

Scripts, Scripts, Scripts

By Neil Steede and the Mexican Epigraphic Society © 2009

The September/October 2009 issue of *Glyph Notes* published by the Pre-Columbian Studies Institute carries an article concerning two shards of Cholulan pottery with Hebrew script on them. A third shard was found along with those two shards which has a script on it that has appeared previously in Mesoamerica. That script appears to be a Shell Script from Southern India and Northern Sri Lanka. This particular shard known as Shard # 1 has been extensively examined by Margaret Kohl. These three shards and their combination create very interesting scenarios.

As stated in the article from the *Glyph Notes*, Dr. David Kelly and Dr. Phil Leonard have verified the shards as authentic Classic Cholulan Pottery and the scripts as having Old World origins. Moreover, the time period of the pottery matches the time period of the script. That is to say, the pottery and scripts all date from the time

of Christ to around 200 AD. It is most interesting that both scripts are found in the same location, at the same time period and on the same medium. This causes one to pause and consider the implications.

On the surface it seems that the Hebrew Script had to arrive as “cultural baggage” across the Atlantic since it originates in the Middle East and particu-



Pottery Shard # 1 from Cholula clearly demonstrates Shell Script on Classical Cholulan pottery.

DNA and the Book of Mormon

By Chris Scott

How could something so small as a human gene create such a big controversy? The study of Population Genetics as related to the historicity of the Book of Mormon has created a big stir among those who would like to claim that the Book of Mormon is fictional and those who believe that the book is scripture that is divinely brought forth by the power and gift of the Holy Spirit. In this first of a series of articles I would like to explore the issues surrounding the DNA controversy concerning the Book of Mormon. I am by no means a scientist or an expert in Population Genetics and would like to clarify that this is my opinion. I write this because it stirs a new interest for me and I thought that what I am learning might be of interest to others.

Gene, like the protein, is such a small word, but the study of genes and

genetics and all the sciences surrounding genetics are big. The words and theories are huge and starting to learn a subject so immense seems overwhelming yet it seems important to learn because of the potential that it can have in our efforts to testify of the Book of Mormon. This knowledge is important for us to be conversant in our attempts to defend the attacks made against the book.

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larly Israel. Meanwhile, the Shell Script, now tentatively identified by Margaret Kohl as belonging to the family of Brahmi Scripts implies a Pacific crossing. This should not surprise one. Transoceanic pre-Columbian Old World/New World contacts have been profusely illustrated over the years. But, this case presents two very different and seemingly unrelated scripts sitting side-by-side on a piece of pottery in an unrelated and isolated third location. It is only the single piece of pottery on which these scripts appear that seems to tie together three vastly separated regions of the geographic



Pottery Shard # 2 displays the Hebrew script, but the word cannot be deciphered.

world. This piece of pottery on which the scripts appear is polychrome Classical Cholulan pottery and serves as the medium that ties both scripts to a common chronology. Both of these aspects are important as one does not supersede the other.

At the moment none of the three shard inscriptions are translatable. It is presently considered that the scripts are personnel names though as of yet this has not been verified. Therefore, though the implications are truly supportive of the Book of Mormon story in no way does this prove it. But, this does demonstrate how new discoveries are changing perspectives in Mesoamerican archaeology. At the moment Dr. David Kelly estimates that thirty-two different scripts have been identified in ancient Mesoamerica. This is a far cry from the single pictographic/hieroglyphic script identified forty years ago. Where will all of this new information concerning the blending of scripts on pottery eventually lead? I believe that the ending will be quite surprising.

Footnotes:

¹ Glyph Notes, September/October, Volume 16 Number 5, published by the Pre-Columbian Studies Institute.

² Cholula is a large Mesoamerican City located close to Puebla, Puebla, Mexico that dates from Book of Mormon times.

³ The Shell Script dates from 200 BC to 400 AD and is called such because of



Pottery Shard # 3 with the Hebrew script that may be a name written on the Classical Cholulan Pottery.

its resemblance to seashells. It comes from Ancient India and as yet it has not been deciphered.

