

Bronze Age Colonies in the Azores and Canaries

by Jay S. Wakefield

Azores Islands

The Azores are nine semi-tropical volcanic islands on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. They arose from the collisions of four continental plates that are 1000m below sea level. They lie on the south edge of the Gulfstream. They feel like an Atlantic Hawaii, but the Hawaiian Islands are at latitude 20°N, while the Azores are much further north at 37-39°. They get a lot of rain and warmth from the Gulfstream, especially the western islands of the group. It is surprising to see hydrangeas growing wild, as they need so much water, when grown in the States. The islands are Portuguese, and, unlike Hawaii, have no Japanese or Philipinos. Also unlike Hawaii which has lots of beaches, sheer cliffs dominate the coasts of the Azores islands, as they are constantly eroded by NE and westerly winds.

San Miguel, the largest of the eastern two islands, lies at 37°N. Its major city, Ponta Delgada, is where your SATA Air (SATA.pt) flight from Madrid will land. The island is popular with European tourists, with its remarkable green and blue lakes. The five Central Azores include the islands of Pico and Terceira, where the ruins of Bronze Age colonies are found, at 38°N. The western two islands, Corvo and Flores, are at 39°N. The modern sailing guide provides the recommended route for small sailboats heading for Europe: sail up the American coast to 39°N, then sail east on that latitude until you find the West Azores. These yachts will be found doing their repairs and reprovisioning at the harbor of Horta on the central island of Faial. Across the small channel from Horta, the sailors will be admiring the towering volcanic peak Pico, at 7,713 feet, on the neighboring island of Pico. Probably without knowing it, below the volcano, they will be looking at the small port of Madalena, where reportedly 200 pyramids have been found.

Many Bronze Age (6500 BC-1200 BC) monuments and artifacts have the number 23 carved into them, or their stone counts. For example, the cairn of Gavrinis, on the Brittany coast of France, the "most decorated" passage grave, is built of 39 huge stones. Twenty three of them decorated with petroglyphs from floor to ceiling, but there is a gap at the 23rd stone, which is a white quartz stone. The axis is oriented 38° off true north. This monument was built, according to archaeology, c.3600 BC, and clearly it was built to celebrate and commemorate the discovery of the Azores, which were found at 38°N and 39°N. We think that ancient navigators sailed west at 23°N, the Tropic of Cancer, the furthest north the sun travels before going south again, changing Summer to Fall. They were trying to find where the sun went every night as it traveled west, to the unknown backside of the Earth. Unfortunately, this course brought them into the windless "doldrums", or "horse latitudes", where Age of Discovery sailors ate their horses. Heroic Bronze Age sailors must have died on this route. Apparently some were blown to the north, and then followed birds to the Azores Islands. Since the tradewinds blow from the west onto the coast of France, sailing to these islands directly from Europe is difficult. It took a thousand years for sailors to learn the tradewind patterns of the Earth. The patterns had to be learned all over again during the "Age of Discovery", with the re-discovery of the Azores claimed by the Portuguese in 1427.

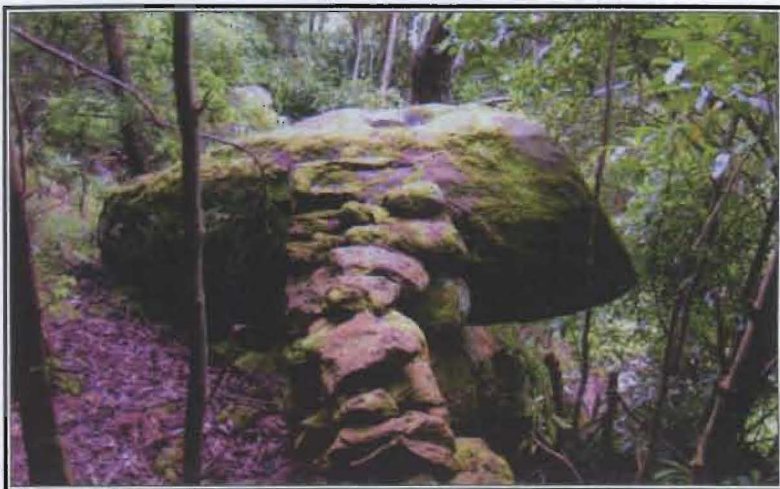


Photo 1: Perched Stone with petropot carved into the top. Located at the start of a rough roadway (ceremonial pathway?) up to Grota do Medo site above Angra, on island of Terceira, Azores Islands. Balanced stones, perched stones and petropots are commonly found in Bronze Age sites



