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151.0 THE LEHI TREE-OF-LIFE STORY IN THE BOOK OF MORMON STILL SUPPORTED BY IZAPA STELA 5. By Michael T. Griffith.

WHILE RECENTLY SERVING as a missionary in Texas, I was surprised to learn that many people do not think highly of the work of Dr. M. Wells Jakeman (professor of archaeology at Brigham Young University) on the complex tree-of-life carving found at the ruined city of Izapa in southern Chiapas, Mexico, the monument known as Stela 5. Specifically, they question his explanation of that carving as no less than an ancient picturization in stone of the Lehi tree-of-life story in the Book of Mormon.

The reason often given for this negative judgment is the vehement criticism of Jakeman's interpretations by anti-Mormon (and some Mormon) writers—especially their unanimous rejection of his decipherments of certain glyph-like figures that have been found on the Izapa carving. Many people, in fact, are convinced that his connection of this carving with the Book of Mormon has been thoroughly discredited by the anti-Mormon authors Harold H. Hougey (in a 27-page booklet entitled *The Truth About the "Lehi Tree-of-Life" Stone*) and Gerald and Sandra Tanner (in their two books, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*, pp. 116-118, and especially *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, pp. 34-52).



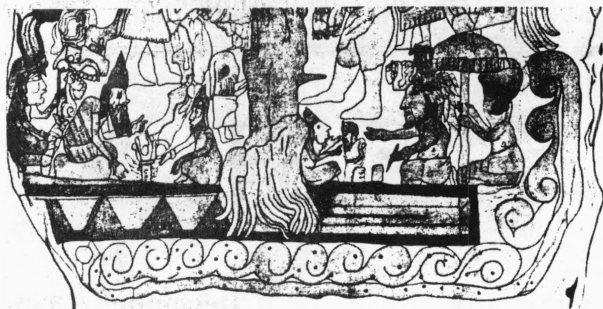
Stela 5, Izapa, in its original standing position. Photograph by William Høglund.

After carefully reading Jakeman's several publications on Izapa Stela 5, I was convinced that these attacks have mostly been superficial and scarcely deserve the attention of serious students. Nevertheless, I have decided to attempt a defense of his interpretations, particularly his decipherments of the glyph-like figures. Limitations of time, however, allow only a response here to the Tanners' attack (Hougey's "critique" has already been rebutted at some length by Dr. Jakeman; see article, "Stela 5, Izapa . . .," in *Newsletter and Proceedings of the SEHA*, No 104, November, 1967, especially pp. 3-9).

First, some general observations. All these critics of his work—expectedly, of course, the anti-Mormon writers—ridicule Jakeman for even suggesting a Book of Mormon explanation. They also frequently misunderstand (or deliberately misrepresent) his reasonings and conclusions. And though they question his scholarship, they reveal in many places their own lack of knowledge of ancient American iconography and hieroglyphics.

I must also warn the reader of the Tanners' general method of dealing with Jakeman's interpretations: their beat-around-the-bush tactic of not really dealing with the issues. Dr. Jakeman presents the particulars of such and such a figure in the Izapa carving, then gives his interpretation. But the Tanners, instead of refuting his analysis and interpretation, skirt around them, throwing up a lot of filmflam to confuse the issue. Throughout their "critique" they are repeatedly guilty of oversimplifying what are actually very complex matters, leading the reader to simplistic conclusions.

Moreover, some of the parallels between the carving on Izapa Stela 5 and the tree-of-life story in the Book of Mormon are undeniable, no matter how one tries to explain them away. Even the Tanners had to admit that "there are some similarities" (*Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, p. 43). As Dr. Jakeman observes, this carving clearly portrays some ancient event in which six important persons—an older couple (a bearded old man and an old woman) and four young men (their sons?)—are apparently engaged in a discussion of the "tree of sustenance or life" of ancient American religion and art. One of the four young men is evidently inscribing on a plate or tablet what was said in the discussion. Furthermore, it depicts a river of water coming by the tree, and—though dimly—a narrow double line (narrow path?) coming straight to it. (Cf. the Book of Mormon, 1 Ne. 8; 10:1-2, 15-16; 11:21-36.) Many other definite or apparent parallels as well, have been established in his published studies.



The six persons apparently engaged in a discussion of the "tree of sustenance or life." From a drawing by M. Wells Jakeman.

The main objection of the Tanners is that Jakeman engages partly in symbolic interpretation (*ibid.*, p. 37). But their use of Mercer's outdated condemnation of symbolic interpretation does not speak well for their qualifications as critics in this case. For their information, most of the pictographs found carved on many of the monuments at Izapa were meant to be interpreted *symbolically*. V. Garth Norman, an authority on ancient Mesoamerican (especially Izapan) iconography and a former student of Dr. Jakeman, notes that "by combining various symbolic motifs in sequential relationships, the Izapeños appear to have developed [for their religious art] a narrative picture writing to express complex and lengthy messages, Stela 5 being the prime example" (*Izapa Sculpture*, 1976, p. 16). Norman also points out that "in Teotihuacan art there is believed to be 'exact meaning in even the smallest of symbols' (Sejourné, *Burning Water: Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico*, 1960, p. 175). Westheim (*The Sculpture of Ancient Mexico*, 1963, p. 22) and others believe that these symbols constituted 'a diaphanous language of forms legible even to the layman'; the same appears to be equally true of Izapan art." (*Ibid.*, p. 12.)

TWO NAME GLYPHS?

Two of the smaller pictographs of the Stela 5 carving are located above or on the head of two of the six persons shown apparently discussing the tree of life. These figures Jakeman identifies as hieroglyphs that record symbolically the names of these two persons, i.e. as name phonograms or name glyphs, and offers decipherments of them as such. The *correctness* of his identification and decipherments of these pictographs is, of course, the critical question on

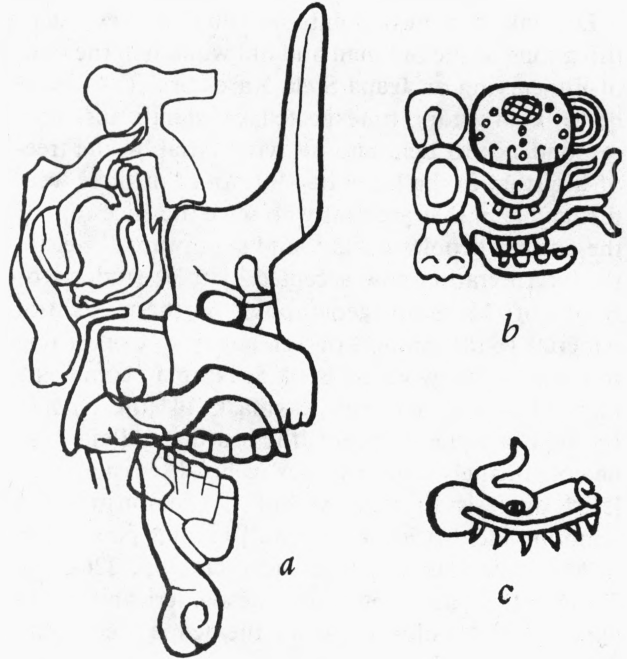
which his connection of this carving with the Book of Mormon stands or falls.

