

The background of the cover is a dark, starry night sky. A bright, glowing orange and red horizon line, resembling a sunset or sunrise, stretches across the middle of the image. Below the horizon, the dark, silhouetted peaks of mountains are visible. Numerous stars of varying brightness are scattered across the sky, with a prominent, bright star in the upper right corner.

Dynamic Astronomy

5th Edition

Robert T. Dixon

5th Edition

Dynamic

Astronomy

Robert T. Dixon

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Riverside Community College



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Preface

Like the first four editions of this text, which have been used in over two hundred colleges and universities in the United States and elsewhere, the fifth edition is designed to help the liberal arts student and the general reader to gain an understanding of how the astronomer studies his or her subject and to appreciate the grandeur of the universe in which we live. No prior background in science is presumed. Concepts are developed in the light of common experiences, and what little mathematics is needed is developed as the need arises. Relationships that are usually presented only as mathematical expressions are also stated verbally in order to dispel any anxiety on the part of the reader as to the mysteries of mathematics.

The real beauty of astronomy lies not only in the facts that surround the subject but also in the development of an understanding of relationships within the universe. The background of thought that has brought us to our present view of the cosmos is presented here in conjunction with the methods whereby we make pertinent observations.

This revision represents not only an updating of information relative to a fast-moving science, but also a move in the direction of a more comprehensive treatment of astronomy. Significant portions of the text have been rewritten to reflect the current state of the art.

While the text is designed primarily for a one-semester course, it lends itself as well to a natural division for the two-quarter or two-semester program. Chapters 1 through 7 emphasize the methods of astronomy and deal with the solar system in particular, while the remaining chapters treat the stars and galaxies.

To a large extent, the astronomy student's understanding is dependent upon his or her ability to visualize the motion of whatever is being discussed in terms of both space and time. To assist the student in visualizing certain rather intricate motions of objects in the universe, a unique kind of illustration is presented in the margins of this text. By flipping the successive pages, the illustrations appear to move.

For their constructive criticism and suggestions, I would like to thank the following reviewers: Dr. Karl Krienke, Seattle Pacific University, Dr. David J. Frantz, McNeese State University, Dr. Alexander K. Dickson, Seminole Community College, Dr. D. O. Van Ostenburg, DePaul University, and Ted Coskey, South Seattle Community College. I would also like to thank the staff of Prentice-Hall, especially Holly Hodder, editor, Maria McColligan, and Debra Wechsler, production editors, and Jayne Conte, designer, for all their assistance and encouragement in the making of this book.

□ KEY TO FLIP PAGES

The eight flip-page sequences that occupy the upper margins of the pages of this text are a unique instructional tool dynamically illustrating the basic motions of astronomy. To use the flip pages on the right-hand margins, grasp the desired section with the right hand, bending these pages as illustrated here and allowing the pages to flip, one by one, from beneath your thumb. Left-hand flip pages may be handled in a similar fashion, using the left hand. Remember, flip pages starting on an odd-numbered page (right-hand) are flipped toward higher page numbers; those starting on an even-numbered page (left-hand) are flipped toward lower page numbers. (See the illustrations here in the right margin, which make this clear.)

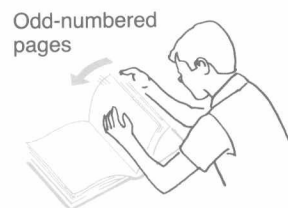
A brief introduction to each flip sequence follows, together with an indication of its location in the text.

The Ptolemaic system (Right-hand flip pages beginning on page 9) Ptolemy envisioned the earth to be the center of the universe. In order to explain the apparent retrograde (westward) motion of the planets among the stars, he utilized the concept of the epicycle. Each planet was thought to revolve on its epicycle as the epicycle revolved on its primary orbit, called the deferent. By assigning the proper speed to each of these motions, he was able to create a retrograde motion. This motion also explains the fact that at certain times a given planet is closer to the earth. Since it had been observed that Mercury and Venus always remained close to the sun, the centers of their epicycles must always align with the earth and the sun. (This sequence of flip pages will be useful in your study of Chapter 1.)

