THE OGAMS OF THE SUN TEMPLE

by

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Besides music, David has a long standing interest in archaeology, particularly that of the American continent. Whilst he has concentrated largely on the Maya, he also also very interested in the possibility of Pre-Columbian contacts between the Old and New Worlds. He has written extensively on this subject and has also given lectures in both the United Kingdom and Italy.

Summary

On the walls, and within a cave of a group of tower rocks in Colorado, various inscriptions have been found that appear to be comprised of letters of the Ogam alphabet. Ogam was in use, principally in the British Isles, between 400 and 900 A.D.. Some examples of Ogam have also been located in mainland Europe, but it is not considered to have been brought to the New World, particularly before the time of Columbus. The script found in America also contains certain properties that, specialists say, are not inherent in the Old World version of the Ogam script. On that basis, they have been dismissed as unauthentic. Nevertheless, when translations of the Colorado Ogams have been attempted, they appear to make linguistic sense and refer to certain astronomical and solar alignments that have subsequently been observed to actually occur. Certain engravings, associated with the inscriptions, also appear to contain affinities with an Old World religion.

THE OGAM ALPHABET

Before describing the inscriptions and engravings that have been found on the tower rocks in Colorado, it is important that we discuss the Ogam alphabet, as used in the British Isles, in some detail.

Ogam, (sometimes spelt Ogham), pronounced "Oh-m", was an alphabet used by the Celts. In essence, is a coded notation that uses parallel lines in groups to represent letters. About 500 Ogham inscriptions have been found in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England dating from between the 4th and 7th centuries AD.. Many of these inscriptions have been deciphered, but there are also inscriptions in the archaic forms of Gaelic and Pictish that have not been deciphered. Similar markings, that some have said date to as early as 500 BC, have been found on standing stones in Spain and Portugal, the area of the Iberian Peninsula that the Celts who colonized Ireland may have come. The majority of Ogam inscriptions are to be found in Ireland.
where there are 369 verified examples of Ogham writing surviving today. These exist in the form of gallán (standing stones). Whilst all surviving traces of Ogham are inscriptions on stone, it was probably more commonly inscribed on sticks, stakes and trees. Inscriptions generally take the form of a person's name, and the name of a place, and were probably used to mark boundaries and burials, etc..

The actual origins of Ogam remain obscure. The name Ogham or Ogam was derived from that of the Celtic god of literature and eloquence, Ogma, who is credited with its' invention of the alphabet. It has been suggested that it evolved out of a system of tallies used for accounting. Today most scholars believe that it was developed in Ireland during the 4th and 5th centuries. However, if the truth be known, as the Ogam scholar Damian McManus has stated in a recent book, ‘Where, when, and by whom the Ogam alphabet was invented is not known.... The nature of the Ogam script is such that it is impossible to pin point its source of inspiration or to identify its formers in time and space with any degree of accuracy.’

It is also important to note that the Celtic god "Ogma" was linked with the Gaulish god "Ogmios" whose golden speech was recorded in Gallic artwork as a fine chain linking the tip of his tongue to the ears of a group of his followers. This, in itself, seems to provide another pointer for the possibility that the Ogam alphabet originated, not in 4th century Ireland, but much earlier in the Celtic homeland of mainland Europe. Furthermore, Stuart Piggott in Neolithic Cultures of the British Isles illustrates and discusses amulets, which appear to be Ogam-inscribed, that were professionally excavated at Windmill Hill (circa 3250-2200 B.C.). In all seventeen such inscribed artifacts were excavated at Windmill Hill, and Piggott has compared the carvings with certain Breton and Scottish rock carvings.

Whatever the antiquity of Ogam may actually be, all that is certain is that it was adopted and further developed by the first (Gnostic) monks in Ireland around 350 A.D., and was used by these monks as a monumental script between 450 and 800 A.D.. This has led some to conjecture that Ogam may have originated in Libya, from where the first Gnostic missionaries are thought to have come. The succeeding Roman Catholic Benedictines used it for literary purposes between ca 700 and 900 A.D.

The fourteenth century manuscript known as The Book of Ballymote, which is now in the possession of The Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, Ireland, illustrates over one hundred varieties of Ogam. For our purposes it will only be necessary to describe the basic content of the alphabet. The Ogam alphabet consisted of 20 letters, and was comprised of fifteen consonants, divided into three sets of five, and a further set containing five vowels. Each set was known as an Aicme. (Figure 1). Five more letters forming a further

![Figure 1. The Ogam alphabet.](image)
set (the diphthongs EA, OI, UI, IA, and AE) were probably added at a later date. Each letter was formed by incising a group of lines across, above, or below a single line known as a midline, (or stemline, or stave). The midline, originally known as a Druim, was usually the edge of the object, either stone or wood, on which the inscription was carved. (Figure 2). When the inscription was carved on stone, the letters were read from the bottom upwards, but in other instances when the script was later used in manuscripts it was read from left to right. In keeping with Druidic concepts, each of the Ogam's twenty letters bears the name of a tree that was held to be sacred. For example: A-Ailim (Elm), B-Bithe (Birch), C-Coll (Hazel). The group containing the diphthongs was also associated with particular trees, eg., UI (Iphin) represented the Honeysuckle tree. Thus, each letter had a special significance. It is important to realize, however, that not all of the twenty plants of the Ogam were found in the post-Christian Celtic world of the British Isles. This fact would seem to lend some credence to the theory that Ogam predates the first century AD.

The linguistic information preserved in Ogham is sparse, but it is sufficient to reveal a form of Gaelic much older than Old Irish, the earliest well-documented variety of the language.

