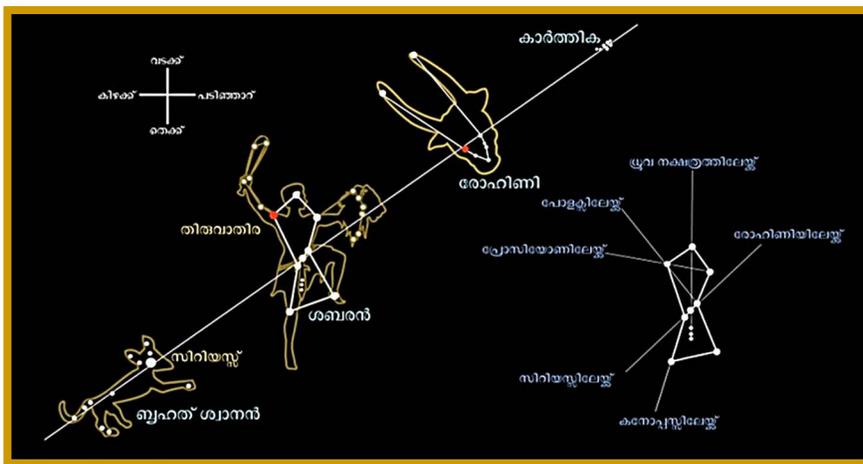




## Orion, Cygnus And The Mysteries Of The North Sky

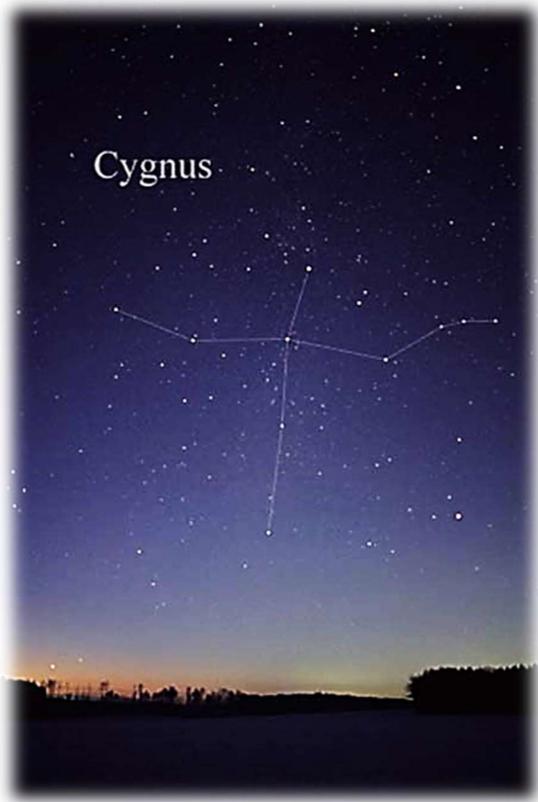
Jim Willis



Of all the mysteries and forgotten wisdom of lost civilizations, perhaps the most profound examples are to be found in their study of the heavens. It is not that modern man lacks information about the cosmos today. Due to computer analysis and radio telescopes that the ancients never dreamed about, far more is known

about the universe than what ancient man did. But what is not fully grasped is why and how they built some of the most magnificent, astronomically precise and enigmatic stone structures ever conceived. Was it to study the night skies, presumably hoping to bring the magic down to earth? Why was that so important to them?

