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Number 149

Editor: Ross T. Christensen

June, 1982

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SEHA Publications Committee: M. Wells Jakeman (chairman and general editor), Bruce W. Warren, Don E. Norton, Ruth R. Christensen, Ross T. Christensen.

Published several times a year by THE SOCIETY FOR EARLY HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, for the dissemination among its members of information on new discoveries in archaeology throwing light on the origins of civilization in the Old and New Worlds, on the earliest periods of recorded history in the two hemispheres, and on the important historical claims of the Hebrew-Christian and Latter-day Saint scriptures; also news of the Society and its members and of the B.Y.U. department of archaeology and anthropology, of which the Society is an affiliated organization. Included are papers read at the Society's and Department's annual symposia on the archaeology of the Scriptures. All views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author of the contribution in which they appear and not necessarily those of Brigham Young University or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Subscription is by membership in the Society, which also includes subscription to other publications.

149.0 THE SEHA BOOK-OF-MORMON-LANDS EXPEDITION OF 1977. By David A. Palmer, chemical

engineer with the Amoco Research Center of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana and former student of ar-

chaeology at Brigham Young University.

Editor's Preface. Dr. Palmer's paper is a site-by-site and museum-by-museum report of the Society's 1977 photographic expedition to Mexico and Guatemala. The expedition was planned on the assumption that Mesoamerica—i.e., central and southern Mexico and northern Central America, in other words the lands lying to either side of the Isthmus of Tehuántepec—was the area of Book of Mormon civilizations (cf. *Newsl. and Proc.*, 147.0). The itinerary of little known and out-of-the-way archaeological sites and museums was selected, not because of their attractiveness and interest to tourists, but because of their importance to an understanding of Book of Mormon geography. (It should be emphasized, however, that the field project herein reported does not commit the Society to any particular geographical interpretation.)

M. Wells Jakeman, professor emeritus of archaeology and anthropology at Brigham Young University, served as consultant during advance planning but did not accompany the group into the field.

Dr. Palmer is the author or co-author of papers presented at the Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures in 1966 and 1974 (*Newsl. and Proc.*, 103.61, 137.1). Also, he is the author of a volume entitled *In Search of Cumorah*, published late in 1981, that he himself summarized in the December issue of the *Newsletter and Proceedings* (147.1) and that is reviewed twice by others in the present issue (149.1, below). That work, in fact, draws heavily on the findings of the 1977 expedition, which he cosponsored and directed. Bruce W. Warren, expedition archaeologist and later SEHA president, made an extemporaneous, illustrated report of the 1977 project on October 27, 1978, at the Twenty-seventh Annual Symposium. (See *Newsl. and Proc.*, 143.2, p. 8.)

Dr. Warren based his field research on the following chronology of Mesoamerican archaeological history:

- . Preclassic Age, from about 2500(?) BC to about AD 300.
 - A. Early Preclassic Period, from about 2500(?) to about 1500 BC.
 - B. Middle Preclaassic (i.e., "Olmec") Period, from about 1500 to about 500 BC.
 - C. Late Preclassic Period, from about 500 BC to about AD 100.
 - D. Protoclassic Period, from about AD 100 to about 300.
- II. Classic Age, from about AD 300 to 900.
- III. Postclassic (or "Militaristic") Age, from about AD 900 to 1519, the year the Spaniards invaded the Valley of Mexico.

Thus the Preclassic Age of Mesoamerican archaeology would correspond in time with the civilizations of the Book of Mormon. Specifically, the Early and Middle Preclassic periods would equate with the earlier Jaredite civilization, while the Late Preclassic and Protoclassic periods would correspond with the later Israelitish (Nephite, Lamanite, and Mulekite) civilizations.

All measurements of distance are given below in the metric system. (A kilometer [km] equals about five-eighths of a mile.)

IN NOVEMBER, 1977, the board of trustees of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology authorized an expedition to Mexico and Guatemala for the purpose of producing a high-quality visual record of geographical, ethnographical, and archaeological materials relevant to the Book of Mormon. Although much photography had already been done in Mesoamerica, it related primarily to the Classic and Postclassic ages. Our efforts were therefore aimed at the earlier Preclassic Age, i.e., that of Book of Mormon times, roughly from 2500 BC to AD 300.

The expedition consisted of three members: Bruce W. Warren, Brigham Young University archaeologist; photographer Dan Bates of Washingotn, DC; and myself, for organization and logistics.

Between December 3 and 22 we called in rapid succession at literally dozens of archaeological sites and museums, many of them in obscure locations almost unknown to curious visitors from the outside world. Also, we actually discovered a previously unreported Preclassic site at Tapilula, Mexico, and confirmed that the ruins of Chalchitán, Guatemala, indeed date back to the Late Preclassic Period, as previously suspected.

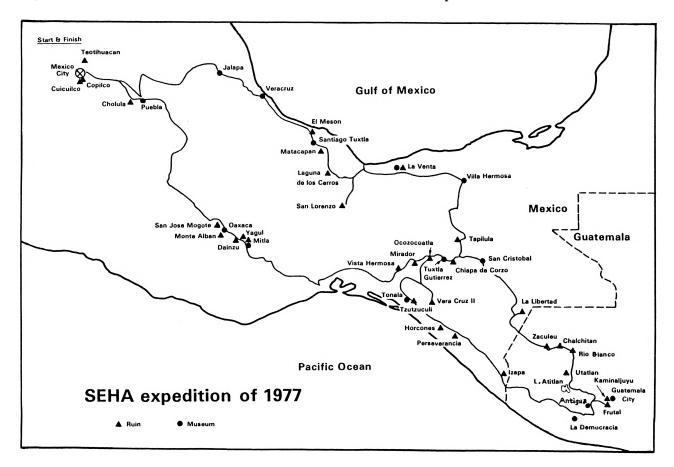
First we flew from the United States to Mexico City, drove from there by rented car to Guatemala, then back by a different route, moving quickly from site to site (see map), then flew back to the US. We drove a total of 4866 km (3024 miles) by automobile, a very long distance to cover in less than 19 days on Mexican and Guatemalan roads. In fact, the shock absorbers on the car wore out before the trip was half over.

We photographed several dozen Preclassic sites, most of them unrestored for tourist visitation. We also took pictures at 16 museums, varying in size from the great National Museum of Mexico to dusty, one-room buildings. (Actually, we were better able to remove objects from glass cases for close-up photography in the small museums and private collections than in the larger museums.)

