



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

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NEWSLETTER No. 32

August 3, 1979

Dear Members and Friends,

Thoric Cederstrom is summering in Independence after a year of studying and teaching in Mexico. He will present an illustrated-sound lecture at 3:00 p.m., August 19, at the Stone Church, Partridge Hall, Floor A. His subject: "Mexico, Land of the Feathered Serpent." Please bring your friends and come.

Also at this meeting George Knotts will give a brief presentation of "Why Not Zion?" followed by Ray Treat's explanation as to the great project for promotion of the Book of Mormon by the Foundation which calls for the raising of \$20,000. Do come and hear the plans and be prepared to assist in this important project.

It was the great privilege of your president to visit the archaeological section of the Israeli Museum in Jerusalem in May, this year, and see the two slabs of stone taken from a cave accidentally destroyed by a bulldozer, about which Dr. Joseph Ginat lectured to the Foundation February 19, 1979. (Part One of Dr. Ginat's lecture was presented in our last newsletter.) You, therefore, have my verification that the salvaged sections of stone described by Dr. Ginat are indeed mounted on display in this museum bearing the Hebrew inscriptions and drawings as stated by him.

You will not want to miss Volume III of Roy Weldon's Book of Mormon Deepes, Herald House, \$5.00. One example of valuable research reported in this volume is an answer to critics of the Book of Mormon who said the word "moulten" (Ether 1:60) should have been "quarry." This volume, pp. 302,303, presents references proving that glass objects were manufactured (moulten) as early as 3000 B.C., including a statement that the University of Chicago has a pale green cylinder of glass dating from this period.

--T.D.S.

OUR GOAL - \$20,000

In our last newsletter it was reported that the Board of Directors felt the need to focus more on promoting understanding and use of the Book of Mormon. To facilitate this objective, the board would like to make various kinds of materials available such as audio-visuals and a variety of types of printed materials. Specific projects will be developed in the near future. The board felt that a budget of \$20,000 would be needed to implement this objective.

Do you believe there are 1000 persons in the church who would donate \$20 to promote the Book of Mormon? We believe there are and we hope you are one of them. We know that you have come to appreciate and understand the message and purpose of the Book of Mormon to the extent that you want to share this book with others, both in and out of the church. In this day of inflation we firmly believe that one of the best investments you can make, in addition to your tithing and local offerings, is an investment in the Book of Mormon.

Your tax-deductible contribution will make it possible for these quality materials to be produced. Send your gift today to the Foundation address.

***** --Board of Directors

FRAA members Richard DeLong and Fred Weddle recently visited archaeological sites in Mexico. One of these sites, Cacaxtla, was visited in order to photograph the famous colored murals recently uncovered there. The murals were discovered in 1975 by Mexican archaeologists while investigating a clandestine excavation by locals looking for saleable artifacts.

Cacaxtla is situated northwest of Puebla near the small village of San Miguel del Milagro. Early in its history, from A.D. 100 to 325, it was a ceremonial center. Later, from A.D. 325 to about 650, it served as a fortress that guarded the main travel route from the Puebla-Tlaxcala area to the great city of Teotihuacan. On stucco walls below palace rooms colored murals portray a capture and murder scene that may have taken place in the general area. Figures in the scene were done in Maya style, but with a mixture of Teotihuacan and Gulf Coast artistic motifs. A Teotihuacan leader is portrayed as a captive with his hands bound in front. In other scenes he and others are being speared in the face, arms and legs by Maya warriors wearing jaguar skins.

Upright femur leg bones symbolize death. Lying on the ground, dead persons have their entrails hanging out. The central Teotihuacan figures are portrayed as people of the feathered serpent with quetzal feathers and crosses on their vestments, while the Maya warriors with their jaguar skins are depicted as the people of the jaguar. This basic conflict theme is Mesoamerican mythology between peoples of the feathered serpent and the jaguar reminds one of the Nephite-Lamanite conflicts. These mural scenes undoubtedly portray a historic murder and it is easy to speculate that it could well have been Mormon who was murdered by the Lamanites.

To visit Cacaxtla, take Mexican Highway 119 north to the Navitadas road going west. Look for a covered bus stop station near the intersection. Go west through several small towns until you reach the road to San Miguel Milagro. Take the left asphalt road to the Cacaxtla ruins. The site is open Tuesday through Sunday. Prior permission to photograph the murals must be obtained from the Director of the Centro Legial de Instituto Nacional de Anthropología e Historia-Puebla-Tlaxcala in the city of Puebla.

