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Editors(s): Ross T. Christensen and Bruce D. Louthan

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Published several times a year by THE SOCIETY FOR EARLY HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, for the dissemination among its members of information on new discoveries in archaeology throwing light on the origins of civilization in the Old and New Worlds, on the earliest periods of recorded history in the two hemispheres, and on the important historical claims of the Hebrew-Christian and Latter-day Saint scriptures; also news of the Society and its members and of the B.Y.U. department of archaeology and anthropology, of which the Society is an affiliated organization. Included are papers read at the Society's and Department's annual symposia on the archaeology of the Scriptures. All views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author of the contribution in which they appear and not necessarily those of Brigham Young University or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Subscription is by membership in the Society, which also includes subscription to other publications.

104.0 SYMPOSIUM A SUCCESS. The Society's "Seventeenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures and Allied Fields" was held on the BYU campus, October 14. One hundred and one persons attended, including 61 SEHA members.

The morning program was as follows: "Welcoming Remarks," by Ross T. Christensen, who conducted the meeting as symposium chairman; "Confirmation of Parts of Joseph Smith's Explanation of the Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham," by Darold M. Marlowe; "Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah," by Donald W. Forsyth; "A Correlation of Ramsay's View of the Seven Churches and the LDS Concept of Apostasy," by Richard L. Anderson; and "Archaeological Excavations at Nauvoo during the Summer of 1967," by Henry G. Crellin, Jr.

The following papers were presented during the afternoon session: "The Phoenician Theory of New-World Origins Re-examined," by Dr. Christensen; "Another Look at the 'Phoenician' or Hebrew-like Inscription near Los Lunas, Mexico," by Lewis R. Church; "A Possible Linear Script from Preclassic Mexico," by Welby W. Ricks; "Possible Mesoamerican-Andean Linguistic Connections, and Their Significance for the Book of Mormon," by Lyle R. Campbell; "Stela 5, Izapa, Mexico; Some Recent Attacks upon the Book of Mormon Explanation of This Ancient Sculpture, and a Detailed Rebuttal," by M. Wells Jakeman; and "Concluding Remarks," by Dr. Christensen.

The Newsletter, from time to time, will publish selected papers from this year's symposium. (Dr. Jakeman's paper--under a shortened title and as slightly revised by him--appears in this issue; see 104.2, below.)

In the meantime, one-page hand-outs of the papers of Mr. Marlowe, Mr. Crellin, Dr. Christensen, Dr. Ricks, and Mr. Campbell are available to Society members free to cost.

104.1 MISUNDERSTANDING AS TO MEMBERSHIP FEE. Several SEHA members, in renewing their membership for 1968, have paid the wrong amount, according to the Society secretary-treasurer.

The annual fee is \$4, as stated in the revised constitution adopted by the Society last July (Newsletter, 103.0; see Article IV, Section 2, of the constitution).

In addition to regular membership, there is the special category of RESEARCH PATRON, which consists of all members who annually contribute \$15 or more to the Society's Research Fund. This amount is in addition to the membership fee. A check in the amount of \$19 would thus cover one year of membership (\$4), plus one year of Research Patronage (\$15).

Several members have sent checks of only \$15, apparently with the understanding that they will be entered as Research Patrons. This is not correct, as the amount remaining--\$11-- after deduction of the membership fee is insufficient. The Society is of course happy to receive contributions to the Research Fund in any amount, but only the full \$15 entitles one to the distinction of Research Patron.

Those who have thus sent in the wrong amount are urged to remit the remaining \$4 as soon as possible. Those doing so will promptly be entered as Research Patrons.

According to the constitution Research Patrons "shall have the privilege of voting at triennial election meetings and shall be eligible for nomination and election as General Officers of the Society" (Article IV, Section 6). Their names are also listed from time to time in the Newsletter.

It is not necessary to be a Research Patron, however, in order to be a regular member of the Society and receive all publications and other benefits of membership.

104.2 STELA 5, IZAPA, AS "THE LEHI TREE-OF-LIFE STONE"; A REPLY TO RECENT ATTACKS. By M. Wells Jakeman. A paper read at the Seventeenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures and Allied Fields, held at Brigham Young University on October 14, 1967.

PREFACE

A now-famous sculpture from ancient America is the large stone monument known as Stela 5, Izapa, which was found in about 1939 at the ruined city called Izapa in southern Mexico. On the face of this monument is carved a complex religious scene, the central feature of which is a great tree with fruit on its branches--undoubtedly a representation of the symbolic tree of life of ancient American religion--and two large semi-human figures standing (apparently in the air) facing it on either side, attending it.

Also prominent in the scene are six persons seated together on the ground--actually three on each side of the tree, and two of them on a cushion or stool--evidently engaged in some discussion. The principal one among them is an old, stoop-shouldered man with a long full beard (hence a white man?), seated oriental-fashion on a cushion facing the tree, and wearing a high pointed tiara, which resembles the tiara worn by ancient Israelite high priests. His hands are outstretched in a speaking gesture towards the tree; that is, he seems to be saying something about the tree--the tree of life--to the other five persons seated around.

Another of the six is apparently also a person of advanced years, but beardless, who sits behind the old bearded man on a cushioned stool, wears a curiously Egyptian-like headdress, and holds a staff which supports a large hieroglyph above the old man. Probably this is a female personage of similar age in attendance upon the old man; that is, his wife.

The remaining four of the six persons, seated directly upon the ground in front of this elderly couple, appear to be four young men (their sons?), three of whom wear oriental-type turbans. One of them is portrayed as larger than the others and as holding a pointed object, evidently a stylus, with which he seems to be recording--on a rectangular object that must be a plate or tablet, seen resting on the ground before him--what the old bearded man is saying about the tree.

Also depicted in the carving are a wavy-line-and-scroll design (obviously a river of water) coming by the tree, and a narrow double line (a narrow path?) running straight to the tree; as well as many other things not previously seen in ancient representations of the tree of life.

