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Visitors to America in pre-Columbian time

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VISITORS TO AMERICA IN PRE-COLUMBIAN TIME

by

Kevin Stanton

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
COMMITTEE ON AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree

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In the Graduate College
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1 9 9 0

Statement by Author

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Preface

In the second semester of my Masters program, I was afforded a valuable opportunity to participate in a seminar that exposed the group to some uncommon perspectives and theories regarding America in pre-historic times. The intent of our meetings was to review many of the standard scientific precepts that explain the past. However, as we were to discover not everybody is in agreement with the present scientific versions. The basic formula that we followed was to examine and discuss opposing hypotheses regarding the same data. For example, we looked at the geologic principles of stratigraphy. The standard scientific concept that explains how soil is laid down is referred to as the 'gentle rain' theory. It is generally thought that the atmosphere displaces particles in a slow and deliberate manner which over a long period of time piles up into a distinguishable stratum. According to this theory, the earth's stratigraphy resembles a layer cake with each segment representing a different geologic period. Some of these periods are seemingly dominated by different soil colors and each new color may mean a new age. The icing on top, or the earth's crust, would be the most recent.

Yet, we found considerable opposition to this theory,

which appears to have more gaps than consistency. One alternative to this 'gentle rain', is the theory of 'catastrophic sequences'. It notes that certain geologic intervals, are dominated by tremendous upheavals and calamities which are sufficiently momentous to be entirely capable of throwing down a material record that is anything but slow and gentle. A minor version of this catastrophic action can be seen in a mud-slide, volcano, hurricane, or flood, all of which can significantly alter the landscape and stratigraphy.

During the course of our meetings we surveyed a number of scientific hypotheses which argued for different routes to the same destination. One particularly intriguing category dealt with how the New World was populated. Most of us as youngsters are introduced to the ruling doctrine, that several thousands of years ago, Asian migrants struggled across the Bering land bridge into a mythical Ellis island. Here, they were seemingly dispatched as groups, to nearly every nook and cranny of the hemisphere, gently raining down upon both Western continents.

What surprised me the most in our discussions of this topic was not only the fact that there was another theory regarding the ancestry and roots of the first Americans, but that there were several. Furthermore, we learned that until about 1890 many of these theories were still accepted as being

possible. However, in 1894 the Smithsonian Institution officially issued a treatise on this subject, and since that time most of us have been raised to accept that Columbus discovered America. As for the aboriginal inhabitants, they came across the now sunken landbridge and remained totally isolated from the outside world until 1492. One valuable benefit of this seminar was becoming acquainted with the Native American perspective that resolves their presence and evolvment in this hemisphere. Not many non-Indians are aware that within nearly every tribal group an account explains how they, as a people, came into a human condition. Furthermore, most tribals believe this evolvment occurred within this hemisphere. In support of this belief are stories which seem to contain elements of past environmental and geologic episodes that would attest to a long existence here. Some of these bygone events are so vividly explained that they appear to be confirmed by present scientific knowledge that describes the same events. However, the most surprising aspect of the oral traditions concerns those legends which tell of other cultures who happened upon them long ago. Some of these visitors were said to have carried on trade and commerce, others engaged the Indians in warfare.

Our seminar group was able to locate documents and accounts which asserted that seafarers from other parts of the world had contacted America in pre-Columbian time. There

is even an account of a tribal member who stated that his people actually migrated here by boat.¹ Initially, all of these precepts were difficult to fathom for those of us who had learned of Columbus at an early age, but right around this time the Vietnamese boat people were prominently in the news. It is reasonable to assume that given the harsh realities of one's existence, that desperate refugees would willingly take to the open sea in flimsy overcrowded vessels, knowing full well that pirates, typhoons, and other like threatening obstacles impeded their path to freedom. Yet, it was a decision that a forlorn and daring people were willing to make, a decision that is presumably not unique to the 20th century. So, if one or more tribes say they came here by boat then it is reasonable and possible to believe that they did.

Some of the material covered in the seminar dealt with the possibility that cultures well known in history came here for a variety of purposes, including: Egyptians, Phoenicians, Celts, Ethiopians, Chinese, Japanese, Greeks, Polynesians, Irish, and the well known but still mythical Vikings. To prove theories regarding all this early traffic, researchers have submitted evidence extracted from a variety of scientific sources, including archaeology, biology, architecture, linguistics, astronomy, epigraphy, cartography, and a few

¹Joseph Mahan, The Secret. (Columbus: By the Author, 1983), 4.

other fields.

Pre-contact evidence is said to be widespread and not necessarily confined to any one area. Nearly all of the supporters for pre-Columbian contacts advance the theory that not only did cultures come and go, but in some cases they may have diffused information and influence upon the American Indians. This of course is not the way that our scientific establishment recognizes the pre-history of the Americas, and honestly, at the conclusion of our meetings most of us did not accept all that was uncovered. But the evidence was compelling. Collectively we agreed that in view of the testimony our oblivious reliance upon certain scientific dogmatic suppositions should be viewed more skeptically in the future.

Unfortunately, circumstances forced me to interrupt my studies for a period of eighteen months. During this time I took a job which afforded me an opportunity to travel extensively. Remembering the discussions mentioned above, I made it a hobby to observe firsthand some of the evidence that adherents claimed was proof of pre-Columbian contacts. In my travels, I made every opportunity to visit museums, archaeological sites, and places where these early travelers are said to have left artifacts, signs, or marks.

The following report reflects these field investigations, combined with research garnered from documents that treat the

question of pre-Columbian contacts. In my travels, I was able to meet and interview a few of the very researchers who have published on this topic. I have also found that a veritable mountain of documents has been published on this subject and related topics.

Initially I had intended to compose a general synthesis of the data concerning this topic, however after discovering the enormous amount of material that exists, I opted to examine two elements of the overall question that help to distinguish why some academics are still unsure as to the possibility of pre-Columbian contact. Therefore the paper is divided into two sections. The first part examines the popular and fairly standard version of how people came to be present in this hemisphere. Additionally, some of the influences that may have aided in constructing the story are identified. Since some institutions had a say in how the account was composed they may have influenced the accuracy and overall composition of the historic and pre-historic record. Part two will examine some actual cases and supply a general description of the evidence which researchers are presently submitting to show that pre-Columbian contact did take place.

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Abstract

In the present era, scientists and researchers have gathered together a considerable amount of evidence which putatively demonstrates that contact occurred between the Old and New Worlds far in advance of either Columbus or the Vikings. This paper will describe and examine a small part of this evidence as well as provide a background summary of how pre-Columbian history was constructed. The emphasis of this paper reveals how epigraphic research has become the principle element in current investigations.

Introduction

The question of early contacts between the Old and New Worlds has been a hotly disputed topic for most of the nearly five hundred years since Columbus made landfall in 1492. Historically, the scientific establishment has viewed the question with truculent consensus: with the exception of the Vikings, THERE WERE NO CONTACTS IN PRE-COLUMBIAN TIME. Advocates for the opposing viewpoint contest this premise and increasingly have surfaced with extensive data emanating from a wide array of fields, including archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, epigraphy, geology, theology, astronomy, oceanography, cartography, biology, and others. Collectively their data seeks to challenge the popular scientific perspective. The combined efforts of these researchers, whose studies merit consideration, are aimed at overcoming what they contend to be a long-standing bias that dominates the scientific community concerning this topic.

If a bias exists, it will have to weather an imminent battle likely to occur in the near future. The last twenty years have produced a veritable avalanche of new material which is certain to enter the realm of public awareness as we approach the quincentennial of Columbus' "discovery." The possibility that mainstream scientists will take a more objective view of this topic remains to be seen. However,

regardless of one's beliefs or loyalties, the evidence should be judged on its own merits. After all, what could be so extraordinary in appearance, substance, and form that its very existence challenges many of the deep-seated beliefs held by science regarding American pre-history. One could argue that if pieces don't fit the puzzle, they should be investigated rather than ignored as has been the routine in the past 100 years.

Even now, some of the more compelling aspects of this immense body of problematic evidence have caused a few scientists who formerly resisted any consideration of early contacts to retreat ever so slightly from the present hard line. Felix C. Lowe, director of the Smithsonian Institution, recently admitted in a statement that, "America was discovered more than once... by the hardy and inventive people who crossed the Bering Straits around 25000 B.C... by the Vikings who settled Greenland around 1000 A.D... perhaps by other seafarers from Ireland, from Polynesia, Africa, Japan, and certainly by Columbus in 1492."²

My objective will be to examine a few of the many facets surrounding the controversy regarding early transoceanic contacts. The first order of business will be to trace the development of the dispute from its inception in the 16th

²Eric Pawley, "Crack in the Facade." Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 15 (1986): 24.

century to the present era. After a brief survey of the model for human development in this hemisphere, an opposing viewpoint will be presented to show the rift that exists between the orthodox line and the minority dissent. The focus will then shift to the time of discovery, which launched the controversy regarding pre-Columbian contacts. The dispute will be briefly traced from its birth to present maturity. This should provide an adequate foundation on which to place the contact evidence; thus can its validity be considered upon its own merits.

Please note that due to my present interest in this subject as well as aforementioned penchant for frequent travel, I have personally visited a few of the alleged sites, viewed some of the physical evidence, and met a few of the researchers who published on this subject. This experience, I believe, will be helpful in one respect best stated by Aristotle, who said, "With a view to action, experience seems in no respect inferior to art, and men of experience succeed even better than those who have theory without experience."³

The burden for me therefore, besides living up to the aforementioned challenge, is to present the material in a fair and objective manner so that the reader can decide for himself if a new interpretation of the past is warranted.

³Aristotle. The Works Of Aristotle. (trans. W.D. Ross. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1952), 499.

Note on References

A survey of my bibliography will promptly reveal that the majority of the selections used in this paper have been published in the last twenty years. However, further scrutiny shows that this same majority reflects the viewpoint favorable towards pre-Columbian contacts. There are two general reasons for this conspicuous imbalance. First, it must be realized that nearly all literature recently published on this topic is directed at either publicizing, reopening, or widening the dialogue concerning possible contact.

Regrettably, most establishment scientists do not engage the kinds of problems that this subject presents, as most feel they have long been solved. A fairly typical attitude illustrating this point is stated by Dean R. Snow: "it has become traditional among professional archaeologists simply to avoid mention of myths (like pre-Columbian visitors)... except as playful exercise away from more serious writings... It is probably true for most regions that the problem will go away if simply ignored."⁴

The problem has not gone away, but at least we understand why most of the recently published materials favor contact. The second reason for my reference selection is to illustrate

⁴Dean R. Snow, The Archaeology of New England. (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 23.

that the contact researchers are utilizing the newest scientific innovations to get at the truth. In addition, we shall see what research areas are getting the most attention, and where the investigations seem to be going.

Most Americans have some grasp of how science views hemispheric pre-history. Accordingly, our context is predetermined and limited, and at some point this alternative literature has to be dealt with, regardless of one's beliefs or feelings. I feel that the question is better studied than ignored, thus my list of selections reflects an honest effort to synthesize what is being said and to make it less it less obscure. To represent that which is noted as general knowledge or to illustrate the scientific perspective, I have utilized the Encyclopedia Britannica since it epitomizes the most widely held scientific views.

PART ONE: Gentle Rain

"The question of when the first people came to North America defies consensus... any evidence is at best circumstantial and cannot be used to constrain what is strictly an archaeological matter".⁵ So says David J Meltzer, a prominent anthropologist from Southern Methodist University. What seems to be eminently agreed upon however, is that man did in fact enter the hemisphere as a migrator from Asia, utilizing a hypothetical landbridge which connected the two continents. The time of this migration is currently assigned to the Pleistocene age or 12,000 years ago. The people in question, Native Americans, don't necessarily subscribe to this theory; in fact, many accept and adhere to their tribes' creation stories as a reasonable explanation for their existence. Although none of these stories will be examined at length, it should be established that Indians generally do not defend the various theories habitually assigned to them by anthropologists, historians, and theologians.

Asia has long been regarded as the birthplace of man, or more scientifically, Homo Sapiens; this not only is substantiated by archaeological remains, but also by many of

⁵David J. Meltzer, "Why We Don't Know When the First People Came to North America," American Antiquity 54 (1989): 471.

the world's major religions. It is assumed that groups of humans began to populate the earth and initially represented three major racial stocks: the Congoid (black) established themselves in Africa and parts of Indonesia; the Caucasoid (white) populated the European shelf and North Africa; and the Mongoloid occupied regions of eastern Eurasia.⁶

In the ensuing millennia these racial types overcame incredible geographic obstacles in spreading out over the globe... developing and borrowing technologies as they went. Frequently overlooked as routes for their travels are the many rivers, lakes, and seas which now are incorrectly perceived as impediments or obstacles that separate people.

The primordial world is divided into a number of glacial periods, and human evolvment is routinely assigned to some of these epochs. A minority of scientists feel that during one of these periods, perhaps 40,000 years ago, conditions existed whereby the ocean levels dropped and a landbridge formed connecting Asia to North America. Others say that this condition occurred many times during any one of the interglacial epochs, allowing men and animals to proceed both ways between the continents.⁷ But the most popular and

⁶Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropaedia, 1985 ed., s.v. "Asia" 15:183, (vol:page-listed this way throughout).

⁷Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropaedia, 1985ed., s.v. "North America, 24:984.

standard scientific theory favors a landbridge forming once about 12000 years ago.

During the Wurm or Wisconsin glaciation period, Asia was theoretically a racial melting pot; however, we are told not to regard the area in racial terms, but instead it can better be described as an assortment of ethnic groups.⁸ Notwithstanding, the Mongoloid race is portrayed as maintaining some cohesiveness despite what may have happened to the others.

Science teaches us that during the Wurm glaciation hundreds, perhaps thousands, of ethnic groups of Asian seed gathered themselves up and went somewhere else. We can imagine some of them trudging across desert sands, scaling high mountains, and the vast expanse in search of a suitable and economically dependable habitat. Some of these groups arrived on islands far removed from the continent which sprung them, and all are believed to have been hunter-gatherers.

One group of Asians who traveled in a westerly direction, managed to develop a language and gather certain mannerisms, technologies, and customs, so that when they arrived at their final destination they were equipped to become more than just a distinct ethnic group. Eventually they secured a homeland and formed the beginnings of a civilization around 2100 B.C.;

⁸Ibid., 984.

today they are known as the Greeks.⁹

Certainly this group benefitted from the contacts made along the way. They developed culturally and materially, and possessed enough specialized skills to eventually control not only the Aegean peninsula, but a good portion of the known world, all before the time of Christ.

Going the other way is a group usually portrayed as nomadic hunters who were dressed in skins and equipped with crude weapons. Their implements eventually would be utilized by scientists to measure their level of evolvement and even their stage of intelligence. They are often portrayed as lacking the fierce competition and close cooperation believed necessary to stimulate progress, at least in terms understood by the western mind. They made few advances in the use of metals and had virtually no industry or systems of transportation with which to trade.¹⁰ In essence, they were not as far along as were contemporary populations in Europe and the Mediterranean areas.¹¹

It is uncertain if this group collectively referred to as Mongoloid crossed the landbridge in large groups or "trickled" in irregularly, but they are portrayed as a largely

⁹Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropaedia, 1985ed., s.v. "Asia", 14:183.

¹⁰Ibid., 183.

¹¹Ibid.

primitive race, carrying little in the way of refinement aside from a simple tool kit.¹²

We are told how these persistent nomads were hot on the trail of the big game beast which fortuitously stayed one step ahead of them on the causeway to the New World. The animals not only provided direction, but food, clothing, and weapons as well. It might even be argued that these first Americans paralleled Columbus in that they probably never realized that they had stumbled into another hemisphere and were no longer in some remote part of Asia. Whatever the case the scientific community feels with great certainty that some of the animals and all of the people came to the Americas across a land bridge and slowly spread out across the hemisphere. Furthermore, they endured here in an isolated state until 1492.

As with any good mystery there are a multitude of dissenting opinions. Many scientists argue over the dates of the migration and the problems that arise in maintaining arbitrary time indexes in the face of contradictory evidence. For example, the date which science maintains as probable for entry is 12,000 B.C. Some linguists argue that this would not allow time for the Mongoloids to spread out, set up, and

¹²Joseph L. Gardner, et al. Mysteries of the Ancient Americas. (Pleasantville NY: Readers Digest, 1968), 75.

develop the nearly 2500 languages found in this hemisphere.¹³

Others who advocate an even earlier date for entry can not produce the corresponding weapons or spear point that would prove existence according to the present model. As technology advances, especially in dating methods, the rigidity of the formula concerning migrations and other beliefs has come into question, and the prevailing archetypes are accused of being fraught with errors.

There are reports out of Bolivia that a cave bordering the Mizque river has been yielding dates of human activity as early as 40,000 years ago.¹⁴ Yet no Clovis points, which supposedly were brought by the first Americans, have ever been recovered in South America. Clovis refers to a type of weapon which is said to have been used by the big game hunters 12,000 years ago. The only way to satisfy the early dates and the present chronology is to suppose that someone came earlier, and that these hunters chased the big game all the way to Bolivia, where the astute animals doubled back, tiring in the area of the American Southwest where some of the points are currently found.

As is apparent, the cave evidence creates more problems

¹³Edward Sapir, "Time Perspective in Aboriginal American Culture: A Study in Method." In Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture, and Personality. D. Mandlebaum, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1963), 454.

¹⁴"Travel Guide." Archaeology 41 May-June. 1988, 5.

than can be explained utilizing the current definition for ancient migrations. We have to ask ourselves: did man come earlier or employ other methods to capture game? Were early Americans strictly herbivorous, or per chance were their tools strictly organic making them harder to trace? Did fishing and gathering precede big game hunting? Did Native Americans at some point borrow, dispense, utilize, seek, accept, or trade technologies with outside cultures in the new world? Did Native Americans even come here from somewhere else?

Perhaps ancient technology is not well understood. Scientists usually portray material advancements as following a progression, from simple to complex. Perhaps we don't really understand much about the hypothetical ladder of advancement. Which rung came first, or was skipped altogether. Can we presuppose that a person or culture will utilize a method or device just because it appears to make a task easier or belongs to a theoretical sequence of development? Should evidence that does not fit scientific rationale be routinely discarded? Finally, is it reasonable to assume that because an innovation or technology is present that it must be employed?

There are numerous examples in today's world where cultural, tribal, or religious groups have access to the world's most advanced technology, yet choose to ignore it. On the other hand, investigators continually uncover material

enigmas within this hemisphere whose construction, appearance, and development cannot be explained or even imitated by the modern scientist. There is much that cannot be fitted into the framework that science has created for pre-Columbian America.

Although some explanations to these questions have been forthcoming, most hypotheses dealing with truly baffling hemispheric mysteries rarely have been considered in the mainstream scientific journals. The forum for these alternative explanations is usually found in obscure or "underground" type publications. There are only a few instances where books dealing with the alternative perspective regarding pre-Columbian history achieved popularity, but ultimately the authors were ridiculed and attacked because their views differed from the scientific norm.

One example of a book that attracted a considerable amount of attention, was published by a popular and distinguished archaeologist whose labors in the Southwest are still highly venerated. However, Harold Gladwyn's, Men Out Of Asia accomplished little as far as his scientific colleagues were concerned and it became clear that his opinions were not much appreciated. Many of the comments that the book elicited from his academic fellows amounted more to ridicule than to reasoned evaluation. Ralph Linton, a well-regarded anthropologist from Yale, analyzed the material

in Gladwyn's book and surmised, "that Gladwyn approaches the problems of American origins with the tentative jocularity of an elderly gentleman patting a new secretary's posterior. If she objects he can lament her lack of a sense of humor; if she does not, the next moves are obvious."¹⁵

Gladwyn who published this book in 1947, is generally credited with "stirring up the ashes" that have since ignited a renewed and now sustained interest in pre-Columbian contacts. His treatment at the hands of mainstream scientists seems to illustrate the rule rather than the exception in regards to a serious consideration for any pre-contact theories.

Gladwyn proposes that New World peoples are the result of several major migrations occurring at intervals and a few smaller ones in between. According to Gladwyn, the earliest of these migrations begins 25,000 years ago, and predominantly consists of a racial group that he labels as Australoids. He employs comparative anatomy for these conclusions and thinks that the first Americans are identical in physique to modern Native Australians, when skeletons of the two are compared.¹⁶

¹⁵Robert Wauchope, Lost tribes and Sunken Continents. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) 2.

¹⁶Harold Gladwyn, Men Out of Asia. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1947), 158.

The second major migration was largely of a Negroid race, figuratively right on the heels of the Australoids, but sustained to 2500 B.C. The third of Gladwyn's racial groups to enter the hemisphere were the Algonquins who came between 1500 - 1000 B.C. This group, Gladwyn feels, brought several major innovations along with them which can be traced from Europe across Asia and into America: cord marked pottery is but one of the items that came with them.¹⁷

The final major migration is represented by the Mongoloid, who possess a broad flat skull. Gladwyn claimed that no archaeological discoveries have ever produced a Mongoloid skull in a context earlier than 300 B.C., in either North, Central, or South America. There was an Eskimo migration that preceded the Mongoloid by two hundred years, however Gladwyn points out that the Eskimo never got as far south as the American border. Only this final hypothesis earned any support from the scientific community.¹⁸

Gladwyn could have enjoyed some acceptance had he limited his interest to the patterns and timing of migrations. Perhaps his ideas would have been debated and politely considered, but his character might have been spared. His postulations were disregarded for lack of evidence, which is

¹⁷Ibid., 125.

¹⁸Ibid., 147.

in short supply for anyone's theories. However, he may yet achieve some vindication.

Although the argument is not dealt with in a racial context, J.H. Greenberg, a linguist, feels that different groups entered the hemisphere at intervals and are best identified at the present time by the language stock they carried with them. Greenberg feels that all Indian languages stem from a single source but belong to three major divisions: Amerind, Na-Dene, and Eskimo-Alute. He explains that this order likely represents the sequence of entry, "the linguistic evidence suggest a minimum of three migrations."¹⁹ This theory is not much concerned with how these groups looked or differed in a physiological sense, as it is interested with the independent means of communication that each possessed; however, it is inferred that each group may have been physically different from the other, and this is somewhat analogous to what Gladwyn proposed.

The consequential mistake that Gladwyn committed was to propose a possible scenario and take his hypothesis to what he felt was a logical conclusion. He proposed that the founding populations eventually ended up with traits, objects, practices, and technologies that could not, in his estimation be carried in from Asia.

¹⁹Joseph H. Greenberg, Language in the Americas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 333.

What he suggested as a possible explanation was not, and still is not, a reasonable rationale as far as mainstream anthropology and archaeology are concerned. Gladwyn knew this and assumed his fate by remarking in the forward of his book, "that anthropology is not a whole science and is often ruled by emotion and specialization rather than laws of proof and the methods which rule other sciences."²⁰ He was to become guilty of these same crimes himself, but his work did once again focus attention on the whole pre-Columbian question.

He noted that some Meso and Peruvian Indian civilizations sprung up rather "quickly", compared to similar populations in the Old World. To him there seemed to be material and other relevant connections between both hemispheres. Some similarities, he reasoned, might be coincidental, but others are too alike for chance invention. And so he proposed that certain items were the product of transpacific contacts.

Gladwyn searched the ancient world and found a likely courier that fit all his qualifications for becoming a New World influence. He noticed that a large seafaring group was present in Southeast Asia around 300 B.C., and were highly experienced in absorbing, transporting, and redistributing cultural affinities in distant locales.

For nine years, (336-328 B.C.) Alexander the Great waged

²⁰Gladwyn, Xiii.

war and led a conquering expedition from Greece all the way to India. He overcame everyone along the way and always took time to build or establish cities. At least 25 have been identified. He figured that these settlements would enable him to control his recently-conquered subjects, while at the same time compensate the soldiers in his armies with leadership positions. Historians feel that one reason for Alexander's incredible success was the varied backgrounds of his legions. They consisted of Circa Mediterranean peoples who collectively possessed the technical capability to solve nearly any problem that was encountered.²¹

Alexander's forces had advanced a considerable distance into Asia utilizing a fleet of over 800 ships, some with crews of 500 to 600 men. But Alexander died at the height of his momentum and the huge army was left under the leadership of his top admiral and confidante Nearchus.²² History does not reveal what happened to this vast assemblage, but Gladwyn offers that some of the ships along with their crews made it to the West, and continued doing what they did best.

Gladwyn proceeds to list some of the traits which seem to suggest contact, including polished red pottery, the upright loom, metals, plus the myths and legends speaking of

²¹Ibid., 218.

²²Ibid., 221.

white-skinned visitors.²³ He points out that the multi-national crews would have possessed a great variety of Old World knowledge, including hieroglyphics, astronomy, calendar, pyramids, metallurgy, pottery, weaving, paper making, and ship building. He further postulates that those who never made it to the West became the nucleus for the Polynesians.²⁴

Gladwyn's arguments rely on the premise that diffusion is at least partly responsible for the development and spreading of ideas to the New World. What he and other diffusionists were to discover is the utter abhorrence that anthropologists have for this term when it is associated with pre-historic America. Its use in such contexts is blasphemous and is the scientific equivalent of yelling "fire" in the crowded theatre of acceptable doctrine.

Gladwyn is described by one anthropologist as harboring a "curious mixture of archaic and modern thinking; he is a man trapped by his ideology to as great extent as any man of the 16th or 17th century was trapped by his theology."²⁵ But he also is a good example of what typically happens to researchers who challenge the accepted structure that explains the roots and development of the western hemisphere. He is

²³Ibid., 233-35.

²⁴Ibid., 235.

²⁵Lee Eldridge Huddleson, Origins of the American Indian. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 147.

by no means unique in the inference that contacts can be traced across the Pacific and across Asia into Mediterranean areas; there are many such scenarios.

A radically different theory is advanced by Jeffery Goodman, an anthropologist who agrees that a land bridge may have existed in the remote past and that man and beast likely crossed it on the way to other lands. However, he argues for an American genesis and places a mythical garden of Eden in this hemisphere. His hypothesis revolves largely around the bones and skulls of ancient Homo Sapiens found in California, some of which are said to date to 70,000 B.C. and more.²⁶

Goodman thinks it possible that humans evolved as modern man here and then spread to other parts of the globe... in some cases returning later. This view, of course, is unfathomable according to scientific principles that have this process firmly entrenched in the Middle East or Africa; however, there is one important group symbolically standing behind Goodman's theories, although this group's perspective is not normally regarded as tenable. Nevertheless, American Indians maintain that their traditions are every bit as viable as the explanations habitually assigned them by scientists.

Native Americans possess an impressive and remarkable collection of creation stories, many of which were passed down

²⁶Jeffery Goodman, American Genesis. (New York: Summit Books, 1981), 3-15.

orally, but now are retained by more artificial means. Because of modern language differences and usage, some of these accounts admittedly do not translate well; however, some tribes confidently point to these histories and the fact that the principle objective of their oral traditions is to account for their human evolvment. And for most this occurred within this hemisphere. Goodmen points to the Hopi as an example of a native culture whose history says that they came to life here, left and then returned to reestablish themselves once again.²⁷

Perhaps we should place greater emphasis on these alternative explanations, exploring them for some answers. There was a time when the presence of the Indian became a matter of debate as to whether or not he was a human being. This was the same period in which the controversy concerning pre-Columbian contacts first began.