ATTEND MAYA HIEROGLYPHIC WRITING WORKSHOP

Richard DeLong and Fred Weddle attended a Maya Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop at the University of Texas, in Austin, during March 24-25. Maya glyphicist Linda Schele translated the Palace Tablet hieroglyphic and the Tablet of the 96 Hieroglyphs. Hieroglyphic texts found on stelae and other public monuments were done in logographs (pictographs) intended to function as dynastic records for public consumption in a context where literacy of the audience was not assured. However, the texts of interior building and sanctuaries are more phonetic like the paper codices. Only professional literates were able to comprehend this phoneticism. This is similar to the trained Egyptian scribes who could write the formal hieroglyphs that perhaps could not be understood by the common man.

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F I L M L E C T U R E

By

D R . J O S E P H G I N A T

PART TWO

In 1960, an ancient temple was uncovered in Israel in a place which is called Arad. This place is mentioned in the Bible several times. There were two close cities of the same name and one of them was built by Solomon was uncovered and this was, I say, a cultural as well as a religious shock to our people. We knew about one temple in Jerusalem, and here is another temple from the time of Solomon--not from a later period, but from the time of King Solomon.

According to the analysis of the two most famous archaeologists of Israel, Professor Benjamin Mazar and the later Professor Yohanan Aharoni, the high priests of this temple

were the descendants of Jethro, and here is something new for us. As I said, for us the relationship between Jethro and his lineage was important only because Jethro was Moses' father-in-law, but here a new avenue was open to our people. We learned (and it is only after 1960) that the high priest in an Israelite kingdom under Solomon where they were direct descendants to Aaron--(let me just say one thing: that I have the privilege of being of this lineage) and usually the descendants of the tribe of Levi, they are the ones who work in the temple and serve in the temple and every day in the synagogue the descendants of Aaron and Levi, they bless the congregation. But here is a temple where those who had the highest authority were the descendants of Jethro, not the descendants of Aaron, and from that several papers were written about the covenant between the House of Jethro and the House of Israel.

The city of Jerusalem is now building a memorial park unto the name of Orson Hyde who in 1841 had his prayer of dedication for the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, so on this spot the city of Jerusalem is preparing now the park and they plant their olive trees.

Masada is a very important Jewish place in history and after the destruction of the temple, for three years the Zealots were besieged by the Romans and they couldn't conquer it and, at the end (when the Romans started to climb on the mountain) and they saw that they couldn't defend it anymore, they committed suicide--they didn't want to fall into the hands of the Romans. This place is a very important symbol in our history. On top of the Masada a synagogue was found. I mentioned many examples about oak trees and altars regarding Abraham but also I think it is Judges 6 where the angel came to Gideon to give the message that he is going to rescue, to save his people, and the angel also waited under an oak tree and sacred places in worshipping the Lord. Walking in the ruins of this place I discovered a small altar. The difference between the large altar with horns is that it was only in the temple, but there were small altars usually for pigeons and those altars were in sacred places.

A city of Arad where the temple from the time of Solomon was uncovered. This is the altar which was found there and the temple there had the same shape of the altar in Jerusalem, and was divided into three places where usually the audience come and sit, and the place which is only for the Levites, and the third place which is the holy of holies where the high priests can come only once a year in the Day of Atonement. So here is the altar from the temple which was taken to Jerusalem and is located in the Israeli museum, next to which place in the Israeli museum are the artifacts from the Lehi cave. There are inscriptions too. You know about the star of David. Actually we don't call it in Hebrew the star of David. We call it the shield of David, and this is also one of our symbols. Of course, the menorah is an earlier symbol than the shield of David. We say the shield of David because David wore this shield when he had his encounter with Goliath.

These Druze people--they are not Arabs--they speak Arabic but it is a secret religion. They don't write in any book. They have some writings--handwriting--and they talk about it only in their small chapels, but only about twenty per cent of the people of each village, each town, know the secret. The entire congregation doesn't know the secret of their religion, but according to them, foreigners and strangers don't know their religion, but everyone knows that Jethro is their main prophet.

The Samaritans who didn't go into exile and stayed in Mount Gerizim are, according to their tradition, descendants of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Levi. We know from the Bible that when the Israelite kingdom was destroyed in 722 B.C., most of the people were taken into exile. Some of the Ephraimites remained and the Assyrians brought people from the northern countries and settled them there, so the Samaritans are probably a mixture of the people who came from the northern countries and the ancient Ephraimites, but they have their traditions which are very similar to the Jewish tradition. They have their five books of Moses written in the ancient Hebrew script, and every Passover they have their sacrifice on Mount Gerizim--the Mount of Blessings--and this is how the Ephraimites keep their lineage from 722 B.C., and here they sit and pray before the Passover sacrifice.

