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ARCHEOLOGICAL

Relics in
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FOREWORD



LARGE part of the civilized world is already aware of many of the attractions held out by Mexico to foreign visitors in the way of climate, magnificent scenic panoramas, luscious fruits, a wealth of flowers, beautiful birds and strange animals, and the proverbial hospitality and courtesy of her people. A fact, however, not so generally known is that Mexico is richer, probably, than any other country on earth in archaeological ruins and the handiwork of races that in remote ages appeared, acted their roles in the tragedy of human existence and vanished.

The purpose of this booklet is to draw attention to a selected very few of the more prominent pyramids and temples built in those ancient times out of the many which have been excavated in recent years. In this extremely abbreviated story of pre-Spanish Mexico considerable space has been devoted to the discoveries at Copilco and Cuicuilco on account of the undisputed antiquity of the relics found and their great scientific interest.

The excavations at Cuicuilco were done under the personal direction of Byron Cumming, M. A., L. L. D., Sc. P., Professor of Archaeology at the University of Arizona. His labors and discoveries are told in detail in his absorbing booklet "Cuicuilco and the Archaic Culture in Mexico", published by the University.

The ruins so briefly and sketchily mentioned herein and the origins of the various peoples who have successively inhabited Mexico are fully covered in a most interesting volume "Archaeological Tours from Mexico City", by R. H. K. Marett, obtainable of local book sellers.

Other publications which treat extensively of the ruins touched upon and which have been consulted in the preparation of this pamphlet are

"Las Excavaciones del Pedregal de San Angel", by Dr. Manuel Gamio.

"Estratigrafía y Extensión Cultural de la Civilización Teotihuacana", by Ing. José Reygadas Vértiz.

"El Estado de México", by Horacio Zúñiga.

"Terry's Guide to Mexico", by T. Philip Terry, F. R. G. S. (1925).

Grateful acknowledgement is also extended to the Secretaría de Educación Pública and the Museo Nacional for the assistance kindly rendered in the way of maps and photographs.

Archaeological Ruins in Mexico



THE most fascinating study to which the human race is devoting itself today is that of man, himself. Where and how and when he originated is an impenetrable mystery that has been the cause of more discussion, exploration and disagreements than probably any other phase of modern science. Our savants appear to agree that the earliest beginnings of the existing nations of the earth were formed by humans who migrated there from some other section of the globe; but the spots whence such migrations originated have not, in many cases, been identified.

If as many believe, the primates all came down from one parent stem there are several parts of the world in which the species **Homo Sapiens** might have found conditions fulfilling its individual requirements for development. But, while the intersection of the meridian and parallel which mark the position of the Garden of Eden may never be logged, more knowledge is being gained each year of the stages of human evolution intervening between the stone hammer and war club throwers of remote geological ages and the Big Stick wielders of today.

Mother Earth, the greatest and most jealous of all repositories of man's unwritten history, is being forced to disgorge secrets that have been held inviolate in her bosom for countless centuries and from disinterred skeletons, pottery and objects made of stone and metal in bygone ages our scientists are piecing together fragmentary bits of the life story of peoples dead for thousands of years and an inkling is had of their physical characteristics, their means and modes of living, of their culture and occupations.

The average lay mind is always interested in the discoveries made and the theories advanced by archaeologists and for this reason the explorations and excavations which have been carried on in Mexico during the past several decades have held the attention and have appealed to the imagination of the thinking people of the civilized world. These investigations have brought to light archaic ruins, human remains and household implements older by ages than any which have been discovered elsewhere on the American continent, and are proving of intense interest to scientists, students and laymen alike.

Mexico has supported a succession of races with differing languages, customs and degrees of culture extending down from the dawn of human existence to the twentieth century, but for the purpose of this extremely condensed relation they may be divided into four principal groups, the Archaic or prehistoric races, the Mayas, the Toltecs and the Aztecs. It seems to have been established that these various races were formed at different epochs by the amalgamation, or intermingling, of separate tribes existing at those periods, the experience and accomplishments of each of these contributing to the forward movement and uplift of the merged peoples. Each succeeding combination of tribes built upon what had been left by their predecessors so that the traces of the departing race are often found covered by the operations of the incoming possessors of the land.

The Archaic period may be considered as that to which pertain the very earliest inhabitants of Mexico and extending backward from about 2000 B. C. to the beginnings of human occupancy. Where the people came from that covered Mexico for those eons of ages may never be definitely known. If, as has been suggested, the peninsula of Yucatan, was the cradle of the human race, then these people were indigenous. If there is any foundation for the story of Atlantis they may have come from the East and in this connection might be considered the statement made by Prescott, quoted in "Terry's Guide to Mexico", under "Michoacan", to the effect that the Tarascans have a tradition which precisely accords with the biblical account of the flood, Noah and the ark and the bird which was released and returned with a twig in its beak.

If there is anything in the theory that what is now Europe and Africa once formed a solid continent with North and South America they may have been human refugees carried away when the western hemisphere sailed off on its own. That there is a connection between the inhabitants of Mexico of certain periods and those of the valley of the Nile is hardly to be doubted; the similarity of their monuments and pyramids and their arrangement with regard to astronomical bodies and events appears too striking to have been mere coincidence, however with this difference — that the Egyptian edifices were monuments to human vanity whereas those of Mexico were expressions of worship, and of fealty to some powerful divinity, brooding deep in the sapphire Mexican skies.

Again, could it be, as some have thought, that these Mexican primitives were, in part, stragglers who by some mysterious means made their way hither from Oceanica? Is there any relationship between the handsome, carefree, comparatively fair-skinned Polynesians and the strikingly beautiful, blue-eyed, laughter loving Zapotec women of southern Oaxaca whose ancestry goes back for centuries into the unknown past? **Quién sabe?**

There remains to be considered the most generally accepted hypothesis that these Archaic people came down through North America by way of the Aleutian Islands and the Behring Straits, having been forced to migrate from Asia for reasons not satisfactorily explained; possibly on account of climatic changes or over population. To this day the topography of the region between northwest Alaska and north east Asia is in a condition of unrest. Islands still appear and disappear. At one time in past geologic ages there may have been a nearly or quite continuous land passage from one continent to the other. There may have been an ice bridge connecting the two, or, these primitive adventurers might have worked across from island to island in canoes.

Scientists of the Smithsonian Institute have been working for years on this problem, prosecuting their investigations from far north of the Arctic Circle down through Canada and the United States to the east coast and lower Mississippi Valley. They are checking up human remains, arrow heads, utensils and camp fire ashes gone cold thousands of years ago which have been found mingled with bones and parts of animals such as the mastodon, the giant elk, the prehistoric horse and camel, long since extinct.

It is a far cry from those immigrants to the ancient but highly civilized races of southern Mexico who accurately foretold eclipses and other astronomical phenomena and whose calendar closely corresponded to the present year when that of the old world was completely in error.

Modern men of science are tracing the progress of these Asiatic hordes, step by step, finding new traces of a connection between the North American indian races, with their mongoloid characteristics, and the inhabitants of the eastern Himalayas and other orientals.

Evidence so far brought out indicates that the region now comprising Canada and the United States once supported some 1200 aboriginal tribes speaking at least that many dialects, and at the same time there were 400 other tribes roaming about in Mexico. These tribes consisted of 300 to 400 persons, none having any fixed abode. They were accompanied by dogs; they knew how to build fires, to construct canoes, were familiar with the bow and arrow and with shields for personal protection.

With the passage of time they increased enormously in numbers although probably not greatly in culture. As they spread to the east and west coasts of America the gradual narrowing of the continent diverted them southward. They extended into the fertile sections of Mexico with its agreeable climate, many of them coming to rest permanently in the tropical and sub-tropical sections of the country. Others continued on through Central America and into the northern portion of South America. Asiatic origin of Central American aborigines seems to be indicated by the fact that certain indian tribes of that section possess features which make it difficult to distinguish them from present day Japanese.

As to when this presumed Asiatic exodus took place there is a wide divergence of opinion, also it is a matter of conjecture as to how long these waves of old world primitives continued their easterly flow. It seems probable, however, if this solution of the problem is the correct one, that the initial movement began from 10,000 to 20,000 years ago.

In connection with this theory, one may digest the fact that Chinese jade ornaments of great antiquity and bronze idols of undisputed Chinese origin have been unearthed in various parts of Mexico. The exquisite feather work of Mexican indians is said to have its counterpart in the Orient.

These primitive nomads remained in various parts of Mexico for an incalculable time, but at all events long enough to evolve from a grade above primeval savages into agricultural peoples having permanent homes — the first suggestions of the dawn of American civilization flickering on the horizon.

A large area south of Mexico City called the Pedregal is a rocky waste formed in ancient times by successive lava flows from volcanic vents with which that portion of the Valley of Mexico is studded. The molten mass covered a huge territory and cooled into a solid stone cap, many feet in thickness, that hermetically sealed everything with which it came in contact, preserving records of that distant time to be revealed to modern investigators.

Concerning the age of this lava field we quote (a) "Mr. Hyde, a geologist from New Zealand employed by the Mexican Government to study the Valley of Mexico in 1921-22, stated that the erosion in the beds of the streams flowing over the lava above Tlalpan convinced him that the Pedregal flow took place some 5,000 B. C. or about 7000 years ago".

(a) "Cuicuilco and the Archaic Culture of Mexico", by Byron Cumming, M. A., L.L.S., Sc. P.

COPILCO



OME score of years ago quarrying operations on the edge of the Pedregal near Villa Obregón (former name San Angel) uncovered various objects of pottery and stone including flat stones and mortars for grinding corn such as are in use in Mexico today.

These discoveries led to the extension of tunnels underneath the lava cap resting on the erstwhile valley floor. Graves of Archaic men were found containing skeletons in good state of preservation.

These have been left exactly as found and may be seen today in their original positions just as they were buried by their fellows anywhere from 7,000 to 10,000 years ago. Other objects found are shown in glass cases in these subterranean chambers.

Regarding these discoveries Cumming says (b) "The people and the artifacts disclose a culture that the Mexican archaeologists class as Archaic and which according to universal classification belongs to the early neolithic culture of the stone age. . . . It is evident that before the eruption of the Xitli a numerous population occupied this portion of the Valley; and if the cap of lava could be removed the ruins of houses and villages would undoubtedly be disclosed".

