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Abstract Archaeological discoveries that challenge previously
accepted theories of the history of civilization are
found all over the world.



OUT OF THE DUST

Finding Things Where They Are “Not Supposed to Be”

Less than one lifetime ago, school textbooks considered ancient civilization as that of the Greeks and Romans, with bits on the Egyptians and Mesopotamians thrown in. Periodically since then, successive cohorts of students have been exposed to one or another “canned” version of history that they have accepted uncritically as truly “what happened.” But in recent years the pace of discovery has quickened; new finds exceed the abilities of the textbook writers to even come close to keeping up. Here are a few items of “news” about the old.

In the extreme northeast tip of Syria at the site of Hamoukar, an international archaeological team has discovered evidence that a genuine city existed by 3700 B.C. A widely accepted theory has been that cities developed in northern Mesopotamia well after those in the south, where Uruk, “the Rome of ancient Mesopotamia,” gives its name to the archaeological period around 3500 B.C. Yet, Hamoukar already had a wall around it, indications of an elite class and government, and signs

of specialized division of labor, like large ovens that hint at industrial cooking and brewing.¹

Far to the south, archaeologists are unearthing a temple and city that appear to have been the home of the fabled Queen of Sheba. The Mahram Bilqis temple near the ancient city of Marib has long been thought to be associated with “Sheba.” Recent finds there prove that the sanctuary, also known as the Temple of the Moon God, existed as early as 1500 B.C. and was in continuous use until the sixth century A.D. It likely was a pilgrimage center during the famous queen’s rule and also a significant political and economic force at the time Lehi’s party was in the area. If Lehi’s and Ishmael’s families were “in bondage” in that vicinity for several years, as S. Kent Brown has argued,² then the new excavations should shed light not only on relations between King Solomon and the “Queen of Sheba” but also on conditions prevailing when the Book of Mormon group was thereabouts. Bill Glanzman, an archaeologist at the University of Calgary, is heading the excavation of the sanctuary. He says that the site is packed with artifacts, pottery, artwork, and inscriptions. The full extent of the site, which is

mostly covered with sand, has been revealed by ground-penetrating radar.

Near this capital of the kingdom of Saba is the ruin of a 2,230-foot-long dam, built in the seventh or eighth century B.C., that allowed irrigation of a large area of Saba for centuries. It could take another 15 years to get a full picture of the city. Excavation first began in 1951 under American archaeologist Wendell Phillips, but within months members of his party were forced to flee for their lives because of threats from the local governor who accused them of failing to decipher inscriptions that, he claimed, told where gold was buried. Dangers exist even today for the new excavators because the central government is not in full control of local tribesmen, who have been known to take hostages for ransom.³

“Noah’s Flood” has been a renewed topic of discussion also. In 1998 geophysicists William B. F. Ryan and Walter C. Pitman published a daring but heavily documented claim that they believe explains many questions about ancient life in the center of Eurasia. Building on the work of many other physical scientists and archaeologists, they have utilized sea-bottom cores and other

underwater data that have allowed them to reconstruct a plausible geophysical history of the Black Sea and Mediterranean basins over many thousands of years along entirely new lines. From Ice Age times down to 5600 B.C., the Black Sea basin contained a freshwater lake—400 feet lower than today's Black Sea—around which flourishing ancient cultures grew up. But due to changes involving the melting of the ice and the rising of the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, the basin was overwhelmed by torrents of saltwater that flowed in from the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus (adjacent to today's Istanbul). The filling of the Black Sea basin with saltwater took only a few years.

The impressive spectrum of physical and cultural data gathered by these two scientists and their colleagues at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University and abroad casts dramatic new light on a whole range of ancient phenomena. The heavily documented book by Ryan and Pitman that reports their fascinating discoveries and inferences, *Noah's Flood: The New Scientific Discoveries about the Event That Changed History*,⁴ became an immediate must-read for all students of ancient history. The two scientists think that the stories of Noah's Flood in the Bible and comparable tales in Mesopotamian tradition and elsewhere hark back to the catastrophic event they describe. The Sumerians, who inhabited Mesopotamia from about the sixth millennium B.C., passed on their own version of a flood tale very much like that in the Bible about Noah.