Retrograde motion of Jupiter (Left-hand flip pages beginning on page 98) This sequence shows Jupiter moving first in a direct (eastward) motion among the stars, then apparently stopping and moving in a retrograde (westward) motion among the stars. Later the planet appears to stop again and resume its direct motion. By careful observation over an extended period of time, this apparent retrograde motion of Jupiter or of any other planet may be observed in the real sky. (This sequence will be helpful in your study of Chapters 1, 5, and 6.)

The Copernican system (Right-hand flip pages beginning on page 99) In this sequence, the planets will be seen to move at their proper speeds in relation to the earth's motion. A period of approximately one year is depicted. The period of revolution of Mercury is 88 days, hence it can make four complete revolutions in one year. Within the period of 116 days, it returns to inferior conjunction with the earth. This is called its synodic period. Venus, on the other hand, makes a complete revolution in 225 days but does not return to inferior conjunction in the period shown. This planet requires 584 days for one synodic revolution. Jupiter needs approximately 12 years for one revolution, hence it is seen to move only about 30° during the period shown. Other configurations such as maximum elongation, superior conjunction, conjunction, quadrature, and opposition may be seen on certain pages individually. See if you can find all possible configurations. (This sequence will be helpful in your study of Chapters 1, 5, and 6.)

A binary system (Left-hand flip pages beginning on page 166) This sequence demonstrates the fact that the earth and the moon form a binary (two-body) system and that it is the barycenter of the system which follows a smooth elliptical orbit. The barycenter of the system is located approximately 3000 miles from the center of the earth. As the moon revolves about this barycenter, the earth also deviates up to



Right-hand flip pages



Left-hand flip pages

3000 miles on either side of the system's orbit. In a very similar way, two binary stars, stars which lie in each other's gravitational field, orbit around a barycenter. The position of the barycenter is determined by the way in which the material (mass) is distributed in the two stars. (This sequence of flip pages should be helpful in your study of Chapters 4 and 10.)

A comet in motion (Right-hand flip pages beginning on page 219) This sequence depicts Halley's Comet, moving in its highly elongated elliptical orbit about the sun. This comet returns to the region of the sun every 76 years, its next expected return being in 2062. Halley's Comet travels in a retrograde direction that carries it beyond the orbit of Neptune. When a comet is at such a great distance from the sun, it possesses no coma (head) nor tail but exists only as a swarm of frozen gas bodies. As the comet approaches the sun, however, the warmth of the sun vaporizes a portion of the gas, thus producing the coma and tail. The outflow of particles from the sun (the solar wind) continually pushes the gases of the tail in a direction away from the sun. The speed with which the comet travels increases as it approaches the sun, hence only a relatively short time is spent in the vicinity of the sun. (This section of flip pages will be helpful in your study of Chapter 7.)

The proper motion of stars (Left-hand flip pages beginning on page 268) Over a 100,000 year-period, the familiar constellation of the Big Dipper will change in appearance until it no longer resembles a dipper. This change results from the fact that stars are in constant motion. The stars that make up this constellation are moving in different directions. The apparent change in the position of a star in 1 year is very small, perhaps in the order of 1 second of arc per year. This is called the proper motion of the star. (This sequence of flip pages will be helpful in your study of Chapter 9.)

Motion of globular clusters (Right-hand flip pages beginning on page 331) The upper view in this series shows the motion of globular clusters that form the halo of the Milky Way galaxy. Each globular moves along an elliptical path which causes it to periodically "dip" into the nucleus of the Galaxy; however, it spends a relatively short time there. (In this sequence, it is best to choose a particular globular and follow its motion, say, the one marked by the double circle.) *Rotation of the Milky Way galaxy* The lower half of the pages shows the revolution of the Galaxy. The sun participates in this revolution and makes a circuit around the center of the Galaxy in 200 million years. From the sun's position, we see one spiral arm beyond and two arms toward the center of the Galaxy. (This sequence of flip pages will be helpful in your study of Chapter 15.)

