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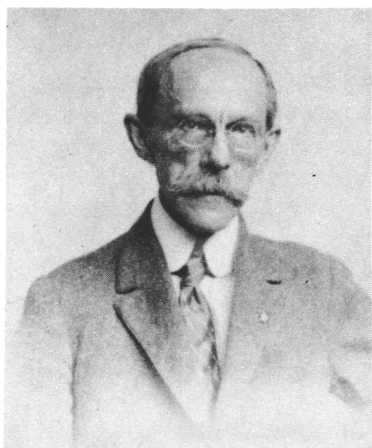
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Published approximately every six weeks by THE UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. The purpose of the Newsletter is to disseminate knowledge of recent archaeological discoveries bearing on the Latter-day Saint scriptures; also, of the Society and its members. Subscription by membership in the Society: three dollars per year; or Life Membership, fifty dollars. (Membership also includes subscription to other publications of the Society and the Department of Archaeology of BYU.)

39. 0



William Gates

William Gates: An Anniversary. In 1946 Brigham Young University came into possession of a collection of documents which was then described as being the most complete assemblage of early Middle American linguistic texts in the world. This was the William Gates Collection of Middle American Literature, representing over forty years of collecting and photographing by William Gates and the Maya Society. The opportune purchase of this collection by BYU brought to the university not only an unrivaled body of Mesoamerican source material, but also cause for the establishment of the Department of Archaeology. The founding of this department took place just

over ten years ago on the 13th of the past month. But it is not this anniversary which this issue of the Newsletter honors, but rather the 93rd anniversary of the birth of William Gates on the 8th of December.

Had it been suggested to Gates early in his career that sixteen years after his death he would be honored not for his persistent pioneer studies in philology, nor for his organizational energies which went into the establishment of the Maya Society, so much as for his accomplishments as a collector, he may have been surprised, but he need not have been dismayed. With the restrictions and inhibitions under which scholarship on ancient America suffered fifty years ago, it is likely that Gates might not have turned in any direction in which his contribution could have been more important than to collecting.

Gates himself recognized that the collection and preservation of source materials must precede the work of scholarship, and that, in fact, without it scholarship is impossible. Today, most of Gates' own studies in the Mesoamerican field are not well known and the Maya Society no longer survives as an organization, being remembered only as the medium of publication of seldom-used works by Gates on the library shelves of Americanists. But his great collection of source materials remains a major mile-stone in the development of Mesoamerican research. It is for this great treasure of source materials, then, and for the wisdom of the man who set about assembling it, that this issue of the Newsletter pays tribute to William Gates.

- 39.1 The Life and Work of William Gates. The following is a condensation, by Victor W. Purdy, of an original paper entitled "The Life Work of William E. Gates!" by Gareth W. Lowe. This paper won the John A. Widtsoe Memorial Award for 1955, presented at the Society's Round-table held in November (see Newsletter, December 9, 1955, 31.10).

William E. Gates, born in 1863, received his A. B. degree from John Hopkins University in 1886. After operating a printing press in Cleveland, Ohio, for twenty years, he retired and devoted his time to linguistic studies. Gates had a speaking knowledge of thirteen languages and had studied Saxon, Gothic, Sanskrit, Egyptian, and Chinese. Finally he turned to the Mayan languages of Mesoamerica and the undeciphered Maya hieroglyphs.

With this new interest, Gates organized the Maya Society, which promoted Mesoamerican studies and produced several outstanding publications. He also organized the still-active Department of Middle American Research (now Middle American Research Institute) at Tulane University of Louisiana. Appointed the first Director-General of Archaeology for Guatemala, Gates was instrumental in securing a museum for that country's antiquities. He lost his fight against archaeological abuses in Guatemala, but his initial stand is reflected in current policies of the Mesoamerican countries.

But his greatest contributions were in his chosen field of Mayan linguistics, and ironically, he will be remembered longest and best as a phenomenal collector of Mayan source materials, rather than as a scholar. He gathered into a central collection practically the entire corpus of early source materials for Middle American linguistics, and familiarized himself with most of this material relative to the Maya region, both ancient and modern.

