



NEARA TRANSIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ENGLAND ANTIQUITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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Winter Solstice sunrise, December 21, 2009, from inside the Whangtown chamber in Putnam County, New York. (Photos: Gerry McLoughlin)

Drill marks in the Solstice Chamber-- Gerry McLoughlin:

There was a perfectly clear sunrise on December 21 at the Whangtown Chamber that illuminated the back wall from a little after 7:30 until about 8:20.

The chamber has not one but two drill marks. Last summer I saw a drill mark on the bottom part of the left-side wall, towards the back. On December 21, with light from the sunrise, two friends and I saw another drill mark nearby. We agreed that these are not two halves of the same rock. What adds to the mystery is that they are not large rocks. Why drill an 8-inch plus hole in a small rock -- to get a flat surface for the inside of the chamber?

Were the drill marks created with a rotary drill or hammered in? The mark on the right feels angular, not "semi-circular" to the touch. Were these stones part of the original construction of the chamber or were they later repairs? A substantial amount of mortar has been added around these rocks.



Founded in 1964, the New England Antiquities Research Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to a better understanding of our historic and pre-historic past through the study and preservation of New England's stone sites in their cultural context. The NEARA Transit is published twice a year at the spring and fall equinoxes. Please address correspondence to Susan Thompson, Editor, 11 Cotswolds Drive, North Salem, NY, 10560. Susiejt@optonline.net Issue #42, 3/1/10. The ideas and opinions expressed in the Transit are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Board of Directors or of a majority of the members.



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The second is located 100 yards east of this one. The tails point towards each other, and the heads point away in a nearly mirror image configuration. Each wall is approximately 90 feet long and curves slightly.



The Overlook serpent walls are part of a larger lithic complex that includes numerous cairns, great cairns (60 - 80 feet long) and enclosure walls. The layout of the great cairns along with the serpent walls form a configuration that appears to reflect the serpent constellation Draco. Cliffrover@aol.com

Stone discs – Doug Schwartz: I have been focusing on comparisons of circular structures, including earthen and stone rings and stone discs. The latter are shaped stones, generally about a foot thick and four to six feet in diameter. There are currently seven known discs, all in southeastern New England, and probably more to be recognized. The majority of the discs have solar and lunar alignments to each other, principal landscape features and to petroglyphs. It is thus not far-fetched to suspect that the



Snakes Alive! – Susie Thompson and Glenn Kreisberg:

This serpent jumped out at Polly Midgley, Robert Treadway and me when we visited a property in North Salem, NY, to look at large boulders in a swampy area. The snake's head is the western end of a 120' slightly winding wall that ends perpendicular to another wall along the road. There has been a road or path there since at least the 1700s. If the snake once had a tail, it is gone. Salemites are combing the woods looking for more critters. Susiejt@optonline.net

The rustic serpent in the next photo was discovered by David Holden and photographed by me at Overlook Mountain in Woodstock, NY. It is one of two in the area.

discs have sky symbolism, either representing the entire dome of the sky, or the solar and lunar discs. Some have been inscribed directly upon their upper face, in addition to having been pecked into a circle. Several have been propped with smaller stones to level them into position, but not all are perfectly horizontal. If anyone knows of other examples (either discs or rings) which are actually

circular (or uniformly elliptical) please let me know. And if you know of small, portable circular and spherical artifacts – either in museums or held privately – please pass along that information. thedougschwartz@gmail.com

Exotic fruit in the Gulf of St. Lawrence-- Gérard Leduc: In July 1534, Jacques Cartier sailed into the Bay of Gaspé, where, he met with Iroquois Indians from Stadacone (site of Quebec City) who were fishing for mackerel. He reported in his diary that these Indians have exotic fruits – plums, nuts, figs, pears, apples, a kind of beans -- and notes that these fruits have been dried, as is the custom in Brittany. Where did they come from?

Plums were indigenous to America but not apples or pears, which originally came from Asia. Figs normally grow along the mild Mediterranean coast, not in Nordic climates, although some varieties can grow under cooler skies as around the Great Lakes area.

The fruits seen by Cartier were most likely procured by Iroquois in their Great Lakes Kingdom. How did they get there, deep inland? They were obviously imported by European colonists. Joseph Brant's testimonies suggest French settlers occupied the Great Lakes area long before the Nouvelle-France era of the 17th century.

In New England, the presence of several fruit trees, including apples (he identified them as *Lucullus*) was recorded by Giovanni da Verrazano when he landed in Narragansett Bay in 1524.

We have two independent testimonies to the presence of European cultivated fruits trees in North America before the time of the first known settlers. Circumstantial evidence I have gathered points to an early presence of the Knights Templar, both on the coast of Rhode Island and on the south shores of Lake Ontario, in the area of the town of Rochester New York. Leduc.potton@explornet.com

COORDINATORS' REPORTS

Canada – Gérard Leduc: Mark your calendar for May 15 when Tim Wallace-Murphy will give two talks in Mansonville, Quebec: “The Enigma of the Freemasons” and “Rosslyn, Guardian of the Secrets of the Holy Grail.” His new book *Hidden Wisdom: The Secrets of the Western Esoteric Tradition* will be released in April. Catalogue information is available at Amazon.com and Amazon.ca. Please email me for details about time and place leduc.potton@explornet.com

Maine – Ros Strong: We have two new computer savvy members from Augusta who are eager to get out and see some of our sites. If this unusual open winter continues, it may not be too long. Deed research is underway in North Whitefield (site of the large well-built cairns described in the last *Transit*). It is quite complicated, but an 1809 property map is a big help.

