

RECENT SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE IN LIGHT OF CYRUS GORDON'S THEORIES OF SEMITIC INSCRIPTIONS IN AMERICA

by

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Three sites will be discussed with ancient Semitic inscriptions; two have astronomical evidence validating their authenticity; the three sites are *Hidden Mountain* in New Mexico, the *Bat Creek Stone* from Tennessee, and the *Newark, Ohio* inscriptions.

Hidden Mountain, New Mexico

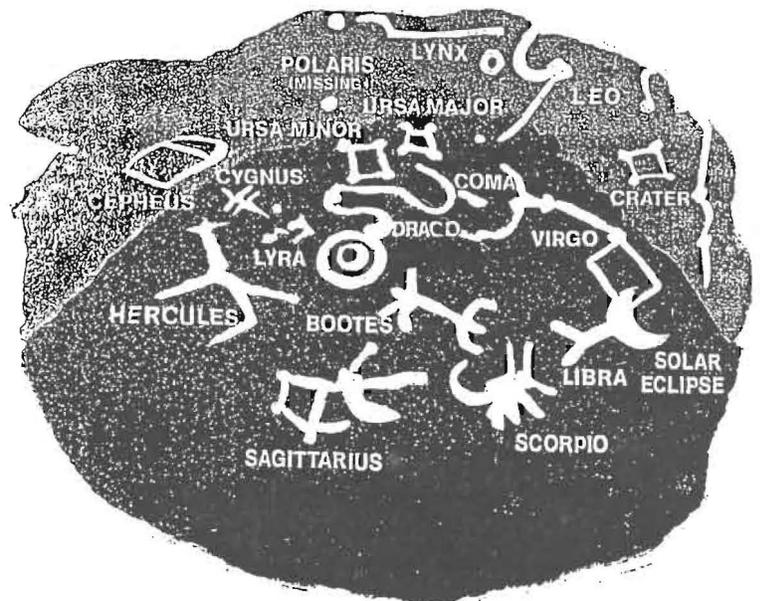
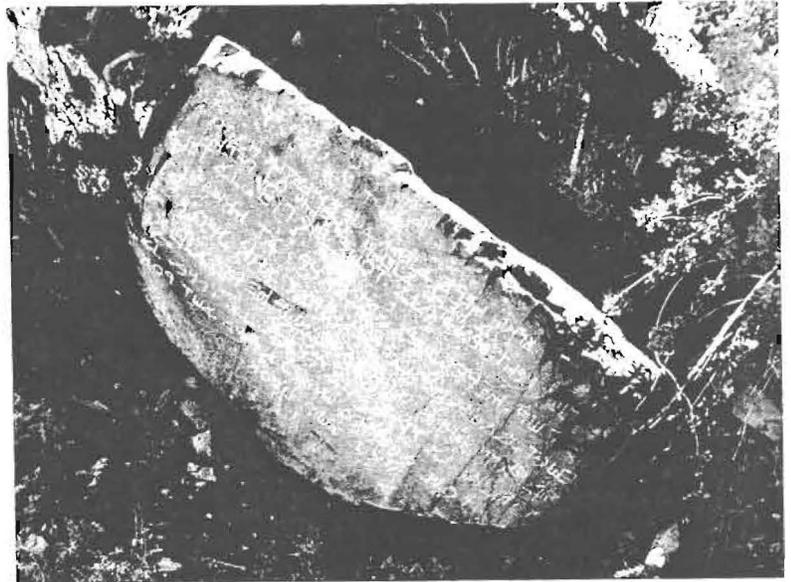
The Decalogue Stone

At the base of the mountain is the *Decalogue Stone* in the old Phoenician/Hebrew/Samaritan script. This huge stone sits in a ravine, at the entrance to a path leading to the top of the mountain. There is a striking similarity to the Samaritan *Mezzuzot* in which ancient Samaritans placed stone plaques inscribed with an abridged version of the Ten Commandments at the doorways to their dwellings. The Israel Museum has two such stone plaques labeled *Samaritan Mezzuzot*.

The Astronomical Petroglyph

At the rim of the mountain, is a petroglyph with identifiable constellations: *Ursa Minor and Ursa Major, Draco, Virgo, etc.* Unique aspects of the petroglyph are a solar eclipse between *Virgo and Libra* (see sketch) and a circles-dot near the constellation of *Draco and Lyra*. Dr. Louis Winkler, an astronomer analyzed the petroglyph and stated that the two concentric circles with a dot placed at the north ecliptic pole indicated a knowledge of precession.

