



BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Transcript

The following transcript represents the views of the speaker and not the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



Michael Lyon

Appreciating Hypocephali as Works of Art and Faith

FARMS

Summary:

Michael Lyon examines the importance and significance of hypocephali as works of art and expressions of religious belief. Facsimile 2, associated with the Book of Abraham, belongs to this class of documents. Lyon illustrates that hypocephali symbolize the sacred center of the universe, expressed in Facsimile 2 as well as in the shield of Achilles and the mandala tradition.

Transcript
Pearl of Great Price

FARMS
Brigham Young University
P.O. Box 7113
University Station
Provo, UT 84602
1-800-327-6715
(801) 373-5111
www.farmsresearch.com

\$3.00
LYO-99



Transcript of a lecture presented on 24 March 1999 as part of the FARMS Book of Abraham Lecture Series.

Michael Lyon received a B.A. in Fine Art and Asian Studies from Brigham Young University. He has worked in several museums, but his greatest joy was in the opportunity to paint the Denver Temple Annex mural. He has been illustrating *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* since 1990.

© 1999 by Michael Lyon

Fair Use Copying Notice: These pages may be reproduced and used, without alteration, addition, or deletion, for any nonpecuniary or nonpublishing purpose without permission.

Appreciating Hypocephali as Works of Art and Faith

Michael Lyon

Tonight I would like you to join me in looking down through the layers of history in an effort to deepen our appreciation of Facsimile 2 of the Book of Abraham and related material as works of art and faith. We will start with the image most familiar to us, our current 1981 edition of the Book of Abraham and its facsimiles. Next we will look at the original 1842 woodcut by Reuben Hedlock and examine his technique and the reliability of his craftsmanship, his "art" if you will. Then going back some two thousand years we will try to examine, in the absence of the original, the document that Brother Hedlock traced: the hypocephalus of an individual named Sheshonq. We will look at a few representative examples of other hypocephali, from the very simple to the most complex. And finally I will crave your indulgence in allowing me to speculate about the possible teachings of Father Abraham to the Egyptians. I will end with suggesting some fruitful avenues to explore, such as the shield of Achilles to the west and the mandala tradition to the east.

But first, a disclaimer. The preceding lectures have been presented by real scholars, Brother Gee and Brother Tvedtnes. They have demonstrated the value of combining the many tools of critical scholarship with a profound faith in the restored gospel. I treasure their friendship and insights and the great help they have been in preparing tonight's presentation. Most of what you will hear tonight, that is of any value, is the result of the great privilege I have had for the past several years of illustrating Brother Nibley's books. His encouragement and genuine pleasure in looking at the material I have found to accompany his text are very gratifying. But it is his testimony, expressed at unexpected moments in our conversations, that I will remember. I don't think I betray any confidences when I tell you that I have seen some of the drawings he did as a youth; his decision to enrich the world of scholarship has diminished

the world of art. His possession of talents in so many fields is simply not fair. But how grateful I am for his willingness to share them with the rest of us. Anything that you find valuable tonight was probably said by him at some point. The foolishness is of my own creation. I am not an accredited scholar but pretend to the noble calling of artist. Although, after tonight I fear my artistic license will be revoked. At the very least I hope to communicate my enthusiasm for this subject as you join me in looking at these images.

Let us start with defining the word *hypocephalus* (see figure 1). As with many scientific words derived from the Greek, it loses some of its mystique when the meaning of the separate elements is revealed. In this case the word was coined in 1827 by the father of Egyptology himself, Champollion. He was working on a Book of Breathings belonging to a child named Soter, son of Baphor, who died at the age of "four years, five months and two days." The loving precision with which his family recorded his exact age is a sad reminder of the high infant mortality rate as mentioned in the last lecture by Brother Gee. On the back of the hieratic document was the Greek inscription *hypo ten kephalen*, instructing the priest to place the document "under the head" of the mummy. This was to bring light and heat to the child's body, somehow enabling the spirit to make use of it in the next life. Hypocephalus is an impressive mouthful but I still prefer Brother Nibley's insightful description for Facsimile 2, "the funny round thing."

How many of you still remember the first time you saw the "funny round thing"? Perhaps it is just my imagination but I seem to remember flipping through the pages of the scriptures during sacrament meeting when my parents had determined that I was too old to keep bringing toys to church. I seem to recall coming across the facsimiles and thinking, "Finally, some grown-up was smart enough to include some pictures with all these boring words," or thoughts to that effect. My second thought was, "They're not very good pictures. Even I can draw a better circle than that." You see how quickly I was turning into the typical

art critic. A few years passed and when I was in high school I discovered the writings of Brother Nibley. I was fascinated by his obvious scholarship and the reassuring strength of his testimony. I had begun to believe that the two were mutually incompatible. His example inspired me to study the other published hypocephali and I conceived the idea of improving on the scriptures. So in my arrogance I got out my expensive new compass and produced a better if not “inspired” version of Facsimile 2. I added elements from the more complete examples I could find to fill out the circle and make it look more impressive. This is a common misuse of art throughout the world; art made only to impress. But I discovered that I was not alone in my arrogance. You can purchase hand-painted “improved” versions such as this one in stores in Jerusalem and Cairo, where vendors have discovered that Mormons will pay well for these colorful decorations. This is another common tragedy of art; its use as ostentatious decoration. Edward Ashment also used a compass in his reconstruction, as did the individual who created the church historian’s copy. You will notice that the artist has drawn the circle first and sketched the details in freehand. His artistic judgement was flawed since you can see that he misplaced the major elements, although his attempts to record every detail that he saw have proved valuable. He also indicated the *lacunae*, an art historian’s fancy Latin term for the missing parts. Note particularly the missing center section. This shows us the condition of the document at that time. Unfortunately we don’t know what that time was or even who the artist was. It is possible that Reuben Hedlock, the man who created the facsimiles, was able to see the originals in better condition but there are indications he also had *lacunae* to fill.

Let us now look at his original work. If you had been a subscriber to the *Nauvoo Times and Seasons* in 1842, you would have had an addition to your March 15 issue (fig. 2). The oval design was printed by itself on a separate sheet of paper and entitled “A facsimile from the Book of Abraham, No. 2.” You could read Joseph Smith’s inspired interpretation at the bottom and wonder at the strange figures and their exotic names. Among the many aspects of Joseph’s

explanation that could be discussed, I would like to focus on just one; the sacred axis (fig. 3). This invisible line connects the governing planets of Kolob in the center with Oliblish above and the sun below with this earth in its four quarters. This is very important. You will be seeing many variations tonight on this great theme. And Joseph got figure 6 exactly right, although you will never get a critic to admit it. I will admit that I do not understand most of the treasures we are given in this particular scripture, but as I have tried to understand what little I can, I have felt the witness of the Spirit. I still don't understand very much but I feel that it is true. This is not to say that the text is inerrant. As you followed the figure numbers for example, you would have found an error in the numbering. After figure 19, there is a 21 rather than a 20. This is the only change made in our current edition of the facsimiles.

When we realize the difficulty of carving the woodblock to create this print, our respect for Brother Hedlock's craftsmanship increases dramatically (fig. 4). For example, a simple crosshatch of four strokes of the pen requires twenty-four separate cuts of the knife to reproduce. It is a long and labor-intensive activity that demands a commitment to excellence that few possess. The process began with Brother Hedlock making a careful tracing in ink of everything he could see on a thin, hard-surfaced paper. Imagine how well you would do if asked to copy a text that you could not read; a text where every jot and tittle might have significance for a future reader. When he had copied all that remained of the original writing, he had a significant empty space to fill if he wanted the design to look complete. Joseph Smith records in his diary for 4 March 1842: "Exhibiting the Book of Abraham, in the original, To Brother Reuben Hadlock, so that he might take the size of the several plates or cuts, & prepare the blocks for the Times & Seasons. & also gave instruction concerning the arrangement of the writing on the Large cut. illustrating the principles of Astronomy."

It is probable that at this time the Prophet instructed Brother Hedlock to replace the missing heads by bringing down the two-headed element of figure 2. You can see how the tw

heads are very similar. This could easily have been done by tracing over the appropriate part of the original on the same tracing paper. The missing part of the inscription was filled in with characters from the Book of Breathing of Hor, a fact that has led some critics to claim that it was "reconstructed in a peculiar way." But it was peculiar only in comparison with today's rigorous standards of Egyptological publication. I struggle with this same question of reconstruction in my own illustration work. Do you show only what survives or do you make judicious restorations based on your familiarity with the particular type of art? Even the use of dotted lines can be misleading since it fails to convey the original intent of the artist adequately. In a perfect publication we would have color photographs of the original condition followed by color reconstructions, but limitations of space and money usually prevent this. It is probable that Joseph Smith wanted a complete design rather than one that would have looked unfinished, as though a great bite had been taken out of it. Therefore he instructed Brother Hedlock to fill in the lacunae. It was at this point that the mistake in numbering would have occurred. I am gratified to learn that they were capable of making the same kind of mistakes that I make today. But I am even more grateful that I do not have to carve my own wood blocks.

Once the finished drawing had been approved by the Prophet, Brother Hedlock turned the drawing over and pasted it face down on a block of hard wood with the grain running vertically (fig. 5). This ensured the greatest consistency in the cutting process. He then carved through the tracing paper into the wood with a variety of tools that had to be kept razor sharp. He could rough out the large areas with the gouge, but the delicate lines had to be cut with great care since mistakes were almost impossible to correct. The small gaps in the lines are the result of the vertical wood fibers breaking off. There was sufficient space around the 9 and 5 for him to insert actual pieces of metal type instead of carving them. Finally he carved his name at the side with the Prophet's approval of his good work, I am sure. After several days of

intense, concentrated effort, the remaining thin strips of paper would be washed off and the block would be inserted into the press where it was inked and the first sheet of paper placed in position. This is the great moment in this particular artistic process, as I can testify. All of his hard work would now come to life in the little-appreciated miracle of printing. The lever is pulled, applying pressure to the paper, and when it is raised the finished print is removed, producing the first artist's proof. I imagine this was a moment of justifiable pride when he saw the first impression, with congratulations being expressed among his small team of co-workers. They probably used an efficient Ramage press such as the one shown here, later used to print the *Deseret News*.

With the recovery of the Joseph Smith Papyri in 1967, we are now in a position to prove how accurate his technique was. A comparison of his copy with the original he worked from shows the meticulous attention to detail common to many artists. In the past Brother Hedlock has been vilified by several critics as having invented all those little "meaningless squiggles" in Facsimile 2, but time has vindicated his dedication to faithfully reproducing what he did not understand. They are not meaningless but can now be read with some degree of confidence as has been demonstrated by the translations offered by Brother Nibley and Brother Michael Rhodes. Sister Alison Coutts of FARMS has been in contact with Dr. Edith Varga of Budapest, the foremost Egyptologist working with hypocephali. We have sent her our collection of eighty-three examples including the Joseph Smith hypocephalus. She informed Alison that she was pleased to see Facsimile 2 with Brother Rhodes' translation because she had been led to believe that it was an unreliable copy. She now felt that it was accurate enough to be included in her collection of 150. As far back as 1913, Brother Isaac Russel said in reference to attacks on the Book of Abraham, "Another worthwhile phase of the matter would perhaps be now to turn to hypocephali and collect and compare all of them" (*The Era* 16 [1913]: 1099). This is what FARMS is doing. And when completed it will enable all interested parties to see the wealth of

material we have to work with. I have observed over the past many years that the work of enthusiastic amateurs is appreciated by real scholars. And in the midst of this information explosion, the more the merrier.

