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## U.A.S. Newsletter, no. 28 (August 10, 1955)

Editors(s): M. Wells Jakeman

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# U. A. S. NEWSLETTER

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Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

Acting Editor: M. Wells Jakeman

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28.0 Editor of the Newsletter in Mexico. Gareth W. Lowe, editor of the UAS Newsletter for the past five issues (Nos. 23-27), and graduate assistant in the Department of Archaeology of BYU for 1954-1955, is now attending Mexico City College, in order to take advantage of the special opportunities offered by that institution for advanced training in Mesoamerican field archaeology. Mr. Lowe with his family are now stationed in Oaxaca, southern Mexico, where he is a member of the field party of the MCC Department of Anthropology doing work at the newly-discovered ruins of Yagul located not far from the famous ancient temple-city of Monte Albán. He reports in a recent letter that Yagul is proving to be an important site, yielding archaeological materials from several periods including the "Pre-Classic" or Book of Mormon period, and offering evidence for solving the difficult problem of the relationships in ancient times of the Zapotec and Mixtec nations of southern Mexico.

We should take the opportunity here of congratulating Mr. Lowe on the high quality of the Newsletter issues produced under his editorship, and wish him and his family a happy and successful sojourn in Mexico.

28.1 Recent Archaeological Work in Ohio. By Robert K. Willardson, director, Columbus (Ohio) Chapter, UAS. The quest for the still unsolved story of the prehistoric tribes that once inhabited Ohio and left their mark on the land in the form of mounds and other earthworks is continuing. Recent explorations were conducted at two major sites, Toepfner Mound on Dublin Road in Columbus and at Fort Hill. Excavation at Toepfner revealed an additional 67 burials in log tombs to bring the total to 85 and presented a broad chronology of Adena burial methods. Stemmed projectile points, slate gorgets, and celts were found in some of the burials. The tombs were dated by radioactive-carbon methods as being about 2,200 to 3,300 years old (much older than previous estimates).

Continued excavation at Fort Hill, a state memorial in Highland County, revealed a post-mold pattern of a large enclosure. The structure, sub-rectangular with round corners, was 120 by 60 feet. Several caches of flint chips were found in the village site at Fort Hill.

Raymond S. Baby, Curator of Archaeology at the Ohio State Museum, and Professor William S. Webb of the University of Kentucky, collaborated on an analysis of the prehistoric Adena culture. Their technical report, "The Adena People Revised," delineated 23 new culture traits and redefined 39 old traits. During 1954 James Ford of the American Museum of Natural History made a study of the obsidian cores in the Hopewellian collections at the Ohio State Museum; Alfred Guthe, Curator of Anthro-

pology at the Rochester Museum, made an examination of ceramics from northern Ohio sites; and the Fels Institute conducted an x-ray investigation of crania of Adena and Hopewellian Indians.

- 28.2 Notes from the Columbus Chapter. On March 3 of this year, members of the Columbus Chapter of the UAS were privileged to hear an illustrated lecture on the "Arts and Skills of Aboriginal Mississippi Valley," by Dr. Glenn A. Black, Director of Archaeology for the Indiana Historical Society and for Indiana University. Dr. Black used color slides to show that in ceramics, metal-working, stonecrafting, and textiles the prehistoric Indian peoples of the Mississippi Valley were scarcely unsurpassed, even by the well-known peoples of Peru, Central America, and Mexico.

The major cultures discussed were the Adena, the Hopewellian, and the Middle Mississippian. Of special interest was the classic Adena Pipe, a tubular tobacco pipe carved in the shape of a human being with such exquisite detail that it is regarded as a classic of ancient American art. This effigy was found in the Adena Mound at Chillicothe in 1901. It is important for students to note that the image is wearing a Hopewellian helmet and ear-spools. Other interesting relics of the Adena Mound-builders are the engraved sandstone tablets which were found in Cincinnati. These tablets exhibit beautiful bilateral symmetry and are thought to have been used as stamp molds.

