

GLYPH

Notes

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What Was in The Stone Box?

By Sherrie Kline Smith

*The answer to this question should be simple; yet the question arises again and again. According to the testimony of Joseph Smith, Jr., the angel led him to a stone box buried on a hill in New York state. The box contained the **breastplate** and the **Urim and Thummim** and the **plates**.*

Confusion about what was in the box arises from the later experiences of the witnesses when in vision the angel showed them the plates, the brass plates, the plates of the book of Ether, and many others. They were shown "as it were a table, with many records and plates upon it, besides the plates of the Book of Mormon, also the sword of Laban, the directors, and the interpreters" (*Story of the Church*, by Inez Smith Davis (1948, rev.), p. 71.

For the contents of the stone box see the following three references.

1) *Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story*, pamphlet form of Joseph Smith's testimony as it first appeared in *Times and Seasons*, 1842, volume 3, beginning with number 10 and subsequent issues. This pamphlet has had numerous printings by both the Mormon and RLDS groups. On some pamphlets it states that this was first recorded in 1828, but it appears that the first published version was in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842. If any of our readers knows some place else it was published prior to 1842, please write to PSI with the information. See also *Story of the Church* by Davis (pp. 35-37).

"He [the angel] said there was a book deposited written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang... Also that there were two stones in silver bows, and these stones fastened to a **breastplate** constituted what is called the **Urim and Thummim**, deposited with the **plates**..." (T&S, vol. 3, no. 12, p. 753).

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Found at Palenque and displayed in the museum, this round stone box contained cinnabar, the principal ore of mercury.

Don Beebe



This hill was identified by Oliver Cowdery as being the hill Cumorah in New York state where Joseph found the plates. The photo was taken by George Edward Anderson in 1907.

Stone Box (continued)

“Having removed the earth and obtained a lever which I got fixed under the edge of the stone and with a little exertion raised it up, I looked in and there indeed did I behold the **plates**, the **Urim and Thummim** and the **Breastplate** as stated by the messenger. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement; in the bottom of the box were laid two stones crossways of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them” (T&S, vol. 3, no. 13, p. 771).

“At length the time arrived for obtaining the **plates**, the **Urim and Thummim**, and the **breastplate**. On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me...” (T&S, vol. 3, no. 13,

p. 772). (All emphasis added to above three quotes.)

2) Oliver Cowdery writes under the heading “Rise of the Church. [concluded.] Letter VIII” in *Times and Seasons*, May 1, 1841 (vol. 2, no. 13), p. 392.

“This box was sufficiently large to admit a **breast-plate**, such as was used by the ancients to defend the chest, etc. from the arrows and weapons of the enemy. From the bottom of the box, or from the breast-plate, arose three small pillars composed of the same description of cement used on the edges; and upon these three pillars was placed the **record** of the children of Joseph, and of a people who left the tower far, far before the days of Joseph...” (emphasis added).

3) *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 1967, vol. 1, pp. 13, 16-18. Joseph’s testimony, same as above, is quoted.

For the vision revealed to the witnesses:

1) *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 1967, vol. 4, pp. 369-371, quotes from *Saints’ Herald*, (March 1, 1882), vol. 29, p. 68-69. An Interview of David Whitmer, Sr., on September 15, 1881, by W. H. Kelley and G. A. Blakeslee.

“A table was set before us and on it the records were placed. The Records of the Nephites, from which the Book of Mormon was translated, the brass plates, the Ball of Directors, the sword of Laban and other plates.”

Whitmer says he saw:

- Records of the Nephites
- Brass Plates
- Ball of Directors
- sword of Laban and other plates


2) *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saint*, 1967, vol. 4, pp. 447. Another interview with David Whitmer by E. C. Briggs and Rudolph Etzenhouser on April 25, 1884.

“In June, 1829, I saw the angel by the power of God, Joseph, Oliver, and I were

Two pottery effigies of men carrying a box are displayed at the Museum at Jalapa, Mexico.