To reach Copilco, drive southwest in Av. Insurgentes, which crosses the Paseo de la Reforma adjacent to the National Railways station leading into Calzada Nueva which follow to Villa Obregón. Once there anyone will explain how to reach the Pedregal, less than half a mile from the San Jacinto Plaza.

(b) "Cuicuilco and the Archaic Culture of Mexico", by Byron Cumming, M. A., L. L. S., Sc. P.

COPILCO

(Archaic)

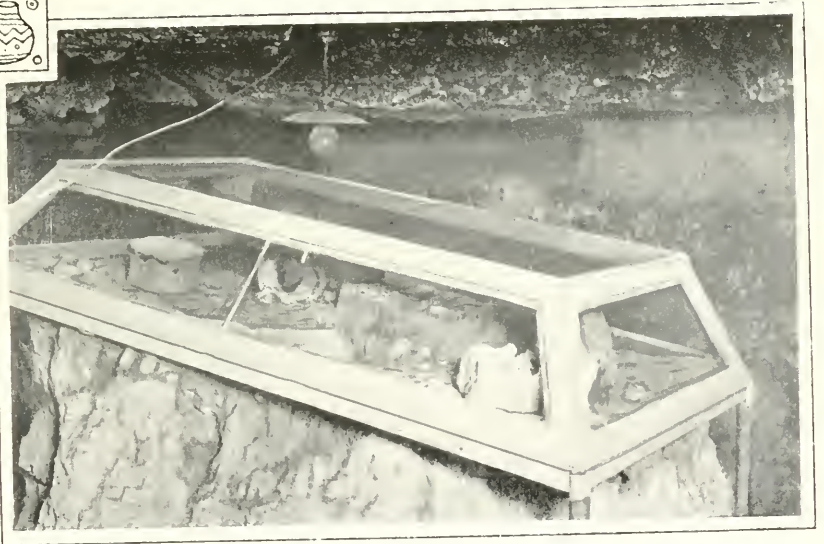


Photo by T. Palomar.

Showing the manner in which the skeletons found here are being preserved. This spot was obviously a burial ground of an archaic race. The human remains were not disturbed but the surrounding earth was cut away leaving each individual on the upper side in the position in which he was placed at the time of interment. The bones are believed to be contemporaneous with the pyramid of Cuicuilco. Obviously, they antedate the volcanic eruption of Xitli, 5000 B. C.



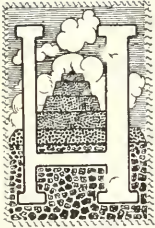
Photo by T. Palomar

COPILCO (ARCHAIC)

The photograph of the face of the lava wall gives an idea of the tremendous volume of the molten rock and metal which flowed over the country side between San Angel and Tlalpan 5000 years before the dying gladiators and the early Christian martyrs furnished entertainment for the aristocracy of Rome.

The entrance to the tunnels which have been excavated beneath the lava cap is shown, and in which were discovered human remains older by countless centuries than those found at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

CUICUILCO



IGHLY important discoveries at Copilco encouraged the Mexican Department of Anthropology to explore along the edges of the Pedregal for further Archaic remains. Their efforts were rewarded by one of the really stupendous finds of the twentieth century. A small mound in the center of a huge lava field to the west of Tlalpan attracted attention. The removal of a layer of debris disclosed the top of a temple of unknown antiquity that had been engulfed in the molten flood which completely surrounded the structure, ascending to perhaps one half, or more, of its height. The hardening lava effectually imprisoned this captive for a later inspection. Much of this lava has now been blasted away showing the structure down to its foundations.

The damage to the temple caused by the rivers of lava that swirled about it, the deterioration of the portion remaining exposed to the elements for seventy or more centuries, and the blasting operations in removing the lava, have modified its original outlines. It still remains, however, as the sole landmark of a dead and gone people whose history is known only to their creator.

Cumming describes the original temple as a truncated cone, circular, 369 feet in diameter, the top platform about 60 feet above the base. The outer walls were made of large chunks of unhewn lava, the inner space being filled with small chunks of lava, sand and clay, interstices filled with pebbles and sand and packed down with dark hard clay. No mortar of any kind was used in this structure. Later this was covered over by a wall ten feet thick at the base and six feet at the top; the old wall was repaired and carried higher.

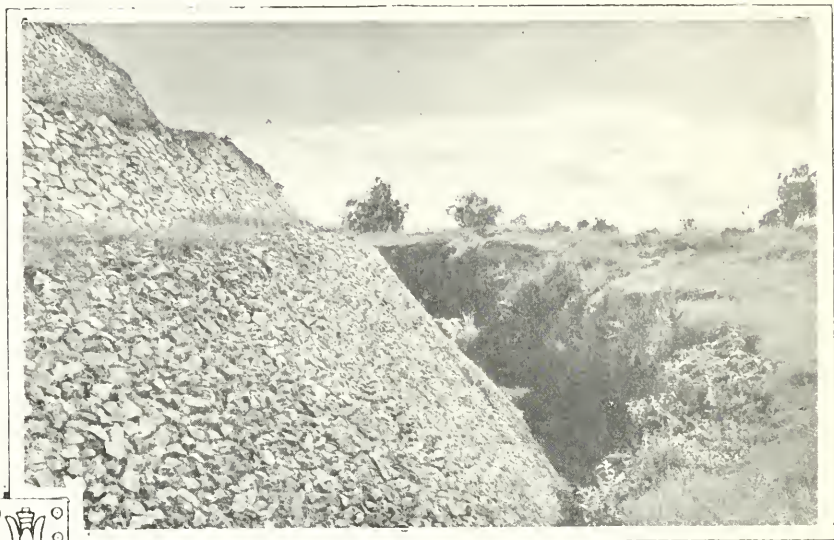
The whole temple was enlarged a second time and the diameter increased to 387 feet. The lava used was older than that of the Pedregal.

After a through study of the various strata of volcanic ash, pumice, surface soil and other deposits Prof. Cumming estimates the period at which Cuicuilco fell into ruins as about 8,500 years ago.

While it is neither beautiful nor impressive in appearance, this "pyramid" of Cuicuilco is intensely interesting as being the oldest man made structure on the face of the earth so far as is known. From evidence gathered to the present, scientists have arrived at the conclusion that it was thousands of years old when the pharaohs began their building operations on the banks of the Nile.

It will be found about a mile west of Tlalpan on the road to the Peña Pobre paper mill and can be reached in half an hour by motor from the city.

The Pyramid of Cuicuilco



Photos by T. Palomar.



The Pyramid of Cuicuilco

(Archaic)

Modern men of science who have made an exhaustive study of this construction, the materials of which it is made, the manner in which it was put together and its environment have arrived at the conclusion that its age approaches 9000 to 10,000 years.

The lava by which it is surrounded and by which it was partially engulfed swept around the pyramid 7,000 years ago, and left a deposit over that section from 15 to 30 feet in thickness. The lava blocks of which the temple is composed are from a much earlier flow.

The chief interest centering in Cuicuilco is not in its architectural beauty, nor in its dimensions, but in the fact that, so far as is known, this pyramid is the oldest building done by human hands that exists on the entire continent of America today.

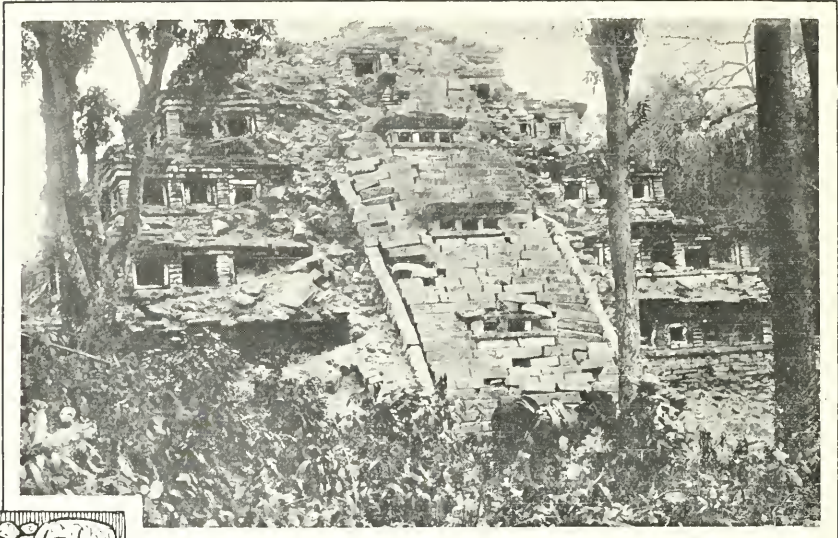


Photo Courtesy of "Excelsior"



El Tajín. (Totonac)

The ruins of El Tajín, lying near the Gulf coast north of Papantla in the State of Veracruz, are the remains of what was, very probably, the most beautiful of the temples erected by the Totonac race.

These people populated the central valleys of the territory north of the Gulf of Mexico and followed the large rivers southward, continuing on the coast line down through what is now Tamaulipas, the valley of the Pánuco, Veracruz and onward to Central America.

The gigantic labor of cleaning and restoring this pyramids was undertaken in 1934 by the Government, during the course of which a huge statue of the Rain god, Tlaloc, was unearched. An almost unprecedented drouth was broken by copious rains which followed immediately the excavation of this immense idol.

A fine plaster model of "El Tajín" as originally built may be seen in the National Museum, second floor.

THE MAYAS



THE period following the Archaic epoch in Mexico is an exceedingly complex and mystifying situation somewhat resembling a picture puzzle with all of the key pieces missing. Several important races, whose origins are lost in the mists of antiquity, reached a high degree of civilization and left monuments and indelible remains attesting to their cultural development which are nothing less than amazing to the archaeological student. As these enter into the story of Toltec evolution they will be briefly mentioned here.

There were the Mayas who occupied some 250,000 square miles of territory including the Yucatan peninsula, Tabasco, Chiapas and a large portion of Central America and who built the beautiful cities since partially uncovered throughout that whole region. One of the most remarkable is Oaxactum with an astronomical observatory. This place bears a date which has been fixed as A. D. 68. Maya culture of the period centered around the northern part of Guatemala but was dramatically terminated some 500 years later when the entire Mayan race abruptly abandoned these wonderful cities with their magnificent temples and monuments, leaving them to decay and crumble while they betook themselves again to the jungles. No adequate explanation has so far been offered covering this exodus which has no counterpart in the world's history outside that of Mexico. The seat of Mayan culture reappeared later in Yucatan, where were constructed the cities of Uxmal, Chichen Itza and others manifesting an even more elaborate architectural and sculptural development than those of Guatemala.

