

Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius

Guide based on:

Evelyn Fishburn & Psiche Hughes, *A Dictionary of Borges*

Various reference books.

Uqbar Arabic for 'the greatest': an imaginary land situated vaguely in Asia Minor and mysteriously referred to in only one copy of the *Anglo-American Cyclopaedia*.

Ramos Mejía A part of Buenos Aires in which the rich had weekend houses containing an English colony. It is now an industrial suburb.

Anglo-American Cyclopaedia Many pirated and mutilated editions of the ninth and tenth editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* were printed in America, but none has been found with the title 'Anglo-American Cyclopaedia' or published in New York in 1917, as stated by the narrator of 'Tlön...'. The 1902 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, of which the 'Anglo-American Cyclopaedia' is said to be a facsimile, consists of 35 volumes. Lab. 27 (35): the story's alleged vol. 46 is obviously fictitious; yet this apparently fantastic occurrence seems to reflect, in part at least, the hazardous history of real encyclopaedias. In private conversation with the present writers, Borges maintained that he owned a copy of the untraceable 'cyclopaedia'.

Encyclopaedia Britannica Borges, attracted to the claim that encyclopaedias embrace the totality of human knowledge, as the word implies, owned a set of the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 29 volumes (1910-11), the last edition to have been published in Britain. The tenth edition (1902-3), said in 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' to be the original of the piratical *Anglo-American Cyclopaedia*, is a reprint of the 24 volumes of the ninth edition plus 11 supplementary volumes, one containing new maps and one a comprehensive index to the whole work. The 20 volumes mentioned as circulating in the USA in about 1824 are probably the sixth edition of 1823. In 1824 these were reprinted with six supplementary volumes.

Bioy Casares, Adolfo (1914-)

A distinguished Argentine novelist, short-story writer and critic. [...] Bioy was a close friend and co-author of Borges, and they published several satirical works under the joint pseudonyms of H. Bustos Domecq, B. Suarez Lynch and B. Lynch such as *Seis problemas para Don Isidro Parodi* (1942), a parody of detective fiction, and *Crónicas de Bustos Domecq* (1967). Bioy married Silvina Ocampo, who was also a friend of Borges. The three together compiled an *Anthology of Fantastic Literature* (1940) and developed the theory and practice of fantastic literature in close collaboration.

Justus Perthes A German publishing house founded by Justus Johann Georg Perthes in Gotha in 1785. Its geographical section became internationally famous. In 1863 it first published the *Almanach de Gotha* (in French), a 'statistical, historical and genealogical annual of the various countries of the world'. Lab. 28(4) *Ficc.*14

Gnosticism (Gnósticos) From the Greek *gnôsis*, knowledge: the collective term designating a number of early Christian sectarian doctrines. Because of its emphasis on direct knowledge of God and the secret of salvation, and its adherents' claim to possess this knowledge, Gnosticism was declared heretical by the Church Fathers. For the Gnostics, knowledge meant not rational cognition but a revelatory experience 'transforming the knower himself by making him a partaker in the divine existence' (H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, Boston 1958). The essential feature of Gnosticism was its dualism. God is 'absolutely transmundane', alien to the universe, which he has not created

and does not govern and to which he is as opposed as light is to darkness. The world is the creation of 'lower powers', Archons (rulers), who, though descended from God, do not 'know' God and obstruct knowledge of him. The earth is the domain of the Archons, whose leader is the Demiurge, or World Artificer. It is likened to a prison surrounded by cosmic spheres. Each Archon rules the earth and his particular sphere and bars the passage of souls wishing to escape and return to God. Mirroring the composition of the cosmos is the composition of man, whose origin is similarly twofold, his earthly body being bound by (seven) cosmic spheres, whereas 'pneuma', a spark of dormant divinity, is enclosed in his soul. The aim of Gnostic thinking is to liberate this imprisoned spark through 'knowledge'. Of particular relevance to Borges's work is the Gnostics' use of the labyrinth as a metaphor of a universe encompassing a plurality of worlds. Each section of the labyrinth corresponds to a different world through which the soul loses its way and wanders about, but whenever it seeks an escape 'it only passes from one world into another that is no less world'. Little was heard of the Gnostics after the second century, but their beliefs survived among other heretics, notably the Albigensians in the twelfth century. Lab. 125 (95): because their beliefs implied that Jesus was not the Redeemer of humanity, the Gnostics were looked upon as Antichrist.

