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The Order of Nehor

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Chapter 3

The Order of Nehor

Nehor is first mentioned chronologically very early in Jaredite history in reference to the land and city of Nehor (Ether 7:4, 9). Etymologically the land and city of Nehor has Hebrew meanings consistent with both a river and area associated with burning and volcanic activity:

hwr: to bend or turn; hollow or depressed ground between hills

nāhār: a stream or river

harer: parched place

hor: hole or cavern

nh: blow fiercely

hori: a burning

hara: to burn or ignite

hur: something white, or white stuff

(www.abarim-publications.com 2015)

Although the land of Nehor is not mentioned after that very early Jaredite reference, it likely continued to exist and perhaps expanded through at least some point in Jaredite history and perhaps existed within the land of Desolation. This might be correlated by the later Book of Mormon reference to the fate of the destruction of the city of Ammonihah where “every living soul” in the city was killed by a Lamanite army, and their bodies “heaped up upon the face of the earth” (Alma 16:9-11). As a result of the scent and perhaps other factors, the land remained desolate and was referred to as the “Desolation of Nehors.” This is apparently a comparison or reference to the demise of the Jaredites in the land of Desolation, as Desolation is the place where the Jaredites according to the record were annihilated down to the last man and their bones were scattered over the land northward. Although the use of *Nehor* in the term “Desolation of the Nehors” was based on the practice of the religion of the order of Nehor found in Ammonihah, it is also consistent as a tie to the Jaredite land Nehor and perhaps the likely place anciently of the religion that the Nephites referred to as the order of Nehor.

The Order of Nehor as an Indigenous Religion

From the description provided in the Book of Mormon, it is apparent that the order of Nehor is not an apostate Nephite religion, but is a separate indigenous religion. Competing religions to the Nephite Christian religion based on or inclusive of the law of Moses mentioned in the Book of Mormon include Sherem (Jacob 7) and some of what was practiced by Noah and his priests (Mosiah 11–13). The description of the Zoramite religion also implies that it migrated out of the Nephite religion (Alma 31).

Descriptions of the Nehor religion provide indications that it was not initially derived from the Nephite religion. The individual named Nehor who initially preached the religion (Alma 1) had a doctrine that indicated that “the Lord” had created all men, but that is just the recognition of a creator god, as he clearly was in denial of Christ (Alma 1:19). Nehor “bore down against the church” and was declared by Alma to be the first to introduce “priestcraft” among the people (Alma 1:12).

It has been established that most of the Book of Mormon names are metonymic, meaning that the names were created or interpreted based on the characteristics of the individual or his/her exploits. The meaning of *Nehor* in this respect will be discussed later, but it should be noted that though the individual named Nehor was the first to

introduce the religion to the Nephites of Zarahemla and he became its namesake among the Nephites, the religion was apparently established prior to Nehor's appearance.

Nehor was brought before Alma in the first year of the reign of the judges; he was apparently preaching for some period of time as he had gathered some number of followers. Although Nehor was executed, that was not the end of the Nehor religion as it seems clear that the crux of the religion continued amongst the Nephites through the fifth year of the reign of the judges:

Alma 1:32

For those who did not belong to the church "did indulge themselves in sorceries, and in idolatry or idleness, and in babblings, and in envyings and strife; wearing costly apparel; being lifted up in the pride of their own eyes; persecuting, lying, thieving, robbing, committing whoredoms, and murdering. More enforcement was added to prosecute those things that were against the law, so there was much peace among the people of Nephi until the fifth year of the reign of the judges.

Mention of idolatry here is an indicator of a specific religious following, not just general wickedness. The religion is next mentioned (Alma 2:1) just four years after the execution of Nehor, when a certain man named Amlici who was after "the order" of the man Nehor, drew away people after him to become king, thus clearly indicating that it was a significantly organized religion, with a significant following such that an election of sorts was held "throughout all the land" (Alma 2:5).

A mere eight years after the original Nehor was mentioned, the city and land of Ammonihah were ruled by a "chief judge of the land" who physically abused and imprisoned Alma and Amulek and was described as being "after the order and faith of Nehor" (Alma 14:14–16). There is little doubt that Ammonihah was politically and religiously dominated by the order of Nehor as "many lawyers, and judges, and priests, and teachers" in Ammonihah were described as being "of the profession of Nehor" (Alma 14:18). The people of Ammonihah were also characterized as being "of the profession of Nehor" (Alma 15:15) indicating that they were followers as differentiated from the "order of Nehor" more indicative of the elite priest level practitioners of the religion.

The people in Ammonihah indicated that they recognized that Alma was the high priest over the church which he had established in many parts of the land according to "your [Alma's] traditions," declaring that "we are not of thy church, and we do not believe in such foolish traditions," and stating that "because we are not of thy church we know that thou hast no power over us" (Alma 8:11–12). The people of Ammonihah did not believe that the earth would pass away, and were not even familiar with this concept of the Nephite religion (Alma 9:2–3). It is fairly clear that most of the people in Ammonihah were not ever a part of the church and did not share those traditions, indicating a long-standing practice of the Nehor religion.

