

GLYPH

Notes

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Sand of the Sea and Rising Suns

By Lyle Smith

In November 2006 I attended an archaeological conference on the Maya in Campeche, Mexico, hosted and organized by the Universidad Autonoma de Campeche. One of the presentations was about a ground survey that covered 500 meters on each side of the road that runs south from Mexican Highway 186 to the ruin of Calakmul. The distance is approximately 25 miles. In that thin line through the jungle, on each side of the small road that goes to Calak-

mul, 60 new archaeological sites were found. Wow, 60 new sites! If there were that many sites in such a narrow line, what about the jungle further out on both sides of the road?

A year later I returned to the same conference in Campeche and heard that 40 additional sites were found by a ground survey team 500 meters each side of the old logging road that goes south from Calakmul toward the border of Guatemala, much of it in what is now the Calakmul Biosphere.

This year, at the Maya Meetings at the University of

Texas in Austin in February, Ivan Sprajc from the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, gave a presentation called "Archaeology of Southeastern Campeche, Mexico: Recent Finds." He reported that a ground survey had been completed of the southeastern area of the state of Campeche, south of Mexican Highway 186, east of Calakmul in the Biosphere and to the border of Guatemala. *Eighty previously unknown sites were found.* Sprajc made the point that they did not find most of the sites from satellite photos, but rather used workers that had previously been *chicoleros* in the area.

In The Book of Mormon the statement is made: "And it came to

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Within 500 meters on either side of the road going into the ruin of Calakmul 60 new sites were discovered.



Wild turkeys venture out from the jungle on the road into Calakmul.



"Everyday that somebody goes to a different new mound – an insignificant heap of stone out in the rainforest – they could revolutionize the entire picture."

-- George Stuart

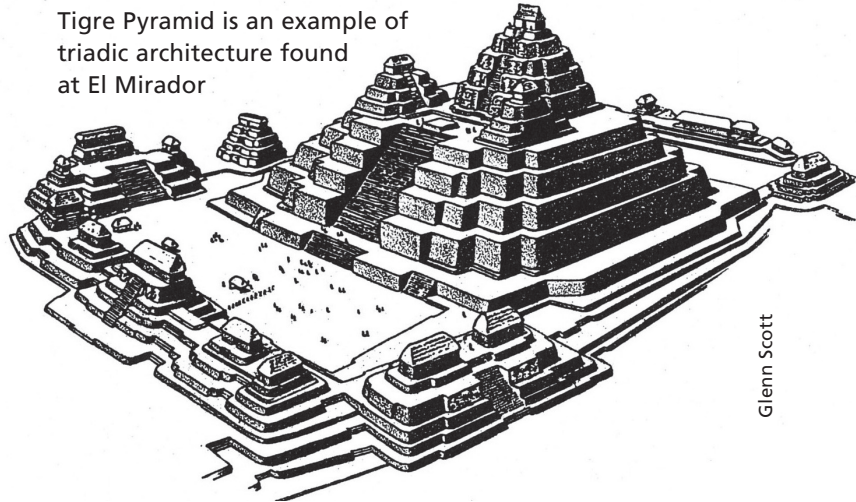
Sand of the Sea and Rising Suns (cont. from page 1)

pass that I, being eleven years old, was carried by my father into the land southward, even to the land of Zarahemla; the whole face of the land having become covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea" (Mormon 1:7). The year is AD 321. The current findings of these new ruins strongly confirm The Book of Mormon statement about population. The ruins are in the right place, south of the narrow neck, i.e. the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and at the right time, the late Preclassic up to AD 250 and the Classic period which begins about AD 250. Once again Book of Mormon cultural information is proven correct.

These newly found sites ranged from small to large in size. Yaxnohcah, one of the larger Preclassic ones, employed a style of buildings arranged in what is referred to as triadic architecture—one large pyramid with two smaller pyramids flanking the larger one on either side and in front. Yaxnohcah, though, wasn't the only site from these surveys to do this; many of them from the Preclassic period displayed this triadic architectural arrangement.

