

The Anubis Caves complex in western Oklahoma is arguably one of the most important archaeological sites in North America, with abundant evidence of visitation by Old World travelers. Part 1 of this article (Lehrburger, *Ancient American*, Vol. 11, Issue 68 June 2006) presented the history of the Anubis Caves and detailed the epigraphy and inscriptions discovered there, as summarized below. This second and concluding part addresses the sophisticated solar equinox alignments of Anubis Cave 2, which tie the site to Mithraic mythology from the Old World circa 1,800-2,000 years ago.

The Anubis Caves, located in the Oklahoma Panhandle, was first addressed in 1985 as having Old World affinities. A local rancher showed the site to Gloria Farley, a professor of archaeology at Oklahoma University, who identified the dog-like figure in Cave 2 as being the Egyptian jackal-god Anubis, hence the name Anubis Cave (Farley 1985). Cation Ratio dating of the petroglyph patina dated the rock varnish of the inscriptions 2,000 years



Figure 1. Anubis figure from Anubis Cave 2. (Photo by C. Lehrburger).

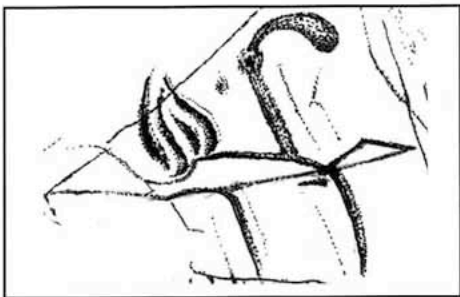


Figure 2. Anubis figure from Anubis Cave 2. (Drawing by Martin Brennan).

before present +/- of 300 years. (Dorn, et. al. 1985).

Barry Fell provided translations for the first of several inscriptions which have been deciphered at the Anubis Caves. There are several significant inscriptions etched in Ogam, a writing system used in the first millennium AD in the British Isles. Most Ogam found in

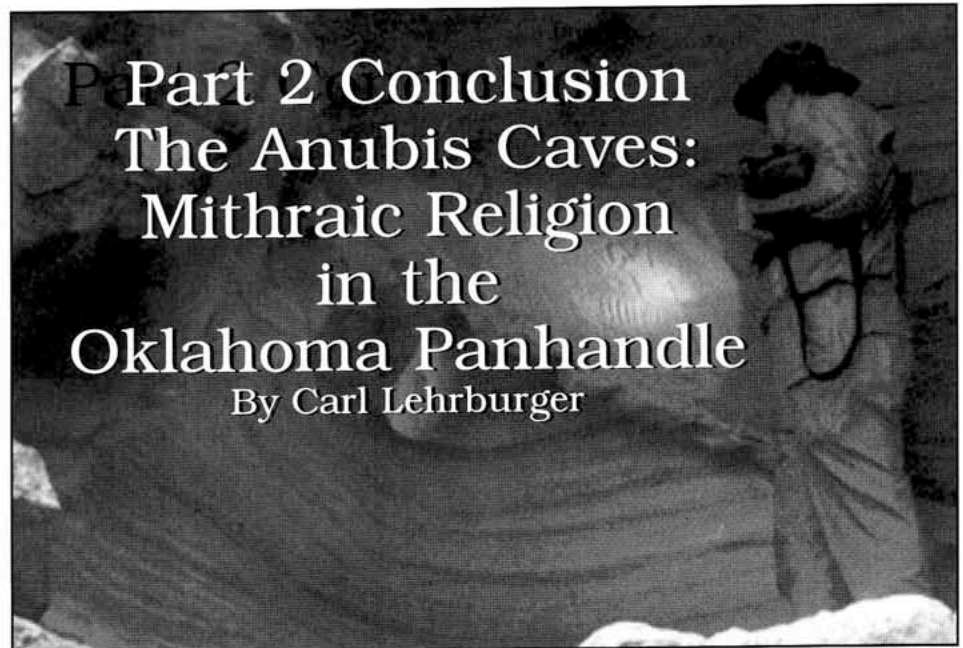


Photo of pioneering researcher William R. McGlone using a light to illuminate the Cave 2 Anubis figure (Photo by Carl Lehrburger).