The Tanners, recognizing its importance, especially dispute this part of Jakeman's work on Stela 5. They insist that his interpretation of these two pictographs as name glyphs is invalid because it was done "symbolically," as if to say that a person's name could not have been represented in ancient Mesoamerican art by a pictograph. The fact is that recording a name by means of a symbol was not uncommon in ancient Mesoamerica. The practice is mentioned in the early accounts, and actual examples are known in the ancient art works.

The *Cipactli* Figure

The clearer of the two pictographs with human figures is the one above the bearded old man shown wearing a miterlike headdress which, Jakeman notes, signifies an important religious person (a priest-ruler or great priest or, in the Maya language, a *chilán*, 'prophet'); in other words, the one above the person (among the six apparently discussing the three of life) who corresponds to Lehi in the Book of Mormon tree-of-life story. For Jakeman's Book of Mormon explanation to stand, therefore, this pictograph must be shown to be a hieroglyph recording the name 'Lehi.' (For such a momentous explanation even to be considered by scholars, the pictograph must be shown to be at least *decipherable* as recording that name, or as indicating that the old man in the carving is the prophet Lehi of the Book of Mormon.)

According to Dr. Jakeman, this pictograph is an archaic version of a common zoomorphic figures in Mesoamerican hieroglyphics and art: the head—sometimes also the upper body or a foreleg—of a crocodilian (Nahuatl *cipactli*; undoubtedly the "spectacled" or "eyebrowed" caiman), which is usually a calendrical hieroglyph phonetically recording "*Cipactli*," the Aztec name of the first of the 20 named days of the ritual and divinatory calendar. At least in one long-known case, however, it is a hieroglyph with the figure of an old man, recording the Aztec name *Cipactonal*, which identifies him as one of the famous old men in Mesoamerican tradition (important ancestors or men of learning such as calendarists) all called *Cipactonal* by the Aztecs (in some early writings mistakenly "Oxomoco"); in fact, as specifically an important ancestor, since the corresponding name in the language and tradition of the Quichés (the chief Mayan people of the Chiapas-Guatemala or Izapa region) was *Ixpiyacoc*, meaning great-grandfather or ancestor.



Examples of the *cipactli* figure. *a*, Stela 5, Izapa; *b*, crocodilian head with *imix* headdress on a classic Maya monument, Stela 7, Yaxchilán; *c*, *cipactli* glyph in a late central-Mexican hieroglyphic manuscript, Codex Nuttall, p. 47. Drawings by M. Wells Jakeman.

The bearded old man in the Izapa carving thus identified as one of these important ancestors called *Cipactonal* or *Ixpiyacoc* is probably not the earliest (who, according to the Aztec writings and the principal surviving Quiché book, the *Popol Vuh*, was the original parent of mankind), but a later important ancestor "*Cipactonal*" or "*Ixpiyacoc*" who lived after the time of a great flood and was the forefather of the Quichés and some of the other ancient peoples of northern Central America. (See Jakeman, *The Complex Tree-of-Life Carving on Izapa Stela 5*, 1958, pp. 11-19.)

Note that this in turn identifies the old woman in the Izapa carving, seen behind and attending the old man, as one of the famous old women in Mesoamerican tradition always mentioned with the "*Cipactonals*" as their consort, and all called *Oxomoco* by the Aztecs [in some early writings mistakenly "*Cipactonal*"] and *Ixmucané*, 'Great-grandmother' or 'Ancestress,' by the Quichés—here specifically the consort, probably of the *second* important ancestor "*Cipactonal*" or "*Ixpiyacoc*," i.e. the ancestress of the Quichés and some of the other ancient peoples of northern Central America.

Dr. Jakeman next points out that, if these identifications of the old man and old woman in the tree-of-life carving on Izapa Stela 5 are correct, we have here an arbitrary (unexpected or significant) correspondence to Lehi and his wife Sariah in the tree-of-life story in the Book of Mormon. For these were the couple in that account who were the ancestors of the ancient peoples of its “land southward,” i.e. (in the interpretation now accepted by most students of Book of Mormon geography) northern Central America to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Concerning this part of his work on Stela 5, Norman comments that “Jakeman believes . . . mask 14 [the *cipactli* figure] is a name glyph for [the bearded old man], as he convincingly demonstrates in his discussion. . . . [His] analysis of this symbol . . . demonstrates a tempting identification of both [the old] personages in Mesoamerican tradition” (op. cit., pp. 226-228). Despite the fact that most Mesoamericanists will agree that the old couple in the Izapa tree-of-life carving are the *second* ancestral couple, the Tanners—though not themselves Mesoamericanists—appear to reject this identification. The evidence, however, clearly supports it, and hence allows a connection of that carving with the Book of Mormon tree-of-life story.

Jakeman’s further interpretation of the *cipactli* figure also gives the Tanners trouble. To begin with, he cites evidence that, in the early period of Izapa Stela 5 (which he dates on stylistic grounds to or near the first century BC), the “crocodilian figure was still a simple pictograph—in its occurrence on Stela 5 (since it accompanies a human figure) quite surely a *personal* name glyph, i.e. had not yet become a calendrical name glyph, while its use as also the appellative glyph of all the Cipactonals was even later, in fact apparently after the tenth century AD. In other words, it here quite surely records the personal name of the old man as the name for what it depicts *in the unknown (not necessarily Mayan) language of the ancient people of Izapa.*

Jakeman next points out—in the new edition of his work now nearly completed, here quoted with his permission—that “evidently what the *cipactli* figure was intended to record as the personal name of the old man in the language of the Izapans (i.e. the name of their ancestor here portrayed, called Cipactonal in the late Aztec and Ixpiyacoc in the late Quiché writings) was not ‘crocodilian’ but, strangely, ‘crocodilian’s head’ or ‘crocodilian’s jaws’—or simply ‘jaws,’ using the crocodilian for this purpose as the thing in nature that especially suggests jaws.

(The whole figure of that animal is never shown in authentically pre-Columbian examples of the pictograph as a name glyph, but mostly its head with the great jaws, in fact usually its head with only the huge upper jaw.)” He then notes the remarkable fact that, in the language of the people of the Book of Mormon who were in its “land southward”—quite surely northern Central America including the region of Izapa—in the period of Stela 5, “the simple alternative meaning of this personal name glyph, ‘jaws’ (especially, it seems, ‘upper jaw’), is the exact strange meaning of the name of *their* ancestor Lehi. (In Hebrew, the main language of that people [their learned men also knew Egyptian], *lehi* was not only a noun but also a proper name pronounced *lēḥē* [in English ‘lehi’], meaning jaw or jawbone, especially upper jaw, cheek, or cheekbone.)

“Here then [Jakeman concludes] is still another congruence of the old man in the Izapa carving with Lehi in the Book of Mormon—one that, in view of the peculiar meaning of his name, must be considered very arbitrary, i.e. especially difficult to explain as accidental.” In the face of this striking additional correspondence, all that the Tanners can do is weakly quote Houghey’s objections (and those of certain other critics who also are not specialists in Mesoamerican iconography and hieroglyphics), and Jakeman has answered them nicely. (See his rebuttal of Houghey’s “critique,” previously cited.)

