

**THE OLDEST STONE BUILDING IN THE WORLD?  
RECENT SEISMIC AND HYDROLOGIC STUDIES REVEAL DRAMATIC NEW  
INFORMATION ABOUT THE OSIREION, ABYDOS, EGYPT**

Presented by James Westerman

Ever since its discovery and subsequent clearing from 1902 to 1926 many aspects of the Osireion have puzzled Egyptologists and others who study ancient Egyptian constructions. The Osireion is a very massive building presently resting in water and prior to this season's work there was no clear understanding of the depth of its foundation or the flowing of the water within it .

In May, 2007 a team from Pennsylvania State University and Sohag University conducted topographic, seismic and hydrologic studies as well as physical probes to determine the depth of the Osireion, the construction of its central island and the flow characteristics of the water in the Osireion.

Based on the topographic survey it was found that the water level in the Osireion was approximately one meter higher than the level in the Roman well in the second court of the Seti Temple. This indicates that the water flow in the area is from west (out of the Sahara) to east (towards the Nile). The ultimate source of this water has not been determined.

Using seismic equipment it was determined that the depth of the island in the center of the Osireion is approximately 15 meters. The island was also determined to not be solid masonry but rather to contain voids or other irregularities. What the significance of these voids is uncertain.

Hydrologic studies show that the water in the Osireion is very drinkable and does not have any predominant taste. Preliminary results show that the water is actively flowing beneath the Seti Temple. It appears to be coming out of the ground from a spring at the foundation level of the Osireion.

Because the ultimate depth of the Osireion is approximately 28.5 meters below present grade, the question of how and when the building was constructed is very puzzling. A case can be made that it was built when the level of the Nile was much lower. When the Nile level was low enough to divert the water down to the foundation level of the Osireion was over 5000 years ago. It is for this reason that it is conjectured that the foundation level of the Osireion may be the oldest known stone structure in the world.