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Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

Editor: Ross T. Christensen

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11.0 NWAF Begins Excavation. After more than a month of intensive surface reconnaissance the New World Archaeological Foundation's field expedition has begun the excavation of Sigero, a medium-size site located about 12 kilometers south of Huimanguillo, southern Mexico.

11.00 Reconnaissance. Reconnaissance during December and January revealed from 40 to 50 sites in the vicinity, ranging from small villages without ceremonial mounds to important centers containing 15 or 20 large mounds. Not a single sure case of Maya, Olmec, or Teotihuacan influence came to light, which evidently means that we are dealing with a heretofore unreported variety of culture and that an independent chronology must be worked out for the area by intensive stratigraphic excavation at a number of sites. All the structures discovered seem to be made of earth or adobe, which suggests an early date of occupation. Pottery was seldom revealed by surface reconnaissance, doubtlessly due to the exuberant vegetation.

11.01 Excavation. Beginning the second week of February the Foundation's field expedition has been engaged in actual excavation at Sigero, an apparently one-period site. "It consists of a plaza surrounded by a seven meter-high pyramidal mound to the north, a large rectangular mound to the west, a ball court to the east and some low mounds to the south," writes Assistant Director William T. Sanders in a field report dated February 24, 1953. "A few hundred meters to the northeast is a small plaza with a smaller pyramid and a few low platform-type mounds. The area in between has 15 or 20 . . . house mounds, as our excavations have proved. We have excavated about 15 small pits for stratigraphic testing, carried a trench across one side of the ball court, excavated one of the house mounds, and cut trenches into one of the smaller mounds that limit the main plaza on the south. . . . The greatest achievement of the month's work was in developing field methods suitable to the local situation . . . in which we were extremely successful. . . ."

"Starting next week," continues Mr. Sanders, "we plan to start excavation at one of the three largest sites--a site which should hold the key to many of our chronological and cultural problems. We are calling it the Sanchez site and it is located about eight kilometers west of Huimanguillo . . . with at least ten large pyramidal mounds, one of which is 12 meters high. It has a ball court and at least 20 or 30 other mounds. If we are going to get cultural stratigraphy or elaborate art in any site of this area it will be there. . . . Later on in the month we plan to work another of the three big sites--one which we are calling Chapultepec Aguirre."

Expedition member John L. Sorenson adds in a letter, "We have learned a good many things about field archaeology. . . . I have increased respect and confidence in what I learned in the Department . . ." at BYU.

- 11.02 Personnel. Field personnel includes Prof. Pedro Armillas of Mexico City College, director (temporarily in Mexico City undergoing treatment for malaria); William T. Sanders of Harvard, assistant; John L. Sorenson and Gareth W. Lowe of BYU; and Roman Piña Chan of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología, previously a participant in the excavation of the Olmec-influenced site of Tlatilco in the Valley of Mexico (April 15, 1952, Newsletter, 5.2). Also, during excavations 12 additional men have been employed.

Organized last October by UAS General Officer Thomas Stuart Ferguson, the NWAFF is engaged in a five-year program of investigating the origins of civilization in Mesoamerica, particularly of the Olmec culture, which was so influential in the art styles of subsequent peoples. UAS Pres. M. Wells Jakeman serves on its Committee of Archaeologists, while UAS members Milton R. Hunter and Nicholas G. Morgan, Sr., are active on its Board of Directors (November 25 Newsletter, 8.4).

- 11.1 Executive Committee Meets. Thursday, April 2, important decisions were reached at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the UAS. A summary of the minutes follows (11.10-11.11):

- 11.10 New Chapters. Chapters of the Society recently organized at St. George, Utah, and Los Angeles, California, in response to Pres. Jakeman's suggestion (January 10 Newsletter, 9.1) were authorized. ~~Frank D. Holland of St. George and Joseph H. Elsmore II of Compton~~ were named directors of their respective groups and automatically became General Officers of the Society. Other chapter officers prescribed by the Constitution (assistant director and secretary) will be elected locally in each case.

- 11.11 Awards and Scholarships. A system of cash awards for outstanding papers by UAS members, and of scholarships for archaeology students and complimentary memberships in the UAS for graduating archaeology majors at BYU, received the Committee's approval.

An annual contest involving cash prizes for the best papers on the archaeology of the Scriptures by any UAS member, whether student or not, will be opened in time for winning papers to be read at the fall, 1953, round table at Salt Lake City. Rules will be announced at a later date, although those desiring to compete may begin their preparation immediately. Winning papers will also be published in the Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society.

The faculty of the Department of Archaeology announces an ~~annual cash award to a~~ BYU student for the best field report or extensive interpretative study in the field of archaeology. To be known as the John A. Widtsoe Award, it has been established in honor of Dr. John A. Widtsoe, late Honorary Member of the UAS and distinguished advocate of archaeology at BYU (January 10 Newsletter, 9.3).

~~Five-year complimentary memberships in the UAS will henceforth be presented to all students who graduate from BYU with a major in archaeology.~~

- 11.2 Message from Society President. Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, UAS president, encourages members to use the Bulletin and the Newsletter for publicity

purposes in whatever manner will best promote the interests of the Society. It is entirely appropriate for newspapers to review articles found in the Bulletin or reprint stories contained in the Newsletter.

