



MAPPING THE BOOK OF MORMON



A COMPREHENSIVE GEOGRAPHY OF NEPHITE AMERICA



ROBERT A. PATE



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Even before Robert A. Pate served a mission in the Andes and Colombia-Venezuela area, he had a great love for the Book of Mormon. A natural problem solver with a strong sense of spatial relations, Dr. Pate received his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from USU, where he also studied

Spanish and French.

While carpooling to work in Idaho, Dr. Pate enjoyed stimulating conversations with a non-LDS friend. One day this friend delivered a challenge Dr. Pate never forgot. He said, "We know where the ancient Bible cities of Jerusalem and Nineveh are, but you Mormon's don't know where a single city in the Book of Mormon is located."

Hoping the illusive geography of the Book of Mormon would soon be resolved, Dr. Pate studied the literature extensively. While reading John L. Sorensen's *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, he was intrigued by the idea that the ancient land of Nephi might be the ruins of Kaminaljuyu on the outskirts of Guatemala City. He had long suspected a phonetic link between Zarahemla and Guatemala. Looking at the name Kaminaljuyu, he realized that it was close phonetically to the Book of Mormon city Ammonihah (with a glottal closure on the "A").

Starting from this hypothesis, Dr. Pate looked for other possible phonetic matches that fit the geographical relationships described in the Book of Mormon. The initial discovery proved providential as one site after another was identified. Not only did these sites make sense linguistically and fit into the geography described in the Book of Mormon with amazing precision, they made sense in light of the ancient legends and the known archaeology of the region.

It now appears that Dr. Pate has located by its current name almost every city mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Whether or not you agree with him on every site, this book will change your thinking. It is a monumental step forward in understanding Book of Mormon geography.

MAPPING THE BOOK OF MORMON

While there are many clues to its geography in the Book of Mormon, the location of cities and landmarks in ancient Nephite America has eluded scholars for 172 years. In Israel, however, the location of Bible cities has been known for generations. The Bible locations were traced from modern sites using linguistics, but for American locations, the problem was compounded by Conquistadors who destroyed records, changed languages, and renamed cities.

In this book, Dr. Robert A. Pate employed his talents for problem solving to trace ancient place names in Central America to Book of Mormon cities using the same methods. With strategic cities identified and a strong sense of spatial relations, he analyzed the geographic descriptions in the Book of Mormon using some new paradigms to solve such problems as the four "seas" and the narrow neck of land. To his delight, a comprehensive geography emerged, one that fits scriptural and archaeological evidence, as well as ancient legends.

This amazing breakthrough is supported by the extent of its scope. As site after site came together, the whole began to confirm the sum of the parts. The result suggests that, although there was migration throughout the Americas, Mormon's record details the history of a very limited part of Central America, the area from El Salvador northward along the Costa Sur of Guatemala to the Mexican border and into the highlands, including parts of Honduras.

Fifty photos, maps, and diagrams are included. For the first time, readers can visualize the events of the Book of Mormon within a known setting, revealing many new and fascinating insights.

**MAPPING
THE
BOOK OF
MORMON**

**A COMPREHENSIVE GEOGRAPHY
OF NEPHITE AMERICA**

BY

ROBERT A. PATE

To my father Alma Jacob Pate for whom the Scriptures and related history were a lifetime love and study.

□

To my mother who helped teach the scriptures to our family and waited patiently after church services while father shared his knowledge with those who asked.

□

To my wife Elaine who made President Ezra Taft Benson's admonition to study the Book of Mormon a beloved reality in our home. And to our children who's lives will be forever changed by these discoveries.

□

To the great prophet and historian Mormon and his faithful son Moroni for delivering to the world, through the beloved Prophet Joseph Smith, the history of Lehi and his descendants and the account of the visit of Jesus Christ to the Americas.

**MAPPING
THE
BOOK OF
MORMON**

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Mapping the Book of Mormon is the product of some very good fortune and some very good friends. Place names that had been glossed over by Book of Mormon scholars since Catherwood and Stephens made their heroic trek into Mormon's world back in 1839 suddenly began to spring from the literature and maps. Being an engineer and one not inhibited by remarkable spelling skills has turned out to be a valuable set of assets in this investigation. Not being an anthropologist, archaeologist, or linguist leaves me poorly qualified for the task. I must therefore acknowledge the Lord's blessings and His help in what has been accomplished. I will be forever grateful.

Many good friends have provided books, computer resources, ideas, language skills, encouragement, and enthusiasm. Each has served not only as a source but also as a sounding board to question and test the findings. Some of these kindred spirits include Michael J. Jensen who provided many books, maps, dictionaries, and ideas, Frederick M. Perkins, Blair Bybee, Brian W. Rex, John F. Roring, John McGuire, Eric L. Rasmussen, Randle L. Buttars, Don G. Ferney, Qunzhen Wang, Rashid A. Ahmad, Jacobo Sapoyo, Omar Galdames, Liz Mitton, Maran C. Pate, Donna P. Galloway, John Ribera, and a dear family friend Mary DiNicola. I also acknowledge a carpool mate, David A. Dickey, who helped with computer consultations and endured long rides filled with my enthusiastic babblings. He also loaned me Sorensen's book, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, which permitted me to stumble into the name Kaminaljuyu and recognize it as Ammonihah. This started the landslide that followed.

There are many published authors who provided pieces to this puzzle. Those who were sufficiently patient to entertain questions and provide material upon personal request are greatly appreciated. These include Hugh Nibley, John A. Tvedtnes, Robert Carmack, John K. Carmack, Ted E. Brewerton, and Millie Cheesman. The digital Quiché dictionary provided so graciously by Allen J. Christenson was of immeasurable benefit to the completeness of this project.

The tremendous help of Richard R. Hopkins as he performed the much-needed editing and manuscript preparation is greatly appreciated. While he tempered some of the acerbic humor that is an extension of my personality, he was very instrumental in recasting the manuscript into a document more worthy of the opportunity extended by the Giver of Light to present a geography of the lands of the Book of Mormon to interested seekers of knowledge.

The identifiable names in the maps and old literature were a very important part of the proof that has been presented in this book, but it is the exact interrelationship between these named cities and the unique topography of the area that make these findings so powerfully convincing. The great and dedicated editor Mormon made it all possible with his exactness, completeness, and attention to preserving seemingly irrelevant details. This has permitted the reconstruction of a geographical witness to accompany the doctrinal and spiritual witnesses.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Born in Arizona, Dr. Robert A. Pate lived his early years among the Hispanics and Indians of the southwest desert. His father shaped his love of the scriptures and his interest in antiquities, which were advanced during his mission in the Andes and Colombia-Venezuela Missions. There he learned Spanish, a skill supplemented later with Spanish and French classes.

In addition to his linguistic studies, Dr. Pate has a powerful sense of spatial relationships, essential for any geographer. He received his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from Utah State University, and works in research and development. He is no stranger to complex problem investigation, and knows how to draw on every aspect of his background and training and the complementary skills and knowledge of others to solve them. Now, driven by a deep interest in the subject matter, the thrill of a good challenge has led him to address the problem of identifying the geography of the Book of Mormon.

But the solution to problems this complex requires one other characteristic. It is the realization that such solutions do not permit parochialism. Shortsightedness inevitably boxes researchers out of the proper solution space. Thus, the most important skill Dr. Pate brings to this field of study is his willingness to keep an open mind and redefine paradigms.

He has served the Church faithfully in many assignments including quorum presidencies, as a Bishopric counselor, quorum and gospel doctrine instructor, stake missionary, Stake Mission President, and several terms in the Stake High Council.

PREFACE

Since the initial publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830, Church members have speculated about the geographical locations of the cities mentioned and detractors have scoffed at the lack of correlation to known New World sites. From my childhood, I too have marveled at the book's names and places, and wondered where the events took place and why people have not been able to identify the critical sites of the 1,000-year history of the Nephites or the additional 1,600-year history of the Jaredites.

I was privileged to be called to the Andes Mission, where I served the entire time among great people in the beautiful land of Colombia with a brief visit to Perú and Ecuador. I listened to the legends of Boquiche, the great God that visited the indigenous peoples of Colombia. I listened to the Lenca and Chibcha tribes that inhabited the area before the arrival of the Spaniards.

As I began finding city names on maps and in the old indigenous literature, I thought, *This is too easy, am I missing something?* My wife and I toured the south coast of Guatemala and the highlands to find answers and to visit the places whose names I had been found on paper. Our visit to the original hill Cumorah (K'umarkáj) was a testimony builder. We learned that the Book of Mormon people certainly did live in the most *capital* parts of the land (Helaman 1:27).

My original motivation in researching these questions was personal curiosity. However, what I discovered has prompted me to write this book and share my excitement. For it appears that the place-names are still there and are often recognizable in print!

Once I tasted some success with the recognition process, I could not let go. Since then, many things have come together to indicate the possible locations of several Book of Mormon lands and cities.

Specifically, I believe it is possible to identify the location of the land where Lehi first arrived; the land to which Nephi fled with his family; the land of Zarahemla; the land of Cumorah, and many more.

However, this is not a completed work in the scholarly sense. My conclusions are not fully attested, and are subject to revision. This effort will only be complete when all remaining ambiguities and uncertainties have been resolved. I attempt here only to open a window. Scholars and specialists in New World linguistics, anthropology, and archaeology will need to examine the findings set forth in this book with an open mind and a willing eye to ascertain the accuracy of what I have done.

The evidence presented here is based on the consistency of the Book of Mormon, the ability to trace languages that have endured, and the endurance of the place-names found in the Book of Mormon and in other historical records. I have assumed that the topography of the area has been left without major transformations except as noted in the Book of Mormon and in scholarly studies of the area. The writings of those who observed and recorded critical history and archaeological findings has also provided insight about these site locations.

As the author of this work, I have gained a great respect and appreciation for those disinterested researchers who have studied the obscure findings offered by the Central American jungles, and who have objectively documented their findings. The fact that many of these researchers have no affiliation with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and no vested interest in the Book of Mormon has, in my opinion, added to the strength of my case as I have picked from their pieces in an attempt to put the puzzle together. Many of these non-LDS researchers have in fact been essential in supporting what will undoubtedly be viewed by some as the "Mormon agenda" in this work.

A noted anthropologist once wrote that a viable model for Book of Mormon geography should not be based on "naive

linguistic comparisons.” Yet it was precisely such an approach that unlocked the mystery of many Bible locations. So I believe that, contrary to this view, the most viable means of locating Book of Mormon sites is provided by their names, to the extent we can unravel them after centuries of linguistic evolution in the region.

It would be hard to stomp out the name of a large city center such as “Jerusalem” or “Zarahemla.” According to the Book of Mormon, the Nephites settled in the most “capital parts” of the land (Helaman 1:27). The most productive and economically viable parts of an area usually remain so over vast geological periods. Hence, they would likely experience continued occupation. The strongest cities tend to remain and continue to be inhabited. I take, therefore, as a basic premise the idea that the lands of the Book of Mormon have been continuously occupied from the arrival of the Jaredites to the present day.

With that premise in mind, I ask readers to make an objective evaluation of the evidence presented here, as I attempt to present a correlated one-to-one mapping of the actual events and places described in the Book of Mormon. For me, it has been astonishingly convincing. There are some city-limit signs waiting to be found, but I believe that, even in those cases, I have at least identified the correct valleys.

Evaluating the evidence presented here may require some paradigm shifts for readers familiar with this subject matter. Mormon was not privileged to a satellite view of the Promised Land. He had his own perspective and frame of reference. The difference between his perspective and ours can lead to many misunderstandings. For example, our global view of “a narrow neck of land” has placed *us* in a kind of box. This book encourages readers to get out of that box.

Virtually all of the evidence presented here is found in currently available literature. I brought to that literature nothing more than a certain tenacity, my deep and abiding interest, and some practical objectivity born of my experience and training as an engineer. My professional career has been very exciting and challenging. Since much of my time has been spent pushing the limits of physics and materials, I have done extensive post-test

analysis of hardware and data. Through this I have become very adept at identifying relevant data from many sources and piecing together the probable cause.

Where does one start when looking for the lands that comprised the world in which Mormon lived and wrote? I could not scrutinize all the continents south of the border, but I was fortunate to make one particular find that focused my attention in the correct area. It would seem that no amount of planning can compare with good luck. Of course, I would attribute my good fortune in this case to a different source.

Many groups and individuals have contributed over the years to the archaeological, ethnological, and cartographical results generated and presented in the National Geographic Society's publications. The National Geographic Society has provided a marvelous vehicle to bring obscure findings to the public. Each contributor offers a piece and these pieces, so beautifully presented, have proven invaluable in the effort described in this book. We are now in an information age that permits many pieces to be pulled together to form a coherent picture. That is what I have attempted to do here. The results, the maps included in this book, represent my best understanding based on all the pieces I will describe.

Carbon dating, dendrochronology, genetic tracking, and linguistics have brought about a quantum leap in the rigor that is now applied to archeology and anthropology. Many researchers and writers have documented their findings using this new and harder data. Each well-documented piece has added to the completion of the puzzle I have sought to assemble here.

The deeper I got into Mormon's geography, the smaller I found his world to have been. This made each set of ruins significant and gave me the confidence to scrutinize individual names and locations. The clincher for me came only at the end when I made the connections that will be described in this book between the New World languages and Hebrew (root language for the Mulekites and Lehaites) and Sumerian (probable root language for the Jaredites). For example, it felt very good to discover that in these ancient languages, Cumorah, (today

spelled Qumarkah, or K'umarkáj by the native inhabitants) means *rotten bones*. Only after these cities and regions were identified based on all other data and linkages, did I make these word-meaning connections. That helped ratify my earlier speculation.

The exciting thing, as I have said, is that it all fits, with just a few cities and lands awaiting verification. Of course, some cities remain to be found, and additional information continues to trickle in. But it was exciting to find a form of Lehi's name ("Lenca," which is a form of Leja) spread across El Salvador in large letters on a National Geographic map. I had suspected for several months that this was the land of Lehi but there was something about seeing it in large print at the completion of my other work that gave me a sense of satisfaction.

This does not mean that the discovery process didn't involve a great deal of doubt and error at times. I was always looking for substantiation that did not require too large a stretch. Many times I stretched more than I felt comfortable with, and more than I'd expect readers to accept. This stretching, however, often led to other finds that, in turn, provided greater confirmation. Some, however, led to the rejection of tentative identifications as the geography presented here was refined.

Many discoveries have led to the feeling that the information presented here is accurate. One example is the etymology of the names Guatemala and Zarahemla and the linkage of their common roots to Cotzumala (Cotzumalguapa today). Another was the fact that the great Catholic Friar Bernadino de Sahagún recorded in the sixteenth century that Jehovah (Yehoã or Yahweh in Hebrew) was the God whom the Toltecs worshiped.

This earth is small. There have been many communications, interactions, and infusions of civilizations between the Americas and the Old World and between the Americas and the Pacific Rim. There are those who would drive isolationist wedges into the past to sever these linkages, but the rule that I have learned to follow is to assume the connectivity of the whole world and look for the similarities and linkages, both recorded and legendary.

There have always been independent spirits who have to see what's on the other side of the mountain, or what's across the next sea, lake, or river. We give ourselves too much credit for our understanding of the world and deprive our ancestors of the right to have a comparable understanding of the world in their day. We often think our ancestors experienced a veil of forgetfulness during the Dark Ages. But the world still kept going around and people were still being people. Chapters were still being written in the world's history. Our lack of knowledge of those chapters does not constitute proof of their nonexistence. The peoples of the world knew and recorded their histories. We simply need to listen and read. That is what I have tried to do, and I invite you to do the same now.

One evening, while looking through a local bookstore, I saw all the books speculating on the location of Book of Mormon cities and lands. I asked myself, "Do I really want to add another book to this collection?" How can I say, "this book is different"? I've bought and read many of those books. Would I buy this one? Yes, in an instant! This book is not the bland pabulum I have found in many of those I have seen on the bookshelf, nor is it the rigorous treatise that remains to be done by archaeologists and anthropologists.

Yes, I hold a Ph.D., but it is a doctorate in Mechanical Engineering and it will not buy me much reverence with archaeologists, linguists, and anthropologists. Worse yet, I do not always follow their practices, and I have not paid my dues in this area of subject matter. I believe, however, that this has left me with a certain lack of prejudice and a mind open to the kind of mental gymnastics and paradigm shifts I have found to be necessary in unraveling the mysteries examined in this book.

Some scholars may debunk these findings, though I believe it will be hard to do so effectively in all but a few instances. Others may consider any success I have had as dumb luck. But I know differently. These findings have come entirely too easily for them to have been no more than the workings of my own

imagination. I recognize and here acknowledge with much appreciation the help of the Lord in this work.

At the very least, it is my hope that this book will help enlighten the world about the lands of the Book of Mormon, where Christ left another testament of his divinity as literal as the one he left in Palestine.



INTRODUCTION

There is a city in the United States that is known by twenty-five percent of the world's population as Old Gold Mountain. The *coolie* laborers who were brought to the gold fields of California in the nineteenth century applied that name to the city of San Francisco, and in China it has persisted to this day. We in the United States who know the city as San Francisco are in the minority compared to those in China who know the same city by this very different name. If San Francisco were to fall into the ocean at the Second Coming of the Messiah, which name would endure for the next 2,000 years?

Take a moment to look at this list of words: *Yie Lu Sai Leng*, *E Ru Sa Re Mu*, *Gerusalame*, and *Orshaleem*. Do you recognize the city to which all of these names apply? They are all names that refer to the city of Jerusalem. We know where Jerusalem is, regardless of the name we use for it, because there is a thread of continuity that has existed from the beginning of that city to the present day.

We would expect that Zarahemla likewise had a thread of continuity that has existed since its beginning to the present day. Unfortunately, that thread has been disturbed in certain significant ways, and, as outsiders, we have not been a part of either the thread or its disruptions. Our challenge is to go back and find where it was broken and where the esoteric pieces now

lay. After finding Zarahemla and its name, the thread of continuity will again appear. Actually, the thread was never broken; it was just unrecognizable from this end of the time span. We have to go to the other end and follow it forward in time to find the present form of its name. As we will see, its name has changed somewhat but the meaning remains the same.

It is this approach that has revealed what heretofore was hidden. The journey is one involving the discovery of pronunciation and meaning, and it sometimes requires more of an ear for language than an eye for it. The sounds of names mentioned in this book have often proven more revealing than their spellings, so an effort is made here to communicate the sound as well as the spelling, but a paradigm shift may be in order for those who see language better than they hear it.

In this book, the majority of the cities and lands mentioned in the Book of Mormon will be identified and located on a map that constitutes a proposed geography of the world in which Mormon lived and about which he wrote. Confidence in this proposed geography varies for each city. The factors used in weighing that confidence will include: (1) name recognition or phonology, (2) name translation, (3) linkages between cities, (4) relative positioning, (5) physical realities and human nature, and (6) consistency with the Book of Mormon descriptions.

An effort has been made to be consistent, and to use the scientific method at all times. This involves: (1) making observations, (2) developing theories to explain the observations in terms of the available knowledge, (3) recognizing that a theory that explains a larger number of observations is better and should replace previously accepted less explanatory theories, and (4) using the best theory thus derived to make predictions that can be confirmed by subsequent observations.

As every explorer knows, however, more discoveries are made by stumbling in the right direction than by maintaining scientific rigor in all things. The confident and bold façade of scientific method frequently comes only later, when it is time to formally document the findings. That reality is often evident in this work. Another factor in arriving at the conclusions stated in

this book is Occam's Razor, a scientific and philosophic rule that states: *the simplest of competing theories should be preferred, or explanations of unknown phenomena should be sought first in terms of known quantities.*

As city names were found on maps and in the indigenous literature, it became apparent that the part of the American continents with which the great historian Mormon was familiar was limited to a very small part of Central America.

Specifically, Mormon appears to have lived his entire life on the South Coast of Guatemala (Costa Sur) and the adjacent highlands. He knew of Lehi's arrival in El Salvador and Nephi's flight to the northeast to start the land of Nephi in the Comayagua region of Honduras. But he never visited these lands because of the hostilities that characterized his day.

This study will show that the part he knew personally was limited to a region of southern Guatemala just 100 miles east to west and 60 miles north to south. These three regions—the Costa Sur of Guatemala, El Salvador, and the Comayagua region of Honduras—constitute what we will call in this text “Mormon's world.” He knew of migrations and commerce that extended over a much greater part of the Americas, but apparently, he felt it his responsibility only to document his stewardship, which was the immediate Nephite nation in his part of the Promised Land.



CHAPTER 1

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

The Status of New World Civilization

The location of the Jerusalem of old is well known and has been since Melchizedek was King of Salem. The same is true of Nineveh. However, as one cynic has said, "You Mormons can't identify a single city location in the Book of Mormon."

Actually, we know a *lot* about Book of Mormon geography. Nevertheless, he was correct in saying that we have not identified the location of a single city. Why? Why, for example, have we been unable to identify such important cities as Zarahemla?

The answer lies in the history of the people involved. Their language and writing began from 600 B.C. Hebrew about which there are still many uncertainties, and evolved or was modified during the 2,600 years since Lehi left Jerusalem. During that interval, the Spaniards came. They changed names as they pleased. Fortunately a number of documents are available that describe these events, but they are limited. Most were generated by natives after they learned the Spanish language. Some were provided by priests, such as Bernadino Sahagún, who recorded what he could gather from the local inhabitants and the mnemonic Aztec codices (e.g., Dibble 1961).

Bishop Diego de Landa, the most zealous destroyer of historical records, burned all he could as part of his efforts to convert "the heathen" of the New World to his version of

Christianity. So we are left with little or no historic records of the indigenous peoples.

When Moroni left the descendants of Lehi in about 421 AD, the people were engaged in wars amongst themselves and practiced human sacrifice to false gods. They were engaged in all manner of wickedness and perversion. Cortés found the people of Central America and Mexico in much the same state 1,100 years later as related so colorfully by Bernál Díaz, a corporal in his army (Díaz 1568). Priests were described as having their feet and sandals caked with crusty dried blood and their hair lumped and matted together. The smell was worse than the slaughterhouses of Seville. Many of the captured Spanish soldiers were sacrificed and eaten (Cohen 1963, 123-124, 173, 229, 236, 305, 381).

Cortés eventually conquered these people through pure *chutzpah*. Pedro de Alvarado, a vicious killer, was sent to conquer the Quiché people of Guatemala. And conquer, he did. In doing so, he destroyed a highly literate civilization. The population of the area was decreased by nearly eighty-five percent. The slaughter has been estimated at more than four or five million over about a sixteen-year period (Christenson 2000, 4). Cities were burned and names were changed. Their leaders were killed. Killing the *intelligentsia* is Lucifer's way. Only the particular hands differ, be they Marx's, Stalin's, Hitler's, Mao's, or Alvarado's. Those that could read and write had to hide their skill or be killed.

The so-called Indians were then taught the Spanish language, after which they started to write again. They rewrote some of their tales in the Nahuatl and Maya languages using Spanish characters. The authors of *Popol Vuh* remained anonymous to protect themselves (Christenson 2000, 6). Much was lost, and a literate but perverted civilization died. They were destroyed by barbarians with swords, with fire, with ideologies, and with small pox.

Of course, they were a fallen people even before the arrival of the Spaniards. Human sacrifice, cannibalism, sodomy and the other perversions mentioned by Mormon in the Book of Mormon and later by Díaz are indicative of their decadence (Moroni 9:8-19; Cohen 1963, 124).

We might complain about the disgrace of Bishop Diego de Landa in burning their records, but there is more to the story than meets the eye. Bishop de Landa called the records “superstitions and lies of the devil”(Christenson 2000, 6). It is hard now to take this charge seriously, judging by his own demonstrated brutality, for he seemed to follow the example of Pedro de Alvarado. Sadly, the milk of human kindness was alien to these men. Landa tortured, burned, and killed the natives. After destroying the Maya people and their history he proceeded to re-write it (Landa 1566).

The writings available to us now regarding Maya cosmology lack the crisp clarity and undeviating divine purpose found in the testaments of Christ and the Father. But despite their fallen condition, the natives had backbone. Their fierce independence and unconquerable spirit helped them continue to rise like the phoenix from the ashes, though much of the beauty that was theirs is lost. They have almost come full circle now. That process will be complete when they discover their past and live up to their royal heritage and divine promise.

The Evolution of Their Language

It is difficult to talk about changes in a language when even the starting point is unknown. The description we have in the Book of Mormon is as follows:

And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech.

And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.

But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our

language; and because that none other people knoweth our language, therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof (Mormon 9:32–34).

This rather brief but excellent description reveals several things. The first has to do with their speech. They started with a knowledge of Hebrew as it was used when they left Jerusalem in approximately 600 BC. Through the years, they modified it until no other people knew their written language. Some of these changes were intentional, some resulted from the merger with the Jaredite tongue, and some were natural “linguistic drift.” The second has to do with their written language. They had at least two forms of writing available—Hebrew and a reformed version of Egyptian. They had modified both forms. Hebrew would have been the more correct, yielding records with no imperfections. But their modified version of Egyptian was selected because of its economy of space.

We would probably be correct to assume that the people’s day-to-day speech was a modified form of Hebrew. We might also assume that for writing, both forms were passed down from generation to generation, at least among the educated or elite. But two writing forms are a luxury difficult to maintain. It is likely that one form dominated and was perfected to a higher level of confidence. It may be that only Mormon’s abridging and Moroni’s conclusions were written in the reformed Egyptian, and that all other records were in their more familiar script. Moroni’s apologetic tone suggests that he and his father were required to learn a form of writing that was not comfortable to them and was not used by the people of their day.

What was reformed Egyptian? Thoughts of complicated hieroglyphics come to mind, but Egyptian had evolved to a more compact phonetic form by 600 BC called demotic. Hieratic and demotic were much simpler cursive forms of Egyptian. Sumerian and Chinese had similar pictographic representations at their origin. It appears that only Sumerian and Egyptian progressed out of that stage. Another alphabet that gained extensive acceptance in the 500 years prior to Lehi’s leaving Jerusalem was

Phoenician. It appears that many of the writing forms in the area at the time Lehi left Jerusalem had their origins in the Phoenician alphabet. The Phoenician alphabet was used to write the Canaanite languages of the area, which included Hebrew, Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite, and Aramaic.¹

Some scholars have speculated that the form of reformed Egyptian referred to in the Book of Mormon was a combination of Egyptian (probably demotic) and Hebrew (Tvedtnes 1999, 22). But, based on the geographic proximity, it is also possible that Phoenician itself was derived from the earlier Egyptian writing forms. What about the eastern roots of Hebrew writing? The Mesopotamian origins of cuneiform were likely involved—Egyptian from the west and Sumerian from the east. Examining the Book of Mormon characters that were included in *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (Roberts 1930, 6:106; see Figure 40), one can see Hebrew, Arabic, Phoenician, demotic, and hieratic influences. In addition, there are some more complicated characters or combinations of characters that look out of place for any of these languages. These may represent more complete standardized thoughts developed by the people after they left Jerusalem. These more complicated characters may be used much the same way the Egyptians used the cartouche to encapsulate proper names.

Who were the Phoenicians? They were Canaanite merchants and traders—more specifically, sea traders. By 600 BC they had circumnavigated continental Africa, but it is more likely that the sailors of Hiram the King of Tyre had accomplished this in King Solomon's day. A Phoenician fleet was commissioned by the Egyptian pharaoh, Necho, around 600 BC to circumnavigate Africa, sailing out of the Red Sea and returning home by way of Gibraltar (Laham 1991, 1). These Phoenician “sea traders” needed a writing form for their business and accounting that was versatile and compact, and many people with whom they traded picked it up. It may, however, have lacked the exactness that Mormon desired.

Christenson presents some excellent comments on the

¹ John A. Tvedtnes, personal e-mail comments, September 2002.

orthography of the K'iche' language in the introduction to his translation of *Popol Vuh* (Christenson 2000, 20-24). Orthography is the art or study of methods used to represent the sound of language using literal symbols. Given the history of the Central American people, this is an extremely difficult exercise. The potential is great for ambiguity or outright mistranslation due to drastically different translations that can come from subtle variations in spelling easily lost or missed. Dr. Christenson indicates that, in the most current orthography, Quiché is written K'iche'. However, older writings and place names still use the spelling Quiché. Both are used in this book because of variations in source material. Likewise, with many names, the spellings are legion for the same place. The spelling used here often varies based on the material being quoted at the time.

The work of many linguists and Maya researchers has standardized somewhat the orthography of an alphabet that is currently being retrofitted to the various Maya languages. Unfortunately, this was not done before the Spaniards started putting Christian names on locations. And among the scribes and between the dialects, there is no uniqueness in the phonetic-alphabetic representation of words. Though the situation is much worse, it is a little like early English before the standardization of spelling accomplished by Noah Webster.

The Maya pictographic characters may have their origins in Egyptian/Phoenician characters, where each character had a phonetic/syllabic sound and a pedagogical name with a naturalistic basis, that is, in flora, fauna, body parts, or tools, etc. But such a phonetic naming system is pedagogical only if you are familiar with the object used to define the name and sound. *Gimel* (the third letter in the Hebrew alphabet, which means "camel" and bears some resemblance to a camel's head and neck) does not help if you've never seen a camel. The Maya would have to modify some of the character names if the names were to be pedagogical, using their speech and surrounding objects.

There is also the possibility that their writing was intended to be occult rather than pedagogical. Maya writing may have developed from cultural infusions prior to the arrival of Lehi's family. Coe dates the Proto-Maya spoken language back to 2000

BC. (Coe 1992, 48-49). That would be in the Jaredite (Olmec?) period not the Nephite era. The characters found in *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* bear no discernible similarity to the older Maya hieroglyphics that are being translated today, but rather they show similarity to Egyptian Demotic, Phoenician, Arabic, and Hebrew.

Reasons for Language and Writing Changes

There are many reasons for changes in the Nephite language from their original Hebrew to whatever has survived to the present. The dominant factor in the loss of their civilization is the loss of that light which “enlighteneth the understanding” (D&C 84:46, 88:11). We know that it was because of wickedness and perversion that the Nephites were destroyed. The process of decline would have taken its toll on every aspect of their culture.

The infusion of other peoples and cultures into the Nephite culture, or visa versa, would also have caused change. Maya histories appear to have some of the inhabitants coming from the tower of Babel. Most of the evidence is circumstantial and hard data is lacking as evidenced by the volumes of less than satisfying literature on Biblical connections. But it is apparent that not all of the Jaredite civilization was wiped out completely.

The Jaredites came from Sumer, known as Shinar in the Bible (Genesis 10:10). This was in the Fertile Crescent, part of which was later called by the Greek name Mesopotamia (“between rivers”). It extends from Ur of the Chaldees on the southeast up through Umma, Kish, Babylon, Nineveh, and Carchemish on the northwest. The Jaredites may have left from Umma, as the *Umamae*, are the “old men” or “ancient ones” that became known as the Mam branch of the Maya. These people lived in the region between the Samalá River in Guatemala and Izapa, Mexico before the Quiché arrived (Goetz 1953, 169).

It is very possible that the Jaredites crossed Russia and Mongolia as Nibley has written (Nibley 1988). Based on the ocean currents, where they landed is a strong indication as to their departure point. There appears to be not only a geographical corridor there, but linguistic traces of such a journey. The

diagrams that show the evolution of scripts and alphabets show a branch of Phoenician writing influencing the Aramaic development and a branch influencing the development of the Mongolian language. The evolutionary language tracks can be found from Sumerian, to Akkadian, to Aramaic, with a branch somewhere in there going to Mongolia. Much earlier, before Phoenician was in use, the Jaredites left Sumer and may be responsible for that Mongolian connection. Asian contacts with the Americas have been quite continual, through shipwrecks if nothing else. In any case, the Jaredites traveled a long hard course eventually arriving in the south coast of Guatemala, which we will discuss in a later chapter, and scattering from there.

It appears that there was a very conscientious mixing of the Jaredite writing with the Hebrew writing. When Moroni said they had changed the Hebrew, it sounds intentional. Some of the change may also have been unintentional, due to decay and linguistic drift. But the Jaredite and Sumerian infusion in Book of Mormon place and proper names is more apparent than an entirely dead civilization could have effected. It is likely there were some survivors.

The reason for the Lamanites' darker skin may have been because they mixed with other native groups. Within a short period of time in the Book of Mormon, the Lamanites greatly outnumbered the Nephites (Mosiah 25:3). Also, it is very apparent from the diversity of their appearance that the people found in the Americas have multiple and diverse genetic origins. We know that Lehi's family absorbed others: those of Ishmael's family; Zoram, the servant of Laban; the Mulekites, and possibly some Phoenician sailors who may have brought the Mulekites; the Jaredites; and possibly some Pacific Rim sea traders, including some from Japan and China. The potential exists for a mix of considerable cultural diversity. We do know that the lack of facial hair among the American Indians did not come from the Semitic side of this conglomerate family.

Further, the peoples of the Americas did not have the Gutenberg advantage. The moveable-type printing press, which in turn encouraged the development of dictionaries, has done more to stabilize language, educate people, and meld the world's

knowledge than any other invention. The extent of that effect was very great. Yet today, few appreciate the degree to which our language has become standardized as a result.

The Mulekites did not bring written resources that survived. At the time Mosiah discovered them, they had become exceedingly numerous. Nevertheless, their language had become corrupt. They had denied the being of their Creator, and neither Mosiah, nor the people of Mosiah, could understand them (Omni 1:17).

The fact that the Mulekites could not be understood shows how fast a non-written language can deteriorate. And after the Nephites disappeared, written language probably became uncommon, making the task of tracing place names all the more difficult.

The Mulekites had wars from time to time prior to the Nephites' joining them. It is likely that there were other factions of the Mulekites who split off prior to that merger. Such groups would not have shared in the Nephite stabilization of their language. Likewise, there may have been significant Jaredite infusion into the language of the people of Zarahemla prior to the arrival of the Nephites at Zarahemla.

Phoenician sailors may also have contributed to corruption of the language. While the writing forms shared the alphabet, the various regions had their own dialects. At one point, the Lamanite king instructed Amulon and King Noah's wicked priests to teach the Nephite language and writing to the Lamanites (Mosiah 24:4). Thus we see that, even living side by side with extensive interaction, their languages had diverged.

Sahagún wrote of a people named *totonaques* (note the similarity to Totonicapán situated in the Guatemalan highlands above the Costa Sur) who settled in the area north of Mexico City and said they were Guastecas (Gott 1938, 129-130). The name is similar to the Aztecas of Nahua origin. This suggests that the initial migration was from the Guatemala area to the Mexico area

and not the reverse, as some authors have said.²

Indian tales recorded in the literature state clearly that the people of the region came from the legendary Tula, across the ocean (Goetz 1953, 169). These writings have not been believed literally and many recent writers believe that the legendary city of Tula is the ancient city of Tula located in Hidalgo, a suburb of present-day Mexico City. The Tula in El Salvador does not appear in the literature.

Sahagún said these *totonaques* people were well clothed and walked with footwear. He said all the men and women were white and their language was different from others (Dibble 1961, 184). These people might have been of Nephite origin and may have come from the Totonicapán region in the Guatemalan highlands.

We have every reason to believe that the Nephite language (though changing) was the most stable of the languages in Mesoamerica at the time. Mormon said that no other people understood their language, suggesting that the other languages changed more rapidly. The Nephite language of Mormon's day may have ceased as the people were destroyed, thus making it even more difficult to find remnants of their language, civilization, and place names. It appears, however, that there are some remnants that have survived.

It is likely that the masses lacked continuity in their access to language training. In the good times, they probably possessed some education, but in the bad times or during wars or in remote locations, education was probably limited. Thus, we see King Benjamin's great efforts on behalf of his sons:

And it came to pass that he had three sons; and he called their names Mosiah, and Helorum, and Helaman. And he caused that they should be taught in all the language of his fathers, that thereby they might become men of understanding; and that they might know

² There was a reverse migration of Teotihuacán influence into Kaminaljuyú, Guatemala, but this was around 400 AD, after the Nephite nation had been destroyed.

concerning the prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their fathers, which were delivered them by the hand of the Lord.

And he also taught them concerning the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, saying: My sons, I would that ye should remember that were it not for these plates, which contain these records and these commandments, we must have suffered in ignorance, even at this present time, not knowing the mysteries of God.

For it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates; for he having been taught in the language of the Egyptians therefore he could read these engravings, and teach them to his children, that thereby they could teach them to their children, and so fulfilling the commandments of God, even down to this present time (Mosiah 1:2-4).

At times the secret combinations or even the educated elite may have introduced cabalistic influences into their speech and writing. This exchanging of pedagogy for the occult or obtuse would definitely limit the extent of usage and lead to a decline in the character of the language. The cosmology that is surfacing from the jungles of the Yucatán is definitely flavored with the occult, not the enlightened as we think of it.

The pictographic forms of writing of the past and present are somewhat cumbersome and incompatible with our present technology. There may be some benefits, but it may be that the children were hobbled with an unnecessary burden. The difficulty of learning the written language, coupled with the lifestyle of the rain forest, suggests it is no surprise that the written forms of the Maya languages were lost, especially after the elimination of the Nephite nation or more particularly the loss of their religion.

Moroni spoke favorably of their form of Hebrew writing with which there would be no misunderstanding. The Maya hieroglyphics that are surfacing today may prove to be

representative in some ways of Mormon's version of Hebrew. It is true that the Nephite writing forms were limited to the Nephites—an ethnic minority—while Maya hieroglyphs are spread over much of Central America. And the time frame clearly places many of these hieroglyphs after the Nephite destruction. But at the place that was probably the temple at Moron (Abaj Takalik), there exists a stone that has the years 83 AD (or 103 AD) and 126 AD clearly engraved in the Maya long count as well as in some Maya glyphs. So it would appear that the Maya glyphs were a part of at least the Nephite commemorative writing.

Mormon talks with disdain about the Lamanites eating beasts of prey and being clothed with only a loincloth (Enos 1:20). Thus, the fixation of the Maya writings on the Jaguar would be more representative of the traditions of Lamanites and Gadianton robbers than those of the Nephites. Note these two passages from the Book Of Mormon:

And because of their cursing which was upon them they did become an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety, and did seek in the wilderness for beasts of prey (2 Nephi 5:24).

And I bear record that the people of Nephi did seek diligently to restore the Lamanites unto the true faith in God. But our labors were vain; their hatred was fixed, and they were led by their evil nature that they became wild, and ferocious, and a bloodthirsty people, full of idolatry and filthiness; feeding upon beasts of prey; dwelling in tents, and wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven; and their skill was in the bow, and in the cimeter, and the ax. And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat; and they were continually seeking to destroy us (Enos 1:20).

Bishop de Landa's burning of all the written records he could find as part of his project to convert the infidels, severed most of our connection to a large block of history. The few codices and chronicles that we have are filled with extensive uncertainties.

They lack the clarity and crispness we find in the Book of Mormon. The chronicles often seem tortured, with the Spaniards' form of Christianity mixed in, together with some ecclesiastical editing. Alvarado's butchery started in 1524 AD. The writings from Totonicapán, the *Popol Vuh*, etc., were written between 1554 and 1558. It is uncertain when these writings, which were initially secret, first saw the light of day. However, many of them were pulled up some 200 years later as evidence in land disputes for the courts in Guatemala. The ethnic groups in Guatemala are protective and secretive about their ancient written documents. It makes one wonder what else they might have.

Linguistic Reconstruction

From the foregoing, one might think that the effort to trace Book of Mormon names to present-day place names is an impossible task. But John A. Tvedtnes, a linguist and noted Book of Mormon Scholar at FARMS-BYU, now the Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (ISPART), has suggested some concepts based on his experience and training that are helpful and should be considered when attempting any historical reconstruction based on linguistic evidence. The following five name tracking concepts were shared by Bro. Tvedtnes in a telephone conversation³ and are formulated here in the author's words:

1. *Phonology*: The phonetic sounds and representations of the roots and words are certainly important and should show the evidence of continuity. If the later language is related to the earlier one, then it is possible to determine regular rules to explain them. If the languages are unrelated, then one may look at the phonology of the two languages to determine if the original name could be directly borrowed, whether or not it had to undergo phonological changes to account for the differences (e.g.,

³ Tvedtnes, John A., telephone interview, February 2002.

some Hebrew letters represent sounds that do not exist in English). Sometimes, when the borrowing language cannot replicate the sounds of the original name, the name is changed to a word in the later language that has the same meaning.

2. *Etymology*: The continuity of similar roots with similar meanings used to build the words should be observed. If similar roots with dissimilar meanings are observed, this detracts from the evidence of true continuity. This is especially true if the two languages are related. But even when they are not, it is typical to borrow the names without translating them. That is, place-names like Chicago, Wichita, Kentucky, etc., have meanings in Native American languages but not in English. Nevertheless, we still use them.

3. *Inertia*: Place names, in general, do not change without a very compelling reason. One example of a very compelling reason is if the old name is also found in the new language but has a very different and perhaps negative connotation, then the name is often changed. Such changes are rare, however, because most borrowings do not have negative connotations.

4. *Borrowing*: Often, names are borrowed from a previous culture, thus losing all etymological significance in the new culture. No roots or meanings are found in the new language, yet the name is used. This is the most common practice.

5. *Translation*: Place-name translation to an equivalent name in the new language is not common except where the new language cannot phonologically represent the place-name.

A thought that should not be forgotten is that the first translation may have occurred when Mormon cast the script into reformed Egyptian characters from his native form of Hebrew. Moroni apologized that he and his father Mormon wrote in

reformed Egyptian as he felt this might introduce some imperfections in their writing that would not be present in their form of Hebrew (1 Nephi 1:2; Mormon 9:32-33). His concern may be for lack of familiarity or for the inherent lack of exactness in the reformed Egyptian. This may be the source of some of the inverted syllables that will be discussed later.

John A. Tvedtnes provided the following useful comments:

Let me add a thought that might help you see the difficulty involved in this. Throughout the book of Ether, we find personal names that, for the most part, can be identified as Mesopotamian—which is normal, considering the origin of the Jaredites. But when it comes to place-names, most of them are Hebrew. This suggests that these are the names by which the sites were known to the Nephites, not the Jaredites. When Moroni knew where the sites were located, he just gave them the later Nephite names. But occasionally, he adds comments like "they came to the place which they called," in which the name is not Hebrew and is therefore the original Jaredite name. This suggests that the Nephites did not perpetuate most of the Jaredite place-names. I discuss this in my article, "A Phonemic Analysis of Nephite & Jaredite Proper Names," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology* No. 141 (December 1977).

We have quite a different situation with biblical names, where many of the sites retain the names they had anciently. This is because there was near continuity of the original language of the region, which was Canaanite/Hebrew. (Hebrew is a Canaanite dialect.) During the Babylonian captivity, the Jews adopted Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the time, as their language, so when they returned to the Holy Land, this is what they spoke. Aramaic is closely related to Hebrew and was written using the same alphabet. So there was no need to change any of the place-names, which also made sense in Aramaic. The Jews of Jesus' day still spoke Aramaic, and

when, over the next few centuries, many of them became Christians, they continued to use Aramaic as a liturgical language (it is still the language used in the liturgy of various eastern Christian churches such as the Maronites, the Syriac Orthodox, and the Assyrians). Again, there was no reason to change place-names. The Arabs conquered the land in the 7th century AD, and because Arabic is also a Semitic language, related to Hebrew and Aramaic, most names were not changed (though the Arabs did adopt some of the Greek and Latin names given to some towns during the Roman and Byzantine periods). Then came the Crusaders of Western Europe, pushed on by the pope himself. Though they established what were called "Latin kingdoms" (from the Latin or Roman Catholic Church) with capitals in both Edessa, Syria, and in Jerusalem, the official language of these two kingdoms was actually Aramaic, the language of the remaining Christians who had not been converted to Islam by the Arabs. Ultimately, of course, the Arabs retook the land and expelled the Crusaders, so there was again no major change in the language. Now, if one or more of the Mesoamerican languages could be shown to be related to Hebrew, the task would become much simpler. Indeed, in the 1960s, Pierre Agrinier demonstrated that 5% of the lexicon of the Sawi-Zaa languages of southern Mexico corresponded, etymologically and phonetically, to Hebrew. Soon thereafter, Robert F. Smith took the same list of words and demonstrated that 13% of them could be tied to Egyptian. In more recent times, Brian Stubbs has argued for a connection between Hebrew and the Uto-Aztecan languages.⁴

The Nephite Language

It is not difficult to see why there might have been changes to the Nephite language. In fact, the language Mormon spoke may

⁴ John A. Tvedtnes, personal e-mail, February 2002

have become extinct. Even so, it should be recognizable in at least some of the place-names found today in Mesoamerica. Alma J. Pate, the author's father and a teacher of English grammar for much of his life, wrote: "Language functions according to exact patterns and systems. Language is a cultural phenomenon. People speak and write according to their particular heritage." (Pate 1987, 1)

It would seem that a people who inhabited a place for a thousand years should have left tracks of their language and heritage. Consider for example the old Hebrew word *pach*, which was borrowed from Egyptian and means "plate" as in "plate of metal." In Quiché the word *puak* means "metal" and "money." Gold is "yellow metal" or *k'an puak* and silver is "white metal" or *zak puak*. Note also that *zak* means "white, clear, bright, and clean" in Quiché and in Hebrew *zak* means "clean and pure." Thus, as we shall continue to see, a significant percentage of the other languages in this region are connected with Hebrew. This will help us in tracing some of the Book of Mormon place names.

What Constitutes Sufficient Proof?

How much and what kind of evidence will firmly establish the Sidon River, the land Zarahemla, the land Bountiful, the land of Nephi, the hill Amnihu, or even Siron, the home of the harlot Isabel who was the proximate cause of Corianton's undoing?

In this chapter a hypothesis will be made as to the general location of the greater land of Zarahemla.⁵ It will provide a frame of reference in which to evaluate the evidence that will be presented in the balance of the book. The reader may or may not agree that the basis for the hypothesis is strong, but the proof of this hypothesis does not lie in its derivation alone. Establishing each city, hill, or other location mentioned in the Book of Mormon as an existing location in the proposed land of

⁵ By way of clarification, it is assumed here that all land names came from city names and every city has the surrounding land named after it, even though at times only land names or city names are mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

Zarahemla will help to establish the hypothesis. That, in turn, will allow a more positive identification of this important region.

If one city is identified and then another and another, and if these identifications are correct, the information should be usable to identify a third and fourth city, land, or hill. That will increase confidence in the hypothesis. Of course, archaeological excavation will ultimately be required as solid identification, but the strength of the proof is not in the derivation of the hypothesis, nor the identification of individual cities and the outlying geography. It is in the composite picture that can be derived by working from the hypothesis.

To date, over eighty percent of the locations named in the Book of Mormon appear to have been successfully identified on existing maps based on this hypothesis. This suggests a high level of confidence. Of course, confidence levels will vary with each site. Some cities appear quite certain, while others seem chance possibilities.

Not every city can be identified with certainty, as nice as that would be, but just getting pointed in the right direction is exciting. Oh, to be a part in the bringing to light of the treasures of Cumorah! But that is not the author's objective. This book is only intended to suggest to researchers of Book of Mormon archeology the proper region and locations within that region in which they may meet with success in their diggings.

Problems In Orthography

Most of the findings in this book are based on the phonetics of the various languages involved. These languages include English, Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, Phoenician, Sumerian, K'iche', Mam, Cakchiquel, Chorti, Nahuatl, Quichua, Quechua, Aymará, Japanese, Chinese, and even Ainu. (The limited availability of dictionaries for the other relevant languages has restricted research to these languages.) But how does one determine the original phonetics, the sound of the word, from its spelling? Orthography is concerned with letters and their

sequences in words and the representation of the sounds using printed symbols. As previously noted, the orthography of Mesoamerican languages accepted by Mesoamericanists has evolved as linguists have scrutinized the ruins of the Central American jungle and attempted to transliterate what they find into a modern Western alphabet. Over the years, the names of ruins and early cities have been through many spelling changes, some due to nonstandard spelling, some due to tribal language variations, some due to the Spaniards, and some due to the evolution of orthographic techniques and acceptable notation.

Many towns have been misnamed because of problems with their orthography. For example, Tooele, Utah, was mistakenly named when someone wrote about the *tules* south of the Great Salt Lake. According to a friend, Steve Wassom (personal conversations, 2001), who grew up in Tooele, the story is correct. One of his ancestors, Thomas Bullock, secretary to Brigham Young, was the person who originally misspelled the word. The misspelling then passed into acceptance (Roberts 1930, 485). *Tule* actually comes through Spanish from the Nahuatl word *tullin*, meaning “reed,” and as we shall see, it goes back through Quiché to Sumerian.

The Nahuatl dictionary published in 1571 has an alphabet of seventeen Spanish characters (Molina 1571). A count of the number of words beginning with each of these fifteen letters shows the following:

a	630 words	p	455 words
c	1,050 words	q	455 words
e	140 words	t	4,760 words
h	7 words	v	455 words
i	1,365 words	x	385 words
m	840 words	y	315 words
n	892 words	z	140 words
o	315 words		

Note the disproportionate number of words starting with the

letter *t*. Their language includes the letters *l* and *u*, but no words starting with those letters are found in their dictionary. Instead, words that would otherwise start with *l* are spelled starting with *t*. Thus, *Laman* would have been written *Tlaman*, or possibly *tlamani*, which means “captor or hunter” (a lamanite in Nahuatl?). Also the *r* is missing from the language and it appears that the Nahua, and often the Quiché, used an *l* where an *r* is found in Mormon’s writings. The confusion between the *l* and the *r* is similar to the Chinese usage and may be evidence of a Chinese influence on the Nahuatl language.

With only 17 letters, it is obvious that sounds coming from other languages with a more extensive alphabet would be lost, and this can happen in either direction. For example, the *sh* sound is present in Mesoamerican languages as well as in Hebrew, Phoenician, Arabic, and Portuguese, but it is not found in Spanish. The early Spanish writers had to use other sounds and characters to spell this sound. Commonly, they used the Portuguese *x* for the *sh* sound.

The *tz* sound is also present in the Mesoamerican languages and in Hebrew but not in Spanish. Some early writers used a backward *c* for this sound. However, an examination of common spellings used by researchers to transliterate Mesoamerican words shows that the *sh*, *tz*, *t*, *s*, and *z* sounds are used quite interchangeably.

Differences between the dialects and what the writer hears vary from person to person. Hence, there are multiple spellings in the literature. It is common to see three, four, and even five spellings for the same transliterated word, and each is often very different in appearance from the other. Thus, in sorting out names, it becomes important to focus on sound more than spelling, for the spelling itself can sometimes be misleading. Still, it is often necessary to trace the orthography of a name in order to make an educated guess at what it originally sounded like when spoken by the early Mesoamerican people.

Dr. Allen J. Christenson, a linguist with BYU, was kind enough to provide a computerized Quiché (or K’iche’ in the more

recent orthography) word list which he has prepared. According to Dr. Christenson, the present-day K'iche' Maya language has thirty-two graphic symbols (Christenson 2000, 23). These thirty-two sounds are represented in the English alphabet using many diacritical markings to achieve the appropriate sound. Some of the sounds aren't found in either English or Spanish and require additional gymnastics of the tongue for glottalization, expectoration, and so forth.

This rich variety of sounds has been more extensively documented in the past few years. The earlier Spanish priests did not document all the sounds and the Nahuatl language appears to have lost many. Mayan languages in written form are only now being resurrected. While Nahua and Quiché Mayan share some word roots, it is clear that they diverged over time.

These problems indicate the nature of the challenge involved in this study. While it appears daunting at first, it becomes easier with familiarity, and the results have been the exciting identification of what appear to be numerous Book of Mormon names for geographical locations in Central America, all proximate to each other in a way that is consistent with their descriptions in that book of scripture.

Guatemala as the Land of Zarahemla

In recent readings the name Guatemala is spelled as Quauhtemallá, Cuauhtemallan, and Quauhtemallan (Guatemalan Army 1963, 73; Carmack 1981, 19; Dibble 1961, 10:190). As mentioned above, the backward *c* was used by some of the early scribes to represent the *tz* sound missing in the Spanish language. If a backwards *c* was mistakenly changed to a forward *c* or a *qu* in these words, this would suggest that the original orthography was closer to Tzauhtemalla or Zauhtemala. This is surprisingly close to the name Zarahemla in the Book of Mormon. While this interpretation was later found to lack any etymological basis, it did focus attention in the correct location. More about the correct etymology of this place-name will be presented later. As we will

see, these two names do appear to have shared some common roots early in their evolution. But it was, in the beginning of this effort, the similarity between Guatemala and Zarahemla that first suggested an examination of that region.

This, therefore, is the hypothesis that forms the foundation of this study: **The southern portion of Guatemala** (i.e., most of Guatemala excluding the Petén rain forest in the north and the lower drainages to the Caribbean Sea on the northeast) **is the greater land of Zarahemla** mentioned in the Book of Mormon. In the balance of this book, we will see how well this hypothesis, this proposed geography, fits other facts about the location of places in the Book of Mormon.

One thing that appears from this investigation is that the names of those cities mentioned as being in Lamanite lands during Book of Mormon times and occupied continuously by the Lamanites, have changed less than those in Nephite lands from which the Nephites were driven out or destroyed.

We have some idea of the language and heritage of Lehi when he left Jerusalem, but how extensively did it change in the New World? Sahagún has given us some valuable insights. These will be reviewed extensively, but first, we will go to *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* and *The Title of the Lords of Totonicapán* to examine the origins of the people and see how they relate to the Book of Mormon story.



CHAPTER 2

A STARTING HYPOTHESIS

Where Do They Say They Came From?

For the reasons explained in Chapter One, few Native American documents have survived to the present day. Very early on, however, as the indigenous people learned the Spanish language they started using the Spanish characters and phonetics to again write in their native languages. One document so produced, was written secretly and surfaced many years later. It is *The Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*. These early writers are referenced in the literature as “the chroniclers.”

The Title of the Lords of Totonicapán was apparently written in 1554 in the Quiché language using Spanish characters. In 1834 the Catholic Father Dionisio José Chonay was commissioned to translate the original document into Spanish and it was added to the court’s register of public instruments. In 1860 Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg came across the translation, and recognizing its value, made a copy, which he used in his work. This copy, after his death was acquired by Alphonse Pinart and later passed to Comte de Charencey who translated it and published it in French and Spanish. This material was later collected and published by E. Renault de Broise at Alençon in 1885. The whereabouts of the original Quiché text is unknown. Recinos made his translation

from Chonay's translation (Recinos 1953, 163-165).

The original transmittal letter for the translation was signed by Dionisio José Chonay. In it, he said: "Translation of the attached manuscript, written in the Quiché language by those who signed it in the year 1554, in accordance with the tradition held by their ancestors." He then goes on to provide this very interesting comment:

This manuscript consists of thirty-one quarto pages; but translation of the first pages is omitted because they are on the creation of the world, of Adam, the Earthly Paradise in which Eve was deceived not by a serpent but by Lucifer himself, as an Angel of Light. It deals with the posterity of Adam, following in every respect the same order as in Genesis and the sacred books as far as the captivity of Babylonia. The manuscript assumes that the three great Quiché nations with which it particularly deals are descendants of the Ten Tribes of the Kingdom of Israel, whom Shalmaneser reduced to perpetual captivity and who, finding themselves on the border of Assyria, resolved to emigrate. (Recinos 1953, 163-164, 166)

Thus, Chonay left some rather irrefutable proof that these people were descendants of Israel. Even the last significant events with Shalmaneser (king from 727-722 B.C.) hit close to Lehi's departure time, and the fact that the history ends with their captivity in Babylon is right on the money. The strongest part of the proof that he was not perpetrating a fraud is found in his comment about Eve being deceived not by a serpent but by Lucifer himself, as an Angel of Light. This was contrary to Catholic dogma of the day, and was not revealed to the world until Joseph Smith.

In the chronicle, *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*, the early inhabitants of Mesoamerica describe their origin as follows:

These tribes came from the other part of the sea, from

the East, from Pa-Tulan, Pa-Civan. They came from where the sun rises, descendants of Israel, of the same language and the same customs...When they rose from Pa-Tulan, Pa-Civan, the first leader was Balam-Qitse, by unanimous vote, and then the great father Nacxit gave them a present called Girón-Gagal (Goetz 1953, 170).

Some think that “descendants of Israel” in this quotation came from overzealous Christian scribes wanting to identify the lost ten tribes. But take note of the departure place and the gift that they were given. The scribes did not know anything about the Liahona in 1554. They even signed an attestation stating,

Now on the twenty-eighth of September of 1554 we sign this attestation in which we have written that which by tradition our ancestors told us, who came from the other part of the sea, from Civán-Tulán, bordering on Babylonia (Goetz 1953, 194).

A similar story is found in another of the early indigenous chronicles entitled, *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*:

From four places the people came to Tulan. In the east is one Tulan; another in Xibalbay; another in the west, from where we came ourselves, from the west; and another is where God is. Therefore, there were four Tulans, oh, our sons! So they said. From the west we came to Tulan, from across the sea; and it was at Tulan where we arrived, to be engendered and brought forth by our mothers and our fathers. So they told us (Recinos 1953, 45).

The translator/editor then adds the following footnote:

It is clear that the author wished to name this site as the origin of the four groups of people that arrived at Tulan (not those who came from Tulan, as translators

have mistakenly read). This passage is sometimes interpreted as meaning that there were of old, four places called Tula. Omitting the Tula where God is and the Tula of Xibalbay, the dominions of Heaven and Hell, would leave two centers from which the Mesoamerican races originated. Historical documents nevertheless, mention only one city of this name. All of the indigenous sources of Guatemala, Yucatán, and the Mexican plateau speak of one primitive center of population, which was called Tullán, Tullán-Zuiva, Vucab-Pec, Vucab Zivan (the seven ravines), Tullán-Chicomostoc, Tulapan, which was the great city and the starting point of the emigrations which set out for the south of Mexico and Guatemala. This place has been identified in modern times with the Tula in the state of Hidalgo, site of the ruins of the capital of Quetzalcoatl, king of the Toltec nation. The phrase in the text, "from the west we came to Tulán, from across the sea," agrees with the Cakchiquel and Quiché traditions of a primitive emigration which took their forefathers to the place of Tulán, the common home of the peoples of Mexico and Central America (Recinos 1953, 45).

This footnote is representative of the confusion and uncertainty that have existed for years about the legendary city of Tula. Robert Carmack is a noted anthropologist from SUNY in Albany and a principal participant in the Institute of Mesoamerican Studies. He has documented extensively the ancient civilization of the Quiché, who lived in the Uatlán region of Guatemala. He quotes Francisco Ximénez, who lived with the Quiché people for several years, as stating that they claimed to have come from "where the sun goes up."

Ximénez also recognized that there was some connection between the Quiché eastern origin and the

Mexican cultures but felt that the Quiché were older than the Aztecs and probably gave rise to them.

Carmack says Ximénez was impressed with the Quiché language and said it was the mother of the other languages, the “most ordered of the world,” with its monosyllables and perfect declensions. His conclusion is that it came from the “Adamic tongue” (Carmack 1981, 22-23). This sounds like it may be related to the language of the Jaredite people mentioned in the Book of Mormon prior to the Tower of Babel. Indeed the Quiché language may be a combination of early Hebrew and Sumerian.

The Book of Mormon says that the people whose history it records all came from the Jerusalem area. Abraham and the Israelites called it Canaan, their land of promise. Later it was called Salem. Other spellings in the Bible include Shalem, Shalom, Shaloam, and Shalome. Today Jerusalem is pronounced Or-shaleem among the Arabic peoples and Yerushalaim in present-day Hebrew. If there is a connection between what the chronicles say and what the Book of Mormon teaches, then Salem or Shaleem is likely the origin of the word Tulán, Tullúm, or Tula.

As noted in Chapter One, the *sh*, *tz*, *t*, *s*, and *z* sounds were used interchangeably to represent transliterations of Mesoamerican words. Thus, Tula could have originally been pronounced Shula, Shulán, or Shullum, a name that bears a striking resemblance to the common names for Jerusalem today.

Thus, the second hypothesis proposed in this book is that **the name in Mesoamerica for Jerusalem is Tulán and its variants Tula, Tulua, etc.** Additional support for this hypothesis will be discussed in a later chapter.

If we apply this hypothesis, we find the following important correlations between the Book of Mormon and the early chronicles cited above. The above-quoted footnote from the editors of *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* says four groups came from the same area. Obviously, the family of Lehi was one of those groups. They went south, then east, thus coming from the

ocean west of Central America, and as we shall see, they may have arrived on the western shores of El Salvador where they named a city Jerusalem, or Tula as it is still known to this day.

The Mulekites would be the next group. Coming from royal descent, they may have chartered a Phoenician boat at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and could have sailed around Africa, swung wide at the Cape Verde Islands, as did Thor Heyerdal, caught the trade currents to Central America, and made landfall near the mouth of the Usumacinta River which empties into the Gulf of Mexico. From there, they would have proceeded through the land Desolation to the south wilderness and the land Bountiful, which will later be identified in Guatemala, a "land of eternal spring time" and truly one of the choicest garden spots on earth (cf, Ether 2:7).

The group from Xibalbay may be the Jaredites, who came from Babelonia at the time of the tower. Examine the name, inverting the second and third syllables (a common practice in Mayan dialects). The result is Xi-Baybal or "below Babel." Thus, the previously cited reference to Babelonia was probably not the result of an overzealous Christian scribe. Several different scribes mention Israel and Babelonia, including Sahagún (Dibble 1961, 10:165). They refer to a Tula in Xibalbay (Recinos 1953, 45) and say that Civán-Tulán was bordering on Babylonia. (Goetz 1953, 194) Is it possible that a correct translation of the word Xibalbay is Babylonia? This possibility will be discussed further below.

The fourth reference to Jerusalem as the place where God lives would also be in line with the Book of Mormon, which indicates that the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born, lived, and was crucified in the Jerusalem area, and that He did, in fact, visit the Americas. The Aztecs called the Spaniards *teules* or gods. As we shall see later, the word *teule* may have been derived from *Tule* or Jerusalem, the place where the Lord Jesus Christ lived. This would provide further support for the idea that Tula is Jerusalem.

Thus, the four references in the chronicles cited above to the departure place of Tulúm could all refer to the same Jerusalem,

even though the natives reciting it to the Spanish scribes may not have realized it at the time.

Xibalbay as Babylon

The cabalistic writings that have surfaced from the interpretation of Mayan carvings, writings, and paintings speak of Xibalbay as the Underworld, which resembles hell—the domain of Satan and his demons. The Bible Dictionary in the LDS scriptures mentions Babylon as “the great antagonist of Messiah’s kingdom.” This would be the pride, extravagance, and wickedness of the world in which we live.

Xibalbay is found throughout Maya cosmology (Freidel 1993, 34, 542). It is a place of death that one must pass through before going to heaven. It contains the devil and evil monsters of hell as well as those that will provide help to the dead spirit passing through. With the Catholic infusion it takes on a connotation of “purgatory.” In LDS theology it would appear to be most similar to the “spirit prison.”

Carmack includes some comments by C.E. Brasseur de Bourbourg to the effect that Brasseur believed the Nahuas had been preceded in the highlands of Guatemala by a mysterious race of people who founded a powerful kingdom called Xibalbay. He based this on mythic tales recorded in the *Popol Vuh*. (Carmack 1981, 124-125) While the Jaredites did come from Babylonia at the time of the Tower of Babel and did inhabit the Guatemalan highlands (or so this book will propose), we do not know of any city they founded named Babylon, though it is possible they did, since they came from that city. Therefore, it is proposed that Xibalbay is Babylon, as used in the above reference by Recinos (1953, 45).

It certainly is understandable that biblical Hebrews (those Hebrews living during the years encompassed by the Bible), such as the family of Lehi, would equate Babylon with hell and the domain of Satan, or all that is wicked in the world. Note these scriptural references to Babylon:

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (Revelation 14:8).

And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath (Revelation 16:19).

And upon her forehead [was] a name written, mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth (Revelation 17:5).

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird (Revelation 18:2).

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies (Revelation 18:3).

That after they should be destroyed, even that great city Jerusalem, and many be carried away captive into Babylon, according to the own due time of the Lord, they should return again, yea, even be brought back out of captivity; and after they should be brought back out of captivity they should possess again the land of their inheritance (1 Nephi 10:3).

Wherefore, it hath been told them concerning the destruction which should come upon them, immediately after my father left Jerusalem; nevertheless, they hardened their hearts; and according to my prophecy they have been destroyed, save it be those which are carried away captive into Babylon (2 Nephi 25:10).

Go ye out from Babylon. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord (Doctrine & Covenants 133:5).

Also, the children of Lehi had access to much of the Old Testament history, which documents their adversarial relationship with Babylon. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel spoke much of the attacks, captivities, and oppression that had been and would yet be a part of Israel's interaction with Babylon. Babylon was an evil world to the Hebrews in the same way Xibalbay was the underworld to the Maya.

The fixation of the Maya with the dead of the underworld may well have come through the Jaredites of Babylonia. The concept of building temple-on-top-of-temple, generation after generation, or king after king, originated in Babylonia. Their temples were referred to as towers and are now called Ziggurats in the literature (and the dictionary).

Babel means "gate of God." Thus, the Tower of Babel was nothing more than a temple or Ziggurat. Any attempt to get to heaven was through the dead, not through some literal stairway to heaven. This was false worship not astronautics in the Cape Canaveral sense, though storybook artists tend to depict a tower being built literally to reach the throne of God. Any civilization capable of building a very great tower would certainly understand the times and seasons of the earth and sun and know the futility of stone and clay reaching to God.

As previously noted, transposing the last two syllables of Xibalbay gives us *bay-bal* or Babel. This common switching of the order of the syllabic roots may have been an artifact of the Maya glyph type writing. *Xi'* or *xe'* is the preposition meaning "under or beneath." Thus, Xibalbay or Xe-Babel would mean "under the gateway of God." Thus, in Sumer, or Shinar as it is called in the Bible, these Ziggurats or temples were nothing more than towers built to entomb the dead and provide access to God through the dead spirits of the "underworld."

While the Book of Mormon does not mention a city or land named Babylon in the New World, the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*

does. The spelling is in accordance with our discussion above, for the town is named Xubabal¹ (Recinos 1953, 93). The location is not given but because of the other towns mentioned as captured by Amullac (Amalickiah?), it would appear that it is in the farmable land of the Cordillera or some descending canyon. Thus it appears that these people did remember their Jaredite roots from the Tower of Babel.

Their false form of worship contributed to the destruction of the Tower of Babel and the confounding of the language. Possibly the confounding of the language resulted when King Sargon of Akkad conquered the people of Shinar, or Sumer, and their language was pressed into obsolescence (Isaiah 20:1). Their language (now called Sumerian) was replaced, and for some time only the priests continued writing it after the people no longer spoke it (ragz-international.com/sumeria.htm). The language died for several millennia but was eventually dug up on thousands of clay cuneiform tablets. The code was deciphered, though not completely, and we again have a form of the Sumerian language.²

The largely outdoor temple worship of Shinar or Sumer is duplicated almost exactly in the jungles of Central America. Where these large towers are found, however, Mormon's people were not. The Zoramites appear to have picked up the practice and were condemned for it (Alma 31:21). The Maya sacrificial rituals being dug out of the jungles today are representative of the apostate condition that existed after they had departed from the Law of Moses. Christ wrote the final chapter on blood sacrifice. All that followed was apostate. Classic Maya did not begin until the late 200's AD. These were the apostate years and the apostate practices continued until the Spaniards put an end to human sacrifice in Central America.

¹ Notice that this is just like Xibalbay with the last two syllables reversed back to the original order, Xi-Baybal.

² Halloran, John Alan. 1996-1999. *Sumerian Lexicon Version 3.0*. [cited 7 July 2002]. Available at Sumerian lexicon@sumeriam.org. INTERNET.



CHAPTER 3 THE LAND OF LEHI

The Ocean Barrier

The ancients were limited in their sailing technology, but their sailing skills appear to have been superb as evidenced by the countless records of the Phoenician and Chinese prowess on the seas. The trade winds and the trade currents of the oceans defined the paths that the ancients could travel with ease. Departing from the natural flow of the winds and waters would have been difficult for them but traveling within the natural constraints could have been a pleasure. The saving grace the oceans provide is that they flow in circulation patterns that always come back around. Working within this system, a sailor or adventurer can win.

The Phoenicians anciently demonstrated a high level of skill and understanding. Thor Heyerdahl, accompanied by a few brave souls, has demonstrated in our day how the legends and writings say it was done. He conquered the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Indian Oceans using ancient technology in his crude but appropriately designed watercraft, the Kon-Tiki, the Ra, and the Tigris. Though much maligned, Thor Heyerdahl is truly worthy of a hero's status. This quote from a *National Geographic* magazine says it all:

The role of the oceans as man's early highways has always fascinated me, and I have spent the better part of my life trying to disprove that the sea was a barrier to human travel and cultural exchange (Heyerdahl 1978, 806-827).

The Jaredites from Sumer (Shinar), and much later the family of Lehi, and finally the Mulekites from the Jerusalem area, each took their turn in the natural flows of the ocean currents and arrived at the Central American shores. The ocean currents and prevailing winds tell us volumes about their travel paths.

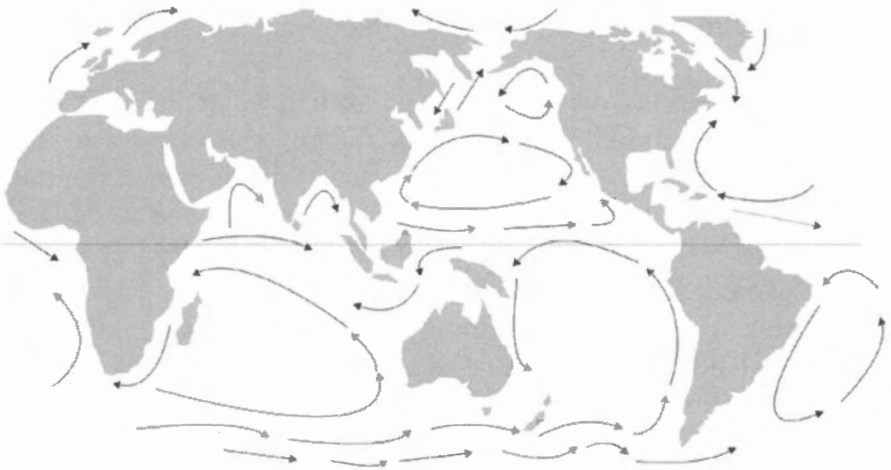


Figure 1. The Earth's Ocean Currents

Lehi's Journey

The Book of Mormon takes Lehi's group from Jerusalem, along the borders of the Red Sea and back again for the brass plates of Laban as well as Ishmael with his many daughters. After continued travel to the south, it appears that they cut across the bottom of the Arabian Peninsula arriving at a land they called Bountiful, where they smelted ore, made tools, and built a boat. Consistent with the quotes in Chapter Two, the indigenous

Americans told the Catholic priest Sahagún where they originally came from.¹

Of these it is said that they were after the Toltecas when they left from the people of Tullan [Jerusalem] and they went toward the east, carrying with them the pictures of their witchcraft [remember, this is being recorded by a priest who was trying to convert “infidels” to Christianity]; and arriving at the port [where] they remained...and were not able to pass over the sea, and of these descend those who at present are called anahuaca mixteca [cloud people]; and they went on to populate there, their ancestors because their Señor who was in charge [Lord, Father, chief, or leader] chose that land for being very good and rich (Author’s translation to English from Gott 1938, 139).

The Quiché and Cakchiquel documents tell of coming from the north and traveling along the borders of a lake or body of water and living there many years. They mention the tribes stopping in stages at certain places such as Teozacuán and Tapuc Olomán. *Popol Vuh* uses the spelling Tepéu Olimán (Recinos 1953, 56).

There appears to be a correlation between the Book of Mormon record of Lehi’s travels and these remnants of historical legend recorded by the indigenous peoples and the early Spaniards. Often in the chronicles of the indigenous American peoples, specific dates are provided for the major travels and events of their ancestors, the early inhabitants. However, the Maya 260-day (Short Count) calendaring system repeated every 52 years, so absolute dates were lost. In this system the day of the year was more important than the exact year. Years run together and information about exact years is lost. The Maya Long Count dating system starts in 3114 BC and will end in 2012 AD so the dates are quite exact and any error is only due to fixing the exact

¹ The author’s comments appear in brackets.

reference point which ties it to our system. However, this dating system does not appear to have been initiated among the Maya in the year 3114 BC. The first carved stone dates do not appear until possibly 200 years prior to the birth of Jesus Christ.

Because they used the short-count in most of their writing, there still appear to be errors in some of the Mayan dates. Reading the indigenous chronicles, the dates mentioned do not correlate with scriptural history. That is, when one recognizes in these legends a storyline from the Bible or the Book of Mormon, the dates do not correlate with the events described in the scriptures. Even the obvious references to Christ as Quetzalcoatl are off by almost 900 years. The time from Shalmaneser's captivity to the arrival of Pedro Alvarado, about 2250 years, is pushed together so that it appears to have happened in just a few generations. In short, the years in their legends cannot be trusted. However, the dates that have been found engraved in stone at the sites of the various ruins in Central America are probably accurate.

How do we explain this? The problematic dates are often tied to wars, which are, in turn, tied to the Spanish conquest or some tribal battle much more recent than the events in the scriptures. While it appears that the Nephites or Jaredites initiated the calendar system (as we will see later), it was probably lost to the remnant whose written records were entirely destroyed by the conquering Spaniards. Later they recited their history to the scribes from picture memory aids. There is much room for error under such circumstances. Thus, we ought not to be dissuaded by date inconsistencies.

The Departure Point

The indigenous writers of the chronicles have given us more information about the departure point than has previously been realized. They came from a place called Pa-Tulán, Pa-Civán

(Goetz 1953,169). *Pa* means "at or by."² If one compares the Quiché, Cakchiquel, Nahuatl, and Andean native languages, this root is used generally to mean "the land of." Thus, Pa-Tulán would be the land of Jerusalem.

So what is Pa-Civán? *Civán* is usually translated as the number "seven" and also as "canyon." Our English number seven goes back through Old English (*seofon*) and Old High German (*sibun*), bypassing the Latin (*septem*) and Greek (*hepta*) to the Hebrew *sheb-aw*'. The name *Civán* does not mean "seven" in Yucatec (*uuc*) or Quiche (*wuküb*), but in Nahua *chicome* means "seven" and Recinos mentions *Chicomoztoc*, which he calls the "City of Seven Ravines" (Recinos 1953, 16). In Quiché, *siwan* is "ravine" (Christenson 1979). The translators of the chronicles mention Seven Ravines as the point of origin of these people, but the Quiché texts only refer to Pa-Tulán and Pa-Civán. Thus, the translators appear to have some ambiguity. Rather than second guessing the translators we will assume that Pa-Civán communicates both "seven" and "canyon."

Is there a land named Seven or Civán, and if so, where is it? In Infobase's Hebrew Lexicon, the number seven is *shba* or *sheb-aw*' which in the English biblical rendition is *sheba* as in the Queen of Sheba. Thus it appears Lehi's family may have set sail from the land of Sheba, not, as some have postulated, from Oman (which is in the northeast direction 700 to 1400 miles of dry desert away).

The Land of Sheba (Sheba being the Hebrew name for the Arabic name Saba) flourished from about 750 BC to about 115 BC, when the Romans invaded it. The capital, after about 600 BC, was Ma'rib, which is located east of the present day city of Sanaa in Yemen. The narrow coastal plain of Yemen is the wettest part of the Arabian Peninsula and receives about 20 inches of rain each year. There are, however, no permanent streams. In the rainy season the mountains catch the water and this feeds springs and oases that provide the local water needs throughout the year.

² Dr. Allen J. Christenson, telephone interview, 2001.

Lehi's family sojourned in the wilderness for eight years. Sojourn does not mean travel but rather to reside or stay as a temporary resident. An extended sojourn of eight years duration would only have been possible in the land appropriately named Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:5-7). The time was needed to make preparations for the long voyage. This stay could only have been in a region where crops could be raised. In the wilderness, they just found enough meat to stay alive and they had to keep moving to find sufficient game. In such an arid desert area, game is quickly depleted or scared off. But for eight years they sojourned in Bountiful, and did not have to move around to find food.

There is a place in this area that still bears the name Lahij. The phonetic connection between that name and Lehi seems too strong to be an unrelated coincidence. A large group residing in this area for six or seven years (and possibly the full eight years, 1 Nephi 17: 3-4) could create a place name that endured among the pastoral, unorganized Bedouin. The region produces fruit, grain, vegetables, cotton, coffee, and livestock. Mining has also been a significant part of the local culture. In fact, the very old port city of Aden actually means "mining" in Arabic. The sea is the Gulf of Aden, which may have relevance to the sea Irreantum (1 Nephi 17:5) or Irre-aden or the Greek name Erythraem (Hilton 1996, 11, 21, 158).

Another relevant name shows up some 240 miles up the coast to the east. It is Cana or Qana, depending on the orthographer, and is a very old seaport. The phonetic connection between Cana, cane (English), *qaneh* (Hebrew, which means "reeds, canes, and bones"), and even the land of Canaan is obvious. Canaan was the Israelites "Promised Land" and from the scouting report of Joshua and Caleb it was very bountiful (Numbers 14:6-7). In the Maya language, *kaná* means "handsome, magnificent, rich, or a precious thing" (Recinos 1953, 45). In an arid land, any spot where reeds or canes grew abundantly might well have been considered rich and bountiful.

The ancient port city Cana or Qana was one end of the Gold and Incense Road. Gaza on the Mediterranean was the other.

Frankincense was gathered in the region and processed in Cana for shipment by camel to Gaza. Cana, as a seaport received shipments of gold, spices, ebony, silk, and fine textiles from India. The Sabaeans were excellent seaman. The trip from Cana to Gaza required 60 to 70 days by camel caravan and the size of the caravans grew to two or three thousand camels per caravan.³

In the Quiché and Nahua tongues, the common name for “reeds” or “canes” is *tula* and the variants mentioned earlier. This includes the “tules” in the English language. When the old Quiché scribes wrote that they came from Pa-Tulán (the land by the reeds), it appears Tulán may have had a double meaning. It referred back to Jerusalem or Salem in the land of Canaan but also to Cana, the land by the reeds, where they built their boat. Reeds still grow in this area of the Arabian Peninsula.

Likewise, Pa-Civán may possibly have two or more meanings. First, it may be the Land of Sheba; second, it is the number seven; and third, it means “oath” in Hebrew, which could have reference to the oath and promise made to Nephi that through his obedience and righteousness he would be led to a Land of Promise. More likely however, the oath part of the definition has to do with the oath that was made between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba that Solomon would not use his navy to disrupt the gold and incense trade that was so profitable and essential to the Queen of Sheba.

There are other connections that make the scenario clearer. In the Hebrew lexicon, *Canaan* means “lowland.” Also, *Cana* or *Kana* (kan-ah) means “place of reeds.” Switching to the Sumerian dictionary, the word for “lowland” as well as “public fountain, well, or cistern” interestingly enough is *túl*, thus indicating that *tula* may have entered the Nahuatl and Quiché languages from Sumerian by way of the Jaredites.

Further, the ancient seaport of Cana or Qana is now called Bi'r 'Ali which means “well” followed by “tool” or “machine.” Also the word for “abundance” is *lam*, which may be the origin of

³ “The History of Yemen” [cited 19 July 2002]. Available at <http://yemeni.virtualave.net/yymn/yh.html> INTERNET.

the Nahuatl word *tlan* meaning “the place where something is abundant” or “the land of...” While the mythical city from which the Quiché came is now called Tulá, the original writings have the double *l* and end with an *m* or *n* (The *m* and *n* are interchangeable in many of the Mesoamerican languages.) The most correct spelling appears to be Túllum, but even in Sumerian they tended to drop the repeated letter, making it Túlum. This place name appears to come directly from the Sumerian language and means “lowland abundant,” or Canaan-Bountiful. Thus, the Sumerian and Hebrew come together with the Nahuatl and Mayan to identify these place names in a way that agrees perfectly with the Book of Mormon.

They Left the East

An excellent example of how the languages of Central America evolved is found in Tedlock’s version of *Popol Vuh*. In a note to his translation, he explains the translation of the Quiché text into the phrase “they left the east.” He states that the verb stem for the expression is *canah*, which means “to leave” (Tedlock 1985, 302). Now we may know exactly where the word came from. We know that *cana* is from the word for “canes or reeds” in many of the relevant languages. It also appears that Cana or Qana is the port city from which Lehi and his family left in the boat Nephi and his brothers built. Thus, we see that Cana was where they left or departed, and it became the verb in the Quiché language meaning “to leave.”

A Fork in the Road

In recent years there has been significant excitement in the land southward (BYU) about the rediscovery of a place named Naham in the land of Yemen. If one looks on the Internet under

the search words Yemen and Naham, the town shows up.⁴ This is not a lost burial place for Ishmael (Nahom, 1 Nephi 16:34), but a current town or location where large quantities of zinc and manganese were rather recently discovered. The news release reads as follows:

Discovering gold mines in Yemen, Yemen Economics, 10/13/1999

Preliminary estimates of mineral discoveries pointed to the existence of large deposits of gold in three areas in Hadhramaut governorate and in Atma and in Zamar governorate, as well as large quantities of zinc and manganese in Naham area in Sanaa.

The Yemeni newspaper El-Thawra said today that work is going on to resume exploration for these resources, which promise to produce large quantities to cover the needs of the local markets and to export to neighboring markets.

The complete name of the town is Furdat Naham. As we can tell from the Book of Mormon text, Naham was a fork in the road where Lehi's family turned east (1 Nephi 16:34; 17:1). This was an inhabited region in Solomon's day some 300 years before Lehi passed through, and probably for many centuries before that. The Queen of Sheba had a famous land, noted for much gold, incense, and spice trade. The famous Gold and Incense Road passed through Sheba. Naham was on that road. It appears that the place was named prior to Ishmael's death, for verse says the land "was called Nahom" (emphasis added). Either that or the name on the grave marker stuck.

At Nahom, Lehi's party stopped going south-southeast and turned straight east (1 Nephi 17:1). Three verses later they were

⁴ "Discovering gold mines in Yemen," *Yemen Economics 10/13/1999* [cited 7 July 2002]. Available at <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/991013/1999101353.html>. INTERNET.

sojourning for eight years, probably in the land they called Bountiful. The closest word to Furdat is a Syrian word *furtai'ki*, which means “fork.” Could it be that Furdat Naham was the fork in the road where they turned east toward Ma’rib (the capitol of Sheba after about 600 BC), rather than continuing southward to Sanaa, which is now the capitol of Yemen?

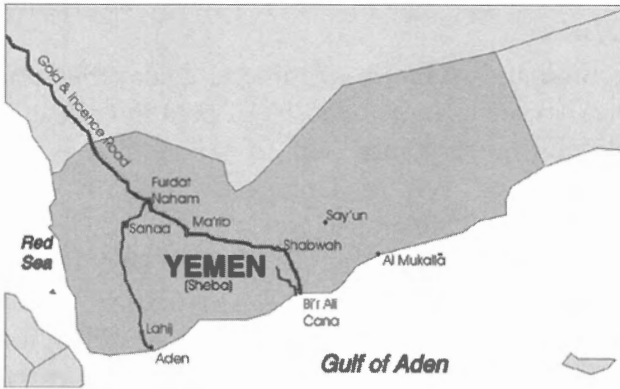


Figure 2. Yemen, Possible Area of Lehi’s Departure

Looking for the definition of Furdat, it is necessary go back to the basic tri-literal roots for the verb or *fiil thulathee* (“verb three”). The word one comes up with is *infrad*, meaning “to separate” or “separately.”⁵ Thus Furdat would not be a noun for “fork in the road,” but rather a verb form having to do with where the road “separates.” To Lehi, as today, Furdat Naham was the fork in the road where the road separates. The right branch goes south to Sanaa and Aden, while the left branch goes east to the port city of Cana (Qana) at the very end of the Gold and Incense Road.

From Ma’rib they would likely have continued east to Shabwah or Say’un (also written as Saywun) then drop down the *wadi* (valley) to the ancient port city of Cana. Today Cana is Bi’r Ali which is some 60 miles west of the Al Mukallá region.

Factoring in the information about Naham (Nahom), it

⁵ Rashid Ahmad, personal conversation, July 2002.

appears the land of Sheba, and especially the town of Shabwah, matches the ancient Quiché reference to the land of their departure, Pa-Civán (meaning “seven,” which is *sheb-aw*’ in Hebrew, like Shabwah in Yemen). The land to the locals was *Saba* (*Sheba* in Hebrew). In the Arabic, the *an* on the end indicates the plural. Thus we have a firm connection between Pa-Tulán and Pa-Civán, and Cana or Qana and Sheba. Note that, in Spanish, the *b* and the *v* are pronounced almost identically (and all the indigenous writings went through a kind of Spanish filter). Thus, Sheba would have been pronounced the same as Sheva, which is very close to Civán.

Lehi’s Trail

Thus, it would appear that, in leaving Jerusalem, Lehi and his family followed the Gold and Incense Road that had been established for centuries before their departure. It appears that Lehi was rather prosperous as they left much gold, silver and precious things at their residence in Jerusalem (1 Nephi 2:4; 3:16, 22-24). Having been rejected by Laban in their first attempt to obtain the Brass Plates, Lehi’s sons went from Laban’s presence in Jerusalem *down into the land of their inheritance*. It appears that Lehi did not live in Jerusalem proper, but possibly somewhere south or southwest (down) from there. Since Lehi had gold to leave, he certainly would have purchased the best transportation for the journey. In this case that would be camels.

They followed it to the end because it went to the land of Cana (Bountiful) and that was where established sailing technology (with known routes to India, and beyond) was available. Lehi may have indeed been a merchant and familiar with the trail. The large caravans were known to make the trip in 60 to 70 days all the way from Gaza to Cana. There were guard posts, water, provender, and tollbooths along the way. Safety was not a minor concern. Tight organization and caravan size was effective protection. Lehi may have had neither. Departing from

the road would be very difficult and possibly even more dangerous.

The Voyage

The Book of Mormon talks of their shipbuilding and subsequent voyage. Many Native American legends and paintings depict the journey from Túllum. Nephi's account mentions being driven back on the waters by the wind for three days because of rebellion and family discord as Nephi's brothers carried on in a manner offensive to the Lord.

It is possible that two things needed adjustment during that period. First, an attitude adjustment was in order for Laman and Lemuel, but second, a course adjustment may have been necessary for their trip. That adjustment may have been required in order to place the ship in the correct trade currents to assist in their landing at the desired spot.

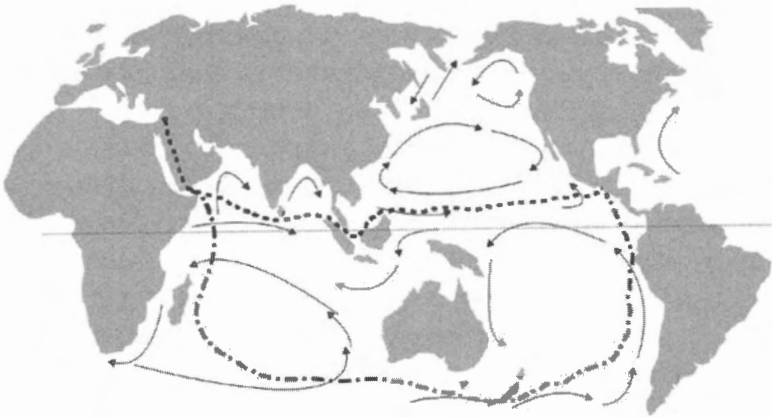


Figure 3. Possible Paths of Lehi's Voyage

In the Indian Ocean there is a counterclockwise circulation pattern. Some adjustment would be necessary to get out of that pattern and into either the flow that goes eastward to Australia and on toward the Pacific Ocean and South America or the

counter current flow that goes through Indonesia and the Polynesian Islands. (See Figure 3.)

Arrival in the Promised Land

Where is the land of Lehi, the land of their first inheritance, where Lehi and his family landed in the New World? It appears almost certain that Lehi's ship arrived on the west coast of Central America, but exactly where? In *An Ancient American Setting for The Book of Mormon*, John L. Sorenson places the land of Nephi in Guatemala near the capitol city. However, his placement of Zarahemla in the central depression of Chiapas, Mexico does not correlate with the alternative set forth as the opening hypothesis of this book.

Sorenson postulates that Kaminaljuyú was a likely site for the land of Nephi. But if one makes an effort to pronounce that name with the appropriate Spanish twist, it comes out something close to Ka-mi-nal-who-you. Dropping the leading *K*, which may have been nothing more than an orthographer's way of spelling the sound associated with a glottal closure on a leading *a*⁶, the sound is A-mi-nal-who-you. And, given the tendencies in Meso-american orthography as discussed previously, this sound is very close to Ammonihah, the great city in the Book of Mormon that Alma 8 describes as being three days journey north of Melek, a land west of the river Sidon by the borders of the wilderness. This was not in the land of Nephi.

Dropping the leading *K* is appropriate as explained in the American Heritage Dictionary, which shows the Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Medieval, and Modern characters at the beginning of each alphabetical section. Under the letter *a* there are three different Phoenician symbols all of which look like the letter *k*. This quote follows:

⁶ That is, the original spelling may have used a leading *a* pronounced with a glottal closure, like the Hebrew holiday *hanukkah*, for which the pronunciation guide in dictionaries reads KHä'ne-ke,hä'- (with the e's inverted).

Around 1000 BC the Phoenicians and the other Semitic peoples began to use graphic signs to represent individual speech sounds instead of syllables or words. They used a symbol in the forms [of *k*] to represent a consonant, the glottal stop, and called it '*aleph*, the word for "ox," which begins with a glottal stop (represented in modern transliteration by '). Adapting the Phoenician alphabet, the Greeks, who did not have a glottal stop sound in their language, used '*aleph* to represent the sound of the vowel "a." They also changed its shape [to a symbol like the current capitol A] and altered its name to '*alpha*. (American Heritage Dictionary 1976, 65)

To understand what a glottal stop is, one need merely say the English word *ox* and keep track of the three vocal motions, *aw-ka-ss*. The middle motion, *ka*, is the glottal closure found in the Semitic and Mesoamerican languages.

Thus, not only is dropping the *k* on Kaminaljuyú justified, it is a piece of evidence linking the origins of names like Kaminaljuyú and Ammonihah to the Phoenician/Semitic origins indicated in the Book of Mormon.

Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú) is high up, near the Continental Divide of Guatemala. From the Book of Mormon, we learn that the city was vulnerable to the Lamanites. It was near the land of Zarahemla yet remote, on the outskirts between the Lamanite lands and the land of Zarahemla (Alma 16:2-3).

Examining the topography and travel paths depicted on National Geographic Society maps of Central America, the mountains, valleys, rivers, highways, towns, and ruins in the area are significant.⁷ They have distinct names, and there is a distinct topography with resulting travel paths consistent with that

⁷ The author is indebted to Fred Perkins, a returned missionary from Guatemala, for a National Geographic Society map of the Maya area (Oct.1968, Vol.134, No.4, *Middle America*) that shows the names of the ruins next to the symbols for the archeological sites. This map led to some of the initial findings that formed the basis for this book.

topography. These maps show that there are only three possible travel corridors between the probable location of the Lamanites and the great city Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú).

Assuming we have correctly identified the location of Ammonihah, the mappings of Palmer (1987), Hauck (1988), and Sorenson (1989, 2000) can be adjusted into a new frame of reference. It requires some transformations, taking into account the locations and the topography of the region. But sweeping southeastward down the west coast of Guatemala toward El Salvador based on this assumption, it makes sense to search for ruins that might be located near a good place to come ashore. There are two natural harbors in that direction, Punta San Juan in El Salvador, and Golfo de Fonseca between El Salvador and Nicaragua. Could one of these have been the landing place of Lehi?

Specific locations for the Land of Nephi-Lehi can be identified just over the mountains northward into Honduras (as explained in the next chapter). By tracing backward from those locations to the southwestern shore, one gains an additional means for locating the landing place. By triangulation, the area in which to look appears to be Punta San Juan.

About sixty miles west of Punta San Juan, is a city of ruins called Tula (Jerusalem). This is possibly the Jerusalem mentioned by the chroniclers as the Tula to which they arrived rather than the Tula in Mexico City (Recinos 1953, 45). This would be the Tula (Jerusalem) where the Book of Mormon people arrived after traveling east across the ocean from the original Jerusalem. After arriving on the western shore of El Salvador they apparently started a new Tula, or Tulán (Jerusalem), as mentioned in the Book of Mormon (Alma 21:1).

If this is an accurate assumption, it follows that other sites in the area will correspond with Book of Mormon place names that are associated with their first landing site. Nephi stated that they called the new land “the Promised Land” (1 Nephi 18:13,23). The legends speak of arriving at a lakeshore that had many animals where they built their huts (Goetz 1953, 171). Shortly afterward,

they moved to another area, which they called Chicpach. *Chic* means dream and *pa* is the place identifier “by the” or “land of,” giving us “dream land” as a meaning for this site. A promised land is certainly a land of one’s dreams.

Another familiar name related to this part of the search was found in the El Salvador region. It is Usulután. *Usu* is the name of the land mass adjacent to Tyre in ancient Phoenicia on which the cities Biblos, Berutas, and Sidon (or Zidon) were located. *Usu* is familiar in the New World because of the Usumacinta River, which flows into the Gulf of Mexico at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. This is one of the rivers that has long been a candidate for the River Sidon.

What does the word *Usu* mean? According to Dr. Hugh Nibley⁸, the Phoenician word *usu* means “bank, shore, or horizon.” A bank or shore may also be a landing place. Usulután might thus be the landing place of Lután.

The maps available of El Salvador are limited compared to the ones of Guatemala and Honduras. However, on the backside of a National Geographic Society digital map of the region around El Salvador is a map entitled *Central America Past and Present* (April 1986).⁹ On that map, stretched out across El Salvador in large letters, is the old name of the region. It is *Lenca*. The letters “nca” in this word may represent an attempt to spell the sound of a glottal closure, so that the original name was actually “Leha,” where the “h” is pronounced with a glottal closure.

Most of the spellings found for “Lehi” in the Guatemala and Honduras regions take the form “Leja” in Spanish, pronounced Leha in English. The pronunciation of *Leja* and *Lenca* are nearly identical in Spanish. In the indigenous languages, many characters are glottalized, and the pronunciation of *Leja* and *Lenca* is even more similar because of the glottal stop in the middle. They differ only by a slight French nasal on the *n*.

⁸ Dr. Hugh Nibley, telephone interview, December 2000.

⁹ National Geographic Society Map. *Central America Past and Present*. Washington D.C., April 1986.

Other spellings and representations of the name Lehi have survived in the various dialects and regions, as will be discussed below. It is significant that, among the original indigenous languages, the name Lehi or Leja is the most commonly used place name in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Most of the uses of the name Leja have been replaced with Spanish representations, but the old names can still be found in print.¹⁰

Going to the north of Guatemala, a different form of the name Lehi shows up. In the Yucatec Mayan, the name takes the form of Lahun, which we will discuss below. In Central Mexico, the Nahuatl version of the name appears to be *Tlaca*. (Remember that they put a *t* in front of all words beginning with the *l* sound. Thus, *Tlaca* is Laca, the “ca” being yet another spelling for a glottal closure.)

What Does the Name Lehi Tell Us?

The Bible Dictionary in the LDS publication of the King James Bible says that *Lehi* means “jawbone.” There is a place so named in Judah near the Philistine border, the scene of one of Samson’s exploits. He found a new jawbone of an ass there, and with it, killed 1,000 men. Samson named the place Ramath-lehi (Judges 15:16-17), which could be translated Hill Lehi, since Ramah¹¹ means height according to the Bible Dictionary.

The jawbone shows up in Stela 5, found in 1941 at Izapa, Mexico, as the name glyph for an older, bearded gentleman depicted on that stela. This is referred to as the Lehi stone among many members of the Church and is thought to depict Lehi’s dream and Nephi’s vision of that dream. Izapa, Mexico, is just

¹⁰ Instituto Geográfico Militar. *Mapa Arqueológico De La República De Guatemala*. Guatemala, C.A., 1991. Instituto Geográfico Nacional. *Mapa Oficial Republica De Honduras*. Tegucigalpa, M.D.C., Honduras C.A., Septiembre 1997.

