

glyph *notes*

PRE-COLUMBIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE • OCT / NOV / DEC 2015 • VOLUME 22 NUMBER 4

ARCHAEOLOGY 101: Understanding How to Interpret Mesoamerican Archaeology Using The Book of Mormon — Part Two

W By Shirley R. Heater
By Shirley R. Heater
We began Part One of this article acknowledging that misinterpretations of archaeological evidences by Book of Mormon believers can be detrimental by sharing wrong conclusions.

In order to adequately be prepared to identify proper interpretations, we proceeded by exploring the field of archaeology and continued by explaining some of the methods used to provide the data on which archaeologists' theories of interpretation are based. The purpose, for Book of Mormon believers, is to understand the process as well as the limitations. Part Two continues with additional archaeological methods, and then conclude with a discussion on how to best interpret these evidences using The Book of Mormon.

Tools

The archaeologist employs a number of tools to assist in the identification of a possible site for exploration. A "field kit" may include a notebook, grid diagrams, screen/sifter, computer, maps (surface, radar, and contour), sample bags, soil core, trowels, buckets, shovels, hand brooms, tape measure, line levels, plumb bobs, tongue depressors (wood/bamboo sticks)/ dental picks (steel), laser/transit, stadia rod (used for mapping), GPS and spatial data (for exact locations and specific points), a contour map, and carpenter's bubble (Figure 6).



Types of Indicators

The most obvious and common indicators of past civilizations are structures such as pyramids, walls, house foundations, stelae, and roads. Other features include evidence of terracing, cenotes (a sinkhole either filled with water or left dry and used for storage), middens (trash heaps, garbage, and waste management), kitchen materials, and

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The purpose, for Book of Mormon believers, is to understand the process as well as the limitations of archaeology.

Figure 6. Besides the trowel, a typical archaeology tool kit includes these objects:
 A. whisk broom
 B. small brush
 C. compass
 D. 10X loop (magnifier)
 E. bubble level
 F. tweezers
 G. dental picks
 H. tape measure
 I. root cutters
 (Feder 2004:190)

ARCHAEOLOGY 101 (Cont. from Page 1)

fire pits. Portable artifacts such as ceramics (usually broken pieces), burials (sometimes under house floors), grave offerings, or plant materials are taken to a lab for cleaning and cataloging. Soils, minerals, rocks, and volcanic materials are also collected and studied, possibly leading to identifying sources of artifacts and/or long-distance trading.

Dating

There are two systems of dating, relative and absolute (scientific). Relative dating is a general or floating means of dating which cannot produce an accurate age or year. Before scientific methods

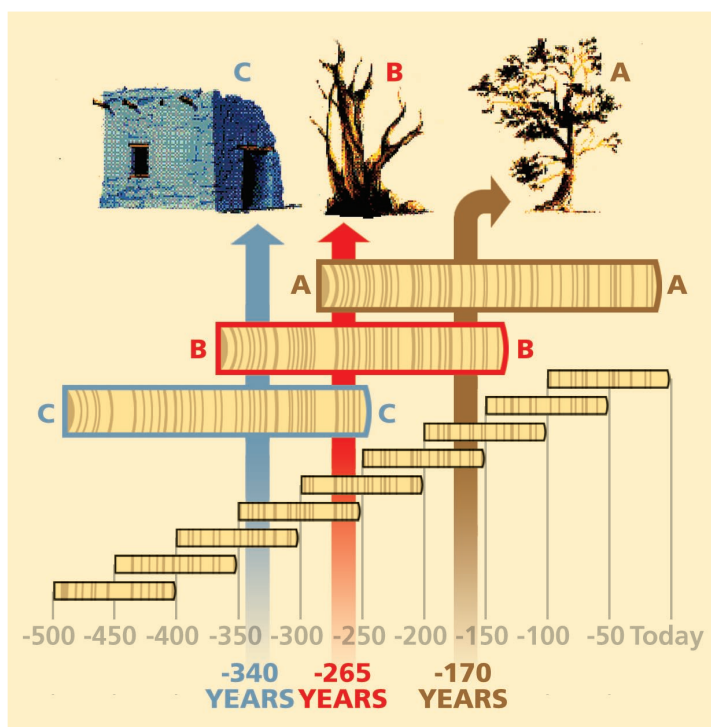


Figure 7. Comparing overlapping tree-ring patterns can lead to reconstructing long-term chronologies.

for identifying the ages of artifacts were developed, three basic means of relative dating were applied: stratification, ceramics, and dendrochronology. A stratification profile (also referred to as superposition—the lowest layer being deposited first) may disclose disturbances of the natural layers, either by human or animal. Ceramic sequences (seriation of styles) are created by ordering shape and style changes from earliest to latest (used in combination with a stratification profile), resulting in relative chronologies and type-variety classifications.

Dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) compares ring patterns which vary from year to year (rings are broad during wet years and narrow during dry years). An index to past climate changes (a unique pattern or fingerprint) is created. When overlapping patterns of dead tree remains from an ancient site are compared and correlated, archaeologists can create long-term chronologies (Figure 7).

Absolute dating is based on scientific analysis but is not *always* absolute, resulting in a clash of opposing views. Methods of dating include radiocarbon (organic analysis), uranium (rocks and volcanic material), luminescence (minerals), electromagnetic (archaeomagnetic), and obsidian hydration (age and composition of volcanic cores and blades).

Radiocarbon metric dating (14_C) was developed in the late 1940s. The amount of 14_C contained in organic archaeological remains can be measured back a few thousand years and is used by archaeologists. Tree rings of known dates were tested for 14_C (cross dating), but there were discrepancies noted in the results. In other words, the known dates of the tree samples did not match the expected 14_C dates, which appeared older. Dendrochronology is now used to calibrate or correct the 14_C dates. This application, however, is not accepted by all archaeologists (Frye 2012; Heater 2012). As an example, archaeologists have established a chronology of Olmec and Maya civilizations. Figures 8a (page 3) and 8b (page 4) show charts highlighted in colored boxes for these Book of Mormon periods—the Jaredites on the Olmec chart and the Nephites/Lamanites/Mulekites on the Maya chart. The chronology used was developed by combining several lines of both relative and absolute evidences. Table 1 (below) shows the time periods by name. Note that two terms, Preclassic and Formative, are used during the early periods, which can lead to

Table 1. Mesoamerican Time Periods

Preclassic/Early Formative	2500 BC - 900 BC
Middle Preclassic/Middle Formative....	900 BC - 300 BC
Late Preclassic/Late Formative	300 BC - AD 200/250
Classic Maya	AD 250 - AD 900
Early Classic.....	AD 250 - AD 600
Late Classic.....	AD 600 - AD 800
Terminal Classic	AD 800 - AD 900
Early Postclassic	AD 900 - AD 1250
Late Postclassic	AD 1250 - AD 1521

DATES	PERIODS	OLMEC HEARTLAND			CHALCATZINGO	BASIN OF MEXICO	OAXACA VALLEY	PACIFIC COAST SE	CHALCHUAPA	COPAN	
		San Lorenzo	La Venta	Tres Zapotes							
400 AD	EPI-OLMEC					Monte Alban II					
400 BC						Monte Alban I					
500	LATE OLMEC	Palangana	Late La Venta	Hueyapan	Late Cantera		Rosario	Escalon	Kal	Bosque	
600			Middle La Venta		Early Cantera	Zacatenco		Late Conchas			
700		Nacaste	Early La Venta	Tres Zapotes	Late Barranca	Tetelpan	Guadalupe	Early Conchas	Colos	Uir	
800								Jocotal			
900	EARLY OLMEC			Early Formative	Middle Barranca	Manantial	San Jose	Cuadros		Gordon	
1000		San Lorenzo			Early Barranca			Cherla	Tok	Plata	
1100											
1200		Chicharras			Late Amate	Ayotla		Tierras Largas	Ocos		Rayo
1300		Bajio	Bari						Locona		
1400		Ojochi			Early Amate	Nevada			Barra		
1500	PRE-OLMEC										
1600							Espiridion	?			
1700											
1800											
1900											
2000						Zohapilco	Martinez	Chantuto B			
2500							Blanca				

Figure 8a. Olmec chronology (Diehl 2005:9) has been highlighted in green to reflect the Jaredite time period.

confusion. Knowing that chronology time frames vary can be of help when reading the various reports.

In addition to the timeline confusion is the mistake individuals make by associating evidences from later time periods with The Book of Mormon. Visitors to ancient sites such as Tikal or Palenque see structures that were constructed *after* the end of The Book of Mormon period, which overlie the earlier relevant construction. Many times these later structures are seen as evidence of Book of Mormon civilization—a common error. A clear example is shown in Figure 9. Tikal, in northeast Guatemala, began roughly around 600 BC; the last date recorded is AD 869 when shortly thereafter the city was abandoned. Five imposing pyramids were constructed during the eighth century, long after The Book of Mormon ended. However, beneath the North Acropolis remains have been found in a pit

dating to the Middle Preclassic (c. 350 BC), shown in the cross section in Figure 9. Uncovering these early periods is difficult because of the ancient Maya habit of building repeatedly upon the same site. As a result, it is important when visiting (or reading about) a site (such as Tikal) to keep in mind that many of the observable structures date from time periods later than The Book of Mormon.

