

glyph *notes*



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Nephites Meet the Mulekites: A Look at the Maya Exhibit at Kansas City, in Three Parts

By Sherrie Kline Smith

On August 19, 2022, the Maya Exhibition opened at the Union Station in Kansas City. Some people have asked our opinion about the exhibit, as well as help in understanding it in relation to The Book of Mormon.

Nineteen of us, most of whom had been on the 2020 PSI tour to Guatemala, went to view and experience the exhibit. Later, Sallie Presler and I returned for a closer look.

Personally, I found the large number of ceramics on display amazing and appreciated the use of mirrors placed behind the objects, making it possible to see the complete piece. But the most exciting for me was the original panel of 160 glyphs on the Cancuén Panel. In addition, although not the original, the display of the San Bartolo murals provides much food for thought.

Officially named “Maya: The Jaguar Rises,” the exhibition is organized according to major themes, like “Meet the Maya,” “Life in the Rainforest,” “Maya Writing,” “Maya Politics,” among others. There are informative wall panels, interactive touch screens, original objects, and videos.

The exhibition opens with a 7-minute introductory video. As the video concludes, the screen raises, and viewers begin the journey through the exhibit. Near the beginning is an historical timeline of the Maya. The early dates in this timeline attributed to the Maya actually refer to the Jaredites or others brought to the land of promise.



Sherrie Kline Smith

Adults	\$19.50
Children (3-12)	\$14.50
Group Admission (15+)	\$10.00
<i>10% fee added to ensure preservation of Union Station.</i>	
Open until Jan 1, 2023	
Monday - Sunday	10 am - 5 pm
unionstation.org/event/maya	

*King
Benjamin
emphasizes
salvation
comes only in
and through
the atoning
blood
of Christ.*

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Sherrie Kline Smith

Figure 1. A portion of the west wall, “reading” from left to right, shows a mythological scene representing the birth, life, and resurrection of the Maize God. The end vignette portrays the commemoration of the coronation of a real-life king.

I am only going to review two things in some detail because of their importance: the San Bartolo murals and possible correlations between events in The Book of Mormon (Part 1) and Maya writing

including examples from San Bartolo and the Cancuén Panel of 160 hieroglyphs (Part 2). Featured in Part 3 are photos of a few other items from the exhibit with explanations.

PART 1: SAN BARTOLO AND ITS MURALS

Not far into the exhibition are two large wall panels with a reproduction of two magnificent murals from San Bartolo, a small site in the northeast Guatemala lowlands. Discovered by accident in 2001 by archaeologist William Saturno, the murals are in “a single architectural complex called Las Pinturas, comprising a pyramid with seven construction phases and several auxiliary structures” (Stuart et al. 2022:1). Specifically, the murals are in a 14- by 31-foot one-room building added to the back of one of the pyramids in the Las Pinturas complex (Figure 3.). It’s believed that the murals “ran along all four walls of the room like elaborate crown molding” (Kaufman 2003:77). The west (Figure 1.) and north (Figure 2.) walls are the only ones remaining; the south and east walls having been demolished during the seventh construction phase when another building was erected over it. (Note: The exhibition does not show the north and west walls with the correct orientation but has the north wall mural where the south wall should be.)

Some reasons why the discovery of the site of San Bartolo and its murals are one of the most important ever made in the Maya area of

Mesoamerica are: its **timeframe** (400 B.C. to A.D. 200); the **quality and content of the paintings**; and examples of the **earliest “Mesoamerican writing from a well-dated context”** (Stuart et al. 2022:1). Earliest writing to be discussed in Part 2.

TIMEFRAME

The Las Pinturas complex dates to 400 B.C. to A.D. 200, a division of time designated the Late Preclassic by archaeologists. This is important! The San Bartolo site and murals were constructed and painted during an historic timeframe of the Lehi/Mulekite histories. Consider—The Book of Mormon covers the years 600 B.C. to A.D. 420, for a total of 1,020 years. The date of Las Pinturas—400 B.C. to A.D. 200—covers 600 years, more than half of the years covered in The Book of Mormon and falls within the center of the book's narrative.

This leads to the question—*What is happening in The Book of Mormon during those years* (400 B.C. to A.D. 200)?

One of the most important events that happens is the **migration of the Nephites**, led by King Mosiah I, from the southern highlands to the northern lowlands where they join the



Figure 2. The north wall with a scene at the left that the scholars still do not understand. The rest shows the “flowering mountain” with a cave-like entrance from which emerges the feather/plumed serpent. The many red scroll-like images indicate breath/wind/spirit (For a closer view of part of the mural, see Figure 4.).

Mulekites. Second, **King Benjamin** gives his famous **proclamation at 124 B.C.** during what was most likely the Feast of Tabernacles at which the people **offered sacrifice** and burnt offerings of “the firstlings of their flocks, according to the law of Moses” (Mosiah 1:30 [LDS 2:3]). King Benjamin caused his **words to be written and distributed** among the people. King Benjamin proclaims his son Mosiah II king. A **coronation** occurs in 124 B.C.; all to be examined closer at the conclusion of Part 1.

QUALITY OF THE PAINTINGS

The murals, found in one of the next to last construction phases of the pyramid complex, date to around 100 B.C. Archaeologists began referring to the murals as the Sistine Chapel of the Maya

because their content represent a visual record of Maya beliefs. These murals are “the earliest known examples of Maya painting. The discovery suggests a level of sophistication in pre-Classic Maya culture previously unsuspected...” (Harbold 2006). Heather Hurst, the excellent artist that made the marvelous reproductive drawing of the murals displayed at the exhibition, stated she believed the murals were well planned and completed in weeks by probably two or possibly three artists, and that the building was built to “house” the murals like a medieval stained-glass window (Hurst 2004). In a *National Geographic* article, Hurst was noted as saying, “The painters’ line work was so consistent and controlled. They were professional artists who had done this many times” (Kaufman 2003:76).