¹¹ The Jaredites called a hill Ramah which was probably redundant. As will be shown later, it appears that Mormon called the same hill Cumorah.

across the river from Guatemala and within about 120 miles of the Land of Lehi identified above.

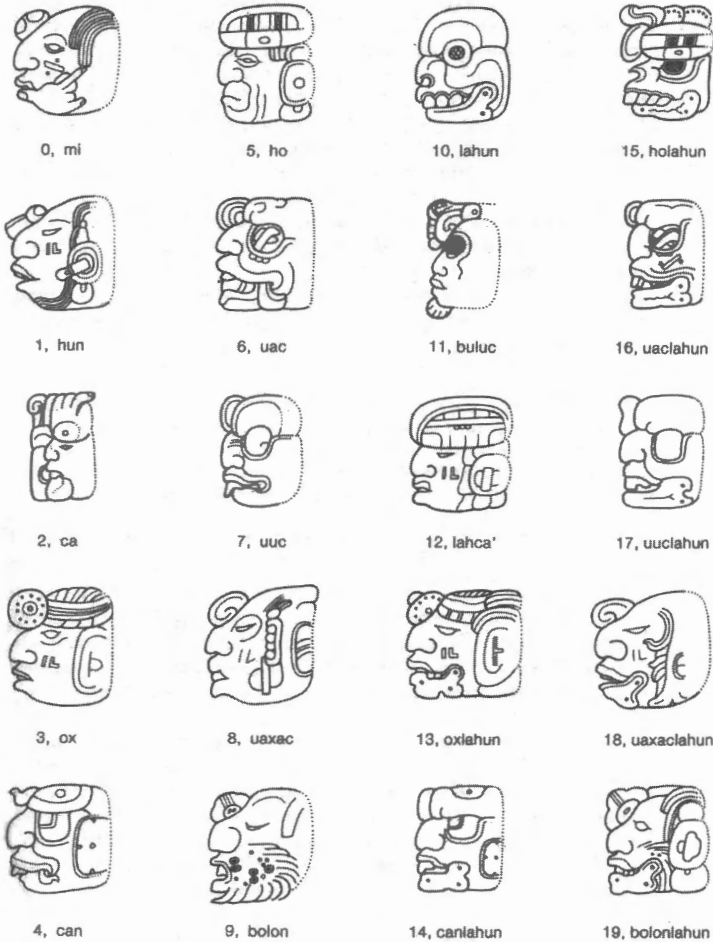


Figure 4. Maya Number Glyphs

Dr. Michael D. Coe has written an excellent book entitled *Breaking the Maya Code*. In it, Dr. Coe shows the head variants of the Maya numbers from zero through nineteen and includes the equivalents in spoken Yucatec (Coe, 1992 p. 113).

Studying Figure 4, taken from Dr. Coe's book, we see twenty

number glyphs. In the glyphs for numbers 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, but not in the other number glyphs, is an almost metallic-looking jawbone that appears to be attached to the head glyph by rivets. Notice the number 0. A hand covers the jaw so no jawbone can be seen. The number 0, or “no ten” is thus symbolized by a feature that suggests the meaning “no jawbone,” or, to use the Hebrew equivalent, “no lehi.” The Yucatec name for the number 10 is *lahun*. This appears to be the form of Lehi used among the Yucatecs.

Why would Lehi be used for the number ten? There are ten possible reasons: Lehi, Sariah, Laman, Lemuel, Sam, Nephi, Jacob, Joseph, and their two sisters. This is not an unusual way to derive a numbering system. In Japanese, the difference between the Kanji symbol for boat and the Kanji symbol for ship, or big boat, is the addition of the Kanji symbol for eight mouths. Eight mouths represent eight people.¹² Who might these eight people have been? Could they have been Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, and their four wives? Noah’s was truly a big boat, a ship. It turns out that a quick way to check the closeness of a language to the Nephite and Lamanite languages is to check the number *ten* and see how close it is to Lehi.

Note some of the key features in the number glyphs shown in Figure 4 that can be found in the Quiché dictionary. Quiché and Yucatec are similar, being different linguistic branches of the Mayan language. In the number one glyph, it is probably the nose that conveys the meaning, as indicated by the embellishment on the nose of the figure and the fact that we have only one nose. *Hun* is the number one, and may be related to *ha-na*, which means “nose” in Japanese. In the number two, it is the hand on the top of the head that shows the meaning. *Ca*, which is the number two in Yucatec, is similar to *cab* (second) and *k’ab*, which means hand in Quiché. A person has two hands, hence the name for the number two. Likewise, the number three, *ox* (pronounced *osh*) is similar to *ix* in Nahuatl and *wäch*, which

¹² This information was provided by Eric Rasmussen, a returned missionary from Japan, in a personal conversation with the author in 2001.

means “eye” in Quiché. The eye has three distinct color zones, hence the number three.

The number four, *can*, has to do with the top of the head. In Quiché, it is *caj*, which means “sky” but may be related to *ja’j*, “the top of the head, the crown, or the soft spot on a baby’s skull.” There are four main plates that knit together to form the top of the skull, possibly suggesting a source for the number four (or it may come from the four corners of the universe or the four cardinal directions). *Can* in Yucatec, meaning “sky,” appears to come from Sumerian where *an* means “sky and heaven.” (Literally it means “water from above.”) Note also that in Chinese and Japanese *tian* means “sky” or “heaven.” The leading *c* in *can* and *caj* appears to be present simply to spell the glottal closure on a leading *a*.

The number five is *ho*, which is *job* (pronounced hob) in Quiché (note the modifications, *jolom* for “head,” and *ro’* for “cap”). Looking at Figure 4, the number five is represented by the cap on the head, the cap being added to the four plates of the skull to achieve the number five. The number six, *ak’*, comes from “the tongue,” which is *uwak* in Quiché. The number seven appears to be related to the teeth, like *shin* in Hebrew, which is pronounced by clenching and baring the teeth. The number eight is depicted through the braided hair in front of the ears. The number nine, *bolon*, or *belej* in Quiché, comes from the facial hair, which is *palaj* in Quiché.

The ancient inhabitants of the New World thus formed their first nine digits based on parts of the human body. Now look at the way they built the Yucatec words for the teen numbers. Thirteen is three-ten (*oxlahun*), fourteen is four-ten (*canlahun*), and so on. There are only two significant exceptions, eleven and twelve, which are not “teen” words in English either.

It was mentioned that the form of Lehi in the Nahuatl language is *tlaca*. As evidence that *Tlaca* is an accurate representation of Lehi, look at the number ten in Nahuatl, *matlac*. It still carries the *tlac* but has lost the terminal *a*, which would form *ma-tlaca*. The Nahua were undoubtedly descendants of Lehi

or *Tlaca*, as we shall see, which is suggested by the fact that their word for “people” is *tlaca*.

Note the differences between the Quiché and the Yucatec, as well as the differences between the number word and the object it was named after in Quiché. This is evidence of the evolution of the languages and the differences that evolve when people are separated. This also shows how the original numbering name meanings may have been lost to the people while still in use, as happened to the Chinese and Japanese with the Kanji characters noted above.

If *Lahun* is Lehi, as suggested by this study, Lehi’s landing place would be called *Usulahun*. *Usulután*, located on the western coast of central El Salvador, is close enough to catch attention, but in the research effort nothing else materialized in this immediate area. The nearest other city connections were sixty miles away.¹³

In Guatemala, there is a town named Quetzaltenango, which means “fortified place or citadel of the quetzal bird.” The local Indian people call this town *Xelahuh* (pronounced *sha la whoo*). Even today, on the streets, the most common name for the town is *Xela*.¹⁴

In *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* there is a reference to the name *Xelahub*. The spelling differs from *Xelahuh* only in that it ends in *b* rather than *h*. Some call the city *Xela* and others call it *Xelaj’*, or *Xelaju’* depending on the tribe they come from. The translators of *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* wrote a footnote to the name *Xelahub* or *Xelahuh*, saying that the Quiché meaning of the word is “under the ten.” (Recinos 1953, 120) They went on to say that the Mexicans changed the name to Quetzaltenango, after

¹³ There are other possibilities. The word *usu* is in the Aymará dictionary (CALA 1973, 65). It means “sickness or pain” and forms the root of all related words in the Aymará language. Thus, the name *Usulután* may have something to do with the place where Lehi became sick and died. We know that Lehi died about ten to fifteen years after his arrival in the Promised Land, prior to Nephi and his followers seeking another place to call home.

¹⁴ Reported to the author by Fred Perkins, a returned missionary from the area, and observed by the author when he visited Quetzaltenango.

the quetzal bird, which provided the long green feathers that adorned the Quiché chiefs who perished while fighting the Spaniards.

What is the significance of the name “under the ten?” Lehi, we have seen, is equivalent to the number ten in ancient Yucatec. But what does “under Lehi” mean? Was it a diminutive, denoting that this city of Lehi was the second, not the original city, or a suburb of the city Lehi? Given the many battles that occurred in the area surrounding this town (as we shall see in a later chapter), it could be that “under Lehi” meant the city was under the command of Captain Lehi.

According to Christenson’s Quiché word list, the more complete or older original name of *Xelahuh* was apparently *Xe’ lajuj no’j*. *No’j* means “idea, reason, opinion, understanding, or character.” These modifiers could have a meaning related to a city built “on the north, one *in a particular manner* which they called Lehi,” (Alma 50:15, emphasis added).

Hence, this city appears to be the fortress city of Lehi, not the original land of Lehi on the coast where they landed, and not Lehi-Nephi over the mountains to which Nephi fled. As we shall see, this was the fortress city built at the time of Captains Moroni, Lehi, and Teancum. It may also have been the second city of Lehi as there was probably an original and unmentioned city of Lehi in the original Land of Lehi where they first landed.

With regard to *Xelahub*, it states in *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*:

Then they were destroyed before Xelahub. Then the Spaniards went forth to the city of Gumarcaah, where they received the kings, the Ahpop and the Ahpop Quamahay and the Quiché paid them tribute. Soon the kings were tortured by Tunatiuh [the Quiche’ name for Pedro de Alvarado] (Recinos 1953, 120).

In a footnote to this excerpt, the editor adds the following from Pedro de Alvarado’s record:

I decided to burn the lords, who said at the time when I wished to burn them, as will appear by their confessions, that they were the ones who had ordered and carried on the war...And as I observed their ill will toward the service of His Majesty, and for the good and benefit of this country, I burned them and ordered that the city be burned to its foundation (Recinos 1953, 120 n. 228).

Thus the city of *Gumarcaah* was burned, as well as *Xelahub*. Noting the similarity of the name Gumarcaah to one in the Book of Mormon, it appears (as we shall see in a later chapter) that they had just burned the city of Cumorah.

Early Legends

In search of further evidence to support the proposed location of the Land of Lehi, it is reasonable to ask, where do the local peoples of Guatemala and El Salvador say that they came ashore? The natives say that their ship or boat landed in El Salvador at a place that is named Acajutla.¹⁵

Can we extract any meaning from the name Acajutla? Recalling that the Nahuatl word for Lehi is *tlaca*,¹⁶ or *laca* without the ubiquitous *t*, the original name may have been taken from the Nahuatl form of *Tlacajutla*, which means “Lehi land,” and the Quiché just dropped the Nahuatl *tl* from the beginning.

Their legends say they terminated their voyage when they arrived at Acajutla, El Salvador. That is up the coast from Usulután, but this entire land of El Salvador was called Lenca after the Lenca people (people of Lehi). It would therefore be known as *Tlaca* to the Nahua. In the Book of Mormon they landed in an area they named Lehi, the land of their first inheritance. It appears that Lehi, Leja, and Lenca are the same place name.

¹⁵ Ted E. Brewerton, personal interview, 2002.

¹⁶ Indeed, in Nahuatl the generic word for people is *tlaca*.

It may be a bit ironic that the landing place for Lehi and his family was the place where Alvarado received his most severe (near fatal) war wounds after he had decimated the descendants of Lehi. In the very difficult battle many Spaniards were injured. Alvarado had an arrow pass through his leg and another arrow lodge in his rear end. The shot to the rear left Alvarado lame. After this incident, one leg remained three fingers shorter than the other. He said they had to stay in Acajutla for five days to recover from their wounds (Guatemalan Army 1963, 181). These soldiers were tough. Díaz in his writings said they would melt some fat, pour it into their wounds, and go on with the next day's battles. One time they did not have any oil or salt to dress their wounds so they grabbed the body of a fat Indian from the battlefield, stripped off some fat, and melted it down for the purpose (Cohen 1963, 150).



CHAPTER 4

THE LAND OF LEHI-NEPHI

The Land of Nephi

In the Book of Mormon, the land originally called the land of Nephi was no doubt so named because of the city of Nephi (Mosiah 9:15). After the Nephites fled, during the time of the first King Mosiah, they referred to it as Lehi-Nephi. There is the distinct possibility that there was a city of Lehi in conjunction with the city of Nephi, and that the two cities grew together to become one.

Assuming the identification of the Land of Lehi made in the last chapter, it follows that, when Nephi decided to flee for his life with his followers, he went up over the Continental Divide and down the Humuya River in the Honduran highlands. The last name used for this area in the Book of Mormon, and hence the name we should be looking for, is Lehi-Nephi. But that name did not come into use until after the Lamanites had occupied the area (Mosiah 7:1).

There is a city of Lemuel and a city of Laman mentioned in the Book of Mormon. The city of Laman is mentioned just before it is burned (3 Nephi 9:10). There are no other references to it. The time when the Lamanites arrived in the land of Nephi is uncertain but Mosiah and his followers left some 200 years BC

(Omni 1:13). This was approximately 400 years after Laman settled in the land of Lehi.

Burning the city of Laman would probably have involved either lightening or volcanic activity. The El Salvador region is very vulnerable to volcanic activity while the area identified as the land of Shilom is not. Thus, it would seem that Laman was most likely located in the original land of Lehi, though it has not yet been located there. Of course, the burning of Laman in 3 Nephi, if it involved volcanic activity, would make it difficult to locate.

The only time that the city of Lemuel is mentioned in the Book of Mormon it is in conjunction with the Lamanite converts in the area of the original land of Nephi or Shilom (Alma 23:12), and sure enough, in the Honduran highlands about thirty-five miles northwest of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, there is a city in a cluster of ruins that looks like it could be the Lehi-Nephi complex that bears the name Calamuya, pronounced Ka-la-moo-ya. Except for the initial *Ca*, this word sounds a lot like Lemuel. The initial *Ca* is the number *two* in Mayan. This city, Ca-Lamuya, could be the second city of Lemuel. And just five miles away, there is a still inhabited town with the name of Lamani.

Nibley suggests that the *i* on the name Moroni means that he was from Moron (Nibley 1988, 244). Likewise, the *i* on Lamani may mean that it was founded by descendants of the original city of Laman. Lamani, then, would not be the original city of Laman because it has the *i* on the end, which is consistent with the nearby ruins of Ca-lamuya, the second city of Lemuel.

The spelling variations are a major part of the challenge faced in this search. Normally, even a small spelling variation would be enough to disqualify a place name from such a search. But as explained in prior chapters, the original spelling of these names was wiped out in the sixteenth century and has been fluid over the years since then. The search, therefore, takes on a different character from similar surveys in the holy land. Here it is better to ignore the exact spelling and go with the sound and rhythm of the name.

The books by Palmer, Hauck, and Sorenson were used to look for additional cities that should be in this complex. The cities Shimnilom and Shemlon are among those additional cities. National Geographic maps show some ruins named Tenampua in the same area with Ca-Lamuya and Lamani. (National Geographic Society, Oct 1968, Vol. 134, number 4). This Tenampua could be Shemlon.

The Land of Shilom

If the original land of Nephi is located in the Honduran highlands, other pieces of the puzzle should fit when examining the Book of Mormon. For example, Ammon and his brethren went in search of the land Lehi-Nephi during the reign of the second King Mosiah, the son of King Benjamin. When the older King Mosiah, the father of King Benjamin, left the area it was



Figure 5. Lands of Shilom and Lehi-Nephi (Upper Right)

called the land of Nephi, but by the time Ammon and his brethren went back looking for it a couple of generations later, the name had been changed to Lehi-Nephi (Mosiah 7-24).

No word had come back from the people that went with Zeniff to the land Lehi-Nephi many years earlier and the people in Zarahemla were very curious as to their fate. The King sent sixteen strong men, probably led by Ammon, in search of Zeniff's descendants (Mosiah 7:2). This group wandered in the wilderness for forty days because they were unfamiliar with the course they should follow. For ease of travel, they probably stayed as much as possible in the high country near the Continental Divide. The terrain is such that the headwaters of the rivers from the northeast are interlaced with the headwaters of the rivers from the southwest. This would require a lot of zigzagging to stay near the Continental Divide in the higher and dryer areas, or they would have to have done a lot of up and down hiking through the very steep *barrancas* in the area. Visibility is very poor in this region when it is humid and there is haze or smoke in the air. The mountains, hills, and trees also limit visibility. Often one's view is no more than 100 feet.

Surely they knew on which side of the Divide the land of Nephi was located. But in low visibility, they would have to go east on each major ridge to see if the land of Nephi was below them. On one such outreach, the Book of Mormon says they came to a hill that was north of the land Shilom and they saw the civilization below (Mosiah 7:5). They camped on the hill, and Ammon, with three of the brethren, went down into Shilom.¹ They were promptly bound and thrown into prison. The people thought these visitors were priests of the wicked King Noah. Fortunately King Limhi wanted to question them before they were executed. Learning their true identity, all was well and they made plans for the people of Limhi to escape.

¹ The first mention of the name Shilom is in the Book of Mosiah, when Zeniff returned. However, it is possible that the name was given to the city by Nephi.

If the identification made in this chapter is correct, the hill on which Ammon and his brethren would have camped is a protrusion of the mountain range into the valley just west of the present city of La Paz, Honduras. This area is all on the Caribbean Sea drainage side of the Continental Divide. The land of Shilom would then be part of the valley floor that wraps around the city of La Paz, Honduras.

So far in this region, seven cities that have names very similar to Lehi have been identified and most are spelled *Leja'*. The apostrophe at the end denotes the exhaling sound as in pronouncing "hah." The land of Lehi-Nephi probably would be part of the valley floor north of La Paz, as there is very little population and few ruins to the south. Mosiah 7:6-7 states that they were on a hill north of the land of Shilom and from that vantage point they went down into the land of Nephi. Hence, it appears that Nephi or Lehi-Nephi was most likely a bit north of Shilom. This would put Lehi-Nephi at or near the present day city of Lejamani. Dividing that city name into *Leja-mani* may show its significance. *Leja'* would be Lehi and *mani* is likely a contraction from *Leja-Lamani* to *Leja-mani* or *Lejamani* as it is known today.

In the Book of Mormon, this city was originally named Nephi (Mosiah 9:15), but after the Nephites fled it was the Nephites that referred back to it as Lehi-Nephi. But the Lamanites were taught from their youth to hate the Nephites for all the "wrongs" that were supposedly done to them by Nephi (see Mosiah 10:12, 13). Therefore, it is possible that the name underwent an additional modification later, maybe around the time of the final battles between the Nephites and Lamanites. The first transformation added Lehi to the name, the second may have eliminated Nephi from it entirely. The logical substitute for Nephi in Lamanite territory would be Laman. Not surprisingly, *Lejamani* looks exactly like a contraction of Lehi and Laman. Thus, Nephi was expunged from the Lamanite culture.

The city of Laman, or Lamani, is up the river to the south about twelve miles. The present-day city of Humuya (five miles south of La Paz) is near the archeological site of Calamuya and

San Sebastian is just across the river less than two miles away to the southeast. Just as *ca* is “two,” *hun* is “one,” and Humuya may be a contraction of Hun-Lemuya. These are the only two cities in the south end of the valley, other than Lamani. The city of Shilom should be somewhere nearby.

Thus, it appears that the Lamanite holdings were on the east side of the Chinchinguara River while the Nephites held the lands of Shilom and Lehi-Nephi (originally Nephi) on the west side. Nowhere in the Book of Mormon are the city of Shilom and the city of Lemuel mentioned at the same time. At first, the Nephites referred to the land Shilom and the city Shilom but made no mention of the city Lemuel (Mosiah 7:21). However, forty-four years later, after a successful missionary effort by the sons of Mosiah, the *land* of Shilom and the city of Lemuel are listed with no mention of a *city* Shilom (Alma 23:12).

The land of Shemlon and the city of Shimnilom are mentioned, however (Alma 23:12). There is the possibility of inconsistent spelling on the part of various scribes. After all, this was a foreign land visited by few Nephites. But the land of Shemlon is described as being very close, possibly just across the river in the same valley (Mosiah 11:12). That would put Shimnilom or Shemlon at or near the ruins of Tenampua, which are just across the valley identified above, to the east and up the hill a bit. This may have been Shemlon, but a *city* by that name is not mentioned in The Book of Mormon (though virtually all lands were named after cities, regardless of whether the city is mentioned or not).

A National Geographic map² states that Tenampau is the largest of several fortified hill sites overlooking earlier valley ruins. Remembering the chroniclers’ propensity for using *t* to spell the *sh* sound, Tenampau could originally have been Shenampau, which has some resemblance to Shimnilon and Shemlon, especially if the “pau” is just a variation on *pa*, meaning “land of.”

² *Archeological Map of Middle America, Land of The Feathered Serpent*, National Geographic Society, Washington, October 1968 Vol. 134 Number 4.

King Noah built a high tower near the temple in Shilom (Mosiah 11:12) from which he could look over the land of Shilom that was inhabited by the Nephites and also over all the surrounding land including Shemlon, which was inhabited by Lamanites. Noah built several luxurious buildings for his wicked cronies. Another much larger tower was also built on the hill at the north of the land of Shilom (Mosiah 11:13-15). Just north of Humuya, which must be close to Shilom if this analysis is correct, is a town named Cane. The Spanish pronunciation of Cane would be the same as the Hebrew word pronounced *qa-neh* which means “cane, reeds, stalks, or bones.”

This definition may have additional relevance, as we have seen. It may have come from the ancient port city Cana or Qana in the land of Sheba where Lehi and his family set sail. With this connection, it may have been a form of their name for Jerusalem, that is, Tullan, Tula, or Cana, all meaning “by the reeds.”

At the time Limhi and his people escaped, the tower would have been under the control of the Lamanite guards. Gideon’s plan was to go out the back pass of the city toward the guards, who liked to drink excessively, but turn left, missing their camp, and head up and over the mountains (Mosiah 22:6).

Gideon’s plan fits the topography of the proposed setting very well. The back of the city Shilom would have been toward the mountains to the north and west away from the Lamanite holdings. They would have turned to the left, or west, and worked their way up the mountains, gaining elevation and skirting around the land of Shilom. This back pass would not be visible to the Lamanites in the valley. It may be where Route 1 goes up the canyon in the proposed area as it follows the Selguapa River. A pass named El Portillo de Mora shows up on a map of the region. It would have been the long way around Shilom. For, as Mormon stated in Mosiah 22:11, they departed by night into the wilderness with their flocks and their herds, and they went *round about* the land of Shilom in the *wilderness*, and *bent* their course towards the land of Zarahemla.

Assuming the city was in the area we have postulated, the

present-day topography indicates that the easiest route would be to the south and then west, but this would be the main road back toward the land of Lehi, Lamanite territory. The most direct path, given the topography of the proposed area, would be up the Guangololo River to the west, but this might be the obvious route and they might have been visible to the Lamanites for a full day's travel.

Given the topography of the region, heading for the back pass might mean they headed northwest where they could travel farther, faster, and be out of sight while they got a head start. This fits the description in the Book of Mormon, which says they went *round about* Shilom in the *wilderness* (mountains) and then *bent* their course toward Zarahemla. Arriving at the higher country they could then have followed the course Ammon originally took and go back to Zarahemla. The shortest, the most direct, and the easiest routes would have been fatal as they would have brought the people past the area suggested as the location for the Lamanite lands at the time.

Before leaving this valley, there are some other accounts that should be examined because of the geographic information they contain. Note the description of this attack given the proposed setting:

For, in the thirteenth year of my reign in the land of Nephi, away on the south of the land of Shilom, when my people were watering and feeding their flocks, and tilling their lands, a numerous host of Lamanites came upon them and began to slay them, and to take off their flocks, and the corn of their fields (Mosiah 9:14).

This indicates that the people were tilling the land some ways south of the land of Shilom, and there does appear to be good farmland south of the area proposed as the location of Shilom. More importantly, the people were feeding and watering their flocks. This would involve pasturing in the dryer foothills and taking the livestock to water on the river. The Lamanites would

come from the city of Laman (Lamani) just across the river. Thus, those watering their flocks would be the first to be attacked, as suggested in this verse.

In the battle described in the Book of Mormon, 3,043 Lamanites were killed during one day and one night, while only 279 Nephites were killed (Mosiah 9:18). This suggests the Nephites were not packing tents and pursuing a fleeing enemy, they were fighting on home ground in their back pasture. The Lamanites only lived a couple of miles away, across the river. Thus, all the geographical data we have about the site matches the proposed location. This is the first of two times that night fighting is mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Only proximity to the enemy would make this an acceptable, and possibly a necessary, fighting procedure.

About nine years later, the land of Shilom was attacked again, this time from the north (Mosiah 10:8). It should be noted that at this time, Shilom was the center of the Nephite government. The land Lehi-Nephi was north of the land of Shilom. The Lamanite lands were wrapped around the lands of Lehi-Nephi and Shilom, on the south, east, and north. Zeniff had the women and children hide in the wilderness to the west, in the direction of Limhi's escape that would occur two generations later (Mosiah 10:9). It was also in the direction Alma fled after leaving the waters of Mormon.

The Lamanites would have assembled for the attack on the east side of the river and crossed over possibly between the land Lehi-Nephi and the land of Shilom. That would put this attack on the north side of the land of Shilom and on the south side of the land Lehi-Nephi. The king was in Shilom. The Lamanites shaved their heads and wore breechcloths. Could this attire have been necessary because they were crossing rivers to attack the Nephites? There are a lot of rivers in the proposed area.

Then came the reign of wicked King Noah. He had the prophet Abinadi burned at the stake. In Omni 1:30, it notes that Amaleki had a brother who went back to the land of Nephi with

Zeniff.³ Amaleki might have been the brother of Abinadi. Amaleki's father was Abinadom (Omni 1:12). Given the similarity in names (a naming convention that can be found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon), this may also have been the father of Abinadi, who, though burned at the stake, was successful in converting Alma the Older. Abinadom was in the record-keeping lineage, though he wrote only two verses. He gave charge of the records to his son Amaleki who in turn wrote nineteen verses. It would not be surprising to find that the great and worthy prophet Abinadi was part of this family, acquainted with the marvelous teachings contained in the records preserved by the Nephites.⁴

The Waters of Mormon

Alma was conducting group meetings at the Waters of Mormon (Mosiah 18:4). If the mapping done so far is correct, that could have been up the river Guángolo and west between the river and the mountain, or possibly at Playitas. It was near the edge of the land and had a fountain of pure water that was frequented by wild beasts (Mosiah 18:4). The distance up the river would put it about three miles from the city. It appears that the people would come up at night to listen to Alma's teaching and then return home. Alma would hide out in the woods near the water during the day to avoid the king's daily searches. There should be some springs coming out of the mountain up the river on the north side within a few miles. These springs have not yet been identified but it should not be difficult to find them. They

³ The author is indebted to Randy Buttars, a family friend, for the point made in this paragraph.

⁴ Subtle consistencies like this are truly amazing. Mormon did not have to make these details consistent, he just wrote the accounts as they were laid down at the time. Real-time events are consistent by their nature. Thus, they support the understanding we have that Mormon compiled this record, and that Joseph simply translated it. Anyone who thinks that Joseph Smith fabricated this record gives him far too much credit, given these subtleties.

were of sufficient prominence to have been named by the king as noted in Mosiah 18:4.

Three miles is a reasonable distance under the circumstances, depending on whether Alma's students were coming from the city or the farming areas. Five miles one way would probably be excessive for a clandestine nighttime stroll. At some point in time the crowd was as large as 204 people (Mosiah 18:16), so it was not likely to have been in an inconvenient spot. However, they may at some time have started an encampment, which could have increased the distance they traveled from the city. There is, however, no evidence to support an encampment at the waters of Mormon because Alma had to hide each day (Mosiah 18:5).

Now, there was in Mormon a fountain of pure water, and Alma resorted thither, there being near the water a thicket of small trees, where he did hide himself in the daytime from the searches of the king.

Only Alma, not a group of 204 people, could hide in a thicket of small trees. And the name Mormon may be synonymous with "fountain of pure water."

The king noticed the stir among the people and was preparing to send an army to end it when four hundred and fifty souls gathered quickly and fled into the wilderness with Alma. They took their families and tents but no flocks are mentioned (Mosiah 18:34). Much later, when they fled the land of Helam, they did have flocks, however. After that, however, as Alma recounts the history and how they fled from King Noah at the Waters of Mormon, he does mention that he was warned of the Lord and they did indeed gather their flocks (Mosiah 23:1-3). Also the indigenous animals that could be domesticated may still have been running wild as when Lehi's family landed (1 Nephi 18:25).

Before leaving the land of Shilom, there is one more connection to make. In reviewing the Hebrew meanings for Book

of Mormon names provided by Dr. Blair Bybee,⁵ the name Shilom was found. The Hebrew root for this name means “peace,” just as in the Hebrew greeting *shalom*. In pronouncing Shilom, it is common to put the accent on the *i* and the first syllable. Indeed, that pronunciation is shown in the Pronunciation Guide at the back of the Book of Mormon. De-emphasizing the *i* and putting more emphasis on the last syllable, the pronunciation is closer to the Hebrew greeting, *shalom* or “peace.”

Peace in Spanish is *paz*, pronounced almost like the English word, *pause*. The current city of La Paz, Honduras, means “the peace” and is situated exactly where the city of Shilom should be to fit the above Book of Mormon references. It is just three miles south of Lejamani, which we have proposed is the city of Lehi-Nephi. La Paz is still in existence today and the surrounding Department (county or state) also bears this name. The name was obviously changed by the Spaniards, but fortunately, it appears they used the literal translation of the original place name.⁶

Shilom in the Indigenous Literature

The exact spelling of the name Shilom appears in the text of *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*. The original text mentions *chuvi Xilom* which Brinton (1885, 126, 127, 214) and Recinos (1953, 89) leave as *Chuvi Xilom* in their translations. (Remember the Portuguese *x* is pronounced as *sh*; so *Xilom* is exactly *Shilom*.) Brinton in his vocabulary list says that *chuvi* is a preposition meaning “upon, over, or on” (Brinton 1885, 214). The best fit from the Book of Mormon perspective would be “over in Shilom,” i.e., over the mountain in the land of Shilom.

No mention is made in the *Annals* of this town’s actual location or its present-day name. Since the name *Xilom* was still

⁵ Telephone conversation, 2002.

⁶ Similar translations are found elsewhere in the area. The Spaniards, or the Catholic priests who changed the place names, are to be commended for making an effort to understand the original place names and give them a good translation or phonetic representation.

in use when the Spaniards arrived, the trail is not too cold. It should be possible to visit the local libraries in La Paz, Honduras, and verify if the old name was indeed the Xilom mentioned in the *Annals*. It is possible, of course, that the reference in the *Annals* applies to another town named Xilom, but given the fit of this locale and the fact that only one Shilom is mentioned in the Book of Mormon, it would not be surprising to find that the name was originally that of La Paz, Honduras.

Not only was Shilom (Xilom) found in *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, a reread of some of Sahagún's writings (Dibble 1961, 194) turned up the name again. He mentions that the Huasteca, before migrating into Mexico, lived in a place named Tamoanchan for a long time. The seat of power was then shifted to Xomiltepec. This name Xomil has the same three tri-literal Hebrew roots as Xilom. The difference between the words is just the order of the roots, sh-il-om verses sh-om-il. Compare these: big red barn, red barn big, and barn red big. Is there any doubt as to what the three words refer to? There shouldn't be. So it is with the Hebrew tri-literal roots and the Maya roots. The order is not critical to the meaning.

There is some more place location information given here—the name Tamoanchan. If this was near Shilom, it may be a Nahuatl representation of Tenampua.

And there at Xomiltepec the rulers, the old men, the priests conferred. They said: "The master of all hath called us: he hath called each one of those who worship him as a god." They said: "We shall not live here, we shall not dwell here, we shall go in search of land." (Dibble 1961, 194)

Compare this with the account of Mosiah leaving Shilom (Omni 1:12). Mosiah left with those *who would follow him* and they were called Nephites, or, *the people of God* (Mosiah 25:24). The people of Mosiah moved to Zarahemla, which was about a 400-year-old city by then. They probably had to settle on the

perimeter, which would include Bountiful to the northwest and Gideon, Melek, Jershon, Antionum, and Manti to the east and southeast.

Within a very short time many people were scattering to Mexico in the north (Helaman 3:8, 12). Sahagún says the group that left Xomiltepec (Xilom or Shilom) “they went very slowly, very deliberately; they went to settle together there at Teotihuacan” (Dibble 1961, 194). He then goes on to say that their leaders accompanied them, each group had a leader, and each group understood their own language. This sounds a bit like the time that the people of Lemhi, Alma, and the Anti-Nephi-Lehies all converged on the Zarahemla area (Mosiah 22:14, Mosiah 25, and Alma 27:22).

The name Shilom appears in the *Popol Vuh* also, but it is obscured by the translations. In Christenson’s version of *Popol Vuh* it appears in line 997, which is “*Xilöma’ k’üt recha’b’äl.*” It is translated “It shall be seen therefore his feeding.” However, these words, as they are separated above, do not appear in Christenson’s Quiché word list. As with other indigenous writings, the words were probably not separated in the original text.

Lets try a different split of the words. *Xilöm ak üt recha’ b’äl.* The first word is Shilom, the second is “pig” or possibly “ox” and the fourth is “pasture.” These words have the same agrarian connotation as the lands of Shilom, Shimnilom, and Shemlon, more about which will be said below.

Jehovah, God of the Tolteca

The very next paragraph in Sahagún’s work says: “To them went speaking the one they worshiped.” This is then followed by footnote 95, which states:

Following *quimoteutia* (worshiped), the Acad. Hist. MS contains this statement, which has been crossed out:
yehoã tlayacana y tolteca ca yxquich yea in acico y chichimecatlalli ipã aocmo vel molnamiq’ y quezqui xivitl

neneque. Acito in teutlalli yitic y texcalli ytzala onca quitlaque chicotetl oztotl. Auh jnin oztotl in iteucal quichihuahque in itlatla. (Dibble 1961, 194).

Note that the next word after worshiped is *yehoã*, which is clearly recognizable as the Hebrew name Jehovah, or *Yahweh*. The tetragrammation of the name, *YHWH*, is known, but the pronunciation was lost because this biblical name of God was so sacred to the Hebrews that they did not speak it. Instead, they use to this day the name *Adonai*. Alternate reconstructions of the name also include: *Jahaveh*, *Jahvah*, *Jahve*, *Jahveh*, *Yahve*, *Yahveh*, *Yahwe*, and *Yahweh*.

Thus, the next words in the sentence (before they were crossed out) go on to say, “*Yehoã*, He presides, governs, or takes the lead of the Toltec people.” The fact that these words were crossed out in the Academy of History manuscript suggests that the editor recognized the Hebrew form of Jehovah (*Yahweh*) and, with less than honorable motives, chose to delete that information. It is again possible, however, thanks to the Catholic Friar Sahagún, to see that Jehovah was the God of the Toltec people.

Reviewing the geography discussed so far it appears that the proposed locale makes a good fit between the existing sites and the Book of Mormon description of the area. The cities of Lehi-Nephi, Shilom, Laman, Lemuel, and the lands of Shilom and Shemlon all fit Mormon’s record. To this day there are only a few other small villages in the immediate area. Further, the evidence is coherent with several accounts: Mosiah’s; that of Ammon and the people of Limhi; Alma’s, with his followers; and the great missionaries, Lehi and Nephi.

This region was established early in Book of Mormon history and was occupied continuously from a little after 600 BC to the present. It was confined to an area twenty miles in diameter. There are no other major ruins in the area, and it appears that the names have not been altered much since Book of Mormon times.

That may be due to continuous occupation by a single group of people, the children of Lehi.

The City of Shimnilom

Of the cities and lands in the Lehi-Nephi complex, as noted in the Book of Mormon, all have been identified except Shimnilom. There are some ruins near Lejamani, Honduras named Lo de Vaca. The English translation of this Spanish name is "That of Cow." Could Lo de Vaca be Shimnilom? All other cities in the region as described by Mormon have been noted.

In the Quichua dictionary there is a picture of a cow's hoof. The accompanying name is *shillu* and the meaning is "the toenail or hoof of an animal." That word is somewhat closer to Shimnilom and is also part of a cow. The word used in the Spanish definition of *shillu* was *uña*, which means "fingernail or toenail, hoof, claw, talon, fang, or pointed hook," as well as "the stump of a felled tree." In the Quiche' dictionary there is a word with similar meanings, *ixq'uiak*, pronounced as *ish-ki-awk*, which means "nail, claw, talon, or hoof." The *ix* may come from the tapir, which is *t'ix* in Quiché and the *ak* on the end means "pig."

Do these words help demonstrate that Lo de Vaca was Shimnilom? Perhaps not, but Moroni mentions two strange animals that have been unknown since the Book of Mormon was first published in 1830. Fortunately, Joseph Smith had the faith to put in print the names he did not know how to translate even though he was ridiculed for years because it. These names are cureloms and cumoms. What are these beasts? The answer to that question may help us identify this city.

These names are part of the Jaredite record (Ether 9:19) so we should go to a Jaredite source for their analysis. That would take us to Umma in the southern end of the Fertile Crescent known as Mesopotamia, between Ur of the Chaldees and Kish, near Babelonia. Scholars refer to that region, during the time period in question, as Sumer, and their language was Sumerian. Their

writing is known as cuneiform and may be the closest we can get to the Adamic language. Most of their root words are one and two characters.

Water is the sound of the single letter *a*, which remains the root sound for water throughout much of the world. The Sumerian is *a*, Mam is *a'*, Quiché is *ja'*, Chorti, *ha'*, Nahuatl, *atl*, Cherokee, *a-ma*, Quichua, *yacu*, Quechua, *unu*, Aymara, *uma*, Spanish, *agua*, French, *eau*, German, *wasser*, Hittite, *water*, Russian, *vada*, Ainu, *wakka*, Japanese, *ume*, Hebrew, *mayim*, which is similar to Arabic, *mayya*. The latter word looks a great deal like the name Maya in Mesoamerica.

Sumerian is a bit dangerous because with so many small building blocks one can build almost any word desired with complete disregard for its true etymology. We will try to avoid that here by using the following approach: First, identify the word as a probable Jaredite word. Second, keep in mind the Jaredites left the Fertile Crescent before the confounding of the language at the Tower of Babel.⁷ Third, go to the Sumerian dictionary with the roots from the Jaredite words. (The roots are the syllables.) Fourth, determine if the roots to be found are relevant to the Book of Mormon scenario. Fifth, find the closest roots and scrutinize the word that has been assembled for rational correlation with the writings of Mormon and Moroni. Sixth, look for the meanings in the Mesoamerican dictionaries and for indigenous roots that match the Sumerian. (The shocking thing is that once we know the English root from Sumerian, the Mesoamerican root can often be found in the dictionaries, and the correlation to the Sumerian is obvious. The reverse path is more obtuse.) Seventh, iterate on this process. If nonsense is the result, there is no correlation. If however, there is a strong correlation, one can often understand why they wrote what they did.

The best dictionaries to check for correlation with Sumerian

⁷ Sumerian was the language in that region until it became extinct some time after King Sargon of Akkad conquered the area in about 2340 BC (close to the time frame of the Jaredite departure).

are Mam, then Chorti, then Quiché, and finally Cakchiquel. The Mam appear to be a mix of the leftover Jaredites because of their location and their ancient name. The Chortí are a group that probably fled the highlands of Guatemala during the final battle at Cumorah and headed east to settle the Copán valley just over the Honduran border in about 400 AD. Their vocabulary is probably closest to Mormon's. The Cakchiquel may be the Anti-Nephi-Lehies who destroyed the Quiché (a possible Nephite remnant) at K'umarkaj' (Cumorah). See Recinos 1953, 103. More on the derivation of these and other existing tribes will be considered in a later chapter.

Now let us see if we can convert Lo de Vaca into Shimnilom using the above process. Dissecting *curelom* we get *cur* and *elom*, which may require additional surgery. *Cur* may also be spelled *kur*, which means "mountain" in Sumerian. Searching the digital Sumerian dictionary for *elom*, or its parts, or anything that sounds like it, we find the word *alim*, which means "wild ram, bison, aurochs (ox), or powerful." This would suggest the meaning "wild mountain ram, bison or ox" for the Book of Mormon name *curelom*.

Having served in the Andes Mission the author long thought that the llama might be the *curelom*, but it does not fit this description. Omar Galdames, a friend of the author who was born near Copán, Honduras, once mentioned a local animal called the tapir. He said that in that area, it is called "the mountain cow," which sounds very similar to "mountain ox" from the Sumerian.

In the Chorti dictionary of the Copán area, the tapir, or mountain cow is called the *tzimim*. Recalling the propensity of the Nahua and Maya to interchange the *s*, *sh*, *z*, and *tz* sounds as well as *m* and *n* at the end of words, *tzimim* could be shimn. The Book of Mormon word is Shimnilom.

If this is a good derivation, where did the "ilom" on the end come from and what does it mean? The answer may be found in the Akkadian dictionary. The Akkadian language replaced Sumerian and was itself replaced by Aramaic. The Akkadian

Dictionary indicates that *lim* may be the plural form and *lam* the singular form of a word. Joseph Smith used the English convention of adding the terminal *s* to create the plural form, cureloms, but shimnilom and curilom may be the Sumerian or Akkadian plural form of Shimm. The Quiché have a word similar to *tzimim* in Chorti. It is *tza'm*, and it means “nose or point of something.” The tapir is known for its long snout. “Nose” in Chorti is *ní*; so again we see the similarities and differences between the different branches of Mayan.

Going to the Hebrew lexicon, we find that wild ox is *r'em* or *r'eym*, which may have come from the Sumerian word *alim* also meaning “wild ox.”

Is Lo de Vaca (“that of cow”) derived from mountain cow or tapir, as represented by the name Shimnilom? Can any other conclusion be reached when Lehi-Laman (Lejamani) is just across the river, Shilom (La Paz) is down the road two more miles, Second Lemuel (Ca-Lamuya) is five more miles away, Laman (Lamani) is four miles further, and Shemlom (possibly Tenampua) is in the foothills five miles to the east?

It appears that the names Laman and Shimnilom were used again in Belizé. There are ruins there called Lamanai and Tzimin Kax (Mountain Cow). These ruins are close to each other in that location also.

Another Perspective

Interestingly, another line of analysis leads to the same conclusions for the city locations, but it reflects some very different naming motivation. In the Sumerian language the word *silim* or *shilom* (where the *s* with a small “v” symbol above it is pronounced as *sh* like the Portugese *x*) means a “milk-producing cow.” The land of Shilom may have been derived from this word rather than *peace* (*La Paz*). That would suggest this was dairy country, which would fit with the other names. Shilom, Shimnilom, (Lo de Vaca, or “that of cow”), and Shemlon all have to do with an agricultural environment. Even *cham* (from

shem-lon) means “fat” in Quiché, suggesting Shemlon might mean “fat ox.” “Fat” in Hebrew is *ha-shem*, which is even closer. The origin of Shilom may not have involved anything so lofty as the concept of peace, but may just have been derived from the mundane agrarian lifestyle. The Spanish priests may have imposed the name La Paz because it sounded better to the clergy than “milk cow,” or they too may have been thinking of Hebrew and saw the Shilom-Peace connection discussed above.

The Tapir

From the foregoing, it would appear that *curelom* from the Jaredites is the same as *Shimnilom* from the Lamanites, and both appear to refer to the tapir. The tapir looks like it belongs to a different age. It is found in Central and South America and in Southeast Asia. That is considered by some to be a very unusual geomorphology.⁸ The Jaredites may have facilitated the transfer.

There are four identified species. The Baird variety is found in Central America. They weigh between 350 and 800 pounds and live to an age of 25 to 30 years. Their closest relatives are the horse and the rhino. They are finding their way into many zoos and are considered an endangered species at this time. In the zoos they waddle around like fat hogs, but that is reported as being very deceptive. It is said that they are very powerful, yet agile, and run like a horse. They are a water-loving animal and can walk under water like the hippopotamus. They can be domesticated and are quite docile, but they are known to throw tantrums and have injured people.

Moroni recorded that the Jaredites had horses, asses, elephants, cureloms, and cumoms that were all useful; but the last three were more especially useful to man (Ether 9:19). It is likely that these cureloms, if they were tapirs, were used as draft animals. Elephants are very useful for heavy work on rather flat ground; but the average farmer could not use one in steep

⁸*The Tapir Gallery*. [cited 5 May 2002]. Available at tapir@tapirback.com. INTERNET.

cornfields. If it lost its footing it might take out the neighbor's house down the hill. The tapir, however, would be just the right size and strength to pull a plow in the cornfields of an average Central American hillside farm. They could forage on the abundant vegetation common to the region. Also the tapir is known to have provided meat for the Maya.⁹

Thus it appears that the *curelom* of the Jaredites may have been the *shimnilom* of the Nephites and Lamanites, the *tzimim* of the Chorti of Copán, the mountain cow of the Spaniards, and the tapir of the American zoo visitor.

Other Jaredite Livestock

Can we locate the animals known as cumoms? There are only two large, domesticated mammals of the Americas with which Joseph Smith would not have been familiar in 1830—the tapir and the llama. There are four species of llama-like animals. There is the large wild *guanaco* and the small wild *vicuña*. Then there are the domestic *llama*, which is thought to have been derived through selective breeding from the *guanaco*; and the domestic *alpaca* (thought, in turn, to have been derived from the *vicuña*). The word *guanaco* comes from the Quechua *huanacu*. *Llama* is directly from Quechua. *Vicuña* is from the Quechua name *wikuña*. *Alpaca* is from the Aymara name *allpachu*. In Aymara the llama is *qarwa* and *qawra*. In Quichua the name for *guanaco* is *huanacu*, which is also the name for the heavy wool poncho typical of the Andes region.

Looking for roots, *huan* is the preposition “with.” The *acu* root is not obvious, but it is part of the words for “fat, water, and shirt.” Since the objective is to find the Jaredite word *cumom*, the Sumerian dictionary is an appropriate source. The closest root of interest is *gu* which is pronounced like *ku* and means “string, thread; wool yarn; flax; or hemp.” Could it refer to a string of pack animals as llamas tied end-to-end in a pack-string

⁹*Maya Recipes*. [cited 5 May 2002]. Available at atcar@utsa.edu. INTERNET.

string of pack animals as llamas tied end-to-end in a pack-string (which is actually done with string), or could *huanacu* mean “with wool”? The better fit might be with the Quiché word *k’u’* which means “blanket, covering, robe, or poncho.” That would make it the animal “with a blanket or coat,” which is probably the best etymology and fits a llama perfectly.

In Chortí the closest root to *mom* is *mam* and it means “dark spots.” This also describes a llama—wool with dark spots. Also in Nahuatl, the word *mama* means “to carry a load on shoulders.” Thus, the *cumom* may be the animal that carries heavy loads and has a wool coat or blanket.

Whether this is an accurate analysis is not as easy to test as the analyses of geographical regions, which can be checked against the Book of Mormon descriptions. But the llama family *is* known to be extremely useful to man. They have ranged over a much larger region in the past than their present limited area of the Andes. Llama fossils have been found in Florida and California. So *cumom* may be the camel with a blanket, the llama.

Cumoms and The Jaredite Trail

Since satisfactory roots for *cumon* do not appear in the indigenous languages of Central America, lets go back to the source of the Jaredites to find clues. The Jaredites left lower Mesopotamia and traveled northward through Nineveh and the valley of Nimrod. They traveled through a part of the land where man had never been. They built multiple barges on multiple occasions (Ether 2:6, 16).

Looking for the most acceptable route, it appears that they crossed southern Russia and northern China going east. Recently a second Roman Byzantine-era gold coin has been found in a tomb in northwestern China. It was excavated in Xiangride township in Dulan County in Qinghai province. Archaeologists are being asked to consider that the area was an alternate route to the Silk Road, the corridor that linked China with central and

western Asia and the Mediterranean between 100 BC and 800 AD. Silver coins from ancient Persia have been found in the region in recent years.¹⁰

The Jaredites may have continued just north of Mongolia then down the 2700 miles of the Amur River. They named their coastal departure point, where they stayed for four years, Moriancumer. The mouth of the Amur River may possibly have been that location. Notice that the ending of Moriancumer, *umer*, sounds identical to Amur. The town today is called Nikolajevsk-na-Amure. The first name is an adjective form of Nicholas. The word *more* means “sea” in Russian and a similar word *moro* means “bowl” in Mongolian. Thus, it may be that the name Moriancumer tells the brother of Jared’s history, if it can be unraveled correctly. We will discuss this possibility further in a later chapter.

Since the llama is of the camel family, the countries and languages along the Jaredite trail could be examined for the word “camel.” Surprisingly, it shows up in Mongolia and Manchuria. In Manchuria the word for camel is *temen*. This is close enough to suggest that the Jaredite animal *cumom* was possibly a camel. However, if that were the case, Joseph Smith would have been able to translate the word. Therefore, given all of the *cu*, *ku*, and *qu* connections to blanket, cloth, or coat, it appears that the best connection we have suggests that *cumoms* are a reference to the llama family—the “camel with a coat.”

Jaredite Remnants

The fact that names or parts of names from the Jaredite time and culture show up in the land of Shilom and Shimnilom in the early Nephite timeframe is evidence that there was a Jaredite remnant that was alive and well in these areas. Dead languages do not propagate themselves and the 24 gold plates of the

¹⁰ *Coin Found in China Bolsters Theory*. [cited 8 July 2002]. Available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A38809-2002Jil18.html>. INTERNET.

Jaredites had not yet been found or translated at the time these cities were named (Mosiah 8:9). More evidence of this remnant will be noted in later chapters.



CHAPTER 5 THE LAND OF MANTI

The Mulekites Arrive

The Book of Mormon states that the Mulekites fled the area of Jerusalem with the infant son of King Zedekiah at the time of the destruction of that city (Omni 1:15). The Old Testament says Zedekiah and his fleeing army were overtaken in the plains of Jericho. The King was captured and taken to a place called Riblah in the land of Hamath.¹ The sons of King Zedekiah were brought before him and killed. Then the King's eyes were blinded and he was hauled off to Assyria to live the rest of his days in captivity (2 Kings 25:6-7).

Notwithstanding these terrible events, the remainder of King Zedekiah's family may have had sufficient notice, resources, and servants to escape. It is possible they fled the armies of Babylon

¹ Riblah was in the northernmost part of the Old World's Promised Land. Notice the similarity between Riblah (2 Kings 25:6), and Riplah (Alma 43:31) and Ripliancum (Ether 15:8) in the New World. Also Mount Hermon (possibly the mount of the Lords transfiguration) and the three peaks Hermonites (Psalms 42:6) in the Old World's Promised Land were north of the main population centers. Likewise, the wilderness of Hermounts (Alma 2:37) was north of the New World Promised Land. The New World mountain range Sierra de los Cuc-Humatanes may be that wilderness. Note the similarity of the name to Hermonites.

by heading to the coast where they could charter a Phoenician ship. The Phoenicians were circumnavigating Africa by 600 BC, and that may have been their objective. However, as they sailed around the Cape Verde Islands it is possible they swung a little wide or hit some bad weather and got caught in the trade winds and currents, forcing them across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean.²

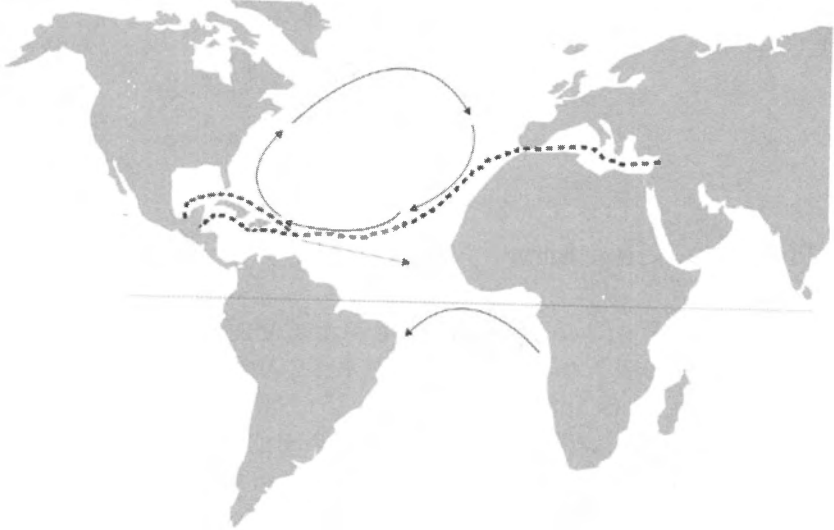


Figure 6. Possible Mulekite Routes Like Heyerdahl's Ra II Expedition

Words on a stone carving found in Brazil mention another group of ships that sailed in a similar direction. They departed Ezion-Geber in the Gulf of Aqaba as did Hiram of Tyre. They circumnavigated Africa and caught the northerly flow of the Benguala Current on the west coast then were carried westward across the South Atlantic on the South Equatorial flow to Brazil.³

² The name Zibakihay is used extensively in the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Recinos 1953, 51, 78-79). Zibakihay and Zedekiah are close in sound. Likewise Nimahay (p, 79) in the same document is similar to Nehemiah.

³ The stone was translated, but has since been lost. For some years, scholars thought the account was a fake because it used a form of Phoenician that was thought to be inconsistent with the age of the writing on the stone. Then a sarcophagus with a known date was found that established this particular form

The content of the inscription is as follows:

Near Parahyba, Brazil, an inscription in Phoenician has been translated, in part, as: "We are sons of Canaan from Sidon, the city of the king. Commerce has cast us on this distant shore, a land of mountains. We set [sacrificed] a youth for the exalted gods and goddesses in the nineteenth year of Hiram, our mighty king. We embarked from Ezion-Geber into the Red Sea and voyaged with ten ships. We were at sea together for two years around the land belonging to Ham [Africa] but were separated by a storm [lit. 'from the hand of Baal'], and we were no longer with our companions. So we have come here, twelve men and three women, on a shore which I, the Admiral, control. But auspiciously may the gods and goddesses favor us!"⁴

Many explorers prior to Columbus tried to cross the north Atlantic but failed because they were fighting the trade winds and currents. Columbus succeeded because he dropped below the equator and caught the natural currents to America. The Phoenicians may have discovered the same route. Christian da C. Karam a student of archaeology from Porto Alegre, Brazil, has written about the wealth of Phoenician evidence found in Brazil. He states that historic documents in the archives of the Louvre Museum, the Royal Museum of London, and also in the Vatican and Lisbon all show that the name of the Amazon River was originally the Solimões or Sulaiman River. This name was given

of Phoenician as consistent with the time in question. It thus provided support for the stone's authenticity. The Parahyba text is a transcription of a purported sixth century B.C. Phoenician inscription supposedly found in Brazil in 1872. The jury is still out on this particular inscription and many reject it since the original is lost.

⁴ [cited 7 July 2002]. Available at <http://paranormal.about.com/library/weekly/aa080700a.htm>. INTERNET.

to it in honor of King Solomon, whose vassals, guided by the Phoenicians, arrived in that region (Karam 1999, 4).

Notice this passage in the Old Testament:

For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. (2 Chronicles 9:21)

The ships apparently belonged to Solomon but the sailors were the servants of Hiram. Hiram is a reference to Hiram of Tyre, and his servants were Phoenician sailors (1 Kings 9:27-28, 10:11; 2 Chronicles 8:18; 9:10,21). The Phoenicians were not settlers, nor did they seek to possess land. They were traders, seeking commerce. Their knowledge of the sea, trade winds, currents, stars, and the world in general provided them with a commercial monopoly. Their trade routes were secret and the sea left no tracks. Thus, their travels could have been anywhere, even to the New World.

Regardless of how the Mulekites got to the New World, the next question is, where did they land? The Book of Mormon says:

And also there were many Lamanites on the east by the seashore, whither the Nephites had driven them. And thus the Nephites were nearly surrounded by the Lamanites; nevertheless the Nephites had taken possession of all the northern parts of the land bordering on the wilderness, at the head of the river Sidon, from the east to the west, round about on the wilderness side; on the north, even until they came to the land which they called Bountiful.

And it bordered upon the land which they called Desolation, it being so far northward that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose bones we have spoken, which was discovered by the people of Zarahemla, *it being the place of their first landing.*

And they came from there up into the south wilderness. Thus the land on the northward was called Desolation, and the land on the southward was called Bountiful, it being the wilderness which is filled with all manner of wild animals of every kind, a part of which had come from the land northward for food (Alma 22:29–31, emphasis added).

These passages say they landed first in the north in a land they called Desolation. Though we often think of Central America as having an east coast on the Gulf of Mexico, due to the east-west orientation of the coastline in that region of the Western Hemisphere, the Gulf of Mexico coast is actually the northern coast at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. There they found the bones of a people who had been destroyed. They traveled “up” (i.e., uphill, that being the topography) from the coast through Desolation to a land to the south, which they called Bountiful.

We are not told of their travels, but we know Zarahemla was the leader at the time Mosiah’s people arrived (Omni 1:14,18). If they used the same naming convention used by the Nephites (naming lands after the leader who discovered them), Zarahemla would have been the discoverer of the land. Of course, he may have been named after his father or his father’s father, etc., or maybe they had settled several other places in their wanderings during the 400 years from the time they left Jerusalem until they were discovered by the Nephites.⁵

Phoenician ships used sails and oars. Their war ships had multiple levels or decks for oarsmen. Any ships chartered by King Zedekiah’s family would probably have had both and may have been able to navigate up the Usumacinta River. The Usumacinta forms the western border of Guatemala for a ways, then goes north through Mexico, emptying into the Gulf of Mexico west of the Yucatan Peninsula. It is wide and meanders to

⁵ If the man who was alive when Mosiah found them was the one for whom the land of Zarahemla was named, it is likely his ancestors had extensive holdings elsewhere.

within about eighty miles of the region that will later be identified as Cumorah. This would be consistent with an Atlantic crossing for the Mulekites.⁶

It is possible that the arrival of the Mulekites gave the Usumacinta River its name. Looking up the pieces of this name in a Nahuatl dictionary, *ma* means to “hunt, capture, or fish,” and *cintli* means “dried ears of corn.” Hence, this river’s name suggests that it was good for hunting and fishing as well as for raising corn. That sounds like a bountiful land. The passage quoted above says they called the land Bountiful, since it was a wilderness filled with all manner of wild animals. The Aymara dictionary contains the word *sinti* which means “much,” “excessive,” or “too much.”

Many authors have postulated that the Usumacinta River or the adjacent Grijalva River was the river Sidon.⁷ As we shall see, that does not appear to be the case. After finding Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú), the Motagua River became a likely candidate for the river Sidon. There is a city in that region named Tz’alamja (which sounds much like Zarahemla) and the topography looks compatible. But that premise does not hold up either. The related city names are not found in the area.

The Search for Manti Yields the Land of Jerushon

The borders of Manti are said to have been by the headwaters of the Sidon River (Alma 22:27). That makes the search for Manti a search for the Sidon River. Sorenson picked up on the fact that the Sidon ran *by* the land Zarahemla (Alma 2:15), not

⁶ It is doubtful that the Phoenicians sailed the Pacific Ocean. They were based in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic was their playground. Many Phoenician remnants are found in Brazil. However, even though they were stationed on the Mediterranean coast of Phoenicia, one biblical reference places them in the Gulf of Aqaba at the port Ezion-geber (2 Chronicles 8:17-18). This would indicate they had circumnavigated Africa in Solomon’s day, which might have given them access to the Pacific.

⁷ In that connection, it is interesting to note that the landmass around the ancient Phoenician city of Sidon (now Saida, Lebanon) was called Usu.

through it (Sorenson 2000, 35). That helps, but there are multiple branches and tributaries on all the rivers in the area and that is certain to cause some confusion.

Further confusion is possible because at times it sounds as if there are two Mantis. One Manti is mentioned in the same breath with the headwaters of the Sidon (Alma 16-43). The other is the land of Manti that appears to be farther southeast, near the south wilderness and the Lamanite lands. That Manti is not mentioned as being near the Sidon River though it may be (Alma 56-59). In addition to the city and land of Manti, there is apparently a separate hill Manti (Alma 1:15).

The references to Manti are so complicated and ambiguous it was thought that the location could not be made with any degree of certainty until Zarahemla and the Sidon were nailed down. Hence, this chapter and the following one, on the location of Zarahemla, are highly interdependent. The struggle with Manti and the Sidon River was the most difficult part of this effort.

Going over Helaman's battles, in which he commanded the 2,000 stripling warriors, helps in sorting out the geography.

And now these are the cities of which the Lamanites have obtained possession by the shedding of the blood of so many of our valiant men:

The land of Manti, or the city of Manti, and the city of Zeezrom, and the city of Cumeni, and the city of Antiparah.

And these are the cities which they possessed when I arrived at the city of Judea; and I found Antipus and his men toiling with their might to fortify the city (Alma 56:13-15).

Helaman and his 2,000 warriors were in Judea. Their strategy was to march from Judea, past Antiparah, as if to go to a city beyond, on the seashore, in an attempt to draw the Lamanite army out of their fortifications (Alma 56:30-31).

A nearby set of ruins named Atiquipaque stands out because

it sounds so much like Antiparah. It is located about 25 miles directly southeast of Escuintla. In the same region there is a town Cuilapa and ruins called Tacuilula. These both have the *cuila* root in them and may have been the city Cumeni. If Atiquipaque was the ancient Antiparah, we can work backward to find Judea.

Lining up the cities on the National Geographic maps of the area and looking for the next symbol for ruins, a recognized city shows up, but there is no ruins symbol near it. That city is Jutiapa. It is in a drier area of the country with not as much foliage. That would make visibility from hill to hill easier than in a tropical rain forest.⁸ The syllable, *pa* on the end of this name, is a place identifier (like “land” or “by the”). Thus, the name of the city itself is Jutia, which even in English is almost identical to Judea. In Spanish it is even closer. In fact, it is a near perfect pronunciation match in Spanish, Hebrew, and Arabic.

The verses above mention Manti as being in the same general area as these cities. But none of them are near the headwaters of any candidate for the Sidon River. There is a city named Mita in the area toward El Salvador, the Land of Lehi. It is near the area we will tentatively identify as the land of Ishmael (Ixtepeque, as will be shown in a later chapter). It is a possible Middoni (Alma 20:2). In that immediate area is a third city, Metapan, that has a phonology very close to Midian (Alma 24:5).

The proximity of the three on the map and the proximity of the three in the Book of Mormon coupled with the similarities in the names forms the basis for a tentative identification of these three cities. Today, they surround the lake Güija, a candidate for the waters of Sebus (Alma 17:26). These were the cities/lands from which the Lamanite converts came who called themselves Ammonites. They were the Anti-Nephi-Lehis, the parents of Helaman’s 2,000 stripling warriors and were given the land of Jershon as an inheritance.

Rereading the account of the experiences Ammon had with King Lamoni gives some insight into the city of Middoni.

⁸ The author is indebted to Fred Perkins for some of the conclusions drawn about this city. He served as a missionary in Jutiapa, Guatemala.

Now Lamoni said unto Ammon: I know, in the strength of the Lord thou canst do all things. But behold, I will go with thee to the land of Middoni; for the king of the land of Middoni, whose name is Antiomno, is a friend unto me; therefore I go to the land of Middoni, that I may flatter the king of the land, and he will cast thy brethren out of prison. Now Lamoni said unto him: Who told thee that thy brethren were in prison? (Alma 20:4).

If the assumptions above are correct, given the topography and what can be determined about the geography, Mita, or Asunción Mita (the complete Catholic name today) appears to be the best location for Middoni. Asunción Mita is just 12 miles from Jutiapa (Judea), which was a Nephite outpost that helped protect the Anti-Nephi-Lehies in the land of Jershon (Alma 56:9-57, 57:11).

It may be that not all of the Ammonite sympathizers left the area of Middoni. In all of their migrations, it appears that some always stayed behind. Nephi left the land of Lehi, but only with those who would follow him. Likewise, Mosiah left the land of Nephi with those who would follow him. It is also possible that this area was included in the territory swept by Moroni and described as follows:

And it came to pass that when Moroni had driven all the Lamanites out of the east wilderness, which was north of the lands of their own possessions, he caused that the inhabitants who were in the land of Zarahemla and in the land round about should go forth into the east wilderness, even to the borders by the seashore, and possess the land (Alma 50:9).

Before leaving this area, consider what we have done. We have traced a direct path from the old Lamanite lands of Midian (Metapan), Ishmael (Ixtepeque), Middian (Mita), and the waters

of Sebus (Güija) down to the Nephite fortresses of Judea (Jutiapa), Cumeni (Cuilapa or Tacuilula), Antiparah (Atiquipaque), and on to an unnamed city by the seashore.

Let's see if we can find the name of the unnamed city by the seashore. On the maps of the area there is a significant cluster of ruins a bit to the east at the mouth of the Río María Linda. This little five-city cluster of ruins includes Iztapa, Mi Cielo, Manacal, Cerrito, and Atitlán. What does Atitlán mean? It means "by the water" or "by the seashore" in Nahuatl. So it would appear that Mormon did not leave the city by the seashore unnamed after all. That possibly *was* its name, By the Seashore (Alma 56:31).

It is not just that eight Book of Mormon place names have been found on a map, the power of the argument for the proposed geography is that they are all so close together, they are all in the correct order, and to this day there are no other known cities of consequence between them.

The Land of Jershon

Studying again the tentative choice for the land of Jershon, the land given to the Lamanite converts, we note that there are several present-day place names with the root "amates" in their names. Could this be a remnant of the name Ammon?

The land of Jershon had to be close to Ammonihah because of the account in Alma 24 and 25 when the Lamanites killed a thousand of their own unarmed blood brothers, the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, then decided instead to go kill some Nephites. The Nephites they went to kill were doubtless nearby and are identified as living in Ammonihah.

Near Ammonihah is the city of Noah (Alma 16:3). A candidate for that city is found just five to eight miles away from Kaminaljuyú (Ammonihah). It is Chinautla or Chi-Naua-tla, a very old and productive archaeological site. In the Mesoamerican languages, many times the trailing *a* is dropped or displaced when adding a suffix or an infix. *Chi* normally means "hill," as we will see in subsequent chapters, and *tla* is a place suffix. Thus,

27:22). This was the Ishmael-Midian-Middoni complex that surrounds the waters of Sebus (Güija).

When Ammon led the Anti-Nephi-Lehies toward Zarahemla, they camped in that wilderness buffer to the east of Zarahemla until they determined the will of the people. They were given the land of Jershon as their inheritance. The land of Jershon was on the east of the land Zarahemla and was the part of the Nephite lands closest to the Lamanites (Alma 31:3). It might be said that the Anti-Nephi-Lehies became a buffer that protected the eastern front. It does not appear that they were sequestered deep in Nephite lands as Sorenson has suggested. Rather, they appear to have been on the edge close to Ammonihah and vulnerable to attack by the Lamanites from the east and southeast. That would be why the fortress cities that surrounded them were necessary.

The Nephites established fortress cities at the eastern edge of the land of Jershon to protect the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, and also themselves, from the Lamanites, who apparently lived in El Salvador, further south and east. The fortress cities had to have been built in regions with an agricultural base sufficient to support them. Thus, on topographical maps, every region that is flat enough for agriculture is important to identify. These fortress cities had to be defensible structures to which the local people could flee. The ruins of Atiquipaque (Antiparah) and the functioning towns of Chiquimulilla (Cumeni?) and Jutiapa (Judea) are in just such agricultural areas between the volcanoes and mountains that hedge up the border between El Salvador and Guatemala. It appears that the fortress city Manti is one of those fortresses, built to defend the greater Jershon area.

The following verse lists four cities, apparently in geographical order: "The land of Manti, or the city of Manti, and the city of Zeezrom, and the city of Cumeni, and the city of Antiparah" (Alma 56:14). If these cities are in order geographically, then Zeezrom would be between Cumeni and Manti. Judea would be beyond, or possibly in a different direction from these other cities. This greatly limits the valleys that are possible candidates for Zeezrom, and Manti would have to be in

the southeast wilderness by Zeezrom, Cumeni, Antiparah, and Judea.

As a candidate for Zeezrom there is Nueva Santa Rosa. The reason for this selection is partly its location in a flat region critical for defense in that area, and partly because next to Nueva Santa Rosa is a town called Santa Rosa de Lima. Years ago the author's father, whose name is Alma, wondered if Lima was a remnant of the name Alma from the Book of Mormon. In the Nahuatl, Quiché, and Spanish dictionaries, *lima* means lime. In the Quiché dictionary *alima*, which sounds very much like Alma, means "sweet lime." Hence, Santa Rosa de Lima may be a city of Alma. Why would there not be one named for him? He was there on a mission with Zeezrom and a city was named for Zeezrom. More importantly, he was the go-between for the peoples of Ammon and Zarahemla (Alma 27:20).

In addition to the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, who inhabited these lands, all the captured soldiers who desired to live in peace were sent to the land of Jershon. Initially, the Nephites placed armies around this land to protect it, but after the first Lamanite attack on the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, no attacks are mentioned. The Lamanites, led by the dissenting Nephite rebels were going after the Nephites, not their Lamanite converts. Thus the land of Jershon grew and became a buffer for the Nephites. The buffer lasted until both groups became wicked in the days when Mormon was young and ethnic strife broke out once again near Zarahemla by the Sidon River, as we shall see in a later chapter.

The Lamanites did not want to kill their own; it was the Nephites that were the object of their hatred. It would be very difficult for Nephite dissenters to stir up the Lamanites and cause them to go to war to kill their Lamanite brethren. Yet the Anti-Nephi-Lehies would defend the Nephites. Hence, this land of Jershon probably was allowed to become large and possibly included everything in the piedmont from Escuintla, Guatemala, to El Salvador (the land of Lehi). The lower, coastal land to the south was Antionum, the land of the Zoramites, as we shall see in a later chapter.

It was smart of the Nephites to place the Anti-Nephi-Lehies between them and the Lamanites. And today, this whole region is full of rivers, lakes, and towns that have *amates* in their names. This is probably a remnant of the name for the people of Ammon. Here is why. Sahagún's writings mention this name root many times. The translators say that it means "gluers of feathers." Everywhere it shows up in the old writings they insert "gluers of feathers." However, when the name shows up in a city or land name, they left it in. (They didn't figure that lands could glue feathers.) For example, the name "Amantlán" is left as is, without translation. This name used by Sahagún is very similar to the present day place name, Amatlán. It would be most significant if it could be determined that this was the same place.

If the Anti-Nephi-Lehies lived in this area, what would they be gluing feathers to? They would not go into battle to defend themselves, but they supported the Nephite soldiers. The preparation of arms, such as cutting and fletching arrows, would be very helpful. That may be the source of their name.⁹

Recall the hill Onidah, "the place of arms" (Alma 47:5). This hill is mentioned twice, first in Nephite territory and then in Lamanite territory (Alma 32:4; 47:5). It was located in the region between Jershon and Antionum (Alma 31:3; 35:2-3). When the Lamanites fled to the place of arms, they may have fled from their own lands and headed to their blood brothers, the people of Ammon, to obtain arms. This is speculative, but it would eliminate the need for two different hills named Onidah and it would explain the Nephite and the Lamanite usage of the site in the Book of Mormon.

Finding Manti

Nephite lands were usually named for the man who first discovered or inhabited them. The only man named Manti mentioned in the Book of Mormon was a spy who chased Amlici

⁹ The author is indebted to his eldest son, Robert, for this point.

and his troops up through the valley of Gideon then east (southward in their reference frame, as we shall see) en route to the land of Nephi where Amlici met a large Lamanite army (Alma 2:22).

Review the following passage:

And it came to pass that Alma inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And Alma returned and said unto them: Behold, the Lamanites will cross the river Sidon in the south wilderness, away up beyond the borders of the land of Manti. And behold there shall ye meet them, on the east of the river Sidon, and there the Lord will deliver unto thee thy brethren who have been taken captive by the Lamanites (Alma 16:6).

Notice that Mormon said, “away up beyond the borders of the land Manti.” He also put Manti in proximity to the headwaters of the Sidon and on its east side.

The following Manti reference is possibly the most important in identifying Manti:

And now it came to pass that as Alma was journeying from the land of Gideon southward, away to the land of Manti, behold, to his astonishment, he met with the sons of Mosiah journeying toward the land of Zarahemla (Alma 17:1).

Alma was going southward from Gideon to Manti, actually “from the land of Gideon southward, away to the land of Manti.” The “southward, away” suggests it is a direction given from the perspective of Mormon’s desk, and Mormon’s descriptions are very exact, as we shall see. Note that southward in Hebrew also means the direction to “the right hand.” In Quiché, the ritual name for south (*cajxucut caj*) means “right.” As we shall see in subsequent chapters this is a common frame of reference in the Book of Mormon, and though southward was somewhat to the

south, it was primarily eastward in this area of Central America.

Thus, Manti would be east and south from Gideon. And we need a Manti between Gideon and the Lamanite lands for things to fit. In the next chapter we will identify the location of Gideon, and it is best for continuity to leave that discussion there. But for the sake of locating Manti, we need that location now. So, suffice it to say that it appears Gideon is in a valley now occupied by Antigua Guatemala (originally Pan Choy). That would place Manti at Amatitlán. Note that Alma met the sons of Mosiah headed to Zarahemla near Manti. Amatitlán is at the crossroads of the most relevant highway from what we will see is likely the land of Ishmael.

In Alma 43:24-25 when the Lamanites attacked the weaker Manti, Moroni responded by leaving part of his army in Jershon and taking the rest with him “over into the land of Manti.” Amatitlán fits that description also.

Manti is tucked in between Gideon, Melek, Jershon, and Ammonihah. That description matches the valley around the Lake Amatitlán. The lake is large and it is shaped like a figure eight. It is a double lobed lake with a very narrow connection in the middle. Manti is found in the *mati* part of that name. The *tlán* is Nahuatl and could have been added by Alvarado and his Mexicans. The leading *a* has to do with water (*a* in Sumerian and *a'* in Quiché). Thus, *a...tlan* would mean “by the water” in Nahuatl, so that Amatitlán would be “Manti by the water.”

The Lago Amatitlán forms the headwaters of the Rio Michatoya, which flows into the Rio María Linda then into the Pacific Ocean. We will see next that this is almost certainly the Sidon River. Hence, this town is not just Manti, its Nahuatl name, Amatitlán, suggests the meaning “Manti by the headwaters of the Sidon River,” just as Mormon expressed it.

Finding the Sidon River

If we lay a straight edge along a map of the ninety-mile stretch along the south coast of Guatemala between the land of

Lehi (El Salvador) and the current best estimate for the land Desolation, it will cross rivers and streams sixty-five times. All of these rivers have many tributaries. So why is only one river mentioned by name in the Book of Mormon? Rivers are mentioned forty-one times; there are two references to unnamed rivers. All the other references are to the Sidon! Is it possible that Sidon is a generic name?

The answer to that question may not be entirely clear yet. One candidate for the Sidon River is the Coyolate. The main and longest branch of this river passes by Iximché. That particular branch is named Río La Vega. Further up stream, the name of this branch of the river changes to Río Xayá. Remembering that Sidon is Saida in Hebrew and Arabic, and remembering that the Portuguese *x* is pronounced *sh*, the name of this river is the Shaya, very close to the Saida (Sidon).

The first mention of the Sidon is in connection with the hills Amnihu and Riplah. These hills will be examined in the next chapter. The Sidon is also mentioned in connection with the south wilderness. Amnihu is east of the Sidon; Melek is said to be on the west of the Sidon, and Riplah is also on the east of the Sidon (Alma 2:15; 43:31, 35). These references can all be explained if the hill Riplah is the volcano Pacaya and the many tributaries of the Rio María Linda represent the manifold Sidon River.

This would require the conclusion that the Guacalate River originally flowed into the Rio María Linda rather than the Achiguate, as it does today. Studying the topographical maps, it looks like this would be more natural, and it may indeed have done so in the past (possibly before the destruction and changes that occurred to the land at the Savior's crucifixion).

There is good reason for this conclusion. The battles in Alma 43 fit very well with Pacaya being Riplah and Zerahemnah's army arriving from the east, passing to the north between the volcano and the Lake Amatitlán, and engaging the three Nephite armies at the Michatoya branch of the river. This battle will be examined in greater detail in a later chapter.

The meaning of the name Michatoya seems a clincher. It was

checked in a Nahuatl Florentine word list. The word for “fish” is *michi* and the word for “river” is *atoya*. So Michatoya is “Fish River.” That is a pretty generic name for a river and may be the source of some of the confusion noted above. Looking up *saida* in the Hebrew lexicon it mentions the biblical name of Bethsaida and explains that *Beth* means “house” and *saida* means “fish,” giving Bethsaida the meaning, “house of fish.” Since *saida* is Sidon in Arabic, the Sidon River is also the “Fish River,” exactly as it is in Nahuatl today, the Michatoya.

The Hill Manti

The first reference in the Book of Mormon to the name Manti is to the hill Manti.

And it came to pass that they took him; and his name was Nehor; and they carried him upon the top of the hill Manti, and there he was caused, or rather did acknowledge, between the heavens and the earth, that what he had taught to the people was contrary to the word of God; and there he suffered an ignominious death. (Alma 1:15)

Is this hill Manti the same as the Manti at the headwaters of the Sidon? Nothing in the vicinity appears to be a candidate for this hill. However, from the sugar factory of El Baúl (close to the location of Zarahemla, as will be shown in the next chapter), a high, rather flat-topped stone formation can be seen to the east. It appears to be named El Peñón, which in Spanish means “a large rock or a rocky mountain.” Such a prominent landmark would be an easy point of gathering. There is no name connection between El Peñón and the hill Manti, on which Nehor suffered his ignominious death, but this prominence is directly in line between Zarahemla and Amatitlán.

Note, however, that the execution occurred on top of the hill Manti, and although the volcanoes are very high in this area, a

volcano of recent vintage could have provided the ignominious death mentioned in this passage.

The Nehors were from the Ammonihah area (Alma 15:15) and were probably descendants of the Jaredites who were known to be a large people (Mosiah 8:10; Ether 7:4, 9). Nehor was reported to be large and noted for being physically very strong (Alma 1:2). The profane and apostate doctrines often emanated from Ammonihah and it is assumed that such was the case with Nehor. He probably entered the land of Gideon to peddle his craft where he encountered Gideon, who was about seventy-five to eighty-five years of age at the time. Gideon withstood him so Nehor pressed his argument using a sword.

After killing Gideon, the members of the Church took Nehor to Alma, the chief judge, who was probably in Zarahemla. Nehor was condemned to death and was carried to the top of hill Manti. This would likely have been near Zarahemla, somewhere between Zarahemla and Ammonihah.

This is the most that has been determined regarding the hill Manti. It's location remains to be determined.



CHAPTER 6

THE LAND OF ZARAHEMLA

The Search

The effort to find the land of Manti at the headwaters of the river Sidon, discussed in the last chapter, led to findings elsewhere and eventually to the conclusion that the land of Zarahemla was on the southwest side of Guatemala's Continental Divide, not on the northeast side. With this paradigm shift, Mormon's world started to fall together into a tight and much smaller package than had been expected.

The city of Tz'alamja is possibly a name remnant of Zarahemla, but a study of the surrounding towns makes it obvious that it was not the original Book of Mormon city by that name. This is not a unique situation. As people move around, they often reuse names. Maps of the region show many duplicate names.

But to switch the search for Zarahemla from the Caribbean drainage over the Cordillera (mountain range) to the southwest side, the Pacific drainage of Guatemala, was a serious paradigm shift. It reduces the Nephite holdings to a section of land a mere 150-miles long by sixty-miles wide.

That may be hard to accept initially, especially for someone in the twenty-first century used to traveling much greater distances. But it also shifts the research to the more heavily populated

regions in the area. Up till then, the greatest success in finding cities had been in the less populated areas where civilization had not obliterated the tracks. But it turns out that the determination that Zarahemla must be on the opposite side of the Cordillera is a major step that helps everything else fall into place.

Referring to the Pacific coast of Guatemala as its “west coast” is only true from the perspective of those who live in the US. It is really to the south of the country since Central America bends dramatically to the east at that point. In Guatemala it is referred to as the Costa Sur, or South Coast. To Book of Mormon people living in that area, most of the south coastal region would be “the land southward” (Alma 22:32, Helaman 3:8). The mountains and the Pacific coast near the Mexican border would have been “the land northward.” The land of Desolation would be to the northwest.

Yet, as we study the directions given in the Book of Mormon, it becomes apparent that their orientation is heavily influenced by the Old World of the Hebrews. The reference frame was based on one standing on the Mediterranean shore looking east. East was forward toward the mainland. West was toward the sunset, the rear. Right was to the south, and left was to the north. The same right for south and left for north are found in the Quiché language (Christenson, 2001). In Mormon’s reference frame we often find that “northward” is to the left and is closer to a true northwest, and “southward” is to the right hand and closer to a true southeast.

Heading south-southeast from Desolation, the next inhabited area would be Bountiful, then Zarahemla, then Lehi, and Lehi-Nephi just over the mountains from El Salvador. Ammoniah, the land of Lehi, and the land of Lehi-Nephi seemed to have been identified. Would the proposed Zarahemla fit in between? The Lord brought Lehi into the land southward and Mulek into the land northward. What is needed is an idea of what area the land of Mulek encompassed.

The first step in making the identifications explained in this chapter was to select a candidate city for the land of Zarahemla

on the southwest slope of Guatemala. One city stands out, Cotzumalguapa, the complete Catholic name being Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa. This city is an old one of great archaeological significance in the Late Pre-Classic period. Many ruins and artifacts have been found there.

Given the reduced size of the Book of Mormon world under the new paradigm, the cities mentioned in the Book of Mormon would need to be much closer together. An area of ruins and a city named Nahuala¹ is found in the mountains above Cotzumalguapa. As we shall see, it is possible that the word “Nahuatl” came originally from the word “Nephite,” so this name has considerable significance. Actually, the name Nahua is closer to Noah, which is significant for identifying the Nahuas as the remnants of the Nephites, as will be seen in a later chapter.

The extensive use of the name Naua or Nahua in this area adds to the conviction that the name is based on the name Nephi. If that is the case, Nahuala¹ looks like a possible Nephiah since it has the *hah* sound on the end. (That’s what the *a*’ sounds like.¹) This ending does not come from Spanish. It comes from the indigenous languages in the area.

This assumption establishes the fortress cities of Nephiah and Lehi (Xelahuh) on the northwest extremes of what would thus have been the Nephite lands. Indeed, the proposed Nephiah is about fourteen miles from the fortress city of Lehi (Xe’Lajuj, Xelahuh, or Quetzaltenango). Of course, this Lehi is different from the land of Lehi (Lenca, or El Salvador) where Lehi and his family first landed, as well as the land Lehi-Nephi (Shilom, Xilom, or La Paz) to which Nephi and his followers fled. This was the city of Lehi fortified in Captain Moroni’s day. This assumption pinpoints two citadels—Lehi and Nephiah, just fourteen miles apart. Further verification of these sites will come with linkages to other sites and the geography of the battle sequences.

¹ In Guatemala, the local pronunciation emphasizes the *hah* sound on the end much more strongly than is the case in English.

“red flower.”² That would certainly be an appropriate name in light of the fact that the entire country is full of red flowers of one type or another, including, among others, the amaranth. It is also noted that *zara* is an Indian corn in the Central American region.

As to the current name, Cotzumalguapa, the *guapa* on the end is a Spanish word meaning “beautiful,” although on some maps it is spelled with an *h* as *huapa*. Looking up the letters *cotz* in Christenson’s Quiché dictionary, there are sixteen words all having to do with flowers.³ As noted above, the Arabic word for red is *hamra* and that may be the root of *humal* in Cotzumal (assuming the Spanish dropped the silent *h*).

The *r* is missing from the Nahuatl language, so finding Zarahemla, with an “r” in the root word will not work. But it may have been a fruitless search anyway, since the Mexican warriors under the command of Pedro Alvarado renamed many of the Guatemalan cities. No “red” connection was found in the Quiché dictionary either. But it is nevertheless a fact that, in Arabic, Zarahemla would be “flower red” or “red flower,” and Cotzumalguapa appears to mean “beautiful red flower.”

There is another small town northwest of Cotzumalguapa that was previously named *Cotz’i’j*, which means “flower.” Also, in Quiché, the language itself is called *catzijobal*, which has some similarity to Cotzumala. Thus, the original name for the Quiché language and the original name of Cotzumalguapa share the same root, as though the *language* was called Zarahemla as well as the land.

Looking at the name and the color, it appears that the language (*catzijobal*), the flower (*cotz’i’jal* or *cotz’i’j*), the city (*Cotzumal*), the country (Guatemala), the bird (*quetzal*), and the god (*quetzalcoatl*) all come from the same root words. There is a lot of substance and commonality in these words. The quetzal is a beautiful green bird with a bright red breast. The Quiché refer to

² The author is indebted to his Jordanian friend, Rashid Ahmad, for this translation.

³ Three additional words using the *cotz* root have to do with resting, reclining, or placing something on top of something.

the quetzal bird as the *k'uk'*. The bird was probably given the name "*quetzal*" by the Nahuatl Mexicans who may have thought they looked like flowers, the *cotz'i'jal* or *quetzal*.

While this may identify the land of Zarahemla, the next three sections explain some points that were pivotal in the investigation and helped provide further evidence that the lands of Zarahemla, Bountiful, and Desolation had been correctly identified.

Before proceeding however let's see what the root word *anti* means, as it is used extensively in the following material.

Anti: One Who Is Opposed?

Some may have thought that the people of Ammon were not getting with the program or something. After all, the "Anti" part of the name "Anti-Nephi-Lehi" does not provide warm feelings in English. But it is not so in other languages. Comparing three word lists, the words *andes*, *anti*, and *antis* appeared as equivalents in the languages of Castellano, Quechua, and Aymará respectively. The word *anti* was also looked up in a Quichua dictionary received from David A. Minchala (an Ecuadorian who works at the Picatinny Arsenal and a friend of the author). It said, "*Lo mismo que anta,*" which means "the same as *anta*." *Anta* is defined as "*cobre*." The Spanish word *cobre* means "copper" in English. The Andes Mountains are thus the "copper mountains."

So what would it mean to be an Anti-Nephi-Lehi? These were not contrary converts. Rather, it suggests the meaning that they were copper colored Nephites descended from father Lehi. It appears these people chose a politically correct name for themselves.

The Book of Mormon is full of *anti* place names. What do Manti, Ani-Anti, Antiomno, Antion, Antionah, Antionum, Antiparah, Antipas, and Antum have in common? The answer, doubtless, is *copper*. Copper was very important to the people and the name was used liberally. It also appears that at times the root *anti* means the color red, as metallic copper is red.

Locating Reference Points

Going through Alma 16 there are many important locations that will help with this geographic analysis. At one point, the Lamanites attacked Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú) and next attacked Noah (Alma 16:3). This suggests, as we have seen in the last chapter, that the city Chinautla, eight miles away to the northeast, was the ancient city of Noah. To review that analysis, we look at the word as Chi-naua-tla. *Chi* is “hill” in Quiché and *tla* is a Nahuatl place ending (meaning “by the” or “land”). Noah is apparent in the letters *naua* in between. These letters are pronounced exactly the same as Nahua, with the silent Spanish *h*, quite similar to Noah. In their contractions, these people routinely dropped repeated letters (like a possible terminal *a* on *naua*) or sounds that would make the word more of a tongue twister than was necessary.⁴

The Lamanites took captives and the Nephite captain, Zoram, inquired of the High Priest Alma where they should go to retrieve the captives (Alma 16:5). The answer from the Lord was that they should look “away up beyond the borders of Manti into the south wilderness, which was on the east side of the Sidon River” (Alma 16:6). When he said “away up beyond,” it appears he was talking about a spot some thirty-five miles from Zarahemla (Cotzumalguapa), up in the highlands above that city and very close to Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú). That is where the city of Chinautla (Noah) is located.

Looking again at Alma 17:1 (“And now it came to pass that as Alma was journeying from the land of Gideon southward, away to the land of Manti, behold, to his astonishment, he met with the sons of Mosiah journeying toward the land Zarahemla”) We see that Gideon was just northward of Manti, closer to the scribe’s desk, as it were. That suggests that this joyful reunion took place right where the present-day roads are still located,

⁴ This kind of contraction is common in Sumerian also, and may have come from the Jaredites, whose language was undoubtedly close to Sumerian.

thirty-five miles from Zarahemla and seventy miles from Middoni (Mita) from which they were headed.

With this identification, another verse starts to fit:

And it came to pass that the king sent a proclamation throughout all the land, amongst all his people who were in all his land, who were in all the regions round about, which was bordering even to the sea, on the east and on the west, and which was divided from the land of Zarahemla by a narrow strip of wilderness, which ran from the sea east even to the sea west, and round about on the borders of the seashore, and the borders of the wilderness which was on the north by the land of Zarahemla, through the borders of Manti, by the head of the river Sidon, running from the east toward the west—and thus were the Lamanites and the Nephites divided (Alma 22:27).

To one from the US it appears that “to the sea, on the east and on the west” must refer to the Pacific Ocean on the west and the Caribbean Sea on the east. They are actually to the south and north respectively, because the Pacific Coastline runs in a west by northwest direction and the Caribbean Sea is 85 miles further north at the closest point. But in the proposed geography, the Lamanite territory has another place, further southeast, with a sea on the east and a sea on the west. The same applies to the narrow strip of wilderness between the land Zarahemla and the land of the Lamanites. The mountain range or Cordillera runs parallel to the Pacific Coast. This would likely be the wilderness that was “north by the land of Zarahemla.”

That conclusion would necessitate an east sea and a west sea in the tops of the mountains! But as it happens, there are two large lakes nestled in the tops of these mountains. On the east is Lago de Amatitlán and on the west is Lago de Atitlán. There was also a lake that once filled the valley near Quetzaltenango a little further west.

Strips of wilderness can go away with time as the civilization expands and the forested lands are depleted. But this east-west wilderness is the backbone of the Cordillera, and it is still quite intact today with very few crossing points. In Book of Mormon times, these mountain passes had fortified cities between volcanoes that limited the enemy's crossing places. The fortified passes prevented the Lamanites from dropping down into Zarahemla from the wilderness to the north. These mountains are mostly north of Zarahemla. They pass through the borders of Manti, and the head of the Sidon River as it runs from the east downhill to the Pacific Coast in a southwesterly direction.

Most authors have the River Sidon running northward, but Mormon refers above to the bearing of the river as "running from the east toward the west." There may be some ambiguity, however as to what runs from east to west in this verse. The antecedent is the river Sidon, but it may refer back to the preceding antecedent, the narrow strip of wilderness, i.e., the mountains. In fact, it may refer to both, but it would be unlikely for the river to run from the east to the west unless the assumption that Zarahemla is south of the Cordillera is correct.

Thus, it becomes clear that the above reference in Alma refers to a narrow strip of wilderness on the north of the land Zarahemla that connects from the sea east to the sea west. If the two "seas" referred to are the lakes of Atitlán and Amatitlán, the proposed geography fits perfectly.⁵

Presently, there are only the two lakes, Lake Atitlán and Lake Amatitlán. If Amatitlán is Manti, the headwaters of the river

⁵ Another possibility might be the lake that at one time covered the valley floor near Quetzaltenango (Xelahu, Lehi). The Samala' River was blocked in years past by lava from the volcano Cerro Quemado, but no reference has yet been found as to when that flow occurred or when the river broke through. The same volcano, in about the year 930 AD, blew the whole top off the mountain, burying the lake.

Looking over the valley from the mountains that surround it, it is apparent that the valley floor was once a lakebed. The outlet broke through and formed a narrow, vertical, walled passage into the land to the south that can be seen on the road from Quetzaltenango to Retalhuleu.

Sidon, the above verse may refer to Quetzaltenago (Xelahun, Lehi) on the west with Lago Atitlán in the middle. This mountain wilderness area was possibly inhabited by Lamanites in the days of Captain Moroni, and would be part of the wilderness he cleared of Lamanites then settled with Nephites. (Alma 50:7)

Mormon goes on to close in the loop describing the regions where the more idle part of the Lamanites resided. If the geography proposed so far is correct, it is apparent he was correct in stating that the Nephites were almost completely surrounded by the Lamanites and that the combined greater lands of Zarahemla and Nephi as a unit were almost completely surrounded by water. (Alma 22:32) The only place that greater Zarahemla (Cotzumalguapa) was not surrounded was a short stretch of the perimeter north by northwest from the city. Given this geography, it is understandable why, as we shall see later, the Nephites wanted to prevent the Lamanites from overrunning the north. They wanted to preserve the northwest corner of the land as a place to which they could flee, if attacked.

Mormon had to exercise this option when he fled north to the land of Shem (Mormon 2:20). Not surprisingly, there are some Shem possibilities northward of the lands we will later identify as Bountiful and Desolation.

Zarahemla's Neighbors to the East

The next geographic references in the Book of Mormon relate to Alma's missionary trip to the Zoramites.

Now the Zoramites had gathered themselves together in a land which they called Antionum, which was east of the land of Zarahemla, which lay nearly bordering upon the seashore, which was south of the land of Jershon, which also bordered upon the wilderness south, which wilderness was full of the Lamanites (Alma 31:3).

The sentence starts out by saying that the Zoramites had gotten together in “a land.” The next five times the word “which” is used, it refers back to this land. That means the land was called Antionum; it was east of Zarahemla; it extended almost to the seashore; it was south of Jershon; and it was adjacent to the south wilderness. The last “which” is a restrictive modifier that applies only to the wilderness. Thus, we know that the south wilderness was full of Lamanites. In the next verse the writer says they greatly feared the Zoramites might team up with the Lamanites. If the proposed geography is correct, this fear was justified. It would have put the Lamanites within ten to twenty miles of Zarahemla.

Notice the copper word, *anti*, in the name Antionum. There is a city, Pantaleon,⁶ that has a copper word in it about five miles east of Zarahemla (Cotzumalguapa). The name Pa-Antionum for “land of Antionum” may have been changed by the Spaniards to Pantaleon. This could be the Zoramite land (Monte Alto and La Democracia). If the Jaredites (possibly the ancient Olmecs) lived there, they may have carved the crude stone figures that became objects of worship when the Zoramites apostatized (Alma 31:1).

Going a little further east, we come to Escuintla, the old name for which is *Panatacat*. Escuintla (Panatacat) was very near Antionum but was likely part of Jershon. Antionum probably included the lowlands from Monte Alto to El Salvador. In an 1885 translation of the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* by Danial G. Brinton, he states that *patan* means “tax or tribute.” The Anti-Nephi-Lehies in the land of Jershon paid tribute to the Nephites for their protection (Alma 27:24). Could Panatacat have come from *patan* meaning tribute? If so, this could be the western extreme of the land of Jershon.

Nephite fears became reality later in Alma’s writings. The Zoramites became Lamanites, and in the forty-third chapter, the Lamanites and Zoramites went up against the people of Nephi in

⁶ This might have been the land Antum. But it is possible Antionum and Antum are the same. The essential difference between the names is the two adjacent vowels, “io,” and the notation for vowels was not added to written Hebrew in the Old World until about 900 AD (Daniell, 1995).

the borders of the land of Jershon. If we are correct in the proposed geography, this would have been very near Escuintla.

Captain Moroni makes his first appearance in the Book of Mormon at this time. In addition to being a good man, he was brilliant in the military affairs of his day. To the Lamanites' surprise, Moroni had equipped his people with armor and heavy clothing. The same heavy clothing type of armor was still being used by the Indians when the Spaniards arrived, as related by Bernal Díaz (Cohen 1963, 180). The Lamanites showed up for battle in loincloths made from animal skins. They were so intimidated by this new war technology that they decided not to fight that day.

