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6.0 There follows a summary of a panel discussion, "The Present Status of Book of Mormon Archaeology," presented by the U.A.S., April 25, 1952, at Salt Lake City, Utah.

6.1 Introduction (Ross T. Christensen): Archaeology may be defined as that science which is concerned with the discovery and illustration of the past progress of mankind, by a study of the material remains of human workmanship. The term "biblical archaeology" deals with archaeological discovery as it throws light upon the Hebrew-Christian scriptures. This is a legitimate, recognized field of scientific inquiry. The name "Book of Mormon archaeology" may raise some doubts. We feel justified in using it, however, because a certain area of archaeological research has begun to have a direct bearing on the Book of Mormon, and special research is being done in that field.

A case of the application of archaeological materials to the illumination of a puzzling portion of history is found in the Aegean region, the islands and surrounding lands of the Aegean Sea. Eighty-five years ago most informed people were quite certain that Homer's Iliad and Odyssey were valueless as history, despite their great literary worth. Yet when archaeology began to uncover great ruined cities dating from long before the time of the Classic Greek civilization (beginning with Schliemann's digging at Troy in 1870) and located where Homer indicated they should be, the Iliad and Odyssey took on new stature as historical documents. Today no one can doubt that they deal with actual historical conditions. Archaeology can do the same for the Book of Mormon.

Archaeology assists the student of the Bible by helping to establish the correct text, by increasing our understanding of the languages of the Bible, by throwing light on the political and cultural background out of which the Bible came, by establishing the ancient geography of the Holy Land, and by confirming the historical authenticity and reliability of the scripture. Such values can be included under two headings: authentication and elucidation (or explanation).

As for the matter of authentication, we have the possibility of a clear-cut scientific test of a primary claim of a major modern religious system, Mormonism. If the actual material remains of Book of Mormon civilizations are discovered, as they should and can be by archaeologists who search for them, then honest people will have independent scientific evidence of the truth of this scripture and of Mormonism to help their minds overcome past prejudice.

As important as is its value for authentication, however, archaeology has at least equal value for our understanding of what the scripture is saying. An example of the need for such explanation is found in Helaman 7:10, where reference is made to a "tower" on which Nephi offered prayer in his "garden" in Zarahemla. Unfortunately we do not know the nature of such a Nephite "tower" nor its function in detail. If this and other features could be illustrated accurately, what a marvellous aid it would be for understanding and teaching the Book of Mormon. Now it may be that many of the mounds or temple pyramids of Mesoamerica were used and thought

of by their builders as prayer "towers". If so, then archaeology may be able to offer solutions for other, similar problems in the Book of Mormon.

The history of LDS effort to utilize archaeology in connection with the Book of Mormon has not been outstanding. Joseph Smith himself read the exploration accounts of John Lloyd Stephens and was greatly impressed with the ruins of Central America described by him. Little real investigation was done, however, until the Brigham Young Academy expedition to Panama and Colombia in 1900-1902. Unfortunately the archaeological results of this trip were not impressive. Some amateur interest continued to be expressed in the field, but no further real progress was made until the establishment of the Department of Archaeology at BYU in 1946, followed by formation of the University Archaeological Society two years later.

Thus, organized professional work in this field dates back but a few years. Today most professional archaeologists reject the Book of Mormon claims, yet actually they know little about them. That this view may change is indicated by the fact that a member of the U.A.S., Thomas Stuart Ferguson, is scheduled (May 3) to deliver to the 17th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology the first adequate presentation of Book of Mormon claims ("Joseph Smith, Mormon Prophet, and American Archaeology") ever given before a body of professional archaeologists.

6.2 Questions of Geography and Chronology (Dr. M. Wells Jakeman): Latter-day Saints, particularly missionaries, have in the past seized on almost any newspaper report of archaeological discovery in the Western Hemisphere as "proving" the Book of Mormon. This has been done without considering that many areas and peoples of the New World apparently had no direct connection with Book of Mormon events, being outside the area and time of the civilizations described in that record.

