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Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

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GOD E. THE MAIZE GOD. (From Copan.)

Frontispiece to The Open Court.

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THE GODS OF THE MAYA

BY LEWIS SPENCE

SO FAR, the most intensive examination of the gods of the Maya people of Central America and Yucatan has been directed to those pictures of them which appear in the three principal Maya manuscripts remaining to us, the *Dresden*, *Paris* and *Tro-Cortesianus Codices*, and not to the sculptured representations of divine forms on the surviving monuments of that marvellous people. The pictured forms of personages in the manuscripts, are, indeed, so obviously those of divinities that we are justified in attempting to collate them with the various members of the Maya pantheon alluded to in literary sources in the *Books of Chilán Balam*, *The Popol Vuh*, *The Book of the Cakchiquels*, and elsewhere. But the same can scarcely be said of the sculptured figures which appear on the temple walls and stelae of Central America. Certain of these, indeed, are as manifestly divine as any of the forms depicted in the manuscripts, and are capable of being compared, if not identified with them, but others, again, are as obviously representations, either modelled from the life, or post-mortem sculptures, of great leaders or hierophants. Nor is it always possible, in view of our present poverty of data and knowledge, to discriminate between these figures which had a human or a deific significance.

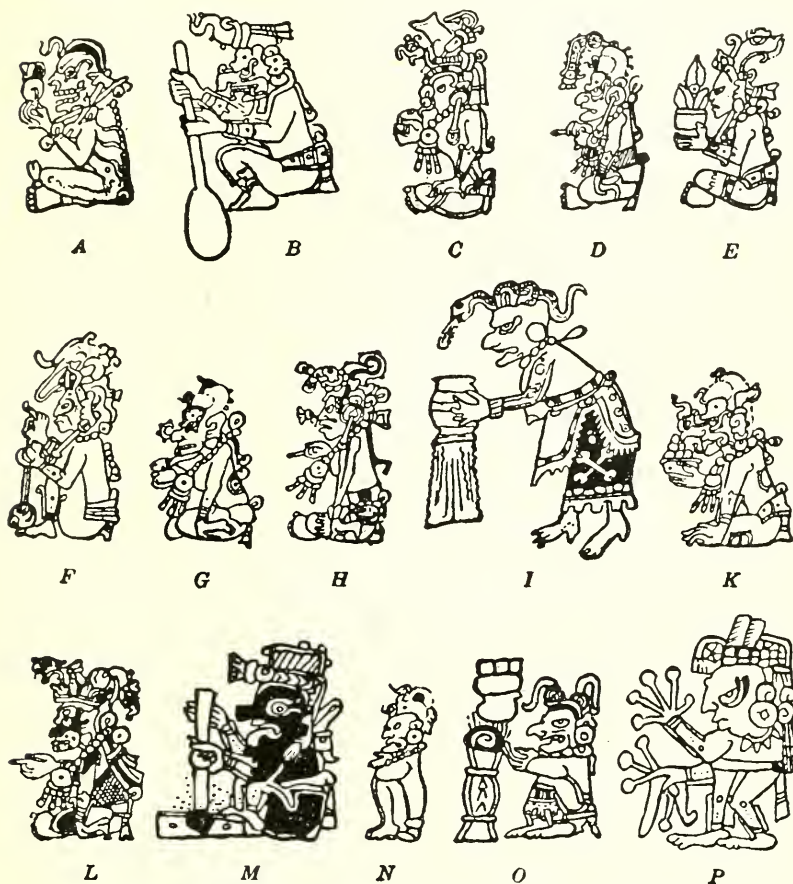
The hieroglyphs which in almost every instance accompany these pictures and sculptures in human form still remain undeciphered, and until these yield their secret, it will be impossible to identify the gods or personages they name with any degree of certainty. For nearly a generation the painted representations of gods in the manuscripts have been for the sake of convenience described by the letters of the alphabet from A to P, a method which has been found much more satisfactory than any dogmatic system of nomenclature which might have affixed to them the names of the divine

beings in Maya myth without the absolute assurance that they actually applied to the painted representations whose accompanying hieroglyphic titles we cannot yet decipher.

