

The Great Serpent Mound and the August 2003 Crop Circle: A Re-Examination

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Figure 1 Great Serpent Mound (Image: Nashua School District)

Introduction

Native Americans and anthropologists alike call it the “Great Serpent Mound,” an earthen berm coiled at the tail that extends sinuously out toward an egg, which the “serpent” takes in its mouth. Of course, the mound must be a serpent because paleo-Indians, presumably, had no knowledge of sperm and ovum, which the figure also resembles. The mound could not possibly represent a sperm and ovum at the moment of conception . . . or could it?

On 24 August 2003, a crop circle appeared in a nearby field of soybeans. A number of interpretations have been given and this analysis neither endorses nor rejects any; it focuses, instead, on the geometry of the crop circle – sacred geometry – that links it to the nearby mound.



Figure 2 Image Copyright 2003, Chris Steele

Vesica Pisces

One cannot look upon the crop circle without being struck by the “cats-eye” – vesica pisces – that some characterize as a pointer; though what it points to is disputed: the circle-in-circle that lies just beyond or the “Indian” mound three thousand feet away, or both?

But that’s just a first glance for on closer inspection, the cats-eye, itself, lies within a cats-eye; that is to say, one observes a vesica pisces within vesica pisces. Does this mean something? What?

If one accepts vesica pisces as representing the “eternal feminine,” then is it significant that one vesica pisces is inscribed within another? In mathematics, the product of two positive integers is positive; and the product of two negative integers is likewise positive. But this is geometry, not mathematics; is there any conceivable correlation? What? How does one multiply (divide, add or subtract) one geometrical figure by another?



Figure 3 Image copyright 2003, Jeffrey Wilson and Roger Sugden

Now, let's return to the pointer. If the inner vesica pisces is indeed a pointer, then its axis points in two directions (owing to bilateral symmetry): to the outer circle-in-circle (time-honored symbol for Sol, our sun); and not so obviously, to the small disk opposite the sun symbol. The small disk is matched by two others (at either corner of the eye) that, together with the sun symbol, mark the four cardinal directions, with the sun symbol marking due west. Viewed in this way, the inner vesica pisces, like the spinner on a compass, orients us to "ground truth."

A line extended from the eastern disk to the sun symbol crosses the inner vesica pisces on its axis, which if extended, intersects the serpent mound. It would seem the crop circle does, indeed, point west, through the sun to the mound.

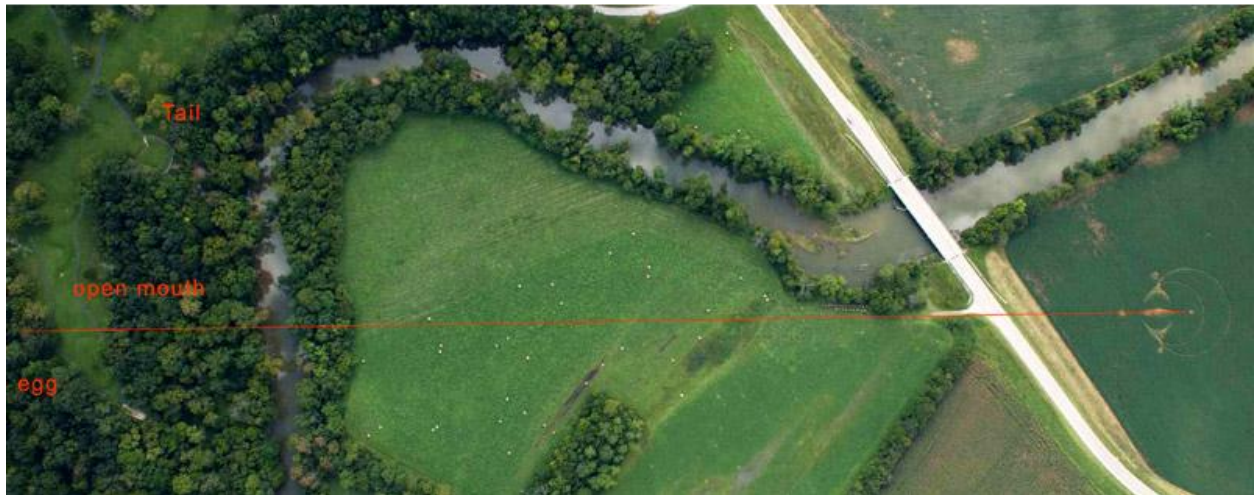


Figure 4 Image Copyright 2003, Chris Steele

What to make of it? Three disks and three circles-in-circles, two defining vesica pisces, the smaller of which points to the ancient mound via Sol?