How to Interpret Book of Mormon Details

We believe The Book of Mormon to be an authentic historical record. We also believe that the area of Mesoamerica is deemed the best fit for the location of Book of Mormon history. When we use this record as our primary source, it fits the historical archaeological type. It must be remembered, however, that *it is archaeology that is interpreted and validated by this historical record rather than the reverse.*

To understand what to look for, we have to *know the book!* This means that we *must* use The Book of Mormon to interpret Mesoamerican archaeology (Heater 2006). The Book of Mormon tells us what we should be finding in the archaeological record. An example of this would be

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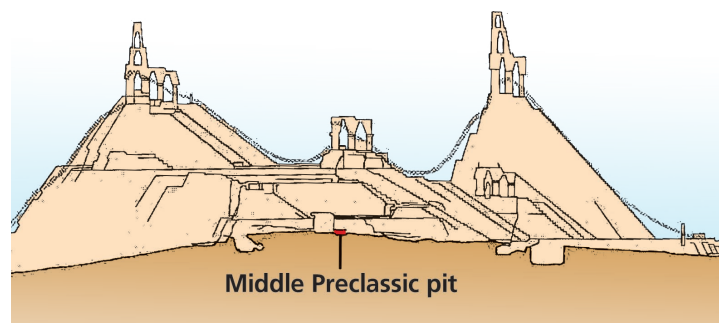


Figure 9. At Tikal in northeast Guatemala, Middle Preclassic remains c. 350 BC have been uncovered in a pit many meters below the later construction of the North Acropolis (Sabloff 1990:114).

ARCHAEOLOGY 101 (Coe 2015:10)

when the outlines of The Book of Mormon were compared with Mesoamerican archaeology in 1978, a mirror image of timeline, cultural, and linguistic parallel points were revealed (Treat 1978:1). Other examples would include evidences of warfare, earthworks, cement, roads, Hebraic writing style, and knowledge of creation and resurrection—all of which have been discovered. But none of these findings have added any light to—nor should we expect them to—such areas as the type of ceramics used, the style of houses built, nor the kind of clothes worn.

Taking into consideration the “two percent factor,” we can state unequivocally that most archaeological evidences for The Book of Mormon are still hidden. It’s important to remember, however, that as archaeology continues to generate new information, we need to consider whether or not it fits Book of Mormon requirements. Book of Mormon archaeology means using The Book of Mormon to interpret Mesoamerican archaeology, not the other way around, keeping in mind professional archaeologists do not always agree in their interpretations. If we use our understanding of how archaeologists bring the past to light and base the reported archaeological findings on the historical Book of Mormon record that we so cherish, then we will have a greater appreciation of how we can best explain the things that are revealed. Remember, the axiom “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence” suggests that something may exist, but it just has not been found yet. We can expect much more to come!

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DATES Calibrated	PERIODS	SOUTHERN AREA		CENTRAL AREA	NORTHERN AREA	SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS
		Pacific Coast	Highlands			
1530	LATE POSTCLASSIC	Aztec Xoconochco	Mixco Viejo	Tayasal	Independent states Mayapan	Spanish Conquest Highland city-states League of Mayapan
1200		Tohil Plumbate	Ayampuk		Toltec Chichen	Toltec hegemony in Yucatan Toltec arrive in Yucatan
925	TERMINAL CLASSIC	Cotzumalhuapa	Quen Santo	Bayal/ Tepeu 3	Puuc, Maya Chichen	Classic Maya collapse, Putun ascendancy
800	LATE CLASSIC		Amatle- Pamplona	Tepeu 2 1	Early Coba	Bonampak murals Height of Maya civilization
600	EARLY CLASSIC	Tiquisate	Esperanza	Tzak'ol 3 2 1	Regional styles, Acanceh	Reign of Janahb Pakal at Palenque Teotihuacan interference and influence
250						First lowland Maya dated stela at Tikal
AD	LATE PRECLASSIC	Izapan styles Crucero	Aurora Santa Clara Miraflores	Matzanel Holmul 1 Chicanel	Late Preclassic	Massive pyramid building in lowlands, San Bartolo
300			Las Charcas	Mamom		Spread of Izapan civilization, calendar, writing
	MIDDLE PRECLASSIC			Xe, Swasey	Middle Preclassic	Earliest lowland Maya villages, temple centers
1000		Conchas Jocotal	Arevalo	Cunil Horizon		Early Olmec influence on Pacific Coast
	EARLY PRECLASSIC	Cuadros Cherla Ocos Locona Barra				Beginnings of social stratification Origins of village life, pottery, figurines
1800						Some maize horticulture
3000	ARCHAIC	Chantuto		Belize Archaic		Hunting, fishing, gathering

