



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

THELONA D. STEVENS, CHAIRMAN / 202 SOUTH PENDLETON AVE. / INDEPENDENCE, MO. 64050

February 2, 1977

NEWSLETTER No. 25

Greetings, Members and Friends,

These greetings come from Independence, Missouri, though the message is actually from Quito and Cuenca, Ecuador where it was your chairman's great privilege to spend the recent holidays. Invitation was extended by our good friend Bea Luther, secretary to U.S. Ambassador Bloomfield, for my daughter Dr. Venna Matson, of Plymouth, Michigan, and me to visit her and her mother Lela Lacey.

Bea's home, located in a high area, looked out over the city of Quito nestled in the valley at the foot of the Pichincha Mountains, part of the great Andes chain. Quito is a beautiful old city of great altitude, 9,400 feet. A side trip was taken by air to Cuenca, where we drove to yet greater height, 11,300 feet, to the Ingapirca ruins, some fifty miles from Cuenca. There we photographed the ruins, the best preserved of which are thought to date sometime in the 15th century. Close by are other ruins discovered recently which they said represent a very much older civilization.

A peak called Cohetambo rose high above other mountains in the area. It is shaped like a shark's tooth, and the natives say that tradition holds that much gold is buried there. It is also believed that this was a place of burial, and rumors continue that there were tunnels through this mountain to Peru, so that runners could go to Cuzco in forty-eight hours. Also that there were tunnels from the mountain to the coast of Ecuador, so that fish caught there in the morning could be found on the emperor's table that night. Explorers have found sections of such tunnels, one twenty miles long. Exploring in this area continues. We met a young man in Cuenca who is seeking to pay for his education in architecture by participating in "digs," where it is claimed they are discovering many artifacts, some of which he is selling.

The most interesting and challenging part of the whole experience came when we visited an old church in Cuenca where an elderly priest, Father Crespi, enthusiastically showed us the artifacts which represent his life's work. We were told that Father Crespi carried on correspondence with the Pope in Rome concerning his findings (and some say that he sent many of the most valuable artifacts to the Pope). Jealousies arose between the other priests and himself resulting in their refusal to assist him. He, through long years of work, managed to set up a museum where all the artifacts were identified and labeled. Then a fire of mysterious origin destroyed the museum and the salvaged artifacts are now in two storerooms of an old church. Father Crespi, well past ninety years of age, has given up all hope of establishing another museum. Our guide tearfully told us that when Father Crespi is gone there will be no one who cares enough about this collection to even keep the things together. She indicated that objects would be sold to individuals, given away, and otherwise scattered and lost. Artifacts are now stacked to the ceiling in both storerooms. One object, a very large musical instrument somewhat like our bass viol though a great deal larger, was covered front and back with sheet gold, engraved with ancient symbols. We also saw a replica of Noah's ark, jammed together with many other objects so that it was difficult to see what is there. It is my understanding that we, the Church, have done nothing in this area, and there may be things there worthy of investigation.

And now a word about our free Newsletters. We have frequently urged that you let us know of any change of address. Few have done this. Sometimes the Post Office has been able to supply the new address, but at a cost. We have been charged with all returned letters. These charges have risen sharply, along with the advance in mailing rates so we can no longer guarantee return postage. Hence, if you move and do not supply us with your new address, the Newsletter just will not reach you.

Our annual meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. at the Stone Church, lower auditorium, February 20. Dr. Richard DeLong will again address us. You will not want to miss him, nor will you wish to miss the important business which the Foundation has to present at this meeting. You are needed, and you need to be informed. Do come!

* * * * *

--T.D.S.

William F. Dankenbring interviewed Dr. Alexander von Wuthenau, resident of Mexico, concerning his findings on pre-Columbian art during the 36 years of his residence in Latin America. This was printed under the title "Who Discovered America First?" and appeared in Plain Truth Magazine, July 12, 1975 (submitted by Janet Goehner, Washington).