Ritter, Karl (1779-1859) A German geographer and professor of history at the University of Frankfurt, author of *Die Erdkunde im Verhältnis zur Natur und Geschichte des Menschen* (Geography and the Study of Nature and History of Mankind). Ritter is regarded as the father of modern geography. There are two editions of his monumental work (1817-18, revised 1822), which has remained incomplete. The book presents the topography of a country as a leading element in its historic development. Lab.28(4) *Ficc.*

Smerdis (Esmerdis) (6th century BC) A Persian prince, the son of Cyrus and younger brother of Cambyses. He was murdered by his brother who was afraid he might usurp the throne during his absence in Egypt. Lab. 29 (5): Gaumata, an impostor claiming to be Smerdis, usurped the throne between 522 and 521 BC. He was deposed and killed by Darius I.

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[...] he was surprised and killed by Darius and his six associates in October 521. His death was annually celebrated in Persia by a feast called the killing of the magian, at which no magian was allowed to show himself (Herod. ~ 79 Ctes. Pers. I5). [from wikipedia]

Tlön One of two regions in an imaginary planet referred to in the literature of Uqbar, the other being Mlejnás. Its description is said to be contained in *A First Encyclopaedia of Tlön*. Eventually material objects from this ideal region begin to invade reality. The nasal sound of 'Tlön' connotes a Nordic atmosphere always idealised in Borges's writings, contrasting with the Arabic sounds of the more earthbound Uqbar. Lab.27(3) *Ficc.*

Haslam, Silas A fictional name, perhaps a tribute to Fanny Haslam, Borges's paternal English grandmother, who is recalled in 'Story of the Warrior and the Captive'. [from Borges dictionary]

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An academic paper titled "Complexity of Two-Dimensional Patterns" by Kristian Lindgren, Christopher Moore, and Mats G Nordahl, cites: "[21] Silas Haslam, *A General History of Labyrinths*. Vienna, 1888." together with real works.

Quaritch, Bernard (1819-1899) An English bookseller and collector first employed by the firm of Bohn. Quaritch started his own firm in Leicester Square and issued multiple catalogues of foreign

books, early publications and rare manuscripts, developing the largest trade in old books in the world. He was the first publisher of FitzGerald's *Omar Khayam*.

Andreä, Johannes Valentinus (1586-1654) A German poet, satirist and theologian who was converted to the Lutheran Church and composed a number of interpretative and didactic works on religion, in Latin and German. Andreä wrote also under the pseudonyms Christian Rosencrutz, Menippus and Florentinus de Valentia. De Quincey (*Collected Writings*, vol. 13, 405-10) alleged that Andreä was the anonymous author of the basic books of Rosicrucianism. According to him Andreä conceived this secret society in an attempt to reform the German people, whom he considered corrupt and evil. He envisaged a body of noble and learned men acting under the direction of a 'most enlightened one', bent on redressing public morality. To attract proselytes, he emphasised that the society was the repository of oriental mysteries and that it had already lasted for two centuries - one reason why he did not claim authorship of the texts. There are strong parallels between the story of Rosicrucianism and the imaginary society of 'Tlönistas': both can be seen as creating 'hrönir', ideal objects which are gradually embodied and become accepted and absorbed into our material world.

De Quincey, Thomas (1785-1859) An English essayist, remembered chiefly for *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821). De Quincey exerted a strong influence on Borges's fiction (see Christ, *The Narrow Act*, NY 1969). Though Borges never wrote specifically on De Quincey, he acknowledged his 'vast debt' to him (*Other Inq.* 89) and often quoted from his collected *Writings*, generally citing the 1889/90 David Masson edition. Lab. 29 (5) refers to De Quincey's statement that the Lutheran pastor Johannes Valentinus Andreä (1586-1654) was the author of an anonymous text from which the community of the Rosae Crucis (Rosicrucians) derived (vol. 12, 405/10). Lab. 149 (118): the 'interpolation' mentioned refers to the description of the City of the Immortals inspired by De Quincey's account of a set of plates by Piranesi. These plates, illustrating the visions of De Quincey's delirium, present images of 'gothic halls' and stairs which reach 'an abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him who should reach the extremity' (vol. 5, 439). The plate called 'The Gothic Arch' from the *Carceri set* may be particularly relevant.

