

or the next day or a year or ten years from now pointing the way to Zarahemla. Several years ago John Sorenson drew an analogy with the Bible which bears repeating:

Playing "the long shots," looking for inscriptions of a particular city, would be like placing the family bankroll on the gambling tables in Las Vegas. We might be lucky, but experience tells us not to plan on it. After 10, these many years of expensive research in Bible lands, there is still not final, incontrovertible proof of a single Biblical event from archaeology alone. The great value of all that effort has been in the broad demonstration that the Bible account fits the context time after time so exactly that no reasonable person can suppose other than that it is genuinely historic. Twenty years or less of systematic "painting the scenery" can yield the same sort of convincing background for the Book of Mormon, I believe.

For too long Mormons have sought to "prove" the Book of Mormon authentic by what is really the most difficult kind of evidence — historical particulars. In the light of logic and the experience of Biblical archaeology it appears far safer to proceed on the middle ground of seeking general contextual confirmation, even though the results may not be so spectacular as many wish. In any case such a procedure — the slow building up of a picture and a case — will leave us with a body of new knowledge and increased understanding of the times, manner, and circumstances when Book of Mormon events took place which seems to some of us likely to have more enduring value than "proof."²¹

I strongly suspect that the Lord, at least for some time to come, will still require faith, not "proof," — and Moroni 10:4 ("he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost"), not archaeology, will continue to be the key for those who really care to understand the contents of the Book of Mormon and desire to know of its truth.

ANCIENT AMERICA AND THE BOOK OF MORMON RESISITED

John L. Sorenson

Secular scholarship and L.D.S. studies of archaeology and the Book of Mormon have had a discordant dialogue for some time. The scripture asserts, for example, that the civilizations it describes in ancient America had their fundamental inspiration in migrations from the Near East. Yet for three generations the most prestigious professors have claimed that the high cultures of this hemisphere — such as the Aztec, Maya, Inca and their predeces-

²¹See footnote 15.

sors in the Mesoamerican and Andean areas — owed nothing essential to the cultures of the Old World.

Attempts to open up the question have been made at various times (e.g., by G. E. Smith, Harold Gladwin, Robert Heine-Geldern, and Gordon Ekholm) but have provoked no major change in the accepted view. In recent years a certain softening has occurred so that most professional scholars today are no longer scandalized by the question, although their conclusions are hardly less firm than they were. The reason for the new, more open attitude is that a limited but interesting body of logical argument and factual evidence has appeared in print since about 1947 pointing to the possibility of some trans-oceanic voyaging earlier than the age of discovery by Europeans. Very few scholars, however, concede even today that the effect of such voyages was more than embroidery on the indigenous cultural fabric of the Americas.

The Mormon contribution to study of this problem has been trivial. Little serious scholarship has been carried on by Latter-day Saints in connection with the problem of American origins, and furthermore, no one in the scholarly establishment has had reason to be influenced significantly by the little which has been done. What few solid contributions have been made, have not been written in a manner, nor used data of a type which would be credible to professionals. In fact the views of Mormon writers on the topic, particularly the more colorful ones, are a subject of quiet amusement among professional Americanists.¹

In situations where sources of religious and secular authority conflict with each other, a Latter-day Saint sometimes finds himself in a quandary. He has been assured by a folklore transmitted in lessons, talks and church literature² that archaeologists (usually Gentiles) are steadily proving the Book of Mormon authentic, while through his formal education and secular literature he has become aware that in actuality "the experts" seem to contradict the scripture.

For most of two decades I have been both privately and professionally concerned with this problem. The scientifically orthodox case — for the complete separation of the culture histories of the two hemispheres — has always seemed to suffer from serious logical problems. The argument from evidence is also weak, for its thrust is negative: that we have *not* (yet at least) found this or that cultural item in America which immigrants could have brought

¹See especially Robert Wauchope's *Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962, (Chap. 4, "Lost Tribes and the Mormons.") Wauchope displays, besides amusement, ignorance of the actual range of Mormon thought and work, an ignorance quite general and quite understandable in the anthropological profession to which he belongs. For hostility to be mixed with the ignorance is more rare, but see V. W. Von Hagen's *The Aztec: Man and Tribe* (Mentor Books, 1958, pp. 2 and 208) for a strong condemnation of Sorenson as a typical Mormon apologist!

