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Editor: Bruce W. Warren

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Published six times a year by THE SOCIETY FOR EARLY HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY, INC., Box 7488, University Station, Provo 84602, for the dissemination among its members of information on archaeological discoveries that throw light on the historical claims of the Hebrew-Christian and Latter-day Saint scriptures; also news of the Society and its members. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the respective authors and are not necessarily those of the Society or its editors. Subscription is by membership in the Society, which also includes subscription to other publications and additional benefits.

162.1 **BOOK REVIEW.** An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon. By John L. Sorenson. Deseret Book Company and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah, 1985. xxi + 415 pages, illustrations, end notes, scriptural references, index. \$14.95 (hardbound).

The Book of Mormon has needed a good contextual analysis for a long time. John L. Sorenson has provided a plausible geographic, historical, and cultural setting in this book. The Introduction along with chapters 1 through 3 provide the necessary information for the reader to understand how the author has managed to bring order out of a very confusing situation. He gives his background interest and methodological approach for researching this book. An appropriate map is produced which is the product of thirty-five years of study and testing. Chapters 4 through 8 focus mainly on the Nephite lineage of the Book of Mormon account. This point needs to be kept in mind when considering Book of Mormon research since the three separate colonies of immigrants described in the Book of Mormon represent more than 31-lineages. The Epilogue is the author's evaluation of his effort to establish a "setting" for the Book of Mormon.

Dr. Sorenson began his formal training in archaeology and anthropology at Brigham Young University in the Fall of 1949. This training has enriched his long-time concern with a geographical, historical, and cultural setting for the Book of Mormon. He earned two master's degrees, one in archaeology at BYU and another in a different field from the California Institute of Technology. He obtained his Ph.D. at University of California at Los Angeles in Social Anthropology. By training and temperament he is very well prepared for the challenging problems dealt with in this book.

Only a few scholars have actually involved themselves seriously in researching a setting for the Book of Mormon. Most of these have concluded that Mesoamerica (central and southern Mexico and northern central America) is the

SEHA Publications Committee: Clark S. Knowlton (chairman and general editor), Ross T. Christensen, Ruth R. Christensen, V. Garth Norman, Don E. Norton, Giovanni Tata, John A. Tvedtnes, Benjamin Urrutia, Bruce W. Warren.

most likely region for two of the 31 plus lineages: Jared and Nephi. However, several variants of the internal geography of the Book of Mormon within Mesoamerica have been published. For some scholars there is disagreement on which of two major rivers in southern Mexico and northwestern Guatemala represents the River Sidon of the Book of Mormon account. Dr. M. Wells Jakeman and several of his students believe the Usumacinta River was the Sidon but Thomas Stuart Ferguson and Dr. Sorenson believe the Sidon was the Grijalva River. The two rivers originate and terminate at nearly the same locations but take different routes on their journey to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Book of Mormon can best be studied by analyzing the words of the book, by making plausible inferences from the words in the book, and by supplying non-Book of Mormon circumstantial evidence that supports the words of the Book of Mormon. In considering the words and the evidence it is necessary that one must distinguish between negative evidence that contradicts the text, no evidence which points up the lack of adequate research, and positive evidence that supports the text of the Book of Mormon. These points need stressing, since many articles and critiques relating to the Book of Mormon highlight the writer's general and/or specific ignorance of the words of the Book of Mormon. Sorenson is not guilty of ignorance of the Book of Mormon text, nor is he ignorant of the past and current discoveries in Mesoamerica research.

Anyone who reads this book will soon find from the text and endnotes that the Mesoamerican information examined includes archaeological, linguistic, ethnohistorical, native and Spanish colonial documents, social, cultural, and

biological anthropological, and geographical evidence. All this information is brought to bear on the words of the Book of Mormon. Serious students should do no less when concerning themselves with both the Book of Mormon and Mesoamerican research materials when evaluating this book.