Dr. von Wuthenau observed that there is significant evidence of Mediterranean and African influences on the "new continent" at a very early time. On a six-foot stela in the National Museum of Mexico a "Star of David" design is engraved in the earring of a Mayan dignitary. The same Mayan figure has a hat which is very similar to reed boats of ancient Egypt. Von Wuthenau investigated reproductions of rock drawings in the Jewish necropolis of Beit-Shearim, where he found a very similar drawing with an interlaced six-pointed "Star of David" and an authentic ancient reed boat. Yet more remarkable, a phylactery (a cord wound on a Hebrew youth's weaker arm at the time of his Bar Mitzvah) has been found etched on the right arm of an eight-foot figure in Vera Cruz, Mexico, the Tepatlaxco Stela.

The article summarizes information as to some stones already more or less publicized:

The Paraiba Stone: Jules Piscus, professor of languages at the University of Massachusetts, in 1966, bought an old scrapbook containing a transcription of stone markings found in 1872 by a slave in the tropical rain forest in Paraiba, Brazil. Dr. Piscus presented the material to Dr. Cyrus H. Gordon of Brandeis University. Dr. Gordon, a scholar of the first rank, author, and expert in ancient Semitic languages, compared the Paraiba inscription with the latest work on Phoenician writings, saying, "I noticed that the peculiarities of this text found in Brazil and written in a language very closely related to Hebrew and Phoenician referred to events between 534 and 531 B.C. . . . I realized this had to be genuine because it contained words, grammatical forms and expressions that were not known in the 19th century, but were only authenticated in the 20th century. This is important because if one of these inscriptions turned up in 1973, there would be no way of knowing if it were genuine or fake. The reason is a forger can know everything I do, or anyone else. But a forger cannot know what's going to be discovered in the next century."

The Bat Creek Stone: Found by Smithsonian Institution archaeologists in 1885 near Bat Creek, Tennessee. At first this was believed to be a Cherokee tablet, published in 1894, upside down. It was ignored until 1970, when Dr. Joseph Mahan happened to see a photograph of the stone. He copied the inscription and sent it to Dr. Cyrus Gordon, who recognized it to be "straight Hebrew of the Roman period, roughly A.D. 100." Five letters on the stone he stated "clearly mean 'for Judah.'" Dr. Gordon says it could not possibly be a forgery. The tomb from which it was taken held nine skeletons. Added to the Bat Stone are the recently discovered coins of the Bar Kokhba rebellion (A.D. 132-135), found by farmers near Louisville, Kentucky.

The Metcalf Stone: Discovered in 1968 at the U.S. military reservation on Fort Benning, Georgia by Manfred Metcalf. The stone was given to Dr. Joseph Mahan, Jr., director of education and research at Columbus Museum of Arts and Crafts at Columbus, Georgia. Being a specialist on the Yuchis, a tribe once inhabiting the area, Dr. Mahan noticed that the Yuchi agricultural festivals had too many resemblances to the Hebrew Feast of Tabernacles described in Leviticus in the Bible to be only a coincidence. He sent a copy of the stone to Dr. Cyrus Gordon in 1968, who, after studying it, reported that it was "apparent to me that the affinities of the script were with the Aegean syllabary. . . . reminiscent of the Minoan civilization." Dr. Gordon suggests that "the Aegean analogues to Mayan writing, to the Aztec glyphs, and to the Metcalf Stone, inspire the hope that the deciphered scripts of the Mediterranean may provide keys for unlocking the forgotten systems of writing in the New World. A generation capable of landing men on the moon may also be able to place pre-Columbian America within the framework of world history" (Manuscripts, summer 1969, p. 166).

