

Venus, Bridge of the Dog Star Sirius
A Historical Analysis. Thea Girard Marshall

The autobiography of Harkhebi, a Priest of Egypt, consisting of an inscription on a statue from Ptolemaic period in Egypt states, in part: “he purified himself for them in their turn when (the decan) Akh rose Heliacally// beside Benu (Venus) from the earth.”ⁱ

Is this evidence of the reality of the Egyptian concept of Venus as ‘the Bride of the Dog Star’? Ptolemy in his *Almagest*, Book 10, Chapter 4 gives the cycles of Venus as 243 years.ⁱⁱ Van Oosterhout in *Discussions in Egyptology* 27, pp. 83-96ⁱⁱⁱ discusses the reappearance of Venus as a Morning Star, specifically mentioning its apparent retrograde motion as a condition of its rising with Sirius every 243 years.

In Budge’s *Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary, Vol. I* Akh-t is the first season of the year. Akh is ‘to bloom, to blossom’^{iv}

The use of computer generated astrology programs makes it comparatively easy to pinpoint when Venus is rising as a morning star during the time of Sirius heliacal rise. Egypt, with its long history, provides an intriguing template with which to study this phenomenon.

Using Ptolemy’s interval of 243 years, and pegging the last date when this cycle occurred, 1836 CE (Common Era), the cycle can be computed backwards to the beginning of the Egyptian calendar which has been differently dated as far back as to 4238 or 4236 BCE (Before Common Era). It is interesting to note a Venus/Sirius heliacal rise occurred in 4240 BCE.

Six Venus’ cycles of 243 years are 1458 years, two years short of the Sothic cycle of 1460 years whereupon at the 1461 year the first day of the so-called gliding calendar and the rise of the Dog Star will coincide. 1461 is also the number of days in a four year cycle wand one leap day. Further consideration of this intriguing fact of a day for a year time cycles between Earth’s orbit and the Dog Star as coordinated by the Egyptian calendar is outside the scope of this article but hopefully the author or interested readers may further develop it. However, as these phenomena will occur within the phenomena of the Sothic Year, it is interesting to consider the historical stages which accompany events of all six cycles.

One cycle which has mainstream historians’ blessings is a consensus date of 139 CE for the beginning of a Sothic cycle.^v Cited are the writings of Censorious for the 139 CE date which occurred during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian whose life also contained a significant connection to Egypt.^{vi} Theon, an astronomer of the classical world opined that there had been 1605 years between a certain pharaoh and the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Diocletian in 284 CE. This produces a date of 1621 BCE as the beginning of a prior Sothic Cycle.^{vii} The Decree of Canopus, discovered in 1865 which confirmed the date of the rising of Sirius during the reign of Ptolemy III Evergetus, allowed historians to confirm the 139 CE and 1321 BCE dates.^{viii}

Calculations for Venus rising as the Bride of the Dog Star Sirius produce two similar dates: July 20 135 CE and July 17, 1324 BCE. In the first instance, the Emperor Hadrian, whose first visit to Egypt coincided with the death by drowning in the Nile of his lover, Antinoos made his second visit to Egypt due to “*trouble in Alexandria, on account of the sacred bull of Apis, that had at last appeared after many years, and all the towns of Egypt disputed the keeping of it with a stubbornness that degenerated into*

riots.”^{ix} The translator of the passage, William Maude added the year of the event as 136 CE but averred that the appearance of the Apis Bull might have been the event Censorious referred to as the closing of the Great Year as the Apis bull was the forerunner of the Great Year. ^x It might have been the Venus /Sirius rising as well.

The 1321 BCE Sothic Year and 1324 BCE Venus/Sirius dates are also very interesting. According to the chronology in *Chronicle of the Pharaohs* by Peter A Clayton the years 1325 to 1321 span the reign of the ‘interim’ Pharaoh Ay. Ay was an old man when he came to the throne, probably by marrying the widow of Tut Ankh Amen, the famous young king who succeeded his heretic father Aknaton, restored the worship of Amun and the primacy of the Priests at Karnak and then died an untimely death. His widow petitioned the Hittite King for a prince but the candidate dispatched was murdered at the border of Egypt and she was married to Ay instead. They had no children and when she died the last of the royal blood line of Amarna and the 18th dynasty died with her. Horemheb, a military general who possibly had something to do with the death of the Hittite prince became the last pharaoh of the once glorious 18th dynasty in 1321 BCE and it ended with his death in 1293.^{xi} It was followed by the 19th Dynasty which contained the Ramesaid kings, another of Egypt’s historical high points.