The reigning interpretation of the "development of civilization" has been that that level of human attainment was reached earliest in the Near East, whence it spread into Europe and elsewhere. Ryan and Pitman's picture calls much of that explanation into question. The Near-East-was-first notion also fails to meet the challenge of other new data. For example, the earliest pottery in the world is now known to have been developed in northern Japan by the Jomon people about 12,700 years ago.⁵ (They are considered to be ancestors of the non-oriental Ainu people of Japan.)

Other archaeologists are now claiming a role for Africa in the pottery sweepstakes. The first African pottery is now claimed to date to the eighth millennium B.C., within the zone now known as the southern Sahara and Sahel.⁶ That is long before any such craft is evident in the Near East.

British archaeologists have discovered further unexpected facts about the Sahara, although from a much later time. In an oasis zone 100 miles long and 2 to 3 miles wide roughly 700 miles south of Tripoli, Libya, dwelt the Garamantes people mentioned by classical historians Herodotus and Tacitus. The first to fourth centuries A.D. were the heyday of the Garamantes. They constituted enough of a threat to the empire that Rome sent an army against them. The area boasted flourishing agriculture made possible by tapping an aquifer with a system of underground channels (the foghara or chain-well system). They traded with both the Roman world and sub-Saharan Africa, and they built tombs

shaped like the Egyptian-stepped mastaba structures as well as pyramid tombs. Recent research has identified "a series of significant botanical horizons in their area—including a late medieval "maize horizon," which represents the arrival of certain plant species from the Americas (before the time of Columbus). The Garamantes also wrote in a Libyan script, a version of which, called Tifinag has persisted to modern times among the nomadic Tuareg people of the Sahara.⁷

In the Americas, too, data have come to light about unexpected human achievements. In a critical reexamination of past research on the pottery of the Amazon basin, North American archaeologist Anna C. Roosevelt has put together a plausible argument that the making of pottery in that area dates much earlier than has been acknowledged before. To support her case, she has published 22 radiocarbon dates that were done at the Smithsonian laboratory between 1972 and 1986 but were never published. It seems that Amazonian pottery began between 5000 and 6000 B.C. (some have suggested that it came from Africa) and is now the most securely dated New World ceramic tradition, existing at least 1,000 years before the next earliest, from Colombia.⁸

Furthermore, a dried-up human corpse, radiocarbon dated to around 5200 B.C., has been found in northeastern Brazil, not far from the early pottery center. There was evidence that the intestinal tract of this person had been infested with hookworms. The nature of the reproductive cycle of the hookworm rules out their having reached the New

World via a cold country (the Bering Strait, as is usually supposed). Specialists on parasites are absolutely sure that the only way for those organisms to have reached the Americas from the Far East, where they are known much earlier, was inside human hosts who traveled from East Asia by boat.⁹

Finally, the press, television, and the Internet have widely reported the discovery of a different kind of city in northern Guatemala. Excavation at a Maya center anciently named (according to inscriptions) Cancuén began this year. The archaeologists, from Vanderbilt and other universities and the Guatemalan government, report that what they have found is not the usual

administrative or holy settlement of the Maya but a very wealthy commercial center. Some mundane manufacturing and trading activities not usually associated with sacred places were central to life at Cancuén and its wealth. This is the first time that a special-function city has been discovered in Mesoamerica; small settlements for specific purposes—making salt, fishing, and mining—have been found before, but nothing so massive and economically crucial as this place.¹⁰

All these examples of recent investigations warn us that the string-wrapped packages of knowledge we may have bought at the learning store—our places of education—a few years back may now be out of date. Our old

contents need to be reexamined in the light shed by more recent discoveries. How these latest finds and claims will work out over time remains to be seen. Their significance will no doubt change as more research is done. The inevitable tentativeness of scientific or scholarly knowledge displayed in these cases underlines the wisdom of Brigham H. Roberts in counseling that “we need not follow our researches in any spirit of fear and trembling. We desire only to ascertain the truth; nothing but the truth will endure.”¹¹ But it also whets our appetite for further challenging discoveries “out of the dust.”

The *Journal* regrets that the table published in volume 9, number 1 (2000), page 58, contains errors. The table on the right corrects those errors.