Rosae Crucis (Rosa Cruz) A secret society, named after the emblems of the rose and the cross, which were taken to be symbols of Jesus's resurrection and redemption. Its practices were based on ancient occult beliefs. In the seventeenth century two anonymous books in Germany told the story of a fictitious Christian, Rosencrutz, and of the society he founded. Now generally believed to be by Johannes Valentinus Andreä, they aroused the curiosity of many eminent men, such as Spinoza and Descartes, who tried to meet members of the society. In time societies were actually founded and Rosicrucianism spread to London and later to Vienna, Russia and Poland. Its history seems to provide a perfect example of a Tlönian hrön - an idea which, when believed, materialises.

Carlos Mastronardi (1901 - June 5, 1976) was an Argentine journalist, poet, and translator. [...] As a translator, Mastronardi was mainly known for translating the French Symbolist poets into Spanish. As a poet, although identified personally with the avante garde of his time, he wrote largely in traditional forms rather than free verse, and rejected what he viewed as his contemporaries' excessive use of metaphor.

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Born in Gualeguay, Mastronardi came to Buenos Aires at the age of 19. There he became a member of the Martín Fierro group (a.k.a. Florida group) and an intimate of Jorge Luis Borges, although they disagreed strongly about questions about esthetics and poetry. Mastronardi figures as a minor character in Borges's short story Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius.

Mastronardi led a notoriously nocturnal existence. Writing of Mastronardi in 1986 in the newspaper *El País* (Madrid), Borges said of Mastronardi that "Like Auguste Dupin ... [the detective character created by Edgar Allan Poe] ... at night he went about the streets of Buenos Aires looking for that intellectual stimulus that only can be given by nighttime in a great city." [from wikipedia]

Talcahuano A street in the centre of Buenos Aires containing numerous antiquarian and second-hand bookshops near its intersection with Corrientes.

"**Some small fading memory...**" translated by Reid from: "Algún recuerdo limitado y menguante de Herbert Ashe, ingeniero de los ferrocarriles del Sur, persiste en el hotel de Adrogué, entre las efusivas madre selvas y en el fondo ilusorio de los espejos."

--menguante: diminishing, decreasing

Rio Grande del Sur ('do Sul' in Portuguese) The southernmost state of Brazil bordering Argentina and Uruguay. Lab. 96 (67): an area characterised by smuggling and contacts with neighbouring countries, its prosperity was largely due to the progressive agricultural methods introduced by European immigrants.

Capanga A pejorative term used in the River Plate to designate a bodyguard, or bully's henchman.

Night of Nights (Noche de las Noches) In Arabic, Laylat al-Qadr, 'night of density', 'night of majesty': a night towards the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting, believed to be a holy night in which the Koran descended from heaven via the angel Gabriel. On this night the gates of the heavens open, angels descend to bring greetings to mankind and all prayers are answered - even salt water is believed to become sweet: 'Better is the Night of Qadr than a thousand months' (Sura 97:3). Lab. 51 (25): the one night 'at the middle of the Thousand and One Nights refers to 'the story of the king and his son and the damsel and the seven wezeers'. This, the framework story of a cluster of tales reflecting the original framework story of the entire book, concerns the skilful telling of tales to delay an execution. According to Lane, it starts at Night 567, ending with part of Night 606, and tells of a king who was enraged with jealousy when his favourite concubine alleged that his son had tried to seduce her. He gave orders to his Wezeers to put his son to death, but they, fearing that he would afterwards repent and blame them for not having dissuaded him, tried to divert him from his purpose by relating numerous tales. A similar story is told by Burton concerning a demon, or Ifrit, in Night 602. Borges alludes to this night of self-revelation when the king hears his own story related in one of Scheherazade's tales as 'magic among nights', and speculates on the unlimited possibilities of such interpolated repetitions (see *Other Inq.* 45). Lab. 31 (7) Ficc. 18, Lab. 51 (25) Ficc.