The entire congregation of the Samaritans, they live of course only in Israel, on the West Bank--is now only 470 people, the entire congregation that remains from the Samaritans. You know from the New Testament, the Good Samaritan? The high priests, blessing the congregation before the sacrifice, put some blood on the forehead, which is to remember the Passover in the Bible.

The five books of Moses were written in the ancient Hebrew script. We are talking about ancient Hebrew script. Several years ago I was in southern Utah and I saw in some places Indian drawings, and also in Arizona and New Mexico. As an anthropologist, I stayed with the Hopi Indians for a few days and I learned several things from them which are very similar to the Nomads--the Bedouins in the Middle East, our country in the Middle East. Besides the Indian drawings, there are some letters which are exactly ancient Hebrew letters. You can see the regular drawings of the Indians, but here we can see six letters which are exactly letters in ancient Hebrew. A statue that I saw in the museum in Mexico City--we see a person which has earrings and you can see there the shield of David, or what you call the star of David, and I think this is a very interesting phenomenon.

I know that there is a controversy and my fellow scientists don't agree that the Mayan Indians knew about the wheel. This picture I took in Palenque--one of the centers of the Maya people in Mexico, and I think we can see here the wheels--here is the king; he is a strong king that can move many things, and he stands on small wheels. Another picture, and we see a wheel made of stone. It is not in its place, but it is right there on the floor in Palenque, and you can see that this is a real wheel.

There are some similarities between the Nomads and the Indians, the Hopi and the Zuni Indians. You saw the Nomads' dwelling--tents in the southern part of Israel. Now when I visited the Indians I saw some things which are very difficult for me to believe about those comparisons. There were colors which symbolize many things: the white color among the Nomads symbolizes peace and purity; the green color symbolizes fertility and the red color symbolizes blood. Among the Indians it is the same. I had the privilege to be in a ceremony of the Indians where they had their dances and they had white flags. When I asked the chief, what are the white flags, he said the white flags symbolize peace and purity--the same as the Nomads in the Middle East. There was a green flag, too, and the Indian Chief said that this symbolizes fertility and during my stay there in one of the homes of the Hopi Indians in Kings Canyon, I saw a big shawl that women wear on their heads, and I asked her why is that shawl white, red and white? And she said that women wear this shawl only in the evening of the wedding of their sons, and this is to symbolize that his wife, his bride, has to be a virgin and this symbolizes blood.

Now the Bedouin in ceremonies--wedding ceremonies and circumcision ceremonies--also put white flags and red flags, exactly the same as the Indians. Here is a modern wedding of the Nomads who became settled, and we see here the red color which has to symbolize the blood that his bride has to be a virgin. Here is a Bedouin tent--what they do, they hang what is like a scarecrow, but it looks like a woman, and the two main colors are white and red--white for purity; red symbolizes blood, exactly the same as among the Hopi Indians. Here they took a girl, usually the scarecrow symbolizes the blood in that wedding ceremony. Here we can see the white flags and the scarecrow in the red and white colors.

This is a regular tent where still the Nomads live. Most of them are settled now. This is the way our ancestors, the patriarchs and Abraham lived when he lived in a tent and the angels came and visited him. Many of the customs, manners, and habits of these Nomads are the same. When we read the Bible, and we visit these people, we can better understand it.

Q. How do you know that you are a Levite?

A. In the Jewish tradition and customs, the Levites descended from Moses and the Cohens descended from Aaron. They have special duties in the ceremony in the synogogue and this

goes from father to son and so to generations, and when I mentioned the figure in the Le-hite cave, we saw there a figure of a person standing in this form (he raised his arms, palms outward in a posture of blessing). Every morning the descendents of Aaron, in the synogogue they take off their shoes and stand near the holy place of the five books of Moses near the front. They cover their head with a shawl and they bless the congregations. Only those who are descended from Aaron can do it, only those who are Levites wash their hands. It can't be anybody else. Three days a week we read in the Bible of Moses (Monday, Thursday and Saturday). Seven people are called to read in the five books of Moses. The first one is the descendant of Aaron, the second is the descendant of Levi. Now if I come now--if I go to a congregation, I have to tell the Rabbi that I am a descendant of Levi because I can be either the second one to be called to read the five books of Moses, or, if there is no descendant of Aaron, I can replace him to be the first, but I cannot expect to be the first.

