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"And he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word..." Alma 9:18

MESOAMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY and the BOOK OF MORMON OUTLINES COMPARED

By Raymond C. Treat

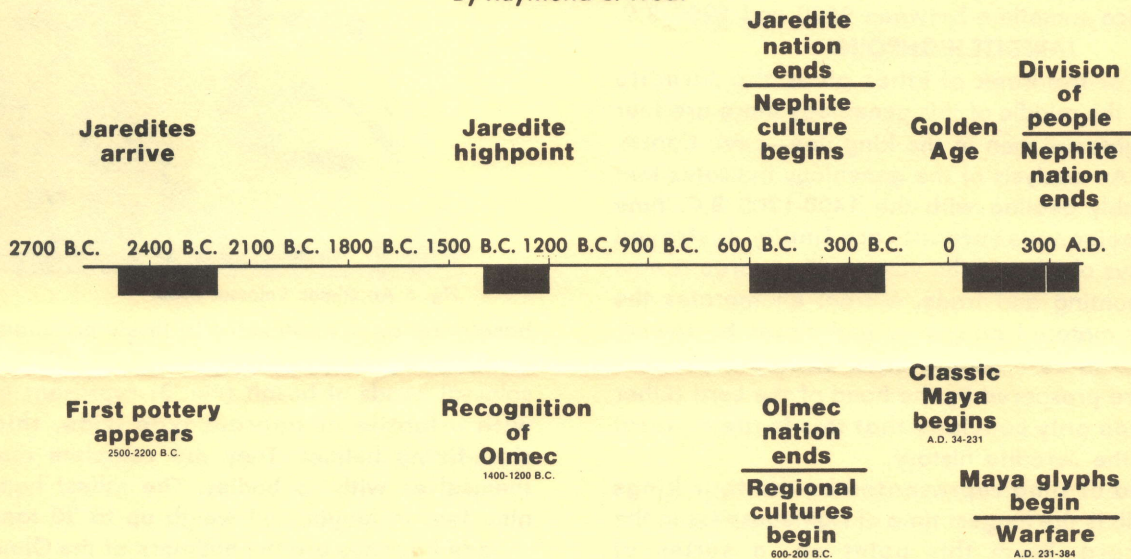


Fig. 1 Comparison of the two culture history outlines.

The following is the edited text of an illustrated lecture given at a recent meeting of the Foundation for Research on Ancient America. The lecture, in turn, was an expanded version of an article first printed in the *Zarahemla Record* Issue Number 2. It should be noted that the following discussion is only a very brief summary of the information available.

I speak to you today both as a student of the Book of Mormon and as a professional archaeologist. I would like to share with you some of the insights which have come to me as a result of combining these two fields.

One of the advantages of being a professional archaeologist is that of keeping abreast of the latest available information. Much of the information presented in this lecture has only been available recently. The archaeological outline discussed here could not have been presented a few short years ago.

We are going to compare the major points in the outline of Mesoamerican culture history with the major points in the outline of Book of Mormon culture history (Fig. 1). We will see the remarkable fit between these two distinct culture patterns which will cause us to conclude that the closeness of matchup of these two long histories goes far beyond the realm of chance. This correlation is indeed a

powerful testimony that the Book of Mormon had its roots in the people whose story it tells.

Although there was some printed material available prior to 1830 about the archaeology of southern Mexico and Guatemala, none of the information about Mesoamerican culture history in Fig. 1 was known in 1830.

It should be made clear that archaeological evidence is of necessity fragmentary evidence. Without written records an archaeological site will retain only an estimated 2% of the total life of the people who once lived there. This means that most archaeological evidence is subject to more than one interpretation. This is less true of a culture history outline, however, since more data is gathered to construct it than any other single type of archaeological evidence.

The archaeological evidence given here is greatly simplified. However, it is a fair representation of the available archaeological record.

JAREDITES ARRIVE - FIRST POTTERY APPEARS

Based on Old World evidence, the Jaredites arrived in the New World sometime between 2500 and 2200 B.C. as

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an already civilized people (see Simmons 1977:24-26). We know that they were settled village farmers with flocks and herds and brought the knowledge of pottery making with them from the Old World.

Looking to the first appearance of pottery in Mesoamerica we find a type of pottery called Pox identified at Puerto Marquez on the Pacific coast near Acapulco. This pottery has been dated about 2300 B.C. (Brush 1965). Very similar pottery has also been found in the Tehuacan Valley southeast of Mexico City and given a similar date (MacNeish, Peterson and Flannery 1970: 21-25). Recent excavations in Belize have discovered pottery dating as early as 2500 B.C. (Hammond et al 1979). This pottery is dated by a group of 12 carbon-14 dates tied into a stratigraphic sequence. The dates range from 2500-1300 B.C. for a single phase. Three of the dates are in the 2500-2200 B.C. range. Thus, from the present evidence, we can safely say that pottery begins to appear in Mesoamerica sometime between 2500 and 2200 B.C.