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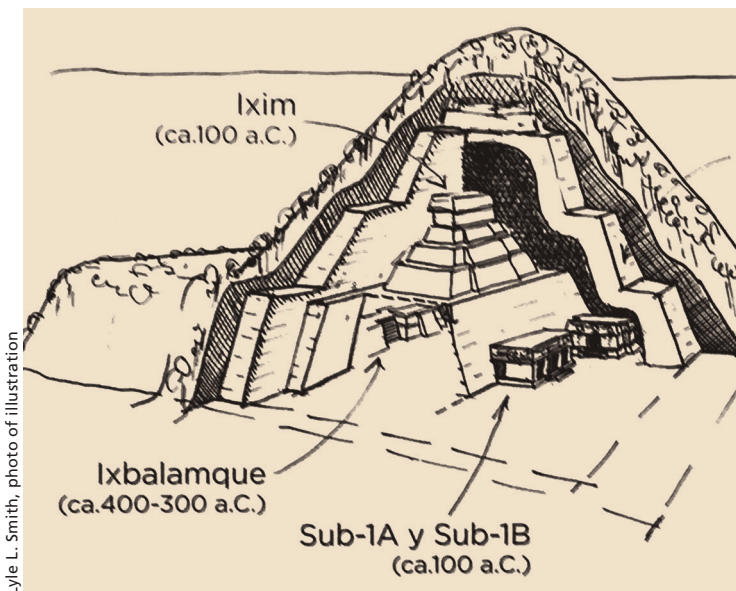


Figure 3. This drawing illustrates several of the different construction phases of the Las Pinturas pyramid complex at San Bartolo. The portion labeled Sub-1A is the mural building attached to the east side of the larger building named Ixim. The Ixbalamque is the area where they discovered thousands of pieces from prior murals along with one of the earliest examples of writing from a well-dated context. Building over prior structures, as illustrated here, is standard practice by the Maya, and the reason almost all the ruins visitors see are post A.D. 420, the end of the narrative in *The Book of Mormon*. This drawing is part of the San Bartolo exhibit at the archaeology/anthropology museum in Guatemala City.

Lyle L. Smith, photo of illustration

Maya Exhibit (Cont. from Page 3)

CONTENT OF THE SAN BARTOLO MURALS

The main themes of the murals are creation; sacrifice; birth/death/resurrection of the Maize God; the Principal Bird Deity (PBD); and the Feathered/Plumed Serpent.

Creation

In detailed polychrome the murals portray the most elaborate depiction of the Maya's creation myth ever discovered. Amazingly, the circa 100 B.C. murals parallel two much later manuscripts: the thirteenth-century Dresden Codex, one of the four surviving Maya codices (A replica is displayed at the current Maya exhibit.) and the sixteenth-century Popol Vuh manuscript, as well as the A.D. 700 hieroglyphic inscription of Stela C at Quirigua. The Popol Vuh was written 1500 years later than the murals! This creation belief held constant for a very long time. The experts found this extremely surprising and enlightening. They had not imagined that the creation "myth" sprung from such early roots.

Karl Taube believes the murals illustrate Maya beliefs. "It's like their bible" (Taube 2004). On the west wall mural (Figure 4.), three persons offer sacrifices, representing the three domains of creation. In the first scene, a man stands in water, sacrificing a fish[**waters/sea**] to the Principal Bird Deity, who perches in the first 'world tree'" (Harbold

2006). In the second scene, a man stands on land, offering a deer, representing **earth**. The third is a turkey/fowl sacrifice representing **heaven**. The psalmist expressed it this way: "the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea" (Psalm 8:6). And the poet Samuel Longfellow penned these words that has become one of our hymns. "God of the earth, the sky, the sea! / Maker of all above, below..."

Birth/Death/Resurrection

At one of the first symposiums (2004) held after the discovery of the murals, Saturno, along with Heather Hurst; Karl Taube, an iconographic expert about Mesoamerica as well as the American Southwest; plus, several other experts presented slide lectures concerning what they believed the murals portrayed.

Taube explained how the images conveyed the Maya creation beliefs, but what he said about the "whole theme" of the murals brought a collective gasp from the audience. Taube believes the **whole theme of the murals is the birth, death, and resurrection of the Maize God**. He said, "**Christ is Maize; Maize is Christ**." He projected the Christian cross used by the Maya today on the overhead screen and suggested a correlation of the Maize God's resurrection to the present-day Maya belief in resurrection. The Maize God dominates the murals.



Figure 4. A portion of the west wall relates creation and sacrifice. Each figure performs a sacrifice in front of an offering. The far left is a fish, representing sea/waters; the middle is a deer (earth); and the last is a turkey for the heavens. The PBD sits on top of all three trees, each of which are a different type of tree.

Did you know that, as early as Lehi, the knowledge of the Redeemer/Messiah who would “offer himself a sacrifice for sin.... That he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead” (2 Nephi 1:72, 75 [LDS 2:7-8]) was known among the Nephites and Lamanites? Over the years the belief in the Messiah waxed and waned but seems to remain in some form or another among the Maya for more than 1000 years.

Along with the Maize God, is the presence of what is called the Principal Bird Deity (referred to as the PBD). This bird sits on the trees in the west wall mural. This complex supernatural creature is a manifestation of the principal creator god Itzamnaaj and in ways, not clearly understood, connected with the Maize God. (See Smith 2008 listed in Resources below.) The PBD (See Figure 5.) is prolific throughout the Maya area for 1,000 years or more.



Sherrie Kline Smith

Figure 5. A portion of the west wall with one of the five trees with a marvelous depiction of the Principal Bird Deity standing on a tree bearing fruit.

Feathered/Plumed Serpent

A major element of the north wall mural is the plumed or feathered serpent that emerges from a flowering mountain, a representation of “paradise.”

This plumed serpent at San Bartolo is the basic form of Quetzalcoatl and *predates* Quetzalcoatl examples at Teotihuacan in northern Mexico. While the feathered serpent is present in Olmec* art, the San Bartolo north wall mural is one of the oldest Maya representations yet found and is 200 years earlier than the those at the central Mexican site of Teotihuacan.

