

During the course of writing this book, I was invited to go on Graceland's Winter Term Book of Mormon tour in January, 2008. The tour guide was Lyle Smith who has led groups to Mesoamerica for the past two plus decades. While Lyle has two M.A. degrees, he does not have a degree in archaeology. Lyle has obtained his knowledge by continuously reading the latest available materials and attending related university conferences. He has, through this type of involvement become, in my mind at least, an authority on how archaeological timelines relate to The Book of Mormon.

Lyle's views are compelling because he recognizes that due to his lack of archaeological credentials, the world would pay very little attention to his views alone. Consequently, he is very circumspect in developing his presentations on The Book of Mormon and uses only widely accepted academic research. Lyle has graciously given me permission to use some of his timeline material as he correlates The Book of Mormon account with the latest archaeological accounts.

Also included following the timeline material, is material developed concerning the cultural and linguistic significance of archaeological excavations that have occurred in Arad, Israel from eighteen seasons of excavations from 1962 to 1984. The significance here is that the Arad excavations and subsequent research offer evidence that indeed The Book of Mormon preserves correct cultural and linguistic information about Judah in the fifth and sixth centuries BC.

It cannot be emphasized enough that Joseph Smith, in his work of translation laid all of his cards on the table in 1830 with the publishing of The Book of Mormon. Over the years the words of this book have not changed; however, archaeology HAS CHANGED to become more in-line with The Book of Mormon account. Many of these changes have occurred in the last twenty-five years.

Archaeological Timeline

Eleven major parallels are listed below between current archaeological views and The Book of Mormon account. The Chronology Chart is listed below for reference.

Maya Cities Appear and Population Explosion

What does archaeology say about the beginning of the Maya?

"All available evidence would have the evolution of Classic Maya civilization from diverse and intermeshed origins in both the southern (highland and Pacific plain) and northern (lowland) settings."

"One of ancient Mesoamerica's great myster-

ies is the absence of significant human populations in Yucatan, Belize, and the Guatemalan Peten before 800 BC but the entire area was very lightly settled until 600/500 BC."

"Slow, uneven population growth occurred from 1000 to 500 BC (Middle Formative), resulting in the proliferation of small farming communities throughout the peninsula.

There are indications that this erratic population growth became an explosion after 550 BC. The reasons for the apparent jump in numbers are obscure."

"Scattered evidence of people in the Maya area previous to 600 BC has been found...but Maya urban life came into existence in the 6th century BC. The Maya appear to have arrived on the scene without too much antecedent... Maya civilization banged into existence in its own way and time...It is unsettling...It violates the rules of diffusion and evolution...."

The Book of Mormon gives this history:

Lehi arrives, Mulek arrives and fifty years later they begin to be numerous.

(1 Nephi 5:212, 213 RLDS) [1 Nephi 18:23 LDS],

(Omni 26 RLDS) [Omni 15 LDS],

(Jacob 1:1, 2:67 RLDS) [Jacob 1:1, 3:13 LDS]

CHRONOLOGY CHART

MAYA

BOOK OF MORMON

Maya cities appear	550 BC	Lehi and Mulek
Population explosion	500 BC	Lehi and Mulek
Maya writing	550 BC	Writing and records
Writing – religion	250 BC	Mosiah to lowlands
Maya cities fortified	200 BC	Moroni fortifies cities
Teotihuacan & Monte Alban	50 BC	major migrations
Many cities disappear	50 AD	great destructions
Religion theocratic	100 AD	Children to Christ
Maya Classic Kings	300 AD	Lamanites had king
Dense populations	320 AD	numerous as sands
Conquest warfare	385 AD	Nephites destroyed

new religion. Archaeology supports that the lowlands borrowed hieroglyphic writing, religion and iconographic elements from the highlands.

Maya Writing

Today archaeology

witnesses that:

"Salama Valley monuments...dating to an era [500-200 B.C.] in the Maya highlands that almost surely saw the emergence of the earliest Mesoamerican writing systems...."