⁴ Member of the Mexican Epigraphic Society.

⁵ Kelly, David PhD, Professor Emeritus, Calgary, private communication.

⁶ Leonard, Phil PhD, Professor Emeritus, Utah State, private communication.

⁷ "Cultural Baggage" refers to items of a particular culture which a traveler carries in his head. i.e. languages, dress, etc.

⁸ Kohl, Margaret; "Pottery Shard # 1," unpublished paper, Mexican Epigraphic Society.

⁹ There are some indications that both scripts arrived to the Americas from the same source; Steede, Neil, "Cholulan Pottery Inscriptions," unpublished paper, working title.

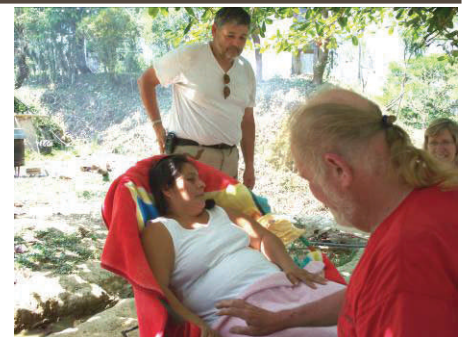
¹⁰ Private communication.

News From Mexico City *By David B. Brown and Neil Steede*

Good news travels fast and I want to help this bit of good news to travel quickly. Neil Steede received a phone call recently from a lady identifying herself as "Lupita." Neil tried to put a face to a name, but was unsuccessful until she mentioned that her husband's name was Juan. Immediately Neil placed this couple as the Mayor and Lady of Piedra Ancha; a village situated across the Santo Domingo River in the valley next to Cerro Rabon that we believe to be the Hill Cumorah. They called to let us know that they were un-

able to find work in the valley so they moved to Mexico City to find employment. They finally saved enough money so Lupé could let us know that she attributed her healing to the sacrament of the laying-on-of-hands.

Certainly we attribute this healing to the loving power of the Holy Spirit as it has moved throughout the region where we have visited. God has something wonderful in store for the people in this valley and it is a blessing to witness Him as He moves and reveals His love for all humanity.



Our visit with Lupé in Piedra Ancha was moving as we had the chance to share the laying on of hands at her request.

DNA and the Book of Mormon *continued*

The field of Population Genetics was not developed for the purpose of tracing where people came from, but instead to study the evolutionary process of genes and how it related to natural selection. It began before the discovery of DNA, but since the discovery of DNA it has taken on an entire new meaning. This article is not an attempt to argue evolution or natural selection, but to explain that a by-product of the study of Population Genetics has resulted in the ability to study the migrations of people around the world.

Coalescence Theory is an important concept in Population Genetics. A simple explanation can be made by using me and my cousin who are trying to find our “most recent common ancestor” also known as MRCA. The oral history of our families, the sharing of common surnames, and sharing in family gatherings would be enough to convince us of the fact that we share the same grandparents. There would be no need to do any kind of genetic testing. It would start to become more complicated to find a MRCA with a second or third cousin, and much more difficult to find a MRCA with a friend or neighbor. Add to that approximately two thousand years from when the Book of Mormon was written and it becomes quite difficult. The opposite of finding a “most recent common ancestor” would be to find descendents of someone from history. Descendents of Lehi or Mulek would require genetic

testing and data gathering from a population that fits the requirements of a sound study.

In the same manner as the study of archaeology in relation to the Book of Mormon it will take some time for the study of Population Genetics to mature and for us to begin developing a picture of the origin of the different migrations of people. It took centuries for archaeologists to develop a map of Central America and match up the various sites to the cities described in the Book of Mormon. This process was not without controversy. Likewise, with Population Genetics it will take time with some heated discussions along the way. It is far too early to find any resolution at this time.

There are several things to consider in a study of the Book of Mormon and how it relates to DNA studies that we will explore in future articles:

1. What does the Book of Mormon say about Lehi and his lineage, and how does it relate to the study of mitochondrial DNA and haplotypes?

