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The Final Stage of Jaredite Geography

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Chapter 13

The Final Stage of Jaredite Geography

The same method used in previous chapters can also be applied in identifying the locations at the end of the Jaredite narrative, particularly those of the final Jaredite battles.

It is a fairly simple process of deduction to determine that the area of the Tuxtla Mountains is the primary area of the geographical locations mentioned also in the final stage of the Jaredite narrative, which is concerned mostly with the final battles of the Jaredites. First, it is the only significantly elevated area in the Olmec heartland—an elevated area is required to satisfy the terms “came up” and “went over.” Most of the descriptions of the subject areas either mentions or implies the proximity of the sea. Finally, the mention of hills is also consistent with the area of the Tuxtla Mountains. The Tuxtla Mountain area is displayed in figure 45.



Figure 45. Tuxtla Mountains.

Archaeological evidence does not show that the Tuxtlas were heavily populated during the late Olmec/Jaredite timeframes. The Jaredite record of the battles mentions no cities by name and only implies cities that were likely to the southeast, in the area of Laguna de Los Cerros. Yet, similar to the analysis of the early Jaredite geography, there are a few locations in the final era of Jaredite geography that can be identified based on known information.

Valley and City of Gilgal

The location of Gilgal (Ether 13:27–29) can be determined using a few different parameters. In the *Geology of the Book of Mormon* (2014), it was determined that the city of Gilgal (3 Nephi 9:6), which was destroyed through the sinking and burial mentioned in 3 Nephi, was located within a certain area of destructive influence near the Veracruz Fault system. The potential area in which the city of Gilgal would be located is shown in figure 46.

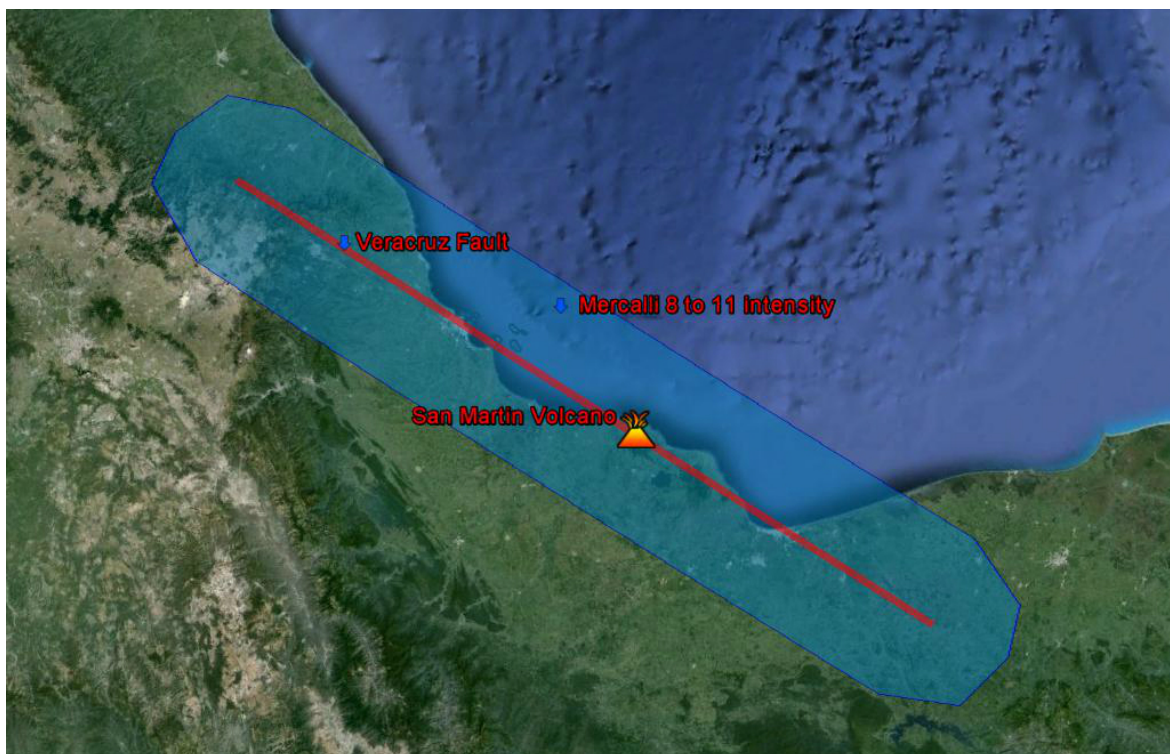


Figure 46. Areas subject to a Mercalli intensity rating of 8 or higher for an 11 intensity earthquake at the fault line, where most fissuring, subsidence, lateral spreading, liquefaction, and earthquake-induced landslides would be expected. (Grover 2014)

In the Book of Mormon, when a city maintains the same name as a geographic area, the text consistently locates the city within that geographic area. As a result, it is fairly certain that the city of Gilgal would be located within or in proximity to the valley of Gilgal.

Etymologically, in Hebrew, Gilgal means “bowl, basin, circle, or wheel,” with *-gal* also potentially meaning “heap” or “pile,” which would indicate a mountain valley of circular shape (Book of Mormon Onomasticon 2017; www.abarim-publications.com 2015a). In examining all of the valley forms within the previously identified seismic zone, there is primarily one potential valley that is circular in configuration. It is located at the south end of the Tuxtla Mountains and is a small caldera structure of the extinct Santa Marta volcano. It is also a mountain valley. The upper mountain valley is uniformly round and forms a geographic basin or bowl. There is a basin valley adjacent and just to the north that may also meet the criteria since it forms a basin and has a generally circular shape (see figure 47).



Figure 47. Primary and secondary location for the valley of Gilgal.

This location is also consistent with the 3rd Nephi destruction—a major strike slip fault passes through the valleys identified here (see figure 48).

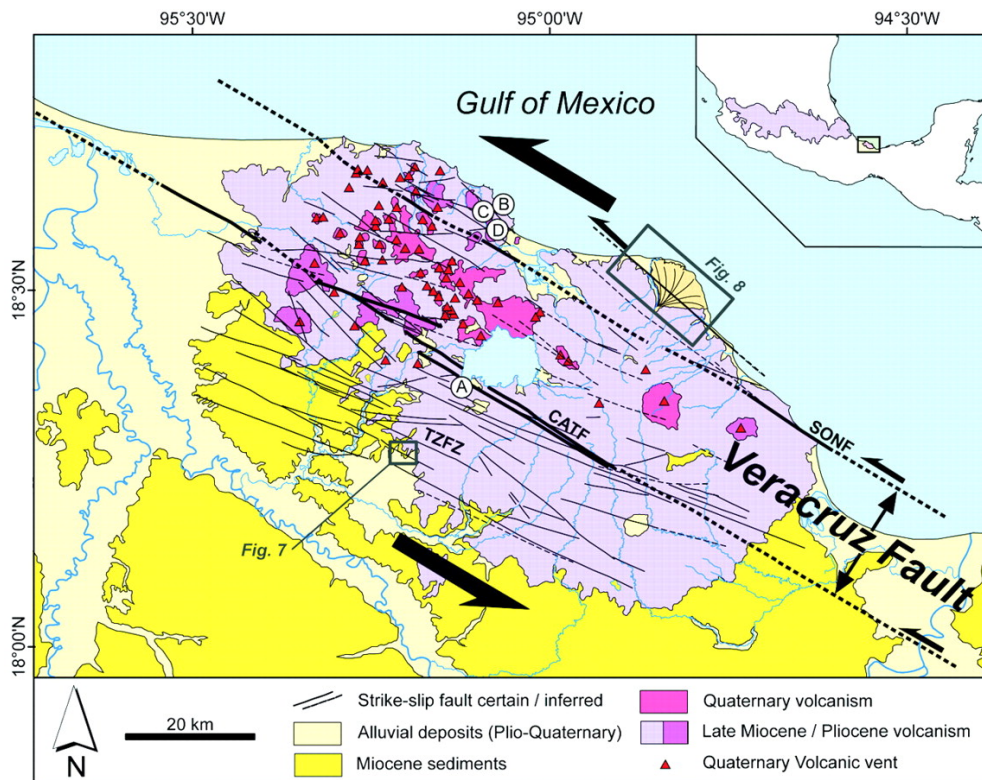


Figure 48. Detail of geologic structure of the Tuxtla Volcanic Field. (Andreani et al. 2008)

The Land and Valley of Corihor

We know from the descriptions in Ether that the land and valley of Corihor is not too distant from the sea (Ether 14:26–28). The etymological elements potentially found in a geographical association of Corihor also seem to involve potential features that may have existed in the land or valley of Corihor:

Sumerian

kar: to harbor, quay

kar-ra, kar-re, kar-e, kar-a (forms of *kar*)

kar: to blow, to light up, shine

kur: to burn, to light up

kur-a-a (form of *kur*)

kur: mountain(s), underworld, land, country, east, easterner

kur-ra, kur-re, kur₂-ra, kur-re₂, kur-a, kur-e (forms of *kur*)

ku: to place, lay (down); to spread, discharge

KU: hole

KU: plough?

u: earth

u: hole

u: emery

u: type of land

u: load

u: earth pile

u: pitfall

u: planking

u: plant

u: food; grass, herb; pasture, plants

u₂-ra (form of *u*)

u: shepherd

U: type of stone

a: water

ur: to drag; to raise a boat

ur₃-ra, ur₃ (form of *ur*)

ur: keel

ur: fish

ur: harness

ur: to pluck, to gather, to collect; to harvest

ur₄-ra, ur₄-a, ur₄-ra-a, ur₄-ur₄-re, ur₅-e (forms of *ur*)

uri: a fish

uri: a vessel

urri: a designation of sheep

harra: dug?

hur: ever (again)

hur: to scratch, draw

i₃-hur (form of *hur*)

Constructed Sumerian Compound Word: **Corihor**

Hebrew*hori*: a burning*hara*: to burn or ignite*hur*: something white or white stuff

Because of the multiple meanings of Sumerian “u,” there are a lot of potential geographical characteristics tied to the etymology of the land and valley of Corihor. It will be useful to look for other corresponding meanings outside of “u” in order to be more definitive. In looking at all the possible features, Corihor seems to be a mountainous land with timber located to the east; it supports agriculture involving grain and livestock. There appears to be some aquaculture (multiple “fish”), as well as some sort of mining (“hole,” “earthpile,” “pitfall,” “to scratch,” “dug,” “type of stone,” “emery”), with heavy overland transport (“to drag,” “to place,” “to lay [down],” “planking,” “to pierce with a spindle,” “harness,” “ring”) and water transport (“to harbor,” “to quay,” “ship’s captain,” “water,” “keel,” “a vessel,” “to raise a boat”). In addition, the presence of volcanic activity as part of the mountains within the land of Corihor is indicated with “burning,” “to burn or ignite,” “to blow,” “to light up,” “white stuff.”