The sons of Mosiah performed missionary work concurrent with the mission of Alma. They encountered the order of Nehor deep in Lamanite territory in the land of Nephi at the city of Jerusalem. Although no year dates are indicated, the sons of Mosiah likely left a few years before the first year of the reign of the judges and one of the sons of Mosiah, Aaron, on his first missionary foray, encountered the Nehor religion, which had well established synagogues (Alma 21). The Nehor religion was already well established in Jerusalem around the first year of the reign of the judges. According to most geographic models, Ammonihah was located north or northwest of Zarahemla (on the order of 90 miles in the Sorenson model) and Jerusalem was well to the south or southwest of Zarahemla (on the order of 120 miles in the Sorenson model). So the religion was geographically widespread and located outside of or on the confines of Nephite lands. While it is possible that it may have incorporated some residual religion from the time of king Noah, there is little to indicate that it had much in common with the Nephite

religion. One would not have expected the religion to have been established in Ammonihah as well as in the land of Nephi should such have been the case.

The Nehor religion was widespread and well entrenched at the time that the individual Nehor came before Alma, so it is apparent that it is a non-Nephite religion. The indication that Nehor “established a church after the manner of his preaching” (Alma 1:6) is an indication of the establishment of a church in the central area of the Nephites, not necessarily of its lack of presence elsewhere. The religion is not referred to as a church, but as an “order,” so Nehor’s establishment of a church does not mean that his church was the origination of the religious order. There may be some Nephite religious elements (i.e., the law of two witnesses) that were borrowed locally into the order of Nehor in Ammonihah (Wright and Gardner, 2012), but they appear to be very minimal and appear to have to do more with civil procedure than religion. Based on the extensive discourses of Alma and Amulek in Ammonihah dealing with the very most basic of doctrines, it is apparent that the people encountered there were not very familiar with the teachings of the church of Alma and Amulek (Alma 9–13).

In addition, the Amlicites (led by Amlici of the order of Nehor) joined with the Lamanites to attack the Nephites (Alma 2:24), implying perhaps a common religious base with the Lamanites as well as political affiliation. The Amlicites had marked themselves with red in their foreheads after the manner of the Lamanites, but had not shorn their heads like the Lamanites did (Alma 3:4). It is noteworthy that marking of red is part of the Maya year end initiation ceremony previously discussed and also appears to be an initiation into the Lamanite religion and polity.

There were at least some individuals at Ammonihah who had Lehite lineage, although it seems that they had not practiced the religion in the near past. Alma said “how have ye forgotten the tradition of your fathers” and also forgotten the commandments of God (Alma 9:8 et al). It seems as if they may not have been of the individual tribe of Nephi (as opposed to the term for Nephite which encompassed multiple tribes), and were perhaps one of two other tribes that had affiliated with the original Nephite tribe. These would have been the Jacobites and Josephites (Zoramites are known to be located elsewhere) and would be consistent with the attempt by Alma of appealing to them using what was spoken to Lehi. Amulek provides additional clarity that one tribe being addressed at Ammonihah was the Josephites, as, in an attempt to establish his credibility, Amulek proclaims his lineage back to Lehi and then beyond to Joseph who was sold into Egypt (Alma 10). As previously mentioned when Alma₁ confronted king Noah, Alma was of the lineage of Nephi, one reason perhaps that he had little initial success in Ammonihah as he had no real tribal kinsmen there.

Alma does say (Alma 13:20), “Now I need not rehearse the matter; what I have said may suffice. Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction.” After Alma spoke unto the people, some did believe, repented and began to search the scriptures (Alma 14:1). This does provide evidence that at least some of the persons in Ammonihah had the religious scriptures of the Nephites, and later they and their scriptures were burned (Alma 14:8).

The wording of the different references to the Nehor religion is curious. In Ammonihah, it is referred to as “the order of the Nehor,” but in Jerusalem it is referred to as “the order of the Nehors” (Alma 21:4, two times; Alma 24:28). The plural may be describing the individuals or perhaps priests that make up the religion. It is also possible that it may reflect a plurality of the gods in the religion or at least multiple aspects of a god, or it may just be a Book of Mormon textual spelling error.

Nehor Religion Has Virtually Nothing in Common with the Nephite Religion.

As discussed, the Nehor religion had virtually nothing to do with the Nephite church. Its members burned the Nephite holy scriptures without compunction (Alma 14:8). They did not have any problem killing others who did not

follow their religion, even causing painful death by ritual burning, which has all the markings of a native Mesoamerican religion. While they did have a creator belief it is clear that the “foolish traditions” of the Nephites had little in common with the character of their creator. Based on the description and name of the Nehor religion, it may be possible to identify a probable Mesoamerican worship system that matches the Nehor religion.

We only see certain elements of the order of Nehor in the Book of Mormon, and it is mostly in the interaction with Nephite missionaries. Certain order of Nehor religious tenets present themselves. A few of these already presented themselves as part of Abinadi and his interaction with the apostate religion, and are presented again in the context of the order of Nehor, namely the belief in multiple gods (Alma 11:28, 14:5); idolatry (Alma 1:32); the issue of their version of the Son of God being a manifestation of God the Father (Alma 11:38); the priests should be “popular” (implying some political influence or power) and paid by the people (Alma 1:3); and that the Son of God would not be coming down among men (Alma 11:35, 14:5, 21:7–8).

