

GLYPH

Notes

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Discovering the Lost Worlds of The Book of Mormon: Sixty years of Progress!

by Shirley R Heater

The review that follows is an excerpt from a longer work to be published in the inaugural issue of Quetzal Codex. See end of article for information on how to obtain the full version.

This year—2010—marks 180 years since The Book of Mormon was published in 1830. As part of honoring The Book of Mormon after 180 years, it is appropriate to assess the progress in evidences predicted in its pages since 1830. The sheer volume of information accumulated in the last 60 years is astonishing, revealing civilizations lost to the world stretching from c. 3000 BC to c. AD 400 (the core time span of The Book of Mormon account) and beyond. This created a challenge, so I offer this as an overview, acknowledging there's lots more that could be included. I would say that's a great problem to have to deal with!

DARKNESS REIGNS

Discovering the New World

The discovery and conquest of the New World (NW) is a complex story. Until Columbus's initial discovery of the Caribbean Islands in 1492 (Heater 1992a, 1992b), most of the world was ignorant of the existence of the NW and initially considered for some time that the Indies had been found. Spanish conquistadors arrived¹ in Middle America in the Maya area (once spread over the Yucatan, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras) and encountered existing Maya centers such as Tulum, Utatlan and Tayasal. They brought "a scourge marked by brutality, catastrophic epidemic diseases," and "protracted, traumatic subjugation that consumed thousands [actually, millions! SRH] of lives, soldiers and nonsoldiers alike" as these and other centers were crushed. Nearby, unseen by these invaders, lie the remains of an even earlier "brilliant civilization," fallen into decay centuries before and hidden beneath the tropical forests (Sharer 2006:1-4, 757-772).

At Veracruz on the Gulf Coast, the Spaniards landed and eventually made their way to Tenochtitlán, the Aztec² capital located in the Valley of Mexico, its remains now buried

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¹ Spaniards landed on the east coast of the Yucatan in 1511; expeditions, battles and conquest continued throughout the Maya area until 1546 with the final conquest of the Yucatan; it wasn't until 1697 that Tayasal, the last independent Maya capital in the Peten, was captured and destroyed (Sharer 2006:758).

² Origin of the Aztecs is pinpointed to the twelfth century AD, believed most likely to be Chichimec barbarians from the north who absorbed the Toltec culture, religion and practices of those they conquered.

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under Mexico City. The bearded conquistadors were hesitantly received as fulfillment of an ancient prophecy of a bearded white god prophesied to return. This was a puzzlement to the new arrivals, but it aided their successful defeat of the native peoples they had found (Prescott 1964; see also Coe 2002:225-228³). The powerful Aztec empire “of at least 11 million people” fell in 1521 to a “tiny force of about 400 men” (Coe 2002:227).

Confusion followed, resulting from witnessing remnants of perverted Christian practices—which, some thought, had perhaps been brought from the Old World (OW) by Saint Thomas or other Christian travelers. Decadent practices such as human blood sacrifices were blasphemous, too extreme for even the cruel Spaniards to tolerate, and they burned many native records as “works of the devil.” The conquerors, leaders and priests, etc. struggled to understand not only the origins of the remnant civilizations, but their place in the history of the world. Today, there is potential to learn from original native writings “an enormous amount of literature in their own languages ... to preserve knowledge that was endangered by the destruction of books in the Mayan script,” accounts written in response to the European invasion—“many still hidden in unpublished manuscripts ... largely unreadable until recently” (Tedlock 2010:2).

Earliest observations and accounts come from the conquerors, churchmen, civil servants and Indian intellectuals (Bernal 1980:35), consisting of letters, memoirs and autobiographies of eyewitnesses (Adams 2005:5) [covering the general time period 1517-1670]⁴; archival research of old histories (Bernal 1980:49), consisting of documentary data, native questionnaires, bishops, lawsuits and records of 200 years of Spanish rule (Adams 2005:6) [1670-1790]; historians and travelers (Bernal 1980:103, 142), consisting of early exploration, broad scholarship in national interest and comparative studies leading to the first synthesis of pre-Columbian culture (Adams 2005:6-7) [1790-1880]; and, finally, the beginnings and development of archaeology in the NW, officially founded and recognized in 1910 [1880-1910], progressing until 1950 (Bernal 1980:160; others say 1960 [Adams 2005:8, 11; Sabloff:1990:5]), when a new era of archaeology began.


Old Archaeology Views

Under the old archaeological system leading up to 1950, theories accumulated that included estimates of low rural population based on slash and burn agriculture, a peaceful harmonious society overseen by astronomer priests, non-urban “vacant” ceremonial centers, non-historical hieroglyphic inscriptions which were calendrical, astronomical and religious in nature, and the assumption of the Classic Maya highpoint of AD 300 to 900 with little attention to any prior “primitive” civilization. All conflicted with The Book of Mormon account!

One way conflict between archaeology and The Book of Mormon account was/is⁵ dealt with by some Book of Mormon believers was/is to take the position that “archaeology” didn’t/doesn’t matter, and that a floating calendar and floating geography were/are okay. But that position is a disservice to The Book of Mormon which deserves the same treatment and respect as does the Bible—considering real people, real places, real time and real evidences, all which strengthen the spiritual message and testimony of Jesus Christ. Also during the first 120 years after publication of The Book of Mormon, many incorrect ideas and suppositions were assumed by other Book of Mormon believers based on the limited archaeological evidences, erroneous views and theories available during those times. Complicating any correlation of The Book of Mormon with a location and ancient civilization was nearly a century of views that all of North and South America constituted Book of Mormon lands, with the Narrow Neck in Panama, the Land Northward extending to New York and the Land Southward all of

South America. Finally, Louis Hills’ 1917 map of Mesoamerica compiled from the internal requirements of The Book of Mormon shifted the focus to a more limited geography in Mesoamerica, with the Isthmus of Tehuantepec identified as the Narrow Neck, a position accepted by most Book of Mormon scholars today (Sorenson 1992:32).

