

# New Finds Support Minoan Role in Transatlantic Copper Trade:

## Stone Circles, PetroPots, Petroglyphs, and Ship Carvings

by Jay S. Wakefield



Map locating Minoan sites in the text

### Abstract

In this article the reader will find that Minoans were connected to the Western European Bronze Age culture. Also discovered was a ship glyph on a copper ingot and a similar glyph in a foundation stone in the Minoan port city of Malia. A petroglyph similar to one at the Minoan city of Phaestos has been found carved in a stone on Beaver Island in Lake Michigan and on the Newberry Stone of Michigan.

In May 2012, a two-week trip to Crete with my friend Reinoud de Jonge revealed some surprising archaeological artifacts. My first trip to Greece was in 1964, with magical music and dancing on the roof of the interisland ferry and the stoning of a woman in black in Patras, just like in the Zorba movie. This time the magical music and violence were gone. There were new highways, huge hinged solar panel arrays, and wind farms, so the modernization of infrastructure brought by membership in the European Union was very visible. Numerous unfinished concrete buildings were the only sign of the economic troubles we have been hearing about. The people were friendly and helpful. Tourism was light, the tourist season just starting up. The waterfront restaurant tables were filled with locals, their girlfriends dressed in tight black skirts. Waterfront hotels were reasonable and available. The huge flowers planted along the roads were in bloom in pink. It was a good time to travel there.

### Stone Circles and Circle Art on Pottery

The second photo (#2) shows a stone circle we were surprised to find at Polyirinia on a hilltop in Western Crete. Nearby was another stone circle. Both circles overlook nearby lands and the Bay of Kissamou to the north. An old Christian church (not in the photo) is near the upper ring. I took the trail to the Acropolis

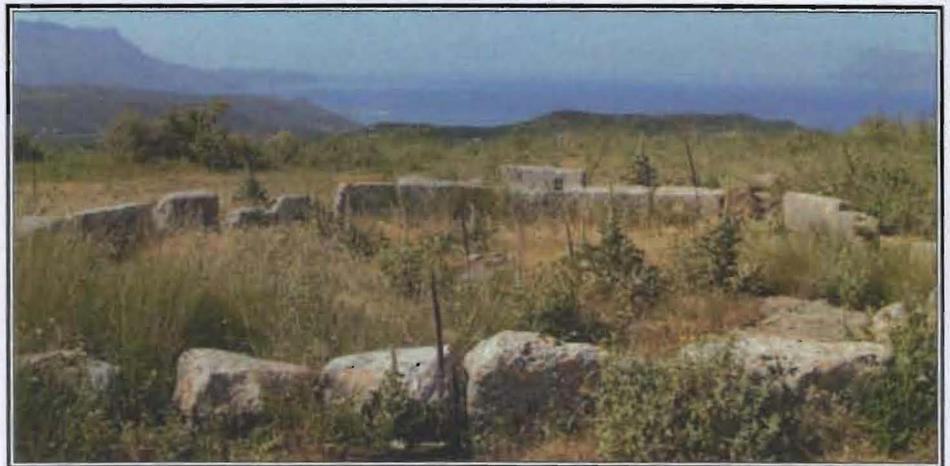


Photo #2: One of the three stone circles at Polyirinia



Photo #3: One of two petropots at Minoan Aptera

and found a disturbed smaller ring beside the trail near the top. There are many ruins and walls of various ages up there and Roman water cavern reservoirs in

several places. In the museum in Kania, formerly a beautiful old church, there are some pots decorated with red concentric circle art, also seen on the Beaker pottery

of megalithic Western Europe and the pottery of predynastic Lower Egypt. Various artifacts in the museums of Crete are decorated with linked spiral designs similar to the patterns seen in the ruins on Malta. It was clear that the Neolithic people of Crete were not isolated from the cultures of Western Europe and other Mediterranean cultures.

#### Petropots

The next photo (#3) shows Reinoud walking inside a disturbed stone circle, most of it obscured by the bushes in the photo. This is an obscure place we found while bushwhacking to find Minoan Apta behind a roadside sign. Up close in the photo in a stone wall overlooking the circle, you will see one of the two petropots cut into this wall. We found petropots to be a surprising feature of sites in Iberia (Spain and Portugal), as shown in a chapter on them in our book *Rocks & Rows* (Ref. 11).