The SEHA now has a set of 773 slides, which have been mounted, numbered, indexed, and coded as to location and subject matter. The documentation includes the exact location of each site and accurate information on all museum shots.

MEXICO CITY TO THE ISTHMUS

Field work both began and ended at Mexico City. We left the federal capital via the northern route shown on the map and returned via the southern.



Jalapa. We first visited the State Museum of Anthropology at Jalapa, where we obtained exciting pictures of huge Olmec monuments, located outdoors, and some Maya codex reproductions. There were several wheeled toys, though not of Preclassic age. One figure from Nopiloa, Veracruz, dating to the second to fifth centuries AD, is apparently wearing a phylactery.

Veracruz. From Jalapa we traveled through Veracruz and down the coast past the edge of the extensive Papaloapán lagoon system, which extends from the coast many miles inland. South of the outlet to the sea at Alvarado we came to Lerdo, a sugar processing center for a very rich agricultural area, which boasts two crops per year.

El Mesón. We continued southward. Many mounds are visible from the road. The archaeologist Michael D. Coe counted 60. The site called Tatocapán of El Mesón is of Middle(?) Preclassic age, although little archaeological work has been done there. We stopped briefly and found a few sherds on the surface.

Santiago Tuxtla. In front of the town of Santiago Tuxtla lies a little village called Tula. A beautiful, fountain-fed waterfall is found just below a restaurant at the far end of the village. Farther down the road another fountain bursts from the rocks and forms a river.

At a small museum, rummaging through boxes of uncatalogued material found in the immediate vicinity, we turned up a variety of fearsome stone weapons. We were particularly interested in pottery that illustrated warriors of varying physical types, since the Cerro (Hill) Vigía overlooking the town seemed to us an excellent candidate for the location of the final Nephite and Jaredite battles (cf. In Search of Cumorah). The large body of water to the north, the many rivers, the spectacular fountains gushing from the earth, the agricultural productivity (which would give a military advantage in preparing for a major battle), the surrounding ruins dating back to Jaredite times, and the fact that the hill stands free and overlooks a large flat plain-all meet criteria that would seem to be required.

Matacapán. About four km before arriving at the town of Catemaco, to the right of the road and after a 10-minute walk from the village through tobacco fields, we inspected the ruins of Matacapán. The sherds all date between about AD 400 and 500 and are of Teotihuacán style. If Cerro Vigía was the location of the last battles, the ruin may have been that of a new settlement set up by the victors. The circumstances also suggest that Teotihuacán was not allied with the Nephites. A large number of good-sized mounds are found at the site, but very little archaeological work has ever been done there.

Laguna de los Cerros. On the road to Acayucán we spotted several mounds off to the left, about five km before reaching Juan Díaz Covarrubias. Then just past a town called Corral Nuevo (not on the map, but about four km past Covarrubias), we turned off to the right. After some exploring, required by the fact that the local inhabitants did not know of the existence of ruins in their own fields, we found the very large site of Laguna de los Cerros. According to Dr. Coe, it is every bit as large as San Lorenzo (see below), but archaeological activity has been meagre. It is known to be of Olmec date. The mounds are very high, but only a little pottery was observed, perhaps because there were but few occupation levels and because the place has been so long abandoned. We observed a large stone altar and a ball court. This site would unquestionably be a fruitful one for archaeological investigation.

THE ISTHMUS

San Lorenzo. At times during the year, San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán, the site of an outstanding Olmec city, can be reached by jeep. However, the best way is to rent a speedboat at Minatitlán. The trip takes one and a half hours up the Coatzacoalcos River and the Rio Chiquito to the village of Tenochtitlán (not to be confused with the Aztec capital in the Valley of Mexico).

At Tenochtitlán, we discovered that the ruins of San Lorenzo were still an hour's walk away. The road leads in a southerly direction away from the river through innumerable cow pastures. The very large site is on an elevation. Dr. Coe reports that so far as he can determine, the hill was built up for the most part with hand-carried fill. But it is so large that such an idea staggers the imagination.

One can observe many partially uncovered monuments, including a stone head. By the use of a magnetometer, the location of other monuments is known, but they have not been excavated. Some of the test trenches can be seen, as well as the ponds in which the ancient Olmecs collected water. The site is so large that without our excellent guide, most of the monuments could not have been located without several days' effort.

San Lorenzo is one of the most important of Preclassic ruins. Our special interest in it stems mainly from the considerable circumstantial evidence that it could be the Jaredite city of Lib (Ether 10:19-28). In fact, it appears the Book of Mormon describes the development of what archaeologists now refer to as the Olmec civilization. The location, the time of commencement, destruction by civil war about 900 BC, and "all manner of work of exceedingly curious workmanship" (vs. 27)—all suggest positive identification.

La Venta. The volcano-shaped pyramid at La Venta is an impressive sight. It is known that the site was first settled about 1200 BC and abandoned about 600 BC, after which it was covered with drift sand. Later, it was inhabited once again. Unfortunately, because the monuments were disturbed before careful archaeological techniques could be applied, it is not known whether the statues of bearded personages found there date before or after its abandonment. It does seem clear, however, that at some point in time there was a shift from an Olmec, jaguar-style cult to a serpent cult, and that the latter is associated with bearded personages.

Villahermosa. The La Venta Archaeological Park at Villahermosa, some 120 km to the east, is first-class. In fact, most of the monuments of La Venta have been moved there and re-erected individually in a forested setting.

HIGHLAND SITES AND MUSEUMS

Tapilula. From Villahermosa we followed the road to Chiapas southward through Teapa and Pichucalco. In a mountain valley climbing up toward the Pan American highway, we stopped at the town of Tapilula, where we found a number of Late Preclassic mounds. This may be a new discovery on our part; so far as we know, no ruins had ever been reported at that town. In fact, even the people who built a house into the side of one of the mounds had not realized that it was anything but an ordinary hill until we pulled potsherds out of the excavation they had made. We counted 10 mounds at this site.

Chiapa de Corzo. We traveled on to Chiapa de Corzo, a major settlement in the Central Depression of Chiapas, dating from about 1500 BC to the present. We photographed Mound 32, whose burial dates to about 100 BC (late Guanacaste Phase).

Tuxtla Gutiérrez. From there we drove on to Tuxtla Gutiérrez to check the local museums. We also took pictures of a large relief map in the Museum of Natural History.

San Cristóbal. From Tuxtla, we reversed our route in order to visit the headquarters of the New World Archaeological Foundation at San Cristóbal de las Casas.

