

[Revisiting the Question of Pre-Columbian Contact between Mayan and Egyptian Cultures](#)

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Dear Colleagues,

New Year greetings. I will be teaching 'Medicine, Science and Technology in World History' this semester. Debates over crosscultural contact and exchange versus independent development are central to the undertaking. Among other historical cases, I plan to raise the question of possible pre-Columbian contact between the Mayan and Egyptian cultures. Along these lines, I've come across the following sources in my brief, limited searches thus far:

Samuel D. Marble, *Before Columbus: The New History of Celtic, Phoenician, Viking, Black African, and Asian Contacts and Impacts in the Americas before 1492* (South Brunswick, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1980). (Marble was at Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan. Unfortunately, no review of this work seems available; has anyone engaged it?)

S.A. Wells, "American Drugs in Egyptian Mummies" (URL: <http://www.faculty.ucr.edu/~legneref/ethnic/mummy.htm>) (This is posted on the University of California Riverside faculty website, though I could not identify an S.A. Wells at UCR.)

Judith Fein (?), "Maya and Egyptian Pyramids: A Hidden Connection?: An Egyptologist and a Mayanologist explore the pyramid connection," *Psychology Today*, Oct 31, 2011 (URL: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/life-is-trip/201110/maya-and-egyptian-pyramids-hidden-connection>). Features Yolanda Ruanova, a Mexican Mayanologist and archeologist, and Manal Saad, an Egyptian-born Egyptologist and historian speculating based on observation, ultimately leaving the possibility of pre-Columbian contact an open question of debate.

Wells cites a fair amount of literature addressing various sides of the debate, but can anyone suggest any further scholarly sources beyond these?

I suggest that at least three religious-cultural-political issues complicate discussion of this historical question:

- 1- Ongoing attempts to either substantiate or discredit Book of Mormon claims regarding pre-Columbian contact;
- 2- Post-colonial efforts to 'decolonize' Native American history by insisting on recognition of independent achievements and contributions over against any interpretation which might allege/imply dependence and borrowing;
- 3- Eurocentric views which have a vested interest in safeguarding the superiority of Western civilization as traced (in this case) from Egypt (i.e., denial of any MesoAmerican claims to an 'advanced civilizational' legacy which might give it equality with and/or leverage against the 'Western' heritage).

Along with additional scholarly sources, I would welcome discussion which is based clearly and squarely on historical evidence (as opposed to mere opinion). I would also take interest in any thoughts on the three issues above which I suggest complicate the discussion.

All the best in 2019,

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