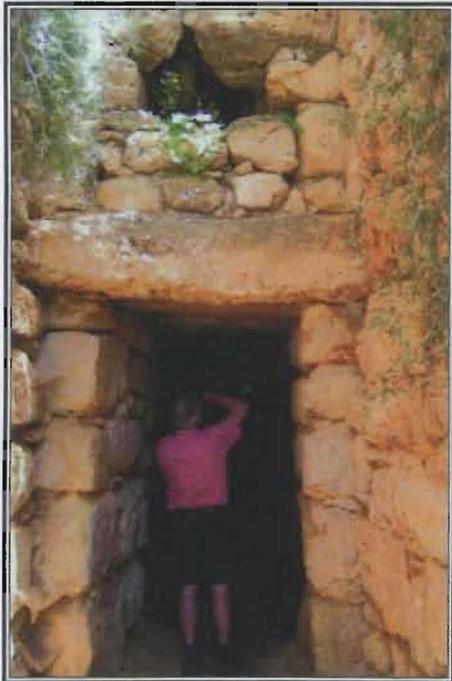


Photo #4: Lightbox of Tholos Tomb

#### Lightbox

On the other side of the hill, we found the overgrown tholos tomb, with its forty-foot-long descending stone entranceway. Behind the large stone portal was a very high corbelled chamber with a lightbox (Photo #4) above the entrance like Newgrange in Ireland. (Famous other examples of these tombs are seen in Antequerra, Spain, and Mycenae, Greece.) The signpost called the site "Azoires Stylos." We know that the Bronze Age sailing routes across the Atlantic utilized the Azores Islands on the return route (*How the Sun God Reached America*, Ref. 12). In any case, the Minoans, thought by Cyrus Gordon to have originated from the Delta of Egypt (Refs. 7, 8), were now connected to Western Europe Bronze Age culture by stone circles, petropots, and a lightbox!



Photo #5: Trident petroglyph, Knossos

#### Tridents: Religious Symbols?

Photo #5 shows one of the 18 Poseidon's trident glyphs at the palace of Knossos on the central north coast of Crete. I photographed 13 tridents at Phaistos (central southern Crete) and others at Malia (north coast of Crete). The tall east wall of the top plaza of Knossos appears to have been reconstructed. My guess is that during the rebuilding in 1900, they noticed trident glyphs on many of the loose stones and faced them all outward, most now too high to reach. As petroglyphs go, many of these are lightly inscribed like the one in the photo. They remind me of contemporary Christian fish graffiti as though they were all carved closely in time during a religious fervor for Poseidon, later Greek god of the sea, during the growth of Minoan Atlantic culture.

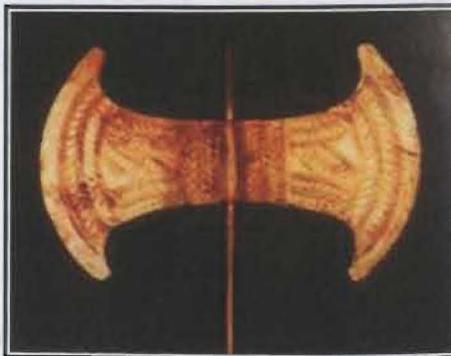


Photo #6: Top; Etruscan fresco, Stockholm, Sweden  
Bottom; Minoan AXE

#### Double Axe: Cultural Symbol of Minoa?

The other most frequent petroglyph is the double axe. I found 11 of these glyphs at Knossos and 13 at Phaistos. Some bronze double axes have been found in areas near the Michigan copper mines. Many were found on Crete in clefts and caves, the cleft or womb of the Earth

Mother (Ref. 24). So the axes are a union of the male power of the metal axe and the Earth, or a union between Heaven and Earth, male and female, like the Asian circular yin and yang symbol. Photo #6 shows big double axes in a funeral procession in an Etruscan tomb fresco, shown in Stockholm's Mendelhavsmuseet. This is evidence that the Etruscans were probably descendants or refugees from the destroyed Minoan Atlantic Empire (Ref. 25).