It became Gates' conviction that the key to the Maya hieroglyphs would be found in the various Mayan languages. He realized that for this study the scanty printed material then extant was wholly inadequate and that he would have to have access to much more original manuscript material. Tabulating the known surviving manuscripts in the various Mayan languages (written with European letters, and dating from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries), Gates calculated that these totaled about 100,000 pages, of which only about one per cent had been printed. In the face of this vast amount of material, Gates set himself to recover every page of these documents that he could, either by purchase, hand copying, or photographic copying. He expended many thousands of dollars in this dedicated pursuit, and eventually succeeded in securing ninety-five per cent of the material he sought from the archives and private collections in the United States, Europe, and Latin America. Gates then turned to the Maya area itself to see if he could find other lost or unknown documents in the hands of local people or institutions; and he searched Yucatan, southern Mexico, and Guatemala, with moderate success. These great undertakings brought his personal fortune close to the point of exhaustion, but Gates feared leaving anything unpurchased lest the chance of obtaining it be lost forever. Time has vindicated this view. Later revolutionary activities in Mexico destroyed far more old manuscript material than had the conquistadores.

Perhaps Gates' publications can be considered his next most important accomplishment. His color editions of the codices or ancient hieroglyphic manuscripts are particularly valuable.

Through great physical effort and mental strain Gates transcribed in typewritten form most of the important linguistic manuscripts in or dealing with the Mayan languages. He also correlated this material in dictionaries and grammars of all the seven or eight Mayan linguistic branches. This task frequently entailed the reading of weathered manuscripts written in an archaic, almost illegible hand.

Gates also translated and indexed every known Mayan medicobotanical text, and did the same for much of the Aztec. This material he classified according to Maya and Aztec plant-names, ailments, and modern taxonomic order. This material was cross-referenced for ailments and remedies, with ten thousand references to native manuscripts.

Furthermore, Gates designed and cast the only font of Maya hieroglyphic type in existence. This font, consisting of all two thousand glyphs found written in the three known Maya codices, was used by Gates in publishing his codex facsimilies and glyph studies.

William E. Gates died in 1940. He had failed in his great ambition to decipher the Maya hieroglyphs, but his collection of source materials for Mayan linguistics and hieroglyphic decipherment remains as a monument to his life work. The Gates Collection, including Gates' font of Maya hieroglyphic type and his huge file of personal correspondence, was purchased in 1946 by Brigham Young University, through the instrumentality of Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, and is now housed in the Department of Archaeology, making the latter a potential center of Mesoamerican linguistic and hieroglyphic research.

39.2



Russia Claims Decipherment of the Maya Hieroglyphic Writing! Coinciding auspiciously with this issue of the Newsletter honoring the Mayanist William Gates is the sensational announcement of a successful preliminary decipherment of the ancient Maya hieroglyphic writing (i. e., of the non-calendrical hieroglyphs; most of the calendrical glyphs have already been deciphered for some time). The announcement was contained in the first issue of the new cultural exchange magazine, USSR. According to this Russian

publication, the key which led to the decipherment of the mysterious glyphs of the ancient Maya was discovered by a young Soviet linguist named Yuri Knorozov, after extensive linguistic preparation in the ancient languages of the East and intensive study in the historical, ethnological, and linguistic material available in Russia on ancient America. A half year was devoted to the methodic transcription of texts, in which, after hours of copying, Knorozov involuntarily made the same slips and distortions of the characters which it is supposed the Maya scribes might have made. Along with this he learned the Maya language as preserved in monastery records and in 16th-century Mayan-Spanish glossaries in which the Mayan words are spelled out alphabetically. Suspecting that the road to decipherment lay in the relationship between the phonetic and hieroglyphic classifications, Knorozov continued working until (according to the report in USSR) the key



THE SUN BURNS EVERYTHING AT THIS TIME

was discovered. After an almost infinite set of comparisons, we are told, the phonetic equivalents of a few hieroglyphic signs emerged: kuts (turkey), tsul (dog), mut (sign). And after new difficulties, the single words grouped themselves into sentences: "The sun burns everything at this time"; "The rain makes the land fertile."

Though the article suggests that the work accomplished so far is only preliminary, Knorozov was honored with a Doctorate in history conferred by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR--an exceptional award for a master's thesis. The magazine further states that he has compiled a comparative grammar of the Mayan languages and is preparing two Mayan-Russian glossaries for publication. However, this appears to be the first and only exposition of his work to be issued from Russia. We can look forward to a more detailed account of this study in the future.