These later Mayan tribes were warlike peoples and were pretty well immersed in their favorite occupation until toward the thirteenth century when a powerful leader merged them into one empire and during the ensuing peaceful two centuries there was a great revival of the arts. This empire dissolved in the fifteenth century; tribal wars and pestilence completed its disintegration and rapid degeneration of the Mayas followed.

With the air service now maintained between Mexico City and Yucatan, numerous well preserved remains of the magnificent structures erected by the Mayas are easily accessible.

The Totonac race inhabited what now forms the State of Veracruz and part of Puebla and spoke a language similar to the Maya tongue. They were exceedingly skillful architects and sculptors as is evidenced by their pyramids excavated at El Tajin near Papantla in Veracruz and at Yohualichan in Puebla, both very difficult of access. Some archaeologists ascribe the parenthood of the Toltecs and Mayas to this race.

The Mixtec and Zapotec were two races which in archaeological times inhabited a large portion of the State of Veracruz and Oaxaca and the wonderful structures erected and decorated by them at Monte Alban and Mitla attest to their skill and advancement in art. They may be conveniently visited from the city of Oaxaca.

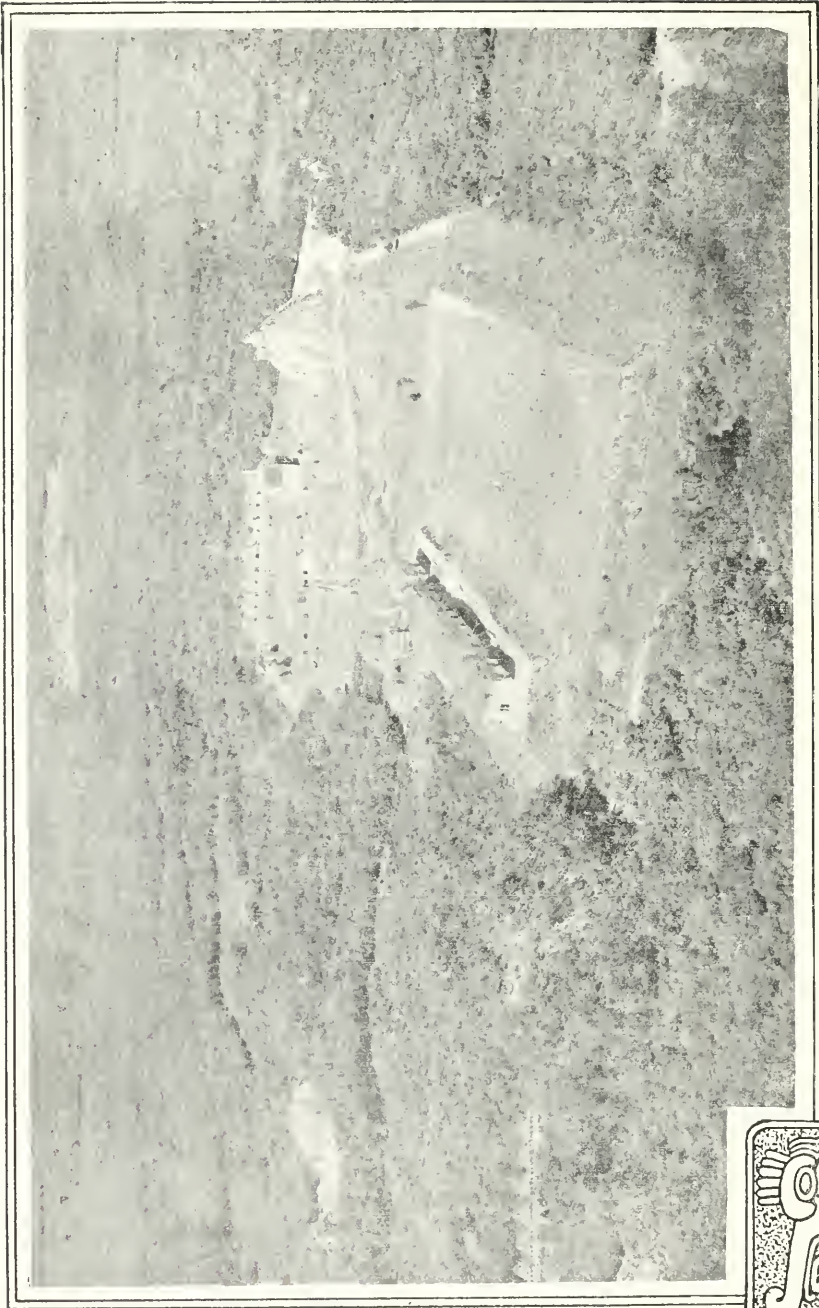


Photo Cia. Mexicana Aerofoto.

UXMAL. (Maya Second Empire)



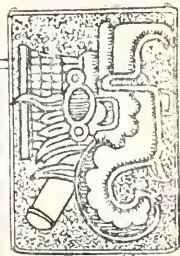
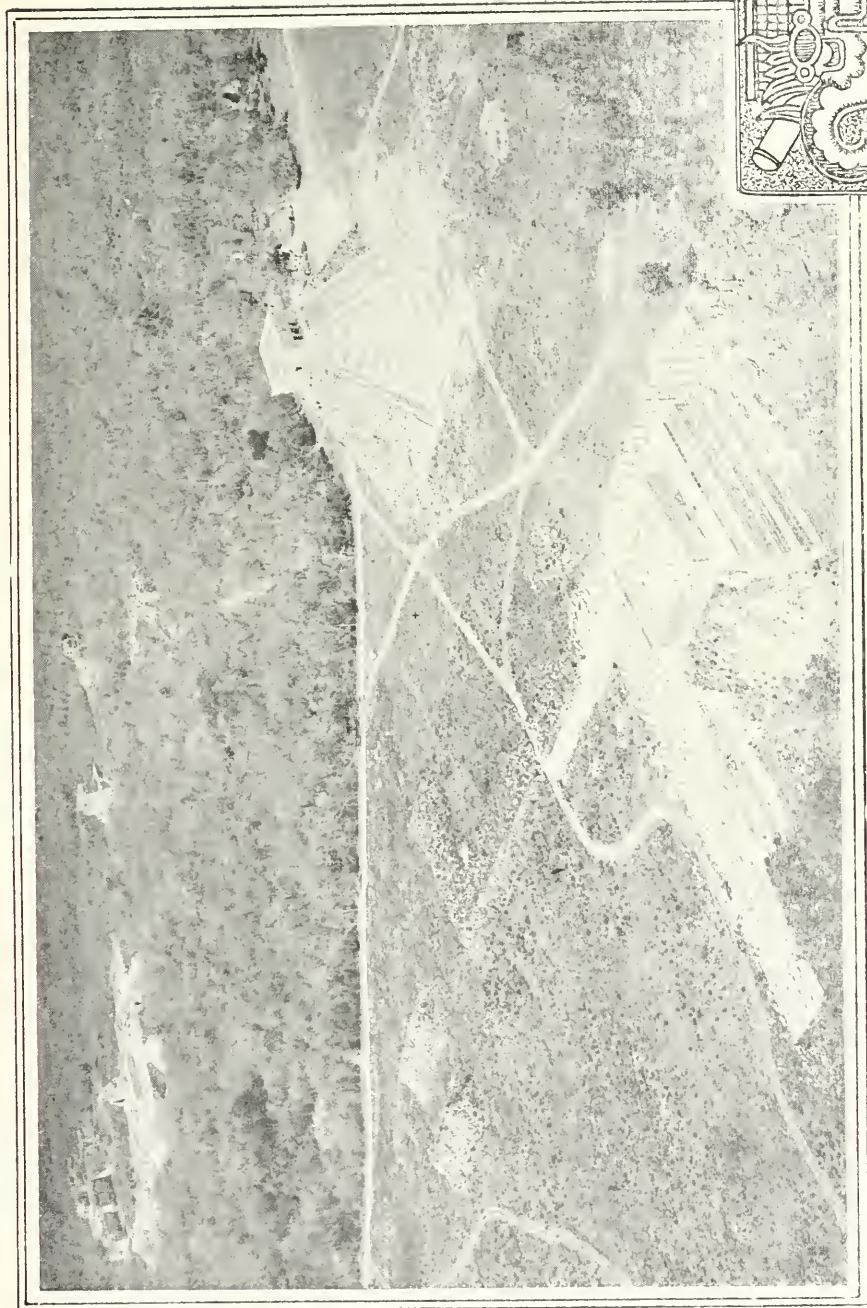


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CHICHEN-ITZA (Maya Second Empire)