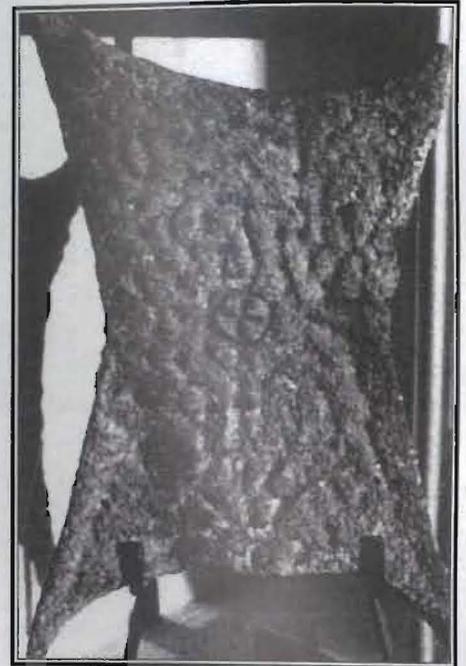


Photo #7: Oxhide ingot with Circle Cross

#### Other Petroglyphs of Crete Including Circle Crosses

Petroglyphs of large stars are frequent, with 14 at Phaistos. Also appearing repetitively are "trees" (five at Knossos, seven at Phaistos), "circle crosses," and the three-branched "birdfoot" of the Earthmother. All of these are characters in Linear A. There are six enigmatic "faces" at Phaistos (Ref. 14). Circle Crosses, such as this one on a copper oxhide ingot from the Ulu Burun shipwreck (Photo #7), are seen at Phaistos (Photo #8). Circle Crosses are widely seen in ancient pictographic writing and appear on Burrows Cave mapstones (Inset, Photo #8), this example associated with the Kaweenaw Peninsula copper mine locations in Michigan.



Photo #8: Circle Cross, Phaistos, inset: Burrows Cave stone

Academicians Write about Copper Voyages and Ingot Finds

Academics are starting to provide some support for the source of the copper ingots being overseas. Professor Minas Tsikritsis of Iraklion, Crete, has computer analyzed a text by Plutarch, which he says is a description of a copper sailing journey from Canada to Carthage. His extensive computer analysis of the Phaistos Disc has led him to think it is about a trip to America (Ref. 21).

Michael Jones' master's thesis (2007) on the oxhide ingots of the Ulu Burun shipwreck (Ref. 23) says "it is extremely significant that the earliest ingots came from Crete, and the earliest securely dated ingot came from an unknown source ... probably outside the eastern Mediterranean. The oxhide shape clearly became an international standard ... they seem to have been transported by sea ... it is implied that scrutiny of the ingot's quality was not considered necessary. They had a well-known standard of purity ... One advantage of working with pure metal is the dramatic reduction in the amount of heat required to melt it: 180 Kcal/Kilogram versus 1400 Kcal/Kgm when starting with a high-grade oxide. The use of oxhide ingots seems closely connected with the Minoan palaces; they're found in the metallurgical installations and storerooms in Crete at Hagia Triadha, Zakros, Tyllisos, Gournia, Palaikastro, Mochlos, and Poros-Katsambas, as well as Phaestos and Knossos. A total of 150 ingots have been discovered in terrestrial sites, most frequently on or near the sea. Thirty complete ingots and 39 fragments are known from Minoan Crete. Damaged Linear B tablets from Knossos before 1400 BC show 60 ingots (ingot-shaped ideograms). A Mycenaean Linear B tablet from the Palace of Pylos dating to 1200 BC indicates 300-400 copper workers employed by the palace issued 1.5 to 12 kg of metal each. There is a complete absence of information on the organization of mining and smelting activities" (Ref. 23). All this implies massive shipments of copper ingots from somewhere else.

Ingot Molds of Clay

Famed George Bass, American founder of the Underwater Museum in Bodrum, Turkey, "believes that some physical features of the ingots, such as the ridge along the edges, may be due to casting in clay molds. Templates of wood may have been used to form the molds, which would explain their rough surfaces and the lack of mold siblings. Analysis of ingot fragments show a dendritic structure (large grain sizes) in the copper, indicating they cooled slowly in well-insulated molds. Copper oxide structures, which form only in an oxidizing atmosphere, show they were poured in an open mold exposed to air." All these findings support the manufacturing of the ingots over open wood fires at Poverty Point, Cedarland, and Claiborne, as proposed in *Rocks & Rows* (Ref. 11).