According to Dr. Dankerbring, von Wuthenau has found "hundreds of thousands" of sculptures in clay showing human types. To his astonishment he observed that in the early, lower levels of each excavation not a single "Indian" head was found. Instead, heads with Mongolian, Chinese and Japanese features, those of Tartars, Negroes, and "all kinds of white people, especially Semitic types with and without beards" were there. Von Wuthenau said, "A terra cotta head from Guerro, Mexico, was remarkably similar to the Egyptian god Bes, and similar images to this peculiar deity were found in almost all Phoenician excavation sites around the Mediterranean. In the Guerro district terra cotta heads of Urweisse, or "ancient White" have also been discovered. Around Acapulco von Wuthenau found art objects with narrow faces and long, curved noses and beards (the Indians had no beards). Dr. Gordon declares, after studying von Wuthenau's discoveries, that the first true Indian types appear in significant numbers about A.D. 300.

"Scholars for many years have been aware of cultural parallels between Central America and the Middle East," says Dankerbring. "The Mixtec Indians squeezed royal purple dye out of the snail Purpura patula of the Pacific Ocean; the Phoenicians performed the same feat with the snails Murex truncatus and Murex brandais found in the Mediterranean. Reed rafts were used by the ancient Egyptians; "Indians" used similar ones from the Pacific coast of California to Chile." Like the peoples of the Middle East, the early peoples of the Americas worshipped the sun; built giant stone statues, wrote by hieroglyphs, performed cranial surgery, and mummified the dead. Were all these traits developed independently and in isolation? He quotes Stewart and Faron, "There are a number of cultural elements so strikingly alike in the two hemispheres that the possibility of their transoceanic spread to America must be seriously considered" (Native Peoples of South America, p. 41).

* * * * *

In the light of these and other discoveries, Roy E. Weldon advocates the sending of a member of the Foundation to the Mediterranean area for special research and further study of these links. This proposal was made at the November 14, 1976 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Foundation. It was pointed out that we have thousands of photos and numberless books on the ruins of the New World, but there is almost a total lack of connecting links in the Old World. We need Kodachromes and authentic information which should create a new chapter in Book of Mormon evidences. For instance, we need to check a new and startlingly sensational discovery has come to light within the last few months--an entire new library of 15,000 clay tablets dating back to the Jaredite period was discovered in Syria.

According to the Arkansas Democrat, August 15, 1976, thousands of clay tablets found in Syria "are providing dramatic new information about biblical times. . . . There were 15,000 tablets in all, covering the period from 2400 to 2250 B. C." Because of the tablets, ancient Syria is beginning to be recognized as a rival of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia in the history of civilization. David Noel Freedman, a University of Michigan

biblical archaeologist who worked with the Italians, described the importance of the tablets by saying, "It is as if we had ignored that Rome existed and suddenly find out about it and the Roman empire."

The tablets reveal an unknown language, which the Italians have called Eblait. It is akin to biblical Hebrew that was spoken more than one thousand years later. "Among the most precious tablets is one containing a vocabulary of Eblaite and Sumeric words. "The Sumerians, a non-Semitic people who flourished in southern Mesopotamia about 3000 B.C. are credited with developing the cuneiform system of writing. The influence of the cuneiform system is found in the writings of the great Semitic cultures that developed in the area. [Much evidence points to the departure of the Jaredites from Sumeria about 2350 B.C.]

Eighty per cent of the tablets are accounts of economic and commercial transactions. Others include international treaties, military reports, religious texts, descriptions of rites and sacrifices and stories of creation, and the great flood. . . . The Ebla tablets establish the patriarchs and their names as historical realities. "We have wondered why the Bible calls judges and rulers before the kings. Now we know that in Ebla, the leaders of the conquered cities were called judges," Giovanni Pettinato, Italian language expert said. The tablets tell of a dynasty of six kings in Ebla. The one that spread its influence most widely is called King Ebruum or Ibrium, which Pettinato says is the root word of Hebrew.

