

FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH
ON ANCIENT AMERICA
202 South Pendleton
Independence, Missouri 64050
THELONA D. STEVENS, PRESIDENT



NEWSLETTER NO. 41

December 28, 1982

Dear Members and Friends,

The annual meeting of the Foundation for Research on Ancient America will be held at 3:00 P.M., January 16, 1983, Partridge Hall of Stone Church. The speaker, Patriarch Roy E. Weldon will illustrate his theme, "The Wisdom of the Wise Shall Perish," with slides. The brief business to be conducted at this meeting will include the election of officers for the coming year. Please plan now to be present.

At the World Conference of 1982 FRAA featured five lecturers: Richard A DeLong, Charles R. Hield, Roy E. Weldon, Raymond C. Treat and Shirley R. Heater. Our last newsletter presented condensed material covering the lectures of all of these speakers except Shirley Heater. We are privileged at this time to present her summarized material. Tapes of the entire text of each of the speakers except that of Dr. DeLong (due to technical difficulties his did not record) are available at \$2.50 each. Please order from Fred O. Weddle, 410 N. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050.

Also from Fred Weddle may be ordered the \$15.00 slide/tape set, "In the Beginning," which is the scriptural story of creation. This is a ten-to-fifteen minute presentation of beautiful slides with script, which may be followed by discussion questions, answers, testimonies, comments with scripture references. This set is suitable for prayer or fellowship groups, church school classes, evening church services, panel discussion, missionary and cottage meetings, family groups, workshops, Women's groups and other study groups, reunions, camps, retreats and youth groups. The only equipment required for use are a projector and screen, and a cassette record player.

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--T.D.S.

SHIRLEY HEATER received her B.A. degree in anthropology from the University of Missouri, Columbia. Specializing in Mesoamerican archaeology, she participated in an archaeological dig at Nauvoo in 1978 and explored ruins at Teotihuacan, Cuicuilco, Tenayuca, Talamitla, Mont Alban, Cholula, and Xochicalo, in the summer of 1981 while she studied at the Universidad Ibero Americana, Mexico City. She has served as secretary and a director of FRAA for a number of years.

CHINESE UPDATE: NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OFF CALIFORNIA
Implications for Book of Mormon Believers and Nonbelievers
By Shirley R. Heater

The discovery of doughnut-shaped stone objects off the coast of California and subsequent analysis linking their origin to ancient China bring hard evidence in the face of controversy based on circumstantial evidence confirming the link between the Old and the New Worlds. A total of ten objects has been recovered and identified as stone anchors, the possible remains of ancient shipwrecks 2-3,000 years old, of mineral composition not of California origin but determined to be similar to deposits in China.

These conclusions are meaningful to Book of Mormon believers. Evidence is accumulative that the Jaredites were responsible for Chinese civilization. Because of the Jaredite experience, we should expect archaeological evidence confirming the knowledge

or capability relating to water travel which was an essential part of their journey. The archaeological record supports a pattern of shipbuilding styles with peaked ends, and the use of stone anchors in the area from which the Jaredites originated; and that they would have brought this tradition of shipbuilding "after the manner which they had hitherto built" with them to China.

Not only do we now know that the Genesis story is locked within the written ancient Chinese characters, but they also contain references significant to the Jaredites. The publication of the book, The Discovery of Genesis, by C. H. Kang and Ethel R. Nelson, in 1979 * and the discovery of the stone relics is unquestionably part of the Lord's plan. (I am not, however, proposing that these stone anchors found off the coast of California are Jaredite remains.)

As believers of the Book of Mormon, we may look to archaeology for confirmation of its testimony. Our faith is intensified as we see archaeological evidences confirming the Book of Mormon. For nonbelievers the stone anchors and the Chinese connection are also important. God is preparing the way for the acceptance of the greater truths yet to be revealed as part of His divine timing.

* Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. Available at Herald House, \$4.50.