The order of Nehor presents a few new religious tenets that were not present (or at least not clearly mentioned) in the Noah-Maya syncretic religion. One is the concept that in the order of Nehor religion, God will save all men and “in the end all men should have eternal life” (Alma 1:4, 14:5, 21:6).

Not all elements of the Maya afterlife concept are currently determined, and with variation within the Maya world, it may not be possible to pinpoint the exact tradition of belief being referenced by the order of Nehor here. However, it does look to be consistent with the Maya forms of afterlife from certain Maya groups as we know them.

Among much of the Maya exists the concept of “co-essence” of spirit or soul where the soul partially consists of a *way* or *wayhel* spirit which constitutes the unruly or compulsive side of behavior and are beings of darkness and the Underworld.

Whereas the bestial *way* spirits directly relate to one’s personal behavior and fate in the mortal world, there is another spirit that continues after death. Thus for the Tzotzil of Chenalhó, the *wayhel* dies with the individual, but the soul known as the *ch’ulel* ascends to the solar paradise of Winahel. (Taube 2004a, 70)

The *ch’ulel* is related to the Classic Mayan words for divinity *k’uh* and sacred *k’uhul* and is “the impalpable essence of the individual” (Guiteras-Holmes 1961, 296). The soul essence is “breath” which continues after death as the soul. Among the Chorti Maya the wind gods blow life-giving breath into the newborn child and remove it at death (Taube 2004a, 72). The breath spirit corresponded to a celestial paradise of flowers and beautiful birds. This Classic Maya realm consists of the “Flower World” and its related “Flower Mountain.” “Flower Mountain” is a celestial place the concept of which is found throughout Mesoamerica as the eternal resting place of gods, ancestors, and celestial assent (Taube 2004a, 92).

Among the sixteenth century Yucatec Maya also exists this concept of a paradisiacal garden of vegetation and flowers under the shade of the ceiba tree, however they do believe in a hell called *Metnal* where the bad would suffer (Tozzer 1941, 131–32). Some Mesoamerican traditions believed that one could travel through and climb out of *Metnal*, eventually reaching paradise.

Thus Maya belief is consistent with the order of Nehor assertion that “in the end all men should have eternal life.”

Second, under the order of Nehor they “knew not that the earth would pass away” (Alma 9:3).

As previously discussed, the religious beliefs of the Maya are intricately bound up in cycles. All of existence carried on eternally in the great cycle of time. As time was an eternal god, bound up in, outside of, and manifesting itself

through the workings of the universe, it could never end. The world brought into being through the operation of time as represented by the gods could never end, as that would contradict the very nature of existence as understood by the Maya. As previously discussed, at the end of each year and at the end of longer time cycles, the world did need to be periodically renewed, but the Maya did not believe that as part of the necessary future that “the earth would pass away.”

Third, there is at least some indication, in addition to the disbelief in Christ, that the order of Nehor did not include the resurrection of man (Alma 12:20). As discussed above, the Maya believed in the resurrection of certain deities, but the afterlife for man did not include the resurrection.

It has been represented that the order of Nehor did not believe in prophecy (Thompson 2017) presumably based on an exchange between Aaron and an Amalekite Nehor:

Alma 21:7–8

7 Now Aaron said unto him: Believest thou that the Son of God shall come to redeem mankind from their sins?

8 And the man said unto him: We do not believe that thou knowest any such thing. We do not believe in these foolish traditions. We do not believe that thou knowest of things to come, neither do we believe that thy fathers and also that our fathers did know concerning the things which they spake, of that which is to come.

A careful reading of this verse actually does not indicate that the order of Nehor did not believe in prophecy. It indicates that their fathers did not know. For Aaron, the reference was to his Nephite ancestors, which was also the case when the Amalekite spoke of “our fathers.” As a dissident group, the Amalekites broke away from the religion of their fathers, so it would not be surprising that they were rejecting the truth of the Nephite religion that their fathers also practiced.

As is evident, the ancient Maya religious belief is completely compatible with the order of Nehor beliefs, both in what they profess to believe in and what they do not profess to believe in.

Nehor and Horus

The identity of Nehor can be independently determined by looking at the etymology of *Nehor*. According to the Book of Mormon Onomasticon (2017) the derivation of *Nehor* in Egyptian is *n-ḥr*, which means “belonging to Horus.”

Similar to the Maya religious system, the Egyptian gods were many, and their names, forms, and their images were varied because each god had more than one aspect or manifestation (Dunand et al. 2004, 6). From the earliest periods in Egypt, the Egyptian word for god, *netjer*, was depicted as a falcon perched on a standard, especially in the hieratic script.

From prehistoric times, the god Horus was represented or symbolized by a falcon. As early as the Pyramid Texts (2400–2300 BC) Horus was associated with the sky. In time every god represented as a pure falcon was regarded as Horus; while not every falcon-headed man was necessarily Horus, he was in some way related (Mercer 1942, 96, 117). Horus was worshiped in many forms and also assimilated many other gods (Wilkinson 2003, 202).