I suggest future publications on the setting of the Book of Mormon give more attention to the Jaredite, Mulekite, and Lamanite problems of the Book of Mormon and to other new and exciting developments taking place. The native chronicles; Spanish chronicles; codices or screen-fold books; art symbolism or iconography; native calendar systems, secret societies; hieroglyphic decipherment, and archaeoastronomy are valuable fields of research for future Book of Mormon studies.

One complaint the reviewer has concerning this book is the submergence of the extensive bibliography in the endnotes. For the serious student this is a needless burden to place in his or her path.

Finally, two strengths of this book need comment. (1) the very fine maps that accompany the text and (2) the excellent scholarship manifested. Hopefully, this book will represent only the beginning of many more good books clarifying the setting or background of the Book of Mormon.

162.2 NEW LIGHT ON THE OLMEC SITE OF TEOPANTECUANITLAN, COPALILLO, GUERRERO. A recent publication in Spanish titled *A recent publication in Spanish titled Arqueología y Etnohistoria del Estado de Guerrero*, edited by Roberto Cervantes-Delgado and published by the Instituto de Antropología e Historia de México contains two important articles on a newly discovered Olmec archaeological site. The first article is by Guadalupe Martínez Donjuan ("Teopantecuanitlan", pages 55–80) and describes excavations in a 395-acre site in the mountains of eastern Guerrero, Mexico, not far from the borders of the Mexican states of Morelos, Puebla, and Oaxaca. Martínez Donjuan in this publication has worked out a three stage sequence of her site dating between 1400 to 600 BC. She excavated a yellow clay structure in Stage I (1400–900 BC). Stage II (900–800 BC) produced three exciting finds: several large Olmec style monuments, a ceremonial precinct, and an irrigation canal system. Stage III (800–600 BC) contains one large Olmec head. Additionally two ballcourts, two large platforms and a plaza complex at the site have not yet been assigned to a specific stage.

The second article by Christine Niederberger Betton ("Excavación de una área de habitación doméstica en la capital "Olmeca" de Tlacoatzotitlan. Reporte Preliminar," pages 83–103) reports that this domestic unit of the Teopantecuanitlan site is characterized by specialized craftsmen (e.g., a shell-working workshop) who enjoyed a status between the administrative elite and the farming population. These people were involved in an interregional trade network.

Teopantecuanitlan means "place of the temple of the Jaguars" and the domestic unit Tlacoatzotitlan means "within the yellow earth." This Olmec site, Teopantecuanitlan-Tla-

coatzotitlan fits entirely within the Jaredite time period and promises to continue producing exciting and important results.

162.21 ROYAL CORRESPONDENCE FROM TELL LEILAN, SYRIA. Dr. Harvey Weiss, associate professor of Near Eastern archaeology at Yale University, recently gave a brief unpublished paper in New York on the 1987 Yale University expedition to northern Syria. He reports that 1,100 clay tablets and seal impressions were recovered from an ancient palace at Tell Leilan located only a few miles from the confluence of the borders of Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.

Preliminary studies show that some of the tablets date from 1740 to 1725 BC. This is the first major discovery of written tablets from this specific time span. Since the tablets date from the time of Israel or Jacob and his twelve sons we expect they will provide important background materials for these patriarchs.

162.3 BOOK OF MORMON CRITICAL TEXT: A TOOL FOR SCHOLARLY REFERENCE. Within the past few years the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) located in Provo, Utah, has completed a major project that compared all the printed texts of the Book of Mormon. The published volumes resulting from this project provide an important tool for all serious students of the Book of Mormon in their research on this volume of Scripture.

162.31 MANUSCRIPTS AND EDITIONS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON. Recent issues of the *Zarahemla Record* (No. 35–36, 1987 and No. 37–38, 1987) contain a two-part series of informative and useful articles by Shirley R. Heater analyzing both the Latter-day Saint and Reorganized Latter-day Saint manuscripts and editions of the Book of Mormon. She provides 9 tables and many photographs of pages from various manuscripts and editions of the Book of Mormon. The *ZARAHEMLA RECORD* is published at P.O. Box 1727 Independence, Missouri 64055 and edited by Raymond C. Treat.