JAREDITE HIGHPOINT

Chapter 1 of the Book of Ether gives the Jaredite genealogy. In the middle of this genealogy there are four successive righteous men in the king line—Levi, Corom, Kish and Lib. An analysis of the genealogy indicates that we are probably dealing with the 1400-1200 B.C. time period. The poisonous serpents are finally destroyed during the days of Lib and the vast southern area is now opened for hunting and trade. Moroni enumerates the signs of their material prosperity and closes by saying, "And never could be a people more blessed than were they, and more prospered by the hand of the Lord (Ether 4:78)." We can only conclude that this is the cultural highpoint of the Jaredite history.

This period of time represented by the four kings ending with Lib is the longest time of righteousness in the Jaredite record. From this point on, a series of unrighteous leaders begin a spiritual decline which is ultimately reflected in the destruction of the Jaredite nation. This destruction must have occurred around 200 B.C. This date is supported by two factors—the genealogy of the kings in the land of Zarahemla and the condition of the breastplates, swords and bones found by the search party of King Limhi just before 121 B.C.

RECOGNITION OF OLMEC

Olmec is the name given to the major archaeological group living during the time of the Jaredite highpoint. Michael Coe's work at the site of San Lorenzo, Veracruz from 1966 to 1968 pushed back the recognition of full-blown Olmec culture to 1200 B.C. (Coe 1970). Coe indicates that 1200 B.C. is not the beginning of the Olmec but that it must have roots much earlier. There is evidence at San Lorenzo of the beginning of the Olmec culture pattern as early as 1400 B.C. This picture correlates well with the Jaredite story which indicates a high spiritual level for four generations which would have resulted in a flowering of material culture at the same time period as San Lorenzo. Thus we see the highpoints of the two patterns match (Fig. 1).

What does archaeology tell us about this culture known as Olmec? Their genius seems to lie in their distinctive art style. They produced art on both a monumental scale in

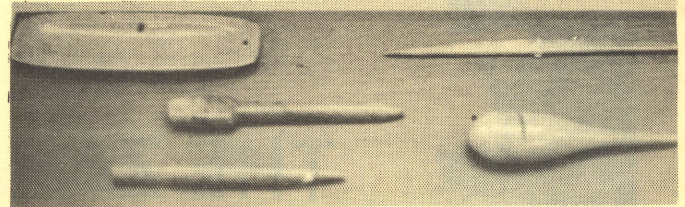


Fig. 2 Small Olmec jade pieces.

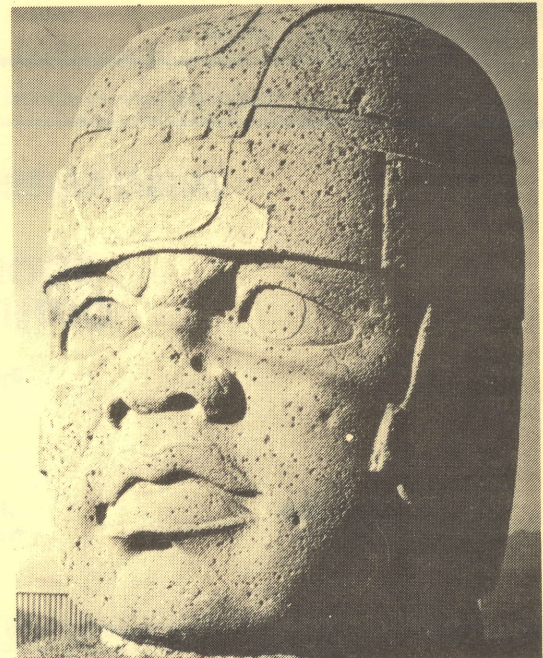


Fig. 3 An Olmec Colossal head.

basalt and on a small scale in finely polished and carved articles of jade and serpentine (Fig. 2). The so-called colossal heads of basalt (Fig. 3) represent a huge head with infantile or negroid type wide, thick lips and close-fitting helmet. They are complete monuments in themselves with no bodies. The tallest heads measure nine feet in height and weigh up to 20 tons.

Jade figurines are the hallmark of the Olmec. The jade used was very often of high quality and bluish green to bluish gray in color. They also had clay figurines, both hollow and solid.