Figure 3. Equinox Face Shadow on Anubis Cave 3. Photo taken after the forehead crosses the vertical lines to the left of the profile, which counts the days from equinox. (Photo by C. Lehrburger)

both the Old World and New World was written in Gaelic. The first inscription to be translated is found in Cave 3 and reads: THE SUN SIX MONTHS NORTH, SINKS SOUTH FOR SPACE OF MONTHS EQUAL NUMBER. (see Figure 3)

"In addition to Ogam that can be read in Gaelic, Libyan writing has been found in Cave 3. Below and to the right of a figure interpreted to be a Sun God, are Libyan letters which Fell (1985) proposed to read as: ENACT AT SUNSET THE RITES OF BEL, ASSEMBLING AT THAT HOUR IN WORSHIP". (See Figure 13A)

"While the epigraphic evidence of Old World writing at the Anubis Caves is compelling, one of the most extraordinary features is the equinox light and shadow animations that occur".

Archaeoastronomy is the study of astronomical elements of archaeological sites. At the Anubis Caves, there are at least four significant archaeoastronomi-

cal alignments that can be viewed toward sunset on the equinox.

In Part I, the "Nose pointer" alignment in Cave 3 was featured. The "Six-Month Inscription," translated above, refers to the equinox. The appearance of a shadow resembling a man's profile counts the days approaching equinox (Figure 3). This forehead shadow moves across a series of vertical lines etched on the stone surface, a line for each successive day.

While the main function of the "Nose Pointer" alignment is to count the days leading to equinox, it is crafted to use a natural-looking shadow resembling the profile of a face that moves across the petroglyphs, creating animation in light and shadow. The occurrence of the "Nose Pointer" alignment precedes the spectacular "Silent Opera" animation in Cave 2.

The Archaeoastronomy and Equinox Alignments in Cave 2

The major calendrical alignments at the Anubis Caves happen toward and at sunset on the equinoxes, beginning in Cave 3. The sequence of light and shadow alignments continues and concludes in Cave 2, where the "Silent Opera" takes place as the sun sets on the horizon on the equinoxes.

To the right and left of the main Anubis panel on the back wall there are elaborate and extensive glyphs. The back of Cave 2 where the primary equinox alignment occurs faces west. Near sundown, a wedged-shape notch at the north end of the cave's opening is projected as a similarly shaped wedge of

light on the panel by the setting sun. The result is the progressive lighting and then shadowing of the petroglyphs on the back wall.

The back of the Anubis panel is quite intricate and confusing at first glance. The main character interpreted to be the Sun God and referred to as Mithras, stands on a Cube with rays protruding from his head and outstretched hands. His head is set between two suns, thought to represent the rising and setting suns. To the left when facing the panel is the Egyptian jackal-god Anubis. A host of other images and vertical lines are superimposed together, presenting a garbled and complicated collage that can be easily

ments briefly discussed below present the most impressive archaeoastronomy discovered to date in Cave 2, at least two other alignments not addressed here have been documented.

The Thumb Pointer Alignment

The Sun God in Cave 2 is placed between two half circles with sun rays extending out, which are believed to represent the rising sun on the left and the setting sun on the right. As the sun begins to set, a shadow with a knob descends on the panel. The shadowy knob moves toward the "dangling sun" below the large sun to the right of the Sun God. The light on the head of the Sun God mimics the action of the real

"The term Silent Opera was coined by Bill McGlone and Phil Leonard to describe a heliolithic light show that occurs at sunset on the Equinox. The light animation is created as the sun sinks on the horizon casting a wedge of light on the petroglyph panel from the wedge-shaped notch at the north end of the opening of the cave. As the sun sets, the light wedge moves up and to the

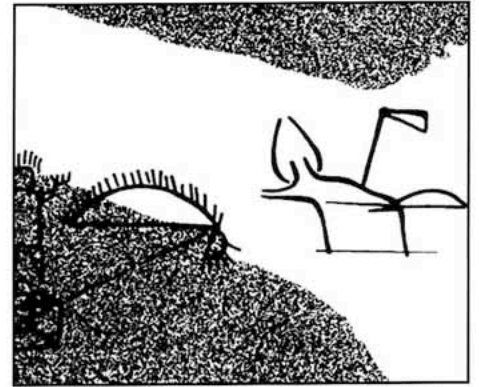


Figure 5. Action of the light wedge and Thumb Pointer on the equinox, as the sun sets on Sun God. (McGlone et. al. 1993, Figure 57, page 146).