The first student of Maya antiquities to apply this provisional and truly scientific system of nomenclature was Dr. Paul Schellhas, who so long ago as 1897 introduced it to the notice of Americanists in his *Representations of Deities in the Maya Manuscripts* as "a purely inductive natural science method," essentially amounting to "that which in ordinary life we call 'memory of persons'." By an intensive examination of the pictures of gods in the manuscripts he learned gradually to recognize them promptly by the characteristic impressions they made as a whole. He was assisted in this not only by dissimilarities in face and figure, but by such details as the constant occurrence in the case of each god of some outstanding hieroglyph, ornament, or other symbol. He dealt with the figures in the manuscripts alone, and almost entirely avoided hypotheses and deductions. The present writer, following in his path, has, however, not refrained from application to those other sources of information which he ignored, and by degrees has been enabled to arrive at a rather fuller comprehension of that extensive Maya godhead for whose worship the gorgeous temples of tropical America were erected.

Schellhas candidly admitted his lack of knowledge of the places of origin of the three invaluable manuscripts which preserve for us those graceful and delicate representations of a forgotten Olympus. But Dr. H. J. Spinden, of the American Museum of Natural History, in his monumental work on *Maya Art*, has, by a careful comparison of the art-forms of those wonderful aboriginal paintings, dissipated nearly all existing doubts on the question. The *Codex Dresden* he assigns to the region south of Uxmal in Yucatan. In the *Codex Peresianus* he finds marked similarities to the art of the ruined cities of Naranho, Quirigua, and Piedras Negras in Peten, a district immediately to the south of the Yucatan peninsula. As for the *Codex Tro-Cortesianus*, he believes it to have been the work of a painter living in the northern district of Yucatan. It is, of course, manifest that all of these must be copies of much older manuscripts, and Spinden is of opinion that the last-mentioned may be dated not much later than A. D. 1200. This means that all three originated in those districts which had been colonized by the Maya after they had left their original settlements in Guatemala and had been driven northward into Yucatan by racial pressure or other

causes, and it is clear that all have reference to the same deities and arose out of one and the same religious impulse. It is possible, however, within reasonable limits, to attempt to collate many of these drawings with the gods of Maya myth. The figures appear again and again, and there is in the manner of their representation



THE ALPHABET OF MAYA GODS (after Schellhas).

a constancy and similarity of form and attitude which justifies the inference that it is possible, as Schellhas thought, to verify a god from his general appearance, and his accompanying symbols.

The god first encountered in this alphabetic sequence, God A, as he is generally described, is without doubt that grisly genius who in all mythologies presides over the realm of the departed. He is

readily to be recognized by his skull-like countenance and bony spine, and the large black spots, denoting corruption, which cover the emaciated body. He wears as a collar the ruff of the vulture, the bird of death, and a symbol which usually accompanies him, but which Schellhas was unable to decipher, undoubtedly represents the maggot, evidently a kind of hieroglyph for death. But the distinguishing glyph for this god is a human head with eyes closed in death, before which stands the stone knife of sacrifice. In one part of the *Codex Dresden*, God A is shown with the head of an owl, the bird of ill omen, his almost constant attendant, and this recalls to us a passage in the *Popol Vuh*, a religious book of the Maya, which states that the rulers of Xibalba, the Underworld, "were owls," the inhabitants of a dark and cavernous place.

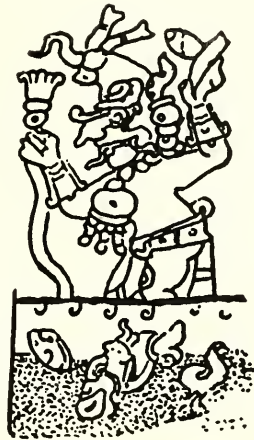
I believe God A to be Ah-puch, the death-spirit mentioned by Father Hernandez. His name means "the Undoer" or "Spoiler," and he was also known as Chamay Bac or Zac, that is "white teeth and bones." In some of his portraits he is decorated with a feather, on which are seen the conventional markings of the symbol of the flint knife, and I have deduced from this that the glyph for "feather" was synonymous with that for "knife," a notion which I have substantiated from the fact that in Maya the first wing-feather of a bird was called "a knife."

The personality of God B is a much debated one. He has a long proboscis and tusk-like fangs, and certain writers on American antiquities have called him "the elephant-headed god." Apart from these peculiarities, his eye has a characteristic rim, and he is easily recognized by the strange headdress he wears, which I take to be a bundle of "medicine" or magical appliances. And here it may be as well to say that I believe the headdress of these gods represent the earliest symbols by which they were known to their priests and worshippers in the period before writing was invented, or hieroglyphs came into use. They would thus rank as hieroglyphs, as something to be immediately recognized or "read," and probably acted as a definite step in the invention of written symbols. But their earliest use seems to have been as personal signs by which the gods could be readily identified.