The etymology for Corihor as a “mine” is extremely helpful in determining the location since the principal mining product known from the Olmec was basalt from the Tuxtla Mountains. The majority of the basalt for the Olmec monuments and the massive heads at La Venta and San Lorenzo (see figure 49) come from the volcanic basalt deposits of the area of Cerro Cintepec, which consists of the volcanic deposits located on the southern slope of the Tuxtla Mountains south of Lake Catemaco (Hazell 2013). One significant valley in the area runs from the southeast side of Lake Catemaco near Agayata up into the Santa Marta Volcano Complex (see figure 50).

The description of the land of Corihor fits the southern Tuxtlas as it supports agriculture, has timber and mining, has potential aquaculture, and harbor in Lake Catemaco and/or the Gulf of Mexico.



Figure 49. Olmec head from San Lorenzo. (whosworld.org 2014)

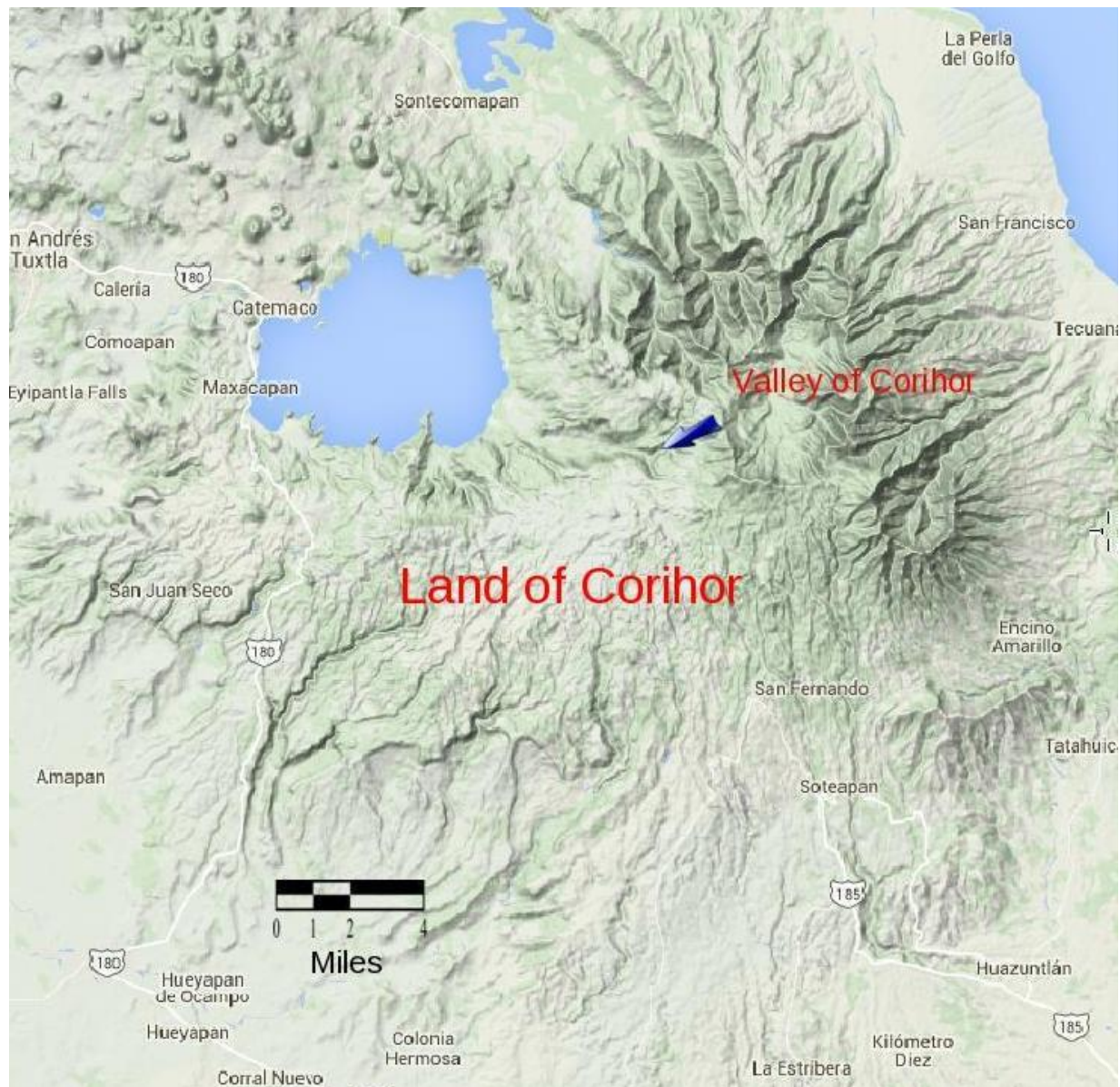


Figure 50. Land and Valley of Corihor.

With the locations previously identified in early Jaredite geography and by using the meanings of the place names, it is now possible to construct the late Jaredite geography that is discussed in relation to battles involving Coriantumr₂. It should be noted that the early Jaredite land of Nehor is no longer mentioned in a geographic context, though it has a prominent role in an order of priestcraft called Nehor and as a personal name later chronologically in the Book of Mormon narrative. The early Jaredite land of Heth is not mentioned either except as a personal name. The absence of these names may indicate that these lands were names for early lands that were no longer existent, although it is also possible that they existed but were not mentioned in the Book of Ether narrative. The early land of Moron is mentioned again in the late stages of Jaredite history, although it is likely that by that time its borders would have expanded, with 2,000 years of intervening population growth.

Ether's Base

One initial criteria for the final battles is that Ether was able to observe them within a limited geographic area and likely from various vantage points.

Ether 13:14

And as he dwelt in the cavity of a rock he made the remainder of his record, viewing the destructions which came upon the people, by night.

Although there is no indication that Ether returned to the cave every morning, he did have a home base and, from the records, seems to have been able to observe troop movements and battles directly, though they may also have been recounted to him. The phrase "cavity of a rock" has an Olmec cultural meaning, which will be discussed later. The Tuxtla Mountain area is approximately 50 miles long and 10 miles wide, has centrally located mountains with many cave possibilities, and provides numerous mountains and hills for vantage points, and so meets the criteria of being a limited geographic area suitable for Ether's base of operations.

Coriantumr₂ versus Shared

It should be pointed out that initially Coriantumr₂ was king "over all the land" (Ether 12:1) and was "studied" "in all the arts of war and all the cunning of the world, wherefore he gave battle unto them who sought to destroy him" (Ether 13:16). One verse also could be reasonably interpreted to be indicative of geographical land divisions at the time of Coriantumr₂:

Ether 13:17

But he repented not, neither his fair sons nor daughters; neither the fair sons and daughters of Cohor; neither the fair sons and daughters of Corihor; and in fine, there were none of the fair sons and daughters upon the face of the whole earth who repented of their sins.

The term "fair sons and daughters" is a literary term intriguingly used elsewhere in the Book of Mormon to describe a people that had recently been catastrophically slain because of wickedness (Mormon 6:19; 3 Nephi 9:2), which fate was soon in store for the Jaredites, so the phrase should not be interpreted to mean actual offspring. In addition, the verse seems to indicate that the people under Coriantumr₂, as well as those of Cohor and Corihor, constituted "the face of the whole earth," indicating these three people or areas constituted the total land of the Jaredites at that time. While one interpretation of this verse could be that Cohor and Corihor are leaders of some sort, that would not be consistent with the statement that Coriantumr₂ was "king over all the land." Gardner (2007) suggests that the names Cohor and Corihor are citations of historic figures as opposed to actual leaders (308).

A more consistent interpretation is that these names refer to lands, of which the land of Corihor has already been identified (Ether 14:27). Cohor would be another land and, together with the land of Corihor, is probably where Coriantumr₂'s rivals and their followers came from. Since Moron was "the land where the king dwelt" (Ether 7:5) and the throne of Coriantumr₂ was located in Moron (Ether 14:6), the third land that made up the full kingdom at that time was the land of Moron. When secret combinations initially challenged Coriantumr₂'s throne, Coriantumr₂'s army was referred to as the "sons of Coriantumr" (Ether 13:12–25), which is consistent in terminology with the military leader Helaman and his "sons" (Helaman 56:46).



Figure 51. Possible lands at the time of the final Jaredite wars.

The land of Cohor, based on its etymology, would have likely laid in the center volcanic area of the Tuxtlas and could include the main volcano of San Martín. The Sumerian and Hebrew etymological units of *Cohor* are listed as follows:

Sumerian

KU: hole

u: earth

u: hole

u: type of land

u: earth pile

u: totality, world

he: be it, be he

ur: to be convulsed

ur₄-a, ur₄ (forms of *ur*)

Constructed Sumerian Compound Word: *Coh(e)or*

Hebrew*hor*: hole or cavern*hori*: a burning*hara*: to burn or ignite*hwr*: hollow or depressed ground between hills

There are clearly at least two lands at this time in Jaredite history: the land of Moron and the land of Corihor. The boundaries of any of these lands on the west are not able to be defined, and the land of Corihor to the south is not defined and could perhaps extend as far as to include the ancient city of La Venta.

Coriantumr₂ had a series of conflicts with Shared, who initially defeated him and placed him in captivity until he was freed four years later (Ether 13:23–24). Ether 13:27–30 describes a continuing conflict with Shared and includes some geographic information:

Ether 13:27–30

27 And it came to pass that Coriantumr was exceedingly angry with Shared, and he went against him with his armies to battle; and they did meet in great anger, and they did meet in the valley of Gilgal; and the battle became exceedingly sore.

28 And it came to pass that Shared fought against him for the space of three days. And it came to pass that Coriantumr beat him, and did pursue him until he came to the plains of Heshlon.

29 And it came to pass that Shared gave him battle again upon the plains; and behold, he did beat Coriantumr, and drove him back again to the valley of Gilgal.