PRONUNCIATION OF SELECTED BOOK OF MORMON NAMES				
Text Word	Deseret Alphabet	Pronunciation	Reference	Guide Pronunciation
Abish	ᐸᐸᐢᐣ	ā-bīsh	Alma 19:16	ā-bīsh
Aha	ᐸᐸᐸ	ā-hā	Alma 16:5	ā-hā
Alma	ᐱᐣᐣ	āl-ma	Mosiah 17:2	āl-ma
Ammonihah	ᐱᐣᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸ	am-a-nī-hā	Alma 8:6	ām-a-nī'-hā
Chemish	ᐣᐸᐣᐣᐣ	shēm-īsh	Omni 1:8	kēm-īsh
Deseret	ᐣᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸ	dēs-ē-rēt	Ether 2:3	dēz'-a-rēt
Hagoth	ᐸᐸᐣᐣᐣᐣ	hā-gāth	Alma 63:5	hā'-gāth
Himni	ᐸᐸᐣᐣᐣ	hīm-nī	Mosiah 27:34	hīm'-nī
Isabel	ᐸᐸᐸᐸᐣᐣᐣ	īs-a-bēl	Alma 39:3	īz'-a-bēl
Jarom	ᐸᐸᐸᐸᐣᐣ	jā-rum	Jarom 1:1	jē'-rum
Lehi	ᐣᐣᐸᐸᐣ	lē-hī	1 Nephi 1:4	lē'-hī
Luram	ᐣᐣᐣᐸᐸᐣᐣ	lūr-um	Moroni 9:2	lūr'-um
Mathoni	ᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣ	ma-thō-nī	3 Nephi 19:4	ma-thō'-nī
Mathonihah	ᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣ	mā-thō-nī-hā	3 Nephi 19:4	mā-thō-nī'-hā
Muloki	ᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣᐣ	mu-lō-kī	Alma 20:2	myū'-la-kī
Nephi	ᐸᐸᐸᐣᐣ	nē-fi	1 Nephi 1:1	nē'-fi
Sam	ᐸᐸᐣᐣ	sām	1 Nephi 2:5	sām
Sariah	ᐸᐸᐸᐣᐣᐣᐣ	sā-rī-ā	1 Nephi 2:5	sā-rī'-ā

17. See L. Cavalli-Sforza et al., *The History and Geography of Human Genes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

18. See Rebecca L. Cann, M. Stoneking and A. C. Wilson, "Mitochondrial DNA and Human Evolution," *Nature* 325 (1987): 31–36.

19. See A. R. Templeton, "Human Origins and Analysis of Mitochondrial DNA Sequences," *Science* 255 (1992): 737.

20. See J. H. Greenberg, Christy G. Turner II, and S. Zegura, "Convergence of Evidence for the Peopling of the Americas," *Collegium Antropologicum* 9/1 (1985): 33–42. An expanded version by the same three authors appeared in 1986 as "The Settlement of the Americas: A Comparison of the Linguistic, Dental, and Genetic Evidence," *Current Anthropology* 27 (1986): 477–97.

21. R. C. Williams et al., "GM Allotypes in Native Americans: Evidence for Three Distinct Migrations across the Bering Land Bridge," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 66 (1895): 1–19.

22. Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, 437; see note 11.

23. See Greenberg, Turner, and Zegura, "The Settlement of the Americas," 488–92. Commenting on this article, Lyle Campbell urged that "the whole speculative venture should be abandoned," and Emöke J. E. Szathmáry charged that Turner "interprets his analytic results in the light of a preexisting hypothesis that he simply assumes to be true" (ibid., 488–91).

24. See Michael H. Crawford, *The Origins of Native Americans: Evidence from Anthropological Genetics*, rev. English version (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 21–24.

25. See M. S. Schanfield, "Immunoglobulin Allotypes (GM and KM) Indicate Multiple Founding Populations of Native Americans: Evidence of at Least Four Migrations to the New World," *Human Biology* 64 (1992): 381–402; and Joseph G. Lorenz and David G. Smith, "Distribution of Four Founding mtDNA Haplogroups Among Native North Americans," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 101 (1996): 307–23.

26. See S. Pääbo et al., "Mitochondrial Evolution and the Peopling of the Americas," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 81/1 (1990): 277.