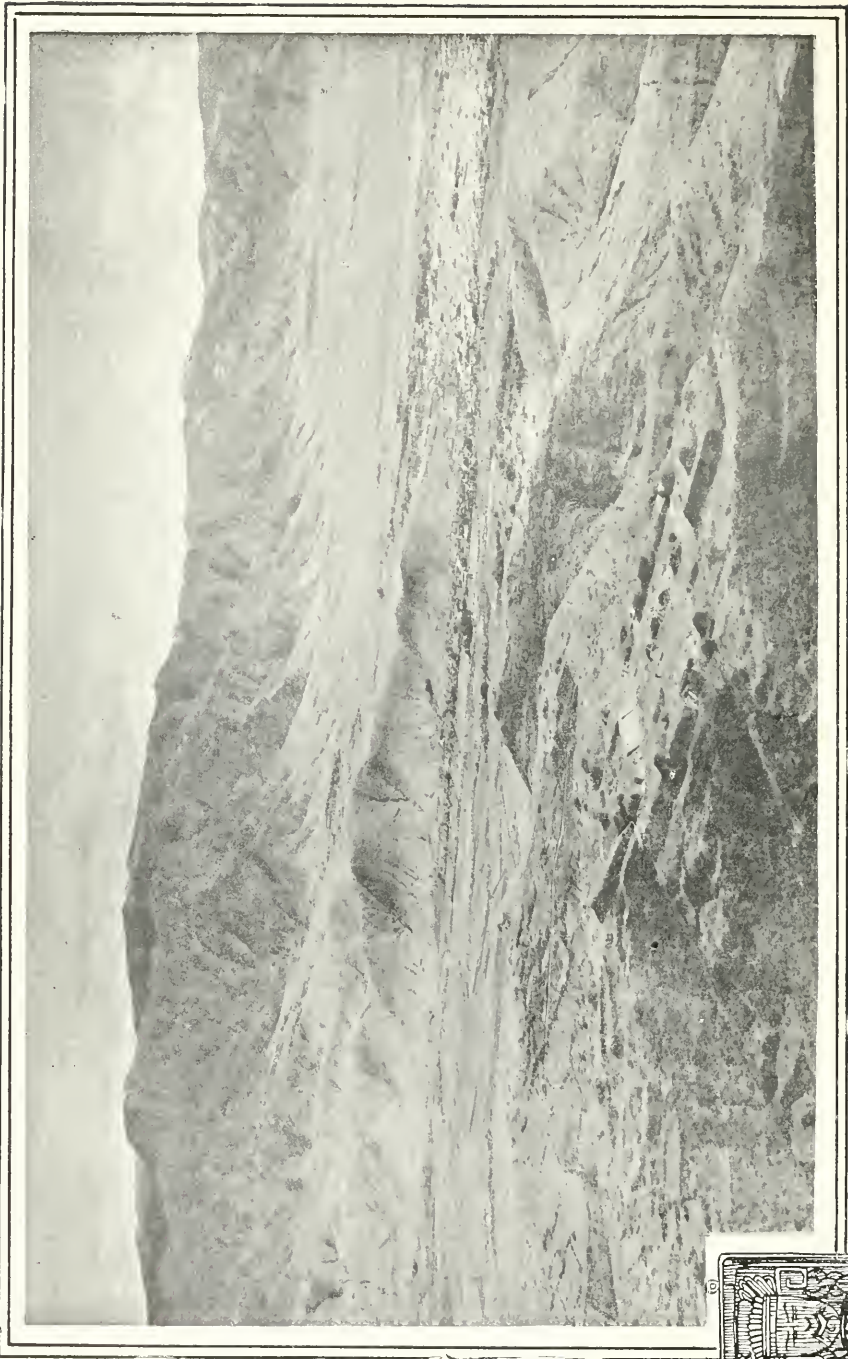


Photo Cir. Mexicana Aerofoto

MONTE ALBAN (Mixtec-Zapotec). City of Oaxaca in the distance to the right.





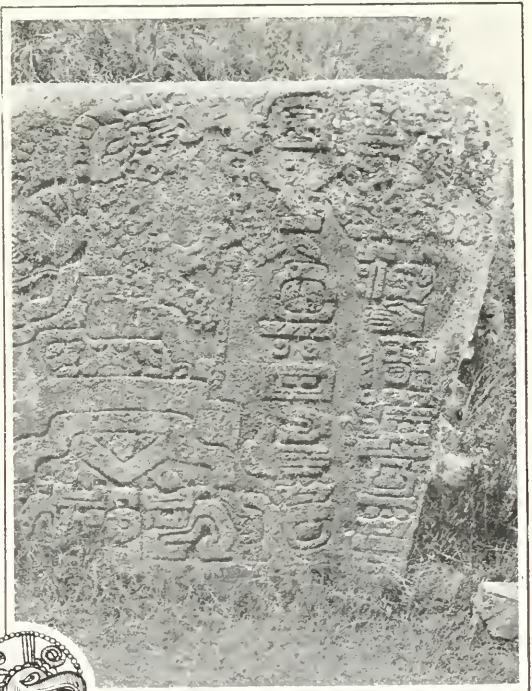
Photos L. Márquez

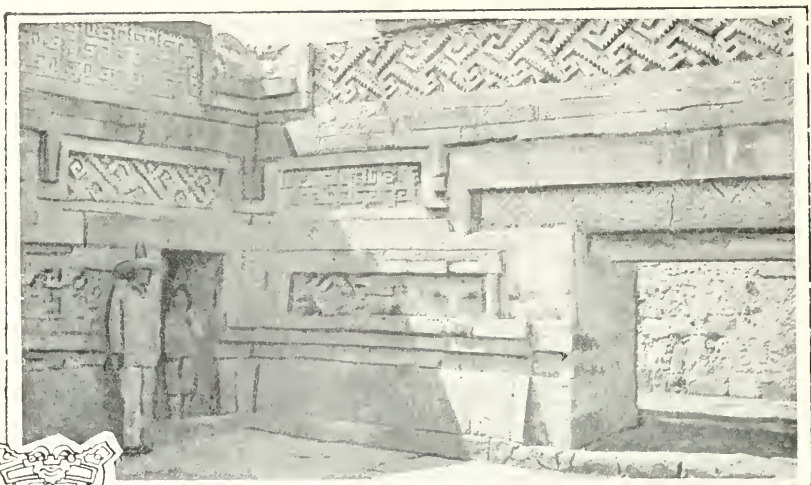
MONTE ALBAN (Mixtec - Zapotec)

Above - Hieroglyphics
cut in stone.

Below - Stone slabs lining
the entrance to one of the
tombs, sculptured in bas-
relief.

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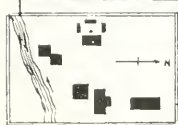
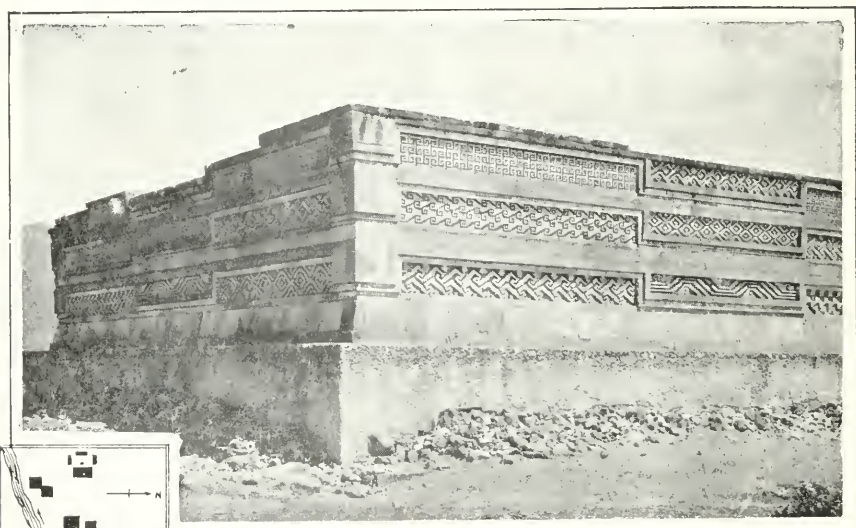




Photos. H. Brehme

Mixtec-Zapotec ruins at Mitla, near the city of Oaxaca.

The relief work on the walls is mosaic and consists of cut pieces of extremely hard stone inlaid in the stone surface underneath. So true and perfectly done was the inset work that this wonderful labor has withstood the elements for these many centuries. Besides the fact that these stones were cut and sunk into the other stone below the remarkable point about the mosaics is that pieces of the same pattern are exactly of the same size. Note the beauty and absolute precision of the designs.