**THE AMERICAN OGAMS**

As stated above, the main corpus of Ogam inscriptions are to be found in Ireland, although a good number are also found in Scotland and England and, albeit to a lesser extent, in the European mainland. However, many inscriptions and markings consisting of parallel linear grooves have been found carved on rocks from all over the world. Such markings range from simple to complex and, whilst some appear to resemble Ogam in varying degrees, the vast majority are not Ogam at all, and probably simply represent tally marks or calendrical counts of
some kind. Of interest to us are the claims of Ogam inscriptions that have been said to have been located in the Americas, especially on the East Coast of North America, and which, it is said, can be read with a form of the Celtic language. One particular example, a petroglyph in a rock shelter in the mountains of Wyoming County, West Virginia, has become almost a focal point for the argument over the existence and authenticity of Ogam writing in the Americas. Whilst the Wyoming County glyphs are possibly quite valuable evidence pre-Columbian contact, they have yet to be demonstrated to be Ogam as they have not, so far, been translated to an acceptable degree of scholarship. However, generally speaking, the fact remains that claims of pre-Columbian Ogam writing being in existence in the Americas have been disputed by various experts and scholars of the script.

It is not our intention in this paper to discuss the merits of the various examples of Ogam writing that are said to have been found in North America, or to prove its actual existence. Our intention is to focus on one particular site in North America that seems to contain an ancient Ogam inscription. In this particular instance, the claim for such an inscription appears to be corroborated by certain astronomical observations that confirm the message of the attempted translation of an apparent Ogam script that is incised upon the rock. Before proceeding further with the investigation, it would be pertinent to point out certain peculiarities of the Ogams that are said to exist in America.

The most important divergent characteristic of the American Ogams is that they are vowelless. (Figure 3). As can be seen in Figure 1, the Ogam alphabet contained five vowels, and Ogam scholars insist that all of the Ogam inscriptions from the British Isles and the European mainland, that are accepted as authentic, contain vowels. The American Ogams, it seems, are written with consonants only. The small tick marks representing the five vowels are totally absent. Those who maintain the authenticity of such inscriptions also claim that the inscriptions are written in an early form of Ogam that originated outside Ireland, (possibly in the third millennium B.C.), which was later transferred to Ireland where the vowels were added. It is this that has led many to dispute the fact that such inscriptions are indeed Ogam, especially those scholars who adhere to the accepted notion that Ogam was invented much later in Ireland, that it was based to some degree on the Latin alphabet, and that it contained vowels from the very beginning. Also, in the American Ogams, the strokes that intersect the stemline for the consonantal group M G Ng S/Z R are not oblique to the stemline, as in the European Ogams, but perpendicular to it. Another peculiarity is that the American Ogams are not
written on a stone where the edge of the stone acts as the stemline, but on the flat surface of a stone.

Claims that Celtic people travelled to the New World are laughable to professional archaeologists and epigraphers. That they also left Ogam inscriptions, written not with vowels as they are in the British Isles, but without vowels, makes the whole scenario even more implausible. However, certain 19th century authorities on Ogam, such as Richard Brash and R.A.S. Macalister, did report vowelless Ogam inscriptions from Ireland that were found in areas where vowelled Ogam also existed. Figure 4A shows one such example reported by Brash.

Figure 4A. Aghadoe inscription from County Kerry, Ireland, with apparent vowelless Ogam characteristics.

Figure 4B shows a stone, first recorded in the Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland in 1972-73, at Castlederg, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland, that is seemingly inscribed with vowelless Ogam. Figure 4C shows an example of vowelless Ogam that appears in The Book of Ballymote itself. There are many others, but none have ever been accepted as true Ogam by academia. The 19th century scholars had an interest in them, but modern scholars have generally dismissed them as

Figure 4B. Ogam stone from Castlederg, County Tyrone with apparent vowelless Ogam characteristics. Photo: Scott Monahan.

Figure 4C. Reproduction of a photograph of an Ogam inscription from the Book of Ballymote. The text that accompanies the inscription involves a warning to the god Lug concerning his wife. Critics of the un-vowelled Ogam hypothesis have said that the portions of the final three Ogam strokes that extend above the stemline do not exist, and that the entire inscription actually consists of seven strokes below the stemline. They have said that it does not, therefore, constitute a word, but instead represents the seven birches with which Lug should castigate his wife. The original photograph, taken under ultraviolet light, reveals that the upper portions of the final three strokes do, in fact, exist. The final three Ogam strokes actually intersect the stemline and represent Ng. Consequently, the inscription, which is completely vowelless, does form a word that has been translated as "sign" or "omen".
"imitation" or "false" Ogams, or "quasi-" or "pseudo-" Ogams. In referring to the un-vowelled Ogams of Scotland, F.C. Diack's conjectured that such vowelless Ogams were, in fact, *proto-Ogam*, but, likewise, this has never been accepted. It should also be noted that, if the afore-mentioned inscriptions on the Windmill Hill artifacts are indeed Ogam, they are unvowelled! Of further significance is the fact that two amulets were also excavated at Troy, and although it has never been documented, certain observers, including Phillip Leonard, have identified both amulets as containing the ogam strokes B-L ("Bel") oriented horizontally and with a stemline. ("Bel", incidentally, will gain importance later in this text). Finally, it is worth pointing out that some apparently vowelless Ogam inscriptions have also been located in Portugal.

It is not unusual for ancient scripts to be purely consonantal in nature. A number of ancient script contained no vowels at all, and the vowels have to be inserted by whoever is attempting to read (or translate) the script. This is not as difficult as it sounds. For example, the purely consonantal phrase ‘thrd flr flt fr rnt’ is easily recognizable to a modern English speaker as meaning ‘third floor flat (or apartment) for rent’. But, with regard to Ogam, even vowelled Ogam is notoriously difficult to transliterate. Often, more than one letter is possible, although translation is facilitated somewhat if the markings have been organized into distinct groups so that it is possible to determine where each letter sequence and each word begins and ends. However, if one is confronted with a series of consonantal Ogam markings without any organized spacing, it becomes extremely difficult to add vowels and split the text into groups of words. Many different permutations could be possible.

