SCIENCE

VOL. 75 FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 1932 No. 1941

SCIENCE: A Weekly Journal devoted to the Advancement of Science, edited by J. MCKEEN CATTELL and published every Friday by

THE SCIENCE PRESS

New York City: Grand Central Terminal
Lancaster, Pa. Garrison, N. Y.

Annual Subscription, $6.00 Single Copies, 15 Cts.

SCIENCE is the official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Information regarding membership in the Association may be secured from the office of the permanent secretary, in the Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D. C.

THE MAYA LUNAR COUNT[1]

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MY subject concerns certain aspects of the indigenous calendar of the Maya Indians of Middle America. This time count consisted of named days and months associated with short number series which, in principle, is closely similar to our own calendar. The dates thus obtained, analogous to our term "Tuesday, the 29th of December," were located, during the earlier period of their civilization, in a count of days from an hypothecated starting point in a manner identical to the system used by European astronomers when they compute in terms of "Julian days." Because of this "Long Count" the many dates recorded in stone during the earlier period are accurate to within a day with relation to one another. For further details concerning the mechanics of this calendar, I refer you to a number of publications.[2]

An outline of the history of the remarkable Maya civilization has been obtained in terms of this native calendar. Because of the influence which this group of people exerted both directly and indirectly upon the majority of the indigenous civilizations of the New World it is of great importance that the Maya calendar be expressed in terms of the European calendar. The problem is to determine the numerical con-

[1] Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section H—Anthropology, American Association for the Advancement of Science, New Orleans, December 29, 1931.

[2] S. G. Morley, "An Introduction to the Study of the Maya Hieroglyphs," Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, Bulletin 57, 1915; H. J. Spinden, "The Reduction of Mayan Dates," Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. vi, No. 4, 1924; J. E. Teeple, "Maya Astronomy," Carnegie Institution of Washington; Contributions to American Archeology, No. 2, Publication 403, pp. 29–115, 1930.