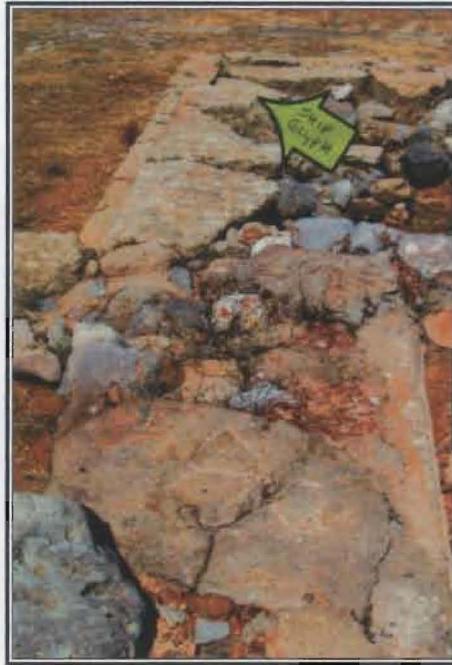


Photo #9: Double axe petroglyph at Malia



Photo #10: 3 shrine pots at Malia ship glyph

Ship Carving in Palace of Malia

In the foreground of Photo #9 is a petroglyph of a Minoan double axe on a cracked stone. Two other double axes are carved on nearby stones. In the background is a stone wall showing the foundation stones that remain of the ancient palace of Malia, a northern shore seaport city. The corner shown is near the NW corner of the palace facing the nearby harbor and the sea to the northwest, where the fleet was located and the direction sailed to exit the Mediterranean toward the western copper country. The next photo is a close-up (Photo #10) which shows the wall corner with its three carved libation bowls and a petroglyph on the triangular stone behind the wall. Close-up Photo # 11 shows the petroglyph, which is a sailing ship in the harbor with its sail down. It

appears that this was a shrine with three offering bowls, or oil lamps, related to obtaining a safe and productive voyage for copper in use prior to the destruction of Malia by the tsunamis and pyroclastic flows of the Thera volcano at Santorini in 1600 BC.

Ship Carving on Ulu Barun Copper Ingot

Photo # 12 is a close-up of one end of a copper oxhide ingot found on the Ulu Barun shipwreck off the Lycian coast of Turkey. The photo sent to me by Don Frey, who made hundreds of dives on the wreck, shows a remarkable image of a sailing ship, also with its sail down. The ingot is on display in the Museum of Underwater Archaeology at Bodrum, Turkey, in the castle made from the stones and columns of the Colossus of Halicarnassus. The wreck has been carbon dated to 1300 BC, so the ingot was probably carved with the ship glyph in Crete and held in a palace treasury for hundreds of years. There are no "primary marks" made in the mold on any of the 350 Ulu Burun ingots. When the ingots were made by the melting of Michigan float copper around the time of the great mound building at Poverty Point (1500 BC), marks were not



Photo #11: Ship petroglyph at Malia



Photo #12: Ship carving on Ulu Burun ingot

left on them by the molds. All of the 187 Ulu Burun ingots with markings (52 types) on them are "secondary marks" made with a chisel.

There are several reasons why it is thought that these markings were carved into the ingots following their arrival by ship. First, there are several examples of the same marks on both tin and copper ingots, which "surely came from different places." Also, broken ingots have the same symbol on both pieces of the original ingot. Many of the incised marks have fishhooks, tridents, a fish, possible quarter rudders, and ships. Half an ox-hide with the "rudder" image was recently found in a hoard at Mochlos which was dated to 1500 BC, so the markings were in use at least 200 years before the Ulu Burun shipwreck (Ref. 23). The Ulu Burun ingot with the ship carving is identical to the Malia petroglyph ship, so it appears that the port of entry for this ingot was Malia, where the ingot was carved and perhaps stored prior to sale or re-shipment. For the first time, a copper ingot has been tied to a Minoan port.