Now we must move back in time more than two thousand years to the creation of the original document that Brother Hedlock has preserved for us. In the absence of the original, we will start with a plausible reconstruction of the hypocephalus of the man Sheshonq (fig. 6). You may have noticed that my present version is not a compass-drawn circle. That is because none of the examples known to me were drawn with a compass and I have made careful tracings of forty-seven of them. Some of them approach the true circle very closely, but there is no sign of the perfect circle with the pinprick in the center. This must have been deliberate since the brush compass is known to have existed at this time. So why didn't they use it? It is because they did not want a perfect circle most of the time; they wanted a flattened, horizontal oval that represented the image of the sun as it appears on the horizon at sunrise and sunset—a phenomenon I observed for myself when I was in Egypt. The sun appeared to be a huge red oval as its rays were refracted through the thick dust of the sky. It was a subtle artistic decision sanctioned by theology, for it represented the moment of transition from one state to another that fascinated the priests. A true circle by its very perfection is static, motionless; while the oval has the visual potential for movement. My restoration of Facsimile 2 is helped by the hypocephalus most similar to the Joseph Smith now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (fig. 7). It belonged to the Lady Wst-wrt, daughter of Khonsu-irdis, and may have come from the very workshop that created the one for Sheshonq. For example, if you compare the shoulder stroke on the cow you see a striking similarity. There are close parallels in the texts as well as the way the hieroglyphs are drawn. You can see for yourself how accurately Brother Hedlock fulfilled his task by how similar these two documents are.

When the Egyptian scribe set about to create one of these documents, he had a variety

of media and techniques to choose from. The choice about the quality depended on the time allowed and the desire of the one commissioning it—whether by the individual in preparation for her own death or by her loved ones after her death. If in preparation for her own death, she could ensure that her name was written in the appropriate places. If it was made after the death, the time would have been limited and thus a simpler hypocephalus would have been ordered, in order that it might be ready for the funeral. Some show evidence, by their small size and simplicity bordering on crudity, that they were made by amateurs, perhaps members of the family (fig. 8). This one also shows the hand-drawn nature of the circle with the scribe starting in the same place each time. It was also done in yellow paint on top of black-painted stucco on a linen base. We can arrange the various media in a chart of increasing cost and difficulty of execution from plain linen at the top to a presumed solid-gold hypocephalus at the bottom (fig. 9). (I had to avoid saying “a hypothetical hypocephalus.”) Papyrus can be an excellent writing surface but it is very fragile unless backed by a more durable medium such as clay. There are fifty-one examples drawn in black ink on stucco, which was smeared on several layers of linen to keep it together if it broke, which it frequently did, giving rise to the *lacunae*. This is similar to the practice of making bricks with straw or putting rebar in concrete. It gave the scribe a hard writing surface and the owner a more durable artifact. Sheshonq’s hypocephalus was probably of this material. The unexpected use of yellow paint on a black background was to imitate the effect of a golden surface, much as Greek red-figures on black vases imitated gold and silver originals. We have only one example of what a golden hypocephalus looked like, and even that one is missing a lot of the original surface (fig. 10). It also belonged to a woman, the Lady Iseheb. It is a particularly interesting example of a less costly imitation of a more expensive version. The artist probably started with the usual stucco-covered linen and added a thin layer of fine plaster into which he incised the design while it was still damp. When it was completely hard and dry he spread an adhesive over the entire

surface and finally applied the very thinly beaten gold leaf. When finished it would have looked like a solid gold hypocephalus but cost a tiny fraction of the real thing.

Though only the face was gold leafed, the cartonnage, full-head mask of Cha-kheper was probably much more expensive than the preceding design, since the amount of minute and colorful painting was very great (fig. 11). An elaborate hypocephalus was painted on the crown of the head surrounded by painted floral wreaths. Since the mummy was placed on its back in this period (you can see the nose at the top), we can see how one of these designs was oriented. This is significant since many museums display them upside down with the cow and boat register on top. If the experts can't even agree which end is up, why are we expected to trust them on far more serious matters?

The most expensive form of hypocephalus discovered so far are the eight bronze versions cast in the lost-wax technique of which this is the most unusual (fig. 12). It represents a version that emphasizes the four quarters as the four winds radiating out from the sacred center. The original disk would have been made of beeswax and the design inscribed with a warm metal stylus. Then the entire disk would have been covered with a clay investment and fired, creating a hollow ceramic shell. This also burned off the wax so it is called the lost-wax technique. Molten bronze was then poured into the hollow cavity, which preserved every detail of the original wax. This expensive process must have been available only to important and wealthy people. The most valuable examples of hypocephali would have been cast in solid gold using the same process. Unfortunately none have been discovered, but there is always hope.

Among the many examples drawn in black ink on stucco there is a wide spectrum of quality, from the very simple to the elegant calligraphy of the hypocephalus of the Lady Takhred-Khonsu, daughter of Khonsu-ir-dis (fig. 13). Though it looks like a true circle, it is actually a slightly vertical oval as opposed to the more common horizontal variety. The artist

who created this was a professional scribe and arranged his design so that the rim inscription starts at the bottom rather than the top. He left a space across the top for the name of the deceased to be inserted later and continued on down to the bottom. He was a master of the calligraphic line and trimmed his reed pen very carefully to a chisel point in order to give such a clear line.

We have now seen the great variety of forms that the hypocephalus can take, but it is the meaning of the individual figures that interests us most (fig. 14). The hypocephalus is a resume or summary of all that has preceded it throughout the millennia of Egyptian history, from the Pyramid Texts through the Coffin Texts to the famous Book of the Dead. In each case there is a concern to depict the goal of all Egyptians: to be with their families and live in the presence of the gods. In the earliest Pyramid Texts we can find the first mention of the gods and the goal of ascending to the stars to be with them. In the Middle Kingdom coffin of General Sepi, we see the blessed Isle of Osiris surrounded by rings of fire and water painted near the head end. The artist exercised unusual freedom in depicting the enthroned god since he is shown full face and not in the usual profile. All Egyptian pyramids were capped by special stones, only a few of which have survived (fig. 15). This one from the pyramid of Khendjer shows the winged sun disk blessing the gods of the rising and setting sun. Under their feet are the two boats of the night and day facing prow to prow. This is the moment of transition from darkness to light when all things are possible. These same boats appear in many of the hypocephali where they mean the same thing. The hypocephali are thus a glimpse of all that has gone before. It is as though one were looking down through the rim and seeing just a portion of the vast body of texts beneath (fig. 16). This is why there could be such flexibility in the choice of material. Whether or not it was actually drawn, it was all implied as being present. The two baboons represent all eight. The central figure can have two heads or four; it means the same.

This ability to bring seemingly disparate motives together in works of art is well demonstrated in this alabaster water clock of Pharaoh Amenhotep III (fig. 17). Inside, a ring of twelve series of points were used to measure the passing hours of the night as the water level fell. On the outside, the northern constellations are carved together with planets and specific stars, thus uniting the measuring of earthly time with that of heavenly time; and all are contained within the never-ending circle of the divine center. This three-dimensional scene in miniature was worn on Tutankhamun's finger (fig. 18). It showed the young king kneeling and lifting his hands in adoration of the sun god. This is essentially the same motif as the center of the hypocephalus, especially as he is flanked by worshipping baboons making the same gesture as well. These are shown as figures 22 and 23 of Facsimile 2.

Pharaoh Ramses I kneels with offerings before an abstract symbol of Osiris. It was a pillar topped by a round domelike object, thought by some to be a reliquary holding his head. It emerged from a special altar table equipped with carrying poles and resting on the Maat stone of truth. The base of the pillar was flanked by winged lions while the surface of the altar was covered with miniature images of the pharaoh worshipping and supporting the central pillar. A modern perspective drawing shows the three-dimensional arrangement of the sacred center with protective cobras facing out to the four corners of the world (fig. 19). If this looks strangely familiar, perhaps it is because it resembles another sacred arrangement of winged beasts around a sacred center (fig. 20). The ark of the covenant was covered by a panel of solid gold surmounted by two winged Cherubim. This was the mercy seat, the throne of God when He condescended to speak with his prophet. All of the foregoing are tangible objects that represented the intangible. The symbol most appropriate for doing this is the motif of the sacred center.

Abraham was called to leave all that was familiar to him and journey forth to meet God and receive unimaginable blessings. "But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs,

concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me" (Abraham 1:31). We are the posterity he wrote for. And the hypocephalus is part of that knowledge that has been preserved for our benefit.

"And the Lord said unto me: Abraham, I show these things unto thee before ye go into Egypt, that ye may declare all these words" (Abraham 3:15). What could he have said that would have captured the attention of one of the most sophisticated court in the world so completely? I believe he spoke to them of the divine center. But it was not just a theological idea but a supremely important aspect of their reality, since it dealt with sacred astronomy. In chapter three, the repeated use of the words *revolution* and *greater* suggest that he was able to tell them something about astronomy and the set time of great cycles that they were desperate to understand. He taught them that the center of the turning heavens, that they were familiar with, was not the only center; there was a greater one beyond it. The Egyptians of that time were well aware of the star that was closest to the center of the turning heavens: Thuban or Alpha Draconis (fig. 21). The Great Pyramid of Khufu has only recently been shown to possess four small upward sloping shafts that are aligned to specific stars. The upper one on the north points towards their pole star, and though it is obvious that no one could have used these shafts for sighting tubes because of their placement, it is just as obvious that the Egyptian astronomer priests had some method for careful observation of the heavens and the means to record their observations. And they must have been disturbed by the slow but inexorable movement of their pole star away from the north pole. Today we know that this is the result of the phenomenon called the precession of the equinoxes, but they did not have the insight into celestial mechanics that we enjoy. They only knew that the unchanging heavens were slowly

shifting. And if the still center of the heavens was moving, where was security to be found? This may even have been an open secret among the intelligentsia of the court. When Abraham was able to give them a better model for understanding this frightening situation, they responded by acclaiming him the wisest of men and seating him on Pharaoh's throne (see Facsimile 3).

This need for better and more complete models of the universe has created some of the greatest works of art and science (fig. 22). I will now show you some possible areas for investigation into parallels to the cosmology that Abraham taught those who were willing to listen and see. These archetypes can help us appreciate the many ways in which these great truths have been expressed throughout history.

From the time of Augustus we see a marble papyrus weight carved to represent the shield of Achilles as described by Homer. Brother Nibley has pointed out the unexpected relationship between this tradition of portraying the world in a round and that of the hypocephalus (see Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* [1981]: 33). The bottom of the piece is equally intriguing (fig. 23). It shows the outline of a four-horned altar with an elaborate word puzzle contained within that can be read out in the four directions from a common center. Again the emphasis is on the sacred center. In Athens, the Tower of the Winds is an eight-sided edifice that contained an elaborate mechanical water clock (fig. 24). The dripping water allowed a wooden float to rise, turning a drum that rotated a large bronze disc engraved with the constellations and the ecliptic. The Muslims preserved this knowledge and made portable analogue computers called astrolabes that also modeled the heavens. In 1350 Giovanni De Dondi devised a seven-faced clock that accurately reproduced the movements of all the major heavenly bodies. It was more than just a timepiece, it was used to compute horoscopes and reveal the future.

In 1992 when I was at the Louvre examining their hypocephalus collection, I was

walking home late one evening when I saw this clock in the window of an antiques store (fig. 25). The French artist was imitating a famous silver Roman cup that depicted the aged Priam begging for the body of his son, Hector, from Achilles, the man who killed him. This is considered one of the most poignant scenes in the entire epic. The artist has done a commendable job of creating elaborate patterns on the shield to show the turning heavens and the earth beneath. He included a clock with his sculptural ensemble, presumably to make it a more practical ornament for the mantel. The motifs had come full circle.

In China the cosmic pattern takes many shapes (fig. 26). This Han dynasty mirror is called a TLV mirror in English from the presence of those markings arranged around the central square. In Chinese this mirror pattern is called compass and square from the resemblance of the markings to those tools. In the cultural sphere of the East, the heavens are round and the earth is square. Thus the oldest Buddhist monument in India, the Great Stupa of Sanchi is a round-domed mound with gates to the four directions (fig. 27). Pilgrims circumambulated the stupa keeping their right hand towards the sacred center of the Buddha's relics. The largest carved monument in the world is that of Borobudur in Indonesia (fig. 28). As pilgrims circumambulated the thirteen miles of reliefs, and ascended the manmade mountain to its peak, they would have been taught the fundamental principles of Mahayana Buddhism. This pattern of circle and square is the fundamental religious design of India and is called a mandala in Sanskrit, meaning "sacred circle." It can take many forms such as this mandala altar arrangement from Japan (fig. 29). Much as Ramses the First had modeled his cosmos in small metal statues around a sacred pillar at the center, this grouping emphasizes the same sacred center. Two-dimensional representations such as drawings and paintings became a powerful object of veneration and meditation (fig. 30).