I have had a few inquiries in the past year about two amphorae found in the waters of Castine Harbor in 1971. After much excitement, it was determined they were Spanish olive jars of a “late” period, not that rare, and could date to the 1500-1700s. I wonder if it would be possible to locate them after all this time.

We welcome vacationers, and with a little advance notice, may be able to take you on a field trip. krosspt@lincoln.midcoast.com 207-882-9425.

Massachusetts – Peter Anick: We had a busy fall with a rich slate of field trips led by local experts. In October, we visited the Gilbert Hills State Forest in Foxboro with Chuck Drayton. Chuck, who grew up exploring these woods, led us to a number of U-shaped structures that James Mavor, Byron Dix and Ted Ballard had interpreted as Native American prayer seats based on their similarity to Yurok prayer seats in California. The stone U's were of various sizes, some consisting of a dozen or so small stones and others that were considerably larger. Most were oriented to the northeast or northwest and faced up a hillside. Ballard believed this allowed a person seated inside to watch the sky revolve around the north star and observe the sunrise and sunset to the right and left. We also saw some perched boulders and standing stones. Not all were ancient. Chuck had erected one years ago!



Taking a break at the largest prayer seat in the Gilbert Hills State Forest, Foxboro.

In November, we hosted three trips in conjunction with the NEARA conference in Foxboro. On Friday, David Brody led one group to view a number of intriguing features that have been identified as evidence for a trans-Atlantic visit by Templar Prince Henry Sinclair in the 14th century, as described in the ship's log of the Venetian admiral Nicolo Zeno. These included a carving known as the “Westford Knight” showing what appears to be the hilt of a sword below the fading outline of a man in chain armor. A smaller carved stone now in the Westford library outlined what may be a 14th century boat, along with an arrow and what appear to be three numbers. A third carving on a large boulder known as the Tyngsboro map stone has been interpreted as depicting the path of the Merrimack River.

George Krusen led a second group to a configuration of lithic sites near his home in Foxboro within the bounds of what had once been the Nashoba Indian praying village. There were several walls embedding possible ritual features and an enigmatic stone-lined enclosure dug into the ground. The tour ended at a low-walled field identified by Byron Dix as a winter solstice sunrise site, where a

representative of Geophysical Survey Systems, Inc. demonstrated the use of their ground-penetrating radar. It revealed the changing depth of the bedrock but no obvious buried archaeological features.

Sunday began with a visit to the Acton Chamber led by Nan Towle Millett and Linda McElroy, who had headed up the recent chamber reconstruction project. Despite some archaeological investigation, the chamber's origin and use remain a mystery, although the property was owned by a blacksmith at one point. Linda pointed out that both the chamber entrance and an adjacent walled area contain matched pairs of split boulders, a subtle but unusual artistic feature. We then visited a nearby cairn site. Rockpile specialist Peter Waksman led us to a dense concentration of rockpiles and pointed out possible alignments within the rows of piles. We then headed south to Holliston where town historian Joanne Hulbert led an excursion into a large expanse of relatively undisturbed "ritual landscape" consisting of multiple cairn fields, perched boulders, stone mounds and serpentine walls connecting large natural outcrops. The highlight was a large and quite loud "drum stone" reportedly used by Native Americans even in recent times. We were disappointed to hear that part of the adjacent land in Milford is currently under consideration for casino development. If you live in the area, please lobby the town to block any such use!



Gathering around Thumper Rock, Holliston.

In December, Dan Boudillion led a trip to the Sara Doublet Forest in Littleton to explore another portion of the Nashoba Indian praying village land. He pointed out a field containing many small mounds which may be the remnants of Indian corn planting mounds. We also examined a worked section of bedrock and several boulders which may have served as turtle effigies. Most curious was a small underground chamber that Dan had discovered just below a rocky outcrop topped by a meandering stone wall. The tour concluded with a stop at a rocking stone near Harvard's Shaker Village. This stone rocked readily but did not make the loud drum sound that the Holliston stone produced.

Our final trip celebrated the 30th anniversary of Fred and Beply Martin's first solstice observations at King Philip's Cave in Sharon. They have studied the area

extensively to identify a number of solar and lunar alignments, presented their findings at the Oxford VII International Conference on Archaeoastronomy in 2004 and participated in a (successful) effort to secure the grounds as conservation land.

Against astronomical odds, the sky remained clear all day, allowing the early risers to climb to a hilltop to welcome the (nearly) solstice sunrise over a pyramid shaped boulder, then trek downhill to watch the sun rise a second time from "Table Rock". This flat slab rests atop a small natural chamber with a deep spring at its base. James Mavor had observed that the two boulders forming the opening of the chamber cause a long light dagger to traverse the back wall in the afternoon just before winter solstice sun sets.