An eclipsing binary system (Left-hand flip pages beginning on page 396) The top view in this section shows the motion of a binary system, seen from above. The brighter star (light in color) is about five times as massive as its cooler (darker) component.

The middle view shows the same system, seen from our position on earth. One star is seen periodically to eclipse the other, for the earth lies very nearly in plane of their orbit.

The lower view shows the light curve which is generated as these stars move in their orbit. When the cooler star almost completely eclipses the hot star, the lowest light output is apparent. When the hotter (brighter) star is in front, only a slight dip occurs. While you are seeing the motion of these stars and the light curve generated simultaneously, the astronomer usually observes only the light curve and must infer the actual motion from that curve. (This sequence will be helpful in your study of Chapter 10.)

□ CHAPTER-OPENING ILLUSTRATIONS

Chapter 1 Stonehenge, in England. (Antony Miles)

Chapter 2 The X-ray Sky. (D. McCammon, D.N. Burrows, W. Saunders, and W. Krauschaar)

Chapter 3 The planet earth as seen from Apollo 11. (NASA)

Chapter 4 Apollo 11 astronaut on the moon. (NASA)

Chapter 5 Radar map of Venus. (NASA)

Chapter 6 Saturn (color enhanced). (NASA)

Chapter 7 Comet West. (Cliff Holmes)

Chapter 8 Sun in X-rays. (NASA/American Science and Engineering, Inc.)

Chapter 9 Star field with Lagoon and Trifid nebulae. (Malcolm Ridley)

Chapter 10 Open cluster—Pleiades. (Palomar Observatory)

Chapter 11 Small Magellanic Cloud. (National Optical Astronomy Observatories)

Chapter 12 Orion nebula. (David Malin)

Chapter 13 Monoceros & NGC 2264. (David Malin)

Chapter 14 Eta Carinae nebula. (Cerro Tololo Observatory)

Chapter 15 Milky Way galaxy. (David Malin)

Chapter 16 Spiral galaxy—M 83 in Hydra. (National Optical Astronomy Observatories)

Chapter 17 Gravitational lensing. (National Radio Astronomical Observatory)

Chapter 18 Pioneer plaque. (NASA)

□ NOTE TO THE READER

One of the most productive things you can do as you begin a detailed study of modern astronomy is to relate everything you learn to *your* own “universe.” How big is your universe—does it reach beyond your own home, your school, and the city in which you live? Your universe can begin to expand by becoming more aware of things around you. Begin by noticing where the sun appears to rise and set, as viewed from your home. Does the sunrise and sunset occur at the same time everyday? Do the sunrise and sunset points change from week to week? Which way do the sun and moon, the planets and stars seem to move during one day or night? Which way does the moon move in relation to the stars night after night? Can you find the north star—the star that seems always to be in the same location? How do stars appear to move in the region of the sky near the north star? Can you identify any particular constellations (arrangements) of stars using the star maps included in Appendix 13? Can you find a fuzzy spot in the sky (a nebula or star cluster)?

As you study astronomy, you have an opportunity to apply almost everything you learn to the real world about you and in the process you will enlarge your own universe!

