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For years now many of us in the alternative research community, including this publication, have argued that a catastrophic event—perhaps a hit from a large meteor or comet—about 12,000 years ago led to the destruction of an advanced civilization on Earth, killed off the woolly mammoths, and sent humanity back to the stone age. From the Bible to Plato, many ancient sources have described such an ancient catastrophe, but academic science has rejected the notion that anything like that could have happened on Earth for at least millions of years. While there is plenty of evidence for a mini ice age known as the Younger Dryas, which began about the time Plato said Atlantis went down, no one had found the actual crater that such a giant impact would have caused—at least, until now.

In November, 2018, in a major report entitled: “A Large Impact Crater Beneath Hiawatha Glacier in Northwest Greenland,” was published in the peer-reviewed journal Science Advances. As recently as 12,000 years ago, say the authors, an enormous, iron meteorite plunged into Greenland and left a 20-mile-wide crater beneath what we now call the Hiawatha Glacier. Among the 25 largest such bolides ever known to hit Earth, the mile-wide meteor is now acknowledged by scientists to have caused ripple effects throughout the region and maybe worldwide. The impact, it is said, would have had the force of 700,000,000 nuclear bombs. The researchers now confirm that the event could indeed establish the ‘Younger Dryas impact hypothesis’ as a fact. While that theory has been controversial, there are many who have been arguing that a large impact in North America 11,000 to 13,000 years ago, could have been the cause of massive wildfires across much of the Americas and Europe, large mammal extinctions, and disruptions in the weather of the Atlantic ocean. Atlantis Rising has reported on other evidence for such an event—see “Comet Impact Caused Mini Ice Age, Says Major New Study” AR #132 (November-December, 2018)—but the new Greenland discovery is the first to identify an actual impact site.

45,000-Year-Old Ivory Tiara in Siberian Cave

A sophisticated ivory ‘tiara’ made from the tusk of a woolly mammoth, an astonishing 45 to 50 thousand years ago, has been found in Siberia’s famous Denisova Cave. On the border of the Altai region and the Altai Republic, in the south of western Siberia, the site is where, in 2017, a sophisticated stone bracelet, with a drill hole requiring a high speed drill, was found. The ivory tiara was found in 2018, along with other advanced artifacts including ivory needles. The existence of such technology in that era contradicts all orthodox theories for the capabilities of paleolithic man.

The belief among Russian archaeologists is that the tiara—or diadem—was made by Denisovan people. Its practical purpose appears to have been to keep hair out of the wearer’s eyes. The tiara’s size indicates it was for male, not female, use. And according to researcher Alexander Fedorchenko, from Novosibirsk Institute of Archeology and Ethnography, it would have required a man with a large head. In an interview with the Siberian Times, Fedorchenko said, “Finding one of the most ancient tiaras is very rare, not just for the Denisova Cave but for the world. Ancient people used mammoth ivory to make beads, bracelets, and pendants, as well as needles and arrowheads.”

The stone bracelet found earlier had already been declared a game-changing artifact.
The ‘precession of the equinoxes’ is the astronomical phenomenon that gives us the so-called astrological ages, where the point of the spring equinox appears to move slowly backward through the zodiac at the rate of one sign (i.e., the age of Aquarius) about every 2,150 years. This is due to a slow wobble of the Earth’s axis that takes almost 26,000 years to circle the zodiac. It is obvious that the detection of any such movement would require centuries of close, disciplined, and continuous observation—something which, orthodox science maintains, would have been beyond the capability of any primitive ancient society. ‘Precession,’ according to mainstream academic science was discovered no earlier than 190 BC by the Greek astronomer Hipparchus, and not everyone accepts that even Hipparchus knew about the precession.

If you could show that long before the Greeks, ‘primitive people’ knew about ‘precession,’ you could make a very strong case that indeed, ancient people had an advanced knowledge of astronomy.

According to the University of Edinburgh press release announcing the new study, the artworks at sites across Europe are not simply depictions of wild animals, as was previously thought. Instead, analysis shows, the animal symbols represent star constellations in the night sky and are used to represent dates and mark events such as comet strikes. They reveal that, perhaps as far back as 40,000 years ago, humans kept track of time using knowledge of how the position of the stars slowly changes over thousands of years. The findings suggest that long before the Greeks, ancient people understood the precession of the equinoxes.

