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U. A. S. NEWSLETTER

Number 35

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Published approximately every six weeks by THE UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. The purpose of the Newsletter is to disseminate knowledge of recent archaeological discoveries bearing on the Latter-day Saint scriptures; also, of the Society and its members. Subscription by membership in the Society: three dollars per year; or Life Membership, fifty dollars. (Membership also includes subscription to other publications of the Society and the Department of Archaeology of BYU.)

35.0 Archaeology Symposium Meets in June. "Progress of Excavation in Book-of-Mormon Lands" will be the theme of the Society's Ninth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures. It will be held this year in Provo, Utah, as a feature of the 33rd Annual Leadership Week of BYU.

Five one-hour sessions are scheduled for the week of June 18-22. The lecturers are: Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, UAS president recently returned from a Society expedition to Central America (last Newsletter, 34.0); Dr. Ross T. Christensen, general secretary-treasurer of the Society; Dr. Welby W. Ricks, UAS general officer and graduate assistant in the BYU Department of Archaeology; Gareth W. Lowe, UAS general officer and recently appointed field director of the current expedition of the New World Archaeological Foundation in southern Mexico; and Bruce W. Warren, BYU archaeology major also accompanying the expedition (March 7 Newsletter, 33.6).

All sessions will be held at 3:30-4:30 PM in the John A. Widtsoe Lecture Hall (Room 230), Eyring Science Center. The schedule is as follows: MONDAY, June 18: Dr. Jakeman, "New Discoveries on the Usumacinta River in Central America"; TUESDAY, June 19: Dr. Christensen, "A Season of Excavation on the North Coast of Peru"; WEDNESDAY, June 20: Dr. Christensen, "Did Book-of-Mormon Peoples Reach Peru?"; THURSDAY, June 21: Dr. Ricks, "Recent Discoveries in Northeastern Mexico"; FRIDAY, June 22: Messrs. Lowe and Warren, "Further Excavations in the Central Valley of Chiapas, Mexico."

Members of the UAS are cordially urged to attend all sessions of the Symposium. They are also invited to participate in other activities of the BYU Leadership Week. (A complete program and other information may be obtained from: Extension Division, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.)

35.1 Is Book-of-Mormon Archaeology Valid? Conclusion. An exchange of correspondence between Society president M. Wells Jakeman and a Los Angeles physician on the subject of Book-of-Mormon archaeology, published in the last Newsletter (34.6), was received with much interest. The editors have obtained Dr. Jakeman's permission to publish the remainder of the correspondence:

35.10 My dear Doctor Jakeman:

I hasten to thank you for answering my inquiry concerning the "truthfulness" of . . . the Book of Mormon . . . Your letter was most interesting from several points of view, especially your frankness and the reasons behind your observations. . . .

In your summing-up statement, you said, . . . "As to my own position and that of the Department of Archaeology here at Brigham Young University, . . . [it] is that, although our archaeological data . . . are not sufficient

to disprove the Book of Mormon history, they are, on the contrary, in sufficient abundance to establish it, to a high degree of probability."

It would seem that this method of argument, that is, putting the burden of proof on the "opponent," is contrary to the customary procedure in juridical courts of law. The accuser is expected to justify his charges. Certain claims have been made concerning the origin and the historicity of the Book of Mormon. They are either true or they are false. If they are true, those who make the claims should prove them so by more than a "high degree of probability," if they expect a jury of intelligent men and women to accept them, that is, the "college intelligentsia."

Another statement in your letter . . . : "the opinion of non-Mormon scientists in respect to the origin or authenticity of the Book of Mormon has no real significance. This is because these people without exception . . . know practically nothing about the Book." I doubt one is justified in making that statement. I am certain that there are many sincere men and women outside the "pale of Mormonism," who have studied and criticized the Book of Mormon assiduously. And not being impelled by an animus of "being on the defensive," as critics within the "pale" are, the evaluation of the "outsiders" might be more objective and realistic, especially in their over-all analysis.