Photo 2: One of maybe a dozen boulders on the Grota do Medo hilltop with these slot cuts, seen commonly in European Bronze Age sites. The slots had wood hammered into them, then the wood was swelled with a water soak, splitting the stone. Some of the stones failed to crack

In 1749 a pot of Carthaginian coins dating to c.200 BC were found washed out by a storm in the foundation of a building on the island of Corvo. This brought the first brought attention to Carthaginian knowledge of the sailing route. Among them were 2 gold coins and 5 bronze coins from Carthage, and 2 bronze coins from Cyrene. They were given by numismatist Enrique Florez to Johan Podolyn, who published a report about the find in 1778 in the Publications of the Royal Society of Sciences and Letters in Gothenburg. More recently, Carthaginian hypogea have been found in multiple places. A full sized bronze statue of horseman with outstretched arm pointing west tumbled down a slope when parts of it were being retrieved for a Portuguese king. The retrieved parts were later lost in the great Lisbon tsunami of 1755. No one knows who built the statue, or where the bulk of it lies. The Spanish galleons from Mexico and Panama used the Azores route for gold bearing ships, just as the route had been used in a previous era for copper bearing

ships. The principal harbor during both eras, and base in the Azores, was Angra, on the central island of Terceira. Angra features some of the major Bronze Age ruins to be found in the islands.

The harbor at Angra is formed behind a 1 km diameter tuff-cone resulting from a basaltic submarine eruption called "Monte Brasil". My Dutch friend, Reinoud de Jonge and I toured the huge Spanish fortifications, and the WWII British anti-aircraft guns on top. In a "military zone" on the north side, we walked old Spanish walls to view old man-made "caves" above the seacliffs. The caves are thought to be Carthaginian ritual centers dedicated to Tanit or Asherah, Goddess of the Sea. Today they show water channels cut in the lava, leading to watering holes for Spanish horses, and one is a water reservoir. There is a small sand beach at Angra, and a town of major buildings, and tourist hotels. Part of the European Union, the roads are good, and driving is on the right, but the streets are narrow and on this populated government-center island of Terceira, there are a lot of cars parked along the roads.

Above Angra do Heroismo (Angra of the heroes), is located a site labeled on the map "Grota do Medo", up the red road, not the freeway, up the hills behind town. At the top of the steep hill, where the road levels out, there are two houses, and on the left, a farm gate. A farmer opened the gate for us, and told us to walk toward the woods on the track beside his field. A path appeared rising into pine woods on the left, and soon we were finding boulders with unreadable weathered petroglyphs on them, and boulders with slots cut for wooden splitting wedges (PHOTO 2). The path crossed a powerline, and then, near the crest, the Perched Boulder PHOTO 1 appeared before us. Right on the top of it appeared a perfect petropot. These are usually found in Iberia above ceremonial pathways, on the top of prominent boulders (REF.9, www.rocksandRows.com). The pathway continued, with brush clearings, the first steps in an early archaeological effort. At the top of the hill was a megalithic stone structure (PHOTO 3), and nearby another, smaller structure (PHOTO 4).

There are stone walls, stairs, steps, and stones arranged as "chairs". We explored the fields and stone fences around these woods, and found many petroglyphs, and ancient walls. Particularly impressive was a petropot that was carved into one of the stones in a cow field, that had the harbor of Angra in the view below. Clearly the hilltop site has been respected and saved although there are no signs to it or about it, and no mention of it at all in the tourist literature. In the rocks on the eastern steep hillside, where there are stone stairs and passageways, there is a full-size stone bull, with a prominent concentric carved eyeball, evoking thoughts of Minoan bull jumping or Egyptian Apis bull worship. From the slot cuts, to the petropots, stone buildings, and huge stones in stone walls, it was a European site to us.