La Libertad. At San Cristóbal we found that Thomas A. Lee, Jr., field director of the Foundation, happened to be leaving at just the right time to be able to take us to the ruins of La Libertad, near the Guatemala border. That was fortunate, for in order to get to the site, one must drive about seven km over a terrible road through a dozen gates, half of which are locked.

The setting for the extensive ruins at La Libertad is indeed impressive. They are close to the mountains which mark the border with Guatemala, while rivers enclose them on either side. These rivers are fed mostly from large springs that form lagoons above the site. Two branches come together at a waterfall of unsurpassed beauty to the north of the ruins. Within a few miles other branches converge.

According to Mr. Lee, the setting is also ecologically unique, for every type of food grown anywhere in Mesoamerica can be grown there.

Late Preclassic sherds and obsidian blades are so abundant on these mounds that we gathered a garbage sack full within only a few minutes.

Both major variants of the Mesoamerican view of Book of Mormon geography accept the Isthmus of Tehuántepec as the narrow neck of land and the Guatemalan highlands as the land of Nephi. One variant correlates the Usumacinta River with the river Sidon of the Nephite record, while the other names the Grijalva River.

In the Grijalva correlation, La Libertad is an obvious choice for the city Manti, which was located at the "head of the river Sidon," near the land Nephi (Alma 22:27–28). The manner in which the streams come together around La Libertad to form the Grijalva River suggests that at least part of the geographical requirements of the record are met in that correlation. Also, the archaeology of the site is consistent with the time span mentioned for Manti.

GUATEMALA

Zaculeu. The first city up the Pan American highway into Guatemala is Huehuetenango. Outside the city we visited the Classic and Postclassic ruin of Zaculeu, where a few Preclassic remains have also been found. Then we departed from the main road to take an all-dirt road through Sacapulas.

Chalchitán. A main objective was the town of Aguacatán. We were fortunate enough to arrive on market day, and we tape-recorded sounds from a market we supposed to be similar to those of ancient times. Commodities were weighed with small, handheld balances, cacao beans serving as a measure of weight.

At the south end of town we visited the source of the Rio San Juan, where a large stream emerges from the interior of the mountain. A pipe had been inserted, the probable source of pure drinking water for Downstream a short distance are very large mounds, a part of the ruins of Chalchitán. They are described by A. Ledyard Smith in his Archaeological Reconnaissance in Central Guatemala. Also, a drawing-reconstruction has been done by Tatiana Proskouriakoff. There are over 40 mounds, including two plazas and a ball-court group.

We visited the two highest pyramids. Our objective was to determine whether or not the ruins were Preclassic, Smith having said they were of Early and Late Classic, and Postclassic date. However, he had also indicated the questionable presence of Preclassic materials. We were fortunate indeed, for the field by the principal mound had been ploughed in very deep furrows. Sherds were so numerous that they presented more of an obstacle to cultivation than rocks would have been. The larger pieces had been thrown onto the stone walls separating the fields. Dr. Warren found definite Late Preclassic markers on the pottery.

A previous suggestion had been made that Chalchitán could be a candidate for the city of Helam (Mosiah 23:20, 25, 26). We are told that the people of Alma "fled eight days' journey into the wilderness. And they came to a land, yea, even a very beautiful and pleasant land, a land of pure water" (Mosiah 23:3-4). This would correctly describe the setting of these ruins, especially in view of the nearby fountain.

Rio Blanco. In traveling on down the road to Sacapulas and thence to Quiché and Atitlán, we observed that for the most part the route is dry and very barren. To our knowledge, the only Preclassic site in the area other than Chalchitán is Rio Blanco, five km west of Sacapulas along the same road.

Utatlán. We visited the Postclassic site of Utatlán, outside Quiché, but in spite of the fact that it was a capital of the Quiché nation at the time of the Spanish conquest, practically nothing remains today.

Antigua. Edwin M. Shook in Antigua is probably the most knowledgeable person alive on highland and coastal archaeology. He maintains his own laboratory on his estate and has two professional assistants. Most cordial when we called on him, he informed us on a number of important issues.

The coast of Guatemala, he told us, is littered with Preclassic sites of both the Middle and Late periods. An important Late Preclassic site, on the southern coast by the Rio de los Esclavos, is Los Cerritos, although modern construction has practically obliterated it. Salvaged artifacts can be seen in the Gordon Smith private collection in Antigua. Los Cerritos would be an interesting candidate for the first Nephite colony (cf. 2 Ne. 5:7ff.). Frutal. Following Mr. Shook's directions, we headed for the ruins of San Antonio Frutal, passing over a large hill that gives a panoramic view of the Valley of Guatemala. The ruins, second largest in the valley, are south of Guatemala City near Villa Nueva. The Late Preclassic and Classic site is off to the left about two km down the road toward San Miguel Petapa.

Kaminaljuyú. Our next call was at the ruins of Kaminaljuyú on the outskirts of Guatemala City, a site which many of us identify with the city Nephi, because the archaeology there is congruent with the Book of Mormon account. In addition to the large mounds themselves, there are two separate excavations and a partial reconstruction of an Early Classic Period, Teotihuacán-style temple.

Guatemala City. A most interesting piece at the National Museum of Anthropology in Guatemala City is the "black throne" brought in from Kaminaljuyú, though we found it hidden away by a service en-



The "black throne" of Kaminaljuyú dates to the 200year Miraflores period preceding the time of Christ. These untranslated glyphs could be of early Lamanite origin.

trance. Underneath a bearded figure appear hieroglyphic inscriptions that may be the earliest evidence of Maya writing.

Mr. Shook met us at the Museum and escorted us to the nearby zoo, where a number of additional archaeological monuments have been placed. Some from the Pacific coast portray fat, blind men. There are also columns of basalt from Kaminaljuyú, which were buried in tombs in a manner very similar to that of the La Venta offerings.

About half the large Jorge Castillo private collection of Guatemalan archaeological pieces has now been opened to the public in the Museo Popol Vuh. It is small in size but well organized and documented. A number of the vessels were almost identical to some from La Libertad we had seen photographed at the headquarters of the New World Archaeological Foundation at San Cristóbal.

La Democracía. Returning by way of Antigua, we crossed over the skirt of the Agua volcano and on down toward the coast. The museum at La Democracía is located near a number of sites dating back to the Middle Preclassic Period: El Baúl, Monte Alto, and La Democracía. They seem to have some affinity with the Olmecs and may have had something to do with early Lamanite population growth. The most typical sculpture of this zone is a seated, pot-bellied, blind man of obscure meaning.