30 And Coriantumr gave Shared battle again in the valley of Gilgal, in which he beat Shared and slew him.

The location of the valley of Gilgal has been previously identified. Remembering that Coriantumr₂ was studied “in all the arts of war,” the location is a perfect defensive military position with regards to ancient warfare. It is a circular valley with only one entrance point, and the outside slopes of the valley are fairly steep, making the valley easier to defend. The valley is an elevated valley, so any army attacking it would be facing an enemy that has the superior high-ground position. In addition, the entrance to the valley is a military “pinch point,” where an army of superior numbers loses its advantage because only a limited number of people can engage in the area; plus, the attacking force ends up being surrounded on three sides.

Coriantumr₂ appears to have utilized this defensive tactic, since he initially defeated Shared in the valley, but once he pursued him out into the open on the plains of Heshlon, he was driven back and retreated to his defensive position, where he again defeated Shared and slew him (see figure 52).

The location for the battle on the plains of Heshlon is an educated guess; it could have happened anywhere on this area of flatter terrain and could be further to the southeast. The Hebrew etymology of *Heshlon*, as indicated by the Book of Mormon Onomasticon (2016), is a “place of exhaustion; place of crushing.” Bowen and Olavarria (2015) add some insight into the Hebrew etymology of the word, which has the meaning “to furbish, forge, or hammer.” The interpretation for the toponym by Bowen and Olavarria reflects the defeat of Coriantumr₂. This meaning also comports with the Sumerian etymological construction:

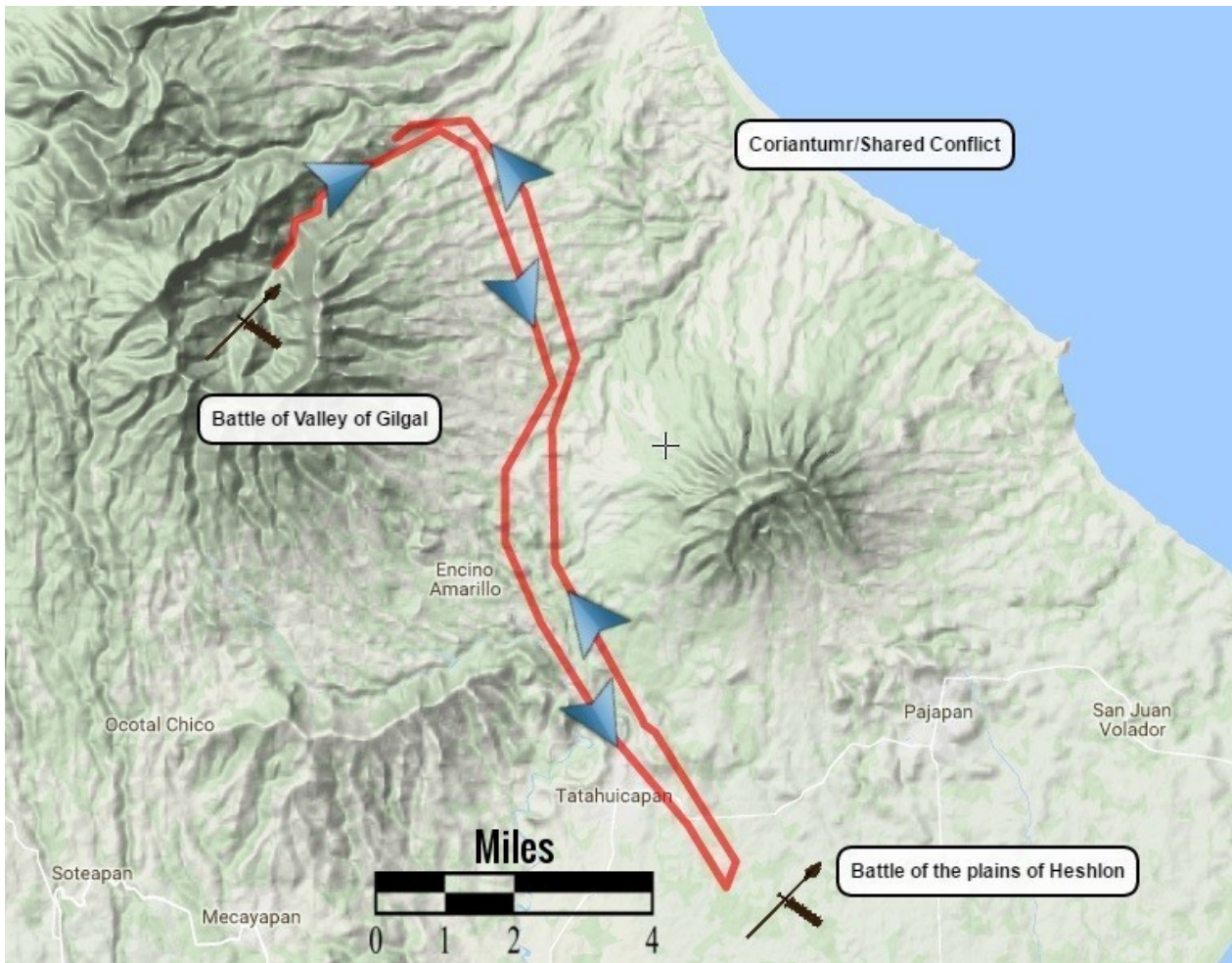


Figure 52. Battle movements in conflict between Coriantumr₂ and Shared.

Sumerian

he: be it

e: to take away; to bring out; to leave

*e*₃-*a*-*še*₃, *e*₃-*še*₃ (forms of *e*)

eš: three

*eš**la*: a trap

lah: to beat

u: defeat

u: type of land

u: grass, herb; pasture, plants

*u*₂-*ni*, *u*₂-*ne*, *u*₂-*na* (forms of *u*)

un: to arise; (to be) high

Constructed Compound Word: **Heshlon**

While this interpretation has validity, there is a geographic reason why these particular plains are called “Heshlon,” which also has an additional Sumerian meaning and construction:

Sumerian*he*: be it*e*: to take away; to bring out; to leave*e₃-a-še₃, e₃-še₃* (forms of *e*)*eš*: rope, thong, string*eš*: shrine; an establishment*eš₂la*: (to be) bound*eš₂la*: bond; band, belt*eš₂la*: a bucket*eš₂la*: a stick?; a tool*šil*: a piece of equipment*la*: to bind; binding, (yoke-)team; to carry*la₂-e, la₂-a-ni, ša-la-ni, ša-la-a, la₂-a-na* (forms of *la*)

This particular Sumerian etymology is consistent with hauling and dragging and utilizing ropes, bands, and other mechanical mechanisms.

This particular area, or the “plains of Heshlon,” is one of the potential routes that was used by the Olmecs in which they had to drag or otherwise transport the massive basalt blocks used in the massive Olmec heads and other monuments from Cerro Cintepec to the sea, where they were then floated upriver to be finished at San Lorenzo and La Venta (and probably other Olmec locations) (Hazell 2013; Velson and Clark 1975). The map below is one projected route to the ocean postulated by Hazell, but there may be a more favorable route to the ocean to the north of what she indicated that would be closer to the valley of Gilgal (see figure 53). This strenuous, manual hauling activity would certainly also comport with the Hebrew etymology of the plains of Heshlon as a “place of exhaustion” and perhaps even “crushing,” since people may have worked the basalt stone preliminarily by hammering at this location.



Figure 53. Potential hauling routes of large Olmec basalt blocks. (Hazell 2013)

Coriantumr₂ versus Gilead and Lib₂

Two years after the death of Shared, Gilead, the brother of Shared, battled Coriantumr₂ (presumably in the land of Moron) and beat him and pursued him to the wilderness of Akish, where they engaged in battle. Coriantumr₂ laid siege to the wilderness, and Gilead marched forth out of the wilderness by night and slew a part of Coriantumr₂'s army while they were drunk. Gilead then "came forth to the land of Moron" and placed himself on the throne of Coriantumr₂. Coriantumr₂ remained in the wilderness with his army. Gilead and his predecessor were both murdered, and Lib₂ took control of the kingdom. Coriantumr₂ then "came up" into the land of Moron and battled Lib₂. Lib₂ fled to "the borders upon the seashore," where there was a battle "upon the seashore." Lib₂ was victorious, and Coriantumr₂ fled again to the wilderness of Akish; Lib₂ pursued Coriantumr₂ until he came to the plains of Agosh and Coriantumr₂ had gathered all the people with him from "that quarter of the land" whither he fled. Lib₂ was killed by Coriantumr₂ at the plains of Agosh. The brother of Lib₂ was named Shiz, and he pursued Coriantumr₂ eastward to the "borders by the seashore" (Ether 14:3–26).

The first step in identifying the potential location of the wilderness of Akish and the plains of Agosh is to look at the etymologies of each. The etymology of *Akish* provides some decent clues as to its location.

Sumerian*a*: water*ki*: place, lower, down below*iš*: mountain(s)Constructed Compound Word: **Akish**

The wilderness of Akish looks to be on the lower part of a mountain or mountain(s), with water.

Agosh has Sumerian etymologies that match the event, but they provide only a few geographic clues:

Sumerian*aga*: rear*a-ga-aš*, *a-ga-še₃* (forms of *aga*)*gu*: bank, side; neck*gu₂-uš*, *gu₂-še₃* (forms of *gu*)*uš*: a fish

The geographic clues would place the plains of Agosh on the rear side of something, near the bank of a river.

The second step is to look at the geographical requirements of each location. The wilderness of Akish is likely adjacent to the land of Moron, and its elevation relationship with the land of Moron is that part of the wilderness of Akish must be equivalent in elevation with Moron, since Gilead "came forth" from there to Moron. Part of the wilderness of Akish must be lower in elevation to Moron since Coriantumr₂ then "came up" from there to Moron to battle Lib₂. The wilderness of Akish is likely not far from the seashore as Coriantumr₂ retreated there after being defeated at the seashore battle.

The word "wilderness" in at least some other places in the Book of Mormon is indicative of some sort of rough or hilly terrain. The Sumerian etymology indicates it was in a "lower" place on the "mountain." In the context of the Tuxtla, if the wilderness was somewhere in proximity to the land of Moron and the sea, it would involve the lower slope of the San Martín volcano. The area identified in figure 54 as the wilderness of Akish has variable elevations such that one can "come forth" to Moron and also go "up" to Moron.