The great challenge of the Book of Mormon to archaeology lies in the fact that Book of Mormon peoples must have left behind extensive material remains, both cultural and skeletal, at specified sites which date to definite periods. (Even a small household group living in one spot for only a generation or two will leave behind abundant remains such as broken pots, implements, and house foundations which will still be found many centuries later. We should expect the archaeologist then to find large quantities of such material that had been left by the populous Book of Mormon nations who lived in the same area over thousands of years.)

However, the main problem to solve before comparing archaeological remains with the Book of Mormon record is geography. Fortunately there are over 400 statements in the record on this subject, more than enough to reconstruct a reliable geography. As examples of the uniformly consistent geographical information in the record, we may mention several features. There are forty-eight references to a land northward and/or land southward without a single mention of a land eastward or a land westward. Equally without contradiction are the forty-four statements indicating that Zarahemla was "down" from Nephi and Nephi "up" from Zarahemla. Also the river Sidon is consistently indicated to have flowed northward through the general land of Zarahemla, that is, from the highlands through the lowlands of Zarahemla and Bountiful to the sea. From data of such consistency construction of a reliable internal geography is entirely possible.

When we attempt to identify this geography with some actual part of the American continent which will fit the features specified in the scriptural record, we find several theories in favor among students of the subject. One may be called the "Panama theory." This would identify the narrow neck of land with the Isthmus of Panama. Central America (and North America too, according to many) would then be the land northward, and north-western (or all) South America the land southward. Although the Prophet Joseph himself seems not to have taken this view, it has been in great vogue since Reynolds' day.

The other leading view may be termed the "Tehuantepec theory" since it identifies the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in southern Mexico with the narrow neck of land. Supporters of this view usually see Central America (Tabasco, Chiapas, Guatemala, Honduras, etc.) as the land southward. The land northward would then be a portion of Mexico north of the isthmus (or all North America, as some believe).

Actually both views involve difficulties. The Panama theory fails to fit the land-sea pattern of the Book of Mormon (where is the sea east and sea south in view of indications in the scripture that the land southward was only a few hundred miles across?) as well as failing on other counts. Tehuantepec, on the other hand, is rather wide for the narrow neck, but the topography and sea arrangement fit very well (still, the Peninsula of Yucatan is difficult to fit into the Book of Mormon picture.)

Archaeology provides the final test for either theory, for the cities mentioned in the record must actually appear at the correct spots under the shovel of the archaeologist. As of now the Tehuantepec view has a definite edge. Of several thousand charted sites in Mexico and Central America, nearly eighty are now known to date back into Book of Mormon times. And the remains disclosed at these sites are in some ways in striking agreement with what we should expect from the civilizations of the Book of Mormon. Colombia, in northwestern South America (Bountiful and Zarahemla in the Panama theory) is not well known archaeologically, but so far as is known does not reveal anything at all dating back into Book of Mormon times. Neither does Panama (the beginning of the land northward in this theory) have any sites of the proper time or cultural level required by the Book of Mormon.

6.3 Some Specific Confirmations (John L. Sorenson): In order to compare complete cultures with each other (as that of the Book of Mormon with those of ancient America), we must add to archaeology the evidence from linguistics, physical anthropology, ethnography (observation of modern tribes), and every other area of research involving culture. If we speak of archaeology here it is in this extended sense.

It has been pointed out that Book of Mormon archaeology divides into two parts, authentication and elucidation. In dealing with concrete contributions of archaeology to the Book of Mormon we must add a geographical division to these first two. One study deals with migrations of peoples from the Old to the New World, seeking to authenticate and explain such migrations as those of which the Book of Mormon speaks. A second subject for research deals with archaeology within the Americas and the light it throws on Book of Mormon civilizations as they existed in this hemisphere.