From our vantage point today, we must look back nearly 500 years through the barrier caused by the Spanish Conquest. And as we continue to move further back in time, another barrier looms c. AD 900 when the large Maya centers were virtually abandoned and fell into disrepair—called the Classic



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³ Coe presents a differing view from Prescott: “...far from being held in thrall by a view of Cortéz as the returned Quetzalcoatl, Motecuhzoma appears to have dealt with him as what he said he was, namely, an ambassador from a distant and unknown ruler” (Coe 2002:227).

⁴ Ranges, variously divided by Bernal 1980, Adams 2005 and Stuart 1992:1-63, are reflected here grouped or averaged in a general way.

⁵ While many of these ideas harken back to the 19th century, it needs to be emphasized that they do still exist today.

Maya Collapse—as the Maya continued but at a much lesser level of accomplishment, no new glyphs, little building, etc., until the time of the Conquest. Our time travel through those two barriers to the close of The Book of Mormon account, AD 421, reveals an even earlier barrier, the destruction of the Nephite nation by their brethren, after which the victorious Lamanites continued many generations (declining at the Classic Maya Collapse).

But our advantage is that we *do* have a record to guide us through these barriers—the historical account in The Book of Mormon. These barriers have been falling and become less of a hindrance as evidences of these earlier peoples—their great cities and accomplishments buried under layers of time—finally have come to light in the last 60 years.

60 YEARS OF INCREASING LIGHT

A Revolution

In the last 60 years, archaeology (actually, science in general) “has experienced a revolution in outlook and technique”—moving forward from the era of “only rudimentary methods ... form(ing) their theories largely by unconsciously projecting romantic notions onto past cultures” (Sabloff 1990:dust jacket). This new era is marked by new views, new technology, new methods and the overturning of outdated ideas. The new archaeology impacted cultural interpretation, population estimates, subsistence (food production), civilization, cities, religion, historical records and political ideas. Adams states that “(a)s much work has been done in the past 50 years as was done in the preceding one hundred and fifty” (2005:11). Most significantly for us, these new discoveries have consistently confirmed the unchanging Book of Mormon account. Many criticisms of The Book of Mormon were/are based on outdated information!

Pivotal events in 1948 set the stage for the next six decades of many profound discoveries—on May 14, 1948, Israel became a nation. And also that year, radiocarbon dating was “discovered”⁶—the first, fulfillment of ancient prophecies; the last, a scientific breakthrough. While these are seemingly unrelated events, the impact of each comes together in one sacred book, The Book of Mormon.

Book of Mormon Chronology

The Book of Mormon account presents three groups of people journeying from the OW to the NW; and, it is specific about the time period it presents—the earliest (the Jaredites) from the time of the Biblical “confounding of languages” event (believed until recently according to Bishop Usher’s Biblical chronology to be c. 2200 BC, but

more likely c. 3000 BC) and two (Lehi and Mulek) escaping the destruction of Jerusalem and Babylonian captivity of Israel (c. 598-586 BC). In the NW, high civilization *was* found, mainly in the Mesoamerican area—the only area that fits the requirements of The Book of Mormon account. The so-called Classic Maya were known to flourish beginning AD 300 (in comparison to the high achievements of the Greeks). Another people called the Olmec were generally believed to be either contemporary with or post-date the Maya (with a growing view among Olmec scholars that they actually *pre*-dated the Maya). In fact, most attention was given to the Classic Maya (c. AD 300-AD 900) and the Aztecs (c. 1200-1520).

Additionally, in the early decades of Mesoamerican archaeology, a “floating” chronology was developed based on the reading of hieroglyphic calendrical “dates” from sculpture and codices. The complexity of the two-calendar Maya system—the “short” count (calendar round) and the “long” count—could not be pinned down to Gregorian (or modern) dates. Systems by Goodman, Martinez and Thompson (GMT), as well as Spinden and others, competed for acceptance. Relative dating was the norm—older material lay beneath newer material (established through stratigraphic excavation techniques at the beginning of the archaeological period of 1910). No dates or archaeological evidence in the NW could be specifically tied to either of the required time periods of The Book of Mormon—they were not old enough! Add in the mix, the unresolved question of whether the Olmec culture pre-dated, post-dated or was contemporary with the Maya, and it might be an understatement to say these were highly charged, emotional issues.

Radiocarbon Dating—an archaeological “atomic bomb”

During the decade of the 1950s, the newly discovered ¹⁴C dating process was being applied to Mesoamerican artifacts, first to wood from a lintel (from above a door frame) at Tikal. Results were mixed, but it was determined that the wood samples were missing their outer rings and thus the dates were “off” or earlier than actual. New samples (without missing wood) were tested and the results were shown to support the GMT correlation, tentatively accepted by that time by the majority of most but not all Mayanists (Taylor 2000:8-9). Today, GMT is the accepted correlation in Mesoamerican studies.

The Gulf Coast Olmec also became the focus of ¹⁴C testing to help resolve the question of their place in Mesoamerican history. Tests performed on material from La Venta resulted in proof that the Olmec not only pre-dated the Maya, but were astonishingly even earlier, emerging “as a thriving community by 800 BC

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⁶ “(T)he origin of ¹⁴C could be set as early as 1946—the date of the first paper on ‘radiocarbon’...or as late as 1951—the first published ¹⁴C list....If an actual ‘birthday’ for ¹⁴C is desired, it might be identified as the day on which the first ¹⁴C ‘date’—an Egyptian archaeological sample—was actually calculated. This was July 12, 1948” (Taylor 2000:2).