2. What do the Book of Mormon and Bible say about Mulek and where he came from?

3. How does the geography of where the story of the Book of Mormon took place relate to this subject?

4. How do statistics apply to this subject and how do we apply them truthfully to this subject?

5. One fact to consider is that a gene of Middle Eastern origin has been

found and is currently being traced in a population of Cherokee. For further information see “The Book of Mormon: An Inconvenient Truth” by Richard E. Rupe, page 72.

This is just a beginning of a very large subject that will most likely be discussed for years to come.

A gene is just a small but powerful biological part of our total make-up; our souls are a much larger concern to our Creator. We are all children of God and as such have been promised the opportunities and blessings of being part of his kingdom. In this process of discovering the impact of DNA and Population Genetics can we avoid causing controversy in attempting to use this information to prove the validity of the Book of Mormon, instead letting this sacred book become a tool for peace and a guide to learn how God works in the lives of people?

Alma 11:26-28 *“And there was no inequality among them, for the Lord did pour out his Spirit on all the face of the land, to prepare the minds of the children of men, or to prepare their hearts to receive the word which should be taught among them at the time of his coming. That they might not be hardened against the word, that they might not be unbelieving, and go on to destruction, But that they might receive the word with joy, and as a branch be grafted into the true vine, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord their God.”*

Membership Now Available

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team is a Missouri not-for-profit corporation dedicated to researching and disseminating historical evidences for the Book of Mormon. We have sponsored several expeditions to Mexico for this very purpose and recently we have found ourselves involved in sharing the message of the Book of Mormon with evangelical groups in Kenya, Africa.

If you are interested and feel so led to support our efforts through a membership then you can send the member-

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The success of our effort is greatly enhanced when there is sufficient funding. All of this can only happen with God’s blessing, but we feel that we must prepare ourselves to be ready when God says, “It’s time!”

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A Testimony of Chinkultic; the City of Nephi by Mike Brown

I want to emphatically state that I am very concerned with the “learned” professors and espousers of knowledge who state unequivocally that there is clearly no evidence of the culture and peoples as written of by Joseph Smith; that the stories of the Book of Mormon are just that—stories. I was going through internet presentations found on YouTube, looking at all the entries concerning Joseph Smith and there are as many against as for the case that Joseph was a true prophet and the Book of Mormon is a historical story about real people. In my opinion, once a sincere investigation of the historical aspects of the Book of Mormon has been initiated a person would need to have his head firmly planted in the proverbial sand to continue to believe that there is no evidence. Either that or they are searching for the Book of Mormon historical remains in the wrong place such as around Lake Michigan, in the state of New York, or someplace similar. It might be worthwhile to say here that Joseph Smith never said that the hill in New York where the plates were found was the Hill Cumorah where the final battle took place and where the larger library exists: Joseph Smith never called it that. The church publications under Brigham Young said that Joseph called it Hill Cumorah and also stated that Joseph said he saw the larger library of plates in the hill in Palmyra, but again, those words from Joseph cannot be found. In so many cases we get ourselves in trouble when we overstate both hearsay and what we believe, calling it “what is said” and “what is known.”

This introduction brings me to the point of sharing my story of a little trip that three members of our group took in September of 2006. This trip was sponsored by the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, but as usual most trip expenses such as airfare, car rental, hotels, meals and the like are paid by each participant. Our objective was to investigate new findings at Chinkultic as well as investigate a site called Tenam Puente (may be Jerusalem from the Book of Mormon) and Izapa on the Pacific

Coast.