The symbolic use of the tools that create the circle and square appear on funeral banners of the T'ang dynasty. Here Fu Hsi and his wife Nu Kua, the Chinese Adam and Eve, hold the

compass and square aloft as their serpent bodies entwine around each other. She holds the compass pointing up because she rules the roundness of heaven. He holds the square and plumb-bob because he rules the square earth below. And it is from the marriage of heaven and earth, round and square, male and female, that all creation comes (fig. 31). The Chinese phrase *kuei chü* 規矩 is used to mean "the way things should be," the standard against which everything is measured. It literally means "compass and square."

A few years ago some Tibetan monks created a Kalachakra sand mandala like this one in the Salt Lake City Public Library (fig. 32). They create such ephemeral works to remind themselves and us of the impermanence of all things. They also see it as a way of blessing all those who look upon it. Mandalas can be made of sand or paint or cloth. Whether in Tibet or crossing the plains in a handcart, the desire to create a thing of beauty is irrepressible (fig. 33). My favorite Mormon mandala is the labor of love that my mother created countless times: the wedding cake (fig. 34). This is also an ephemeral work of art and yet it combines the elements we have been looking at: the sacred center, the four-cornered world contained in a round, and the recognition of the supreme importance of the husband and wife in the continuation of the cosmos.

Once you have been shown this motif you will see it everywhere. A Spanish monk in A.D. 970, Anno Domini, read the Apocalypse of John and painted this image of the round heavens centered on Christ, the Lamb of God (fig. 35). The four beasts are the four Gospels as well as the earth in its four quarters. Sandro Botticelli demonstrated his mastery of the newly invented science of perspective to show us Dante and Beatrice contemplating the circling stars of the Primum Mobile (fig. 36). This unquenchable desire to finally see and know for oneself is depicted in this sixteenth-century German woodcut (fig. 37). The strange wheels within wheels also appear in this seventeenth-century English conception of Ezekiel's vision (fig. 38). The Lord is enthroned above the foursquare divine chariot with the four winged cherubim each

with their four faces. Ezekiel describes his vision with elements of the very latest Babylonian astronomy but puts them under the feet of God, creating a Jewish mandala. In the world of Islam the mystics sought for union with God at the center of all existence (fig. 39). Here the four archangels represent not only the four letters of the divine name but the heart, intellect, spirit, and soul of the seeker that will be joined together eternally in the resurrection, displaying to us an Islamic mandala.

Lest you think we have gone too far afield, let us look at the Manti Temple and its doorknobs (fig. 40). The pattern that you see is based on an Islamic depiction of the planets moving in their spherical orbits around a badly copied Arabic inscription that may say something like "the Creation of Allah." When you leave tonight you will pass by an elegant granite fountain here in the Tanner building (fig. 41). The designer may not have realized it, but he has done more than create a pleasant design of intersecting ripples within a circular pool. An educated Muslim would recognize this as a typical paradise fountain in which the four water jets represent the four rivers that issued out from the Garden of Eden, from the sacred center at the beginning of the world. If we but open our eyes we will see reminders of the sacred center all around us.

Tonight we have seen some possible ways in which the teachings of Father Abraham may have joined with the universal yearning for the divine center. The confusing and yet very human story of the hypocephalus of Sheshonq reminds us of the importance of the individual in the great plan of salvation. There are no unimportant people in the eyes of God. Consider, for a moment, the tens of millions of copies of our triple combination that have been printed and sent throughout the world. In each one is a copy of the hypocephalus of an obscure man. We know nothing about Sheshonq other than his name and the fact that his loved ones provided him with a work of art that was a summary of their deepest beliefs. It was the last gesture of their love and an expression of their hope for eternal life. It is a hope I share. I

wonder how he has responded to the preaching of the gospel in the next life. I like to believe that he is grateful for the unexpected contribution that he was able to make to the spreading of the gospel in this dispensation. Is it not strange that an ancient diagram of the cosmos belonging to this man should so inspire the Prophet that his eyes were opened and he saw what Abraham saw? It continues to reach out and touch the eyes of our understanding, and the heavens that were opened to Abraham and Joseph can be opened to us. Is this not a marvelous work and a wonder? He who has eyes to see, let him see.

In the name of the Lord of the divine center, Jesus the Christ, amen.

Addendum

A few days ago, an individual showed Brother Michael Rhodes a metal plate screwed to a wooden block that may prove to be Reuben Hedlock's original work for Facsimile 3. It appears to be a very soft metal, perhaps an alloy of zinc and lead, that enabled him to use the traditional techniques of woodblock carving. The process of cutting into the metal is similar to wood carving but required greater time and strength. The extra time required to carve the plate was offset by its greater durability. This may explain why Joseph Smith used the term *blocks* and never *woodblocks* (4 March 1842).

Illustration Sources

Unless noted below, drawings are by the author with the generous assistance of John Gee.

Fig.7 Hypocephalus 253 a/2 Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

- 8 Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology 54:108. 8 March 1911
- 10 Hypocephalus N3524, Louvre
- 11 Hypocephalus E268342, Louvre
- 12 Bronze Hypocephalus, Egyptian Museum, Cairo SR 10692, CG 9449, JE 28857
- 13 Stucco Hypocephalus, Ashmolean 1982-1095
- 15 Pyramidion, Egyptian Museum, Cairo
- 17 Klepsydra, Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Nr. 4940
- 18 Gold ring bezel, Egyptian Museum, Cairo, 1" in length;
- 19 Herbert Winlock, Bas-reliefs from the Temple of Ramses I at Abydos, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art 1921, fig. 1
- 21 Drawing from photograph by Jared Daley of model by author;
- 22, 23 Tabula Iliaca, Roma, Museo Capitolino, sala delle Colombe 83a;
- 24 Harry Peck, Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities, NY: Harper & Bros. 1898, 80
- 25 Gilt-bronze clock by Thomire, "Renoncourt," Rue de Saints Peres, Paris
- 26 W. C. White and P. M. Millman "An Ancient Chinese Sun-dial," Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, 1938, 422
- 29 Bronze Mandala altar arrangement, Tokyo National Museum
- 30 Redrawn from photo of a section of the *Gobu Shinkan*, Onjo-ji, Shiga, Japan
- 31 New Delhi Archeological Museum, India
- 35 Morgan Beatus, M644, fol. 87 M644, f. 87, Pierpont Morgan Library, NY
- 37 Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Vol. 10, Plate 7 NY: Bollingen Foundation, 1964
- 38 The "Bear" Bible, the first complete Spanish translation, Basle, 1569
- 39 Bibliotheque Nationale Ms. Arabe 2964, fo. 37
- 41 Photograph by Jared Daley, 1999


Hieroglyphic	
Transcription	<i>hry tp</i>
Greek	ὑπὸ τὴν κεφαλὴν
Latinized	hypo-cephalus
English translation	“under the head”

Figure 1. Origin of the term *Hypocephalus*



Figure 2. Facsimile 2, 1842

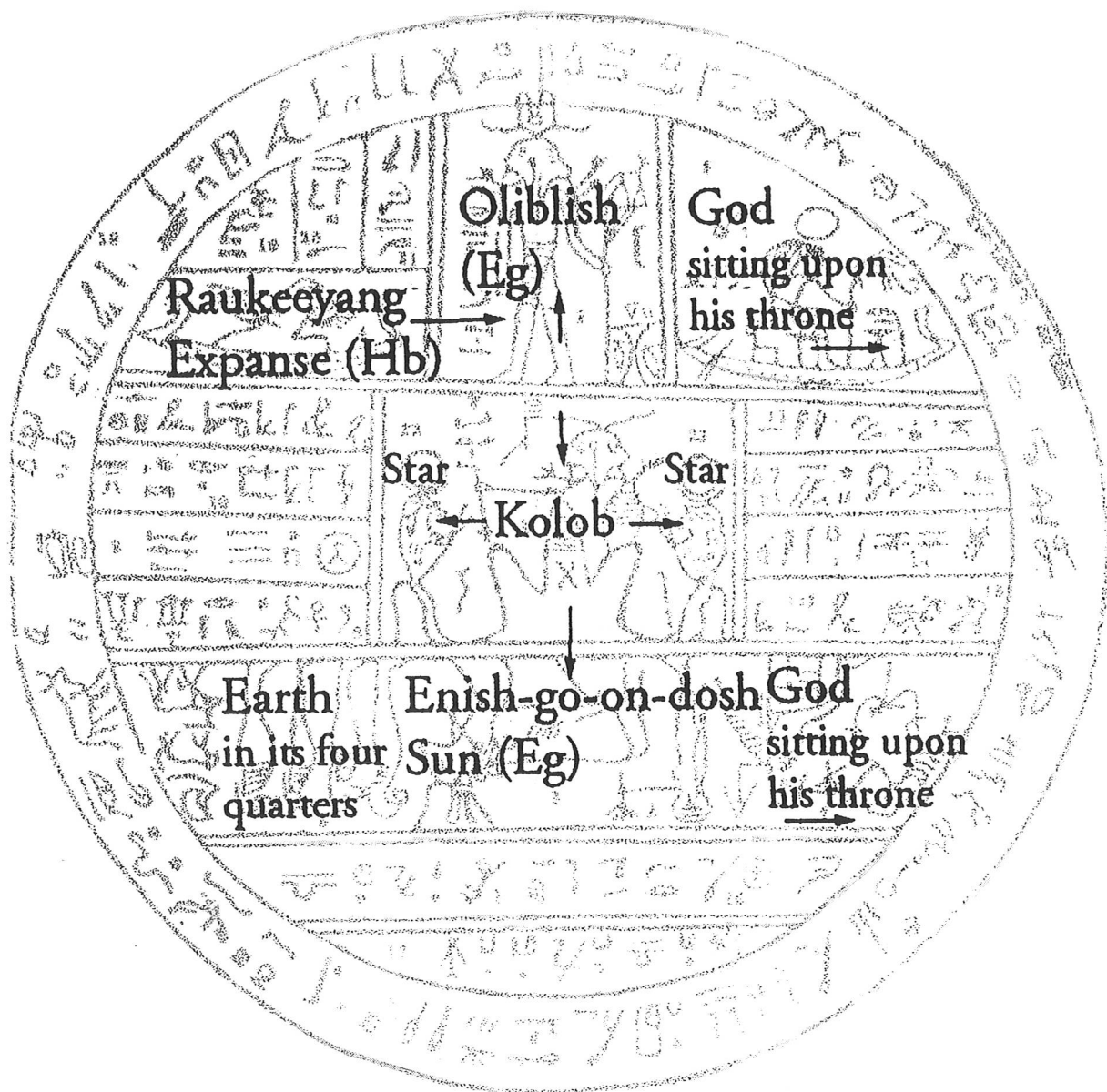


Figure 3. Facsimile 2, in words

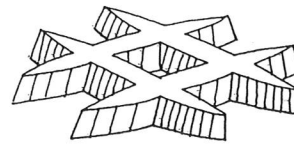
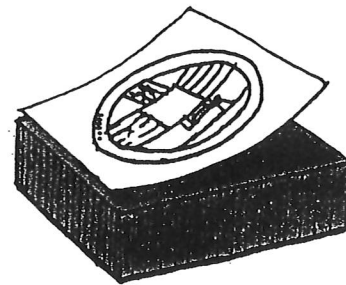


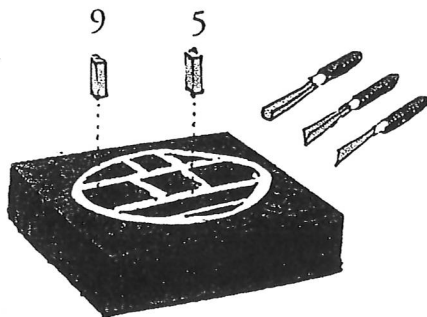
Figure 4. Four pen strokes require twenty-four knife cuts



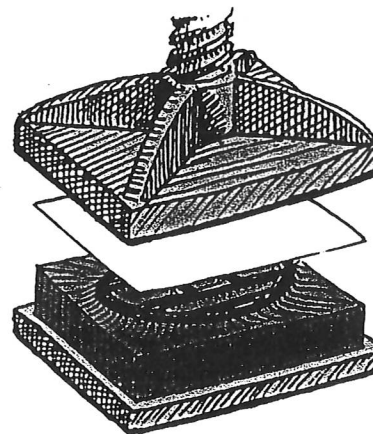
1. Ink tracing of original on thin paper.