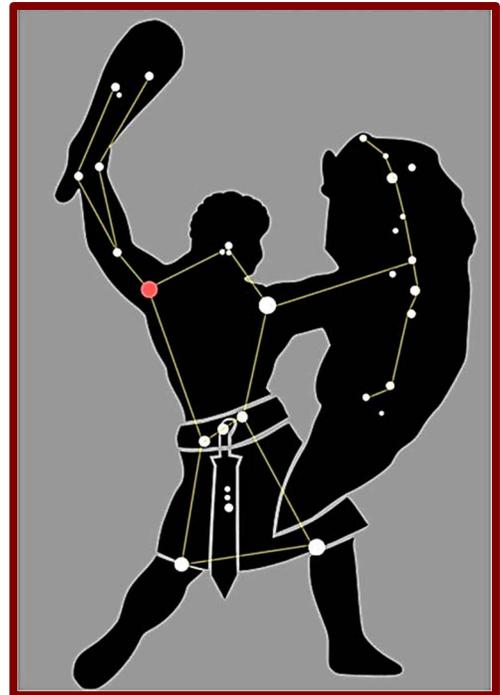
Of all the star, moon, and sun alignments, angles and precession movements the ancients studied, the position of two constellations, Orion and Cygnus, appear to have been particularly important. Orion seems to have been the guiding light for the construction of the Giza Pyramids (although that is a point of contention) and Cygnus seems to have been of paramount importance to the builders of Göbekli Tepe (although that is debatable as well). It is impossible to condense all the books and scholarly articles written about the astronomical alignments built into these two monuments, but it raises some questions as to why man's forgotten ancestors put so much time and work into them.



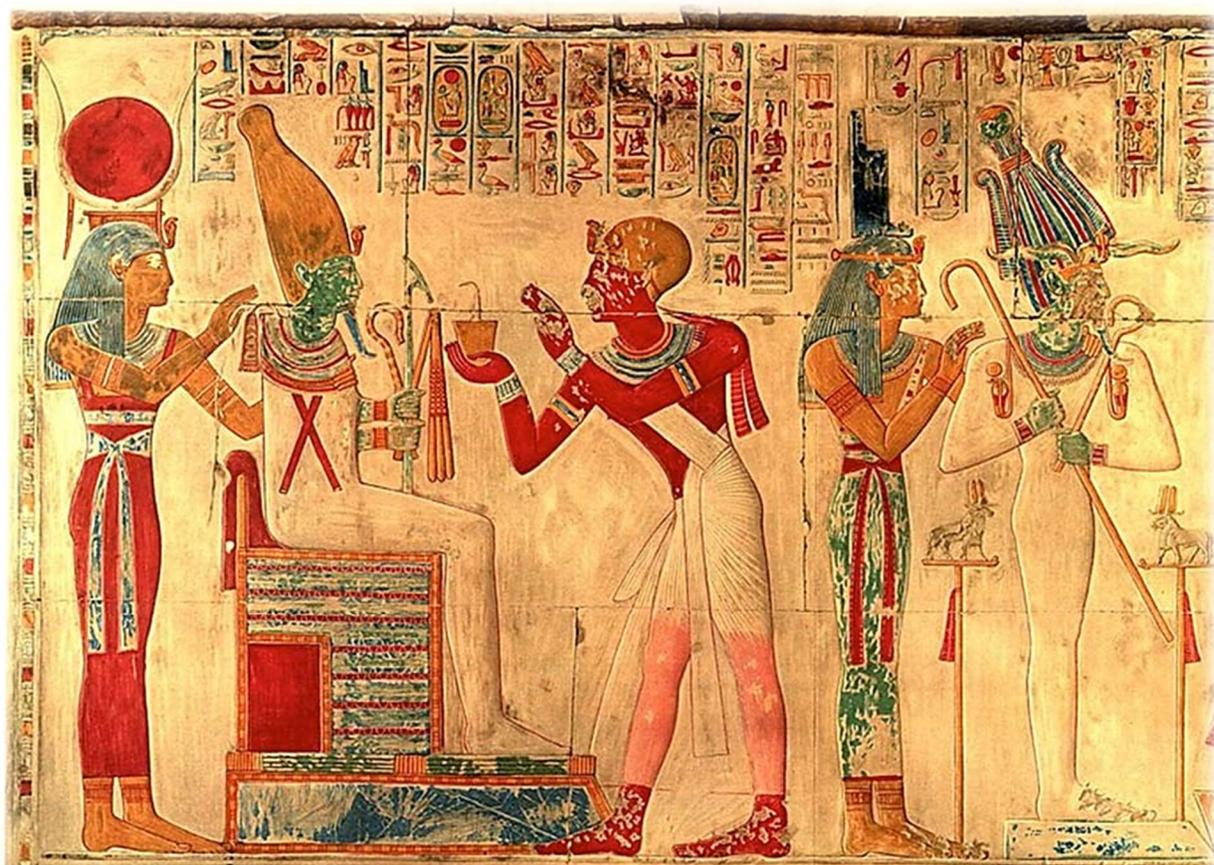
*The constellation Cygnus as it can be seen by the naked eye, with the Northern Cross in the middle. (Till Credner / CC BY-SA 3.0)*