On the other side of the island of Terceira, there is a town named Sao Bras, just off the cross-island freeway. Actually quite a way above the town, past a small group of houses called "Baldio", you come to an area labeled on the map as "Biscoito da Fontinhas". Although Portuguese, it is actually easier to get around here than in Portugal, as quite a few folks know some English. That is because when the whaling industry died, there was quite a diaspora to Brazil and New England. That is why the SATA flights originate in Boston, full of American Portuguese, returning to visit relatives. (The fellow next to me in the airplane was returning from Hollywood to stay again in the house a grandmother had left him.) At the

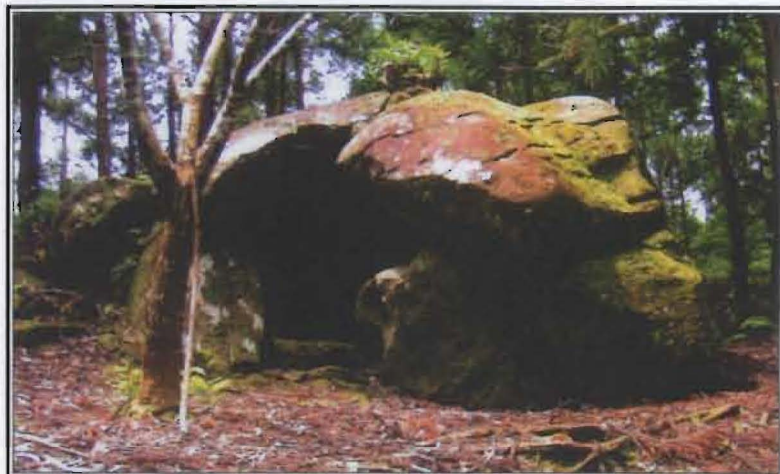


Photo 3: Megalithic stone structure on the hilltop at Grota do Medo, above Angra



Photo 4: A smaller stone structure at Grota do Medo



Photo 5: One of many similar photos of approximately half a mile trackway previously described as near Sao Bras, but actually up on the hilltop above that town in an area labeled "Biscoito da Fontinhas" above Baldio. Along the route was a stone well structure, and at the end of the road were many stone walls 4-6 foot in height throughout the woods. We could not determine the extent of the walling. The trackway starts at a 12 foot diameter concrete platform labeled "CAMINHO PRIMITIVO", with a two wheel cart axle on it.

top of the hill, you will run across a big concrete platform labeled "CAMINHO PRIMITIVO", which has two big wooden wheels with iron rims between a big wooden axle, from an old wine cart. PHOTO 5 shows the

Trackway that runs half a mile through the woods, over mostly level ground. It ends in a seemingly endless complex of stone walls in the woods on a hilltop. The locals think these trackways were made by medieval wine carts, maybe when the lava was molten or soft. On Malta, and other sites where trackways are found, including Spain, Turkey, and Sardinia, there is a suggestion that the tracks were made by poles dragged by animals, or carts carrying heavy stone blocks. There can be no doubt they are very old. PHOTO 6 shows a long trackway behind the airport that goes under a wall. Another piece of trackway can be seen under a highway bridge on the western side of the island at a town called Santa Barbara, where the tracks run under the town walls. We found another trackway in beachrock on the east end of the island south of Porto Martins. This was a light track (not so deep), and even more curious in its origin.

An elevated ridge of eastern Terceira named "Serra do Cume", has been written up by a psychologist named Maria Costa (Refs. 13,20). The first day we tried to explore this area, it was enveloped in deep fog. It was a surprise to come back a few days later when it was clear, and find the rock outcrops with all the petroglyphs and petropots and big rock walls across the fields illustrated in her book. It is unfortunate that the rocks are so weather eroded.

Reinoud and I do enjoy exploring on our own, and sometimes find things others have not noted, despite their being 4,000 years in the past. We are attracted to big stone outcrops on the tops of heights, places that have not been altered by people. On a farmed conical hilltop overlooking the large container and cruise ship port of Praia, east of Serra do Cume, we found a huge boulder at the top of the hill, which was flat on top at about chest height (PHOTO 7). Carved into the top of it was a big carved square full of water. We had seen one just like it up on the Serra. I have also seen a similar square flat bowl in the Pacific, in the Marquesas Islands, square, and the same size, at a hillside site with red rock chairs for only royalty. Our guide, Mark Eddowes, called the "French Polynesian Expert" by the National Geographic Magazine, said that they were filled with water, and served as mirrors. Perhaps, like mummification, mirrors are a concept that spread worldwide during the Bronze Age.