Around the time that Neanderthals became extinct, and perhaps before humankind settled in Western Europe, people could define dates to within 250 years, the study shows. The findings indicate that the astronomical insights of ancient people were far greater than previously believed. Their knowledge, in fact, may have aided navigation of the open seas, with implications for our understanding of prehistoric human migration.

Researchers from the Universities of Edinburgh and Kent studied details of Paleolithic and Neolithic art featuring animal symbols at sites in Turkey, Spain, France, and Germany. They found all the sites used the same method of date-keeping based on sophisticated astronomy, even though the art was separated in time by tens of thousands of years.

Researchers clarified earlier findings from a study of stone carvings at one of these sites—Gobekli Tepe in modern-day Turkey—which is interpreted as a memorial to a devastating comet strike around 11,000 BC. This strike was thought to have initiated a mini ice age known as the Younger Dryas period.

They also decoded what is probably the best known ancient artwork—the Lascaux Shaft Scene in France. The work, which features a dying man and several animals, may commemorate another comet strike around 15,200 BC, researchers suggest.

The team confirmed their findings by comparing the age of many examples of cave art—known from chemically dating the paints used—with the positions of stars in ancient times as predicted by sophisticated software. The world’s oldest sculpture, the Lion-Man of Hohlenstein-Stadel Cave, from 38,000 BC, was also found to conform to this ancient timekeeping system.

The study was published in 2018 in *Athen Journal of History*. Dr. Martin Sweatman of the University of Edinburgh’s School of Engineering, who led the study, said: “Early cave art shows that people had advanced knowledge of the night sky within the last ice age. Intellectually, they were hardly any different than us today.”

“These findings support a theory of multiple comet impacts over the course of human development, and will probably revolutionize how prehistoric populations are seen,” said Sweatman.
The long-running mystery of Canada’s Oak Island is familiar to *Atlantis Rising* readers. Less well known are a number of recent finds that may at last disclose who could have buried a substantial treasure just off the south coast of Nova Scotia, in Mahone Bay, when they did so, how, and why.

The enigma began about two hundred twenty years ago, when a settler digging foundations for a planned farmhouse struck flagstone pavement two feet beneath the surface. Intrigued, he continued shoveling until a log platform was reached at ten feet. Two more wood platforms, at ten-foot intervals, were unearthed with the assistance of two neighbors. They quit at thirty feet, but their peculiar discovery would spark many search efforts throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even to the present day. Ultimately the search would involve many hundreds of investigators—including celebrities like Errol Flynn, John Wayne, and President Franklin Roosevelt—at the expense of untold millions of dollars in equipment and construction projects. The efforts claimed half a dozen lives but, so far, with little to show for it, except for some tantalizing clues.

There are many of those: human bones, parchment fragments, carved wood, old coins, pre-modern jewelry, and links of gold chain—parchment fragments, carved wood, old coins, for some tantalizing clues.

Roosevelt—at the expense of untold millions of dollars in equipment and construction projects. The efforts claimed half a dozen lives but, so far, with little to show for it, except for some tantalizing clues.

There are many of those: human bones, parchment fragments, carved wood, old coins, pre-modern jewelry, and links of gold chain—bewildering and contradictory physical evidence, signifying everything and nothing. Making sense of such heterogeneous materials once did not seem possible, but now Oak Island’s questionable items and artifacts have been subjected to modern testing techniques, and some new insights have begun to emerge.

Foremost in the new analysis is the so-called Carbon 14 testing, a highly respected method for determining the age of any object containing organic material. Radiocarbon is constantly being created by the interaction of cosmic rays and nitrogen when C-14 combines with atmospheric oxygen to form radioactive carbon dioxide. The radiocarbon is then incorporated into organic material which stops exchanging carbon with its environment when it dies. When a tree, for example, is felled and reduced to workable wood for carving, the amount of C-14 in the wood begins to decrease, as the carbon undergoes radioactive decay. Measuring the amount of C-14 from a piece of wood or a fragment of bone provides information that can be used to calculate when the animal or plant died. The process is not perfect, but the more often C-14 testing is repeated on a single test object, the averages approach confirmation of an accurate date. Reliability lies in repetition.

When radiocarbon testing is applied to materials from pre-nineteenth century Oak Island virtually all specimens assemble themselves into three, distinct time groups: 1300 to 1400 CE, circa 1500, and mid-1600s to late 1700s. Moreover, Oak Island’s pre-nineteenth century, non-organic objects, when subjected to typological study, likewise fall into the same, three periods.