BACK TO MEXICO

Izapa. Tapachula, Mexico, is a convenient base for visits to Izapa, an important religious center dating to, at the latest, the Middle Preclassic through the Late Classic periods. Stela 5 in Complex A, the important tree-of-life sculpture, has become badly eroded, particularly on the right side of the carving, as we noticed when we compared it to earlier photographs.

In Complex B, we observed the alignment of two mounds and two altars with the volcano Tacaná.

We saw many artistic connections with Kaminaljuyú, including the serpent motif, four-footed altars, and depictions of frogs and fish. According to Dr. Warren, there are also ceramic affinities.

Near the main mound, a stream issues from the ground. Vegetation in the area is abundant, with cacao, bananas, and maize flourishing.

Perseverancia. Proceeding northwestward toward the Isthmus of Tehuántepec, we stopped near the ruins of La Perseverancia. A test pit dug by the NWAF had produced 100 percent Late Preclassic material dating to about 100 BC. It was a large ceremonial and population center, located northward from present-day Pijijiapán between the Rio Jesús and the Finca Perseverancia.

Horcones. Twenty km farther on are the ruins of Horcones, reached by a road that leads to a transmission tower. There are engravings on some of the stones of which the road is made, and we later learned that in its construction, building platforms from the ruins had been used. Also, at many points the modern road lies right over an ancient one.

At the ruins are a number of mounds and building complexes connected by causeways. Included are fortifications and a Classic Period monument. On top of Cerro Bernal is another complex, containing smashed building platforms.

The site is located at a spot that would have controlled passage along the coast, for it is in the middle of a narrow corridor separating the Sierra Madre range from the ocean. Apparently, it was built about the time La Perseverancia was abandoned, that is, around the time of Christ. Occupation continued through the Classic Period.

Tzutzuculi and Tonalá. Farther up the coast, at the south edge of Tonalá, are the ruins of Tzutzuculi. Recently studied by the NWAF, the site appears to date from about 900 BC to about the time of Christ. Some of the monuments of this area have found their way into a modest new museum at Tonalá.

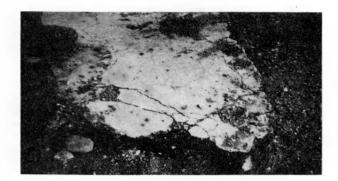
Vera Cruz II. From Tonalá we visited the Mar Muerto at Paredón, then continued northward, past the Preclassic site of Tiltepec.

Our intent was to visit the large Preclassic site of Vera Cruz in the Frailesca region of Chiapas, on the way back to Tuxtla Gutiérrez. The maps all showed a paved road connecting the Pan American highway with Villa Flores. But it was a major deceit; the road was abysmal.

When we finally reached our destination of Villa Corzo, the ruins being just on the other side of it, we were halted by about 100 people who blocked the road with large trucks. They had sealed off the entire village and were waiting until the governor of Chiapas might show up to listen to their grievances. Despite our negotiations, we were unable to continue to the ruins. Reluctantly, we headed for Tuxtla Gutiérrez, having barely enough time to get there before the museum closed for the day.

Tuxtla Gutiérrez Again. Dr. Warren's old friend, Ramiro Jiménez Pozo, removed interesting pieces from the museum cases at Tuxtla Gutiérrez for us to photograph. At the excellent zoo, we also took pictures of animals indigenous to the region.

Chiapa de Corzo Again. At Chiapa de Corzo we saw mound groups 1 and 5, which had been damaged



A portion of the cement floor of the temple at Mound 1, Chiapa de Corzo.

in a recent earthquake and were now generally offlimits to tourists.

It is unfortunate that, after all the money spent by the NWAF to restore the important Preclassic site of Chiapa de Corzo, it has been virtually abandoned by the government. It is easy to see there distinct construction levels representing three successive time periods. Dr. Warren pointed out similarities in floor plan to Solomon's temple. We photographed some excellent examples of Preclassic cement.

Ocozocuautla. Returning along the Pan American highway towards Tehuántepec, we took pictures of the mounds at Ocozocuautla on the east side of the road. They date from about 1000 BC to about AD 300.

Mirador. Thirty-one km past Ocozocuautla, we turned left onto a dirt road which began just before the bridge over the Rio Soyatenco. A four-km, halfhour ride brought us to the pig-infested village of Vicente Guerrero. The principal mound at the nearby Preclassic ruin of Mirador (not to be confused with El Mirador, Guatemala) is exceptionally high. This leads to its name, for the view from the top is excellent, limited only by the sides of the valley in which the ruins are located.

This was the place, incidentally, where fragments of a codex were found in an archaeological test pit dug by the NWAF. The site was developed about 1500 BC, was burned about AD 350, and was finally abandoned about AD 700(?).

Vista Hermosa. Next were ruins dating from about 1000 BC to about AD 900, located in the town of Vista Hermosa. Many ceramics were being exposed as workers excavated a mound in a central plaza for use as land fill.

According to Dr. Warren, some 8000 archaeological sites have been reported in the State of Chiapas alone, probably half of them Preclassic.

OAXACA HIGHLANDS

Mitla. The visible ruins at Mitla are beautiful but of Postclassic date. It is known, however, that the occupation of the site dates back to Middle Preclassic times.

The museum at Mitla belongs to the University of the Americas. Even more interesting, however, is a private collection next door belonging to 80-year-old Howard Leigh. He let us photograph some marvelous pieces, including two unique Preclassic polychrome effigy jars. He also has a four-horned incense burner which Dr. Warren recognized as similar to others found in Palestine.

Mr. Leigh has been studying the inscriptions of nearby Monte Albán and can tentatively date one of them, by correlation with the Venus calendar, to 545 BC.

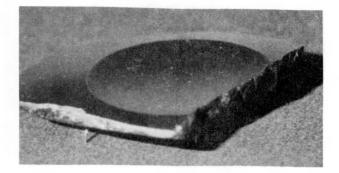
Yagul. Northward from Mitla a few km are the ruins of Yagul, which cover a time span from Monte Albán I to V (Middle Preclassic to Postclassic). Impressive fortifications overlook the restored ruins from the hill above.

Dainzu. Continuing northwestward a short distance and one km off the highway are the restored ruins of Dainzu. The impressive architecture is exclusively from the Monte Alban II Phase (100 BC to AD 200, according to Dr. Warren). Some of the wall inscriptions at the ballcourt suggest that the game was played with the hands. (In later times, the ball was not touched by the hands.)

