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Nov. 26, 2004

A Detailed Chronology of LDS Thought on the Geography of the Mulekite Journey to the New World

1921 -----> 1980

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Statements by Church Authorities

Significant *Books*, "Articles," & Events

[Significant Theoretical or Illustrated Models, or Illustrations Related to Book of Mormon Geography]

Notes*

YEAR1 PERSON PRIMARY SOURCE2

Note 1: The mark ^ after the year is purely a research tool indicating that a copy of the article or book is on file in the author's personal library.

Note 2: The year (listed on the left) for the event or quote is not always the same as the date of the primary source (listed on the right) from which the information was taken. If the source information (the later publication of the information) was significant, in and of itself, to the later time period in which it came forth, there will also be a separate listing for that later year. When appropriate, additional sources will be listed.

1927^ News	J. M. Sjodahl	<i>An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon</i> , SLC: Deseret Press, 1927
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Starting on page 418, J. M. Sjodahl writes in detail of things having to do with configuration, dimension, direction, and topography. He includes the data from all the very early Book of Mormon geography experts. He summarizes (1) the Reynolds 1880 model first, yet he granted it was only one of a number of "theories," and then he includes (2) Joel Ricks of Logan, Utah; (3) Col. Willard Young; (4) Stuart Bagley and (5) himself.

(1) *A Well Known [Traditional Hemispheric] Theory (by Elder George Reynolds):*

The best known theory concerning the geography of the Book of Mormon is that represented by the late George Reynolds in his "Story of the Book of Mormon." . . . According to the same theory, the attendants who had charge of the young prince of Judah, Mulek, the son of Zedekiah, were brought across the great waters and landed in the southern portion of North America. . . .

To those who hold this theory, the entire North America is, in the Book of Mormon, called "Mulek," because the Lord brought Mulek into the land. South America is, for a similar reason, called "Lehi," because this great colonist landed there.

(2) *This [Hemispheric] Theory [Slightly] Modified (by Elder Joel Ricks):*

According to Elder Ricks, who has published a "Helps to the Study of the Book of Mormon," . . . The Mulekite colony landed on the northern coast of South America, near the mouth of the Magdalena river. They occupied the entire valley and the plains westward toward the Isthmus, and here they were joined by the Nephites under Mosiah. . . .

(3) *The Central American [Limited Mesoamerican] Theory (by Willard Young) :*

A theory, of more recent date, holds that the geographical scene of the history of the Book of Mormon is confined to a comparatively small area of Central America, viz., Guatemala, British Honduras, part of Yucatan, and Salvador. In this area, it is thought, the Jaredites, the Mulekites and the followers of Lehi, all established their first colonies . . .

Mulek and his colony, Colonel Young believes, came out of the Mediterranean Sea, crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and landed on the northern shore of Honduras near the mouth of the Ulua River.

(4) *Another theory of Book of Mormon Geography (by Elder Stuart Bagley):*

Note* It is not stated where Lehi landed or the Mulekites landed.

1937^ J. A. Washburn ***From Babel to Cumorah: A Story of the Book of Mormon,***

J. N. Washburn Provo, Utah: New Era Publishing Co., 1937. Second edition

1938

Introduction [VI-VII]

. . . *From Babel to Cumorah* in its first form was written early in the 1920's by J. A. Washburn, Principal of the Provo L. D. S. Seminary. During the years that have passed since then, it has undergone a number of changes and has come under a joint authorship.

The book is an attempt to bring together brief narratives of the Bible and Book of Mormon. . . .

Geography as presented herein is suggestive merely and is by no means intended to be definite. The subject is quite controversial. There are many opinions regarding it. All cannot be right, but most of them may be wrong. The subject is treated more extensively in another volume by the authors. The title of the new book is *The History and Geography of the Book of Mormon*. [Actually this "new book" would be published in 1939 under the title *An Approach to the Study of Book of Mormon Geography*] . . .