I should note that on the far western side of Terciera, past the village of Serreta, is a road down to a point of land called Ponta do Queimado. In the deep forests near the point are "more than 2-3 square kilometers" of stone ruins. The walls are so extensive in the woods that you can see no ending of them. You would need a full day or more to properly check this site out. There are no signs, and no indications at all of who built all the walls, terraces, and ruins. Old walkways or "roads" run through them. "The place is not classified or registered in any civil documents" -Costa, Ref.20. We walked down a pathway through them for quite a distance, then returned to the car, thinking we needed David Childress over here to check out this "Lost City", his favorite subject. PHOTO 8 takes us back to the Azorean island of Pico, at the ferry port of Madalena.

This pyramid, or "Maroicos" as they call them, is surrounded by a city park, with recreational facilities, including tennis courts. It is a rectangular stepped pyramid on a hill or mound, described as of "origem obscura" (obscure origin) by the archaeologist Manuel Tomas, in his bronze plaque at the foot of the pyramid. It has an interesting design, as its steps spiral up from the base, then the spiral terminates, and there is a square step around

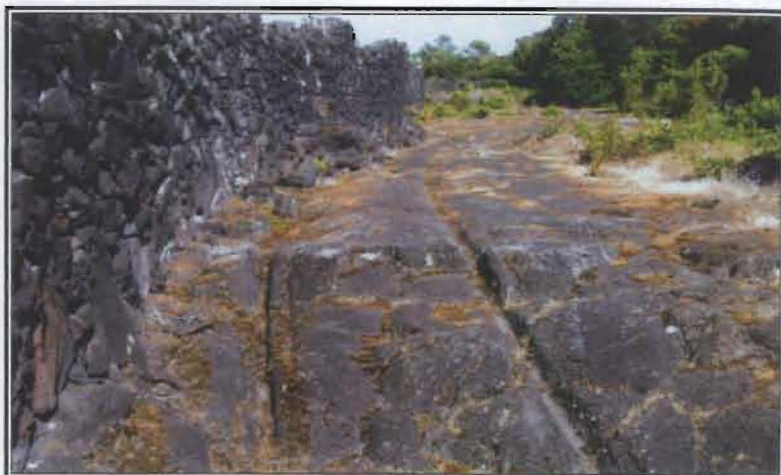


Photo 6: This trackway runs parallel to and just upland of the road that runs on the ocean side of the airport on Terceira. Like the trackway on the hilltop, this is surprisingly long, maybe 1/3rd of a mile. In this photo it goes under a wall. It does connect with an asphalt roadway at both ends. There is another, shorter trackway, nearby, running just alongside the smaller road along the ocean cliffs. The locals have the theory that these were created by the wheels of winecarts, perhaps running over lava that was hot and still soft



Photo 7: My friend Reinoud de Jonge looking at a mirror square atop a conical hill overlooking the cruise ship terminal port of Praia, Terceira, central Azores Islands



Photo 8: This well maintained pyramid is labeled the "Jardim dos Maroicos". in a central park of the port of Madalena, Pico Island, Azores Islands. It is unusual in its design, with two or three spiraled tiers, and one at the top is circular, as can be seen in the photo, and a twelve foot wide, eighty foot long tongue pointing to the SW

the top. The monument is about 20 feet tall (6.2m). Its long sides orient to true north at about 39°, which is the latitude of the site. The unique tongue of stone is 6.6m wide, 1.77m high, with an angle of 228°SW (corrected for the deviation here of 8°w). Is this the winter solstice angle at 38°N? The middle step, on the south side where the spiral ends, is expanded into a wider ceremonial terrace of 2.3m (showing in lighter color in the photo). Most of the steps have a width of less than a meter. I find it interesting that the 4800-4500 BC cairn of Barnenez on the north coast of France also has a south-side middle step with an expanded ceremonial terrace of 2.4m (www.rocksandrows.com).

On the Internet, you can read claims that there are "200" pyramids around Madalena, while others claim "125". Driving the backroads around town, through the stone walls sheltering the grape vines, and the houses built of stones, you find at least dozens (see PHOTO 9) of pyramid-type structures, in various states of ruin. Some have houses or garages or sheds built into them, or next to them, or built of their stones. I do not see how one could count them, how small a pile of rocks make a ruin? Surely there were quite a few pyramids built, but a systematic groundplan and archaeological survey needs to be done. Nuno (Ref. 19) reports that APIA (Portuguese Association of Archaeological Research) studied them, and noted that "around 70 of the maroicos appear to have been built aligned to the summer solstice, and that some of them have narrow corridors, chambers, and doors." Unfortunately UNESCO scientists said the APIA conclusions of construction before the 15th Century were premature and fanciful, and designated only the vineyards of Madalena as a World Heritage Site in 2004.