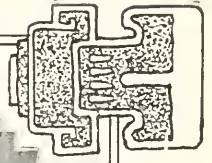
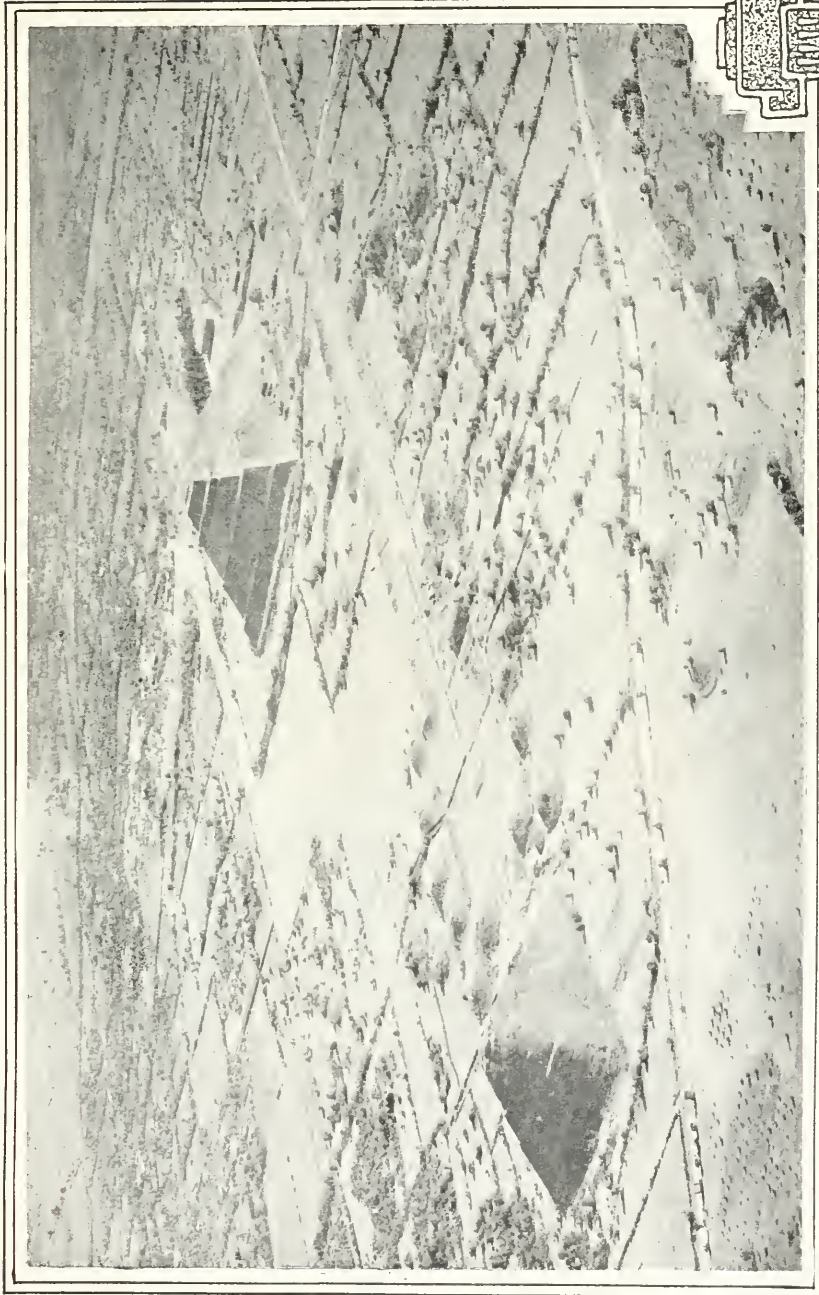
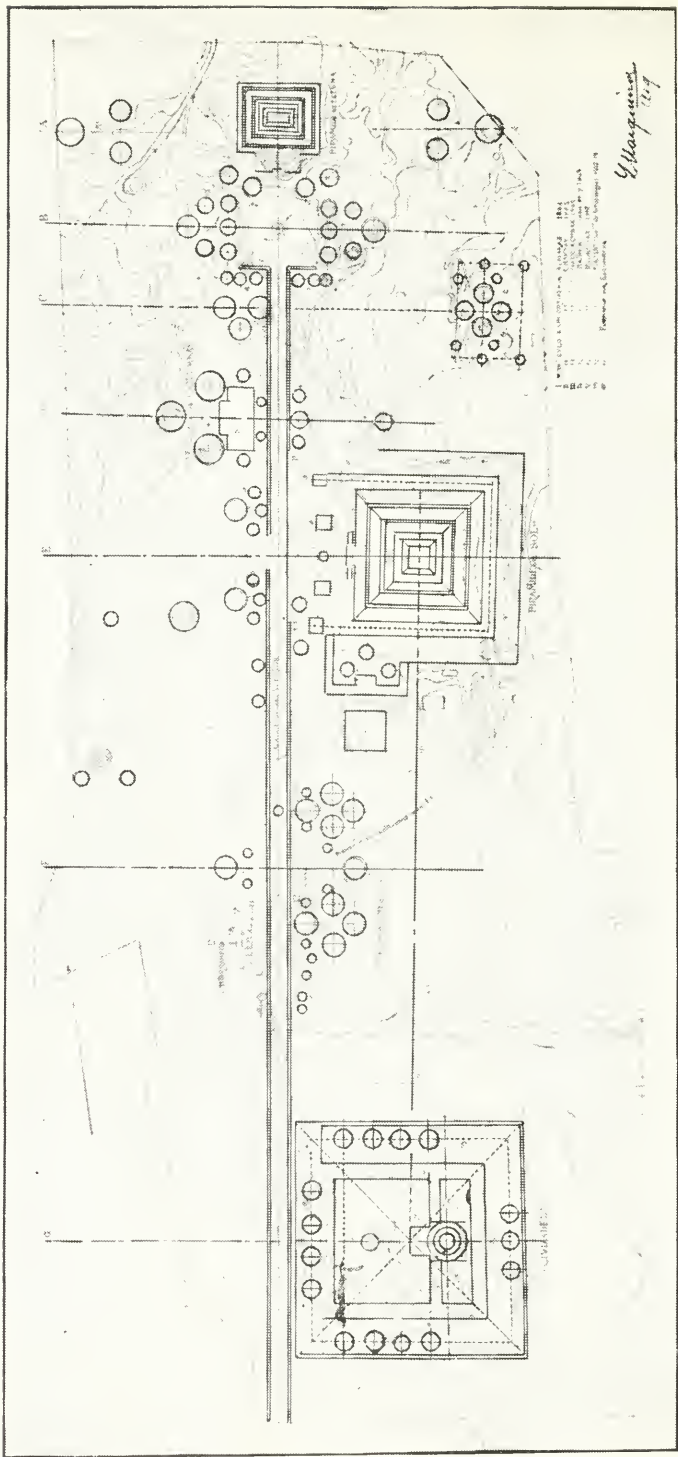


Photo Cia. Mexicana Aerofoto
Aereo view of Teotihuacan showing the pyramid of the Moon and various mounds in the left foreground awaiting excavation.



From "La Población del Valle de Teotihuacán": Courtesy of Secretaría de Educación Pública.

Pyramid of the Moon

Pyramid of the Sun

Citadel

THE TOLTECS

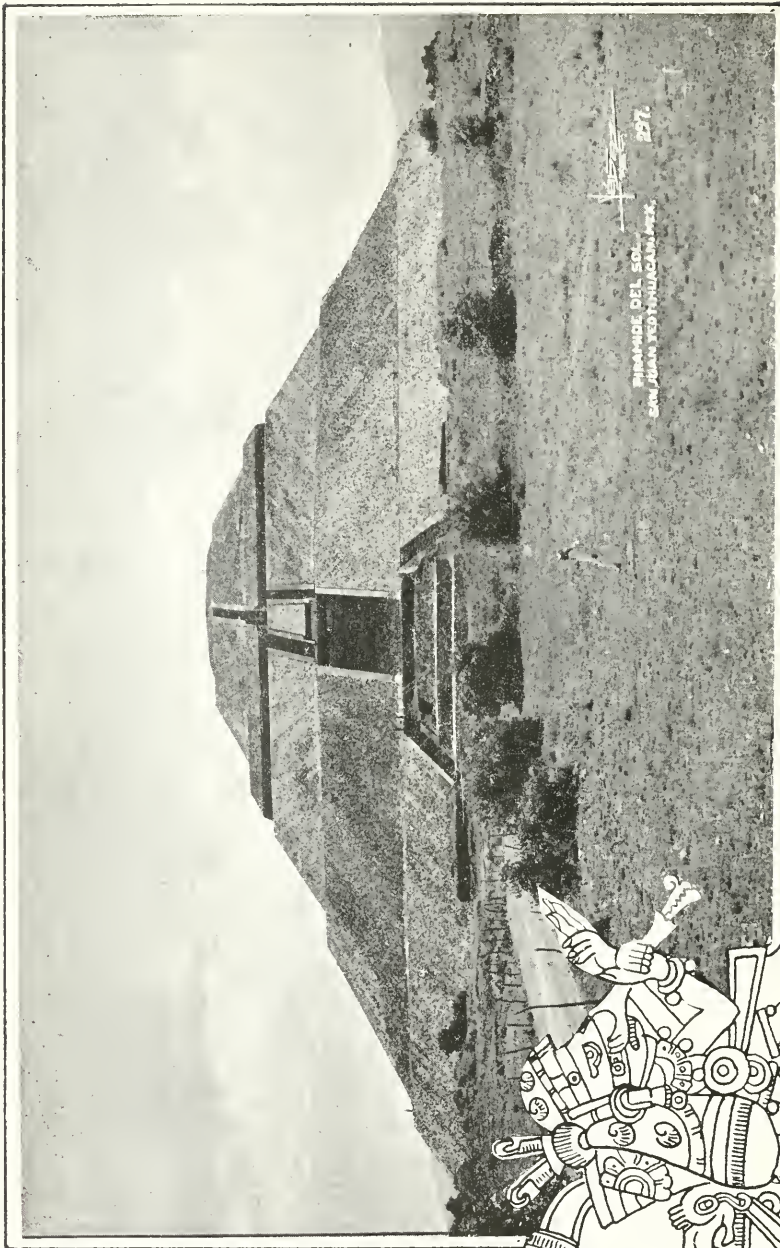


WHILE the origin of these interesting races just mentioned, with their different languages and stages of cultural progress and the time they appeared on the seat of action in Mexico are only matters of speculation, the impress made by them upon what is now accepted as the Toltec civilization is quite manifest, showing that at various periods there was more or less intimate contact among them with reciprocal benefits.

The people referred to as the Toltecs are believed to have come from the vast regions to the north of the Valley of Mexico, once inhabited by wandering tribes speaking the Nahuatl tongue and who subsisted upon the fruits of the chase. In time, these hunters and fishers were forced south by the increasing pressure from above until their constantly extending southerly drift encountered the Archaic race already entrenched below the Tropic of Cancer who, naturally, resisted encroachments by foreigners on their homes and cultivated fields. In time, however, the human driftwood from the north gathered sufficient strength by sheer weight of numbers to burst through this opposition and they settled, like swarms of locusts, over the fertile cultivated lands so long coveted.

The newcomers are accounted to have been men of action with intelligence broadened and intellects sharpened by their previous mode of existence and struggles for a livelihood. They were not slow to recognize the advantages of agriculture and carried on with great vigor the beginnings already made by the conquered race in the way of soil cultivation as well as in the erection of temples for the celebration of religious rites and sacrificial ceremonials. A new civilization had arrived, destined to play a part of stupendous importance in the unwritten history of the world's greatest enigma — Archaeological Mexico.

The most notable relics of the Toltec civilization are those of the archaeological zone of San Juan Teotihuacán where the ruins of a vast prehistoric city have been uncovered by the Mexican Government and are being carefully preserved under its supervision. This zone lies 47 kilometers to the northeast of Mexico City and is easily reached over a good motor road in an hour and a half. It occupies a huge rectangle containing about eight square miles, the immense temples, pyramids and extensive courts which completely occupy this area being arranged according to a well studied and splendidly executed design. The accompanying drawing, done to scale, indicates the grouping of the principal buildings and shows the straight broad avenue, known as the "Highway of the Dead", which runs the full length of the zone. One of the amazing features of Teotihuacán is that the construction of the buildings which compose it, and their arrangement, indicate a knowledge of astronomy most extraordinary in a people of that remote epoch. A brief mention may be made here of the outstanding structures.



PIRAMIDE DEL SOL.
SAN JUAN TEOTIHUACAN, MEX. 197.

Photo by Yañez

PYRAMID OF THE SUN (Toltec), Teotihuacan. The core of this pyramid was built by one of the Archaic races, period unknown. The center was built over and enlarged by subsequent dwellers of the region. The age of the City of Teotihuacan is estimated at 2500 to 3000 years. The pyramid of the Sun is said to have been covered originally with gleaming red pyrites and was a gorgeous spectacle.

The Pyramid of the Sun. The most imposing relic of archaeological interest thus far uncovered and one of the largest artificial mounds in America. It is nearly square at the base, measuring approximately 765 by 725 feet, with a height of nearly 220 feet and covering an area of about 13 acres. It is built on five terraces, each of the series of ascending walls sloping inward toward the top, giving a most pleasing and symmetrical general effect. Before the work of excavation was begun the entire structure was covered by a heavy layer of earth and debris made substantial by a considerable growth of vegetation. For this and other reasons the original construction had deteriorated somewhat but has been cleverly restored.