The location’s far more abundant, mid-seventeenth to late eighteenth century finds are, as one might expect, predominantly British. Nova Scotia became an English colony in 1654, and by 1759, little Oak Island’s one hundred forty acres had been divided among four, New England families.

Amazingly, the genesis of the story told by the Oak Island artifacts may be in faraway South America, where on the early morning of November 15, 1532, one hundred sixty-eight Spanish soldiers led by Francisco Pizarro arrived in the high northern Andes Mountains of Peru, at Cajamarca. On a hill outside the native city, the Inca Emperor was encamped near the Konoj hot springs, surrounded by several thousand of his troops, billeted in tents. Pizarro sent an emissary to the Sapa Inca, requesting a formal meeting.

Atahualpa, the Inca god-king, arrived in state the following day, accompanied by an armed guard, only to be ambushed and captured by the Conquistadors, who then sacked the Inca army camp, from which they looted great quantities of gold and silver. Observing their lust for the precious metals, Atahualpa offered to ransom himself by filling a room twenty-two feet long, seventeen feet wide, and eight feet high with gold, plus two, more equally large spaces filled with silver, and to do so within sixty days. Pizarro agreed thus, conditionally, to spare his royal captive’s life, if not his freedom, and Atahualpa summoned Ati II Pillacuaso, the Inca army chief-of-staff, ordering him to Ecuador, where the gold and silver deposits of the Tiahuanacu–the Empire—were stored.

The commander was better known by his nick-name, Rumiñahui, or “Stony Eye,” for his stern gaze, and as the Sapa Inca’s half brother, born of a native noble woman. Weather conditions in the northern Andes did not favor such a protracted, difficult expedition, which could not commence until the following year. After climbing down through the mountains and marching across the Peruvian desert, then through Ecuador’s formidable jungles, Rumiñahui and his warriors finally completed the more than eight hundred, grueling miles to Ecuador’s Malqui-Machay, or “Place of the Mummy,” at Quito, by April, 1533.

This bizarre city, with its trapezoidal, subterranean water canals, was the Empire’s chief repository for all precious metals mined throughout Andean South America. It was not enough, commander Stony Eye learned to his dismay, to fill the three, large rooms required to reprise Atahualpa from death. Desperate to meet the life-saving quota, Ru-

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sometime in early July, 1947, William “Mack” Brazel, manager of the Foster sheep ranch near Corona, New Mexico (Chavez County), journeyed to the nearest large town, Roswell, New Mexico, county seat of adjacent Lincoln County. He visited Sheriff George Wilcox to report the crash (in June or early July—accounts differ widely) of something strange on his ranch.

Students of old-West history will recognize the names “Brazel” and “Wilcox,” for the two families had known one another and been on good terms since the time of Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid. Lincoln County was the location of the infamous range war that made Billy famous. Wilcox, intrigued by Brazel’s account, notified nearby Roswell Army Airfield (the U.S.A.F. would break away from the Army and become a separate military branch in December of 1947).

In the all-too-familiar story, the Army, on July 6, sent intelligence officer Major Jesse Marcel and a CIC (counter intelligence) man to investigate, and Marcel picked up a large mass of wreckage. Most accounts describe a kind of metal foil of unnatural strength and resilience, and beams of some unknown but strong material with “hieroglyphics” engraved or printed on them. There were, moreover, reports of bodies—humanoid, dwarfish “aliens,”—and a second crash site, either on the ranch, or far to the West on the Plains of St. Augustin. Accounts vary, and, where Roswell is concerned, confusion is the norm. The base was home to the 509th Bomb Wing, America’s (and the world’s) only nuclear bomber wing, flying B-29 bombers. Jesse Marcel was its Intelligence Officer, and we would all like to believe that only a first-rate man would be given this duty. Surely, the commander of the wing, Colonel William Blanchard, would have been carefully selected. In fact, both men had excellent records of good service in WWII and afterward. It was Col. Blanchard who authorized the Public Information Officer, Lt. Walter Haut, to do a press release on July 8, stating publicly that the Army Air Force had recovered a “flying disc.” The term was by that time understood to be synonymous with “flying saucer,” and to refer to something very strange indeed, involving an unknown and possibly interplanetary technology. The fact that a man in such a responsible and important position as Col. Blanchard would authorize this release is not to be ignored.