Fred and Beply Martin viewing the sunrise from the top of Table Rock in Sharon. Below, the triangular sunbeam on the back wall of King Philip's Cave at sunset. (Photo by Christopher O'Connell. For more of Chris' photos, see the album labeled "KPC" in the neara_members blog.)

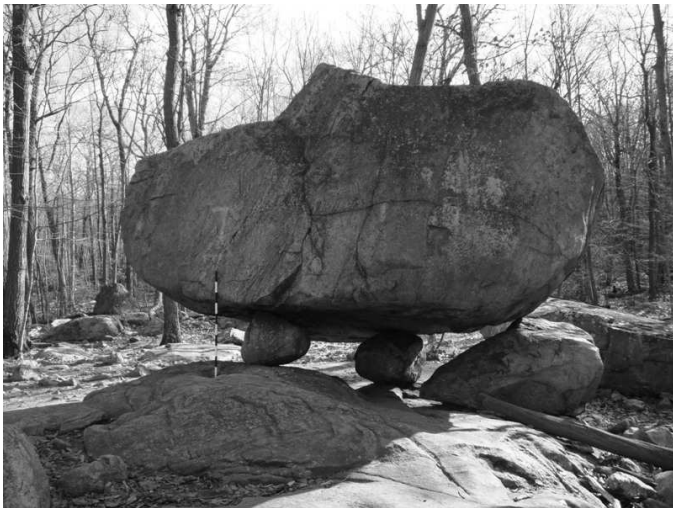


We noticed that there was an additional triangle-shaped opening on the southeast side of the chamber and speculated that the winter solstice sunrise might also cast a light beam through it into a crevice at the rear of the cave. Unfortunately, it was too late in the morning to verify this, so we leave this hypothesis for future observers to test.

When the sun was up, Fred led the group to view other stone formations nearby. These included the cluster known as King Philip's Rocks, another large perched erratic at the terminus of a short wall and an eerily bird-like boulder Fred had dubbed "Beak Rock". After a quick tour of nearby Borderland State Park, the group returned to Sharon to observe the sunset at King Philip's Cave and Table Rock. King Philip's Cave is a natural pile of large glacial boulders forming a chamber with two openings to the sky. By an odd coincidence, one opening faces directly into the summer solstice sunset while the other faces the winter solstice sunset. As the winter sun sets, the edges of two walls of the cave, along with two smaller (possibly manually placed) boulders at the base of the southern opening conspire to cast a triangular light beam on the wall of the cave. The vivid upright triangle, roughly eight inches tall, appears for only a few minutes before moving a short distance to the right where it fades into a crevice as the sun drops below the horizon.

A few days later, the snows hit New England and put an end to an excellent season of observations in Massachusetts. [Peter Anick@Yahoo.com](mailto:Peter_Anick@Yahoo.com)

New Jersey – Nancy Hunt: In November we went to Tripod Rock in the Pyramid Mountain Natural Area in Kinnelon. The hike from the visitor's center is steep and rocky and takes about an hour. The trail goes up to a high ridge and



Tripod Rock (Photo: Nancy Hunt)

continues along it for about 3/4 of a mile. The exposed bedrock is weathered and in some places glacially-rounded. There are occasional large loose rocks and boulders, and there are overhangs that appear suitable for use as rockshelters.

Tripod Rock is on the western side of the ridge at an elevation of 806 feet. The eastern ridge here is higher, so views from Tripod are mainly towards the west, north and south. The rock is massive – approximately 8 feet high and 15 feet wide and sits precariously on three smaller rocks – two about 18" in diameter and one about double that.

A 1983 survey of Tripod Rock and several others within a 75' radius by Mead Stapler, Lucy Meyer and Bruce Scofield shows some interesting site lines. One that goes from a seat-like feature in a bedrock outcrop through a

gap between two small placed boulders is oriented towards the summer solstice sunset.

A number of other interesting rock features within a few hundred yards of Tripod were noted, but not yet mapped. We came down a different trail on the eastern side of the ridge and saw large, loose boulders, some of which were split. Looking up to the ridge line, we noticed occasional large boulders which appear to be positioned on the edge of the ridge. nhunt@ptd.net



The two sitting stones near Tripod rock (Photo: Nancy Hunt)

New York – Polly Midgley: In January, Tom Maxson, Chairman of Highlands Preservation, Inc., shared his pictures, knowledge of chambers and preservation efforts (town of Kent, Putnam County) with North Salem residents. He was invited by the North Salem Historian and the North Salem Historical Society. He generated a lot of interest and enthusiasm for learning more about and preserving North Salem chambers and sites at this well attended meeting.



One of North Salem's chambers

Many NY Chapter members have been working hard in Westchester and Putnam Counties to find and document stone sites. Rob Buchanan's finds in Fahnestock State Park, Patricia Silvestre's pictures and chamber finds in Westchester (nearby CT too) and the measurements of chambers by Teresa Bierce, Donna Savino and Gerry McLouglin stand out in their importance to our efforts.