Another interesting historical turning point involving only the Venus/Sirius Heliacal Rise cycle occurred in 1567 BCE. This is interesting as the expulsion of the Hyksos kings, whose conquest of Egypt was one of the greatest disasters the country had ever known, took place during the reign of Ahmose I who became pharaoh in 1570 and began his war to reunite Egypt and expel the Hyksos in the 12 year of his 24 year reign ushering in the greatest period of conquest and territorial expansion Egypt had ever known under the New Kingdom of the 18th dynasty!^{xii}

The earliest date for which we have any reliable historical information is the Venus/Sirius Heliacal rise for July 17, 2296 BCE, during the reign of Pepi I of the Sixth Dynasty. This was a long reign and a time of growing prosperity for Egypt^{xiii} The Heliacal rise occurred 13 years before his death and his eventual successor, Pepi II, second of his two sons, ruled Egypt until 2184.

Given the interesting occurrence of the Venus/Sirius Heliacal Rise with turning points in history, the charts based on this may reveal interesting insights for mundane astrologers. I have chosen four charts for study of these phenomena. Two of them are charts when the Venus/Sirius couple occurs just before the inauguration of a Great or Sothic New Year. Since the Six Cycle Venus/Sirius ‘Year’ is only 1458 years rather than 1460, the First Occurrence of the new Venus/Sirius cycle falls just before the Great Year. The second set of charts are of the 6th Cycle Venus/Sirius Heliacal rise, the last occurrence of the cycle before it completed and then renewed itself by occurring again close to the Sothic Great Year.

The time line begins with the chart of the 6^h cycle event dated July 17 1567 BC, 4:43 AM LMT Luxor Egypt. The second chart is July 17 1324 BC 4:43 AM. It is the 1st, the initiating chart for the next Venus/Sothic cycle. The new Sothic Year begins in 1321 BC. The next chart is another 6th cycle chart. It is for 19 July 109 BC and is followed by the 1st or Initiating Venus/Sirius chart of 20 July 135, 4:43 LMT. All the charts are set for Luxor Egypt to approximate Thebes.

I have used Bernadette Brady’s Starlight with planisphere maps to calculate the day and hour of Sirius apparent rising and Ptolemy’s intervals to locate Venus as Lucifer

or Morning rising phase and retrograde in motion to garner the data to draw up the charts. The hour selected is based on the visible rise of Sirius so descriptions of the sky can approximate what a star watcher/astrologer of that time might be seeing and using for calculations. The charts are referred to in tropical but much of the description will involve the sky as it could be seen by a watcher/astrologer and will be part of the method of analysis by fixed star and planetary energy.

The charts and the fixed star configurations show a most faithful indication to the history of the time. I hope that this analysis will open up a wide window for speculation on how using fixed stars might recreate anew or newly create an accurate technique of mundane astrology.

The first chart to be examined is July 17 1567 BC set for Luxor Egypt. At this time the pharaoh was Ahmose I, the conqueror, who in the 12th year of his 24 year reign defeated the Hyksos who ruled 'Lower' or Delta region Egypt and re-united the crowns of the Two Lands (Upper and Lower Egypt) Ahmose founded the 18th Dynasty, one of the most glorious, if not the most glorious of the ancient Egyptian dynasties. This chart for the phenomenon of Venus/Sirius Heliacal rise came in the 3rd year of his reign which dates from 1570 BC-1546 BC.^{xiv}

Visible beside Sirius and slightly lower in elevation to the east is Venus. Just above Venus is Mars at 24 Gemini 08 rising at 4:03 AM in *parans* to the fixed star Ras Elasad Australis, the southern Star in the Lion's head, which rises at 4:10 AM at 25 Gemini 43. To the west and south of the ecliptic, the head of Hydra rises. These two constellations of Lion and Serpent are depicted together at Dendara. Two days later, on July 19 around 4:43 AM LMT (-02:10:36) Venus Retrograde will conjoin Mars around the 26th degree of Gemini, rising between the two heads of the Lion and the Serpent..

Also visible in the Venus/Sirius morning sky/chart is the Moon, at 10 Aires 47, just past its culminating degree at 9 Aires 51. The Moon is in a last quarter phase, and is quite near the fixed star Alcyone, part of the Pleiades. The Moon is at altitude 65 degrees 19 minutes, azimuth 134 degrees 55 minutes. The Pleiades star is at altitude 65 degrees 52 minutes, azimuth 135 degrees 21 minutes. The Moon has a diameter at this phase of 32 minutes 10 seconds and a declination of 7 degrees 21 minutes. Alcyone has a declination of 7 degrees 39 minutes. It is possible that this very close appearance may have actually been an occultation of the Pleiades by the Moon.