The recovered wreckage was flown, accompanied by Marcel, to Ft. Worth, and there, on July 9, 1947, General Roger Ramey issued a press release, contradicting the previous one, and claiming that the “disc” was nothing more than a weather balloon. A photograph of Major Marcel was also released, showing him posing in the General’s office with what is obviously a weather balloon, with its kite-shaped radar reflector. Marcel and the other Roswell personnel were very familiar with these devices, made of neoprene, balsa wood struts, and foil-backed paper. In fact, even many civilians would recognize one instantly.

Decades ago, in another life, I was a NORAD Intelligence Officer and, as an additional duty, a U.S.A.F. UFO investigator. If I had told my commander that a weather balloon was a “flying disc,” my career would have ended that very day, and I would probably have been locked up. As for my commander, had he authorized a “flying disc” press release, he would have suffered the same fate. But Marcel was later promoted to Lt. Col., and Col. Blanchard was promoted again and again, retiring with four stars, the highest possible rank. The only conclusion we can reach from all of this is that some sort of flying craft using unknown technology did in fact crash on the Foster ranch, and the weather balloon story was just that, a story to cover up the truth. Years later the USAF changed its story again, claiming that what crashed was a secret Project Mogul balloon. Nevertheless, a balloon is a balloon is a balloon, and neoprene is rubber, and balsa wood and foil were common, well-known materials. Marcel would never have told his commander that a balloon—any balloon—was a “disc,” and neither of their careers would have survived such an inexcusable error. In addition, like the Sherlock Holmes story where the clue was a dog who failed to bark (because he knew the perpetrator), a “dog” failed to “bark” at Roswell. Any such device would have writing and labels in English, including one asking any citizen finding it to turn it in to the proper authorities and perhaps offering a small reward. In the entire history of the Roswell incident, no one has mentioned any such thing.

So a craft of unknown origin crashed there in 1947 and was taken away for study, probably to the Wright-Patterson Army base in Ohio. There may or may not have been bodies; numerous people claimed to have seen them, but accounts are confused and contradictory. Bodies, if sufficiently “alien,” would indicate an interplanetary origin. Otherwise the device may have been something developed at the White Sands Missile Range (W.S.M.R.), perhaps based on the rumored Nazi “bell” craft brought over by ‘Operation Paperclip’ scientists tasked with recovering German rocket technology following WWII. This, in turn, implies that we do, indeed, have a secret space program and advanced, albeit suppressed, technology.

There have been other alleged UFO “crashes,” including one in northern Mexico in December 1950, not far from Del Rio, Texas, reported by retired U.S.A.F. Col. Robert Willingham. Another reported crash was supposedly at Kingman, Arizona, in May 1953. One in the woods just outside Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, was reported in 1965, and possibly there was one near Aztec, New Mexico, at about the time of Roswell (or that may have been a confused account of the Roswell crash). Multiple witnesses, including military personnel, reported the crash landing of a strange flying craft in the water just off Shag Harbour, Nova Scotia, in October, 1967. This particular object reportedly later moved off underwater and was never recovered. As far back as 1897, eyewitnesses all across America reported seeing a mysterious “airship” (there may have been more than one) and even conversing with crew members, who appeared to be human. One report claimed that one of the airships crashed in Aurora, Texas, but no wreckage has ever been found, nor the bones of its pilot. Even then, there was speculation that they were dealing with some kind of spacecraft from another world, perhaps Mars.

Most of the Unidentified-Flying-Object (UFO) talk has been focused on the ‘flying object’ part of the phenomenon, but, unknown to most, there is another possibly stranger dimension to the story—at least as far as the Roswell incident is concerned. Indeed, its physical location seems to some of us to suggest a kind of—what might be called ‘magical’ significance. For these observers, there is something remarkable, yet unexplained, in the story’s numerological and sacred geometrical aspects.

The Roswell crash site, it turns out, is within about one degree of the thirty-third parallel of North American latitudes. The

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Denisovans in America?

A Closer Look a DNA and the Coming of the ‘Thunder People’

BY ANDREW COLLINS

In 2010 the existence of a previously unknown archaic human population was discovered following the DNA sequencing of a finger bone over 41,000 years old. It had been found two years earlier in the Denisova Cave, a Stone Age occupational site located in the Altai Mountains of southern Siberia. Here also three molars, two of enormous size, were retrieved. These too were found to belong to this same group of archaic humans, who are today known as the Denisovans after their place of discovery.