#### Worldwide Corn and Latitude 36

Photos #13 and #14 show a bronze "cymbal" found in the Idean cave where Zeus is reported to have been raised. In the center, Zeus stands on a bull and "tears a lion apart with his hands." Beside him, "kourtes," shown as winged Assyrian demons, clash four cymbals (Ref. 2). It is mounted on the wall of the Archaeological Museum in Iraklion. The close-up shows three of the 36 corn cobs. This is a nice illustration of how corn has spread around the Earth of 360 degrees or 36 Big Moira units of ten degrees each (*How the Sun God*, Ref. 12). This is dated to the "Archaic Period," or "Proto-Geometric Period," (1000-800 BC) after the Minoan Bronze Age but 1500 years before Columbus. The number might also refer to latitude. Crete lies between 35 and 36 degrees north, as does Carthage, Gibraltar, the East Azores, the Grand Canyon, and most of the sites studied in Oklahoma by Gloria Farley. Her friend Alan Gillespie remembers this as the "sacred latitude" for finding sites (Ref. 9).

There is a huge and beautifully finished Minoan "offering stone" at Malia



Photo #13: Cymbal in Iraklion Museum

with 34 outside bowls, so 35 or 36 including the center. At Knossos there are 18 ancient wide-entry stairs to the palace, rising from the road leading to the port and the sea. Knossos has 18 huge "West Storage Magazines," which were found with many huge ceramic storage jars still in them. Eighteen is half of 36, half the circumference of the earth. The Holy Latitude of Punt in the west, the home of the Olmec in the Gulf of Campeche and symbolic for the afterlife and the Realm of the Dead, is 18 degrees north. Latitudes were clearly important in the navigation technology of the Minoans and regarded with reverence.

#### Minoan Phonetic Syllabaries around the World

Cyrus Gordon provides a helpful explanation of Minoan language and writing (Refs. 8, 13). "We know that Crete was polyglot and a system of writing was used on Crete for more than one language." He describes an "international complex of peoples" on the Levant (the eastern shore of the Mediterranean), who had their original origins on the Egyptian delta, including the Hittite, Akkadian, Hurrian, Sumerian, and Hebrew. Minoans developed a NW Semitic dialect "akin to Ugaritic" of the Levantine coast. The Phaistos Disc was a pictographic form of the language called "Cretan Hieroglyphs" (Ref. 8). But what was developed next was a stylized version, a syllabary now called "Linear A" where each sign was a syllable (phonetic). Each sign had the phonetic value of the beginning of the word depicted. There are "logograms" for numerals and commodity pictographs.

There have been only 150 fired (accidentally burned) clay tablets discovered, mostly in southern Crete, many at Phaistos and Komos, its port. They are records of commercial transactions. Most of the writing was probably on papyrus imported from Egypt. Gordon says a number of dialects may have been able to use the Linear A "Aegean Syllabary." The very different languages Minoan and Mycenaean were both able to use the modified Linear B syllabary. Most of the signs and phonetic values are the same in both (Ref. 8).

Mayan "culture bringer" legends say that their white god Kukulcan taught the script he brought with him. Many Mayan symbols are similar to Linear A, and in some cases the phonetic values are



Photo #14: Corn Cob closeup on Cymbal

known to be similar (Ref. 19). It was also brought to North America, as seen in the Algonquin syllabary (Ref. 18). The Basques, with their language "unrelated to any modern European languages," are also said to be able to read Minoan (Ref. 20). These language remnants show that

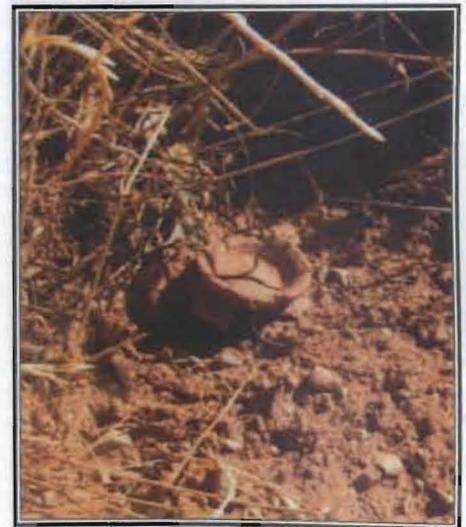


Photo #15: Tsunami debris, Itanos 2012

the Minoans were sailing over much of the world for more than a thousand years and suggest answers to long-standing mysteries, such as the origin of Kukulcan (Minoan) and the Basque people (Minoan Atlantic).

