

# Historical Context of Burrows Cave

by Dr. Joseph Buford Mahan, Jr.

President Emeritus - ISAC - Spring 1995

MIDWESTERN EPIGRAPHIC JOURNAL, Vol 9, Number 1, 1995

---

*Note to Web Browser:*

*If you've made it this far through our Web Page, you are no longer a novice. You should by now realize what we have done and what we are claiming to be true and factual. This is the controversial lecture given by Professor Mahan in spring of 1995. The story is carefully detailed in my books: Tomb Chronicles Part I and II. I had been supplying Dr. Joe with data relating to our discovery to use for his speech to be made in our absence, however, Joe talked us into being present at the last moment. The editors notes are that of Dr. John White III, as this issue of the article is taken from his MES Journal. The only sham that happened here, is that Joe gave us no credit for any of the data I sent him. Most of the speech is my work verbatim, but he didn't list either of us in his bibliography. Not that we so much as cared, but others came after Joe and claimed him responsible for the discovery which simply is not true. We brought Selene, Juba, Helios and the others to the forefront and can spread the credit to no one else in the world. Mahan, nor anyone, would never have had a clue if it weren't for us. Let's face it, no American Scholar or writer would have any comments whatsoever of the significance of these personages and our "New World History" without first being privy to our data, especially a Diffusionist Historian like Joe. Most of what is REAL with this speech is my data, but Mahan did add in his own material; much of which came from books written by certain ladies fantacized most of what they wrote, because there was no classical history to back up any of their ideas, (see first three bibliography entries). We had no problem with Mahan, because of what we told him, he stuck to the main line closely and got it right. It was more important for us to leave a trail of true history, as opposed to having our data twisted. This lecture was reprinted in several journals and newsletters. You can read more about Dr. Joe in the Personal Bios section.*

---

*Editor's note: Dr. Joe Mahan, Founder of ISAC, was a tireless worker for all that he believed in. This paper is probably the result of his last scholarly efforts. Joe presented it at the Determining the Truth, II, A Symposium held at the Columbus Museum, Columbus, GA on April 21-22, 1995. He had hinted that a treatise was forthcoming called "The presumption of Fraud", referring, of course, to the mistaken notion of the opposition that the expression of concerns about the validity of certain aspect of the alleged Burrows Cave was tantamount to proof that everything about the topic is fraudulent. Fortunately we have the wisdom of scientific and legal experience to guide us toward a concept of True History. Would you really be happy to observe that Burrows Cave research was abandoned and forgotten on the basis of a few off-the-wall opinions? Is History by authority or Belief worth anything to future generation? I think it is fair to say that most of the Burrows Cave supporters are gratified that the opposition has been unable to produce scholarly papers on problems with the interpretation of the site and its artifacts.*

This article presents updated information relating to a power struggle which was played out in the countries around the Mediterranean Sea in the half centuries before and after the birth of Christ and how this century-long conflict effected peoples in North America as well. The motivating focus of the conflict was the insanely determined effort by ambitious men in Rome to expand their control, which had already been established in the former territory of Carthage in 146 BC, until it encircled the Mediterranean, converting it into Mare Nostrum (Our Sea).

In the spring of 30 BC, Octavian, (63 BC -14 AD), the grand-nephew and heir to Julius Caesar (100-44 BC), moved his army into Egypt where they soon occupied the city of Alexandria and surrounded the royal palace in which Cleopatra VII (69-30 BC) and Marc Antony (83-30 BC) had taken refuge. The both committed suicide when they realized the hopelessness of their situation. The queen's son by Julius Caesar, now a youth of 15, attempted to escape to Ethiopia with a small army contingent. However, offered a truce by Octavian, he returned to Alexandria and was promptly assassinated. The three children of the Egyptian queen and Antony were taken to Rome as prisoners. These were the ten-year-old twins, Cleopatra Selene and Alexander Helios, and Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was six.

As conquered royalty, the three children were forced to march behind the chariot bearing Octavian through the streets of Rome in his triumphant return from the conquest of Egypt.

Nonetheless, because they were royal and might one day be of use to the emperor, the children were reared under his supervision by his sister Octavia, who was the former wife of Marc Antony. She had three children of her own by Antony, so the new charges were, in fact, her step-children.<sup>1</sup>

Juba, the king of Numidia, had sent his army to the support of Pompey against Julius Caesar in the Civil War. The king was forced to commit suicide when his ally was defeated at the Battle of Thapsus in 46 BC. His five year old son was taken to Rome as a captive and forced to march in Caesar's triumphant procession. He grew up in the household of the Caesars where he later gained the favor of Caesar Augustus who restored him to his father's North African throne as Juba II of Numidia in 25 BC.