Today, there is ample evidence that the Maya's ability to write matches the Nephite's ability to write. As recent as five to ten years ago the archaeologists did not have evidence to show that the Maya had writing as early as 500 BC.

But through recent research in the Salama Valley we have the evidence. Of more importance is the realization that although the Maya hieroglyphs do not look much like Old World scripts, the writing system has proven to be identical in most ways to Old World writing systems such as Egyptian (see Coe's book *Breaking the Maya Code*, 1992).

Nephi writes in The Book of Mormon:

"I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians."
(1 Nephi 1:1, also see 1 Nephi 1:161 RLDS)
[1 Nephi 1:1, also see 1 Nephi 5:12 LDS]

Hieroglyphic Writing – Religion to Lowlands

Archaeology indicates that:

David Freidel and Linda Schele theorize that cities in the lowlands "borrowed certain highland religious concepts, along with iconographic elements and the idea of hieroglyphic writing."

"Around 250 BC El Mirador, Tikal, Uaxactun, Nakbe and other close cities show a major ceramic transition. Small figurines (idols) seem to disappear."

The Book of Mormon witnesses that:

Mosiah left the highlands, went north into the lowlands, and discovered the people of Zarahemla. He took written records, the Brass Plates and the Plates of Nephi, and a new religion to the people of Zarahemla (see the books of Omni and Words of Mormon).

"Mosiah had established peace in the land of Zarahemla, and...had taught them to keep the commandments of God, that thereby they might rejoice, and be filled with love towards God, and all men." (Mosiah 1:32 RLDS)
[Mosiah 2:4 LDS]

"And their language had become corrupted; and they had brought no records with them....But it came to pass that Mosiah caused that they should be taught in his language."
(Omni 1:30, 32 RLDS) [Omni 1:17, 18 LDS]

Summary: King Mosiah leaves the highlands in the south, goes north into the lowlands, taking the ability to write and a

Maya Cities Fortified

What is archaeology saying?

"Late Formative Maya built more formal fortifications than nearly any other group in Mesoamerica...All of these fortifications date to the Late Formative."

The Book of Mormon says:

"Moroni had fortified or had built forts of security for every city in all the land round about....Now behold the Lamanites could not get into their forts of security...because of the highness of the bank which had been thrown up, and the depth of the ditch which had been dug round about, save it were by the entrance." (Alma 21:164, 170 RLDS)
[Alma 49:13, 18 LDS]

Note: the Late Formative period includes the time of Chief Captain Moroni.

Teotihuacan and Monte Alban Growth

What does archaeology indicate?

"While Teotihuacan may have been in existence earlier, during the last century BC, its population grew very rapidly."

How does The Book of Mormon support this?

"And it came to pass in the forty and sixth year (AD), yea, there were much contentions and many dissensions; in the which there were an exceeding great many who departed out of the land of Zarahemla, and went forth unto the land northward, to inherit the land."
(Helaman 2:3 RLDS) [Helaman 3:3 LDS]

"And it came to pass that there were many of the people of Ammon who were Lamanites by birth, did also go forth into this land."
(Helaman 2:11 RLDS) [Helaman 3:12 LDS]

Many Cities Disappear

Archaeology:

"For reasons not yet understood, many of these cities [those in the lowlands or northern regions of Guatemala] failed during the second half of the first century A.D."

The Book of Mormon says:

"And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year (AD), in the first month, in the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the landAnd the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled, and many smooth places became rough,

And many and notable cities were sunk, and many were burned, and many were shook till the buildings thereof had fallen to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain, and the places were left desolate." - (3 Nephi 4:6, 11 RLDS) [3 Nephi 8:5, 13, 14 LDS]

Religion Theocratic

What does archaeology indicate?

"It appears that all of Mesoamerica was more closely tied together religiously before A.D. 250 than afterward."

Religion played a major role in the life of the early city (Teotihuacan). Archaeologists

believe it was an integrated system, not merely religious ideas grouped together. Some researchers give it enormous importance.

The Book of Mormon says:

"In the thirty and sixth year (AD), the people were all converted unto the Lord.... There was no contention in the land because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people....And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God...."