Examples of pottery vessels decorated with negative-painting (commonly found in Mesoamerica and Peru) from the Illinois River area were shown. Other examples of pottery included several types of stirrup-spout jars, which are found from Indiana to Peru.

Many objects of ornamentation from Hopewellian burials were discussed, including such items as copper headdresses, ear-spools, bear canines, shell and pearl beads, wildcat jaws, and mica ornaments. Some of the copper ear-spools had an overlay of iron or silver. Numerous objects made from mica, such as geometric forms and plumed serpents, were also shown.

Weaving of cloth was practiced by the Mound-builders. Although most of their textile work has been destroyed, some samples have been preserved. Many bolts of cloth were discovered in the Sparrow Mound. Fragments of Hopewellian cloth, which were preserved because they were in contact with copper breast-plates, are on exhibit in the Ohio State Museum.

Probably the most important contribution of Dr. Black's lecture was a greater appreciation of the archaeological treasures of the Ohio State Museum, since most of his slides were pictures of items in the Museum. Many interesting details, which would be overlooked by the casual observer, were brought out by his discussion and the careful photography of the slides.

- 28.3 Salt Lake Chapter Visits University of Utah Dig. On July 16, at the invitation of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Utah, a party of members of the Salt Lake Chapter of the UAS and archaeology students from BYU visited a prehistoric village site near Salina, Sevier County, Utah, now being excavated by that department. Dr. Jesse D. Jennings and Prof. James H. Gunnerson are directing the dig, which is expected to continue for three years, and to throw new light on the early Puebloid "Fremont" culture of that region. The group studied the excavation in progress, and heard Dr. Jennings explain the methods used,

and the objectives of the statewide archaeological survey now being conducted by the University of Utah department.

28.4 Progress of the Mexico City Chapter. Since its organization on April 15 of this year (see last Newsletter, 27.1), the new Mexico City Chapter of the UAS has rapidly become one of the most flourishing branches of the Society. A large and enthusiastic membership has been meeting monthly under the leadership of Director Otto Done, to hear illustrated lectures and engage in discussions on the archaeology of Mexico and the Book of Mormon--one of the meetings being held in the National Museum, in conjunction with the members of the 1955 BYU Archaeological and Cultural Tour of Mexico (see following), where the combined party examined some of the important collections of the Museum and were addressed by members of the Museum staff. The Chapter has also undertaken the publication of a mimeographed monthly bulletin, under the editorship of Assistant-director Joseph E. Vincent. To be known as the "Archae-O-logic," this bulletin will supplement the UAS Newsletter, by providing Chapter members with basic information on archaeological subjects which will assist them in understanding the more technical articles in the Society publications. It will also keep the Chapter members up-to-date on local news, and provide an excellent means of uniting and increasing the branch's membership.

28.5 BYU Tourists Inspect Mexico Ruins. Twenty-one members of the 1955 BYU Archaeological and Cultural Tour of Mexico, including four UAS members, examined spectacular ruins in southern Mexico, June 10-July 1.

Cosponsored by the BYU departments of Archaeology and Modern Languages and the Extension Division, the Tour was directed by M. Carl Gibson, instructor of Spanish. Ross T. Christensen, general secretary-treasurer of the Society, served as assistant director. Dr. Francis W. Kirkham of Salt Lake City, UAS general officer, and Society members Miss Etta Rasmussen of Salt Lake City and Miss Janice McAuliffe of Long Beach also were members of the Tour.

In addition to examining important and picturesque sites and local museums between the Valley of Mexico and Oaxaca, the group toured the National Museum of Archaeology in company with the Mexico City Chapter of the UAS and attended a monthly meeting of the Chapter held in the Sahagún classroom at the Museum (see also above, 28.4).

José O. Dávila M. of Puebla, UAS member, government-licensed guide, and expeditionary with M. Wells Jakeman in 1954 to Honduras and the Usumacinta River (see August 23, 1954, Newsletter, 22.03) and with Milton R. Hunter and Otto Done in 1955 to Bonampak (see March 31, 1955, Newsletter, 26.0), served as guide at Teotihuacan and Cholula (see below).