2. Pasted face down on woodblock with watersoluble paste.



3. Carved through tracing paper into wood, leaving only the inked areas. The remaining paper washed off.



4. Block inked, paper placed, pressure applied by press, finished print removed.

Figure 5. Woodblock printing

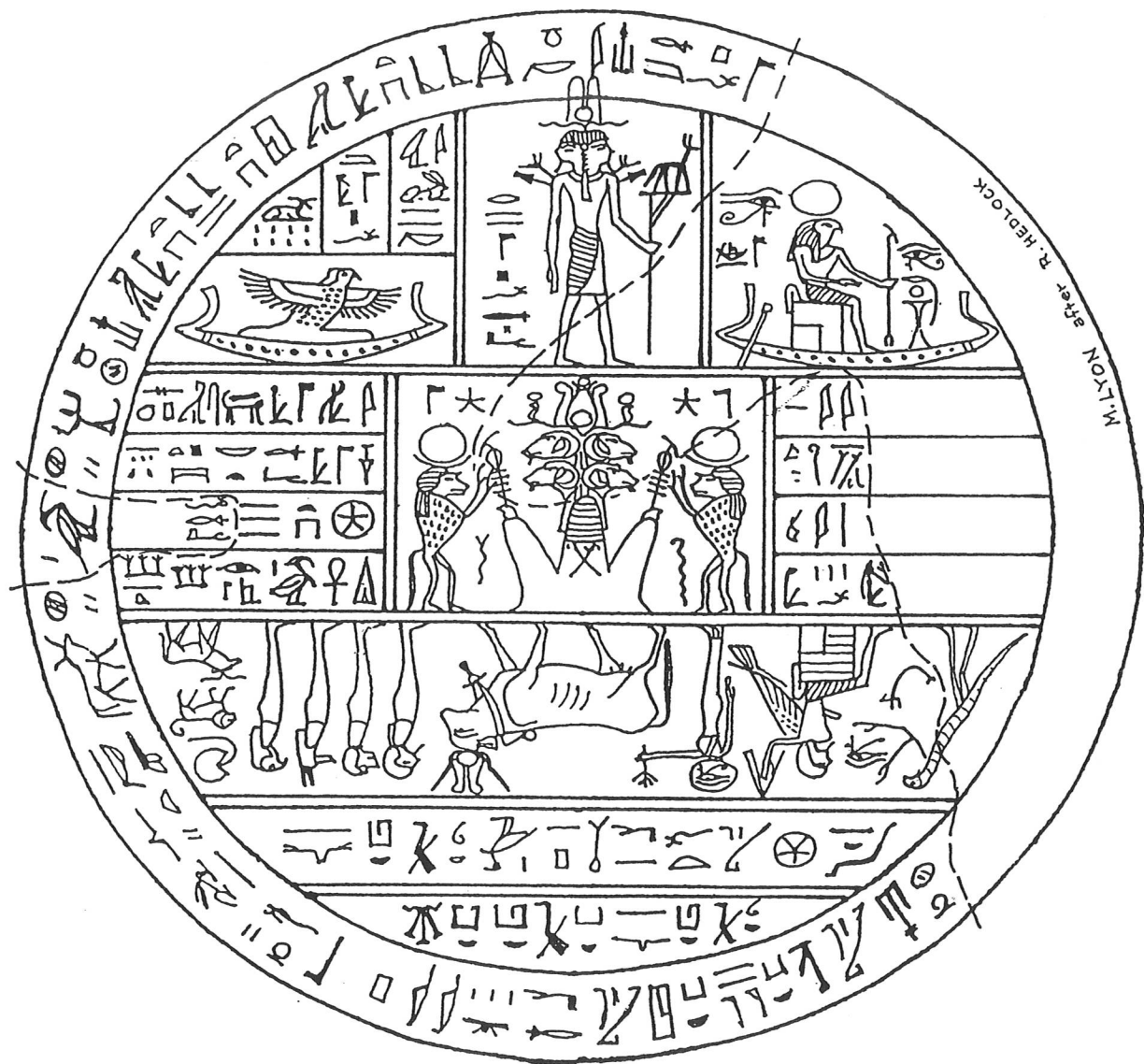


Figure 6. Facsimile 2, Hypocephalus of Sheshonq, Lyon reconstruction.
Dashed lines indicate lacunae of church historian's copy.



Figure 7. Hypocephalus of the Lady Wst-wrt, Vienna 253 a/2



Figure 8. PSBA, 8 March 1911

Linen	2
Papyrus	3
Papyrus on linen on clay	1
Stucco on papyrus	1
Stucco on linen, black ink, colors	51
Stucco on linen, yellow paint on black	6
Terra cotta disk	3
Wood, stucco	1
Gold leaf on stucco on linen	1
Gold leaf on wood	1
Cartonnage head mask	1
Bronze, engraved	2
Bronze, cast in lost-wax	8
* Gold leaf on bronze	no examples
* Gold, solid	found