²⁷Ibid., 30.

Cataclysm From the Eastern Sea

Many of the initial and principal beliefs concerning the Native American including his origins, rights, even his biological and evolutionary position, were determined by the ruling politicians and prominent theologians of 16th century Spain. In addition to a good many documents dealing with these subjects, juntas were called into session and debates were held in courtrooms, primarily to ponder and discuss the mounting perplexities presented by "discoveries" in the New World. Administratively, the civilized Spaniard was forced to grapple with the bewildering prospect of parlaying with impressive and materially developed cultures on one hand, while manipulating those who were viewed as ordinary barbarians on the other.

One important aspiration of these colloquies was to construct a reasonable and fair political policy which conformed to Christian doctrines. Undermining what undoubtedly was a sincere desire to do "right" was the absence of reliable input from the type of experts comparable to modern day scientists; although there were countless witnesses whose testimony was considered, a qualified context was lacking. Input from the Indians themselves was not much considered and might to a large extent amount to outright fabrication. Edward Spicer, a well-regarded expert on the

Spanish colonial period, contends that," what purports to be a record of the native viewpoint is actually what European writers thought the Natives were thinking."²⁸ Nevertheless most problems were solved to the satisfaction of those in judgment, and policies for better or worse resulted from the implied resolution of numerous difficult matters.

For the Indian, the immediate consequence of tribunal determinations was the consideration of important questions regarding his status: were Indians human beings; did they own their land; did they have the same rights as a Spaniard; should all or some of the cultures be recognized as distinct entities given the undeniable advanced magnitude emblematic of many of their societies? These and other considerations would in time impact the formulation of our national, international, and Indian law, but were not necessarily confined to only judicial matters. Court determinations additionally decided business which belonged more to the auspices of science. Not only would these actions and decisions have immediate impact on the lives of the Indians, but precedents formulated at the time would prove to have enduring jurisdiction in scientific statutes. Despite what was determined, the Spanish managed to adopt laws cleverly worded so that the seemingly boundless wealth possessed by

²⁸Edward H. Spicer, Cycles of Conquest. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981), 21.

New World peoples could be gained legally and without offense to God or the Christian doctrines which had to be considered.

A reasonable query regarding this whole process is to consider whether the financial forces supporting the colonial mechanism attempted to obscure evidence or employ deceit for their financial advantage. One example of disinformation, perhaps for securing a more lenient and advantageous policy, was the portrayal of the Indian as a cannibal and active participant in human sacrifice, both of which occurred in instances, but as a racial trait are completely baseless and totally absurd. Yet, this notion indisputably became popular and effective propaganda.

Incredibly many misconceptions and stereotypes formulated at Spanish contact were later adopted by Colonials in North America. For example, the captivity tales created fear and loathing towards the Indians and worked effectively to sway popular opinion. Many errors formulated and contrived in these early periods have been slow to disperse or be corrected, consequently deluding historical and scientific concepts and often encouraging erroneous substantiations regarding the Native American. Accuracy appears not to be a priority where manipulative interests were concerned.

Among the many goods that Columbus brought to Spain after his epic voyage in 1492 was a ball "as large as a jug and which bounced twice as high as the balls used in soccer; (and)

when bounced it would continue doing so for a quarter of an hour."²⁹

The bouncing action of the rubber ball is symbolic of initial Spanish resolutions regarding the New World. Columbus had always publicly claimed to have provided a new route to Asia, thus accomplishing his objective. Curiously, he called the inhabitants he captured and abducted... Indians. They were, he reasoned, inhabitants of the islands that lay off the coast of India, or Cathay, as Asia was called in that era. He was not surprised to find "humans" and evidently when he was assured that they belonged to nobody, he was entitled to enslave them for Spain.³⁰

Twenty-six years would pass before new information gained via Magellan's voyage of 1519 supplanted the inceptive contention which linked, racially and geographically, the Indians and Asia. This transition of thought had to overcome observations and information gathered by early explorers whose travels brought them upon impressively designed and constructed cities; artwork which appeared to espouse an Eastern style; gems, gold, and other articles all of which seemed to uphold the initial belief that the Spaniards were

²⁹Juan Friedeand and Benjamin Keen, ed. Bartolome' de Las Casas In History. (Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), 23.

³⁰Huddleson, 5.

indeed somewhere in the Orient.

Columbus found that inhabitants had "iron, which they use to make hatchets".³¹ He later reported coming across the presence "of fair skinned youths residing near the equator."³² Balboa is cited as stumbling upon a tribe of Negroes living on the coast of Panama, and according to Peter Martyr the Indians of the Yucatan practiced circumcision, which they claimed to have absorbed from previous visitors.³³ The apparent diversity present in the New World populace conceivably suggests a corresponding variety of influences which would not seem unusual to the Spanish explorer, believing himself to be in the proximity of Asia; rather, it reflected a more familiar heterogeneity that likewise was present in the circa Mediterranean at that time.

However, when the implications of Magellan's findings became clear, there suddenly was a scramble to explain who the Indians were and why were they were present in a heretofore unknown part of the world. Early investigations far removed from the regions and peoples in question were conducted as mentioned, by politicians, theologians, and the

³¹Samuel Elliot Morrison, trans. and ed. Journals and Other Documents On the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus. (New York: Heritage Press, 1963) 248.

³²Huddleson, 8.

³³Ibid.

returning conquistadors...all of whom had plenty at stake in how the mystery would be resolved. Gradually several major theories emerged providing specific explanations for the origins and roots of the Indians. Generally any conjecture had to satisfy the dogma of Christian doctrine which holds that all men are descended from Adam and Eve "and secondarily from Noah and the survivors of the flood"; in fact, all human and animal life could be traced to the ark according to the Bible, and most of the literature from the immediate post contact era had to be concerned with satisfying these basic theological perspectives.³⁴

Lee Eldridge Huddleson examines the advent of deliberations centering on the origins of the Indian. He offers that two distinct traditions emerged, both of which sought to resolve the derivation of the Indians. The two hypotheses are named for the authors who popularized their respective contentions through publication and public forum.

The Acositan tradition named for Joseph de Acosta, submitted that somewhere, America and Asia were connected by land or at the least separated only by a narrow passage of water, similar to the type of separation attending the familiar pillars of Hercules. "He felt that such a connection in itself induced men to cross it, and that its geographical

³⁴Ibid., 9.

remoteness and the cultural level of migrants was responsible for Europe's lack of knowledge of it."³⁵

Even though Acosta is credited as being one of the founding fathers of the land bridge migration theory, he evidently believed that some leeway was needed to allow for other explanations. He once conceded that it was possible "in times past, (that) men came to the Indies driven unwillingly by the wind."³⁶ Acosta, who was a Jesuit missionary, spent 17 years in South America, most of it in Peru. It would not be unreasonable to assume that during this time he possibly came across evidence which promoted this acknowledgement, however he is usually portrayed as the champion of the "no contact before Columbus" perspective.

The opposing viewpoint, according to Huddleson, is best illustrated by the collected works of Gregorio Garcia who spent about nine years in Peru. Garcias does not necessarily reject the idea of a land bridge for entry, but feels that it was by no means the only possible avenue for admission into the hemisphere. Garcia reasoned that conspicuous differences present in the appearance of the people, their languages, customs, devices, technologies, and so on, necessitate a

³⁵Ibid., 52.

³⁶Joseph de Acosta, Historia Natural y Moral de los Indios. Ed. Mundo O'Gorman 1st ed. (Mexico: Fundo de Cultura Economica 1940), 74.

multiplicity of influences; therefore, it is just as likely that the Indian's inspiration came from multiple sources.³⁷

At the time there were several popular theories circulating in Europe, each attempting to account for the presence of humans in America. One speculated that the "race" was the result of deliberate or accidental Carthaginian colonizations prior to, or as the result of, the Roman empire. Another popular anecdote was the belief that the lost Continent of Atlantis was the source of all that is found in the New World. The Greeks, who were well known to have achieved a highly developed maritime technology in the ancient world, appeared to be yet another capable candidate for supplying the seed for Indian populations and culture. The Egyptians, Hebrews, and Jews all enjoyed support as possible Old World links, thus provoking many a lively discussion. If an Old World culture or region possessed some trait or likeness that had a real or imagined counterpart in the New World, it immediately became suspect of being the source, or at least an influence on the American Indian.

Garcia, in his lengthy work, Origen de los Indigos lists twelve of these theories all explaining the presence of Indians, but did not favor one over another, rather he felt that all the suppositions were plausible, and for this reason

³⁷Huddleson, 74.

they all merit consideration:

The Indians proceed neither from one Nation or people, nor went to those parts from one (part) of the Old World. Nor in the same time, nor in the same manner. But actually they proceeded from various nations, from which some came by sea, forced and driven by storms; others by art of navigation looking for those lands, of which they had heard. Some came by land...³⁸

Both authors found support for their respective theses, however one hypothesis would soon supplant the other. The enchanting verity concerning our topic is that the difference between the above premises remarkably remains much the same today. The Acosta tradition represents the position of the scientific community and favors the premise that animals and man entered the West via a land bridge. On the other hand the Garcian represents the "alternative" viewpoint by recognizing numerous influences generated from a variety of locales.

These opposing positions have been adopted as tenets of doctrine by the respective groups debating the question of transoceanic contacts in pre-Columbian time. In the absence of any real scientific analysis of Spanish contact, and the substantiated presence of many curious enigmas, a reasonable question to ask is: Why has one view received more support than the other?

The answer may be found far from the realm of historic

³⁸Gregorio Garcia, Origen de los indios de le nuevo mundo. ed. Andris Gonzalez de Barcia Cordillido y Zciniga (Madrid Francisco Mortinez Abad. 1729), 315.

and scientific inquiry which dominates the debate presently. If we look to the political, and economic conditions of the former period while keeping in mind the abiding and consequential influence of the Church, it is entirely possible that if the Acostians are right about the origins of the Indians, it is perhaps due more to chance and coercion than to a reasoned or logical evaluation of the facts.

Vital questions concerned with how Indians might have arrived in the New World, were substituted with the consideration of whether Indians were capable of becoming Christians, and, if so, should they be converted forcibly or passively. But even empirical interest became obscure in the face of economic considerations concerned with the enslavement of Indians, confiscations of their territories, and the forced transformation of their life style. In this critical period of debate the Indians did not enjoy a great deal of sympathy among the scholars and ambitious political bureaucrats in Spain.

However, there was one puissant voice whose demands for humanitarian treatment of Indians before the courts of Spain postponed for a short time the misery and slaughter that would result from the acquisition of riches, resources, and lands. Bartolome' de las Casas, who lived in the New World and had substantial dealings with the Indians, became a force in their defense. It is possible that he could have provided many

valuable insights concerning Indians and their history; however, the bulk of his efforts was concentrated with trying to protect Indians from destructive and inhumane treatment at the hands of the Conquistadors.

There was great opposition to his premise that Indians were human beings, or that they deserved equal treatment in social and civil matters as did any "civilized" European or Spaniard.³⁹ Francisco Lopez de Gomara, who wrote extensively about a New World which he never visited, preached the increasingly widespread axiom regarding Indian character which held, "that Indians were descendant from the devil and deserved at best enslavement."⁴⁰

Las Casas temporarily wielded great influence in matters concerning the Indians. His basic approach was to find logic supporting his views within the context of the Bible. On several occasions he traveled to Rome to confer with the Pope and eventually he participated in a great debate held at Valladolid in 1550-51.

This junta was to decide several questions concerning the Indians, but one of the important considerations was to ascertain whether force should be employed against the Indians to make them succumb to Spanish desires. Charles V, emperor

³⁹Friede and Keen, 279.

⁴⁰Ibid., 278.

at the time, selected Juan Gines de Sepulveda to argue the point opposite Las Casas. "This is the first time in history that a nation and her king initiated discussions concerning the justice of a war that was being waged. Moreover, and again for the first time in history, the emperor at the urging of Las Casas, ordered a provisional halt to the military campaigns in America".⁴¹

As significant as these actions were in establishing judicial precedents, there was suspiciously very little attention paid to the question of Indian origins or possible Old World influences which conceivably would have impacted any decision. Although Las Casas wrote extensively on the New World, he was not as much concerned with the possible backgrounds of Indians, as were so many of his contemporaries. He was primarily concerned with establishing their rights as the more pressing necessity.

One unavoidable corollary to Las Casas' brief success in defense of Indians was an interruption of incoming revenue. With so much being spent on exploration and other treasury draining activities, Spain was suffering a serious financial crises in the mid 16th century.⁴² When Philip II ascended the throne in 1556 he faced the woeful task of raising funds

⁴¹Ibid., 279.

⁴²Ibid., 6.

to replenish the nearly empty treasury. Instead of following the doctrines of Las Casas, Philip II favored a "policy of squeezing as much tribute from the Indians as possible," in so doing Spain had to develop methods which effectively discredited both New World ancient rulers and Las Casas' doctrine.⁴³ The only possible result was that the Indianist movement fell into decline and Lascasian doctrine became suspect in Spanish courts."⁴⁴

The Conquistadors, who had enacted widespread looting and destruction against the Indians, actually contributed to a prevalent mystique encompassing the New World inhabitants. Their tales of unusual findings combined with the tremendous influence of Lascasian ideals helped for a time to foster a certain reverence and respect in Europe for New World cultures. However, whatever admiration was nurtured soon disappeared because admiration does not fill the coffers of a struggling colonial empire. And with Las Casas' death came a corresponding decline for Indian integrity. Once again Indians were actively subdued, enslaved, and relieved of their goods and resources.

Little effort was made to collect and record data pertaining to their past, and the best opportunity to compile

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

an accurate record was avoided; unfortunately, Spain came to view the Indians as mostly illiterate and racially ignorant and this attitude would not only persist but spread to other Old World emigrants.

Newly-enacted laws encouraged non-communication between the Crown and its new subjects: for example, the "requerimiento" was contrived as a prerequisite to be addressed prior to the use of force against the Indian. The Spaniards first had to "ask" a tribe or village to surrender or submit before making war and or taking slaves. If the Indians opted to resist, then action could morally and legally be taken against them; lands would be confiscated and slaves apprehended without breaking any law. It was incumbent that the Conquistadors and slavers fulfill this requirement only in their own tongue and unnecessary to make the infidels understand that they had been justly forewarned of possible aggression.

In the village or newly formed rancherias the local priest would usually select a deacon or assistant from the community and teach him Spanish. When it came time for the weekly sermon the priest would have the interpreter deliver his message until such time that the congregation was conversant in the Spanish language. In schools the children were likewise required to learn and speak in Spanish and were actively discouraged from learning or conversing in their own

tongue. Thus, all remnants of past knowledge were vigorously purged from the memory of the Indian. These same procedures were adopted and practiced by other colonial powers and later became standard procedure in the United States.

There are instances whereby ethnographic and historic information was gathered from Indians, but in most cases by the time the Indian was subdued and converted, he had either forgotten or displaced his past. A few missionaries who kept impeccable and valuable records have preserved the little that is available today, but even here certain data which did not conform to prevailing religious beliefs was often altered or left out.

There is a case reported by a Augustinian friar named Jeronimo Roman y Zamora who found in his travels that some of the Yucatan tribes knew of the cross and the trinity.⁴⁵ Since it was illegal according to Spanish law to wage war against Christians, information such as this would be potentially catastrophic to pecuniary interest, and so it had to either be played down or suppressed. Conceivably, tribes who might have possessed knowledge of ancient contacts rarely encountered an open mind or a willingness to consider such possibilities.

It may have been important to not find any connection

⁴⁵Gardner, 11.

between New and Old World peoples; it would not be profitable to find a reason, or to suggest that Indians deserved respect, or that perhaps some of them represented a long lost brethren. Certainly, it was advantageous to authorities not to confuse the issue by entertaining harmful insinuations as Lascasian doctrine had presented. If there was a chance that the Indian was some remnant from the Old World, especially with a Christian strain, it would be difficult to treat him as a heathen savage, which has long been the approach of dominant societies in dealing with Native peoples.

Henceforth, New World peoples became pressured to forsake their native heritage and become transformed into hybrid versions of the Christian Spaniard whether they wanted to or not. Most of the teachers who worked with the Indians went to great lengths to encourage a total condemnation of their past history, religion, and cultural legacy. Spanish priests and civil authorities actively destroyed written records or any material goods that might represent or encourage retainment of past traditions. The stage was set to supply the Indians with a history that dovetailed with new or preexisting European rationalizations concerning the past. If an item did not fit, it was either ignored or destroyed.

The foundation for the next 400 years of Indian policy was forged during the Spanish colonial period, as was the custom of supplying the Indians with explanations and data

concerning themselves. Only with the advent of new technologies and the gradual recognition of an archaeological record has the framework of the contrived version for pre-Columbian history been challenged. Newly gathered data underscores the spoiled and now lost opportunity for gathering information from the aboriginal inhabitants. The time for gaining valuable insights into Indian history was squandered in favor of looting and religious conversion.

Another possible factor which might have inappropriately worked against the Indian was the impact of the Renaissance and the humanist movement. European Renaissance Man began to perceive himself as being separate and more powerful than nature. This rediscovered doctrine allowed that man is entitled to control and manipulate nature to his advantage. The Indian was better dominated if he was portrayed as being more akin to nature than to a civilized man. It is conceivable that the Indian's image was manipulated for practical considerations. The Spanish initially established the custom of finding some basis to ease their conscience when certain policies implied wrongdoing. The humanist approach provided a method of overcoming many of the inherent problems and moral dilemmas confronting civilized Christians seeking to justify the domination of Indians and other life forms.

In time, it became necessary to formulate theories and to construct a model, rationalizing all elements present in

the New World. The effort would necessitate some liberal analysis and careful planning so that the story would support existing religious beliefs and justify what was being done here. Two familiar and widely hated groups well-known to most Europeans of the 16th century were the Tartars and the Scythians. It was suggested that not only did the above groups resemble "savage" Indians in actions and appearance, but it was postulated that these "Old World barbarians" were likely related to and might even be the progeny of them. This theory conveniently provided a transcendent example that manipulated Old World opinion. This would be a far more profitable characterization than one which linked the Indians to the more affable Greeks, Hebrews, Celts, or Egyptians. Thus, misleading depictions actually became a part of the Acostian tradition, and in turn the basis for future beliefs concerning the origins of the Indians.

So we see that the earliest references concerning Indians came in a period of great transition and eclectic pressures, collectively exerting some influence on the overall picture. The model that was formed over time relied heavily on circumstantial evidence and resourceful manipulation of religious beliefs, compounded by probable economic coercion. The net result was the fabrication of a theory that possessed bigoted evidence in its support; the existence of objects, practices, or evidence that suggested otherwise was left

unexplained.

A Tropical Depression Drifts North

Perhaps in reaction to or as a result of the Spanish experience to the south, North America saw a much modified progression in the creation of social, political, and militaristic relationships between Aborigines and the European colonizers. The French, English, and Dutch all accomplished many of the same objectives as had the Spanish, but did so while appearing to respect the philosophy espoused by the former power. Initial beliefs concerning Indian origins likewise followed a slightly different course from the previous period. This may be due in part to recognition of some of the earlier blunders, especially those which resulted from miscommunication. In fact, it became clear early on that valuable alliances with the tribes would be the key to gaining a foothold in North America.

Much of the initial communication involving Indians centered around trade, but gradually shifted to topics concerned with war, territories, and treaty making. Negotiations between tribes and the competing imperial powers concerning land acquisition was originally a Spanish precept, formulated in 1532 by Francisco de Victoria who determined

"that the natives were the true owners of the land".⁴⁶ Even though the Spanish rarely followed this premise, it more or less became the touchstone regarding all commerce and colonizing in North America.

From all indications, the tribes present in the formative period of colonial America did not view themselves as a cohesive racial group, certainly not in the sense that they are defined at present. The "very diversity of Indian tribes (has) dampened efforts to treat Indians as a monolithic group although historians have often struggle to bring meaning and understanding to what the non-Indian community views as Indian."⁴⁷ This disunity had great bearing on political and social matters and would work indiscriminately against all of the tribes as they faced the continual onslaught of immigrants. However, in their individual dealings with whites, tribes often supplied information about themselves and their histories.

George Rogers Clark and two army colonels are credited with recording the following story as told to them by a Chief Cornstalk who lived in the area of what is now West Virginia.

There once lived in the area a white people who originally were from the east, and had dwelled in large

⁴⁶Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, Clifford American Indians, American Justice. (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1983), 2.

⁴⁷Ibid., 1.

numbers a long, long time ago in the Ohio valley. Chased by a warring red tribe they fled westward to the falls of the Ohio river, near Louisville Kentucky where a bloody skirmish took place... the Indians attacked again and again and not a single white person lived. The fact that early settlers found a great number of human bones on a island near Louisville lends credibility to this legend.⁴⁸

To early settlers, North America may not have appeared to include elements indicating advanced civilization of the type found in the ancient stone cities of Meso and South America. Moreover, early Spanish incursion and subsequent French, English, and Dutch expeditions did not uncover the vast mineral wealth that was found in the latitudes below. But as the northern tribes were engaged in wars, and in turn dispossessed of their lands, newly arrived settlers discovered ample evidence of both highly developed and organized societies represented by the presence of manmade mounds and trumuli.

Gradually, it was supposed and accepted by some early scholars that since the recently departed Indians did not seem actively engaged in the type of pursuits which these impressive monuments seem to demand, in all probability they were built by a different tribe or preceding people. This notion, of an earlier race or culture, is traceable in part to stories supplied at that time by the tribes themselves,

⁴⁸Nancy Clark, "Prehistoric Race of White People May Have Lived in Kanaha Valley." Wonderful West Virginia. 50 (1986): 38.

many of whom were at a loss to explain the derivation of any earlier groups who may have raised earthworks.

Numerous and impressive scientific achievements were exemplified by the various designs and presence of thousands of dirt mounds and complex earthworks that were later found to possess sophisticated geometric layouts. In addition to these earthen monuments were numerous chambers, walls, and buildings which were constructed with the use of stone. Most of these were found in areas of present-day New England, the Northeastern Canadian provinces, and parts of the Middle Atlantic states. In the Southwest impressive apartment complexes and cliff dwelling communities complicated any effort of defining Indians as one-dimensional.

Citizens of the new American republic had two important objectives after the revolution and these included a desire to defend the borders and in time to expand geographically into adjacent areas. One of the prime movers for annexation of new territories was Thomas Jefferson, who as president was responsible for doubling the size of the United States territory. Among Jefferson's many interests was a fascination with the Indians and a sincere desire to discover their origins. He managed to practice a little archaeology early in his career, and like many other colonials he excavated a mound near his home in Virginia.

The future president did a fairly credible job of

profiling the barrows as is demonstrated by his report published in 1785. He observed that the mound seemed to indicate a great antiquity and probably was used at different times by different groups: "It consisted of several strata, one level having no correspondence with the one above."⁴⁹ He further postulated in reference to the possibility for Old World pre-Columbian contact, "that discoveries made long ago were sufficient to show that the passage from Europe to American was always practicable even to the imperfect navigation of ancient time."⁵⁰

It is difficult to presume to what extent, if any, that people emulated the many virtues that Jefferson exemplified, but there were those who shared his pursuit of excavating mounds, though likely in a less than scientific manner and for wholly different objectives than the celebrated statesman. Many of these "digs" undoubtedly yielded similar type artifacts including bones, tools, weapons, fetishes, and various implements that were interred, it is generally thought, to assist the deceased in their afterlife. Occasionally some item would be recovered that did not fit into the nuclear category presently labeled as typical "grave goods." However, many of these icons were not judged to be

⁴⁹Leo Duel, Conquistadors Without Swords. (New York: St. Martins Press, 1967), 399.

⁵⁰Ibid., 399.

out of context since at this time many believed that in the shady recess of the past, non-Indian cultures had resided or even co-habitated with the Indians. Some believed that the mounds were constructed by a now extinct race... to which belief many Indians either contributed to, or confirmed with their own stories and legends.

It is hard to say if the lost race theory can be traced directly to unusual grave goods, Indian legends, or curious enigmas that turned up as settlers expanded into new territories. Perhaps it was some combination thereof; however, the basis for arriving at some truth was immaterial as more pressing concerns involving survival, trade, and the current Indian problems dominated the thoughts and actions of immigrants and those anxious to settle lands. Not until the latter stages of the 1800's did the mounds gain the attention from the public at large and some newly created government agencies.

Robert Silverberg has made a close study of this period and postulates that the newly independent Americans were collectively disappointed that their adopted homeland did not possess the highly distinctive ruins that graced other lands. Italy had its colosseum, Egypt the pyramids, England had Stonehenge, but the author argues that the apparent absence of ancient memorial was a source of collective grief:

Our forefathers...lamented the lack of a usable past.
Many of them were educated men, aware of the

archaeological treasures of Europe and the near East. They expected to find in this green New World traces of awesome antiquity on which romantic myths could be founded; they did not like to feel that they were coming into a empty land peopled only by naked wandering savages. Even as they transplanted the traditions of west Europe to the new continent, they sought and did not find potent older traditions that would give their adopted land the cachet of great age.⁵¹

It is difficult to envision the pioneers and early settlers whose life was dominated with the pressing demands of survival, engaged in a concerted movement to organize a completely artificial tradition invented wholly without factual basis, as Silverberg suggests. Those few who may have actually claimed a connection between the mounds and some lost race possibly did so because of tangible evidence extracted from them. Artifacts, whose composition and appearance espoused a peculiar style, perhaps similar to an item found elsewhere, promoted such comparisons, rather than some random and spontaneously contrived hypothesis which Silverberg says approached that of a religious fervor.⁵²

The late 17th and early 18th centuries did not possess archaeologists in the sense that we distinguish them today. Periodically, materials pilfered from the mounds were brought to either a local expert, who was "known" to be a competent judge, or perhaps were put to the attention of a science

⁵¹Robert Silverberg, Mound Builders of Ancient America: Archaeology of a Myth. (New York: Graphic Society, 1968), 1.

⁵²Ibid., 6.

teacher who would then determine the identity of artifacts and what they did or did not represent.

These 'experts or scientists' were asked to establish what certain artifacts represented, but they possessed absolutely no training and very little context to determine such things. Pottery, jewelry, coins, inscribed plates, copper implements were all brought to self-appointed specialists who would determine their use, composition, source, and value. Over time there undoubtedly were countless authentic icons which unfortunately were misclassified or labeled incorrectly and discarded as worthless. Complicating the analysis were instances whereby items of fraudulent manufacture were submitted and positively identified by the same authorities, only to be proven fakes later. However, by the end of the century a solution to the guesswork was at hand.

The last quarter of the 19th century was a fast-moving era for both the United States and the Indian tribes, both of which were experiencing a period of great transition. Congress, much like the courts of 16th century Spain, was grappling over the status of the Indian, trying to settle many of the same questions that earlier confronted the Spanish. Both periods produced the same type of calculating decisions which proved ultimately not in the best interest of Indians.

