

at Dendera, 591 years before Christ, the second fixes it at 1290.(1) M. Latreille assumed the epoch of this zodiac at 670 years before Christ; that of the planisphere at 550; that of the zodiac of the great temple of Esne at 2550; and that of the smaller at 1760.

But there was a vital difficulty in all these dates, which set out on the twofold supposition that the division marks the solstice, and that the position of the solstice marks the epoch of the monument. The unavoidable result is, that the zodiac of Esna must be at least 2000, and perhaps 3000(2) years more ancient than that of Dendera, a consequence which evidently destroys the supposition; for no man, with the slightest knowledge of the history of the arts, can believe that two edifices so strikingly similar in their architecture have been built at periods so widely remote from each other.

The feeling of this impossibility; united with the belief that this division of the zodiacs marks a date, give rise to the conjecture, that it was intended to mark the period of the sacred years of the Egyptians, when the monument was constructed. These years only lasting three hundred and sixty-five days, if the sun, at the commencement of one, was at the commencement of a constellation, he would be six hours backward at the same time in the commencement of the following year, and after one hundred and twenty-one years, he would have

(1) Rhode's Essay on the Age of the Zodiac, and Origin of Constellations, in German, 1809, p. 78.

(2) According to the tables given above, the solstice remained 3474, or at least 3307 years in the constellation Virgo, which occupies the greatest space in the zodiac; and 2617 in that of Leo.