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The October 17, 1982 FRAA meeting featured Raymond C. Treat as lecturer. His presentation was so well received that we have been requested to reproduce it in print. As it is, he has submitted the following highlights of his lecture so that we may share it with our readers in this newsletter. A recording was made of his lecture and copies on tape may be had at \$2.50 each through Fred Weddle (address given above). Please see Newsletter No. 40, September 20, 1982 for our introduction of this lecturer-author.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN BELIZE

By Raymond C. Treat

The July 1982 issue of National Geographic contained an article on Mesoamerican archaeology entitled "Unearthing the Oldest Known Maya." The article told about excavations at the site of Cuello located in northern Belize. The author was Norman Hammond, a leading Mesoamerican archaeologist who has been working in Belize for a number of years. His work at Cuello has discovered pottery dating back as far as 2500 B.C. Because Belize is located in the Maya area, Hammond believes this early pottery is evidence the Maya were living at Cuello as early as 2500 B.C. The finding of pottery this early was a very important discovery for the Maya area since this date is about 1500 years earlier than any other ceramics known from the area. If Hammond is correct, this information would pose a problem for Book of Mormon archaeology. We will discuss the problem and its solution and see how this information contributes to Book of Mormon archaeology after discussing the excavations.

Belize, formerly known as British Honduras, is nestled between Guatemala on the south and west and the Caribbean Sea on the east and has a northern border with the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. Belize is in the part of southern Mesoamerica known as the southern Maya lowlands, which includes northern Guatemala and adjacent parts of Mexico as well as Belize, and constitutes the heart of the Book of Mormon lands during the Nephite period.

As in many archaeological discoveries of note, the finding of the early ceramics was entirely unexpected. Cuello was originally chosen for excavation because of the presence of Protoclassic period (200 - A.D. 200) pottery. Hammond was interested in adding to our understanding of this period. The original survey began in 1973; Cuello was chosen for test excavation in 1975, and when the unexpectedly early radiocarbon dates were obtained, Cuello was chosen for full-scale excavations which began in 1978.

So far, about 10,000 pieces of broken pottery or shards have been found which date to the earliest phase at Cuello, called the Swasey phase. The Swasey phase is dated from 2500-1300 B.C., based on a series of 12 radiocarbon dates. The more dates available, the more accurate should be the interpretation. A single radiocarbon date is not considered very good evidence. Therefore, the Swasey dates are fairly well established. In fact, they represent the best evidence available thus far for ceramics appearing in Mesoamerica as early as 2500 B.C. Ceramics approaching this age have been found in only two other areas of Mesoamerica thus far--Puerto Marquez, on the Pacific Coast near Acapulco and the Tehuacan Valley located east and south of Mexico City. There is only one radiocarbon date available for the early ceramics from Puerto Marquez and none for the early ceramics from Tehuacan. As with any archaeological discovery as important as the Swasey phase at Cuello, there was initial skepticism about the dating, but now the dates are generally accepted. This phase will be divided into at least two phases after more work has been done on the ceramics.

Two plaster-faced platforms with postholes have also been found which are a part of the Swasey phase. One is dated at 2200 B.C. and the other at 2000 B.C. The earliest jade at Cuello is also interesting. This dates to about 1200 B.C. Pictured in the National Geographic article is an oblong, perforated jade bead with the following caption: "A bead of distinctive blue jade dates from 1100-900 B.C. and may indicate the earliest known Maya contact with the Olmec people on the Gulf of Mexico." It is more than likely that this bead means more than contact but the actual presence of Olmec people. The Olmec evidence is overlain by a succession of floors and ceremonial architecture. By A.D. 300-400 Cuello had a 30-foot-high pyramid on top of a 12-foot-high acre-size platform.

There is a consensus among Book of Mormon scholars that the Maya represent the Mulekite, Lamanite and Nephite peoples. Of these three groups, the Mulekites arrived in the southern Maya lowlands first. Since the Mulekites arrived in the New World after 600 B.C., the beginning of the Maya, according to the current interpretation of Book of Mormon scholars, could not have been earlier than 600 B.C. If Hammond is correct in identifying the Swasey phase (2500-1300 B.C.) as Maya, the Mulekites (and Lamanites, Nephites) can not be Maya and a major problem would exist in the current interpretation of Book of Mormon archaeology.