Canary Islands

When the Portuguese "discovered" the Canary Islands in 1427, they found large, strong, white, blond non-Christian people living there they called "human stock" (Ref.24). These people were divided into nine kingdoms around the coasts of Tenerife, surrounding common goat pastures up on central Mt. Tiede (12, 198 feet). My friend Bob List and I tried to go up to the park at the caldera, but the roads were blocked by snowbanks and park police (late February 2016).

The Pope had declared that the title to new lands could be claimed through discovery, as long as there were no Christian people living there. (This also applied to America, by the way.) These non-Catholic "Guanche" were seen as a lesser class of beings, and so they used them as slaves, and sold them sold in the slave markets of Lisbon, Seville, and Valencia. These people, some called "Guanche", some by other names, inhabited the Canaries, as well as the Azores and Madeira. All of them received the same treatment as slaves, whether from the Portuguese in the Azores, or the Spanish in Madeira and the Canaries. In Heyerdahl's museum in the Canaries, there is a painting of these people trying to fight off the first Spanish conquistadores landing at the beach with sling stones. Remember that the slingers of the Balearic islands were so reknown for their slinger skills, that they formed a division of Hannibal's Carthaginian army that crossed the Alps. There is a suggestion that these Guanche were related to the Berbers of North Africa. (My opinion is that both were descended from the same Bronze Age culture.)

In their first battle with the Spanish, the Guanche led the armored Spanish up a trail, where the Spanish stretched out single file. When they encountered a Guanche herd of goats, they put their armor in



Photo 9: This is one of the least dilapidated of the reported "200" pyramids in various states of destruction among the farms and wine walls around the town of Madalena on Pico Island. There are a dozen or two of these structures easily seen, driving the village roads



Photo 10: Five-tier pyramid "El Guincho" near Los Cancajos, on La Palma Island, Canary Islands. It has a staircase cut into the side, like other pyramids seen in Thor Heyerdahl's Archaeological Park on Tenerife Island.

their carts, and caught goats for dinner. Then the athletic Guanche impaled their eyeballs, testicles, and bellies with their wooden poles, and won the battle. A museum painting shows the Spanish cavalry later wiping out every living person in a Guanche valley village. A story goes that a prominent Spanish gentleman colonist in the Canaries had an affair with a Guanche princess. His wife reportedly got even by seducing Columbus when he brought his ships to the harbor, preparing for one of his voyages to America. The story ends with the comment that she then had all the Guanche males still living on the island put to death.

Nowhere in these islands is there active archaeology in progress. Permit applications have been submitted, but none approved. The President of the Portuguese Archaeological Society, Ribeiro Nuno (Ref.19), who claims a Megalithic Culture presence on these islands, says "Archaeology has not yet begun". He has published scientific articles, and presented to international archaeological conferences. He claims he has received "great acceptance" among the international scientific community. I am tempted to speculate that these Catholic-raised administrators must wonder who made these pyramids, trackways, petroglyphs and so on. They must fear that if archaeology were to show that they were built by an early Christian people, what other country today might be able to lay a valid claim to the ownership of the islands? Remember that their perspective is that Jesus and his people began the world, not that there was an earlier Bronze Age world thousands of years before there was Christianity.

Unfortunately, despite the early reports of giant mummies, only small mummies were on exhibit in the Santa Cruz museum we visited. On the SW end of the Canary Island of Tenerife there are the extremely tall "Cliffs of Gigantia". There is a lot of evidence around the edges that at least some of the Guanche were very large. A statue in the city square of Santiago, in western Tenerife, has a huge bronze statue of a guanche warrior, and a museum exhibits a huge bronze head. Unfortunately, the Spanish prefer their conquistadores to be bigger than they were, so even at the entry to Thor Heyerdahl's museum, there are two bronze statues of equal stature.