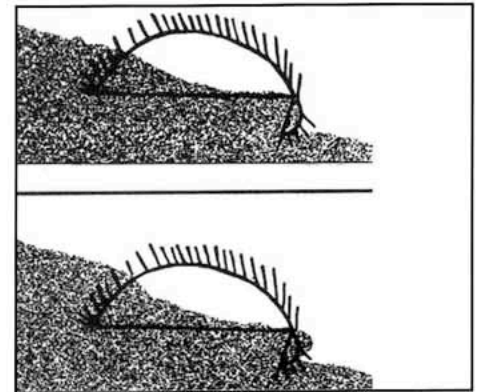


Figure 6. Specificity of the equinox target. A. On equinox. B. One day from equinox. (McGlone et. al. 1993, Figure 58, page 146).

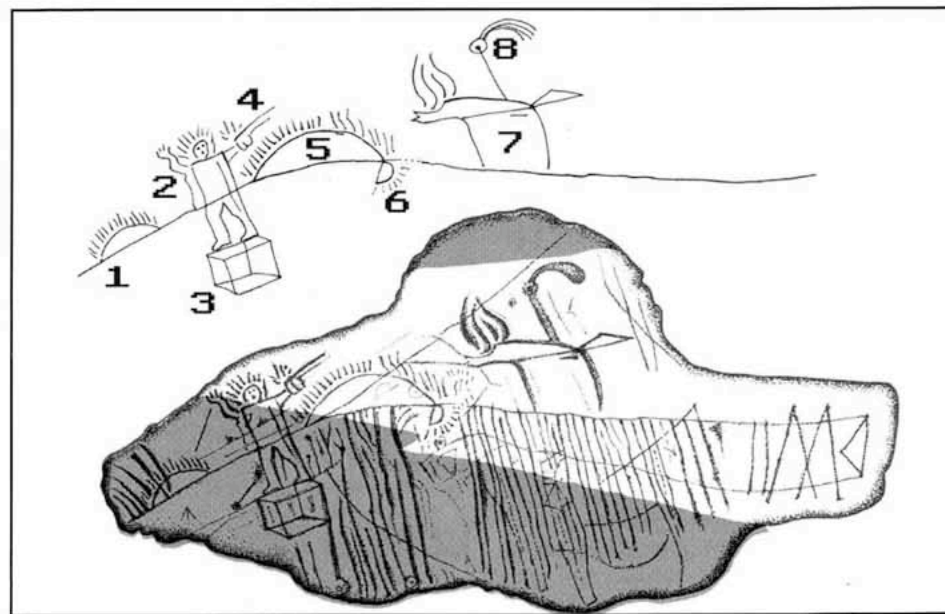


Figure 4. Rendering of the Anubis Panel in Cave 2. Main elements of the Anubis panel include: 1. Rising sun. 2. Sun God. 3. Cube. 4. Penis. 5. Setting sun. 6. Dangling sun. 7. Anubis. 8. Flail. (Drawing by Martin Brennan from McGlone et. al., Figure 74, page 168).

confused with graffiti or nonsensical doodles. The date 1896 can be seen etched to the right of the Sun God with the name TOM OGIMA carved above, with one stroke of the M crossing the Anubis flail. OGIMA is thought to have been a migrant worker from Louisiana born in 1896, who passed through Oklahoma early in the 20th century.

Facing the Anubis Panel in Cave 2, on one's left several of a series of figures thought to represent constellations can be seen (Figure 9). Looking to the right of the main Anubis Panel, three images can be seen: the first (Figure 10, 11A) has been identified as an Old World goddess (Sheila Na Gig) and the other two characters appear along with an image of large fire. Petroglyph images continue to the right around the inner cave wall. Many have yet to be identified.