Figure 9. Hypocephalus media chart

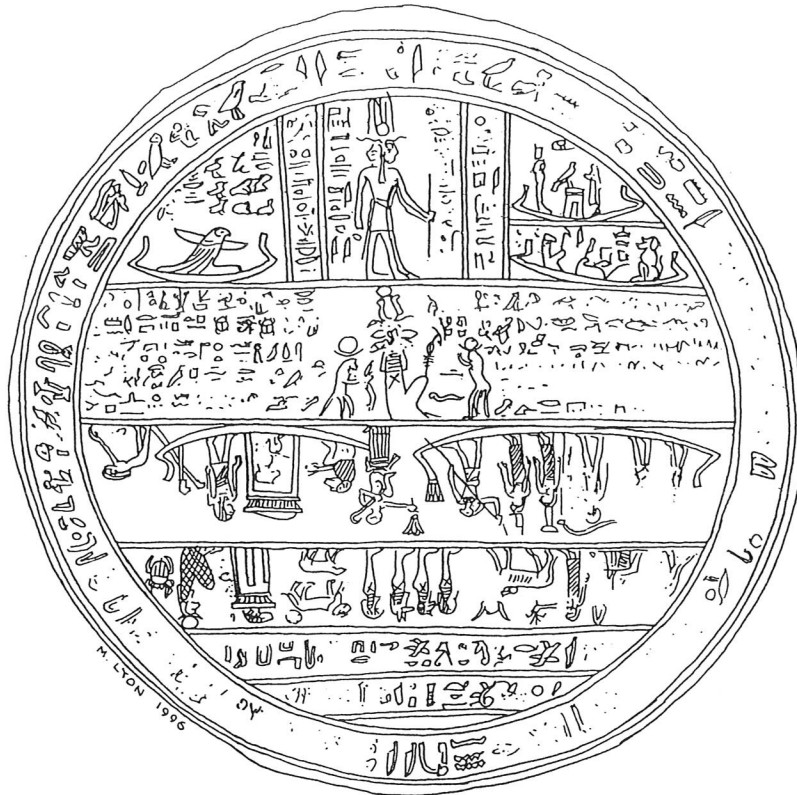


Figure 10. Gold-leafed Hypocephalus, Louvre N3524

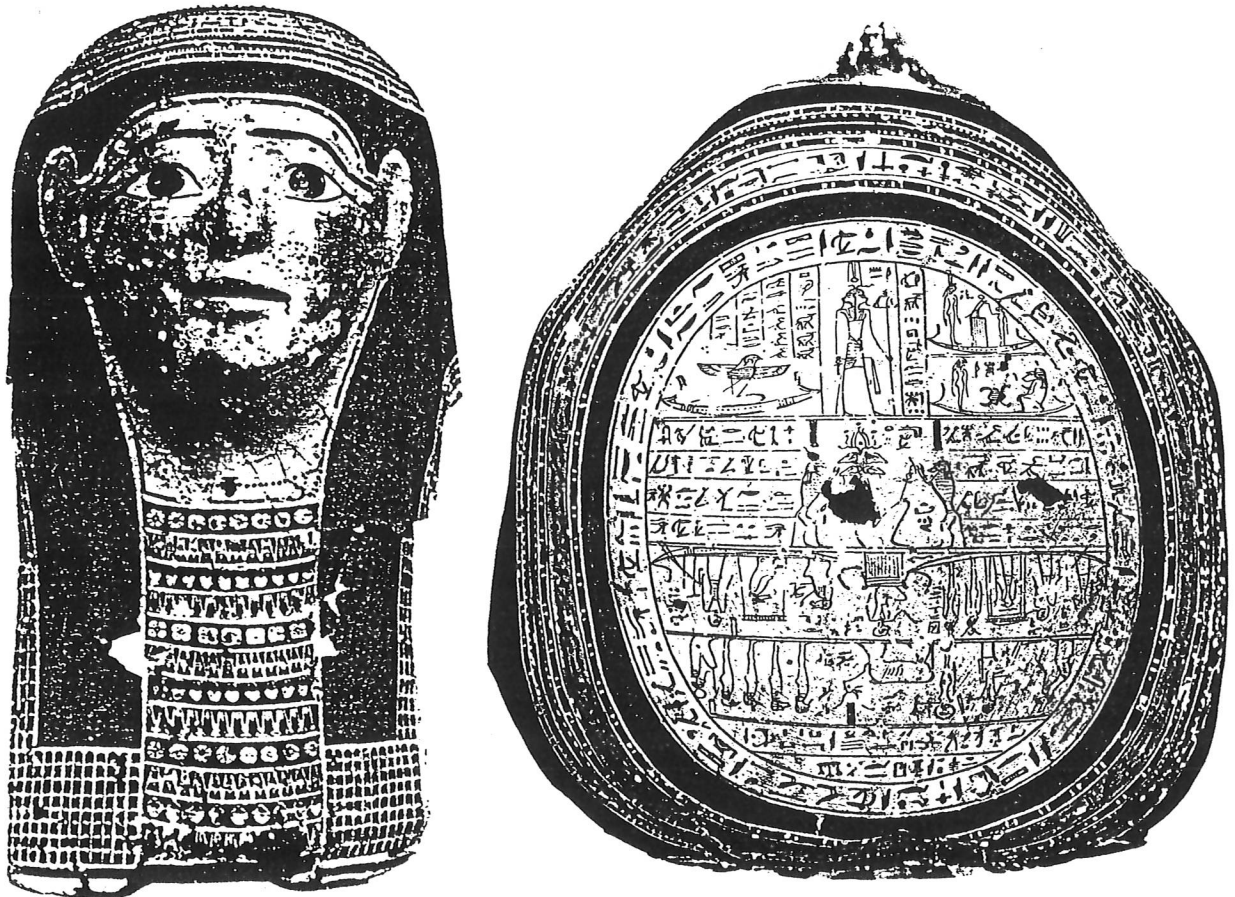


Figure 11. Hypocephalus of Cha-Kheper, Louvre E26834a



Figure 12. Bronze Hypocephalus, Cairo SR10692

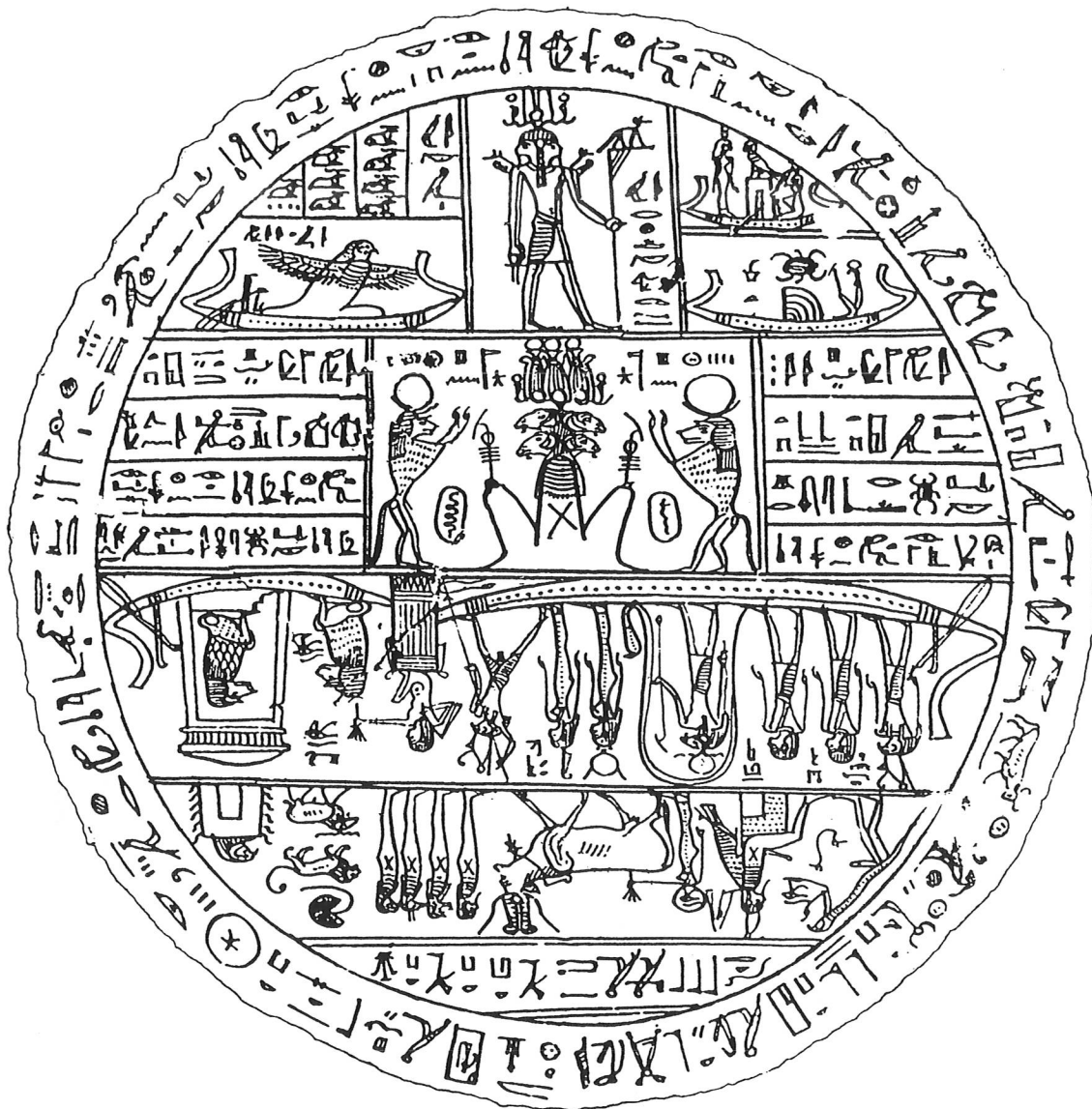


Figure 13. Hypocephalus of the Lady Ta-khred-Khonsu, Ashmolean 1982-1095

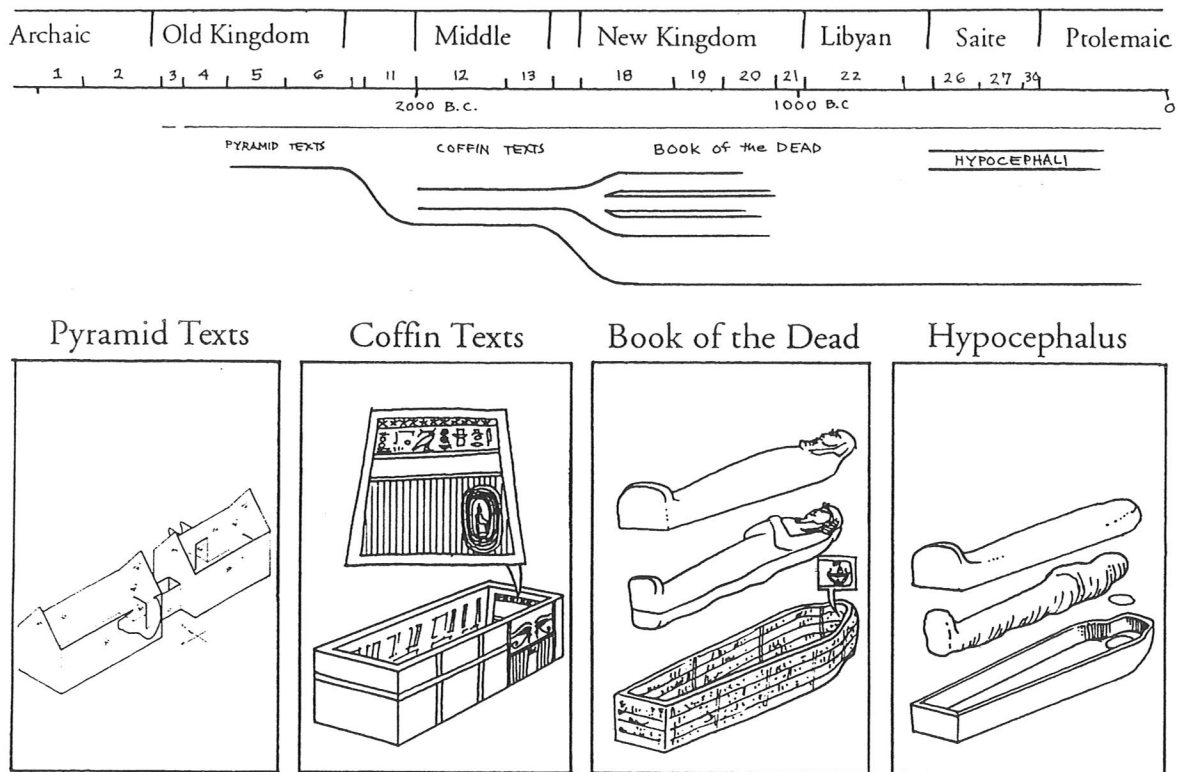


Figure 14. Timeline of Egyptian sacred writings

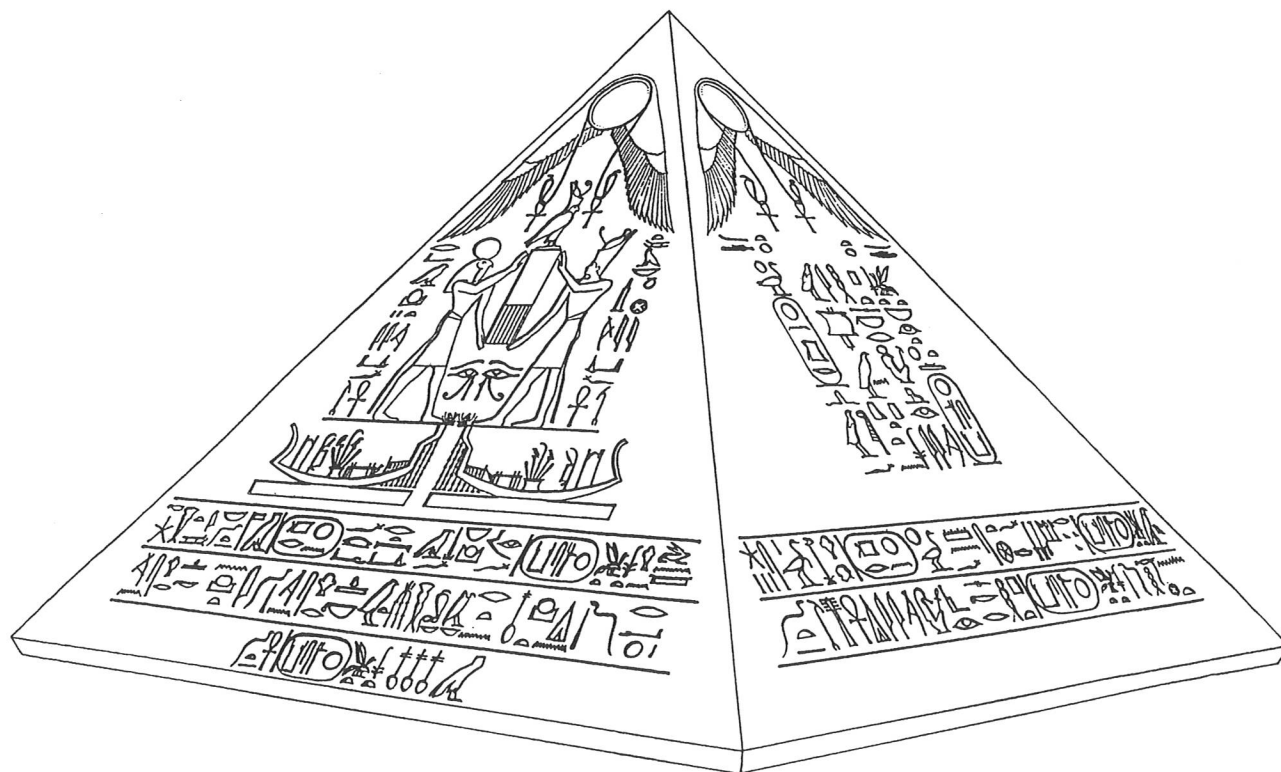


Figure 15. Pyramidion of Khendjer, c. 1745 B.C.

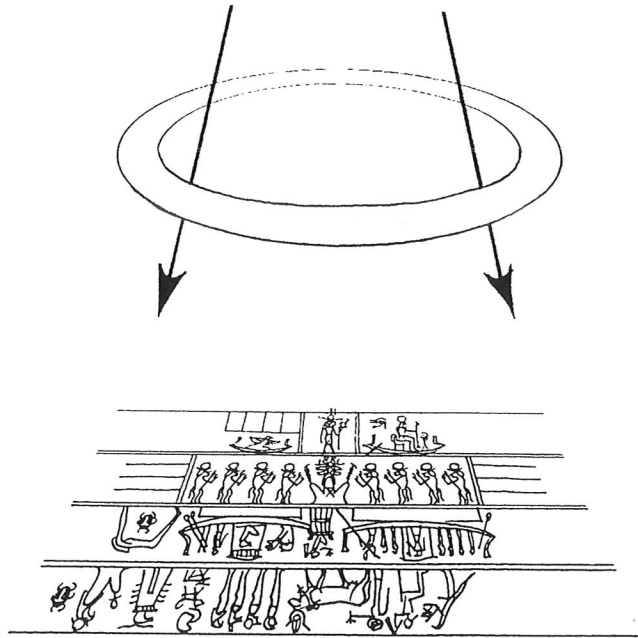


Figure 16. Hypocephalus overview



Figure 17. Klepsydra of Amenhotep III, c. 1360 B.C.



Figure 18. Ring of Tutankhamun, c. 1330 B.C.

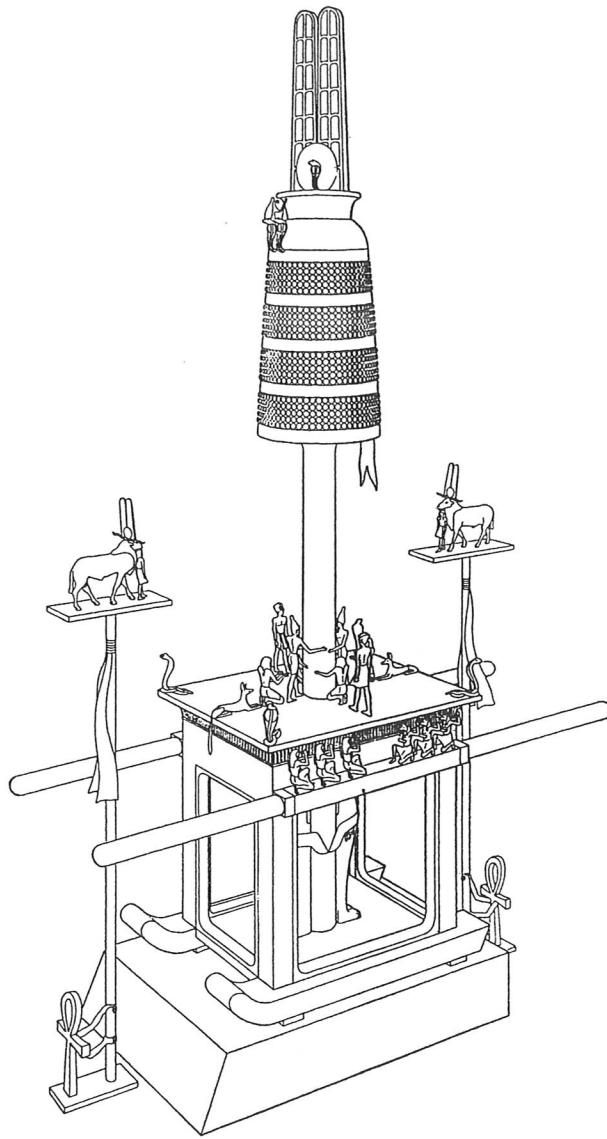


Figure 19. Osiris fetish of Ramses I, c. 1306 B.C.