Although to date these remain the only confirmed fossils relating to this extinct population, the sequencing of the Denisovan genome by the Department of Human Evolution at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, has allowed us to determine that many modern-day human populations carry Denisovan ancestry. Most of these populations are located in central, southern and eastern Asia. Others are found among the indigenous peoples of Papua New Guinea, Australia, and the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific.

We know also from archaeological discoveries made in the Denisova Cave that prior to their disappearance around 40,000 years ago, the Denisovans displayed clear evidence of advanced human behavior. This included the creation of the beautiful Denisovan bracelet, a green stone bangle of immense sophistication, now accepted to be as much as 60,000-70,000 years old. There is compelling evidence also that the Denisovans used bone needles to manufacture tailored clothing, developed highly advanced stone tool technologies, fashioned the earliest known musical instrument in the form of a bone flute or whistle, and perhaps even domesticated and rode horses.

That so-called archaic humans achieved such a sophisticated lifestyle quite separately from that of modern human populations, leads us to the potential impact of the Denisovans on the development of our own civilization, a matter examined by the present writer in our book The Cygnus Key. And what about the Americas? What might have been the Denisovans’ impact on the continent prior to the submergence around 8500 BCE of the Beringia land bridge, which for tens of thousands of years had provided safe passage between the Russian Far East and Alaska?

Denisovan DNA

We know, for instance, that various First Peoples in both North and South America possess significant levels of Denisovan DNA. This includes the Ojibwa, one of the largest tribes in North America. Their territories extend from Ontario in Canada down through the Great Lakes region into Minnesota and Wisconsin. Originally, however, their homeland was far to the east in the St Lawrence River basin, in what is today Quebec. The Cree (or Oji-Cree) also possess Denisovan DNA, although not quite to the same level as the Ojibwa. Their ancestral home was immediately to the north and west of the Ojibwa in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories. They have around 200,000 members today, most of whom live in Canada.

Both the Ojibwa and Cree form part of what is known as the Algonquian language-speaking group, named after the Algonquin or Algonkin tribe. This collective of First Nations refer to themselves, often above the use of their own individual tribal name, as the Anishinaabe (plural Anishinabek), a word meaning, simply, “original people,” while their shared language is today known as Anishinaabemowin. Those belonging to this interlinked network of tribes, all of which are located in the northern and northeastern parts of the North American continent, include the Potawatomi, Mississaugas, Cree, Chippewa (a form of Ojibwa), Ottawa, Ojibwa, and the Algonquin themselves. Despite the ethnic and cultural unity of the Anishinaabeg, it is only the Ojibwa and Cree that possess significant levels of Denisovan ancestry (other tribes that do have it include the eastern Algonquin, whose surviving territories are beyond the northeastern limits of the Great Lakes region, as well as the Tingit of the Pacific Northwest).

The ancestors of the Algonquian-speaking peoples are thought to have entered North America from East Asia. This was made clear in a comprehensive study of First American DNA based on the genome sequencing of individuals from populations in East Asia, Australia, Oceania, North America and South America. Its findings suggest that the earliest peoples to arrive in North America came from East Asia around 23,000 years ago. By 12,500 years ago the population had split into two distinct branches. One moved southward contributing to the emergence of the first indigenous populations to occupy southern North America, Central America, and South America. The other branch headed eastward, forming the ancestors of various First Peoples including the Algonquin, Chippewa, Ojibwa and Cree. If so then how exactly did the Ojibwa and Cree come to possess so much Denisovan DNA? Did their –

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After about 150 years of Egyptology as an academic field, there still appears to be no agreement between scholars on the true function of the Egyptian pyramids. Traditional Egyptology insists the pyramids were used as tombs for the Pharaohs and their queens. Not all accept that idea, though; and thus, many competing hypotheses have been proposed, drawing upon possible spiritual, mathematical, astronomical models, and more. The Great Pyramid of Giza is the main focus of most alternative theories, but, interestingly, the other 130 pyramids still standing in Egypt are seldom considered, and the question arises: should any particular alternative hypothesis fit all pyramids, not just one, regardless of how ‘great’ it is? In all of this, the mythology of ancient Egypt is also often neglected, leaving unconsidered many important clues as to just how the ancient Egyptians interpreted the world. Could such myths shed light on some of those hypotheses and help explain some of history’s greatest gaps?