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and was abandoned in the fifth century BC, 700 years before the Maya Classic period even began.” Subsequent testing revealed that La Venta became a dominant capital after 900 BC, with roots dating back at least to 1200 BC (Diehl 2004:15, 60). Dates at the Olmec center San Lorenzo are even earlier! Diehl describes San Lorenzo as “Mesoamerica’s first city, and perhaps the oldest urban center anywhere in the Americas” (Diehl 2004:29; see also Coe and Diehl 1980:395-396).

The impact of these and other radiocarbon test results was nothing short of “an archaeological atomic bomb.” Responses included “(f)requent howls of protests, often savagely derogatory,” “all sorts of consternation,” a “period of initial suspicion and even, in some quarters, hostility” (Taylor 2000:2-5, selected quotes). As the process became accepted, refined testing techniques were developed for more accuracy, with the need to calibrate, or correct, the results using tree-ring dating (dendrochronology). Calibrated dates are used freely in many published archaeology reports. In many cases, the reader is not informed whether the dates are radiocarbon or calibrated. Diehl in his latest book on the Olmec does not use calibrated dates, explaining that

I justify flouting this modern archaeological practice by observing that we have so few radiocarbon determinations for the critical points in Olmec history that to calibrate them would appear to lend them more validity than they merit. I prefer to continue to use our “old-fashioned” three-century blocks of time, periods that are supported by the existing radiocarbon dates, until we are better equipped to inject fine nuances into our history (Diehl 2004:10).

Outlines Compared

Although radiocarbon dating has not proven to be as “absolute” as once expected it is still the valuable discovery that has filled in a matching or mirror image timeline of Mesoamerican archaeology (utilizing the GMT correlation) and The Book of Mormon, not possible before ¹⁴C. Ray Treat published the first simplified outline comparison in 1978, stating that “(t)he most important type of evidence at the present time supporting the Book of Mormon is a correlation of the outline of the Book of Mormon and Mesoamerican archaeology at strategic points along the approximately 2800⁷ years of their common history” (Treat 1992 [1978:1]). The basic outline has not only stood the test of time, but new information gleaned from archaeology reports have filled in even more details. Table 1 (see p. 9) presents a new, updated comparison chart filled with parallel major points—including timeline, cultural and linguistic—that continue to confirm the steadfast and unchanging account of The Book of Mormon.

It clearly is obvious that both the Olmec and Maya civilizations mirror The Book of Mormon requirements,

leading us to broadly equate them with the Jaredites (Olmec) and Nephites-Lamanites-Mulekites (Maya).

To quote Lyle Smith (personal communication):

Recently I spoke with a current, well acknowledged and published archaeologist. He was formerly the Chairman of the Anthropology Department of a major university here in the U.S. He reaffirmed that when you look at archaeological history, over a period of years, and compare it with another source that claims to give the history of the period, one can always have, by chance, a few areas of correspondence. But when that number is much larger, such as the eight Olmec and twelve Maya areas of correspondence listed [in Smith’s Olmec and Maya presentations, Smith 2010a, 2010b], *chance is very unlikely.* [emphasis added]

Literate After All

On the heels of the breakthroughs of radiocarbon dating which began to resolve the timeline issues, another storm was brewing over the Maya hieroglyphs. For decades, the historical nature of the glyphs had been dismissed—mainly by J Eric S Thompson who ruled by going “for the jugular” against any differing views (Coe 1992:123-144)—as well as understanding the nature of their composition. Progress was stymied, until a forward-thinking Russian, Yuri Knorosov, steeped in OW languages, took the position that the Maya hieroglyphs were based on the same OW system:

Up to the present time, some specialists have held to the view that on the American continent before the European colonization, there was not writing in the true sense of that word. The various systems of writing ... were regarded as pictographic or ideographic. However, it is now known with certainty that the civilized peoples of ancient America ... had hieroglyphic writing of the same type as that of the Old World, of China, Egypt, Sumeria, and so forth (Knorosov 1958:284).

Knorosov went on to say that “Maya writing has no rival on the American continent. ... Until the hieroglyphic texts are studied, it will be impossible to study fully the civilization of the ancient Maya” (1958:286). His translations and ideas were met with extreme resistance, although eventually embraced as on the right track. However, Thompson continued to deny any OW connection and asserted that the Maya system “came from an entirely indigenous development” (Schele and Freidel 1990:52).

The inkling of historicity was confirmed with Heinrich Berlin’s recognition of glyphs on the sarcophagus at Palenque (discovered by Alberto Ruz) as “names of the ancestors of the individuals buried in this spectacular Late Classic tomb,” as well as Emblem Glyphs for eight

⁷ Now considered more likely 3500 years.



Figure 1. Yaxchilan Double Emblem Glyph—"muluc" is the portion highlighted in yellow.

Maya cities or place names (Coe 1992:177-178). Berlin's 1958 paper included the dual Emblem Glyph for Yaxchilan (see figure 1), one identified as *Muluc* (Marcus 1976:76) and catalogued T-511 (often linked with "water") in Thompson's *A Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs* (1962:110-111). Readers will recognize the association of *Muluc* with Yaxchilan as a possible candidate for The Book of Mormon city Zarahemla (Simmons and Treat 1984). Interestingly, secular archaeology of late is backing away from this translation (one wonders why? perhaps to distance it from The Book of Mormon?)—for instance Sharer (2006:138) ignores T-511 (*Muluc*) and only mentions its paired T-562 glyph "split sky." Most recently the T-511 sign is referred to as "yej" as a term for 'mouth' or 'teeth' with no mention of "Muluc" (Tedlock 2010:97-98). Not so easily ignored is also the day sign "muluc" (one of twenty) recorded by Bishop Diego de Landa in the 16th century, and in the Madrid Codex and the inscriptions (Coe 1992:102).

