

**THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD DIARIES OF  
SYLVANUS GRISWOLD MORLEY:  
Explorations in Petén, 1920–1921**

*The Morley Diary Project, Volume IV*

Edited, annotated, and with introductions and illustrations by

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Volume IV of the Morley Diary Project returns us to the forests of Petén, northern Guatemala, at the beginning of the 1920s, a decade that can justly be called the pinnacle of the Golden Age of early twentieth-century Maya archaeology. The ten-year period between the end of the first World War and the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929 saw dramatic progress in Maya studies as major projects were launched in both the northern and central lowlands, the largest efforts being the Carnegie Institution of Washington's (CIW) massive undertakings at Chichen Itza, Uaxactun, and Tayasal. All these projects were initiated by Sylvanus Griswold Morley who, during this decade, cemented his standing as the most significant Mayanist of the era.

Morley's ultimate goal had always been the excavation and restoration of Chichen Itza—indeed, the CIW engaged in Mesoamerica in 1914 on the basis of Morley's ambitious proposals regarding that great northern lowland metropolis. It was not until 1924 that the Chichen Itza project finally got underway, owing to a series of events that delayed Morley's dream by a full decade: specifically, political instability in Yucatan caused by the Mexican Revolution and Civil War, and then the world-wide disruptions of World War I. Morley spent the years 1914–1916 exploring various lowland sites—especially Copan—to record date inscriptions as part of his effort to place Maya civilization into a chronology. These years are covered in Volume I of the Morley Diary Project (Rice and Ward 2021). When the United States joined the Allies in the fight against Germany and the Axis powers in April of 1917, Morley organized and headed a Central America-based spy ring for the Office of Naval Intelligence, a role he retained until the Spring of 1919. His war efforts precluded most archaeological activity, although he was able to undertake short limited expeditions, including a tour of the Yucatan peninsula in 1918. His field diaries during the war years are not, however, void of interest. His detailed account of travels along the Honduran and Nicaraguan coast in search of potential German submarine bases, constitute one of the best travelogue-style accounts of this neglected area. These years are covered in the second volume of the Morley Diary Project (Ward and Rice 2021; also see Harris and Sadler 2003). With the war over, 1919 gave Morley time to re-engage in full-time archaeology, but because he was still employed by the Office of Naval Intelligence until mid-Spring, he did not have time to organize a large expedition for that year. Instead, he returned to Quirigua, where he had cut his excavation teeth during the 1911–1912 School for American Archaeology excavations under the supervision of Edgar Lee Hewett. His 1919 field work on the last of the unexcavated structures at the Quirigua Acropolis was, with the exception of a brief return to Quirigua and some digging at Uxmal in the 1940s, the last time Morley got his hands directly into dirt—the rest of his career was spent searching for inscribed monuments or supervising large excavation projects, the shovels held by subordinates. Morley's work at Quirigua is documented in the third volume of the Morley Diary Project (Ward and Rice 2022).

As we come to 1920 and 1921, the world had changed: the Great War was over, as was the Spanish Flu epidemic, and the decade of prosperity we now call the Roaring Twenties was about to unfold. With funds suddenly available, archaeology was a benefactor. Morley published, as he

would throughout his career, numerous popular articles in venues such as *The National Geographic Magazine*, and he never hesitated to offer public lectures—all with the aim of popularizing his beloved Maya, his “Greeks of the New World.” These efforts by Morley and others made for exciting reading and the public was enthralled. Two journalists, Alma Reed and Gregory Mason, wrote extensively on explorations in Yucatan in *The New York Times* during this period, Reed authoring numerous reports in 1923, Mason in 1926 (Munro 2021). The archaeological event of the decade, if not of the century, was Howard Carter’s discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings in 1922, an event that created a near frenzy of interest in archaeology the world over. Archaeology was no longer the exclusive purview of the rarified university scholar: in the 1920s, the discipline became part of popular culture, a position in which it has remained to this day.

Of course, this was Morley’s goal all along. His great dream, which came to fulfillment between 1924 and 1929, was the restoration of Chichen Itza as a visitable example of the greatness of Maya civilization. An engaged public would guarantee energy and funding for future work in Mesoamerica. If the CIW work at Chichen Itza was undertaken with the public in mind, the parallel project at Uaxactun was the opposite, focusing instead on careful excavation with the primary aim of gaining knowledge about this early Maya site (see Chapters 19 and 20). By the end of the decade, in addition to the ten annual CIW “expeditions,” as each yearly endeavor was called, the Department of Middle American Research at Tulane, the British Museum, and the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago had all launched major projects in the Maya area. In 1931 the University of Pennsylvania joined the fray. As Mexico entered a long period of stability, the CIW joined in the work at Chichen Itza. Morley had his fingers, even if only peripherally, in most of these projects.

In a fascinating letter written to William Gates on October 7, 1920, Morley gives us a key bit of information on where his mind was at that moment, in terms of his profession. The huge success of his *The Inscriptions at Copan* (1920), just published, gave him the idea to do a larger study of the inscriptions of the entire Petén lowlands. This is the first hint of what would become his landmark opus, the monumental *The Inscriptions of the Peten* (Morley 1937-38). He writes in anticipation of the 1921 field season:

I can hardly wait myself to get back and start all these plans, for I anticipate a tremendous season this coming winter. It will mean dreadfully hard work, but I think we can get out a lot of new stuff, and this new book I have in mind is a fairly exhaustive treatment of the inscriptions of northern Peten (literally this Heart of the Old Maya Empire) modeled after Pub. No. 219 [*The Inscriptions at Copan*]. It will take a lot of explorations this winter, but look at the material I already have, most of which is absolutely unpublished: Ixkun, Ucanal, Benque Viejo, Naranjo, Nakum, Tikal, La Honradez, Xultun, Uaxactun, Itsimte, Flores, and Yaxha. There is much in the Copan volume that would not have to be repeated, and so many sites are to be covered, with their physiographic descriptions and maps, ground plans, etc. that this volume, I believe, will equal in ponderosity the Copan one. Already I yearn to see it finished.<sup>1</sup>

Morley’s expeditions in 1920 and 1921 were markedly different from his journeys through

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<sup>1</sup> Morley to Gates, October 7, 1920. BYU Digital Collections: Gates (MSS279) Box 2 Folder 10.

the tropics before World War I. Take, for example, his ill-fated 1916 expedition to Uaxactun. His entire contingent consisted of himself, the Peabody Museum's Arthur Carpenter, expedition physician Moise Lafleur, and just a few laborers/guides—six or so people in total. In contrast, by 1921, the CIW crew consisted of so many archaeologists that work could be run concurrently at multiple sites. The size of Morley's mule train indicates the increased size of the operation: in 1916 he had about half a dozen mules; in 1921 the train consisted of 20-plus animals. And in 1922, Morley visited Tulum with a veritable army that effectively cleared the entire site. By mid-decade, the CIW employed well over 100 people during its annual field seasons.

A note on the diaries themselves: Morley's 1920 diary is not extensive, as his field season did not start until May 1. The first months of the year he spent state-side completing the final proofs of *The Inscriptions at Copan*, which was published in mid-1920. At the time, this book was the most expansive volume ever published on any Mesoamerican topic. In contrast to the abbreviated 1920 diary, his 1921 account begins in January and covers January into early June. Accordingly, the 1921 diary accounts for most of the pages in this current volume.

Here for the first time, we have access to Morley's field notes, which are held at the Tozzer Library at the Peabody. In his field diaries, Morley often discusses his drawing of inscriptions, which appear in his field notes. We have presented some of these original drawings as illustrations at appropriate points throughout this volume. Additionally, Oliver Ricketson, who accompanied Morley on the 1921 expedition (effectively launching his own career as an influential CIW archaeologist), took many personal photographs which, in coordination with the staff at the Peabody, we have been able to digitize. These images, published here for the first time, offer unparalleled photographic insight into life in rural Petén in the early twentieth century. Sadly, another potentially valuable resource covering the 1920 expedition is no longer available in useful format: Carl Guthe, another archaeologist who began his career with Morley on this trip, maintained a detailed daily diary. How wonderful it would have been to compare and contrast Guthe's and Morley's impressions of the events of each day. Unfortunately, all of Guthe's papers were severely damaged in a house fire. What is left are now held at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan. Fire damage has impacted the ability to read Guthe's version of the expedition as the margins and many lines are now missing (Figure P.1).

The authors would like to thank those who have made this volume of the Morley Diary Project possible. First and foremost, thanks go to Don Rice, who has done such a remarkable job with the many maps and plans, as well as other contributions, that his name has been added to the title page as a full co-conspirator. As in the case of our previous volumes, many scholars have offered support, both moral and material: Dorie Reents-Budet, Steve Houston, Milan Kováč, David Stuart, Bruce Love, and Charles Golden. The staff at the Peabody Museum, especially Cynthia Mackey and Marie Wasnock, offered continued support above and beyond what might normally be expected, and remain vital to our project in terms of assistance in acquiring illustrations and making available Morley's original field notes and diaries. Equally important is the staff at the American Philosophical Society, particularly Paul Southerland and Joseph DiLullo. Finally, we thank Joel Skidmore of Mesoweb for his ongoing support and his willingness to publish our project on his wonderful website. The fact that he offers our volumes in PDF format to the public at large at no cost is remarkable and greatly appreciated.

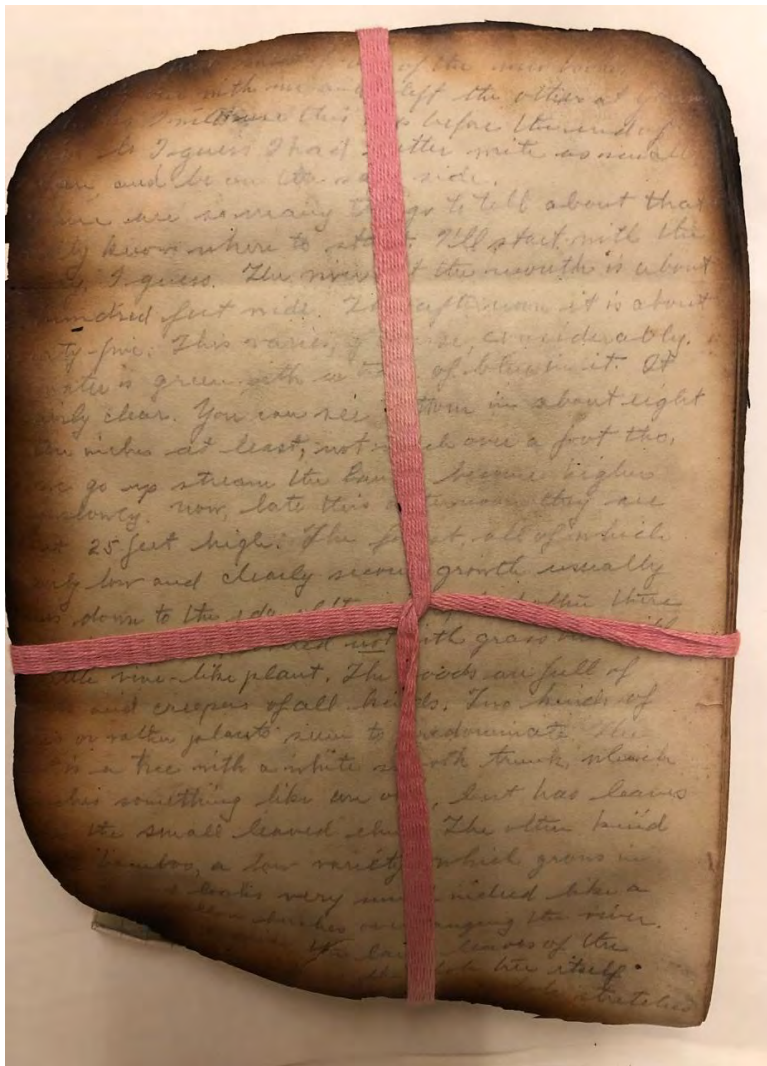


Figure P.1. Part of Carl Guthe's 1920 fire-damaged diary.

## INTRODUCTION

Sylvanus G. Morley's 1920 diary begins in New Orleans, as he is preparing to take a United Fruit Company steamer, the *Saramucca*, to Belize (now Belize City) on the Caribbean coast of the small British colony then known as British Honduras. From there, he traveled up the Belize River to the border with Guatemala, and then overland—by mule—on repeated journeys to archaeological sites and elsewhere in the Department of El Petén, northern Guatemala. Before presenting his diaries of these arduous trips, we provide here some introductory information—some of which repeats that found in earlier volumes of the Morley Diary Project (e.g., Rice and Ward 2021: Chapters 1–3 and Appendices)—for readers who might not be familiar with the background to his undertakings.

### Morley's Journeys and Journals

In 1914, Morley achieved his much-desired position as a research associate of the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW), renowned for supporting explorations and publication in various branches of science, including archaeology. As a step in securing this appointment, he developed a plan for the excavation and restoration of the large northern lowland site of Chichen Itza, but the Mexican revolution and then World War I delayed the project for a full decade. During this time, Morley convinced the CIW to undertake a long-term study and recording of Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions, specifically their dates, carved into stone stelae and altars at remote sites in the dense tropical lowland forests of eastern Mesoamerica: Belize, northern Guatemala, and Mexico.

His trips to Belize and Guatemala in 1920 and 1921 were carried out as the Fourth and Fifth Carnegie Expeditions to Central America, and financed by that institution. Considerable assistance was contributed by private and governmental units in the U.S. and abroad. The United Fruit Company (UFC) was one such helpful company. United Fruit, an American firm based in New Orleans, imported tropical fruit, especially bananas, and had set up a virtual social, economic, and at times even quasi-political empire in many Central American republics, including Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. Although not a scientific research organization, UFC underwrote considerable archaeological work on its lands in the Maya area, for example at Quirigua (Ward and Rice 2022), and publication of reports. Its weekly steamships from New Orleans offered the best—and sometimes the only—means of travel to the region, and the company provided free passes for archaeologists. Morley frequently mentions his friendships with UFC personnel and their assistance.

The 1920 and 1921 expeditions were noteworthy in that they laid the groundwork, in terms of staff, for significant archaeological work in the coming decades. Morley's team included an aging William Gates and introduced two new faces to the field: Carl Guthe and Oliver Ricketson, both of whom went on to have illustrious careers in archaeology. Ricketson remained with the CIW for two decades, heading up the Institution's Uaxactun excavations.

In Morley's time, British Honduras was a colony of Great Britain: Morley often referred to it as "the colony" and "Belize" meant Belize City, then its capital, on the coast. After Belize City was devastated by Category 5 Hurricane Hattie in 1961, a new capital was built inland in Belmopan; the country changed its name to Belize in 1973, and in 1981 it won independence from the United Kingdom. Until Belizean independence, Guatemala proclaimed British Honduras was theirs, "*Belice es nuestro!*" as a legacy from the colonial era. Morley spent time in Belize City, where he had numerous friends and carried out his banking transactions, purchases, and other affairs.

But his business travels were focused on the west, particularly two towns near the border with Guatemala: El Cayo and Benque Viejo del Carmen. The town of El Cayo ("the island") was so named by early Spaniards because, at the time, it was effectively an island surrounded by water, bounded by the Macal and Mopan Rivers and a small creek between them, now desiccated. The endpoint of riverboat travel from Belize City, El Cayo has since been renamed San Ignacio and largely absorbed its "sister" town across the river, Santa Elena. Although Morley came to detest El Cayo, he and his colleagues particularly enjoyed the hospitality and meals of Aunty (or *Tia*) Chon and her restaurant. Given the frequency of the Chon surname (and Morley's misspellings), "Chon" might have been Morley's version of a British pronunciation of "Chan," a common patronym in the Petén/Belize area (see Thompson 1977).

Benque Viejo del Carmen ("Benque"), about 8 mi (13 km) southwest of El Cayo, is the border crossing point into Petén, Guatemala. His close friend there was Father Arthur Versavel, an American Jesuit priest who Morley first came to know during his 1914 travels. Versavel served as head of the Catholic mission to Belize in Benque from 1908 to 1923 and was regarded as a hero during the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic, when he and the nuns of the Pallottine Order ran the local hospital.

Another town in the Benque-Cayo area is San José Succotz (or Socotz), founded, like many villages in western Belize, in the 1860s, probably by refugees from the Caste War<sup>2</sup> of Yucatan (Thompson 1977: 9). Said to be named after the fruit of a tree (*tzok'otz*; *Licania platypus*, sansapote) used to cure diarrhea, this small town lies on the Mopan River, directly across from the Classic site of Xunantunich, and immediately north of Benque Viejo del Carmen.

In operationalizing his plan for long-term exploration of Maya sites, Morley had to cope with unimaginably difficult logistical considerations. British Honduras was separated from Spain as a British colony by treaty in 1783, and was valued for lumber extraction, particularly mahogany and logwood. Petén, in contrast, was still an undeveloped forest, with no roads or modern conveniences. Travel was by mule packtrain: Morley writes many colorful passages about the recalcitrant and grossly mistreated mules along muddy trails—which he wishful-thinkingly calls "roads"—hacked through the forest by *chicleros*. *Chicleros* are workers who tap or "bleed" sapote trees (*Manikara zapota*, *Manikara chicle*; formerly *Achras sapota*) during the rainy season for the sap (latex, gum; known as *chicle*), once used in chewing gum (see Mathews 2009).

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<sup>2</sup> "Caste War" or "war of the castes" (1847–1901) refers to an uprising of oppressed Mayas against the wealthy and powerful "whites" (people of European descent) in the northern Yucatan Peninsula (Reed 1964). Long after the military campaigns had ceased, rebellious Maya had moved east to the Caribbean coast and continued their violence, making it difficult for Morley and his predecessors to explore the area in 1918 (see Ward and Rice 2021: Part II).

The chicle business (*la chiclería*) in northern Petén and Belize enjoyed a boom between about 1890 and 1970, when chicle entered international markets (see Schwartz 1990). At the outset, Guatemala (under President Manuel Estrada Cabrera; see Chapter 7, p. 45, note 68) granted Petén chicle-tapping rights into two concessions, the (Federico) Arthes Zone in the northwest (headed by Paul Shufeldt at Laguna Perdida; see Chapter 2, p. 11, note 32), and the José Wer Zone in the northeast. Both were initially granted for exploitation of lumber (mahogany, logwood) and other forest products (see *United States v. Guatemala* 1930: 143–144). When the northeast concession expired in 1918, the Guatemala government issued licenses to individual *chicleros*, which netted the government no revenue. In his diary of Monday, March 21, 1921, Morley describes the informal division of the northeast chicle zone into four fields, to be exploited by *chicleros* from Corozal, El Cayo, and Benque Viejo in Belize, and Flores, Petén.

The life of a *chiclero* was not an easy one (see Schwartz 1990), and the tappers were viewed very negatively. During the rainy season, the men (and sometimes women) and their mule trains moved about small temporary encampments called *jatos*, usually consisting of a few open huts with thatched roofs (*champas*, *galerones*) near *aguadas*: water holes, sources of fresh drinking water. *Chicleros* and other travelers (archaeologists) exchanged information about these places to guide them along trails, much like we note rest stops along interstate highways. *La chiclería* was pivotal to the success of Morley's Petén expeditions, as he gave *chicleros* financial rewards for reports of new sites with carved monuments (see Chapter 8, p. 62, Figure 8.1), and he and his party followed their trails from camp to camp, grateful for the likelihood of access to potable water.

Morley assiduously — almost obsessively — records exact times and approximate distances (in leagues; 1 league = ~3 miles) between these stops or other landmarks, in expectation that these data will be of use to future archaeologists. His attention to time and its passage in his diaries is evident not only in this way (and, of course, in his recording of Maya dates), but also in his memories about where he was and what he was doing a week ago, a year ago, or five years ago. In 1921, he was still tormented by the death of young Moise Lafleur coming out of Uaxactun five years earlier, in 1916. And at one point (e.g., his April 6, 1921 entry), he began with reminiscences about events and locations as “four years ago today the US declared war . . .” or “three years ago today, I was . . .” and so on.

As we discussed in the Introduction to Volume I (Rice and Ward 1921), Morley's diary entries were typically in Spanglish: English liberally sprinkled with Spanish words and phrases, especially those with no convenient English equivalent. Example phrase: “. . . we found the *galerón* well filled with the *arrieros* of two *patachos* . . .” Many of the words relate to his mule-train journeys along the *chiclero* trails: *arriero*, *mulada*, *patacho*, *champa*, *galerón*, *jato*, *aguada*, and *paraje* (see Glossary). Also, to the many insects: *sancudos*, *garrapatas*, *moscas*, *pulgas*, and *coloradias* and defenses against them, such as *pabellón* (lit. “pavilion,” here a canopy of mosquito netting).

## Maya History and Calendrics

At the time of Morley's explorations, the chronology of Maya civilization, its beginnings and endings, were largely unknown, so this was a significant scientific problem that merited investigation by the Carnegie Institution. It would be decades before the hieroglyphic texts could be transliterated, translated, and read, but the Maya “bar-and-dot” numbers and calendrical glyphs had been figured out by the late nineteenth century, and Morley understood them and



their complexities. He carefully drew and photographed his discoveries, ignoring the bulk of the epigraphic material and the history it related. At the time, Maya history was divided into the Old Empire (basically the end of the Late Preclassic period and the Early and Late Classic periods) and the New Empire or Postclassic period.

Scholars today divide ancient Maya history into Preclassic (ca. 1000 BC–AD 200), Classic (AD 200–950/1000), and Postclassic (AD 950/1000–1525) periods, with early, sometimes middle, and late subdivisions (Table I.1). In Morley’s time, archaeologists used terms such as Early period (Early Classic), Great period (also called Old Empire, today’s Late Classic), and Late period or New Empire (now Postclassic) (Morley 1946: facing page 40). Note that the Maya civilization was never a unified empire but rather a dispersion of small states or kingdoms.

Table I.1. Periodization of southern lowland Maya archaeology.

PERIOD		BEGINS	ENDS
Spanish	Colonial	1697	~1840
	Contact	1525	1697
Postclassic	Late	1200	1525
	Middle		
	Early	~950/1000	1200
Classic	Terminal	~800	950
	Late	600	~800
	Early	AD 200	600
Preclassic	“Terminal” <sup>a</sup>		
	Late	400 BC	AD 100/200
	Middle	1000/900 BC	~400 BC
	Early	?	

a, A “Terminal Preclassic” period, sometimes called “Protoclassic,” can be distinguished at some sites, but not all.

Initial Series (I.S.) dates on Maya monuments were Morley’s holy grail in these trips, and to understand them requires a digression into Maya calendrics. The Maya observed two major calendars which cycled concurrently, along with other similar instruments based on celestial phenomena such as lunar or Venus cycles (Rice 2007). One calendar is the *ha’b* (*haab*), a solar calendar of 365 days; it comprises 18 “months” (*winal*s<sup>3</sup>) of 20 numbered days (*k’ins*; *k’in* also means ‘sun’ and ‘priest’), totaling 360 days (a *tun*; also means ‘stone’), plus five extra days. The other, a divinatory almanac rather than a calendar per se, is the *tzolk’in* of 260 days, very ancient and widely followed in culturally specific forms throughout Mesoamerica. The *tzolk’in* consists of 20 day-names preceded by numbers 1 to 13. Any given date was specified by its numerical coefficient and day or month name in both calendars. It takes 37,960 days, or 52 years, for the same day names and numbers to coincide, an interval known as the Calendar Round.

<sup>3</sup> In Yukatekan Maya, a plural is indicated by an *-ob* or *-oob* suffix, as *winalob*, but here we use the English “s.”

The Classic Maya used two types of dating to record events. One was the Calendar Round, which gives the date of an event only by the day/month names and numbers in the two calendars, the *tzolk'in* day preceding the *ha'b* day/month. As mentioned, these exact day/month combinations repeat every 52 years. This abbreviated record began to be used toward the end of the Late Classic period, instead of the second type, the cumbersome "Long Count" dating system. Long Count dates, carved on stelae, altars, and lintels (and sometimes painted on pottery) throughout the Classic period, specified the occurrence of events by counting the days that had passed since Creation (on August 11 or 13, on a day 4 Ajaw, in 3114 BC). These dates are known as the Initial Series, a formulaic sequence of glyphs that present tallies of elapsed days in bundled units in fixed order, usually in two columns. An inscription typically begins with the oversize Initial Series Introducing Glyph or ISIG that spans both columns, its central element the patron of the month of the *ha'b* in which the date falls. The series continues with the number of completed or filled *bak'tuns* or cycles (units of 144,000 days; 394.5 Gregorian years), number of completed *k'atuns* (units of 7,200 days, close to 20 years), *tuns*, *winal*s, and *k'in*s, ending with the number and name of the day of the event in the *tzolk'in*. Archaeologists use a 5-place system of notation for these five units, for example, 9.9.10.0.0: this indicates that 9 *bak'tuns* had been completed or passed, 9 *k'atuns* were completed, 10 *tuns*, and 0 *winal*s and 0 *k'in*s. Other glyphs, giving, for example, the age of the moon on the day of interest, may follow and are known collectively as the Supplementary Series.

Morley played a key role in inventing the term *bak'tun*. From his diary on March 25, 1921:

Gates suggested to me, [when] walking over to the ruins this morning, that since *bak'* is the Maya word for 400, and is so given in the *Motul Dictionary* [Beltran and Pio Pérez 1898], that the Maya word for cycle was *bak-tun*. Furthermore, names are given for 8,000, 160,000, 3,200,000 and 64,000,000, which just equal the number of higher terms on Stela 10 at Tikal . . . .

Although these words are, frankly, manufactured,<sup>4</sup> they so closely fit the series on Stela 10 at Tikal, where the Kawak symbol appears in every sign above the *tun*, and the highest term is 64,000,000 *tuns*, it seems that the names suggested are probably those by which these very time periods were known. If this were the case, Cycle 9 was probably called *Bolon pik bak'tun*, and Cycle 10 *Lajun pik baktun*. The word *Bak'tun* strikes me so favorably that from now on I am going to use it in place of the word "cycle." Which has always been a poor makeshift at best.

Despite his intense focus on finding stelae with I.S. dates, Morley was not uninterested in broader issues relating to Maya sites and he typically engaged one or more of his party in map-making: Carl Guthe in 1920. These efforts were only partial, primarily showing the plazas and structures where he found monuments, but the varying sizes of the sites he visited caused him to ponder what the differences meant for ancient Maya social and political relations. In several places in his diary, he muses about sites of different sizes: for example, while visiting Xultun (May

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<sup>4</sup> Tallies of hundreds of thousands and millions of elapsed days—*piktun*, *kalabtun*, *kinchiltun*, *alawotun*—extend well back into mythical times, before the beginning date of the Maya calendar in 3114 BC, and these terms have survived into the sixth edition of Morley's *The Ancient Maya* (Sharer with Traxler 2006: 102).

29, 1920), he commented after finding its second plaza (Plaza B) that it “shows this place was fairly extensive, at least a third-class city and possibly a second-class one.” These observations presage later archaeologists’ efforts at developing site-size categorizations. One came from William Bullard (1960), who undertook a Morleyesque survey of sites in northeast Petén by following *chicleros’* trails. He classified settlement remains as house ruins (often occurring in clusters), aggregates of clusters into township-like zones with minor ceremonial centers, and larger, province-like districts, each with a major ceremonial center. Joyce Marcus (1973, 1976) analyzed patterns of occurrence of Emblem Glyphs among “primary” and “secondary” centers, noting that primary centers mentioned each other by name, but secondary centers only mention their primary-center overseers. Subsequent efforts used construction volume or courtyard counts (Adams and Jones 1981; Turner et al. 1981) to assess the relative size and importance of centers.

At some point, Morley proclaimed a policy, continued until 1933, that “All new sites discovered by the Carnegie Institution Central American Expeditions, save those where a Maya name already exists attaching to the locality, [should be] given Maya names ending with the word ‘*tun*,’ meaning ‘stone,’” that is, a monument (Morley 1937–38, I: 138n36). Thus, Morley gave us Uaxactun (‘eight stone’ for its Cycle 8 date on Stela 9; Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 18) and Xultun (‘end stone’ for its late, Cycle 10, dates; Chapters 9–11, 17), as well as Uolantun, Xmakabatun, and Naachtun. At the time Morley named Uaxactun, in 1916, he was unaware that it was known locally as Bambonal.

### Petén Physiography

Morley devoted considerable effort to understand the physical geography of northeast Petén and adjacent Belize during his journeys of 1920 and 1921. This area had never been formally mapped by the 1920s, of course, and Morley’s travels followed existing *chiclero* trails through the forest, stopping overnight at their encampments. Establishing his position in this wilderness was accomplished by reference to a compass or by sending a workman up a tall tree to spot the “towers” (roofcombs) of temple-pyramids above the forest to locate his intended destination.

Morley was especially interested in the many rivers that drain the area, many of which have their headwaters in the seasonal creeks and *bajos* of eastern Petén. In particular, he tried to determine their interrelations by means of their tributary valleys vis-à-vis the ridges and higher terrain between them, which he crisscrossed regularly. Unfortunately—albeit unsurprisingly—Morley’s initial impressions of these terrain features were incorrect. By the time his diary entries were put into typescript, he realized his errors and the entries often have “WRONG!” penciled in the margins (see Chapter 10, p. 75 and note 99; Chapter 17, p. 193, note 90).

The two major river systems draining northeast Petén and northern Belize are those of the Río Hondo and the Belize River (Figure I.1). The Río Hondo forms the northern boundary of Belize, debouching into Chetumal Bay and from there into the Caribbean Sea. The Río Hondo system is known among archaeologists as the Three Rivers Region, home to the watersheds of tributaries Río Azul, Río Bravo, and Booth’s River, the last entirely in Belize (see Dunning et al. 2003). The headwaters of the Río Azul include small Ríos Tikal/Uaxactun and Ixcán (Ixcánrio), the latter bounding the Xultun-San Bartolo territory and flowing into Río Azul northeast of Xultun. Their drainages are separated from the Río Holmul to the southeast by a steep

escarpment. The headwaters of the Río Bravo begin in northeast Petén with the Lower Río Holmul, known as Chan Chich Creek in Belize.

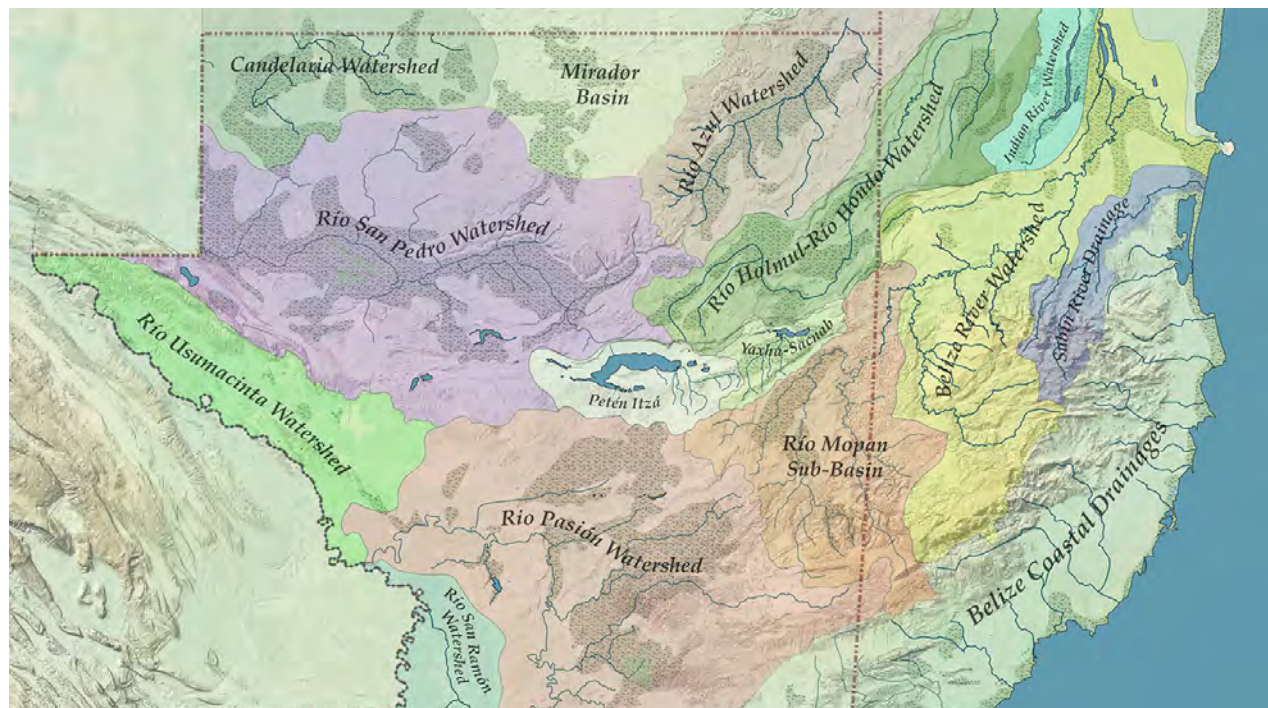


Figure I.1. The rivers, watersheds, and drainages of Petén and Belize.

The Río Holmul does not appear to be a single river course but rather several intermittent creeks originating in large *bajos* (Bajo la Justa north of Yaxha, Bajo de Santa Fe east of Tikal, and others) in northeast Petén. Recently, these segments have been distinguished as Upper Holmul, Middle Holmul, and Lower Holmul (see Fialko 2005).

The Belize River system, dividing the country into northern and southern halves, likewise has origins in Petén, specifically the Río Mopan (and its tributaries Arroyo Sal Si Puedes and Río Chiquibul) in eastern Petén, south of Lakes Yaxha and Sacnab. The Mopan flows north to join with the Macal River just across the border into Belize, forming the Belize River. The other major tributaries of the Belize River include Yalbac Creek and Labouring Creek in the north, and Roaring Creek draining the higher terrain of the Maya Mountains in the south.

### Sites and Places Morley Visited in 1920–1921

During Morley's travels through Belize into Petén in 1920 and 1921 he visited many sites, often for the first time. The highpoint of the 1920 expedition was the discovery of the site of Xultun, along with visits to Flores and Benque Viejo (Xunantunich). The 1921 expedition, much larger in scope, visited Xultun, Uaxactun, Nakum, Xunantunich, Naranjo, El Encanto, Tikal, Uolantun, Ixlu, Tayasal, Itsimte, and Piedras Negras. Here, at appropriate points in the diary, we offer descriptions of these sites and the archaeological work done at them since Morley's time.

# PART I. THE 1920 DIARY

## CHAPTER 1.

### NEW ORLEANS TO BELIZE

#### On the Gulf

#### May 1—Saturday

The last four hours in New Orleans were very busy as always. [Thomas] Gann,<sup>1</sup> [Carl] Guthe<sup>2</sup> [Figure 1.1], and I had breakfast at eight and then each scattered for his last errands. Carl had a Palm Beach suit to invest in, Gann a phonograph, and I had to buy many last things—drafting materials, toilet articles, a cot, boat tickets, etc., etc. It was fortunate I attended to the passport visas yesterday. Carl had to get a sailing permit from the customs house. I got one yesterday, and then he attended to getting the baggage down to the dock.

At 9:15, Gann and I went out to 2901 Tchoupitoulas Street<sup>3</sup> to look up Ricardo Ferraez.<sup>4</sup> We found the same disreputable-looking soft drink shop that we saw last night in the automobile with Stephanie and Lucia, and this time Ricardo was within. He recognized us both and took us to a back room on the second floor, a mark of especial hospitality. A Yucatecan hammock, a bed, two chairs, and a table were the only furnishings.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas William Francis Gann (1867–1938), an English doctor, was the district medical officer of British Honduras (see Ward and Rice 2021: 338–342). With a strong interest in Maya archaeology, he explored many Maya ruins there, as well as along the Quintana Roo coast, often accompanying Morley (Gann 1900, 1918, 1927; Gann and Thompson 1931). He discovered Lubaantun in 1903, and is particularly associated with Santa Rita and its murals (Chase 1985; Chase and Chase 1988).

<sup>2</sup> Carl Eugen Guthe (1893–1974), one of the founders of the Society for American Archaeology, earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard in 1915 and 1917, respectively. After he was hired by A.V. Kidder to work at Pecos Pueblo, he joined the Carnegie Institution of Washington and worked with Morley at Tayasal (Petén, Guatemala), between 1920 and 1922. Later he directed excavations in the Philippines and became director of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of Michigan in 1929.

<sup>3</sup> The closest street in New Orleans to the Mississippi River, location of the docks for river traffic in the early twentieth century. Today it is a residential/business district.

<sup>4</sup> Ricardo Ferraez Avila (1866–1940) was born in Ticul, Yucatan. His presence in New Orleans stemmed from his family's association with the banana import industry.



Figure 1.1. Carl E. Guthe, Morley's associate during field work in 1920–1921.

As time was running short, we broached our business at once. We were frankly seeking information as to the finds he made in the north end of the House of the Governor at Uxmal. He told us that the night he penetrated this chamber, Manuel Ríos had advised him from San José that the authorities were coming out early the next morning, and to close up the chamber immediately. This he did after first abstracting the two stucco heads he later sold to Gann (Figure 1.2; see Kowalski 1987: 22, Figure 40). He said the room was filled with figures and the walls covered with ornaments; in an earlier story to Gann these ornaments were *jeroglificos*. We saw there was nothing further to be gained from talking to him, so we bid him goodbye and climbed into our taxi. He asked us to visit him in his St. Charles Avenue home, a fine house he says, and not far from Stephanie's.

Gann dropped me at the latter. He had the taxi filled with his impedimenta—a trunk, phonograph, various bags and parcels, and a steamer rug. To my great surprise, Stephanie was ready and we went to her father's bank, where Wilfred Miltenberger<sup>5</sup> cashed a check for me. In getting out of her car she left me so little space—about one foot—that in turning around I pressed against a hub of a wheel, and extracted from it a huge spot of axle-grease. Stephanie wanted to know why I hadn't backed out. The only difference that could have made would have been in the location of the spot, i.e., aft instead of fore.

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<sup>5</sup> Wilfred Louis Miltenberger (1876-1921) was a banker at the New Orleans branch of the United States Safe Deposits and Savings Bank.



From the bank we went to the St. Charles [Hotel], where I settled our bill, and then we made for the dock as it was already after 11. Carl had everything down and was only waiting for the tickets to get us aboard. I introduced Stephanie to Gann and she stayed a little while and then left us. I came on board directly when we sailed at 12:30.

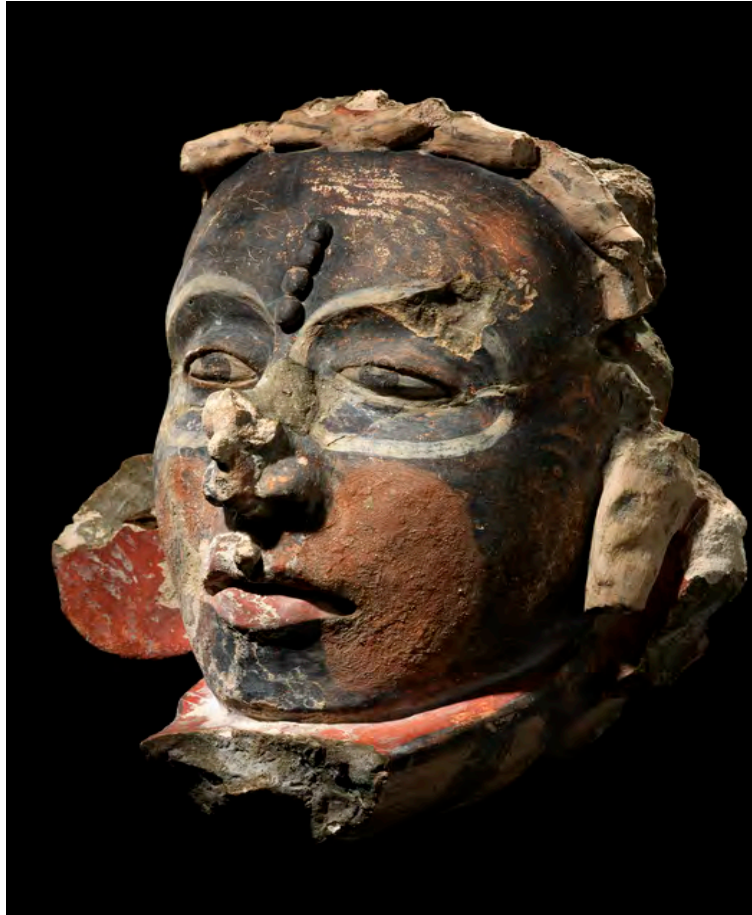


Figure 1.2. One of the two masks found by Ricardo Ferraez in the House of the Governors at Uxmal, purchased by Thomas Gann.

As always, found I knew a number of the people. Rafael Rodezno<sup>6</sup> and his wife were returning to Guatemala City; Mrs. Nanne and her daughter; and for Belize there were 16 passengers, including Gann, Carl, and myself. I knew C.O. Taylor,<sup>7</sup> a chap Van Bibber, who went down with me three years ago, and others. Lunch was very late, not until after two. Everybody was fighting hungry before the bell finally rang. I had arranged that Gann, Carl, and I should sit together, and C.O. Taylor, a fire insurance agent, and a Miss Turiff, a trained nurse, were the other three at our table. After lunch until we dropped the river pilot about 5, I wrote letters so that they

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<sup>6</sup> Rafael Rodezno, a cattle rancher and a naturalized U.S. citizen, obtained a concession [permit] in Honduras to operate a 100,000-acre ranch and owned a meat processing house near Quirigua.

<sup>7</sup> Taylor is frequently mentioned in the diary, apparently living and/or working in Belize.

could go ashore with him. Happily, the Gulf was calm when we crossed the bar<sup>8</sup> about six o'clock, and everybody was on hand for dinner.

I was very tired with rushing about New Orleans, letter-writing, etc., and went to bed early. Our cabin, No. 15, was the last one back on the port side (salon deck), not very cool. Gann, Carl, and C.O. Taylor went up on the upper deck and talked. It always depresses me just a little bit, this leaving my own country, just as returning to it always gives me a little thrill. The past three months I have been so busy with the book<sup>9</sup> and have been more or less upset over the Madeline matter,<sup>10</sup> that I feel the rest and quiet of this sea trip will do me good. I thought I would write Elsie Clews Parsons an Indian story for her on the way down, but I find myself so tired that it will have to wait.<sup>11</sup>

## **On the Gulf**

### **May 2, Sunday**

Another lovely day, most of which I spent reading *The Three Brothers* by Ed Phillips, a good yarn of Devonshire. A week ago today we organized our Maya Society, for which we all are expecting a brilliant future.<sup>12</sup> With the group of founders, which comprises practically all the Maya students in the States, it should be able to shape and control Maya research for a long time to come. Those present at the organizing meeting: Gann, Gates,<sup>13</sup> Guthe, Hagar<sup>14</sup>, Judd,<sup>15</sup> Morley, Saville,<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This is a river mouth bar, a deposit of water-borne sediment that settles out when the river broadens and flow slows at the mouth where it joins another water body.

<sup>9</sup> *The Inscriptions at Copan* (Morley 1920), which was published mid-year.

<sup>10</sup> The editors have not been able to find any information on "the Madeline matter."

<sup>11</sup> Elsie Clews Parsons (1875–1941) was an anthropologist, folklorist, and specialist on the American Indian. Morley's (1922b) fictional story, "How Holon Chan Became the True Man of his People," appeared in her *American Indian Life* (Parsons 1922). Spinden (note 17) and Tozzer also contributed.

<sup>12</sup> Despite the high hopes of its founders, the Maya Society never took off, partly because of the difficult and combative personality of William Gates, its president (see note 13; Brunhouse 1975: 140–142). The organization collapsed until 1930, when Gates brought it back as a one-man show. It lasted until his death in 1940. See also Chapter 19, p. 203.

<sup>13</sup> William Edmond Gates (1863–1940) was a linguist interested in Maya hieroglyphic writing and a noted collector of early manuscripts. He published on Maya language (dictionary, grammar), calendars, and original codices (Dresden, Madrid, Perez), 21 volumes appearing under the Maya Society imprint. His collection, many from the colonial era, is now housed with the William Gates Papers at the Brigham Young University Library. Gates accompanied Morley on his 1921 expedition to Petén.

<sup>14</sup> Stansbury Hagar (1869–1942), an American ethnologist specializing in Peruvian astronomy.

<sup>15</sup> Neil Judd (1887–1976) was one of Morley's associates during his years under Edgar Hewett at the School for American Archaeology. Judd's career focused on the American Southwest rather than Mesoamerica, especially work at Pueblo Bonito, in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico (Judd 1968).

<sup>16</sup> Marshall H. Saville (1867–1935), a Harvard-trained archaeologist and professor of American archaeology at Columbia University, became the director of the Heye Foundation's Museum of



Spinden,<sup>17</sup> Stetson,<sup>18</sup> Totten,<sup>19</sup> and Wilkins.<sup>20</sup> Gordon<sup>21</sup> only came out for the get-together meeting the evening before, but we took matters up with him and included him in the organizational meeting. The officers of the new society were the slate I (as chairman of the organizing committee) proposed: Gates as president; Spinden as vice-president; Sam Lothrop<sup>22</sup> as secretary-treasurer, with Guthe as an alternate. These three offices, with two members-at-large, Saville and Wilkins, constitute the executive committee, the governing body of the society.

In the afternoon, while I was making headway with *The Three Brothers*, Carl got into a poker game with Gann and Taylor, and two others and dropped a few dollars. In the evening, while I was again getting on with my book, he showed better sense and devoted himself to Miss Turiff, the trained nurse at our table. He reported little headway, however.

## **On the Gulf**

### **May 3, Monday**

Finished my book about noon and then Taylor loaned me *Now It Can Be Told*, by Philip Gibbs, the English war correspondent. It starts out bravely and I think I am going to like it. We should have picked up Mugerres [Isla Mujeres] sometime in the forenoon, but it was not until four o'clock when we came abreast the lighthouse and the little Maya temple at the southern end, and then

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the American Indian in New York City (now the National Museum of the American Indian, part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC).

<sup>17</sup> Herbert Joseph (Joe) Spinden (1879–1967) was a Harvard-trained archaeologist specialized in Maya art. Employed by the American Museum of Natural History, he and Morley were life-long friends. In 1913 Spinden published *A Study of Maya Art*, in which he attempted a chronological ordering of the art through stylistic similarities. During World War I, he was one of several archaeologists engaged in espionage for the U.S. Naval OSS, working in Honduras. His 1924 effort to correlate the Maya and Western calendars was widely rejected (Stuart 2011: 190). The 1975 reprint of his art monograph includes a summary of his career penned by Eric Thompson.

<sup>18</sup> John B. Stetson, Jr. (1884–1952) was the son of the founder of Stetson University in DeLand, Florida. Stetson, Jr., a wealthy industrialist (owner of the Stetson hat company), had a lifelong interest in history and archaeology, especially concerning Florida: he organized the Florida State Historical Society and was one of its officers. In the 1920s he became an ambassador to Poland.

<sup>19</sup> George Oakley Totten (1866–1939), an important Washington, DC, architect of the Gilded Age, authored *Maya Architecture* (1926), the realization of his long-standing interest in Mesoamerica.

<sup>20</sup> Possibly Harold T. Wilkins (1891–1960), who wrote *Mysteries of Ancient South America* (1947).

<sup>21</sup> George Byron Gordon (1870–1927) led the Peabody Museum's early expeditions to Copan. Most of his career was spent at the University of Pennsylvania and he helped build the collections of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Before the publication of Morley's *The Inscriptions at Copan* (1920), he was considered the foremost authority on Copan.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Kirkland Lothrop (1892–1965), with undergraduate and doctoral degrees from Harvard, was mentored by Alfred Tozzer. Most of his career was devoted to the archaeology of Central and South America, but he also published on Maya archaeology. He was one of the archaeologists engaged in espionage during World War I, working in Costa Rica. See <http://www.nasonline.org/publications/biographical-memoirs/memoir-pdfs/5etheri-samuel-k-1.pdf>

we stood so far out that it was impossible to distinguish any of the details of the latter. It was dark when we picked up the northern light on Cozumel Island, and the captain followed the outside course. In the evening, while the same quintet played poker, a few of us moved the Victrola [record player] over to the door of the Social Hall and danced out on the deck: the two Van Bibbers, Miss Turiff, myself, Ira Lewis (the youngest son of Joe Lewis of Belize), and a French chap bound for Guatemala. A rumor passed through the ship from some wireless communication that a ship is wrecked on Chinchorro Reef and we are to stop there tomorrow and take off the survivors. Although this will delay us considerably, the memory of my similar experience at the Cayos Cochinos for 19 days in 1918 is still so vivid, that I do not begrudge this delay.<sup>23</sup> Today is Santa Cruz day, when the Indians [the Maya] all believe the rainy season commences.

## **Belize [City]**

### **May 4, Tuesday**

Read Philip Gibbs the greater part of the day. We were off Chinchorro Reef about nine and sighted the wrecked schooner, but she appeared abandoned and repeated signaling failed to raise anybody from the reef or boat. A distressing swell was rolling in, and while it did not make me downright seasick, it so upset my stomach that I lay down the greater part of the day. Of all the many times I have made this run in big craft and small, I never yet have seen the sea off this east coast of Yucatan really calm. Always there is this same unpleasant swell rolling in from the east.

About 4:30 we picked up the pilot [to lead into the harbor], and we dropped anchor just after supper. Of the officials who came out, I know Dr. Davis and Fox Wilson. We had heard that there were no lights in Belize [City], which had agitated the fire insurance man [Taylor] somewhat, but to our great relief we learned that the government was operating the electric light plant again, and had been since Saturday last.

Gann went off on the customs-quarantine boat, but since this had to first go to the *Vera* before going ashore, we were the first to land. The same swell that had been pursuing us all day still persisted in Belize harbor, and it now made descent into the motorboat waiting for us at the bottom of the stairway a sloppy business. By biding one's time it was possible to leap on to the motorboat without getting wet, and five of us made the passage ashore in her: Taylor, Carl, young Lewis, the fire insurance agent, and myself.

We were soon through customs, the only thing they were really looking for were revolvers, and Carl had one, which he gave up. Before crossing to the International Hotel [Figure 1.3], I sent a boy around to Eddie Johnston's or Mr. Rice's to tell one or the other that I would be around in a half hour. We reached the International without further incident save the discovery that one of my bags had been left behind in the customs house. At the hotel were several familiar faces, Joe Lewis the proprietor, Mrs. Joe, Emmeline the black waitress, old aunty the black chambermaid, the black barkeeper, etc., etc., and a real surprise—Dick Kevlin<sup>24</sup>—whom I last saw in Tanson Lagoon behind Caratasca Lagoon on the north coast of Honduras when he was about to take a

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<sup>23</sup> See Ward and Rice 2021: Chapter 18.

<sup>24</sup> Dick Kevlin (1891–1920) was part of a large New Orleans-based family of Kevlins who worked throughout Belize and coastal Honduras in the railroad and chicle industries. He was involved with the construction of the Tela railroad but spent most of his time leading teams of *chicleros*.

group of cut-throat *chicleros* up into the hinterland behind Caratasca. John Held<sup>25</sup> and I gave him some shells and bid him a goodbye that I feared might be final. It looked like a desperate venture in that remote spot with such a ruffian crew as he had with him.



Figure 1.3. The Hotel International, Belize.

Well, here he was, very much “in the flesh” as the Christian Scientists say, and with news of a ruin with two monuments at it in the southern part of the colony [British Honduras] near San Antonio, nor far from where he is now working. This ruin is about a day from the site on the Columbia branch of the Rio Grande, where Merwin<sup>26</sup> found the three altars in 1915. He, Kevlin,

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<sup>25</sup> John Held Jr. (1889–1958), a young artist, accompanied Morley as a cartographer on his 1917–1918 espionage-related trips in service to the Office of Naval Intelligence (Rice and Ward 2021: 4–9). Held eventually achieved fame as an illustrator of the Jazz Age.

<sup>26</sup> Raymond E. Merwin (1881–1928) earned a PhD at Harvard and was a Fellow in Central American Archaeology at the Peabody Museum. While a graduate student he went to Petén, Guatemala, as assistant to Alfred Tozzer, mapping at Nakum and Tikal to finish work started by Maler. Later he directed expeditions at Holmul (Merwin and Vaillant 1932), Rio Bec (Quintana Roo), and Lubaantun, Belize. He died young, possibly from Chagas disease (a flu-like disease caused by a parasite), leaving a series of diaries now being prepared for publication by his grand-nephew Keith Merwin. <http://www.instituteofmayastudies.org/index.php/features/pioneers-in-maya-archaeology2/7etheri-merwin>

tells me the Indian describes the figures as two "*manufatos*," a common word used in speaking of monuments, and that they had scratches and lines upon them. These sounded like stelae.

Kevlin is going down there himself next week and will go out to this place, so that by the time we come back from the Cayo, he should know the truth about the matter. After visiting with Kevlin a few minutes, we walked over to the Rices. They were not in, so continued on to Eddie Johnston's,<sup>27</sup> who I found out lived beyond Boatman's old house. All of the relationships now in the colony were gathered there, not many: Mr. and Mrs. Rice, Doris [daughter of Eddie and Gladys Johnston], and Eddie. I was surprised to see Doris, as I understood she was in the States with Grace. I fear Grace tired of the responsibility of chaperoning such a little flirt. I discreetly made only very casual mention of John [Held], and he was left out of the conversation.

Mr. Rice is looking well, and his aim (salivary) is as unerring as ever. I think in spite of John Held's didoes [mischievous or capricious acts, pranks] he still really likes me. He should, for I had nothing to do with John's infatuation, indeed headed it off by packing John off to Guatemala as quickly as I discovered it. Poor Mrs. Rice has lost her voice completely. She looks well, and has all her other faculties, they say, only cannot talk. As I told them, Mr. Rice makes up for her deficiency in this respect. We visited with them for about an hour. One very pleasant item of news I picked up from Doris was that Warren and Federica Smith were living in Belize. This was a pleasant surprise indeed, as I fancied them still over at Quirigua. I tried to reach them by telephone—they are in the Franco house—but could not. Returning to the hotel, it must have been well after nine, we stopped at their house. I knocked at the door and Warren answered they had both gone to bed, but got up and we had a nice, long chat. They asked us over for eight-thirty breakfast, which we accepted. Returned to the International and went to bed.

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<sup>27</sup> Eddie Johnston, a friend of Morley's, was a Belize City merchant involved in the auto industry—his name is frequently found in automobile magazine advertisements from the early 1900s as being the British Honduras representative of various motor oil companies.



## CHAPTER 2.

### UP-RIVER TO EL CAYO

#### On the Belize River

May 5, Wednesday

One of the busiest days I ever spent in Belize. Started out at seven and got as far as Eddie Johnston's, where I went in to ask his advice about boats. We tried to do this by telephone, but he suggested we go down to the riverfront [Figure 2.1] in his car and interview the river captains in person. There were only three boats in, the *Positive*, *Amy*, and *Canada*. At first, I thought some of chartering a boat to take us up [the Belize River to El Cayo], but [the costs of] river boats have risen with everything else, and the best I could do was \$200.00 for the trip; the owner of the *Amy* wanted \$300.00. Gasoline is 65 cents the gallon, and food, labor, etc., correspondingly high.



Figure 2.1. River boats like the ones Morley saw at the Belize City wharf.

The *Canada* is leaving at 10 tonight, and we made a tentative arrangement with the captain, Dave Hughes,<sup>28</sup> colored. He was to let me know after breakfast. Eddie next took us back to the hotel where we picked up C.O. Taylor and then went out to the hospital to have our temperatures taken. The boys there remembered me. While Taylor and Carl were thus employed, I went over to Gann's house. He was just getting up. I made arrangement with hm to go out to the club after four. Eddie brought us back to Smith's, where we had breakfast, and then set out again. I went first to the *Canada's* wharf and closed arrangements with her captain to take us up on her tonight. \$50.00 for the passage and baggage extra—two cents the pound.

On my way back to the hotel, I stopped at Melhado's and arranged with Henry Melhado for a \$600.00 letter of credit on Habet and Savala.<sup>29</sup> On my way back to the hotel (still) I met Mr. Rice and asked him to fix my broken cot for me. I brought this back to him at the Belize Stores, where he is working. Returning to the hotel, I started to pack. This was somewhat of a business, since we were leaving part of our things at the hospital with Gann. In the midst of it, Carl had to get a haircut, which somewhat delayed him, but about one it was finished and I sent the baggage down to the riverside in a cart. Got a haircut myself after lunch, and then Carl and I finally went to the Belize Stores [Figure 2.2], where we laid in our food supplies for the trip. By the time we had finished here it was four o'clock and the store was closing.



Figure 2.2. The Belize Stores, circa 1920.

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<sup>28</sup> Sometimes given as David Humes. For a detailed study of the river boats operating along the Belize River in the 1920s–30s, see the April 2, 2018 online edition of Ambergriscaye.com (<https://ambergriscaye.com/photogallery/180402.html>).

<sup>29</sup> Morley frequently mentions this office, but it is unclear if it refers to a legal firm, a financial firm, or something else.

I went down to the wharf to tell Captain Hughes that the rest of our stuff would be down directly, and we then went out to the club, picking up Taylor on the way to the hospital, where we dropped our hand baggage, which we are leaving with Gann. We picked up Gann and little Johnny Hunter, who hasn't changed a bit.

The club has not changed either. A. [unidentified] told me that he had seen Craik,<sup>30</sup> who is just back from a six-week's trip in the Petén, who reports a new city with monuments west of Flores, about 25 miles, near one of the American Chicle Co. camps. I found Mrs. Craik at the club. She could tell me something about this site, which is within three miles of one of their chicle camps. El Zotz,<sup>31</sup> near as I can make out the name. Later I saw Jim Craik and verified this from him. He had not seen it himself, but was told of it by their field manager, Shufeldt.<sup>32</sup>

I was introduced to the governor, a Mr. Hutson, and a rather pretty girl, a Miss Murphy, daughter of the director of public works. We, Gann, Carl, and I, came away about seven. After dinner I went back to the wharf to see that our baggage was all down, and lucky it was that I did, since only one cot was there at the wharf. I had to look up Burnham again in his house. Met his wife, a pleasant English girl of the fair type. Burnham went over to their grocery department. We went around behind and entered through the door on the river front. He had to break a lock to get in. Happily, after this trouble the cot was found and I sent a boy down with it to the *Canada*.

Bidding goodbye to Burnham, I walked up to the hospital, whither Carl and Gann had gone after supper, and wrote a few letters, changed to field clothes, and then as it was nearly ten, we bid goodbye to Gann and walked back to the riverfront. The \$50.00 I had paid was supposed to be the equivalent of 8 passengers, and in conformance with this agreement, the whole breast of the boat amidships had been turned over to us, a place about 6 feet wide by 7 feet long. Here we were just able to squeeze our two cots with a space between of about 2 feet, where we dressed, ate, wrote, packed, and unpacked. Our baggage, the kyacks,<sup>33</sup> boxes, etc., were piled just fore of

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<sup>30</sup> James Craik, Central American manager of the Chicle Development Company. Craik often offered logistical support to the CIW archaeological expeditions.

<sup>31</sup> This is El Sos, the site known today as Itsimte (see Chapter 34).

<sup>32</sup> Paul W. Shufeldt was the administrator of a concession of the American Chicle Company at Laguna Perdida, Petén. He first met Morley and his party as they were on their way to Piedras Negras in 1921, and played a large role in that expedition (Chapters 36–45). Later, he became head of a different chicle concession, one that included the ruins of Uaxactun, Tikal, and many other sites. (The complex legal proceedings surrounding this or a related claim saw Shufeldt try to form a company with Lic. Clodovego Berges, former *jefe político* of Flores and governor of Petén, who passed away midstream, to be headquartered at Ixlu. Details can be found online: see “United States v. Guatemala 1930” in References). Shufeldt was also helpful in arranging transportation and other logistics for the Uaxactun Project. It was he who convinced Morley of the large ancient Maya populations in the lowlands, by referring to the vast numbers of housemounds—low rises representing residential construction and debris—in the concession territory (see Shufeldt 1950: 224–229).

<sup>33</sup> A kyack is a type of packsack that consists of two connected sacks hung on either side of a pack animal.



us, and fore of that was a smaller space where an English padre with several colored ladies held forth, and also the man at the wheel. Aft of us is the engine, a kerosene burner, and aft of the engine, the cook's galley. Immediately on going aboard we set up our cots and before we had turned in, the engine was started, and presently the *Canada* swung out into the current and turned her nose upstream. Behind, we towed a string of four pitpans,<sup>34</sup> which trailed along like the tail of a comet. It was 10:30 when we pulled out, and by 11:30 I was fast asleep, though Carl, as usual, was somewhat later.

## Cock Laugh

### May 6, Thursday

The river is very low. I can easily see we are going to have trouble later on in the upper reaches of the river [Figure 2.3]. Our crew, including the men on the pitpans, numbers 17. We have Dave Hughes, part owner, for captain; Egbert Leslie, engineer and also a part owner—the other owner is Messiah at El Cayo; Peter Vaccaro (a descendant on the left hand of old José Vaccaro), the pilot; Harold Young, the cook; and Joseph August, oiler. The rest are boatmen to help us up the rapids.

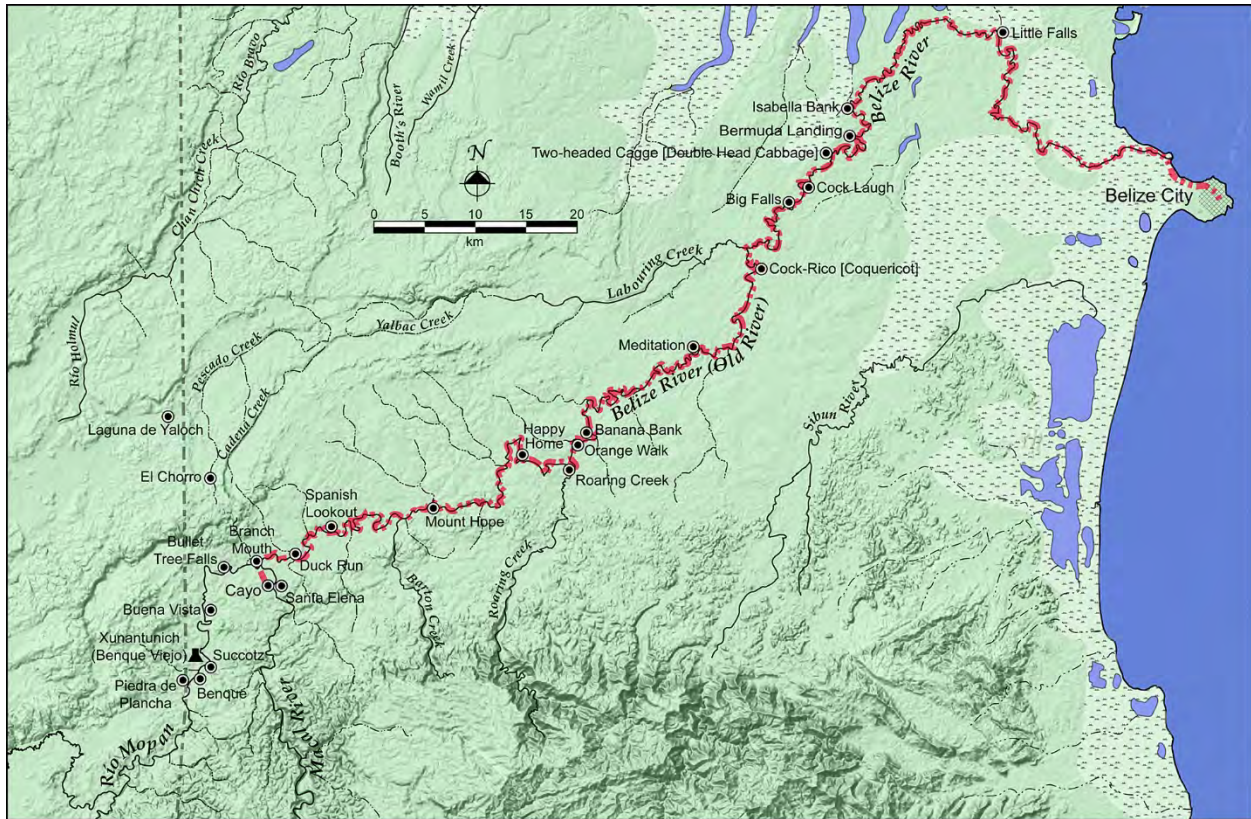


Figure 2.3. The route of the riverboat journey up the Belize River from Belize City to El Cayo.