Humanitarian organizations had risen up and fulfilled the

role formerly wielded by Church Missionaries, defending Indians and their rights, while big business, railroads, miners, cattlemen, and settlers all exerted great pressure on the government to acquire lands and resources still in Indian hands.

The analogy between the two periods is strikingly similar, especially considering that Indian origins would once again become a popular topic around the same time that Indian legal status was being adjusted to allow for a nearly total territorial and psychological metamorphoses to occur. While the parallel might be purely coincidental, both periods ushered in an era whereby Indians were compelled to be transformed into an amalgam of the dominant society, which the ruling authorities asserted would benefit them as human beings while coincidentally satisfying the propitious desires of powerful business concerns.

In both courts and conference, topics concerned with who the Indian was, where he came from, should he be controlled, and what should be done with him, were both discussed and debated. The results would in time impact the Federal Indian policy similar to the Spanish period. It was decided that Indians should be forced to replace their traditional lifestyle and heritage for one based more on white Christian values. Their territory would be reduced and reservations established to better control the desired process. The Indian

regrettably would not have much of a hand in the compilation and writing of history, his myths and legends, some of which were recorded, were often dismissed as evidence of a clever and fanciful imagination. Indian children were forced to substitute English for their tribal language in mandatory boarding schools, where they were introduced to the new recently drafted scientific version of their past.

Ironically, the little bit that we know about American Indian cultures is largely the result of one man's dream to create a legacy in his own honor. James Smithson, a European scholar, established a bequest designated be used for the creation of a research institution in the United States

The Smithsonian Institution was founded in 1846, "as an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."⁵³ Among the first manuscripts submitted to the new institute was a lengthy report co-written by E.G. Squire and E.H. Davis entitled Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley. In it, they offer a comprehensive survey of the numerous earthworks found in the river valleys of the Midwest; they also hypothesized that an ancient race of moundbuilders was responsible for the construction of said mounds. There was both support and criticism for this premise, and it became a dispute that would in time be settled under the supervision

⁵³Encyclopedia Britannica Micropedia, 1985 ed., s.v. "Smithsonian Institution", 10:900.

of the new institution.

Although prior to this time there had been numerous books and articles written and published dealing with this and other topics regarding pre-Columbian history, the founding of the Smithsonian marks the real beginning of a concerted effort to systematically survey and treat these subjects and to arrive at some consensus.

Forecast The Past

Not until fairly recently has there been a serious attempt to investigate or piece together a cohesive archaeological record for North America. Certainly what has been accomplished here is not comparable to the profound comprehension of ancient history retained for the Middle East or Europe. Even today many of American's top university archaeology departments, bypass sites in this country for the more familiar territory found overseas. While Central and South America and some parts of the Southwest have enjoyed exclusive attention, most of the territory north of Mexico, historically, has been ignored by the trained American archaeologist. Even though there has been some significant discoveries of late, there still seems to be a stigma or aloofness that discourages the kind of consequential research found elsewhere. It is as if there exists very little to investigate or perhaps that North American studies represent a less prestigious field when compared to Middle East or Mayan archaeology.

The manuscript compiled by Squire and Davis and published by the Smithsonian in 1847, had the effect of greatly increasing national and international interest in the mounds, while conversely diminishing their number. Part of the destruction might have resulted from the conclusions offered

at the end of their report suggesting who was responsible for building the mounds. The authors felt that due to the unlimited numbers, the strange configurations, and the nature of interred materials, that the mounds were tied to "the semi civilized nations which formerly had their seats among the Sierras of Mexico, upon the plains of Central America, and in Peru".⁵⁴

Since the riches of those areas to our south were well known and legendary, many people naturally assumed that a persistent digging might eventually produce a significant reward. At the least, some of the buried articles would make nice collectibles or decorations, or even be sold to another for a profit. Some items which were of an unusual nature would be submitted to a museum or to some expert who would determine the use, age, origin and value thereof. It was mainly in the 19th century that museums gathered materials and bid amongst themselves for that which was considered most precious. The curators would decide what a piece represented and often would give some recognition to the finder, if not a fee. These practices not only served to destroy many of the ancient cairns, but helped to undermine the validity for the current beliefs associated with the construction, function,

⁵⁴Ephraim G. Squier and E. H. Davis, Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley. (Smithsonian Contrabutions to knowledge, No. 1, 1848), 301 .

and age of the mounds.

One notable enthusiast who actively dug into burials and who ultimately came to wield a great deal of influence as far as American Antiquities were concerned, was the much celebrated John Wesley Powell. Although he would become most famous as the first person on record to successfully navigate the Colorado River through both canyon and cataract, he possessed an intense interest in the mounds. Even as a officer in the Union Army Powell found time and opportunity to excavate scores of the so-called Temple and Burial mounds.⁵⁵

Powell eventually was chosen to become the director of the Bureau of Ethnology which was a natural consequence of his life's experiences. He conceded that Squire and Davis's works had influenced his beliefs somewhat, and in 1859 he excavated several mounds in Illinois. He describes finding the usual grave goods: stone, bone, shell, and pottery, but in addition he also recovered some glass beads and a sheet of copper that was magnificently crafted into the figure of a bird. He reported that at first this discovery led him to suspect, if these "articles were the work of mound builders in pre-Columbian times, then the people must have possessed arts more advanced than those shown by the mound arts

⁵⁵Mahan, 41-45.

previously studied."⁵⁶

When the Civil War broke out, Powell made the most of the opportunity to resolve this and other mysteries presented by the mounds. Various campaigns brought him upon scores of fresh and untouched trumuli. Between 1861-64 he was able to quarry into numerous burials in Missouri, Tennessee, and Mississippi. He recalls finding the usual type objects, but in a mound near Nashville he "unearthed a stone grave which possessed more of the glass beads and a iron knife very much rusted".⁵⁷ It was with this find that Powell determined not only who built the mounds, but hereafter how objects would be classified with respect to age and origin. Having resolved in his mind many of the questions regarding the mounds, Powell's attention became focused upon other matters of inquiry, most notably the study of Indian languages and linguistics.

Powell mentions later that he never intended to have further dealings with the earthworks; for him most doubts regarding their existence were resolved. However as the director of the Bureau of Ethnology he found a rider attached to his appropriations bill in 1881 extolling him to create a

⁵⁶Cyrus Thomas, "Report on the Mound Explorations of the Bureau of Ethnology," Twelfth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1890, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894), XXXIX.

⁵⁷Ibid., XL.

commission to study and survey the mounds east of the Rockies. Several Congressmen were made aware of the destruction being wrought upon the mounds from all quarters. Deciding that very little could be done to stem the devastation, it was agreed that Powell's department should determine what was still present, where it was located, and then make every effort to professionally excavate and recover from the mounds what was still intact. These materials could then be moved to the National Museum in Washington for exhibit and further study.⁵⁸

For the job, Powell chose men who shared or adopted his viewpoints. He relished the fact that: "these zealous observers and students, who freely interchange their information and opinions, has resulted in their training with the acuteness of specialists, (although) corrected and generalized by the knowledge obtained from other authorities."⁵⁹ Powell's choice to head up the investigations was Cyrus Thomas, who spent nearly ten years investigating mounds in about twenty states. Thomas and his crews overcame many difficult obstacles just in locating mounds. Most of the work which then ensued was then nothing short of exhausting. One of their maps shows all of the known mound locations, which are so numerous that collectively they

⁵⁸Ibid., XLI.

⁵⁹Ibid.

appear to cover the eastern half of the country with the density of a rain cloud.

Once the field work was completed a massive report was compiled and it became the bulk of the Twelfth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology. This document contains descriptions and accounts for most of the sites that were surveyed. Additionally, it is replete with numerous charts, maps, drawings, photographs and most importantly conclusions. Powell who wrote the foreward, not only remarks how successful the whole project turned out, but declares that Thomas's treatise disposes of the widely held belief that "the ancient Tumuli of the eastern half of the United States are the remains of a people more highly cultured, than the tribes of Indians first encountered by the White man."⁶⁰

As Thomas and his crews progressed across the countryside they located over 2000 mounds, many of which were entered and excavated. The commission apparently adopted or employed Powell's hypothesis which is described in the introduction of the final report. Powell felt that the mounds belonged to two general categories based mainly on the objects he had earlier recovered from them, although other factors were considered by the commission. Naturally, Powell seems to have recognized that this situation presented him with a perfect opportunity

⁶⁰Ibid., XLV.

to publicly establish his earlier opinion regarding the mounds. Perhaps not coincidentally his thesis was confirmed by Thomas's findings.

One of his categories included those mounds which contained the (assumed) usual type burial objects composed mostly of stone, bone, shell, and pottery. If these mounds showed a distinctive age, and appeared to be undisturbed, then they were judged to have been built in pre-Columbian time. According to the report, the vast majority of the trumuli surveyed belonged to this category.⁶¹

The other smaller division also contained the same kinds of basic objects mentioned above, but in addition contained glass, copper, iron articles, or inscribed tablets. "These mounds were constructed subsequent to the advent of the white man on this continent, and the contents gave evidence of barter between the civilized and savage races."⁶² Not only is this conclusion scientifically baseless, assuming as it does that all Indians were incapable of manufacture prior to 1492, but it had the immediate and unfortunate consequence of rendering most of the unusual but scientifically recovered objects as being valueless. Countless specimens which were dug up or recovered from burial sites were later tossed away

⁶¹Ibid., XL.

⁶²Ibid.

or lost by scavengers convinced that the objects were only recently interred.⁶³

Thomas and his crews uncovered many such 'recently interred' objects, and were also asked to refer judgement on a wide assortment of others which were recovered by local landowners or found in recently plowed fields. One object, that was uncovered by Thomas's own survey crew in Tennessee, has ironically, thrown much doubt upon the Commission's (Powell's) hypothesis concerning post-Columbian mound construction. All along there has been a type of unwritten law which holds that until some item is recovered by an archaeologist in a professionally-excavated context and which demonstrates some possibility for pre-Columbian contact, then the whole question is moot. But such a scenario has reportedly occurred and has now become a catalyst for reopening the entire question of pre-Columbian contact.

⁶³Henriette Mertz, Atlantis (Chicago: By the Author, 1976) 99-113.

Bat Creek Tablet

After the Revolutionary war, the Cherokee people changed quickly and efficiently in nearly every aspect of their existence. By white precepts, they achieved an advanced standard of living, earning them the distinction of being labeled 'civilized'. This seeming laudable effort however, did not prevent their removal from the southeastern United States, and by 1840 only a small isolated group still remained in their former homeland. The rest were removed to Oklahoma on the infamous Trail of Tears.

During this episode, Cherokees had barely time to get out of their cabins before anxious white settlers moved in and claimed the structures along with the adjacent gardens and orchards, plus the land upon which they were located.⁶⁴ A Mr. M.M. Tipton had been living on one such abandoned tract for about 40 years, when a Bureau of Ethnology survey crew came along and requested permission to investigate the burial mounds located on his property. Tipton acceded to the request, and informed the crew chief John Emmert, that for as long as anyone had been living in these parts the mounds in question had always been covered with trees and shrubs.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Angie Debo, History of the Indians of The United States (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 117-25.

⁶⁵Thomas, 398.

There were three mounds on Tipton's property, which was located just above Bat Creek, a tributary to the Little Tennessee river in eastern Tennessee. The survey crew burrowed into all of them finding the usual samples of bone, shell, and stone artifacts, but under mound number three, they discovered some extraordinary items. Beneath the jaw bone of one of the skeletons were found:

two copper bracelets, a engraved stone, a small drilled fossil, a copper bead, a bone implement, and some small pieces of polished wood. The earth around the skeleton was wet and the pieces of wood soft and colored green by contact with the copper bracelets.⁶⁶

Besides the tablet, which Thomas labeled enigmatic, the objects all fit into categories which had been firmly established prior to the fieldwork. However, the final report on the survey contained a section devoted to inscribed tablets, and dealt with this specimen and a few others.

As was the routine, these objects along with thousands of others were removed and sent to the National Museum in Washington. Some would be further examined, but most were only catalogued and stored. The characters etched on the tablet were eventually determined by Cyrus Thomas to belong to the Cherokee syllabary, which was a logical guess based on geographical grounds; however he provided no translation. The tablet seemingly should have presented some problems in

⁶⁶Ibid.

a chronological sense as Thomas mentions that the mound showed great age. He felt that it had to be at least one hundred years old, yet the syllabary at the time of discovery had only been in use for sixty-five years. But aside from the brief description, the report contains nothing more than a photograph of the tablet.⁶⁷

Apparently, there is no reference to this Bat Creek tablet until 1964, when Henriette Mertz published a book astonishingly proposing that Homer's great epic the "Iliad" was a true and actual account of an ancient sea voyage. Her research determined that the territories and peculiarities mentioned in this account were not only identifiable, but geographically unique. Furthermore, she proposes that these locations could only be found in the western hemisphere, along the Atlantic seaboard.⁶⁸ Mertz mentions the existence of numerous material artifacts and oddities, that have been recovered in America over the years. Since most of these objects remain unexplained, Mertz thinks that some could possibly represent tangible proof for her ancient 'Greeks in America theory.'⁶⁹ The Bat Creek tablet was one possible

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Henriette Mertz, The Wine Dark Sea: Homer's Epic of the North Atlantic. (Chicago: Published by the Author, 1964) et. al.

⁶⁹Ibid., 130.

example of ancient contact according to Mertz, and she felt that the photograph published in the 1894 report was both mislabeled and shown upside down. She proposed that the letters belonged to a Phoenician alphabet, and that Cyrus Thomas had erred in assigning the characters to the Cherokee syllabary.⁷⁰

Evidently her claims were so fantastic that she had to privately publish this manuscript, but nonetheless her ideas have significantly impacted other contact studies. Joseph Mahan, who has become an authority on Cherokee history, also noticed that the picture in the Bureau's report had apparently been mislabeled. He could not find the basis within the syllabary upon which to determine what the tablet said. He proposed instead that a better match for the letters were to be found in a Canaanite script that spatially was related to Mertz's Phoenician.⁷¹ Mahan did come up with a tentative translation and sent his data along with a new photograph of the tablet to Cyrus Gordon, "one of the foremost authorities of Semitic alphabets", who at the time (1967) held the Chair of the Department of Mediterranean Studies at Brandeis

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Cyrus H. Gordon, Before Columbus: Pre-Columbian Links between the Old World and Ancient America. (New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1971), 182.

University.⁷²

Gordon published his findings on this and other alleged New World inscriptions in 1971. He concludes that the letters of the Bat Creek tablet belong to a Hebrew script, and that the tablet by virtue of its lineage, enjoys some relationship with the two alphabets mentioned above. However, according to Gordon, the Hebrew examples provide a much better match than any other script including Cherokee, and he illustrates the similarities with a comparative chart.⁷³

The entire identification process involves detective type analysis utilizing clues from different sources which in some way share a common relationship. This type of interdisciplinary approach is the trademark of most contact investigations taking place at the present time. Gordon noticed that certain clues could be weaned from a script's style. For example on the Bat Creek tablet, he noticed that one letter was "embellished with a little drilled hole (by the Y and L) and that this typifies (the script on a certain) Hebrew coin of the Roman period."⁷⁴ He then consulted numismatic sources in pursuit of a letter style that might be a close match for the characters found on the tablet. Gordon

⁷²Mahan, 51.

⁷³Gordon, 182.

⁷⁴Cyrus Gordon, Riddles in History (New York: Crown Publishers, 1974), 154.

located one possible association that existed in Palestine sometime between 100 and 200 A.D. He then consulted all historical records for this area and time period and proposed the following scenario.⁷⁵

A well-known rebellion took place in Jewish Palestine against Roman rule between the years 132-135 A.D., the result of which interrupted Roman influence for a couple of years before the revolt was put down. In the meantime the citizens of that region had to carry on with their commerce and needed to produce currency for the purpose. Coins were minted for business transactions and naturally these were fashioned to commemorate the victory.⁷⁶ The coins as well as the rebellion are named in honor of the uprisings leader, Bar Kokhba. Gordon found that the coins from this era exhibit the embellishment mentioned above and the letters have the same stylistic features as are found on the Bat Creek tablet.⁷⁷

We know that soon after the Romans squashed the uprising and reestablished control that many people either perished or fled the area as refugees. A number of these coins have been recovered in locations around the Mediterranean, possibly attesting to the flight of Bar Kokhba expatriates. Gordon

⁷⁵Gordon, Before Columbus, 182-5.

⁷⁶Ibid., 175-87.

⁷⁷Ibid., 176-8.

reports that the very same Bar Kokhba coins were dug up in Tennessee and Kentucky between 1932 and 1967. By themselves the coins are certainly not good evidence of contact prior to 1492. However, Hebrew script being located in the same area, with the same peculiar letter style, and dating from the same time period as the coins, argues for a connection of some sort.⁷⁸

Gordon postulates that as a result of war, perhaps a band of freedom seekers took to the sea in desperation, crossed the ocean and landed in the southeast. The coins would have been reasonable memorabilia to bring along, and might even have embodied a tangible inspiration for those in such dire straits. When the coins were discovered and dug up by ordinary citizens, their presence in an American context presented no problem for archaeologists, who reasoned that these coins likely were brought here during the historic period by collectors and later lost. Gordon accepts no such explanation, but thinks the relationship is fairly evident between the Bar Kokhba coins and the Bat Creek tablet. The inscribed artifact was professionally excavated from an untouched mound and was embellished with Hebrew script which translates "Year 1: Comet of the Jews". Thus Gordon concludes that contact is a entirely reasonable explanation for the

⁷⁸Ibid., 175.

tablet found in Tennessee.⁷⁹

Gordon's scholarship on the Bat Creek tablet and other Old World scripts located in the western hemisphere was not well received by mainstream scientists despite his prestigious and impeccable credentials. The Smithsonian's own magazine reviewed Gordon's work and hinted that race may be a possible underlying motive for his erudition. "Extreme diffusionists like Gordon often underestimate human inventiveness, explicitly American Indian civilization."⁸⁰ Another author familiar with early contact postulations feels that "Gordon's general views on pre-Columbian matters do not inspire confidence."⁸¹ Marshall McKusick the former editor of Archaeology, finds Gordon's assumptions misplaced and states that the Bat Creek's script is neither Hebrew nor Sequoyah's syllabary, but is a little known version of a secret Cherokee script that existed well before 1821 (see Fig. 1).

McKusick's argument centers on the testimony of Traveler Bird, who wrote a book dealing in part with Sequoyah and the Cherokee syllabary. Bird states that "Sequoyah did not invent the script, but only made popular a secret scribal society

⁷⁹Ibid., 185.

⁸⁰G. Strusvant, review of Before Columbus, by Cyrus Gordon, Smithsonian, April 1971, 62-63.

⁸¹Nigel Davies, Voyages to the New World (Southampton, G.B.: The Camelot Press LTD, 1979) 153.

BAT CREEK TABLET

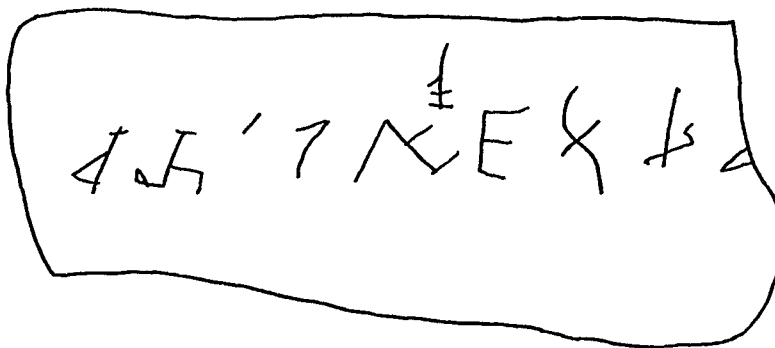


Fig. 1: Actual size tracing of the Bat Creek tablet recovered in 1886. Source: McCulloch (1988)

writing system that had been in use for a very long time."⁸² I consulted Dr. Robert Thomas who is both a member of the Cherokee tribe and an expert on the history of the syllabary; he states, "Mr. Bird's testimony is baseless and undocumented. Sequoyah was the script's inventor and Mr. Bird is the fraud."⁸³

Recently a paper published in the Tennessee Anthropologist addressed many of the problems associated with the Bat Creek Tablet. The paper's author, J. Houston McCulloch, logically compares the alphabetic characters of Bird's syllabary (as published by Foster); Sequoyah's syllabary (as published by Worcester); Gordon's Paleo Hebrew; and our own English alphabet.⁸⁴ Comparative charts are provided, and it is indicated that "Cherokee fits no better than English... only Hebrew fits well."⁸⁵ McCulloch does not limit his analysis to the tablet's characters alone. He essentially examines all the artifacts still held by the Smithsonian from Bat Creek mound number three.

McCulloch points out that most of the Adena and Hopewell

⁸²J. Houston McCulloch, "Bat Creek Inscription: Cherokee-Hebrew," Tennessee Anthropologist Fall (1988): 2-3.

⁸³Thomas, Robert K. Professor of American Indian Studies, University of Arizona. Personal Interview. 11 Feb. 1990.

⁸⁴McCulloch, 5-15.

⁸⁵Ibid., 1.

mounds date from 1000 B.C. to 700 A.D., and that 1335 marks the end of most burial mound construction based on modern dating techniques. Although in some cases it is possible that secondary internments could yield later dates.⁸⁶ The Cherokees, being late comers to the Tennessee valley, probably are not responsible for much mound building in the Southeast.

According to carbon dates gained from the Bat Creek mound #3, it was built well before the Cherokee period, and possibly some 1400 years before Emmert dug into it. McCulloch was able to secure a few fragments from the wooden ear spools, which auspiciously had not disintegrated due to sustained contact with the copper-like bracelets. The C-14 tests indicated that the wood spools retained a mean date of "345 A.D. + or - 170 years", this would allow a bottom end of 175 A.D. for the mound's construction, which is about forty years after the Bar Kokhba rebellion. McCulloch favors a different scenario for the script's arrival in Tennessee, however the time frame would seem to favor the Hebrew script over the Cherokee syllabary, and on this he concurs with Gordon.⁸⁷

McCulloch, in addition to the above findings, reveals that the bracelets were assayed for their metallic content by the Smithsonian in 1970, but for some reason the results were

⁸⁶Ibid., 2-3.

⁸⁷Ibid., 25.

never publicized. These items were originally identified as copper bracelets indicative of 19th century trade, however the test divulged the bracelets were "heavily laden yellow brass...containing approximately 27% zinc and 3.3% lead."⁸⁸ Although this brass composition is known to have been used in modern eras, it likewise is found to have been popular in the Eastern Mediterranean region within a very "narrow period, around 45 B.C. to 200 A.D."⁸⁹

Does this new information vindicate the hypothesis and research of Gordon? More importantly, has the one item been located that is beyond all suspicion and perhaps acceptable proof of contact for the scientific establishment? Will the Bat Creek tablet be, for the Hebrews and other Old World visitors, what L'aux Anse Meadows was for the Norse?

The answers for these and other logical inquiries are not easy to attain, especially when one considers the kind of implications that either a positive or negative response infers. It is difficult to dismiss the Bat Creek material as inconclusive. Researchers are trying to locate the same kinds of compelling evidence to show that pre-Columbian contact perhaps did occur.

The whole Bat Creek sequence presents serious problems

⁸⁸Ibid., 19.

⁸⁹Ibid., 33.

indicating that perhaps mound evidence has not been properly handled. One gets the feeling that other such problems presented themselves during the course of the ten-year Bureau of Ethnology investigation. As Thomas remarks in the summary:

Even should a few specimens of art of undoubted ante-Columbian origin be found in them, which are evidently beyond the capacity of any of the tribes known to have inhabited this section, this will not be sufficient to establish the theory that these works or any of them, were built by a lost race or by cultured races of Central America or Mexico, as they may have been obtained by intercourse with these cultured races, and may be relics wafted by winds and waves, in wrecked vessels, from the eastern continent.⁹⁰

Not long after the last shovel was packed away, and all the objects were safely removed to secluded storage within the bowels of the Smithsonian, the case for pre-Columbian contacts was closed. Even though the above disclaimer hints at some unsolved puzzles, not many career academics or scientists would challenge the edict set forth by J. W. Powell and the Smithsonian regarding pre-Columbian contact.

In the period since the Smithsonian published its conclusions, there were many instances whereby a newspaper or magazine reported some fantastic find that 'baffled the experts', but more often than not such mysteries would be solved in a manner befitting the no-contact-before-Columbus paradigm, and the pre-contact hypotheses would be kept

⁹⁰Thomas, 644.

languid. But a metamorphosis is now well underway.

PART TWO: Receding Antithesis

My preliminary investigations immediately revealed an apparent contempt and nearly total disregard fostered by most rank and file establishment scientists against pre-Columbian contact research. Most intellectual and academic professionals seem to oppose and ultimately ignore the scholarship which either supports or entertains theories concerned with pre-Columbian transoceanic contact, except perhaps that of the Vikings. If any reference is made in a mainstream journal regarding contact investigations, it is usually to condemn that which collectively has been described as "intellectual rubbish" and representing the "maniacal fringes of archaeology".⁹¹

Certainly this position on the part of the trained scientists is understandable to a point. After all, we are taught that a certain sequence of events occurred in history and more often than not research is conducted within the context and framework of this general model. Be that as it may, the main complaint against those who argue for intercontinental contact before Columbus, is that they lack identifiable and reliable evidence.

But now there is evidence, though not well known, or so

⁹¹Glyn Daniel, review of America B.C. by Barry Fell, New York Times Book Review, 13 March 1977, 8-11.

claim excited pre-contact researchers. In the past twenty years these investigators, who have been denied access to mainstream scientific journals, have created their own publications and now exhibit their findings and advancements to a limited but discerning audience. This period has also produced a large number of manuscripts, although many have been published privately.

In 1971 Cyrus Gordon published a book, in the popular press, that incorporated many of the elements that proved so profitable in the Viking research. His methods reflect a fresh approach by contact researchers to incorporate input from several disciplines, but rely primarily upon a central artery which passes through nearly all present investigations. In the case of the Vikings the Sagas were a primary focus, but more concrete indicators exist.

Gordon recognized that many ancient cultures used scripts to communicate. Furthermore, most of these scripts enjoyed a close relationship with trade. Often, wherever one was found, so was the other. Some of the ancient scripts that were very widespread not coincidentally belonged to the great trading cultures. As it stands today, contact research revolves around the discovery and identification of ancient scripts the study of which is called epigraphy. This exciting but rather obscure field of study has now become the nucleus of pre-contact research.

Other elements existed in ancient times that motivated human movement besides trade. Some include natural disasters, wars, famines, fluctuations in weather, and so on. Because certain ancient scripts are found in widely divided regions we have begun to appreciate the mobility that apparently existed back then. Likewise we have gained a better understanding of the peoples who possessed these writing systems; in essence, the ancient world appears to be far more sophisticated than previously thought. Some of this new understanding is due to epigraphic breakthroughs like the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Rosetta Stone. Those cultures who possessed some literacy and had the ability to navigate the seas have become the primary focus of pre-contact research.

