

Symbolism of Umlabalaba Board with respect to ancient Egyptian (Kemet) Cosmology by Edward L. Powe.

1. The Board represents the view from the sky of a step pyramid and the hill from which Maat (the earth) was developed. The largest square can be said to represent spirit, the smallest square body, and the middle square imind.

He first appeared as a dry hill
Composed of forces 8,
Known as Gods of the beginning,
Their names below I'll state.

2. The eight lines connecting the three squares (representing body, mind, and spirit) are:: Heh, Hehet, Nun, Nenet, Tenem, Tenemet, and Kek, Keket.

The paired gods and goddesses
That were said to be:
The mighty Heh and Hehet
Owners of eternity.

Owners of primeval waters
Were the gods Nun and Nunet;
The owners of the twilight were
Tenem and Tenemet;

The owners of the darkness, were
The gods Kek and Keket
These **eight** gods **dwelt** in that **great** hill,
Which dry land did beget.

3. The three spots forming the capture line in umlalalaba represent the forces Ptah used to fashion his creations (Heka, Sia, and Hu).

To fashion his creations, Ptah
Relied on forces three:
Heka was the first he used
"Magic Creativity".

The second force was Sia,
"Insight to reach a goal"
Without this force there'd be no way
To form a living soul.

The third force that he utilized,
Before young nature stirred,
Was the Holy might of Hu,
The sacred spoken word.

4. Three also represents the trio: Ptah (the sun), Shu (the atmosphere), and Tefnut (the moisture goddess)

He spat upon the ground and thus
Created his son Shu
A worthy force of air and light
And a preserver too.

He then retched and vomited
Tefnut his lovely daughter
She was the force of moisture and
More acidic than water.

He cast a spell and produced Maat
And though he had no wife,
Tefnut established social order,
And Shu the great values of life.

The land that they created
Had great stability
For it was based on law and order
And lived in it these three.

5. The four lines (horizontal and diagonal that delineate maat (the earth) are the 4 children of Geb and Nut. These are also symbolized by the four sides of each of the three steps of the pyramid.

To Isis and Osiris, Geb
And Nut in turn gave birth
As well as Seth and Nephtys
To rule on Maat, the earth

Osiris, Ra's great grandson
Became the first Pharaoh
While Ra would rule the sky above
Pharaoh would rule below.

The Creators said to Pharoah
"Rule Maat in our place!"
For you are God incarnate
Master of the Human Race.

6. The 24 tokens and the number of spots on the board (12 black and 12 white) represent the 12 hours of the day and the 12 hours of the night. This is the reason why black moves first as night is said to precede the day. 12 is also the number of months in the year.
7. The missing conical top is symbolized by the vacant inner square from which fric-frac (a simplified form of umlabalaba) is derived. That is, umlabalaba can be viewed as an expanded form of fric-frac.