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Modern Knowledge OF THE Antiquities of America.

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MODERN KNOWLEDGE OF THE ANTIQUITIES OF AMERICA.

BY ELDER H. A. STEBBINS.

Some of the strong statements (if they were only true ones), made by the opposers of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, are as follows:

“Another argument advanced by Mormonism, in support of the Book of Mormon, is American antiquities. It is claimed that recent investigations corroborate the statements of the Book of Mormon in regard to the ancient civilization of America, their ancestry, language, works, etc. They further claim that these things were not known to the world prior to the introduction

of the Book of Mormon. Now, if we can show that these facts were taught to the world long before the Book of Mormon was published, then their argument from this source falls to the ground.

“Centuries before the introduction of the Book of Mormon the theory was taught that the early inhabitants of this continent came from the tower of Babel. * * The Book of Mormon has simply borrowed these speculations from the old writers, and is trying to palm them off on the world as a revelation from God. The ruins of ancient cities of America were known to the world long before the publication of the Book of Mormon.”

There has also been used against us the quotations in the “Voice of Warning” from Josiah Priest’s volume, where he says that the ruins of Otolum (or Palenque, the name by which they are now altogether known), were discovered by Captain Del Rio

in 1787, "an account of which was published in English in 1822," says Priest.

It is stated that this is given in the "Voice of Warning," as proof of the inspiration of the Book of Mormon, "notwithstanding that the city was surveyed nearly half a century before the introduction of the book, and published to the world eight years before the Book of Mormon was published." And that the city of Otolum or Palenque, is much spoken of by us, but that we "ignore the fact that it was discovered about the middle of the sixteenth century, too early, by nearly two centuries [says this critic], to be revealed by the Book of Mormon, or by God through that book."

To all the above we reply, as well as say to any who may have been troubled by such statements, or who are unacquainted with the real facts in this matter, that there has been a great perversion of the truth, an unfair and unjust use made of the facts

about the discoveries and the publication of those discoveries; and that no one need be troubled or dismayed by the *apparent* array of proof upon the side of the enemies of the Book of Mormon.

And to those, whether they are in the church or out of it, who have gathered the idea that, for some time before the publication of the Book of Mormon, there was world-wide knowledge of the existence of the ruined cities of Central America, we say that they have certainly obtained a very wrong impression, one that is contrary to the truth. And that the opposers are either very deficient in their education upon this point, or else they purposely leave their readers and hearers in the dark as to the real facts, which, when stated, will make the whole subject clear to all who desire the truth, and only the truth.

Some may accept the superficial statements made by the opposers because they are willing

to believe anything against the claim that we make for the divine origin of the latter day work. This class are not interested enough to ask what may have been the circumstances of the times or of the surroundings when the alleged discoveries were made, or they may not be wise and just enough to ask as to *when* and *where* these facts were published, by whom, and in what books, or as to what may have prevented such knowledge from coming to the great world before 1830.

On the other hand there may be those who would like to learn the reasons *why* it was not possible for Joseph Smith, or others, to have had at hand the alleged information upon which to have based, and from which to have fabricated the Book of Mormon in 1829-1830, and why there could not, at that time, have been any wide-spread knowledge of the ancient cities of Central America, either in Europe or in

America. That it was impossible for those men to have had such books and publications there is sufficient proof; and I herewith produce enough on this point to satisfy every impartial mind; or so I believe.

It will be well to consider first the discovery of Otolum, or Palenque, by Captain Del Rio, and its publication. I notice that those who use this item against us do not state *where* the book was published, or say anything of how very little it was known, even to the learned of the city of London (according to Priest and Stephens), until 1831-33. Mr. John L. Stephens, the noted traveler and explorer among the Central American ruins, wrote as follows about Del Rio and Palenque:

“The report of Captain Del Rio * * through either the supineness or the jealousy of the Spanish government, was locked in the archives of Guatamala until the time of the revolution, when

the original manuscripts came into the hands of an English gentleman, and an English translation was published in London in 1822. *This was the first notice in Europe of the discovery of these ruins.* And, instead of electrifying the public mind, *so little notice was taken of it* that in 1831 the *Literary Gazette*, a paper of great circulation in London, announced it as [then] a new discovery."—*Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, Vol. 2, page 269.