Behold, now it came to pass that they durst not come against the Nephites in the borders of Jershon; therefore they departed out of the land of Antionum into the wilderness, and took their journey round about in the wilderness, away by the head of the river Sidon, that they might come into the land of Manti and take possession of the land; for they did not suppose that the armies of Moroni would know whither they had gone (Alma 43:22).

If we have the correct Zarahemla location (Cotzumalguapa), it appears that the Lamanites left the borders of Jershon and traveled east into the southeast wilderness then turned north to head by a roundabout route to the land of Manti by the headwaters of the Sidon, identified in the last chapter.

Moroni sent a runner to the prophet Alma and got the same answer as Zoram had gotten seven years earlier (Alma 43:23-24). Moroni deployed troops to the headwaters of the Sidon near Manti by a more direct route than the roundabout path of the Lamanites. The Lamanites would have approached from the east side of the hill Riplah, going around it and to the north side then down to the river crossing (Alma 43:34-35).

Upon checking the Quichua dictionary, the word *ripachicuna*, means "to be burning." *Chi* usually refers to mountain or hill, and

ripa is very close to Riplah. Riplah, therefore, may be a generic name for a burning mountain or volcano. However, having located Manti in the last chapter, it appears that Volcán de Pacaya, adjacent to that valley, is the hill Riplah.



Figure 9. Volcán de Pacaya, Possible Hill Riplah

The battle commenced as the Lamanites were crossing the Sidon River. Normally, it is no small operation to get an army of approximately 20,000 across a river. In this region, however, the rivers are low by the end of the dry season. The topography and the vegetation would provide a greater obstacle than the water. Given the geographical setting and the disparate military technology, it is no wonder the Nephite soldiers administered death with almost every blow. The dead from this battle were said to have been too numerous to count because of the “greatness of the number”(Alma 44:21).

Looking back through the text at the previous battle, the name of the hill near which it took place was noted as the hill Amnihu, on the east of the Sidon.

And it came to pass that the Amlicites came upon the hill Amnihu, which was east of the river Sidon, which ran

by the land Zarahemla, and there they began to make war with the Nephites (Alma 2:15).

There are two volcanoes in the area right next to each other. Today one is named Agua and the other is named Fuego. In Spanish, these words mean *water* and *fire*. Could Amnihu be the volcano named Agua?



Figure 10. Typical Water Levels, End of Dry Season

Water in the Nahuatl language is *atl* and many of the water words begin with *a*. In Quiché one of the words for water is just *a'*. In the Quichua language it is *yacu*, and *tamia yaca* means “rain water.” Looking at the word for rain, *tamia*, and assuming that the “t” can be discarded as we have seen before, what is left is *amia*. The word *ama* may have to do with rainwater.

The root word *tlán* means “a place where there is plenty,” plenty of whatever noun precedes it. It may also mean “the land of,” or most often, “by the.” It is used much the way *land* is used as a suffix in other languages. For example, in Nahua, *atlan*

means *by the water* and Utatlán means *by the reeds*.⁷

Looking through the index in the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* and *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*, we find the volcanoes Fuego and Agua noted. The editors added several footnotes. While they are not always exact, they are still very helpful, particularly when they provide information about place names and name changes. One such footnote reads, “The Spaniards gave the Volcano Hunahpu’ the name Agua probably because of the flood which in 1541 destroyed the first city of Guatemala, built at the foot of the mountain” (Recinos 1953, 61, 134).



Figure 11. Volcán de Agua (Hunahpu’), Possible Hill Amnihu

⁷ The word for water in Quechua and Aymará is *uma*. The Cherokee word is *ama*. Why is the name for water among the Cherokee so similar to the Aymará of Bolivia? The obvious answer is that they share a common ancestry. Indeed, one of the names for water in Japanese is *ame*. Obviously, these people too shared some cross-talk in their histories. The Chinese, the Japanese, and the American Indians all share the same genetic feature of limited facial hair, while the Semites from the Middle East are quite hairy. Where did the American Indians get the genetic trait of no facial hair that they share with the Pacific Rim people? Again, there appears to be a common ancestry or racial mix.

This footnote is very helpful. Amnihu and Hunahpu' sound very similar. The name Hunahpu' is used extensively in the cosmology of the Maya world as presented by the chroniclers and by the famous Maya scholar Linda Schele and her associates Freidel, Parker, and Mathews. This volcano's name and place are well established in the writings and legends. Given the importance of this volcano in the Maya cosmology and its physical closeness to the proposed location of Zarahemla, it appears that this location (Cotzumalguapa) was central to the Maya origins.

While used only once in the Book of Mormon, the name Amnihu may be one of the strongest ties to the location of cities in Mormon's world. The hill Amnihu is on the west of the Sidon River (Michatoya) as it is now configured. However, at some time in the past the Guacalate River that is just west of hill Amnihu (Agua, Hunahpu') may have been a tributary of the Sidon River (the Michatoya).

The river structures in the area are complicated. There is a river with the name Coyolate in that area. The *ate* ending probably has something to do with *atl*, the Nahuatl word for water. Several rivers in the area have that ending. The Nahualate River, for instance, may be the Nephi or Nephiah River, since Nephiah or Nahualá is at its headwaters. Achiguate is another river in the area. *Achi*⁸ means "man" in Quiché. There is another river complex just west of the Coyolate River named Río Madre Vieja. In Spanish, that means "old mother river." So there is a "man" river on the right side and a "woman" ("old mother") river on the left. The symmetry of these names is probably important, as the Maya cosmology would indicate (Freidel 1993). The words *cajxucut caj* are the ritual title for south and are associated with

⁸ The word *nimal* means "leader, chief, or boss" in Quiché. As noted above, the word *achi* means "man." As previously noted, the word *Laja* is a common spelling of Lehi. Putting these three words together and contracting them, we have *nimalajachi*, which means "great man" in Quiché. And so Lehi was.

maleness and the right. The words *cajxucut uleu* form the ritual title for north and are associated with femaleness and the left (Christenson 2001, 22).

The lower reaches of the Coyolate River appear to have no tributaries. Adjacent to this river on both sides are the two largest tracts of land not sliced by rivers along the whole southwestern slope in that region. From time to time, the volcanoes appear to have altered the rivers into which the various tributaries flow. Thus, we have possibly the two most famous volcanoes in the region, named Fuego (fire) and Agua (water) at the present time, both overshadowing Zarahemla. Then there is a male river on the right and a female river on the left with a possible branch of the Sidon River between them. This setting appears to be relevant to the origin of the Maya cosmology described by Schele and others (Freidel 1993; Schele 1998; and Schele 1982). In their words, "The reality places human beings at the center of the cosmos and makes humanity responsible for creation as an ongoing, endless process." (Freidel 1993, 11)

The Nephites had a few years of peace after this particular battle was fought. These were good years. The Book of Mormon says that in the days of Moroni there was never a happier time among the people since the days of Nephi (Alma 50:23). Full employment and righteousness will do that to a nation. In this time of peace, Moroni did not rest, though. He spent these years fortifying existing cities, removing Lamanite squatters from Nephite lands, and building new fortified cities in critical strategic locations. Later, all of Moroni's building efforts and battles will be discussed, because they are critical and most helpful in identifying all the surrounding fortress cities.

Amlici's Contribution to the Geography

Lets go back and review Amlici's battles now that we have an idea of Zarahemla's location. The story line starts in Alma 2:1. Amlici gathered those followers he had and they made him their king. He then armed them and commanded them to go to battle

against their brethren. Amlici was of the order of Nehors and as such was probably from the Ammonihah area.

The Amlicites probably came down what is now route CA9 from Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú), past Manti (Amatitlán). They skirted to the southeast of the hill Amnihu (Hunahpu' or Volcán de Agua), which was east of a branch of the river Sidon (Alma 2:15). There would be no reason for them to climb the volcano. The photograph of volcano Agua in Figure 11 was taken from route CA9, which would be in the same location as the route used anciently.

After their defeat they probably returned back through Gideon (Alma 2:20). That would most likely be up the Guacalate River between Volcán de Fuego and Volcán de Agua (the hill Amnihu). Fleeing after the rout, Amlici's followers left 12,532 of their dead on the banks of the Sidon and along the trail for the Nephites to clean up. The Nephites pursued them all that day, killing a large number of them (Alma 2:19).

When Alma and his troops were unable to pursue the Amlicites any farther, they pitched their tents in the valley of Gideon (Alma 2:20). Alma sent spies to follow those who remained of the Amlicites. The spies followed them from the valley of Gideon to the land of Minon, which was above Zarahemla in the course to the land of Nephi (Alma 2:24). This would be in the greater Amatitlán area.

The spies returned in a hurry the next day stating that the Amlicites had joined with a numerous host of Lamanites in Minon and were attacking their Nephite brethren in that land (Alma 2:25). The people were fleeing with their flocks and families to Zarahemla, apparently by a different path than Alma because the Nephite spies were afraid that the Amlicites and Lamanites would arrive at Zarahemla before they did.

The valley of Gideon would appear to be the Guacalate River valley, but it has two major sections to it. The upper valley is around Antigua Guatemala and the lower valley is around Escuintla. The Amlicites were probably chased to the upper valley. It is possible that the enemy army headed northwest at

first so they could drop down just west of Volcán de Fuego into Zarahemla. However, the main route to the land of Nephi would have been to the east. That suggests this entire region to the north and east of Zarahemla (Cotzumalguapa) was considered the greater land of Nephi. Few Nephites had ever set foot in the original land of Nephi and Mormon's knowledge of the Lamanite regions was limited to the written documents left by others.

So it is more likely that the Amlicites headed east about 12 miles, joined up with the Lamanite army, then dropped down on the east side of Amnihu, into the Escuintla area. The Amlicites and Lamanites would then have crossed to the west side of the Sidon River before the Nephite army arrived.

As the Nephite army crossed the Sidon from the east to the west, the Lamanite and Amlicite armies confronted them (Alma 2:27). Amlici was killed. But the Nephites found crossing the river to be difficult. They had to throw the Lamanite and Amlicite bodies into the river to clear a place for the rest of the Nephite army to cross and fight on the west side (Alma 2:34). Then, when all of Alma's army had crossed the river, the enemy fled toward the wilderness, which was west and north, beyond the borders of the land Zarahemla. The Nephites pursued and killed many of them. They were met on every hand, killed, driven, and scattered on the west and north until they reached the wilderness called Hermounts (Alma 2:37).

Nibley mentions that Manti was a Semitic form of the Egyptian god Manti-mankhi, the god of Hermonthis (Nibley 1988, 27). This is significant because, if the geography proposed is correct, their escape route would have taken them just west of the land of Manti. It may also suggest that the wilderness to which they headed was the present day wilderness of Sierra de los Cuchumatanes. It lies in the direction of their escape, and *humatanes* is close to Hermonthis or Hermounts.

This wilderness is about 70 miles away today, which is much too far unless the Lamanite holdings extended that far, in which case it might have been toward home. But it is possible that the wilderness moved back with time. The name may have persisted,

but the exact location may have shifted. Remember this occurred prior to the destruction that accompanied the Crucifixion when the entire face of the land northward was changed (3 Nephi 8:12).

While the city and land of Zarahemla are central to most of Nephite history, there is very little geographic data about Zarahemla itself. The geographical clues come from the battles and missionary trips to the surrounding area. So we will leave Zarahemla for the moment and look at its perimeter. The proof of Zarahemla's location will come as the neighboring lands and towns are mortared into place.

An Engineer's Perspective on War

The Book of Mormon is full of violent interactions between Lamanites and Nephites. In defense of the Lamanites, it was almost always a renegade Nephite that joined the Lamanites and agitated them to war. But many of the battles occurred when the Lamanites were trying to break through into the land to the north (Helaman 1:23). They may have outgrown the land to the south and needed some additional land to expand into. The Nephites were trying to keep the lid on the bottle because they did not want to have the Lamanites on all sides to harass them (Alma 52:9). Thousands of Nephites were migrating into the land to the north but apparently it was initially closed to the Lamanites (Alma 63:4, Helaman 3:3). However, eventually, Lamanites and Nephites went freely into the land northward (Helaman 6:6, 8).

During the great years after the Coming of Christ, there was free travel for all people. It would seem that much of the expansion was into the lands of present-day Mexico and the United States. Nothing is mentioned about migrations south, although one can tell from the dictionaries that the peoples of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia originated in the Guatemala area. As more dictionaries become available, it is probable we will find that most of the indigenous peoples of Central and South America come from Guatemala, or at least their language originated there.

Many members of the church in Mexico have, for years, claimed lineage through the Lamanites, but it was the Nephites who were the first of Lehi's descendants to go north in large numbers. While those that went to the lands northward had their own wars that were not recorded by Mormon, they were not a part of Mormon's Nephite nation that was destroyed at Cumorah (Helaman 3:14). They doubtless lived on.

At the time of the final battle, many Nephites escaped to the south but most of them were hunted down and killed. Could it be that they were being attacked from the north in the final battle? Maybe the Lamanites were reluctant to migrate to the south. Maybe it was impassable. The Nephites and the Lamanites had shown a preference for the more pleasant climates of the higher altitudes. No cities on the oceanfront have been identified in this study as being relevant to Mormon's world. The highlands of Guatemala are called the land of eternal springtime. Going to the south it gets more tropical, with all the challenges of the lowland jungle.

Temperate altitudes to the south are, however, encountered in Colombia. Medellín is also referred to as a land of eternal springtime. There are some very pleasant temperate areas in Colombia—Medellín, Pereira, Ibagué, and others. Cali is a little hot and Bogotá is a little cold in the rainy season.

The Book of Mormon people obviously experienced great weather. They never mention snow and only once did they mention battling in the heat of the day (Alma 51:33). Also, they never mention rain as it related to their battles. Apparently they fought during the dry season. When thinking of the practicalities of war, one might remember the scripture, "pray that your flight be not in winter" (Mathew 24:20, Mark 13:18). It is not difficult to relate to that. The early ancestors driven from Jackson County, and later Nauvoo, in the middle of winter left blood in the snow and heartrending accounts of their suffering.

From the mundane drudgery of a foot soldier's war, what can we learn about Book of Mormon geography? Many of the battles started, were conducted, or ended at the beginning or end of the

Nephites' calendar year. We know from Joseph Smith that the birth of Christ occurred on the sixth of April according to our calendar. This corresponds to the Feast of the Passover. The trip to Bethlehem to be taxed was imposed by Rome to correspond with the Feast of the Passover when the Hebrews were happy. This also served to let them know that the destroying angel may have passed them by but the taxman would not. Christ's trip to the Temple in Jerusalem as a twelve-year-old corresponded to the Passover, as did the Crucifixion. The destruction in the western hemisphere corresponding to the Crucifixion started at the beginning of the thirty-fourth year, in the first month, and on the fourth day of the month (3 Nephi 8:5). This means that the first day of their year occurred on the second day of April in our calendar.

The rainy season in Central America begins around June and continues through December with an occasional dry spell in August called *verancito de San Juan* (little summer of St. John). The dry season runs from about January through May. So it looks like they did their fighting in the dry season. This is important because it tells us a great deal about their fighting techniques, strategies, and troop movements.

They were fair-weather fighters. The tents and bedding needed for the trip would be much less in the dry season. They had time on their hands during the dry season. They didn't get their blood boiling when it was rainy. They were mostly farmers, depending on the land for their food. They had to plant, weed, and harvest, to support their habit of fighting. In January when the corn is mature, dried, and ready for storage, they had to harvest or go hungry the following year. With the stores in they could again return to fighting. We do know of at least one battle that destroyed grain fields and led to hardship in the Zarahemla area (Alma 3:2). But the weather, the rivers, the distances, the facilities along the trail, the width of the trail, the size of the battlefield where they were going to fight with 20,000 men on each side, and the retreat path if they lost, all influenced when, where, and how they choose to fight.

What can we come up with as hard realities for their fighting technology? Rivers are a major obstacle when conducting a war. Parts of Guatemala receive as much as 200 inches of rain in a year. Utah gets that amount in about fifteen years. The rivers in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras are large in the wet season but are greatly reduced by the end of the dry season.

During the wet season the rivers would be a major obstacle because of the volume and speed of the water. At the end of the dry season, the flows are low. The rivers are clean. The women do laundry on the river rocks. Today some of the water is diverted for irrigation. With few exceptions, the volume of water in the dry season would not be an obstacle when it came to traveling. The obstacles would be the steepness of the banks and the intensity of the underbrush. Initially each inch of the way would have to be cleared with a machete. This means that river crossings would have to be selected carefully. Trails and roads would have to be cut and maintained.

As the number of humans and livestock increased, the rivers and foliage would become less of a barrier. Even today in that region, wood is cut and packed to town for use in cooking. This practice clears the ground. Likewise, the harvesting of lumber for building materials and smelting clears land for pasture, farming, and travel. To this day, they still practice slash-and-burn farming in the area. In an overgrown area they will chop down the plant life, let it dry, then burn everything. Fires are burning everywhere at the end of the dry season. And they farm mountainsides as steep as Utah's ski slopes.

Many of the fortifications of the Nephites were along the high mountain valleys between the volcano peaks that form the Cordillera. In the mountainous regions it appears they used to keep small valley floors and flat topped hills for farming. Their temples and fortified complexes were built on flat-topped hills or protected regions. Qumarkaj' and Iximche' are examples of this.



Figure 12. Three Generations of Wood Haulers (1 Nephi 17:2)

It is evident at Iximche' that the temple complex was integrated with a fortress complex. The steep rock walls, the mote, the labyrinth entrances, and the nine watchtowers placed around the outside of the complex at a sufficient distance to see what was approaching the hilltop, are all evidence of the defensive nature of the position. Some of the small gateways through the old Jerusalem wall are of a labyrinth type, similar to those at Ixmiche'.

The reason that these areas were fortified was to protect the land Zarahemla and to prevent the Lamanites from going into the land to the north. In the proposed geography, it appears that these fortifications were placed sequentially. They formed a series, not a front. Fronts can be breached to gain access. Sequential defenses require sequential battles and all in the sequence must be captured to gain access or control.

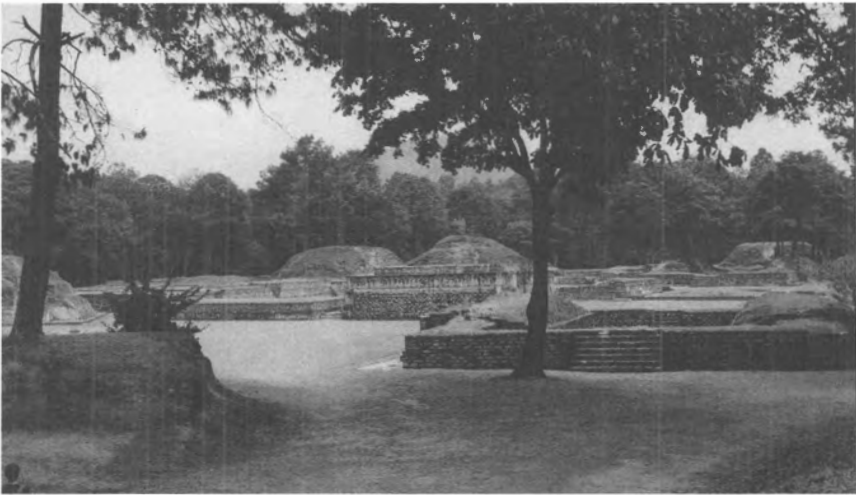


Figure 13. The Fortress Temple at Iximche⁷

They wrote that the whole face of the land to the north was changed at the time of the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 8:12), and the proposed geography clearly supports that statement. The hill country today is so chopped up with steep mountains and *barrancas* that it hardly seems compatible with the troop movements described in Captain Moroni's time as well as the Jaredite times. Notably, none of the old mountain fortresses were mentioned after the destruction that occurred at the time of the crucifixion.

We are told that the lands of the Nephites and Lamanites were almost completely surrounded by water and that the Nephites were almost completely surrounded by Lamanites. (Alma 22:32 That poses a problem that will need to be dealt with. First, however, we need to identify all the cities we can in order to assess the magnitude of any potential problem with east seas and west seas.

In addition to the oceans, there are large lakes, and certainly there are plenty of large rivers that surround much of the land. In Hebrew, the word *yam* pronounced as *yawm* means "sea" It is applied to the Mediterranean, Red, and Dead Seas, the Sea of Galilee, the river Nile, and even the basin in the temple court

(Infobases Hebrew Lexicon). Also in the lexicon the Hebrew word *saphah* means “lip, shore, bank, brim, edge, and border.” Thus it does not appear that they made any distinction between rivers and seas or between riverbanks and seashores, at least not as we do in English. It appears that our limited English interpretation of these words has been a major stumbling block for Book of Mormon researchers.

On the north of Zarahemla was a narrow strip of wilderness dividing the Lamanites from the Nephites. Also there was a wilderness to the southeast that formed a barrier. This could be uninhabited lowland as well as mountain jungle, a barren lava flow, or steep lava walls like those found near the Snake and Columbia Rivers in the western United States.

The Motagua River is one that might form a formidable barrier. Far to the east was the Caribbean Sea bordered by a lowland, swampy jungle. On the northeast side were the Lake of Izabal and the Polochic River. Above the headwaters of the Polochic and over the hill were the headwaters of the Chixoy River and the Río Negro. There are many tributaries to the Chixoy and Negro Rivers that flow into and become the Usumacinta River that ultimately flows northward and empties into the Gulf of Mexico near the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. These rivers and tributaries form three river basins that could limit the travel of the Lamanite armies into the land northward. The fortified cities or citadels that were built to protect greater Zarahemla were in the highlands near the Cordillera, perhaps the only passable route to the northwest.

The rivers in the lowland areas were also a major obstacle. They were only crossed in the higher country because they get too big as they approach the oceans. Then there is the steepness of their banks and foliage that is quite impenetrable at the lower elevations. Imagine trying to cross a river with bows, arrows, armor, tents, and food, then try crossing it in a hurry if you're in retreat. Canoes and boats are a possibility but not a practicality for large troop movements or caravans. Try moving 40,000 troops and their supplies for a four-month Boy Scout outing. What were

their bowstrings made of? Plant and animal fibers do not hold up well under water or even in extensive rain. Neither would fletchings and arrowhead bindings.⁹



Figure 14. Lower Reaches of the Naranjo River

How long would their corn last if they were periodically getting it wet at river crossings or in the rain? The Lamanites also liked to drink alcoholic beverages as they went into battle. River water would do damage to their wine. How many jugs could they tote and still swim a river or traverse a steep gorge? It is easy for a trained man to go almost anywhere but it gets difficult for large bodies of troops with supplies sufficient for extended periods of time. Even drinking water could become a problem in such circumstances.

In their battles, they seemed to favor the high country, where the streams and fresh springs provided good water. Besides that, they frequently threw bodies into the river. During the dry season,

⁹ Besides bows and arrows, they had slings, cimeters, swords, and axes (Mosiah 6:16; Alma 2:12). The cimeters may have been the two-handed swords mentioned by Bernál Díaz (Cohen 1963, 75).

as it is today, these mountain rivers would not pass the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' test for navigable waters. That is, they could not float a six-inch-diameter log. The rivers at the lower elevations are slower, wider, deeper, and muddier. They would not have wanted muddy water to drink in battle. The selection of Cumorah as a battleground for the Nephites was based in part on the abundance of good drinking water (Mormon 6:4). When you bring thousands of people together, water and sanitation is a major problem.

Many of their wars were scheduled (Mormon 3:4). Only in the beginning were there surprise attacks (Alma 2:15). They probably developed roads or highways as they said (Helaman 7:10) and then became dependent upon them for travel. They may have used bridges and limited crossings to places where their war technology was viable. There was a bridge over the Samalá River when Alvarado and his soldiers arrived in 1524 (Guatemalan Army 1963, 162). Their river crossings were probably limited to rivers that were less than three or four feet deep in the dry season. In several battles the vanquished fled in directions that seemed not the most optimal. River crossings and rough topography probably played a role in deciding these escape routes.

They spoke of horses and chariots (Alma 18:9; 3 Nephi 3:22). If they used chariots, they would have had wagons and beasts of burden to transport their war materiel. This would further limit their travel routes and make citadels in critical locations even more important as a defensive strategy.

Guerrilla tactics work well for small numbers against large numbers. Geronimo made the U.S. Army and the Mexican soldiers look silly with just a few fast men and one plan of battle. That plan was to hold fire until they could not miss, then take shots and run. They would scatter in all directions and meet later at a predetermined spot. This would have worked well for the Gadianton robbers when their numbers were small. It does not work well when there are large armies on both sides. The armies may have stayed to the roads that were well traveled in order to prevent ambush.

Why did the Lamanite armies always “come down” (Alma 51:11; Helaman 5:4) into the land Zarahemla? Those words suggest that they traveled in the high country to avoid the rivers, the steep-walled gorges, and the intense vegetation so plentiful in the volcanic ash soil at the lower elevations. Maybe they did not like the heat, mosquitoes, and reptiles in the lowlands either. If one gets up just a bit higher, out of the trees and underbrush, there is a refreshing gentle breeze.

Thus, their travel routes and places of attack were predictable. That was mostly because of the region’s topography and the resulting engineering limitations. Zarahemla (Cotzumalguapa) is not in a valley but on the piedmont. There are in reality no significant valleys in the immediate region. The water channels were for runoff and they flooded in the rainy season and were occasionally filled with fresh volcanic ash. The people farm the higher piedmont regions between the rivers on the Costa Súr even today. Irrigation is not an issue in that garden spot. They do not have farmable river valleys as we have in the western United States.

A Narrow Neck of Land

A major breakthrough will next be presented. It requires a paradigm shift for all Book of Mormon archeology enthusiasts. The correctness of this observation is not as critical as the paradigm shift itself. The shift loosens up the thinking to admit possible alternative explanations for a common geological reference in the Book of Mormon, the “narrow neck of land.”

While going through the battles around Mulek (Alma 52), and trying to identify the plains between the cities Mulek and Bountiful, some of the larger water features were noticed. Checking aircraft maps, it was noted that the outlets of some of the rivers emptying into the sea are much wider than shown on the National Geographic maps. There are two such outlets, some three miles apart, located near the Mexican border with Guatemala. The rivers are parallel for about a fifteen-mile reach.

The river on the west then turns and continues more to the north and forms the boundary between southern Mexico and northern Guatemala at the Pacific Coast.

These are not just river mouths. They are tidal estuaries for some distance inland from the sea. The maps show them as being wide and extending about fifteen miles inland before they neck down to a rapid-flowing river. There are four rivers in the area that are very large and appear to have large tidal regions. These rivers include the Suchiate, and very close to it the Naranjo, then, moving southward, the Samalá then the Nahualá. There are many other smaller rivers in the area, but these are the large ones that provide large natural land divisions in the area.

The Jaredite record states, "And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land" (Ether 10:20). Two things are important in this short verse. First, there is a narrow neck of land and second, it is near where the sea divides the land. Here are all the passages applicable to geography that reference the word "narrow." They are all included for the reader's convenience and because of the importance of this issue.

And it came to pass that Hagoth, he being an exceedingly curious man, therefore he went forth and built him an exceedingly large ship, on the borders of the land Bountiful, by the land Desolation, and launched it forth into the west sea, by the narrow neck which led into the land northward (Alma 63:5).

And the Lamanites did give unto us the land northward, yea, even to the narrow passage which led into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward (Mormon 2:29).

And it came to pass that I did cause my people that they should gather themselves together at the land Desolation, to a city which was in the borders, by the narrow pass which led into the land southward (Mormon 3:5).

And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land,
by the place where the sea divides the land (Ether 10:20).

Notice that there is only one reference to a “narrow neck of land.” All others refer to a “narrow pass by the sea” or a “narrow passage into the land southward.” The point is that these allusions may not be referring to the same thing. They may represent as many as three different geographical obstacles: a narrow neck of land, a narrow pass by the sea, and a narrow passage between the land to the north and the land to the south. Alma 63:5 mentions a “narrow neck,” which may be somewhat ambiguous, but it is clear that the scripture refers to a narrow passage for travel.

At the lower reaches of the two rivers at the Mexican border there are banana plantations today. Large canals divert the water from upstream to irrigate these plantations. Where the bridges cross the rivers, the water tumbles over lava boulders but there is greater enlargement just below the bridges.

At the Mexican border, Suchiate and Naranjo Rivers truly become arms of the sea. One might even be considered an east sea and the other a west sea. Many cities were found on the Pacific Coast that Mormon said were on the shores by the east sea. Specifically, there is the following passage in Alma:

And thus he went on, taking possession of many cities, the city of Nephiah, and the city of Lehi, and the city of Morianton, and the city of Omner, and the city of Gid, and the city of Mulek, all of which were on the east borders by the seashore (Alma 51:26).

These cities were near the *west* (Pacific) coast, but they were on the northeast side of the heavily populated part of Mormon’s land and they were by a riverbank. Here the east sea may have been Lago de Atitlán. Note that Ripliancum, in the region of Cumorah, was supposedly an *ocean* to exceed all (Ether 15:8). Maybe there were some major tectonic plate shifts at the time of the crucifixion that lifted up the Petén lowlands of northern

Guatemala out of the ocean. Major salt deposits have been found that would indicate the area was once under water. The whitish limestone soil is also evidence that it was previously under water. There are many limestone sinkholes in the Cobán area that might indicate the area has undergone major erosion caused by water below the surface.¹⁰

As noted before, there is documentation of a lake that once existed where Quetzaltenango is today. This lake was apparently buried in about 930 A.D. by a volcanic blast that removed almost the entire cone of Cerro Quemado. The age was established using trees found in the pumice and ash. The 60 to 100-foot-deep pumice layers observable at the roads cut in the Quetzaltenango area may possibly have been deposited in that blast.

While there is no lake in the valley today, we should probably assume there *was* a lake there from the time of the crucifixion through Mormon's lifetime. The references to the east sea may have been Mormon's additions and not from the original record keepers. It is possible that the lake was not present prior to the crucifixion. That is because, in Jaredite times this region was critical to Omer's trip and no lake was mentioned between Shim and Cumorah (Ether 9:3).

Almost no major ruins are found on the Caribbean (Gulf of Honduras) side of Guatemala. The National Geographic maps show only three red dots on that side while there are about 1,000 on the Pacific Coast side (*Middle America*, Oct. 1968, vol. 134, No. 4).

Mormon was not privileged to a satellite perspective of his land. Our own satellite perspective has boxed us out of an understanding of his frame of reference. It appears to be better to follow the names. They are firmer than the volcanic *terra-not-so-firma* that forms the Costa Sur of Guatemala and El Salvador.

One can see that at times Mormon speaks on a global level and at other times he speaks on a very local one. But Mormon was not privileged to our satellite perspective, so even his global

¹⁰ Fred Perkins, personal conversation, 2000.

perspective was very small compared to what we are used to today. The critical point is to understand his point of reference and his field of view or area of focus at the particular time he was writing. Where was Mormon's desk? The answer is critical to the proper interpretation of his directional references. Apparently writing was a difficult process (2 Nephi 25:23) and they did not waste words. So, we must extract the most meaning we can from all the clues he gives.



Figure 15. Pumice Cliff near Quetzaltenango

At this time, we will not identify the narrow neck of land. Much more must be discussed before those identifications will

make sense. The purpose of this section is to loosen up the reader's thinking about this descriptive term and about the seas east and west. It has been our global, and more recently satellite, perspective that has limited us for the past 172 years. The narrow neck of land will be discussed further after we examine the Jaredite perspective.



CHAPTER 7

THE TRANSITION LANDS

Between Zarahemla and the Land of Nephi

With a proposed land of Manti identified, the entirety of the land to the east and south of Zarahemla can be examined and reconstructed. The land of Lehi, the land of their first inheritance, appears to be El Salvador—*Lenca* on the old maps—placing the land of Nephi, the land of Shilom, over the divide in the Honduran highlands. Some time later the name was changed to Lehi-Nephi, and at some point after the Lamanites took over the area, they apparently changed the name to Lehi-Laman or Lehi-Lamani, because we find the name Lejamani there today.

The people of the first king Mosiah fled the land of Nephi and traveled to Zarahemla to settle with the Mulekites. That appears to have been at Cotzumalguapa, the Beautiful Red Flower. Between this tri-land region, many additional lands were settled.

These in-between or transition lands separated the Nephite and Anti-Nephi-Lehi lands on the western side from the Lamanite lands on the eastern end. The Lamanite lands included the Ishmael-Midian-Middoni complex around the waters of Sebus, the Helam-Amulon-Mormon complex, and the AniAnti-Siron-Jerusalem complex. These last two may have grown to become one complex after the people of Alma fled the land of Helam (Alma 21). Later, the dissenting Nephites joined this region and caused much grief

for the people in the land of Zarahemla. These lands in the transition zone, the interior of the triangle described above, will next be examined in detail.

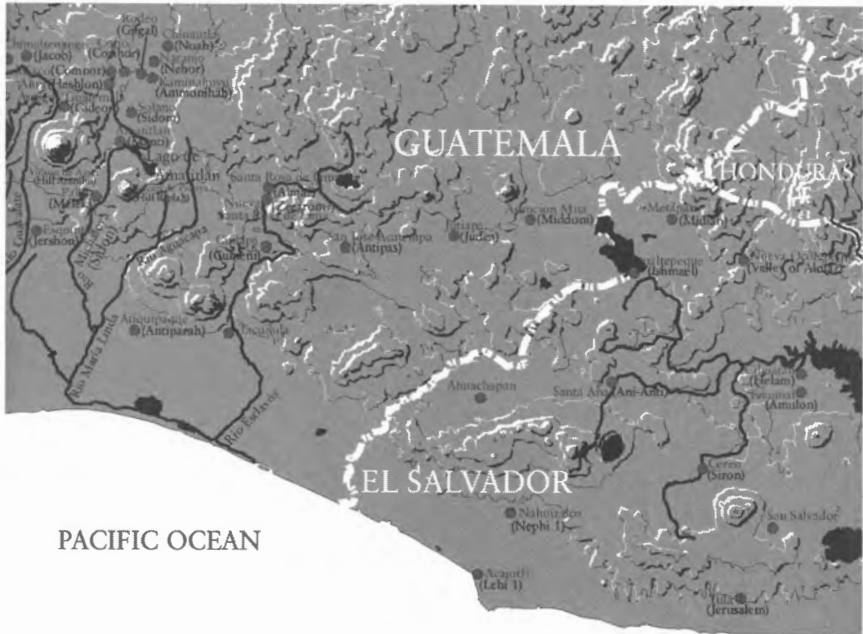


Figure 16. The Transition Lands

Gideon, the Man and the Land

When one reads the account of Limhi in the land of Shilom, an interesting character appears. Up on the tower is a man named Gideon, ready to deprive the wicked King Noah of the fate promised him by the prophet Abinadi (Mosiah 19:4-8). The Lamanites were seen headed toward Shilom to attack. Gideon spared Noah's life at that time, but the wicked king suffered Abinadi's fate at a later date (Mosiah 19:20). The son of Noah, named Limhi, became their leader and Gideon was his captain, a great assistant (Mosiah 19:20, 20:17). Limhi's people eventually escaped and returned to Zarahemla (Mosiah 22).

Gideon was a great man but he may have been an independent sort of fellow. He chose to settle in a valley, which, given the geography proposed so far, would have been up the Guacalate River between the volcanoes of Fuego and Agua (Amnihu or Hunahpu). The largest town in that area today is Antigua Guatemala. This was the capital the Spaniards chose after Alvarado destroyed the natives. The town was destroyed one too many times by earthquakes and floods so the Spaniards moved their capital to Guatemala City (near Kaminaljuyú or Ammonihah).

The hills Amnihu and Riplah were both listed as being on the east of the river Sidon. It appears that Riplah is east of Sidon, but if the proposed geography is correct, Amnihu is on the east only if the Guacalate River was once a tributary of the Michatoya River. Topographically, that is a distinct possibility.

That leaves the valley near Antigua as a candidate for the land Gideon and suggests that the Anti-Nephi-Lehies may have had all the region south and east of Amatitlán (Manti) for the lands of Jershon and Melek. The valley of Gideon had to be near Ammonihah given the encounter with Nehor and his subsequent death on the hill Manti (Alma 1:15).

Looking for a linguistic link to this area, a list was found of Hebrew names that indicate Gideon meant “feller,” someone who fells trees. The town, Antigua Guatemala, is also in Christenson’s K’iche’ dictionary. The pre-Spanish name of the town was *Pan Choy*. In Quiché, *choy* means “to cut with a machete,” and the word *ch’oy* means “to cut down as a tree or a cornstalk.” Gideon, in Hebrew, means “to cut down trees” and *ch’oy* in Quiché means “to cut down a tree.” This linguistic link is strong evidence that Antigua Guatemala was Gideon.

According to Christenson (personal conversation, 2001) the word *pan* means “at” or “by” in Cakchiquel and is equivalent to *pa* in K’iche’. He says that the name *Pan Choy* is a present day Cakchiquel name that means “by the lake.” But there are no lakes in the area of Antigua Guatemala. It is in K’iche’ that *ch’oy*, with the glottal stop, means “to cut down trees or cornstalks” while

choy without the glottal stop means “to cut something with a machete.” It was the Cakchiquels that destroyed the Quiché nation at Qumarkah (pronounced remarkably close to Cumorah) (Recinos 1953, 103). Their languages are similar but there are differences. This is one example of such a difference.

Possibly, after the Quiché were driven out of Pan Choy by the Cakchiquel, the glottal stop and subsequently the original meaning of the place name was lost and changed. Interestingly, there is another word in Christensen’s K’iche’ word list that means “to cut down trees.” It is *quetom*. Gideon and *Quetom* have a very similar pronunciation. The *n* and *m* in some Maya languages are used interchangeably, suggesting that the pronunciation may, at one time, have been even closer.

Many Book of Mormon names appear to have been applied to a person after-the-fact. It appears this might have been the case with Gideon. He may have been given this name after his death by sword at the hand of Nehor. This suggests that the form *ch’oy* meaning “to cut down trees or cornstalks” is not correct, while the form *choy*, meaning “to cut something with a machete” would be closer to the historical derivation of Gideon’s name. He was not a feller of trees, but rather he was the one *cut down with a machete* (or sword) at the hand of Nehor (Alma 1:9).

The Land of Helam

After the death of Abinadi and Alma the Older’s departure from the land of Shilom, dissension occurred among the remaining Nephite people. The wicked king Noah had not dedicated much of his resources to defense and his army was not very large (Mosiah 19:1-3). The Lamanites attacked once more and Noah and his priests fled (Mosiah 19:9). Noah was burned at the stake, dying just as Abinadi had prophesied (Mosiah 19:20). A weakened people were then led by Noah’s son Limhi (Mosiah 19:26), with Gideon as his captain (Mosiah 20:17). There was much oppression and suffering inflicted upon them by the Lamanites (Mosiah 21:3).

They decided to send a group to find the land Zarahemla. That group got into the land covered with dry bones and back without encountering the people they were seeking (Mosiah 21:26). One may think that they arrived at Cumorah, but this is probably not the case. It's too far inland. The reference does not mention Cumorah but just mentions many bones of man and beast and ruins of buildings of every kind (Mosiah 8:8). The Jaredites had been back and forth between Moron and Akish on the west and Corihor, Comnor, Gilgal, Shurr, and Heshlon on the east leaving bodies all over the place, so that the whole land stank (Ether 14:23). They lost more than two million people in that area before ever reaching Cumorah (Ether 15:2). Cumorah was not centrally located and it was not the principal region of the Jaredite lands. No references to any lands close to Cumorah are made in the Book of Mormon. The Jaredites lived and built their buildings elsewhere, in the land Desolation nearer the Pacific Coast. They went to Cumorah for the final battles. So we do not know exactly where this scouting party went. They would certainly have known Zarahemla was on the Pacific slope side of the mountains, the same side as the original land of Lehi. They probably followed the trail of bones from near Ammonihah (Corihor, or Cotio, which is very near Kaminaljuyú, Ether 14:27-28) westward and dropped down the wrong canyon to the land Desolation rather than the land of Zarahemla. This could have been anywhere along the trail of skeletons. It is certain that they bypassed the land of Zarahemla below them to the southwest.

The Lamanites had not yet attacked the people of Zarahemla to any degree, so the people there did not have need for the fortified mountain towns that became a major part of their defenses during Moroni's command. One battle, however, is mentioned in the twenty-fourth chapter of Omni.

When Alma departed the area, he and his people settled in a land they called Helam. This was a trip of eight days from Shilom and twelve days from Zarahemla (Mosiah 23:3; 24:25). Figuring that they could have traveled on foot over the winding, up-and-down terrain at a rate of about fifteen miles per day, the distance

they traveled to get to Helam could have been 120 miles. On a map, that would probably be a direct distance of closer to 90 miles. There are very few ruins in this area to choose from. This suggests that the land of Helam may have been the ruins of Cihuatán.

Today, the river that runs past that city is called Lempa. The pronunciation is close to Limhi. Alma was not trying to get to Zarahemla, although he knew of its existence. But Limhi's people were headed straight to Zarahemla, so they took a more direct path. The Lamanite army, while chasing the people of Limhi, got lost and stumbled onto the people of Alma in the land of Helam (Mosiah 23:30-35). The four best indicators for its location are the distance traveled, the fact that it was sufficiently off the path for Limhi to pass them by, the fact that it was a valley big enough to be of interest to settle, and the lack of any other major ruins in the area. The linguistic connection is not strong, but there is some similarity. Remember also that Alma, Helam, and the others inhabited this area for twenty-seven years before they made their way to Zarahemla. That's not a short period but may not have been long enough to establish a name connection.

The Land of Ishmael

Searching for the land of Ishmael, one might focus on words beginning with *ix*, pronounced "ish." This beginning is common in the various indigenous languages, as it should be since Ishmael provided the daughters for Lehi's sons. It is a sound that has survived and often has to do with women.

While looking through the "ish" or *ix* roots in the Nahuatl dictionary, the word *ixmani* was found. The *mani* part of the name is of interest given the cities of Lamani and Leja-mani, which share the *mani* root. The king of Ishmael was Lamoni, which also has the *mani* root sound (Alma 17:21). It was common for the natives to cut words short and form contractions. Ishmael and Lamoni could have been contracted to Ish-mani or *Ixmani*, as it appears in Nahuatl. The definition of *ixmani* is "something that

is equal, plain, even, level, smooth, or flat.”

There is a place named Igualtepeque in the region. The *tepeque* ending is Nahuatl and was probably applied by the Mexicans that came in when Pedro Alvarado conquered the area. It should be remembered, however, that the Nahua tribes extended from Mexico City along the coast through El Salvador long before the Spaniards arrived. Igualtepeque is on the southern shore of lake Güija (the waters of Sebus) and is just down the river eighteen miles from the volcano Ixtepeque.

Though there is nothing of the word roots from *ixmani* in the name Igualtepeque, the translation from Nahuatl to Spanish is exact. It means “flat top hill” or “equal height hill.” The location is also very good for the land of Ishmael. It is well located for all of the references. We can see that Lago Güija, or one of the three rivers close by, is a likely candidate for the waters of Sebus.

These sites are all in the choicest farmable valleys in the area. Today there are many orchards in the area around Metapan (Midian). There are no other important valleys in the area. This is a rural area with just a few *pueblitos* scattered about. These places were found in sequence by following the roads in the region on the map of known ruins. Usually only the larger or more noticeable ruins of interest to tourists or archeologists are on these maps. All the ruins on this map are named (*Mapa Arqueológico de la República de Guatemala*, Instituto Geográfico Militar, 1991), and it shows another name for the ruins at Asunción Mita—Cerro de Laja. That would be the “hill of Lehi.” Right next to it are ruins named San Juan las Minas, or in English, St. John the Mines. These may well have been copper mines.

There are several places in the area named Río Amayito, Volcán Amayo, a town Amayo, and multiple towns named Los Amates. One of the rivers near Igualtepeque is named Tusamates. The name roots *amayo* and *amates* may have come from the name Ammon, as previously noted. These places are in the area where, in the proposed geography, Ammon had his great success

as a missionary, having converted the kings and the people in all the lands in this region.

This is a region that was critical as a line of defense and a line of fortresses to protect the Nephites and the Ammonites from the Lamanites. The previous missionary work of the sons of Mosiah among the people of Lamoni (Alma 17:21) was actually very near what later became the fortified Nephite cities of Judea (Alma 56:9), Manti, Cumeni, and Antiparah, which were built to protect the land of Jershon.

The Land of Jershon

As we have noted, while the people of Ammon waited in the wilderness between the land of Nephi and greater Zarahemla (Alma 27:14), Ammon and his brethren went into Zarahemla to determine the will of the people regarding these Lamanite converts. On the way, they met Alma (Alma 17:1). Looking at the map, it can be seen that every descriptive word is satisfied with exactness in the identified city and land locations proposed so far.

There was a joyful reunion and they traveled on to Zarahemla. There, the people decided as follows:

And it came to pass that the voice of the people came, saying: Behold, we will give up the land of Jershon, which is on the east by the sea, which joins the land Bountiful, which is on the south of the land Bountiful; and this land Jershon is the land which we will give unto our brethren for an inheritance (Alma 27:22).

Let's start with "inheritance," the last word in this verse. The name Jershon comes from a Hebrew word that means "to inherit," according to Dr. Bybee¹. In the above verse we have the land of Jershon followed by three modifiers. The first modifier adds information about the land of Jershon being on the east by

¹ Dr. Blair Bybee, telephone interview, 2001.

the sea. Was the next modifier, “which joins the land Bountiful,” intended to give us information about the sea or about the land of Jershon? If we assume it, and the next modifier, refers back to the land of Jershon, this verse tells us that the land of Jershon is near the east sea, the Lago de Amatitlán as we have noted in the last chapter, and adjacent to and on the southeast side of greater Bountiful. In this sense Zarahemla would have been considered part of greater Bountiful also. This is possibly the only time the land Bountiful is used so globally.

The next chapter says that armies were placed around the land of Jershon in all the borders around the land Zarahemla (Alma 28:1). In the following verse, which we have looked at before, it is clear that the modifiers refer back to the land Antionum.

Now the Zoramites had gathered themselves together in a land which they called Antionum, which was east of the land of Zarahemla, which lay nearly bordering upon the seashore, which was south of the land of Jershon, which also bordered upon the wilderness south, which wilderness was full of the Lamanites (Alma 31:3).

This suggests that Jershon was east of Zarahemla, and that Antionum was also east of Zarahemla but south of Jershon extending almost to the sea. That sea would be the Pacific Ocean in our proposed geography. Antionum was also adjacent to wilderness on the south and east. The wilderness on the south would be the coastal jungle area, which the verse tells us was full of Lamanites.

In Alma 27:8, we read that, as the Anti-Nephi-Lehies were contemplating going down to the land Zarahemla, they said, “We will be their *slaves* until we repair unto them the many murders and sins which we have committed against them.” This is interesting because there is a river to the southeast in the region proposed as Jershon that is today called Los Esclavos, “the slaves” in Spanish. The word for *slave* in the Quechua dictionary is *pachaka*, which is very close to Pacaya. As noted in a previous

chapter, there is a large volcano named Pacaya (the hill Riplah, most likely) to the west in Jershon, close to the proposed Manti, that looks over the lands that would be Melek and Jershon. Manti, Melek, and Minon, therefore, were on the northwest perimeter of the greater land of Jershon.

When Captain Moroni ordered Antipus and Helaman to protect the southeast borders, they would not have gone into the wilderness to the east to set up their fortresses. It would be most appropriate to set up the fortresses close to their supply lines. In this case, it was the Anti-Nephi-Lehies who were supplying the defensive effort. Thus Antiparah, Cumeni, Judea, and Manti would be positioned to protect the land of Jershon. And, indeed, these fortresses surround the land of Jershon in the proposed geography.

To further resolve the location of Jershon, it will help to firm up the land of Melek. It should be remembered that the people of Ammon represented a significant fraction of the Lamanites at the time they left their native lands. Also, all of the people and lands grew as they reproduced, pushed back the wilderness, and went looking for additional places to settle.

The Land of Melek

The following reference to the land of Melek adds geographical information about the location of this area:

And it came to pass in the commencement of the tenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, that Alma departed from thence and took his journey over into the land of Melek, on the west of the river Sidon, on the west by the borders of the wilderness (Alma 8:3).

Alma had left the land of Gideon and returned to Zarahemla (Alma 8:1). From there, as indicated above, he went “over into the land of Melek.” That would imply he crossed over into a different valley. Alma would have traveled east to arrive at

Melek, which was on the west of the Sidon River. He was on the west side of the river where it borders on the wilderness. This wilderness would be the southeast slopes of the hill Amnihu. Further east of the river and beyond the land of Jershon is another east or southeast wilderness. In verse three, the west means that this wilderness was on the west of the Sidon River and not that it was the west wilderness.

Returning to the text, we learn the following:

So that when he had finished his work at Melek he departed thence, and traveled three days' journey on the north of the land of Melek; and he came to a city which was called Ammonihah (Alma 8:6).

Three days south of Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú) would put Alma's starting place in the valley south of Lake Amatitlán. He did not mention going through the land of Gideon so he may have taken a different route. The region that is probably Melek, therefore, would be centered south of lake Amatitlán, east of Gideon, and west or northwest of Jershon. That would be about 24 miles by road from Ammonihah, assuming an eight-mile-per-day travel rate. At this time in his life, Alma was an older man, not a fleet-footed soldier. He was not fleeing either, just traveling casually. Thus, the slower rate seems reasonable.

A good agricultural valley about 24 miles south of Ammonihah is the Michatoya River valley, which continues on to the Rio María Linda area. These river valleys are directly east of Zarahemla (Cotzumalguapa) and the River Sidon (the Michatoya) that goes by Manti.

Therefore he took Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner; and Himni he did leave in the church in Zarahemla; but the former three he took with him, and also Amulek and Zeezrom, who were at Melek; and he also took two of his sons (Alma 31:6).

Amulek and Zeezrom were originally from Ammonihah (Alma 8:6, 21; 10:31). Zeezrom had been near death in Sidom when he was healed by Alma and Amulek (Alma 15:3). Did the city of Sidom receive its name from the river Sidon? The *m* and *n* are quite interchangeable in the local languages. Or, does it come from the Hebrew word *siddim* meaning field or plain? Siddim is also the name of the valley where the Dead Sea is located (Genesis 14:3).

And the people of Ammon departed out of the land of Jershon, and came over into the land of Melek, and gave place in the land of Jershon for the armies of the Nephites, that they might contend with the armies of the Lamanites and the armies of the Zoramites; and thus commenced a war betwixt the Lamanites and the Nephites, in the eighteenth year of the reign of the judges; and an account shall be given of their wars hereafter (Alma 35:13).

The people of Ammon departed out of the land of Jershon and “came over” into the land of Melek. This implies two things. First, “came,” suggests that Melek was closer to the scribe’s desk than was Jershon. Second, “over” suggests that it was over a rise or some other geographical barrier into another valley or area. This would most likely be the next valley. We know that Jershon was east of Zarahemla and north of Antionum. To move all the Anti-Nephi-Lehies over more than one valley would be difficult and probably unnecessary.

The Michatoya River valley might be part of the land of Melek. There are several critical events that may have occurred in Melek and the name may give an indication of what they were. What does Melek mean? The Arabic word *melek* is an exact match and is very close to the Hebrew word *mal’ak*, which has the same meaning, “angel.” This is very interesting since it suggests that the land of Melek is the land of the Angel. Melek is never mentioned before Alma the younger had his experience

with the angel, and all references to the land are in direct conjunction with Alma the younger (Alma 8:3-45:18).

The main road between Amatitlán (Manti by the Water) and Escuintla, which goes on into Cotzumalguapa (Zarahemla), follows on the west side of the Michatoya River. There are three towns or sets of ruins along this river that have interesting names. They are Palín, María Santísima, and Concepción. These last two have to do with the Virgin Mary and were probably a Catholic paste-over for some indigenous name that may have referred to an angelic visitor. The Virgin Mary is the most frequent, purported angelic visitor reported among Catholics.

The first town, Palín, is a Spanish noun from the verb *paliar*, which means “to palliate, to excuse, or to extenuate.” Palliate in English means “to reduce the violence of, to cover by excuses and apologies.” Could it be that these definitions suggest this may have been the exact place where Alma the Younger received his attitude adjustment, repented, and was forgiven?

This town is on the west of the Sidon River by the slopes of the hill Amnihu (Hunahpú, Agua). This wilderness is not the west wilderness, but just the wilderness by the west of the river as the slope goes up the hill Amnihu. This appears to be the attack route for many of the earlier battles.

There is a small town about seven miles to the east-southeast of Palín with the Spanish name El Patroncinio. This is the noun form of a verb *patrocinar*, which means “to favor, to patronize, to protect, and to countenance.” This could be the land of Jershon established “to...protect” the Anti-Nephi-Lehies. The Quiché word would be *chajij* a verb meaning “to take care of, look after, defend, guard, or protect.” The noun form next in the dictionary is *chajal*, which means “servant.” Thus, it appears that the land of Jershon may have extended to the Michatoya and María Linda rivers on the west and the land of Melek was very small and possibly just across on the west side of these rivers.

The land of Jershon appears to be well defined by names. The name connections are: Escuintla, which was previously named Panatacat, possibly Panpetak (Recinos 1953, 95) with *patan*

meaning “tribute or tax” (Brinton 1885, 39); El Patroncinio, which comes from “to patronize or to protect”; and Pacaya, which may come from a similar root as *pachaka*, the Quechua word for “slave.” Then there is Río Los Esclavos, (the River of Slaves). Thus, the land of Jershon seems to be bounded by the Michatoya River (the Sidon) on the northwest and extend from Esquintla on the west probably all the way to El Salvador. On the south it was bounded by Antionum, and on the north it extended from Manti to the Lamanite lands in the northeast.

A city so large and as important as Escuintla should have relevance to the Book of Mormon. It was probably the capitol of the land of Jershon and may indeed be the city of Jershon itself.

The Zoramite Lands

The Zoramites lived in the land of Antionum south of the lands of Gideon and Jershon and east of the land Zarahemla (Alma 31:3 and 43:5). They may have joined borders but not necessarily. They were, however, close together as we can see by Kōrihor’s wanderings. Kōrihor, the Antichrist, probably came from the Ammonihah area near the land of Gideon. Remember, Gideon was killed by Nehor who was trying to impose priestcraft by the sword, and Nehor is a Jaredite name (Ether 7:4, 9). As these verses mention, in Jaredite times there was a man named Corihor (with a C rather than a K) who lived in the land of Nehor. The profession of Nehors and the Desolation of Nehors occurred at Ammonihah (Alma 16:11). The region was called the Desolation of Nehors and was left desolate for any years. Even the name Kaminaljuyú, which sounds so close to Ammonihah, means “dead” (*kāmināq*) “hill, mountain, or unpopulated area” (*juyú*) in the Quiché language.

These names and practices were probably tied together in both Jaredite and Nephite times in the region of Ammonihah. There may have been some lingering Jaredites in the area, or some contrary Nephites may have learned the tricks of the trade from the Jaredite writings. Of course, it is always possible they

received some fresh ideas directly from the father of all lies. The genealogy of the people from the Ammonihah area is never given, but it was a hotbed of corrupt practices and doctrines throughout Nephite history. With all the legends and word connections, the strongest probability is that some Jaredites may have lingered in the area.

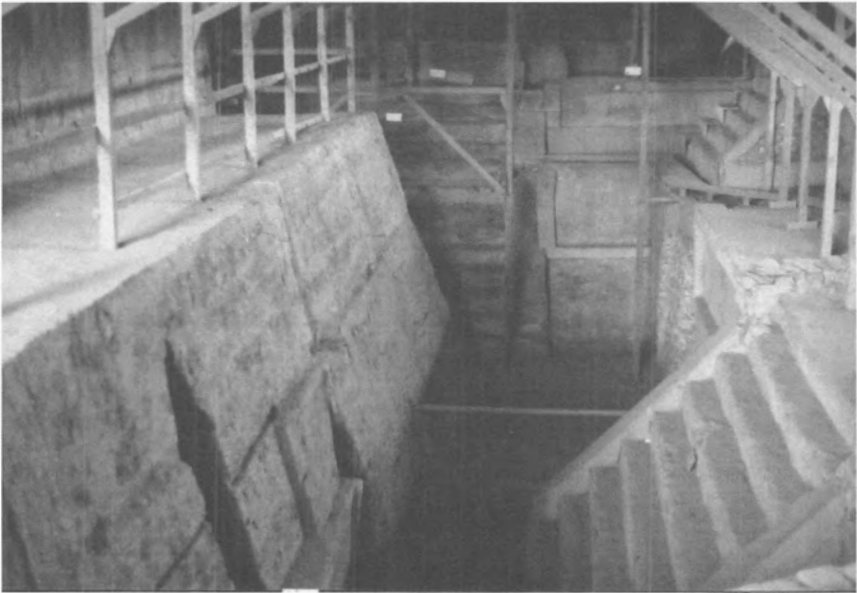


Figure 17. Ruins at Kaminaljuyú, Possible Ammonihah

After the demise of Korihor, Alma received tidings that the Zoramites, led by a man named Zoram, were perverting the ways of the Lord and the people were worshipping idols (Alma 31:1). These may have been the large stone idols that have been found in the area of Monte Alto near the Pantaleón River drainage. They were left by a previous civilization, probably Olmec or pre-Olmec, and they have Chinese facial structure and features. Pantaleón, with its Spanish word structure (but nonsensical meaning, “lion’s pants”), is probably derived from the name of Pa-Antionum or “land of Antionum”(the “Anti” referring to copper), and the colossal stone heads were probably carved by the

Jaredites (or a yet earlier civilization) near Monte Alto. The Zoramites were also using what they called the Rameumptom, which means “the holy stand.” It is possible that Monte Alto was the location of the Rameumptom.

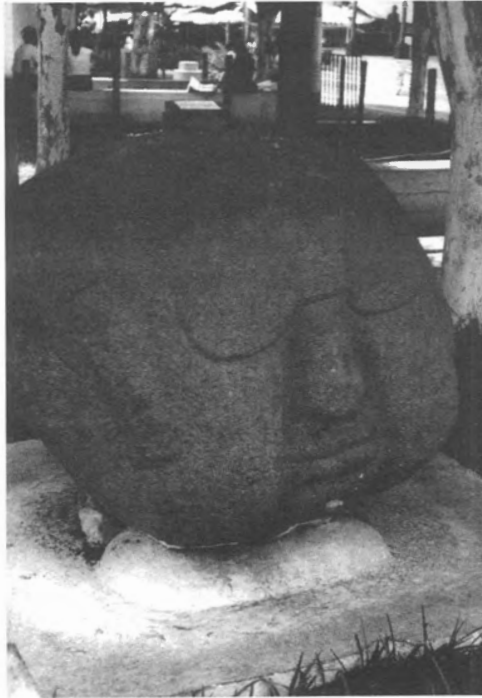


Figure 18. Monte Alto Stone Carving Shows Chinese Style and Features.

Leaving the town of La Democracia and traveling a few miles down a rough cobblestone road to the southeast, one arrives at a fenced, nonfunctional compound. This is the location of Monte Alto. No hill can be seen in the area at all. That makes the place name something like the Colombian joke about a small village named Pueblo Rico. It's called the “town of two lies” because there are not many people in it (no *pueblo*), and it is not rich (*rico*). Monte Alto is the hill of two lies. There is no hill (*monte*), and it is not high (*alto*).

Is there evidence that Monte Alto was a high alter or tower

anciently? Examining the roots of Rameumptom, we find that *Rame* is similar to *Ramah*, which would be “a hill or height.” *Uma*, in the Quichua dictionary, is the highest part of a mount or tree, etc. If there is anything holy in the name, it would be in the ending. In Chorti the word *uh* means “sacred or good.” In Nahuatl, “God” is *teo*, similar to Greek. Christenson’s Quiché word list has *tiox* for “holy or sacred,” similar to *Diós* for “God” in Spanish. Looking at other words in the list based on *tiox*, it appears the Quiché used the root in much the same way the Aztecs used the root *teo* in the Nahuatl language. If the long *i* sound is incorporated into the *tee* sound, we may have *to* and *teo*, meaning “holy.” The *m* on the end may be an old Zoramite tradition or a method for making the word plural as in Hebrew.

Maybe the name Rameumptom was translated directly into Monte Alto, “tall hill” or “holy stand.” As for the Rameumptom being inside a synagogue, it appears that most of the worship in the Central America region was conducted in the open air. Even the reference in Alma 31:14 says that they would get on top, which was high above the head, and stretch their hands toward heaven and cry with a loud voice. This may have been an outdoor tower similar to the many Maya temple sites and was possibly the basis for the name Monte Alto.

Alma comments on the gold, silver, and all manner of fine goods the people had (Alma 31:28). He specifically mentions the ringlets, bracelets, ornaments of gold, and all the precious things with which they were adorned. The name of the region, Antionum, has copper as its root. These people may have lived in a mining district with an abundance of precious and semiprecious metals. Note that the mining hill Onidah was in or near the Zoramite lands (Alma 32:4; 47:5).

Alma took an entourage of missionaries with him to the Zoramites. They included Ammon, Aaron, Omner; his sons Shiblon and Corianton; and Amulek and Zeezrom from Ammonihah, who were in Melek. Aaron, Omner, and Zeezrom have cities named after them, but only Zeezrom has the potential to be in this area. Two cities of Aaron are mentioned near

Ammonihah and fortress Lehi and Omner is near Gid and Bountiful. Alma at one time preached from the hill Onidah, which would be in the land of Antionum (Alma 32:4). The missionaries met with limited success. The converts were expelled from the land and went over to live in the land of Jershon with the people of Ammon (Alma 35:5). Then the Zoramites joined with the Lamanites and more trouble started.

It is doubtful any cities were named after the missionaries while they were preaching there. This particular mission they were on appears to have lasted only a short time. So these cities were probably named later, after Moroni and the armies cleared the south wilderness of Lamanites and had Nephites occupy the area (Alma 16:7). Note how the cities were grouped in the following verse: "The land of Manti, or the city of Manti, and the city of Zeezrom, and the city of Cumeni, and the city of Antiparah" (Alma 56:14). All these cities, except the city of Zeezrom, were mentioned in connection with a series of maneuvers by Helaman and his 2,000 Lamanite sons (Alma 56-62).

Alma's son Corianton was less than valiant in his missionary work.

And this is not all, my son. Thou didst do that which was grievous unto me; for thou didst forsake the ministry, and did go over into the land of Siron, among the borders of the Lamanites, after the harlot Isabel (Alma 39:3).

As a consequence of Corianton's bad behavior we have available to us the name of another geographical area. This is the only time the land of Siron is mentioned. The city Siron would appear to be the current city of Cerén, El Salvador. The pronunciation of its name is identical with the Book of Mormon name and its location fits the proposed geography perfectly. In the languages of Mongolia and Manchuria, where the Jaredites may have traveled on their way to Central America, *ceren* refers to a specific type of gazelle common to the area. Also in Manchurian,

sirin means “copper.” It is also possible that, as the Jaredites traveled through Mongolia, they had reason to move a mountain named *Zerin* in that locale. “For the brother of Jared said unto the mountain *Zerin*, Remove—and it was removed” (Ether 12:30). These names are too similar to be unrelated: *Siron*, *Zerin*, *sirin*, and *Ceren*, suggesting that the name *Siron* (*Ceren*) had Jaredite origins, which lends further support to the possibility that there were residual Jaredites in the land of *Lehi* when *Lehi* and his family arrived.

Cerén is southeast of the area where the land of *Antionum* extends. *Antionum* appears to have extended from *Monte Alto* to the *El Salvador* border, across which would be *Lamanite* land. It is uncanny how many of the *Book of Mormon* land boundaries appear to follow existing national, regional, and documented ethnic boundaries that exist in the area at the present time. The high ground between the major river drainages in some cases may actually be what is referred to as the lands.

The size of *Jershon* and *Antionum* may have increased at various times. We first hear about *Jershon* as the *Nephites* leave to make room for the *Anti-Nephi-Lehies*. There were thousands of *Lamanite* converts and in addition many of the captive *Lamanites* and expelled *Zoramites* who chose to live in *Jershon*. *Jershon* and *Antionum* were between the land *Zarahemla* and the *Lamanite* lands. In the proposed geography, there is room to expand to the southeast into the wilderness between the *Lamanites* and *Nephites*.

The *Zoramites* were one of the original tribes of people in the *Book of Mormon*. *Zoram* married the eldest daughter of *Ishmael* and his tribe may have grown extensively from the time *Lehi* landed until the time spoken of in the verses cited above (some 525 years later). The *Zoramite* lands may have extended into *El Salvador*. *Siron*, where the harlot *Isabel* lived, (the one who enticed *Corianton* from his missionary duties) was “among the borders of the *Lamanites*.” Thus, the city of *Siron* helps to identify those boundaries, and *Cerén* is located near the western extreme of the land of *Lehi*, *El Salvador*.

The Helam-Amulon-Mormon Complex

There is quite a threesome mentioned in the following two verses.

Now the Lamanites and the Amalekites and the people of Amulon had built a great city, which was called Jerusalem (Alma 21:2).

And it came to pass that the Amalekites and the Amulonites and the Lamanites who were in the land of Amulon, and also in the land of Helam, and who were in the land of Jerusalem, and in fine, in all the land round about, who had not been converted and had not taken upon them the name of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, were stirred up by the Amalekites and by the Amulonites to anger against their brethren (Alma 24:1).

Let's return for a moment to the conversion of Alma the Elder through the words of the prophet Abinadi. Alma fled to the waters of Mormon for safety and later traveled with his followers eight days to a land where they founded the city of Helam (Mosiah 23:3). Alma was looking for a place where his followers could be safe. Alma's ancestors two or three generations back had lived in Zarahemla and he and his converts were headed in that direction but on a different route than the one followed by Limhi's people. He probably thought he was far enough away from the Lamanites to be safe, so he and his people were doubtless shocked when the Lamanite army showed up with Amulon, the priests of wicked King Noah, and the twenty-four kidnapped Lamanite daughters. This group asked for directions to get back to the land Lehi-Nephi (Mosiah 23:35-36). The Lamanites posted guards and placed Amulon over the people of Alma as a puppet king. When Alma and his followers fled, they abandoned the land of Helam to the Amulonites and Lamanites. At the time Alma settled in this area, the Lamanite lands had not

been extended from the initial land of Lehi into the Ishmael-Midian-Middoni complex nor into the Ani-Anti and Siron regions. Otherwise, Alma probably would have observed evidence of Lamanite civilization and not have chosen the spot for a settlement (Helam, or Cihuatán). Also the army of the Lamanites would not have been lost.

We aren't told the origin of the Amalekites. There are two individuals named Amaleki mentioned previously in the Book of Mormon but they were both good, not wicked. The implication of the above verses is that the Amalekites were like the Amulonites. They were descendants of the Nephites. Many of the Amulonites and Amalekites were of the order of Nehor (Alma 24:29). A bit later, Helaman and his brethren traveled through every city in all the land possessed by the people of Nephi and reestablished the Church (Alma 45:22). Many were proud, rich, and wicked, and would not adhere to the teachings of Helaman. Rebellion started and one of the strongest of the rebels was Amalickiah. We aren't told his genealogy but he was probably an Amalekite from the region we are discussing.

The Amalekites and the Amulonites built a great city they called Jerusalem. That would likely be Tula since that was the name used to refer back to Jerusalem from which they originally came. It is in west-central El Salvador just close enough to a large river, volcanic lake, or the Pacific Coast to be flooded by hurricanes and tsunamis at the time of the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 9:7). Tula is a city of ruins in northwestern El Salvador just ten miles south of the earthquake and landslide of January 2001 that killed about 1,000 people near Santa Tecla. During the rebuilding of the ancient city after the Crucifixion, it may have been moved to safer ground, giving us some possible uncertainty as to the location of the Jerusalem that had "waters come up in the stead thereof."

The Amalekites and Amulonites possibly did not found the city Jerusalem (Tula) but only built it up. It may have been founded much earlier by the first inhabitants in the land of Lehi as the previously cited legends would indicate. The ruins called

Tula today are only thirty miles south and just over a mountain ridge from Helam (Cihuatán).

This was probably the transition zone between the original land of Lehi (the land of their first inheritance) and the lands of the Nephites. These transition lands were filled with dissenters. The people were distributed as follows: starting to the east and moving west there were 1) the Lamanites, 2) the Amulonites and Amalekites, 3) the Zoramites, and finally, 4) the Nephites.

The second region became the source of much grief for the Nephites (Alma 24 and 25). At times, missionaries were sent into this area and, at other times, armies came from here. It was part of the land of Lehi as well as part of greater Zarahemla.

During the wars it may have been called the land Lehi-Nephi, although technically it was not. Most of the attacks appear to have been launched from this area. Traveling on an uncharted course from the land of Nephi or Lehi-Nephi, previously identified, to the land Zarahemla would have taken about twenty days. With improved infrastructure, troops could possibly have made the trip in ten days or less. That's a lot of time for marching troops to cool off and think about whether they really want to be killed the next day. The area identified above is within better striking distance for attacks on the land of Zarahemla.

The concentration of known ruins is much greater in this area than in the area we have identified as the land of Nephi (northward in the La Paz region of Honduras). Even today the population is more dense in El Salvador than in any other area of Central America. It was a region where Nephite dissenters were eventually concentrated, and there is a city in the region today with what may be "Nephi" in its name—Nahuizalco.

Lamanite cities and lands were also located in this area of western El Salvador. The land of Mormon was adjacent to the land of Jerusalem. This is not the *place* or *Waters* of Mormon that were within walking distance of Shilom in the land of Nephi. This is the *land* of Mormon. It is mentioned in Alma 21:1 and 3 Nephi 5:12 and appears to be in the area of the city and land of Helam. The original Waters of Mormon received its name from

the king, probably wicked King Noah. We are told that it was a beautiful area of fresh water named by the king (Mosiah 18:4). There is also the possibility that it was a Jaredite name from residual Jaredites in the area, since Mormon is very possibly a Jaredite name. The root of the name *mor* has meaning not only in Quiché and Chortí, but there are ties back to Sumerian, as we will see later.

When Amulon and Noah's other priests took charge of the land of Helam, Alma and his associate Helam were not their friends. These priests of wicked King Noah were probably in the land of Shilom during the naming of the original waters called Mormon. Amulon's followers may have reused the name after arriving in the land of Helam. There's a stream named Morán, closely related to Mormon in pronunciation, at the headwaters of the Lempa (Limhi) River, which passes through this area.

Aaron the missionary, after being rejected in the land of Jerusalem, went into the village of Ani-Anti. Later he went still farther to the land of Middoni. Ani-Anti would therefore be relatively close to the land of Jerusalem but possibly in a different valley. The ruins at San Andres, or more likely the present-day city of Santa Ana, might be the location of Ani-Anti. The Spaniards could very easily have Christianized the indigenous sounds of Ani-Anti into the name Santa Ana. Ani may be related to the Cakchiquel verb *aneh* which means "to escape" (Brinton 1885, 210). It may also mean "to take out copper." This town may have been in a copper region. Today it is a very rich agricultural area with limited gold, silver, copper, and lead.

It is likely that the mount Antipas (Alma 47:7) is also in this general region (note the copper word in this name). The mount Antipas is probably named after the great captain Antipus (Alma 56:9) and the people of Antipus (Alma 56:53). The interchanging of the *pas* and *pus* could have been the result of a subtle phonetic exchange between Joseph Smith's verbal utterances and the scribe's hearing. This is not to point an accusing finger, but rather to bear strong testimony of the reality of the translation and recording process as described by the participants.

Moroni's captain Antipus was defending Judea when Helaman and his 2000 young Lamanite warriors arrived (Alma 55:9). The mount Antipas and the city Antipus are thought to be San José Acatempa, just five miles east of Cuilapa (Cumeni) and just sixteen miles west of Jutiapa (Judea). Amalickiah took up residence in this region before he moved in with the queen. Note in the following verse the reference to copper in the name. Note also that the embassy was sent *into* the mount to Lehonti while his followers were *on* the mount. He was probably in a copper mine or smelter, while his troops were on the mount.

And it came to pass that when it was night he sent a secret embassy *into* the mount Antipas, desiring that the leader of those who were *upon* the mount, whose name was Lehonti, that he should come down to the foot of the mount, for he desired to speak with him (Alma 47:10, emphasis added).

There are two names mentioned together in the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* that are close to Lehonti and Amalickiah. They are Huntah and Amullac (Recinos 1953, 92). It mentions a time when there were two kings and gives an account that sounds very similar to the events in Alma 47. It even mentions 36 cities that were captured (Alma 51:22-27). Of these captured cities, Lahub, Zutum, Molobak, Lamagi, and Molomic Abah look like Lehi, Antum, Moroni, Lamani, and Moronihah respectively. Remember that Amalickiah captured many cities by his cunning and only a few fortress cities were mentioned (Alma 51:27).

The original point for which Amalickiah was mentioned was his desire to be king (Alma 46:4). He was voted down but rebelled and the King-men were started. Now catch the significance of the following quote from the *Annals* (author's comments in brackets):

Then began the revolt of the Quichés against the king Quikab [Jacob, Alma 52:20] and also against the clan

[*chinamital*, village, town, followers] of the king. The revolt spread, and the king's clan was destroyed together with the principal chiefs [lower judges of the land, Alma 46:4]. The Quichés did not wish the vassals to serve *the king*. They wanted the Quiché people to travel freely on the roads, but the king did not wish this. The principal chiefs became angry with the king and refused to pay him homage. For this reason the Quiché people rose against the king and so his glory diminished. (Recinos 1953, 94).

Recognize that *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* was written from the perspective of the Lamanites and the Book of Mormon was written from the perspective of the Quiché prior to their apostasy and fall. The *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán* is also the Quiché perspective and covers both the good years and the apostate years. The documentation is tainted however because it was written after they had rejected their Messiah. Most of the time the Quiché and Cakchiquels were enemies.

The Original Land of Nephi

There have been many paradigm shifts in this research effort, and the following is a very significant one. It appears that Lehi and his extended family landed at Acajutla, El Salvador, as their legends state.² At some point in time, Nephi apparently traveled a short ways north and founded a city named Nephi. It is just fifteen miles inland to the north. As noted briefly above, that town is named Nahuizalco today. The name appears to mean "Nephi's house" or "Nephi's hill."

Why should we not expect a town named Nephi where they first landed? They lived there some 15 years before Lehi died and Nephi fled with his followers to start a new land of Nephi over the mountains in Honduras. The name of Nephi's first city

² Brewerton, personal conversation, 2002.

apparently stuck and should not be confused with his second city, which became known as Lehi-Nephi.

It is most likely that this original land of Nephi (Nahuizalco and vicinity) became the ominous and dreaded land of Nephi from which the Lamanites were always attacking. This was where the Lamanite kings lived. The lands of Shilom, Lehi-Nephi, Shemlon, and Shimnilom are just too far away to be militarily significant, while this original land of Nephi is but a short way southward into the greater land of Lehi.

This conclusion is supported by the intrigue and battles with Amalickiah described in chapters 55, 56, and 57 of Alma, which talk of the battles of Antipus in Judea (Jutiapa) and establish the mount and land of Antipas or Antipus as San José Acatempa. There is further support in chapter 47, which discusses the treachery of Amalickiah (likely Amullac referred to in the *Annals*) as he surrenders to Lahonti (Huntoh in the *Annals*), then poisons him slowly. He finally stabs the king then moves in with the queen.

The hill or place Onidah is mentioned twice in the Book of Mormon. First it appears in Nephite territory, and second, it appears in Lamanite territory.

Now, as Alma was teaching and speaking unto the people upon the hill Onidah, there came a great multitude unto him, who were those of whom we have been speaking, of whom were poor in heart, because of their poverty as to the things of the world (Alma 32:4).

And now he had got the command of those parts of the Lamanites who were in favor of the king; and he sought to gain favor of those who were not obedient; therefore he went forward to the place which was called Onidah, for thither had all the Lamanites fled; for they discovered the army coming, and, supposing that they were coming to destroy them, therefore they fled to Onidah, to the place of arms (Alma 47:5).

If it is the same place in both verses, its position in the proposed transition zone, between the Lamanites and the Nephites, would fit. And in that area there is another city in the Book of Mormon that is called by a name too similar to ignore. It is Onihah (3Nephi 9:7). Its proposed location is close enough to the Pacific Ocean that it could have been covered by the same tsunami or volcanic lake that hit Jerusalem (Tula) at the time of the Crucifixion.

Yea, and the city of Onihah and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Mocum and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Jerusalem and the inhabitants thereof; and waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof, to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come up any more unto me against them. (3 Nephi 9:7)

The *Annals* say that Amullac (Amalickiah?) was the lord of the Akahals (Recinos 1953, 92). This group would be the people from Acajutla, which is believed to be the landing place of Lehi and his extended family. Amalickiah, after initially gaining the Lamanite king's favor, "went forward" toward Onidah (Alma 47:5). "Forward" in a Hebrew reference frame means "from the sea inland toward the east." In the Americas this reference frame was skewed and "forward" meant inland from the sea. In this case it is northwest and implies that they were close enough to the Pacific Ocean to use it as the reference in this old sense.

The name Onihah may refer to a city near the hill Onidah. Onidah was known as "the place of arms" (Alma 47:5). It may have been a storehouse, a metal foundry, an obsidian outcropping, or some other source of raw materials for weapons. The technology for metal swords appears to have been lost amongst the Central American people by the time Cortés arrived. Obsidian was the blade of choice among the tribes encountered, according to Bernál Díaz (Cohen 1963, 72). He also talked of

their swords which were as long as broadswords, made of flint which cut worse than a knife, and the blades were set so that one could neither break them or pull them out (Cohen 1963, 142). Díaz does mention that when the Indians saw the rust on a Spaniard's steel (half-gilt) helmet, they took note of it as if they had seen or heard of ferrous metals before.³ Apparently, it was like one that they possessed which had been left them by their ancestors. It was placed on the head of their god Huichilobos (originally, Huitzilopochtli). Notice how the Spaniards put *lobos*, "wolves," in a name for the Aztec god that did not have it there originally. When the Spaniard's helmet was compared to the one on the head of their god, they were convinced that the Spaniards were of that race which, according to the prophecies of their ancestors, would come to rule the land (Cohen 1963, 91-92).

Obsidian or flint will do a number on flesh, but it is too brittle to match armor or steel. If it were to hit something harder, one would have to retool. It is possible that the Lamanites were using steel or alloyed swords, but the evidence indicates this was a technology Nephi kept secret among his people. Mormon is very consistent and correct in the usage of metallurgical terms. His correctness demonstrates understanding—an understanding superior to any Joseph Smith could have had and superior to that of the average man-on-the-street in the US today. This level of understanding was not demonstrated by *any* of the factions that scattered (based on current archaeological findings). The complete loss of such a useful body of information might indicate that they (the residual Lamanites) never had it.

Thus, Onidah would likely have been in a mining and smelting area. Mocom, near Onihah, is only mentioned this once and it is probably close by in this region because it is mentioned in the same breath. In Quiché, *mocom* means "hireling or servant." This name may be associated with the Anti-Nephi-Lehies and the land of Jershon.

In Onidah there was a hill Onidah (Alma 32:4) and also a hill

³ They took the helmet to Montezuma and returned it full of gold.

Antipas (Alma 47:7). The two hills may have been the same. If Antipus and Antipas are the same, then Judea and Cumeni are nearby. After Amalickiah deceived and then poisoned Lehonti, he headed back to the land of Nephi, to the city of Nephi, which was the chief city (Alma 47:20). Amalickiah and the returning army were met by the king and the king was then stabbed by the servants of Amalickiah. The king's servants realized the situation and fled to the people of Ammon for safety (Alma 47:29). The land of Ammon was close and the king's servants were not captured by Amalickiah's men. Verse 31 says that "on the *morrow* he entered the city of Nephi with his armies, and took possession of the city. Thus it would appear that Antipas is only about one day's journey from Nephi. That would have to be the original city of Nephi (Nahuizalco) just 40 miles from Antipas (San José Acatempa). The land of Lehi-Nephi is much further away.

At one time during Alma's administration, a man named Zoram was the chief captain of the Nephite armies (Alma 16:5). His lineage isn't mentioned either, but his name tells us a great deal. He had two sons, Lehi and Aha (Alma 16:5). There is a present-day city with an archeological background on the west edge of the area we've been discussing named Ahuachapán. It may have been named for Zoram's son Aha.

There is also a Jaredite king named Ahah (Ether 11:10). In Cakchiquel, *ahauh* means "ruler, chief, or lord" (Brinton 1885, 209). In Christensen's word list, this is *ajaw*, and in English, it is pronounced as *ahaw*, which is similar to Ahauh-chapán. The greatest of the Lamanites probably lived in Ahuachapán. *Cha* means "to speak" and *pan* means "land of" or "by the." Ahuachapán is just five miles from Nahuizalco (Nephi).

Lamanite Lands Wrap-Up

We have now covered all cities and lands that are known parts of the Lamanite world as mentioned in the Book of Mormon. There are four major regions.

First, there is the land of their first inheritance, the land of Lehi. Though not mentioned in the Book of Mormon, there was probably a city of Lehi at the place of their first landing. That is probably the city Acajutla (possibly from Tlaca-jutla where tlaca or laca is the form of Lehi that survived among the Aztecs). Fifteen miles inland is the original city of Nephi (Nahuizalco). It is likely there was also a city Lemuel and a city Laman in the immediate area since duplicate cities of Laman and Lemuel are found over the mountain in the Shilom area. No original cities by that name have been found in El Salvador, however. There is good reason for this. The Book of Mormon mentions one city of Laman, and it was burned (3 Nephi 9:10). This was probably in volcanic-prone El Salvador. Likewise, the Book of Mormon mentions one city of Lemuel, where the inhabitants were converted by the great missionaries Lehi and Nephi (Alma 23:12). This city Lemuel was definitely in the land of Shilom. The coastal region of El Salvador can be oppressively hot and humid at times during the year. A more pleasant, temperate region can be found at a higher elevation, namely, the area to which Nephi fled.

Second, there is the second land of Nephi which became known as Lehi-Nephi. Nephi fled to higher ground over the Continental Divide for personal safety, not because of the weather. At some point in time the Lamanites entered into the second land of Nephi and eventually caused Mosiah and his people to flee. We have discussed the cities of Laman and Lemuel in the second land of Nephi. The city of Lemuel was likely Ca-Lamuya, which suggests it was the second city called by the name Lemuel (because of the Mayan number two in the name). Likewise, the city of Lamani in the land of Lehi-Nephi, like the one in Belize, is not likely the original.

Third, there is the Lamanite region in the Midian, Middoni, and Ishmael area of northwestern El Salvador, where Ammon and the other sons of Mosiah had their great success.

Fourth, there is the Lamanite region at the southwestern end of El Salvador. This area probably had the largest concentration

of Lamanites and is the interface where the Nephite dissenters also gathered. It is the region around the lands of Jerusalem, Ani-Anti, Siron, Helam, Amulon, and Mormon. This also includes the original land of Nephi.

The volcano Illopango in El Salvador supposedly erupted about 260 AD, wiping out everything within a sixty-mile radius around it. This would include virtually all of El Salvador at the time, including many cities we cannot now locate. Archaeologists and geologists may be off in dating this eruption. It may have occurred at the time of Christ. But if the dating is correct and the eruption occurred about 260 AD, the event may have added to the crowding of the Lamanites and motivated them to move into the land of Zarahemla, leading to the ethnic strife of Mormon's day.



CHAPTER 8

MORMON'S CONNECTIONS

Mormon's World

The next logical step would be to discuss the mountain fortresses built in Captain Moroni's time, the trouble between Morianton and Lehi, and the great battles of Captain Moroni and the others who fought with him. Unfortunately, it was not possible to identify the city Mulek until after examining Mormon's documentation of his own battles and Moroni's Jaredite contribution. So, although the following section is out of order in the Book of Mormon, it will provide the evidence for a more credible case when we return to examine Captain Moroni.

There is extensive geography in Mormon's nine short chapters, and much confusion has existed about this part of the geography. Now that many of the major features of Mormon's world have been presented, the confusion is largely cleared up, and we can see the simple geography as it was.

About the time Ammaron hid the records of the people, he approached a ten-year-old named Mormon, whom he knew to be sober and quick to observe (Mormon 1:2). Ammaron hid the plates in the hill Shim in a land called Antum (Mormon 1:3). As noted before, Antum may have copper as its root. Perhaps some mining occurred in the area. Ammaron and Mormon probably

lived in Antum in order for Ammaron to have observed Mormon and his father Mormon. Ammaron would have known the family and may even have been related. In fact, it is most probable that Mormon was the grandson of Ammaron. They may all have been from Moron, since they, as well as Moroni, all have that city name in their personal names.

At age eleven, Mormon's father took him into the land southward, to the land of Zarahemla.¹ Zarahemla is referred to as the land southward. Bountiful appears to be mostly west by northwest from Zarahemla but is also included as part of the land southward reserved by the Jaredites for hunting (Mormon 1:6; Ether 9:31; 10:19).

Many of these directions appear to have come from the skewed reference frame of the Old World Hebrews. Zarahemla was on the right and southward. But all of the major lands (Desolation, Bountiful, Zarahemla, Antionum, and Jershon) were actually on the southwest coast of Guatemala. Mormon does appear to use both conventions, but mostly it appears he uses the Hebrew or Old World convention previously defined.

How and when did Mormon have his extended contact with Ammaron? Since Nephi readily produced the plates at the temple in Bountiful at the time the Savior came to the people there, the plates must have been kept near Bountiful at that time. The contact between Ammaron and Mormon would appear to have been in the land of Antum, not in Bountiful or Zarahemla. Rereading Mormon's first four verses, it is clear that the contact with Ammaron was prior to the young man moving to Zarahemla, the land southward (or to the right, facing inland).

Young Mormon was impressed by the number of houses and buildings in Zarahemla (Mormon 1:7). This suggests he came

¹ The record uses the word "carried," which would imply he had some sort of conveyance. The Book of Mormon refers to horses fourteen times. Eleven of these refer to Jaredite and Nephite times. Six are used in conjunction with chariots. It seems probable that wagons were used to transport supplies. If this is true, it would influence where the people traveled, how far they went, when they traveled, as well as the points of attack for their armies.

into the city from a more rural, mountainous, less populated, mining area. His father may have known that war was eminent and was moving to a more central location. Mormon's father may have been a leader himself. He was probably not an average, nondescript individual. His recognition among the people would likely have contributed to his son Mormon being selected to lead the Nephite armies at age sixteen. The fruit doesn't usually fall far from the tree.

Considering the shift of the records, the chief judges, and the chief high priests from the city of Zarahemla to the temple at Bountiful (3 Nephi 9:3; 23:8), the Jaredite record, the epistle of Mormon to his son Moroni, and a study of some geology in the area, the best place to start looking for a land of Antum would be in the mountains above the Bountiful and Desolation areas, northwest of Zarahemla (Cotzumalguapa). Looking at all of the names of the ruins in this area and thinking about the time element and what effect the Spaniards and the Catholic priests might have had on the original names, some possible name roots can be found in the higher region between Abaj Takalik (believed to be Moron) and the fortress city of Lehi (Quetzaltenango). Specifically, there are some ruins named San Antonio los Cerritos just a few miles west of Quetzaltenango at the top of the canyon from Colomba Costa Cuca.

The Book of Ether speaks of large heaps of earth in the area:

And it came to pass that Morianton built up many cities, and the people became exceedingly rich under his reign, both in buildings, and in gold and silver, and in raising grain, and in flocks, and herds, and such things which had been restored unto them (Ether 10:12).

And they did work in all manner of ore, and they did make gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, and all manner of metals; and they did dig it out of the earth; wherefore they did cast up mighty heaps of earth to get ore, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of copper. And they did work all manner of fine work (Ether 10:23).

Cerritos means “little hills” in Spanish. These may have been the mill tailings heaped up from the mining operations Ether describes above. Notice the name of the Jaredite king mentioned not long before the reference to mining. It was Morianton, the same name as the man (supposedly Nephite) who beat his maidservant, making her flee to the camp of Moroni for safety (Alma 50:30). The Nephite city of Morianton was adjacent to the fortress city of Lehi (Alma 50:25). San Antonio los Cerritos is about seven miles from that city (Quetzaltenango). It appears that the Jaredites may have had a city Morianton near the same ground where the Nephites had their fortress city Morianton (Alma 50:25; 55:33; Ether 10:12, 23). If this is the case, the Nephite city could have been a continuation of the Jaredite city.

Mormon, in his epistle to Moroni, mentions a city of Moriantum with a *um* (Moroni 9:9). This may be the same as Morianton with an *on*. Based on the war reports (Alma 50:25, 51:26), it is in the same area. Take the name Moriantum and discard the *Mori*, which means “to heap up a pile” in both Sumerian and Mayan, and you are left with the name *Antum*. *Antum*, *Moriantum*, *Morianton* the Jaredite, and *Morianton* the Nephite appear to be related, and are probably all from, or located in, the same small region. *Moriantum* even looks like a contraction of *Moron* and *Antum*.

From this perspective, the Spanish name *Antonio* might have been selected because of its phonetic similarity to *Antum*. The differences in the orthography are neither significant nor unusual. That is, *o* and *u* are interchangeable sounds, and *m* and *n* are interchangeable in the early writings. Today there is a river named *Lacantum* that starts fifty miles away and drains into the *Usumacinta* River. This shows that the people in the region knew the word *antum*.

In K’iche’, *antun* is the name of a bird whose Spanish name is *clarinero*. It is black with a bluish sheen to its feathers, about the size of a magpie, but its tail feathers are a bit shorter. This bird is prevalent throughout the area we are considering. There are other place names farther north that may have *antum* in their names but

they are too far north to be relevant. That is because Mormon later pulled the records from the hill Shim in the land Antum when he thought the land was going to be overrun by the enemy. They were fighting at the time in Desolation and the Boaz area down by the sea (the Pacific Ocean and the Samalá River, as we shall see). That means the hill Shim should be relatively close to Desolation. We know Shim was between Moron where the Jaredite king dwelt, and Cumorah, based on the Jaredite record (Ether 9:3). We do not know how all encompassing the Nephite land Desolation was.

The year that young Mormon arrived in the land of Zarahemla, war began in the borders of the land Zarahemla by the waters of Sidon (Mormon 1:10). Coming from the southeast where the Lamanites had historically been, there are two ways to go to Zarahemla by the Sidon. One is to come down from the high country near Manti, and the other is to come directly from the east-southeast over the river.

The people had experienced peace for 286 years. The mountain fortresses were probably no longer functional in the way they were initially built. There had been no need for fortresses for the better part of three centuries. The infrastructure between the former Lamanite areas and the former Nephite areas would have been well developed and the roads (including bridges and river crossings) were probably the best they had ever been.

After so many years of peace, a military attack from the southeast would be most likely. Otherwise, a mountain city would probably have been mentioned. The war was between the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Gadianton robbers are not mentioned until eight verses later (Mormon 1:18). Then Mormon says that the Gadianton robbers, who were among the Lamanites, infested the land. This would suggest that pockets of Lamanites were in the land of Zarahemla and that the Gadianton robbers were predominantly among the Lamanite portion of the people.

The Lamanites and Nephites were mixed together geographically at that time. The clear lines that were drawn during Captain Moroni's time were not in existence then. It was a

multiethnic society. When young Mormon said war began *among* them, that is what he meant. The lines were not geographical; they were familial. It was the Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, and Zoramites against the Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites (Mormon 1:8). This sounds like an ethnic conflict.

The Nephites gathered 30,000 men. When defeated, the Lamanites did not retreat to Lehi-Nephi, they merely “withdrew their plan” and there was peace in the land for four more years (Mormon 1:11-12). No city south of Zarahemla is ever mentioned again in Mormon’s history.

In this time of peace, young Mormon said he was visited of the Lord and knew the goodness of Jesus (Mormon 1:15). Thus, he received the tutoring and instruction that would help him through very troubled times as a young man on his own among very wicked people. During the four years of peace, some lines began to be drawn and the two main groups may have been separating ideologically, ethnically, and geographically.

At the end of those four years a war began between the Nephites and Lamanites. Mormon said, “Notwithstanding I being young, was large in stature; therefore the people of Nephi appointed me that I should be their leader, or the leader of their armies (Mormon 2:1).” They then moved from a non-military society into a fully military one in the space of a few months.

With young Mormon at the head, the Nephite army fought against the Lamanites. The Lamanites were taking the offensive. Mormon said they came upon the Nephites with power, so much power that they frightened his armies. It is reasonable to assume this war too started near Zarahemla. The armies fled northward to the city of Angola (Mormon 2:4). This may have put them in the area of today’s Chocó, about thirty-five miles to the northwest. True north would have put them in the rugged wilderness or mountains. As noted previously, however, it is suggested that we buffer the compass directions given in the Book of Mormon using the skewed Hebrew and what appears to be a similar Quiché reference frame.

Bountiful and did not head over the mountains. This will be established more firmly as we continue. There was nothing in the mountains to help them carry on their war. They retreated *toward* but not actually *to* the north countries. And in the skewed reference frame, that would mean they were fleeing in a west by northwest direction.

They marched from the land of David to the land of Joshua, which was near the west borders by the seashore (Mormon 2:6). Joshua may well be the ruins of Xojolá. The pronunciation of the two names is almost identical if the syllables are rearranged. Xojolá shifted would be Joxolá. The shifting of the order of the syllables has been observed extensively in Mayan and is likely an artifact of their glyph writing where the glyph features cannot always be ordered correctly. In fact, on a map published by the Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic/Topographic Center, Washington D.C., the town Xojolá appears as Yoxajá, very close to Joshua.

If Joshua is Xojolá (or Yoxajá), the land of David could possibly be Pasac. If so, it would appear they had been chased the full length of the lands of Zarahemla and Bountiful. This means “the borders west by the seashore” was either the west shore of Lake Atitlán, which is 19 kilometers away, or the Samalá River, ten kilometers to the west. There may have been a lake in that area along the Samalá River, but, there is not one there today.

An Even Narrower Neck of Land

As previously noted, the search for the narrow neck of land suggests the need for an important paradigm shift. The Sumerian dictionary does not have a word that distinguishes riverbank from seashore. A shore or a bank appears to apply to a river, lake, sea, or ocean. Thus, it may be that the term “seashore” in the Book of Mormon is a term applied to the bank of any large waterway.

In this regard, it is significant that the definition for the Sumerian word *gú* is “neck, nape, riverbank, side, edge,” and similar words. Thus, it appears that the narrow neck of land

referred to in Ether 10:20 may be the riverbank along the Samalá River as it tumbles down the narrow canyon from Xelajú (Lehi, Quetzaltenango) to Retalhuleu and the Line Bountiful, which we will discuss later. The words *gú* and *gud* have the same meaning in Sumerian. In Quiché there is an analogous word, *jut'*, which means "narrow." This may be a definition of the name Gid (Alma 51:26).

The Jaredites came from lower Mesopotamia where they had learned to harness great rivers. They did much to manage the Tigris and Euphrates for flood control and irrigation. They had a system of levees, head gates, and ditches to irrigate the flat land near the rivers. Levees are raised earth embankments or rather narrow dykes that are high enough and wide enough to control floodwater (most of the time). An excellent description of a levee is a "narrow neck of land." This may possibly be the origin of the use of that term with respect to riverbanks and shores.

There is another possibility that should be considered in connection with the "narrow neck of land." Between the present-day towns of Santa Cruz Mulúa and San Sebastián, where the highway bridge crosses the Samalá River, the river is at its most narrow, lowland point. With all of the volcanic activity from the nearby Volcano Santa Maria there exists the possibility that there was at one time a natural lava bridge in this area.

Lava flowing over a wet riverbed can create a condition where the top cap is solid, with porous sand and gravel left underneath. Initially, the water will be forced to flood over the top of the lava, but with time, a path is eroded underneath in the porous substrate, leaving a natural land bridge. This may have been the narrow neck of land they defended so fiercely (Alma 50:34; 52:9; Mormon 3:5). In this sense, the land northward would be nothing more than the coastal plains west of the Samalá River, placing the land Bountiful to the east of the river, comparable to the Old Hebrew where east is inland, north is to the left along the coast, south is to the right along the coast, and west is backward toward the sea or ocean.