Figure 8. Depiction of Horus (Wikipedia Commons, 2017)

By the time of the Pyramid texts, Horus had become either a royal god representing the pharaoh and being identical with him, or a sun and sky god. The god Horus reigned in pre-Historic times in Egypt, but was always represented by an earthly king, who was a Horus-king. Horus is thought to have been the last of the old Gods to reign in Egypt. His successors, or Followers, as kings of Egypt, represented him, and as such were Horus gods (Mercer 1942, 54, 106, 145). The wife of Horus is usually given as Hathor, the mistress of the sky.

Horus had four sons, just like Itzamna and the Bacab, and also just like the Bacab, each son represents a cardinal direction: Amseti, the south; Hapy, the north; Duamutef, the east; and Qebehsenuf, the west. In the Pyramid Texts they are described as the “four spirits” and the souls of Horus. They are used by Horus to assist the king in Egypt, and the king (pharaoh) was considered their father, and joined himself with them and controlled them. They were not only spirits but also gods.

Nearly identical to the four Bacab, the four sons of Horus

represent . . . the four cardinal points; or the four tresses (*ḥnsktiw*) which were conceived of as binding earth and heaven, or the four pillars of heaven, which eventually became the four cardinal points. (Mercer 1942, 109)

The four sons of Horus sometimes appeared as four birds who announced to the four quarters of heaven the accession of the king as Horus. Horus himself is also associated with all four cardinal directions (Mercer 1942, 111).

The kingly display of bird masks of the Principal Bird Deity of the Maya has an interesting correlation to the etymology of the god Horus. Before discussing Egyptian etymology, it is important to remember that the vowels in

ancient Egyptian are for the most part unknown, so the words are represented only using the consonants. The name of the Egyptian God Horus initially was related to the word for face, *hr*, and secondarily with the word for falcon, which is also *hr*.

As already intimated, looking at the various Mesoamerican possibilities, the best match for the Book of Mormon god worshipped by Nehor is the Principal Bird Deity (PBD) and its various aspects and manifestations also known as "Itzamna."

Itzamna (Mayan pronunciation: [itsam'na] was, in Maya mythology, the name of an upper god and creator deity thought to reside in the sky. Although little is known about him, scattered references are present in early-colonial Spanish reports (relaciones) and dictionaries. Twentieth-century Lacandon lore includes tales about a creator god (Nohochakyum or Hachakyum) who may be a late successor to him. In the pre-Spanish period, Itzamna, represented by the aged god D, was often depicted in books and in ceramic scenes derived from them.

The early colonial sources variously connect, and sometimes identify, Itzamna with Hunab Ku (an invisible high god), Kinich Ahau (the sun deity), and Yaxcocahmut (a bird of omen).

Itzamna was an active creator god. More generally, Itzamna was the creator of humankind, and also the father of Bacab (Francisco Hernández), a fourfold deity of the interior of the earth.

In the New Year pages of the Dresden Codex, god D is given a role similar to that of Itzamna in Landa's description of these rituals. It is thus likely that in the Post-Classic codices, the aged god D represents Itzamna.

God D is sometimes dressed as a high priest, and hieroglyphically identified as the god of rulership. Speaking generally, Classic iconography confirms god D's identity as an upper god, seated on his celestial throne while governing, among other things, the affairs of agriculture and the hunt.

From the Late Postclassic Paris Codex back in time to the Pre-Classic San Bartolo murals, god D (Itzamna) has the so-called Principal Bird Deity - perhaps the Yaxcocahmut mentioned above - for a transformative shape. The bird often holds a bicephalous snake in its beak. Its head sometimes resembles that of a rain deity; at other times, it is more like that of a bird of prey, perhaps the laughing falcon believed to be a harbinger of rain. The wings are repeatedly inscribed with the signs for 'daylight' and 'night', suggesting that the bird's flight could represent the unfolding of time. The San Bartolo murals have a Principal Bird Deity seated on top of each of four world trees, recalling the four world trees (together with a fifth, central tree) which, according to some of the early-colonial Chilam Balam books, were re-erected after the collapse of the sky. These world trees were associated with specific birds. Four world trees also appear in the Mexican Borgia Codex. The shooting of the Principal Bird deity is one of the main episodes of the Classic Period Hero Twins myth; but strong arguments plead against the Principal Bird Deity's equation with Vucub Caquix, a bird demon shot by the Popol Vuh Twins.

God D and his avian transformation could be represented by human beings. Various kings of Yaxchilan, Dos Pilas, and Naranjo had Itzamnaaj as part of their names or titles. On Palenque's Temple XIX platform, a dignitary presenting the king with his royal headband wears the Principal Bird Deity's headdress, while being referred to as Itzamnaaj. In his bird avatar, god D here appears as the creator god bestowing rulership on a king. (www.wikipedia.org, 2017a)

The Principal Bird Deity dates back to the timeframe of Alma in the Book of Mormon (post 100 BC):

The Principal Bird Deity motif is, by itself, a dynamic iconographic complex which has undergone a major developmental and stylistic evolution beginning in the Late Formative at Izapa, during the Miraflores phase (300 BC–150 AD) and ending in the Late Classic (600–900 AD). The motif does not persist into the Post Classic

though there is evidence that suggests the continuance of the concept it relates through a variation of form. (Bardawil, 1976)

The Principal Bird Deity was widespread in Mesoamerica:

[The PBD] is by no means the only supernatural theme presented on early monuments, but it easily is the most dominant and diverse in its representations. If we are to understand ideology among Late Preclassic Maya polities then we will need to take on the question of the great bird. The second is the tremendous consistency with which these ideas and their expressions are expressed throughout the Maya world. Ranging over great distances and diverse topographical and ecological zones, it displays a coherence that is not simply pan-Maya, but at root pan-Mesoamerican. (Martin 2016)

Itzamna is sometimes linked with the sun god Kinich Ahau and the moon goddess Ix Chel. Horus was considered “Lord of Heaven,” and the sun and moon were considered his eyes (Mercer 1942, 106). Like Itzamna, there were many festivals and feasts related to Horus (Mercer 1942, 197–98).