No thoughtful person would quarrel with the statement, "all the evidence is not yet in, hence a final judgment should not be made." However, that is what has been done by the proponents of the problem. The Book of Mormon has been adjudged by them as a true history "in an abridged form" of the ancestors of the American Indians (or at least some of them)

. . . .

As one critic put it, "The Book of Mormon is the product of an astute, imaginative mind, plus the stories and speculations current at the time the book was published concerning the origin of the American Indians." The History of the American Indians, by James Adair, published in 1775, and the "Spaulding writings" are in point, as indicating the mental atmosphere at that time by which Joseph Smith could well have been influenced. There seems to be more than a "high degree of probability" in this assumption. . . .

"Mormonism" is a complex and a composite of religious, moral, ethical, and social principles. Three of its basic principles, the claim as to the Origin and the Validity of the Book of Mormon, the Plurality of Wives, and the United Order, set it apart as distinctive from other religious systems. Two of these three "principles" were found to be unworkable in modern society and were discarded. The claim as to the Book of Mormon is now under close scrutiny. If it is true, it must be validated by substantial evidence, material evidence. Otherwise, it should be considered in the same way as the Hindu "Puranas," the Hebrew Bible, or the Koran, as originating in the same manner in which they originated, and historically factual to the same degree that other scriptural writings are considered historical. . . .

I deeply appreciate your writing to me. . . . Obviously, more evidence is needed, . . . Let us hope that the Archaeological Institute will soon furnish this evidence and appease the minds of many of our sincere young men and women who are seeking the truth.

With kindest personal wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

(signed) R. E. C.

35.11 Dear Dr. C.:

. . . . You rightly point out that the customary procedure in courts of law (which, incidentally, is not always the best procedure for discovering the truth) is that of placing the burden of proof on the accuser. In the case of the Book of Mormon, the accusers are those who accuse Joseph Smith of fraud in his story of the origin of the Book of Mormon. So far, these critics have failed to demonstrate the falsity of the Book of Mormon history of ancient America. There is no statement on record, so far as I am aware, which demonstrates a conflict, to any significant extent, between the Book of Mormon account of early civilizations in the New World of Near Eastern origin, and the known archaeological history of the area and period of these civilizations.

This does not mean, of course, that those who accept the Book of Mormon account--i.e. the accused--do not have an equal obligation, namely that of accumulating and presenting convincing external evidence of at least the probability of this account. Note that the proponents are not required to establish the absolute certainty of the account's history. This would be demanding more of them than of the author of any other history or of a scientific hypothesis. Science--especially historical science including archaeology, but even, within the last two decades, physical science--now recognizes that most of our knowledge of the past and of nature can never be absolute (i.e. like a mathematical maxim), but only, at most, reasonably or practically certain--i.e. extremely probable--in accordance with the new "principle of probabilities." Consequently, as soon as the correctness of a purported historical account (such as the Book of Mormon) or of a scientific hypothesis is shown by its proponents, from independent external evidence, to be more probable than improbable, the account or hypothesis must then receive, if not the acceptance, at least the respect of historians or scientists. But if its correctness is shown to be not merely probable but extremely probable--i.e. reasonably or practically certain--it must then be accepted by all serious students as binding, for all practical purposes, i.e. as an addition to the world's working or practical knowledge of the past or of nature. As to the case for the Book of Mormon, I am prepared to stand by my statement that the archaeological data pertaining to the area and period of the Book of Mormon civilizations are now sufficient to establish the correctness of that account to "a high degree of probability," i.e. to a degree of reasonable or practical certainty, all that is required here. . . .

Turning to some of your other objections--I repeat that I am entirely justified in my statement that the opinion of non-Mormons in respect to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon has no real significance. Here I was referring, of course, to the trained non-Mormon archaeologists and anthropologists working in the fields involved by the Book of Mormon history of ancient America--i.e. the only non-Mormons entitled to an opinion as to the truth of this history. My justification is that all the published statements of these people and all their oral remarks heard personally by me in lectures and professional gatherings, concerning the Book of Mormon, establish their general ignorance of the true claims of the Book of Mormon history, and also, equally important, their lack of sufficient knowledge of the actual history of the area of the Book of Mormon in the period of its civilizations. In view of this two-fold ignorance, how can their opinion have any significance?