<sup>34</sup> Long, flat-bottomed canoes, common in Central America. In trips up the Belize River, they were hauled behind the main craft with the boatmen getting out to help move (warp) it over rapids, and to finish the journey in times of shallow water.



The first rapids we reached were Little Falls. Here all the boatmen went overboard and carried a heavy cable to a point above the rapids and made it fast to a tree on the bank. The other end was fastened to a capstan on the prow, and by the aid of the engine, four men at the capstan, and several others pushing in the water, we got over the rapids and into deep water again. Corozo palms are beginning to appear, and I had the feeling that Petén was not really so far off as it usually seems, particularly since the river we are on rises therein.

We lost our English padre at noon at Bermuda Landing. Spent the greater part of the day in writing letters, which we will send back by the first motorboat we meet going downstream. We tied at Two-Headed Cagge for supper, and then afterward, in the lovely cool of the evening, pushed on to Cock Laugh, just below Big Falls. Between these last two places Carl and I sat up on deck talking shop, Maya technology, etc., and drinking White Rock,<sup>35</sup> interspersed with cigarettes. The night sky was lovely. Every star out in full brilliance, in spite of the eminence of a decreasing moon that was only full a day or so ago. We had some difficulty in locating the Great Dipper because of the trees on the banks, and we did not see the North Star until we reached a place where the bush had been cleared. The North Star in this latitude hangs very low, near the horizon. The moon came out in extraordinary brilliance before we reached Cock Laugh, making the forest look like painted canvas scenery silhouetted against the sky.

## **Meditation**

### **May 7, Friday**

The captain was up before sunrise calling for "Aral," being Belize creole for Harold, the cook. But Harold had slept ashore and tarried in the arms of sleep. A black little shaver, about 18, whom they call Pajarito, stood up in a pitpan and yelled "Aral, Aral" at the top of his voice. Presently Harold came down the bank, was berated soundly by the captain for having delayed us in getting off, and we started, all before sunrise. We began warping over Big Falls at 6, and it was 10 before they were behind us. About 8, just before breakfast, Carl and I had a delightful cool bath in the rapids. Somewhere we have picked up two men more, for now we number 19 as against the 17 with which we started. And we needed everyone, the river is so low.

About noon, we passed Cock-Rico and afterward I slept for two hours. It is very warm, though by three the sun begins to lose its strength. Just before dinner we reached Meditation, one of the biggest rapids in the river, and stopped for the evening meal. Three of the pitpans went ahead, and the fourth trailed behind the *Canada*. All evening long the crew worked hard to warp the *Canada* over these shallows and it was 10 o'clock before we had won through to deep water beyond—four hours to cover a quarter mile. I sat up next to the headlight and watched, first two, then three, and finally four boys serve the capstan. When we finally caught up with the three pitpans which had gone on ahead, the boys aboard them were well ragged by the others for having slacked in the common task of getting the *Canada* over the shallows.

We slept on board again, tied to the bank, under a large tree, the pitpans drawing in around us like chicks nestling under the old hen's wings. Thirteen men slept aboard the *Canada*, including ourselves, two in cots, three on benches fore and aft, and eight in hammocks strung between the

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<sup>35</sup> Probably a mixer like club soda or seltzer. The company was founded in 1871 to sell Wisconsin's White Rock Spring water, thought to have medical properties ([www.WhiteRockBeverages.com](http://www.WhiteRockBeverages.com)).

stanchions both diagonally and straight across the boat. Tired as all were, the boys had time and heart enough for good-natured chaff and bantering over their cigarettes before they fell asleep about eleven.

## Happy Home

### May 8, Saturday

We got an early start this morning and had not been going long before Harold (the cook) touched me on the arm—I was still in bed, though not asleep. He said a motorboat was just ahead of us going downstream. This proved to be the *Nameless*, and when we drew alongside of her, I asked her captain to deliver a package to Gann, which contained letters for mailing to the States, as well as films to be developed.

It was another long, hot day with the river growing increasingly shallow. We passed Banana Bank after lunch, but did not stop. It was here 5 years ago, coming downstream after that hard, hard trip though Petén from Cahabón in the Alta Vera Paz to Cayo, that I left the river and went on horseback across country from Banana Bank through Yalbac to San José, where I slept; and thence on the next day to Robert Wade and Hill Bank, the headquarters of the Belize Estate and Produce Company in the bush, where Red Frazier<sup>36</sup> with Scotch whisky, a hot bath—the first in months, literally—and a phonograph made life worth living again.

We did stop at Orange Walk, just above Banana Bank on the opposite side of the river, however, where I tried to get off a message to Father Versavel [see Introduction, p. ix] at Benque Viejo. A Belize creole, a Mr. Burns, was the presiding genius at Orange Walk, and he remembered me well, in fact everyone along the river can never forget poor Moise Lafleur's death,<sup>37</sup> and that he was a member of my party. I am associated with those tragic happenings in everybody's mind, of necessity. Mrs. Burns showed me a picture of her son who has recently died, post-mortem the photograph. Poor chap, she traces his death to the same incident. He was with the volunteers at the time and in the rough patrol work of those days—at the beginning of the rains—he contracted tuberculosis, from which he eventually died. Burns could not get Benque Viejo but said he would deliver my message to Father Versavel as soon as he could get a line through.

We returned to the *Canada* and began the slow laborious work of warping and pulling ourselves upstream. About one hour later, we reached Roaring Creek, where J.B. Smith was now bleeding chicle. As we came around the bend, J.B. was sitting on a log at the bank, immovable as usual. I hailed from the *Canada* and when I got within recognizing distance, he gave me a wave of the hand. He was greatly surprised and said he had felt that he would never see me again. His wife—a Belize creole—is now running a bakery in Belize, while he bleeds chicle up the river during the season. His old white horse, the one I rode the day Lafleur was killed, was killed by a stone. I asked principally for word of new ruins in Petén, but he has been away from Cayo himself since 1916 and could give me nothing. Bidding him goodbye, we boarded the *Canada* again and continued on our way.

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<sup>36</sup> Frazier, of Hill Bank, was the superintendent of the Belize Estate and Produce Company property, a major shipping agent.

<sup>37</sup> Moise Lafleur was a young doctor from Louisiana mistakenly killed by Guatemalan soldiers in an ambush, when they were looking for rebels. See Ward and Rice 2021: Chapters 21–23.

The boys had learned that there was to be a dance at Happy Home tonight, so they were keen on pushing through. The shallows were so numerous, however, that it was nine o'clock before we finally reached Happy Home, where we found the *Cayo* was already tied up. And then such a preening of plumage. Our crew fairly blossomed out. Leslie donned a very military-looking khaki suit, tunic jacket; Pajarito, black knee trousers, shoes, stockings (*mirabile dictu*<sup>38</sup>), and a white shirt; August, clean linen; and all more or less resplendent in their respective equivalents for purple and fine linen.

We climbed the bank with Harold as a guide and walked the eighth of a mile back through cleared pastures toward a group of lights from which came the sound of music. We stopped at the host's house a moment, a Mr. Arnold, black as the ace of spades and weighing 250 lbs., but very much the big man of the place. He had cut his foot the day before, which prevented him from attending festivities in person, but he waved us to the dance hall where he urged us to make ourselves at home. The dancing place was a shelter of palm leaves about 50 feet long by 30 feet wide. Rows of upright posts supported cross pieces and over the roof branches of corozo palm were laid. Lanterns (not Japanese, but the more practical hurricane light, which has illuminated our way up the river so far) hung from the ceiling [Figure 2.4].



Figure 2.4. The dance Morley attended at Happy Home.

Around the sides were some 150 black people of both sexes and all ages. In one corner was a refreshment stand over which presided a huge negress with a bust measurement of at least 52 inches, not a bit of exaggeration. The music consisted of a poor marimba, a zither with chord

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<sup>38</sup> The Latin *mirabile dictu*, "wonderful to relate or say," is an expression of surprise.

attachment, and a guitar. On the whole it was fairly good, certainly better than the floor, which was only of grass. A one-step was danced, a *schottische*,<sup>39</sup> a waltz, and a kind of fox-trot, also a quadrille. There seemed to be a great deal of animation and the bodies of the dancers moved and swayed and twisted and twitched in a manner which would not have been considered elegant at home, and which in a public dance hall would, I fear, have called for the services of the bouncer. The only one of our crew who danced was Pajarito. I offered him 50 cents if he would, and to my surprise, he took me up. It seems the dancing is not free, but cost every gentleman who danced 50 cents each.

On our way back to the boat we bid goodbye to our host. He and his wife had at least a dozen small children sleeping on the floor of his living room, which had been left by dancing couples to be claimed after the fiesta. I suggested it might be advisable to check them, but they thought each would recognize their own. After a drink of strong native (sugar) rum, we bid him good night and returned to the boat.

## Mount Hope

### May 9, Sunday

We did not leave Happy Home until after daylight and stopped again at Hogtie about 7. This is a mahogany [logging] bank belonging to our host of last night. Here a radical change of operations became advisable. It began to become apparent that sooner or later we would have to abandon the *Canada* and take to the pitpans, so shallow was the river. At Hogtie this point appeared to have been reached. Captain Hughes put it to a vote of the crew, however, and all but one or two were in favor of leaving the *Canada* at this bank and taking the pitpans. This change was effected by nine o'clock and we again set off up the river. It was necessary to have another pitpan to take care of the extra people from the *Canada*, and the captain borrowed one from Arnold's manager at Hogtie. The captain very wisely sent Harold, the cook, ahead in the small borrowed pitpan with the cooking outfit, and two other men. The second pitpan carried four men; the third, called *Black Rock*, carried four, of which the man at the stern, who does all the steering of the pitpan, was little Pajarito, a little black imp of cheerful disposition and great strength and endurance. The fourth was our own, the *Success*, the largest of the five. We carried four polemen forward and one man to steer aft. The last was a Belize creole named Peter Vaccaro, who I later found out was a left-handed grandson of the original José Vaccaro, the founder of the Vaccaro Fruit Co. at Ceiba, Honduras. The fifth pitpan carried Leslie (our engineer), Captain Hughes, and young Harris.

A fortnight ago, just at this time between 9 and 10, we were organizing the Maya Society, an even further cry from John Stetson's house at Elkins Park, than a week ago today on the Gulf.

It was a long, hot, broiling day on the river, and toward the end of the afternoon we both slept. Captain Hughes had set Mount Hope as our sleeping place that night, and in order to make it, he again sent Harold on ahead after lunch with the grub in the light pitpan, which soon left the others behind, and in order to get anything to eat at all, the other crews had to push through on to Mount Hope, which we did not reach until 9:30. It was a hard, grueling day, and during the latter part the men were in the water most of the time, pushing and pulling the pitpans.

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<sup>39</sup> The *schottische* is a Bohemian polka-like dance, popular in Europe in the late nineteenth century.

At this late hour, however, after the pitpans had all been moored alongside of each other, Harold's pitpan next to the bank, we all had a cold supper, ours washed down with soda pop, which has been our only water for the last two days. And then came the question, very perplexing, of where to sleep. The bank seemed out of the question on account of the insects, so we were constrained to find places in the pitpans. Carl and I chose our own, the *Success*, and I put up my cot amidships where we had been sitting all day, and Carl went aft to the open place where Peter had been steering the craft.

One more incident, and I am done: in the dark and confusion, Carl dropped my bedroll on the floor of the *Black Rock* and wet it, as well as my pajamas, while I dropped my union suit<sup>40</sup> in the bilge water in the bottom of the *Success*. By the aid of the faithful hurricane light, which gives off heat as well as light, the 'jamas were dried and I went to bed rejoicing.

## Duck Run

### May 10, Monday

There was much grumbling among the men this morning, some complaining about the hard day's work yesterday, and it was hard too, and others growling and grumbling to the effect that their respective pitpans had been the heaviest. A great deal of talk was spilled by everybody, including Captain Hughes, before we finally got off. Some of the bad blood brewed in these contentions bore fruit at Spanish Lookout, where one of the men in our boat left for good.

The Mr. Burns at Orange Walk has a brother here who has a nice place on the north bank of the river, giving a commanding view of the same both upstream and down, owing to a big bend the same makes at this point, from which I judge the name Lookout was derived. This Mr. Burns was as pleasant and agreeable as his brother and gave us a number of bananas. Captain Hughes also laid in a supply of plantains here, and about 12 [o'clock] in a blistering heat we set off again up the river, only 3 men forward in our pitpan. Shortly afterward, we came to a bank where Harold had stopped for lunch, and here, with the aid of a bottle of pop, we washed down a not too bounteous repast.

The afternoon's run was characterized by many shallows, which are called runs, and the crews were in the water most of the time. We had hoped to reach Duck Run about 5, where Carl and I would leave the pitpans, walking across the 3-mile strip of land to El Cayo, but it was 8:30 when we finally got there. The boys were all against going on and Hughes asked me what I wanted to do, as he had promised to put me into Cayo tonight, but little was to be gained by having the boats get in about midnight, and as Carl and I were both tired, we voted to sleep at Duck Run. The bank did not appeal to either of us, so we slept in the *Success* in the same relative positions as the night before. The boys were all exhausted and after another meager repast, which for us consisted of a tin of Campbell's vegetable soup (concentrated), a tin of pears, and some Huntly and Palmers biscuits<sup>41</sup> and some jam, we turned in.

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<sup>40</sup> A union suit was a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century one-piece undergarment for men that covered arms, legs, and trunk.

<sup>41</sup> Huntly and Palmers, a British company making cookies and other confections, was founded in 1822 and famous for its award-winning packaging tins.

## El Cayo

### May 11, Tuesday

A very full day with many surprises. We were up before six, and after a cup of tea we set out for El Cayo at 6:30. Joe [Spinden] and I took this walk at night six years ago when I first came to Cayo, so it was not altogether unfamiliar. The trail was well bushed and straight, and we had no difficulty in following it through. We reached Santa Elena on the south side of the [Mopan] river just opposite Cayo after an hour's easy walking. And here was my first surprise—there was a Ford truck on the *playa* [beach, shore]. No one had told me that the automobile had reached this inaccessible spot, but such was the case and I was taken aback. A far greater surprise, however, awaited me on the farther bank of the river.

We hailed a boy with a dory, who put us over, and the first person I saw on the Cayo side, even before I left the dory was, of all people, Chico,<sup>42</sup> who I had thought to be in Corozal with Muddy.<sup>43</sup> There he was grinning at me from ear to ear. "*Muchacho mío*," I cried and jumped ashore and grabbed him. I could hardly express myself rapidly enough to find out what he was doing and why he was there at all. As far as I could make out, he had been in Cayo for three weeks and was working for a Greek saloonkeeper named Peter Brown. He had a long tale of woe about Muddy, who had worked him to death, paying him only 10 cents the week. When Muddy had the quarantine station taken from him because he would not allow Prince William<sup>44</sup> to enter Gann's house during the latter's absence, he gave Chico nothing, so Chico left Muddy and about a month ago beat his way up to Cayo where he found work with the Greek saloonkeeper named Brown. He is earning 5 dollars a month with board, lodging, and such clothes as the man may be inclined to give him. I told him to find out from the Greek what his *cuenta* [bill] was and I would settle it, and with this understanding we parted for the time being. It was a very great pleasure and surprise for me to meet him in this totally unexpected manner.

I walked next toward the new ice factory and moving picture place, amazed at the improvements in the village, and at the sight of several Fords coughing over the earth streets [Figure 2.5]. A negro chauffeur hailed me with obvious delight. I recognized him but could not place him or even remember his face, until he told me he had driven me around Guatemala City during the earthquake. It was James Blackman, the Trinidad boy, whose Ford I had used during the earthquake 2½ years ago for taking pictures about the city.<sup>45</sup> Later I had secured passes for himself and his woman to go down to Barrios on the train, gave them a lift to Livingston in a boat I had chartered, and finally helped them over to the colony. But more of him later.

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<sup>42</sup> Morley took young Chico Ávila, from Copan, under his wing in 1915 and he became part of Morley's expeditions for the next several years. By the early 1920s, Morley had become almost a father figure and Chico accompanied him on his explorations whenever possible.

<sup>43</sup> Muddy, Amado Esquivel, was Gann's longtime right-hand man. He accompanied Gann and Morley up the Quintana Roo coast and throughout central Yucatan in 1918. Muddy was also a key figure on Morley's Petén expedition.

<sup>44</sup> This was Prince Edward of Sweden (see Chapter 12, page 122 for an account).

<sup>45</sup> Morley drove around with Blackman for several days recording the aftermath of the earthquake. This story and Morley's photos are published in Ward and Rice 2021: Chapter 23.



Figure 2.5. The main street in El Cayo.

We were hungry by this time, so we went down to old Aunty Chon's [see Introduction, p. x], the old negress who has taken care of archaeologists in El Cayo ever since they have been going there. Aunty herself was not in, but her young niece, Rachel Thompson, was, and I sent her out to look for the old lady, who was over taking tea at the Blancaneaux.<sup>46</sup> Aunty came hurrying back and gave me a long double *abrazo* [hug, embrace], and Carl one too for good measure. She said she had given me up for dead—killed in the war, but, and I quote her, her "boy has come back." I was very much touched at this warmth of feeling.

Breakfast was soon on the table and before it was cleared Chico showed up saying his boss would not let him go. While I was getting ready to see this Peter Brown, he came in himself and ordered Chico home. I said, "not so fast, let us talk this matter over." He was in a rage and said if I wanted the boy, I would have to give \$50.00. I remonstrated and turned to Chico, who said he

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<sup>46</sup> "The Blancaneaux" was the home of Francois J.S. Blancaneaux, a late nineteenth-century naturalist who lived in El Cayo, where Morley knew him (see entry for June 6). He worked in western Belize and claimed to be the discoverer and first exporter of "sapodilla gum," or chicle (see <https://ambergriscaye.com/photogallery/161211.html>). A grandson, son of a daughter who married a Canadian, built a country home on the northern edge of the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest in central Belize, 19 miles (30 km) southeast of San Ignacio/Benque Viejo. The home is today called the Blancaneaux Lodge, a small boutique hotel purchased in the early 1980s by Hollywood film director Francis Ford Coppola (<https://ambergriscaye.com/photogallery/120317.html>).



had only two shirts, a pair of pantaloons, and a pair of shoes, and had worked for three weeks. Peter began cursing Chico for lying, and again I interrupted him telling him that such was impossible as Chico had never lied to me, and I would believe Chico in preference to him on any question.

I suggested we go over to don Chindo de la Fuentes and talk with his son, Candelario, a friend of mine. But although the three of us talked for some time, Peter Brown would not lower his price. Either I should pay him \$50.00 or he would keep Chico. In vain, Candelario and I explained that he could not hold Chico for debt in the colony like he could have done in Guatemala, but to no purpose; he said it was \$50.00 or I could not have Chico. He even said go to the District Commissioner, which I told him I would do at once. Chico, in the meantime, was very much downcast, but I told him to pluck up heart and that it would soon be all right. I went down to the moving picture place and talked the matter over with another old friend, Ed Enright, who, when he heard the details, said Brown hadn't a leg to stand on.

He went with me to the District Commissioner, who is a Mr. Wyatt, who used to be Chief of Police in Belize, and whom I had known before. I laid the matter before him and he summoned Brown, and later, Chico. All that I asked was that Brown submit Chico's account which previously he had refused to do, which I wanted to settle, but the only sum he would mention was \$50.00. When Wyatt heard the details he said, "Look here, Brown, you cannot hold this boy if he wants to go with Mr. Morley; he can up and leave you without your getting a cent, so you had better take what Mr. Morley offers." Brown saw he was cornered and said all right. Chico's account came to \$22.25 and I gave him \$2.75 over for his trouble in getting a new boy. Chico came with me, a grin spread from ear to ear.

I next telephoned to Father Versavel and got him in about 15 minutes. He had not received my message from Orange Walk and was well surprised at hearing from me. I told him I would be over in the afternoon. It was now toward eleven, but I went first to Habet and Savala's to arrange about my letter of credit. Both Álvarez Habet and Eduardo Savala remembered me well and we had quite a conversation. My money up here is to cost me 2%. I sent Chico down to the riverside to see if the pitpans were in yet, and we returned to Aunty Chon's. On the way, we stopped in at the Enrights'. His wife has always been very kind to me in former visits, and I was glad to greet her. They are raising funds for a new church on the main street, and I promised to contribute. Another old face was Mr. Waight, who formerly owned the Cayo, but who has now let it all slip through his hands and into those of the Melhados. Poor old man, he is a dispirited figure with no enemies, a weak, good-natured fool who was his own undoing.

The pitpans had not arrived at twelve, and we sat down to a delicious lunch cooked by Aunty. Chicken, tortillas, tea, rice, etc. While we were finishing, Chico came in and said the pitpans were in sight. We went down to the riverbank and the first three were just in, and the last two pulling over the last run. It has been a hard trip and the boys were glad to get in. Poor Brooks had a bad bruise on his shin and another in his groin, both badly swollen, which I painted with iodine. I got a cart and soon our baggage was loaded on it and carried to Aunty Chon's. It was now one o'clock and I wanted to get started to Benque Viejo, but Blackman, who had taken a passenger over this morning, had not returned yet, and indeed I was on the point of negotiating for another car when he came in. I told him we wanted to go over, and he said he would go as soon as he had eaten a bite of lunch. We returned to Aunty Chon's and about 2:00 left for Benque



in his Ford, of the 1917 vintage and a hard-looking article. The engine was in excellent condition as we soon found out, the way it pulled us up the long hill leading out from the village.

There were five of us in the car: Carl, Chico, and I in the back seat, Blackman and a native on the front seat. We reached Benque Viejo in shortly less than an hour's time, and I went directly to the mission. There, Father Versavel awaited us on the porch [Figure 2.6]. A fine man, a little stouter, perhaps; a little grayer surely, but the years have passed him by lightly, and he is far younger in body and heart than his 48 years would warrant. He gave us one of his royal welcomes, and I gave him the Scotch that I knew would warm his heart.

He has made arrangements with one Eusebio Valdez of Succotz for his *patacho* (mule train, or *mulada*) of eight mules, and I am to close the agreement today. About 4 we set down to one of the sisters'<sup>47</sup> delicious meals and did it full justice. By this time, it was too late for me to go over to Plancha [de] Piedra<sup>48</sup> to see don Pablo Guerra, so I gave that up until tomorrow.



Figure 2.6. Father Versavel (standing near center), the four Pallottine sisters, and the children at the Benque Viejo schoolhouse.

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<sup>47</sup> The Order of the Sisters of Pious Missions (PALLOTINI) was a German Catholic order that was active in the United States. In 1912, while travelling in the States, Father Versavel requested the order provide him with several sisters to serve as teachers in Benque Viejo. Four arrived in 1913, and the Pallottines have had a continuous presence in the Cayo district ever since (Anon. 2015).

<sup>48</sup> Plancha de Piedra was the first Guatemalan (Petén) town across the river from Benque Viejo, Belize. Its administrative functions (customs, migration) for international crossings are now handled by the town of Melchor de Mencos, at the border proper.

On the way back to Cayo we stopped at Succotz, where I arranged with Eusebio Valdez for his *mulada* of 8 animals (five pack and three saddle) for \$12.00 the day. He will send 2 *arrieros* [muleteers, mule train drivers] at his own cost. This works out to \$1.50 a day for a mule and is half the price Father Versavel thought I would have to pay. Bidding goodbye to don Eusebio, we were back in Cayo before seven, and sat down to another meal at Aunty's which we had little desire to eat, we had partaken of so much at the *padre's*. We ate a little to pacify Aunty, however, and afterward went down to the waterfront. Saw Blackman in the evening about taking us over tomorrow afternoon. Retired a little after 10.

## CHAPTER 3.

### Editors' Insert: THE SITE OF XUNANTUNICH

The primarily Classic-period site of Xunantunich (Figure 3.1) lies on a ridge overlooking the Mopan River, a tributary of the Belize River, in west-central Belize, barely a kilometer from the border with Guatemala. Formerly called Benque Viejo (see Thompson 1942) after the nearby town of Benque Viejo del Carmen, its current name means roughly “stone woman”—*xunan* ‘noble lady’; *tunich*, ‘stone sculpture’—from a local legend about a ghost living in the area.

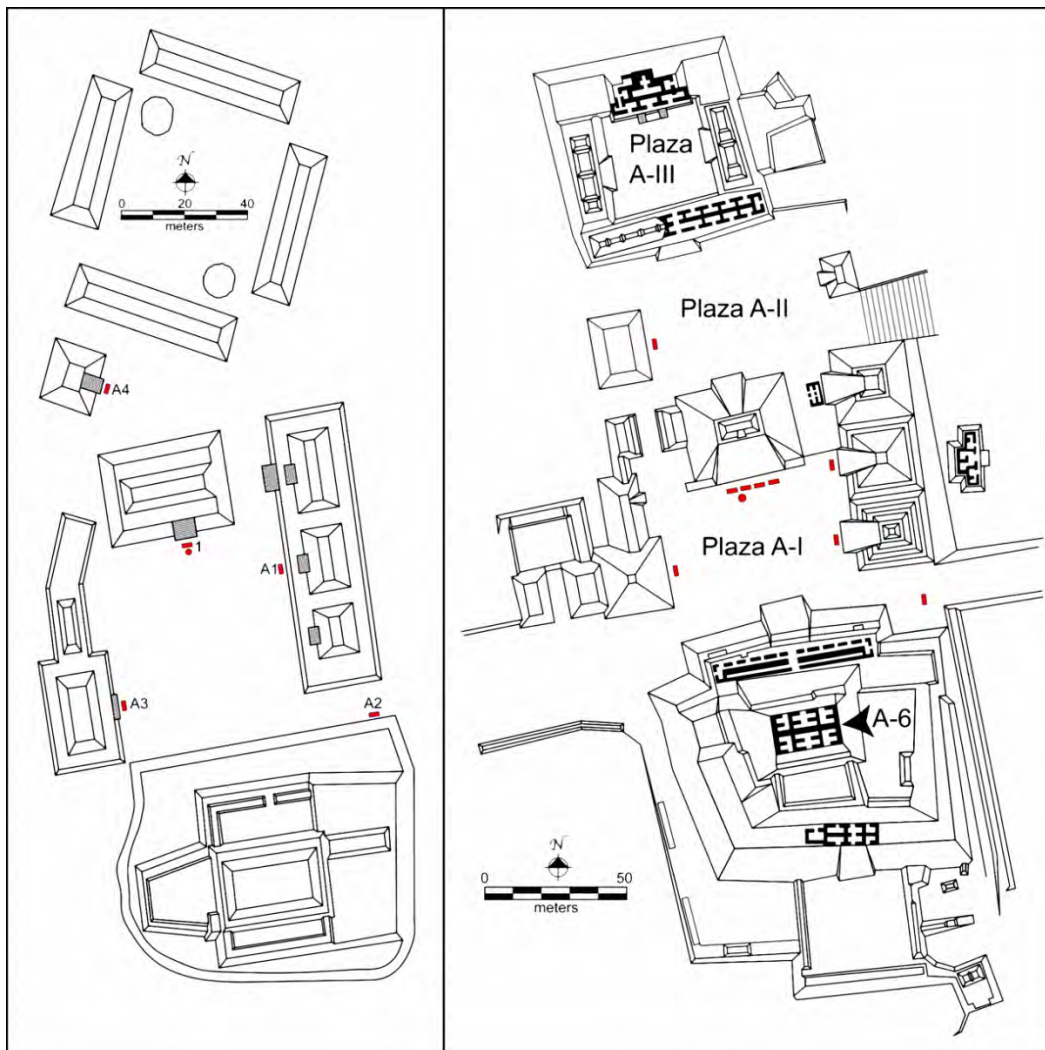


Figure 3.1. Xunantunich (Benque Viejo). Morley's map of the site core is on the left; right side presents a current map.

Xunantunich was first explored by Thomas Gann in the 1890s, when he was stationed in the Cayo District of western Belize as a medical officer, and later visited by Teobert Maler (1908a). J. Eric S. Thompson worked in Group B at the center in 1938, publishing on its ceramic sequence (Thompson 1942). In the 1960s, British archaeologist Euan MacKie (1961) excavated several structures, noting damage that he speculated might have resulted from an earthquake. (For a history of early work, see Leventhal et al. 2010: 2–5). In the 1990s, mapping, excavations, and regional surveys were undertaken by Richard Leventhal and Wendy Ashmore: the Xunantunich Archaeological Project (XAP) focused on the center and directed by Leventhal, and the surrounding settlement (the Xunantunich Settlement Survey or XSS), co-directed by the two.

Xunantunich is a mid-sized (about one square mile; 2.6 km<sup>2</sup>), long-occupied, ridge- or hill-top center that dominated numerous smaller sites in the upper Belize Valley in the Late and Terminal Classic period. This ridge-top location was sparsely occupied beginning in Early-to-Middle Preclassic times, with Cunil Complex sherds (1100–900 BC) found with platform constructions under the large Castillo structure (Str. A-C, Fig. 3.1 right) and scattered elsewhere (LeCount and Yaeger 2010a: 69). Other sites in the vicinity (e.g., Actuncan, Buenavista, Cahal Pech) appear to have played major regional political roles in the Preclassic and Early Classic (LeCount et al. 2002: 42–43). Xunantunich may have been involved in regional trade of pine wood (fuel, torches, furniture) from the Mountain Pine Ridge to the southeast (Lentz et al. 2005).

It was not until the Late Classic, however, that the settlement grew into an important center. Around the beginning of the ninth century, the site became a satellite of larger Naranjo, lying ~12 km to the west-northwest, perhaps by a cadet branch of that center’s ruling house (Ashmore and Leventhal 1993; LeCount et al. 2002). The two centers exhibit similarities in sculptural style, architecture, and layout. With its easily defensible siting, Xunantunich might have been a “frontier stronghold” for Naranjo (Ball and Taschek 1991: 154). Xunantunich flourished as Naranjo declined, erecting at least three Terminal Classic stelae: broken Stela 8 at 9.19.10.0.0 (AD 820), with the Naranjo Emblem Glyph; Stela 9, 10.0.0.0.0 (AD 830); and Stela 1 (10.1.0.0.0, AD 849),<sup>49</sup> plus a possible Cycle 10 altar. When Naranjo was abandoned, its rulers might have relocated to the more defensible Xunantunich (Martin and Grube 2008: 83). Jamie Awe, via his work on the Castillo, has explored the relationship between the two sites (Awe et al. 2020). His discovery of panels of the Caracol/Naranjo staircase indicate that Xunantunich was closely associated with Naranjo well before the early ninth century (see below). And the first of the Xunantunich monuments (Stela 8) dates only slightly after the last stela at Naranjo (AD 820), and is similar in style to late Naranjo stelae (Leventhal and Ashmore 2004).

The site’s temples and palaces (and two ballcourts) are dispersed among four major architectural groupings: A (a two-part main plaza), B, C, and D. These are arranged north-south with an east–west causeway crossing them, creating a cruciform layout (Jamison 2010). The center of the site, where the two axes cross, is dominated by the Castillo complex in Plaza A, an enormous, mountain-like construction c. 40 m (130’) tall, comprising a series of terraces, platforms, and structures, crowned by the Castillo itself (Figure 3.2). The temple has modeled

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<sup>49</sup> The Long Count dates on Stelae 8 and 1 are reconstructed from fragmentary Calendar Round dates; Stela 9 has a full Long Count.



stucco friezes on its upper exterior walls, the one on its eastern wall noticed as early as Gann's work. The eastern frieze displays mythological and cosmological themes, including various deities and the World Tree (Fields 2004), and the structure itself may represent Na Ho Kan/Chan, one of three cosmic thrones established during Creation time (Schele 1998: 490–491). It has been called an “ambitious propagandistic iconographic program developed by the rulers of Xunantunich to legitimize their rule” through associations of this massive building with cosmic origins (Jamison 2010: 127). This frieze was damaged by deadly Hurricane Hattie in 1961, and what is visible now is a fiberglass replica dating from 1996. The western frieze has been reburied.



Figure 3.2. Terminal Classic Structure A-6, the Castillo, at Xunantunich, viewed from the north. It stands 40 m high. Its stucco friezes are not visible in this photograph.

A particularly interesting feature of Xunantunich consists of the recently excavated carved Panels 3 and 4, found on either side of the center stairway of pyramidal Structure A-9 (Helmke and Awe 2016a, b). Both panels have texts presented as squared glyphic medallions. These panels originally bookended the narrative on the Hieroglyphic Stairway of Structure B5 at the site of Caracol, built by ruler K'an II (618–658 AD) to celebrate the period-ending of 9.10.10.0.0 in 642. Panel 4 at the beginning of the narrative has a partial date with the day name 18 Kank'in, the 9.10.10.0.0 dedicatory date. Panel 3 at the end of the narrative mentions an earlier *lajuntun* ending (9.9.10.0.0), the playing of a ballgame, and two important deaths. One was the death of Waxaklajuun Ubaah Kan of the Snake(-Head) dynasty of Calakmul, in Campeche, Mexico; the

other is the AD 638 death of Lady Batz' Ek', a Yaxha princess and K'an II's mother. Helmke and Awe (2016b) conclude that K'an II and Caracol were vassals of Calakmul, and Naranjo, another vassal, attacked Caracol in 680. The stairway was dismantled and parts of it were carried away by Naranjo's allies, such as Ucanal; panels have also been found at these sites.

Xunantunich did not survive much beyond the dedication of Stela 1 in AD 849. It might have met its demise through an earthquake or as part of the general turbulence of the Terminal Classic period in the southern lowlands.

## CHAPTER 4.

### BENQUE VIEJO AND VISITING XUNANTUNICH

#### Benque Viejo

May 12, Monday

The morning was devoted to getting a few last articles left out of the outfit altogether or, like quinine, of which I did not think I had a sufficiency. Also, there were last letters to write, including for me two letters of recommendation for membership in the Cosmos Club, one for [Clark] Wissler, who I am proposing with [Hiram] Bingham, and one for Sam Lothrop, who I am proposing with Mr. Holmes.

Another matter that had to be attended to was that of cash. I am taking with me \$200.00 cash, which I had to get from Habet and Savala in American bills. Blackman made a trip to Benque this morning and brought back Father Versavel, who is to return thereto with us right after dinner. By the time all of these several matters were attended to, it was lunch time and we sat down to another of Aunty's famous chickens, and before we had finished it Blackman was at the door with the Ford, and he began loading on our boxes and baggage. I should have said that I painted Brooks' skin again with iodine, in old Waight's saloon. It is very much better.

We had to wait a few minutes for our laundry and this having arrived, though still damp, we bid goodbye to Aunty Chon, Rachel, Candelario and his wife, the Enrights, etc., and climbed into the Ford. We picked Father Versavel up in front of the Court House and then climbed the hill. Father Versavel was of the opinion that the mules had gone on with the baggage to Plancha, but I hardly thought so. We had sent Chico over with the baggage in the morning and told him to stay there until we came over to watch the baggage, and Father Versavel told us he arrived at the mission with it.

We stopped at Succotz a few moments to see Eusebio, and he said he would be over between 4:30 and 5 to see the baggage, bringing with him his *arriero*. Father Versavel set the hour of his dinner back until 5, so we would have plenty of time to visit the Benque Viejo ruins [Xunantunich]. We had some little difficulty in securing a guide, but finally through the kind offices of Father Versavel, who sent his boy with us, we found a chap who said he would go. It was now after 3, and the sun at its very height. We crossed the Mopan [River] in a dory, Carl, Chico, myself, the guide, and a young auxiliary guide, the last two pure Maya. The distance is not far, but the ascent to the top of the low range of hills on the north side of the river is sharp, and before I reached the summit on which the temple [Structure A-6; Figure 3.2] stands, I was painfully aware of how soft I had grown during the past ten months. I was hot and perspiring, which of course was to be expected, but in addition was out of breath and weak like a woman. Carl felt much the same way, and even Chico drew his breath in quick sharp pants. After seeing



his first Maya building, Carl was ready to descend and see his first stela.

I had not realized the stela and square carved stone were so far below. We descended quite a bit to another plaza on the north side and came first to the square stone [Figure 4.1]. I reached the conclusion this time that this never could have been a lintel, but must always have been an altar. The upper left-hand corner was still missing and although I offered the several small boys we had collected en route a dollar gold if they would find it, after poking around for a few minutes they reached the unanimous conclusion that it wasn't there: "*no hay.*"<sup>50</sup>



Figure 4.1. Xunantunich Altar 1 in Maudslay's time.

Meanwhile, I had introduced Carl to the stela [Stela 1, Figure 4.2] and told him I couldn't help him a bit. It is a hard bit of deciphering, as the month's coefficient is gone, and only a small corner, the upper right-hand corner of the month sign itself, remains. Finally, the day coefficient

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<sup>50</sup> More of this altar was soon to go "missing." In 1924, Gann cut the figure of the skeleton from the monument and shipped it to the British Museum. Later, in 1938, Thompson reported that the hieroglyphic text Gann had left behind was missing (Graham 1978: 127).

is a head-variant numeral. Carl gave me my first surprise by finding the day sign and identifying it as Ajaw, and although the clearest part of the date, it is none too clear. Next, he handed me another surprise in identifying the day coefficient as a head-variant number, a big step forward, and ultimately, he worked this out as 5, its correct value. But the biggest surprise of all came when he correctly identified the single fragment of the month sign present as the eye of K'ayab, a real inspiration which excited my liveliest admiration. Carl certainly made good. It is a hard bit of reading, and he identified the most difficult parts; the rest was a work for Goodman's tables.<sup>51</sup> [This date is now read 10.1.0.0.0 5 Ajaw 3 K'ayab, AD 849 GMT.]

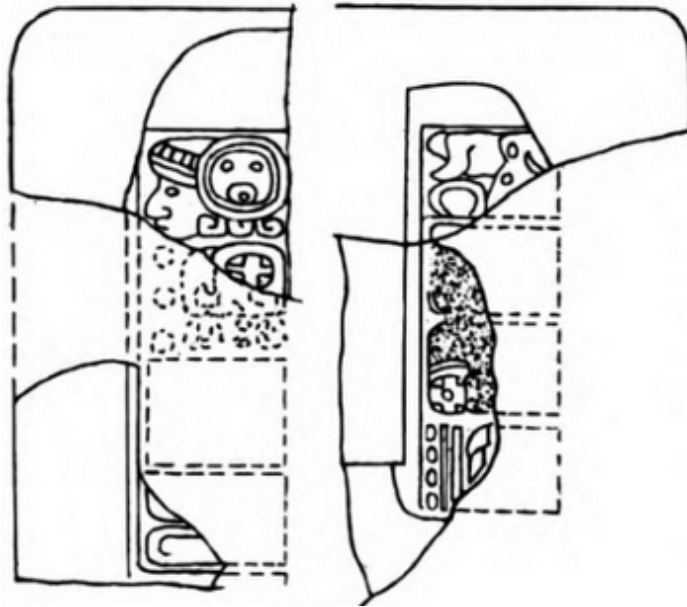


Figure 4.2. Morley's drawing of the Xunantunich Stela 1 Calendar Round inscription.

On the way back to the village, in fact on the other side of the hill, we stopped at our guide's *casita* where the boys drank some water. His milpa this year is right on the site of the old city, and he showed me a couple of large river stones which had been carried up there from the riverbed in ancient times. When we got back to Benque, I paid off our guide and then the three of us had an iced ginger ale each. Think of such luxury. I had a thirst worth many times the 20 cents it took to quench it.

Eusebio Valdez was already looking over the baggage when we returned to the mission, and he seemed to be satisfied with it; said his men would be around with the mules between 7 and 7:30. I offered to pay him for 10 days in advance, but he said two would be sufficient. Afterward, we sat down to another big dinner with Father Versavel. Afterward, he had an evening service

<sup>51</sup> The "Goodman tables" refer to J. Thomas Goodman's (1905) correlation of the Maya and Christian calendars, now solidified as the Goodman-Martínez-Thompson (GMT) correlation. The tables, "The Archaic Maya Inscriptions," were published in 1897 as an appendix to Alfred Maudslay's *Biología Centrali-Americana* (1889–1902). Goodman discovered the head-variant glyphs for Maya numbers, but much of his work repeats the earlier findings of Ernst Forstemann (see Sharer and Traxler 2006: 135–136).

and we had several things to attend to in the village. I first tried to get Tappin to take me over to Plancha in the truck, but he says the ferry [across the Mopan] is out of order, so it couldn't be done. Next, went to the Post Office where we mailed our letters, and next to the son of Benito Silva, who used to have a copy of the Peabody Naranjo report [Maler 1908a]. This unfortunately had been borrowed and not returned and its present whereabouts were uncertain.

We stopped at Pablo Guerra's store to find out news of ruins near the Mexican line—his *chicleros* had worked there last year. I got hold of a *chiclero* named Sixto Cambranes, who everybody admitted knew more about that part of the bush than any other man. He speaks of a ruin called Bambonal ['bamboo place'], 4 leagues beyond Tikal, which almost seems could be Uaxactun. Beyond that, 2 *jornadas* [2 day-long journeys] is another ruin. He gave me the name of a *chiclero* in Flores, Cruz Manzanero, who knew that part of the countryside as well as he does, he says. I feel confident from his description of his Bambonal that it must be my Uaxactun,<sup>52</sup> but I cannot be certain. It lies beyond the Bajo of Santa Fe, and the *paraje*<sup>53</sup> of Bejucal. It will be a great saving if we do not have to come back to El Cayo again, but can make Bambonal (Uaxactun) from Tikal direct. Sixto says his Bambonal is only 4 leagues beyond Tikal, where I placed Uaxactun 4 years ago.

We returned to the mission about 8 o'clock, and after a few minutes' conversation with Father Versavel, I went to bed and Carl to writing his diary. I have not slept here for four years, almost to the day. It was just after Lafleur's death.

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<sup>52</sup> Morley calls it "my" Uaxactun because he (re)named it "eight stone" (*waxak tun*) after finding Stela 9 with a Cycle 8—Early Classic ("Archaic")—date (see Rice and Ward 1921: 244–245, 291).

<sup>53</sup> A *paraje* (from *parar* 'to stop') is a cleared stopping place on a trail, typically near a water hole (*aguada*) and with thatched structures (*champas*, *galerones*) to shelter travelers and mules.

## CHAPTER 5.

### BENQUE VIEJO TO FLORES

#### Santa Cruz

#### May 13, Thursday

As this is Ascensión Thursday, we could not have breakfast at the mission until after the service, i.e., after eight o'clock. The *arrieros* came at 7:30, packed the baggage, and left us the three saddle animals. After breakfast, the father wanted us to see his garden and, although it was 8:30, I felt I must do this. He has a nice place, a strip of above five acres in the center of which he is going to build his industrial school for girls. He has a sort of verbal agreement with the government that they will make the same allowance for their board that they do for the asylum inmates in Belize. He figures that the building he has in mind will cost six or seven thousand dollars.

After admiring his bananas—three different varieties—plantains, casavas, pineapples, corn, etc., etc., we got back to the mission and mounted our animals. Carl had never ridden a mule before and had his troubles almost from the start. We passed the Post Office to mail the letters we had written between rising time and breakfast, and then down to the ford. Carl's mule flatly refused to take the path leading down the steep riverbank, and against all Carl's kicking and pounding and moral suasion, turned a deaf ear. It finally took Eusebio and a boy of his leading the beast to get him down to the ford at all. The Mopan was low and we crossed without difficulty. And here my troubles began. I rode ahead smartly and was nearly unseated when my mule shied from a stick. It is a big mule, and the resulting jump he gave pretty nearly landed me in the road. Twice this happened until I felt quite at home on the *mañoso* [difficult, misbehaving] animal. I had gotten somewhat ahead with these maneuvers, so waited for Chico to catch up. He reported that Carl was right behind, so I rode on into Plancha.

To my dismay, I found all the cargo unloaded and piled nicely under the portal of the customs house. I sent at once to see don Pablo Guerra, and Carl joined me presently. We walked over to the customs house where, upon my assurance that we carried no firearms, [Guerra] passed our baggage without opening it and made out the necessary *guia*. While they were packing the mules, we returned to the house and chatted for half an hour. His nephew, Emilio, came in—I had known him before—and the talk turned upon ruins. Emilio had seen two stelae in the bush on the Callar Creek road, about 4 leagues from Plancha, and don Pablo had heard of another that far to the south. He is going to have both stories investigated so that when I come out, he can have them shown to me. Old Pablo is nervous over his job and is keen on helping everybody now. It came out in the general conversation that his birthday is the same as mine, June 7th, and so I needs must draw his birthday glyph.

But now the mules were at last ready to go on, and bidding goodbye to don Pablo and Emilio,



we turned over the hill and into the *camino real* [main trail; lit. “royal road”] to Flores [Figure 5.1], which at once enters deep bush. We had left Benque about 9:15, but it was just 10:30 when we left Plancha. It was obvious that we could not make Yaxha that night, so I told the *arriero* we would sleep at Santa Cruz, 6 leagues beyond Plancha.

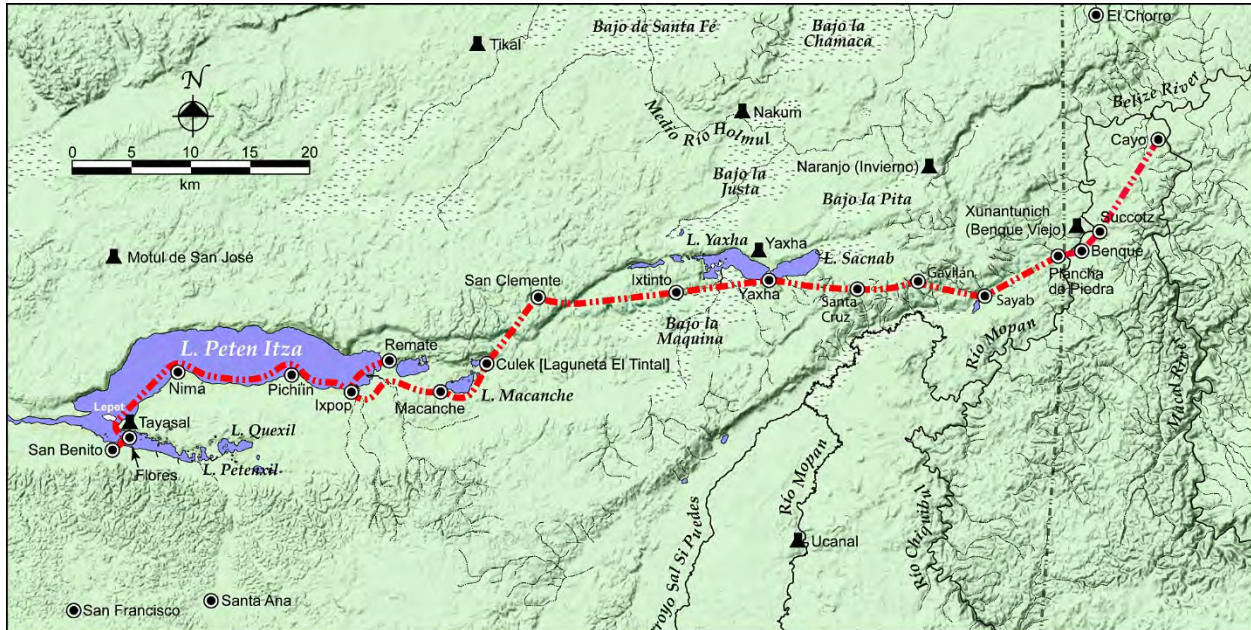


Figure 5.1. The route of Morley’s journey from Cayo to Flores.

The ride is a monotonous one through *bajos* [low-lying, often swampy areas] of corozo palm for the first two leagues to Sayab, where we passed the last water until we reach Santa Cruz. Two leagues beyond Sayab we passed the *paraje* of Gavilán. The *aguada* here was dry and the mule trains going westward have to make Santa Cruz their first stop at this time of year. We reached Santa Cruz at 4:45 p.m. and found another *patacho* of 15 mules already there. It belonged to a tall Syrian, Felipe Something, whom I met first five years ago at the Laguna de Yaloch, when Percy Adams and I went to La Honradez.<sup>54</sup>

The *aguada* of Santa Cruz was all but completely dried up. Someone had dug wells in the bottom, where the vile tasting, muddy water might still be had. Chico prepared some tea from this, and we gulped it down as best we could, but it was hard going in spite of some delicious limes and rich brown sugar. Supper tasted good, however, and afterward we fixed the cots and *pabellones* (mosquito-bars [nets]). We set the cots up with their feet under a *champa*—very poorly built—and then tied the *pabellones* above them. I showed Carl how to tuck the nets under the bedding to keep out the ubiquitous *sancudos* [mosquitoes]. He was under his *pabellón* before eight, and I stayed outside until 8:30 talking ruins with Felipe and his *arriero*. An owl croaked in a nearby

<sup>54</sup> La Honradez is a medium-sized Classic site in northeast Petén, which Morley visited in 1915. See Rice and Ward 2021: Chapters 10, 12, and 13.

tree and the boys said it was a sign of bad luck. We are starting on May 13, and have 13 mules. The only consolation in all this welter of evil omens is that 13 was a lucky number with the Maya.<sup>55</sup>

## Culek<sup>56</sup>

### May 14, Friday

We rose something after five and after breakfast with some more of that dirty water for tea, we set out at about 7, reaching Yaxha at quarter to nine. Here was a considerable confusion. Several *muladas* were in, and Carl counted more than 60 mules. There was much shouting and swearing of *arrieros* before the mules could be disentangled and started off in different directions. My own mule strayed off into a pack of cargo animals, and I cut it out from among them only with some difficulty.

I had to show my *guía* from don Pablo to the *alcalde* here, an Indian who had been with me 5 years ago when I stopped over a day at Yaxha and visited the ruins there on the north side of the western lake.<sup>57</sup> I also sent Chico around the village to make a house-to-house canvass for some tortillas, and he presently returned with 10.

This finished our business in Yaxha and we continued on our way. Carl's mule again flatly refused to move and was only dragged from the plaza by the aid of an obliging *arriero*. Felipe, the Syrian, had in the meantime put one over at our expense. He is only going as far as Ixtinto today, and wanted me to do the same, as did also my *arrieros*, but I had already decided that that was too short a *jornada*, and that we at least would push on to Culek. Felipe tried to checkmate me here by getting his 15 mules out of Yaxha first, then going so slowly that we would reach Ixtinto too late to push on the remaining 3½ leagues to Culek. However, he failed in this, for when I came out on the shore west of the village, we swung our *mulada* out from behind his and by a shortcut near the lake, cut in ahead of him, for which he roundly blamed the youth leading the *mulada*. I called back to him that the "*culpa*" was "*mía*" [the fault was mine], but he abused the boy verbally further.

After this, we slowly drew away from his train and saw it no more. The ruin on the north shore of the western lake [the Classic site of Yaxha] shows up very clearly from the south shore, and it was possible to see pyramid after pyramid. The *camino real* soon draws away from the lakeshore and plunges into the bush again. It took us 2-1/3 hours to reach Ixtinto, where we heard the cries of *arrieros* before we reached there. Our *arriero*, one Eulogio Medina, was sulky because I would not stop for the day there: he said from Culek to Santa Cruz was 3 *jornadas*, but I certainly was not going to stop at 11:30, and so we pushed on.

The next stretch, from Ixtinto to San Clemente,<sup>58</sup> was the worst of the day. It took us 3½ hours to do it, and it must have been a good 10 miles. The sun beat down mercilessly, and we were

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<sup>55</sup> Calling 13 a "lucky" number is somewhat misleading. Rather, in Maya numerology it is cosmocalendarically significant: 13 numerical prefixes of day names in the 260-day sacred almanac, 13 *k'atuns* in a 260-"year" *k'atun* cycle, and 13 celestial levels and gods.

<sup>56</sup> This is probably "Julek," a common shortened version of *julequi*, a term for sinkhole in Petén.

<sup>57</sup> Lake Yaxha is the western of a pair of lakes, Sacnab lying immediately to the east, with a narrow isthmus between them.

<sup>58</sup> The beginning of this westward journey is confusing. There are several places in Petén called

consumed with thirst. Even the deep bush was sultry and the leaves of the smaller bushes drooping. I have never seen the bush so dry, and indeed everybody one meets says the same thing—that the *verano* [summer (northern hemisphere winter), dry season] is unduly protracted. At 2:50 we passed San Clemente, a nice *galerón* [thatch-roofed shelter] but its *aguada* quite dry. From here I had heard that it was only 2 leagues farther to our destination for the day, Culek, and in fact it took us just 2 hours. These last two leagues were very greatly helped by a thunderstorm which came up suddenly and cooled things off for us. The ground was so hot and parched that it did not grow moist. But we got a little wet ourselves, which cooled us off.

I have not been so thirsty in a long, long time as I was today. The fierce heat of the May sun<sup>59</sup> seems to have drawn all the surplus moisture out of my body, and every fiber in me called for water. We were in the saddle for ten hours lacking only ten minutes, and one can imagine how stiff and tired and sore we were, to say nothing of a consuming thirst, which transcended every other need. Happily, we could bathe while Chico was boiling water for tea, and we went down to the shore of the lovely little lake, which gives its name, Culek, to this *paraje*. But after the manner of the country, there was a decided fly in the ointment of our bath. There were no large rocks on the shore to sit on, only a few sharp and small stones, and worse still, the bottom of the lake was filled with a stinking foul mud, into which one's feet sank way above the knees. One imagined it filled with all sorts of slimy, crawling creatures, but it was the only bottom there was, and so standing in the slime, one waited for the water to clarify, and then bathed with as little motion of the feet as possible. The water itself was fine, quite a turquoise blue, and it refreshed us wonderfully. I even could have sworn that it quenched my thirst a little, but.

By the time we had dressed and gotten back to the mules, Chico had supper ready, and some really delicious tea. Before dinner was over, I had finished 5 cups and Carl a like number, and during the evening he managed to get down 3 more. Another fly in the ointment of our complete enjoyment of this lovely spot was the fact that a mule had died too recently and too near the *paraje*. This was very high, and at times when the wind came just right, it was suffocating. This was so strong, in fact, that I decided to move my cot down to the lower end of the *paraje* farther away from the source of this olfactory nuisance. A *mulada* was already camped here, but they agreeably allowed us to put up our cots among them, and Chico swung his hammock there, too. We put up our *pabellones* again, and in doing so tied them to the hammock ropes of the *arrieros*. When these swung back and forth, the *pabellones* swayed sympathetically, but it did not disturb us greatly. We were too tired. A 10-hour day in the saddle without stopping is a goodish bit, and we both felt it. However, the bath and tea had done me a lot of good, and as I lay on my cot in my pajamas, I could actually feel the tiredness and muscular soreness slipping as I relaxed.

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Ixtinta or Ixtinto, and we assume the one mentioned here is a very small site just south of Lake Yaxha. In any case, the "*camino real*" of which Morley speaks was a *chiclero* trail well north of the present paved road. It passed from the vicinity of Lake Yaxha west through a well-known *paraje* called San Clemente, and then southwestward to the four or five small lakes or ponds on the north side of Lake Macanche. Maler's sketch map of this area (Ward and Rice 2021: Figure 1) shows the trail and names two of these ponds "Kulek."

<sup>59</sup> May is the last month of the dry season, and its intense heat is made even worse by smoke from the burning of the forests to prepare agricultural plots (*milpas*) for planting corn.



The country between Yaxha and Culek is a succession of low ridges, 200 or 300 feet high, separated by low *bajos*, which must be swamps in the rainy season. The tops of these ridges are levelled off artificially and were once crowned with small stone buildings, the remains of which may still be seen. Practically every ridge was thus levelled off, and practically every one had one or more mounds where the trail crossed them. On the summit of the ridge overlooking the lake of Culek we thought we distinguished a limestone temple, but it was too late to climb up there, even if we had had the desire.

## Ixpop

### May 15, Saturday

I was awakened shortly after 2 a.m. by the surrounding *arrieros* rising. Something was frying on the fire, not 3 yards from my head. I could hear the sputtering grease distinctly, and presently other getting-up sounds were added thereto. And after this I only slept fitfully until 5, when we got up. This morning we got an early start; were off by 6:45. The *camino real* climbed a ridge just west of the little lake where we had bathed yesterday, and on its summit—again artificially leveled—were two distinct mounds, in fact the trail passes right over one of them. A little farther on, the Lake of Macanche came into view, much larger than Culek, and a lovely spot. We reached the settlement of Macanche at the end of an hour.<sup>60</sup>

Here the trail swings north over a lowish ridge and thus gradually winds down [south] to the beach of Lake Petén Itzá. Long before the shore is reached, one can see the gradual thinning out of the forest. First, a trail bore away to the right from the *camino real*, the road to Remate, and presently we turned off to the right ourselves, to Boburg's ranch of Ixpop.<sup>61</sup>

We reached Ixpop at ten o'clock on the wrong side of the Arroyo Ixpop, that is the east side, and away from the *rancho*. Some time ago a bridge had been started, indeed the supports and all the long members were in position, but the flooring was lacking. I hailed some man on the other side and after some argument a dory put over for me. I found the motorboat had called yesterday, and would probably not be in until tomorrow; further, that don Clodoveo<sup>62</sup> was expected to go to Remate today to meet the new *jefe político* coming by way of Belize. As we were discussing these various matters, one of the boys at the *rancho*, Anastasio Montero, raised the cry that he could see the *Giralda*, don Clodoveo's boat, passing on the other side of the lake for Remate.

My only course of action seemed to be to cross the lake myself and intercept him, giving him as much news as I had. I quickly acted on this plan. Eulogio, who was still waiting with the mule

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<sup>60</sup> Today, the Macanche settlement lies on the southwest shore of the lake, on the modern road.

<sup>61</sup> Morley's description here is confusing. It seems the *camino real* he traveled on was an old—perhaps Postclassic/Contact period—trail headed west from Lake Macanche, passing north of Lake Salpeten (and its long-lived—Preclassic through Contact period—settlement of Zacpeten/Sak Peten; Rice and Rice 2009), without mentioning it, then turning south to the eastern shore of Lake Petén Itzá. The two lakes are separated by a 1 km-wide isthmus. Remate is a small community on the northeastern edge of Lake Petén; Ixpop, another small community, occupies a tiny peninsula on the southeastern shore, where the "Río" Ixpop empties into the lake.

<sup>62</sup> Don (Lic.) Clodovego Berges was the *jefe político* of Flores and later the governor of Petén. Morley consistently misspells his first name, which we correct hereafter.

train loaded, I told to unload and take the empty train on to San Benito,<sup>63</sup> whither I expected him to arrive before tomorrow night. I arranged with Francisco Montero, who is in charge of Boburg's *finca*, to permit his younger brother, Anastasio, to paddle me over to Remate in a dory. Chico went with me, Carl staying behind to look after the baggage.

It was calm enough when we started, but by the time we reached the middle of [this end of] the lake quite a brisk breeze was blowing, and the waves running a little high. The sun beat down fiercely and made it very warm. On the way over we saw no further trace of the *Giralda*, and when we reached Remate, no sign of it was there. Indeed, we found out here that what the boys had probably seen was a *canoa* called the *Concha* en route to Flores or someplace down at the eastern [sic., western] end of the lake.

It was now furiously hot on the Remate plaza. I went first to the home of Jacobo Melchor, my old guide to Tikal, but he had been gone for 8 days to a fiesta at San José [on the northwest shore of Lake Petén]. My next thought was for food, but it was not until after I had been refused at 3 or 4 houses before I encountered a woman who would give me something to eat. This food was prepared while I waited for it, swinging in the hammock. It consisted of freshly baked tortillas, two small fish from the lake, two eggs, and coffee. The girl who rolled the *masa* is going to Flores this afternoon with her brother, so before I left, I wrote two notes, one to the governor, don Clodovego Berges, informing him that the new governor left Belize Wednesday, and the other to Paco Boburg, telling him to come for us tomorrow without fail. Also, before leaving I left word with the son-in-law of Jacobo Melchor to tell Jacobo to come over to Ixpop this afternoon if he came back, as I wanted to talk with him about the Tikal trip.

We got off from Remate about 2, but the sky to the south looked very black and threatening, and Anastasio thought it safer to row around by the shore instead of cutting straight across the lake to Ixpop. But before we had gone a quarter of a mile, rain began to fall and we put into shore at a *playa* in front of a small *rancho* where was a primitive sugar mill. In fact, some men under a *galerón* had just finished pouring out some sugar into wooden molds [Figure 5.2]. *Panela* they call the brown sugar in this form. The man remembered me from 6 years ago when Joe [Spinden] and I went from Remate to Tikal with Jacobo Melchor. We talked for about an hour—he seems to think Tikal can be made in two long days—and then, the storm having passed, we returned to the *canoa* and put across the lake.

Another disappointment waited me here. Carl, fearing that I had missed connections with the motorboat, had told Eulogio to put back after he had started, so that he was still waiting when I got back to Ixpop. There was nothing to be done but let him wait until tomorrow before starting. But meanwhile, I made arrangements for another messenger to leave at once carrying word to Paco Boburg [in Flores] to send the motorboat first thing in the morning for us.

I gave a man my horse and a letter for Paco and he got off about four o'clock. Chico prepared

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<sup>63</sup> San Benito is a community on the southwest shore of the southern basin of Lake Petén Itzá, opposite Flores. It was Morley's arrival and departure point for travel between the western and eastern ends of the lake. Settled by escaped Black slaves from then British Honduras, and named for the Black Saint Benito de Palermo, the town long had a reputation for "moral laxity" (see Schwartz 1990: 65–67). Two houses of prostitution (Mangos Bar I and II) graced the main street in the 1970s.

tea for dinner and with some corned beef hash, eggs, and tortillas, we fared very well. The water of the lake is sweet, and with lemon juice makes a good tasty weak tea, the main requisite. We went to bed early. The cots were put up in the main part of the house where three hammocks were also swung—each inhabited, and I fear by more than one living thing—and the boys, Chico, Anastasio, and young Beto Boburg, the only members of the doctor's family at the *rancho*, slept in the next room.



Figure 5.2 A man pouring unrefined cane sugar juice into wooden molds to solidify into the typical half-moon shapes of *panela*, dark brown sugar.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Editors' Insert: FLORES ISLAND AND LAKE PETÉN ITZÁ

Ciudad Flores, occupying a small island in southern Lake Petén Itzá, is today the capital of the Department of El Petén and the island was, before that, the principal city of the Itza Maya kingdom in the area. Flores Island (Figures 6.1, 6.2) is the largest (*noj peten*, 'big island') of several islets in the small, shallow, southern "thumb" of the lake.