When Mormon's troops retreated (Mormon 2:6), there were

two possibilities for the “west borders by the seashore.” It may have meant the west borders of the land Bountiful near the seashore, meaning the bank of the Samalá River, which would divide the land Bountiful from the land Desolation (“where the sea divides the land”—Alma 63:5; Ether 10:20). It may also have meant the west borders of Lake Atitán by the shore some 13 miles to the northeast of Xojolá. If Xojolá (Yoxajá) is Joshua, the west border of the land is the river Samalá.

Note that there is a town in that area today named San Felipe, which was previously named Tak’ajal. That name means “something which pertains to the coast.” But there is no coast in the area, just the Samalá River.

We should also keep in mind the possibility that the local topography has changed. There may have been a volcanically impounded lake in the area at some time in the past.

Based on the cities and lands that have been identified, it appears that the Samalá River is the true west border of the greater land Bountiful. This is not in the old Hebrew sense; this “borders west” of the land “by the seashore” would be in the true west sense. Recognize that Mormon was probably writing at or near the hill Shim, which we shall see is probably 15 miles further northeast of this location.

The Nephite armies probably went toward Bountiful and Desolation for the simple reason of food, support, population centers, and ease of travel. Travel toward Lake Atitlán is rugged, even today. Food, support, and protection are not available in that direction. Their later stands were made in the Desolation/Teancum area on the shores of the Samalá River (“where the sea divides the land.”—Mormon 3:5; Alma 63:5; Ether 10:20.) Of course, from our perspective, it would be more correct to say “where the *river* divides the land” as this river became the boundary in the treaty between Mormon’s army and the Lamanites and Gadianton robbers (Mormon 2:29).

We talk of the east coast and the west coast of the United States and there is no confusion. Our ease of communication and travel pulls us together. Mormon didn’t have that luxury. Thus,

references to east and west seas, etc. must be examined more closely and from Mormon's perspective, as much as we can possibly determine it, in order to get the proper meaning.

Locating Teancum

At this point it would be helpful to locate the city Desolation and the city Teancum. *Tecún Umán* is the name of a Guatemalan national hero who appears, as we shall see, to be based on the legend of Teancum, and there is a city named Tecún Umán just on the Guatemalan side of the border with Mexico in the Pacific Coast drainage. Note that the last letter of each name in Tecún Umán is *m* in some documents and *n* in others.

A town near the place where the first successful attack on Ammaron's brother occurred was honored with Teancum's name (Alma 51:32-37; Mormon 4:3). However, Ciudad Tecún Umán does not appear to be the Book of Mormon city named after Teancum. Nevertheless, a further study comparing Teancum and Tecún Umán (or Tecúm, very close to Teancum) will help in locating the true historical site for that city.

The warrior Tecún Umán is a national folk hero in Guatemala. *Umán* means "grandson" in Quiché while *umun* means "a title of respect" in Sumerian. Legend has it that this great warrior was killed in hand-to-hand combat during the Spanish conquest of Guatemala by Pedro de Alvarado and his soldiers. The Spaniards were destroying their history as well as the people themselves. The result has been much confusion about the legend of Tecún Umán. Even the various scribes and historians who write of the legend are inconsistent with the battle's date and that of Tecún Umán's reported death. Some relevant quotes by Carmack demonstrate the difficulty of determining what happened:



Figure 20. Statue of National Hero Tecún Umán, Lord of the Banners and Staffs (Possible Teancum)

Quiché history has been the subject of considerable interest. Disagreements among authors on important historical matters abound. Unfortunately, our sources lack absolute dates for the major events that took place in the Utlán community. A few scattered 260-day calendar dates are recorded in the chronicles, such as the day on which the Spaniards arrived in Guatemala. Without a zero

reference point, however, these dates are chronologically useless.

Apparently the Quiché long-count system was lost with the destruction of such books. The Cakchiquels, who were, perhaps, slightly more secular in their outlook than the Quiché of Umatlán, revived the system after the conquest.

Of course, it must also be remembered that alteration of genealogy for political purposes is a general phenomenon in traditional societies like that of Umatlán (Carmack 1981, 121-122).

Another problem is that the Spaniards changed many names to suit their liking. They had no interest in honoring a peasant boy who got in the way of their war machine—especially when obliterating ethnic pride, religious heritage, and national tradition were the order of the day. They destroyed a people, a civilized literate society, and a system of government. So the dates may have been altered by the chroniclers with the intention of making it look like a more recent history, so the Spaniards would not purge it.

As to the dating problems noted above, while the Jaredites or Nephites most likely started the long-count calendaring system, as noted previously and suggested by Sahagún's work (Dibble 1961, 191), the technology may have been lost to the common people. It may have been a skill taught and handed down just for the skilled record keepers. These factors need to be kept in mind while reviewing that history and seeking correlation with the Book of Mormon story of Teancum.

Carmack quotes a report prepared by the Guatemalan Army, *La Muerte de Tecún Umán, Estudio Crítico de la Conquista del Altiplano Occidental de la República*. Editorial del Ejército, 1963, Guatemala, C.A. This report about Tecún Umán was published as an Editorial of the Guatemalan Army in 1963 in an effort to designate a military hero for the indigenous people of that region.

The towns mentioned in the old writings about Tecún Umán include Xelaju (Lehi), Mik'ina, (which we shall see appears to be Moronihah), Tzjibachaj, and Quiché (Utatlán, or K'umarkáj). These are all mountain towns. The legends say Tecún Umán died in a battle over Xelaju (Lehi, Quetzaltenango), which correlates with the Book of Mormon story of Teancum. However, Alvarado wrote to Cortés, saying Xelaju was situated in a very strong position, and that the people had fled before they arrived (Guatemalan Army 1963, 190).

Legend has it that Tecún Umán was living near Ixtahuacán at the time of the attack. This city has the indigenous name of Sija' and is located just two miles from Nahuala' (Nephihah) and ten miles from the town we will later identify as Moroni (just off the shore in Lake Atitlán).

The Book of Mormon says the Lamanite army was gathered around Moroni, by the "seashore," ten miles away (Alma 62:32-33).² The Nephite armies had taken Lehi without a struggle and were chasing the Lamanite army from city to city. All of the Lamanite armies and King Ammaron were gathered at the city Moroni, the first city that his brother Amalickiah had attacked when he led the army.

As we shall see in the next chapter, the city of Moroni was probably on the seashore of Lago de Atitlán, but it sank into that "sea" at the time of the crucifixion (3 Nephi 9:4). Thus, Moroni is now underwater in that lake.³ As we examine the legends of Teancum, keep in mind that it is possible the legend changed, focusing on another city nearby. With Moroni under water after the time of Christ, those retelling the story would have had no

² The city that bears the name Tecún Umán is eighty miles away from Xelaju' down by the Mexican border. It is closer to Bountiful and Desolation where Teancum killed Amalickiah as recorded in the Book of Mormon and not up in the mountains where Teancum/Tecún Umán was killed. The naming of the city Tecún Umán, so distant from Xelaju', does not support the legend, and is of recent date.

³ During a relatively recent dry spell, the water level in this lake dropped sixty feet and ruins were found. They have since been established as a city that existed at the time of Christ (Warren 1987, 44).

current location to point to. If that is true, Xelahu' (Lehi, Quetzaltenango) would have been a good choice as a substitute for the lost city of Moroni since it is nearby.

In the book *Maya Cosmos*, by Freidel, Schele, and Parker, some interesting information is presented about the battle in which Tekúm Umán (yet another spelling) was killed. Here both the Spanish and the indigenous perspective are presented. First, let's read the Spanish perspective as presented in *Maya Cosmos*.

The Spanish account describes the battle in purely material terms. On December 5, 1523, Cortés ordered Alvarado to southern Mexico to suppress a rebellion and begin the conquest of Guatemala. Alvarado took with him 120 horsemen, 300 foot-soldiers, 200 Tlaxcaláns, and 100 loyal Mexica. This company of 720 men was expected to face 3,000 to 4,000 K'iche'. The battle took place near the town of Xelahun, today called Quetzaltenango by Latinos and Xelahu by the Maya.

According to Alvarado, this was just another battle among many. In a letter to Cortés, he said that several thousand K'iche' warriors approached his troops while they were taking a break for food and water. They let the Indians close the distance. Then they attacked and routed the Indian army, pursuing them until they were trapped against a mountain. To draw them out, Alvarado's men pretended to flee on their horses and then turned, rallied, and defeated the assembled warriors. He mentioned that one of the K'iche' chiefs was killed, but he didn't even record his name. (Freidel 1993, 327-328)

Now let's see what the indigenous people had to say years later about the same battle. Again, this is described in *Maya Cosmos*:

The K'iche' account is told as if a totally different series of events had unfolded. Their story begins with the

entry of Tekum Umán into the town of Xelahun with 8,400 warriors, including thirty-nine flag bearers and drummers. The warriors prepared themselves for battle with a bloodletting ritual. Tekum Umán was called the Lord of Banners and Staffs. His banner, according to the chronicles, was decorated with gold on the tip and many emeralds (or, more likely, jade). This is clearly the battle standard of the Classic period, rich with the same flashing decoration as its Aztec counterpart. Each Maya lord brought 10,000 warriors armed with bows, arrows, slings, and lances, as well as other arms. There were so many warriors they could not be counted.

When the host was assembled, Tekum Umán transformed himself before them. He put on “wings with which he flew and his two arms and legs were covered with feathers and he wore a crown and on his chest he wore a large emerald [jade?] which looked like a mirror, and he wore another on his forehead. This captain flew like an eagle, he was a great nobleman and a great sorcerer.”

The battle began with a skirmish when the chief, “Ah Xepach, an Indian captain who became an eagle,” went to fight the Spaniards with 3,000 of his soldiers. “At midnight the Indians went and the captain of the Indians who had transformed himself into an eagle became anxious to kill the Adelantado Tunadiu’ [Alvarado] and he could not kill him because a fair maiden defended him; they were anxious to enter, but as soon as they saw the maiden they fell to the earth and they could not get up from the ground, and then came the footless birds, and those birds had surrounded the maiden, and the Indians wanted to kill the maiden and those footless birds defended her and blinded them.

The Indians fell back and yet another chief, one who had become lightning, went against Alvarado. “And as soon as he arrived, he saw an exceedingly white dove

above the Spaniards, which was defending them, and which returned to repeat it again and it blinded him and he fell to the earth and could not get up." Three times the lightning warrior went against the Spaniards, and then he too retreated to tell the king that only by killing Alvarado could they win.

Alvarado and his Tlaxcalans charged and routed the Indians before him. After taking thousands captive, and killing and torturing many of them in their search for gold and treasure, the Spanish prepared to go deeper into Maya territory. The next day, February 22, 1524, and 1 Q'anel in the Maya calendar, Tekum Umán himself came against the Spanish in his eagle *way*. "And then Captain Tekum flew up, he came like an eagle full of real feathers, which were not artificial; he wore wings which also sprung from his body and he wore three crowns, one was of gold, another of pearls and another of diamonds and emeralds." Tekum Umán went forward with the intention of killing Alvarado and thus defeating the battle beasts and the *way* of the Spanish. He struck at the great man/beast with all his power, hitting Alvarado's horse and taking its head off with a single blow. According to the K'iche', his lance was not made of metal, but of shiny stone which had a magic spell on it. When Tekum realized he had killed only the battle beast and not the man, he flew upward and came at Alvarado. The Spaniard was ready and impaled the charging king on his lance. (Freidel 1993, 328-329)

How much of the K'iche' account is really the history of their defeat at the hands of Alvarado, and how much is legend? And, discounting the mythology that relates to the Spanish conquest, what is the origin of that legend?

About the only thing that matches between the Indian and the Spanish accounts is that many Indians were killed. For Alvarado it was just another day at the office. No horse was taken out from

under him, and there is no account of the head of his horse being removed with one stroke of a sword. Actually a *lance* (as quoted above), not a sword, was used in the legend. A lance is not a weapon for taking off a horse's head. Note, however, that Teancum used a *lance* (Alma 51:34; 62:36).

Tekum was supposedly impaled on the lance of Alvarado, but the description in the legend is unlikely. Cortés instructed his horsemen, of which Alvarado was one, to aim for the head, not the chest. They were specifically ordered not to stop and spear those who were down (Cohen 1963, 74).

Much of the Spaniard's effectiveness was caused by the fear the natives had of horses, strange beasts to them. The horsemen were used to break ranks. Three horsemen could effectively set literally thousands of Indians to flight, but to do this they had to aim for the head and keep moving. Impaling in the chest was not the Spaniards' way, as this would render the horse and rider vulnerable. It is interesting to note that the Quiché apparently did not have the same fear of horses that the Aztecs had. They may have had time to learn from the Mexico experience or they may have been familiar with horses in Book of Mormon times.

Possibly the most brutal and vicious battles between the Spaniards and the Indians were fought as they crossed the Samalá River and climbed to Quetzaltenango and Xequiquel (now Orintepec). The Quiché tried every trick they could to defeat the horses and soldiers. They would grab the horses' tails or anything else they could get a hold of. They would hang on so tightly that, in spite of the lance wounds and stab wounds, they could not be separated. The greatest defense was the piles of dead bodies. The blood ran like rivers. (Guatemalan Army 1963, 166, 174-178)

Carmack writes of the uncertainty of these events.

Ximénez found Fuentes y Guzmán's account of the Conquest unsatisfactory, and he corrected both its emphasis (which glorified the conquistadors) and several specific errors. He argued that the claim that Pedro de Alvarado himself had killed the Quiché general Tecum

had no basis in fact. He cited a tradition held by the Argueta family of Totonicapán that they had killed Tecum and kept a lance with dried blood on it said to be “the blood of the eagle.”

Recinos may have been the first student of the Quiché to distinguish between the Tecum who was the son of the ruler burned to death by Alvarado and the Tecum who was killed in the battlefield outside Quetzaltenango (Carmack 1891, 23).

So what really happened on February 22, 1524 or December 5, 1523?⁴ Alvarado’s account, as rotten as he was as an individual, is probably the more accurate account of the day’s activities. Bernál Díaz was also with Alvarado and recorded some of the events. When the fighting was over, Díaz lived out the remainder of his days in Guatemala.

Now let’s look at the similarities that appear between the legend accounted above and the Book of Mormon account. The battle took place near Moroni (now under water in Lago Atitlán), which is near the citadel of Lehi (Xelahun, Quetzaltenango). Tecún Umán had 8,400 troops in the legend, while the Spaniards mentioned 3000 to 4000. The 8,000 figure is more representative of the number Teancum had for his battle in the Book of Mormon. Moroni had just dispatched 6,000 troops to Helaman in the south and 6,000 reinforcements to the armies of Lehi and Teancum (Alma 62:12-13). The multiple lords in the legend (each with 10,000 men) might have been Moroni, Pahoran, Lehi, and Teancum. The Spaniards did not mention multiple captains, each with 10,000 men. It is probable that Moronihah, the son of Captain Moroni, was also present, since he took over Moroni’s command after this series of battles (Alma 62:43). One writer mentions that 232,000 native soldiers gathered at this conflict (Guatemalan Army 1963, 187). That is very close to the number (230,000) slain at the hill Cumorah battle (Mormon 6:11-15).

⁴ Note the different dates in the above accounts. Other accounts have Tecún Umán dying on the day of Pentecost.

In the legend, a bloodletting ritual is mentioned. This may be a perversion of the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament. The Nephites, as good followers of the Law of Moses, would likely have offered a blood sacrifice, similar to the Hebrews, as part of their preparations for war.

The banners and standards, and drums and trumpets, were also a part of Nephite warfare. Moroni may have started this tradition with his famous Title of Liberty. Tecún Umán was called the Lord of the Banners. The bows and arrows, slings and lances, as well as the other types of armament mentioned in the legends fit the Nephites' technology. The anger Teancum held for the wickedness of Ammoron led him to enter the enemy camp in the middle of the night to kill the man. The reference to a person defending the leaders of the opposition during the midnight venture of Ah Xepach is relevant to Teancum's demise (Alma 62:35-36), but that legend has absolutely no relevance to the Spanish account or even the Indian account as it relates to the battle with the Spaniards.

The Nephite battle ended some few days before the end of the year 60 BC. The New Year for the Nephites is about the second day of April in our calendar system. The death of Teancum on our calendar date of February 22 would just leave time for the final rout of the leaderless, Lamanite army from the citadel Moroni, and the return to Zarahemla for Moroni to retire (Alma 62:42-43).

In all this, the strongest point is the name—Captain Tecúm. We pronounce Captain Teancum in three syllables, *Te-an-cum*. Put some French nasal into it and pronounce it in two syllables — *Tean-cum*. Some of the natives today, pronounce the name Tecún Umán in three syllables so it sounds like *Te cu mán*. This pronunciation is exactly the same as Teancum with an interchange of the *cum* and the *an*. As noted previously, this is not unusual in certain Mesoamerican languages.

Thus, we see that none of the details of the mythology were relevant to the Spanish battle at Xelahun (Quetzaltenango, Lehi), while there are as many as fifteen strong correlations with the

Book of Mormon account of Teancum. Regardless of who died at the hands of Alvarado that day in the highlands of Guatemala, Tecúm was a well-established legendary hero long before the Spaniards arrived. Some accounts say that Tecúm was carried around on their shoulders for seven days when he received his honor prior to the battle with the Spaniards (Carmack 1973, 302). Why would he be so famous and honored prior to the battle with the Spaniards? This would be more commensurate with the Book of Mormon account because Teancum was definitely a hero after he killed Amalickiah.

Why add Umán (grandson) to Tecún's name, unless the original Tecún was already famous? Could it be that a the more recent Tecún Umán was actually a descendent of Teancum? Why name a racehorse Son of Man-of-War except to pick up on the fame of that horse's legendary sire?

And Tecún Umán may not be the only famous descendant of Teancum in the Americas. Note the name of the famous Shawnee Indian chief, Tecumseh. Tecum-seh. The "seh" or "tha" ending is like the Quiché and Book of Mormon exhaling terminal *h'*. Even the great Montezuma's real name was *Motecuh cut matzin*. Could the *tecu*h in the first name be from our friend and hero Tecum or Teancum.

Looking at Teancum's name more closely may help make an even more solid connection. The word *te* means *from* in the Mam language. The Mam people still inhabit the greater Tecún Umán/Ayutla area. They are reputed to be the descendants of the ancient ones or old men who were already there when the Quiché arrived. These people would likely have been the Jaredites. Te-Ancum, in Mam, would mean "from Ancum" or possibly "from Antum," a Jaredite name (Ether 1:13, etc.). To the man, each of Teancum's warriors were better than each of the Lamanite warriors (Alma 51:31). The Jaredites were said to be larger than the Nephites and Lamanites (Mosiah 8:10; Ether 1:34; 15:26). Could it be that Teancum led a contingent of residual Jaredites from the Desolation area?

The city of Teancum was established in the land of

Desolation adjacent to the city of Desolation (Mormon 4:3). This region west and northwest of the Samalá River is that occupied by the Mam branch of the Maya, the “ancient ones or original inhabitants” of the area, as noted above. Carmen Lind Pettersen lived in Guatemala most of her life and, speaking of the Mam, states that, “They are a taller tribe than most, sturdy and hard-working mountain people living in the foothills of the Cuchumantanes.” (Pettersen n.d., 230)

A study of other dictionaries yields some interesting information about the name Teancum. The preposition “from” is found in several forms. In Mam, it is *te*, as noted above. In Sumerian, it is *ta*. In Chorte, it is *ta*. And in Quiche, it is *pa*. Looking more closely at Ancum, we find that “heaven” in Sumerian is *an*; *caj* in Quiché; *can* in Yucatec; *cha’an* in Chortí; and *chaja* in Mam. Sky or heaven (and the number four) are equivalent in the above four Mayan dialects. Chinese also shows evidence of a connection with Sumerian and Mayan, since the word for sky and heaven is *tian* (note the *an* in this word).

The word *cum* also has meaning. In Sumerian, it means “heat”; in Quiché the word is *k’ak’*; in Chortí it is *kúm*; and we can even add the Hebrew word *chom* or *khome* to the list. So the meaning of Teancum or Te-an-cum may be “from-heaven-heat” or, as it would be phrased in English, “heat from heaven.” This may sound like sunshine, but because of the location, the correct meaning may be volcanic, “fire from heaven.”

For all these pieces and parts of names, there is still one problem, one that becomes the greatest proof that the legend of Tecún Umán was based on the Book of Mormon history of Teancum. The legends have recorded the meaning of the name and the Book of Mormon tells why that name is relevant and how the name was earned.

Lord of the Banners and Staffs

The title of honor by which Tecún Umán was known is Lord of the Banners and Staffs, as mentioned above and in other

indigenous writings (Carmack 1973, 303). There is a word in the Sumerian language that may have some relevance in this regard. The word is *urin* and it means “eagle, standard, emblem, banner, and blood.” In the Quichean legends, all of these descriptors are applied to Tecún Umán. The banners were a very important part of the Maya and Aztec war paraphernalia, as they were in the Book of Mormon.

We first hear of banners in the Book of Mormon when Captain Moroni rends his coat and writes on it his challenge to the people that came to be known as the Title of Liberty. Teancum was one of the great Captains under Moroni. This banner, on the pole, became the rallying symbol for the people.

Now note that *te'* means “pole” in Chortí; *an* means “sky or heaven” and is applied to anything that is “up or high” in Sumerian; and *k'u'* means “blanket, covering, robe or poncho” in Quiché (as in Moroni’s rent coat). The *m* on the end may make it plural as in Hebrew. Thus Teancum would mean “the coat up high on a pole.” While *Umán* means “grandson” in the Maya languages, *umun* is a title of respect in Sumerian. It is like the title, Lord. Tecún Umán, therefore, could literally mean “Lord of the Banners.”

It is possible this name was applied by Moroni to Teancum after he enlisted in Moroni’s army and killed Amalickihah. This more evidence that the Tecún Umán legend was based on the Teancum history and we know from the Book of Mormon the significance of the name and how it was earned.

The City Tecún Umán and the City of Teancum

Tecún Umán was formally declared a national hero by decree number 1344 of the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala on March 22, 1960 (Guatemalan Army 1963, 53). The present-day city of Tecún Umán, though it is doubtless named for Teancum, was first applied to that city rather recently when it was deemed

politically correct to have a national hero from the native culture.⁵ The previous name for the city of Tecún Umán was Ayutla. Why was the name changed to Tecun Uman? Was there some indigenous history that influenced that selection?

Teancum became a Nephite hero for slaying Amalickiah down by the hot coastal seashore next to the city Desolation where Hagoth built his ship (Alma 51:32-33; 63:5). The Quiché hero Tecún Umán met his death in battle for the highland city of Xelaju (Lehi), which Pedro de Alvarado said was “situated in a very strong position” (Guatemalan Army 1963, 190). How did the name get applied to a city down in the coastal plain in the general area where Amalickiah was slain by Teancum rather than up in the mountains where Quiché legend places Tecún Umán’s fatal heroics?

The Annals of The Cakchiquels give some information on this issue. The text says, “They soon came for the second time to the places of Zakihuyú and Teyocumán. There they looked upon the volcano called Gagxanul.” Recinos then adds that this means “naked volcano,” and refers to the volcano now called Santa María. (Recinos 1953, 69)

The first place mentioned in this quote is Zakihuyú, which should probably be written as Zakijuyú. *Zak* means “white,” and *juyú* or *jyub* means “hill, mountain, or unpopulated area” in Quiché or Mam. This white unpopulated area may refer to the land of Desolation. Brinton adds that the word *zak* means “white or bright” as an adjective, but as a noun it means “a white or clear thing, a clearing in the forest, or cleared land” (Brinton 1885, 212). The latter definition, “cleared land,” is most relevant to the Book of Mormon’s land of Desolation.

There are three towns in this general area with the same name meaning: Izapa, Zaculeu, and Sacatepéquez. One is Nahuatl, one is Quiché, and the other is a combination of the two; but they all mean “white earth or hill.” The first two are about 55 miles apart, and both are part of the Mam branch of the Maya

⁵ At the same time they founded a town named Pedro de Alvarado on the border with El Salvador.

located near the Mexico/Guatemala border. The name Izapa and the name Zakijuyú (mentioned by Brinton) may apply to the same town. However, Izapa is about 40 miles from the volcano Santa María, which is too far away to match Recinos' description.

Much closer is San Martín Sacatepéquez, high in the mountains at the foot of the volcano Santa Maria on the uphill side and just six miles from the peak. *Zak*, *Zac*, and *Sac* are equivalent and also the ending *tepéquez* (from Nahuatl) is a much better fit for *juyú* than is *uleu*, thus making Sacatepéquez in Nahuatl a near exact fit for Zakijuyú in Quiché.

It is probable that the general land of Desolation also included Izapa. In fact, there may have been several ruined Jaredite cities named Desolation while only one is mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Izapa also means "cleared, un-forested and un-populated" in Quiché and Cakchiquel.

However, there is another Nahuatl word that means "desert or desolate." It is the name *Ixtahuacán*. And there is a town with just such a name in the mountains near Nahualá (Nephihah). It is called Sijá today and was previously named Ixtahuacán. This is where Tecún Umán is reported to have lived when he made his fatal attack on Alvarado. It may be where Teancum was stationed when he made the fatal attack in the night on Ammaron, who had retreated to the fortress city of Moroni just seven miles away in the proposed geography (see Alma 62:34).

Recinos also mentioned an even more interesting town, Teyocumán. But he does not say where it is located. All he says is that the volcano called Gagxanul, today the Santa Maria, is visible from there. Teyocumán is even closer phonologically to Teancum than Tecún Umán, though it is very close to the regional native pronunciation of the latter name, as noted above. The *an* ("heaven" in Sumerian) is on the end in this name, whereas it is in the middle of Teancum. But since each syllable is itself a root word, the shuffling of the syllables is not critical to understanding the meaning of the name. The name Te-an-cum could easily be shifted to Te-cum-an, and the Mam people, who knew not Teancum, could easily have thought it was a contraction

of Tecum-uman and pronounced it that way, as noted above. Indeed, the name of the great hero in *The Annals of The Cakchiquels* is Teyocumán without Uman (grandson) on the end (Recinos 1953, 69).

Is Teyocumán the early name for the city of Tecún Umán? As noted, the natives do not pronounce the city name Tecún Umán, but Tey-cu-mán which is very close to Teyocumán. The Book of Mormon city of Teancum was probably the city of Teyocumán identified in the 1885 Brinton translation of the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, but it is not clear that the present day Tecún Umán is the old Teyocumán. A town significantly closer to volcano Gagxanul (Santa María) would be a more likely candidate.

While researching the history of Retalhuleu, it was noticed that originally there were two towns on the Samalá River, named Santa Catarina Sacatepeques and San Antonio. These two towns were combined by the Spaniards and renamed Retalhuleu (which we will see means “boundary land” in Quiché). Sacatepeques is a name that has been noted above. Putting it back in the Quiché or Cakchiquel form it would be Zakhuyú, and it (Retalhuleu/Zakhuyú) is near the foot of Volcano Santa Maria. Since the companion city, Teyocumán, was mentioned in the same sentence, it is possible that the original name of San Antonio was Teyocumán. This combination suggests that the west seashore borders mentioned in Mormon 2:6 and Mormon 4:2 are the Samalá River, “where the sea [river] divides the land” (Ether 10:20) The lands that are divided by that river were the lands of Bountiful and Desolation, and it appears from this analysis that they were both at the foot of the Volcano Santa Maria.



CHAPTER 9

THE MOUNTAIN FORTIFICATIONS

New Fortifications

Much geographic information is included in Alma's description of Captain Moroni's building program and the wars described in the Book of Alma. In the forty-ninth chapter of Alma, the Lamanites were seen approaching Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú). Why were they planning to attack Ammonihah? As we can see from the proposed geography so far, it was the most easterly of the strategic fortifications protecting the mountain access to greater Zarahemla. Ammonihah blocked the high road. Judea was also on the high road but farther southeast, toward the land of Lehi-Nephi and less strategic for that reason. It was an isolated outpost that could possibly be bypassed and was not as good a location for launching an attack on Zarahemla.

Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú, Guatemala City) is located on a high plateau with mountains and volcanoes. Probably the best reason for an attack on Ammonihah was that on the last venture into the area, Ammonihah was not sufficiently fortified and the Lamanites were successful in killing all the inhabitants (Alma 16:2-3). This time Moroni had prepared and heavily fortified the city.

After seeing the major fortifications prepared according to Moroni's instructions, the Lamanite army decided to avoid

Ammonihah and try Noah (Chinautla) just eight miles to the northeast. During the previous visit it too was weak. To their disappointment, this time it was even stronger than Ammonihah. With the pride and vanity of the dissenting Nephite captains on the line (and an oath), the Lamanite army was ordered to attack anyway (Alma 49:14; 17).

It was futile. They tried to dig through the tall berm around the palisade fortress, but the ditch filled with dead bodies faster than they could dig (Alma 49:22). They finally came to the conclusion that their course was doomed, but they did not arrive at this conclusion until all the dissenting Nephite captains were dead (Alma 49:25).

Thus, in Book of Mormon times, as today, we see that apostates can *leave* the Church but they can't seem to *leave it alone*. One Nephite dissenter or another was responsible for nearly all the battles between the Nephites and the Lamanites. How would the Book of Mormon history have read without all the power hungry Nephite malcontents and those who thought they had kingly lineage, who, suffering from excessive pride and ego, stirred up the Lamanites to battle?

Having failed to take any Nephite cities, and being fresh out of leaders, they returned home to give King Amalickiah the news (Alma 49:25-27). While he was busy preparing a new corps to promote his perversions, Moroni was busy fortifying other cities (Alma 50:1).

In addition, Moroni removed the Lamanite squatters from the east wilderness (Alma 50:7), sending them back to their own lands, southeast of the land Zarahemla. This area was described as the east wilderness, using the somewhat skewed Hebrew orientation mentioned earlier. Moroni sent new inhabitants from Zarahemla to occupy that land (Alma 50:9).

For the names of some of the cities built, we have this:

And it came to pass that the Nephites began the foundation of a city, and they called the name of the city Moroni; and it was by the east sea; and it was on the

south by the line of the possessions of the Lamanites.¹

And they also began a foundation for a city between the city of Moroni and the city of Aaron, joining the borders of Aaron and Moroni; and they called the name of the city, or the land, Nephihah.

And they also began in that same year to build many cities on the north, one in a particular manner which they called Lehi, which was in the north by the borders of the seashore (Alma 50:13-15).

The fortress city Moroni, we are told, was close to the shore of the east sea. Indeed, this city of Moroni sank into that sea at the time of the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 8:9). But it would be a mistake to assume that references to the “east sea” here meant the Atlantic Ocean. That assumption leads to inconsistencies and is part of the reason it has been so difficult for scholars to identify these locales.

As we have previously noted, it is unlikely that the Book of Mormon writers used the words “sea” and “seashore” only in reference to oceans. In the Old Testament, the word “sea” may refer to oceans or any part of them, but it is also used for inland lakes such as the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, and even great rivers, like the Nile (Isaiah 19:5; Nahum 3:8) and the Euphrates (Isaiah 21:1; Jeremiah 51:36). The Hebrew word used to describe the bank of a river is the word for “lips,” *saphah* (pronounced *saw-faw*). It is used for a seashore or for the bank of a river. It follows that a Book of Mormon reference to “the seashore” could just as well refer to a riverbank.

This is crucial in understanding the geography imparted by the extensive writings Mormon included on the wars of the

¹ This verse may have been abridged by Mormon during the ten years of peace *after* the treaty mentioned in Mormon 2:28-29. Mormon would have been in the general area of Antum and the hill Shim, somewhere south or west of what is Quetzaltenango at this time. The line of possessions here may refer to the treaty configuration in Mormon’s day, not the configuration in Captain Moroni’s day.

people. Alma's huge war report gives us almost all we know about the geography of these mountain fortresses, and has proven of critical value in ascertaining the proposed geography. As indicated in the previous chapter, Moroni is likely the city, the ruins of which were recently discovered beneath the waters of Lago Atitlán. Note that the name Atitlán means "by the sea" yet it is up in the Guatemalan highlands.

Jerusalem (Tula), which was in the land of their first inheritance, is also said to have sunk into the sea. Since it was near the coast, this reference may well be to the Pacific Ocean. Jerusalem's sinking into the sea could have been the result of a *tsunami* that hit the coast after all the earthquakes and hurricanes. If that is the case, it is possible it did not stay under water. It may have been covered just long enough to wipe out all the wicked inhabitants. Later it may have been rebuilt in the same location or, perhaps, moved to a safer place. The ruins of Tula in El Salvador are likely to be this original or possibly rebuilt city of Jerusalem. It is presently about seven miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, which may be too far for much *tsunami* damage, but the configuration at the time of the Crucifixion is uncertain. The subduction of the Cocos Plate under the Caribbean Plate in the Middle American Trench would tend to lift coastal Guatemala on the Costa Sur.

We are not told the origin of the city Aaron. It may have been a Jaredite city. The note in the index of the Book of Mormon states that there may have been two cities of Aaron, and indeed, there is a set of ruins named Girón (a very good phonetic match in Spanish for the Hebrew word Aaron) just twenty-two miles straight west of Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú).

There is also a ruined city named San Jerónimo (another close phonetic match) near the fortress city of Lehi (Quetzaltenango) that may correspond to the city of Aaron that was near Nephihah and Moroni. Nephihah (Nahualá) is exactly between Moroni at Lake Atitlán and San Jerónimo. Aaron would be pronounced in Hebrew like *Haron* using the back of the throat for the glottal fricative. Take the *imo* off of Jerónimo and you have Jerón,

pronounced almost the same way in Spanish. It is easy, therefore, to see how the Spanish might have made such a name change.

In Alma 50:15, Mormon is clearly referring to a new fortress Lehi that was built in a “particular manner” to the extreme north of the Nephite lands. As previously discussed, it is believed that the present day name of this city is Quetzaltenango, which the Indians call by the beautiful name Xelaju’ or Xela (pronounced as Shay-la).

It would be interesting to find the exact site of the ruins, now covered by the city sprawl, to determine what is “particular” about its design or location. The *Annals of the Cakchiquels* mentions a city Lahub (Lehi) in the area (Recinos 1953, 93). There was also an old town named Kulaja in the suburbs of Quetzaltenango (Carmack 1973, 309). This may have been the original fortress city. Both show up in the old writings but the exact locations of Lahub and Kulaja are unknown. Kulaja may have the *ku* in front of Lehi (laja) because of Moroni’s Title of Liberty, since *ku* means “coat and banner” in Quiché.

More Fortresses

The next battle took place among the Nephites (Alma 50:25). It was a border dispute between the inhabitants of the cities of Morianton² and Lehi. Looking at the map, some of the closest and largest ruins appear to be in Totonicapán, just ten miles away in the same river valley. This city is very old and even has a book written about it, *The Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*. Smaller ruins show up on other maps.

The ruins at Almolonga are just two or three miles away from Lehi (Quetzaltenango, Xelahun). Presently Almolonga is a small town in a well-defined, boxed-in valley that drains into the Samala’ River below Quetzaltenango. The sign as one enters the valley today advertises it as “America’s Vegetable Garden.” It is a beautiful little vegetable farming valley and there are mineral

² The name Morianton is of Jaredite origin and the people of Morianton may therefore have had some residual Jaredite blood.

various branches of the Maya language. Some will use the *l* where others use the *r*. It may be like Chinese and Japanese, where the *l* and *r* sounds are almost identical. Some sections of China distinguish between the two sounds and some do not.⁵

The root in the name Moron, Moroni, Morianton, and Moriantum is an excellent example of the interchange of the *l* and *r*. In Chortí (a branch of the Maya in the Copán area) *mor* means “a pile, mound, heap, collection, small hill, or mountain crest.” It is also synonymous with *mol* in Chortí. *Mori* is the verb form meaning “to gather into a heap or pile, etc.” In Quiché the word is *mol* and a closely related word, *mul*. The verb form *mulij* in Quiché is the same as the verb *mori* in Chortí.

We know of the Jaredite city of Moron where the king dwelled (Ether 7:5) and the Nephite city Mulek, which means “king” in Hebrew (*mlk* without the vowels). The similarity of the nouns *mor* and *mul* and the verbs *mori* and *mulij* also match, but the “king” meaning for the word appears to have been lost, but the Jaredite city Moron and the Nephite city Mulek are nevertheless related by the residual roots, which have to do with heaping up mounds of earth.

The closest word to Mulek in Chortí is *muluk*, which means “any mound growing plant or tuber, specifically potato.” In Chortí a synonym for *muluk* is *muruk*, which again demonstrates the interchangeability of the *l* and the *r*. This may indicate that Mulek has to do with the kings heaping up great mounds or towers as the Sumerians did with their Ziggurats.

There is an interesting connection with Russia (where the Jaredites may have traveled). The Russian word *more* means “sea.” A sea is a concave depression in the earth, a basin or gathering place for the water in the surrounding area. In Manchurian, *moro* means “bowl” (or “dish,” as in “tight as a dish”?). While these word roots stress the concave and the similarly spelled Central American word roots stress the convex (heaps or piles), there may be a relationship. In Russian, *za more*

⁵ Qunzhen Wang, personal conversation, 2002.

means “over seas.” *More za* simply reverses the word order without changing the meaning, and there are several towns in this part of Guatemala with Morazán in their names. The *zan* ending in Quiché comes from the word *tzan*, which also means “over.” While this suggests the meaning “over the hill or mountain,” it is interesting to note that, in Mongolia, there is a town named Moron. Could the Russian/Mongolian phrase *za more* have been the source of the Jaredite city name Moron (or Morazán), referring to their newly obtained land “over the sea”?

As noted, the land of Moron is referred to as the land where the king dwelled (Ether 7:5-6). In Hebrew, that would have something to do with Mulek. With the word connections between king, Moron, moro, mori, mul, mulij, and Mulek, is it possible that Mulek and Moron were the same city? Given all the factors, it is probable that Moron was the motivation for the names Morazán, Nuevo Morazán, and San Antonio Morazán, which are all near El Asintal and the ruins at Abaj Takalik. Even Colomba Costa Cuca was previously named Morazán.

In the Book of Ether, Morianton is mentioned, and in the same sentence it says he, “gathered together an army” (Ether 10:9). Within one page of discussing the king Morianton, the Jaredites are casting up mighty heaps of earth in their mining operations. In Chortí *mori* is the verb “to gather together” and “to heap up.” Similarly, Gid (or *gad* from the Hebrew root *gd*), which means “group or band” in Hebrew, was the leader of a band of men (Alma 57:29). Likewise the secret band of Gadianton is the “band of robbers from the high country” (*antum or anta* in Sumerian means “from high”). These may have been intentional word games. Such plays-on-words are not uncommon in Hebrew and related languages.

The Nahuatl and Quiche’ languages appear to be quite different but there are many connections that can be found in the dictionaries and both have very strong roots from ancient Hebrew and Sumerian. The Nahua and the Quiché peoples lived together in much of this area. While we have often blamed the Mexicans that were with Alvarado for changing the place names, this may

not be correct. The Nahua peoples had roots in El Salvador, up the Pacific coast, and throughout Mexico, as well as scattered pockets in Honduras. The Nahua of Mexico probably originated in Mormon's part of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras and migrated into Mexico as described in the Book of Mormon (Heleman 3:4, 8, 12, 16).

Morianton Verses Lehi

The story of the Nephite named Morianton is in Alma 50:25-36. The people of Morianton claimed part of the land of the people of Lehi and they took up arms to impose their viewpoint on the people of Lehi. The people of Lehi promptly fled to the *camp* (not the city) of Moroni, which must have been very close and in a direction away from Morianton. While the *city* of Moroni is presently under water in the Lago de Atitlán, the *camp* of Moroni, was near the fortresses of Lehi and Morianton. Totonicapán, as we shall see is tied to the name Moroni but it is about twelve miles away, just up the valley from Xela (Lehi, Quetzaltenango). That is probably too far away for this interchange. As we shall see, Totonicapán is probably Moronihah.

Morianton might be closer to San Mateo and San Juan Ostuncalco in the same valley but on a different tributary of the Samalá River. Looking at the word Ostuncalco, the root *tun* has the same meaning in Sumerian as *mori* does in Chortí, "to heap up or pile." The root *cal*, or possibly *kal* in Sumerian, means "something that is valued, excellent, or rare." In Quiché that word would be *je'l*. If the meaning of Ostuncalco is "to heap up something rare or valuable," this may have been a mining area. The ruins in this area are called San Antonio los Cerritos. As noted previously, *Cerritos* means "little hills" in Spanish and Antonio could have been the Spanish way of Christianizing Anton, Ostun or Antum. As noted before, in Sumerian *tum* would be "heaped up hills," and *an* would be "sky or heaven." Thus, Antum would be "hills heaped high into the sky or clouds," "high

hills,” or “high country,” but it may have an even more specific meaning that ties it very nicely into the proposed geography. We will discuss that meaning later.

Around Ostuncalco and San Mateo is a fine volcanic sandy soil, and there are some 100-foot-thick pumice cliffs where the road cuts through. These major volcanic ash deposits may have obscured much of Mormon’s world in this region. In fact, over the years this region may have been completely destroyed several times.

The news of the people’s flight from Lehi to camp Moroni struck fear into the people of Morianton. Fearing an attack by the army of Moroni, Morianton and his followers decided to flee to the land northward, no doubt in a direction away from Lehi and the camp of Moroni. Before departing, in a fit or rage, Morianton beat a maidservant. She promptly ran to the camp of Moroni and told him about it. This also suggests that the camp of Moroni was very close by. The information from the maidservant led to some concern on the part of Moroni, expressed in an awkward verse in the Book of Alma:

Now behold, the people who were in the land Bountiful, *or rather Moroni*, feared that they would hearken to the words of Morianton and unite with his people, and thus he would obtain possession of those parts of the land, which would lay a foundation for serious consequences among the people of Nephi, yea, which consequences would lead to the overthrow of their liberty (Alma 50:32, emphasis added).

The previous verse mentions Morianton’s intention to flee into the land “northward.” The first line of this verse begins by saying that the people of the land Bountiful feared that move, but the next line indicates it was Moroni who feared this move. Did Mormon write something that wasn’t quite as he intended it to be? Did he then make a correction? There are eleven uses of “or rather” in the Book of Mormon. Each time, it is used to make a

minor clarification. This verse is the only exception. It appears that a major thought was engraved on the plates then corrected. Such a mistake could not be corrected once it was engraved on the plates except by crossing it out. The error would not have come from Joseph Smith, for he or his scribe could make corrections fairly easily while translating.

The correction “or rather” in this verse takes “the people who were in the land Bountiful” out of the mix completely, as if the phrase had never been written. What, then, is the antecedent for the word “they”? Who were “they” whom Moroni feared might “harken to the words of Morianton”? Most likely, it would have been the people in the land northward. Morianton did not intend to stay in Bountiful. He planned to flee into the land northward, where there were many large bodies of water (Alma 50:29).

Nothing is mentioned of the politics of the land northward. It may have been outside of Mormon’s world for most of the Book of Mormon history. Other than some possible Jaredite cities and the cities of Desolation, Teancum, Boaz, and Jordan, we are told of no other specific cities in the land northward. Mormon does tell us, however, that there were many cities and lands and that the records of their interactions were recorded both in the north and the south (Helaman 3:13-15).

It is doubtful, though, that Moroni thought Morianton would sway the people in the land of Bountiful. They had been through too much together to join with some hothead dissenter. But the lands northward were obviously peopled by some group and Moroni did not want an enemy in that direction. It may still have been peopled by residual Jaredites and Morianton may have had some Jaredite blood as his name suggests. It may have been outside of Moroni’s political and geographical world but he knew the power of one hothead to stir up trouble. That is what this verse suggests.

Given the proposed geography, there are two canyons through which Morianton could have dropped down into the coastal land

northward.⁶ One follows the Samalá River and the other is north toward the Naranjo River drainage. The evidence we will discuss below suggests that they headed to the Retalhuleu area on the Samalá River.

As mentioned before, the Samalá River canyon goes through a narrow pass that leads “by the sea” (probably a reference, in this case, to the river) into the land northward. Once in the Pacific piedmont, Morianton would likely have turned west-northwest and headed to the lakes, rivers, and tidal estuaries near the Mexican border. Once past the rivers he would be on the narrow coastal plain of Chiapas, Mexico and be able to travel unimpeded into central Mexico to the north.⁷

Teancum was sent with his army and camp to stop the flight of Morianton’s group. Verse 34 says:

And it came to pass that they did not head them until they had come to the borders of the land Desolation; and there they did head them, by the narrow pass by the sea into the land northward, yea, by the sea, on the west and on the east.

He would not have been able to head off Morianton’s group until they got to the borders of the land Desolation by the narrow pass mentioned above, the one that leads by the sea (namely, the Samalá River in this case) into the land northward. This is near Santa Cruz Mulúa and San Sebastián in what is today called the Department of Retalhuleu.

⁶ Again, the actual direction is more west than north, but we are assuming an orientation skewed by the ancient Hebrew orientation where the ocean is west.

⁷ There appear to be at least four lands “northward” mentioned in the Book of Mormon. One is the high country around Lehi, where the chase started. Another is beyond that, north into the Yucatan Peninsula. Yet another is the coastal plain between the Samalá River and the Mexican border in the Pacific Coast drainage. This land northward appears to be the one most often referenced in Mormon’s writings and was probably the area referred to in Alma 50. The fourth land northward is reached by passing along the narrow coastal piedmont up into Chiapas and mainland Mexico, as described above.

When chasing livestock with the intent of stopping them or changing their direction one does not approach from the rear. Rather one swings wide around to the front. This is what is suggested by the word “head” in this verse. Thus, Teancum may have approached from a different direction.

The phrase “yea, by the sea, on the west and on the east” represents a different structure from the other passages that talk about the “sea west” and the “sea east.” In this case the word “sea” is modified by both “the east” and “the west” equally. The tidal estuaries, rivers, and possibly some now-nonexistent lakes or impounds in the area, form the basis for Mormon’s description, but it is not clear in our present way of thinking and speaking. The antecedent is the land northward and the use of the seas east and west is to help clarify which of multiple paths into the land northward was used.

The smallness of Mormon’s world and the very limited perspective of a foot soldier would make one think the reference to a sea east and a sea west (most likely two rivers) would be so close together that both were visible to the soldiers from some vantage point between the two. If one of these “seas” were out of sight it would be out of mind. Reference points that are many miles and mountains apart, through dense jungle, are not viable reference points for making subtle distinctions between which of two paths was taken.

Another Perspective

The feature and the location that has been of greatest concern is the narrow passage by the sea. The location identified in this book is a rather straight and narrow stretch of the Samalá River positioned between San Sebastián and Santa Cruz Muluá. To see this, one must ask what Mormon is trying to tell us in Alma 50:34.

Morianton’s group was in the borders of the land Desolation. This means they were on the borderline, or in this case, at the river crossing. It says, “they [Teancum’s group] did head them

[Morianton's group], by the narrow pass by the sea into the land northward, yea, by the sea, on the west and on the east."

To understand this correctly one must go back to the grammar and examine the sentence structure. The narrow pass into the land northward is by the sea (river in this case). "Yea, [it (the narrow pass) is] by the sea." But how is it by the sea? The narrow pass is on the west and on the east of the sea.

The only way this makes sense is if it refers to the two banks of the river or to a bridge, natural or manmade, between them. The clues indicating that this is the correct interpretation are found in Mormon's words. The "yea" means that he is going to repeat the modifier "by the sea" that refers back to the narrow pass and he is going to give us more information about how the narrow pass is by the sea. It (the narrow pass) is on the east and west of the sea. Note that the sea is singular. It is thus the narrow passage that is on the east of the sea and on the west of the same sea. Or, this whole verse might be just Hebrew (and Quiché) repetition.

It is also possible that the modifiers, east and west, refer back to the people, who were on the east and west sides of the river at the time they were headed by Teancum.

In either case, the location in the proposed geography fits. It is where the main highway, CA2, and the Guatemalan Railroad cross the Samalá River. There was a bridge across the river at this location when Alvarado and his soldiers arrived to destroy the Quiché Nation (Guatemalan Army 1963, 162). Alvarado refers to it as a "bad pass" that was heavily defended. The importance of the pass to the Quiché and to Moroni's and Mormon's troops was that it could be defended. (The Spanish technology was too much for the Indians, however.)

There are many private banana plantations in the area along the rivers near Tecún Umán. It is a rough international border noted for crime. The mouths of the rivers are wide, deep, and dirty. In the dry season, away from the coast, all of the rivers on the Pacific side are easy to wade across. Of course, much of the water is removed from the rivers for the towns and irrigation. The

maps show some very wide stretches of the Samalá River. These may be seasonal and they may have been lakes or seas in the past, before being silted in by volcanic run-off.

The starting point is not mentioned for Teancum's race to the narrow pass but we know he returned to Moroni's camp (Alma 50:35). Therefore, it is assumed that Moroni's camp was his starting point. Given the proposed geography, it would be about twenty-five miles from Moroni's camp (if it is Almolonga) to the narrow passage on the Samalá River that must be crossed before entering the land northward.

Verse 33 (emphasis added) says "Moroni sent an army, with *their camp*, to head the people of Morianton." The reference to "their camp" would mean all the paraphernalia necessary to subsist during the trek for the required number of days. It would include tents, tools, and supplies. This would indicate that the trek was intended to last more than just one day.

Let us assume that Morianton, with his family and friends could travel at about fifteen miles per day while fleeing, and that he had a one-day head start—which is about the time needed for the battered maidservant to deliver her message and for Moroni to muster troops and supplies. It is likely that Teancum, with a skilled and conditioned army, could travel faster, perhaps as much as thirty miles per day. Thus, it would require Teancum a full day to overtake Morianton. Then he would probably engage him on the second day. Given the proposed geography, this would put both groups on the Samalá River crossing in the narrow pass leading by the sea into the land northward, just northeast of Retalhuleu. A trek of many days to catch them would indicate that Morianton had several days head start and this would not be consistent with the story. A chase of five days, for example, would render the proposed geography incompatible. But Retalhuleu is the correct distance from the Quetzaltenango area to fit the story and the proposed geography.

While there are some linguistic references that might place the city of Morianton near Ostuncalco, that location might be a Jaredite city of Morianton or Moriantum. It might also be the

place where the people of Morianton settled *after* their forced return. That location would have given them a bit more room to spread out. But the smallness of Mormon's world and the sequence of events that occurred around Lehi and Morianton, the maidservant, and the camp of Moroni all suggest that the cities were not more than two or three miles apart originally.

The original city of Morianton, therefore, might be the ancient town of Cerro Quiac, which has the words "hill" and "red" in it. *Cerro* means "hill" in Spanish and *quiac* means "red" in Quiché. *Mori* could be the "heaped up pile" and *antum* could be "red" (a northern variation of *anti*). Another possibility might be the ancient town of Kantel (also spelled Cantel). This name has "height" and/or "red" in its name. Maybe this was Mormon's land of Antum. It begins with the Phoenician glottal *k'a* as does Kaminaljuyú (Ammonihah). The *Annals of the Cakchiquels* mentions a city Zutum in the area that might be their representation of Antum (Recinos 1953, 93).

The bounds and location of the land of Antum are not yet known. There are too many towns in the very small area around Quetzaltenango with names similar to Antum in the old writings to clearly identify a specific and unique Antum. The name may refer to all of the high country and not to a specific city. With this caveat, it is likely that Antum was in the area of Quetzaltenango (Xelaju, Lehi) and the Samalá River drainage. The present town of Ostuncalco and the adjoining ruins of San Antonio Los Cerritos are the best estimate for Morianton.

This little exercise means Morianton is located at about the correct distance from the border of the land Bountiful and Desolation and the narrow pass by the sea into the land northward. It is interesting to note the use of the word "come" in these passages: This gives us some ideas as to the location of the desk where Mormon was writing. In verse 31 the maidservant fled and *came over* to the camp of Moroni. This suggests she may have crossed a mountain pass or ridge, and the direction of her travel was toward, possibly coming very near, Mormon's desk. In verse 34, Teancum did not head them until they *had come* to the

borders of the land Desolation. After the battle, the people in verse 36 were *brought back*. These make it sound like it all took place in the Samalá River canyon between Quetzaltenango and Retalhuleu. This would possibly place the land of Antum near Tierra Colorada (meaning “red earth” in Spanish) just two miles up from San Felipe.

Note that, to get to the lands northward, Morianton and his group were going down, south, into the coastal piedmont before heading northward to their destination. They did not go directly northward. The mountain connection into the lands northward must have been impassable wilderness (possibly loose volcanic ash or pumice), so that the preferred path for travel was down by the sea in the coastal piedmont. The Nephites were apparently quite successful in keeping the Lamanites out of the land northward until the Coming of Christ.

Amalickiah’s Attack

The next battle in the Book of Alma is found in the fifty-first chapter. The cities involved include Moroni, Nephihah, Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid, and Mulek. The land Bountiful and the land northward are also mentioned. The Nephite captains include Teancum and Lehi. Initially, Moroni was in Zarahemla dealing with the Kingmen. Gid is not mentioned as a captain until the next battle and that’s on a different front possibly 120 miles away. So the name Gid in this lineup of cities may have come from the Jaredite king Amgid who was in the area many years before (Ether 10 32).

The Lamanite king Amalickiah (a Nephite by birth) led his troops in person. He had sworn to drink Moroni’s blood. Where did this all take place? The verse that answers this question has been misunderstood and has led other authors to place the cities in confusing and incorrect places.

And thus he went on, taking possession of many cities, the city of Nephihah, and the city of Lehi, and the

city of Morianton, and the city of Omner, and the city of Gid, and the city of Mulek, all of which were on the east borders by the seashore (Alma 51:26).

This verse locates these cities on the east borders by the seashore, but it would be incorrect to interpret this as the Atlantic Ocean or even as the east end of the Costa Sur of Guatemala on the Pacific side. We have previously proposed that fortress Lehi and fortress Nephiah were to the west and north of Zarahemla. We proposed a city of Moroni at Lake Atitlán and a possible camp of Moroni near fortress Lehi also. Note that the city Aaron and the land Zarahemla are not mentioned here.

The land Bountiful, however, is mentioned in this chapter. It is on the northwest next to the passage, the “narrow neck” that leads into the land northward (Alma 22:31-33). It has been proposed that this narrow neck lies along the Samalá River as it passes through a narrow canyon on the way from fortress Lehi (Quezaltenango). Mormon is talking about the northwest extreme of the land and not the land southeast by the seashore, which is still on the Pacific Coast, the Costa Sur of Guatemala.

In referring to the east borders of the land, it appears that Mormon was using the Old Hebrew reference frame where east was inland from the ocean. As we have noted, using that reference frame, “east” would actually be more northeasterly in direction. Given these constraints, “the east borders” would be in the area of Quetzaltenango (Xelaju, fortress Lehi). So what “seashore” is in that area?

At some time in the past there was a lake in that valley. That lake would fit this reference, but we do not know if that lake was present in Moroni’s time, so the best fit may be the Samalá River. “Seashore” in this case is just the riverbank. This is the only way the verse makes sense based on the city names that have been identified so far. With this interpretation, however, everything fits perfectly into place.

Amalickiah’s army had been reduced by their previous failures, but their numbers were great enough to come down into

the Zarahemla area. Notice the use of “come down” (Alma 51:11). This suggests he was coming through one of the mountain passes from a higher elevation to the Pacific piedmont.

His first attack was on the city of Moroni. It has been proposed that this city was next to Lago de Atitlán. Other towns that have Moroni in the previous forms of their names include Totonicapán and Almolonga, but these, as will be shown, appear to be Moronihah and the camp of Moroni, respectively. Looking at the name Totonicapán as it might relate to the name Moroni, and throwing away the *capán* ending, which has roots in Maya and Nahuatl, we have *Totoni*. In Nahuatl *totoni* means “it becomes hot.”

A related word or possible synonym for *totoni* is also found in the Florentine *Codex Vocabulary* (Campbell 1997). It is *moloni* which means “they seethe” as well as some other definitions discussed below. Recinos says *moloni* is the Mexican word meaning “to spring from the fountain” (Recinos 1953, 127n). That is very close to Mormon being a “fountain of pure water” (Mosiah 18:4-5; 3 Nephi 5:12). This is very close to Moroni. The rhythm of it is right, and the Nahuatl dictionary does not have an *r* in the alphabet. But an older spelling of the name Totonicapán is found in *The Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*. The ancient name was *Chimekenha'*. Yet another spelling for this name is *Chuvi Mik'ina'*.⁸ These last two spellings, *Mekenah'* and *Mik'ina'*, are older and therefore more likely to be helpful. Phonetically they are about the same and differ only in the particular orthographic representation used.

There are many uses for *chi* in the Nahuatl and K'iche' dictionaries but no definitions for just the root *chi*. Based on common usage and other translations it appears to mean “hill” or some kind of protuberance when applied to place names. Usage suggests the meaning could include “mount, hill, or volcano.”⁹

⁸ Note the marked difference between these two spellings. This demonstrates the difficulties in determining the correct original pronunciation of the indigenous names, as noted earlier.

⁹ For example, the volcano called *Chigag* means “fire mountain” in K'iche'.

Thus, *Chimekenha'* would be "mount, hill, or volcano *Mekenha'*". As for the *k* in *mekenha'*, there are several words in the Central American languages that use *k* when *r* is more common in English. For example, Saka for Sara or Quamarkah for Cumorah. That would suggest *mekenha'* might originally have been pronounced *Merenha'*. That is very close to Moroni, except that the *ha'* on the end would make it Moronihah not Moroni or the camp of Moroni.

At the end of this campaign, Moroni retired from fighting and yielded up the command of his armies to his son Moronihah and a city was later named for him (Alma 62:42). At the time of the Crucifixion, Moronihah was covered with earth. This could have been volcanic ash. The Book of Mormon says, "And the earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah that in the place of the city there became a great mountain" (3 Nephi 8:10). Notice that the verse says, "earth was carried up upon." This language implies deposits of volcanic ash and pumice.

Totonicapán (which appears now to be Moronihah) is in an area where this could easily have happened. It is connected to the greater Xela valley region but it is in a much narrower part of the canyon. Across the valley there are many pumice cliffs. The pumice is used today to make cinder blocks. Pumice is formed when the frothy ash expelled by volcanoes cools and solidifies in the air. It can be deposited in mounds hundreds of feet thick.

Closer to Quetzaltenago is Almolonga, previously named *Moloenk*. In Nahua *moloni*, mentioned above as similar to *totoni*, also means "it billows, it diffuses, it gushes, it wells up, it spreads out, it swirls, and it swirls up." If one were to invoke the *l* interchange for *r*, this would be exactly Moroni.

The welling up of water comes from the same roots, *mol*, *mul*, and *mori* meaning "to heap up." *Mol* and *mul* are from Quiché and *mori* is from Chortí. Notice again in these Quiché and Chortí roots the switching of the *l* and *r* similar to Chinese and Japanese. These words provide a good description of the geyser and fumarole activity in Yellowstone National Park, and the name was no doubt given to the Almolonga area because of the hot

springs at the lower edge of that town. As indicated above, Moroni's name is tied to hot water geysers, etc.

Again from the Nahuatl dictionaries *totonia*, the root of Totonicapán has to do with "becoming hot." The older Quiché name of *Mekenha'* or *Mik'ina'* also means "hot water." Moloonk or *moloni* and *totonia* from Nahua refer to the same thing as the *Mekenha'* from Quiché, "hot water."

Another Quiché word for "hot water, sweat, or fever" is *c'atän*. This Quiché word is similar to Antum, probably very near where Mormon was from (Mormon 1:1-6). As previously noted, Mormon's son Moroni may have been from Moron. The Book of Mormon names, Antum, Moron, and Moroni, all seem related to the Quiché and Nahua words for hot water.

There is another Quiché word, *molonic*, which means "to beg." The next word in the word list, *molotaj*, means "to gather," and both words share the root which means "to gather or heap up." Again switching out the *l* for an *r* we have *moronic*. This has the same root as "to gather," which shows up in the various languages in the area.

Possibly this name is related to the great captain Moroni because he gathered the people together under the banner of the Title of Liberty and got them to join the army to oppose the Kingmen. Moroni's life mission appears to have been tied up in his name. There is a tradition of receiving a new name commensurate with your life's activities, which supports this idea, and will be discussed later.

But it is clear that Moroni means "to gather up," and *mori* in Chortí is just a shortened version of that name. It matters not whether it is hot water rising up, or raising a Title of Liberty on every tower, or heaping up great mounds of earth to an exceeding height, or rallying your compatriots to come join the army in defense of your liberties, your God, your religion, your freedom, your peace, your wives, and your children against the Kingmen. Moroni's mission was in his name.

This also gives meaning to the Moroni who was the son of Mormon. The part of the definition of *moloni* meaning to "billow,

diffuse, spread out, and swirl up” has significance as it relates to Moroni “speaking out of the dust.” His voice from the dust billows up, gushes, wells up, diffuses, and spreads out. His mission was to deliver the golden plates to Joseph Smith to be translated into the Book of Mormon which would be the tool “to gather in the people” of the last days. This is consistent with ancient Hebrew ways of writing and it requires a very educated, enlightened, and inspired mind to put such depth and layers of meaning into print. The apparent redundancy in these ancient languages is important to the message and should be read and pondered (Christenson 2000, 13). We become the beneficiaries because the scriptures can be read and understood at many levels, depending on one’s progression and need at the time.

Thus, it appears that Almolonga, or Moloonk as it was called, was the camp of the great captain Moroni, and Totonicapán was the town named for his son, Moronihah. There is a close relationship between these towns. We have Totonicapán in the mountains, which may have been Moronihah. The *pan* on the end means “by the” or “land of” and the *ca* is an ending of the name Totonica or Molonica. The *c* just gives the glottal closure to the *a* and the name is *Molonia* or Moronihah. The *totoni* from Nahuatl replaced the *moloni* or *moroni* from Quiché and conveys only the “hot water” portion of the meaning according to the Nahuatl dictionary. These people appeared to like the hot thermal springs and may have used them. Mormon was named after the land of Mormon (Mosiah 18:4; Alma 5:3; 3 Nephi 5:12), which was probably named after the Waters of Mormon. Possibly these waters were also hot or warm springs.

We previously indicated that Moroni’s camp was Almolonga (Moloonk), and there is the sunken city of Moroni down by the east seashore (of Lago de Atitlán) near the line of the Lamanite possessions. This proposed geography is correctly placed in the Cordillera that is found in this area, a narrow strip of wilderness that passes near these mountain “seas.” It is indeed close to the lands that the Lamanites possessed. Considered in this context, the proposed geography gives greater meaning to the description,

“being surrounded by Lamanites and surrounded by water” (Alma 22:29, 32).

When Amalickiah and his Lamanites attacked them, the people from fortress Moroni (now under the waters of Lago de Atitlán) fled to fortress Nephihah (Nahualá), which is the closest neighboring city, about ten miles to the northwest. It is also the next closest set of ruins. The people gathered themselves together and made preparations to receive the Lamanites (Alma 51:24). Lehi (Quetzaltenango) is about twenty miles northwest of the proposed Moroni, and about fourteen miles from Nephihah (Nahualá).

The Lamanites next approached the city of Nephihah. These were heavily fortified mountain outposts in small agricultural areas in the narrow strip of wilderness between the Lamanites and Nephites that provided a defense for the lands of Zarahemla and Bountiful below. Amalickiah was in hot pursuit as described here:

And those who fled out of the city of Moroni came to the city of Nephihah; and also the people of the city of Lehi gathered themselves together, and made preparations and were ready to receive the Lamanites to battle.

But it came to pass that Amalickiah would not suffer the Lamanites to go against the city of Nephihah to battle, but kept them down by the seashore, leaving men in every city to maintain and defend it.

And thus he went on, taking possession of many cities, the city of Nephihah, and the city of Lehi, and the city of Morianton, and the city of Omner, and the city of Gid, and the city of Mulek, all of which were on the east borders by the seashore.

And thus had the Lamanites obtained, by the cunning of Amalickiah, so many cities, by their numberless hosts, all of which were strongly fortified after the manner of the fortifications of Moroni; all of which afforded strongholds for the Lamanites (Alma 51:24-27).

The twenty-fifth verse places Amalickiah and his army near Nephihah but camped down by the seashore. Again, we must not be thrown by the term “seashore” here. This is up in the mountains, not down by the Pacific or Atlantic Oceans. The Nahualate River flows by Nahualá (Nephihah), and the city is just ten miles from Lago de Atitlán. The lake is about eight miles long and five miles wide and is the largest lake by far still remaining in what was then Mormon’s inland world. There is a larger lake in Guatemala today, but it is 145 miles away to the northeast by the Caribbean coast. In Mormon’s terms, the Lago de Atitlán was a sea.¹⁰

Note that, in the twenty-fifth verse, Amalickiah’s army has been kept down by the seashore (Lago de Atitlán). But in the very next verse it says that, by his cunning, he has taken the cities of Nephihah, Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid, and Mulek. Thus, there appears to be a hole in the text here. The events that resulted in this accomplishment by Amalickiah and his army are not detailed. Or, are they? “Amalickiah would not suffer the Lamanites to go against the city of Nephihah to battle, but kept them down by the seashore.” This may have been the technique that was so successful. He may have used his troops to deprive the people in the fortresses of water.

Notwithstanding this absence of information, these cities were probably listed in the order in which they were taken and in the direction the army traveled. The proposed geography is consistent with this verse. It places Nephihah and Lehi next to each other in order and proximity, and so they are in this account.

Amalickiah and his army next marched to the borders of the land Bountiful (Alma 51:28) to take possession of it and the land northward, which would be Desolation and beyond. Mulek is the last fortress listed as having been taken by the Lamanites. Amalickiah’s army drove the Nephites out, killing many. The

¹⁰ Sorenson thinks that Lago de Atitlán was the Waters of Mormon, but that locale is likely some 260 miles away near Shilom (La Paz, Honduras) and the land Lehi-Nephi.

description suggests they were coming down the same Samalá River canyon that Morianton traveled. And as he did with Morianton, Teancum's army headed them off (Alma 51:30). At night, Teancum's army camped in the borders of the land Bountiful, and Amalickiah and his men camped on the beach by the seashore (Alma 51:32). Again, this seashore would not be an ocean seashore but a bank of the Samalá River.

In the dry season these rivers tumble over lava boulders and are as clear as trout streams. At the highest elevations in the mountain valleys where they originate, they pick up some dirt. At the intermediate elevations they tumble over rocks and are clean and clear. In the flat coastal plains they slow down and are much wider, deeper, and muddier. There they take on an opaque greenish-brown color similar to the rivers in the southern states of the United States. The advantage of camping by the river was for good drinking water so they were most likely in an intermediate region where the water was clear and good to drink.

Here we get a helpful glimpse of the weather: "Sleep had overpowered them because of their much fatigue, which was caused by the labors *and heat of the day*." (Alma 51:33, emphasis added) They were used to the cool highlands. Apparently, they had dropped down closer to sea level during their battle with Teancum.

In the night, Teancum stole into Amalickiah's tent and thrust a javelin (a kind of *lance*) through his heart (Alma 51:34). The next morning, Amalickiah's army awoke to find their king dead. These events occurred on what was their New Year's Eve. Mormon made a point of putting the exact day in the text, which may one day be useful in proving the accuracy of the Book of Mormon. The Nephites were still practicing the Law of Moses as they awaited the coming of the Messiah. The Nephite calendar year started the first or second of our month of April, which, as we know from the Bible, corresponds to the Passover season. Clearly, the destroying angel did not pass by Amalickiah as it did the children of Israel on this Passover morning!

Without a leader and with Teancum's troops ready to attack,

the Lamanites decided to go back up the river to the fortress city of Mulek (Alma 52:2).

After his brother's death, Ammoron took over (Alma 52:3). He commanded the troops to keep all the cities they had taken by the shedding of much blood (Alma 52:4). In the proposed geography, these cities were the high mountain fortresses and those along the Samalá River as it approaches the piedmont. The Lamanites planned to stay in the well-built Nephite fortresses. Where did they get their supplies? They did not have to come from the old land of Nephi (Shilom) or the old land of Lehi (Lenca, El Salvador). They came from very nearby. This suggests, as noted above, that everything to the northeast and east was Lamanite land, including most likely, land on the Caribbean Sea drainage side of the Cordillera.

Teancum knew that with existing conditions it was not wise to attack the Lamanites in the fortresses. So, he had his men fortify more cities (Alma 52:5-6). Moroni was still not with them but he sent orders to keep preparing for war, to fortify the land Bountiful, and to secure the narrow pass that led into the land northward¹¹ (Alma 52:8-9). From Moroni's command and from the proposed geography, we know that Teancum's army was on the northeast side of the Samalá River near the narrow pass into the land northward.

Listed below are some geographical verses in Alma 52, with comments in brackets. Moroni is not in the northwest yet, but he has sent fresh troops to Teancum with these instructions:

And Moroni also sent unto him [Teancum], desiring him that he would be faithful in maintaining that quarter of the land [Bountiful and the narrow pass], and that he would seek every opportunity to scourge the Lamanites in that quarter [the cities of Gid, Omner, and Mulek] as much as was in his power, that perhaps he might take

¹¹ In the proposed geography, the narrow pass provides the best access to the land northward even though it leads from the highlands down into the Pacific Coastal piedmont as the means for gaining that access.

again by stratagem or some other way those cities which had been taken out of their hands; and that he also would fortify and strengthen the cities round about [the land Bountiful], which had not fallen into the hands of the Lamanites.

And he [Moroni] also said unto him [Teancum], I would come unto you, but behold, the Lamanites are upon us in the borders of the land by the west sea [probably the Pacific Ocean near the southern extreme of Guatemala]; and behold, I go against them, therefore I cannot come unto you.

Now, the king [Ammoron] had departed out of the land of Zarahemla [strategically speaking, this included the city of Mulek where Teancum was and the other mountain fortresses that protected Zarahemla (Cotzumalguapa)], and had made known [sent a message] unto the queen concerning the death of his brother, and had gathered together a large number of men, and had marched forth against the Nephites on the borders by the west sea. [This was probably the Pacific Ocean at the southern extreme of Guatemala, as previously noted.]

And thus he [Ammaron] was endeavoring to harass the Nephites, and to draw away a part of their forces [Lehi and Teancum's forces at the northwest and easterly corner of the land] to that part of the land [Moroni's and Helaman's areas in the southern end of Guatemala by the Pacific Ocean], while he [Ammaron] had commanded those whom he had left [in the cities of Gid, Omner, Mulek, Morianton, Lehi, Nephihah, and Moroni] to possess the cities which he had taken, that they should also harass the Nephites on the borders by the east sea [Amatitlán, or Manti], and should take possession of their lands as much as it was in their power, according to the power of their armies.

And thus were the Nephites in those dangerous circumstances [which is putting it mildly, since they were

surrounded on the northwest by the Lamanite occupation of their own fortress cities, on the northeast near Manti, and on the southeast along the Pacific piedmont] in the ending of the twenty and sixth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

But behold, it came to pass in the twenty and seventh year of the reign of the judges, that Teancum, by the command of Moroni—who had established armies to protect the south [Helaman’s area on the southeast of Guatemala by the Pacific Ocean] and the west borders of the land [an area about which we are told nothing, unless it is Teancum’s area which is indeed in the direction of true west but is often referred to as “northward” in the skewed Hebrew reference frame], and had begun his march toward the land Bountiful, that he might assist Teancum with his men in retaking the cities which they had lost. (Alma 52:10-15.)

With the skewed reference frame, no easts or wests are in conflict, and we now have Captain Moroni on the northwest end of the Nephite world with Teancum, about to take back Mulek. Captain Lehi is in Bountiful, also. The story line picks up in Alma 52:21. Reviewing the battle to see which direction each of the armies was going as well as the direction Teancum fled while decoying Ammaron and the Lamanite army out of the fortified city of Mulek, the use of the direction “northward” must be visualized in Mormon’s skewed reference frame. Also, we must remember his usage of the term seashore.

Locating Bountiful

The land Bountiful was southward (closer to true east) of the area where the fortress city Mulek was located. A positive fix on the city of Bountiful would be helpful. It had to be within a ten-mile radius of the narrow pass. Most likely it is Mazatenango today or just three miles away at San Francisco Zapotitlán.

But where is the fortress city Mulek? It would have to be close to the narrow pass, and is most likely the present day town of Santa Cruz Mulúa, a close match for pronunciation. The Spanish roots of this name have to do with digging up the soil and heaping up a furrow or mound around a plant. The more ancient name of this city was Mul-ja' in Quiché. The *mul* comes from heaping a mound of earth around the city (*ja'* is "water").

We would expect the city Bountiful to be centrally located, in the best part of the land, very defensible and an old city center with many archeological sites around it. Being in the most capital parts of the land, the ruins would very likely be buried and built upon (Helaman 1:27). Given the proposed geography, we would expect to find the city Bountiful to the southeast of the Samalá River crossing that divides the land in that area.

There are really only a few cities in that area to choose from. Only three cities are shown on the National Geographic maps that have a tourist-interest symbol indicating larger archeological sites.¹² This approach does not help where the most capital cities are located. In those areas, the new demolishes and builds on top of the old, leaving no surface traces. The Nephites lived in "the most capital parts" of the land, so too often their traces have been covered by time.

Nevertheless, two possibilities for a city Bountiful show up using this method. They are Cuyotenango and Mazatenango. Cuyotenango reportedly had an earlier indigenous name of Ah Yabaccoj, which has to do with "water," "bones," and "mountain lions."

Mazatenango is a bit better. Its reported old name was *Kakol Kiej* or *Aj Cacolquej*. In Quiché and Chortí these roots have to do with "fire," "offerings," and "deer." Also in Chortí the *ajk'* or *ahk'* means "yield or produce," consistent with the concept of bounty for which the city was likely named.

There are also some Temple Bountiful possibilities in

¹² To merit this symbol, a site must have something big, a temple site or something unique. Holes in the ground with shards of pottery do not rate this symbol. They just get a red dot on the back of the map.

Mazatenango. In Sumerian, the word *mash* has to do with “sacrifice” and “a he-goat.” But Dr. Allen J. Christenson puts a different orthography on the name. In his word list he states that Mazatenango had the name *Q’uiakal quiej*. The last word, *quiej*, means “horse.” The root of the first word can possibly be inferred from words that are close to it. *Q’uiäk*, means to “shoot, hurl, or throw.” *Q’uiakalic* is an adjective that means “appropriate,” as words at a blessing—*quiakal cätzijonic*. The adjective “appropriate” may be as close as we can get, linguistically, to the name Bountiful. Two other close words are *q’uiäkanel*, a noun meaning “hunter,” and *q’uiäkanic*, a verb meaning “to hunt.” This may have been the region reserved by the Jaredites for hunting, which was later called Bountiful by the Nephites (Alma 22:31; Ether 10:19).

In the final analysis, the mileage or distance traveled is probably the best indicator. Cuyotenango is about five miles from Mulúa, while Mazatenango is about nine. In the battle that follows, the nine-mile distance appears to be the most appropriate. There is also the possibility that San Sebastián, across the river toward Retalhuleu, is the city Bountiful. But it would be just two miles away from Mulúa (Mulek), which is probably too close.

Retaking Mulek

The Lamanite army was led by Jacob (Alma 52:33). The Nephite captains were Moroni (he marched his army by night into the wilderness on the west of Mulek), Teancum (he and a few of his army marched down near the “seashore”), and Lehi (he remained on the outskirts of the city Bountiful to protect it and to wait for Teancum’s small group to come running back). The Lamanites did not dare come near Bountiful. They had even declined Moroni’s offer to fight on neutral ground on the plains between the two cities. The Lamanite army held Mulek for at least two, but possibly three, years without ever attacking Bountiful (Alma 52:1, 19; 54:1). So the operation described in

Alma 52 beginning with verse 21 had to happen close to Mulek. The army of Lehi was left to protect Bountiful, but at a significant distance from the city.

Teancum's job was to get close enough to Mulek to entice the Lamanite army to come out after him and his small group. The guards ran to tell Jacob and the army had to have time to respond. Guards were probably placed a significant distance from the fortress to watch all the access corridors. Teancum was in the area of the seashore or riverbank. This seashore had to be very close to Mulek to interest the Lamanites in coming out. It was possibly a water impound along the river where the water may have cut through later and drained it. They may have had an irrigation reservoir in the area.¹³

During the planned retreat, Teancum began to go down by the seashore. Which seashore was this? The seashore northward, which we have proposed is the Samalá River more to the west (Alma 52:23). Northward describes the seashore, thus indicating the particular seashore he approached, not necessarily the direction he was traveling. Today the road goes that direction for two miles before splitting off to San Sebastián across the river to the west and Mazatenango to the east. Teancum would possibly have headed first toward the crossing of the Samalá River near the fortress Mulek (Mulúa) before turning east to Bountiful (Mazatenango).

The previous night, Moroni marched his troops up into the wilderness west of Mulek (Alma 52:22). The term "wilderness" almost always indicates mountainous terrain in Mormon's world but there are instances where it may refer to wetlands. In this case, there could have been both, but the foothills are most probable. The next morning the guards saw Teancum traveling with a small force. Had Teancum's soldiers been heading toward the fortress, Jacob would have let them come and fought them on the doorstep. But Teancum was to bypass Mulek close enough to

¹³ In the American Southwest the Indians had 280 miles of irrigation canals diverting water from the Gila River to feed the area near the Casa Grande ruins at Coolidge, Arizona, near where the author lived as a child.

be tempting as he headed down near the west seashore, or the Samalá River.

The guards ran to tell Jacob, who promptly took most of his army and chased Teancum down toward the northward shore of the Samalá River then on toward Bountiful. Meanwhile, Moroni sent a small part of his army to take the fortress Mulek, while most of his army followed the Lamanites who were in hot pursuit of Teancum. If Teancum retreated at a swift march, the Lamanite army would have to run in an attempt to catch them. When the Lamanite army spotted Lehi's fresh troops they panicked, thinking they would not be able to retreat to the fortress Mulek before Lehi's army caught up with them.

Lehi's army was fresh because they had not been at a near run, while the Lamanite army had just traveled a quick two to six miles in full pursuit. Their march had wearied them not because of the distance but because of the speed. It is unlikely that the Lamanite army would have followed Teancum much closer to Bountiful before they got the picture and wised up.

Lehi allowed their retreat without engaging them until they encountered Moroni's army, which had been following to their rear. Mormon's account says that Lehi's and Moroni's armies were fresh. This suggests that when Moroni followed the Lamanite army, he did not travel at so exhausting a pace or for such a distance. The Lamanite army did not retreat far before they were surrounded and the retaking of Mulek was complete.

Retaking Gid

The next city for Moroni to retake was Gid (Alma 55). This account is the second time Gid is linked with Mulek. The takeover plan this time consisted of using a supposedly escaped Lamanite with a hefty quantity of wine. The guards partook of the beverage and fell into a deep sleep. A sufficient number of arms were passed over the wall to give a weapon to every man, woman, and child in the city, and the Lamanites were overpowered. This plan also worked beautifully.

Gid and Omner

The fortress city Gid had to be close to Mulek. The only confusing factor is the difference between the sequence of cities described during the military maneuvers and the sequence described in Lehi's and Nephi's missionary trip (Helaman 5:14-15). The missionaries state that they started from Bountiful and went to Gid then to Mulek. The only reasonable conclusion is that the order of travel is not as critical in missionary work as it is in battle. The cities were probably very close and could easily have been visited in either order.

They tended to distribute the fortified cities somewhat evenly for protection. That would put Gid about seven miles up the Samalá River canyon, but topography was the driving factor, not distance. There are several small towns in the area but an old name close enough to Gid has not been found.

The word Gid could come from the Hebrew root *gd*, which, among other things, means "a group, a band, or a troop." *Jut* in K'iche' and *gd* in Hebrew require a nearly identical use of the throat, tongue, and palate. The closest Quiché words are *jut*, which means "a string of beads," and *jut'*, which means "narrow."

Narrow is a very relevant word. It is used in connection with the neck of land and the riverbank. That word in Sumarian is *gú*. *Gíd* is actually a Sumerian word that has an alternate pronunciation of *gud*. The meaning is "length, long, distant, to lengthen, to draw, to pull, to tow, and to stretch out." There was also a Jaredite king named Amgid in the area so the root *gid* was known there previously (Ether 10:32).

Another definition that may have relevance is the Quiché word *jutz*, which means "nook or corner of the eye." More significantly, the word *jut' siwan* means "narrow canyon." Thus, the fortress city of Gid may be in the narrow part of the canyon.

Looking for Gid, the following verse is of interest:

And when we saw that they were making preparations to come out against us, behold, I caused that Gid, with a small number of men, should secrete himself in the wilderness, and also that Teomner and a small number of men should secrete themselves also in the wilderness. (Alma 58:16)

Look at who Gid, the bandleader, is running around with—Teomner. The passages cited above refer to a fortress city of Omner near fortress Gid in the region of Mulek. Here we have Teomner, not Omner, running around with Gid. *Te* means *from* so just as Teancum had a meaning, so Teomner should mean “from Omner” (possibly Omer). In Chortí there is the word *ohomar*, which means “boiling, foaming, and foam.” Also *ohom* means “foam.” In Hebrew *chamar* is “foam.” But in Sumerian the noun root *ner* (and *nir*) means “frog and omen.” Aside from the frothy volcanic pumice formation mentioned above or the foaming river, nothing in the area correlates to these definitions.

The city of Omner is mentioned only once (Alma 51:26) in the order of the cities listed as conquered by Amalickiah: Moroni, Nephiah, Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid, and Mulek. Omner is not mentioned in the missionary report in Helaman and it is not mentioned in the retaking of the cities. This makes placement even more difficult. When a stronger fortress fell, often the people fled from the weaker ones and no battle was necessary. This may have been the case with Omner.

Retaking Morianton

The next city to be retaken was Morianton. (Omner would be next according to the previous listing.) But Mormon, at this point, takes a break in the sequence and inserts the epistle from Helaman about his 2,000 valiant Lamanite warriors. We have already been through those battles. They helped locate Antiparah, Cumeni, Judea, and Manti. This was the sequence that helped us get Zarahemla on the correct side of the mountains and the Sidon

flowing from east to west in the skewed sense used by Mormon.

Later Moroni met with Pahoran in the land of Gideon. They returned to Zarahemla to throw the ruffraff out and reestablish Pahoran in the judgment seat (Alma 61). Moroni and Pahoran then returned to retake Nephiah (Alma 62). On the way, they captured 4,000 Lamanites, supplies, and weapons that were headed for Nephiah. These would have been traveling from the direction of the city Moroni. Those that survived the encounter took an oath of peace and were sent to live with the Ammonites. Moroni and his army then resumed the march to Nephiah and camped in the plains of Nephiah.

These little operations tell us about the course of travel. They may have gone back up the Guacalate River through the valley of Gideon, but it is doubtful. A more direct route would be up the Madre Vieja River to Lago de Atitlán then to the west through the high country where they intercepted the Lamanite reinforcements. However, that might have been too close to the fortress city of Moroni, which was still held by the Lamanites.

The most direct route would be straight up the Nahualate River to Nahualá (Nephiah), where they camped in the plains of Nephiah just south of that town. There are some plains just east (“southward,” using Mormon’s skewed frame of reference) of the ruins where the present-day city of Nahualá is located. No roads are shown for this route but the map does show a trail. Thus, the Lamanites and the Nephites would both have been approaching Nephiah from the same direction as they neared it. That may have been where the Lamanite reinforcements were headed before they were intercepted and sent to Jershon.

In retaking the fortress city of Nephiah, Moroni began by finding that the Lamanite army was sleeping by the east gate, closest to the Lamanite homeland. His army went over and down the west walls of the fortress on ropes. When morning came, the Nephites killed many Lamanites without losing a single soul. Many Lamanites were captured and decided to go live with the Ammonites and be a free people. This is an indication that, in their own land, these Lamanites were oppressed by a wicked,

Nephite-dissenter king who forced them to fight.

The remainder of the Lamanite army escaped, fleeing back to fortress Moroni in the borders by the seashore. The fortress city of Moroni was in the direction of the Lamanites' home if the sea mentioned here was, in fact, the Lago de Atitlán.

Retaking Lehi and Moroni

The next city that was to be retaken was Lehi, which was just fourteen miles straight west of Nephihah. The Lamanite army fled from fortress Lehi when they received word that Moroni was coming. Moroni had quite a reputation going by then. He chased them from town to town until he met up with the armies of Lehi and Teancum. They had last been stationed at the fortress city of Mulek.

All of the Lamanites that had fled were eventually chased into one body in the land of Moroni next to the seashore (Alma 62:33). The main army was previously captured in the fortress of Mulek. As we have noted, King Amalickiah was killed by Teancum as the Lamanites tried to march on the land Bountiful and go into the land northward. The dead king's brother, Ammaron, had previously returned to the land of Nephi and was appointed king. He then returned to the fortress city of Moroni, and he was in charge of the Lamanite army at fortress Moroni.

Moroni marched on the fortress city Moroni and prepared for battle. Ammaron and the armies of the Lamanites were encircled by the armies of Teancum, Lehi, and Moroni on the north and west and by wilderness (the mountains and lake) on the south and east. (Remember the skewed frame of reference in using these compass points.)

Teancum made his second nocturnal trip into the enemy camp. There he succeeded in killing Ammaron but lost his own life when the guards were awakened (Alma 62:36). As noted before, this event and the previous similar event appear to have given rise to today's legend of Tecún Umán. Moroni and Lehi, without Teancum, marched on the fortress city Moroni in the

morning killing many and driving the rest of the Lamanites out of the Nephite lands. This time the Lamanites stayed out for many years. Apparently, fresh out of wicked dissenter Nephite leaders, there was no need for them to go to war.

Proximity

The battles described in this chapter are one of the strongest evidences for the limited geography proposed in this book. Others have proposed geographic locations that would have had these troops gallivanting all over the continent. This is not consistent with the situation. These people had to have been close to each other. They coveted the same toy, so to speak. To covet the same lands required that they see the same lands and that required that they be in close proximity to each other.

Closeness is a relative term, depending on communication and travel technology. But even today, cross-town rivals exist because of closeness, while cross-country rivals exist only because of the NCAA and sports commentators. The same can be seen in the conflicts of the Middle East.

There is the story of a football coach who gave his gladiators a last minute pep talk in the locker room. “Now go out there and kill, kill, kill!” he told them. Fully pumped up, the players headed for the door, but it was locked. So much for the enthusiasm generated by the coach’s pep talk.

In the same vein, imagine that you have some dissenting Nephite coach getting you drunked-up and in a fit of rage to go kill some Nephites. After this you go get your war toys and march on foot for 250 to 500 miles. Like the football coach with the locker room doors secured, that scenario would take all the fight out of the troops. Even today, with our high-tech travel and communications, conflicts of ethnic hatred are within walking distance, one-half day, not twenty days. Wickedness breeds hatred, but it takes proximity to facilitate conflict.

It is very apparent that the original land of Nephi, the land later called Shilom and Lehi-Nephi was much too far away to be

relevant in these battles. The enemy had a presence and leaders who were much closer together at this time. The Nephite references to the land of Nephi, from whence came all the warring Lamanites led by dissenting Nephite leaders, had to include lands that were much closer to them than the cities where Nephi once lived. The center of the Lamanites by this time may have been as close as Iximché, which was the head of the Cakchiquel nation when the Spaniards arrived. *Iximché* means “corn tree.” Schele mentions the importance of the Maize god to the Maya (Freidel 1993, 55). Could this name be a reference to the grain god for which Nephi may have been named? The meaning of the name Nephi will be covered extensively later. Iximché may have become the center of the later, all-inclusive, land of Nephi and have nothing to do with the Shilom area.

Was Mulek in the Land of Nephi?

The following verse is a source of questions for some who have studied the geography and text of the Book of Mormon:

And it came to pass that Moroni had thus gained a victory over one of the greatest of the armies of the Lamanites, and had obtained possession of the city of Mulek, which was one of the strongest holds of the Lamanites in the land of Nephi; and thus he had also built a stronghold to retain his prisoners (Alma 53:6).

Sorenson indicates that he thinks this is an editorial slip by Mormon. The following is his explanation:

There is one often-noted spot in the text that I believe is an editorial slip by Mormon (the 1979 edition eliminates the error). Alma 53:6 formerly read, “The city of Mulek which was one of the strongest holds of the Lamanites in the land of Nephi.” (Sorenson, FARMS, 2:849) Yet Alma 50:11 and 51:24–27 confirm that the

city was actually part of the land of Zarahemla, which lay north of the land of Nephi. The textual mistake may have sprung from the fact that until shortly before this point in time, Lamanites had inhabited the Mulek area, called the east wilderness. They were expelled by Moroni's forces as a defensive measure. (see Alma 50:7) Presumably, while Lamanites lived there, the city of Mulek and the neighboring areas constituted de facto extensions of the Lamanite ruled "land of Nephi." (Alma 22:28)

If the text was corrected in the 1979 edition, it has been switched back in recent editions. That is, more recent copies have the text the same as Sorenson said it was before the error was eliminated. Checking one of the recent reprints of the original Book of Mormon, the verse in question appears to be the same as in the current printings. Checking a copy of Royal Skousen's printer's manuscript (Skousen 2001, 659), there is no evidence of a change. If there is an error, therefore, an "editorial slip," it was most likely in the original manuscript by Mormon.

The contributors to the Book of Mormon, as well as Mormon himself, used the greater land area names loosely, just as we do today. The proposed Mulek (Santa Cruz Muluá) is near what would have been the northwestern extreme of Mormon's world, adjacent to the lands Bountiful and Desolation. It was in the land Zarahemla only in the sense that *all* Nephite holdings were in greater Zarahemla, including Desolation, Bountiful, Zarahemla, Jershon, Antionum, and all the small lands, as well as those that make up the line of fortification in the Cordillera extending from Morianton and Lehi on the northwest to Judea on the southeast. And of course, Mulek is not in the east wilderness as Sorensen states, except if we use the skewed reference frame suggested here, where east is really closer to north.

What do we know about Mulek from the Book of Mormon? We do not know exactly when it was built but it was probably about 67 BC when Moroni constructed all the other defensive cities. However, with a name like Mulek, it may have been built

by the first settlers of the land Zarahemla. It may have been in the pass through which the Mulekites first entered the land Bountiful from the Atlantic side of the continent. The first mention of it is when the Lamanite army took control of the city in 67 BC. They held it for about three years until Moroni took it back when Teancum lured out the Lamanite army. Lehi was then given command of the city. It was not mentioned again for thirty-four years, when Nephi and Lehi went there on their missionary trip. They started at Bountiful, went to Gid and Mulek, then possibly to the southeast along the chain of mountain fortresses, returning thence to Zarahemla (Helaman 5:16). They may have taken the lowland route.

Helaman 5:16 makes it clear that, at the time, there were many Lamanites in the land Zarahemla. Nephi and Lehi then went south into the land of Nephi, all the way to the prison in which King Limhi had Ammon and his brethren cast before he knew who they were. Just as the land Zarahemla was all encompassing, the land of Nephi grew to be all encompassing. The second city of Nephi (Lehi-Nephi) started as a small cluster of cities in a ten-mile radius about thirty miles northwest of Tegucigalpa, Honduras. It later included the land of Lehi and the lands northeast of Middoni, Ishmael, and Midian. This all-inclusive the land of Nephi may have been named for an earlier land of Nephi (Nahuizalco) just fifteen miles from Acajutla (where they first landed), where Nephi may have lived for 15 to 20 years before Lehi died. As we can see from remaining name identifications, these cities bordered on Judea, Cumeni, and Antiparah. When Moroni cleared the southeast wilderness, it is possible he started the cities of Antiparah, Cumeni, and Judea, which protected the land of Jerushon. But the northeast side of the Cordillera that runs through that region was probably also Lamanite country and thus part of the greater land of Nephi.

There are some major rivers (the Motagua and Polochic) in that area that may have limited the movement of large armies, but they would have been a boon to small groups of settlers. It appears the Lamanites had free access to this very large area that

lay mostly east and a little north of the Nephite lands as they have been identified in the proposed geography.

The Lamanites hit Ammonihah, Noah, Moroni, Nephiah, Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid, and Mulek from the side of the mountains opposite greater Zarahemla and Bountiful. The northeasterly side of the mountains was apparently Lamanite land. This probably included some of the Motagua, Polochic, and upper Usumacinta River basins. If not, why would the Nephites have built their fortifications to protect them against attack from that direction? Thus, when Alma and Mormon said the Nephites were nearly surrounded by Lamanites, it was geographically true.

Much later, in Mormon's day, the land of Nephi had grown to include most of the lands to the north and east of these mountains, and may have included some of the mountain fortresses. There is only one verse that might indicate the Nephites held some of the mountain fortresses:

And it came to pass that they came against us again, and we did maintain the city. And there were also other cities which were maintained by Nephites, which strongholds did cut them off that they could not get into the country which lay before us, to destroy the inhabitants of our land (Mormon 5:4).

The fact that the final battle was in the land of Cumorah also indicates that the Nephites held at least some of the mountain fortresses, since, as we shall see, Cumorah is one of them.

In support of the proposed geography, it is of interest to note that the suffix *tenango* means "citadel," a stronghold or fortified place, a bulwark in a commanding position in or near a city. Looking at a current map of the Cordillera that runs through Guatemala in the area of the proposed geography, one can see that many of the high mountain cities have the *tenango* suffix.

What were conditions like in Mormon's day? The great days that followed the visit of the Savior were over. During the years of peace there would have been free travel among all tribes. By

Mormon's day, as everyone started to become wicked, the society was much more mixed than in Moroni's day. It is very unlikely that they got together in a large council and said, "Now that we're all getting wicked again, let's go back to our old boundaries?"

Mormon tells us that the land was infested with Gadianton robbers and Lamanites (Mormon 1:18). Earlier, when they starved out the Gadianton robbers, they were holed up in the mountains and the Nephites were down in fortifications between the lands Bountiful and Zarahemla (Alma 4:1). In Mormon's day, it follows that the Lamanites and robbers held some of the mountain fortifications. That may be why none of those mountain fortresses were mentioned after 60 BC.

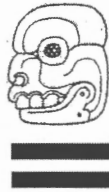
In preparation for the second phase of attacks in Mormon's final battles, he had his people and army gather at Desolation (Mormon 3:5). They were being attacked from the direction of Zarahemla. By this time, therefore, Mormon may have been correct in stating that Mulek was one of the strongest holds of the Lamanites and therefore part of the land of Nephi in his day.

If, however, this was an editorial slip, the minimum modification required to make the statement correct, based on what we think we know, would be to change the words, "in the land of Nephi," to "in the Nephite lands." In biblical Hebrew they used nouns to modify nouns rather than adjectival phrases. Therefore, the original structure of Mormon's statement might have been "land Nephites," which would translate into English as "land of the Nephites." The only error would then have been using "Nephi" instead of "the Nephites." This would be a matter of omitting the diacritical marks that distinguish the name glyph "Nephi" from the word "Nephites," a very minor omission.

But remember, this was written from Mormon's perspective. That was most likely in the region of the hill Shim after the Nephites had signed a treaty that gave away most, if not all, of the land Bountiful and all of the land of Zarahemla (Mormon 2:28). Mulek (Santa Cruz Muluá) was on the Lamanite side of that treaty line and thus appropriately lumped in with the other parts of the land of Nephi as it was in Mormon's day.

When Mormon was editing the book of Helaman there was no longer a people known as Nephites (Helaman 3:16) so why should there be a land of Nephi? The Lamanites would not maintain the name of Nephi for their lands; they didn't even like the Nephites. The name that has persisted to this day for the Nephites appears to be Nahua, which is closer to Noah. In Mormon's day possibly all of the lands (Desolation, Bountiful, Zarahemla, Jershon, Antionum, Lehi, and Nephi) were grouped under the heading of the lands of the Nahua. And indeed, that is where they are found today within the proposed geography.

If, therefore, the name of Nephi had transitioned to Noah or Nahua and there was no longer even a people called Nephites in Mormon's day, as he said, then the whole combination of all the lands southeast of the Samalá River may have indeed been called Nahua and Mormon may have been correct in this also. Mulek was definitely in Lamanite territory during the latter part of Mormons time.