R.T. Dixon



Brief Contents

- 1 History of Astronomy 1
- 2 Methods of Astronomy 42
- 3 The Earth 94
- 4 The Moon and Eclipses 127
- 5 The Terrestrial Planets 156
- 6 The Jovian Planets and Pluto 194
- 7 Asteroids, Comets, and Meteors 228
- 8 The Sun 256
- 9 Stars in General 285
- 10 Multiple Star Systems 311
- 11 Variable Stars 325
- 12 The Interstellar Medium 337
- 13 The Birth and Lifetime of Stars 352
- 14 Death of Stars 373
- 15 The Milky Way 388
- 16 The Realm of Galaxies 402
- 17 Cosmology 426
- 18 Extraterrestrial (ET) Life 439



Contents

Preface

1 History of Astronomy 1

Babylonian “Astronomy” 4 Egypt, Land of the Nile 7 A Megalithic Legacy 8
Stonehenge 10 Early Concepts of the Universe 12
Planets in Motion 15 How Good Was Ptolemy’s Model? 17
Arabic Influence 17 Nicolaus Copernicus, Founder of Modern Astronomy 18
Tycho Brahe, the Diligent Observer 21
Johannes Kepler, the Inventive Mathematician 23
Galileo Galilei, Father of Experimental Science 27
Isaac Newton, the Young Genius 31
The Force of Gravity Between Two Objects 33 Our Place in the Universe 37
Summary 40 Questions 40 Suggested Reading 41

2 Methods of Astronomy 42

Properties of Light 43 The Wave Nature of Light 47 Polarization of Light 49
Does Light Travel in a Straight Line? 50 Reflection of Light 50
Refraction of Light 51 Dispersion by Refraction 53 Diffraction of Light 53
Interference of Light 54 The Dual Nature of Light 56 Telescope Design 58
Limitations in Refractors 59 The Reflecting Telescope 61
Grinding a Parabolic Mirror 62 Multiple-Mirror Telescopes 65
The Schmidt Camera 66 Schmidt Cassegrain Telescope 67
Telescope Performance 68 Atmospheric Turbulence: A Resolution Spoiler 70
Seeing 70 Magnification (Power) 71 The Binocular 72 Telephoto Lens 73
The Spectrograph 73 The Atom Signs Its Name 75 Doppler Shift 77
A Very Important Generalization 79 Radio Astronomy 80
Radio Interferometry 82 Radar Astronomy 85 Infrared Astronomy 85
Ultraviolet Astronomy 88 Hubble Space Telescope 88 X-ray Astronomy 90
Gamma Ray Astronomy 90 Summary 92 Questions 92
Suggested Reading 93

3 The Earth 94

Volume, Mass, and Density 96 Volume of the Earth 97 Mass of the Earth 97
Density of the Earth 99 Crust of the Earth 101 Age of the Earth 103
Atmosphere of the Earth 104 Why Is the Sky Blue? 106
The Earth's Magnetic Field 107
The Auroras (Northern and Southern Lights) 109 Rotation of the Earth 110
Revolution of the Earth 112 The Seasons 113 The Calendar 114
Time: How Long Is a Day? 115 Latitude and Longitude 117
Right Ascension and Declination 120 Apparent Motions of the Sky 121
Altitude-Azimuth System 122 Precession of the Earth 122
Ice Ages of the Earth 124 Other Motions of the Earth 124 Summary 124
Questions 125 Suggested Reading 126

4 The Moon and Eclipses 127

Bouncing a Laser Beam Off the Moon 129 Surface Features 131
Moon Rocks 137 History of the Moon 137 Magnetic Field 140
Origin of the Moon 141 Revolution of the Moon 141
Tides Produced by the Moon 144
Eclipses 147 Solar Eclipse 148
Lunar Eclipse 152 Eclipse Seasons 152 Summary 154 Questions 154
Suggested Reading 155

5 The Terrestrial Planets 156

The Planets in General 157 Rotation of the Planets 158
Spacing of the Planets 158 Earth-like vs. Jupiter-like Planets 160
Configurations of the Inferior Planets 161
Configurations of the Superior Planets 162 Mercury 163 Venus 167
Earth 176 Mars 177 Summary 192 Questions 192
Suggested Reading 193

6 The Jovian Planets and Pluto 194

Jupiter 195 Saturn 204 Uranus 212 Neptune 218 Pluto 220
Planet X 223 Origin and Evolution of the Planets 224 Summary 226
Questions 226 Suggested Reading 227