39.3 The Bible as History, by Werner Keller; a Review by Nils-Eric Brodin.

Ever since the excitement occasioned by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls found in caves along the Dead Sea in 1947, a multitude of new books on biblical archaeology have been rushed to the presses. Most of those issued so far, however, have been too specialized for the enjoyment of the interested layman. But in 1956 came one of the most usable and interesting books of its kind to appear. This book, The Bible as History, by Dr. Werner Keller, a German journalist of considerable scientific training, has been a best-seller in Germany and elsewhere in Europe and is fast becoming a most popular book also in the United States.

The book is directed toward a correlation of the biblical narrative with archaeological discoveries of the last century, and thus, whenever possible, a presentation of empirical evidences of the historicity of the Bible account, its personalities and events. Dr. Keller has approached this enormous task with a keen understanding of his audience, and by avoiding the overly-specialized and obscure, has produced a book with a vividness and freshness which makes it as fascinating as it is informative.

In the preparation of this work, use has been made of all the sources available on recent scientific discoveries by American, English, French, German, and Scandinavian archaeologists. That Dr. Keller has traveled extensively in the Near East is apparent from his ability to illuminate the biblical account with a rare power of concreteness in his description of specific archaeological sites. From the Nile to the Tigris, from the Euphrates to the Jordan, The Bible as History provides an instructive setting for the familiar narratives of the Bible. The birth of three of the world's great religions is dramatically retold in the light of an accumulation of archaeological data which includes the most recent discoveries.

The Ur of Abraham, who commenced the age of the Patriarchs, is illustrated by the expeditions of 1842 and 1923 which unearthed the remains of this templated city which had been the home of Abraham. The 1929 discovery of a ten-foot thick mud layer, doubtlessly deposited by a large body of water, evidencing a flood of catastrophic proportions (though limited to the area of Mesopotamia), under which was found a civilization of more archaic type, is perhaps one of the most exciting chapters in the archaeological history of the Near East. Joseph in Egypt, Moses and the forty years in the wilderness, the battles for the

Promised Land, the Israelite nation from Joshua to Solomon, the division into the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the Exile, and the final revolt under the Maccabean brothers--all these historical events are retold in the instructive light of archaeological discovery. Though documentary proof of the actual existence of specific biblical personalities is often lacking, the discoveries have provided information about the environmental conditions of the time of these same individuals. In no important case, according to Dr. Keller, has the biblical narrative been contradicted by the discoveries made by archaeologists in the past hundred years.

The account of the industrial enterprises of Solomon are most interesting reading. The finding of Solomon's mines and smelting center by the Red Sea, and the unearthing of the Queen of Sheba's capital in southern Arabia supplement the brief biblical account of this era with much illuminative background. The extent of the commercial system, trade routes, and monopolies of Solomon's day is something which has been realized by few students of the Bible.

Though the major portion of the book is concerned with the archaeology of the Old Testament period, it does not ignore the New Testament. The life of Christ and His apostles are illuminated with descriptions of the early Christian milieu as brought to light through archaeological discovery. The book follows the missionary journeys of Peter and Paul into what is now Turkey, Greece, and Italy, and the turbulent history of the early Christians is suggested through such discoveries as the paintings in the Roman catacombs.

In the final chapter, Dr. Keller discusses the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls, thus bringing up to date, with its most sensational discovery, the history of archaeological investigations bearing upon the Bible.

The Bible as History has one main thing to say, and that it says effectively: the Bible is history!

- 39.4 New Life Member and Research Patrons. A Life Membership in the UAS was issued in December to Mr. Milan D. Smith of Washington, D. C. There are now ten Life Members of record in the Society. Life Membership may be purchased for a fee of \$50.00.

The following UAS members have become, or continued as, Research Patrons since September by contributing \$10.00 or more to the Society's Research Fund (see December 9, 1955, Newsletter, 31.20):

Lois Leona Bigelow, Salt Lake City; R. F. Christensen, Riverside, California; M. Wells Jakeman, Provo, Utah; J. Clifford Johnson, Marysville, California; Lynn C. Layton, Salt Lake City. Previous Research Patrons and some of the results of their contributions are detailed in the September 5 Newsletter, 37.3.

- 39.5 Renewal Notices Mailed to Members. Approximately 150 renewal notices were mailed to Society members whose membership terminated December 31, 1956, according to Dr. Ross T. Christensen, UAS general secretary-treasurer. About half of these have already returned their renewal fees. Second notices are being mailed to the remainder about January 31.

According to Dr. Christensen, all memberships in the Society have been extended to either December 31 or June 30 (see June 8 Newsletter, 35.3). First notices are customarily sent out one month in advance of the expiration date, while second notices are mailed one month following the date of expiration.