Glenn Kreisberg gave a presentation on Catskill Mountain sites at the recent meeting of the NYSAA, Orange County Chapter. He also planned to speak at the February 16th hearing for a proposed mixed residential development in the town of Ulster. This site (Ulster Manor) is at the south border of Kingston near the west bank of the Hudson River, east of Esopus Creek. The 48-acre site has yielded old remains (documented) and has never been cultivated. Native American activity at this site was noted and celebrated during the Quadricentennial festivities. Previous archaeological work has been done here by William Ritchie and James Schafer. Important historical information may be lost should this development proceed without modification.

Following John Goff's mention of a chamber with turtle-like features at the Wyman house in Burlington, MA, we identified two chambers resembling snake heads. Each has a stone wall tail. They are side by side in Putnam County.

Two field trips are planned in Westchester/Putnam before the Kingston Spring Conference. The trips will end by 4:30 so everyone can reach Kingston comfortably before the evening program. One is a cairn trip led by Rob Buchanan. Participants should meet at 12:30 at the Pelton Pond parking lot on Route 301 just east of the Taconic Parkway exit. I will lead a chamber/dolmen trip. Meet at 12:30 at the Holiday Inn parking lot in Mt. Kisco (exit 37 off the saw Mill River Parkway). It is important for us to have advance notice of those who wish to participate in either trip. Please let me know by the Wednesday evening before the conference. Cell phone 914 610 6047 or Polmidge@optonline.net

Rhode Island – Jim Egan: Braving cold conditions and a foot of snow, over 25 people showed up to witness the Winter Solstice Sunrise event at the Newport Tower. Many of the enthusiasts were aware of the light show because of the *Holy Grail in America* presentation that aired on the History Channel. Steve Voluckas, who lives on Cape Cod, got snowed out, but arranged for a local videographer to tape the movement of the patch of light inside the tower from sunrise until it illuminated the egg-shaped rock in the north-northwest arch. Rick Lynch provided a lively commentary for all the visitors. This photo shows the sun coming through the south window and the west window about one half hour after sunrise. jim@jimegan.com



Vermont – Lisa Gannon: In November we went on our final trip of the season to the Jones Mountain area of Rochester to tour the cairns there. Ernie Clifford brought us to a large solitary glacial erratic with stonework jutting off of it, forming a kind of viewing station platform which points in the direction of the winter solstice sunset. Those woods also feature a huge serpent-shaped cairn and an unusual terraced split level cairn.

Recently I was contacted about two previously unknown cairn sites, one in Chittenden County and one in Washington County. I will meet with representatives of a local land trust to tour one of the sites in February. These sites will receive our excited attention in the coming season as we document as much as possible. Our annual meeting will convene on Saturday March 20 in South Burlington at the Blue Water Center. Lisa-Gannon@comcast.net

PEOPLE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – SUE CARLSON

The fall meeting in Boxborough seems eons ago. It was a huge success, with record attendance and a great program, with the Friday evening panel discussion launching a new forging of partnerships in preservation and a dynamic tribute to Jim Mavor and Byron Dix celebrating the 20th



At the fall meeting: NEARA President Sue Carlson, left, posed with four of her predecessors: Dan Lorraine, Rich Lynch, Dan Leary and Ros Strong. Below, Nancy Berke and Donna Thompson welcomed shoppers to the book table. (Photos: Gerry McLoughlin)



anniversary of *Manitou*. Book sales are always brisk with an ever-growing selection of enticing reads.

Now comes the frenzy that accompanies planning the spring meeting, this time in Kingston, NY, where we will give our New York chapter a chance to show off its many fascinating sites.

Meanwhile the NEARA Board forms the coordinating links in the chain connecting all our activities. Board members met in December and February to conduct the business of the organization; Library, Research, Membership and Publications, and coordinators reports elicit lively discussions on policies, positions and projects. We are excited about our upcoming members survey, about a photo contest for a NEARA fundraising calendar and the redesign of our logo, to give NEARA a new look (please see p. 11 for contest details).

Do take time to read the reports in this issue for more information. Hope to see you in April! Sue krosspt@lincoln.midcoast.com

IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT E. STONE

NEARA founder Bob Stone, 80, of Salem, NH, died December 15, 2009.

Bob was born and raised in Chester, NH, and subsequently made his home in Derry. A graduate of the Coast Guard Academy, he served his country for four years until 1953. He worked as an engineer for over 30 years with AT&T and Bell Laboratories.

Ownership of an icon of NEARA lithic sites, America's Stonehenge, formerly known as Mystery Hill, was passed from William B. Goodwin, author of *Greater Ireland in America* to Malcolm Pearson and then to Bob Stone who opened it to the public in 1958. Many visitors and researchers have been attracted to this enigmatic site.

Bob's son, Dennis Stone and Dennis' wife Patricia of Salem have operated American's Stonehenge for a number of years as Bob's health declined. We send our condolences to his family.