The Egyptian derivation of the name *Nehor* assigned to the native religion by the Nephites (or the divine translator of the Book of Mormon) does not imply that the Mesoamerican god or religion had an Egyptian source, although syncretization of portions of Egyptian religion may have been possible as the full cultural makeup of the Mulekite immigrants is not known. The similarities are definitely striking. The Nephites assigned the Egyptian name *Horus* to the religion because there were numerous similarities between the god and worship of Horus and the Mesoameric god(s) and religion.

In various Maya contexts the world trees are associated with the Principal Bird Deity (Vail et al. 2013, 77). As previously discussed, the land of Nephi, where the order of Nehor was found during the missionary period of the sons of Mosiah, has been identified under the Sorenson Model as including the Valley of Guatemala. The Principal Bird Deity was well represented there iconographically on Sculptures 10 and 11 determined to be from the period of Alma (200 BC–AD 1) (Parsons 1986). Sculpture 11 at Kaminaljuyu features the regalia of a king representing the Principal Bird Deity (PBD) including a bird mask (Henderson 2013, 335, fig. 1).

The Sorenson Model identifies Ammonihah as Mirador, Chiapas, Mexico. To date, no excavation there has turned up monumental art for the exact period of Alma, however a monument slightly later than Alma known as Stela 1, found in Mound 10 in Mirador, dates to the Protoclassic (50 BC–AD 250) (Agrinier 1975). Stela 1 features an individual with a bird mask, which is identified as a harpy eagle or vulture, and appears to be related to bird deities including Itzamna (see figure 9).

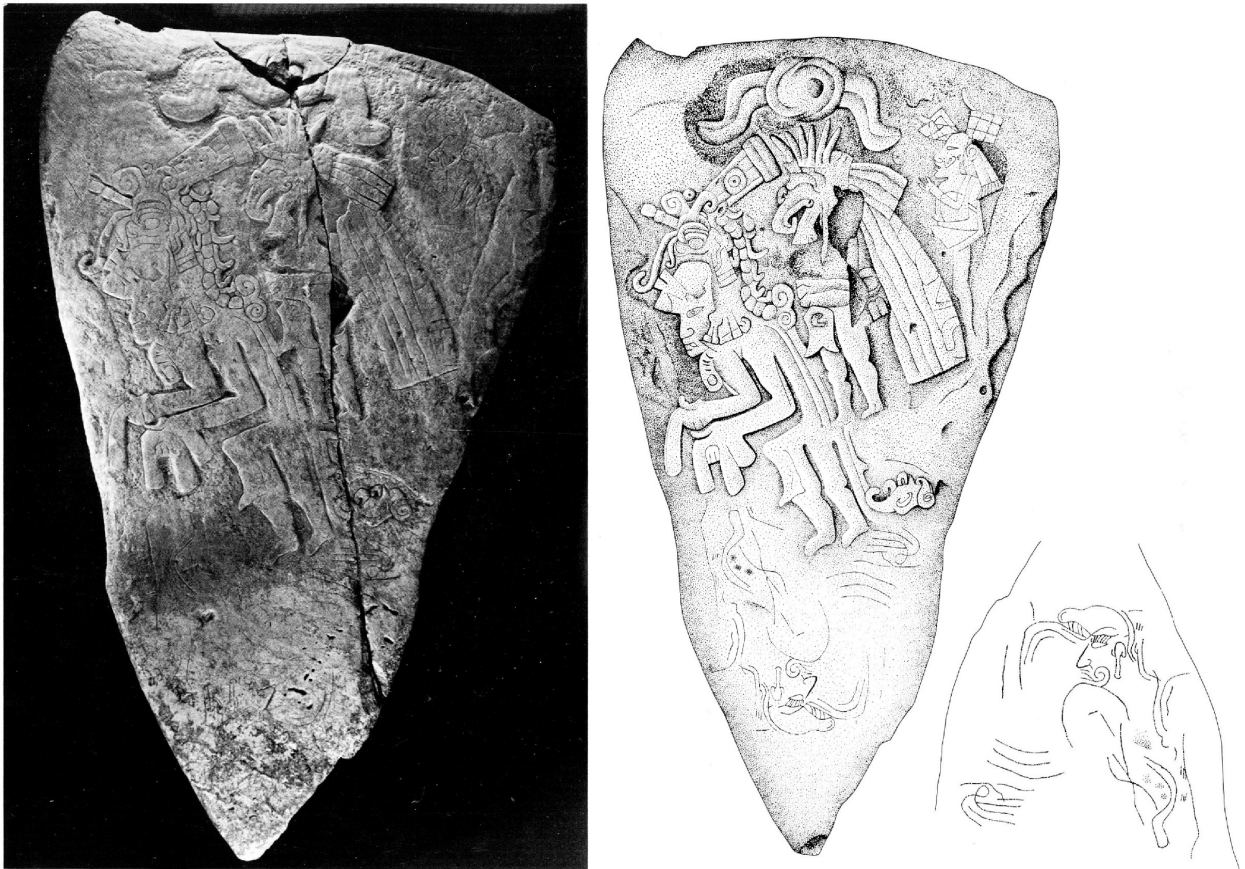


Figure 9. Stela 1 found in Mound 10 (Agrinier 1975)

