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- 5.0 Radiocarbon dates: A new laboratory for radioactive dating has been placed in operation at Columbia University. Its first release of dates includes a significant one from the Maya area. The laboratory date was 481 A.D. plus or minus about 150 years. The material dated was a wooden door lintel from Tikal, Guatemala, on which a Maya date was carved. By the Goodman-Martinez-Thompson (GMT) correlation of Maya dates with Christian chronology (the one most favored the last decade), the equivalent Christian date would be about 740 A.D. By another system, the Spinden correlation, it would be around 480 A.D. This seeming rejection of the GMT chronology (not certain however, as Dr. Jakeman points out that this lintel might have been taken from a building older than the date carved on it and re-used) could probably be settled by carbon-dating other wood samples obtained by controlled excavations from known levels at Uaxactun and Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala. Carnegie institution has now submitted some of these for dating. Should the Spinden correlation prove correct, the Classic Maya period would fall in the first centuries A.D., the "United Order" period of the Book of Mormon.
- 5.10 Important papers: Papers of the XXIVth International Congress of Americanists (1949) have been released in three important books by the U. of Chicago press. Some points of interest to Society members are given below from one of them, The Civilizations of Ancient America (edited by Sol Tax, 1951).
- 5.11 Paul B. Sears, in "Pollen Profiles and Culture Horizons in the Basin of Mexico," supports with field data the following points: (1) the Early Archaic or Middle culture (Zacatenco, Copilco, Tlatilco) and the Aztec culture both enjoyed the benefit of relatively humid climates, or at least a high lake level prevailed then; (2) between these two there occurred a prolonged dry period. (In the Lake Texcoco area of the Valley of Mexico a layer of coarse volcanic sand can be traced stratigraphically under later sediments, between Teotihuacan I and II levels.) Compare the deforestation of the "land northward" of the Book of Mormon reported by the Nephite colonists ca. 50 B.C. This would fall in roughly the proper time level required by the present dates for Sears' dry period.
- 5.12 George W. Brainerd reports on field work in Yucatan where twelve pre-Spanish ceramic periods are now distinguished. Of outstanding importance was the finding of materials of Early Formative, Middle Formative and Late Formative stages in northern and central Yucatan. The dates for these would extend backward from about 300 A.D., probably a number of centuries into the actual Book of Mormon period. Large mound groups were as early as Middle Formative showing a high cultural development and probably a good-sized population. A characteristic of Early and Middle Formative was pattern burnishing of pottery. This is a design produced by rubbing in line patterns. The same kind of decoration occurs in the Las Charcas and slightly later Sacatepequez stages in highland Guatemala. Interestingly enough, pattern burnishing was also a characteristic type of decor-

~~ation in Palestine in 600 B.C.~~

- 5.13 Edwin M. Shook summarizes and illustrates for the first time the known materials from the Las Charcas, Sacatepequez and Miraflores phases in Guatemala. These are the Pre-Classic periods and are almost certainly Book of Mormon in date. One of his most provocative statements concerns the Pacific Coast of Guatemala and Chiapas, Mexico. "Manifestations of the Pre-Classic Horizon are, I believe, greater in this region than perhaps anywhere else in Meso-America. Here, archaeological sites of enormous size are situated along the banks of live streams from the foot of the volcanoes almost to the beach. Many of these were constructed entirely in Pre-Classic times." So far not a single one of these sites has been excavated scientifically. Could this be one of the earlier regions settled by the Nephites or Lamanites of the Book of Mormon?
- 5.14 Gordon R. Willey gives a brief description of the new Monagrillo culture of Panama. This is apparently the oldest culture in that region. In general characteristics its pottery resembles Formative (Pre-Classic) materials from Peru, Honduras, and Mexico. This is the first time anything at all approaching Book of Mormon age has turned up in Panama. However, this site appears simple, as if on the margin of a high culture area, not a center.
- 5.15 Victor Oppenheim reports that evidence of glaciation in Colombia indicates that the area of the San Agustin culture, the oldest (it is thought) so far known in that area, would have been under the mountain glaciers only seventeen hundred years ago if the present rate of deglaciation has persisted. This evidence weakens any geographical interpretation of the Book of Mormon which would make Colombia the land of Zarahemla with Panama the narrow neck of land.
- 5.2 Tlatilco: One of the most important Mexican excavations in recent years, at Tlatilco in the Valley of Mexico, is reported in Cuadernos Americanos for May-June, 1950, by Miguel Covarrubias. Of greatest interest is the multitude of figurines. Most of these are female, with fat, bulging thighs and slender torsos. Frequently the figures appear to be dancing. Headdresses occur in endless variety including many types of turbans. A fine-featured type of figurine is common, of which the author says, "Certainly most of these figurines are pretty, even judging by western concepts of feminine beauty, and some recall the figurines of the Archaic Greek epochs."
- Two periods are noted, the earlier having unelaborated ritual or religion. The later is an unquestionable immigration or invasion of "Olmecs" from the Gulf Coast region. In this second period ritual is important, and such features appear as bearded figures, ball players, tiger masks, head deformation, etc. The one carbon-14 date from Tlatilco places part of the period around 1500 B.C. This falls in the period of the Jaredites. The "Olmecs" belong to a later time, about when the Nephites and Mulekites come.
- Tlatilco material shows connections with Hopewell of Ohio, La Venta and Monte Alban of southern Mexico, Miraflores of Guatemala, and Chavin and Cupisnique of Peru. A complete report is awaited with interest.
- 5.31 U.A.S. news: Mr. Ross T. Christensen, a General Officer of the Society, has joined the faculty of the Department of Archaeology of BYU. He received the B.A. and M.A. degrees from BYU, the latter in archaeology, in 1947. Since then he has been studying for the Ph.D. degree at Yale, the U. of New Mexico and the U. of Arizona. In 1950 he was a Pan-American fellow in Peruvian archaeology engaged in research on the north coast of Peru.
- 5.32 U.A.S. panel: A panel discussion will be presented by the Society April 25th in Salt Lake City. Tentative plans have set 7:30 PM as the time and the Institute of Religion as the place. The subject will be, "The Present Status of Book of Mormon Archaeology." Details will be mailed members around S.L.C.