It was once believed that triadic architecture originated at the large site of Teotihuacan in central Mexico, but it was found at El Mirador in the Peten of Guatemala at an earlier date. In fact this

Tigre Pyramid is an example of triadic architecture found at El Mirador



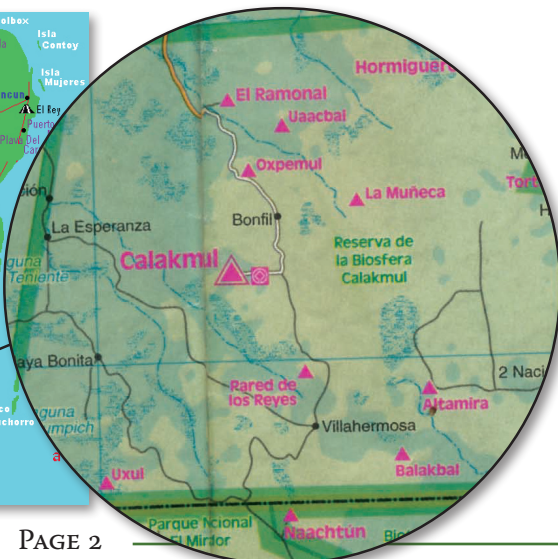
Glenn Scott

arrangement of three temples appears to be the norm in the late Preclassic period, in the years before AD 250.

I can only speculate why the people of Mesoamerica would consistently build in this pattern. Why would they have not built in groups of two or four or five, or just have a complete mixture as most societies have? There must be some reason. I believe, although I do not have archaeological evidence to prove it, that these three temples represented God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Part of my reason for believing this is that cultural studies of the area indicate "religion was of enormous importance during this era" (Cabrera, Sugiyama, & Cowgill 1991: 78) and Mesoamerica was "more closely tied together religiously before AD 250 than afterwards" (Pasztory 1988:75). This fits Book of Mormon history quite well.

Sprajc's research also discovered that some of the triadic groups were oriented for astronomical observations, like sunrises on February 12 and October 30. The amount of days between these two dates is 260. The Tzolk'in, Sacred Round of 260 days, is one of the three Maya calendars.

This astronomical observation happens not only at these sites in the southeastern part of Campeche like Calakmul, but at Xochicalco and the Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan, both in central Mexico. Sprajc mentioned that the Hopis and Zunis in the southwest of the United States also incorporated this orientation for the sunrise on the same dates. February begins the time for field preparation and planting and October 30 is the end of wet season and the beginning of harvest.



In the film *Breaking the Maya Code*, archaeologist George Stuart made what to me is an extremely important statement that bears repeating. “Everyday that somebody goes to a different new mound—an insignificant heap of stone out in the rain-forest—they could revolutionize the entire picture.”

In the last few years more than 180 new sites have been identified in one small area of Mesoamerica. What is yet to come forth


may well be astounding.

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GLYPH *Quotes* by Clyde W. Noren —

If there must be faith, there must be hope.—Moroni 10:16

People both young and old may wish for a gift for recognition of a birthday, an anniversary, or an accomplishment. Wishing is a form of hope found in the present world of materialism based on one’s personal wants. These wants today in the United States are found in people’s wishing and hoping for an improvement in economic conditions by government action.

Hope in a spiritual sense is more than wishing. Christians believe that man is here on Earth for the purpose of qualifying for a future life, eternally, with God and Christ. The Book of Mormon tells us in Alma 9:41 that this life is a probationary state, one of preparing for the future.

Preparing for the future, calls for faith. Faith is the first step in qualifying for the future by walking with God and Christ. Apostle Paul in his classic statement said,


“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

Moroni wrote about the correlation of faith and hope in The Book of Mormon by stating, “If there must be faith, there must be hope” (Mor. 10:16). The result of this correlation is found in the joy of living out one’s life with the expected hope of the fulfillment of the promises found in the Scriptures.

The faith of Lehi was very great in that he followed the Lord’s commandment to flee Jerusalem and depart into the near-by wilderness. Because of Lehi’s conviction in following the Lord’s command, Lehi’s son, Nephi, through the Holy Spirit received the promise that he, Nephi, would be led to a land of promise—a land which is chosen above all other lands (1 Nephi 1:54). This blessing occurred when Nephi and his people landed in Mesoamerica and began to prosper. Thus hope was fulfilled because of the faith of Nephi and his people.