Studies conducted from the late sixties up to the present reflect a new pattern of piecing together a larger puzzle which includes written material, oral traditions, technological capabilities, religious beliefs, regional and cultural supply and demand, and the presence of artifacts or such tangible evidence that relates in some manner to Old World civilizations. One major impact of discovering the Norse settlement in Newfoundland, was to demonstrate that if the Vikings made it, so could have others.

In the last two decades some archaeologists have begun to take pre-contact possibilities more seriously. Significant

other finds have occurred not only in the Canadian Maritime area, but in other parts of the hemisphere as well. Earlier discoveries that were previously mislabeled or judged to be fraudulent, have since been newly evaluated and vindicated from their previous and dubious distinctions. However, much remains unexplained.

"Independent inventionist" is how science explains the seeming relatedness or cultural parallels amid human development in different hemispheres. This viewpoint represents the belief that the human mind in itself is equipped with a basic intelligence, and that people in similar situations but in wholly opposite geographic locales, will react to the same human needs and wants with a similar response. So if a culture here is found to possess a certain method of burial, or employs an adz or gouge to work wood, or perhaps has fashioned a spear-point in a particular shape and size, it is because of a human-species genetic trait and not the result of a transfer of knowledge.

On the other end of the spectrum is the theory of diffusion. It maintains that man is basically un inventive and once a innovation is created it will in time spread to other regions. So if pyramids exist in Cambodia and Central America, as well as Egypt, it is because inhabitants of these regions experienced some element of communication. When these or other examples are said to share additional similarities

beyond their unique shape, such as similar functions, corresponding motifs, and other recognizable attributes, then diffusionists claim their case for contact is strengthened.

Diffusion might seem to represent the most basic tenet for the dispute concerning pre-Columbian contact. Although it is not a widely understood concept, it is employed to explain certain traits within human societies as they are introduced in the normal confines of our rudimentary education. I mention it here because often it is associated with contact research. However, it need not concern the primary focus of this paper which will concentrate on ancient Old World scripts whose roots are now fairly well established.

In 1976 Barry Fell published America B.C. which seems to have provided an important impetus for the now sustained investigation into pre-Columbian contacts. Fell states that throughout America there are numerous signs and tokens which can be traced to Old World peoples. Much of his research revolves around manmade marks, etchings, and designs that were left mainly on lithic surfaces in both regions. Fell claims that deciphered inscriptions found throughout this hemisphere are the surviving accounts of ancient Old World people, and perhaps the only physical vestiges of these now extinct cultures.⁹² But his critics look at the same material and

⁹²Barry Fell, America B.C. (New York NY: Pocket Books, 1976) et. al.

perceive it differently.

Most scientists agree that this hemisphere is chock full of petroglyphs and pictographs, and that they are symbolic of something, but all of them were left by Indians and due to their wide disparity and unsystematic appearance, only the authors and a few others sufficiently initiated, know of its meaning.⁹³ Today, most pictographs and petroglyphs are characterized as rock art. But the text of America B.C. presents examples of Old World scripts that undeniably resemble some of what has been found here.

Since 1976 Fell has offered hundreds of translations for America's inscribed panels. However, his conclusions have not been well received by the most eminent and popular scholars of anthropology and archaeology. He was once described by the editor of Archaeology magazine as proposing "a cuckoo fantasyland, where Romans, Greeks, Libyans, Phoenicians, Vikings and other white civilized nations of antiquity ruled the roost over timid, uninventive savages".⁹⁴ Even though Fell claims nothing of the sort, he has rightly been assigned the burden of proving his hypothesis, and has thus proceeded without any cooperation from the scientific

⁹³Grace Rajnovich, "Visions in the Quest for Medicine," Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology 14 (1989): et. al.

⁹⁴Marshall McKusrick, "Discussion" Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 9, part 1 (1981) 36.

establishment.

Fell is the best known proponent of early contacts and indeed his expertise is mostly concerned with epigraphy and linguistics. Although according to his most vocal critics he does not possess adequate credentials, very few scientists have the training or expertise to authoritatively refute his work, at least on strictly scientific grounds. Today's contact research has expanded into the realms of nearly twenty different scientific fields. The current trend is to cross-examine the findings and piece together what presently is fragmented evidence.

Some of the pre-contact studies are becoming more exact in methodology and technique. One such study involves plant dispersion. The movement of various plant species can now be traced from their point of development to other geographic regions. It has been demonstrated that many species have traveled incredibly long distances and overcome what appear to be formidable barriers, to exist somewhere else. Theoretically, the seeds of a plant species are carried by three principle agents: wind, water currents, and other organisms. In the latter category, man is the principle vehicle.⁹⁵

Some scientists claim that the sweet potato, certain

⁹⁵Encyclopedia Britannica Macropedia, 1985 ed., s.v. "Biosphere", 14:1013.

strains of cotton, and perhaps even corn were spread by native or visiting pre-Columbian man to other parts of the world.⁹⁶ But the present scientific belief in these cases is for a natural dispersal. For example, the sweet potato, which originated in South America, is found on nearly every island that belongs to Polynesia and Micronesia. It is thought that sweet potatoes were carried randomly by ocean currents and eventually washed up on these islands where they took root.⁹⁷

Diffusionists argue that perhaps this is possible for some plant species, but most would not survive the long inundation in salt water and extreme exposure to the sun.⁹⁸ However, they do agree that if it was possible for a sweet potato tuber to drift around the South Pacific, it is as possible for people in ocean going craft to do the same.⁹⁹ Besides, nearly all of the world's islands were inhabited prior to 1500 and this was not the result of Middle Age maritime technology.

⁹⁶Thor Heyerdahl, American Indians in the Pacific: the theory behind the Kon-Tiki Expedition (London: Allen and Unwin, 1952) 34-50.

⁹⁷Douglas E. Yen, "Construction of the Hypothesis for Distribution of the Sweet Potato" in Man Across the Sea, ed. Carol L. Riley (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971) 197.

⁹⁸Thor Heyerdahl, "Isolationist or Diffusionist," in The Quest for America, ed. Geoffrey Ashe, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 135.

⁹⁹Ibid., 136.

Despite all the data which has been collected, and all the theories that have been offered, there remains a general reluctance to seriously consider pre-Columbian contacts. There exists a scientific paradigm to which all findings must conform or generally support. When some item is scientifically discovered and appears unusual because of its location, rarely is it believed to be legitimate; often it is just left unexplained.

Campbell Grant, who has conducted abundant inquiry into American Indian rock art, dismisses any other group besides Indians as being responsible for leaving the marks and designs found here. He refers to theories about Old World contacts as belonging to the realm of the "absurd and fanciful."¹⁰⁰ However, in one of his publications he includes an example of a maze or labyrinth design, which he notes is "identical to others (found) in Crete, Italy, England, and Ireland; where they appear as iron age "cult" symbols."¹⁰¹ He remarks only that "how they got to America remains a mystery."¹⁰²

Although establishment scientists have sidestepped the pre-contact issue, it is becoming increasingly harder to do so. Every year new discoveries and methods for analyzing old

¹⁰⁰Campbell Grant, The Rock Art of the North American Indians (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 9.

¹⁰¹Ibid

¹⁰²Ibid., fig. 95.

evidence are brought forth for consideration. The chronological sequence which has long enjoyed scientific adherence is now being called on the carpet and increasingly, is becoming harder to defend. Pre-contact researchers are digging deeper and are increasingly more able to analyze and circulate their findings.

In a recent issue of American Antiquity, David Meltzer suggests that for too long scientists have all been reading the same journals and publications, and this is at the least a stifling condition. His article concerns the sobering realization that we really don't know when man came to America, and it may be time to consider some of the information formerly dismissed. He asks why it is that we (establishment scientists) "dismiss archaeological evidence because it fails to match the chronological expectations derived from non archaeological sources."¹⁰³ This of course is what the early contact researchers have been asking all along.

The traditional way of looking at pre-history has been built upon a time sequence that corresponds with the way stone points have been shaped by man. While this has been helpful in recognizing some of the innovations man has achieved along the way, the method itself may soon become obsolete. There is a need to consider other ancillary

¹⁰³Meltzer, 475.

evidence which contributes to a more rounded picture. Studies of bone types, blood classifications, even the new dating techniques have offered solutions to those problems long ignored by science. Combined with other studies, a whole new image of the ancient world has begun to materialize. Perhaps we need to consider everything for the time being and put the model aside, at least until such time as it has undergone realignment or overhaul.

In the last twenty years the tide seems to have changed and now more academics are willing to at least entertain the possibility that representatives of Old World cultures ventured here, or even vice-versa. Historians are examining the records; numismatists are looking over their coins; archaeologists are digging with a eye for the unusual; epigraphers are finding new keys to old scripts; and paleographers are finding ways of dating them.

All of this, combined with innovations in the study of plant and animal dispersions, linguistics, art history, religion, Native American oral traditions, comparative anatomy, cartography, and archaeoastronomy will conceivably supply information to help solve what has is now a five-hundred-year-old problem.

Symbols, Epigraphy, and Rock Art

Investigators who believe or consider it possible for at least some traffic to have crossed the oceans in ancient times and who additionally regard American artifacts as possible proof, consistently find themselves defending what has long been considered circumstantial evidence. The reason why artifacts are correctly or incorrectly designated as circumstantial has to do with how they were recovered and who found them. An item excavated by an amateur who did not employ the techniques utilized by the professional archaeologist, usually becomes suspect and is not considered reliable evidence.

To date, the only evidence of pre-Columbian contact that has enjoyed any support from the scientific establishment is L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland. Here, the ruins of Norse house sites have provided irrefutable testimony of the type demanded by the professional scientific organizations.

Judging from the most recent documents offered by pre-contact researchers, there has been a change in the approach used in presenting evidence supportive of a contact hypothesis. The emphasis now is to get away from the so-called circumstantial "tokens" as being primary indicators of contact, and instead relegate these artifacts and other unusual finds as belonging to an overall context of related

elements. Establishment scientists who refute all claims for early contacts consistently find some basis on which to discredit coins, tools, pottery, metal, or anything that is judged as enigmatic by itself. As the trained archaeologist has always maintained, "when an artifact seems markedly out of place, temporally or spatially, it cannot be accepted unless it has been excavated with extreme care and the circumstances of the find have been meticulously documented"¹⁰⁴

Since this 'doctrine' rules out a great deal of material, the research emphasis has now focused on other types of evidence which are seen as being immune from the circumstantial charge. This deviation in research probably does not represent some well thought out strategy as much as it shows the new methods and technologies currently available. Whether or not artifacts should be viewed as physical proof of contact, they are no longer exceedingly important in the present research dominated by epigraphy. The material produced by the latest pre-contact investigations may well justify and earn a new and candid hearing from the scientific establishment.

Currently there are two views on how writing began. One holds that there was a common root or monogenesis, which

¹⁰⁴G. Sturtevant, review of Before Columbus, by Cyrus Gordon, Smithsonian, April 1971, 63.

benefitted from several cross cultural influences. On the other hand, most scientists will say that writing developed independently in several isolated regions as the need arose.¹⁰⁵ The steps to writing, however, seem to be agreed upon and involve a three-stage process. The primary step towards written communication involves drawings and designs, and is called picture writing. This phase will in time lead to hieroglyphics, and finally the process culminates in the formation of alphabetic systems.¹⁰⁶ The need to come up with a system of visual communication to conduct relations within or between cultures follows no geographic or temporal restrictions, but writing in a alphabetic system seems to be much more constrained and traceable.¹⁰⁷

Today's epigraphic studies concentrate on those ancient scripts which are recorded on hard or very durable surfaces.¹⁰⁸ This field of study has really blossomed in the past twenty years and several heretofore unknown scripts have been deciphered and translated by researchers, who point to the resulting data as perhaps the only surviving records of

¹⁰⁵Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia, 1985 ed., s.v. "Writing", 29:989.

¹⁰⁶Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia, 1985 ed., s.v. "Culture", 16:929.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., "Writing", 989-90.

¹⁰⁸Encyclopedia Britannica: Micropedia, 1985 ed., s.v. "Epigraphy", 4:525.

ancient man. Primitive scripts have been demonstrated to reveal the thoughts, concerns, and accomplishments of those cultures who left them, and not abstract concepts that can never be understood, as was previously thought.¹⁰⁹

Basically, we know about the literate civilizations of the ancient world because they described themselves, mostly in scripts that were either developed or borrowed from others. Epigraphy acts as a bridge to ancient history especially as it shows the movement of things from one place to another. We can trace the movement of deities, goods, plants, people, animals, innovations, languages, symbols, and many other items via the study and identification of ancient scripts. If the script of one culture is found within the region of another, some type of communication can be inferred; moreover the nature of the contact is often revealed in a decipherment. For example, Norse runes have been found near the ancient "Greek port of Piraeus on the coast of the Black sea."¹¹⁰ The inscribed panel found here not only indicates the range of Norse ships, but their trading mission was revealed through a decipherment.

There is no precise record for the number of alphabetic scripts that actually exist, but each year more of the

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 525.

¹¹⁰Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia, 1985 ed. s.v. "History: Epigraphy", 20:664.

anonymous ones are deciphered. Breakthroughs have been aided by the recognition that many of the old writing systems seem to enjoy some type of a relationship or association. Furthermore, many markings that formerly were dismissed as incidental or doodling may prove to be attempts at communication. Just because a panel does not appear to be script should not mean that communication was not intended. Scholars in the past "defined writing as a device for recording language, dismissing all the early stages in which visual markings on objects do not serve this purpose...(they were only) feeble attempts in the direction of writing, not worthy of study".¹¹¹ But new research indicates that pictographs do embellish meaning although they do not have to be indicative of a specific language.

Here in America there is no official recognition for the existence of alphabetic scripts, which epigraphers claim are plainly evident on various lithic surfaces. Many of these alleged examples are stylistically and fundamentally different from each other, yet all of North America's petroglyphs, pictographs, and inscriptions are labeled collectively as rock art by the scientific establishment. And no distinctions are presently accepted. If some surface resembles a script in any way, shape, or form, it is said to be natural markings,

¹¹¹Ibid., "Writing", 984.

plowshares, nicks, weathering, erosion marks, or outright fraud. But epigraphers are seeking to demonstrate that a difference exists between two distinct archetypes.

'Rock art' can be found in nearly every region of the hemisphere, but still there is considerable debate as to whether any communication can be garnered from the examples. Garrick Mallery was one of the first to investigate the visual materials situated on American rocks. He felt that indeed some meaning can be derived from these graphic images and in fact differentiates rock art and rock writing. "Some portions of these pictures can be interpreted...(and may) represent the only intellectual remains of ancient inhabitants...wherever found they bear significantly upon the evolution of the human mind."¹¹²

Mallery, who conducted most of his research in the latter part of the 19th century, was of the opinion that Native Americans throughout the hemisphere are not given the credit they deserve for achieving well developed visual communication skills. Nearly one hundred years hence, scholarly investigations seem to confirm Mallery's hunch. LaVann Martineau has investigated American rock art and believes that much of it is actually understandable messages. He has found that many tribes possess words that refer "to reading and

¹¹²Garrick Mallery, Picture Writing of the American Indian, (New York: Dover Publications, 1972, Vol 2), 26.

writing... which are not descriptive words or borrowed, but are retained from a recent time when the Indians practiced their own form of picture writing."¹¹³

For years it has been thought that symbols common to rock art may have been supplied by designs found on pottery, basketry, and in quillwork, but Martineau believes the opposite is true. His recent decipherment of pictographic panels indicates that symbols were already in use well before they were employed for decorations. Furthermore, some symbols, like the mountain sheep or hump-back flute player, are thought to be so basic to thought expression that they can be found on opposite regions of the world. "Most world rock writings are strikingly similar to Indian pictography in their utilization of symbol combinations, incorporations, and the cluster method of arrangement."¹¹⁴ Martineau feels that a deciphered Indian pictography may help to understand rock writing panels in other world regions. Meanwhile there are examples of symbols found here and overseas that allegedly possess similar meanings and are identically portrayed.

We have already referred to the labyrinth, which is distinctive by shape and design and is found throughout the western world (see fig. 2). Sometimes called a maze or

¹¹³LaVann Martineau, The Rocks Begin To Speak (Las Vegas: K.C. Publications, 1973), 3.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 149.

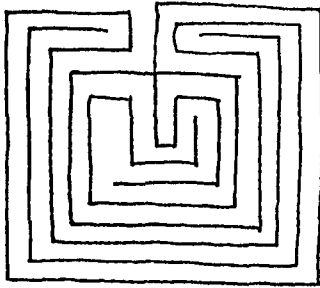
spiral, this design has been left on rocks in Sweden, Crete, Greece, Italy, Ireland, England, Spain, New Mexico and Arizona. Campbell Grant who is regarded as a expert on American rock art, thus far denies that any intelligible scripts exist here, but does admit that the extensive appearance of the labyrinth here and abroad remains a great mystery. He hopes that someday "it may be possible to arrive at some plausible explanation for rock art symbols."¹¹⁵

One possible explanation for the labyrinth has been supplied by the late Warren Cook, who was both an epigrapher and renowned historian. He says that the labyrinth symbol represents the earth mother and that this concept portrays a nearly universal divinity seemingly enjoying a special significance in cultures of every continent. There are other widely dispersed symbols besides the labyrinth which are either analogous to the earth mother character or representative of some other ethereal power.

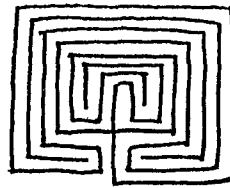
Around 500 B.C. a goddess became very popular in the western Mediterranean. Eventually, veneration to her spread to other regions via trade routes. This deity known as Tanith is universally represented with a triangular body and wide outstretched arms with hands turned up. Although there is some variation to this basic description, her figure is easily

¹¹⁵Grant, 13.

LABYRINTHS



Pylos, Greece



Oraibi Mesa, AZ.



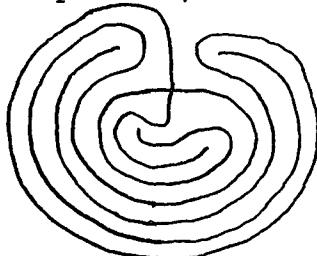
Shipaulovi, AZ.



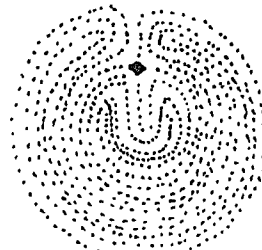
Cornwall, England



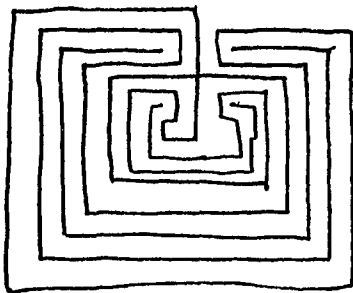
Galicia, Spain



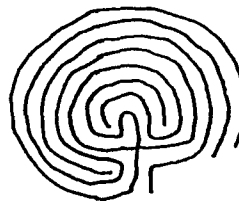
Gila Valley, AZ.



Trojeborg, Sweden



Pompeii, Italy



Lockstown, Ireland

Figs. 2: Assorted Labyrinths from around the world.
Source: Warren Cook, Castleton Vermont, (1988).

recognizable regardless of locale. One early Phoenician shrine containing a Tanith symbol has been found in southern Crete and is dated to 800 B.C.¹¹⁶ Other shrines were known to exist around the Mediterranean but especially in ancient Carthage, which was founded by the Phoenicians as a regional hub for their trading operations. By 500 B.C. Carthage was an influential and thriving port city with ties to civilizations all over the known world.

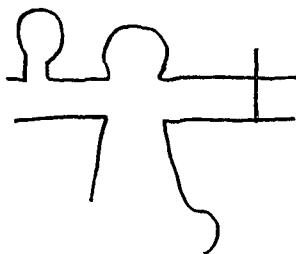
The trading Phoenicians are at least partly responsible for popularizing and diffusing the worship of Tanith throughout the ancient world. Ports of call visited by the Phoenicians or later Carthaginians were hosts to shrines and other memorabilia built in her honor. Very often her symbolic design is one of the few clues indicating that these ancient seafarers arrived at some place and thanked their goddess for the safe passage.

Some examples of the Tanith design are reported as distinguishable in American contexts. According to Dr. Cook, the design served the same purpose as did Tanith figures in the Old World (see fig. 3).¹¹⁷ Much of what we know about the Phoenicians comes from Greek, Egyptian, and Roman Sources all of whom attest to the great range of the Phoenician merchant

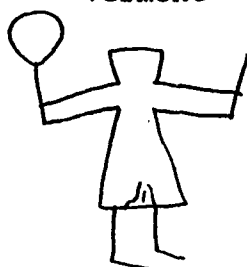
¹¹⁶Joseph W. Shaw, "Phoenicians in Southern Crete," 93 (1989), 173.

¹¹⁷Fell, "America B.C.", 236-8.

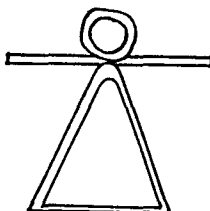
TANITH



Vermont



Oklahoma



Crete



Oklahoma

Figs. 3: Assorted figures of the Tanith or Byanu.
 Source: Warren Cook, Castleton Vermont, (1988), Crete; Shaw
 (1989)

marines. Contact proponents point to such cultural affinities as the Tanith symbol as feasible testimony for Phoenician, Carthaginian, or Celtic voyages to America since all were known to worship her.

Another widely worshiped god was known as Bel or Baal. He is sometimes symbolized by a design resembling an eye, but more often by three strokes situated below a vertical line (see fig. 4). This deity is mentioned in the bible and was the male partner of Tanith, but probably predated her by several centuries. As with any of the ancient cultures, Phoenician sailors called on their gods to show mercy or assistance as their situation might dictate. There are allegedly many pictorial and inscriptional references to Bel in this hemisphere and some are thought to have been left by Phoenicians. Many of these notations refer to Bel in his capacity as a sun god which provides some clue as to who might have left the message.

Since the famous Phoenician traders were known to range not only in the circa Mediterranean area, but up into the North Atlantic, around Africa, and possibly to India, they conceivably held few doubts as to power and benevolence of their gods. This might explain not only why these symbols are so widespread, but perhaps why others like the Celts, who adopted Phoenician technology, innovations, and customs, accepted some of their gods and cosmology as well.

Ogam Script in America

Presently, American epigraphers are studying inscriptions found in caves, on rock faces, tablets, and even on gravestones, all of which might prove to be examples of ancient European or Old World writing. Some of these samples date back to as early as 3500 years ago and theoretically were forgotten by intervening civilizations and cultures.¹¹⁸ One of the most prominent and widespread of these alleged scripts is called Ogam.

The roots of the Ogam system itself seem possibly to be related to Cuneiform writing used in the fertile crescent by the Sumerians and Hittites.¹¹⁹ Ogam is an alphabet and not a language, and as such it may have been employed by several different cultures, much like our 'English' alphabet is widely used and actually is based on earlier writing systems.¹²⁰ Theoretically, Ogam was carried by those ancestors of the Celts who came out of the eastern Mediterranean and who eventually ended up on the Iberian peninsula.

At one time there were a variety of Ogam scripts being

¹¹⁸Barry Fell, Saga America (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1982), et. al.

¹¹⁹Warren W. Dexter, Ogam Consaine and Tifinag Alphabets (Rutland, Vt: Academy Books, 1984), 5.

¹²⁰Ibid., 7.

used and examples have been found in the eastern Mediterranean, Spain, and even in regions of Central and North Africa. Warren Dexter, a professional photographer from Vermont, has traveled throughout the world and made a lifelong hobby of photographing most of the known examples of ancient Ogam. He has published several photos of religious objects inscribed with Ogam, one of which belongs to a Zulu witch doctor named Credo Mutwa.¹²³ Mutwa says that he can both read and write using Ogam, (not the Zulu term), and that it has been used as secret script by properly initiated Zulu witch doctors since very ancient times.¹²⁴

According to Fell, the oldest known artifact containing Ogam script is a pendant recovered at Windmill Hill England, by "British archaeologists who date it to around 2000 B.C."¹²⁵ Other ancient Old World examples include a pendant and some engraved pottery, excavated by Heinrich Schliemann in the 1870's at the ancient Troy site. And across in Egypt there is an Ogam notation located on a wall mural inside the tomb of Ramses VI, who ruled around 1150 B.C.¹²⁶ Celtic coins which

¹²³Barry Fell, "An Ancient Arabic Guide to Ogam on a Sacred Tablet from Zambia," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 12, part 1 (1984): 29-31.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Barry Fell, "Ogam Amulet of Windmill Hill," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 15 (1986): 34.

¹²⁶Dexter, 10.

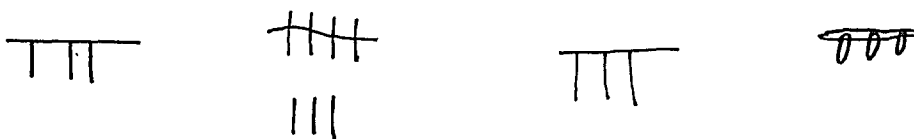
date from 200 B.C. have been recovered and also have Ogam imprinted on them (see fig. 4).¹²⁷

These examples, other than predating the accepted time of the script's creation in 4th century Ireland, by themselves may not appear so unusual within the context of the Old World. But there seems to be a traceable path of Ogam use originating in the Mediterranean and passing on to other areas. A principle strain seems to have matured in ancient Iberia, from which it forks out in two directions. One path roughly follows the west coast of Europe and spreads over to Ireland where the script blossomed into a variety of styles. The other branch heads straight out to sea, and according to American epigraphers, surfaces in various regions of this hemisphere.

The Irish offshoot in time splintered over time into at least 70 different forms, and can be found on both rocks and in manuscripts, although only a few examples exist on paper. There is a general absence of the Ogam examples within the Irish regions. This may be due to the advent of Christianity and the subsequent destruction of all reference to Celtic pagan religion. The Celts employed the script to notate religious references, as was the case in Iberia and other Celtic regions. The fact that many of the known Ogam notations refer to pagan gods and to pre-Christian festivals

¹²⁷Fell, "Origin of Ogam...", 49.

OGAM, OGAM CONSAINE, AND BEL



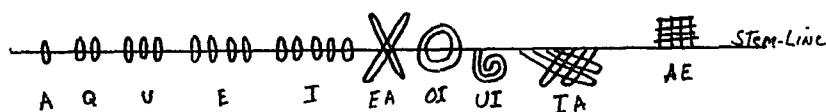
Bel, Troy

Ogam, Egypt

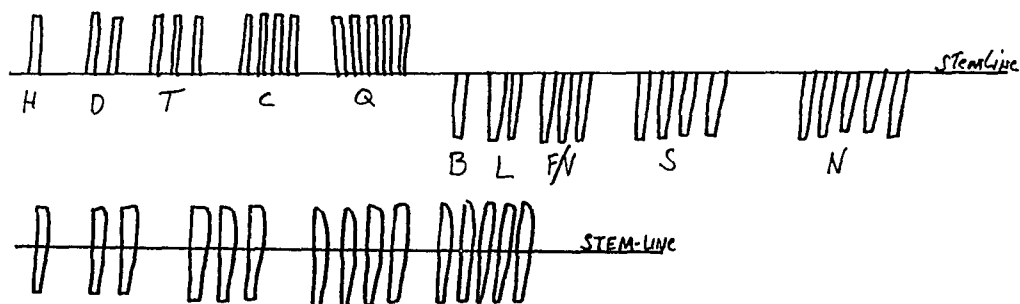
Bel, OK.