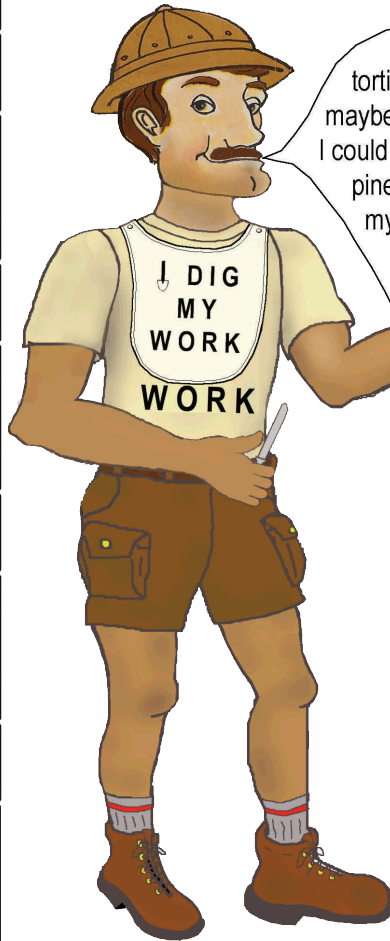
I believe that Chinkultic is the City of Nephi. It is one of the most interesting sites I have seen. If you consider the story of the city, its location relative to other cities and lands and what events occurred there then compare that to the topography and the river that runs literally “around” it, you cannot deny the similarities. It must be considered a strong forerunner as the City of Nephi; I wouldn’t want to say that it is “without a doubt,” but it fits in many ways.

Terry Scott, Neil Steede and I traveled south by road from the lowlands around the land of Bountiful (Palenque) to the highlands of the Land of Nephi; just ask Terry about the curvy mountainous roads to reach the area. We passed through a mountainous, heavily forested area called the Hermounts that act as a natural barrier between the highlands of Guatemala and southern Yucatan in the south and the Yucatan

peninsula lowlands. There is no easy pass through these mountains. At the ruin known as Chinkultic, there is a river that forms a semicircle around the city. You can go in either direction depending on which direction you choose to follow the river; one way goes toward Yaxchilan (Zarahemla) and the other end empties toward the Isthmus of Tehuantepec up by the narrow neck of land (Land of Desolation). Wow, now where did I hear about this? There was a thriving community in Zarahemla and the decaying bones and rusting swords of the final Jaredite battle in the land of Desolation.

Under persecution from the Lamanite King during the time of King Limhi the Lamanites are taxing the Nephites in the City of Nephi with a very heavy tax – around 50%, and the weight is very difficult to bear. The people of the City of Nephi finally have the opportunity to escape so a plan is devised to collect all of the people and





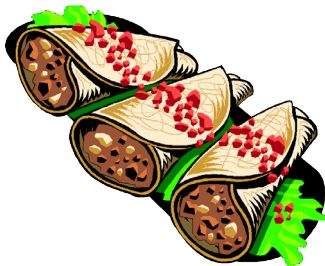
I'm ready to eat! Maybe I'll have a corn tortilla with refried beans and tomatoes and maybe a side of squash or pumpkin. For dessert I could have some fruit like black raspberries or pineapple or guava or papaya. And I could have my favorite drink, chocolate with chili. (you have to get used to this drink) Today we put sugar in our chocolate drink instead of chili.

There are many foods that originated in Mesoamerica or Central America as we call it today. (Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras). This

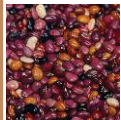
means these foods could only be found here in Mesoamerica. Later they were brought by outsiders to Europe and the rest of the world. All fruits and vegetables we eat today were once wild plants. Over time these plants have been changed into the plants we recognize today. Seeds from each type of plant are placed in the ground. These crops grow until they mature and are ready to eat.

You might be surprised to find that these foods were found here in Mesoamerica before anywhere else:

- 1 Corn (Maize) -common types of corns are: flint, dent, flour, sweet and popcorn.
- 2 Beans –black, pinto & tepary beans
- 3 Squash -(calabaza) - pumpkins, zucchini, acorn & butternut squash
- 4 Yam and Mexican Turnip (Jicama)
- 5 Amaranth (Huautli) -leaf vegetables & cereal grain
- 6 Tomato -over 300 varieties today
- 7 Chili peppers (Capsicum) – used as flavoring
- 8 Vanilla bean - used for flavoring
- 9 Chocolate (Cocoa) -bean
- 10 Avocado –fruit
- 11 Black raspberry - fruit
- 12 Pineapple - fruit
- 13 Papaya - fruit
- 14 Guava (Guayaba) - fruit
- 15 Sunflower seeds – eating, flour, vegetable oil
- 16 Tapioca root (Cassava) – tapioca pudding
- 17 Peanuts (Cacahuete)
- 18 Chewing Gum (Chicle)