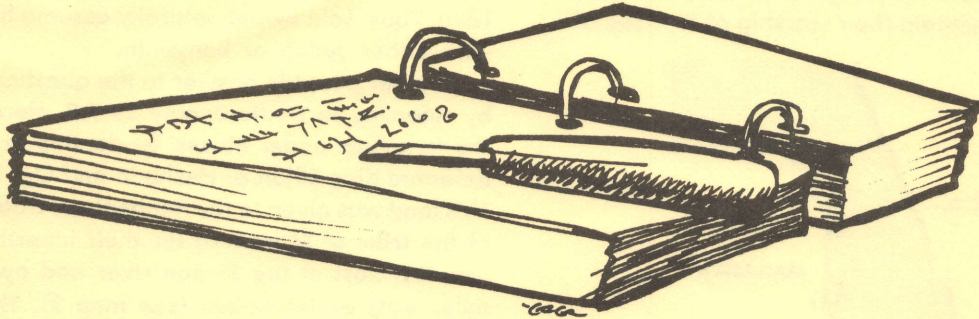
The dominant motif of their art is that of a were-jaguar, a creature depicted as a combination of human and jaguar. The human element is frequently represented as an infant and combines the chubby face, short wide nose and thicker lips of a young child with the snarling mouth of a jaguar. Sometimes an indentation or cleft is shown on the top of the bald head, which is often elongated. The significance of the Olmec motifs, particularly the were-jaguar, is a matter of unresolved debate.

Typical Olmec pottery includes bowls which are heavily carved or excised in broad gouges. A common design is known as the paw-wing or scroll-wing motif (Fig. 4). Hematite red is a favorite color. This distinctive pottery was widely traded.

During their period of florescence beginning around 1200 B.C. the Olmec dominated a large portion of Mesoamerica. However, new pottery types typical of settlements elsewhere replace the old around 550 B.C. New wares and figurines are indications of the decline and replacement of a culture.

JAREDITE - OLMEC END

The Jaredite decline really may be said to begin soon
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Readers' Research

THE QUESTION OF LEHI'S LINEAGE

By Dr. James H. Robbins



Map 1. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah c. 925-842 B.C.

After obtaining the Brass Plates from Laban, Lehi carefully studied them. Nephi is careful to record the contents of the Brass Plates which I would recommend you take time to read - see I Nephi 1:159-168. While studying these records, Lehi discovers that he is of the lineage of Manasseh, son of Joseph - see I Nephi 1:164,165; Alma 8:3. This would seem to indicate that Lehi did not know his lineage or assumed his lineage to be of some other tribe. Criticism of the Book of Mormon has been raised on this very point. Critics have said that it is common knowledge that all Israelites knew their lineage; thus, Lehi should have known his lineage prior to discovering it from the Brass Plates. Let us journey back in time to the development of the Kingdom of Israel and its subsequent division into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah to see if we can find a

plausible explanation to this question.

According to Halley's Bible Handbook, page 111, Israel's enslavement in Egypt was circa 1800-1400 B.C. which would restore Israel to the land of Palestine as a free people approximately 1360 B.C. (allowing for the 40 years in the wilderness). The Hebrew Nation initially was a confederacy of 12 independent tribes under a governmental system of Judges which lasted for approximately 300 years. This "theocracy" gradually evolved into the Kingdom of Israel with Samuel the prophet as the connecting link between the Judges and the Kingdom. Samuel's ministry spanned from approximately 1100-1050 B.C. Then Saul was anointed the first King of Israel and reigned 40 years and, as you well know, proved to be a disastrous failure. The Golden Era of Israel came forth under the reigns of David and his son Solomon, each reigning 40 years, thus bringing the length of time that the Kingdom of Israel existed as a united entity to 120 years. Then in the days of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, a revolt was staged by Jeroboam in which 10 tribes followed Jeroboam northward and established a separate kingdom known as the Kingdom of Israel. Two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) remained under the leadership of Rehoboam and became known as the Kingdom of Judah. Thus, now circa 930 B.C., the united Kingdom of Israel (all 12 tribes) existed as two separate kingdoms—Israel (10 Northern tribes) and Judah (2 Southern tribes). (See map 1).

Little time passed before Jeroboam removed the Levites from functioning in their lawful priestly duties and introduced the idolatrous Golden Calf worship. By referring to II Chronicles 11:1-17 we find that the Levites defected from Jeroboam's Northern Kingdom to the Kingdom of Judah under Rehoboam. Thus the Kingdom of Judah was composed of three distinct tribes—Judah, Benjamin and Levi.

