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Published approximately every six weeks by THE UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. The purpose of the Newsletter is to disseminate knowledge of recent archaeological discoveries bearing on the Latter-day Saint scriptures; also of the archaeological activities and viewpoints of the Society and its members. Subscription by membership in the Society: three dollars per year; or Life Membership, fifty dollars. (Membership also includes subscription to other publications of the Society and of the BYU Department of Archaeology.)

48.0 BYU EXPEDITION RETURNS. The 5th BYU Archaeological Expedition to Middle America has terminated its activities following successful investigations at Izapa and Aguacatal in southern Mexico, and staff members have returned to the campus.

Dr. Ross T. Christensen, field director, and Carl Hugh Jones returned last week to the campus from studies in southern Mexico which began early in January. Alfred L. Bush is spending a few days with his family in Denver before returning to begin the spring quarter. Welby W. Ricks returned late in January.

48.00 Mold Taken of Lehi Stone. At the ruins of Izapa, near Tapachula, southernmost Mexico, the expedition -- as previously reported -- made a Latex (liquid rubber) mold of Stela No. 5 containing an elaborate Tree-of-Life scene, interpreted by Dr. M. Wells Jakeman as depicting Lehi's well-known vision as recorded in the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 8. This mold was made under the direction of Dr. Ricks, who also left the expedition early and returned with the mold, with the intention of preparing a plaster-of-Paris cast for the benefit of students and visitors at BYU (Newsletter, 47.02).

48.01 Further Explorations at the Probable City Bountiful. The major project of the 5th BYU Expedition was the investigation of the ancient ruined city known as El Aguacatal, located in the Xicalango jungle near Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche. This ruin had been explored by Dr. Jakeman in 1948 and identified by him as very probably the city Bountiful of the Book of Mormon, as well as the ancient Tulan or Place of Abundance of the Spanish chronicles (UAS Bulletin 3, 1952; Newsletter, 22.02). Dr. Jakeman's 1948 excavations were located. The entire site, some 600 yards across, was cleared of its dense jungle undergrowth and mapped. About 150 earthen pyramidal structures were identified within this area. The earthen wall and moat running from water's edge to water's edge and dividing the peninsula occupied by the ruins from the mangrove swamp

to the northwest was completely traced out and was cross-sectioned by three trenches in order to study its composition and history. (This wall was one of the considerations that led to the identification of the ruins as the city Bountiful ten years ago; cf. Alma 53:3-5.) Excavations were also made in the approximate centers of the plazas of the principal groups of pyramids. Six soil samples were taken which it is hoped will throw light on the geological history of the area.

A remarkable development of the last several days of the month-long excavations at Aguacatal was the discovery of a still more ancient earthen wall surrounding a much larger area than that explored in 1948! Extending nearly a kilometer beyond the newer wall, it encloses not only Dr. Jakeman's Aguacatal but also a large area containing numerous earthen pyramids jutting upward from the swamp. Aguacatal appears to have been not only the only walled city in this part of the southern Gulf Coast region, but also a comparatively large city, and to have flourished over a very long span of time (judging from the pottery samplings, from the pre-Classic or Book of Mormon



Stairway of a cement pyramid excavated at Aguacatal.

period to Toltec and perhaps Aztec times).

48.02 Visits to Other Ruins. In addition to the investigations made at Izapa and Aguacatal, expedition members examined ruins at Teotihuacán, Copilco, Cuicuilco, and Querétaro in central Mexico; at Monte Albán, Yagul, Mitla, Chiapa de Corzo, and Palenque in southern Mexico; and at Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, and Kabah in Yucatán. Also, studies were made at museums in Mexico City, Oaxaca, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Villahermosa, Campeche, and Carmen, and at the Archaeological Park of La Venta near Villahermosa.

