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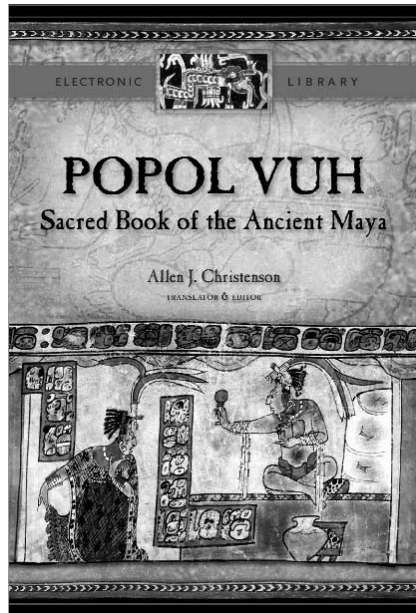
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Maya Origin Story Now on Searchable CD-ROM

The Popol Vuh, an epic poem that tells the creation story of the Maya, will soon be available in a searchable database published on CD-ROM by the Maxwell Institute's Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART). Prepared by Allen J. Christenson, the database incorporates his recently published edition and translation of the Popol Vuh. The database offers the first-ever publication of a complete set of images of the earliest manuscript of the Popol Vuh, kindly provided by the Newberry Library in Chicago.

Fully searchable, the *Popol Vuh CD-ROM: Sacred Book of the Ancient Maya Electronic Database* links the text to related images of plants, animals, Maya art and architecture, and maps. It also includes a high-resolution scan of the Newberry Library's entire Popol Vuh manuscript. Christenson provides a literal English translation and a free, or nonliteral, English translation that better communicates the flow of the narrative. It also includes a Spanish translation and two K'iche'-Maya versions, one in the older romanized K'iche' script and the other in modernized K'iche'. An audio file allows users to listen to the Popol Vuh in the K'iche'-Maya language out loud. The introduction



and copious footnotes provide historical and cultural context for the Maya culture and the Popol Vuh text itself. The University of Texas Press will distribute the *Popol Vuh CD-ROM* beginning in March 2007.

Christenson, an associate professor of humanities, classics, and comparative literature at BYU, has designed this CD-ROM for scholars as well as for anyone interested in Maya culture or world literature. But he particularly prepared it with the K'iche'-Maya people of Guatemala in mind. Though the Popol Vuh was composed by members of the Maya nobility soon after the Spanish Conquest in the early 16th century, it is based entirely on records dating to pre-Columbian times. Unfortunately, most modern K'iche' Indians have not had the opportunity to read their culture's most important ancient document. Expressing enthusiasm for the project, Guatemalan officials and educators have requested multiple copies.

With its fully searchable electronic format, hundreds of linked images and explanatory footnotes, and Christenson's up-to-date translations, the *Popol Vuh CD-ROM* promises to aid both scholars of Maya studies and the people of Guatemala in understanding the mythic origins of the Maya people. ■

Mary and Elisabeth Topic of Museum of Art Lecture

As part of the ongoing Museum of Art lecture series on the life of Christ, S. Kent Brown, director of FARMS, addressed the topic "The Birth of the Savior" on January 17. Drawing from Luke 1 and 2 and studies on life among ancient Jews, he focused on Mary and Elisabeth, whose lives are only faintly sketched in the scriptures.

Emphasizing the importance of foreordination, Brown began by reviewing scriptural prophecies about Mary. He noted that Book of Mormon prophecy offers more details about her than Bible prophecy does, such as her hometown and even her name. Although Elisabeth appears more indirectly in scriptural prophecy, her positive influence on her son is discernible in the prophecies about John the Baptist. For example,

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