Quetzalcoatl is a Nahuatl (Aztec) word composed of two words—*quetzal*, the emerald plumed quetzal bird native to the Maya highlands and *coatl*, serpent.

The Yucatec-Maya word for the feathered serpent is Kukulcan; *kuk*, the quetzal bird, and *kan*, meaning both serpent and sky. The

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**The Olmec were a group of people living mainly in the Gulf Coast area of Mexico from circa 2000 – 400 B.C. Evidence suggests they were the Jaredites.*



Sherrie Kline Smith

Figure 6. The figures stand on a feathered/plumed serpent. The top part of the serpent has a section divided by lines with smaller ones inside indicating the feathers. In the red and yellow section are footprints. The three walking figures are on a journey, two of them carrying sacred bundles.

Maya Exhibit (Cont. from Page 5)

Quiché Maya in Guatemala call it Gucumatz or Gukumatz. The Popol Vuh, a Quiché sixteenth-century document, describes Gukumatz as a serpent with beautiful blue and green feathers, referred to as Sovereign and Quetzal Serpent, a creator god.

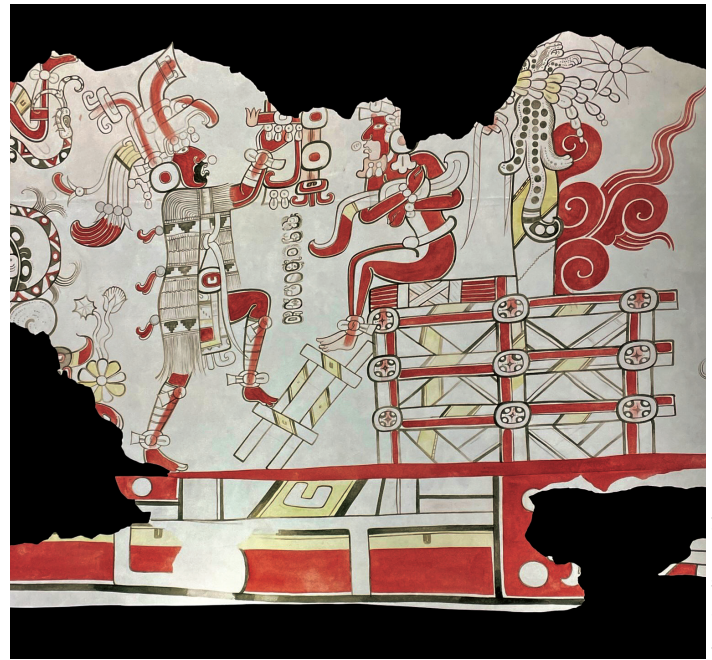
The human figures to the right of the flowering mountain are placed on top of the feathered serpent. Footprints are painted on its the lower portion, conveying that the feathered serpent “is not just a support or platform: it is a road or vehicle of supernatural travel” (Saturno et al. 2005:25). Examples of similar illustrations of footprints on the plumed serpent can be found at other locations, like Teotihuacan, Cacaxtla (“the merchant” on the feathered serpent), and one from the Hopi in the Southwest. Clearly this was a long-lasting symbol used over a very large geographic area from the American Southwest to Guatemala (and maybe further).

The two figures (far right when viewing the north wall exhibit) “traveling” on top of the feathered serpent are the only two figures to have glyphic notations. Both carry “sacred bundles.” “As bearers of the ancestral bundles, these two individuals may have had legendary or historic ties to the inhabitants of San Bartolo” (Saturno et al. 2005:38).

The belief of many latter-day Saints has been that Quetzalcoatl, or the feathered serpent, represents Christ because of numerous shared attributes. Quetzalcoatl is believed to be a Divine Redeemer, gives his life and sheds his blood; the Lord of creative forces/breath of life; rebirth/resurrected from the dead; inventor of arts, science, calendar, and writing. His many titles include Wind God, Creator God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, and God of Life. In the Maya sphere the Maize God also has correlations with Christ as Taube mentioned above. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; Redeemer/sacrifices his blood for our sins; and giver of all things good.

Coronation of a King

In another scene of the mural at the north end of the west wall, a king receives his crown as he accedes the throne. He sits on the same type of “throne depicted in the coronation of Maya kings for centuries” (Harbold quoting Taube 2006:2). This portion of the mural portrays not the spiritual but real world and the crowning of a real-life king.



Sherrie Kline Smith

Figure 7. Notice the hieroglyphs between the two figures. While epigraphers cannot yet read these glyphs because they differ somewhat from the later Maya glyphs, they do believe the inscription names the figure being crowned. The bottom glyph, however, closely resembles the later style glyph that reads “king.”

“The whole narrative [on the west wall] leads to the coronation of a named individual (see the glyphs between the two personages), Saturno says, establishing the maize god as the foundation of Maya kingship” (Harbold 2006:2).

SOME POSSIBLE CORRELATIONS WITH THE BOOK OF MORMON

Would these murals have anything to do with events in The Book of Mormon?

A most significant event was the migration of Mosiah I with the Nephites from the southern highlands to the northern lowlands, bringing the **Brass Plates** as well as the **other records** with them. Unfortunately, this extremely important milestone is without a date! Mormon, who was the main abridger of the records, and other record keepers were meticulous in recording dates. (So were the Maya. Look for the wall display and interactive screen that describes their calendar.) Why would Mormon forget to include such an historic date? Most probably, he didn’t. Most likely, he had recorded it in the proceeding records which formed the lost 116 pages that ended with the reign

of King Benjamin. (See Words of Mormon, verse 4.)

The most probable time that Mosiah I took the Nephites to the Land of Zarahemla has been noted by others as about 200 B.C. The last recorded date in the small plates is in Omni verse 7, “three hundred and twenty years had passed away...” (since 600 B.C. makes this 280 B.C.). The next date recorded is in Mosiah 4:6 [LDS 6:4], when King Benjamin consecrated his son Mosiah II as king. “And he began to reign in the thirtieth year of his age, making in the whole, *about* four hundred and seventy-six years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem.” This means Mosiah, son of King Benjamin, became king *about* 124 B.C. The San Bartolo murals date to *about* 100 B.C. Not only does the date match, but also the place—where the Nephites meet the Mulekites—in the northern lowlands.

