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154.0 A CAUTIOUS INTERPRETATION OF A MESOAMERICAN MYTH: REFLECTIONS UPON OLMEC-JAREDITE ROOTS. By Bruce W. Warren, SEHA trustee and special instructor in anthropology and archaeology at Brigham Young University. Preface by V. Garth Norman.

Preface. By V. Garth Norman. The Jaredite civilization of the Book of Mormon appears to have centered in the narrow neck of land, as I showed in my paper, "San Lorenzo as the Jaredite City of Lib" (*Newsl. and Proc.*, 153.0, June, 1983). Thus we should expect to find distinctive roots of that civilization in Mesoamerica. Certain mythical and historical traditions could relate, through the archaeological record, back to Jaredite times and ultimately even back to ancient Near Eastern origins. Dr. Warren provides a cautious but probing search for such evidence in an archaeological, chronological, and linguistic examination of the Popol Vuh. His preliminary presentation here, the result of much research, opens the door to far more extensive and exciting studies that will no doubt follow along these same lines.

IN THE ANCIENT WORLD it was a common practice to weave important historical events into a mythical fabric. This practice often preserved some of that history as oral tradition. The priests of Mesoamerica, skilled in these traditions, clearly understood their historical roots, which were hidden, however, from the uninitiated. Thus one could easily read the mythical traditions and still miss the underlying historical skeleton. In many cases, all that remain today are disguised traditions that can be decoded only when we discover the historical skeleton from linguistic and archaeological sources.

A CREATION ACCOUNT IN THE POPOL VUH

One such mythical tale is found in the sacred book of the Quiché Mayas of highland Guatemala called the Popol Vuh. At the beginning of the story is an account of a creation of mankind as understood by the ancient Mayas. This is the first of a series of creations that in many respects parallel the Genesis account down to the flood of Noah's generation and the dispersion that followed.

In this first creation account the people are referred to as "wooden people," because their ancestral parents are symbolized as a tree. Thus their offspring are thought of as being made of the wood of the ancestral tree.

These "wooden people" forgot to worship and honor their god and therefore brought upon themselves a catastrophic flood. At the time of the flood and in the period immediately following, there was a very proud personage with the calendar name "7 Macaw," who thought himself to be very important. Since the faces of the sun and the moon were covered at this time, he also began to feel that he was the sun and the moon. He, with his two sons, Cipacná and a younger brother Cabracán, began to irritate the other deities with their pride, so it was decided they should be destroyed.

Four additional actors are also part of the story. The first two were brothers known as 1 Hunter and 7 Hunter. The older was married; the younger was not.

These two brothers were once playing the sacred ballgame, thereby disturbing some of the deities of the underworld. They were consequently invited to enter the underworld, where they were tricked and destroyed.

The head of 1 Hunter was removed from his body and placed in a calabash or gourd tree. Time passed, and the calabash tree miraculously produced fruit. One day a beautiful young maiden came by and looked up into the tree. She heard the voice of 1 Hunter speaking from among the branches. As she lifted up her hand toward the branches, 1 Hunter spit into it, and she became pregnant. In due time she gave birth to twin sons, Hunahpu (Hunter) and Ixbalanque (Jaguar Deer), hereafter called the Hero Twins.

Now we return to the story of the planned destruction of 7 Macaw and his two sons. The Hero Twins,

sons of 1 Hunter, were selected to be the instruments to carry out this destruction. Through various episodes, they managed to bring about the demise of their three antagonists. For our present purpose we will describe only the death of 7 Macaw.

The Twins had noticed that 7 Macaw went out each day to climb a certain tree to obtain fruit for his meal. They crept up to the tree with their blowguns and managed to shoot 7 Macaw in the jaw, causing him great pain. He fell to the ground and went home to be comforted by his wife. The Twins, along with an older couple, approached the house of 7 Macaw and offered to help heal his jaw, his teeth, etc. But instead, they pulled his teeth, blinded him, and robbed him. They succeeded in bringing about his death and that of his wife also.

Later, the Twins in their turn were playing the sacred ballgame and again disturbed the lords of the underworld. This resulted in a messenger-bird's inviting them down into the underworld. They accepted this invitation and journeyed through the hazards of Xi-