That God B has an affinity with water is plainly evident. He is seen walking on its surface, standing in rain, fishing, paddling a canoe, and even enthroned on the clouds. He is connected with the serpent, which is, in America, the water-animal par excellence. In some places, indeed, his head surmounts a serpentine body, and,

like the priests of the modern Zuñi Indians of Arizona, he is represented as clutching tame serpents in his hands. Like the old British god Kai—the “Sir Kai the Seneschal” of Malory—he is seen in some parts of the manuscript carrying flaming torches. Kai was a god of the waters; so, in some measure is God B.

The “elephantine” aspect of this god is accounted for by his wearing the mask of the medicine-man or priest, during the religious ceremony. Indeed in one statue of his analogous Mexican form we see him in the very act of removing this mask. In Mexico the mask resembles the beak of a bird; in Central America it is more like a snout—whether that of an elephant, tapir, or other animal I do not possess sufficient data to form an opinion.



GOD B: WALKING IN WATER.

God B is, indeed, none other than Kukulkan, “The Feathered Serpent,” the Maya name for the Mexican Quetzalcoatl, the god of the rain-bearing trade-wind. But in Central America proper, whence he originally hailed, he is more intimately connected with water than with wind, and the learned priests of his cult explained him to the Spanish conquerors as “the ripple wind makes on water,” the ruffled feathers on the serpentine stream. But in later times he came to be regarded as the priest who conjured down the rain by magic, and his possession of the *caluac*, or rain-maker’s wand, places his position in this respect beyond all question.

Coming to the third letter of our alphabet of gods, we find God C simple of explanation. At first sight his outward semblance

may seem puzzling. His face is framed by the painted border seen on the *xamach*, or flat dish on which the Maya baked their tortillas or maize pancakes. But *xamach* also means "north," so that in this instance we have an example of that rebus-writing on which the Maya hieroglyphical system was undoubtedly based. There was, we know from tradition, a god called Xamanek, who represented the pole star, and that God C is identical with this deity scarcely admits of any doubt. In the *Codex Cortesianus* we see his head surrounded by a nimbus of rays which can symbolize only stellar emanations and in the same manuscript we find him hanging from the sky in the noose of a rope. Elsewhere he is accompanied by familiar planetary signs.

In D we have a god of night and the moon. He is represented as an aged man with toothless jaws, and is indicated by the hieroglyph *akbal*, "night." His head, in the reduced cursive writing of the texts, stands for the sign of the moon, and is frequently accompanied by the snail, the emblem of birth, over which function the moon had planetary jurisdiction. Among the Maya deities D is the only one who can boast of a beard, a certain sign in the case of the neighboring Mexican pantheon that a god possesses a planetary significance, and for this reason, no less than because of his venerable appearance, I would collate him with Tonaca tecutli, the Mexican creative deity, father of the gods, the Saturn of their Olympus. This figure was known to the Maya of Guatemala as Xpiyacoc, but can scarcely be collated with Hunab Ku, "The Great Hand," the "god behind the gods," invisible, impalpable, of whom we are assured that he was represented in neither painting nor sculpture.

In God E we have such a definite picture of a divinity connected with the maize-plant that we have no difficulty in identifying him as Ghanan, the traditional Maya god of the maize, whose other name was Yum Kaax, "Lord of the Harvest Fields." He bears the maize-plant on his head, and this, becoming in course of time the conventionalized form of an ear of maize with leaves, composed his hieroglyph. His face-paint, too, frequently bears the symbol of fertility, and the rain-vase is depicted as an ornament above his ear.

God F, in his insignia, is reminiscent of the Mexican harvest-god Xipe, whose annual festival brought forth such grisly horrors of human sacrifice. He has the same distinguishing vertical face-mask, implying "war," for plenteous harvests were only to be secured by drenching the soil with the blood of prisoners taken in battle. He is, indeed, a war-god, and is occasionally represented

in full war-paint, with flint knife and blazing torch, setting fire to tents or huts. In some places he is pictured underneath a stone axe in the shape of a hand, with thumb turned upwards, which probably had an inauspicious significance.