Outstanding ruins which the Tour visited were the following:

28.50 Teotihuacan. Near the village of San Juan Teotihuacan in the northeastern part of the Valley of Mexico, the Tour visited the magnificent stone ruins of the ancient ceremonial center of Teotihuacan. This name means 'Place of God,' and the site was anciently dedicated to the worship of Quetzalcoatl, the Fair God. The dominant feature is the Pyramid of the Sun, an enormous rectangular structure some 180 feet high rising in four sloping terraces. The temple which anciently surmounted it has now completely disappeared.

Past the west face of the Pyramid of the Sun, the perfectly straight

"Avenue of the Dead" traverses the entire length of the ancient city. On the north the thoroughfare terminates with the second largest structure of the site, the unexcavated and little known Pyramid of the Moon. Lining the avenue on either side are numerous smaller structures, only a few of which have been excavated, such as a priestly residence which the group visited.

At the southern end of the site is a large complex known as the Citadel. A bulwark or very thick wall surrounds a large rectangular court. Upon the bulwark, on each of three sides, four platform altars or small pyramid temples are spaced evenly, making a total of 12. Across the eastern end, three more similar structures are located. In about the center of the enclosure is another altar (or dancing?) platform. To the east of this stands the main structure of the complex, the Pyramid-Temple of Quetzalcoatl. On the western face of the structure a number of large heads of the "Precious-feathered Serpent" (Quetzalcoatl), alternating with heads of the Rain God (Tlaloc), stand out in full relief, the obsidian eyes still present and the paint still bright in some instances.

Four members speculated on the Citadel having been built by a remnant of the Nephite Christians of the Book of Mormon in early post-Book of Mormon times. The 12 platforms or pyramids surrounding the three sides of the plaza would represent the Nephite twelve disciples (3 Nephi 12:1) according to this view, while the three pyramids on the east would represent the Nephite first presidency (or Godhead?), and the main structure would stand for the resurrected Christ himself.

28.51 Cholula. Near Puebla is located Cholula, an ancient city containing the largest pyramid in the world, a much eroded structure of adobe bricks which covers twice the area of the great Pyramid of Cheops at Gizeh, Egypt.

Cholula was the pre-Aztec city where Quetzalcoatl-worship and apparently the Toltec civilization itself were kept alive until the coming of the Spaniards. Aside from the main temple pyramid, some 400 smaller temples were counted by Cortés at his arrival in 1519.

A maze of tunnels has been cut in all directions through the ancient structure by modern archaeologists in an effort to understand its history and composition. The guide, Sr. Dávila, reported the 1953 discovery of a smaller circular pyramid buried beneath the masonry in one corner of the large pyramid. This structure may date to the "Pre-Classic" or "Upper Archaic" period, when circular pyramids first appear in Mesoamerica, i.e. perhaps to the Nephite period of the Book of Mormon. Figurines found on the surface in the vicinity of the Pyramid indicate a still earlier occupation of the site in the "Lower Archaic" (Jaredite) period.

28.52 Mitla. Located in the state of Oaxaca in the south of Mexico, Mitla, meaning in Aztec the 'Place of the Dead,' is the site of the best-preserved architectural remains of the Mexican highlands. Although Mitla has only one small pyramid, it contains a number of temples arranged on platforms in groups of four around central courtyards. The mosaic stonework in which thousands of small, accurately cut stones are put together in a variety of patterns based on textile designs, characterizes the walls of the structures. Tombs in the form of a cross are found underneath several of the temples. Stone lintel blocks of tremendous weight and length span many of the entrances.

Mitla is believed to have been a burial place for Zapotecan kings and a center for religious pilgrimages. It was conquered by the Aztecs in the

fifteenth century.

After seeing these interesting ruins, the Tour party visited a private museum owned by Mr. E. R. Frissell in the modern village of Mitla, which contains many unusual antiquities from a radius of some 200 miles.