### Orion The Hunter

When Robert Bauval and Adrian Gilbert wrote *The Orion Mystery* in 1994, they popularized a theory which had been percolating in various circles since the 1960s that the Pyramids of Giza were built to mimic on earth the position of the stars in the belt of the constellation Orion, the Hunter. Orion is one of the easiest constellations in the night sky to identify. The three stars of his belt are quickly spotted and it is the first constellation many beginner star-gazers learn to recognize. The belt stars seem to be straight but upon closer inspection one notices that they are just a little out of line. One is offset. If one should fly over the pyramids or study a map of Egypt in a format such as Google Earth, it is noticeable that the three pyramids are offset in identical fashion.



*Orion constellation (Sanu N/ CC BY-SA 4.0)*



SETHOS WORSHIPS AND GAZES UPON OSIRIS

*Worship and view of Osiris; the Chapel of Osiris at Abydos Temple (CC BY-SA 3.0)*

In Egyptian mythology, one of the chief gods is Osiris. An Osiris cult ruled in Egypt for centuries, and since he has traditionally been identified with Orion, the relationship makes perfect sense. This identification was further buttressed when it was discovered that a southern shaft running upward from the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid would have formed, during the age traditionally attributed to the building of the pyramids, a straight shot, similar to the barrel of a gun aimed at the belt of Orion.

In Bauval's words, as recalled by Graham Hancock in his book, *Fingerprints of the Gods*: "What I found was that the shaft had been precisely targeted on Al Nitak, the lowest of the three belt stars, which crossed the meridian at altitude 45 degrees around the year 2475 BC ... If you look carefully on a clear night you'll see that the smallest of the three stars, the one at the top which the Arabs call Mintaka, is slightly offset to the east of the principle diagonal formed by the other two. This pattern is mimicked on the ground where we see the Pyramid of Menkaure is offset by exactly the right amount to the east of the principal diagonal formed by the Pyramid of Khafre (which represents the middle star, Al Nilam) and the Great Pyramid, which represents Al Nitak. It's really quite obvious that all these monuments were laid out according to a unified site plan that was modeled with extraordinary precision on those three stars ... What they did at Giza was to build Orion's Belt on the ground."

What more satisfying a theory could there be? It included traditional Egyptian mythology, while placing the building of the pyramids within traditional time spans taught by traditional Egyptologists. Everyone was happy. Alas, it was not to remain that way. Bauval could not leave well enough alone. After carefully calculating everything, measuring to scale and superimposing a map of the ground over a map of the heavens, he determined that although the general consensus of his theory could be seen in all eras, there was only one era when the stars were in an exact position to line up perfectly with his theory, and that was in 10,450 BC. That was way too far back in time to satisfy traditionalists. This was, of course, before the discovery of Göbekli Tepe, which preceded the pyramids by more than 5,000 years, so no one was ready to say that any human civilization existed way back then which was remotely capable of building such a structure. According to conventional wisdom, it simply could not be. Paleolithic humans just could not have done it! So two groups developed. One group took the 2475 BC date as gospel, the other jumped on board the 10,450 BC ancient-civilization band wagon. And that is where things stood for a while, until more information threw another monkey wrench into the works.

*The Sphinx (sciencefreak/CCO)*

## The Sphinx

Standing right next to the pyramids is an even more enigmatic structure. It is called the *Sphinx* and has traditionally been cloaked in the enfolded blankets of a conspiracy of silence as well as the shifting desert sands of the Giza plateau. Nothing about this structure quite fits traditional parameters. For one thing, it is a form carved right out of the native bedrock to represent the body of a lion with the head of a man. That makes no sense at all unless one offers some purely speculative motives for the project, which leads to a second point. The image has absolutely nothing to do with pyramids. It seems totally out of context. Because it is carved into bedrock, it sits in a deep well, of sorts. The well is constantly filling up with drifting sand, to the point where for many thousands of years only the head was left sticking up out of the desert. No one even knew about the lion body until it was excavated.