7 Asteroids, Comets, and Meteors 228

Origin of Asteroids 233 Comets 233 Physical Nature of Comets 235
Space Age Observations of Halley's Comet 238 Origin of Comets 239
Comet Spin and Perturbations 239
How Are Comets Discovered and Recorded? 241 Meteors 242
Observing Meteors 243 Meteor Showers 244
Physical Properties of Meteorites 246 Orbit and Origin of Meteorites 248
Meteorite Craters 249 The Siberian Event 250
A Comet May Have Ended the Time of Dinosaurs 251 Tektites 251
Micrometeorites 254 Summary 254 Questions 254 Suggested Reading 255

8 The Sun 256

Physical Characteristics of the Sun 258
The Sun: A Hydrogen Fusion Reactor 260 Neutrinos from the Sun 261
Layers of the Sun 263 The Solar Spectrum 268 Spectroheliograms 271
Magnetic Fields of the Sun 273 Sunspots 274
Maunder Minimum 276 The Cycle of Sunspots 276 Rotation of the Sun 277
Source of the Sun's Magnetism 277 Plages 279 Spicules 279
Prominences 280 The Solar Flare 281 Our Nearest Star 282
Summary 283 Questions 283 Suggested Reading 284

9 Stars in General 285

Motion of Stars 289 Proper Motion 289 Space Velocity 290
Peculiar Velocity 291 Distance to Moving Clusters 291
Brightness of Stars 293 The Scale of Brightness 294
Absolute Magnitude 296 Temperature of Stars 297
Hertzsprung-Russell Diagram 299 Spectroscopic Parallax 303
Size of Stars 304 The Great Variety of Stars 306 The Infrared Sky 307
X-ray Astronomy 308 Summary 308 Questions 309
Suggested Reading 309

10 Multiple Star Systems 311

Optical and Visual Binaries 312 Spectroscopic Binaries 312
Astrometric Binaries 314 Eclipsing Binaries 314 Close (Contact) Binaries 315
Determination of the Mass of Binary Systems 316
Mass-Luminosity Relationship 317 Origin of Binaries 318
Clusters 318 Origin of Clusters 319 Cluster Types 320 X-ray Bursters 322
Associations 323 Summary 323 Questions 324
Suggested Reading 324

11 Variable Stars 325

Cepheid Variables 326 Cepheids: Indicators of Distance 328
RR Lyrae Stars 330 Irregular Variables 331 T Tauri Variables 332
Recurrent Novae 332 Supernovae - Type I 334 R Coronae Borealis Stars 334
Flare Stars 335 Summary 335 Questions 335 Suggested Reading 336

12 The Interstellar Medium 337

Interstellar Gases 338 21-cm Radio Emission 339
Absorption by Gas Clouds 340 Interstellar Dust 341
Interstellar Molecules 345 Giant Molecular Clouds 347
Cosmic Rays (Particles) 348 Summary 350 Questions 350
Suggested Reading 350

13 The Birth and Lifetime of Stars 352

Gas Laws 353 Initial Energy Source 354 Model Building 354
Formation of a Star 355 A Star is Born 359
Main-Sequence Stage 362 The Red Giant 364
The Supernovae (Type II) 368 Supernovae 1987a 369
Summary 371 Questions 372 Suggested Reading 372

14 The Death of Stars 373

The White Dwarf 374 Stellar Winds 375 The Neutron Star 376
Pulsars 378 The Black Hole 383 Rotating Black Holes 385
Exploding Black Holes 385 Summary 387 Questions 387
Suggested Reading 387

15 The Milky Way 388

Structure of the Milky Way Galaxy 390
Where Are We in the Milky Way System? 391
Rotation of the Milky Way Galaxy 395
21-cm Radio Observations Show Spiral Structure 395
Mass of the Galaxy 397 Distribution of Stars in the Milky Way Galaxy 398
The Galactic Nucleus 399 Summary 400 Questions 400
Suggested Reading 401