²Most L.D.S. literature on "archeology and the Book of Mormon" ranges from factually and logically unreliable to truly kooky. In general it appears that the worse the book, the more it sells (the Farnsworth picture books top the list, of course), which seems to say something about Mormons as an audience. Of course popular secular works on archaeology are also frequently full of nonsense. Perhaps it is the pictures that sell both types.

with them from civilized lands of the old World. But negative evidence is always weak evidence. Thus intellectually dissatisfied as well as religiously challenged, for years I filed away facts relevant to the problems as I encountered them.*

In 1968 an invitation to present a paper to a Symposium on Problems of Trans-Oceanic Contacts (at the annual meetings of the Society for American Archaeology) led to my making a new, comprehensive review of the state of the evidence. At last the nature and amount of evidence seemed to justify professional attention. The paper prepared for that occasion constituted a new departure in the interpretation of Old and New World cultural relations. The present article summarizes and interprets for *Dialogue* readers some of the points made in the technical paper.³

THE UNITY OF CIVILIZATION IN THE OLD WORLD

One striking result of the extensive historical and archaeological study which has been carried on during the last few decades has been to demonstrate a fundamental interrelatedness among the various centers of civilization in the Old World. The fact is particularly well documented for the last two millennia, when written records were common in certain areas, but increasingly it is clear that similar linkages prevailed long before written history. Where once it was permissible to think of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India or the Aegean as sites where independent civilizations "arose," now each of those cultural manifestations must be seen instead as more nearly a regional stylistic variant — a special local structuring — of symbols, ideas and techniques which were generally shared throughout the most culturally complex portion of the world. A. L. Kroeber termed this advanced culture or civilized sphere the "oikoumene" (or "ecumene").⁴

"Civilization," the highest manifestation of man's cultural activity, appears to have originated as a result of a single process. Its crucial develop-

³To be published under the title "The Significance of An Apparent Relationship between the Ancient Near East and Mesoamerica" in the symposium volume, to be issued by a major university press next year.

⁴See especially Kroeber's "The Ancient Oikoumene as a Historical Culture Aggregate," in *The Nature of Culture*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1952, 379-395. To the Greeks the "oikoumene" was the civilized world known directly to them; Kroeber expanded that meaning to eliminate their subjectivity as to the boundaries in favor of an objective determination of the limits in terms of cultural trait distributions. Gordon Hewes elaborated the concept and the supporting data in "The Ecumene as a Civilization Multiplier System," *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers*, No. 25, 1961, 73-109. Congruent with this concept is Hugh Nibley's "The Hierocentric State," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 3, 1951, 226-253.

*This is not to say that my religious beliefs were consciously allowed or made to shape the substance of my scholarship. Truth is good enough; it needs no direct assistance from hope. Rather, belief served as a stimulus, in the sense that Dr. Gordon had in mind when he wrote, "On the modern scene the only large reservoir of humanistic scholars with enough drive and stamina to master a whole complex of difficult sources is the intellectual upper-crust of Bible students." (*An Introduction to Old Testament Times*, Ventnor, N. J., Ventnor Publishers, 1953, v.) Mormon beliefs drive some of us in parallel fashion (though not nearly hard enough, as Hugh Nibley keeps telling us).

ment occurred between about 7000 and 3500 B.C. in the zone between the Aegean Sea and what is today Iran. From that southwest Asian heartland, knowledge of the advanced cultural components at the root of "civilization" spread outward, stimulating local adaptations as it went. By the 15th century A.D. this basic cultural heritage prevailed in all the more populous centers in a broad band stretching from Gibraltar to Japan. Concepts and objects, from the abacus, alfalfa, and algebra to zero, and zodiac, and zoöomorphic art, were widely distributed throughout "this great web of culture growth," combining and recombining in stylistic variants in each ecologically suitable region. Beyond its boundaries, and after within it in enclaves, cultures of substantially less complexity were to be found.