Dr. Winkler also analyzed the solar eclipse and stated that the depiction of the solar eclipse from *Hidden Mountain, New Mexico* took place on Sept. 15, 107 BCE (Gregorian) and was at 5:03 PM Local Standard Time at an elevation of 13 degrees above the horizon. Dr. Winkler's software (Albug) shows the eclipse in *Virgo* near *Libra*. Using the Julian calendar, the eclipse is dated to Sept. 18, 107 BCE which correlates remarkably to the Hebrew calendar date of *Elul 28, 3654*. *Elul 28* is the Hebrew month and day preceding the sacred day of *Tishri 1* and the first day of the seventh month (*Leviticus 23:24*) later observed as the New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*). (See table of eclipse dates.)



The remarkable message depicted on a rock on the rim of Hidden Mountain shows a sophisticated understanding of astronomical data and observation of an event at an auspicious time in the year 107 BCE, which marked the eve of the day of an ancient observance of the Hebrew calendar.

This new evidence from astronomical data and recent underwater archaeological discoveries prove the sea-faring capabilities of Jewish mariners in the second century BCE to cross the Atlantic. The voyage to this mountain over 2,000 years ago was west from one of several ports along the coast of Judea, across the Atlantic, into the Gulf of Mexico, up the *Rio Grande* with entry into the *Rio Puerco*, taking the group to within several hundred feet of Hidden Mountain.

The crescent shaped figure had previously been identified as an eclipse in progress (Deal 1984). Dr. Winkler used more modern techniques not available in 1984 and considered many more fundamental factors. Eclipses were found (see table) occurring from 2000 BCE to 1500 CE (Julian calendar). Dr. Winkler's conversions between Julian and Jewish calendar dates were made with an interactive site on the Web. He used Total Eclipse Software by Smith (1992) and the canon of eclipses by

Eclipse Date Julian	Magnitude	Time Deviation	Evening Planets	Jewish Calendar
Sep 21, 1540 BC	0.98	6 days late	Jupiter, Venus, Mercury	29 Elul 2221
Sep 24, 889 BC	0.93	6 days late	Jupiter, Mercury	29 Elul 2872
Sep 18, 107 BC	0.90	6 days early	Saturn, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury	28 Elul 3654
Sep 26, 284 AD	0.96	On time	Mercury	28 Tishri 4045
Sep 26, 805 AD	0.96	4 days early	Saturn	28 Tishri 4566

Mucke and Meeus (1983) to determine the dates. The table includes the canon-software eclipse date and the magnitude and the deviation in time relative to the assumed date of the occurrence of the eclipse. Also tabulated are the evening planets immediately after the eclipse and the Jewish calendar date of the eclipse. ■



A photograph of a Star of David created at Capernaum in Israel during the 2nd century CE. Photo by the author. ■



Beverly Moseley and Zena Halpern at the MES 20002 Symposium. Mrs Halpern was a guest speaker at the Symposium. ■

The Bat Creek Stone: New Evidence for Authenticity
A Comet/Scepter Star For Judea

The Bat Creek Stone: New Evidence of Authenticity:
Ancient Chinese Texts with the Identical Concept

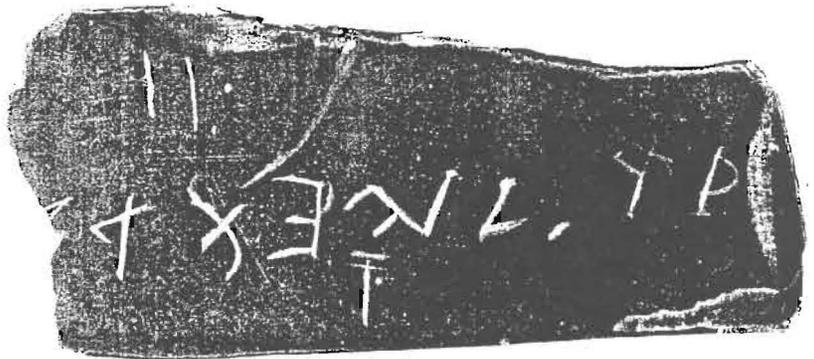
Arguments have raged over the authenticity of the Bat Creek Stone for almost a hundred years. It has been the cause of the most intense controversy. Accusations that the stone was planted under the head of the skeleton when it was found in 1892 are samples of the type of thinking that surfaced despite the fact that the mound was found untouched in 1892.

In a recent book, *Black Athena Revisited* (1998) two linguists from Cornell add their voices to this ongoing controversy in their critique of Cyrus Gordon's decipherment of Minoan Linear A as a Northwest Semitic script from the island of Crete. They state: "it has found no acceptance outside his immediate circle; the same applies to his efforts to find Semitic inscriptions at various locations in the New World" (italics mine).