16 The Realm of Galaxies 402

Classification of Galaxies 403 Hubble's Classification Scheme 407
The Local Group 408 Clustering of Galaxies 408
Intergalactic Media 411 Measuring the Distance to Galaxies 411
Hubble's Red-Shift Law 413 Radio Galaxies 414
Seyfert Galaxies 416 Quasars 417 The Double Quasars 422
BL Lacertae Objects 422 A Modern Classification of Galaxies 424
Summary 424 Questions 424 Suggested Reading 425

17 Cosmology 426

Cosmic Background Radiation 428 Inflationary Model 429
The Future of the Universe 430 Einstein's Concept of Spacetime 433
Tests for Cosmological Models 434 Mass-Energy Density of the Universe 436
Deuterium Abundance 437 Particle Physics and Cosmology 437
Summary 437 Questions 438 Suggested Reading 438

18 Extraterrestrial (ET) Life 439

Is It Worth the Effort? What Are the Chances that ETI Exists? 441
What Language Would We Use? 445 What Shall We Say to ETIs? 445
How Shall It Be Done? 446 Summary 447 Questions 447
Suggested Reading 447

Glossary 448

Appendixes

Temperature Conversion Charts 459
International System of Units (SI) with English Equivalents 460
Powers-of-ten Notations 460 Constants with Useful Approximations 460
Orbital Data of the Planets 461 Physical and Rotational Data for the Planets 461
Satellites of Planets 462 The Twenty Brightest Stars 463
The Messier Catalogue of Nebulae and Star Clusters 464
The Greek Alphabet 466
The Constellations 466 The Periodic Table 468 Sky Maps 470

Index 475

History of Astronomy



■ Babylonian "Astronomy"
 Egypt, Land of the Nile
 A Megalithic Legacy
 Stonehenge
 Early Concepts of the Universe
 Planets in Motion
 How Good Was Ptolemy's Model?
 Arabic Influence

■ Nicolaus Copernicus, Founder of
 Modern Astronomy
 Tycho Brahe, the Diligent Observer
 Johannes Kepler, the Inventive
 Mathematician
 Galileo Galilei, Father of
 Experimental Science
 Isaac Newton, the Young Genius
 The Force of Gravity between Two
 Objects
 Our Place in the Universe

T

he history of astronomy is characterized by humans' ever-expanding concept of the cosmos. Through their observations of celestial objects, humans have been able to relate the rhythms of their lives to those of the visible universe. To understand the development of this harmonious relationship, place yourself backward in time about 6000 years and try to imagine what was taking place then. The early humans were nomadic—ever searching for a new supply of food and shelter from the weather and unfriendly animals. The very survival of these early humans demanded that they recognize the cycles of nature: day and night, the monthly phasing of the moon (see Figure 1.1), and the seasonal changes which influenced hunting. These cycles became yet more important when humans turned from nomadic patterns to become farmers—domesticating animals and planting crops. Crops had to be planted in the spring for harvest in the fall.