Another well-known hieroglyphic translation in the 1980s is "and it came to pass," heralded by believers as a strong connection to the writing style found in both The Book of Mormon, as well as the Bible—one of the most frequently used Hebraisms in The Book of Mormon (Crowell 1992:4; see figure 2). In recent years, this hieroglyphic translation, too, has undergone a change—switching to the phrase "it happened" (in my opinion, for the same reason "muluc" has been downgraded). But the Hebrew word *va*(=and) *yehee* also can be translated "it happened." According to "J. A. Weingreen's *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, the author comments concerning the meaning of this phrase, "This, rather than implying a continuation with what has preceded, has little more force (when translated) than 'now it

happened'" (Crowell 1992:5). So it seems little is gained by altering the translated phrase!

Overall, a number of glyphs have been translated that have a unique connection to The Book of Mormon, in addition to "muluc" and "it came to pass." The name of a Maya king K'inich *Laman Ek'* of Motul de San Jose (a site south of Tikal) (Grube 2000:156) may be a memory of Lehi's son for whom the Lamanite protagonists are called, and which also reminds us of the Maya site of Lamanai, one of a few where the original name is known.

Translation of the glyphs is not the whole story—we must include the pattern or style of writing as well. In 1967, a young LDS serving his mission in Germany learned of Biblical chiasmus at a lecture on the New Testament. Jack Welch went on to discover this pattern in The Book of Mormon, resulting in an article "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" in *BYU Studies* in 1969, the subject of his 1970 master's thesis, and in the introduction to the 1981 volume *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, which also included a chapter on this subject. This was a landmark publication, with The Book of Mormon included along with worldwide scholars of the Hebrew Bible, Sumero-Akkadian, Ugaritic, Aramaic and Talmudic-Aggadic (Welch 1999; 2007; Smith 2007).

Chiasmus is only the beginning of the internal revelations of a Hebraic literary style within The Book of Mormon. Subsequent studies have spotlighted numerous simple as well as complex forms (e.g., Crowell 1992:4-30). Remarkably, Dr Richard A DeLong (then a professor at Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa, and member of Foundation for Research on Ancient America—FRAA) presented a paper "Chiasmus in Mesoamerican Writing" at a Palenque Roundtable in 1986. The late Kathryn Josserand, along with her husband Nicholas Hopkins, credit DeLong for influencing the direction of their hieroglyphic decipherment and recognition of the chiastic structure in Maya writing (Smith 2007). A new translation of the *Popol Vuh* (written, according to Allen Christenson, by anonymous native authors in the 16th Century who "refer to themselves only as 'we'") is "a sublime work of literature, composed of rich and elegant poetry"

" AND IT CAME TO PASS . . . "



vayehee (it came to pass)
HEBREW



BASIC "IT CAME TO PASS" GLYPH
(From carved inscriptions)

Figure 2. "and it came to pass" in Hebrew and the basic glyph (Scott 2002:218)

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(Christenson 2007:35, 42; see also Christenson 2004) which highlights many poetic forms, including chiasms, other numerous types of parallelisms and parallel lines (from two to six). *Popol Vuh* themes of creation, birth, death and resurrection have been traced to the Pre-Classic site of San Bartolo and El Mirador. In addition, V Garth Norman's work at Izapa, Stela 5, has revealed a chiasmic or mirror image structure, also with subjects of creation and resurrection—an even earlier tie to the *Popol Vuh* themes (as well as OW geometric measurements) (Norman 2003:740-744). Once considered influenced by Spanish priests, the themes and poetic forms linked to the Pre-Classic era confirm that the *Popol Vuh* has genuine ancient roots.

Most recently, Dennis Tedlock has pointed out that not only is Maya literature in the form of parallel verse and recurrent patterns, but also a present-day interaction with a priest-shaman in Guatemala revealed that when he (Tedlock) asked a simple non-poetic question, the response was composed in poetry. In other words, the answer revealed the ability “to improvise long runs of parallel verse without the aid of writing ... in the course of conversations, including interviews conducted by field workers” (Tedlock 2010:2-3). This “thought and speech process” has also recently been discovered in The Book of Mormon and will be reported in the first issue of *Quetzal Codex*.

More Matching Cultural Fingerprints

As we have seen thus far, major, dramatic evidences have overturned previously held views that differed with The Book of Mormon. Other old views also began toppling—low population, vacant ceremonial centers with peaceful astronomer priests, and raising food crops using the slash-and-burn method. These views are intertwined and their reversal is also linked. Work in the 60s and 70s produced population estimates at Maya centers and surrounding “rural” areas much higher than expected. Subsequent evidences highlighted “intensive” agricultural methods which would support a higher population, such as irrigation canals and raised fields. In addition, the discovery of barley (an OW food product) in the NW was groundbreaking verification of The Book

of Mormon record. The image of “the peaceful Maya” quickly evaporated with evidences of ditch and bank fortifications at such sites at Tikal and Becan (see cross-section drawings in figure 3), as well as murals at Bonampak and Cacaxtla depicting warfare. With investigations at the northern Guatemala site of El Mirador, not only is the old “low population” view demolished by its vast size, its extensive fortifications also add to the overall warfare image. But that's not all! The dating of the site in the Late and Terminal Pre-Classic (c. 350 BC to AD 250) falls right in the midst of The Book of Mormon era, revealing earlier origins of the Classic culture. The discovery of a nearby site of Nakbe, dated possibly as early as 600 BC, further pushed the recognition of complex civilization indisputably in the right time frame (and place), matching Book of Mormon history. The Classic Maya are no longer the star of the show—the Pre-Classic are taking center stage—just the exact time period of The Book of Mormon! Groundbreaking work at San Bartolo, also in the Pre-Classic period, is also part of the picture.