This Juba married Cleopatra Selene and the emperor made them joint monarchs of Mauretania (Morocco). King Baccus II of that Berber country had died in 33 BC and willed his kingdom to Rome. Not willing to accept the responsibility for so large and potentially troublesome a region, Augustus found a solution to the problem in making Juba, who was one of their own, king of the Mauri and Garamantes. Adding the prestige of a descendant of the Ptolemies in making Cleopatra Selene their joint ruler, the Roman emperor gained further assurance of success for the venture.

The two young monarchs reigned together for more than 30 years until the queen's death about 9 AD, Juba continued as king until his death in 24 AD. Although theirs was a "client" kingdom of Rome, the two sovereigns maintained a high degree of independence and enjoyed a prosperous and generally peaceful reign. They build a mighty city on the site of the old Carthaginian Iol, which they named Caesarea, and from there conducted extensive trade throughout the Mediterranean, down the west coast of Africa to the Canary Islands, and along the Atlantic Shore of the Iberian peninsula.<sup>2,3</sup>

Norman Totten has suggested<sup>4</sup> that Juba's ships reached South America as well. His evidence comes from the fine pottery portrait vessels from the Tiwanaku-Moche period of Ecuador and Peru. Notable is the effigy of a human head with distinctive features which is wearing a broad headband on which is inscribed degenerate Greek letters reading Jub Bosileus, i.e., King Juba. The name is repeated in the inscription. It is his opinion as well that ships of Juba's son, Ptolemy of Mauretania, may have brought some of his people to the southern Andes at the time their king was summoned to Rome and assassinated by the emperor Caligula (12-41 AD) and that they may have been partially responsible for the flowering of high culture there in the first centuries of the Christian era. He wrote that:

Well educated in things Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Carthaginian, Iberian, and Berber, privileged court refugees were neither nomadic tribesmen nor hillpeople engaged in petty clan warfare. This cultured elite inherited all the Mediterranean civilizations of their era.<sup>4</sup>

Cleopatra Selene became the active ruler of the kingdom, while Juba devoted his time to travel and writing. He wrote many volumes of history, geography, and natural science. Although none of these has survived in their original form, they were extensively used as sources of information form other writers, including Plutarch, Tacitus, and Pliny the Elder. Through them, Juba's works have survived in parts.

Alexander Helios and Ptolemy Philadelphus remained in Rome during the first few years their sister reigned as Queen of Mauretania. They were de facto hostages of the Emperor to assure the cooperation of their sister and her husband. This arrangement lasted until 17 BC when the brothers disappeared. That year the Judean King Herod made a state visit to Rome. Cleopatra Selene wrote friends that her brothers had disappeared and implied that she thought this might have been at the behest of the Jewish king who was well known as an enemy of her parents and who feared the possibility of the return of a Ptolemy to the throne in Egypt. Modern historians have generally believed that this is probably what happened as Herod was undoubtedly capable of just such an act.

At the same time the Emperor was once again attempting to eliminate the worship of Isis in the city by destroying the shrines dedicated to this Egyptian mother goddess. As had been the case on previous occasions, he only succeeded in driving the cult activities underground. The same was true of Augustus' effort to control those who worshipped Osiris.<sup>5</sup>

Another problem which continued to trouble Augustus and his immediate successors was the continual uprisings of native peoples along the outer reaches of their steadily expanding empire. Most troublesome of these were the German tribes beyond the Rhine River, the Garamantes in North Africa, and the native Iberians who still controlled a large area in southwestern Spain.

According to the historian Tacitus, it was only in the reign of Gaius, known to history as the mad emperor Caligula, that the conquest of the Spanish region was completed. This fact is important to our story because the valley of the River Baetes and the port of Gades would have been in friendly hands at the time Helios drew his map of that river and would have provided the logical route for him and his brother to take in their flight from Rome.<sup>6</sup>

The Garamantes were Berber people from whom Juba was descended and were closely affiliated with the Mauri who gave their name to the Kingdom of Mauretania. These powerful people became a client kingdom of Rome during the reign of Juba's son, King Ptolemy of Mauretania (24 BC to 40 AD). For centuries they had been controllers of the caravan routes which spanned the Sahara.<sup>7</sup> As tenuous allies of the Romans, they continued in this role and enriched themselves as they brought to Rome the riches of equatorial Africa, ivory, gold, ostrich feathers, slaves, and wild beasts. They were always too powerful for the Romans to conquer.