“This box was sufficiently large to admit a breast-plate, such as was used by the ancients to defend the chest, etc. from the arrows and weapons of the enemy.”



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alone, and a light from heaven shone around us, and solemnity pervaded our minds. The angel appeared in the light, as near as that young man. [Within five or six feet.] Between us and the angel there appeared a table, and there lay upon it the sword of Laban, the Ball of Directors, the Record, and Interpreters. The angel took the Record, and turned the leaves, and showed it to us by the power of God. They were taken away by the angel to a cave, which we saw by the power of God while we were yet in the Spirit.”

Again, Whitmer says he saw:

- sword of Laban
- Ball of Directors
- the Record and Interpreters

3) *Saints’ Herald*, July 1, 1881, vol. 28, page 198 prints an article that first appeared in the June 5, 1881, *Kansas City Journal*, where a reporter interviews David Whitmer.

“It was in the latter part of June, 1829. Joseph, Oliver Cowdery and myself were together, and the angel showed them to us. We not only saw the plates of the Book of Mormon, but he also showed us the brass plates of the Book of Ether and many others. They were shown to us in this way. Joseph and Oliver and I were sitting on a log when we were overshadowed by a light more glorious than that of the sun. In the midst of this light, but a few feet from us, appeared a table upon which were many golden plates, also the sword of Laban and the directors.”

Continued on Page 4



Chichen Itza Stone Box



Above:
Chichen Itza
lid and box

Below:
Roy Weldon
photographs
his camera case
inside the box
at Chichen Itza.

Center: Box is found to the right of the staircase near the door that opens to the inside stairway to the temple underneath.



Perhaps one of the most intriguing stone boxes from Mesoamerica is the one found at the base of the Kukulcan pyramid at the site of Chichen Itza. In 1987 on our first visit to Chichen Itza, one of our goals was to find the stone box known from Roy Weldon’s photos. Its location at the site was unknown. We almost missed it because the side of the box was sitting against the stairway, giving the appearance of just another block of stone. The lid sat next to it. The description of the lid of the box where the metal plates were stored matches the lid found at Chichen Itza: “This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all round was covered with earth.” Although the lid is weathered, its “rounding in the middle on the upper side” appears as the one described by Joseph.

Stone Box (continued)


See also *Story of the Church*, by Inez Smith Davis (1948, rev.), page 71, quoting the Whitmer testimony as told in the *L.D.S. Biographical Encyclopedia* (page 266).

What happened to the plates after Joseph translated them by the gift and power of God? According to Joseph, the angel took them back.

“At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate; on the twenty second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having went as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me, with this charge that I should

be responsible for them: that if I should let them go carelessly or through any neglect of mine I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, **until he the messenger should call for them**, they should be protected.

But by the wisdom of God they remained safe in my hands until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand, when according to arrangements the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him and he has them in his charge this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight.”


—*Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, no. 13, pp. 772; also *Church History*, vol. 1, p. 18, emphasis added. 

Cancuen, Guatemala Stone Box



Doriam Morales

Glyph notes readers may remember our reporting about the looted stone box from the site of Cancuen in Guatemala and its subsequent return. The box, dating to AD 480-550 and measuring 15 in. x 9 in. x 6 in., was found in a cave near an eight-meter high waterfall and large pool near Alta Verapaz. The cave and stream are directly in the path of one of the two main Maya trade routes. Some speculate that the cave was a shrine for traveling merchants.

Looters got past the cave's locked gate and stole the box and ten ceramic vessels. The box was returned anonymously, but the ceramics remain missing. “The lidded stone box which may have been the storage place of a Maya codex or a funerary urn is extraordinarily carved with an Early Classic hieroglyphic inscription and depicts, among other motifs, the Maize God and the Moon Rabbit.” *Mexicon*, Vol. 28, Oktober 2006, p. 85. Read more on Mesoweb Reports at <http://www.mesoweb.com/reports/StoneBox.html>. 