The seven Canary Islands, off the coast of Morocco at 28 degrees north, are also volcanoes in the Ocean, but they receive hot winds off the Sahara Desert, so are not wet, but are hot and dry. The eastern islands are so close, they say they can be seen from the African coast on a clear day. The rugged and green western island of La Palma had some pyramids, but most are gone. PHOTO 10 shows the best one left. Note that it has an ascending staircase built into the west side of it, like the six step pyramids at the pyramid park of Thor Heyerdahl on Tenerife. Studies in 1991 by the Archaeology Department of La Laguna University carried out the first excavation at the site, and the Canary Islands Astrophysical Institute determined that the pyramids were aligned to the winter and summer solstices (Ref.27). The stairways up the pyramids suggest a "rising sun" ceremony on the morning of Solstice.

At the northern end of La Palma, in the area of La Zarza many petroglyphs are to be found on boulders and at cave entrances. Some of these (see PHOTO 11) are dead ringers for the petroglyph carvings in Gavrinis, on the coast of France, and others are similar to petroglyphs seen at Loughcrew, in Ireland. There can be no question that these were created in the traditions of the same Bronze Age people. PHOTO 12 shows a portion of the large pyramid and plaza complex at the "Pirames de Guimar Ethnographic Park" founded by Thor Heyerdahl and his friend Fred Olsen. An entry fee of 20E brings a lot of revenue to the site, which is elaborately built of stone and glass, with multiple buildings, wired for music, and has a "poison plant garden", lots of botanical displays and south seas relics of Thor Heyerdahl's expeditions. Thor is shown in a movie, where he says that "what struck him most about the site was the plazas between the pyramids, like in Mexico."

There must have been a lot of people to support a complex of this size, but there are no estimates of the former population size, or any explanation of the extensive (ancient?) terracing on the mountainsides around the site. PHOTO 13 shows a pyramid in a complex on the other side of Tenerife, not far from the town of Icod, taken from the parking lot of the public library of the tiny village of Santa Barbara. PHOTO 14 is another pyramid at the same complex of plazas, pyramids and walls, now being farmed. Note this pyramid has an unusual five-sided design. We looked for "La Suerte" pyramid reported by Coppen (Ref.25), and small reported ruins of several others, but did not find them. On the nearby governing island of Gran Canaria are caves with Guanche paintings in them, shown on the internet before and after repainting. They



Photo 11: One of many petroglyphs found on boulders and in caves in the area of "La Zarza" on the north end of La Palma Island, in the Canaries. This design is identical in style to the extensive glyphs in the Cairn of Gavrinis, on an island in the Gulf of Morbihan, on the coast of Brittany. Other petroglyphs have patterns similar to the daisy-circle glyphs found at Cairn-T at Loughcrew, Ireland



Photo 12: This is one of the pyramids in the multiple pyramid/plaza/walls complex named "Pirames de Guimar Ethnographic Park", founded by Thor Heyerdahl and his friend Fred Olsen, who owned the shipping line still serving the Canary Islands, and connecting them with Spain. This site is in the town of Guimar, on the east side of the island, south of Santa Cruz



Photo 13: This is a pyramid in a different Guanche Kingdom, at a place called "Santa Barbara", up a small road from Icod on the western side of the north coast. Actually, this photo is taken from the parking lot of the public library. The entire complex of pyramids and plazas is being farmed. We were being watched by the farmers, who waved as we took photos.



Photo 14: This is the five-sided six story pyramid at the Santa Barbara site, east of Icod. are highly geometric. Guanche "pintadera" were "small and unique wooden or clay seals worn on a leather thong necklace and thought to be useful in the afterlife" (Coppens, Ref.25). A small museum collection of original Guanche pintadera in Santa Cruz (Ref.28), recalled patterns seen in Iberic pendants. Another cultural cross-connection is given by Coppens (Ref.25): "medical anatomist Elliot Grafton Smith reported the discovery of a Guanche mummy that had been subjected to typically Egyptian mummification procedures of the 26th Dynasty. For all the reasons given above, I conclude that there is convincing evidence that the seafaring people of coastal Europe, with a Minoan and Egyptian component, colonized all these islands during the Bronze Age, in support of their trans-Atlantic trading voyages. ■

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Maritime Petroglyphs of the Beaker Colony of Benohare (La Palma Island, Canary Islands)
Photos taken 3/25/17 by Jay S Wakefield