Hope was prevalent in Apostle Paul’s ministry when he wrote that Jesus is the anchor of the soul and to lay hold upon the hope set before us (Heb. 6:18).

Joseph Smith, Jr., in the early years of the church was given the following revelation by means of prophetic insight and spiritual experience in 1830, “Lift up your hearts and be glad, for I am in your midst, and am your advocate with the Father; and it is his good will to give you the kingdom...” (D&C 28:2b).

The final result of a true believer’s hope and faith will be a joyous, peaceful, healthy, and equitable life in the eternal kingdom of God and Christ. 

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Review: *Breaking the Maya Code: The 200-Year Quest to Decipher the Hieroglyphs of the Ancient Maya*, A feature documentary by David Lebrun

By Sherrie Kline Smith

When Joseph Smith translated The Book of Mormon by the “gift and power” of God in 1829, he did not know about the hundreds of inscriptions found in Mesoamerica. It wasn't until 1841 that *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, by John Lloyd Stephens was published, and a wide audience learned about the ruins and hieroglyphic inscriptions.

Stephens wrote, “One thing I believe, that its history is graven on its monuments. No Champollion has yet brought to them the energies of his inquiring mind. **Who shall read them?**”

In the next 150 years, only a handful of scholars tried to read them. Many concluded it was impossible to “break the code.”

By the 1990s, though, major breakthroughs had occurred, and archaeologist Michael Coe took up pen (or computer!) and wrote his seminal text *Breaking the Maya Code*. In it he tells the story of how the Maya hieroglyphs were deciphered and those *who now can read them*.

This compelling story was transformed into a two-hour documentary film by David Lebrun with Night Fire Films, in conjunction with Arte France and major funding from the Humanities and National Science Foundation. The premier showing of the film was at the Maya Meetings in 2008 at the University of Texas-Austin. The archaeologists, epigraphers, linguists, and scholars that filled the room all stood for a standing ovation at the completion of the film. It is not only a beautiful and well-made film, but it explains in simple terms for the lay person *how* decipherment took place.

Those who see the movie, however, may wonder, “What does this have to do with The Book of Mormon?” If the Maya were descendants of peoples described in The Book of Mormon, then their writing system

Join us for the second screening of
Breaking the Maya Code
 2-hour Documentary Film
 Tuesday, May 26, 2009
 7 PM
 South Chrysler Restoration Branch
 Independence, Missouri
 Time for questions following the film.

should fit that found in The Book of Mormon, and in turn, with Hebrew and Egyptian. The producers of the film, however, do not make this clear. The parallels between Maya writing and language patterns and those with Middle Eastern scripts and languages are barely noted.

To that end, we are publishing this article to call things to your remembrance and to encourage you to read the articles listed at the end.

Some things to remember include the following.

1. Most of the hieroglyphic writings discovered to date in the Maya area were inscribed **after** the end of The Book of Mormon, or in other words, by Lamanites. Therefore, do not look for Nephite history, but do look for parallels in language structure and the writing.
2. Do not look for similarities in the outer appearance of the writing forms of Maya to Egyptian. These vary a great deal over time. Instead look to see if the writing system, i.e. grammar, is alike. If the systems share a common ancestor, the way the systems work will generally remain the same.
3. According to Nephi, he wrote on the plates using “the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians” (1 Nephi 1:1). Both Egyptian and Hebrew at 600 B.C. were phonetic. See also Mormon’s explanation in Mormon 4:98-100. Not all languages employ a phonetic script. Maya writing is phonetic.
4. The Maya writing system works like Egyptian, employing a mixed system of both phonetic and logographic signs, and resembles Egyptian in other ways such as reading order (arranged in columns and usually read right to left, but both can be reversed and read left to right), reading direction is indicated by the way the human and animal forms face, the number of signs (both have 700-800), and use of a cartouche to surround a name, etc.
5. Maya inscriptions or written texts show evidence



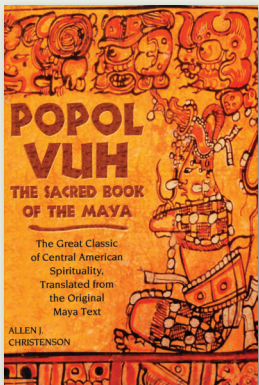
This portion of an inscription from Palenque has two “it had come to pass” glyphs—right hand column, the second and sixth from the top.

of ancient Hebraic literary conventions such as chiasmic structure and other poetic forms, like couplets, paired opposites, etc.—“the learning of the Jews.”