Your statement that "there seems to be more than a high degree of probability" in the assumption that the writings of Adair, Spaulding, etc., indicate the atmosphere which influenced Joseph Smith in connection with the origin of the Book of Mormon, is of course an old opinion of critics--but still only an opinion, since against it can now be levied a long series of archaeological confirmations of the Book of Mormon history of ancient America, as shown in the publications [of the University Archaeological Society and the Department of Archaeology of BYU], past and forthcoming. The important thing, of course, in this controversy between those who accept the "environmental theory" of the origin of the Book of Mormon and those who accept the Book of Mormon history as it stands, in light of the evidence of archaeology, is that both sides be willing to abide by the weight of the evidence, as it comes forth in future publications.

Sincerely,

(signed) M. Wells Jakeman

- 35.2 UAS General Elections to be Held in July. General elections of the UAS will be held in July, 1956, according to Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, Society president. Candidates for president, vice-president, and general secretary-treasurer to serve for a three-year term will be voted upon by mail. A proposed Honorary Membership in the Society and constitutional amendments will also be placed on the ballot. It is expected that election results will be announced in Newsletter 37, scheduled for publication in August.
- 35.3 Renewal Notices Sent to Society Members. About half of the Society's some 475 members, will shortly receive notices asking for renewal of membership dues. Members are requested to return their dues promptly so as to insure receiving their publications without interruption. The remaining half of the members will receive their notices the following December (see March 7 Newsletter, 33.3).
Two kinds of paid membership are available: annual membership at \$3.00 per year, or Life Membership for \$50.00. If several year's annual membership is desired, this can be obtained by payment of a multiple of \$3.00. Life Memberships have been issued to date to Dr. Francis W. Kirkham, Barnard Stewart Silver, and Theron B. Butler.
- 35.30 Research Fund. The last Annual Business Meeting of the Society created a new membership category: that of Research Patron (December 9 Newsletter, 3L20). This distinction can be obtained by contributing \$10.00 or more per year--in addition to regular membership dues--to the Society's Research Fund. Simply inclose the extra amount when returning membership dues and check the space provided.
- 35.31 Great Opportunity to Help. The UAS is a non-profit organization engaged in a research program of vital importance to the progress of archaeological discovery. Society members have inquired, "How can I help more than by merely paying the annual dues?" The answer is: "If you have extra dollars to spend on archaeology, there are two excellent ways to help the UAS: (1) Take out a Life Membership, or (2) become a Research Patron." These two outlets can absorb any amount of extra financial support that loyal members may wish to give.

Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, Society president, reports that contributions to the Society's Research Fund were the deciding factor in the financing of his recent highly successful expedition to the region of Bountiful and Zarahemla in Central America (last Newsletter, 34.0)--that without them the expedition and the important discoveries made could not have taken place.

35.4 Activities of the Chapters:

35.40 Campus Chapter. On March 26 a large group met with the Campus Chapter to hear Lorenzo C. Allen, just returned from an expedition of the New World Archaeological Foundation in Mexico, present an illustrated report of the Foundation's activities of the past season. Mr. Allen is one of the four BYU student members of the NWAFF field staff who returned in March for a brief visit in Utah before leaving again to continue work in the Grijalva River valley (March 7 Newsletter, 33.6). At this meeting, the Chapter also elected officers for the Spring Quarter, making Carl Hugh Jones of Wolcott, New York, president, and Carol Luana Collett of Spokane, Washington, vice-president. Phillip Parmeter of Danville, California, was chosen to serve as secretary, while the retiring president, Robert R. Beishline of Ogden, Utah, became honorary president and thus automatically a member of the Society's Executive Committee.

On April 9 and May 21 UAS president Jakeman reported his recent expedition to Central America (last Newsletter, 34.0) before fascinated audiences totaling nearly 300, the two largest in the history of the Campus Chapter.