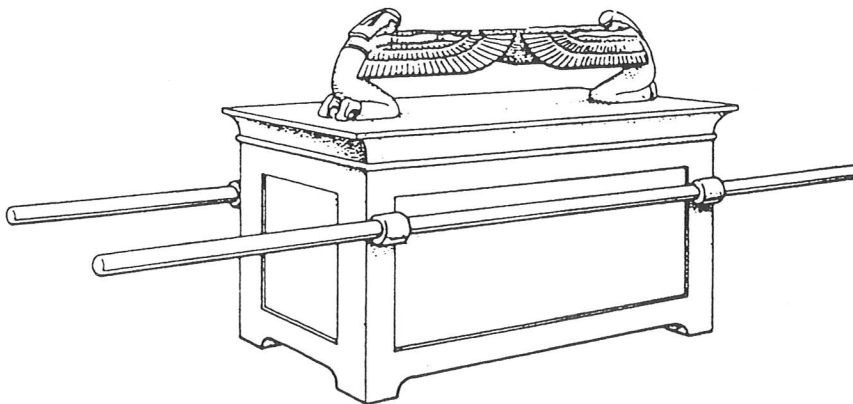


Figure 20. Ark of the Covenant of Moses

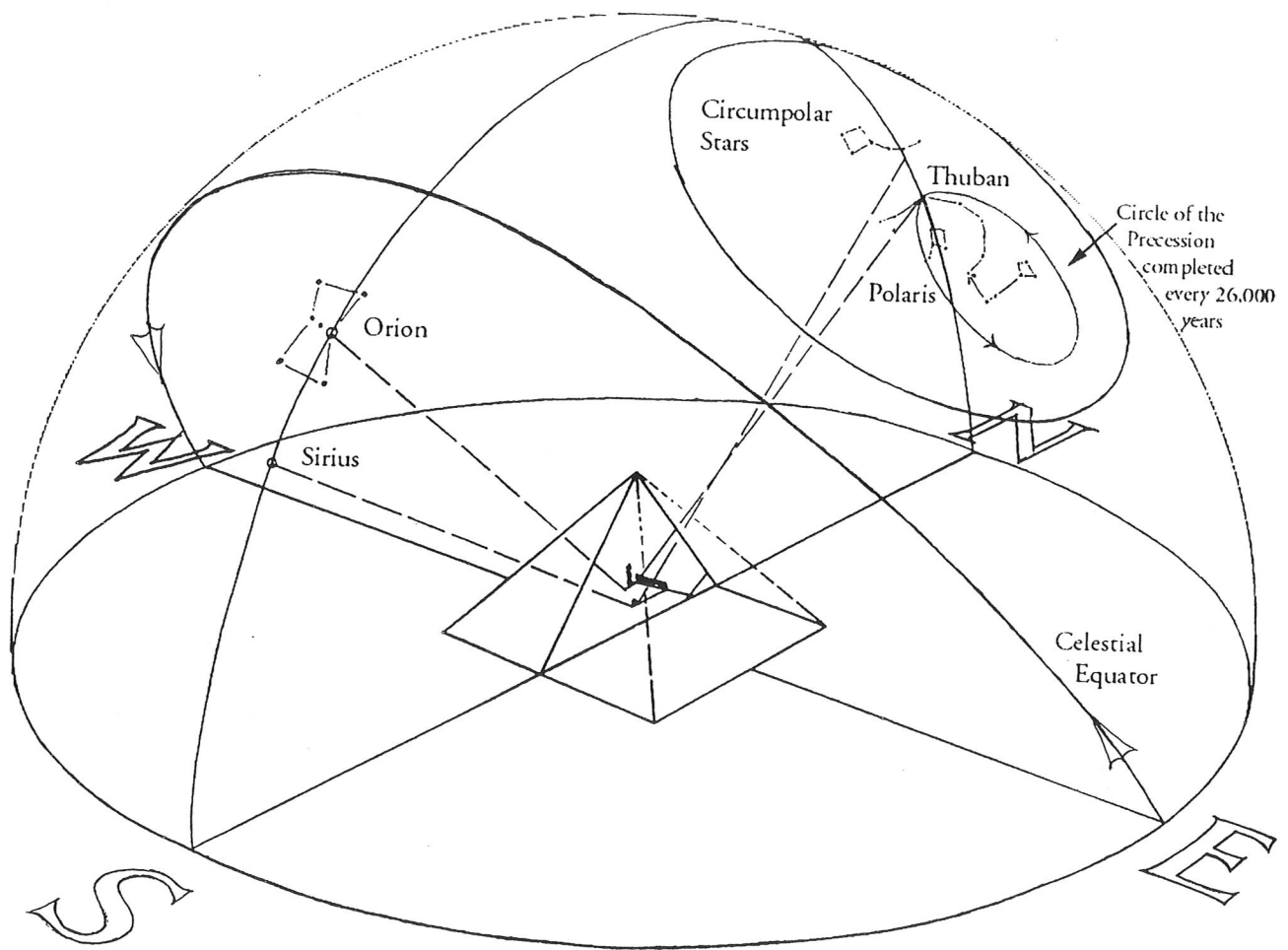


Figure 21. The Great Pyramid of Khufu and its orientation to specific stars, c. 2450 B.C.

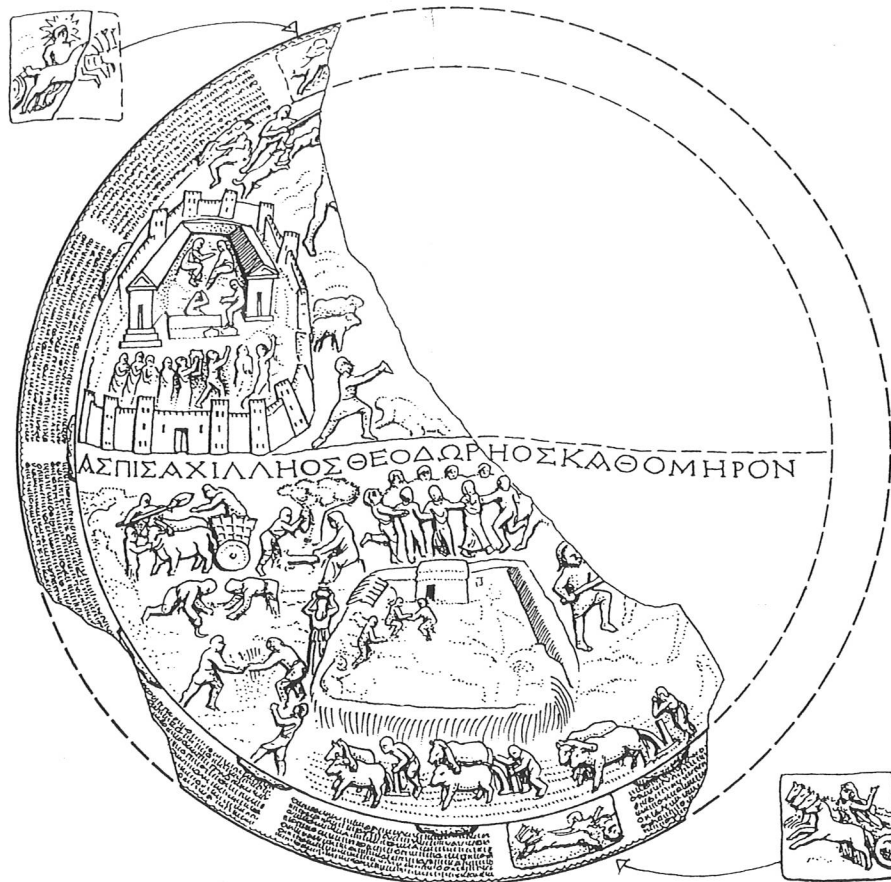


Figure 22. Shield of Achilles, top, c. 10 B.C.

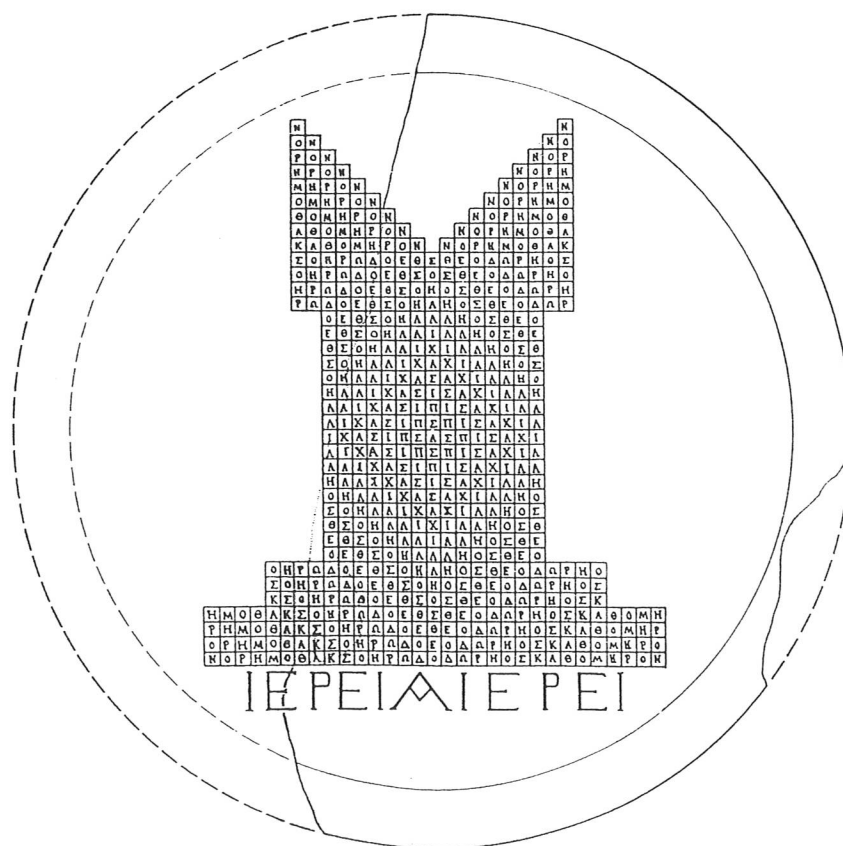


Figure 23. Shield of Achilles, bottom

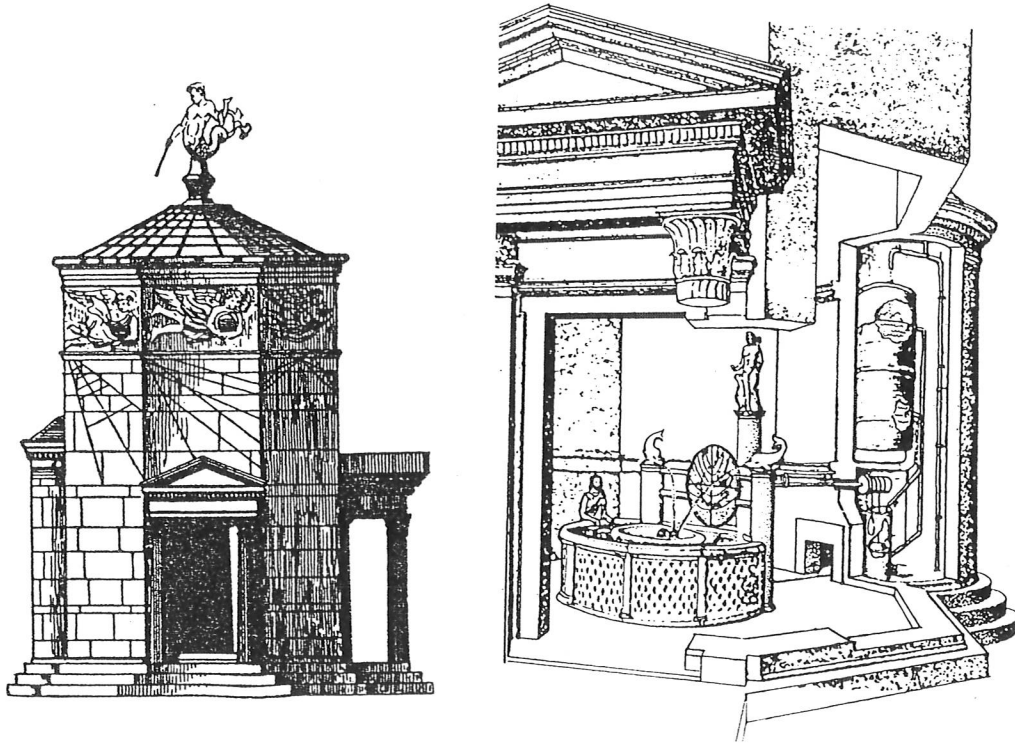


Figure 24. Tower of Winds, Athens, c. 50 B.C.