The location of the plains of Agosh as identified in figure 54 is the most plausible because it is located on the “rear” of the Tuxtla Mountains and is adjacent to the San Juan River. The proposed route of Coriantumr₂ also passes through or near some populated areas in the Santiago Tuxtla and San Andrés Tuxtla areas. Since these areas are adjacent to Moron, perhaps they were more inclined to side with Coriantumr₂. It is also possible that the route of Coriantumr₂ from the wilderness of Akish to the plains of Agosh was further to the northwest and went through the land of Moron, which would be more consistent with “taking all the people with him as he fled” (Ether 14:15). In addition, the next military movement from this location involves the overthrow and burning of cities, and this location is adjacent to the Olmec population center of Laguna de Los Cerros (this movement is not depicted on the maps). The next movement also involves Coriantumr₂ being pursued eastward to the seashore, so of necessity, it must be somewhat westward of the seashore (Ether 14:26).

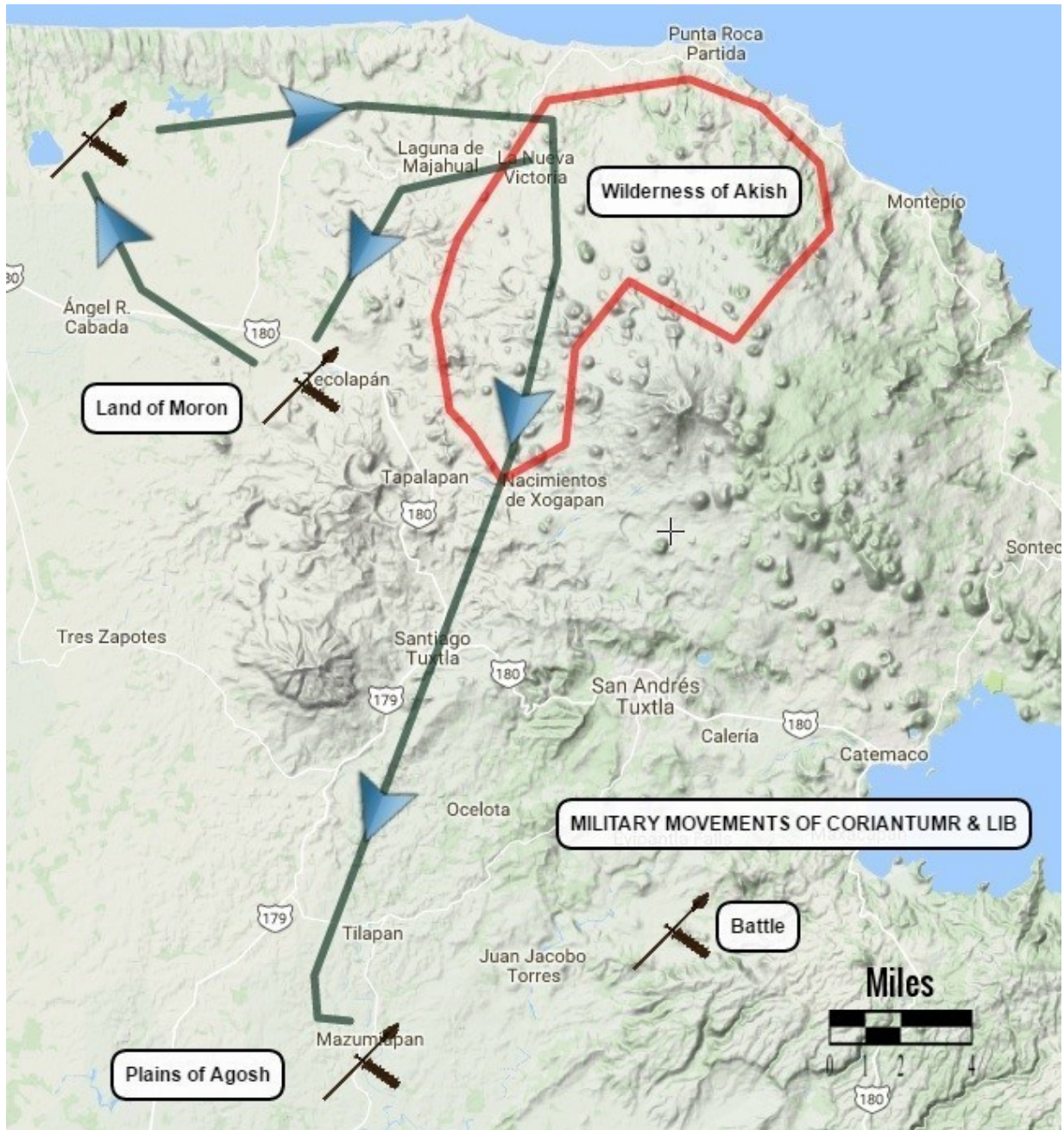


Figure 54. Map of military movements of Coriantumr₂ and Lib₂.

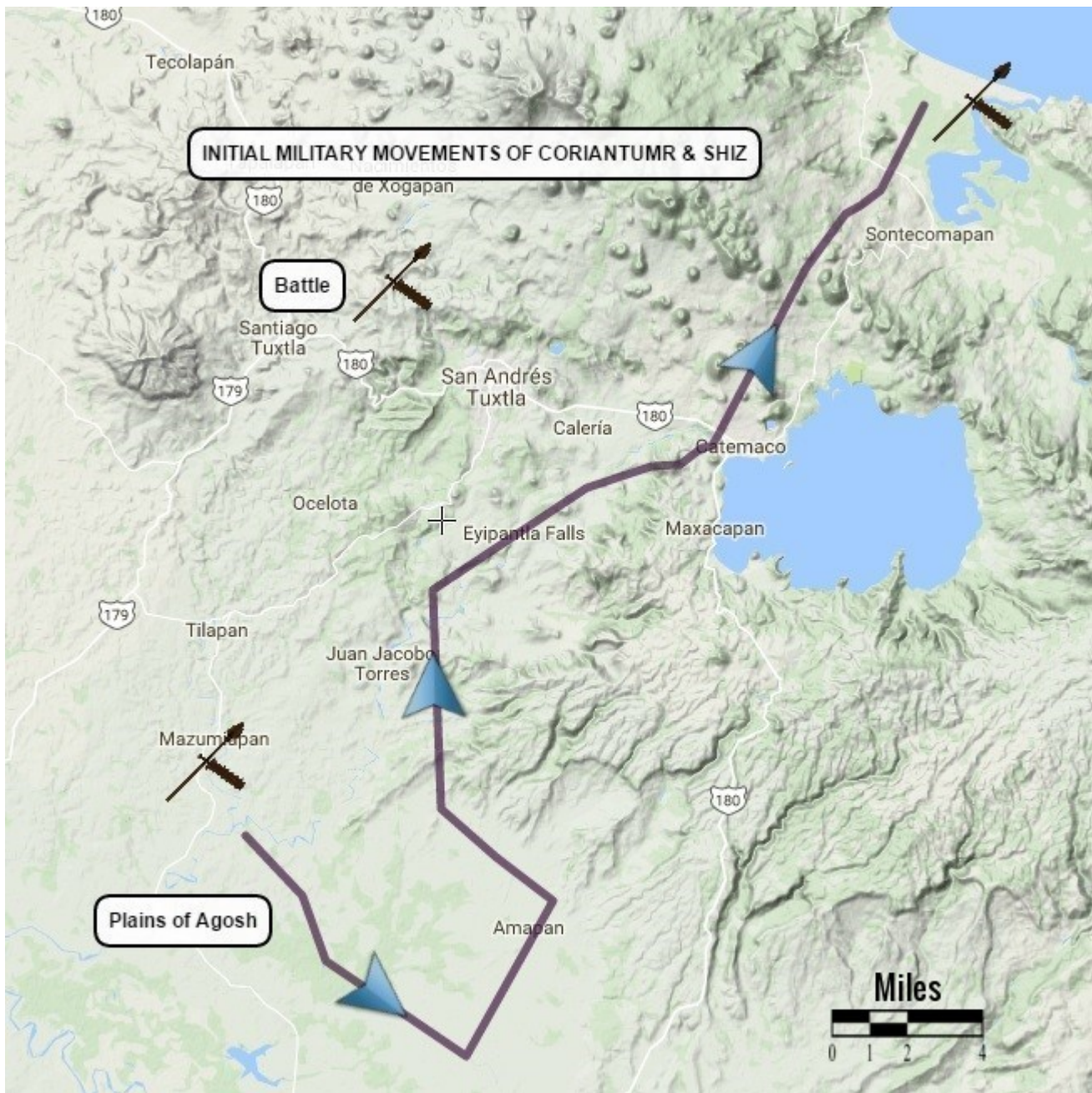


Figure 55. Map of initial military movements of Coriantumr₂ and Shiz.

Coriantumr₂ versus Shiz

After defeating Coriantumr₂ on the plains of Agosh and the burning of cities, Shiz pursued Coriantumr₂ “eastward,” ultimately to the seashore. Figure 55 depicts one path to the seashore; there are other paths to the seashore that lie in a more easterly direction and are also suitable. After a three-day battle and a “terrible destruction among the armies” of Shiz on the seashore, he retreated to the land of Corihor, collected more to his armies, killed all those who would not join him (Ether 14:27), and ended up in the valley of Corihor.