(4 Nephi 1:3, 17, 19 RLDS)

[4 Nephi 1:2, 15, 16 LDS]

"Therefore there began to be Lamanites again in the land." (AD 194)

(4 Nephi 1:23 RLDS) [4 Nephi 20 LDS]

Maya Classic Kings

What does archaeology say:

The point of the table below, listing comparative timelines for the beginning dates of kings in the Maya area is that for a period of time it appears that there were no kings. This period generally coincides with the period of peace and righteousness after the appearance of Christ where there were no kings in all the land.

COMPARATIVE TIMELINES

(Beginning Dates for Kings in Maya Area)

<u>SITE</u>	<u>KING NAME</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Tikal	Animal Headdress	AD 290
Naranjo	Tzik'in Bahlam	AD 450
Caracol	Te' K'ab Chaak	AD 375
Calakmul	Yuknoom Ch'een I	AD 475
Yaxchilan	Yopaat Bahlam I	AD 350
Piedras Negras	Founder	AD 300
Palenque	K'uk' Bahlam I Casper	AD 440
Tonina	Ruler One	AD 520
Copan	K'inich Yak K'uk' Mo'	AD 420
Quirigua	Tok Casper	AD 420

The Book of Mormon says:

"And now the Lamanites had a king and his name was Aaron....And three hundred and thirty years had passed away." (Mormon 1:31, 33 RLDS) (Mormon 2:9 LDS)

Dense Populations

Archaeology:

Patrick Culbert postulates in *The New Maya*, "Based on settlement pattern analysis, archaeologists estimate that by ca. AD 600, Maya population had reached a density of 600 people per square mile across a 36,000 square-mile area in the forested lowlands of northern Guatemala and adjacent parts of Mexico and Belize. This is a staggering figure, comparable to the most heavily populated parts of rural China today."

Here is what the Book of Mormon says:

"And it came to pass that I, being eleven years old, was carried by my father into the land southward, even to the land of Zarahemla; the whole face of the land having become covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous as the sand of the sea." (Mormon 1:7 RLDS) [Mormon 1:6 LDS] (about AD 320)

Conquest Warfare

Here is what Schele and Freidel say:

"While the impact of warfare on Maya commoners remains to be elucidated archaeological-

ly, there is positive epigraphic and iconographic evidence to identify the advent of conquest warfare among these people at the close of the fourth century A.D."

The Book of Mormon says:

"And it came to pass that there were ten more who did fall by the sword, with their ten thousand each; yea, even all my people...."

(Mormon 3:16 RLDS) [Mormon 6:15 LDS]

"And I, even remain alone to write the sad tale of the destruction of my people."

(Mormon 4:2 RLDS) [Mormon 8:3 LDS]

CHRONOLOGY CHART

MAYA

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Writing - religion
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Dense populations
Conquest warfare

550 BC
500 BC
550 BC
250 BC
200 BC
50 BC
50 AD
100 AD
300 AD
320 AD
385 AD

BOOK OF MORMON

Lehi and Mulek
Lehi and Mulek
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major migrations
great destructions
Children to Christ
Lamanites had king
numerous as sands
Nephites destroyed

Significance of Maya Timeline

Commenting on the significance of the timeline material presented above, Smith says:

Recently I had the opportunity to speak with a current, well acknowledged and published archaeologist. He was formerly the Chairman of the Anthropology Department of a major university here in the U.S. He reaffirmed that when you look at history, say over a thousand years, and compare it with another history that claims to give the history of the period, one can always have, by chance, a few areas of correspondence. But when that number is much larger, such as the eleven areas of correspondence listed above, chance is very unlikely to play a part.

Archaeology uncovers major events in cultural/linguistic/geographical history of a place and people and when these events correspond to an outside source, the validity of both timelines find support. Using today's proven archaeological methods, archaeology presents authentic cultural history of the time in question. This is why it is important to understand that many major, current archaeologists portray the cultural history of The Book of Mormon but have no idea they are doing so, and we should not ever expect them to admit they are doing so. But, the major events in Maya chronology identified by archaeologists confirm Book of Mormon history.