The *Centeotl* Figure

Stela 5 itself provides a test of Jakeman’s decipherment of the *cipactli* figure. Again quoting him, “This is a small pictograph that rests on the head of one of the other members of the group of six persons apparently discussing the tree of life—a large young man shown holding a pointed implement toward a rectangular object, i.e. evidently in the act of inscribing with a stylus, on a plate or tablet, what was being said about the tree. In other words this pictograph—undoubtedly another name phonogram or name glyph—is on the head of the particular member of the group who corresponds to Lehi’s youngest son Nephi in the Book of Mormon story, a large young man who inscribed on a plate what was said about the tree in Lehi’s dream. If it is found actually to record the name ‘Nephi,’ or at least to be decipherable as recording that name or an approximation thereof, then there can be little doubt that the *cipactli* figure records the name ‘Lehi.’ But if it is found to record a name quite different from ‘Nephi,’ then our whole Book of Mormon explanation of the Stela 5 carving stands refuted.”

Unfortunately, this particular detail of the carving is one of its more obscure elements. However, Dr. Jakeman has informed me that an unpublished photograph of Stela 5 received from Dr. Matthew W. Stirling of the Smithsonian Institution (the first archaeologist to visit Izapa and report at length on its ancient monuments) has confirmed his previous conclusion with respect to this detail, arrived at on the basis of his first-hand study of the carving at Izapa in 1954 and Stirling's published photograph. (Jakeman states that the Stirling photographs are the chief sources for the study of Stela 5 and some of the other monuments of Izapa, since they were obtained in 1941 not long after those monuments were unearthed and before most of the modern weathering and the vandalism they have suffered. He adds that, according to information from Stirling, the carved face of Stela 5 was wetted before the unpublished photograph was taken, which resulted in better definition in some places.)

Jakeman's conclusion is that this pictograph on the head of the large young man "consists of a human face in profile with what are probably leaves hanging down behind, and clearly a plant growing upward therefrom with leaves curling outward in opposite directions. In other words, it is undoubtedly an archaic version of a well known motif in Maya and ancient Mexican art—in classic Maya, the figure or at least the face or head of a man (usually a young man) from which an ear of corn (here simply a young grain plant) grows upward, with leaves curling outward in each direction. In the Mesoamerican pantheons this was the grain god, called *Centeotl* (Maize God) by the Aztecs—evidently a personification of the mysterious life force or spirit in a grain plant that causes it to grow. In the classic Maya inscriptions the face of this grain spirit or grain god, with the identifying plant above, is occasionally used as a symbol for the number eight. But here in an archaic Maya sculpture it is quite surely a name glyph which records the name of the large young man as that of the grain spirit or grain god (or is used as a way of symbolically recording his name, because of the similarity of the grain-spirit's name to that of the large young man); for this use of an icon or religious symbol to record a name cf. the *itzam-na* (iguana-house) and *kukulcan* or *quetzalcoatl* (precious-feathered-serpent) headdresses of priest-rulers depicted on later Maya temples and stelae, which signify—as indicated in the early accounts—that they were the representative of the life god and even bore his name, i.e. that they were the 'priest-ruler Itzamna' or 'priest-ruler Kukulcan' or

'Quetzalcóatl.' (The *centeotl* figure here definitely does not identify the large young man as the grain god. To have that meaning, the plant portion would have rested directly on his head.)



Examples of the *centeotl* figure. *a*, Stela 5, Izapa; *b*, as the face sign for number 8 in classic Maya inscriptions; *c*, in a late Maya hieroglyphic manuscript, *Codex Dresdensis*, p. 12. Drawing (*a*) and photographic reproductions (*b* and *c*) by M. Wells Jakeman.

"The name of the grain spirit or grain god [Jakeman continues] which was thus quite surely the name of the large young man or similar thereto, was however not the name of that spirit or divinity in the language of the Aztecs, *Centeotl*, since there is strong evidence that Nahuatl (Toltec-Aztec) was not a language of Mesoamerica until long after the period of Izapa Stela 5. Nor, probably, was it the other known name of that divinity among the ancient Mexican peoples, viz. *Pitao Cozobi* in the language of the Zapotecs. For although Zapotecan is one of the older tongues of Mesoamerica, there is no evidence that it was ever spoken by a people of the Maya area. And the grain-spirit's name has not been found in any tongue of the Mayan linguistic family. (Some writers have suggested that it is the *Yum Kax* in Yucatec

Mayan religious texts, but this name means lord of the forest.) We are thus left with the apparently unanswerable question of what this grain-spirit's name was among the ancient people of Izapa in the period of Stela 5.

"A possible answer, however, is provided by the fact that numerous parallels have been noted between the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica (the main high cultures of pre-Columbian Mexico and Central America, now referred to for convenience as the Olmec, the Maya, and the ancient Mexican), and some of the ancient civilizations of the Old World, especially the preclassical civilizations of the Near East (those of western Asia and Egypt before c. 500 BC). Many of these parallels are correspondences to the preclassical civilizations of *both* western Asia and Egypt, many specifically to the West Asiatic (Sumerian, Assyro-Babylonian, Canaanite-Phoenician, Aramean-Israelite, etc.), and many specifically to the Egyptian. Most of them have already been discussed by other writers and some previously in this work (see Part I). Here a number may be briefly listed.

[Still quoting from the manuscript of the new edition of Dr. Jakeman's work on Stela 5]

Some of the preclassical Near Eastern parallels definitely in all three Mesoamerican civilizations, or at least the two later, the Maya and ancient Mexican, and quite surely the earliest, the Olmec

1. First the fundamental (though not very arbitrary) parallel: a heavy emphasis on religion and religious ceremonies
2. Deities portrayed in the religious art as anthropomorphic (though often the face of a god is concealed by an identifying zoomorphic mask; cf. the frequent Egyptian portrayal of a god with an identifying zoomorphic head)
3. The paramount deity a sky and storm god (giver of fertility to the earth and life and sustenance to mankind), as also in preclassical western Asia. The name of this chief storm or life god among the earlier Mesoamerican peoples—the 'Olmecs' and earliest 'Mayas' and 'ancient Mexicans'—is unknown, but in late pre-Columbian times he was usually called the Lord Itzamna by the Mayas of Yucatán and the Lord Quetzalcoatl by the Aztecs, or simply 'the Lord.' When not masked, this paramount deity is depicted in the religious art as an old and/or bearded man

4. A young goddess of *human* fertility, however, also generally worshiped, as again in the preclassical Near East, in late times called Ixchel by the Mayas and Ciuacoatl by the Aztecs. Her popularity seems to be attested by the numerous talismanic female figurines that feature the archaeological record of most of the periods of the Mesoamerican civilizations beginning with the first, the Olmec

5. Imposing centers for the religious ceremonies (one or more temples within or approached through a court or courts, sometimes a walled precinct), the larger of which, with the palace of a ruler, residences of priests and nobles, and numerous houses of craftsmen and merchants round-a-bout, were the cores of *urban* centers, i.e. 'temple-cities' as in the preclassical Near East

6. The temples at these centers—most of which, it seems, were for the worship of the sky and storm or life god—typically a sanctuary set upon a stepped and truncated pyramid sometimes built of brick; i.e., 'pyramid-temples' closely paralleling the ziggurat-temples of Mesopotamia

7. Canal irrigation in arid regions

- 8) Cotton clothing

9. Both adobe brick and cut – stone masonry

10. Advanced hieroglyphic writing—in the case of Maya and possibly Olmec, not only ideographic but in large part phonetic and with determinatives, like early Sumerian linear pictographic and Egyptian hieroglyphic. (Aside from the face signs, the essential parts of Maya glyphs and especially the characters in Olmec writing—in the few known examples of the latter—are in form generally more like the signs in Sumerian linear pictographic than those in Egyptian hieroglyphic which are much more pictorial, i.e. at a lower level of formal development.)