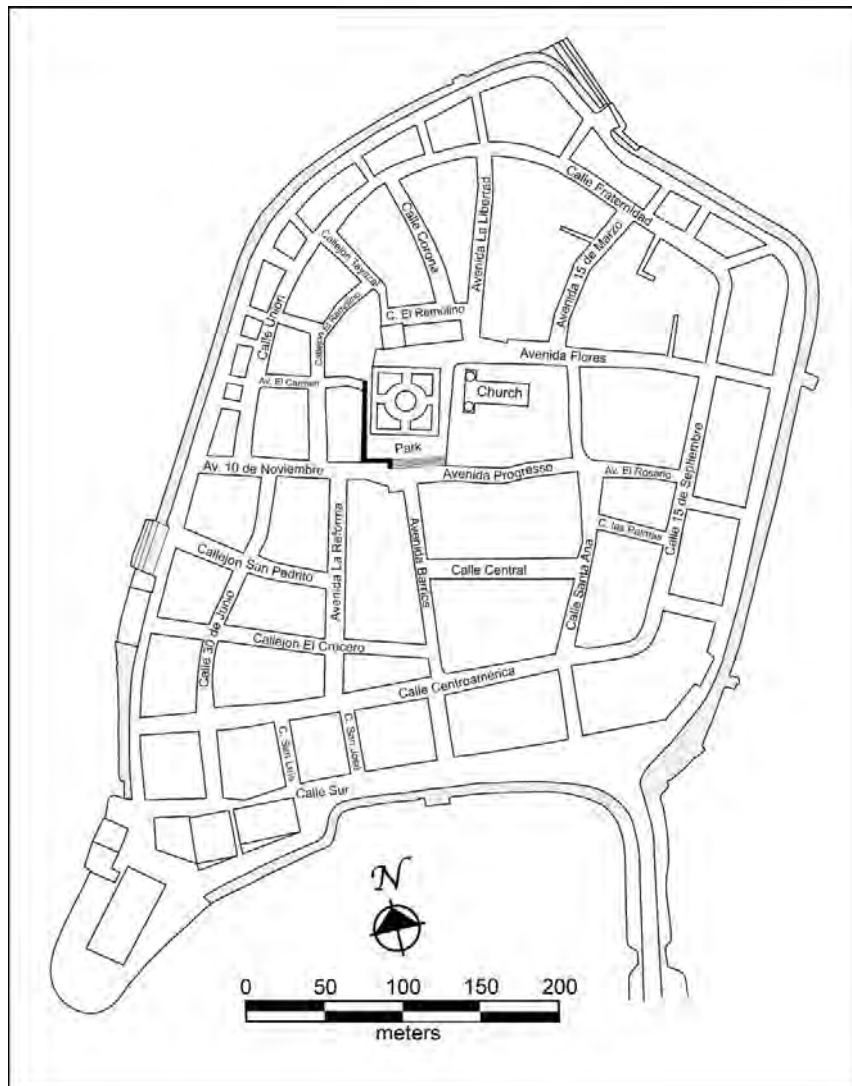


Figure 6.1. Map of Flores Island today.



Figure 6.2. View of modern Flores, Guatemala, and its whitewashed church, looking southeast.

With an area of 23.7 acres (9.6 hectares; 0.96 km<sup>2</sup>) and rising ~17 m (~56 ft.) above the fluctuating levels of the lake waters, Flores exhibits a concentric settlement pattern, with circumferential tiers of homes, stores, hotels, and streets up to the center. The elevated center is dominated by its old church and well-maintained plaza, surrounded by municipal buildings. Today, the island is divided into four main sectors by steeply sloping streets and alleys (Figure 6.3) from the center down to the lakeshore, like spokes of a wheel. Each sector has a mix of commercial (tourist-oriented) functions, primarily around the island's circumference, and residential functions.

In Morley's time, many of the structures were built of wattle and daub (*bajareque*) or *mampostería* (rubble masonry) with thatched roofs, and the streets were unpaved or cobblestoned. Today, they are primarily of concrete block with steeply sloping roofs of sheets of red zinc *lámina*, maintaining the mix of traditional Yucatan and Caribbean/Belizean styles of vernacular architecture, the latter with wood facing and balconies (Sánchez Góngora 2007). In the early twenty-first century, the streets were covered with concrete pavers after the sewage and potable water systems were updated.

Exterior doorways feature traditional flattened or elliptical arches, known as a three-point arch because three circles of different diameters were used to create them. Their history is unknown, although one of the oldest is said to be in a mid-sixteenth-century bridge over the Amo River in Italy. The curved back of these arches is often decorated with a high relief shell motif, possibly related to the conquest-era patron of Spain, Santiago (Rice 2018a: 280, 287n5).





Figure 6.3. One of the alleys in Flores in the early 1920s. The density of construction and the palm-thatched roofs created fire hazards.

Devastating fires have played an ugly role in Flores' history. In 1842, much of the old town, a large part of which had roofs constructed of *guano* (palm thatch), was destroyed, and 16 years later in 1858 another fire swept through several areas. More damaging still was the fire of 1872, which destroyed 109 houses and burned the city archive. Finally, during the period covered in our present volume, a major fire in late 1921 left much of the town in ashes (Municipio de Flores, Petén n.d.). Images of Flores taken by Oliver Ricketson, Jr., in 1921, published here for the first time, provide a rare look at what the town looked like in the early 1920s.

Flores is best-known as the departure point for tourists visiting the ruins of many Classic-period (ca. AD 200–900) sites in Petén, such as Tikal, Yaxha, and Seibal. The city can be reached via air travel into the modern Mundo Maya International Airport<sup>64</sup> or overland via roads constructed and/or paved in the 1970s, linking to Belize and Guatemala City. (Morley would be thrilled at not having to rely on mules!) Within the lake basin, transport of goods and people to and from Flores is accomplished by motorized water taxis (*lanchas*) from lakeside communities or, since 1966, via a causeway between the southern mainland and Flores. Besides tourism (and associated restaurants, hotels, transportation services, and artisan crafts/souvenirs), exports of

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<sup>64</sup> This airport, in nearby Santa Elena on the mainland, was, until the late 1970s, a dirt strip handling primarily DC-3s for cargo (especially chicle) and passengers. It was modernized with an extended paved runway and instrument landing technology for adjacent military as well as passenger jet service.

forest products, chiefly chicle and *xate*,<sup>65</sup> were also important to Flores' economy until recently. But the island has a long history of occupation dating back at least to the Middle Preclassic period (ca. 900–400 BC), as revealed by abundant pottery fragments unearthed in excavations for remodeling or modernization (sewage; electricity) projects. That history is difficult to access systematically because of the density of overlying residential and tourist-oriented construction.

The best-known phase of Flores's pre-Columbian history comes at the end, in the sixteenth century and later, when Flores Island was the capital of the Itzas of Petén. In 1525, Hernán Cortés visited the island on his march from highland central Mexico to the Caribbean coast of Honduras to investigate a rebellious colleague, Capt. Cristóbal de Olid. In a letter to King Charles V of Spain he noted that the lake was so large it seemed like an arm of the sea, but the water was sweet. He (and his multilingual translator, doña Marina) dined with the Itza ruler Kan Ek' on the island before heading south to find Olid, leaving his lame black horse with the Itzas (see p. 47, note 74).

In the subsequent 172 years, the Spaniards engaged in a campaign to subjugate the previously unknown inhabitants of this unknown land—the “New World”—although their efforts in Petén were sporadic and notably unsuccessful. It was not until March of 1697 that the Spaniard Martín de Ursúa y Arizmendi was able to bring about the defeat of the Itzas, having constructed a ship (with fittings brought along a newly constructed *camino real* south from Campeche) and launched it across the lake toward the island from their encampment somewhere on the Candelaria Peninsula to the west (Jones 1998). In short order, Ajaw Kan Ek' surrendered and Ursúa renamed the island Nuestra Señora de los Remedios y San Pablo, and established a garrison and a church.

Ursúa and his men then set about the first stages of demolishing the “barbarian” Itza civic-ceremonial structures on the *noj peten* to turn it into a Spanish town. One of the earliest descriptions of the island is from visiting Franciscan fathers Bartolomé de Fuensalida and Juan de Orbita (Morley 1937-38, I: 27–31), who arrived in 1618 from the missions in Belize, especially Tipu on the Mopan River.

More information comes from another visiting friar, Andrés de Avendaño y Loyola (1987 [1696]), who in 1695 traveled to the island from Tipu in the hope of securing Itza submission before the Spaniards resorted to military conquest. He, along with others, probably traveled along a route very similar to that Morley followed 200-some years later. The Spaniards commented on the residence of Ajaw Kan Ek', its location uncertain but probably in the island's lower southeastern quadrant (Rice 2018a: 294). Of greater interest, however, was the Itzas' main temple, high in the center. This structure was a copy of similar temples now better known from Chichen Itza and in reduced size at Mayapan to the north in Yucatan. Archaeologists describe these “Castillo” [castle] structures as “radial pyramids”: square in plan, with nine tiers and a stairway up the center of each side, and a flat-topped temple superstructure. Serpent head sculptures sat at the base of the balustrades of the stairways and patterns of sunlight and shadow gave the illusion of a serpent slithering down the stairs. At Chichen Itza this hierophany occurred on the northern stairway on the equinoxes; at Mayapan it was seen on the winter solstice. Both were dedicated to the “feathered serpent” hero/deity known as Kukulcan or Quetzalcoatl. Little is

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<sup>65</sup> *Xate* refers to the fronds of the *Chamaedorea* genus of palms, popular for floral arrangements because they stay green for more than a month after being cut.



known about the features of the temple at Flores, although it is thought to have been about 16.5 m on a side (Jones 1998: 74), smaller than those to the north, and it probably sat on the south side of what is now the central plaza of Flores.

Lake Petén Itzá, the second largest lake in Guatemala (see Brenner 2018), is not as large as Morley says: it is 32 km long east–west and 5 km wide. The lake has two connected sub-basins: the very large northern body, ~165 m deep, and a much smaller and shallower arm to the southwest, the two separated by the Tayasal Peninsula. It is, as Morley notes, a closed basin, with small streams running into it and no external drainage (except perhaps underground through cracks and fissures in the karsted limestone). Because it is a closed basin, it can experience dramatic rises and falls of several meters in response to seasonal (rainfall) and climate variations. Father Avendaño asked the Itzas about lake level changes at the end of the seventeenth century, and they denied such occurrences. But modern record-keeping has revealed at least two dramatic rises of 4–5 m in the Lake Petén waters during the twentieth century, and they occurred in the other nearby lakes as well. The first occurred over about a decade between 1929 and 1938; the cover of the 1937 issue of *Revista Petén Itzá* presents an aerial photograph of Flores looking west, and appears to show very high water. The second rise began in 1978, with the high levels sustained through the 1990s, inundating the lower circumferential unpaved road and tier of stores, hotels, and restaurants. This low perimeter of the island was apparently devoid of buildings until the early twentieth century, likely because of such fluctuations in lake stage, and since the 1980s–’90s it has been rebuilt. But other lakes, such as Lakes Yaxha and Salpeten, also experienced rises and falls, with the Topoxte Islands in southwest Lake Yaxha sometimes joined to the mainland. The ancient Maya must have been aware of this phenomenon, because archaeologists typically find the foundations of the lowest Postclassic structures around the lakes about 3–4 meters above present lake levels.

## CHAPTER 7.

### FLORES

#### Flores

#### May 16, Sunday

Chickens, dogs, fleas, and *gente* [people] all contributed to a general waking up before dawn, although I managed to doze on until after six. Chico had the water boiling by this time and we had breakfast. For the next two hours I wrote in this diary, being a few days behind, and it was nearly 10 before Francisco Montero first sighted a motorboat off Point Pichi'in.<sup>66</sup> This was nearly an hour in reaching us and by the time it came up the creek [Río or Arroyo Ixpop] to Boburg's landing, the luggage was packed and down at the *playa*. Eulogio and the unloaded *mulada* had gotten off about 6:30 on the Flores road for San Benito. Paco, Boburg's oldest boy, did not come back, but the engineer, Guillermo, was in charge of the *Alpha*, Boburg's old boat, with a fine new 12 horsepower Gray engine which pushes her along at the rate of 18 miles an hour. We were six—Chico and myself, Guillermo, Anastasio, Montero, and a younger brother who had come in the capacity of a supercargo.

The water was so low in Arroyo Ixpop that the boys had to pole out nearly to the mouth, and then engine trouble began. Guillermo turned the flywheel over and over and over until the perspiration literally poured off him; he tore his finger on a screw and added blood to sweat, and still the cranky motor would not fire. It became apparent after some time that the trouble was in the sparkplugs. He took these apart, cleaned them, and finally induced one cylinder to fire, and at last both began to wheeze and we pulled out of the Ixpop. The lake is so low that it was necessary to pole over the bar, and finally we were off, cutting the water smartly at 18 miles an hour, both cylinders hitting regularly.

The lake of Petén Itzá is about 30 miles long, east to west, and not more than 7 miles at the widest. Hills rise sharply from the northern *playa*, possibly to a height of 300 feet. The southern shore is low and only a few hills appear here and there above the somewhat low vegetation. Succeeding north- and south-running ridges close in the drainage area of the lake to the east, and others, less regular, block it at the west. Lake Petén Itzá is in fact an interior drainage. The island city of Flores, toward which we were headed, is at the extreme western end. The first point passed on the southern shore, Pichi'in, is perhaps 7 or 8 miles from Arroyo Ixpop. The second point, Nimá, must be nearer twice that distance beyond Pichi'in, and the third point, again about 7 or 8 miles beyond Nimá. Just beyond the last is the [western tip of the] peninsula which lies just north of Flores, and which I am convinced, because of the archaeological remains upon it, was the city

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<sup>66</sup> Point Pichi'in was the eastern of the two north-pointing extensions of the deeply scalloped southern shoreline of Lake Petén Itza. The name survives on some modern maps as Pichain.

of Tayasal visited by Cortes in 1524 and conquered by Martín de Ursúa in 1697 [Chapter 6].

The present town is on an island about 1-1/8 miles in circumference and about a third of a mile in diameter [about 700 m north-south and 375 m east-west]. When we rounded the point of the peninsula I called Carl's attention to the ruins on top, and in fact all along the crest for several miles, and he agreed with me that it was much more likely to have been the site than Flores proper, which today is crowded with a thousand souls. Turning south rounding the point, Flores came into view, first the conspicuous lofty palms surrounding the Plaza, then the church, dazzling white in the afternoon sun, the *jefatura política* [political headquarters], and finally the new *cabildo* [town hall], a two-story building of no architectural merit, with balconies around, after the style of the houses in Belize. The Spanish did things better, and the church, in spite of the fact that its fine old barrel-arched roof has been replaced by a hideous monstrosity of corrugated iron, is easily the most dignified building in the place.

We almost completely encircled the island before coming to the *playa* nearest the *aduana* [customs house; Figure 7.1]. Anastasio saw Paco Boburg running along the *playa* and when we got in, he was on the beach. I greeted him warmly. He has grown into an upstanding, rather nice-looking, youth.



Figure 7.1. The waterside landing at Flores in the 1920s, probably on the south-southwest side of the island.

First, we walked up to the *aduana*, leaving Chico to guard the baggage which the boys were unloading on the strand. We met the director on the street and we shook hands; he was an old acquaintance. He said it would be necessary to have the baggage moved up to the *aduana* to have

it registered, and while this was being done, I went in search of a house. I had heard of one being vacant and set out to look for its owner. My idea is to rent it for a week. After some trouble, we failed to locate the son of the owner, in whose hands the renting lay, so sent to Paco's house. On our way we met Kid Taintor,<sup>67</sup> another old friend from La Libertad, who in 1914 and 1915 was in charge of Manuel Otero's mules, and who is now in charge of the *muladas* of the American Chicle Co. He was just going off to La Libertad. He dealt me a staggering blow when he said the ruins of El Sos were nothing more nor less than those of Itsimte [see Chapter 36], which I saw five years ago. This was a very great disappointment. I had high hopes of its being a new ruin, but I had told Carl that it might possibly be Itsimte, and so it runs out. Taintor thinks he knows of a stone near Laguna Perdida that may have carving on it, but he is not sure.

From [Taintor], we walked around to Dr. Boburg's new house, still with Paco. And here was María and little Luisa, Boburg's youngest daughter. María has added unto herself a child. She says she married a Mexican by the name of Villares, whose first name she doesn't know—later her niece told me his name was Carlos Ramos. He left her a year ago with this infant, the cause of his departure being that his attentions to an Indian servant girl in the Boburg family had resulted in another infant. Both mothers and both children are living together happily while the worthless father has gone to Mexico, where María has heard he has been killed. "*Puro bandito era*" [he was a true outlaw].

From here, we went down to don Clodovego's, who gave me a warm welcome. After a double *abrazo* [hug], I introduced Carl and we had a long talk. I told him first what I knew of the arrival of Coronel Pacheco Quevedo, and then the conversation turned to the death of poor don Manuel Otero on January 21st after the earthquake. His death had much affected don Clodovego, I could see, and our conversation followed this melancholy strain clear through. We naturally talked of the revolution which unseated Estrada Cabrera<sup>68</sup> and he told me what he knew of it. At one time the assembly had actually passed an act permitting the president to leave the country with full honors to be cured of a serious illness. But his advisers seemed to have misinterpreted this as a sign of weakness on the part of the *unionistas* and hardened Pharaoh's heart, hence the revolution and the subsequent imprisonment of Estrada Cabrera. I must have talked with don Clodovego for an hour or more. While we were there, a heavy shower came up cooling the air.

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<sup>67</sup> Taintor later became one of La Libertad's most important chicle operators and remained Morley's friend well into the 1940s (Brunhouse 1971: 289). Brunhouse spells his name Tainter, as did Morley in his original diary. However, at some point someone (presumably Morley himself) went through and changed "Tainter" to "Taintor." We retain this last spelling, but other than the Brunhouse reference, we have not found any mention of him to confirm which is correct.

<sup>68</sup> Manuel Estrada Cabrera (1857–1924) was president/dictator of Guatemala from 1898 to 1920. He ruled with an iron fist from his very first years, arresting political rivals and punishing dissent with brutal force. Morley met him in Guatemala City at the time of the 1917 Christmas earthquake and described him: "The eyes are a piercing black, and his most notable feature. The face is heavily lined—cruelty, lust, power, satiation, and disillusionment are all registered there . . . he rarely looks you straight in the eye, rather avoiding it. There was no magnetic thrill, however, when he did, rather an impression of power and cruelty" (Ward and Rice 2021: 331). After Estrada Cabrera was deposed in 1920, he was sent to prison, where he died four years later.

But we were still without a roof over our heads and I returned to Dr. Boburg's. María had in the meantime discovered that the house opposite theirs was vacant. She closed with the owner and we returned to the strand to see about our baggage. The old director of the *aduana* had in the meantime decided our boxes need not be lugged up the hill to the customs house, but had sent down a deputy official who wanted to see that they agreed with the *guía*, and then permitted them to be carried up to our new quarters. On my way thither we met Taintor again, who was just leaving for La Libertad. He came back to the office for a moment while I wrote a letter to [Paul] Shufeldt, the manager of the new chicle co. at Laguna Perdida. He also promises to see Cruz Manzanero tonight and will telegraph me the first thing in the morning as to whether he will come or not. We bid him goodbye in front of Boburg's door. María insisted that we come in and have something to eat. She had a plate piled high with some delicious tamales<sup>69</sup> and some steaming coffee. We both ate more than we should, as it was then after five. María had arranged for us to eat at the house of her widowed sister, Manuela.

After our baggage was all up from the beach, we walked up to the plaza, whither the stela I had disinterred from the street five years ago had been carried.<sup>70</sup> It was standing in front of the *cuartel* [barracks; later the Flores jail], leaning against the low wall of the corridor, and with the aid of many soldiers, all very anxious to help the *tontos extranjeros* [crazy foreigners], we tilted it out a bit so that we could see the glyphs on the back. The Calendar Round date is fairly clear as 3 Ajaw 3 Keh ([Figure 7.2, corresponding to a Long Count date of] 10.2.0.0.0, about 869 AD),<sup>71</sup> though Carl thought the interpretation was difficult.

We walked over to the churchyard, which has a stela in front with a rounded top. It had carving on the front though I could detect no glyphs.<sup>72</sup> We turned to the left in the churchyard and, going around to the north transept on the outside[west], I finally found the other sculptural fragment here,<sup>73</sup> 5 Ajaw 3 K'ayab [corresponding to 10.1.0.0.0, 849 AD]. It is very crudely done and obviously late. In fact, we are both all but certain its I.S. [Initial Series date; see Introduction] was 10.1.0.0.0.

Some rock scratchings on an outcropping of the hill just west of the plaza were shown us, but we could make nothing of them. But it was now past six, and we returned to Doña Manuela's where supper was awaiting us. Both of us had partaken too generously of María's tamales and we had little appetite.

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<sup>69</sup> Guatemalan tamales (today, at least) are different from those of Mexico: the masa is much softer and more moist, and they are wrapped in banana leaves, rather than cornhusks, for steaming.

<sup>70</sup> Stela 1, originally found by Maler, had been used as a paving stone in the street behind the church. It is still in the Flores Main Plaza. The front shows two figures in the coils of a serpent; the back incorporates the locally important Ik'a' ("windy water") Emblem Glyph, probably referring to Motul de San José on the north shore of the lake (see Tokovinine and Zender 2012).

<sup>71</sup> In his original diary entry, Morley, using his incorrect Maya/Christian calendar correlation, dated this stela to AD 610; in the typescript he manually corrected it to the GMT date of 869.

<sup>72</sup> This is Flores Stela 3, dated [10.0.0.0.0] 7 Ajaw 18 Sip, AD 830, which shows a seated cross-legged figure.

<sup>73</sup> This is Flores Panel 1, with a Terminal Classic Calendar Round date, which Morley discovered in 1915.

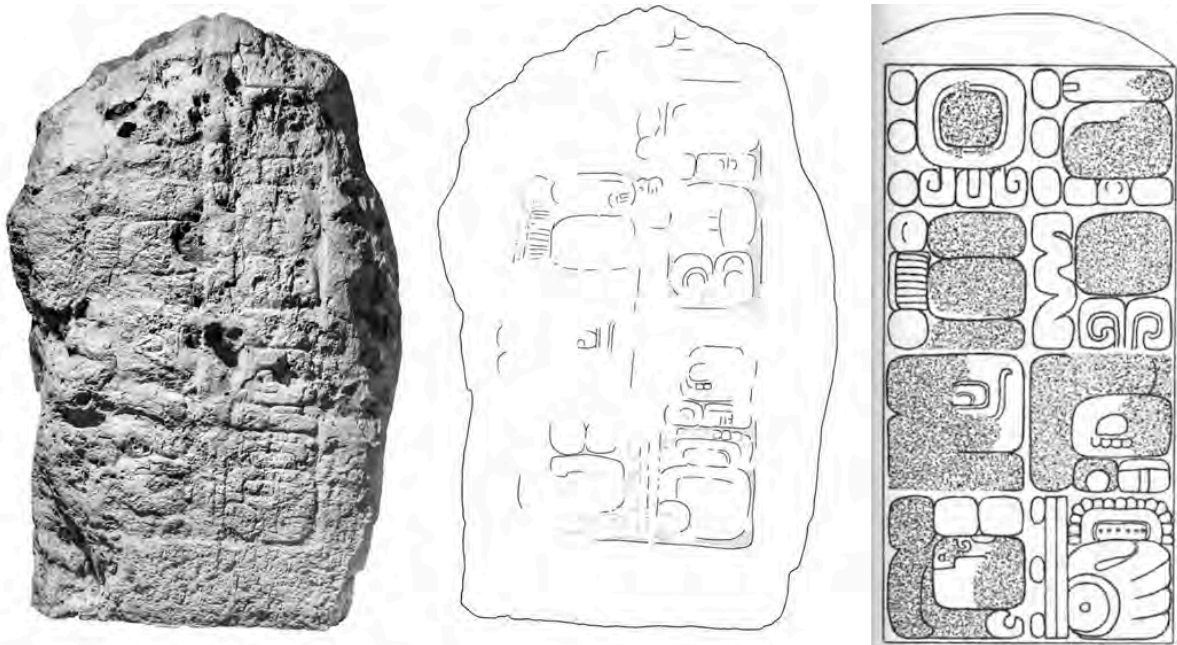


Figure 7.2. Text on the back of Flores Terminal Classic Stela 1. Photo (a) and drawing (b) by Bruce Love; (c) Morley's sketch from *The Inscriptions of the Peten*. Note the loss of detail between Morley's earlier drawing and the ones published in 2020.

In the evening we visited Coronel Julian Pinelo, son of the old *padre*, a man of 84. His relationship is quite a legal one. The *padre* did not become one until after he was forty, had raised a family, and lost his wife. Coronel Pinelo, his son, is the man most interested in the history of the place, of all others. I again questioned him about [Hernán] Cortés' horse, but while the tradition concerning it is very old, no one has ever seen it.<sup>74</sup> It is placed on the other side of Lepet [or Lepete Island] from Flores, that is between Lepet and the north shore. The old *padre* himself came in while we were there and told how his mother had told him when she was a small girl (her father was born in 1801) that a Coronel Seguro, then *jefe político*, had ordered the people out in *canoas* to raise it, the water of the lake being very low at the time and the horse visible, but the ropes broke and the water again rose and the horse was not recovered. Coronel Pinelo himself rather discredits this story of his father's and is inclined to regard the whole story of the stone horse as a hoax.

After visiting thus for a while, we bid goodnight and continued on our way. I fell in with

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<sup>74</sup> The legend of the Horse Idol has its roots in Cortés' visit to the Iza capital (today's Flores) in 1524 on his trek to Honduras. On leaving Flores he left behind his lame horse, which came to be known as El Morcillo. The new and strange animal was held in high esteem by the Itzas and soon was worshiped. When the horse died, a stone statue was made and venerated. In 1618, when Franciscan missionaries Bartolomé de Fuensalida and Juan de Orbita came to the island to convert the Itzas to Christianity, they destroyed the statue (Morley 1946: 120–125). Although reports said it was smashed, local legend says it was dumped in the lake, supposedly near Lepet island.



Paco Boburg and together we walked all around the island looking for Felipe Ovando, a *chiclero*, who had been recommended to me as a *buen conocedor de aquellas montañas* [very knowledgeable about those mountains]. After almost encircling the island, we ran him down in the *cabildo*, where some sort of meeting was going on—a reading of new decrees in which the new government promises to do everything for everybody—editorial parenthesis—A new broom is touted to sweep cleaner in Central America than anywhere else. After the meeting was over, Paco brought Felipe down to the house and I tried to find out from him about the country beyond Tikal. He is a shifty looking customer with an untrustworthy eye, and if I can get ahold of Cruz Manzanero, I think I would prefer him. However, this Felipe seems to know something about the region and he is coming again tomorrow afternoon for another talk.

## Flores

### May 17, Monday

An unsatisfactory day and a sad anniversary, the fourth year of Lafleur's death. I little thought four years ago today that I would ever come [again] to Petén, and yet here I am. Immediately after breakfast, I went over to the telegraph station to see if any word had come from Kid Taintor, but there was none. Until he should let me know whether Cruz Manzanero would come over from La Libertad, it was useless to make any plans; since Craik's wonderful ruins of El Sos were Itsimte, there was no such need for visiting there.<sup>75</sup>

While waiting for the message, Carl and I spent a fascinating hour nosing around the sacristy of the church. We got into this without much trouble, and in an old cupboard found some church records, chiefly marriages. There was a book of the marriage records of the parish of San Andrés from about 1894 on, I think it was, and the oldest records went back only to 1811, though Carl thinks he remembers one of 1809. These were all marriage records and were given a serial number. These records were in an unhappy state, worms had eaten great holes in them, and they are in such an open exposed place—the sacristy is accessible to the outside—that anyone could carry them off without hindrance. I thought of Gates as I saw them rotting there, and how tenderly he would have cared for them.<sup>76</sup>

When we returned to the house, I found a telegram from Kid Taintor saying Cruz Manzanero would reach San Benito about 11 and would come up and see me. I spent the rest of the day hanging around the house waiting to see him. Chico met him just as he was going into the *padre's* to arrange about his marriage, which comes off next month, but after that he disappeared off the face of the earth. I had boys looking for him everywhere, but "*no hay*." It seems an evil sign, since Taintor certainly acquainted him with the purpose of my business with him, and knowing that, I fear he is trying to avoid me.

I got ahold of another *chiclero*, one Felipe Ovando, whose face is so crooked that one would trust no word or pledge that the man could give, who knows ruins in the vicinity of Bambonal y

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<sup>75</sup> Morley did visit Itsimte in 1921 (see Chapter 36).

<sup>76</sup> A reference to William Gates, president of the new Maya Society and noted collector of early manuscripts (see note 13). Some of the Flores church records were microfilmed as part of the FamilySearch project of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/238035?availability=Family%20History%20Library>)

*por adelante* [and beyond]. His location of it answers so closely in direction to where I placed Uaxactun, and his description of it as a “place where there are plenty of monuments” fits Uaxactun so well that I am satisfied they are one and the same place. He knows ruins on beyond at the following *jatos*: San Francisco, Santa Rosa, Santa Monica, and Nanzal. If I can come to no agreement with Cruz Manzanero, I will take Felipe on, though he looks like a great scoundrel to me, the kind that would stop at nothing, even murder. I took the occasion to impress upon him the fact that I never travel with money in the bush, that I leave all that at Cayo with Habet and Savala.

Just before dinner, Carl and I went up to the plaza, and sitting on the western parapet, watched the sun fall [Figure 7.3]. A *canoa* crossing from Lepet to San Benito left a thread of gold in the calm water behind it. Women and girls crossed the plaza in their picturesque *rebolsas* [shawls], soldiers lounged under the corridor of the *cuartel*, and the old Spanish church, bathed in a golden glow, looked down on it all, even including the two gringos in khaki, who were so much out of the picture and out of the time. The conversation turned on New Mexico and we fell to comparing Flores with Santa Fe as it was in the Spanish Colonial period, not so dissimilar either.



Figure 7.3. The sun setting behind Isla Santa Bárbara and the remnants of a typical late afternoon storm, viewed from Flores.

The clock in the church struck six and a moment later it repeated the six strokes, a good

feature of the clock, it has always struck me.<sup>77</sup> The women and girls vanished from the plaza, the shadows lengthened and gradually faded, and twilight swiftly merged into darkness. We left the plaza and took our way to Doña Manuela's where we dined and then returned to our house to relieve Chico. We kept close to the house all evening in hopes that Cruz Manzanero might show up, but although I had Chico and Anastasio looking for him everywhere about the village, he could not be found.

## Flores

### May 18, Tuesday

Another most disappointing day, during which I spent hour after hour looking for this worthless *chiclero* Cruz. It began early enough too, in all conscience. I rose a little after 5, wakened Chico, and together we went down to the *playa* looking for a *canoa* to put us over to San Benito, where I had heard Cruz passed the night. Anastasio was on the strand and found a man to put us over, and then accompanied us about the village looking for Cruz. We inquired at many of his haunts but ran him to ground at not one. Returning to a house on the *playa*, I found that his saddle, bridle, etc. are still there, and that he therefore had not returned to La Libertad. That much, at least, was certain, but here certainty ended and the vaguest speculation commenced. Some insisted he had gone to San Andrés to see his sweetheart, others said this could not be, as his sweetheart lived in La Libertad; while others insisted he had sweethearts in both places! Some said he had crossed to Petén [Flores] that very morning.

I returned to Flores greatly disgusted, found Carl up and dressed, and we went to breakfast. Twice later in the day, once in the morning and just after lunch, I crossed to see if he had come to light, but he was still among the missing. I had posted Chico to stand guard over his saddle and bridle in San Benito, so that I knew he could not get off to La Libertad without seeing me. We had planned to go to El Sos this morning, but our inability to find Cruz has thrown the plan into the background. Every[thing] hung fire on our finding this wretched *chiclero*.

I had gone down to the *playa* to look again, when suddenly he appeared, almost out of the ground. I judge from his appearance and his odor that he had passed the day hidden in some *estanco* [liquor store] guzzling *aguardiente*. I hailed him as a long-lost brother, and enticed him and his friend, another semi-drunken *chiclero* named Mónico Torres from San Benito, up to the house. As soon as I made my proposition to Cruz that he guide us up into the hinterland behind Tikal, he refused on the ground that he was to be married on June 15 and had many arrangements to make for the wedding, which in these countries is always at the cost of the groom. In vain I told him I would give him good wages and only hold him a fortnight, but he would hear nothing of it, and was a bit sullen and sodden from drink. I saw that nothing was to be hoped for from him and turned to his friend Mónico, who he said had accompanied him into that bush. Mónico also had a *compromiso* [commitment], guard duty, but I quickly assured him that I could get him off that. He was far less gone than Cruz, and from him I got data for a fairly accurate map of the

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<sup>77</sup> Across much of rural western Europe, church bells still ring the hour twice, about two minutes apart; sometimes the bells ring three single strikes before the hour as an alert. This tradition originated to assure that workers in distant fields heard the correct time of day.

country beyond the *bajo* of Santa Fe. He knows of one place where there is a ruin, at a *paraje* called El Savana, and I half engaged him for the morrow.

I tried hard during the remainder of the afternoon to get in touch with Felipe Ovando, but he was marching in the May Flores procession—among the men, at least. The more shameless they are, the more conspicuous they are in the May procession—and it was not until after six that he showed up. I put a new proposal to him at which he rose like a hungry fish, namely that I pay him \$25.00 for every site with monuments that I have not seen, gave him his food and a mule, but not one cent of wages. He claims he knows five ruin groups, which if so would net him \$125.00. He was very keen on this arrangement and at first wanted me to sign a contract, but when he saw how keen I was he cooled on that idea. Anyhow, we arranged that he was to accompany me to Bambonal (Uaxactun) and beyond on these terms, and he left. As it was nearly 7, we went to dinner.

At dinner, I got ahold of another boy, called Siriano Ibañez, who knows the direct road from Tikal to Bambonal. He calls it 3 *jornadas* of 4 leagues each, and the first *paraje*, Guinellas, only has water. This seemed the best route and I told him we would talk further in the morning.

Anita (the daughter of our hostess Manuela) had a *novio* there and we were introduced. He is the son of the director of the *aduana*, old Cepeda, and speaks very good English. He had been educated in Guatemala City and knew many people there that I did. We exchanged acquaintances, so to speak, in English, at which he is very proud, thereby gaining kudos with his fair Anita. All of them like to speak English and are proud of it when they can.

After dinner, we looked up Felipe Ovando and closed arrangements with him for the day after tomorrow. We sealed this bargain with some real good Spanish sherry, and then returned to the house. Still later we went over to María's. I twitted her about driving such a hard bargain with the poor Coban Indian this morning over a metate and mano [shaped stones for grinding corn meal] she bought from him for \$10.00 when he asked \$14.00. Poor devil had carried it on his back all the way from Coban, 13 *jornadas*, to receive only 10 dollars for it. I accused her of having a "*corazon de piedra*" [heart of stone], but she insisted she must live. Her idea was to sell it for \$15.00 and clean up a 50% profit. Went to bed about ten.

## **Flores to Ixpop**

### **May 19, Wednesday**

The first thing after breakfast I did was to look up Siriano Ibañez, who was to be our guide from Tikal to Bambonal. He was not at his house, but his wife said he would be back at 11, that he had gone to his milpa. He had said something about this the night before and I was not discouraged. Returning to the house, however, a real disappointment awaited me though hardly a surprise, I must admit. Felipe Ovando and a cutthroat of a man, a cross of some mongrel Mexican strain with more than a suspicion of the Ethiopian [i.e., Black], came in. This was right after breakfast. Felipe did not delay to broach the reason for the call; "*No podemos ir por que no hay agua adonde nosotros queremos andar*" [We can't go because there is no water where we want to go], to which his cutthroat companion said "*si, si.*" I asked why this knowledge had not deterred him last night, and he said, "If the mules die of thirst on the way before we reach there, I will lose my time, premium, and everything else. *¿Que voy ganar pues?*" [So what am I going to gain, then?]. I told him Mónico Torres had said there was water at all the *parajes* save one where we wished to stop,

but he could not see it. Although I thoroughly distrusted this man on general as well as specific grounds, I believed him to be now really telling me the truth. I felt myself that there was no water on the *camino*—never have I seen the bush so dry. But I would not give in so easily. I first felt I must talk to Siriano Ibañez, who had been highly recommended to me as a *bueno conocedor de aquellas rumbos* [person with good knowledge of the area]. I told Felipe I would look him up later.

This *fracaso* [fracas, failure] bid fair to upset all our plans again, but I could only hope for the best. I decided to spend the next hour photographing around the village. We had brought some photographs from Avery, a Canadian photographer who is living at Flores now, and these seemed far better than any we could get. However, I thought I would try my hand at a few. I wanted first pictures of the three stelae in the vicinity of the plaza, so set off up the hill with Chico carrying the kodak and tripod. I first tried to persuade the captain in charge of the *cuartel* that he let me take the stela in front, but he said it was “*prohibido*” and that I would have to get don Clodovego’s permission first. This was another delay. I had to go back down to don Clodovego’s to get the permission, which he gave graciously and generously enough.

To my dismay, on the way down, whom should I see sitting on some steps in front of a doorway near the house of don Clodovego but Eulogio, whom I had supposed had long since departed with the mules from San Benito toward the east end of the lake. Although I could not yet tell whether we were going into the bush from Remate or back to Benque from Ixpop, it made no difference so far as Eulogio and the *mulada* was concerned, since in either event the *mulada* had to be at the east end of the lake. I had planned to intercept Eulogio at Ixpop if we could not find guides into the interior, and if we could, to meet him at Remate, and here he was at 10 in the morning when he should have been three hours on his way toward the other end of the lake. I was indignant and berated him roundly. He was something less than half shot and mumbled something about having to wait to see a corporal. I told him flatly that if he were not at Ixpop that night I would deduct a day in the first settlement. He would surely be there, he said, and so I left him and returned to the Plaza to photograph the stela in front of the *cuartel*.

I had previously prepared the fragment [Panel 1] built in the outer west wall of the north transept of the church showing the Calendar Round date 5 Ajaw 3 K’ayab (i.e., 10.1.0.0.0 5 Ajaw 3 K’ayab, AD 849 GMT) for photographing. This had been partially whitewashed in some former cleansing of the church, and I had a boy whitewash it entirely so that a good photograph could be made. While I was preparing the stela in front of the *cuartel*, to the great interest of a dozen odd soldiers and civilians, Carl came up with Siriano Ibañez, back from the milpa. As Carl made the latter out, he claimed there was water in the *aguadas* where we wanted to go, and Carl was of the decided opinion that Felipe was just plain stalling. In this conflict of evidence, it seemed best to confront these two worthies and ascertain which was lying, at least. Siriano had the most trustworthy face, but my judgment told me that in view of the length of the dry season and the fierce heat of the last few weeks that Felipe was probably nearer correct.

Felipe was down on the *playa* engaged in his favorite pastime of doing nothing. I told him somewhat bluntly what Siriano had said, and they both fell into argument. As this verbal battle continued it was obvious even to Carl, who could not catch it at all, that Siriano was weakening, and in the end amid the jeers and jibes of the spectators, a half a dozen other idlers watching one man at work sawing a log, he gave way entirely, and admitted that probably there was no water where we wanted to go.

In disgust, I returned to my photography and Carl to the house. I next photographed the stela in front of the church, and then before returning to the house, visited the new *cabildo* and was shown upstairs. From the second-story veranda, which runs all the way around, a fine view is obtained of every horizon, indeed the view from this veranda is second only to the one from the church belfry, which, being higher, commands a wider sweep of country in every direction.

I had scarcely returned to the house when Eulogio came back and said he needed a dollar to settle his bill. In my original arrangement with Eusebio Valdez nothing had been said about keeping the *arrieros*; on the contrary, it was distinctly understood they were to board themselves and had brought food with them. I judged the appeal to be simply for the purpose of prolonging his debauch, so refused; whereupon Eulogio said that if I did not give it to him, he would take the mules direct to Eusebio and leave us high and dry. Here was a dire possibility indeed, and the only way to avoid it was to pay him. I told him, however, that if he did not get into Ixpop tonight I would not pay Eusebio a cent for the extra day's loss his dilatory tactics would entail. I paid him the money and he said he would set off at once.

Before going over to doña Manuela's for lunch, Chico told me he thought he'd better go over to San Benito after lunch and see whether they really got off, for there would be no use in our going on to Ixpop by motorboat in the afternoon if Eulogio and the *mulada* were not there. Immediately after lunch I went up to the church to photograph the fragment in the north transept, the light being just right, and Carl returned to the house. After lunch Chico went over to San Benito and returned later with the news that Eulogio had gotten off, but not until one o'clock.

Carl had unpacked all our foodstuffs to take an inventory and was now engaged in packing them again, a pastime in which his methodical head appears to rejoice. While I was writing in this book, Kid Taintor came in. He told us of his failure to get the Indian at La Libertad to go to Itsimte (El Sos), so it is lucky we did not go over, the reason being "*su milpa*" [his cornfield]. He says, however, the man undoubtedly knows where two other stelae are nearby. He is going to have them located and trails cut to them so that when I return next year, I can find them. He tells me also that the American Chicle Co. are going to open two and possibly three roads through to Usumacinta next year and send some of their chicle out that way.

While the conversation was going on, Wakefield Avery and the Cepeda boy came in to say goodbye. Presently Paco Boburg came in to say the motorboat was back from Candelaria<sup>78</sup> and we made ready to say our goodbye. And now occurred an accident which was to give me a great deal of suffering and some anxiety. I had bid goodbye to our landlady and started for the kitchen to say adios to her daughters. The kitchen is a small house behind which a step made of a large squared block of mahogany leads. I stepped on the edge of this, it tilted forward, then over, and fell over on the front part (the metatarsal region) of my right foot. This did not hurt very much at the moment, and I walked down to don Clodovego's limping only slightly. We had a pleasant farewell visit with the old governor, and then took our departure, hoping that we might have the pleasure of sometime seeing him in the States. Next, we walked up to don Julian Pinelo's. His father was up at the church and against my remonstrances was sent for. It seems that the old *padre* had left orders that if we came by to bid him goodbye, he was to be sent for. He came in presently

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<sup>78</sup> The Candelaria Peninsula, at the far western edge of Lake Petén Itzá.



to say adieu but did not tarry; he told us he was *predicando* [preaching] in the church and could not wait. Don Julian walked down to the *playa* with us.

I stopped to pay the Boburgs and to say goodbye to María and the boys. Beto was coming back to the ranch with us. By this time, my foot was painning me considerably. We got aboard the *Alpha* and Guillermo pushed off. As soon as we rounded the [Tayasal] peninsula, I removed my shoe and found my right foot swelled considerably. By this time also it had begun to pain strongly. I painted it with iodine, but it failed to put out the fire. I had Guillermo go first to Remate where I wanted to talk with Jacobo Melchor about the road to Tikal, for if there should still be water in the Tikal *aguada* I felt we should go on there if my foot would permit. In crossing the lake, the waves ran a little high, splashing us a bit, but Guillermo crossed at a narrow point and it was only moist for half an hour. We reached Remate at dusk and I sent Chico and Beto ashore to ask Jacobo to come down to the launch. He sent back word that he would come when he had finished his supper! So, it was to wait and I was in no humor therefore, with my foot.

Jacobo came at last and I inquired at once as to whether the Tikal *aguada* still held water, which he answered as promptly by saying "it does not." It seems for the last two years it has gone dry at the close of the *verano*. The road is good, open I mean, but no water at the ruins. Jacobo told me of another boy in the village who knew where some new ruins were, and I sent Chico for him. He came presently, a boy by the name of Quintana. This Las Palmas is about four or five leagues back from the north shore of the lake. It consists of "*casas de material*" [probably meaning stone buildings] but no sculptured stelae. Neither did Jacobo know of any other places where the latter might be found, and he also knew nothing about the trails and *parajes* beyond Tikal, which was the information I wanted most. There was nothing more to be gained by tarrying at Remate, so I gave the signal to push out.

And now came another wearisome half hour's delay with the wretched engine, which would not start. Followed a changing of sparkplugs and turning over the engine, but what sparks were made were of such a weakness that they failed to fire either cylinder. My foot now pained so badly that I decided the cool water might help it, and so climbing up on the side I let it over in the water. The coolness of the latter seemed to help it at least momentarily, so I left it there, though Chico warned me against alligators that might be lurking by.

While I was thus employed, the engine was started. Carl blew a powerful breath through the sparkplug that was not igniting, and after that it fired, so he was quite perked up about it. Wherever the credit lay, heaven knows I was glad enough to get on my way again, and save for some difficulty in getting over the bar [at the mouth of the Río Ixpop], we had no further trouble. Arrived at the landing, Chico and Guillermo made a seat of their hands and carried me in, where my particular hell commenced. Chico fixed my cot and I undressed at once, but not to sleep. My foot ached and throbbled and in no position could I hold it so that I could have a surcease from pain. Chico superintended dinner and not a bad one either, considering the lateness of the hour—it was after eight—but after a cup of tea and a tortilla, I lay down again to make the best of my suffering. I was in some anxiety as to what had really happened to my leg [sic., foot]. Was it broken, or was it dislocated, or only bruised? I felt the latter must be the case, but I couldn't feel sure. In any event it was best that we should push on to Benque as fast as I could stand it, unless indeed it really was broken, in which event I thought possibly I had better return to Flores, although there was no doctor there.

I decided in the end to push on to Benque Viejo, if I could possibly stand it. I bathed my foot in hot water about 10, and then counted every hour. No clock struck, but I lighted matches to look at my watch, and the hours were only creeping by. Once I smoked a cigarette, but the night was thoroughly uncomfortable and unpleasant, and I heard don Francisco Montero arise at 4 with relief.

## Ixtinto

### May 20, Thursday

I decided during the night hours to engage another man to go with us as far as Benque. I was quite helpless, could not get on or off my mule without being lifted. There was a large husky Belize Negro at Ixpop named Michael Malcolm, who seemed just the man and before daylight I had engaged him for the journey. I failed to note in yesterday's record that Eulogio did not reach Ixpop last night, as he had been instructed to do, and it was therefore uncertain this morning how far we could get on the Benque trail. It seemed the part of wisdom to hurry on just as far each day as my foot would permit. I sent a *chiclero* back on the Flores road right after breakfast with instructions to ride as fast as he had to meet the *mulada* and to tell Eulogio to hurry on. He came back presently, saying Eulogio was just down the road a little bit and would soon be in, and he did come in shortly after seven. About this time, someone sighted the *Giralda* making toward Remate, and we learned a messenger had gone to Flores yesterday afternoon. It appeared that we would meet the new governor of Petén, Coronel Ismael Pacheco Quevedo.

The packing went forward speedily, but I did not get on my mule until the pack animals had started forward. I had decided to ride with my right leg, the injured one, thrown over the mule's neck in front of the pommel resting on my Turkish bath towel folded many times to make a soft cushion. Michael was to walk in front and hold the mule's head if he acted fractious. It was an anxious moment when he finally lifted me into the saddle and the mule started, to see whether every step was to cause a twinge of pain or not. Most happily it did not. I found that although I suffered considerably, it was no worse on the mule than it had been on my cot, in fact the attention I had to give to other things—the towel, which kept slipping off to the left, and my blanket which I had across my saddle, which was always slipping off to the right—kept my mind off my foot and I did not do badly at all.

We got off from Ixpop at 8:30 and reached Ixtinto, 9 leagues off, at 5:10—8 hours and 40 minutes on the way—and I did not leave the saddle once. Toward the end, my foot pained considerably, but after having left Culek at 11:50 a.m. there was no water on the road until we got to Ixtinto, so I had to endure it and carry on. I append our itinerary which will show about the speed one has to travel with a *mulada*:

Leave Ixpop	8:30 a.m.
Leave Macanche	10:55 a.m.
Leave Culek	11:50 a.m.
Leave San Clemente	1:50 p.m.
Arrive Ixtinto	5:10 p.m.

When we came down from the hill and into Culek, we were greeted by the same noisome

odor of the dead mule as offended our nostrils a week ago tomorrow night, here at this same place. The old cove had not grown a whit less fragrant in the interval of 6 days, if anything it was higher, and we had little desire to pass another night here, and yet that was precisely what Eulogio was preparing to do when I came into the clearing. He said he was going no farther, and I had great difficulty in getting him to. He had a cargo off, and I told him that if anything happened to my foot because of this delay that I would haul him before the magistrate in El Cayo. He put the pack back on one of the mules that had come thus far without cargo, and I concluded he had tried to run a bluff on me. He had intended changing the cargo anyhow, and if he could get away with the stopover threat he would do so and if not, he would go on. After some 20 minutes delay at Culek, we got under way again.

The stretch of 5½ leagues from Culek to Ixtinto is the most unpleasant of the entire Benque-Flores trip. In the rainy season, it is broken by the *paraje* at San Clemente 2 leagues east of Culek, but in April and May the *aguada* goes dry, and it is necessary to make either Culek or Ixtinto for the *paraje*. It was in this stretch that we met the new governor, Coronel Pacheco, a few minutes before we reached San Clemente.

First came a man on horseback, followed by an Indian carrying a very heavy load, next another horseman or two, and then after an interval of 15 or 20 minutes, the *jefe's* party. First the *señora*, a rather good-looking girl of the plump embonpoint<sup>79</sup> type so popular in these countries and which is called *guapa* [handsome, beautiful], the *jefe* himself in "very good point," and next a son. I stopped him, told him who we were and our business there, asked him a few questions about Rodolfo Robles, the new President's son-in-law, who, I permitted him to understand, was a close friend of mine, and then we exchanged farewells and each continued on his way. Both the *jefe* and his lady looked very bored and much fed up with the trip, I thought.

The afternoon wore by very slowly although, I must confess, I felt very fresh and had the time permitted would have pressed on to Yaxha. Even the mules were fresh, in spite of Eulogio's gloomy croakings back at Culek, and Chico and Rosa (Eulogio's assistant) could play with each other a mile back, each striving to outrun the other even at the very end. When we reached Ixtinto, we found the *galerón* well filled with the *arrieros* of two *patachos*, one of them belonging to the Syrian, don Felipe, whom we met just a week ago tonight at Santa Cruz. The *galerón* was so crowded that Eulogio decided to continue on to the *aguada*, and it was a good decision. I stopped off for a few minutes at the *galerón* to talk to Felipe. When I remarked how full the *galerón* was, one of the *arrieros* told me that last week 11 *patachos*, consisting of upwards of 400 mules, had camped here and that they slept some distance from the *aguada* out in the bush, it was so crowded nearer.

Carl brought back his horse very kindly, and I went down to the *aguada* where the mules were already unloaded [Figure 7.4]. Carl wanted a real supper, which he got himself and it was a banquet, but more on that later. Michael came in presently somewhat foot-sore, but very *vivo* [lively, energetic], as they say in Spanish, and under my directions, while Carl and Chico were getting dinner, he put up the 2 cots and the *pabellones*. Supper consisted of tomato bisque made of Campbell's tomato soup and Pet milk, the best item of the menu by the way, Cross and

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<sup>79</sup> Embonpoint, meaning pleasingly plump or stout, comes from Middle French *en bon point*, meaning "in good condition."

Blackwell's kidney and beef stew, Van Camp's pork and beans, crackers, butter, jam, and with this meal we had so much that we passed up the tin of fruit we had saved out.



Figure 7.4. Morley's *mulada* unloaded, the mules' carrying frames in the foreground, kyacks in the background. This photo was taken on the 1920 expedition, though not necessarily on May 20.

After I had crawled in under my *pabellón*, my foot began paining again and I had Chico put some salt in some water which had been heated and bathed it again. As last night, it seemed to ease the pain somewhat. I fell asleep listening to Michael telling his life history to Carl. I remember his hunting another old acquaintance of mine, Peter Grilley, who had killed his brother. Somehow Peter escaped his vengeance and went to the war in Egypt, where Michael felt sure he had been killed. Later in the night Michael wakened me while changing his bed. He said the fire ants had given him too much hell where he was.

## CHAPTER 8.

### BENQUE VIEJO

#### Benque Viejo

May 21, Friday

We were up before five and almost had a real early start—by six—only a mule got bogged in the mud at the side of the *aguada* and this delayed us so that we did not get off until 6:20. It was decided that Carl, Chico, and I should push on into Benque Viejo today, but that the *mulada* should sleep tonight at Sana Cruz and come into Benque tomorrow. With this understanding, we pushed ahead, making excellent time, covering the 11 leagues between Ixtinto and Benque in 9 hours as the following itinerary shows. We had been on the road from Flores to Benque just 47 hours, having left Flores at 4:15 Wednesday afternoon.<sup>80</sup>

Leave Ixtinto	6:20 a.m.
Leave Yaxha	8:25 a.m.
Leave Santa Cruz	9:55 a.m.
Arrive Gavilán	11:20 a.m.
Leave Gavilán	11:40 a.m.
Leave Sayab	1:20 p.m.
Arrive Plancha de Piedra	2:50 p.m.
Leave Plancha de Piedra	3:00 p.m.
Arrive Benque Viejo	3:15 p.m.

This really long day did not begin to drag—for me at least—until after we had left Sayab, i.e., were on the last 2 leagues, but then we caught it. The mules were about done up and ourselves included, and it was not until the last league when they began to recognize some of their surroundings that they came to life. Fortunately, it was not a very hot day, though we grew thirsty before the end, and we were able to make good time. We stopped at Yaxha only long enough for me to find out that the *alcalde* had gone to his milpa—I wanted to ask him about ruins north of Yaxha—and then pushed right on.

On this Flores-Benque highway<sup>81</sup> one meets sooner or later every *arriero* and muleteer one has ever known. Yesterday, for example, at Culek we picked up a boy (with a miserable mongrel cur, by the way, which whined mournfully the greater part of the trip) who had been my muleteer to Ucanal down by Smith's mahogany camp on the Mopan River in 1914 when I got so thoroughly

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<sup>80</sup> The straight-line distance between them is about 50 miles/82 km.

<sup>81</sup> Bear in mind that this "highway" is simply a muddy mule trail, albeit heavily used.

drenched.<sup>82</sup> He remembered me, and I him, and we talked over that trip. Today, just beyond Santa Cruz I met a man who was at Laguna de Yaloch when Carpenter, Lafleur, and I passed through there in May 1916 en route to Uaxactun (Bambonal). Lafleur treated this man for some illness and the fellow told me that when he heard of the doctor's death, he cried. It seemed to me a strange coincidence that we should be thus thrown together for a moment on the Flores-Benque highway. I shook his hand and we parted.

Up to this point we passed several *muladas*, those which had left from Sayab that morning, but from now on to Gavilán we met none. We stopped at Gavilán for 20 minutes for a light lunch—tea biscuits, Spanish or Italian sausage, Horlick's malted milk tablets, and a tin of pears. It was as dry as a dry smoke, though the pears helped. We got away from Gavilán at 20 minutes before twelve and soon began to meet *patachos*, which had set out from Plancha de Piedra that morning. The distance between Gavilán and Sayab is 2 leagues, and about half an hour out we passed a long *patacho*, the men of which as we passed them severally, I asked how far we were to Sayab. The answers I got from them were 2 leagues, 3 leagues, 1 league, and 4 leagues, an excellent commentary on the veracity and judgment of these *arrieros* when it comes to estimating distances.

This section of the day's run we covered in good time, doing the two leagues between Sayab and Plancha in 1 hour and 40 minutes, 50 minutes to the league. A *mulada* was in at Sayab when we got there, a drunken *arriero* in his delight at greeting Carl nearly fell under the animal. The last 2 leagues into Plancha were terrors—ourselves, tempers, and the animals were all worn out and these 6 miles seemed like 60. Carl now set the pace and toward the end managed to get some good trotting out of his animal, and mine followed. These stretches hurt my foot terribly, but I wanted to get in and pushed my mule on. About half past two, we passed a milpa clearing which I thought could not be far out of town, and we rode into the plaza of Plancha at 2:50, Chico being about a mile behind.

We paid our respects to don Pablo, and then pushed on. I asked him in passing what he had found out about the new ruin and he told me the guide was in Yaloch, an easy lie. Carl's animal was so worn out over the last half league that he could not move it from a walk. As we were crossing the ford in front of the village, Chico caught up with us, and as we climbed the bank on the Benque side it was just 3:45, or 47 hours after we had left Flores. At the time, this seemed to us a good record, but we heard later of a messenger whom don Pablo had sent to don Clodovego who left Plancha at 5 o'clock one morning on foot and reached Flores at 7 that same evening; slept there that night, leaving again at 5 o'clock and getting back to Plancha at 7 that same night. Each one-way trip in 14 hours, and the whole trip in 28 hours. Also, old Mr. Tappan of Benque told me he had once left San Benito at 2 o'clock in the morning with two riding animals, changing at Ixtinto, and that he reached Benque at eight. In spite of these better records, ours was a good one with a *mulada* and a lame foot.

We went first to the place where iced drinks could be had, a cantina belonging to Domingo Espot, and had some ginger ale. It was not imported, but I have never tasted anything sweeter, and then up the hill to the *padre's*. It was a great surprise, he said, to see us back so soon and a greater one to see me limping about. Father Henneman<sup>83</sup> had not arrived yet for his retreat, but

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<sup>82</sup> See Rice and Ward 2021: 129–130.

<sup>83</sup> A Jesuit priest in Belize City.



was expected that very evening with Doctor Simon, who was going to exhume the body of a murdered boy who had been killed the night of the day we left Benque, 10 days ago.

We had not been at the father's for more than a half an hour before a nice-looking Petenero came up the hill, one Aurelio Aguayo, with a story of a ruin 3 days north of Cayo, beyond Ixcario, which he claimed contains 5 or 6 stelae sculptured with hieroglyphics. It sounded too good to be true, and I suspected at once that it could only be La Honradez.<sup>84</sup> It was the same direction from Cayo as La Honradez, though it did not seem so far off and had about the same number of stelae. I talked with this boy for upwards of an hour, trying in every way to ascertain whether it could be La Honradez or not. He naturally feels that it is not, as indeed I hope, but after the El Sos fiasco I am shy of another long trip only to see something I already know. I told him that tomorrow my baggage would be here, and I had notes in it which I thought might solve the question. He will return tomorrow.

It had grown so late by this time that Father Versavel decided to wait no longer for Father Henneman, and we sat down to dinner. When I first got in, Father Versavel wanted to open the swelling on my foot with a knife. I was amazed at the idea and thought at first that he surely must be joking. The thing had no pus, and why he should want to open it with a knife was more than I could comprehend, nor did I let him. As it was, in examining it he pressed so hard on the swelling I thought I would faint with the pain of it. He may be a healer of souls, but he is certainly no healer of flesh.

In the evening he told us the details of the murder. It was shockingly brutal. The murderer, a boy of 17, a cross between a negress and a mestizo, had killed a companion about the same age. A lot of *chicleros* had been drinking in the early evening, and the killing occurred at midnight. The *padre* had the following version, although he said he had not mixed in the matter in any way: It seems a quarrel had arisen about some girl a third party was interested in, and the boy, in drunken anger, had driven a dagger into the back of the boy who died, up to the hilt. The poor chap ran a block before he fell, and then lay there groaning and crying out for help. Then came the crowning brutality. The murderer returned and deliberately put the same dagger to the temple of his unfortunate companion and drove it home.

The village was horrified at the crime, and the murdered boy lay there in his blood until 10 o'clock the next morning, when the District Commissioner arrived. The police had not even arrested the murderer, who had fled to his milpa where he was later apprehended. Doctor Simon was coming to exhume the body of the dead man to examine into the cause of death. It seems there is some chance that another man may have given the second wound—two are under arrest—and this may save the boy's life, though Father Versavel says everybody knows it was this Juan Carrillo, whom they now have in jail in Cayo. He will surely hang. British justice is swift and sure, and this boy's road to the gallows will be short. After a few reflections on this bloody tragedy, I went to bed tired out with the day and my foot. The sisters kindly fixed me a hot salt bath for it before retiring.

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<sup>84</sup> After much debate, it turned out that this was a new site, one Morley would name Xultun (see Chapters 9 and 10). For La Honradez, see Rice and Ward 2021: Chapters 10, 12, and 13.

## Benque Viejo

May 22, Saturday

The first thing before breakfast, Carl went down to the telephone station and tried to get Blackman at Cayo and was told to return in an hour. I had found out late yesterday there were no crutches in Benque, and I wanted to get in touch with Blackman and have him bring them over when he brings Dr. Simon and Father Henneman. Carl returned later and when the connection was finally made, he was told that Blackman had already left. By the time Carl had brought back this intelligence, Father Versavel had finished mass and we all sat down to breakfast.

Not long after, we heard that Doctor Simon had arrived. He went straight to the cemetery to examine the body of the murdered boy, which had been exhumed that morning against his coming. I had sent Chico down to ask him to come up as soon as he could, and he had sent back word he would come up after the exhumation. He came presently and as he said little about his unpleasant task save that he had not detected the odor—he was covered with disinfectants—I did not press him. He examined my foot and said almost at once that I had torn a ligament. He tried pulling out the second toe, but although it hurt enough, it did not snap and he said it had not been dislocated. He recommended putting a bag of hot salt over it to keep it warm, and said when he returned to Cayo he would send back a bottle of liniment. Blackman had not brought him over, nor had Father Henneman come over with him, though he had accompanied him up the river and was then in Cayo. He did not stay long and in leaving said he would look up a pair of crutches for me in Cayo and send them over in the afternoon.

Spent the greater part of the day talking to Sixto Cabranes and Aurelio Aguayo. Sixto, as I have said before, is supposed to be the best *chiclero* either of Cayo or Benque, which means in addition that he knows the northeastern Petén bush better than anyone else. I asked him to give me a complete list of places where there were sculptured monuments, and he gave me four names as follows: Tikal, Bambonal (Uaxactun), Invierno (Naranjo), and Taliche. I had seen all but the last, and after much questioning he weakened on the last—said he was not sure whether it had figures or not, but that Aurelio would remember.

When I first heard of this stela, I said we would go there Monday. It is not far beyond Río Holmul, and stands right by one of the roads leading into the interior. But later, when Sixto weakened, and especially when Aurelio said he could not remember whether it was carved or not, I gave up the idea. I told Sixto he could verify the matter this season, and when I return next March can take me to it, if it is carved. I have strong doubts about it because Aurelio says the Americans who worked at Holmul (Merwin and his brother) cleaned it and photographed it. If this is so, it must have been a plain stela, otherwise Merwin would have mentioned it to me. Aurelio came back several times to see if we could go to his new site, but I would promise nothing until I had seen my La Honradez notes, which were coming in the *mulada*.

For some time now, I have had an idea which Father Versavel helped me to carry out. I had long had an idea of having some placards printed in Spanish, an announcement to the *chicleros* of Benque Viejo and El Cayo that when they go out into the bush to bleed chicle the next trip, they mark any places in the bush [as] "*ruinas antiguas*" where there were carved or sculptured stones with either figures or letters (hieroglyphics). Further, that on my return next March I will pay any individual who guides me to a place of this description and shows me the monument, the sum of

\$25.00 gold for every new place. *Chicleros* interested are to communicate such discoveries to Father Versavel at Benque or Edward Enright at El Cayo. This “*aviso*” [notice] Father Versavel helped me to put into Spanish, and when I return to Belize I am going to have it printed at the Clarion Press and will then send the placards up to Benque and Cayo to be put around in the various stores, saloons, and cantinas [Figure 8.1]. Both Cabranes and Aguayo think it will bring in many notices of such discoveries, and when I return in March, I hope to reap the harvest.