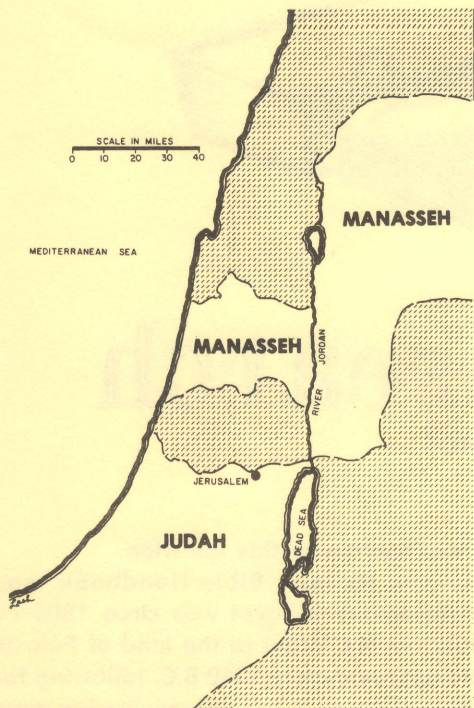
We now come to a very significant yet easily overlooked fact that I feel has an important bearing on Lehi's lineage. Read carefully verse 16 of II Chronicles 11:

And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers.

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LINEAGE (Continued from page 3)

Here we see that apparently remnants from some, if not all, of the Northern Ten Tribes (Manasseh included) defected to Judah to maintain their worship of the God of



Map 2. The half-tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan maintained ties with Jerusalem while the half-tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan went northward with Jeroboam. Both were carried into captivity by the Assyrians in 721 B.C.

Israel. This opens up an avenue of interesting conjecture. For instance, let's say that Lehi's progenitors were some of the remnants that defected from Jeroboam (Northern) to Rehoboam (Southern) just a few years after the split in the united Kingdom of Israel (circa 930 B.C.). This would mean that Lehi's roots would have been planted in the soil of the Kingdom of Judah for nearly 300 years before his sojourn here on earth as a mortal. Continuing in this same line of reasoning we must also admit that eventually all separate tribal lineages of these Northern defectors were assimilated into one of the three tribes of which the Kingdom of Judah was composed. For in all the history and prophecy which concerns the three-tribed kingdom, there are no tribal names used but those of Judah, Benjamin and Levi.

Unfortunately, we don't have an in-depth record of Lehi's background. The Book of Mormon simply says that Lehi dwelt at Jerusalem all his life (1 Nephi 1:3) and that the land of his inheritance was "down" (elevation) from Jerusalem - see 1 Nephi 1:77. So, from the sketchy details found in the Book of Mormon we cannot with any certainty pinpoint Lehi's land of inheritance. However, the point to be made is that Lehi had been a part of the Kingdom of Judah all his life and that the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been "lost" in the Assyrian captivity for over 100 years.

I don't think it an injustice to credibility then to propose the following as a possible solution to Lehi's lineage. Very possibly, Lehi's progenitors were some of the early defectors to the Kingdom of Judah to maintain their religious beliefs. These progenitors of Lehi then

established themselves within the territorial confines of the Kingdom of Judah and gradually were assimilated into either the tribe of Judah or Benjamin (very unlikely into Levi). Thus, Lehi would naturally assume his lineage to be with either Judah or Benjamin.

Another possible answer to the question may be found by referring to Deuteronomy 29:7,8. Here we read that the Israelites under Moses' leadership in the wilderness defeated King Sihon of Heshbon and Og, King of Bashan. This land was given to the Reubenites, Gadites, and to half of the tribe of Manasseh for their inheritance. This land was just east of the Jordan river and approximately 40 miles east of Jerusalem (see map 2). This half-tribe of Manasseh maintained political-religious ties with Jerusalem (capital city of the Kingdom of Judah) when the other half of the tribe went northward with Jeroboam. The half-tribe of Manasseh in Judah was carried into captivity along with the other half tribe of Manasseh in Northern Israel by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. If Lehi's progenitors had been a part of the tribal inheritance east of the Jordan, then undoubtedly they had escaped the Assyrian invaders, fled to the territorial confines of Judah, and eventually became assimilated into either the tribe of Judah or Benjamin. Thus, the first alternative of a Northern Israel defection could have meant as much as 300 years for assimilation of Lehi's progenitors or the east Jordan alternative would have meant a little over 100 years for tribal assimilation.

Awhile back, I had the privilege of discussing this matter with a rabbi who is also the chairman of the History Department at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. I asked him if he felt that Lehi's ignorance of his true lineage should be a cause of skepticism of Book of Mormon validity. He felt that either of the two alternatives just presented were perfectly legitimate and should not in any way be construed as evidence of a fraudulent document.

Perhaps when the Large Plates of Nephi are released to the world we will find on them the detailed historical account of Lehi's past, but until that occurs we must piece together a reasonable explanation, as I have attempted to do in this article, using various sources and conjecture.

I hope this article will stimulate someone's imagination to pursue this subject and bring to light even more evidence to the question of Lehi's lineage.

Statement of Purpose

The Zarahemla Research Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation chartered under the laws of the state of Missouri. This is a non-church sponsored association. A major aim of the Foundation is to provide information and materials to assist in Book of Mormon ministries. ZRF is open to all who desire to improve their understanding and use of the Book of Mormon.