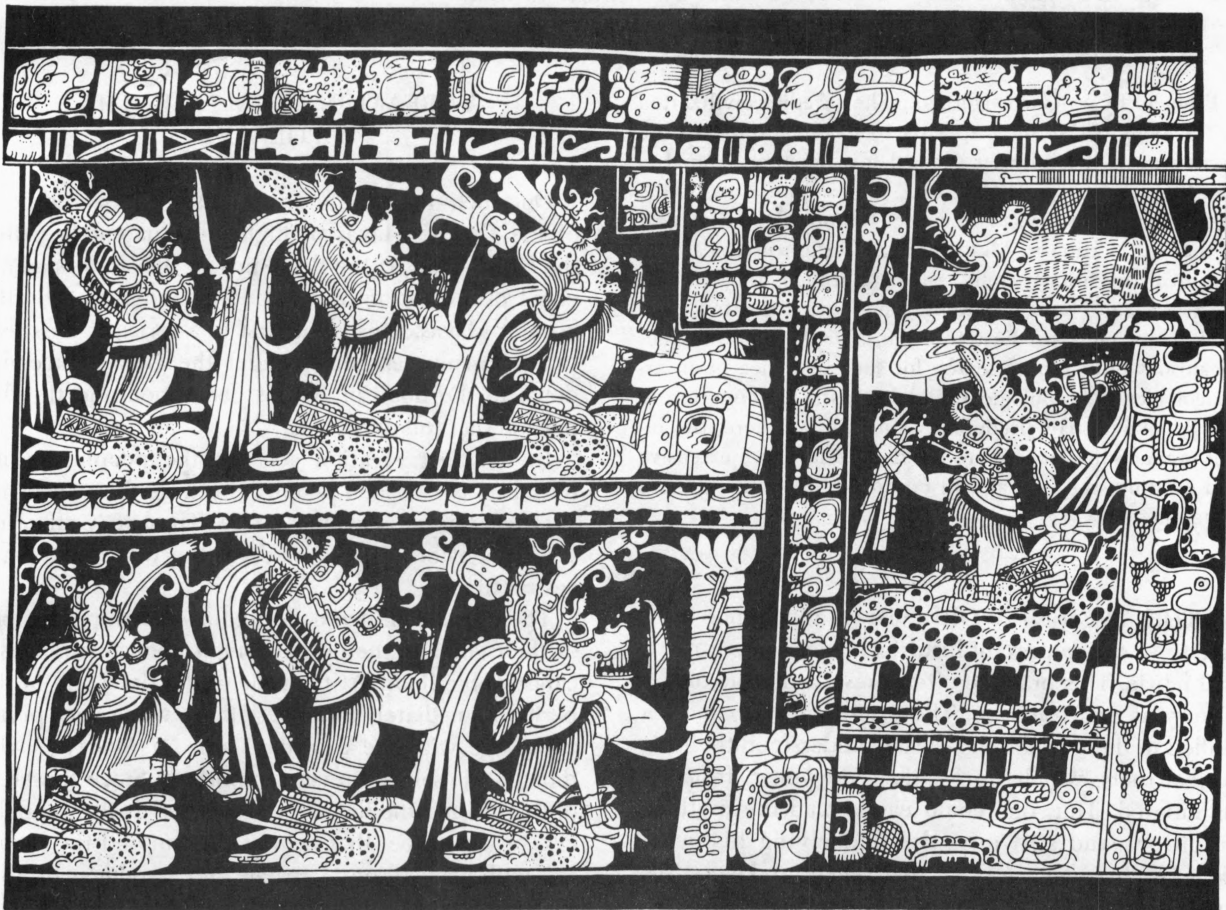


Fig. 1. The Vase of the Seven Gods. Coe, 1973, p. 109. By permission of the Grolier Club, New York City.

balba. There, in the course of many hardships and hazards, they outwitted the lords of the underworld and eventually brought about their death. Also, they finally caused the rebirth or resurrection of their father, 1 Hunter, and of themselves. The three then become the sun, the moon, and the planet Venus.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

The task facing us now is to determine whether any external evidences from archaeology and linguistics might clarify this mythological tale from the Popol Vuh. I present here, in a semi-speculative fashion, some such evidence.

First, let us consider a Maya vase of the Late Classic period (ca. AD 800) from Naranjo in the central Petén district of Guatemala (Figure 1).¹ This vessel has been called the Vase of the Seven Gods. Some of its hieroglyphic texts can be partially deciphered and give us some idea what is taking place in the scene.

On the right, the main actor, identified as God L of the ancient Mayas, sits on a jaguar throne and faces the other six deities. God L is associated with a bird hat (the bird is referred to as a *muán* but looks more like a macaw parrot). He has a 9 Sky glyph above his head, and at his foot is a 9 Earth Star bundle.

I suggest that this scene portrays the seven lords discussed above. Each of the seven actors has an identifying glyph. Let us call God L, the main character, Figure 1, and refer to the other six deities by number also. The upper row, then, depicts (l. to r.) Figures 2 through 4, while the lower row shows Figures 5 through 7.

Figure 2 is a jaguar deity, whom I identify as Ixbalanque, who has the calendar-day name of 4 Jaguar, although on some occasions he is referred to as 11 or 7 Jaguar. He is also God III of the Palenque triad of gods. Figure 3 represents Cabracán, the younger son of 7 Macaw. Figure 4 represents 1 Hunter, and Figure 5 is Cipacná, the older son of 7 Macaw. Figure 6, Hunahpu, is one of the Hero Twins, a son of 1 Hunter. Finally, Figure 7 is 7 Hunter, the brother of 1 Hunter.

At this point, 7 Macaw, or God L, is the main character. He is, however, faced first by Ixbalanque, one of the antagonistic twins. Ixbalanque is identified with the Aztec Xiuhtecuhtli, a god of fire and of the year. He carries a *tun* symbol on his costume and is associated in some way with the beginning of the calendar.

Above Ixbalanque's head are some glyphs, two of which are 4 Ahau and 8 Cumku. This is a Calendar Round date associated with the beginning of the Long Count calendar system of ancient Mesoamerica. God

L, the main actor on the vase, is also associated with this date in the Dresden Codex, page 46. However, neither God L (7 Macaw) nor Ixbalanque is credited with the origin of the Long Count calendar. This honor is given to Hunahpu, or God I of the Palenque triad.²

Fortunately, we have an indication of the beginning of the glory and pride of 7 Macaw with the beginning of the Long Count calendar system itself. This date is 13.00.00.00.00 4 Ahau and 8 Cumku, or in our Gregorian calendar, 1 February 2897 BC. (This is the date in the new Kelley correlation, which is currently being published in this country. This correlation would make all dates 216 years and 136 days more recent than the previously accepted GMT correlation. See Editor's Note, below.)

Chart 1 gives a series of dates in the Kelley correlation, with very brief indications of some of the events associated with them. One will notice that the date immediately following the Era Base, 13.00.00.00.00 4 Ahau 8 Cumku, is connected with the fall or the shooting of 7 Macaw out of his tree by the Hero Twins (13.00.01.09.02 13 Ik [End] Mol, 28 July 2896 BC). The next date, 13.06.13.03.11 10 Cib 0 Yaxkin, 16 May 2766 BC, is the origin of the vague solar year of 365 days. The following date is 1.00.00.00.00 3 Ahau 13 Ch'en, 7 May 2503 BC.

On a Maya polychrome vessel (Vessel 104 in Robicsek and Hales, 1981, pp. 74, 82; see Note 4, below) the Hero Twins confront some of the deities of the underworld. Also, dates of the rebirth or resurrection of the Hero Twins and their father are recorded at the Maya site of Palenque (see Chart 1). These are (1) 9 Ik (Wind) on 1.18.05.03.02 9 Ik 15 Ceh, 11 April 2143 BC; (2) 13 Cimi (Death) on 1.18.05.03.06 13 Cimi 19 Ceh, 15 April 2143 BC; and (3) 1 Ahau (Hunter or Flower) on 1.18.05.04.00 1 Ahau 13 Mac, 29 April 2143 BC.

A time frame for our mythological account can now be established from 12.09.16.05.09 6 Muluc 14 Zac, 15 May 3098 BC, the date of the flood that destroyed the "wooden people," down to 2143 BC, when the rebirth or resurrection of the three deities described above occurred.

