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## A Complex of Ritual and Ideology Shared by Mesoamerica and the Ancient Near East

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Mesoamerica and the Ancient Near East

by

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## **INTRODUCTION**

A large number of cultural features connected with ritual and ideology were present in both the ancient Near East of the first and second millennia BC and the civilization of Pre-Classic and later Mesoamerica. The arbitrary nature of these features combined with their centrality in the civilizations of each area are interpreted as evidence that a major diffusion event connected the two zones.

When marked similarities are observed between cultural features in widely separated geographical areas, two different types of explanation are offered by scholars to account for the facts. The prevailing view, so far as anybody thinks about the issue nowadays, is that human beings' inherent mental powers could lead to the development of parallel cultural traits in locations that have had no historical connections. It is tacitly assumed that the parallels have been a result of adaptation to similar social and environmental situations.

A small minority of scholars (labeled "diffusionists") hold that some cultural correspondences cannot be explained by duplicate or convergent invention but have to be accounted for by borrowing through direct contact. They maintain that this is the case when the parallels are extremely specific, arbitrary and exotic. Where groups are near each other and share corresponding features, borrowing is the obvious explanation for such parallels even when details of the nature of the communication between the two areas cannot be established. But at a distance of thousands of miles a similar degree of parallelism is harder to accept as a result of borrowing.

An example of a difficult-to-explain parallel is the "posthole murder motif" shared between Micronesia and Guatemala (and nowhere else). Stewart (1984) has discussed this

"mythological episode" in which "a character ... miraculously escapes being crushed to death by a timber thrust into a house construction pit." Stewart found a minimum of twenty "specific and peculiar elements" that together form "parallel concatenations." He felt compelled by these to accept the idea that there had been "an historical relationship of some sort between the Guatemalan and Micronesian stories."

But the classic case of this genre is the correspondence between a board game known anciently in India where it was called *pachisi* and the game *patolli* that had been played among the Aztecs and other peoples of Mesoamerica for centuries by the time the Spaniards reached the area. Both *pachisi* and *patolli* involved a flat playing surface marked in the form of a cross; on squares around the periphery of the cross markers were moved according to successive throws of dice or their equivalent. The winner of the game was he whose marker completed the circuit first (the twentieth-century commercial game "Parcheesi" was an adaptation of Indian *pachisi*). English anthropologist Edward Tylor (1878a; 1878b) pointed out numerous details in common in the setup and rules governing these games in Mexico and India. He concluded that since we do not know from historical sources how the similarities might have been transmitted from one area to the other, "all we can argue is that communication of some sort there was." He found it impossible to accept that human minds had twice invented the same set of arbitrary notions. The only satisfying explanation for parallels of such specificity as *pachisi* and *patolli* display is that the two occurrences were indeed historically related through some contact that has not so far been identified. Anthropologist Robert Lowie observed about this case that "the concatenation of details puts the parallels far outside any probability [of their having originated independently]" (1951, 13), although he did not propose any direct contact mechanism. Scholars nowadays simply ignore the question.

Over the years of culture historical research on the question of the origin of civilization in the Americas, and particularly of that version found in Mesoamerica, some scholars have raised—then usually have quickly dismissed—the possibility that major stimuli came from centers in Eurasia, where the attributes of "civilization" appeared at least 2,000 years earlier than in America. For example, archaeologists Kidder, Shook and Jennings said in their landmark monograph on excavations at the site of Kaminaljuyu near Guatemala City (1946, 2), "We

cannot rule out ultimate foundations for Mesoamerican civilization in Eurasia." Specifically they observed that, "The belief that pungent smoke is sweet in the nostrils of the gods is one of the many extraordinary likenesses between Old and New World religions" (page 93). Yet the trio immediately added the caveat, "although lack of any Old World food plant [in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica] argues strongly against early transpacific migrations."

Their quick abandonment of any diffusionist explanation reflected the entrenched position of almost all scholars in the second half of the twentieth century. J. A. Remington (1981, 202) characterized the orthodox position that then prevailed as "a determined and often defiant adherence to assumptions [about the independence of Old and New World culture histories]." She described the atmosphere in professional circles as one in which "talking about the possibility of diffusion ... was considered to be in rather bad taste."

It was in that intellectual setting that I first drew attention to an array of parallels between cultures of the ancient Near East and Mesoamerica, in a paper given at the 1969 annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Santa Fe, New Mexico. When it was published in the volume *Man across the Sea* (1971), it was greeted by near-silence and without substantive criticism.

The *Man across the Sea* article used as a model for culture contact one developed by anthropologists A. L. Kroeber (1952) and Gordon Hewes (1961). They characterized an Old World *oikoumene* (cultural "world" or interaction sphere) that extended in the fifteenth century CE all the way from Iberia to Japan, including, of course, the Near East. Within that sphere a couple of hundred cultural features were widely shared as a result of internal diffusion throughout Eurasia. My paper asked were those "oikoumenical" traits also found in Mesoamerica? It documented that of some 200 cultural features tabulated by Hewes and Kroeber for the Eurasian *oikoumene*, one out of eight were indeed found in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, while for another ten percent there were indications that they too might be confirmed. My list of shared features went beyond those Kroeber and Hewes had detected, adding other traits that suggested a Near Eastern presence in Mesoamerica due to diffusion. For each parallel the paper provided preliminary documentation in the technical literature.

The list included a large number of features in the category "ideology and religion": 22

of the traits were grouped under the heading "Temple and its platform"; 17 more were under "Astronomy, calendar, writing"; 13 others were under "Burial"; 19 under "Incense and incense furniture"; 4 for "Standing stones as cult objects"; 8 under "Figurines"; 20 under "Sacrifice complex"; 11 in regard to "Lustration"; and more than 75 under other rubrics. At least 25 of the correspondences were not just marginal features but rather were basic to civilizations in Eurasia and Mesoamerica. It seemed clear that a "substantial number of cultural features of much more than peripheral significance in Mesoamerican civilization ... originated ... earlier in the heart of the Old World *oikoumene*." Without attempting to provide specific historical scenarios that might explain how the parallels came about, the study maintained that there was enough evidence to suppose "at least a generic connection between the two areas." The evidence seemed to make it "plausible, and perhaps necessary, to interpret the rise of civilization in Mesoamerica as significantly dependent upon [direct] communication from Eurasia" (Sorenson 1971, 223–224).

Far more extensive evidence for transoceanic connections between the Old World and New World civilizations was reviewed a generation later (Sorenson and Raish 1996), but the majority view of the matter has remained unchanged among scholars.

## THE EVIDENCE IN GENERAL

In recent years further relevant material has emerged. Research on the distribution of crops and other biological materials has demonstrated that extensive exchanges took place by means of voyages across the oceans between the hemispheres. Conclusive evidence has been presented showing that over 120 species of fauna and flora were shared between the Old and New Worlds in pre-Columbian times (Sorenson and Johannessen 2004; 2006; 2009). Because of the nature of those organisms the transfers had to have been accomplished by humans traveling in ships. Some of the voyages went to or from Mesoamerica. Here are highlights of this evidence (see the cited references for documentation):

- The agave or maguey plant (*Agave* sp.) served as caulking on a Greek ship (built ca. 300 BCE) whose sunken hull was examined by archaeologists at Kyrenia, Cyprus. The plant is of Mexican origin and was not otherwise credited with being found in the Old World.

