

GLYPH

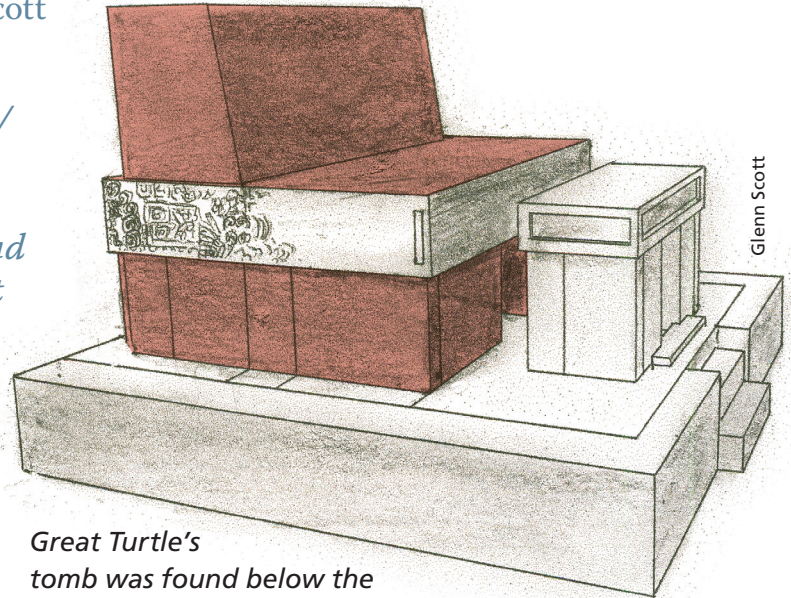
Notes

PRE-COLUMBIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE • JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2013 • VOLUME 20 NUMBER 1

El Zotz (ca. A.D. 350) — Temple of the Night Sun

By Glenn Scott

A spectacular Maya temple/pyramid/tomb complex built by a previously unknown Maya royal dynasty and overlooking the ancient site of El Zotz in northern Guatemala has recently been discovered by veteran archaeologist Stephen Houston.



Glenn Scott

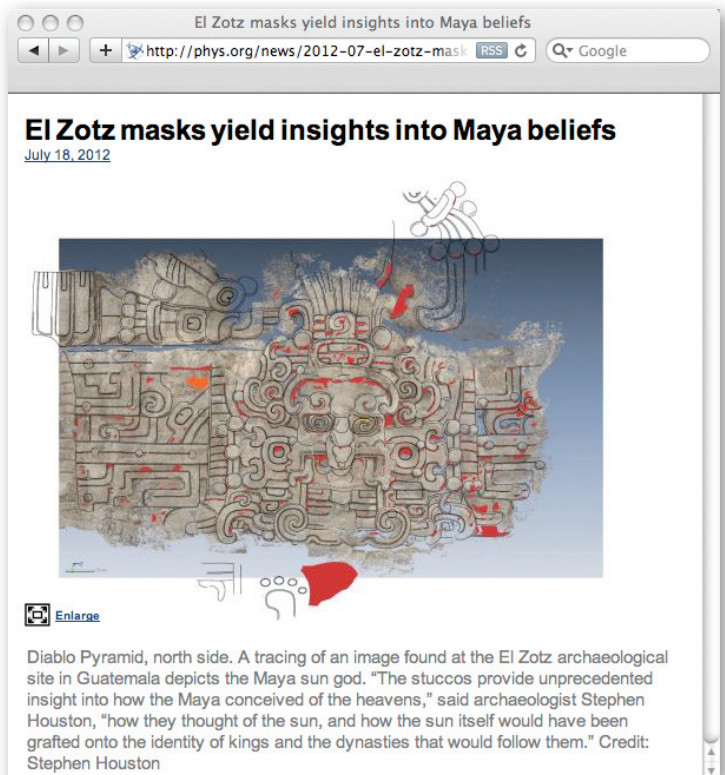
Great Turtle's tomb was found below the sanctuary (right). Temple of the Night Sun (left) with stucco frieze was painted red.

The complex sits atop a 525-foot high escarpment just west of the ancient city center called El Zotz (the bat) for the multitude of bats that occupy caves in the face of the escarpment. El Zotz is located approximately 12 miles west of the famous Maya site of Tikal and about midway between Tikal and El Peru. The original Maya name of El Zotz was "Pa'Chan" (Split Sky). The site looks across a spectacular valley of the Peten Basin which connects eastern and western Guatemala.