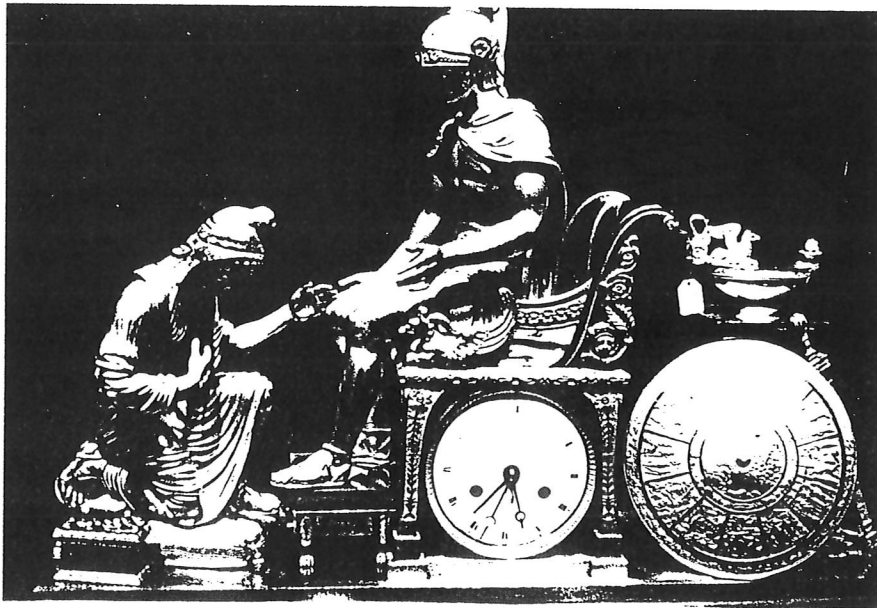


Figure 25. Shield of Achilles, French clock, c. 1880



Figure 26. Han TLV mirror, China, c. 200 B.C.

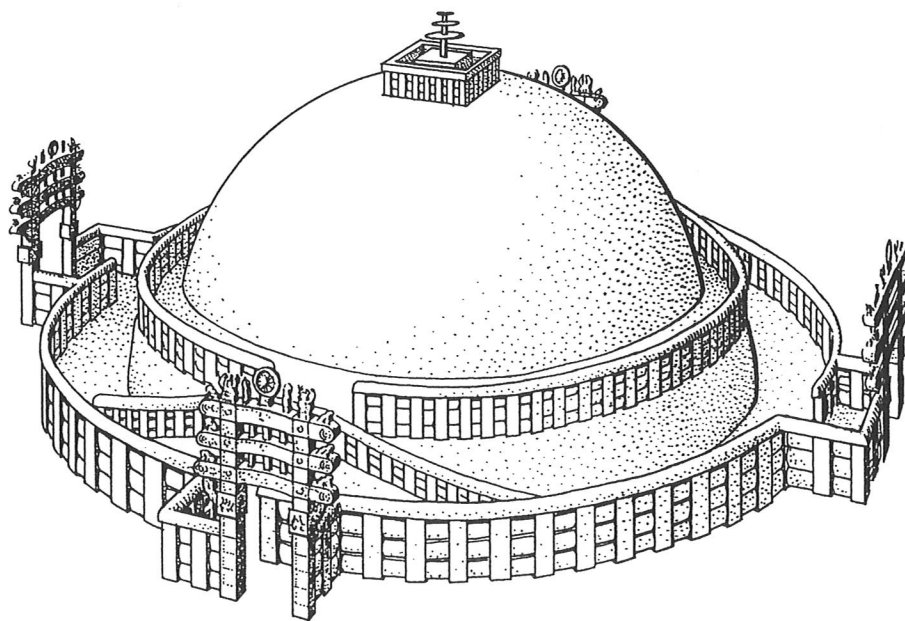


Figure 27. Great stupa of Sanchi, India, c. 100 B.C.