27. See Ann Gibbons, "The Peopling of the Americas," *Science* 274 (4 Oct. 1996): 32–33.

28. Roger Highfield, "Europeans Colonised America in 28,000 BC," *Electronic Telegraph*, issue 1730 (19 Feb. 2000): 1 (www.telegraph.co.uk).

29. See Theodore G. Schurr, "Mitochondrial DNA and the Peopling of the New World," *American Scientist* 88/3 (2000), 246–53; and Virginia Morell, "Genes May Link Ancient Eurasians, Native Americans," *Science* 280 (24 April 1998): 520.

30. Ibid., 33.

31. See Dennis H. O'Rourke, S. W. Carlyle, and R. L. Par, "Ancient DNA: Methods, Progress, and Perspectives," *American Journal of Human Biology* 8 (1996): 557–71.

32. See Nicholas Wade, "DNA Backs a Tribe's Tradition of Early Descent from the Jews," *New York Times*, 9 May 1999, 1, 10; Karl Skorecki et al., "Y Chromosomes of Jewish Priests," *Nature* 385 (2 Jan. 1997): 32; A. B. Spurdle and T. Jenkins, "The Origins of

the Lemba 'Black Jews' of Southern Africa: Evidence from p12F2 and Other Y-Chromosome Markers," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 59 (1996): 1126–33.

33. See M. J. Allison et al., "ABO Blood groups in Chilean and Peruvian Mummies," 139–42; see note 10.

34. See C. W. Griggs et al., "Evidences of a Christian Population in the Egyptian Fayum and Genetic and Textile Studies of the Akhmim Noble Mummies," *BYU Studies* 33/2 (1993), 215–44.

35. Bryan Sykes et al., "The Origins of the Polynesians: An Interpretation from Mitochondrial Lineage Analysis," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 57 (1995): 1463–75, 1470–72.

36. See Jim Borg, "The History Within," *Hawaii Magazine*, February 1997, 36–41, based on an interview with Rebecca Cann at University of Hawaii.

37. Sykes et al., "The Origins of the Polynesians," 1472.

38. See *ibid.*, 1463.

39. See J. K. Lum et al., "Polynesian Mitochondrial DNAs Reveal Three Deep Maternal Lineage Clusters," *Human Biology* 66/4 (1994), 567–90, 573.

40. Sykes et al., "The Origins of the Polynesians," 1474.

41. Borg, "The History Within"; compare Sykes et al., "The Origins of the Polynesians," 1472.

42. See, for example, R. H. Ward et al., "Extensive Mitochondrial Diversity within a Single Amerindian Tribe," *National Academy of Science USA, Proceedings* 88 (1991): 8720–24.

43. See L. Cavalli-Sforza et al., *History and Geography*.

44. See James L. Guthrie, "Human Lymphocyte Antigens: Apparent Afro-Asiatic, South Asian, and European HLA in Indigenous American Populations," MS in possession of John L. Sorenson.

45. See Kelly Owens and Mary-Claire King, "Genomic Views of Human History," *Science* 286 (15 Oct. 1999): 451–53.

46. A. E. Mourant et al., *The Genetics of the Jews* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 39.

47. See *ibid.*, 39.

48. See *ibid.*, 25.

49. Some work on genetic aspects of blood groups has been done, but it is not systematic and comes to no clear conclusion about what the ancestral Jewish genes might have been. See Mourant et al., *The Genetics of the Jews*; and Raphael Patai and Jennifer Patai, *The Myth of the Jewish Race*, rev. ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989).

50. See John L. Sorenson, "When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find Others There?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1 (1, 1992), 1–34; republished in *Nephite Culture and Society: Collected Papers*, ed. Matthew Sorenson (Salt Lake City: New Sage Books, 1997), 65–104.

51. John L. Sorenson, "The Significance of an Apparent Relationship Between the Ancient Near East and Mesoamerica," in *Man across the Sea: Problems of Pre-Columbian Contacts*, ed. C. L. Riley, J. C. Kelley, C. W. Pennington, and R. L. Rands (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 219–41.