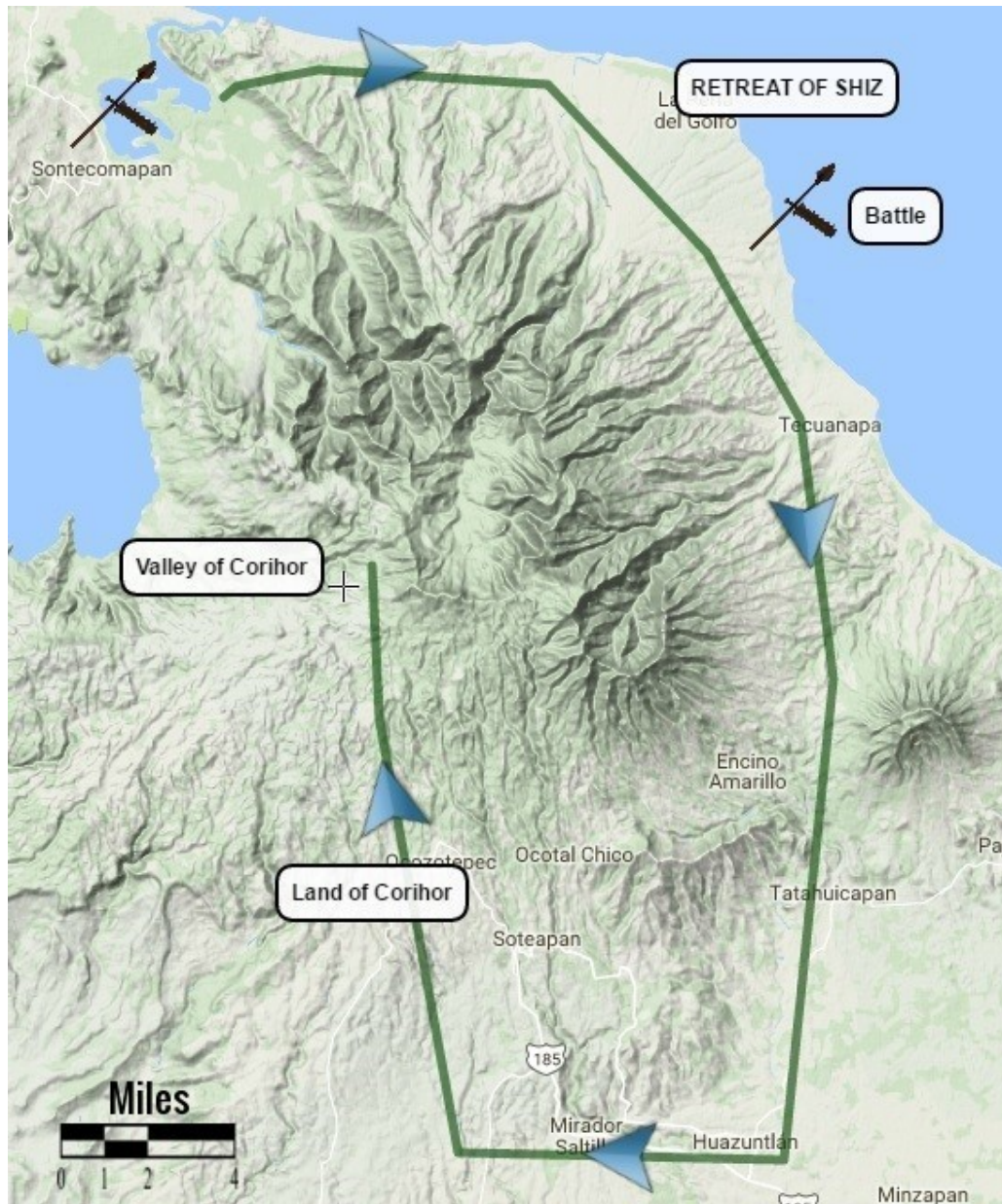


Figure 56. Map of retreat of Shiz.

While the armies “began to flee” before the armies of Coriantumr₂, there is no mention (as there is in other descriptions of this battle) of Coriantumr₂ “pursuing” Shiz. Thus, there is no indication that Coriantumr₂ followed Shiz; in fact, if Shiz was stopping to kill persons not willing to follow him, it seems likely that Coriantumr₂ was not in direct pursuit and perhaps not likely that he followed Shiz at all. The depiction in figure 56 of Shiz’s retreat may have been further to the south or west into more populated areas. There is no indication, however, that Shiz sacked any cities; he only dealt with “the inhabitants.” Yet Coriantumr₂ ended up in the valley of Shurr, which was adjacent to the valley of Corihor. The valley of Shurr was near the hill Comnor, where Coriantumr₂’s armies sounded a trumpet to invite the army of Shiz to battle, so the hill Comnor was adjacent to both the valley of Corihor and the valley of Shurr (Ether 14:31).

A valley of Shur is found in relation to the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, with the Hebrew meaning of *Shur* being “wall” or “barrier,” (*šûr*) (Genesis 16:7; 20:1; 25:18; Exodus 15:22; 1 Samuel 15:7). *Šûru* is a Sumerian loanword in

Mari and Nuzi texts (Book of Mormon Onomasticon 2016) that refers to some kind of geographic feature. Recent scientific inquiries into the biblical Shur identified a valley (wadi) with steep-sided “walls” that drains into the northern end of the Gulf of Aquba (Humphreys 2004).

With regards to the name of the hill Comnor, the spelling of this name in the current Book of Mormon is most likely erroneous: In the two instances where the name appears in the Printer’s Manuscript (the Original Manuscript is not extant for this passage), the name is spelled “Comron.” The typesetter for the 1830 edition reversed the last two consonants to produce the 1830–1981 reading of Comnor. The likely correct spelling of “Comron” is used for this analysis.

The Sumerian etymology for Comron is:

kum: (to be) hot

ra: (to be) pure; (to be) clear

rah: to flood

mu-rah₂-ni, *mu-rah₂*, *um-rah₂*, *rah₂-a-ni*, *a-rah₂-a*, *rah₂-a₂-na* (forms of *rah*)

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

an: sky, heaven; upper; crown (of a tree)

an-na, *an-ne₂*, *an-na-ke₄*, *an-e*, *an-na-ka*, *an-na-kam*, *an-kam* (forms of *an*)

Constructed Sumerian Compound Word: Comron

Features of the hill Comron one would look for is a high point, high rainfall that might precipitate flooding, and a volcanic element in that it is hot.

There is a valley that has very steep sided walls and whose head ends in one of the highest hills in the southern Tuxtla and empties into the Gulf of Mexico near the small town of Los Arrecifes Veracruz. The hill is part of the Santa Marta Volcano Complex and has had recent volcanic events on the hill. The top of the hill is one of a few in the area that maintains a tropical rainforest due to extremely high precipitation rates in excess of 6000 mm (236 inches) per year (see figure 57).

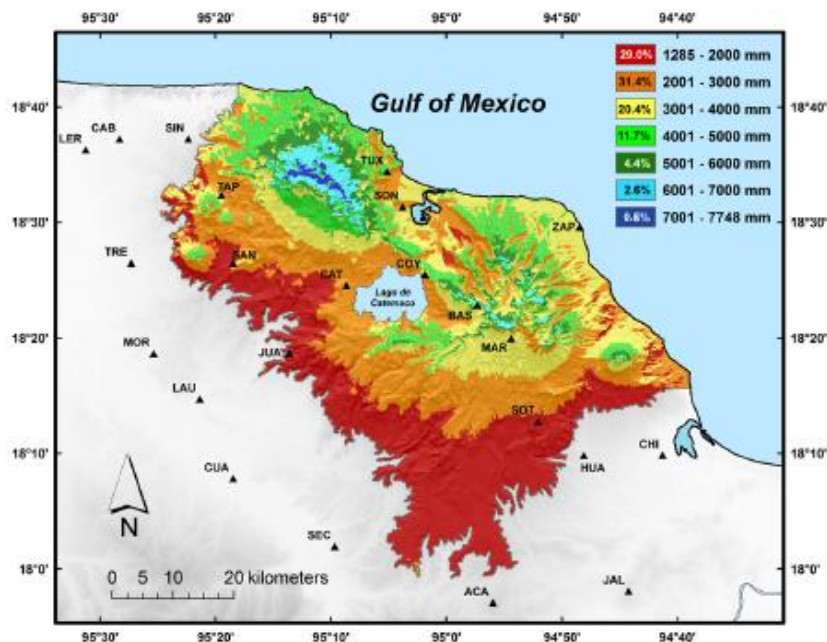


Figure 57. Average annual precipitation rates for the Tuxtla Mountains. (Gutiérrez- García 2011)



Figure 58. Forest classifications for the Tuxtla Mountains. (Gutiérrez- García 2011)

The location of the valley of Shurr and the hill Comron are shown in figure 59. In this battle, Coriantumr₂ shows he is studied “in all the arts of war” as he strategically approaches Shiz from an adjacent valley, takes the high-ground position, and invites Shiz to battle.

After two unsuccessful attacks up the hill, Shiz was finally somewhat successful on the third attempt but suffered such a loss of life that he did not pursue the armies of Coriantumr₂. Coriantumr₂ was gravely wounded in the battle and carried away. The Book of Mormon does not say where Coriantumr₂ was taken away to recover, but the text seems to indicate it was Moron, since he sent an epistle to Shiz saying he was willing to give up the kingdom for the sake of the lives of the people. His throne has been identified as being located at Moron (Ether 14:6), and in order to actually be able to give up the kingdom, he most likely would have had to have been on the throne in Moron.

He was unsuccessful at placating Shiz, so Shiz attacked again, and Coriantumr₂ had to flee again, this time to the “waters of Ripliancum, which by interpretation, is large, or to exceed all” (Ether 15:8). Sumerian provides an etymology that nearly exactly matches the descriptions given in the Book of Mormon, with additional related terms:

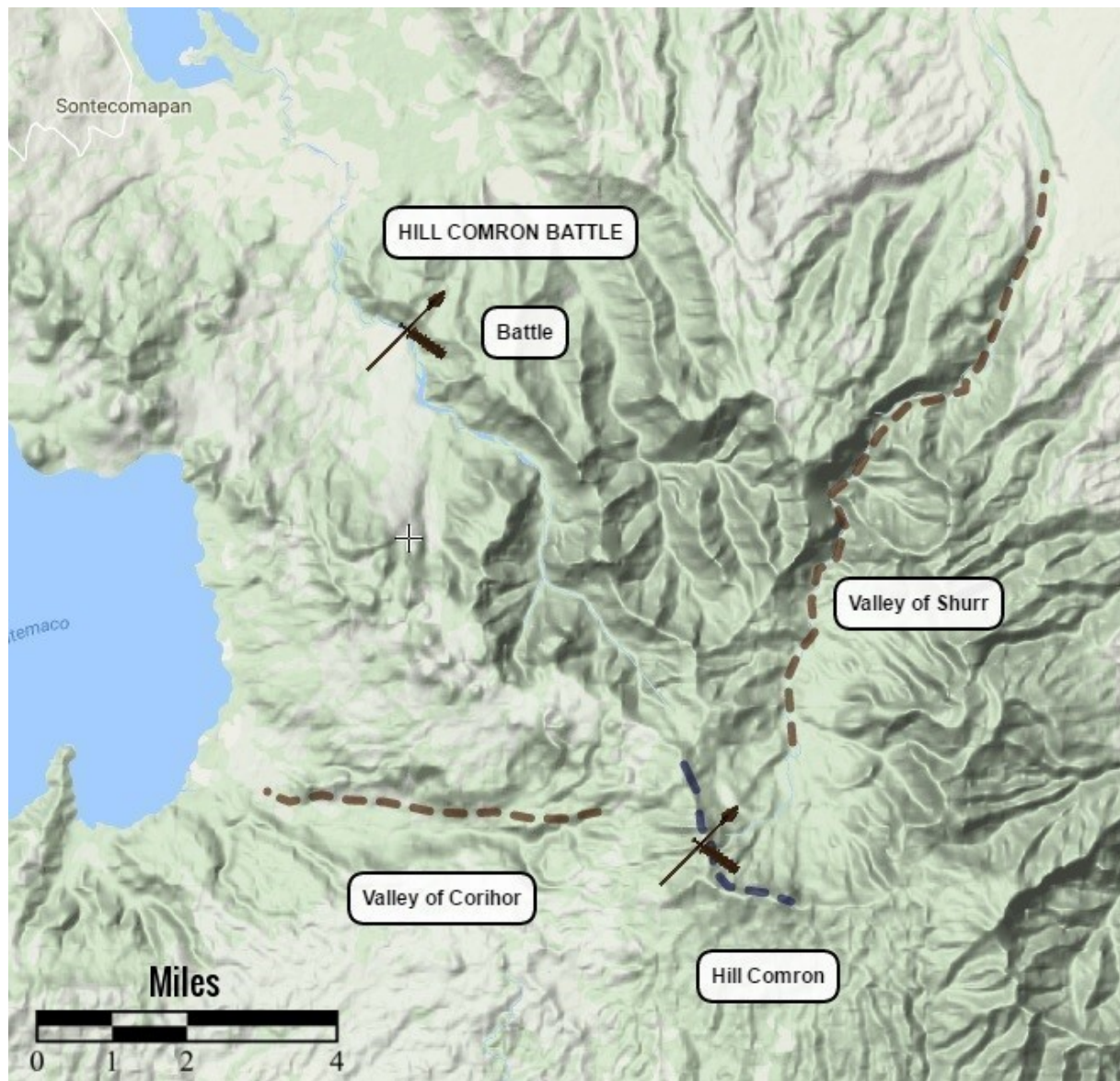


Figure 59. Map of battle at hill Comron.

ri: to be distant

ri-a (form of *ri*)

ri, Ri: to pour out

Ri-a (form of *ri*)

rib: (to be) surpassing, outstanding; (to be) strong, massive

li: branch

la: flooding

la: to stretch out

a: water

a-ni, a-na, a-ka, a-ke₄ (forms of *a*)

an: upper

an-na, an-ne₂, an-na-ke₄, an-e, an-na-ka, an-na-kam, an-kam (forms of *an*)

ana: upper
ana: as much as
 a-na, a-na-a (forms of *ana*)
ku: to spread, discharge
ku-um (form of *ku*)
kam: to alter
kaman: irrigation work

Constructed Compound Word: **Ribliancum**

Based on all the elements contained in the Sumerian, from a geographic context, it would seem that the type of water feature contemplated here involves water discharge from a river that extends into large riverine lagoons and swamplands, probably located at the boundary of the Jaredite (and perhaps Nephite) lands. The only place that meets these criteria with any proximity to Moron is the large lagoon and swamp complex where the Papaloapan River discharges into the Gulf of Mexico.

Coriantumr₂ was here successful against Shiz (although he was wounded again and fainted with loss of blood) and caused Shiz and his armies to “flee southward” before them, with Shiz pitching their tents at a place called Ogath. Sumerian etymology of Ogath does provide a description of the situation of Shiz and his armies (Grover 2017) but does not provide any geographical clues. One can surmise that since they were fleeing southward, that Ogath was somewhere south of where the armies of Coriantumr₂ stopped and pitched their tents, which was the hill Ramah, which the Nephites called Cumorah (Ether 15:9–12). Since Coriantumr₂ was wounded, it is unlikely that the hill Ramah would be a great distance from the waters of Ripliancum. In addition, it is likely that Ramah was adjacent or part of the land of Moron, Coriantumr₂’s kingdom, which allowed him to more successfully gather friendly armies to himself (Ether 15:13–14). Similarly, Ogath would be expected to be located some distance to the south, in the area favoring Shiz, since during the next four-year period, both Coriantumr₂ and Shiz gathered all of the people to their armies (Ether 15:12–13). While “Ogath” does not appear to have a Sumerian etymology that provides geographical clues, clues from the biblical Hebrew do indicate the likely location as San Lorenzo, which will be discussed later.

Some elements of the Hebrew and Sumerian etymologies of Ramah have some generic geographical applicability since the Sumerian etymology mostly is indicative and descriptive of the final great battle that occurred near Ramah.

Sumerian

rah: to beat, kill; to break, crush
 rah₂-am₃, a-rah₂-a, (forms of *rah*)
a: arm; horn; side; strength; wage; power
 a₂-mu (forms of *a*)
A: a weapon or a leather holder for a weapon
ama: chamber; cell (location of storage for records)
a mah: to strengthen
mah: (to be) great
 mah-a, ma-ha, mah-ra (forms of *mah*)

Constructed Compound Word: **Ra(h)mah**

Additional geographical etymological units would be:

Sumerian*ra*: (to be) pure; (to be) clear*a*: water*a-a, a-mu, a-am₃* (forms of *a*)Hebrew*ramah*: height

“Cumorah” provides a Sumerian etymology consistent with the use of the hill, but nothing clearly that would indicate a geographic clue. One logical parameter involving the hill is that it was utilized as a record repository (as was Shim), so it is not likely that it would be a hill that had volcanic eruptions—the Jaredite and Nephite history is long enough that they would likely have known which areas, hills, and mountains were volcanically active. Neither the hills Shim or Ramah identified in this work have any known recent volcanic eruptions. Palmer (1982) and others have proposed the location of Cerro Vigia as the hill Ramah. Mormon 6:4 indicates that the land of Cumorah (of which the hill Cumorah is a part) was a land of many waters, rivers, and fountains, which describes the northwest side of the Tuxtla Mountains. Cerro Vigia is also consistent with the analysis here and so is the most likely candidate for Ramah.

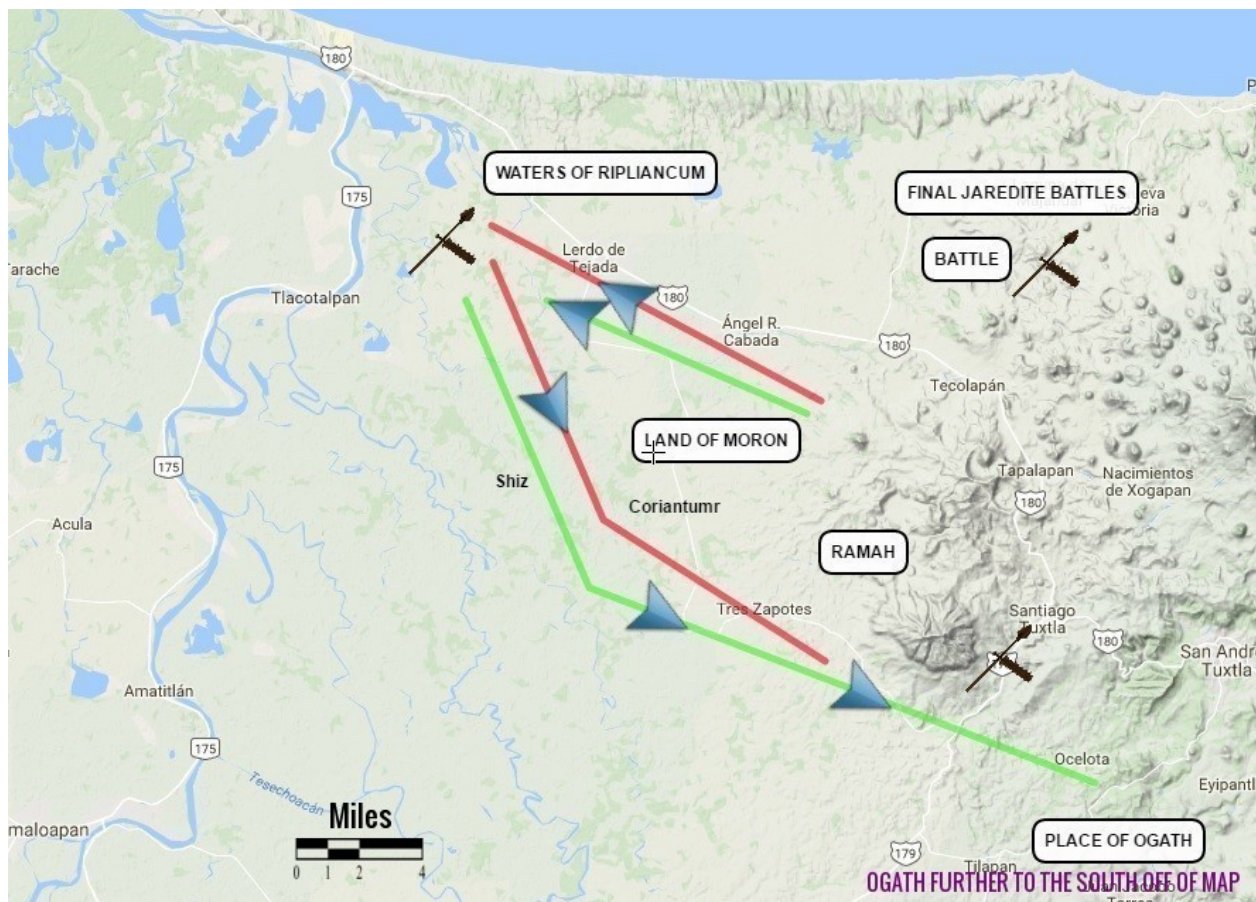


Figure 60. Map of final Jaredite battles.

Having completed maps based on the geographic information given about the Jaredites in the Book of Mormon, a good question is whether there were other areas outside of the Tuxtlas during the time period of the final battles where the Jaredites may have lived. The answer is likely yes, since during the period of the final battles, there were

numerous stoppages that lasted years, during which time additional people were gathered to armies. Also, it appears that the Tuxtlas were likely more of a home area for Coriantumr₂. While he was in the wilderness of Akish for two years, he “did receive great strength to his army” (Ether 14:7). After the battle on the plains of Agosh, Shiz “did overthrow many cities, and he did slay both women and children, and did burn cities” (Ether 14:17). This area that Shiz attacked clearly sounds like an area with allegiance to Coriantumr₂. During the flight to the land of Corihor, Shiz and his armies “swept off the inhabitants before them, all them that would not join them” (Ether 14:27). This also sounds as if most of the inhabitants here were allies of Coriantumr₂ or at least not big fans of Shiz. Shiz clearly must have had a base of support somewhere, so it appears that his tribal alliance was in the south, likely from La Venta and the population adjacent to the Coatzacoalcos River. This situation may indicate that when there were historical splits in the kingdom (at least in later Jaredite times), they were likely based on a north/south kingdom alignment. This explanation is also consistent with Shiz going to the south to gather strength to his army.