The Dynamics of Ceramics

This overview would not be complete without touching on two examples from archaeology that also dramatically fit The Book of Mormon account.

Mosiah and the people of Nephi were led by the Lord from the Land of Nephi down into the Land of Zarahemla, about 200 BC. Prior to 200 BC archaeological evidences in these two areas are distinctly different. Occupants of the northern lowlands are identified as Mamom (Mulekite), with a specific art style and figurines. In the highlands of Guatemala, the Chicanel (Nephite) culture developed. Then about 200 BC, the Chicanel replaced the Mamom in the lowlands—a change in both architecture and cessation of figurines, indicative of a new religion. This change in the archaeological record suggests “that lowland Maya culture was a result of a union and blending—an *amalgamation* of two regional cultures (i.e. Nephites and Mulekites)” (Scott 2002:119-121 italics in original).

Evidences of a second migration event in The Book of Mormon have also been identified. After a group of Lamanites (Anti-Nephi-Lehis who became known as the people of Ammon) were converted, they were relocated about 76 BC from their homeland in the Land of Nephi to the Land of Jershon (Alma 15:22-29). Later, converted Zoramites also arrive in Jershon and the people of Ammon subsequently moved to the Land of Melek to make way for the Nephites and converted Zoramites to contend with the invading Lamanites and dissident Zoramites (Alma 16:254). At the site of Chalchuapa, El Salvador, a distinct pottery has been found which was named Aguacate

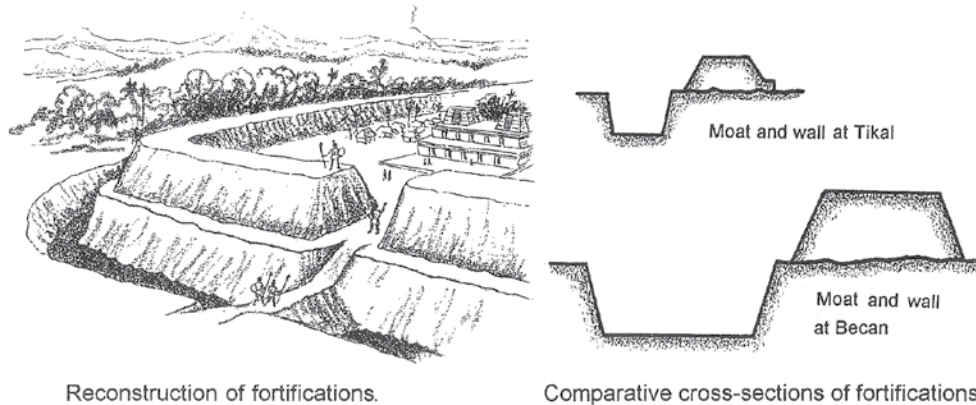


Figure 3. Fortifications at Tikal and Becan compared in cross-section (Scott 2002:168)

Orange (dating around 100 BC). Almost directly north of Chalchuapa in Belize, a pottery style was independently found which was named Floral Park. It wasn't until a conference in Guatemala City in 1965 that the two pottery collections were recognized as being "so close that individual sherds ... can barely be distinguished one from another" (Sharer and Gifford 1970:446). See figure 4. The story gets even better when this same pottery type is found at Dos Pilas, Seibal and Aguateca (evidence that Ammonites relocated to the Land of Melek) (Scott

2002:154-155). These evidences from archaeology are useful in pinpointing and confirming the location of the lands referred to in The Book of Mormon!

CONCLUSIONS—A FUTURE OF EXPECTATIONS

How can I write a "normal" conclusion which, according to writing guidelines, should summarize and neatly tie up the points that have been made? As I look over the progress of the last 60 years, I'm finding it difficult to restrain my enthusiasm for the breakthroughs—if I were standing before you presenting this material, I would not—could not restrain my excitement! Nor, admittedly, can I do so here. In the above review of the story of the unfolding evidences over the past decades, I have not included an exhaustive listing of all that has been discovered and may, in fact, have omitted something someone else might think should be here.

We will see evidences continue to accumulate, in linguistic studies, more focus archaeologically on the Pre-Classic period, and the future expansion of Maya studies by natives themselves, along with more insights relating to the growing together of the Bible and Book of Mormon and an awareness of its purpose and prophecies yet to be fulfilled in these Last Days. The message is spiritual—the archaeological evidences are temporal, confirming validity of the record as historical, being mindful that all things are spiritual.

Ultimately, the purposes and message of The Book of Mormon will go forth to the Lamanites specifically to restore to them the knowledge of what the Lord has done for their fathers, "that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever" (Title Page).

I firmly believe the confirming evidences required by The Book of Mormon account have been provided as part of the Lord's timing in preparation for greater things yet to come, and by com-