CHAPTER 10

THE LAND OF BOUNTIFUL

The March of Coriantumr

The Nephites experienced nine years of peace with no wars after the retaking of the highland fortresses and the retirement of the great Captain Moroni (Alma 62:39; Helaman 1:1). However, by the end of the nine years they were, once again, struggling with secret combinations, assassinations, and wickedness (Helaman 1:1-13). The Nephites did not keep sufficient guards in the land of Zarahemla because of the contention and difficulty in the government, which enabled Coriantumr, who was a descendant of Zarahemla, to lead a Lamanite army straight into the city of Zarahemla. (Helaman 1:15-20).

We are not told from which direction he came with his army, but it is most probable that he came around the south side of the hill Amnihu (Volcán de Agua), like Amlici and his army. That would be right down the present-day highway from Amatitlán (Manti) to Escuintla (Jershon) and on into Cotzumalguapa (Zarahemla).

Arriving at Zarahemla with such ease, Coriantumr decided to go on and take Bountiful and cut all the way through to take control of the land northward. Notice the order of the lands: Zarahemla, Bountiful, and the land northward (Helaman 1:23).

There was something about the land northward that made it desirable. Possibly it was ore, or possibly it was just the additional real estate and access to the land beyond.

In the proposed geography, these cities are in a direct path along the Pacific piedmont. From the mountains above they could have attacked whichever city they wanted—Zarahemla, Bountiful, or Desolation—but apparently they could not go on to the land northward. The fortress cities in the mountains prevented such an attack. They did not form a line that could be crossed perpendicularly by an attacking army. They were strung out in the mountain valleys and had to be taken sequentially in order to get through to the northernmost part of the land.

The eastern front—Antiparah (Atiquipaque), Cumeni (Cuilapa or Tacuilula), and Judea (Jutiapa)—was different. It could be crossed perpendicularly, possibly in between cities. Thus, the line of fortification from the east appears to be only one fortress deep. These three fortress cities would have to have been situated to take the greatest advantage of topographic features—rivers, jungle, and steep terrain—in order to limit access by invading armies. Indeed, a topographical map of the area shows that the proposed cities are in strategic valleys between volcanoes, which limit access to the lands to the west and north as well. Crossing this line of cities perpendicularly leads to additional mountain wilderness. The land of Jershon was an additional buffer of sorts, and probably expanded to include all of this area.

The armies of Lehi from the front, and Moronihah from the rear, ended Coriantumr's career. After a bloody battle, the surviving Lamanites went home in peace. From this battle we know that Bountiful is near Zarahemla and in line with the land northward, which in this case includes the land of Desolation and beyond (Helaman 1:19-34). Verse 31 says that the Lamanites could not retreat either way, neither on the north, nor on the south, nor on the east, nor on the west. In the northwest/southeast line formed by Zarahemla, Bountiful, and Desolation, the

Nephites were assisted by the mountains to the northeast and the Pacific Ocean to the southwest.

Abaj Takalik and the Temple at Bountiful

The city and land of Bountiful appear to be southeast of the Samalá River, but the temple Bountiful where Christ appeared is not mentioned as being in the city Bountiful. It is mentioned as a temple in the land Bountiful (3 Nephi 11:1). It is assumed they are close to each other.

Abaj Takalik has the largest and most archaeologically significant ruins in the area. It has temples and earthen fortification berms, but the Book of Mormon evidence suggests it is not the site of the city Bountiful. Nevertheless, Bountiful was very large and could have included all the surrounding area. The city of Retalhuleu is the largest city currently in the area. Ongoing cities tend to bury old ruins, which may be the case with Retalhuleu. However, as noted previously, the town of Retalhuleu appears to be a combination of the city Desolation and the city Teancum, having been combined into one city by the Spaniards.

It is possible that Abaj Takalik was the ancient Moron, where the Jaredite kings dwelled. The artifacts are there to support that possibility. It was very active during the Nephite years, and experienced a decline with the destruction of the Nephite nation. The area was not a significant player in the Classic Maya era.¹

Dr. John Allen Graham and associates of the University of California at Berkeley conducted the dig in this area. He describes the site saying that the mounds occupy a ridge running north to south with a gentle slope toward the south. The ancient center was laid out as a series of wide, level terraces with steep

¹ It was thought that Moron, where the king dwelled, was possibly also Mulek, which means king in Hebrew and may have come from Sumerian, but the battles that follow would indicate that they were distinct cities. In Sumerian *mu-lú-gal*, the pronunciation of which is close to Mulek, means "name-man-big." The *lugal* part was often used to mean "king."

fronts. The terraces are variable in width, ranging from 140 to 220 meters and the steep fronts are from four-and-a-half to nine-and-a-half meters high. (Graham 1978, 88)

The site at Abaj Takalik is everything one would expect for an ancient temple site. A large temple complex rests on a local high spot, just the way we locate most temples today. There are some stone carvings from the era of the Olmec (possibly Jaredite) civilization and some from later also. This site, like many of the others, had foundations built with lava boulders and large river rocks, but there is no stone superstructure.



Figure 22. Temple 12 at Abaj Takalik

The weather in the area is pleasantly warm but can get quite hot. Usually there's a refreshing breeze. The most functional form for a gathering place in this region would be something like the native structures of the Polynesian Islands with their thatched boweries or shaded pavilions. There would likely have been very limited walls, since with walls and people inside it would be unbearably hot. Walls would keep away the pleasant breeze, prevent body odors from dissipating, and make it dark inside.

Artificial light would have been necessary. Walls would not add to comfort or functionality in this region. It is not surprising, therefore, that what remains today is not a walled-in structure.

All of the temple sites in the region appear to have been made for outdoor worship, similar to the tent-like tabernacle used by the children of Israel in the wilderness. Even in the mountains, the temple altars are in the open air. The raised rock foundation of the temple at Abaj Takalik elevates the structure to catch the breeze and promote water runoff from the rain. It also makes the structure stand out as something special.

The foundation is not made from cut stone, but rather from simple boulders mortared together with clay. Some other temple sites (unlike those at Abaj Takalik) still have white plaster coating the stone and clay structure. There are two carved, stone platforms with legs about fourteen inches high and about two-and-a-half feet by three-and-a-half feet. These are identified by some as thrones, though they look like altars or pedestals from which a person could speak. However, there is a stela from Abaj Takalik that shows a man sitting cross-legged on one of these pedestals so it is possible they were indeed thrones.

There are many foundations for buildings in close proximity at the part of the site that has been excavated. The main temple has been given the number 12 as its identifier. In front of the steps leading into temple 12—the largest at this site, with a base of about forty-five yards by sixty yards—there are two flat stones about six feet in diameter raised slightly from ground level. These round, flat stones could have been the bases for lavers and sacrificial altars such as are found in the Old Testament temples. They would provide some flooring to prevent a muddy mess around the sacrifice and the laver.

There is a carved stone basin in the town square in La Democracia, which was hauled in from Monte Alto. It would have fit perfectly as a laver sitting on just such a base as the two

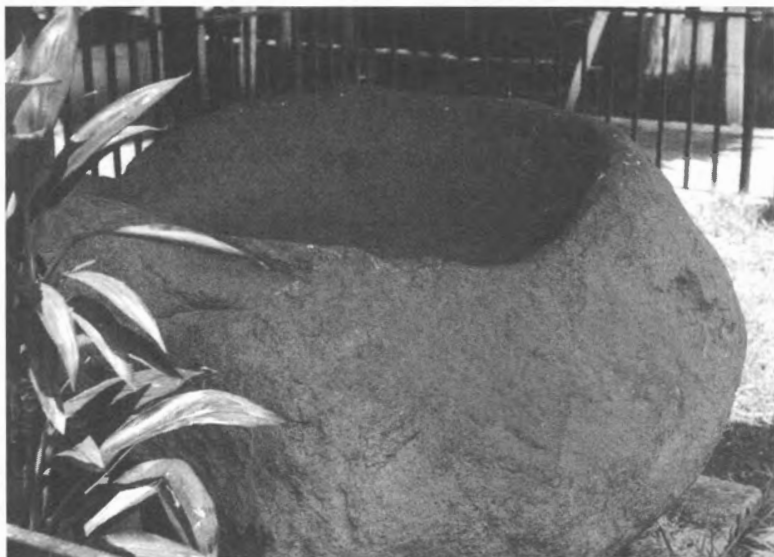


Figure 23. Monte Alto Stone Basin Now at La Democracia

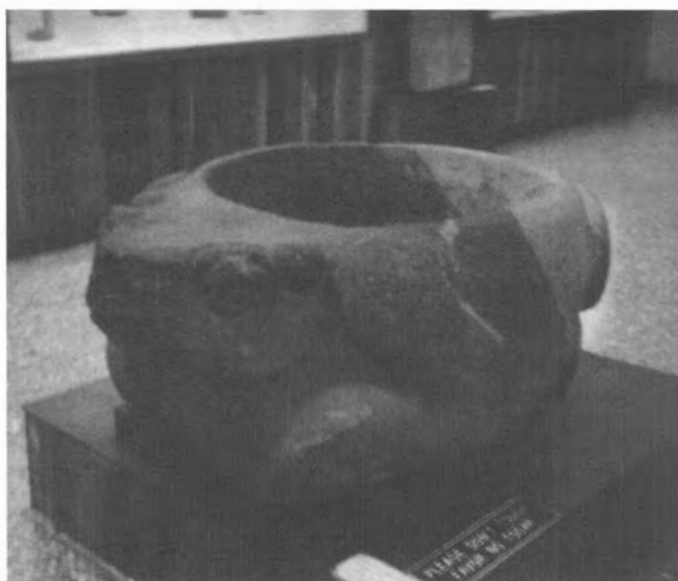


Figure 24(a). Frog Stone Basin at the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.



Figure 24(b). Frog Stone Basin at Hotel in Antigua Guatemala

at Abaj Takalik. There is another laver in the National Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in Guatemala City that would also have been a perfect fit. It is a two-and-a-half-foot-diameter basin hollowed out of the back of a stone frog. The function of these basins is obvious, and carved frogs also appear at the temple site in Abaj Takalik. There is a stone frog alter at Izapa, and frog statuary is found in Teotihuacán, and even in Bolivia.

There is also a large flat event-marking stone at temple 12. It has a Maya bar-dot, long-count date carved into the stone and contains many eroded glyphs. According to archaeologist and author Charles Gallenkamp, several stelae were found in the Abaj Takalik area with dates on them ranging from about 200 B.C. to 126 A.D. (Gallenkamp 1985, 69). Apparently, the temples at Abaj Takalik were in use during the time both before and following the Savior's visit, but we have no recorded evidence of a visit by the Savior to this site. The size is right, it has the Hebrew characteristics, and the surrounding area has the agricultural abundance, comfort, and location that one would expect for the land where a king dwelt. Also, because it is so close to the

Volcano Santa Maria, it does occasionally get buried in ash. The ash deposits produce fertile soil, but the city may have been abandoned because of excessive occurrences of these ash deposits.

The burial by volcanic ash was probably what saved the site from becoming the foundation for a present-day city. The true temple site in the land Bountiful could easily have a Catholic church resting on it today. The natives kept returning to the sacred sites, so as part of the conversion process, the Spaniards built churches in these places.

The ruins at Abaj Takalik are some of the largest and oldest found to date. Only part of the site has been excavated. Indeed, most of the visible ruins in the Costa Sur of Guatemala are just mounds in back pastures. They have not been dug because of lack of interest and/or resources. FARMS and NWAFF (New World Archaeological Foundation) have focused on the central depression of Chiapas and elsewhere. There are many mounds at San Juan Noj. And on the coastal road to Tilapa, nine mounds can be counted, the highest being twenty-five to thirty feet.

There are several mounds at a farm named ¿Quién Sabe? on the road between Pajapita and El Tumbador in the Tecún Umán area. The name ¿Quién Sabe? is Spanish for “who knows?” This farm is a set of ruins that has lost its identity. Possibly it had a name that sounded like Quién.

One mound on ¿Quién Sabe? looks very much like a temple foundation. The locals say that mounds and ruins are widespread in the area, the largest being on the other side of the hill to the east of this farm. These ruins do not show on current archaeological maps of the area, but their age and location is relevant to Mormon’s last battles in the lowlands prior to his move to the highlands of Cumorah.

Abaj Takalik (or Abaj Tacalic) means “standing stone” in Quiché. The name came from S. W. Miles, one of the earlier archaeologists, who christened the site in 1965 with a name of her liking. She chose the Quiché name Abaj Takalik to represent the “standing rock” or *pedra parada* in Spanish found on the site.

The site is larger than the portion that has been uncovered so far, and forms part of several different *fincas* or farms.



Figure 25. Sacred Site at Iximché Where Offerings Are Burned.

Unfortunately, the selection of this name is a great disservice to understanding where the site fits in the local history. These sites are sacred to the indigenous people, and they have existing proper names. The natives follow a form of Hebrew tradition mingled with Catholic ritual and bring flowers, incense, and offerings to burn at these sites. They have done so for centuries. The devout old men and women know the native names for these sites. Onsite interviews with someone they trust would have revealed the correct name. The name of a city center as important as Abaj Takalik would have been passed down from generation to generation. Had it been properly identified, the job of determining its Book of Mormon name and location might have been easier.

There is a large standing rock by the front steps of temple 12 at Abaj Takalik that has eroded, but one can still see Maya long-



(a) Photograph of Stela



(b) Artists Reconstruction of Carving on Stela²

Figure 26. Stela at Temple 12 in Abaj Takalik

count, bar-dot dates on it. The number on the left of this stela is 8.4.5.17.11, which corresponds to June 5, 126 AD. The number on the right is 8.2.2.10.5, which corresponds to August 23, 83 AD. It

²Presented by Lynette Norr. [cited 20 June 2002]. Available at www.clas.ufl.edu/users/norr/maya-aztec2000/latepreclassic/. INTERNET.

might also be read as 8.3.2.10.5, which would correspond to May 11, 103 AD.³ The difference depends on how a possible damaged dot is interpreted.⁴ These dates, on a stela at the front steps of the largest temple at Abaj Takalik, put this site at the top of the list for relevance to events in the Book of Mormon. The dates encompass the death of Nephi IV and the handoff of the records to his son, Amos (4 Nephi 19), but do not correspond to any specific events in the Book of Mormon.

There appear to be two additional partial dates on other stones that may have been removed from this site. Examination of Dr Graham's preliminary notes and photographs from Berkley are interesting and helpful in this regard. But it cannot be determined if the dates were from 500, 400, 300, or 200 BC.

The ruins are scattered over a vast area on the coffee plantations of Santa Margarita and San Isidro. Many workers have visited the site over the past 112 or more years. Artifacts have been found, lost, and rediscovered again. It appears that not all the things that were found and documented originally are still at the site today. In 1902, the Volcano Santa María left heavy ash deposits in the area and many of the old stela were buried and lost again. A very graphic description of this particular eruption, as recorded by an eyewitness, will be presented later. Early accounts of the site mention "foundation walls of stone edifices." (Graham 1978, 85) The artifacts are linked in style to Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, Monte Alto, Bilbao, Chocó, El Baúl, and Kaminaljuyú. There are some similarities to findings at Izapa but there are differences as well. The site is from the early, mid, and late pre-Classic Mayan period. These sites did not participate in the great development and construction of the Classic period (300 to 900 AD).

³ In a televised program about Copán, David Stuart counted out a bar-dot date, demonstrating how simple it is. Many of the dates stated here have been interpreted using the method shown on this program as well as other sources. There is even a Maya date calculator on the INTERNET.

⁴ One dot is missing at the Katun level. Two dots are clear but the spacing is such that a third dot was probably also on the stone originally.

Graham mentions that Stela 2 from this dig had part of a long-count date (Graham 1978, 89-91). There is a questionable 7 or 8 *Baktun* cycle and a *Katun* number that is definitely a 6, 11, or 16. The other three numbers are completely gone. Graham thinks that the first number is a 7 but, from his photographs, it looks like there may have been a middle dot that would make it an 8. The center dot region shows a distressed area but no raised features. The distressed region shows evidence of a surface crater that would have resulted from a raised dot being broken away. Had there not been a dot there, it does not appear that the surface crater would have resulted, because of the recessed, protected nature of the spot. The damage appears to be the result of vandalism or rough handling. Had this damage occurred naturally, the large broken fragment containing the last four numbers would have been close by. The large part of the stone that spalled off or was broken away appears similar to damage that could have resulted from a hot fire at the base of the stela. The damage to the first cycle number is not physically connected to the damage to the subsequent numbers, but it appears that it may have resulted from the large broken fragment shearing past and causing damage to the first bar and dots. The archaeologists involved may have desired the older date of seven rather than eight on the *Baktun* cycle, since that would shift the stela's date back 394 additional years and make it possibly the oldest recorded long-count date.

If Graham is correct, the possible years that would match the stone-date fragment would be those between 235 BC and 215 BC, or those between 136 BC and 117 BC, or those between 38 BC and 18 BC. The earliest period is within the time when Mosiah and his people arrived in Zarahemla. The second period may involve such events as King Benjamin's death, Mosiah II becoming king, and the people of Alma arriving back in Zarahemla. The third period is marked by the dissension and turmoil chronicled in Helaman when Moronihah and his army were driven north to Bountiful and the dissenters and Lamanites took over Zarahemla.

If the first number is eight, as suggested above, the stone

fragment date would include the years between 159 AD and 179 AD, or the years between 258 AD and 278 AD, or the years between 357 AD and 376 AD. The first period would relate to the transition of the records from Nephi to his son Amos and from Amos to his son Amos. The next period is marked by wickedness beginning again, and the third period is in the war years near the land Desolation.

The dates on stela 5 from the dig are clear and include the years between 83 AD (or 103 AD) and 126 AD. To the untrained eye, stela 2 and stela 5 look like they were carved by the same hand. The spacing of the bars and dots; the border around the bars and dots; the border around the outside of the carving; as well as the decoration that fills the space all look similar.

These two stelae do not look 394 years apart in their workmanship, craft, or technology. If they are, in fact, from the same era, the correct first two numbers on stela 2 are probably 8 and 6. That would put the carved text between December 18, 159 AD and September 3, 179 AD. This is the same time frame as stela 5, and both stones would have been carved during the years of righteousness following the visitation of Christ when there were no wars and Bountiful's culture and civilization were at their peak. This would be the era when the people had time to pursue such carvings.

The terraces Graham mentions were not for agricultural purposes. Just up the canyon the local farmers work much steeper terrain without terraces. In fact, there does not appear to be any terraced farming in the area. These terraced flats are for buildings, roadways, or defense. A four-and-a-half to nine-and-a-half meter (fifteen to thirty foot) bank of steep dirt is a formidable barrier for troops with clubs, swords, spears, and arrows. Such heights would not be employed for agriculture.

In Alma 53:3–5, a description is given of the fortifications at Bountiful. They dug a large ditch around it and put a breastwork of timbers on the inner bank of the ditch. The dirt from the ditch was cast up against the timbers to “an exceeding height.” The city became “an exceeding stronghold ever after.” This sounds much

like the earthworks at Abaj Takalik, except for the ditch, which would have been filled in by ash from the volcano anyway. Similarly, the town near Retalhuleu named Santa Cruz Muluá at one time probably had a ditch and a berm around it because that is what its name means in Spanish and Mayan.

The cities noted by archeologists as the centers of civilization in the area are Izapa, Abaj Takalik, El Baúl, and Kaminaljuyú. Other cities in the area sometimes mentioned as significant include Monte Alto, Cotzumalguapa, and San Juan Noj. As we have seen, these are the names of the main city centers in the lands of Zarahemla, Bountiful, and Desolation. Looking at the density of archaeological sites on the National Geographic map, these ruins were indeed the hub of civilization during the Book of Mormon era. It is interesting to note that Retalhuleu and Mazatenango, two of the biggest and oldest continual cities in the area are not mentioned. This is likely because continuously occupied cities tend to bury their past.

Zarahemla was destroyed by fire at the time of the Crucifixion and later rebuilt. While it was the principal city prior to this event, it seems to have been less important than Bountiful afterward. We have noted that Cotzumalguapa is probably what is left of Zarahemla. As we shall see, it is the name from which the Spaniards derived the name Guatemala.

El Baúl is within about four miles of Cotzumalguapa and is more significant to archeologists. It also would be within the confines of greater Zarahemla. Another set of ruins less than a half-mile southeast of El Baúl is Castillo, which means "castle" in Spanish. Perhaps it was the ancient location of the castle for the Nephite leaders.

As noted above, the Spaniards often built churches on top of the native temples as part of their forced conversion of the natives to Catholicism. The older cut stone would then find continued use as building material and foundations. At the El Baúl sugar factory are displayed about forty stone heads that have been found in the area. There are tangs on the back of the stone heads that show they were once hung or laid by inserting the tangs into a two-foot-

thick wall, but there is no evidence of that wall remaining.⁵ Stelae have also been found in the area, and according to Gallenkamp, one stela had a bar-dot date tentatively translated as 36 AD (Gallenkamp 1985, 69), placing it in close proximity to the visit of Christ to this area.

It is believed that the greater land of Desolation is in the area from the Samalá River northwestward to Izapa and Ayutla and possibly beyond. This would include the ruins of Abaj Takalik and San Juan Noj'. The city of Desolation, however, appears to be limited to about half of the present city of Retalhuleu close to the shore of the Samalá River.

Mormon's Comment on Northern Migrations

During these years many of the Nephites became restless and decided to move. Many of them, and many of the people of Ammon (Helaman 3:12), migrated to the land northward. They built houses out of some sort of cement (Helaman 3:7-8) and kept many records (Helaman 3:13). They spread from the sea south to the sea north, and from the sea west to the sea east (Helaman 3:8). This is the first and only reference to the sea north and the sea south.

In effect, these people moved out of Mormon's world. He knew of their existence but we are not told much more about them. There was shipping, and many records were kept of their proceedings (Helaman 3:15-16), but we do not have those records today nor did Mormon abridge much from them.

⁵ It appears that the plain of the back of the heads is not perpendicular to the tang. If the tangs were horizontal, the heads would be tipped back about five degrees from vertical. This means the stone heads were probably designed to rest in an adobe-and-stone, or clay-and-stone wall that was slightly tilted inward, not on a vertical, cut-stone wall where the tang would be perpendicular to the head. All of the rubble-filled stone with clay walls observed in the area were, in fact, sloped inward a few degrees from vertical. They were originally faced with plaster. Such a slope would aid in the construction and stability of the walls. The plaster, which does not bond well with clay, would best be applied to a sloped surface.

The Line Bountiful

As noted above, the Lamanites and Nephites experienced about nine years without war after Moroni, Teancum, Lehi and their armies recaptured the fortified mountain cities (Alma 62:39; Helaman 1:14). Coriantumr, who was sent by Tubaloth the son of Ammaron (Helaman 1:16), made his daring drive in and took Zarahemla and was then defeated between Bountiful and Zarahemla. They then experienced an additional 16 years before the next confrontation (Helaman 4:5).

As frequently happened, the people prospered and became wicked during this time. They had internal conflicts, dissension in the Church, and experienced much bloodshed. The secret combinations of the Gadianton robbers were established in the more settled parts of the land, and dissenting Nephites again tried to stir up the Lamanites. But they were afraid to fight the Nephites (Helaman 4:3). Moroni, Teancum, Lehi, and Moronihah had left quite an impression on them. Eventually however, when Nephite dissenters rounded up another army, they came down and took the entire land of Zarahemla and all the lands, even to an unnamed land that was near the land Bountiful. In doing this, they probably took the same route as Amlici and Coriantumr.

The mountain fortress cities are not mentioned in the record here. Possibly the Nephites let their defenses fall into disrepair over the years. The infrastructure may have been improved, permitting more direct access from the east. Better roads, bridges, and the spread of population would permit access where the land was previously wilderness.

The lands that were captured—Zarahemla and the unnamed land near Bountiful—were lands in the smallest sense of the word. They were basically one city and the land around it in a small valley. In the piedmont regions, the cities were not in the valleys but on the higher land between the river valleys. The rivers appear to be the division markers.

Mormon left one town or city unnamed a few times in the text. He mentions it as a city or a land (Helaman 5:4). He was

sufficiently meticulous about names that it is likely that the text he was abridging did not include the name, or the name carried some undesirable connotation.

The Nephites and the armies of Moronihah were driven all the way to the land Bountiful, which they promptly started to fortify.

And there they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea, even unto the east; it being a day's journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country (Helaman 4:7).

The proposed geography suggests that this line ran from the Pacific Coast to the citadel of Mazatenango, a distance of about thirty miles over relatively flat land most of the way. Of course, the line spoken of here may have been perpendicular, running from the Samalá River (a "sea" which was close to true west from Bountiful in the proposed geography) near Desolation to the Mazatenango area some fifteen miles away.

Maza means "deer" in both Nahuatl and Quiché, and *tenango* is the Spaniards representation of the Quiché word for "citadel or fortress." Mazatenango is probably Bountiful, Bountiful was very close to Lib's city and appears to have been reserved for hunting by the Jaredites (Alma 22:31; Ether 19:10). It is situated just where the mountains start to become steep. Most of the other citadels were up high at the entrance points to greater Zarahemla, which lies below. This fortress and the neighboring Cuyotenango may seem atypical with regard to their location, but that location fits the description of Bountiful. The cities which were in the heavily populated regions were also very heavily fortified.

Sahagún mentions that the people in this area made rubber sandals (Dibble 1963, 188). With such footwear, it is likely that the distance a Nephite could travel in a day was between fifteen and thirty miles, a match with the proposed geography.

There is a present-day section of highway running from Champerico on the coast, through the ruins of the city San Juan

Noj, and up the canyon to Quetzaltenango (Lehi, Xelajuh) with hardly a bend. The highway runs parallel to the river with only about three small stream crossings. From Retalhuleu to the coast it is at low elevations and is perfectly straight. However, in the mountains from Retalhuleu to Quetzaltenango it winds, although some maps do not show that. This highway may very well mark the ancient location of the line spoken of in the Book of Mormon (Alma 22:32; Helaman 4:7).

Indeed, in Christenson's K'iche' word list, *ulew* means "land, soil, or earth." The more standard orthography appears to be *uleu*. Carmack, in his translation of *Titulo C'oyoi* (1973, 344), includes *retal* in the original text many times. It means "border or boundary." The word *rulew* is interpreted as "territory." This suggests that the name *Retalhuleu*, (spelled with or without the *h* on various maps) means "the border land."

In the dry season, at intermediate elevations, most rivers in the region can be waded easily. They widen and slow down, however, as they near the coast. Therefore, the best places to cross would have been found closer to the steep mountains, in the piedmont region. The eruptions of the volcanoes in this area periodically cover the land with a fresh layer of ash that is rather quickly converted into some of the richest soil on earth. The rivers cut through these volcanic deposits like butter. Thus, the banks of the rivers are steep over much of their length. Where there is lava, water often cuts vertical walls, like it has done through the Snake River Gorge in Idaho. Where soil or ash were deposited, however, the rushing water cuts steep banks or *barrancas* that are quickly covered with dense underbrush.

This means that river crossings are limited at intermediate elevations and effectively nonexistent at lower elevations. Thus, the lower river crossings mentioned during the battles would have to have been in the piedmont close to the mountains.

The line of fortification at Bountiful is mentioned in a verse in the Book of Alma:

And now, it was only the distance of a day and a half's

journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward (Alma 22:32).

This reference was written about fifty-five years before the description in Helaman 4:7 above. Perhaps the conditions (paths, roads, etc.) improved for travel during those intervening years. When Moronihah had the line fortified, the ease of travel may have been greater, so that, what took a day and a half may have taken only a day.

Possibly, because of improvements made in the intervening years, it was not necessary to fortify all of the line. The lower reaches of the rivers may have provided their own barriers against the 40,000 troops and supplies marshaled by the Lamanites in the book of Helaman.

Now notice the choice of words for the east and west extremes in these two verses. Alma says, "from the east to the west sea," and Helaman says, "from the west sea, even unto the east." The order of east and west is switched but the word sea is still applied only to the west. Had this been an elliptical sentence structure, the reference would have been switched in one of them to the "east sea." Apparently, consistent with the proposed geography, there is no east sea in this region.

There is a reference to a line (of fortification, presumably) between Bountiful and Desolation. It may have been the line Bountiful, if it had the perpendicular orientation.

And the land which was appointed was the land of Zarahemla, and the land which was between the land Zarahemla and the land Bountiful, yea, to the line which was between the land Bountiful and the land Desolation. (3 Nephi 3:23)

The unnamed land is mentioned here as well, standing between the lands of Zarahemla and Bountiful. This suggests the lands were in a row, as they are in the proposed geography. Consider the following two verses.

And the remainder did flee and join the inhabitants of the city Teancum. Now the city Teancum lay in the borders by the seashore; and it was also near the city Desolation (Mormon 4:3).

And it came to pass that Hagoth, he being an exceedingly curious man, therefore he went forth and built him an exceedingly large ship, on the borders of the land Bountiful, by the land Desolation, and launched it forth into the west sea, by the narrow neck which led into the land northward (Alma 63:5).

Starting at the northwest end of the proposed geography for Mormon's world and going east, we have the distant land northward, then Desolation, which has the narrow neck of land at the Samalá River bank between it and the land of Bountiful and is also near the narrow passage in the canyon where the Samalá River has cut vertical lava walls just down stream from Quetzaltenango near Almolonga. Next is the unnamed land, and finally, there is Zarahemla, which shares its borders with several smaller lands. Mormon later names a city and a land that may have been in the unnamed land between the lands of Zarahemla and Bountiful, but they appear to be significantly further up the slopes than the larger cities on the piedmont. These are the city Angola and the land of David. He also mentions the land Joshua and says it is on the west borders of the land near the seashore. This may be the Pacific Ocean shore in this case, assuming that the term "west borders of the land" is used in the sense of the old Hebrew frame of reference. This may be true west, however, since we have already found Joshua (Xojola).

Did the line Bountiful run perpendicular to the direct line between Bountiful and Desolation, extending from the mountains

to the Pacific Ocean, or did it lie between Bountiful and the Samalá River near Desolation? Everything observed about the Nephite defenses, suggests they set up their defenses in a sequential path, not a perpendicular one. A single-line front is ultimately impossible to defend. Concentrated forces can breach such a line. Sequential defenses, however, require the enemy to take and hold many fortresses in a sequence. This limits rapid penetration and consumes the resources of the invading army. Also, the enemy is more vulnerable when spread out sequentially through hostile territory.

It is possible, therefore, that the line Bountiful was a direct line between the cities of Bountiful and Desolation. Helaman 4:7, Alma 22:32, and the proposed geography fit either possibility. The east end of the line would be Bountiful (possibly Mazatenango), and the west sea would be the Samalá River near Retalhuleu (Desolation/Teancum). That would make the distance along the line about 16 miles to the river and an additional five miles down the river to Desolation for a total of about 21 miles (diagonally it would be about 19 miles).

A perpendicular line from the mountains to the Pacific Ocean, however, would seem a more appropriate fit to 3 Nephi 3:23. It may be that the numerous streams and rivers in the area were enough of a barrier to troop movement that a perpendicular line of fortification was considered sufficient.

In this regard, note the information about Hagoth. Why would he build his ship in the place he did? The obvious reason would be the same one Thor Heyerdahl had for building his raft in Guayaquil, Ecuador. There was tall timber up river in the mountains. The large fir trees could be felled and floated down the Samalá River to the tidal estuary, where the sea, in effect, divides the land. Construction would be convenient on the shores of the tidal estuary. Building materials, a river to float the large timbers to the sea, and a protective tidal estuary by which to build and launch his ship were all necessary for Hagoth, and they were all present at this location. Also Hagoth's boat may have been a

very large raft, as this is the kind of watercraft that was common when the Spaniards arrived (Cieza 1998, 104).

The Land Between

The river crossings, fords in English or *vados* in Spanish, are essential for year-round crossing of the critical rivers in the area. These *vados* are shown on the topographical maps of Guatemala. On the Costa Sur, these crossings tended to cause a grouping of the major cities along a line that formed the transition between the piedmont and the mountains. Even today the main highway tends to follow that line. The critical cities are thus in a linear sequence along the mountains where the rivers can be most easily crossed.

One would think Mormon knew them all, so why didn't he name the land between Zarahemla and Bountiful? It may be that one of the names was unbecoming in translation and he did not want to mention it. Another possibility is that he provided the name and it was missed.⁶

There are not many cities or lands to choose from in the area. Closest to Retalhuleu is Cuyotenango, then Mazatenango, Suchitepequez, Chicacao, and Cotzumalguapa, which is Zarahemla. Examining the maps, there is a cluster of ancient ruins where the main highway crosses the Madre Vieja River. No significant events or places are mentioned that occurred or were located in this region. In the Maya cosmology there is a divine couple named Xmucane and Xpiyacoc. The Spaniards probably changed the name of the river from the name of the divine mother to *Madre Vieja*, which means "old mother." The original name may have been disrespectful in Mormon's thinking or it may have become a part of the decadent Maya religious culture for which the Nephite nation was destroyed.

⁶ If the name of the missing land actually was *The Land Between*, as China is known as *The Middle Kingdom*, it could have been Retalhuleu, which means "border land," or a land between two other lands. Unfortunately, Retalhuleu is on the wrong side of Bountiful.

Another possibility is that nothing of sufficient importance occurred there to be recorded by the scribes. Mormon as a 16-year-old leader of the armies was not raised in the area and went through there in a hurry during the flight to Angola. He may not have known the name.

Nephi and Lehi

At the beginning of Helaman 5, having failed with the sword to regain their lands, Nephi was voted out of the judgment seat. The government was established by the voice of the people and those who chose evil were in the majority. The seat of government was now in Bountiful (Helaman 4:5; 5:1-2; 5:14). At that time, Nephi and his brother Lehi (possibly the great captain, now retired), two of the greatest missionaries who ever served, started to call the people to repentance. The story line starts in Helaman 5:4. Their message hit home with the people who knew they were doing wrong. Tens of thousands were taught and joined the Church. They brought almost the entire Lamanite nation and many of the Nephites to repentance.

They started teaching in Bountiful then went to Gid and Mulek, as we have noted before. We have already established some good candidates for these three cities. The brothers then went southward from city to city into the land of Zarahemla among the Lamanites (Helaman 5:16). If they took the mountain route, they would have visited Omner, Morianton, Lehi, Nephihah, Moroni, Gideon, and probably Manti, where they could drop back down, traveling through Melek, Jershon, and Antionum before returning to Zarahemla, where they could work among the Lamanites who were occupying that land along with the Nephite dissenters. It is also possible that they stayed in the lowland cities initially and went into the northern lands after the conversion of the Lamanites. Some ten years later, they returned to Zarahemla from the land northward, where they had been rejected (Helaman 7:1-3).

Many Lamanites were converted and immediately returned

the land to the Nephites to repair the damage they had done. Nephi and Lehi converted and baptized 8,000 Lamanites in Zarahemla (Helaman 5:19).

They then headed to the land of Nephi (the La Paz area of Honduras) where they were put in prison and slated for execution. Glorious manifestations occurred followed by a lot of preaching and baptizing. Almost the entire Lamanite nation joined the Church. They then yielded to the Nephites all of the lands they had previously won in battle. All this led to some great years of free trade, travel, and communications. Many Nephites and Lamanites went into the land to the north (Helaman 6:6).

We are not told much more about Nephi's travels other than the method:

But behold, the power of God was with him, and they could not take him to cast him into prison, for he was taken by the Spirit and conveyed away out of the midst of them.

And it came to pass that thus he did go forth in the Spirit, from multitude to multitude, declaring the word of God, even until he had declared it unto them all, or sent it forth among all the people (Helaman 10:16-17).

The roles switched in the years before the appearance of Christ. Samuel the Lamanite tried to save the Nephite nation. "And thus we see that the Lord began to pour out his Spirit upon the Lamanites, because of their easiness and willingness to believe in his words" (Helaman 6:36).

Starving Out the Gadianton Robbers

In the meantime, the Gadianton robbers were making life miserable among the Nephites. The Nephite leader Lachoneus instructed the people to bring all their supplies, flocks, etc. to one area (3 Nephi 3:22). They had sufficient food and supplies for a seven-year siege. Note how well the proposed geography fits the text describing the gathering point:

And the land which was appointed was the land of Zarahemla, and the land which was between the land Zarahemla and the land Bountiful, yea, to the line which was between the land Bountiful and the land Desolation.

And there were a great many thousand people who were called Nephites, who did gather themselves together in this land. Now Lachoneus did cause that they should gather themselves together in the land southward, because of the great curse which was upon the land northward (3 Nephi 3:23-24).

Four lands are mentioned. Starting with the northwest as the upper boundary, we have Desolation. This is the place where the sea (Samalá River) divides the land northward (Desolation) from the land southward (Bountiful). (Ether 10:20) The river and the mountains form a natural barrier for the northwest boundary and this boundary land is today named Retalhuleu. Next to Desolation we have Bountiful. It is thirty miles wide from the west sea (the Pacific Ocean in this case) to the mountains at that point. Between the lands of Bountiful and Zarahemla is that unnamed land, and next to the unnamed land is the land Zarahemla.

Between each of these lands are some major rivers that flow from the mountains to the Pacific Coast. These rivers form significant barriers for the hit-and-run tactics of the Gadianton robbers. The Nephites were farmers, and the lowlands between the piedmont and the Pacific Coast in this region are ideal for farming.

Note that the wilderness is not mentioned in these passages. The term "wilderness" usually referred to the uninhabited mountainous regions. Notably, the mountain towns are not mentioned either. Nor is anything south and east of Zarahemla toward the land of Lehi. That area included Antionum, Antiparah, Cumeni, Judea, Jershon, Melek, Manti, Gideon, Ammonihah, and others.

Helaman 3:23 states that, unbeknownst to the head of the

government, secret combinations were established in the more settled parts of the land. Subsequently, they became very aggressive and were separated from the law-abiding portion of the civilization. But the Nephites were their own worst enemies. At one time the Lamanites had purged their society of the robbers, but the Nephites let them live among them (Helaman 6:20-21, 37).

Finally, the Nephites could no longer live with them and gathered into heavy fortifications within the flatter farm country. The Lamanites who had converted helped fight with their brethren the Nephites (3 Nephi 2:12). The Nephites under the command of Lachoneus and Gidgiddoni decided to deprive the robbers of their two supply streams, animals to hunt and people to rob. The robbers were forced to retreat into the mountains that make up the Cordillera and possibly the Pacific coastal jungle.

The robbers essentially were left with scorched earth. The rules of engagement for the Nephites were to go and wipe out any robbers they could find, while remaining within their own safety zone (3 Nephi 4:21). Wild game was probably depleted from the flatlands, and the robbers could not take up farming because the crops, as well as the workers, would be vulnerable to attack. Besides, this sort of work was not to their liking. They depended on wild animals to hunt and people to rob.

The plan of Lachoneus worked.⁷ As the robbers were in a weakened condition, the Nephite army finished them off (3 Nephi 4:22-27).⁸

There is one very important piece to this story that is missing. The whole country is a garden compared to the dry and cold western United States. The Gadianton robbers could have retreated back to the high country or Altiplano of Alto Verapaz to farm and been out of reach of the Nephite armies. Why didn't they do that?

⁷ Incidentally, the Lacondon branch of the Maya probably goes back to Lachoneus for its name.

⁸ The Mam word for "finish off" is *b'antzan*. This could relate to the name Antum and the destruction of the Jaredite nation in the land Desolation.

The missing piece was a killing frost provided by the Lord and found in *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, where the great Quiché king Qikab is mentioned (Recinos 1953, 101). Qikab would likely be Jacob, the founder of the town of Jacobugath (3 Nephi 7:12) (which may have been Santa Lucia la Reforma, previously named Ak'aab near Santa Cruz del Quiché). Jacob (3 Nephi 7), an antichrist and the part of the Quiché with him at this particular juncture, would be the Nephites who formed the Gadianton robbers (3 Nephi 7:9). Again, Gadianton possibly comes from Hebrew and Sumerian roots and may mean "group from the high country" or the "group from Antum," or the "red group." Their battle costume was indeed a loincloth of lambskin dyed red in blood (3 Nephi 4:7). One of the possible Gadianton towns was named Gadiandi and *andi* is essentially the same as *anti* meaning "copper" and "red."

The Cakchiquel may have been the Lamanite name for the Gadianton robbers. *Cak* means "red" in Cakchiquel (K'uk' in Quiché). The word for sheep is *chij* in Quiché, which is similar to *chih* for horse in Chortí. Horse in Quiché is *quiej* or *quej*. This root appears also to apply to animals other than the horse. The word for "blood" is *quiq* or *quic'*. The name Cak-chi-quel may have come from Cak-chih-quej or Cak-quic'-quej meaning "red sheep blood" or "red blood sheep." The word for blood in Quiche is *quiquel*. So Cak-chi-quel appears to be "red blood."⁹

According to the *Annals*, King Qikab died and the Quiché began to make war on the Cakchiquels (Recinos 1953, 101). A great famine occurred at that time, caused by heavy frosts that killed the corn crops in the month of Uchum. That may have been the missing piece that made the Nephite's approach to starving out the Gadianton robbers so effective—a heavy frost in the high country that year.

One thing that may be important in the final battles is fact that Nephi went into the land northward to preach to the people, but he was rejected and could not stay with them (Helaman 7:1-3).

⁹ Note that, in Japan, the word for "blood" is *chi*.

Lachoneus had the people gather in the land southward because of the great curse that was on the land northward (3 Nephi 3:24). This curse may have been caused by wickedness and the prevalence of the Gadianton robbers.

Zemnarihah, the leader of the Gadianton robbers, was captured as they fled back to the land northward (3 Nephi 4:28). This land northward had to have been the high country where Jacobugath was located. He was hanged from the top of a tree until dead and the tree was then felled. This was a very major experience for the Nephites. They had been plagued many years by the robbers. It is unlikely this hanging would have gone down in history without a commemorative place name of some sort. In Sumerian the words would be put together as *up* and *hang*. It would have *an* for "sky or up" and *lá*, meaning "to hang." *Angola* may mean, "to be hung high." In Quiché, *ch'oc* is "a hook to hang something on" and *ch'oy* is "to chop down." In Chortí, *ch'an* is "a strand, twine, or cord" and *ch'ahn* is "a twine, rope, or climbing vine." These pieces point to the ruins at Chocolá, which also has to do with hanging. Chocolá may have been Angola in the Book of Mormon. This would fit geographically because Angola was in Mormon's escape path northward as a 16-year-old youth. It is just before the land of Joshua or Xojolá. Likewise, it would have been the most logical escape path for Zemnarihah and his robbers.

The Annals of the Cakchiquels has a related story. They mention a town named Zimahihay, which is very similar to the name of the man Zemnarihah. In the next paragraph, they mention that the Cupilcat and the Canalakam peoples were annihilated at that time. (Recinos 1953, 83) Could Cana refer to Bountiful and Lakam to Laca or Lehi?

After the destruction of the Gadianton robbers, Mormon said that not one living soul among all the Nephites doubted the words of the holy prophets (3 Nephi 5:1). The sign of Christ's birth had been given. But in the next eight years, the Nephites took a turn for the worse. Wealth, pride, and class distinction, based on riches and their chances for learning, entered their society again.

Corrupt judges were secretly executing the prophets (3 Nephi 6:12, 23). The government was overthrown, and they again divided into tribes. In this state they were ready for the natural disasters about to come, when the earth would mourn the death of the Innocent One.

Events At The Crucifixion

The geology of the Guatemalan Pacific slope presents a strong testimony that this region makes up the lands of Bountiful and Zarahemla. This is probably the most seismically active area in all of the Americas. Fuego, a major volcano in the area, has erupted about sixty-five times since the year 1524. Many volcanoes in the area blow steam continuously, and earthquakes in the area routinely claim thousands. Such destruction, recorded in other historical accounts, matches Mormon's reports about the geography and topography of the region.

Starting in 3 Nephi 8:5, we are told that a great storm arose, greater than had ever been known before. A hurricane undoubtedly came from the east as they still do today. There was a great and terrible tempest. Terrible thunder shook the whole earth as if to divide it in two. Lightning was sharper than had ever been known in all the land.

Carmen Lind Pettersen in her book *Maya of Guatemala* included an account written by her father, A. H. Gehrke, of a devastating eruption of volcano Santa Maria. The descriptions provided by her father are most instructive:

In October 1902 San Martín suffered the worst catastrophe of its history. The volcano Santa María erupted violently and covered their poor cherished land with a meter of sterile pumice-stone sand.

I was living in Guatemala City with my family when we were awakened in the early morning by a noise of distant explosions in quick series coming from Quetzaltenango, or due west, roughly 120 kilometers. It

sounded to me like heavy artillery fire, but we soon realized that it must be a volcanic eruption. Quetzaltenango, on the north side of the volcano Santa María, had suffered a severe earthquake in April, followed by frequent heavy quakes through the year. Dr. Karl Sapper of Tübingen, Germany, a volcanologist, had arrived in Guatemala to study the phenomenon and was staying in my house. In two days, we had organized a small party of men and set out to try and get as near as possible to the volcano. We were able to get to Retalhuleu by train, and from there we had to walk. We were on the lowland, south of Santa María, directly facing the side of the mountain which had blown a huge crater a third of the way down from the summit. The noise was deafening as we were only thirty kilometers (19 miles) away from this crater and it was still in full eruption. The sky was dark with a ceiling of sand, and the light was unnatural and eerie. The volcano pushed enormous quantities of pumice sand and rock high into the sky in a great solid column, and round this rose a curtain of superheated steam which rose higher still, cooled in the upper atmosphere, and came down as a solid sheet of water.

We were anxious to reach Quetzaltenango. The condensed steam had swollen the rivers, which were already covered in floating pumice, and the bridges had been carried away. We made several unsuccessful attempts to climb nearer, and found that our only chance was to go eastward once more and try to round the mountain on that side. We plowed through the sand, and late at night we crossed the river Samalá on a bridge hanging in broken strips. We could not see the water far under the floating sand, but we could feel its vibrations over and above the incessant volcanic quaking. We had been walking on pumice for many kilometers the last few days, and were now distressedly thirsty as well as exhausted. But our personal feelings seemed nothing

compared with the really terrifying spectacle of that huge crater in front of us spouting steam and lightning, and God knows what else, into a gigantic column rising into the air. We can only have been seven or eight kilometers (4 or five miles) from the rim of the crater. The darkness of the night blocked out everything but the devil's display before us, and the sensation of the heaving earth under our sore feet. The eruption seemed to grow worse and worse. Lightning flashing persistently up and down the column. We lay down to rest, but quickly got to our feet again when it was forced upon us that there was a secondary eruption in full swing. The only way I can describe it is to ask you to imagine a big gun flash going straight up and magnified thousands and thousands of times. A continual flash of explosion rising in a column thirty kilometers high. The hideous noise drowned our voices and we must have just stood and gasped in horror for nearly an hour.

One of our companions suddenly vomited. We all felt peculiar. We had had enough of it. Dr. Sapper decided we were running a considerable risk by staying there as by now big stones had begun to fall. He waved us on, and suddenly we were overcome with panic and ran for our lives up the road. We must have run and stumbled several kilometers before we reached the village of Santa María on the road to Quetzaltenango. Not a soul in sight and not a house stood erect. We dropped exhausted with fatigue and fear under the shelter of a wall in the deserted village. At the village of Almolonga we stayed two days to recover and mend our boots. At San Martín the sand was again too deep for comfort and speed. We camped in the Indian village or what was left of it, and bought a sheep and killed and cooked it in a sugar-boiling vat. The only remaining living inhabitants were those who stayed to rescue the flocks, but now they had them they did not know what to do with them, as there was no grass or any green thing to feed them.

The landscape was white with pumice sand. The roofs of the houses were caved in. The trees were stripped of branches. There was the stench of death everywhere. There was no water. The few San Martín Indians in their long black woolen garments and black hats, stood like ghosts above their huddled sheep.

Everything they owned seemed to be entirely destroyed and their lives came to a standstill. The tribe was almost entirely eliminated. Almost all from the village had escaped to the lowlands further south, below the buried coffee plantations [the Abaj Takalik area] and beyond the fall of the heaviest sand. Few ever returned. A terrible epidemic of malaria broke out in the hot lowlands the year after the eruption, and the Indians died by the tens of thousands. (Pettersen n.d., 212-215)

This is an impressive account of one volcano. Multiply it by dozens of volcanoes along the volcanic arc that occupies that area. Add in the earthquakes felt from Jerusalem around the world caused by major tectonic plate shifts and the tsunamis larger than ever recorded that resulted from these shifts, and the result brought the world to its knees.

The description in 3 Nephi 8 suggests there were extensive earthquakes in the area. The tectonic plates and the east/west fault across Guatemala must have shifted violently. Volcanoes along the Cordillera apparently erupted, causing severe blasts and rumblings. These kinds of cataclysmic events cause a charge disturbance in the atmosphere leading to major lightning and thunder.

Zarahemla took fire. This may have been due in part to volcanic eruptions as well as lightning. Volcano Fuego is just fifteen miles up the hill from Zarahemla (Cotzumalquapa). Buildings of wood, cane (bamboo), and thatch would have burned easily. In some of the pumice cliffs in the area, charred limbs and chunks of wood are still visible. This eruption could easily have altered the flow of the Sidon as suggested earlier.

The prevailing wind would have blown from the northeast. Lava probably did not reach the city because the distance from the volcanoes is too great and the cities were built on the higher ground between the river valleys. But ash and cinders would certainly have reached Zarahemla. It appears from the account that many volcanoes caused cities to be destroyed by fire. The hurricane that was greater than anything ever experienced in the area might have kept everything from burning as a result of the volcanoes. Very likely, the destruction started with dry lightning common to volcanic activity.

Many cities in the area would be covered by heavy ash deposits. The Book of Mormon says that Moroni sank into the depths of the sea (Lago de Atitlán), and earth was carried up onto Moronihah and in its place a great mountain arose (3 Nephi 8:10). This sounds like volcanic ash and lava or a major new volcano, not a landslide. Landslides and lava flows do not cause great mountains. A new volcano, a major ash deposit, or a major earth upheaval caused by the shifting of tectonic plates would have been necessary to create such a mountain. Cliffs of pumice and ash are still visible in many places in the area. Some of these cliffs are as high as 100 feet in some of the road cuts that have been made through these mountains. The whole high country region is chopped up with steep mountains and *barrancas* along the streams and rivers.

In the Nephite lands, great destruction occurred in the area to the south but the land northward experienced even more devastation. The whole face of that land changed (3 Nephi 8:12).¹⁰ The chopped-up or broken nature of the countryside in the northern lands (in the mountains) is such that it would seem

¹⁰ Some errors in locating the geography can occur if one assumes that the phrase, "the whole face of the land was changed," refers to all of Mormon's world. The antecedent of that phrase in this verse is "the land northward." It is clear, therefore, that the people in that region, who had utterly rejected Nephi during his missionary journeys, were the most severely affected by these disasters. In the area of the proposed geography for Mormon's world, the changes, though great, did not affect "the whole face of the land." This has been a major assumption in identifying the locations described here.

incompatible with the level of activity of the Jaredites some 600 years earlier. Where a northeastern piedmont might have been, it is now a series of steep canyons (*barrancas*), mountains, volcanoes, and ash deposits. While destruction occurred elsewhere, Nephi wrote what he knew about what happened in *his* world. Many great cities sunk and those that remained were damaged in a major way. People could not kindle a fire due to the weather and volcanic activity, including the “wet vapors of darkness,” an obvious reference to a combination of hurricane clouds and clouds of volcanic ash and condensing steam.

Seismic maps of the area reveal a subduction zone of the Cocos plate just off shore, which is parallel to the Pacific Coast. The edge of the North American plate cuts across Guatemala near the southern area of the Petén lowlands. Two other faults cut across Guatemala, parallel to the Polochic and Motagua rivers. The Sierra de las Minas was clearly the result of a shift in these faults. It is possible that, prior to the destruction described in the Book of Mormon, the Caribbean Sea extended inland to the mountains. This would have created an isthmus and an east sea where the Sierra de las Minas range now stands. The area has clearly been under water before. The only question would be the timing of when the region was pushed up.

When Christ arrived, he spoke about all the destruction. “Moroni have I caused to be sunk in the depths of the sea.” This is different than Onidah, Mocum, and Jerusalem, of which He said, “Water have I caused to come up in the stead there of...” (3 Nephi 9:7). These latter cities are Pacific coastal towns in the proposed geography and could have been buried by a tsunami. Tidal waves can be as high as 100 feet and have wavelengths of hundreds of miles. Then there were the cities of Gadiandi (Gadiani in the Book of Mormon Index), Gadiomnah, Jacob, and Gim gimno, which sank into the earth as hills and valleys were created in their place (3 Nephi 9:8).

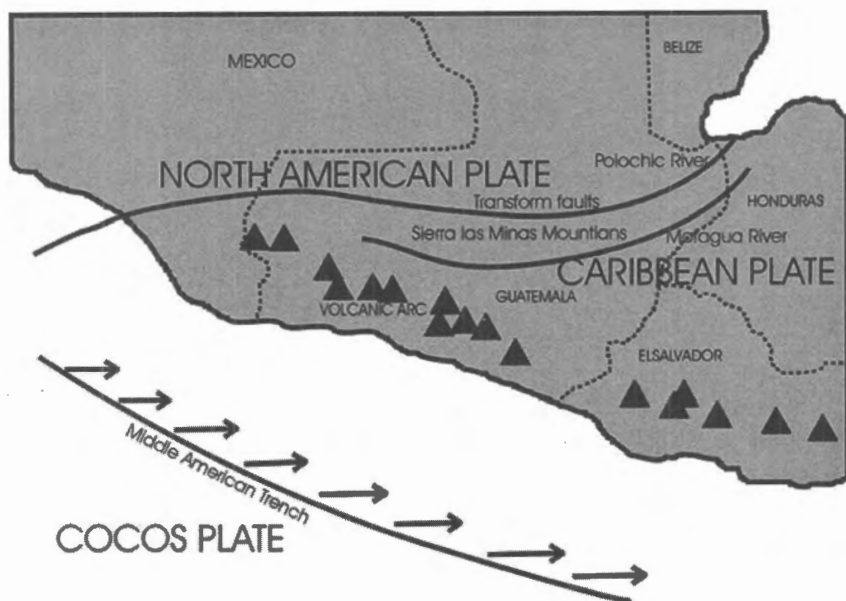


Figure 27. Tectonic Plates of the Guatemala Region

The city of Moroni was like one of these latter cities, except it happened to be near an inland sea or lake when it sank. Earthquakes can with equal ease create mountain lakes or drain them. The ruins found under water in Lago de Atitlán, together with the relationship to the fortress cities of Lehi, Morianton, and Nephiah, suggest that the fortress city of Moroni has been under water since the coming of Christ to the area.

One city was singled out for special mention in the record as if there was a volcano with its name attached to it.

Therefore, Jacob seeing that their enemies were more numerous than they, he being the king of the band, therefore he commanded his people that they should take their flight into the northernmost part of the land, and there build up unto themselves a kingdom, until they were joined by dissenters, (for he flattered them that there would be many dissenters) and they become sufficiently

strong to contend with the tribes of the people; and they did so (3 Nephi 7:12).

And behold, that great city Jacobugath, which was inhabited by the people of King Jacob, have I caused to be burned with fire because of their sins and their wickedness, which was above all the wickedness of the whole earth, because of their secret murders and combinations; for it was they that did destroy the peace of my people and the government of the land; therefore I did cause them to be burned, to destroy them from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints should not come up unto me any more against them (3 Nephi 9:9).

Looking at the maps from the perspective of the Nephites, the northernmost part of the land might possibly have been Zaculeu, near the present-day town of Huehuetenango, which is on the south slope of the wilderness of Hermounts (Cuhumantes). There is also a set of ruins named Jakawitz just northeast of Santa Cruz del Quiché. The best guess, however, is that Jacobugath is Santa Lucía la Reforma, which was previously named Ak'aab. This name is a dead ringer for Jacob as it is pronounced in Hebrew.

This would define the northernmost part of the land. These people may have been Gadianon robbers. The Quiché people have legends about their great King Qikob, which also sounds like Jacob. Were these Jacobites, descendants of the brother of Nephi? There were doubtless many leaders named Jacob among these people. Was this the Zoramite named Jacob, who dissented and led the Lamanite armies? (Alma 52) Or was this King Jacob the Nephite dissenter who led the Gadianon robbers and became king of a league of tribes? (3 Nephi 7) We do not know, but the latter best fits the proposed geography.

The only other cities mentioned are Laman, Josh, Gad, and Kishkumen, which were all burned. The city of Laman might have been in the land of Lehi (El Salvador), or it may have been in the land of Nephi next to the second city of Lemuel

(Calumuya). Yet another candidate shows up in the indigenous writings. There is a Lamoá near Santa Cruz del Quiché and a city Lamagi somewhere in the highlands (Recinos 1953, 93). When Christ visited the temple Bountiful, He may have mentioned only the towns in that region. Nothing southeast of Zarahemla is mentioned, with the possible exception of Laman.

Kishkumen is not listed as a city in the Book of Mormon Index or Topical Guide, but Christ knew where it was, and it was destroyed due to the wickedness of the people there, who had stoned the prophets. It was probably in the wilderness or mountains north of Zarahemla. There is a set of ruins in that area named Cunen that could be the remnants of Kishkumen.

Christ visited the land Bountiful where many of the righteous people who survived were located. These survivors in the land Bountiful were not the only people he visited. He said that he still had others whom he was going to visit (3 Nephi 15:17; 16:1). Legends throughout the Americas have references that point back to Christ's visit (Hansen 1963). They indicate that some accepted Him while others did not. He was known by different names in Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, and Peru. These names include Quetzalcoatl, Kukulcan, Boquiche, and Vira Cocha respectively. The Book of Mormon speaks only of the Nephites and Lamanites, located in a land that went from the middle of Honduras northwest to the border between Guatemala and Mexico on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. The Yucatán civilizations came later. Many civilizations thrived in central Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru at this same time. Based on their many legends, it appears they were all visited by Christ or one of his prophets. Each civilization had a different name for Him but the message was the same.

After Christ's visit, the Lamanites and Nephites became as one people. Their civilizations grew and prospered. Finally, however, pride began to take its toll, and the secret combinations came back. After 286 years, covered by only four pages of the Book of Fourth Nephi, we read of Ammoron hiding up the plates and giving instructions to young Mormon.

While we are talking of the plates and the visit of the Savior to the land Bountiful, let us look at some obscure but important points. Consider the following verses as they relate to the keeper of the records and the location at which they were kept.

And Nephi, the son of Helaman, had departed out of the land of Zarahemla, giving charge unto his son Nephi, who was his eldest son, concerning the plates of brass, and all the records which had been kept, and all those things which had been kept sacred from the departure of Lehi out of Jerusalem (3 Nephi 1:2).

And the city of Zarahemla did take fire (3 Nephi 8:8).

And in one place they were heard to cry, saying: O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and then would our brethren have been spared, and they would not have been burned in that great city Zarahemla (3 Nephi 8:24).

Behold, that great city Zarahemla have I burned with fire, and the inhabitants thereof (3 Nephi 9:3).

The first of these verses says that Nephi, the son of Helaman had departed out of the land of Zarahemla, “giving charge” of the plates to his son, Nephi. This may mean that Nephi, his son, was still in the land of Zarahemla, but it does not necessarily mean he was in the city of Zarahemla. Indeed the most logical sequence would be for Helaman’s son Nephi and his family to have moved from Zarahemla to Bountiful, and after arriving at Bountiful, he gave charge of the records to his son Nephi. But verse three of the first chapter goes on to say that “whither he (Nephi the son of Helaman) went, no man knoweth.”

Zarahemla was going to be burned and the prophet might have known this. By then, the city of Zarahemla had become a less desirable place to live. There was a lot of trouble with fighting and secret combinations. Twice it was taken by enemy troops. The city was burned, possibly by a volcano, and the people were killed at the time of the Crucifixion. The

ecclesiastical center of the land had probably shifted to Bountiful before then.

When Christ appeared at the temple in Bountiful, he stated that there were other scriptures that he wanted them to write that they did not already have.

And it came to pass that he said unto Nephi: Bring forth the record which ye have kept.

And when Nephi had brought forth the records, and laid them before him, he cast his eyes upon them and said:

Verily I say unto you, I commanded my servant Samuel, the Lamanite, that he should testify unto this people, that at the day that the Father should glorify his name in me that there were many saints who should arise from the dead, and should appear unto many, and should minister unto them. And he said unto them: Was it not so?

And his disciples answered him and said: Yea, Lord, Samuel did prophesy according to thy words, and they were all fulfilled.

And Jesus said unto them: How be it that ye have not written this thing, that many saints did arise and appear unto many and did minister unto them?

And it came to pass that Nephi remembered that this thing had not been written.

And it came to pass that Jesus commanded that it should be written; therefore it was written according as he commanded (3 Nephi 23:7–13).

When the Savior asked for the records to be brought to him, it is unlikely that Nephi went back to Zarahemla to get them. They seemed to be readily at hand in Bountiful. The objective here is to help locate the hill Shim (Mormon 1:3). The record keeper is at the temple in Bountiful and he had the records with him there. Bountiful was where the more righteous people were located and Zarahemla had been burned. The hill Shim, therefore, should be near Bountiful, not Zarahemla.

This conclusion also fits better with the trip of Omer, described as follows:

And the Lord warned Omer in a dream that he should depart out of the land; wherefore Omer departed out of the land with his family, and traveled many days, and came over and passed by the hill of Shim, and came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed, and from thence eastward, and came to a place which was called Ablom, by the seashore, and there he pitched his tent, and also his sons and his daughters, and all his household, save it were Jared and his family (Ether 9:3).

Omer left the land of Moron where the king dwelled. The city of Moron is most likely Morazán, as we have noted previously. Nibley tells us in his book, *Lehi in the Desert*, that the *i* on the end of the name Moroni is an indication that he was from Moron (Nibley 1988, 244).¹¹ Likewise, it seems reasonable to conclude that Lamani in the land of Shilom was named for one or more people who were from the city of Laman in the land of Lehi. This convention is still used in the Middle East where there are Israelis, Afganis, and Pakistanis.

Moroni tells us that Moron was near the land the Nephites called Desolation (Ether 7:6). The towns of Morazán, Nueva Morazán, and San Antonio Morazán are southeast of Coatepeque, between Abaj Takalik (which may be Moron) and Izapa/Ayutla. Morán also is a common surname in Guatemala.

Note that Omer “came over” and passed by the hill Shim (Ether 9:3). Since they “came over”, Moroni was probably still writing the Jaredite history into the gold plates in the hill Shim and the hill Cumorah region. In the year 401 AD, Moroni was still finishing Mormon’s personal book. This was sixteen years after

¹¹ We have already suggested that Moroni does not just mean that he came from Moron. Moron and Moroni share the same root, and Moron has to do with the heaping up of mounds (Ziggurats) as the ancestors of the Jaredite kings may have done in Sumer.

Cumorah (Mormon 8:6). The Jaredite history was added later. At this point in time Mormon had been killed, the Nephites were destroyed, and Moroni was in hiding. Twenty years later (421 AD) Moroni was still writing (Moroni 10:1).

We need to put ourselves in the writer's location in order to understand what his frame of reference was. Omer came from Moron near the land Desolation. This would be on the Pacific slope by the narrow neck of land where the sea divides the land (Alma 63:5; Ether 10:20). "Where the sea divides the land" appears to be Moroni's description. It would therefore describe the geography as it existed in his time frame.

In the proposed geography, the easiest route for Omer would have been from the area of Desolation or Moron, up past Colombo Costa Cuca (formerly Morazán). Then he would come up the mountains toward Morianton and Lehi. Somewhere in there he would have passed the hill Shim.

A possible hill Shim in that vicinity is Tui Chim, up near the top of the canyon on the southeast side of the highway. From there, they would have passed the land of Cumorah and continued eastward to "the sea," probably Lago de Izabal. It provides the nearest seashore due east of Cumorah, though we have demonstrated many times that any riverbank may have been referred to as a seashore. There they started the city of Ablom by the sea (by Lago de Izabal, that is). Further study indicates that Omer may have gone up the Samalá River instead. This would put Antum and the hill Shim in the canyon near the village of Tierra Colorada, in which case Tui Chim would not be relevant.

It is doubtful Omer went all the way to the Caribbean, though it is possible that, at that time, the Caribbean penetrated inland much closer to the Cordillera than it does today. The ruins at El Bongo may be Ablom by the sea. The starting point, the direction, the days of travel, and the seashore all match. Even the name is remarkably close if it is transliterated into Hebrew, with no vowels. In Sumerian, *ab* means "sea" and *lom* means "abundant."



Figure 28. San Martín Sacatepéquez, Mountain Valley
Location of Tui Chim

Antum and Bountiful

It would be helpful to know the original name for the ruins at Abaj Takalik. The nearest town is El Asintal. To those not familiar with the language, this name has a Spanish sound, but it does not appear in Spanish dictionaries. The closest Spanish noun is *asiento*, which means “seat” in English. The peculiar spelling, with *al* at the end, may have been a way to amplify the importance of the seat. Thus it may have been meant to designate “the great seat, the seat of government, or the judgment seat.” The Spanish language has just such idiosyncrasies. Thus, the name El Asintal may have come from the large stone throne that has been found at Abaj Takalik, or it may have once been the judgment seat.

In Quechua (the language in Perú of a branch who, with the Quichua of Ecuador, are descended from the Quiché of Guatemala), the word for “bountiful” is *hatun-sonqo*. *Hatun*

means “great or large in bulk,” and *sonqo* means “heart.” Together they mean “bountiful.” The similarity between Antum and *hatun* is obvious. It is possible that the land of Bountiful and the land of Antum were one and the same. However, the name Antum, as will be discussed later, may have to do with the high country, while Bountiful and Canaan had to do with the lower fertile areas. Perhaps too many connections between the name and land Antum have been identified to permit us to link it very closely with Bountiful, but it is interesting that they are frequently linked together.

Note that the first use of the name is in Alma 22:29 where Mormon writes about the land “which they called Bountiful.” Note that Mormon distances himself from the name by the use of “they called.” He did not say, “*We* called it the land Bountiful.” Rather, he said it was the land “*they* called Bountiful.” In his second use of the name Bountiful (Alma 22:31), he again says that it “was called Bountiful.” His subsequent uses of the name Bountiful are more familiar; he just talks about the location as being Bountiful. The final use of the name Bountiful in the Book of Mormon is in 3 Nephi 11:1 when the resurrected Christ appeared at the temple there.

The original travelers from the Jerusalem area must have thought they had died and gone to heaven when they arrived at the lush southern coast of Guatemala/El Salvador after leaving the bleakness of the Middle East. But the novelty of such abundance may have worn off as their descendants forgot that not everyone lives in a Garden of Eden. Thus, the name Bountiful may have fallen into disuse before Mormon’s time.

Possibly a volcano deposited too much ash in the area. Volcanic deposits of ash in the canyon above the area that should be Bountiful approach a thickness of 100 feet at some of the road cuts. One hundred feet of pumice could even change the name of a town.

Let us retrace what we know. Mormon was approached by Ammaron at ten years of age and instructed, at the age of twenty-four, to add the events of the people to the record that existed at

the time (Mormon 1:3). The faithful young man did so. His first writings constitute the first part of his personal contribution, which is found near the end of the Book of Mormon in the smaller book that bears his name.

Ammaron did not ask Mormon to edit the entire history of the Nephite people and put together the Book of Mormon. This particular assignment must have been a later request from the Lord. Mormon faithfully discharged this request during his later years, between battles, as time permitted, when the end was becoming apparent for his people.

At twenty-four, Mormon was probably not yet aware of the complete history of his people. That came later as he engrossed himself deeply in the records. Mormon never uses the name Bountiful in his personal part of the history. This is consistent with what we have noted above and suggests that the name was changed after the resurrected Lord visited the site.

The best word for bountiful might be fertile, which is *khasba* in Arabic. The *k* in this word is not really pronounced. It's just a way to start the *h* with a glottal closure. The closest word in Biblical Hebrew is probably 'able' which is pronounced as *aw-bale*. There is possibly some connection between these words but nothing matches the old recorded names in the area.

A better fit from Old Hebrew might be *ahlab*, which means "fertile place." More literally it means "water fat". *Lib*, *lab*, *la'b*, and *cham* mean "fat" in Sumerian, Hebrew, Chortí, and Quiché respectively. This would show a connection with the city of Lib, the great hunter, in the land Bountiful, but there appears to be no connection with Antum or El Asintal.

The word *tem* in Quiché means "seat, bench, roof beam, rafter, or stool." *Tem* sounds like the last half of Antum. It is interesting that it means "seat" similar to El Asintal. Even the part of the definition that means "roof beam" is interesting as it relates to the Nahuatl ending on the name Ostuncalco. *Calco* means "the highest part of the roof." Ostuncalco could be the land of Antum because it is near the hill Shim (Tui Chim) and Ostun is pronounced very close to Antum. Ostuncalco (which

may be Morianton or Moriantum, located between the lands of Moron and Antum) is near the top of the canyon that drops down from Quetzaltenango to Colomba Costa Cuca near Abaj Takalik and El Asintal.

In the Sumerian dictionary there is a word with a similar set of definitions as *calco*. The word is *ur*. There are many words that sound the same but have different meanings. These are called homophones. The third homophone is marked by a grave accent. *Ur* with the grave accent means “roof, entrance, beam, rafter, and mountain pass.” The mountain pass definition seems particularly relevant, but it is possibly related to Coriantumr with an *r* on the end of the name that gives it the *ur* sound. Coriantumr is a Jaredite name. The roots are *kori* meaning to “let loose, free, or take off” in Chortí. *An* refers to “sky, heaven, or very high.” *Tum* means “work, action, and wind.” *Tuma* means “to break wind.” *R* or *ur* would mean “roof.” This suggests that together Cori-an-tum-r refers to a tall volcano that blew its top and vented gas to the heavens.

Lynn M. Hilton (Hilton 1996, 21) mentions the similarity between the name Irreantum and the Greek name Erythraem used to describe the same body of water, the Gulf of Aden just south of Yemen. The Book of Mormon definition of Irreantum is “many waters” (1 Nephi 17:5). Note the word *antum* on the end of this word. It suggests that Irreantum really means “waters many” or possibly “waters bountiful” The *irre* probably comes from the same source as our word irrigation. The Arabic word for “water” is *ra-yi*, which is related. *Antum* would be “many, great, or large,” like *hatun* in Quechua from Perú. And what was the name of this area of Yemen? It was Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:5-7). Thus, Antum and Bountiful are again tied together. The meanings of Antum appear to be “many, large, high, high country,” and therefore possibly also “mountains or volcanoes.”

Unfortunately, this analysis gives us only an idea of where Antum fits into the proposed geography, not an exact location. However, Tierra Colorada is a possibility. Likewise, the location

of the land of Bountiful could be firmer, but the general area of Mazatenango is the best estimate.

In the article *The Death of Tecun Uman* (Guatemalan Army 1963, 199), the invasion of Zapotitlán by Alvarado in 1524 is recounted by various writers, and the name Zaputulan is mentioned with no explanation. It appears that one of the early orthographic renditions of the name Zapotitlán is Zaputulan. Tulan, as we observed in Chapter 3, is likely the name Lehi's descendents used for the land of Bountiful in the land of Sheba where they set sail. This may be in the area of the ancient Yemeni port city Cana or Qana, which has the common root (*qaneh*) with Canaan through the Hebrew. It was, however, the Sumerian root *túl* and *Tulan* or "by the reeds" that stuck in Mesoamerica.

Thus, it appears that San Francisco Zapotitlán or Zaputulan, just three miles up the slope from Mazatenango, may be the namesake for the land of Bountiful. The two towns are close enough together that they would both be in the land of Bountiful. In the same text, an early rendition for Mazatenango was Xelajú-Quiej, which puts Lehi (Lajú or Lahú) in the place name (Guatemalan Army 1963, 201).

Yet another very relevant tip shows up in the vocabulary list of the Cakchiquels that Brinton includes in his old translation of the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*. The old Cakchiquel name for the Zapote tree is *tulul* (Brinton 1885, 220). The current name of Zapotitlán probably came from Zaputulan, which appears to be a combination of *zapote*, *tulul*, and "land" or *tlan* in the Nahuatl tongue. The name *zapote* comes from the Nahuatl name *tzapotl* as in *cochitzapotl*, which means "sleep producing *zapote*." The pit of this fruit, it turns out, is poisonous and contains a narcotic.¹²

Another indigenous name for the *zapote* is *ahaché* (*ché* meaning tree in Quiché). This may share meaning with the Hebrew word *ahlab*, meaning "fertile place." The department of

¹² Morton, J. 1987. *White Sapote*. [cited 14 August 2002]. Available at http://purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/white_sapote; INTERNET.

Guatemala that includes Mazatenango and San Francisco Zapotitlán is named Suchitepéquez. There is a spice made from the Zapote seed that is named *súchele*. Could this spice be the origin of the name Suchitepequez?

Looking at Zaputulan, it is another of those redundant names. *Zapote* in Nahuatl is the same as *tulul* in Quiché and Cakchiquel. So the name is *Zapote-tulul-tlan* with the Nahuatl ending for “by the” or “land of.” The contracted version would be the source of the name Zaputulan in Alvarado’s day, but with the arrival of the Spanish soldiers and the Mexican warriors, the earlier pieces of the name were forgotten and the name Zapotitlán is what continued to this day.

When Mormon first mentioned Bountiful, it was “the land which *they* called Bountiful’ (Alma 22:29). The Bountiful part of the name would be *túl* from the old world, but it sounds like the name underwent some evolution between the time of the Nephite’s arrival and Mormon’s day.



CHAPTER 11

MORMON'S WORLD

Much of the geography found in Mormon's nine short chapters has already been covered in the effort to identify the separation between the land southward and the land northward. We have the Samalá River identified as the critical "seashore" in the east borders of the land even though, in our reference frame, the border is in a more northerly direction. We will now go through Mormon's battles to see if they fit the proposed geography and give us further city locations.

The Wars Begin

Ammaron hid the records in the hill Shim in a land called Antum, which may have been near Bountiful. He then approached the ten-year-old Mormon, knowing him to be sober and quick to observe (Mormon 1:2-3).

At age eleven, Mormon's father "carried" him to Zarahemla, referred to as the land southward (Mormon 1:6). If they were coming from Antum in the mountains, down through Bountiful in the piedmont, and on into Zarahemla, it would be a more southeasterly course to Zarahemla. This suggests that the Hebrew

reference frame mentioned previously was being used by Mormon.¹

It mentions that Mormon's father carried him to Zarahemla. This suggests that some beast of burden or a wheeled cart was used (or both). As Alvarado and his troops tried to cross the Samalá River (which was described as *cuadaloso* or flowing a very large amount of water) and head up the canyon, the Indians used small castles made of wood and built on wheels so they could be moved easily. Many men could hide behind these wooden shields on wheels and launch every type of throwable projectile they could gather. Unfortunately, the first cannon balls eliminated these *castillejos* on wheels (Guatemalan Army 1963, 175). This demonstrates that the Quiché knew how to use wheels prior to the arrival of the Spaniards.

As noted before, young Mormon was impressed by the number of people and buildings in Zarahemla (Mormon 1:7). He may have come from a small mining town, since Mormon demonstrates his metallurgical knowledge throughout the Book of Mormon without really mentioning it explicitly.

His father, also named Mormon, was not the average nondescript person, though we have no explicit references to him (Mormon 1:5). Men of the caliber of Ammoron, Mormon the father, Mormon, and Moroni do not just happen, they each had great fathers.

The year that young Mormon arrived in the land of Zarahemla, war began in the borders of the land Zarahemla by the waters of Sidon (Mormon 1:10). The people had experienced peace for 286 years. The infrastructure would have been well developed and the roads (including bridges and river crossings) were probably the best they'd ever been.

The Lamanites and Nephites were mixed together geographically. The clear lines that had been drawn in Captain Moroni's time were no longer in existence. It was a multiethnic society. The conflicts in Mormon's day were ethnic and fueled by

¹ In that reference frame, eastward was forward; westward was to the Mediterranean, the rear; right was southward; and left was northward.

prejudice. The Nephites gathered 30,000 men (Mormon 1:11). When the Lamanites were defeated, they did not retreat to Lehi-Nephi as they would have done in Moroni's time, they merely "withdrew their design" (Mormon 1:12), and there was peace in the land for another four years.

During these four years of peace, it appears that some lines were redrawn and the two main groups probably separated further ideologically, ethnically, and geographically. At the end of the four years, a war began again between the Nephites and Lamanites, and young Mormon, being large in stature, was appointed to be the leader of their armies. (Mormon 2:1)

Thus, they moved into a full military society with the weight of the nation on Mormon's 16-year-old shoulders. Mormon's inexperienced troops were frightened by the power of the Lamanites and fled "towards the north countries" (Mormon 2:3). There they took over the city of Angola, which is probably today's town of Chocotá, about thirty-five miles northwest of Cotzumalguapa.

Mormon's armies took control of the city and started making preparations to defend themselves (Mormon 2:4). But the Lamanites came upon them and drove them out of that city and out of the land of David (Mormon 2:5). This suggests that the land of David is the ruins of Pasac at Santo Tomás La Unión.

From the land of David, they marched to the land of Joshua, which was "in the borders west by the seashore" (Mormon 2:6). Joshua, as indicated previously, is likely the ruins of Xojola, which lies due west of Pasac. The name is very close to Joshua, with the first and second syllables transposed. In fact, on some maps the name actually appears as Yoxajá.

Transposing syllable roots appears to have been fairly common, and as previously noted, may be an artifact of the Mayan glyph writing. It has not been widely observed by other scholars, however, and is not noted in the literature. That is understandable, given the background of these scholars. They lacked a baseline that would have made them aware of the

transposition. It is with the Book of Mormon as a baseline that the transposition becomes apparent.

The west seashore in this verse would appear to be nothing more than the Samalá River, which appears to have been the interface between the land of Bountiful and the land northward called Desolation. Thus, the Lamanite army chased the Nephite army the full length of the lands of Zarahemla and Bountiful.

Gathering In the People

To help with the war effort, the Nephites began gathering into one body all their people as fast as they could (Mormon 2:7). Mormon mentions that the land was filled with robbers and Lamanites and there was blood and carnage spread throughout all the face of the land, both on the part of the Nephites and also on the part of the Lamanites. It was one complete revolution throughout all the face of the land (Mormon 2:8). There were no geographic separations; what separated them now was wickedness and hatred. This was not a separation of the good from the bad. Both sides were wicked and intolerant.

At this point, the Nephites stood their ground against the Lamanites and drove them back (Mormon 2:9).

Fifteen years later, the Nephites fled once more before the Lamanites and they were pursued until they came to the land Jashon before it was possible to stop them in their retreat (Mormon 2:16).

Mormon tells us that Jashon was near the land where Ammaron had deposited the records (Mormon 2:17). As we have discussed, that would be in the land of Antum near the hill Shim. Given the proposed geography, it looks like, at this time, they were fleeing toward Quetzaltenango (the old fortress Lehi).

There is a town named Paxán (pronounced Pashán) in a valley about six miles north of Quetzaltenango. This name might be a contraction of Pa-Jashon or the land of Jashon.

The valley around Quetzaltenango is one of the largest in the mountain area. Several Book of Mormon cities may be located in

that valley—the fortresses Lehi, Morianton, Moronihah, and the camp of Moroni .

There may be a better location for Jashon in the piedmont. It is Ajaxá. Up near the headwaters of the Ajaxá River is a small village named Tierra Colorada. This Spanish name means “red colored earth.” Antum, if it relates to Anti (meaning “copper or red”) or Adam (“red earth,” in Hebrew), may have to do with “red colored earth.”

The Quiché and Nahuatl languages frequently use contractions. There are root words in the languages, but as they put words together to form larger words they often discard much of the roots. This practice also shows up in Book of Mormon names such as Moriantum, which could be a combination of Moron and Antum, suggesting that Moriantum is between Moron and Antum.

In his book about Uatatlán, Carmack quotes Bartolomé de las Casas (a Dominican who labored in Guatemala during the first half of the sixteenth century) as saying that they referred to the land around Uatatlán as Calcatún. Bartolomé believed this place name tied the Quiché to biblical lands. Carmack was unable to find this name in any other source. (Carmack 1981, 17) The *atún* on the end is interesting, since it looks a bit like Antum. However, it may also have been the biblical name Adam.

Many of the Spanish priests were exposed to the Nahuatl language in Mexico before going to the Guatemala area, but even in Uatatlán both Quiché and Nahuatl were spoken (Carmack 1981, 3). As the Spaniards moved around, many of the Quiché names appear to have been changed to their Nahuatl version. In the Nahuatl dictionary the *calc* words have to do with “householder, building a house, and the ridge of a house.” Thus, Calcatún could be “the house of Adam.”

From the Book of Mormon's chronology, we can see that Mormon was born in about 310 AD. His retreat to Jashon near the hill Shim was in the year 345 AD, when Mormon was about thirty-five years old. By then, Mormon would have already gone to the hill and made his record as instructed by Ammaron

(Mormon 2:17). Thus, it appears that in the very first battle in Mormon's seventeenth year, the Nephites were not driven completely out of the land (as other authors have stated), because by his thirty-fifth they were still close by. Additional bloodshed is referred to with thousands hewn down in open rebellion against God and heaped up as dung upon the face of the land (Mormon 2:15). It follows that these battles were probably fought army against army, while the rest of the inhabitants went on living more normal lives. This was Poncho Villa's approach. He fought where the resistance was and left other people largely undisturbed. The Nephites and Lamanites may have avoided city centers, employing a type of warfare that required open battlefields. It was not a scorched-earth war yet.

Hunted and Driven

In this same year (345 AD) the Nephites were hunted and driven. Mormon says they were driven northward to the land called Shem (Mormon 2:20). There is a possible city Shem ninety miles due north of the area we have identified as Desolation. It is in the southern end of the central depression of Chiapas, Mexico. The name of the ruins is Tenam.² If this was the city Shem, Mormon's army had to go a long way to get away from the Lamanites. This may be too far, based on our previous discussions of their wars.

There are other possibilities for a land of Shem that are a bit closer. Approximately thirty-five miles north of Desolation there are some ruins called Xoltenam, Xetenam, and Xemsul. These all have Shem (or sounds that are phonetically close to Shem) in their names. However, they may also be too far away.

There is yet another possibility only seven miles away from the proposed Jashon (Ajaxá). Mormon said they were in the land Jashon near the hill Shim. The hill Shim is mentioned three times in the Book of Mormon, and the land of Shem and the city of

² This becomes "Shenam" if one remembers the tendency in these languages to substitute the *t* sound for the *sh* sound.

Shem are each used in adjacent verses relating to this chase. Thus, Shem and Shim might possibly be the same place.

Tui Chim has been mentioned as a possible hill Shim. This is near a dirt road at San Martín Sacatepéquez. It is near the top of the canyon in a wide spot that consists of a few hundred acres. While the name Chim may be a dead ringer for the hill Shim, the other part of the name is equally interesting. The word *tui* is not in any of the dictionaries available to the author, but *tuj* is, and some orthographers interchange the *j* and the *i*. Christenson lists the meaning of *tuj* as “steam bath or oven.” There are steam baths on the other side of Tui Chim to the east. But the other definition, “oven,” is also interesting. If this area has anything to do with an oven, as in a kiln or blast furnace, it may have been the site of a smelter in Book of Mormon times.

According to Christenson the word *chim* means “shoulder bag, *morral*, scrotum, or heap of something.” The meaning “heap of something” is similar to the *mor* and *mul* roots discussed earlier. The “shoulder bag” meaning is quite similar to the Quichua word *shimi*, which has to do with the mouth or opening of a bag or anything into which things may be placed.

If the word was meant to identify a heap of something, it could relate to heaped up piles of overburden, mill tailings, or slag piles from a smelter. On the opposite side of the valley, exposed rocks and seams are visible, which would indicate a possible mining area. Upheavals of lower strata, such as are found at this location, often bring ore deposits to the surface. Archaeological maps show some ruins at this site and give them the name noted above, San Martín Sacatepéquez.

Just up the hill and over the pass is the town of San Juan Ostuncalco along with some other ruins. As we have previously noted, the *ostun* part of this name looks a bit like Antum. The closest word to *calco* is *calcuaco*, which in Nahuatl is “the peak or ridge of a house.” Ostuncalco is near the ridge or saddle where the canyon drops down toward the Pacific Coast. The Catholic name of the ruins at Ostuncalco is San Antonio Los Cerritos. As noted before, Los Cerritos, means “the little hills” in Spanish.

The name San Antonio may have been chosen because of its similarity to Antum.

Looking at Carmack's reference to Calcatún, we see that the *calc* and the *antum* are switched in Ostuncalco and Calcatún. The two roots are the same. They are simply used in reverse order in the two names. It seems possible, therefore, that the land of Antum is somewhere in this area.

Interestingly, there is another Chim (Chim Cementerio) near San Marcos, just twelve miles northwest of Tui Chim. This may be relevant as possible a Shim or Shem.

The Treaty

Mormon said they fortified Shem and gathered in their people as much as possible (Mormon 2:21). At some point here, the army of the Lamanites went home. We know this because Mormon 2:22 indicates that it was not until the next year that the Lamanites returned to fight them. That would be the next dry season, the rainy season being a bad time for warfare, as previously noted.

Mormon's choice of words in verse 22 is interesting. He says, "they began to come upon us." This suggests that the Lamanites were in the lowlands of Zarahemla and came "up—" the canyon into the mountain region "—on" the Nephites who were in the high country to the north.

When the Lamanites came again, Mormon gave the troops a pep talk to stand boldly before the Lamanites and fight for their wives, and their children, and their houses, and their homes (Mormon 2:23). Mormon's words aroused them sufficiently that they did not flee again. This time the Lamanite army fled and the Nephite army pursued them and beat them. They went against the Lamanites and the robbers until they retook possession of the land of their inheritance (Mormon 2:24-27). This could mean they went all the way to Zarahemla and possibly beyond, though it is doubtful they proceeded very far southeast of Zarahemla.

This started as a civil war between the Lamanites and

Nephites who were living in close proximity. Mormon is talking about troops of 30,000 against a Lamanite army of 50,000 (Mormon 2:25). This was a small percentage of the population. There were 230,000 Nephite soldiers in the final battle (Mormon 6:14-15). Armies of 30,000 to 50,000 thousand represent only thirteen to twenty-two percent of that figure, and there were several years of killing that went on before the final battle. This further supports the idea that these battles were limited primarily to troops fighting troops.

In the year 350 AD, a treaty was made. The parties involved were the Nephites, the Lamanites, and the Gadianton robbers.

And the three hundred and forty and ninth year had passed away. And in the three hundred and fiftieth year we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided.

And the Lamanites did give unto us the land northward, yea, even to the narrow passage which led into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward (Mormon 2:28-29).

One might think that the Nephites would not make a treaty giving up the land of their inheritance, which they had just regained in battle. However, they were not alone in their occupation of Zarahemla. Lamanites and Gadianton robbers lived there, too. And prior to making this treaty, the Nephites had been displaced from Zarahemla for a few years. The Nephite army may have retaken the land of Zarahemla but their families were probably displaced in the gathering process of the previous years and battles.

Would these Nephites even dare return to Zarahemla? It would seem that Zarahemla had, at the very least, lost some of its charm for them. And at this point it looks like they gave up the land of Zarahemla and possibly the land of Bountiful southeast of

the Samalá River. That's where it would make sense to divide the land, given the proposed geography.

A straight line from fortress Lehi in the mountains (Xelaju', Quetzaltenango), through Retalhuleu, to the west sea at Champerico may have been the line, the line Bountiful, the line that was fortified in Moronihah's day. Logic would appear to include the current city of Retalhuleu in some way because it has the appropriate name, the Boundary Land. However, the adjacent Samalá River seems to be the natural boundary in the area. The cities Desolation, Teancum, Boaz, and Jordan are all just west (or "northward") of the river (cf., Mormon 4:20; 5:30). Indeed, Moroni's use of the phrase "where the sea divides the land" (Ether 10:20), referring to Lib and the lands northward and southward, may have been a direct reference to the condition of the land after this treaty was signed by Mormon.

Today, there is a very narrow passage (Mormon 2:29) at the top of the canyon near Quetzaltenango (fortress Lehi or Xilaju). Vertical lava walls rise several hundred feet where the pass is only about forty feet wide. Here, the river leaves room for a narrow path on the west side. The road has been blasted out of the mountainside much higher up from this feature, but at the time, the spot where the road now is would have been impassable but for this narrow passage or path by the river.

The battles of the Nephites led by Mormon did not involve the land of Bountiful by name, or the land of Antum by name. Later Mormon sets up for battle in the cities of Desolation and Teancum. As we have noted, these appear to have been lowland cities that were combined by the Spaniards to become Retalhuleu near the Samalá River. It seems that the land of Desolation, and at most a sliver of the land of Bountiful, was on the Nephite side of the treaty line.

The land southward in this split is most likely the land of Zarahemla and most of Bountiful. The names Zarahemla and the land southward are at times used interchangeably in the Book of Mormon (Mormon 1:6). Zarahemla was, however, referred to as

the land northward when Mormon was comparing it to the place where Lehi landed (Helaman 6:10).

Thus we see that there were likely several different “lands northward.” The land of Cumorah, where the bones were found, is referred to in Omni 1:22 as the land northward. The mass migrations in Helaman’s day were also into a land northward. Hagoth, during his initial trip, went into a land northward. That is, the land of Desolation on the Pacific Coast where Hagoth set sail is also referred to as a land northward (Alma 22:31; 36:5).

There could be a closer land northward as well—the coastal area near the Guatemala-Mexico border plus the highland area of Guatemala north of the Pacific slope. The Chiapas area of Mexico could have been an extension of this land northward. Then there is the land northward that is basically Mexico above the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

The land of Desolation on the Pacific Coast is the “land northward” that is most relevant to Mormon’s struggles. Much confusion has resulted because people have interpreted the land northward and the land southward as absolute, unique place identifiers rather than relative descriptors. It is unlikely that the lands northward in Mexico had anything to do with the treaty that was made by the Nephites with the Lamanites and the Gadianton robbers in Mormon’s day. They were probably not in this fight at the time. We read that many of the people of Ammon went northward (Helaman 3:11-12). After the time of Christ, there could have been mass migrations of Lamanites and Nephites into central Mexico. Mormon’s war was a civil war that started “among” the mixed people of Zarahemla near the Sidon.

None of the towns and lands mentioned in the final battles include anything south of Zarahemla by the Sidon River. Nowhere is the land of Nephi mentioned, nor the land of Lehi-Nephi, nor the land of Lehi, nor any of the old Nephite cities and lands south or east, like Antiparah, Cumeni, Zeezrom, Judea, or even Ammonihah, Manti, Gideon, Jershon, Melek, or Antionum.

Mormon mentions a narrow passage that led from the land northward into the land southward. This could be the canyon of

the Samalá River that runs from the Guatemala highlands down to the piedmont. The narrow passage, the narrow neck of land, and the place where the sea divides the land may be distinct features in Mormon's mind, but they all appear related to the Samalá River, though specific distinctions are not always clear.

In that vein, a possibility for the narrow passage from the land northward into the land southward is the spot at which one can cross the Samalá River with the greatest ease. Today, and anciently, it is located between the towns of San Sebastián (Lib/Shem) and Santa Cruz Muluá (Mulek). It appears on the maps that anciently the crossing was just southeast of San Sebastián where the river was wide but shallow with firm rock footing. Today there is an irregular jog in the road (CA2), with a tight 90-degree bend where the old ford was. At that point, the road jogs two and a half miles to the north toward Santa Cruz Muluá where the river is the narrowest and the stone abutments are best suited for a bridge. There are no other crossings between this bridge and the Pacific Coast.

The canyon going up to Quetzaltenango, and the path through it, runs in a northeast to southwest direction. The northwest side of the line (the land Desolation) and the headwaters of the river in the highlands directly to the north (Quetzaltenango) were probably retained by the Nephites, and the southeast side of the line was probably relinquished to the Lamanites and the Gadianton robbers.

Note that this supports the location of the cities of Desolation and Teancum at Retalhuleu. Given the Book of Mormon descriptions, it is necessary to look for the separation line, not at the Mexican border, but at the Samalá River. That is the largest natural boundary in the area.

The City of Lib

Let us now reconsider the following verses:

And it came to pass that Lib also did that which was

good in the sight of the Lord. And in the days of Lib the poisonous serpents were destroyed. Wherefore they did go into the land southward, to hunt food for the people of the land, for the land was covered with animals of the forest. And Lib also himself became a great hunter.

And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land.

And they did preserve the land southward for a wilderness, to get game. And the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants. (Ether 10:19-21)

There are several points in these verses that have been overlooked or confused. The poisonous serpents kept the Jaredites in the north (Ether 9:31; 10:19). Only after the serpents were destroyed did they again move southward. The archaeological evidence suggests that the Jaredites were living in the Izapa/Ayutla (Tecún Umán) and Abaj Takalik region. We will discuss this possibility more in a later chapter. The barrier of snakes could have been the motivation behind the name of the city Coatepeque, which means "snake hill." After the serpents were gone, they established a new city at the southeast interface between the greater land of Desolation and the hunting grounds to the southeast (the land of Bountiful, as noted previously).

The reference here to "where the sea divides the land" may have been Moroni's description of the division of the land that occurred in Mormon's day when the treaty was drawn up. This Jaredite city built by Lib may have eventually been called the city of Desolation by the Nephites.

The sea that divides the land, or the Samalá River, may have run from an extinct lake in the Quetzaltenango valley. (fortress Lehi) down to the Pacific. This river exits the high valley through a very narrow pass then goes through an even narrower pass where the lava from Cerro Quemado at some time completely blocked it. Eventually the lava dam eroded and left vertical lava walls several hundred feet high and about 40 feet wide, thus forming what was probably the narrow pass or neck of land

leading into the land northward at fortress Lehi. This pass may have prompted the comment in the letter from Pedro Alvarado to Hernando Cortes that Xelajú (Quetzaltenango, fortress Lehi) was situated in a very strong position, and it may have prompted Mormon's comment that the fortress city of Lehi was built in a peculiar manner.



Figure 29. Narrow Pass on the Samalá River Where Cerro Quemado Previously Blocked the River.

The Samalá River continues to flow down the very narrow and steep walled canyon to the piedmont region and then on to the coastal lowlands and the Pacific Ocean. It flows somewhat parallel to the elevated highway from Retalhuleu to Champerico. The river widens in the flat land and the flood plane is very wide. This waterway becomes a tidal estuary as it approaches the coast. It is very wide in the last 30 kilometers to the ocean. If this is the division spoken of, the large city built by the Jaredites would likely have been in the Retalhuleu area.

The lands "southward," reserved for hunting, have animals in their names. They include Cuyotenango and Mazatenango.

Both names have been altered by Nahuatl influence, but *maza* means “deer.”³ The old name of Mazatenango is reported to be *Kakol-Kieh* or *Aj-Cacolquej*.⁴ The *kieh* or *quej* are from the Cakchiquel word *queh*, which means “deer” in Brinton’s orthography (Brinton 1885, 219). It is different in Christensen’s orthography, which spells it *Q’uiakal quiej*. The original name of Cuyotenango is reported to have been *Ah Yabaccoj*, with *ya* being “water or river,” *bac* being “bone,” and *coj* being “lion.”⁵

The name of Lib, the man who became the great hunter, means “mutton fat” in Sumerian. Checking the Chorti dictionary, the word for “fat or grease” is *la’b*, very close to *lib*. The great city they built may have been called Lib, but to the Nephites it was part of Desolation.

Where is this city today? Retalhuleu is not at the main crossing of the ancient roads. The town at those crossroads is San Sebastián. There is an archaeological site next to it of the same name. Checking to see what Indian root words might have prompted this Spanish name, we find that *sebo* in Spanish means “tallow, candle grease, suet, or any kind of fat.” Possibly the Spaniards, seeing the stockade and knowing that the indigenous name meant fat, tallow, or suet, decided to replace the name with a word that sounded like the Spanish equivalent. The Catholic name San Sebastián would meet that requirement. Remember, the Spaniards were destroying all Indian identity and insisted on changing virtually all their names, even the names of individuals. Fortunately, however, it appears that they often used translations of the original names, or names that sounded similar to the original. Often, the Indian name continued among the indigenous people in spite of the Spaniards efforts.