6. Some names in The Book of Mormon are also Maya names: Muluc (Mulek); Laman (from a Maya vase) and the site of Lamanai in Belize; Yich'aak (Isaac) from Calakmul and Ich'aak (Isaac) from Tikal; and Pakal (sometimes spelled Pacal), the great king from Palenque, is very like Pachus (Pakus).
7. In the film, they indicate that one of the key pieces to decipherment that opened a “flood” of readings was the understanding of the glyphs for “and it came to pass.” In the movie, however, and in later literature, the scholars abandoned the words “came to pass” and use instead “it happened” to modernize the translation.

Transcripts of the interviews with the scholars featured in the movie can be found under the Archive link on Night Fire's Web pages (<http://www.nightfirefilms.org/breakingthemayacode/>). Many of the transcripts are 40 or more printed pages, but they provide a lot of information that wasn't included in the film.

My advice is—enjoy the movie! But be aware of the missing links—those that help confirm that the Maya are descendants of the people in The Book of Mormon. ☺



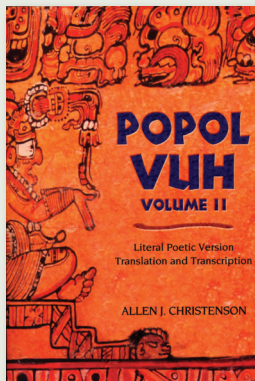
The Popol Vuh is by far one of the most important existing documents of a transcription by Spanish priests of a Pre-Columbian book using a modified Latin script. It has had many translations. The most recent was done by Allen J. Christenson with Brigham Young University.

In his introduction to the two-volume work published in 2003, he includes a section called “The Poetic Nature of the Popol Vuh.” Strangely enough, the poetic nature of the Popol Vuh exhibits some of the same types of poetry found in ancient Hebraic literature and The Book of

Mormon—parallelism, chiasmus, strophe, and couplets. Christenson doesn't make the correlation, but allows it to stand on its own. Those aware of the work of Mormon scholars about the Hebrew nature of The Book of Mormon and those in the Reorganization by Angela Crowell and Shirley Heater will have no trouble seeing the correlation. An example is the following.

“The account of the first creation is arranged as a single, large chiasm. Each phase of the creation is outlined in detail from primordial stillness to the formation of the face of the earth, along with its mountains and rivers. The final portion of this section then recapitulates the events of the creation in reverse order” (Christenson 2003:47).

Christenson taught one of the long workshops at the 2009 Maya Meetings at the University of Texas-Austin on the Popol Vuh.



Articles Showing Correlations between The Book of Mormon Language and the Maya Hieroglyphs

This sampling of articles can help tie the movie with The Book of Mormon. If you do not have copies and would like some, please write to PSI, P.O. Box 477, Independence, MO 64051.

Christenson, Allen J., translator
2003 *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Maya*, Volumes 1 & 2. New York: O Books. [The introduction is especially important. See sidebar.]

DeLong, Richard A.
1986 Chiasmus in Mesoamerican writing. Paper presented at the Sexta Mesa Redonda de Palenque, June 1986, Palenque, Chiapas. [This is an important paper, but we've been unable to locate a copy.]

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From the EDITOR

I strongly believe that you can never say “thank you” too much. So, thank you, thank you, thank you to all who have helped support PSI over the past year. We are grateful that contributions in 2008 rose slightly over 2007. The number of subscribers has also increased.

Eighty-five percent of the tax deductible gifts coming into PSI are earmarked for the production of *glyph notes*. Other important goals of PSI are to provide seminars, classes, workshop education, and outreach ministry. The remaining fifteen percent does not stretch very far to help these endeavors. Volunteers continue to shoulder these goals heavily; however, budgets are tight for everyone.