162.4 SEHA NEWS ITEMS. V. Garth Norman, SEHA trustee and contributor on the staff of the *Newsletter and Proceedings*, presented a major paper on Izapa sculpture at the Third Texas Symposium held at the University of Texas, Austin, in March, 1987. This was a major honor for him in recognition of his extensive research at the important archaeological site of Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico.

162.41 BRUCE W. WARREN AND THOMAS STUART FERGUSON'S POPULAR NEW BOOK, *The Messiah in Ancient America*, is now in its third printing. Both authors are or have been associated with the SEHA.

162.42 SEHA MEMBER DIANE E. WIRTH WRITES that new research opportunities have opened for her since she and her husband moved to Concord, Massachusetts, due to close proximity with some of the finest museums and libraries in the United States. Diane has presented three

papers at Annual Symposiums and has written two fine books related to scriptural archaeology. One in 1978 is titled *Discoveries of the Truth* and the other book in 1986 is titled *A Challenge to the Critics: Scholarly Evidences of the Book of Mormon*.

162.5 ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM, 1987, HEARS NEW EVIDENCE ON BOOK OF MORMON, AND ON THE NEW TESTAMENT-MEDITERRANEAN AREA. By Ross T. Christensen.

Such topics as the recent translation of a Maya glyph for the Book of Mormon term, "And it came to pass"—and evidence in early Christian Egypt of the doctrine of a pre-mortal existence of the human soul—were included in the Thirty-sixth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures.

The Symposium was held at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, on Friday and Saturday, September 25 and 26, 1987.

Welby W. Ricks, SEHA vice-president, organized the Symposium as general chairman. In his student days, Dr. Ricks served as a graduate teaching assistant in the BYU Department of Archaeology. Elected an SEHA trustee in 1955, he then accompanied the Fifth BYU Archaeological Expedition to Middle America in 1958. He served as Society president in 1962–65, and again in 1968–72. Nineteen-eighty-seven marks the seventh time he has presided as chairman of the Annual Symposium. (UAS Newsl., 31.22, 46.0, 82.0; Newsl. and Proc., 109.2, 121.0, 131.2, 151.2, 158.1, 159.2.)

Assisting Dr. Ricks as members of the 1987 Symposium Committee were Esther Phelps Parks (SEHA president), Ruth R. Christensen (SEHA secretary and treasurer), Bruce W. Warren, V. Garth Norman, and Ross T. Christensen.

Nine papers on scriptural archaeology and related topics were presented to Society members and their friends at three separate sessions. Dr. Ricks himself conducted the Friday evening session; President Parks conducted Saturday morning; and Franklin S. Harris, Jr., conducted Saturday afternoon.

The Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures is an occasion for sharing research findings, especially those pertaining to the Book of Mormon, and for fellowship among Society members and their friends. The yearly conference was instituted by Dr. M. Wells Jakeman after he joined the BYU faculty and has been held nearly every year since 1947.

FRIDAY EVENING

V. Garth Norman, SEHA trustee and president of Archaeological Research Consultants of American Fork, Utah, filled Friday evening with his well-illustrated lecture entitled *GEOMETRY, MEASURE, AND CHIASMUS IN MESOAMERICAN SCULPTURE*. Evidence for the use of an ancient Near Eastern planning device in designing

works of art has been discovered in Maya and Izapan sculpture. It involved standard geometric format, the royal Babylonian cubit, and chiasmic linguistic syntax. It is clear that the cubit was regularly used in measuring the layout of sculptures.

Knowledge of this device was probably brought from the Old World in two contacts: one at the beginning of the Late Preclassic period (c. 600 BC) and another sometime before the San Lorenzo-La Venta (Olmec) era, i.e., preceding c. 1400 BC.

The presentation at the Annual Symposium was adapted from a lengthy paper read at the University of Texas the preceding March (see above, 162.4).