An illustration reconstructing the decapitation ceremony based on the items found in Mound 10 including Stela 1, complete with the avian masks/headaddresses is shown in figure 10.

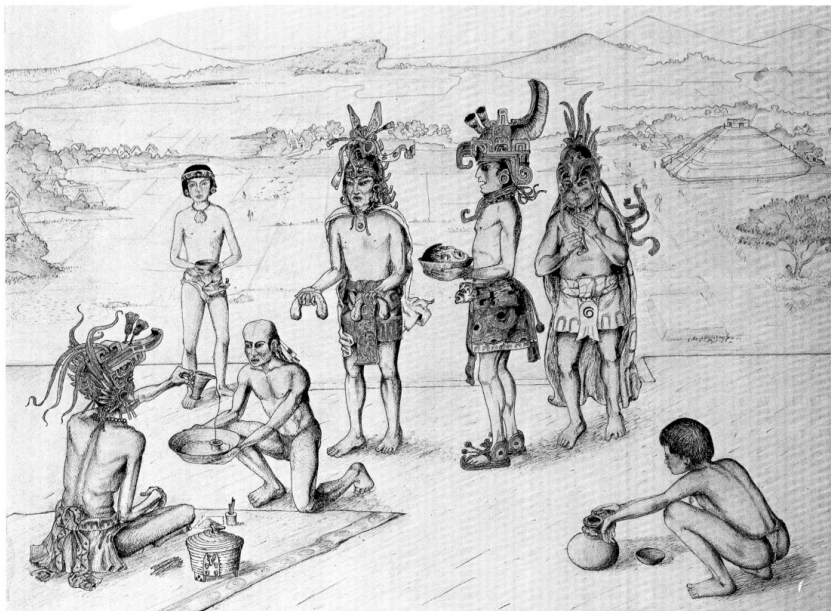


Figure 10. Reconstruction of the ceremony based on the items found in Mound 10 (Agrinier 1975)

Since there is an indication that there may be a link between the Olmec Nehor and the order of Nehor, there is some potential evidence that perhaps such a link may have existed. It has been fairly well established so far that some Olmec Gods (Old Fire God, the Fat God, the Rain God, and the Maize God) were the source of the gods of later Mesoamerican cultures. The Olmec God III called the Bird Monster is generally attributed to either the harpy eagle or the quetzal bird. An Early Formative period (900–300 BC) Olmec stone masquette which features bird profile heads may depict an especially early form of the mythical avian entity known as the Principal Bird Deity in the Maya region, and as El Ave de Pico Ancho among Zapotec specialists (Taube 2004).

While there is much discussed about the belief system, features of the Nehor religion that correspond with the Itzamna/Bacab Maya religion complex with applicable Book of Mormon references are:

1. Belief in multiple gods (Alma 14:5).
2. Belief that at least one of the gods was a creator (Alma 1:4).
3. Belief that there was no “Supreme Being” (Alma 11:22).
4. Belief in a class of priests supported financially by the people (Alma 1:5).
5. Priestcraft and combination of the religion with political power (Alma 1:2).
6. Priest leaders wore some sort of different “costly apparel” (Alma 1:6).
7. Some origination of the religion likely from Olmec times (*Nehor* is found in the Book of Ether)(Ether 7:4, 9).
8. Belief in prophecy (Mosiah 12:25).
9. All men would have eternal life (Alma 1:4, 14:5, 21:6).
10. Earth would not pass away (Alma 9:3).
11. No resurrection for men (Alma 12:20).

Utilizing the list of characteristics of the Nehor religion above, the Mesoamerican religion involving the Principal Bird Deity and the Egyptian religion involving Horus correspond as follows:

1. Belief in multiple gods (Alma 14:5).
2. Belief that at least one of the gods was a creator (Alma 1:4).
3. Belief that there was no “Supreme Being” (Alma 11:22).
4. Belief in a class of priests supported financially by the people (Alma 1:5).
5. Priestcraft and combination of the religion with political power.
6. Priest leaders wore some sort of different “costly apparel” (Alma 1:6).
7. Both sets of gods and specifically Horus and Itzamna involved bird elements, specifically birds of prey.
8. Each has four sons, aspects or manifestations (the Bacab and the Sons of Horus) who are also related to the four cardinal directions, the pillars that support the sky, and the wind gods.
9. Both Itzamna and Horus are sky gods, with correspondences with the sun and moon.
10. Both Itzamna and Horus have manifestations on earth of divine kings (pharaoh and Maya kings).
11. Both are invoked for healing spells (Horus and the Bacab).
12. Both Itzamna and Horus were represented by humans with bird heads or bird masks.
13. Both religions in general have multiple manifestations of gods.