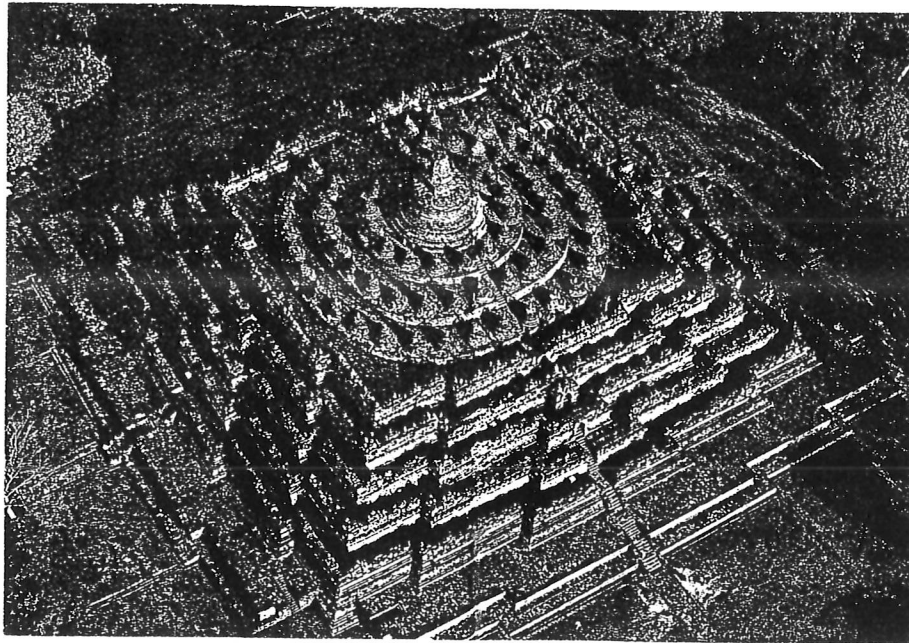


Figure 28. Borobudur, Indonesia, c. A.D. 850

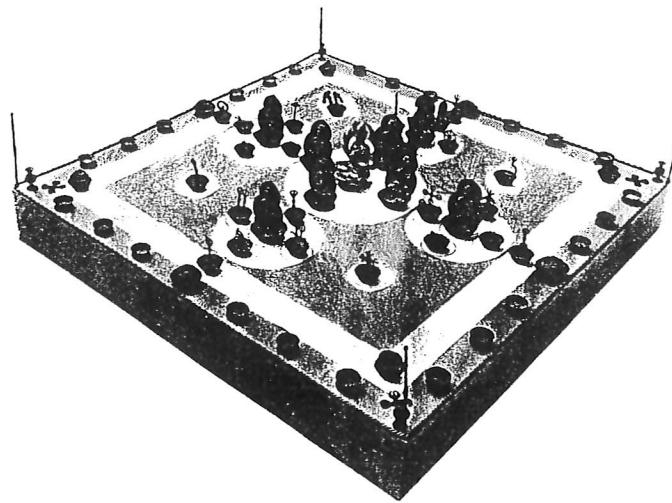


Figure 29. Mandala altar, Japan

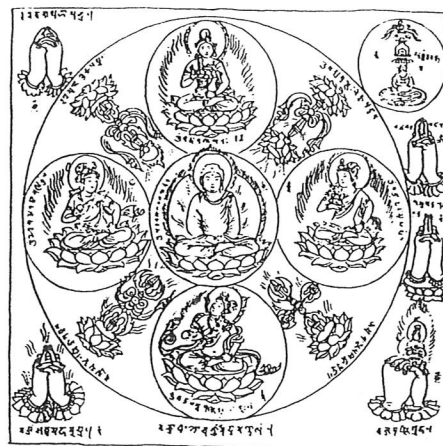


Figure 30. Mandala drawing, Japan, A.D. 855

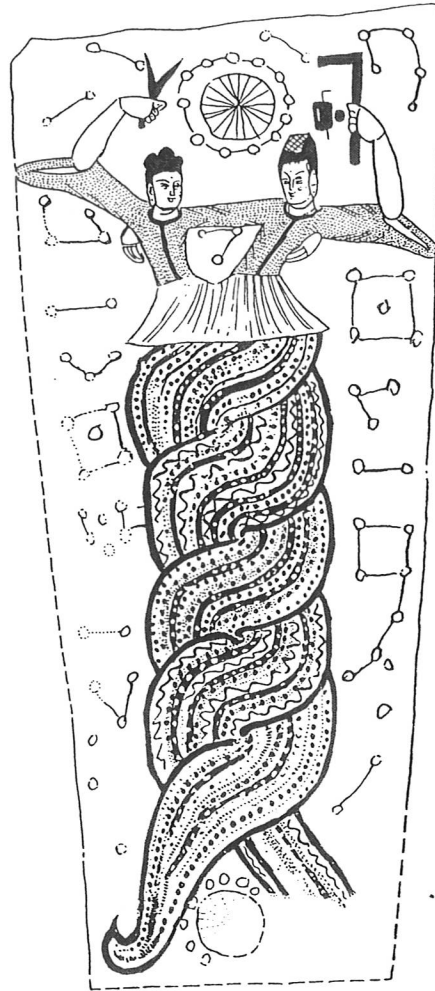


Figure 31. Astana banner, China, A.D. 689

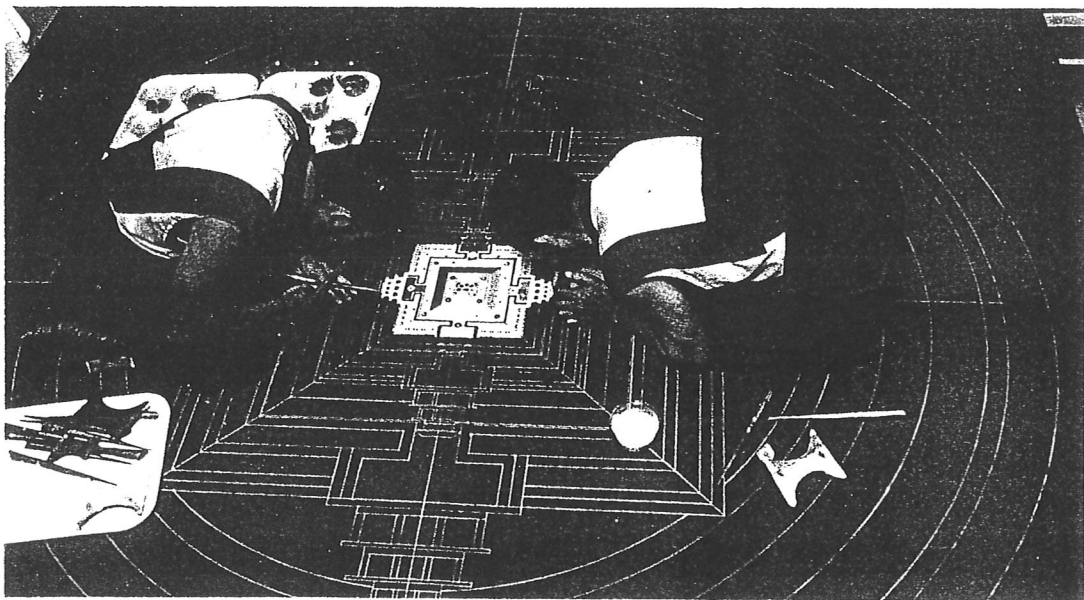


Figure 32. Tibetan monks making a sand mandala

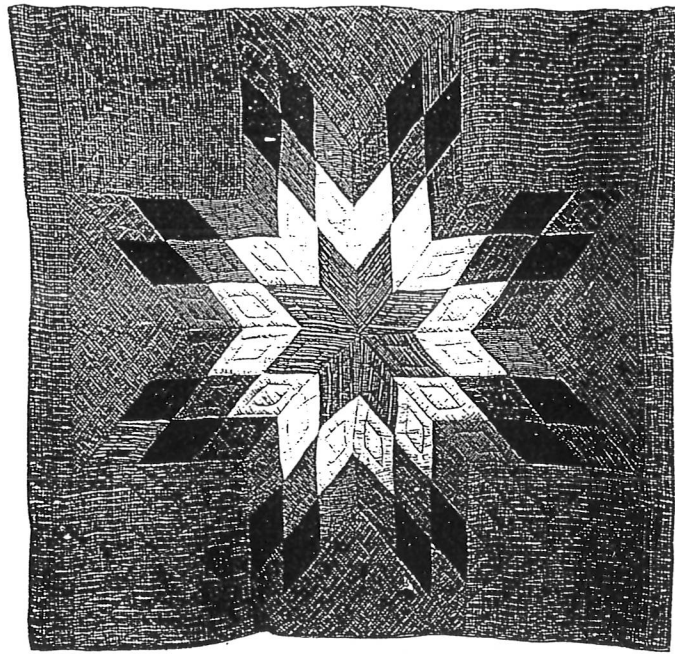


Figure 33. Star quilt, c. 1890



Figure 34. Wedding cake



Figure 35. Apocalypse, Spain, c. 970



Figure 36. Sandro Botticelli, Dante and Beatrice behold the starry heavens, Italy, c. 1480

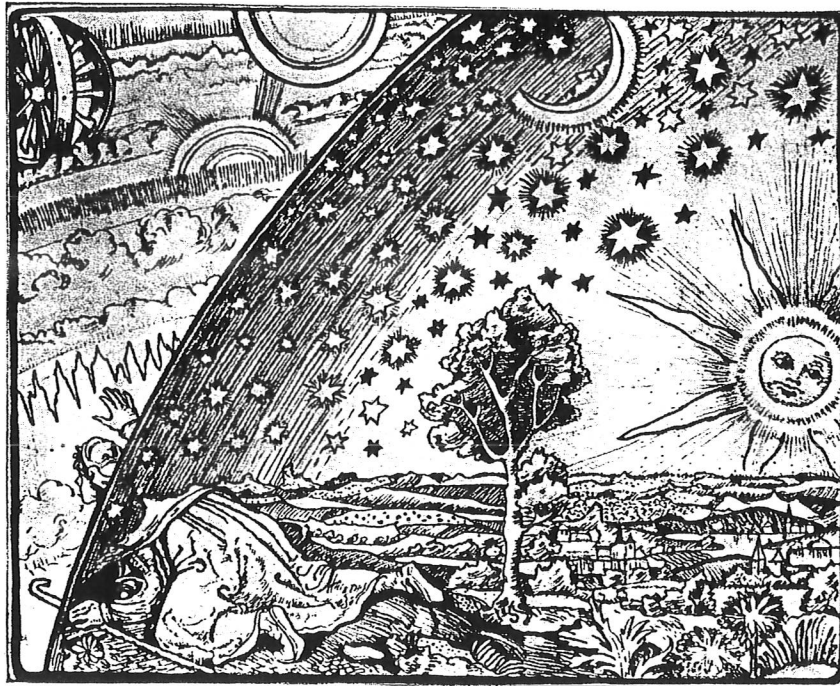


Figure 37. Heavenly Spheres, Germany

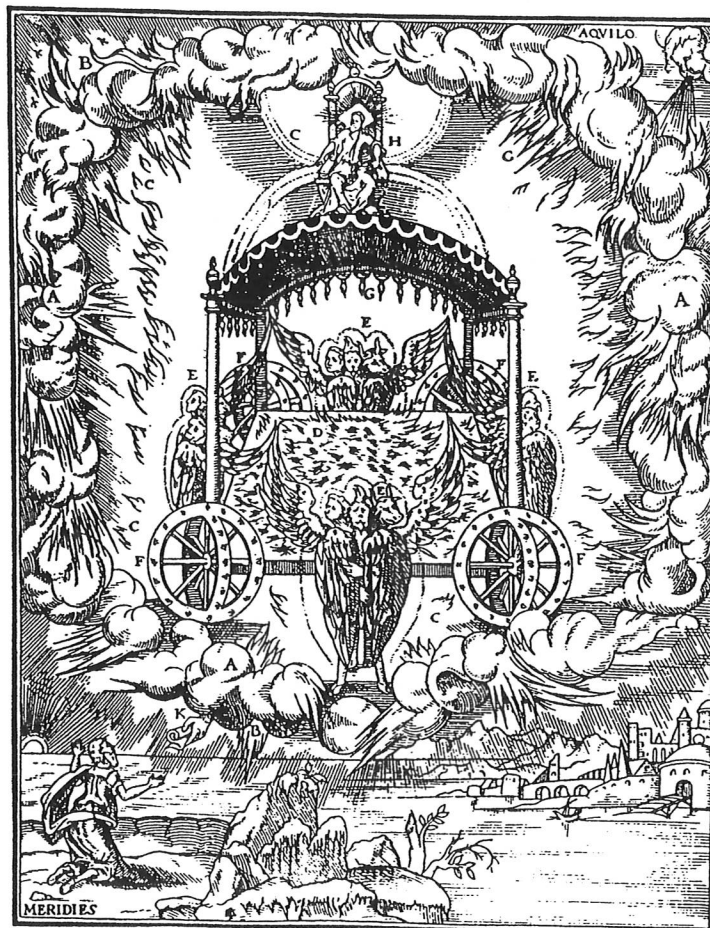


Figure 38. Ezekiel's vision, The "Bear" Bible, Basle, 1569

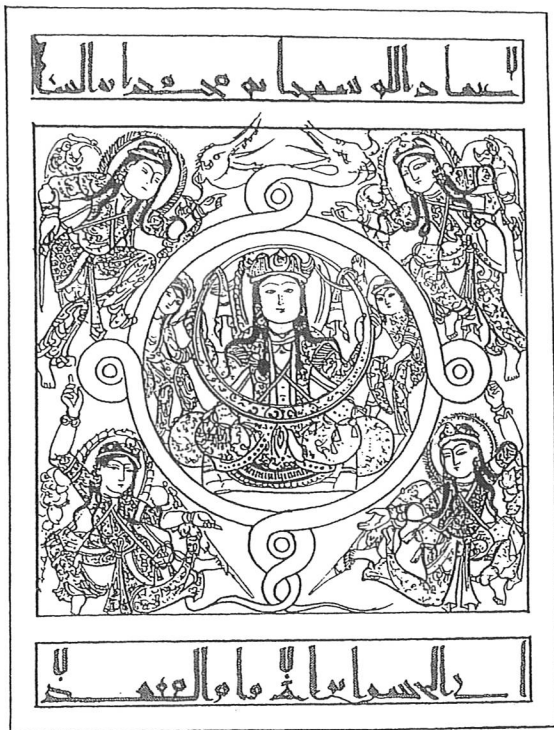


Figure 39. Muslim mystic, Turkey, 1199



Figure 40. Manti Temple doorknobs, 1870

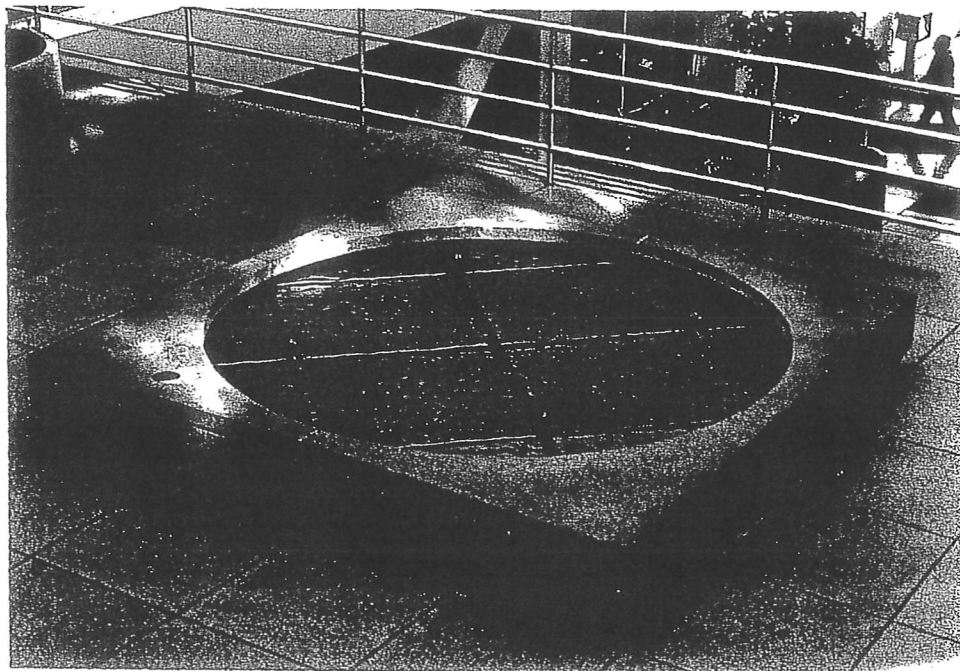


Figure 41. "Paradise" fountain, Tanner Building, BYU, 1983

Illustration Sources

Unless noted below, drawings are by the author with the generous assistance of John Gee.

- Fig.7 Hypocephalus 253 a/2 Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
8 Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology 54:108. 8 March 1911
10 Hypocephalus N3524, Louvre
11 Hypocephalus E268342, Louvre
12 Bronze Hypocephalus, Egyptian Museum, Cairo SR 10692, CG 9449, JE 28857
13 Stucco Hypocephalus, Ashmolean 1982-1095
15 Pyramidion, Egyptian Museum, Cairo
17 Klepsydra, Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Nr. 4940
18 Gold ring bezel, Egyptian Museum, Cairo, 1" in length;
19 Herbert Winlock, Bas-reliefs from the Temple of Ramses I at Abydos, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art 1921, fig. 1
21 Drawing from photograph by Jared Daley of model by author;
22, 23 Tabula Iliaca, Roma, Museo Capitolino, sala delle Colombe 83a;
24 Harry Peck, Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities, NY: Harper & Bros. 1898, 80
25 Gilt-bronze clock by Thomire, "Renoncourt," Rue de Saints Peres, Paris
26 W. C. White and P. M. Millman "An Ancient Chinese Sun-dial," Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, 1938, 422
29 Bronze Mandala altar arrangement, Tokyo National Museum
30 Redrawn from photo of a section of the *Gobu Shinkan*, Onjo-ji, Shiga, Japan
31 New Delhi Archeological Museum, India
35 Morgan Beatus, M644, fol. 87 M644, f. 87, Pierpont Morgan Library, NY
37 Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Vol. 10, Plate 7 NY: Bollingen Foundation, 1964
38 The "Bear" Bible, the first complete Spanish translation, Basle, 1569
39 Bibliotheque Nationale Ms. Arabe 2964, fo. 37
41 Photograph by Jared Daley, 1999