The evidence for intercommunication within the Old World makes it impossible to say that civilization arose in that hemisphere more than a single time. Now, if one wishes to learn more about the process of man's becoming civilized — about the conditions under which man has made high cultural advancement — this situation is disappointing, for one is left with but a single case to study, and general principles cannot be developed from single cases. For this reason some students of history look to the New World for a second comparative case of independent culture growth.

THE ECUMENE AND THE NEW WORLD

It appeared to Kroeber that "the story of major civilizational growth in America . . . gives no indication of integrating with the corresponding story in Eurasia. The two are not, so far as we can yet see, parts of a single plot." (1952,392) This question now deserves to be rechecked with somewhat greater exactness.

Hewes' elaboration of Kroeber's initial work offered a list of more than 200 cultural features which were widely shared throughout the ecumene in the 15th century. If a substantial number of those features were also present in pre-Columbian America, it would suggest that ancient New World civilization did relate directly to the Old World tradition.

Examination of the Hewes list reveals that Mesoamerica (southern Mexico and northern Central America, the cultural zenith of pre-Columbian America) shared with the ecumene a significant, though not large, number of traits — about one out of eight in Hewes' list.⁵ This is enough to indicate some sort of communication between the two areas, although it obviously could not have been extensive or enduring.

SHARED PATTERNS: MESOAMERICA AND THE NEAR EAST

When we turn from considering features which occurred widely throughout the ecumene to compare the cultures of the Near East and Mesoamerica

⁵These include: observatories, eclipse records, nonpermutating eras and year counts, the zero concept, a zero sign, paper, papermaking, "royal" (conspicuous display) tombs, the sacrifice complex, fermented drink offerings, concepts of paradise and hell, the parasol, the litter, the loom, cotton, textiles, resist dyeing, lost wax casting, the true arch, walled cities, fired brick, merchant class or caste, caravans or organized trade expeditions, and corvée labor. From 10 to 20 additional features may, on further examination, prove to be shared.

directly, stronger conclusions can be drawn. Complex, highly specific, similarities are found to link the two areas.

Precisely that kind of evidence is required if a convincing case is to be made for cultural transmission from one era to any other? Sufficient evidence exists to prove that peoples in different parts of the world do sometimes come up with surprisingly similar inventions or discoveries quite independently of each other. For a critical person to accept that a cultural parallel between two areas is due to some historical movement from the one place to the other, he must be struck by the unusual or arbitrary nature of the feature compared. To say, for example, that "pyramids" were built in both Mexico and Egypt carries little weight in persuading us of an historical cultural connection between the two, because the feature is too general or vague. After all, sizable "pyramids" of a sort were developed in the Society Islands a number of centuries ago, probably without benefit of contact with any other area.⁶ Thus we cannot honestly be convinced of an historical link on the basis of such weak evidence.

Our impression is different when we are told that in both the Near East and Mesoamerica, large pyramidal platforms were built as foundations for temples, that the platforms were thought to represent mountains, that climbing the elevation stood for an ascent to heaven, that in temples a partitioned-off area was considered an especially holy spot where contact with the heavenly powers could be made, that subterranean waters were believed to be sealed up or confined beneath the spot, and so on. These features make the comparison so specific and complex that our judgment tends to reject the view that similarities in such arbitrary concepts could arise by mere coincidence.

The persuasive power of comparisons increases with the number. Three or four parallels could be due to chance. Even a dozen might conceivably be. What we have in the comparison made below, however, is well over 200 shared cultural features, many of them combined with each other in intricate ways to constitute patterns. Such bodies of evidence are characteristic of two areas which have been in serious, even fundamental, communication. No historical claim of the cultural independence of the two areas from each other is credible in the face of it.

SOME COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE

The following listing is intended to convey to the reader most of the range and some of the quality of parallels known between the cultures of the Near East and Mesoamerica. Since it is impossible to explain with full clarity some of the ideas mentioned, the entries may appear cryptic, but limitations of various kinds make impossible a fuller treatment here. Again because of the brevity required, some of the items are stated without those qualifications ("sometimes," "probably," etc.) which make a scholar comfortable.

⁶K. P. Emory, "Stone Remains of the Society Islands," *B. P. Bishop Museum Bulletin* 116, Honolulu, 1933, pp. 38-41.