The first study of this interesting sculpture was made by Dr. Matthew W. Stirling of the Smithsonian Institution, who directed an archaeological expedition to Izapa and other sites of southern Mexico in 1941.

In a work based on the expedition, entitled Stone Monuments of Southern Mexico and published at Washington in 1943, Dr. Stirling offered a partial analysis of the carved scene on this monument, and suggested the meaning of some of its features.

Since then, most other archaeologists specializing in the Mesoamerican area--that is, the ancient high-culture area of central and southern Mexico and northern Central America--have accepted this carving as a portrayal of some ancient event or ceremony featuring the tree of life. But the identity of the six persons shown seated together apparently discussing the symbolic tree, and the meaning of the river of water and most of the other features of the carving, have remained a total mystery to these scholars.

Partly because Mesoamerica is the area of my own specialization, I have been engaged for a number of years in developing, if possible, a complete analysis and interpretation of this ancient sculpture. My principal publication so far, in this study, is a monograph entitled Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico; a Major Archaeological Discovery of the New World (SEHA,



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

Special Publications No. 2, Provo, Utah, 1958).

In this was presented, with supporting evidence, my general interpretation of the Stela 5, Izapa, scene -- though this is an interpretation which many may find hard to accept; namely that this carving is actually a portrayal of the "Lehi tree-of-life story" found in the early account of ancient America called the Book of Mormon (see 1 Nephi 8). That is the six persons in this carving, seated together apparently discussing the tree of life, are to be identified as none other than the six persons--an ancient Israelite prophet named Lehi and his wife and four sons--who in the Book of Mormon account likewise gathered together on one occasion and discussed the tree of life, which this prophet Lehi had seen in a vision--the old bearded man (one of the six in the carving) being of course, in this identification, the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi himself; while the river of water shown coming by the tree of life is to be explained as, in fact, a representation of the river of water which Lehi saw in his vision similarly coming by the tree of life. I also pointed out in my 1958 paper that if this interpretation is correct, Stela 5, Izapa, constitutes almost conclusive evidence of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

Many people have come to accept this interpretation, and refer to Stela 5, Izapa, as "the Lehi Tree-of-Life Stone." Some, however, violently oppose it.

THE HOUGEY ATTACK AND A DETAILED REPLY

One lengthy attack has appeared in print. This is a 27-page booklet authored by a non-Mormon writer, Hal Hougey, entitled The Truth About the "Lehi Tree-of-Life" Stone, published at Concord, California, in 1963, and since then widely distributed to members of the Latter-day Saint church and to investigators of Mormonism.

I have had a copy of this publication for some years, but have been disinclined to undertake a reply.

This has been for two reasons. First, Mr. Hougey has written his "critique" not as a serious contribution to the interpretation of the Izapa sculpture but as an addition to anti-Mormon literature. (His prejudice is evident throughout--in the title of the booklet itself and on most of its pages. On p. 6, for example, he states that it is impossible for me, being a Mormon, to be objective. But in many other places he rejects my analysis or interpretation merely with an unsupported opinion of his own; and at the end of his booklet he pleads with his prospective Latter-day Saint readers "to leave the falsity of Mormonism." This is not the way of an objective discussant but of a biased pamphleteer.) Secondly, he reveals himself in several places to be unacquainted with the fields of learning involved, namely Mesoamerican and Near Eastern archaeology.

In other words, I do not regard his critique as meriting a reply--or at least as warranting the considerable time required for dealing with all his opinions and assumptions.

Nevertheless, because of the numerous enquiries received, a rebuttal is here made of each of Mr. Hougey's three main arguments against my analysis and interpretation of the Izapa tree-of-life carving, which together will constitute a fairly detailed reply to his attack.

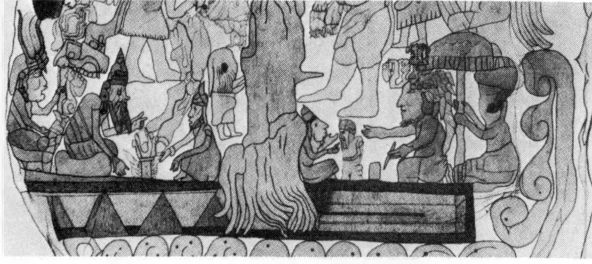
1

His first main argument is that there are--instead of the many correspondences which I see--only three undisputed similarities in this carving to the Lehi tree-of-life story found in the Book of Mormon (that is, undisputed by him); namely, "several figures seated around the tree, the tree itself, and the river of water" --similarities which (if we accept his wording of them as quoted here) cannot be considered arbitrary or unexpected, and therefore are easily explained as accidental. All the other correspondences which I recognize he declares to be actually "improbabilities," "dissimilarities," or "unwarranted assumptions." (Pp. 11-12, 15, 16, 17).

My immediate reply to this argument is that he wrongly or insufficiently states even the three similarities which he does not dispute; and that when correctly or fully stated, all three of them are found to be definitely arbitrary or unexpected and therefore significant.

In the case of the first, although he admits that "the most convincing" of my arbitrary similarities is "the number of persons, six, seated around the tree," he maintains that this number is in doubt, and that there are "several" persons seated around the tree--that the number can be anywhere from five to seven (p. 17): he holds that it is an unwarranted assumption that the seated figure on the far right (which has been partly obliterated by weathering) is "even human" (pp. 14, 17; he is here apparently following the drawing reproduction of the carving by Dr. Clyde E. Keeler, professor of zoology at Georgia State College for Women, reprinted in his booklet as Pl. V, which shows this figure with a monkey's [?] face in full front view and a monkey's tail); and that it cannot be determined whether the small second figure to the right of the tree which I identify as a small idol, is really an idol or else should be counted as a small seated person (p. 17), that is a seated child.