God G is not often represented in the manuscripts. He appears to be a sun-god, and his hieroglyph, a circle enclosing four teeth, is believed by some authorities to symbolize the "biting" nature of tropical heat. His own teeth are filed to a sharp point. His head-dress recalls that of the priesthood of Yucatan, and in some of his representations has a certain resemblance to the Egyptian wig. There is, indeed, no question that it is a wig. He frequently holds the flower symbolic of a life rendered to him in sacrifice, and is occasionally depicted standing amid tongues of solar flame, a central eye blazing upon his forehead. That he is Kinich Ahau, the sun-god, is scarcely open to dispute. Another of his hieroglyphs consists of a composite picture, including a solar disk, the sign *been*, which means "straw-thatch," and the sign *ik*, which in this connection is to be translated "fire which strikes upon the roof," in allusion to the frequency with which the thatched roofs of the Maya were ignited by the fierce rays of the sun of Yucatan.

The distinguishing characteristic of God H consists in what is known as the *chiccan* or serpent-spot appearing on his brow. He has practically no other distinctive marks, and that he has some relation to the serpent is clear. With I we come to the first of the two goddesses represented in the list—a divinity of water. She is scarcely prepossessing, and has claws in place of feet. She wears on her head a knotted serpent, and seems to pour the flooding rains from a large vessel. But she is evidently not a beneficent deity, for her face is distorted by an expression of angry menace, and it is obvious that she personifies water in its more harmful guise—the baneful flood rather than the grain-bringing rain. In some of the representations of her, water belches from her mouth, breasts, and armpits, and she wields the rattle of the thunder-storm.

Such data as we possess regarding the deity indicated by the letter K is not of a kind that would permit us to arrive at any very definite conclusions regarding him. He closely resembles B, and has even been confounded with him by some authorities. He is frequently represented on the walls of the temples of Copan and Palenque, so it follows that he must have been a divinity who ranked high in the galaxy of gods. He has the same description of mask, with elongated snout, as B, but his hieroglyph differs very markedly

from the symbol of that god, representing as it does an almost ape-like head with a peculiar foliation in the region of the forehead—a constant feature in his pictures. From his position as lord of the calendar years which belong to the east, Professor Seler believes him to be Ah-Bolon tzacab, "Lord of the Nine Generations." In my view he is a variant of B. The two most famous deities among the Maya, Kukulcan and Itzamna, were undoubtedly one and the same in origin and essence, although in later times they came to be regarded as rivals and as swaying the fortune of opposing cities, and I believe K represents Itzamna, as B is unquestionably Kukulcan.

A deity of darksome hue appears in God L, known as "The Old Black God." In some of the pictures in the *Codex Dresden* his face is entirely black, but in the other manuscripts only the upper part of it is so painted. From the insignia which accompany him, I have been led to the provisional conclusion that he is in some manner connected with the synodical appearances of the planet Venus, which bulked largely in the Maya chronology as the basis of a time-count for the calendar. He is also the fire-maker, who kindles the new flame with the fire-drill on the recurrence of the time-cycle.

In God M we have an even duskier deity, a patron of the native porters or coolies, and, like them, well-nigh black through constant exposure to the tropical sun. He has, in fact, an appearance almost negroid, thick, red lips, the lower drooping pendulously. He bears on his head a bale of merchandise secured by thick ropes. Occasionally he is drawn with the skeleton-like frame of the death-god, and this, and the circumstance that he usually carries arms, incline me to the belief that he is symbolical of the great risks run by the itinerant merchants of Mexico and Yucatan, who frequently acted as spies upon neighboring tribes, or as the advance-guard of an invading army. He is, indeed, the god Ek ahau, or Ek chuah, "The Black Lord," a cruel and rapacious deity, whose general character reflects none too amiably upon the methods of Maya commercial activity.

God N, another aged divinity, is the god of the end of the year, and his headdress contains the sign for the year of 360 days. O is the only other goddess of the group, and her picture does not appear elsewhere than in the *Madrid Codex*. She is also depicted as advanced in years, and is usually represented as sitting at a loom. P, the last of the series, is easily to be recognized as the Maya frog-

god, whose headdress, like that of God N, contains the sign for the year.