Some of the preclassical Near Eastern parallels definitely or quite surely in the Maya civilization and/or the ancient Mexican, and quite possibly in the earliest, the Olmec

11. Quite surely periods of nearly total monotheism, i.e. generally worship only of the sky and storm or life god. Such were the 'protoclassic' and to a less extent the 'classic' periods of general Mesoamerican culture history (the periods of the florescence of the Maya and ancient Mexican civilizations and their great achievements in architecture, art, and chronometry, c. 200/100 BC - AD 900). This is a surprising recent conclusion based on the dominance of representations and symbols of the life god and the rarity of idols in the archaeological record of those periods (cf. J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya History and Religion*, 1970, pp. 232-233, also 187).

- Monotheism was an uncommon development in ancient civilizations, but here we appear to have a parallel to the famous such developments in the preclassical Near East, the Aton cult of the heretic Egyptian king Akhenaton and the Yahweh religion of the Israelites—especially the latter, since the Mesoamerican deity is much closer in his many aspects to the Israelites' god than to Akhenaton's (even more exactly to the Yahweh religion after the reforms of Josiah in 628-621 BC, which included the banning of all idols and talismanic fertility-goddess figurines.)
12. A belief that the sky was divided into seven heavens—definitely a belief of the ancient Mexicans, probably also the *earlier* Mayas. This was also a belief of the preclassical peoples of western Asia. (The *late* Mayas of Yucatán, however, believed that there were thirteen heavens. For explanation see Part I.)
 13. Also a belief in a shadowy afterlife in an underworld, again as in the preclassical Near Eastern civilization. (In Maya and ancient Mexican eschatology, however, some of the dead could attain a more substantial and happy existence in a heavenly paradise, specifically the first heaven, or in a few cases the seventh—the top-most—heaven, where the life god dwelt.)
 14. Knowledge of the wheel, at least in the 'classic' and probably the 'preclassic' periods of the Maya and ancient Mexican civilizations and quite possibly even in the earlier Olmec civilization. This is contrary to a long-held assumption that the wheel was unknown in the New World before the coming of the Europeans; but is attested by sensational finds in Mexico of animal figurines of baked clay mounted on four clay wheels which revolved on wooden axles, like ancient wheeled toys found in Mesopotamia. (In archaeology surprises never cease.)
 15. Metallurgy, to some extent as in the preclassical Near East—production by metallurgical processes (at least alloying, gilding, and casting including filigree work and the *cire-perdue* method) of such things as ax-blades and other implements of copper, bells of copper or gold, crowns and pectorals of gold or an alloy of copper and gold, necklaces of gold beads, ear-pendants of gold, finger-rings of gold or silver, and disks and plates of gold, silver or the alloy of copper and gold (with the pectorals, disks, and plates often engraved with religious symbols and hieroglyphs), probably in all the periods of the Maya and ancient Mexican civilizations and quite possibly the Olmec. (For a detailed discussion of the evidence of metallurgy in Mesoamerica in the 'classic' and even the 'preclassic' periods, see John L. Sorenson, 'Indications of early Metal in Mesoamerica,' *Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society* [now the SEHA], No. 5, 1954, pp. 1-15.)
- Some of the preclassical Near Eastern parallels apparently beginning in the earliest periods of the Maya civilization (certain of them also beginning traits of the related ancient Mexican)**
16. Burning of incense for ritual purification, especially at the temples by priests, prior to prayers and other rites, as in ancient Egypt and among the Israelites. In the Near East frankincense or myrrh was used, in Mesoamerica copal.
 17. A solar calendar of fixed months and a year of 365 days—another Near Eastern parallel. Actually this was a second calendar of the Mayas and ancient Mexicans, for they also had a lunar calendar such as probably first used by the 'Olmecs' (more exactly a *lunisolar* calendar, hence another somewhat arbitrary Near Eastern parallel). While the lunar (lunisolar) was basically a farmers' almanac, this schematic solar was the 'civil' calendar of the later Mesoamericans. In its first use—quite surely at the 'preclassic' Maya centers (the temple-cities dating to the Late Preclassic and Protoclassic periods, c. 600/500 BC - AD 200)—it evidently consisted of twelve months of 30 days each plus five epagomenal days, which resulted in a calendar year of 365 days, i.e. only a fraction of a day short of the true solar year; and the months must have been merely numbered. In short, it was evidently the same as the well known Egyptian (and also a Mesopotamian) schematic solar calendar. Before the end of the Protoclassic period, however, the months of this civil solar calendar were given names in the unknown language of the Early Maya people, the meanings of which—judging from their presumed derivatives in the late Indian calendars—suggest that they were borrowed from the agricultural lunar calendar. Finally, sometime in the Early Classic (c. AD 200-400/450), the change was made in the months of the solar calendar which completed the obscuration of its original Egyptian-like form: the twelve 30-day months were shortened to 20 days each and six new months of that length were added (as partly indicated by their names) resulting in the peculiar calendar of eighteen 20-day months plus five epagomenal days known to us from the inscriptions of the 'classic' periods and the sixteenth-century writings. (See Jakeman, *The Ancient Middle-American Calendar System: Its Origin and Development*, 1947, pp. 5-7.)
 18. Use of the corbeled arch for vaults of stone tombs, as in preclassical Egypt (also in the Maya civilization for roofing other important masonry structures—temples, palaces—beginning in the Early Classic period)
 19. Coating of some walls and floors with cement or lime plaster, as in preclassical Egypt, Palestine, and Phoenicia