#### Disaster: End of the Minoans

The Thera volcano erupted with a massive explosion in 1600 BC, which caused four successive 90-meter tsunami waves which devastated the Minoan Civilization (PBS Home Video, Ref. 3). The fleets were destroyed, and most of the coastal cities were washed away. This initial volcanic explosion was followed by a collapse of the caldera under the sea, so the sea rushed in and this generated an estimated 48,000 cubic kilometers of superheated dry steam, which slid across the sea at high velocity as seen at Krakatoa. This pyroclastic flow crossed Crete to the southern city of Phaistos in one and a



Photo #16: Phaistos petroglyph (Wakefield)



Photo #17: Beaver Island petroglyph (Bussey)

half minutes, incinerating the city at 600-700 degrees C. The great oak and cedar forests were all ignited at once. All the cities burned, along with perhaps a million people. The second tsunami from the steam explosion was larger, perhaps 100 m tall, and extinguished all shore-side fires, washed all the bodies of people and animals into the sea, and reduced cities, like the city of Malia with its three- and four-story buildings, to its foundation stones (Ref. 22). Today, one can still see mixed pottery, pots, and debris washing into the sea in several places, especially at Itanos (Photo 15).

Those folks remaining were violently conquered by the Mycenaean Greeks from the north. Knossos was one of the few sites rebuilt. Four thousand Linear B tablets have nearly all been found at Knossos and Pylos and Mycenae in Greece. The Greeks used the Minoan B syllabary from 1500 BC to the end of the Bronze Age at 1200 BC. The Greeks later learned to use the Phoenician alphabet as written language further developed. To trace Minoan exploration and shipping routes, we should learn to recognize Linear A or B if we see it.

#### Scandinavia: Minoan Ships and Mining

Johan Jarnes has found Linear A and wire silver mines near his home in Konsberg near Oslo, Norway. He has obtained help from linguist Kjell Aartun. He has read five Linear A symbols as "pure and soft" along with other symbols including a wine bag and a ship glyph (Ref. 10). Two Scandinavian professors, in their new book *The Rise of Bronze Age Society: Travels, Transmissions, and Transformations* (Ref. 1), claim the Bohuslan ship carvings on the west coast of Sweden are recordings of visits by Mediterranean Bronze Age ships.

#### Beaver Island: Minoan Petroglyphs at Copper Miner Site

By looking for Minoans, we are starting to find more evidence of them. Compare Photo #16 which I took of a strange petroglyph at Phaistos with Photo

#17 of a petroglyph taken by Marie Bussey this summer (2013) on Beaver Island, Michigan, where she has found stone circles. The symbol also appears marked near the center on the Minoan Newberry Tablet found in Michigan (Photo #18). We expect further fruitful research on the accomplishments of the Minoans. ■