This west complex includes a pyramid called "El Diablo" (the devil) that was built over the great Temple of the Night Sun. The temple, painted red, incorporated an elaborate frieze and five-foot masks

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El Zotz was established near the time the Nephites surrendered the entire land southward in return for unchallenged ownership of the land northward, and could be the first city built by the Lamanites in the Land of Zarahemla.



Enlarge

Diablo Pyramid, north side. A tracing of an image found at the El Zotz archaeological site in Guatemala depicts the Maya sun god. "The stuccos provide unprecedented insight into how the Maya conceived of the heavens," said archaeologist Stephen Houston, "how they thought of the sun, and how the sun itself would have been grafted onto the identity of kings and the dynasties that would follow them." Credit: Stephen Houston

El Zotz (Cont. from Page 1)

in different guises of the Maya sun god, an emblem associated with kingship. The Maya believed the sun went under the earth at night before rising again in the east. The temple was built behind and above a tomb believed to contain the remains of Great Turtle, the founder of El Zotz. The tomb contained many rich ceremonial gifts which, remarkably, looters missed.

El Zotz was established around A.D. 350 and could possibly be the first city built by the Lamanites in the Land of Zarahemla. This was the year of the peace treaty between them and the Nephites in which the Nephites surrendered the entire land southward in return for unchallenged ownership of the land northward.

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More on El Zotz

By Sherrie Kline Smith

While preparing Glenn Scott's news article about the Temple of the Night Sun at El Zotz, I was struck by several items reported in some publications that appear to support The Book of Mormon narrative.

One is the tomb of the founder of El Zotz and its contents (reported in the Sept./Oct. 2010 issue of *glyph notes*). Another is what Stephen Houston, director of the excavations, calls "new religious preoccupations" that emanated from the area of El Zotz.

If you have back issues of *glyph notes*, you might want to pull out the Jan./Feb. 2006 (vol. 13, no. 1) issue with the timeline of events in The Book of Mormon to keep handy as you contemplate the things written here. (If you don't have a copy, send us a note and we'll send you one.)

As reported by Scott in his article above, El Zotz was founded around A.D. 350—an extremely turbulent time for the peoples in The Book of Mormon which proved to be the end of the Nephite nation. The year 350 saw the division of the land by treaty, the Lamanites receiving the land southward and the Nephites receiving the land northward. Prior to this time, since A.D. 321, the different factions had been engaged in warfare. By A.D. 325 Gadianton robbers infested the land, and sorcery, witchcraft, and magic were practiced. Mormon wrote, "Blood and carnage spread throughout all the face of the land..." (Mormon 1:30). Mormon recorded that around

A.D. 366 the Lamanites took many prisoners, both women and children, and offered "them up as sacrifices unto their idol gods" (Mormon 2:16).

It's hard to imagine what it was like during those years, but the tomb at El Zotz dating to this period gives a glimpse. The discovery of an intact tomb in the El Diablo section of El Zotz, and its subsequent detailed examination by the team led by Houston, resulted in the premise that the principal person in the tomb was the founder of the royal dynasty of El Zotz who was interred about A.D. 370 (Houston, et al. 2012:117). The burial chamber held numerous pottery vessels, two jade mosaic



"Fire-Mouth-Bat" is a *wahy* (demon) painted on a Classic Maya vase found at the site of Chama in the Chixoy River Valley, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, in the southern periphery of the Maya lowlands.

Aaron Presler

masks, three jade celts, two jade ear spools, a necklace of shells, remains of textiles, 10 large Spondylus shells, and 15 spectacular cubes of hematite. It was, however, the remains of six sacrificed children, one to five years old, found in vessels along with the king that supports Mormon's account of the sacrificing of women and children. One report indicates that their bones showed signs of burns (Román and Newman 2011:418).

A second substantiation comes from a study of the El Zotz ceramics that caused Houston to deduce that the people of El Zotz were the first to display the ubiquitous *wahy* (more commonly rendered as *wahy*) spirits, a "group of sinister supernatural entities" (Houston 2008:8). October last year David Stuart posted a short

article with a link to excerpts from his study of *wahy* spirits on his blog "Maya Decipherment." He wrote,

Around this time of year I often give my "Maya Spooks" lecture to students here at UT-Austin, highlighting the grisly and fright-filled demons (*wahyoob*) of Classic Maya art and religion. The lecture title is "Spooks, Witchcraft and the 'Dark Side' of Maya Art and Rulership (a.k.a. The Halloween Lecture)."