Bel, VT.

Bel inscriptions curtesy of Warren W. Dexter, (1984, 1988).



Ogam Vowels and Diphthongs, Source: Payne and Fell (1989).



Ogam Consaine, Source: Payne and Fell (1989)

festivals would make them obvious candidates for eradication, much as analogous Native American religious items and references were later destroyed.

However, in Ireland and on the continent, some use of Ogam survived into the Middle Ages, kept alive ironically by monks whose lifelong efforts concentrated on reproducing books and manuscripts by hand (see fig. 5). Fell has deciphered some of these examples which are found mostly in the margins of their works. His translations indicate that most of these margin notations were short messages seemingly penned by the scribes as lighthearted diversions from the tedious nature of their difficult occupation.¹²⁸

The Irish Ogams developed not only into many varieties, but in time were equipped with vowels and diphthongs as is demonstrated by the Book of Ballymote written in the 12th century A.D. In 1876, the Royal Irish Academy published a journal containing seventy known versions. Since that time a few more obscure, published Ogams have been found dating from before the time of Christ. A most astute Arab, by the name of Ahmad Bin Abubekr Bin Wahshih, compiled a book in 856 A.D. which included facsimiles of over 80 ancient alphabets, two of which are said to be very early versions of Ogam.¹²⁹

¹²⁸Ibid., 35-50.

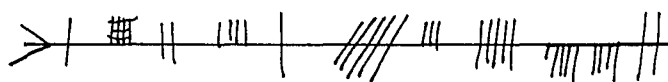
¹²⁹Dexter, 14.

Wahshih's book was recovered by Joseph Hammer in a Cairo library and republished by him in 1806. This document contains examples of what is referred to as 'tree Ogam'. Although both of these examples appear to be very similar, they evidently belonged to, and were utilized by, different people. This style of Ogam is composed with a vertical stem line having horizontal lines extending from it like branches on a tree. The number and location of the branches determine the letter value of the symbol. Wahshih states that one of the versions was perfected and used by the philosopher Dioscorides, while the other is shown to have been utilized by Plato. Although there are samples found outside the Mediterranean area that resemble this tree Ogam, none as yet have been linked to the above variants in any way.

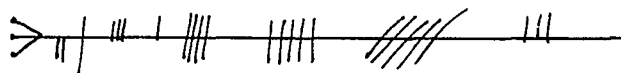
The Ogam branch which heads out to sea, figuratively follows the transatlantic currents and becomes American Ogam according to a host of American epigraphers. Examples are said to have been found in Vermont, West Virginia, California, Utah, Oklahoma, Colorado, parts of Central and South America, and present in Canada as well. As epigraphy has become the main artery that connects all research presently conducted for pre-Columbian contacts, a number of Ogam examples from the above areas will be examined.

PAPER OGAMS

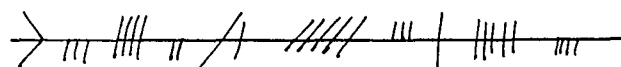
1.



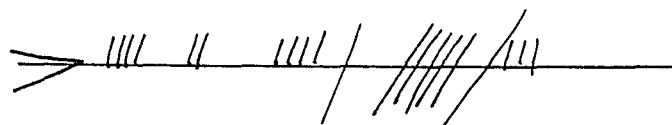
2.



3.



4.



Figs. 5 All Paper Ogams were found in a Priscian manuscript at St. Gall, Switzerland and published by Barry Fell (1989).

If indeed a form of Ogam was carried here in ancient times, it theoretically might be quite different from the versions found in the Old World, especially those which date from more recent eras. Apparently this is the case. Epigraphers point out that most American Ogams are consonantal alphabets and do not employ vowels, which is the usual circumstance with most ancient scripts. Vowels are a later invention and made a script easier to read, so for the more archaic alphabets vowels have to be inferred and added by the reader. Sometimes this process is aided by the inclusion of a rebus figure or symbol which denotes a context making the whole process much easier. A simple example of a rebus would be finding the letters c-t accompanied by an inscribed figure of a cat. The reader would gain a clue to either the individual word or perhaps the overall context via the symbol and would know to add an 'a' to the letters, that in essence the message somehow relates to cats.

The existence of Ogam consaine is not universally recognized, but it may be just a matter of time before it is widely accepted. Although none have shown up in mainstream journals, numerous examples from both hemispheres have now been found and published. The effort to gain official recognition for non-Irish examples of Ogam hinges upon a fresh evaluation of the most recent discoveries. Collectively, the present data seems to justify a new definition for the script.

To briefly present the official line on Ogam, it was "used by the Irish in the 4th century A.D." mostly on stone monuments; "in its basic form, Ogam consists of four sets of strokes, each containing 5 letters."¹³⁰ Most Irish versions are incised vertically or sometimes horizontally on a flat surface and read from right to left (semitic style). The strokes are usually situated above, below or through a stem-line, which can be substituted by the edge of a rock or simply inferred by the relative location of the strokes. "The fact that it has signs for h and z, which are not used in Irish, speaks against a purely Irish origin."¹³¹

The reputed American versions are usually found on rock, however, there are examples of bone tools and metal plates that have marks resembling or depicting Ogam. Thus far, all of the examples I have personally observed have been inscribed upon lithic surfaces. Some of these were present on cliff faces, in caves, on tablet-like stones, and on the surfaces of the New England stone chambers, which will be described presently.

Nearly all American Ogams, and most of the ones I have personally seen, read in the semitic mode (right to left), and utilize an inscribed horizontal line, a fissure, or a crack

¹³⁰Encyclopedia Britannica: Micropedia, 1985 ed. s.v. "Ogam", 8:885.

¹³¹Ibid.

in the rock surface as a stem-line. However, there are few examples for which the stem-line is inferred by the relative location of the strokes. Other Ogams are composed by strokes located on a circle which acts as the stem-line. Generally, the spacing of these strokes determines the particular letter.

The basic nature of this script sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish from other marks that are not script, but nevertheless are inscribed notations that are organized and grouped. According to many critics of American Ogam, this type of deliberate notation, probably applied by Native Americans, should readily invalidate the theory of Ogam consaine in America. Brendan O'Hehir who is a Celtic scholar at the University of California at Berkeley says, "so-called American Ogams do not look like genuine Ogams, (and) their purported transliteration are forced, and their translations ignorant gibberish".¹³²

Having been to numerous 'Ogam' sites around the country I can attest to the confusion that seems to exist when two factions call similar items by different names. Certainly the Ogam found in Ireland is well established as alphabetic and decipherable, while Ogam sites in America have only recently been examined and probed for some meaning. One group refers

¹³²Brendan O Hehir, "The Origin, Development, and History of the Ogam Script: Facts and Conjectures," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 18 (1989): 30.

to the marks as incidental or tool marks in an Indian rock art context, while the other group tries to draw some conclusions from the letters of a translated script.

A few examples of alleged American Ogams are the stroke-like notches often employed in historical times by Native Americans making numerical notations. This practice, commonly referred to as the 'winter counts' or 'tallies,' was especially evident among the Plains tribes. Winter counts are actually a type of art form that can be described as a narrative record of a tribe or in many cases, an individual.¹³³ The context of the message could be a record of history, battle scenes, hunting exploits, or even an account of one's possessions. Often, symbolic notations were accompanied by strokes, thought to represent numerical denominations.¹³⁴

One such example from Wind River reservation in Wyoming is composed of a human figure with outstretched arms holding a cross in each hand. Immediately over the top of this figure is a series of grooves (at least 25), that are grouped together above a horizontal line. A reasonable interpretation of the panel is the existence of "an Arapaho legend...(that) refers to an event which took place near Fort Laramie at the

¹³³Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia, 1985 ed., s.v. "Winter counts," 13:398.

¹³⁴James Keyser and Linea Sundstorm, Rock Art of Western South Dakota (Sioux Falls, SD: South Dakota Archaeological Society, 1984), et. al.

Great Peace council in 1851. The famous Jesuit missionary Father Peter De Smet, a key figure at that council, baptized 305 Arapaho people."¹³⁵ The style of this petroglyph certainly favors a Native American author and may well represent the above account(see fig. 6).

Arlington Mallery who was one of the first Americans to visit, record, and publish Indian 'rock art' sites from around the Western hemisphere, found many examples which exhibited notch like strokes. These examples were either incised, pecked, or painted on rock surfaces. One example, from Boca San Pedro in the Baja California, includes groupings of strokes, dots, and circles which may have some significance, but do not appear to be similar to the Ogam style of grooves.¹³⁶ (see fig. 6)

South Dakota contains hundreds of known Rock Art sites that represent various styles. One study has separated this state's examples into four categories and assigned a chronological sequence, thus distinguishing each style's period of popularity. According to this investigation, the most recent material used since 1750 belongs to "biographic" style, and includes the winter counts mentined above.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Indian Mission Foundation, "Only the Rocks Last Forever," Wind River Rendezvous 18 (1988): 11.

¹³⁶Mallery, 683.

¹³⁷Keyser and Sundstorm, 50.

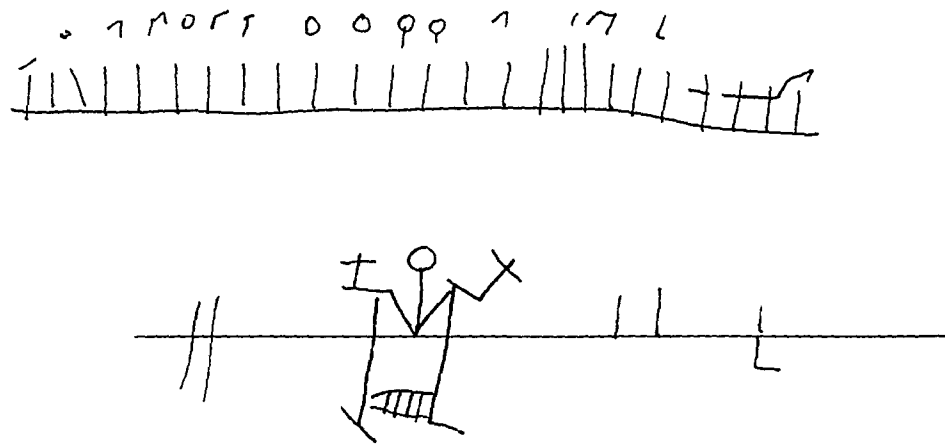


Fig. 5a Wyoming Stroke Petroglyph, Source: Wind River Rendezvous (1988).

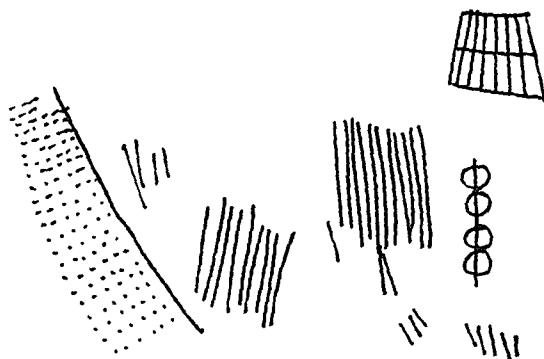


Fig. 5b Stroke Petroglyphs from Baja, California. Source: Arlington Mallery (1896)

A related style that is dated slightly earlier (1600), but essentially contemporaneous, is the "hoofprint" type.¹³⁸ This style is well named as it is dominated by semicircles in numerical groups. The next style is called "shield bearing warrior", and is thought to have preceded Columbus by 200 years, lasting until 1750.¹³⁹ As with the preceding division, this style is aptly named, and shows a dominance of human figures holding shields. The earliest style is labeled "geometric abstract" and according to the research team of James Keyser and Linea Sundstorm, occurs before 1300 A.D.¹⁴⁰

Most of the examples from this last category bear notch-like notations, and are the sole content of the inscribed panel. Many samples greatly resemble the Ogam style, as indicated by the figures shown (see fig. 7). The authors, however, do not propose such a connection and instead suggest that many of the panel's notches and stroke marks represent tool sharpening grooves. It is felt that the antler or the bone points that may have been employed to carve these panels had to be constantly honed, thus the grooves that accompany some of the stylized figures probably attest to this routine sharpening. What remains unexplained, however, are those

¹³⁸Ibid., 50.

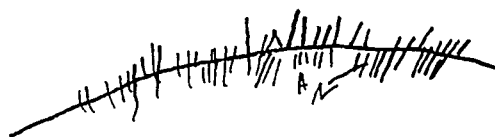
¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

panels which are strictly grooves and notches, and/or are so situated that they could not have served a utilitarian function. For example, some notations are situated high up on a wall, effectively eliminating its use in a routine honing of points.

To date, much of South Dakota material remains unexamined by epigraphers who are trying to identify American Ogams. On the other hand, these same investigators have been busy in other locations and now claim to have established a connection between Old and New World Ogams. The following section will present a sampling of sites throughout the country which contain alleged Ogam scripts.

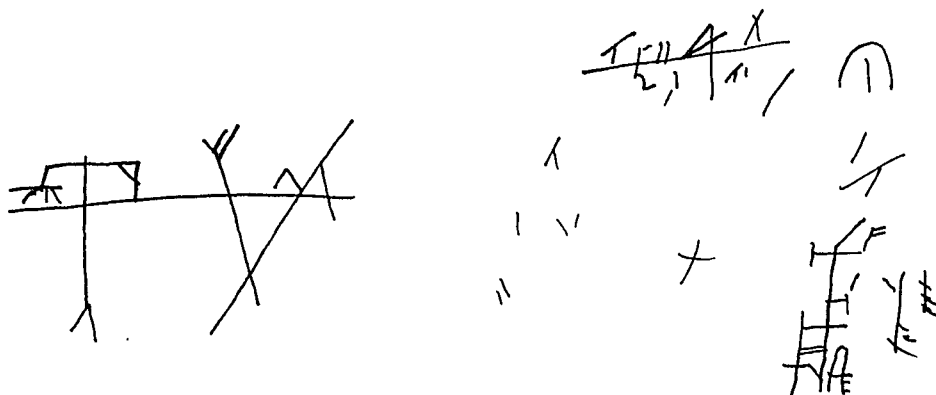
SOUTH DAKOTA ROCK ART



These marks are from panel 13, S.D. Rock Art, (1984).



These marks are from panel 15, S.D. Rock Art, (1984).



These marks are from panels 14 and 16 S.D. Rock Art, (1984).

Christmas in West Virginia

Our first example is an Ogam panel located in West Virginia which is believed to be more recent than most of the other sites. Since American examples of Ogam are said to span a period of at least 2500 years, theoretically they would be representative of both Christian and pre-Christian or pagan Celts. As indicated, there is no scientific recognition of Ogam usage here or for its existence outside of Ireland. The examples here differ from most Irish types in two ways: First, American types rarely are found to employ the edge of a rock for its stem-line; secondly, the American examples are almost always Ogam consaine, which omit the vowels.

What really makes this scenario intriguing as well as believable is that these stroke-like inscriptions have been known for a long time, yet for only about fifteen years has the expertise to translate them been available. Excited epigraphers, who translate a message and then find that it predicts a natural phenomena that eventually comes to pass, argue that such sites offer a solid case for authenticity.

Many Ogam sites incorporate the long-lost practice of archaeoastronomy, once widespread and highly developed in the ancient world. Although this topic will be discussed more in detail in the following chapter, archaeoastronomy presently examines man-made buildings, natural and artificially placed

stones, pillars, caves, and other objects that are strategically aligned so that empyrean movements are highlighted and made more noticeable to the eyes of man. A case in point would be the petroglyphs of southern West Virginia that were described in that state's official magazine in 1983:

In early december 1982 it (Wyoming county petroglyph) was identified as an ancient Irish script called Celtic Ogam and deciphered by Dr. Barry Fell. The translation, which revealed an early Christian message, began: "At the time of sunrise a ray grazes the notch on the left side on Christmas Day." To verify Fell's translation, the investigative team revisited the site at the time of the winter solstice on December 22, 1982. At that time, team members watched as a sunbeam funneled through a three sided opening on the left side of the rock shelter and struck the sun symbol on the left side of the petroglyph. The rising sun soon bathed the entire panel in light. Members of the team later visited the site at sunrise on various other days of the year and observed that sun only partially lit the petroglyph. The phenomenon apparently occurs only at the winter solstice.¹⁴¹

The editor of the magazine commented in a updated article that this story inspired a tremendous amount of interest. The publishers were hoping to receive detailed scientific challenges to both the story and the inferences that were presented, but no objections were forthcoming; in fact the editor repeats his "previously extended invitation to archaeologists and linguists with opposing views to submit opposition...so that the reader should have the freedom to

¹⁴¹Arnout Hyde Jr., "Petroglyph Case Remains Open," Wild West Virginia 50 (1986): 23.

decide for himself if the evidence is plausible."¹⁴²

One distinguished Celtic scholar who has since responded is Dr. Robert T. Meyer, Professor of Celtic Studies at Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. As a teacher of Old Irish he was a bit more than curious about these claims and visited the site to see for himself. Upon examination of the panel he declared it to be an example of Ogam script. As to its authenticity, he states:

Nobody could have faked this sort of thing unless they had a very deep knowledge of Celtic philology, for this is very archaic, and it will probably be from the sixth or seventh centuries. This for Celtic scholars is at least as important as the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls...for this is very archaic Old Irish.¹⁴³

Many of the advancements that have occurred in Ogam decipherment have only been achieved because of recent discoveries and innovative methodology. Researchers currently apply these new analytic tools to Ogams which formerly were ignored or identified as something else. Now, under different circumstances, scripts make sense and are believed to be legitimate. This scenario has occurred at a number of sites that previously were not understood, but now deserve a re-examination according to confident epigraphers.

¹⁴²Ibid., 22.

¹⁴³Ibid.

OKLARADO CELTS

In the southeastern corner of Colorado and the bordering Oklahoma panhandle region is located a series of canyons which generally run in a north-south direction, draining the relatively flat prairie country into the Cimarron river and eventually into the Arkansas. Many of these canyon walls are riddled with caves and outcroppings that have been utilized by man over the centuries for a variety of purposes. Prior to white settlement, but during the historic period, this region was part of the great buffalo range and the Southern Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Comanche were among some of the tribes that camped and hunted in this area. After the Homestead Act, the area became a farming region until the dust-bowl days of the thirties when most of the people went somewhere else. Today the area is part of the Comanche National Grasslands Preservation Area and home to a few ranchers who run cattle on the range.

Back in the late seventies, many of these ranchers became aware that the rock faces and cave walls of this region held important research material for epigraphers who responded to reports of alleged ancient scripts located there. No one had ever conducted a survey of the material, although the ranchers and government range officials were acquainted with the markings. For years these petroglyphs were believed to be

tool sharpening grooves or unusual Indian rock art.

If not for a trip I made into this area in late spring of 1987, I would have never become involved with pre-contact research. At the time, I had recently completed reading Ancient Celtic America, which describes some of this area's petroglyphs and scriptural notations. This manuscript presented what appeared to be very compelling evidence for the presence of Old World scripts in this region. So, accompanied by my brother and nephew, I arranged to visit 'Oklarado' as the local inhabitants call it, and have a 'look-see' for myself.

Much of the appeal of these alleged inscriptions, and indeed a large part of their validation, involves some understanding of an emerging study called archaeoastronomy. This soon-to-be scientific discipline is so novel that, as yet, dictionaries and even encyclopedias provide no entry for it. However, ancient man seems to be long familiar with archaeoastronomy, which appears to have played a key role in his lifestyle.

Recent studies of archaeoastronomic sites from around the world indicate that science and religion were intertwined with engineering and history for the builders and inhabitants of these sites, and that apparently these sites were designed to either access the power or at least make note of a human relationship with the heavens above. We know from the study

of individual cultural mythologies that often ancient man viewed himself as a active participant in the world order, and part of that order included the sun, moon, planets, and stars.

Archaeoastronomy seeks to combine input from anthropology, astronomy, archaeology, epigraphy, architecture, and art history in order to arrive at some understanding of the highly advanced wisdom that man formerly possessed about the earth and its extended cosmos. Ancient notations and ruins display an understanding of the natural mechanics that seem to regulate all movement, but accordingly are subject to forces presently referred to as supernatural or extraterrestrial. Studies show that man's relationship with the heavens was a very sacred and serious business, and because this relationship has not been examined to any great extent as yet, we lack an accurate understanding of how the ancients integrated "this astronomical knowledge into their religion, mythology, art, and daily lives."¹⁴⁴

In a recent edition of the National Geographic, Richard Carlson examines how three different Native American groups displayed archaeoastronomy as an important ingredient of their existence. Carlson feels that these Indians did not chart celestial movements as a scientist might mainly because "the movements of sun and moon were the journeys of gods

¹⁴⁴John B Carlson, "America's Ancient Skywatchers," National Geographic Society 177 (1990): 86.

personified."¹⁴⁵ Theoretically, whatever happens in the above has a reciprocal effect on the below (earth), and all through the ancient world are structures, notations, modified natural settings, and engineered devices that enabled man to keep the relationship between the above and below strong and orderly.

Carlson feels that among the underlying motives for astro-observation was a need to know the proper day for conducting rituals; to predict times of commencement for certain activities in the animal or plant sphere; to gain an ability for predicting rain or seasonal storms; and to organize the processes that result in crop cultivation.¹⁴⁶ All of these aspects imply civilization and indeed each civilization seems to have had its own way to relate to the cosmos. Carlson's examples show American Indian groups possessed various names and symbols that represent important deities who have control within and upon their world, and thus were recognized for their power.

Everywhere in the world the sun rises and sets, although depending on latitude and season the phenomena varies in the length of time. Knowledge accumulated over generations leads to perspectives that are like a signature for the culture involved in celestial observations and no two cultures see

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 86.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

exactly the same. Today there is physical proof that many civilizations incorporated the influences of science and religion and built structures that were designed to benefit from the accumulative knowledge of their sky-watchers.

Casa Grande or the big house located about 70 miles north of Tucson is such a structure, built so that on the morning of the spring equinox rays of sunlight shine through a window and highlight a notch in the wall opposite the opening. Many of the so-called primitive societies built their homes with such directional alignments, but perhaps not as precisely. The Navajo hogan would be one example. In addition there are natural settings that have been slightly modified to accent or track the movement of the sun. One such observation device is found at Chaco Canyon and called the "sun dagger".¹⁴⁷

A symbol identified as a sun graph, but resembling a spiral or labyrinth, is situated high up on Fajada Butte above the ruins of Chaco Canyon. This design is engraved on a wall opposite some thin but very large boulders which are spread a few inches apart. On the days of the spring and fall equinox a sliver of light resembling a knife passes between two of the boulders and highlights one side of the design. On the day of the summer solstice or midway between the equinox days, the dagger appears right in the middle of the

¹⁴⁷Thomas Y. Canby, "The Anasazi," National Geographic Society 584 (1982): 580.

design. However, on the day of the winter solstice two daggers appear, one on each side of the design.¹⁴⁸ "Discovered by Anna Safaer in 1977, this Chacoan sun dagger is widely regarded as the pre-historic southwest's most sophisticated astronomical device."¹⁴⁹

The year following this discovery another equally sophisticated archaeoastronomic site was discovered by Gloria Farley in the Oklahoma panhandle about 300 miles west of Chaco Canyon.¹⁵⁰ The material that she happened upon was situated in a number of caves in the general area of the Cimarron river as described above. There were five different caves located in a draw and in every one of them was found the familiar groove and strike marks that typify Ogam script.

At the time of discovery no astronomical significance was suspected. Farley carefully recorded the grooved notations and sent them off to the National Decipherment Center in San Diego reporting that there were apparently several symbolic motifs etched into the cave walls along-side the script, which she suggested resembled mythological

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 580.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Gloria Farley, "Mythology of the Petroglyphs of the Anubis Caves," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 14 (1985): 79-90.

characters found in the Old World.¹⁵¹ One of these characters favored an Egyptian deity known as Anubis, who is often symbolized as a dog-like figure or a man with a dog head.¹⁵² Another design resembled Epona, who is associated with the Celts, and often is portrayed as a horse or a woman riding side-saddle upon a horse.¹⁵³ There were other symbols as well, all allegorically providing clues as to how the script might be deciphered, what it meant, and more importantly, who put it there.

Once some of the inscriptions were deciphered it became evident that perhaps this site was some type of celestial tracking device. Equipped with some of the translations, Dr. Jon Polansky in 1981 predicted that these caves were strategically aligned, and due to their westward orientation it was likely that "it should be an equinox site with some sort of light and shadow play involving the (Anubis) petroglyph."¹⁵⁴

The research involved with the decipherment showed that the primary language represented in the caves was Celtiberian,

¹⁵¹Farley, 80-9.

¹⁵²William R. McGlone and Phillip M. Leonard, Ancient Celtic America (Fresno, CA: Panorama West Books, 1986), 121.

¹⁵³Gloria Farley and John Polansky, "The Celtic Horse Goddess," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 16 (1987): 203.

¹⁵⁴McGlone and Leonard, 121.

which is closely related to Gaelic. However, this language was represented by at least three different but related scripts within the caves, including Ogam consaine, Bricren Ogam (dotted ogam), and Numidian.¹⁵⁵ By 1985 the scripts were mostly deciphered and published by Barry Fell, after which a team of researchers consisting of Bill McGlone, Phillip Leonard, Jon Polansky, and Rollin Gillespie anxiously revisited the caves on the equinox day to ascertain if there was any link between the translated scripts, the symbolic images, the suns rays, and the relative positions of the caves. Cave number two immediately proved to present the most dramatic evidence for a relationship between the suns movement and the script.¹⁵⁶

One of the deciphered communications which was located on the back left wall of cave number two read "at sundown the shadow moves nearly to the jaw of the image of the jackal divinity."¹⁵⁷ Immediately above this passage are five engraved images identified by the research team as the rising sun; the sun god figure (on top of a box); a setting sun image; a

¹⁵⁵Gloria Farley, "The Anubis Cave is a Celtic Calendar," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 18 (1989): 167.

¹⁵⁶McGlone and Leonard, 126.