48.03 "Letters-From-Field" Sent to Research Patrons. A series of three "Letters-From-the-Field" by expedition member Alfred Bush have been sent to all Research Patrons and Life and Honorary Members of the UAS, covering some of the more spectacular incidents of jungle archaeology experienced by the group. These were rushed by airmail directly from the field, reproduced by spirit duplicator, and sent on immediately to the Society's patrons. (A Research Patron contributes \$10 or more per year to the UAS Research Fund in addition to the regular membership fee. The Letters-From-the-Field were prepared as among the "special Society honors" voted for Research Patrons, November 21, 1955; see Newsletter, 31. 20.)

48.04 To Be Reported at Symposium. It is expected that a more detailed report on the results of the expedition will be presented to Society members and the public at the 11th Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures, to be held this June in connection with the annual BYU Leadership Week and subsequently abstracted in the Newsletter. By that time it should be possible to complete the map of the ancient city and the processing of expedition photographs for public showing, also to make substantial progress on the analysis of ceramic and other materials resulting from the excavations, about a ton of which is being shipped to the BYU campus.

48.1 NEAR EASTERN CIVILIZATION. A review by Clark S. Knowlton of The Birth of Civilization in the Near East, by Henri Frankfort (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956. 85¢).

The advent of the inexpensive mass produced paper-back book has been a great blessing to the serious student. Almost all the basic books in any field of human study are appearing in one or another of the many series published today. By carefully examining the titles of such lists as Penguin, Doubleday, Anchor, Vintage, Phoenix, and The New American Library it is possible to build up a fine library in archaeology at a very low cost.

The book under consideration is an excellent example of the treasures to be found. Henri Frankfort, one of the greater authorities on the ancient civilizations of the Near East, discusses the formation and development of the early cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia. There are four chapters and an interesting appendix, as follows: (1) The Study of Ancient Civilizations; (2) The Prehistory of the Ancient Near East; (3) The Cities of Mesopotamia; (4) Egypt, The Kingdom of the Two Lands; and the appendix, The Influence of Mesopotamia on Egypt Towards the End of the Fourth Millennium, BC.

In Chapter 1, the author outlines what could be called his personal philosophy of history that has guided his research and interpretations. He asserts that each civilization has at its core a basic and hard-to-define cluster of concepts and ideas that integrate and give meaning to it. He uses the term "form" to describe this elusive grouping of basic cultural elements. Thus each civilization possesses its own form. When this form comes into being, a civilization may be said to have been born. When this form is destroyed, the civilization ceases to exist, even though the people who once possessed it may continue to live.

In his analysis of the prehistory of the ancient Near East (Chapter 2), the writer points out that toward the beginning of the Neolithic period a basic stratum of simple farmers came into existence, living in independent and relatively prosperous villages. Although called by different names, this basic level has been found in every section of the Near East, in North Africa, and in Europe. It was deeply influenced by the increasing aridity of the climate that turned once fertile lands into deserts but made the swampy river valleys inhabitable.

Toward the end of this period, or about the middle of the fourth millennium BC, the basic forms of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations began to appear. In Mesopotamia, the larger villages became city-states, urban nuclei intimately linked with their dependent rural areas. Each city-state was an independent social, political, and religious unit that recognized no higher political allegiance. Although often forced to pay tribute to some imperial power, these city-states rebelled whenever an opportunity presented itself, down to the end of the Mesopotamian period.

The economic and religious life of each city-state was conducted by a ruling temple group. Each city was believed to belong to a specific god who was the overlord of the other gods whose temples were found within it. The temple community was referred to as the "people of the God X." The temple owned the land and rented or allotted it to members of the

community. The temple supplied seed, draft animals, and implements, and stored the produce. The temple also maintained soldiers and hired craftsmen, as well as sending out merchants into foreign lands. Every member of the temple community had his allotted tasks, but once they were performed he was free to use his time and even temple materials for private gain.