Glenn Scott Archaeological Timeline Material

Before continuing on with Lyle Smith's material concerning Arad, interjected here is supplemental archaeological timeline material listed in concluding paragraphs of Glenn Scott's book, *Voices From The Dust*:

- Perhaps the most significant shift in position by archaeologists has been a retreat from the claim that the Classic period (300-900 AD) saw the origin of all the traits that define civilization, in the Peten (a department or administrative area of Guatemala – like a state) lowlands. They had said that before the Classic period the indigenes were simple farmers living in small villages scattered throughout the jungle.

That is—they did until 1984, when excavations at El Mirador and Nakbe, proved that these major sites, with pyramids, temples, and palaces, had been built in Chicanel (Nephite) times. El Mirador dates to at least 150 BC, and Nakbe perhaps as early as 550 BC. Thus, archaeologists now acknowledge that the period in which civilization developed in the Peten, actually occurred in the Formative, or Preclassic, period. This has required a shift of dates back in time by as much as 800 years, exactly into the period which the Book of Mormon has described all along!

It would be hard to overemphasize the enormous significance of this shift in official position. Textbooks have had to be rewritten and new volumes printed to explain how this could have happened. Two examples include *The New Archaeology* and *The Ancient Maya* by Jeremy

Sabloff (1990), and *New Theories on the Ancient Maya* by Danien and Sharer (1992).

- We know that archaeologists have established that around 600 BC two regional cultures arose simultaneously in Mesoamerica, one of the Pacific coast and one on the Gulf coast.

- We know that the Gulf coast culture, known as the Mamom, occupied the Peten lowlands ca. 600 to 250-200 BC – just right for the Mulekites.

- We know the Pacific coast culture, the Chicanel, occupied the highlands ca. 600 to 250-200 BC, with a major city at Kaminaljuyu—just right for the Nephite capital City of Nephi.

- We know that about 250-200 BC, the Chicanel crossed the narrow range of mountains and entered the lowlands (probably through the Salama Valley) merging with the Mamom—just as the Book of Mormon describes the Nephite migration under King Mosiah I.

- We know that after the Chicanel (cf., Nephites) met the Mamom (cf., Mulekites), they dominated the merger, evidenced by the Mamom ending the manufacture of idols. "That," wrote archaeologist Michael Coe, "can only be seen as an abrupt change in religious practice."

- We know that a distinctive type of pottery, first produced in the southern highlands around Chalchuapa, was later produced 300 miles away in northern Belize. Archaeologist Gordon Willey agrees that this represents "an intrusion associated with the movement of peoples," just right for the migration of the Lamanite converts from the Land of Lehi-Nephi, who brought their culture with them to the Land of Jerushon.

- We know that Native Americans, from Alaska to Patagonia, share an ancient legend that they were visited by a bearded, white God/man, born of a virgin and died on a cross. He performed miracles, preached love, abhorred bloodshed, instructed them in baptism and sharing sacred bread. Upon leaving, he promised to return. These legends date to the first century AD.

That event made such a lasting impression that he was memorialized as Quetzalcoatl in Mexico, Kukulcan in Yucatan, Gucumatz in Guatemala, and Viracocha in South America.

All of those titles have the same meaning, i.e., "Feathered Serpent," signifying a union of the heavenly and earthly aspects of that God/man. The gorgeous feathers of the quetzal bird represented his heavenly aspect, and the lowly serpent represented the earthly.

Arad

The articles in the Biblical Archaeology Review (BAR) edition of March/April 1987, while not directly speaking about the Book of Mormon, offer good evidence that cultural and linguistic narratives in The Book of Mormon preserve correct information about Judah in the fifth and sixth centuries BC.

First we need to go to another edition of BAR, May/June 1985, which explains how archaeological research can validate cultural history.