The Working Out of Prophecy [p. 78]

The Bible says that all Zedekiah's sons were killed, but the Book of Mormon states that one of them came to America. His name was Mulek. (See the Book of Omni). This is not actually a contradiction in the facts set forth by the two books. There is this in II Kings 24:18: "Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem." He would then have been but thirty-two years old when his sons were killed. None of them could have been very old. Mulek might well have been an infant and could have been removed unnoticed by a nurse or even by his mother. The colony with which he came to America was no doubt honored with his name.

These people are known in the Book of Mormon as the Mulekites. Which way they journeyed and how, and the place in which they arrived in America we do not know from any definite statement in the record itself. They might have become established anywhere about the central portion of the western world.

1937[^] Josiah E. Hickman *The Romance of the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City, Utah: The Deseret News Press, 1937

On page 43 he writes of the Mulekites:

. . . when the Mulekites, who left Jerusalem about 589 B.C., landed on the coast of Central America they found that land covered with ruined cities and bleaching bones.

1939[^] J. N. Washburn *An Approach to the Study of Book of Mormon Geography*, Provo: New Era Publishing Co., 1939, pp. 76-79

Zedekiah reigned eleven years. Lehi's colony left Jerusalem in the first year, and Mulek's, in the last. . . The Bible account is contained in II Kings, chapters 24 and 25, and in chapter 36 of II Chronicles. . . . As Zedekiah began his reign at twenty-one, he was but thirty-two when he was taken to Babylon. [The number and ages of his sons are not given, but there could not have been many of them, nor could they have been very old, the eldest not more than nine or ten. Helaman 6:10 says that Mulek was one of them. In Helaman 8:21 we read that all Zedekiah's sons were killed except Mulek. There is really no contradiction here. So far as the Bible historian knew, all the sons of the king were killed. But since the eldest could have been a mere child, the youngest could well have been but a babe in arms. He could easily have been preserved by a nurse or other attendant and kept from the notice of the king and his murderers. . . .

We have no information whatever as to the way and manner in which the Mulekites came to the new world. What little is known directly about them comes from the meager record of Omni. From the study of the Nephthids, however, much can be determined with some degree of certainty.

If the city of Mulek was the one established by them, as is altogether possible, its location becomes of greatest importance. But of this we cannot be sure; it might have been farther north than the Mulekites landed. There was, however, a city of that name on the eastern coast of the land of the Nephites very near the land of the Jaredites. . . . [see Alma 51:26; Alma 52:2,17,20,27-28]

The historian, in Alma 22:30, has this to say:

And it (Bountiful) bordered upon the land which they (the Nephites) 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.

Verse 32 of the same chapter points out that it was on the line between these lands Desolation and Bountiful that it was a day-and-a-half's journey for a Nephite from sea to sea. Thus they were without question at some point in the western hemisphere at which the distance between the oceans was negligible, provided always that sea here means the ocean, a thing of which we cannot be altogether sure. That was where the Jaredites landed and were destroyed; that was where the Mulekites landed and found Coriantumr, in fulfillment of Ether's prophecy; that was where the Mulekites came to possess the land of the Jaredites. . . .

The expression, "it being the place of their first landing," may refer to the Mulekites, the Jaredites, or both of them. The cross references in the Book of Mormon indicate that it means the Mulekites, and this would seem to be the correct rendering of the above passage. But if the Mulekites landed there, where was it? It was so near the place of the Jaredites that they found Coriantumr, the last Jaredite, in the land in which his people had been destroyed. While he yet lived, the Mulekites dwelt in, or possessed, the land of the Jaredites. If, then, we know where the Jaredites landed, we know also the place of the landing of the Mulekites because they were in a very real sense the same.

Does it not appear beyond controversy that both the Jaredites and Mulekites landed in the western world at the point at which the land was narrowest? Is it not apparent that their lands were very near each other if not actually the same? . . .

There seems to have been a very general agreement among the men who have written in explanation of the Book of Mormon that the Jaredites lived in or near their first home, probably in Central America, or Mexico, until four years before the end of their nation.