Further enlightenment is needed on the Hero Twins and their connections with the Popol Vuh account. In a scene carved on Stela 12 from Izapa (Fig. 2), two figures are seated at the bottom of the monument, and a jaguar is suspended by a net and ropes or vines near the middle; there are also some symbols in the band at the top. This stela contains the calendar names of the Hero Twins. The birthdate of the Twins in the sacred ritual calendar of ancient America (which is different from both the Long Count cal-

SELECTED LONG COUNT DATES BASED ON THE CORRELATION OF 11.05.00.08.00: 13 AHAU, 13 KANKIN (12 NOV 1539) AS WELL AS 11.04.02.09.05: 1 CHICCHAN, 8 YAX (23 AUG 1521) AND 11.05.14.06.05: 13 CHICCHAN, 8 CH'EN (26 JULY 1553).

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------|---------|-------|--------------------------|
| 13.00.00.00.00 | 4 Ahau | 3 Kankin | 15 June | 2229 | |
| 12.05.00.00.00 | 8 Ahau | 3 Pax | 5 Oct | 1933 | Sixth Return |
| 12.00.00.00.00 | 5 Ahau | 13 Zotz | 12 Mar | 1835 | |
| 11.14.00.00.00 | 4 Ahau | 8 Pax | 30 Nov | 1716 | |
| 11.12.00.00.00 | 8 Ahau | 3 Mol | 29 June | 1677 | Fifth Return, Tayasal |
| 11.01.00.00.00 | 4 Ahau | 8 Mol | 24 Aug | 1460 | |
| 11.00.00.00.00 | 6 Ahau | 8 Mac | 7 Dec | 1440 | |
| 10.19.00.00.00 | 8 Ahau | 8 Cumku | 23 Mar | 1421 | Fourth Return, Mayapan |
| 10.08.00.00.00 | 4 Ahau | 13 Cumku | 18 May | 1204 | |
| 10.06.00.00.00 | 8 Ahau | 8 Yax | 13 Dec | 1164 | Third Return, Chichen |
| 10.00.00.00.00 | 7 Ahau | 18 Zip | 5 Sep | 1046 | |
| 9.18.00.00.00 | 11 Ahau | 18 Mac | 1 Apr | 1007 | Beg. of Collapse |
| 9.16.04.10.08 | 12 Lamat | 1 Muan | 2 May | 972 | Dresden Base |
| 9.15.00.00.00 | 4 Ahau | 13 Yax | 9 Feb | 948 | Arrival of Tutulxiu |
| 9.14.11.06.08 | 12 Lamat | 1 Pop | 4 Aug | 939 | Madrid Base |
| 9.13.00.00.00 | 8 Ahau | 8 Uo | 7 Sep | 908 | Second Return, Chichen |
| 9.12.19.02.18 | 4 Caban | 1 Xul | 7 Nov | 907 | 5th Sun, 13 Reed |
| 9.12.17.19.16 | 13 Cib | 5 Zec | 24 Oct | 906 | MPC, 12 Rabbit Year |
| 9.09.17.16.03 | 7 Akbal | 16 Muan | 23 Apr | 847 | End of 104 year cycle |
| 9.09.02.04.08 | 5 Lamat | 1 Mol | 17 Jan | 832 | Accession of Pacal |
| 9.08.09.13.00 | 8 Ahau | 13 Pop | 14 Sep | 819 | Birth of Pacal |
| 9.05.00.00.00 | 11 Ahau | 18 Zec | 25 Dec | 750 | Stelae Hiatus, Tikal |
| 9.04.00.00.00 | 13 Ahau | 18 Yax | 9 Apr | 731 | Temple of Inscriptions |
| 9.02.00.00.00 | 4 Ahau | 13 Uo | 4 Nov | 691 | |
| 9.00.00.00.00 | 8 Ahau | 13 Ceh | 1 June | 652 | First Return, Chichen |
| 8.14.03.01.12 | 1 Eb | 0 Yaxkin | 9 Mar | 537 | Leyden Plate |
| 8.12.14.08.15 | 13 Men? | (3 Zip)? | 28 Dec | 508 | Stela 29, Tikal |
| 8.06.02.04.17 | 8 Caban | (0 Kankin) | 3 Sep | 378 | Tuxtla Statuette |
| 8.06.00.00.00 | 8 Ahau | (12 Ch'en) | 8 June | 376 | U Kahlay Katunob |
| 8.00.00.00.00 | 9 Ahau | 3 Zip | 27 Feb | 258 | |
| 7.18.00.00.01 | 1 Imix | 0 Yaxkin | 26 Sep | 218 | |
| 7.16.06.16.18 | 6 Tecpatl | (1 Xocotluetzi) | 23 Feb | 186 | Stela C, Tres Zapotes |
| 7.16.03.02.13 | 6 Acatl | (16 Toxcatl) | 30 May | 182 | Stela 2, Chiapa de Cor. |
| 7.06.00.00.00 | 11 Ahau | 8 Cumku | 6 Mar | -19 | Long Count Beginning? |
| 7.05.00.00.01 | 1 Imix | 4 Zec | 20 June | -39 | Long Count Beginning? |
| 7.00.00.00.00 | 10 Ahau | 18 Zec | 25 Nov | -138 | |
| 6.00.00.00.00 | 11 Ahau | 8 Uo | 22 Aug | -532 | Md. Bldg., Yucatan |
| 5.08.17.15.17 | 11 Caban | 0 Pop | 16 Sep | -751 | Acc. of U Kix Chan |
| 5.07.11.08.04 | 1 Kan | 2 Cumku | 30 Aug | -777 | Birth of U Kix Chan |
| 5.00.00.00.00 | 12 Ahau | 3 Zac | 20 May | -926 | Antiquity of Ancients |
| 4.00.00.00.00 | 13 Ahau | 13 Pop | 14 Feb | -1320 | |
| 3.16.18.11.01 | 1 Imix | 18 Mol | 14 Aug | -1381 | Origin of Sacred Almanac |
| 3.13.00.00.00 | 1 Ahau | 8 Cumku | 18 Feb | -1458 | |
| 3.00.00.00.00 | 1 Ahau | 8 Yax | 12 Nov | -1715 | |
| 2.00.00.10.02 | 9 Ik | 0 Zac | 26 Feb | -2108 | Acc. of Rulership, Pal. |
| 2.00.00.00.00 | 2 Ahau | 3 Uayeb | 8 Aug | -2109 | |
| 1.18.05.04.00 | 1 Ahau | 13 Mac | 29 Apr | -2143 | Temple of FC, Palenque |
| 1.18.05.03.06 | 13 Cimi | 19 Ceh | 15 Apr | -2143 | Temple of Sun, Palenque |
| 1.18.05.03.02 | 9 Ik | 15 Ceh | 11 Apr | -2143 | Temple of C., Palenque |
| 1.00.00.00.00 | 3 Ahau | 13 Ch'en | 7 May | -2503 | Hero Twins confrontatio |
| 13.06.13.03.11 | 10 Cib | 0 Yaxkin | 16 May | -2766 | Origin of Vague Year |
| 13.00.01.09.02 | 13 Ik | (end) Mol | 28 July | -2896 | Fall of 7 Macaw* |
| 13.00.00.00.00 | 4 Ahau | 8 Cumku | 1 Feb | -2897 | ERA BASE# |
| 12.19.19.17.17 | 1 Caban | 5 Cumku | 29 Jan | -2897 | Beg. of 819 day calen.? |
| 12.19.13.04.00 | 8 Ahau | 18 Zec | 25 May | -2904 | Temple of Cross date |
| 12.19.13.13.00 | 1 Ahau | 8 Muan | 6 Apr | -2906 | Temple of Cross date |
| 12.09.16.05.09 | 6 Muluc | 14 Zac | 15 May | -3093 | Traditional Flood? |
| 12.08.19.00.08 | 12 Lamat | 0 Pop | 10 Aug | -3115 | |
| 12.00.00.00.00 | 5 Ahau | 18 Mol | 26 Nov | -3292 | |