Figure 8b. Maya chronology (Coe 2015:10) has been highlighted in blue to reflect the Nephite period.

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glyph quotes

By Eric English

How many of us remember when we were young children and our parents would ask us either to do something or to refrain from doing something and we would inevitably ask, why? There is some innate drive within us to understand the reasons behind why we do or don't do certain things. However, a detailed answer for the reasons behind the request wasn't usually forthcoming from our folks. Instead, we typically received the all-too-familiar response of "because I said so."

When we are small, it's important that we learn to obey simply because of who asked us to obey. As we get older and grow into adulthood, the parent-child relationship begins to shift to more of a peer relationship. As that transition occurs, the child's need increases for the parents to share the reasons behind their requests. This trend continues until the parents stop expecting obedience from the child and instead offer advice when it's asked for, as the child has become an adult and is now responsible for their own decisions.

Our relationship with the Lord goes through a

O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it.

—Mosiah 1:91 [LDS 2:41]

very similar process regarding obedience, but it's interesting to note that as we grow and mature in that relationship, and especially in our faith in the Lord, we actually grow in the opposite manner from our relationship with our earthly parents. When we first come to have faith in the Lord, we generally ask a LOT of questions of God because we want to understand in great detail the reasons behind why he commands us to do certain things or to refrain from doing other things. As our faith in him matures and expands, we slowly grow to a point where we no longer need to understand every reason for why he commands something, but we begin to obey simply because of who has commanded us.

King Benjamin reminds us that we need to approach truth in the same way. He gave us some great insight about truth in his famous sermon in the scripture listed above. He described that something is true simply because God said that it is. King Benjamin had just finished telling his people about how God had created them, loves them, and

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glyph quotes (Cont. from Page 5)

continues to preserve and bless them, for which they are completely undeserving. He then tells them of the promise extended to them to live with the Lord in a state of never-ending happiness if they will but come to God, repent, and establish a relationship with Him. King Benjamin follows all of this up by reminding his people that all of these things are true because God spoke it!

The Creator of the universe, and everything that is in it, is the Creator of what is real and true,

which is the ultimate definition of truth. Therefore, anything that God chooses to speak MUST be true. I love what Francis Schaeffer said about truth back in 1981 in a speech at Notre Dame where he shared that “Christianity is not a series of truths in the plural, but rather truth spelled with a capital ‘T.’ Truth about total reality, not just about religious things. Biblical Christianity is Truth concerning total reality—and the intellectual holding of that total Truth and then living in the light of that Truth.”



Assistant Editor Wanted

We continue to be excited about the opportunity to share the good news about The Book of Mormon. To do this more effectively, PSI (Pre-Columbian Studies Institute) is searching for someone to assist the editor with the publication process of the newsletter *glyph notes*. This is a volunteer position. *glyph notes* is published

quarterly now, which would require approximately 60 hours during the three weeks of the editing and proofing process. Prefer someone who lives in the Independence area to facilitate working together and someone who has a degree in English or journalism or special training in producing newsletters. Write to the editor (Sherrie Smith) at precolumbiansi@gmail.com.

GLYPH Clips

By Sherrie Kline Smith

Upcoming Conference

Maya Meetings, University of Texas-Austin
January 12-16, 2016

utmesoamerica.org/maya/2016-maya-meetings

The 2016 Maya Meetings include the usual workshops plus a two-day symposium. The symposium (January 15-16) “will explore the archaeology and history of the lower Rio Pasión region, focusing on sites of Ceibal, Dos Pilas, Aguateca, and others. Research over several decades has shown this distinctive area was a key ‘hot spot’ of turmoil during the Classic period – an area of conflict, alliance-building, and ever-changing political structure. Very recent excavations reveal that the region also includes some of the earliest-known sites in the Maya lowlands. No previous large conference has ever focused on this important area, so the presentations and discussions will be break new ground, weaving together information from archaeological projects old and new.”