The criticism that the inscriptions in America are not Ogam because they have not been inscribed with the edge of a stone acting as the stemline, as is the case with the Old World variety, is also invalid. There are, in fact, a number of examples in Ireland, Scotland, and England, where the Ogam text has been inscribed on the surface of a stone, as opposed to its edge. *Figure 5* shows a recumbent slab that was once on display near the base of the Gap of Dunloe, close to Killarney in Southern Ireland. It is one of eight stones, all of which had been removed from a nearby cave. The stone not only has an Ogam inscription on its edge, with the edge of the stone acting as the stemline, but also on its surface. It is also interesting to note that the Ogam inscription on the surface only has an *implied* stemline. Ogams with

![Figure 5. Recumbent slab, measuring approximately 10 feet in length and 2 feet in width, that was once on display near the base of the Gap of Dunloe, close to Killarney in Southern Ireland. It not only contains an Ogam inscription on its edge, but also on its surface with an implied stemline. Photo: Scott Monahan.](image)
only an implied stemline, not an actual inscribed stemline, are also common in America. Indeed, the lack of a stemline in some instances is another reason that has been given by experts to refute the legitimacy of the American Ogams.

Regarding the criticism that the Ogam signs for the M G Ng S/Z R consonantal group are not oblique to the stemline, as in the Old World Ogams, but perpendicular to it, it is pertinent to point out that, even on stones in the British Isles, transecting Ogam strokes for the M-series are sometimes inscribed perpendicular to the stemline. The Killogrone stone is one such example, where all the M-strokes are at right angles to the edge-stemline except the first, which slopes the wrong way.4

There is also the question of the language that was being used. It has been established that the Ogam alphabet, as developed by the Irish monks during the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., was used for writing very early Irish. However, it is not known what language was being used when the American Ogams were inscribed, and the question has arisen as to whether it is legitimate to use the early Irish tongue when translating these Ogams. Those who have attempted to decipher the American Ogams have, nevertheless, used Old Irish sources, and even older Common Celtic sources to try and arrive at a meaningful translation. These sources have been used on the premise that, assuming the people who inscribed the Ogams originated from the Old World in the first place, they contain the closest linguistic roots available to use in an attempt to recover a related, probably earlier, language.

THE SUN TEMPLE AND THE INSCRIPTIONS

The site that contains the Ogams in question has been named "The Sun Temple". This is purely a name that has been given to the site by those who have investigated it. The reasons for the name will become obvious, but it in no way reflects any known ancient or local name. This site, and others like it in the region, has been the subject of some very concentrated, painstaking, and thorough research for well over twenty three years. The team of investigators was originally led by William McGlone and Phillip Leonard, but after the death of William McGlone in 1999, Phillip Leonard has continued with the research.

The site is located on private land south of the Arkansas River in southeastern Colorado, near the mouth of a broad open canyon. It consists of a group of tower rocks that are actually eroded columns of sandstone. (Figure 6A). Part of the surface of the east facing rock...
appears to have been purposely smoothed by man, and a simple ring, that the investigators have termed a "Sun-Ring petroglyph" has been carved on the smoothed surface. (Figure 7). Such "Sun-Rings" occur at other sites in the general vicinity, and they usually are found to have an alignment with a Solar event. The carving of the ring at the Sun Temple has been executed so that it is tilted slightly away from a plane perpendicular to a line of the sun. It has also been inscribed slightly oblate, so that when viewed from the sun's direction, it is a circle about a foot in diameter. It is elevated from


Figure 7. "Sun-Ring petroglyph" carved on the smoothed surface of the east-facing rock of the Sun Temple. Photo: David Eccott.
the bench level of the site, and one can crouch on a shelf below it and place one's head in the centre of the ring to sight the sun.

High on the south facing cliff, a heavily patinated inscription was located that appeared to be "Tree" Ogam. Tree Ogam was a legitimate method of writing the Ogam script in the Old World, and it was usually carved on a branch of the specific tree to which it is related. It was inscribed in the same vein as the stave version, except that, instead of the grooves for the letters being incised across a stemline, the grooves were carved as if they were twigs at the ends of branches. (Figure 8). For this reason, Tree Ogam is sometimes referred to as "branch" Ogam. The Tree Ogam inscription at the Sun Temple (Figure 9A) bears a strong resemblance to such writing. (Compare Figure 9A with Figure 8). When the inscription was transliterated with the vowels inserted, the inscription read in Celtic ‘Foil Bel Imdae i Bel Mam’. This was then translated as: **THE SUN RING ALONG WITH THE SHOULDER BY MEANS OF SUN AND HILL.** (Figure 9B). The meaning of this somewhat cryptic message will be revealed in the
following sub-section, but it was assumed that "the ring" referred to the Sun-Ring petroglyph. In fact, the word "Ring" was translated from "foil", the Celtic word for "the ring of the sun" with specific reference to the "circle of the sun".  

(It is interesting to note that, as can be seen in Figure 9A, the hole beneath the Ogam strokes for F-L is like a half sun at sunrise, and the strokes of the F-L are like sun rays. The same technique as was also used at another site known as the Anubis Caves that seems to be related to the Sun Temple). The Tree Ogam inscription, combined with the orientation of the Sun-Ring petroglyph, strongly suggested the possibility of an astronomical alignment.

Between the east facing rock that contains the Sun-Ring petroglyph and the south facing cliff containing the tree Ogam, there is an elevated shallow cave about seven feet above ground level. Its dimensions are approximately eight feet long, four feet deep, and two feet high. The ceiling of the cave is covered with grooves, most of which are linked by stemlines. Attempts to decipher these inscriptions have been met with varying degrees of success, but two inscriptions in particular, (see Figure 10), appeared to confirm the suspicion that there was an astronomical alignment at the site.