Although they were outside Roman authority, the Garamantes adopted Christianity when it became a state religion of Rome in 325 AD. On the collapse of the Roman Empire, they fell victim to conquest by the Arabs. In 668 AD, Okba ibn Nafe tricked the Garamantes king into a truce, seized him, and sent him back to Egypt in chains. This was the last mention of these once powerful people.<sup>8</sup>

There is a reason to think that many of the Garamantes were ferried to a secret colony in America that their ancestors and the Carthaginians established some two centuries earlier as a ready haven in the case they should ever need such against the Romans.

The historian Diodorus Sicullus, c 80-20 BC, is the principal source for information about this colony. He wrote at length describing the luxuriant plants, the plenteous number of fish and animals, and the fine rivers, fertile soil and splendid climate of an "island" the Phoenicians discovered long before in the ocean "a number of days' west of Libya. "The climate," he wrote, "is so altogether mild that it produces abundance of fruits o the trees and the other seasonal fruits for the larger part of the year, so that it would appear that the island, because of its exceptional felicity, were a dwelling-place of a race of gods not of men."

Diodorus recounted how the Phoenicians happened upon the land he described in such superlative terms: The Phoenicians, who from ancient times made voyages continually for purposes of trade, planted many colonies throughout Libya and not a few as well in the western parts of Europe. And since their ventures turned out according to their expectations, they

amassed great wealth and assayed to voyage beyond the Pillars of Heracles.....They, then, while exploring the coast outside the Pillars for the reasons we have stated and while sailing along the shore of Libya, were driven by strong winds a great distance out into the ocean. And after being storm-tossed for many days they were carried ashore on the island we mentioned above, and when they had observed its felicity and nature they caused it to be known to all men.

Consequently, the Tyrrhenians, at the time when they were masters of the sea, purposed to dispatch a colony to it; but the Carthaginians prevented their doing so, partly out of concern lest many inhabitants of Carthage should remove there because of the excellence of the island, and partly in order to have ready in it a place in which to seek refuge against an incalculable turn of fortune, in case some total disaster should overtake Carthage. For it was their thought that, since they were masters of the sea, they would thus be able to move, households and all, to an island which was unknown to their conquerors.<sup>9</sup>

Widespread evidence of the Carthaginian presence in North America has been reported in recent years by many competent observers. Most interesting to you might be the discoveries of two Carthaginian trade coins at separate sites within a mile of the Columbus, Georgia Museum. One of these was found in 1957 on the site of an ancient Indian town just across the Chattahoochee River, the other was located in 1983 by the use of a mine detector on a vacant lot in the 500 block of Third Avenue in Columbus, Georgia.

The Alabama find was reported in ESOP by Norman Totten, with an identical coin found a little later in Arkansas and reported by Gloria Farley.<sup>10</sup> At that time he concluded that "These coins confirm a reasonably specific date for one or more voyages between Iberia and America about 322 BC". He later told in conversation that he had studied one other from Connecticut, and knew of at least one other from Pennsylvania. He had found that they were cast as trade coins in Syracuse about 250 BC. This was the time of the Second Punic War, and the coins themselves could have been in the baggage of those members of the Punic branch of the Phoenicians that Helios wrote, "sailed from the port of Gades and vanished after being crushed by the Romulans." Paul Schaffranke will translate the Burrows Cave stone inscription from which this statement is taken.

There are other traces of the Carthaginians in this state and elsewhere in North America. In November 1956, George Stowe found a "banner stone" on the surface of an Indian occupation site near Hartwell, Georgia. Seeing that it contained a clearly discernible inscription in a Mediterranean-type alphabet, Dr. Carol Norton, of the University of Georgia faculty, Athens, sent the artifact to Barry Fell in 1989. Fell's reply read: "The letters are of a rather degenerate style of Punic writing of the second century BC..." He translated the inscription to read "javelin-caster," and presented a drawing of a spear thrower on which the stone served as a weight.<sup>11</sup>

There is evidence also documenting travel to America at the time of the Roman conquest and destruction of the City of Carthage in the Third Punic War. This was in 146 BC. A Numidian bronze coin was discovered in 1985 in a small Indian mound at Deer Creek near Chillicothe, Ohio. It was reported in ESOP by Victor and Beverly Moseley.<sup>12</sup> It had been determined that the coin was issued by King Micipsa, 148-118 BC, great-grandfather of Juba II.

The migration indicated in the Burrows Cave artifact inscriptions was not first nor the last from the same area of Morocco and Spain that are known to historians. In this field, the epigraphic research led by Barry Fell has brought to light other dramatic episodes when people fled across the Atlantic to escape suffering or even death at the hands of oppressive invaders.