Saturn is in the vicinity of the constellation of Cetus, near the head of the constellation, whose bright star is Menkar. There is no evidence that the Egyptians used the constellation Cetus, but nearly 1500 years later, the Planisphere of Dendara shows two Egyptian figures in the area of Cetus. Although they have been ascribed by Francis Rolleston in her book *Mazzaroth*^{xv} as representations of Andromeda they are visually located on the planisphere where Cetus would be expected. The constellation where the head of Cetus is today is depicted as a feline (lion?) headed goddess. It is interesting to speculate on an entry by Teucer of Babylon^{xvi} who refers to Cetus and the Head of the Cat in pairs: *And some suffer from a flux in the extremities because of the tail of Cetus and the head of the Cat, signifying the suffering of the head.*

Again he says: *...and vengeance in regard to the afflictive cause of the decan, and with sailing and toiling on account of the tail of Cetus. And he runs the course a lot in different places while being unsettled and unfortunate on account of the Cat.*

The sun is rising with the star Regulus, invisible until its apparent heliacal rise on August 3. It is quite possible that the star watchers may know this and they can both interpolate between stellar disappearances and appearances and have star clocks in order to know the times of their several phases. Invisible also at the Heliacal rise, but visible after sunset on the same day is Jupiter, which sets at 12 Leo 01 at 8:51:13 close to the fixed star Denebola which sets at 14 Leo 56 at 8:58:01.

The constellation Lion appears 1500 years later on the Planisphere of Dendara, depicted along with the closely connected asterisms of Hydra, Corvus, Crater and Coma. The prevailing school of historical thought says that the zodiacal constellations on the planisphere are not native to Egypt but come from Babylon and the Lion as western astrology knows it was not known in Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom, having been introduced to the Zodiacal signs only through the Ptolemies. However, the 18th dynasty's most successful pharaoh Thutmose III, called 'The Napoleon of Egypt', who expanded Egypt to her widest borders, built the small temple of Ptah and Sekhmet in the temple precincts of Karnak.^{xvii} This temple, which faces W/NW with the statue of Sekhmet in the second southern chapel, has a small opening in the roof whereby, on a full moon, the light shines directly on the statue.^{xviii} If we could confirm which full moon of the year, we might go a long way toward confirming whether the ancient Egyptians used the zodiacal constellations before the arrival of Hellenic Greek influence under the Ptolemies.

The first chapel through the entry is consecrated to Ptah, the consort of Sekhmet and chief god of the first Capital of Egypt in Memphis. The Apis bull has often been connected to Ptah, as the Apis Bull has its ceremonial home in Memphis. It was identified by certain markings such as a square mark on its face and on its back a figure like an eagle. It sometimes is described as having a crescent moon on its right side. It is tempting to consider what the appearance of the Moon and the Pleiades, a group of seven stars situated in the constellation of the Bull, might have meant to the sky watchers of that period.

Although the Nakshatras come from a completely different tradition, it might be interesting to note that the Pleiades constitute the Nakshatra Kritika, and have as their symbols the razor, the flame or the axe and edged weapons.^{xix} The Nakshatras have been traced back to the Rig Veda and date as early as 4000 BC. In addition to their Sothic calendar, based on Sirius; their solar or 'sliding' calendar of 360 days with 5 intercalary days; the Egyptians also had a lunar calendar of 29 and 30 days in alternating sequence. Whether the Egyptians had any system similar to the Nakshatras cannot be verified but assuredly a modern astrologer, attempting to use the fixed stars would note this, along with a present day practitioner of Vedic astrology.

In all, the visible fixed stars of this chart, representing the final phase of a Venus/Sothic cycle preliminary to initiating a new Sothic year, coming when it did in Egyptian history makes in itself a beautiful and literally heavenly metaphor for the reconquest of Lower Egypt and reunification of Egypt under the Theban Pharaohs that did in deed follow nine years later.

The next chart to be examined is for 17 July 1324 BC, 4:43 LMT, Luxor Egypt. This chart, occurring 3 years before the new Sothic Year of 1321 represents the first order of occurrence of the new series of 6 cycles of Venus/Sirius. Once again the history of Egypt is illustrative of the chart.

Tutankhamun has just been buried and his widow Ankesenamun has been married to the elderly Ay, who was actually her grandfather.^{xx} His reign was short, a mere 4 years and she did not survive him. They were succeeded by Horemheb, a career military officer who ruled nearly 30 years and who may have been behind the relatively short reigns of his predecessors. Both the royal bloodline in the persons of Ankesenamun and Ay ended as did the 18th dynasty with Horemheb's reign.

The chart for this is very clear. Venus at 29 Gemini 01 retrograde rises closely conjunct with Saturn at 28 Gemini 34. Jupiter at 22 Acquarius sets with the fixed star Algenib in the Wing of Pegasus at 25 Aquarius 14. They are visible in the western sky before sunrise. The Egyptians did not use Pegasus but the Great Square is depicted on Dendara as one of the extra Zodiacal constellations.