My own thinking on *wahy* beings keeps being refined somewhat. I still see them as animate dark forces wielded by court sorcerers, perhaps even rulers themselves, in order to inflict harm or disease on others. But *wahyoob* can be exceedingly complex and multi-layered, and they certainly aren't really the benign, shamanistic "animal companion spirits" as we often described them a couple of decades ago (Stuart 2012).

These *wahy* spirits are associated with "witchcraft and sorcery," practices that Mormon relates began around A.D. 325. "And it came to pass that there were sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics; and the power of the evil one was wrought upon all the face of the land..."

(Mormon 1:20). Houston wrote, "Large quantities of looted vessels reveal that new religious preoccupations emanated from the area of El Zotz" (Houston 2008:9), but it may be that they were the first to embellish their ceramics with the glyphs and iconography denoting sorcery and witchcraft that was, according to Mormon, already being practiced throughout the land.

As excavations and research continue, new discoveries and understandings may shed more light or even change our understanding. We first have faith that The Book of Mormon is true, but these added witnesses confirm that faith.

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Highlights from the Maya at the Playa Conference

By Sherrie Kline Smith

Last year we became aware of an archaeological conference sponsored by American Foreign Academic Research and the Archaeological Institute of America held in Florida each year. This was their sixth annual program. When we saw the lineup of speakers, my husband Lyle and I resolved to attend.

Hieroglyphs

The first day, September 27, 2012, included a beginner's hieroglyphic workshop concurrent with the lectures. Although I have attended numerous workshops, I thought it would be fun to get a refresher. And indeed it was! I had attended workshops before with both of the instructors Stanley Guenter (Idaho State University) and Marc Zender (Tulane University). Without doubt, the way they approached introducing people to the glyphs was by far the best I've experienced. Maybe I felt that way because I already had a solid background in the glyphs, but even my husband Lyle said he understood things this time that previously had eluded him. Part of the class included pages from "Introduction to Maya Hieroglyphs" by Harri Kettunen (another presenter at the conference) and Christophe Helmke. This excellent document, available in seven different languages, is in pdf format and available online at the Wayeb site (http://www.wayeb.org/resourceslinks/wayeb_workbook.php). They periodically update it.

A great complement to this all-day class was a



presentation on Saturday, September 29, by David Stuart (University of Texas-Austin) called "Rough Drafting: A Personal History of Recording Maya Monuments." Stuart reflected on his early involvement with the glyphs while tagging along with his parents, George and Gene Stuart, on archaeological digs. Drawing was at the center of his life at an early age. His "life's lessons" about drawing glyphs gave me great encouragement. In the process of drawing, one can see details often missed otherwise.

I cannot draw. Because of this, I believed I could never really advance in reading the glyphs. This changed with Stuart's presentation. He said he traces photographs of glyphs onto paper or acetate or mylar with pencil, then

Cont. on Page 4

Playa Conference *(Cont. from Page 3)*

inks over the tracing. I don't know why I never thought about tracing! I *can* do that—and have begun to do so.

For those with desire, talent, and an interest in the glyphs, here are Stuart's "Life's Lessons."

- Digs still need artists as well as photographers
- No drawing is ever perfect or ideal
- Pure objectivity in drafting is impossible
- The quirkiness of individual hands is fine, inevitable, even useful
- Established standards need to be more widely followed and applied
- Photography, drawing, and scanning of sculpture all complement one another

La Corona

Marello A. Canuto (Tulane University) gave an excellent talk about La Corona, a site recently in the news because of the discovery of an inscription with reference to the ending of the 13th bak'tun in December 2012. (See "glyph clips" in the Sept./Oct. 2012 issue of *glyph notes*, pp. 6-7.) This relatively small site is in northern Guatemala not far from El Zotz (page one in this issue) and part of the Mirador Basin. La Corona sits on an important east/west north/south axis trade network.

In the 1960s some finely sculpted monuments were sold on the antiquities market. The site of their origin remained a mystery and was dubbed "Site Q." In the following years, various places were proposed for Site Q, but in 1997 when Ian Graham and David Stuart conducted the first excavations at La Corona, a more probable match was made. La Corona, although heavily looted, still had a lot of inscriptions. These caused Stuart to postulate that this was the missing Site Q. Later in 2005 excavators found a great set of panels in situ at La Corona that resembled the panels found earlier and sold in the antiquities market. The discovery of these new panels allowed them to confirm that indeed this was Site Q, called *Saknikte* in the inscriptions.