28.53 Monte Albán. Undoubtedly the most spectacular ruins visited by the Tour were those of Monte Albán, a Zapotec religious center crowning a mountain ridge above the modern state capital of Oaxaca. Excavated by Alfonso Caso in the 1930's, the discovered occupation of the site dates back to somewhere near the time of Christ and continues through five periods to the coming of the Spaniards. The excavators have preserved the layered evidence of the various occupation periods.

A vast array of large stone pyramids surrounds a group of connected plazas. The fourteen main pyramids are believed to honor the fourteen principal gods of the Zapotecs. Outstanding discoveries in one plaza are low relief sculptures of humans in a variety of poses. One heavily-bearded individual is portrayed.

In excess of 150 tombs have been excavated in the vicinity, some of which were visited by members of the Tour. Tomb No. 7 is one of the great treasure discoveries in the history of archaeology. The fabulous gold and jade contents were viewed in the museum at Oaxaca.

28.54 Copilco and Cuicuilco. Ten Tour members of more than ordinary enthusiasm for archaeology utilized a free afternoon visiting two sites of Book of Mormon significance which were not included on the regular itinerary. Copilco and Cuicuilco are sites which were overwhelmed by an ancient lava flow at the Pedregal on the outskirts of Mexico City. Copilco dates from "Lower Archaic" (i.e. Jaredite) times, while Cuicuilco may date to about 200 A. D. The former is a sublava village site, while the latter is a circular brick pyramid faced with stone, around the sides of which the lava flowed.

28.6 A New Reconnaissance of Central Chiapas by UAS Members and Carnegie Institution Archaeologist. In Newsletter 13.00 a report was given members of the Society on explorations conducted in Tabasco and central Chiapas in Southern Mexico, in 1953, by UAS members John L. Sorenson, Thomas Stuart Ferguson, and Gareth W. Lowe. In April and May of the present year, a second reconnaissance was undertaken in the same region by Mr. Ferguson, in behalf of the New World Archaeological Foundation of which he is president, accompanied by I. B. Ball of Berkeley, California (also a UAS member), Ernest Strong of Springville, Utah, and Edwin M. Shook, archaeologist of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, who joined the group at Tuxtla Gutiérrez, capital of Chiapas, Mexico.

From Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the party surveyed promising sites in the central Grijalva River valley of Chiapas. Among those visited were groups of mounds near Chiapa de Corzo and Acala, both of which were evidently large ancient centers. At Acala camp was pitched for a week, during which time a trench was dug at this site by native laborers, extending back from the edge of a cliff where a deposit of sherds had been exposed by weathering and stream action. This trench yielded several bagfuls of potsherds, also a number of figurines. After these were washed and studied, Mr. Shook was positive in dating the deposit back into "Pre-Classic"--i.e. Book of Mormon--times. Other ceramic collections were obtained at neighboring sites, which also indicated, in the opinion of Mr. Shook, an occu-

pation of this region in the "Pre-Classic" period. These collections were later transported to Mexico City, where they were placed in the care of Dr. Heinrich Berlin, another Carnegie Institution archaeologist, with whom Mr. Ferguson has contracted to direct a season of field work for the NWAf in central Chiapas beginning next October and extending to May, 1956.

These two surveys of the central valley of Chiapas by UAS members, it should be noted, are the first extensive archaeological explorations yet to be made in this region. Their combined results clearly establish the existence of a large urban or advanced-farming population there in "Pre-Classic" or Book of Mormon times. The first question remaining to be answered--perhaps by findings of the forthcoming expedition of the NWAf-- is that of the specific phase or phases of the "Pre-Classic" period to which this ancient population dates. After this question has been settled, it may then be possible to take up the problem of the origin of this "Pre-Classic" occupation of central Chiapas, in the light of this more exact dating, and discovered relationships to other developments of the "Pre-Classic" period in Mesoamerica.