Monte Albán. Most of the structures observable at Monte Albán are of Classic date, but a pyramid of irregular shape, Mound J, on a prominent spot in the plaza, dates to the earlier Monte Albán II phase. We examined some of the inscriptions containing calendar symbols and marveled that the city could have been built on a mountain so high above the surrounding plain.

San José Mogote. The site of San José Mogote dates from about 1600 to about 600 BC. Monument 3, found at a large pyramid, contains an inscription which could perhaps be the earliest known manifestation of the sacred calendar.

Because of ancient agricultural advances, it is believed that only half the population was needed to till the land. Craft specializations such as mining and metal working could therefore be developed. One kind of object the ancient artisans traded was polished iron mirrors. In a dusty, one-room museum we photographed not only polished mirror fragments but also the raw material from which they were manufactured-magnetite-mined in the valley itself.



A concave Olmec mirror of iron oxide (magnetite). Such mirrors were worn by Olmec rulers, as depicted on a number of their monuments. Fashioned by hand, each one must have required hundreds of hours of labor.

San José Mogote is an attractive candidate for the capital of the Jaredite land of Moron (Ether 7:5ff.).

CENTRAL MEXICO

Cholula. In recent years restorations have been carried out at Cholula in the State of Puebla, showing to advantage impressive Classic and Postclassic constructions around the main pyramid, which covered 40 acres and reached a height of 181 feet. In Preclassic times, however, the pyramid was of more modest proportions, measuring only 55 feet in height. The earlier construction is not directly visible now, but may be seen in tunnels cut underneath the main pyramid.

Copilco and Cuicuilco. The ruins of Copilco and Cuicuilco in the Mexico City area were covered with lava from the Xitle volcano, apparently in the first



Dr. Palmer (left) and Dr. Warren in front of a typical small pyramid at Cuicuilco, which was covered with lava about the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. Note the stairway leading to the sanctuary platform on top. half of the first century AD. At Cuicuilco, substantial excavations have been carried out in the past 15 years. At the circular pyramid, dating from about 600 BC to around the time of Christ, three layers of construction have been uncovered. Across the road and less familiar to tourists, three impressive Preclassic temples have been freed from the lava and restored.

Teotihuacán. At Teotihuacán, stratigraphy and radiocarbon dating of the ash-layer artifacts have made possible a dating of the eruption of the Xitle volcano. As a place to which people fleeing the eruption gathered, Teotihuacán began to flourish about that time.

Mexico City. In Mexico City at the end of our journey, we visited a geographical society to photograph the original Tapestry of Jucutacato. It shows what may be the landing of nine ships on the coast of Veracruz, perhaps the same group mentioned in the Paraíba text, who would have arrived shortly after 531 BC. The original tapestry is in extremely poor condition. We therefore photographed very carefully a copy in the possession of the National Museum of Anthropology.

Some References to SEHA Publications. By the editor. References to some of the sites and subjects of Dr. Palmer's report have previously appeared in publications of the SEHA.

Substantial studies of the Olmec (late Jaredite-period) civilization of the Gulf Coast and elsewhere are found in the Newsletter and Proceedings, 103.60 and 133.0; see also 133.1 and 133.2. Other papers are found in the Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society, No. 4 (1953), pp. 19–25, and in Progress in Archaeology, pp. 88–95, 99–103, and 156–158.

On Kaminaljuyú, see Progress in Archaeology, pp. 167-172.

Many SEHA publications, principally by M. Wells Jakeman, refer to Izapa and its Stela 5. See especially Newsletter and Proceedings, 104.2 and 110.0; Progress in Archaeology, pp. 119-126; Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society, No. 4 (1953), pp. 26-49; Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico (1958); and Tree of Life in Ancient America, pp. 12-28.

(Other titles on Izapa-not published by the Society, howeverare M. Wells Jakeman, *The Complex "Tree of Life" Carving on Izapa Stela 5*, 1958; and V. Garth Norman, *Izapa Sculpture*, 1976.)

Concerning cement, such as found at Chiapa de Corzo, see Progress in Archaeology, pp. 110-112.

The Newsletter and Proceedings, 126.3, makes brief mention of the codex fragments found at Mirador, Chiapas.

On four-horned ceramic incense burners, such as that owned by Howard Leigh of Mitla, see *Progress in Archaeology*, pp. 118-119.

Several sites in central and southern Mexico are treated in a popular vein in ibid., pp. 149–157: Teotihuacán, Copilco, Cuicuilco, Cholula, Mitla, Monte Albán, Yagul, and San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán.

On the Paraíba text, mentioned in connection with the Jucutacato tapestry, see *Newsletter and Proceedings*, 111.01, pp. 6–7, and 118.0, pp. 3–4; reprinted in *Transoceanic Crossings to Ancient America*, pp. 22–24 and 41–43. 149.1 LINGUIST, ARCHAEOLOGIST EVAL-UATE VOLUME ON BOOK-OF-MORMON GE-OGRAPHY. Two reviews of In Search of Cumorah: New Evidences for the Book of Mormon from Ancient Mexico, by David A. Palmer (Horizon Publishers: Bountiful, Utah, 1981. 254 pp. \$9.95). Reviews by John A. Tvedtnes, doctoral candidate in Semitic and Egyptian languages at Hebrew University, and V. Garth Norman, specialist in Mesoamerican archaeology and iconography.

Significant Contribution. By John A. Tvedtnes. David A. Palmer has made a significant contribution to Book of Mormon geography and archaeology in his book, *In Search of Cumorah*. Building on information gleaned from professors M. Wells Jakeman and John L. Sorenson, he has given a good case for the location of the hill Cumorah in southern Mexico, with additional evidence for the geographical boundaries of the Jaredite, Mulekite, Nephite, and Lamanite civilizations.

No truer statement can be made about scientific investigation of the Book of Mormon than that made by Palmer in regard to the importance of geography as a prelude to study of Book of Mormon archaeology. Without proper identification of the region in which the peoples whose history is contained in that sacred volume lived, it is impossible to proceed into its archaeological aspects. To attempt archaeological research without the geographical identifications would be comparable to trying to learn about the biblical Israelites by studying ancient ruins in nearby Egypt rather than Israel proper. The research would disclose some cultural traits shared by Egyptians and Israelites, but would not disclose information about the Israelites themselves. Nor would it necessarily shed light on the correct time period for the Bible, since there are archaeological remains of thousands of years in Egypt.