¹⁵⁷Barry Fell, "Parietal Inscriptions of the Anubis Caves," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 14 (1985): 45-60.

falling sun image, which hangs down from the setting sun by a string; and finally the dog-like or jackal representation of Anubis."¹⁵⁸ An adjacent inscription confirms the when and why of the panel and reads, "Enact at Sunset the Rites of Bel, Assembling at the Hour in Worship."¹⁵⁹

On the evening of the spring equinox in 1985 the team gathered inside the cave to observe if the movement of the sun would confirmed the deciphered inscriptions. As the last rays of the sunlight began to pass through the cave entrance, several shadows were created. One of them became a pointer of darkness that slowly passed like the end of a stick across the Anubis panel. The members of the research team likened this effect to the spot-lighting of characters in an Opera and thus dubbed the following sequence "the silent opera."¹⁶⁰

At first the whole panel was bathed in sunlight, but as time quickly passed each of the figures was eclipsed by darkness beginning with the rising sun image; once the pointer moved across it, a larger shadow moved up and covered it completely. This action was repeated for each one of the images. Next after the rising sun the little pointer cut a shadow through the box upon which the sun god stands. In a

¹⁵⁸McGlone and Leonard, 122.

¹⁵⁹Fell, "Parietal Inscriptions...", 51.

¹⁶⁰McGlone and Leonard, 120.

near perfect line the pointer's shadow divided the box into two triangular halves from the bottom left corner to the top right corner (box is displayed in perspective style). Moving along, the pointer touched the setting sun figure. The enveloping shadow moved up under it so that the sun's position on the adjacent mesa was exactly reproduced on the panel wall. The pace now picked up and the pointer moved through this image and darkened the dangling sun figure for a brief moment. At this point the jackal or Anubis figure was the only image still lit, everything else having been darkened, thus fulfilling the scriptural passage. The sun's actions apparently confirmed Polansky's theory, as well as corroborated the inscriptions decipherment.¹⁶¹

After a few minutes the sun set and the symbols in the cave were in darkness. The sun figuratively had now passed into the realm of the nether world for the night. According to the mythologies of several circa Mediterranean peoples it also entered into the realm of Anubis or Bel, depending on which direction the sun was heading (winter, summer).¹⁶² According to McGlone and Leonard, all the symbols have some significance. For example, the box is supposed to be a "serakh" upon which Egyptian deities and rulers were often

¹⁶¹Ibid., 122-26.

¹⁶²Ibid.

pictured. The Anubis figure is said to represent safe passage, perhaps for the sun, which in this case one might infer, safely returns to the equinox point again in six months.¹⁶³

This particular panel is only one of several located in Anubis cave number two, but it indicates and expresses a unique version of the relationship that its authors held with the universe, as indicated by the sun's movement. The choice of images shows some borrowing of deities that could only have come from the circa Mediterranean area. According to the research team:

The worship of Anubis in Celtic lands and the presence of his image in association with Ogam writing is not surprising, because overlapping and intermixing of such cultural elements took place extensively in the Old World, particularly in the area of the Iberian peninsula."¹⁶⁴

The research team concluded from the evidence that Celt-Iberians at some time in the past came to this region and left definitive proof.

When I arrived in this area I went first to the Comanche National Grasslands headquarters in order to get some directions and to see what "their" opinion was of these sites. As luck would have it, I received both. The director possessed an open mind to the whole scenario and felt that

¹⁶³Ibid., 127-32.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 131.

the evidence and conclusions had been arrived at in a scientific manner, but he was reluctant to say it was the work of Celts. As for directions, he could not disclose the whereabouts of the Anubis complex, but another similar archaeoastronomic cave was located nearby and on public land. McGlone and Leonard described this site in Ancient Celtic America as well, and the park director supplied a map and verbal directions on how to get to it. The site was located in a place called Picture Canyon and was called Crack Cave.

After a few wrong turns and a equal number of 'backups', the correct canyon was located and my brother spotted the cave. It was as described in the book: a small cave with an eastern orientation, having a narrow entrance leading into a larger chamber. All along the walls we saw the Ogam notations and the symbols that were said to be present. To us, the evidence seemed real enough. Although how could we say that Celts had left the notations? In this particular cave, Ogam represented the only marks. Elsewhere in the canyon we came across petroglyphs that were of a completely different style, some appeared to depict a buffalo hunt with horses, bows, and arrows.

Scot Monahan captured on film the sequence that occurs on the equinox sunrise at Crack Cave, which has a history similar to the Anubis caves. The marks and inscriptions here were discovered long before the script was deciphered, and the

archaeoastronomic significance was understood and confirmed by the sun's actions. Two of the inscriptions present in the cave read, "LINGERS WITHIN FOR ONE DAYS DURATION, THE SUN"¹⁶⁵; another says, "SUN STRIKES HERE ON THE DAY OF BEL".¹⁶⁶ We were able to locate these two inscriptions in the cave's interior with the aid of facsimiles obtained from the Crack Cave report.¹⁶⁷ But since we had arrived there well after the day of Bel (March 22), we were not able to witness the sun's movements on the panel. However, Monahan describes the experience:

A solar beacon was reaching deep into the cave, shining only on the marked rock, leaving the rest in shadows. It was as if a magician had focused the beam with great care on this knob and the two lines above.¹⁶⁸

What is being alluded to here is the sun's penetration into the cave on equinox day, which his film displays most vividly. The sun rays enter the cave at sunrise and immediately light up the 'strikes here' inscription. The film was so dramatic that a clip of it was shown on the CBS evening news a few years ago. Having seen for myself as much of the evidence as was available, I was left to contemplate if the scripts were

¹⁶⁵Donal Buchanan, "The Decipherment of Late Iberic, part 2," 14 Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 14 (1985): 372.

¹⁶⁶McGlone and Leonard, 151.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 147.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

actually the work of a Celt scribe or of Native Americans. Maybe there is fraud involved.

This question is difficult to answer in the favor of a Celtic origin, when one is taught that there were no pre-Columbian contacts except for the Vikings. What the caves display is a ready natural structure whose directional alignment was utilized by some knowledgeable authority, who possessed both the time and the ability, to inscribe a Celtiberian language in three distinct alphabets which were not decipherable more than twenty years ago. All of the examples are located on lithic surfaces complete with corresponding symbols that strongly resemble Old World deities and characters. Furthermore, the markings are situated and designed as to utilize the sun's movements for visual exposition. I have to suppose that there might be some way that a fraud could be perpetuated, but thus far the evidence does not support a hoax.

Two recent developments have added some promise towards a tentative acceptance of these sites as somehow being related to Old World Celts. One involves a new dating procedure being perfected by Dr. Ronald Dorn of Arizona State University, who appears to have found a way to date the patina found in the grooves of inscriptions. Some of his tentative dating for the 'Oklarado' material shows it to have been inscribed prior to

the time of Christ.¹⁶⁹ Another more important event was a meeting of researchers and scientists representing both sides of the argument regarding contact. This marks one of the rare occasions that pre-contact evidence has officially been examined by members of the scientific establishment. One of the most vocal critics of pre-Columbian contact research, Marshall McKusick, attended the meeting and remarked after experiencing the Crack Cave sunrise, "I was prepared for all of these things to be science fiction, but they are really here."¹⁷⁰ At the present time, the state of Oklahoma is considering the possibility of purchasing the Anubis site for its protection and possibly for future display.

Ten years after first entering the caves, Gloria Farley works towards educating people about this and other epigraphic material. She recently published a paper that asserts that Anubis cave number is a Celtic calendar. The interior scripts have now been mostly deciphered and all of the symbolic figures identified. Several of the panels are illuminated on specific days corresponding to the inscription's communique, just as was the case with the Anubis panel.¹⁷¹ The other caves at the Anubis site have been deciphered as well and provide

¹⁶⁹William McGlone, et al. "A Brief Report," Southeast Colorado Research in Petroglyph Translation 1 (1989): 1.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 3.

¹⁷¹Farley, "Celtic Calendar," 167.

additional testimony linking the caves to Celts. The whole area is now recognized as containing inscribed panels that are astronomically oriented. It is known that Native Americans created sites that utilized the sun's position and rays, however so far as we know, the Indian's sites lack a decipherable script resembling Celtic Ogam.

To many ancient peoples, regardless of their geographic location, the movements of the sun and other heavenly bodies were well understood, observed, and often noted in some manner. The Celts, like many circa Mediterranean civilizations, associated certain gods or mythological characters with the sun's position and celebrated this connection when the sun was in a significant position. The most important positions are mentioned above along with the cross quarter days which occur halfway between the solstice and the equinox. The progress that has been made thus far is largely the result of earlier investigations made in the general area of Vermont, where the same type of actions were first recognized in the early seventies.

The New England Stone Chambers

As mentioned, my research has benefitted from several opportune circumstances that permitted me to travel and visit various sites and museums around the country, most of which relate to my topic in some way. One of the most pleasant and informative of these forays brought me into the New England area and in particular to the gentle mountains and valleys of Vermont. Fortuitously, this visit happened to coincide with this state's most famous and colorful season, when the vast maple forests assail the visual senses with a hundred shades of red during those waning days of autumn. Upon entering the state I established two goals: first, I wanted to see a few of Vermont's unusual stone chambers and the related items which are purported to be of a likeness and style found in parts of Northern Europe and Spain; secondly, I wished to contact and possibly meet a few of the local researchers who have both investigated these sites and offered their findings in published documents.

The evidence in question consists of numerous semi-subterranean stone chambers, standing stones, marked rocks and lithic complexes, all of which have mystified investigators since colonial times. Enthusiasts and researchers who scour the countryside searching for artifacts and ancient relics have repeatedly come across these chambers,

but historians have been at a loss to present acceptable explanations of their existence or the identity of their creators. While a few scientists point to Native Americans as being responsible for the chambers, others say that the unusual markings associated with them indicate an altogether different derivation.

The news of possible inscriptions has naturally encouraged epigraphers to canvass these regions and most claim to have been well rewarded for the effort. In fact so much had been published on New England's epigraphic evidence that a conference was held in 1977 to sort out the material and discuss various testimony, some of which has since become the basis for several contact hypotheses.

The late Warren Cook, who organized the conference, was eager to bring together scholars representing various disciplines who could examine the alleged artifacts and hopefully provide a foundation for further scientific analysis. The conference was successful in presenting the most recent findings, but unfortunately most of those scholars who over the years have attacked pre-contact theories chose to skip the deliberations, making the faction supporting contact a majority at this gathering. Nevertheless, Cook published the proceedings and gained a national reputation as Vermont's foremost authority on the lithic monuments.

Presently, the central element that proponents rely upon

more than any other to imply contact is presence of Old World scripts that can be both identified and deciphered. However, these same researchers feel that New England's stone works present important and solid contributory evidence that encourages support for their contact theories.

These suppositions rely on certain particulars that materially tie New England's stone chambers to nearly identical ones in Europe. First, the method of chamber construction which is called the dry stone technique is found on both sides of the Atlantic. It is utilized to raise up the walls in such a manner that they are able to support giant stone slabs that serve as the chamber's roof. Another likeness is found in the entrance ways, which are situated to face a specific direction on the horizon, allowing observation of celestial and astronomical movements from within. They thus permit penetration of solar rays on certain days as is the case in Europe. The third outstanding link is the presence of certain symbols, some of which are representative of religious deities known to have been worshiped in various Old World regions during the Bronze age. Finally there are identifiable scripts present.

Prior to my seeking out any of these structures in the field, I was able to query a then healthy Dr. Cook on a few important points. I wanted to know what purpose these Vermont chambers had. Cook felt that they had more or less the same

function as those found overseas; that they were used as "communal graves, but in addition had another purpose which was ceremonial in nature".¹⁷² He felt that the alignment of the entrances and the placement of huge stones in the immediate vicinity of the chambers "all figured into its use", which was to keep track of the days when certain festivals or religious observances were to take place.¹⁷³

Why would these Europeans want to come here? Cook explained that there were two major reasons: the first was to obtain copper and gold, or any other item which brought a high trade value in the Old World "even skins or dried meat."¹⁷⁴ The second and more important reason as far as the structures are concerned would be "emigration, but this factor is probably tied to the first reason."¹⁷⁵ The entire Vermont area may well represent a production colony which was located at the source of a raw material, copper probably being the main product. The Celts, faced with a reliable source but nobody to work it, brought over other Celts to mine it. These workers would naturally want to practice certain customs as

¹⁷² Warren Cook, D.Litt., Ph.D. Professor of History and Anthropology, Castleton State College. Personal interview Oct. 1988.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

were performed in their homeland and thus would have erected the stone structures for purposes mentioned above.¹⁷⁶

This practice of founding work villages or towns has been played out perhaps thousands of times over the centuries, usually by advanced civilizations in undeveloped countries or territories. It certainly can be found taking place in many bronze age cultures. One of the principle ways that Greek, Roman, and other influences in bronze age development are traced is by finding evidence or indications of their presence which they left behind. An example of this cultural detective work can be found in pre-literate Spain at a ancient mining site called Los Millares; here are found a type of defensive bastions identical to ones found in Greece. This has led to the conclusion that the site was built by Greeks, and at one time supplied Greek bronze markets.¹⁷⁷

Cook felt that the Celts, being heavily involved in bronze age trade, probably learned and practiced the same kinds of production methods as were used by earlier groups. In fact Celts "may have absorbed Greek innovations diffused to them in Spain or other parts of Celtic Europe."¹⁷⁸ Spanish mines mostly played out before the Roman period and that Celts

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia, 1985 ed. s.v. "Bronze Age", 18:682.

¹⁷⁸Cook, "Interview," 1988.

were living in those specific areas where mining was practiced helps to tie New England evidence into a logical, if not reasonable, scenario according to Cook. He sees Celtic-type elements in America and especially those in Vermont as confirmation of Celtic presence here, a presence which was not small or temporary owing to the number of chambers and other material evidence.

There are at least two hundred stone structures in the New England area, and at least fifty still present in Vermont. To Cook, this indicates an attempt to colonize and set up a base of operations consistent with what was being done during Europe in the bronze age.¹⁷⁹

The presence of the chambers and other lithic materials represents inorganic evidence that the Celts made every effort to remain Celts in this area, although according to Cook there are indications that Celts freely communicated with Native Americans and perhaps some diffusion resulted. Fell, who examines the New England evidence in his America B.C. says that the Celtic presence in New England can be seen in certain place names that historically were thought to be Indian words. For instance a Vermont river named the Ottauqueche flows through a deep gorge, a branch of which passes through the town of Quechee, Vermont. Fell says both of these names

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

actually stem from the "Celtic word Quithe, meaning chasm or pit" which would accurately describe this particular region.¹⁸⁰ Other such examples of loan words have been determined and used by investigators to round out the overall picture that supports a contact hypothesis.

Given the nature of the evidence that regards mining as an important factor, Cook informed me that site investigations have shown that substantial mining had been conducted sometime in the pre-Columbian era in the Geil mountain region of Vermont, and that evidence for such operations was still present. Much of Vermont's copper was produced historically between 1812-1840, when this state was the nation's top supplier. But what ultimately ties the Celts to Vermont are the Ogam inscriptions and symbolic designs found in and around the chambers.

Dr. Cook informed me that around the time of the conference held at Castleton State College, where he was a member of the faculty, there was a great deal of publicity generated which made many of the sites popular and thus vulnerable to vandalism or theft. Rather than risk potential damage, volunteers, with the blessing of various property owners and state officials, gathered up those inscribed or unusual rocks which could be moved, and placed them on

¹⁸⁰Fell, "America B.C.," 7.

display, first at the conference site so that attendees could view them, and later in the campus library for permanent display.

The Castleton library collection contains two types of lithic evidence that according to Cook connects the Celts to Vermont. The first group are small and mostly thin tablet-like rocks, whose surfaces have been inscribed with Ogam grooves. The second variety of rocks are of a much larger size and are suggestive of either human or animal forms. Several of this second type are long and cylindrical in shape.

According to Cook and other investigators, these are considered to be male phallic symbols. There are also rocks that physically resemble the female torso and are said to represent a corresponding female significance.¹⁸¹

There is ample documentation showing that similar shaped rocks are found throughout Europe, and are believed to be the ritualistic symbols used formerly by the so called Phallic cult. The Celts are known to have participated in such practices which were rather widespread and practiced in Greece, Rome, and India.¹⁸² It should be noted that there is no evidence that these symbolic human organs were worshiped

¹⁸¹Warren Cook, "Vermont's Lithic Sites and Artifacts," in Ancient Vermont, ed. Warren Cook, (Rutland: Academy Books, 1978), 7.

¹⁸²Encyclopedia Britannica: Micropedia, 1985 ed., s.v. "Phallicism," 9:353.

per se, but that they best represented the powers of creativity that are inherent in nature, and as such were important to man.

This conceptual practice of enlisting or creating particular rudiments to symbolize reproductive power is not limited to the Celts. For many cultures, fetishes were found or constructed to represent fertility. Even the entire physical environment is seen as a female deity or earth mother. Periodically or seasonally "she" needs to experience regeneration which can be brought about by the combination of two or more elements. The Celts as well as others felt that symbolically they had to participate or assist in this process and in this case chose symbols that were familiar and best accomplished the purpose.¹⁸³

Most of the "male" type stones in the library collection were either found in a erected or upright position or were supposed to have fallen over at some time in the past. These stones were strategically located in relation to nearby chambers or to other significant features of a conspicuous locality. Cook explained to me that these markers were carefully placed and provided a function critical to a ritual being carried out. He said, for example, that the sun on a particular day would pass over one of the erected phallic

¹⁸³Ibid., 353.

rocks and throw a beam or a shadow across the female rock (called a yoni). Once contact took place, a symbolic copulation would be completed and the human participants would be content that a seasonal rebirth of the earth was now ensured; at the least they had done their part.

The pre-contact investigators claim that the true significance of this rock material was not fully understood until decipherment rendered an explanation. For instance, two phallic-shaped stones were found on either side of a large boulder that was split on one end and this was reasoned to be a yoni or female torso. Both stones had plainly visible strokes inscribed on their surfaces, but whose relevance was not detected until the language was identified and the script solved. One is said to read in the Celt-Iberian language "Is-S-G L-Ia."¹⁸⁴ The object itself is a rebus, and as such helps the epigrapher to infer which vowels need to be added to arrive at a plausible meaning. The object indicated the intended context and the script was worked out to say " Uisge Luia," which according to Fell reads "to inseminate her vagina."¹⁸⁵ The other cylindrical rock found on the other side of the yoni was translated in much the same manner from the Ogam strokes, and reads, "For the loins of Byanu," which

¹⁸⁴Cook, "Vermont," fig. 42.

¹⁸⁵Barry Fell, "Some Celtic Phalli," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 5 (1978): 1-5.

refers to an earth mother deity worshipped by the Celts.¹⁸⁶

The anthropomorphic rocks are not the only devices that carry out these rebirth rites. The sun, moon, and planets are all involved in Celtic cosmology and interact with stone devices, caves, or natural settings that have been slightly altered by the hands of men. Proof or demonstrations of Old World rituals or prayers are said to be present on rocks, cliff surfaces, and some bone and metal objects that were found in this hemisphere in pre-Columbian contexts. The fact that the New England chambers utilize the sun's position for emphasis to determine important dates, is judged by some to be decisive evidence of contact, especially when the same activities are known to have been conducted in Old World settings.

There is a conspicuously small number of published articles challenging the above analysis, and there has not been much written that even superficially is concerned with New England's stone chambers. Also absent are remarks concerning the alleged lithic notations or related mysteries.

This point could foster a misleading assumption that there exists very little objection to a Celt-contact theory. However, the exact opposite is the case, but most scientists and professional researchers either avoid or choose to ignore

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

this controversial subject, unless of course they happen to consider contact feasible. The conference in 1977 did produce some relevant opposition, and among the objections raised were a concern with the various interpretations presented by the epigraphers; the identity of chamber constructors; and the revised interpretation of Celtic and Old World history.

In 1976, the state of Vermont appointed Giovanna Nuedorfer, who had just earned an M.A. in Cultural Resource Management, as its inaugural state archaeologist. One of her first duties was to investigate the stone chambers for their historical significance and determine how the state should respond to the growing awareness and activities these and the other lithic materials were promoting within state borders. She presented her findings at the Castleton conference and her paper focused primarily on identifying who was responsible for constructing the chambers.

This report essentially says that the chambers are actually root cellars put up by early colonial farmers for the storage of farm products. Her analysis centers upon the widespread tradition in which farmers dug "outdoor cellars even before their cabin or dwelling was built."¹⁸⁷ As for the exclusive use of stone for the chambers, Nuedorfer says that

¹⁸⁷Giovanna Nuedorfer, "A Preliminary Analysis of Vermont's Stone Chambers," in Ancient Vermont, ed. Warren Cook, (Rutland: Academy Books, 1978), 11.

this helped in protecting the contents in event of a fire. But her report does not contain any documentation or reference to stone root cellar construction: "From the research conducted thus far and in spite of various mentions of outdoor cellars, a detailed description of what such cellars looked like and how they were constructed is virtually absent."¹⁸⁸

Her report concludes that the best evidence against pre-Columbian construction is:

Provided by one informant (not named) who had once talked to a 60 year old man whose father had told him that his own grandfather had helped build chambers 9, 12, 31, 36 and 43."¹⁸⁹

What her report does include are partial descriptions of root cellar construction where wood is utilized as a building material. One reference alludes to the construction of a "Dutch cellar", whose interior dimensions would match some of the stone chambers, but its material composition is not mentioned.¹⁹⁰ Most colonial root cellars were situated beneath the house, but those located outdoors were normally cut into a bank, presumably because it was easier to make and the earth would help insure cool temperatures and provide natural protection against fire.

Some objections to her analysis might point out her lack

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 11.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 12.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 11.

of written documentation describing how colonials or anyone constructed stone chambers. However, there are reports referring to the common and more logical use of wood.¹⁹¹ Another point that she does not address is why a practical colonial farmer would use massive slabs of stone weighing in some cases several metric tons, when a neighbor was getting the same results with more manageable and readily attainable lumber. Many of the chambers are not located near stone quarries and hauling the huge boulders into place would have involved an effort bordering on the scope of public works. Other group efforts like barn raising, church construction, and road building are all documented in colonial accounts, but mention of stone root cellar construction is conspicuous by its absence.

Neudorfer does call for more research to be conducted and for archeological excavations to take place, but surprisingly disqualifies herself from actively participating because of her "bias, which some people maintain I have, which I do."¹⁹² The state's official position in regard to the chambers is that they are of historical origins and were built for storage. Neudorfer says, "people maintain that there are Celts in Vermont...and that the earth is flat...or was created

¹⁹¹Ibid., 9-13.

¹⁹²Neudorfer, 126.

in 4004 B.C...but you reach a point where over all there is no longer doubt..you cannot continue to look for evidence when there is a real good chance you are never going to find it."¹⁹³

Regarding Vermont's Ogam script, two notable professors from Europe attended the conference and jointly published their opinions on this matter. They were Ann Ross who holds a doctorate in Archaeology, and Peter Reynolds who holds a doctorate in Ancient History. They lament that on their trip they saw nothing indicating a Celtic presence, and that all the activity surrounding this type of research reflects a desire on the part of Americans to connect or "identify with European pre-history."¹⁹⁴ As far as Ogam writing is concerned, they insist that it is "peculiar to Ireland and to lands settled by Irish,...it is thus improper to apply the term Ogam to any other alphabet found in association with non-Irish countries or cultures...there are no other scripts analogous to and predating Ogam."¹⁹⁵

Reynolds refers to an experiment that demonstrates how colonial era plowshare could have easily made marks on a rock in such groupings that it might resemble Ogam. Besides this, there are likely several other ways in which rocks could have

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴Peter Reynolds and Anne Ross, "Summary," in Ancient Vermont, ed. Warren Cook, (Rutland: Academy Books, 1978), 140.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., 144.

been marked according to Ross and Reynolds, including "natural cracking, glacial scouring, organism trails, erosion processes...which coincidentally Fell has been able to translate."¹⁹⁶ Interestingly, they comment that some marks cannot be dismissed, like the "sun net" which makes it possible to "calculate solar positions at different seasons of the year, but has no direct relevance to the argument that ancient Celts were in New England."¹⁹⁷

The structures in question are no doubt built by employing corresponding techniques. This, according to these European scholars, is due to the limited possibilities of stone as a construction material. "Since the buildings in question are constructed of dry stone walling the options are fairly limited, and the very diversity of structural method virtually assures some degree of similarity."¹⁹⁸ They feel that just because a structure is built exactly the same way in two widely separated localities does not make them related, nor can they be assumed to possess the same functions for this reason.¹⁹⁹

The objections raised here by qualified skeptics of

¹⁹⁶Ibid., 140.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 141.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., 143.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., 143.

contact hypotheses are valid and helpful to the ultimate resolution of the pre-contact problem. However, those currently trying to prove ancient ties between areas outside the hemisphere and pre-Columbian America have not benefitted much from other discriminating input, and thus have had to become their own critics. One conference attendee stated that "the whole mess would likely be cleared up in five years or so," but this has not happened.²⁰⁰ More has reputedly been found, more has been written, but from the critics less has been said.

My own trip through the Vermont countryside was enlightening as well as exciting, for these stone chambers do not have signs pointing to them, nor are they cited on any maps. One literally has to track them down. I was fortunate enough to have the eminent photographer Warren W. Dexter escort me to several sites on a snowy, showery, cold, partly sunny, or otherwise typical Vermont October day in 1988. Dexter, a consummate gentleman, has been all over the world with his cameras, and since the middle seventies he has amassed thousands of pictures associated with the contact question. He was very emphatic at the outset of our journey to stress that he would offer no opinions as to what we saw, but that he wanted me to view the material in lieu of

²⁰⁰Neudorfer, 126.

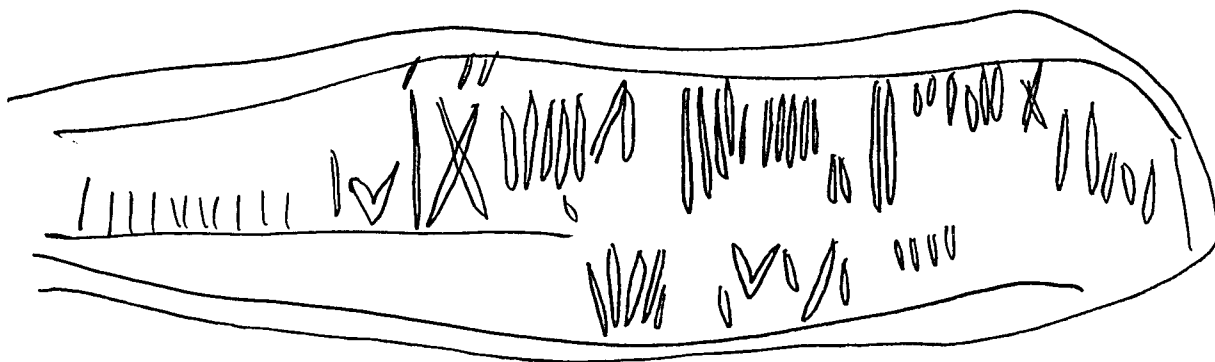
prejudice. As this corresponded to what I preferred, we had a splendid day driving around Vermont in his Volvo.

Our first stop was to view a massive rock boulder which is located in a cow pasture in Cavendish Township, Vermont. This site is situated right along a very ancient path that runs between the present day cities of Boston and Montreal. The Blanchard stone as this specimen is named, is covered with the stroke-like marks or grooves that are said on one hand to be tool or plow marks, but bear a strong resemblance to Ogam (see fig. 7). Upon seeing this rock, I would say that it is hard to imagine a farmer running his plow over it, as it measures about four feet high, three feet wide, and about twelve feet long. On the other hand a case could be made for it being used to sharpen tools, if the most accessible surface of the rock had the grooves in it, but it does not. The north face is covered with marks while the more feasible south is totally clean.