20. Stone carvings mostly two-dimensional (pictorial or narrative), specifically reliefs that in the discovered examples are usually low, flat, and sharp-edged, and consist of one or more human and/or grotesque (symbolic) animal figures, as also stone carvings from the preclassical periods of the Near East; other characteristics of these reliefs from the earliest periods of the Maya civilization: the motifs in complex compositions usually arranged symmetrically, human figures always static, and such figures always delineated in side view except the shoulders and upper torso which may be in partial front view (and in the case of standing figures, with the feet always in full tandem)—all as in stone carvings from the preclassical Near East. (The great predominance of reliefs [often showing several and sometimes many figures] over sculptures of single figures in the round, human figures static instead of dynamic, and grotesque animal figures, sharply distinguish these somewhat baroque Maya carvings of the Late Preclassic and Protoclassic periods from the classic Olmec sculpture of the so-called Middle Preclassic period. In other words these early Maya reliefs, first appearing in the Late Preclassic period, constitute a new art style in Mesoamerica that is surprisingly Near Eastern-like. Maya reliefs from the 'classic' periods are fully baroque; e.g., parts of the costumes of important persons are delineated in great detail—in the case of apparent high priests or priest-rulers, elaborate aprons, jade medallions, and imposing miterlike headdresses bearing symbols of the life god, as well as pectorals, bracelets and other adornments, with a profusion of curling elements, symbolic or ornamental. As seen below, some of the specific motifs in these sculptures are also Near Eastern-like.)
21. Stelae bearing reliefs and inscriptions, as in the ancient Near Eastern civilizations, especially the Egyptian. (For the Near Eastern-like style of the earliest reliefs on such monuments see preceding Parallel 20.)
22. Books of a kind of paper, at least by the Middle Classic period according to archaeological evidence, but as early as the Late Preclassic according to 'literary' evidence, as in Egypt from early times and also western Asia by the late preclassical period of that area. (The 'literary' evidence consists of statements in the early native and Spanish historical accounts—indications of such books in the possession of colonizers of the Maya area in the late Preclassic period who are said to have come from a homeland across the sea.)
- (three important symbols of life which apparently were also introduced by the founders of the Maya civilization)
23. A variant of the common serpent symbol of water, fertility, or life in Maya and ancient Mexican iconography, in which the serpent is depicted with tongues of flame coming from its body, identifying it as, specifically, what the Aztecs called the *xiucóatl* or fire serpent. This flaming or fiery serpent was in particular a symbol of the sky and storm or life god in his aspect of *sun or light god* (Itzamna Kinich Ahau of the Mayas, Tonatiuh of the Aztecs; see Part I). On the disk-shaped Aztec 'Calendar Stone' two representations of the fire serpent are seen encircling the face of the sun god. The interesting parallel here, of course, is to the Egyptian serpent symbol of the sun (supreme life and light) god Rā, which is regularly seen emerging from the sun disk that was his eye or concealed his face, and must therefore have been a flaming or shining serpent; and also to the Israelite serpent symbol of life (not to be confused with the cunning, evil 'serpent,' Satan), which is referred to explicitly as a 'fiery' serpent, doubtless a concept acquired from the Egyptians (Num. 21:8-9, wherein its representation by Moses is further stated to have been of brass, probably so that it would shine as though fiery); and is said to have saved the life of those who looked upon it (ibid.); i.e., their life was thereby saved by the god of the Israelites whom it symbolized, the sky and storm or life god Yahweh, who was also the ruler of the sun and god of light, like Rā of the Egyptians.
- Addendum.* The chief variant of the serpent symbol in Maya and ancient Mexican iconography, however, is the strange 'feathered serpent,' the figure of a serpent with the bright green feathers of the rare quetzal bird, the principal symbol of Itzamna/Quetzalcóatl ('Precious quetzal-feathered serpent') as the giver of fertility to the earth. This has no known counterpart in ancient Near Eastern iconography.
24. The tau cross as another Near Eastern-like symbol of life in Maya iconography (as well as the sign for the day-name *Ik* in the Maya calendar, which must therefore have been the Maya word for this figure as a symbol of life). It is identical to the main part of a well known symbol of life in Egyptian iconography, which can be described as a tau cross with a loop handle on top (in Egyptian art it is often shown held by this loop, and it is sometimes referred to as the *crux ansata* or handled [tau] cross). The Egyptian and Maya words for this figure are also similar: *ankh* or possibly *enkh* or *inkh* in Egyptian and *ik* in Maya (*ikh*, the corresponding word in Quiché Mayan, scarcely differs from the Egyptian). But this may well be accidental, since these words have different meanings—the Egyptian, 'live' and 'tie,' 'strap,' or 'sandal'; the Maya, chiefly 'wind' and 'breath'; and the Quiché Mayan, chiefly 'wind' and 'moon' (the three meanings of the Mayan words given here, however, all had the connotation of 'life' in Maya and Quiché religious thought).

25. A 'tree of sustenance or life' (Maya *yax imix che*, 'green or living tree of abundance'; Nah. *tonaca-quauitl*, translated by the Aztec historian Ixtlilxóchitl as meaning tree of sustenance or life)—yet another Near Eastern-like symbol of life. In the religious art it is distinguished from an ordinary tree by (of course) fruit on its branches or other signs of its giving sustenance or life, but also by a symbol of the storm or life god above it, and finally by two figures standing, one on each side, facing and attending or worshipping it—all as sometimes also a tree of life in the late preclassical arts of western Asia, most fully in the art of the Assyrians.

Addendum. In the earliest known representation of this symbolic tree in the art of the Mesoamericans—that in the carving here under study, Izapa Stela 5, which we date on stylistic grounds to the early part of the Protoclassic period, hence to or near the first century BC—the tree itself is depicted naturalistically with fruit on its branches; the identifying symbol of the storm or life god (a 'jaguar mask,' the old Olmec symbol of that deity) is above it as in the Assyrian representations; and the two figures standing on either side attending or worshipping it are *bird-headed or bird-masked and winged*—i.e. supernatural beings, undoubtedly agents of the sky and storm or life god—just as again in the Assyrian representations.

In another early Maya representation—on Izapa Stela 2, which we date on stylistic grounds to the late part of the Protoclassic period, hence to or near the third century AD—the tree itself is somewhat conventionalized in the form of a tau cross (the Egyptian-like *ik* sign of life; see Parallel 24); the identifying symbol of the storm or life god is *under* it (in this case a feathered serpent, the new symbol of that deity [see at end of discussion of Parallel 23] adopted by the Maya iconographers apparently after the time of Stela 5); and in place of the two attending winged figures there is only one such figure, which hovers above it.

Finally in the two long-known, elaborate 'classic Maya' representations at Palenque—the Tablet of the Cross and the Tablet of the Foliated Cross, dating to the seventh and eighth centuries AD—the tree itself is highly conventionalized in the form of a cross (in the case of the representation on the Tablet of the Foliated Cross, again a tau cross, the *ik* sign of life); the identifying symbol of the storm or life god is again above the tree (in this case a 'bird-serpent,' an equivalent of the feathered-serpent symbol); and there are again two figures standing facing it on either side, but now without the bird-head and wings, i.e. are apparently mere priests worshipping (instead of supernatural beings attending) the tree. This version of the symbolic tree—cross-shaped with apparently two priests worshipping it on either side—is that of most of the known representations in later Mesoamerican art.

"The inescapable conclusion from the numerous—these and many other—preclassical Near Eastern

parallels [Jakeman continues] is that very *possibly* (some might say probably) the ancient Mesoamerican civilizations derived, at least in part, from the preclassical Near Eastern civilizations. This is especially because some of the parallels are in the 'very arbitrary' category, i.e. difficult to explain as accidental or due to natural convergence—in the writer's view, at least those in the above list numbered, 8, 11, 12, 23, 24, and 25.