“Here today, gone tomorrow,” is a phrase that appears to be taking on a deeper meaning as our nation faces an economic downturn. The once glib expression used to pass things off lightly now pervades industries that have stood as icons in America and describes man’s loss of self confidence and faith in the world around him.

In the world of Mesoamerican archaeology, stelae and glyphs which have been and continue to be poorly protected are also “here today, gone tomorrow.” It is imperative that these discoveries, especially those that might have correlation to The Book of Mormon, are documented and information disseminated to those who desire to learn

of them before their carvings disappear.

Final issues of major newspapers are coming off the presses regularly across our country. Many have failed to survive and many more will soon stop production. PSI, too, has faced the possibility of not being able to continue publication of its newsletter *glyph notes*, but our supporters have always come through—and we trust that this will be the case again. We recognize that budgets are tight for most families, and that everyone will have to prioritize expenditures continually until economic conditions improve.

If you have not already done so, won’t you please take a moment to update your subscription to the newsletter now? A self-addressed envelope is provided in this issue for your convenience. If you are able, please include a little extra for those who may be facing difficult times and are unable to subscribe or to help provide ministry to those in outlying areas. PSI classes are scheduled in the area surrounding Independence, Missouri, but requests for ministry in outlying areas are numerous.

Exciting discoveries which bear correlations to the events and people of The Book of Mormon are surfacing at an increased speed. PSI doesn’t want you to miss the opportunity to be among the first to know.

Patricia J. Beebe

JOY *Line* By Joy Muir _____

One day last fall George Thomas and Dick Smith were driving along a lonely road on the Pine Ridge Reservation (Lakota Sioux) in South Dakota. They spotted a man and a woman walking beside the road. Realizing the couple had a long walk ahead of them, they stopped to give them a lift. As they drove along, the men shared the gospel with them and eventually came to our belief in The Book of Mormon.

George, knowing the conditions on the reservation—incredible poverty, alcoholism, and a general feeling of hopelessness—told them of the *book of hope*. He explained that one of the purposes for this special book was to bring hope to the First Nation People,

and that it tells about their forefathers. The actual name of the book, he finally said, is The Book of Mormon.


As they continued visiting, the woman spoke up and asked if it were possible for her to have one of these *books of hope*. George said yes and handed her a copy. After several more miles the husband asked if he too could have a *book of hope*. When they finally reached their destination, the couple left the car—each with a copy of The Book of Mormon.

We do not know if the books have made or will make any difference in the lives of this couple, but because George and Dick shared the *books of hope* with them, there

“Exciting discoveries which bear correlations to the events and people of The Book of Mormon are surfacing at an increased speed. PSI doesn’t want you to miss the opportunity to be among the first to know.”

are two more copies of this very special witness of Christ on the reservation. In the five years George has been going to Pine Ridge he has given away 22 of these *books of hope*. We hope that many more will find their way into the hands of not just the Native Americans but into the hands of

all who need to know about this special witness, this *book of hope*.

Seventy George Thomas is a convert to the church whose wonderful testimonies bring ministry everywhere he goes. He is happiest when serving his God. 



GLYPH *Clips*

Cacao (Chocolate) in Chaco Canyon

From David Stuart's Blog

<http://decipherment.wordpress.com/>

"Here's an interesting news tidbit, from a recent *Times* article on new chemical evidence of cacao usage in the American Southwest, at the famous site of Chaco Canyon. The tall cylinder vessels found there bear a striking resemblance to the common form of Late Classic Maya cacao pots, and in fact I've long wondered if they could indicate a connection to Mesoamerica. Seems they do."

The article was "Mystery on Ancient Pueblo Jars Solved" by Michael Haederle, *The New York Times*, February 3, 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/04/us/04cocoa.html>

New Discovery at El Mirador, Guatemala

On March 7, 2009, Richard Hansen, who has been researching in the El Mirador basin for many years, revealed a major find to reporters of a pair of monumental stucco panels at the massive site of El Mirador in Guatemala, "considered the largest of all ancient Maya cities in Mesoamerica." The 26-foot-long panels made of carved and modeled lime plaster lined a water collection system in a part of the city known as the Central Acropolis. Both the panels and water tanks date to the Late Preclassic period, from 300 BC to about AD 250. The panels depict two "swimming" individuals framed by cosmic monsters. Hansen says, "We tentatively believe that the 'swimmers' represent the Hero Twins of the Popol Vuh."