A major goal of this newsletter is to provide a bridge of understanding between the scientific-oriented field of archaeology and the Book of Mormon studies. Keeping abreast of archaeological information is a full-time job, hence few people are in a position to devote the time needed to this subject. Yet, there is a wealth of information and enlightenment there that remains to be tapped. This newsletter hopes to draw on the finds of those who are in a position to give time to these areas of research and make this information available to interested church members.

Mexican Diary

August 2, 1979

Dear Diary,

I can't believe it but our Zion's League trip to Mexico is almost over. Two weeks of climbing ruins, bargaining in market places, swimming and sailing on the Caribbean, going through museums and historic places and bus tours with the very best friends I have, sure flew by.

Boy! Just think of those three years in League preparing for this trip. We thought it would never come. We didn't even know where we were going to go until February 1979; but all along we knew it was going to be big and far away, educational and spiritual as well as fun. That \$800.00 that we each got when we divided up our group account of \$9,000.00 paid for the whole thing, along with my own League account from projects done individually. I'm sure glad, Diary, otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to go, neither would most of the others.

We had faith all along that we could raise the money. After all, we're the third trip in the legacy of "the international trips" that previous Pittsburgh, PA South Hills Branch Zion's Leagues have taken. We have money raising down to a science!

Our plan of action has been to build fabulous booths consisting of a wooden frame with chicken wire stapled on and stuffed with colored tissue paper. We entered these booths in two annual community bazaars each year at shopping malls, both held in January. We cleared about \$2,000. each year on those. We sold reuben sandwiches, hot fudge sundaes and a beverage each time. The only other thing we did was some piece work for Julie's Dad's company. In our best seven hour session doing that we made \$230.00 between six of us. Then, Mrs. Ross, our Zion's League leader, put our money in a high interest managed money account and we made \$500.00 in interest. All that came to \$9,000.00.

Mrs. Ross negotiated with the travel agent for six months to get the most for our money. The seventeen of us flew from Pittsburgh to Merida, Merida to Oaxaca, Oaxaca to Mexico City, and Mexico City to Pittsburgh. We stayed in first class hotels. (We even stayed where the Shah of Iran is staying in Oaxaca!) And three meals a day were provided except in Mexico City. Ten bus tours to ruins and to sightsee were included. But, enough of the nitty gritty

You will hardly believe this, Diary, but amazing things happened before we even left Pittsburgh. Isabelle's house was struck by lightning and caught fire, Ray had to sell his house and it wasn't even ready to sell when he left for Mexico, Dave still hadn't gotten rid of his paper route at 10:30 p.m. and our plane left at 7:30 the next morning, Shan and Rana were being coerced to go to India to visit relatives instead of going to Mexico, BUT, all those problems were taken care of. Seeming misfortunes were turned into victories. God sure does good work!

When we got here we had a lot of exciting "cultural experiences." Like getting diarrhea and vomiting with

Montezuma's Revenge and beating it with prayers, administration and trusty Iomotil. Mexican food, another cultural event which occurs three times a day, was so hot in Merida "you could melt steel with your breath," according to Steve! It was the strangest thing though, Diary, we haven't found any "Mexican" food—no tacos, or burritos or chili! However, our group crave is pizza—good 'ole "Italian" pizza.

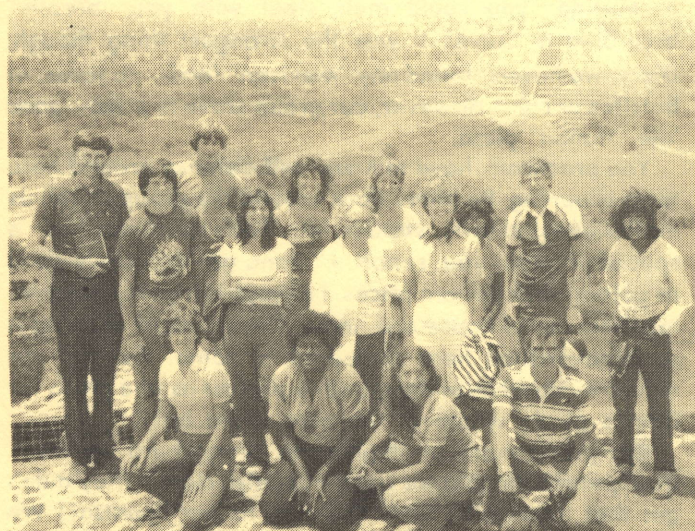
You practically have to know self defense around here to go shopping. Peddlers flock around the group to sell us marionettes, shawls, statues, etc. Each salesman has "a special price for you, senorita." Rana got especially good at getting rock bottom prices. I always felt guilty bargaining them out of house and home. The standard of living is so impoverished here compared to home. We had our macho muchachos in the group to protect us in a pinch (or from a pinch, whatever the case might be!).