We begin with King Nabonidas, father of King Belshazzar. We know about him because of the thousands of clay tablets that



...e been excavated, telling of the era of time in which he lived. The BAR article points out that "archaeological discoveries like these [the finding and translation of the clay tablets] cannot, of course, prove that the narratives in Daniel [in the Bible] report events that actually occurred in the sixth century BC, but they, and other finds like them, do indicate that those narratives preserve correct information about Babylon at the time they were supposed to have occurred."

The concept is of major importance to understanding the role of archaeological evidence and how it relates to The Book of Mormon. Now we move to BAR, March/April 1987, that contains the articles about Arad.

"The Israelite fortress at Arad is unique in the land of Israel. It's the only site excavated with modern archaeological methods that contains a continual archaeological record from the period of the Judges (ca. 1200 B.C.) to the Babylonian destruction of the First Temple (586 B.C.)."



King Nabonidas, father of Belshazzar, 539 B.C.
Drawing by Glenn Scott – used with permission

"Over 80 other Hebrew inscriptions were found at Arad because of the special care to insure that none was overlooked. Moreover, unlike the rare collections of inscriptions found at other sites in Israel, the Arad inscriptions range over a period of 350 years, covering six different strata. As a result, we can study the development of cursive Hebrew script – so called old Hebrew (as opposed to the later square Hebrew script) – from the United Monarchy, say about 950 B.C. to the Babylonian conquest of Judah in the early 6th century B.C."

"The Eliashib letters and other inscriptions discovered at Arad now comprise the most valuable corpus of ancient Hebrew inscriptions from the period of the Israelite monarchies."

There are five points about this dig that present evidence that Book of Mormon narratives preserve correct information about Judah at the time it was supposed to have occurred.

Military Commanders Kept Records

Point #1: Chapter 1 of I Nephi tells an interesting story. A military commander named Laban has charge of the Brass Plates, a religious record of the Jews. It is 600 BC. Because of this story, The Book of Mormon has often been under attack because it says that the Brass Plates were in the possession of Laban, a military commander. Critics also have pointed out that it is unlikely that military people could write at 600 BC. Here is evidence that indicates military commanders were keeping records at 600 BC and before:

"this archive demonstrates that...writing was common at administrative and military centers in Judah and Israel" (at 600 B.C.).

This evidence from Arad, while not talking about Laban specifically, proves that the narrative in The Book of Mormon preserves

correct information by indicating that military commanders kept written records in Judah at 600 BC.

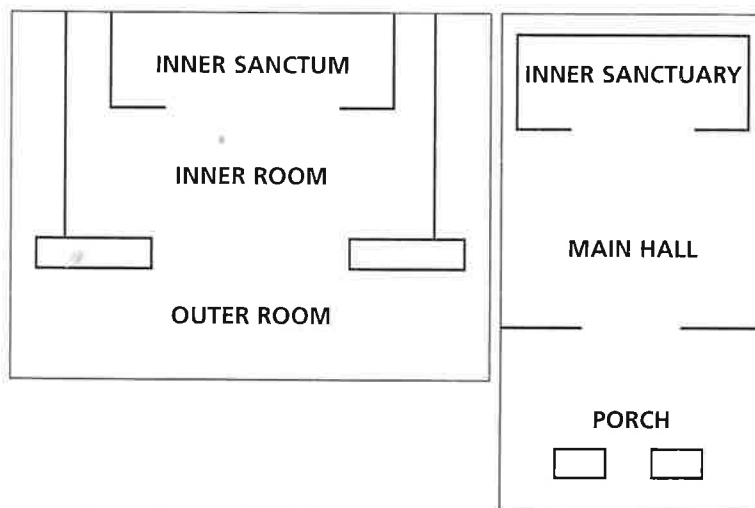
Temples Built Outside Jerusalem

Point #2: II Nephi 4 (RLDS) [2 Nephi 5 LDS] tells about Nephi building a temple. Until this dig at Arad, we had no archaeological evidence, (and only Book of Mormon supporters believed), that the Jews built temples outside of Jerusalem in this era.

"A unique Israelite temple dedicated to Yahweh – the only temple dedicated to the Hebrew God, ever found in an archaeological excavation." (The first temple found outside of Jerusalem.)