The second most significant event during the years 250 B.C. to 100 B.C. was **King Benjamin’s proclamation and its associated events**. The importance of this event cannot be over emphasized. In a nutshell, the key aspects are as follows.

- 1) The speech appears to be given during the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles under the Mosaic Law and its associated **sacrifices**.
- 2) It was King Benjamin’s “farewell speech” and announcement that his son Mosiah II would be king. The **coronation** probably took place at that time or shortly thereafter.
- 3) The central part of the message is “that a person must apply the **atonement blood of Christ**.... Benjamin emphasizes that salvation was, is, and will come only in and through the atoning blood of Christ. The blood of Christ atones for sins. No other writer in the Book of Mormon gives such urgent reference to the blood of Christ shed for mankind” (Welch 1991:8).
- 4) He shares the message given to him from an angel about the **birth and life and resurrection of Jesus Christ**.
- 5) The **speech** was written and distributed to the people. It had a **lasting impact** not only on the people hearing the proclamation, but also succeeding generations.
- 6) “Benjamin concludes his speech with a moving and historically accurate use of covenant ritual, where the people enter into a covenant to obey God and obey the newly installed king. In that covenant the people witness their willingness

to keep the commandments of God, to take his name upon them, and to remember him always” (Welch 1991:9).

All these momentous events took place around 124 B.C.

When considering the statements by scholars about the San Bartolo and its murals with what is happening among the Mulekites and Nephites during the same timeframe, we cannot help but ask, Could the murals be commemorating the **arrival of the Nephites**, who brought the Brass Plates and other records, as well as salient points of **King Benjamin’s speech**, and the **coronation of Mosiah II** as king?

Remember the two figures on the north wall carrying sacred bundles? “As bearers of the ancestral bundles, these two individuals may have had legendary or historic ties to the inhabitants of San Bartolo” (Saturno et al. 2005:38). Could this possibly be commemorating the coming of those crucial historic records by Mosiah I?

Remember Taube (2004) believes the whole theme of the murals is the birth, death, and resurrection of the Maize God. He said, “Christ is Maize; Maize is Christ.” King Benjamin’s central point in his proclamation is the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ and salvation only comes through the atoning blood of Christ. Blood sacrifices are shown on the west wall of the murals.

Is the king being crowned at the north end of the west wall Mosiah II?

Simply put, I cannot say with certainty that the correlations of the murals with events in The Book of Mormon that I have related are correct. On the other hand, however, both the murals and The Book of Mormon seem to portray the same ideology and events in the right timeframe.

In our American culture eyes, the murals appear quite strange and fantastic. How could they possibly be depicting the creation and the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ? For now, we trust that the scholars who have studied these things for many years know what they are talking about, but also qualify that they don’t understand all the murals’ images. It certainly seems, however, from their explanations and many examples, that the Maya had a knowledge of creation described in Genesis along with a knowledge of God and his son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.

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Maya Exhibit (Cont. from Page 5)

PART 2: MAYA WRITING AND THE CANCUÉN PANEL

Moving onto another area of the Maya exhibition, “Maya Writing,” look for the informative wall panel describing Maya writing as well as an excellent interactive screen explaining how the writing system works. (Figures 8 and 9.) Maya writing is generally read two columns at a time, i.e. left to right, left to right, and top to bottom. Epigraphers usually designate the rows across as A/B; C/D; E/F, etc., and number the lines down.

Displayed in this exhibit section of Maya writing is the original **Cancuén Panel** mentioned in the opening paragraph of this article. Although the panel dates to AD 799—long after the close of the narrative in The Book of Mormon—the panel provides ten examples of that ubiquitous phrase “and it came to pass” used so much in The Book of Mormon—as well as the bible. Of the 160 glyph blocks, eight of the nine glyph blocks read as “and it came to pass;” the other two read “it had come to pass.”

The drawing of the Cancuén Panel (Figure 12.), shows the ten glyph blocks colored in blue. Those at B7 & O3 do not include “and.” These are the two past tense examples and read “it had come to pass.” When visiting the exhibit, see if you can find all ten glyphs on the original Cancuén Panel.

Cont. on Page 10



Figure 10. Closeup view of one of the “and it came to pass” glyphs on the Cancuén panel. Specifically, the one at A10.