MEMBERSHIP – LEE MCKENNEY

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to NEARA: *California*: Edward Moreno, La Puente; *Connecticut*: Joy Banach, Avon; *Florida*: William H. Hodges II, Naples; Lauren R. Gould, Southwest Ranches. *Kentucky*: David Feldman, Lancaster; *Massachusetts*: Carol Montgomery, West Concord; Dennis Cerrotti, Brookline; Susannah Wolfe, Gloucester; Allen & Karen Altman, Great Barrington; Jeff Legros, Belchertown; Paul & Melinda Godfrey, Wendell; Simon C. Bunyard, Boxborough; Gwendolyn C. Hadden, Gloucester; Rosemary Loveday, Newbury; W. Edward Nash, Jr.,

Leominster; Walter Van Roggen, Boxborough; Elizabeth Hall, Westborough; Scott Fountain, Quincy; *Maine*: Cynthia Hook, Augusta; *New Hampshire*: Joanne E. Lambert, Kingston; Paul Jenkins, Strafford; *New York*: David Johnson, Poughkeepsie; *Pennsylvania*: Keith Schaffer, Birdsboro; David Hand, Hegins; Donald Drinkwater, Dalton; *Vermont*: Vernon Alper, Hardwick.

Please let me know if you change your snail or email address nearamembers@comcast.net

The NEARA Publications Committee
Wishes to thank George Krusen
For his generous contribution to the
NEARA Revolving Fund

LIBRARY NEWS—ANNE WIRKKALA

The immediate storage needs of the NEARA archival collection are met with the addition of more file cabinets. It is now much easier to locate past and present members' papers and also to trace the history of the organization. However, in doing the filing we noticed a big gap in the Secretary's minutes: there are none for the years 1993-2004. All Board members from that time period please search your attics and send ANY minutes. We will make copies and return them to you wish. The archival minutes of the organization should be complete. Stray correspondence and financial reports from that period will also be gladly added to the archives.

The Library collection now numbers about 4500 unique volumes; all are listed in the NHTI online catalog (OPAC) available via the NHTI Library's webpage <http://www.nhti.edu/library/index.html> Requests for any book should be sent directly to Anne Wirkkala awirkkala@ccsnh.edu

COMMENTARY

From Ros Strong: FROM THE MAMMOTH TRUMPET
The Center for the Study of the First Americans (CFSA) has a wonderful web site <http://centerfirstamericans.com> with the latest research on the Peopling of the Americas and includes a photo gallery of many sites with ever earlier dates, like Topper, Cactus Hill etc. The current edition of their quarterly publication the *Mammoth Trumpet* has two articles of special interest:

James Adovasio, who has long been a champion of early contact with his Meadowcroft dig in Pennsylvania, has teamed up with Olga Soffer and Jake Page in a new book *The Invisible Sex: Uncovering the True Roles of Women in Prehistory*. The MT article by Elizabeth Chilton makes two important points; one, that when we compare stone age people coming to America "...we're imputing motives that weren't there...they never set out to discover new lands...paleo people weren't racing or exploring, they were likely more concerned with making supper, finding a marriage partner.." Two, they decry the lack of female prehistorians and although it is better now, the concentration on stone tools and big game hunting has ignored the role women probably played not only in gathering food and fashioning perishable materials into

clothing and baskets, but in hunting small game. I am going to order the book.

Finding Traces of Early Hunters Beneath the Great Lakes has photos of "apparently aligned or arranged boulders" that are 12-150 m below the modern lake surface. Experts speculate a similarity to caribou hunting line drives that must have occurred when the land was dry 10,000 to 7,500 years ago.

From Jim Guthrie: *MIGRATION ROUTES TO AMERICA* Geneticists at the University of Pavia, Italy, and colleagues from other institutions, using information from two rare sub-lineages of mitochondrial DNA, think they have reconstructed two of the paths by which Asians reached the Americas. Of special interest to me is their claim that carriers of type X2a proceeded from Berengia by way of the "Ice-free Corridor" because it demonstrates how new information gets filtered through a cultural lens. I think it is more likely that X2a came from Europe by way of the St. Lawrence. The work, reported this year by Ugo Perego and 12 others in *Current Biology* 19(1):1-8, has been interpreted uncritically for readers of *Mammoth Trumpet* by archaeologist Bradley Lepper in the October issue (vol. 24, #4).

Each lineage of MtDNA identified so far in ancient or living American Indians (A, B, C, D, X, M) can have sub-varieties, of which several are now known through complete sequencing of nucleotides. The more common sub-types are widespread, but others have limited distributions that make them especially useful for inferring population histories. The two examined in the present study are D4h3a, which seems confined to a few locations near the west coasts of both Americas, and X2a, which occurs only in North America, primarily in the east, where it is concentrated around the Great Lakes and along the St. Lawrence River. Perego and colleagues suggest that two "dispersal events" were responsible also for the two major stone point traditions, the D4h3a people carrying the stemmed-point industries along the coast, and the X2a people bringing the fluted-point style (Clovis) to interior North America.

The authors state that D4h3a "is very rare in North America and mainly found in South America with deep variation." This fully supports the hypothesis that "the Pacific coast was the major entry and diffusion route for the early Paleo-Indians," a concept that now seems beyond dispute. Their distribution map shows peak concentrations of D4h3a in Ecuador and in northern Argentina and Chile where, as I have pointed out previously, carriers of D4h3a tend to speak Paezan languages and to have Oceanian traits (see fall 2008 *Transit*, p.8).