Most prominent of the two inscriptions in question was a large circle with horizontal incisions carved in it across a stemline. (This can be seen on the right side of Figure 10). Reading from bottom upwards, the incisions spell out the Ogam letters S/Z (four strokes...
through the stem line) and L (two strokes below the stemline). By adding the missing vowel, this can be read as the word SOL meaning SUN, which was used widely by many ancient peoples including the Celts. To the left of the SOL inscription there is also a rebus-like inscription that begins with an engraving like an inverted V, and which is followed by, what appear to be, Ogam incisions across a stemline. (This can be seen on the left side of Figure 10, and in close-up in Figure 11A). The word groupings of this inscription are clearly spaced, and two words seem to have been written. Reading from left to right, the letters of the first word have been transliterated as NG (N), and the letters of the second word have been transliterated as TBGH. By adding vowels, the two words can be read as uin (which translates as time or season) and tobagh (which translates as reaping). Therefore, a complete reading could be TIME FOR REAPING or SEASON FOR REAPING. (Figure 11B).

Before describing the astronomical alignment that was subsequently detected at the Sun Temple site, it is perhaps appropriate to digress a little to discuss the apparent preference in the transliterations detailed above for NG instead of N, and Z instead of S. Indeed, the Ogam sign for NG consistently replaces N, and the Ogam sign for Z consistently replaces S at sites in America where Ogam is said to exist, and it is another peculiarity that has shed doubt on the authenticity of the markings as being Ogam. Critics have said that these substitutions actually alter and

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**Figure 11A.** Ogam inscription at the Sun Temple. Photo: David Eccott.

**Figure 11B.** Diagram of Figure 11A with transliteration and translation. Drawing: Phillip Leonard.
destroy the meaning of the words, and that any resulting translations therefore result in gibberish. Such changes in spelling are especially relevant to certain words in the above translations where, for instance, the Old Irish word for Sun has the apparent Ogam spelling transliterated as "Griang", as opposed to the accepted spelling "Grian". Critics have said that an NG-ending for this particular word is inadmissible. In actual fact, as the Irish scholar Thomas O'Rahilly has noted, there are certain dialects in Ireland today where N is often replaced by NG, whilst in other dialects the reverse is true. In Northern Ireland NG is even assimilated to NN, and, in other areas, vice versa. Also, in the Old Irish Dictionary of the Royal Irish Academy, some words are spelt equally with NG or N without any alteration of meaning. It all depends, it appears, upon variation in dialects. An S - Z interchange is not uncommon in languages such as Latin and Spanish, and there has been French and English confusion of S and Z for many centuries. Furthermore, some Ogamists give the sound value for the Ogam letter in question, (consisting of four strokes intersecting the stemline), as F(?) / Z (as is the case in Encyclopedia Britannica), or SS, or ST, all of which seem to be hinting at a variation of dialect. Such consonantal changes and interchanges over time within languages, and even within contemporary dialects, are an accepted fact. For instance, and interchange between P and B is a very common occurrence. The meaning of words where such changes occur are not altered or destroyed. Therefore, we should not be surprised to see that the people who, supposedly, brought the Ogam script to the New World were seemingly using a certain dialect where such consonantal replacements may have been the norm. It simply suggests an anomaly in their actual dialect. We must also bear in mind that we are probably dealing with a relatively small unit of immigrants to the New World, not a wholesale invasion by thousands and thousands of people. Therefore, a unique inflection in the dialect of what may well have been a single clan of people, reflected in their inscriptions, is what might be expected to occur.

THE ASTRONOMICAL ALIGNMENT

With the information gleaned from the translation of the inscriptions, it was decided to see if some form of astronomical alignment would take place at the site. The presence of a Sun-Ring petroglyph suggested that a solar alignment might occur, possibly at the time of the summer solstice. If an observer sits on the ledge just below the Sun-Ring petroglyph with the back of his head resting on the ring itself, he will see, opposite him, a cliff. He will also see a protruding overhang, like a notch on the edge of the cliff, and he will observe that a hollow area is thus formed between the notch and the horizon. (Figure 12). It was proposed that, at the time of the summer solstice, the rising sun, when observed from the Sun-Ring petroglyph, would fit into the hollow area formed by the cliff overhang and the horizon. The suggested alignment was first tested at the time of the 1984 summer solstice, but the rising sun was hidden totally by the cliff when viewed directly from the petroglyph. Furthermore, the shadow cast was far off the Sun-Ring petroglyph to the south.

Despite this initial failure, the message of the translation of the inscriptions was not abandoned, and it was decided to see if a solar alignment still might occur sometime between the solstice and the equinox at a date important to the ancient Celtic people. The children of the
rancher who owns the land volunteered to check at sunrise on succeeding days to find if, and when, an alignment occurred. Success finally came on the 8th of August when the full disc of the rising sun was observed sitting in the hollow formed by the cliff overhang and the horizon.

The investigators subsequently learned that the 8th of August is a cross-quarter day. There are four cross-quarter days during the year. Two occur between the summer solstice and the equinox; one in August when the sunrise point on the horizon is moving south, and one in May when it is moving north. Two more occur in February and November between the equinox and the winter solstice respectively. Cross-quarter days were extremely important events for the ancient Celts, and actually set the Celtic Calendar.