And of course further detailed research on some of the points may demonstrate that the parallelism is distorted or that information on which I have based the statements was erroneous. By no means have I pursued all the items in depth. The technical paper of which this article is a summary contains extensive documentation which would enable an investigator to begin to pursue further in the literature the various cultural comparisons quickly skimmed over here.

In the list, each statement implies that at some period, the cultural item mentioned was present in some part of both Mesoamerica and the Near East. The greatest concentration of Near Eastern data refers to Palestine and Syria, between around 1500 and 300 B.C.

A. *Pyramidal temple platform.*

1. The pyramidal platforms represented mountains. Atop each elevation was a temple or other scene for sacred rites.
2. Ascent up the pyramid signified ascent toward the cosmic upperworld or "heaven." A stairway ran up the center of one side.
3. The temple structure was partitioned inside to form a "holy of holies" section, which was a contact point with heavenly powers.
4. This point of contact at the temple and pyramid was the distinctive feature which conferred on the site the name "navel of the world."
5. Subterranean waters were capped or confined by the temple. At the pyramid at Cholula in Mexico, probably the largest of all native American structures, when Cortes was attacking, native priests made an opening in the side anticipating (in accordance with "a tradition") that water would flood out and cover the attackers. The temples at Byblos and Jerusalem were believed to be over the watery abyss, confining the water there from bursting forth. (Compare Ezekiel 31.)
6. This holy point was thought of as a cosmic axis — a point at which heavens, earth and underworld were all accessible.
7. As such, the pyramidal platform was a desirable and logical spot for burials, and prominent persons were sometimes interred there.
8. The platform was constructed in levels so as to leave terraces.
9. The various levels — usually 3, 4, or 7 in number — represented parts of the cosmos. Some of the terraces were gardenized.
10. Sacred sites were oriented to cardinal or solar directions. In particular, temples faced east to meet the rising sun; the term for "south" meant "on the right hand" in both Maya and Hebrew.
11. Directional orientation around the cosmic axis defined world quarters each of which was symbolized by a color.
12. The world quarters were represented in various ways, including on the board of the pachisi/patolli game (our Parcheesi), and by the swastika, the pattee cross, and the cross-within-a-cross designs.

B. *Astronomy, calendar, and writing*

1. Astronomy was highly developed and of central importance.
2. Nonpermutating eras and year counts were employed.

3. Separate calendar counts were based on sun, moon and stars; all three were articulated with each other. A year of 360 days plus five unusual extra days was shared (by Egypt and Mexico.)
4. A seven-day cycle was in use, among others.
5. Days were measured from sunset to sunset.
6. Observatories and eclipse records were in use.
7. The list of Maya day names correlates with the Semitic alphabet and the related "lunar houses"; similar names and animal associations occur in the same sequence. David Kelley (*Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 6, 1960, 317-337) has shown, among many other interesting data, that Maya day name *manik* was represented by a hand glyph, probably pronounced *ke*, corresponding in sequence to the position in Near Eastern alphabetic listing to Hebrew letter *k*, which probably originally represented a hand, pronounced *kaph*. (Compare Yucatec Maya *kab*, or Mam Maya *kop*, hand.) *Lamed* is the next Hebrew letter; the next day name in the Yucatec Maya list is *lamat*. Then comes Maya *mulu(c)*, a day ruled by the shark and with the Aztec equivalent "water." The alphabetic sequence has Greek *mu* (perhaps from Assyrian *mu*, "water") or Hebrew *mem*. Kelley became convinced that the calendar and deity symbols which he found parallel between Mesoamerica and the ecumene of the Old World could best be explained by supposing a direct transmission of calendar knowledge from Eurasia to Mesoamerica between 700 and 400 B.C.
8. Animals associated with Mesoamerica day names are comparable in many ways to animals linked with the constellations (see Kelley, 1960, 332). Half the named animals associated with Aztec days recur in Eurasia in correct sequence in connection with the constellation list.
9. The concept of zero, a zero sign, and place value notation were all employed.
10. Hieroglyphic writing systems (Egyptian and Mayan at least) were based on similar principles; each had about 750 signs and used ideographs, the rebus principle, affixes, etc.
11. Records were kept on paper, and a papermaking process was employed. The paper sometimes used lime sizing as a surface preparation.