As is the case with most of the temples and pyramids so far uncovered in Mexico, it was found that the center of this pyramid was built by an earlier and more primitive race and that it had been added to and built over at various times until it attained its present form and dimensions. The supposition is that the earliest beginnings of this immense building were of the same epoch as the one at Cuicuilco, previously mentioned, by reason of the similarity of the materials used.

A steep stairway on the western side, consisting of more than 200 steps in five flights, conducts one to the summit where once existed a small shrine for the worship of the Sun god, Tonatiuh. **The Pyramid of the Moon** is smaller than that of the Sun by about one-third and is rather less than 150 feet high. It has not been entirely excavated but the work, so far as it has progressed, shows that its style of construction is very similar to that of its more pretentious neighbor. As to which of the two was constructed first there is some difference of opinion.

The Temple of Agriculture lies between the two pyramids and west of the Highway of the Dead. It was constructed at several different periods and very interesting frescoes ornament the walls. These may be seen by applying to the caretaker.

The Temple of Quetzalcoatl. Wind god of the Toltecs, the spirit "who was sent, it was told, by the Sun to the inhabitants of Tula upon a mission of education, and who revealed to the people the calendar, the picture writing, and the sciences". (a)* It may be that this god Quetzalcoatl symbolized in some way the uplift the Toltecs had received in their contacts with more advanced peoples.

The name of this deity is derived from two Nahuatl words — "Quetzal" — a beautiful species of pheasant now rare but still found in Guatemala, and "Coatl" a very wise serpent; the combination therefore indicating a being of exceeding beauty and great intelligence.

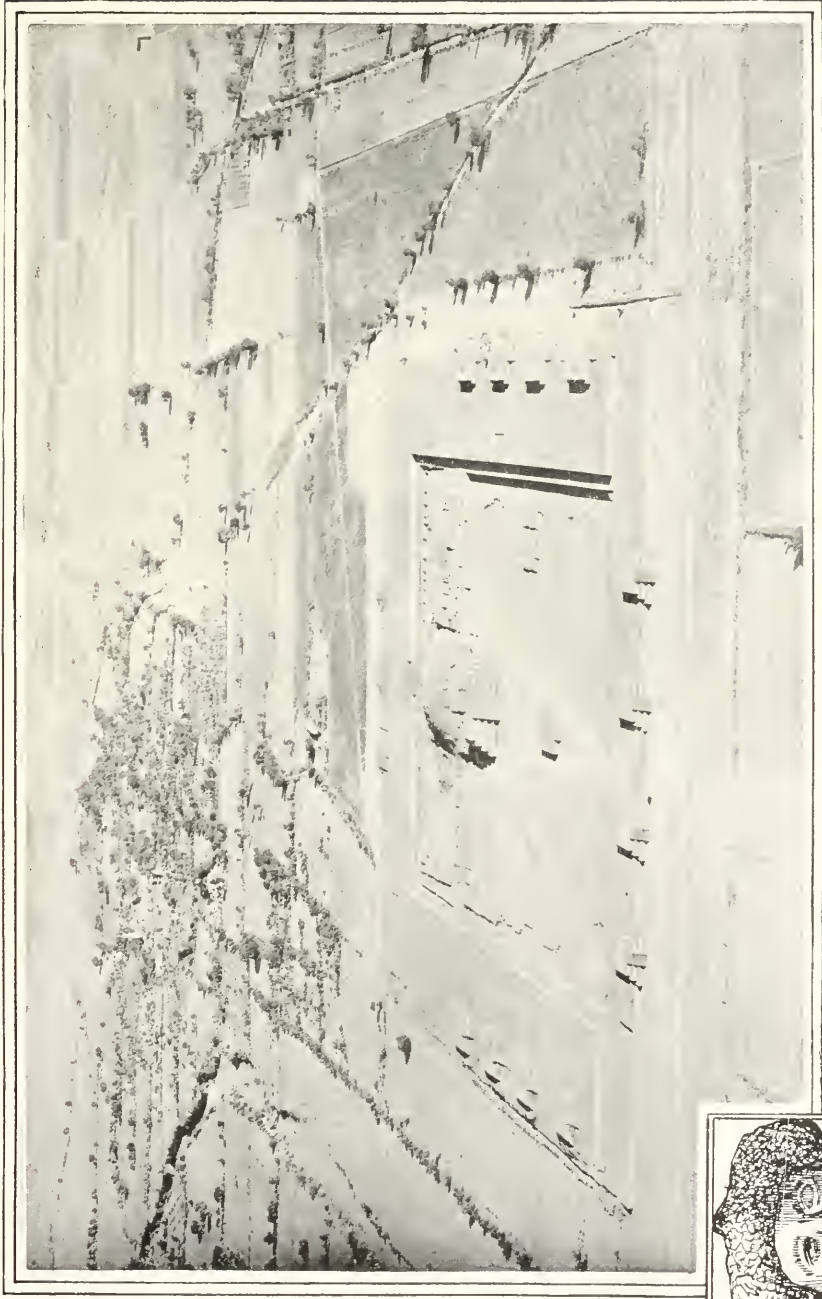
Stone slabs which faced a portion of this structure were very skilfully sculptured as were also the enormous serpent heads which adorn some of the outer walls and the sides of the inevitable stairway. Though not the greatest edifice of the zone, in point of size, this temple and the structures surrounding it are far and away the most interesting exhibit of all Teotihuacan.

(a) "Archaeological Tours from Mexico City," by R. H. K. Maret, p. 44.



Photo by Yañez.

The Pyramid of the Moon is thought to antedate that of the Sun. It has not yet been entirely excavated but enough has been brought to light to show that the style of architecture is very like that of the larger pyramid. It is claimed that it was finished off in silvery white. One may imagine the impression which would be created on even the twentieth century beholder could he see these two pyramids as they probably appeared in those prehistoric times.



Teotihuacan. Aereo view of the Ciudadela. Photo by Cia. Mexicana Aerofoto



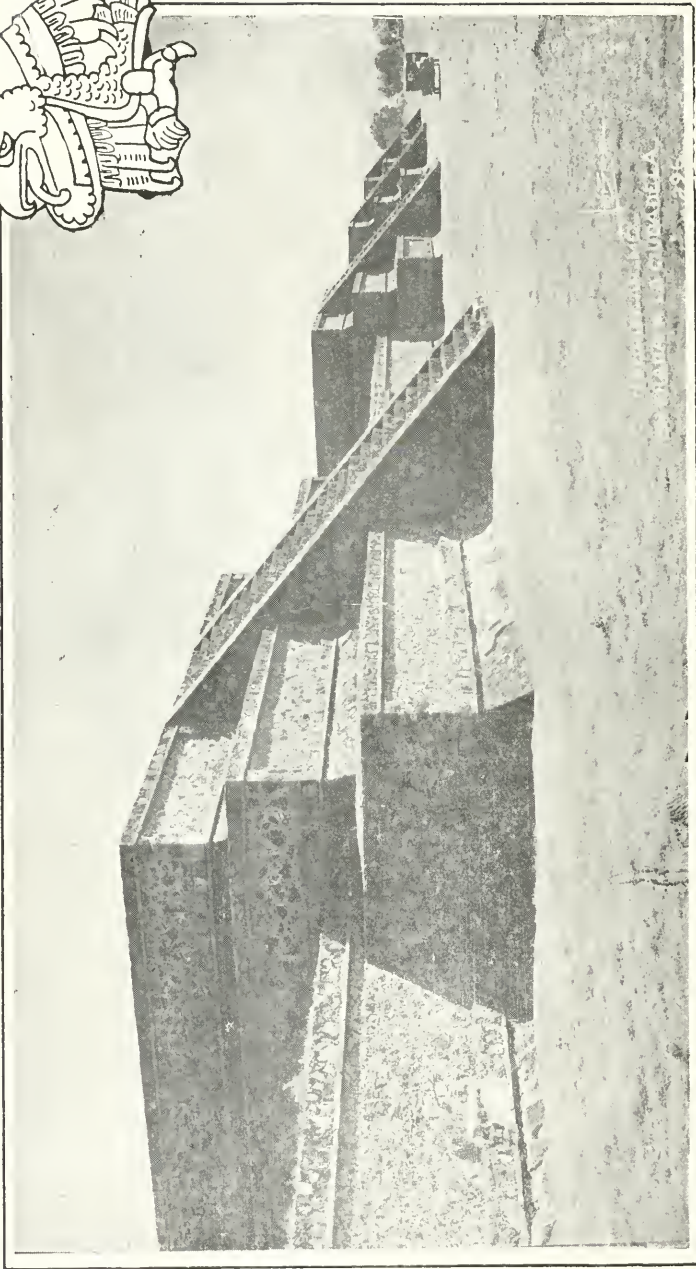
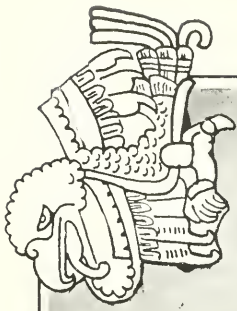
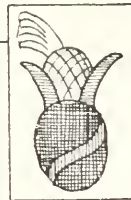


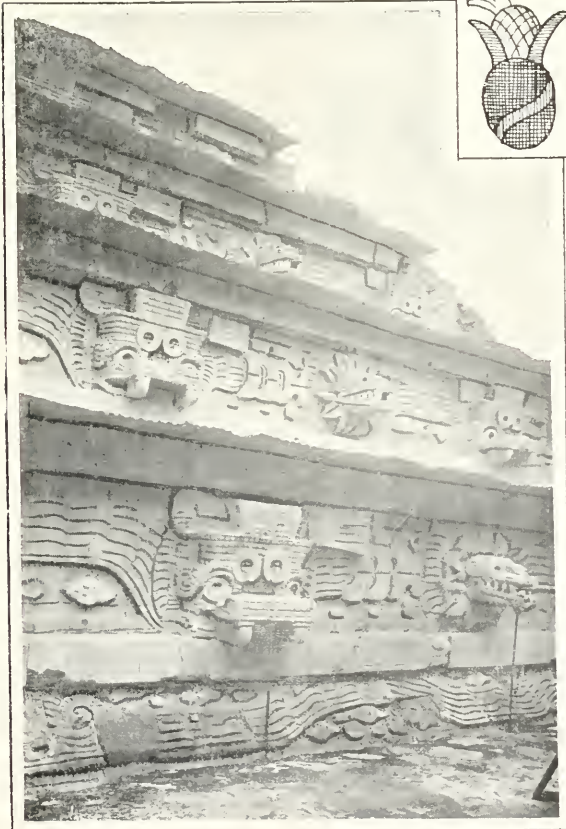
Photo by Yáñez

ENTRANCE TO THE CIUDADELA.