Last year they dug out only three walls of the room where most of the tablets were stored. About 1,000 tablets were found in another room. Only a small section of the royal palace has been excavated. The archive room was on the side of a courtyard. Prof. Paola Matthiae said the tablets had been stacked vertically on wooden shelves. They vary from the size of the palm of a hand to the size of a large brick. When troops led by King Naram-Sin of Akkad, the great Mesopotamian state, conquered Ebla in 2250 B.C., they looted the palace and set it afire. The wooden shelves in the archive room burned but the baked clay tablets were undamaged by the flames, although many broke when they fell to the floor. Eventually wind blew dust over the ruins, "sealing the precious tablets under a small hill that grew up over the centuries. The tablets are now neatly packed in 100 boxes in the Museum of Aleppo." It is claimed they are worth at least \$15 million.

The tablets reveal details of government 4,300 years ago. The queen appeared to have had a prominent role in Ebla. The king was assisted by two prince-ministers and a council of elders. A tablet recorded an international treaty, the oldest known in history, between Ebla and the city of Assur over the establishment of a free-trade area. It included a variety of commercial and legal provisions, including some for crimes. Matthiae says the greatness of Ebla and its kingdom is reflected in an inscription from Mesopotamia that quotes Naram-Sin after his conquest of Ebla: "The city that had never been conquered from the time man was created."

* * * * *

Through the courtesy of John E. Hobart, Santa Monica, California, we have a copy of an article, "Ancient Manuscripts on American Stones," by William Coxon, written for Arizona Highways, September 1964 (pp. 1-39) from which the following is gleaned.

An old Indian's statement, "I am an Aztec, and my ancestors always marked the routes over which they migrated," stimulated William Coxon's quest for knowledge concerning petroglyphs. Webster defines a petroglyph as "A carving upon a rock, especially a pre-historic one." Coxon came to prefer the term rock-writing as his searchings unfolded the methods used and the reasons for these writings. The Indians, when asked about them, always said they were not theirs, but were those of a people "long, long before we came." Coxon said, "I wondered who those noble people could have been who challenged the deserts--some of them must have contributed their lives--to obtain the information inscribed here on stones, all for the safety and preservation of others whom they knew would follow. . . . It is inscribed on stone, that thousands of years before the birth of Jesus Christ, a mighty and mysterious civilization challenged. . . the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to come to

the Western Hemisphere and colonize it."

Most of the common writings were incised for permanency because of the rock surfaces being exposed to the elements. Printed messages were often placed in caves or recessed cliffs, thus saving time and labor. When no suitable surfaces were available, small stones were aligned on the ground in the forms of the signs or symbols required.

Referring to Genesis 11:1, "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech," Coxon claims that rock-writings found in every quarter of the earth testify that a written language was understood over the whole world. He says, "These ancient stone-writers crossed the Pacific in boats," but he cannot say who the people were, although he insists, "I do know and can produce the material proof, for the inscribed sites still exist, that the civilization responsible for Arizona's Cognate Geometric rock-writings penetrated the interior of the continent by way of the Gulf of California, the Colorado River and its tributaries. The sites and the inscriptions flank the Gila River and its tributaries, . . . pass over the Continental Divide and out to the Gulf of Mexico by the Rio Grande River. Beyond there, they appear in the Mexican state of Vera Cruz, in the Loltan Cave of Yucatan, and certain islands, like the Virgins, in the Caribbean Sea. Then athwart the Atlantic Ocean they make appearances in the Canary Islands off the coast of North Africa, Portugal and Spain. The west and south coast, and several of the rivers of Ireland, are littered with them, and they flank the River Nile from the Cataracts south. The Orange River of South Africa is literally sprinkled with these sites also. They gird the globe, and that circumstance presents the difficult problem of their origin, for no one can yet say just at what geometrical point the encircling band began, or where it had its end."