Khafre’s pyramid, Giza’s second largest, still stands on the plateau. Made of limestone blocks—quarried locally, each weighing around two tons—the Khafre pyramid has two passages, two portcullises, and a large granite cofﬁn in the main chamber. Its inner limestone blocks were once covered by a layer of Tura limestone quarried across the Nile. The structure was built with a—now missing—pyramidion (capstone) at its peak. Many other Egyptian pyramids tell a similar story.

I would like to propose a previously unconsidered possible scenario. Let’s assume the pyramid could produce an electric charge in its main chamber. As the Tura limestone has good isolation properties and creates essentially a shell around the pyramid’s inner body, no such charge would escape through the pyramid sides but would, instead, move through the inner moist limestone core toward the capstone. As the charge density increased at the peak, the air around the pyramidion would be ionized, creating a corona discharge that would show there as a light glow. Also known as St. Elmo’s light, this phenomenon is, and has been, known for ages. Atum, the first god in Egyptian mythology, was closely associated with the pyramidion. It was believed, in fact, that he dwelled there and would bring enlightenment to anyone who could see him. With this, I can only wonder if, by “Enlightenment,” the ancient Egyptians meant, not some spiritual enlightenment, but a physically real light that they could see.

As the ionization process continued, two things would happen. First, the ionic wind (the Egyptian god of wind was Shu) would occur. Ionic wind is a process by which the movement of charged particles pick up and move air molecules along with it. As air moves upwards from the pyramid, it will pick up the hot air at the ground surface and move it to lower layers of the atmosphere above. There, the hot air would condense, creating rain or hail, that would fall on the pyramid. Tefnut is the Egyptian god of moisture, and it is interesting to note that Ancient Egyptians actually had hieroglyphs for snow and hail. These phenomena would have been extremely rare in arid Egypt. Where could ancient Egyptians have seen hail?

The process of creating rain with charged particles released into the atmosphere is not new or something out of science fiction. At least two commercial companies market products for rainmaking which employs just such technology. One of them is the Swiss company Meteo Systems, based in Zug. Founded in 2004, the company provides rain enhancement services to various arid regions of the world. The technology is not without controversy, but scientists working for the Abu Dhabi government used Meteo services and reported 50 rainstorms in the middle of the hot emirates summer month with the company’s systems products turned on. The company has a patent titled “Apparatus and related methods for weather modiﬁcation by electrical processes in the atmosphere.” In a very concise summary of the granted patent, the company says that it employs antenna arrays that, with high voltage, generate negative charges releasing them into the atmosphere where they combine with dust and form water droplets. An illustration of the Meteo rainmaking process, posted on the company website, accompanies this story, as well as a photo of antenna arrays which the company used in Abu Dhabi. With Egyptian pyramids releasing similar charged particles, there would be cloud formation...
ANCIENT MYSTERIES

• BY MARTIN RUGGLES

In November of 2018, not only did archaeologists report discovery, in the Israel desert, of a 1500-year-old painting said to be of Jesus as a young man (see page 11), but also, in the region south of Qumran in Palestine, the neighborhood where the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1940s and 50s, new caves have come to light. Though the story drew headlines, no new scrolls have yet turned up, but optimism that they may yet be found, is encouraged by the fact that the caves have not been looted. According to archaeologists Randall Price of America’s Liberty University and Oren Gutfeld of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, caves dubbed 53b and 53c contain plenty of well preserved pottery and cooking ware. Perhaps, by the time you read this, new scrolls and new evidence surrounding the time of Jesus will be discovered.

Curiously, in an apparently unrelated development, another detail in the traditional story of Jesus also came to light in November, when the personal ring of Pontius Pilate was unveiled. Actually found in 1968 in the palace of King Herod near Bethlehem in the West Bank, the small piece of copper alloy jewelry had gone unrecognized for a half century until a proper analysis established its likely ownership. The man who the Bible says ordered the crucifixion of Jesus has been reviled ever since, but, ironically, Pilate may have inadvertently made a contribution to latter-day debate over the reality of an historical Jesus. Argument over the matter is certainly not new, but recent controversy has put the issue back in the spotlight. That may partially explain why, also in November, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan chose to declare in Lahore, “There is no mention of Jesus in history.” In a speech calling for an international convention to ban speech deemed insulting to Muslims, Khan was attempting to contrast Jesus unfavorably with Muhammed, who he described as “Allah’s last prophet [and] part of history.” Strangely, Khan neglected to mention that Jesus is also revered in Islam.