Ibarra, Nestor (1908-?)

A friend and follower of Borges in his Ultraist period, when a preoccupation with language and its etymology led him to indulge in the playful invention of a private language. Ibarra was one of Borges's first translators and an early critic of his work, and published a perceptive interview with him ('Borges et Borges', *L'Herne*, 1969). Lab. 31 (7): the article in the NRF is, of course, apocryphal. Lab. 31(7) Ficc.

Martínez Estrada, Ezequiel (1895-1964) A prolific Argentine writer whose work reflects a deep concern with his country's development. *Radiografía de la Pampa* (1933) describes the changes that took place in Argentina in the early 1930s under fascist rule. *La cabeza de Goliath* (1940) examines the relationship of Buenos Aires to the rest of the country. *Muerte y transfiguración del Martín Fierro* (2 vols, 1948) is regarded as an outstanding work of literary criticism. Lab.39(15) Ficc.

Drieu la Rochelle, Pierre (1893-1945) A French novelist, short-story writer, journalist and essayist, editor for a time of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. He visited Argentina in 1933, when he met Borges and became one of the first critics to recognise his genius. On his return to France he declared: 'Borges vaut le voyage' ('Borges is worth the journey').

Reyes, Alfonso (1889-1959) A Mexican poet and essayist who was ambassador to Buenos Aires 1927-30 and 1936-7. Reyes was a long-standing friend of Borges, who considered him his master in matters of style and often paid tribute to him. As a poet he participated in the 1920s modernist movement in Latin America.

Ex ungue leonem: You may tell the lion by his claws.

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (1646-1716) A German philosopher and mathematician, born and educated at Leipzig, who served as librarian and counsellor at the court of the dukes of Hanover. Leibniz's best-known works are *Theodicy* (1710) and *Monadology* (1714). Lab. 102 (72): in the second book he expands the principle that all substance is made up of an infinite number of spiritual beings, or 'centres of force', known as 'monads'. These are entirely self-contained, in so far as the activity of each excludes that of every other; yet each one mirrors the universe and they are all related by a 'pre-established harmony'. Although Leibniz's monads 'have no windows by which anything can come in or go out', this pre-established harmony makes it possible to infer from the state of any one substance a corresponding state of any other. Thus each monad, combining matter and form, is the microcosm of the whole. Lab. 32 (7) [...]

Hume, David (1711-1776) A Scottish philosopher who, to quote Bertrand Russell, marks, in the history of Western philosophy, the end of the age of reason and the triumph of scepticism. Lab. 32 (8): in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) Hume began by accepting the premises of Berkeley and proceeded to demolish them. Whereas Berkeley affirmed that God's perception maintains reality in existence, Hume speaks of the 'probability' of knowledge, referring to the unreliability of any notion empirically derived from inferences which, he asserts, are neither demonstrative nor demonstrable (Other Inq. 174). Hume claims that we cannot prove the existence of an objective reality, even though we naturally posit it; all we can affirm is the existence of 'bundles of sensations'. Hume denies the validity of causation, saying that though certain objects or events in our past experience have so far always been related, we cannot conclude from this that they will be related in the future or that they are related in unobserved parts. Hume's sceptical conclusion is that the supposition that the future resembles the past is simply derived from habit (*Treatise*, book I, part iii, section iv). Hume's scepticism, which finds a passionate echo in Borges (Other Inq. 104), extends throughout his system to the point where he discards any practical purpose in philosophy except as an 'agreeable way of passing the time': the narrator of *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* at the end of the story also preserves such a sceptical outlook. Lab. 182 (150): Hume's 'remote arguments' can be found in his essay 'On Miracles' where he argues that a phenomenon constitutes a miracle - by definition a breach of a law of nature - only if its 'testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish'. Lab. 32 (8) *Ficc.* 20, Lab. 182 (150) *Aleph*