"A Near Eastern derivation is also suggested by a partial, but very unexpected, *noncultural* parallel between ancient Mesoamerica and the ancient Near East. It has long been agreed that the racial character of the peoples of Mesoamerica—as of the New World generally—at the coming of the Europeans was mostly what may be called "Amerind" or "Proto-" Mongoloid (among their common physical traits, quite surely, were a broad face [especially in the women and mostly due to prominent cheekbones], alveolar prognathism, straight black hair, only light beard growth in the men, reddish- or yellowish-brown skin, shovel-shaped incisors, and blood-group O), establishing their ultimate ancestry as at least partly East Asiatic, dating back to a time before the development of blood-group B, which is a characteristic of today's fully Mongoloid peoples of eastern Asia. But both the early historical accounts and the archaeological finds (numerous art representations and some skeletal remains) indicate that there were also among the Mesoamericans, especially in the earlier periods, men with a relatively narrow and orthognathic face, a large or narrow, high-bridged nose, a heavy beard, and a 'white' or light skin, and who were comparatively tall. Indeed most of the ruling people at the Olmec as well as the Maya and ancient Mexican temple-cities, up into Toltec times, may have been of this very different Caucasoid ('Near Eastern-European') racial type. . . .

"Moreover, most of the arbitrary Near Eastern cultural parallels seem to appear first in the formative and florescent periods of the second Mesoamerican civilization, now called the Maya, in northern Central America (the mislabeled Late Preclassic, Protoclassic, and Early Classic periods in the general culture history of Mesoamerica, now dated c. 600/500 BC to AD 400/450). In other words, as investigations take us back before the later 'classic' and 'postclassic' periods of changes in that highest culture of ancient America into those early periods of its development, there seems to be a significant increase in Near Eastern similarities. Cf. Alfred V. Kidder, in idem, Jesse D. Jennings, and

Edwin M. Shook, *Excavations at Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala*, 1946, pp. 241-244, 260: life at one of the earliest known Maya temple-cities in highland southern Guatemala, the 'Miraflores' phase at Kaminaljuyu (latter part of the Late Preclassic period, c. 300-100 BC), was 'approximately on a level with, and in general extraordinarily like, that of our own cultural ancestors of the ancient Near East.'

"A reasonable further conclusion, therefore, is that the people who established the 'Maya' civilization and led in its development in the earlier periods—including its art dominated by the storm-god iconography, such as the tree-of-life carving on Stela 5, Izapa—very possibly were not native Mesoamericans at all (i.e., contrary to the general assumption, not Amerind Mongoloids in race and Proto-Mayans in language who, by coincidence or natural convergence, came to have many Near Eastern-like cultural traits), but instead were originally foreigners from across the sea, in fact pre-classical Near Easterners in both race and language as well as culture.

"Finally, it will be noted that apparently all the motifs in 'Early Maya' iconography that are arbitrary Near Eastern parallels—a surprising number, as seen in Part I of this work—are correspondences chiefly to Mesopotamian and Egyptian motifs. In other words, it is very possible that the ancient people at Izapa who carved and erected Stela 5 were not only Near Easterners but were acquainted with both Mesopotamian and Egyptian iconography. Consequently (returning to the crucial problem in its interpretation), the figure on the head of the large young man in the tree-of-life carving on that monument—quite surely a representation of the spirit of growing grain or young grain god of the Mesoamericans—*may well be a Mesopotamian or Egyptian iconographic motif.*

"Such, indeed, appears to be the case. This *centeotl* figure (for a detailed analysis see previously, p. 5) is essentially identical to representations of a spirit of growing grain or grain god in ancient Egyptian iconography: the figure of a young man—he has only a short beard, whereas other male deities in Egyptian art have a long narrow beard—with ears of grain growing upward from his head. (It is the same in *concept*, despite the fact that—probably because here used as a name glyph—it is limited to the face and plant sign of the grain spirit or grain god, whereas in the known Egyptian representations it is a full or nearly full human figure with the plant sign [in later Mesoamerican representations, however, it usually also is a full human figure with the plant sign]; and despite the fact that the plant is not clearly




depicted as a *grain* plant, whereas in the known Egyptian representations it is clearly depicted as such, specifically as two ears of wheat [in later Mesoamerican representations, however, it is clearly depicted as an ear of maize, i.e. Indian corn, the equivalent staple grain food of at least the later Mesoamericans]. Moreover in Mesoamerican belief the young grain god had a consort, a 'young grain goddess,' as again in Egyptian belief. But the grain-spirit or grain-god figure here is different from the Egyptian in *style*—it can only be described as a simple naturalistic or 'unstylized archaic Maya' representation, very different from the highly stylized Egyptian representations [in later Mesoamerican art it is also highly stylized but still very different in form from the Egyptian representations]. In other words, it can not have been the work of *Egyptian* artists but rather that of other Near Easterners at Izapa who nevertheless were acquainted with Egyptian as well as Mesopotamian iconographic motifs though not themselves artists, or at least not artists trained in either Mesopotamian or Egyptian stone carving.

"The chances that this grain-spirit figure on the head of the large young man in the Izapa carving is, in fact, the Egyptian grain-spirit figure though not in the Egyptian style, are increased by the circumstance that another of the six persons in that carving shown gathered around apparently discussing the tree of life *also* has an Egyptian-like headdress; namely, the female personage who has been identified as the ancestress called Oxomoco by the Aztecs and Ixmucané by the Quiché Mayans (see previously in this study)—a headdress mostly consisting of two feathers upright side by side between two horns. In Egyptian iconography this essentially was the identifying headdress emblem of the fertility-goddess Hathor, but also of a queen or princess. (Several *hieroglyphs* that are Egyptian-like in concept though not in their style also occur in the Izapa carving, as seen later in this study.)

A Suggested Decipherment

"All this brings us to the point of a possible full interpretation of the *centeotl* figure. It has been concluded that the function of this figure in the Izapa carving is that of a phonetic *name glyph*; i.e., a pictograph recording the name of the large young man. That is, it records his name as that of (or at least as *like* that of) the grain spirit or grain god, in the language or one of the languages of the ancient people of Izapa. In view of our list of parallels (it could have been much longer) establishing the very possible presence of preclassical Near Easterners in the Maya

area in the time of Izapa Stela 5, and therefore (especially in view of the preceding paragraphs) the very possible *Egyptian* origin of the grain-spirit figure, it is evident that the name which it here records—preposterous as this will seem to many present-day students of ancient America—may well be that of the grain spirit in the language of the ancient Egyptians.

According to Egyptian phonetic hieroglyphics, in early preclassical times this was *Npr* (), the early Egyptian word for grain (full vocalized form of the name unknown because there are almost no vowels in ancient Egyptian writings, but probably or close to 'Nepri,' i.e. pronounced 'nep̄rē'). In later times, however, this was commonly *Npi*, a shortened form of the word for grain: the consonant *r* (phonogram ), which was weak in Egyptian, supplanted by a strong vowel, phonogram  —actually a semivowel, i.e. a consonant when at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *y* in 'yet,' but when at the end, as here, a vowel pronounced as Continental *i* in 'Annie' or *y* in 'steady,' i.e. as English long *e* which, in fact, has generally been considered the unrecorded final sound in the original form of this name.