Photo #18: Newberry Tablet, marked around glyph

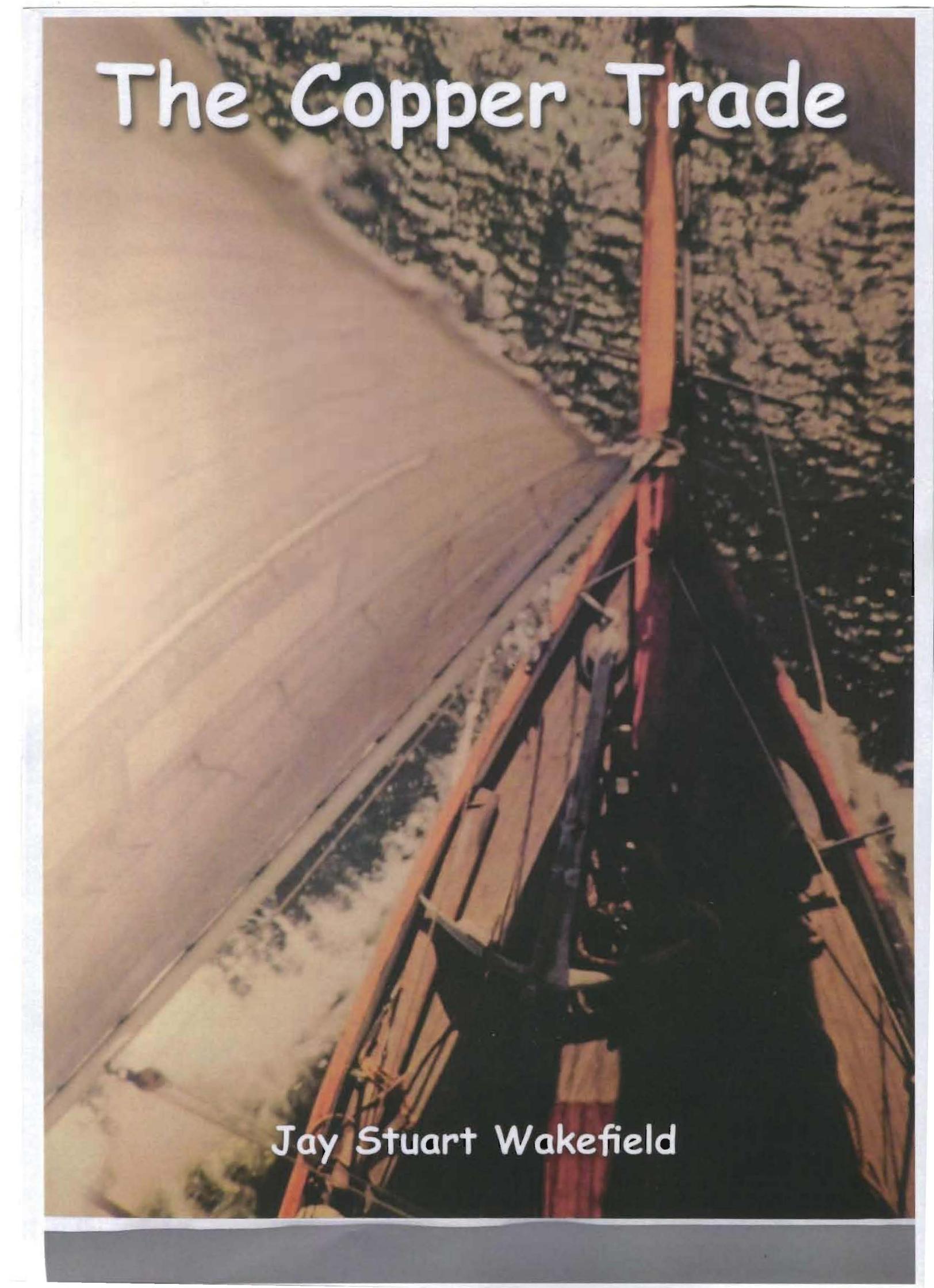
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*“Over and beyond mere living, the human Spirit adds and creates what is better than what was before” -R.Roefield*



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ISBN 978-0-917054-24-1

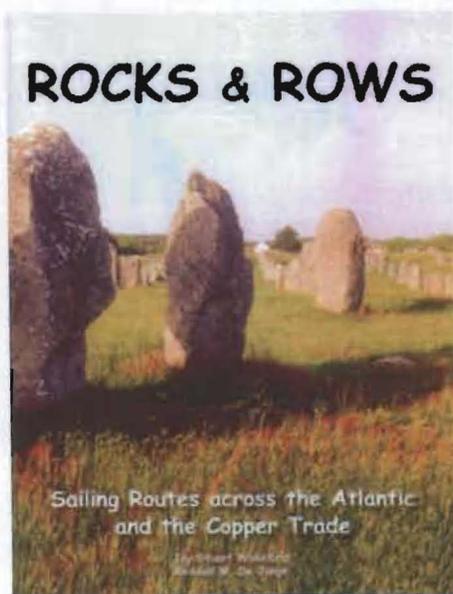
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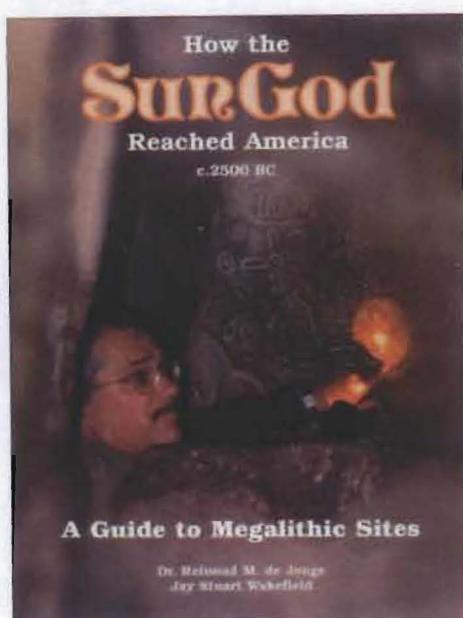
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