SATURDAY MORNING

Ruth R. Christensen, SEHA secretary and treasurer and a master's degree candidate in anthropology at BYU, began the Saturday program by reading *INFANT SACRIFICE BY FIRE AT ANCIENT CARTHAGE, 800 TO 145 BC*. It was a continuation of her 1986 Symposium paper, "Infant Sacrifice in Canaanite Baal Worship" (Newsl. and Proc., 161.1). In this year's paper she considered written Greek and Latin sources, exploring possible reasons for this Canaanite custom.

The principal source of archaeological evidence is the Precinct of Tanit, or the Tophet, at Carthage, containing thousands of burial urns filled with charred remains of infants. The practice was similar to that suppressed by Josiah, king of Judah, a few years before 600 BC at the Tophet outside Jerusalem (2 Kings 23: 10, Jer. 7:31).

Dr. William Revell Phillips, professor of geology at BYU and assistant director of the BYU archaeological expedition to Egypt in 1987, also a New Testament teacher and tour director, made the next presentation, *BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY EXPOSES ROOTS OF CHRISTIAN EGYPT*. The University's excavations of 1981 to 1987 have included an Old Kingdom pyramid and a cemetery in use from the first century BC to the coming of Islam in AD 642. Christianity's appearance shows up as a sharp cultural break early in the burial record.

Dr. Thomas W. Mackay, BYU professor of Greek and Latin, read the next paper, *DIDYMOS THE BLIND, THE BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY PAPYRUS*. Twenty pages of fourth century AD notes made by a student of Didymos of Alexandria have almost miraculously come into the possession of BYU. They contain references to early doctrines later rejected by Christians generally, such as a pre-mortal existence of man and a belief that God's punishment in the afterlife is not necessarily of eternal duration (cf. Doctrine and Covenants 19:6–12).

The document reflects the Alexandrian allegorical method (that used by Origen) and contains four different levels of interpretation. The final editing is now underway. It will be published with both English and German translations.

The Saturday morning session came to an end with a

paper read by William James Adams, Advisor to the SEHA Board of Trustees and PhD candidate in Hebrew at the Middle East Center of the University of Utah, entitled **LOSS OF THE "PLAIN AND PRECIOUS PARTS" FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT**. The paper is a continuation of the author's 1981 Symposium paper, "Some Ways in Which the 'Plain and Precious Parts' Became Lost (1 Nephi 13:20-42," (published in full in *Newsl. and Proc.*, 159.0), which focused on evidence from Old Testament times of the fulfillment of Nephi's prophecy. His 1987 offering presents evidence for similar loss from the New Testament, as mentioned in vs. 26 of the prophecy.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Diane E. Wirth, who earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in art from BYU and is an author, lecturer, and specialist in Mesoamerican iconography, led the Saturday afternoon session. Her paper was titled **ICONOGRAPHY OF THE MOTHER GODDESS: EVIDENCE OF PRE-COLUMBIAN VOYAGES TO THE NEW WORLD**. The stone, U-shaped headrest for the dead—recently discovered in Jerusalem of the seventh century BC—has long been known throughout Mesoamerica as a symbol of the earth mother and of birth, burial, and the resurrection, and is now seen as a clear evidence of transoceanic crossings possibly dating to the time of Lehi and Mulek.

Dr. Bruce W. Warren, an instructor in anthropology at BYU and a specialist in Mesoamerican and Near Eastern archaeology, iconography, and calendrics, next addressed the topic, "AND IT CAME TO PASS" **GLYPH DECIPHERED IN MAYA HIEROGLYPHICS**. The phrase, "and it came to pass," which appears so often in the Book of Mormon, has now been identified in Maya hieroglyphic writing. Posterior and anterior "count indicators," which are slight additions to a basic glyph, denote changes comparable to tenses (past, present, future, etc.).