Berkeley, George (1685-1753) An Irish bishop, exponent of the idealist philosophy and author of, among other works, *The Principles of Human Knowledge*, in which he denied the independent existence of matter. The world, Berkeley maintains, is precisely as we perceive it and does not exist outside our perception: '*esse est percipi.*' Berkeley does not suggest, however, that objects jump in and out of existence, but believes that they are sustained by God's own continuous perception of them. Borges, who quoted Hume's aphorism that Berkeley's arguments

are completely irrefutable and completely unconvincing (*Disc.* 67), acknowledges his debt to Berkeley: 'What are all the nights of Scheherazade compared to one argument of Berkeley?' Lab. 39 (15); Berkeley and others planned a new university in America, and the University of California at Berkeley was later named after him.

Xul Solar (1887-1963) The pseudonym of Alejandro Schultz, a friend of Borges in his youth. A linguist and painter, Xul illustrated some of Borges's early works: *El tamaño de mi esperanza* (1926), *El idioma de los argentinos* (1928) and *Un modelo para la muerte* (1946), written in collaboration with Bioy Casares under the pseudonym B. Suarez Lynch. Xul Solar was known for his searching and original mind; he devised a language called 'Neocriollo' to which some aspects of the invented language of Tlön show marked similarities. Certain preoccupations of 'Pierre Menard' also seem to coincide with Xul's. Lab. 33 (8): there is no reference in the English translation.

Spinoza, Baruch (1632-1677) A Dutch Jewish philosopher, an admirer and follower of the rationalism of Descartes and author of one of the most comprehensive systems of philosophy ever composed. His unorthodox views caused consternation among the Jews of Amsterdam who, in 1655, fearful of their position in a Christian environment, felt compelled to excommunicate him. Spinoza set out to deduce the nature of reality using a system conceived entirely through reason. His philosophy, expanded in *Ethics*, is essentially pantheistic and explains the universe as one substance or independent unity which must be its own cause. This belief led him to deduce that, since it comprises the whole of nature and its creation, this substance must be equivalent to God. Hence he concluded that God does not transcend the universe but is an impersonal force immanent in nature, an assertion that shocked his contemporaries. In *Ethics* Spinoza distinguished substance from its attributes and modes. Lab. 33 (9): substance, nature or God is infinite and manifests itself through an infinity of attributes, of which only two, thought and extension, are known to man. It is also divided into an infinity of finite modes (defined as 'parts' of the whole and ultimately indivisible from it), of which human beings are an example. For Spinoza there exists an exact correspondence between the 'modes' of one 'attribute' and the modes of any other, which makes the human mind a part of God's intellect, as the human body is a part of the physical system of nature. Though part of the absolute intellect, human thought can experience the absolute only through intuition, an insight Spinoza terms 'the intellectual love of God'; total knowledge is impossible since only two of God's attributes are known to man. Spinoza tries to achieve this intuition of God (or knowledge, or truth) through a logically deduced system of metaphysics in which arguments are advanced like geometrical theorems. Lab. 112 (81): this particular characteristic of Spinoza's method of exposition highlights the significance of the compass in 'Death and the Compass'. Borges was attracted to the idea of Spinoza 'creating' God in his elaboration of a rational system of metaphysics and wrote two poems to this effect. The juxtaposition of reason and intuition is a distinguishing feature of Borges's own writing as exemplified in his often used formulation '*álgebra y fuego*' ('algebra and fire').

Russell, Bertrand (1872-1970) An English mathematician and philosopher. Russell's *Principia, Mathematica* (1910-13) develops the principle that pure mathematics is an extension of logic and that every authentic mathematical statement can be translated into a logical one. The most important stage of his philosophical thought is represented by *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914) in which, having discarded both the idealist and realist positions, he replaces 'physical' entities (whose nature is problematical) with logical constructions which we feel to be intelligible. Thus we can avoid reference to the 'unobservable', except as something unknown which we can postulate. This theory is further illustrated in *Analysis of Mind* (1921). Later, Russell rejected this programme, though other philosophers continue to work in his tradition. Lab. 64 (38): in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, Russell dedicates a chapter, 'The Problem of Infinity...', to the historical analysis of

philosophical questions associated with the concept of infinity. He presents the four arguments against motion produced by Zeno of the Eleatic school, which are based on the principle that time and space are infinitely divisible. The second of Zeno's arguments is the contest of Achilles and the tortoise, which Borges refers to in this story and elsewhere. Lab. 68 (42): Borges's reference to Russell in connection with 'the curious discourse of Don Quixote on arms and letters' is a humorous allusion to the philosopher's political position. A pacifist and a conscientious objector during World War I, Russell was sent to prison for campaigning against conscription.