From the above statement it will be seen how impossible it was for Joseph Smith, or any others in America, to have known of Del Rio's discovery of Palenque, or for them to have made use of it in fabricating the *Book of Mormon* in 1829; for that book was copyrighted June 11, 1829, and issued in book form early in 1830. Thus it was legally entered for publication two years before Del Rio's discovery began to be known to the learned and wealthy students of Europe, the

very men who were using all their time and abundant means in discovering something new about antiquities and ancient history.

In further proof that neither in England or America was there any general knowledge about these ruins prior to 1829, I make the following quotations from Josiah Priest. He says:

“It is stated in the Family Magazine for 1833, No. 34, page 266, as follows: ‘Public attention has been recently excited respecting the ruins of an ancient city found in Guatamala. It would seem that these ruins are now being explored, and much curious and valuable matter, in a literary and historical point of view is anticipated.’ ”—Priest’s American Antiquities, fifth edition, page 246.

Mr. Priest explains that the discoveries by Del Rio were the ones referred to, and he comments thus:

“Let it be understood that this

city of Otolum [Palenque], the ruins of which are so immense, is in North, not South, America, in the same latitude with the island Jamaica. * * The discovery of these ruins and also of many others in the same country, are *just commencing to arouse the attention of the schools of Europe, who hitherto have denied that America could boast of her antiquities.* But these immense ruins are now being explored under the direction of scientific persons, a history of which in detail will doubtless be forthcoming in due time."—American Antiquities, page 247 of fifth edition.

Notice the words in italics, and consider how much they mean as to the knowledge that was *not* had in the world prior to the publication of the Book of Mormon. If this knowledge was not had by the schools of learning in the capital cities of Europe how came it in possession of the illiterate young man, or his fellows, or even in the brain or hands of

Solomon Spaulding? Remember that the Book of Mormon locates in Central America the greatest civilization that it gives account of, or far away from the Ohio valley, which is the scene of Spaulding's romance, and that when the Book of Mormon was copyrighted the Central American ruins, according to all writings extant, were not at all known to learned European scientists, students, travelers, and antiquarians. And the unlearned young man outrivaled in knowledge the wise students, trained travelers, wealthy schools of learning, and powerful assisting rulers, who had at their command, all the avenues of learning that existed in the world, save that direct from the Lord on high.

But what about Josiah Priest's book, when was it published? I heard one of the most noted of the opposition make a statement in a public discourse that Priest's book was our armory, and that

it was published in 1824; and a certain writer says of a debater that he introduced "a work by Josiah Priest, which was printed in 1824." Clearly there is a purpose to have people believe that all that Mr. Priest wrote was in one book, and that the year 1824 was the time of its publication.

There is no doubt that Mr. Priest wrote a book in 1824 about a variety of curious things as being the wonders of earth and heaven, and that in it he gave the theories of James Adair, Rev. Ethan Smith, Dr. Boudinot, and others, that the aborigines of America were of Hebrew origin. But it was not a work upon antiquities, and no author anywhere quotes that book upon these matters, neither Bancroft, Baldwin, Foster, or other well known and thorough students of all works ever published upon antiquities. There was not, evidently, anything of value in it upon this subject. But his work, from which we have already

made a quotation where he speaks of the "Family Magazine" article published in 1833, is named "American Antiquities," and is the one so largely quoted by leading as well as lesser writers upon this and kindred topics. I was fortunate enough to come into possession of a copy of this work in 1889, by discovery at a sale of ancient books in Kansas City. It is of the fifth edition, but is complete from title page to the end, and shows that the work was entered for publication (the first edition) in the office of the clerk of the Central District of New York (at Albany) on the twenty-first day of March, 1833. It has the date, and the seal of the United States Court, as well as a statement of the nature and character of the book, by whom entered, etc. A copy of this book is a very rare article in these days.