JOY *Line* By Joy Muir

IN HIS TIME — Testimony of Sheila Lidberg, Oak Grove, Missouri

In 1995, I decided to accept FRAA's* New Year's resolution challenge to read The Book of Mormon in six months. My endeavor to meet this challenge, which began around the end of November 1994, was a rich and rewarding experience. Having received great blessings, I felt that God impressed upon me to share this testimony with the Saints.

I have always loved reading The Book of Mormon. The words of Nephi, King Benjamin, Alma, and Moroni bring the joy and peace that can only come from God's Holy Spirit. Never doubting the validity of The Book of Mormon, I have always believed with a simple faith that each experience and event actually took place just as it is written.

Many times I have prayed for my own personal testimony about the truthfulness of The Book of Mormon, yet the outstanding or earth-shattering experience I had longed for had never come. What I did receive many times over though, was a quiet assurance, within my very innermost being, that these words are true. This time, however, as I made the commitment to read the entire Book of Mormon within six months, I asked specifically for God to give me a testimony I could share with others.

After Christmas, while my husband was off from work, and my children and I were taking a break from home-schooling, I had some extra time to read. On December 27th, I arose earlier than the rest of my family and went into the family room to read. Beginning with prayer, I once again asked God to open my heart and mind to the truths I would find within the pages of this beloved book. I invited His Spirit to come and enlighten my mind with understanding.

That particular morning I was reading King Benjamin's proclamation to his people. I have always received tremendous strength and comfort while reading King Benjamin's words of counsel. The *spirit* of his words seems to communicate with my *spirit* in such a plain and precious way, that an edifying takes place within me. As I read this morning, however, something extra special happened. The words from Mosiah 3:3 seemed to


leap from the page, and in that instant I knew they were intended *just for me*.

"And also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually."

The message the Holy Spirit wrote upon my heart at that moment was the testimony I had been seeking; the personal witness of the truthfulness of The Book of Mormon I longed for. The Holy Spirit manifested to me in a very concrete way what so many times before had been conveyed in very subtle, quiet ways.

It is difficult to describe just how I felt that morning; but as I have reflected on this joyous occasion since, I believe I can say as did Ammon in Alma 14:91, "*my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God....*" This is exactly how I felt at that moment. I had to stop reading because of the all-consuming love and joy I was experiencing as God poured out His Spirit upon me.

God is so very good to me. He has blessed me so abundantly all of my days. I rejoice in His greatness and His love that He showers down upon each one who loves and trusts in Him. He granted me this blessing that I might share it with others. To those who may be seeking still, or needing a spiritual uplift, I would simply say that if you ask in faith, believing, you **will** receive, *in his time*.

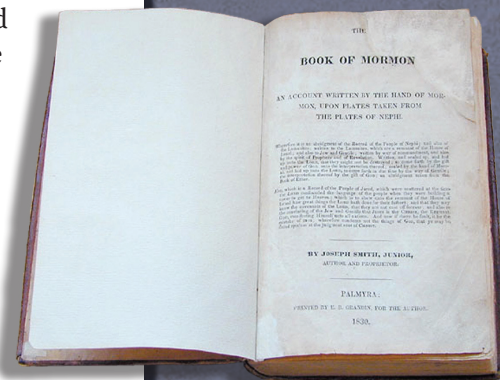
Sheila Lidberg was born in Independence and "is very blessed to be a homemaker." She and her husband Ron have three grown children and four grandchildren and another on the way. When a young child, she lived in Lee's Summit and was baptized there at the age of eight. Sheila and Ron attend the Oak Grove Restoration Branch. 

* Now The Book of Mormon Foundation



"The message the Holy Spirit wrote upon my heart at that moment was the testimony I had been seeking: the personal witness of the truthfulness of The Book of Mormon I longed for."

Sheila Lidberg



The Book of Mormon, first edition typeset and published by E. D. Gran-din in Palmyra, New York, in 1830.