In the last few years the project team working at La Corona has been able to put together a fairly good history of not only La Corona and its ties with the giant Calakmul just over the border in Mexico but also the whole region. Most of the information comes from the site's second phase, A.D. 520 to 625, and well after the close of *The Book of*



Formerly, visitors to the site of Ceibal saw few remaining buildings. The one in this photo was built in the Terminal Classic around A.D. 830. Getting to Ceibal used to be challenging, either by river and climbing a steep and sometimes slippery hill to get into the site proper or over a "road" full of pot holes that cut through overhanging trees and brush.

Mormon. They've been able to tentatively say that this site was founded in A.D. 314, but the early phase from A.D. 300-520 remains murky.

The project team has been studying a building in the main plaza that they call the palace. It had three construction phases and a hieroglyphic stairway. They've discovered a multitude of jade items and shells, even in a non-royal burial, and in 2012 more than 20 hieroglyphic panels. While a lot of information has come forth from the work at La Corona, there is still much to learn.


Canuto really made the historical events at La Corona come alive. He told us that the Tulane symposium in February (22-24, 2013) will be about Calakmul and will undoubtedly include more information about La Corona since several "princesses" from Calakmul married into the La Corona dynasty and lived at La Corona.

Ceibal

Another fascinating presentation was given by Takeshi Inomata (University of Arizona) who is director of excavations at Ceibal in Guatemala. During the 1960s he worked at Ceibal and later spent 17 years at Aquateca, a nearby site. In 2006, Inomata decided it would be good to go back to Ceibal and focus on the Preclassic levels discovered in the mid-1960s by a team from the Peabody Museum at Harvard University.

From February to April 2011, Inomata and his co-director Daniela Triadan wrote about the work at Ceibal on *The New York Times* blog "Scientist at Work" (Smith 2011:8). His presentation at the conference included much of the material reported in his blog but also an in-depth review of his use of three different dating methods— calibrated radiocarbon dates (they now have 50 such dates), Bayesian statistics, and ceramic chronology— to arrive at probable dates for all the layers and "caches" discovered at Ceibal.

After five seasons of excavation, we now have enough confirmation that the formal ceremonial center of Ceibal was suddenly established with a substantial initial construction effort at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. in an area



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formerly occupied by small mobile populations (Inomata 2011).

One of their spectacular discoveries which Inomata was specifically searching for and expected to find was a cache, items deposited that usually accompany a burial or initial building phase. This ritual deposit of polished axes of greenstone marked the beginning of a major settlement at Ceibal. It was very similar to one found at the Olmec site of La Venta, which also began at the same time as Ceibal. They since have found 11 caches at Ceibal, some with Olmec-like figurines.

The recent discovery of the caches and their contents coupled with the north/south orientation of Ceibal, which is the same as Olmec sites instead of the east/west of Maya sites, added more fuel to the current debate by archaeologists about the relationship of the Maya with the Olmec. Archaeological evidence from other sites like Chiapas de Corzo and the Pacific Coast of southern Mexico and Guatemala also indicate an Olmec-like presence.

The account in The Book of Mormon is silent on this salient point. Perhaps the lost 116 pages may have included something about other people living in the Promised Land when Lehi and his family arrived. Whatever the case, archaeology is telling us there were Olmec settlements in the Maya area beginning around

1000 B.C. Archaeology also shows that around 600-550 B.C. larger and more massive buildings appeared together with an explosion in population. (See Smith 2012:5.) The early buildings at Ceibal were low, flat platforms with ramps instead of stairs. "Deep excavations in front of the other buildings of the court revealed massive Middle Preclassic (600-300 B.C.) constructions with large buildings that formed a courtyard..." (Triadan 2011). Inomata stated at the conference that all massive construction at Nakbe and El Mirador (two of the earliest Maya sites) happened after 600 B.C.

Ceibal was occupied from about 1000 B.C. until about A.D. 900 with layer upon layer of buildings. To find the earliest evidence of occupation, the archaeologists dug as deep as 26 feet. What tourists used to see (before digging these deep pits) were remains from the last period of the city in the Late Classic, ca. A.D. 830-900.