C. Burial practices

1. Tombs were placed in pyramidal platforms or other artificial elevations, with or without a temple atop; the burial chamber sometimes was reached via a hidden entry.
2. A rich assortment of domestic and luxury products was placed in tombs in a kind of conspicuous display to the dead. Such burials are often called "royal" on the assumption (perhaps incorrect) that only nobility could command such luxury to be interred.
3. Tombs reached only by way of a very deep vertical shaft were in use. A kind of bench was built along the walls of some tombs, and niches were constructed in walls at points.
4. Families (or other groups) re-used tombs for multiple burials. Ancestor heads were preserved for veneration.

5. Fires were built over burial sites after important persons were interred.
6. Retainers were sacrificed to be buried with notable personages whom they apparently served in life.
7. Children were sacrificed and buried in a dedicatory manner beneath the foundations of buildings.
8. Urns were used as burial containers for small children.
9. A hollowed stone sarcophagus was occasionally used, with a low relief carving of a rope decorating its outside.

D. *Incense*

1. Use of incense was greatly emphasized and occurred in connection with practically all ritual.
2. Smoke of incense symbolized the ascent of the soul (cf. C. 5 above). It also symbolized prayer.
3. Incense was thought to purify and to serve as a sweet, attractive offering to the gods.
4. The smoke from censers placed in front served to hide from view a holy object within the temple.
5. "Holy" or special fire was required to be used for incense burning.
6. Incense was frequently a gum procured from trees by persons ritually prepared for the task. The gum was considered the "blood" of the tree.
7. Rain and fertility were associated with the idea of censuring.
8. The serpent was also associated with incense use. (Incense, as a bloodless form of "sacrifice," was favored by Quetzalcoatl, the Mexican god, who was represented as a feathered serpent; frankincense was gathered from trees in South Arabia which were supposedly guarded by winged serpents. There are further associations also.)
9. Tall, cylindrical ceramic burner stands were horned, white surfaced, and constructed with rows of "windows" in their bases in the shape of inverted triangles.
10. Incense altars of limestone were also used which were decorated with feline or human feline hybrid motifs which connoted fertility.

E. *Standing stones (stele) as cult objects*

1. Series of such large stones were placed in rows on ceremonial sites, possibly for astronomical purposes.
2. There is evidence that they served to commemorate historical events and/or calendrical anniversaries.
3. They also probably had memorial and mortuary functions.

F. *Figurines*

1. Human, female, ceramic figurines were abundant. Apparently they had a connection, which remains obscure in detail, to cult concepts and practices having to do with fertility. One specific form is of a pregnant woman holding her breasts.
2. Sometimes they were placed in burials.
3. One type of figurine had movable limbs.
4. Animal figurines were also constructed, having cultic rather than toy significance.

5. One type of animal figure was provided with wheels.
6. Ceramic models of cultic scenes were constructed.

G. *Sacrifice complex*

1. Animals were slain on an altar in a ceremonial area and then burned wholly or in part as offerings.
2. Celebrants of the rite consumed part of the sacrifice with a sense of communion.
3. Censing accompanied the sacrifice. In fact one type of offering consisted of incense mixed with cereal.
4. Parched grain or meal served as another type of offering.
5. Blood was offered as a sacrifice.
6. Blood was scattered over the sacrificial area and participants.
7. Fermented and non-fermented drink offerings were employed.
8. Libation vessels were of very similar shape.
9. A (substitute) human was sacrificed when a prominent person was near death.
10. Children were sacrificed with some frequency. The child of a leader might be sacrificed at a time of national danger.
11. A scapegoat was thought to bear away the people's sins.
12. Human sacrifice was sometimes accomplished by throwing the victim down from an elevation.
13. Persons sacrificed their own blood, for which purpose they cut themselves.
14. A form of circumcision was used which had sacrificial connotation about it.