It is then possible to identify with reasonable likelihood six out of these sixteen figures, to label them with the traditional names they bore, and to fix the nature and characteristics of some of them. We now come to those pictured representations of divinities who are not included in the alphabetical series of Schellhas. The Bacabs are deities of the four points of the compass, and are represented in the Dresden manuscript, especially in the familiar pages 25 to 28, where they are co-ordinated with the signs for the compass points. The Maya of Yucatan believed that these Bacabs were four brothers whom the gods had placed at the four corners of the world to support the heavens and keep them from falling. Landa says that their collective names were Uayeyab, "they by whom the year is prisoned," and prefaces to this the personal names Kan, Chac, Zac and Ek,¹ but these titles merely imply "yellow," "red," "white" and "black," and signify the colors associated with the south, east, north and west, respectively. The Bacabs had also a funerary significance, and their heads in stone occasionally appear as the lids of "Canopic" jars found in Maya tombs. In the *Poꝑol Vuh*, the sacred book of the Maya-Quiche, these Bacabs are alluded to by the generic name of Balan, and are associated with the four winds. Shooting stars are the burning stumps of gigantic cigars which they fling down from heaven. When it thunders and lightens they were said to be striking fire to light their cigars. The god Chac is sometimes alluded to as if he were a personification of the Bacabs collectively, and seems to be the same as Schellhas' God B.

Zotz, the Bat-God, appears to have been the deity of the Ah-zotzil, or Bat Folk, a tribe long settled in the vicinity of San Cristobal de Chiapas, as well as of another clan, part of the Cakchiquels of southern Guatemala. In the *Poꝑol Vuh* the god of the Cakchiquel is called Zotziha Chimalcan, and after him the two royal lines of that Cakchiquel tribe were named. He is a god of caverns, and had a two-fold form as well as a two-fold name, which seems to signify "Bat's House-Serpent Shield." Perhaps the name might be read "Serpent shield (or pond) in the Place of Darkness," and may refer to those cenotes or subterranean wells which are so frequently encountered in Yucatan, because of the constant connection of the serpent with water by the Maya. In any case, Zotz appears to have

¹ *Relacion de las cosas de Yucatan*, p. 207.

been connected with a cult whose worship was carried on in caverns, like that of the Nagualists.²

The Maya designated the twenty-day period Zotz, after this god, and his glyph is frequently encountered on the Copan reliefs. On one of the temples of Copan is a relief depicting a combat between this god and Kukulkan, perhaps an allegory of the strife between light and darkness.

In the Dresden manuscript a deity is represented whose face appears to have animal characteristics. His glyph contains an element which occurs in the glyph of a god with a deer's head also to be found in the Dresden manuscript, and in the *Codex Tro-Cortesianus* in a glyph denoting weaving or embroidery.

The goddess who acts as regent of the Second Period in the Dresden manuscript, does not seem to be met with elsewhere in the manuscripts, and is not mentioned in Schellhas' list. Seler³ believes her to represent the planet Venus. Her body is painted red, and on the front of the trunk are the vertebrae and ribs of a skeleton. The nose curves down like that of God B, but she has not the long, crooked teeth and the flourish on the bridge of the nose. A string of precious stones, hanging over in front from the headdress, has attached to it by a bow the glyph of the planet Venus. Seler also alludes to a deity who figures as regent of the fourth period in the Dresden manuscript. He says, "He is obviously a warlike divinity. A jaguar skin is wrapped around his hips, and he wears on his breast a disk apparently bordered with jaguar skin. As headdress he wears the conventionalized head of a bird having a crest. An entire bird is worn as an ear peg, with the head stuck toward the front through the much enlarged hole in the lobe of the ear. There is a serpent's head before his mouth (as a nose-peg?), and the head of a bird projects over his forehead. The face painting strikingly recalls that of the Mexican Tezcatlipoca. . . . There is, in front, the element which in the hieroglyph of the jaguar is combined with the abbreviated jaguar head, and in other places is associated with the cardinal point east, probably denoting a color (red). It is not difficult to recognize the element *kin*, "sun," at the right, and in the center a head with a bleeding, empty eye socket. All these are elements which stand for a war god."⁴

If we now look for any of these gods on the monuments of Central America or Yucatan, we shall find that little has been done

² See Brinton, *Nagualism*.

³ Bulletin 28, Bureau of American Ethnology, p. 387.