The Giants of Ogath

In determining the location of “a place which was called Ogath” (Ether 15:10), breaking down the constructed name “Ogath” provides geographic clues and reveals some interesting cultural insight as to how the later Nephites viewed the Jaredite culture. While the Sumerian and Hebrew etymologies don’t provide much help in locating Ogath, a construction of the name “Ogath” using information from the Bible provides a great deal of insight.

The first part of the place name “Ogath” is “Og.” According to the Hebrew Bible, Og was an Amorite king of Bashan who, along with his army, was slain by Moses and his men at the battle of Edrei. Og is first discussed in the Bible in the book of Numbers:

Numbers 21:31–35

31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

32 And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there.

33 And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei.

34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

35 So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land.

A further discussion of Og is found in Deuteronomy 3:1–6, 11:

1 Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

2 And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

3 So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining.

4 And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

5 All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwallled towns a great many.

6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city. . . .

11 For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? Nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.

The biblical Hebrew word for “giant” in verse 11 is actually *hā·rā·pā·ʾim*, commonly known as the Rephaim; thus, Og is known as the last of the Rephaim.

Amos 2:9 in the Bible likely refers to Og as “the Amorite” whose height was like the height of the cedars and whose strength was like that of the oaks. “Edrei,” where Og’s final battle took place, means “mighty” and “strength” in biblical Hebrew (Easton 1897).

In the Hebrew Bible and other non-Jewish ancient texts from the region, Rephaim refers to a people of greater-than-average height and stature, to the places where these individuals were thought to have lived, or to dead ancestors who are residents of the Netherworld.

Rephaim have also been considered the residents of the Netherworld (Sheol in the Hebrew Bible) in more recent scholarship. Possible examples of this usage appear as “shades”, “spirits” or “dead” in various translations of the Bible. See: Isa 14:9, 26:14, 26:19; Ps 88:11; Prov 2:18, 9:18, 21:16; Job 26:5, and possibly 2 Chron 16:12, where we may read Repha’im as “dead ancestors” or “weakeners”, as opposed to Rophe’im, “doctors.” The Heb. root רפא means “heal,” and thus the masculine plural nominalized form of this root may indicate that these “deceased ancestors” could be invoked for ritual purposes that would benefit the living.

Various ancient Northwest Semitic texts are also replete with references to terms evidently cognate with Rephaim as the dead or dead kings. Lewis (1989) undertakes a detailed study of several enigmatic funerary ritual texts from the ancient coastal city of Ugarit. Lewis concludes that the “Ugaritic Funerary Text” provides important evidence for understanding Ugarit’s cult of the dead, wherein beings called rapī’uma, the long dead, and malakuma, recently dead kings, were invoked in a funeral liturgy, presented with food/drink offerings, and asked to provide blessings for the reign of the current king. The many references to repha’im in the Hebrew Bible in contexts involving Sheol and dead spirits strongly suggests that many ancient Israelites imagined the spirits of the dead as playing an active and important role in securing blessings, healing, or other benefits in the lives of the living. (www.wikipedia.org 2017)

The similarities of the personage and story of Og and the personage and story of Shiz are quite clear and striking:

- 1) Both battles involved the death of the leader (Og and Shiz) and the complete destruction of their respective armies, with no survivors.
- 2) Og’s battle involved the death of “all men, women, and children, of every city” on his side. In the case of Shiz, “every one” and all of the “men, women and children” were killed. (Ether 15:14–15).
- 3) Og is the last of the Rephaim, the dead ancestors or dead kings; Shiz is the last of the Jaredites (excepting Coriantumr₂), who are the dead ancestors of the Nephite/Mulekite polity.
- 4) Og is large in stature; his final battle occurred at a place meaning “mighty.” Shiz is one of those referenced in Ether 13:15 “who rose up, who were mighty men and sought to destroy Coriantumr” (others would be Shared, Gilead [brother of Shared], and Lib₂ [brother of Shiz]). In the final days of the final battle, Shiz and his 32 remaining men were described in Ether 15:26 as “large and mighty men as to the strength of men.”

The second part of the place name “Ogath” is “Gath.” The correlation to Gath and giants is of course most well-known in the Bible story of David battling Goliath of Gath.

Gath in the Bible is a Philistine city, one of the Famous Five listed in Joshua 13:3 as part of the area that still remained to be conquered at the end of Joshua's life: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, Ekron, and Avva (which are actually six names, so we may assume that two of them belong together somehow). But the city of Gath is remembered mostly for being the birthplace of the giant Goliath of Gath, who was famously slain by young David of Judah (1 Samuel 17:4). Goliath was not the only giant from Gath, since he had at least one huge brother and four huge sons: Ishbi-benob, who was killed by Abishai; Saph, who was killed by Sibbecai; Goliath the Second, who was killed by Elhanan, who also killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath the First (1 Chronicles 20:5); and an unnamed giant who was killed by David's nephew Jonathan (2 Samuel 21:15–22).

Gath was the location for giants known as the last of the Anakim (named after Anak). Anak and his descendants, the Anakim, were a tall and numerous people, reckoned among the Nephilim (also a race of giants) (Numbers 13:33) and the Rephaim (Deuteronomy 2:10). The story of Goliath being struck down by a sling and then beheaded by David is well-known. It is surmised that, like Og, Goliath was one of the last of the Anakim since "there was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel. Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod did some remain" (Joshua 11:22).

The similarities of the personage and story of Goliath of Gath and the personage and story of Shiz are fairly obvious:

1) Goliath was beheaded; so was Shiz.

2) Goliath is large in stature. In the final days of the final battle, Shiz and his 32 remaining men were described in Ether 15:26 as "large and mighty men as to the strength of men."

3) Goliath is one of the last of the Anakim, with Gath as their final location; Shiz is the last of the Jaredites (excepting Coriantumr₂), with Ogath as his final location.

Size of the Jaredites

Many who have written regarding the Jaredites have made the erroneous conclusion that the Jaredites were all larger in height or size than the Nephites, with some persons even referring to the Jaredites as "giants." The word "giant" is never used in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon does describe a few individuals as having a greater "stature" (likely referring to height). There are various terms to describe the physical attributes or capabilities of individuals in the Book of Mormon, and it is useful to look at these terms and to whom they are applied. I have not listed descriptions of people described as only being "strong" since there are many references that did not imply a large size or even physical strength.

1. "Mighty men": The men who rose up to destroy the Jaredite king Coriantumr₂ (Ether 13:15); "two millions of mighty men" were killed in the final Jaredite battles (Ether 13:15).

2. "Mighty man": Laban (1 Nephi 3:31); an unnamed iniquitous man arose to challenge the Jaredite king Moron (Ether 11:15); an unnamed "mighty man" who was a descendent of the brother of Jared (Ether 11:17) and successfully overthrew the Jaredite king Moron.

3. "Mighty to the strength of men": The Jaredite king Shule (Ether 7:8).

4. "Mighty hunter": Nimrod of the Old World (Ether 2:1).

5. "Strong and mighty": Moroni₁ the Nephite military leader (Alma 48:11); the unnamed leader of the aborted mission to return to the land of Nephi (Omni 1:28); Ammon₁, who went to find those who had returned to the land of Nephi—he was a "descendant of Zarahemla" (Mosiah 7:3); Nehor, who was "large and noted for his much strength" (Alma 1:2); Amalickiah, who was a "large and a strong man" (Alma 46:3).

6. “Large and mighty”: Brother of Jared (Ether 1:34); the final warrior groups who were “large and mighty as to the strength of men” in the final days of battle between Shiz and Coriantumr₂ (Ether 15:26); Coriantumr₃, who did great battle damage to the Nephites—he was a “descendant of Zarahemla” (Helaman 1:15–16).

7. “Large stature”: Nephi₁, the Nephite founder (1 Nephi 2:16); Mormon, the final Nephite general and a “pure descendant” of Lehi (Mormon 2:1; 3 Nephi 5:20).

8. “Great stature”: The Jaredite king Lib₂ (Ether 14:10).

The description of the breastplates that were recovered with the 24 Jaredite gold plates also implies a larger size for certain Jaredite individuals to whom the breastplates originally belonged:

Mosiah 8:10

And behold, also, they have brought breastplates, which are large, and they are of brass and of copper, and are perfectly sound.

As mentioned elsewhere, these breastplates were part of a Mesoamerican “sacred bundle” and would have likely represented the exception, not the rule, of warrior size. They could have belonged to Shiz and Coriantumr₂ and represented in the “sacred bundle” the final tribal power of the Jaredites. It should also be noted that there is no definitive standardized measurement of what a large stature might be, and a person reported as being taller by a population is taller only in relation to the height of the population reporting it; therefore, a person of “large stature” in early Mesoamerica might be someone of average height today.

The term “mighty men” is also found in the Bible, describing some of David’s warriors (2 Samuel 23:8). They are not described as being larger in size, just valiant warriors. So, assuming that the term “large” could perhaps also include someone of extraordinary height, the only Book of Mormon persons identified that would possibly equate to biblical giants would be the brother of Jared, the final Jaredite warrior groups including Shiz and Coriantumr₂, Coriantumr₃, Nephi₁, Nehor, Amalickiah, Mormon, and Lib₂.

There is no indication that more than a few of the Jaredites (or Nephites) were of exceptional height or size.

Giants in Mesoamerica

The Book of Mormon does not indicate that the Jaredites as a group were larger than others in Mesoamerica, yet it does indicate *–gath* as a place of giants. Thus, the origination of the name Ogath likely represents more than the larger physical size of Shiz and his final battle group. The wicked Nephite great city of Jacob-Ugath, which was destroyed in the 3rd Nephi destruction, also contains *–gath* and thus also indicates a place of giants, even though there is no indication that Jacob was large in stature.

In one line of Mesoamerican lore referred to as “The Loss of the Ancients,” giants were considered to be the “first race” (Bierhorst 1990, 172), which would be consistent with the source of that particular line of legend originating from the Olmec, the first Mesoamerican civilization.