- The American pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) has been depicted in art at a number of locations: Assyria in the eighth century BCE, Pompeii in the first century CE, Palestine and Egypt. Depictions farther afield are in India and Cambodia.
- The American tobacco plant was being used in Egypt by 1200 BCE as shown by chemical studies of mummies that show the presence of nicotine and a derivative of it.
- That staple of the Mesoamerican diet, the common kidney bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), has been excavated from Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites in India dated as early as 1600 BCE. This American crop apparently also reached the Near East, as suggested by words for bean: in Arabic *ful*, in Hebrew *pol*, and in several Mayan tongues *bol* or *buul*. Furthermore, "the medieval Arabic term for kidney bean is *lubiya*," which was derived from Akkadian *lubbu* and Sumerian *LU.ÚB*. Since that bean is a native of America, this means that voyagers had to have reached Asia *from* America at least in the second millennium BCE, and presumably the way *to* the western hemisphere was known then as well.
- Maize or American Indian corn was represented in pre-Columbian times in the sacred art of India at over a hundred temples, as well as in Java. At least four Sanskrit names for maize are recorded in India, and botanical evidence from corn varieties grown in remote areas of south and east Asia confirm the crop's very early presence there. *Zea mays* was also known in medieval Arabia as shown by a lexical entry. (It is uncertain whether the Asian maize came from Mesoamerica or from elsewhere in the New World.)
- *Chenopodium ambrosioides*, called Mexican tea in English, was used medicinally in both Mesoamerica (where the species originated, according to botanists) and in South and Southwest Asia; it too had an Arabic name.
- The edible sedge, *Cyperus esculentus*, while of New World origin, was known to the ancient Babylonians and later Arabs.
- The wormwood or mugwort plant (*Artemisia vulgaris*) represented, and was even equated with, the goddess Artemis among the Greeks. Her Mexican equivalent was known to the

Aztecs as *Chalchiuhtlicue*; in Mexico the mountain where she dwelt was called *Yauhqueme*, signifying "covered with mugwort." Artemis was identified with and probably derived from the deity *Ishtar/Ashtoreth* of the Near East; she dwelt on Mount Taygetus where her herb, artemisia, grew. She symbolized fertility and was supposed to assist at childbirth and to furnish medicinal herbs for children and women. The herb was also thought to protect, especially voyagers, against tempests. Aztec *Chalchiuhtlicue* was credited with the same powers, in addition to sharing with Artemis water/marsh associations. (Graves {1957, 9–10} lists startling parallels between the god Tlaloc of the Aztecs and Dionysus—of Near Eastern origin—whom the Greeks worshipped.)

- The list of plant transfers, in one direction or the other, could be expanded to include the grape, *Vitis vinifera*, *Ocimum sanctum* or holy basil, *Cucurbita pepo*, the pumpkin, the hallucinogenics *Datura metel* and *D. stramonium*, and *Portulaca oleracea*, the herb known as purslane, although in those cases other areas of Eurasia may be involved as much as or in place of the Near East.

Linguistic evidence is partially confirmatory. Agrinier, an archaeologist working under the guidance of linguist Morris Swadesh, the originator of lexicostatistics, made a study of "Sawi-Zaa," a major language grouping that includes Zapotec in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, although he never published the result fully (see Agrinier 1969 and Reed 1966, 7–14). Swadesh was quoted by Reed as saying about Agrinier's study, "I was surprised at the number and closeness of the parallels between the Sawi-Zaa and the Semitic languages"; 18 to 20 percent of the few hundred Zapotec words examined were said to have recognizable parallels in Hebrew.

The late Mary LeCron Foster, a linguistic scholar for many years associated with the Department of Anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley, proposed in 1992 that "Afro Asiatic" (Semitic and Egyptian) languages had been influential in the formation of some Mesoamerican tongues. "Specifically," she said, "the Mixe-Zoquean languages of southern Mexico ... as well as the Mayan languages of Mexico and Central America, are demonstrably closely related to, and probably descended from, ancient Egyptian" (Foster 1992a, 1992b). Based in part on linguistic and ethnographic fieldwork among the Popoluca people in southern Veracruz



(Foster 1943; Foster and Foster 1948), she also noted that "a Zoque myth tells of the life and death of Homshuk, the maize god, bearing much similarity to Egyptian tales of Osiris" (Foster 1992b). Moreover, she noted, the Popol Vuh of highland Guatemala "tells of a group of four great sages (Q'uj'-kumatz, Tepev, Tzakol, Bitol) who arrived on the sea coast...." The names of these in Mayan she related to Egyptian roots, both phonologically and semantically (Foster 1992a). Unfortunately she did not publish all her "extensive" linguistic analyses supporting these assertions before her death in 2001.

Her notion of an Egyptian connection to Mexico may also be supported by botanical research. Wendel et al. (1995) discovered that "phylogenetic analysis of sequence data from the ribosomal DNA internal transcribed spacer (ITS) region" of cottons revealed that *Gossypium gossypioides*, a cotton species that grows only in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, alone of New World cotton species belongs to an African clade (grouping of taxa) which could have come from early Egypt (in exchange for tobacco?) There is no credible explanation of how this species received its DNA other than that voyagers bearing an African cotton brought it to Mesoamerica.

Brian Stubbs, a historical linguist specializing in the Uto-Aztecan (UA) language family of Mexico and the southwestern USA, in a 1988 (unpublished) report showed a "consistent pattern of sound correspondences" between that family and Semitic languages involving over 200 roots. A brief sample of terms he had discovered by 1996 suggests that some type of systematic relationship probably existed (Stubbs 1996, 14–16):

Table 1. Lexical Similarities

Hebrew/Semitic		Uto-Aztecan	
bārāq	lightning	berok	lightning
*kilyāh/kolyāh	kidney	*kali	kidney
kātēp/katpa	shoulder	*kotpa	shoulder
šōkēm/šikm	shoulder	*sika/siku	shoulder
ʾādām	man	*otam	man, person
mayim/mēm	water	*mēme-t	ocean
šippāh	smooth, plane off	*sipa	shave, scrape
*siggôb	squirrel	*sikku	squirrel

This sample is indicative of a larger corpus of comparative linguistic material including several types of patterned correspondences between the two families that go beyond lexicon.

Stubbs considered his latest study still exploratory, but his interim conclusion (2004, 131) was that perhaps 30–35% of all UA words (drawing from 30 languages) relate in some degree to Semitic. Data on this scale are sufficient that it will require serious consideration by other linguistic scholars of the hypothesis that UA languages involved a Semitic element. Currently he thinks it likely that UA languages are descended from a creole that originated historically from a combination of Near Eastern components—indications are, Egyptian and two dialects of Northwest Semitic—and an Amerindian protolanguage.

A study by Alcina Franch (1958) adds further evidence from an extensive study of Eurasian and Mexican stamp seals. Based on 1700 specimens he found that this type of artifact occurred mostly in a band extending from the Near East and the Balkans through Italy, Spain, North Africa, and the Canary Islands, to Nuclear America. Chronological relations form a picture consistent with diffusion from a point beginning in fourth millennium BC Mesopotamia (cf. Woolley 1937, 76: “Mesopotamia is the obvious origin point” for roller/cylinder seals), reaching America ca. 1500 BCE.

These data give enlarged salience to the cultural elements shared between the Near East

and Mesoamerica published in *Man across the Sea* in 1971. The biological evidence for transoceanic voyages is now linked to linguistic and cultural data to show that the two hemispheres were connected by multiple sea trips that resulted in the transfer of numerous cultural features.

## **New Evidence**

An examination of the literature on ancient Near Eastern and Mesoamerican religion and ideology has resulted in the identification of correspondences that go far beyond those listed 40 years ago. The Appendix to this paper lists nearly 380 correspondences in or associated with the cultic aspect of culture.