Samuel E. Shepley, a former advanced student of archaeology at BYU and now an engineer and advanced student of law in Missouri, followed with **THE SOLOMON SPAULDING MANUSCRIPT AS A CONTROL DOCUMENT FOR BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES**. The author has revised and expanded his 1978 Symposium paper, "An Archaeological Analysis of the Claims of the Spaulding Manuscript," has developed an explicit methodology, and has shown the manuscript novel of Rev. Solomon Spaulding to be a valuable control in testing claims for Book of Mormon authenticity. For purposes of this test, he assumes the novel to be an authentic ancient document. While the test has "killed" Spaulding's work, the Book of Mormon, on the other hand, has so far "survived all reasonable tests."

The final paper of the Symposium was **THE TREE OF LIFE AND THE CROSS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON**, read by Benjamin Urrutia, a Hebraist and anthropologist who earned his bachelor's degree at BYU and has been a graduate student at other universities. Howard Goodkind,

in the September-October, 1985, issue of the *Biblical Archaeological Review*, attacked the Book of Mormon on such strange grounds as pointing out that the cross of the Temple of the Cross at Palenque is not a Christian symbol, despite its shape, but rather is a representation of the Tree of Life. Actually, the Book of Mormon refers many times to the Tree of Life but says very little about the Cross. This, as well as other questionable arguments, shows that Goodkind is not very familiar with the historical claims of the Book of Mormon or even the Bible.

162.51 TRUSTEES RE-ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEETING. By Ross T. Christensen. All 13 members of the 1986-87 SEHA Board of Trustees were elected to another year of office. The occasion was the Annual Meeting of the Society, held on September 26, 1987, in connection with the Thirty-sixth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures (see above, 162.5).

The Annual Meeting of the Society is usually held on the final day of the Annual Symposium. All SEHA Research Patrons are qualified voters. The principal business of the Meeting is the election of Trustees to serve for a one-year period until the next Annual Meeting.

The Board is the governing body of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology. Among its duties are the appointment of the Society's president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, and general editor.

The Trustees elected on September 26, together with the scholarly organizations with which many of them are officially connected, are Dale L. Berge, Brigham Young University; Ross T. Christensen, BYU (retired); Ruth R. Christensen, Orem; Franklin S. Harris, Jr., Old Dominion University (retired); M. Wells Jakeman, BYU (retired); Clark S. Knowlton, University of Utah; Macoy McMurray, Salt Lake City; V. Garth Norman, Archaeological Research Consultants; Esther Phelps Parks, Salt Lake City; Virgil V. Peterson, Salt Lake City; Welby W. Ricks, Provo; John A. Tvedtnes, BYU-Salt Lake Center for Continuing Education; and Bruce W. Warren, BYU.

162.52 SEHA APPOINTS TWO NEW EDITORS. Dr. Clark S. Knowlton, new General Editor of the SEHA (*Newsletter and Proceedings*, 161.2) has recently asked two new editors to assist him. Bruce W. Warren is the new editor of the *Newsletter and Proceedings of the SEHA*, and John A. Tvedtnes is editor of *SEHA Research Papers*. More information on these new appointments will appear later.

162.6 QUESTION AND ANSWER. By V. Garth Norman. **QUESTION:** The First Presidency of the LDS Church and the Board of Trustees of Brigham Young University were in the process of adopting a policy in 1960 stating that the Church does not encourage archaeological research to try and prove the Book of Mormon. Does this mean that the Church frowns upon historical research of the Book of Mormon? How can this policy be reconciled with the scriptures that admonish us to add to our faith knowledge (2 Pet. 1:5), to prove all things (2 Ne. 11:3-4), and to seek historical

knowledge from the earth of the past of things that pertain to establishing the kingdom of God on earth (D&C 88:77–79)?

ANSWER: To obtain the correct interpretation when we observe seeming inconsistencies with the scriptures, we should do as Joseph Smith directed, ask the question, “What were the circumstances that precipitated the statement?”