Figure 13 shows the photograph that was taken on the cross-quarter day of May 5th (1985), the alignment is exactly the same on the cross-quarter day of August 8th. Photo: William R. McGlone.
not be unreasonable to suggest that the inscriptions are, indeed, Ogam, and that they have been
correctly translated - in as much as their messages have been confirmed by a solar event. This is
particularly true of the Tree Ogam inscription: **THE SUN RING ALONG WITH THE
SHOULDER BY MEANS OF SUN AND HILL.** The "ring" is the Sun-Ring petroglyph, and the
"shoulder" is the notch on the cliff edge that, together with the horizon, forms the hollow in
which the "sun" rises on the cross-quarter days. The land that stretches away in front of the
observer as he views the event from the Sun-Ring petroglyph is actually a mesa, (a tableland of
small extent rising abruptly from a surrounding plain), which is, of course, the "hill" referred to
in the inscription. The reader should also bear in mind that the decipherment of the inscriptions
was made before the astronomical event was observed. In other words, the translations of the
inscriptions were not contrived to read as a description of something that had previously been
observed.

There is a third inscription in the elevated cave, (seen to the right of the circled SOL
inscription in Figure 10), that may also indicate that the solar event was to take place on the
cross-quarter days. It was more difficult to translate because the strokes of many of the letters are
so equally spaced that it is difficult to determine word groupings. Many different translations are
possible as a result, and it has only been tentatively deciphered on a preliminary basis. The first
letters are sufficiently spaced to read, and appear to spell out the Ogam consonants for the letters
**LGNS.** By inserting appropriate vowels, the word can be transliterated as **Lugnasa.** Lugnasa
was the great pre-harvest festival of the Celts. It was celebrated in early August at the time of the
cross-quarter day, and was held in honour of Lug, one of the Celtic sun gods. Furthermore, the
tip of the inverted V that precedes the **season for reaping** inscription, seems to be aligned to the rising sun.
This, combined with the word **reaping** also suggests a link with the
the pre-harvest festival of Lugnasa at the time of the cross-quarter day
in August. The site, therefore, seems as if it were used for the Lugnasa
festival in August, rather than the Beltane festival in May.

It is worth pointing out that solar alignments on cross-quarter
days are observable at ancient sites in other parts of the world where
Celtic people are known to have inhabited. Such an alignment can be see in **Figure 14** that shows a solar alignment occurring at sun rise on the cross-quarter day in February at Stonehenge in the British Isles.

**Figure 14.** Cross-quarter days were important events in the Celtic Calendar. Solar alignments on cross-quarter days are observable at many ancient Celtic sites. This photograph shows a solar alignment occurring at sun rise on the cross-quarter day in February at Stonehenge in the British Isles.
*Photo: Marita Vickroy.*
If the inscriptions described above are indeed Ogam, the question that remains is; when were they executed? There is another inscription that may provide an answer to that question. On the lower lip of the cave, an intricate motif has been executed on an angled flat section of rock. **Figure 15A.** It has groupings of small "plus-signs" (approximately one inch high) that are believed to be representations of stars. There are also some larger plus-signs (about three inches high), as well as an apparent Ogam inscription. **Figure 15B** is a diagram that shows the basic pattern of the plus-signs and, in particular, the Ogam inscription itself.

The word groupings of the inscription are relatively clear, and the first group of Ogam incisions on the left has an obvious stemline. The three strokes through this stemline signify the consonant NG (N). The second group does not appear to have a stemline, but if an inferred stemline is assumed to continue from the previous one, the consonants N - S can be determined. (The fact that the second word does not have a stemline should not prevent it being accepted as Ogam. Ogam inscriptions in the British isles were sometimes written without a stemline, or with an implied stemline. The Casteldearg stone from Ireland, shown in Figure 4B, is testimony to this). The third group has not been incised next to the first two words, but appears above, and to the right of them. This group also has a stemline and contains signs for the consonants S - M. By inserting appropriate vowels, the inscription can be transliterated as *In Neas Saimh*, and translated as **THE NOBLE TWINS**. If this is correct it would seem to imply that the zodiacal constellation of 15
Gemini, dominated by the twin magnitude 1 stars Castor and Pollux, is being referred to, and that the small plus-signs are intended to depict this constellation. Indeed, there is a remarkable similarity between the basic pattern of the constellation depicted on the panel and a modern star chart of the Gemini zodiac. Figure 16 shows a modern star chart of the Gemini constellation, and when this is compared with the diagram in Figure 15B, which shows an astronomical interpretation of the plus-signs on the panel, it can be seen that the arm of stars that radiate outward from Castor, and one of the arms of stars that radiate from Pollux, appear to be distinguishable.

![Figure 16. Print from REDSHIFT.](image)
Viewing location: ~103ºW, ~38º N.
Date: August 8th, 471AD (Gregorian)
Time: 2.30a.m. (local time)
The eastern sky, showing Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus straddling the ecliptic, and their positions with regard to the Gemini Constellation. Compare with Figure 15C.
(The discs of Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus have been enlarged for purposes of clarity).
If we now turn our attention to the large plus-signs shown in Figures 15A and 15B, it can be seen that they do not seem to correspond to any visible stars in the constellation. It was thought, therefore, that the large plus-signs may have been intended to represent planets. It appeared that there were three large plus-signs inscribed on the panel, (two next to the word "twins", and a third in the lower left portion of the panel as shown in Figure 15C. Because the large plus-signs appeared to form a straight line where the ecliptic was in Gemini, it was also suggested that a three-planet conjunction, occurring on the cross-quarter day in August, may have been the phenomenon that was being depicted on the panel. However, there was some concern amongst the investigators regarding the fact that the large plus-sign in the lower left portion of the panel had actually been incorporated into the first word of the inscription. The horizontal arm of the assumed plus-sign has been used, it appears, as the actual stemline, and the vertical arm for one of the incisions of the Ogam strokes for the consonant N. Nevertheless, a computer programme revealed that there was a triple conjunction of Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn in the constellation of Gemini before sunrise at the time of the cross-quarter day on August 8th in 471 A.D., and that it was visible from the Sun Temple location. This is why the larger plus-signs have been marked on Figure 17 as Venus, Saturn, and Jupiter respectively. However, it was eventually decided not to use this date for an astronomical dating of the site because it was too late to comply with results obtained from cation-ratio dating. Computerized searches for earlier possibilities showed that another triple conjunction between Venus, Saturn, and Jupiter had also occurred in 324 B.C.