As the above date (1833) is nearly four years later than the Book of Mormon was copyrighted

(which was on June 11, 1829), it is evident that Joseph Smith did not draw his inspiration from that source.

In order that all may know just when the important discoveries in Central America came to the knowledge of the world, we will present the evidences about Captain Dupaix. Of him Prof. J. D. Baldwin, on page 102 of his "Ancient America," says:

"Captain Dupaix's folios, in French * * contain the first really important memoir of these ruins [Palenque]. It was prepared in 1807, detained in Mexico during the Mexican revolution, and finally published in Paris in 1834-5."

Of this same work Mr. John L. Stephens says:

"While the report and drawings of Del Rio slept in the archives of Guatamala, Charles the Fourth of Spain ordered another expedition, at the head of which was placed Captain Dupaix. * * His expeditions were made in

1805-7, the last of which was to Palenque. The manuscripts of Dupaix and the designs of his draughtman, Castadena, were about to be sent to Madrid when the revolution broke out in Mexico. They then became an object of secondary importance and remained during the wars of Independence under the control of Castadena, who deposited them in the Cabinet of Natural History in Mexico. * * And the work of Dupaix was not published until 1834-5, when it was brought out in Paris."—Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan, Vol. 2, page 297.

According to Prof. Baldwin, the work of Dupaix was the *first* description of the ruins of Palenque that was of real value. He says "the first really important" one, and it was issued five years after the Book of Mormon, and then in French only.

Compare the foregoing evidences with the unwarranted assertion that we "ignore the fact

that it [Palenque] was discovered about the middle of the sixteenth century, too early by nearly two centuries to be revealed by the Book of Mormon.”

We do not ignore it, but we deny that the knowledge of the discovery came to the world in the sixteenth century, or even until well along in the nineteenth century.

A recent publication says that “Spanish adventurers penetrated the dense forests of Chiapas, in which they discovered the ruins of an ancient city, to which they gave the name of Palenque, from a poor adjacent village.”

To this we reply that it is now known (in recent years) that Palacios, a Spaniard, visited and wrote of these ruins hundreds of years ago, but what are the facts and what were the circumstances connected with that discovery? Prof. Baldwin relates as follows:

“Palacios, who described Copan [which is in the same region as Palenque] in 1576, may properly

be called the first explorer.”—
Ancient America, page 102.

But it was long after the year 1830 before his writings came to the knowledge of the world. The Hon. H. H. Bancroft, on page 79 of volume 4, of his “Native Races of the Pacific States,” says that Palacios wrote the results of his observations to the king of Spain, “which document,” says Bancroft, “is preserved in the celebrated Munoz collection,” that is in the city of Madrid. Bancroft states, and so also does the American Encyclopedia (article Squier), that no English translation of Palacios was made until that by the Hon. E. G. Squier in the year 1860.

As for other Spanish adventurers, who discovered ruined cities as early as the sixteenth century, we find that the writings (such as they were) of Acosta, Garcia, Hermandes, and others, have never yet been published in the English language; and we challenge our opponents to pro-

duce good evidence that even one book existed in England or America prior to 1830 that contained any extracts from their views or speculations; or even that such men were known to have lived, or that they explored any region of antiquities. The foregoing extracts from Stephens, Bancroft, and Priest, abundantly disprove the idea that what those Spaniards found became known to any English speaking people on earth prior to 1830.

As for Siguenza, he was professor of astronomy and mathematics in Mexico about 1680, and he wrote (as modern investigation proves) several treatises on Mexican history and her ruins. But they were all in Spanish, and modern historians say that they have been read very little even in Mexico, and are rarely to be seen there. In very recent times the learned in various languages, such men as Bancroft, have read them to see what Siguenza did write. Bancroft has read all that

Spanish writers have written upon these subjects; and in 1875 he published the results to the world, in his five octavo volumes.