MPC: Mass Planetary Conjunction, Year 12 Rabbit, 24 October 906 A.D.

* Hunahpu shoots 7 Macaw out of tree with a blowgun (Vessel 110, Robicsek and Hales 1981:83-84).

Compare the Vase of the Seven Gods (M.D. Coe 1973: Vessel 49, page 107).

Correlation of Maya-Gregorian calendars: 79028 + 584,283 = 663,311 days. Astronomical beginning date of calculations: 1 Jan 4712 B.C. and the Historical beginning date for calculations: 1 Jan 4713 B.C. This Chart uses the Historical base date for calculations.

Chart 1. New Kelley correlation of the Maya Long Count calendar.

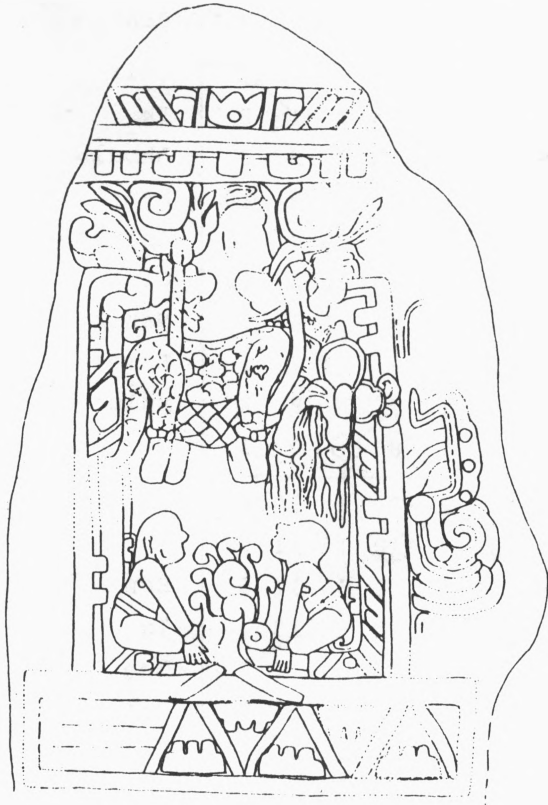


Fig. 2. Stela 12, Izapa. Norman, 1976, Fig. 3.12.

endar and the vague solar-year calendar) may also be depicted on Stela 12.

The sacred almanac is a calendar with 20 day names and 13 numbers (see Chart 2). These names and numbers intermesh in such a fashion that when we begin with the date 1 Imix it will be just 260 days later before the number 1 and the day-name Imix will meet again. Thus the 260-day matrix of the sacred almanac enables us to identify the calendar names of the various actors in our story.

Among external evidences of the mythological tale of the Popol Vuh we are considering, Stela 12, Izapa, shows a netted jaguar bound and dangling from the heavens with a symbol to the right with four dots on it; and above, in the band at the top of the monument is the symbol for Reed, or the Maya symbol Ben, with three points. Underneath, two individuals burn incense and look up at the netted jaguar.

What we have here, I suspect, is the calendar names of two of the actors in our story. One would be the netted jaguar with the number 4, or in the ritual calendar matrix, 4 Jaguar. The other would be the symbol at the top of the monument, or 3 Reed. In turning to pages 9 and 10 of the Nuttall Codex one will see depicted the birth of the Hero Twins and that

their calendar names are respectively 3 Reed for Hunahpu and 4 Jaguar for Ixbalanque. Also, in the almanac matrix, 3 Reed is followed by 4 Jaguar.

Another monument from Izapa, Stela 25 (Fig. 3), contains visual symbolism which I think further confirms the mythological tale from the Popol Vuh. What one sees here is an upended crocodile with five branches growing out of its tail and a bird sitting on one of them; a tree staff sitting in a pot or vessel, on top of which is a huge bird; and finally an individual holding onto the tree staff, his left arm missing, perhaps having been severed.⁵ This scene parallels the episode in the tale from the Popol Vuh where 7 Macaw was in the top of a tree feeding and was shot by one of the Hero Twins, Hunahpu. However, 7 Macaw tore off the arm of Hunahpu. One of the sons of 7 Macaw is Cipacná, or the crocodile, and we see this individual represented by the upended crocodile itself.

The other Hero Twin, 4 Jaguar, could possibly be symbolized by the pot in which the tree staff is resting. Ixbalanque, or 4 Jaguar, is associated with the Cumku tree, which means literally *cum*, pot or gourd, and *ku*, god. Thus we have on Stela 25, 7 Macaw, the father, and his son Cipacná, as well as both the Hero Twins of the Popol Vuh episode.



Fig. 3. Stela 25, Izapa. Norman, 1976, Fig. 3.26.