This is an important contribution, adding details about inputs to the west coast and the role of the D4h3a group. However, there seems to be little merit in the notion that the X2a pioneers followed an interior route from Berengia. Perego presents no evidence that either group was ever in Berengia or that fluted points arose there. Furthermore, American fluted points resemble Biscayan Solutrean points in Europe, as has been argued for years by Dennis Stanford and Bruce Bradley. In the Eastern Hemisphere, mitochondrial X is concentrated in the Basque region and along the northern coast of the Mediterranean, so the most

straightforward explanation for the X lineage in North America is that it came from Europe at an early date. Sub-lineages in the two hemispheres are different now because thousands of years have elapsed since the two populations split. Lepper discounts this hypothesis, calling it "radical," a good illustration of how tenaciously the archaeological community clings to its old traditions.

ANCIENT AMERICAN CATS Among the animals transported anciently from the eastern hemisphere to America was the domestic cat, *Felis catus*, or *Felis domestica*. In their recent book, *World Trade and Biological Exchanges Before 1492* (reviewed in Volume 42 of the *NEARA Journal*), John Sorenson and Carl Johannessen describe Mexican sites at Tlatilco and Cuanalán, near Mexico City, where apparently pre-Columbian cat bones have been found in ancient bottle-shaped burial pits. Although not dated directly, the Tlatilco find was at a level corresponding to 800-400 B.C. Support for this date appeared in *Archaeology* May/June 2009 (vol. 62, No. 3:34-39). Writing about the famous Nasca lines of Peru, contributing editor Andrew Curry maintained that the Nasca land designs are based on earlier petroglyphs made by Paracas people. Curry's article, "Rituals of the Nasca



Lines," included photos of Paracas rock carvings. One, on p. 38, (above) clearly represents a domestic cat. The caption reads, "Researchers say petroglyphs at Chichictara, like this cat, were etched by the Paracas culture around 500 B.C. and are the precursors of the Nasca lines." Curry makes no comment about implications of this ancient carving or that archaeologists might find it out of place in America where, according to tradition, there were no domestic cats before the arrival of the Spanish ships.

MERCURY TECHNOLOGY IN THE ANDES Mercury amalgams were used in the Andes to refine gold as early as A.D. 750. Metallurgists knew how to produce elemental mercury from the mineral cinnabar (mercuric sulfide), mix it with gold ore, separate the amalgam, then heat it to drive off the mercury and leave pure gold. This technique was used throughout the Andes, possibly before it was known in Europe. Traces of mercury can still be found in Andean gold foil, although contamination with cinnabar can be a problem because of its common use as a red

pigment. A brief account in *Science*, October 23, 2009 (Vol. 326, No. 5952:505) describes recent work on foils of the Sicán culture of Peru by geologist William E. Brooks and colleagues. Not stated in the *Science* account is that Andeans sometimes found mercury in its elemental form, trapped in rock pockets. In addition to use in metallurgy, Mercury was used both in the Andes and in China to study water flow by allowing it to trickle down huge clay models of canal and drain systems. The use of water is precluded in such simulations because of its inappropriate surface tension, density and viscosity.

REVIEWS

MYSTERIES AND DISCOVERIES OF ARCHAEO-ASTRONOMY: FROM GIZA TO EASTER ISLAND by Giulio Magli. Copernicus Books, 2009. \$27.50 Reviewed by Anne Wirkkala. A full professor of Civil Architecture at the Politecnico in Milan where he also teaches the only official course on archaeoastronomy ever established in Italy, Giulio Magli is well qualified to offer up a comprehensive worldwide overview of this fascinating “science of stars and stones.” He indeed has gathered together a complete study of the relationships between the various celestial cycles and the great monuments left from the far distant past to help the reader appreciate our ancestors’ seemingly sophisticated knowledge of astronomy and architectural construction.

Magli begins with an overview of “thirty thousand years of silence” which is a wonderful celebration of the vast number of sites left behind to be discovered by the curious and those who have some grasp of astronomical events and history. Then he moves on to “forests of stones, rings and giants” and to very articulate summaries of the archaeological research available for the various sites. None of this is new, although Magli does offer a few twists in the form of original interpretation of existing data. A few viewpoints make the reader exclaim : ah now that makes sense! For example , the aerial view map of Poverty Point does indeed resemble an outdoor theater for observing something of importance.

The volume ends with a comprehensive review of archaeoastronomy in ancient Egypt that presents new findings from the author’s recent research. Included are the interesting account of the National Geographic Channel special *Egypt Unwrapped: Secrets of the Sphinx*, which aired in September 2009.

Excellent and well placed drawings and color photographs round out this important addition to the field. An easy to understand appendix dealing with celestial events and moving large stone objects make this book a must read for any NEARA member. This book and many others are available from the NEARA Library Collection. Please visit <http://www.nhti.edu/library/index.html> (Online library catalog) for a complete listing and email your requests to awirkkala@ccsnh.edu.