But a careful study of the seated figure on the far right, in the excellent photographic reproduction of the carving by Richard H. Stewart of the Smithsonian Institution-National Geographic Society expedition to



The six seated figures in the Stela 5, Izapa, carving.

Izapa in 1941 (from which Keeler made his drawing and which is reprinted in Hougey's booklet as Pl. I), reveals no indication of either a face in full front view--which in fact would be contrary to the "protoclassic Maya" art style to which this sculpture belongs--or of a monkey's tail, and that consequently it is surely one of the group of human figures seated around the tree (cf. Newsletter, 50.70).

Moreover, careful study with a magnifying glass of the small second figure to the right of the tree--in the original Smithsonian-National Geographic photograph reproduced in my monograph, not his figure as it appears in Hougey's somewhat blurred reprint of this photograph (which I suspect is a secondary copy via my reproduction) or in the inaccurate Keeler drawing--clearly reveals, first, that it is ^{probably} standing rather than seated; and second, that it is a miniature adult figure with a moustache (and possibly a beard) and a turban headdress; in other words, not a seated child but probably a small standing portable idol or image very much like the teraphim (household gods or ancestor images) of ancient western Asia.

Both these analyses have been verified in a study which I made of Stela 5--the actual monument itself--at the site of Izapa in 1954 (Newsletter, 19.1). That they are correct is also attested by the fact that they satisfy stylistic requirements: they give us a group of human figures in symmetry (three on each side) and all of them in profile, which are stylistic traits of the particular development of protoclassic Maya art to which this sculpture belongs (as shown in a new edition of my 1958 monograph now in preparation), dating very probably between 100 BC and AD 35.

We thus arrive at the specific number six for the persons shown seated around the tree--which, incidentally, is also the conclusion reached by Dr. Stirling and others who have studied this monument. That is six, and only six, persons are shown seated together, apparently engaged in a discussion of the fruit-bearing tree in the center (a representation of the tree of life; see following)--the same number as

that of the persons indicated in the Book of Mormon as grouped together on one occasion in a discussion of the tree of life, which is an arbitrary and therefore significant correspondence.

In the case of the second similarity which Hougey does not dispute, "the tree itself," we may first point out that in my monograph it is amply established (from associated features) that this central feature of the carving is not a representation of just an ordinary tree but actually a well-known tree symbol of life in the ancient religion and art of Mesoamerica--an identification also arrived at in recent studies of the ancient sculptures of Izapa by non-Mormon archaeologists. In other words, this similarity to the Lehi story of the Book of Mormon--not just a tree in both the carving and that story but specifically the tree of life--is not so simple or without significance as Hougey asserts.

In fact this similarity becomes highly arbitrary or significant when we take into account, as a part of the tree-of-life symbol, the two large semi-human figures with birdlike heads and (at least one of them) with wings, standing--apparently in the air--facing the tree on either side and attending it (in view of the objects which they hold towards it). For two such figures--supernatural beings with bird heads and wings--are also shown with the tree of life, standing facing it on either side and apparently attending it (holding similar objects towards it), in ancient Assyrian and Canaanite sculptures of the Near East; and these have long been identified by specialists in Near Eastern archaeology as representations of genii, specifically the cherubim which in the belief of the ancient Israelites guarded the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. Indeed they seem to have been the model of the winged cherubim in Israelite religious art, such as the pair mentioned in Exodus 25:18 as placed on the mercy-seat of the Ark of the Covenant, and those mentioned in 1 Kings 6:29 as carved on the walls of Solomon's temple at Jerusalem with palm trees (undoubtedly representations of the tree of life, as in Mesopotamia), as well as the colossal pair described in 1 Kings 6:23-28 and 8:6-7 as overshadowing with their wings the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies of Solomon's temple. These two figures attending the tree of life in the Izapa carving, therefore, constitute a striking parallel to the cherubim shown attending or guarding the tree of life in ancient Near Eastern (including Israelite) art.

It is true that these figures, at first thought, do not also constitute a parallel to the tree-of-life symbol in the Lehi story of the Book of Mormon; for there is no mention therein of cherubim guarding or attending

the tree. Note, however, that this does not necessarily rule out Lehi's having mentioned seeing cherubim in his vision guarding or attending the tree in his narration of the vision to his family gathered around. (That is, our admission that they are not mentioned in the Book of Mormon account of the vision is not the same as Hougey's flat claim, on p. 14, that "there are no cherubim guarding the tree in Lehi's vision.") For Lehi's son Nephi who wrote down his words at this time states that he, Nephi, did not record all that his father spoke of seeing and hearing in his vision (1 Nephi 9:1).

In fact, since in ancient Near Eastern art the tree of life is usually shown with two cherubim attending it, and these beings are explicitly associated with the holy tree in Israelite scripture (Genesis 3:24), it is at least a good possibility that they were also with this tree in Lehi's vision and that he spoke of seeing them, even though Nephi does not mention them in his record. Moreover, it must be kept in mind that the descendants of Lehi in the New World, the "Nephites," being also Israelites and having in their possession a copy of the Israelite scriptures (the "Brass Plates of Laban"), were assuredly familiar with the supernatural beings that guarded or attended the tree of life. They are, in fact, mentioned in the Book of Mormon itself, the Nephite scriptures, in several other references to the tree of life (Alma 12:21; 42:2, 3). And the Nephites were also undoubtedly familiar with the way in which their ancestors in the Old World, the Israelites, were accustomed to portray these beings, that is as the Assyrians and Canaanites portrayed them, at least as winged and in pairs (see in preceding paragraph). It is therefore very likely that in any depiction of the Lehi tree-of-life story which the Nephites may have made in the New World--even if Lehi did not speak of seeing them in his vision--cherubim would have been shown guarding or attending the tree essentially like those attending the holy tree in Assyrian, Canaanite, and Palestinian Israelite carvings, at least as winged and two in number.

