SCIENCE:

A BRIEF STUDY OF THE PALENQUE TABLET.

IN order to assist students in their efforts to interpret the inscription on this tablet, I notice here some discoveries which may possibly lead to valuable results in this direction. However, to bring this article into proper limits and avoid the necessity of introducing tables and diagrams, I must take it for granted that the readers have access to my "Study of the Manuscript Troano" and to Dr. Rau's "Palenque Tablet" and refer them thereto. The only figures referred to are that of the entire tablet, and the photograph of the right slab, both in Dr. Rau's work. A copy of the first will also be found in my "Study MS. Troano." I will also have occasion to refer to the Calendar Table V, p. 11, and the diagram of Dr. Rau's figure of the tablet, on p. 199, of the "Study MS. Troano."

The order in which the characters on the tablet are to be read is as given in the same work, pp. 200–201. That is to say, the columns are taken two and two, commencing at the top and reading from left to right across the two until the bottom is reached, then going to the top of the next two which stand to the right. Thus it will be seen that the character at the bottom of the second column will be followed by the top character of the third column, the bottom one of the fourth by the top one of the fifth. As we will have occasion to refer only to the columns at the sides, it is unnecessary to refer to the central portion.

The particular point to which I wish to call attention at present is that the particular manner of reckoning the days of the month, found in some of the series of the Dresden Codex, notably the extensive one on Plates 46–50, is found on this tablet. The peculiarity of this method is that the day of the month is counted not from the first of the given month, but from the last of the preceding month; thus, the fifteenth day of Pop, beginning the count with the first, will, according to this method, be numbered 16.

I will now refer to the tablet to confirm this statement.

Turning to the right slab and to our diagram (Study MS. Tro., p. 199) we observe that the columns of this part are taken in pairs thus: ST, UV, and WX. The character 10 S is 11 *Lamat*. The little loops by the side of the outer 1 of the 11 are apparently of no significance, being left as mere ornamental supports or protection to the single numeral. I will not stop at present to give the proof of this, as the student will soon learn it for himself. Moreover, it is evident that they form no part of the numerals and hence have no bearing on the question now before us. The character 10 T, immediately to the right of the 11 *Lamat* above mentioned, is beyond question, 6 *Xul*. The two characters taken together are to be interpreted "11 Lamat the 6th day of the month Xul." Turning now to our Calendar Table (Study MS. Tro , p. 11) we see that Lamat is never the 6th day of the month according to the usual method of counting, but is the fifth day of the month in the Kan years. If the count were to begin with the last day of the preceding month it would then be the 6th, as here numbered.

Characters 17 T and 1 U form another pair. The first (17 T) is unquestionably 8 Ahau, but the month symbol, 1 U, has not been determined; however, the number attached to it is clearly 13. Ahau is never the 13th day of the month but is the 12th in Muluc years. Here, again, counting from the last day of the preceding month agrees with the numbering on the tablet. Symbols 17 U and 17 V are 5 Kan the 12th day of the month — ? — (probable Kayab as the character contains the phonetic elements *k* and *b*). Kan is the 11th day of the month in *Ix* years, therefore the same method of numbering is followed in this instance.

We notice a few other examples briefly.

Symbols 5 X and 6 W. — The first 1 Ymix, the second the 4th day of the month — ? —. Ymix is the 3d day of the months in the Cauac years. We refer next to 10 X and 11 W; the first is 7 Kan, the second the 17th day of the month — ? — (possibly *Uo* or *Mol*. Kan is the 16th day of the month in Muluc years. Attention is called next to 8 T and 9 S; where the first is 1 Kan and the other the 2d day of the month, — we have suggested may be Kayab. Kan is of course the first day of Kan years, but is never the second day of a month. In 7 U and 7 V we have 3 Ezanab, the 11th day of the month Xul. Ezanab is the 10th day of the month in Muluc years.

Turning now to the left slab of the tablet we notice the following, though with less assurance than in reference to those named, as here we have no photograph. The first two we call attention to are 16 A and 16 B, the first of these is 1 Ahau, the second the 13th day of the month Xul (?). Ahau is the 12th day of the month in Muluc years. Next 3 D and 4 C. The first of these is 4 Ahau, the second the 8th day of the month — ? — (probably Cumhu). Ahau is the 7th day of the month in the Ix years. Next 9 C and 9 D. Here the first is 13 Ik, the second has no number attached to it, hence we can only guess that it is a month symbol; nevertheless, it is a curious coincidence that precisely the same method of notation is found once on plate 48 and twice on plate 50 of the Dresden Codex, no number-symbol being attached where the day is, according to this method of counting the 20th of the month. As Ik is the 19th day of the month in the Kan years, it would, according to this method, be counted the 20th, and no number-symbol would be given. I think it possible that the symbol 9 D is that of the month Pop. The