Tepe may date to the second half of the ninth millennium BCE. In the catalog to accompany a 2007 exhibit at the Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe (*Die ältesten Monumente der Menschheit. Vor 12.000 Jahren in Anatolien*, Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2007), the earlier material at Göbekli Tepe, that of Layer III, is referred to 9500-8800 BCE whereas the material from Layer II is referred to 8800-8000 BCE and material from Nevali Çori is dated to circa 8500-7900 BCE. Prof. Schmidt suggested that some of the carved depressions and gouges, for instance on the tops of pillars, may date to a time when the site was buried but still remembered as an important or holy site, and people came to partake of the energy of the site. As Veysí Yildiz, son of the local landowner, explained, even before the archaeological remains were discovered at Göbekli Tepe, the area was held in reverence (stone-covered graves are found on the top of the mound to this day).

8. Quoted by Patrick Symmes in *Newsweek* [see note 5.].

9. Patrick Symmes [see note 5.]

10. Giulio Magli, "On the possible discovery of precessional effects in ancient astronomy," article from 2004 posted at: http://arxiv.org/ftp/physics/papers/0407/0407108.pdf (Accessed 17 June 2010); Giulio Magli, *Mysteries and Discoveries of Archaeoastronomy: From Giza to Easter Island*, New York: Copernicus Books, 2009.

11. See for instance, J. Norman Lockyer, *The Dawn of Astronomy*, New York: Macmillan, 1894 (reprinted, with a preface by Giorgio de Santillana, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964); Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill: An Essay on Myth and the Frame of Time*, Boston: Gambit, 1969.

12. The main, and older, portion of Göbekli Tepe under discussion in this article belongs to Schmidt's Layer III; the younger and smaller pillars and structures belong to Schmidt's Layer II [see note 7.].

13. These measurements are only approximate, and are based on the plan of Göbekli Tepe on page 186 of Peters and Schmidt, 2004 [note 5.].

14. Alignments discussed here were determined using the computer program "Starry Night Pro 4.5" (Toronto: Space Holding Company, 2003).

15. Christopher Seddon, "Ice Age Star Maps?" article dated 1 January 2008, posted at www.christopherseddon.com/2008/01/ice-age-star-maps.html (Accessed 5 June 2010); Gary D. Thompson, "Paleolithic European Constellations - star maps in Lascaux cave in France 16,500-13,000 B.C.", article dated 2001-2007, posted at: www.mazzaroth.com/ChapterOne/LascauxCave.htm (Accessed 5 June 2010); David Whitehouse, "Ice Age star map discovered", article dated 9 August 2000, posted at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/871930.stm (Accessed 5 June 2010).

16. David Whitehouse, " 'Oldest star chart' found", article dated 21 January 2003, posted at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/2679675.stm (Accessed 5 June 2010).

17. Robert M. Schoch, "An Ancient Warning, A Global Message, From the End of the Last Ice Age", *New Dawn* 121, 15-22 (July-August 2010).

18. Anthony L. Peratt, "Characteristics for the Occurrence of a High-Current, Z-Pinch Aurora as Recorded in Antiquity", *Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Transactions on Plasma Science*, vol. 31, no. 6, 1192-1214 (December 2003); Anthony L. Peratt, John McGovern, Alfred H. Qöyawayma, Marinus Anthony Van der Sluijs, and Mathias G. Peratt, "Characteristics for the Occurrence of a High-Current, Z-Pinch Aurora as Recorded in Antiquity Part II: Directionality and Source", *Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Transactions on Plasma Science*, vol. 35, no. 4, 778-807 (August 2007); A. L. Peratt and W. F. Yao, "Evidence for an Intense Solar Outburst in Prehistory", *Physica Scripta* (The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences), 13 pages (December 2008).

19. See note 17.

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