H. *Lustration (ritual washing)*

1. A representation from a Mexican pre-Columbian document (Codex Borgia) compares with a standard scene from Egyptian art as follows: (a) a central figure is shown beneath (b) crossed streams being poured (c) from vessels held by (d) divinities at either side. Conventionalized symbols used to mark the streams signify "life." The figures at the sides in the Mexican codex are Mictlantecuhtli and Mitlancihuatl, lord and lady of the region of death. Egyptian scenes show Horus and either Thoth or Seth; Thoth signifies the direction west, the region of death. Seth is of the north and was associated with the ideas of illness and evil. The Mexican divinities are also connected with the north. Ixtlilton, the center figure in the Borgia scene, was a god of healing; Thoth was emblematic of healing in Egyptian medicine. Nethys, wife of Seth, was sometimes queen of the night and of the dead, the same as Mictlancihuatl.⁷
2. Rites involving sprinkling water over a person with an aspergillum were thought to purify him and also to signify renewal or rebirth.

⁷In private correspondence, the most respected of American orientalists said some years ago, upon seeing these ritual scenes and learning of their associations, that in his opinion had the Mexican scene come from some place near Egypt — say, Mesopotamia, where transmission distance was no issue — there could be no question that an historical connection existed between the representations.

J. *Divination*

1. Astrology was highly elaborated.
2. Astrological almanacs were constructed and used.
3. Divination by gazing fixedly in a mirror (captoptromancy) was employed.

K. *Illness*

1. Illness was thought to be caused in some cases by the breaking of taboos.
2. Confession of sin was believed to bring about a cure of illness.

L. *Snake symbolism*

1. The serpent symbolized wisdom and knowledge, healing, and fertility.
2. It was thought to inhabit and to be connected symbolically with water holes, springs, etc.
3. Another association was with death and the underworld.
4. A feathered, "flying" snake representation was an object of devotion.
5. A specific artist motif of an undulating serpent was similar in detail.
6. A seven-headed serpent was represented in art and connected with the idea of rain and fertility.

M. *A dragon or great water monster was thought to inhabit the waters and to symbolize them.*

N. *Feline symbolism*

1. The lion or jaguar represented power, dominance and rulership.
2. Also these felines in some settings symbolized fertility, rain and abundance.
3. The lion (jaguar) was lord of the underworld, symbolizing the night aspect of the sun, which was thought to enter the underworld at night.
4. Art representations of the feline sometimes showed a radial whorl design at the joint of the leg. (H.O. Thompson considers this feature in Asia to indicate deity.)
5. Hybrid human-feline representations have already been mentioned in connection with incense burners.

O. *Various water-connected features*

1. A mountain/rain/cloud divinity controlled life through dominating the regularity of rain. He was thought to dwell on a mountain, was full-bearded, and grasped a lightning bolt in his hand. (Striking comparative illustrations are shown in C. Irwin's *Fair Gods and Stone Faces*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1963, 171-173).
2. An overflowing vase motif was related to the concepts and symbols of the sacred tree and the waters beneath the earth.
3. The lotus or water lily symbolized emergent life, or primeval and ultimate abundance.
4. The guilloche (double S) sign not only occurred in both areas, but was associated with the idea of rain or water.

P. *Trees*

1. The cedar of Yucatan was called *kuche*, "tree of God" and was preferred as the wood for carving idols. In Babylonia the sacred cedar had the name of the god Ea written in its core, while at nearby Susa the cuneiform sign for cedar tree was part of the name of the dominant deity.
2. Scenes showing the "tree of life" regularly included not only the tree in the center, but also one (or two) personages facing it from either side, a serpent/monster element associated usually beneath the tree, or other winged feature above.
3. The sacred tree was supposed to bear leaves or fruit of precious blue or green stone (jade in America, lapis lazuli in Mesopotamia).
4. Trees served to represent peoples or tribes, which sometimes bore the name of a tree.
5. A great world tree, rooted at the cosmic axis, was thought to spread its limbs protectively over the earth. Furthermore the tree was considered a route for travel up or down to other cosmic levels.

Q. *Various cosmological and related features*

1. A "paradise" was anticipated for certain persons after death.
2. An underworld in the sense of "hell" was also believed in.
3. Upper-and underworld were considered divided into hierarchical layers above and below the earth's surface.
4. The concept of dualism was strong.
5. Earth, air, fire and water were considered basic elements.
6. There was belief in a deluge which was produced by rain and from which only a few persons were saved in a vessel they had constructed. A bird was sent from the vessel to check on the drying up of the land.
7. A (pyramid) tower was believed constructed for safety against a deluge, however the structure was blown down by a great wind.