While the two equinox align-

ment sun: as the real sun appears to touch the mesa on the horizon, the moving shadow touches the chin of the Sun God. As the last rays of sun drop below the mesa the head of the Sun God is obscured. At the same time the shadow's Thumb Pointer fills the Dangling Sun at the moment of sunset. The precision of the animation is revealed by observing how the thumb pointer fits into the Dangling Sun over a four-year period. The exact moment of equinox occurs near sunset only every fourth year, corresponding to the leap year cycle (McGlone et. al. 1993). The Thumb Pointer fits precisely into the Dangling Sun once every four years as shown in Figures 5 and 6. The Dangling Sun alignment occurs exactly at sunset as the Silent Opera animation ends.

The Silent Opera Alignment



Figure 7. The Cave 2 Anubis Panel near sundown on the Equinox. (Photo by William McGlone, reproduced from McGlone et. al. 1993 front piece. Photo taken on equinox as sundown approaches. C. Lerhberger).

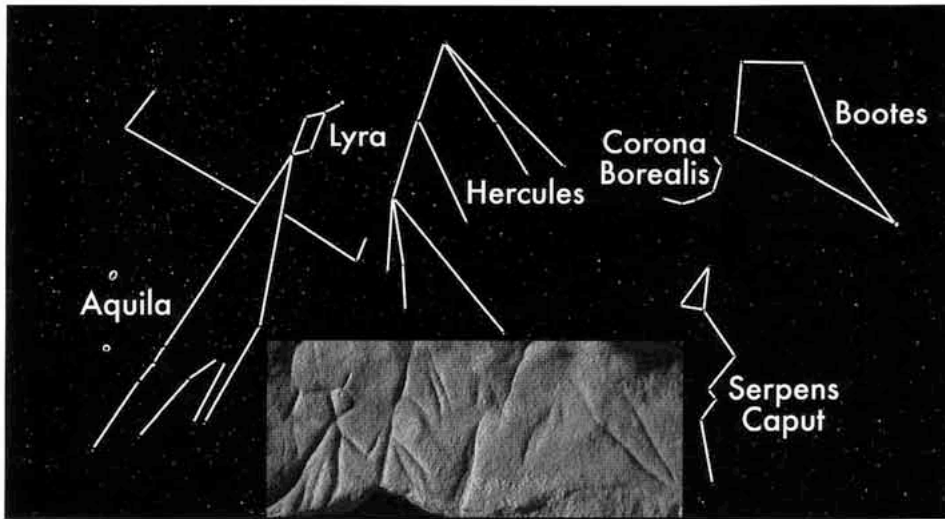


Figure 8. Top: Photo of five constellations in Anubis Cave 1. Bottom: Tracing of the star patterns showing the correspondence with the constellations as labeled. (Leonard 2006, Figure 23, page 39. Graphic courtesy of TransVision).

right across the petroglyphs creating the so-called Silent Opera".

This equinox enactment is consistent with other petroglyphs at the Anubis Caves site that describe the equinox event, including the Ogam inscription translated from Gaelic to read: ENACT AT SUNSET THE RITES OF BEL, ASSEMBLING AT THAT HOUR IN WORSHIP. The light animation seems to portray a story consisting of the Sun God (Mithras) and Anubis, the Egyptian jackal god. As the sun approaches the horizon, the ascending light wedge moves up the panel with the shadow ascending and eventually engulfing the Sun God. As the last rays of light are seen on the horizon, the lighted Anubis stands above the shadowed Sun God. This can be interpreted to mean that at the moment of sundown the sun has moved into the world of night ruled by Anubis from the upper world of day ruled by Sun God.

As the Silent Opera comes to an end, other light animations can be observed, including the Thumb Pointer alignment described above. As the shadow engulfs the Sun God's head, the Thumb Pointer penetrates the Dangling Sun petroglyph.

"Another ingenious animation observed by Leonard is created by the shadow that penetrates the Setting Sun (to the right of the Sun God). The shadow wedge in the Setting Sun seems to mimic the sun setting on the mesa to the west, so that if one looks at the setting sun behind the sloping side of the mesa, it resembles the shape of the shadow in the Setting Sun" (Figure 6).

The preciseness of these calendrical alignments made approximately 2,000 years ago attest to the skill and abilities employed by the creators of

Anubis Caves.