⁴ Bulletin 28, p. 389.

to locate them there, or collate them in any way with the figures of the manuscripts. Indeed this is a department of Maya Archaeology which calls loudly for research. Dr. Spinden writes sanely on this subject and on the methods of collating and recognizing deities in his excellent monograph on Maya Art.⁵ He says, "Because of the natural exuberance of Maya art, identification, even of gods, is far from easy. Fewkes declares that in any attempt to classify the Maya deities the character of the head must be taken as the basis. This statement is true within certain limits, simply because characterization is more easily expressed in the head than elsewhere, especially when the figures are largely anthropomorphic. But in many cases the character and decoration of the body are also significant and should be examined." He proceeds to compare certain sculptures with God B, whom he collates with a long-nosed manikin god, as found in sculptures at Quirigua, and sees his surrogate, God K, on a vase in the American Museum of Natural History, the representation on which, however, might perhaps, equally well apply to the Bat-god. But there are clearer indications of his presence in details from Copan and Yaxchilan. God D, too, he finds in two sculptures at Yaxchilan, in the form of the earth-dragon. On Stela I, at that city, says Dr. Spinden,⁶ "there is a bust of a human being or of a god directly over the center of the planet strip that forms the body of the two-headed monster, and its resemblance to God D of the codices is evident at the first glance. The Roman nose, the open mouth with the lips drawn back, the wrinkles on the cheek, the peculiar tooth projecting outward, the ornamented eye and the flowing hair and beard are all features that occur in the codices in connection with God D. The air of old age is admirably characterized."

Spinden, too, sees another manifestation of God D in the face-form of the glyph known to Mayologists as *K'in*, which represents a single day, and he adduces sculptures from Copan, Yaxchilan, Chichen-Itza and Palenque to prove his contention. He finds, too, further representations of this god in a sculptured block from Copan and a detail from Piedras Negras, on a pottery flask from the Uloa Valley, as well as in the Atlantean figures that support the altar at Palenque. He has seen, too, anthropomorphic figures of the Bat God at Copan, and has identified his glyph on the back of Stela D at that city.

⁵ P. 62.

⁶ P. 70.

God A and his attributes appear in connection with many conceptions to be found on the monuments especially at Chichen-Itza, Copan, Tikal and Palenque, a distribution which bears witness to a far-flung worship of this divinity. Regarding the Maize God, E, Spinden says:⁷ "On the monuments the representation of this god may be discerned in the youthful figure with a leafy headdress. . . . It occupies a secondary position on the monuments, but the characters are constant and are, moreover, consistent with those appearing on the figures in the Codices. On Stela H at Copan several small human beings of this type. . . may be seen climbing round and over the interwoven bodies of serpents. At Quirigua the occurrence is similar . . . while at Tikal the head . . . thrusts itself out of the eye of a richly embellished serpent head, the upturned nose of which is shaped into the face of the Roman-nosed God (D). . . . In all these drawings the determining feature is the bunches of circles enclosed in leaflike objects that may represent the ear of maize or bursting seed pods. In an interesting stucco decoration in the Palace at Palenque . . . are shown comparable circular details as well as maize ears rather realistically drawn, while the god himself appears at the top of the design. Details which seem to represent ears of maize or bursting pods are recorded in a drawing by Waldeck of one of the now lost tablets of Palenque. The maize ears in this instance seem to depend from the inverted head of the Long-nosed god. The form of the Maize god in all these instances is distinctly human and in marked contrast to the other deities so far considered. The beautiful sculpture from the façade of Temple 22 at Copan, which Maudslay calls a "singing girl," may represent the youthful Maize God. Other comparable figures from the same building are in the Peabody Museum. . . . The headdress resembles that of this deity as given in the codices. There is clear enough evidence that the faces and figures of the Long-nosed God (B), the Roman-nosed God (D), and the Death God (A) were used to decorate the façades of temples in this city, and the usage may have included other deities as well. Two sculptured stones from the terrace east of the Great Plaza at Copan doubtless bear representations of the Maize God."

The face of God C has also been found on the Hieroglyphic Stairway at Copan, part of which is now in the Peabody Museum, and in inscriptions at Palenque and Copan. Gods F and H have, so far, not been clearly identified in the sculptures, nor have I, M,

⁷ P. 89-90.

O, or P as yet been encountered on stela or temple wall. The penetrative work of Spinden notwithstanding, the great need of the further collation of the manuscript forms of the gods with those depicted on the monuments, not only in major form, as found, but in lesser detail and grotesquerie, is obvious.