TONALPOHUALLI: SEQUENCE OF DAY NAMES AND NUMBERS

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----------|
| 1 Crocodile | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | Imix |
| 2 Wind | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | Ik |
| 3 House | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | Akbal |
| 4 Lizard | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | Kan |
| 5 Snake | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | Chicchan |
| 6 Death | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | Cimi |
| 7 Deer | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | Manik |
| 8 Rabbit | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | Lamat |
| 9 Water | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | Muluc |
| 10 Dog | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | Oc |
| 11 Monkey | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | Chuen |
| 12 Twisted | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | Eb |
| 13 Reed | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | Ben |
| 14 Jaguar | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | Ix |
| 15 Eagle | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | Men |
| 16 Vulture | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | Cib |
| 17 Earthquake | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | Caban |
| 18 Flint | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | Etnab |
| 19 Rain | 6 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | Cauac |
| 20 Flower | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 13 | Ahau |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|--|--|-----------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | 14 | | | | |
| | | | | Xochipilli | | | | |
| | | | | 1 Monkey | | | | |
| | | | | Tonatiuh Tezcatlipoca | | | | |
| 14 | | | | 4 Water | 10 Twisted | | | |
| | | | | Ilamatecuhtli | Xiuh-tecuhtli | | | |
| 14 | | | | 10 Rabbit | 4 Reed | | | |
| | | | | Chalchihuitlicue | Yoaltecuhtli | | | |
| 14 | | | | 3 Deer | 11 Jaguar | | | |
| | | | | Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli | Tlal-tecuhtli | | | |
| 14 | | | | 12 Lizard | 2 Earthquake | | | |
| | | | | Tlaloc | Mictlantecuhtli | | | |
| 14 | | | | 4 House | 10 Flint | | | |
| | | | | Quetzalcoatl | Tlazolteotl | | | |
| 14 | | | | 9 Wind | 5 Rain | | | |
| <hr/> | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Itztli | Piltzintecuhtli | | | |
| 14 | | | | 7 Crocodile | 7 Flower | | | |
| | | | | Tlaloc | Cinteotl | | | |
| 14 | | | | 9 Snake | 5 Vulture | | | |
| | | | | Tepeyollotl | Mictlantecuhtli | | | |
| 14 | | | | 3 Death | 11 Eagle | | | |
| | | | | Chalchihuitlicue | Tlazolteotl | | | |
| 14 | | | | 2 Dog | 12 Monkey | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | Xiuh-tecuhtli | | | | |
| | | | | 13 Dog | | | | |

Chart 2. 260-day matrix of the sacred almanac and the Mesoamerican Lords of the Day and Lords of the Night.

An even clearer bit of external evidence of this part of the tale is from Vessel 109, published by Robicsek and Hales,⁴ in which one observes 7 Macaw in the top of a tree, the tree trunk being a symbol of his second son, Cabracán, who is further symbolized by a scorpion at the foot of the tree. One of the names of Cabracán, who is God M of the Mayas, is Ek Chuuah, which means black scorpion. To the right of the tree is the figure of Hunahpu with a long blow gun aimed at the figure of 7 Macaw. If there were any doubt about the meaning of this scene, the hieroglyphic text of this pottery vessel would remove it.

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

I think it useful to try to orient ourselves to the original geographical area of this mythological tale. The overall scene is not entirely clear without a great deal of study, but apparently much of it takes place in the underworld. However, the name 7 Macaw, one of the main characters, may be a useful clue to the original earthly setting, and the locale seems to be in a lowland tropical region.

It is worth noting that the name of the Tuxtla mountains of southern Veracruz has been misinterpreted by most scholars as meaning the place of rabbits. However, Covarrubias indicates that the correct word should be Toztlan, "place of Macaw."⁵ He further points out that the symbol of this area in the Codex Mendocino is the yellow macaw.

Another feature of the account that I think points to southern Veracruz as its original locale is the story of the sacrifice of the father of the Hero Twins in the underworld. Hun Hunahpu (1 Hunter/1 Flower) later in the tale is reborn or resurrected as Cinteotl, a corn god.

In the Tuxtla mountain area of southern Veracruz there is a mountain that still bears the name Cintepec, and this I believe is connected with the story of the rebirth or resurrection of the corn god Cinteotl.

Thus, it seems to me that the overall implications are that the location of the original underworld of the Popol Vuh tale was southern Veracruz, or the very heartland of the early Olmec civilization.

BOOK OF MORMON IMPLICATIONS

We noted above that the events of the Popol Vuh tale under consideration dated from about 3100 BC to nearly 2100 BC. The implication of these dates for the Book of Mormon is clear. The Popol Vuh tale belongs back in the Jaredite time-period. Not only that,

but perhaps, from the point of view of the Book of Mormon, some of the earliest details would date to a time even before the migration of the Jaredites out of the Old World. In other words, there should be found parallels between this episode and mythological tales of the ancient Near East. There are in fact several such parallels, but I will not be concerned with them here.

I will now consider the Book of Ether and the lineage of Jared, the ruling lineage of the Jaredite people. Ether 9:3 relates that an early king left the highland homeland and journeyed many days, coming over past the hill Shim and over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed. Then he traveled eastward and came to a place called "Ablom by the seashore."

Linguistic evidence suggests the ancient Mesoamerican location of the hill Shim. In several Maya dialects the word for corn or maize is 'sim, which would be transliterated "shim." As noted above, an important landmark in the southern Veracruz area was the hill, or mountain, Cintepec. The name means "corn hill"; it has the same meaning in the Aztec language as the word for the hill Shim in the Maya language.

The hill Shim was near the hill Ramah of the Jaredites, or the hill Cumorah of the Nephites (Ether 9:3). David A. Palmer has recently made a strong case for Cerro Vigía being the original hill Cumorah, where the final battles of both the Jaredite and the Nephite nations were fought.⁶ Cerro Vigía is about 30 miles northwest of Cintepec in southern Veracruz.

One of our Hero Twins, Ixbalanque, is associated with the gourd tree, which is referred to as *cum*. This phoneme is part of the name Cumorah. Also, one of the Maya month names is Cumku, meaning god of the gourd. I suspect this information will eventually support placing the hill Cumorah in southern Veracruz.