The Egyptian religion was completely foreign to the Hebrews, from a foreign place, just as the Nehor (Principal Bird Deity) religion was completely foreign to the Nephites.

Itzamna and World Trees

According to the Chilam Balam of Chumayel, after the world was destroyed, four World Trees were raised at the points of the compass, with a final green one raised in the center. In the *Dresden Codex*, World Trees are identified as columnar stone trees and are thus described as “Itzamna trees” (Vail et al. 2013, 77). To each of the tree

inscriptions is affixed the glyph for the god Itzamna. Incantations in the *Ritual of the Bacabs* links Itzamna to the World Trees (Christenson 2016, 39). The San Bartolo murals dated to the first century BC show Itzamna birds atop World Trees, indicating a linkage to the Maya New Year’s observances that go back to the Pre-Classic (Christenson 2016, 58)(see figure 11).

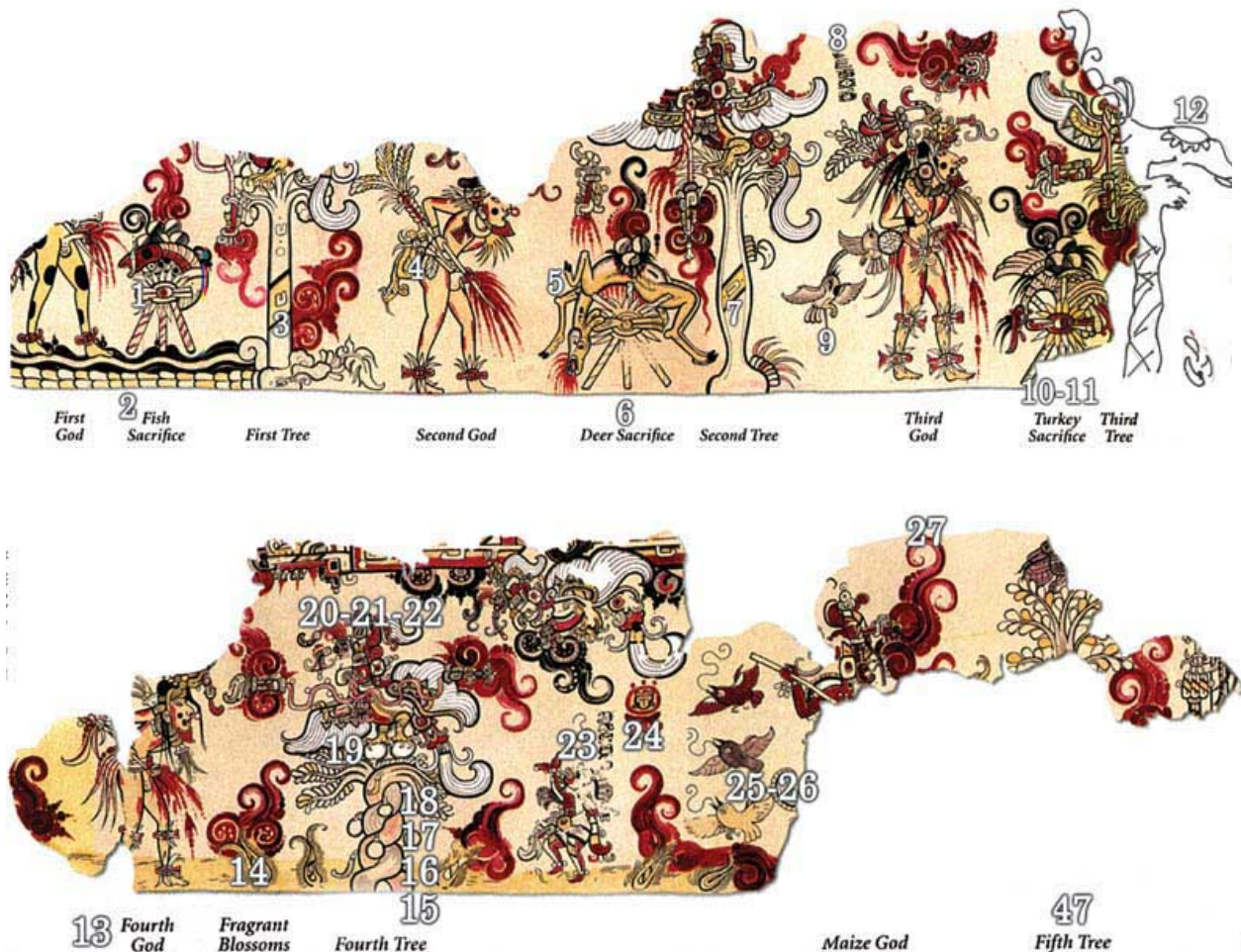


Figure 11. San Bartolo West Wall mural set showing five World Trees (www.alunajoy.com 2017)

In 1696 AD at the site of Noj Peten, Fray Andrés de Avendaño y Loyola noted a Maya stone column was worshipped by the Maya king and his family and was called *yax cheel cab*, which means “the first tree of the world” (Vail et al. 2013, 391).