The features or traits in the Appendix are phrased separately on the assumption that each one was the result of an incremental conceptual innovation—a unique idea, discovery or invention by some ancient person or group. For example, the idea that smoke from burning incense represented a prayer ascending to heaven would be such a conceptual innovation that went beyond the practice of merely burning incense generally. Of course certain correspondences alone may be quite obvious (e.g., constructing a pyramid or mound to represent a mountain) and so might have been thought of independently more than once, but when the notion was associated with additional arbitrary details (e.g., the mound/mountain was thought to sit atop a hole that would give the waters of an underground primal ocean access to the surface of the earth if the hole was not plugged by the mound), surely this *combination* of ideas is most unlikely to have sprung up independently in multiple human minds.

The historical problem the student of civilization faces is how this suite of hundreds of cultural concepts turns up in places half a world away from each other. The most rational explanation is that the religious complex originated and took form in one area, presumably the Near East where the features are generally older, then was transferred to Mesoamerica.

"Near East" is used here in a broad geographical sense. That area is considered to extend from Egypt through the Levantine core ("Syro-Palestinian") area along "the fertile crescent" to include Mesopotamia. Ancient intercultural communication was so extensive throughout this zone that we should not be surprised if ideas and practices from the whole of it were known in at

least the middle of the territory. "Mesoamerica" is defined in equally broad geographical terms as the area between central Mexico and western Honduras throughout which a common civilization was spread.

As to when the parallel traits first made their appearance, the data are not entirely clear for many features. In the Near East archaeology has revealed the probable presence of certain of the features, such as ziggurats or pyramids, by 3000 BCE, about when written documents came into use. When early documentary texts are brought into consideration, many associated ideological traits are shown to be present soon thereafter. Between the texts, art and artifacts most of our Near Eastern list can be placed in time with considerable assurance by the end of the Iron Age, i.e., no later than 500 BC.

For Mesoamerica a scarcity of ancient documents forces us to rely for much data (e.g., on myths and motifs) upon what is known of those lands and cultures as late as the time of the Spanish conquest. However it is possible to project back in time much of the data on ideology and religion that the Spaniards and hispanicized Indians recorded after the conquest. There are many indications that civilization in the area was highly conservative. Beliefs and practices still current as of 1500 CE often prove to have been in place two or even three millennia earlier as shown by art and archaeology. Some basic Mesoamerican cultural patterns seem to show up in the Early (pre-1000 BCE), or at least the Middle, Pre-Classic period (1000–400 BCE). There are substantial reasons to believe that many religious/ideological traits, while early in Mesoamerican terms, still were later than their parallels in the Near East. In summary, when we talk about transoceanic transfers from the Near East, they would most likely have taken place by the early first or second millennium BCE.

All correspondences noted are considered here to fall under the broad heading "ideology and religion." The term "cultic" is sometimes used as a synonym. The category is construed broadly to include such associated topics as kingship, myth, and specialized knowledge like astronomy, medicine and divination that in ancient civilizations were intimately related to ideology/religion/cult per se.

For each entry in the Appendix references to published sources are cited in endnotes that document the presence of the concept in the technical literature on both the ancient Near East

and Mesoamerica. Reference numbers precede each trait in the table; the decimal system employed allows linkages to be made into larger conceptual units.

## BEYOND THE TABULATION

In order to demonstrate the intricacy of the pattern of parallels that may not be obvious from a mere table, a couple of exemplary sub-complexes of correspondences can be pointed out that underline the complexity of the data.

Some observers may believe that certain of these correspondences are so "obvious" that peoples anywhere could have come up with the notions. What that view fails to account for, however, is that few of the world's cultures have developed such "obvious" concepts or associations.

But even if a few dozen correspondences should be considered the result of multiple inventions or are thought to be inadequately documented and are eliminated from consideration, there would remain a large number—well over 300—too arbitrary to explain away in that manner. All told it is impossible to account for the parallels without calling upon transoceanic diffusionary events.

The array of correspondences or parallels leads to at least two important conclusions: first, a virtual avalanche of Near Eastern cultural knowledge and practice was transferred to Mesoamerica by migrants; and second, the number, centrality and pervasiveness of many of these traits in that civilization mean that the transfer and spread of much if not all of this cultural knowledge probably took place in the Mesoamerican Formative era, that is, in the first millennium BCE or earlier.

Note that the evident contact from southwest Asia does not exclude other possible movements to Mesoamerica from other areas of the Old (or New) World.

Certain single items from the Appendix constitute especially persuasive evidence for cultural transmission. These correspondences are so arbitrary or conceptually unique that reasonable persons would not try to explain their duplicate presence in inventionist terms. Consider the following sample from the table in the Appendix:

- 1.9314 Non-sexual impregnation by the dead; a female character in the Popol Vuh conceived from the spittle of deceased Hun Hunahpu; in an Egyptian account Isis became pregnant from a wooden splinter off the dead body of Osiris.
- 9.2531 The Egyptian mythological crocodile and the Mexican under-earth reptilian monster, besides being conceptually closely parallel, were called by phonetically similar names (Sobek/Sipak-tli).
- 9.26 One leg of a deity was represented in the form of a serpent.
- 9.27 Scenes depict a miniature seated deity figure representing "social order"/rulership being ceremonially presented to a lord/monarch.
- 9.34 A feline represented the night/underworld aspect of the sun; its spotted skin represented the night sky and the stars.
- 9.54 A fertility goddess or earth-mother was conceived as having 400 breasts.
- 9.72 An omega-shaped (i.e., uterine-shaped) motif represented the hair or wig of a deity who presided over motherhood/birth and also carried vegetation and reanimation associations.
- 9.93 A lore motif explained a toothache as caused by a worm.

It seems incredible that such bizarre notions as these would have occurred independently to different peoples.

As provocative as such lone correspondences are, however, the material takes on even greater significance when we look at interrelated *sets* of correspondences. There is space here to consider only a couple of such combinations. One of the most dramatic is as follows:

Under the heading "Temple/cosmos" items 1.5542, 1.5544, 1.5546, 1.5547, 1.5548, and 1.7441 are clearly related. Nicholson's summary (1971a, 400) of a Mexica legend describes two conceptions of earth's origin. One has a "great spiny monster" or "horrendous earth monster, swimming in the primeval waters." This creature is known in central Mexico as Cipactli, the earth dragon (it is not clear if these were one monster with two aspects or two separate beings) floating in the waters. As Tlaltecuhltli, earth deity of the Aztecs (Nicholson 1971a, 406; Miller and Taube 1993, 70), he/she (characteristics of both sexes were represented) devoured the blood

and hearts of the dead (Nicholson 1971a, 406). For the Maya, Thompson (1960, 72–73) reported a "saurian or ophidian monster" that was "the exact counterpart of [Aztec] Cipactli." The top of its body formed the earth's surface (Helmuth 1987; Nicholson 1971a, 400). The monster and the waters in which it existed symbolized chaos. This creature had been fought, defeated and tamed by a beneficent divinity when the earth was being created (Norman 1976, 97; Miller and Taube 1993, 70; Wirth 2003, 47). This cosmic monster was associated with a water lily icon (Thompson 1960, 72; Miller and Taube 1993, 148). In an Aztec tradition, the gods Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl at an heroic moment entered the body of the earth monster, split it in half, and left one half to form the earth while elevating the other half to form the heavens (Nicholson 1971a, 400; Graulich 1983, 576).