Coincidental alignment? The case for reconsideration

Let's begin by asking whether the crop circle could appear in proximity to the ancient effigy and yet have nothing to do with it? "No, inconceivable," for in addition to the proximity of the two, there are no other symbolic objects vying for our attention; therefore, one would have to deliberately ignore not just the proximity of the two artifacts, but their obvious commonality: both were created, evidently, for symbolic purposes by sentient, intelligent beings who intended that they be observed by other sentient, intelligent beings. More precisely, each is symbolic/purpose-built – one enduring, the other transient – for no apparent reason other than to be observed and contemplated.

And so, there is ample reason to believe that the transient crop circle (yin) redirects our attention to the enduring mound (yang), as if suggesting the mound, which has for centuries drawn the attention of natives and settlers alike, deserves reconsideration; that while the morphology of the mound is indisputably serpentine, the creature it depicts is not indisputably a serpent; other interpretations, perhaps equally valid, are possible.

In this sense, the circle-makers seem to draw our attention to changing perceptions over time; to consider that things one day perceived to be X may, at another time be perceived as Y or even XY, though nothing has changed; except, our perception. Consider that our solar system never changed from Ptolemaic to heliocentric, only our perception of it. Does this not capture in an ideaistic, vice representational, way the notion of yin and yang . . . or stereo isomers . . . each a reflection of its opposite, alike and yet different . . . two opposing things in one thing? Might this crop circle symbolize things that are apparently opposed, but actually complementary, like yin and yang, male and female; perhaps the human chromosome itself, X and Y, locked in a laddered, helical embrace?!

The mound could easily represent sperm and ovum at the moment of conception; except, that paleo-Indians presumably knew nothing about the biology of reproduction at a microscopic level.

Well, it's an interesting conjecture, but conjecture just the same; certainly we can take it no farther. Or can we?

Serpent and egg or sperm and ovum?



Figure 5 Image Copyright 1999, Steve Alexander

Four years earlier, on 5 August 1999 another crop circle appeared in a wheat field near Barbury Castle, England, in Wiltshire County. It was evocative of the Serpent Mound; except, the serpent head was sperm-like (small and slender in proportion to the body) and the egg, like an ovum opening its outer membrane at the moment of conception. Was this a clue to re-examine the Great Serpent Mound; to consider it afresh? And if we missed this clue (our first) was the 2003 crop circle in Ohio our second?



Figure 6 Image: Fantom-XP

Recall the vesica pisces of the Ohio crop circle. Though frequently called a “cats-eye,” the irises of several other species take the same shape, including some serpents. And what does the serpent represent but ancient wisdom? Is it possible that the 2003 crop

circle in Ohio represents Sophia, the “oh, so feminine” serpent of wisdom and her eye leads us through the sun – radiant light to illumine the mind’s-eye – to the mound; thus, redirecting not just eyes but thoughts, as well, causing us to reconsider things about which we are certain?!

It works on multiple levels, doesn’t it? Yin and yang expressed over and over again, not in familiar symbology, but ideaistically; a serpent’s eye that calls attention to a serpentine form, causing us question whether we have not been misled by biological eyes that see a thing and mistake it for something it is not; seeing the form only, not what it represents – life-giving conception – an idea perceptible only in the mind’s eye!

Well, this is even more intriguing, but more conjectural too. Besides, paleo-Indians, presumably, built the mound? Or did they?! Are there other clues?

The Grave Creek Mound and its controversial stone



Figure 7 Grave Creek Mound (Image: West Virginia Division of Culture and History)

Today, at Moundsville, West Virginia, on the banks of the Ohio River, there is a large earthen mound, a presumed paleo-Indian artifact, called the Grave Creek Mound. The archaeological community considers it and similar earthen artifacts, such as the Great Serpent Mound, to have been erected by a mound-building Indian or paleo-Indian culture that inhabited much of the Central United States, including the Ohio River Valley.

In 1838, a small engraved stone was excavated from the Grave Creek Mound and drew immediate interest and controversy. The Grave Creek Stone bore etched markings that were evocative of letters or symbols. The stone cannot be examined today, because its current location is unknown; however, a photograph is preserved by the Smithsonian Institute (see below), and plaster and wax castings were also made.



Figure 8 The Grave Creek Stone

Smithsonian photograph 90-9022
(MS 3146, E.H. Davis Collection, National Anthropological Archives)

Multiple researchers have, over the years, attempted to decrypt the markings, not without controversy, including allegations of hoax; that the Grave Creek Stone was deliberately planted for excavators to “discover.” That said, many believe the stone to be genuine; the fact that it was excavated from the mound is not in dispute.

Assuming it’s genuine, what does it say, if anything? Multiple decryptions have been offered, all controversial, including one by Dr. Barry Fell, the great, controversial, Harvard professor and epigrapher. Fell identified the writing as ancient Ibero-Punic, a language shared by ancient Phoenicians and Carthaginians. The latter are believed to have emigrated across the Mediterranean, establishing settlements in Malta, Sicily, North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula and what is today Brittany, making them possible ancestors of modern-day Celts.