Another useful bit of information is the possible relationship of Ixbalanque to the Book of Mormon name Shiblón. The consonants *shbln* of Shiblón are equivalent to the consonants of the first part of Ixbalanque ("ix" is pronounced "sh"). Furthermore, Ixbalán means "little jaguar," whereas Shiblón means "lion cub."⁷

In short, I believe that a preliminary comparison of this tale from the Popol Vuh with recent exciting evidence from archaeology and linguistics puts us on the track of important geographical interpretations relating particularly to the Jaredites of the Book of Mormon; these may help lead us to a rediscovery of that long lost civilization.

NOTES

1. Michael D. Coe, *Lords of the Underworld: Masterpieces of Classic Maya Ceramics* (Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 109.
2. Dieter Dütting, "Birth, Inauguration, and Death in the Inscriptions of Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico," *Tercera Mesa Redonda de Palenque*, Vol. 4 (Herald Printers: Monterey, California, 1979). See p. 184.
3. V. Garth Norman, *Izapa Sculpture* (Brigham Young University: Provo, 1976), Part 2 (Text), p. 32. Papers of the New World Archaeological Foundation, No. 30.
4. Francis Robicsek and Donald M. Hales, *The Maya Book of the Dead; the Ceramic Codex: The Corpus of Codex Style Ceramics of the Late Classic Period* (University of Virginia Art Museum: Charlottesville, 1981), p. 83.
5. Miguel Covarrubias, *Mexico South: The Isthmus of Tehuantepec* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1947), p. 26, n. 4.
6. David A. Palmer, *In Search of Cumorah: New Evidences for the Book of Mormon from Ancient Mexico* (Horizon Publishers: Bountiful, 1981).
7. Benjamin Urrutia, "Shiblon, Coriantumr, and the Jade Jaguars," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the SEHA*, 150.0, pp. 1-3, Provo, 1982.

Editor's Note. Translations of the Popol Vuh into English include Adrian Recinos, *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1950); and Munro S. Edmonson, *The Book of Counsel: The Popol Vuh of the Quiché Maya of Guatemala* (Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, 1977).

Brief studies of the Popol Vuh appear in the volume, *Progress in Archaeology*, pp. 116-118. On Maya hieroglyphic writing and calendar research, see *ibid.*, pp. 128-138. On p. 129, the GMT (Goodman-Martínez-Thompson) correlation of the Maya with the Christian calendar is explained briefly. RTC.

154.1 THE LIGHT OF EDEN. By Benjamin Urrutia. Of primordial importance in the contemporary novelist J. R. R. Tolkien's saga of Arda is the story of the Eden-like land of Aman, with its white and golden Trees of Light, whose destruction by the enemy Morgoth plunged that land into darkness. The story bears a slight resemblance to that of Genesis, Chapter 3, which also tells of a land of Paradise, which was lost because of the intrigue of an enemy, the Serpent. Two trees, the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life, also appear in the Genesis account, but otherwise the similarity is small indeed: there is no hint that these trees produced light, or that they were injured in any way at the Fall. Surprisingly, a much closer parallel to the Tolkienian narrative can be found in ancient Mexican mythology—the story of Tamoanchán.

TAMOANCHAN

Tamoanchán (cf. Fig. 4) is "the house of descent, place of birth, mystic west where gods and men origi-

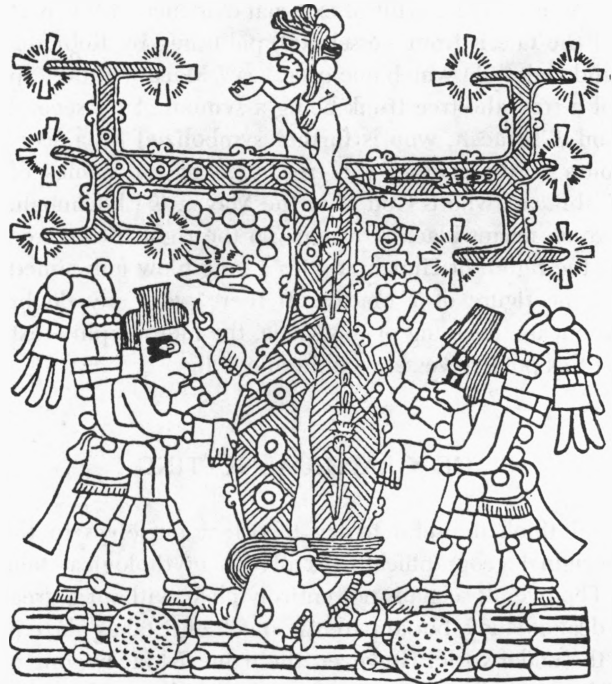


Fig. 4. Symbol for Tamoanchán according to Laurette Sejourné, *Burning Water*. From the Codex Vindobonensis.

nated.¹ The story of its foundation and downfall has been summarized by Michael Graulich:

Creation is always begun by a supreme divine couple. They install their creatures in a paradise, Tamoanchan (= Tlalocan), or in a celestial city or a radiant palace. This place is always one of abundance, in which creators and creatures live in perfect harmony. There is no death. . . . At a certain point, the creatures become guilty of a transgression. A goddess (Xochiquetzal, Tlazolteotl, Itzpapalotl, Cihuacoatl), deceived by a god (Piltzintecuhtli, Tezcatlipoca), picks or eats the blossom of the forbidden tree, which then shatters. . . . The results of the transgression are disastrous: the tree of paradise is destroyed, the gods are driven from heaven and exiled on earth or in the underworld; evil, death, and night come into being. . . . Xochiquetzal produces Cinteotl (the corn god), who immediately dies and is reborn in the form both of corn and useful plants and of Venus, the first light of the world. . . . During the first few years of an era . . . the earth is in darkness. . . . There is no longer much communication between the creation, and heaven, light, the supreme Duality. Thus the lost paradise must be regained. It is at this point that the . . . heroes become important. . . . The Twins . . . sacrifice themselves by leaping into a fire. . . . They die and are reborn; they triumph over the underworld, death and darkness and finally emerge as sun and moon.²

POINTS IN COMMON

Let us now compare these three versions of the story of how Paradise was lost.

1. *Points Common to All Three Versions.*

The story begins in a place of abundance and perfect harmony. Creators and created both live there peacefully.

There is no death.

The peace and harmony are destroyed by the consumption of part of a sacred tree (the fruit in Genesis, the sap in Tolkien, the blossom in Mexico).