Upon comparing these beliefs with Near Eastern cosmological myths, striking parallels are clear. In Babylonian cosmology the water of the "great deep" was regarded as the primordial element out of which the universe was generated (Sayce 1951; Keel 1978, 40). The "deep" was pictured as a dragon (Tiamât = Hebrew Tehôm) who was the enemy of light and law. This embodiment of darkness and chaos (Handy 1992a, 4: 295–296; 1992b, 5: 1113) was subdued by the Babylonian god Marduk (Sayce, 1951, 128–29; 1978, 50, 52; Day 1992a, 4: 295–296). The Hebrew version was that he/it was tamed and controlled by Yahweh (Isaiah 27:1; Wallace 1961). Death for humans was thought to consist of being swallowed by a subterranean aquatic monster with an insatiable appetite (Xella 1995, 2064; Keel 1978, 71–73). A reptilian monster was also associated with the water lily (Rands 1953; James 1966). The earth's surface was considered to be formed of the back of the floating dragon monster (Crenshaw 1972, 39; Handy 1992a). And, according to an extraordinary account, the god Marduk slew Tiamat and raised up half of its body to become the dome (firmament) of the sky while the rest formed the earth (Pritchard 1969, 67; Frankfort 1948, 328–329, 234; Glassner 1995, 1820–1821).

A second suite of concepts is seen in numbers 3.0, 3.11 to 3.15, 3.2, 6.6 and 6.61. As Berdan (1982, 185) observed, a number of "remarkable similarities" between Mesoamerican and Old World religions were evident to the Spanish padres at the time of the conquest. One of those was the practice of censuring. In no areas of the ancient world other than Mesoamerica and the Near East did ancient cultures place such emphasis on the burning of incense as part of religious

rites (Nielsen 1986; Kidder et al., 1946, 260). To the Maya the burning of copal gum was considered so vital that it was known as "the super odor of the center of heaven ... and the brains of heaven" (Tozzer 1941, 75, 144ff.) The aroma of burning resins was supposed to please the gods and make them amenable to granting worshippers' wishes. To Maya devotees smoke also represented ascending prayer (Bancroft 1883, 3: 7). Its smoke also provided a route for the ascent of the soul of a deceased person (Bancroft 1883, 2: 799; MacCulloch 1951a, 7: 202). The smoke was also thought to have healing and purifying power (Tozzer 1941, 75). Satterthwaite (1946, 21) observed that in a Classic Mayan temple incense smoke served to hide a sacred object from sight. Holy or "special" fire was required to burn some incense offerings properly (Tozzer 1941, 153, 155, 158). The gum or resin that served as incense was taken from trees and was considered the "blood" of the tree (Tozzer 1941, 142). It could only be gathered properly upon completion of appropriate ritual.

Every one of these features of the Mesoamerican complex was duplicated in the Near East, as documented by Pedersen (1946, vol. 3), MacCulloch (1951a), Nielsen (1986, 1992, 1997), and others.

Other corresponding sets could be detailed, but those mentioned should suffice to demonstrate that the Near Eastern and Mesoamerican cosmologies are not just generically similar but are of "the same conceptual species," as witnessed by their sharing so many arbitrary mythic or conceptual components. The numerous levels of interrelated correspondences defy any attempt to explain these phenomena by duplicate, independent invention or "convergence."

### **Artifact Parallels**

My renewed interest in recent years in comparing Near Eastern and Mesoamerican cultural features has been piqued in part by clues in the form of artifacts of similar shape that are patently linked to ideology and religion. Accompanying figures (in a separate section at the end of the article) show some of these objects.

Figures 1a, 1b and 1c display artifacts of most unusual shape. Even casual observers would suppose that these pieces must be culturally related because of their unique and arbitrary forms. The item shown in 1a was excavated over seventy years ago at the archaeological site of



Nuzi (or Nuzu) in northern Iraq (Starr 1939, II: Pl. 113; see endnote 153). Another object (1b), also from Iraq (Frankfort 1935, 42–50, Figures 47–49, 86–87), is obviously related to that in shown in 1a; it dates to the third millennium BCE and appears to have been a precursor of the Nuzi piece. Although the precise use of these artifacts is uncertain, any archaeologist who knows ancient Near Eastern cultures would unhesitatingly call them “ceremonial objects.”

The item in Figure 1a was associated with Hurrian culture remains (in northern Mesopotamia); it probably dates near 1350 BCE, while 1b is supposed to be Sumerian, at least a millennium earlier.

The object shown as Figure 1c was collected in the Mexican state of Oaxaca by the late art historian/collector Howard Leigh. It is part of the inventory of the former Museo del Arte Zapoteco (or Museo Frissell), which Leigh operated at Mitla, Oaxaca. (After his death the museum was closed and the collection was sequestered by the Mexican Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia as part of the national cultural patrimony.) The only provenience listed for 1c is “Oaxaca,” and no date has been suggested for its manufacture, nor are similar pieces known. It has been suggested to fall within the class of ritual furniture called “offering stands.” Its appearance is so much like the objects from Iraq that independent invention fails as a plausible explanation for the similarity.

A second pair of like-looking artifacts can be seen in Figure 2. The object shown in Figure 2a is also from Nuzi (Starr 1935, Pl. 114F). In Fig. 2c a ceramic cylinder from highland Guatemala is shown that is dated around the middle of the first millennium BCE (Borhegyi 1951b, 170–171, Fig. 1a). Similarities are obvious.

Item 2a is thought to have served as a ceramic base on which a bowl rested where incense was burned. Another cylindrical burner (this time of bronze) from Nuzi (see 2b) bore on its rim three reclining feline figures (Starr 1939, II: plate 113E) also thought to have held a bowl for censuring. Feline figures (though not on the rims) also decorate stands of similar form from Guatemala that date to the first millennium BCE (Borhegyi 1950, 62, 80; 1951a, 110).

Offering stands from the Near East and Guatemala are similar in other ways. For the American area some of them are marked by “horns” that project upward from the top rim as with the one seen in Fig. 3a (the photograph shows only the upper portion of the stand). In some cases

these projections are undecorated but in others the "horns" have been rendered as human heads. On the piece shown in 3a the "horns" show heads of bearded males with tear-streaked cheeks (compare correspondence number 9.94 above, the "weeping god" motif). Fig. 3a comes from Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala, and dates to around 500–600 BCE. Fig. 3b shows the broken off top from an incense stand from the Syria-Palestine area a century or so later; it is in the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem (where it was first noticed by A. von Wuthenau {1975}). On it are seen the projecting heads of three bearded men upon which a censer dish once sat.

Also of interest are ceramic objects at Nuzi labeled "votive chariots" which were excavated from several spots around the site (Starr 1937; no illustration available). In Fig. 4a a comparable miniature wheeled animal, one of the earliest known in the Near East, is shown; it comes from Tepe Gawra in northern Iraq (Speiser 1935, I: Pl. XXXV, 68). This figure of (apparently) a dog dates to about 3000 BCE, but conceptually similar wheeled objects in variant and widely diffused forms were manufactured throughout much of Eurasia all the way down to the European Middle Ages (Littauer and Crowel 1979; 1992; Forrer 1932). The earliest of these wheeled devices have been described as "an indispensable portion of the paraphernalia of divine monarchy (in the Near East)" (Cheyne and Black 1899–1903, 731).

What have been called "wheeled toys" in Mesoamerica are obviously of the same basic form as Near Eastern wheeled miniatures. Fig. 4b illustrates the generic Mesoamerican sort (here a dog, from Veracruz). These are obviously ritual objects, not toys. Since such pieces display the only known use of the wheel in ancient America (for their distribution, chronology and possible functions see Stocker et al. 1986; Von Winning 1962; Borhegyi 1970), any proposed origin for the Mesoamerican specimens other than importation of the idea from the Old World is difficult to imagine. The earliest such wheeled objects known in Mesoamerica are from the first century BCE in highland Guatemala (Borhegyi 1970) but also from slightly later in central Mexico (Müller 1978, 135). Such a split distribution demands that their first Mesoamerican usage probably was earlier than either known instance and likely at a place between those two points.