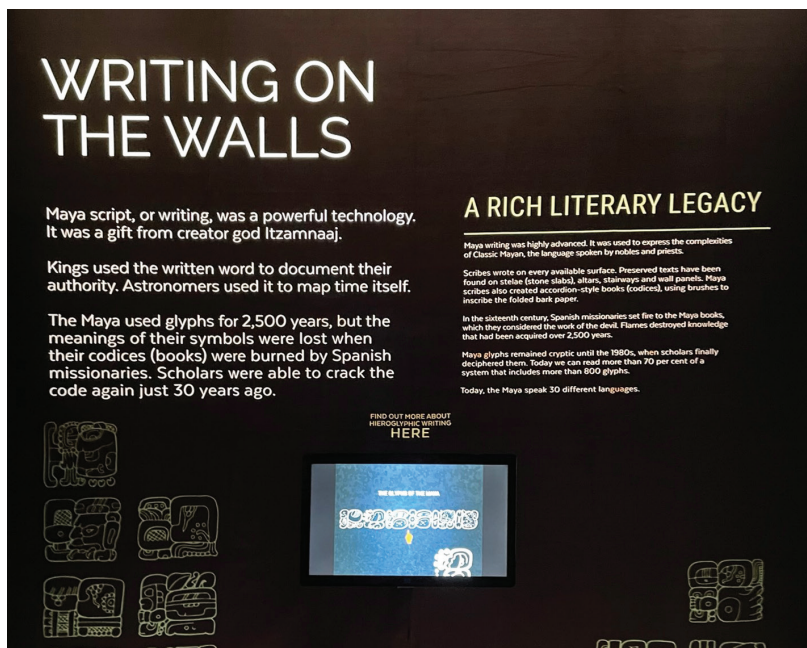


Figure 8. Wall Panel with Interactive Screen

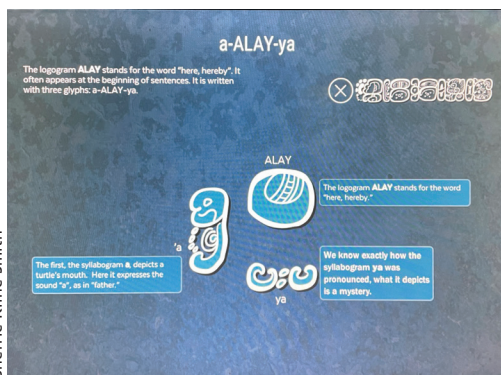


Figure 9. The interactive screen that explains how the glyphs work illustrates each glyph in what is called the Primary Standard Sequence, a dedicatory statement most usually found

around the edge of pots, plates, and drinking cups. The screen shot shown in the photo explains the word “alay,” which begins the dedication. A reading of “here is” or “now” has been proposed by epigraphers.

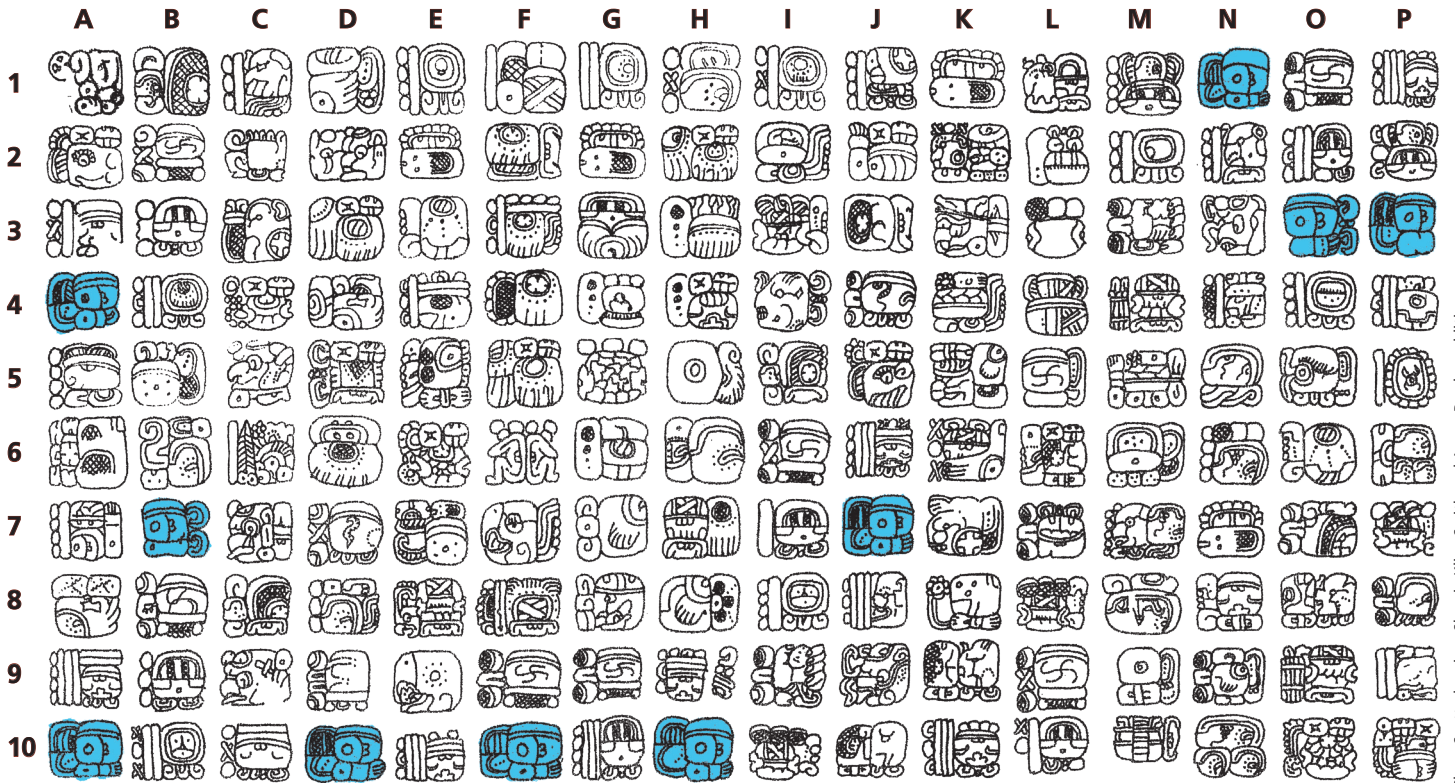
Some years ago, Gaylord Shaw proposed that alay could also be translated as “behold.” (See Shaw 2006:6.) This seems like a valid choice because “behold” is used numerous times in The Book of Mormon to focus the reader’s attention on what comes next. Therefore, this dedicatory formula could read something like this. “Behold, this is the drinking cup/ plate/bowl/etc. of [person’s name and sometimes titles] and [location].” Often, it also includes what the vessel contained, like tamales or a chocolate drink.

See the Maize God vessels on page 13 for examples of alay and the dedicatory phrase.



Sherrie Kline Smith, modified by Aaron Presler

Figure 11. Original Cancuén Panel



Glenn Scott, drawing; Sherrie Kline Smith and Aaron Presler, additions

Figure 12. Cancuén Panel drawing with “And it came to pass” Glyphs Highlighted

Maya Exhibit (Cont. from Page 5)

Mike Walker, who was with the group to see the exhibition, made the following comment.

I really enjoyed the entire exhibit, but the fairly large stone tablet was the most meaningful to me because of the repetition of the 'it came to pass' glyph. So, to me, the 'and it came to pass' glyph is a tremendous witness of both the Book of Mormon and the Book of Mormon land."