Therefore the impossibility of Joseph Smith (or others) in the wilds of New York, without railways, telegraphs, or more books than a bible and a few common volumes, having any acquaintance with any of these writings. It is extremely absurd to hold the idea that these common men could have known of these wonderful discoveries before the learned had heard of them, and in time to have manufactured a fraud that exactly agrees with the discoveries brought to light since 1830.

I next take up and examine a statement made by one writer that Baron Humboldt "visited Central America and described the antiquities of that country," also that "his (Humboldt's) work was published in England and America in 1806." I do not know that any other has made such a

glaring mis-statement, but it is well to answer it, as well as to give the facts about Humboldt, and the dates of his travels and of his publications.

I find that this renowned German scientist landed in South America on July 16, 1799. He explored the regions of western South America very thoroughly, and then went directly to Mexico, landing at Acapulco, March 23, 1803. He remained in Mexico until March 7, 1804, and then sailed for Cuba. He left there and arrived at Bordeaux, France, August 3, 1804. And there is no claim made by any historian, or encyclopedia, that Humboldt even knew anything about, much less visited, the ruined cities of Uxmal, Palenque, Mitla, Copan, or any of the others that are now so well known to the nations of Europe and America.

In fact at the time Humboldt visited *America no one* knew about those ruins; for all that had been written of them was locked in

the Spanish archives at Madrid, and the information had not reached the light of day. What Siguenza had written of Mexico did not pertain to the ruined cities I have named, which comprise the real great discoveries, and which are the center of the old-time civilization.

As to the publication of Humboldt's works we read as follows:

“As the condition of Germany made it impracticable to there publish his large scientific works, he was permitted by Frederick William III, as one of the eight foreign members of the French Academy of Sciences, to remain in Paris. * * There [in Paris] appeared his ‘Voyage aux Regions Equinoxiales,’ three volumes folio, with an atlas, 1809–1825; translated into German, six volumes, Stuttgart, 1825–1832.”—American Encyclopedia, article Humboldt.

That is, Humboldt's account of his travels in the equinoxial regions of America were not even

begun in publication, in getting out the sheets, until 1809, and the three volumes, as first published under his own supervision, were not completed until 1825. And, with the best efforts of the German king, and the aid of Humboldt's scientific friends, they were not completed at Stuttgart, in the German language, until 1832.

What then of the statement that Humboldt was published in England and America in 1806? It is simply an assertion without any proof, without any foundation in fact; it is only a falsehood. The only book that we have any account of as having been published about Humboldt's discoveries prior to Josiah Priest's mention in 1833, is a book that he quotes from. He calls it, "Researches in America," and says that an edition had been published in America by Helen Maria Williams, probably not long before his book was issued. This is found on page 255 of Priest's

American Antiquities, fifth edition, issued in 1835.

But whatever year her book was published in, it could have contained nothing about Palenque or other ruins in that region; because Humboldt neither explored them or knew anything of them when he was in America. And there are no evidences that Joseph Smith had any knowledge of said book, or that it had much circulation in the United States. Nor do we find it quoted by any author except Priest.

We now come to the consideration of the time when other eminent and lesser writers upon American antiquities published their works. In 1875 the Hon. H. H. Bancroft published his five volumes, called "Native Races of the Pacific States." It is an exhaustive and very valuable work, being enriched with thousands of quotations from all known authorities upon American antiquities and traditional history. In volume four he quotes

largely from the writings of John L. Stephens, and he remarks that "since 1830 the veil has been lifted" by the researches of the explorers. Of Stephens and Catherwood he says:

"These gentlemen boldly left the beaten track and brought to the knowledge of the world about forty ruined cities, whose very existence had been previously unknown."—Vol. 5, pp. 144–5.

