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## Appendix 1: East Coast or West Coast?

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## Appendix 1: East Coast or West Coast?

Whether the Jaredites crossed the Atlantic or the Pacific is not fundamental to the thesis of their Asiatic origin, since in either case their culture was fully developed at the time they left their homeland. President Milton R. Hunter has kindly called the writer's attention to certain statements in the writings of Ixtiloxochitl and Sahagun that seem to cast light on the subject of the Jaredite landing. The pertinent passages as given in Hunter and Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*,<sup>1</sup> are as follows:

Sahagun's comment on the remarks of Ixtiloxochitl: "It is the common and general opinion of all the natives of all this Chichimeca land . . . that their ancestors came from *Occidental parts*, and all of them are now called Tultecas, Aculhuas, Mexicanos; and other nations that are in this land say that they are of the lineage of the Chichimecas, and are proud of it; and the reason is, according as it appears in their histories, that the first king they had was called *Chichimecatl*, who was the one who brought them to this New World where they settled, who, as can be inferred, came from the great Tartary, and they were those of the division of Babylon. . . . And they say that they traveled for 104 years through different parts of the world until they arrived at *Huehue Tlapallan* their country."<sup>2</sup>

Sahagun further says:

"Concerning the origin of these peoples, the report

the old men [of central Mexico—where Sahagun lived many years] give is that they came by sea from the north [i.e., down the Gulf Coast of Mexico]. . . . It is conjectured . . . that they came from seven caves, and that these seven caves are the seven ships or galleys in which the *first* settlers of this land came. . . . The people first came to settle this land from the direction of Florida, and came coasting along the coast disembarking in the port of Panuco which they call *Panuco*, which means 'place where those arrived who crossed the water.' This people came in search of the terrestrial paradise and they had as a family name Tamoanchan, which means 'we are looking for our home.' "<sup>3</sup>

And again: "and this . . . king, as he traveled on with them through the greater part of the world, arrived in this land."<sup>4</sup>

Here *two* distinct phases of the Jaredite migration are indicated. First, there is the original exodus of the ancestors from Occidental parts under their first chief, "Chichimecatl, who was the one who brought them to this New World where they settled who . . . came from great Tartary, and they were those of the division of Babylon." Tartary is defined in the *Oxford Dictionary* as "the region of Central Asia extending eastward from the Caspian Sea,"<sup>5</sup> i.e., the very area to which we have assigned our Jaredite wanderings in the Old World. When Sahagun, writing in Mexico in the sixteenth century, speaks of Occidental parts, he means regions to the West. In those days the word *Occident* was used in its literal sense, and Jesuit missionaries, writing their reports from Mexico in the time of Sahagun, refer to Asia as the Occident, since it was Asia and not Europe that lay to the west of them. The writer was puzzled when, in an early and premature attempt to translate certain Jesuit letters, he first came upon this natural but unfamiliar use of the word *Occident*. Sahagun removes all ambiguity on the subject by specifically mentioning Babylon and great Tartary, neither of which was "Occidental"

in the European sense, as being the very "Occidental parts" from which the settlers came.

Then there is a *second* landing, that of the people who reached Huehue Tlapallan after 104 years of wandering. These people, specifically described as the first settlers of Mexico, came "by sea from the north," coasting along the Gulf of Mexico "from the direction of Florida." We are not told where they came from nor are we told that they had just crossed the ocean, but we are told that they landed in Mexico over a century after the great migration began, i.e., long after the Jaredites had arrived in the New World. Moreover, a moment's reflection will make it apparent that the landing at Panuco can hardly have been the original Jaredite debarkation. After 344 terrible days at sea the Jaredites, or anyone else, would waste no time in stepping ashore on the first land that offered. Indeed it is clearly implied in Ether 6:12-13 that they did just that, and only later continued their expansion and exploration (Ether 7:4-11). But the Panuco people "came coasting along the coast," sailing, perhaps for many days, in full sight of land. Either they had not been at sea very long or they had already landed somewhere, else in their dire need for fresh meat, fresh water, and fresh fruit, they would have landed immediately instead of "coasting along the coast." Had they sailed into the gulf from the Atlantic, they could hardly have avoided sighting islands and touching at them. There is no mention of any terrible storm that might have kept them from landing, and at any rate, people do not "coast along the coast" in terrible storms. The statements that they "come from the north," and "from the direction of Florida" are strangely localized. If the Panuco people had just crossed the ocean, they certainly would have known it, and it would have been the main part of their legend, but no Atlantic crossing is mentioned.

The landing in Mexico is obviously one of the later developments of the great Jaredite migration, which, as

we have often noted, did not come to an end with their landing in the New World but continued in many directions. We know that the Jaredites in their wanderings crossed many bodies of water and so made *many* landings like the one at Panuco, which need not be described in the Book of Mormon.

Furthermore, Sahagun tells us that the original migrants under their first chief had traveled "through the greater part of the world," and that those who landed in Mexico had "traveled for 104 years through different parts of the world." If they had passed from the Near East into the valley northward, across Asia and the Pacific, and then traversed this continent to reach the gulf coast in Florida or at the mouth of the Mississippi, hence following the gulf coast to Mexico, this would certainly be true. On the other hand, a journey westward from Babylon to the Mediterranean and out over the Atlantic does not take one through the greater part of the world and is far harder to visualize than the eastern route.

In the writer's opinion, the most attractive interpretation of the evidence is this: From Babylon at the time of the great dispersion came a group of wanderers under their first king. They wandered "through different parts of the world" (that is important for our Old World background) and then left "great Tartary" (Asia) and crossed "from Occidental parts" to the New World, where they presently continued their exploration (Ether 7) by land and water, one family or tribe of them, the Tamoanchan, coming cautiously down along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico to land, over a hundred years after the departure from the tower, on the east of Mexico. Such a view is by no means the only possible one to be taken from Sahagun's evidence, but it seems to reconcile all the known facts, while the assumption that the original landing was at Panuco overlooks some important things, to wit, (1) that the original settlers came to the New World from the west, not from

the east, (2) that they apparently had been in great Tartary, or Asia east of the Caspian, (3) that they had traveled through many lands—through most of the world, in fact, (4) that they were anxious to land, whereas the Panuco people were coasting, (5) that the Mexican party is not said to have crossed the ocean on this occasion—a thing that would certainly have been recorded were it the case—but only to have come “from the direction of Florida” and from the north—which definitely localizes the picture, and above all (6) that the landing at Panuco took place 104 years after the beginning of the great migration, whereas the Jaredites landed well within one generation after leaving the tower.

The problem is a fascinating, but not a vital one. The writer’s opinion on the matter, excluded as he is from any deeper knowledge of the subject by an invincible ignorance of any of the native languages of Central America, must continue to be regarded as pure, unalloyed speculation, at best a particle of truth—not an article of faith.

## Notes

1. Milton R. Hunter and Thomas S. Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, Ca: Kolob, 1950).

2. *Ibid.*, 25.

3. *Ibid.*, 30-31.

4. *Ibid.*, 38.

5. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 12 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), 11:100; s.v. “Tartar.”