In the exhibit, to the left of the Cancuén Panel, is a rendering of a drawing of the panel's glyphs along with a partial translation. Notice that instead of saying "and it came to pass," epigraphers now use "it happened; it had happened; or and then it happened." The first years after the decipherment of these glyphs, which occurred in the mid-1980s by David Stuart, the translation was always written as "and then it came to pass," or "it came to pass." Perhaps the epigraphers decided to change the translation to a "more modern" translation.

Earliest Writing

The Cancuén Panel dated to A.D. 799, 400 years after the narrative in The Book of Mormon. The San Bartolo ancient murals, however, discussed above include some of the earliest Maya hieroglyphic writing, 100 B.C. Subsequent

investigations of the architectural foundation of [Las Pinturas] revealed even earlier paintings, a fragment (Figure 12.) from which bore important evidence of early Maya hieroglyphic script, dating to approximately 300 to 200 B.C., and this remains one of the earliest examples of Mesoamerican writing from a well-dated context (Stuart et al. 2022:1).

This fragment from an earlier mural painting at San Bartolo has been referred to as the San Bartolo block. According to Houston (2006:1250),

the San Bartolo block achieves importance because it narrows the time in which writing first appears in Mesoamerica. Most early finds, regardless of region, now come close to the midpoint of the first millennium B.C.

Samples of carbonized wood that are closely associated with the writing have calibrated radiocarbon dates of 200-300 B.C. This early

Maya writing system was in use centuries earlier than previously thought... (Saturno et al. 2006:1)

The text from San Bartolo commands attention less because of what it records, than because of its striking date and sophistication. The glyphs are hardly the work of a neophyte or an inventive genius from antiquity. The sure execution and balancing of brush width indicate centuries of prior development... (Houston 2006:1249).

Maya writing and the timeframe for its earliest examples **may be the most important evidence anywhere** that the Maya are descendants of Lehi and Muluk/Mulok.

"Mesoamerica is the only area in the Americas where writing systems have been identified" (Pool 2007:290 and Benson 1973:v).

While a few isolated examples of written inscriptions have been found in both North and South America, epigraphers recognize that the only writing systems in the Americas, earlier than Columbus, are found in Mesoamerica. The largest corpus of examples is the writing of the Maya. Thousands of hieroglyphic inscriptions carved on stone and pottery with painted hieroglyphs provide solid evidence for this.

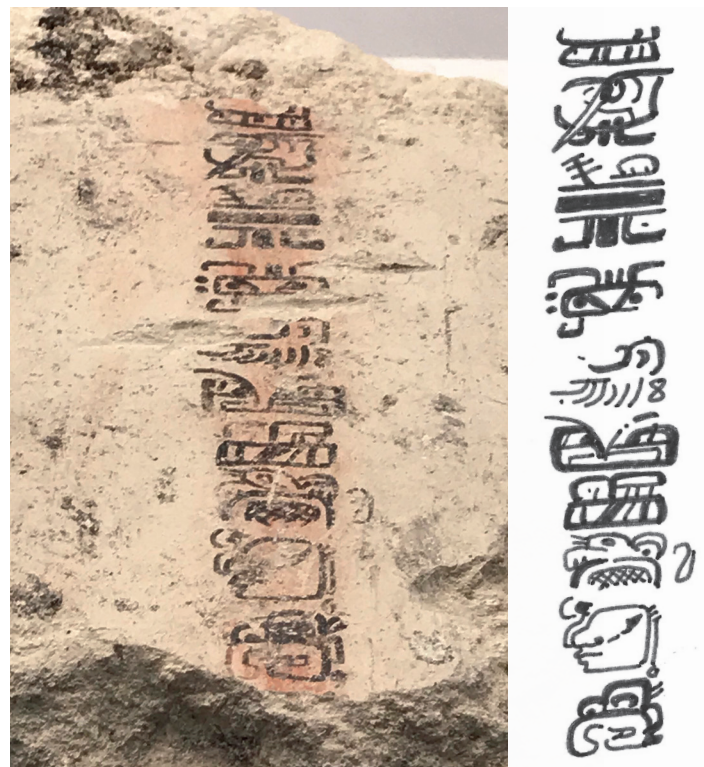


Figure 13. San Bartolo Block

Lyle Smith, drawing by Glenn Scott

PART 3: SELECTED ITEMS FROM THE EXHIBIT

The exhibit at Union Station in Kansas City, “Maya: The Jaguar Rises,” includes hundreds of items—from numerous ceramics/pottery examples; replicas and one or two original stelae (carved upright stones with figures and/or hieroglyphs); pieces of jade and shells; items made from bone, including sewing needles; a screen print on black fabric of one of the magnificent carved lintels from Tikal’s Temple IV; pottery figurines, some of which are ocarinas, a small flute like instrument; and so much more. Almost everything in the exhibit dates to after A.D. 400. There are, however, at least two that fall within the timeframe of The Book of Mormon. (Figures 14. and 15.)

The other photos seen below, dated later than A.D. 400, were selected because we find them of great interest: stone boxes; screw-top lid vessels; ceramics with the Maize God; and a couple pages of the facsimile of the sixteenth-century Dresden Codex. I’ve also included some items that are not in the current exhibit at Union Station (Figures 17., 18., and 20.).



glyph notes

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CERAMICS/POTTERY



Sherrie Kline Smith

Figure 14.

The exhibit label for this lovely bowl indicates it is from Kaminaljuyu (now almost all covered over by Guatemala City) in the Maya highlands, 450-200 B.C.



Sherrie Kline Smith

Figure 15.

The plate is also from Kaminaljuyu. The hole in the bottom of the plate is referred to as a “kill hole.” Its precise reason is unknown, but plates like this are most often found in burials.

Cont. on Page 12

Maya Exhibit (Cont. from Page 7)

STONE BOXES



Sherrie Kline Smith

Figure 16.



Janet Twombly

Figure 17.