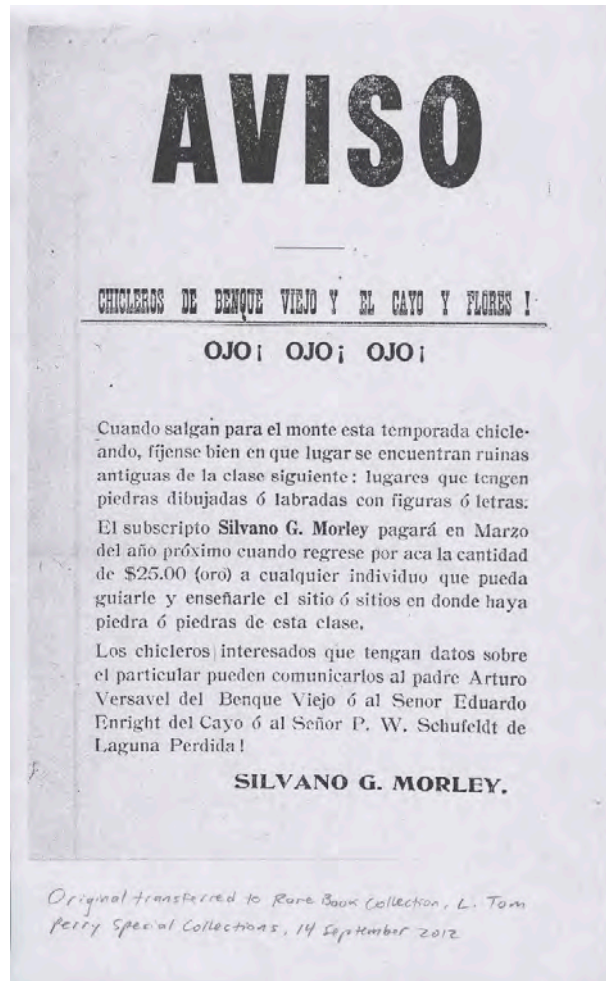


Figure 8.1. Morley’s placard from 1920 offering rewards to *chicleros* who find new sites with sculptured monuments.

About 3 in the afternoon, Eulogio, Michael, and Rosa got in. They slept at Santa Cruz and we discovered later that Eulogio had repacked everything to make the packs balance! In so doing, tins had been dumped in helter skelter with the result that the process of reducing the crackers to wheat flour again had been greatly accelerated. I wanted to keep one riding animal at the father’s, but Eulogio said he must take them all over to Succotz tonight. He would tell Eusebio Valdez to come over tonight, however, and I could arrange with him if I wanted one in the morning. As soon as I could get into my kyack I got out my La Honradez notes and tried to ascertain from them whether Aurelio’s site could be the same one or no. But even after making the map of La

Honradez and locating the stelae on it, I could not feel sure. Aurelio, on the contrary, feels confident that it is a new site and bases his belief on a very strong point. Percy Adams and I were at La Honradez at the end of February 1915; while there I had a well-defined trail cleared into the ruins and the trees and bush around each stela cut down. Aurelio was at his site only 7 months later, September and October 1915, and he says he found no sign of any sort of a previous visitor. It is impossible that clearings made no more 6 or 7 months before his visit would not have been apparent to a skilled bushman, and the obvious conclusion is that the two are not the same site, which I earnestly hope is the case. His site, he stoutly avers, has 9 or 10 monuments.

I have decided to take him over to El Cayo with me tomorrow and lay the whole matter before Natalio Guzman, because he is about the only one left who remembers where old Eleuterio Hernández had his first *jato*, 10 years ago, which was within a mile of the ruins of La Honradez. If Natalio Guzman thinks they are different places, I am willing to chance it, although it means a hard bush trip of at least a week—Aurelio's place is three good *jornadas* northwest of Cayo, but if Natalio thinks they are one and the same site, we will return to Belize by the first boat we can catch. I dismissed Aurelio for the day with this plan. We will take him to Cayo with us in the auto in the morning and if Natalio reports favorably, we will start for the ruins the next day.

In the afternoon I translated into English, as I read it in Spanish, Father Versavel's play, "*Chuchos*" (Dogs), which he has written for the villagers to perform on the 16th of July. It is real witty and contains some excellent hits against local institutions, customs, practices, fads, and foibles. The reason for Father Henneman's visit is to conduct a retreat for the four sisters which begins tomorrow night. All day long Father Versavel had been worrying for fear that Father Henneman would not arrive in time to begin the retreat. But along about five he came in, and proved to be a fine fellow, somewhat jollier, and less inclined to seriousness than Father Versavel. We had already finished supper when he came in, but the sisters got him something, including a fine cake with "Welcome" written on it in red sugar. A cot had been set up for me in Carl's room, where I am to sleep, and Father Henneman took the room I had last night.

In the evening I talked some time with him before turning in. What hardships these Jesuit fathers have had to put up with, what obstacles they have overcome, only an itinerant archaeologist familiar with these wilds can properly estimate. Theirs is a true Christianity, and their faith, sublime. We talked for an hour or more, rather he talked, which he does well, whilst I listened, and then feeling tired, I bid him good night, Carl coming to bed at the same time. We heard the two fathers, however, talking together until late into the night.

## **El Cayo**

### **May 23, Sunday**

Father Versavel was up early as he was going over to Succotz to say early mass. I rose myself in time to get down to the telephone station shortly after seven. When Father Henneman came over last night, he brought me a pair of crutches and my liniment. Father Versavel rubbed the latter on my foot last night—and not too gently either—but I must say it greatly helped it. This morning I could move my toes for the first time with comfort. This morning, going down to the telephone office, I tried the crutches out for the first time. Cannot say I was skillful, but managed to get down the stairs and steep hill with only one fall.

The corporal in charge was just up when I reached the station, and happily for once, the line

to Cayo was working all right. He put in a call for Blackman while I waited. Presently old Tappan joined me and I asked him if he would be so obliging as to put up my “*avisos*” for me in the various stores and saloons of Benque if I sent them up to him, and he said that he would. After perhaps a half hour’s wait, I got Blackman on the line and told him to come over for me just as soon as he could. He said he only had enough gasoline to get over, but that I might be able to persuade Domingo Espat to loan him a tin. I told him to come along and I would see he got the gasoline. He said he would leave in half an hour.

I hobbled back up the hill and we sat around and talked until Father Versavel got back from Succotz (a little after 8), when three of us had breakfast. Father Henneman fasted as he was celebrating a 9:30 mass. This had started before breakfast was over, and I went down to hear it. For me, it was very easy to understand the hold his religion has over these people, and particularly the women. There were between 300 and 400 people in the church, and Father Versavel told me fully 200 had gone over to Succotz from Benque for the early mass. There were four little altar boys who seemed to know their not-too-complicated part of the ritual and ceremonial. One of the four German sisters played the organ, another led the choir, and the other two sat up front, one on each side leading the singing downstairs. It was Pentecost,<sup>85</sup> the birthday of Mother Church, and in a few simple sentences Father Henneman explained how this was their mother’s birthday.

I was obliged to leave before the service was over to see Blackman. He was surprised to learn about my foot and kindly expressed concern. I thanked him and told him the worst was over. He said he was ready to go any time we were, and we did not tarry long. Carl had seen that everything was packed. We were taking nothing over with us in the car this morning, as Blackman was coming over again in the afternoon to bring everything over in one load. We waited until mass was over to bid goodbye to Father Henneman. While we were waiting, Pablo Guerra’s wife and sister came up to see Father Versavel about some masses they wanted said. They both remembered me and we exchanged a few observations. Father Henneman came up, and bidding the ladies goodbye as well as the fathers, we went down to the automobile. Carl had already gone on to look up the Avery family—what of it is here: the mother, aunt, and two boys—and I had to wait for him a few minutes.

I always take leave of Father Versavel with regret. He is so kind to all strangers and takes care of the chance visitors to his door so royally that everyone likes him, and when his really unselfish, altruistic life is known, one loves him. He being a Belgian too, made it easy for me, and we have always been very fond of each other.<sup>86</sup> I hope that my plan will carry through so that I may see him next year in March.

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<sup>85</sup> One of the Catholic Church’s many movable feast days, Pentecost (“fifty, fiftieth”) is celebrated 50 days after Easter Sunday. It commemorates the day when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus’s disciples in Jerusalem after his resurrection, and they began speaking in tongues. It is sometimes viewed as the beginning of the Christian Church.

<sup>86</sup> Morley’s maternal grandfather, Felix de Lannoy, was a Belgian immigrant who settled in Chester, Pennsylvania, and became a professor of modern languages at the Pennsylvania Military College. The Lannoy family was a prominent one in Belgium during the nineteenth century—Morley’s great-grandfather had been a judge on the Belgian Supreme Court.

Carl came and we got as far as Domingo Espot's cantina, where we picked up old Salvador Espot, Domingo's father. We went in here and had some iced ginger ale as the morning was hot. Carl wanted to look up another Avery, so he walked on ahead. Presently we overtook him and he climbed in. There were seven of us in the car: Carl, myself, and Aurelio Aguayo on the back seat, Chico on one side and Blackman's helper, a boy John on the opposite side, Blackman and don Domingo being on the front seat. I had thought the little Ford crowded to capacity with this crowd, but Blackman told us that during the fiesta of Succotz he had brought as high as TWENTY-ONE people over from Cayo at the same time. There seems nothing that this Ford won't do. The ride over was crowded with seven. Heaven knows what it must have been with 21, even the S.R.O. sign could not have been out that trip.<sup>87</sup> We stopped at the entrance of the village to tell Natalio Guzman to come down to Aunty Chon's. Old Natalio recognized me, and when I told him I needed his advice, he said he would come at once.

We dropped don Salvador and then continued to Aunty Chon's, who was expecting us, Blackman having told her we were coming over when I telephoned him this morning. She and Rachel gave us a royal welcome and had one of her famous chicken dinners waiting. We had not even seated ourselves to this when Natalio Guzman came down and he and Aurelio and I went into executive session. I described La Honradez, the approximate location of which he knew (although he had never been there) and then Aurelio described his ruin. After some discussion Nate decided that the two could not be the same place.

We had food for another 10 days, we had the time, and were here. Even on the chance of its being La Honradez, I felt we should investigate Aurelio's site. That Aurelio had seen stelae I had no doubt, my only fear was that he had seen La Honradez. The next question was mules, and I asked Ed Enright to come over. He suggested several men who had *patachos* of 7 or 8 animals and I sent Chico to go to the nearest, one Macario Frutos, who lived just behind Aunty Chon's. I also asked Enright at the same time, if he would distribute my *chiclero avisos* in the stores and cantinas here, and also run a slide in the moving picture place, both of which he consented to do.

Chico returned presently with Macario Frutos and I told him what I wanted: 4 saddle animals and 4 cargo animals, but I wanted it understood in advance that we would make double *jornadas*, i.e., of 7 or 8 leagues each. This was agreeable to him and he went out in search of someone to go along as *arriero*. He returned after some time with the discouraging news that he could find no one, but went out to look again. In the meantime, I sent Chico and Aurelio out on the same errand. Macario returned a second time and reported that although he was willing, indeed anxious, to let his mules go, he could find no one to go, and he went home. Sometime later, Chico and Aurelio returned saying they had found two men who would go, and a third, a young Negro by the name of Lysby came in, who was ready to go. The real trouble with Macario, I learned from Aurelio, was that he thought \$2.00 per day per mule insufficient remuneration for the double *jornadas*. I sent Chico over again and Macario came back with a middle-aged man, don Miguel, who had been his first choice. It was then agreed upon that I was to pay \$2.50 for the first day, and \$2.00 for each succeeding day, the *arriero's* food and his mule to be at Macario's cost. On these terms the business was concluded, and Macario set off to find saddles, etc.

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<sup>87</sup> S.R.O.—Standing Room Only—refers to the note that used to be placed on doors of theaters with sold-out seats.



Blackman had gone to Benque Viejo to bring back the Espats. There is to be some marriage of one of the Savala girls and all the Turkish<sup>88</sup> colony was turning out for a dinner tonight. The plan was that Blackman was to take the Espats back to Benque whenever they wanted to go, even if it should be after midnight, and when he made the trip, he was going to take Aurelio over and give him half an hour to get his things together for the trip, and then bring him back together with our baggage, which was still at Father Versavel's house. In the afternoon trip he was going to remove them to the police station from Father Versavel's, as it might be after midnight before he could get them. The various plans and setbacks had consumed the greater part of the afternoon, and we were sitting down to tea before they were fairly over. Blackman left with the Espats and Aurelio for Benque about 10 or 11.

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<sup>88</sup> Morley used the term "Turk" to describe anyone of Middle Eastern heritage. In the case of El Cayo, these were almost certainly Lebanese. Lebanese immigrants first came to Benque Viejo in 1890, Alaro Habet being the first recorded. Others followed, at first mainly men involved in the chicle trade, but by the 1920s a sizeable community had been established. Descendants of these early immigrants form an important part of the modern population of the Cayo district (Roessingh and Darwish 2012: 7–13).

## CHAPTER 9.

### Editors' Insert: THE SITE OF XULTUN

Xultun is a large (16 km<sup>2</sup>; 6.2 mi<sup>2</sup>) center in far northeastern Petén, occupied from about 1000 BC to AD 1100 (Garrison and Dunning 2009). It was discovered in 1915 by Aurelio Aguayo (or Aguello), a *chiclero* from Benque Viejo, western Belize (see Chapter 8). The site lies off the southeast margin of the Bajo de Azúcar, a logwood swamp, 40 km north-northeast of Tikal and extending close to the border with Belize. This area, known as the Three Rivers region,<sup>89</sup> was extremely difficult to reach in Morley's time, but after crude "all-weather" roads were bulldozed to facilitate logging (mahogany, logwood) and petroleum surveys in the 1970s, Xultun and neighboring sites were heavily looted.

Morley spent three days at Xultun in 1920 and seven in 1921, with subsequent Carnegie investigations in 1923 and 1924 (Morley 1937–38, I: 383). Since then, the site was largely ignored by Mayanists until 1974, when Eric von Euw, working with Ian Graham's *Maya Corpus* project (von Euw and Graham 1984), visited and drew six of its many stelae, Stelae 20–25. Stelae 20–22 had been discovered by Morley (see Chapters 10, 17; Morley 1937–38, I: 383–385); Stelae 23 through 25 were discovered in 1974, in front of Structure A23. Recent fieldwork at Xultun began in 2008 by the San Bartolo Regional Archaeological Project directed by William Saturno and continuing under the direction of Heather Hurst and Boris Beltrán.

During his 1920 visit, Morley identified two main architectural groups at Xultun, A to the south and B to the north, both of which have stelae. Because he was interested only in dated monuments when he visited, he missed the many structures that lie between these two groups, west of a causeway and a parallel travelway between them (Figure 9.1). He identified ten sculptured monuments in Group A and eight (later eleven) in Group B. The carving of these monuments was badly eroded (the limestone itself is fairly soft, making for poor preservation), but many are very large or tall, some greater than 3 m (Morley 1937–38, I: 407).

The most exciting monuments for Morley were the very late Cycle 10 Stelae 3 and 10 in Group A. Stela 3 (10.1.10.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Kank'in, AD 859 GMT) was found in front of the stairway of Structure A-2, a large pyramid on the north side of the Group A main plaza, with Stela 22 behind it. The extremely late date of Stela 10, at 10.3.0.0.0 1 Ajaw 3 Yaxk'in, AD 889 GMT, led Morley to name the site Xultun, meaning "end stone" or "closing stone" (diary, May 29, 1920), favoring incorporation of *tun* ("stone," i.e., stela; see Introduction, p. xiv) into the names of sites discovered

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<sup>89</sup> This highly productive area of northeast Petén and northwestern Belize was the location of several large-to-medium sites economically adapted to particular *bajo*, upland terrace, and *aguada* landscapes (Scarborough et al.+ 2003).

by Carnegie Institution expeditions.<sup>90</sup> Xultun has an Emblem Glyph (Houston 1986), and its original name may have been Baaxwitz, *b'aax [tun] witz*, “quartz hill” or “hammerstone hill” (Prager et al. 2010).

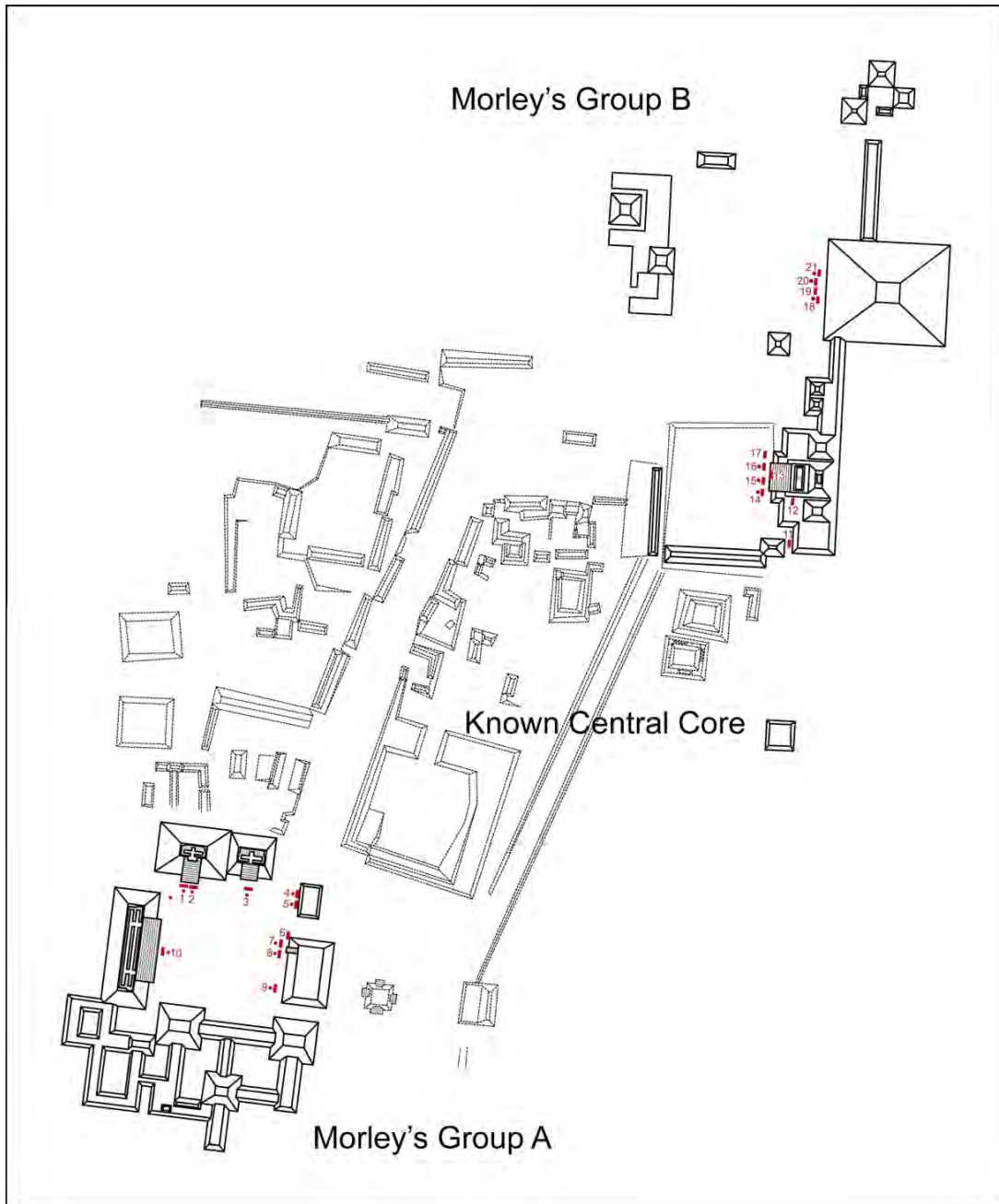


Figure 9.1. Map of the site of Xultun, with Morley's Groups A and B highlighted.

<sup>90</sup> Eric von Euw reported that Stela 10 was still in situ at Xultun in 1974, but by the time of his return in 1975 it had been removed from the site by looters. Its current whereabouts are unknown (von Euw 1978: 37; Zender and Skidmore 2012: 3).

In his 1921 visit, Morley (Chapter 17) found three additional monuments, which he originally numbered Stelae 19 through 21 (plus a renamed Stela 18), paired with altars, in front of a large edifice he had failed to note earlier. Initially called Pyramid III and now known as Structure B-7, this is an elongated platform in the southeast corner of Plaza B, the eastern of two characteristic structures of an E-Group (see Freidel et al. 2017), named after a building complex first identified at Uaxactun.<sup>91</sup> As at Uaxactun and at E-Groups subsequently identified elsewhere, the Xultun stelae faced west. The functions of these complexes and their individual structures are unknown. They were originally thought to have solar observatory functions (Blom 1924; Ricketson 1928), but this is now deemed unlikely (see Rice 2023), although the *k'atun*-ending dates on the monuments in front of the eastern structures suggest some calendrical relations. Morley (1937–38, I: 388–392, Table 18) style-dated Stelae 18, 19, and 20 to the first quarter of Baktun 9 (minimally before 9.12.0.0.0). This would put them in the Early Classic period, the fifth and early sixth centuries. Stela 21, dated 9.14.10.0.0 5 Ajaw 3 Mak (AD 721 GMT), was obviously a Late Classic outlier, moved – without its altar – from some other location for an unknown reason. Perhaps the earlier three commemorated the ending of *k'atuns* 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, and/or 9.4 (and/or their intermediate *lajuntuns*), spanning the period AD 455–524.

Over time these stelae had fallen, but with the use of a jack the expedition brought along, they were able to raise up the largest section of Stela 19 and view the carving. This showed a Maya lord facing left, holding in his outstretched right hand a small jaguar, which Morley called a tiger. This imagery appears on “at least nine . . . and possibly twelve” Xultun stelae in both Group A and Group B, beginning in AD 820 (Chase 1983: 110). Arlen Chase (1983: 105, 108) suggests that the Terminal Classic uplifted jaguar cub,<sup>92</sup> unique to Xultun, might be a “new symbol of power” that helped the site maintain its independence from outside forces and weather the crises underlying the southern lowland “collapse.” One wonders if this baby jaguar was resurrected from earlier times, subtly referencing Tikal where it had appeared “as if it were the name of the kingdom” (Schele and Freidel 1990: 406). The maternal grandfather of Tikal’s Early Classic king Chak Tok Ich’aak II (c. 486–508) was from Xultun (Martin 2020: 184), and jaguar or *bahlam* imagery and names continued to be important in Tikal dynasties (e.g., Kaloomte’ Bahlam, c. 511–527) through the Terminal Classic (Martin and Grube 2008: 38–52, *passim*).

The most remarkable discoveries of recent work at Xultun and its satellite San Bartolo, 8 km to the south, are spectacular mural paintings and calendrical texts (Rossi et al. 2015; Saturno et al. 2005, 2012, 2017). At San Bartolo, for example, Late Preclassic (c. 100 BC) murals in Structure 1, “Las Pinturas” (see also Urquizú and Hurst 2011), feature an Olmec-like Maize God and early glyphic signs, including the logogram *ajaw*. Other writing appears even earlier, around 300–200

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<sup>91</sup> The other structure of an E-Group is a pyramid west of and centered on the eastern platform.

<sup>92</sup> The Jaguar Baby (Unen Bahlam) made earlier appearances at Tikal and Caracol, often as a reclining anthropomorphic feline (see Schele and Freidel 1990: 406, 407). The baby-like reclining pose may signify infancy or renewal (e.g., like the infant Maize God; Martin 2003: 9), and as the cub is sometime shown being sacrificed it may indicate child sacrifice (Stone and Zender 2011: 31). Jaguars, especially with “cruller” ornaments at the nose and eyes, are typically associated with the sun, for example with GIII of the Palenque Triad (Schele and Freidel 1990: 414).

BC, with a “7 Deer” date from the 260-day divinatory calendar (Stuart et al. 2022). At Xultun, Late Classic Structure 10K-2 is part of a large, elite residential compound known as the “Los Sabios (wise men) Group” in the southwestern part of what Morley called Group A. Murals on three interior walls and the ceiling of one room, identified as a possible scribal workshop, show eleven individuals: a seated eighth-century king named Yax We'nel K'inich, two youths, and multiple attendants or priests identified as *taaj* (“obsidian”). These latter are thought to be a “hierarchical specialist order” serving as palace advisors on calendrical matters and rituals (Saturno et al. 2017). Three hieroglyphic texts, painted in black or red and repeatedly covered with layers of plaster, display calendrical content that presages later codices. Text A, for example, is a lunar table in bar-and-dot notation in Long Count that compares with the Postclassic Dresden Codex. Text B presents a date and “Ring Number” corresponding to 4000 years before the mural was painted and commensurate with the Venus Cycle. Text C gives counts of days relating to astronomical and ritual intervals, particularly in the 260-day sacred almanac but also the 365-day “vague year.” It is not impossible that similar murals and early texts existed in other elite residential structures in the Maya lowlands but have not survived the ravages of time. Morley, however, could never have even dreamed of such findings in 1920 and 1921.

The remains of Stela 30, apparently excavated and discarded by looters, were discovered in 2016 in front of Structure 11K17. This structure is the location of four of the best preserved Xultun monuments, numbers 23, 24, and 25, and Stela 30 may have been part of this grouping (Rossi and Stuart 2020: 13–14). A name on Stela 30 is clearly that of a female, and is also found on two polychrome vessels. Stelae 23, 24, and 25 may depict a woman, dubbed the Late Classic Queen of Xultun (Rossi and Stuart 2020: 14). Unfortunately, the poor quality of stone used for the many Xultun stelae do not allow us to know details of the site’s dynastic history other than Yax We'nel K'inich and the Late Classic queen.

## CHAPTER 10.

### JOURNEY TO XULTUN

#### Laguna de Yaloch

#### May 24, Monday

Although we were up early, we did not get off until 9:25, and I felt we were lucky to get off at all. One of the first things I verified was that Aurelio had returned last night with Blackman and that all of our baggage had come over. In spite of the fact that Aurelio had brought a saddle back with him from Benque, Macario came over early to tell me he was lacking one saddle. I therefore had to hobble out on my game foot in search of another. I went first to old man Blancaneaux's [Chapter 2, p. 19, note 46], an old Frenchman of great age and many children—even very young ones. Unfortunately, he had loaned his saddle out and could not help me. I went down the street making almost a house-to-house canvass, but could find none until I got to Eduardo Savala's. He had an old one in his bodega which he thought would do for a boy. Thanking him for his kindness, I limped back to Aunty Chon's, my foot paining from this unusual use.

Macario had not brought the mules over yet, but they were almost ready. I stopped at his house to tell him to send the boy down to don Eduardo's bodega to get the saddle. Carl had the packing done when I got back, and I sat down and wrote a note to Mother, [and] called Blackman to take me down to the Post Office, where I also wrote a note to Gann, sending with it those films of our Flores trip to be developed. Did a few last errands, soda-pop, shoes for Chico, and then returned to Aunty Chon's, where I found Macario and Miguel and the *mulada*. Our baggage is only four very light loads; I do not know whether it will total 400 lbs. This was being loaded when I got back. Don Chindo de la Fuente at the last moment gave me a bunch of lady-finger bananas and I brought a couple of "guanabanas." Or as the English call them "soursop."<sup>93</sup>

But at last, at 9:25, we were ready to start. The Mopan River is now so low that it can be forded just above Branch Mouth,<sup>94</sup> to which ford we were now going. The water was not deep and we crossed without difficulty. As we passed through Branch Mouth, I noticed a little fenced enclosure just beyond the *galerón*. It had three wooden crosses in it. Death had not passed even this casual stopping place of man, and we saw more traces of the dead than the living as we passed through without stopping. Beyond, Miguel took a short cut which went through a second-growth thicket, and here we all had to turn *arriero* and urge the mules forward. They had little

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<sup>93</sup> This is *Annona muricata*, a round, spiny fruit with a flavor hinting of strawberries, apples, and citrus. It is also sometimes called custard apple.

<sup>94</sup> At Branch Mouth, the Macal River—formerly called the Branch River—flows into the Río Mopan to form the Belize River.



desire to do this and kept stopping every little bit and looking back. By dint of much profanity and beating, we finally got them through the thicket and on to the main trail.

After winding through the thickly overgrown valley plain of the Belize River, we entered a stony-bottomed arroyo, very narrow, and commenced to ascend it. It had rained while we were crossing the valley plain, and the rocks were very slippery. One of the cargo animals slipped on a smooth slab, went down, and almost stood on his head. I felt quite sure it had broken its neck. Miguel hurried forward, gave it a push; it staggered to its feet and leisured on, apparently none the worse. After getting out of the arroyo, we stopped a minute for the boys to adjust the packs, and my animal improved the occasion by laying down with me on his back. I lost no time in helping him to his feet, however, with every means at my disposal, not many to be sure, but very efficacious.

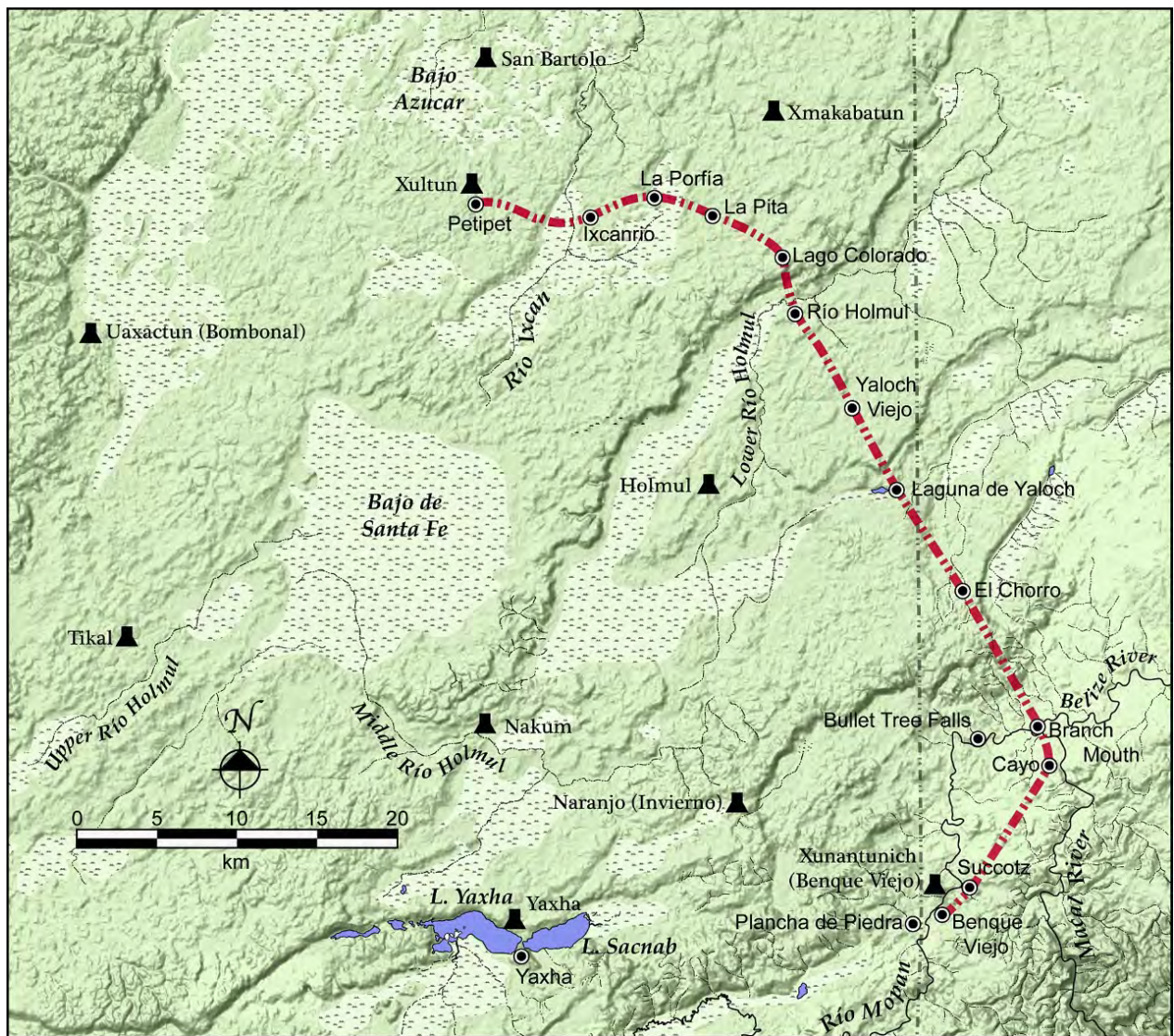


Figure 10.1. Morley's route from Benque Viejo to Xultun.

After winding over quite a little range—always amidst dense vegetation—we descended and at the bottom of the hill reached El Chorro, 4¾ hours out [Figure 10.1]. We stopped to arrange the packs; quite a little group of mounds extended back from the *champas*. The area is cleared and is altogether quite cheerful. There are several *champas*, one had its doors closed as though someone lived in it occasionally. In the little plaza of a group of mounds which Carl wandered off to explore while the packs were being fixed, he found a cache of clothes and cooking utensils. We were at El Chorro for 20 minutes. I did not dismount, as it is such a business for me to get on and off horseback, but my mule was not still a moment. I hit its head and it wandered all over the clearing, not once but several times, a foolish animal I had long before concluded, but this was additional proof. We left El Chorro at 2:30 and reached Laguna de Yaloch at 5:25 [Figure 10.2].



Figure 10.2. A mule train arriving at Laguna de Yaloch circa 1920, probably Morley's.

The last time I had ridden into this little settlement, for such it was then, having 4 or 5 houses and some 15 or 20 people, was under very different circumstances. It was about a fortnight earlier, four years ago—early in May—and the night of the second day out from Cayo, Lafleur, Carpenter, and I.<sup>95</sup> We had stopped the night before at El Chorro, and in the morning I found my prized *práctico*, or guide, had decamped and I returned to the Cayo for him, the *mulada* with Carpenter and Lafleur going on to Laguna de Yaloch. Arrived at Cayo, I found the town by the ears: Trinidad Flores, a Mexican *chiclero* had seized Plancha and was going to collect the duties on chicle. It was a bloodless revolution and, barring some monetary loss in supplies, hurt no one.

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<sup>95</sup> Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 20.

I turned around and came right back to Laguna, whither I arrived after nightfall. I broke the news and the natives were thrown into consternation. Trinidad Flores' plan—so far as I could get it in Cayo, from J.B. Smith—was to abandon Plancha and make his headquarters at Laguna de Yaloch. When the inhabitants heard this news, they all prepared to scatter, and the *resguardo* [guard], the only minion of Guatemalan law there, more hurriedly than anybody else. He told me earnestly that he had better return to El Cayo, while yet there was time, rather than to await the coming of the *banditos* and be killed in Laguna de Yaloch. Carpenter, Lafleur, and I held a council of war: should we return to Cayo or should we go on? In view of the news I had brought back with me, I did not care to decide the matter myself, though I could have, but left it to a vote of the three of us. We were unanimous in deciding to continue our trip, and even Andrew and Marius Silas, whom I had with me at the time, were eager to go forward. And so the decision was made, which resulted a fortnight later (May 17) in the death of Lafleur on our way out from that trip.

This time it was very different. The houses were all gone, save one—burned by Trinidad Flores' motley crew when they finally fled north from Laguna de Yaloch toward Mexico. There were two *galerones*, a large one, already occupied, and a small one, which we took. The owner of the *mulada* already in was don Antonio Maldonado of El Cayo, a *Campechano* by birth and an old friend. We exchanged greetings and he insisted upon our taking some food until our dinner should be ready. We had supper about dusk and turned in early—Chico was so troubled with mosquitoes in the night that he abandoned his hammock and slept on the ground under Aurelio's *pabellón*.

## La Porfía

### May 25, Tuesday

The boys were up before daylight and we got a fairly early start in consequence, 7:20. Antonio Maldonado had advised us to go by way of La Cubeta, and that the water at La Porfía was nothing but mud. In spite of this advice, both Aurelio and Miguel were in favor of going to La Porfía as being much shorter for us. We skirted around the northern end of the lake and then headed almost due NW. Indeed, for the 7½ hours we were travelling today we maintained this general direction. At 1¾ hours out, the trail forks: the lefthand branch going to Triunfo, being that we followed four years ago on our way to Uaxactun (now known as Bambonal). The right branch is the one we followed this morning to La Porfía. Three hours out from Laguna we passed Yaloch Viejo; if I am not mistaken it was here in the *chultun*<sup>96</sup> that that beautiful cache of pottery was found many years ago.<sup>97</sup> Half Gann acquired and half Davis.<sup>98</sup> I think now it is all in the Heye Museum in New York.

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<sup>96</sup> A Maya storage pit dug into the limestone.

<sup>97</sup> In the late 1890s, the hunting dog of the *sargento segundo* of Yaloch, Guillermo Tut, went into a *chultun* and discovered a collection of polychrome vessels "differing in size and shape, some of which were adorned with hieroglyphs and curious designs. Thomas Tappin ... succeeded in obtaining the whole collection for a few dollars ... thus happily preventing their loss and destruction. Tappin then transferred these interesting vessels to Dr. Gant [Gann], who, understanding their importance, sent them to England" (Maler 1908a: 123).

<sup>98</sup> Edward H. Davis (1862–1951) was the field collector for George Heye's Museum of the

After this, for the next hour we passed mound after mound. Four hours and a half out we entered the *bajo* of the Río Holmul, and were in it for half an hour, reaching a river at the end. These *bajos* are bottom lands usually along water courses, which in the rainy season are nothing more than logwood swamps. The logwood [*Haematoxylum campechianum*] is about the only tree that grows in them, its branches hang very low, and the pack animals are continually becoming entangled. We had to watch constantly to avoid ugly blows from low-hanging *bejucos* (thick hanging vines, *lianas*) and several times our hats were swept off. The Río Holmul is dry at this time of year. After winding considerably, it empties into the Belize River at Spanish Lookout.<sup>99</sup> We were, therefore, still in the drainage of that river.

Shortly after leaving this *bajo*, we passed a faint trail to the right leading to the Laguna Colorada, which was not more than a half a league distant, Miguel told me. Five hours and a half after leaving Laguna, and a half hour after leaving the *bajo* of the Río Holmul, we commenced ascending a high range on the north side of the Holmul Valley.

~~List of Parajes from El Cayo to Champoton (Campeche)~~

Furnished by don Antonio Maldonado of El Cayo at

Laguna de Yaloch on May 25, 1920

(Note in pencil: ENTIRELY WRONG CAPTION TO THIS ITINERARY)

Lv. Petipet	9:45
Ar. Ixcario	12:45
Lv. Ixcario	12:50
Ar. La Porfía	3:45
Lv. La Porfía	7:30
Ar. Yaloch Viejo	
Lv. Yaloch Viejo	
Ar. Laguna de Yaloch	2:30
Lv. Laguna de Yaloch	8:40
Lv. Chorro	11:45
Ar. Bullet Tree Falls	3:00
Lv. Bullet Tree Falls	3:15
Ar. Horha	4:45

## Petipet

### May 26, Wednesday

It was a dry night. The rains are still holding off and luck is still with us in that respect, at least. In spite of an early rising, Aurelio and Miguel were late getting off for the mules, and when they finally brought the latter back—happily “*completo*” [all of them] as they say down here—they ate a lengthy breakfast with the result that although we are up half an hour earlier than yesterday,

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American Indian in New York City, now part of the Smithsonian.

<sup>99</sup> In the diary margin the word “WRONG!” is penciled, probably Morley’s note while editing the typescript. Río Holmul is the Guatemalan headwaters of the Río Bravo in Belize.



before they had loaded the mules and we were ready to start it was 7:30, ten minutes later than yesterday.

Today's journey led across the valley plain of Ixcario, or if I can put that into English, across the valley plain of the River Ixcan. Yesterday we had descended the slope on the southern side of the valley and today we crossed the valley. The first  $3\frac{3}{4}$  hours of the day from La Porfía to the crossing of the Ixcario we pursued the same general direction as yesterday, namely due northwest. The next  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours after leaving Ixcario, the direction changed to halfway between west and northwest, and so continued to our journey's end: the *champas* of Petipet, Maya for "two brothers." There were few incidents to record. Half an hour after starting, the trail forked. The right-hand fork, the less used, goes to El Susto, 5 leagues distant. We continued on the left fork.

Forty minutes after starting we entered the Bajo of Azucar. This was worse than the one yesterday. In avoiding a low hanging bough, Carl grasped an *escoba* palm<sup>100</sup> and ran eight of its needles in his right arm and hand. It was very painful. He tried digging them out with a needle, but only succeeded in removing one this way. The rest were too deep. We were 25 minutes crossing this *bajo* and in several places Miguel and Chico had to cut a new trail around fallen trees. About an hour later we passed the small *aguada* of San Felipe on our right. I saw no *champas* here, but think it must be a *paraje* for *muladas* at this time of year. An hour and a half later we again entered another extension of the Bajo de Azucar, and 20 minutes later had reached Ixcario.

The river was not running now, being little more than a discontinuous series of little stagnant pools. We stopped here for 15 minutes while the boys fixed the cargos. Chico found an old machete, which, however, had a better edge than his new one, and he took it along. We also unearthed an old shotgun in two parts, but because we had no shells, did not carry it with us.

We left Ixcario at 11:15, changing our direction, as already noted, from northwest to between west and northwest. This part of the road was level. Fifty-five minutes after leaving Ixcario, we passed the *jato* de Máquina, one of Antonio Maldonado's former chicle camps. One and a half hours after leaving Ixcario, we began to pass through a group of mounds, two at first, and 25 minutes later quite a large number of these continued for three quarters of an hour. We judged it to be a fairly important group, some of the mounds were quite high enough to be called pyramids, and we felt a search might disclose stelae. Just after passing this group, I asked Aurelio how far his group of ruins lay from where we are now, and he said we had just passed his old blaze of five years ago, and that the monuments lay no more than a "*grito*" (shout) to the north of the trail. It was evident then that the mounds through which we had just been passing were all part of his city [now called Xultun], the outlying plazas, possibly to the south.

Although he was tired—the mules had been particularly obnoxious all day long, eating zapotes<sup>101</sup> when we wanted them to go forward, and rushing at every low-hanging bough they saw with the hope of scraping us off; thoroughly ornery to use a homely expression of ours—I prevailed upon him to go back, look up the ruins, and make himself sure of the monuments. Very obligingly he did this, and we continued on to Petipet, which we reached 36 minutes after passing the last mound of the above group. There were a number of small shallow pools filled with water the color of strong tea and covered with algae. The *champas* were not half bad, though we picked

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<sup>100</sup> A fan palm with long spines over its single trunk, its tied fronds can make a broom ("*escoba*").

<sup>101</sup> Zapote, or sapote, is a soft, round or oval fruit produced by tropical trees of various genera.

the worst one first, and not until after we had unloaded did we discover better ones, which we moved to at once.

Chico had tea going soon and we had a cup. When I added my lime juice to mine, it precipitated a messy looking gummy substance, and after drinking it I was nauseated somewhat. Carl set off to the *ramonal* with Miguel and the mules, and I wrote in this book while Chico prepared the camp, fire, etc. Some little after four, Aurelio returned, dripping with perspiration and tired out, but bringing the welcome news that he had succeeded in finding the ruins and that there were three standing monuments and three fallen ones, and that the ruins were not more than half a mile at the most north of the group of mounds we had passed through. I calculated his blaze to be about 2½ miles back along the trail, and another half mile to the monuments made three miles we would have to cover from camp to the scene of our labors and back, a total of 6 miles daily. This meant carrying lunch with us.

It was well after five when Carl and Miguel returned from the *ramonal*. Carl was greatly heartened over the good news, and we fell to speculating on what kind of chronological data we should find. We had a good supper and turned in early against the prospects of a busy exciting day tomorrow, although I could not get to sleep at once for thinking of what we might find in the way of new dates.

## **Petipet**

### **May 27, Thursday**

We were all up early in anticipation of an early start for the ruins, but before we actually got off it was six minutes to 7. The walk back over the trail is laborious, most of it is through a low swamp, the trail much cut up by the mules and now hardened into hummocks, walking upon which tired the feet considerably. It took us 38 minutes to reach the last mound we passed yesterday afternoon, and then 16 minutes more to reach the blaze where Aurelio's *picada* [narrow cut trail] came in, and from there it was just 22 minutes' walk north and east through the bush to the principal plaza. The ruins seem to be about due east of the *paraje* of Petipet. Before reaching the principal plaza, we passed eight subsidiary plazas and several *chultunes* [Figure 10.3].

We passed a high house on our left, on the west side of the Great Plaza and came to the first stela (No. 1). This was fairly well executed, but appeared to me to be only half of its original height, that is, the figures entered the ground at its waist. There were no glyphs on it. Stela 2 stood next to it, and while complete, was unfortunately badly eroded. There were no glyphs on the back and sides so far as I could tell, and the two vertical panels on the front appeared to have no calendrical signs.

Stela 3 stood in front of Structure II [A-2]. It was broken in half, the lower part still being in situ. In addition to this it had split along the narrow sides so that the front half was practically complete; the part of the base in situ was only the back half of the monument. The front half of the bottom half we raised later. There had been glyphs on the sides of this stela, but I could do nothing with them.<sup>102</sup> Stela 4 was standing, but although the sides had glyphs, they were so far gone that I could do nothing with them either.

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<sup>102</sup> Stela 3 was largely destroyed by looters before 1974. In the *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions*, Morley's photographs were used for the rendering (von Euw 1978, 5(1): 15-17).



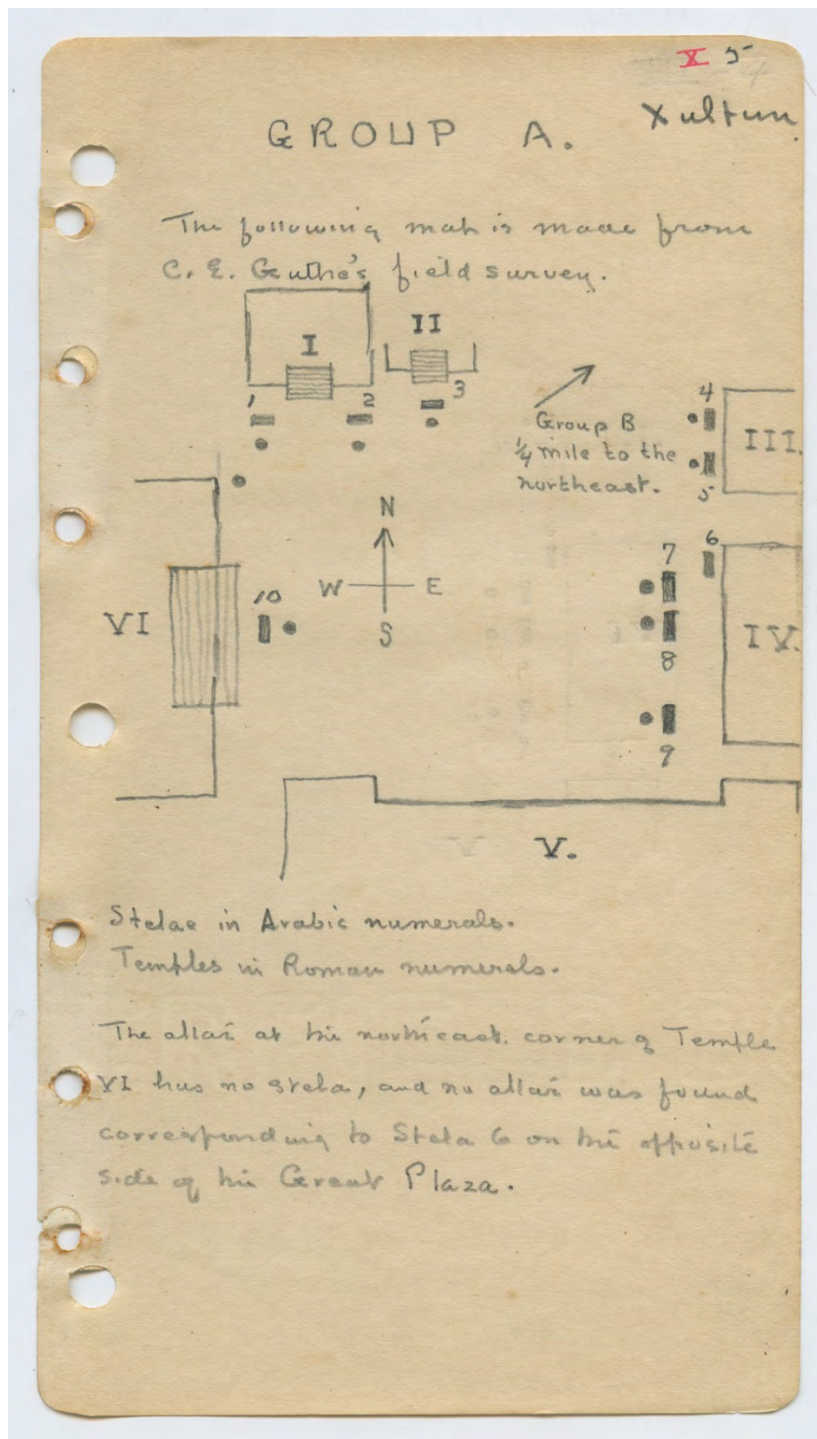


Figure 10.3. Morley's field sketch of the ruins and monuments at Xultun Group A.

Stela 5 [Figure 10.4] had broken near the ground and the monument had fallen forward face down in one great piece. The glyphs on one side of this were very clear, but unfortunately, they were of unknown meaning.



Figure 10.4. Xultun Stela 5, lower half.

Stela 7 had fallen forward on its face; faint traces of glyph columns, two on each narrow face, appeared, but I could do nothing with them.

Stelae 8 [Figure 10.5] and 9 had both fallen forward on their faces, but in each case fairly large trees were growing on top of each, their roots thrown down over the side and clasping them in a grip which had actually cracked and even crumbled them.

Stela 6 Carl found. It is small and low and built in so close to the substructure of Structure IV [A-4] that it is almost completely buried. It has one curious and very unusual feature: the glyphs are intaglio.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Intaglio refers to the engraving of a design in which the design element, say a human head, is carved into (sunk below) the surface of a material, leaving the “background” higher. The opposite is cameo, in which the motif is raised, the background having been cut away.



Figure 10.5. Xultun Stela 8 strangled by tree roots. Morley's worker Miguel is on the left-

The preliminary inspection of the nine monuments discovered proved very discouraging, since it looked as though we were not going to get a single date. We next climbed the high Structure 1 [A-1], the loftiest building at the site, the summit of which towers above the highest vegetation on the plain below. Its ground plan was simple, the so-called temple type and outer chamber and an inner sanctuary.

The view from the top of the roof comb was splendid. When we finally oriented ourselves with the compass, we saw stretching across the horizon far off to the southeast and cutting the view in that direction the high range, which divides the drainage of the Belize River (i.e., the

Holmul Branch) and Ixcario, which flows into the Hondo.<sup>104</sup> Between this high ridge and ourselves stretched a great rolling plain covered with the dense forest through which we passed yesterday. From our lofty lookout, it appeared to be a carpet of green, which on closer inspection, however, broke down into individual clumps of trees, succeeding low ridges which did not rise above the distant range to the south, and spots of varying color. We were now hot, tired, thirsty, and disappointed. Four Horsemen of a Discouraging Apocalypse, we descended the temple pyramid to eat lunch on the round altar of Stela 1—all of the stelae, save one we have found, having these round altars.

It was a meagerish lunch: tea, biscuit, jam, chipped beef, veal loaf (of which I did not partake), and a tin of apricots. This dry repast was washed down with a bottle of Benque Viejo soda pop, a sweetish liquid whose chief merit lay in the fact that it was moist. Lunch left us, however, with a tremendous thirst still. While we were eating lunch, a troop of monkeys, perhaps 15, came up through the treetops, chattering and growling. Chico was fired with the ambition to kill one instantly, and loudly lamented the fact that he had not brought the old shotgun he had found at Ixcario. He threw many stones. The monkeys became enraged, shook the branches, and broken boughs fell and a wild excitement reigned. The monkeys retired to a corner of the plaza and continued to shout their defiance from time to time. After lunch, Chico and Aurelio climbed the substructure of Temple VI and hurled down stones from above. Chico claims to have registered one hit on a foreleg and cause one old patriarch to dodge his head violently in order to avoid extinction. I did not see these acts of prowess and cannot vouch therefore.

This belligerency on the part of Chico had a most unexpected, and as it finally turned, valuable outcome for us. He and Aurelio, in cruising along the eastern edge of the substructure off Temple VI [A-14], found a stela (No. 10) fallen face forward, broken into three pieces. We cleaned off the vegetable mold, fallen leaves, decomposed stone, earth, etc., and turned the top part first. The upper half of a beautifully executed human figure [Figure 10.6] rewarded these efforts, and on the next fragment to the left in front of the figure was a column of four glyphs, beginning with a Calendar Round date and a Secondary Series, which filled the last three blocks. What delighted us particularly was the extraordinary state of preservation of the carving, which was in little short of mint state.<sup>105</sup>

We next directed our attention to the bottom fragment, which was more deeply buried. This required more excavation, and our only tools were two machetes. Finally, the earth and roots were cleared from its edges and we turned it over. It was the bottom half of our priest or ruler or deity and was as well preserved as the top part. Next, we jimmied these three pieces into their proper relative positions and gave the face a good scrubbing with a stiff bristled brush I had brought for the purpose, and the whole design was revealed.

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<sup>104</sup> Morley's typescript has a handwritten note saying "WRONG" here. The high range separates the Ixcario from the Holmul, both in the Río Hondo drainage (see Figure I.1).

<sup>105</sup> Stela 10, artistically stunning, was in such remarkable condition that it eventually was looted. Eric von Euw saw the monument on his visit to Xultun in 1974, found just as the CIW team left it in 1920. By 1975 when the Corpus team returned to the site, Stela 10 was gone, and its location remains unknown (Von Euw 1978, 5[1]: 37).



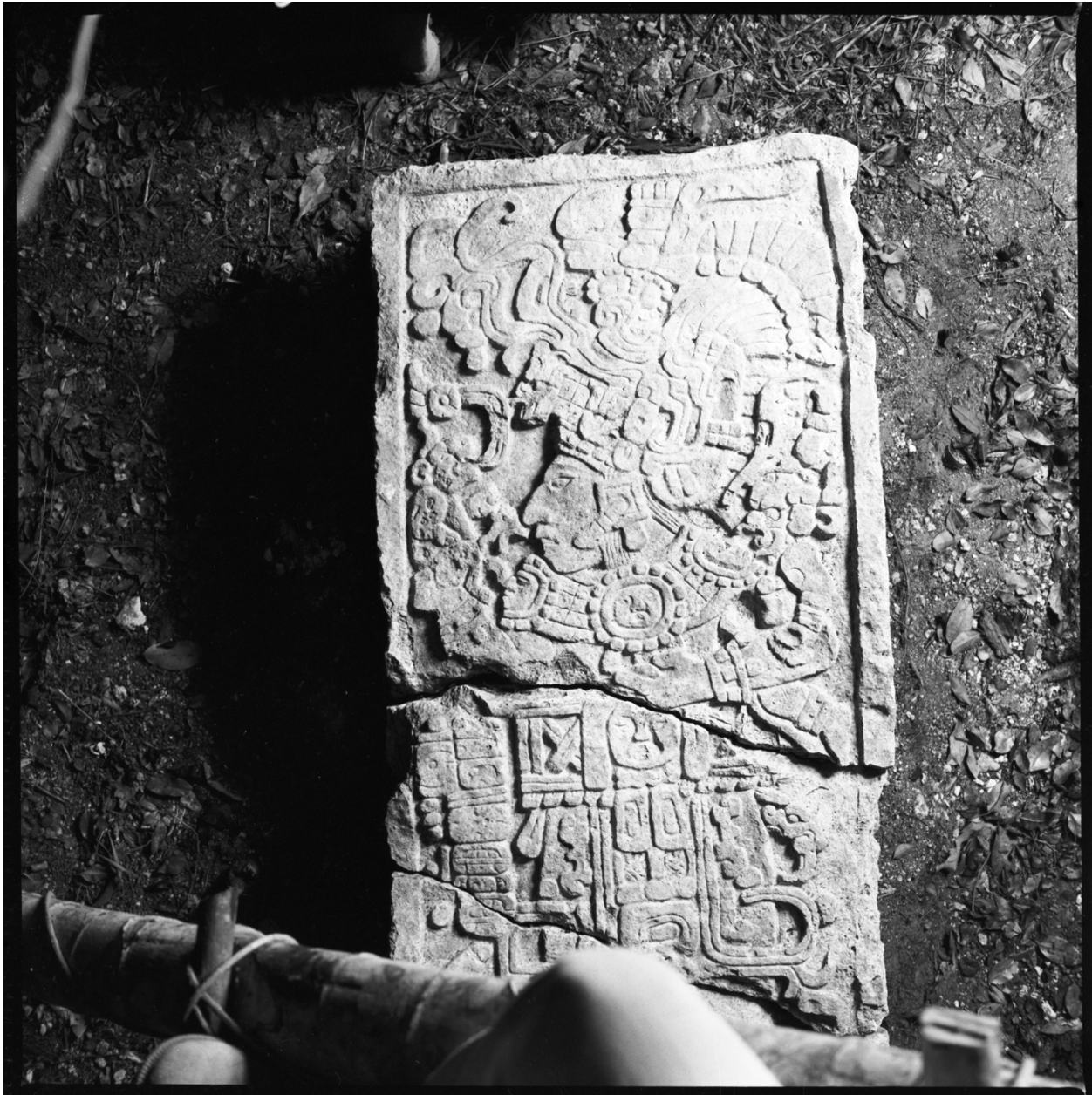


Figure 10.6. Xultun Stela 10 as photographed by Ian Graham in 1974.

A priest facing to the left held in his right hand, extended before his face, a beautiful little tiger [Baby Jaguar, see Chapter 9, p. 69] figure seated upon its haunches. So well preserved at this point that even the delicate lining on the spots of the body still showed clearly. From this little feline's mouth there issued a scroll, which rose above its head terminating in a graceful flower which resembled a lily. A small companion figure was seated on the elbow of the left arm of the priest; this figure had a death head. The details of the priest's costume were elaborate not to say gorgeous, and the large headdress in which feathers played a conspicuous part were sumptuous. This work made ready Stela 10 for photographing, and we scattered to other work.

I returned to Stela 3 to start my notes there, and Carl climbed Temple VI [A-14]. He later called my attention to an interesting stucco decoration on the roof comb of Temple II [A-2]. We climbed the pyramid to study this closer and were intent upon its examination when a heavy shower came up and we hastily took shelter in what was left of the temple itself, a small section in front of the sanctuary. Presently the rain fell so heavily that it began to drop in tiny streams from many places, and Carl conceived the happy idea of arranging our mouths under some of these. This was rainwater and therefore to be trusted. I selected a promising infant Niagara, and turning up my face allowed the tiny thread of delicious cool refreshing water to trickle down my throat. In this way for many moments, we partially assuaged our thirst. Indeed, my first intimation that the shower was passing was the thinning and occasional interruption of my particular streamlet, and before long, the blue skies broke through the blanket of clouds. Aurelio and Chico, who had taken refuge near Stela 1, now joined us.

We descended the pyramid and I found my note paper and sun helmet a sorry wreck. The latter weighed at least 5 lbs and was soft and squashy. We returned to Stela 10, and just then the sun broke through, making a fine light for photography. I took six exposures of the monument (Figure 10.7; compare with Figure 10.6).



Figure 10.7. Morley's photo of Xultun Stela 10.

We now prepared to go. The boys had arranged a canvas pack cover which they had brought over so that it would catch rainwater. We had three bottles which we were still thirsty enough to want. The camera, lunch containers, etc., were packed and we started back to camp a little before four. In leaving the plaza, we frightened a *perdix*, a partridge [probably a little tinamou, *Crypturellus soui*] which flew up into the air. Aurelio found its nest under a shrub containing 7 eggs, about the size of a hen's egg, of pinkish color. Fearing these had young within, and none



caring to discourage the little mother—indeed I felt it would have been bad luck to have done so, a sort of albatross, so to speak—we did not even touch them, but continued on toward camp.

If the way was weary coming out, it was certainly wearier coming back, particularly the last half; the part crosses a *bajo*, the mud had dried into hummocks, and long-continued hopping from one to another of these tires and bruises the instep cruelly. We reached Petipet a little after five, being an hour and a quarter on the way back. Miguel was out at the *ramonal* when we returned but came in shortly. I undressed to the skin immediately after getting in to prevent ticks from transferring themselves from my clothes to my person, and to my utmost dismay found on my left foot in the center of the instep a small black cup-shaped hole about 1/10 of an inch in diameter. It neither pained nor burned nor itched nor anything, but there it was and I couldn't explain it. As always in the bush I think of a snake bite first, but the boys declared snake bites swelled and pained horribly from the first. It was [not] an *anigua*—like our chigger—that I knew, but what dread unknown malady of the bush was it. Anxiety as to its nature far transcended any inconvenience from the malady itself, and I was half sick for worry over what it might or might not be. I continued to the examination of my body, and to my horror found another of these black cups on my left heel, and three on the calf of my left leg. What awful bush malady was this?

And then the rational explanation occurred to me, worry ceased, and I composed myself. This morning before dressing, a package of potassium permanganate had spilled on my cot. Several crystals of this had gotten under my left sock, and as the day wore on and I perspired more and more, these had slowly dissolved. The close-fitting puttee I wore had held them tightly in one place, and each of them had slowly eaten into the flesh below, causing these little black cup-like depressions. Once I could explain how they got there I ceased to worry and fell to working on the Secondary Series and Calendar Round date on Stela 10 and others from Stela 3, but I could do nothing with either, I found.

Meanwhile, Carl was covering himself with glory and Chico with beans at the campfire. In spite of considerable camp experience in the States, he put a tin of Van Camp's pork and beans on the fire without first making a hole in it. I had warned him several times as to the possible dire consequences, but nothing had happened, so he did it tonight. Suddenly, there was a loud report. Chico, who was near the fire, either reeled or fell backward and clapped his hands to his face. The can of beans had exploded with some violence, covering Chico from head to foot with beans and scattering the contents of the can to the four winds. Happily, there was no damage done. Chico's eyes were not hurt, and the spots made on his shirt and pantaloons were indistinguishable from previous intrusions of foreign matter. Finally, a new can of beans—this time pierced—repaired all damages.

Poor Carl had an accident later with some delicious vegetable soup and milk. This spilled and he only was able to save a little, but that little went a long way. We turned in early. I was very much discouraged. This long, expensive, and laborious trip, and no dates; it was too disheartening. We, neither of us, were able to go to sleep at once, Carl for itching and myself for nervous indigestion. Carl happily remembered having seen some Pepsin and Soda Mint Tablets<sup>106</sup> in the outfit, and six of these relieved me. Chico's cold in the chest, he claimed, was also relieved

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<sup>106</sup> Pepsin and Soda Mint Tablets were an early twentieth-century remedy for indigestion, pepsin being a digestive enzyme.

by the same remedy, though he only took one. It looked so threatening that we put out our bucket under the edge of the *champa* to catch any rain that might drip from the roof. A little fell, but not much. I remember drinking two cups full about midnight and feeling greatly refreshed by it.