³ In Sumerian it is *mas* (pronounced *mash*), in Mam and Quiché it is *masat*, in Nahuatl it is *masatl*, and in Chorti it is *masá*.

⁴ Mazatenango. [cited 7 July 2002]. Available at www.uweb.ucsb.edu/~jce2/mazate.html. INTERNET.

⁵ Departemanto de Suchitepequez, Municipio de Cuyotenango. [cited 7 July 2002]. Available at www.tinamit.com/tinamit/Guatemala/Zona_occidental/Suchitepeques/Cuyotenango/cuyotenango.htm. INTERNET.

There may be other connections to the word “fat” that will help us firm up this identification. What would Laban mean in Sumerian? In Hebrew, Laban means milk. In Sumerian it means “fat water above.” Apparently they did not know about non-fat milk. Heaven and sky are *an*, which means “water” plus “high.”

The Sumerians had a word, *u'tu*, that means “dried, powdered milk” and “sky.” This would indicate that they knew how to effectively dehydrate milk and also that they might have thought of the night sky as the *Milky Way*. The Milky Way is an important part of the Maya cosmology.

On the Pacific coast end of the road from San Sebastian is another city with fat in its name. Champerico is a mixture of Quiché and Spanish. *Cham* means “fat” in Quiché, and *rico* means “rich” in Spanish. The *pe* in between may originally have been *pa*, meaning “land of” or “by the.” Champerico would thus be “the fat rich land.”

Another word for “fat” shows up in the Hebrew lexicon as *hashem*, pronounced as *haw-sheme*. This word could be the source of the Quiché word *cham*, the Hebrew word *ha-shem* being truncated to *shem* is similar to *cham* in the Quiché language. The Hebrew root, *shem*, may be relevant as the name for the land of Shem. In Quiché with *cham* as “fat” and *chum* as “limestone,” there may be some difficulty sorting out with certainty Shim and Shem from *chim*, *chum*, and *cham* (“oven,” “limestone,” and “fat,” respectively).

Since the Hebrew *ha-shem* translates to *cham* in Quiché, then possibly Shem was the “fat land.” This could be Champerico on the coast, or it could be Lib (San Sebastián) up the Samalá River just above Retalhuleu (Teancum/Desolation). Based on the pattern of fighting, San Sebastián, as Lib to the Jaredites and Cham to the Quiché, would be the preferred choice. As previously noted in connection with Mormon 2:16-17, there is a possible land of Jashon (Ajaxá) just six miles up the river from San Sebastián. If these locations are correct it would appear that all of Mormon’s fighting to this time was in the piedmont of the

Costa Sur near the Samalá River. It appears that possibly only the final battle was in the highlands.

Just down the road from San Sebastián and Retalhuleu on the way to the coast is a set of ruins named Xulá Copepé. This is another city of Shule distinct from Xulá near Izapa. There is no mention of a city of Shule, one of the Jaredite kings, in the Book of Mormon, but Xulá is one of the more common names in this area. Copepé is not in the Spanish dictionary but two similar words are. *Copete* is “a crest, tuft, or pompadour.” It could be the feathered crest that identified a man of distinction in Maya and Aztec costumes. Shule was certainly a man of distinction, the son of a king (Ether 7:10), a king, and the father of kings. Another word of possible relevance is *copia* which means “copiousness, plenty, abundance, fullness, and fertility.” This is not far from the land of Bountiful. It is also possible that the pepé on the end of Copepé may be an intrusion by the Italian/Spanish Pépe or Bepe, a nickname for Giuseppe or Joseph.

In each of the regions studied, repeated names show up unique to the particular region. There are Lehi roots (Leja) near the lands of Lehi and Lehi-Nephi, there are Ammon roots (Amate) in the transition lands where Ammon and his adopted converts lived, and there are Nephi roots (Nahua, Nahualá, and Nahualate) in the Bountiful and Zarahemla region. In this region, the old Jaredite lands, the most commonly repeated names are Morazán (Moron), Xulá (Shule), and Sacahuyu (meaning “white earth” or “desolation”) in various forms.

We Did Get Our Lands Divided

After signing the treaty, the Lamanites did not come to battle for ten years (Mormon 3:1). In the year 360 AD, the Lamanite king sent an epistle to Mormon to let him know they were preparing to come again to battle (Mormon 3:4). Why would the Lamanite king communicate directly with Mormon? Could it be that Mormon was more than just the general, possibly the political leader/king?

Mormon chose not the city of Desolation, but a city in the land of Desolation that was nearer the border of the land of Desolation and the river crossing (Mormon 3:5). The last fortified city mentioned was Shem (Mormon 2:21) and Shem (San Sebastián/ Lib) was this un-named city by the narrow pass. In our proposed geography, the city of Desolation is in the flatland to the southwest just three miles away. Previously, the Gadianton robbers had been forced to the mountains, and many of their prior attacks had come from there (3 Nephi 1:27; 2:17). At this time, however, the Nephites appear to have occupied the lowland area known as Desolation and possibly the mountains around Quetzaltenango, though there are no known city ties in the area at this particular time, other than Cumorah.

The political center of the Lamanite world was apparently no longer in the old land of Lehi-Nephi down near Tegucigalpa, Honduras. It is possible that the real center of the Lamanite civilization may never have been there. It may have been in the land of their first inheritance, the Pacific coastal land of Lehi. That would place it near Acajutla, El Salvador, which is near where Nephi lived (possibly Nahuizalco) for the first 15 to 20 years after their landing and before father Lehi died. In Mormon's fighting years the Lamanite center was in the rebuilt city of Zarahemla. The Lehi-Nephi complex near Tegucigalpa, Honduras, does not show the archeological growth that the lands in southern Guatemala or El Salvador show. The Lamanites occupied everything from the old land of Nephi (the Shilom area was probably the second land of Nephi) up to and including Bountiful by the Samalá River. There are also some beautiful valleys just over the mountains on the northeast side of the Cordillera that were probably Lamanite lands. The archeological linking of Kaminaljuyú (Ammonihah) artifacts with those from Teotihuacán shows that trade and communications in that area were well established at this time.

Thus, the threat to Mormon's people was much closer. Surprise was not an issue in this contest, but the direction of the threat and the relative position of the land to be protected were

concerns. And the direction of retreat and the land being protected help confirm the proposed geography.

The Lamanites came down in the year 361 AD to Desolation but were repulsed and returned home (Mormon 3:7). They came down again the next year and were beaten severely (Mormon 3:8). A great many were killed and their bodies were dumped into the sea (the Samalá River, no doubt). The cities of Desolation and Teancum are very close together in the Book of Mormon and in the proposed geography. That and the strategic position of the narrow pass to the land southward no doubt helped the Nephites win these battles.

But the Nephites were becoming overconfident. In 363 AD, they tried taking the offensive (Mormon 4:1). They went up out of the land of Desolation to fight the Lamanites. They were without Mormon on this occasion. He had taken leave, due to the wickedness of the people, and was back home working on the book that would bear his name (Mormon 3:16). In his words, "I did stand as an idle witness to manifest unto the world the things which I saw and heard." And manifest he did.

The obvious "up" direction for these troop movements would be toward the fortress Mulek that was across the river up beyond the crossing point shown on the maps. This may have been the motivation for Mormon's comment (Alma 53:6) that Mulek was one of the strongest holds of the Lamanites in the land of Nephi since Mulek was now on the Lamanite side of the line and all Lamanite lands appear to have been called the land of Nephi (representing a certain amount of irony). In the proposed geography, Zarahemla would also be up in elevation relative to Desolation, and Zarahemla is probably the direction from which the fresh Lamanite army came (Mormon 4:2).

The Nephites were promptly chased back to Desolation. They were weary from the day's activity when a fresh army of Lamanites arrived. Many were killed and the Lamanite army took the city. The Nephite survivors fled to Teancum, which was near by and also close to the seashore (the Samalá River's riverbank). Note that Teancum and other cities were still inhabited by

Nephites as they were not *all* gathered into Desolation (Mormon 2:7, 21; 3:5).

At this point, one wonders why the Nephites could not just pack up and leave. Was not Mexico peopled at this time by blood brothers who had departed from Zarahemla over the years? One possible problem with that plan is that there may have been Gadianton robbers in the north as well.

In the year 364 AD, the next year, the Lamanite army attacked Teancum and was repulsed. As they retreated, the Nephites took heart and, boasting of their own strength, took back Desolation (Mormon 4:8). Two years later (366 AD) the Lamanites came down again and took Desolation (Mormon 4:10). They also attacked Teancum and drove out the inhabitants. Many women and children were taken captive and were sacrificed to Lamanite idol gods (Mormon 4:14). The Lamanites' actions sufficiently irritated the Nephites that they then retook Teancum and Desolation and drove them out of their land (Mormon 4:15). This would be back across the Samalá River to Mulek on the Lamanite side of the line created by the Treaty of 350 AD (Mormon 2:28).

Eight years passed with no battles. Then, in 375 AD, the Lamanites came down with all their power. The Nephites were defeated at Desolation and fled to Boaz. Teancum is not even mentioned here. This is an indication of how close the two fortresses were to each other (Mormon 4:16-20). They may have already grown together by then.

Boaz (or Booz, as it is in the Spanish scriptures) may mean "reeds." In Arabic *boos* is a name for "reeds." In Hebrew, Boaz, is a word for "swiftness." If swiftness is the intended meaning, then Boaz might be a town that was near some river rapids. Boaz would have to be close and within a 90-degree sector centered at the city Desolation. The Samalá River would form one boundary of that angle and the mountains would form the other, with the city of Desolation at the vertex.

Just five miles away down the Samalá River to the south-southwest are the ruins of a town named Bolas. The Hebrew name Bo'az is very close to the Spanish word Bolas. This

renaming would be strictly phonetic, as no meaning appears to have been transmitted by this name change.

The Lamanite army followed the Nephites but was repulsed the first time. The second time they came, however, they took the city and once again sacrificed the women and children to their idols (Mormon 4:20-22).

Mormon, seeing that the Lamanites were about to overthrow the land, went to the hill Shim and took up all the records (Mormon 4:23). Shim is between Moron and the land of Cumorah (Ether 9:3). It is significant that this is the first and only time Mormon felt the Lamanites would overrun the land and that the records were in danger. It suggests that the records were deposited in one of the canyons leading into the highlands rather than actually in the highlands. Tui Chim is in just such a location near the top but not in the valley around Quetzaltenango. It is near the top of the canyon between Colomba Costa Cuca and Quetzaltenango.

By now, Mormon had become a spectator, still refusing to lead a wicked army. He had returned in order to lead his people but said that it was without hope (Mormon 5:2). He had not led the army since about 362 AD, meaning that he had been away from the battle for about sixteen years.

The Nephites fled to Jordan and the Lamanites were repulsed twice (Mormon 5:3). The next set of ruins, down the road an additional 3 miles from Bolas (Bo'az), are named Gerardo. This is a good choice, geographically, and the Spanish name is a close phonetic approximation of Jordan.⁶

⁶ The Spanish word for Jordan is the same as in English with slightly different pronunciation. So it would seem that the name could be matched more exactly. It is possible, however, that the phonetic symbols on the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated did not spell Jordan with total exactness. "Jordan" may have been the closest approximation to what was inscribed. Transposition of syllables appears frequently in the Book of Mormon compared to the names found today. There may have been no connection between the name Jordan in Mormon's text and the land and river Jordan near Jerusalem. A translator puts down his best approximation of what something means based on his personal database. When Joseph Smith's

At Jordan the army held for a while:

And it came to pass that they came against us again, and we did maintain the city. And there were also other cities which were maintained by Nephites, which strongholds did cut them off that they could not get into the country which lay before us, to destroy the inhabitants of our land (Mormon 5:4).

Thus, the Nephites were successful in protecting part of their homeland by preventing access to it with the strategic use or placement of strongholds.

Next the Lamanites began to use a scorched-earth strategy.

And it came to pass that whatsoever lands we had passed by, and the inhabitants thereof were not gathered in, were destroyed by the Lamanites, and their towns, and villages, and cities were burned with fire; and thus three hundred and seventy and nine years passed away (Mormon 5:5).

database did not include cureloms and cumoms, he no doubt put down the phonetic representation of the symbols as closely as he could. When Mormon was writing, the Nephites had been removed from Jerusalem for almost 1000 years. Consider how much English has changed in England since the American pilgrims left. Was the name Jordan, from the Old World, preserved in the Nephite language or was it modified? Was it modified in the 1600 years since Mormon? Based on the variations that are observed among the various Mayan dialects, it is doubtful that any ancient biblical names came across these time gaps without some modification. And of course, Jordan in Hebrew (Yarden') or Arabic (il-urdun) does not sound the way it does in English. In the translation of Mormon's writings, the name Lehi appears to have come across from the Bible representation of that name, but on this side of the water it was obviously modified. Leja is the closest approximation and the other versions go down hill from there, Lahuj, tlaca, caca, etc. A translator needs the freedom to apply the best approximation to the symbols on the page, and Joseph Smith should be no exception. Let us afford him that privilege. In fact, using the Urim and Thummim, Joseph may have pulled back to their origins some of the words that had degraded by Mormon's day. One of those words could have been the name of this town, Jordon.

Mormon then wrote his famous letter to the king of the Lamanites requesting that he give the Nephites time to gather into the land of Cumorah to fight the Lamanites there (Mormon 6:2). The Nephites had less than four years to gather and prepare for the Lamanite army that came in 384 AD. (Mormon 6:5-8). But first, Mormon hid all of the sacred records in the hill Cumorah, except for the few plates he gave to his son Moroni (Mormon 6:6). We now come to that important location.

Cumorah

We may wonder why Mormon picked Cumorah as the place for the final battle. In their previous battles, the Nephite army had been displaced from the land Zarahemla and fled to the land around Desolation. They were then driven out of the lowlands near the west sea (the Pacific Ocean) and possibly retreated into the highlands. Mormon mentions nothing about the battles that prompted this move, but his son Moroni included a second letter from Mormon that may fill in a few pieces if the tower of Sherrizah near Moriantum can be identified (Moroni 9).

There are several possible reasons why Mormon selected Cumorah. It was contiguous to the land where they had been pushed by the Lamanite army, but it was probably not centrally located. The Lamanites were scorching the earth when Mormon asked for the change of venue. Every town and village was being burned. This was a place the Lamanite armies could access from the southeast without going through the heart of the remaining lands. Getting away from populated areas at a place on the line between the Lamanites and the Nephites would prevent the Lamanites from burning more towns. Also, it was close enough that the Nephites could transport supplies. The most significant reason for selecting Cumorah, though, was probably the same reason the Jaredites selected it for their final battle. It probably had a steel foundry with all the needed resources: ore, limestone, timber, and waterpower. It appears that the tunnels or man made

caves in the hill Cumorah (which, as we will see, bears the indigenous name, K'umarkáj) may have formed a steel smelter.

Mormon states that during the battle at Cumorah some of the Nephites escaped into the land southward (Mormon 6:15). This would be the familiar direction of escape, back toward the main Nephite highland cities and possibly down into Desolation, but not to Bountiful or Zarahemla, which had been lost many years earlier. In the skewed reference frame, "southward" would have been east southeast toward present-day Copán. Some probably escaped by boat to South America (the Pacific Coast side) and to North America by way of the Caribbean. Desolation, Teancum, Boaz, and Jordan are all on the Samalá River. It would be rather easy to set sail from there as Hagoth may have done. Remnants of these people appear in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile, as well as the eastern United States. The Quichua of Ecuador know they came from the Quiché Maya of Guatemala and dictionaries of each language bear out this fact.

So where is the original Cumorah? Right where it has always been. Its name is still in the books. It still shows up on some maps. The name today is Santa Cruz del Quiché. Before that, it was named Uatatlán by the Spaniards. But the oldest name we have for it is Qumarkah or K'umarkaj', pronounced Cumorah (with a glottal closure on the "ah"), which as we will see, means "rotten reeds or rotten bones." It is twenty miles north of Lago de Atitlán, and the ruins on the hill still bare the original name of Qumarkah. The choice of this location suggests that the Nephites had not been driven north of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as many authors have surmised.

It is easy to recognize the Hill Cumorah. But the place of the encampment and the battle would have been on the high flats, where the town of Santa Cruz del Quiché is located today. Mormon and the command force would have been on the higher but much smaller flat-topped hill specifically named Qumarkah (or K'umarkáj, in Christenson's orthography).

Cumorah (Qumarkah, K'umarkáj) is a hill overlooking the land of the same name. Much of the general area is useful for tent

sites, but the perimeter of the hill itself is very steep, with deep breaks or ravines (*barrancas*). A causeway connects the hilltop of K'umarkáj with the town area.

The Nephites camped in the area for some time preparing for the battle that was to take place. There are many waters, rivers, and fountains in the general area. There was enough time and privacy to hide wagonloads of records without the Lamanites or the Nephite deserters becoming aware of their location.

The Nephite soldiers numbered 230,000 (Mormon 6:11-16). Wives and children could have brought the total to about a million. The text however is not clear as to the breakdown between wives, children, men, and people. That number, whether 230,000 or one million, is relatively small after 1,000 years of history. This is further indication that the total land occupied by the Nephites was not extensive. If each man, woman, and child were given five acres, the total would only add up to 5,000,000 acres, or 7,800 square miles. That is just 100 miles long by 78 miles wide, exactly the size of the south coast region of Guatemala we have been exploring. Eleven 7,800-square-mile plots could fit in the state of Utah. If the 230,000 count was the total and included wives and children, then the land could have been one-fourth that size.

If each of the 230,000 soldiers at Cumorah had 100 square feet on which to place a tent for him and his family, that would be about one square mile of tents. Squaring off for battle would require another square mile, but that area would be distributed in a more linear pattern, rather than in a square.

We are told nothing of the Lamanite camps, other than that there were some (Mormon 6:11). They must have been out of sight, because the first mention of visual contact was when the Lamanites came marching toward the Nephites for battle (Mormon 6:8). They must have outnumbered the Nephites by at least four times in order to make such quick work of them. They, too, would have required several square miles for their camps. It is unlikely that they brought their women and children, however. This was the end of the road only for Mormon's people. The

Lamanites knew they would be returning home after the battle.

It should be noted that prior to this final battle there was no longer a people called Nephites (Helaman 3:16). In this final battle that destroyed the remainder of Mormon's people, the Nephites who had split off in all directions starting at the time of Helaman were not directly affected. Hence, people of Nephite descent continued in the surrounding general areas to which they had scattered.

Prior to the battle, Mormon said he began to be old (Mormon 6:6). He was seventy-four at the time. However, he still led his troops at the front. Only twenty-four Nephites survived the first day. Mormon was wounded and left among the dead. In the morning, Mormon surveyed the sad site (Mormon 6:11). The hill Cumorah is not too high for a wounded, seventy-four-year-old man to get to the top and view the scene. Apparently, the Lamanites did not return immediately. In fact, no one was likely to return to that site until the bodies had completely decayed. Mormon had time to finish writing about the last tragic scenes and give the plates to his son Moroni.

The proposed site meets all the requirements listed in the Book of Mormon. There are many streams in the area, but due to the elevation, these streams and rivers are not large. Maps show many small and possibly seasonal lakes. At the end of the dry season the region today appears to be dryer than in Mormon's description, but that could be the result of the current warming trend.

In reference to a chain of lakes in the region, Carmack states:

These small bodies of water may have been much larger in the pre-Hispanic times, and some of them may have held fish and crustaceans. The natives from Lemoa traditionally ate an amphibian from the lake (*nurutuk*). Today they catch fish from the lake, but the fish are stocked...The central area is rich in freshwater springs and the populations have always been clustered around them (Carmack 1981,100).

Topographical maps show few roads in the area but there are literally thousands of homesteads scattered around. These people know how to walk and how to carry heavy loads. Many of their dwellings are without a road of any kind within five miles. They are accessed by trails through the mountains. Eradicating a people from this area would be nearly impossible. A nation was destroyed, but anyone committed to survival would be able to flee in small groups and escape successfully.

The chroniclers wrote much about the events that occurred in this area. While the dates do not match the Book of Mormon as previously noted, the events are recognizable. In the literature, the place (Cumorah) is variously spelled Gumarcaah, or Qumarkah, or K'umarkáj. Note for example, the following from *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*:

By the order of the warriors, the thirteen tribes gathered in Gumarcaah, to repair and make ready their bows and their shields, and they went to conquer all the small towns and the large towns, the countries as well as the cities. But the Quichés did not do this alone, the warriors of the thirteen divisions conquered the towns and in this way augmented the glory of King Quikab [Jacob?].

When the sun rose on the horizon and shed its light over the mountain, the war cries broke out and the banners were unfurled; the great flutes, the drums, and the shells resounded. It was truly terrible when the Quichés arrived. They advanced rapidly, and their ranks could be seen at once descending to the foot of the mountain. They soon reached the bank of the river, cutting off the river houses. They were following the kings Tepepul and Iztayul who accompanied the god. Then came the encounter. The clash was truly terrible. The shouts rang out, the war cries, the sound of flutes, the beating of drums and the shells, while the warriors performed their feats of magic. Soon the Quiché were defeated, they

ceased to fight and were routed, annihilated, and killed. It was impossible to count the dead (*The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, pp. 91, 103).

There are many similarities between this account and the Book of Mormon's account of the final battle, though it could be any one of many battles. The great King Quikab sounds like Jacob. The weapons and war tactics are familiar, and the last line sounds all too familiar. To put it in Mormon's words during Alma's day, "Now the number of the slain were not numbered, because of the greatness of their number" (Alma 3:1). After Mormon's final battle he could easily have guessed the number of the dead. He mourned the loss of virtually all the 230,000 fair sons and daughters on his side and probably a comparable number of Lamanites and Gadianon robbers on the other (Mormon 6:10-15, 18).

The Caves in the Hill Cumorah

On top of the Hill Cumorah (Qumarkah) are many foundations and piles of rubble. The circular K'ucumatz "temple" at Qumarkah with its cloud-and-wind aspect of the feathered-serpent deity may be a temple to anthropologists, but to an engineer it looks a lot like a smelter. The two horizontal tunnels under the hill (one about thirty feet above the other) could have been used to charge the furnace and to provide the combustion air. The two horizontal shafts probably once connected with a vertical shaft up through the great circular temple of K'ucumatz or possibly up through the Tohil Temple. The two tunnels go to some point beneath the main plaza. (Tedlock 1985, 360)

The two horizontal tunnels are about four feet wide and eight feet high with an arched ceiling. The walls are plumb and straight, except for a slight angle correction in the upper of the tunnels. Presently the tunnels just terminate. One has a small room and the other just ends. It took a lot of work to build these tunnels for what now appears to be nothing. And why did one

tunnel have a slight angle correction unless it was intended to align with something at the terminus? An alternate explanation is that the slight angle change was for thermal radiation shielding. During the filling of the smelter a straight path would be preferred for ease of material handling, but during the smelting this upper tunnel would have to be sealed off quite airtight. The angle change would permit the external door to be sealed in the cool external environment rather than being exposed to the intense thermal radiation of a smelter.

Further, the many hearths found at the site are not for a large kitchen. To an engineer, they appear to be blacksmith forges. Crucibles of the metal working deity and many ingot molds have been found in the immediate area. The molds were made of clay and all possess a fine charcoal temper (Weeks 1976, 55-67).

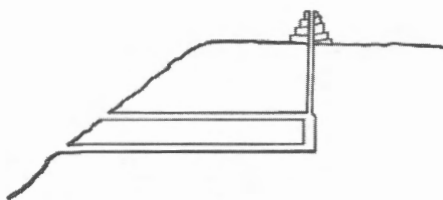


Figure 30. Schematic of Possible Steel Smelter in Uatatlán (Cumorah)

If Mormon needed 230,000 swords for the final battle, and if they had worked 12 hours a day for four years, they would have needed to hammer out 13 swords per hour to meet the demand. It took a lot of work for the Nephites to get ready for this battle. Iron ore, limestone, timber, and waterpower, along with a clay hill for a smelter/chimney are all there and they were doubtless the draw for the Jaredites as well.

The Open Mouth of the Mundo

In Spanish, the word *mundo* means “world” as in the whole earth we presently occupy. In the Maya cosmology there are many

references to a large open mouth into the earth. These references are specifically tied to Utatlán (K'umarkáj/Cumorah) and are mentioned in Tedlock's translation of Popol Vuh. Dennis Tedlock adds some insights in his notes: "Daykeepers who visit the cave beneath the ruins of Rotten Cane [Kumar Caj], the last Quiché capitol, speak of the danger of falling into "the open mouth of the Mundo" there, which is said to be more than four yards wide." (Tedlock 1985, 322)

No such four-yard-diameter mouth exists in the top of the hill today, but it certainly existed anciently. Carmack mentions that the only thing left of the circular temple of K'ukumatz is a clear circular impression four meters in diameter (Carmack 1981, 274). This impression he notes is an indication that a stone wall superstructure once existed on the spot. He mentions that some 1932 photographs by Lathrop show some platforms and cylindrical walls made of uncut stone joined with mortar, and states that the superstructure must have been dismantled shortly after the conquest because none of the early visitors mention it in spite of its unique construction.

It is very likely that the stone superstructure joined with mortar, as mentioned by Carmack, was part of the chimney for the smelter below. This would create more draft, release the smoke at a higher level, and prevent children from falling in.

Now evaluate the "open mouth of the *mundo*" from the perspective of an old dilapidated smelter chimney built mostly some 200 feet underground. Returning to Popol Vuh, Tedlock mentions that according to Lucas Pacheco, the corral where the Sparkstriker keeps his animals is located deep within a branch of the cave beneath the ruins of Rotten Cane (Cumorah); in that context they take the form of small stones. The fortunate may be allowed to take some of these; the unfortunate fall into a great wide mouth (Tedlock 1985, 306).

Based on the above references it would appear that a large chimney once existed in the hill. The stones were scavenged for other uses. Some brave or foolish (unfortunate) souls fell into the hole as they scavenged stones. Eventually the hole was buried.

Find the hole and one will probably find a steel smelter, which to those who had lost the technology was just the “open mouth of the *mun*do.”

The Tower of Sherrizah

Some thirty-six years after the voluminous records were stored and sealed in the Hill Cumorah (Mormon 6:6), Moroni completed his contribution to Mormon's abridged record (Mormon 8:6; Moroni 10:1). Moroni included a letter from his father, Mormon, in the next to the last chapter of the translated part of the plates (Moroni 9). This sad letter mentions the military losses and the depravity of the Nephites.

In those passages, the tower of Sherrizah is mentioned (Moroni 9:7, 16). In Nehemiah 3:11 and 12:38 there are references to the tower of the furnaces. Towers of furnaces are chimneys; chimneys are for smelters. References in the Book of Mormon to such towers probably also refer to smelters. An essential ingredient for making steel is charcoal or coke. Looking up charcoal in Christenson's Quiché word list, one finds the word *xak*; in Hebrew one finds the word *shachar*, which means “to make black.” This is nearly identical to the Quiché word *xakarisaj*, which means “to make black” (with the *x* pronounced as *sh*). Sherrizah and *Shakarisaj* are nearly identical phonetically.

To make something black is a perfect description of the carbonizing process used to make charcoal out of wood. The wood is heated in an oxygen-starved environment to drive off the water, hydrogen, and resinous volatiles, leaving only carbon. The flame temperature of the carbonized charcoal is much higher than that of the virgin wood. This is essential for smelting steel. Tall towers or chimneys are not necessary for a charcoal oven, but they are for a smelter. The Tower of Sherrizah may have been a charcoal oven and a smelter combined. King Noah's tower in the land of Shilom was likely a smelter also. Use of such towers as lookouts would merely have been an added benefit.

Steel making was very secret and proprietary. The Jaredites

had it, as did the Nephites. But it may have been a technology kept from the Lamanites as a military secret.

So where is the Tower of Sherrizah? That is yet unknown. It is mentioned in conjunction with Amoron (which has the root Moron in it), Moriantum (which has both Moron and Antum in it), and Aaron (which is in the highlands near Moriantum) (Moroni 9:7, 9, 17). While some of these names are men, they are also places and these places are in the piedmont near Retalhuleu and the highlands near Quetzaltenango in the proposed geography. These battles were at least four years before Cumorah (Mormon 5:6; 6:5). The tower may have been in the high country in the valley north of Quetzaltenango (fortress Lehi), possibly near Olintepeque. The Nahuatl word *olin* means “movement” so this name might have something to do with a *moved mountain*. The reason for such a movement could be volcanic or possibly the name was a reference to mill tailings. The previous indigenous name was Xequiq’uel, which is similar to Sherrizah, though it appears that the town was called Xepau at the time of the conquest. (Recinos 1953, 126)

The Land of Shem

The search for the land and city of Shem has not been completed, but several clues have been identified. Shem is either in the piedmont near San Sebastián or in the highlands just north of the greater Quetzaltenango area. What does Shem mean? It may mean fat (*cham*) or it may be tied to limestone (*chum*) one of the ingredients for making steel. The root word for limestone in the Florentine Nahuatl word list is *tenex*, which looks like the several Tenem place names that were selected for possible Shem candidates. In Quiché, limestone is *chun*. If the hill Shim is Tui Chim then why should not the city Shem be *Chun* or *Cham*? These people (the Quiché and Nahua) obviously knew how to use limestone to make lime. All of the lime processing names and words are in their dictionaries. These include words for carry, burn, sell, mix plaster, whitewash, treat, apply, and cook lime. It

was used to process the corn in making tortillas, to thicken corn dough, to plaster walls, to whitewash walls, to mortar stones together. Why not to make steel?

Steel technology was probably limited to the Nephites and lost when they were killed. Possible complaints by Laman, Lemuel, and the two sons of Ishmael about the departure of Nephi with the sacred writings and his knowledge of metallurgical technology (2 Nephi 5:12-15) may have prompted the following quote, which comes from the chronicles:

They carried away the writings, the books, the paintings: they carried away all the crafts, the casting of metals...these four old men assembled. They took counsel. How will the common people live, how will they dwell? He is gone; they carried away the writings (Dibble 1964, 190-191).

Limestone is used to reduce the iron oxides in the iron ore into elemental iron. Charcoal is used to achieve higher temperatures and to mix interstitially with iron atoms to make steel. One of the lime words in the Quiché dictionary is the word *polim*. *Polim* is the “lime mixed with water for making tortillas.” As mentioned above, a previous name for Olinztepeque was Xequiq’uel and at the time of the conquest it was called Xepau. In Quiché it appears that *Xepau* means “under transparent or clear material.” With *Xe* meaning “under” and *pau* meaning “veil or transparent material.” A similar word for clear in Nahuatl is *chipahuac* (note the compressed *pau* root, *pa*, similar to Quiché). In Sumerian, there is an interesting word for “clear.” It is *sen* with a *v* symbol over the *s*, meaning it is pronounced *sh*, which therefore yields *shen*. This is identical to Shem since the *m* and *n* are interchangeable in the Mayan orthographies.

So what is Olinztepec? It may be “the lime water hill,” *tepec* being “hill” in Nahuatl. Or it may be “under the clear water,” also a possible reference to lime water. Thus, in spite of some uncertainties, the land or city of Shem may have been Olinztepec.

However, the confusion with *chum* for lime and *cham*, *ha-shem*, *lib*, *la'b*, and *sebo* all meaning fat make it difficult to say with certainty what the meaning of Shem may have been to Mormon. In this case, the scale is tipped in favor of “fat.” The definition from Hebrew of *ha-shem*, meaning “fat,” seems to be the first choice. The location is best nailed down through Lib, the fat Jaredite king and great hunter, as the Samalá River crossing (Ether 10:19-20). That would place Lib at San Sebastián down on the Samalá piedmont area. The Hebrew definition for “fat” as *ha-shem*, with the Quiché being *cham*, and Champerico just down the road, leads to the proposition that Lib and Shem are the same land, the present-day town of San Sebastián near Retalhuleu.

Qumarkah, Gumarcaah, K'umarcaj', K'umarcaaj

Cumorah was the place where two great civilizations died—the Jaredites and the Nephites. What does the name Cumorah mean? Carmack says that the etymology of K'umarcaj has never been adequately explained and then presents his own useful explanation (Carmack 1973, 322). He says that Ximenez translated K'umarcaj as “rotten huts,” and Recinos notes the similarity between this meaning and that of Uvatlán, which comes from the Nahuatl language and means “among the reeds.” Uvatlán was the name given by the Mexican warriors who arrived with Alvarado and is the translation from *caj*, meaning “reeds” in Quiché, to *uta*, the Spanish pronunciation of a Nahuatl word meaning “reeds.” The *tlán* means “by the” or “in the land of.”

Carmack says that *K'umar* means “rotten, but also possibly old or ancient.” He continues by explaining that *caj* means “the reeds or canes,” and apparently by extension, “the reed huts.” Thus, the word might mean “the old reed huts,” perhaps a reference to simple structures standing there at the time the Quiché first began to build their capital. Christenson also states in his Quiché word list that the meaning of *K'umar* is “rotten,” as in “rotten wood.” So the rotten part is very clear, but what is it exactly that was rotten? If *k'umar* means “rotten, old, or ancient,”

the name K'umarcaj may refer to rotten bones, not rotten reed huts.

Looking up *hueso*, which is Spanish for "bone," in the Quichua dictionary from Peru, the word is *tullu*. Looking up *tullu* in the Spanish side of that dictionary to search for all the words with the same root, one finds *tula*, meaning "an ancient sepulcher" of the earliest inhabitants or "a small stake of wood" used by the Indians to dig potatoes or scrape the ground. One also finds *tullu*, meaning "bone, skinny, or sterile."

The word *tula*, means "reeds" in Quiché, and the Nahuatl word *tullin*, means "reed." Thus we see that reeds, canes, and bones are the same or closely related words in many of the native languages.

Going to the Aymara dictionary from Bolivia and looking up bone, the word *ch'aqha* is found. The last part of *ch'a-qha* is pronounced the same as *caj*, but the first part, *ch'a*, also sounds similar to *caj*. Thus, since *caj* means "reeds," as Carmack says, it may have a dual meaning. Like *tula* and *tullin*, it may also mean "bones." The Quiché word for thigh is *a'* pronounced as *aj* or *ah* and may be a reference to the thighbone. Thus, K'umarcaj', Qumarkah, or Cumorah likely means "rotten bones." And the Book of Mormon certainly tells us why "Rotten Bones" is an appropriate name for this location.

This appears to be a common duality. The Hebrew word *qaneh*, which is pronounced as *kaw-neh'*, means "reed, cane, stalk, bone, and balances." The Quiché word *caj* and the *kaw* in this Hebrew word are nearly identical, phonetically. In fact, the Central American *caj* may be a contraction or shortening of the two Hebrew syllables *kaw-neh'*.⁷ If this word had the dual meaning of reeds or bones in Hebrew, it may have had the same dual meaning in Quiché.

The English word *cane* came through Middle English, Middle French, Old Provincial, Latin, and Greek from a Semitic origin in Hebrew, Arabic, and Assyrian. The Hebrew, Arabic, Assyrian,

⁷ As for the "balances" part of the Hebrew definition, the root *caj* and *kaj* is in several words that have to do with weights in Christenson's K'iché dictionary.

and Greek forms are *qaneh*, *qanah*, *qanu*, and *kánna* respectively. The Spanish word *caña* could have come from the Arabic through the Moors. (Of course, it may also have come through the Hebrews, since there was a very significant Hebrew population with the Moors that was driven out or converted during the Spanish Inquisition.⁸) This establishes at least one clear connection between Hebrew, Arabic, Assyrian, Latin, Greek, Spanish, English, and even Quiche' Mayan. Since cane (like bamboo) turns a yellowish golden color when dried, cane also becomes the word for yellow and gold in many of the indigenous languages as well as the oriental languages.

The English dictionary gives the definition for cane as "any hollow or pithy jointed stem." From this definition one can easily see how "bone" fits as an alternative translation. The extensive usage of the word "cane" would indicate something that was associated with international commerce, possibly paper for writing, house-building materials, or boat transportation. And indeed, there is ample evidence that it involved all of these uses.

Utatlán

It is interesting that the Spaniards renamed K'umarcáj Utatlán. Any Utah boy should recognize the similarity between Utah and Uta-tlan. Many have stated that Utah means "the tops of the mountains." Some have chosen to refute that assertion, however, and now it appears the name may have come from the cattails in Utah Lake. Likewise, Utatlán may mean "among the reeds," but it is in the tops of the mountains of Guatemala, just as Utah is in the tops of the Rocky Mountains. The name Utah is pronounced the same as Uta with the silent Spanish *h*. The Nahuatl ending *lan* means "land of" or "place where something is plentiful," but is most often interpreted as "by the." The *t* on *tlán* is added in the Nahuatl language to the front of all words that

⁸ This information was shared with the author by Jacob Sapayo, a Jewish friend who's ancestors were driven from Spain, to Turkey, to Cuba, and finally arrived in the United States.

would otherwise start with the letter *l*. Utatlán is pronounced *Uta-tlán* with the *tl* being a single sound where the tongue covers the entire top of the mouth and the air is leaked out both sides of the tongue at the back of the mouth, but to someone from the Intermountain West, it is just Utah-land.

The Hidden Records

Moroni took with him only the plates for the abridged history that were eventually deposited in a hill named Cumorah after the original hill in Guatemala (Mormon 6:6). The new Hill Cumorah was located in upstate New York. The rest of the records, however, comprising 99 percent of their total collected records, were left in the original Hill Cumorah (Words of Mormon 1:5; Helaman 3:14; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; Ether 15:33).

How and when did Moroni get back into the hill to add the Jaredite record to the Book of Mormon? At the time the Book of Ether was added, Moroni was still in the land northward near the original Cumorah (Ether 1:1). He mentions that the ancient inhabitants were destroyed upon the face of *this* north country, meaning that Moroni was still in the north country near the original Cumorah when he wrote the first verse in Ether some sixteen years later. Moroni completed his father's section, which precedes Ether, some sixteen years after the war (Mormon 8:6).

After Martin Harris lost the 116 pages of the manuscript, where did the small plates of Nephi come from? Mormon's comment in Mormon 6:6 may not be the last word on the records, as Moroni appears to have shifted some records that were sealed in the original hill Cumorah. Regardless of location, the records are being protected and no unhallowed hand will desecrate what Mormon hid up unto the Lord. It will be protected and come forth in the Lord's due time.

What do the natives know about the original Hill Cumorah? Some of Schele's and Freidel's comments are very interesting in this regard. Speaking of the cave Schele says:

This is the most sacred place in all the K'iche' world. Manuel told us that the people of his town (Antigua) prefer to bury the afterbirth of their children in the cave at Utatlán because of the power of the ancestors there. The souls of many, many *chuchkahawob* abide in and near the cave ready to help their successors in their work. For the K'iche', the cave is alive with the most powerful energies of the Otherworld (Freidel 1993, 187).

The Hill Cumorah

As noted above, the name of the town of Qumarkah today is Santa Cruz del Quiché, where it is still possible to locate and visit the hill Qumarkah. It is the highest hill in the immediate region. According to material obtained from Robert Carmack (Guatemalan Army 1963, 73), it was called Chi Gumarcaah in the old writings, *Chi* meaning "hill."

While the Quiché people today put a very strong *kaw* sound on the end, for the *caj*, the dictionary also shows an alternate word for reeds as *āj*, which is pronounced as *aw* or *ah*. This would give the alternate pronunciation for Qumarkah as Qumaraj, which is exactly the pronunciation of Cumorah that Moroni used in his interviews with Joseph Smith and that we have come to know from the Book of Mormon.

If one were familiar with the dialects and speech variations in the area, it might be possible to tell the exact location in Guatemala where Mormon and Moroni learned to speak. This little difference between *caj* or *kah* and *aj* or *ah* in Qumarkah and Cumorah may be small, but it becomes very strong evidence of the truth and accuracy of not only Mormon, Moroni, Joseph Smith, and the Book of Mormon, but also of the proposed geography. K'umarkáj or Qumarkah is the same as Cumorah without any wordsmithing or pronunciation gymnastics.

The town of Santa Cruz del Quiché occupies almost the entire top of a larger hill. There are no other imposing hills to be seen in the area. The ruins are marked and not difficult to find if one asks

the locals. They are impressive, covered with tall pines, and have a temple site excavated on top, as previously noted. Inside the little visitors center is a large display. One of the displays mentions Robert Carmack as one of the anthropologists who worked at the site. He is the brother of Elder John Carmack, formerly of the Quorum of the Seventy.

The cave mentioned by Schele as the most sacred place in the Quiché Maya world is under this hill. There are actually two caves. As noted above, the longer one has a small room at the end and is empty. The hill is not made of rock but of clay. The caves have been in the hill for hundreds of years and have not collapsed. They are manmade tunnels about three-and-a-half feet wide and eight feet high with an arched ceiling. The walls are plumb and the tunnel is straight except for a slight bend in the longer tunnel, as mentioned before. The walls slough down in some places, and the shorter cave is below the longer one. It appears to have the same bearing and to lay directly below the upper cave.

The temple ruins on top of the hill are of the same stone-rubble and clay construction coated with plaster seen elsewhere in the region, though the plaster is missing from most of what remains of the walls at this site. Although, there are some places that show cut stone and masonry walls with square corners.

The hill Qumarkah is higher than the flat hilltop town of Quiché, but not by more than about fifty feet. If the trees were not so dense the entire town would be visible from the top, which is small, possibly twenty acres, surrounded by steep *barrancas* that help protect it. There is a flat region east of the hill on which the town stands that is about three miles long and one-half-mile wide. Many small lakes and ponds are found in the area. There are rivers and streams in every draw. The elevation is high enough that these headwater streams are relatively small.

The two tunnels mentioned above apparently go nowhere. They were difficult to make, so what was their purpose? As noted previously, they appear to be designed for a steel smelter. If Mormon needed to arm 230,000 men he would have had to



(a) Upper Cave



(b) Lower Cave

Figure 31. The Caves at K'umarkáj.

hammer out something like 13 swords per hour over a four-year period. So this would have been a major steel foundry.

When steel became popular in Europe, the continent was

practically deforested to make charcoal for the steel furnaces. In a similar manner, New England was deforested. Desolation got its name because of great destruction. This may have included similar deforestation. The Jaredites may have gone to Ramah, Cumorah (Mormon 6:6; Ether 15:11), for their final battle because there was still timber, limestone, iron ore, and waterpower there. Mormon doubtless selected the site some one thousand years later for the same reasons.



Figure 32. Model of the Ancient City of K'umarkáj (Utatlán)

The two horizontal tunnels provide access for charging the furnace and combustion air. The clay of which the hill is composed is a natural refractory material. Once fired, it will not go away, but remains like thick, hard-baked pottery. According to compass readings and aerial photographic interpretation, these tunnels appear to point toward the center of the circular K'ucumatz Temple on top of the hill. A vertical shaft from the circular temple down to the horizontal tunnels would provide the natural draft needed for the furnace. There was a circular stone superstructure on top of the hill that has been removed. The stone and rubble was probably used to fill the vertical shaft. Many blacksmith-type hearths and two water quench tanks have been found on top. Molds and refining crucibles have also been found in the area. Further archaeological study is needed, but finding a functional steel smelter in the Americas between 600 B.C and 400

A.D. would definitely shake up the archaeological and anthropological world and give Joseph Smith the last laugh.



Figure 33. Above-ground Remains, Circular Temple of K'ucumatz



Figure 34. Circular Stone Masonry Core of One of the "Temples" at Utatlán (K'umarkáj, Cumorah)

The Ball Court

The Maya Ball court is famous for the perversions and death that resulted from this game of high stakes. It developed into part of their religion and cosmology. It was not a part of the righteous Nephite religious practice, however. So, where did it come from?

The disturbing thing is that there is a supposed ball court on the hill Qumarkah. There were many buildings on the top of the very crowded hill, so something as large and centrally located was very important and may not have been just for playing ball. If Cumorah was a steel smelter then the ball court would serve a very necessary function. It is very possible that Allen J. Christenson has unwittingly given us the only clue to this mystery in his translation of *Popol Vuh* when he refers to the “Pulverizing Ball Court” (Christenson 2000, 83, 197). Having been raised on

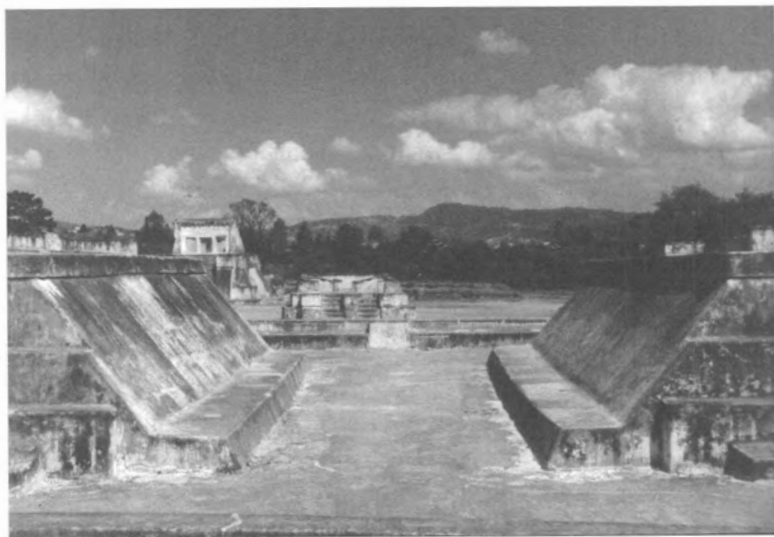


Figure 35. Typical Maya Ball Court Found at Zaculeu

a farm, the author has observed how, even after a hard days work, teenage boys still want to play. He has also seen how the Mexicans in San Carlos are eager for a pick-up game of soccer after the work is done. It is very likely that the young men

working in the steel mill at Cumorah even in Mormon's time wanted to play ball in the cool of the evening.

That would explain the secondary use of the ball court, but what would be the primary purpose? Christenson gave that to us—for pulverizing. The efficiency of iron ore reduction is influenced by the homogeneous mixing of the necessary ore, limestone, and charcoal. For this the ore and limestone would need to be pulverized to an appropriate mesh size. Likewise the charcoal would need to be chopped or pulverized to a useful and appropriate size. This area could have been used for that purpose. And, after hours, the boys could play. Thus, the game may have started in the pulverizing silo, but it definitely grew into a very significant part of their culture at some time later.

Mormon's Editorial Career

Between the years 330 and 345 AD, the land was in complete revolution (Mormon 2:8, 9, 16), though no specific wars between Lamanites and Nephites are mentioned. These may have been years of ethnic conflict. Mormon was between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. He went to the hill Shim at age twenty-four as Ammaron commanded (Mormon 1:3; 2:17). He may have found time for editing during the years that followed.

The next break is between about 350 and 360 AD. The Nephites retook the lands of their inheritance and signed a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers. Mormon may have done some research into the records and some editing during these years as well. He would have been forty to fifty years of age and would have known his people were in their decline at this point.

Mormon led the Nephite army for the next year or two but, due to wickedness, he again refused to lead them (Mormon 3:11). He was just an observer for the next sixteen years or so. During this time, he was between the ages of fifty-two and sixty-seven. By then, if not much earlier, he would have been heavily involved in compiling the records. During the time he refused to lead the

armies, he probably finished most of what we have of his abridgment.

Mormon went to war again for a year or two then decided he had better things to do. It is doubtful he had time to finish the abridgment the way he wanted. The last 400 years are very brief, too brief. They may have been more complete if he had had more time. His own writings were quite limited and he commanded his son Moroni to add some specific concluding things (Mormon 8:1). He says he was visited by the Lord and tasted of the goodness of Jesus (Mormon 1:15). Jesus' three remaining disciples ministered to Mormon and his son Moroni (Mormon 8:11). Had time permitted, he might have written more about their missions. We know that he was still writing while on the hill Cumorah the day after the great and final battle.

The reason for mentioning all this is because of Mormon's comment when he was editing the records of Helaman.

And they have been handed down from one generation to another by the Nephites, even until they have fallen into transgression and have been murdered, plundered, and hunted, and driven forth, and slain, and scattered upon the face of the earth, and mixed with the Lamanites until they are no more called the Nephites, becoming wicked, and wild, and ferocious, yea, even becoming Lamanites (Helaman 3:16).

What was the condition of the Nephite nation at that time, and when was Mormon writing? Mormon uses these same words, "plundered, hunted, driven, and slain" to describe the events in Mormon 2:20 that occurred before the year 346 AD. Mormon was thirty-six at that time. Hence, this part of the editing may have been done during the ten years of revolution between Mormon's twenty-fourth birthday and the year 346 AD, when the Lamanite armies again came upon the Nephites.

Notably, they were fortifying the city of Shem when they were attacked (Mormon 2:20-22). Thus, Shem was probably near

the land of Antum and the Hill Shim. As previously indicated, it may have been San Sebastián. In the next four years of fighting, the Nephites retook the lands of their inheritance and signed a treaty with the Lamanites and robbers. The next ten years passed in peace. It is possible that these were years during which Mormon did a lot of his research, compiling, and editing.

The people of Nephi were apparently no longer in the land of Zarahemla. The land of Shem, therefore, was probably within greater Zarahemla, but not in Zarahemla proper. The population was not driven out of the land; the army was being driven. The political and religious records were kept by the same individual. The records might have been kept near the center of government for the safety and convenience of the kings, chief judges, chief high priest, etc. At the time of the Savior's resurrection, the records appear to have been at or near the temple Bountiful.

From Mormon's account we know that the records were voluminous, Mormon did not include the hundredth part of what was written (Words of Mormon 1:5; Helaman 3:14; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; Ether 15:33). So we know Mormon was not packing this library of records around the countryside. Only in about the year 375 AD did he go to retrieve all the records from the hill Shim.

And now I, Mormon, seeing that the Lamanites were about to overthrow the land, therefore I did go to the hill Shim, and did take up all the records which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord (Mormon 4:23).

The account Ammaron made just prior to giving Mormon charge of the records states that because of the wickedness of the people, he was constrained by the Holy Ghost to "hide up" the sacred records (4 Nephi 1:48). It is possible that this was when the repository was made in the hill Shim. He went "up" the mountains to "hide up" the records. The records were thus removed from their historically functional library and hidden. Wherever the hill Shim was, the records were safe there until about the year 375 AD. While they may have continued to be safe

in that location after that, they may not have been accessible.

Thus, in 375 AD, the records were withdrawn, but where were they kept during the nine years before the final battle at Cumorah and where are they now? In the above verse, Mormon says he “[took] up all the records.” “Up” would most likely have been to Cumorah, not to Bountiful or Desolation, which would have been “down.”

Mormon performed his task masterfully; but many ask why there are so much detail about the wars. The obvious answer may be that the war chapters provide most of the geographical information. It is exactly this information that has permitted the ancient cities to be located in the proposed geography. The contents of Mormon's library in the original hill Cumorah will see the light of day some time in the future, providing another witness for those who, like Thomas and the Missourians, lack faith and must see for themselves before they will believe.

What Is Located Where?

The last we were told is that all the records were stored in the original Hill Cumorah except “these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni” (Mormon 6:6). Of course, the situation may have changed, as Moroni was still writing in 421 AD, some 36 years later.

The items that were transported to upstate New York included the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim, the breastplate, and the golden plates that were later translated by the gift and power of God and became our beloved Book of Mormon. Then there is the sealed portion that contains the vision of the brother of Jared of the history of the earth from the beginning to the end (Ether 4:1-5). The location is uncertain for the Liahona and the Brass Plates of Laban, which contain the Old Testament up through Lehi's departure from Jerusalem.

As for how these materials were transferred from the battlefield at K'umarkáj to the Hill Cumorah in upstate New York, there are three options available. Moroni may have hauled

them there; the three remaining Nephite Disciples may have assisted; or the Lord may have used whatever other method He desired. The contents would be a very heavy load and most of the lands from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego were inhabited at that time, so it is not likely Moroni carried them by himself.

Whenever another, original Hill Cumorah is mentioned, some question the possibility, saying that Joseph Smith saw the Hill Cumorah in upstate New York open up in a miraculous manner and reveal its wagon loads of records (Journal of Discourses 19:38). The response to that argument is that once the spiritual realm is entered, the Lord can put on a display of whatever special effects He wants. The Master Physicist who created “worlds without number” is not bound by the puny curriculum of human universities. In this special effects show, the words written along the blade of Laban’s sword changed from time to time to communicate special messages. Did Laban’s sword maker construct a sword of such fine steel that it could periodically change the words written across its blade? Of course not. In short, the vision that was presented to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery has no binding relevance as to the location of any of the noted objects and records, either before or after the presentation.



CHAPTER 12

JAREDITES AND NEPHITES

The Jaredite Connection

At this point we could say that we are familiar with the lands that were a part of the Nephite history as recorded by Mormon. Let us now discuss the connection between the Nephite lands and the lands of their predecessors, the Jaredites. We are familiar with the links that Mormon has given, but the connections are not limited to the few that Mormon specifically mentioned. Examination of these links suggests that the Nephite lands and the Jaredite lands largely coincided. Let's look first at the obvious connections then discuss the not-so-obvious ones.

As noted previously, there are several "lands northward" referred to by Mormon. At times they may have been grouped as one and at times he may have been referring to specific northward regions. Starting with the tidal estuaries at the Mexico/Guatemala border on the Pacific Ocean side and going northward, there is the narrow coastal plain that provides ready access to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and all of the lands of Mexico to the north. Next there is the central region of Chiapas, possibly extending to the east, including the Petén and the Yucatan jungle of northern Guatemala and southern Mexico. The third region takes in the highland region of Guatemala from the Continental Divide north

to the second region listed above. Fourth, there is the Pacific coastal region just northwest of Bountiful. This included Teancum and the land of Desolation where the sea divides the land. This area extends to Izapa at the Mexican border.

Most of Mormon's references to the land northward appear to refer only to the last two regions. His discussion of migrations, however, probably refers to the first two northern regions as well.

Let's review the verses that refer to the northern regions.

It also spake a few words concerning his fathers. And his first parents came out from the tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people; and the severity of the Lord fell upon them according to his judgments, which are just; and their bones lay scattered in the land northward (Omni 1:22).

At the least, this verse applies to the area between the Samalá River and the tidal estuaries at the Mexican border by Izapa, and from the Pacific Ocean up the mountains to the Cumorah region. There are no ties to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec or the Vera Cruz regions in this verse because we have strong evidence suggesting that Ramah, Cumorah, and K'umarkáj are the same place, namely Santa Cruz del Quiché.

And they were lost in the wilderness for the space of many days, yet they were diligent, and found not the land of Zarahemla but returned to this land, having traveled in a land among many waters, having discovered a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beasts, and was also covered with ruins of buildings of every kind, having discovered a land which had been peopled with a people who were as numerous as the hosts of Israel. (Mosiah 8:8)

The men in this expedition would have known that Zarahemla was on the Pacific Coast side of the Cordillera. They would have

traveled in the high country, past the Ammonihah region, possibly (but not necessarily) to the Cumorah region, and may have gone down to the coast toward Izapa, Ayutla (Tecún Umán), and Retalhuleu. Skeletons as numerous as the hosts of Israel were left at Cumorah (Ramah) and in all the region round about from Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú) to Izapa (Mosiah 8:8). Millions were killed long before going to the hill Ramah (the Jaredite name for the original hill Cumorah). The whole land stank because of rotting flesh (Ether 14:21-23). The many buildings were probably not in the Cumorah area but closer to the Divide and from there down to the Pacific Ocean at Moron and Desolation where the kings dwelled and the larger cities were located. None of the Jaredite history that occurred prior to their destruction occurred anywhere near Ramah. The civilization centers were elsewhere and therefore the “buildings of every kind” would also have been elsewhere.

And it bordered upon the land which they called Desolation, it being so far northward that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose bones we have spoken, which was discovered by the people of Zarahemla, it being the place of their first landing. (Alma 22:30)

The Mulekite landing site may have been on the Caribbean side of Guatemala, the Gulf of Mexico side, or the Pacific Ocean side. Wherever they landed, that is where the bones were, but bones were everywhere. Taken by itself, therefore, this verse does not specify which region it is referring to. The next verses add some insight.

And they came from there up into the south wilderness. Thus the land on the northward was called Desolation, and the land on the southward was called Bountiful, it being the wilderness which is filled with all manner of wild animals of every kind, a part of which had

come from the land northward for food. (Alma 22:31)

The wilderness just mentioned in the south is the greater land of Bountiful; in this sense Zarahemla was included in the greater land of Bountiful. If the Mulekites had landed near Ayutla/Izapa, the coastal piedmont would be up in elevation to the southeast of them (i.e., “southward”). If they landed on the Caribbean side, it would have been necessary for them to come up and over the Cordillera then down into the land of Bountiful. They would likely have passed Cumorah. That is not an essential assumption, but they passed many bones and we know there were bones there. If they landed on the Gulf of Mexico side they could have come up the Usumacinta River, up the Grijalva River, or across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and along the Pacific coastal plain. Note that, at the Crucifixion, the whole face of the land northward was changed. Access from the northeast might have been less difficult prior to the cataclysmic events at the Crucifixion. However, this area may have been largely impassable even in Captain Moroni’s time, since it appears they preferred to come down to the Pacific coastal plains and piedmont in order to get to the land northward.

Many legends suggest that the Mulekites came from the east but the Izapa/Ayutla landing sounds more likely given their travels. The references to the land northward in this verse appear to apply to the Pacific coastal region of Guatemala from Izapa to Retalhuleu. This is what became known as the Nephite’s “land northward” as that term seems to have been used in the day-to-day interactions discussed in the Book of Mormon.

The combination of these north and south lands constituted virtually all of Mormon’s world. The mass migrations and boat trips to the lands northward that were outside of Mormon’s world may have extended hundreds of miles north into Mexico and beyond. Thus, when Alma’s son Corianton went to the north and was never heard from again, it wasn’t just over the Divide into the highlands. It was probably much farther away into the Mexico area because he went by ship (Alma 63:7-10). Otherwise, it is likely he would have been heard from again.

And now, it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward. (Alma 22:32)

The information in this verse seems to fit the Izapa/Ayutla/Retalhuleu landing region. The small neck of land sounds like a connecting link when in reality, as we have seen from the Sumerian usage, it is likely nothing more than a riverbank or levy along the Samalá River that forms a perpendicular boundary not a passage. This may have been the only viable crossing area in the Samalá River drainage.

It appears that, in this verse, "east" modifies Bountiful, not sea. If we consider true east and west (the passage does not mention northward or southward, terms that appear to imply use of the skewed Hebrew reference frame), the geography and the words are consistent.

Let us consider again the words, "It was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea." If one travels from Mazatenango (Bountiful) on the east to Retalhuleu (Desolation/Teancum), which is near the Samalá River or the sea on the west, this is about twenty to twenty-five miles depending on the straightness of the path and the location of the river crossing. Still, it is uncertain if the west sea was the lower Samalá River or actually the Pacific Ocean.

And it came to pass that Hagoth, he being an exceedingly curious man, therefore he went forth and built him an exceedingly large ship, on the borders of the land Bountiful, by the land Desolation, and launched it

forth into the west sea, by the narrow neck which led into the land northward. (Alma 63:5)

This appears to be a reference to the Samalá River that forms the boundary between Bountiful and Desolation. The narrow neck appears to have something to do with a river crossing, possibly a natural lava bridge. It is very possible that the ship was a very large log raft, as a ship with deep draft could not navigate the upper reaches of the Samalá River near Retalhuleu. This information supports the idea that the original landing of the Mulekites would have occurred somewhere northwest of this division (the Samalá River) on the Pacific coastal plain.

And it came to pass as timber was exceedingly scarce in the land northward, they did send forth much by the way of shipping (Helaman 3:10).

This verse refers to the shipping of timber, possibly by land and possibly by ship, into the land northward. Shipbuilding is mentioned four verses later. If by ship, this could possibly be from Zarahemla and Bountiful to Ayutla and Izapa as well as the narrow Pacific coastal strip south of Chiapas, Mexico. If by land, this may refer to the highlands and the Cumorah region. It could also refer to both. The fact that there were not many trees in the area may have had to do with the arid climate rather than the depletion of trees by the previous inhabitants. Even today trees are relatively scarce in the Ayutla/Tecún Umán area. Also the account mentioned previously of the 1902 eruption of volcano Santa María demonstrates how volcanoes can deforest the land.

Some deforestation could have been due to smelting. The people may have been spoiled by all the trees in the land Bountiful. Even today the principal fuel for cooking in many of these areas is firewood. Some make their living by gathering firewood and carrying the bundles on their backs into the cities and towns. This process tends to clear the wooded areas near the population centers.

And now it came to pass that in the three hundred and sixty and third year the Nephites did go up with their armies to battle against the Lamanites, out of the land Desolation. (Mormon 4:1)

Based on the proposed geography, this seems to indicate that the entire land of Desolation was near the lowland Izapa/Ayutla to Retalhuleu area, the area between the Suchiate and Naranjo River complex at the Mexican border and the Samalá River.

And the remainder did flee and join the inhabitants of the city Teancum. Now the city Teancum lay in the borders by the seashore; and it was also near the city Desolation. (Mormon 4:3)

Given the proposed geography, this appears to be a reference to the Samalá River region near the Pacific Ocean.

Now the land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was near the land which is called Desolation by the Nephites (Ether 7:6).

Desolation is most likely near the Pacific Coast and, based on the smallness of all other lands mentioned, it would appear that the total land of Desolation is confined to the relatively small region around Retalhuleu. It is possible that all the areas where there were bones were included in the land Desolation. If this is the case, then all of the highlands and the Cumorah region might have been included as well.

All the geographically relevant references to the land and city of Desolation have just been covered. In this last verse there is an important link to the Jaredite world. The land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was near the Nephite land of Desolation. The fact that most of the Jaredite kings lived in this region is an indication of the economic and political importance of the area as well as

the pleasant surroundings. Note that Moron may not have been in the land of Desolation but it was near.

And the Lord warned Omer in a dream that he should depart out of the land; wherefore Omer departed out of the land with his family, and traveled many days, and came over and passed by the hill of Shim, and came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed, and from thence eastward, and came to a place which was called Ablom, by the seashore, and there he pitched his tent, and also his sons and his daughters, and all his household, save it were Jared and his family. (Ether 9:3)

This verse contains many geographical clues. Moron, where the king dwelt, is probably Abaj Takalik near Asintal, which is on the piedmont just up the slope from the Pacific Ocean. That would enable the people to get away from the heat a bit. The towns in this area include Nueva Morazán, San Antonio Morazán, and two other villages named Morazán surrounding Abaj Takalik and just to the southeast of Coatepeque. This is between Ayutla and Retalhuleu. The name Morazán could have derived from Moron. The word *morén* in the Brunka language of Costa Rica means "good" (Arroya 1966, 27). This may also have relevance to the name Mormon.

Having been warned by the Lord, Omer left Moron and traveled many days. He and his people probably traveled northeast up the canyon past the hill Shim (possibly Tui Chim). No mention is made of where the sea divides the land or of the Nephite fortresses of Gid, Omner, and Mulek. This may indicate that Shim was in the closest canyon, between Colomba Costa Cuca (previously known as Morazán) and Quetzaltenango, and that is where Tui Chim is located. But the land of Antum might be in the Samalá River drainage (Tierra Colorada). Thus, the Hill Shim may be in a different location. A firmer location for the land of Antum is needed in order to resolve this question.

There would be about thirty miles to travel on the route

between Moran and Quetzaltenango. Omer and his people then passed by the area where the Nephites were destroyed. That would have been Cumorah (Qumarkah or K'umarkáj), an additional forty miles to the east.

From Cumorah they went eastward to Ablom by the seashore. Again, "seashore" can apply to any shore or riverbank. In Mormon's terminology, it is not necessary to assume that this was a large lake, sea, or ocean. Ablom or *ab-lam* means "sea abundant" in Sumerian, but *ab* has another set of meanings having to do with "window, opening, niche, and nook."

Possibly the sea spoken of here was Lago Izabal about 140 miles straight east of Cumorah, though that is a considerable distance for people traveling on foot. It could also have been a now nonexistent arm of the Caribbean Sea. The ruined city of El Bongo would fit this latter possibility. The name sounds Spanish, but it is not. It has no meaning in that language. It does, however, have the requisite Hebrew consonants *b*, *l*, and *n* or *m*, similar to Ablom.

It is very possible, based on the topography observed in the region, that the Caribbean Sea once penetrated up the Polochic and Motagua rivers to the mountains. It is also apparent that the Sierra de las Minas range is geologically new. Were it not there, the sea would penetrate as much as 150 miles inland. If and when these changes occurred is a matter that will have to be determined by geologists. The obvious guess would be at the time of Christ's Crucifixion.

There are some duplicate names in the area closer to Cumorah. The river Salamá has the same three root syllables as Samalá. Likewise Morazan and Marron, similar to Moran, show up in this area also, along with many ruins.

It is unlikely that Omer and his people went all the way to where the Caribbean coast is now positioned. The mosquitoes and the hot muggy weather in that area are insufferable. The trip from Abaj Takalik (Moron) to El Bongo is about 210 miles as the crow flies. It would take about fourteen days travel at fifteen miles per day, more like twenty days, considering the necessity of

winding around rivers and mountains. If they really did make this trip, it is likely that there were fewer mountains in the way prior to the destruction at the time of the Crucifixion.

The Lands of Ether

The obvious links referred to by Mormon and Moroni have been covered. The less obvious connections are in Ether's writings. The Jaredites left greater Babylonia when the languages were confounded at the Tower of Babel. The people likely traveled north through the valley of Nimrod, so named for the great hunter. Nibley proposes that they took a right turn and crossed the Asian continent (Nibley 1988, 181). Nibley's suggested area of departure seems correct, judging from the place where they made their landing. Nibley also mentions that the prevailing wind direction and high mountains are correct for a Pacific crossing, but not for an Atlantic crossing.

These people crossed many waters and built multiple barges multiple times. They went into a quarter of the land where men had never been (Ether 2:5). The Lord would not have them stop on the other side of the wilderness; He wanted them to go to the best land—the land that was choice above all other lands. If one finds the land laden with the best soil, water, weather, and minerals in the entire world, this would be the Jaredites ultimate destination. If the king lived in Moron, the Jaredites must have crossed the Pacific Ocean and landed somewhere between the Mexican border and the Samalá River. The trade winds and currents could help indicate their starting and ending points.

The trip took 344 days—almost a year (Ether 6:11). Lehi's family traveled about twice the distance. Much of the time, the Jaredites must have drifted without navigational aids. The description of their ships or barges does not mention sails but it does mention steering. It appears that the Jaredite boats would function either side up; though a water-tight hatch top and bottom large enough to load animals would represent a major technological problem. Upon landing, they probably migrated to

the piedmont and highland elevations.

Take note of the Jaredite names. There is Corihor, who rebelled against his father and went to live in the land of Nehor. These names show up in Nephite history in the Ammonihah area. They are most likely connected as there was no doubt a residual Jaredite influence in the region when the Mulekites and, later the Nephites, arrived in Zarahemla.

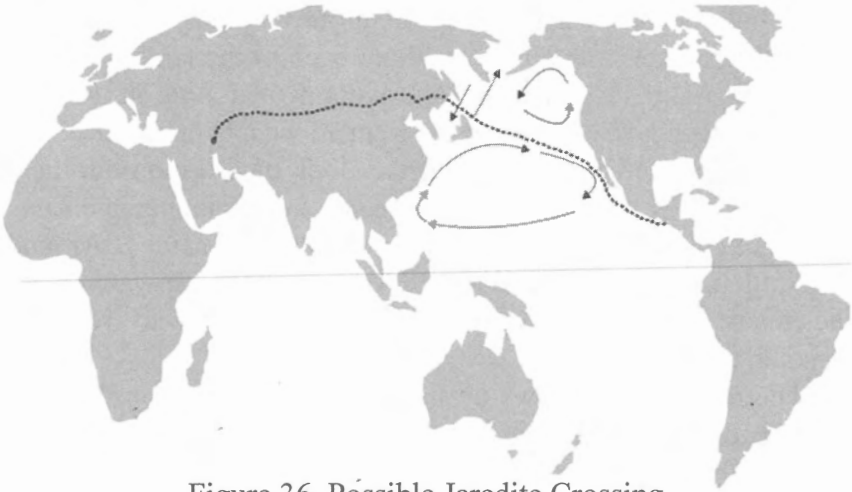


Figure 36. Possible Jaredite Crossing

The sons and daughters of Corihor were fair (Ether 7:4). The Olmec may have been the Jaredites, but the large football-helmeted, carved stone heads in the La Venta area would lead one to conclude that the people depicted in those sculptures did not have fair skins. Little is known about the ethnicity of the Jaredites, but based on the area from which they came, they could have had dark hair but relatively light-colored skin. Of course, it is not possible to tell skin color from a rock carving, but the facial features can be compared. Our perspective probably would not accommodate the idea that the features found on Olmec carvings came from the Middle East of today. Such features appear to be more Polynesian and oriental.

Corihor and his followers went to Moron and took the King captive (Corihor's father). They probably did not just come *up* to battle (Ether 7:5). Most likely they came *over* some mountain

ridges, then *down* the other side, and finally *up* to Moron.

King Kib lived in captivity for many years and in his old age he had a son named Shule (Ether 7:7). *Kib* means “something made of gold” in Sumerian. An alternate definition is “wheat,” which undoubtedly reflects the golden color of the grain. Shule apparently left Nehor, gathered an army, smelted some metal for swords, and went to battle against his brother, Corihor (Ether 7:9). Shule restored his father to the throne and later served in his stead. The reason for following Shule back to the land of Moron is that there are several ruins and rivers named Xulá in the area between Izapa and Mazatenango. Remember *x* is pronounced *sh*. No city of Shule is mentioned in the Book of Mormon but there are three cities with that pronunciation in the immediate area. Each area has different but common repeated names. Around Retalhuleu, the repeated names are Xulá and Morazán, along with the many forms of “white earth” which seem to refer to Desolation.

The name Noah shows up in Jaredite history. Noah defeated Shule and took over the land of their first inheritance. That would most likely be the area of Moron (Abaj Takalik). Noah attacked again and took King Shule away captive to Moron (Ether 7:17). Judging from these two attacks by Noah, it appears that Moron and the land of their first inheritance were the same area. Shule’s sons crept in at night and killed Noah then released their father (Ether 7:18).

Cohor, the son of Noah, built a kingdom and the country was divided (Ether 7:20). It is reasonable to conclude that the Nephite city of Noah was established by the Jaredites and was the center of Cohor’s half of the divided country. Noah is near Ammonihah and appears to be the city of Chinautla, as previously indicated. This town is just about six miles northeast of Guatemala City. The *chi* in the place name means “hill or mount” and the suffix *tla*, is definitely Nahuatl but the meanings and uses are numerous. It can be an introductory particle or a verbal compounding element. One interesting connection is that *tla* can be equivalent to *ma* in the Nahuatl language and one of the definitions of *ma* is

“to take captives.”(Karttunen 1983, 126, 250, 285) Captives were taken in Noah (Alma 16:3). Removing the prefix and suffix leaves just *Nau* or *Naua*, pronounced very close to Noah.

Chinautla is an old and prolific archaeological site and many of its artifacts are in the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Guatemala City. The names Cohor and Noah from the Jaredite history suggest there was an Ammonihah connection with Corihor, Korihor, and Nehor from the Nephite history. This would be the political center at the east of the Jaredite land, while Shule, Moron, and Lib would be the political center at the west end of the land. Later, the leaders of these two centers would fight back and forth from end to end of the Jaredite lands.

During Shule’s reign, the people practiced idolatry (Ether 7:22), possibly as seen in the Olmec carved stones. Prophets were sent to call the people to repentance and King Shule supported the prophets (Ether 7:23). The people repented, but the stone idols remained for archeologists to find at places like Abaj Takalik, Izapa, Monte Alto, and Kaminaljuyú.

These were not particularly attractive stone carvings. The carvings that displayed the finer craftsmanship were further northeast into Mexico up near La Venta and Veracruz. Both types of carvings are attributed to the Olmec, but they are so dissimilar that it appears as though the carvers were from two separate cultures. Nevertheless, archaeologists tend to paint them with the same brush and call them all Olmec.

Regarding the two different types of carvings associated with the Olmec, this quote was found on the inguat.net Internet site under the heading of the town, La Democracia:

La Democracia—The site is located in the Department of Esquintla, in the Pacific lowlands of Guatemala. For many years, archaeologists believed that the most ancient monumental civilization in America was the Olmec, that flourished in the region of the Gulf of Mexico. It has now been proven, however, that the Olmec had their origin in an early group of Mayas to which the

name Preolmec had been given. In contrast to Olmec sculpture, the Preolmec heads have only one carved side. The Preolmec civilization existed only in the area of the Pacific Coast.

The Jaredites as described by Mormon appear to have restricted themselves largely to the highlands of Guatemala and the Pacific Coast. Thus, the Preolmec may have been the Jaredite civilization. This suggests that the great stone brought to Mosiah for translation was a flat, one-sided carving. The Jaredites may have scattered in many directions after they arrived, but they likely arrived on the Pacific Coast and the original center of their civilization died there.

The name Jared shows up again as a rebel son of King Omer (Ether 9:3). Coriantum was a faithful son of Emer, the son of Omer (Ether 9:14, 21-22). On the end of Coriantum's name is the word *antum*, just like Moriantum and the land of Antum mentioned previously in connection with the hill Shim. Antum thus appears to be a Jaredite name. Hence, we should look to the Sumerian dictionary for its meaning, as we will do later.

Next came a drought in the land, followed by many poisonous serpents.

And there came forth poisonous serpents also upon the face of the land, and did poison many people. And it came to pass that their flocks began to flee before the poisonous serpents, toward the land southward, which was called by the Nephites Zarahemla (Ether 9:31).

And it came to pass that the Lord did cause the serpents that they should pursue them no more, but that they should hedge up the way that the people could not pass, that whoso should attempt to pass might fall by the poisonous serpents (Ether 9:33).

And it came to pass that Lib also did that which was good in the sight of the Lord. And in the days of Lib the poisonous serpents were destroyed. Wherefore they did

go into the land southward, to hunt food for the people of the land, for the land was covered with animals of the forest. And Lib also himself became a great hunter (Ether 10:19).

These three verses provide some good connections. Their livestock would not likely have crossed the large rivers. The land southward was called Zarahemla by the Nephites. Mormon also called it the land southward many times. This area was also called the land of Bountiful, the land preserved by the Jaredites for hunting (Alma 22:31; Ether 10:19).

And it came to pass that when they had humbled themselves sufficiently before the Lord he did send rain upon the face of the earth; and the people began to revive again, and there began to be fruit in the north countries, and in all the countries round about. And the Lord did show forth his power unto them in preserving them from famine (Ether 9:35).

And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land.

And they did preserve the land southward for a wilderness, to get game. And the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants (Ether 10:20-21).

The “north countries” mentioned here would most likely include the Guatemalan Costa Sur From Retalhuleu north to the Mexican border and possibly further. However, it is apparent that the coastal lands near Izapa, Ayutla, and Abaj Takalik, which are on the northwest extreme of these lands, are about the extent of the most important lands northward.

Thus, the Jaredite lands were small and coincided with much of greater Zarahemla plus the coastal land Desolation between Retalhuleu and Izapa. No Jaredite place name has been mentioned in the Book of Mormon that is outside of the area Mormon identifies as the Nephite part of the world.

With regard to the snakes, the name Coatepeque means “snake hill” in Nahuatl. This town is located between Ayutla and the ruins at Abaj Takalik. This puts Coatepeque (snake hill) in just the spot where the serpents could drive the livestock to the southeast near Retalhuleu (Desolation/Teacum) and to Mazatenango (Bountiful?) beyond. It is amazing how close this place name matches Mormon’s and Moroni’s accounts.

Next come the first chronological use of the names Morianton, Riplakish, and Kish (Ether 10:8, 9, 17). These are names and roots also used extensively in the Nephite world. Finally comes the great prophet Ether, and the stubborn but eventually repentant Coriantumr (Ether 11:23). And we see that Shared, his brother Gilead, the assassin Lib, and Shiz, all led by wickedness, hatred, and revenge, brought about the virtual destruction of the Jaredite nation (Ether 14 and 15).

Here is an interesting verse about Ether.

For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him who dwell upon the face thereof. (Ether 13:2)

Ether told them everything that had happened in the world from the beginning of man. Ether must have had available the vision of the brother of Jared that is included in the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon plates (Ether 4:4-6). That would be a long and interesting story. We have been told a lot but we are missing many chapters. He said that after the waters receded from this land, it became choice. There is a chance, as noted previously, that some of the waters may have continued to recede during and after Mormon’s history.

Ether was rejected by the people and had to flee for his life. He went to live in the cavity of a rock (Ether 12:5, 13:13). There

are some mountainsides near the Lago de Atitlán that are steep and pocked with caves about six-feet high. This may have been where Ether stayed during the final battles of his people. He hid in the cave during the day and completed his record. At night he went out to observe what he wrote about in his last chapters. This specific area would be ideally suited for that purpose, given the proposed geography.

During Ether's first year in the cave, the secret combinations fought against Coriantumr and killed many (Ether 13:15). In the second year, he delivered a personal message from the Lord to Coriantumr who had not yet repented (Ether 13:20). Ether again had to flee for his life back to the cavity of the rock. In the third year, Shared led the opposition and captured Coriantumr. In the fourth year, Coriantumr's sons freed him and returned the kingdom to their father (Ether 13:23-24).

In that same year, all the face of the land was in war, every man fighting for what he desired (Ether 13:25). This is similar to the beginning of Mormon's final battles. The people did not appear to be geographically polarized, but that did not prevent them from homogeneous mayhem. It is likely, however, that Shared and his army stayed away, at the opposite end of the country. Coriantumr was exceedingly angry with Shared and engaged his army in the valley of Gilgal (Ether 13:27).

We have a possible location for Gilgal. The Hebrew root of Gilgal means "to roll, to go in a circle, a wheel, etc." The Nahuatl word *galgas* was used for the round stones rolled down on Cortés and his troops (Cohen 1963, 334).

Within two miles of the ruins of Ammonihah (Kaminaljuyú) is a set of ruins with the Spanish name, Rodeo. The definition of *rodeo* is: "the act of going around, a circuitous way or road, or a market where cattle are exposed for sale." This corresponds, in Spanish, to Gilgal in Hebrew. But more impressive is the surrounding geography, which would match the location described in Ether. Also, Gilgal was not only a Jaredite city but at the time of Christ's crucifixion it was a Nephite city that was sunk in the depth of the earth (3 Nephi 9:6). Geologists and

archaeologists might be able to tell us if this region (Rodeo) has experienced such an event.

Coriantumr won the battle and pursued the enemy to the plains of Heshlon (Ether 13:28). There are some ruins about six miles east of Rodeo named Alux. This may have been the plains of Heshlon. The linguistic connection would require a transposition of the syllabic roots, but that appears to have been fairly common in these languages. Again, the strongest evidence is how the totality of the geography seems to fit.

Coriantumr's army was probably centered near Moron, where the king lived, and Shared's army was probably centered at the other end of the highlands near the Nephite center of Ammonihah. Do not forget the connection of Corihor and Nehor, both Jaredite names, with Ammonihah in Nephite times. The city of Ammonihah was supposedly named after Ammon, as Mormon described their naming convention (Alma 8:7). It is very possible that Mormon used the name Ammonihah prematurely in the text. It may have first been named Nehor. Note that, when the Lamanites completely destroyed Ammonihah, it was called the Desolation of Nehors not the desolation of Ammonihah (Alma 16:11).

Shared wins the next go-around and pushes Coriantumr's army back to the valley of Gilgal (Ether 13:29). Coriantumr battled Shared again in the valley of Gilgal and killed him (Ether 13:30). In the process, Shared wounded Coriantumr in the thigh. Coriantumr went home and did not fight for two more years. That would make six years in the cave for Ether (Ether 13:31).

Gilead, Shared's brother, next went to battle with Coriantumr in the wilderness of Akish and was beaten. Coriantumr laid siege in the wilderness. Gilead attacked during the night while Coriantumr's men were drunken, and then went on to the land of Moron and took the throne for himself. Thus, Gilead left the area of Ammonihah and went to the other end of the land. There he took over the capital in Moron (Ether 14:3-6). If Moroni, as his name would indicate, was from Moron, a Jaredite town, then Moroni probably knew this area very well.

Lib, the high priest of Gilead, killed Gilead and took over the throne. Lib was the man of greatest stature in all the land (Ether 14:9-10). By greatest, the record may have meant he was fat because *Lib* and *La'b* mean "fat" in Sumerian and Chortí, respectively. Coriantumr attacked and was wounded in the arm by Lib but Coriantumr's army was victorious, pushing Lib's army to the borders of the seashore (Ether 14:11-13). We have many seashores and riverbanks to chose from here. On the seashore, Lib gained the victory and pushed Coriantumr back to the wilderness of Akish. Then Lib pursued him to the plains of Agosh. Coriantumr killed Lib but Lib's brother, Shiz, took the battle to the final inning for the Jaredites (Ether 14:14-16).

Coriantumr was gathering his people at this time. Shiz started burning all the cities and killing all the women and children. Up until that time, armies were fighting armies, while cities remained relatively unaffected. They were fighting at Coriantumr's end of the country, so when Shiz started burning cities, the people had to make up their minds which army they were going to support (Ether 14:17-20). Only after they started burning the cities and killing all the people was the average citizen forced to make up his mind and take sides.

And there went a fear of Shiz throughout all the land; yea, a cry went forth throughout the land—Who can stand before the army of Shiz? Behold, he sweepeth the earth before him!

And it came to pass that the people began to flock together in armies, throughout all the face of the land.

And they were divided; and a part of them fled to the army of Shiz, and a part of them fled to the army of Coriantumr.

And so great and lasting had been the war, and so long had been the scene of bloodshed and carnage, that the whole face of the land was covered with the bodies of the dead.

And so swift and speedy was the war that there was

none left to bury the dead, but they did march forth from the shedding of blood to the shedding of blood, leaving the bodies of both men, women, and children strewed upon the face of the land, to become a prey to the worms of the flesh.

And the scent thereof went forth upon the face of the land, even upon all the face of the land; wherefore the people became troubled by day and by night, because of the scent thereof. (Ether 14:18–24)

Coriantumr pursued Shiz toward the east to the seashore where they had a three-day battle (Ether 14:26). The battle was terrible and Shiz's people started to flee to the land of Corihor. As they fled they killed all who would not join them. They pitched their tents in the valley of Corihor and Coriantumr pitched his tents in the valley of Shurr (Ether 14:27–28). This would probably have been at Lago de Atitlán, giving Ether a good view of the events from the caves there. The armies were then in the area of Corihor and Ammonihah.

The hill Comnor was near the valley of Shurr and was within a trumpet sound of the valley of Corihor (Ether 14:28). That would be close by, and suggests that Corihor may have been the ruins of Cotiío, which are located just west, on the outskirts of Guatemala City. Apparently, proper etiquette in war was to call the enemy to battle by sounding a trumpet. Also, it appears that the king and his guards fought the opposing king and his guards, and troops fought troops.

The Hebrew word *shur* means "wall." If the valley of Shurr shares that origin, then it would be the valley of the wall or walls. In Sumerian *sur* means "ditch, deep furrow, or drain." The rivers Molina and Villalobos join and drain the Cotiío area. Some very steep walls form a deep gorge in this area. These steep walls may have given the name to the valley of Shurr. A bridge on the Villalobos River washed out recently while passing 150 cubic yards of water per second. These rivers flow into the lake Amatitlán (Manti by the Water), which forms the headwaters of

the river Sidon (the Michatoya or Fish River).

Shiz inflicted Coriantumr with many deep wounds. Coriantumr fainted from loss of blood and was hauled away as if he were dead. Shiz commanded his army not to pursue Coriantumr's army because of the great loss on both sides. The armies went home (Ether 14:30-31). Coriantumr recovered and began to remember Ether's words. He began to repent and his soul mourned and refused to be comforted. Nearly two million of his people had been killed and he sought for peace, but Shiz and the people on both sides would not have it (Ether 15:1-6).

The people of Shiz started the next battle. It was on Coriantumr's turf and Shiz won. Coriantumr's army fled to the waters of Ripliancum, which means "large or to exceed all" (Ether 15:8). Coriantumr was wounded and fainted but his army prevailed. Shiz fled to the south to Ogath and Coriantumr followed, camping on the hill Ramah (Cumorah). No battle occurred and they waited for four years while gathering the people to either side (Ether 15:6-14).

Did they stay at Cumorah or did they go home? We do not know. No more is told about their locations. Cumorah (Qumarkah), the Nephite name for the hill Ramah (the Jaredite name), as we have seen, likely means "rotten bones," so it is probable that this is where the final battle took place. They left bodies everywhere they'd been, so they may not have wanted to go back.

Four years is a long time. The people were choosing whichever man they wanted to support, so there would be no peace at home unless the groups were geographically separated. Two million Jaredites had been killed prior to the battle at Ripliancum (Ether 15:2). The camps may have stayed in place for the four years but it seems that someone would have to have done some farming.

Ripliancum was in the north, probably about a one-day journey from Cumorah since Cumorah is where they next pitched their tents (Ether 15:8-11). At present there are no large lakes or seas in the area of Ripliancum, but there are mountains and

ivers. The upper reaches of the Usumacinta River are twenty miles straight north. There may have been other large waters in the area at the time but that is not a certainty.

If one stands on an ocean shore and looks out, all oceans look the same. One does not look any bigger than the other because they're too big for the eye to make a comparison. There is, however, a great difference between rivers, and the name of this "sea" suggests it may have been the largest river in the area.

North of the hill Ramah (Qumarkah), in the headwaters of the Usumacinta River, is the Chixoy River, also called Río Negro. The Usumacinta is the largest river in all of Central America and may have been used by the Mulekites in landing and approaching the highlands. The indigenous writings recorded by Sahagún talk of coming up some river valley to the snowcapped volcanoes in Guatemala (Dibble 1961, 190).

The name of the Chixoy River is *Nimala'* among the Quiché people. In Christenson's K'iche' word list, *nimal* and *nimalaj* are all superlatives having to do with size, power, and greatness. The word for water is *ja'*. That is where the phrase "waters to exceed all" may have come from. This suggests that Ripliancum was not the ocean, but the largest, most powerful, and greatest river south of the Mississippi and north of the Magdalena, the Nimala' River, the headwaters of the Usumacinta River. While the name Ripliancum did not survive to the present, the meaning, "waters to exceed all," apparently did.

And there is more in the Sumerian connection to Ripliancum. The word *rib* means "to be higher in rank"; and the word *rib-ba* means "enormous or supreme." Interchanging the *p* and the *b* is not unusual. It has been observed in some of the area languages, like Quiché and Quichua. The *an* has to do with "heaven and water from above." The *kum* means "to crush," but just *ku* alone means "to procreate, produce, or be the foundation." Thus, the name Ripliancum implies it is the highest starting point or beginning of the largest river in Mesoamerica. Again, that would be the Chixoy or Nimalá River today flowing into the great Usumacinta.

The Jaredites were destroyed in the same sense and in the same location as the Nephites, at Cumorah, the place of the rotten bones (Ether 15:11).

There are four points that should be clear by now:

First, the Jaredite lands were largely coincident with the Nephite lands. The land southward was, to the Nephites of Mormon's day, Bountiful/Zarahemla. The land northward was Desolation to the Nephites, and Moron to the Jaredites. Today it is home to the Mam branch of the Maya, who may be a remnant of the Jaredites. Not surprisingly, the boundaries of the various coastal Maya groups, as depicted on many National Geographic maps, match closely the configuration of the tribes in Mormon's day as identified in the geography we have proposed.

The word in Hebrew for "to be desolate, to be deforested, to be deflowered, or to be deserted" is *shamem*, pronounced shame. The last part of the word, *mame*, is very similar to the name of the Mam branch of the Maya, which still occupy the land proposed as Desolation. Unfortunately, with the level of understanding available today, the definitions for the tri-literal roots of the Hebrew word *sha-ma-me* are not unique. The vowels in Hebrew are somewhat arbitrary. Indeed, the word "vowel" comes from a Latin word meaning "to fly away." The remaining consonants have cognate or similar meanings in all the words in which they are used.¹

The land southward was reserved by the Jaredites for hunting. How far could they transport fresh meat without it being dried, salt cured, or kept cold? A day's travel is excessive in such a warm climate. The Jaredite hunting grounds, therefore, had to be just a few miles away to the southeast. In the proposed geography, it was just across the Samalá River on the Pacific Ocean drainage. Those who think the Jaredites lived north of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and hunted south of the Isthmus, several hundred miles away, either must assume a processing facility of some kind in the area to cure or dry the meat, or they have never

¹ David Stewart, telephone interview, 2002.

hunted deer and expected their families to eat their catch.

The Mulekites and Nephites (after leaving the land of Nephi) settled first in the land of Bountiful (Omni 1:13; Mosiah 25:2; Alma 22:31, 33) and moved into the higher elevations later, though it is possible that the Mulekites had wandered extensively during the 400 years before they were joined by the Nephites. The valley of Gideon, the land of Manti, and the mountain fortress towns appear to have been settled hundreds of years after the arrival of the Mulekites. Indeed, Gideon himself arrived with Limhi's people (Mosiah 22:9-11; Alma 1:8).

The second point is that no mention is made of any Jaredite land outside of Mormon's known and named lands. The total number of Jaredites killed was on the order of almost four million (Ether 15:2). The Jaredites were one people, not two, as were the Nephites and Lamanites. All of those who died started out as Coriantumr's people. Give each man, woman, and child five acres and you still do not require more area than the part of Guatemala we have been studying.

The third point is that, most likely, there were survivors. The legends as well as the Spanish writings support this idea and that is a practical reality common to war. Some legends (as recorded by the Catholic priests) of the Maya state that they came from the tower of Babel (Recinos 1953, 165).² The early indigenous writers mention the old and infirm who could not travel (Dibble 1961, 170). With four million people, there are always some women who are heavy with child and cannot travel. There are always the remote outlying areas that do not get the word everyone else wants to go to war. Diffusion of any species is such that someone over the last hill will survive. These lands have a lot of hills, mountains, and vegetation. If someone wanted to flee and hide in order to survive, it would be easy. Any person or small group committed to surviving could do so by fleeing the area of the last battle.

Also, there appears to be a direct infusion of the Jaredite

² See also, Chapter V: Myths of the Mayas. [cited 18 July 2002]. Available from www.sacred-texts.com/nam/mmp/mmp4.htm.

language (apparently related to Sumerian) into the Maya tribes and the Nahua. The impact on the remaining civilizations and the linguistic evidence recorded in the Book of Mormon is too extensive to have come from a totally dead people. Jaredite words found their way into Shimnilom in the southeast before the Jaredite record was made public in the northwest 250 miles away. Furthermore, Shimnilom was Lamanite, while the Jaredite history was translated and disseminated by the Nephites.

The fourth point is that it is unlikely the Olmec people were Jaredites. The great carved, stone heads attributed to the Olmec do not appear to be fair skinned nor are they consistent with the place of origin of the Jaredites. Jared and the brother of Jared were both involved with Orihah, the very first king in Moron (Ether 6:27). This indicates that Moron was the initial settlement area and the people diffused from there. Once the people scattered far enough away, Mormon no longer felt responsible to include their histories.

It is probable that in the 1,500 years or so of Jaredite history, they scattered to the four winds just as the Nephites and Lamanites did. Not all such splinter groups would have gathered again for the privilege of getting killed in Shiz's war. They may have had their own wars not documented by Moroni.

The genetic diversity found among Native Americans is too great to think that they all came from one race or locale. There is a clear influence from the Pacific Rim peoples. The Olmec left traces from El Salvador to Veracruz. Only a small part of the early settlement of this land is documented by Ether, just as Mormon and Moroni only documented that part of the history that was relevant to their particular piece of the Promised Land.

What Do Archeologists Say?

Charles Gallenkamp refers to five places that are related specifically in time and space to Mormon's world. These include: Izapa, which would have been part of the greater land of Desolation; El Baúl/Cotzumalguapa, which is most likely the city

Zarahemla; Kaminaljuyú, which appears to be the great city of Ammonihah; and Abaj Takalik and Noj, which are in the land of Moron/Desolation. He also mentions El Salvador, the land of Lehi, which includes the lands of Helam, Amulon, and Jerusalem; and finally, Teotihuacán near Mexico City, which was probably started by Nephites migrating north and was a great city after Christ's visit to the Americas.

Here is what Gallenkamp says about the areas we have been discussing.

Other early dates and inscriptions associated with Olmec traits have been found in Guatemala. Included among these are a number of carved stones at Abaj Takalik, a site located on the Pacific slopes south of Quezaltenango, which has also yielded several stelae executed in a style clearly related to Classic Maya sculpture and inscribed with dates ranging from the first or second century before Christ to 126 AD. Another monument (designated as the Herrera Stela from El Baúl, approximately fifty miles southeast of Abaj Takalik) exhibited a partially eroded long-count inscription tentatively dated at 36 AD. Excavators working at Kaminaljuyú stumbled upon a portion of a magnificent Late Pre-Classic relief carving—Stela 10—depicting an anthropomorphized jaguar and two lavishly costumed humans interspersed with bar-and-dot numbers and hieroglyphs, which appear to represent an antecedent of Maya script.

In the case of the monuments from El Baúl, Kaminaljuyú, and some of those at Abaj Takalik, the scenes depicted reflect elements derived from an important center called Izapa, situated in southeastern Chiapas near the Guatemalan border. Izapan art is distinguished by its superbly executed, if somewhat florid, bas-relief sculpture usually portraying mythological creatures, richly attired chieftains, and gods.

Inherent in these works are a number of Olmec inspired characteristics, and many archaeologists envision Izapa as a major entrepot through which Olmec influences were infused into Maya culture during the Late Preclassic era.

Whatever the facts surrounding the origin of Maya calendrical and hieroglyphic writing, these innovations reached their highest development in the lowlands between 300 and 800 AD, especially in the Petén and adjacent regions. Thus far, the oldest Maya inscription found anywhere in the lowlands was carved on Stela 29 at Tikal, which bears a long-count date corresponding to July 6, 292 AD. By that time the Maya had attained a remarkably high level of advancement in many fields of endeavor and the stage was set for the extraordinary achievements that marked the florescence of Classic civilization.

In spite of the obvious environmental advantages offered by the highlands—its temperate climate, fertile soil, and abundant natural resources—this region remained curiously outside the mainstream of Classic Maya culture. As J. E. Thompson pointed out, sculpture, architecture, and ceramics never approached the levels of excellence in the highlands that they did elsewhere, and the corbelled vault (one of the most fundamental concepts of Maya engineering) was restricted to several sites near the periphery of lowland influence. Even the auspicious beginnings in hieroglyphic and calendrical writing evidenced by the monuments at Abaj Takalik, El Baúl, and Kaminaljuyú mysteriously disappeared from the area sometime before 300 AD, and no inscriptions from the Classic period have occurred in any highland sites. Equally strange is the sudden abandonment of long-count dates and the stela cult in this region by the end of the Late pre-Classic era, both having previously played an important role in the development of its cultures.

Archaeologists believe these puzzling circumstances

are partly attributable to the intruders who came from Teotihuacán. This was the great urban center near Mexico City that was so famous for its lavish palaces, long avenues of temples, and the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon. Large numbers of immigrants from Teotihuacán began infiltrating the highlands around 400 AD heralded, perhaps, by military invasion or a massive colonization that resulted in Kaminaljuyú's loss of political and economic independence. Over the next two centuries the city was practically rebuilt in Teotihuacán's architectural style. Much of the pottery from Classic period tombs at Kaminaljuyú was either imported directly from Teotihuacán or copied by local craftsman, who produced vessels decorated with the images of Teotihuacán's gods and human figures wearing the typical dress of elite classes. Unquestionably, Kaminaljuyú, together with vast sections of the surrounding territory, fell under the domination of the Mexican rulers, sociopolitical institutions, and religious beliefs and, although certain Maya traditions continued to survive, and extensive trade was carried on with lowland cities; life in this region was radically altered by these foreign contacts.