Because The Book of Mormon plates were stored in a stone box, it's always exciting to see examples of other stone boxes. Experts suggest that most of them held books (codices). One elaborately carved stone box (not shown), discovered in

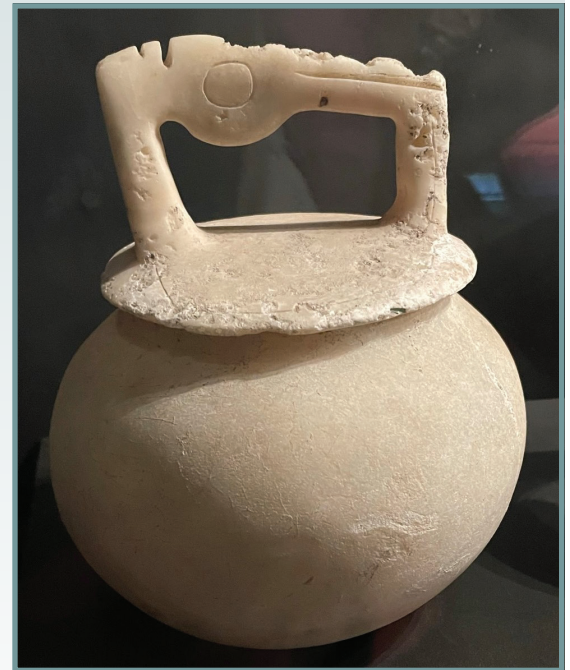
2005 in a cave near Cancuén, the place of the Cancuén Panel, shows scribes writing on codices. The box with a figure on the lid (Figure 16.) comes from the highlands of Guatemala. The other example (Figure 17.) can be seen at the anthropology/archaeology museum in Guatemala City.

SCREW-TOP LIDDED VESSELS



Don Beebe

Figure 18.



Sherrie Kline Smith

Figure 19.

Quite a few years ago, a vessel with a most unusual top was found in Rio Azul (northeast corner of Guatemala). The lid could “screw” on to the bottom, allowing the vessel filled with chocolate to be

carried. The glyph, far left on the lid rim, reads cacao. Until now, I wasn't aware of any others like it, until we saw this alabaster container in the exhibit.

CODEX-STYLE VESSELS

Maya Vase Database. Used by permission.



Figure 20.

The codex-style ceramics are so designated because the glyphs written on the vessels resemble those found in the handful of codices that still exist. The three ceramics featured here are from the Late Classic (ca. A.D. 600-800) and portray the Maize God. The plate, well-known among archaeologists and epigraphers as the Resurrection Plate, depicts the resurrection of the Maize God emerging from the earth symbolized by a turtle carapace. The two glyphs to the left of the Maize God gives his name as Hun Ajaw Itzamnaaj, indicating the close relationship between the Principal Bird Deity/Itzamnaah and the Maize God.



Sallie Presler

Figure 21.

Around the rim of the plate and top of the two chocolate drinking vessels



Sallie Presler

Figure 22.

is the usual Dedicatory Phrase (formerly described as the Primary Standard Sequence) that begins with *alay* (behold). (See caption for Figure 9.) On the Resurrection Plate, the *alay* is easily seen; it's the first glyph, reading left to right. Also notice the "kill" hole on the plate. On the smaller of the two chocolate vessels (Figure 21.), *alay* is the glyph on the far right. On the larger vessel (Figure 22.), *alay* is not visible from this view.

DRESDEN CODEx

Near the end of the exhibit, you will find a facsimile of the Dresden Codex, one of the four surviving Maya "books." According to *Wikipedia*, Johann Christian Götze (1692–1749), German theologian and director of the Royal Library at Dresden, purchased the codex from a private owner in Vienna in 1739 while traveling to Italy. It's believed to have been created in the Yucatan between the years 1200-1250. It's a Maya manuscript, written in hieroglyphs and their numbering system. Well-known for its astronomical and calendrical information,



Sherrie Kline Smith

Figure 23.

it includes also, among many other things, creation myths, as well as a flood.

Cont. on Page 14

Maya Exhibit (Cont. from Page 13)

CONCLUSION

You may have noticed that this issue is a combination of two, Numbers 3&4 2022. We wanted to be able to present enough photos and information about the Maya exhibit at Union Station to encourage you to visit the exhibit. Over the years, since 1987 when my husband and I began leading tours to Mesoamerica to see the “ruins” of ancient cities, we also toured museums. In the museums we see things and read labels which leads us to a greater appreciation of the sites visited and helps us to begin to imagine what their society was like. We find gems like stone boxes, exquisite carved jade and shells, written inscriptions, and much more that shows the Maya people beginning around 600-500 B.C. were skilled in many crafts and architecture. We also find connections to the narrative in The Book of Mormon.

As mentioned before, to our American cultural eyes, the murals and many other of the items on display appear quite strange and fantastic. Please do not be overly confused by the Maya art style. In regard to the San Bartolo murals, the timeframe as well as the depicted creation story, the birth, death, and resurrection of the Maize God, and crowning of a king—again about the same date as Mosiah II—plus the Cancuén Panel and its many “and it came to pass glyphs” all correlate very well with the narrative, timeframe, and place with events in The Book of Mormon.