Our conclusion, then, must be that--contrary to Hougey--the two large semi-human figures standing (apparently in the air) facing and attending the tree of life in the Stela 5, Izapa, carving are very much in accordance with the claims of the Book of Mormon, and strongly reinforce the correspondence of the tree in this carving to the tree mentioned in the Lehi story found in that work.

Finally in the case of the third similarity which Hougey does not dispute, "the river of water," all we need point out here is that he neglects to mention as a part of this correspondence the fact that the wavy-lines-and-scrolls feature in the Izapa carving, which

undoubtedly represents a river of water (especially since this feature is a motif of early Maya--as well as Assyrian!--art), is strangely placed under the panel representing the earth from which the tree is growing, that is apparently under the earth. Since the corresponding river of water which came near the tree of life in Lehi's vision is explained by his son Nephi in the Book of Mormon as not an actual river but a representation of the "depths of hell" (1 Nephi 12:16)--that is the shadowy afterworld believed in by the Israelites, which they called Sheol and which they located under the earth--this third undisputed similarity in the carving to the Lehi story is not a simple one without significance, as Hougey asserts, but actually also--like the first two similarities as we have seen--an arbitrary or significant one.

Of the many other similarities to the Lehi tree-of-Life account which I see in the Izapa carving, some--restating my opinion against Hougey's--are quite obvious or definite and also arbitrary or significant, although others must be deemed only probable or possible or of a simple nature, quite easy to explain as accidental and therefore not very significant. In the former group is surely the correspondence between the hieroglyph above the old bearded man--a great face in profile with the jaws (especially the upper jaw) emphasized, a symbol well known among ancient Mesoamerican hieroglyphs as the cipactli or crocodile glyph--and the very name of the Israelite prophet Lehi of the Book of Mormon. That is, this strange hieroglyph, I maintain, is here a name glyph decipherable as actually recording the name of the old bearded man as "Lehi."

Hougey claims that this correspondence or interpretation is "highly conjectural"--that the crocodile symbol above the old bearded man may not be a personal name glyph (for it is already known to be a calendrical sign)--and questions why, if it is here a name glyph, only the jaw portion is singled out to signify the name Lehi (p. 13). In this, however, he reveals his lack of knowledge of Mesoamerican archaeology. For in Maya and Aztec hieroglyphics--contrary to his supposition--the cipactli glyph is well established as not only a calendrical sign but also a name glyph, and as often conventionally abbreviated to the head of the crocodile with the jaws--especially the upper jaw--emphasized; in which form (which is its form in this carving) it is an exact illustration of the meaning of the ancient Hebrew word and name leh-hee or Lehi, viz. 'jaws,' especially 'upper jaw' or 'cheek.' This is a correspondence which is undeniably very arbitrary or unexpected, that is, one very difficult to explain away as accidental (especially since this hieroglyph thus decipherable as recording the name Lehi occurs above

the only one of the six persons seated around the tree who could possibly be the prophet Lehi of the Book of Mormon); and therefore is a correspondence of great significance.

Still another agreement of an arbitrary nature which may here be mentioned is the showing of the largest of the six persons seated around the tree--the second from the right--as a young man who was also a ruler (indicated by the umbrella held over him, a custom of the ancient peoples of Mesoamerica as well as the Near East), and apparently also a scribe in the act of writing on a plate or tablet--just like the largest of the six persons in the Lehi tree-of-life episode, namely Nephi one of the sons of Lehi, a young man at this time who was also (afterwards) a ruler, and also a scribe who wrote on plates or tablets (as in this episode when he wrote on a plate the words of his father concerning the tree of life).

2

Hougey's second main argument is that I am mistaken in noting non-Israelite Near Eastern elements in the Stela 5, Izapa, carving--Mesopotamian, Egyptian, etc.--as support of my interpretation of this carving as a depiction of the Lehi tree-of-life story. He holds that an Israelitish people such as the Nephites of the Book of Mormon, the descendants of Lehi--who in my interpretation were necessarily the carvers of Izapa Stela 5--would not have included in a sculpture depicting their ancestor Lehi elements of the "heathen religion and art of various Near Eastern cultures not Hebrew," and certainly not "symbols of Near Eastern religions half way around the world, and 750 years earlier." (Pp. 7, 12, 13, 19).

My answer to this argument is that such elements are precisely what we should expect to find in such an art work, before its authenticity can be accepted; and that in making this argument Hougey reveals his lack of knowledge of not only Mesoamerican but also Near Eastern archaeology. One reason for this is the fact that archaeological research in the Near East over the last half-century has established beyond any doubt that many elements of the "heathen" religion and art of the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Canaanites, and other ancient peoples of that region had been fully incorporated into the religion and art of the Israelites by the time of Lehi; for example, the concept of the afterlife (a shadowy world under the earth), the sabbath, the tree-of-life symbol itself of our present interest, the cherubim, and the teraphim of the Mesopotamians (for the last-mentioned Mesopotamian element adopted by the Israelites see, especially, the Genesis account of Jacob's wife Rachel taking her father's teraphim with her in her journey

with Jacob from her Mesopotamian homeland to Palestine, Genesis 31:17 through 35); and the sacred boat (for the Ark of the Covenant), probably some of the religious and moral laws (for the Ten Commandments), and some of the hymns or prayers of the Egyptians.

Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Canaanite art conventions--for example, the showing of standing human figures, in pictorial scenes, in half profile with the feet in tandem; the showing of cherubim as bird-headed and winged beings attending the tree of life in pairs, one standing (again in half profile with feet in tandem) facing it on each side; and the scroll as a symbol of water (cf. Newsletter, 103.61)--were also familiar to the Israelites (and therefore, we can expect, to the Nephites of the Book of Mormon). And Egyptian writing, Egyptian names, and Egyptian gods were all known to some of the Israelites of the time of Lehi, especially Israelite merchants engaged in Egyptian trade--as probably Lehi, who is indicated in the Book of Mormon to have been an educated and wealthy citizen of Jerusalem with a knowledge of the language of the Egyptians (1 Nephi 1:2).