This report provides a glimpse from only a few of the many presentations at the enjoyable and extremely informative conference. We hope to attend again!

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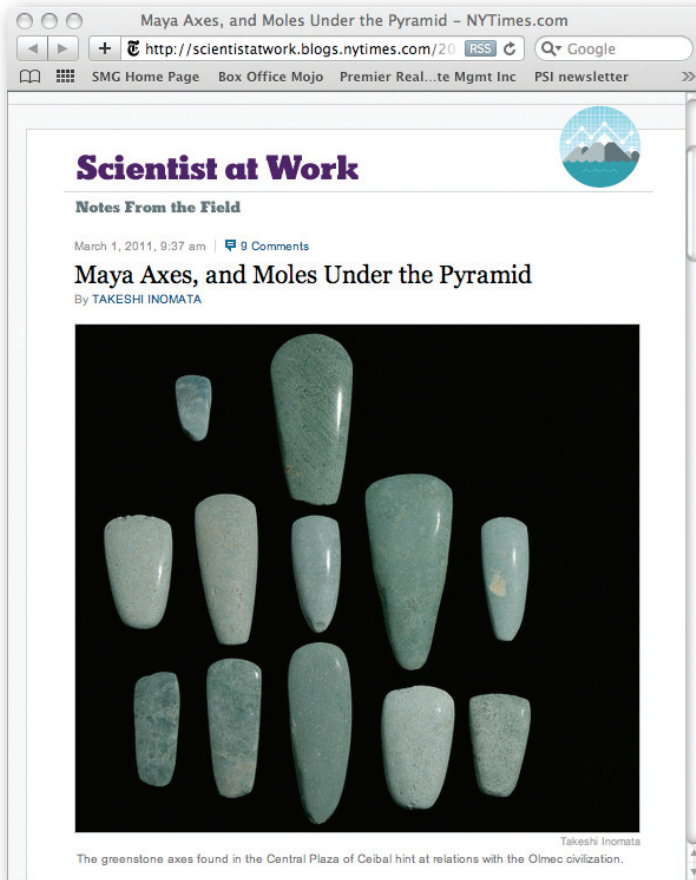
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These polished "axes" of greenstone found in a cache at Ceibal, so similar to those found at the Olmec site of La Venta, suggest Ceibal was settled by the Olmec (Jaredite).



One of several caches of serpentine and jadeite "axes" found at La Venta, in the Olmec Gulf Coast region, is displayed at La Venta Park in Villahermosa, Mexico.

Glyph Dwellers

Dwellers - to live and have a home in a particular place



Remember last time when I was telling you that the sons of Mosiah were out preaching throughout the land? Guess what?! I ran into Ammon the other day and he told me the coolest story!

The Adventures of Beezrom

by Mindy Mulheron

Illustrations by Aaron Presler

Ammon was traveling throughout the land and ended up in a place where the Lamanites live. He wasn't afraid though because he knew God would protect him. As he traveled, he entered the area where King Lamoni was in charge. Now King Lamoni was a little worried about this Nephite being in his area, so he told his servants to bring Ammon to see him.

When Ammon was brought before King Lamoni, the king asked him all kinds of questions. Eventually King Lamoni decided that he would let Ammon stay and work for him. So Ammon became one of King Lamoni's servants. (Isn't that crazy? The son of one king becoming a servant of another?)

Anyway, Ammon began to work for King Lamoni as one of the servants who helped watch the sheep herds. This job was kind of dangerous because there were bad people around who liked to cause trouble and steal sheep. But Ammon wasn't afraid; he knew God would help and protect him.

So there Ammon was taking care of King Lamoni's sheep and trying to minister to the people around him—and guess what? Those bad people showed up and tried to steal the sheep! It's not okay to steal, so Ammon had to fight those bad guys. God protected Ammon because he was trying to do the right thing, and eventually the bad guys ran away.

King Lamoni was very happy about this when he heard the story. He called Ammon in so that Ammon could tell him everything that happened. And then something wonderful happened. Ammon began to preach and teach the word of God to King Lamoni! Isn't it awesome how God organizes all things to work together for His purposes?!

Ammon and King Lamoni talked for a long time. The Spirit of God was so strong that everyone actually passed out! Can you imagine being in a place where the Spirit was that strong?! It must have been amazing! When everyone awoke, King Lamoni told Ammon that he knew that the things Ammon had told him were true and that he wanted to believe in God and live a good life.