Our group made an impression everywhere we went. Most people thought we were a Spanish class. (They didn't get that impression from listening to our Spanish!) We sang wherever we went and when others listened to our camp songs and hymns they knew we were an enthusiastic Christian youth group. A young couple, a middle-aged couple from Germany, a group of teachers from California and one of our guides wanted to know about the church and the Book of Mormon. The teachers told us our parents should be very proud of us and that they were even proud of us! Wow!

We had studied the Book of Mormon and a little archaeology before we left which was a big help. But, to be here where Jaredites and Nephites really lived made the Book come alive. There's just not a single solitary doubt in my mind anymore that the Book of Mormon is an authentic record. And I believed in the Book of Mormon before the trip but now I just can't stop praising God for giving us such a blessing. When I get home, Diary, people are going to hear about THIS trip. It seems that for all of the League that the more we discover and experience here in Mexico the greater our desire is to witness when we get home.

I learned things I'd never read in any books or have been taught in any classes—and they're dynamite things EVERYONE is interested in. Ray Treat, our archaeologist, does a great job of giving us the Book of Mormon interpretation of current archaeology. Did you know that the 1830 Book of Mormon lines up perfectly with the 1979 compilation of research which constructs the archaeological framework of civilization for Mesoamerica during 2350 B.C. to 400 A.D.? It does! That's the brightest ray for the unbeliever yet! We learned about many findings that are still ignored to this day by the main body of archaeologists because they don't fit the prevailing theories. The population was dense back then according to Scripture. But archaeologists are just beginning to believe it, even though as many as 600 house mounds per square mile were discovered in the 1920s. And phytoliths, tiny plant cell "fingerprints", will eventually pinpoint wheat and barley as a crop during Nephite times. That will blow the intellectual world's mind set. They've been thinking all along that Mesoamerican contact with the Old World occurred much later. And, when God allows the world to look beyond the curtain of rain forest in Guatemala and

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Pittsburgh Zion's League "getting on top of" Mesoamerican archaeology. Pyramid of the Sun, Teotihuacan.

the major Nephite ruins are uncovered, the wisdom of the wise will just up and perish! Of course, science is doing all right considering that at best they can glean only two percent of the civilization's story from the physical remains.

What is humbling to me, Diary, is that we church members are not even living the Book of Mormon principles that we are so fortunate to have. If we were, we would have received the sealed portion already. Ray showed us in Ether 1:98-101 that we have to repent, be clean and be sanctified before we'll receive them. Big deal, I thought. But then he showed us the clincher where in III Nephi 12:1-3 it says that we have only 1% of what Jesus taught the people in the Book of Mormon. This is to try our faith. If we believe what we already have, then we will be given the extra 99%. Those guidelines could speed up our preparation for Zion. And those records are to convert the descendants of the Book of Mormon people. They could help us build Zion, too (Those pyramids in Mexico sure were impressive. I bet the spiritual lives they built were just as impressive.) Take note, dear Diary, I'm going to be more righteous from now on. I have an additional motive: the bringing forth of the records. Ray did tell us before the trip that the colorful Mexican way of life would take on a richness beyond what the physical eye could see as we were led to understand the part these people are soon to play in these last days. At each ruins we prayed that the treasures that are now hidden within the earth would begin to come forth soon.

In our prayer service at Chichen, God let us know through the sudden rushing of the wind that the Holy Spirit is the connecting link of faith between the ancient Saints and ourselves. Even I felt it and knew what God meant by it. Just to make sure we got the message, the stone portrait of Jesus in the temple at the end of the ball court was illuminated by a light brighter than the sun when Les turned back for one last look. The Spirit let her know that Christ had been there long ago and was there at that moment caring for us and all that would recognize who He is. I'll never forget when we were at another site and sang

"Afar in Old Judea." When we got to "a voice serene yet piercing," a giant tropical bird flew just over our heads piercing the air with the highest note of his song . . . and there's no such thing as coincidence. It sends a chill down my back knowing that our prayer services at Uxmal, Chichen Itza, Monte Alban, Mitla and Teotihuacan may be the first ones since those ancient Saints had them there.

Ray told us that we had the potential to be more than the average tourist, that we could ascend beyond the heights of jet travel and be transported by the Holy Spirit to new insights and understandings about what we would see and about ourselves and our places in God's plan. It has happened just as he said.

It's so sad to be getting ready to leave Mexico. When I read you again later, Diary, I'll always remember that the ripple and smear on this page is from those tears of having to leave such a good experience. We must have been living in a mini-Zion community of learning and loving—really and truly a ZION'S League. Now that we are a real ZION'S League, I wonder what we can do for the Lord back in Pittsburg, Diary? I owe Him my best more than ever after this trip. Maybe, for starters, we can have a Mexico Service at church to tell them about the trip . . . well, enough for now dear Diary. I'll keep you posted.