Another reason for expecting non-Israelite Near Eastern elements in art work of the Israelitish Nephites of the Book of Mormon--even "half way around the world" in Central America and "750 /better, 600/ years" later, such as (in my view) the Stela 5, Izapa, carving--is the fact that the annals of archaeology are full of instances of survival of such elements at least in distant parts of the Old World and over even longer periods of time (though naturally in modified forms, which is just what we appear to have in the case of the Near Eastern-like elements in the Izapa carving!)

Finally, although the Second Commandment forbade the Israelites to make any image of a thing to be worshipped (cited by Hougey in objection to my interpretation of the small standing figure as a teraph), there is nothing in the Laws of Moses which forbade the Israelites to have cult objects or symbols--some of them borrowed from "heathen" peoples of the Near East--which were not to be worshiped but merely used in ritual or as aids or reminders in religious thinking (for example altars, the Ark of the Covenant, the tree of life, cherubim, the brazen or fiery serpent), or even to ward off evil (e. g. amulets, teraphim--the latter, usually defined as "household gods" or "ancestor images," were apparently never worshiped by the Mesopotamians and Israelites as actual idols or images of gods, but merely kept by them as heirlooms believed capable of warding off sickness from the home or family).

3

Hougey's third main argument is that there are "alternate" interpretations of the Izapa carving which are as reasonable as or better than my thesis that it is depiction of the Lehi tree-of-life story of the Book of Mormon (pp. 17-19). One of these, he claims--actually the only one he offers--is the interpretation proposed by Dr. Clyde E. Keeler of Georgia State College for Women, whose drawing reproduction of the carving has previously been mentioned (Hougey seems to follow Keeler's drawing for part of his criticism of my interpretation, despite the fact that it is inaccurate [see above, third paragraph in "1"], as he himself admits).

Keeler holds that Stela 5 depicts the birth of the world and of humankind as told in the mythology of the Cuna Indians of Panama. The tree in the center is the tree of life (here Keeler agrees with me), beside--in the panel which I interpret as a representation of the earth--certain sex symbols of "the Earthmother." The wavy double line with scrolls under the panel is "the water of life [gushing] forth to form the oceans of the world." The large semi-human figure standing facing the tree on the right is "the Two Headed Sun-god...with his sacred flute." The two monster heads high up on either side of the composition are the heads of "the Two Headed Snake [which] frames the picture." The two fish hanging from the panel at the top "are [additional] symbols of the Earthmother." The jaguar nose and teeth in this panel "represent the physical power of God." The old bearded man--second seated figure from the left--"is a merman" (fabled marine creature, half man and half fish). The small object before this creature "is a new tree of life." The seated figure on the far right "is a monkey that sometimes symbolizes the Placenta Dragon." The parasol this last figure holds "would be taken by the Cunas to be the umbilical cord and the foetal membranes of the child." (P. 18).

"Dr. Keeler's interpretation"--Hougey concludes--"has the advantage of corresponding with the religious beliefs of the Cuna Indians of the San Blas Islands of Panama. The religion of these Indians has been largely uncorrupted by European influence, and is believed to be much the same as it was thousands of years ago. Stela 5, Izapa, may therefore reflect similar beliefs among the residents of that region at the time it was carved." (P. 19).

To what extent can this alternative interpretation of the Stela 5 carving be accepted, in the light of present knowledge of the beliefs and arts of the ancient peoples of Central America? The fact is that, although it may correspond with the beliefs of the modern Cuna Indians of southern Central America (as maintained by Keeler and Hougey in the above

statement), it corresponds very little with the beliefs--now somewhat known from archaeology and the early Indian and Spanish writings--of the ancient peoples of the actual region where the carving was made and found, i. e. the region of Izapa in northern Central America (=southeastern Mesoamerica). In other words, it appears to have little if any scientific value.

Recent studies of the sculptures of Izapa, and neighboring sites of northern Central America, have shown that Stela 5 as one of these sculptures is entirely a work of ancient Mesoamericans of the Izapa region, in an early (protoclassic) style of "Maya" art. But Keeler explains most of the features in the carving on Stela 5, Izapa, according--in his supposition--to the belief of the Cuna Indians of Panama, instead of according to the actual meanings of these motifs as now established in the ancient Maya art of Mesoamerica. These mistaken interpretations of most of the separate features tend to invalidate his interpretation of the carving as a whole.

For instance he explains (see in an above paragraph) the large semi-human figure standing facing the tree on the right as a representation of "the Two Headed Sun-god...with his sacred flute." But no such deity is known in the pantheon of the Mayas, or in fact in that of any ancient people of Central America. Moreover a careful examination of this figure in the Smithsonian-National Geographic photograph reveals that what Keeler evidently takes for a second head on this figure is actually a headdress it is wearing, mostly consisting of the "long-nosed" mask (face or head)--often seen in Maya art--of the principal Mesoamerican deity, the sky and rain or life god. (In other words, this figure is not a god at all but an agent of the Mesoamerican sky and rain or life god, a deity known by various names in the Indian languages of Mesoamerica, such as Itzamna, Quetzalcóatl, Chac, and Tlaloc, and popularly referred to as the "Fair God" of ancient America.)

A further examination of this figure also reveals that what Keeler takes for a flute--a long projection from the region of its mouth to the tree--is actually two long parallel elements which together look like nothing else than a bird's bill. (This and the large semi-human figure also standing facing the tree on the left recall the two personages--evidently priests--often seen standing facing the tree of life on either side in Maya and Aztec art. They differ from them, however, in being shown with birdlike heads and wings, which--as previously noted--brings them into striking correspondence with the two bird-headed and winged beings from the sky [cherubim or genii] seen standing facing the tree of life on either side in ancient Near Eastern art.)