Once again we see that The Book of Mormon preserves correct information about Judah at the time it was supposed to have occurred. The Jews had built temples outside Jerusalem.

The Book of Mormon also says that Nephi built the temple in the Promised Land. Do we have any evidence in Mesoamerica, the area we believe Book of Mormon people lived, to support such a view? One way is to compare floor plans of Solomon's Temple with temples in Mesoamerica.



Above: Temple of the Sun, Palenque.

Right: Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem
(not to scale)



The Temple of the Sun at Palenque was built at about 692 AD; many years after Nephi built the temple in The Book of Mormon. What it does show is a remarkable resemblance to the floor plan of Solomon's Temple.

Author's note: in researching the excavations at Arad, unexpectedly I came across documentation concerning other Jewish temples built outside of Jerusalem, namely Onias and Elephantine in Egypt. Onias has been known about for nearly 2,000 years from Josephus Flavius and the Talmud, and its site was claimed to have been found just 100 years ago, but it has now been lost again. The other was never known of until just a hundred years ago and its site has only recently been discovered.

Concerning the temple at Elephantine, it has been known from papyri, found some 100 years ago at Elephantine and nearby Aswan, that a group of Jewish mercenaries, in the pay of the Egyptians and later the Persians, guarded the southern border of Egypt at the first cataract of the Nile in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. They lived there with their families and had their own temple. Their date of arrival is not known but they were already well established when Cambyses II of Persia conquered Egypt in 525 BCE.

Hebrew Writers Wrote in Egyptian

Point #3: Nephi's statement, that he wrote on the plates in Egyptian, has long been doubted by critics of The Book of Mormon. They have not believed that Hebrew records would have been written in another language. It's like writing the history of the United States in French.

The findings at Arad helped clarify that Nephi, when he made his record in Egyptian, was doing what other Hebrew writers of his time did.

"An ostrakon was found written entirely in Egyptian hieratic (cursive) script...[It] was written by a Hebrew-speaking scribe."

"Indeed, Egyptian symbols for numerals and measures, as well as for commodities, are found in Hebrew inscriptions, not only from the southern kingdom of Judah but even from the northern kingdom of Israel."

For the third time, the evidence at Arad indicates that The Book of Mormon presents information that is correct for the early sixth century BC, the time it was supposed to have occurred.

Mulek - Belonging To The King

Point #4: L'Melek (Belonging to the King)

It's like our government offices today. Each item of equipment has a stamp on it saying "PROPERTY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT."

At the time of Lehi, written Hebrew did not include vowels. Therefore, MELEK could also be MULEK which is the name of Zedekiah's son. Because of this dig, we know the MLK means "belonging to the King."



Clay seal belonging to Hezekiah, son of Ahaz

Drawing by Glenn Scott – used with permission

"[A] most interesting sherd...one of a type archaeologists call L'Melek handles because they all bear an inscription saying L'Melek (belonging to the king) of some place....The handles are known to date to the 8th century B.C."

Also in the March/April 1999, p.41, issue of Biblical Archaeology Review, the article "King Hezekiah's Seal Bears Phoenician Imagery" tells of an archaeological artifact, a seal, that uses the term MLK. It reads, "Belonging to Hezekiah, (son of) Ahaz, King of Judah."

Once again The Book of Mormon contains information that is correct for the time it occurred, as in Mulek (son of the king). Also the name Mulek holds special interest for us as a calendar day name in Mesoamerica. There are many examples of this hieroglyph in the Maya area.

"And Now"

Point #5: In BAR, March/April 1987, pages 36-39, Anson F. Rainey writes about the office files of the commander of the fort. In the translation of some of these files, Rainey indicates that "and now" is a "standard opening."

"To Eliashib,

And now (the standard opening), give the Kittiyim three baths of wine and write the name of the day."

"To my lord Eliashib, May Yahweh seek your welfare.

And now...as to the matter which you commanded me...."

Rainey calls "And now" a standard opening. It must be like "Dear Sir" in our present-day letters, or even like a period between thoughts. To be considered a standard opening means it was used often in the writing of that era.

