La Venta Culture

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Abstract: A series of brief comments in which the author presents archaeological findings, architectural notes, and myths and legends that deal indirectly with the Book of Mormon. Dibble discusses the wheel, ancient irrigation methods, metals, Mexican and Mayan codices, Quetzalcoatl, ancient buildings, and numerous other related items. The twenty-first part covers the La Venta culture.
LA VENTA
Culture

By DR. CHARLES E. DIBBLE

The last decade, and in particular the last five years, have witnessed the accumulation of a vast amount of accurate anthropological data on the early cultures of Central America. Of particular interest have been the excavations led by Dr. Matthew W. Stirling of Smithsonian Institution in the states of Vera Cruz and Tabasco, Mexico. The finds were so impressive that the archaeology of this area formed the subject of discussion during a special conference held in Chiapas, Mexico, in the summer of 1942.

During the discussion it was decided to abandon the term “Olmeca” and use the name “La Venta Culture” in honor of the site where objects of this culture were discovered. La Venta can be partially characterized by great stone faces with pug nose and thick lips, fat figurines, an abundance of jade objects, altars with a seated figure emerging.

This culture is contemporaneous with other cultures to the west (Monte Alban 1) and to the north (Zacatenco) and dates back to the years immediately preceding the Christian era. It is in no respect a primitive culture but one well advanced, which presupposes centuries of preparation and formation. Dr. Alfonso Caso rightly considers this as the antecedent and mother culture which influenced the subsequent Maya, Teotihuacan, and Monte Alban cultures.

Archaeologists are continuing in their work of identifying and tracing the origins of La Venta culture.

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