Equally noteworthy are miniature wheeled platforms on which an animal effigy rests. Fig. 5b shows such an artifact from Susa, the capital of Elam in southwestern Iran, dating around the twelfth/thirteenth centuries BCE (Biblical Archaeology Review 1996, 22 {5}: 80). The lion

figure itself, as well as the royal context of the find, suggests cultic significance. In Mesoamerica (Veracruz) similar objects are known that bear an animal effigy (here a monkey) lying on a similar wheeled device (Fig. 5a).

In Fig. 6 two ritual scenes are juxtaposed. In 6b is one from Egypt, while 6a is from the Codex Borgia, from south-central Mexico (Seler 1902–1923, II: codex page 31; cf. Díaz and Rodgers 1993, Plate 31) and dated shortly before the Spanish Conquest but surely it was based on earlier pictorial documents. While the two scenes differ in style, they share significant motifs. Shown are streams of water in the Mexican case and of *ankh* signs in the Egyptian scene, both of which in the respective traditions signified "life." They are being poured by ritual officiants (divinities) positioned on either side of a central figure. The poured streams cross above his head. The Egyptian rite represented has become known as "the baptism of Pharaoh" (Gardiner 1950).

At the sides of the Borgia scene are Mictlantecuhlti and Mictlancihuatl, lord and lady of the region of death. Egyptian scenes of this type show gods Horus and either Thoth or Seth at the sides. Horus signifies the east and Thoth the west, the region of death. Seth is of the north and also was associated with illness and evil (although he could also connote the reverse—Thompson 1967, 120–122). The Mexican divinities are associated with the north, or sometimes the south, quarter. Ixtlilton, the center figure in the Borgia scene, was a god of healing; Thoth was emblematic of healing in Egyptian medicine. Nephtys, wife of Seth, was sometimes queen of the night and of the dead, like Mictlancihuatl.

These scenes were published together in the nineteenth century without analysis. Over fifty years ago some of the corresponding characteristics of the two were pointed out to William F. Albright, the noted Syro-Palestinian archaeologist. He called the resemblance between the two scenes "most extraordinary" (personal communication, June 23, 1954) and continued that if the Mesoamerican scene had come from Mesopotamia "one would have to assume some connection" with Egypt.

Finally, Fig. 7 shows a ceramic cylinder or roller seal discovered at Pre-Classic Tlatilco, near Mexico City, some forty-five years ago; Tlatilco artifacts date from 1400 down to about 600 BCE. Although this object was published in 1966 by David H. Kelley, no one has related it to any cultural context, although archaeologist John Graham at UC Berkeley wrote of it, "the

markings ... closely resemble various ... scripts ranging from ... China to the ... Mediterranean" (1971, 133). In 2004 R. Hristov (with support from the Institute for the Study of Ancient Religious Texts at Brigham Young University) had the seal dated at the laboratory in Oxford, England, using the thermoluminescence method. The test yielded a date "between 2000 and 3200 years ago" (Thermoluminescence Analysis Report, Oxford Authentication Ltd., 25 Feb. 2004). This shows at the least that the seal is authentically ancient in Mesoamerica. Subsequently an archaeologist expert in Near Eastern cylinder seals characterized the object as most closely resembling seals from Iran or Mesopotamia from the third millennium BCE (e-mail to Sorenson from V. Mair, 2006).

The Mesoamerican artifacts reviewed here could be considered merely inexplicable coincidences if they did not fit into the context of cultural importation from the Near East demonstrated by the correspondences in the Appendix. But the artifact correspondences take on deeper meaning as material manifestations that confirm concretely correspondences presented in the Appendix.

## CONCLUSION

The thrust of this paper is that a bloc of culture was apparently transferred across the ocean from the ancient Near East early in Mesoamerican culture history, where many of the transferred features played a seminal role in the development of civilization. Henceforth the array of correspondences needs to receive serious, critical study by scholars as evidence of that diffused complex.