By reference to the archaeological material, Palmer notes that the New York location for the Book of Mormon's hill Cumorah is unsuitable, for there were no cities in that region, as required by the text. On the other hand, Mesoamerica fits the various criteria which must be met for the scenario set forth in the scripture.

Indeed, there is only one problem with identifying the isthmus of Tehuántepec as the "narrow neck of land"—and the same problem exists in identifying the Isthmus of Panama (Darien) as such. It is that in both cases, the narrowest path is defined by a line which runs roughly north-south rather than east-west, as described by the Book of Mormon. To solve this problem, Palmer proposes (pp. 35-36) that the Nephites followed the ancient Israelite system, placing the sea by which they arrived at their backs and calling the direction which they then faced (northeast) by the term "east." To support his contention, he cites Avi-Yonah and Aharoni in the *MacMillan Bible Atlas*. However, the *MBA* tells only part of the story. While it is true that the Hebrew term yam ("sea") could be used to designate "west," it was only because, in the Syro-Palestine region, the Mediterranean Sea was to the west! It is likewise true that, using the same system, the Israelites were able to term the north $s^{e}mol$ ("left") and the south yamin ("right"), while th east was called qedem ("front, forward").

This was only one of two directional systems used in ancient Israel, however. The other, of much more common usage, termed the four directions as follows: east-mizrah ("dawn"), south- $d^{e}rom$, north-saphon, and west-ma^carab ("entering, setting"). But both systems were oriented toward the rising sun. Indeed, the word qedem ("forward, front") was used to designate east only because that is the direction one faced to see the rising sun. In this case, the sea was to the rear. Had the Israelite orientation been based on the sea rather than on the sun, they probably would have faced west and called it qedem!

To me, it is not reasonable to believe that the Nephites living inland and no longer in view of the Pacific Ocean could have reoriented their directions according to the sea rather than the rising sun. From inland, the major phenomenon on which directions could be based was the daily sunrise. Palmer's argument for this reorientation is therefore not convincing. Believing, however, that he has correctly identified the Nephite homeland, I would like to suggest that there begin a search for a more reasonable explanation for the Book of Mormon description of the narrow neck of land and the placement of the seas.

There are two other points on which I find myself in disagreement with Palmer. He is wrong, for example, in stating that the lunar year is 360 days (p. 37, fn. 2). Actually it is 354 days (29½ days per lunar cycle, measured as alternating 6 months of 30 and 6 of 29 days). And despite the admiration I have for the scholarship of both Robert Smith and Hugh Nibley, I cannot accept their rendering of Cumorah as *qum ora*, "arise O light" or "arise revelation" (p. 21, etc.). In the first place, the Hebrew form for "light" is '*or*, not "*ora*," though it is feminine. Being a feminine noun, it would require, for the imperative verb, *qumi*, not *qum*, thus giving *qumi-or*. In addition, the Hebrew word for "light" does not have the further connotation of "revelation," as does the English word. I prefer to see in the name Cumorah the Hebrew form $k^{e}morah$, "priesthood," though I am open to other suggestions.

One of the important points made in Palmer's book is that there was undoubtedly more than one Jaredite survivor—though we know only of Coriantumr from the Book of Mormon. Palmer, however, did not seize the opportunity to give further evidence for this. For example, one may note that many Nephite names are Jaredite in origin (cf. Korihor/Corihor, Corianton, Morianton, Cumen, Kishkumen, Cumenonhi, Cumenihah—misspelled Camenihah in the printed version—Gadianton, etc.). It is alos likely that the continuation of the "secret combinations" among the Gadianton robbers resulted, not from their reading of Mosiah's translation of the record of Ether, but rather from personal contact.

Much more could be said about this subject, as also about the size of the Nephite population—much smaller than would fill a great expanse such as is required by those who see all of North and South America as the stage for the Book of Mormon story (e.g., Mosiah 2, where King Benjamin is able to gather all his people together overnight). More could also be said about the biblical concept of "city" and "land," especially in light of archaeological finds (e.g., Lachish) and geographical reality in the land of Israel.

All in all, though I found a few problems with Palmer's work, I was favorably impressed and felt that my time was well spent in reading what I hope will become an introduction to further study of Book of Mormon geography and archaeology.

New Version of an Old Theory. By V. Garth Norman. David A. Palmer has selectively detailed a plausible theory of Book of Mormon geography in his new book, *In Search of Cumorah*. I found it to be both stimulating and informative. It is by far the most objective recent publication available on the subject of Book of Mormon geography and related archaeology. Also, the approach is appropriate to the author's objective of presenting a general, over-all, believable picture of a possible Mesoamerican setting for Book of Mormon history as supported by archaeological evidence. It is a good synthesis of current views of the subject, along with some new ideas from the author.

The central theme of Palmer's book is the location of the hill Cumorah. Yet, while this theme is certainly of interest, the precise location of the hill is not crucial to an over-all reconstruction of Book of Mormon geography within the region of Mesoamerica. With or without Cumorah, the thrust of Book of Mormon textual evidence and supporting archaeological evidence is toward the Isthmus of Tehuántepec as the "narrow neck of land" (cf. Newsl. and Proc., 147.0).

Some added background will be useful in appreciating the scope of Dr. Palmer's work. The accumulation of material for his book began in earnest in 1974 (though the book may not have been been conceived at that time), when he promoted a "round robin" (workshop by correspondence) involving 12 of the most kowledgeable people on the subject. Two comprehensive manuscripts on Book of Mormon geography were circulated at that time to each of the 12 participants for their critical comments: one of them by John L. Sorenson on the limited Tehuántepec theory, proposing the Grijalva River of southern Mexico as the river Sidon of the Book of Mormon; and the other, in two parts, by this reviewer, on the broader Tehuántepec-Mesoamerican view.

The latter view, it may be added, had also been held for many years by M. Wells Jakeman and others, who had proposed the Usumacinta River instead of the Grijalva as the Sidon. However, because of time restrains Dr. Jakeman did not participate in the workshop.

A few of the critical commentaries resulting from the workshop were substantive, and some additional contributions were made, but over-all results were limited. The two manuscripts agreed with each other in many parts. Most of the 12 participants felt that Sorenson had the stronger argument for a Grijalva-Sidon correlation, but neither manuscript was complete in terms of dealing with all geographical requirements in the Book of Mormon.