The "Ciudadela" (Citadel) is a vast quadrangle about a quarter of a mile each way in which are located the Temple of Quetzalcoatl and a number of less important structures. The absolute precision with which this court was laid out, the architectural beauty of the temples and surrounding structures and the sculptural work found are amazing in view of the remote age in which all of this work was performed and the primitive methods which must have been employed in its execution.



Stairway and Balustrade,
Temple of Quetzalcoatl.
Teotihuacan.



Photos by Yáñez.

Temple of Quetzalcoatl.
Teotihuacan

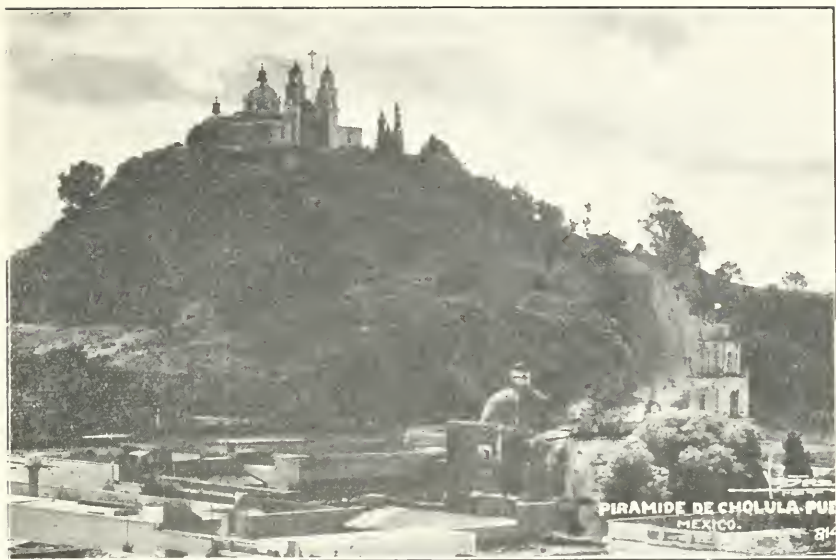


Close-up of Serpent head, Temple of Quetzalcoatl, Teotihuacan.

Photos by Yáñez.



Close-up of Serpent head shown at the extreme of second tier above, Teotihuacan.



Cholula

Cholula, the largest artificial mound in the world, lies 120 kilometers south-east of Mexico City and is reached by a splendid motor road running through the heart of the eastern Sierra Madre range, skirting the foot of Popocatepetl enroute.

The southerly trend of the North American nomadic tribes previously mentioned continued century after century and one prehistoric race after another was forced to move on to make room for the perennially arriving multitudes. The site of Cholula was occupied by many of these, successively, and each added its contribution to the bulk of this vast temple, the core of which may have been erected by the same Archaic people who built Cuicuilco.

Excavations and tunnels bored lengthwise, from side to side and vertically have clearly disclosed various types of construction imposed in succession, one upon another. In due course the Toltecs arrived here, probably from Teotihuacan, and added their architectural knowledge and skill to what had already been built, and were followed by the Aztec who were in possession when the Spaniards overcame them early in the 16th century. At that period history records that Cholula was a city of some 300,000 people but it has since deteriorated into a small place of no commercial importance.

This huge temple, now covered with centuries-old dirt and vegetation, is surmounted by a very beautiful colonial church.

THE AZTECS

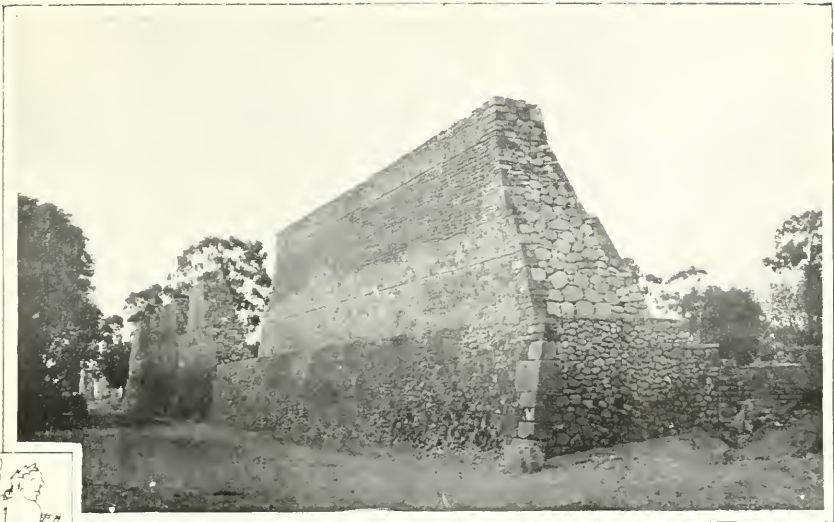


ONE of the most inexplicable recurring phases in the evolution of Mexico from a state of savagery to enlightenment is the total abandonment, at various times, of centers of an apparently prosperous civilization representing in each case a tremendous step forward in culture and personal well being compared with conditions previously known. In the case of the Toltecs, history, accounted a consistent repeater, duplicated previous performances. About the time that William the Conqueror appeared in England, the Toltecs departed from Teotihuacan leaving everything they had accomplished up to then to the mercies of new and ruder tribes which again poured from the north. The last to arrive was the Aztecs whose story has been told so graphically by Prescott in his History of the Conquest of Mexico. He gives the date of the founding of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, later to become Mexico City, as 1325. The vicissitudes of this brave and powerful race and its subjugation by the Spaniards early in the 16th Century are matters of authentic modern history.

The Aztecs indulged in human sacrifice in various forms as propitiation to their gods, some of these practices being exceedingly cruel and revolting and accompanied by horrible tortures. It is a question, however, whether these torments were any more brutal or excruciating than those inflicted by the more enlightened, if less humane, old world clergy and royalty three or four centuries later. It is said that the corpse of the victim formed the **pièce de résistance** at the feast which followed the sacrificial ceremony. These practices, which already were falling into disfavor at the time of the Spanish invasion, were ended shortly afterwards, as the Indian races fell under the influence of the members of the religious orders who came with Cortes, and subsequently.

Tenochtitlan, the capital of this new and somewhat sketchy empire was at first little more than a collection of rude huts but as the power and intelligence of its rulers expanded it grew in size and improved greatly in architectural beauty. At the time of the arrival of the Spaniards it had become a splendid city.

The main structure was the Teocalli, a huge pyramid on the site now occupied by the Cathedral, which towered above the city and was surmounted by shrines dedicated to various deities. Proud, magnificent, pagan Tenochtitlan, embracing this edifice, the gorgeous palace of Moctezuma and innumerable other buildings, was razed to the ground by its "Christian" conquerors who rebuilt it with the blocks and the blood and the tears of a vanquished and broken people.



Photos by L. Márquez

HUEXOTLA

Near Texcoco is a small indian village, Huexotla, about an hour's drive from México, where some very interesting ruins are to be seen. These consist of a group of pyramidal structures, some of them uncovered, which at one time were enclosed by a massive wall, a portion of which still remains. This archaeological zone with its vast collection of pyramids and temples, once heavily populated, was the governmental seat of Netzahualcovotl, probably the wisest, most influential and most progressive of all the Aztec rulers. Under him Texcoco reached cultural heights not attained by any previous or contemporaneous Mexican capital. This region is well worth the time spent in looking it over.

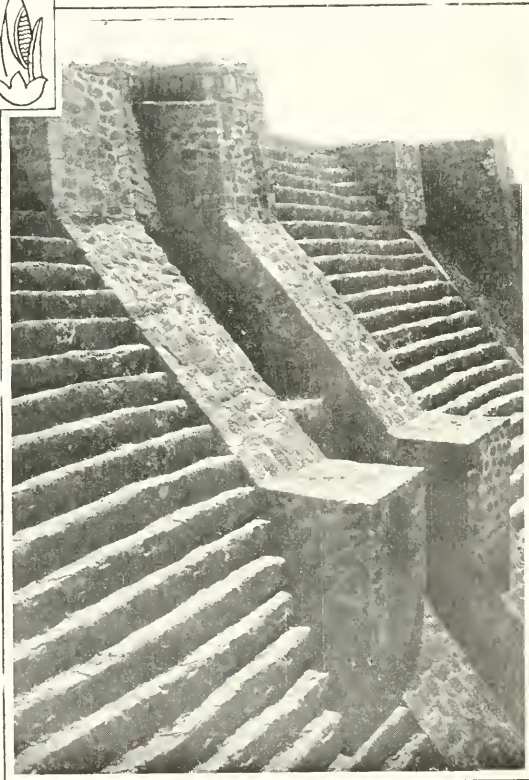




Photos by L. Márquez

TEOPANZOLCO

These ruins are within walking distance of Cuernavaca about half a kilometer northeast of the railway station. They are commonly credited to the Aztecs who were there when the Spaniards came. However, the same as with many other recently excavated temples, it is evident that here various structures have been superimposed on others and the first beginnings are lost in the haze of antiquity.



The ruins of Teopanzolco are most interesting and well worthy of inspection.



Fotos by H. Brehme



XOCHICALCO

(Before restoration)

The Toltec city of this name is about 20 kilometers S. S. W. from Cuernavaca if one takes horses for the trip; but during the dry season it may be reached by motor over the well paved Acapulco highway to Kilometer 100. Follow the road running thence to the west through the Village of Alpuyeca (some 10 or 12 kilometers) until reaching a sign post indicating a right turn conducting one to the ruins.

This ancient city was built on a hill and covered some six square miles in area. Occupying a commanding position between Tenochtitlán and the country to the south and east it was well fortified to resist attacks from all sides.

The beautifully carved walls of this pyramid, the subterranean passages with which it is honeycombed, the shaft up through the roof and other work of the ancient builders are well worthy of the time and effort and the visitor to Mexico is recommended to visit this site.

A detailed description of Xochicalco, of absorbing interest, is to be found in R. H. K. Marrett's "Archaeological Tours from Mexico City", p. p. 34-41.