Coxon says that of the approximately 400 characters used in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, twenty are elementary signs of geometry. The same signs also present themselves in the Cognate Geometric rock-writings. He claims that the stone-writers were more consistent than the Egyptians in the use of the geometric system, for they evolved symbolic variants--thousands in number, developing objective illustrations. "The incised likeness of a snake at a site, for example, was a sign of warning to the observer that such reptiles frequented the vicinity, and to look for them. The footprint of a bear with claws extended, or the drawing of a ferocious beast or a poisonous insect implied such dangers to the strangers. A fish told of the availability of such food in the stream nearby, and pictures of birds and edible game told them what to hunt for food. . . . When a spiral is seen with its outer end extended in a waving line, it is not a snake. The direction up or downstream of the waving line indicates that the succeeding site cannot be seen from the point where you are standing, and that if you will proceed along the river, counting off the corresponding number of turns of its course with those of the spiral's extension, you will, when both tally, have arrived at the source of more information that you have been searching for."

A massive rock, according to Coxon, discovered in the Santan Mountains of Pinal County shows on its surface the most magnificent specimen of geometric enumeration "I have yet found in the world." Through a system of circles and a sphere, the number of weeks in the year were indicated. "Mysteriously enough, a stone metal-mould was unearthed in Ashur, Assyria, with a symbol incised in it, differing only from the one discovered in the Santan Mountains in that it is constructed from three circles instead of four. . . . The sphere is also centralized in the symbol. Scientists dated this object 2400 B.C. It is illustrated in Omstead's History of Assyria."

Stone-writers, when reaching a tributary of a river they were exploring, examined the area drained by that tributary, and having ascertained what they needed to know, returned to the confluence of the mother stream and incised the information for the benefit of others expected to follow. Some lineal drawings were quite small, while others cover broad surfaces. To illustrate the use of these, Coxon mentions our modern practice of using a road map, folding it up and placing it in the glove compartment, only to unfold

and refer to it again and again. Ancient Americans, whose map might weigh tons, might be miles distant when they needed to refer to it again. To solve their reference problem, they etched on a small rock a miniature copy of the big one. He concluded, "The pocket map of the present is not a new idea."

History records that Rameses II (1292-1225 B.C.) "made a division of the soil of Egypt among the inhabitants, assigning spot plots of ground of equal size to all, and obtained his chief revenue from the rent which the holders were required to pay him year by year." Coxon relates this to findings in Ancient America, saying that the land charts along the Gila River are intriguing when compared with like drawings left by the ancients of the Nile. "They, too, came out of 'nowhere'--relocated, reclaimed, and recorded land allotments in squares."

Coxon's evaluation is that "No study can present so many thrills so frequently as that of archaeology, and certainly none compels more reconstruction and revision." This personal testimony, after having spent much time in searching out and studying those things of which he has written--searchings "not only in broad fields, along rivers, and coasts of this and other countries, but in museums, libraries, and universities as well"--should challenge and appeal to anyone seeking meaningful, worthwhile areas of study. All may not be able to follow his example of searching in far away places, but one can gather funds of information from museums, libraries, and universities.

The Foundation has been offering 162 topics from which one may choose something for Book of Mormon research. Now we are suggesting that all work on one topic: SERPENTOLOGY. All are invited to join in research on this one subject. Search anywhere you can. Find anything and everything you can which in any way pertains to this subject which in some way can be related to the Scriptures and Ancient America, regardless of how small the item may be. Librarians are willing to assist in such searching. Send your findings to your chairman, being sure that each statement is carefully documented. Typed material is not required, but be sure it is legible. Documentation requires:

Full name of the author

Full name of the book (or periodical, or newspaper)

Date of copyright. (If not copyrighted, show "No Copyright")

Name of the publisher and the city

Each item quoted must show page numbers

Each phase of this documentation is vital and none may be omitted if your work is to be acceptable. Please note that while searching for information on one subject, you may run across other items of importance. Make notes of such in a systematic manner under appropriate subject headings and file them for yours and others' uses. Almost before you realize it, you will be launched on fascinating research. All are invited to participate.

* * * * *