Who then are the Swasey phase people? The Book of Mormon identifies only one people in Mesoamerica during this time period--the Jaredites. Could the Swasey people be Jaredites? The answer is yes, they certainly could.

Most Book of Mormon believers date the arrival of the Jaredites in the New World around 2200 B.C., based on the chronology of Archbishop James Ussher. We know that Ussher's dates are in error and that a better estimate for the arrival of the Jaredites is around 2400 B.C. Therefore, we can see that the 2500 B.C. date for Swasey ceramics fits in well with the arrival of the Jaredites, keeping in mind that radiocarbon dates are not precise. The 2500 B.C. date for Swasey is only an interpretation and the actual date could just as well be 2400 B.C. Archaeologically, the Jaredites from about 1400 B.C. on have been identified as Olmec because of the distinctive Olmec art style. Prior to 1400 B.C. the Jaredites have not been correlated with any archaeological culture. Therefore, not all Jaredites are Olmec, only those from 1400 B.C. on.

There were probably small numbers of Jaredites (Olmec) living throughout the lowland Maya area at the time of the Mulekite arrival. We can say this because there is scattered evidence of Olmec artifacts found throughout this area and because the Jaredites eventually attained a very high population. Although the main area of Jaredite occupation was just northward of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, which was also true of the Olmec, scattered groups of Jaredites went into the land southward to hunt, especially after the snakes were removed by the hand of the Lord. Certainly, some of them stayed to live.

There is evidence the Olmec imported obsidian from the land southward into the Gulf Coast of Mexico area. Since the Jaredites became very prosperous and conducted extensive trade, they must have had colonies located in the land southward to exploit natural resources not found in the land northward.

The Olmec (Jaredites) had an entirely different way of life than the Mulekites. Therefore, from the viewpoint of the archaeologist, if the Book of Mormon history is valid, one would expect to find evidence of a people moving into the southern Maya lowlands with a new way of life sometime soon after 600 B.C. This is exactly what archaeologists have found. They call this new way of life the Mamom phase. It begins about 550 B.C. and was first discovered at the site of Uaxactun, located within a half-day's walk north of the well known Maya site of Tikal in northern Guatemala. The Mamom people were long considered the beginning of the Maya.

As we would expect, the Mamom people were more numerous than the people of the previous phase. Also, the Mamom people had different pottery, figurines (in great abundance) and architecture. In fact, they were the first to build stone temples in the southern Maya lowlands. This correlates with the Book of Mormon, which hints at the idea that the Jaredites preferred to build with wood if possible. As excavations continue, more and more Mamom phase sites are being found. The Mamom phase is now well represented throughout the southern Maya lowlands. This is in harmony with the Book of Mormon statement that the Mulekites were more numerous than the Nephites (Mosiah 11:78).

The end of the Mamom phase is also in harmony with the Book of Mormon history. The Book of Mormon tells us that at about 200 B.C. Mosiah led a group of righteous Nephites from the highlands of the land of Nephi, where they had been living for almost 400 years, down into the lowlands north of the land of Nephi where they discovered the people of Zarahemla (Mulekites), who then chose Mosiah to be their king. A very important bit of archaeological information confirming this part of Book of Mormon history is the fact that in the phase following the Mamom phase, figurines virtually disappear. Because figurines are believed to be part of the religion (worship of idols), the lack of figurines in the phase following the Mamom phase (the Chicanel phase) is good evidence the Mamom people (Mulekites) changed their religion. If the Mulekites were willing to accept Mosiah, a righteous man, to be their king and were willing to adopt his language, it is very likely most of them repented of their idol worship and no longer made use of figurines.

Because the archaeological pattern (Mamom and Chicanel) fits the Book of Mormon pattern of the arrival of the Mulekites followed 400 years later by the Nephites so well, and because there is evidence that a non-Maya people inhabited the Maya area prior to this, it would seem logical that the Swasey people will eventually be identified as pre-Olmec or some other non-Maya people.

The finding of ceramics dated as early as 2500 B.C. at Cuella fits the Book of Mormon pattern of culture history and helps to validate it. The faith of Book of Mormon believers continues to be rewarded as more and more archaeological information from the Book of Mormon lands known as Mesoamerica becomes available.

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