**Figures**



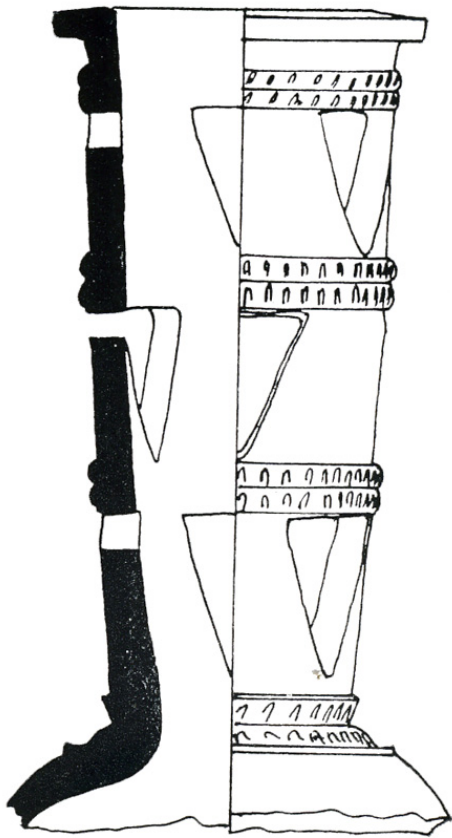
1a



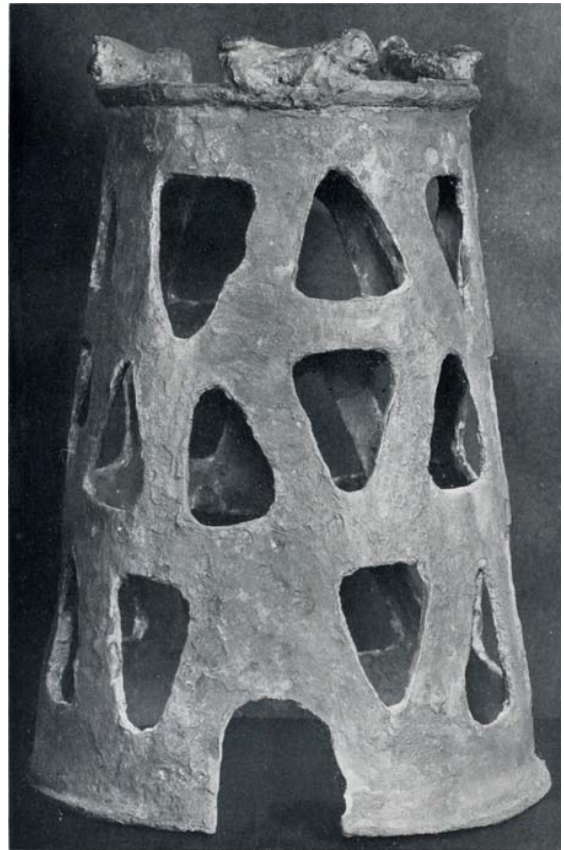
1b



1c



2a



2b



2c





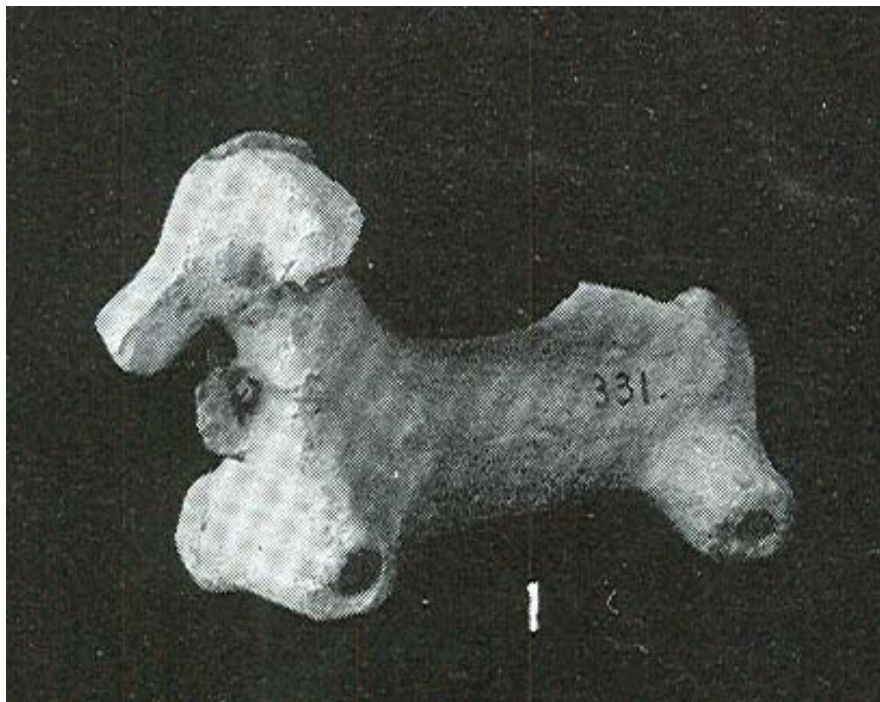
3a



3b



4a



4b

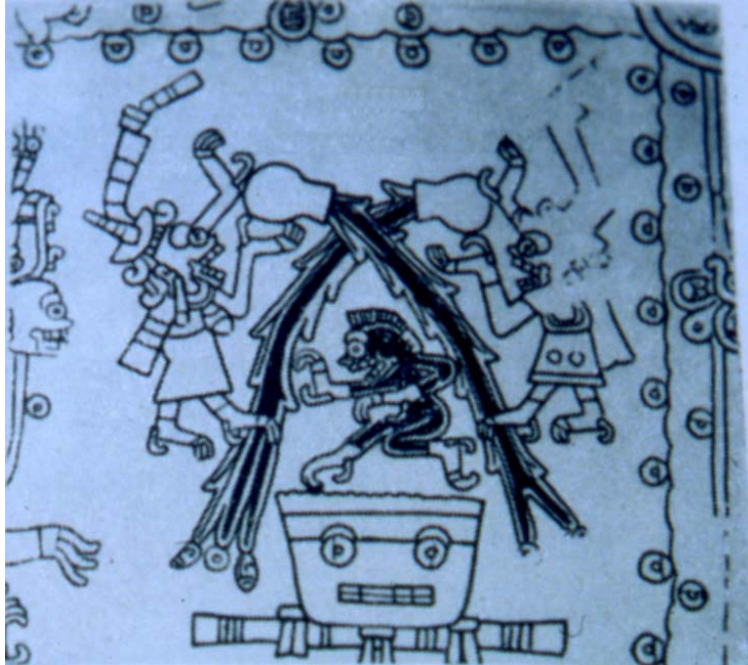




5a



5b



6a



6b





7

**Illustration credits:**

- Figure 1a    Starr 1937, 2: Plate 113
- Figure 1b    Frankfort 1935, Fig. 48
- Figure 1c    Leigh collection, Mitla, courtesy Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia
- Figure 2a    Starr 1937, 2: Plate 114
- Figure 2b    Borhegyi 1951b, 111
- Figure 3a    Wuthenau 1975, 44–45
- Figure 3b    File photograph, courtesy Rockefeller Museum
- Figure 4a    Speiser 1935, 68
- Figure 4b    Photo of specimen by Paul Cheesman
- Figure 5a    Photo of specimen by Paul Cheesman
- Figure 5b    Biblical Archaeology Review 1996, 22 (5): 80
- Figure 6a    Seler 1902–1923, 2: 31

Figure 6b     Gardner 1950

Figure 7     Milwaukee Public Museum, photograph, R. Hristov

## APPENDIX

### Correspondences in Ideology and Religion Shared by the Near East and Mesoamerica

- 1.0 Sub-Complex: Temple/mound/cosmos. Temple was considered to sit on an elevation, whatever its actual height <sup>1</sup>
- 1.11 Temple/mound/cosmos. Such elevations were considered "artificial mountains"<sup>2</sup>
- 1.110 Temple/mound/cosmos. The elevation represented the archetypal "first mountain"<sup>3</sup>
- 1.111 Temple/mound/cosmos. This nominal "world mountain" was supposed to sit at the "center point" of the earth<sup>4</sup>
- 1.112 Temple/mound/cosmos. Earth was viewed as an island surrounded by ocean<sup>5</sup>
- 1.113 Temple/mound/cosmos. Actual mountain-/hilltops were also loci for shrines and rites<sup>6</sup>
- 1.114 Temple/mound/cosmos. "Mountain" was signified by the same glyph in both areas<sup>7</sup>
- 1.115 Temple/mound/cosmos. A principal deity was linked with mountains, rain, and clouds<sup>8</sup>
- 1.12 Temple/mound/cosmos. A large base mound supported a smaller sacred structure<sup>9</sup>
- 1.13 Temple/mound/cosmos. A stairway (literal or figurative) ascended the sacred elevation<sup>10</sup>
- 1.2 Temple/mound/cosmos. Belief: a council of deities periodically assembled on a sacred mountain to consider the fate of humanity and the world<sup>11</sup>
- 1.3 Temple/mound/cosmos. Space and time units were related in the site/structure layout and dimensions<sup>12</sup>
- 1.31 Temple/mound/cosmos. The "megalithic yard" was a unit of measure of the sacred area<sup>13</sup>
- 1.32 Temple/mound/cosmos. Temples were partitioned according to degrees of holiness<sup>14</sup>

- 1.321 Temple/mound/cosmos. The innermost room was visited by only one or a few priests<sup>15</sup>
- 1.322 Temple/mound/cosmos. The temple entrance was framed by two non-structural pillars<sup>16</sup>
- 1.323 Temple/mound/cosmos. Temple, platform was a contact point with heavenly powers<sup>17</sup>
- 1.33 Temple/mound/cosmos. Temple site was considered the "navel of the earth"<sup>18</sup>
- 1.34 Temple/mound/cosmos. Temple was surrounded by a bounded (often walled) sacred area<sup>19</sup>
- 1.35 Temple/mound/cosmos. Small model temples/shrines were used in the cult<sup>20</sup>
- 1.4 Temple/mound/cosmos. Devout persons made pilgrimages to temples or shrines<sup>21</sup>
- 1.5 Temple/mound/cosmos. Multiple levels of the cosmos were thought to lie above earth<sup>22</sup>
- 1.51 Temple/mound/cosmos. Extensive waters existed in the heavens<sup>23</sup>
- 1.52a Temple/mound/cosmos. Cosmic levels above earth's surface were symbolized by pyramid terraces<sup>24</sup>
- 1.52b Temple/mound/cosmos. Plantings on terraces represented life on the cosmic levels<sup>25</sup>
- 1.53 Temple/mound/cosmos. Certain colors were associated with the various levels<sup>26</sup>
- 1.54 Temple/mound/cosmos. Multiple levels were thought to lie below earth's surface<sup>27</sup>
- 1.541 Temple/mound/cosmos. Belief: nine lords of the underworld<sup>28</sup>
- 1.542 Temple/mound/cosmos. A sacred tree served as a way to reach lower and upper levels<sup>29</sup>
- 1.55 Temple/mound/cosmos. A body of life-giving waters was thought to lie under earth<sup>30</sup>
- 1.551 Temple/mound/cosmos. Water would flow out from the axis point if not blocked<sup>31</sup>
- 1.552 Temple/mound/cosmos. Art shows a sacred figure holding an overflowing vessel<sup>32</sup>