Thus Mr. Bancroft claims (without any collusion with us) that it was after 1830 that the "veil was lifted" from the great ruins of that land. And it seems a remarkable, and perhaps a providential coincidence, that he is compelled by the facts to name as the starting point (not the closing one) in obtaining information of the ruins, the very year in which the Book of Mormon was published, after being copyrighted in 1829. The Lord has left the world without excuse, except they hide under the lie that the ruined cities were known to the

world before 1830. Of the value of Mr. Stephens' works Mr. Bancroft says:

"Stephens' account has been the chief source from which all subsequent writers, including myself, have drawn their information," p. 146.

And when did Catherwood and Stephens first explore those regions? Stephens' first volume shows that they sailed from New York on October 3, 1839, and both he and Bancroft state that they began their work in 1840, at the ruins of Uxmal. Hence, we see that even the learned did not have before 1833 to 1840 the sources to draw from which it is claimed that the unlearned Joseph Smith and his colleagues had prior to 1829. If the veil has only been lifted since 1830, and nearly all before that was in Spanish manuscripts, from whence had Joseph Smith his fountain of wisdom, excepting it was just where he claimed it was, namely, in God himself.

I will mention some other authors who are supposed by some (without examination) to have written about the ruins before 1830. The facts are as follows:

Some may suppose that Bras-seur De Bourbourg, who is largely quoted by Bancroft and Baldwin, was an ancient Spanish writer. But he did not begin his explorations until 1848, and his "History of Civilization in Mexico and Central America" was not published until 1857, and then only in the French language.

Delafield's valuable work, "Antiquities of America," was issued simultaneously in London, Paris, and New York in 1839.

Hon. E. G. Squier published his works upon "Antiquities in the United States" in 1848-1851, his "Nicaragua" in 1852, and his "Notes on Central America" in 1854.

The celebrated geologist and archæologist, Prof. J. W. Foster, published his first volume on antiquities, entitled "The Missis-

issippi Valley," in 1869, while his "Prehistoric Races in the United States" was not issued until 1873.

Charney, the French explorer, first visited Mexico and Central America in 1857, and the second time in 1880-1882. His latest book, a summary of both visits, named "Ancient Cities of the New World," was published in Paris in 1884, and, by agreement, was translated into English and issued by Harper Brothers in New York in 1887.

Lord Kingsborough, whose writings are largely quoted by historian Bancroft and other writers, should have been mentioned earlier in this list. His nine large volumes, entitled "Mexican Antiquities," had their beginning in 1830, the first sheets being in press then. But the work was not completed until after 1840. And they have never been seen in any but the largest libraries. I was informed by a student of ancient lore in Kansas City that these volumes with

colored plates, were valued at \$875 for the set, and with plain plates at \$550. Bro. S. F. Walker visited the Cincinnati Exposition about ten years ago, largely for the purpose of getting a sight of them and making extracts for his use and for publication.

I should add about Baron Humboldt's works that a literal translation and publication of them, as a series, was not begun until in 1845 the celebrated publisher, Bohn, began the work of issuing them, and that they are worth hundreds of dollars, and are only to be found in great libraries. The encyclopedias say that they are "almost inaccessible on account of the cost."

Prof. J. D. Baldwin's much read and largely quoted book, "Ancient America," was published in 1872. It is chiefly valuable as being a brief digest of the main points by all the leading writers upon antiquities.

Hon. Ignatius Donnelly's "Atlantis" was issued in 1882.

John T. Short's well known work, "The North Americans of Antiquity," was also published in 1882.

Brownell's "New World" was published in 1857, and Bradford's "Origin of the Red Race" still later, the year not now remembered by me.

There are names of lesser note, but their investigations and their writings have all been since 1830. What Bancroft has stated on this point may be relied on, and any who choose to examine will learn that neither the historians nor ourselves have mis-stated the facts.

We now take up briefly the Peruvian civilization, of which one writer boldly proclaims as follows:

"It has been known since the conquest of Peru by Pizarro that there had been three or more civilizations there, that of the Incas being the last."

