2.2: Prehistoric Astronomy

Astronomy is the earliest branch of classical mechanics. Astronomical observatories date back to around 4900BC when wooden solar observatories, called henges, were built in Europe. Stonehenge in England is a well-known example which was built ~ 3000 BC.

The mesopotamian people, who lived in the land between the Tigress and Euphrates rivers, developed cuneiform writing and recorded accurate numerical data around 3500 – 3000 BC. They recognized that the motion of the planets was periodic as reported in Babylonian tablets. After 2700 BC the Egyptians built pyramids that are aligned to the pole star and they made significant advances in astronomy, mathematics and medicine.