Living Waters

By Sherrie Kline Smith

In the “glyph quotes” column, Clyde Noren writes about the fountain of living waters. (See page 7.) He relates the conversation Jesus has with the woman at the well and also references Lehi’s vision where the rod of iron leads to the fountains of living water and the tree of life.

This brings to mind the Temple of the Foliated Cross at Palenque. The central portion of the back panel sculpture is one of a tree/cross bearing fruit springing forth out of water, thus it was named by archaeologists the Temple of the Foliated Cross.

In the May/June 2006 issue of *glyph notes*, I reported on new understandings being gleaned from further decipherment of the inscriptions at the site of Palenque. One of those had to do with this panel. The “cross” is described as “a fruitful maize tree growing out of primordial waters, or the ‘tree of life.’” The bottom part of the sculpture incorporates symbols for water (colored in blue in the illustration) and forms the foundation for the tree of life. Decorating the outer portions of the temple are small

kan cross motifs. This small cross has association with water and carries the meaning of yellow or precious and helps to establish the symbolism as the “precious pool maize plant.” This could also freely be interpreted as abundant, bountiful.

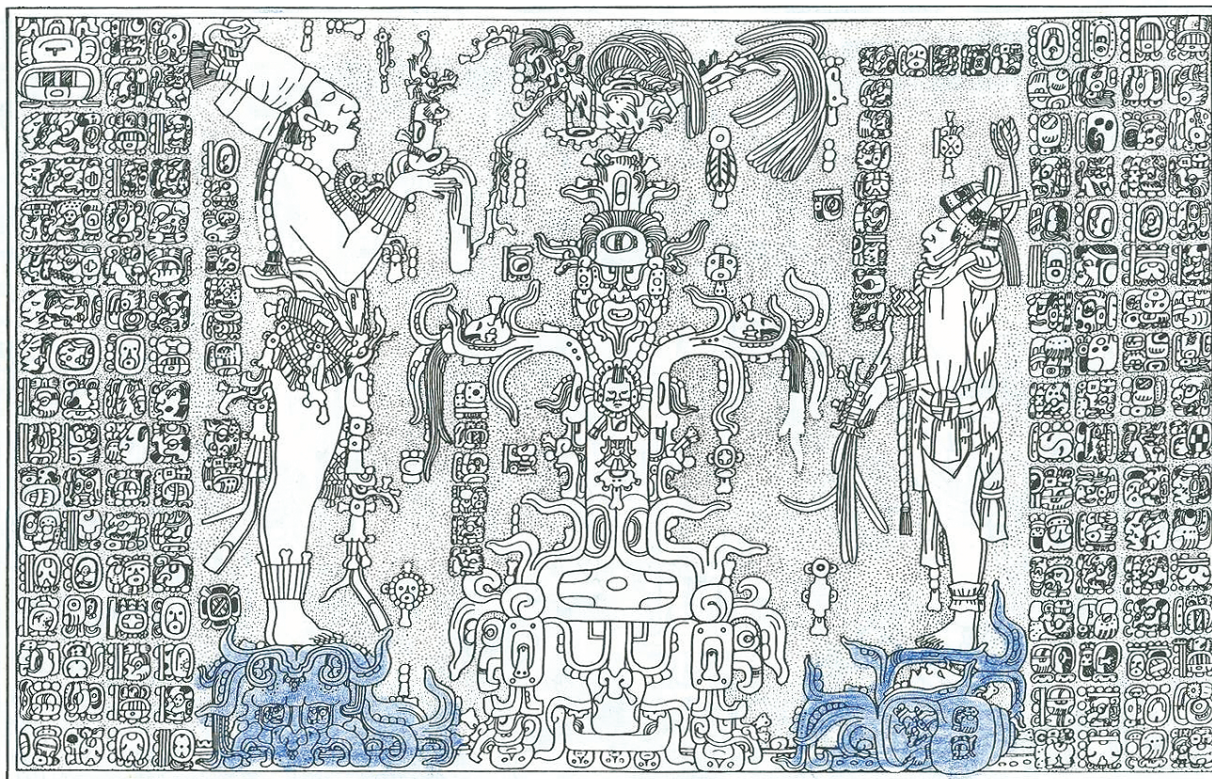
While reflecting about this abundant tree of life growing out of the waters, I forcibly remembered Psalms 1:3: “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season....” Could this panel in the Temple of the Foliated Cross be a visual representation of this scripture? Or likewise the one found in Jeremiah 17: 7-8 that says, “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth

out her roots by the river . . . neither shall cease from yielding fruit.”

Or could it be a representation of the tree in Lehi’s vision? “I beheld that the rod of iron which my father had seen was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and... the tree of life was

Drawing of the back panel of the Temple of the Foliated Cross

Could this panel in the Temple of the Foliated Cross be a visual representation of the scripture, Psalms 1:3?



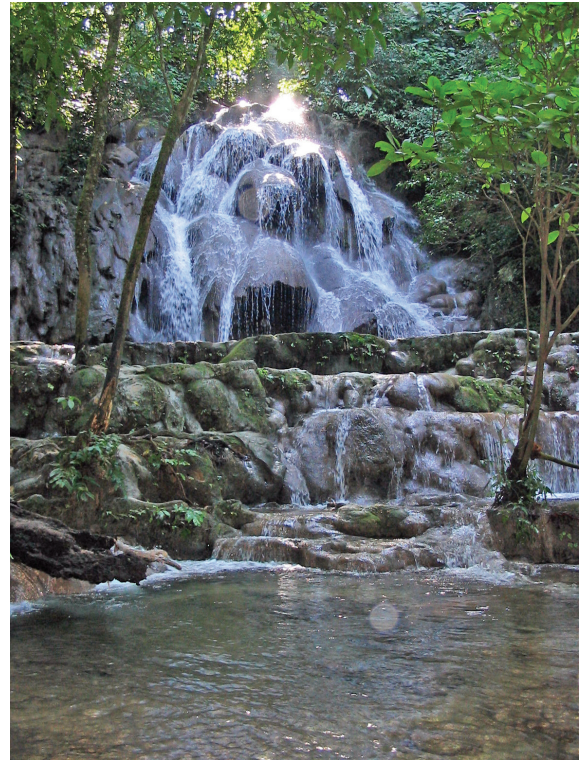
a representation of the love of God” (1 Nephi 3:68-69).

The Cross Group with the Temple of the Foliated Cross was built at the end of AD 600s, almost 300 years after the close of The Book of Mormon. We generally assume that all knowledge of the gospel was lost when the Lamanites destroyed the Nephite culture around AD 400. (The last battle was AD 385.) Yet, vestiges of the gospel remained all throughout the years until the Spanish arrived. They bore testimony that the natives’ religious beliefs were so similar to Christianity that they thought the devil had surely had a hand in this.

Evidences coming from the inscriptions at Palenque, which I believe reference God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, cause one to won-

der if the people at Palenque had a reformation, if you will, something like Josiah in the Old Testament when they found the book of the law and the king had it read among the people. The king sought diligently to destroy the idols and high places and encouraged the people to follow the teachings found in the book of the law. The story is found in 2 Kings: 22-23 and 2 Chronicles 34-35. Did something similar happen here among the people at Palenque? The temples in the cross group seem to suggest this possibility. ☪

Waterfall at Palenque



Jared Smith

GLYPH *Quotes* By Clyde Noren

Fountain of Living Waters —1 Nephi 3:68

The encounter of Jesus with the woman at the well in John 4:8-16 concludes with the invitation for her and others to drink of his water which will lead to everlasting life.