- 1.5521 Temple/mound/cosmos. The overflowing vessel signified fertility and abundance<sup>33</sup>
- 1.553 Temple/mound/cosmos. An actual well/cave was sometimes located at the axial center<sup>35</sup>
- 1.5531 Temple/mound/cosmos. Caves served as cult sites<sup>36</sup>
- 1.554 Temple/mound/cosmos. Water holes were thought connected to the cosmic waters<sup>37</sup>
- 1.5541 Temple/mound/cosmos. A constructed water feature in the temple area represented the underworld sea<sup>38</sup>
- 1.5542 Temple/mound/cosmos. A dragon monster inhabited the primal underground waters<sup>39</sup>
- 1.5543 Temple/mound/cosmos. The monster and waters in which it lived symbolized chaos<sup>40</sup>
- 1.5544 Temple/mound/cosmos. The monster was defeated and tamed by a superior divinity<sup>41</sup>
- 1.5545 Temple/mound/cosmos. Death was represented as being swallowed by an underworld monster with insatiable appetite<sup>42</sup>
- 1.5546 Temple/mound/cosmos. A reptilian monster was associated with a water lily icon<sup>43</sup>
- 1.5547 Temple/mound/cosmos. A monster was shown as a reptile with seven heads<sup>44</sup>
- 1.5548 Temple/mound/cosmos. The monster/dragon creature's back formed the earth's surface<sup>45</sup>
- 1.555 Temple/mound/cosmos. Some concept like geomancy was used in site placement<sup>46</sup>
- 1.56 Temple/mound/cosmos. The sun made its night passage thru the under- or over-world<sup>47</sup>
- 1.561 Temple/mound/cosmos. The sun was daily eaten and reborn by a sky or earth deity<sup>48</sup>
- 1.562 Temple/mound/cosmos. The temple sat at the nexus of four world quarters<sup>49</sup>

- 1.57 Temple/mound/cosmos. Each world quarter was associated with a particular color<sup>50</sup>
- 1.571 Temple/mound/cosmos. A ritual (cosmic representation) ball-game was played<sup>51</sup>
- 1.58 Temple/mound/cosmos. Deities at outer edges of the four quarters held up the sky<sup>52</sup>
- 1.581 Temple/mound/cosmos. Those atlases were brothers<sup>53</sup>
- 1.5811 Temple/mound/cosmos. Trees were sometimes considered skybearers<sup>54</sup>
- 1.582 Temple/mound/cosmos. Effigy jars representing the four brothers contained entrails<sup>55</sup>
- 1.6 Temple/mound/cosmos. Temples were sited using astronomical/solar criteria<sup>56</sup>
- 1.61 Temple/mound/cosmos. Temples were sometimes oriented to the azimuth of a key sunrise/sunset<sup>57</sup>
- 1.62 Temple/mound/cosmos. Some temples were aligned on a star's rising point<sup>58</sup>
- 1.621 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation commemoration rituals were performed at the dedication of a new temple or new territory or at the coronation of a king<sup>59</sup>
- 1.63 Temple/mound/cosmos. South meant the "right hand" (of one facing sunrise)<sup>60</sup>
- 1.64 Temple/mound/cosmos. West was associated with death and night<sup>61</sup>
- 1.65 Temple/mound/cosmos. The direction north signified also "up," "above," while south meant "down,"<sup>62</sup>
- 1.66 Temple/mound/cosmos. North was linked with left hand, bad luck, cursing, and death<sup>63</sup>
- 1.7 Temple/mound/cosmos. Four or five world ages each had ended in destruction<sup>64</sup>
- 1.71 Temple/mound/cosmos. One destruction was because humans were too noisy for the gods<sup>65</sup>
- 1.72 Temple/mound/cosmos. World ages were symbolized by certain colors<sup>66</sup>
- 1.73 Temple/mound/cosmos. A wind "blew down" the archetypal artificial mountain<sup>67</sup>
- 1.74 Temple/mound/cosmos. A flood ended one world age<sup>68</sup>
- 1.741 Temple/mound/cosmos. A couple/family was preserved from flood in a boat they built<sup>69</sup>



- 1.742 Temple/mound/cosmos. Test birds were sent out from the flood-surviving vessel<sup>70</sup>
- 1.743 Temple/mound/cosmos. A ziggurat/tower was built to escape an anticipated new flood<sup>71</sup>
- 1.7441 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. Hero god(s) split(s) the subterranean monster in the primeval waters to make a firmament in the sky and the earth beneath<sup>72</sup>
- 1.7442 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. A council of gods planned the creation and fate of the world<sup>73</sup>
- 1.74421 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation was by fiat, verbal causation<sup>74</sup>
- 1.74422 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. It involved measuring the cosmos with a cord<sup>75</sup>
- 1.74423 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. That cosmic measurement was ceremonially commemorated at renewal time (new year)<sup>76</sup>
- 1.74424 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. Creation scenario/texts were performed/recited on ritual occasions<sup>77</sup>
- 1.744241 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. At new year the king's ritual path represented the annual course of the sun<sup>78</sup>
- 1,74425 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. The sacred center-space was ceremonially purified at new year<sup>79</sup>
- 1.7443 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. One creation of the human race ended in failure<sup>80</sup>
- 1.7444 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. Creation of woman was while man slept<sup>81</sup>
- 1.7445 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. Access to a sacred tree on the creation scene was forbidden<sup>82</sup>
- 1.77446 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. The first woman pondered the possibility of death should she eat a forbidden blossom/fruit<sup>83</sup>
- 1.74461 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. Humans' changed state after a "fall" gave them expanded understanding<sup>84</sup>
- 1.74462 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. Expanded perception after eating the forbidden item is described in an expression in merismus stylistic form<sup>85</sup>
- 1.7447 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. Events of were tied to units of the calendar<sup>86</sup>

- 1.745 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. Humans were created so gods might take their ease<sup>87</sup>
- 1.747 Temple/mound/cosmos. Creation. Man emerged from the earth after a storm god cleaved the earth with an axe<sup>89</sup>
- 1.81 Temple/mound/cosmos. New fire was ritually made at the start of a new calendrical period<sup>90</sup>
- 1.82 Temple/mound/cosmos. Light of an equinoctial sunrise/sunset made an 'animated' scene (or light show) at a temple structure<sup>91</sup>
- 1.83 Temple/mound/cosmos. Fire, air, water, and wind were considered the basic "elements" of the cosmos<sup>92</sup>
- 2.0 Sub-Complex: Sacrifice. Constituted the central cultic act<sup>93</sup>
- 2.01 Sacrifice. Slaying of an animal was the quintessential sacrifice<sup>94</sup>
- 2.011 Sacrifice. Blood as the essence of life constituted the ultimate sacrificial substance<sup>95</sup>
- 2.02 Sacrifice. Blood of a sacrificial victim was smeared on an altar<sup>96</sup>
- 2.03 Sacrifice. Blood from an offering was scattered/poured out in the sacred area<sup>97</sup>
- 2.11 Sacrifice. All or part of certain sacrificed animals was consumed by burning on an altar<sup>98</sup>
- 2.111 Sacrifice. Calendrical scheduling of offerings were made for the community's good<sup>99</sup>
- 2.121 Sacrifice. Part of some sacrifices was consumed by the officiating priest<sup>100</sup>
- 2.122 Sacrifice. Part of some sacrifices was consumed by the person furnishing it<sup>101</sup>
- 2.131 Sacrifice. Sacrifice of domestic animals<sup>102</sup>
- 2.1311 Sacrifice. Of dogs specifically<sup>103</sup>
- 2.1312 Sacrifice. Of fowls specifically<sup>104</sup>
- 2.1313 Sacrifice. Of certain game animals<sup>105</sup>
- 2.1314 Sacrifice. Of humans in general<sup>106</sup>
- 2.1315 Sacrifice. Of socially lesser humans, accompanying tomb burial of a prominent person<sup>107</sup>