There are other various vanished giant stories in Mesoamerican lore that may also have some correlation with the early Mesoamerican civilization, perhaps the Olmec. In Aztec mythology, the Quinametzin Giants populated the world during the previous era of the Sun of Rain (Nahui-Quiahuitl). The construction of the pyramid of Cholula and the City of Teotihuacan (The Place Where Men Become Gods) was attributed to the Quinametzin Giants (Editorial Universo México 1981). Bernardino de Sahagún (1499–1590 AD), in the Florentine Codex, documents the Mesoamerican legend that pyramids of the Sun and Moon in the city were constructed by a vanished race of giants

(Sahagún 1950–82, 10:29) and identifies them as the Toltecs. Torquemada, in 1615 AD, also confirms much the same story, with a few variations (Torquemada 1969).

Since, as a group, the Jaredites/Olmec do not appear to be physically a “race of giants,” why would later civilizations have perceived the Olmec to be such? In theory, the legend could have been generated by stories of the few Jaredite individuals described as being larger in stature, but the legends don’t seem to be based on battle stories or one or two specific individuals. The primary theory by anthropologists and folklorists is that giant legends are metaphorical and based on geologic formations or natural oddities that appear to depict the form of giants (Varner 2007, 38). In the case of the Jaredites/Olmec, the most obvious source that would be present for later civilizations to observe are the colossal Olmec heads. These heads are consistent with the likelihood that the Toltecs were considered giants of legend based, at least in part, on the massive Toltec statues at Tula (see figure 61).



Figure 61. Toltec statues at Tula. (www.farhorizons.com 2017)

Ogath is San Lorenzo

Because of the giant myth criteria with respect to the cities where the colossal Olmec heads are found, the possible locations for Ogath are Tres Zapotes, San Lorenzo, or La Venta. Since Ogath was south of Ramah, Tres Zapotes is not a possibility. Tres Zapotes is, however, a direct match for Jacob-Ugath, which will be discussed later. In order to determine whether Ogath referred to San Lorenzo or La Venta, it is helpful to look at the utilization of the word “place” in the Book of Mormon when referring to a specific geographic location.

When a geographic location refers to a “place” in the Book of Mormon, it refers to a location that was previously unpopulated (or not sufficiently populated to be considered a named location), and the name is typically given to the place by the founders. The place of Shazer (1 Nephi 16:13–14) was in the wilderness; the place of Mormon was in a previously uninhabited area (Mosiah 18:7, 16, 30); the place of first inheritance was likely sparsely populated (Alma 22:28); the place of arms was apparently not part of a city (Alma 47:5); Ablom was not described as a previously populated place (Ether 9:3); neither were Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:6), Nephi (2 Nephi 5:8), Shemlon (Mosiah 20:1), Amulon (Mosiah 23:3), “place of their first landing” (Alma 47:5), Onidah (Alma 47:5), Moriancumr (Ether 2:13), nor even the New Jerusalem (Ether 15:10).

The one possible exception may be Nahom, which is referred to as a “place which was called Nahom” (1 Nephi 16:34). Nahom has been located in the Arabian Peninsula, with altars as part of a temple complex. The location does appear to have been populated at the time Lehi’s group passed through the area, with the area having been named by others prior to the arrival of the Lehite group.

Thus, “a place which was called Ogath” is indicated as more lightly populated, which was the case with San Lorenzo, since it was anciently abandoned as a population center prior to Shiz. In addition, the great city that Lib₁ built (La Venta) was not named, and if it was Ogath, it likely would have been identified as such when referred to in the Book of Mormon. San Lorenzo is thus the best candidate for Ogath. It also correlates with the *Rephaim* meaning of “dead kings” since the Olmec colossal heads were figures of dead kings.

The great city that Lib₁ built does not have a name indicated in the text, so it may have had *–gath* in its name, a notion that is inferred based on the fact that his apparent namesake Lib₂ is the only Jaredite and only person in the Book of Mormon described as being of “great stature.”

Further evidence that Ogath is San Lorenzo comes from the etymology of the king “Riplakish.” Under the Jaredite chronology, Riplakish’s place of residence matches well only with San Lorenzo. The Hebrew derivative of “Riblakish” is *Riblah*— which has a root meaning of “fruitful; fertile”; and *–Akish* (Achish; אַכִּישׁ), which is a name used in the Hebrew Bible for two Philistine rulers of Gath. It is likely only a general title of royalty, applicable to the Philistine kings (1 Samuel 21:11–15, 1 Kings 2:39–46). Riplakish carried the title of king of Gath in his very name.

Jacob-Ugath

As mentioned, Tres Zapotes is the only candidate city that meets the requirements for being Jacob-Ugath. It is the only location north of Ramah/Cumorah that has colossal Olmec heads. Jacob-Ugath was identified as the location of king Jacob. The spelling of “Jacob-Ugath” with a hyphen is based on the original spelling from the Printer’s Manuscript.

3 Nephi 9:9

And behold, that great city Jacobugath, which was inhabited by the people of king Jacob, have I caused to be burned with fire because of their sins and their wickedness, which was above all the wickedness of the whole earth, because of their secret murders and combinations; for it was they that did destroy the peace of my people and the government of the land; therefore I did cause them to be burned, to destroy them from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints should not come up unto me any more against them.

Jacob was a king and leader of a secret combination that migrated to the “northernmost part of the land”:

3 Nephi 7:9-10, 12

9 Now this secret combination, which had brought so great iniquity upon the people, did gather themselves together, and did place at their head a man whom they did call Jacob;

10 And they did call him their king; therefore he became a king over this wicked band; and he was one of the chiefest who had given his voice against the prophets who testified of Jesus.

12 Therefore, Jacob seeing that their enemies were more numerous than they, he being the king of the band, therefore he commanded his people that they should take their flight into the northernmost part of the land, and there build up unto themselves a kingdom, until they were joined by dissenters, (for he flattered them that there would be many dissenters) and they become sufficiently strong to contend with the tribes of the people; and they did so.

Based on the description of the method of destruction of Jacob-Ugath in 3rd Nephi, it was located within relatively close proximity to the San Martín volcano (Grover 2014) (see figure 62).



Figure 62. Location within which Jacob-Ugath must be located based on the description of destruction in 3rd Nephi. (Grover 2014)

The name Jacob-Ugath contains the *-gath* element that is indicative of a place of giants or colossal heads, but instead of *Og-* as in Ogath, it contains *Ug-*. In Sumerian, *ug* means “lion; a mythical lion; a large cat” (Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary 2006). At the time Jacob-Ugath was destroyed, it was essentially ruled by a secret society. The secret society which had arisen at this time was described as being of “ancient date” and was “handed down” (3 Nephi 3:9), so the clear origination of the society is indicated from the Olmec. Tres Zapotes at the time of the death of Christ was considered part of the Epi-Olmec culture, which, although not Olmec, contained significant vestiges of the Olmec that would have been considered “handed down.”

One of the principal gods of the Olmec was the were-jaguar (Diehl 2004). The actual practice of Olmec shamans has been documented with Olmec figurines depicting the shamans undergoing a transformation from humans to jaguars through a series of steps:

The sequence opens with a kneeling human who proceeds through the motions of rising on one knee while assuming were-jaguar characteristics and ends with a completely jaguarized creature who stands in a highly charged, combative human stance. This sequence appears to recapitulate the actual transformation living shamans experienced after ingesting hallucinogens such as native tobacco (*Nicotiana rustic*) or the psychoactive venom found in the parathyroid gland on the marine toad *Bufus marinus*. (Diehl 2004, 106–7)

A relationship between the jaguar being and a combative secret society among the Olmec has been proposed by Whitney Davis (1978), who suggests that the depictions of so-called human-jaguar copulation in these monuments show instead the beginnings of a jaguar cult or are representative of conquest in battle rather than a sexual conquest. Davis sees the jaguar, or man in jaguar pelts, as an aggressor toward a defeated opponent.

Evidence of an ancient *nahualista* savage secret society featuring the jaguar has been found; the society is from the time of the Spanish conquest in Mesoamerica and extends far back into Pre-Columbian history, perhaps to the Olmec (Sorenson 1985, 301–2).

Feline figures or motifs (likely jaguar or were-jaguar) are prominently featured on Stela D and Stela A, which are both from the Late Formative period (300 BC–100 AD), at Tres Zapotes. Stela C from Tres Zapotes, which bears the Long Count date of 32 BC on its back side, depicts a leftward-facing human head amid curved, upward-radiating lines above the cleft brow of an abstract were-jaguar mask (see figure 63).

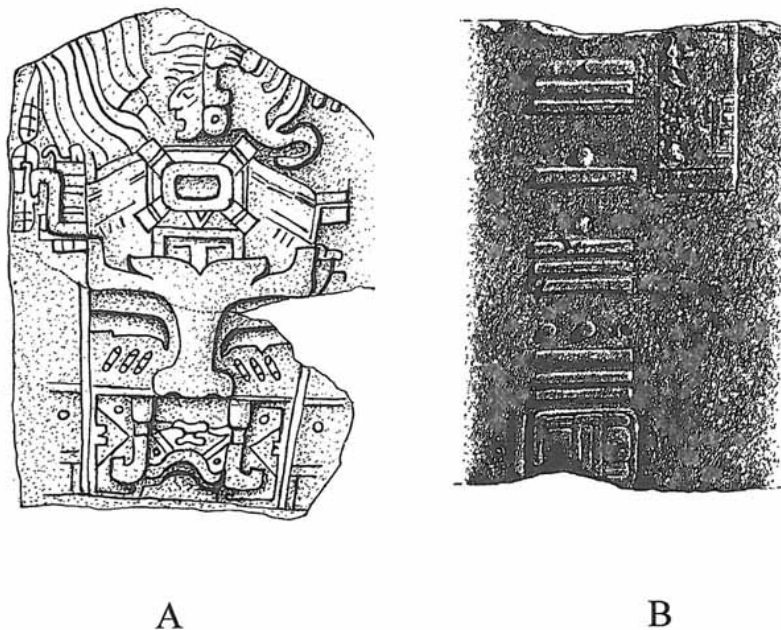


Figure 63. Stela C, from Tres Zapotes. (www.famsi.org 2017)

Based on all of the parameters discussed above, the location of Jacob-Ugath is the Epi-Olmec city which is modernly referred to as Tres Zapotes.