52. See Cyrus H. Gordon et al., *Before Columbus: Links between the Old World and Ancient America* (New York: Crown, 1971); *Riddles in History* (New York: Crown, 1974);

and J. H. McCulloch, "The Bat Creek Inscription: Cherokee or Hebrew?" *Tennessee Anthropologist* 13/2 (1988), 79–123.

53. See Alexander von Wuthenau, *Altamerikanische Tonplastik: Das Menschenbild der Neuen Welt* (Baden-Baden: Holle, 1965); and *Unexpected Faces in Ancient America, 1500 B.C.–A.D. 1500* (New York: Crown, 1975).

54. See Pierre Agrinier, "Linguistic Evidence for the Presence of Israelites in Mexico," *Society for Early Historic Archaeology, Newsletter and Proceedings* 112 (1969): 4–5, which reports on glottochronological comparisons begun under M. Swadesh's guidance. Brian Stubbs's "Elements of Hebrew in Uto-Aztec: a Summary of the Data" (FARMS, 1988), and subsequent reports have found at least 1,000 roots with phonological and other linguistic patterns consistent with creolization involving a Semitic language and Uto-Aztec.

55. See Mary LeCron Foster, "The Transoceanic Trail: the Proto-Pelagian Language Phylum," *Pre-Columbiana* 1 (1998): 88–113; "Old World Languages in the Americas," unpublished paper presented at the eighth annual meeting of the Language Origins Society, Selwyn College, Cambridge University, 7–10 Sept. 1992 (copy in the possession of John Sorenson).

56. *The Lost Tribes*, video documentary produced by Nova, copy in FARMS library.

57. See "The Jewish Indians in Mexico," *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review* 18 (1950): 1–12.

58. In an e-mail to John Sorenson dated 13 October 2000, he wondered if any LDS DNA specialists would be interested in collaborating.

Out of the Dust

1. Craig Savage, "Scientists find civilization where it isn't supposed to be," *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 May 2000, 3.

2. S. Kent Brown, *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1998), 55–74.

3. Mike Theodoulou, "Traces of the Queen of Sheba under antiquity's dust," *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 September 2000, 7.

4. William Ryan and Walter Pitman, *Noah's Flood: The New Scientific Discoveries about the Event That Changed History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

5. C. M. Aikens, "First in the World: The Jomon Pottery of Early Japan," in *The Emergence of Pottery: Technology and Innovation in Ancient Societies*, ed. William K. Barnett and John W. Hoopes (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 11–21.

6. Angela E. Close, "Few and Far Between: Early Ceramics in North Africa," in *The Emergence of Pottery*, ed. Barnett and Hoopes, 23–37.

7. David Mattingly, "Making the desert bloom: the Garamantian capital and its underground water system," *Archaeology Odyssey* 3/2 (March–April): 31–37.

8. Anna C. Roosevelt, "Early Pottery in the Amazon: Twenty Years of Scholarly Obscurity," in *The Emergence of Pottery*, ed. Barnett and Hoopes.

9. L. Fernando Ferreira et al., "Encontro de ovos de ancilostomídeos em coprólitos humanos datados de 7,230±80 anos, no Estado do Piauí, Brasil," in *Paleoparasitologia*

no Brasil, ed. L. Fernando Ferreira, A. Araújo, and U. Confalonieri. (Rio de Janeiro: Programa de Educação Pública, Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública, 1988).

10. See Will Weissert, "Ancient Mayan Marketplace Found," <http://www.abcnews.go.com>, 27 Oct. 2000; and Angela M. H. Schuster, "Maya Palace Uncovered," <http://www.archaeology.org>, 8 Sept. 2000.

11. Brigham H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God: II, The Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1951), 503.

Centenary of a Giant

1. Harold Lundstrom, "George Reynolds," in *A Complete Concordance of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), iv. For more information about the life and work of George Reynolds, see Bruce A. Van Orden, *George Reynolds: Secretary, Sacrificial Lamb, and Seventy* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1986), 114–48; and Bruce A. Van Orden, "George Reynolds: Loyal Friend of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, August 1986, 48–51.

2. Reynolds's preface to the *Concordance*.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Tabulated from Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, and Sandra A. Thorne, *A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1996).

6. Ibid.

7. Lundstrom, "George Reynolds," iii.