## **Petipet**

### **May 28, Friday**

It was decided this morning to take Miguel back with us to help us try and lift Stela 5, and also cut down the tree above Stela 8. But when we were ready to set off about seven, he was absent at the *ramonal* and we left a note in camp for him to follow with the ax as soon as he came in. We set out for the ruins and at the point where Aurelio's *picada* branches off, I left my handkerchief on a sapling as a sign for him to follow.

Our failure to injure her eggs was alone sufficient to inspire confidence in the trusting little mother *perdix*, and although we passed within a foot or so of her, and even stopped to look at her as she sat on her eggs, she took no fright but sat on unruffled. Think we all felt rewarded.

As soon as we arrived at the river, the four of us freed the upper half of Stela 3 from its blanket of humus, rots, leaves, and broken, rotten stone, and turned it over. The upper part of the priestly figure there preserved was very like that on Stela 10, holding the same little tiger in its right palm. It was in practically as good condition as Stela 10, and we jimmied the two pieces together for photographing. Meanwhile, as Miguel had not yet arrived, it was useless to attempt even to raise Stela 5, so Carl returned to his mapping, while I began to draw the glyph panels on the fronts of Stelae 5 and 10. Aurelio set off into the bush.

Sometime later, we heard distant calls and gave answering halloos, and presently Miguel with an ax arrived. As Aurelio was now missing, I put Miguel to cutting down the roots of the tree on top of Stela 8. My idea here was that if the roots were severed at the ground level, the tree would fall, turning over with it the monument grasped in its roots. While Miguel attacked this problem, I returned to my drawing, but after a while the cutting ceased and I sent Chico to ascertain why. It seems although all the roots were cut, the tree would not fall. I believed this due in part to the engagement of its upper branches with the branches of a neighboring tree, and in part to the heavy weight of the stela itself, which prevented the tree from falling in spite of the fact that it had a decided cant to the northwest.

A big *bejuco* hung on the side and we tried pulling on this, but to no purpose, so I gave it up as a bad job. By this time, the morning had worn on pretty well, and Aurelio had come back. I finished up my drawing of Stelae 3 and 10, that is, the panels on the front, and calling Carl from his mapping, we all tried to turn Stela 5. The heavy mass of this fragment proved too much for us, and after getting the edge we were lifting some foot and a half off the ground, we had to abandon the project.

By this time, we were all hungry and tired, and by common consent adjourned to the lunch table: the altar of Stela 1. No monkeys visited us this noon and we ate uneventfully, Miguel staying on with us.

Afterwards, we scattered to our work: Carl to his mapping, Miguel back to Petipet, Chico, myself, and Aurelio back to Stela 10, where I wanted to take a final photograph and then throw it back on its face to protect it from the rain. Also, I wanted to have a last try at its right edge—facing the monument—in hopes that I might find an I.S. there. Aurelio and Chico were not

inclined to view with enthusiasm the overthrowing of the monument on which we had expended so much time, but finally we threw it back face down.

I took my scrubbing brush and rubbed up the glyphs on the right side. Only the left edges of these were preserved, it must be remembered, and at first I saw nothing but two long bars, 15½ inches [39.4 cm] long. Thus, for a moment I thought these must be parts of some decorative side panel like one of the stelae at Piedras Negras (Stela [left blank]<sup>107</sup>), but suddenly it struck me between the eyes that this was the two bars of a Cycle 10 Initial Series and just above it, where my eye fell next, was the curve of the *tun* element of the I.S. Introducing Glyph [Figure 10.8]. At this point I shouted excitedly, “Carl – a Cycle 10 I.S.”

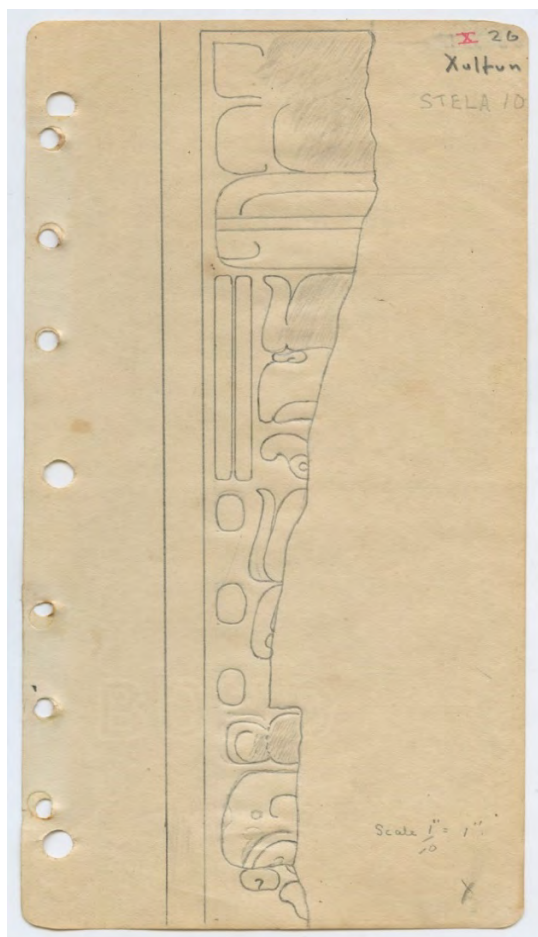


Figure 10.8. Page from Morley’s field notebook with his drawing of part of the beginning of the Initial Series on Xultun Stela 10, showing *bak’tun* 10 (two bars) and 3 *k’atuns* (three dots).

In any Maya date, the most important coefficient is always that of the *k’atun* sign, and next my eye hurriedly followed down to this, and here came the greatest surprise and most amazing discovery of the entire trip. It was 3, making this monument the latest known in the Old Maya Empire. This I fairly roared to Carl, “The latest I.S. known in the whole Old Empire.” I heard a

<sup>107</sup> We think he may have intended to reference Piedras Negras Stela 32 here.

great crashing and Carl came hurtling through the bush in an equal frenzy of excitement. I had already found the 0 *tuns*, and by the time he arrived was able to give him the final reading of 10.3.0.0.0 1 Ajaw 3 Yaxk'in (889 AD), and 20 years [a *k'atun*] later than the latest previously discovered stelae from the Old Empire: Stela 2 at Flores, Stela 1 at Seibal, and Stela 11 at Tikal.

It was a great discovery and immediately changed our plans. We had been planning on finishing this afternoon and leaving tomorrow for La Porfía. But now I would have to draw this, it would make me stay over another day. Carl was glad of this, as he said it would enable him to do a better job on the map.

This discovery at once raised the hope that a similar I.S. might yet be found on Stela 3, whither we immediately removed ourselves and threw it also over on its face. I was kneeling down by its right side almost before it fell, and in another second was reading the following important and never found before Initial Series: 10.1.10.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Kank'in [Figure 10.9]. It was almost too good to be true. Two Cycle 10 I.S. and only three others are known everywhere else, and both new, and one the latest date in the Old Empire.<sup>108</sup>

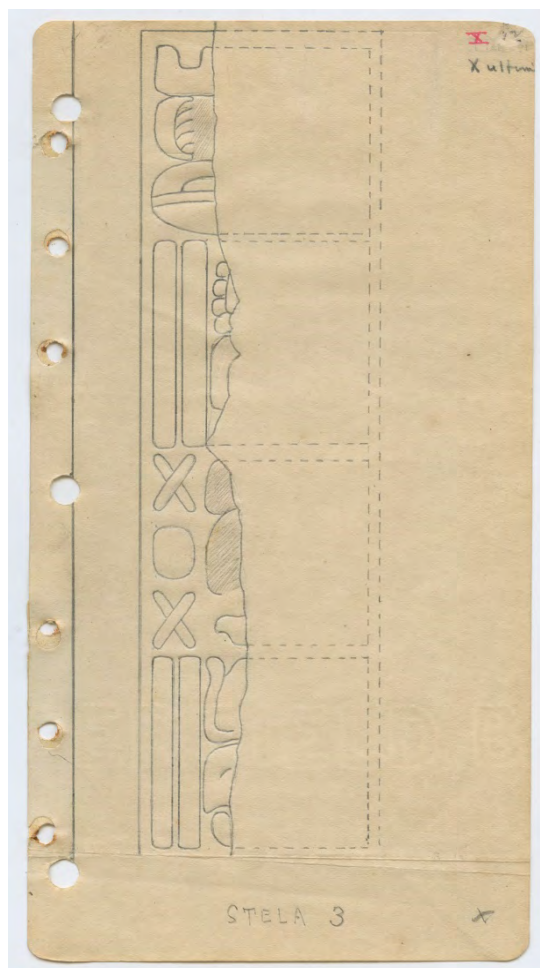


Figure 10.9. Morley's field drawing of the I.S. on Xultun Stela 3, showing 10.1.10.

<sup>108</sup> Several dozen Cycle 10 dates have since been found, including a few dating to 10.4 (AD 909).

We were both greatly excited, and I could scarcely compose myself sufficiently to draw. Finally, I settled down, however, to drawing the I.S. of Stela 3 and finished the four glyph blocks on the right side, I.S. Introducing Glyph, cycles, *k'atuns*, and *tuns* in what remained of a very eventful afternoon filled with one of the most important discoveries of my field career.

And now I must take up another matter which may prove of importance. In his cruising through the bush this morning, Aurelio came on another plaza filled with seven sculptured monuments about a kilometer to the northeast. He told me of this in the afternoon, but said he was saving it to show me the next year. I saw at once what was troubling him. It was so nearly the site we are now working on that he feared I would regard it as the same and not give him an extra twenty-five dollars for it unless he held it over until next year. Of course, if it is only a kilometer distant, it is technically and actually part of the same site, but I saw that if I were to see it all this year, I must regard it as a new site. So far as his reward was concerned, I therefore told him that if it were that far distant from the first group, I would regard it as a new site and give him an extra twenty-five dollars for leading me to it in the morning. And when he learned that I would do this, he was willing enough to lead us to the "new site."

On the way home, tired as we were, we speculated on the new dates, and the effect of their news upon our friends of the Maya Society. I can just imagine old Gann's eyes fairly popping out of his head. We talked some of what we should name the site, and this latest date of all suggested the propriety of incorporating in whatever Maya name we choose—we both were one on the propriety of giving it a Maya name—the Maya word *xul*, which means "end" or "close."

Carl thought a one-syllable word not so desirable as a two-syllable one, and I thought Xul might be confused with the modern village of Xul in Yucatan, where Stephens also speaks of archaeological remains. We reached home before half past five and, while Carl was supervising the preparation of dinner, I succeeded in tying in the two Calendar Round dates and Secondary Series to the respective Initial Series on Stelae 3 and 10. I give these calculations below to preserve their record here:

Front of Stela 3	10.0.3.0.0	11 Lamat 11 Xul
“ “ “ “	1.6.14.12	
Right side “ “	10.1.10.0.0	4 Ajaw 13 Kank'in
Front of Stela 10	10.1.13.7.17	6 Kaban 10 Sip
“ “ “ “	1.6.10.3	
Right side “	10.3.0.0.0	1 Ajaw 3 Kank'in

According to the correlation of Maya and Christian chronology, I have suggested in C.I.W. Pub. No. 219, 10.1.10.0.0 corresponds to 859 AD and 10.3.0.0.0 to 889 AD.<sup>109</sup>

It has been a very eventful day and these two discoveries alone have put an entirely new aspect on our entire trip, which up to the point of this afternoon's discovery, so far as this Petipet trip had been concerned, I had been disposed to regard in the light of a failure. Now, however, we can bring home new dates, and important ones too. The afternoon's discoveries show that this

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<sup>109</sup> In *The Inscriptions at Copan*. In the typescript of his diary, the dates are given according to his own incorrect correlation, as some 200 years earlier. Possibly reading AD 630, these are crossed through in pencil, with the correct GMT dates given (and presented here).

site must have been one of the very latest, if not the very latest, Old Empire city to be occupied, and indeed has increased the period of the Old Empire by another 20 years. Finally, it shows that this site, at least, of the Old Empire was occupied for at least 10 years after the single I.S. yet found at Chichen Itza, namely 10.2.10.0.0.

## **Petipet**

### **May 29, Saturday**

We got off at quarter to seven and covered the first half in good time. This morning, in going in on his *picada*, Aurelio made a shortcut of it and reached the ruins in better time than either day heretofore. We stopped at the ruins only long enough to leave the lunch, and then going to the northeast corner of the plaza we struck due northeast, crossing several mounds and, 5 minutes after leaving, a small quarry.

Here, we found what I have never seen before: a half-finished stela which seems to have broken in ancient times. This is well squared but only about 4 feet [1.2 m] high, I should judge, though I did not measure it and the top is broken. Another five minutes' walk and we came to a plaza with a small stela standing in it. This later was to receive the number 11.<sup>110</sup> It was sculptured on the front with one figure and glyphs on the sides. These, like those on Stela 6 and Group A, are intaglio. We decided to call this morning's new group, Group B [Figure 10.10].

Aurelio next led us to a fine standing monument. It is some 7 or 8 feet [2.1–2.4 m] high, and so far as I could detect, was sculptured only on the front, with a large figure facing most unusually to the right. Another equally unusual feature was the absence of any glyphs on it, which I think is almost if not quite unique. This stela was later given the number 12.<sup>111</sup>

Aurelio next led us to four very large stelae, nos. 17, 16, 15, and 14, which had all fallen face forward and which had all been quite tall, standing at least 10 feet [3 m] above ground. Stela 17 was caught in the roots of a large tree, which grew on top of it. Burrowing down along the right side of this, I detected traces of an I.S. and even think I read this as 9.15.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Yax, although this is doubtful. Stela 16 also had an I.S. on its right side, but the details of the glyphs are so far gone that I could not even hazard a guess as to the date recorded here.

Stela 15, however, provided a certain date. On the left side, the fourth glyph down I noticed was Glyph A of the Supplementary Series; the following glyph was very clearly and unmistakably 13 Muwan and the next "End of K'atun 14" [Figure 10.11]. The first, second, and third glyphs I next succeeded in deciphering as Glyphs C, X, and B of the Supplementary Series, and it became evident that the 10 or 11 glyphs on the right side, now unfortunately practically

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<sup>110</sup> Morley renumbered the Group B stelae when he returned to the site in 1921 (Chapter 17), as follows: Stela 11 became Stela 17; Stela 12 became Stela 16; Stela 13 became Stela 15; Stela 14 remained the same; Stela 15 became Stela 13; Stela 16 became Stela 12; and Stela 17 became Stela 11. As if this were not confusing enough, at a later date it was determined that "Stela 11" was actually the upper section of Stela 13. Accordingly, modern numeration skips "Stela 11" (Von Euw 1978: 41–43). Fortunately, Morley hand-corrected the stelae numbers in his diary, so the names presented in his text are correct. Researchers consulting his 1920 field diaries, however, should keep in mind the old numeration.

<sup>111</sup> See diary entry for February 16, 1921 (Chapter 17, Figure 17.6).



entirely eroded, had recorded the following Initial Series number, the day of the terminal date and the first three or four glyphs of the Supplementary Series.

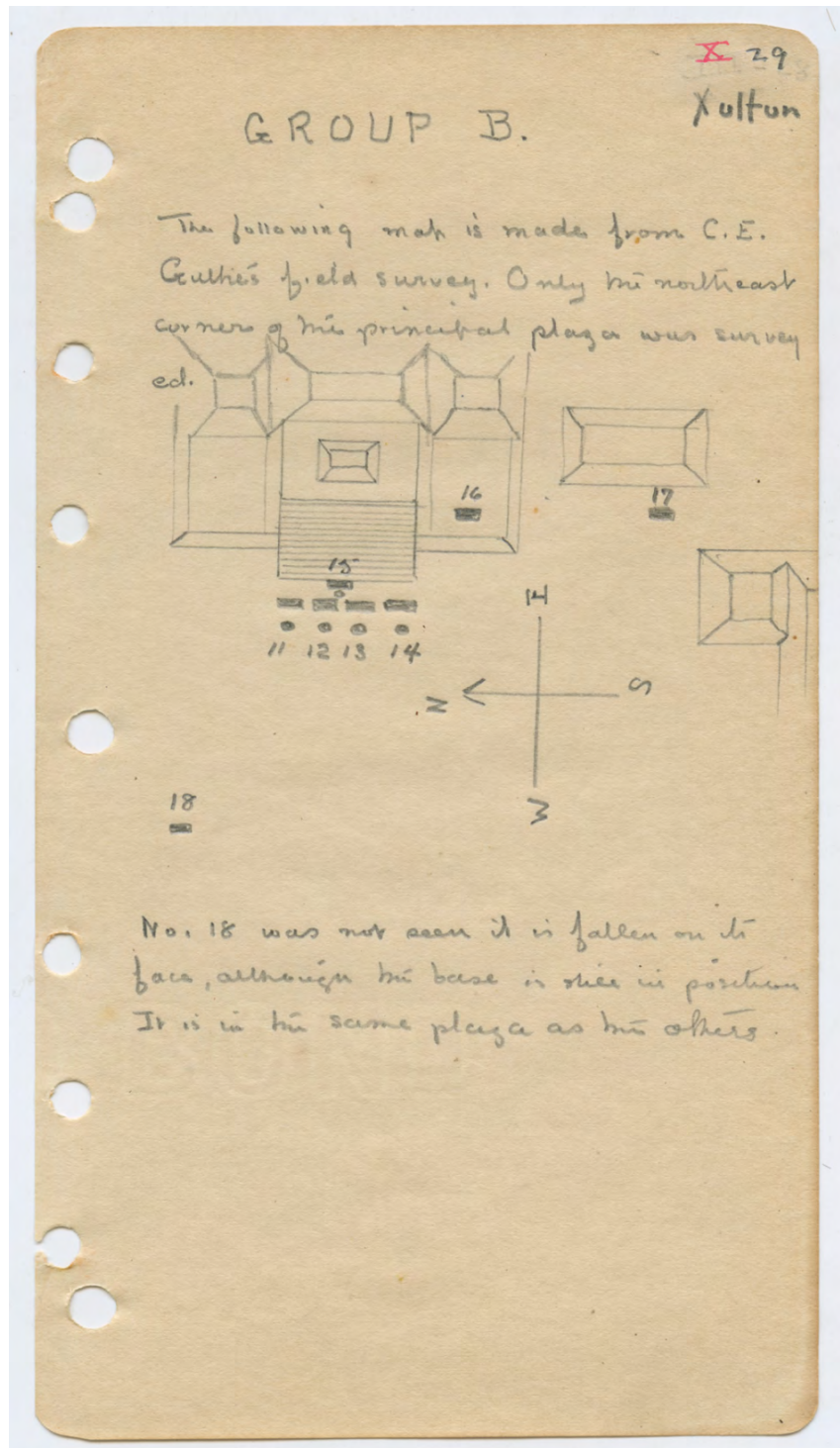


Figure 10.10. Morley's field sketch map of Xultun Group B, with the stelae identified by their original numbers. See note 109.

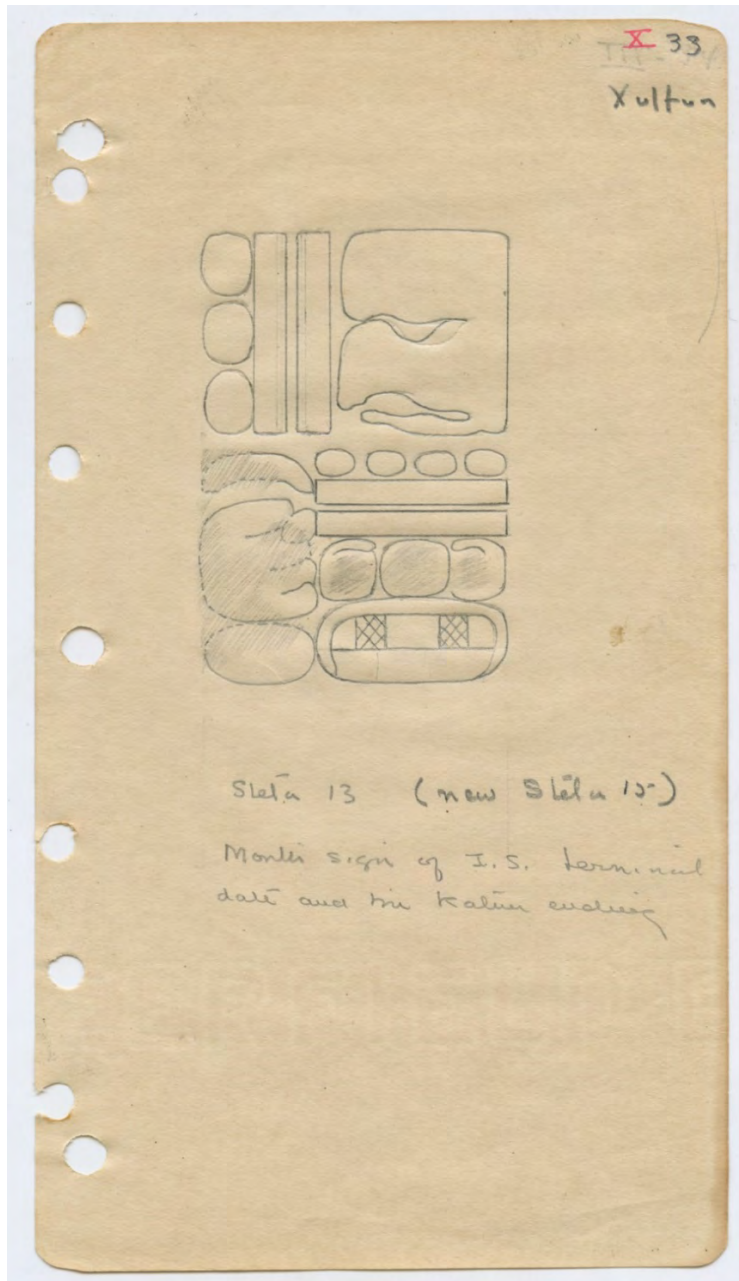


Figure 10.11. Morley's field drawing of part of the inscription of Stela 15. Note that his diary corrects the stela numbers.

The date recorded here was therefore:  
 9.14.0.0.0 6 Ajaw 13 Muwan  
 End of K'atun 14

This date [AD 711 GMT], toward the close of the Middle Period, to 10.3.0.0.0, shows a recorded occupation of 180 years. The discovery of this second plaza shows this place was fairly

extensive, at least a third-class city and possibly a second-class one.<sup>112</sup> The plaza discovered this morning, "Group B," was older than the Great Plaza at Group A and, although the monuments are higher at B than at A, they are not so highly developed stylistically.

Stela 14 is so badly eroded that I could not even tell whether there had ever been glyphs on its sides. Since the other three, 17, 16, and 15, are in the same line [and] had had I.S., I believe this had formerly had one also. These four stelae had all fallen face forward and the sculptures on these faces should be in excellent states of preservation. Stela 13 is a low stela just behind and between Stelae 16 and 15. It is sculptured, but so eroded I could decipher no glyphs on it.

Aurelio reported to me later that there is one other stela fallen and broken, to which I gave the number 18. This makes 8 sculptured monuments for Group B, which, added to the 10 already found at Group A, makes 18 for the entire site. As it is obvious that I will have to return here someday—I hope to be able to next year—I made but little attempts at scale drawing, save only on Stela 15, where I drew the 13 Muwan and the end of K'atun 14.

There are five stelae that will have to be turned here at Group B—Stele 17, 16, 15, 14, and 18—and four at Group A: Stelae 5, 7, 8, and 9, making nine for the site. If they all carry Calendar Round dates and Secondary Series on their fronts, even if the I.S. on their sides are effaced, I think I can probably date them. At any rate, we now have at least six new Initial Series (Stelae 3, 4, 10, 17, 16, and 15), of which three have been read surely (Stelae 3, 10, and 15) and one doubtfully (Stela 17).

Carl had in the meantime returned to Group A, while I remained behind to take such notes as might be necessary at Group B. I finished here about 11 and returned with Chico and Aurelio to the other group. As it wanted an hour yet to noon, and as I wanted to finish Stela 3 before drawing the Initial Series on Stela 10, I worked here first, and then adjourned to Stela 10, where we all ate lunch. Afterward, I drew the Initial Series on Stela 10 and then, after a last photograph or two, was ready to go.

Carl, in the meantime, had worked around the Great Plaza and was finishing the last structure, Temple VI on the west side. I assisted him in this and he soon had as much of the ground plan as could be recovered without excavation. Temple VI must have been an imposing construction. So far as we could make out, it consisted of two long, parallel chambers, close on to a hundred feet [30.5 m] in length, broken here and there by transverse walls, though not by many of them. Traces of a roof-comb with niches in it were observed at the southern end, and from the floor of the chamber to the capstone of this arch must have been all of 15 feet [4.6 m].

Carl finished about 3, and after gathering our effects together, taking a last look at the Great Plaza, and bidding goodbye to the little partridge mother, we set off for Petipet with light hearts. On the way back, we decided on the name for the ancient city. I have spoken here already how we both felt the propriety of having Xul in the name to commemorate or symbolize the fact that this was the last or "end" city of the Old Empire. That this fact had further been recorded on a monument here, a "stone," Maya *tun*, and that such a stone was the closing stone or "end stone," suggested the name Xultun, which was the one we finally adopted for this city. The more we said this over, the better it sounded, and we came to refer quite naturally even on the way back to the city of Xultun.

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<sup>112</sup> See discussion of such ranking in the Introduction, p. xiv.

We reached camp at 4:30 and set about preparing to leave. I first changed clothes to the skin—we had seen some monstrous *garrapatas* today—celebrating our coming departure by a clean pair of riding trousers. We began to ease up somewhat on food restrictions also, because we planned to be in Cayo on Tuesday night, the first of June, Carl's 26th birthday.

The sun set fair and a pleasant day seemed promised for tomorrow. The moonlight falling through the bush is lovely, the moon is full Tuesday night, and it literally floods the forest with its brilliance. We turned in about eight as usual. One cannot stay outside of one's mosquito-bar for very long after dark with any comfort, the insect life becomes so superabundant. Though one may not be sleepy, he must needs go to bed anyhow. Tomorrow we will be on our way out.

## CHAPTER 11.

### XULTUN TO EL CAYO AND A NOT-NEW SITE

#### La Porfía

#### May 30, Sunday

We rose early, 4:30, against an early start, had breakfast, packed, and then sat around for three mortal hours and waited for Miguel to bring in the mules. We knew well why he did not return from the *ramonal*; seven passed, eight passed, and nine, and then shortly after, he came in. It was the wretched *yegua* (bell-mare), Chico's mount, which had strayed, leading with her 6 of 8 animals. Miguel and Aurelio, who had gone to assist, came back furious, cursing out the *yegua* and all the other animals of this *mulada*. After the mules were once in, it did not take too long to saddle them, as the Belize creoles say, and we left Petipet at 9:45. There are few incidents to record of our trip out. Having with me in my pocket our itinerary out, it did not seem so long, knowing in advance just how many minutes it had taken us going out to do the several sections of the trip.

Soon it became evident that we were making up time. Thus, we reached Ixcanrio at 12:45, just 3 hours after leaving Petipet, whereas the same stretch coming out took us 3¼ hours. Again, coming out from La Porfía to Ixcanrio took us 3½ hours, while returning we did this same stretch in just 3 hours, making a half hour's saving for this section and three-quarters of an hour for the whole day. We reached La Porfía at 3:45. Although the sky was overcast and it thundered, we only caught a few drops and we felt ourselves lucky. It is quite evident, however, that the rains must break soon, and we are thankful for each dry league on the road to Cayo which we are able to put behind us.

The day's ride is the shortest we will have to take. It is lucky, too, for with the late start we got this morning, a really long *jornada* would have taken us until six o'clock. The *jornada* today was across the valley of the Ixcanrio, on the southern side of which, before reaching La Porfía, we crossed the Bajo of Azucar, a large logwood swamp.

I am at last beginning to grasp the physiography of northeastern Petén. Starting north from Cayo, one crosses the Río Mopan and then the north side of the valley-plain of that river. This valley is bounded to the north by a generally east and west range called locally the Sierra Chunvis. The Cayo-Laguna trail crosses this range at Tom Indian Hill, and just beyond the crest lies El Chorro, 4½ leagues out. From this crest, one descends, tho' not too steeply or so long, to the Laguna de Yaloch, a little interior drainage lake in the valley of the Río Holmul, which has no outlet. From the cleared space at the little settlement on the east side of the Laguna de Yaloch, one gets a fine view of the northern side of the Sierra de Chunvis and somewhere due west of us [actually south-southwest; see Figure 10.1], on the northern slope of this range, lies Naranjo.

Five leagues beyond the Laguna de Yaloch, in a northwesterly direction, brings one to the Río Holmul, the principal stream of this considerable valley. Both Aurelio and Miguel insist it

rises in Lake Yaxha, and this appears probable.<sup>113</sup> It flows into the colony, finally, becomes the Río Yalbec, and at last finds its way into the Belize River as Labouring Creek. (WRONG) Half an hour's ride after leaving the north bank of the Río Holmul, one commences to ascend a really considerable range. I could get no especial name for this, but it is known to all the *chicleros* and is an important feature of the topography, since it is the divide between the Belize and the Hondo Rivers.<sup>114</sup>

The stream, or rather the almost dry bed of it, which we passed today, the Ixcario, finds its way into the Hondo, probably through the Río Bravo. CORRECT. Certainly not through Blue Creek, which rises in Mexico and only just touches Petén on the north. This great valley—it took us more than a day to cross only part of it—holds, I believe, many of the most important Old Empire cities: Tikal, Uaxactun, Nakum(?), Xultun, and La Honradez.<sup>115</sup> As a region of intensive occupation in the Great Period, it must have surpassed [undecipherable penciled word] the valleys of the Usamacintla<sup>116</sup> and the Motagua. Here, the Old Empire had its beginning, probably (Uaxactun), and here made its final stand (Xultun), cities less than 50 miles [80.5 km] as a bird flies.

Another 9 or 10 leagues northwest of the place where we crossed the Ixcario, there is another great range, the north side of the valley of that river, and just beyond this—I am told—is the Mexican boundary. I got the name of the *sierra* for this range.

La Porfía does not seem to have changed. We put our cots up under the same *galerón* as before, though Miguel and Aurelio moved to the other. Both of us were literally exhausted after the short *jornada* and actually slept before dinner. The only cause I could ascribe this to was the 7 miles [11.2 km] we had to wade daily to and from the ruins. This was not so far in itself, but the underfoot conditions were very trying, and after the mental stimulus of the ruins was removed, we felt the reaction all at once. We both went to bed right after dinner.

## Laguna de Yaloch

### May 31, Monday

The sky looked very threatening when we set off at 7:30, and about 10:00 we caught a heavy shower. This lasted for about an hour and then ceased, leaving every bush and shrub dripping. Nor did it clear the skies and, after leaving Yaloch Viejo after 11, it became apparent by the darkening of the bush that we were to be in for a heavy downpour.

At Yaloch Viejo, Chico found a lime tree and laid in a great supply of this pleasant-flavored fruit, of which I consume unbelievable quantities in tea. The *mulada* disgraced itself at Yaloch Viejo by running about the clearing, tearing through the bush, and raising confusion generally.

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<sup>113</sup> A branch of the “Middle Río Holmul” arises in the *bajo* just north of Lake Yaxha. But Morley is mistaken in his belief that the Río Holmul is a part of the Belize River drainage system.

<sup>114</sup> This range or escarpment separates the Ixcario and Holmul Rivers.

<sup>115</sup> What Morley calls a “great valley” is not a single physiographic feature but rather a varied area of *bajos*, uplands, and hills between two of the northeast–southwest ridges or escarpments that characterize northeast Petén.

<sup>116</sup> The old spelling for the Río Usumacinta. We have corrected/updated this throughout.



Carl's animal tried to run back to the little Río Yaloch out of pure contrariness. But at last, the packs were tightened and Chico led the way on the bell-mare.

The bush had grown almost as dark as it is at seven o'clock, the thunder, though distant, was constant, and we knew we were in for a downpour presently. A newly fallen tree across the trail held us up for five minutes, and here the flood caught us; the bottom seemed suddenly to fall out of the sky and sheets of water poured down. The mules moved forward but very slowly, and we lost time over this stretch. This heavy downpour did not continue for more than an hour, but this time the clouds did not lift, the sky remained lowering, and rain fell at not infrequent intervals into Laguna de Yaloch, which we reached at 2:30, just 7 hours after leaving La Porfía and a half an hour better than we did this stretch coming out.

At Laguna we met two new men: Emilio Urrutia, a Spaniard [Ladino; non-Maya], and a nephew of that wealthy Urrutia in Guatemala City, who lives in the big fake brick house on Prolongación of 5th Avenue.<sup>117</sup> He is the *resguardo* here, the chap we met last week being a substitute. A friend of his is a Petenero, Santiago Mendoza, was the other; the latter is a nephew of old Manuel Otero of La Libertad. I learned here from the Spaniard of some ruins, "*muchas piedras labradas*" [a lot of worked/carved stones], in the Sierra de Chunvis perhaps 6 or 7 leagues the other side of Bullet Tree Falls.<sup>118</sup> I questioned him closely and finally found out that he had seen these ruins in company with Emilio Guerra, that they were in fact the ruins of which the latter had told me when I passed through Plancha. The corroboration was so strong that I could not fail but believe that there actually were sculptured stones at this site.

A radical change of plan became necessary. At first, I thought we would go on to Cayo as originally planned tomorrow, but later in the evening I found that I could get on toward the new group by returning only to Bullet Tree Falls on the Mopan, a league and a half out of Cayo, and then back along the trail toward the new ruin. This Emilio told me the best guide was a man named Prisciliano Sánchez, who was then at his milpas 2½ leagues northwest of Bullet Tree Falls at a place called Horha.<sup>119</sup> This Prisciliano had had his chicle camp the year before at the ruins and there was an excellent *aguada* there. Emilio thought my best plan would be to proceed direct to Horha, pick up Prisciliano as a guide, and thence on to the ruins, which was what I eventually decided to do.

Emilio offered his kitchen for the preparation of our evening meal, and Chico moved the cooking utensils and *viveres* [groceries, food] thither. One of Emilio's men killed a young doe antelope [white-tailed deer, *Odocoileus virginianus*] and we had the liver fried for supper. There

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<sup>117</sup> Morley repeatedly misspells the surname "Urita." Civil engineer Claudio Urrutia (1857–1934) built, with another engineer, the enormous relief map of Guatemala in the northern part of the city (see Chapter 13, p. 128, Figure 13.1). Mayor of Guatemala City in 1912, he later founded the department of engineering at the University of San Carlos. See also Chapter 35, p. 370, note 211.

<sup>118</sup> Bullet Tree Falls, a small village on the Mopan River, is named after the tree known as bullet tree or bully tree (*Bucida buceras*, *Terminalia buceras*), with very hard, water-resistant wood used for railroad ties. ([elpilar.marc.ucsb.edu/trail/documents/plants/bulletree.htm](http://elpilar.marc.ucsb.edu/trail/documents/plants/bulletree.htm))

<sup>119</sup> As is usual with Morley's misspellings, this place—seen on modern maps as Jorjá—appears in the diaries as Horha, Holha, or Holja. It lies in Petén very near the Belize border, north of Plancha de Piedra.

were no *tortillas de maiz* [corn tortillas] to be had of Emilio, however, though he kindly gave us some beans, and Carl gave him tobacco.

This report of a new ruin somewhere in the Sierra de Chunvis just west of here—Emilio indicated to me where he thought it lay, i.e., just north of the crest of the *sierra* and in the Holmul drainage—has changed our plans considerably and at best will delay our getting into Cayo for another two if not three days, depending on the amount of work we may find to do there.

We occupied the large *galerón* nearest the lake. The approach of the rains has brought out a host of insects, and these made life so unbearable outside of the *pabellones* that we retired early.

## Horha

### June 1, Tuesday

#### Carl's 27th Birthday

We rose about 4:30 and the boys set off for the mules shortly after daylight. While we were eating breakfast at Emilio's, they returned with the unpleasant news that one was missing, Miguel's mule. They went out to look for it again, and seven passed with no results, and eight, and then I made a change of plan.

Santiago Mendoza was going through to Cayo by way of Bullet Tree Falls and I decided to go on ahead with him, taking Chico with me to the latter place, to see whether Prisciliano Sánchez was still at his milpa and if he were, to get a guide to take us on to Horha. Carl was to stay behind with the *mulada* and see that they got through to Bullet Tree Falls without fail, where I would meet them. As the bell-mare had about given out yesterday—she has been moribund ever since we left Cayo—I had to arrange for a new mount for him. Fortunately, there was a mule in Emilio's charge belonging to a man named Landero at San José, within a mile of Bullet Tree Falls, and he said I might have this for Chico if I would turn it over to the wife of this Landero, who might himself be absent from San José. This arrangement being concluded, Chico and I, with Santiago and his three mules laden with chicle, all set out for Bullet Tree Falls at 8:40.

Santiago had felt sure that his mules would trot right along, but the first half mile convinced me they were not even as good as our own sorry *mulada*. When we passed Chorro, I found by comparing our notes that we were actually 10 minutes slower (3 hrs., 5 mins.) than on the way out. Before reaching Chorro, the road crossed from Guatemala back into British Honduras, the point being marked by a low concrete monument. Indeed, the trail here runs almost due north and south, crossing and recrossing the boundary several times.

A league and a half beyond Chorro, the Bullet Tree Falls road branches off to the right, and after some confusion with the pack animals we got them headed into this. Shortly, it led into a ravine, the bed of a stream, and we followed down this; although steep, it was not so steep or so slippery and rocky. For the first time on the entire trip, I have some thorns in my hand. These were not from the *escoba* palm, but from another much more deceptive hanging vine, which took me in completely as to its friendly character.

About five hours from Laguna, we got out of the Sierra de Chunvis and came down onto the valley-plain of the Mopan. Frequent old clearings overgrown with smaller bush were passed, and much nearer the river we passed a very large, new clearing in which several [men] were at work, filled with a number of mounds, one being a sharp pyramid. Not long after this, and before we reached Bullet Tree Falls, Carl and our own *mulada* caught up with us, much to their glee and our

chagrin and mortification. Thus, we filed into Bullet Tree Falls at 3:10, six hours or so on the way for us and 5½ for Carl and the *mulada*.

Bullet Tree Falls is a collection of a score or more thatched huts on the north bank of the Mopan, inhabited by creoles from the colony. Across the river and opposite is a smaller [Maya] Indian village. Possibly both sides counting all souls and a few dogs would reach to one hundred. I looked up the *principal* of the village at once, one Amado Gonzáles, for a guide to go on to Horha that same afternoon. I bought a little sugar and tobacco and got my guide, and hurried them out of the village, all in 15 minutes, a good record even for me. Neither Miguel nor Aurelio, nor Chico, indeed I fear nor Carl, had much desire to push on. The boys murmured about how late it was, how far off it was—I got pessimistic estimates up to 4 leagues—but we left the village 15 minutes after entering it, to have tarried 15 longer would have meant to stop for the night.

To my relief, the guide who was afoot set a good swinging pace and we managed to keep the interval behind him closed up. The trail was of the best: a recently opened mahogany road straight through the bush to Horha. We actually trotted most of the way and reached the clearing of Horha at 4:50, 1½ hours after starting from Bullet Tree Falls, and 8 hours after leaving Laguna de Yaloch.

Prisciliano Sánchez himself was out hunting when we got in, but an old antediluvian [lit. “before the flood”] by the name of Miguel put the place at our disposition. There were two sleeping *champas*, and a smaller one for cooking, chickens, ducks, dogs, one sick mule, and many *moscas* [flies]. The boys unloaded the mules and then went out to look for *ramón*. They returned presently, reporting “*no hay*,” and this meant the mules would have to eat the long leaves of the corozo palm. We feared they would wander into the milpa and eat the tender young corn, which already is doing so nicely.

When they returned from cutting the corozo, Prisciliano was with them and a middle-aged Indian who proved to be an old friend, no less than the guide who had taken Joe Spinden and I to Tikal, 6 years earlier. I remember Jacobo Melchor of Remate was the official guide. This other chap was named José and, as I remember it, we picked him up on the road, perhaps at Ixtinta after Jacobo had lost his way.

As soon as we had greeted Prisciliano and apologized somewhat for landing upon him not only so unexpectedly but also so numerously, I broached the *raison d’être* of our visit. He knew the place at once, said it was 6 leagues distant, and considerably more to the west of Horha than north, which latter direction was where Emilio Urrutia had said it was. A fearsome thought flashed through my mind. Could this alleged new site possibly be Naranjo? Diligent subsequent questioning only confirmed this fear the more, until before bedtime I became convinced, reluctantly enough, that it really was Naranjo.

Everything, as I say, confirmed this and nothing contradicted it. The direction was just right, i.e., northwest to north of west from Chunvis. Prisciliano, when pressed to say how many monuments there really were, said “*muchos*,” many. Naranjo has 32, far more than any other known city in this general region. Both Prisciliano and José, who also knows the site, says the monuments have been “excavated,” “cleaned,” and “photographed” by the Americans. Again, this refers either to Joe’s and my visit in 1914 or Teobert Maler’s<sup>120</sup> a decade earlier. Again, José

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<sup>120</sup> Teobert Maler (1842–1917), though originally from Germany, worked for many years at

says of all the many monuments only one is standing. And of the 32 stelae at Naranjo, only one is standing, Stela 5.

But final proof came when Prisciliano told me the *parajes* on the road: La Aguacate, El Rodo, Paraíso. This is identically the road followed by Joe and I six years ago, and Paraíso was the last *paraje* then before reaching the ruin of Naranjo. Today, Prisciliano has built his *jato* right in the midst of the ruins and called it Bambonal, because of a bamboo thicket near the *aguada*, which he says always has water.

Another radical change of plan was necessary. It would have been foolish to continue on to Naranjo, an old and much published site, when time was running so short, and so I decided to return to Cayo tomorrow morning early, much to everybody's delight, including my own. This latter change made any conservation of the food supply no longer necessary and we had a good meal, punctuated by lunges at the canine inhabitants who yearned to partake thereof. Three puppies eventually had to be tied up, and had their revenge by yowling so persistently and dismally that the cure seemed worse than the trouble their freedom occasioned.

Prisciliano had an antiquated phonograph, which he set going after dinner. This reminded me that next year, I am surely going to travel with a little one myself; they serve to while away many an otherwise tiresome hour in the bush, particularly at night.

Prisciliano's house was pretty crowded. Chico slept nearest the door in his hammock, then Carl on his cot, then the old antediluvian in a hammock, then myself on my cot, and then our host on a bush bed of saplings. Miguel and Aurelio had gone across to the other *champa*, where José and his *señora* held forth. The latter was ailing in some way and was not seen. We went to bed shortly after eight.

## El Cayo

### June 2, Wednesday

Happily, no mules had strayed into Prisciliano's milpa nor into the bush for zapotes, and by 7:10 we were on the way. As far as I could make out, we should reach Cayo by eleven at the outside, so we did not push the mules. Before we reached Bullet Tree Falls, Chico and I, who were ahead, thought we heard a motorboat off to the southeast, but it was very faint. We did not tarry at Bullet Tree Falls longer than to inquire where the ford was across the Mopan. I went first. The river is very low, and we had no difficulty in crossing.

On the opposite bank we came out near a tiny *campo santo* [cemetery]. A new grave had just been added to it, marked by a crude wood cross and a single candle on the fresh earth mound. Our trail here went in both directions, and because we were anxious to get in, hot, and fed up, we took the wrong one. Fortunately, this very rapidly grew worse, impassable. It was all overgrown and, after a few hundred yards of bucking it, we turned around, returned to the little *campo santo*, and took the other trail. This latter soon led through the Indian half of Bullet Tree Falls, and here a woman put us on the right trail for El Cayo. But our troubles were not over yet.

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Harvard's Peabody Museum. He was a pioneering explorer in the Maya lowlands, and recorded and published many Maya inscriptions, including well-regarded photographs. His studies of the Río Usumacinta polities in Chiapas, especially Yaxchilan and Piedras Negras (Maler 1901, 1903, 1908b), and work in Petén (Maler 1908a, 1911) provided valuable information on stelae.

We came to a steep little ravine filled by a mud hole at the bottom, which both Miguel and Aurelio said was a bad place. Miguel, in fact, dismounted, leaped across it, and began cutting corozo palms to lay across the mud. Many of these he cut and Aurelio presently joined him, adding others. They soon had a respectable bridge of these, and Miguel took his mule over first. Then Chico followed and I came next. The delicate moment had arrived: the crossing of the cargo mules. One got across safely by sticking close to the improvised bridge of corozo. No. 2, a white mule, of course, had to stray from the beaten path, and [as he] essayed to cross below, he became mired; and No. 3, following, sank into the soft mud up to its belly. Here was a pretty to-do.

We who were over, Miguel, Aurelio, Chico, and myself, all rushed to the rescue. Miguel and Aurelio and Chico jumped into the mud, and I grabbed the halter rope. Pulling thus forward, and the rest heaving from behind, we finally got this white animal, who had started the trouble on the right bank of this *arroyo*, and were able to turn our attentions to the other animal, which was much more deeply mired. We tried every device on this mule, a black *macho*, but he would not help himself and only sank the deeper. At last, we got his forefeet on the bank, but at a heavy cost: his back legs were sunk in the soft, oozy mud up to his thighs. Finally, Chico hit upon the maneuver which ultimately pried him from the mud. It was this. A pole was cut and slipped under his belly and he was literally pried up from below; at the same time, a rope had been slipped around his buttock and under the tail, and by hauling on each end of this, while Miguel pried him up with the pole and I pulled on the halter, we managed to get him out of the mud and up on the bank.

No. 4 was now led safely across, and lastly the riding animals of Carl and Aurelio. We were obliged to wait another 10 minutes while they loaded the black *macho*—it had been necessary to take off not only the cargo but also the pack saddle to extricate him at all, and before we were on our way once more this episode had cost us fully an hour. We resumed our way cursing roundly the devilry of the mule in general, and the black *macho* in particular.

At first, the trail led along the Mopan through a bamboo brake, but presently turned away from the river and continued through a corozo palm forest for the greater part of the way. It was nearly noon when we came out into the clearing behind Cayo, and began descending into the village. While the rest of the *mulada* went on to Aunty Chon's, I rode down to the *playa* to see about boats. None was in, the *Positivo* having left not an hour before. I heard subsequently that five left yesterday, which looks as though we will have a good wait.

I rode back to Aunty Chon's, where the *mulada* was already unloading. To my very great surprise, C.O. Taylor, who had come with us from New Orleans on the *Saramucca*, was stopping at Aunty Chon's. He is on his way west to Flores and the Río de la Pasión, and had stayed over a day to get dope on the trail from us. His big item of news from the outside was the complete success of the Mexican Revolution, Obregón, and Gonzáles, and the reported assassination of Carranza,<sup>121</sup> by wireless. This had been forecast by the initial successes more than a month ago

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<sup>121</sup> Venustiano Carranza (1859–1920), a one-time governor of Coahuila (1911–1913), became involved in national politics after the assassination of Francisco I. Madero in 1913. At that time, he became head of the Constitutionalist Army in opposition to the regime of Victoriano Huerta. His forces prevailed and he became effective head of state after 1915, from which position he

when we left home, but it came as a surprise nevertheless, and particularly his assassination, which Taylor said he had from the captain of a Fruit Co. boat, which had intercepted a wireless message to that effect. Taylor was eating dinner or lunch, so we joined him, dividing a rather small pullet between us. Aunty and Rachel were glad to see us, and at once made us feel at home.

Taylor's most disquieting news was that Gann was contemplating a trip to El Cayo, in fact had nearly come up with Taylor himself, and Taylor believed must then be on his way. We earnestly hope not, because we can hardly wait for him, and yet must see him. Later in the afternoon about 4, we walked down to the telephone office and I tried to get Belize. After some time, the report came back that Gann was out of town, but we lost the line before we found out where he had gone and when he had started. This time I put in a call for the Belize hospital, and after some time got them. I then learned that Gann had left Belize this morning on the *Chicle*, together with an agricultural expert named Dunlop and Muddy Esquivel for El Cayo. And so far as we could then find out, this boat was the first that would be in El Cayo.

After supper I went up to see the District Commissioner, Mr. Wyatt, for a little while. I found, to my surprise, that he was genuinely interested in Maya archaeology, and we sat conversing on his veranda for an hour or more. From his house, I went up to the *padre's* to see what arrangement I could make with Father Huerman<sup>122</sup> about Chico. I found both Father Huerman and Finnely at tea, to which they hospitably asked me to join. I stated my business, but did not get a very enthusiastic reception. The difficulty of providing a place where Chico could sleep seemed to be the rock on which the project was like to found. I judged it best not to press the matter too much just then, and presently bade them goodnight, telling them I would come again to talk the matter over.

As Carl had had no birthday party yesterday, we had a little one tonight at Aunty Chon's, those present being the three of us; we had asked the D.C., but he found himself unable to come down. The refreshments consisted of a cake Taylor's mother-in-law had made for him, and some ginger ale high-balls with ice. It was only a mild spree. I left it half way through to go down to the D.C.'s and the *padre's*, and Taylor and Carl were still at it when I got back.

I forgot to add that before speaking to Belize this afternoon, Taylor, Carl, Chico, and I had all gone down to the riverside for a bath. Four, five, and six years ago, when I was here before, we used to cross the savanna to the old slaughter-house, below which was a sandy beach where we bathed. But when we started to do this this afternoon, we ran into so many barbed-wire fences that I thought I was lost, and finally when we did reach the beach, there was a score of washerwomen plying their calling there. After walking around another point, we at last found a beach where Carl and I took a very much needed bath.

## El Cayo

### June 3, Thursday

The King's birthday. No boats in today. I spent the morning up at the Courthouse with the District Commissioner. He heard last night or this morning that the *Cayo* is ahead of the *Chicle*, and should

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supervised the writing and ratification of the 1917 Mexican Constitution. He was assassinated by forces loyal to incoming president Álvaro Obregón on 21 May, 1920, after leaving office.

<sup>122</sup> Father F. Huerman was a Jesuit priest in El Cayo.



be in first. It was another fearfully hot day. Taylor plans to leave tomorrow for Benque and the following day for Flores. I have written letters for him [to deliver] to Father Versavel, Pablo Guerra, and María, Boburg's sister-in-law at Flores, and in addition have given him what information I have as to the trail *parajes* that have water, distances between, etc.

In the afternoon, word came that there was to be a parade of the volunteers about 5. We had an early dinner against the prospects of seeing this, and about that hour strolled down the street toward the bridge. A British flag posted on the savanna attracted our attention, and judging this to be a position of importance for whatever ceremonies were afoot, we seated ourselves on some logs under a tree nearby. We saw a few volunteers idling around, but no sign of a parade. I had brought my kodak with me to photograph the ceremonies, but as the sun sank lower and lower, and 5:30 drew on, I feared the light would fail before the affair started.

By and by a volunteer came, took away the flag, and set it up some distance off, and two others appeared with a half a dozen folding chairs, which were set up in a row behind the flag. This we judged to be the reviewing stand. Now a bugle sounded off by the Courthouse, and in the head of the street leading therefrom, we saw two bands and volunteers forming. The music struck up and in columns of fours the troops came toward us. Previously, I had placed my camera in a strategic position and as they passed, I snapped them.

In the meantime, the District Com., very dignified in highly starched white duck and white helmet, took his post by the flag; Mrs. Wyatt, a young Mrs. Waight, and Mrs. Enright with several children taking seats on the chairs. Ed Enright, I noticed at once, was the captain of the company, with rank of second lieutenant; the second-in-command was Joseph S. Waight. The boys were put through some maneuvers, including a present-arms to the colors, while "God Save the King" was played. Enright led three cheers for the king and there were a few simple movements.

I had been snapping the dramatic movements up to this point, and now Ed Savala told me was to be the climax, which I was particularly requested to get. The company was drawn up in double file, and some command such as "prepare for firing" was given. To the great indignation of Enright, it turned out that no ammunition had been distributed, and while this was being fetched, he ragged his troops profanely and effectively for not having it by them, asked facetiously what kind of soldiers they would be in battle without ammunition, etc. Presently this arrived, and a more or less ragged firing in sequence commenced. The sun was now so low that although I gave the exposures 1 second and a full diaphragm, I am afraid they will turn out under-exposed.

After the drill, Aunty had a little bite for us, some of the funeral baked meats of dinner, and then I went to keep an appointment with the D.C. at his house at 7:00. I reached there even before he did, but as I was about to leave, I saw him and his wife and all the six little Wyatts making up the path. We chatted for an hour or more and then it was time to go to the dance, which, judging from the music, had already begun. I had to return to the house first. When I got back, they said they had sent Chico for me. We brushed up a bit for the fiesta and then walked down to the ballroom. This was Ed Enright's moving picture hall. The band of the volunteers was on the gallery at one end, and two marimbas with three *marimberos* on the stage at one end. The music alternated.

We were somewhat early, and took strategic seats near the door. The hall began to fill up rapidly. There were only four people present who were 100% white, namely ourselves and the

D.C. Practically everybody else had a large Ethiopian strain, perhaps three out of every four were pure black. The girls all had their hair brushed out and attractively arranged with combs. The dresses were starched, light-colored affairs with ribbons, one or two more pretentious ones were silk. The quality present were easily the D.C. and his family, ourselves, the Enrights, and the Joseph Waights. Ed pressed us to dance vigorously, but we declined. The music, especially the marimba, was excellent, the floor good, and many of the girls not ungraceful, but whether rightfully or wrongfully I judged it best to preserve the color line, and so abstained. Carl wanted to dance, and indeed did I, but it did not seem to me appropriate, and we did not take the floor. Ed and his wife urged us to, Mrs. Waight, the D.C. and his wife, but we pled unskillfulness and fatigue. The dancers had a curious jerky movement, coming down on their heels hard. Some were very agile and active, Ed Enright being a good example of the latter. He moved around with such celerity that I thought he would dissolve.

Twice we were taken out for drinks, once by Ed at the beginning of the evening, and once later by the D.C. Carl for one little minute thought he had some real beer, but discovered on examining the bottle that it was one of Pabst's more recent substitutes. He swore it went to his head, though I should have said it settled at the other end.

After watching for several hours, we left shortly before twelve, and although I went to sleep immediately and did not hear her, Rachel came in a little later. This was a ball for the volunteers, and only the latter were allowed to dance. It is just as well, since the hall was crowded to capacity with them alone.

## **El Cayo**

### **June 4, Friday**

Still waiting around for a boat. The *Cayo* should be in this afternoon sometime. We lay around Auntie Chon's, sat, read, and wrote, and wished a boat would turn up.

This morning we attended a session of the Police Court, Magistrate Wyatt presiding. What struck me most forcibly about the whole proceeding was that, rough and ready as the justice was, real justice was dispensed and everyone seemed to have a very wholesome fear of, and respect for, the law.

Four cases came up for hearing this morning. First, the Benque Viejo murder case of which I have written elsewhere in these pages. Owing to the absence of the official interpreter, further hearings were postponed until Monday. The boy-murderer appeared to be the least interested of all the people in the courtroom. The other man who is being held as a possible accessory, on the other hand, looked to me paralyzed with fear. He is older and of mixed Spanish-Indian blood. The boy-murderer, on the other hand, looks like and is a Negro with doubtless some Spanish admixture. He speaks only Spanish, being a descendant of that group of Negro slaves who escaped from the colony to Petén some 50 or 60 years ago, and settled at San Benito opposite Flores [see Chapter 5, p. 36, note 63]. Their descendants have lost all knowledge of English, but retain their negroid appearance. This boy, Juan Carrillo, is a slender youth of 17 with an apathetic, unintelligent, listless expression. His only defense is that his memory of the entire incidents is a complete blank.

Some of the links in the chain of evidence are not complete. No knife or dagger has been found with which the blow was dealt, and neither of the three witnesses have been able to testify

that they saw him strike the dead man with a weapon. All saw him strike a blow, but none can say whether it was with his fist or with a weapon. On the other hand, all three testify that they met Ramírez, the other man held—running toward the scene with a knife, and that they urged him to turn back, saying Carillo was attending to him [the victim], but this he did not do. Hence his detention now. But the case went over until Monday.

The next case called was that of a familiar face, the man we had met at Laguna de Yaloch on our way out. He was charged with the amiable offense of having sliced off a man's hand clean, with one blow of a machete! After having done this, he ran across the line into Petén, stayed a few days at Laguna Yaloch, and then voluntarily gave himself up to the British authorities. The wounded man, by all rights, should have bled to death, for he was three miles out in the bush when he lost his hand, but he had the presence of mind enough to hold his hand above his head, and by the time he had reached the Cayo, the bleeding had stopped. This case was also carried over, as the wounded man is still in Belize hospital.

A third case was a labor dispute between a chicle contractor, one Burns, and a *chiclero* to whom he had advanced money, but who had failed to carry out his contract. This bid fair to be a lengthy matter, as each party was filled with accusations, counter-accusations, recriminations, and so forth. But Wyatt interfered vigorously, made them stick to facts, and effected a solution whereby the man is to have another month of grace to see what he can do toward paying his debt.

The last case was just a bit of rowdyism between two boys wrestling in a store and refusing to stop when told to get out by the clerk. They were fined \$2.25 each and allowed to get off with that. This finished the day's docket, and I left the courtroom much impressed with British provincial justice, and the feeling that right had been served in most instances.

Taylor was all packed and ready to leave with Blackman this afternoon. Just after lunch, we strolled down and watched the *Cayo* come in. I hailed the captain and arranged with him for a passage down in her. I next walked up to the *padre's* to discuss with Father Huerman about leaving Chico with them. I found Father Huerman in and we had a pleasant visit. Father Huerman seems to have undergone a change of heart about the Chico business, and now says he will take him in. I am to pay him a salary of \$10.00 a month, and the fathers are to give him food, lodging, and clothing. He is to work for them, coming to me again when I come back next February. We made no final arrangement, but I am to come again before I go.

I returned to the telephone office and met Taylor, who was looking everywhere for me to say goodbye. I wished him good luck and he climbed into Blackman's dilapidated but albeit trusty Ford, and they labored up the hill. I tried to get the following message through to Gann, who had not yet reached Mount Hope, that we were leaving tomorrow by the *Cayo*. The telephone boy promised to let me know if he could get the call in before closing time, but I did not hear from him again.

We spent the evening with the D.C. He told us of the Belize race riots last year.<sup>123</sup> He was

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<sup>123</sup> The 1919 race riots in Belize were among several uprisings in the British colonies that year. Preceded by two years of resistance (much of it led by women), murders, and arson, and inspired by the Haitian Revolution, on July 22 some 336 Black former servicemen who had served Britain in World War I staged a protest against racial discrimination, unemployment, and inhumane living conditions. More than 3,000 civilians (and police) joined them in rioting and looting during

chief of police at the time and received a hearty beating at the hands of the mob, which came near to ending his life. In fact, he caught it twice, the first time the night the riots began, and the second time the Friday after, when sailors from a British cruiser raided the U.S. moving picture theater.

He had been kind enough to put in a call to Mount Hope to tell Gann to call me up at the D.C.'s house in El Cayo as quickly as he (Gann) reached Mount Hope. About the middle of the evening, the police corporal came up to say Doctor Gann was on the wire at Mount Hope. I spoke to him. He wanted to know what luck, and when I said two Cycle 10 I.S., I could hear his wire fairly sizzle with his amazement. I told him we would have to leave on the *Cayo* tomorrow noon, and that he could ride across from where he was in four hours. He said he'd try to get mules, but seemed pessimistic over the prospects. He reports the inscribed stone at Plantation Creek to be without glyphs. He continued to express his surprise about the Cycle 10 I.S. and said we surely were bringing home the bacon.

This telephone conversation had interrupted Wyatt's story of his adventures with the Belize contingent mob. Remember this mob was composed of ex-soldiers. He went on afterward telling me other of my friends who were beaten up, Duncan Fraser and Blagg being the two I know best. They were lucky enough to catch a British cruiser at Swan Island, and the second night after this disorder she came into the roadstead and had Belize under her guns, which practically ended the matter. Because of this whole business, Wyatt now finds himself D.C. of the El Cayo district and somebody else in his place as chief of police of Belize [City]. We bid the Wyatts goodnight about nine and returned to Aunty Chon's and went to bed.

## El Cayo

### June 5, Saturday

We were awakened about 3 A.M. by the playing of a marimba at a house behind. At first, I thought this was for a wake, but remembered there was to be a wedding today. The custom here is to have the marimba start playing as soon as the bride rises on her wedding morn, which is usually between 3 and 4. About 7:30, the best man, resplendent in a black suit, called for the bride and she came forth in white satin, tulle veil, and flowers, two little Negro girls dressed in white carrying the ends of her long veil, the dress itself has no train. The best man led her to the church, whither the groom had already gone, and the ceremony must have taken place about eight. But my attention was soon distracted by another matter.

I had told Blackman last night to call for our baggage the first thing this morning. Right after breakfast, I went downtown to look up the captain of the *Cayo*, and to my dismay he informed me he had promised the preceding time to take down seven other passengers, all women, to say nothing of their progeny which were not even enumerated—I judged them rightly, as it turned out, to be as the sands of the sea. In vain, I urged that I would pay for the space of all seven, but he said he had promised and had to take them.

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the night. Order was restored early the next morning, with reinforcements arriving on the 24th. More violence ensued after attempts to arrest the leaders of the uprising, and martial law was declared. These events have largely been scrubbed from Belize histories.

[See <https://imperialglobalexeter.com/2020/06/09/1919-repression-riots-and-revolution/>, and [https://1919revolution.weebly.com/uploads/3/4/7/0/3470758/rights\\_by\\_delmer\\_tzib\\_copy.pdf](https://1919revolution.weebly.com/uploads/3/4/7/0/3470758/rights_by_delmer_tzib_copy.pdf)]

This made me do some quick thinking. It really was wisest that we stay over and see Gann, and if by any chance I find no Carnegie drafts in Belize I will have to call on him. So, I decided to wait over, and go down on the *Chicle*. I told the captain of the *Cayo* once more that if he could not give us the space I wanted, I would take another boat. Again, he said he was sorry but he had promised these seven women, etc., etc. This ended any idea of our going on the *Cayo*. I hurried back to the house and was just in time to prevent Blackman from conveying our baggage down to the waterside. It was already loaded on the machine and he was about to start.

The rest of the morning I spent up at the D.C.'s. I had promised to draw him the birthday hieroglyphs of his kiddies, and to my surprise found there were six. To complete the job, I also added those of his own and his wife's birthdays. While I was drawing these in his office, which is also the courtroom, I heard the swish of a switch, and the lamentations of a small Negro boy in the courtyard behind the building. We looked out the window just as the blows ceased. "Now put on your trousers" —this chastisement had been inflicted on the bare person—"and go home at once, and remember this is the way all bad boys are treated." This from a burly Negro who had administered the correction measures. "I no bad, sah," sobbed the injured youth. "O' course you is, didn't you get a thrashing? That is the proof of it." The D.C. and I laughed heartily over the logic underlying this assertion, for as I told him, he need worry no more as to the justice or injustice of any of his decisions, for once punishment had been administered for any crime, this would, on the basis of our friend's philosophy, constitute in itself proof that the crime had been committed.

All morning long, dancing went on at the moving picture hall, part of the wedding festivity. Aunty had something to do with cooking the wedding dinner, and just before lunch she came home with eyes as big as saucers, speaking of two turkeys, a dozen fowl, etc., etc. She brought home some sugar plums and cake. Mrs. Enright had previously salvaged a piece of ice, which she gave us, so we had some odds and ends of this wedding feast.