Using the computer astronomy programme REDSHIFT, I looked for conjunctions that occurred between Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn during the time span of 500 B.C. to 1000 A.D. I set a viewing location of 103ºW and 38ºN, approximations for the Sun Temple, whose exact location is not being disclosed out of respect to the property owner, and set the conjunction search facility in operation. In order to obtain the closest possible match with the engraving on the Noble Twins panel, it was important that any conjunctions that were detected by REDSHIFT should show the planets either in, or close to the constellation of Gemini. The Gemini constellation forms an oblong shape in the heavens with the stars Castor and Pollux at one extremity, and the stars Tejat Posterior and Alhena at the other extremity. The Noble Twins panel seems to show the constellation orientated with Castor and Pollux to the west, and Tejat Posterior and Alhena to the east.

Surprisingly, although the 324 B.C. triple conjunction was detected by REDSHIFT, no triple conjunction was detected for the year 471 A.D. In fact, between 500 B.C. and 1000 A.D. REDSHIFT detected 18 triple conjunctions, but only two of them had occurred in the constellation of Gemini. One was the 324 B.C. triple conjunction, and the other had occurred in 531 A.D.. I also felt that it was important that the position of the planets in question appeared within the boundaries of the Gemini constellation as they had been depicted on the Noble Twins panel. In the 324 B.C. conjunction, which had occurred at 4:14 am, although the orientation of the conjunction was a match for the Noble Twins panel, the three planets themselves had appeared just below the southern boundary of the constellation. In the 531 A.D. conjunction, which had occurred at 8:17 pm, the three planets were within the boundaries of the stars forming the constellation, but the orientation of the constellation was completely different to that shown
on the panel. Castor and Pollux formed a northern tip of the conjunction, and Tejat Posterior and Alhena, which were also below the horizon, formed a southern tip. Therefore, neither of these two triple conjunctions appeared to fit the pattern shown on the panel for one reason or another.

Using the same coordinates, I then set the conjunction search facility to look for double conjunctions between Jupiter and Saturn that had occurred within the same time span. A total of ninety nine were detected, but only in six of them were the two planets in, or close to the constellation of Gemini. Furthermore, one of those six conjunctions had occurred in 471 A.D.!

Of the six Jupiter/Saturn conjunctions that had occurred in Gemini between 500 B.C. and 1000 A.D., one in 264 B.C. had occurred during the night, but the orientation of the constellation was different to that shown on the Noble Twins panel. Jupiter and Saturn were also both outside of the boundaries of the constellation. Another, in 324 B.C. had occurred below the horizon and would, therefore, not have been visible. Three more, in 384 B.C., 531 A.D., and 590 A.D. had occurred during the daylight hours and would, therefore, also not have been visible. This left only one more, which was the 471 A.D. conjunction.

However, REDSHIFT showed that even the 471 A.D. conjunction did not fully meet the requirements that were needed to obtain an exact fit with the depiction on the Noble Twins panel. Most importantly, the conjunction had occurred, not of August 8th, but on June 19th. Furthermore, it had occurred just after midday at 1:45 pm and would not, of course, have been visible. Added to that, the orientation of the constellation was, once more, different to that shown on the Noble twins panel, and Jupiter and Saturn were just outside of the boundaries of the constellation pattern. I decided to turn the clock back a little in order to obtain a view of how the two planets and the constellation would have appeared at 4:25 am, just before sunrise on June 19th. The orientation of the constellation is a fair match for that depicted on the Noble Twins panel, but Jupiter and Saturn are still just beyond the constellation boundaries itself.

By turning the clock forward on a five-daily basis, however, the whole pattern gradually began to change, and at the beginning of July, first Jupiter, then Saturn began to move into the boundaries of the Gemini constellation. By July 5th, both planets were within the constellation boundaries, but even at 2:30 am during the night hours the constellation was still very close to the horizon, which could have made clear visibility difficult. But, towards the end of July and into the beginning of August, the Gemini constellation began to move higher in the night sky, and by August 8th it was well above the horizon where it would have been clearly visible in the night sky. Also, around the 20th of July, Venus would have been moving into Gemini's northeastern sector. During the remainder of July, Venus gradually passed to the east of Jupiter and Saturn, and by the early days of August, and certainly by August 8th, it would have been seen to the south of the Gemini constellation where it appeared to line up approximately with Jupiter and Saturn on the path of the ecliptic. In fact, during the hours after midnight, very much the same pattern would have been seen throughout August. By the end of August, Jupiter began to move out of the constellation parameters. Generally, therefore, the month of August appears to be crucial. August 8th itself is not too important because, through the centuries, the festival of Lugnasda has been celebrated on a number of dates in August.
The positions of the planets in REDSHIFT are based upon DE102 calculations, and over an extended period from 4712 B.C. to 10,000 A.D. they are considered to be better than ten arc-seconds for the inner planets, and thirty arc-seconds for the outer planets. I checked, once more, all of the other conjunctions mentioned above in order to determine whether moving slightly forwards or backwards in time would produce a pattern similar to that shown on the Noble Twins panel, but no such possibilities emerged. Neither were any meaningful results were obtained by searching for conjunctions between other planets such as, for instance, Venus and Mars, or Jupiter and Mars, etc. Although, technically speaking, the event that occurred during August in 471 A.D. event was not a conjunction, it was the only one of its kind in 1500 years that matches the Noble Twins panel. To ancient people who, in any case, probably would not have understood the actual technicalities of a true conjunction, it may well have seemed as if the three planets appeared to be passing through the gates of heaven on their return to earth. As such, it is a strong candidate for a date that would indicate when the people who inscribed the panel were actually in the area.