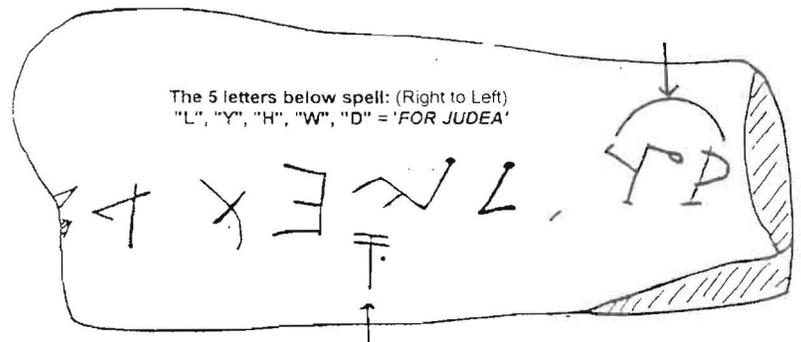
The eight letters on the Bat Creek Stone have been translated as *A Comet For Judea* by Cyrus Gordon and Robert Steiglitz, Ph.D. In Hebrew a comet is known as *Kochav Shavit*, a *Scepter Star* or a "rod star" because of its tail. Solid evidence exists from Chinese texts and Babylonian annals of the tracking of comets and the firm association with "divine culture heroes" or messianic leaders and the rise and fall of dynasties in China and the Near East. This identical belief was held by the ancient Israelites and Judeans. Josephus records the association of a comet with the Revolt of 67 CE, later known as Halley's Comet. The Second Revolt or the *Bar Kochba Revolt* of 131-134 CE was associated with the expectation of the comet known as Halley.

The leader of the *Bar Kochba Revolt*, *Simeon Bar Kochba* was renamed *Bar Kochba*, *Son of the Star* by the religious leaders of the time specifically because of the association with a verse in the Bible. This connection goes back centuries and its origin can be traced to the enigmatic passage in Numbers 24:17 which has astronomical meaning. It is known as *Baalham's Oracle* and the seer predicts in this passage that a star/comet would appear for Israel. *I see it, though not now; I behold it, though it is not near; A Star (Kochav) of Jacob did course. A scepter of Israel did rise.* In biblical times, the comet we now call Halley was considered the *Scepter Star of Israel*. In China, the rod star or broom star connects the snake to the comet dragon in Chinese lore. The Shang Dynasty (ca. 1600-1200 BCE) rose and fell when the "Mandate of Heaven" was lost. Political legitimacy was conferred directly by a deified heaven and there was a deep rooted belief in the close connection of cosmic activities and earthly government. Meteor showers, the appearance of comets, planetary arrangements; all affected the earthly realm and were interpreted as such. Thus, astronomical

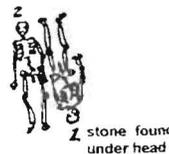
observations were of prime importance in ancient China and the Near East. Ancient Chinese texts associated comets with dragons, describing passing comets as dragons fighting in pools of water.



Figures of the Bat Creek Stone. The 2 letters below are "Z" and "Q". "ZIQ" in late Hebrew means *Kokeba Desabit* = comet, bright star. It is derived from the root Z-Q-Q = smelt, cause to sparkle, purify. The Hebrew name for comet is *Kochav Shavit* = *Scepter Star*.



The letter above is "ALEPH" = Number "1"



The disposition of the skeletons at Burial Mound #3, Bat Creek, Tenn. In 1892, when the mound was discovered on the Little Tennessee River, the area in the western foothills of the Appalachian Mountains was just being settled.

Despite the fact that the stone was found in an untouched burial mound, under the head of one of the nine skeletons buried in the mound, charges of fraud have circulated after it was discovered that when the stone was turned right side up, the letters could be read as an ancient form of Hebrew and were not the Cherokee alphabet.

For centuries, ancient Jewish texts referred to specific celestial events such as comets, meteors and sparkling stars as the *Miracle of Fire*, linking their appearance to great events in their history and the rise of leaders. The identical belief existed in ancient China, documented in Chinese texts. We now add this evidence from Chinese annals to the authenticity of the Bat Creek Stone, adding the linguistic analysis dating it to the first or second centuries CE, the carbon 14 dates from the wood, the metal analysis from the brass bracelets; all items found in the mound. To conceptualize such a fraud in 1892 in Tennessee was an impossibility. ■

The Newark, Ohio Hebrew Inscribed Stones

An archaeological find near Newark, Ohio in 1860 set off a controversy which continues today. In 1999 *The Newark "Holy Stones": Context For Controversy* symposium was held at the museum in Coshocton, Ohio, where the artifacts are on display. Panelists were Dr. J. Huston McCulloch, a proponent of the authenticity of the artifacts, Dr. Robert Fox, Dr. Bradley Lepper, arguing against authenticity as was Dr. Kenneth Feder. Sue Carlson from NEARA was also a panelist.