The Cosmology

The Anubis Caves complex has been identified as a site dedicated to Mithras, an Old World Sun God. The ancients had many different names for the Sun God which were sometimes interchangeable and sometimes represented different aspects of the sun. At Anubis Caves the Old World god BEL is identified, as is GRIAN, another name for the sun or Sun God. Other names for the Sun God include Lug (Lugh), Apollo, BEL (Belus, Baal) and Perseus. While there appear to be many similarities to the Old World Mithras, the iconography of the Anubis Caves is also seen as distinct. Leonard notes that the Anubis Caves exhibit a blend of Old World cultures, including Mithraism and native Celtic religion (Leonard 2006).

More than just a religion, Mithraism was a cosmology which integrated constellations, planets, calendrics and rituals. The cult of Mithraism had both exoteric and esoteric aspects. While the exoteric manifestations include calendar keeping, ancient mythology and observing and performing rituals, the deeper esoteric side of Mithraism relates to the journey and return of the soul back to heaven. As Leonard notes:

At Anubis Cave, images engraved on cave walls are targets that mark alignments on key calendar dates. The alignments suggest certain mythological events or concepts by their imagery. There are symbols of Mithraic grades relating to planets and constellations. Each image provides an opportunity for the new member of a grade to learn about con-

stellations and their myths as well as the meaning and character of the associated planet. The myths explain how the universe functions and the important place that Mithras occupies in it (Leonard, 2006, page 11).

Cave 1 Cosmology

On the east wall of Cave 1 are five figures carved about five feet above the cave floor, interpreted to be constellations (McGlone et. al. 1993). These constellations would have been visible from the cave in the western sky from September through December about 2,000 years ago. This three-month period runs from the autumnal equinox to the winter solstice; or from the time the ancient god Mithras crossed into the Dark World below the equator, to the time of his birthday, when the sun begins to increase in strength.

Cave 1 constellations have a mythological connection with Mithras. This southernmost cave is the shallowest and seems to have an Indo-European star map of the constellations visible after dusk on the fall equinox 15 centuries ago. Specifically, Aquila and Lyra combined Cygnus, Hercules, Serpens Caput, Corona Borealis, and Bootes. Figure 8 is said to show the constellations Bootes, Corona Borealis, Serpens Caput, Hercules, and a female figure-composed of a combination of Lyra, Aquila and Cygnus (Leonard 2006).



Figure 9. Figures on the north face of Anubis Cave 2 interpreted as depicting Taurus, Aries and Pegasus. (McGlone et. al. 1993, Figure 73, page 165).

Cave 2 Cosmology

There are many dimensions to Cave 2 iconography and cosmology. On the northern wall of the cave are animal figures, some so worn they can barely be seen. These have been interpreted to represent Taurus, Aries, and Pegasus (Figure 9).

On the southerly side of Cave 2 a Sheila Na Gig figure is placed to the right of the main Anubis panel (see Figures 10, 11A). This petroglyph, damaged by an early researcher using latex to create a mold, is notably similar to Old World representations of this fertility goddess (Figure 11B). While found throughout Ireland and England, the image from the Oklahoma Panhandle



Figure 10. Sheila Na Gig figure, Anubis Cave 2 (photo by C. Lehrburger).



Figure 11A. Sheila Na Gig, Anubis Cave 2, Oklahoma (drawing by Martin Brennan.)

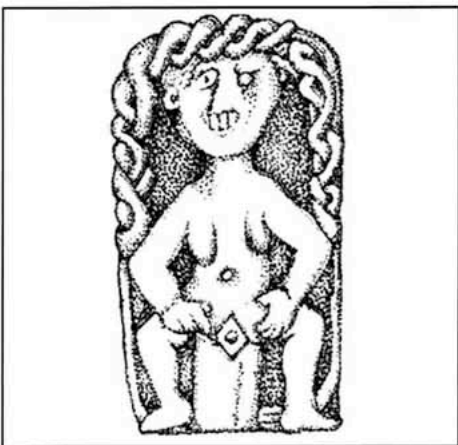


Figure 11B. Sheila Na Gig figure, Rahara, County Roscommon, Ireland (drawing by Martin Brennan).

indicates that travelers thought it important to represent her as part of the Cave 2 Anubis Panel imagery to be preserved in stone.