Sorenson's revised and enlarged manuscript of 1977, which Palmer cites in his book, likewise disregards some geographical requirements, particularly the strategic narrow strip of wilderness. This border country between the lands of Nephi and Zarahemla is a major focus in Norman's paper, which tends to favor the Usumacinta-Sidon correlation. The desired outcome of the workshop—to thoroughly test the two main variants of the Tehuántepec theory, a necessary exercise before many conclusions can be drawn—was not achieved. Thus, while Palmer's book provides an up-to-date overview of Book of Mormon goegraphy, it has reference only to the Grijalva variant of the limited Tehuántepec theory which he espouses.

Leaving geographical considerations aside, I had hoped that certain artifacts of potential value to Book of Mormon studies could have been researched in greater depth. The Tapestry of Jucutacato, reproduced in color on the back of the dust cover, is Palmer's prime artifactual connection with the Book of Mormon. A key motif portrayed on this tapestry is a curious ball, suggesting to him the Liahona (Al. 37:38), which accompanied the original ancestors on their migrations to Mexico. He asserts that the ball is not likely an incense burner, as suggested by some archaeologists, because it is not open on the top.

Actually, no one acquainted with colonial-period artifacts of Mexico could question the identity of this censor, which must be *closed* at the top. Similar specimens of the period are to be found in museums in Mexico. I found a fourteenth-century French censor, corresponding in every detail, illustrated in a current dictionary.

Such loose treatment tends to weaken the entire argument, which actually has merit. The most one can say in this instance is that the incense burner may have functioned as an instrument of prayer for guiding the journey, somewhat in the manner of the Liahona in guiding Lehi, and could be a logical substitute for that device in this late version of the migration tradition.

Throughout the book, I frequently found that I had previously read elsewhere substantial parts of arguments developed in textual analysis and identification of geographical features, lands, and cities, both in my own works and others. For instance, the location of the narrow pass along the Tehuántepec trans-isthmian ridge by Sorenson is also considered by Palmer to be possibly on the west coast (p. 33), a view explored in great detail in the Norman manuscript mentioned previously, but which the author fails to document. Likewise, he does not cite an SEHA symposium paper by Norman which examined evidences for the ruins of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán as the city of Lib, as mentioned in Ether 10:20 ("Book of Mormon Archaeology: Alive and Well," Twentyfourth Annual Symposium, 1974).

While it is true that Palmer acknowledges in a general way at the outset that there are many other sources of his information then those he explicitly cites, this is not enough. This lack of documentation may not affect the quality of his information, but it does seem beneath the scholarly level otherwise mantained. Simply, the reader should be made aware that many premises developed by Palmer come predominantly from other sources; his book should therefore be used with caution as a source of original interpretations.

The book nevertheless contains a great deal of reliable information. The reader must be impressed that he is actually perusing lands and antiquities from the heart of Book of Mormon history. Over-all, Palmer's work is commendable and should move us to look with increased anticipation to still other in-depth and specific scholarly studies for confirmation and elucidation of Book of Mormon geography and archaeology.

Editor's Note. The 1977 geographical expedition of the SEHA to Mexico and Guatemala yielded important information which assisted Dr. Palmer in preparing his volume, *In Search of Cumorah*. A site-by-site report of the expedition appears in the present issue of the *Newsletter and Proceedings*. See above, 149.0.

149.2 SOME POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATIONS OF BOOK-OF-MORMON SITES. In the question-andanswer period that followed the paper "Geography in Book-of-Mormon Archaeology," read by Ross T. Christensen at the Thirtieth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures, held on September 26, 1981, a question was asked about specific placenames in the record which had actually been identified. In response, suggestions were made by Lynn M. Hilton, V. Garth Norman, and Dr. Christensen. They are listed here for their interest in connection with other articles published in this issue of the *Newsletter and Proceedings*; the Society does not necessarily endorse or subscribe to any of them.

In addition to Jerusalem, where the Book of Mormon story begins, the following were mentioned:

Nahom, where Ishmael was buried (1 Ne. 16:34). This has been equated with Nehhm, a small administrative district of modern Yemen in southern Arabia. See Christensen, 1978.

Bountiful (Old World), where Lehi's group embarked for the "promised land" (1 Ne. 17:5; 18:8). This place is believed to have been located at Salala, a harbor on the Arabian shore of the Indian Ocean. See Hilton and Hilton, 1976, 1976a.

Lib, a city "by the narrow neck of land" built by a Jaredite king of that name (Ether 10:18–20). This has been tentatively identified by M. Wells Jakeman and some of his students as the ruins of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán, located on the Isthmus of Tehuántepec, southern Mexico, where Michael D. Coe began excavations in 1966. (Dr. Coe's findings, incidentally, were analyzed in Mr. Norman's unpublished paper read at the Society's Annual Symposium of 1974, "Book-of-Mormon Archaeology: Alive and Well;" see Newsl. and Proc., 136.1.)

Nephi, the first important settlement of the Nephites and later a Lamanite city (2 Ne. 5:7, 8; Mos. 9:1–15). Some have equated it with the ruins of Kaminaljuyú, near modern Guatemala City. These ruins are treated in Christensen, 1963, pp. 167–172.

Zarahemla, Nephite capital in the land southward. Dr. Jakeman is preparing a publication covering his tentative identification of that city with an important ruin on the west bank of the Usumacinta River of southern Mexico. Cf. Christensen, 1963, pp. 174-176.

Bountiful (New World), Nephite city visited by the resurrected Christ (3 Ne. 11:1). Dr. Jakeman believes this city was located at or near Aguacatal, a ruin in western Campeche near the southern Gulf Coast of Mexico. This identification, together with reports of BYU and SEHA excavations there, appears in Christensen, 1963, pp. 177–191.

Further identifications of Book of Mormon placenames are proposed in Palmer, 1981, and in Vestal and Wallace, 1981.

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1981 In Search of Cumorah: New Evidences for the Book of Mormon from Ancient Mexico. Horizon Publishers: Bountiful, Utah.

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1981 The Firm Foundation of Mormonism. LL Company: Los Angeles.

149.3 COMING CLOSER TO CONSENSUS. A partial review of Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless: Classic Essays of Hugh W. Nibley. (Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978. 323 + xxviii pp.) Review by Benjamin Urrutia.