Water is essential for the continuation of human life--to quench thirst, to nourish our fields and forests which in turn guarantee our edible food supply and provide oxygen for us to breathe. Jesus said that he who drinks of his water shall never thirst, because believing and following the commandments in his word leads to eternal life. Access to this living water comes by baptism with water and the Holy Spirit as Jesus explained in John 3:5.

In The Book of Mormon Nephi expands the meaning of the living waters by writing, “And I beheld the rod of iron, which my father [Lehi] had seen, was the word of God [and Jesus], which led to the fountains of living water and to the tree of life” (1 Nephi 3:68).

Further light was given to the Saints

by Joseph Smith, Jr., in a revelation given in 1831. “But unto him that keepeth my commandments, I will give the mysteries of the kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life” (D&C 63:7b). We conclude from these scriptural statements that we have need for the filling of our spiritual well while living our earthly life.

Unfortunately, life does not permit our spiritual cup to be filled with one large “gulp.” The living water promised by Jesus comes drop by drop, one uplifting experience after another. If not this way, believers would form an endless line to have their cup filled to the brim all at once. Isaiah commented about these spiritual learning experiences. “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isa. 28:10).

Many people today are thirsting for “knowing not what” and do not realize the prize they desire is contained

in Jesus’ words. Our lives are enriched and blessed by turning to the endless well of living water through worship of Jesus and his word. ☪

CALENDAR DATES

Graceland College Winter Term
Mexico Tour

January 6 – 15, 2008

PEOPLE AND PLACES
22nd Annual Book of Mormon
Archaeological Tour

January 26–February 5, 2008


Maya Meetings —
University of Texas at Austin
February 25 – March 2, 2008

South Chrysler Restoration Branch
Mexico Tour

March 9 – 19, 2008

GLYPH *Clips*

Ancient Tunnel Found in Jerusalem


The Associated Press (September 10, 2007) reported that in August Israeli archaeologists discovered an underground drainage channel that led to the discovery of a massive tunnel. The channel was found underneath what would become the main road of Jerusalem. The “walls of the tunnel—made of ashlar stones 3 feet deep – reach a height of 10 feet in some places and are covered by heavy stone slabs that were the road’s paving stones.” It dates to the end of the Second Temple or around AD 70 when the Romans sacked Jerusalem. It is believed numerous people took shelter in the drainage channel and lived inside it until they fled Jerusalem through its southern end, although the number of people who used the channel to escape is unknown. 

Thanks to Eric English for calling this to our attention.

New Light on the Founder of Copan


David Stuart, leading Maya epigrapher, posted June 25th on the Maya Decipherment blog a new understanding about K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo (KYKM), founder of Copan. Stuart was at Copan in June and while looking closely at Stela 63 noticed for the first time that KYKM has a special title with his name glyph followed by a place glyph translated as Three-Hills-Water. The same glyphs are also found on the later Stela J. Stuart says this is a known place name “identifiable with one and only one Maya site: Caracol, Belize.” Much has been said about KYKM’s association with Teotihuacan, but analysis of his bones indicate that his younger days were spent outside of Copan, probably in the Maya Lowlands,

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but not Teotihuacan in northern Mexico. This name glyph would support that belief. Stuart says, “I suspect KYKM was born as a member of Caracol’s nobility... but in AD 426 journeyed to Teotihuacan to receive the emblems and sanction of office and then established a ritual center – and a new political order – where Copan’s acropolis now lies.” <http://decipherment.wordpress.com/> Read more about Stela 63 at Nova Online: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/maya/copan.html>. 

Maya Meetings in Texas February 25 - March 2, 2008 Copan Archaeology and History: New Finds and New Research



Hieroglyphic Stairway and its associated sculptures. Read more at <http://www.utmaya.org/index.html>. 

The focus this year will be the spectacular Maya ruins at Copan, Honduras, perhaps the most thoroughly studied and excavated of all Maya sites. Key discoveries and advances continue to be made in recent years, even after a century of intensive research. One highlight of the 2008 Maya Meetings will be a detailed presentation of the very latest progress in reconstructing and deciphering the great

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