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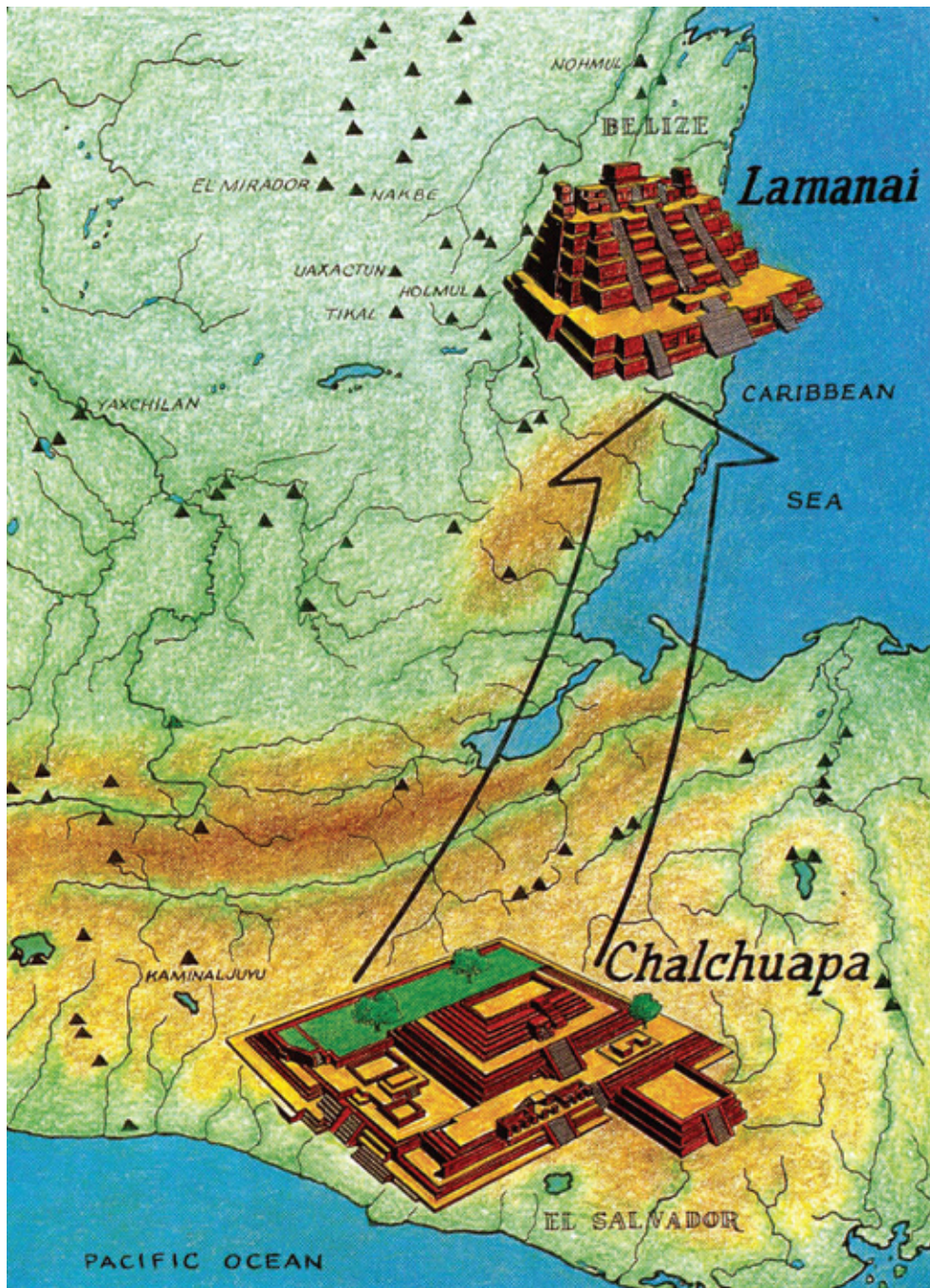



Figure 4. Archaeologists confirm that a people – makers of a distinctive orange pottery at sometime after 140 BC, migrated from El Salvador to the lowlands of Belize (Scott 2002:Plate I).

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parison are actually the *lesser* of what He has in store (see 3 Nephi 12:1-5). The scriptures promise that many things are available as we exercise faith. Hebrews 11:1 says that “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” From this vantage point of 180 years since The Book of Mormon was published, the “unseen” evidences that our faith hoped for have become “seen.” The Book of Mormon is taking its place as a testimony of Jesus Christ alongside the Bible. The promises and prophecies within The Book of Mormon reveal that there are many records yet to come forth—the Plates of Brass, Mormon’s library with both Nephite and Jaredite records, as well as other writings spoken of in First Nephi 3:249-251 and Second Nephi 12:64-72, including the words of the lost tribes of Israel, as well as the testimony of others, and perhaps the most revered—the sealed vision of the brother of Jared. The best is yet to come!

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Note: The full version of this article will be available for download and printing at www.quetzalarchaeology.org later this summer. Please feel free to share the link or print and share the article with others without Internet access. 

MESOAMERICAN & BOOK OF MORMON TIMELINES COMPARED

With Selected Old World & Biblical Added

Note: To follow the timeline sequence, start at the bottom of the chart.

