

MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Archaeoastronomy Module – AHAN7010
Week Description

Week 7: Case Studies – Classical and Medieval Worlds

Purpose of the week

The last four weeks focus on worldwide case studies. Each week your readings will focus on different regions and time-periods, as well as exemplify different “flavours” of archaeoastronomy. This week the focus is on the Classical and Medieval Worlds.

Class Description

The Classical world has been mostly studied with recourse to the classical texts, but with the opening up of Classical Archaeology, archaeoastronomical research soon followed suit. Much the same can also be said of the Medieval period, in both the Christian and Islamic sides of the Middle Sea.

This week’s readings focus on key archaeoastronomical studies covering these periods. One of the advantages of studying these periods is that there is already a wealth of historical and literary evidence that one can relate back to and use to backup any findings. Remember that this module doesn’t exist in isolation and material previously studied in other modules can and should be brought in.

Required Reading

The readings this week present a key piece on each topic. Belmonte and Shaltout’s paper is the culmination of several years of fieldwork in Egypt, whereas Boutsikas and Ruggles’ piece was a pilot study for an ongoing research project on the Greek temples. This is followed by Hannah and Magli’s study of the Pantheon’s relationship with the Sun. Finally, Hoare and Sweet and King’s papers study the orientation of medieval religious architecture on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Belmonte, Juan A. and Mosalam Shaltout, “Keeping Ma’at: An astronomical approach to the orientation of the temples in ancient Egypt,” *Advances in Space Research* 46(4), 2010, pp.532-9. Available online:
http://www.uranos.fr/PDF/ETUDES_19_D02_TEN.pdf

Boutsikas, Efrosyni and Clive Ruggles, “Temples, Stars, and Ritual Landscapes: The Potential for Archaeoastronomy in Ancient Greece,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 115(1), 2011, pp. 55-68. Available online:
http://www.academia.edu/432821/Temples_Stars_and_Ritual_Landscapes_The_Potential_for_Archaeoastronomy_in_Ancient_Greece

Hannah, Robert and Giulio Magli, "The role of the sun in the Pantheon's design and meaning," *Numen* 58, 2010, pp.486-513. Available online:
<http://arxiv.org/abs/0910.0128v2>

Hoare, Peter G. and Catherine Sweet, "The Orientations of Medieval Churches in England," *Journal of Historical Geography* 26(2), pp. 162-73. Available online:
<http://his.library.nenu.edu.cn/upload/soft/haoli/115/455.pdf>

King, David, "The Orientation of Medieval Islamic Religious Architecture and Cities," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 26, 1995, pp. 253-74. Available online:
<http://adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/1995JHA....26..253K>

Optional Reading

Boutsikas, Efrosyni, "Placing Greek Temples: An Archaeoastronomical Study of the Orientation of Ancient Greek Religious Structures," *Archaeoastronomy* 21, 2007-8, pp. 4-19. Available online:
http://www.academia.edu/362755/Placing_Greek_Temples_An_archaeoastronomical_study_of_the_orientation_of_ancient_Greek_religious_structures

Belmonte, J.A. and Mosalam Shaltout (eds.), *In Search of Cosmic Order: Selected Essays on Egyptian Archaeoastronomy*, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010.

Magli, Giulio, *Mysteries and Discoveries of Archaeoastronomy: From Giza to Easter Island*, New York: Springer, 2000, Chapters 16-19 (pp. 305-98).

Magli, Giulio, "The Cosmic Landscape in the Age of the Pyramids," *Journal of Cosmology* 9, 2010, pp. 2232-44.. Available online:
<http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy112.html>

Magli, Giulio, "On the orientation of Roman towns in Italy," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 27, 2008, pp. 63–71.

McCluskey, Stephen, (2006). "The medieval liturgical calendar, sacred space, and the orientation of churches." In Soltysiak, Arkadiusz (ed), *Time and Astronomy in Past Cultures*, Torun and Warsaw: Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, 2006, pp. 139-48.

Thought for the Week

What is the relationship between archaeoastronomical alignments and the cosmology of their builders?