It was only after many years of study that McGlone and Leonard concluded that the Mithras figure at the Anubis Caves conformed to the constel-

lation of Perseus (see Figure 13A). Consistent with the constellation Perseus, the Cube below the Sun God was identified as Auriga, directly below Perseus in the sky (Figures 12, 13A).

"After making this important discovery", other figures on the panel were identified to be adjacent constellations (see Figure 13A). Detailed study of a photo of a cast of the Anubis panel cast made by Gloria Farley showed that the constellations Orion, Canis Major, and possibly Gemini could be added to the list of recognizable constellations in the central area of the panel. McGlone et. al. noted the following: "The presence of the human figure of Orion and the animal figure of Canis Major in their proper positions, though slightly rotated, adds persuasive evidence for the hypothesis that the outlines on the cave wall represent the constellation in the section of the sky that marks the spring equinox". (McGlone et. al. 1993, page 168).

The accurate Silent Opera and Thumb Pointer equinox light animations occur using the same petroglyph characters that represent the constellations noted above.

Mithraic mythology

The full depth and meaning of the Anubis Caves and how the exoteric and esoteric Mithraic traditions are presented has yet to be taken seriously by mainstream historians or archaeologists. The precise equinox alignments, sophisticated light animations and the "call to worship" inscriptions provide evidence of preparing for a ritual performed in the Old World, specifically on the equinox.

The specificity of the Sun God

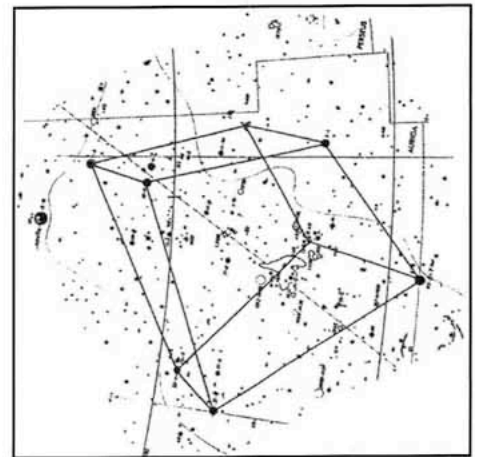


Figure 12. Drawing of possible connection of stars to represent the Cube in Cave 2 (McGlone et. al. 1993, Figure 71, page 165).

character and the Anubis, the Egyptian jackal god also known as the lord of the night, offer onlookers a moving story in light/shadow animation. The placement of the light shows and inscriptions in the caves makes for an ideal amphitheater for onlookers to observe the movement of the light and shadows on the panels.

What is observed at sunset on the equinoxes is the darkening of the Sun God as the Anubis petroglyph is illuminated. Here, the dialectic between day and night and the upper and lower worlds is revealed as a lightshow. And the message seems clear: the sun has moved from the upper world realm of the Sun God to the nether-world of Anubis.

Perhaps more enigmatic is the prominent Cube below the Sun God. As previously noted above, the Cube contains Libyan writing urging the reader to enact the rites of Bel, the Sun God, at the appointed hour. The Cube was used by

