

BOOK REVIEW

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Native American Mounds and Earthworks by Gregory L. Little, illustrated by Dee Turman. Memphis, TN: Eagle Wing Books, 2008. 342 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 978-0940829466.

Although the U.S. public is generally aware of the erections of central and eastern North America's pre-Columbian Mound-Builders, it does not widely appreciate how astonishingly numerous, extensive, and sophisticated (including lunar alignments) these earthworks were and how puzzling certain aspects of their histories and uses remain. Louisiana psychologist and investigator of the supernatural and the paranormal Gregory Little has written a very useful book of inventories, state by state, of hundreds (out of the original hundreds of thousands) of mounds and earthworks, many of which are illustrated with pictures from old U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology and other archaeological publications, supplemented by new visual reconstructions executed by illustrator/graphic designer Dee Turman. There are also a fair number of images of associated artifacts.

In the inventory, each mound/earthwork or complex covered is categorized by type (e.g., burial mound, effigy mound) and archaeological culture (e.g., Hopewell, Adena, Mississippian), and its exact location given (when rules and ethics permit), followed by a brief-to-lengthy description and discussion. The discussions are generally quite straightforward, but one encounters the occasional provocative observation—e.g., regarding Newark, Ohio's, Great Circle Earthworks: "Its size and basic layout is identical to England's [megalithic] Avebury site (except without the standing stones present at Avebury)" (p. 192). But part-Seneca Little does not think that these works derive from Old World models; in his brief Introduction, he emphasizes that "All we can say with certainty is that the ancestors of the present Native Americans [Indians] built the mounds" (p. 2). This is in contradistinction to the nineteenth-century notion that the mounds reflected arrivals from overseas on the part of Israelites and perhaps others.

The author outlines the success of Ohio State University economist J. Huston McCulloch in confirming the one-time existence of the now-destroyed "*Hannukiah*" (sic) earthworks near Milford, Ohio, whose plan was long thought to resemble the outline of a Hebrew lamp and menorah (p. 189). According to Little, two British archaeologists

Turn[ed] the map [of the "menorah"] upside down and the earthworks instantly became recognizable as a bird effigy. The bird's head is depicted, as well as a forked tail, and the wing feathers are flowing to the rear of the bird. (p. 190)



One can see how this interpretation is possible, although it is not as obvious to me as it was to the archaeologists. Little does not mention McCulloch's work in attempting to interpret the intriguing Newark Holy Stones—several carved objects carrying Jewish symbolism and Hebrew writing, including a condensed Decalogue, said to have been unearthed in 1860 in a burial mound ten miles to the south of Newark, Ohio, and in a “well” next to Newark's Octagon earthwork—which mainline professionals perceive as fakes, but which McCulloch thinks genuine (<http://www.econ.ohio-state.edu/jhm/arch/decalog.html>).

Other inscribed tablets with Semitic texts have been reported from American mounds, the best candidate for demonstrable genuineness being that from East Tennessee's Bat Creek Mound—which Little does not include here. He does characterize such a tablet from West Virginia's Grave Creek Mound: “archaeologists universally accept the stone as a fake planted in the mound to gain attention for the commercial museum venture, which failed” (p. 261).

Until recently, with an age of about 3200 bc, Louisiana's Watson Break Mounds were considered to be the continent's oldest (p. 110); but Little points out that recent work in Lower Jackson Mound at the state's more-renowned Poverty Point site indicates a date there of about 3800 bc (p. 107)! This is well before the building of Egypt's pyramids.

It is worth noting that Louisiana State University-associated psychopharmacology/drug-rehab specialist Little, who holds an Ed.D. in counseling, is also the author/co-author of books in support of the ideas of the purported psychic and healer Edgar Cayce (1877–1945) and Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment (*Secrets of the Ancient World: Exploring the Insights of America's Most Well-Documented Psychic, Edgar Cayce*), on Atlantis (including the Bimini Road and other sites in the Bahamas), and Mu (*Edgar Cayce's Atlantis; Mound Builders: Edgar Cayce's Forgotten Record of Ancient America; The A.R.E.'s Search for Atlantis: The Ongoing Search for Edgar Cayce's Atlantis in the Bahamas*), and on UFO-abduction experiences (*Grand Illusions: The Spectral Reality Underlying Sexual UFO Abductions, Crashed Saucers, Afterlife Experiences, Sacred Ancient Ritual Sites, & Other Enigmas; People of the Web: What Indian Mounds, Ancient Rituals, and Stone Circles Tell Us about Modern UFO Abductions, Apparitions, and the Near Death Experience*); no such material is included in the scholarly book here reviewed.

STEPHEN C. JETT

Professor Emeritus of Geography and of Textiles and Clothing, University of California Davis
Editor, *Pre-Columbiana: A Journal of Long-Distance Contacts*, scjett@hotmail.com

Note: This review also appears in *Pre-Columbiana: A Journal of Long-Distance Contacts*.