Debate over the historical reality of Jesus has not been entirely between believers and non-believers. Indeed, there are plenty of non-Christian authorities supporting the case. In, for instance, Antiquitates of the Jews, AD 93, Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian, mentioned Jesus and his brother James, as well as John the Baptist. The Roman historian Tacitus recorded the death of Jesus at the hands of Pontius Pilate, and first-century Roman politician Pliny the Younger mentioned knowledge of Jesus gained from interrogating Christians. Other early references, both direct and indirect, have been made in Jewish Rabbinical literature, by the Greek philosopher Celsus, and elsewhere.

Over the past century archaeology has produced some very interesting evidence that is still far from being fully digested. The much-celebrated Gnostic Gospels—thirteen, leather-bound papyrus codices buried in a sealed jar—were discovered in 1945 near Nag Hammadi, Egypt. Comprising 52, mostly Gnostic, treatises, the codices included three works belonging to the third and fourth centuries and numerous references to a special relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene. There is even a gospel of Mary Magdalene. Needless to say, the Roman Catholic Church has not looked kindly on the Gnostic Gospels or their implications, now or ever. From the church’s inception, the early fathers officially proclaimed the teachings of the gnostics to be heresy. At the time the Nag Hammadi gospels were buried, one could have been tortured and killed just for reading them, which, doubtless, explains why they were hidden.
While a visitor from another planet might expect the two enormous religions contending for worldwide dominance—Christianity and Islam—to differ over the issue of historical authenticity for Jesus, the visitor would be wrong. Both religions agree that Jesus existed. Oddly some of those most likely to reject the historical case for Jesus, consider themselves Christians and align with a more allegorical and mundane explanation of his significance. In a further irony, many of those who fervently believe in a literal interpretation of Bible stories seem to find themselves at odds with evidence now coming to light which points to the real existence of a man called Jesus, but one much different than they may have pictured. For the latter, the best question may not be: Did Jesus exist? But rather: If he did, what kind of person was he?

A few years ago mainstream Christians were shocked to read in the Dan Brown novel, The DaVinci Code, the claim that not only did Jesus have a flesh-and-blood identity, but that he was married and left a bloodline which survives to the present day. Another researcher, Atlantis Rising contributor Ralph Ellis (Jesus, Last of the Pharaohs) has argued that Jesus, was, in fact a historical personage in Palestine known as Jesus of Gemala who descended from the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt. Popular Egyptian author Ahmed Osmon (Jesus in the Land of the Pharaohs) thinks Jesus was actually Tutankhamun. Reconciling such widely divergent views might seem impossible, but one thing many alternative researchers seem to agree on: Jesus was probably part of a community of ascetics, the Essenes or, perhaps, the Zealots, that, may, eventually, have become Gnostics.

The Apocalypse of James

New archaeological discoveries help to make the point. The first-known original Greek copy of a heretical Christian writing: Jesus’ secret teachings to his brother James from ‘Gnostic Gospel’ The First Apocalypse of James, has been discovered in the U.K. in the stacks at Oxford University by biblical scholars from the University of Texas at Austin.

Only a small number of texts from the Nag Hammadi library had been found in Greek, their original language of composition. But in 2017, religious studies scholars Geoffrey Smith and Brent Landau of the University of Texas at Austin added to the list with the discovery of several fifth- or sixth-century Greek fragments of the First Apocalypse of James, which was previously thought to have been preserved only in its Coptic translations.

According to a UTA press release, the ancient narrative describes how Jesus reveals to his brother knowledge of the heavenly realm and future events, including James’ inevitable death. In other words, Jesus initiated James into an esoteric awareness, or special understanding reserved for the initiated, or chosen elect—a recurring theme in gnostic literature.

The relationship between Jesus and his brother James has been at the center of much of the debate over the role of first-century gnostics in the life of Jesus. A tomb discovered in 1980 in Jerusalem’s East Talpiot neighborhood, containing several inscribed ossuaries corresponding to Jesus and family members mentioned in the Gospels, including Mary, has been asserted to be the actual Jesus family tomb. A Discovery Channel documentary and associated book, The Jesus Family Tomb, by Simcha Jacobovici and Charles R. Pellegrino was released in 2007.

In 2002, discovery of the ‘James ossuaries’—a first-century limestone box used to contain the bones of the dead—was announced by the Discovery Channel and the Biblical Archaeology Society. Greeted, initially, with much skepticism, its discoverer Oded Golan was tried for forgery, before, ultimately, being acquitted. In the years since, many scholars have come to think the Ossuary could, indeed, be the real thing. On the other hand, Robert Eisenman, author of James, the Brother of Jesus, and considered one of the preeminent authorities on early Christians, is on record as very doubtful of the Ossuary’s authenticity.