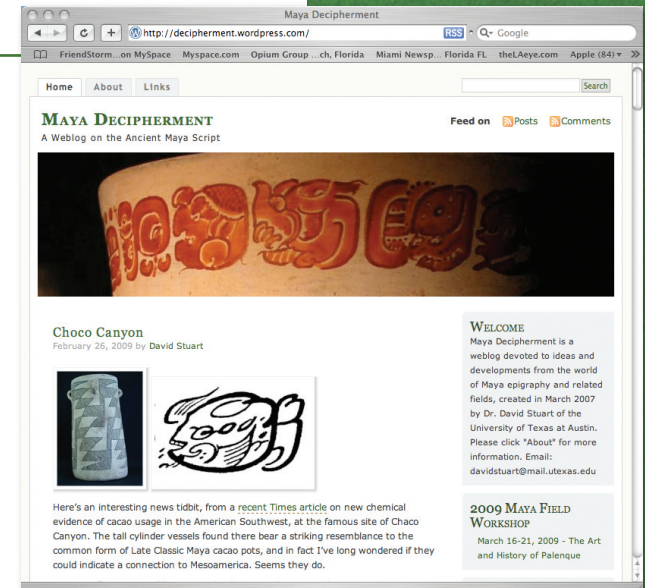
From Idaho State University Headlines

<http://www2.isu.edu/headlines/?p=1711>

More Evidence for Horses

A recent news item (February 15, 2009, *The Herald News* of Fall River, Mass.) submitted by Edgar Pillsbury announced continued analysis of a large cache of ice age fossils. Discovered in 2006, the finds are near the La Brea Tar Pits in California and include a near intact mammoth skeleton, a skull of an American lion, bones of saber-toothed cats, dire wolves, bison, horses, ground sloths, and other mammals. Fossil horses were also found at the original La Brea Tar Pits near Los Angeles. These pits were first noticed in the 1700s, but excavations began in the 1940s and '50s.

Ice ages from the Biblical perspective are associated with the aftermath of Noah's flood—leaving mass burials such as those at and near the La Brea Tar Pits. The earliest mention of horses in The Book of Mormon is about 600+ years after the Jaredites came to the New World—that they "had" horses (Ether 4:21). Nephi relates nearly 1800 years later



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GLYPH *Clips* (cont. from page 7)

that they found horses when they came to the Promised Land (1 Nephi 5:216). Horses are last mentioned in AD 26, shortly before the time of the crucifixion and great destruction throughout the lands. It's at that time perhaps horses disappear from the scene.

The discovery in the early 1800s, however, of a unique curly coat horse has created a mystery! Not related to the Spanish horses brought to the New World at the time of the Conquest, the American Bashkir Curly is considered an ancient breed. They appear in early Chinese art and statuary (early first century AD) and also in Russia. How did they get to the New World and when? A possible connection with the Jaredites is suggested. Evidences of horses have been documented in a carving at Chichen Itza, remains in the ancient Maya *cenotes* in the Yucatan as well as the Loltun Cave, and in excavations at Mayapan. (See Glenn Scott, *Voices from the Dust*, pp. 88-91.)



Pyramid at Uxmal, Mexico

INAH (National Institute of Anthropology and History) reports that during maintenance work on the illumination system that was installed in the 1970s for the popular "Light and Sound" show at Uxmal they discovered a section dating from 250-500 AD exhibiting architectural details much different than the Puuc style of the visible ruins. The find was in one of the substructures of the great pyramid at Uxmal, commonly called the Pyramid of the Magician.

According to Robert Sharer in the latest (6th) edition of *The Ancient Maya*, "little in the way of systematic archaeological excavation has been done . . . [Uxmal] reached its apogee between ca. AD 800 and 1000, but the length of occupation before and after this era is little known" (2006:536). This find of earlier construction confirms a presence somewhat 300-400 years earlier. The story was on page 5 at INAH's Web blog pages:



Lyle Smith

http://dti.inah.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=39&Itemid=150&limit=9&limitstart=36.

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