Corn is a member of the grass family of plants. It was first grown by the Mayan, Aztec, and Inca Indians more than 5,600 years ago. Called *maiz* in Spanish, corn was basic in their diet and their more revered crop. Corn is still the basis of the Maya diet; in many communities, it represents 50% to 70% of the daily food intake. The Mayan used corn in a variety of ways. Even today, the Mayan uses corn in more than 400 different recipes.



Beans-Mayan used a variety of beans, including pinto and black beans. Corn, beans, and squash, formed a triad commonly referred to as the "Three Sisters." They provided a complementary nutrient triangle. Each contributed a part of the essential vitamin mix that was needed to survive. These three crops planted together helped retain nutrients in the soil.



Squash are related to gourds, cucumbers, and pumpkins. Summer squashes (zucchini, yellow crookneck) are harvested during the growing season and have tender skins. They require little cooking. Winter squashes (butternut, acorn, pumpkin) are harvested at the end the season and have harder skins. They require longer cooking times. In many cases, squash were valued more for their tender edible seeds than for the flesh. Chilacayote squash is still used in many dishes throughout central Mexico.



Chilies may be the first spice used by humans anywhere in the world. They originated in South America spreading over time into Mesoamerica by birds and humans. Chili was cultivated as a food crop as early as about 4000 BC. It was used by all cultures in Mesoamerica. It appears that nothing was eaten without chili. Chilies were used fresh, dried, smoked or roasted. They were chopped or ground when added to food, much like today. Chocolate and chili were a favorite flavor combination among the Mesoamericans.



Tomato is native to South America. One species was transported to Mexico where it was grown and consumed by prehistoric humans. The exact date of domestication is not known. It was called **tomatl** by Mesoamerican peoples. Aztec writings mention tomatoes were prepared with peppers, corn and salt, likely to be the original salsa recipe.



Avocados (*Persea americana*) originated in south-central Mexico, sometime between 7,000 and 5,000 B.C. It would be several thousand years before it was cultivated. Around 291 B.C. it began to be commonly used as food. The avocado was originally called **ahuacatl**. The name was changed to *avocado* in 1669.



Chocolate was used in Mesoamerica as early as the first millennium B.C. Chocolate comes from the seed of the Cacao tree. Cacao was used by the Maya as money, and in religious ceremonies as well as food. It was the Maya who taught Europeans their custom for drinking chocolate.



Black raspberries are native only to North America. The Black raspberry is also called, wild raspberry, and has been used for centuries to treat pregnant women. Raspberries contain extreme quantities of antioxidants that are linked to preventing cancer, intervene with heart disease and offer many other health benefits. They have high amounts of Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, B2, Vitamin C, Niacin, and the mineral, calcium, phosphorus, iron and potassium.



The origin of **pumpkins** is not definitively known, although they are thought to have originated in North America. The oldest evidence are pumpkin seeds found in Mexico, dating between 7000 and 5500 B.C. Pumpkins are a squash-like fruit that range in size from very small to very large. They are commonly used during Thanksgiving for pumpkin pies and at Halloween for jack-o-lanterns.