The Church policy on archaeological research of the Book of Mormon being adopted in 1960 was to regulate the Church’s sponsorship of the archaeological research program in Mexico of the New World Archaeological Foundation, (See the “Welcoming Address” of Dr. Earl C. Crockett, Academic Vice-President of Brigham Young University to the Thirteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures April 1, 1961, published by the Department of Extension Publications, Adult Education and Extension Services . of Brigham Young University in 1962). Certain developments had raised a concern that an openly avowed interest in the controversial Book of Mormon, could jeopardize NWAf’s professional working relationships in Mexico, and this statement was viewed as a means of helping establish NWAf’s scholarly credibility.

The Foundation’s work had been initiated by Thomas Stuart Ferguson for the purpose of researching the Preclassic origins and development of Mesoamerican civilization, including the possibility of ancient Near Eastern origins as set forth in the Book of Mormon. The Church by direction of President David O. McKay had initiated substantial support of NWAf because of its scholarly commitment to archaeological research that might relate to the Book of Mormon.

It is interesting today, that after 28 year’s work under this policy, non-LDS anthropologists still consider the Church’s ongoing support of NWAf as directly linked to the Book of Mormon. It would seem that their main concern is whether the BYU-NWAf will continue to gather accurate and reliable field results rather than a controversy over the validity of Book of Mormon archaeology. It is of more significance that the reputable non-Mormon archaeologist Michael D. Coe recognizes Book of Mormon archaeology as a viable field for scholarly research.

There can certainly be nothing wrong in archaeological discoveries that might eventually prove the Book of Mormon. Obviously, for the Church to ignore or subvert such discoveries would be contrary to our stated belief in expanding knowledge in all fields of endeavor. Our focus of interest should be a broadly based expansion of knowledge in ancient American studies, rather than a narrow focus upon developing some specific proof from antiquity for the Book of Mormon. To me the policy is a broad scholarly commitment to American archaeology that includes but is not confined to the Book of Mormon.

There is a general misconception that the main intent of archaeological research of the Book of Mormon is to try to prove it. Archaeology of the scriptures is that branch of historical science that does in fact strive to document, but more importantly, to bring greater understanding and appreciation to the scriptures through identifying historical places and peoples from which it sprang. The success of this endeavor is well known in Biblical studies, and the same can be accomplished for the Book of Mormon. We don’t need to prove the Book of Mormon. It’s witnesses are sufficient proof, and we as a people, know it is a true history from ancient America. However, we do need to grow in our understanding, conviction, and appreciation of this great book. Archaeological study of the Book of Mormon can only help. Proof, if it develops, should be a by product of expanding our knowledge in all aspects of the Book of Mormon and ancient American studies.

The Prophet Joseph Smith gave us the vision that still challenges us today. Through him the Lord gave a commandment to seek knowledge of countries and kingdoms, of things in the earth and under the earth that have been as they pertain to establishing the kingdom of God on earth (D&C 88:78–79). What could be more applicable to this admonition than Book of Mormon research? As he considered the possible connection of discoveries from ancient Maya ruins in 1842 to the Book of Mormon, Joseph challenged the Saints to continue in this endeavor. He concluded with the injunction that “light cleaves to light; facts are supported by facts; the truth injures no one.” His intent was to “assist the Saints in establishing the Book of Mormon as a revelation from God.”

THE SOCIETY FOR EARLY HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY depends heavily on donations from those who are interested in the archaeology of the Scriptures, especially that of the Book of Mormon. Tax-exempt donations may be sent to the LDS Foundation, A-285 Smoot Building, BYU, Provo, Utah 84602.

The donor should ask the Foundation to restrict it to the use of the Society for Early Historical Archaeology (SEHA). The Foundation thereafter sends him or her a receipt for Income-tax purposes. At the same time he may wish to write the SEHA office about how he or she wants the gift spent.

Some uses of the gift could be (1) to sponsor an issue of the Newsletter and Proceedings by paying the printing cost, about \$600; (2) to sponsor an Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures, usually held in September, \$300 to \$600; or (3) to add to the Society’s Research Fund to help pay for important projects in the archaeology of the Scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, including excavations in Mesoamerica.

The Society’s mailing address is Box 7482, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602.