Dr. Keeler also claims that the two fish hanging from the jaguar-mask panel at the top of the carving are "symbols of the Earthmother." In reality, fish in Maya art--as well as, not unexpectedly, in some other ancient arts--are long-established symbols of rain or water.

A careful examination of the figure of the old bearded man, which he identifies as that of a merman or mythological half man and half fish, fails to reveal that it has any fishlike characteristics.

Still another example of a mistaken interpretation of a separate feature of the carving is that of the small object in front of the old bearded man. Keeler accepts the opinion of a modern Cuna Indian that this is "a new tree of life." But this object has recently been found in other early Maya sculptures of the Izapa region, where it is clearly shown to be an incense-burner, an interpretation I had previously reached on the basis of the Stela 5, Izapa, example alone, and with which non-Mormon students of Maya art agree.

Keeler's identification of the seated figure on the far right as that of a monkey has been discussed in a previous part of this paper and there shown to be also mistaken.

The parasol or umbrella this last figure holds over the large young man with the stylus, finally, would according to Keeler "be taken by the [Cuna Indians of Panama] to be the umbilical cord and the foetal membranes of the child" (presumably he means the first-born child of the "Earthmother" of Cuna mythology). But this parasol would be taken by the ancient Mayas of Mesoamerica simply to indicate that the large young man was a ruler (see also previously in this paper)--which is a more acceptable explanation of this feature, since Stela 5, Izapa, is a work of ancient Maya and not Cuna art.

One of my colleagues in the department of archaeology and anthropology at Brigham Young University, Dr. Ross T. Christensen, has written the following concerning Dr. Keeler and his alternative interpretation of Stela 5, Izapa, in a letter recently addressed to me, which gives some further points in reply to Hougey's claim that this interpretation is a reasonable or better than my own: "I have read some of the published writings of Dr. Clyde E. Keeler, including the first item listed following his name on page 27 of Mr. Hougey's pamphlet. As a scholar, Dr. Keeler is not to be taken seriously. He simply has no firm grasp of tree-of-life symbolism and related matters in the art of either ancient America or the ancient Near East. Also, his writing seems to be shot through with a desire to penetrate the sex symbolism of ancient art motifs. He is a professor of zoology at the Georgia College for Women, and one wonders whether his

professional position has something to do with his interpretations of this subject. Moreover, nothing that Dr. Keeler learned from the Cuna Indians of Panama is likely to have anything to do with the subject at hand. The Cunas lived far away from Mesoamerica, and were a relatively primitive group. They did not necessarily have any connection with the advanced civilizations of ancient Mesoamerica.

"I should like to repeat my conviction with regard to Stela 5 found at the ruins of Izapa. Whoever carved that stone certainly had a knowledge of Lehi's vision as recorded in Chapter 8 of I Nephi. I cannot imagine how anyone could have recorded thereon the details contained in that vision unless he knew of the account. In my opinion, this is the most direct and startling evidence, and the most important single piece of evidence, bearing on the Book of Mormon yet to come forth from the science of archaeology."

(Hougey's Claim as to the Origin of
Lehi's Vision of the Tree of Life)

In his critique Mr. Hougey assumes that he has succeeded in reducing my long list of correspondences between the Stela 5 tree-of-life story of the Book of Mormon to merely three similarities ("several figures seated around the tree, the tree itself, and the river of water"), which are "of such universal nature that they cannot be considered unexpected" or significant; and that "hence the resemblance between Lehi's vision and the Stela 5 [carving] remains unproved... [and that therefore] there is no historical connection between the vision of Lehi in the Book of Mormon and Stela 5, Izapa" (p. 17). He attempts to strengthen this conclusion by the argument that the non-Israelite Near Eastern elements I also find in the carving do not support but rather conflict with my interpretation; and by calling the reader's attention to an alternative interpretation of the carving--that proposed by Dr. Clyde E. Keeler--which is "as reasonable as" or better than mine. Whether these various claims are well founded can be judged from the preceding discussions I have offered in rebuttal.

On the basis of these claims, Mr. Hougey now proceeds (at the end of his booklet, pp. 19-25) to give his reader "the true source of Lehi's vision"--a modern source, instead of the ancient one believed by Latter-day Saints and called for by my interpretation of the Izapa carving. "This [true modern] source is a dream or vision [of the tree of life] which Joseph Smith, Sr., father of Joseph Smith the Prophet, experienced at Lebanon, New Hampshire, in 1811, when Joseph Smith, Jr., was but five or six years old. Lucy Smith, the Prophet's mother, undoubtedly told this dream many times to the family and friends, and finally recorded it in her book, Biographical Sketches

of Joseph Smith the Prophet, which was published at Liverpool in 1853. Having heard the dream recounted during his youth, Joseph simply incorporated it with a couple of minor changes into the Book of Mormon as a vision of Lehi." (P. 19).

Now I agree with Mr. Hougey that the similarities between Joseph Smith, Sr.'s, dream and Lehi's dream of the tree of life found in the Book of Mormon are too many of an undisputed and arbitrary nature--as he points out in his booklet, p. 24--to allow for any other explanation than that they are connected. But that Joseph Smith, Sr.'s, dream is necessarily, in view of this connection, the origin of Lehi's vision, is only an assumption that Hougey makes. For he assuredly has not succeeded, in his critique, in disposing of the many and often arbitrary correspondences which I have brought out between the Lehi story and the ancient Izapa carving.