B	X	R	S	A	S	M	A	T	C	H	V	C	P
C	L	J	E	Q	Y	L	H	H	G	T	D	H	O
T	K	A	U	W	L	A	O	B	A	N	U	I	F
Z	A	A	C	I	O	C	P	V	C	A	L	L	B
T	S	P	N	K	O	L	A	A	P	R	S	I	L
H	R	A	I	L	R	U	F	M	P	A	N	P	D
Q	V	P	A	O	G	A	D	N	C	M	A	E	K
O	U	T	D	P	C	I	S	Y	U	A	E	P	O
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F	P	W	O	S	A	O	V	F	V	J	E	H	Y
F	W	A	I	A	V	O	C	A	D	O	Q	R	N

WORD SEARCH

Find the words



and circle Mayan foods listed below:



- Amaranth Avocado Beans
- Black Raspberry
- Chili Peppers Chocolate
- Corn Guava Papaya
- Peanuts Pineapple Squash
- Sunflower Tapioca
- Tomato Vanilla Yams

http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/science/archaeology/

http://research.history.org/Archaeological_Research/KidsPage.cfm

<http://www.smm.org/sln/ma/index.html>

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/pyramids/>

<http://archaeology.la.asu.edu/teo/>

<http://www.digonsite.com/drdig/mesoamerica/15.html>

A Testimony of Chinkultic; the City of Nephi Continued

livestock and be ready to escape during the night. They do so through a secret pass in the middle of the night. The Lamanite guards are given an extra bounty of wine, fall asleep and remain in a drunken slumber through all the night. During this time, the Nephites sneak out of the city. There is a stela (standing inscribed stone) at the sight that shows people sneaking by a sleeping person--this stela at Chinkultic tells the Book of Mormon story.

Mosiah 10:8-16 *“And Gideon said unto him, **Behold the back pass through the back wall, on the back side of the city.** The Lamanites, or the guards of the Lamanites, by night, are drunken; therefore let us send a proclamation among all this people, that they gather together their flocks and herds, that they may drive them into the wilderness by night. And I will go according to thy command, and pay the last tribute of wine to the Lamanites, and they will be drunken; and we will pass through the secret pass on the left of their camp, when they are*

drunken and asleep; Thus we will depart with our women and our children, our flocks and our herds, into the wilderness; and we will travel around the land of Shilom. And it came to pass that the king hearkened unto the words of Gideon. And King Limhi caused that his people should gather their flocks together; and he sent the tribute of wine to the Lamanites; and he also sent more wine, as a present unto them; and they did drink freely of the wine which King Limhi did send unto them. And it came to pass that the people of King Limhi did depart 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, being led by Ammon and his brethren. And they had taken all their gold, and silver, and their precious things, which they could carry; and also their provisions with them, into the wilderness; and they pursued their journey. And after being many days in the wilderness, they arrived in the land of Zarahemla, and joined his people, and became his subjects.”