“Here, truly, is a mind-boggling coincidence. For the Egyptian name *Npi* (full vocalized form probably or close to 'Nep̄i'), which was in common use in Egypt in the period of the very possible Near Eastern derivation of part of the Maya civilization, and which—from the preceding discussion—may well be the name of the large young man in the tree-of-life carving at Izapa phonetically recorded by the *centeotl* figure on his head (or sufficiently similar to his name for the *centeotl* figure to be used for thus recording it), *is exactly the same or nearly the same* as the name of the *corresponding* young man in the tree-of-life story in the Book of Mormon, viz. 'Nep̄hi'—in fact very likely the same despite the *h* in the Book of Mormon name. For the Israelites (of whom the Book of Mormon people were a branch) tended to transliterate a stop consonant in an Egyptian name or word, such as *p*, with not only their letter for that consonant but also, if it preceded a vowel, their letter for the strong sound of expulsion of breath which directly follows such a consonant in this case (in modern transliteration the letter *h* or ^h), even though the consonant in the Egyptian name or word in the hieroglyphics did not have following it a phonogram

recording this breath sound. In other words, 'Nep̄hi' would quite surely have been pronounced by the Book of Mormon people the same way as *Npi* by the Egyptians or at least by the Israelites in the homeland; viz., 'nep̄^hi.' (Definitely it would not have been pronounced 'nēfi' as now by English-speaking readers of the Book of Mormon.)

“It will be noted that this decipherment of the *centeotl* figure as a pictograph which, at the least, very possibly records the name of the large young man as the same or nearly the same as the late preclassical Egyptian name *Npi* (probably or approximately pronounced 'nep̄^hē') and the Book of Mormon name 'Nep̄hi,' is based on evidence and a line of reasoning independent of the Book of Mormon. Consequently it is an additional—at least very possibly and if correct an extremely arbitrary—congruence between the large young man among the six persons in the Izapa tree-of-life carving and the large young man among the six persons in the Book of Mormon tree-of-life story. Furthermore it seems to corroborate our previous full interpretation of the *cipactli* figure above the bearded old man as a pictograph which not only identifies that other important person among the six as a famous ancestor, in late times called Cipactonal or Ixpiyacoc; but also records his personal name as 'Lehi' (see first paragraph of this discussion of the *centeotl* figure).

“A final comment. Some critics have stated that the writer wildly claims to have definitely deciphered these two figures in the carving on Izapa Stela 5 as pictographs recording the Book of Mormon names 'Lehi' and 'Nep̄hi.' This is not true. All that is claimed is that these figures have been shown to be *decipherable* as such. If this conservative position is accepted, it must be acknowledged that the Lehi tree-of-life story in the Book of Mormon is supported at least to some extent by the tree-of-life carving on Izapa Stela 5. (That is, insofar as the primary question of a correspondence of the six seated persons apparently discussing the tree of life in that carving to those who discussed it in the Lehi story. *Corroborated* would have to be the verdict, of course, if among the many other figures in that carving are also found correspondences to all or most of the many other things in the Lehi story—necessarily the symbolic tree but also the 'straight and narrow path,' the 'river of filthy water,' the 'rod of iron,' etc.)”

(End of major quotation
from Dr. Jakeman's new study)

SOME OTHER OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

The main criticism of the Tanners with respect to Jakeman's work on Izapa Stela 5—that he engages partly in symbolic interpretation—has now been dealt with. Here, certain of their other objections will briefly be answered—first, their criticism of his symbolic interpretation of the *centeotl* figure.

It seems that the Tanners do not oppose Jakeman's identification of this figure as a representation of the grain spirit or grain god of Mesoamerican belief. But they object to its suggested derivation from the Egyptian grain-god figure (*Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, pp. 39-40). Their argument on this point, however, is self-defeating. To support it they quote Jakeman's own statement in one of his works that

The fact that this man-with-grain-plant headdress symbol discovered in the Izapa carving and seen in Maya art differs stylistically and in one or two details from the grain-god [figure] of the Egyptians is not significant, since these representations are from ancient peoples widely separated geographically, which makes such differences inevitable between traits of the same origin. (*Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico; a Major Archaeological Discovery of the New World*, 1958, p. 44).

For some reason, the Tanners think this quotation helps their case against any connection between the Egyptian and Mesoamerican grain-god figures. Actually, it hurts their case, since Jakeman gives therein a logical explanation of the stylistic and other minor differences that do exist between the Egyptian and Mesoamerican representations.

The Tanners also charge that according to Jakeman's interpretation, "Lehi named his son after the pagan Egyptian grain-god Nepri," which of course would have been a surprising choice for an Israelite prophet. But they should have paid attention to his reference to the grain god of the Egyptians as the "spirit of growing grain" (as also, evidently, the grain god of the Mesoamericans). So it could be concluded that Nephi was given this Egyptian name merely as a promise that he would grow up and become productive like the remarkable and valuable grain plant. (The giving of foreign names to Israelite children was not forbidden in the time of Lehi, except that the Phoenician name 'Baal' or Chaldean name 'Bel' for the Lord could not be a part of them.) Moreover, Jakeman has pointed out that a representation of the grain spirit or grain god on the head of the large young man in the Izapa carving, as the ancient priest-artist's idea of recording his name with a single glyph, does not necessarily mean that his name was that of the grain spirit; it may only mean that the name of the grain spirit happened to be so similar to

that of the large young man that it was ideally suited for this purpose.

Most of the Tanners' remaining objections are to what they term the "pagan" elements in the Stela 5 carving (op. cit., pp. 43-50). These are, perhaps, the most unwarranted of all. For example, they protest that the "jaguar mask" and "long-nosed mask of the rain god" which Jakeman and other specialists in the Mesoamerican field have found in that carving are not mentioned in the Book of Mormon. The weakness of this argument, however, is obvious. The Book of Mormon authors were not concerned with art representations and details of iconography that had developed among their people by the time of Stela 5.

Another complaint of the Tanners along this line is that the presence in the Stela 5 carving of a figure comparable to a teraph or "teraphim" (Jakeman's suggested identification of the very small standing figure on the right of the tree) is a violation of the Old Testament prohibition of idols. But though they quote much of Jakeman's discussion of this additional "pagan" element, they omit the part that explains why this figure in the carving, if a "teraphim," was not a violation of that prohibition. We therefore supply this part in rebuttal.

Although the Second Commandment forbade the Israelites to make any image of a thing to be worshipped, there is nothing in the Laws of Moses which forbade [the use of] cult objects or symbols—some of them borrowed from "heathen" peoples of the Near East—which were not worshipped but merely used in ritual or as aids or reminders in religious thinking (e.g. altars, arks, incense burning, the tree of life, cherubim, the fiery serpent), or even to ward off evil (e.g., amulets, teraphim). The teraphim, usually defined as "household gods" or "ancestor images," were apparently never worshipped by the . . . Israelites as actually idols or images of gods, but merely kept as heirlooms believed capable of warding off sickness from the home." ("Stela 5, Izapa . . .," *Newsl. and Proc.*, 104.2, mostly as reproduced in Ross T. Christensen, comp., *The Tree of Life in Ancient America*, 1968, p. 16).

The Tanners' mistaken arguments with respect to the "pagan" elements in the Stela 5 carving are just so much chaff before the wind. For instance, if the Israelites could use "cult objects or symbols" borrowed from other peoples as ritual aids or religious reminders, why could not a Book of Mormon artist of Israelite descent use an Egyptian symbol or representation to record someone's name?