Mars, which is below the horizon at the Venus/Sirius rise would be visible in the evening sky in Vespertine phase. It would set at 6 Leo close to Zosma, star of the Victim at 9 Leo. Visible at the same time, the Moon would be culminating with the star representing the head of the arrow of Sagittarius, pointing close to the center of the galaxy.

Leaping ahead in history we arrive at the 6th and final Venus/Sirius of that Great year in the chart of 19 July 109 BC Luxor Egypt in the reign of Ptolemy IX, who was driven from the throne by his brother and mother. He did begin the building of Dendara where the famous planisphere was later erected. By now Egypt has been ruled by foreigners for hundreds of years. The last native Pharaoh, Nectanebo II had abdicated in 343 BC. This chart is very interesting in terms of visual astronomy; there are no visible planets besides Venus above the horizon. Horus is 'without his eyes' as both sun and moon are below the horizon! When the sun goes down, Mars and Mercury remain in the Western sky in Vespertine phase and the Moon is with Saturn close to Spica, the Wheatsheaf of the Goddess. The reign of the Ptolemies ended in 30 BC with the deaths of Cleopatra and her son Caesarion and with it the independence of Egypt for nearly 2000 years. The man who ended it was Augustus Caesar who put his birth sign of Capricorn on a coin.

The final chart is for 20 July 135 AD. This is the first Venus/Sirius cycle preceding the commencement of the next Sothic Great Year in 139 AD. It was during this time that Hadrian had to intervene in the riots that accompanied this occasion; although there had appeared a sacred bull of Apis this was the first time there were no official celebrations for the Great Year.

There are few visible planets in this chart either. The Moon in its last quarter is close to a minor star in the Head of Cetus. Jupiter sets with Fomalhaut, one of the four Royal Stars of the Persians. Although there is little if anything to indicate the Egyptians had any specific imagery for this star, it was probably known through observation to be the star opposite Regulus. Jupiter setting with it is ominous of things to come, and interestingly enough, the Venus/Sirius cycle of 378 AD would see the defeat of Valens by the Goths at Adrianople and by the 621 AD Venus/Sirius cycle the Roman Empire in the West would be ended and Mohammed was only one year away from the Hegira when he fled Mecca for Medina in 622. In 639 the Muslims would begin their conquest of Egypt.^{xxi}

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- ⁱ Nicholas Champion, *The Dawn of Astrology, Vol 1: The Ancient and Classical Worlds*, UK, Continuum Books, 2008, pg. 105
- ⁱⁱ Dr. A.S. von Bomhard, *The Egyptian Calendar A Work for Eternity*, UK, PERIPLUS PUBLISHING LONDON LTD, 1999, pg.74, reference 3.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid*
- ^{iv} E.A. Wallis Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, USA, Dover Publishing, 1978, pg.8
- ^v Dr. A.S. von Bomhard, *op cit*, pg. 40
- ^{vi} Phillip Coppens, *The Conopus Revelation, Stargate of the Gods and the Ark of Osirus*, Frontier Publishing, 2004, pg.112, ref.
- ^{vii} *op cit* Dr. A.S. von Bomhard, pg. 40
- ^{viii} *Ibid* Dr. A S Bomhard
- ^{ix} Philip Coppens, *op cit*, pg.45
- ^x *Ibid*
- ^{xi} Peter A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs, The Reign-by Reign Record of the Rulers And Dynasties of Ancient Egypt*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1994, pg.135-137.
- ^{xii} *Ibid*, pg.97-101
- ^{xiii} *Ibid* pg.65-66.
- ^{xiv} *Ibid*, pg.97-101
- ^{xv} Rolleston, Frances, *MAZZAROTH, The Constellations, Parts I-IV, Including Mizraim: Astronomy of Egypt*, USA, WeiserBooks, 2001, first printing 1865, pg.11
- ^{xvi} *The Astrological Record of the Early Sages in Greek*, Project Hindsight, translated by Robert Schmidt, 1995, Golden Hind Press, pg.73, [CCAG 91 2: 181-186]
- ^{xvii} John Barnes, Jaromir Malek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*, Facts On File Publications, NYC, 1980 pg.92
- ^{xviii} De Lubicz, R.A. Schwaller, *The Temples of Karnak, Inner Traditions*, VT, 1982, pg. 675
- ^{xix} Harness, Dennis, *The Nakshatras, the Lunar Mansions of Vedic Astrology*, Lotus Press, Wisconsin, 1999, pg. 11-12
- ^{xx} *Op cit* Peter A Clayton pg.136-137
- ^{xxi} Jean cooke, Ann Kramer, Theodore Rowland-Entwistle, *History's Timeline*, New Yourk, Crescent Books, 1981, pg 45-53