In other words it is just as logical to assume the reverse of his postulate, namely that Lehi's vision in the Book of Mormon is the origin of Joseph Smith, Sr.'s, dream; that is (as one possible explanation), that Joseph Smith, Sr., actually did not have his dream until after the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830 and his reading therein the vivid account of Lehi's vision of the tree of life, and that his wife Lucy misdated his dream in her book. (After all, she did not publish her book until 1853 or approximately forty-two years after the date she gives her husband's dream of the tree of life. This is a long period of time for the retention in memory of the date of a dream someone had had. In fact, many writers similarly working from memory have wrongly dated such a particular event even more badly than may have happened here.)

In the previously quoted letter of Dr. Christensen of the BYU archaeology faculty he also gives his reaction to Hougey's theory of the origin of Lehi's vision (and mentions another possible explanation of Joseph Smith, Sr.'s, similar dream of the tree of life), as follows: "I have not had the opportunity to check on Mr. Hougey's assertions with regard to this matter, but even so, what he has done is not to explain the Stela 5 - Book of Mormon parallels but merely to divert the attention of the reader. I suppose it is possible for the Lord to give Tree of Life visions to as many different persons as he might wish, including the father of the Prophet Joseph Smith. After all, Lehi's vision itself was later repeated to Nephi (1 Nephi 11:1-12, 25, 35-36; 12:16-18; 14:28-29). But that is not the point. What about Stela 5? Of the stone and its startling parallels to Near Eastern religious art, Dr. Carl B. Compton, director of the Instituto Interamericano, has said

the following in a review of your monograph: 'Some people may be disturbed by Jakeman's parallels between certain New and Old World elements, but he is very cautious and after all the parallels are there.' And Hougey has in nowise explained away these parallels." (Compton's full statement may be found in the Newsletter, 73.2, from which it was reprinted in Progress in Archaeology, p. 126. Ed.)

I should mention, finally, that a still more detailed study of the Stela 5, Izapa, carving than my 1958 monograph is now nearing completion. This includes some minor corrections in the analysis and interpretation, which bring additional support to my position--and consequently also to the Latter-day Saint claim of the ancient origin of Lehi's vision. Two of these are corrections of interpretations of particular parts of the carving which I merely suggested in the 1958 work, but which Hougey goes out of his way to criticize (p. 14); namely (1) my suggestion that the peaked elements in the left part of the ground panel are a depiction of the tents in which Lehi and his family and friends dwelt in the wilderness at the time of his tree-of-life vision, and (2) my conjecture that the group of broad cuts on the right edge of the monument is a largely obliterated feature of the carving which represented the "great and spacious building" that Lehi saw in his vision on the other side of the river of water.

In this further study, the discovery has been made that the peaked elements actually constitute a hieroglyph, decipherable as having a meaning of great interest in connection with the Lehi tree-of-life story; and that near the group of broad cuts on the right edge of the monument is still another hieroglyph, decipherable as having a meaning which can be exactly rendered as "great and spacious building"!

ATTACKS BY TWO MORMON WRITERS AND BRIEF REPLIES

Other than the Hougey booklet, the only written or public pronouncements I know of against my Book of Mormon interpretation of the Izapa sculpture have come from two Mormon writers. These can be answered here briefly.

One of these "attacks from within" is known to me only by hearsay. This is evidently a dittoed leaflet by a prominent member of the faculty of Brigham Young University, in which, I am told, he ridicules my interpretation, and which he appears to have distributed privately to some of his friends and students, two or three years ago. Since I have not been able to obtain a copy of this brochure, I am unable to reply to his specific charges. It may be noted, however, that although this BYU critic is

competent in several fields of ancient study, the Mesoamerican is not one of them--that is, the field most involved here. Consequently his criticisms in this case, whatever they may be, can hardly be accorded much weight.

The other attack I know of by a Mormon writer has been going on for some time, in fact ever since my correlation of the Izapa sculpture with the Book of Mormon was first published in 1953 ("An Unusual Tree-of-Life Sculpture from Ancient Central America," Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society, No. 4, March, 1953, pp. 26-49). This has been mainly the repeated assertion in lectures, by a former student of the archaeology department of Brigham Young University and former faculty member of that institution, that my interpretation is purely a subjective one on my part, and that there is really not enough evidence in the carving itself to establish an interpretation. (In other words, he sides with anti-Mormon writer Hal Hougey, in the latter's contention /see above, p. 3/ that it is impossible for me, being a Mormon, to be objective.)

My reply to this has been, and still is, that a charge of subjectivity is a subjective judgment on the part of this critic himself. For so far as I know, he has not himself ever given Izapa Stela 5--and other ancient art works of Mesoamerica--the long-time study necessary to qualify him as an informed and objective judge in this case. (As a matter of fact, the basic part of the carving which I see as corresponding to the Lehi story--six persons seated together apparently discussing the tree of life, and a river of water coming by this symbolic tree--is also seen in the carving by practically all non-Mormon archaeologists who have studied it. Consequently at least this part of my interpretation cannot justly be called subjective.)

The same writer also, in a contribution to the Mormon magazine Dialogue, refers to (quote) Jakeman's "pseudo-identifications" of the six persons in the Stela 5, Izapa, carving. That is he rejects, as false, my identifications of these persons with the six persons in the Book of Mormon episode. But he does not give cause for this rejection, by showing that my reasonings which led to the identifications are fallacious; nor does he explain how only he happens to know that they are false. Such a casual dismissal of the conclusions of another writer is not the way of a responsible critic, and surely will not be accepted by careful students. (For a discussion of part of the considerable evidence for these identifications see in my reply to the Hougey attack, above, pp. 3-4).

SOME FURTHER COMMENTS

This last critic, in the mentioned contribution to Dialogue, also denounces the work of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology in the field of Book of Mormon archaeology; and asserts that the proper scientific approach to the Book of Mormon is not that of the Society (that is, historic archaeology) but rather anthropology, which is his own field of specialization.