This book contains what some students of Book of Mormon archaeology and geography will consider to be good news. Statements in the introduction to the essay, "The Book of Mormon: A Minimal Statement," show that Dr. Nibley has changed his mind in recent years about the ancient physical setting of the Book of Mormon: "The overall picture reflects before all a limited geographical and cultural point of view small localized operations, with only occasional flights and expeditions into the wilderness; one might almost be moving in the cultural circuit of the Hopi villages" (p. 149). He views the Nephites as having had a "tragically short-lived religious civilization that once flourished in Mesoamerica" (p. 150). Dr. Nibley formerly favored a vast setting for the Book of Mormon: from South America by way of Panama to North America (cf. *The World of the Jaredites*, 1952, pp. 226, 270–272). Now he has come to realize that the evidence favors the more limited area of Mesoamerica. It is an admirable trait for a scholar to be thus able to change his mind.

Even better, this means that Latter-day Saint scholars are now coming closer to consensus with respect to Book of Mormon geography. This in turn may make it easier for the LDS church to give some attention to the archaeology and geography of the Book of Mormon when this volume of scripture becomes the focus of study in the 1984–86 period.

However, only one paper in the whole collection is entirely archaeological: "The Haunted Wilderness." This was originally published in *Revue de Qumran* as "Qumran and the Companions of the Cave." But the editors of *Timely and Timeless* fail to mention anywhere the change of title. (In fact, the original place of publication is listed for *none* of the book's selections. This is one of two major flaws of the volume the other being the lack of an index.) Quibbling aside, the Qumran paper, under either title, is a masterpiece of historical archaeology: The written records have been carefully analyzed and the results convincingly juxtaposed with the archaeological data.

However, one puzzle in connection with the Qumran paper remains: Written traditions, in particular the work of Tha'labi, the most reliable source, lay heavy emphasis on records of *metal*. But only one such document, the Copper Scroll, has been found at Qumran (cf. *Progress in Archaeology*, pp. 43-44). Where are all the others?

149.4 **SYMPOSIUM CHAIRMAN SETS DATE.** Saturday, October 9, 1982, has been set as the date of the Thirty-first Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures, according to Welby W. Ricks, chairman. The all-day, yearly meeting will be held at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, in the J. Reuben Clark Law Building, Room 205.

A preliminary announcement of the Symposium, together with a call for papers, was mailed to all Society members on May 20. According to Dr. ricks, those wishing to participate should return to the Society office by August 14 a one-page abstract or summary of their proposed papers.

Members of an organizing committee to assist Dr. Ricks have been named, and several meetings have already been held. Committee members include Esther Phelps Parks, SEHA vice-president; Ellis T. Rasmussen; Bruce W. Warren; Ruth R. Christensen; and Ross T. Christensen. Most of these have served in connection with the Symposium a number of times in past years. Dr. Rasmussen was chairman both in 1972 and 1973. Dr. Christensen was chairman in 1964 and 1967, and Dr. Warren in 1980. Mrs. Christensen has been a committee member several times, including 1976, when she served as vice-chairman. Vice-president Parks was a committee member in 1981.

The Society's brief Annual Business meeting will also be held on the same day, probably at the close of the last Symposium session.

149.5 BYU PLANS HUGE FUND-RAISING DRIVE. A five-year campaign to raise \$100 million for strengthening Brigham Young University's academic programs was announced at a recent banquet honoring some of the school's major donors.

BYU president Jeffrey R. Holland said that, following the school's three-decade span of record growth, building construction on the campus had leveled off and the size of the faculty and student body had reached a steady state. "To become an educational Mt. Everest, a leader among the great universities of the world," he added, would require "seeking out broader horizons of support."

The new funding program will be titled "Excellence in the Eighties." It calls for raising \$20 million a year for the next five years. "Funds will be used to upgrade faculty positions, establish endowed chairs, conduct professional development programs, create endowed scholarships and grants for students, and strengthen the university's academic and research programs."

Virgil V. Peterson, SEHA president, recently announced arrangements whereby Society members and others may donate any amount to BYU with their gifts restricted to the exclusive use of the SEHA—and with tax-relief for themselves (*Newsl. and Proc.*, 147.3). President Peterson's goal for 1982 is \$50,000. Members should send their checks to the BYU Development Office, A-285 Smoot Building, Provo, Utah 84602, and ask that the donation be restricted to the use of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology.

Thousands of return-address envelopes for mailing in contributions are being sent to BYU alumni and others all over the world. The flap of each envelope contains a list of projects on which the donor may check the one he wants his money spent for. All he needs to do in order to have his gift earmarked for the Society is to write "SEHA" in the blank space at the bottom of the list and check the box opposite it.

President Peterson also promised complimentary Life Memberships in the Society to donors of substantial gifts. Enthusiastic Society members may make their gifts by sponsoring individual issues of the *Newsletter* and *Proceedings*. The printing cost of an issue is about \$500. See the December issue, 147.9.

The new BYU fund-raising campaign involves several phases. President Holland stated that the public phase will be announced later this year.

149.6 ARCHAEOLOGY TALKS LISTED FOR BYU EDUCATION WEEK. A four-day course entitled "Archaeology Sheds New Light on the Scriptures" will be presented at Brigham Young University, Provo, August 24–27, as a feature of the annual Campus Education Week. The talks will be given at 11:45 a.m., Tuesday through Friday, in the David O. McKay Building, Room 115. The teacher is Ross T. Christensen, BYU professor emeritus of archaeology and anthropology and editor of the SEHA Newsletter and Proceedings.

The schedule is as follows:

Tuesday: "The Serpent as a Symbol of the 'Fair God' in Ancient America."

Wednesday: "1982: New Climate for Book of Mormon Archaeology."

Thursday: "Between Noah and Abraham: The Dimly Lit Centuries."

Friday: "BYU Excavates in the Holy Land."

A registration fee is required in order to attend these classes. The fee also entitles the visitor to attend a large number of other subjects also listed on the printed program. Contact Campus Education Week, 297 HCEB, BYU, Provo, Utah 84602 (tel. 801-378-2087) for a program and information.

149.7 IN THE NEXT ISSUE. A paper by Benjamin Urrutia, SHIBLON, CORIANTUMR, AND THE JADE JAGUARS, is being readied for the next issue of the *Newsletter and Proceedings*. Figurines and other small jadeite objects manufactured in ancient Mesoamerica often portray the jaguar, which is the closest New World relative of the Old World lion. Careful study of the derivation of certain personal names found in the Book of Mormon reveals a plausible reason why this should be.

Briefer articles on the Star of David in ancient America and on excavations at El Mirador, Guatemala, are likely to be included in the same issue.

This announcement is merely a statement of the editor's plans as the present issue goes to press. Changes may be required.