	Mesoamerica	Dates ¹	Book of Mormon
28	Maya continue today	Present Day	Remnant of Lehi's seed awaiting promises
27	Classic Maya Collapse, many cities abandoned	AD 900	Lamanites continue many generations
26	Conquest warfare	AD 385	Nephites destroyed
25	Warfare, some Maya cities abandoned	AD 350	Nephites driven to Land Northward, treaty
24	High population density	AD 320	People as numerous almost as it were the sands of the sea
23	Maya Classic Era kings appear	AD 300	Lamanite Kings appear again
22	Maya dates appear at end of Pre-Classic	AD 192/230	"Ites" begin again
21	Religion theocratic	AD 100	Time of Children of Christ, no "ites"
20	Many Maya cities disappear	AD 50/34	Major destruction of cities at time of crucifixion of Christ
19	New star legends in the NW	0	Sign given for birth of Christ—new star
18	Teotihuacan & Monte Alban growth	c. 100/55 BC	Migrations northward
17	Maya cities fortified, warfare	c. 73 BC	Moroni fortifies cities, warfare
16	Migration from Chalchuapa (El Salvador) to Barton Raimie & Lamanai (Belize); Aquacate Orange pottery from Chalchuapa identical to Floral Park in Belize; later at Seibal, Aquateca and Dos Pilas	100/76 BC	Converted Lamanites (Anti-Nephi-Lehis/ people of Ammon) migrate to Land of Jershon; relocated to the Land of Melek
15	Maya hieroglyphic writing & religion to lowlands; Chicanel (Nephite) style replaces Mamom (Mulekite)	200 BC	Mosiah migrates to Zarahemla, becomes leader of Mulekites; took written records and religion; Mosiah translates Coriantumr stone, learns of earlier Jaredites
14	Olmec civilization ends	500-400 BC/ c. 200 BC	Jaredites final battle; Mulekites discover Coriantumr who leaves history on stone
13	Maya cities appear, population explosion	550 BC	People began to be numerous
12	Writing appears/earliest date deciphered at Izapa	592/550 BC	Nephites brought and kept written records
11	<i>Jerusalem destroyed; Israelites taken into captivity in Babylon</i>	<i>c. 598/586 BC</i>	Lord led Lehi and Mulek away <i>before</i> destruction of Jerusalem and captivity
10	Civilization begins to appear in Guatemala highlands (from Pacific area) and northern lowlands (from Gulf area)	c. 600 BC	Arrival of Nephites on Pacific Coast (El Salvador or Guatemala); Mulekites on Gulf Coast
9	Olmec writing	c. 650 BC	Jaredites had brought and kept records
8	Yucatan, Peten, Belize sparsely populated until 600 BC	800 BC	Land Southward as game preserve, wilderness
7	Olmec metal working, workshops, tools, iron	1400 BC	Metals used during entire Jaredite history, tools and weapons
6	Olmec cities recognized	1800 BC	Jaredites greatest nation on earth
5	Deserts form in American Southwest	2000 BC	Great drought caused by wickedness
4	(Pre-)Olmec civilization recognized	2400-2200 BC	Jaredites spread out over the face of the land
3	Pottery appears at Puerto Marques	2900 BC ²	Jaredites settle and till the earth
2	Maya "mythological" creation date, may have been "invented" by earlier Olmec	3114 BC/c.3000 BC	Arrival of Jaredites in NW on Pacific Coast, from Great Tower
1	<i>Civilization arose in six areas: Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, Indus Valley, Andean and Mesoamerica</i>	<i>4th Century BC</i>	<i>Confounding of language, scattering of people over all the face of the earth</i>

Table 1. Dates and date ranges are approximate. This table is a compilation of Treat (1992), Scott (2002) and Smith (2010a, 2010b), used by permission, with additions by SRH. My sincere thanks for their generosity in allowing me to incorporate their scholarship. Any mistakes or differences are my own. © 2010 Quetzal Archaeology Center. [Note: All references for the above timeline are given at www.quetzalarchaeology.org and are from current archaeology sources, along with corresponding Book of Mormon references.]

- 1 Where two dates are given, the left refers to Mesoamerica & the right to The Book of Mormon internal date (OW & Biblical in italics).
- 2 Redating by ¹⁴C indicates possible later date.

From the Editor

Spring is my favorite season of the year. First glimpse of a green canopy emerging through once bare branches, tulips and daffodils shooting up through the ground and the sweet smell of fresh blossoms stimulate my senses and quicken my awareness to the greatness of our Heavenly Father. The miraculous awakening of dormant portions of nature lifts my spirit and impels me to give thanks for the gift of life.


The spring issue of *glyph notes* is also the time when the officers of Pre-Columbian Studies Institute take the opportunity to express their appreciation to YOU, our supporters, for your contributions which keep *glyph notes* going to press bi-monthly. We also want to thank the many readers/supporters who took time to write to PSI with comments such as:

Thanks for the important work you ... do for the Institute. I enjoy *glyph notes* and hearing about the continued evolving research related to The Book of Mormon. S.B., San Marcos, Texas

Glyph notes doesn't come often enough. Every two months is a long time to wait. Why don't you increase the number of pages? K.D., Independence, Missouri

Although contributions for the year 2009 have decreased slightly over 2008, we feel most fortunate that so many of you have not only continued your support, but also some have increased the amount of your gift. Thank you for making Pre-Columbian Studies Institute a priority in your budgeting. Few have escaped the effects of a "rocky" economy and have, out of necessity, had to curtail spending on all but the barest of needs. We extend a special thank you to those who have increased their giving which makes it possible for PSI to send Book of Mormon faith-building information to those who desire to receive *glyph notes* even though they may feel unable to subscribe.

Spring is the time when that which has been dormant takes on renewed life. Pre-Columbian Studies Institute invites all, like nature, to celebrate renewed life by becoming an active supporter in helping PSI share testimony and research discoveries which attest to the truthfulness and timeliness of The Book of Mormon for our day. Please use one of the self-addressed envelopes included in every other issue to add a friend or family member to the mailing list, to invite PSI into your group for classes, to submit comments or suggestions or to update your subscription.

— Patricia J. Beebe 

Introducing: Quetzal Archaeology Center for Mesoamerican Research

Quetzal Archaeology Center for Mesoamerican Research, a public nonprofit scientific and educational research organization, was organized in 2004. The name, chosen through a series of thoughtful and prayerful exercises, precisely expresses the blending together of the spiritual and temporal revelation of The Book of Mormon:

Quetzal = the sacred or spiritual

Archaeology = the physical or temporal


Mesoamerica = a cultural & archaeological designation for Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras

Specifically, Book of Mormon archaeology means using The Book of Mormon to interpret Mesoamerican archaeology, the location equated with the lands of The Book of Mormon. The beautiful quetzal bird logo was designed by the late J Robert Farley.

Quetzal Codex (QC) will be the official quarterly journal of Quetzal Archaeology Center for Mesoamerican Research. "Quetzal" links the sacred and spiritual with "codex" which reminds us of Mesoamerican folded books. The inaugural issue (July/Aug/Sept) will be available later this summer and will be provided free of charge on the Internet in PDF or text version, available for download and printing. For those without Internet, send name and address to PO Box 266, Oak Grove, MO 64075 for a printed copy. Help us be good stewards by sharing with others.