- 11.3 Bulletin Delayed. The long-awaited publication in the field of Book of Mormon archaeology, No. 4 of the Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society, has been delayed due to production difficulties at the press. It is expected, however, that it will be in the mail in a matter of days. Will members everywhere please advise interested persons.
- 11.4 Exchange List. The Society is pleased to announce that an exchange of publications has been arranged with the following scholarly organizations. All publications received are available to UAS members, at the Department of Archaeology, BYU:
1. Instituto de Antropología e Historia de Guatemala, Guatemala, C.A. (Antropología e Historia de Guatemala).
 2. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University (Papers, Memoirs).
 3. Sociedad Alemana Mexicanista, Mexico, D.F. (El México Antiguo).
 4. Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc. (formerly The Viking Fund, Inc.) (Publications in Anthropology).
- 11.5 Campus Chapter Meetings. Some outstanding meetings were among the activities enjoyed by the BYU Campus Chapter during the Winter Quarter, just ended. Reports of three follow (11.50-11.52):
- 11.50 Hebrew Writing in America. February 26, UAS member Dr. Welby W. Ricks, a former student of Hebrew under Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, spoke on occurrences of alphabetic writing in pre-Columbian North America. Dr. Ricks has for some time been gathering data, in collaboration with his brother, UAS member Artel, of Solon, Ohio, on New World scripts of possible Old World Origin and of information concerning the circumstances of their discovery. Scholars have generally assumed these inscriptions to be fraudulent. The speaker pointed out, however, that not a single case, to his knowledge, had ever been competently investigated. The lecture was supplemented by photographs and casts of some of the better known finds, such as the Newark Holy Stone and one of the Kinderhook Plates. (Dr. Ricks has since presented plaster of Paris casts of the Newark Holy Stone and one other Hebrew inscription to the Department of Archaeology. Also, in the Archaeology office are posted statements of a number of problems related to his study, in the investigation of which he welcomes the collaboration of others. UAS members are invited to inspect them.)
- 11.51 Utah Ruins Dated. "How Old Are Utah's Ruins?" was the title of Ross T. Christensen's lecture of January 22. The antiquity of the ruins of the Northern Periphery (central and northern Utah and adjacent portions of Nevada and Colorado) was shown to be less than many of those present had suspected. Since the advent of dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) the Four Corners area of the United States Southwest has become the best-dated portion of the New World. Edmund Schulman's new (since 1948) tree-ring series for Nine Mile and Hill Canyons, eastern Utah, dates the Puebloid occupation at c. 950 to c. 1175 A.D. The Basket Maker-Pueblo farming culture centering in the Four Corners area must,

then, have expanded northward into Utah at something like 800 to 1200 A.D.

- 11.52 Chapter Forum. A question-and-answer session, February 3, proved to be perhaps the most popular event of the quarter. Questions were solicited in advance from an archaeology class, sorted, and presented, together with impromptu questions from the floor, to a panel consisting of Profs. M. Wells Jakeman and Ross T. Christensen, with Miss Terry Heisch serving as moderator. The identity of Quetzalcoatl, the significance of the Tree of Life symbolism, and Southwestern archaeology in relation to Book of Mormon archaeology were among the topics discussed.
- 11.6 New Chapter Officers. At an election meeting held April 2 the following officers were chosen to preside over the Campus Chapter during the Spring Quarter: James L. Gillings, president; Richard M. Beesley, honorary president; Garry C. Kitchens, vice-president; and Marcia Daniel, secretary.
- 11.7 Plans for Spring Quarter. Plans have already been laid for several Campus Chapter activities during the Spring Quarter. Included are lectures by Mrs. Irene Briggs Woodford, April 8, on the Tree of Life symbolism in ancient America; by Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, April 15, on an apparent sculptured portrayal of Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life recently discovered in Central America; by former Arizona Senator William Coxon, April 29, on cognate petroglyphs and early migrations in ancient America, with Kodachrome slides; and by Dr. George H. Hansen, May 13, on recent geological interpretations of Utah Valley archaeology. All lectures are to be held at 7:30 P.M. in Room 205 of BYU's Physical Science Building. All UAS members and guests are invited to attend.
- 11.8 Holy Land Tour. Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, director of the Division of Religion, BYU, and Honorary Member of the UAS, left April 3 on the first BYU-sponsored tour of the Holy Land. Eldin Ricks, instructor in the Division of Religion and former US Army chaplain in the Mediterranean Theater, is assisting. The group leaves on the ship "Caronia" April 9 for Paris, from where their itinerary includes important sites of archaeological and scenic interest in Israel, Lebanon, Egypt, Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, Scotland, and England. Dr. Sperry has spent a year in graduate study at the American school of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and has done research in various other countries of the Near East and Europe.
- 11.9 Linton Visits BYU. Dr. Ralph Linton, Sterling Professor of Anthropology at Yale University, visited BYU's Department of Archaeology February 21 in company with Dr. Charles E. Dibble of the anthropology department, University of Utah. The visitors commented favorably on the Gates Collection of Middle American linguistic documents in the Departmental library and were each presented a complete set of the Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society. Dr. Linton is enjoying sabbatical leave and has visited San Diego, Tucson, Santa Fe, and other centers of archaeological interest.