nomad
list

crisis

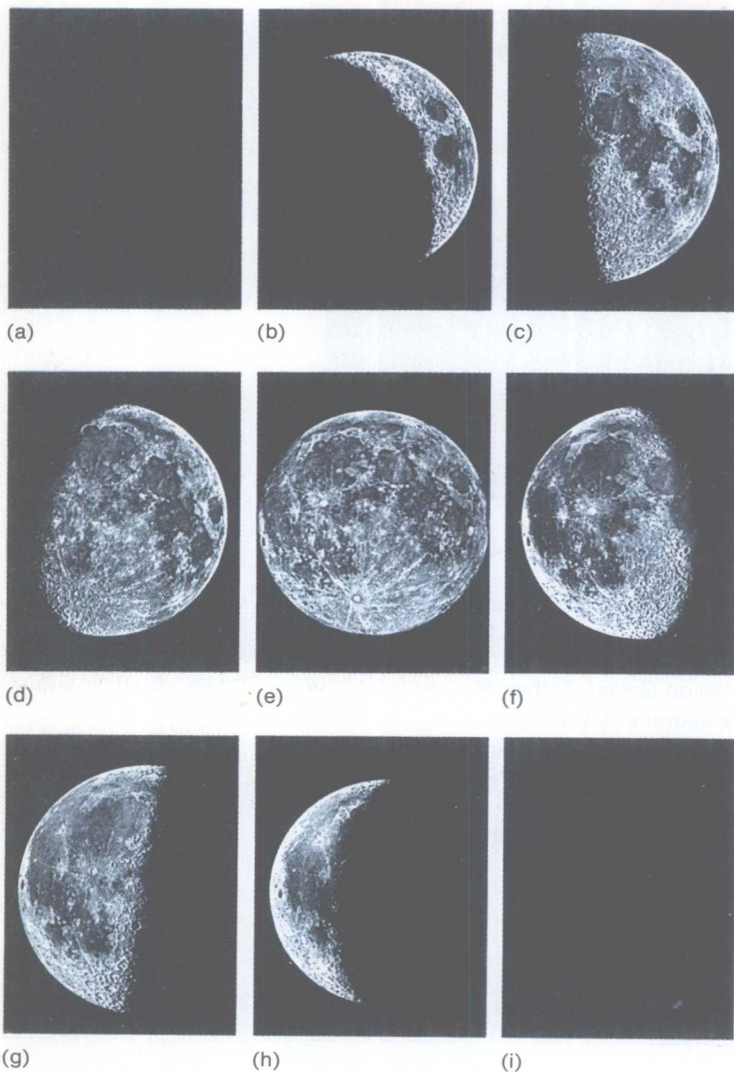


FIGURE 1.1
The phases of the moon: (a) "new moon"; (b) waxing crescent, 4 days old; (c) first quarter, 7 days old; (d) waxing gibbous, 10 days old; (e) full moon; (f) waning gibbous; (g) last quarter; (h) waning crescent; (i) "new moon" again. (Lick Observatory)

The most natural locations for agriculture were along the banks of river valleys, where both fertile soil and water for irrigation were found. As food products were traded with neighboring people, at least four early civilizations arose: China, along the Hwang Ho river; India, along the Indus river; Babylonia and Sumeria, along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers; and Egypt, along the Nile. We have numerous forms of evidence dating from these early cultural beginnings that early humans watched the skies and charted the motion of the sun, moon, and planets among the stars. It is likely that the motion of these objects prompted early people to attach godlike qualities to the celestial bodies, to worship them, and therefore to record their rhythmic motions.

The people of China produced one of the more accurate determinations of the apparent motion of the sun through the constellations, thus establishing the length of the year. In fact, many of their circular objects were divided into 365.25 parts, which corresponds to our present understanding of the number of days contained in a year. What kind of experiment could they have performed in order to determine the number of days in a year so accurately? Visualize yourself standing under the imaginary dome of the sky, facing south. Let an imaginary curved line run on that dome directly north and south over your head. This line is called your *local meridian*. The point directly over your head is called your *zenith*. Choose the time of year when the sun passes closest to your zenith and place a metal rod in a permanent foundation so that it points directly toward the sun as it crosses your meridian. Because the rod is pointed directly toward the sun, it will have no shadow (see Figure 1.2). Note that if the sun is east or west of the meridian, the rod would cast a shadow, and the time would not be noon. You can then easily tell when a full day has passed, because at that moment the rod will cast no shadow again. As the days go by, however, it will become evident that the sun is crossing your meridian farther from your zenith and as a consequence the rod casts a shadow even at noon. But count the number of days until the sun again passes closest to your zenith and the rod casts no shadow at noon and you will have determined the length of a year—approximately 365 days. After several years of counting, your record might look like this:

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| First year | 365 days |
| Second year | 365 days |
| Third year | 366 days |