The Book of Mormon uses the phrase "it came to pass" in much the same way, like a standard opening. Does The Book of Mormon also use "And now" as a standard opening? Let's search together.

Beginning Words of I Nephi:

Chapter:

RLDS/LDS

1/1	I, Nephi having been born
2/6	And now I, Nephi, do not give
3/10	And now I, Nephi, proceed
4/15	And it came to pass
5/16	And now it came to pass
6/19:22	Now it came to pass

Beginning Words of II Nephi:

Chapter:

RLDS/LDS

1/1	And now it came
2/3	And now I speak
3/4	And now I, Nephi
4/5	Behold, it came to
5/6	The word of Jacob
6/9	And now my
7/10	And now, I, Jacob
8/11	And now Jacob
9/16	In the year
10/23	The burden of
11/25	Now I, Nephi
12/28	And now, behold
13/31	And now I, Nephi
14/32	And now behold
15/33	And now I, Nephi

Book of Mormon "and now" as a standard opening:

<u>Books</u>	<u>and now</u>	<u>other</u>
I Nephi	3	3
II Nephi	10	5
Jacob	2	3
Enos	0	1
Jarom	0	1
Omni	0	1
Words of Mormon	1	0
Mosiah	9	4
Alma	11	19
Helaman	4	1
III Nephi	9	4
IV Nephi	0	1
Mormon	3	1
Ether	5	1
Moroni	2	8
Totals	46	44

For the fifth time we see evidence from the dig at Arad that provides proof that the Book of Mormon provides correct cultural and linguistic narrative for the time it was supposed to have occurred.

Let's review the cultural and linguistic evidence:

Military commanders kept written records. Thus the narrative about Laban is culturally correct.

An Israelite temple was discovered outside Jerusalem. Nephi was doing what others had already done in building a temple outside Jerusalem.

Hebrew scribes wrote records in Egyptian. When Nephi wrote in Egyptian on the plates he was doing what others of his time did.

L'MeLeK (belonging to the king): when Joseph Smith used the name "Mulek" in the Book of Mormon he gave a title, not a given name, that means "belonging to the king."

"And now" was a standard opening in Hebrew writing in the fifth and sixth centuries BC. The Book of Mormon uses "and now" as a standard opening a multitude of times.

25 years, I find that it is accurate and true in its theology as well as in its cultural and linguistic narratives.

As we search for understanding in the cultural/linguistic/geographic areas of the world where the Book of Mormon took place, we still find unanswered questions. But again and again, evidence such as this from Arad confirms that the Book of Mormon accurately depicts people and places of its time.

In archaeological circles, if this was not a religious book, such evidence would be accepted to support the idea that the book accurately represents the people and cultural of its time. But it is a religious book! It tells us of Jesus Christ!

Therefore we should not expect archaeological support from the world. But it is of value to use their archaeological evidence to prove that the book is true.

And if they are not the words of Christ, judge ye: for Christ will shew unto you, with power and great glory, that they are his words at the last day. (2 Nephi 15:13 RLDS)
[2 Nephi 3:11 LDS]

"Wherefore the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built up upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come, when the earth shall pass away."
(Ether 6:8 RLDS)
[Ether 13:8 LDS]

To order The Book of Mormon An Inconvenient Truth, Voices From the Dust and Breaking the Maya Code DVD please see the advertisement included in this issue of The Witness.

Lyle Smith testimony:

Consider this question: How could Joseph Smith have known these five cultural and linguistic traits of the sixth century BC and accurately narrate them in the Book of Mormon?

Probably most of us today are better educated than Joseph Smith when he translated the book. Also we have 100 years of modern archaeological exploration that he did not have. Even with all this archaeological information available to us, could we have gotten these five items from 2600 years ago correct? The answer is "very likely" not.

I believe that this provides strong evidence that the book was translated as Joseph said it was, by the power and gift of God. I choose to believe that it was translated by the power and gift of God, because in all the ways that I have studied it, over the past

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