Can we now relate these forms, pictured and sculptured, to what is known of Maya religious tradition, and try to gather not only a clearer notion of the identity of the deities in question, but some knowledge of their functions and worship? Unfortunately, the early contemporary notices of Maya religion are extraordinarily scanty. They consist almost entirely of the *Historia del Cielo y de la tierra* of Pedro de Aguilar, the *Historia de Yucatan* of Fray Diego Lopez, the account, in Las Casas' *Historia de las Indias*, of Francisco Hernandez, the *Relacion de las cosas de Yucatan*, of Diego de Landa, and the *Constituciones Diocesanas* of Nuñez de la Vega, as well as the *Documentos Ineditos*, published at Madrid, and containing fugitive and sometimes anonymous notices of native beliefs and customs.

From these it is only a fragmentary account of the Maya pantheon which we can glean. The religion of the Maya seems to have possessed few deific figures of note, as Hernandez remarks, and he adds that the "principal lords" alone were acquainted with the history of the gods, their myths and allegories. The spirit of the religion appears to have been dualistic. We witness, indeed, a dualism almost as complete as that of ancient Persia—the conflict between light and darkness. Opposing each other we behold on the one hand the deities of the sun, the gods of warmth and light, of civilization and the joy of life, and on the other the deities of darksome death, of night, gloom, and fear. From these primal conceptions of light and darkness all the mythologic forms of the Maya are evolved. When we catch the first recorded glimpses of Maya belief we recognize that at the period when it came under the purview of Europeans the gods of darkness were in the ascendant and a deep pessimism had spread over Maya thought and theology. Its joyful side was subordinated to the worship of gloomy beings, the deities of death and hell, and if the cult of light was attended with such touching fidelity, it was because the benign agencies who were worshipped in connection with it had promised not to desert mankind altogether, but to return at some future indefinite period and resume their sway of radiance and peace.

The heavenly bodies had important representation in the Maya pantheon. In Yucatan the sun-god was known as Kinich-ahau (Lord of the Face of the Sun). He was identified with the Fire-bird, or Arara, and was thus called Kinich-Kakmo (Fire-bird; lit. Sun-bird). He was also the presiding genius of the north. Sacrifices to him were made at midday, when it was believed that the deity descended in the shape of the Arara or macaw. Such ceremonies were especially performed in times of pestilence or destruction of the crops by locusts. But this god was probably much less prominent in the public mind than the greater solar deities, and his attributes were occasionally assigned to Itzamna. He is certainly God. G.

Itzamna, one the most important of the Maya deities, was a deity of moisture, the father of gods and men. In him was typified the decay and recurrence of life in nature. His name was derived from the words he was supposed to have given to men regarding himself: "*Itz en caan, itz en muyal*" ("I am the dew of the heaven, I am the dew of the clouds"). He was tutelary deity of the west. Itzamna, may, indeed, be regarded as the chief of the Maya pantheon. "He received," say Brinton,⁸ "the name *Lakin chan*, 'the Serpent of the East,' under which he seems to have been popularly known. As light is synonymous with both life and knowledge, he was said to have been the creator of men, animals, and plants, and was the founder of the culture of the Mayas. He was the first priest of their religion, and invented writing and books; he gave the names to the various localities in Yucatan, and divided the land among the people; as a physician he was famous, knowing not only the magic herbs, but possessing the power of healing by touch, whence his name *Kabil*, 'the skilful hand,' under which he was worshipped in Chichen Itza. For his wisdom he was spoken of as *Yax coc ahmut*, 'the royal or noble master of knowledge.' He was, indeed, the son of Hunab-Ku, the great and unseen divine spirit behind the pantheon of the Maya. The center of his cult was the city of Izamal, to which pilgrimage was made from all parts of Yucatan. As has been said, he is probably God K, although some students of the Codices identify him with God D.

Ekchuah was the god of travellers, to whom they burned copal. He is certainly God M. He is painted the color of cocoa, the merchant's staple of exchange. There were quite a number of war-gods, and it is difficult to know which of them should be identified

⁸ *Mayan Hieroglyphics*, p. 38.

with God F of the Codices; whether Uac Lom Chaam, "He whose teeth are six lances," worshipped at Merida, Ahulane "the Archer," depicted as holding an arrow, whose shrine was on the island of Cozumel, Pakoc, "the Frightener," and Hex Chun Chan, "The Dangerous One." The last two were especially gods of the Itzaes of Yucatan. Kac-u-pacat "Fiery Face," carried in battle a shield of fire, Ah Chuy Kak "Fiery Destroyer," Ah Cun Can, "The Serpent Charmer," and Hun Pic tok "He of 8,000 lances," were all divinities of war.