This also I cannot accept. For anthropology is principally a social rather than a historical science--the study of culture, or the patterns of behavior of human groups, especially of present-day primitive or illiterate societies; and it usually begins with ethnography, or the description of the ways of life of such groups. But the primary interest of the Book of Mormon to scholars is--or should be--not its possible use as an ethnographic report, but the basic questions of its authenticity and correct understanding as, in large part, a historical record (a challenging account of certain early civilized peoples of Near Eastern origin in the New World). Consequently the proper scientific approach to this work is not the social science of anthropology--or even the division of the historical science of archaeology inappropriately called prehistoric archaeology (better, culture-centered archaeology), which is anthropology-connected; but rather the division of archaeology which is the discipline particularly concerned with the scientific checking and clarification of early historical--or disputed historical--writings, namely historic or text-centered (history-connected) archaeology. (Cf. Newsletter, 56.2, 100.1; "Note to Article II" following SEHA constitution, which is appended to Newsletter 102; and Progress in Archaeology, pp. 1-4. Ed.)

(In this approach, of course, research begins with the study of the Book of Mormon itself, the disputed historical text whose authenticity and claims are the primary questions it presents the scholar--that is, the study of its geography, chronology, etc.; and then moves to comparative archaeological studies.)

We may compare the scientific approach to the Bible, which is also in large part a historical or disputed historical record. This approach is again that of historic or text-centered archaeology, in this case the study of the historical text of the Bible in the light of the independent findings of archaeology; and has long been established under the name of "biblical archaeology." On the other hand, there is practically no recognition among scholars of a field of "biblical anthropology."

Note that I am not here suggesting that anthropological study of the Book of Mormon or the Bible--

that is, their study for the light they may throw on culture as such or human behavior--cannot have value. My position is that such study, to have any results of real value for social science (if this is one's interest in these scriptural records and not historical or theological knowledge), must be preceded by the archaeological checking--that is authentication and mayhap correction--and clarification of their historical content.

This brings us finally, of course, to the question whether there now actually exists any archaeological evidence for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Non-Mormon scholars, naturally, deny that there is any such evidence. And anti-Mormon pamphleteers have joined the chorus--among them Hal Hougey, whose pamphlet attacking my Book of Mormon interpretation of Stela 5, Izapa, has been dealt with in this paper (Mr. Hougey has also authored a booklet devoted to a general denial of archaeological or other evidence for the Book of Mormon).

The opinions of such writers with respect to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, however, have actually little significance, for two reasons. In the first place these people, apparently without exception, know very little about the Book--particularly its geography, chronology, and many of its historical claims (including developments of culture which it records as having occurred in its area and period of the New World; that is, historical claims especially susceptible to archaeological checking). In fact, the common notion among these people is that the Book of Mormon is a story of the "Lost Ten Tribes" of Israel; in other words, they have not troubled to read the Book itself before passing judgment upon it.

Secondly, too little is yet known, archaeologically, about the actual period of the Book of Mormon civilizations in the New World--the so-called Preclassic period--to make possible at this time a rejection of the Book's claims. (Most of our information to date on the area of these civilizations--clearly central and southern Mexico and northern Central America, the area now called Mesoamerica by archaeologists and ethnologists--pertains to developments after the "Preclassic" period of the Book of Mormon, that is after the fourth century AD; principally the famous Maya, Teotihuacán, and Zapotec cultures of the "Classic" period, and the empires of the Toltecs and Aztecs.)

(Further essays in this same vein may be found in the Newsletter, 34.6 and 35.11; see also Progress in Archaeology, pp. 139-144. Ed.)

As a matter of fact, what is now known of the Book of Mormon or "Preclassic" period in Mesoamerica--

the period from the third millennium BC to the fourth century AD--is already in some agreement with that record. For example, two civilizations arose successively in this period according to present archaeological evidence, just as according to the Book of Mormon; the first of them, called by archaeologists the "Olmec," corresponding at least partly in time to the first of the two Book of Mormon civilizations, an advanced Mesopotamian-derived culture called by Book of Mormon students the "Jaredite"; and the second main archaeological development or civilization--actually the earliest period of the "Maya" civilization--corresponding closely in time to the second Book of Mormon civilization, an Israelitish culture known as the "Lehite-Mulekite" or "Nephite." (Cf. "Joseph Smith and American Archaeology," by Thomas Stuart Ferguson, in Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society, No. 4, Provo, 1953, pp. 19-25; see also Newsletter, 22.00, and Progress in Archaeology, pp. 85-88, 99-103. Ed.)

Moreover, there is now some support for the Book's basic claim that the civilizations of this period in Mesoamerica were of Near Eastern origin. A leading non-Mormon archaeologist working in this area, for instance, has pointed out that certain of its ancient peoples--including those of the "Preclassic" (that is the Book of Mormon) period--"achieved civilizations approximately on the level with, and in general extraordinarily like, those of our own cultural ancestors of the ancient Near East" (Alfred V. Kidder, in id., Jesse D. Jennings, and Edwin M. Shook, Excavations at Kaminaljuyú, Guatemala, Washington, 1946, p. 260). Many Near Eastern-like elements in the two civilizations of this period known to archaeologists--the "Olmec" and "Early Maya"--can be mentioned; here only, for example, figures of bearded men, stepped temple pyramids of brick (cf. the Mesopotamian ziggurats), hollow roller stamps (cf. the Mesopotamian cylinder seals), and the tree-of-life symbol.

We should not fail to mention here also, of course, the unusual tree-of-life sculpture known as Stela 5, Izapa, which dates to the time of the second civilization of archaeology in Mesoamerica, the "Early Maya," corresponding to the second civilization of the Book of Mormon in this area, the "Lehite-Mulekite." For despite the attacks upon my correlation of this sculpture with the Book of Mormon (its identification, in fact, as a work of the second civilization of the Book of Mormon, the "Lehite-Mulekite") it still stands--as shown, I believe, in this paper--as a major archaeological discovery supporting the authenticity of that record.