R. *Assorted motifs and esthetic features*

1. The double-headed eagle.
2. A winged disc or globe, or the sun as the body of a bird.
3. A pennated tail dependent from a circular feature.
4. The "star of David," intertwined triangles.
5. A representation of a ring (or plate), which shows a pentad on its face transfixd from below by a stick.
6. A ritual bag or bucket held by a divine or priestly figure in a ritual scene.
7. Floating figures, or "angels," in art.
8. Frontality in representations of the human figure, that is the head being in profile while the eye, torso and shoulders are shown full front.
9. A horseshoe-shaped, curl-end motif, either alone or in the form of hair curls of a female deity. This deity, called "Mother" or "Lady," was associated with childbirth, with vegetational fertility, and with Venus as the Morning Star. (Many of the figurines noted earlier are probably representations of this deity, who was Ishtar/Hathor in Mesopotamia/Egypt.)
10. Construction of mosaics, particularly using blue or blue-green stone.

11. The panpipe, as well as a variety of trumpets.
12. Both flat and cylinder stamps or seals. Sir Leonard Woolley once wrote, that "The cylinder seal is a peculiar type not likely to be invented independently in two different countries . . . Paper-using people would never invent the cylinder seal" (*Digging Up the Past*, Penguin Books, 1937, 76). The Mesoamerican peoples were paper-users.
13. An antiphonal poetic style, of which J.E.S. Thompson has said, "There are close parallels in Maya transcriptions of the colonial period, and I am convinced, in the hieroglyphic texts themselves to the verses of the Psalms, and the poetry of Job," (*Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Introduction*, Carnegie Institution Publication 589, Washington, 1950, 61-62). Other early western semitic peoples employed the same style.

S. *Kingship complex*

1. The king concept
2. Divine mandate
3. Throne
4. Canopy over the throne
5. Parasol as a sign of dignity and rank
6. Sceptre
7. Crown or diadem
8. Gold necklace as a sign of office
9. Heraldic devices
10. A litter for transport of the king
11. Deference by bowing and casting down the eyes.

T. *Technology*

1. Loom-made textiles were elaborately developed.
2. Clothing included the turban, a "nightcap" style of headdress, shoes with pointed toes, long robes, sashes, mantles, sandals, and loin cloth.
3. Purple dye was prepared from a coastal mollusk by going into the water, picking up the animal, squeezing or "milking" its body, then replacing it. The coloring was of high value and had an elite connotation.
4. Scarlet dye had much the same connotation, though of a lesser degree, and was manufactured from the body of a plant louse.
5. Resist dyeing was practiced.
6. Cotton was widely used.
7. In weaponry and armor, a kettle-shaped helmet, the sling, and thickened textile armor were shared.
8. In metallurgy not only was the lost wax or *cire perdue* method of casting particularly noteworthy, but more basically the processes of smelting, alloying, forging, hammering and gilding were shared.
9. Building features included colonnades, adqueducts, canals, highways, cement-lined reservoirs, fired brick, and city walls.
10. Both the corbelled and true arches were known. As long ago as 1944 Professor Linton Satterthwaite of the University of Pennsylvania wrote, "It has been usual to suppose that the principle of the true

arch was unknown to the American Indian, though here and there in some particular structure it has been argued that the principle, though not obvious, was really present. If the reader will turn to Figures 22 and 23 and Plates 3b and 4a of this report, I believe he will have no doubt that the Maya at La Muñeca roofed a long room with the true arch, and that they knew exactly what they were doing." (Review of *Archaeological Reconnaissance in Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Peten*, by K. Ruppert and J. H. Denison, Jr., Carnegie Institution Publication 543, 1943, in *American Antiquity*, Vol. 10, 1944, 217). More recently see "The True Arch in Pre-Columbian America?," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 5, 1964, 328-329.)

11. The highly developed ceramics include a large number of technical and decorative features which are often considered, in regional comparisons, indicative of cultural links.