A second factor that apparently contributed to the decline of Early Classic Maya culture in the highlands was a natural disaster of catastrophic proportions. Sometime around 200 to 250 AD, an enormous volcano called Ilopango erupted in central El Salvador. As a result, thick layers of ash rendered the area within a sixty-mile radius of Ilopango virtually uninhabitable for almost two hundred years. (Gallenkamp 1985, 69–71)

Let's look at what Gallenkamp confirms about what we have proposed as the geography of Mormon's world. This area of Guatemala got off to a technological head start and then mysteriously disappeared around 300 AD, followed by an influx and renaissance initiated from Teotihuacán around AD 400.

Mormon relates that the Nephites and the Lamanites were decadent by about 322 AD, when the war among the Nephites, Lamanites, and Gadianton robbers got underway at the Sidon River. By the year 385 AD, Moroni walked away alone. This archaeologist really hits these dates right on the numbers.

However, for purposes of this book, the location is more important than the time. The time was given to us by Mormon. Gallenkamp has identified the places. In his book, Gallenkamp talks about all of the Maya world, clear up into Teotihuacán, but only the highlands of Guatemala and the Pacific slope took this unexpected dive. We know why and when, and now we know where. This was the location of the Nephite culture.

The part about the volcano Ilopango is especially interesting. If the dating is off, the eruption may have occurred at the time of Christ's crucifixion. But, assuming the researchers are correct and the eruption occurred somewhere between 200 and 250 AD, if the volcano wiped out everything within a sixty-mile radius, that is virtually all of the land of Lehi. If it were rendered uninhabitable for 200 years, there would be no Lamanite threat from that region. However, we have since learned that recovery from volcanoes can be much more rapid.

The Lamanites and Nephites lived in harmony from the time of the Coming of Christ until war began in about 322 AD. Travel and migration went uninhibited for about 288 years. The Lamanites were everywhere. If any people survived the Ilopango eruption, they would have migrated into the Nephite lands and beyond. Disputes may have begun because of growing geographic pressures caused by this eruption, as well as their own wickedness. We should note also as a reminder that none of the cities and lands in this area were mentioned after the Crucifixion.

Let's assume the land of Lehi was no longer habitable because of Ilopango. The land of Lehi-Nephi was farther away and, according to National Geographic maps, there are fewer major ruins in that area. There was not the necessary density in population to wipe out the Nephites. The Lamanites were close on the southeast and lived most of the way around the Nephites

on the east and north. The population center of the Lamanites must have shifted.

Also, the Gadianton robbers were everywhere. Previously most of these robbers had been Nephites. There is no reason why the case would have changed in Mormon's day, except that Mormon says the Gadianton robbers were among the Lamanites. By Ammaron's time, the Gadianton robbers had spread over all the face of the land (4 Nephi 1:46).

If the Lamanite's primary lands were destroyed, that would put heavy geographical pressure on the Nephites. The Lamanites were actually moving into their neighborhood now. It requires a greater degree of ethnic tolerance to live close to groups that are different from you. That could have been the very pressure that tested their righteousness and eventually found them wanting.



CHAPTER 13

ANTUM

The Search for Antum

Many writers have noted that the Hebrews liked to play word games with their writing. They often wrote with multiple, layered, and hidden meanings, and used a composition structure called chiasm. Nephi understood how the Jews wrote and taught the writings of Isaiah to his family and followers. Nephi states that he was taught in the learning of his father and made the record in the language of his father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians

Now I, Nephi, do speak somewhat concerning the words which I have written, which have been spoken by the mouth of Isaiah. For behold, Isaiah spake many things which were hard for many of my people to understand; for they know not concerning the manner of prophesying among the Jews. (2 Nephi 25:1)

Yea, and my soul delighteth in the words of Isaiah, for I came out from Jerusalem, and mine eyes hath beheld the things of the Jews, and I know that the Jews do understand the things of the prophets, and there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they

are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews. (2 Nephi 25:5)

The faithful scribe, Mormon's son Moroni, was apologetic about writing in their reformed Egyptian as there would be chances for ambiguity and misunderstanding. He stated that if he could write in the Nephite form of Hebrew there would be no imperfections in their record. The economy of space provided by the more compact reformed Egyptian was the driving factor, and he knew that the Lord would make up the difference and prepare a means for the interpretation of their writing.

With this understanding, recognizing the potential for misunderstanding and recognizing some of the word play practiced by the Hebrews, let us see what clues we can uncover about the location of the land of Antum in the Book of Mormon.

The Hebrew lexicon states that *Adam* means "red," and in Greek it means "red earth." Also, it is known from the lexicon that the land of *Edom* means "red." Adam and Edom may therefore be equivalent, differing only because of the divergent evolution of dialects, languages, peoples, and nations that has and continues to occur. It makes one wonder if the Garden of Eden was really the Garden of Adam.

Now lets go with Lehi and his family from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. They followed along the borders of the Red Sea traveling in a south-southeastward direction. Ishmael died and was buried in a place called Nahom (1 Nephi 16:34). This place has been identified by the discovery of a stone marker and is still called the valley of Nahom by the Bedouin (Hilton 1966, 21).

They then traveled nearly eastward arriving at the seashore of a sea they called Irreantum and a productive valley they called Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:5-6). Irreantum has been interpreted as "many waters." The "water" part, from Greek and Arabic, is *Irre*, and the *Antum* part means "many or large," as it does in the Quechua language (*hatun*). This could very well be related to the

Basque word *antie*, which means “big.”¹ And then there is the scripture in Moses 1:34, which says that “the first man have I called Adam, which is many.” Thus, Adam and Antum both appear to mean “many.” Both may also mean “red.”

Looking at the maps of Yemen, the sea between the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea is called the Gulf of Aden. Just south of the town of Lahij (could this be Lehi?) is a coastal city of Aden. Could Aden be a variant of Adam or Antum? Possibly, but it means “mining” in Arabic today. There is a town of Adam (spelled the same as in English) to the east-northeast in Oman. The similarity of location and name between the Book of Mormon sea Irreantum (Irre-Antum) and the present-day maps would suggest that Aden and Antum share some meanings, such as “mining” and “many.”

The Quiché carry heavy burdens on their backs. To carry these heavy loads they have a leather or padded woven strap that goes across the forehead and down the back over both shoulders for support. This strap is called a *tumpline* in English (See Figure 37), but in Quiché it is called a *patän*, which appears to have the Antum root in it. This may be tied to mining because so much of mining involves carrying the ore and raw materials to processing locations. In Sumerian, *túm* means “to carry,” while *tum* means “work or action.” It is interesting in this context that Mormon said his father *carried* him from Antum into the land southward (Mormon 1:6). This may have been a play on words.

Also, from Sumerian comes another meaning for the word Antum. The *an* is “sky, heaven,” or more loosely “anything that is up high.” The *tum* is also a cardinal point or direction indicator so *An-tum* could refer to “the land above” or “the high country.” While *anti* means “red and copper” and is one of the possible roots of the Andes Mountains, *anti* and *antum* may be from the same roots and mean “the very high mountains,” which the Andes most certainly are.

¹ The origins of the word are most likely from the Sumerian to the Akkadian then to the Aramaic, which was taught to the Hebrews in captivity.



Figure 37. Quiché Man Carrying Heavy Load Using Tumpline

Interchanging the terminal *n*'s and *m*'s is common in the languages with which we are dealing. In Quiché Mayan it is very common. Also, many words in English that end in *m*, end in *n* in Spanish. For example, Adam in English is *Adán* in Spanish, and Cham or Ham (the son of Noah) in English is *Can* in Spanish. So, Antum, Adam, and Aden would appear to share a common base.

These names are of interest because of the quote by the Catholic Friar, Bartolomé de las Casas, cited in an earlier chapter. Las Casas was very concerned for the indigenous people and very critical of the Spaniards treatment of them. He saw in the indigenous name of the region around Uatlán (K'umarkáj, Cumorah), which was *Calcatum*, something that he felt tied the Quichés to biblical lands (Carmack 1983,17).

As previously noted, the word *calc* comes from Nahuatl and means "house" and the ending *atum*, which may mean high

country, must contain the tie to the biblical lands. Calcatum is “the house of Atum.” Las Casas may have seen in this a reference to Adam.

In Greek the word for the Hebrew *talent*, and for “weights and measures” in general, is *tal-anton*. Also in Greek, words beginning with *chalk* (pronounced *khal'-k*, the same as *calc*) have to do with copper and brass. Could Calcatum have been written as *chalk-aden*, having to do with copper mining or much copper?

A little about the background of these Catholic priests might help. They were educated men of their day. In that age, what did it mean to be educated? Western education dates back to the Greeks. Indeed, the curriculum developed by Dionysius Thrax for grammar schools in 120 BC was adopted throughout Europe and remained largely unchanged until the nineteenth century. The subjects included literature, literary expression and argument, philosophy, and logic. Certainly history was a major part of their education as well. In addition, there were the arts, religion, Greek, and Latin. There was no mathematics before Galileo (1564-1642) and his follower René Descartes (1596-1650). The father of calculus, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), came later. Newton himself was trained in religion and Latin, nothing else.

These Catholic priests were probably trained in religion and Latin with some rudimentary arithmetic. The Jesuits were also trained in subversion, for as the dictionary states, Jesuit means “one given to intrigue or equivocation.” They were eventually outlawed and thrown out of Mexico. In fact, all of the Catholic Orders were at one time expelled from Guatemala (Christenson 2000, 11).

But the different priests were very different in their dispositions. There was the very brutal and savage Diego de Landa and the very caring Bartolomé de las Casas who documented so much. Then there was Bernadino Sahagún who gave us volumes. There is much to appreciate in what each of them has done. Even the bestial de Landa provided the Mayan alphabet that eventually, once we understood what it represented, became the Rosetta Stone for breaking the Maya hieroglyphic

code. Of course a Rosetta Stone would not have been necessary had he not been so efficient at burning the records and killing the natives in the first place.

It was the very conscientious and educated Bartolomé de las Casas who said that Calcatun or “house of Atum” was indicative of biblical ties. He would have known Nahua and Quiché through his experience, as well as Spanish and Latin. There also may have been some Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic in his background. The Crusades were history by then and the Moors had already left their imprint on the Spanish language.

The tie he referred to is likely to be found in *atum* as “Adam” or as “red” from Hebrew or Arabic, or possibly “red earth” from Greek. Red earth is common in much of the highlands of Guatemala. There is also a mining connection through Aden and Irreantum. *Anti* and *ande* mean “copper” in some of the area languages. Likewise the words for red and copper are the same in some of these languages, thus making *antum* and *anti* possible equivalents, or at least related roots.

In the Quiché dictionary there is another root that means “burned” and sounds similar. It is *c’atom*. And there is an Arabic word *’adam* which means “to annihilate.” Could this suggest that the land Desolation was Antum?

The Book of Mormon land of Antum probably had to do with “many or large,” “red earth,” “mining,” “copper,” “Adam,” and “riches.” The root name *Antum* is heavily used in the Book of Mormon. There is Adam, Antum, Corianton, Coriantor, Coriantum, Coriantumr, Edom, Gadiandi, Gadianton, Irreantum, Moriancumer, Teancum, Morianton, and Moriantum. Even the Gadianton robbers were the “group” or “band” from Antum. And then there are the related *anti* root names such as Ani-Anti, Anti-Nephi-Lehies, Antiomno, Antion, Antionah, Antionum, Antiparah, Antipus, Gadiandi, and Manti.

The *antum* names were in general from the northwest or land northward among the Nephites and Jaredites, while the *anti* names were generally from the southeast or land southward among the Lamanites. Because of the similarities between *antum*

and *anti* as well as the prevalence of each, it is very likely that the words meant the same thing and differed only because of differences in the spoken languages of the Nephites and the Lamanites.

The Lands of Riches, Abundance, and Flowers

In the writings of Sahagún he repeatedly mentions lands of riches, abundance, and flowers. The translators tend to translate these phrases as three distinct attributes of one land. But it is possible that these were really three distinct lands, one noted for riches, one noted for abundance, and one noted for flowers. Could it be that the land of riches is Antum, the land of abundance is Bountiful, and the land of flowers is Zarahemla? Antum appears to have something to do with mining and treasures from underground, while Bountiful is certainly a land of agricultural abundance, and Zarahemla has the red flowers of the mallow family in its name.

The names used by Sahagún are Nahuatl and bear no resemblance to the Quiché words. They are *necuiltonoloian* for land of riches (*k'inomal* for “riches” in Quiché), *tonacatlalpan* for land of abundant food (*tz'abem* for “abundant” in Quiché), and *xochitlalpan* for the land of flowers (*cotz'i'j'* for “flower” in Quiché). In Nahua *tlalpan* is “land,” in Quiché *pa* is “land” or “by the,” and in Cakchiquel *pan* is similar to *pa* in Quiché.

Much of the above surmising could be called speculation. It would be nice to know with certainty, but at our vantage point we are very limited.

Follow the Nose to Shim

Since *curelom* means “mountain ox” in Sumerian and is probably equivalent to the “mountain cow” in central America, it seems appropriate that the *curelom* is the “mountain cow” which is known to the world today as the tapir and to the Maya as the *tzimin*. This would indicate that the *tzimin-ilom* or Shimnilom

would also be the Nephite equivalent of the Jaredite curelom. The tapir has a very long nose and in Quiché the name for nose is *tz'am* or *tzaam*, depending on the orthographer. Possibly the tapir was known as the nose-ox. In Sumerian "nose" is *kiri*. Could the curelom be the *kiri-ilom* or nose-ox?²

If there is a nose connection, it should show up in Mormon's use of Shim-nilom the city and Shim the hill. Could it be that the place that was the hill Shim was Nose Hill? Such a place exists just four miles east of San Francisco Zapotitlán (Bountiful). The name today is Samayac but the name prior to the conquest was Tzaamayac which supposedly means "nose of the mountain lion" since *tzaam* or *tz'am* means "nose" and *yac* means "mountain lion." But if one checks the Nahuatl language the word *iyac* means "nose" also. Thus Tzaam-ayac would be another of those repeated names, *tzaam* meaning "nose" in Quiché and *ayac* meaning "nose" in Nahuatl.

Tz'am or *tzaam* is similar to *tzimin* or tapir. It is possible therefore that the hill Shim is in the immediate vicinity of Samayac. It is interesting to note that there are three villages and a major city surrounding that town all having San Antonio in their names. Antonio would be the Catholic christianizing of Antum, just four miles from Bountiful (San Francisco Zapotitlán). In fact, the Department is named Suchitepéquez after the principal city, San Antonio Suchitepéquez. Maybe we just found Antum.

² There may be additional connections between nose and hill in Sumerian and Quiché. In Quiché the word for nose also means point, corner, rim, or edge, all of which can be used to describe mountainous structures.



CHAPTER 14

AN AMERICAN GENEALOGY

Starting the Journey

The Book of Mormon takes Lehi's group from Jerusalem along the borders of the Red Sea then back again for the Brass Plates of Laban and Ishmael with his many daughters. How many daughters did Ishmael have? What was the make-up of Lehi's family and Ishmael's family?

Lehi's family consisted of himself, his wife Sariah, his sons Laman, Lemuel, Sam, Nephi, and later Jacob and Joseph, and two daughters. Zoram was numbered with the Nephites.

It appears that Ishmael's family consisted of himself, his wife, two sons, and five daughters. The two sons of Ishmael seem to have acquired wives prior to their departure from the Jerusalem area. There are two verses and possibly a third that so indicate.

And it came to pass that as we journeyed in the wilderness, behold Laman and Lemuel, and two of the daughters of Ishmael, and the two sons of Ishmael and their families, did rebel against us; yea, against me, Nephi, and Sam, and their father, Ishmael, and his wife, and his three other daughters. (1 Nephi 7:6)

Right away, before arriving at the camp of Lehi, two of the daughters of Ishmael had aligned themselves physically and ideologically with Laman and Lemuel. The three daughters of Ishmael that sided with Nephi and Sam probably became the wives of Zoram, Sam, and Nephi.

Notice that the two sons of Ishmael already had their families in place and these families were old enough to rebel against Nephi and Sam. That would mean they each had one or more wives and possibly children old enough to participate in the fray.

Nephi was bound but with the power of the Lord he burst the bands. And in verse 19, one of the daughters of Ishmael, and her mother, and one brother, plead with Laman and Lemuel not to harm Nephi. No doubt that was when Nephi decided which of the daughters he would marry. But notice also that one son of Ishmael now supported Nephi. Was this a third son of Ishmael or, had one of the previously mentioned two sons of Ishmael changed his allegiance?

Arriving at the camp of Lehi in the desert, Zoram married the eldest daughter of Ishmael (1 Nephi 16:7). And Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi each married a daughter of Ishmael. Jacob and Joseph were not yet mentioned as having been born. The two daughters of Lehi did not marry the two sons of Ishmael as we see in another verse.

Wherefore, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did take my family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, *and also my sisters*, and all those who would go with me. And all those who would go with me were those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God; wherefore, they did hearken unto my words (2 Nephi 5:6, emphasis added).

At this time, after Lehi's death, when Nephi fled the land of Lehi and traveled in the wilderness for many days to start the land of Nephi, we see that Nephi, Zoram, and Sam each had families. Jacob and Joseph did not. Nor did the two sisters of Nephi who

also fled. Had the sisters been married to the sons of Ishmael they would almost certainly have stayed.

By the time of Alma, in 87 BC, some ethnic diversity is mentioned.

And their brethren sought to destroy them, therefore they were cursed; and the Lord God set a mark upon them, yea, upon Laman and Lemuel, and also the sons of Ishmael, and Ishmaelitish women. (Alma 3:7)

This account was about 512 years after the family of Ishmael met the family of Lehi in the desert. Laman and Lemuel were long since gone, but the Lord possibly used the Ishmaelitish women, or some earlier inhabitants of the land, to provide the genetic characteristics that became a distinction between the Lamanites and Nephites. That distinction has since disappeared in the mixing of the remnants even though there is much diversity in skin color among the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

One possibly identifiable group that still has a lighter shade of skin is the Lacandon branch of the Maya. Lacandon may have come from Laca-Antum (Lehi-Anti) Laca appears to be the Nahua form of Lehi and one of the Lacandon ruins is named Lacanhá, which is very close to Laca-Nahua or Lehi-Nephi.

Who were the Ishmaelitish women? Who was Ishmael? Ishmael was a righteous man who believed the revelation of the Lord to Lehi and followed with his family into the desert. Is it possible that he was not from the city of Jerusalem, but from the general land area of Jerusalem (1 Nephi 7:2). The Book of Mormon does not mention his lineage though a note in the index states that he was an Ephraimite from Jerusalem. There is nothing in the Book of Mormon that would indicate he was of the tribe of Ephraim. Lehi took great pride in discovering that the Brass Plates of Laban showed his own descendancy from Joseph through Manasseh. Had Ishmael shared this heritage, Lehi or his son Joseph would surely have mentioned it.

Several people have said that Joseph Smith said it was mentioned in the lost 116 pages of the manuscript. Erastus Snow

mentions this in 1882 (Snow 1882, 183-184). Orson Pratt mentions the lineage but does not mention the source in 1851 (Pratt 1851, 91-92). Was this rumor or is there a closer, more substantive reference? Is it possible that Nibley was correct when he indicated that Ishmael was a descendant of the earlier Ishmael, the son of Abraham through the Egyptian handmaid Hagar.

The Ishmaelites occupied much of the land south of Jerusalem through which Lehi's group traveled. The Arab world today claims birthright from Abraham through Ishmael. Lehi may have been a well-traveled merchant knowing much of the Egyptian culture and Ishmael's descendants. Lehi's son Nephi was certainly a metallurgist and this profession would require much travel and trade in the raw materials. The name of the game in metallurgy is *alloying*, which requires the correct amounts of the correct materials in very critical, controlled processes to achieve the desired result. Cassiterite, the ore for making tin, used in bronze, came from the Cassiterites Islands now known as the British Isles. This involves extensive shipping of materials. The fact that Lehi and his family traveled the Gold and Incense Road possibly means that they were familiar with it from before.

In addition to the Ishmaelitish women, the wives of the sons of Ishmael and possibly all of Ishmael's family could have been ethnically distinct. It is apparent, as previously noted, that there were remnants of the Jaredite and other tribal peoples in Central America. These could have been the Ancient Ones, the U Mamac or *old men* (Goetz 1953, 169). They are currently known as the Mam branch of the Maya people.

Pure Nephites

If the Nephites tended to be a fairer skinned people, where did they get it or how did they maintain it? Mormon took pride in the fact that he was a *pure descendant* of Lehi (3 Nephi 5:20). He was also larger in stature, like Nephi.

It appears likely that Nephi had daughters but no male offspring. Note that the records went to his brother Jacob and then to Jacob's son Enos. Enos records his touching prayer as he

wrestled before God. After receiving forgiveness for his sins he prayed for the safety of the records. The Lord covenanted with Enos that He would preserve the records and in His own due time bring them to the Lamanites.

And the Lord said unto me: Thy *fathers* have also required of me this thing; and it shall be done unto them according to their faith; for their faith was like unto thine (Enos 1:18, emphasis added).

Notice that Enos' fathers have required this thing. Who were his fathers? Jacob and Nephi had made this request of the Lord, not Lehi as far as we know. Nephi had molten the plates and made the record. Jacob and the first-born daughter of Nephi were probably close to the same age and may have married, both being born in the wilderness of the south Arabian Peninsula (1 Nephi 17:2; 18:7).

Nephi probably had girls and Sam, boys, but no tribe of Sam is ever mentioned in the Book of Mormon. This may be why:

And after he had made an end of speaking unto them, he spake unto Sam, saying: Blessed art thou, and thy seed; for thou shalt inherit the land like unto thy brother Nephi. And thy seed shall be numbered with his seed; and thou shalt be even like unto thy brother, and thy seed like unto his seed; and thou shalt be blessed in all thy days. (2 Nephi 4:11)

Thus, Lehi's blessing to Sam was that his seed would inherit the land like unto Nephi's and his seed would be numbered *with* Nephi's.

While, in the Book of Mormon, Sam's name gets lost as a branch of the people, in the indigenous literature it does not appear to have been lost. Rather, it is Nephi's tribe that loses its unique identity.

The three great tribes of the Quiché Maya nation are the Tamub, Ilocab, and Cavekib. These correspond to Sam (Tamub—they often put *t*'s in for their *s*'s, and the *ub* on the end is plural; the singular would be Tam, or Sam), Jacob (Ilocab, closer to the Hebrew Ya'acob, Iakob in Greek), and Joseph (Cavekib, or Yeweeph in Hebrew). These three Quiché tribes formed the larger group of Nahuales, which appear to be the Nephites or *people of God*, as they are called nine times in the Book of Mormon. The name *Nahual* means "God" according to the translators of the *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán* (Goetz 1953, 169, 171, 172).

While it is possible that some genetic diversity may have been added to the Nephite group through the wives of Nephi and Sam, this was apparently much less so than in the case of the two wives of Laman and Lemuel and their four in-laws. It should be noted that there is a great variation in the skin color of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. They range from very black, to brown, to tan, to yellow, to white. Many are as white as Caucasians. As they get out of the sun and come to the universities, one realizes that their skin is quite fair, with mountains of rich black hair.

Some of the early Spanish writers, including Sahagún, mention that there were many fair skinned people when they arrived (Dibble 1963, 184). There would be three darker-complexioned children along with two fairer-complexioned children in the same family. Some whole tribes were lighter. Díaz mentioned that Montezuma was tall and not very dark skinned; he even had a short black beard (Cohen 1963, 224). They said that some of the women were as fair as the fairest women in the Spanish court. Even today this continues, as noted by missionaries that work with the people in the smaller villages.¹

Throughout the history of the world, intolerant people have used any difference available as a basis for distinction, isolation, and hatred. When people are wicked they take the offensive and want to fight. And, as a corollary to this, any excuse will do. In

¹ E.g., Elaine Jensen Fukui, personal conversation, 2002.

Northern Ireland it is the Catholics against the Protestants; in early American history it was the settlers and the Indians and the farmers and the cowmen; in the Shogunate it was the Japanese against the Europeans; and now in the Middle East, ancient arch rivals will not be satisfied until they fill the valley of Migido (Armagedon) with their dead.

The Book of Mormon is excellent as a bad example of intolerance. When the people were wicked they wanted to destroy their neighbors. At times, ethnicity may have been a factor, but the Book of Mormon makes it clear that wickedness was always the cause of intolerance and war, be it among Jaredites, the Nephites, the Lamanites, or any combination of them.

Zoram, the Bat Man

What was Zoram's contribution to the genetic mix? The word *mix* may not be quite appropriate because mixing between these tribes may have been somewhat limited, limited to the extent that throughout the Book of Mormon history and until the arrival of the Spaniards with their small-pox, the tribes maintained their separate identities in spite of some mixing.

Zoram was the servant of Laban. He may have had some blood other than, or in addition to, that of father Jacob (Israel). The people of Zoram maintained their identity as a separate group throughout the Book of Mormon history and even today. They would appear to be the Tzutuhil branch of the Maya and at times appear to be linked to the Cakchiquels. This name is spelled many different ways including Tzotzils and Zotzil. The Quiché root for the name is *Sotz* or *Zotz* and means "bat," as in the little black flying creature. According to *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, when they arrived at the gates of Tulán only a bat guarded the gate. *Zotz*, the bat, is the symbol of the Cakchiquel race, whose totemic name was *zotzil*. Apparently the king of that nation was titled Ahpop-Zotzil, which is "lord of the mats" or "chief of the zotzils." (Recinos 1953, 47, 49)

Is there a similarity to the Book of Mormon story in these legends? Suppose the mats are the papyrus reed mats used for

writing upon, and Zotz was the one in Tulán (Jerusalem) who guarded the gates or doors for the record repository. That sounds very similar to the account of Nephi and Zoram. The indigenous legends go on to say that they paid tribute to Tulán in the night. Remember that Lehi's sons brought all their treasure to Laban in an attempt to buy the plates (1 Nephi 3:24).

In the Quiché language the word for "paper with writing" is *wujil* or *vujil*, which sounds very much like *zotzil* with the Spanish *j* being pronounced like an English *h*. There may have been a connection 2600 years ago. If so, it sounds like Zoram was the legendary Lord of the Mats or keeper of the records and he was called Zotz, meaning "bat."

The Jaredite Lines

The Jaredites likely came from Sumer, known for years as Mesopotamia. Today it is known as Iraq. Jared and his brother were possibly from Umma just northwest of Ur and southeast of Babylon and Kish. Abraham was from Ur of the Chaldees and may have been of similar ethnicity. Many conquerors have entered this area over the centuries but it is assumed that the people back then were similar to those who live there today.

As we have discussed, the Jaredites apparently traveled up through Nineveh, the valley of Nimrod, then through Russia, China, Mongolia, and Manchuria. During that trip they traveled where men had never been (Ether 2:5). They called the place where they stayed for four years before setting sail, Moriancumer, which may refer to the mouth of the Amur River (Amur being the sound of the last syllable in the name Morianc-umer). The language connections to this area are extensive so it is possible that some locals joined them on the trip or followed at a later time. There does appear to be a strong Oriental influence in the peoples of Mexico, their languages, and the stone carvings attributed to the Olmecs, who might have been the Jaredites.

Ishmael, Provider of Women

In Hebrew, the masculine indicator is *'iysh* pronounced *eesh*. The female indicator is *'ish shah* pronounced *eesh shaw* which is very similar to Quiché where the word for “woman” is *ixök* and was probably a contraction from Hebrew pronounced *eesh-shak*. In Chortí the word for “women” is *ixik*. The male indicator *'iysh* did not come across from the Hebrew into the Maya where roots like *ama'*, *ah*, and *achi* are reserved for the male. However, in Mam “male” is *xinak* and in Quichua it is *masha*.

Why did the female indicator come across from Hebrew to Maya? Ishmael may have brought more than his girls, he may have brought the name that has persisted in the indigenous languages for anything feminine, *ish* or *ix*. Again, was Mormon playing with words or was Ishmael the man's real name? Perhaps his name was used for a double meaning—the one who provides the females.

Nephi to Noah to Nahua

During the 1600 years since the end of the Book of Mormon, the tracks have clouded. In the beginning, the Nephite identity was very clear. Now, 2600 years later, the secular remains of the Nephites are hard to find. Can we piece together the Nephite trail? Nahua may be the residual name of Nephi. The Spanish name Nahua, or Naoa as it is written by Sahagún, is pronounced almost exactly the same as Noah. Is there a connection?

Take note of the last part of the following passage:

And the people of Ammon did give unto the Nephites a large portion of their substance to support their armies; and thus the Nephites were compelled, alone, to withstand against the Lamanites, who were a compound of Laman and Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael, and all those who had dissented from the Nephites, who were

Amalekites and Zoramites, and the descendants of the priests of Noah. (Alma 43:13)

The Lamanites were a compound of not only the regulars, but also all the Nephite dissenters, the Amalekites, the Zoramites, and the descendants of wicked king Noah. These later groups were centered in the western end of El Salvador (the land of Lehi, or Lenca). The Nephite grief came from this region, not the land of Shilom (the old land of Nephi), which was too far away and too small to be relevant. It may be that this region of the land of Lehi became known as the land of Nephi to the beleaguered inhabitants of the greater land of Zarahemla. But would it be called the land of Nephi or the land of Noah? National Geographic Society maps show the Nahua people extending from this exact region up into most of Central Mexico.² In Mormon's day there was no longer a people known as Nephites (Words of Mormon 1:1; Mormon 8:7). It is possible that the name Nephi blended into and became lost in the name Noah and is known today only by the Spanish rendition of Nahua.

What Does the Name Nephi Mean?

Some have said that the name Nephi comes from the Egyptian grain god, Nepi (Jakeman 1958, 45). It may seem odd that a Hebrew child would be named after a pagan Egyptian deity, but pre-exilic Israel had close ties with Egypt. The name appears in the Apocrypha (2 Maccabees 1:36), and Nibley has suggested that the source of Nephi was the Egyptian name *Nfy*, but he goes on to say that, since the Book of Mormon insists on the "ph" in Nephi, it is closer to Nihpi the original name of the god *Pa-Nepi*, which may have been pronounced Nephi (Nibley 1988, 27).

The name also appears to have another definition. Looking in any good English dictionary for the closest approximation to the word Nephi, one finds words like nephoanalysis, the study of

² National Geographic Society Map, *Spain in the Americas*. National Geographic Society, Washington D.C. February 1992.

clouds; and nephelometer and nephoscope, instruments for measuring cloud characteristics. All these words come from the Greek words *nephele* and *nephos* meaning “cloud” and possibly share their origin with the name Nephi.³

Stela 5 from Izapa, Mexico shows an umbrella shaped object over the head of the individual believed to represent Nephi. Also interesting in this regard is the book entitled, *The Cloud People, the Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Peoples of Central Mexico* (Flannery 1983). Why were these tribes called the Cloud People? Apparently, it is not known where the name came from, just that they called themselves the Cloud People. Looking up the word for cloud in Nahuatl it is found to be *mixtli*, suggesting that the name Mixteca means “cloud people.”⁴

What would the symbol for the Egyptian grain god look like among the Nephites? Would it be an ear of corn or a bushel of barley? Or would it be a cloud, a rain cloud that brings moisture and life to the grain? One of the jokes among the author’s children has to do with moisture. Most of the children were born in the arid west, but were raised in Massachusetts. During that time, on trips west each summer, church was attended on Sundays in Young Ward (Cache Valley, Utah). The children would always laugh at the prayers of the old farmers. “Thank thee, Lord, for the moisture,” they would always say. That was because the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts received plenty of rain and the children did not have any appreciation for how dependent the farmers in the west are on water. Those in the Cache Valley were usually blessed to have what was necessary to irrigate their crops. They were always in the thanking mode for this blessing. They knew where their blessings came from. “Thank thee, Lord, for the moisture.”

Those connected to the soil are very much aware of the God that provides rain in its due season. This same sense of gratitude

³ The Greek culture was a powerful influence on the known world by 600 BC.

⁴ The names of many Indian chiefs in the Old West included the word “Cloud”—Chief Red Cloud, Chief Gray Cloud, Chief Rain Cloud, etc. Were these tribes carrying on an old Nephite tradition of including the name Nephi, or “cloud,” in the names of their chiefs?

was likely a part of the corn-growing culture of the American Indians.

In the introduction to the English version of *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Recinos 1953, 29), a page with some of the calendaring symbols and names is included. It has been reproduced as Figure 38 below. Notice the ninth symbol with its meaning. The name is *Toh*, and the meaning is "rain." It is designated by the donut-looking symbol.

Introduction			
	1 <i>Imox</i> fish or lizard		11 <i>Batz</i> monkey
	2 <i>Iq</i> moon or month		12 <i>Ei</i> tooth
	3 <i>Akbal</i> night		13 <i>Ah</i> reed
	4 <i>Qut</i> corn net		1 <i>Balam</i> tiger or wizard
	5 <i>Can</i> make		2 <i>Tziq'uim</i> bird
	6 <i>Camey</i> death		3 <i>Ahmak</i> owl
	7 <i>Quah</i> deer		4 <i>Noh</i> full, certain gum
	8 <i>Canol</i> rabbit		5 <i>Tihax</i> fint
	9 <i>Toh</i> rain		6 <i>Caok</i> lightning and thunder
	10 <i>Tzi</i> dog		7 <i>Hunahpú</i> principal god

Figure 38. Maya Calendar Day Symbols

Now look at Figure 39, taken from the Aubin Codex (O'Brian 1995, 173). It says that the first personage to the right may represent Nephi. The others would be his brothers, Laman, Lemuel, and Sam. Notice the glyph above the head of the first personage on the right (Nephi). It is the symbol for rain. This donut-shaped symbol is the symbol of the Maya rain deity. The

very strange looking eye glasses discovered on the dead Maya king, Kinich Yax K'uk' Mo in Copán, are the same symbol and may have had reference to the Urim and Thummim. Notice the symbol across Nephi's skirt. That may be a young crop of grain. Now study the symbols on the Anthon transcript (Figure 404, below) as found in the *History of the Church*. The second character on the second row may be the symbol on Nephi's skirt in the Aubin Codex.



Figure 39. Figure From the Aubin Codex.

If the characters in the Anthon transcript are in the correct order and if the text from which they were taken was translated into our Book of Mormon (rather than being among the lost 116 pages), then it would not be a difficult task to find them. Even if they were among the lost 116 pages, there are similarities in style that could be recognized. Several of these characters are repeated frequently. Those would be the easiest to spot. The first character (the one that looks like a bow and arrow) might mean, "and it came to pass." It is repeated six times.⁵

The Egyptian grain god, Nepi, and the Greek word Nephos, meaning "cloud," may refer to the same thing. That would suggest that Nephi's name, and the name of the Egyptian grain god, may have come to mean "cloud" to the Nephites. It is noteworthy in this regard that the corn and the cloud are two

⁵ It also appears to have a Maya bar-dot number nine in it.

also have been viewed as clouds or cloudy figures. The donut-shaped name glyph mentioned above may also have represented the cloudy ring around the top of a volcano.

Mormon in his letter to Moroni mentions another form of the name Nephi, namely Zenephi (Mormon 9:16). Eighty miles east of Cumorah there is currently a town named Senahú, which looks similar to Zenephi. The *nahú* portion of that name also supports the transition from Nephi to Nahua.

Was There a Speech Impediment?

The Quiché of Guatemala and the Nahua, principally of Mexico, have close ties that are known to go back many centuries. They are both of the Tolteca (Dibble 1963, 170) and go back to Tula (Tullum, or “by the reeds”) for their origins (Recinos 1953, 169). Tula we have suggested was from the Sumerian form of the name for their departure point on the coast of Sheba at the port city of Cana or Qana. Qana we know was the Hebrew form, from the word *qaneh* for “reeds” or “canes.” It appears that this became their generic name for Jerusalem, though in reality it probably had nothing to do with the actually city of Jerusalem. It was just their departure point, by the reeds, from that part of the world that included the land of Jerusalem.

Both languages were spoken at Utatlán (K’umarkáj or Cumorah) when Alvarado and the Catholic priests arrived in 1524 (Carmack 1981, 3). Likewise the Nahua were distributed along the Pacific Coast from El Salvador through much of Mexico.

How could two groups that started so close and shared their origins and much of their history have developed two languages so different yet with some commonalities? The other branches of the Maya share similar origins and their languages are closer. Still when one has a Hebrew root word, often it can be recognized in Yucatec, Chortí, Quiché, Mam, Ch’ol, and Cakchiquel, etc. The spelling and pronunciation of these words can be very different, but when they are lined up together one can often recognize that they share a common source. Many of the Nahua words are

recognizable, but they seem to have been changed more than is consistent with their historical proximity.

Consider, for example, the word for white, clean, or pure. In Hebrew the word is *zak*. In Quiché it is *sak*. In Mam it is *sak*. In Chortí it is *sak*. But in Nahuatl, it is *iztac*. Clearly, they all came from Hebrew. Why is the Nahuatl so different?

Recall that approximately one quarter of the Nahuatl words start with a *t*. The other consonant sounds are there but many of them have a *t* thrown onto the front. Consider the Nahuatl root word *tlán*. This means “by the” according to the scholars, but it is equivalent in meaning, usage, and form to the word *land* used throughout much of the world. Uta-land is the land of the reeds or by the reeds, but the Nahuatl use Uta-tlán.

The author had an elementary school classmate in Florence, Arizona who had a speech impediment similar to tongue thrust, or possibly a lateral lisp, and much of his pronunciation difficulties were similar to the normal Nahuatl pronunciation. This young man was of Mexican ethnicity, as was the teacher. The teacher was familiar with this particular speech impediment and suggested the student place a pebble under his tongue and practice talking while retaining the pebble. Could one of the early leaders of a group that departed from Zarahemla have had such an impediment? Those who do not have the impediment can learn to mimic the impaired sound, but those with such impediments have great difficulty trying to “unlearn” their tendencies.

The words of Jeffrey Gall are enlightening in this regard:

I had a reverse-swallow tongue thrust my whole life. When I graduated from high school in 1977, my only goal was to overcome my speech impediment. Because I swallowed incorrectly and I had a habitual tongue posture at rest, which was totally inappropriate for articulation, I had tremendous trouble with “r” and “w” and interchanging the two. I said the “s” between my teeth. “L” I said by having the tip of my tongue touch my upper

front teeth. There were many words that I literally could not say such as “formal,” “children,” “rare,” and “rural.”⁶

A letter that is nearly impossible for such a sufferer to pronounce is the *r*. The *r* cannot be pronounced with the tongue thrust forward against the top of the mouth. Sahagún wrote of a non-Nahua group: “The way they pronounced their language made it somewhat unintelligible; in their language was the letter *r*” (Dibble 1963, 182). The Nahua did not have the letter *r*. Some of the other letters or sounds missing from the Nahuatl language include *b*, *d*, *f*, *g*, *j*, *s*, and *w*, and the leading *l* is always preceded by the *t*. Try to pronounce these sounds with the tongue stuck to the top front of the mouth. Note that all of these present a problem for one with the tongue thrust impediment or the lateral lisp impediment.

Speech impediments can be very difficult, and it can be hard to pinpoint the exact cause. It can start from a poor model, poor hearing, neurological problems, physical problems, or sound production problems. The problem can be the sound from an early life model into the sufferer’s ears, the sound out of the sufferer’s mouth, or anything in between. Often a hearing problem causes the sufferer to model the incorrect sound. Is it possible that a speech impediment of an early Nahua leader accounted for much of the divergence in the two languages?

⁶ Gall, Jeffrey. 2001. *What the Pebble in the Shoe Meant to One of Our Readers* [cited 14 June 2001]. Available at streicherpublishations.com/JeffSays.html; INTERNET.



CHAPTER 15

ODDS AND ENDS

Who Where the Nahua?

The Nahua may have been the ones who left Mormon's world starting at the time of Helaman. They migrated by land and by sea into the north countries of Mexico and perhaps beyond. To the Quiché they are known by the Nahua name of *Yaqui* meaning "those that left." As was mentioned in Chapter 4, Sahagún says that the Huasteca of Teotihuacán (Mexico City area) left Xomiltepec (X-il-om-tepec, Shilom), and went through Coatepec (the town in Guatemala between Retalhuleu and Ayutla that means "snake hill") on their protracted journey to Teotihuacán. There were probably other peoples and languages from the Pacific Rim and beyond already in place as these people went north. In fact, infusion from the Pacific Rim countries was likely a continual process.

Hunahpu

The name Hunahpu shows up as the ancient name for the Volcán de Agua (the Volcano of Water), which stands abreast of Volcán de Fuego (Chigag or Chi-k'ak' in Christenson's orthography). Both overshadow what would be the Zarahemla area (Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa). This was proposed as the

name of the hill Amnihu and it fit the scenario. In *Popol Vuh*, shortly after the creation, the character Hunahpu' shows up very early and very often in the Maya cosmology. This character must be someone we know because he shows up early in Quiché mythology and the volcano of the same name is adjacent to Zarahemla. Also the root of the name shows up on the hill Amnihu in Alma's day.

Examining the name, *hun* is the number "one." That leaves *ahpu*. But since *hun* ends in *n* it is very possible that the name that follows may have begun with an *n*. That would make the name *nahpu*. Thus, the name Hun-Nahpu may mean First Nephi. This also approximates the name of Nahua for Nephi. Note that the name of the volcano, which means "water," *agua* in Spanish, is also relevant to Nephi, having to do with the rain and clouds. These names had many years to be modified and this change is minimal as one compares the changes in Old World names.

Nearby, to the east, is the hill Riplah, which now goes by the name Pekulyä' or Volcán Pacaya. At times it appears that a *k* was used to replace the *r* in some words. This is such an example. Replace the *k* with an *r* and switch the first two syllables, and the result is Ru-pe-lyä', which is very close to Riplah. Again, switching syllables appears to have been done with impunity when one compares the Book of Mormon names with the local names in the indigenous literature.

K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo

There is a major set of ruins in Honduras near the Guatemalan border named Copán. It has a very large stairway with stepping-stones that have Mayan hieroglyphic text carved into their faces. A few dedicated researchers have broken the Maya code and are now able to decipher most of the Mayan glyphs. Unfortunately the 2200 stone blocks making up the great stairway have tumbled down and been scrambled. The archaeologists have discovered in the largest temple mound the central, oldest, and deepest tomb of what appears to be the

original king. They have determined, based on the name glyphs that make up his headdress, that his name was K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo.

There are several little related pieces of information regarding this discovery that may be relevant to our Book of Mormon investigation. The language spoken in this area, which is Chortí, has more of the name roots for Mormon's writing (including Jaredite) in a cleaner form than does Cakchiquel, Nahuatl, Mam, or even Quiché. It appears that this group was separated at the time of the final battle at Cumorah and did not experience as much change or mixing as the others. It has been easier to first identify the roots in Chortí then look for them in Quiché and the other dialects. They were not initially recognizable in these others dialects.

The relevant facts found by the researchers at Copán include the following. Yax K'uk' Mo was born in the west and moved into the Copán area in the early 400's AD. In about 425 he built the temple where he was later entombed after his death. His right forearm suffered a fracture in battle and was not set straight. It healed with an ugly offset of about an inch. So he became left handed, if he was not, in fact, born that way. In the carvings of him he wore a small 6 by 8 inch ceremonial shield on his right arm to cover the disfigurement. The writings (carvings) explain that he had been given divine authority to be king in the west before he moved east. He wore the large goggles that were representative of the Maya rain god (and possibly the Urim and Thummim). Copán is about straight east-southeast from Cumorah (K'umarkáj), just down the Motagua River about 140 kilometers then up a tributary into Honduras.

Yax, pronounced *ey-a-sh*, sounds quite similar to one of the captains that was with Mormon at the hill Cumorah. Could Yax be Josh (the Josh who was with Mormon in 6:14) or possibly his son? Mormon said that some escaped to the south (that would be southeast in their reference frame) and some deserted over to the Lamanites (Mormon 6:15). Yax K'uk Mo was likely of Nephite extraction. Perhaps a DNA comparison of his bones with the

skeletal remains in the showcase at Utatlán (Cumorah, K'umarkáj) will reveal that link. The worldwide mapping of DNA that is being conducted by Dr. Scott R. Woodward at BYU has the potential to add immensely to the understanding of cultural migrations. Already he has found major Asian contributions among the Quechua and Aymará of the Callehon of Peru and Bolivia.¹

The People of God

There is a word usage in the Book of Mormon that may be relevant to identify the Nephites. “And they were called Nephites, or the people of God” (Alma 2:11). The name “people of God” is used nine times in the Book of Mormon, starting at the time that King Mosiah called Alma to establish the Church throughout the land. In the Quichua dictionary the word *jahua*, similar to *nahua* and also to *Yeshua* in Hebrew, means “that from above.” It is also very close to the Hebrew form of Jehovah. According to Recinos and others, Tohil was the god of the Quiché (Recinos 1953, 58). For this reason the Quiché were also known as the Tohohils. *Toh* means rain as mentioned previously in connection with Nephi. The symbol is the two concentric circles seen above the Nephi character in Figure 39. As previously noted, this symbol may have been used to form the funny looking goggles that became the symbol of the rain god and were found in the tomb of Yax K'uk Mo.

Tohoh means “loud noise or thunder” in Cakchiquel, but Christenson doesn't have that root as a meaning for thunder or loud noise in his Quiché dictionary. Recinos speculates that the name Tohohils came from *Tohoh*. But it looks like there is a lot more to this name.

If there is any connection between the god of the Quiché and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Jehovah or Jesus Christ) it would most likely be through this name. Since *h* and *j* are often

¹ Woodward, telephone conversation, 6 November, 2002

interchanged by orthographers, the meanings of *Toh* and *Toj* should both be examined.

There are no *toh* roots in the orthography used in Christenson's dictionary, but the following are all the words that begin with the *toj* root in the Quiché word list:

1. *toj* (n) accident; difficulty; sorrow; danger
2. *toj mac* (v) to pay penitence
3. *Toj* (n) day in the sacred calendar; Treasurer Mam
4. *toj<o>* (tv1) to pay something
5. *tojbal k'ij* (n) pay day
6. *tojbal mac* (n) fine
7. *tojbal* (n) price; interest; premium; payment; license fee
8. *tojbej re* (v) to pay its price
9. *tojbex* (v) to be paid
10. *tojic* (pass v) to be paid
11. *tojic* (iv) to pay
12. *tojjij* (v) to pour out (grain, liquid)
13. *tojilabic* (v) to conceive (child)
14. *tojinic* (v) to be emptied out; to spill out
15. *tojnabic* (v) to cough
16. *tojobal* (n) payment; tax
17. *tojojej* (v) to give abundantly (blessings; food)
18. *tojojic* (v) to cascade down (water down mountainside)
19. *tojom* (n) salary; stipend
20. *tojom* (adj) paid
21. *tojonc* (v) to pay
22. *tojtajinak* (adj) paid

Note that there is no "thunder" or "noise" in this list. The first meaning is a noun having to do with accident, difficulty, sorrow, and danger. Could this be connected with the Crucifixion? The second meaning is the verb "to pay for sins," *mac* being "sin." The third meaning is the name of a sacred calendar day. The first three definitions alone indicate the significance of this root. The meaning that is most prevalent in this list is "to pay," especially "to pay for sins or transgressions."

Another word in Christenson's orthography is *ajil*, meaning "price." Other orthographers write it *ahil*. Putting the words

together we have Tojajil or Tohahil. If the middle syllable is contracted, as commonly happens in this language, the result would be Tohil or Tojil, and it would mean “to pay the price.” That means the Quiché people, called the Tohohils, worshiped the god Tohil, the God who paid the price. This appears to be a reference to the atonement of Jesus Christ who visited these very people at the temple Bountiful.

Could this mean they are the people of God? Assuming the proposed geography is correct, the area designated as Bountiful is Quiché territory, and according to them, it has been their territory since their arrival on the Guatemalan coast from Tula by way of the lands of Lehi and Nephi. The Mam branch of the Maya were there first, however.

Recinos says it is a “curious fact that the three outstanding literary works” (referring to *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, the *Popol Vuh*, and the *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*) came from this very area. (Recinos 1953, v) But if these people are descendants of the Nephites, it is not so surprising after all.

What Does the Name Alma Mean?

In answer to Alma’s prayers on behalf of his son Alma, the Lord sent an angel to intervene and have a little chat with the wayward young man. While Alma the younger was wracked with the pains of hell he was struck dumb. He could not speak. In Quiché, the word for “silent” is *al-anima*. Could this be the meaning of Alma. The Hebrew word for “silent” is *elem*, which is pronounced *aylem*, and *illem*, which is pronounced *il-lame*. These two Hebrew words are similar to the Quiché and close in pronunciation to Alma.

Based on the observation of other names and their meanings, it is very likely that the name Alma means “silent.” That explains Alma the younger, but what about Alma the older? Remember that Teancum’s name, meaning “Lord of the Banners and Staffs,” may have been applied later in his life, possibly postmortem, or at

least after Amalickiah's mortem. Perhaps Alma the Younger received his name the same way.

A New Name

A centuries old tradition among the branches of the Maya was to name a child after the *day* and *month* in which he was born. The year appears to have been lost. Elder John Groberg mentions the Tongan tradition of changing one's name as they progress through life. He explains that, if one dies having the same name given at birth, it indicates that the individual had not progressed at all through life. They cited Bible and Book of Mormon references for this practice, which they have apparently practiced for centuries (Groberg 1993, 219).

The Catholic Church has retained this practice for nuns, priests, cardinals, and popes, as they enter their new Orders. The historical and biblical usage of this practice might indicate that there is some significance to receiving a new name as one progresses. The practice may have been used in the Book of Mormon, as we have seen from time to time in earlier chapters. Whether it was a standard practice or just Mormon's pedagogical way to help us is a matter of speculation.

The Brother of Jared

We know through Joseph Smith that the name of the brother of Jared was Mahonri Moriancumer.² The name was transmitted *verbally* from Joseph to the child he was blessing with this unique name. That means there may be multiple ways to represent the name orthographically. Specifically, the *er* on the end could be *er*, or, *ur*, or just *r*.

The Sumerian roots in the above name are many and certainly not unique, but knowing what we know about the life of the brother of Jared, the most appropriate combination can be

² See, *Improvement Era*, Vol. 8, 704-705.

selected. Remember that we have seen many instances where the name applied to an individual in the Book of Mormon appears to have been applied later in their life, after-the-fact.

Let's start with Moriancumer. The *mo* is not found in the available dictionary but *ma* is and it means "to bind or to go." The *ri* is the fifth calendar month, Umma, which is also the city near Ur of the Chaldees from which the Jaredites may have departed. It also means "to gather, to touch, to beget, to blow, to throw," and many other things. Combining *ma* and *ri* or *mo* and *ri*, we get a meaning similar to the Chortí word *mori* which means "to gather or heap up in a pile." This is equivalent to the Quiché word *mulij*. So the best guess at Mori is "to gather."

The next two letters, *an*, are actually two separate roots, "water" and "high". Combined they mean "where the rain comes from, sky, heaven, or very high." The *cu* or *ku* means "to build or to found," while *kum* means "to heat." It is recognizable in some Chortí roots. The *er*, or possibly *ur*, on the end has several possible meanings, including "to lead." *U* alone means "light," while *uru* means "light or glowing," like the Chortí word *war* for "light, brilliance, or radiant." In Sumerian *u* also means "ten or many," and the verb *u* correlates to round objects.

Putting these pieces together based on the Book of Mormon account, it would appear that the last name had something to do with his going up to the mountain and melting 16 round, clear stones out of the rock, which were touched by the finger of the Lord and provided light for the 8 vessels as they were blown across the sea to the New World.

The first name also has many roots. *Ma* means "to go or to bind." *Hon* was not found, but phonetically it may be spelled *an*, with the *h* acting as a separator between the two *a*'s, which were then stretched out into a double sound as the Arabs do. That would be Ma-hon-ri or Ma-an-ri. As we have seen, *an* means "sky and heaven," but it also can mean "the god of heaven." The *ri* on the end has many meanings but the definition "to touch" may be the most relevant. The best combination might be "to go up" the mount and "be touched" by the "God of Heaven."

The Sumerian roots are many and putting them together is very easy. But, going in the reverse direction, trying to second-guess the intended meaning of the authors of the Book of Mormon may be foolhardy. The ambiguities are numerous, but this deficiency may change as linguists continue to characterize these words and their meanings.

Reeds

There are several words or names in the Book of Mormon that come together in an interesting manner. These words include Jerusalem, Salem, Shilom, Tula, Cana, Uta, Utatlán, and Qumarkah. All of these words have to do with reeds and/or peace. More importantly, they also have to do with the starting places and ending places of the people, and hence are related to our inquiry in this book.

The connection between Jerusalem, Salem, Shilom, and shalom or peace is straightforward from the Hebrew side. One of the words for peace in Quiché is *uxlanem*. The *x* is *sh* so it is pronounced *ushlanem*. Jerusalem is pronounced Or-shaleem among the Arabic peoples and Yerushalaim in present-day Hebrew. *U-shlanem* sounds very close. Since they both mean peace, they may have both come from Jerusalem.

As noted previously, the Hebrew lexicon has a word that looks and sounds like “cane” in Spanish. The word in Hebrew is *qaneh* and it means “reed, stalk, or bone.” That grouping of definitions is identical to the Indian word grouping for reeds, canes, and bones. The word is pronounced *kaw-neh*. The *k’aj* from the K’iché may have come from the Hebrew *kaw-neh*. *K’aj* and *kaw* are pronounced identically, with only a variation in the extent of the glottal closure and the exhalation on the end.

The Aymará word *Uta* means house, and *tutura* refers to the kind of reeds used to thatch the roofs on rural houses. The Aymará dictionary shows an alternate, corrupted spelling of the word as *tоторa*. The reed boats of Perú and Bolivia were called

balsas de totora.³ There are many articles and books about Thor Heyerdahl and his expeditions in reed boats. The name for Jerusalem is *Tula* in the legends and *tula'* means “reeds” in the indigenous languages, the same as tule or tules in English.

In Quiché, *tul* also means “reed or bulrush,” and *tula'* means “water reeds or reed boats.” All that is lacking is a Hebrew representation equating peace (or *salem*) with reeds.

The Jerusalem area was called Canaan by the returning Israelites. Canaan was their promised land. Does the name Canaan come from the Hebrew root *qaneh*? The word “reed” is also a unit of measure to the biblical Hebrews totaling six cubits. So we may have Canaan as another name that means reed.

Nephi's Ship

It is interesting that the Quiché word *tula'* also means “reed boat.” *Tula* may be the name used for Jerusalem, but it may also indicate that Nephi and his brothers built a reed boat like that of Thor Heyerdahl. Let's see what the Book of Mormon says.

And now it came to pass that when I had spoken these words, they were angry with me, and were desirous to throw me into the depths of the sea; and as they came forth to lay their hands upon me I spake unto them, saying: In the name of the Almighty God, I command you that ye touch me not, for I am filled with the power of God, even unto the consuming of my flesh; and whoso shall lay his hands upon me shall wither *even as a dried reed*; and he shall be as naught before the power of God, for God shall smite him (1 Nephi 17:48, emphasis added).

Notice in this verse the reference to a dried reed. Nephi had been commanded to build a ship and his brothers were withholding help. Why use dried reeds as a metaphor unless they

³ Brian Rex, personal conversation, 2002.

were in the process of drying reeds, possibly for use in the ship, so that Nephi and his brothers had dried reeds on their minds?

And it came to pass that Laman and Lemuel did take me and bind me *with cords*, and they did treat me with much harshness; nevertheless, the Lord did suffer it that he might show forth his power, unto the fulfilling of his word which he had spoken concerning the wicked (1 Nephi 18:11, emphasis added).

From this verse we can see that they knew how to make cords, and had cords available on the ship. These cords may have been woven primarily from reeds and hemp as they probably would be the materials available, and would be necessary in the construction of a reed boat. As dried reeds are wetted they gain toughness and are less brittle.

And it came to pass that they did worship the Lord, and did go forth with me; and we did work timbers of curious workmanship. And the Lord did show me from time to time after what manner I should work the timbers of the ship.

Now I, Nephi, did not work the timbers after the manner which was learned by men, neither did I build the ship after the manner of men; but I did build it after the manner which the Lord had shown unto me; wherefore, it was not after the manner of men. (1 Nephi 18:1-2.)

We see that they worked timbers for the ship in a curious manner, a technique that was not after the manner of men. If we look at what the Phoenicians were sailing in 600 BC, we will know what Nephi did *not* build. By 700 BC, the Phoenicians were using wooden ships with one to five decks of oarsman. Xerxes is said to have assembled 1,207 ships with three separate layers of oarsman in his show of navel power against Greece. They had

war ships as well as commercial sailing ships.⁴

When it was time for Zedekiah's family to flee, the Phoenicians and the sea would be the obvious choice. The Phoenician ships were well crafted and probably made of the cedar then abundant in the area. Solomon's navy was gone for three years at a time with the servants of Hiram (that would be Hiram of Tyre and his Phoenician sailors) to bring back gold from Ophir (2 Chronicles 8:18).

Lehi and his family were not just drifting, they were sailing. Their craft could be steered manually in the direction the Liahona indicated. That means they probably utilized sails and a rudder. A rudder only works if the craft's velocity is different than that of the water. If the craft is only drifting with the flow, no steering is possible.

Thor Heyerdahl's log raft, Kon-Tiki, traveled 4,300 miles in 101 days. They averaged about forty-three miles per day with some days as high as seventy miles. His reed boat averaged about fifty-seven miles per day on the Ra II expedition, allowing him to make the trip faster than Columbus (Heyerdahl 2002, 1). The reed boats described by Thor Heyerdahl and utilized in his voyages had a wooden super structure and shelter as well as a sail and a rudder.

Many times he thought the seas would bury them but the water percolated through the reeds and they popped up like a cork. During Laman and Lemuel's misbehavior they feared they would be swallowed up in the depths of the sea. For a conventional watercraft, the failure mode would more likely be capsizing or tipping over, not being "swallowed up." This suggests an experience similar to that described by Heyerdahl in his reed boats.

Most members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints probably think of Nephi's ship as a modest version of Arnold Friberg's rendition, but that may be a significant misconception. After finding that *tula'* means "reed boat" and

⁴ [cited 25 June 2002]. Available at www.phoenicia.org/trade.html. INTERNET.

tula means “by the reeds” and refers to Jerusalem, we may need to consider the possibility that Nephi’s ship was made of bound-up reed bundles with a wooden superstructure similar to the boats that Thor Heyerdahl used to cross the Atlantic Ocean.

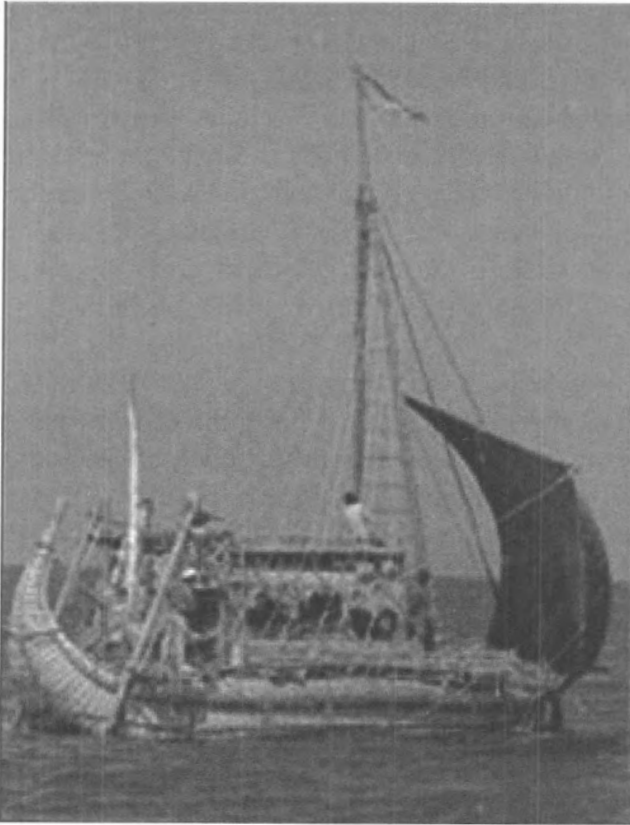


Figure 41. Heyerdahl’s Reed Raft, Ra II

Some scholars, hiding behind academic credentials while burying their heads in the sand, have scoffed at the travel accounts in the Book of Mormon. They hold to the land-bridge theory and ignore all the legends and recorded history to the contrary. Thor Heyerdahl has done much to refute the land-bridge requirement and the isolationist concept of civilization.

The Tigris expedition was the Heyerdahl expedition that most

relates to Lehi's launching area and travels in the Indian Ocean. Heyerdahl mentions some Sumerian references to a trade city they called Meluhha.⁵ It would be interesting to know if there was any connection between Meluhha or Luhha and Lehi. The location may be Al Mukulla in Yemen near the ancient port city of Cana (Qana).

Reeds were very important to the ancient peoples. Another function they served has recently been identified. The oldest boat known to man (dating back possibly 7000 years, using carbon dating) was apparently discovered in the Kuwaiti desert. Some bitumen covered wood slabs were found with barnacles on one side and reed impressions on the other. Robert Carter published a paper on the findings June 7, 2002 in *Science* and presented the material in the *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* (Viegas 2002, 1).

Carter says that bitumen, which is still crushed with fish oil and coral and used today by some Middle Eastern boat builders, likely formed a waterproof seal around vessels constructed out of reed bundles tied together with ropes and strings. The function for the reeds may have been to displace the water from the hull of a leaky pitch-plank boat. The boards would provide the outer structure and the reed bundles inside would provide the flotation. In those days it would have been difficult to maintain a boat "tight like unto a dish" (Ether 2:17). Heyerdahl used the reed bundles alone with just a superstructure added. That may have been the very innovation the Lord revealed to Nephi.

To us, every boat is "tight like unto a dish." Anything less would fill with water and sink. Rafts, however, are not tight like unto a dish and we do not call them boats or ships. Nevertheless, they will float and they will not sink until they have rotted to disintegration. The need for the clarification "tight like unto a dish" in the description of the Jaredite boats may have been to distinguish between watertight boats and reed or log rafts.

A log raft is another possibility, of course. The Polynesian

⁵ Heyerdahl, Thor. "Tigris Sails into the Past." *National Geographic* December 1978, 823.

legends that prompted Thor Heyerdahl to build and sail the log raft Kon-Tiki across the Pacific made reference exclusively to rafts. Heyerdahl found that the raft's being near the water's surface trapped fish at night, some flying fish and some from the waves that would break over the logs. The crew ate fish throughout the entire journey. Many of these log rafts, called *balsas*, were in operation when Pizarro arrived in Perú. Some were so large that they resembled ships (Cook 1998, 104). Even gardens were grown on the legendary rafts as depicted in the Indian drawings. The rafts became floating islands of life above and below the water's surface.

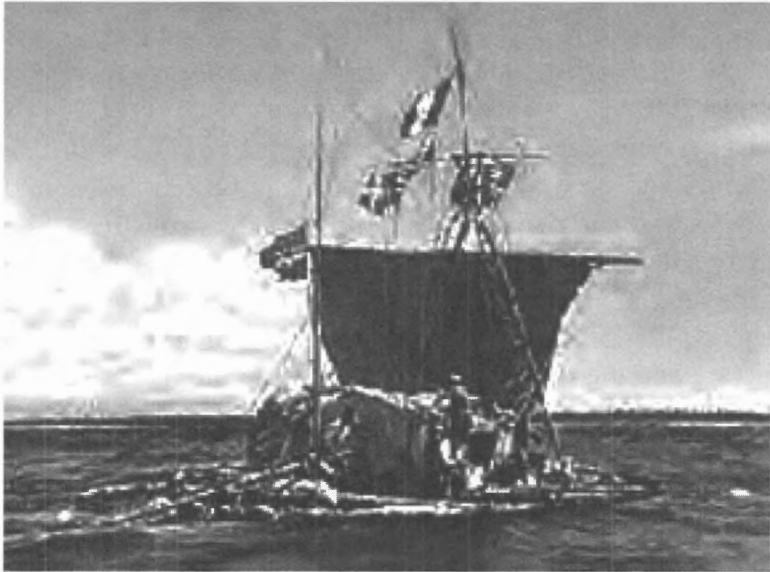


Figure 42. Heyerdahl's Log Raft, Kon-Tiki

The New Jerusalem—By the Reeds

We have reviewed the references to Tula as the Old World departure point for the indigenous peoples of the Americas. We have discussed the possible linkage of *tullum* with the name Salem and thus Jerusalem, Yerushalaim or Ur-Shaleem. We have reviewed the possibility that Nephi's boat was a reed boat. We

have also mentioned the Reed Sea. We know from the Book of Mormon that Lehi's family left the Jerusalem area and we know that another city named Jerusalem was established in the land of Lehi (Alma 21:1).

All this indicates that the original adults in the journey knew Jerusalem and the surrounding area. But eight years had passed by the time they were ready to board the boat and many children had been born. What was Jerusalem to Jacob and Joseph and all their nieces and nephews who were born after their departure from that city? The sons of Ishmael already had families old enough to rebel against Nephi (1 Nephi 7:6). Some of them may never have seen Jerusalem. All they knew was their departure point, a place by the reeds, which they called or knew as Tula, it having been shortened from Pa-Tulán or Tullum (Recinos 1953, 169). This generation was the people from the *place by the reeds*. Based on roots in the Florentine Nahuatl word list, the name Tullantzinco in Sahagún's work appears to mean "the place where the reeds were gathered." That sounds very much like a description of their departure point in the Old World, especially if we assume they built a reed boat.

We have reviewed the name Qumarkah and know that it means "rotten reeds" and, by extension, "rotten bones" because of the connection between reeds, canes, and bones in the indigenous languages as well as in Hebrew. When the Spaniards came, the name was changed through translation to Uatlán because of the Nahuatl language spoken by the Mexicans that came with Pedro Alvarado to conquer or destroy the Quiché. Thus the name was changed from "rotten reeds/bones" (K'umarkáj) to "by the reeds" (Uatlán). The reeds part is all that survived. The bones and the rotten parts were lost. As the scholars translate Uatlán today it is "by the reeds." That is also what the name Tula refers to in Quiché, Nahuatl or Aztec, and even English (tules).

When the Spaniards arrived at the shores of Utah Lake and saw all the bulrushes, they again used the indigenous word for the place with all the tules. They named it Utah, having reference to the place by the reeds. Brigham Young wanted to name our fair

state Deseret, meaning honeybee, as a symbol of industry.⁶ To pass the Enabling Acts and become a state, and as a slap in the face, the U.S. Government imposed the name Utah on the territory instead. How fortunate they did.

Many have said that Utah means “in the tops of the mountains” (see Isaiah 2:2), but others refute that, claiming a lack of evidence and the absence of that meaning in the Ute language which was the original claim.⁷ As Lynn Arave wrote,

You'd think if anyone has the definitive answer on what the name Utah really means, it should be members of the Ute Indian Tribe. But according to Larry Cesspooch, public relations director for the audio/visual department of the Ute Tribe in Fort Duchesne, the Utes don't even have such a word in their language (Arave 1994).

However, Utah, like the prophesied city of Jerusalem referred to in Isaiah 2:2-3, *is* in the tops of the mountains just as verse 2 requires.

Congress fulfilled numerous prophecies by naming this land Utah. That name apparently came from the reeds, the place “by the reeds.” Just as Uatlán (K’umarkáj) means “by the reeds” and Tula means “by the reeds,” so also the name used by the descendants of Lehi for Jerusalem was Tula or “by the reeds.” So, unwittingly Congress gave our desert home the name “by the reeds,” the same name the Toltecs used for Jerusalem. That would make it an even better candidate for the prophesy in Isaiah 2:2, which is directed at Jerusalem (see Isaiah 2:1). Of course, there is already a Jerusalem, so this Utah land “by the reeds” could be called the “New Jerusalem,” the one “by the reeds” in the tops of the mountains.

⁶ *Dbowrah*, pronounced *deb-o-raw*’ like the girls name Deborah, means “honeybee” in Hebrew and shares its origin with Deseret.

⁷ The author has found no name connection between Utah and the phrase “tops of the mountains.”

Asian Connections to the New World

The Japanese and Chinese live on the Pacific Rim and were known to be great sailors in ancient times. Because of their proximity to the sea and the fact that islands, such as Japan, were inhabited anciently, they were probably great sailors at the time of the Book of Mormon history. Many of the people of central Mexico share a great similarity with the Chinese. Indeed, many of the facial structures carved in stone in Central America resemble the facial structure of the Asian people.

Some of the ceramic plates that Dr. Paul Cheesman obtained in Central America had Kanji characters that his secretary, a native of Hong Kong, could recognize.⁸ Millie Cheesman, Dr. Cheesman's widow, has told of miniature Chinese junks that her husband obtained that came from a tomb in Latin America.⁹

Returned missionaries from Japan speak of Chinese and Japanese connections to the Hebrews.¹⁰ Included in these connections is the Peach Boy legend, which is a clear reference to Moses. The Shinto temples in Japan are another connection. At the approach to these temples is something called "the gateway to light." The name for this gateway of light is *Torii*, similar to the word *Torah*, the Hebrew name for the five books of Moses in the Old Testament.

The K'iche' word for "light" is *tunri de Dios*, which means "the light of God." The *de Dios* part is Spanish and represents an infiltration into their language from that source, but it shows the correct usage. The two words, *torii* and *tunri*, look similar and both mean "light." In the Mayan languages, the *o* and the *u* are often interchanged in various orthographies.

Another Hebrew Connection to the New World

The Quichua word *tотора* means "reeds." The word bible

⁸ Ray Berry, personal conversation, 1980.

⁹ Millie Cheesman, telephone interview, 2001.

¹⁰ Eric Rasmussen, personal conversation, 2001.

comes from *byblos* which is the word for the reeds from which the paper was made—*byblos papyrus*. How interesting it is that the Old Testament writings known to the Hebrews as the Torah, and the name used in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia for the reeds that produced the paper on which it was written is *titora*? Torah, *titora*, *torri*, and *tunri* probably all come from the same root word relating to the reeds used to make the paper on which the word or light of God was written. This is another indication that all the children of God have been connected in the past. Our linguistic separateness at the present time is an aberration.

The King's Son, Mulek

The name Mulek (with the Hebrew letters *mlk*) has to do with the word “king,” with Melek, with an *e*, possibly meaning “king and father.” In the Infobases Hebrew Lexicon many definitions are listed as “possible” because of difficulty in reconstructing Old Biblical Hebrew from our vantage point some 3000 years after-the-fact.

Mulek was the infant son of King Zedekiah at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. He was saved by family and/or friends and carried to the Americas, possibly by Phoenician sailors. This group of people became known as the Mulekites and settled the land Zarahemla. They did not bring written records, and their language deteriorated rapidly. Part of the deterioration might have been caused by mixing with residual Jaredites or other civilizations in the area. Upon the arrival of the people of Mosiah, they were again taught the language of the Hebrews as the Nephites knew it (Omni 1:18).

The Quiché the word *mululic* means “to walk in a group” as in walking out of church together. The second definition is “to gather” as in making a collection. The obvious similarity between Mulek and *mululic* causes one to visualize the Mulekites as “the group that walked out of Jerusalem together.”

The roots *mol*, *mul*, and *mori* mean “to gather or heap up” in Quiché and Chortí. While the Book of Mormon talks of Mulek as

the son of King Zedekiah, the Quiché word means “to heap up.” In Quiché, *ajaw* (or *ahaw*) means “king.” This is very similar to the Jaredite king Ahah, who may have been the source of the Quiché word for king. The Mulek part as it relates to king is lost in Quiché, but it does show up in some of the other languages in the area.

Another Hebrew connection is found in the word *mahalak*. It is a Hebrew noun meaning “walk or journey.” This is very close to the Quiché equivalent *mululic*, which also means “walk.”

Another word reveals a similar connection. In K’iche’, the word *sak* means “white, clear, bright, or clean,” and *tzij* means “word.” Together *sak tzij* translates to “white word” and means “truth.” In the Hebrew, the word *zak* is an adjective which also means “clean or pure.” The Nahuatl word is *iztac*, which means “white.” Note how the Nahua have added letters to the simple word *zak* to get *iztac*. While these two languages share this common word (and others), Quiché appears to be the older and closer to Hebrew.

Quiché People

The words *ajquiche winak* mean “Quiché people.” The root of this name appears in several other words having to do with weaving, and may come from the word *ajquiem*, which means “weaver.” Thus, the Quiché people may have been given their present-day name because of their weaving or the verb may have originated from what the Quiché do—weave. However, there are some other possible origins of the name in the literature, as we shall see below.

Zenock and Zenos

These Book of Mormon names are of interest because of the names Tenochtitlán and Tenosique. Nephi refers to Zenock and Zenos as Old Testament prophets (1 Nephi 19:10). However, Alma refers to Zenos differently. He mentions a prayer offered by

Zenos in the wilderness (Alma 33:3,4). That prayer sounds similar to the one offered by Enos earlier in the Book of Mormon (Enos 1:2-18). Enos speaks of the wrestle he had with the Lord before receiving a remission of his sins. When he was told that his sins were forgiven he asked the Lord how it was done. The Atonement of the Son was explained and he then prayed for his brethren, for the records, and for the Lamanites.

Now notice these verses about Zenos:

Do ye remember to have read what Zenos, the prophet of old, has said concerning prayer or worship?

For he said: Thou art merciful, O God, for thou hast heard my prayer, even when I was in the wilderness; yea, thou wast merciful when I prayed concerning those who were mine enemies, and thou didst turn them to me (Alma 33:3-4).

Behold, if ye do, ye must believe what Zenos said; for, behold he said: Thou hast turned away thy judgments because of thy Son (Alma 33:13).

Yea, even if they should dwindle in unbelief the Lord shall prolong their days, until the time shall come which hath been spoken of by our fathers, and also by the prophet Zenos, and many other prophets, concerning the restoration of our brethren, the Lamanites, again to the knowledge of the truth (Helaman 15:11).

Nephi was clearly referring to an Old Testament prophet named Zenos but these verses sound like they could be a reference to Enos of the Book of Mormon. Notice the references to his prayer, his enemies, the Atonement of the Son, and note specifically the passage in Helaman where he mentions the Lamanites being restored to the truth. Would an Old Testament prophet have referred specifically to the Lamanites?

The reason this is of interest is to help us understand the use of the leading *t*, and *tz* sounds in these names as they relate to names from the maps and in the literature. Hebrew did not use

vowels in its written form until about 900 AD. We do not know when or how the Nephites introduced vowels and vowel sounds into their writing but we know they are represented in Maya hieroglyphics. So, the question is, how do you start a word with a leading vowel sound, like Enos, when you do not use written vowels? It is possible that Tenos, Zenos, and Enos all refer to the same name, though not necessarily the same individual. Likewise, Tenoch, Zenock, and Enoch may all refer to the same name, but not necessarily the same individual.

The indigenous peoples who inhabit the area in and around Mexico City have said that the Tenoch in the name Tenochtitlán refers to a kind of cactus that is in great abundance and native to the area. This is a little like the author's experience in third grade at Fairfield, Montana when he was told by a classmate, a young Catholic boy, that the Mormon Church was named after the Mormon cricket. It makes one wonder how Joshua would feel to be told that he was named after a cactus plant (the Joshua tree).

When a civilization goes down hill, it is difficult for the remnants at the latter end to describe the feats of their civilization at its zenith. The technology of that civilization and an understanding of its language get lost. It's like taking a guided tour through the restored Kirtland temple. The building is different now. Gone are the days when glorious events occurred there as described in the Doctrine and Covenants, Church History, and the journals of our ancestors. To the present owners it just represents the materials available in the hardware stores of the 1830's.

Thus, it is unlikely that the name Tenoch came from a cactus plant. Rather, it is more likely that the cactus plant was named after the great prophet Zenoch (or Enoch?) mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

Chi

The name prefix *chi* has been the subject of some discussion already. It is found throughout the Americas, and especially south of the U.S. border. Starting with Chicago, Chillicothe, Chippewa,

Cherokee, Cheyenne, Chiricahua, Apache, Chicano, Chihuahua, Chichimeca, Chichicastenango, Chimaltenango, Chibcha and on down to Chile. Did these *chi* words come from semetic origins? Was *chi* a part of the Jaredite background? The only place that *chi* is more prevalent in the world is in China and Japan. Is this evidence of linguistic exchange among the Pacific Rim countries?

In Chinese, *chi* was used as a reference to anything related to China. In more recent years, it has become a derogatory expression for things related to China. It is also what is inside human beings. The Chinese believe there is a body and a spirit of man and the *chi* is the spirit. In Japanese, *chi* has many meanings like “blood, earth, and mother.” In the Mam branch of the Maya the word for “blood” is *chik’y*, similar to the Japanese.

In a book by Katherine Plummer about the shipwrecked drifters that have departed Japan over the millennia, she documents many that found their way to the Americas. Genetics documents others. Plummer has researched well those that departed unwillingly from Japan, as a result of bad weather and ship damage during the Tokugawa period (1603–1867) and later. In fact, she documents thirty-four shipwrecks between 1617 and 1854 alone. (Plummer 1984)

The shipwreck in 1617 drifted ashore at Acapulco, Mexico. She extrapolates back into the unrecorded past suggesting that this process was not something that started with the Shogun years but probably had been going for centuries. The Shogunate restricted the size of ships that could be built to small rice-shipping junks to be used in the coastal waters. Prior to that edict, the Japanese built much larger, more ocean-worthy craft that permitted a greater international reach.

Plummer pulled out a Japanese word with which we are familiar to help make her case. She said that the word for “milk,” used by some of the coastal tribes of Oregon and California, is a pure infusion from Japanese. The word was *chichi*, which refers to “breast milk” in Japanese. The word *chichi* in Nahuatl means “to suckle” and refers to the breasts. In the Quichua language of Ecuador the similar word *chuchu* means exactly the same as

chichi in Nahuatl. The word is still in use among the west coast tribes of the North American Indians. It has even entered the American slang from Hispanics of Nahua/Aztec origin.

If one knew all the languages of the earth, one would probably know the entire migratory history of the earth's people. Three of the drifters mentioned in the 1832 wreck of the *Honun-manu* that drifted to Cape Flattery on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington were named *Iwakichi*, *Kuykichi*, and *Otokichi*. The ending of these names, *kichi*, is very close to K'iche', a spelling for the Quiché tribe of Guatemala. The *kichi* ending on their names means "luck." (John McGuire, personal conversation, 2001) "Luck" in Quiché is *cochibal*, and the word *cochij* means "to receive a gift," which is pretty good luck. The *c* followed by the *o* gives the *c* the hard *k* sound, thus making *kichi* and *cochi* almost identical sounds, both having to do with good luck.

It is apparent that there was a linguistic, cultural, commercial, and genetic exchange with China, Japan, and the Polynesian Islands as well as the New World. The exchange apparently went in *both* directions, not just to the west, as some LDS scholars have postulated, and not just to the east, as some non-LDS scholars have postulated. The various genetic facial features are carved in stone. The features differ extensively among the various ethnic groups in the Americas.

The author has a Yaqui acquaintance (the name Yaqui means "those who left") who is six-feet-three inches tall and a Cherokee friend who is about six-feet-two inches tall. In other areas of the Americas, five feet is considered tall. Then there is the lack of facial and body hair on most Native Americans. That is a genetic trait shared with the orient. It did not come from Jerusalem or Babylon, for the Semites were notoriously hairy.¹¹

The genetic diversity found in the indigenous peoples of the Americas is not fully explained by the Book of Mormon. People have been led to this land from time to time whose records we do not have. There are even antediluvian possibilities.

¹¹ A Cherokee friend of the author asserts that this lack of facial hair is because they have evolved farther from the apes.

Frogs

As noted previously, there are numerous stone frogs at temple sites and museums in Guatemala. At Abaj Takalik there is a frog on each side of the main steps into temple 12, the largest of about twenty foundations the archaeologists are calling temples. The largest part of the base of temple 12 measures about forty-five by sixty yards. Only the foundation and steps are present today. The superstructure is gone. The foundation and steps were just boulders in clay built up to over six feet high. One might speculate that the superstructure was made of wood, the most suitable architecture for the area being Polynesian, that is, thatched boweries with few closed-in walls.

In front of the two frogs by the front steps are two large flat stones about six feet in diameter. Recalling the Old Testament descriptions of the original Hebrew tabernacle and temples, the layout looks like the first stone pad might have been where the sacrifice was performed and the second, the base for the laver, where the priests would wash before entering the tabernacle. From seeing the two stone pads, one can tell that the stone basin found at Monte Alto, and now in the park at La Democracia, is a laver. At the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Guatemala City, there is a well-carved stone frog with a basin in its back. It too looks like it might have been a temple laver. Something so difficult to make and adorn would most likely be ceremonial. It is dated as late pre-Classic, which would put it exactly in the Book of Mormon time frame. Its location of discovery is not listed, but there is an identical one in a hotel lobby in Antigua.

Abaj Takalik is thought to be a temple site, but having two frogs at the front entrance and a possible frog as a laver doesn't compare with twelve oxen. Though there is some Egyptian significance to the frog. Dr. Hugh Nibley has said that the frog represents the number 100,000 and has great religious significance.¹² Their progression from eggs, to tadpoles, and

¹² Hugh Nibley, telephone interview, 2001.

finally to frogs, represents eternal life (not unlike bodies terrestrial, bodies terrestrial, and bodies celestial, 1 Corinthians 15:40).

The Egyptian god, Heket the frog, represents fecundity and resurrection, productivity and fruitfulness in offspring or vegetation. The latter representation for the frog, “productivity and fruitfulness in offspring and vegetation,” is consistent with the land Bountiful. Could it be that the frog is the symbol for that land? In Spanish the name for the toad is *sapo*, pronounced the same as *zapo*, and the common name for the area east of the Samalá river was Zapotitlán at the time Alvarado arrived to cross the Samalá River. There was even a bridge at the crossing. (Guatemalan Army 1963, 162) Thus Cuyotenango, Mazatenango, and San Francisco Zapotitlán may all have been part of the land of Zapotitlán or the people of Zapotitlán. This is more evidence for the location of the land Bountiful in this area.

During their conversation, Dr. Nibley asked the author if there were any carved stone turtles at the site. The turtle lives at the bottom of rivers and is considered to be under everything on earth. It connotes the devil and hell. One of the carved heads at the site does look like a turtle shell. Where the turtle head would come out from the shell, however, the stone has been broken.

Near the front steps to the temple at Abaj Takalik are also a fish, an alligator, and an owl. The alligator is actually an alligator on one side and a fish on the other. According to Dr. Nibley, it is referred to as the “eater of the dead” and is related to the angels that one must pass by after death. The name for “alligator” in Quiché is *ayin* and the name for “whale” is *ayin cär* or “alligator fish.” The Quiché have a legend of a man who was swallowed by an alligator.¹³ This may be a reference to the alligator fish, *ayin cär*, or whale, as in the story of Jonah.

In Hebrew, *ayin* is a vowel, but it also means “eye.” When an alligator swims, all that can be seen of it are its eyes. The alligator, or the crocodile, is a significant figure in the Egyptian facsimile found in the Book of Abraham. The Abraham facsimile

¹³ This legend was mentioned by a guide at Abaj Takalik.

also shows a bird, which is labeled as the angel of the Lord. This may have been the significance of the owl at Abaj Takalik.



Figure 43. Stone Frog, Steps of Temple 12, Abaj Takalik

In addition to cleaning up the mess after sacrifices (“eater of the dead”?) there are other associations with the alligator. The alligator dominates the sea, and it has meaning relative to the royal family.¹⁴

The crocodile has significance in the Maya cosmos also. In the northern sky is a constellation called Draco, which means “Dragon.” It is the dragon or crocodile depicted in the Abraham facsimile.

The owl at Abaj Takalik, in addition to being a symbol for wisdom, is the protector that watches over the protagonist in the

¹⁴ Hugh Nibley, telephone interview, 2001.

hero legends, according to Dr. Nibley. He explains that the goddess takes the form of the owl and rescues the hero. That is much like the Tecún Umán legend in which Tecún Umán is transformed into an eagle then swoops down at Pedro Alvarado.



Figure 44. Possible Turtle, Steps of Temple 12, Abaj Takalik

The Nephites/Mulekites/Jaredites appear to have been more liberal (the word liberal could come from the Sumerian word *lib* meaning “fat”) than some of the Hebrews in the Old World, in that they may have departed from some of the stodgy orthodoxy of the day—the orthodoxy that still denies the Messiah while the Christian world accepts Him. The name of Nephi, for example, possibly coming from the Egyptian grain god, *Nepi* (Jakeman 1958, 45), together with the Egyptian concept of the frog as it relates to progression, resurrection, and eternal life are two examples of symbols that may evidence such liberalism.



Figure 45. Stone Alligator, Steps of Temple 12, Abaj Takalik



Figure 46. Stone Owl, Steps of Temple 12, Abaj Takalik

Christ was the master teacher, and a good teacher uses pedagogy appropriate to the circumstances. The metamorphosis of the frog would have been pedagogically appropriate for the place and time. It must have become quite common in the region, for there is a frog or toad altar in Izapa; a frog is part of the statuary at the temple in Teotihuacán; and frogs even show up in the carvings of Bolivia.



CHAPTER 16

THE INDEGENOUS PEOPLES

Sahagún's People—The Tolteca

The Tolteca were the Nahuatl people of central and southern Mexico. We know the Nahuas as a possible remnant of the Nephites. So who are the Toltecs? Sahagún gives us the answer in his classic *Códice Florentino, Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España*, a many-volume set, depending on the translation. The original text was written in Nahuatl using Spanish characters. The translators of the work that is referenced here, Dibble and Anderson, make this footnote about the spelling of the name Toltec:

To maintain consistency within this chapter, names of populations elsewhere anglicized (Toltec, Chichimec, etc.) are left in the form [that] they appear in the Nahuatl text (Dibble 1961, 165).

The Dibble and Anderson translation is presented in double columns with English on the left and Nahuatl on the right. There is also a Spanish translation available by Elisabeth Gott (Gott 1938).

In Spanish there are different ways to form words that tell us the national origins of people. For example, *Americanos* are from America, *Rusos* are from Russia, *Chilenos* are from Chile. These

show a certain similarity in how the ending is formed from the nationality. Someone from Guatemala, however, is called a *Guatemalteco*. They would not like to be called *Guatemalos* because *malo* in Spanish means “bad.” So who are the Toltecas? They would be the people from Tola.

The Nahuatl text of Sahagún’s work, however, does not say these people are from Tola, it says they are from Tula and refers to them as the *tulteca*. The *teca* ending actually comes from Nahuatl, not Spanish. Also the interchanging of the *o* and the *u* is very common among the orthographers as we have seen with the roots *mul*, *mol* and *mor*.

So the Tolteca are actually the *tulteca*. (There are no capital letters in the Nahuatl text.) They are from *tullantzinco* (“where the reeds were gathered”). This has been shortened to *tullan* or *tullam* (they interchange *m* and *n* quite frequently) and finally to *tula*. The name *tullam* was initially thought to come from Salem or *shullam*, but further study suggests an even better correlation through Sumerian with reeds, Canaan, and Bountiful. As we have seen, this is the land from which all the ancient writings of the area say the people came. It is the land of Jerusalem in general, and more specifically, it may have been the place where they built their boat and set sail. Thus, the Tolteca are the people who came from Jerusalem or Tula, the place “by the reeds.”

The fact that there was a distinction between those who were Tolteca and those who were not, suggests that there were other people who came from other lands. The Tolteca were always spoken of favorably for their skills and mechanical abilities.

The Tolteca Were Dispersed

Sahagún mentions some cylindrical, stone columns with serpents wrapped around them, the rattles up and the heads down. These were found in the ruins of La Nueva near Jutiapa, in the more arid, high country between Cotzumalguapa and the El Salvador border. One of the columns is now found in the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Guatemala

City. Thus, in their wanderings, the Toltecas passed through the Guatemala area before going on into Mexico.

Sahagún says that the Toltecas were dispersed all over the region. He mentions some wonderful devices that were entrusted to this people. The Nahuatl text says, *ca ie vel iehoan intlatqui*. Remembering that Sahagún had difficulty separating words, it is interesting to note the letters *liehoan* in this text. They are quite similar to *liahona*. Also, as Sahagún mentions all the wondrous stones (precious and semiprecious) and their great knowledge of precious stones, one can almost imagine the breastplate that goes with the Urim and Thummim as depicted in the Old Testament, with a precious stone for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Amanteca

Sahagún mentions a group of people called Amanteca. This looks like the people of Ammon. The translators render this word as a group of people “skilled at gluing feathers.” But much more information is available in the original Nahuatl text than in the translations currently available. For example, when Sahagún mentions a *land* named Amantlán, the translators leave it as it is in the original text (obviously, lands do not glue feathers). Amantlán could be a variation of Amatitlán, (Manti by the Water) or it could be the land where the people of Ammon lived. This land, Sahagún says, was near Tula.

The Year Count and the Book

Sahagún says the Tolteca were wise and originated the year and day count. The oldest known dates found in stone so far have come from the Costa Sur of Guatemala. Archeologists have found the oldest long-count dates near Izapa (in the land of Desolation). This would place the Toltec’s original lands in Guatemala, not Mexico City.

A compilation of the discoveries of the Tolteca formed a book for interpreting dreams. They are said to have been tall, and

because of that, they could run all day without resting. They lived in a land that produced in abundance (Bountiful?).

The Naoa-Laca Branch of the Tolteca

Sahagún says that the Tolteca were Nahua (*naoa*). At times he uses the name *naoa* explicitly for Nahua and at times he uses the name *naoalaca* and the translators consistently add the silent Spanish *h* and drop the *laca* to leave just Nahua. Note that *laca* in Nahuatl sounds a lot like *laja* (Lehi) in Quiché. The names Nahua and Laca are linked together many times in the Nahuatl text. They appear as *naoalaca*. If we are right about Nahua being Nephi, this would give us the name Nephi-Lehi (Nahua-Laca, or *naoalaca*) as the name of one of the groups of the Toltecs.

As noted, the translators leave off the *laca* part of the name and only include the Nahua part in the English rendition. The name Nahua is pronounced the same as *naoa* and is almost identical to the biblical name Noah. Nephi's name having possibly been derived from the name of the Egyptian grain god (Nepi) and from the Greek word for cloud (*nephos*), it is possible that, because of the rains at the time of the flood, the name Noah was connected with the name Nephi.

The possibility that the extermination of the Jaredite and Nephite people was not complete finds some confirmation in these words by Sahagún:

Still, here a little more needs to be told concerning the Tolteca. All the Nahua are the descendants of the Tolteca, for they are those who remained, those who could no longer migrate; perhaps old men, perchance the old women, the sick, the recently delivered, those who perhaps for some reason remained of their own will (Dibble 1961, 170).

This sounds a great deal like a remnants of the Nephites after their great and final battle with the Lamanites.

The Tlaminqui or Shooters of Arrows

There is a section of his writings that sounds like Sahagún is talking about the Ammonites, but the translation loses a great deal when compared to the original Nahuatl text. Many of the words in that text cannot be found in the three Nahuatl dictionaries available to the author. Sahagún talks of the Tamin people, saying that their name means “shooters of arrows.” The word for shooter of arrows, however, is *tlamjnquj*. The *j* is used instead of *i* in Sahagún’s orthography. The more recent translators replace the *j* with an *i*. That would make the “bow shooters” the *tlaminqui*, which sounds very close to Lamanites (remember to take off the leading *t*). Sahagún says these people were an offshoot of the Teochichimeca, *teo* meaning “god” (“true” in one translation).

The Chichimeca appear to have been the Nephites of Guatemala. The Tamin were an offshoot of this group, possibly the Ammonites, and were associated with the Mixica (which would be the cloud people) who were also Nahua. The Tamin learned their civilization and language from the Nahua. They did not own the land but were vassals who had to pay tribute to the landowners. This sounds like the Ammonites (the Anti-Nephi-Lehies), who inherited the land of Jershon (Escuintla). This tradition gives relevance to the original name for Escuintla (Panatacat, meaning “tribute”) and the Slave River (Río Esclavo).

Sahagún says that they made their homes in caves, gorges, and grass huts, and always carried their bows. Both the men and the women wore their hair long and parted it in the middle. They made reed baskets to carry their medicinal herbs, which they went about selling. The information in the above paragraphs would indicate that this particular group might have been the people of Ammon or the Anti-Nephi-Lehies. The carrying of bows does not suggest that they had departed from the covenant made by their fathers, as the bow was principally a tool for survival. These people were hunters.

The Cacachimeca

Sahagún next switches to the Cacachimeca. The word *caca* means frog in present-day Nahuatl. The temple sites and museums in this region have many carvings of frogs. As discussed in the last chapter, the frog must have had some religious significance for the people of the south coast of Guatemala.

The name for “toad” is *sapo* in Spanish, and there may be a connection between the Zapotec and the Cacachimeca. It is not known how much they distinguished between toads and frogs. The Spanish *s* and *z* are pronounced the same and so it is possible that the Zapotec people that migrated north with the Mixteca were related to these Cacachimeca. There is a fruit tree in the area named zapote¹ that might have some relevance to the name.

Looking up “frog” in Christenson’s K’iche’ word list we find that *cacate’* (which is the closest to the Nahuatl *caca*) means “chin, lower jaw, or mandible.” That is exactly what the name Lehi means. This may explain the importance of frogs to these people. Thus, it appears that the spellings for Lehi among the dialects and languages in the region includes *caca*, as well as *lahun*, *leja’*, *lajuh*, *lenca*, *leje’*, and *laca*. Note that the name for “people” in Nahuatl is *tlaca*, another variant of Lehi.

An initial reading of the section of Sahagún’s work about the Cacachimeca shows similarities with the Gadianton robbers. Further study and name identification opened up the interpretation to include the people of Ammon, possibly all the Lamanites, and possibly all the children of Lehi. That is because of Sahagún’s reference to the true or Teo-Chichimeca as a group separate from the Caca-Chichimeca. *Teo* means “God.” This suggests that the Teo-Chichimeca may have been “the people of God” mentioned nine times in the Book of Mormon.

If the Chichimeca were Nephites, then the caca-Chichimeca might have been the Anti-Nephi-Lehies. That is because,

¹ One can get zapote pies at McDonalds there. They taste great.

according to Sahagún, the Cacachimeca lived in the grassy plains, forests, deserts, and among the crags. They had no homes, they were wanderers, and they lived alone (separate families, relatively far apart). When night came upon them, they sought out a cave or craggy place to sleep. They wore skins of the mountain lion, bobcat, ocelot, and wolf and ate the meat of beasts of prey. They discovered peyote and esteemed it above wine or mushrooms. This is consistent with Book of Mormon descriptions of some of the Lamanites. The Anti-Nephi-Lehies were different during their good years, but they also departed and fell back by the time of Mormon's final battles.

They had to pay tribute to their king (which could also have been true of other Lamanite groups). They were healthy and lived to old age with white hair. They ran around the mountains like the wind with no folds of fat to impede them. If anyone was sick for more than four days they were put to death, which was considered a favor. So, if they were the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, they had definitely departed from what Christ had taught by the time Sahagún wrote of them.

There is a large colored mural in the ruins at Bonampak that shows a light-skinned, ruling class dressed in leopard skins. There are also some dark-skinned, friendly people mixed in the group depicted in the painting. The Book of Mormon mentions the Lamanites being dressed in the skins of beasts of prey (2 Nephi 5:24; Enos 1:20). The Gadianton robbers came to battle wearing lamb's skin dyed in blood (3 Nephi 4:7). At the time of the final battles in Mormon's day, the lands of the Lamanites and the Gadianton robbers may have been wrapped all the way around the Nephites on the east and the north to include Bonampak, Tikal, and other great cities that flourished during the Classical Maya years, thus giving Mormon's people no quarter from that direction.

The name Chichimeca has a strong connection to the Guatemala area because of all the *chichi*-named places found today in that country. There is even a town by that name. The most appropriate meaning for *Chi* as part of a name is "hill,

mount, or mountain," but it is used in many other ways as well. One would expect *chichi* to mean "two hills" similar to the Sumerian form of repeating words to show emphasis or plurality. However, it means "breasts" and "to suckle." The connection is reminiscent of how the Teton Mountains got their name from the French. It is possible that the Guatemalan mountains also got their names from the word "breast." Which suggests that the Chichimeca were the people from the mountains of the highlands of Guatemala, where the volcanoes may have resembled breasts, especially the two that shadow the land of Zarahemla—Fuego and Agua (Amnihu).