- 2.141 Sacrifice. Of children in general<sup>108</sup>
- 2.142 Sacrifice. "Dedicatory," of (usually) a child, beneath the foundation of a structure<sup>109</sup>
- 2.143 Sacrifice. Of a child, when a prominent person was near death<sup>110</sup>
- 2.15 Sacrifice. Self-laceration by a devotee was considered a type of sacrifice<sup>111</sup>
- 2.2 Sacrifice. Of non-animal substances offered, part was eaten by the celebrant<sup>112</sup>
- 2.21 Sacrifice. First fruits/flowers offering<sup>113</sup>
- 2.211 Sacrifice. Of parched grain or flour<sup>114</sup>
- 2.22 Sacrifice. Of incense<sup>115</sup>
- 2.23 Sacrifice. Of incense mixed with cereal<sup>116</sup>
- 2.3 Sacrifice. As, or with a sense of, communion with divinity<sup>117</sup>
- 2.31 Sacrifice. Accompanied by prayer, singing<sup>118</sup>
- 2.311 Sacrifice. This (and other rituals) was accompanied by dancing<sup>119</sup>
- 2.32 Sacrifice. Scapegoat concept<sup>120</sup>
- 2.321 Sacrifice. Scapegoat concept: the 'contaminated' victim not slain as was a usual offering<sup>121</sup>
- 2.4 Sacrifice. Victim sometimes was killed by throwing or pushing off a height<sup>122</sup>
- 2.5 Sacrifice. Libations (liquid sacrifices) were poured on the ground<sup>123</sup>
- 2.51 Sacrifice. Use of a libation dish of a particular shape, with lipped or 'gutter' spout<sup>124</sup>
- 2.52 Sacrificial furniture. Ceramic 'trick vessels' (fertility association?)<sup>125</sup>
- 2.53 Sacrificial furniture. Ceramic bird-effigy bowl<sup>126</sup>
- 2.6 Sacrifice. Circumcision considered a form of<sup>127</sup>
- 3.0 Sub-Complex: Incense. Emphasis on, pervasiveness of in ritual<sup>128</sup>
- 3.11 Incense. Aroma was thought to please deity<sup>129</sup>
- 3.12 Incense. Smoke represented prayer ascending<sup>130</sup>
- 3.13 Incense. Smoke provided a route for ascent of the soul of a deceased person<sup>131</sup>
- 3.14 Incense. Smoke had healing power<sup>132</sup>
- 3.15 Incense. Smoke hid a holy object in the temple<sup>133</sup>

- 3.2 Incense. Sometimes censuring required use of special/"holy" fire<sup>134</sup>
- 3.31 Incense. Resin was procured from a sacred tree, only after ritual preparation<sup>135</sup>
- 3.32 Incense. Resin was considered the "blood" of the source tree<sup>136</sup>
- 3.33 Incense. Gathering resin from its source involved serpent association<sup>137</sup>
- 3.4 Incense. Rain/fertility association of<sup>138</sup>
- 3.41 Incense. Feline association of<sup>139</sup>
- 3.411 Offering furniture. Offering stand, cylindrical, felines on<sup>140</sup>
- 3.5 Offering furniture. Offering stand, a square model shrine<sup>141</sup>
- 3.51 Offering furniture. Offering stand, cylinder, ceramic, horned<sup>142</sup>
- 3.511 Offering furniture. Number of horns/heads could vary<sup>143</sup>
- 3.522 Offering furniture. Stand, cylinder, ceramic, fenestrated ('window' openings in the body)<sup>144</sup>
- 3.522 Offering furniture. Stand, tubular, ceramic, tall (sometimes flanged)<sup>145</sup>
- 3.523 Offering furniture. Offering stand/vessel, bearded male effigy heads or horns on or near the rim<sup>146</sup>
- 3.53 Offering furniture. Serpent motif on any shape furniture<sup>147</sup>
- 3.531 Offering furniture. Feline association, with multiple shapes of censuring furniture<sup>148</sup>
- 3.54 Offering furniture. Stand or other cult furniture was white-surfaced<sup>149</sup>
- 3.55 Offering furniture. Brazier itself was considered a deity<sup>150</sup>
- 3.56 Offering furniture. Censer. Ladle- or frying-pan-shaped, hand-held<sup>151</sup>
- 3.57 Offering furniture. Stand (for libation?), ceramic, cylinder atop a rectangular 'house',<sup>152</sup>
- 3.58 Offering furniture. Stand, ceramic, chalice form<sup>153</sup>
- 3.59 Offering furniture. Ceramic, tripod-supported cup<sup>154</sup>
- 3.6 Offering furniture. Cultic bag/bucket shown in art carried by an officiant<sup>155</sup>
- 3.7 Other cultic furniture. Wheeled animal figurine or mini-vehicle<sup>156</sup>
- 3.71 Other cultic furniture. Cultic animal figure lies on a miniature wheeled platform<sup>157</sup>
- 3.72 Other cultic furniture. A harnessed, bridled animal "pulls" a wheeled miniature<sup>158</sup>
- 4.1 Sub-Complex: Figurines. Anthropomorphic, female, ceramic, general concept<sup>159</sup>

- 4.11 Figurines. Anthropomorphic. Female, ceramic, fertility-related<sup>160</sup>
- 4.12 Figurines. Anthropomorphic. Female, ceramic—patroness/protector of women, birth<sup>161</sup>
- 4.121 Figurines. Anthropomorphic. Female, ceramic, found in or about cult sites<sup>162</sup>
- 4.122 Figurines. Anthropomorphic. Female, ceramic, in some burials<sup>163</sup>
- 4.123 Figurines. Anthropomorphic. Female, ceramic, usually broken; ritual discards?<sup>164</sup>
- 4.124 Figurines. Anthropomorphic. Female, ceramic, her hands hold her own breasts<sup>165</sup>
- 4.13 Figurines. Anthropomorphic, white-slipped<sup>166</sup>
- 4.14 Figurines. Anthropomorphic, ceramic. Termination of certain cult furniture signals change in broad cultic pattern<sup>167</sup>
- 4.15 Figurines. Anthropomorphic. Ceramic, male. Rare.<sup>168</sup>
- 4.151 Figurines. Anthropomorphic. Ceramic, male. Bearded (relatively rare)<sup>169</sup>
- 4.16 Figurines. Zoomorphic effigies in cultic contexts<sup>170</sup>
- 4.17 Figurines. "Horse-and-rider" figurine type<sup>171</sup>
- 4.2 Figurines. Anthropomorphic. With movable, articulated limbs<sup>172</sup>
- 5.1 Sub-Complex: Divination. Stone-gazing (scrying)<sup>173</sup>
- 5.2 Divination. By gazing into a water surface<sup>174</sup>
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- 5.4 Divination. Necromancy?<sup>176</sup>
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