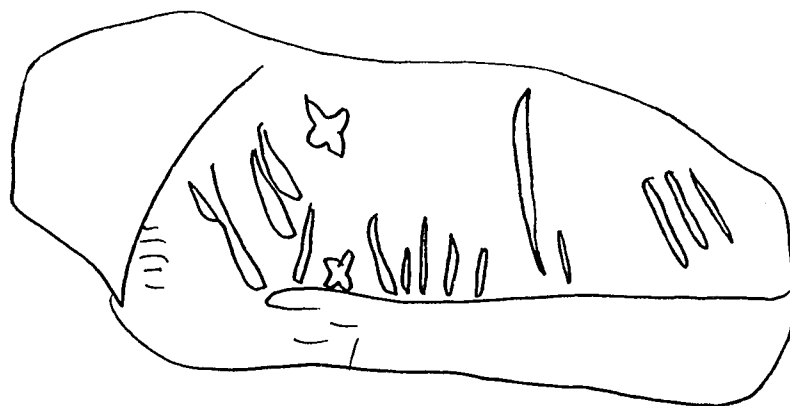
Cook thinks the shape of the rock is significant in that it resembles a "Hellbender, which is America's largest salamander".²⁰¹ This reptile awakens from a death-like state each spring. Symbolically, this natural occurrence might be significant to the Celts or any other group who observes with great ritual the coming of spring.

²⁰¹Cook, Fig. 23-27.

BLANCHARD STONE: CAVENDISH TOWNSHIP, VERMONT



North side script.



East side script.

fig. 7 Blanchard Stone. Source: Warren W. Dexter, (1978).

Of course what ties this rock to the Celts is the identification of the script as Ogam. Fell translated the markings on the Blanchard stone as "To the goddess Bianu Mabona...give thanks for rain showers by chanting; for blessings pray to Lug during Caitean (May)." Another grouping on the rock says "each time by smoking the sacred tobacco pipe".²⁰² Cook later informed me that this phrase might indicate some acculturation of Indian customs by the Celt community.

Our next stop was located in Windsor County, Vermont at a site called Calendar II, so named because it is thought to be part of a rather large celestial observation center where the passage of time could be actively observed. Byron Dix, who managed to lay out and survey the entire area in 1974, found that the chamber located here was constructed so as to access rays of sunlight on the morning of the winter solstice. Dix also found what he refers to as a viewing platform, which was aligned with several standing stones. He thinks that at one time these were erect and situated so that the time of the year could be determined by observing the sun's seasonal progress as it passed by the rocks.

By standing on the platform and facing the eastern

²⁰²Elizabeth Sincerbeaux, Warren Dexter and Barry Fell, "An Ogam Consaine Inscription at Royalton Vermont," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publication 12 (1984): 110-116.

horizon at sunrise, the sun's location, except for the two solstice days, is somewhere between two extremes. Once it reaches its northern point (summer), it starts back to the southern point (winter). These two points were marked at this site by the standing stones. Dix says that there is evidence that other stones once stood between these two (solstices) and marked the other significant days of the year.²⁰³ At the top of the hill adjacent to this site were found a large number of the phallic-shaped rocks and their corresponding yoni, prompting it to be dubbed "Phallus hill".

Just about a mile from this site is the location of another chamber called the Reeves site. Although all of the chambers have outstanding features and markings, this particular structure had a most distinctive and beautiful design etched into one of the massive slabs overhead. The figure was identified by Gloria Farley as "Byanu" the female deity of the Celts whose other Phoenician or Carthaginian title is Tanith.²⁰⁴

I did see a few other sites with Mr. Dexter and later to my great surprise found a few on my own. All of the structures are impressively made and preserved, considering

²⁰³Byron Dix, "Possible Calander Sites in Vermont," in Ancient Vermont, ed. Warren Cook, (Rutland: Academy Books, 1978), 13-21.

²⁰⁴Cook, Fig. 39.

that they are neither protected nor maintained. The massive slabs that were used in topping off the chambers remain, in my mind, the most bizarre element. Each slab weighs many tons and would have had to be transported long distances over hilly terrain. It is difficult to envision how they could have been dragged to the sites without some type of mechanical assistance and without being noted.

One author who has summed up the problems of the chambers particularly well is Mark Feldman who writes:

There is no record of any construction of this kind occurring during the colonial period...It is inconceivable that hundreds of such structures could have been built by the farmers without any word ever having been recorded about the activity. The existence of these structures in colonial New England is totally without explanation or rationale...One could argue that there may have been a special group or subcultural element in the early modern history of America that was responsible for all the stonework. Such an argument, however, would have to answer the following questions: What were the structures built for? Why was it done in secret? And, most important, how was it done in secret? How could all of the construction occur without 'outsiders' hearing of it, seeing it, and finally reporting it for publication in the newspapers of the day? It is quite obvious²⁰⁵ that they were not built for ordinary mundane use.

Researchers in Vermont are still attempting to answer all the questions concerning Ogam and the stone chambers. Some see the evidence as proof that Celts came to America during the time when they were a European power, and that because of

²⁰⁵Mark Feldman, The Mystery Hill Story (North Salem: Mystery Hill Press, 1977), 6-7.

their extensive and profitable trade network they managed to remain in control for a considerable time. Perhaps they came for copper, as Cook thinks, or perhaps they emigrated and in time were absorbed into Indian populations. On the other hand, the evidence may only be proof that colonial Vermonters left some impressive monuments.

In the meantime, pre-contact investigators are asking why ancient man should be limited to a certain amount or type of travel? Why should natural barriers be held as preventing movement even though evidence may point to the contrary? Can trade and commerce be confined to only certain areas and to certain peoples? Is it reasonable to assume that trading cultures of one continent traded extensively with each other but were incapable of dealing with anyone else?

If ships and crews took to the seas in a sustained and systematic order around 10,000 years ago, how could one hemisphere avoid contact with another for over 9,000 of those years, given the undisputed advanced technology of maritime cultures during different periods of that time? Should migration, emigration, trade, or contact be limited or thought of as flowing in only one direction? At the present there are far more questions than answers, but innovative studies have presented a whole new way of looking at human movements in ancient time.

The Celts are not the only culture that has been

suspected of making pre-Columbian contact, nor is Ogam the only alphabet claimed to be found here. There are many others. The following chapters will examine some of the other scripts, as well as consider the variety and strength of the different evidence. One investigation proposing contact between Native Americans and a Old World Nordic culture rests on translated inscriptions discovered on a rock face in southern Ontario in 1957.

Trading At Peterborough Ontario

The Peterborough inscription was found in 1957 and according to the Canadian authorities who maintain it, is a good example of Indian rock art, indicative of the Northern Woodlands style.²⁰⁶ But as in other cases involving scripts there is some basic disagreements with the above premise. Several authorities were invited to study the panel and offer an opinion as to what the marks represented. One research team, Joan and Romas Vostokas, determined that there were several different styles involved and they feel that the designs which appear to represent animals:

May be images of the animal guardians of the site...(as for the) abundant fertility symbols, vulvas, turtles, phallic males, and females with uterus, as well as (the) symbolic copulation, (they) indicate a shamanic ideology based on the shaman's ability to acquire the hidden power or sexual energy of nature.²⁰⁷

This interpretation, although as plausible as any other, seems to be based pretty much on the conjecture of the Vostokas's who say the "entire site is a symbolic uterus."²⁰⁸ Another interpretation has been supplied by Barry Fell, who happens to agree with some of the above statements but who feels the

²⁰⁶Grant, 56.

²⁰⁷Joan Vostokas and Romas K. Vostokas, Sacred Art of the Algonkians: A Study of the Peterborough Petroglyphs (Peterborough: Mousord Press, 1973), 59-61.

²⁰⁸Ibid.

presence of decipherable scripts there allows for a much more precise translation. Fell writes that many of the symbols are actually letters from Nordic script and that the same designs, symbols, and marks located on this rock face are present in other parts of the world. The Vostokas's noted the same regional affinities existed and found:

One of the many canoe petroglyphs at Peterborough shows a mast topped by a rayed sun disc that looks very much like sun figures and solar boats found in the rock art of the circumpolar regions of North America, Siberia, and Scandinavia.²⁰⁹

While there are many highly regarded authorities who note the presence of motifs and visual representations located in far-removed regions of the world, very few recognize that ancient alphabets may enjoy this same attribute. Recognition of this would strongly imply contact of some type. Fell however, has no reservations, in fact, he affirms that the Peterborough panel contains alphabetic letters and symbolic motifs that can be found in other parts of the world and their presence in Ontario can only be explained by theories favoring ancient contact.²¹⁰

This assertion is difficult to fathom for those who have been raised to think it impossible that ancient man was capable of long distance sea voyages at such a early time.

²⁰⁹Ibid., 120-9.

²¹⁰Barry Fell, Bronze Age America (New York: Ruggles De Latour Inc., 1982), 6-22.

However, a look back at what we do know of the ancient world will reveal that the sea represented no great obstacle to either Old World cultures or certain Native American cultures. For example some of the early Greeks were known to be mining raw materials and collecting obsidian on the Aegean island of Milos around 7000 B.C.²¹¹ New findings on the northern coast of Labrador point to the existence of a maritime culture that may have been active seafarers at perhaps the same time, but certainly by 5000 B.C. Both cultures have left behind certain objects that indicate that they possessed the necessary technology to range widely on the open seas.²¹²

Fell's identification of the Peterborough petroglyph as a record of an ancient voyage is based on what he and other researchers recognize as a still-used North African script called Tifinag. This very ancient form of writing actually is rooted in northern Europe, but according to Fell was brought to North Africa by raiding Norse in the 12th century B.C.²¹³ Survivors of these raids settled in North Africa and preserved the script which in time was used by various other cultures right up to the present era; even today Tuareg

²¹¹James Trager ed. The People's Chronology. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979), 2.

²¹²William Fitzhugh, "Maritime Archaic Culture of the Central and Northern Labrador Coast," Arctic Anthropology 15 (1978): et. al.

²¹³Fell, 20.

tribesman still utilize it.²¹⁴ This alphabet consists of varying combinations of dots and dashes along with a few other shapes and symbols which collectively are based on the stars and constellations of the night sky.²¹⁵ Epigraphic studies have revealed that ancient scripts could be utilized by any number of language groups. This factor often complicates a decipherment until a specific combination of letters seem to make sense in one of the languages it was known to portray. Fell traveled to both Scandinavia and North Africa to observe their examples of Tifinag and found that the Nordic language seemed to fit the Peterborough markings better than any other language that is associated with this alphabet. To his credit, Fell provides charts, tables, and graphs that are intended to justify his conclusions, nevertheless, a wary eye has been cast on this analysis by the scientific establishment.

As best as he could determine, Fell thinks that the Peterborough panel is a series of messages detailing the establishment of a trading post by a King Wodin Lichti in 1700 B.C. The date was determined by the inclusion on the panel of a particular star grouping that was last in such a position

²¹⁴Encyclopedia Britannica: Micropedia, 1985 ed. s.v. "Tuareg," 12:22.

²¹⁵Fell, "Bronze," 14.

at that time.²¹⁶ Finding copper ingots (artifacts) at this site lends material support for Fell's theory, which proposes that the Norse came to this area seeking to trade copper for woven textiles. Some of the copper was carbon dated and supports the 1700 B.C. date.²¹⁷ From his decipherments, Fell says that this king spent about five months there and established a trading relationship with the Algonquins.

There is considerable evidence showing that copper mining was practiced extensively in Ontario and the adjacent Great Lakes regions in ancient times. One estimate states that between 500 million and one billion pounds of copper were mined from the Lake Superior region before the time of Christ.²¹⁸ The carbon dates show that this mining began at least as early as 2000 B.C., and close to 5000 ancient mining pits have been identified.²¹⁹ The extent of the mining operations and the incredible amounts that were recovered suggest that the copper did more than supply Indians with materials used for trinkets and ornaments.

We have been conditioned to believe that activities such as mining and trade could not have taken place in America one

²¹⁶Ibid., 125.

²¹⁷Ibid.

²¹⁸Roy Ward Drier and Octave J. DuTemple Prehistoric Copper Mining (Calumet: By the Authors 1961) 15.

²¹⁹Ibid., 16.

thousand years ago much less 3500. But Fell and others ask, why not? Once man began to cultivate fields, plant crops, and harvest them, he in turn began to trade. Agriculture is known to have begun in the ancient Near East at least ten thousand years ago and the evidence for food production in this hemisphere is dated to roughly the same period.²²⁰ Once urban centers sprung up, trade became essential for their survival. A certain amount of acculturation can be traced along old trade routes no matter where they are found. Furthermore, the production centers or depots associated with the trading routes are likely spots to find evidence of cultural insignias and affinities.²²¹

Ruins along the major river systems in North America and other hard evidence are testimony to a widespread ancient trade network. Presently there is support for the recognition of a ancient but well developed inter-continental trading system. Artifacts recovered over the years support this thesis as do the more enduring mounds and earthworks that seem to have a relationship to other cultures or civilizations.²²²

Fell and his supporters point to Peterborough and numerous other sites and ask why not recognize ancient man as

²²⁰ Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia, 1985 ed. s.v. "Agriculture," 13:185.

²²¹ Uncle Bob

²²² Robert K. Thomas, personal interview, (1990).

being capable of conducting transoceanic trade and commerce thousands of years ago? Why give Native Americans credit for trading with each other, but view them as incapable of trading with anyone else? With nearly ten thousand years of maritime activity, why deny that one region could avoid another entirely, while at the same time acknowledge the presence of people inhabiting nearly every island in every sea?

All hemispheres have regions and cultures that had well developed maritime traditions, although trade routes certainly crisscross the wide expanse of land. The rivers, seas, and oceans generally provided the most accessible and reliable passage between regions far removed. It may be possible that the ancient world had transoceanic contacts.

On The Fence

It would be useful to distinguish at this juncture the general classifications that presently divide the so-called pre-Columbian evidence. As demonstrated, there are at least two ways of evaluating the same data. One perspective which happens to be favored by a majority of the scientific establishment, is to regard nearly all of the contact material as unfounded. To this, some mainstream scientists have attached a small subcategory which contains material that for one reason or another has not been entirely explained away and thus has earned the tag of 'mysterious'.

On the other hand there is the early contact faction who views the very same data in wholly different terms. Their best material has been accorded a 'proof' designation and roughly corresponds in substance to the above 'mysterious' category. Another one of their divisions contains findings that do not enjoy wide support among the group, but nonetheless endure in a type of reprieve status. I refer to items in this category as being "on the fence" and two cases will be examined presently.

There is one other very large and ever-growing category that contains those dubious cases which can only be described as fraudulent. A good number of items relegated to the this category have dutifully been placed there by researchers who

support early contact. One reason why this faction is sniffing out the dupery involves a sincere desire on their part to distance their good evidence from the deleterious material. Naturally, many members of this faction feel as though they can only increase their credibility by exposing all hoaxes; furthermore, most feel that to be even remotely associated with such flimflams would set them back in their overall efforts to achieve some level of acceptability within the larger scientific community. For this reason the "on the fence" material sits in limbo, not quite acceptable but neither disproved; the pre-contact membership remains undecided on how it should be handled.

The two examples that will be examined here share certain affinities: both are located in the American southwest; they represent inscriptions that are said to have been written by Jews; the scripts, though not the same, share an apparent geographical semantic relationship; both were discovered and became prominent around the same time, 1920-30; and finally both are dismissed by the scientific establishment as fakes.

Los Lunas

Our first case involves an inscription that has at least three designations: the Los Lunas Stone, Inscription Rock, and the Ten Commandment Stone. The location of this item is upon rocky hillside situated about 35 miles southwest of Albuquerque, New Mexico. I have not been able to see the inscribed panel personally, as it is located on a private ranch. However it has been thoroughly investigated and good pictures of it have been published. The script itself has been identified as Paleo Hebrew, which is the same as was found on the Bat Creek tablet mentioned elsewhere. The text, as might be supposed from one of its titles, is an abbreviated version of the laws given unto Moses and described in the Bible's book of Exodus 20: 14-20.²²³

These Ten Commandments are carved into a basalt boulder which lies just below a mesa, referred to as Hidden Mountain. It has been reported that Laguna Indians called this area, "Cerro Los Maqujino, or cliff of strange writing."²²⁴ David Deal, who has been responsible for much of the research regarding the Hidden Mountain script has proposed that it is

²²³ Cyclone Covey, Calalus, (New York: Vantage Press, 1975), 182.

²²⁴ Richard Lynch, "Astronomy of Hidden Mountain," Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications 18 (1989): 102.

connected to an archaeological site on top of the mesa where "ancient ruins of a camp are laid out in military fashion."²²⁵ In addition, he proposes that another petroglyph close by is related to both the fort and the commandment stone and represents an animated record of a solar eclipse.

Deal identifies some of the figures on this panel as belonging to the Old World Zodiac. By identifying the eclipse and the star groupings shown on the rock, he determined that the last time the sun, planets, and stars were in these positions was on September 15, in the year 107 B.C.²²⁶ From this he deduces that the Hebrew was inscribed at this time. Deal's efforts to locate collaborating evidence are consistent with other pre-contact investigations, but thus far only the Hebrew material is thought of as 'mysterious'.

The Indian name for Hidden Mountain is appropriate terminology since the whole area contains numerous petroglyphic panels. Deal's zodiac eclipse inscription seems to belong more to the dominate style found here than it does to the Hebrew mode, in either style or form. In fact, besides the commandment panel and a short inscription located on another rock, all of the petroglyphs in this area might for stylistic purposes be classified as 'Indian rock art'.

²²⁵David Deal, Discovery of Ancient America (Privately Published, 1985), 1.

²²⁶Ibid., 19.

The Ten Commandment rock sits on the west slope of Hidden Mountain in such a position that one investigator theorized that possibly it was dislodged from on top, by an earthquake.²²⁷ Still on top is the other rock; its Hebrew script translates as "Yahweh is our Mighty One."²²⁸ Dr. Robert Pfeiffer of the Harvard University Semitic language department was the first to correctly proclaim Inscription Rock to be the Ten Commandments in 1948, but its history appears to be much older.

The earliest reference to the panel was made by a Dr. Frank Hibben who was a highly acclaimed archaeologist at the University of New Mexico in the 1930's. Hibben states "I first examined the inscription in 1936, and at that time it looked ancient, was half buried in the sand and was covered with lichenous growth."²²⁹ Its position at this time may support the earthquake theory. Hibben also describes an account related to him by a "Franz Huning, original owner of a collection of Spanish land grants" who saw the panel in 1871.²³⁰ According to Deal this date is critical to proving the legitimacy of the inscription.

²²⁷Covey, 182.

²²⁸Deal, 8.

²²⁹Ibid., 25.

²³⁰Ibid.

Old Hebrew writing was utilized mainly in the traditional North Semitic region of old Palestine, but the Hebrew on the panel is unique because it contains certain additional characters that are not found in the original alphabet, but emanate from other Old World regions. For example, the letter Q used on the panel resembles a hourglass shape and in this form is found only in a script from ancient Iberia. Knowledge of this particular letter form was not published until 1884 and would post-date the earliest alleged sighting of the Los Lunas stone.²³¹ Moreover, nowhere is the Iberian Q found with Paleo Hebrew in the ancient world. If the New Mexico panel is legitimate it would show that the authors might have been Iberian Jews or that they borrowed some letters from this area.

The earliest documents published on Paleo Hebrew date from 1868 when the Moabite stone was discovered in the Middle East. It is conceivable that a prankster could have used this text and added a few Iberian letters to formulate the Ten Commandment inscription, but according to Deal, it is equally possible that a group of Iberian Jews settled at Los Lunas and left the inscription sometime in the first century B.C. when Old Hebrew was still being used for writing.

Deal, like most of the present contact investigators,

²³¹Ibid.

tries to build a case for authenticity by finding additional evidence in the area which might be related to the inscription. For this purpose he proposes that the ruins on the mesa top are "clearly reminiscent of sites strewn across the Middle East."²³² To this he adds the Zodiac panel which employs "Schematic symbols for the constellations."²³³ Although many of Deal's colleagues seem to take a supportive position regarding the Commandment panel, his theory regarding the ruins and the star panel enjoys less backing.

Richard F. Lynch recently published an article which examines the ruins. He concludes that they represent "Pueblo IV phase, or more specifically the Ancestral Piro phase...that employ masonry-based jackal and compound-masonry type construction."²³⁴ Lynch's research found that the entire area was archaeologically investigated in the fifties and sixties, the findings of which divulged that Hidden Mountain was home to a variety of peoples over time, each one leaving a reminder of their presence.

As yet no Hebrew-type artifacts have been recovered, although some frauds have been perpetuated over the years, trying to cash in on such an association. Nearby is a hill

²³²Ibid., 26.

²³³Ibid., 18.

²³⁴Lynch, 102.

that seems to have been a "regional ritualistic site" but bears no relationship to the Hebrew texts.²³⁵ As for the astronomy, Lynch says that the eclipse of September 15, 107 B.C. was not a major event in New Mexico, and likely may have even gone unnoticed. There are several types of solar eclipses each having varying effects on the amount of sunlight that is blocked or reduced. On the day in question there was not a total solar eclipse in New Mexico, but rather an annular type that allows the sun's brightness to maintain for the most part.²³⁶ Lynch says that "unless one was expecting an eclipse, this event could have taken place without no one noticing it...the Zodiac stone at Hidden Mountain is nothing more than a collection of native American petroglyphs similar to the many found all along the mesa."²³⁷ And so the Los Lunas Stone remains in a suspended status, an unlikely object, but never totally disproved.

²³⁵Ibid.

²³⁶Ibid.

²³⁷Ibid., 104.

Tucson Artifacts; Genuine or Fraud?

On September 13, 1924 a Tucson lawyer and his father spotted a piece of metal sticking out from the side of a trench. They managed with the aid of some tools to free the specimen from its lodging and returned home that afternoon undoubtedly perplexed over what they had recovered.

The article turned out to be a lead sword weighing over sixty pounds and was actually two halves riveted together. The finder, Mr. Charles Manier, managed to pry the sword apart and found that the interior was packed with wax. He then found after removing the wax that the inside surface was covered with writing. One of his neighbors thought that the letters might belong to the Latin alphabet and he decided to consult an authority to be sure.²³⁸

Manier took this item over to the University of Arizona and showed it to a Latin scholar named Frank H. Fowler. He confirmed that the characters were indeed Latin, and shortly thereafter provided a translation for the text, which proved to be an account of an ocean voyage and a subsequent war. Over the next five years thirty-one other artifacts would be excavated from the site. Some were recovered by Manier and his partners, others were dislodged by scholars and scientists

²³⁸Mahan, 93.

from the University, and the rest were extracted by laborers hired to excavate the area.

The prevailing reputation surrounding this case is so fantastic that initially I considered not including it in the present analysis. However, since the site, documents, and artifacts are located, figuratively speaking, right in my backyard I felt it worthwhile to investigate and address the questions that remain unresolved. Thus, the Tucson Artifacts qualify as a current example of 'On the Fence' material.

One other factor that influenced my decision to examine this case resulted from learning that a renewed interest in this site will shortly effect a new scientific excavation. The pre-work has already begun, (Spring 1990) and the investigation is being funded by the INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF AMERICAN CULTURES, from Columbus Ga. Because of the present interest, I have been able to meet some of the participants involved with the upcoming investigation, and to gain access to much of the related documents that still exist.

The site is located on Silverbell Road, which leads northwest out of the city. Along this route are the remains of abandoned limekilns, which formerly supplied the city's adobe buildings with a periodic protective white coating. Shortly after the turn of the century this custom disappeared as new building materials came into use. It was from one of the old abandoned limekiln sites that Manier recovered the

sword. Presently, the site is overgrown with typical desert growth and it remains undeveloped. The pits and profiles of the former archaeological trenches are still plainly visible, and my first visit there brought me face to face with a good sized rattlesnake.

A short time after his discovery, Manier took a fellow lawyer out to examine the site, which at the time was still public domain. The two became partners of sort and mutually decided to excavate the area.²³⁹ By February of the following year the new partner, Thomas W. Bent, began to homestead the land and moved out there with his wife and family, thus fulfilling the principle legal obligation required by the Homestead Act.

There were many scholarly visitors to the site over the next two years, most of them faculty members at the University. Significantly, many of these same teachers who took an interest in the artifacts became highly distinguished in their respective fields. The reason why this whole scenario has not been entirely dismissed is due to the accounts and testimony freely dispensed by these most credible of witnesses. Their signed testimony in many cases contradicts the reigning explanation currently assigned to the lead artifacts.

²³⁹Ibid.

Byron Cummings, who was the chair of the Archaeology department at the time of the find, was on hand to personally witness and assist in the excavation of several artifacts, including the recovery of a sword blade. In a note to a geology professor he remarks, "I have seen it removed from the gravel and caliche in which it was imbedded...I am convinced that they must have been there for a long period of time, (and that) they are genuine."²⁴⁰

In archaeological circles Cummings is well regarded, in fact he is credited with the discovery of Cuicuilco Temple near Mexico City, which at the time of its unearthing was considered the oldest prehistoric ruin yet identified on the American continent. Most of the reports that Cummings filed regarding the Tucson artifacts bespeak of a thoroughly competent scientist. His astute methodology and training resulted in several comprehensive reports in which he treats all relevant aspects. One important element of this site was the stratigraphy, and he states that:

The articles are covered with from 5 to 6 feet of undisturbed natural deposit and they lie at approximately the same level as the earliest prehistoric pueblo culture of the valley, a culture showing no characteristics in common with these artifacts. The condition of the overlying deposits precludes their having been "planted", and the articles could not have been of Indian

²⁴⁰Cummings, Byron. Letter to Dr. Sarle. February 5, 1926. Arizona State Museum Archives, file number 054 M 7.

manufacture.²⁴¹

As an experienced investigator, Cummings certainly understood that the material was so bizarre that he was required in a manner of speaking to leave no stone unturned. His early reports reflect very careful analysis. But always and understandably so, he was forced into facing the possibility that this discovery could typecast him and profoundly affect his career ambitions. However, he had been at the site when artifacts were being worked free, and he believed what he saw.

He was sufficiently impressed and confident enough that he took ten of the artifacts to a meeting in Kansas City and showed them to the membership of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Away from the convincing atmosphere of the site, Cummings got a taste of how the outside world would view this kind of material, and the outlandish implications its presence presented. Cyclone Covey who has published a book on the artifacts, reports that the reaction Cummings received was "scornful".²⁴² Nevertheless, after his return to Tucson, Cummings was still committed to support their authenticity and in 1927 on behalf of the University, he agreed to buy the artifacts from Bent and

²⁴¹Cummings, Byron. Office of the Director, Arizona State Museum. file 054-M-7.

²⁴²Covey, 97.