Honestly and truly yours,

J.R.

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after righteous King Lib but accelerated more rapidly the last 400 years. Again we find similar patterns relected in Olmec archaeology and Jaredite history. Like the Jaredites, there is evidence that the Olmec begin their steady decline around 600 B.C. and are no longer recognizable as a nation by 200 B.C.

NEPHITE CULTURE BEGINS

Turning now to the Nephite record, we remember that Lehi's group arrived in the New World around 588 B.C. Shortly after, they divided into two cultures, Nephite and Lamanite. The Mulekites arrive about this time also, forming a third culture. We know from the record that there was no interaction between the Nephites and Mulekites for almost 400 years.

More information is given in the Book of Mormon from 200 B.C. to the beginning of the Golden Age than any other period. It is a very complex period during which the Lamanites ultimately become more righteous than the Nephites. The period ends with the great upheaval which destroys all but the more righteous part of the people.

REGIONAL CULTURES BEGIN

In Mesoamerica, beginning around 600 B.C., we have a series of regional cultures which maintain their own distinctiveness instead of a pattern of dominance by a single culture as in Olmec times (Adams 1977:111). This pattern of regionalism is in harmony with the Book of Mormon picture at this time which indicates there are at least three separate and distinct cultures, Nephites, Lamanites and Mulekites.

One of these regional cultures was centered in the Maya lowland area. Archaeologists see evidence of a population explosion in the Maya lowlands beginning around 550 B.C. (Adams 1977:118). This period, called the Mamom phase, is characterized as one of a simple village culture with monochrome (one color) pottery, figurines

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OUTLINES (Continued from page 6)

and the beginning of formal architecture. Figurines are presumed to have religious significance. I see the arrival of the Mulekites in the New World fitting in very well with this picture of the Mamom culture.

The Mulekite arrival and subsequent growth would explain why there was a population explosion in the Maya lowlands and also why formal architecture in stone, a culture trait previously lacking in the area, was introduced.

Mamom develops into what is called the Chicanel culture. Chicanel is characterized by a lack of figurines (Weaver 1972:86) and innovations in architecture. A variety of structures were suddenly erected including rich tombs, temple-pyramids, great plazas, terraces and corbeled vaults. The contrast with the preceding Mamom period is enormous.

Since figurines are usually associated with idols or pagan beliefs, the sudden lack of them is an indication to me of a major change in religion. This is implied in the Book of Mormon account when the people of Mosiah come down and join the Mulekites about 200 B.C. and Mosiah is chosen king. Because the Mulekites learned the language of Mosiah and accepted him as their king, we are led to believe they also accepted Mosiah's religion. This would account for the removal of the figurines during the Chicanel period.

We know that the Nephites were great builders wherever they lived. The sudden burst in the quality and quantity of architecture around this time of 200 B.C. is additional verification to me of the Nephite presence in the Maya lowlands. The contrast between the Mamom and Chicanel phases is a clear reflection of the pattern predicted by the Book of Mormon.

GOLDEN AGE-DIVISION OF PEOPLE-NEPHITE NATION ENDS

About a year after the upheaval, Jesus Christ appears to the multitude in land Bountiful. The inspiring account of his ministry to the people of Nephi marks the highpoint of the Book of Mormon story and results in the Golden Age. The Golden Age lasts until the division of the people in 231 A.D. They resume their old pattern of warfare between the Nephites and the Lamanites. Because of their willful rebellion, the Nephite nation is finally destroyed by the Lamanites in 384-5 A.D.

Moroni gives us a final glimpse of the culture pattern of the remaining Lamanites: "... and the Lamanites are at war one with another; and the whole face of this land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed; and no one knoweth the end of the war (Mormon 4:10)."

CLASSIC MAYA BEGINS

The beginning of the Classic Maya has traditionally been defined by the appearance of three major traits: polychrome pottery, the corbeled arch (Fig. 5) and hieroglyphs. These were all thought to appear at the same time as the earliest known glyph dates of 292 A.D. (rounded off to 300 A.D.). Recent evidence now allows Maya archaeologists to say that polychrome pottery and the corbeled arch began as early as 100 A.D. Therefore, we can say that the Classic Maya period really begins at 100 A.D. and not at 300 A.D. as previously thought.

What are some of the distinguishing characteristics of



Fig. 4 Olmec ceramic vessel decorated with scroll-wing motif.