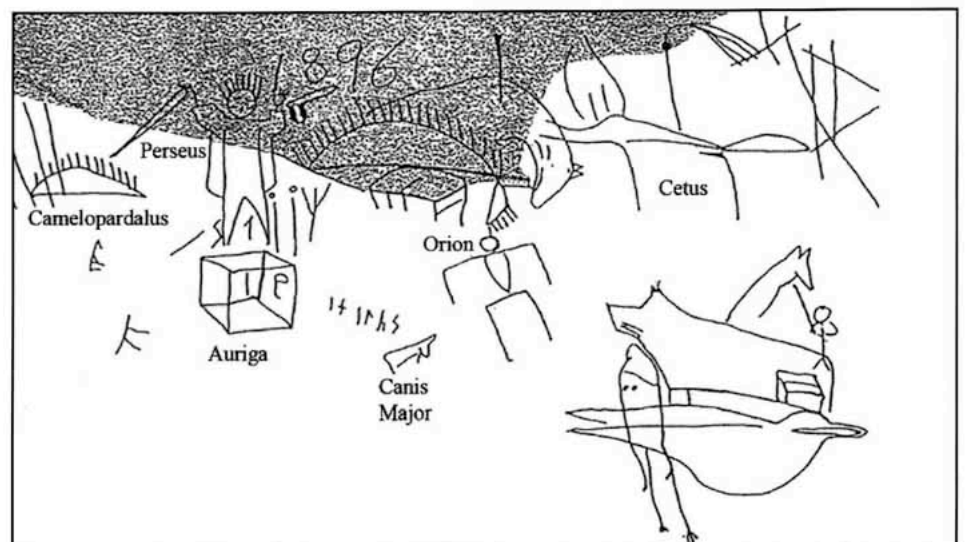


Figure 13A. Detail of Anubis Panel, showing constellations. Compact cluster of Mithraic grade symbols in lower right. (Leonard 2006, Figure 11, page 19).

the Egyptians as a symbol for space, volume and the material world. In other esoteric traditions, the Cube represents the earth. What is presented in Cave 2 is the Sun God (Mithras) standing on the Cube, like a throne, ruling over the earth. This prominent symbolism could have also been enacted in rites and ritual to represent the conquering of matter by spirit, and more esoteric instructions to aspirants on how to prepare for the return to the godhead.

Less visible or comprehensible than the figures of Anubis and the Cube is a collage of other figures embedded in the panel, interpreted by Phil Leonard as symbols for the seven grades of Mithraism. Leonard's research indicates that each stage of advancement represents a level of understanding represented by a planet, day of the week, and its own symbol. In the Mithraic mystery rites, these symbols were used to instruct initiates in proper attitudes and conduct (Leonard, 2006). The seven symbols are 1. Corax (Raven); 2. Nymphus (bride); 3. Miles (soldier); 4. Leo (Lion); 5. Perses (represents the

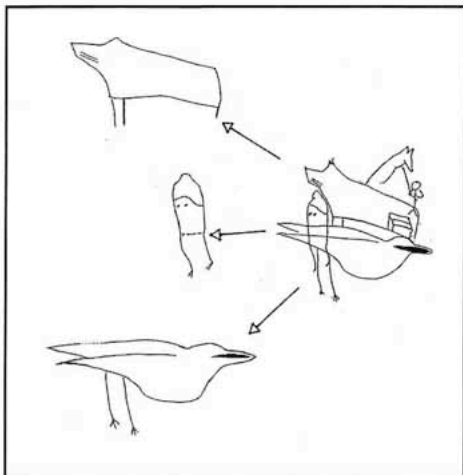


Figure 13B. Exploded drawing of compact cluster of Mithraic symbols in Cave 2. (Leonard 2006, Figure 20, page 31).

moon, son of Perseus); 6. Heliodromus (one who proceeds like the sun, Lugh); 7. Pater (Mithras).

Figure 13B shows an exploded drawing of a compact cluster of Mithraic grade symbols. From top to bottom of the left side are Leo, Nymphus and Corax. Miles can be seen on the extreme right. Figure 3B. Exploded drawing of compact cluster of Mithraic symbols in Cave 2. (Leonard 2006, Figure 20, page 31).

Conclusion

The significance of the Anubis Caves has yet to be appreciated by historians. While only a cursory presentation is given here, the imagery exhibited in

Cave 2 offers a record of Mithraic and Celtic cosmology and mythology nearly 2,000 years ago. For Old World historical studies, the Anubis Caves represent an original source for understanding these cosmologies, iconography and rituals. For the emerging new history of America, the Anubis Caves offer some of the most compelling evidence for Old World contact over a thousand years before Columbus.

The Anubis Caves site is on private property and off-limits to the public. Fortunately, researcher Scott Monahan of Denver has produced a documentary, "Old News," which makes accessible quality video and commentary on Anubis Caves (www.ontar.net). One of the earliest and best presentations of the Anubis Caves is the book *Ancient American Inscriptions: Plow Marks or History?* (McGlone et. al., 1993), the primary source of information used in preparing this article. Philip Leonard, one of its coauthors, has recently completed a monograph entitled *A New World Monument to Mithras* (Leonard, 2006), which provides a thorough and expanded treatment of the material presented in this article. A link to this work is provided in the reference section. ■

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Information on the Anubis Caves and other related sites are featured in the documentary video "Old News," which can be found at www.ontar.net.

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