Banishment and exile follow as consequences of the transgression.

2. *Points Common to the "Silmarillion" and the Tamoanchán Myth of Which There Is Some Hint in Genesis.*

Creation is begun by a supreme divine couple. In Tolkien's narrative "Valaquenta," this supreme couple consists of Manwe and Varda. They are assisted by other couples: Aule and Yavanna, Namó and Vaire, Irmo and Este, Tulkas and Messa, Orome and Vana. In Genesis, a divine creating couple is not mentioned directly, but is hinted at in 1:26-27: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." There is a clear suggestion here that "our image" and "our likeness" mean "male and female." An earlier version of the Creation narrative may have spelled it out more clearly, but later redactors may have obscured it as the theology evolved to exclude the female element from orthodox theology.⁴

Paradise is located in the West. Traditionally, the Eden of Genesis is located in the East. However, this may be the result of an imperfect translation. The late William F. Albright, a biblical authority of renown, said that *miqqedem* in Gen. 2:8 should not be translated "eastward" but "in primeval times."⁵ Of the four rivers of Eden mentioned in Gen. 2:10-14, Pison and Gihon suggest the West; Hiddekel and Euphrates (Hebrew *P̄rat*), the East. However, Cyrus H. Gordon has pointed out that the last named was originally a general word for "river" and that a related element, *para*, appears in the names of various South American rivers: Pará, Parú, Paraná, Paraíba, Parnaíba, Paranaíba, Paranapanema, Paraguá, Paraguai, Paratinga, Paracatú, and Paraguaçu.⁶ These names, it should be emphasized, all derive from native languages, not Spanish or Portuguese. They are all located in eastern South America. Dr. Gordon suggests they received their names from the

same civilization that named the river called the *P̄rat* (Euphrates) in Gen. 2:14, *Porat* in Gen. 49:22 (according to Albright), *Buranun* in Sumerian, *Purattu* in Akkadian, and *Baradu* in Eblaite (in that language meaning "the Cold River").⁷ If Gordon is right, the possibility exists that the biblical Eden, like Aman and mythical Tamoanchán, may have been located in the distant West.

3. *Elements Common to Aman and Tamoanchán.*

Cities and palaces are mentioned as well as the Garden (unlike the biblical story, which considers the first city to be the much later creation of the wicked Cain (see Gen. 4:16-17).

The Transgression results in the death of the sacred tree.

The destruction of the Tree plunges the world into darkness, since that tree was the main source of light.

A whole race of people, not just the individuals responsible, are exiled as a consequence of the Transgression. To overcome the darkness and undo at least some of the damage, two divine beings transform themselves into the sun and the moon. Another hero becomes the planet Venus (but this precedes even the sun and moon, in the Mexican version, while in Tolkien, Venus is the last luminary to ascend into the sky).

4. *Elements Common to the Israelite and Mexican Versions.*

The Transgression occurs when a female personage is deceived into consuming part of the Tree (in Tolkien, the element of deception is missing, as well as the woman or goddess).

Death comes into the world as a result (while neither the Valar nor the Eldar becomes mortal because of the Transgression; and Men are created mortal to begin with: they are not even allowed, as a general rule, into Aman).

5. *Element Common to Tolkien and Genesis.*

There are two sacred trees, not just one. (However, in Genesis, only the fruit of one tree is consumed, the other being untouched.)

RESULTS OF COMPARISON

Two amazing results emerge from this comparison: (1) The greatest number of similarities, and the strongest ones, are between the Mexican and the Tolkienian versions, even though that is where we would least expect it. (2) Only one parallel, and not a very strong one at that, unites Tolkien and the Bible (as opposed to the Transoceanic version), although we

would expect Tolkien to be more familiar with the Bible, and more influenced by it, than with or by Mexican mythology.

Indeed, I know of no evidence, from his writings, his biography, his letters, or any other source, that J. R. R. Tolkien was at all acquainted with the religion and legends of pre-Columbian America. Could he have found an Old World document that detailed a story similar to the Mexican myths? Such speculation would be futile until and unless such a document is found or identified.

Or could the similarities be attributed to transcendent inspiration, to racial memory, to unconscious primordial archetypes? This line of thought cannot be very productive either. However, at least it allows us to point out that those elements which are unique to Tolkien, not found in Mexico or the Bible, are the same ones that can be explained in terms of Tolkien's own individual psychology, rather than racial (by which I mean the human race) memory and unconscious archetypes. These include:

1. The absence of a female personage as an agent of the Transgression and the death of the Sacred Tree. Tolkien was deeply devoted to the Virgin Mary, to his mother, and to his wife. The notion of blaming the Fall on a goddess or woman did not appeal to his spirit. Perhaps for similar reasons, in later years he tried to downplay the role of Galadriel in the Rebellion of the Noldor.

2. The great spider, Ungoliant, an element strikingly unique with Tolkien, is perhaps best explained as a product of his trauma in infancy (while he was still living in South Africa), when he was bitten by a huge tarantula. The event was consciously forgotten but vividly remembered in his subconscious, spawning Ungoliant, Shelob, and the Spiders of Mirkwood.

ORIGINAL STORY

Assuming, then, just for the fun of it (or "for the sake of argument"), that the three narratives are variant versions of an ancient myth, and leaving aside Tolkien's idiosyncratic touches, we can then reconstruct what the original story would have been, if it really existed.

A divine couple, a god and a goddess, created other deities and the human race, all in their own image and likeness, male and female. All of them, goddesses and gods, women and men, lived together in peace and harmony in a beautiful Paradise in the West that had magnificent cities and palaces, as well as a great Garden. In this garden were many trees, but two trees were especially sacred. From one of the trees emanated the light of Paradise. There was no death; all life was immortal. However, a god who had fallen

into evil deceived a female—a goddess or woman—into eating part of one of the sacred trees. As a result the tree died, and the world plunged into darkness. Death appeared for the first time. Those responsible, and all their people with them, were exiled from Paradise. Gods and men were estranged from each other. Wishing to undo at least some of the damage and to restore light to the world, three divine heroes ascended into the sky and became the Sun, the Moon, and Venus. Thus the purposes of the evil one were defeated, and the world had light again.¹⁰

The Mexican myth of Tamoanchán seems closest to this reconstructed version—which is not too surprising, considering that its source is more to the west than either of the other two.