After lunch, we went down to look on at the dancing ourselves, sending Chico to watch the *playa* for the first signs of the *Chicle*. The bride and groom sat on the balcony at the end of the hall, whither we also took our seats after first felicitating the happy couple. The groom is an East Indian coolie rather sad of visage, and his wife a Mexican, I should say. I judge she may be somewhat of a vixen, too. Two years ago, she and another girl got into a fight down at the waterside, and in the ensuing melee the other lady bit a piece out of her lip. A historic lawsuit followed, to which half of *Cayo* was summoned to Belize [City] to appear as witnesses. Aunty Chon herself on this memorable occasion made her one and only trip to the capital of the colony. She had chanced to be at the waterside when the quarrel occurred, and was a star witness. The biting female got off scot-free. I daresay the judge thought it 6 of one, half a dozen of the other. At all events, this afternoon the bride, if not sweet-looking, was at least pacific and bore no scars I could see.

We were at once plied with a generous swig of cognac and then watched the dancing. The ladies were the same as night before last, but the men were mostly different. Ed Enright again did wonders on the floor, much fancy footwork that caused the perspiration in that hot place to burst from him like so many geysers. The fat Waight boy covered himself with honors, in fact the whole fiesta was very "*alegre*."<sup>124</sup> Every once in a while, the groom made clumsy efforts to dance, but he

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<sup>124</sup> *Alegre* means "happy," and is sometimes a colloquialism for mild intoxication.

had no idea of time [rhythm] whatever, and the result was painful.

And so the afternoon wore on. Sometime after four, Ed came up and said the *Chicle* was coming up the last bend. We were offered and accepted another cognac, and then took leave of the bridal couple, hurrying down to the *playa*. Chico was nowhere in sight. There was the *Chicle* with 2 pitpans in tow, covering the last few yards of her long trip—it is 180 miles [290 km] to Cayo from Belize by the river, although only 90 [145 km] by land.

Presently we spied Gann and then Muddy Esquivel. Gann vaulted ashore and we greeted each other warmly. I reproached him for coming up just now and upsetting our plans, and we joked thus back and forth. I saw the captain and purser, and engaged the part of the boat Gann had had for ourselves going down.

We left Muddy on the *playa* to watch Gann's baggage, and brought him [Gann] back to Aunty Chon's with us. Of course, he was full of questions about the new site, and Carl showed him first the map and then I showed him the drawings of the inscriptions on Stelae 3, 10, and 13.<sup>125</sup> He was particularly interested in the 10.3.0.0.0 I.S. on Stela 10, and in the two Calendar Round dates, one on the front of Stela 3 and the other on the front of Stela 10, which led by Secondary Series to their respective contemporaneous dates.

We sat for some time talking over the effect of these dates on the whole problem of Maya history, and then the D.C. sent down a horse by a policeman, saying he would be glad to see Gann at any time.<sup>126</sup> Gann went up there by and by, promising to return for dinner, which he did. After dinner, we discussed Pub. 219 [*The Inscriptions at Copan*]. Of course, he hasn't read it all, nor anywhere nearly all, but *mirabile dictu*, he has read Appendix II twice. He thinks it is the pith of the whole book, and he agrees with it. He says it has Cycle I for Cycle II in one place, a fearful error, and a word printed upside down. He tried to say throws an error in the calculations, but we both flew at him so furiously he said he wasn't sure, with that twinkle he has in his eye sometimes. An error in calculation would be the last straw on the camel's back in Appendix II.

After sitting a while at Aunty Chon's, we went up to his quarters, the medical officers' house, and here met the agricultural expert, Mr. Dunlop, who had come up with him. We talked with them until nearly twelve. Gann tells me the index Gates made for me is a fine one, and that every time he wanted to look up something, he found it there. Bed about twelve.

## El Cayo

### June 6, Sunday

Gann and Dunlop came over for breakfast a little after seven. After breakfast, Dunlop disappeared and Gann suggested we walk up to see Wyatt. Carl joined us and we set off. I found that the *Chicle* cannot get off before tomorrow—no loading on Sunday—and so when we reached the D.C.'s, I asked him to try and get Connelly at the Fruit Co. for me. To my great surprise, after not too much waiting I got Connelly himself on the wire, and found out that the *Lera*—this week's tramp [steamer]—would not leave until Wednesday afternoon, which should give us plenty of time to make her even leaving tomorrow on the *Chicle*. I also told Connelly to reserve a passage

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<sup>125</sup> While at Xultun (see page 92), Morley noted that Stela 13 was completely eroded. We think in this passage he meant to say Stela 15 rather than Stela 13.

<sup>126</sup> Gann began his career in Belize in the D.C. office for the Cayo District.



for me from [Puerto] Barrios to New Orleans on the steamer of June 17 or 18, whichever date it sails on. He said he would cable Barrios for this.

We returned to Aunty Chon's after this visit to arrange about Muddy's visit to the ruins of Naranjo, whither Gann is sending him to get out the stone of the Hieroglyphic Stairway that has the Initial Series on it. Muddy is going from here to Bullet Tree Falls, hire his *mulada* there from Amado Gonzáles, and then go on to Horha, where he will pick up Prisciliano Sánchez, who will guide him to the ruins. Muddy—so Gann tells me—is in a blue funk over the trip, fearing a fate like Lafleur's may overtake him, but he is going anyhow.

The slab Gann wants him to bring out must weigh at least 450 lbs. The idea is to bind it firmly to two poles, one on each side, to the pack saddle, the other ends dragging on the ground. As I told Gann, he has about a 3 to 4 chance of getting away with this felony, the only uncertain element so far as I can see being whether His Royal Highness the chicle cargo mule will consent to drag a 450 lb. burden in place of carrying a 200 lb cargo. Of course, he is going to relay them, and if the mules do not object, I see no reason why he should not succeed. The idea is to bring the stone only as far as Bullet Tree Falls and then send it down by dory to Branch Mouth, where Gann will pick it up in the motorboat.

After lunch, we walked up to old man Blancaneaux's. I met his niece, who is also his wife and the mother of some, at least, of his children. He is a curious old Frenchman, over 75 years old, and has a child under four. He spoke to me about some molds that Maler left with him, when I was here two weeks ago, but I misunderstood him then to say some molding paper that Merwin had left with him. He raised the question again and asked if we did not want to see them. I then understood that they were actual molds old Maler had made somewhere in the Petén and left with Blancaneaux to be sent for. Either the old man (Maler) forgot or else he never cared to take the trouble, for he left without ever communicating with Blancaneaux about them. Blancaneaux said they were only being eaten by mice and roaches, and that it was a pity to leave them to be destroyed thus. We made a date with him to see them at his office at four.

We went to the medical officers' quarters next and had a highball. Presently Muddy came in with the boy who is to accompany him to Bullet Tree Falls. Gann gave him final instructions and he set out. He is to sleep in Bullet Tree Falls tonight and if possible, in Naranjo tomorrow night, that depending upon whether he can find Prisciliano at Horha on the way out, in time to continue on to Naranjo the same day. At any rate, he should be back Wednesday or Thursday at the latest.

After he left, we went down to Blancaneaux's place. He had the molds spread out, and the first was that of a splendid stela 10 feet [3 m] high. There were two other figures in full front, arms across, which I think are from the single stela of Motul de San José. Blancaneaux was of the opinion that Maler had told him some were from there, also. The other two both looked to me as though they were from Seibal. One very clearly has the date 11 Lamat 11 Yaxk'in, and the other 6, 7, 8, or 9 Ajaw 13 ???. Unfortunately, I could do no more with either. It is barely possible that one or two others may be from Naranjo, which would be nearer. I take it Maler left them here on his last trip in 1905. Blancaneaux was willing that I should take these and Gann is going to bring them down the river for me. Carl carried them down to Aunty Chon's.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> These molds somehow made their way to the Peabody Museum, where a few casts were made of them. Because they were paper, however, they disintegrated after a few casts.

Dunlop was there, waiting for Carl to go bathing. I should have gone too, in all conscience, but I was too lazy, so lay in the hammock and read. Toward six, Dunlop and Carl came back, and shortly after Gann, and we had dinner at once. Dunlop went off somewhere in the evening and Gann, Carl, and I talked archaeology.

Emilio Urrutia and his little Mexican *querida* came in to visit for a few moments, but did not stay long. Chico also came in for some medicine for a sick friend, no other than the one who had paid his fare up here to El Cayo. The boy had an attack of fever and I gave him 10 two-grain quinine pills with directions to take 2 every hour. Gann left early, and Carl played the violin. He really is quite adept at this and plays by ear. When I think of those many laborious hours mother made me play, and how I loathed it. They used to pay me 10 cents an hour and 5 cents a half hour for practicing, and I remember clearly how Bert Wetherill and Stanley Wilson used to stand by me and watch the clock. Time-servers three, if ever there were any. I always tell mother this experiment ground what little music there might have been in me, out of me forever.

**Young Gal**  
**June 7, Monday**  
**(My 37th Birthday)**

Lv. Cayo	9:25 a.m.
Ar. Chorro	2:10 p.m.
Lv. Chorro	2:30 p.m.
Ar. Laguna	5:25 p.m.
Lv. Laguna	7:20 a.m.
Ar. Yaloch	9:30 a.m.
Lv. Yaloch	10:05 a.m.
Lv. new <i>paraje</i>	10:50 a.m.
Ar. La Porfía	2:50 p.m.
Lv. La Porfía	7:30 a.m.
Ar. Ixcanrio	11:10 a.m.
Lv. Ixcanrio	11:15 a.m.
Lv. La Máquina	12:10 p.m.
Ar. Petipet	2:30 p.m.
Lv. Ixpop	8:30 a.m.
Lv. Macanche	10:55 a.m.
Lv. Culek	11:50 a.m.
Lv. San Clemente	1:50 p.m.
Ar. Ixtinta	5:10 p.m.
Lv. Ixtinta	6:20 a.m.
Ar. Yaxha	8:25 a.m.
Ar. Santa Cruz	9:55
Lv. [sic] Gavilán	11:20 a.m.
Lv. Gavilán	11:40 a.m.
Ar. So hap [?]	1:20 p.m.

Ar. Plancha	2:50 p.m.
Ar. Benque	3:15 p.m.
Lv. Benque Viejo	9:30 a.m.
Lv. Plancha Piedra	10:30 a.m.
Ar. Santa Cruz	4:45 a.m.
Lv. Santa Cruz	7:00 a.m.
Lv. Yaxha	9:00 a.m.
Lv. Ixtinto	11:20 a.m.
Lv. San Clemente	2:50 a.m. [sic., clearly p.m. is meant]
Ar. Culek	4:50 " " " "
Lv. Culek	6:45 a.m.
Ar. Macanche	7:45 a.m.
Ar. Ixpop	10:00 a.m.
Lv. Ixpop motorboat	
Ar. Flores	
Lv. San Benito	

## PART II. THE 1921 DIARY

### CHAPTER 12.

#### WASHINGTON, DC TO BELIZE (CITY)

##### Washington

##### January 1, Saturday

The fanfare of New Year trumpets and horns filtered down to me in my berth in the Washington sleeper through the different levels of the Pennsylvania Station in New York. I had previously taken Eleanor<sup>1</sup> over to the train at the Grand Central, and Joe Spinden and Bella Weitzner<sup>2</sup> came back with me in a taxi to the Pennsylvania [Station]; we stopped by the Harvard Club to pick up my suitcases. I was just crawling in between the covers in the Washington sleeper, then, when 1921 came in.

My train reached Washington at 6:45 and I came right up to the Cosmos Club expecting to find Gates, but *no hay*, though No. 2 was in his name. Telephoned there twice, but got no response. At 8:00 Arthur Rutherford<sup>3</sup> joined me at the Club as per previous arrangement for breakfast. Afterward, we went out to the Institution [The Carnegie Institution of Washington; CIW]. I found here everything had arrived from Cambridge, the saddle, the Peabody Museum reports, and my box of specimens. I repacked the books and indicated to Arthur where he would find the saddles when he comes to leave. He left shortly afterwards. Gilbert<sup>4</sup> had arrived in the meantime and said Dr. Merriam<sup>5</sup> was coming down at 10:00 and wanted to see me about the terms of the Gates collection.<sup>6</sup> It seems he feels that there are only two ways of receiving it in the Institution, either

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<sup>1</sup> Morley's sister.

<sup>2</sup> Bella Weitzner (1891–1988) was a curator at the American Museum of Natural History, despite lacking degrees in anthropology. She began there in 1908, as a secretary to ethnologist Clark Wissler, and carried out ethnology studies of Native North Americans, including the Hidatsa.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur K. ("Ruddy") Rutherford was the photographer on the 1921 expedition.

<sup>4</sup> Walter M. Gilbert, executive secretary to the president of the CIW, and later its head.

<sup>5</sup> John Campbell Merriam (1869–1945), a vertebrate paleontologist at U.C. Berkeley, studied the fauna of the western United States, particularly the La Brea tar pits, and strengthened the U.S. National Park system. In 1920 became president of the CIW, from which he retired in 1938.

<sup>6</sup> William Gates (see Chapter 1, p. 4, notes 12 and 13), joining Morley's expedition, collected Colonial-era Spanish documents and was making arrangements for their disposition.

under formal articles of agreement, drawn up by an attorney, or else by correspondence direct with Gates, in which the latter absolves the Institution of financial responsibility for loss or damage. He favors the latter method and wanted to see me about it.

I found quite a mail had accumulated since I went away on the 24th, including Irma's pictures, both of which are splendid, though of the two I like the serious one better.<sup>7</sup> It does ample justice to her lovely eyes and hair, though, of course, does not render her fine coloring.

Dr. Merriam came in something after ten and with Gilbert we went into executive session on the matter of the Gates collection, in which I finally undertook to secure from Gates the sort of a letter of transmittal that Dr. Merriam wants. I also turned over to Gilbert the Copan vases, jades, etc., which came on from Cambridge, and then came back to the club. Gilbert and I lunched together and in the middle Gates showed up, quite bizarre in that respectable spot in high laced [field] boots. His excuse was that he had nowhere else to put them, all his containers being full.

We lingered so long over lunch discussing the details of the letter Gates is to write to Doctor Merriam that I had to go up to 2400 Sixteenth Street in a taxi. I paid the Merriams a brief New Year call, as they were going out with the Woodwards to several teas about four. While I was there, Dr. Merriam received the sad news over the telephone of the death of Doctor Bumstead,<sup>8</sup> Chairman of the National Research Council. He was found dead in his berth on the Pullman<sup>9</sup> coming back from the meetings of the AAAS [American Association for the Advancement of Science] (in Chicago) this morning by Dr. Kellogg, the Secretary. It was a great shock, and was not discounted by any previous warnings, so Dr. Merriam tells me.

The Merriams and I came down to Jeanette Buckman's on Rhode Island Avenue and had a nice cozy visit with her by an open fireside. Jeanette is sensible, intelligent without being intellectual, good-looking, and 31. I think she would like to marry the right man, but since the death of her aviator several years ago, he has not come along, at least if he has (which I suspect in the person of an attractive Army colonel), he has not yet proposed.

About five we went up to the Cliftons' to pay a New Year's call. Mr. and Mrs. Clifton and Gay were all at home, and Doctor Spriggs was also calling. We all toasted Kathryn in some of Mr. Clifton's home-brewed wine, which was pretty good. We "twozed" off nicely. Mr. Clifton and Jeanette, Dr. Spriggs and Gay on the sofa, and Mrs. Clifton and myself opposite on chairs. We all thought of Kathryn [wife of a U.S. Vice consul] in her Venetian Palace with five servants and the Lord knows what not for \$20.00 per month, or whatever it comes to when the lira of it is reduced to American gold.

Presently Mr. Osgood came in. He is all but stone deaf, uses an air trumpet, and looks exactly like Mrs. Holmes. Just as we were leaving, their old friend Toddy San, wife of Captain Todd, U.S.N., came in. Jeanette, Doctor Spriggs, and I left together, the Doctor bringing us back to Jeanette's in his car. I stayed a few minutes at Jeanette's until the army colonel came, and then hurried back to the club to dress for the Glenn Stewart dinner at the Shoreham [Hotel].

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<sup>7</sup> Irma [Alexander] was evidently Morley's girlfriend, but we know little else about her. He was frequently upset by her letters, and after March 14 she is not mentioned again until June 4th.

<sup>8</sup> Henry A. Bumstead (1870–1920), a professor of physics at Yale University, was elected to chair the National Research Council in 1920 but died shortly thereafter.

<sup>9</sup> Pullmans are railroad sleeping cars built by the Pullman Company beginning in 1867.

This was for 17 or 21 covers, I have forgotten which. The only people I knew previously besides Glenn and Jacqueline were L.S. Rowe (new Director of the Pan American) and Harold Walker. The most celebrated guest was ex-Senator Bourne, who was there with his *señora* (more of whom in a minute). The most decorative lady was Jacqueline's own guest, a Miss Myers of New York, a beautiful willowy blonde. She created a mild sensation just before, or rather during, the cocktails by discovering that she had lost two diamond rings (which were really Jacqueline's). A frantic search ensued which led her eventually to her own room upstairs where she found the two missing rings in her powder box!!

I happily sat at Glenn's end of the table. On his right was the *señora* of Senator Bourne, next to whom I sat. On Glenn's left was the decorative lady of the ring incident. I sat next to a Mr. Somebody, to whom I didn't talk much as the Senator's lady proved very interesting. She is much younger than the Senator himself, rather good looking, and has an interesting mind. We enmeshed brains at once and by the *café noir*, were old friends. She was kind enough to ask me out to play bridge tomorrow afternoon, but unhappily I could not avail myself of the invitation; however, I promised to look them up next Fall. They live in Stoneleigh Court.

After dinner we danced a bit and talked a lot and drank "considerable." Glenn had done himself proud at the alcoholic end of his feast.<sup>10</sup> We started off with absinthe and gin cocktails with grenadine (a mixture of the senator's). These were continued on through the dinner, champagne for the main beverage during dinner, and Scotch and soda during the dancing afterwards. We danced till near on to eleven, when I bid the Stewarts goodbye and took my departure. They leave for California tomorrow night.

When I returned to the club, Gates was still out. I was so wakeful, however, that I sat down and wrote more on a long letter to Irma. And thus passed the first day of 1921. For the life of me I cannot remember what I did last year at this time. It was a matter of some gratification to me that the first official business of Dr. Merriam's administration—the first thing he took up as the new President of the Institution this morning—was connected with the Middle American archaeological work, namely the matter of the Gates collection loan.

## Washington

### January 2, Sunday

Rose very early, packed, and wrote all morning. I had to compose and write out the labels for the exhibit of Maya material which is going to be put on at the Institution, and which Neil Judd [see Chapter 1, note 15] is going to have printed for me at the National Museum. Also wrote several letters and made great headway with my packing. At one, I went out to the Dresden and had a farewell dinner with the Woodwards.<sup>11</sup> How fine that pair are. How successful his life, and how

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<sup>10</sup> Note that 1921 was a full year into Prohibition.

<sup>11</sup> Morley apparently means he went somewhere to get a copy of the Dresden Codex, a famous (and rare) Maya hieroglyphic text. Dr. Robert S. Woodward (1849–1924) held a civil engineering degree and natural science interests (astronomy, geology, and physics), and was professor of mechanics and mathematical physics at Columbia University. As president of the CIW from 1904 to 1920, he did not encourage its (or Morley's) social science endeavors. In 1900, Woodward was president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



happy and generally cheerful Mrs. Woodward tells me he is. No regret at having laid down the presidency, but only satisfaction at his release so honorably won from the tedium of administrative duties. As his New Year greeting so aptly puts it:

The undersigned begs to announce that he has retired from the Presidency of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and that he hopes to resume his ancestral profession of farming and his adopted profession of civil engineering without losing contact with accustomed interests and without losing confidence in the upward trend of our race. His address will remain until further notice, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C.

January 1, 1921

Robert S. Woodward

And so I bade them goodbye, finished an official relationship which has gone on now for 6½ years and a friendship which began more than 8 years ago, and which I earnestly trust may go on for many years more.

I came back to the club very sleepy after that heavy dinner and the potations of the night before and took a nap until 4:45, when I had to get ready for tea at the University Club with Captain Bennett and his wife. The former is the old codger who took away from Quirigua, in the spring of 1918, the *k'in* sign and coefficient of the Initial Series on the cornice of Temple 1 [see Ward and Rice 2022: 183]. To his justice, let me hasten to add that when I laid this matter before him in its proper light, he gave me this carved stone back and I returned it to Quirigua last spring, where it is now in Doctor MacPhail's possession at the Quirigua Hospital. If I have time this year, I would like to cement it back into its original place down at the ruins.

Mrs. Bennett proved to be a handsome large woman, much younger than the captain. I should call her charming and simple-minded, a good wife for his aggressive type. We had a very delightful hour and then they took me out to 2400 Sixteenth Street in their car, where I was to dine with the Merriams. Besides myself there was our own Doctor MacDougall, and a Doctor Ritter from California, whom I did not know. Curiously enough, the latter was in the Chaco Canyon this summer in September and saw Hewett's<sup>12</sup> work. I bade goodbye to Mrs. Merriam and her two boys, whom I will not see until next June, and I left about eight. Spent the evening in packing and writing and got to bed real early, before 10:30. I need the sleep.

## **En route, Washington to New Orleans**

### **January 3, Monday**

Today was a full day indeed. Breakfasted with Arthur Rutherford and Gates. About 9:30, Gates

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<sup>12</sup> Edgar L. Hewett (1865–1946) was a controversial figure in early twentieth-century archaeology and anthropology, and disliked by powerful figures at institutions in the northeastern U.S. Primarily a Southwesternist, he also worked at Quirigua and was a colleague/friend of Morley. He helped develop the 1906 Antiquities Act and established the School for American Archaeology (later School of American Research) in Santa Fe in 1907, assuming its directorship. (See Chauvenet 1983; Ward and Rice 2022: 17–18.)

and I took a taxi and went up to the Institution, where Gates got some cards on the Dresden Codex out of one of his boxes to take down with us (he is taking my copy of the Dresden) while I got my two packed kyacks into the taxi. Returning, I dropped Gates at the club, picked up my remaining kyack and a bed-roll, and went over to the Southern R.R. office to get my ticket. I turned over some scrip, and it took the ticket agent 15 minutes to calculate that I owed them a balance of \$3.85. From here I rushed over (in the same taxi) to the Internal Revenue Collector's, but found I could not pay my taxes for 1920 because the blanks were not out yet. They said I would probably not have to pay even in New Orleans.

Next, I taxied down to the Union Station, where I checked my baggage after a 15-minute wait, and then back to the National Geographic Society where I had an engagement with Grosvenor<sup>13</sup> at 10:00—and I was only five minutes late. Miss Peck gave me the not unpleasant news that Grosvenor was out of town, not unpleasant because I had still so much left to be done yet before lunch. I left my message which concerned the popular article I am to write for them,<sup>14</sup> and then before leaving went upstairs to bid goodbye to Martin of the photographic department. We made a date to meet in June.

I got out to the Institution at 10:30 and began to finish up my business with the different ones. To Barnum I turned over the corrected report for the *Yearbook*. Miss Stevens got some stationery out for me. To Gilbert, I gave final data about forwarding all of our mail and also final instructions as to the Maya exhibit. With Wirt I took up the question of where to deposit Guthe and Rutherford's salary, and also got my drafts [checks], or rather asked for them. He sent Fristo after them and said they'd be at the Institution before I had finished with Dr. Merriam.

The most important part of my conference with the latter had to do with getting my concession [permit], then in the safe at the Institution. Gilbert finally located this and we talked over a few last matters. At twelve Gates came in, but had forgotten his letter. He read us his will, which provides that the collection shall remain in the custody of the Institution for ten years, in the event of his death, and then if Point Loma [California] is not ready for it, it is to remain until January 1, 1951. As a final arbitrator between the two establishments, the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the A.A.S.R. [Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry] is appointed as referee. The document is clearly and well-drawn, and most handsomely treats the C.I., which fact I think Dr. Merriam perceives.

After reading the will, we bid Dr. Merriam goodbye as well as everybody else around. I got my drafts from Wirt and we left the Institution. Gates returned to the Club but I went to Beatrice Towers', with whom I was to have lunch. She was not in, but her chauffeur, one Harold, had just come in, and I went off with him on a round of the three clubs where her mother thought she might be. First, to the Cosmos, but she was not there; next to the Associated Woman's Club,

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<sup>13</sup> Gilbert Hovey Grosvenor (1875–1966), related to President Taft, was the first full-time editor of *The National Geographic Magazine* (1899–1954) and president of the National Geographic Society (1920–1954). He married the daughter of Alexander Graham Bell, former president of the NGS, and had seven children, the first, Melville Bell Grosvenor (1901–1982), also becoming NGS president and editor of the magazine. His son, Gilbert Melville Grosvenor (1931–1982), followed in the family footsteps at NGS as editor (1970–1980) and president (1980–1996).

<sup>14</sup> This article (Morley 1922a) focused on hieroglyphic writing and both Aztec and Maya art.

*tampoco*, though here I ran into Stella Clements for a moment. Finally, at the Women's Congressional Union I ran into a message from her saying she was staying at her home.

We returned thither—she lives in the same terrace as the German Embassy used to be—and then we returned to the Congressional Union for lunch. After lunch we walked across to the Cosmos Club, where I showed her Irma's pictures. She expressed herself as very happily surprised. I left her here while I went over to the American Security Co. to see Fugitt about getting \$500.00 in gold. He was of the opinion that I'd better take it from here rather than trust to getting it in New Orleans, so he cashed a draft of \$500.00 for me into \$20.00 and \$10.00 gold pieces.

From here, I went over to Zack Brewer's, where I was to meet Arthur Rutherford. He was waiting for me and I gave him an Institution voucher for \$200.00 to cover his expenses down. I also asked him to photograph immediately the concession from the government of Guatemala under which I am to work this season and return the original to me at the club between 4:30 and 5:00. Dr. Merriam is very anxious to have a photographic copy of it in the files of the Institution. Arthur is to send three prints of it to him as soon as I leave.

I bid goodbye to Zach and rushed back to the club where I picked up B. [Beatrice]. Harold was waiting in the car and we first went to that jewelry shop on 15th Street where my watch was being repaired. Next, we went to Stinemetz on F [Street] where I shed my fur overcoat and then we returned to the Towers' boarding place on Massachusetts Avenue, where we picked up Bess and Mrs. Towers. They next took me over to the National Museum where I took my leave of Mr. Holmes,<sup>15</sup> Miss Rosebush, Dr. Hrdlička,<sup>16</sup> and Dr. Hough. From here we went over to the Smithsonian, where I bid goodbye to Dr. Fewkes,<sup>17</sup> Miss Clark, Harrington, J.N.B. Hewett, Serles, Swanton,<sup>18</sup> and Mrs. Nichols, and then back to the club where Towers dropped me off and where I bid them goodbye. A really delightful family, and one I hated to leave, especially Bess, who is so very congenial and easy to confide in; *simpática*, as the Latins say.

Rutherford was waiting in front of the club with the concession, which he had photographed, and will send prints to Dr. Merriam right away. I had about fifteen minutes in my room, which I devoted to packing, and then Coville telephoned me to come up to the private dining room on

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<sup>15</sup> W. H. Holmes (1846–1933), a geologist surveying the Rocky Mountains in the 1870s, turned to Mesoamerica when he became curator of anthropology at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago in the 1890s. He published a lavish overview of the major Maya ruins (Holmes 1895–1897), then was head curator of anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution/Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) from 1897 to 1920. A skilled artist, he was director of the National Gallery of Art from 1920 to 1936.

<sup>16</sup> Aleš Hrdlička (1869–1943), a physical anthropologist at the American Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian, was interested in human evolution, especially Neanderthals.

<sup>17</sup> Jesse W. Fewkes (1850–1930), zoologist, anthropologist, and archaeologist, worked at sites and with the peoples of the Southwest, and also in the Caribbean. He was on the staff of the BAE at the Smithsonian Institution, moving to its directorship in 1918.

<sup>18</sup> Anthropologist John Reed Swanton (1873–1958), with a Ph.D. from Harvard, was known for his folklore and linguistic research among Native American people throughout the U.S. President of the American Anthropological Association and editor of its journal *American Anthropologist*, he spent his career at the BAE/Smithsonian.

the fifth floor, where our committee meeting was to be held. We had a good quorum: Coville, Smith (of the Geo. Survey), Smith (of the Bureau of Fisheries), Schofield, and myself. Nelson of the Biological Survey was there to advise on the MacMillan Arctic Exploration project. The main business before the committee, however, was the final disposition of the Judd report on Chaco Canyon. A favorable letter was read from Grosvenor casting his vote in its favor, and then when Coville put the question, it was carried unanimously. I took the moment of voting and it was approved at just 28½ minutes past five. Thus, comes to a successful issue a matter inaugurated some nine months ago, carried forward by Neil Judd so splendidly this summer, and now by the action of the committee (the Research Committee of the National Geographic Society) is accepted as the major archaeological activity of the Society for the next five years. The resolution provides for a total expenditure of \$75,000.00 in annual installments of \$15,000.00, that Neil M. Judd is to be the Director of the project, and finally that there will be an Advisory Committee of six as follows: Fewkes (Chairman), Holmes, and Morley representing archaeology; Merriam representing geology; Schofield representing agriculture; and Mather representing the N.P. [National Park Service]. This matter gives me a double satisfaction: not only am I able to help an old and cherished friend to what should prove to be the biggest opportunity in American archaeology—as a result of this Neil should become as well-known as Hiram Bingham was for his work under the same auspices at Machu Picchu, but in addition it will make Chaco Canyon as well-known as that Peruvian city.

Coville brought up MacMillan's project providing for an exploration in the Arctic region, I think of Baffin Island. Friends of his are giving \$25,000 to buy a specially built ship, the keel of which is already laid. He wants the N.G.S. to find \$25,000 more to buy the supplies and pay the salaries. It was decided that MacMillan be asked to come over to Washington and lay his project before the committee in greater detail. I bade them all goodbye and left just as we adjourned.

I stopped in to say goodbye to Neil and Bessie Judd for a few minutes and to tell them the good news, and then went out to Bella Weitzner's for a last visit with her. A taxi at ten brought me back to the club where I picked up Gates and we went down to the station. We verified the fact that our baggage was on board—an important point—and then went out to the sleeper. There had been a wreck somewhere between New York and Philadelphia, and we were told our train would be held until midnight. As it turned out, we didn't leave until two in the morning.

I had been so busy that I had not opened my mail, which was rather large. I noted one from Irma, which I reserved until last, in fact until after I had undressed and turned in. I thought to have a happy ending thus to a long and tiring day, but what a surprise. Her letter was sarcastic, cutting, and angry. Obviously, she was hurt at something I had written her; she was seeking to strike back and was doing it effectively. As I lay awake pondering over this new phase in this young woman who has attracted me so tremendously, I composed in my mind a dozen equally cutting replies but discarded them all. I simply cannot hurt her that way, no matter how she may hurt me.

## **En route Washington to New Orleans**

### **January 4, Tuesday**

An uninteresting day during which nothing happened. We are running 2½ hours late with little apparent chance of making it up. I wrote letters and diary most of the day, and intermittently

Gates searched for his bifocals, which he lost last night. He insists he had them on when he came on the train, but of this I have my doubts since they disappeared utterly. If they had fallen behind the berth and had been broken, we would at least have found the fragments, but we found nothing. I wrote to Irma, telling her I did not understand her letter. Hers was obviously hurt, but she repaid with interest. We turned in early against a busier day tomorrow.

## **New Orleans**

### **January 5, Wednesday**

I rose some time before Gates and had finished breakfast and returned to our car when he got up. We had made up some during the night and pulled into New Orleans only two hours late.

We went first to the St. Charles [Hotel], where I had engaged rooms by telegram—and lucky it was, too, since the races are on here and everything was full. We got two rooms with communicating bath, however, and are very comfortable. We lunched immediately at Kolb's nearby and then returned to the [United] Fruit Co. office. Before we could buy our tickets, however, we had to go down to the customs house and secure embarking permits. It took me some time here, as I had to make out my 1920 income tax receipt. Having paid this and received a receipt therefore, I was given an embarking permit which will enable me to leave. The next stop was to get the Guatemala Consul's visa on my passport, and after some red tape this was accomplished. I thought I recognized the boy in the office who told me his name was Beltranena. I found I had met some of his brothers in Guatemala.

We returned next to the Fruit Co. office, where we were now permitted to buy our tickets and cleaned all that part of our business up. I also made arrangements with Hicks, their passenger agent, to forward my suitcase to the Cosmos Club when I send it up from Belize at the end of this month. While we were in the Fruit Co. office, an old and very unexpected friend came in, Wilkinson, who had been our Vice Consul at Tegucigalpa [Honduras] the first time I was there.<sup>19</sup> He had just gotten in from Brownsville and was leaving the next morning for Tela to establish a vice-consulate there. We made a date to take breakfast together.

Toward evening, as I was standing in the ladies' entrance of the St. Charles, Glenn Stewart and Jacqueline came up. I made an engagement with them for tea tomorrow.

## **New Orleans**

### **January 6, Thursday**

Wilkinson was in the lobby of the St. Charles promptly at eight. Indeed, he called me up from his lodgings at 7:30 to see if I was up or getting up. We had a nice long gossipfest about Tegucigalpa. We could both patch up gaps in the other's knowledge and breakfast was prolonged until after nine. His boat was leaving at 10:00, and he gave me a cordial invitation to visit him at his new consulate in Tela. I am afraid, though, I won't get around there this time.

After he left me, I called up Stephanie Levert, but unfortunately found her out of town. Next called up Lucia Miltenberger and arranged with her for tea at the country club. She was to meet

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<sup>19</sup> Stanley L. Wilkinson (1892–1939) had a distinguished career in the United States foreign service, serving in posts around the Americas, including San Salvador; San José, Costa Rica; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Santa Marta, Colombia.

me here at 3:55 this afternoon, and together we are to pick up the Glenn Stewarts at the Grunewald [Hotel].<sup>20</sup>

I went out after this and did the rest of my errands—some drafting supplies at Hansel's and some medical supplies, including some very essential carbolic acid soap,<sup>21</sup> at Lyons. The rest of the morning I spent in writing and packing at the hotel. Gates' friend, Dr. López, had been kind enough to invite me out to lunch, but I was so busy writing that I got Gates to excuse me. At four, I met Lucia and Gates came along presently. Lucia filled me up with her troubles and those of Stephanie. John Levert in Santa Fe has had another hemorrhage and they fear the end is not far off. Poor boy, what a stiff fight he has put up. Then Dr. Carney, Stephanie's brother-in-law, died suddenly of angina pectoris while on a hunting trip this fall, and Stephanie has had to stick in there and manage for her sister. Lucia was also not without her troubles. Her brother, Wilfred, came down in September with some obscure trouble—swelling in the neck and abdomen—which baffled the New Orleans physicians and finally obliged him to go to the Mayos'. Lucia says his case was so unusual that they gave him precedence over everybody else. They found his tonsils in bad condition and their Doctor Barker has made a serum for them, which they hope may take effect. Lucia is very much upset and her mother, she says, is in a worse condition.

Gates joined us after these exchanges of information, and we went over to the Grunewald to pick up Glenn and Jacqueline. They came down by the side elevator while I was waiting at the desk and had met Lucia and Gates before they came to look for me. We went directly to the Country Club and had coffee out under that lovely large tree hung with Spanish moss. Saw Jeanne Castellanos for a moment—she was full of her trip to California this summer. She introduced me to a Mr. Flood, who said he had met me, but I did not remember him, nor do I believe I had ever laid eyes on him before. However, I lied amiably.

We left the club about 5:30 and dropped Lucia at her house. While we were stopping there, I saw old General Levert going in, but did not trouble him. We dropped the Stewarts at the Grunewald with the understanding that we were to return and pick them up in 15 minutes, all going over to Antoine's<sup>22</sup> for dinner, as it was Glenn's birthday. We carried out this program and had a very delightful dinner party of four at New Orleans' most famous restaurant. Glenn had got from Lucia some of the prized dishes we should order, and it was a Lucullan feast.<sup>23</sup>

Jacqueline and I talked about the coming Belt-Starr marriage, which takes place next Wednesday, and Gates and Glenn talked *tonterías* [jokes, nonsense]. Jacqueline had a cake with 5 candles for Glenn's birthday. One nice touch, which one would never get outside of New Orleans, and probably not outside of Antoine's, they turned the electric lights off a moment so that we could the better see the effect of the lighted candles.

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<sup>20</sup> The Grunewald was a lavish hotel with an early nightclub, built in 1893 on Canal Street. In 1923 it was renamed The Roosevelt, and was associated with governor Huey P. Long.

<sup>21</sup> Carbolic acid soap, a mildly antiseptic (anti-bacterial) soap for deep cleansing of the skin. Between 1895 and 2006, it was manufactured as Lifebuoy.

<sup>22</sup> Founded in 1840, Antoine's was, by the 1920s, the French Quarter's most famous restaurant. It remains in business today.

<sup>23</sup> A metaphor for a lavish meal, named for Roman general Lucius Licinius Lucullus who, in his retirement, entertained illustrious guests at sumptuous banquets.

We left Antoine's about ten, the Stewarts went to the theatre, but Gates and I returned to the hotel to pack against the morrow. Before I went to bed, I had things pretty well organized for our leaving day. I only have one or two minor errands to do tomorrow before going down to the wharf and the boat (S.S. *Coppename*) will not sail before eleven.

## **En route New Orleans to Puerto Barrios**

### **January 7, Friday**

I was up at six and finished packing before breakfast. In addition to the two suitcases I brought with me, my divers purchases make up two large bundles which will be left in Belize. We breakfasted at 7:30 and then separated for our few last commissions. I sent pralines to True, Muz, Irma, and Lybs, and a telegram to Irma as she had requested. I should have recorded that I got a telegram from her yesterday regretting her letter of the 28th and asking me to wire if everything was o.k., so I wired that it was. I think perhaps she had good grounds for getting hurt at me. I wonder. How I wish I knew or could see ahead. I cashed a couple of drafts and then paid my bill. We were delayed a few minutes in getting off because Gates wanted O'Shaughnessy to witness his will. We finally got hold of him and he and the head porter, a man by the name of King, witnessed it. We stopped at the City Hall where Gates left his will with a Dr. A.L. Metz, a 33rd degree Mason, to be delivered to by him to Levy in Baltimore, Gates' executor.

Our baggage had preceded us to the dock and there was no difficulty in getting it aboard. We put everything in the hold which is to be put off at Belize. I only knew three of the passengers. Pérez Aura, who used to be a spy of [former Guatemalan president Manuel] Estrada Cabrera [see Chapter 7, p. 45, note 68], and who made his money exporting sugar when it was so high two years ago during the embargo against its shipment out of the country. This was one of the ways E.C. rewarded the faithful.<sup>24</sup> The other two are Mr. and Mrs. Doyle. Doyle is an engineer on the Guatemala Northern Railroad and Mrs. Doyle runs the Fruit Co. mess at Barrios. I was also present at their older daughter's marriage to Sara in Barrios several years ago.<sup>25</sup>

I had surely expected a special delivery letter from Irma, but "*no hay*" and I was correspondingly cast down. I left my gold and drafts with the purser and started in on my eight or nine letters, which I always leave for going down the river. Just as we were leaving, in fact the gangplank had already been pulled aboard, a special delivery boy came down to the dock with a letter, which it turned out was from Irma for me. This seemed a very good omen indeed to start out this long arduous and in spots dangerous trip, and the contents of the letter had nothing to mar the "*buena suerte*" [good luck] of its timely arrival. Had it been another ten minutes later it would not have reached me for another fortnight. It surely was a case of an inch saving an ell there.<sup>26</sup> I cannot tell ultimately what will fall out between this little German-Jewess and me. All I

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<sup>24</sup> Morley's encounter with Pérez Aura in 1917 was during his spy mission with John Held. The Guatemalan dictator had given Aura permission to traffic in sugar, which at the time was a restricted commodity (Ward and Rice 2021: 351–352).

<sup>25</sup> The Doyle wedding was on December 20, 1917. The next day, Morley left Puerto Barrios for Guatemala City, arriving just before the December 25 earthquake (Ward and Rice 2022: 296).

<sup>26</sup> This is an early version of the proverb about giving an inch and taking a mile. An "ell" was one of several historical measurement units approximating the length of an arm: c. 45 inches (114 cm).



know now is that she has a tremendous attraction for me, though not an exclusive one, I must admit. Perhaps such a thing is never to exist for me again, but this I know: I see her face in every pretty girl I meet, and her pictures have wonderfully quickened the whole experience of last Fall.

I wrote until five about a dozen letters, all members of the family, Alice Jackson, etc., etc. The river pilot went off at five, taking the mail with him, so that closed communications with home. After sunset we put the bar pilot off, and this severed our last corporal link with the U.S.A., and we put out into the Gulf.

### **En route New Orleans to Puerto Barrios**

#### **January 8, Saturday**

It is discouraging, this seasick business. Now it isn't rough at all today, and yet I have a headache, my tongue and mouth and breath all dark brown, and I am all but seasick. Fortunately, last night I secured a very good book from the library, *The Children of the Ghetto*, by I. Zangwill,<sup>27</sup> and lay abed the greater part of the day reading. I missed no meals, either by staying away from them or by losing them after I had taken them in, but just the same I can hardly say I felt good within.

### **En route New Orleans to Puerto Barrios**

#### **January 9, Sunday**

It was still pleasant enough today, and although I felt some better, I still did nothing but lie in my berth and read *The Children of the Ghetto*, which is a good book. About one we passed Contoy Island and light, which is said to be some 24 hours from Belize. I had hoped we would get in sooner. This stretch of this journey always aggravates me because it is so near where I would like to get and yet so far out. Muddy Esquivel's wonderful cave [see below] with the hieroglyphs on its wall we must have passed sometime in the late afternoon or early evening.

### **En route New Orleans to Puerto Barrios**

#### **January 10, Monday**

A lovely day though with the typical swell that rolls in against this shore, always, always, always, always. We passed Xcalac about ten in the morning, and it brought vivid memories of when I passed through here nearly three years ago (i.e., about the 6th or 7th of February, 1918). I spent the morning in writing and reading, and the afternoon in reading, writing, and packing. It was not until after four that we dropped anchor in the Belize roadstead. A British cruiser was riding in the roadstead also, and a boatload of tars was just putting off to shore. Someone said on the boat that she had come in response to a threat of further race riots such as they had last year.<sup>28</sup> These, it was rumored, were to have been precipitated about New Year. All was quiet while we were ashore, and indeed I heard nothing further of the whole business.

When the quarantine launch came alongside of the *Coppename*, I spied Muddy Esquivel and waved a greeting to him. The doctor who came aboard was not old Davis, but a new man I did

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<sup>27</sup> Israel Zangwill (1864–1926), a British-Jewish writer, was nicknamed “Dickens of the Ghetto” from books like his 1892 *Children of the Ghetto*. He coined the term “melting pot,” popularized by his same-titled stage play. Morley's interest was piqued by Irma, of Jewish/German heritage.

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 11, p. 104, note 123.

not know at all. Presently I spied Connelly, the Fruit Co. agent at Belize, and he said, "The doctor wants to see you," so I was introduced. Gann, it seems, had given him definite instructions about my coming, and that I was to be taken directly to the hospital to Gann's house. He is a nice young chap named MacDonald, a Canadian by birth.

I got Muddy and my room steward to bring up our baggage and it was taken aboard the quarantine boat, whither we followed it. Gabriel, the customs house inspector, was on the same boat, and he gave it a perfunctory examination and then OK'd it. As Muddy let us into Gann's house at the hospital, I could not but feel that I was treading where royalty had been denied. I refer to the incident when the Prince of Sweden, William, had visited Belize [City] last winter.<sup>29</sup> Gann was away at the time and when he left, he gave the keys to his house to Muddy with strict orders not to permit a soul to enter, and as a dashing finish, not dreaming that royalty would ever get to Belize added, "not even if royalty wants to get in." During Prince William's visit he wanted to see Gann's archaeological collections and the Governor ordered Muddy to open the house, but Muddy declined. All sorts of pressure was brought to bear upon him, but he refused, and since an Englishman's home is his castle, the Prince did not get to see Gann's collection.

Poor Muddy, however, who was quarantine keeper at the time, lost his government job instantaneously, and was generally reviled by the rest of Belize for this literal interpretation of Gann's orders. As he let me in the house, I recalled the incident to his mind and he grinned sheepishly. The house itself made me very blue indeed. Without old Gann, it is a very different place, and I was glad to finish storing away our baggage and get out as quickly as possible.

Muddy gave me some more information about the hieroglyphic cave. It is about 1½ miles north of Tulum along the beach, and about a quarter of a mile inland. The inscription covers the back wall of the cave, as I understand it, and is 18 feet long by 7 feet [5.5 x 2.1 m] high. It must be a veritable Bible for length.<sup>30</sup> Muddy says that when he was there in August, the bottom 3 feet all along were covered with this pool of water which rises and falls, apparently with the rains. I determined on the spot to send Muddy up at once whilst I came over to Guatemala, and to the end took him down to the bank with me to establish a credit of \$250.00 for him there. Beatty, the manager, was not in, but I arranged with Muddy to be at Gann's house at seven and we would fix the matter up then.

By this time, it was nearly 5:30 and MacDonald, Gates, and I went out to the club where I had the great pleasure of renewing a lot of old acquaintances: the Governor, Mrs. Craik, the MacConnells, Miss Roberts (who said Gann had told her to take care of me *en cualquiera que necessita* [in whatever he needs]), Miss Murphy (who is engaged), Mrs. Stoye, Mrs. Fowle, Mrs. Franko, Blogg, the Starkeys, McKinstry, John Hunter, Bryant, Mr. Grant—everybody, in fact.

Because of the arrival of the cruiser, everybody had turned out to meet the officers, who did not come in uniform, and we had a big crowd. I noticed many new faces and they told me many new people had come out during the summer past. We left the club at seven and returned to the hospital, where Muddy was waiting for me. We made the final arrangements for his trip and I

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<sup>29</sup> William was an explorer prince and travelled to Central America in 1920, including a visit to Tulum. Footage shot on the expedition was gathered by director Robert Olsson and released in 1921 as a silent movie entitled *Prins Wilhelms Expedition till Central Amerika: Del 1 Och 2*.

<sup>30</sup> Morley here refers to the cave of Tancha (Lothrop 1924: 132).

wrote a letter to Vidal, the *guardafaros* [lighthouse keeper] at Cozumel, asking him to help Muddy in whatever way possible.

We got to the hotel so late that the dining room was closed, but I managed to scare up something to eat. Joe Lewis, the proprietor, came in and exchanged a few words with us, also old Aunty, a Belize Negress of considerable antiquity who had done my washing here for many years.<sup>31</sup> Before we left the hotel, I telephoned Eddie Johnston [that] I could not go over as our boat was leaving at eight, and I have several other calls to make. We stopped at the bank next and saw Charley Beattie. The mail had no communication from the Carnegie Institution, but Beattie said it was probably in the registered mail, which they would not get until the next day. I made over three \$100.00 drafts to him, and asked him to establish a credit of \$250.00 for Muddy. Also gave him my gold and drafts to keep for me. From here we went on to the Craiks. Jim is away in Punta Gorda, but Joe Melhado was there and we had a peg or two and chatted for a while. As Gates wanted me to get in touch with old Schofield at Corozal, I begged stationery of Mrs. Craik and wrote him a letter telling him Gates would be up in about a fortnight, and bespeaking his courtesy and aid for him.

I telephoned over to the U.F. Co. and found out we'd better go aboard as soon as possible, so bidding Mrs. Craik and Joe goodbye, we caught an automobile out to the fort. Muddy was waiting for me here and came out to the *Coppename* with us for a few last words. Gates and I went to bed at once, very tired, but the *Coppename* did not sail until 2.

## **Puerto Barrios**

### **January 11, Tuesday**

Getting such a late start from Belize made us miss the morning train from Puerto Barrios to the capital [Guatemala City], indeed it was eleven o'clock before we finally came alongside the wharf. I saw several familiar faces: Mrs. Doyle's two daughters, the older crying for happiness at seeing her mother; Pflucker, the port superintendent; Godman, our consul, etc. There had come over with us from Belize a travelling consul general, a Mr. Frazier, who is inspecting all our Latin American consulates.

Ashore I met old Major, the American darkey who has taken care of everybody's baggage for as long as I can remember in Belize. Getting through customs was an easy business. We had decided, a number of us, to see what a special train to the city would cost, leaving shortly after noon. Godman telephoned up and a reply came presently saying that we could get one for \$455.00, but that it would first be necessary to get the government's permission. When we heard this, we all threw up our hands, particularly the Latin Americans themselves, deciding the regular train up tomorrow morning would be a speedier means of transportation to the city as compared with a special, contingent on the government's approval!

We went ashore and had lunch with the Kings, the nice couple we had previously selected as our most personable passengers. It was a drizzly, miserable typical Barrios afternoon, and I lay down most of it. After dinner I tried to get up some auction, but couldn't. Read a bit and went to bed early. Gates and I occupied the same bed, and the old fellow snored so I thought he would raise the roof. It poured torrents in the night so that I felt sure the road would be washed out.

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<sup>31</sup> Not to be confused with Morley's beloved Aunty Chon in El Cayo.

## CHAPTER 13.

### TO GUATEMALA CITY

#### Guatemala City

#### January 12, Wednesday

Poor young King lost his wallet, so he informed us at breakfast, with \$150.00 in it. Gates gladly loaned hm \$40.00 to get to the city. I had arisen early to secure seats in the parlor car and was the first to buy them, the Bishop of Salvador (also one of our passengers from New Orleans) and General Lima being just behind me. The parlor car was filled and every available corner occupied with hand baggage, and after the manner of the travelling Latin American, with baskets and bundles.

I had brought a book from the Barrios club library, *Mr. Isaacs* by F. Marion Crawford<sup>32</sup> and finished this before reaching the capital. Although I had asked a Fruit Co. boy to telephone Doctor MacPhail to come down to the train, I saw no one I knew at Quirigua, though heaven knows the place looked familiar enough. The [Río] Motagua is very high and it was evident much rain had fallen in December, agreeing with the stories I got in both Belize and Barrios. Beyond Gualán, it began to grow warm, and it was quite hot at Zacapa, as per usual. The hotel man here remembered me well. I did not have time to run over to Levy's store, but gave him a message for Rafael and Salvador.

Hot as it is, somehow I have grown to like old Zacapa, as it is the stopping off place for Copan. Gladly I would have foregone the Guatemala City trip for one to Copan, but it couldn't be, and we pulled out for the capital on time. It was quite warm on the Zacapa plain for a couple of hours, but between 3 and 4 the road began to rise and we were soon weaving in and out the hills and it grew perceptibly cooler.

I finished *Mr. Isaacs* before it grew too dark to read. It is a lovely, impossible (to me, at least) conception, one of those really spiritual treatments of love with a confident belief in the continuity of the soul, which if it could only be true would bring out fundamental changes of character here.

The new crescent moon (holding water, happily<sup>33</sup>) with a gorgeous evening star hanging nearby in the eastern sky, and the velvet night of the tropics fell swiftly. We crossed the Puente de las Vacas only 20 minutes late, owing to a couple of hot boxes, and were soon in the capital.

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<sup>32</sup> Francis Crawford (1854–1909) was a Harvard-educated novelist known for his books set in Italy. *Mr. Isaacs*, published in 1885, was a story of British India.

<sup>33</sup> Reference to a common belief that it rains when the crescent moon is upside down and cannot hold water.

Gates and I bored through the crowd (Mrs. James told Gates once she always thought of me as “The Gimlet,” because I got through with things<sup>34</sup>) and we cajoled a *cochero* [taxi driver] to move us rapidly toward the Grace Hotel, since we had engaged no room in advance. Captain and Mrs. G[race] were glad to see me, so they said, and fixed us up in two adjoining rooms. There was no message from Toxica Roach—I had invited her by wire from Los Amates to invite us to dinner tonight. So, I telephoned her but no one was *en su casa*. Later, while we were at dinner, Jim Roach called up. Said he had just got my wire, that Toxica and his sister were in Antigua and would we come to lunch tomorrow. We would, etc., etc. After dinner old Gates was well spent and went to bed early.

I walked over to Schwartz and Co. and knocked at the *zaguán* [entry hall door] on the residential side and sent my card in to Jack Armstrong and his wife.<sup>35</sup> They were almost as surprised to see me as I had been to hear that he had left the British Consular service and gone into business for Stahl.<sup>36</sup> The last I had heard of him had been that he was appointed British Consul General in Argentina at a salary of \$12,000.00. Spent a very delightful evening with them, and left something after ten.

## Guatemala City

### January 13, Thursday

I conceived that I would need three papers here. First, I hoped to get a general “*carta de recomendación*” from the president. Second, a specific *carta* from Escamilla, the Minister of War (and I am told the strongest man in the Herrera<sup>37</sup> government) to the new *jefe político* of Petén, Dr. José Prado Romaña, a scholarly man [a medical doctor], I am told. And third, a letter from Aguirre, the Minister of Foreign Relations, granting us specific permit to excavate at Tayasal and Piedras Negras. To secure these was my chief business in being in the city.

The first thing after breakfast, I got in touch with Herbert Apfel, who is still stopping here at the hotel. Poor chap, he tells me he has lost everything in the rapid drop of coffee, the withdrawal of all credits, and the cessation of all buying in consequence. Although a haberdasher, he has suffered heavily; indeed, he says he is ruined. Lily, his wife, has had an expensive operation in Paris and is now coming home. Herbert arranged to fix an interview with his brother-in-law for Saturday afternoon, i.e., with Luis Aguirre, and with Escamilla this afternoon.

Gates had left me to go down to the customs house to get his baggage through, and I visited with Herbert the greater part of the morning. Also looked at some lovely Panamas [hats], but they

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<sup>34</sup> A gimlet is a small hand tool for boring or drilling small holes in wood without splitting it. It is also the name of a cocktail of gin and lime juice.

<sup>35</sup> Armstrong was the British Consul General in 1917.

<sup>36</sup> The Stahls are a wealthy Guatemalan business family involved in coffee exports and, later, automobile importation.

<sup>37</sup> Carlos Herrera y Luna (1856–1930), from a wealthy coffee and sugar family, assumed the presidency of Guatemala (1920–1921) after the ouster of dictator Manuel Estrada Cabrera. He was deposed in a coup, however, and exiled in France. The coup leader, General José María Orellana Pinto, Estrada’s chief of staff and supported by the United Fruit Company, held office from 1921 to 1926, when he died under mysterious circumstances (poison? heart attack?) in Antigua.

are way up [in price] in Guatemala. They want \$40.00 apiece for them. About one, Gates and I walked around to Jim Roach's. He looks well, has grown some heavier, some fuller of waist, but still a fine figure of a man withal. Toxica, his sister, and their invaluable Concha are gone to Antigua for quite a time, so I will probably miss them. Jim's father died last summer and he has had his sister living with him.

After lunch I walked down to Campbell's, that English curio collecting chap, but he wasn't in. I slipped a card under the door, however, telling him where I was stopping. At 3:45 Herbert Apfel met me here at the Grand Hotel and went over to the Ministry of War. We went in through several offices—Herbert surely has his entry here—and finally penetrated to the Under Secretary. He said the minister was occupied for the moment and would we kindly wait. I feared a long one, but in some 15 minutes a dapper little secretary in a dark queer tunic came in and waved us into the Holy of Holies. The minister is tall and somewhat stoop-shouldered. His mother was a German, and he is supposed to have been very pro-German, which I daresay is true, at any rate he was anti-American, which down here in the war meant the same thing. He was, however, exceedingly kind to me, and after I had made known my errand, he gave me an order on the *Comandante de Armas* of Petén to aid me in any way he could. We chatted for some moments after this letter had been prepared, not to make our exit too abruptly, and then we went.

Something after 5, Gates and I walked down to the American Club, where Jim had given us tickets. I did not see anyone I knew except Jim and a railroad man named Paul. We did not stay long. We (Gates and I) had a thoroughly delightful dinner with the Armstrongs. We discussed American politics with 4-ounce gloves—Gates and I always disagree—and had a very enjoyable time. Jack had told me of a young Englishman, a Captain Fitzgerald, the military attaché at their legation here, who had just returned from a four-months trip in the Petén, and who wanted to meet me. He had asked him over after dinner.

Sometimes toward nine the young captain turned up and proved to be a splendid fellow, the kind one takes to instinctively. Besides, he had been over a considerable part of Petén recently, in fact only just returned before Christmas, and was full of information and malaria too, I regret to say. He had been down the [Usumacinta] river as far as Desempeño, though he had not seen Piedras Negras, up the [Río] Pasión as far as Old Porvenir, had come overland to begin with from Coban to Petexbatun, and had gone out by way of Flores, El Cayo, and Belize. An amazing trip for the rainy season. He had been with two other men, so-so geologists, I take it looking for oil indications. There seems to be quite a furor these days over the fact that there may be oil in the Petén.<sup>38</sup> Well, we had much in common to begin with and developed it quickly and much farther. While we were going at each other hammer and tongs, Max Schauerberger came in to see Gates. He is a 32 Degree [Mason] and had been recommended to Gates as a good man by his active 33, Metz, in New Orleans. After his arrival, Fitzgerald and I dropped out of the general conversation for some time, tête-a-tête-ing over Petén.

He told me my *boga* [boatman; rower], Manuel Gutierrez at Nuevo Guatemala, remembered me well, and had told him of my trip. He said Tres Marías, near Yaxchilan, where the Villanueva

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<sup>38</sup> The heyday of U.S. oil exploration in Petén was in the 1970s, when oil company explorers were all over the area, locating some reserves. By the late 1980s four oil fields were producing 6,000 barrels per day, not a huge amount (Banks 1987).

brothers formerly had had a big *montería*, was abandoned, which recalled to my mind the half-forgotten fact that the one who had entertained me, I had subsequently heard, had been murdered. Conversation became general and what with telling stories of Tulum, Yucatan, and Petén, the evening passed away and we did not leave until after eleven. Fitzgerald is to lunch with me tomorrow.

## Guatemala City

### January 14, Friday

The first thing I tried to do this morning was to get the yellow fever injection down at the Rockefeller Foundation establishment.<sup>39</sup> When I finally got there, however, the Director, Dr. Vaughn, was out, and so I will have to come back. The secretary in charge showed me the bottles of serum which have to be kept on ice. At 10:00, Gates and I called on don Salvador Herrera, the brother of the president, and now living with the latter in the old Owens house on 5th Avenue, opposite the American Legation, or rather where it used to be, as it is now changed. He received us and I presented my letter from Doctor White to him. At first, we talked in English, but when he learned that we both knew Spanish, halt and lame as that Spanish is, he insisted on our getting forward in that. We must have stayed for over an hour, talking politics, policies, and petroleum. Finally, between Gates' conversational barrages, pretty-well laid down and pretty-well kept up, I got down to brass tacks and asked him to arrange an interview for us with don Carlos [Herrera], and also to get two letters of recommendation from don Carlos, one for each of us, which he promised to do.

Finally, I asked him if he would present my compliments to Margarita, his niece, the loveliest and most beautiful of all the Herrera girls, and ask her when I might call.<sup>40</sup> To my great delight, he said he would ask her to step in at once, which he did, and presently Margarita came. Certainly, she has grown no less lovely and fair during these three years. The same slender chic figure, the same deep melting eyes, the same beautiful red lips. Of all the girls I have met in these countries, only two have appeared to me as matrimonially feasible: Margarita and Bertha Palomo of Salvador. The latter, so Herbert Apfel tells me, ran off with some chap 8 or 10 years her junior, and after living with him a couple of days married him. He is a young Escobar of one of the wealthy families over there. During the earthquake days three years ago when the Herreras had gone outside to a finca, I used to take Margarita supplies of apples and candy.

She is more of a flirt than ever, and when in answer to her question as to how long I was going to stay in Guatemala, I told her about five months. She said "No longer than that! You ought to stay with us for a while." They are motoring to Solola this afternoon and won't be back until Sunday afternoon or Monday morning. Anyhow, I am to call there Monday afternoon.

But now I must go back to pick up another thread. Last June when I was here, I promised Mrs. Grace when I came back that I would give a little lecture for her on the Maya. This time

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<sup>39</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation's decades-long fight against yellow fever began in 1914, when it began working with William Gorgas, chief medical officer of the Panama Canal Project. In 1937 the foundation developed a vaccine that earned a Nobel Prize for Max Theiler.

<sup>40</sup> Margarita Robles was a young woman in Guatemala City who attracted Morley's attention (see Ward and Rice 2021: 327).



when she saw me, she asked whether I had forgotten, and I told her no. It was decided, therefore, that it is to be at nine o'clock Monday evening. Before leaving, therefore, I asked don Salvador whether he would not like to come and bring his nieces, and he said he would be delighted to do so. With these exchanges of mutual goodwill, we took our leave. It was after leaving here that Gates and I walked down to the Rockefeller place and found Dr. Vaughn out.

Fitzgerald came at 12:45 and brought his notebooks, and we had a live busy session. I found out a lot about the conditions now obtaining in Petén—he says the Usumacinta River is perfectly safe—and after lunch we went up to the relief map to study Petén [Figure 13.1].<sup>41</sup> We took off our shoes and clambered all over it. As if with seven-league boots we crossed the sierras, climbed from Petén over the Altos, dropped into the Motagua Valley back and out to San Marcos, thence along the Pacific coast plains to Salvador and through to Puerto Barrios and Belize, all in 15 minutes. Quite a *paseo*. We studied the map closely and came to the conclusion that so far as our personal knowledge went, it was very good indeed.



Figure 13.1. The huge cement relief map of Guatemala, looking east, with Petén (and Belize) to the left center and the volcanic highlands right. With exaggerated scales of 1:10,000 on the horizontal plane and 1:2000 on the vertical, this tourist attraction covers a surface area of 1,800 m<sup>2</sup>. Wikimedia commons, photo by Rene Hernández.

When we got back to the Temple of Minerva, Gates was lazily sleeping or resting, and as for our *cochero*, he was sound asleep. We came back to the Plaza where we separated, Gates returning to the hotel and Fitzgerald and I going to the Imperial for some ice cream. I went next down to the Rockefeller place, but Dr. Vaughn had gone. This was my fault, as my appointment had been for four and it was 4:30 before I got there.

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<sup>41</sup> A large relief map in the north part of the city shows—with surprising accuracy—the entire country of Guatemala. Its construction was ordered in 1904 by President Manuel Estrada Cabrera, with design by Claudio Urrutia (see Chapter 11, p. 96, note 116). An underground water tank provided water for the rivers and lakes. It was extensively restored in 1980 and 2014.

I returned to the hotel and hadn't been here for 5 minutes when I walked Campbell. He wanted me to come down and see his things, and he had such lovely ones that I spent one month's salary on acquiring them. Oh, but I got some lovely things.<sup>42</sup> First, a magnificent pair of sculptured columns fully 7½ feet high. Very massive and richly carved. These are much lovelier than I have ever seen, and he says they are the best he ever has had. Second, two equally magnificent pieces of old rose silk damask, which had formerly been part of the hangings in the Cathedral. These were both in absolutely perfect condition and were exquisite in shade, rich and deep. To match these, I bought a handsomely brocaded rose damask silk chasuble. This he wanted \$50.00 for and he says it is the finest one he has ever had. I also bought two brocaded mats and a silver candlestick, and to close with, a very handsomely carved chest of cedar with secret compartments. As I say, these things cost me a month's salary and it will cost me another fifty dollars to get them home, but they were too lovely to leave, and as Campbell very cleverly pointed out, at home one can always get far more than what I was paying for them out of them. I took the damask hangings, the two mats, the chasuble, and the candlestick back to the hotel with me. The columns and chest he is going to box tomorrow and I will send them off Tuesday.