Manier for sixteen thousand dollars.²⁴³

During the course of excavations and with each subsequent translation, the artifacts began to divulge the nature and purpose of the scriptural texts. Covey has pieced together the various scripts and feels that to avoid persecution, a colony of Roman Jews fled their homeland and somehow made their way to America. Once established, a settlement was founded and named Calalus. They remained here for more than a century, (775 to 890 A.D.) and existed in some type of monarchy, the leaders of which are listed on the artifacts. The scripts indicate that a great war took place and more than three thousand perished. The artifacts are the only records that remain, and theoretically these were made by a scribe who signed many of these lead documents "OL". Covey indicates that OL might have been a better metalworker than a scribe, but if responsible for the accounts did the best job under conceivably trying circumstances.²⁴⁴

The Latin that was found on these relics seems to represent a hodgepodge of phrases that might have been extracted from Latin grammar books. This was the charge made by a visiting lawyer from Rochester, New York named Emil Hawley. He sought to discredit the artifacts by showing where

²⁴³Mahan, 97.

²⁴⁴Covey, 37-42.

the script's grammar originated. Hawley finds that much of the written material could have been found in publications available from around 1880 on, however it must be noted that Latin publications and manuscripts have been available far longer than the late 19th century, owing to the fact that today we have quotes and passages from the likes of Strabo, Horace, and Pliny the Elder.

For more than a thousand years scholars have utilized Latin as the standard and popular alphabet, and of course many of these writers were published. Their books did not appear and circulate in a modern technological sense, but nevertheless manuscripts written in Latin have been available since the days of the Roman Empire thanks to the copies made by scribes. Conceivably one such book containing important and popular Latin verses would have constituted the type of ethnic and literary treasure that would have accompanied a group of emigrating Romans.

Covey and others indicate that OL was likely one of the few survivors of the war mentioned in the scripts. Perhaps he lived out his days trying to construct both a record of his people, and what became of them. Possibly he was not entirely literate, but knew enough to borrow familiar and descriptive passages from a surviving book, that supplied him with the means to compose and piece together an account of Calalus. This might explain why some inscriptions found on

the artifacts is nearly flawless Latin, while other passages look to be the work of someone having little working knowledge of proper use.

This hypothesis has no little bearing on the overall matter because the questions that burden this case involve archaeology, geology, and apparently fear. Frank H. Fowler who was originally consulted on the Latin, became a frequent visitor to the site and initially was very supportive of some ancient explanation. After witnessing one recovery he remarked, "the material surrounding this object had, in my judgment, not been disturbed. When dug out, a very distinct mold was left in which the sword had rested."²⁴⁵ The fact that such impressions were found for many of the artifacts has important implications in the final analysis.

Similar testimony from equally reliable judges and authorities is readily found in the Arizona State Museum archives. A.E. Douglas, who at the time was the Director of the Steward Observatory, not only spent a great deal of time at the site, but was responsible for making numerous photographs of the finds. Many of his pictures exhibit the "in situ" locations of the artifacts. A few are shown sticking out of the profile wall, tightly clenched by the cement-like grip of the caliche. Douglas would become most

²⁴⁵Fowler, Frank. Letter to Byron Cummings. April 5, 1925. Arizona State Museum Archives, doc 00064, 054 M7.

famous for his work in development of dendrochronology or tree ring dating, but in the spring and summer of 1925 his attention was focused on the Silverbell site.

On one occasion, in the company of Dr. Lovering and Dr. C.J. Sarle, both university geologists, Douglas arrived at the site to examine a lead pipe whose tip was exposed in the caliche wall. He writes:

We all examined the ground carefully to form a judgement as to its being disturbed or undisturbed in the vicinity of the lead pipe and we all agreed that there was no evidence at all of recent disturbance- that, in fact, the pipe must have been in there many years. In short, it certainly looked as if the caliche had formed in place all around the lead pipe.²⁴⁶

Caliche is found throughout the southwest desert regions and is a cement-like composition that over time hardens and solidifies into fairly hard strata. Ranchers who encounter caliche while planting fence posts do not waste time fruitlessly digging, but use dynamite to create the holes instead. I consulted a University geologist as to how long it takes to form. The formation can vary due to certain circumstances and climatic variances, so he could not say for sure. However he did visit the site with me and examined the remaining profile wall. He felt that in this type of setting and under normal circumstances caliche would not form over

²⁴⁶A.E. Douglas general report. Wednesday March 4, 1925. Arizona State Museum Archives, file 0055 #14.

decades but rather over centuries and perhaps millennium.²⁴⁷

The lead pipe was carefully extracted from the caliche and much to the amazement of the esteemed gathering, it had a flared tip which resembled a spade. It was then lifted from its location and Douglas recalls:

"a perfect impression was left in the soil where it had lain...the surface of the impression was evidently very hard and seemingly very old... It was the opinion of those present that this object was not put in recently but that it had been there a long period of years...The caliche formed immediately about the spear (and) was hard enough to require continuous picking with a knife blade in order to dislodge common pebbles and release the spear...My original opinion last September of the first cross was that it had been put there in recent years, perhaps with a view to supporting some religious claims. I had not then seen one taken from its original location in undisturbed ground. The excavation of March 4th in the presence of so many witnesses and with so many photographs and with all the care that all the various persons present could suggest makes it extraordinarily difficult for me to see any modern origin for these lead articles.²⁴⁸

As this testimony exhibits, those who were present for the excavations came to the same conclusions and developed similar feelings with respect to the site. Having seen the photographs that still exist, I have to admit that most of the claims appear to be supported by the pictures. The geologist did suggest that the area's stratigraphic profiles seem to be much older than the age of the artifacts, but as yet a study

²⁴⁷Phil Pearthree. Geologist: University of Arizona; Arid Land Studies. personal communication, Feb. 7, 1990.

²⁴⁸Douglas, "Report," 2-5.

has not been conducted.

In 1930, the artifacts were dismissed. Much of the credit for this should be given to Emil Hawley, who objected to the grammar found on the artifacts. He formulates twelve reasons why the Latin used had to be of a modern construct. These reasons include: misspellings; use of English and French words; sentences from Caesar, Cicero, and Virgil; frequent use of Israel and Biblical names; the alphabetical order of maxims and mottos; and a disconnected and incoherent mass of Latin sentences, mottoes, and maxims.²⁴⁹

Hawley further states that most of the inscriptions can be traced to Latin textbooks that were being used in Tucson high schools around 1924. Covey feels Hawley's work is not so neat, and writes:

He extracted 39 sentences from the 1881-83 and 1892 editions of Harkness, fourteen further sentences from Allen and Greenough of 1903, and a couple-dozen maxims and mottoes from the Standard Dictionary of Facts of 1914 (nine of these also found in Fairbanks Book of Crests of 1892) which he said were also found on the crosses. Some of his paired sentences look a little less than identical; for example,

Romulus septem it triginta regnavit annos.

Harkness, p.194

Israel septum it secaginta regnat annos

Artifact, 3a

²⁴⁹Emil Hawley. Report for Arizona State Museum, "Facts vs Artifacts, An Antidotal Disquisition applied to the artifacts excavated near Tucson Pima County AZ 1924-25" (1928) Geneva NY., file 00034.

Hawley's report does, however, show a close correspondence between many of the phrases on the artifacts and those of published books of his day. He even goes as far as to accuse two people of being the perpetrators of the hoax: Dr. Sarle the geologist, and a local high school teacher, Laura Oslander, who conducted research concerning the case. Hawley contends that the artifacts were made between 1914 and 1924, and then somehow were interred at the site. But this would seem impossible since some of the objects were found under kiln debris. The kiln itself had not been used in 20-30 years prior to the discovery, and the soil around the artifacts showed no recent disturbance as would be visible if the objects were just recently planted. Furthermore, there is a report that when the kiln was first built in the 1880's some lead objects had been recovered.²⁵⁰ Since Hawley's testimony contained these serious deficiencies some other explanation had to be found.

A suitable culprit was found in the person of Timitio Oduhui, whose father reportedly was a refugee of the Mexican revolution against France. The elder Oduhui was reputed to be highly educated as was his family, but as the story goes he could only gain livelihood by working the limekilns out on Silverbell. The younger Oduhui was rumored to possess the

²⁵⁰Covey, 98.

skills of a sculptor and thus was accused of making and burying the artifacts. How he did all this has never been explained nor has this person ever been located. This scenario was known to Cummings in early 1926, but evidently he did not accept it until much later. In the meantime he had become President of the university and had other more important considerations to deal with.²⁵¹

In the early thirties it quickly became evident that the case would have to be resolved in some manner. The university had taken over excavations in 1927, but the reports show that it was a sloppy operation and only a few more artifacts were recovered. When the digging ended it became evident that some solution had to be reached. The national press had picked up on the story, and the university was being ridiculed on a daily basis, particularly by the New York Times. Hawley's study appears to have set in motion a concerted effort to dismiss the artifacts and wash the hands of all the scientists involved.

Cummings finally issued a rather short statement that lacked the methodology, substance, and thoroughness which formerly had accompanied his documents; in it he offers his principle reason for withdrawing support:

In the removal of one of the articles we excavated in the caliche bank, we found a rounded hole extending about

²⁵¹Cummings Report. Jan. 20, 1926. "Mexican made artifacts," Arizona State Museum Archives, file M7 00021.

an inch beyond the end of the article. This was not a snake hole. Our conclusion was that a hole could have been made in the sand and gravel by driving some implement into the pocket and then withdrawing it and inserting the piece of lead and tamping in the sand and gravel around it, but that the piece of lead spear didn't quite reach the end of the hole that had previously been made.²⁵²

He mentions some further reasons that aided his decision, including Hawley's Latin objections and a metal assay test which throws doubt on the age of the lead castings. As far as he was concerned the case was laid to rest.

Once the Depression hit, the Tucson artifacts were forgotten, many of the characters who were involved went on to become famous in their own right and now have university buildings named for them. Except for Tom Bent, who never gave up. Perhaps he alone just could not dismiss it from his mind. He went back on other occasions and dug around until his death in the sixties. Three months ago I met his son who still possesses the artifacts and who still owns the land.

Thomas Bent Jr. was in town to meet with the archaeologists who want to reopen the site. He spoke of how his dad had suffered from the whole ordeal, how his mother wanted him to toss the "damn things" in the ocean, and how it appeared that the university seemed not to want to solve the mystery in a scientific manner.

²⁵²Dr. Cummings. Final report on Alleged artifacts January 21, 1930. Arizona State Museum Archives, file 055M7.

There are many questions that remain unanswered. For example, how could a probe hole be made in the desert strata and then a sword or a spade with a wide handle be forced down through the hole and into place in a horizontal position at a depth of over five feet? And then be packed in such a manner that an impression would be made in the surrounding soil or caliche, all of which completely fooled the scientists who witnessed the whole excavating process? Another mystery involves the caliche itself. At the time of the controversy it was stated that caliche could form in a very quick time if the conditions were right; the site has been largely abandoned for 70 years, yet presently the piles of debris extracted from the profiles are as loose and fragmented as the day they were broken up.

On the other hand, why are these artifacts the only items recovered, no bones, no signs of habitation, only lead swords with Latin script? Perhaps the upcoming dig will reveal some new data and answers, but until such time this and many other sites will have to remain 'on the fence'.

Record Revisions

Robert McGhee of the Canadian Museum of Civilization recently noted that "a generation ago, the search for the Norse in the New World was not reputable scholarly activity...and was a subject which had been overwhelmed by naive enthusiasm and archaeological fraud."²⁵³ But ever since the discoveries at L'Anse aux Meadows, researchers have been honorably scouring the country searching for more of the same kinds of proof. Perhaps they believe that it's only a matter of time before some smoking gun type evidence is located and corroborates their pre-contact theories. In many respects their persistence is remarkable in view of the many discouraging words thrown their way by establishment critics. Perhaps they take the disapproval in stride and simply remember "that science is infallible, but scientists are usually wrong."²⁵⁴

A few of the pre-contact faction have gone to extreme lengths attempting to prove that their theories are plausible and ought to be considered. For example in 1976 Tim Severin decided to test whether Saint Brendan's alleged voyage to

²⁵³Robert McGhee, review of Norse Discovery of America by James Tuck, Journal of Canadien d'Archaeologic Vol 12, 1988, 248.

²⁵⁴Cyrus Gordon, After Dinner Comments at Institute for the Study of American Cultures annual Conference, 1989.

America could have been accomplished as was described in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*. This account written about 200 years after his death, described some of the landfalls and other important aspects of this legendary priest-explorer's adventures. Severin's research led him to construct a boat some thirty six feet in length, "built of tanned Ox hides, (and stretched) over an ashwood frame according to medieval directions,...the curragh (boat) braved gales, ice floes, and curious whales to travel the 2,600 miles from Ireland to Newfoundland," which is exactly what was proposed to have happened some 1500 years earlier.²⁵⁵

An equally impressive feat was accomplished by Thor Heyerdahl in 1970. He was among many who noticed an uncanny similarity between the reed boats of South America's Lake Titicaca region, and similar craft from the Egypt's Nile River valley. Since both civilizations got underway at around the same time period, which new findings now substantiate, Heyerdahl supposed that the Egyptian side of the equation might have reached and possibly influenced the South American side. He set out to show and dramatize the probability of his theory by sailing a reed boat constructed by Buduma tribesmen from the Lake Chad region in Africa. His first attempt in 1969 failed after 2600 miles, however the following year he

²⁵⁵Gardner, "Mysteries," 45.

enlisted the expertise of the Aymara tribe of the Lake Titicaca region and this boat, the "Ra II," accomplished the journey of 3270 miles in under three months with no problems.²⁵⁶

Although these scientists based their lives and reputations on well-reasoned speculation, they basically followed clues and instructions garnered from surviving documents which were pertinent to both ship construction and ancient navigation. It was ultimately demonstrated that contact could be accomplished via boats made of leather or even ones made of reeds. Yet for all this trouble the definitive results were largely dismissed as having little validity. As one noted archaeologist commented "the only thing that Heyerdahl proved, was that Norwegians are good sailors."²⁵⁷

As much as the feats of the ancient Egyptians and the Irish of St. Breandan's day are to be admired, the sailors who are suspected of consistently reaching the New World are the Phoenicians, Celts, and Norse. Lesser known but equally impressive seafarers may be those of ancient Japan. As we dig deeper into the past and continue to improve archeo-

²⁵⁶Ibid., 16.

²⁵⁷Allman, William F. and Joanie M Schrof, "Lost Empires of the Americas," U.S. News and World Report, 2 April 1990, 56.

analytical processes, we are finding that sailing is far older than previously thought. Since primitive ship-building materials are exclusively organic in ancient times, the hard evidence tends to be obscure for the earliest maritime vessels. But recently, the sophistication of several archaic maritime cultures has come more into focus.

Perhaps the earliest instance of maritime activity in the New World was practiced by those early peoples who emigrated here from Asia, so claims William S. Laughlin. He says that the Bering land bridge could not have supplied travelers with a reliable food source, and was probably frozen as well. "The first Americans were skilled whalers who used driftwood for boats", they probably followed a route along the supposed "southern shore of the land bridge, (which) had a bounty of sea mammals, fish, and birds to support human life."²⁵⁸

This theory is consistent with the new thinking that ever so slowly has begun to reshape our comprehension of the past. It serves to demonstrate some backing away from the long standing stereotypical depiction of trudging, mammoth chasing-Asians hunting their way into the hemisphere and gradually mellowing into Indians. Has the time arrived for us to consider that other theories may help or better explain human

²⁵⁸Ibid., 54.

movements in ancient times? Should we consider that other vehicles, routes, and time frames might soon account for the unresolved enigmas present in the ancient New World? Certainly the use of boats would help to overcome the rather narrow time frame that presently accounts for all movements across the still-hypothetical land bridge.

One ongoing study has revealed early maritime activity occurring on the opposite side of the North American continent and is beginning to account for some rather unique objects and traditions that have been uncovered in the general circum-arctic region. If we are willing to let early Americans sail in (or out) from one direction, why not another?

Archaeological discoveries now show that a highly advanced and long lasting Archaic Maritime culture existed in the Canadian Northeast territory perhaps as early as 7500 B.C. Studies indicate that much different climates, sea levels, and ocean currents may have permitted and even encouraged extensive maritime activity within certain time windows, one of which occurred between 7000 to 3500 B.C..²⁵⁹ James A. Tuck, who has been responsible for much of the data we now possess for the maritime culture called Red Paint, says that they emigrated into these areas from the American southeast;

²⁵⁹James Tuck, "The Northeastern Maritime Continuum: 8000 Years of Cultural Development in the Far Northeast," Arctic Anthropology 15 (1975): 139.

probably Florida, Georgia, or North Carolina. Thus far no discernable path has been found to link or trace them from these southern territories.²⁶⁰

To account for the lost trail, Tuck points out that the Atlantic coast likely extended a few miles past the present beach and now the ocean has buried all evidence for their trip north. This theory is strikingly similar to the one employed for the Bering land bridge.

Tuck has found no earlier horizon or earlier culture that they could have developed from, and the area was probably void of humans. Because of the choice conditions, he thinks the sudden appearance of the Red Paint people "represents a rapid migration of Paleo-Indian hunters northward into an unoccupied territory", where they quickly and efficiently became proficient at sea.²⁶¹ Today their tool kit and burial customs serve to distinguish them from other later neighbors who did possess the same sea mammal hunting technology.²⁶² Some of their tools include stemmed points, ground slate spears, adzes, gouges, harpoons, plummets, and bifaces, and many of these are found in the earliest horizons. What really is distinctive about this people is the practice of burying their

²⁶⁰Ibid., 140.

²⁶¹Ibid., 140.

²⁶²Ibid., 140-50.

dead with red ocher.

A film produced by Tim W. Timerck explored Red Paint culture and mentioned that they very likely had connections with the later Great Lakes area Copper cultures, and apparently with the Moundbuilders of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. In fact a burial mound "containing bifaces, gouges and red ocher" has been found in Southern Labrador and dates to about 6000 B.C., perhaps making it one of the first mounds constructed in this hemisphere.²⁶³ But the most mysterious aspect regarding these Red Paint people is the existence of similar type burials and mounds found in Siberia, Ireland, Britain, and Spain, and just last year it was reported that Red Paint burials were found in the area of the Baltic sea.²⁶⁴

I wrote Dr. Tuck for his opinion concerning this latest discovery, and although he has not seen documentation concerning it, he volunteered to nip any inferences that I might innocently suppose. In a return letter he emphatically stated that "nobody in his right mind believes that trans-Atlantic contacts were responsible for the outward similarities between the Maritime Archaic people and the more or less contemporaneous people of northern Europe."²⁶⁵ His

²⁶³Ibid., 144.

²⁶⁴T.W. Timerick. Film maker, Producer of In Search of the Red Paint People. Personal communication, October 1989.

²⁶⁵James Tuck. Letter to the author. 18 October 1989.

letter suggests that perhaps a few others have likewise enlisted his opinion on such matters.

But such a transoceanic connection, according to many experts, can be implied based on evidence consisting of similar tools, economies, and burial customs. The artifacts show that Red Paint boats were made of wood and were very seaworthy, as evidenced by the type of fish remains found in their burials. For example, a certain species of swordfish can be found only in waters at least 100 miles out to sea; the blades from these fish have been found in Red Paint burials.²⁶⁶

In more modern times trans-Atlantic travel has been accomplished in small craft such as rowboats, sailboats, and the leather boats mentioned above. "In the late 17th century a Eskimo Kayak was found on a beach in Scotland," which likely was paddled from Greenland or Northeast Canada.²⁶⁷ If the Red Paint did sail or row extensively in the Arctic and North Atlantic, their craft most likely resembled those of the Indians on the Northwest Coast. The tool kit of both cultures is amazingly very similar, and the tools show that carved coastal timber was the primary material for boat

²⁶⁶In Search of the Red Paint People. Nova, 1986. T.W. Timerick producer.

²⁶⁷Alice B. Kehoe, "Small Boats Upon the North Atlantic," in Man Across the Sea, ed. Carrol L. Riley (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 276.

construction.²⁶⁸

Perhaps the evidence of Red Paint culture being present at widely separated locales in such an early era should be labeled as circumstantial, because what it purports to show is a diffusion of style and technique from one area to another. Who had it first is not yet clear. At the present we can allow diffusion within the hemisphere, but between hemispheres seems to be asking too much. Once the Baltic sea finds are analyzed we should know whether there were Indians in Europe around 7000 years ago. If so, a total overhaul of pre-history will be forthcoming as transoceanic contact at very early times is proven. Furthermore, such a scenario would indicate that an inter-continental seafaring community existed prior to the founding of the great urban civilizations.

Because the question of diffusion often enters into discussions concerning pre-Columbian contact, I felt obligated to at least mention one case or study that attempts to use this theory to prove transoceanic contact occurred. The case involves a discovery made in South America in 1956.

On the coast of Ecuador lies a little fishing village known as Valdivia. For centuries this area has been frequented by fishermen who plied the local Pacific waters

²⁶⁸Timerick, film.

for their livelihood. In a hillside adjacent to the town, some pottery was discovered and proved to be nearly five thousand years old. What was so remarkable about this find was that the pottery appeared to be "incongruous...suddenly it would seem a highly developed and varied body of ceramic work appears in the archaeological record virtually out of nowhere,...(totally absent is a) line of development."²⁶⁹

The discovery of other items in the area provided clues that led investigators to look elsewhere for the pottery's ancestry. Eventually a likely matrix was located, but not in South America. The style and technique seemed distinctive enough that all preceding developmental steps leading up to the refined Valdivia-ware were found 8000 miles away in Japan.²⁷⁰

Ceramic form pottery has been detected in the Orient for a period as early as 7500 B.C., however the type that was linked to Ecuador is called Middle Joman, and is found principally on the Japanese islands of Honshu and Kyushu; and dates to around 3000 B.C.²⁷¹ Clifford Evans and Betty Meggars, two archaeologists who conducted most of the research

²⁶⁹Gardner, 24.

²⁷⁰Betty J. Meggars, "Contacts from Asia," in The Quest for America, ed. Geoffrey Ashe, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971) 244.

²⁷¹Gardner, 24.

on this pottery, found that samples of the earliest Valdivia were contemporaneous with the Middle Joman. Meggars uses samples from both to claim that:

Duplication occurs in surface finish, technique of decorating, motif, combination of motifs, and variation in rim treatment, to the extent that without reference to the catalogue number it is impossible to distinguish the fragment's origination from sites in Japan from those obtained in Ecuador.²⁷²

Evidence of this type is distinguished as being diffusionist. Because a practice or technique appears to have been introduced from elsewhere, its preliminary stages or origination are not present in the context or region where it was found. However, those steps can readily be identified in some other region, and in the case of Valdivia pottery, Japan. Equipped with the technique or style, the receiving group will over time blend or incorporate their own advances and influences into the item, thus creating their own synchronized technique, the result of which may become a hybrid of the original.

Two major objections for Valdivia pottery being a product of diffusion are: there are only so many ways to decorate pottery, and since these particular items can be labeled as basic and having ordinary marks, they could have come into being independently; secondly, there is the 8000 miles of

²⁷²Meggars, 244.

ocean between the two locations.²⁷³

As far as the journey is concerned there are many documented instances during the historic period whereby Oriental fisherman have been shipwrecked or swept up upon Pacific beaches. The pottery might have been the result of a shipwrecked crew. Yet, it is widely believed that the Pacific was not a barrier to ancient seafarers. As another of Heyerdahl's expeditions proved, rafts sailing in the Pacific and making use of the currents, winds, and paddles as well as reliable navigation techniques, were likely responsible for all Pacific island populations. Chinese and Japanese presumably had the same or similar skills as possessed by the Polynesians who ranged widely throughout the Pacific. Furthermore, Oriental sailors would have traveled the same 8000 miles whether they came straight across the ocean or skirted the northern coastlines. However, for the Joman-Valdivia pottery, most investigators favor a shipwreck scenario occurring around 3000 B.C.

As for the strong affinity of the two pottery types being a product of an independent development, Meggars contends that "one of the reasons that pottery is a valuable indicator of temporal and cultural differences is because it is infinitely

²⁷³Ibid., 244.

variable."²⁷⁴ As for the pottery in question, she insists that "it could not develop in the absence of communication."²⁷⁵ Pottery is one of the primary objects employed by anthropologists and archaeologists to classify and date ancient cultures. It would seem demonstratively inconsistent to accept some cases and reject others based on the belief that oceans were insurmountable natural barriers for ancient man. As Meggars points out, if the sites were in the same hemisphere there would be no argument as to their obvious connection.²⁷⁶

In one respect much of pre-Columbian history can be likened to the American Folk art practice of quilting; specifically quilting by patchwork. Frequently, when any new historical fact of a seditious nature is either discovered or verified, it may gain admittance to the official record, but perhaps not be properly acknowledged or appreciated for to its potential influence. The result can mean that important new information does not modify or change the record. In lieu of fanfare, the needed adjustments often seem to decay on the periphery. As we have seen, this practice appears to be the rule rather than the exception for certain evidence. Thus

²⁷⁴Ibid., 245.

²⁷⁵Ibid.

²⁷⁶Ibid., 256-9.

many important contributions remain largely unapparent in the overall pre-historic context.

Our pre-history, as exemplified by the ever increasing number of patches, may be seen as either deficient or losing a reliable foundation. It certainly is incapable of supporting or incorporating the type of unconventional discoveries mentioned in this paper and this is likely to continue. For example, a recent article carried by the U.S. News and World Report examined South American pre-history. The essence of this story was to present new findings regarding the age of the Andean civilization period. Archaeologists have uncovered material that now extends this civilization's beginnings back a full 2000 years further than previously believed. This revelation and its corresponding implications affects the entire recorded history of the Andean region as well as any culture associated with them.²⁷⁷ Logically, such data should weaken the credibility of the entire pre-historic framework. But if past disclosures of this nature are any indication, it will take decades before the record is adjusted or the lingering problems addressed.

Thus far, my research has turned up extant and compelling evidence, which though agreeable to pre-Columbian contact, has consistently been dismissed simply because it fails to fit

²⁷⁷Allman, 46-60.

within the rationale and framework favored by the scientific community. The official pre-contact record, even in places where factually it is suspect, is defended almost as if it were a religious dogma. But each year brings attempts to introduce new and recent findings which serve to challenge the key tenets of pre-contact history.

For most of the past century any effort made to demonstrate contact was either ignored or dismissed by mainstream scientists, who employed discouraging and encyclical-like rhetoric effectively canceling any widespread consideration of the data. But this attitude may be waning since at least some of the current research seems to satisfy even the most stringent empirical scrutiny. It is doubtful that any Old World languages or scripts were independently invented in America, so if some investigation uncovers these items in a proven pre-Columbian context, we can be fairly certain that they were brought here from somewhere else.

Although it is difficult to envision any wholesale change occurring in the short term, as far as incorporating pre-Columbian contacts into the historical record, perhaps the current preponderance of analysis might soon bring this whole subject to trial. Based on some of the evidence, pre-contact adherents hope that the pre-historic quilt will undergo repairs with the aid of some properly situated patches.

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