Yes, we do not deny that these matters, particularly about the

traditional history of the ancient Peruvians, were written of hundreds of years ago. But by whom and to whom? By Spanish priests, soldiers, and adventurers, and to the king of Spain, to whom the manuscripts were sent, and by him laid away in the archives at Madrid. What the world knows about the great roads, aqueducts, ruined fortresses and cities of Peru, especially the people of America and of England, they have learned from the writings of the historian, W. H. Prescott, beside what has been gained through the extracts from Humboldt that have been published more particularly since 1845, and in part since 1833.

But the author chiefly quoted is Prescott, his "History of the Conquest of Peru," which was published in 1847. In his preface, written April 2, 1847, Prescott says that from Spain he gathered his material, he appearing to have special advantages which no other man has had. He

writes as follows: "The larger part of the documents in both cases [that is in writing both the "Conquest of Mexico," and the "Conquest of Peru"] was obtained from the same great repository, the archives of the Royal Academy at Madrid." He writes of the great collection of material by Munoz, the eminent scholar, who intended to publish a thorough history from the manuscripts, but who died before he could accomplish it, and Prescott says that the portion of the Munoz manuscripts "which had reference to Mexico and Peru were destined to serve the uses of another, an inhabitant of that new world to which they related," meaning himself.

The "Conquest of Mexico" was published in 1843, and the "Conquest of Peru" in 1847. So late came the chief source of information to the American public concerning the ancient civilization of Peru, outside of what was known about Humboldt's discoveries.

And when we come to the traditional history of Peru we find that Montesinos is chiefly used as the authority. He is quoted as such by Bancroft and Baldwin, because he was early in Peru and made a special study of these matters. But what of him, and when did he write, and when did the English speaking world first learn about him?

Baldwin, on pages 261-263 of "Ancient America," says that Ferdinand Montesinos was a "scholar and a worker," that he had "the best possible opportunities for observation," and that no one exceeded him in archæological knowledge of Peru. He was sent by the King of Spain to Peru in 1630. But his two manuscripts, "Memorias Antiguas Historales del Peru," and his "Annales." remained for two hundred years in the archives at Madrid, and only the former has yet been published, and that in the French language, after being translated from the Spanish by

M. Ternaux-Compans, as shown by Baldwin on pages 264, 265. It is now only known to the learned, those who can read French.

Therefore the impossibility of any American in the year 1830 having known of this work of Montesinos, whether he was learned or unlearned. It is impossible that Joseph Smith, or any other American, knew of its existence when the Book of Mormon was written.

As for the work of the Hon. E. G. Squier it was not published, his "Peru, the Land of the Incas," until 1876-7. He was sent to Peru in 1863 as United States Commissioner, and, while there, gathered the materials that have been of so much value to the world in the study of antiquities, in connection with Prescott's volumes. These two men have given to the world the chief information about Peru and her ancient history and civilization.

It may be well to say a little about the origin of the Indian

race, because we are attacked upon this point. One writer states that the idea of the Israelitish origin of the American aborigines was held long before 1830, and he says that it does not take inspiration to teach something that has been taught for years before."

We reply, that inspiration may tell mankind as to the truth or falsity of theories or speculations held by men, and also give information and understanding as to how certain events were brought to pass. Even, as in this case, the Book of Mormon is a history of God's dealings with a certain portion of the Hebrew race, an account of the wanderings and experiences of a colony which came to America before the Babylonish captivity. For the Lord had declared by Moses that he would yet scatter Israel "from the one end of the earth even unto the other." (Deut. 28:64.) We have always admitted that the theory of a

Hebrew origin was advocated by the celebrated Indian trader, James Adair, about 1775, by the Rev. Ethan Smith in 1825, also by Dr. Boudinot and the Rev. Jedediah Morse early in this century, and there is no disposition to deny it. All who are interested in this point will here have the dates and brief facts that cover the ground.

In the foregoing article I have been explicit in order that no misunderstanding need be had upon any point; at least I hope that all will be clear to those who read; and I believe that I have made no mistatements as to any of the points at issue. That good will be accomplished by this is the only desire that I have.

LAMONI, Iowa, March 4th.