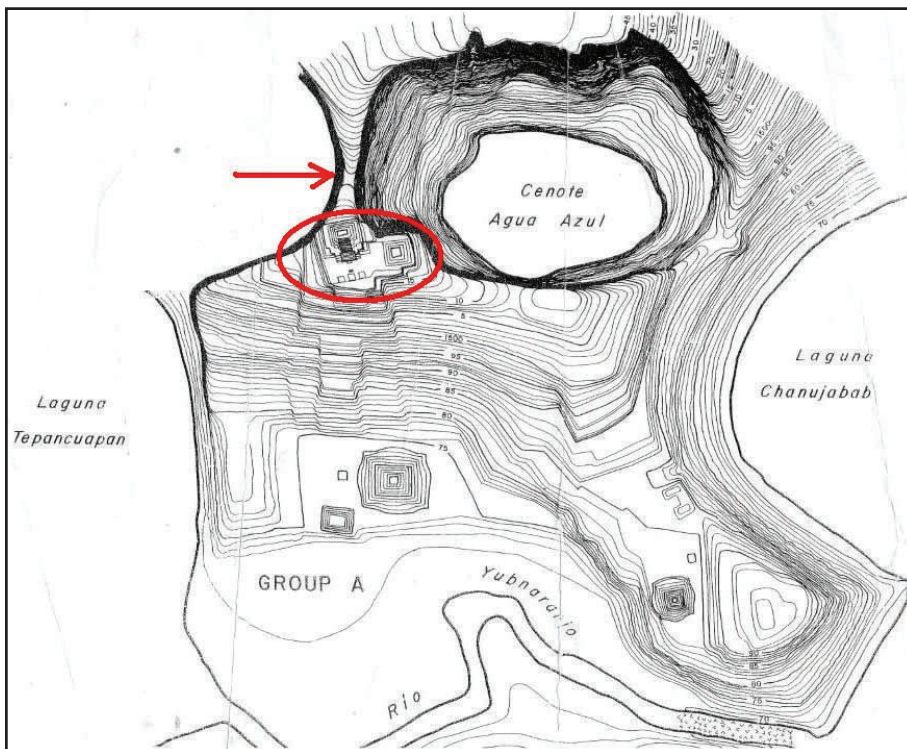


This photo illustrates the narrow path around the corner of the temple to the land bridge located behind it. The path is in the foreground with the cenote in the background.

hemla, and joined his people, and became his subjects.”

The most interesting feature of this sight is a rock cliff situated directly behind a very majestic looking temple (pyramid). This pyramid is sitting at the highest point on the south side of the cliff. The cliff is a solid rock face that drops 100 meters to a lake below. While standing at any location on the south side of the pyramid there is no clue of any drop off that would isolate the city or temple; only the cliff is visible. As you get closer to the pyramid, one can begin to see that there is a huge chasm behind the pyramid and in front of the rock face cliff. It appears that the back of the pyramid is right against the edge of the 100 meter drop. However, as you investigate and walk around the corner to view behind the pyramid you can see a very narrow pass that goes from directly behind the pyramid to the rock cliff on the back side of the chasm; it is truly amazing.

I had heard Neil Steede speak about this particular site and although I believed him it is very difficult to picture how this can be. As we investigated the site Terry and Neil decided to work their way through the brush to get to the cliff opening on the other side. An hour later as the guards were beginning to close down the site Neil and Terry had still not returned. I went to the back of the pyramid and tried yelling to them. Eventually, I saw two tiny little figures several hundred yards away to the west, still on the back side



A topographical layout of the site at Chinkultic illustrates the placement of water around the temple site. Note the lagoons located on the left and right with the Rio Yubnarario at the bottom of the map connecting the two large bodies of water. But, on the lower left corner of the Cenote Agua Azul is where the temple is located (inside the red circle), behind which is a land bridge (red arrow) to the high cliffs that are located on the top portion of the map.

**We're on the web at
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The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc is a Missouri not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the study, research and dissemination of information as it pertains to the Book of Mormon. Our primary focus is to research and assemble archaeological and other related information to help establish the historical feasibility of the Book of Mormon.

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Don Beebe, Mike Brown, Randall Lawrence.

A Testimony of Chinkultic; the City of Nephi continued

of the chasm and right on the edge of the cliff. I was a little nervous since they looked precariously close to the edge from my vantage point. After a long period of time they found their way back and we were able to leave.

Chinkultic is a great site with a beautiful history. Fortunately, the story of the city is recorded in glyphs that tell the same basic story found in the Book of Mormon. In some cases, they are not as complete as the Book of Mormon while in other cases the glyphs fill in some details left out of the Book of Mormon account. As many of the authors of the Book of Mormon report they can only tell a small part of their history and even then that history is abbreviated by the abridgment of Mormon and Moroni.



A view from the side of the mound located next to the temple at Chinkultic looking over the plain and lagoon to the east. This may be the very plain where the Lamanites camped to guard the Nephites.

In closing, I want to say that being a part of this group can get expensive. All of our travel expenses are covered by the individuals that go on the trips. I, like most of the group, work full-time so if you take a vacation to make this trip you miss work. But, this is like the Hardy Boys and Indiana Jones put together; we investigate beautiful sites and have the opportunity to discover the clues that have been waiting to be found for millennia. We feel it is a joy and a divine calling to find and then share evidences of the truths that are so beautifully written in the Book of Mormon. I want to invite anyone that has an interest in joining to step forward and be a part of the adventure!! Our meetings are open to the curious and called, so come join us.