The life of the Mesopotamian city was marked by a relative political equality. There were few slaves in this period, and all citizens were considered equal before the law and before the gods. The citizens elected an assembly which in turn selected persons to serve as political and military leaders,

Exposed to invasions from many sides and subject to continuous natural calamities such as flood and drought, the Mesopotamians felt quite insecure. Few men believed that anyone might secure happiness by his own endeavors. It was only as a citizen of a proud and free city and member of a temple community that a man could obtain relative security in this life and have some hope for his condition in the next.

Although Egyptian civilization evolved out of a way of life similar to that which gave birth to the early Mesopotamian civilization, it had an entirely different form. In Egypt the entire society was organized around the institution of a king ("Pharaoh"), who was believed to be a god. The king possessed absolute power. He ruled by custom and decrees which were believed to be the result of divine inspiration. Below the king there were few castes or classes. Men of even the lowest social origin might rise to the highest office in the land.

The economic life of the country was minutely organized and controlled by the king and his officials. All Egyptians labored for the monarch. None below the king, from the highest to the lowest, was free in the western sense of the word. Yet, surprisingly enough, the Egyptians seem to have been a happier and more optimistic people than the Mesopotamians. They were relatively more protected against the hazards of nature and the dangers of men. Although they were ruled by an absolute monarch, his government was based upon a common regard for customary rights and obligations. The institution of divine kingship provided social and personal security lacking in Mesopotamia. If the king was a god he could be depended upon to control the forces of nature and of society in such a way as to maintain peace and bring prosperity. A god was also expected to live and reign in righteousness and to maintain virtue, truth, and justice.

Thus out of a common level of small, independent, agricultural villages there developed in Egypt and Mesopotamia very different forms of civilization. That in Mesopotamia was a relatively democratic

way of life, centering in independent city-states and temple communities. That in Egypt was largely a rural way of life with few cities, in which control was exercised in minute detail by a powerful centralized government directed by a divine king.

This book should be of interest to all those who desire to know something about the life of the ancient civilizations that in many ways laid the foundation of our own. These civilizations existed for several thousands of years and were fairly successful in solving the problems that faced them. One wonders whether we shall be as successful in solving ours.

48.2 ON THE ORIGIN OF MAIZE. A review by Wilfrid C. Bailey of Indian Corn in Old America, by Paul Weatherwax (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954. 253 pp., \$6).

When we think of the American Indian we think of corn or maize. Centuries before the discovery of the New World, corn, unknown in Europe, was in cultivation over vast areas of America from Argentina to North Dakota. Three great centers of cultivation, in Peru, in Guatemala and Yucatan, and in Mexico, corresponded to the three great civilizations: Inca, Maya, and Aztec. The discovery of maize by Europeans exerted a greater influence on Western Civilization than all the gold and silver so feverishly sought by the conquistadores.

Dr. Paul Weatherwax, the author, has been teaching botany at Indiana University since 1915. This monograph is the result of years of study beginning with his publication of "The Evolution of Maize," in 1918 (Bul. Torrey Bot. Club, 45:309-342). This study has involved not just ordinary botanical research and travel but also extensive use of library sources. His bibliography contains most of the available eyewitness historical sources, as well as modern scientific reports from archaeology, ethnology, and botany.

Dr. Weatherwax points to a series of important problems. By what methods were the Indians of the time of Columbus growing corn and using it in various parts of America? How did the varieties which they had compare with those of today? Where did they get the plant in the first place, and what sort of plant was it when they first began to cultivate it? How long had they been growing corn before Columbus discovered America? What was the European explorers' first reaction to the plant? What part did it play in European colonization and the early development of modern America? Some of these questions are answerable, but others, particularly the problem of the origin of corn, can only be speculated about.

The LDS student will be especially interested in the chapter entitled "Corn From Asia." After discussing

tantilizing evidences of pre-Columbian corn in Asia he takes exception to Edgar Anderson's sweeping statement in favor of this view and doubts the possibility. He points out that even if maize existed in Asia before 1492, evidence strongly favors America as its original home.