THE JOURNAL “PRE-COLUMBIANA” RESUMES PUBLICATION: Production delays kept material slated for publication in 2006 – 2008 from appearing until now. To catch up, editor Steve Jett has published a triple issue of more than 250 pages. Besides feature articles and

reviews, there are 137 fascinating pages of annotated bibliography summarizing pertinent literature in the tradition of John Sorenson and Martin Raish. If you wish to subscribe, contact *Pre-Columbiana*, c/o Celia Heil, 2014 Covington Dr., Florence, AL 35630. *Jim Guthrie*

NEWS FROM THE AMERICAS

ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNCOVER STONE AGE COPPER WORKSHOP NEAR MONK’S MOUND by George Pawlaczyk BND.COM February 16, 2010. The extent of copper working in prehistoric America remains a tantalizing subject, and this report reveals a new effort at Cahokia supported by the National Geographic Society. Excavation reports by James A. Brown, professor of archaeology at Northwestern University and his partner John Kelly at Washington University, St. Louis, have focused on the remains of workshops used to pound and anneal copper into thin sheets. Surprisingly, this is the first evidence of a copper workshop from the Mississippian era that peaked about 1250 A.D. The designs on the copper artifacts are similar to those on conch shell fragments, originally from the Gulf of Mexico, found in rock shelters from Wisconsin to Missouri. Kelly and Brown say, “The overall purpose of the excavations is to determine the true role of Cahokia in the Southeast Ceremonial Complex, the string of ancient cities and mounds that stretched from Wisconsin through Illinois, Kentucky, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama and Georgia.” RS

FLORIDA MAMMOTH CARVING “The carving on an extinct animal bone is the New World’s oldest known work of art” says the caption of a photo in the fall issue of *American Archaeology* (Vol. 13, No. 3:10). Iris Picat describes how fossil hunter James Kennedy found the engraving, said to be at least 13,000 years old, just north of Vero Beach. The beast is realistically depicted with huge tusks. A panel of experts, led by Barbara Purdy, professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Florida, has confirmed its authenticity, noting that the engraving was done on a fresh bone from a mammoth, mastodon or giant sloth. The site, on private land, had been excavated between 1913 and 1916, when human bones were found with those of extinct Ice-Age animals. A discussion of elephant portrayals in early America appears in the *NEARA Journal* 38 (1): 39-40 (2003). JG

ARCHAEOLOGISTS STUDY SIGNS OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATION IN AMAZON BASIN WWW.MONSTERSANDCRITICS.COM February 16, 2010. Brazilian archaeologists Denise Schaann and Alceu Ranzi have discovered more than 250 geoglyphs – geometric, manmade ditches -- more than 100 meters wide. Aerial photos and satellite imagery combined with deforestation revealed a former civilization in the Brazilian state of Acre. Schaann believes the lines, forming circles and rectangles, were dug between 200 and 1300 AD and that the sophisticated people who created them numbered in the tens of thousands. She hopes to learn what the geoglyphs might have meant and what the area was like (rainforest? Savannah?) then.

The discovery comes on the heels of renewed interest in Colonel Percy Fawcett's early 20th century pursuit of the vanished South American city he called "Z." Fawcett, who disappeared during his last trip in the Amazon, is the subject of *New Yorker* writer David Grann's riveting 2005 book *The Lost City of Z* in which Grann juxtaposes Fawcett's story with his own trip to the Amazon to find out what happened to the explorer. In the jungle, Grann meets with University of Florida archaeologist Michael Heckenberger, who was living among the Kuikuros. Heckenberger showed Grann circular manmade impressions similar to what Schaan and Ranzi have found. Hollywood isn't wasting any time getting on the this bandwagon. In the works is the film *The Lost City of Z* starring Brad Pitt as Colonel Fawcett. ST

CHOCOLATE AT CHACO CANYON Cacao use at Pueblo Bonito adds to evidence that some Southwestern settlements were extensions of Mesoamerican cultures. Archaeologists at the University of New Mexico, reinvestigating trenches dug in the 1920s, have found cacao on pottery shards dating to A.D. 1000-1125. Sharp-eyed Patricia Crown called for the tests because she noticed that some of the ceramic vessels resembled those used for ritual chocolate drinking farther south. She notes that further tests may show cacao consumption to have been common at other Southwestern sites. Michael Bawaya summarized the work in the spring issue of *American Archaeology* (Vol. 13, No. 1:7) JG

NEWS FROM ABROAD

ON CRETE, NEW EVIDENCE OF VERY ANCIENT MARINERS by John Noble Wilford **THE NEW YORK TIMES**, February 16, 2010. This is just the latest in the increasing tempo of astonishing worldwide discoveries. The quartz tools found during careful excavations in caves and rockshelters on the island of Crete were discovered in strata dated to a minimum of 130,000 years ago. Thomas F. Strasser, an associate professor of art history at Providence College and Curtis Runnels, archaeologist at Boston University, noted that "the style of the hand axes suggested that they could be up to 700,000 years old. That may be a stretch, they conceded, but the tools resemble artifacts from the stone technology known as Acheulean, which originated with prehuman populations in Africa." Will anthropologists have to rethink what constitutes "human behavior"? It is encouraging to read "The new finds suggest that their dispersals were not confined to land routes" and consideration given to the ingenuity of very early people to undertake long voyages. Since Crete has been an island for millions of years, the tool makers had to have come by sea. RS