We had no engagement on for the evening, so I retired early, well satisfied with the day's work all around. I left Gates and Herbert Apfel talking another hammer and tongs. They seem to have taken quite a liking to each other.

### **January 15, Saturday**

[Note: Here, Morley stops giving his location in his diary entries.]

Gates got introduced to Doctor Forbes and the two had quite a long confabulation. It started over some small, queer-looking pendants that Forbes brought in. At first, I thought one was a Maya day sign, but on closer examination it appeared to be a fake, and since it was brought of the Lara brothers, it is almost certain to be one. G. [?] left them to do a number of errands and then came back to tear old Gates away, and it was high time too, since they were wrecking the masonic loyalty of all Latin American lodges when I hove in the offing.

We went first to Campbell's, as I wanted Gates to see the chest and columns I had bought. They were just being packed out by a couple of *mozos* [youths], but he had a chance to see them. He admired the chest particularly. Campbell was not up yet, but let us in anyhow and Gates began to nose around. I had warned him that he would see some lovely things, so he steeled his heart against the whole business. Imagine then my surprise and amazement when I found that a French Boule cabinet and a pair of French blue enameled opera glasses set with small opals had captivated his eyes. He bought both. I myself fell for another lovely piece of red damask. Somehow that lovely rich, old shade gets me.

From Campbell's we went over to Héctor Montana's, but he wasn't in, so we continued on down to the Rockefeller Foundation offices, and this time—my third visit—we found Dr. Vaughn in. He proved to be a most engaging chap who knew Joe Spinden, Sam and Rachel Lothrop, and

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<sup>42</sup> Morley spent many years building a large collection of Spanish Colonial art, which was donated to the Museum of New Mexico in 1945. Today it is split between Santa Fe's Museum of International Folk Art and the New Mexico History Museum/Palace of the Governors. A catalog of his collection was produced in 1945 (Anon. 1945).

Saville. When I told him of the two Lothrop *niños* [children], he was quite surprised. I was too, somewhat, come to think of it, when I heard of the arrival of S.K.L., Jr., because children somehow had not figured in the extensive field campaigning plans of their married life. He gave me the yellow fever serum and warned me to touch no alcohol for the first 24 hours. The immunity lasts for six months, and of the 1200 cases vaccinated under his personal supervision, only two contracted the disease, and of these only one died. In these two cases he believed the vaccine was poor. It has to be kept on ice, and in these two cases the vaccine had probably been subjected to heat and had lost its efficacy.

Noguchi, on the other hand, explains these two by the hypothesis that whereas the period of incubation of the disease is usually 3 to 6 days, he thinks on occasion it may run from 9 to 24, in which later event these two cases had been exposed to the disease before they were treated.<sup>43</sup> There is also some evidence to show that even after exposure, use of the serum at an early stage makes a light case of it. The whole question of it absorbed me greatly, and I am thankful to have been able to take it, for going out thru Frontera as I plan to do, there is grave danger of infection, as that port is rotten with it this year. Before leaving I asked Dr. and Mrs. Vaughn if they could come to the lecture Monday evening.

From here we came back to Héctor Montana's. He has some nice things, a few good jades, but we bought none of them. Gates was quite entranced with some old silver and may buy. He likes to toy with the idea. There was a chair he wanted me to see at his house, so we walked out there, and to my surprise and delight there was a small section of that old Spanish or Moorish carpet that the Scholles bought three years ago. How time flies! I was too wily to admire or even notice this, but went on to examine other of his treasures. He brought in a *capa* [cape] from some *santo* [statue of a saint], a lovely old green embroidered with silver bullion lace and sequins. It weighed a great deal and was exquisite. He brought in next a thing I eventually bought, a framed picture of St. Thomas Aquinas. The picture was very mediocre, but the frame of carved wood covered with gold leaf was exquisite. An archbishop's hat with 10 tassels was at the top. The miter is at one side and the crozier at the other, and at the bottom is the prelate's arms. This was so lovely that I determined to buy it for the frame alone. He wanted \$50.00 for the picture and \$10.00 for the carpet. I made him a cash offer of \$50.00 for both, and we closed the deal then and there.

The stupid Indian woman who carried the carpet and the frame down to Campbell's contrived a break of the tassels on the left side. I did not discover it until after she had left, but I was furious. Happily, all the parts were preserved and Campbell says it can be easily and unnoticeably fixed. This put me in a great temper.

We left the frame with Campbell to put in my chest and returned to the hotel for lunch. I should have mentioned that while we were at Montana's office, I left Gates there for a moment while I went up to Jim Roach's with the draft of my letter to the Foreign Relations Minister, which

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<sup>43</sup> Hideyo Noguchi, a prominent Japanese scientist employed by the Rockefeller Foundation, argued incorrectly that yellow fever was caused by a bacterium rather than a virus. A vaccine he developed was extensively used throughout Latin America in 1920–1921 and had some ameliorative effect, but was discontinued in 1926. Noguchi also achieved a level of infamy because of his unethical studies related to syphilis, wherein he inoculated orphaned children with the disease as part of his clinical studies (Mantel et al. 1912).

I wanted typewritten. His stenographer promised to have this for me by two. I thought some of going to Antigua tomorrow for the day to see Toxica, but after lunch when I went down to the garage that runs the stage line, I found they had no sailings for Sunday, so we had to give it up.

I next went out to look up a man named Gusholz, who had some diamonds he wanted to sell, but he wasn't in, and from there I went on to don Clodovego Berges.<sup>44</sup> I found the old man in a little wooden shack, *muy mal puesto* [very badly put together], which looked like a hangover from the earthquake days. He is having a new house built on 5th Street off 7th Avenue in the northwest near his old place, and that won't be ready for another 3 months. He has invested in a \$3,000.00 automobile, and rides to and fro each day superintending the building of his new house, which he wants me to see. We talked of Petén, etc., etc., etc., and presently he called in good old doña Adriana, his sister, the one who was operated upon last year in New Orleans when Doctor Boburg went up with her. She has several married daughters in Flores and gave me messages for them. Don Clodovego summoned in a young Belize Negress, a girl of 14 whom they brought with them from there, and let her talk her bastard English for a moment. I took leave of them presently with a real genuine regret. They are nice folks. Doña Adriana is particularly simple.

It was now nearly time for us to go to the Foreign Relations Ministry. I dismissed the cab at the hotel and wrote for about half an hour until Herbert Apfel showed up, and then the three of us went over to see his brother-in-law, Luis P. Aguirre, the minister of foreign relations. When we went in, after the usual felicitations, I handed to the minister a formal letter which I had written first in English and Herbert had translated into Spanish. This letter simply states the fact that the [Carnegie] Institution is now ready to go forward with the permit granted it last June (25th) and acquaints the government of Guatemala of that fact. The minister was most cordial, and we must have talked for a half an hour. He says he knows José Prado Romaña, the new *jefe político* of Petén, and that he is a gentleman and a scholar. Don Clodovego, on the other hand, assured me not two hours earlier he was everything he should not be. It all depends from which side of the fence one's activities are viewed down here. He told me one of this Prado Romaña's brothers had been put to death by Estrada Cabrera in connection with the bomb attempt on the latter's life.<sup>45</sup>

Don Luis is to provide me with a letter to Prado Romaña, and assures me we will have royal treatment. He also asked me, and I engaged, to write before leaving a prospectus of the expedition's activities during the coming six months for the local press. After a friendly exchange of the amenities, we took our leave. I am to return Monday afternoon for the letter and to have my passport visaed.

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<sup>44</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 35, note 61.

<sup>45</sup> José Prado Romaña (1883–1960) was long opposed to Estrada: two of his brothers were conspirators in the bombing of his carriage on 7th Avenue in Guatemala City in 1907. He took exile in Mexico and helped organize an invasion of Petén in 1915–1916 (Pinelo n.d.). Later, after Estrada was deposed in 1921, he returned to Petén and became *jefe político* and *comandante de armas*. A medical doctor, he was progressive, building roads, a hospital, and public schools, and started the project to build a bridge to connect Flores to Santa Elena. He was in office for only seven months in 1921, during which Flores suffered a major fire (see Chapter 6, p. 40), which started with a lightning strike and destroyed 60 houses (Anon. n.d.).

After dinner, De Wees asked me if I wanted to play auction. He got a Mr. Caldwell and Mr. Mullins (acting manager of the railroad in Clark's absence) and myself. We switched around every double rubber until at the end, when the accounts were steeled up, it was found to be De Wees' party. He paid for everything. Before retiring I sat down and wrote the rough draft of the article for the local paper. Sleep, as usual, overpowered me before I finished, but the back of it was broken and I finished it the next morning.

### January 16, Sunday

I went down to Campbell's the first thing this morning so that I could see the carved wood from Antigua and decide whether or not I wanted to take it. He was just getting up. We talked the matter over and decided it would be safer to go around there about noon when the owner of the house where this material was stored would be sure to be in.

From Campbell's I went up to a young chap by the name of Guirola, who King had told me had some diamonds to sell. He lived up on 7th Avenue North. The house had suffered heavily from the earthquake, and indeed a partition wall between his office and the *sala* had never been rebuilt, leaving a bizarre effect in the throwing together of the two rooms into one. Young José Guirola, to whom I had a letter, showed me a lovely jewel, a tiny diamond which hung a 2½ carat perfect white stone, the whole thing set in platinum. He wanted \$1000.00 for it, which was a real bargain, since he told me he had paid that for the large diamond alone. However, I had spent so much with old Campbell that I did not feel that I could afford it, and so passed it by. Campbell was ready when I got back to his rooms and we left for his *carpintero's*. This one—I did not know his name, nor did I find it out, tho' his father works for the Herreras and that family owns the block where he is (4th Avenue S. and 17 Street W)—had the columns all set out and it did not take Campbell and I to reach an understanding. I finally selected the following: four low columns, 4' 3" [1.3 m] high from Santo Tomás, and two matching round bases from the same place; four half columns, one pair 5' 9" [1.75 m] high, the other 4' 9" [1.45 m] high, all four being from the same place, i.e., San Miguel Milpas Altas.<sup>46</sup> In addition, I bought two carved boards and what had been the front of an old altar. Campbell gave me a price of \$150.00 packed for the lot, and I took it up.

We also saw the archbishop's frame, which the stupid woman of Montana broke for me yesterday. It had been so well repaired, however, that I could scarcely see the fractures. I took the measurements of this, along with the other things, so I will know what I have. We adjourned to Campbell's rooms, where I drew up some checks for him, and then we went over to the Grand Hotel where we had a big dinner to bind our bargainings, at least I did—poor Campbell himself is suffering from the usual Guatemalan malady and only ate sparingly. I had some delicious strawberries to wind up with, though the whipped cream on them was sour, as usual in these countries.

I got back to the hotel sometime after 3, and wrote until nearly 4, when I had to dress for a tea at the Guthries'. Six of us were driven out in Jack's car: Jack, *señora*, young Spagnoli, Apfel, Gates, and myself. The tea was in full swing when we got there. Dancing was going on and a number of people standing about. We finally penetrated to the tearoom, where I served a blind girl, English, she seemed to me. The sponge cake was delicious and I partook liberally.

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<sup>46</sup> A small community in an area of "high cornfields" (*milpas altas*) just east of Antigua.

As between dancing and auction, I chose auction—Apfel, McCrory, and Dr. Forbes being the other three. McCrory is an Englishman who is going into the Petén soon to look for petroleum. Everybody seems to feel the Petén is full of oil, whereas I doubt it extremely.<sup>47</sup> I danced once at the conclusion of the auction session with Mrs. Forbes, though this was encored several times. We all went home together as we had come out, the [Armstrongs] dropping us at the Grace Hotel.

After dinner Apfel, Mrs. Forbes, the doctor, and myself played auction. I won \$50.00, tho' I must confess I held beautifully. The Forbes' disagreed painfully, and at one state of the game she was going to leave the table, asking Mrs. Grace to take her hand. She was mollified, however; the doctor ceased to rag her quite so much and we played until midnight. Before retiring I did some packing, so that it was after one when I finally got to bed. The norther from which we are all shivering is making the city very cold, especially at night.

### January 17, Monday

There were many things that had to be attended to this a.m. Went around to the carpenter's early in the morning. While there he showed me some other carved slabs, what had been box-like bases to something, and I told him to include them in the shipment. I went too to Pedro Bruni (of the U.F. Co.) and found out what I would have to do about shipping the stuff, and this was a consular invoice, and to our consulate I went next. Dr. Forbes was there, and the wires were popping over the death of an American named Thomberg, alias Thomas, who had died of acute alcoholism. Goforth, the acting consul, had thought him a poor man and had interred him simply, and now it turns out he was Somebody. Cables, etc., to ship the body home, etc., etc. Goforth was up in the air. He turned me over to a boy no longer connected with the office, and this chap made out a consular invoice for me.

From here, I hurried down to the Rockefeller place for some *vacuna* for yellow fever and found that Dr. Vaughn had been called off to the Pacific coast. I had put a wire to him, however, and hope for an answer by tomorrow. The native doctor in charge tells me he only has three doses left, of which I want two for [Arthur] Rutherford and [Oliver] Ricketson.<sup>48</sup>

It was now close on to twelve and I had to hurry down to see Mr. Mullins, the acting manager

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<sup>47</sup> See p. 126, note 38.

<sup>48</sup> Oliver Garrison Ricketson, Jr. (1894–1952) completed a year of medical school after earning a bachelor's degree at Harvard, then decided to go into archaeology. He worked in the Southwest (Navajo) and with pioneering tree-ring dating (dendrochronology) studies. In the Maya area, he accompanied Morley in 1921; led a CIW expedition to Ucanal in 1923; and was field director of the CIW expedition to Uaxactun. In 1925 he married his second wife, archaeologist Edith Bayles, a great-niece of Andrew Carnegie and Morley's secretary for the Chichen Itza project. The Ricketsons worked together at Uaxactun, where Edith analyzed the pottery, later published by R. E. Smith (1955), and are particularly known for their analysis of the site's E-Group (Ricketson and Ricketson 1937). After living and working in the Guatemala highlands for some time (Oliver planned the CIW work there), they moved to the United States. A daughter, Mary Bayles Ricketson, married Maya archaeologist William R. Bullard, Jr. Ricketson left the employ of the CIW in 1941, apparently on bad terms (Lothrop 1953). He gave up archaeology and opened an illustration/drafting studio in Boston. He died in 1952.

of the railroad while Mr. Clark is away. I laid my whole connection with Guatemala open to him, how Mr. Keith had been interested in the Quirigua work from its beginning, and how I had always had passes on the railroad heretofore. He very kindly gave me an annual pass and also one for Gates. He also asked Pflucker<sup>49</sup> to have the Florencio ready for Thursday morning, and wired Mac [Phail] to meet me at the train Wednesday, and altered our certificates of residence in Guatemala City for six days to residence in Quirigua for the ditto, as required by the British Honduran authorities.

As it was noon, he was returning to the hotel and gave me a lift with him. Had lunch with Jack Armstrong and his wife, and then the former cashed a check for me. We had a nice farewell chat, for though they came to the lecture—or rather Jack did—I did not see much of him.

At two-fifteen I got back to the hotel and found Gates and Herbert Apfel champing at the bit. We went over to the Foreign Relations Ministry where we had our passports visaed, and thence down to the British Legation for that visa. I met that Miss Marroquin, who used to be at our legation working there. We also saw the Minister. He looks very badly—delicate, colorless, and thin. If I saw him in Santa Fe, I should pronounce him as tubercular without further ado. And indeed, I understand he has it. Fitzgerald told me he and Mrs. Gaisford were coming over tonight.

On our way back to the hotel I stopped at the consulate, where I got my passport visaed at our own [American] consulate, and also my consular invoice. By this time, it was quite four, the time I was to have called on Margarita Herrera. I had sent her a very large bouquet of violets earlier in the afternoon, and got around there myself by 4:45. She did not keep me waiting and we had the *sala* all to ourselves for about two hours. How do I feel toward her? I met her first at the Pan-American Union in Washington—no, it was at a reception in the National Museum in 1916, and have seen her more or less ever since. She is, of course, very lovely to look at, rather intellectual as these girls go, and very charming. Indeed, she has so much more now than she did five years ago that a susceptible man might easily fall hard for her. We had a long, cozy chat, interrupted only by tea, which an Indian girl served. We talked too, equally intimately. Of mixed marriages, and how unhappy they were. I challenged her directly to name one single happy one in the range of her own experience and she could not do it. Of how little choice would be permitted her in the selection of her own husband, this from me, and a spirited denial thereto from her. Of what she wanted in a husband, etc., etc. She says she will remain single—an obvious impossibility in such an attractive girl. After almost two hours of these pleasant exchanges, I took my leave, returning to the hotel.

Everything was in readiness. The blackboard up in the reception room, my paper from the *Diario*, and Gates already starting to arrange the MSS. I put the map up and the paper, and then we had dinner. It was just a few minutes before nine when I finished dressing and came out of my room. It had been decided that Jack Armstrong should make a brief word of presentation, which he did. And then I took the word. I began about 9:10 and had finished by 9:55 when Gates took the floor, and speaking in Spanish gave them what's what for another half an hour.

I spoke first of the rise of the Maya civilization and its development during the Old Empire and finally of its fall. Then I began to draw glyphs for them—the two systems of numbers, the principal gods, the heavenly bodies, and last of all, birthday glyphs for those present. As a

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<sup>49</sup> Pflucker was the superintendent of the port of Puerto Barrios.



compliment to Margarita, though no one knew of it save she and I, I drew first her own birthday glyph, for February 13. Then I threw it open and drew September 15th and a number of others. At the conclusion of Gates' part, there was a little lunch served in the dining room, some good hot coffee, and some excellent sandwiches and cakes. I think the whole evening may be said to have been a success. We had the president's brother and three of his daughters, the minister of public instruction, the British minister's wife, and a number of notables from our own colony. People really seemed to enjoy themselves and I guess the evening was worth the effort spent.

### January 18, Tuesday

Our last day in Guatemala City. The first thing this morning I went around to see Campbell to tell him that Spagnoli and I would be around at 11:00. Then over to the carpenter's to see how my boxes were progressing. He promised to have them down at the station at 3:30 when I said I would be there. At 10:00 I met Gates at the Fruit Co. office and we got certificates stating that we had resided in Guatemala City for six days prior to our leaving tomorrow. I walked thence down to Kosak's to get some crackers, Swiss cheese, and a bottle of wine for the train tomorrow, and also stopped around behind the Cathedral, or that behind the market, to the store of Nemensio Gutierrez to see that jade head he has had for so many years. It was here I bought that Legion of Honor of Leopold I several years ago, to replace the one of great-grandfather's, which I lost at Harvard in the Fall of 1904. Nemensio wanted \$150.00 but would have to come down. The head is pretty good and worth \$75.00, I should judge, but I did not make any offer. I told him that if I wanted it, I would come in later and make an offer.

On the way back to the hotel to meet Spagnoli, I ran into Alfred Clark (*hijo*, "junior"). I congratulated him. He tells me he is to be married in April. He is willing to sell me that little mahogany desk for \$150.00, and I almost had a notion to take it. Spagnoli was a little late, but we got down to Campbell's by 11:15. Spagnoli loved the things and we bought a couple of those old damask mats. I paid Campbell the balance of what I owed him, and then left the two together as I had a date with Herbert Apfel and the Grand Hotel at noon.

Herbert was on time and we had a real good farewell dinner. I am under heavy obligations to him for the close contact he has established for me with the foreign relations ministry. We lingered over our cigarettes and then went over to his office. The burden of our talk fell upon life and woman, and he told me of an interesting experience in the Latin Quarter at Paris when he was a boy.

I returned to the hotel and found Gates there. I had ordered a cab at 3:20 and Gates went with me. We stopped at Biener's<sup>50</sup> while he got some photographic material. Though I was 10 minutes late myself, the boxes from the *carpinteria* had not arrived at the freight station when I first got there, but they came presently. As there were to be two cartloads, I improved the interval between the first and second by coming back to the Rockefeller offices to see about the yellow fever serum. Dr. Vaughn had in the meantime wired that I might have the two doses I wanted, and the young native doctor in charge kindly packed this for me in a tin filled with ice and sawdust. The serum has to be kept on ice, otherwise it will become *inútil* [useless]. Gates took this tin back to the hotel to put it in the icebox while I returned to the station on foot. The remaining boxes arrived

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<sup>50</sup> Biener's was a well-regarded photography and office supply store in Guatemala City.

presently and after weighing them it was found there was a total of 1,170 lbs. They went as fourth class and took a \$24.75 freight to Puerto Barrios.

I had to see Nanne about the freight and before I had finished, Gates came back. At last, all the bills of lading, etc., etc., were made out, and I paid and left. We stopped at Campbell's a moment to tell him that everything was gone and then went on to Gates' friend, M. J. Jaramillo. He is a Columbian, and a physician and has written a Mam [Maya language] grammar which Gates wanted me to see, and also his collection. The man is a dry little fellow, who wore a weird cap with a buckle on top. His Spanish sounded beautifully clear to me, and I got it almost all. We first looked at his grammar, a beautifully prepared manuscript of 575 pages, prepared in such a way that all the native words are in red ink. Three courses of publication appeared open: 1) that he publish it in Spanish down here at his own expense; 2) that he publish it in English in the States under the Maya Society imprint at his own cost; 3) that he publish it in English in the States through the Bureau of Ethnology. I favor the latter as his book will have far wider circulation and gain a much bigger prestige for him. He is going to take the matter under consideration and let us know what he decides later.<sup>51</sup> From here we passed into a large back room where he has his archaeological collection housed. It is a very good one, though I saw no spectacular pieces save only a jade head, which was truly exquisite. The collection was made at Quezaltenango and is chiefly composed of Quiche [K'iche'] material.

We returned to the hotel well after six, and about seven went into dinner. When I got back to my room after dinner, I found Arturo Lara waiting for me there with a pair of silver candlesticks under his arm, of which he spoke first Saturday when he came around. He took them out, and I knew that if we would agree on a price, they were exactly what I wanted. They were plain and very simple, but quite tall and unusually heavy, which was just the combination I was looking for. For I had decided that I wanted to put my money into weight rather than ornateness. Lara said they weighted 85 ounces and asked at first \$150.00, which would have been better than \$1.75 the ounce. I explained to him how the white metal had gone from over a dollar an ounce to about .55 and he agreed. I tried to get him down to \$75.00 for the old lady he was representing, and a \$10.00 premium for himself, but he said he could not be induced to take less than a dollar an ounce. We finally closed the deal at \$85.00 for the old lady and \$5.00 for himself, making the cost to me \$90.00, or a little more than a dollar an ounce, since as Mrs. Grace and I made the weight was 88 ounces. Nothing that I have bought has pleased me more than these silver candlesticks, which are lovely.

While I was bargaining with Arturo Lara, Toxica Roach called up and told me she was back from Antigua and to come over as soon as I could. I told her I was then dressing, but would be over as soon as I could. After I had dressed and shaved, however, it was nearly nine, and then I first went down to Campbell's to show him my candlesticks. He thinks they are genuine in spite of the Prince of Fakers who sold them to me—this Lara family is the one who has been faking antiquities so brilliantly, and in any event he says at \$90.00 I can more than come out whole. This was to be my last visit to Campbell in a long time, possibly a year, and so we shook hands reluctantly. He is a nice fellow with, I believe, a tragic history, which I might have pieced together had I known him longer. I really hated to say goodbye to him.

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<sup>51</sup> It does not appear that Jaramillo's Mam grammar was ever published.

It was 9:15 when I got to Toxica's and stayed until 10:45. It is the same old Toxica. I do not see that she has changed physically or mentally. The same number of people have been nice to her, and the same number not, etc., etc. Jim and she and I talked on about everything, and then I bid them goodbye.

The dance was in full swing when I got back to the hotel at eleven. Margarita Herrera did not come. I had hardly expected her, but was told she might show up with don Salvador and his sisters. Instead, I spied that rather pretty little English secretary of Chalmers, Guthrie, whom I saw but did not meet out at Guthrie's last Sunday afternoon. I got Herbert Apfel to introduce me and from that time on for the rest of the evening I was *abonos* [season ticketed] with her, as they say down here, that is, I danced with no one else. She is a very good dancer and was kind enough or polite enough to say that I was, and we got on famously. Her name is Russell, her *gracia* I did not get. We talked politics, the Irish question, etc., and danced and enjoyed ourselves. About 12:30 the dance broke up and I took her home, somewhere down on 9th Avenue, not far as I could judge from the British Legation.

### January 19, Wednesday

Rose at 5:30 and finished my packing. A coach had been ordered for us by Captain Grace the night before, and we had nothing to worry us. My clothes, which had been promised by the washerwoman who had them for every day this week, had to be sent for early this morning—came about 6:15, but half of them, including all the collars, were un-ironed.

I got my Noguchi serum out of the icebox where the captain had placed it the night before, and we set off for the station with plenty of baggage. I had decided to take this in the train with us, even including Gates' typewriter box, rather than to risk sending it, and so when I asked for Mr. Mullins' private car, they passed us right in. Happily, it was not a regular steamer day, and there was plenty of room in the first-class coach. When we got underway, whom should I spy ahead but Meiggs of the U.F. Co., returning to the north coast (where he is the superintendent at Pilar). He was suffering from an acute *goma* [hangover]. Said he hadn't been in the city for six years and did not want to come again for that time. He was bringing down some Spanish girls, two Misses Esteves and their brother and two Misses Samayoa, one of the latter very lovely, but alas only 23, verging toward the embonpoint [plump; see Chapter 7, p. 56, note 79].

I had noticed when we boarded the train that there were two private cars on, one belonging to Mr. Mullins and the other I did not know to whom. While I was talking to Meiggs, a boy came in from one of the cars and asked me if I would step back and see Mr. Clegg. Sure enough, that was who it was in the other car, the roadmaster Mr. Clegg, in whose car I had ridden before. He insisted on our coming back with him, bringing all our baggage, and so we did so. His boy and I moved our baggage back. In doing this, I also saw General Alvarado again. I understand under this new government that he is the *jefe político* of Guatemala. I stopped to talk English with him for a few moments, which always pleases them.

While in Clegg's car I went back one to talk with the Mullins party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Mullins, Mr. and Mrs. Cook, the Pacific Mail Co.'s agent in Guatemala, and Doctor Phipps and a Mr. Easton, Landry's successor at Quirigua. I showed them my candlesticks, and for one awful moment thought they were plated. They look yellowish in spots, but wherever I scraped

this, the white brilliant metal showed through, and I felt confident in the end that they were in fact silver.

Clegg decided to run the two special cars down as a special from Zacapa following the regular train by about 40 minutes. As this would give me a little visit at Quirigua with MacPhail, I decided to come ahead on the regular train to Zacapa. Had lunch at the railroad hotel at Zacapa and then came down on the regular to Quirigua. Old Mac did not meet the train but came running down the trail before it pulled out. He had my certificate ready, and he also modified Gates' when I vouched for the latter's not having been out of Guatemala since he got there seven days ago. Ames was also down at the station. I bid Miss Esteves and Miss Samayoa goodbye and saw them go off with Meiggs.

I supposed I was going to have perhaps a 40-minute visit with Mac, but the regular had hardly pulled out when the special came in, and I had to go aboard her. She is making considerably faster time than the regular and as a matter of fact trailed her all the way into Puerto Barrios.

When I got back on the special, we opened up the vino, cheese, and crackers and had a delicious feast. The cheese was particularly good, and the three of us finished the half pound I had bought. As soon as we got to Barrios, I got a couple of boys to carry our suitcases over to the Fruit Co. house, leaving the rest of our baggage, including the Noguchi serum, in Clegg's car, which he had locked and given me the key. Early this morning as soon as we got in his car, I had put the serum in his icebox.

Pflucker was in the dining room whither we went at once and learned from him the good news that the tramp [steamer] was still here in Barrios and would not get off until midnight. The boat this week is the *Gansfjord*.<sup>52</sup> After dinner we bought our tickets. Major had in the meantime made arrangements with the customs people and all of our baggage went through, even the damask chasuble. The silver candlesticks, of which I was more doubtful, I carried aboard myself.

It was a horrid night, raining hard intermittently. Between showers I went over to see Godman, to advise him about the goods coming for me from the city on tomorrow's freight. He said he would give them the best attention he could. Afterward, went over to the Hotel del Norte to bid Mr. Clegg goodbye and to give him the keys of his own car, which he had loaned me. Gates and I bid goodbye to Pflucker about nine and walked out to the *Gansfjord*. As we were going out an engine and a flat car passed us with our baggage aboard the latter. And almost before we got on the boat, Major had all our baggage aboard her. I told him about the crates and boxes coming down for me tomorrow and urged him to see that they got through the customs all right and on the New York boat. I bid him goodbye and went to bed at once, very tired out with the day's work.

### **January 20, Thursday**

This morning we woke up in or rather off Livingston. It was gray and rainy and looked as though it might be worse later. When I came out, B. Connors, the Fruit Co. agent, was already aboard. We greeted each other—I can never remember names, but faces I always remember. He told me

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<sup>52</sup> The Norwegian vessel *Gansfjord*, of 1,087 tons, was built in 1913 and remained under Fruit Company charter service until 1947, after which time it was used in the lumber trade.

Robert Burkitt, that odd Englishman or Scotchman, *mejor dicho* [better said], had been up from the hills for two months getting a lot of stuff off to [left blank].<sup>53</sup> Also that the boat, the *Joaquina*, which we saw riding at anchor at Puerto Barrios the day we got in, a week ago yesterday went down in the recent heavy *norte* somewhere between Puerto Barrios and Puerto Cortéz. Frazier, our travelling consul-general was aboard her, but was saved. Many, however, lost their lives. What an accident, and Frazier had been thinking of coming up to Guatemala City first. How easily I might have gone down in one of my many trips along these shores. How dreadfully uncertain life is, and how insecure our tenure of it.

At first O'Connor [B. Connors?] did not think we could finish loading our cargo today. It seems a strong northwest wind springs up and kicks up so much a sea, particularly over the bar, that they cannot get the lighters out. The rain held off, however, and presently it began to look more favorable. As a matter of fact, we got off at 12:30.

I spent the day in reading, writing, and sleeping. We called at Monkey River and Riversdale for fruit, but the recent norther has made [for] a small cutting and we were not detained long at either place. The *Gansfjord* is the most comfortable of all these fruit tramps that I have travelled on, and I hope I may strike her again sometime in my peregrinations up and down this coast. Her skipper is a jolly old barge.

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<sup>53</sup> Robert J. Burkitt, an English mathematician and self-taught linguist, was an expert on the Q'eqchi' Maya language and made significant early contributions to highland archaeology. He acquired through purchase or excavation some of the holdings now at the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. Morley's comment about "getting a lot of stuff off to ..." probably means to the museum. Morley previously met Burkitt in early May, 1915 while traveling from Copan to Cancuén (Rice and Ward 2021: 225–226).

## CHAPTER 14.

### BELIZE CITY

#### January 21, Friday

I was awakened about 3 a.m. by voices in the dining hall and a great hubbub outside and found we were at Stann Creek, alongside the wharf and bananas going aboard at a great rate. Went out to see who had come aboard, and there were several old friends. Francis, fat, portly, and black as the ace of spades, now acting manager of the Stann Creek R.R.; and a colonial Englishman whom I've met but whose name escapes me; and the Doctor and Fadgett, whom I had never met but whom I have heard Gann speak of more than once.

Francis was at Quirigua the first year I ever worked there, 1910,<sup>54</sup> and since then I had only seen him once, last June when I came up to Belize on the fruit tramp and went ashore at Stann Creek for a few hours. We chatted all for a while, and then I went back to bed, though there was very little sleep because of the racket the banana loaders were making: loud-voiced cries, violent altercations, arguments, discussions, and the monotonous bleating of the counter as he named the number of hands on each stem as it was store into the hold—eight, eight, nine, eight, eight, seven, eight, eight, eight, six, ten, eight, eight...the eights seem to have it.

We finished at Stann Creek before eight and were soon on our way. I left writing to mother and Irma until this morning, and as a result only got mother's letter in. We approached Belize rapidly and had not been anchored in the roadstead very long when Doctor MacDonald came aboard. All our baggage was stowed aboard his boat, and as soon as his inspection was over, we went ashore. A customs man went with us, and he examined our baggage on the hospital wharf.

Gann's house was locked when we first arrived, but the key was soon found, and we went in with all our baggage. It seemed to me much best to keep my own house rather than to eat at the hotel, so I looked around for the two cooks Doctor [Gann] had when he left, or rather only one, and sent boys for them. Jane Hall showed up first. She is really Mrs. Craik's cook, but only gets the 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. meals for her. Gann had been using her to clean the house for him. She is an East Indian but talks quite like a Belizeana. I arranged with her to get us tea at 6:30 a.m. and again at 2:00 p.m., and to make our beds and keep the house as tidy as possible with me around. In the meantime, Ruth showed up. She is black as ebony and on other visits to Belize has served me as a washerwoman. She was Gann's official cook when he left, and I engaged her to get breakfast at 9:00 a.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m.

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<sup>54</sup> Morley and Edgar Lee Hewett (Chapter 12, p. 114, note 12; Ward and Rice 2022: 20–21) traveled to Quirigua in 1910 to scout the ruins for a multi-year excavation project for the newly founded School of American Archaeology (School of American Research), an endeavor that began in earnest in 1911. The Quirigua excavations are covered by Ward and Rice (2022).

With four meals a day arranged for, and the two domestics given money to buy food and dispatched therefore, I went downtown with MacDonald to get some money, since I had arrived penniless. I had previously telephoned Beattie at the bank and found that my drafts had arrived the next day after I left for Guatemala, and also that Muddy had cashed a check for \$200.00, so I knew he had gotten off. When I went down there, I passed Juan Carrillo, who grows fatter and more patriarchal every day, and he told me that Muddy (a son-in-law of his) had returned last night. This, after all, was only what I had expected after such a terrific norther and I felt sure Muddy would turn up during the day.

Returning to the hospital (Figure 14.1), the first thing I did was to get some silver polish and clean up my silver candlesticks. When these were polished, they shone beautifully and I got out a couple of the velvet mats and set these up on Gann's desk. They are exceedingly decorative. After Jane Hall's second meal, 2 o'clock tea, I wrote to Irma until it was time to go out to the club. Gates did not come but sat writing up his Maya. He will end by knowing that language yet. He has indefatigable energy, the flair, and the divine inspiration of wanting to do it for the love of the thing itself.



Figure 14.1. The hospital complex in Belize City in 1921.

Everybody seemed to be out at the club, and as a result I made several engagements. Dinner tomorrow night with the MacCarrolls in their new house out at the point, called locally the fort.<sup>55</sup> Dinner at two on Sunday at the Craiks, cocktails at eleven on Sunday at the Fred Starkeys, and cards at Miss Roberts' Monday evening. I came down from the club with Joe and Harry Melhado and the Craiks.

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<sup>55</sup> This references the old British Fort George, located at the tip of a point of land jutting into the Caribbean Sea. The Fort George district of Belize City had a colonial occupation and became an upscale tourist area in the mid-twentieth century, anchored by the Hotel Fort George.



Gates and I dined at home in solemn glory with the first meal under Ruth. She had a fowl which was very well cooked, and if these two domestics are able to alternate peaceably and regularly, I have hopes of doing pretty well here. Muddy showed up also, with a hard luck story. They had encountered the heavy norther off Bacalar Chico, and had had to put in there after losing a spar. The weather continued heavy and he had finally sent the other man, Eloy Gutierrez, on up there to make the mold and returned to Belize. The whole adventure cost something like \$200.00 and unless this Eloy brings back a mold it must be written off as a loss. Well, I suppose such are the fortunes of war. One cannot have all the luck all of the time, but I will get a cast of that inscription yet, or else go and see it myself, a thing I hate to do.<sup>56</sup>

Muddy also tells me Coronel Ismael Pacheco Quevedo arrived from Petén yesterday. I did not find out in Guatemala City why he had been replaced as *jefe político* of Petén, though I was told he was *en camino* [en route] for Guatemala. I have a letter to the new *jefe*, Dr. José Prado Romaña, from Luis. P. Aguirre. I told Muddy to look him up and make an engagement for me to call upon him, as I want some information about the cost of living, conditions of the roads, etc., etc. in Petén.

We had planned to go over and see Eddie Johnston after dinner, but a drizzling rain came on and as we were both pretty-well tired out, I telephoned him that we would see him later. Both of us went to bed early.

### **January 22, Saturday**

Last night the bottom literally fell out of the sky. I do not know how many inches actually fell, but I should hate to estimate. I guessed 3½ but I heard that double that fell. I thought the house would wash into the sea. I awoke in a gray world with the rain lashing against the windows and a great, though only occasional, booming going on under the house. I had visions of no jam and no tea, but about 7:30 she washed in and we had tea about 8. Ruth came at 8:30 and announced "*plenty wedda*" with which I heartily agreed. I also discovered now the cause of the occasional booming under the house. A huge mahogany log, nearly 3' in diameter, had washed in from somewhere, lodged itself under our kitchen, and with every wave that came in was being hurtled upward at our kitchen floor. Even if it had come through it could not have done much damage; what I really feared was that it would be hurled against one of the rather slender concrete piers on which the kitchen is built, and bring our culinary department into the sea, Ruth and all.

I went over to the hospital in a torrent of rain to get some boys with poles to dislodge it, but by the time that they got back it had floated free of its own accord and passed on down the shore-wall to annoy someone else. We decided early to go out not at all, and spent the morning in writing, I on Clews Parsons' story.<sup>57</sup> Muddy floated in about ten with a pair of tall church tapers which we at once fitted into the candlesticks, and which looked splendid. I determined straightaway to light them tonight.

It began to clear up before noon and something afternoon Doctor MacDonald came in to

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<sup>56</sup> Morley visited Tulum on several occasions (1916 and 1918), always with great difficulty and dangerous challenges (Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 19; Ward and Rice 2021: Chapter 27). Morley indeed returned to Tulum in 1922 as head of a large CIW expedition.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 4, note 11.

hear some of my new records on the phonograph. We talked some of a dance for Tuesday night. It was suggested that we give it here, but I did not feel like that owing to the nature of Gann's errand to England.<sup>58</sup> We discussed, too, a provisional list of guests. This was only provisional, however, as it first had to be submitted to certain society leaders to see that we had made no gaucheries. After he left, I went on correcting my story for the Parsons book and had almost finished it by time to go to the club.

It rained on and off all day, so much so in fact that we had about decided not to go, but it cleared a little and we changed our minds. There were very few out, though the occasion was one of some interest, namely the auctioning off for second use of the club's periodicals. The *Graphic*, *Sketch*, *Illustrated News*, etc., etc. Even *Town Topics* was knocked down at \$2.75. Dear at the price! I left early to go to MacCarroll's. Gates, myself, and a Mrs. Murphy and child came back together in an auto, and then after dropping Mrs. Murphy and her child, the chauffeur returned and took me out to this part of the MacCarrolls.'

Their house is quite delightful. It has a fine old Adams doorway and a fine, large bay window at the back of the living room looking out to the sea. Dinner was served shortly after I got there. She [Mrs. MacCarroll] is very pretty, but quite simple-minded and unintelligent.<sup>59</sup> Him, I liked. He is much better born than she is and is, I believe, the 14th Laird of the MacCarrolls. We talked a long time. At first, I thought there was to be auction but when nobody came in, I saw that I was in error. I had ordered the auto at 11:00 and thought the evening might drag, but it didn't.

Somehow the conversation turned to the question of a life hereafter and a spiritual world. Two extraordinary incidents had converted him from atheism to orthodox Christianity. One night in Mesopotamia he had gone out after dinner into the brilliant moonlight and had seen a sentry. One can picture it clearly enough—the radiant tropical moon, the desert, palms, tents, etc. He advanced to the sentry and to his amazement it was his own brother. He said, "Hello, Martin." And then the sentry vanished. He is sure it was his own brother standing there in the moonlight and the words "Hello, Martin!" came from him quite involuntarily. Months after, he learned that his brother had been killed on the western front. I tried to verify when these two events took place, whether on the same day or not, but MacCarroll could only say that it was about the same time, since he had failed to note the date of this apparition.

The other incident was similar and happened to a cousin of his mother, a naval captain. He was seated at the head of his mess one night with all his officers at the table and was suddenly seen to go white in the face. The first officer, or another someone present, asked if he were ill. He replied, "My God, I have just seen my brother pass across the foot of the table." Later he heard his brother had died just at that time.

These matters are upsetting enough, and difficult to explain in a rational way. The honesty of purpose of the narrator frequently is above reproach, as in the present instance, but I find it hard to swallow. The MacCarrolls, however, believe implicitly in a spiritual world. Of course, MacCarroll himself is Celtic Scotch and may be given to uncanniness, and she is too unintelligent to count, but it was very interesting. He took me over the house, which he designed himself, and

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<sup>58</sup> Gann's mother was very ill and passed quickly (see p. 149, diary entry for January 27).

<sup>59</sup> Morley frequently characterizes women as "simple," but seemingly in a positive sense, rather than "unintelligent," as here.

I left about eleven. When I got back, we enjoyed the candlesticks by the taper light for a few minutes.

### January 23, Sunday

The sun rose clearly and gave promise of a better day. I finished the story for the Parsons book and turned it over to Trap to copy for me on his typewriter. This closes an incident of nearly a year's running. It will reach Elsie Clews Parsons about the first week in February, or nine months after it was due. Gates has read it. Bella Weitzner has read it, and both say it will do. Gates said he didn't think I had it in me [to write a piece of fiction]. The title is "How Holon Chan Became the True Man of His People." The scene is laid at Tikal in 531 A.D, and portrays the investiture of a young boy, this Holon Chan, as the ruler of the state of Tikal. I will get it off to Mrs. Parsons on the next boat north.

At about 10:30 we went over to Fred Starkey's for a cocktail. He is going to sell me a couple of jacks to turn the stelae with, and also gave me some information as to men. He had two very good *incensarios*, which had been found in a cave near Vaca Falls. They were in perfect condition and well painted. The head applied on each had the cruller-like ornament under the eyes. What a general concept that was all over Middle America [Figure 14.2].<sup>60</sup>

Starkey's cocktails are notorious and the one he brewed this morning was no exception to the general rule. I only took half of mine, but *pobre* Gates, unwarned, partook heavily of his. We left soon afterward, but scarcely had we reached Gann's house when Gates was overcome with drowsiness and took a nap.

MacDonald came in during the course of the later morning, and we concluded the arrangements for our *partycito* [little party], which is to be at the house of Miss Roberts here in the hospital compound on Tuesday evening, which will give Ricketson and Rutherford a chance to attend. He left about 1:30 and then I waked up old Gates, and in a very grouchy humor—him, not me—went down to the Craiks for dinner. Mrs. Craik has had a touch of the fever, and indeed I thought still looked pretty seedy. We had a delicious dinner afterward, cooked by our Jane Hall, who alternates between Mrs. Craik and our menage, and talked for an hour. Mrs. Craik and I arranged that I am to give a little informal talk or lecture at her house Friday evening. Much the same sort of thing that I gave in Guatemala City last Monday night.

From Craik's we went up to Government House, where I registered (and Gates also) and then we separated: Gates went to look up the Wesleyan parsonage and I to Eddie Johnston's. The latter was not in, but I found him at his father-in-law's house. It was quite a family party: Gladys [Johnston], Eddie, Doris, the brother Walter (whom I had never met), and Mr. Rice were playing stud poker, and Mrs. Rice and the boy looked on. We had quite a nice visit. I stayed for an hour more chatting of old and new friends and faces in Belize. Of my new friends, without mentioning any names, they could say nothing nice, and so I switched to old tried and true recipients of hard words.

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<sup>60</sup> Morley calls this an *incensario* (incense burner), but unless there are signs of burning on the interior and base, it is more likely a censer stand: a flanged, hollow cylinder that supports another vessel holding the burning substance (often *pom*, the fragrant resin of the copal tree, *Protium copal*). The "cruller"-like nose ornament is associated with the Jaguar God of the Underworld.



Figure 14.2. One of two *incensarios* found at Vaca Falls in Fred Starkey's collection in Belize City (see note 60). It is impossible to know from the photograph if the paint was original or modern.

They want me to teach them auction, and we made a date for Wednesday night. I left about half past five, and when I got back to the hospital found Miss Roberts talking to Gates on a bench in the yard. She asked us up in her quarters for a whisky and soda and cigarettes. We stayed about an hour and came home, but to no supper, as we had let Ruth off, it being Sunday. But we had had a heavy and late dinner, so did not mind.

In the evening Johnny Hunter and Miss Roberts came in to listen to the phonograph. Johnny appeared to me to be in a very mellow condition. To my amusement, he kept referring to Gates as "Guv'ner." I think Gates did not like it particularly. Johnny and Miss Roberts danced to the graphophone<sup>61</sup> several pieces, while Gates and I talked. They left before eleven. Gates and I had a nice, confidential, friendly conversation after they had gone.

### January 24, Monday

Gates left this morning for Corozal, the first time we have been separated from each other in nearly a month. A month ago today, by the calendar month, I came up from Washington as far as Chester with Bella Weitzner, who was on her way over to New York.

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<sup>61</sup> Graphophone was the name used by Columbia Phonograph Company for its record player.

We got up early and Gates finished his packing. Muddy came in after tea, and I sent him off on some errands. We had invited Coronel Ismael Pacheco Quevedo to breakfast, but it rained just before nine, and presently a boy appeared with the Coronel's apologies, but he was *muy ocupado* [very busy] and begged to be excused. Gates and I dined alone on a large breakfast which I had instructed Ruth to prepare against His Magnificence, and to which we did but scant justice. After breakfast, Gates finished his packing and Muddy saw his baggage off on a cart, while he and I walked down to the Belize Stores for a few last purchases. Then I bid him goodbye. His boat was out in the roadstead and he had to take a small boat.

Afterward I went to the Post Office and to Melhado's, and finally came home something after twelve to write until tea again. No sign of the mail [boat] all afternoon. I walked out to the club something after five and overtook Mrs. Craik on the way out. She told me Jim had had fever again, and by mutual consent we called off our soiree for Friday evening. With Jim as seedy as he is, there was no other course open to us.

At the club I saw the Starkeys and also had quite a talk with Grabham, the manager of the Belize Estate and Produce [Company]. He seems to be an able man and up on local conditions. He is expecting Sir Samuel Hoar, one of their directors, down on the same boat as my men.

Ruth had prepared a big dinner of turtle against the coming of Ricketson and Rutherford, but when I saw the mail [boat] was not in, I asked John Hunter to share it with me instead. We ate hurriedly, as neither of us had dressed for Miss Robert's party after dinner. She had two tables of auction—Doctor Cran, Fred Starkey, Doctor MacDonald, and I at one table, and Mrs. Starkey, Miss Roberts, Johnny Hunter, and a Captain MacKaye at the other. I won \$1.60.

About 11:30 the quarantine launch came, and MacDonald and I went out. Connelly was also aboard. When we got out and alongside, the *Princess Pat* came along with Grabham aboard. Finally, MacDonald sent down word that I might come up, and we went aboard. There were Ricketson and Rutherford with all the baggage safe and going strong. C.O. Taylor was a passenger, and also Dr. and Mrs. Hetherington, the latter on their honeymoon. Also, and this was most extraordinary as I never expected to see him again, I met Beebe, whom I used to know at Tela [Honduras]. He has been away from the tropics for two years and he says that he is now returning for good. It gets us all eventually. I also met Sam Lothrop's Englishman, Lewis Clark. He has money and is interested in archaeology. He is going to Copan and Quirigua. I invited him up to the Petén, but he is going on to South America and has to be back by the first of June, so he feared he would be unable to make it.

The Hetheringtons were in the meantime ready, and we all came ashore in the launch going to the customs house. There were two autos waiting and we took one, MacDonald and the Hetheringtons the other. I thought I saw a light in Miss Roberts' when we came by, but she had retired. She was kind enough, however, to pass out a bottle of Scotch and 3 sodas and we went over to the hospital to partake of them.

I left Ricketson and Rutherford in Gann's house and myself went to bed in my own little place by the sea, which is the most delightful house in Belize. It was after one when we finally finished our nightcaps and cigarettes and turned in.

## **January 25, Tuesday**

We lay around the house in pajamas until after our second meal, and then all repaired to the

customs house. I tried to get Masson to have our baggage passed *libre*, but he said there was so much of it that he didn't like to, so we had to go down and get it through. Ayles, who did the inspecting, treated us somewhat better, and ended by permitting me to haul it all away.

When we got it spread out in Gann's central room—11 kyacks—it looked quite imposing. Ricketson checked up what we had bought at Abercrombie's and found there was nothing missing. That foolish chap, Lynch, at Burroughs Welcome did not include the 500 pills of quinine which I had bought and paid for. This is the most serious failure of our equipment, and we will have to get some quinine here. I will write to Carl [Guthe] and to Lynch, both of them, and get the latter to send this on to Carl so that he can bring it when he comes.

The captain of the *Bellona* came up to see about our going up to El Cayo. He asked \$125.00 at first, but later came down to \$100.00. I am inclined, moreover, to think this latter amount is just about what I will have to pay to get ourselves and our baggage up there.

In the afternoon we all went out to the club. Many people were out, including the governor, his wife, and Sir Samuel Hoar. I was introduced to the latter, and he was apparently much interested in our coming trip. I suggested, since he told me he was returning by way of Puerto Barrios, that he could spend a very enjoyable day by running up to Quirigua. This caught his fancy to such an extent that he asked me to arrange the details of the trip, which I did. I got hold of Connelly and had him write to Pollan and Pflucker, while I wrote to MacPhail at Quirigua, asking him to look after the Bart.<sup>62</sup> when he got there. Sir Samuel himself will write to Mr. Clark, who promised him some facilities. He seemed quite overjoyed at the prospect.

One disappointment of the day was that it brought no mail. Some half-witted mail clerk in New Orleans misdirected the Belize bag to El Salvador, and thither all our mail is now wending its way. The only letter I got was an outside one sent to me direct care of Carlos Melhado from Carl in Ann Arbor. The missing street number is 111 Michigan Avenue, a curious address.

After dinner, about 8:30, the guests for our party at Miss Roberts' began to arrive. Muddy had been instructed to serve the phonograph and Jane the whiskey and punch. We had one table of auction and the rest danced. MacDonald and I were hosts, Miss Roberts simply having been kind enough to do the entertaining for us. Those who came were the MacCarrolls, the Fred Starkeys, the Taylors, the Pierces, the Hetheringtons, the Francos, Miss Cran, Miss Roberts, Ricketson, Rutherford, Johnny Hunter, Macdonald, myself, Captain Sharp, and Baer. I danced till I was tired and bored, terribly sleepy, and fed up. The dancers, however, were of the well-known marathon variety and stayed until after one, and I couldn't ask them to go. The party would appear to have been successful, measured by this factor. I really preferred to play auction, but as one of the hosts, I had to dance. Ricketson and Rutherford neither danced nor auctioned. Rick, however, with Johnny Hunter and Captain Sharp, paid assiduous attentions to the bar.

### **January 26, Wednesday**

This morning I stayed in, reading that charming picture of rural life in England under the Regency, *The Broad Highway*, by Jeffrey Farnol. My silver candlesticks, to my horror, I discovered this morning were tarnished with a sort of yellowish rust, which I felt must indicate plate, so I sent them over to Chanona, who is repairing my gramophone. This was by Muddy's boy, who

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<sup>62</sup> Bart, an abbreviation for Baronet, is an honorary title (not a peerage) and refers to Sir Hoar.

returned after some time with the information that it is old cast (but solid silver), but that to make it run there is some copper in the alloy. This was as it should be because the base has both the lion and the livery stamped on it. It is, he says, very old, being actually cast. Muddy brought back the phonograph with the new spring, but it does not work too well, being weak.

After tea, Ricketson and Rutherford got into their riding clothes against the arrival of two mules, which Muddy had said would be coming around for testing out. Rick and I worried Ruddy [Rutherford] with horrible tales of slaughter at the hands of these animals, but all to no avail, since no mules showed up. Leslie, the engineer of the *Canada*, sent up word asking if he could come see me this afternoon down at the dock, so about four-thirty I went down. He and the *Canada* are leaving for Cayo tonight but will be back Sunday. He wants me to see if I can get a little freight from Stary and Dodd for him, and if so will take me up Monday evening for \$100.00. I would rather throw the business Leslie's way than any other, but will have to see how the thing works out.

Trap finished copying my Parsons' book story this afternoon in time for the mail north to her on Friday. Thank God that thing will then be out of my way. I went over to Eddie Johnston's for dinner. Ricketson and Rutherford walked over as far as the other side of the bridge<sup>63</sup> with me, stopping at the International Bar for a cocktail. Gladys had a delicious dinner of which chicken à la king was the pièce de resistance, but other fine things included creamed asparagus and potato salad. After dinner, Doris, her father, and mother came over and we four younger ones played auction, or rather I undertook to teach them auction. Think Doris was my brightest pupil, Eddie next, and poor Gladys a poor third. We only played one rubber, but that lasted until 11:00, Doris and I winning by about 400 points.

When I got home, I found quite a party on. Rutherford had been out philandering, whilst Rick had picked up Muddy down at the International Bar and had proceeded to illuminate them both. I must say Rick held his beautifully. If he had not told me I would never have suspected it, save possibly only for a certain merriness of the eye, but Muddy was mellow. When I arrived, he was expatiating in Spanish to the two boys how fine Gann and I really were. We adjourned later to the dining room where there was more than one dead soldier and had a nightcap. Rick here bid us good night, and a little later I steered Muddy out. In a burst of great confidence, he asked us all to a real Spanish breakfast at his house Saturday morning, which Rick, in an equally generous spirit, accepted largely for all of us.

### **January 27, Thursday**

Started the *National Geographic Society* article today, but find it goes very heavily. Trust it will be done in time for Trap to copy. The two mules we were thinking of buying were brought around yesterday, and miserable creatures they are too. The front legs of the larger one appear to be sprung outward, and the small one wants a section of the back bone which almost looks as though one of its vertebrae were missing. We may have to buy worse in El Cayo, but I doubt it. Think we shall send them back.

In the afternoon, Eddie Johnston came over for us and we all four went over to the afternoon-

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<sup>63</sup> This is the bridge over Haulover Creek (Haulover Canal), which divides Belize City in two, north/east (the point and Fort George district) and south/west.



at-home at Government House. Everyone was there. I saw again that pretty youngest Kevlin girl, whose husband went down on the *Marowijne*, and who later remarried a man named Smith. She was with her sister, Mrs. McCall, now grown to tremendous proportions, though the last time I saw her she was a slender slip of a girl. The most stylishly dressed lady was easily our friend C.O. Taylor's *señora*. A white tailored hat and dress, and a sealskin stole, made an extremely effective costume. After the at-home, we rode with Eddie and Gladys and their son out to the barracks before dinner.

A letter from Gates says he is comfortably located at Corozal and that Schofield has heard from Mrs. Gann's niece to the effect that Gann's mother died on December 22, or two days before he left New York City. Poor old chap, what a tragedy. He is an only child, and it has been hard lines that so much of his life has been spent away from his mother, of whom he was very deeply fond. I feel now that he will return almost immediately to Belize, possibly by the steamer of the 9th and certainly by that of the 21st, when Carl Guthe will get here. In that case I will surely come down the river to see him.

### **January 28, Friday**

Spent the greater part of the day around the house. Muddy is buying the outfit and it is being assembled at a bodega of don Juan, his father-in-law. We had a tremendous battle of words develop today between our four domestics, the principal combatants being Ruth and Muddy. I fear Ruth is a generally disturbing factor, but if I can coddle her though until Monday I shall be more than satisfied. It seems (her version) that Muddy "made an argument with her" that she is "hired to me and not to Muddy." I suspect Muddy of being somewhat overzealous in my behalf, but better that than the reverse. I patched things up and we may jog along now until we leave.

I had a few people in for tea this afternoon, which Jane prepared. Eddie and Gladys Johnston, Doris Rice, the MacCarrolls, Miss Roberts, and ourselves. Ricketson preceded the tea with some orange blossoms—half gin and half orange juice, neat but not gaudy, delicious *pero fuerte* [but strong]. Of the nine of us (if I were Gates, I would insist I am running nines), three reneged on the posies, Mrs. MacCarroll, Doris, and Arthur. I showed them my antiques and then we all repaired to the dining room where Morgan served the tea.

Jane had baked a chocolate cake against the occasion, but it fell or did something else equally inedible, though the icing was good for fudge, in which we ate it. After tea, and indeed some before, we danced. I had the packing cases pushed back a bit, and then we turned on the phonograph. Doris Rice was easily the best dancer, Mrs. MacCarroll the next, Miss Roberts next, and poor Gladys cannot dance at all to speak about. She sort of restricts her movements to little mincing steps that get her or her partner nowhere. They left about six-thirty, Eddie Johnston very coquettishly carrying off my Moorish carpet with him. I take it in jest, induced by his one orange-blossom. We are to go over to the MacCarrolls' for tea Sunday afternoon, and then on to Eddie's or the Rices'. Must find out later.

### **January 29, Saturday**

The captains of riverboats, Dave Hughes of the *Canada* and John Bulkeley of the *Lion*, came in early this morning whilst I was putting in some good strokes on my article for the *National Geographic Magazine*. The best terms I can get is \$100.00 for getting us and our luggage up the

[Belize] river, and I told them both that I would give them the final answer in the morning. Spent the greater part of the day on my article and had the satisfaction of almost finishing it before nightfall. I do not care much for it, though it covers the probable course of civilization in the southwest fairly well, thanks to Kidder and Morris, whom I have given adequate credit on it. Trap will copy it tomorrow and Monday, and I will mail it from Cayo.<sup>64</sup>

### **January 30, Sunday**

Today we packed. I decided on the *Canada* the first thing this morning and made an initial payment of \$60.00 to Dave Hughes. We leave tomorrow evening at 10:00 p.m, primero Dios. Rutherford photographed the MacCarroll baby this afternoon, and afterwards Rick and I went out there for tea. As usual, the English people have their tea too strong for reasonable drinking. This tea of the MacCarrolls was like sheep dip.<sup>65</sup> The cake, which Mrs. MacCarroll made herself, however, was more than edible and we finished it almost.

We came back to the hospital after tea, but had to leave again shortly for the Rices' or Johnstons', for I did not know just where we had been asked to dinner. It turned out that we were asked at Rices', where Sunday night supper is always held. Besides the three of us, there were the four Rices--Doris, Walter, Mr. and Mrs. —and Eddie, Gladys, and the boy. Doris herself did not eat with us, presiding over the serving and kitchen end.

We did not stay long afterward, though we were pressed to. Truth is we all had a lot to do against leaving tomorrow and wanted to get off. It will be a busy day with many broken promises that I can foresee, and so I went to bed early to fortify my spirit against them.

### **January 31, Monday**

This was a busy day indeed, and we were going all the hours of it up to 10 o'clock, when we got off. We spent the morning in shopping and packing. I also looked up Starkey and got a letter from him to his bush manager, Robertson, that he [should] give me two jacks. We got some hardware at H. and H. and some sweet biscuit at Harleys.

Two things had been promised me all week long—one, my spectacles, which the silversmith has been promising daily all week, and the other was the gramophone which the repairer at Morlana had been at work on since Monday. I got my spectacles at 6:00 and the gramophone was fetched down to the boat about seven o'clock.

I wrote some letters that afternoon and finished my packing. John Esquivel [Muddy] was very helpful during these closing hours in Belize. He it was who jacked up the silversmith and practically stood over him, forcing him to finish my spectacles, and he it was who advised me

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<sup>64</sup> We are unable to identify this article. He published an article in the February 1922 issue of *The National Geographic Magazine* (Morley 1922a) which has nothing to do with the Southwest and does not mention either Kidder or Morris. In the June 1921 issue of the magazine, an uncredited article appears under the title "A New National Geographic Society Expedition: Ruins of Chaco Canyon, New Mexico . . ." (Anon. 1921: 637–643), which describes the work earlier approved by Morley and the Research Committee (see pp. 116–117). This may be the article Morley describes.

<sup>65</sup> Sheep dip is a liquid blend of insecticides and fungicides used by sheep farmers against external parasites. "Sheep Dip" is also the name of a small-batch, premium, blended scotch malt whisky.

that Sharon, the man who was fixing it [the graphophone], had laid down on the job. I rushed down to the latter's house with John, and found this Sharon really was trying to fix our machine. Muddy too, was a host unto himself. He was everywhere, doing everything, and found time in between to do his own tasks. He saw the cargo on board the *Canada* and had our two cots up so that the breast of the boat should not be occupied by cargo.

Our personal baggage had gone aboard in the late afternoon, including kyack no. 1, which had \$1250.00 in good hard coin of the American Commonwealth locked in its bowels in a tin cash box: \$750.00 in gold and \$500.00 in paper. We went down about 9:30, stopping at the matron's quarters to say goodbye to Miss Roberts and her ever-faithful Johnny. She asked us in for a whiskey and soda and in farewell cup we toasted the success of the expedition.

Belize is without electric lights for a fortnight, and we had to use our electric lanterns. Arrived at the waterside, we found everything in readiness aboard the *Canada* [Figure 14.3], and 10 minutes after we were aboard the engine was started and at just ten o'clock to the dot, we cast off and put up river. The engine worked smoothly with its regular and not un-soothing vibration, and the only discomfortable feature aboard was some imperfectly preserved salt fish, which smelled unto the high heavens.



Figure 14.3. Morley (center with the white shirt and tie) and Ricketson (on the roof to the left) aboard the *Canada*.

We made ready for bed at once—Rutherford and I each had a cot, while Ricketson strung his hammock diagonally across the boat above us. Muddy was somewhere forward of him. As I lay on my cot watching the tall, graceful coconut palms glide by, and the fragrant night odors of the tropical bush swept out over the water to me, I could not help but sigh with relief and relax for a moment all of the problems which beset me.

## CHAPTER 15.

### UP-RIVER TO EL CAYO

#### February 1, Tuesday

The day passed quickly enough with eating, sleeping, and playing our phonograph. We took this out on the upper deck and played it while we watched the country go by. The [*Canada's*] machinery behaved beautifully; only once we had to stop for any length of time, something was slipping, and Leslie, the engineer, tinkered with it for a while and then we went ahead again. Toward the close of the afternoon, as we were getting on toward Banana Bank, I told the captain to stop there for a moment as I wished to go ashore and see old Evans, who has been caretaker there for a long, long time. As we approached the bank, we saw the British flag flying from the mast in front of the house, and I thought it just possible that Sir Samuel Hoar might have arrived here on the swing around his property. Sure enough, as I climbed up the hill leading to the house, there he stood in the doorway looking as dapper and as English as though he had never been in the bush in his life, not to say during that very day. We had scarcely greeted each other when there rode toward the house the governor, Grabham, and Red Frazier, the last grown quite portly. We all exchanged greetings and sat down on the front porch.

The governor, Sir Samuel, and Grabham return to Belize tonight by the *Cacique*, while Frazier stays on for a day or two here at Banana Bank, and thereby hangs a tale. Frazier's servant this morning forgot to put in some scotch and Frazier is correspondingly out of sorts about it. He wanted to know if my archaeological expedition carried some, and when I said no, nothing but brandy, he replied no archaeological expedition or any other, for that matter, should take to the bush without scotch.