Now when I was a little boy, I followed my father and grandfather to the synogogue. My grandfather was the second one to be called, usually they went out to wash their hands--of those who were descended of Aaron--my father did it and I followed him, so it goes from father to son, and there is no question about it among Jewish people. No one will ask me twice if it is correct when I say I am a Levite because those who are not Levites are not there to do these ceremonies; so it goes from father to son and when you are thirteen years old you have special blessings of being of that lineage. But it can be only by lineage--you cannot join that lineage.

In 1970 was the first time that I was invited to the University of Utah to teach at the Department of Anthropology, and at that time I was working with the Israeli Government, and I am still on a leave of absence, teaching now in the University of Haifa and working then in the Prime Minister's Office in the Department of Arab Affairs, so I was invited to teach about Middle Eastern societies there, and I didn't know about the Book of Mormon before I came to Utah. Being in Utah, I, of course, read the Book of Mormon, in the summer of 1970.

I don't know Indian languages. There's only one thing, when I mentioned the Hopi Maya, the word water in Hebrew is Mayim. The second word is not connected with the Hopi but the Ute Indian. There is a place not far from that cave in the name of Yuta. However, in the Bible in Joshua 15:55, in English translation every Y is changed to J like we speak. It is written in English Juttah. You say Jehovah. The name Joseph is Yosef. Now it is written in English Juttah but in Hebrew it is Yuttah; you cannot pronounce it differently. It is precisely Yuttah, and this is a city of Levi in the tribe of Judah, and actually there is an ancient Protestant tradition from the twelfth century that this was the place where John the Baptist was born. So here I just gave you several examples of similarities.

There are about twenty books and several hundred articles on the controversy of where were the original Red Sea walls and the route of the Israelites when they left Egypt. One of the places is not far from the city of Suez today, but according to one of the archaeologists who studied it, the Red Sea is very close to the Mediterranean and this was the place where the Israelites were when they crossed the Reed Sea. Actually there was there a small peninsula and a very, very narrow strip of coast, but every day tides and ebbs, you know the water covered this place. The Israelites, according to this specific theory, when they crossed it, they went on this strip at the time very late at night and early in the morning. When the Egyptians crossed it, it had already started to be covered with water and the question is, "What is a miracle?" We can talk for months about it, but as I understand miracles, in many cases they can happen. You just have to be in the right place at the right time and of course it was the direction of the Lord. The Israelites crossed the place at the right time. Well, the Egyptians, when they crossed the place with their chariots, the place was covered with water and we see it every day now in the same place, so this is only one theory about the Reed Sea.

This is far from Aqaba Gulf. It is 200-300 miles; however, Mount Sinai would be between the place where they crossed and the Aqaba Gulf.

Q. I heard that some of the Chinese people feel they are descendants of Jethro. Have you heard such things? How do you understand that?

A. I don't understand it. But there are some other people who feel they are related. There is a group that calls themselves the Aaronic Order and in this church they believe they are descendants of Aaron through the Scottish Royal family, and they believe they are of the direct lineage of Aaron. There are other people. There is a group in Russia that believes they are descendants of Hebrews, and they keep the Sabbath on Saturday, and they never have contacts with--have never had contacts with the Hebrew people before.

There is a group which was recently recognized by the Jewish Rabbis in Jerusalem as Jewish people, the Falashas, who are in Ethiopia, and they didn't have any contacts with Jewish people for 2000 years, and they keep the Sabbath and all the rules and laws of the Bible. Now we know that in 722 B.C. the ten tribes went into exile and we didn't have contact with them. We don't have evidence and who knows who went where and kept the tradition? So in other words, who am I to judge and to say you are not. I cannot say yes or no, but we know that there are traditions in different nations in the world of people who say that they are descendants of the ten tribes.

Q. I was reading in Moshe Dayan's recent autobiography, and he stated that the most elaborate ceremonies that he had seen were the ones from the period of the Judges. Was that around 600 B.C.?

A. The period of the Judges is about 1100 B.C.

Regarding the temple, you know, when we talk about Zionism, people talk, speak about Zionism starting from the 19th century. I don't agree with that. Zionism started from the day the temple was destroyed and the people went into exile. From that day, which was A.D. 70, every Jew prays, every day, that he hopes that the temple will be rebuilt soon. In our days this is part of our prayers. In the prayer book, every day every Jew should say that he hopes that the temple will be rebuilt soon.

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