Whale petroglyph, La Zarza, La Palma



Ship petroglyph, La Zarza, La Palma



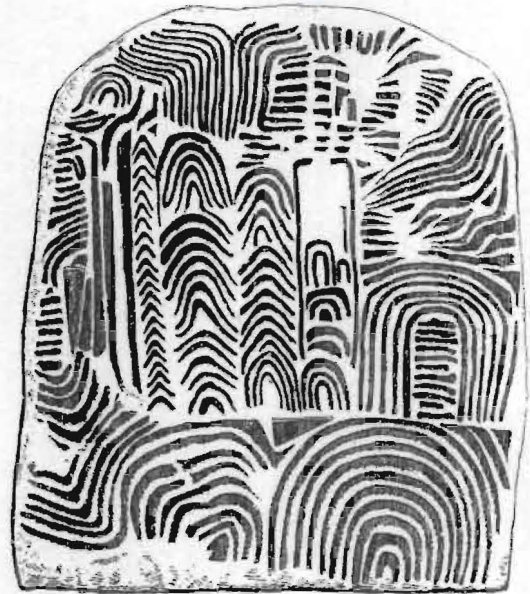
Axehead in petroglyph, at La Zarzita (on the road LP-1, in the north island), La Palma



Similar axeheads in petroglyphs of Gavrinis Cairn, Brittany, France)



Chart of sailing voyage, at Petroglyphs La Castellana (in gulch below road junction), Santo Domingo De Garifia, La Palma



Large 8ft passage stone in Cairn of Gavrinis, Brittany, FR



Degrees of distance lines on pots at Mus. of Archaeology Bena Hoarito, Frachada Del Instituto Museo De Las Culturas del Llano, Los Llanos de Aridane, La Palma



Egyptian pots with similar design pattern, Egyptian Museum, Munich



Pyramid "El Guincho", at los Cancajos (just north of La Palma Airport)



Smaller pyramid at San Simon, La Palma (south of Airport, below road LP-2)

The Copper Trade

A photograph of a large sailing ship's mast and rigging, viewed from a low angle looking up. The mast is a prominent vertical structure, with various ropes and pulleys visible. The background is a steep, rocky mountain face, possibly a coastline. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunset or sunrise, with a bright yellow glow on the left side of the image.

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"Over and beyond mere living, the human Spirit adds and creates what is better than what was before" -R.Roefield



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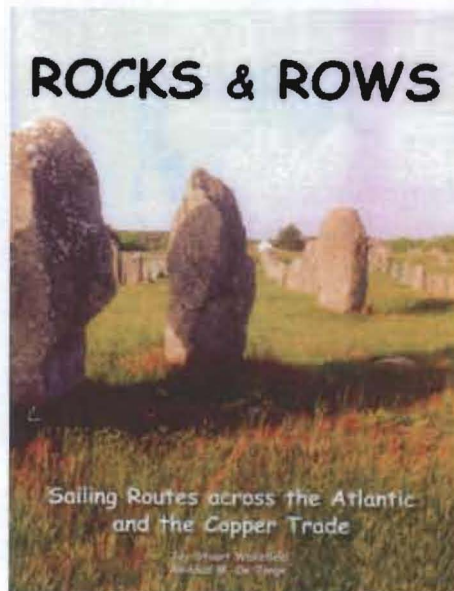
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Cover photo by Richard Holt Wakefield, Yacht Valhalla in Bahamian waters, 1946

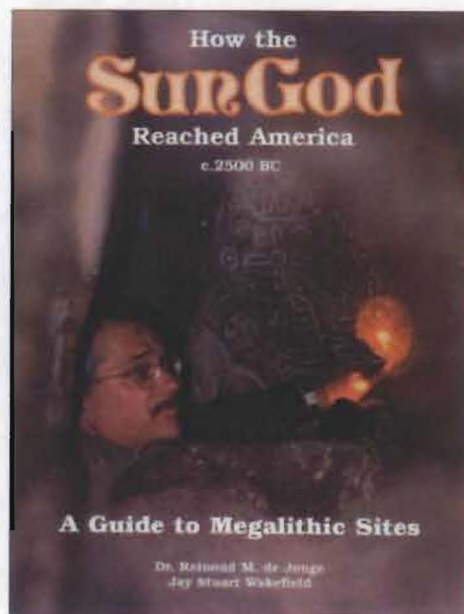
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