Herewith are offered some evidences of authentication in the form of similarities in cultural traits. Some of them are general, such as might have occurred by independent invention of the same trait more than once. Other similarities, however, are so arbitrary or complex as to make it extremely unlikely that the trait was invented more than one time. If such a trait occurs in one hemisphere, we assume it must have been ~~taken~~ from one to the other side of the world, probably by migrating people.

Traits that correspond in the ancient Near East (before Lehi's day) and in Mesoamerica (probably the central Book of Mormon area) include: developed cereal agriculture including irrigation and fertilization and possession of cotton and the gourd; religious structures on raised platforms or pyramids, often similar in construction and function; a highly organized, graded priesthood which was frequently the controlling force in a theocratic government; religious beliefs such as human sacrifice (similar in many details), blood atonement idea, sin as a cause of sickness, confession as a healing power, fasting, circumcision, baptism, and emphasis on ritual; traditions of a great flood and great tower; symbolisms including the Tree of Life, the serpent as a sign of wisdom, and the cat (or lion, etc.) as a frequent artistic and rel-

igious motif; historical and genealogical records, often on paper; precious stones as a common form of wealth; the umbrella as a symbol of divinity or rank; manufacture and use of purple dye from shellfish and scarlet dye from the cochineal (or similar) insect; turbans in great variety; advanced chronological and mathematical reckoning.

Some correspondences showing a basic similarity of early ("Formative") culture of Mesoamerica to that described in the Book of Mormon were discussed by the speaker in a paper delivered at the Fifth Annual Symposium of the UAS last year. For authentication of the similarity of these two cultures ~~from native~~ historical records consult Hunter and Ferguson, Ancient America and the Book of Mormon.

But few examples can so far be given of how archaeology has elucidated the Book of Mormon. The "tower" of Nephi, mentioned before, may have been one of the mounds or pyramids found archaeologically in Mesoamerica. Climatic change shown by geological and archaeological data now appears: ~~to have~~ caused a dry period in Mexico about the same time that the Nephites colonized the land northward, which had been deforested. The "wilderness" of tropical forest around the ruins of Central America fits ideally the Book of Mormon wilderness full of wild beasts, impeding travel and causing parties to get lost continually. The division of Guatemala and adjoining regions into two distinct archaeological zones corresponding to the highlands and the lowlands may indicate some basic physical and economic reasons for the enmity of the highland Lamanites toward the lowland Nephites.

All the above fields of research have been barely touched by studies thus far. Any one subject or trait mentioned above offers a challenge to LDS investigators. Today the professional world of archaeology rejects almost unanimously (or rather pays no attention to) the Book of Mormon claims, but if we accumulate further evidence, the experts will be forced to give serious attention to the question. Meanwhile our own knowledge and appreciation of the scripture will continue to grow by such study.

6.4 Concluding Remarks (Dr. Jakeman): The needs of Book of Mormon archaeology are three-fold: (1) definite location of sites corresponding, at least in a general way, to Book of Mormon cities where excavation can be undertaken; (2) trained personnel; (3) funds. The first is fairly well settled since Central America certainly was inhabited by Book of Mormon peoples by either theory of Book of Mormon geography. The BYU Department of Archaeology has an understanding with the Mexican government which will make possible the continuation of its work at an important site in southern Mexico begun in 1948. The second need is being met by the training of students in archaeology at BYU and by offers of help from outside archaeologists, a few of whom are becoming sufficiently interested in the challenge of the Book of Mormon to archaeology to offer their services. The third need, funds, is still the great obstacle to further progress.

6.5 A news note of interest to society members appeared in the Smithsonian Annual Report for 1950. George A. Llano, a botanist, reports that one species of lichen, which grows on rocks in Bible lands, is often blown loose and piled by the wind in small hummocks where some desert tribes gather and eat it. As he suggests, this may well be the manna of the Israelites, eaten by them during their forty years' wandering in the Sinai desert.