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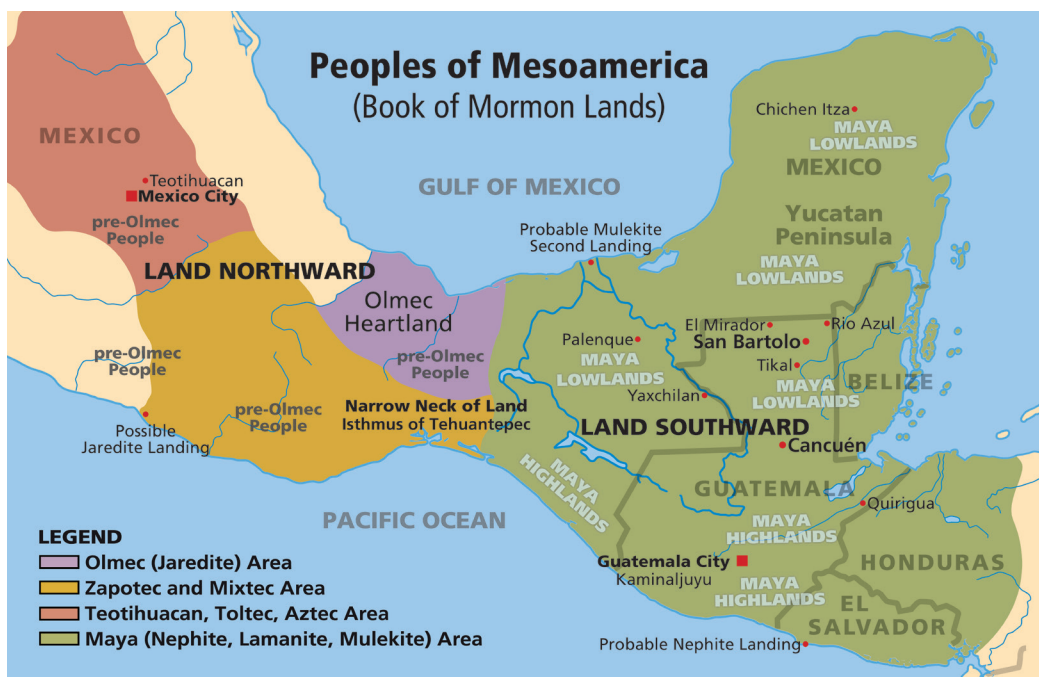


Figure 24.

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glyph quotes

By Eric English


“Four score and twenty years ago...” There are few words that we may hear in our society that are more universally recognized than those. We instantly think of Abraham Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address, along with the most major crisis in American history that was transpiring at that time as our forefathers wrestled and fought over the issue of slavery, among other things. While there seem to be fewer and fewer common concepts that every generation learns about our collective history, the integration, assimilation, and acceptance continues. The concept of liberty and equality among all men is a crucial foundation of our nation, and Lincoln recognized that it was worth bleeding and dying for. We continue to recognize that point today and to express gratitude for all those who gave their lives to enable this great Republic to hold together.

The speech of King Benjamin appears to have held that level of importance and reverence to the ancient Nephites as Lincoln's speech does for us.

A lot had transpired among the Nephite people leading up to Benjamin's speech. His father, Mosiah I, had led the Nephites out of the Land of Nephi and down to the Land of Zarahemla, where they had encountered and integrated with the people of Zarahemla, who had also come out from Jerusalem. And yet, we see in Mosiah 1:15 [LDS 1:10] that Benjamin still referred to them separately as he instructed for them to all be gathered as one (they were apparently still struggling to fully come together). Benjamin had led the people through strife with the Lamanites and now he was planning

Believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent. ~ Mosiah 1:18 [LDS 3:18]

to transition leadership over to his son, Mosiah II. We also see in Mosiah 1:37-38 [LDS 2:8-9] that the words of Benjamin's speech were written down for the people to have and to read. This speech appears to be included in its original totality in The Book of Mormon and takes up multiple chapters of the book of Mosiah; and as Mormon describes, he only included those things that the Lord directed him to include in his abridgment. When we read King Benjamin's speech, there should be no wonder why it's in there.

Benjamin lays out one of the most powerful messages in all of scripture, plainly detailing the way of salvation and how to return to our Maker. He shows us that the path of that return is wholly dependent upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and that that one event in history is central and pivotal to all else, as well as being available to all mankind at all times. Not only are all men equal as Lincoln proclaimed, but all men are equal at the foot of the cross as Benjamin further proclaimed. All men have the equal opportunity for His atoning blood to be applied to our account and to be able to find eternal salvation. Benjamin didn't just lead his people through this effort of integration. He knew that he needed to lead them all to the Lord before the end of his life. We can see this collective act of covenanting with the Lord as a people. Perhaps we should be striving to help make Benjamin's words as recognized as those of Lincoln by sharing the truths of the Book of Mormon with all that we can, therefore providing the opportunity for spiritual equality as well as cultural equality. 

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*Nephites Meet the
Mulekites: A Look at the
Maya Exhibit at Kansas
City, in Three Parts*
*Part 1: San Bartolo and Its
Murals*
*Part 2: Maya Writing and
the Cancuén Panel*
*Part 3: Selected Items from
the Exhibit*

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With Sincere Gratitude

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WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE

**Dave and Connie Spivey ~ PSI Mailing
Team since September 2012**

**Connie Spivey ~ PSI Secretary since April
2018**

We have had the privilege, and genuine joy, of working with Dave and Connie Spivey for the past ten years. Sadly for us, they have requested to be relieved of their current duties with PSI. They will both be greatly missed, yet we support their decision and wish them God's choicest blessings upon their future endeavors.

Dave and Connie joined our PSI staff in September 2012. Connie had been in charge of mailings for several different branch newsletters and Dave had retired after 40 years with the post office not long before joining us. Their willingness to put that mailing expertise to use for *glyph notes* was timely and greatly appreciated.

While serving as our mailing team, Dave and Connie were the "behind-the-scenes" force in handling the mailing of *glyph notes*, navigating the complicated process of bulk mailing requirements and were the reason the newsletter/journal appeared

in your mailbox. They were also responsible for adding new subscribers to the mailing list and keeping the list as current as possible. Theirs was a tedious job, yet critical to the success of our publication.

During their ten years of service, Dave and Connie were valuable members of the PSI Board, giving insights and suggestions well beyond the mailing process. Their contributions helped shape the content of future issues.

Connie became Secretary on the PSI board in April of 2018 and served in that capacity until present. One very important job as secretary was to write "thank you" letters to be sent to our generous donors. While Lyle gratefully signed those letters of appreciation, it was Connie that was creating them behind the scenes.

Gena Martin has also been a part of the PSI mailing team and she has graciously accepted the role as Secretary of the PSI Board. We are thankful for Gena's work in the past with Dave and Connie and now welcome her in an increased role. We'll introduce Gina to our readers in the next issue.

We wish you the best of luck, Dave and Connie!
... and "THANK YOU." 