Chichicastenango was previously called Chuwila by the indigenous people. *Chuwil* means "stench," as from rotten meat. Close to it is the word *chuyil*, which means "million." Chuwila or Chichicastenango is just five miles from Qumarkah. This may be the place where a million people died and rotted away, causing the area to stink of rotten flesh. The Jaredites also complained of the stench of rotting dead from their final battles in this area, so the name may be even older.

The Totónaque and Huasteca

Next Sahagún talks of the Totónaque people. Originally, this group was probably from the Totoncapán area. But where did the name come from? Was it from the natives or the Spaniards? Sahagún says that the men and women were beautiful, fair, tall, slender, and firm. They were skilled in song and dance and lived a humane, civilized life. They were well clothed, being skilled with cotton and fabrics, and looked at themselves in mirrors. The women wore skirts. They ate well.

Sahagún next writes about the Huasteca who arrived at Pantla or Panotla, which means "where the water is crossed." He says these people crossed the sea in boats. Where they lived, the sweet potato grew every month of the year. This area has supposedly been identified in the Vera Cruz area of Mexico, but could this

name, *Panotla*, be related to the name *Pantaleón* in Guatemala, near where Lehi's family may have landed?

Later, Sahagún writes of these people reaching Quauhtemalla and being led by their priests. Quauhtemalla is an early spelling of Guatemala. These people migrated from Guatemala to Mexico, as their early legends state, and not the reverse, as many have said (Carmack 1981, 45). Of course, it is possible that some reverse migration occurred after the demise of Mormon's people.

Sahagún says that once they embarked, they carried off the writings, paintings, crafts, and the casting of metals. He writes of four old men being left, who ask, "How will the common people live, how will they dwell? He is gone; they carried away the writings." That sounds like the departure of Nephi and his followers from the land of Lehi. Perhaps the four old men who were left were Laman, Lemuel, and the two sons of Ishmael.

The Olmeca

Sahagún next wrote of the Olmeca and the Mixteca who came from the east. Remember that Guatemala is southeast of Teotihuacan (Mexico City). He says that according to legend, these were Tolteca also. They were rich in every way and they lived in a land of wealth and abundance (Bountiful?). The Mixteca, we know, are the cloud people and the Olmeca may have been connected to the Jaredites. These are the ones that wore rubber sandals and carried copper hatchets.

Sahagún's understanding as he recorded these Indian tales was much greater than that of the subsequent translators. The dictionary of the 1500s is limited and the more recent dictionaries are based on a language that has aged another 500 years since then, without much being written in that language. Too much has been lost or possibly misplaced. The translators appear to be skipping over the names and missing much of the meaning because they do not have the old vocabulary.

Many critical pieces of the puzzle may still be there in the Nahuatl language, to be had if only a better translation could be

derived. It would be useful for linguists in the Church to retranslate the works of Sahagún, taking full advantage of all the regional languages and their evolution, as well as Sumerian, Hebrew, Arabic, Egyptian, Chinese, Mongolian, Manchurian, Japanese, Ainu, and the various Polynesian languages. All of the seemingly unrelated pieces of trivia that Mormon includes as he discusses the weightier matters are clues that might have additional meaning in light of such a translation.

Sahagún's monumental work represents a treasure still to be mined. Since he wrote in the Nahuatl language using Spanish characters, this may have been why his works were stashed away and did not see the light of day for centuries. This may also have helped protect his volumes. Sahagún was sent to trial for his views on the Indians. The Spanish and English translations available today are inconsistent and woefully inadequate. A better translation is needed. The dictionaries of the Nahuatl language available today lack many of the basic building blocks of the language that were available in Sahagún's day. These missing words include many of the very simple ones. His work is so voluminous that much of the vocabulary could be derived through examining the different uses of the unknown words.

It seems that the dedicated and brilliant scholars who are breaking the Maya code are getting the phonetic syllables correct but in some cases they build words from parts and miss the meaning—more specifically, the names. This is very evident in the translations of Sahagún's works. The meanings of old names change and get lost, and generations later, the fallen people do not know the stories of their great original leaders. This is very apparent with the old Chronicles (*Popol Vuh*, *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, and *The Title of the Lords of Totonicapan*).

Cross-Checking with the *Título C'oyoi*

The old indigenous document entitled *Título C'oyoi*, translated by Carmack, is in poor condition. Pieces of the pages are torn off and lost and other pages are stuck together. The order

of the pages is uncertain. But there are several interesting things about the document that relate to our inquiry.

One of the rivers once thought to be a candidate for Sidon is the Rio C'oyolate, which shares its name with the *Título C'oyoi*. There is a town on that river named Xatá, and one of the upper reaches of the river is also named the Xayá. It goes all the way to Iximché. There is another tributary of the river named Xatá that runs just west of El Baúl and Cotzumalguapa (Zarahemla). Remembering that the *x* is pronounced *sh*, this would make the names *Shaya'* and *Shata* sound much like the Phoenician city of Saida, known to us in English as Sidon. Sidon may have been a generic name for "fish river" (Michatoya) but all the important references are tied to Manti (Amatitlán).

Carmack's translation of *Título C'oyoi* may seem like fragments to the casual reader, but, with a Book of Mormon and Bible background, one can learn much from this text. However, it is highly fragmented and disjointed because of the condition of the original document.

The text starts with the grandfathers that came from the east across the sea from the canyons of Tulan, which we have proposed was Jerusalem or Salem. The text talks of these people's "white stone structures," which appear to be temples. When referring to the grandfathers, "*balam, q'uitze, and ak'ab*" are mentioned. Of what are all Hebrews most proud? It is their lineage through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Is this what we see in *Balam* (Abram), *Q'uitze* (Isaac), and *Ak'ab* (Jacob). The Hebrew pronunciations are closer than the English.

A little further down on the list of grandfathers is *Nijaib*, which is pronounced very close to Nephi (in English the Spanish *j* is pronounced as an *h*). The text talks of multiple branches coming from the east, altogether about thirteen groups. The word for thirteen is *oxlaju*. The prefix *ox* means "three" and *laju* means "ten." As noted previously, it may also mean "Third Lehi."

In the next paragraph the text uses the name *ch'umilaja*. Once again, we see *laja* or Lehi. It should be noted that the end of one word and the beginning of the next is not clear in the original

texts. This leads to additional difficulty in translating.

Another name mentioned looks familiar. It is *Lamak'ib*, which looks like Laman (or Lamanite?). The text talks about a dawn when people were kneeling and shouting and a great star came out. When it did, it was the dawning of "three great days" or "festive days." Carmack notes that, "The term is still used in the Quiché-speaking communities to refer to the festive days of the Christo-pagan ritual cycle" (Carmack 1973, 310). In another work, Carmack mentions a document that Fuentes y Guzmán had that says the Quiché "saw three suns in one day" (Carmack 1981, 129): Perhaps the authors of this *título* were recounting the birth of Christ. Remember, the followers of Christ prayed for the sign and Nephi was told that it would be given that night. "On the morrow come I into the world." (3 Nephi 1:13). This was followed by a day and a night and a day that appeared as one (i.e., three suns in one day).

The text mentions that the people went up to get the stone that they brought from the east with the *Pisom C'ac'al*. This was a sacred bundle. In Quiché it means "wrapped child." Other accounts refer to it as a gift and name it the *Girón Gagal*, which may have been the Liahona, the ball or director. The sacred bundle may also have to do with the brass plates of Laban. *Pisom C'ac'al* and *Girón Gagal* are different scribe's representations of not only the same thing, but also the *same words*. The liberties taken in this book with the spellings of old place names pales by comparison.

There is a place mentioned that is not known but is thought by Carmack to be one of the locations they lived in during their wanderings prior to arriving in the Guatemala highlands. The place name is *Ticaj Ch'alib*. Could this be the Jaredite city Lib (San Sebastian) near the Samalá River? The first name, *Ticaj*, is similar to the nearby *Tak'ajal* (now named San Felipe), which means "having to do with the seashore" (i.e., the bank of the Samalá River). With respect to *Ch'alib*, another trend has been observed. It appears at times that when one object has different names in two different languages, a new word is formed that is a

combination of the two separate words in the two separate languages. *Cham* means “fat” in Quiché and *la’b* means “fat” in Chortí, which is similar to *lib* meaning “fat” in Sumerian. Combining the two Cham-Lib or Ch’alib, is then understood in the two different languages.

The text talks about a K’ana Uleu. That looks like a land of Canaan (K’ana), and may be their name for Bountiful. There is also a town of Cane (adjacent to La Paz, Honduras) in the land of Nephi that is pronounced like the Hebrew word *qa-neh*, which means “reeds.” K’ana Uleu might be “the land of reeds.” Canaan was the name for the Jerusalem area when the Israelites returned from their captivity in Egypt. Canaan was their “promised land.” The Canaan-cane-qaneh-Tullum-Tula-reeds connection might be why Jerusalem was called Tula. They may have referred to Jerusalem as Canaan, thus giving the cane or reeds linkage to Jerusalem (Tula). Also, Joseph Smith may have used inspired translation prerogative to translate Canaan as Jerusalem, whereas the indigenous peoples stayed with the canes and reeds definition only.

Next in the writings, they talked about young wasps and bees, getting sick, the color yellow, and becoming weak. Young wasps sounds like mosquitoes, and yellow sickness could be malaria. This also is a linkage to the area of interest, as there are continual reports of malaria in this region.

Recinos Casts His Vote

One of the translators of *The Annals of The Cakchiquels* made a very profound observation that has great relevance to the Book of Mormon setting:

It is a *curious fact* that the three outstanding literary works which throw the most light on the life and thoughts of the American natives come from a small area situated almost in the center of the continent. Two of these works, the *Popol Vuh* and the *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*,

were written by the Quiché and are anonymous accounts of the life of that Indian nation. The third one, written by two well-known natives, is the work which I present here in an English translation, under the title of *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*. The descendants of these people are still living in the interior of Guatemala and occupy the same territory where their ancestors, after long migrations, settled for the first time hundreds of years ago (Recinos 1953, v, some emphasis added).

This observation is most significant. The children of Lehi were a very literate people. They were raised on the scriptures and wrote volumes. As a nation, Mormon's part of the Nephite world was destroyed, but as a people there were undoubtedly remnants. The remnant of Mormon's Nephites would appear to be the Quiché nation. The remnants of the Lamanites are probably the Cakchiquel, Pipils, Lenca, and many other Maya groups. The remnant of the Zoramites appears to be the Tzutuuhil nation. The remnant of the Jaredites, the old men (*U Mammae*, meaning "those who were there before," similar in sound to *imam* in Arabic meaning "leader"), were likely the Mam nation and some other unidentified groups mixed with the Maya.

The "curious fact" is that they still live very close to where Mormon left them 1600 years ago. It appears that the Zoramites (Tzutuuhiles) have encroached upon and taken over Zarahemla. In the early part of Mormon's battles the Zoramites were aligned with the Nephites (Mormon 1:8). As the Nephites were driven out of Zarahemla and signed the treaty, it is possible that the Zoramites retained their land and took part of the Nephite land. In the end the Zoramites may have sided with the Lamanites, or possibly the Zoramites were driven out and the Lamanite component that shared the land remained and retained the ownership and name of the land. There may have been some ethnic differences with the Zoramites because they tended at times to side more with the Lamanites than with the Nephites (Alma 43:4). They did not appear to mix with the Nephites.

The Cakchiquels occupy the land that was held by the Anti-Nephi-Lehies and the Lenca occupy the old Lamanite holdings in the lands of Lehi (El Salvadore) and Shilom or Lehi-Nephi (La Paz, Honduras). The Pipils are in between. Were the Cakchiquels the Anti-Nephi-Lehies? Brinton says that the name of the Cakchiquels comes from a tree native to the area and that *cak* means "red" in the Cakchiquel language (Brinton 1885, 13, 211). The words for copper and red are the same in most of the languages in the area. That means Anti, copper, and red are the same. The Cakchiquels are quite likely the Anti-Nephi-Lehies because of their name, their location, their connection to the Quiché, and the recorded history that states the Cakchiquels destroyed the Quiché nation at K'umarkáj (Recinos 1953, 102-103). No date for this battle is mentioned. As we have discussed previously the name may be tied to the Gadianton robbers who were mixed with the Lamanites in this area.

There is more than a little irony that it was the Anti-Nephi-Lehies who were the enemy in the destruction of the Nephites. While the Nephites were righteous, the Anti-Nephi-Lehies supported and defended them, but when the Nephites were fully ripened in iniquity it was their closest neighbors, just across the Sidon River, who destroyed them (Mormon 1:10). While the Book of Mormon does not state this explicitly, just across the Sidon River was the land of Jershon, which was occupied by the Anti-Nephi-Lehies. That land has historically belonged to the Cakchiquel and it was this people that legend says destroyed the Quiché at Gumarcaah.

An alliance between the Lenca and the Cakchiquels is not mentioned in the literature. It is possible that the Lamanites from the lands of Lehi and Shilom did not participate in the Nephite destruction. During the friendly years, the Nephites and Anti-Nephi-Lehies probably mixed geographically. It is known that the Lamanites (probably the Anti-Nephi-Lehies) moved north during prior centuries (Helaman 6:6). These may have been the Lamanites that were throughout all the land in Mormon's day, rather than the Lenca who were in the land of Lehi (El Salvador)

and Shilom (La Paz and Lejamani in Honduras).

The Jaredites, Nephites, Anti-Nephi-Lehies, and the Lamanites were continually scattering to other parts of the continent throughout the Book of Mormon history. As far as Mormon was concerned, those that left had fallen off the edge of his world and were no longer his responsibility in so far as his record was concerned. The tribal names going north include the Nahua, Zapotec, Mixtec, Anahuaca, and more. Those going south included the Lenca, Chibcha, Quichua, Quechua, Inca, Aymara, and more.

Virtually all of the American natives emanated from Guatemala, but there were also other stray infusions from time to time. The Oriental infusion was major, probably not just a few shipwrecks. Some may have actually traveled by sea on purpose. If there were trouble at sea they would have to go where the currents took them. This would be the Kuroshio, North Pacific and California current that would wash them down the Pacific coast of North America.

Where did the enigmatic Ainu and Basques come from? Why is *labana* the word for “knife” among the Basques? Did they know something about the sword of Laban? How did the Basques know that *andia* (Antum?) means “large” similar to the word “many” (Irre-antum for “waters many”) in the Book of Mormon? It appears, and there are many examples, that the Quiché, Basque, and Ainu share some common origins for their languages. The north Atlantic currents could easily have dropped them on the north face of the Iberian Peninsula, and the Pacific currents would naturally carry drifters to Japan.

Scrambled

Recinos lists the above-mentioned three volumes as being “great literary works.” Indeed, these volumes are an extremely significant light into the past. However, from the point of view of one looking at the Book of Mormon and the Bible, the true records of this people, a different adjective comes to mind—

scrambled. That word is said with a sense of reverence combined with honesty. The great and valued effort of the chroniclers in putting legend and history into print, at a time when one would forfeit his life if his name were attached to the document, should be respected, admired, and appreciated.

Sir Arthur Helps, in his volume *The Spanish Conquest in America*, recounts the legend of Tecúm and adds this comment:

In other histories the narrative gradually descends from myth to fable, from fable to legend or song, and thence, by fine degrees, to the comparative certitude of recorded history. But in the annals of American history, the writer, being otherwise deprived of any starting-place for his story, is obliged occasionally to throw a flying-bridge over the shaking morasses of fable, tradition, and pictured record, which he cannot altogether neglect and cannot securely abide upon. (Helps 1966, 173-174)

From an LDS perspective, knowing the divine origin of man, it would appear that the sequence Helps describes “from myth, to fable, to legend and song, and in fine degrees to the certitude of recorded history,” should be in the reverse order. The more one studies the myths, fables, legends, and songs, the more certain is the historical and often divine origins of the tale. Of course, one must know and accept the divine record of man’s history to separate the fact from the fiction in the legends.

Helps’ Flying Bridge

The analogy of the need for a flying bridge to span the “shaking morasses of fable and tradition” is excellent. We have been given such a flying bridge. It is the recorded tomes that bear the prophets names. Much of the academic world would request another flying bridge to span that leap. But, as we have seen greater acceptance of the Bible amongst archaeologists after centuries of study, we may yet see the same increase in

acceptance of the Book of Mormon in the academic world.

An example of the scrambled nature of these tales can best be seen when they are unscrambled. For example: Tulán, as proposed, would refer to the old world launching point and, in the broader sense, to Salem or Jerusalem. Is it possible that Balam, in *Título C'oyoi*, is father Abram (another example of the *r* being switched out for an *l*) or Abraham. Could Zaka-Paluma be Abrahams's wife Sarah? Could Qitzé be Isaac (Goetz 1953, 169)? Agab and Qikab both sound much like Jacob. Rogchah could be Jacob's wife Rachal (Goetz 1953, 189). By default Rebecca would have to be Tzununiha. Cavekib could be Joseph (and there are two mentioned) and Mahucutah could be Manasseh. Lahun would obviously be Lehi, and Tamub (the *ub* makes it plural in Quiché), Sam. Ilocab is virtually identical to Jacob in its Hebrew form. This Jacob would probably be one of Lehi's sons. And then comes another distinct Cavekib in the writings. Could this be Joseph, Lehi's son, as he is linked with Sam and Jacob (Tam and Ilocab)?

While the names may seem to be a stretch, they are not unlike some of the orthographic variations we have seen in the literature. More particularly, notice that the order of these names is exactly the same as the biblical forefathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Manasseh. The order of the wives Sara, Rebecca, and Rachal is not correct, but switching to the Americas, the order is exact: Sam, Jacob, and Joseph, and the three combined were called Nephites. These last three men or tribes formed the major group known as Nephites or "people of God."

In the Quiché tribes Tamub, Ilocob, and Cavekib together formed the *nahuales* and the word *nahual* means "god" to these people. Nahua or Noah is the form of Nephi that seems to have survived. Thus, the Nahua and Quiché both appear to have been Nephites. The Nahua appear to have gone north into Mexico, while the Quiché stayed in the highlands of Guatemala.

Consider the following verse that shows how they used the names Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in their praises:

And they did rejoice and cry again with one voice, saying: May the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, protect this people in righteousness, so long as they shall call on the name of their God for protection. (3 Nephi 4:30)

When they arrived after their voyage they called the land the Promised Land or *Chicpach*, which may mean “Dream Land.” *Chic* is “dream” and *pa* is a place identifier often used as “land.” (Goetz 1953, 171) *Chicpach* may also be a different dialectic representation of the town Acajutla, which was identified as their landing point.



CHAPTER 17

REMAINING ISSUES

A Good Model

With each paradigm shift, major chunks of geography have fallen into place. The remaining unidentified cities are not of major consequence. There are, however, a few remaining issues that should be reviewed. Some of these relate to information that has arisen from the study itself.

A good model will predict well beyond the limited data used to generate and verify the model. A good model can help identify bad data, that is, data that was incorrectly acquired, erroneously recorded, or inappropriately processed. In this investigation several such findings have surfaced.

For example, the possibility that some of the players in the Book of Mormon had new names applied to them during or after their lives, names that reflect their major accomplishments or missions in life, was a surprise that grew out of the analysis. Others are considered below.

Our limited facts give rise to ambiguities. But whatever the ambiguities, Mormon is to be appreciated for the scholar he was, especially under such adverse conditions, and for the mountains of data he assimilated and edited to create the Book of Mormon.

Some day this book of scripture and history will be more greatly appreciated for the work it represents, standing forever as a monumental accomplishment in any era of time.

Lehi-Nephi to Lejamani

The Book of Mormon talks first of a land of Nephi. The group that returned from Zarahemla to occupy the area had Shilom as the principal land and city (Mosiah 2:21; 11:12-13). During this occupation the name Lehi-Nephi first appears (Mosiah 7:1, 21). Sometime after the Nephites had again fled, and maybe after the completion of the Book of Mormon, it appears that the name was again changed.

This study suggests it may have then gone to Lehi-Laman or Lehi-Lamani, eventually shortened to Lejamani, a currently functional city in Honduras. The first change (Nephi to Lehi-Nephi) was recorded in the Book of Mormon, the other changes (Lehi-Nephi to Lehi-Lamani to Lejamani) are an extrapolation using the model to fill in the missing pieces. The logic of the changes is undeniable. The Lamanites hated the Nephites, why would they keep that name on their capitol city? The ability to see this change through a present-day city in the proposed geography strengthens the model we have used here.

Sidon, Xayá, Xatá, and Guacalate Rivers

The identification of Amatitlán as Manti-By-The-Water helps to eliminate possible ambiguities about the land of Manti. The fact that the Michatoya River is the Fish River and may therefore be the Sidon River was also a great help, but there is still some possibility for ambiguity with the river. The only geographical reference that remains in question is the statement that the hill Amnihu was east of the river Sidon (Alma 2:15). This may be explained as a different flow pattern of the Guacalate River in years past, or it may mean that the Book of Mormon used the name Sidon as a generic fish river. A third and possibly

more correct interpretation is that Amnihu is, in the skewed Hebrew sense, eastward of a section of the Sidon River where the river makes a turn to true east.

The Xayá and Xatá (Shayá and Shatá) rivers at the head of the Coyolate River would suggest a generic use of Sidon for any fish river, especially since today the word for small fish in Quiché is *sa'y* a shortened version of Saida (*sai*) (Sidon in English).

Other Concerns

There is a lot we do not yet know. Many of the descriptions are not as crisp and clear from our limited perspective and information base. For example, one may well ask why, at the final battle, Mormon could not call for support from his brethren in Mexico who had left during the previous 500 years.

There is another city of Lehi near the sunken city of Moroni at the Lago de Atitlán. Presently its name is Panajachel and it is a tourist town by the lake. Previously, it was named Cheleja' (Christenson 1979). That would be "tree Lehi." This is just across the lake from the ruins that appear to be sunken city of Moroni. Is it relevant to the Book of Mormon era or a new name used for a city rebuilt after other cities were inundated by the lake?

Was the heavily fortified city of Iximché the capitol of the Lamanite kingdom, the vague land of Nephi, in Mormon's day? Its name may have come from the grain god. This is a concern because the original land of Nephi in Shilom (La Paz, Honduras) is too far away to be relevant in most of the battles.

Mormon tells us that it was wise for the Nephites during the time of Alma not to allow the Lamanites to have more possessions in the land northward, not to let them overrun the land to afflict the Nephites on every hand, but to preserve a land into which the Nephites could flee (Alma 22:33, 34). Mormon saw the wisdom of these maneuvers and appreciated them in part possibly because it was a luxury he did not have in his battles with the Lamanites and Gadianton robbers. Mormon may have been surrounded completely by Lamanites and Gadianton robbers

and had no country into which to flee. When he fled into one area or another, he would have had to take control of it first.

When some troops at the battle of Cumorah fled into the land southward, why did they not go northward (Mormon 8:2)? Lamanites were in the south. For years the Nephites had been moving into the land northward. That would seem to have been their obvious choice.

Assuming that the eruption of Ilopango devastated El Salvador, there would be no threat from that quarter or, apparently, from the original land of Nephi either. The archaeological findings do not show strength from those regions. The Pre-Classic Era came to a close in the Guatemalan highlands and the Costa Sur. The people who started the long count and had so many environmental, economic, and technological advantages died and did not participate in the Classic period.

Who were the participants in the Classic period? Working the way around the Nephite/Lamanite lands there are Copán, Quiriguá, Tikal, Bonampak, Palenque, all of the north Yucatán, and on up into Teotihuacán and central Mexico. These are the lands of the victors. The Guatemalan highlands and the Costa Sur were the lands of the losers. Even after the Nephites were destroyed, the infighting apparently continued. The archaeologists (e.g., Gallenkamp 1985, 71) tell us that eventually there was an infusion from Teotihuacán into Kaminaljuyú (Ammonihah). The murals at Bonampak (north of Cumorah), as we have noted, would fit Mormon's description of the Gadianton robbers and the Lamanites.

So we have the dead Nephite lands surrounded by thriving Classic Era Maya civilizations. These places did not wait for the Nephites to die to get started; they were going before and really boomed between 400 and 900 A.D. The center-of-mass of the Classic civilizations, however, was to the north.

Be they Nephites, Lamanites, or Gadianton robbers, the people that surrounded Mormon and his people were enemies. The one communicating with Mormon was the king of the Lamanites. He communicated directly with Mormon when he

wanted to go to battle. This is strong evidence that Mormon was the major political leader. Certainly he was more than just the leader of the armies. Either he was the leader of the people or the people were in a leaderless condition, also a distinct possibility.

The Sea East

The reference in Alma 51:26 clearly states that the fortress cities of Nephiah, Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid, and Mulek were all on the east border "by the seashore." No sea is there today, but, the ancient existence of a lake at Xelajú' has been found in the literature. However, as previously noted, similarities to Sumerian and Hebrew usage clarify Mormon's use of the word seashore and narrow neck of land, so that these terms may define any shore or riverbank. This understanding in the proposed geography has eliminated the need for another east sea.

While the foregoing is an adequate explanation, there may have been changes that occurred in the interim. As previously stated, the volcano Cerro Quemado near Quetzaltenango at some time in the distant past erupted and buried a lake that used to be where the present town now stands.¹ Carbon dating of the trees buried in the volcanic ash has indicated (Conway 1992, 303-323) that the major volcanic activity was around 930 AD. The radiocarbon ages range from 980 to 1,440 years into the past. This volcano has at times dammed the Samalá River. There would be less of a problem in terms of finding the cities in the area spoken of if there were still a lake in the valley by Quetzaltenango (fortress Lehi). No doubt some of the cities in the area are under a hundred feet of ash.

Viewing the valley from the mountains, it is apparent that a lake has been there. The place where it broke through and drained is visible to the untrained eye. It may have ruptured at the time of the Crucifixion, though it appears that the descriptions about the east sea were given by Mormon himself, not the earlier writers.

¹ Volcanes de Xela. [cited 30 March 2001]. Available at <http://members-america.tripod.com/xelajuj/volcan.htm>. INTERNET.

The rivers and possible impounds can change with each major eruption and earthquake.

An example of this is the Thousand Springs in the Snake River near Hagerman, Idaho. It looks as if a whole river is gushing out of the hillside. The Lost River in eastern Idaho sinks and disappears into lava. This and other underground water apparently enter the Snake River many miles away at Thousand Springs. During the earthquake in 1983, the Lost River and many of the springs in the area were altered. Likewise, an earthquake could easily have altered the existence of this high mountain lake. It is likely that there was a lake of significant size near the fortress city of Lehi where Quetzaltenango now stands during the entire history of the Book of Mormon. This could have been the sea east mentioned above.

The maps that include hydrology data for the area show a large swampy area on the coastal plain between Retalhuleu and Ayutla. These *pampas* are extensive and at some time could have been under Pacific waters. This would make an intrusion extending about twenty miles inland from the sea.

Another feature that may have changed is the Caribbean Sea. It could easily have extended up the Polochic or Motagua Rivers to the Guatemalan highlands. The Sierra de las Minas mountain range, pushed up along the fault between the two rivers, may have been the result of an earthquake at the time of the Crucifixion. If either ocean extended closer to the mountains in the early Book of Mormon times, the references regarding the "narrow neck of land" and "nearly surrounded by water" would be further clarified.

Bounds of The Land Desolation

The boundaries of the city/land of Bountiful as they interface with the land of Desolation are not yet certain. The extent of the land of Desolation is equally uncertain. In some respects, Moron appears to be outside the land of Desolation. How far into Mexico did the land extend? This we do not know.



CHAPTER 18

THE NAME ZARAHEMLA

The Rubber Tree Etymology

Carmack said that Vázquez gave the correct etymology for the name Guatemala. He says that it came from the Nahuatl word *cuauhquemallam*, which means “a tree with white sap” (Carmack 1981, 19). This may be true, but as we have noted above for similar name derivations, there is possibly more to the story. Country names are originated within the country, not in foreign lands. Foreign lands may apply a name that becomes the common name in those foreign countries. Japan is not known by that name at home, nor is China. Americans refer to the country as China, but there they call it The Middle Kingdom. What did the people of Guatemala and Zarahemla call themselves?

Returning to the Nahuatl name for a tree with white sap, we note that many plants and some trees in the region have white sap. What tree would be most relevant to the area and have white sap? The answer would be the rubber tree or possibly the sapodilla tree (the source of latex from which chewing gum is made). Sahagún tells us that the natives of the area wore rubber sandals more than 500 years ago (Dibble 1961, 188). Is there a connection between the flowers of one of these trees and the possible definition for Zarahemla as “flower red” and Cotzumalguapa as “flower red beautiful”? What does “the tree with white sap” mean?

The rubber tree is native to the Costa Sur of Guatemala, the area of our proposed geography for the Nephite lands of the Book of Mormon. There are apparently several varieties scattered around the world. The color of the blossoms vary from red, pink, and white, to yellowish green. The Spanish names for rubber are *hule* and *caucho*. *Caucho* comes from the Quechua name for rubber through the French *caoutchouc*, to Spanish. *Hule* was the original Spanish name for rubber but in Sahagún's work he uses *olli* and *ulli*. It appears that *hule* is not a Spanish word but a Spanish way to write the Nahuatl word *olli* or *ulli*. The *olli* root shows up in the Nahuatl words that have to do with "ball or playing a ball game," as it should, since the balls were made of rubber.

Again we encounter problems with the translations of Sahagún's work. One translator refers to "wonderful sandals" while another skips the line completely. The word that Dibble translates as wonderful is *quaqualli*. The *alli* may refer again to rubber. But the *quaqu* may also refer to rubber in another language. We have seen this before. Often the first and second parts of a name mean the same thing but in different languages.

The Quiché word for rubber is *quic'*. The same word is used for "sap, blood, rubber, and rubber ball." This may be part of the symbolism of the Maya ball game, a brutal game resulting in the death of the losers. The name of the rubber tree is *quic'che'*. This may be the true origin of the name for the Quiché people or for their neighbors to the east the K'ekchi. The Quiché, the Quichua, and the Quechua all share a common name root. It may be that root is the word for the rubber tree.

The names Guatemala, Cotzumalguapa, and Zarahemla all started from the same place, as we shall see, and evolved in different directions as information and meaning were lost among the people over the 2,600 years from the time the refugees of Zedekiah's family arrived until the present day.

A native of Costa Rica was asked, "If early settlers arrived, what would be the most beautiful, captivating, flower after which they might name their country?" He said the area is full of

beautiful red flowers of various types in all seasons. After giving it some thought he mentioned the *amapola* as a striking flower. The *amapola* is a poppy in Spanish. The poppy family is the *papaveraceae* family and this family has white sap.

Another reference has grouped (possibly incorrectly) the Costa Rican flower they call the *amapola* with the *hibiscus*. The *hibiscus* family of flowers are present in all the Pacific Rim countries at sufficiently warm latitudes. It is the state flower of Hawaii. But the *hibiscus* is from the *mallow* family (*malvaceae*), not the *papaveraceae*. Putting the Phoenician word for flower in front of *amapola* is interesting. That would be *zahra amapola*, which has some similarity to Zarahemla. The separation of plants into families is an evolutionary process that has changed in the past and continues to change as species are shifted or reclassified into different families.

The *amapola*, as a poppy, has a white milky juice similar to the opium poppy. Opium is derived from the white juice taken from the pods of the opium poppy. Since the region is full of beautiful red flowers one would be well advised to live in the region for a while to identify the most likely candidates. If, for example, a foreigner from the Palestinian desert arrived in Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa on the Costa Sur of Guatemala and lived through all the seasons for a full year, the namesake flower for Cotzumalguapa would probably become obvious.

Mallow

Later in the wanderings of the Quiché they talk of a young girl named Hamai-Uleu (Geotz 1953, 185). *Uleu* is “earth, soil, or land.” The *hamai* is a red flower, a form of mallow found in the area, which in Mexico is called *quajocote* (Geotz 1953, 185). The name *Hamai* is very close to the Arabic word *hemra* for red. The *mallow*, or *malveceae* family is very useful for food, fiber, and medicine. There are about a thousand species in this family. It has many varieties including the hollyhock, which the Crusaders took back to England. Some of the varieties are hibiscus, cotton, okra,

cheese weed, rose of Sharon, swamp rose mallow, crimson-eyed mallow, marsh mallow, and purple poppy mallow, with roots that are like a sweet potato. Virtually all have some shade of red in their flowers. Some flowers are eight inches in diameter. The lines that distinguish which species belong to which family change from time to time and are not clear. Some of the poppy family have been considered in the *malveceae* family. Some varieties of the *amapola* or poppy of Central America may be or may have been grouped with the hibiscus. Mallow has an old Hebrew name of *malluwach* which is pronounced as *mal-loo'-akh*. In fact, the Strait of Gibraltar was previously known to the Phoenicians as the Strait of Moloch (Karam 1998, 3).

There is a possible reference to the plant mallow in the *Annals of The Cakchiquels*. Recinos (1953, 89) leaves it out of the text translation and just includes it in a footnote without explanation. Brinton did not know what it was and left it out of his translation completely (Brinton 1885, 126, 127), but it is included in his copy of the Cakchiquel text as, *xa maloh yc*. The ancients were seated under a ceiba tree and ate maloh yc, chile, shellfish, and fish. It looks like *maloh* or mallow was one of their staples. The word *maloh* or *maloh yc* appears to have come from the Hebrew word for mallow.

In the same paragraph, the Quiché mention a nation named Malah. The people of Malah were also called Tzutuhil. Tzutuhil comes from the name Zotz who was the “keeper of the mats” and mythologically was the bat that guarded the gates of Tulán (Recinos 1953, 47). As previously noted, Zoram would appear to be Zotz. The mats may have been the sacred records, including the Brass Plates of Laban. The Zoramites (Tzutuhils) apparently encroached on the Nephite part of Zarahemla after the Nephites were driven out, as that is where they are found today. Their home was Antionum, which has a corner of the Costa Sur very near Zarahemla.

What is most interesting is that the Tzutuhil land (Recinos 1953, 184-185) was called Malah (like the red mallow flower). Malah could be a nickname for Zarahemla or Zara-hem-malah.

Chayote

According to Brasseur de Bourbourg (Geotz 1953, 185) the *hamai* was the name of a red flower, a kind of mallow, which in Mexico, as noted above, is called *quajocote*. This may be *quelites*, the vegetable Diáz called the “wretched stuff” (Cohen 1963, 365). To some, zucchini is “wretched stuff.” The Spanish soldiers were not as careful with the Indian names and pronunciation as the priests who came later.

Combining this with mallow would give *quajocote-malah*, a predecessor to Guatemala. But what would this mallow type plant be? Searching the plant lists it appears that the most likely plant is the one that is today called the *chayote*. This is a truly amazing plant that is known to have originated in Guatemala and southern Mexico (Saade 2002,1). It is in the US ethnic markets today and is now scattered throughout the warmer climate regions of the earth. The fruit, stems, young leaves, and roots are all good to eat. It is a vine plant of the *Cucurbitaceae* family, not a mallow. But, the exact naming conventions of today were not in place when the Mulekites got off the boat. There are many varieties and they are excellent food staples today, just as they were in the days of the ancient Maya. The first one the author ate was cut in sections carefully to preserve the pit for examination. The pit looks like the Maya bar-dot symbol for zero. How fitting, zero is the pit with no fruit. The three hash marks on the zero symbol could have been the scratch marks from a knife. The mathematical concept of *zero* is not a trivial matter and it is one of the understandings for which the Maya are famous. Still, these people were very close to the earth, so a pedagogical representation of zero, such as this, is not unreasonable.

Zarahemla

The Zoramites settled east of Zarahemla and south of Jerushon and their land extended from near the city of Zarahemla to near

Siron or Cerén, which is in the western edge of El Salvador or Lenca, the land of Lehi. The Zoramite land was named Antionum (Alma 31:3). The place name Pantaleon is probably the Spanish name remnant of Antionum and is just about five miles east of Zarahemla (Cotzumalguapa).

The Quiché wrote of a city named Zakmalá. The *k* should probably be an *r*, which would make the name Zarmalá, very close to Zarahemla, but the location is not given. The Nahuatl language did not have an *r* in it and Sahagún mentioned a people that used an *r* and made that language unintelligible (Dibble 1961, 182). In the Arabic word for flower, *zahra*, the *hr* gets a not quite complete glottal closure. If the *hr* is replaced by a *k*, a complete glottal closure is achieved. There may have been some *k* replacements of *r* and *hr* by some of the early orthographers. Some examples would be Zaka for Sarah, Qumarkaj for Cumorah, Zakmalá for Zarmala or Zarahemla, and Mekénhá for Merénhá or Moronihah (Totonicapán).

The legends say that the Tzutzuhil people were also called Malah. Malah appears to be the last part of Zarahemla. It is also the last half of Guatemala. It was also the last half of Cotzumala before the Spaniards inserted the *guapa* to make it “pretty.”¹

Guatemala Is Zarahemla

The etymology of Zarahemla, Guatemala, and Cotzumalguapa can be found in the above word scraps. Zarahemla is formed from the Arabic word for *flower*, *zahra*, and the Hebrew word for mallow, which is *mal-loo'-akh*, or as the natives of Guatemala called it, *Malah*. The Arabic word for “red,” *hemra*, appears to be inserted between. That would be *Zahra-hemra-malah*, contracted to Zarahemla.

The name Guatemala probably came from Cotzumala before the Spaniards put the *guapa* on the end. This is an example of an

¹ Displacing the terminal *a* to add a suffix ending or an infix is an old tradition of the Nahuatl, the Quiché, and the Spaniards.

old name being changed because it has a bad meaning in the new language.

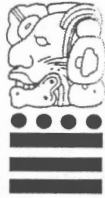
The Mexican name for a particular type of mallow was *quajocote* (or *quajcote malah*), which is not found in the dictionaries but does have two critical parts, *quaj* and *cote*. The *cote* is from the Quiché *cotz* for “flower,” and the *quaj* is the Mexican Nahuatl contribution that changed the name from Cotzumala to Quauhtemallan in the writings of Sahagún (Dibble 1961, 190). Actually, it looks like the whole word was used, *quajocote* for *quauhte*, with mallow, mallan, or Malah. That would be *quajocotemalah* or *quauhtemalah*, which is almost exactly Sahagún’s rendition of Quauhtemallán. Sahagún was in Mexico with the Aztecs who spoke Nahuatl, not in Guatemala where Quiché was spoken. Guatemala is in the Quiché world but it appears that the name was imposed by the Spaniards through the Nahuatl influence as *quajocotemalah* or *quauhtemalah* to Quauhtemallán and finally Guatemala.

The more direct origin and evolution of the name within Guatemala among the Quiché would be Cotzumala directly to Guatemala without the Nahuatl and Spanish twist. But it appears that this original path has been forgotten. It started as Cotzumala (Zarahemla or “flower red mallow”) and the Spaniards added an infix, *guapa*, forming Cotzumalguapa. To Christianize this “heathen” place they added a saint’s name to form Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa. This is a nice little town in an excellent agricultural area below the volcanoes Fuego and Agua where the present-day inhabitants probably do not even know that their fair town was the original namesake for the beautiful “land of eternal springtime,” Guatemala.

Strait of Maloch

Karam states that Phoenician inscriptions found in Tyre, known today by its Arabic name Sur, are on tombstones, which are now in London. The writings mention an expedition of a Phoenician navigator to a region beyond the Strait of Moloch

(Gibraltar today) where “the sea penetrated into the land...” a place where there was an abundance of food and lots of wood (Karam 1998, 3). Where would one find such a place where “the sea penetrated into the land?” If one follows the currents from that area, they lead directly to the Gulf of Mexico. It appears that the Phoenicians knew of *Maloch*, or *Malah yc*, or the greater land of Zarahemla, the land “with an abundance of food.”



CHAPTER 19

PERSONAL CONCLUSIONS

Credit to Mormon

The great and dedicated editor Mormon made it all possible with his exactness, completeness, and attention to preserving seemingly irrelevant details along with the weightier spiritual concepts. These details give the geographic clues we have followed in this book.

City Locations

The proposed geography identifies and locates on maps the majority of the cities and lands mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Confidence varies for each city named. The Matrix of Cities and Lands reflects the author's level of confidence with each tentative location. The factors included for weighing this level of confidence were determined on the following criteria: (1) name recognition or phonology, (2) name translation, (3) linkages between cities, (4) relative positioning, (5) the physical realities of human nature, and (6) consistency with Book of Mormon descriptions.

A strong source of verification comes from the Hebrew and Sumerian connections to the new world names. It was also

helpful to find that Cumorah, Qumarkah, or K'umarkáj means "rotten bones." Only after these cities and regions had been identified, based on all other data and linkages, was the word-meaning connection identified. It did much to confirm the correctness of the proposed geography to have these connections yield to discovery so late in the project. They helped ratify what had been done before.

A very strong indicator for confidence is the fact that it all fits. There are just a few cities and lands that await identification in the proposed geography.

One of the first questions people ask is, "Where is the Sidon River?" It is most likely the Michatoya River, the Fish River in Nahuatl or the Saida River in the Middle Eastern languages. The extent of the tributaries involved and any course changes over time are uncertain, however.

Problems in Achieving Certainty

The locations of some of these cities and lands are very firm, and some are a bit shaky. But, this book will alter the way people read the Book of Mormon. When people can picture the geography where the events occurred, they will know Captain Moroni and Mormon personally. The author's love and respect for these great men has grown immensely because of the up-close and personal intensity of this investigation. It is hoped that the reader will have a similar experience.

Some of the difficulty in arriving at site locations for the remaining cities results from trying to hit a moving target. Jerusalem in the land of Lehi had water come up in its stead (3 Nephi 9:7). Did the water stay? Was the city moved? Was it rebuilt? We do not have the answers, but this can be learned by a good archaeological studying of the proposed geography. The fortress city Lehi has been subjected to many volcanic deposits that have, no doubt, buried some towns that were relevant to Mormon's history. As for the wilderness of Hermounts, is it where we find it today or did it move back as civilization grew?

The wilderness between the Lamanites and the Nephites probably disappeared before Moroni finished his writing. With all the seismic and volcanic activity in the area, what has survived? Rivers and lakes are transient entities when volcanoes can put down 100 feet of ash in a matter of minutes.

Much research in Central America has been conducted but it is difficult to get at much of the information that has been extracted. Carmack made this comment about the availability of archaeological data from the Utatlán site: "Much of the information is widely scattered in field notes, reports, and all-but-inaccessible publications" (Carmack 1981, 12). The reader has experienced the struggle with those "all-but-inaccessible publications" in the case of the Abaj Takalik site. If all the facts from all the digs were put into an accessible database, it would be a great aid to Book of Mormon researchers.

An example of another problem is the following observation made by one researcher about "anomalous" findings, such as the discovery of metal at an inappropriate age depth.

Typically when one of these "anomalous" specimens has been reported, the accompanying statement goes something like this: "Since we know that metals date only after AD 900, in all probability this specimen was intruded into our archaeological feature by latecomers to the site, or else the site is later than it otherwise seems." In one famous case, metal fragments were found in a cache constructed beneath a stela at Copán, Honduras, dated AD 782 by inscription. A respected analyst suggested that the objects "were gathered together and inserted into the vault (much later), perhaps by a band of pilgrims visiting the deserted ceremonial center." In fact this scenario directly contradicts the judgment of the excavator. The suggestion that ragtag visitors would dig beneath a massive stela at an abandoned site to find the cache put there by those who erected the monument and then put pieces of scarce copper in among earlier artifacts instead

of looting the deposit is unsupported by a single known case of similar behavior. Yet logic little more compelling than this isn't infrequent in the reports (Sorensen 1992, 2:849).

The situation reminds one of Arlo Guthrie's song *Alice's Restaurant*. The singer implies, "Yes, officer, I did indeed dig under that whole pile of garbage just to put that letter there." Not surprisingly, the officer in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts did not believe Arlo either.

How have some of these archaeologists and anthropologists survived, using such a lack of logic, for so many years? What did it take to deify the concepts that have been put on a pedestal so that no one dares challenge them today? Who canonized their "since-we-all-know" database? We agree with Nibley in calling this "Smithsonian paralysis" (Nibley 1967, 1).

Diffusion of the Peoples

Many people have been raised to think that they lived in the lands of the Book of Mormon. Many people have taken tours and figured they've seen it all. The smallness of Mormon's world may be disappointing to these people. Also, the relevant ruins may lack the Friberg touch. Friberg's paintings are inspiring renditions. They are very representative of the great temples of the Classic Maya period. But sadly, they are not representative of what we find today as the remains of Mormon's world. There is always the very real possibility that the materials were removed from some of the old sites to build new ones. When Alvarado arrived at Iximché, the buildings were made of beautiful, well cut and polished stone and mortar. But the city was burned and the stone was used to build churches and other buildings in the area. The same was probably true of other important cities. The foundations of some of the old Catholic churches may thus show evidence of ancient craftsmanship.

While Mormon's world was small, it should be remembered

that people were continually scattering from the Guatemala area to inhabit all of the Americas. Once a group left the confines of Mormon's world, he no longer kept track of their history in the Book of Mormon. Communications and travel were not rapid at that time. Besides, Mormon had his hands full just documenting the doings of the people immediately around him from the beginning to the end. He apparently considered it the responsibility of these other peoples to keep their own records. Indeed, he indicated that some of the departed groups *were* keeping their own records (Helaman 3:3-16).

There is a certain pride associated with ethnic heritage and ancestry that is healthy and good. The turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers is a divine concept. When the Father said of his Son, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What did he mean? In part it must mean that he is justifiably proud of his Son—our Savior.

Pride and appreciation for ancestors is good. It is hoped that no one will feel less proud of his or her heritage because of anything written in this book. The opposite should be the case. The human race should appreciate its diversity while recognizing the closeness we share as a human family, the children of one loving Father. The more we learn of the migration and diffusion of civilizations, the more we will come to see the heritage we all share. It is not "us" and "them." It is just a matter of where do we each fit into Adam's family tree, and do we make it back to the Father, or are we casualties to the adversary?

As an example of mixed heritage, the author is proud of the half-breed Cherokee Indian that shows up in his family tree. This half-breed, Andrew Jackson Still, was quite a character. He crossed the plains with his family alone in their two wagons during the gold rush. One night, an Indian snuck into their camp. Andrew Jackson Still snuck up behind the intruder and grabbed him by the hair then, with one hand, lifted the Indian to his feet.

He said to the intruder, "When you come into my camp you walk like a man, not crawl like a dog." He then turned the intruder loose.

With this encounter the word went ahead of him. This half-breed was "big medicine." The way was opened for him, and the Indians provided a protective path for Andrew Jackson Still and his family all the way to California.

However, one daughter did not complete that trip. She had seen in a dream the man she would marry. While they drove their wagon teams through Salt Lake City, she recognized the young man, told her mother, jumped off the wagon, and married him. He was the author's great-grandfather Jacob Greenwood Pate and she was Ruth Johnson Still.

This little story shows the great tendency for diversity as a southerner probably of English extraction married an American Indian and their offspring moved to California seeking their fortunes. A daughter stayed in Utah to marry an Illinois native of English extraction. Mixing, moving, and discovering is what people do and have done since Adam.

We know of the twelve tribes of Israel and their origin. We know little of the wives of the original twelve brothers. We know essentially nothing of the wanderings of the Lost Ten Tribes. Of course, we may know everything about them, but just not know that we know it. From advanced thermodynamics, the entropy of a system is influenced by what we know about that system. Likewise, with the Lost Ten Tribes, we may not know what we know. Indeed, until we receive the third tome, yet another *Testament of Jesus Christ* from the Lost Ten Tribes, we may not learn of the missing chapters that link those who left Israel and scattered to those that still wander the earth. Possibly all we lack is the continuity of their identity.

How many great men of the past have received promises from the Lord as to the continuance of their posterity. Certainly the great patriarch Abraham has to head the list. But there are other subsets of Abraham's posterity that have from time to time been involved in special covenants and promises with the Lord relative to the continuance of their posterity. Ishmael had promises (Genesis 16:7-12; 17:20). But his was in part a "Scotch Blessing." While his descendants would be innumerable, verse 12

says he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Jacob had great promises (Exodus 19:5-6). Joseph through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh had great promises (Genesis 48:13-20). Likewise, the children of father Lehi were blessed with a blessing of continuance (2 Nephi 4:7,9). Nephi and his brothers Joseph and Sam were promised that not all would be destroyed (2 Nephi 2:23; 4:11; 9:53). The findings of this book suggest that more survived and scattered both to the north and south, as well as west, than the 230,000 who died at Cumorah.

Here is a farmer's perspective on the House of Israel. In any livestock-breeding program, desirable traits are identified and encouraged by selective breeding. One of the most important things a farmer does is cull the undesirable traits from his herd. Good bloodlines are kept and promoted. If there is one group that, because of father Abraham, has received a promise and another group that has no promise because of wickedness, which group will continue? Is it not the groups who are just cumbering the ground who have routinely been destroyed when they are fully ripened in iniquity? This is the Lord's culling process.

The most prominent name in running quarter horses is a stud named Three Bars. He was a thoroughbred that didn't do well on the track but when he was crossed with quarter horse mares he produced great offspring. This one stud did more for the quarter horse breed than any other. Even today, fifty years later, horse owners are proud of the Three Bars blood in their quarter horses.

Getting out of the corral, we have the great patriarch Abraham in our genes, also the blood of Israel. There are many references to the House of Israel being scattered among all of the nations of the earth. We do not yet know of all their wanderings. We just know that they were extensive. In the 4,000 years since Abraham, or the 3,400 years since Joshua led the children across the river, how much growth, spreading, and scattering has occurred? With some groups being shepherded and protected and other groups being destroyed as they became fully wicked, the concentration of

the protected groups would tend to increase. It follows that the concentration of the seed of Abraham and Jacob is greater than we may imagine.

Nephi was saddened when he learned of the destruction that would face his descendants but he was also comforted that not all would be destroyed (1Nephi 13:30; 15:5). In Mormon's day the Nephites were so scattered and mixed with the Lamanites that there was really no longer a people known as Nephites (see Helaman 3:16). The Nephites were mixed, not completely annihilated. As a nation they were gone but, to some degree or another, they are still present in the gene pool.

When the early Spanish conquistadors came, they wrote of finding some women as fair as the fairest women in the Spanish courts. These fair-skinned women were quickly married to the Spaniards and lost their identity. The soldiers with Cortés were not blind. Bernal Díaz often mentioned the beautiful women (Cohen 1963). Some of them were taken to Spain. The peoples of Central and South America are proud of their Spanish blood. But likewise, the Spanish blood in early Latin America has some Nephites in the woodpile. Even the Spaniards will have some European Israelite blood on the top side and some Abrahamic blood through the Arabic Moors on the bottom side of their pedigree charts. We also know of many Jews that took refuge in Spain prior to the Inquisition.

On the Pacific side, we know of extensive interaction between the Americas, Polynesia, and Asia. The genetic evidence is literally carved in stone. Diffusion does not go one way. Sometimes a sailor will jump ship, but sometimes he will take a bride home. There is also the ever-present danger of shipwrecks that seem to have placed human life on virtually every island of the sea. There is also the rather direct path across China that would promote travel and migration from Sumer and the Middle East to China and Japan. Where did the Mongols come from? Who are the Ainu of northern Japan? Did the Jaredites really go across China, Russia, Mongolia, and Manchuria? The Oriental influence in Mexico is massive.

The Ainu people of northern Japan are different from the other people in the region and their origin is unknown. According to their own language, their name, *Ainu*, means “human.” This would more appropriately be “people,” a common designation among various American Indian tribes. Their names in their own languages mean “the people.”

The word “people” in Christenson’s K’iche’ word list is *winäk*. Let’s look at Ainu more carefully. There are no diphthongs in Japanese. Ainu is pronounced *a-i-nu* with the *i* being pronounced as a long *e*, as in most languages other than English. Dropping the *k* from the end of *winäk* as an attempt to spell a glottal closure, we see that the two words for “people,” *w-i-na* and *a-i-nu* are somewhat similar. Japanese children are known to taunt Ainu children by calling them *inu*, which means “dog” in Japanese. Interestingly, the word for “dog” among the Aymará of Bolivia is *anu*, very close to *inu*. Is it possible that the Ainu people of northern Japan have their origin in Guatemala? Or was the migration from the land of Shem, or Bilad Ashamm as the Arabs call it (Rashid Ahmad, personal conversation, 2002), and Mesopotemia/Sumer, through China to the Americas?

Continued study will demonstrate many word connections between the Quiché of Guatemala, the Ainu of Japan, the Mongals, the Manchus, and even the Basques of northern Spain. We are missing many chapters in the migration of mankind, but there is one thing we know for sure. God “hath made of one blood all nations” on the face of the earth and He has determined the times and bounds of their habitation (see Acts 17:26).

Conclusions

Sincere thanks and appreciation are extended to all those who have gone before and left their tracks with integrity. To the researchers and the people who document, to those who have the courage to write what they see even if they do not completely understand, and to those who are not bound by the precedent of theories, go a most sincere word of praise.

This earth is small and we are all connected in the not so

distant past. There have been many infusions of civilizations between the Old World and the Americas and between the Americas and the Pacific Rim. There are those who would drive isolationist wedges into the past to sever these linkages, both recorded and legendary. It is folly to assume discontinuity and to fiercely defend it. There have always been independent spirits who have to see what is on the other side of the mountain, or what is across the sea. We should not deprive our ancestors of the right to have had a comparable understanding of the world of their day. Our lack of knowledge does not constitute proof of their nonexistence. The peoples of the world knew and, for the most part, recorded their histories.

Mormon will go down in history as one of the greatest historians of all time. His history is real and the geographical names are recorded on maps and documents prepared by men and women who had no affiliation with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. This is true, as we have seen, even after the Spaniards changed virtually every place-name in Central America in their efforts to Christianize the "heathens," destroy a culture, and plunder the continent.

The purpose of the Book of Mormon is to serve as another testament of the divinity of Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice. Mormon delivered that message well as he prepared the stick of Joseph (Ezekiel 37:15-22). The gospel of Jesus Christ is presented with clarity, the lessons on faith are beautifully simple, and the results of wickedness are graphically real. The message of the Book of Mormon is celestial, but the setting is terrestrial, earthbound. Surprisingly, the terrestrial has been included by Mormon in exacting detail, detail that has permitted the proposed geography to be identified so that, like the Apostle Thomas, those who must see can also believe.

APPENDIX A

A BOOK OF MORMON GEOGRAPHY

The following information is presented here as an aid in understanding the geographical relationships between the place names given in the Book of Mormon and the maps based on the proposed geography. This information must correlate to all the locations identified, and perhaps the strongest evidence for the proposed geography is that it does. Any alternative geography would need to fit the same geographical information.

Note On Hebrew Reference Frames

To the ancient Hebrews, directions were relative to a person standing on the Mediterranean shore facing Jerusalem. East is forward, inland, west is behind, to the sea, north is on the left hand, and south is on the right. In the Quiché Maya language of today the ritual title for north is left, and for south it is right

This reference frame appears to have been used in the Book of Mormon. That is, “northward” appears to be rotated counterclockwise to line up with the Pacific coast of El Salvador and Guatemala. Thus, in the Book of Mormon, “northward” is usually closer to northwest, “southward” to southeast, “westward” to southwest, and “eastward” to northeast.

Place Names & Geographical Descriptions

Aaron-1: A Nephite city near the city of Ammonihah in a direction probably different from Gideon and Melek (Alma

8:13). It may have been a Jaredite city (Ether 1:15, 16; 10:31), and possibly the same city as Aaron-2.

Aaron-2: A Nephite city near Nephiah in a direction opposite from the city of Moroni (Alma 50:14).

Ablom: A Jaredite city by a seashore (any body of water) many days eastward of the hill Shim and the land of Cumorah (Ether 9:3).

Agosh: A Jaredite plains region near the wilderness of Akish and westward from the Corihor, Shurr, and Comnor area (Ether 14:15-28).

Akish: A Jaredite wilderness (possibly a mountainous region) near a seashore and next to the plains of Agosh (Ether 14:3-14).

Alma-1: A valley one day's journey from the land of Helam. This would be eleven days travel from Zarahemla and nine days from Shilom (Mosiah 23:3; 24:21, 25).

Alma-2: Not mentioned, but possibly a city among the Anti-Nephi-Lehies in the land of Jershon to honor their benefactor, Alma the younger.

Ammonihah: Possibly a Jaredite city known as the city of Nehor that was later an apostate Nephite city (Ether 7:4, 9; Alma 15:15). Located three days north of Melek (Alma 8:6) and surrounded by Gideon, Aaron, Noah, and Sidom. It was on the edge of Nephite lands and like Noah was vulnerable to attack (Alma 16:2, 3).

Amnihu: A hill (probably a volcano) near the Sidon River that was along the attack path between the Lamanite lands and the Zarahemla area (Alma 2:15). This would place it near Melek and Manti at the headwaters of the Sidon River.

Amulon: A city founded by the apostate Amulonites who were the priests of wicked king Noah (Mosiah 23:31). It was located

near the city of Helam founded by Alma and his followers (Mosiah 23:35, 39). This was near a city named Jerusalem and therefore near a land named Mormon (Alma 21:1, 2).

Angola: A Nephite city near David and Joshua that was in the path of Mormon's retreat from Zarahemla in the northwest direction toward the lands of Bountiful and Desolation (Mormon 1:10; 2:4-6).

Ani-Anti: A Lamanite village near Jerusalem (Alma 21:4, 11).

Antionum: A rather large Zoramite land southeast of Zarahemla and south of Jershon (Alma 31:3).

Antiparah: A Nephite fortress city southeast of Zarahemla established to protect the Anti-Nephi-Lehies in the greater land of Jershon. This is the furthest southeast of the fortress cities mentioned. It is between a city on the seashore and Cumeni (Alma 56:14 to 57:2).

Antipas: A mount in the Lamanite territory of Onidah that was on the interface between the original land of Lehi (Lehi-1) and the land of Jershon. It was within about a one-day march from the original city of Nephi (Nephi-1) where Nephi first lived after they landed (Alma 47:5, 7, 20, 29-31). It was very near, if not part of, the land of Jershon as the Lamanites with Lahonti fled there for safety from Amalickiah. Also, after the king was killed by Amalickiah's guards, they fled to the people of Ammon for safety (Alma 47:29).

Antum: A Nephite land that included the hill Shim (Mormon 1:3). It was near the land of Jashon (Mormon 2:17). It was on Omer's path from Moran by Shim, past Cumorah to Ablom by the seashore (Ether 9:3). The name root shows up in Jaredite names such as Coriantum, Coriantumr, and Morianton and the Nephite names of Morianton and Moriantum (Ether 1:14, 22; 12:1; Moroni 9:9). These citations would place Antum in the mountainous country above Desolation and Bountiful near the

fortress cities of Lehi-3 and Morianton (Alma 50:25-51:26).

Boaz: A Nephite city in the greater land of Desolation that was part of the retreats from Desolation to Teancum to Boaz and on to Jordan (Mormon 4:1 to 5:3) before Mormon wrote his famous epistle changing the venue to Cumorah (Mormon 6:2).

Bountiful-1: The land on the southeast shore of the Arabian Peninsula where Nephi and his brothers built a ship and set sail to the Americas with the families of Lehi and Ishmael (1 Nephi 17:1, 5-8).

Bountiful-2: A Nephite temple-city and land northwest of Zarahemla and adjacent to Desolation. This was the most northwesterly part of the Nephite lands before crossing the “narrow neck of land” into the land of Desolation. It is between the fortress cities of Mulek, Desolation/Teancum, and an unnamed land in the southeast direction toward Zarahemla. (Alma 22:31, 32; 51:28, 30; 52:9, 17; 63:5; Helaman 1:23; 4:4; 3 Nephi 3:23; 11:1)

Comnor: A Jaredite hill adjacent to the valleys of Shurr and Corihor. Shurr was very near hill Comnor and Corihor was within trumpet-sound of Comnor (Ether 14:28).

Corihor: A Jaredite land and valley near the hill Comnor and the valley of Shurr (Ether 14:27, 28). This region is eastward from the wilderness of Akish and the plains of Agosh (Ether 14:3, 26). Corihor is similar to Korihor and is linked with the land of Nehor, the Desolation of Nehors, and Ammonihah (Ether 7:4; Alma 16:11).

Cumeni: A Nephite fortress city east of Zarahemla situated to defend the Anti-Nephi-Lehies. It is on the southeastern frontier close to the Lamanite lands and is situated between Antiparah and Zeezrom (Alma 56:14).

Cumorah-1: A Nephite hill and land full of rotten bones left

from the Jaredite destruction. Known as hill Ramah to the Jaredites. Located one day's battle south of Ripliancum, the waters to exceed all. The hill Cumorah is east of the hill Shim, and west of Ablom by the seashore. It is the location of the Nephites' final battle. It is the place where Mormon deposited the records of the Nephite before giving the few plates containing the Book of Mormon to his son Moroni. The region must have been plentiful in resources for weapons. (Mormon 6:6; Ether 15:7-11; Mosiah 8:8; Words of Mormon 1:5)

Cumorah-2: A hill in upstate New York adjacent to Manchester and Palmyra from which, following Moroni's instructions, Joseph Smith Jr. extracted the golden plates of the Book of Mormon, which were translated by the gift and power of God using the Urim and Thummim. The naming of the hill may have been due to a misunderstanding of the verse in Mormon 6:6 as all the records were stored in the original hill Cumorah except the few that Mormon gave his son Moroni. Some 36 years later Moroni was still writing (Mormon 6:5; Moroni 10:1).

David: A Nephite land near the city of Angola and just southeast of the land of Joshua (Mormon 2:4-6), which was near the seashore (which could include a river) that divided the land southward (Bountiful) from the land northward (Desolation) (Ether 10:20).

Desolation: A Nephite name for a city and a land previously occupied by the Jaredites. This land was just northwest of the sea (river) that divided the land southward from the land northward. Bountiful, the land southward, was reserved by the Jaredites for hunting. The two lands were connected by a very narrow neck of land (Alma 63:5; Ether 10:20). The adjective narrow is a relative term, and in this case the narrow neck of land was narrow relative to the city/land Desolation and the city/land Bountiful. Cities are a few square miles at most, and lands apparently extended beyond the city to the next closest land. Bountiful and Desolation were separated by about 20 to 30

miles (Alma 22:32). Using this as the length scale, the narrow neck of land was probably a natural land bridge or narrows in the river. It may also have been a manmade bridge that spanned the spot where the sea (large river) divided the lands (Alma 63:5; Ether 10:20, 21). It was described by Mormon as a “point” (Alma 52:9). The Mulekites first landed in Desolation but chose to move southward to start the land of Zarahemla (Alma 22:30). Later a city of Teancum was built adjacent to Desolation (Mormon 4:3).

Ephraim: A Jaredite hill where iron ore could be obtained and smelted to make steel swords (Ether 7:9). It was somewhere closer to Moroni’s writing desk than the land of Nehor, probably above Moran in the general region of Shim and Cumorah.

Gad: A Nephite or Gadianton robber city burned at the time of the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 9:10). The name has the same Hebrew root as Gid, meaning band, group, or troop. See Gid, Gadiandi, Gadiomnah.

Gadiandi: A Nephite or Gadianton robber city buried at the time of the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 9:8). The name has the same roots as Gadianton and therefore is assumed to have some affiliation. See Gid, Gad, Gadiomnah.

Gadiomnah: A Nephite or Gadianton robber city buried at the time of the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 9:8). The name shares the same roots as Gid, Gad, and Omner. An affiliation is therefore assumed. If it is affiliated with Gid and Omner it would be located in the canyon between the fortress city Lehi in the highlands and the fortress city Mulek near the land Bountiful in the piedmont (Alma 51:26)

Gid: A Nephite fortress city near the city Bountiful and the fortress cities of Mulek, Omner (Alma 51:26). See Gad.

Gideon: A Nephite city and valley settled by and named after the great defender of the faith, Gideon (Alma 1:1-15; 6:7). The

city was located in a mountain valley between Zarahemla and Ammonihah where the Nehors were located. Southeast of Gideon, in the direction away from Zarahemla, is the city of Manti at the headwaters of the Sidon River (Alma 17:1; 61:5).

Gilgal: A Jaredite valley near the plains of Heshlon (Ether 13:27-29). Later there was a Nephite city identified as Gilgal and it is assumed to be the same location. This city was buried at the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 9:6).

Gimgimno: Probably a Gadianton robber city buried at the Crucifixion. Mentioned with Gadiandi and Gadiomnah, it may have been in the same general area (3 Nephi 9:8).

Helam: A Nephite city founded by Alma and Helam that was deep in Lamanite territory. The apostate Amulonites who were the priests of wicked king Noah (Mosiah 23:31) were set over the people of Alma. It was located very near the city of Amulon (Mosiah 23:35; 39). This was near a city named Jerusalem and therefore near a land named Mormon (Alma 21:1, 2). Helam was eight days travel from Shilom and twelve days travel from Zarahemla (Mosiah 23:3; 24:25).

Hermounts: A wilderness (probably a mountain range) north and west of Gideon and Zarahemla (Alma 2:24-37).

Heshlon: A plains region in Jaredite history that was very near the valley of Gilgal (Ether 13:27-29).

Ishmael: A Lamanite land near the waters of Sebus (Alma 17:21, 26). This was part of a rather isolated tri-city complex that included Middoni and Midian (Alma 20:2; 24:5). These three cities appear to be closest to the Lamanite village of Ani-Anti (Alma 21:11, 12). They were near the very first land of Nephi, Nephi-1 (Alma 22:28), and more than eight days travel away from the second land of Nephi, Nephi-2 or Lehi-Nephi as it was later called (Mosiah 23:3).

Jacob: A Nephite or Gadianton robber city buried at the time of the Crucifixion (Nephi 9:8). Possibly founded by the apostate Nephite named Jacob who was made king over a secret combination (3 Nephi 7:9). After he found that he was outnumbered, he commanded his followers to leave the greater Zarahemla area and move to the northernmost part of the land where they founded the kingdom and city of Jacobugath (3 Nephi 7:12; 9:9).

Jacobugath: A Gadianton robber or secret combination city founded in the northernmost part of the land by the apostate, Jacob (3 Nephi 7:12; 9:9). The city was burned at the Crucifixion for destroying the peace and the government, and for killing the prophets. Even though this city was in the northernmost part of the land, it was still within striking distance of Zarahemla.

Jashon: A Nephite city in the highlands above Bountiful near the land of Antum and the hill Shim (Mormon 2:16, 17). Preceding and subsequent battles might possibly place it between Joshua/David/Angola and Shem/Desolation (Mormon 2-3).

Jershon: A large Nephite land east of Zarahemla that was given to the Anti-Nephi-Lehies (Alma 27:22; 31:3). The land was between Zarahemla and the land of Nephi-1 and served as a buffer until the people were extremely wicked in Mormon's day (Alma 27:23; Mormon 1:10).

Jerusalem: A Lamanite city in the original land of Lehi. The city was built by the apostate Amulonites and the Amalekites (Alma 21:1-4). It was located near the cities of Helam and Amulon and the village of Ani-Anti (Alma 21:11). This was near a land named Mormon that was distinct from the waters of Mormon in the land of Shilom (Mosiah 18:4, 5). There may have been some confusion among the writers for it appears from our distant perspective that there was a land of Mormon near

Jerusalem, Helam, Amulon, and Nephi-1. This is an eight-day journey from the Shilom/Nephi-2/Lehi-Nephi area. There is also a Waters of Mormon within about three miles of Nephi-2, later called Lehi-Nephi.

Jordan: A Nephite city in the greater land of Desolation that was part of the retreat from Desolation to Teancum to Boaz and on to Jordan (Mormon 4:1 to 5:3) before Mormon wrote his famous epistle changing the venue to Cumorah (Mormon 6:2).

Josh: A wicked Nephite city destroyed by fire at the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 9:10). Possibly near Gad. Josh is a variant of Joshua and may be the same or a neighboring city. *See* Joshua.

Judea: A Nephite fortress city placed around the land of Jershon to protect the Anti-Nephi-Lehies (Alma 27:23). It was near, but outside of the fortress city sequence of Manti, Zeezrom, Cumeni, Antiparah, and the unnamed city by the sea (Alma 56:14 to 57:2). Possibly it was the fortress city closest to the mount Antipas, as the army of captain Antipus was assisting at Judea (Alma 47:7; 56:9, 10).

Kishkumen: A wicked Nephite city burned at the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 9:10). Possibly named after Kishkumen who with Gadianton started the secret combination known as the Gadianton robbers (Helaman 6:18). When they were discovered, they fled into the wilderness by a secret way and may have founded the city of Kishkumen (Helaman 2:11). This city may have been founded earlier and served as their base of operation.

Laman-1: Not mentioned in the Book of Mormon, but may have been a city near the landing point in the original land of Lehi-1.

Laman-2: Not mentioned in the Book of Mormon either, but it shows up on Honduran maps near La Paz (Shilom).

Laman-3: A city burned at the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 9:10). It is mentioned by the Savior at the temple in Bountiful in the same

breath as Gad, Josh, and Kishkumen. Therefore, it was probably in the highlands above Bountiful with the more wicked part of the Lamanites (Helaman 6:18). In his visit to temple Bountiful the Savior may have mentioned only cities near Bountiful, except possibly Onihah, Mocum and Jerusalem (3 Nephi 9:7). He did not mention any of the cities beyond Zarahemla such as Gideon, Antionum, Jershon, Ammonihah, and Manti. He did not mention anything in the original land of Shilom and Nephi-2. It is therefore assumed that Laman-3 was in the greater Bountiful area, but toward the northern extreme. Of course, the possibility remains that Laman-3 is really Laman-1 or Laman-2.

Lehi-1: This is the land of their first inheritance where Lehi's family first landed. It is referenced as the land southward (Helaman 6:10). No city was mentioned in this region by the name of Lehi. Their children scattered with their own families to start their own towns.

Lehi-2: Originally a Nephite city and land named Nephi, but after the Nephites left, it was referenced as Lehi-Nephi (Mosiah 7:1). This name change would distinguish it from the original land of Nephi, Nephi-1 in the land of Lehi, where they originally landed. It was very near the land and city of Shilom, from which, using the king's tower, the Lamanite land of Shemlon could also be observed (Mosiah 11:12). The Lamanite cities in the immediate area, called the land of Shemlon, were named Lemuel and Shimnilom, and may possibly have included Laman-2 (Alma 23:12).

Lehi-3: This was a Nephite fortress city active in the days of captain Moroni (Alma 50:15; 51:24). It is in the mountains near Morianton, above the land of Bountiful in the piedmont below (Alma 50:32; 51:26). Other city/lands in the area included Nephiah, Gid, Omner, Mulek, and the Camp of Moroni.

Lemuel-1: Not mentioned in the Book of Mormon, but possibly in the land where Lehi's family first landed.

Lemuel-2: A Lamanite city in or near the land of Shemlon, which was adjacent to Shilom and Lehi-Nephi (Alma 23:12).

Manti: A Nephite fortress city, part of the fortresses that protected Jershon and Zarahemla (Alma 43:22). It was located east of Zarahemla in the mountains near the headwaters of the Sidon River (Alma 22:27). It was also southeast of Gideon, but on the main road that connected the greater land of Zarahemla with the Lamanite lands (Alma 17:1). It was between the hill Amnihu and the hill Riplah (Alma 2:15; 43:31, 32).

Melek: A Nephite city near Manti and the Sidon River (Alma 8:3). It is located three days south of Ammonihah on the road from Ammonihah, through Manti and Melek, and on to Zarahemla. At Manti is a fork in the road that goes toward the Lamanite lands. This is a distinct road from the one connecting Ammonihah, Gideon, and Zarahemla. Melek is northeast of the land of Jershon (Alma 35:13). Melek is very significant to Alma, as the city is mentioned only in conjunction with him.

Middoni: A Lamanite city that was part of an isolated tri-city complex including Ishmael and Midian (Alma 20:2; 24:5). These three cities appear to be closest to the Lamanite village of Ani-Anti (Alma 21:11, 12). They were near the very first land of Nephi, Nephi-1 (Alma 22:28) and possibly about eight days travel from the second land of Nephi, Nephi-2 or Lehi-Nephi as it was later called (Mosiah 23:3).

Midian: A Lamanite city, part of the isolated tri-city complex that included Ishmael and Middoni (Alma 20:2; 24:5). These three cities appear to be closest to the Lamanite village of Ani-Anti (Alma 21:11, 12). They were near the very first land of Nephi (Alma 22:28) and more than eight days travel from the second land of Nephi, Nephi-2 or Lehi-Nephi as it was later called (Mosiah 23:3).

Minon: A Nephite city less than one day's travel from Gideon in the direction of Manti (Alma 2:20-24) on the road to Nephi-1.

Mocum: A city that was flooded at the Crucifixion and linked with Onihah and Jerusalem (3 Nephi 9:7). It therefore was probably a Lamanite city. Onihah may be the same as Onidah, which was on the interface between the land of Jerushon and the land of Nephi-1 (Alma 32:4; 47:5).

Moriancumer: A camp or town, probably in eastern Asia on the Pacific Coast, where the Jaredites lived for four years and built their eight barges that transported them to the land of Moron, and what the Nephites later called the land of Desolation (Ether 2:13; Alma 22:30). Ocean and wind currents indicate that this might be near the mouth of the Amur (as in *Morianc-amur*) River, a 2800-mile-long river in the Russia, Mongolia, Manchuria area north of China.

Morianton: A Nephite mountain city that became a fortress to help protect Bountiful below. It was adjacent to fortress Lehi and near the camp of Moroni (Alma 50:26-32; 51:26). Morianton appears as a Nephite city but the name Morianton first appears in Jaredite history (Ether 1:22). It is therefore very likely that Morianton was a Jaredite city.

Mormon-1: The Waters of Mormon, the Forest of Mormon, and the Place of Mormon were near a fountain of pure water (Mosiah 18:5) located close enough to Shilom for an evening stroll and a gospel lesson taught by Alma (Mosiah 18:1-5).

Mormon-2: A Land of Mormon is mentioned that appears to be related more to the land of Helem than the original Waters of Mormon near Shilom (Alma 23:1-5, 19). The borders of Mormon are mentioned as adjoining the land of Jerusalem (Alma 21:1), but Jerusalem is mentioned as being near Amulon and Helam which are eight days travel from Shilom and the original Waters of Mormon (Mosiah 23:31).

Moron: A Jaredite city where the king dwelled, near Desolation (Ether 7:5, 6). This would place it in the piedmont within about two day's journey of Bountiful. The hill Shim, Cumorah, and

Abloom are up and over the mountains to the east (Ether 9:3).

Moroni-1: A Nephite fortress city in the mountains that was sunk in the depths of a sea at the time of the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 8:8). The closest fortress to the northwest was Nephiah (Alma 50:14) and the closest fortress to the southeast was Ammonihah (Alma 49:10-14). Amalickiah's troops first approached Ammonihah then stepped to the side and attacked Noah. Failing in these two attempts he reorganized his troops and lead them personally in the taking of this city (Moroni-1). He then stayed in the highlands and took many cities including the following in order: Nephiah, Lehi-3, Morianton, then on down the canyon to Omner, Gid, and Mulek, which was near Bountiful (Alma 51:26-30).

Moroni-2: A camp where Moroni stayed during the Morianton incident (Alma 50:27). It was located near both Lehi-3 and Morianton (Alma 50:25-28), which were in the mountains above Bountiful and Desolation (Alma 50:32, 34).

Moronihah: A Nephite mountain city, named after captain Moroni's son, which was buried at the time of the Crucifixion (3 Nephi 8:10, 25). Most likely it is in the mountains near Lehi-3 and the Camp of Moroni.

Mulek: A very strong Nephite fortress within a one-half-day march of Bountiful (Alma 51:26-28; 52:22-31).

Narrow Neck of Land: A very small topographic feature that is identified with the crossing place from the land Bountiful on the southeast into the land of Desolation/Teancum in the northwest. The term "narrow neck of land" is used only once and it was a Jaredite reference (Ether 10:20). All other references mention a "narrow pass which led by the sea" (Alma 50:34), a "narrow pass which led into the land northward" (Alma 52:9), a "narrow neck which led into the land northward" (Alma 63:5), a "narrow passage which led into the land southward" (Mormon 2:29), and

a “narrow pass which led into the land southward” (Mormon 3:5). It was sufficiently narrow that it could be protected by one army and was described by Mormon as a “point” (Alma 52:9). The narrow neck of land was possibly a natural land bridge or a man-made bridge that spanned the spot where the sea (large river) divided the lands. After the earthquakes at the time of the Crucifixion, it may have been nothing more than a narrows in the river or a ford.

Nehor: A Jaredite city inhabited by Corihor (Ether 7:4). This became the name of a wicked group in the Ammonihah area who practiced what was called by the Nephites the “profession of Nehor” (Alma 16:11). The name connections between Corihor, Korihor, Nehor, the land of Nehor, and the Desolation of Nehors, suggest that there was some residual Jaredite influence in the area of Ammonihah.

Nephi-1: The town started by Nephi in the land of Lehi-1 after they first landed. This area had been occupied by Nephi and his followers for possibly 15 to 20 years, when Lehi died and Nephi fled to start a new land, Nephi-2, in the Shilom/Lehi-Nephi area some eight days travel beyond Helam (2 Nephi 4:12; 5:5-8). After Nephi’s departure, this location was still called the land of Nephi among the Lamanites and many of their kings lived there. It was not much more than a days travel southeast of the southeastern extreme of Jershon (Alma 22:28; 47:29-31).

Nephi-2: An isolated land and city founded by Nephi after he and his followers fled the original land of Lehi, Lehi-1 and Nephi-1 (2 Nephi 5:5-8). After Mosiah’s people fled, it was called the land of Lehi-Nephi, possibly to distinguish it from Lehi-1 and Nephi-1. It is located eight days travel from Helam, which itself was another twelve days travel in the opposite direction from Zarahemla (Mosiah 23:3; 24:25). There may have been some confusion among the Nephites about Nephi-1 and Nephi-2, as neither were visited by many Nephites.

Nephihah: A Nephite fortress city built between the lands of Aaron-2 and the fortress Moroni-1 (Alma 50:14). This would place it in the mountains between Moroni-1 and Lehi-3. There was also a plains region in the area (Alma 62:18). There appears to be no direct route to Zarahemla as the major fortress cities formed a loop and are only referenced in sequence. That loop is Zarahemla, Gideon, Ammonihah, Moroni-1, Nephihah, Lehi-3, Morianton, Omner, Gid, Mulek, Bountiful, an unnamed land, and back to Zarahemla (Alma 51:26-28; 3 Nephi 3:23). It appears that Ammonihah could actually be bypassed in this loop, as could possibly Moronihah.

Noah: A Jaredite city and land near Ammonihah that later became a Nephite fortress (Ether 7:20; Alma 16:3). This land may have been isolated and exposed on the Lamanite frontier.

Ogath: An isolated Jaredite place just south of the Jaredite hill Ramah, also known as the Nephite hill Cumorah (Ether 15:11). Ogath and the hill Ramah were about one day's battle south of Ripliancum (Ether 15:8-11).

Omner: A Nephite fortress city near Gid and Mulek that was also located in the canyon between fortress Lehi-3 in the highlands and Bountiful in the piedmont (Alma 51:26). See also Gad and Gadiomnah (3 Nephi 9:8-10).

Onidah: A hill and/or a place near the interface between the southeastern extreme of Jerushon/Antionum and the northwestern extreme of the land of Lehi-1 and Nephi-1 (Alma 32:4; 47:5; 47:29-31). This may have been the same place as Onihah (3 Nephi 9:7).

Onihah: A city that was flooded at the time of the Crucifixion. It was possibly linked to Mocom and Jerusalem (3 Nephi 9:7). May have been the same place as Onidah.

Ramah: The hill where the Jaredites were destroyed as a nation (Ether 15:11). Also known to the Nephites as the hill Cumorah

where the Nephite nation died in battle (Mormon 6:6). This hill was the repository for the voluminous Nephite records, excepting the few plates given to Moroni, which were later deposited in upstate New York and translated by Joseph Smith Jr. into the Book of Mormon.

Riplah: A hill (volcano) near the Sidon River that was along the attack path between the Lamanite lands and the Zarahemla area. This would place it near Melek and Manti at the headwaters of the Sidon River (Alma 43:31-42). Also it would be near the hill Amnihu (Alma 2:15).

Ripliancum: A very large body of water (river, lake, sea, or ocean) in Jaredite times that was about one day's battle north of Ramah/Cumorah and Ogath (Ether 15:8-12).

Sebus: A body of water in the Lamanite land of Ishmael where the king's flocks were watered (Alma 17:21, 26). This was also near Middoni and Midian.

Shem: A Nephite city/land in the southeast part of the northern land near the land Desolation. It was probably on Mormon's side of the treaty line established in the year 350 AD (Mormon 2:20-29). The dividing line appears to be where the sea/river divides the land (Ether 10:20). Shem may be the Nephite name for the city of Lib (Ether 10:19-20).

Shemlon: A Lamanite land so close to Shilom that troop movements in Shemlon could be observed from a tower in Shilom (Mosiah 11:12). It was also near the Lamanite cities of Lemuel and Shimnilom (Alma 23:12).

Sherrizah: A Nephite tower mentioned in Moroni 9:7, 16, 17. This tower may have been the chimney to a charcoal oven, a limestone kiln, or a smelter, since biblical usage of the term "tower" occasionally refers to chimneys (Nehemiah 3:11; 12:38).

Shilom: A Nephite city/land adjacent to Nephi-2 (Lehi-Nephi), the Waters of Mormon, and Shimnilom (Alma 23:12). This isolated complex was eight days travel from Helam and the other Lamanite lands. It was also a distant 20 days from Zarahemla (Mosiah 23:3; 24:25). Many references appear to indicate that this was the land of Nephi where the Lamanite civilization was centered. However, the great distance suggests that the much closer Nephi-1 in the original land of Lehi was a more appropriate distance from the many battles that are recorded.

Shim: A Nephite hill in the land of Antum that was in the mountains above Bountiful (Mormon 1:3). It was also near the land of Jashon (Mormon 2:17) and it was in the course of Omer when he traveled eastward past Shim and Cumorah to Ablom by the sea (Ether 9:3).

Shimnilom: A Lamanite city in the greater land of Lehi-Nephi (Nephi-2). It was near Shemlon, Lemuel, and Shilom (Alma 23:12).

Shurr: A valley in Jaredite times, possibly a steep walled valley since *shur* means “wall” in Hebrew (Ether 14:28). Shurr was very near the hill Comnor, which in turn was within trumpet sound of the valley of Corihor. This combination may have an Ammonihah connection because of the similarity between Corihor and Korihor.

Sidom: A Nephite town near Ammonihah (Alma 15:1). It may be the same as Sidon.

Sidon: A river in the Nephite lands to the east of Zarahemla. The headwaters were near Manti and the hills Amnihu and Riplah (Alma 2:15; 22:27; 43:35).

Siron: A Lamanite city in the borders of the original land of Lehi (Alma 39:3).

Teancum: A Nephite fortress city very near the city of

Desolation (Mormon 4:3), which was across the narrow passage to the northwest of Bountiful.

Zarahemla: A large Mulekite city and land later shared by the Nephites (Omni 1:14, 15; Mosiah 25:2). Zarahemla had been occupied by the Mulekites for roughly 400 years before they were joined by the Nephites. Most of the Nephites appear to have settled on the perimeter because Zarahemla was already occupied. The Zoramites settled to the southeast in Antionum (Alma 31:3). North of Antionum, the Anti-Nephi-Lehies settled in Jershon. (Alma 27:22) Many Nephites may have settled north of Jershon in Melek, Minon, Manti, and Gideon (Alma 2:24-25; 8:6, 17:1). Ammonihah was probably still inhabited by Jaredite remnants. Completing the loop north of Zarahemla between Ammonihah and Bountiful were Aaron, Moroni-1, Nephihah, Lehi-3, Morianton, Moronihah, Camp of Moroni, Omner, Gid, and Mulek (Alma 50:14; 51:26-28). Zarahemla was probably down in the piedmont between Antionum/Jershon and Bountiful.

Zeezrom: A Nephite fortress city that was in a position to help protect the lands of Jershon and Zarahemla (Alma 56:14). It was located between Manti and Cumeni.

APPENDIX B: MATRIX OF CITIES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Candidates</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Longitude</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Confidence</u>
Aaron-1	Giron	city	90.85 W	14.65 N	75
Aaron-2	San Jeronimo	city	91.42 W	14.91 N	50
Ablom	El Bongo	city	89.18 W	15.61 N	30
Agosh	Argueta	plains	91.23 W	14.81 N	10
Akish	Kux/San Marcos la Laguna	wilderness	91.26 W	14.72 N	20
Alma	Santa Rosa de Lima (alima)	city	90.29 W	14.39 N	10
Alma	Nueva Ocotepeque valley	valley	89.27 W	14.25 N	50
Ammonihah	Kaminaljuyu	city	90.54 W	14.61 N	99
Amnihu	Volcan de Agua/Hunahpu	hill	90.74 W	14.46 N	99
Amulon	Tazumal/Cihuatan	land	89.14 W	14.02 N	50
Angola	Chocola	city	91.43 W	14.60 N	60
Ani-Anti	Santa Ana	village	89.54 W	14.00 N	50
Antionum	Pantaleon to southeast	land	90.98 W	14.32 N	80
Antiparah	Atiquipaque	city	90.57 W	14.09 N	99
City by sea	Michiquiztlan	city	90.50 W	13.91 N	50
Antipas	San Jose Acatempa	mount	90.13 W	14.26 N	50
Antum	Samayac/San Antonio	land	91.46 W	14.63 N	80
Antum (?)	Tierra Colorada	land	91.55 W	14.82 N	20
Boaz	Bolas	city	92.12 W	14.66 N	10
Bountiful-1	Cana, Qana	old world	51.97 E	14.02 N	90

MAPPING THE BOOK OF MORMON

<u>Name</u>	<u>Candidates</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Longitude</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Confidence</u>
Bountiful-2	San Francisco Zapotitlan	city	91.72 W	14.63 N	80
Comnor	Mixco	hill	90.63 W	14.62 N	70
Corihor	Cotio, Ammonihah area	land	90.60 W	14.63 N	70
Cumeni	Chiquimulla/Tacuila	city	90.37 W	14.08 N	80
Cumorah	Qumarkah, Utatlan, Santa Cruz del Quiche'	hill/land	91.16 W	15.02 N	99
David	Santo Tomas La Union	land	91.44 W	14.64 N	10
Desolation	Zakihuyu/Retalhuleu	city	92.13 W	14.67 N	99
Izapa	Izapa	city	92.15 W	14.93 N	100
Ephraim	Jaredite hill	hill			
Gad	possibly same as Gid	city			
Gadiandi	similar to Gadianton	city			
Gadiomnah	combination Gid and Omner	city			
Gid	San Martin Zapotitlan/San Felipe	city	91.74 W	14.70 N	50
Gideon	Antigua Guatemala, Pan Choy	city/valley	90.73 W	14.55 N	90
Gilgal	Rodeo	city/valley	90.06 W	14.62 N	50
Gimgimno		city			
Helam	Cihuatan	city	89.14 W	14.02 N	70
Hermounts	Sierra de los Cuchumatanes	wilderness	91.00 W	15.50 N	90
Heshlon	Alux	plains	90.63 W	14.60 N	50
Ishmael	Igualtepeque/Ixmani	land	89.50 W	14.24 N	90

APPENDIX B: MATRIX OF CITIES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Candidates</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Longitude</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Confidence</u>
Jacob (?)	San Pablo Jocopilas	city	91.45 W	14.59 N	80
Jacob (?)	Chimaltenango/B'okob'	city	90.81 W	14.66 N	20
Jacobugath	Santa Lucia la Reforma/Ak'aab	city	91.23 W	15.12 N	60
Jashon	Ajaxa	city	91.10 W	14.59 N	80
Jershon	Esquintla east to Santa Rosa	land	90.29 W	14.39 N	80
Jerusalem	Tula, El Salvador	city	89.27 W	13.55 N	50
Jordan	Gerardo	city	91.73 W	14.43 N	90
Josh		city			
Joshua	Xojola or Yoxajá	land	91.41 W	14.60 N	99
Judea	Jutiapa	city	89.89 W	14.30 N	99
Kishkumen	Cunen	city	91.03 W	15.34 N	50
Laman-1	El Salvador				
Laman-2	Lamani, Honduras	city	87.62 W	14.20 N	99
Laman-3	Lamagi (possibly Lemoa)	city			20
Lehi-1	Lenca, El Salvador	land			
Lehi-2	Leja-mani	city	87.71 W	14.37 N	99
Lehi-3	Xelaju'/Quetzaltenango	fortress city	91.51 W	14.84 N	99
Lemuel-1	El Salvador	city			
Lemuel-2	Calamuya	city	87.66 W	14.25 N	99
Manti	Amatitlan	city	90.62 W	14.49 N	99

<u>Name</u>	<u>Candidates</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Longitude</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Confidence</u>
Melek	Palin	land	90.69 W	14.41 N	10
Middoni	Asuncion Mita/Cerro Laja	land/city	89.73 W	14.34 N	70
Midian	Metapan	land/city	89.43 W	14.34 N	80
Minon	Chimaltenango area	land	90.82 W	14.66 N	10
Mocum	coast	city			
Rameumptom	Monte Alto/La Democracia		90.94 W	14.21 N	50
Moriancumer	Nikolajevsk-na-Amure	land	140.74 E	53.18 N	99
Morianton	San Antonio los Cerritos/Ostancalco	fortress city	91.58 W	14.88 N	50
Mormon-1 (?)	Playitas/Comayagua	waters	87.71 W	14.42 N	70
Mormon-1 (?)	Rio Guangelolo/La Penita	waters	87.82 W	14.23 N	30
Mormon-2		land	89.20 W	13.80 N	80
Moron	Morazan/Abaj Takalik	land	91.82 W	14.60 N	99
Moroni-1	Lago de Atitlan	fortress city	91.25 W	14.72 N	70
Moroni-2	Almolonga/Moloook	camp	91.42 W	14.94 N	80
Moronihah	Tonicapcan, Chi Mekenha'	city	91.35 W	14.92 N	99
Mulek	Santa Cruz Mulua	fortress city	91.69 W	14.80 N	90
Nehor	Naranjo	city	90.54 W	14.65 N	20
Nephi-1	Nahuizalco	city	89.75 W	13.78 N	90
Nephi-2	Leja-mani (Lehi-Nephi)	city	87.71 W	14.37 N	99
Nephihah	Nahuala'	fortress city	91.33 W	14.82 N	99

APPENDIX B: MATRIX OF CITIES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Candidates</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Longitude</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Confidence</u>
Noah	Chinautla	city	90.51 W	14.69 N	99
Ogath	Chichicastenango	place	91.11 W	14.96 N	50
Omner	El Palmar	fortress city	91.67 W	14.80 N	60
Onidah	San Jose Acatempa	place/hill	90.14 W	14.26 N	80
Onihah	possibly same as Onidah	city			
Ramah	Qumarkah, Utatlan	hill	91.17 W	15.02 N	99
Riplah	Volcan de Pacaya	hill	90.60 W	14.38 N	90
Ripliancum	Rio Chixoy, Nimala'	waters	91.14 W	15.27 N	99
Sam (?)	Samayac (Tzaam-yac)	city	91.46 W	14.63 N	10
Sebus	Guija	waters	89.51 W	14.26 N	90
Shem	San Sebastian	city	91.65 W	14.57 N	90
Shemlon	Tenampua	land	87.52 W	14.31 N	80
Sherrizah (?)	Xecaracoj	tower	97.62 W	14.80 N	70
Sherrizah (?)	Sakiya	tower	91.17 W	14.94 N	20
Shilom	La Paz, Honduras	city	87.68 W	14.34 N	99
Shim (?)	Tui Chim	hill	91.59 W	14.88 N	10
Shim	Samayac (Tzaam-yac)	City	91.46 W	14.63 N	80
Shimnilom	Lo de Vaca/Palmerola	city	87.66 W	14.34 N	40
Shurr	Molina and Villalobos Rivers	valley	90.59 W	90.61 N	80
Sidom	Solano	land	90.59 W	14.55 N	10

<u>Name</u>	<u>Candidates</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Longitude</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Confidence</u>
Sidon	Michatoya	river	90.62 W	14.49 N	99
Siron	Ceren	land	89.36 W	13.82 N	99
Teancum	Teyocuman/Retalhuleu	city	91.68 W	14.54 N	99
Zarahemla	Sta. Lucia Cotzumalguapa	city	91.02 W	14.34 N	99
Zeezrom		city			

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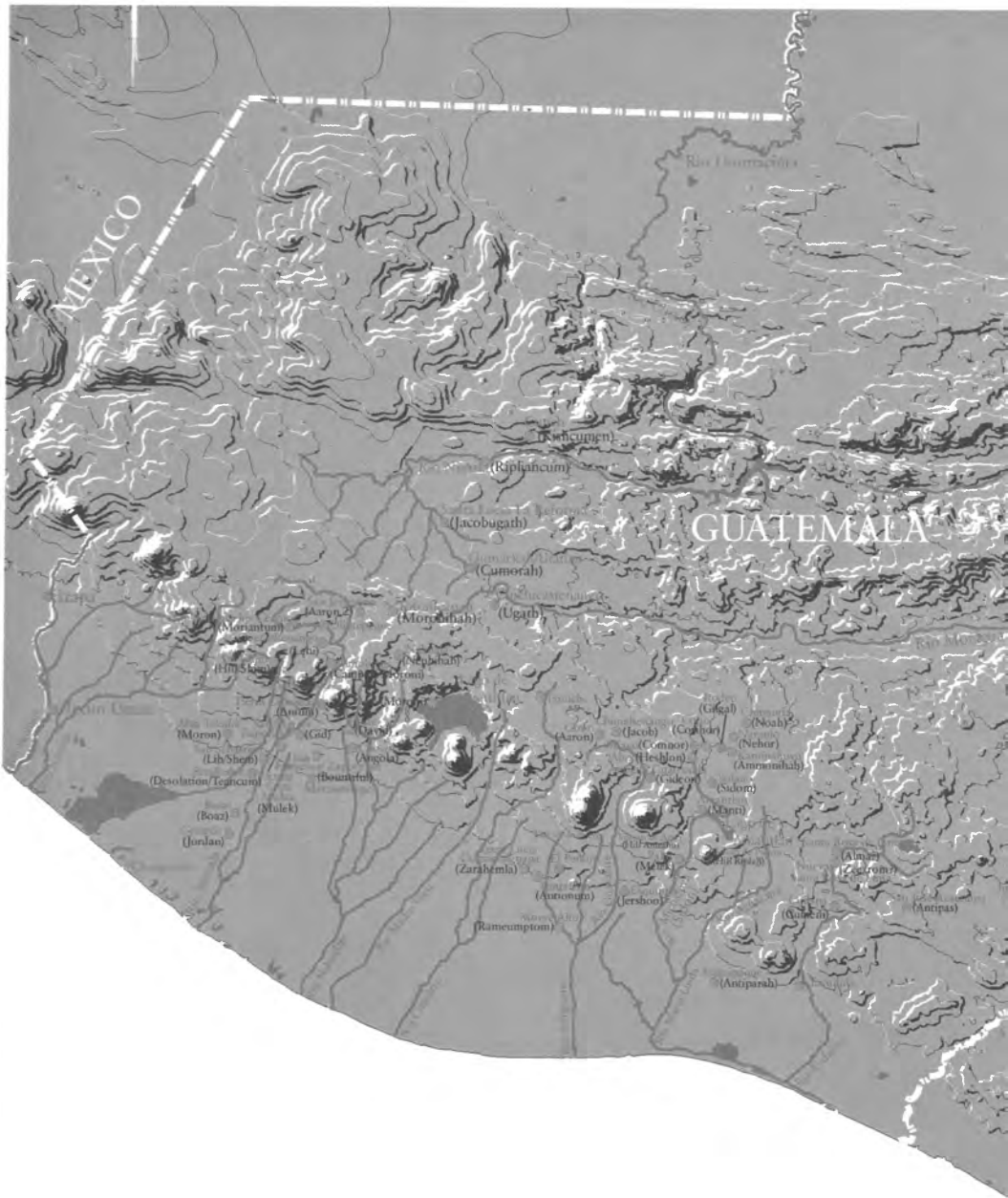
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