The Ossuary is inscribed with Aramaic text declaring the box to be that of James, son of Joseph and brother of Jesus. Until now, it has been impossible to determine exactly where the Ossuary originated, but, according to Jacobovici, a Canadian-Israeli filmmaker, and Arye Shimon, a geologist, it can be directly connected to a purported Jesus family tomb first located in 1980. Jacobovici and Shimon carried out an extensive statistical analysis of the first-century population of Jerusalem and various popular Jewish names of the time and have established the strong likelihood that the inscriptions on both the tomb and Ossuary could only pertain to the actual Jesus family. Moreover, the researchers claim that a unique

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ANCIENT MYSTERIES

• BY STEVEN SORA

It is a shared belief among Christians and Muslims that Jesus Christ died on the Cross and soon thereafter ascended into heaven. The belief is not shared by everyone and for years books have emerged saying Jesus survived the Crucifixion and went to India. In 2010 several international news organizations ran stories of the tomb of Jesus in a town called Srinagar in Kashmir. The BBC, the Times of Britain, and The Times of India all carried the story. The tomb is also mentioned in Lonely Planet’s guide to Kashmir and more recently Trip Advisor reviews cover the tomb as well.

How would Jesus have ended up in India?

The first question is, what did Jesus do in the period called the ‘lost years.’ At age twelve Jesus was left behind by Mary and Joseph for a brief period. When they went to get him he was in a temple preaching to religious teachers. “After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.” It is rarely questioned just how a twelve-year-old could hold court with learned rabbis. Little is known of his education. He was visited by three wise men from the east at his birth. Could his education have started at an early age? It is believed that an inheritance of knowledge and philosophy passed between Egypt and Persia into Judaism and finally into Christianity. After the story of his teaching and learning, there is no record of anything he did between then and age thirty when he was baptized by John the Baptist. The Gospels simply say he “increased in wisdom and stature.” This remarkably covers eighteen years of the life of Jesus in one sentence.

A number of authors have put forward the idea that he had traveled along the Silk Road to Asia. The Silk Road was the main route from lands dominated by Rome all the way to China. From Israel to India is about four thousand miles, and one would take a year to cover that distance at a rate of about ten miles a day.

In India his education might have continued. Six hundred years before the time of Jesus, Buddha brought enlightenment to India. There are numerous similarities between the two. They were both conceived in a miraculous manner. Their mothers’ names were similar, Maya for Buddha, Mary for Jesus. They both fasted. They both overcame the temptations of the devil. They both began their missions at age thirty and both traveled with disciples. They renounced earthly riches and challenged the religious elite that included the Brahmans and Pharisees.

One of the early proponents of the Jesus-in-India story was a Russian by the name of Nicholas Notovitch who published the journey of his own in his 1894 book The Unknown Life of Christ. He had traveled the same route until he was injured from falling off his horse. He recuperated in a monastery where he was shown scrolls of the story of Jesus. His Buddhist hosts translated for him the story of the man they referred to as Issa, or sometimes St. Issa. He claimed Issa had studied with Jains, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians in Persia before returning to Jerusalem. He was not received well. He claimed he was told by a cardinal that the Vatican has sixty different texts which tell of the life of Jesus in India. When he was called on to reveal the name of the cardinal he said he had promised to keep it a secret.

Another early work was Musih Hindustan Mein (meaning Jesus in India) published in 1899 by Ghulam Ahmad. He was a devout Muslim with a title that has been granted to only thirteen men throughout history. The title was “Mujjadid.” He was referred to as the Promised Messiah and founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. His references include the Quran, the Bible, medical books, historical records, oral traditions. He also claimed a revelation directly from God.

A more recent work by theologian Holger Kersten, Jesus Lived in India published in 1987, discusses the survival of Jesus from the cross. He says that victims usually don’t die sometimes for days. For this reason bones are broken which brings on death faster. Jesus was only on the cross for about six hours. Then a Roman soldier Longinus pierced him with a spear. Blood and what appeared as water flowed from the wound. This prevented the bones being broken and Jesus was simply taken off the cross. His body was then treated with herbs and restoratives like aloes. Several scholars and researchers have cast doubt on the story of a living Jesus in India.
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