Petito principii The logical fallacy of assuming the conclusion in the premises; literally: begging the question

Reductio ad absurdum (Latin: "reduction to absurdity"), in logic, a form of refutation showing contradictory or absurd consequences following upon premises as a matter of logical necessity. [from: Encyclopedia Britannica]

Schopenhauer, Arthur (1788-1860) A German philosopher of the post-Kantian school, whose best-known books are *The World as Will and Idea* (1818; 2nd edn. 1844) and two volumes of essays entitled *Parerga und Paralipomena* (1851). Schopenhauer is the philosopher most quoted by Borges (about fifty times) in his stories and criticism. Solitary and retiring, Schopenhauer was relatively unnoticed until the publication of his essays, which brought him worldwide recognition. His philosophy is based on the principle that all that exists is a manifestation of the Will and is comprehensible only through the constructs of man's intellect engendered by the Will itself, such as time, space and causality. Lab. 53 (28): the reference to Schopenhauer's belief in a uniform absolute time follows: time, being like the rest of experience a representation of the Will, is not subject to variations connected with individual and particular states. Schopenhauer insists that through the constructs of our mind only the appearances of the world are revealed to us, and not its reality. Brodie 85 (103): with reference to Schopenhauer's 'disbelief of history', it follows that history, resting on the category of time, belongs also to the world of phenomena. On this point Borges adds that, since for Schopenhauer 'the universe is a projection of our soul', 'universal history lies within each man' (Other Inq. 58). Outside the world of phenomena, only the reality of the self is knowable to man, as being part of the primary essence of all things, the Will. Lab. 99 (70): this, however, eliminates the concept of individuality, as suggested in 'I am all other men': all individuals are but a form or manifestation of the Will which moves and organises everything from the blind impulses of inorganic nature to the 'rationally' guided actions of man. Lab. 175 (143), Brodie 88 (106): yet, because man is the Will's prime manifestation, it can be said paradoxically that no human action is involuntary (since it is also a manifestation of the Will). Man can escape from the control of the Will, partially through the uplifting effect of the arts and, totally, by complete abnegation of the self through asceticism.

Erfjord A fictional character who appears in several stories: in Lab. 39 (14) as Gunnar Erfjord, one of the inventors of Tlön; in Lab. 128 (98) as Erik Erfjord, a Danish Hebraicist; and in Lab. 153 (122) simply as Erfjord, a Christian theologian. Lab. 39 (14) *Ficc.* 29, Lab. 128 (98) *Ficc.* 174, Lab. 153 (122) *Aleph* 40

Hinton, James (1822-1875) An English surgeon, theologian, philosopher and member of the Metaphysical Society. Accepting from idealistic philosophy the doctrine that existence is limited by consciousness, Hinton tried to save the essence of Christianity by claiming the presence of a 'Universal Spirit' in the 'actuality' of things. His system acquired the name of 'actualism'. Lab. 39 (14) *Ficc.* 29, Lab. 120 (90) *Ficc.*

Ouro Preto The Portuguese for 'black gold', a city in Brazil south east of Central Minas Gerais in the Serra do Espinaco. Founded in 1700 during a short-lived gold rush, it later decayed and was preserved as a living museum of the eighteenth century. Lab.39(14) *Ficc.*

Dalgarno, George (c. 1626-1687) A Scottish philologist who devoted himself to the creation of a universal language and worked on perfecting a 'dactylogy', or language for the deaf and dumb, based on a universally acceptable ideographic system which seeks to express ideas through signs. Lab. 39(15) *Ficc.*