Without adding to the tremendous amount of literature written about the riddle of the Sphinx, suffice it to say that the traditional position of most Egyptologists is that the whole complex, pyramids and Sphinx together, were built at roughly the same time, circa 2575-2467 BC, by three pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty, *Khufu*, *Khafre* and *Menkaure*. (Or, if one prefers their Greek

names, *Cheops*, *Chephren*, and *Mycerinus*.) According to accepted doctrine the pyramids were built as tombs. Nothing more esoteric was involved. There are no great mysteries here.

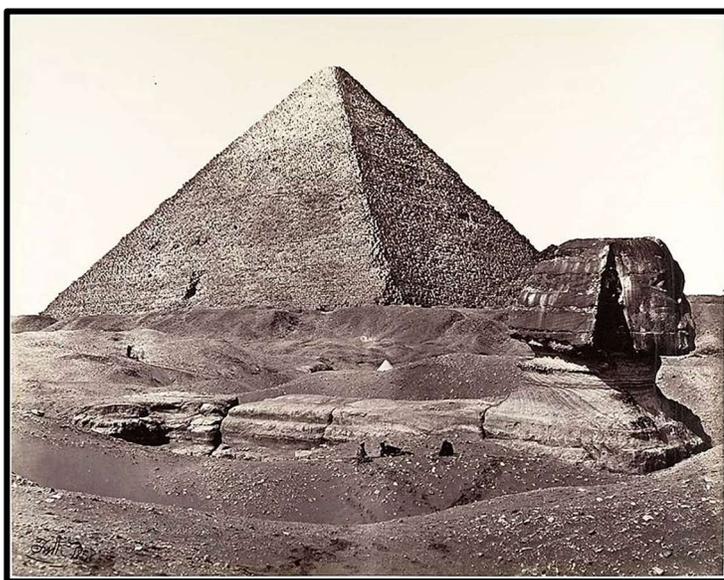
The theory became known as 'Tombs and Tombs Only' and that is the way it stands to this day with those who prefer to invoke the conspiracy of silence when it comes to discussing ancient aliens, lost civilizations, or any other such pseudoscientific nonsense. Giza is a necropolis, period! It is a home for the dead. Or so the story goes.



*Pyramids of Giza (CC0)*

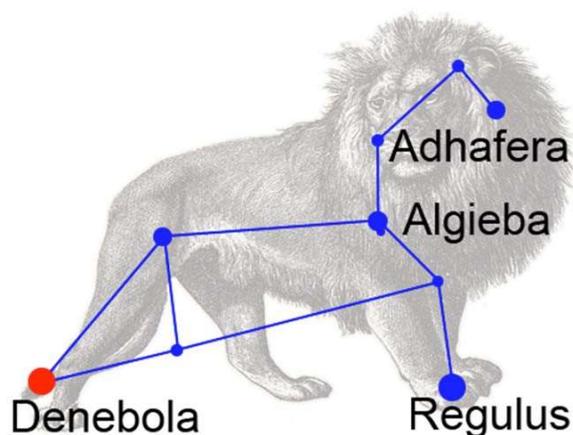
But if that is the case, how to explain the Sphinx? It does not seem to have much to do with burying somebody. There are no tombs inside. "Well," the traditionalists reply, "that's easy. The Sphinx bears the head of Pharaoh Khafre, who had it built as

*a monument to his glory.*" But that does not explain two problems related to it: Firstly, after careful inspection, years of arguing and hundreds, if not more, carefully worded and peer-reviewed papers, the consensus now seems to be that the head of the Sphinx is a modified addition to the original work. In other words, the head was originally that of a lion, just like the rest of the structure. Pharaoh Khafre, if he had anything at all to do with it, probably had it re-sculpted to look like him. This, of course, implies that the Sphinx does, indeed, bear his likeness, although it could just as easily be someone else. What this means is that the Sphinx was originally crafted before Khafre's time and is, therefore, older than the accepted dates of the pyramids. How much older?