We will review briefly the background of these controversial artifacts and offer some new information not previously known.

In 1860, excavators discovered a small stone object in one of the many mounds that existed in Ohio. This was the second object, the first was the *Keystone*. This second object was a stone box and sealed within it was an inscribed stone made to hold it exactly. When found, it was pried open and the inner stone was seen to have Hebrew letters on the stone within the box which were run on without spaces between the words and are an abridged version of the Ten Commandments written in a strange but unmistakable form of the later script of the Jews. It opens with a likeness of Moses with his name spelled out over the image. The Samaritans had no restrictions against depicting a likeness of Moses and unlike the Jews celebrate the birthday of Moses. Despite this, there is a striking similarity to the traditional Jewish *Mezzuzah*. There is also a remarkable connection to the *Decalogue Stone at Hidden Mountain*, New Mexico where a huge stone inscribed with paleo-Hebrew letters stands at the base of the mountain leading up to an ancient encampment at the top of the mountain. The inscription is also an abbreviated form of the Ten Commandments.

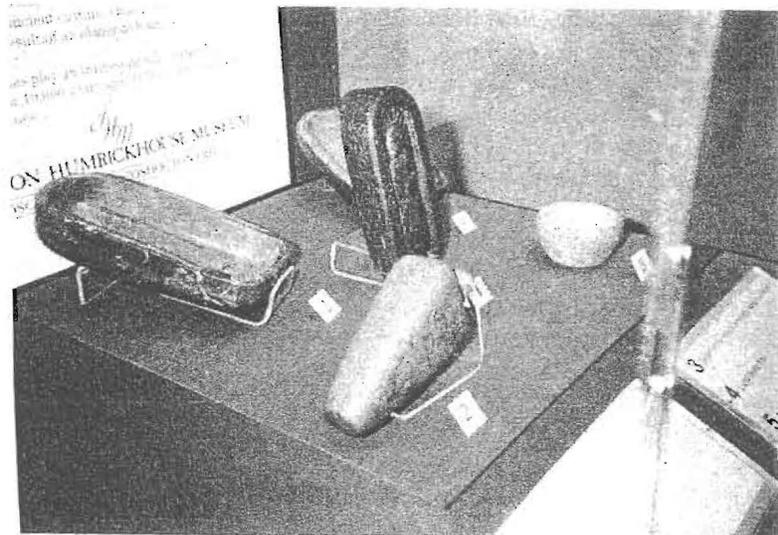
The Samaritans placed stone plaques with an abbreviated Ten Commandments at the doorway of their dwellings. Two such stone plaques dating from the 3rd century CE were found by archaeologists in Shecham and Kfar Bilu and are now on display at the Israel Museum.

Samaritans and Jews existed side by side in the Diaspora and were known to have naval capability. In the year 390 CE, Theodosius the Great passed a law requiring the Jewish-Samaritan community to supply the Roman state with ships to transport goods and personnel. Documented evidence of Jewish ship-owners in antiquity has recently been uncovered and published in *A Register of Jewish Shipowners From Antiquity To The 20th Century* (S. Aronson, N. Kashtan, D. Ran, Haifa, 2003). Jewish involvement in ships, shipping and sea-trade was extensive and is now becoming known and recognized. Their maritime skills and commercial interests led them to distant lands for resources and trade from ancient times.

Along with this enigmatic stone box, a small stone

bowl was found in the mound and has never been properly analyzed and interpreted. Dr. McCulloch noted the striking similarity of the stone bowl to stone bowls in use in Jerusalem prior to 70 CE. These stone bowls in use in Jerusalem were used by the populace to observe ritual purity laws and disappeared after 70 CE.

The evidence of Jewish voyages to the Americas from the Bat Creek Stone, the Hidden Mountain site, the Ohio artifacts and evidence in Mexico indicates that Jewish mariners were sailing west through the Mediterranean, crossing the Atlantic via the westward trade winds and currents and into the Gulf of Mexico where the great rivers led them into the American Heartland.



Newark Holy Stone artifacts on display at the Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum in Roscoe Village, Coshocton, Ohio. Photos by the author.