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A Study of Book of Mormon Texts IV

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Abstract: In this series, internal evidences of the Book of Mormon's authenticity are argued using analysis of words and names used in the book that reflect ancient Hebrew customs, and parallels between the Book of Mormon and American Indian languages. The fourth part covers the names "Laban" and "Laman."

architect; Edwin C. Santeo, native Saint of Papago ward; and a sermon and the dedicatory prayer by Elder Richard R. Lyman of the Council of the Twelve. The exercises marked an important milestone in the progress of the construction of the temple, which bids fair to become a unique, substantial, and handsome structure. The memorial box, sealed in the wall of the structure, contained the standard Church works; *Mormon Settlement in Arizona*, by State Historian, James H. McClintock; Salt Lake, California and Arizona newspapers and other periodicals, a map of pre-historic canals of the valleys, by Omar A. Turney; *The "M,"* a recently launched M. I. A. stake magazine; also a sealed bottle containing alfalfa, cotton, wheat and barley seeds.

At a time when extraordinary efforts are being put forth to unearth historical data pertaining to the history of races who have inhabited this land years before our modern history began, it seems only fitting that we should leave certain evidences of our existence and our progress, hidden in the walls of this temple structure. It is erected almost immediately over the ruins of a once thrifty race who irrigated, tilled and reaped from the same soil we now occupy. Their canals for miles we traverse with our great modern irrigation system under the Roosevelt project. In the fields of this valley our plowmen uncover the implements of war and the home utensils which once served a numerous race inhabiting this land in bygone ages. It is not an exaggeration to state that the structure we now rear as our temple, under the same operations of the elements, will defy the crumbling power of time, reaching out thousands of years into the future. So that, if future generations seek amid the ruins of this beautiful valley after the upheavals of the earth which may again bury its fertility, their attention may be expected to be directed toward this structure. Furthermore, if the future archaeologist should have the means at hand to rend those cement blocks, and give the interpretation of our language, he may find embedded within the massive walls of the Arizona temple a brief and accurate history of the races of the valley as they existed during the early part of the twentieth century.

Mesa, Arizona.

A STUDY OF BOOK OF MORMON TEXTS

BY J. M. SJODAHL

Laban. This was the name of the brother of Rebecca, the mother of Jacob, and the father of his two wives, Leah and Rachel. The meaning of the word is "white." It is found in many forms in the Old Testament, such as "Lebanah," "Lebanon," "Libuah," "Libni," "Libnites," all from the same root and having the same fundamental meaning.

From the Book of Mormon we learn that this was the name of a wealthy Israelite of the tribe of Joseph, and a contemporary of Lehi.

It was also, in a slightly modified form, the name of the oldest son of Lehi, Laman.*

In the latter form the name has become prominent in the history of the Book of Mormon. There were two kings of that name, Laman I and II, father and son. There was a river named Laman and a city of the same name, and when the great schism took place, the descendants of Laman, Lemuel and Ishmael were called *Lamanites*, from the son of Lehi, who was the leading spirit in the events that culminated in the separation.

The name in both forms has been preserved in the accounts of American antiquities, and this fact must be accepted as corroborative of the Book of Mormon.

Nadaillac, after having described the elaborate grandeur and marvelous harmony of the buildings at Uxmal, takes us to the ruins at Kabah and *Labna*, near those of Uxmal. *Labna* is, no doubt, a word related to "Laban," as are the Biblical words "Lebanah," "Libnah," etc. Nadaillac says: "The buildings of Labna were no less remarkable than those of Uxmal; but unfortunately they are in a state of extreme decay. The chief building was covered with stucco ornaments, which are breaking off and rapidly disappearing. One can still make out a row of skulls, some bas-reliefs representing human figures, and a globe of considerable diameter upheld by two men, one of whom is kneeling. All these figures retain some traces of color" (*Prehistoric America*, p. 340). One can obtain some idea of the former magnitude of this city of Labna, or Laban, from the statement of Stephens: "The summits of the neighboring hills are capped with gray, broken walls for miles around."

The name Laman, which is the form in which "Laban" most frequently appears in the Book of Mormon, is still borne by a division of the Kechua† linguistic stock of Indians, the *Lamanos* or *Lamistas*. Concerning the literary achievements of the Kechua stock, Dr. Brinton says: "Its literature was by no means despicable. In spite of the absence of a method of writing, there was a large body of songs, legends, and dramas preserved by oral communication and the guipus. A number of these have been published. Among them the drama *Ollanta* is the most noteworthy. It appears to be a genuine aboriginal production, committed to writing soon after the conquest, and bears the marks of an appreciation of literary form higher than we might have expected. The poems or *Yaraveys* usually turn on love for a theme, and often contain sentiments of force and delicacy" (*The American Race*, p. 215). John Fiske says of the *Ollanta*: "It is a love story, with the scene laid in the time of the great Inca Pachacutec;

*"Laman, white, another form of Laban." George Reynolds. *Story of the Book of Mormon*, p. 298.

†The "Kechuas" of Dr. Brinton is the "Quichuas" of John Fiske, and the "Qguichuas" of Nadaillac.

it would make a pleasant scene upon the stage, and is undeniably a pretty poem" (*The Discovery of America*, Vol. 2, p. 363).

Dr. Brinton mentions an independent linguistic stock called Yameos, who, he says, are found along the lower course of the river Javary and also further up the Maranon where they are called *Llameos*, *Yameos*, *Lamas* and *Lamistas*. Formerly they were a numerous and war-like nation (*The American Race*, p. 285). The *Lama* Indians are described as agricultural and industrious, and much given to trade and travel, but small and dirty in appearance. It may safely be inferred from the location of these aborigines along a river that seems to be named after Moroni, that their name is derived from "Laman."

From these quotations it seems clear that the words Laban and Laman were known in America anciently from the northern parts of Yucatan to the region of the sources of the mighty Amazon river, by a people advanced in some arts and literature, as were the Lamanites of the Book of Mormon at one stage of their history.

(To be continued)

Great is God's Kindness

When the fresh breath of the morning Comes a wafting o'er the Hills, When the sunshine starts adorning All the silvery gushing rills.	When the evening shadows creeping Blend with shifting twilight ray, Mother Earth is once more sleeping From the toils that fill the day.
When the birdies dart and flutter, As they voice their glee in song— Seems to me I'd not but utter Words of love the whole day long.	When the wind through pine trees stealing Chant of weird and haunting sight, Then in prayer we oft' are kneeling Asking God's care through the night.
When the sun, in rising splendor, Sifts it's golden shafts around, Warmly falls it's glow so tender, That with joy all hearts abound.	From the sun's first gleam of gladness Till the shades of night are drawn, From the hours of settled darkness Till the coming of the dawn.
When the noon-day zephyrs blowing Gently fan earth's teeming sod, Seems to me these all are showing Mercies granted us from God.	I am filled with glad thanksgiving For the joys we know on earth, May we, through our righteous living, Prove we're worthy of our birth.

Laie, Oahu.

M. F. KIRKHAM.