However, even though 471 A.D. also falls within the accepted dates for when Ogam was in use, it is totally contradicted by other dating methods that were conducted at the Sun Temple and other sites that are related to it. Attempts to date the rock inscriptions at various sites were made using three basic techniques. The first technique that was employed compared the relative degree of repatination of the inscriptions to those of nearby panels containing petroglyph styles having a known age. A second technique compared the inscriptions to others that contained written dates and signatures that had been inscribed by early 19th century settlers in the region. Finally, the experimental technique known as "Cation ratio dating" was also used. By all three methods the sites were determined to be clearly pre-Columbian by a wide margin. The Cation ratio method in the case of the Sun Temple produced dates that, although it was thought may have been possible, were considered to be unlikely. For instance, tests conducted from samples at the Noble Twins panel produced an age of 3000 (±250) years B.P. Evidence from other similar sites seemed to point to somewhere around 2000 years B.P.10

It is, of course, possible that the Noble Twins panel does not relate to an actual astronomical event that occurred, but to something that related more to a mythological event. We must also remember that we cannot be totally certain that the various motifs on the Noble Twins panel were really intended to represent Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus. However, the design of the star pattern, combined with the Ogam inscription itself, seems to imply some connection with the Gemini constellation. As such, this particular constellation was obviously important to whoever inscribed the Noble Twins panel. The question that subsequently arises is why Gemini, (the twins), was so significance. An answer to that question may lie in the religion of Mithraism.
THE RELIGION OF MITHRAS

By introducing Mithraism, we are, it must be said, introducing another incongruous factor into an equation that is already unacceptable to mainstream doctrine. Not only that, but to also suddenly introduce a reference to the religion of Mithras may, at first sight, appear to be totally irrelevant to everything that has been said previously in this essay. However, it must be understood that the Sun Temple is not the only site in America where apparent Ogam inscriptions have been found. There are many, but two other sites in particular seem to be inexorably linked, not only by the existence of Ogam inscriptions, but also by mythology and technique of execution, to the Sun Temple. One site, known as Crack Cave, is also situated in southeast Colorado, and the other site, known as the Anubis Caves, is located in the Oklahoma Panhandle. The Anubis caves, in particular, are imbued with, what would appear to be, Mithric symbolism.

The religion of Mithras has its roots in the cult of Mithra, the ancient Persian god of light and wisdom, who appears as the “beneficent one” and ruler of the world. He was supposed to have slain the divine bull, from whose dying body sprang all plants and animals beneficial to humanity. After the conquest of Assyria in the 7th century BC and of Babylonia in the 6th century B.C., Mithra became the god of the sun, which was worshipped in his name. The Greeks of Asia Minor, by identifying Mithra with Helios, the Greek god of the sun, helped to spread the cult. It was brought to Rome about 68 BC by Cilician pirates whom the Roman general Pompey the Great had captured, and during the early empire it spread rapidly throughout Italy and the Roman provinces where it became a rival to Christianity. During the early years of the 4th century A.D., Mithraism was eventually suppressed under the Roman Emperor Constantine, but it continued to be popular in the provinces where it was often practised in secret. As D. Jason Cooper has said in describing Mithras, 'For almost 500 years his religion vied with Christianity for dominance of Rome and through the whole of Western Civilization. In ancient times he found followers in the Indian, Persian, and Roman Empires, and as far north as the Russian steppes.... Mithras has been worshipped in more religious traditions than perhaps any other deity in history. Aryan tribal pagans, Hindus, Iranian pagans, Zarathustrians, the Mitanni people of the Middle East, and even the Manicheans have all worshipped him.'

The sun-god was known to the soldiers of the Roman Empire as "Mithras Sol Invictus". The principal god of the Babylonians was "Bel" who, in the Old Testament was referred to as the god Marduk, god of the Sun and battle. Celtic connections to Bel also exist. Fergusen states that the Celtic god Bel(enus) was a sun-god, and was not only equated with the Celtic god Grannus, but that the Celtic divinities were also associated with the name of Mithras, where they became well established in some of the old centres of Gallic origin. Cecil Pascal also points out that there are inscriptions from southern Gaul to the Celtic god Belenus, whilst Robert Graves equates Belenus as a god of the early Irish. The Celtic god "Lug" was also synonymous with the sun-god. Therefore, not only can Mithras, Bel, and Lug be seen as being inter-connected, but it can also be firmly established that strong elements of the Mithric religion had taken root amongst the Celts from very early times. It must also be made clear that, apart from there being places of worship in Rome dedicated to Mithras, there were also Danubian places of worship dedicated to Mithras.
Astronomical imagery and symbolism pervaded the cult of Mithras. The iconography, rituals, and degrees of initiation of the religion are far too complex to discuss in this essay, but certain aspects are worth relating as they are relevant to the Noble Twins panel of the Sun Temple.

Firstly, Mithraists would have found the celestial important because it would have been significant to them in religious terms. Secondly, the "twins" (Dioscuri) were also extremely important to Mithraism. In traditional Greek mythology, the Dioscuri were the twin heroes Castor and Plooux who were the sons of Zeus. It is they who gave their name to the constellation Gemini (the twins). Some criticism has been leveled at the association of the word "noble", as it apparently appears on the Noble Twins panel, with the constellation Gemini. The reason given for the criticism is that Castor and Pollux were not of the nobility, and the inference of the criticism being that the words "Noble Twins" do not, therefore, refer to the constellation Gemini, and that the whole concept of a link to Mithras is therefore inadmissible. However, in Homeric legend, Castor and Pollux are described as being the sons of Tyndareus, a king of Sparta. They were actually worshipped in Sparta as guardians of the state, and the fact that they were the sons of a king would have made them "noble". For this reason, we can be fairly certain that the inscription on the Noble Twins panel is referring to Castor and Pollux, and, by association, the constellation of Gemini. In other words, the person who made the inscription was aware of the noble connection.