*The Great Pyramid and The Great Sphinx (1858) Metropolitan Museum of Art (Public Domain)*

Secondly, the Sphinx has spent much of its time, thousands of years, buried in the drifting sands of the Giza Plateau. It is only when someone takes the time and spends the effort to dig it out that it is exposed to erosion and wear. But the body, the oldest original portion of the figure, shows unmistakable signs of water erosion. How could this be? It stands, or rather reclines, in a desert! It does not rain in the Sinai, at least not enough to cause the kind of visible wear evidenced here. As it turns out, the Sinai is a young desert. It was not always dry. About 11,000 to 15,000 years ago the Giza Plateau was a well-watered, palm-covered paradise. While it would have made no sense to build such a great edifice in a way that was guaranteed to cover it up with drifting sand, it would have made perfect sense to build it back when it was surrounded by lush forests and grass. But that makes the Sphinx at least 11,000 years old - way too old for traditional Egyptologists.



*Leo as constellation tail (CC BY-SA 1.0)*

### Leo The Lion

So the circle is completed, back to the original theme — astronomy. More to the point astrology. If one assumes that the experts are correct when they say the Sphinx was originally a lion in both head and body, can its position reveal anything about its age? The Lion on the Giza Plateau faces due east. Every spring equinox, it is positioned to watch the sunrise.

But behind that sunrise he sees the ‘house’, or compartment of stars, out of which the sun appears. One of the animals that make up the signs of the Zodiac is the heavenly counterpart to the earthly Sphinx — Leo the Lion.

When did the sun last rise out of the house of Leo? In the era that ran from 12,800 years ago to about 11,600 years ago. This was the epic geologists call The Younger Dryas Ice Age. When was the Giza plateau last favored with a rainy climate? Precisely at this time. It was also the epoch when Egyptologists place the *Zep Tepi*, the ‘First Time’, the age when the original ancient Gods of Egypt began the Egyptian civilization. Graham Hancock explains it concisely in his book, *Magicians of the Gods*: “*The essence of the argument is that there was an ancient globally-distributed doctrine — “as above, so below” — that set out quite deliberately to create monuments on the ground that copied the patterns of certain significant constellations in the sky. Moreover, since the position of all stars change slowly but continuously as a result of the precession, it is possible to use particular configurations of astronomically aligned monuments to deduce the dates they represent — i.e. the dates when the stars were last in the position depicted by the monuments on the ground ... The heart of the matter involves two constellations - the*

constellation Leo, rising due east above the sun at dawn on the spring equinox in the epoch of 10,500 BC, and the constellation of Orion, which the Ancient Egyptians visualized as the celestial figure of the god Osiris, the deceased god-king who ruled over the afterlife.”



Cygnus as depicted in Urania's Mirror, a set of constellation cards published in London c.1825. Surrounding it are Lacerta, Vulpecula and Lyra. (Public Domain)

## Cygnus The Swan

This theory is met with ridicule and scorn by traditional Egyptologists who just wish the whole thing would go away and hide beneath the covers of the conspiracy of silence. As a matter of fact, even non-traditionalists have trouble with it. Andrew Collins, for instance, whom Egyptologists often place in the same heretical camp as Graham Hancock, argues that the Giza Complex does not mimic Orion. It mimics Cygnus the Swan, the great Northern Cross, 'the backbone' of the Milky Way. In ancient times, Cygnus was known simply as the 'Bird' constellation. When one looks at Cygnus on a clear night, one can see behind it the luminescent band of stars which make up the plane of earth's galaxy, the Milky Way. Cygnus highlights this sight. His argument is that throughout the world, many religions fix the location of heaven, both the source of life and the destination of death, in the same segment of the northern sky covered by Cygnus. His question is, why? In Collin's words: *"In December 2005, an American scientific think tank called the Meinel Institute of Las Vegas, founded by former consultants to the NASA-linked JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory), came forward and announced that it now believed that cosmic rays from a galactic binary system producing relativistic jets was responsible for a rapid acceleration in animal and human evolution around 40,000 years ago. It was at this time that great changes occurred in human advancement, most obviously the appearance of anatomically modern human beings in Europe and Asia and the emergence of cave art."*