Lyle Smith



The workshops are held the first three days, January 12-14. Three different workshops cover the hieroglyphics (Maya Glyphs I, Maya Glyphs II, and the hieroglyphic stairways of Dos Pilas). In addition to the glyph workshops, there are two others: “Late Preclassic Sculpture: Iconographies of Landscape and Power in the Early Maya World,” and “The Disintegration of a Dynasty: Tikal in the Middle Classic.” See this web page for complete information about the workshops: utmesoamerica.org/maya/workshop-information-0



Lyle Smith

The stela (left) and ruins (above) are found at Aguateca.

Glyph Dwellers

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

The Adventures of Beezrom

By Mindy Mulheron
Illustrations by Aaron Presler



Hi guys! It's been pretty cool hearing the stories about these people I never even knew existed before!

No matter where you grow up, it's so neat to know that when you meet friends that love Jesus too, you often find that you have so many things in common. Remember that song: "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white: they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world"? That song always pops into my head when I meet new friends that love Jesus, because if you share Jesus then you share love—with whomever you meet. And when it's shared back to you, you quickly become friends with that person. And Jesus loves that: he wants us to love each other, no matter where we come from or how we look. The only thing that matters is how we treat each other. That reminds me of the story I wanted to tell you today. It's both sad and happy.

The sad part is this: Even though these "Jaredites" (that's what we're calling them now) knew Jesus and had seen God work in their lives they chose to forget for a time. They pretended God didn't care what they did, and instead of thinking of others they only thought of themselves. They did whatever they wanted to do, and they didn't care if it was bad or hurt anyone else. And they acted like this for a long time. They hurt a lot of people. (Can you imagine how much it hurts God when we act like this—thinking only of ourselves and hurting other people? If he loves everyone, how hard must it be to watch someone he loves hurt another person he loves? I so wish we wouldn't do that! If we would just follow Jesus, we wouldn't even want to hurt anyone!)

I hate talking about the sad part, but it makes the next part even better! Here's the happy part: Jesus didn't give up on them. And there were a few good people who didn't give up either. And finally they won, because you always win when you're with Jesus! There may be some hard times, but you'll win. Jesus

ALWAYS wins. Bad people will try to tell you differently, but don't believe them. It may even seem like they're winning for a time, but, at the end of every story, Jesus wins. Every. Single. Time. And he will win at the end of the earth's story. Trust that promise.

So, no matter what, even when things are hard, even when people are mean to you, remember that if you love Jesus, you're a winner. He will never leave you. He's there with you even if you can't see him, and he'll help you win. You will never be defeated with Jesus by your side. So be happy today: he's right there with you. Talk to him as if you can see him. Share fun things with him. Tell him your worries. Let him be your very best friend, and you'll always be OK—no matter what.

Alright, I gotta go! See ya next time! ☺

Scriptural Reference: Ether 4 [LDS 9-11]



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*ARCHAEOLOGY 101:
Understanding How to
Interpret Mesoamerican
Archaeology Using
The Book of Mormon —
Part Two*

Glyph Quotes

Glyph Clips

The Adventures of Beezrom

Conjugation

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Conjugation (känjə 'gāSH(ə)n/) — the formation or existence of a link or connection between things—

The use of an appeal—conjugated (appeal/appealed/appealing)—has provided great benefits for PSI over the years. Conjugation relates to time—past, present, and future. PSI owes its existence to an initial appeal made in 1994. The outpouring of response to that appeal made it possible to launch its newsletter *glyph notes* and to be able to continue production through the current issue. Therefore, the use of an appeal formed a link or connection (as in the definition of conjugation) between PSI and its readers and supporters—a powerful bond and one for which we are most grateful. A two-word THANK YOU seems so inadequate to express our appreciation for your commitment to help share Christ's message found within The Book of Mormon as it radiates through archaeological research and

scientific discoveries with potential correlations to Book of Mormon times. But, we do thank you. Today we are again appealing for your support to enable the continued timely reporting of these archaeological findings as they relate to The Book of Mormon.

We invite all who receive *glyph notes*, now published quarterly, to continue in a bond with PSI. Many have yet to hear the good news of the Gospel or to share in recently acquired knowledge concerning the lands of The Book of Mormon which are coming forth at an accelerated pace. Won't you please use the self-addressed envelope enclosed with this issue to update your subscription and, if possible, add a little extra for those who cannot give at this time?



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