Orbis Tertius In Tlön, Uqbar, 'Orbis Tertius' the name given to a proposed encyclopaedia to be written in one of the languages of Tlön, relating to an imaginary planet, or to what our planet will become under the influence of Tlön. The Latin name stands in marked contrast with the Nordic 'Tlön' and the Arabic 'Uqbar'. Explanation of it in terms of what we call the 'third world' seems unacceptably out of context; a more satisfying theory would be that it refers to a view in later Gnosticism that an *orbis tertius* existed as an intermediary between the spiritual *orbis primus* and the inferior, or casual, *orbis alter*. The attempt to resolve the duality of *orbis primus* and *orbis alter* is reflected towards the end of the story of 'Tlön', where it is said that the penetration of our world with 'objects' from Tlön would eventually result in an 'Orbis Tertius'. Another explanation may be found in the Copernican heliocentric system, according to which Mercury and Venus are the first and second planets orbiting round the sun and Earth the third. Lab.27(3) *Ficc.*

Laprida Street (Calle Laprida) A street in the fashionable district of Palermo, in the Barrio Norte.

Poitiers A university city in west central France, important in French history from the Middle Ages to the sixteenth century. Joan of Arc was interrogated there in 1429. Lab. 40(16) *Ficc.*

Faucigny Lucinge, Princess of An Argentine friend of Borges, née Lidia Lloveras, who married Prince Faucigny Lucinge and went to live in Paris. Salvador Dali in his *Diary of a Genius* refers to her death with regret, together with the death of aesthetic movements such as surrealism and existentialism.

Cuchilla Negra A hill range on the borders of Brazil and Uruguay. Lab. 41(16) *Ficc.*

Amorim, Enrique (1900-1960) An Uruguayan novelist related to Borges by marriage. He spent many years in Buenos Aires and formed part of the socially committed school of writers known as the Boedo Group. Borges considered his novel *El Paisano Aguilar* (1934) a closer description of *gaucho* life than Guiraldes's more famous *Don Segundo Sombra*. In 1934 Borges visited Amorim's home in Salto. See Sant'Anna. Lab. 41(17) *Ficc.*

Tacuarembó Guarani for 'tall slender cane': a river in central Uruguay which gives its name to a city and department. Lab. 41 (16): it rises not far from the Brazilian border near Sant' Anna. Lab. 41 (16) *Ficc.* 31, Lab. 96 (67) *Ficc.*

Milonga A popular tune, song or dance in Argentina. Borges wrote *milongas*, most of which are published in the collection 'Para las sets cuerdas' (*O.P.* 297) and some appear in English in *Sel. Poems*, 245-9. Lab.41(16) *Ficc.*32

Browne, Sir Thomas (1605-1682) An English author and physician. Browne was a student of Platonism, the belief that the world is the imperfect reflection of a perfect system in which all things have a purpose and are worthy of observation. His style abounds in quaint expressions, latinate words and neologisms. His *Religio Medici*, the expression of a mind at once credulous and sceptical,

was regarded by his contemporaries as a bundle of contradictions, and it was put on the Papal Index. A Spanish translation was published in *Sur*. Lab. 43 (18): the idiosyncratic quality of Browne's writing is clearly revealed in *Urn Burial*, considered the most imaginative and elegant of his books. Lab. 154 (123): the remark about the Histrionic gospels must surely be apocryphal. Lab. 43 (18) *Ficc.* 34, Lab. 154 (123) *Aleph*

Urn Burial A treatise by Sir Thomas Browne (1658), written in the form of a discourse inspired by the discovery of ancient sepulchral urns in Norfolk. Following the discovery of this unsuspected 'subterranean world', Browne praises the custom of commending man's ashes to the anonymity of an urn 'not much unlike the Urns of our nativity', as opposed to the fallacy of monuments and the 'folly of posthumous memory'. The discourse is illustrated with a variety of classical examples and learned references. The writing is elegant, rich, highly rhythmical and poetic. Together with Bioy Casares, Borges translated into Spanish chapter 5, which was published in the literary magazine *Sur* (January 1944, 15-26). Lab. 43 (18): the term Quevedian refers to the Latinate structure of Browne's sentences and the striking association of images and conceits which make *Urn Burial* an eminent example of baroque style. Lab.43(18) *Ficc.*