U. *Social organization*⁸

1. Merchant class or caste
2. Organized trade expeditions or caravans
3. Corvee labor

V. *Biological modifications*

1. Cranial deformation
2. Trepanation (an operation to remove a piece of the skull)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVIDENCE

Specialists in the cultures of the Near East and Mesoamerica will recognize that many of the features listed above are central to the civilizations concerned. For the Near East, subterranean waters, the temple platform, sacrifice, censuring, the symbolism of the serpent and lion, rain and fertility ritual, and others listed were of great importance in those peoples' conception of man, nature and divinity. By no means were they peripheral. Similarly for Mesoamerica, astronomy, writing, the calendar, the platform, burials, figurines, the feline and serpent, rain symbolism, and so on were core features. Moreover, many of those elements were actually articulated into complex cultural super-patterns which can not readily be shown here. However these elements reached Mesoamerica, they assuredly did not arrive as mere "embroidery" as the traditional experts would have it.

Furthermore, much more work than I have done would probably increase the parallels, for entire topics (e.g. plants, diseases, seasonal cult practices, astronomy, mathematics, myths, etc.) were omitted altogether or were only touched upon above rather than being considered seriously.

CONCLUSION

The evidence indicates strongly that communication of importance must have been carried on between the Near East and Mesoamerica. The time

⁸Only parallels in social organization which were considered by Hewes and Kroeber are listed here, since sociological parallels are among the least reliable indicators of cultural influence at a distance.

suggested by the evidence is probably between 1500 and about 300 B.C. The route and medium of transmission is unclear. However it definitely affected even the fundamentals of symbolic life of later Mesoamerica, not just the secondary aspects of that civilizational tradition. While a great deal of work would be desirable at this point to clarify these evidences, it is difficult to see how the fundamental conclusion can be challenged that to a significant degree Mesoamerican civilization had roots in the Near East.

A broader lesson needs to be drawn, too. The array of evidence cited did not result from any dramatic new excavations or text discoveries. Nearly all the information used was in the standard literature, and presumably there is much more yet to be found there. Ekholm has asked, "Why is it that . . . seemingly good evidence for the ancient Maya having known the true arch was published over twenty years ago and since that time has been scarcely mentioned? Its significance has not been discussed, and it has not been mentioned or considered in connection with any of the more general discussions of . . . the American civilizations?" (*Current Anthropology*, Vol. 5, 1964, 329). Why indeed have many other data relevant to the American origin problem lain unappreciated for years by orthodox experts?⁹ I suggest that no investigator is likely to discover anything which is implicitly ruled out by the question he posed to begin with. All but a handful of the Americanist scholars have really been asking the question, why was there *not* a connection between the hemispheres? They have found what they sought, and little else.

Gertrude Stein is supposed to have asked on her deathbed, "What is the answer?" After only silence followed, she finally cried, "Then what is the question?" For the Latter-day Saint whose religious knowledge and secular learning seem to be in conflict, the restatement is apt. I believe that if we have the wit to phrase our questions well and then work very hard to master the relevant data, answers may not be as far away as they had appeared.

Professor Gordon has said,

Nearly always, we can know what we understand a . . . passage correctly, when its literal meaning fits smoothly into the general context. (1953, 107)

This paper has shown that the context of historical knowledge which once conflicted with one claim of the Book of Mormon (to a Near Eastern origin for part of ancient American civilization) should be modified. The change has come through re-synthesis of scholarly knowledge to correct the context. There may be other cases, of course, where a scriptural claim itself has to be reinterpreted, but the general rule (again in Gordon's words) seems to govern the present example:

⁹J. J. Sherwood and M. Nataupsky (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 8, 1967, p. 53) report finding that seven out of a set of 21 features concerning the background (e.g. number of American-born grandparents, undergraduate scholastic rank) of the psychologists who have studied the question of differences in intelligence between Negroes and whites are significantly correlated with the conclusions of their studies! I expect that a set of personal characteristics of scholars could also be discovered which would correlate with the conclusion that Old World and New World civilizations are independent.

It cannot be overemphasized that the discoveries of archaeology tend to justify the literal meaning of the text as against scholarly and traditional interpretation. This holds not only for the Bible but for ancient texts in general. (1953, 107)

The Book of Mormon is one of those ancient texts. Its accuracy is increasingly attested by scholarship.