- 28.7 Important News on the Lehi Tree-of-Life Stone. One of the most remarkable antiquities of the New World is a stone monument unearthed in 1941 at the ruins of Izapa in southern Chiapas, Mexico. This monument, labeled Stela 5 among the many numbered monuments of this site by its discoverer, Dr. Matthew W. Stirling of the Smithsonian Institution, is of fairly large size, measuring approximately 8 ft. high by 5 ft. wide and 2 ft. thick, and weighs several tons. It bears a carving on one side, which presents perhaps the most unusual and interesting scene ever encountered in ancient American art--a representation of the Tree of Life in the center, with six human figures seated around it, including a bearded man who is apparently telling the other five persons something about the Tree. As has been shown, this is a portrayal of the early Israelite prophet Lehi of the Book of Mormon(!), narrating to the other five named members of his family the vision of the Tree of Life which he had when they were in the desert journeying to the New World (c.598 B.C.), as recorded in the Book of Mormon, I Ne. 8. All or most of the many features of Lehi's vision besides the Sacred Tree itself are also depicted, such as the "river of water" and the "rod of iron," just as described in the Book of Mormon. Included in the scene are cherubim and other elements as seen also in ancient Near Eastern representations of the Tree of Life. Judging from the art style and technique of the sculpture, this remarkable monument was probably carved and set up at Izapa by ancient priests of Central America (whom we must consequently identify as Nephites of the Book of Mormon) around the year 300 A.D., i.e. near the end of the Nephite civilization of the Book of Mormon. (See M. Wells Jakeman, "An Unusual Tree-of-Life Sculpture from Ancient Central America," Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society, No. 4, March, 1953, pp.26-49.)

The Near Eastern elements appearing in this ancient American Tree of Life scene give this sculpture extreme importance to American archaeology, as undeniable proof of a connection between the ancient American civilizations and those of the Old World. Adding to this the fact, established in the cited article, that the carving also depicts in detail an event related in the Book of Mormon (thus definitely confirming the authenticity of that record, since the discovery of the ruins of Izapa and its Book of Mormon Tree-of-Life carving occurred long after that record's publication, i.e. independently of it), obviously makes this monument by far the most

important yet discovered in the New World--indeed comparable, in this respect, to the famous Rosetta Stone of the Old World, the key to the decipherment of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.

The preservation of this monument, therefore, should be a matter of great concern to the archaeological profession and to the world. Unfortunately, when the writer--the editor of this newsletter--visited the site of Izapa and examined the stela in the spring of 1954, he found it lying face up exposed to the elements. In order to prevent its further weathering, and to render it more accessible to students of archaeology and all others interested in the ancient American civilizations, he consequently, on returning to Mexico City, proposed to officials of the Mexican National Institute of Anthropology and History that the monument be removed from its exposed Izapa location to the National Museum of Archaeology in Mexico City. Since the Institute was without funds designated for such an undertaking, he indicated to them that the University Archaeological Society, an organization which he represented with headquarters at Brigham Young University in the United States, and which was especially interested in the advancement of Mesoamerican archaeology, might be able to provide the necessary amount. This offer was tentatively accepted, and discussions have continued since then as to the procedure of this joint enterprise, the UAS being represented in these talks by Director Otto Done of the Mexico City Chapter of the Society.

We are now happy to report to the members of the Society that word has been received from Mr. Done that the removal of the monument to the National Museum has finally been officially approved, and that the arrangements have been completed for its transfer by agents of the Museum in Chiapas, with an estimate of the expenses which, according to the agreement, will be paid by the UAS. He also informs us that the officials of the Museum are most anxious to obtain the monument, being now convinced of its great importance. The actual removal may be delayed somewhat by the rainy season which is now underway in southern Mexico and Central America; it should be completed, however, by autumn of this year.

The payment of the expenses of this transfer of the Lehi stela to Mexico City for its preservation and public display, will be an exceptional opportunity for the UAS, not only to advance the study of Mesoamerican archaeology and to further US-Mexican relations, but especially to promote interest in the great history of ancient America contained in the Book of Mormon. We wish to bring to the attention of the members that they may have a direct share individually in this important undertaking. This can be achieved by a special contribution to help the Society make this payment--we suggest five dollars or more--by those who desire to be listed in the records as thus directly assisting therein. (In making this contribution, please specify that it is for the transfer of the Lehi Tree-of-Life Stone to Mexico City. If by check or money order, make payable to The University Archaeological Society.)