To conclude, if we compare the level (degree of logic) of Jakeman's interpretations of the motifs in the Stela 5 carving with that of the Tanners' criticisms of his interpretations, a fair judgment has

to be that his proposed explanation of this carving—an ancient picturization in stone of the Lehi tree-of-life story in the Book of Mormon—is certainly not implausible. Cf. Jakeman's own conservative conclusion reached at the end of his restudy of the *cipactli* and *centeotl* name glyphs, given in full on previous pages of this article. (He has recently informed the writer that the work containing this restudy, now nearly completed, includes several new discoveries in the carving with respect to the question of correspondences not only to the tree of life and the six named persons in the Lehi story, but also to the many things Lehi is related to have seen in his dream or vision besides the symbolic tree—the straight and narrow path, the river of filthy water, the rod of iron, etc. All these constitute an important further test of his Book of Mormon explanation.)

151.1 CAST OF LEHI STONE ON EXHIBIT.

The Society's cast of the Lehi Tree-of-Life Stone (Izapa Stela 5) is on exhibit at the Museum of Peoples and Cultures on the Brigham Young University campus.

"In view of their long-standing interest in Stela 5, members of the SEHA are especially invited to view the exhibit," said Dr. Dale L. Berge, technical director of the Museum. "Care has been taken to explain, on brief, easy-to-read label cards, how the sculpture fits into Mesoamerican archaeology, as well as M. Wells Jakeman's interpretation of this unique work of art."

The Museum of Peoples and Cultures is located on the corner of Seventh North and First East streets in Provo. It occupies Allen Hall, which served, beginning in the early 1940s, as the first men's residence hall built by BYU. The building was later used by the Language Training Mission.

Discovered in the 1930s, Izapa Stela 5 has long been interpreted in SEHA publications as a representation in stone of Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life, as recorded in 1 Nephi 8 of the Book of Mormon (*UAS Newsl.*, 29.0, 83.1; *Newsl. and Proc.*, 104.2, 128.6; *Progress in Archaeology*, pp. 119-126). A defense of this point of view is made in the foregoing paper in this issue of the *Newsletter and Proceedings* (Michael T. Griffith, "The Lehi Tree-of-Life Story in the Book of Mormon Still Supported by Izapa Stela 5").

151.2 SYMPOSIUM HEARS PAPERS ON BIBLICAL AND BOOK OF MORMON TOPICS.

Nine papers, mostly on Book of Mormon topics, were presented at the Society's Thirty-first Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures and Allied Fields, on Friday and Saturday, October 8 and 9, 1982. The yearly meeting was held in Room 205 of the J. Reuben Clark Law Building, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

The program was as follows:

Friday Evening Session

Panel Discussion: **WHERE WAS THE RIVER SIDON OF THE BOOK OF MORMON?** The Rio Grijalva view was represented by Bruce W. Warren and the Rio Usumacinta view by V. Garth Norman, with Welby W. Ricks as moderator.

Saturday Session

Ross T. Christensen, **REPLY TO AN ANTI-MORMON LEAFLET DISTRIBUTED NEAR TEMPLE SQUARE.**

Dale L. Berge, **LOCATION OF THE ORIGINAL LOG HOUSE OF JOSEPH SMITH, SR.**

Brent Ashworth, **A RECENT FINDING OF AN 1829 LETTER WRITTEN BY LUCY MACK SMITH.**

Bruce W. Warren, **WORLD AGES AND CALENDAR SYSTEMS IN MESOAMERICA.**

Terry M. Blodgett, **GERMANIC AND HEBREW SOUND SHIFTS.**

Allen J. Christenson, **A POSSIBLE SURVIVAL OF THE QUCHE-MAYA SCRIPT.**

John A. Tvedtnes, **HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE GEOGRAPHIC IMPERATIVE.**

The Thirty-first Annual Symposium was organized by Welby W. Ricks, general chairman, with the assistance of Esther Phelps Parks, Ellis T. Rasmussen, Bruce W. Warren, Ross T. Christensen, Ruth R. Christensen, and Ronald A. Pritsch as a Symposium Committee. Dr. Ricks conducted the proceedings Friday evening and Clark S. Knowlton on Saturday.

Symposium papers will be published from time to time in the *Newsletter and Proceedings*, as selected by the Society's editors. (The editors, incidentally, would welcome suggestions from members on which papers they would especially like to see published.)

The Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures has been held since 1947 as an occasion to share research findings on archaeology as it relates to the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Pearl of Great Price. Preparations are already underway for the Thirty-second Annual Symposium in 1983.

151.3 TRUSTEES RE-ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEETING. The 13 incumbent members of the SEHA Board of Trustees were re-elected at the Annual Business Meeting of the Society, held on October 9, 1982. They will serve one more year in office—until the Annual Business Meeting of 1983. The Meeting was held immediately following the Thirty-first Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures and in the same room (see above, 151.2).

The re-elected trustees are Virgil V. Peterson (Society president), Esther Phelps Parks (vice-president), M. Wells Jakeman (general editor), Ross T. Christensen (secretary and treasurer), Ruth R. Christensen, Clark S. Knowlton, Victor L. Ludlow, V. Garth Norman, A. Delbert Palmer, Ellis T. Rasmussen, Welby W. Ricks, John A. Tvedtnes, and Bruce W. Warren.

151.4 "EL MIRADOR" MAILED TO SOCIETY MEMBERS. A popularized tabloid reporting 1982 excavations at El Mirador, one of the largest and earliest ruined cities of Maya antiquity, was mailed to SEHA members on September 22.

Archaeologists Ray T. Matheny of Brigham Young University and Bruce H. Dahlin of the Catholic University of America are the co-excavators of El Mirador, located in the rain forest of Petén in northern Guatemala. Progress reports were presented in 1979 and 1980 in three papers read at the Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures. V. Garth Norman, contributor on the staff of the *Newsletter and Proceedings*, speculates that El Mirador may have been one of the "great cities" of the Nephites in the region of Zarahemla mentioned in the Book of Mormon, Hel. 7:22; 8:5, 6 (*Newsl. and Proc.*, 150.2).

"El Mirador" was mailed in the same envelope with No. 150 of the *Newsletter and Proceedings*. Also enclosed were copies of the printed program of the Thirty-first Annual Symposium, held last October 9, and of a leaflet announcing a tour to Mesoamerica, to be led by Mr. Norman and David A. Palmer next February 28 - March 12.

(Incidentally, a leaflet announcing a tour to Israel, to be led by John A. Tvedtnes, March 26 - April 8, is enclosed with the present issue, No. 151.)

151.5 GUEST EDITOR NAMED FOR NEXT ISSUE. John A. Tvedtnes has been named Guest Editor of the next issue (No. 152) of the *Newsletter and Proceedings*, according to M. Wells Jakeman, general editor of the SEHA and chairman of its Publications Committee.

Mr. Tvedtnes is trained in linguistics, archaeology, and anthropology and has lived for nine years near Jerusalem as a graduate student at Hebrew University, where he is now a doctoral candidate in Semitic and Egyptian languages. He is also a trustee of the SEHA and an instructor at the Brigham Young University - Salt Lake Center for Continuing Education.

Mr. Tvedtnes has not announced the content of his guest issue, but it is understood he is considering papers in the field of Old Testament archaeology.

Other guest editors for future issues have also been appointed, according to Dr. Jakeman. The editors and the papers to be included in their respective issues will be announced later.