In the Mithrasian religion, the Dioscuri are also equated with the torchbearers Cautes and Cautopates who were minor figures in Greek mythology. In Mithric lore they represent morning and evening, spring and autumn, and the spring equinox and autumnal equinox. Cautes and Cautopates also witnessed the birth of Mithras on December 25th, and Mithras is often shown with one of these torchbearers on either side of him as seen in Figure 17, which is a drawing of a relief from the Esquiline in Rome. It depicts Mithras slaying the bull, an important event in his life, flanked on either side by Cautes and Cautopates. The seven star signs around the head of Mithras represent the seven degrees of the religion, but there is a notable similarity of the design of the star pattern to that shown on the Noble Twins panel.

![Figure 17. Drawing of a relief from the Esquiline in Rome. It depicts Mithras slaying the bull, flanked on either side by the twins Cautes and Cautopates.](image)

Above the head of Mithras can be seen the arch of a cave. Not only did Mithrasians worship in underground temples known as a "Mithraeum", but they also thought of the universe with stars
studding the walls. It may be more than mere coincidence that the inscriptions and the Noble Twins panel are located in a cave at the Sun Temple.

Indeed, the whole concept of "twins" is, in many ways, fundamental to the Mithric religion. When explaining his sources for information on the Indian god Mitra, Dr. Jason Cooper refers to the Rg Veda, written about 1500 BCE. He explains that Mitra was an important deity of India, and goes on to say that ‘In Vedic references, Mitra is normally mentioned with a partner, Varuna. In fact there are only a dozen references to either god, but over a hundred of the two together. I believe that, like the Nasati, Mitra and Varuna may have originally been twins. This would explain why the two gods are so similar, why they are mentioned together, and why they are linked to paired principles. Mitra is identified with fire, earth, the colour red, morning and day, and the right-hand side; Varuna with water, heaven, evening and night, and the left-hand side.... The sort of duality Mitra-Varuna displays is an important part of Vedic thought. Between them, the two gods encompass the universe and rule it in the same way they rule the affairs of men. That is, as they bring order to the world of men, so they bring order to the functions of the universe.’

Although it would seem certain that the Noble Twins panel is alluding to the Gemini (twins) constellation, it occurred to me that there might be a deeper, possibly hidden meaning also being inferred on the panel. Mithric symbolism is often highly cryptic in nature, and often delineated in such a manner on purpose so that it would be difficult for the uninitiated to understand the inherent implications. Is this also the case with the Noble Twins panel? The fact that REDSHIFT detected a double conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn in 471 A.D., and not a triple conjunction, suggested to me that perhaps the event in the heavens that was seen during that year somehow also reinforced the aspect of "twins", or even more so, "duality", and maybe even an acting out of some myth involving Jupiter and Saturn. Astronomically and mythologically, Jupiter and Saturn are not regarded as twins, but in Mithric lore there was a certain amount of interaction between them. According to Cooper, ‘Many Mithraea show paintings of Saturn handing the thunderbolt over to Jupiter, indicating a transfer of cosmic rulership to the latter god.’

There are gaps in our knowledge of the religion of Mithras, and, as D Jason Cooper states, ‘scholars have been unable to arrive at anything approaching a consistent interpretation of Mithrasian symbology.’ For this reason, a total, satisfactory understanding of the Noble Twins panel and its link to the Gemini constellation and the astronomical event in 471 A.D. is not possible with out present state of knowledge.
CONCLUSION

Too many questions remain unanswered for any firm conclusions to be drawn.

Did the Ogam alphabet originate, not in Ireland during the 3rd century A.D., but sometime before then? We do not know for certain, but some evidence would seem to suggest that it did. Was there ever an unvowelled form of the Ogam script? Again, we cannot answer in the affirmative, but certain evidence appears to suggest, at least, that this was the case. It is known that the Celtic people used the Ogam alphabet, but did they ever bring an unvowelled form of it to the New World before the time of Columbus? Professional archaeologists and epigraphers remain adamant that no Celtic people ever reached the New World before Columbus. Yet, when the inscriptions of the Sun Temple are transliterated and translated using Old Irish sources and common Celtic roots in an attempt to reconstruct a more ancient language that was probably spoken by the Celts, the inscriptions make linguistic sense. The astronomical alignments, of which the inscriptions speak, have been subsequently observed, and appear to occur. If, then, Celtic people did bring an unvowelled version of Ogam to the New World, were they also practising a form of the Mithric religion in the tower rocks of Colorado? Again, we cannot say for sure, but associated petroglyphs, especially in the Anubis caves of the Oklahoma Panhandle, seem to portray Mithric symbolism. If the inscriptions are not Ogam, and were not the work of Celtic people, then who did execute them, and who carved their related petroglyphs? We do not know, except to say that the indigenous Indians of North America did not celebrate festivals connected with quarter days and cross-quarter days, etc.. When were the inscriptions carved upon the rocks? Once more, we cannot answer this with any degree of accuracy because the various pieces of evidence conflict.

What really happened? What is the truth of the whole matter? We may probably never know the answers to these questions.
REFERENCES (shown as red superscripts within text)


5. The Royal Irish Acedemy Dictionary (*Dictionary of the Irish language*, 1983) defines "foil" as RING (p.320), and "fail" as an alternative spelling (p.292). Dineen's dictionary also defines "fail" as ring.

6. The Royal Irish Acedemy Dictionary (*Dictionary of the Irish language*, 1983) gives this word as being spelt either as "tobagh" or "tobach".


8. The Royal Irish Acedemy Dictionary (*Dictionary of the Irish language*, 1983) spells the word for the cross-quarter-day as "Lugnasad", but also includes the same word spelt as "Lughnasad".


16. Ibid. p.4.