In other words, humankind took a giant leap of creativity forward some 40,000 years ago when cosmic rays out of Cygnus, in the north sky, bathed this planet with energy. This was precisely when modern humans began to produce symbolic (religious) art deep in the caves of western Europe. Could this step have been a ‘heavenly’ boost, a ‘divine’ intervention, remembered in myth and legend? It would certainly explain why heaven is seen as being in the north. Again, in Collin's words: *“It becomes clear that the memory of this cosmic influence, seen as divine, was behind the emergence of religion, art and intellect. This was abstractly recognized and preserved, eventually becoming the basis for the ancient cosmology behind the symbolism found even today among various world religions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism.*

Urfa museum Göbekli Tepe Temple D  
(Dosseman/ CC BY-SA 4.0)

After arriving at this theory, Collins set out to find earthly proof for his heavenly concept. In structures such as the then newly discovered Göbekli Tepe he found evidence that pointed to a Cygnus connection. The structure seemed to be oriented toward Deneb, the brightest star in the constellation of Cygnus, the celestial bird. The plot thickens when one discovers that 17,000 years ago, Deneb was in position to be the polar star, the fixed star that stands above the earth's north pole around which the rest of the heavens appear to rotate. His



full argument, which is quite technical, is put forth in his book, *Göbekli Tepe: Genesis of the Gods*, but to summarize — the twin pillars of Enclosure D at Göbekli Tepe feature a drilled sighting hole and seem to be oriented in such a way that a priest or shaman: *“...would have been able to look through the stone's sighting hole to see Deneb setting on the north-northwestern horizon, a quite magnificent sight that cannot have happened by chance alone. Clearly, this is powerful evidence that the enclosure really was directed toward this star during the epoch of its construction.”*

*Illustration of the swan of the constellation Cygnus, with text or scholia within the figure of the constellation in Latrin. Image taken from Aratea, with extracts from Hyginus's Astronomica.*  
(Public Domain)

Another one of the places he looked to confirm his theory was Giza. He was not entirely satisfied with the Orion belt-star theory. According to his calculations, the pyramids on the ground did not quite fit with the celestial measurements above. But in stars forming the wings of Cygnus, he claimed to have found an exact fit. And not only here in Giza. Eventually he: “...uncovered an astronomy that is about 17,000 years old, with standing stones, temples, and monuments across the globe oriented towards Cygnus’ stars. He also found that the use of deep caves by Paleolithic man led to the rise of religious thought and the belief in life’s stellar origins.” This, of course, caused a stir in the non-traditionalist camp.

One thing is clear, however. Lest one relegates these arguments and theories to the field of irrelevant interests, no longer important to modern society, remember that mankind’s very language preserves the memory of these concepts. If Cygnus the Swan, for instance, suggested to ancient ancestors that a heavenly bird brings one into earthly existence from out of the north, one needs to remember the myth told to children that they were born when a ‘stork’ deposited them in their homes. And when a person dies, just before making the final trip to the heavenly home, a metaphorical operatic ‘swan song’ is sung.

Out of such ideas come new insights and questions. Maybe, in the end, it does not matter who is right and who is wrong. Maybe the purpose of such battles is to break open the conspiracy of silence and challenge the institutional *status quo*, entrenched in doctrines that refuse to acknowledge the march of time and new information.

After all, the question is not so much what Orion and Cygnus represented to the ancient ancestors. The question is why they were so intrigued in the first place. What were they thinking? What answers were they seeking? What was in their hearts and minds when they gazed upward at the north sky? Were they searching for something new, or remembering something old that they had forgotten — a memory that shimmered in the recesses of their minds, recalling a civilization that once was and could be again?

*This article is adapted from Jim Willis’ book, **Ancient Gods: Lost Histories, Hidden Truths, and the Conspiracy of Silence**, published by Visible Ink Press, and is here used by permission.*

*Top Image: Orion and adjacent constellations.(Sanu N/ CC BY-SA 4.0)*

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