Now God F is pictured much more frequently in the Codex Perisianus than elsewhere, and as we have seen, that manuscript probably came from the district of Peten, immediately to the south of the Yucatec peninsula. We may then dismiss the idea that he is closely associated with the war-gods of Northern Yucatan, who were nothing if not distinctly tribal. In all probability he is a much older warrior deity of the people of the settled district of Peten. It is, however, not a little strange that his body-paint closely resembles that of the Nahua war god Uitzilopochtli.

Xamanek, the North Star, has already been identified with God C, and A with Ahpuch, the death-god. D is evidently a lunar deity. But although we find a moon goddess in Maya myth, Ix-hun-ye, there seems to be no record of a male lunar god. God E, as has been said, is the maize-god, Yum Kaax, "Lord of Harvests." God H is rather puzzling. He is certainly a deity of serpentine character, but that is to be inferred from the serpent-skin mark upon his forehead. I believe him to be a variant or surrogate of Itzamna, one of whose minor names was Lakin Chan, "the Serpent of the East," by which he seems to have been popularly known.

All this goes to show that while we can safely identify several of the gods of Schellhas' list with the known figures of the Maya pantheon, others cannot be equated at present with any known Maya divine figure. A (Apuch), B (Kukulcan), C (Xamanek), E (Yum-Kaax), G (Kinich-ahau), K (Itzamna), and M (Ekchuah), can reasonably be regarded as identified with the names bracketted, almost beyond dispute. The rest remain uncertain or unknown.

It is not that the Maya pantheon has not many other deities besides these embraced by the alphabetic gods of the manuscripts. The names of many other Maya gods are known to us, only we are either unaware of their outward appearance, or the circumstances of their descriptions do not tally with the pictorial forms of the

gods in the three Maya manuscripts. Of Ixtab, the goddess of suicides, we know that she was also a goddess of ropes and snares for wild animals, and therefore probably had a textile significance originally. She seems to be pictured in some of the manuscripts. Cum Ahau "Lord of the Vase," or of the Rains, we may, perhaps, identify as a phase of Itzamna. Zuhuy Kak, "Virgin Fire," appears as a patroness of infants, and Zuhuy Dzip, is a species of Maya Diana, a divine huntress of the woods. Ah Kak Nech was the deity of the domestic hearth, and Ah Ppua and Ah Dziz, were divinities of fishermen.

Lesser departmental deities and caste gods abounded. Acan was the god of intoxication, resembling the pulque gods of Mexico. Ix Tub Tun, "She who spits out Precious Stones," was the goddess of workers in jade and amethyst, and bears a marked likeness to a Japanese goddess who similarly ejects precious stones. Cit Bolon Tum was a god of medicines, and Xoc Bitum a god of song. The Maya, to their honor, had also a god of poetry, Ab Kin Xoc or Ppiz Hiu Tec, and Ix Chebel Yax was the first inventress of colored designs on woven stuffs.

We labor, then, under the dual disability of a lack, almost unparalleled, of early descriptive sources and the impossibility in many cases of collating Maya divine figures as described in myth with the pictured and sculptured representatives of the pantheon. This would seem to imply that Maya mythology, as we know it, belonged to a different age from the manuscripts. The sculptured representations of the gods, too, may represent a period apart from either. We can, by means of the dates which usually accompany them, fix approximately the period of the sculptured forms, which so far as Guatemala is concerned, are obviously older than the manuscripts or myths, dating roughly as they do from about 300 to 600 A. D. It would then seem to be indicated that we should take as a basis these sculptured forms, consciously collect and collate both those of Guatemala and Yucatan, and fix their dates as far as possible, grouping them in chronological order. This task accomplished, a careful comparison of their forms should be made with those in the manuscripts, a process which should result in the approximate fixation of the dates of these paintings, and enlighten us more convincingly regarding their spheres of provenance. Then, with increased confidence, it might be possible to apply the mythic descriptions to this better charted and chronologically fixed picture-gallery of the Maya gods. In some such system of examination and research, in

the writer's estimate, resides the best hope for an increased knowledge of the Maya pantheon.

Until further research of this nature has been given to the subject, it will, however, be wise to retain Schellhas' alphabetical nomenclature, which our present knowledge and data has by no means outgrown.