QC along with our website at www.quetzalarchaeology.org will share research relating to all aspects of The Book of Mormon—archaeology, hieroglyphs and linguistics, radiocarbon dating, transoceanic contact, history of coming forth, manuscripts, internal language and structure, as well as Biblical research and correlation, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the growing together of The Book of Mormon and the Bible. We acknowledge that the Lord is working in many ways and through many avenues toward the fulfillment of His promises and prophecies in these Last Days, and we desire that what we share with you will be of service for His purposes. Our first project is underway, a booklet of maps, *Landscapes of The Book of Mormon*. We also have permission to resume the Study Book of Mormon project by Zarahemla Research Foundation (ZRF). All work is supported by tax-deductible donations as funds are available, with stewardship accountability.

Shirley R Heater serves as Director; she received her archaeology degree in 1982 and worked two years as a volunteer for ZRF, then on staff for 14 years. Projects included completing a comparison of The Book of Mormon manuscripts and editions, the 1999 Restored Covenant Edition, as well as First Nephi Study Book Mormon, and numerous research projects and articles along the way. The library, archives and artifacts of Zarahemla Research Foundation are currently housed at the Quetzal facility. 

GLYPH *Quotes*

"I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded," — 1 Nephi 1:65

by Mindy Mulheron

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father, I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save He shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which He commandeth them" (1 Nephi 1:65).

Throughout my life, I have been motivated by Nephi's example. In my childhood, as far as I was concerned, Nephi was worthy of "hero" status. It seemed like every time he turned around, he was being tested again—and he always got an "A." Whenever I had a problem, whether it was loving my three younger brothers after they destroyed my Barbie castle in a Ninja Turtle attack, being nice to someone I would rather be mean to, or aceing my spelling test that week, I would remember that Nephi could do anything because God was with him. As I continue to grow in my knowledge and understanding of the Gospel, I remain especially fond of Nephi. Like many of the great men and women in the scriptures, Nephi was just a man, but he was a man whom God loved. Why? Because Nephi was willing to fully rely on God and sought to fulfill the commandments—even if it meant hardship.

This year, Oak Grove Restoration Branch's

annual yearly theme is "Take Up Your Cross." Over the last few months, we've been instructed to go to the foot of the cross, to look up and see the broken and bleeding Savior. In the latest *Zion's Call* (Volume 21, Number 1; Spring 2010), Vim Horn explores this idea further by examining the true meaning of the phrase, "take up your cross." He explains that, unfortunately, this phrase has, in some ways, become a simple catch-phrase, used in sometimes trite and symbolic ways, but Biblical scholars realize that taking up your cross is much more. The phrase meant to literally accept your death upon picking up the cross. When considered in this way, the idea of taking up your cross takes on a whole new meaning. It is not just simply witnessing or bearing a burden; it is the understanding that God requires everything—even your life.

Nephi was unafraid of the world's recompense, because he was on a heavenly mission. He was unafraid of death or trial. He knew that God's reward was sure. I'm sure he must have been afraid at times, but he persevered.

I reference First Nephi 1:65 often, because it brings me such encouragement. We *can* do all things which the Lord asks us to do. God bless you as you strive to do His will. ☪



COMING SOON!

**2011 PSI
Annual
Tour to
Mesoamerica**

Look for details
in the
July/August
issue of
glyph notes.

Caana, the largest acropolis at Caracol, rises 43.5 meters (142 feet). The photograph was taken standing on top of the acropolis looking down. It has triadic architecture—one large temple on top flanked on either side by two smaller ones.

GLYPH *Clips*

Transforming Archaeology with Lidar Technology

Two recent articles describe the use of lidar (Light Detection and Ranging), a digital laser device that is revolutionizing the mapping of archaeological sites.

Patricia Castillo, project director of the site of El Tajin, plans to implement this new laser technology at El Tajin to help locate structures and possible tombs. After the many years of excavating at El Tajin, no tombs have been found leading some to believe the inhabitants practiced cremation. "Digital mapping will allow new research projects to be part of El Tajin Archaeological Zone Management Plan, by helping to determine which sectors should be excavated..."

Several days later, May 10, 2010, *The New York Times* ran an article about the use of lidar at the
Continued on Page 12



Lyle Smith

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GLYPH *Clips*

(cont. from page 11)

site of Caracol in Belize. Husband and wife team Arlen and Diane Chase, who have been working at Caracol since the 1980s, found that using this technology provided results within weeks that previously has taken them over two decades to accomplish. The Chases had estimated the city's population at its peak to be around 115,000, but some archaeologists didn't feel the evidence supported such a number.


"Now we have a totality of data and see the entire landscape," Dr. Arlen Chase said of the laser findings. "We know the size of the site, its boundaries, and this confirms our population estimates, and we see all this terracing and begin to know how the people fed themselves."

When the Chases saw the results of their first efforts using lidar to digitally map Caracol, Dr. Diane Chase said, "We were blown away.... We believe that lidar will help transform Maya archaeology much in the same way that radiocarbon dating did in the 1950s and interpretations of Maya hieroglyphs did in the 1980s and '90s."

Read more about Caracol at <http://www.caracol.org/>

"Research Would Take Place at El Tajin Using LIDAR Technology." *INAH* [Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History], May 7, 2010. http://dti.inah.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4325&Itemid=512 (accessed May 10, 2010).

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— Sherrie Kline Smith 



Don Beebe

One of several ballcourt markers found at Caracol: this one has several "and it came to pass" glyphs. One is the bottom of two on the right and is "it had come to pass." Look immediately to the left one column and down one, and there are two more next to each other that are "and it came to pass."