1947[^] Paul M. Hanson *Jesus Christ Among the Ancient Americans*, Independence, MO, 1947

(Mul) (RLDS)

On page 149-150 Paul Hanson writes:

Respecting the landing places of these colonies in the New World, reasoning from the details given in the *Book of Mormon* bearing on their migration, such as their places of departure, travels, direction followed, topography of the country in which they settled, and taking into consideration ocean currents and trade winds, it is generally assumed by students of *Book of Mormon* geography that the Jaredites and the third colony landed on the eastern shore of Central America, and the Nephites in the southern part of the western coast of Central America, or on the coast of South America, in northern Chile. Those holding that the Nephites landed on the west coast of South America believe they were founders of the civilization in the highlands of the Andes, later pushing into what is now Central America.

1955 Ariel L. Crowley "The Escape of Mulek," in *Improvement Era* 58, May 1955, pp. 324-326.

An attempt to reconcile the biblical account of Zedekiah's capture and the implied extermination of all his male royal line, with the Book of Mormon account of an escape by one son, referred to as Mulek. [R.C.D.]

1955 John L. Sorenson "Traditions of Immigration by Sea in the Peopling of Meso-America." Provo: UT: FARMS, 1955.

Documents a variety of traditions that show that the idea that ancestors had arrived by sea was widespread. [J.L.S.]

1959 John L. Sorenson "Bible Prophecies of the Mulekites," in *A Book of Mormon Treasury*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1959, pp. 229-37.

1964 Ross T. Christensen *Papers of the Fifteenth Annual Symposium of the Archaeology of the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1964.

A collection of papers relating archaeology to the scriptures, many of which are relevant to Book of Mormon subjects: . . . Mulek's migration. . . . [A.C.W.]

1964 Einar C. Erickson *Papers of the Fifteenth Annual Symposium of the Archaeology of the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1964.

1969 Ross T. Christensen "The Phoenician Theory of New World Origins Re-examined," in *SEHA* 111, January 13, 1969, pp. 1-11.

Suggests Mulek escaped with the aid of Phoenician mariners. "Sidon was the principal metropolis of the Phoenician homeland, the Mulekites and Nephites were unable to understand each others' language, and Phoenician inscriptions have been found in America." [A.C.W.]

1970 Ross T. Christensen "Renewed Latter-day Saint Interest in the Phoenicians," in the *Improvement Era* 73, October 1970, pp. 12-15.

New evidence reveals Phoenician contact with the New World between 1000 to 500 B.C. Phoenician inscriptions record in remarkable detail the voyages of mariners, pinpointing both departure and arrival dates and places. Christensen hypothesizes that the guardian(s) of Mulek may have asked Phoenician friends to aid in their escape from the Babylonians. [J.W.M.]

1972 Ross T. Christensen "Perspectives on the Route of Mulek's Colony," in *SEHA* 131,
Ruth R. Christensen September 1972, pp. 1-6.

Proposes two possible routes for the transoceanic Mulekite journey: (1) the Mediterranean/ North Atlantic route, or (2) the African/South Atlantic route. The first choice is seen as the more likely. [D.M.]

1973 Ross T. Christensen "Possible Routes Suggested for Mulek's Voyage," in
the *Ensign* 3, September 1973, pp. 76-77.

One route for Mulek's journey from Jerusalem to the New World may have been through the Mediterranean Sea and westward across the Atlantic Ocean. An alternative route may have been around Africa and the Cape of Good Hope, then northwest towards the Gulf of Mexico. The existence of strong ocean currents supports the plausibility of either of the two routes. [D.M.]

1977 M. Wells Jakeman, Bernhart Johnson "Israelite-Phoenician Commercial Relations
and the Voyage of Mulek to the New World," in *SEHA* 140, March 1977, pp. 1-9.

During the Solomonic period and after Israel enjoyed international trade alliances with the Phoenicians. The Phoenician influence is found in the architecture of Israel as well as religious symbols. The authors conclude that Mulek, the son of King Zedekiah, fled Israel with Phoenicians to the New World. There are several artifacts in the New World of Phoenician origin. [W.D.M.]