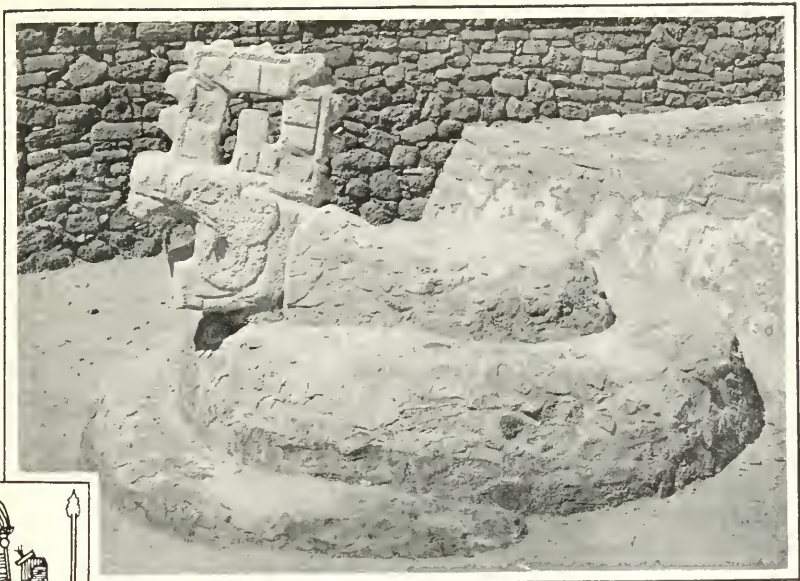


Photo by L. Márquez

Tenayuca

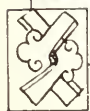
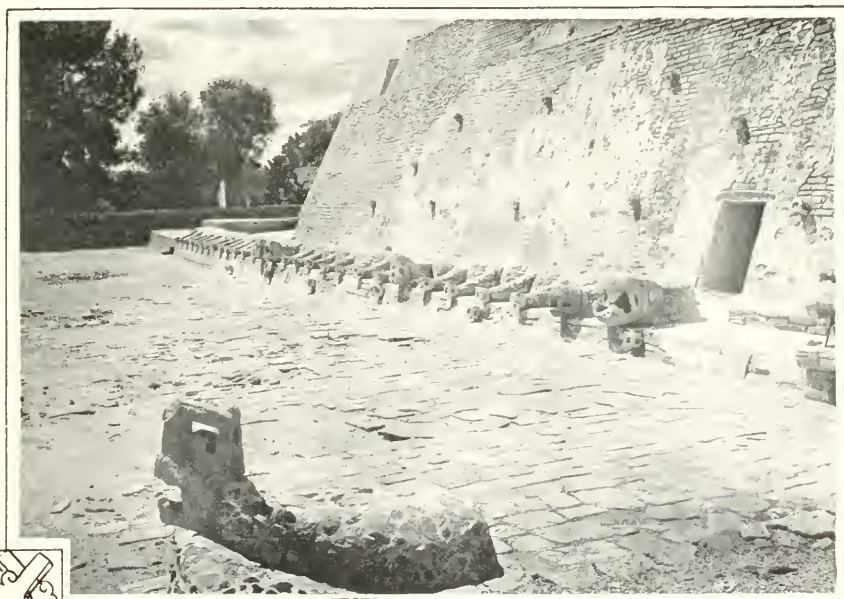
This temple, which is about two miles north of Mexico City and is easily reached by auto, is a very fine example of the Aztec style of construction and is in a splendid state of preservation. Several tunnels which have been excavated throughout the structure show successive enlargements at various periods. The temple is enclosed on three sides by a line of serpents, fifty-two in each row. The Aztec cycle having consisted of fifty-two years may have some connection with this circumstance.

The serpent, which enters everywhere in the Aztec mythology, was played up very strongly at Tenayuca and forms a striking theme in this, one of the most interesting remains of a wonderful race which flourished in the Valley of Mexico in pre-Spanish days.



Photos L. Márquez

Tenayuca



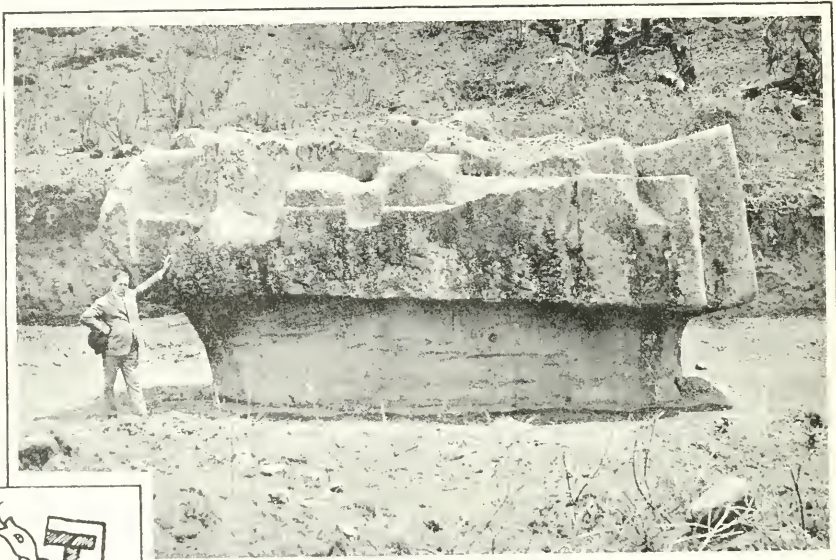
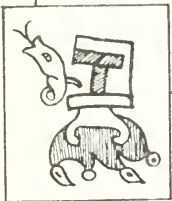


Photo by L. Márquez



THE IDOL OF COATLINCHAN

The enormous idol shown in the accompanying illustration is the Rain god Tlaloc which lies face upward in a ravine in the mountain foothills. As it weighs several hundred tons the problems of how it was transported to this place, why it was dumped there, where it was carved, by whom and when will never be solved. The reason that it has not been brought to Mexico to be placed with other monoliths for preservation is that modern transportation facilities are unequal to the task.

Coatlinchan is about a mile to the east of the Mexico-Tezcoco road which is abandoned on the right hand at a point just opposite the railway station General Gonzalez. The idol will be found about three miles east of the village and is to be reached from there only on foot. Obtain directions from one of the villagers or, better, have one accompany the party.

In the National Museum, on Calle Moneda bordering the National Palace to the north, will be found a vast collection of archaeological relics gathered from all parts of Mexico, ranging from minute trinkets of gold and bits of carved bone to stone idols and monoliths weighing many tons. These myriads of testimonials to the intelligence, industry and culture of peoples who appeared in Mexico through the haze of remote ages, left indelible marks on her history and then disappeared from the face of the earth, form what is possibly the most valuable accumulation of its kind in the world. Photographs of a few of the larger pieces are reproduced here but it is recommended that one day, at least, be devoted to the archaeological section of the Museum. This repository also guards the priceless finds of Monte Alban which the visitor to Mexico should not fail to see.

Far from throwing any light on the origin of the early Mexican and the source of his amazing knowledge of sculpture, astronomy, architecture and durable colors, and his cultural development, this marvellous collection of antiquities only adds to the mystery. The idols and images exhibited here show features of indian types; some are unmistakably hebrews; others are certainly Egyptian; a few cannot be anything but Ethiopian and among them are easily recognizable Asiatics. It is but natural to assume that these were reproductions of types with which the sculptors and modellers were familiar; the laws of heredity preclude the supposition that they might have been variations of any one race. Then, too, there are three great stone pillars chiselled to represent human legs and feet, found at Tula, that are reminiscent of similar Grecian statues of colossal size.

After having viewed the ruins so sketchily described herein and having inspected the collection housed in the National Museum, the visitor is invited to form his own theories as to where the first inhabitants of Mexico originated, and when and how they reached here. No matter what the angle may be from which the subject is viewed we cannot pass over the fact that the civilization of Mexico was in a highly advanced stage at a period when Europe had not begun to emerge from a condition of savagery.

H. E. M.



THE STONE OF THE SUN, better known as

The Aztec Calendar

The immense block of basalt, from which this work was carved, was brought from the hills of Acalpixco, near Xochimilco, to the plaza of the city where it was hewn into its present form. As the dressed stone now weighs 24 tons it must have required the combined strength of thousands of indians to drag it hither. The central figure represents the Sun. Four large pointers indicate the cardinal points of the compass and the seven surrounding circles are completely filled with symbols representing the four elements of Fire, Water, Earth and Air, various deities, the months of the year and days of the month. The calendar is chronologically correct whereas that of the old world of the same period was in error. The exact time when this stone was elaborated is not certain but it is known to antedate the birth of Columbus. It is considered one of the most valuable relics of pre-Spanish times in existence.



Many rituals and ceremonials of the Aztecs involved human sacrifice and the number of victims at some of these events, according to Prescott, Bernal Diaz and other historians mounted to incredible figures. The favorite form practiced was to stretch the victim to the sacrificial stone where he was firmly held by several assistants of the head priest while he cut open the breast of the sacrificial offering, tore out the palpitating heart and cast it into a convenient receptacle. Such an urn is depicted above - a massive tiger with a huge bowl, elaborately carved, hewn out of the beast's back.



Photos by Yáñez



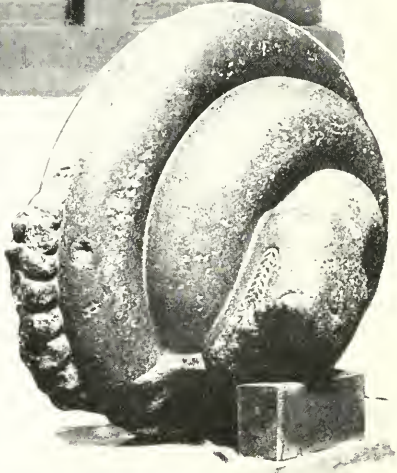
THE SACRIFICIAL STONE

Nearly ten feet in diameter and three feet thick was found near the Cathedral in 1791 and was placed in the Museum in 1885. Presumed to have been one of the stones upon which humans were sacrificed on the summit of the Teocalli. The carvings around the circumference, each of the 15 couplets consisting of a warrior holding a captive by the hair, are in commemoration of victories gained by Tizoc, one of the early kings of Tenochtitlan.



Chalchiuhtlicue, goddess of the Moon, weighing 22 tons; Coatlicue, with her frock of serpents; a beautifully carved dead man's head and a coiled serpent.

Photos Courtesy National Museum









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