BRONZE AGE SHIPWRECK FOUND OFF DEVON COAST by Jasper Copping WWW.TELEGRAPH.UK February 13, 2010. Bronze age (and earlier) ships are being found in increasing numbers, but this one is notable for the details of the cargo: 295 artifacts, mostly ingots of copper and tin that appear to come from many different areas of Europe, Switzerland, France and the Iberian Peninsula. Is the tin from Cornwall? We may have to wait

for more analysis to appreciate the complexity of trade in the Atlantic world. The find was made by a team of amateur marine archaeologists. Times are a-changing! RS

EGYPTIAN TEMPLES AS OBSERVATORIES Hieroglyphics on temple walls record the use of astronomy in the architecture of important Egyptian buildings, according to a note in *New Scientist*, September 5 (Vol. 204, No. 2724:7). In an illustrated example, light from the rising sun penetrates the inner sanctuary of the Karnak temple at the time of the winter solstice. The note summarizes the work of Juan Belmonte (Canaries Astrophysical Institute) and Mosalam Shaltout (Helwan Observatory, Cairo), who have studied 650 temples dating back to 3000 B.C. Features of the temples allow observation of solstices, equinoxes and the rising of Sirius, all important in Egyptian religion. As reported again in this *Transit*, NEARA members are well aware of similar features built into American structures. JG

BRONZE ROMAN HORSE HEAD IN GERMANY A photo on p. 1187 of *Science*, September 4 2009 (vol. 325 No. 5945) shows an elegant life-sized horse head that was part of a statue believed to be of Emperor Augustus. Found at Waldgrimes in the remains of a Roman town, the head may be one of the world's best preserved bronzes. It was discovered during excavation of a wood-reinforced well shaft dated to about 9 B.C. Apparently, Romans had a more extensive presence in ancient Germany than had been thought. JG

TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY OF THE CAUCASUS An anonymous note on p. 12 of *Smithsonian*, November 2009 (Vol. 40, No. 8) shows a photomicrograph of 30,000-year-old flax thread found in a cave. What is surprising is that two pieces had been dyed and knotted together. Clay from the Georgian cave yielded violet, red, black and turquoise fibers and spores of a cloth-eating fungus, indicating some form of textile technology at a very early date. JG

OSMIUM MARKS ANCIENT INDUSTRIES Osmium is the second least abundant element in the earth's crust, but may be concentrated by mining or smelting.. An example from ancient Spain was described by Elizabeth Wilson in the December 15, 2009 issue of *Chemical and Engineering News* (Vol. 87, No. 50:8). Investigating ancient peat bogs of northwestern Spain, a team led by Sébastien Rauch at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden detected three apparent instances of copper production from sulfide ore. The first occurred about 4,700 years ago, the second during Roman occupation 2000 years ago, and the third about 1750 at the start of the modern industrial age. JG

BRING A RAFFLE ITEM TO THE SPRING CONFERENCE!

It doesn't have to be lithic! This is a good "green" way to downsize or pass on something nice you don't need to live with anymore. The raffle is always a source of laughter and fun. Contributions must be portable. Margaret Venator shamelessly hawks raffle tickets to supplement NEARA'S income!

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NEARA is creating a 2011 calendar, and you are invited to make it happen by submitting up to four of your favorite photos of lithic sites. The 12 winning photographers will receive a free copy of the calendar. Photos should be emailed as attachments (at least 300dpi and sized not larger than 8" x 10") and must be your own, previously unpublished work. In your covering email, please include a brief caption, and your name as you want it to appear in print. Be sure to include your snail and email addresses. Entries should be sent to Margaret Venator MVenator2000@aol.com by June 1, 2010. The calendar will be available for members to purchase by mail (details will be in the fall *Transit* and on the website) and at the fall meeting.

DESIGN OUR NEW LOGO!

If you agree that it's time for our little stone idol to take a back seat to a new design more appropriate to our mission, get out your sketch pad and come up with something fresh. Send your black and white designs as email attachments to Sue Carlson at krosspt@lincoln.midcoast.com by June 1, 2010. The Publications Committee will select the winner and adapt the drawing into a design.



NEARA'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATING POLICY: Dan Leary, Research Director

NEARA is not an archaeological society. NEARA is a research association that provides and stores site information, conducts ground or surface surveys, carries out documentary research and does public education.

NEARA encourages members to participate in archaeological programs and studies through approved institutions such as universities, colleges, state historical offices and such other agencies with accredited professionals in the field of archaeology in good standing in your state.

NEARA members as individuals or as a group should not engage in any site disturbance (excavating), removal or movement of artifacts or any other kind of activity that would affect the natural setting of any site.

Should any NEARA member be asked by a private property owner to engage in such activities, he/she should report the incident to the NEARA State Coordinator and the NEARA Research Director. The NEARA Research Committee will evaluate the situation and, if needed, present its findings to the NEARA Executive Board for further consultation.

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SAVE THE DATE

**For the NEARA Fall Meeting
November 12 – 14, 2010**

Nathan Hale Inn, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