Afterwards, King Lamoni and Ammon went throughout all the land and told the other Lamanites about Jesus—and many believed and were baptized. Cool, huh?

I love this story because it reminds me that even when things look bad and you might even be scared, don't worry—because God's in control and He's going to take care of you. Ammon could have been hurt several times, but God had a mission for him. And God protected him. And God will protect you when you're scared. He has a mission for you too.

Well, that's Ammon's story. Hope to see you next time. I'm sure I'll have another amazing story about how cool God is. I can't wait to talk with you again. Take care and remember—God's always with you. Don't be scared! ☺

Scriptural reference: Alma 12

Lost Sheep? by Beezrom

Can you help the Lost Sheep find his way back to the Shepherd in the maze below? Just like Ammon protected the king's sheep, God protects you. When you're lost, you just need to ask God for help, and He will help you find your way back to Him. He's waiting for you. Ask Him today to bring you home.



GLYPH *Quotes*

I will bring forth out of darkness unto light, all their secret works and their abominations. —Alma 17: 56

By Kevin Anderson

As we examine the seventeenth chapter of Alma, we find a beautiful narrative of the *directors (interpreters)* prepared by the Lord, along with a stern warning that is easily overlooked if we are not careful to thoroughly consider the story. Not only were the interpreters to assist a “seer” to translate the unknown language, but also to bring to light those secret works of darkness that were had from the beginning as well as to expose the abominations that resulted because of them. (See Ether 1:87-89 and Mosiah 12:15-21.)


God placed a curse upon this land declaring that destruction would come upon all workers of darkness that would possess it. “And except they repent, I will destroy them from off the face of the earth; and I will bring to light all their secrets and abominations, unto every nation that shall hereafter possess the land” (Alma 17:57). Alma’s testimony reveals that those workers of darkness did not repent, and thus God destroyed them, fulfilling His word.

God’s curse upon workers of darkness is not necessarily new at this point in The Book of Mormon record. It had already been established numerous times in previous narratives; however, this particular account gives a further glimpse and a broader perspective into the mind and wisdom of the Lord. He shares this curious statement with Alma: “Therefore ye shall keep these secret plans of their oaths and their covenants from this people, and only their wickedness, and their murders, and their abominations, shall ye make known unto

them” (Alma 17:61). In verse 65 God tells Alma *not* to trust those secret plans to the people.

Today we live in a society that thrives upon the investigative accounts of secret organizations and societies historically cloaked in mystery. It appears that God did not want man to seek the *nature* of the oaths and covenants that were made by the workers of darkness. Perhaps God considered these combinations so vile that it was not good for man to search them out. Perhaps our nature is not strong enough to withstand the darkness that is embodied in them. Maybe it would be better for us to remember the counsel found in 2 John 1:7-11 which warns of the many deceivers that have entered into the world, and how those who bid them Godspeed become partakers of their evil deeds.

This lesson reaches far into the heart of mankind’s nature, that carnal nature which we, as saints, are supposed to have crucified in our lives. It should challenge us to consider the nature of every influence that passes through our faculties and senses. These dark secrets are not meant for the upright in Christ, for they subject us to a dark fellowship, the nature of which we were commanded not even to speak.

Our fellowship should be with light—to lead others in the way of truth and to assist in bringing forth the revelation of Jesus Christ to the world. Let us keep our hearts set upon the light, lest we give our time to pleasures that make it difficult for us to celebrate the strength and blessing of a pure oath and covenant with Christ! 

GLYPH *Clips*

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pre-Columbian Studies Institute (PSI) Classes
Archaeology—Israel, Bible, and The Book of Mormon
 Tuesdays: February 19, 26, March 5, 12
 7:00 PM/ South Chrysler Restoration Branch Fellowship Hall

Midwest Mesoamericanist Meetings 2013
 March 15th-16th, 2013, Loyola University Chicago
<http://www.luc.edu/anthropology/midwestmesoamericanistmeetings2013/>
 No details at present; check the web page



EDITORIAL COMMITTEE HELP

Thanks to Jacquie Powell of Fort Dodge, Iowa, who has answered our request for help on the editorial committee. Her skills and knowledge have

assisted us in providing our readers with a quality publication.

We can still use more assistance, though, and if any others would like to serve on this committee, contact Sherrie Kline Smith, sksmith2@gmail.com.

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Galilee

Holy Land Tour

May 23 - June 2, 2013

Qumran
and more...

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