Additional Meaning of the Name *Nehor*

As previously discussed in Egyptian, *Nehor* can mean: *n hr*: belonging to (*n*) Horus (*Hr*) (Book of Mormon Onomasticon 2016). Looking at *Nehor* in light of Sumerian roots and a compound word construction, considering that the “o” phonetic sound may be represented as an “a” or a “u” in modern Sumerian dictionaries one arrives at (words in capital letters maintain the same sound but the underlying glyph is logographic):

ne: strength; force

NE: type of bird

NE: a designation of trees

HAR: a bird

hur: ever (again)

u: totality, world

U: type of stone

U: tree

ur: to anoint

ur: he; that; are corresponding to another; like (one another)

ur: man

(*The Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary*, 2006)

The meaning of a compound word utilizing these Sumerian roots would provide a word roughly meaning “Man that is anointed, powerful bird and world stone tree.”

Meaning of the Names *Ammonihah* and *Amlici*

The meaning of both *Ammonihah* and *Amlici* are consistent with the order of Nehor being equivalent with the Maya religion of Itzamna, the Principal Bird Deity.

Ammonihah

As mentioned, most Book of Mormon names are metonymic, and often have multiple meanings in Egyptian, Sumerian, and Biblical Hebrew. A description of the individual Ammonihah for which the city is named is not provided, but a reasonable etymology for the founder of Ammonihah can be constructed:

am: a bird

a: arm; labor; strength; wage; power

a₂-mu, *a₂-na*, *a₂-ni*, *an-na*, *an*, *a₂-a-na*, *a₂-a-ni* (form of *a*)

A: a weapon or a leather holder for a weapon

mah: (to be) great

mah-a, *ma-ha*, *mah-a-ni*, *mah-ni*, *mah-na* (form of *mah*)

mu: manly; young man

un: to arise; sky; (to be) high

ni: fear, aura

i: oil; container for oil (indicating priestly function)

NI, *i₃-a* (form of *i*)

ah: scum; spittle; poison

uh₃-a, *uh₃* (form of *ah*)

he: be he

Constructed Compound Name: **Ammonih(e)ah**

The Sumerian meaning would be something to the effect of “Powerful, feared, high and great bird priest; he is scum/poison.”

The Hebrew meaning seems to be more applicable to the nature of the city, which is:

'amam: to darken or dim, and figuratively: to make secret

hamon: people

-ihah: theophoric element “Yahweh/Jehovah”, the divine name

Constructed Compound Name: (H)**amonihah**

The Hebrew combined meaning would be something like “People who darken or make secret the Lord.”

The Egyptian meaning also seems to be more applicable to the nature of the city, which is:

Ḥm: Egyptian city that was a center of worship of the deity Khenty-irty or Khenty-khem, a form of the god Horus.

Ḥmn: a local name for the falcon god Horus in Asphynis

mn: eternal

ḥah: great number

(Mercer 1942, 119, 158) (Dickson 2006) (Book of Mormon Onomasticon 2016)

The Egyptian combined meaning would be something like the “Great city of the eternal Horus.” This is an interesting meaning given the fact that the people of Ammonihah declared that their city was a “great city” (Alma 9:4, 16:9).

There is also an alternate meaning of Sumerian construction that describes the final destruction and burning of the residents of the city of Ammonihah:

a: arm; strength; wage; power

a₂-mu, a₂-na, a₂-ni, an-na, an, a₂-a-na, a₂-a-ni (form of *a*)

ma: to burn

mah: (to be) great

mah-a, ma-ha, mah-a-ni, mah-ni, mah-na (form of *mah*)

mu: to crush, mangle

mun: (to be) brackish

a-mun₄ (form of *mun*)

u: abuse

u: to bray, bellow, bawl, voice, cry, noise

u: defeat

un: (to be) high

ni: fear

ah: phlegm, mucus, sputum; foam, scum; saliva, spittle; poison

uh₃-a, uh₃ (form of *ah*)

he: be it

Constructed Compound Name: Am(u)monih(e)ah

The Sumerian combined meaning would be something like “Great, high and powerful; fear and screaming; crushed and mangled, defeated and burned; place of scum.” That is a very fitting description of the quick destruction (Alma 16:2, 7–11), even down to the detail of the “mangled” bodies described in the Book of Mormon.

In summary, the name of the city Ammonihah also provides evidence that it was a primary location for the worship of Itzamna, the Principal Bird Deity as viewed and interpreted by the Nephites.

Amlici

a: arm; labor; wing; horn; side; strength; wage; power

a₂-mu (form of *a*)

a: a bird-cry

A: a weapon or a leather holder for a weapon

am: a bird

li: to press

i: oil; container for oil (indicating priestly function)

ki: place, ground, earth, land, toward, underworld, lower, down below

Constructed Compound Name: **Amliki**

The Sumerian combined meaning would be something like “Powerful underworld bird priest; press with a weapon.”

Based on multiple lines of evidence, it is abundantly clear that the native portion of the Noah syncretic religion and the entire order of Nehor are the Itzamna-Bacab complex of Maya gods, religious practice, and religious ritual. The Nephite description of this religious complex as being “of Horus” is an accurate description of the Itzamna-Bacab complex.