Figure 9 Round Barrow (Image Copyright 2009, Steve Alexander)

In each location, they left cultural artifacts, including standing stones, dolmen, and stone chambers. Furthermore, the existence of standing stones, dolmen and stone chambers, as well as earthen structures, such as barrow mounds, is well documented in England and throughout the British isles, giving reason to suspect that ancestors of modern Celts crossed from what is today Brittany into southern England and beyond.

Fell’s identification of possible Ibero-Punic writing on the Grave Creek Stone gives reason to suspect that Ibero-Punic peoples or Celts journeyed as far as the Ohio River Valley when it was roamed by paleo-Indians; and perhaps intermingling occurred.

Prehistoric intermingling; the great controversy

For those not already familiar with the controversy, it should now be obvious; the recovery of an Ibero-Punic artifact from a paleo-Indian mound in Ohio implies the mound-builders were possibly of European origin or, at least, interacted with people from the European Continent.

In other words, even if not themselves Europeans, the mound-builders acquired cultural artifacts produced by peoples of European extraction with whom they mingled. One such artifact, arguably, was produced contemporaneously with the Grave Creek Mound and entombed within it as a memorial. Fells translation of the Grave Creek Stone follows:

The mound raised-on-high for Tasach
This tile
(His) queen caused-to-be-made.

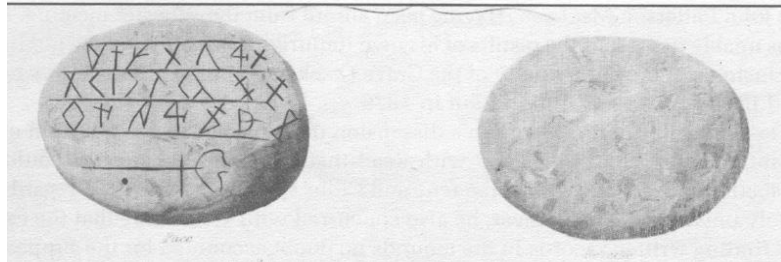


Figure 10 Photocopy of Seth Eastman drawing of Grave Creek Stone

Henry R. Schoolcraft *Indian Tribes of the United States*, 1850,
by way of Barnhart (1986)

There are two acid tests for any theory: *replicability* and *predictability*. If the Grave Creek Mound, and perhaps other mounds of the Ohio River Valley, were erected by Europeans or people who shared the land with Europeans, intermingling with them (perhaps interbreeding), and sharing cultural artifacts and spiritual beliefs, as well, then more such artifacts should be found in or nearby the ancient mounds.

Is this the puzzle the circle-maker(s) would have us solve?

Conclusion

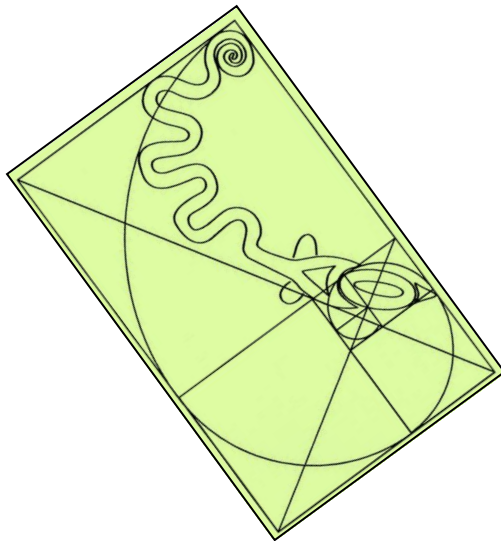
That the appearance of a crop circle in a field adjacent to the Great Serpent Mound might be a coincidence strains credulity beyond the limit; the circle-maker(s) almost certainly wished to draw our attention to the Great Serpent Mound, causing us to question and reconsider all that we *think* we know about it.

If, furthermore, this is the puzzle the circle-maker(s) wish to draw our attention to, then there is reason to suspect that one or more Ibero-Punic artifacts may lie hidden within the Great Serpent Mound; perhaps, within the egg.

And this brings us suddenly full-circle back; for if the Great Serpentine Mound is really about conception and the mystery of life, as it appears to be, then the egg is very special – possibly, the Orphic Egg. And in that case, might the sperm, in a final serpentine twist, be a serpent after all? Is it Sophia, the serpent of divine wisdom, devouring what was not intended for our human eyes?!



**Crop circle construction by Tree Pruitt
Courtesy of Crop Circle Connector**



**The Great Serpent Mound: Golden Section Illustration
Ross Hamilton, Mystery of the Serpent Mound**