Fell found that the script from the ancient Arab city of Palmyra, in Syria, a rival of Rome, which was totally destroyed by the emperor Aurelianus in 272 AD, was essentially the same as that used until the present by the Ojibwa and other tribes notably the Cree. This can only mean that refugees from Palmyra or under its cultural influence made their way to North America.<sup>13</sup>

One documented journey to a refuge in the west is recorded in Old Arabic in the Libyan script on a stele found near Figuig, Morocco and translated by Barry Fell in 1976. The fascinating story told on the stele is as follows: A band of Christians, including members of a brotherhood order, fled Morocco by sea to escape the ruin being wrought by the Vandals. They sailed for many days on a ration of dried fruits until they reached a wilderness land far to the northwest. One person in the expedition returned home many years later and provided the information recorded on the stone. Norman Totten estimated the time of the journey in this way: "By integrating the information contained within the inscription itself, with known events of the period, it has been possible to infer a likely date for the exodus voyage as 480 AD and for the inscription as 535 AD."<sup>14</sup>

In the actual words, as translated by Fell, the inscription describes the troubles brought by the "trouser men" (Vandals) and continues with the account of the flight to another land:

They decided to sail away to Asqa-Samal (North Land) to seek a livelihood where the sun sets in the evening. They prepared suitable dried fruits to last a long time. They calibrated with numbers a plaque from measurements of the exact elevation of the sun. The entire company sailed away from the coast, trying to curb their appetite. Carefully, they counted also how many times the sun rose and shone. Across the trackless wastes their chief precisely directed the helmsmen by his secret calculations on the correct track. They journeyed on contented with their lot, far away to that land, inspired with zeal. They reached their destination and into the wilderness ventured. The void of surging waves they had overcome by adhering to their plan. Pray for our friends, each one. Bless them O Jesus!<sup>15</sup>

One must agree with Totten that the people of Mauretania were heirs to most of the peoples of the ancient Mediterranean world. The Garamantes had lived so long in their homeland in the area of the Central Sahara and the region northward that their place of origin is unknown—at least to me. It has been assumed that they were the people who constructed the extensive irrigation system which has been found between their capital, Garama, and the oasis of Ghat. The underground conduits which comprise this system are parallel and interconnecting shafts and tunnels driven through the limestone rock. They are 10 feet high and 12 feet wide and those that have been discovered extend for a combined distance of 1600 kilometers (almost 1000 miles).<sup>7</sup> There can be no doubt they were experienced in excavating spaces within solid rock formations.

In very brief form I have narrated circumstances I know from the history of North Africa and the Roman Empire which relate to the information from the Burrows Cave inscriptions which Paul

Schaffranke and Arnold Murray will give in their papers. [The author refers to lectures at the Determining the Truth, II ISAC Symposium, Columbus, GA, April 21-22, 1995 -- Editor.] There is much more that I know from North American history and archaeology which pertain to these inscriptions as well. Most of this knowledge I have recorded for you in my books The Secret<sup>16</sup> and North American Sun Kings<sup>17</sup>, but there is more yet to be learned.

1) Beatrice Chanler, Cleopatra's Daughter, the Queen of Mauretania, Liveright Publishing Corporation, NY, 1934.

2) *ibid*

3) Alice Curtis Desmond, Cleopatra's Children, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1971

4) Norman Totten, "King Juba Remembered?" ESOP 1992.

5) Ref. #1

6) P. Henry Furneaux, Cornelli Tacitly, The annals of Tacitus, 1896.

7) Robert Furneaux, "The Garamantes, Ancestors of the Modern Tuareg?" 1972.

8) *ibid*.

9) C. Oldfather, Diodorus of Sicily, Harvard Press, 1952.

10) Norman Totten, Carthaginian Coins found in Arkansas and Alabama, ESOP, 1977.

11) Barry Fell, A Punic Inscription on a bannerstone from Georgia, ESOP, 1989.

12) Victor and Beverly Moseley, Latest finds of Ancient Coins, ESOP, 1987.

13) Barry Fell, An Arabic Dialect in Ancient Moroccan Inscriptions, ESOP, 1976.

14) Norman Totten, Implications of the Figuiq Decipherment, ESOP, 1976.

15) Barry Fell, A Fifth-Century Moroccan Emigration to North America, ESOP, 1976.

16) Joseph B. Mahan, The Secret, 1983.

17) Joseph B. Mahan, North American Sun Kings, Keepers of the Flame, 1992.

---

---

[Back to ESOP](#)