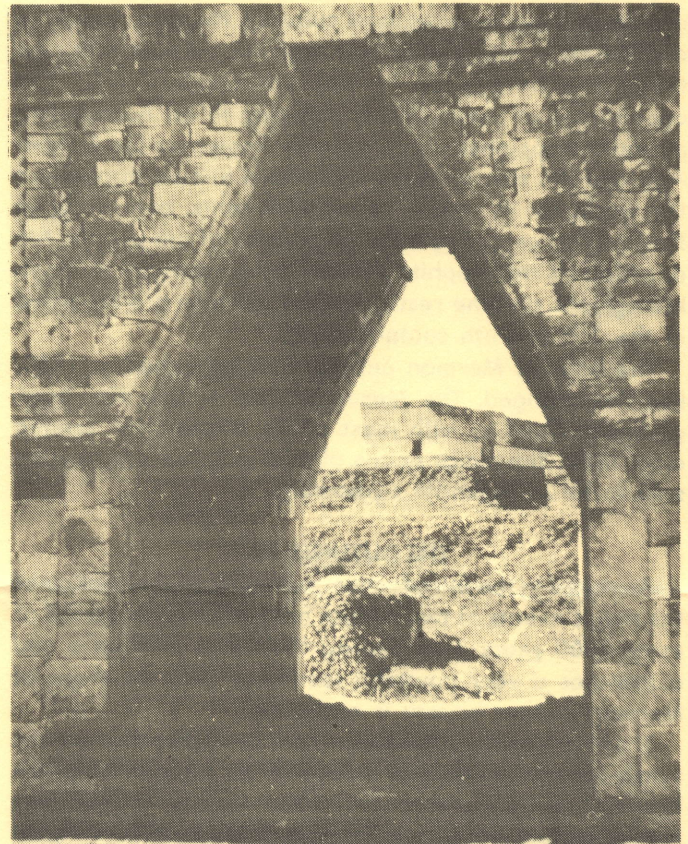


Fig. 5 An example of a corbeled arch, Uxmal, Mexico.

these Early Classic Maya? The archaeological remains are quite fragmentary for this period but a general picture emerges. Their cities seem to have been built according to a basic plan. The buildings were located around courts and plazas which included sculptured monolithic monuments and stelae and altars.

The true genesis for all the later Maya achievements for which they are so well-known seems to have come from the time of unification experienced in the Golden Age.

MAYA GLYPHS-WARFARE

The glyph dates around 300 A.D. actually mark the end of the Golden Age and the beginning of warfare. It is now known that many of the glyphs on stelae give historical information about individual rulers. This is what we would expect after the division in 231 A.D. when men would aspire to become rulers and to erect monuments to their own glory. There was no need for such monuments during the unification of the Golden Age.

I believe the greatness of the Classic Maya as seen in the architectural achievements after 231 A.D. is not because the people were better than those who lived

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OUTLINES (Continued from page 7)

during the Golden Age but because unrighteous rulers were taking advantage of the unification and progress of the Golden Age and using it to their own glorification. Remember, there is always a time lag between spiritual highpoints and their material manifestations.

Let's review: We have seen the arrival of the Jaredites and the beginning of pottery both established between 2500-2200 B.C. The succession of four righteous kings and the recognition of Olmec come together at nearly the same time, 1400-1200 B.C. The Jaredite decline and the decline of Olmec civilization both occur from 600-200 B.C. The arrival of the Nephites and Mulekites which resulted in at least three new regional cultures, Nephite, Lamanite and Mulekite, and a pattern of regional cultures with new traits are both seen in the 6th century B.C. The appearance of Jesus Christ, ushering in an outstanding period of happiness and prosperity known as the Golden Age and the rise of Maya civilization known throughout the world for its unique accomplishments, both occur in the first two centuries A.D. The division of the people, the downfall of the Nephite nation, the beginning of Maya hieroglyphs and the resumption of warfare are all dated in the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D.

The Book of Mormon outline, first published in 1830, has not changed. The Mesoamerican outline has been gradually filled in with most of the information coming after 1950. The major points of both outlines can now be said to be in essential agreement.

THE OUTLINES FIT

As stated in the introduction, such a close correlation of the major events of two culture histories over a period of some 2800 years goes beyond the realm of chance and constitutes a very powerful testimony that the Book of Mormon culture history is authentic.

There is enough information now available that we can surely say the outlines do indeed fit. As more information becomes available through Mesoamerican archaeology we can expect that the authenticity of the Book of Mormon outline will become more and more evident.

We have seen from the Book of Mormon how the Olmec and the Maya attained high spiritual levels and how they willfully rejected this enlightenment and fell as nations. There is a parallel in this pattern for us today.

The message from the dust comes to us in two ways: from archaeology and from the ancient record itself.

The Christ that came to Land Bountiful and is known in legend as Quetzalcoatl and other names is waiting the fulfillment of our mission to take the sacred record to the remnant that they might know more than a legend but the true and living Christ.

We read from Section 2 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

... for this very purpose are these plates preserved which contain these records, that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people; and that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord. D&C 2:6cd

"And now, if ye believe all these things, see that ye do them." Mosiah 2:17.

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