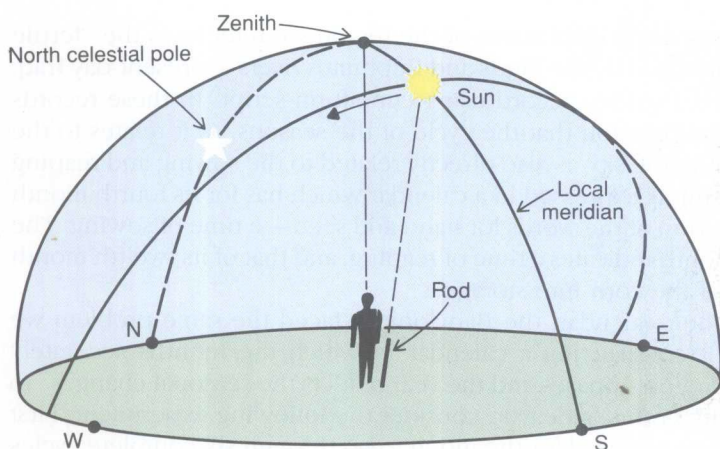


FIGURE 1.2

A rod is placed in the ground so as to cast no shadow when the sun appears highest in the sky.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Fourth year | 365 days |
| Fifth year | 365 days |
| Sixth year | 365 days |
| Seventh year | 366 days |
| Eighth year | 365 days |
| Average | $2922 \text{ divided by } 8 = 365.25 \text{ days per year}$ |

By averaging the counts of eight consecutive years, we see that a year contains 365.25 days. Even this is not exact and must be corrected periodically, but we will consider this further adjustment later.

As with so many early civilizations, Chinese observers were motivated to follow the motions of the sun, moon, and planets in order to predict human and governmental affairs. Although there is no scientific basis for such a belief, a huge body of observations grew out of such motivations. After many years spent observing the sun and moon, the Chinese were able to predict eclipses—times when the earth, sun, and moon would align so perfectly that the shadow of one object would fall on the other. Because they did not fully understand the cause of eclipses, early observers were superstitious and to a degree fearful of them. A story relates that two Chinese observers named Hi and Ho became lax in their duties and failed to predict a given eclipse which was unexpectedly viewed by the citizens of their province. Because an unheralded eclipse was thought to be a bad omen, the two were beheaded.

Other early civilizations were also interested in the sun. The great temple at Peking is oriented to point toward the rising of the midwinter sun (at the time of the winter solstice). Sun alignments are quite common among the temples and monuments of many cultures. Even today, St. Peter's in Rome is oriented toward the rising sun at the time of the equinox (approximately March 21 and September 21). At these times sunlight floods the entire length of the basilica and illuminates the high altar. At the setting of the sun, a similar phenomenon illuminates the window of the Holy Ghost, producing a spectacular, almost mystical appearance.

Early Indian culture is recorded in a work called the Vedas. Included are hymns to the sun which are at least 3500 years old—hymns which recognize human dependence upon the sun for life and light.

■ BABYLONIAN “ASTRONOMY”

The Sumerians were very early inhabitants of the region we refer to as the “fertile crescent,” a region dominated by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers—present-day Iraq. These people produced a written record using cuneiform script. In these records one finds a very early recognition that the cycle of the seasons, as it relates to the sun's apparent position in the sky, is also directly related to the sowing and reaping of crops. This relationship is expressed in a calendar which has for its fourth month a name that is a contraction of the words for hand and seed—a time of sowing. The name of its eleventh month indicates a time of reaping, and that of its twelfth month indicates a gathering of the corn into storage.

In constructing their calendar, the Babylonians faced the same problem we still face today: that of constructing a calendar in which the months accurately reflect the cycle of the moon's phases and the year reflects the seasonal changes. To understand the difficulty of this endeavor, consider the following experiment. First count the number of days required for the moon to go through six complete cycles