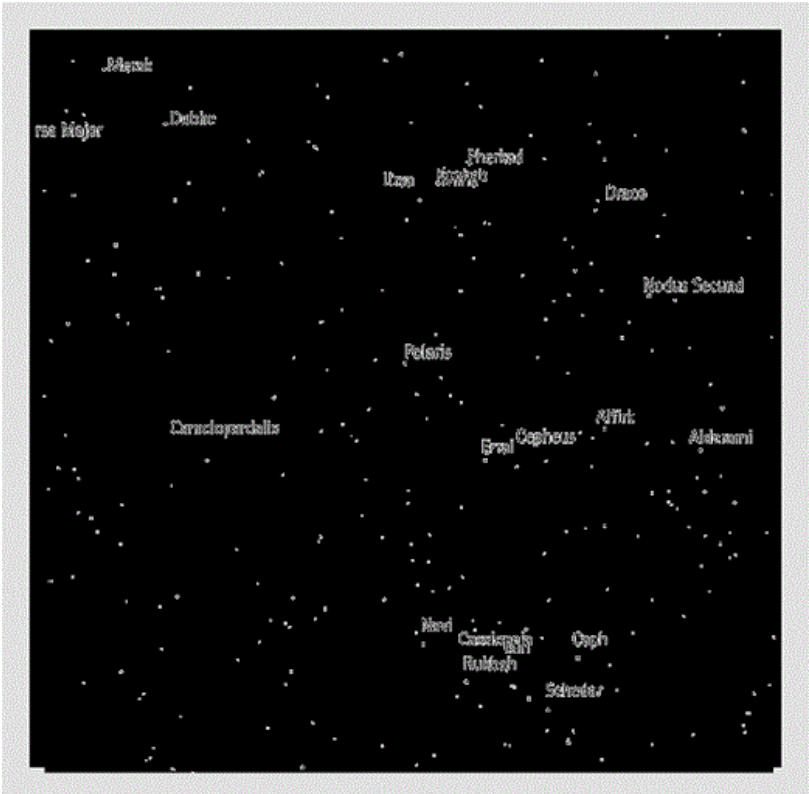


Figure 15.3.



The North Celestial Pole with both constellation names and the names of bright stars.

Similarly in the Egyptian story of Osiris and Isis, the Nile River is represented by the Milky Way. Osiris is the constellation Orion and Isis is the star Sirius. The story involves death, life, dismemberment, marriage, and jealousy. Osiris is put back together except for his penis, which is lost in the Nile River—the Milky Way—but Isis, who is his wife, causes the Nile to rise and flood with her appearance. The Egyptian calendar relied upon the appearance of Sirius to mark the year and the beginning of the floods. Again, as with the story of Perseus, Sirius and Orion are next to each other in the sky, with part of the Milky Way nearby.

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Many of the southern hemisphere constellations were not visible to the Greeks and Egyptians and as a result, the modern names do not reflect legends that weave sections of the sky together. This is where indigenous stories from Southern Hemisphere cultures can be helpful (e.g. Johnson 1998).