Indian Corn in Old America brings a variety of disciplines to bear on the problems it treats. It is mainly a botanical treatise about corn, not about Indians. Yet corn is so thoroughly a part of the life of the Indians that the book contains almost as much anthropology as botany. Being a botanist, Dr. Weatherwax makes an occasional slight slip with respect to the American Indians, but in general handles anthropological materials well. For the student of archaeology there are several lessons beyond those dealing directly with corn. It demonstrates the need of a broad background—one that makes it possible to use materials from history, ethnology, botany, and other sciences to aid in the interpretation of archaeological findings.

48.3 RESEARCH MATERIALS DONATED. Important collections of books and magazines have recently been presented to the UAS for use in the BYU archaeology department.

48.30 Dr. Franklin S. Harris, Jr., president of the UAS and professor of physics at the University of Utah, has donated a large collection including a complete set (13 vols.) of Gaston Maspero's great work, History of Ancient Egypt, Chaldea, Syria, Babylonia, and Assyria; a number of volumes and separate issues of several journals containing articles of interest for the study of Near Eastern and biblical archaeology (Journal of the American Oriental Society, The Middle East Journal, The Arab World, and The Moslem World); 39 numbers of the Bulletin of the Bureau of American Ethnology, containing numerous papers in the field of American archaeology and ethnology; and 27 volumes of the Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution and the US National Museum. Many of these were collected by the donor's father, Dr. F. S. Harris, Sr., for 25 years president of BYU.

48.31 Forace G. Green, father of the production manager of this Newsletter, donated a set of 90 numbers of the National Geographic Magazine, containing many articles and illustrations of archaeological and ethnological interest.

48.4 A QUESTION FOR THE EDITOR. It is the intention of the editor to include a selected question on an archaeological subject, together with an answer written either by himself or a guest contributor, in each issue of the Newsletter. Please send questions

to: Editor, UAS Newsletter, Department of Archaeology, BYU, Provo, Utah.

48.40 Indian Rock Writing. Sir: While in northeastern Arizona, I had the opportunity of studying a site containing many ancient mounds. Near the site are an enormous number of petroglyphs. Can they be read? Have we deciphered any of them?--JKJ.

Petroglyphs or "rock writings" are symbolic designs placed upon stone, whether by pecking, incising, painting, or some other means. Such designs, some of them very ancient, are found in various places throughout the world. In western United States they are especially common in such areas as northeastern Arizona and the Vernal country of eastern Utah. They cannot ordinarily be "read" for the reason that they do not constitute writing. I should define true writing as any sort of system for the recording and communication of human thought wherein symbols which are conventionally rendered and understood as to form, meaning, and order are placed in some sort of alignment on more or less permanent materials, such as paper, parchment, or stone. These Indian "writings," however, are not usually placed in alignment, either from left to right, as English is written, from right to left, from top to bottom, or otherwise. Moreover, while the individual markings may have esoteric meanings to the particular priest or shaman responsible for them, they do not, so far as we know, constitute a conventional system in the sense that any person acquainted with that system can derive from them precisely the same meaning as expressed in articulate speech.

What we are probably dealing with, in the case of most petroglyphs, is symbolic art. I believe that those markings associated with the Basket Maker-Pueblo culture of the US Southwest are in a direct tradition with the wall-paintings of the kivas, or underground ceremonial chambers, of modern Pueblo Indians.

However, while most local petroglyphs are probably ceremonial in nature, it is not safe to say categorically that all such glyphs are of the same nature. Some of them, for example, may be nothing more than "doodling." On the other hand, former Arizona state senator William Coxon (who possesses an excellent collection of color transparencies of western American rock inscriptions and who lectured before the UAS Campus Chapter, April 29, 1953, on the subject of "cognate petroglyphs"; Newsletter, 12, 5) has developed the theory that a certain class of skillfully-fashioned geometric inscriptions, found in very widely separated localities, show world-wide migration routes of an ancient enlightened and benevolent people. Different prehistoric artists must have had different purposes in mind in leaving their inscriptions. --RTC.