Other meetings during the quarter included a report on the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, by Dr. Ross T. Christensen (35.53, below), and a film trip around the world, with visits to many archaeological sites, presented by Dr. Harrison Val Hoyt from the collection of motion pictures taken by him during his various world travels.

35.41 Salt Lake Chapter. Among the activities of the Salt Lake Chapter in recent months were a lecture by Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, Director of Graduate Studies in Religion at BYU and an honorary member of the Society since 1950, on the much discussed Dead Sea Scrolls; an illustrated lecture by Harold W. and Virginia Hoopes based on films taken by them during a two-year stay in the Holy Land; and a lecture by Prof. James R. Clark of the BYU Division of Religion on "Unsolved Historical and Archaeological Problems of the Pearl of Great Price."

35.5 Activities of Individual Members:

35.50 Robert C. Nugent, a former student of archaeology at BYU and presently a member of the Nassau Archaeological Society of Sea Cove, New York, as well as of the UAS, has participated in the digging of a newly-discovered site which extends for about a half-mile along the shore of Long Island. No human remains have yet been located, but the second ceremonial dog burial of its kind on the island was discovered. The skeleton lay on its side with a rock placed under its head. Mr. Nugent does the surveying, map work, and section drawings for the Nassau society.

35.51 Curt H. Seemann of Hamburg, Germany, writes of a new school of thought developing in that country on the building of the pyramids

of Egypt. According to the Egyptologist Dr. Mueller-Feldmann, slavery was not so important in their construction as heretofore supposed. It is believed that great masses of people worked willingly for the Pharaoh as a form of religious devotion.

Mr. Seemann writes also of a number of fine Egyptian collections in West Germany. The famous collection of the Aegyptisches Museum of Berlin, which includes the renowned bust of Nefertiti, is now housed at the Wiesbaden Museum.

Mr. Seemann has recently begun a program of Near Eastern studies at Wolsey Hall, Oxford University, aimed at eventual matriculation in the University of London.

35.52 Melvin L. Fowler, curator of anthropology at the Illinois State Museum, reports having recently lectured to audiences totaling about 2,000 on the Lehi Tree-of-Life discovery as given in Bulletin 4 of the UAS (March, 1953). These lectures were given at meetings held in connection with the general April conference of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at Independence, Missouri.

35.53 Ross T. Christensen, UAS general secretary-treasurer, was awarded the PhD degree in anthropology, with specialization in archaeology, at the May 30 commencement of the University of Arizona. His dissertation is entitled, "An Archaeological Study of the Illescas-Jubones Coast of Northern Peru and Southern Ecuador," and reports the field research which he did in that area as a Pan-American Fellow in 1950 (March 7 Newsletter, 33.5).

On May 4 Dr. Christensen delivered a paper before the 21st Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, held at Lincoln, Nebraska, summarizing the results of his dissertation research. It was entitled, "An Archaeological Study of the Far North Coast of Peru."

The December, 1955, issue of Chimor carried an article by Dr. Christensen entitled, "A Modern Ceramic Industry at Simbilá, Near Piura, Peru." It reports an ancient pottery manufacture still thriving in a northern Peruvian village, which he investigated in connection with his archaeological field research of 1950. The modern industry continues the native craft in an unbroken tradition from pre-Columbian times. Chimor is a scholarly journal published by the Museum of Archaeology of the National University of Trujillo, Peru.

35.6 Corrections. Despite careful checking of the Multilith masters, a few typographical errors have slipped by the editors into the last three issues of the Newsletter. Society members are asked to make the following corrections in their personal copies: In No. 32, January 28, 1956, 32.00, line 4: insert "expedition" after "Brigham Young Academy"; in No. 33, March 7, last page, lines 37 and 38: correct to "Chichén Itzá and Uxmal in Yucatan and Palenque in Chiapas"; in No. 34, April 30, 34.01, line 5: correct "jungle trains" to "jungle trails"; 34.6, p. 5, line 35: "misinterpretation."