NOTES

1. Eduard Seler, *Bulletin 28* (Smithsonian Institution: Washington, 1904), p. 220.
2. Michael Graulich, "The Metaphor of the Day in Ancient Mexican Myth and Ritual," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (February, 1981), p. 46.
3. J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* (Ballantine Books, 1979), pp. 18–23.
4. Benjamin Urrutia, "El or Yahweh? An Observation on Patai's Comment on Segler's Review," *American Anthropologist*, December, 1972; "About El, Asherah, Yahweh, and Anath," *ibid.*, August, 1973. See also replies by Rafael Patai in the same issues and titles cited both by himself and Urrutia.
5. William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Doubleday, 1968).
6. Cyrus H. Gordon, *Before Columbus* (Crown Publishers, 1971), pp. 129–131.
7. Mitchell Dahood, "Afterword" in Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla* (Doubleday, 1981), p. 275.
8. Janice Johnson, "The Celeblain of Celeborn and Galadriel," *Mythlore*, No. 32, pp. 11–19. See also Christopher Tolkien's notes on the subject in *Unfinished Tales*.
9. As Tolkien himself convincingly avers in the *Letters*.
10. See also Isaiah 60:19, John 8:12, Revelation 21:23. John Taylor, LDS church president, 1880–1887, is credited with the following statement: "They [the Gods] next caused light to shine upon it [the earth] before the sun appeared in the firmament; for God is light, and in him there is no darkness." *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 18, p. 327.

Apparently the same concept is also referred to in the Enuma Elish, the earliest known Babylonian creation account. See E. A. Speiser, *The Anchor Bible: Genesis* (1964), pp. 9–10.

154.2 SYMPOSIUM COMMITTEE SETS OLD TESTAMENT THEME. "The major emphasis of the Society's 1983 symposium will be the archaeology of the Old Testament," according to Clark S. Knowlton, symposium chairman, "although contributions in other areas of scriptural archaeology are certainly welcome."

The Thirty-second Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures is scheduled for Friday evening and all day Saturday, October 21 and 22, 1983. It will be held at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, in Room 205 (Moot Court Room) of the J. Reuben Clark Law Building (the same location in which the Symposium was held last year).

Members of the Society have been invited to participate by submitting a one-page summary or abstract, for the consideration of the Symposium Committee, of a paper they wish to read at the annual meeting. Full instructions were mailed to all members on July 15, together with a form for returning the abstract. Dr. Knowlton reminds members of the September 1 deadline and points out that there is still time before then to get the abstract in. It should be sent to the SEHA Symposium Committee, Box 7488, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602.

The Guest Speaker for this year's symposium will be Rafael Patai, renowned Hebraist, anthropologist, and folklorist. He will be introduced by Dr. Eldin Ricks, BYU professor emeritus of ancient scripture, who studied under Dr. Patai at Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, Philadelphia.

A special feature of the 1983 symposium will be a Friday-evening panel discussion on the "documentary hypothesis" of the origin of early Old Testament literature. Included will be the "JEPD theory" of the first five books, as well as the supposed multiple authorship of Isaiah. Members of the panel are William James Adams, Stephen David Ricks, John L. Sorenson, John A. Tvedtnes, and Benjamin Urrutia. RTC.

154.3 SOCIETY TRUSTEE CALLED TO GERMANY. Victor L. Ludlow, Life Member of the SEHA since 1964 and trustee since 1976 (*News. and Proc.*, 139.3), is serving The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as president of its Germany-Frankfurt Mission. He will serve for a three-year period beginning in June.

Dr. Ludlow, an associate professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University, was awarded a doctorate in Near Eastern and Judaic studies at Brandeis University in 1979. His specialty is Jewish history. He has served BYU since 1968 in connection with its Study Abroad program in Israel. In 1977 he was chairman of the Society's Twenty-sixth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures. (*News. and Proc.*, 141.3, 143.6.) RTC.

154.4 TO READ PAPER IN SPAIN. William James Adams, Jr., an advisor to the SEHA Board of Trustees and a graduate research fellow in Middle East studies

at the University of Utah (*News. and Proc.*, 150.5), has been invited to read a paper at the University of Salamanca, Spain, before the Society of Biblical Literature, August 27-28, 1983.

Mr. Adams' paper will be entitled "Ancient Scribal Tendencies and the Transmission of the Biblical Text." It was accepted some time ago for publication in the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*.

In 1981 Mr. Adams presented a paper at the SEHA Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures entitled "How the 'Plain and Precious Parts' of 1 Nephi 13:28-29 Became Lost." It was an adaptation, for a Latter-day Saint audience, of his *Zeitschrift* paper. The SEHA paper is briefly summarized in the *Newsletter and Proceedings*, 147.3.

Mr. Adams will also read a paper on authenticating and deciphering ancient inscriptions, in Salt Lake City on August 13 at the Western Regional Meeting of the Epigraphic Society. RRC.

154.5 TAKES DOCTORAL EXAMS IN ITALY. Giovanni Tata, a contributor on the staff of the SEHA *Newsletter and Proceedings*, left for Italy on July 19 to take his doctoral examinations at the University of Turin.

Mr. Tata recently served as the curator of the Utah Pioneer Trail Stake Park. He is a candidate for the Litt.D. degree in classical and Egyptian archaeology at the University of Turin and is concurrently a candidate for the Ph.D. degree in anthropology at the University of Utah. (*News. and Proc.*, 146.3, 148.4.)

Mr. Tata read a paper in 1981 entitled "Investigations of the Turin Shroud" at the Society's Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures, which was later published in the *Newsletter and Proceedings* (148.0).

Mr. Tata's trip to Italy interrupts his assignment as Guest Editor of a forthcoming issue of the *Newsletter and Proceedings* (see 152.4). He will resume his work on the guest issue upon his return to Utah late in August. RRC.

154.6 PUBLISHES ON EGYPTIAN CONNECTION. Benjamin Urrutia, a contributor on the staff of the *Newsletter and Proceedings*, is the author of an article appearing in the June, 1983, issue of the *New Era*, pp. 38-41. Entitled "The Name Connection," it draws freely upon recent SEHA publications in showing links between the Book of Mormon and Egypt, as well as other ancient lands. Included are brief studies of the names Mormon, Cumorah, Mosiah, Shiblon, and Corinatumr. RTC.