I went down to the waterside, however, to tell Rick and Rutherford to come up, and at the same time to have Muddy dig up the brandy and bring it up. Presently the boys joined me, and we talked for half an hour while we all had a drink. Then, bidding goodbye to Sir Samuel, whom I shall probably never see again, and the governor, Grabham, and Frazier (whom I hoped lived to see often) we went down to the *Canada*, climbed aboard, the engine started, and we were off. As we rounded the last bend in the river where the party on the porch could be seen we waved another farewell. Soon after this Muddy called us down to dinner, and we descended from the after deck to a good meal.

After supper, we went back and played the phonograph until a slight shower drove us below for the rest of the evening. Captain Hughes decided to tie up for the night instead of pushing through, so about eleven, having reached Spanish Lookout, we put into the bank and tied up for the night. I had been abed a long time before this, however, and did not know when we stopped.

## February 2, Wednesday

We started about six on the last lap of our journey and got into El Cayo about 11. Chico had heard the *Canada* down the river and was there on the bank to meet me, in fact was the first one aboard. I gave him a good hug. He looks well, round in the face, and as disreputable as ever. Ed Enright was there and had a horse! He said Muddy's telegram to secure me a house had come through that way. The District Commissioner, however, had had a phone message last night from Frazier at Banana Bank telling him that we would be in this morning, and rightly the D.C. had guessed that it would be a house and not a horse that we would be wanting.

There were two houses in the village vacant which answered our requirements—a two-story building with living quarters and a bodega or storeroom downstairs. One belonged to young Clarence Waight, and the other to Eduard Savala. The former we examined first, and took finally [Figure 15.1]. It had no water tank and a kitchen without a stove, but most important of all, it has a good bodega which can be securely locked. It is provided with a concrete floor and has shelves on all four sides of the single room. While I examined this and later the house of Eduard Savala, Rick and Rutherford stayed by the boat, but as soon as I arranged about the house, I sent word for them to come up. Ed Enright had in the meantime arranged for his cart to begin hauling our baggage, and Chico accompanied it each trip to see that no pieces strayed between the waterside and the house. Muddy remained on board the *Canada* to see that everything got off.



Figure 15.1. Morley's house in El Cayo in 1921.

Our dunnage made four cartloads and almost entirely filled the bodega. With the hams and sausages hanging from the roof rafters, and the tins of fruit, vegetables and the like lining the sides, it looked quite like a young store. But now I had been using Chico all morning without even so much as asking the *padre's* leave, so I went up that way. Both Father Huerman and Father Finnely were home, and I told them I had come for my boy. This brought forth a flood of complaints. Chico was never at home, Chico stayed out more often than not all night long, Chico drank, Chico smoked, Chico gambled, Chico sought the solace of the opposite sex. Chico, in short, had all of the vices and none of the virtues and it was with thankfulness that they turned him over to me. And alas, never again will they take him.

Well, that bridge I will cross next June, but not now. I don't believe for an instant, of course, that Chico is as black as they are painting him. Some of the things with which they charge him are not moral obliquities to him—they are as natural as the function of breathing, and far more agreeable. For instance, they told me he attended every *velorio* in town. A *velorio*, or wake as we would call it, is a general gathering of the friends of the deceased with drinking, gambling, and smoking. The last two are cardinal failings of Chico, and of course he never missed a *velorio*. He is not vicious in the only three ways that I could not forgive. He does not get drunk. He has never lied to me. And he has never stolen from me. And until he does one of these three things and does it not once (because we all fall from grace occasionally) but several times, his patron will not desert him.

Muddy threw together some sort of a lunch. I remember there was some very cold tinned tongue, and we pieced it out with tea, crackers, and cheese. Muddy looked up the Aragón woman who was going to sell us four animals and rent us two. These unhappily have dwindled to 2. Three are at Plancha de Piedra and the *comandante* there will not release them until she pays him \$200.00 for their upkeep, and the other one is rented to Lysby. Of the two here, she will sell me one, a good mule, and rent me another. They both appear to be good strong animals, and we will start our livestock with them.

After dinner, I heard that the new *comandante* at Plancha de Piedra was in town at Peter Brown's hotel, en route to Laguna de Yaloch on a tour of inspection. As I had planned on running over to see him there tomorrow, I went down at once. He and a companion were drinking and eating as I got there. I presented my letters and they read them gravely, and then said that whatever aid they could give me they would be glad to do so. They are leaving this morning for Laguna and will meet us there.

I knew many people in Guatemala whom they know and we got acquainted. I broached the matter of the Aragón animals which are being held in Plancha, but they didn't hold out much hope. They said I wouldn't want them anyhow, as they are in very poor condition. I am going over anyhow tomorrow to see Father Versavel and Benque, and will see the man now in charge at Plancha. They told me also of a Señora Arriaga, recently from Chiapas, with three animals to sell.

### **February 3, Thursday**

There is a creole boy from Corozal named John Oge, who says that he saw one of the Aragón mules in a *potrero* [pasture] at Benque and since he is the only one that knows the animal, I decided



to take him over with me. Muddy and I rode the two Aragón animals we have already, and I rented one for John. We set off about nine and reached the halfway point in an hour.

The road was not too bad. There was one bad spot near Ed Enright's *ranchito*, but this was avoided by a *desecho* [shortcut] through his land. Beyond the halfway point, however, Horha, the road became a sea of stiff, muddy waves. Mules always put their hooves in the same spot, and as a result these become deep holes with high ridges in between. Now that the mud is drying, these are hardening into stiff ridges, upon which in another fortnight a man will easily be able to walk, but now they are insecure and apt to give way. The animals seek to walk as close to the bush as possible, where the ground is not so cut up, with the result that one is always dodging branches, boughs, and thorny vines. Indeed, I was well cut up before the day's work was over. Blackman says he will get his automobile over it in another week, but I doubt it. A caterpillar truck might negotiate it, but not an automobile, even a seasoned old Ford like Blackman's. This last half of the journey took almost twice as long as the first half because of this poor condition of the road, so that we did not reach Benque Viejo until after 11.

I went straight to Father Versavel's house, while Muddy and John looked up the Aragón mule. Father Versavel was out, but one of the sisters obligingly sent a boy for him and presently he came up the hill. We greeted each other affectionately. As much as he disapproves of my godlessness, he admires—so he says—the energy with which I carry on my non-essential work. We had a nice little chatty talk as do folks who have known each other for a long time and have not seen each other for months. He tells me that the chicle situation is so desperate that he thinks both Benque Viejo and El Cayo are threatened with virtual extinction: unless the price goes up the *chicleros* [chicle tappers; see Introduction, pp. x–xi] will begin to move away and the towns will all but disappear. However grateful I, as an archaeologist, am to the chicle business for opening up the Petén bush, and thus bringing to light new Old Empire sites, I cannot help but feel that it has been a very doubtful blessing for this part of the country as a whole, since nobody will raise corn any longer, and a *milpero* has lost caste whilst a *chiclero* is the local profligate dandy.

I could not stay long with the father, as I was in a hurry to get over to Plancha, so he asked me back for a good lunch at one. With that understanding I went down to the waterside where Muddy and John were awaiting me. We saw Señora Arriaga's animals—a mare, a small stallion, and a white mule. The *señora*, however, proved to be a *señor*, and as I was in a hurry to get to Plancha, I left word with his boy that I would see him on my way back.

We walked over to Plancha as the Mopan was too high to ford the animals, and swimming them is always such a business. The road was very muddy and the mile they call it between Benque Viejo and Plancha seemed more like one and a half, which is what I think it really is. The latter place had not changed any for the better since I was here in May. The new *receptor* [receiver], or the new regime (for they change officials very frequently here), had made a new custom's house, or perhaps taken an old shack and painted it with the national colors—blue and white. Before we got to the house, John spied one of the animals we had come for, a white mule but in very sad condition, even as the *comandante* had said last night.

The *receptor*, a Mr. Cifuentes, proved to be a nice fellow, a Petenero as he called himself, tho' he had been born in Quezaltenango [city in the western highlands of Guatemala]. I presented my letters and then broached the business of the Aragón animals. He offered to do all in his power, but said the mules could not be delivered until Mrs. Aragón paid over the two hundred dollars

she owed to Colonel Sandoval for their keep. One mule could not be found anyhow, one had disappeared, and the other was good for nothing. Moreover, nothing was to be gained by pressing the point and very much, including the goodwill of the *receptor*, might be lost, so I bowed gracefully and withdrew my request. He gave me instead a letter to the *celador* [watchman] at Laguna de Yaloch to pass my baggage through without inspecting it, and then bidding him farewell, we returned to Benque.

As soon as I crossed the Mopan, I stopped to look at Señor Arriaga's animals, a saddle mare equipped with a silver-mounted Mexican saddle, a little gelding with a good McClellan saddle, and a pack mule with *aparejo* [gear: harness, etc.]. Señor Arriaga himself came to the hut where the horses were and said they were good animals that he himself had brought them all the way from Ocosingo in Chiapas, Mexico. His first price was \$375.00 for everything, but to this I objected that I had no possible use for the silver-mounted saddle, whereupon he knocked down the price to \$325.00 for everything but that. And here we left the matter, arranging that he should go back to Cayo with me this afternoon.

I got up to Father Versavel's just before one and much before he expected me. He ordered dinner presently and in the interim, we had as a cocktail a mixed drink of sugar rum, crème-de-menthe, and water. We talked of olden times and of the future. He is very pessimistic over the prospects for El Cayo and Benque Viejo, which as I have said he feels are facing virtual extinction because of the collapse of the chicle business. I almost persuaded him to go to Flores in March with me, and he about consented when he remembered that the Succotz fiesta, or Novena, runs from the 7th of March until the 16th. After that, the best I could get him to promise was that he would come in April, if he could, which I know now in February means no.

I bought of a Negro in Benque the hind quarters of a peccary, one of which I took back to Cayo with me, and the other I gave to Father Versavel. I also gave him the barometer he asked me for last year and it seemed to please him greatly. He said he studied it out while I was in Plancha and now knew how to adjust it. I bid him goodbye and went downtown where Muddy joined me. He was having a convivial time with old Pablo Guerra, Arturo Estevez, and several others. I tried to buy Estevez's mule, but he wanted \$250.00 for it, so I turned it down. I think, though, in time he would have come to \$200.00, but even that I am not prepared to give yet, especially when I am about to get 3 animals for \$325.00. Senor Arriaga and his two boys joined me, and we all set off for El Cayo. I stopped for a moment at Succotz to see old Eusebio Valdez to see if I could rent his mules. He said *con mucho gusto*, but next month. As I have to have them at once, this wouldn't help, so I said goodbye and went on my way.

I got back to Cayo before any of the others, as I rode Arriaga's big white mule. It is a powerful animal and certainly is a good buy at the price he is asking for all three. I told Arriaga that he had better put up [stay] with us while he was in Cayo, so his boys brought these animals down to our house when they got in. After I returned from Benque Viejo, I met Doctor Hearne and went up to his house for a visit. He is just returning to Belize and thence to Jamaica on business. We never have much luck seeing each other. He is a pleasant chap and quite one of the most cultured men I have met in the colony. I also saw old Wyatt. He hasn't changed much and seems contented, though I understand he feels that he has been demoted. He was formerly police chief in Belize, but because of the riots was sent up to El Cayo as D.C. I saw him mete out justice last year [Chapter 3, pp. 103–104], and while it was rough and ready, it was direct and very just.

Arriaga spent the night with us, his two boys sleeping and eating under the house downstairs. Tomorrow we will conclude our bargain, and I will buy his animals I hope for \$300.00. He knows lots of the people I do in central Petén. He comes from Ocosingo and says there are some fine ruins near there. He thinks I could get from Desempeño to Ocosingo in five days. If so, I may make a try for it.

### **February 4, Friday**

The *Cayo* came in last night and left at noon, so Arriaga and I had to conclude our business the first thing this morning. I offered him \$300.00 flat, and he finally came to \$312.00, at which figure we closed the deal. Muddy says the *aparejo* is worth \$40.00 and the McClellan saddle, \$20.00, putting the bridle at \$2.00. One might calculate that I acquired the 3 animals for \$250.00, and they are certainly worth that and far cheaper than I could get any three in Cayo. All day long the search for pack animals continued. I have 3 promised from one Victoriano Hernández, 2 from Lewis, one from a John Armstrong at San José near Bullet Tree Falls, and one from Erasmo Cepeda, which with the one I have rented from the Aragón woman, makes 8. We still need 2 more, which I am combing the town for.

I also acquired another mule, also white, from a boy named Modesto Samos. The negotiations were carried on by an officious Chinaman, who has been around promising *muladas* of 10 and 15 animals, but coming across with none. This Modesto first wanted \$160.00, but I finally got him down to \$125.00, and poor devil, he didn't get all of this as the following will show. It appears for the last ten years he has been making his milpa on Crown land without paying any rent for it, and recently the long arm of the British law in the person of Mr. Wyatt, the District Commissioner, reached out and imposed a fine of \$54.00 upon him, which had to be satisfied at once. Therefore, Modesto must needs sell his mule. I made out two checks—one to the District Commissioner for \$54.00 and the other to himself for \$71.00.

We now have six animals, five acquired by purchase outright and one on what might be termed a long-term lease.<sup>66</sup> I think this is enough for the time. We now all have riding animals, and the rest I will rent.

Went up to see the doctor for a while. He is a cultured fellow and very agreeable to talk to. We talked of many things, including marriage, which got us nowhere. I suppose no amount of talking can help that institution, the only thing to do is to try it and see if it will take. And if it does not the first time, try it again, but oh, how a burnt child avoids the fire.<sup>67</sup>

### **February 5, Saturday**

I have gradually sifted out the men I am going to take with me. There will, of course, be the five of us, including myself, Ricketson, Rutherford, Muddy, and Chico. Then I have engaged a man from Benque Viejo, one Elfio García, with two cargo mules as chief *arriero*. For cook of the *arrieros*

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<sup>66</sup> The outright purchase of animals was something new for Morley. On previous expeditions he had always rented a *mulada* along with an *arriero*.

<sup>67</sup> Morley's attitude toward marriage was shaped by his acrimonious divorce from his first wife, Alice, and her marginalization of his relationship with daughter True (Ward and Rice 2021: 97).

and also as a guide to some new ruins in the interior, a boy from the colony named Charley Phillips. I am paying him more than any other--\$2.25 a day—but then in addition to such casual *arriero* duties as may develop in the road I will expect him to do the cooking. If he shows me a new ruin, he will of course get the regulation reward or premium for such, namely \$25.00 per city. I have also two other *arrieros*, Modesto Pérez and Pedro Rosales, who with Elfio García are earning \$1.50 per day. One of these, Modesto [Figure 15.2], knows where there is a large city beyond Petipet. He does not remember any monuments but says the “*cerros*” and “*pirámides*” [mounds and pyramids] are very high and some of the “*casas*” are “*enteros*” [houses are entire]. This looks like a good prospect for monuments also, especially in view of the fact that Modesto admits he didn’t look about. The remaining man is a Negro, George Usher, a husky animal, who is taking his own animal along. Him I am paying \$2.00 per day.



Figure 15.2. Modesto Pérez, one of Morley’s *arrieros*.

In the afternoon when I rode up to the doctor’s on my little *macho*, it did not like its shoes. We had a number of the riding animals shod this afternoon by Victoriano Hernández and Pedro

Rosales, and by the way they act, raising their feet gingerly and placing them with even greater care, I am inclined to believe that they never have been shod before, particularly my own mule.

I went up to the doctor's in the late afternoon and found he had several visitors who were from Vaca [Falls]. One, a Mr. Nation, brought me 2 jacks, and these I think will prove very useful. I had asked the doctor up to lunch today, but about the middle of the morning he was called to Benque suddenly to attend to a policeman there who has the pneumonia. He told me when he got over there, he found that nursing and not medical aid was what he required. Of course, he can prescribe his head off, but as soon as his back is turned, they stop his treatment for some bush concoction brewed by an ignorant old man or woman with a local reputation for healing.

Wyatt—at least we thought—asked us up to dinner tonight at seven. Ricketson bears me out in this, as he said he heard him distinctly ask us to dinner. Well, we went up there and he asked us to sit down on his porch. We waited for some time, and then Mrs. Wyatt came out. We all thought then that presently a domestic would appear and announce the evening meal, but none such appeared. Presently, I went in the dining room to get a chair for Mrs. Wyatt and to my dismay saw the table was cleared and, evidently, we had not been asked to dinner. I could not communicate this to Ricketson and Rutherford, but soon they caught on and finally Rutherford came to the rescue by saying he had some photographs in a bath and that he would have to leave early. Ricketson and I rose eagerly at the same time. We were given some whiskey and cake, however, before leaving.

As soon as we got out of earshot, we confessed ourselves well sold, and as soon as we got home, I had Muddy throw together some kind of meal, for we were famished.

## February 6, Sunday

Today was anything but a day of rest. It was the day of assembling the *mulada* and finding out chiefly what we had not. Sometime during the morning, a Mexican appeared on the horizon with an animal to sell, a small but very lively mare which he swore had me all the way from Tenosique [in Tabasco, Mexico]. He wanted \$100.00 for the outfit, saddle and bridle included. He was going on to Payo Obispo [Chetumal] and wanted to sell out. I offered \$75.00 in the yellow metal, or \$85.00 in American paper. He came down to \$90.00, but I stuck to my offer. He finally came down to \$87.50, and as the outfit was obviously worth 50 percent more than that, I gave in and the Tenosique mare was mine. I spent the morning in writing, while Muddy, Ricketson, and Rutherford packed. Toward noon our two guests arrived, first the District Commissioner, and then Doctor Hearne. We had set up the two camp tables side by side in the central room and here the feast was spread: soup, chicken, potatoes, beans, rice, and cherries.

The D.C. is a good trencherman and cleaned up his plate in no time. They stayed around for a while after lunch, while we went ahead with our packing. They took their leave about 3. In the middle of the afternoon, Elfio García came in from Benque Viejo with his two Cayo pack animals, and toward nightfall Lewis brought his two up, one had a back in shocking condition, not only saddle sores, but also a big beef worm<sup>68</sup> which from the hummock on the poor beast's back looked

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<sup>68</sup> A beef worm or botfly is the Belizean term for the insect *Dermatobia hominis*; it is called *colmoyote* in Petén. The adult female botfly (a large insect, the size of a bumblebee) captures mosquitoes, ticks, and other biting insects and attaches its eggs and then releases them. When the egg-laden

to me to still be in the flesh. I fear it will be impossible to use it. Then too, before nightfall, my own good *macho* had gone lame. This I lay directly to the shoeing which Victoriano Hernández did yesterday. He claimed he uncovered an old rotten spot in the hoof, and indeed he showed me such, which even by the light of a flickering lantern appeared to go an inch down into the quick. It must hurt because when I rode him up to the doctor's before dinner he limped and stumbled heavily.

But this was not all. During the evening, John Armstrong's mule broke loose and, after running around among the mules, disappeared in the darkness. Ricketson and Muddy gave chase but found nothing. He doubtless ran back to John's place, a good league<sup>69</sup> off at San José, somewhat nearer Cayo than Bullet Tree Falls. I wrote letters until after eleven o'clock before I went to bed.

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insect bites a person, the eggs migrate through the bite wound and develop into a larva which, over the course of some eight weeks, grows into a pupate. The larvae require oxygen to survive, hence the hole in the skin which must remain unobstructed for the entire incubation period. The term *colmoyote* may derive from the Aztec/Nahuatl *colmoyotl*.

<sup>69</sup> Morley's estimate of a league's distance is three miles.

## CHAPTER 16.

### EL CAYO TO XULTUN

#### February 7, Monday

Gates is all wrong about 7 being a lucky number. It may be for him, but it certainly isn't for me. In the first place I awoke this morning with 3 animals wanting: my own lame *macho*, John Armstrong's mule, and Lewis' pack animal, which I had rejected. The cargo was brought out [Figures 16.1, 16.2] and the *arrieros* agreed that 10 pack animals were our minimum requirement there, and we had of course needed 5 riding animals. I had 9 of the former and 4 of the latter, and not another animal more. My own *macho* I reluctantly decided to leave with Victoriano Hernández to cure of his lameness.



Figure 16.1. Getting the cargo ready for leaving El Cayo.

I sent Chico everywhere for an odd animal, but none could be found. I fell back on obliging Doctor Hearne for my riding animal. I went up to his house and rented his horse just before he was leaving. He goes this morning to Belize and thence to Jamaica and will not return unless



chicle picks up. His practice during July and August was splendid, he said, but since has been growing worse and worse. Anyhow. He rented me his horse for \$1.00 a day, and I sent Muddy up for it. But a pack animal still remained lacking.



Figure 16.2. Morley's horse and house in background on the day of departure from El Cayo.

However, I decided to start these nine cargo mules off to Branch Mouth so as to lose as little time as necessary at the ford there, and if worst came to worst, I could not get another cargo mule, I decided to send the last cargo on by Antonio Melhado's *mulada*, which goes to the same *jato* [*chiclero* encampment] as the first ruin we will visit, the one Charley Phillips knows about. I got everybody off for Branch Mouth at 11. This included 10 pack animals, for at the last moment I decided to load Chico's mount, the little Ocosingo stallion which I bought from Arriaga, and let Chico walk until we met an animal which I could rent somewhere on the road.

Ten pack animals started off for Branch Mouth with four arrieros, Elfio García as chief *arriero*, Modesto Pérez, Pedro Rosales, and Charley Phillips, who later will be the boys' cook in the bush. Ricketson and Rutherford went ahead with them to see there was not too much delay at the crossing of the Mopan (i.e., Branch Mouth). Muddy, Chico, and I stayed behind to lock up. I had previously taken my cash box with \$750.00 in gold in it up to old Wyatt to store for me in his safe until we returned and bid him goodbye. Also paid a hurried visit to the doctor for a farewell, and then got back to the house. We locked up and I sent Chico back to Wyatt with the house and bodega keys, while Muddy and I started off for Branch Mouth. I had not gone far, however, before I returned to see that Chico got off all right.

And here I must record the only bright spot in the whole damn day. After dispatching the

cargo animals to Branch Mouth, who should ride up but John Anderson with his animal in tow. He told me that it had come into his rancho early in the morning, and he knew at once that it had broken loose and come home, so he brought it back. He said it would cost me one dollar, but I would cheerfully have paid thrice that for the service, for I was sore-pressed for another pack animal, and besides, as I say it was the only bright spot in a long distressing day, and he certainly deserved that reward for his intelligence, when all the other men were so devilishly irritating. As Chico's animal had John Armstrong's *aparejo* on it, we put Chico's saddle on John's animal so Chico could ride it down to the Mouth, where they would all have to be reloaded anyhow.

It had proved so fractious the night before that I thought I had better ride back and accompany Chico to the Mouth myself. It was lucky enough that I did too, for Muddy had left a large biscuit tin full of ground coffee for him to bring. The animal proved fractious, wanted to take another road, Chico lost his hat, dropped some water bags, and had a bad time in general. I took the tin of coffee and his hat, finally, and just as noon was striking, he and I rode out of our backyard and we were at last underway, at least four hours after we should have been.

Arriving at Branch Mouth, I found the baggage going over, about half indeed was on the other side. Going down, I passed a caterpillar truck which the Starkeys are bringing up for hauling their mahogany logs at Vaca Falls.

My little mount, the Tenosique mare, is *muy delicado*, as I have not recorded, and kicks like a bay steer whenever anyone gets near enough to reach. It handed poor Chico a *patada* [kick] in the groin early in the morning before we got underway, and waiting at the waterside at Branch Mouth it handed Victoriano another on the shin. This brought forth a storm of lovely oaths that I would give anything to be able to get off. Finally, the baggage was ferried across, and we started to drive the mules into the river to swim across [Figures 16.3, 16.4].



Figure 16.3. Taking the mules across the river at Branch Mouth, beside and following the canoe. Morley is probably the figure standing in the rear of the canoe.

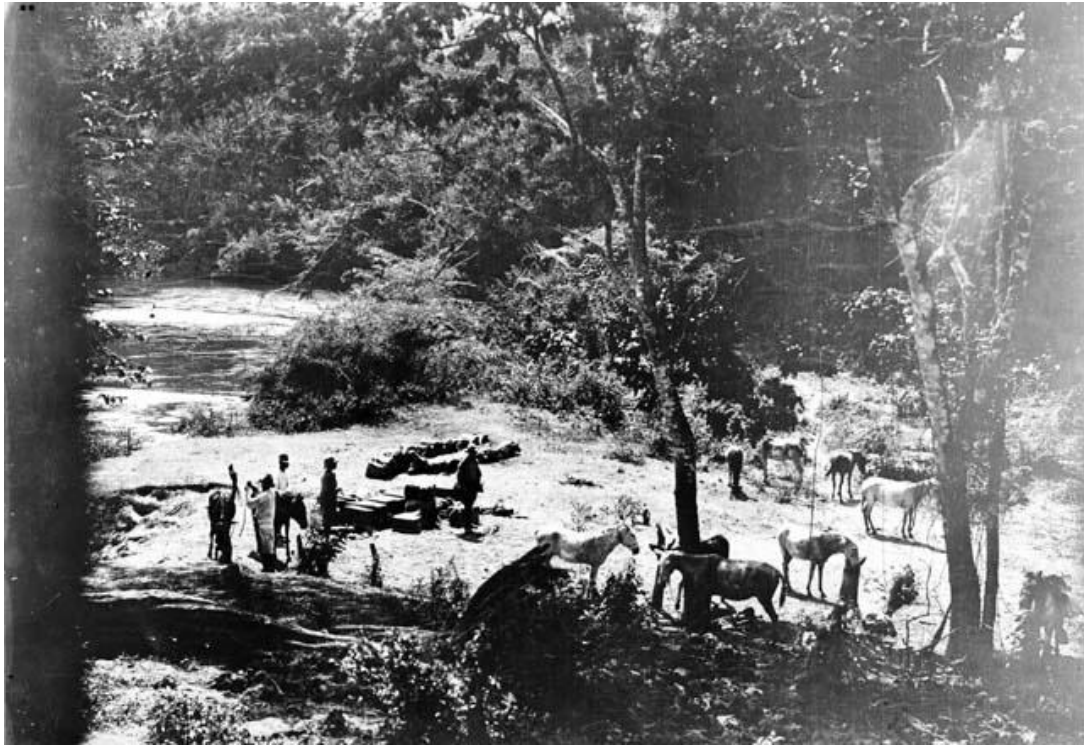


Figure 16.4. The expedition, having crossed the Mopan River at Branch Mouth, prepares to resume the trek.

At this point it was discovered that we had left our raincoats back at Cayo, and though Chico had already crossed to the other side, I called him back and set him off post haste on his own mount, the Ocosingo gelding, to get the key once again from Wyatt and to fetch back the raincoats. Just before we drove the animals into the water, the *Cayo* passed with Doctor Hearne aboard. He waved us goodbye as his boat slipped downstream. And now our own mules were driven into the water and got across safely, though one white one was pretty exhausted before it finally climbed out.

It was past midday by this time, and the *arrieros* had no desire to go forward since they wished to pass the night at the Branch, indeed George Usher had returned to Cayo on his own mule saying he would overtake us the next morning. But this arrangement did not suit me at all, and I soon had the four boys who were with me—Pedro, Elfio, Charley, and Modesto [Figure 16.5] putting on the *aparejos* and at 3 we were off. I left Pedro behind to show Chico the way.

No sooner had we got started, however, than one of the mules got bogged in a bad crossing and we were 10 minutes extracting it, and before we finally got away from Branch Mouth, Chico and Pedro had caught up. And now commenced one of the worst two hours of all my experiences with *muladas*. To begin with, the mules were not used to working together, some being hired from one man, and some from another, and some from a third and fourth. There was no esprit de corps amongst them, with the result that each made off in a different direction whenever there was a forking of the trails. They were perfectly devilish, darting from the trail at every occasion, hiding

behind trees and doing their best to cause trouble. The packs were continually coming off, or requiring adjustment, and progress was correspondingly slow.



Figure 16.5. Modesto (right) and Elfio (left), next to one of the mules.

We scattered ourselves among the cargo animals, each selecting two or three animals and thus, with much profanity, we slowly made forward. During the first two hours after three o'clock, we were crossing the river plain of the Mopan and here there are many, many trails, and the mules were continually, and I firmly believe intentionally, taking the wrong ones. After 5, however, the trail headed up a rocky draw with very steep sides, leading toward Tom Indian Hill. We went through the notch which one sees so clearly from Wyatt's side porch. But now

night was coming on. We had taken a count of noses several times and, by good luck more than good management, always seemed to have 10. On one count we thought we were lacking one, but Elfio turned up with it from behind where he had fallen back to adjust its cargo.

It was getting quite dusk when I finally crossed the crest and started down the north side of Tom Indian Hill. Charley Philips was ahead leading the bell mare, then came three pack animals and then I followed, keeping these three going forward. Modesto Pérez was ahead of Charley but stopped at the fork of the trail where we left the main road to descend to the *aguada* where we were to camp for the night. Charley and I got in first at just 6:30. It was then all but dark. I watched the bell mare while Charley went down to the *aguada* to see if it had water, and fortunately it had, so we began to unpack. Ricketson and Rutherford came in almost immediately with Muddy, Elfio, and two other pack animals. This made six in. Muddy and Charley started a fire and presently we heard distant halloos. We answered these every time and they separated, coming apparently from two different directions. We saw a light off to the northwest, where lay the *aguada*, and presently Modesto came in with a flaming palm leaf torch in hand, crossing the night. He reported one animal strayed in the bush somewhere. The other hallo seemed to come from the northeast, and gradually drew nearer and nearer until I recognized it as coming from Chico. He came in leading his own mount and a white cargo mule sans cargo. This, he said, had dropped only a short distance back and I sent some boys to carry it in, which was done. This made seven accounted for. Later still another one strayed in, which made eight, and finally George Usher and Pedro Rosales brought in a ninth, but without its cargo, which had been left in the road when darkness finally overtook them.

Now began a count of the animals to see which one it was that was missing, and what it had aboard. George and I with candle and torch went the round of the picketed animals and counted 15. The missing *vestia* [beast; mule] was the *macho* I had bought from Arriaga. A count of the cargo disclosed the fact that Rutherford and I were out of luck—the missing animal carried the cots, the chairs, the table, two jacks, a tin of biscuits, a tin of the ground coffee, and the package of Charley's with his bedding. The three of us, therefore, were quite out of luck. The theory most acceptable to the *arrieros* was that this animal had laid down this side of the crest and would not stray, being too tired.

Supper was now ready for both sets of us, and we ate it on the ground by the light of a hurricane lantern. After supper the boys cut *corozo* [palm fronds] for the 15 horses and mules and saw that all were securely tied, as we feared they might wander, being without *ramón*.<sup>70</sup> It was after nine when we finally got around to making up the beds. At first, I had thought to sleep in a hammock improvised out of a ground cloth, but George put one up for me which came down, and an *alacrán* (a scorpion) was found in the tree to which it was fastened, so I gave the idea up, not unreluctantly.

Ricketson's hammock had not been on the missing mule, so he was fixed for the night. Rutherford, on the other hand, was out his cot, so he slept uncomfortably in one of George's improvised hammocks. I had the boys arrange 4 kyacks on their sides like a long narrow bed, and spread my quilt on this and was quite comfortable. At first, I had thought to sleep without a

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<sup>70</sup> In the bush, leaves of the *ramón* tree, *Brosimum alicastrum*, were cut as preferred food for the mules. In the absence of *ramón*, *corozo* palm fronds might be cut, but they were not as nutritious.

*pabellón* [mosquito net], but the small fleas and gnats were so bad that I finally had Modesto put up one of the *pabellones*, and after that I rested very comfortably.

We had gotten out the phonograph and everybody enjoyed the music during the evening. If the spring holds out, I can see where we are going to enjoy it a great deal. It was very lovely going to bed, the stars shown through the arching graceful fronds of the corozo palms, and the night noises of the bush, mingled with the munching and stamping of our tethered animals as they ripped and tore the corozo leaves. I think this Modesto Pérez is going to be a good boy; apparently, he knows all the roads through this part of the bush and will be a great help during the next month. We talked trails and ruins until after eleven o'clock and then, when everyone else had fallen asleep, bid each other good night and went to our bed and hammock.

### February 8, Tuesday

I called the boys at 6:15, and after breakfast three boys, George, Modesto, and Pedro, set out to look for the missing mule, while Elfio and Charley watered the animals. I wrote in this diary while Chico played the phonograph. About nine, Elfio came in bearing a tin of biscuits saying that the mule had been found. It was in the trail laying down with all its load still on, just this side of the crest. Presently George, Pedro, and Modesto came in with it still loaded. It was decided that Chico should ride it, whilst another animal would bear its cargo.

We got off shortly before 11, and at 1:30 reached El Chorro. The road was very bad in spots and the mules, though not quite so bad as yesterday, were bad enough, quite. The boys said they did not know whether there was any water between here and Laguna, and because the animals did not have *ramón* last night, it seemed best to stay here though we had only done 2½ hours, scarcely 6 miles. There was a little clearing here, a rather good sour orange tree, and a flea-infested *galerón*, under which we slept.

After lunch I was so tired with my *arriero* exertions that I lay down on my cot and slept for perhaps an hour. When I woke up, Ricketson and Rutherford were out hunting and the boys had gone to cut fodder for the animals. I wrote in my diary for some time, and while I wrote four men came into the clearing: *chicleros* coming out from the bush after having been in for six months. They were Negroes, or possibly even Caribs, and their wooly hair had grown quite long. They were hired out to Lysby in the Cayo, but feared because his chicle might be seized by the new Guatemalan officials that they might lose all their pay.

The boys came back presently, and soon Ricketson and Rutherford returned, but with no game. I wrote in my diary most of the afternoon. The evening was lovely, but the beauty of the spot was largely spoiled by the insects—fleas, sandflies, and *garrapatas*. I was more sorely bitten here than anywhere else since we have started. We fixed the cots and hammocks under the *galerón*, though there probably would have been fewer insects in the open. We had a concert and afterward swapped snake stories with George. He got the prize by telling of a jumping tommygoff [*tamagás*, *Bothrops*, a poisonous fer de lance], a serpent which leaped 12 feet on the horizontal. Rutherford was quite impressed, but Ricketson was frankly skeptical.

Before retiring, or rather just as we were going to bed, a strong fragrant odor stole though the *galerón*. This turned out to be some toilet reparation with which George was anointing himself before going to bed. We at first accused Rutherford of this, as he is always rubbing on himself scented oils to kill the mosquitoes, but afterwards gave George a good chaffing.

## February 9, Wednesday

We rose at 7, and when the boys came back from the place where the mules had been tied for the night, they reported none had strayed, but between then and when we were ready to load them, one had managed to stray off on the Cayo road and George had to go after it. It took a long time to pack this morning, and it was 9:15 when we finally left the clearing.

The boys asked that we ride ahead or behind, leaving the mules to them. This suited us all down to the ground as the strain of seeing that none were lost yesterday was very tiring. The only promise that I exacted was that they guarantee that none be left behind like the first day. This they agreed to, and so we rode behind. The road was not all bad, but in some places—in the bottoms—it was very heavy, full of *desechos* or shortcuts, and very confusing. The Aragón *macho* was very tired out and lay down several times, but we roused it with sticks and curses, the only voice these mules heed, and came out about 2:30 at Laguna.

The *comandante* had gone on to Tsotskitan,<sup>71</sup> and so we missed him after all, but I gave my letter from Cifuentes, the *Receptor de derechos* at Plancha de Piedra, and also my letter from President Herrera to the customs representative, a young boy, and he said we might go on without having the cargo examined. We thus got around the head of the lake (Yaloch) and started toward a *paraje* at the northwest corner.

In the many *desechos* around the clearing where the Customs Collector's house is, two of our shameless mules managed to hide themselves so that George, Pedro, and Modesto had to return for them. When we got into the *champas*, we found these occupied by other men already there, or rather, a man and two boys. They were returning from the interior from a *chiclería* belonging to an old friend of mine, Natalio Guzman—in fact, Natalio's son was one of the boys. The other was ill of malaria. We got out a thermometer and the quinine after taking his temperature, which was 102½. We gave him 10 grains of quinine at once, and other 15 before bedtime.

We had lunch late, indeed were still at it at 4, and the rest of the afternoon I wrote. The man who was here before us tells me he met a *chiclero*, Tancredo Pérez, at the *jato* of Natalio Guzman who was telling him that he had seen 3 or 4 carved stones with "letters" on beyond La Palma. These are, of course, stelae, and the story comes to me so gratuitously that I cannot help but believe that it is true. I will certainly make efforts to talk to this man, Tancredo, before coming out of the bush.

I am so absent-minded that for a little while this afternoon I thought I had taken a bichloride tablet for a quinine pill. When nothing happened, however, I ceased to worry and came to the logical conclusion that it was quinine I had taken after all. But I take no further chances and I handed over my bichloride bottle to Ricketson.

This place is a pest of mosquitoes. They breed in the lake and swarm up here on every breeze, and as Ricketson says, every one which he has killed is full of gore. After dinner, Rutherford told me there had been complaints among the men about the food—they wanted different fare, etc. I

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<sup>71</sup> Now Chochkitam (bat, *sots'*, *zotz*; tapir, *kitam*), this site was first noted on maps as a "camp or village" about 5 km west of the Guatemala-Belize border. Morley visited it in 1915. Recent epigraphic work indicates it was a "royal city" with important connections to the Classic Kaanu'l (Calakmul) dynasty (Estrada-Belli and Tokovinine 2022).



determined to quash this right in the beginning. I went right over to their campfire where they were all eating and laid down the law, told them I wanted every man to have his belly full of the food that I had provided for them, which was an ample diet, but that luxuries such as jams, sweet biscuits, soups, etc., I had not agreed to provide nor would not. Further, that if any one of them had any complaint whatsoever about the food, he was to bring it to me direct and not to Chico or Muddy. They said they had no complaint as to the quality, but wanted enough, and this I promised them.

Afterward, I got Modesto over to the table and from him extracted data for a stela map of this northeastern Petén region. These I wrote down, and they conform roughly with my experience of last year. Starting with El Cayo, there seem to be three drainages in the northeastern Petén (see map, Figure I.1, p. xiv). First, that of the Mopan. After crossing the Mopan one crosses the river-plain and then ascends the Chorro Hill or Tom Indian Hill — this is known elsewhere as the Sierra de Chunvis.<sup>72</sup> It is quite a chain and I got an altitude of 550 feet, if I read the barometer correctly, and from Laguna de Yaloch appears to stretch far off to the west. Its general direction would be slightly northeast by southwest.

Dropping off this range we come into the valley of the Río Holmul, or the Río de Temap as it is called up above, or Labouring Creek as it is called in the colony. This flows into the Belize River from the northwest just below Cockrico, about halfway between Belize and El Cayo.<sup>73</sup> This Río Holmul, I have heard, rises somewhere near or possibly in Lake Yaxha, but I have never verified this.

After crossing the Holmul Valley, which must have contained important cities in ancient times—Naranjo and Nakum for two—you come to a really high sierra, which is called locally El Cerro Grande, which it really is. As I have said, as I remember it last year, it was the highest one we crossed. Passing over this summit, we came down into the valley of the Ixcánríó, which later flows into the New River, or perhaps it is the New River, and comes out by Lowry's Bight just southeast of Corozal. I take it this was an equally important valley. It contained La Honradez, Xultun, Uaxactun, and, I believe, Tikal, though upon this latter point I am very hazy.<sup>74</sup> Beyond this valley lies another great sierra, which I saw from the summit of Temple I at Xultun last May. Beyond this at no great distance runs the line between Mexico and Guatemala. These data, I believe, are fairly accurate and I hope before this season is over to be able to establish the drainages of this region and to work it out pretty well, at least in a general way.

I got Charley in on this map work finally and we decided our itinerary [see Figure 16.6]: first, his ruin via Ixcánríó, thence to Petipet, thence to his new ruin beyond, and lastly on to Bejucal, or Bambonal (or Uaxactun, as I named it). When we get to Ixcánríó, Modesto and I will start back to

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<sup>72</sup> A small settlement in eastern Petén, near the Belize border, was called Chunvis in Morley's time but is now known as Chunhuitz ("*huitz*" is a Hispanicization of Mayan *witz*, 'mountain').

<sup>73</sup> The Río Holmul flows through northeast Petén, north of Lake Yaxha, then turns northward and flows through northwestern Belize, where it is known as the Río Bravo, a tributary of the Río Hondo. It does not join the Belize River. Compare Morley's summary here with Figure I.1.

<sup>74</sup> Morley is also mistaken on the details of the Río Ixcánríó (as he realizes later), which doesn't flow into New River, and the New River, entirely within Belize, does not drain any part of Petén.

find this Tancredo Pérez, who knows where four sculptured monuments are beyond La Palma, which is in the Uaxactun district.

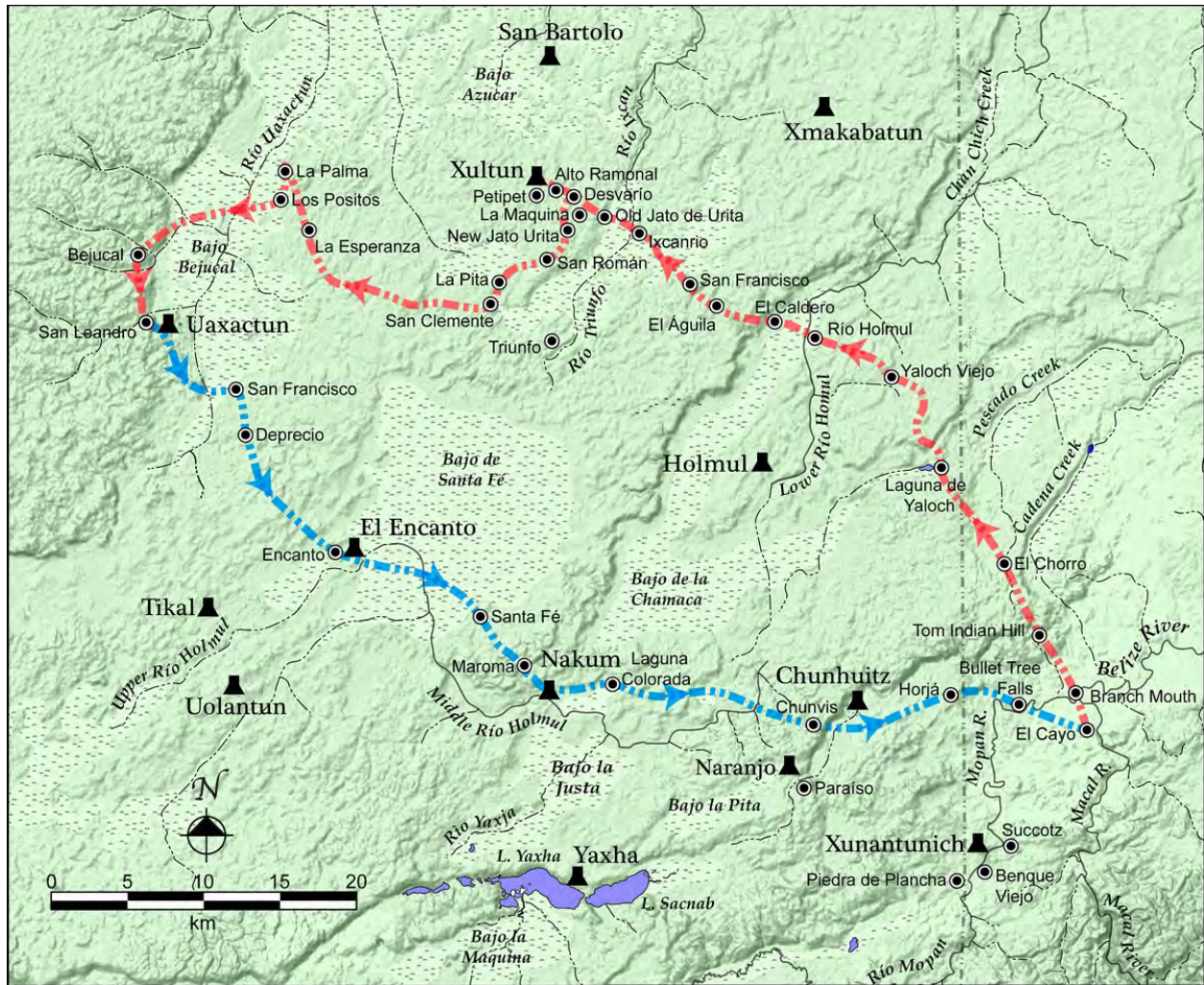


Figure 16.6. Morley's travel routes across eastern Petén.

### February 10, Thursday

I called the boys at 6:30, but from that hour to the moment I rode out of the *paraje*—I was the last to leave—just 3 hours and 10 minutes had elapsed! Everything seemed to go wrong. The packs didn't fit, or they had to be readjusted, etc., etc., etc. Anyhow, whatever it was, the *mulada* didn't get off until 9:40. I gave our malarial patient 5 grains of quinine and three other pills to take today and 3 for tomorrow. Poor fellow, his eyes are all congested and he is thin as a rail, hollow cheeks, skinny arms and legs, abdomen all fallen away. I hope he'll get treatment in Cayo, but imagine it doubtful.

The *mulada* acted outrageously all morning. The packs required adjustment all of the time, and all five of our boys worked all of the time. We reached Yaloch Viejo at 12:55, just 3¼ hours on the way, which is just about half an hour longer than it took Carl, Chico, and I last May to do

it. The heaviness of the trail, plus the continual adjustment of the packs, easily made up this time. It was quite a disappointment to find no oranges or limes at Yaloch Viejo, and we did not linger long here. The only pleasant thing about this old settlement is its lime trees, now bare, and the cache of pottery found in a *chultun* nearby.

The last 3 miles from Yaloch Viejo to the Rio Holmul, which we reached at exactly 2:30, were one long series of trails. The mules did their best to scrape off the packs and were continually running off into the bush. We passed several times little minor ruin groups, some with fairly good masonry, though of course badly destroyed by the trees. I was provoked that we had made so little progress today, but there is no help for it. When we reached the Río Holmul we really had to stop. My little mare had bruised her right front foot, and limps in consequence.

After lunch, I went down to the river to bathe. I have never seen the Holmul so high.<sup>75</sup> Heretofore, it has always been a series of shallow pools. Now, however, these had become continuous, though still stagnant, and one could not wade across. I hope there is a ford as it will be an awful nuisance to have to swim the animals and ferry ourselves across in the *cayuca*, which is there by the water. Muddy was busy bailing it out when I got down to the waterside, and I had to wait for him to finish so that I could go in off its end. The water was very dirty, or rather discolored, with rotting vegetation. I took my bath, however, anointing myself liberally with carbolic acid soap to keep away the insects, which are terrible up here at the *champas*, especially the sandflies, which have dotted my hands with many small blood blisters.

Ricketson invited me to go canoeing in the crazy old *cayuca*, but I thought I'd rather be eaten on dry land by the sandflies than in that capsizing craft, so came back to the clearing to write in this book between bites. George took the animals to the *ramonal* with Chico, whilst Rutherford went out hunting, but he only got a hawk. Later, Ricketson and Rutherford tried to paddle up the river, but quickly struck bottom, around the first bend, Ricketson said it was.

Unfortunately, my little mare developed a limp somewhere along the trail, as I have already recorded, and we got out the embrocation<sup>76</sup> and applied it after Muddy had given it a bath. Perhaps it will clear up by morning. I hope so. Elfio, who is an excellent man, by the way, though the poor devil has tuberculosis by the cough of him, I am afraid, spent the closing hours of the afternoon in searching for the ford which we will have to cross tomorrow morning. He reported when he came back from the river late in the afternoon that we could go across without ferrying.

We went to bed quite early, in fact I was in bed by eight o'clock. Woke once from a nightmare due to indigestion, but this was early—before nine o'clock—and afterward I slept fairly well. Once I remember waking and hearing some barbarous howling, making a noise like one coyote, for volume I mean.

## February 11, Friday

I called the boys at 5:30 this morning, but it was 6:30 and I guess later when it was light enough for the boys to start off to the *ramonal* for the animals. And startling enough news they brought

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<sup>75</sup> This in stark contrast to the previous year, 1920, when the entire central Petén was in extreme drought—the driest Morley had ever seen it.

<sup>76</sup> A lotion or liniment rubbed on the body to ease soreness and pain from sprains, etc. In this case, it is for a mule.

back with them. The mare Ricketson has been riding gave birth to a still-born colt during the night. This was quite a surprise and did not seem to hurt her in the least. None of the animals happily had strayed, and we got off at the comparatively early (for us) hour of 9:20.

The way led down through dense growth, a tangle of vines, roots, and smaller bushes to the Río Holmul, which we forded without any difficulty. Having crossed the stream, the ground rose more rapidly than on the other side. In fact, the going all day today was much better than any of the preceding four days. Immediately after leaving the river, we crossed some high ground where there arose some ruins. This may be the ruins of Holmul, which Merwin excavated so long ago; I think it was in 1912 or 1913. I did not see them as we passed, and my attention was only called to them a league farther on.

Dropping off this island of higher ground, we crossed a considerable *bajo*, then across some higher ground, and then another *bajo* on the other side of which, at 11:20—2 hours out—we reached the *jato* of El Caldero. On the way from the river, about 11 o'clock, we passed the *chicleros* coming from San Francisco, the *chiclería* of don Antonio Maldonado. They told me a new road had been opened up from El Águila through to San Francisco, and that it was only 1½ leagues. This later proved to be a pious lie, as it took us 2½ hours to do it, and even at our slow pace this must have covered 2½ leagues. This information changed all our plans, since instead of going around by way of Cubeta and Ixcánrío, and not getting to San Francisco until tomorrow night, we will cut off both of these *jatos* and sleep tonight at San Francisco, a day gained.

Sometime after we left Caldero, we reached the base of the range, or sierra, on the northwest side of the Holmul Valley. At the base, Ricketson and I compared our barometers. He has the one I bought off Boatman several years ago, which Rutherford had adjusted at the Bureau of Standards, and I had one Doctor Woodward has loaned me. Mine read 30.31 when we started up, and his 29.5. When we reached the top mine registered 375 feet and his 400. These readings were reached by placing the zero at the needle starting up. We have no means of knowing whether this is correct, but we felt the hill must be about that high when we went up it. It is a high ridge and forms the divide, or watershed, between the Old (or Belize) River and the river system of the northern part of the colony. A conference between Muddy, Charley, and I developed these facts pretty clearly: One, that the Ixcánrío runs to Gabriel's Falls; and two that Gabriel's Falls is on the Booth's River and the Booth's River is the eastern branch of the Hondo, Blue Creek being the western branch. Charley sponsors the first fact and Muddy the second. Therefore, what I wrote yesterday about the Ixcánrío flowing into the New River is incorrect. It seems now almost certain the Ixcánrío flows into Booth's River, or becomes Booth's River, and this of course flows into the Hondo.

Coming down off this ridge, the drop is gradual as in the cases of all these ridges. The southern slopes are sharp, but the northern slopes are gradual. At 4 hours out from the Río Holmul we came to some abandoned *champas* which constitute the *paraje* of El Águila. Here, the new trail from Antonio Maldonado's *jato* of San Francisco opens, bearing off to the northwest. This road could not be more than a fortnight old, and it is the best bit of trail we have struck yet. They boys who told us it was only a league and a half, however, lied, for as I have said we made good time doing this bit in 2½ hours. We passed two fair-sized, small groups of ruins, one of them showing a fairly good back wall. About 1½ leagues from El Águila we met a trail coming in from the right, and bearing in the same direction that we were going. This trail is well traveled

and Charley at once identified it as the one coming from La Cubeta. After this we traveled for a good league, arriving at the *jato* of San Francisco at 3:55, or 6 hours and 35 minutes after leaving. But we stopped for 20 minutes at El Caldero to talk to a man about the ruins of Holmul, so we were actually 6¼ hours on our way.

The *jato* of San Francisco was a busy scene. There were eight or ten *champas* occupied by twelve or fifteen men, some half a dozen women, and even children, perhaps 25 or 30 souls in all. Antonio's aunt, now Mrs. Plácido Castillo, was in charge in her nephew's absence. I had met her 5 years ago when she was a widow living at Laguna de Yaloch, just before Lafleur's death. Her husband, Plácido Castillo, I also met at the same time in the same place. He is here at San Francisco now with her, and the moment I laid eyes on them both I remembered I had met them somewhere before. And then it came back to me. I remember him particularly because he told me of a ruin near a place named Libertad in Quintana Roo, two hard *jornadas* from Ixcapen, where there was a hieroglyphic monument. As I look back on this, thought it may have been in 1915 when I passed through Laguna with Percy Adams that I got this information from Plácido.<sup>77</sup> Both he and his *señora* remembered me and nothing would do but that we must come into their *champa*, the best in the *jato*, and have coffee.

After this it got nosed around that we had a doctor with us, and several patients came into an open-air clinic which Ricketson opened in an abandoned *champa* that belonged to the two boys we met on the road to El Cayo this morning. His first patient was a man, a *chiclero*, who had fallen 30 feet out of a tree more than a year ago and his shoulder still hurt him! Our wonder was that he was still alive to tell about it. Ricketson rubbed his back with our mule embrocations and painted and sprayed his wrist with iodine. While these ministrations were going forward, another case, or rather notice of it, was brought to us. A young lady of tender years—fifteen—was given to epileptic fits, a matter of some 7 or 8 years standing, and her father wanted her cured. Ricketson thought this distemper incurable, but Muddy had a ready cure, so he said, one that had been tried on his wife and on her two sisters, and it had worked a successful cure in all three cases. These estimable ladies had all suffered from such epileptic attacks, but they had disappeared after marriage in each case! Muddy suggested the present victim might be cured by the same treatment. The subject had its delicate side, but we sent back word that while we could do nothing, the attacks might disappear if the young woman were married. The father sent back his thanks and said he thought it was highly probable.

While the clinic was in operation, we heard frequent loud cries, almost lamentations I thought, in one of the nearby *champas*. Later one of the boys said that Pedro Rosales had told one of the girls here in the *jato* that her mother had died 3 months before at Branch Mouth. Poor girl, she gave herself away to unrestrained grief and shrieked piteously, but she was gradually quieted. What a hard life they have at best, and how little even our poor people know of real hardship.

We had dinner just outside the *champa* of Señora Castillo and afterward I told her husband to assemble all the men in the *jato* as I wanted to talk to them. When they got together, I told them about the *avisos* I had printed last year [Figure 8.1] and what rewards I was offering for new sites which contained monuments. There was only one boy in the place who could report any, one

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<sup>77</sup> March 6, 1915 (Rice and Ward 2021: 184).



Justo Sul, and on close questioning and after making a map I became convinced that it was Xultun. Indeed, he said he found bottles and tins about. This convinced me that it must be Xultun, but when I drew out the map and found out where it was in reference to Petipet, this conviction became a certainty. However, I told Muddy to arrange with him to accompany me thither tomorrow, which he said he would do.

I also got Charley to locate exactly on the map where his ruins are, and they appear to be somewhat farther south than Xultun, though they cannot be too far off in an air line. By the time these conferences were finished it had come on to rain, and most of us adjourned to the principal *champa* of the group that belonged to my friend Plácido Castillo and his *señora*. Here Modesto put up the cots and the *pabellones* and here a concert was given on the phonograph. I dare say of all the times Alma Gluck has sung "My Little Gray Home in the West,"<sup>78</sup> it has never been in stranger surroundings: here, by the light of two kerosene lanterns in a palm-thatched hut, with a lot of native Guatemalan and colonial *chicleros* standing by.

The evening wore on and the rain fell heavily and it turned cold—a cheerless night. We got to bed before ten o'clock in spite of the interested spectators. We have a *jornada* of 6 leagues ahead of us, about as far as we have done today, and so we were glad enough to get to bed early. I got some data from Plácido Castillo about a monument up in Quintana Roo. These data are as follows: One should go to Ixcopen on the Rio Hondo, and thence to Naranjal (5 leagues), thence to Central Reforma (5 leagues), thence to San Antonio Mexicana (5 leagues), and thence to La Libertad (6 leagues—this last the longest *jornada*). From La Libertad you go due north for not more than a league at the outside, and then come to a creek, and on the far side of that is the stela, a short *grito* from the bank. It is 8 to 9 feet high and 4 to 5 feet wide, has a human figure with a crown, plumes, and hieroglyphics; still further north is a big *ramonal* and a "*barbaridad de ruinas*." Merwin photographed the latter, but did not see this monument. The only other person who saw it besides Plácido Castillo was a man named Luis Méndez, now a worker in the chicle business in El Cayo. Plácido thinks that if I had Luis there in La Libertad he could find it again. Of course, one stela there with a date on it would be worth ten down here, because of its position on the southern edge of the New Empire in Yucatan. Sometime Gann or I will go up there and see it, or better still, send Muddy.

Curious how I should run into this chap Plácido Castillo way out here in the Petén bush after having seen him last 5 or 6 years ago.

### **February 12, Saturday**

The rain continued all night and was going strong at daylight. I called the boys at 6:30, but it was well on toward seven when they finally got astir. It was cold and though the rain presently let up some, it drizzled on and off all day. There was plenty to annoy. In the first place, the boy Justo, who is the only one who knows where Xultun is, refused to go. First, he wanted a mule and this I got for him from Plácido Castillo, and then, because it was raining, he wanted to stay and bleed chicle. The sap only runs when it rains. I finally offered to let him name his own price, but he said he wouldn't go at all. This made me quite lose my patience and I had the satisfaction of telling him that he was born a fool and would certainly die one. To my surprise this proved to be the

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<sup>78</sup> To hear Alma Gluck sing this song, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPzRTc56-q4>.

turning point, for he later sent around word that he would go for ten dollars for the trip, his food, and a horse.

During the miserable drizzle, the loading of the mules went forward after breakfast. I wrote a letter to Tancredo Pérez, one of Natalio Guzman's *chicleros* who is supposed to know where a new ruin is on the other side of La Palma, telling him to come work for me and that if he would guide me thither, I would pay him a premium of \$25.00. This letter I am sending by the hand of Modesto Pérez, who is to guide this other Pérez back to the *jato* of Desvario, which, as I understand Justo, is about a league from Xultun itself. I have instructed Modesto to surely be back by tomorrow night. I also gave Plácido a letter to Wyatt, in which I requested the latter to pay the former \$5.00 for the use of his mule these four days that Justo is to be with me. Before going, I engaged another boy, Alejandro, to come along as *arriero* until Modesto should return.

After thanking the *señora* and Plácido—she is very kind and nice, but equally garrulous—we took our leave. Poor Plácido in his three years of married bliss has learned quite to efface himself and let her do the talking, which she is quite willing to do. He is her second venture, and one suspects No. 1's end may have been hastened by too much conversation. It was just 9:30 when we left the *jato*. We now have 17 animals instead of 16, 11 men instead of 10, but these are temporary additions and will not stay with us beyond three or four days. We were told that Ixcarrío was only 3½ leagues off, but we did not reach it until 3:30, six hours on the way. Of course, we just crept along, but even discounting our admittedly snail's pace, we must have been making 2¼ miles an hour, and that would give a total of 13½ miles, or 4½ leagues, which is about what we covered.

At the end of the first two hours, we passed a small stream which the boys unhappily mistook for the Ixcarrío, whereas it could only have been an affluent of it. The river itself, as I say, we did not reach until half past three. It was a familiar *paraje* to Chico and me, as we were here a little less than 9 months ago. The place hasn't improved any in that period, although it has grown much damper. It was here Chico found a broken shotgun which he only decided to leave behind because we had no shells for it. I am now on a familiar trail, and it cannot be more than 6 or 8 miles to Xultun.

It looks like rain, and after dinner we moved everything under cover. Ricketson and I, together with George, Pedro, and Charley, slept under a long *champa*, while Rutherford and Muddy put up the oiled tarp and slept under that. We had tea about eight with some delicious sweet biscuits of Peck Frean and Co. and with this and the graphophone, we whiled away the rest of the evening. It was not raining when we turned in about nine and we almost have hopes that the rain may hold off altogether and that we will have fair weather tomorrow.

### **February 13, Sunday**

Owing to the fact that one of Elfio's own mules was missing, we didn't get off until 9:45. George and Pedro brought in all but this one, and then whilst they were loading, Elfio himself went out. He was gone so long that I sent out Justo with the understanding that if Elfio returned with the animal, we would make a signal by shooting three times. Scarcely had he left, it seemed, when Elfio came in with the missing animal. Ricketson fired off his own gun three times and presently Justo returned.

We got off at a quarter to ten, and in just an hour had reached the fork in the trail, the right-



hand branch being the one we took. The left, Charley told me, led to the new *jato* of Emilio Urrutia, some four miles distant. Beyond this lies his own ruins, about a league. Not five minutes farther on we came to another fork in the trail, and again we took the right-hand branch. This led to the old *jato* of Emilio Urrutia. The left-hand fork led to the *jato* of La Máquina and Petipet, and was the road we followed last year.<sup>79</sup> We passed several mounds, one fairly high.

The *jato* of Emilio was quite an ambitious affair. There were half a dozen *champas*, and in one we retrieved some needed treasure—first a lantern, and second, two tins of lard. These last we did not take with us, but hid out in the bush against our return. Other valuables lay about—a guitar, an oil painting of Emilio himself done by Gross (a Swiss artist who is now in Flores), an indifferent likeness, built on in chromo-style.

The next stretch of our journey was from this *jato* on to that of Desvario, where Antonio Maldonado had his people. This we had been told was only one league, but it took our slow-going *mulada* two long hours to do it. We reached this *jato* of Desvario at 1:25, and allowing 10 minutes for the stop at Emilio's, we were 4½ hours only on the way. The greater part of the *mulada* stopped here, but Rutherford, Justo, George, and I pushed on to the nearer *jato* to the ruins. A half mile on beyond Desvario we took a less-used trail to the left, and a mile along this brought us to the first *jato* of Antonio Maldonado. We went first to the *aguada* to see if it perchance still contained water. Happily, it did, though not much. It will probably last our outfit for the week we will be here. The *champas* are in fairly good condition and we can be quite comfortable here.

But I was not satisfied yet. I wanted to get the ruins located today, so we left along a trail leading somewhat to the southwest. Perhaps a half a mile out, Justo left this trail (which leads to Petipet) and struck off into the bush in a westerly direction. After perhaps three quarters of an hour going forward slowly and passing many mounds in the bush (including one high, new pyramid I never saw before) we emerged in the Plaza at Group A [of Xultun] at the northeast corner, between Temples II and III. I took them first to Stela 3, which we turned over. George was of the naïve opinion that the builders of this ancient city were “brutes,” a high compliment for him to pay. They all admired the sculpture on the face and then I took them over to Temple I, where were some tins and a bottle we had left here last May.

We climbed Temple I, clear to the roof comb, and again had that wonderful view from the summit [Figure 16.7]. To the northwest lay the high sierra on the northern side of the Ixcanrío valley, to the southeast the high hill we had come over yesterday on the southern side of the same valley. Intervening subsidiary ridges made lower crests, but the high sierra crowned the horizon. George cleared the top and we had a splendid view. Coming down we slipped and slid and almost fell. It was getting on after four when we came down, and so we started for home, blazing a very clear trail out to the main road we had left.

It was after five when we got back to the *jato* of Desvario. Modesto had already returned with Tancredo Pérez. I understand from what he says that his ruins are Naranjo. He says the stones he knows are “*casi pegado al jato de Prisciliano Sánchez*” [almost next to Prisciliano Sánchez's camp]. These are certainly those of Naranjo. Because he had come all the way over from El Susto, I offered him a job at \$1.50 a day and board until I should come to his ruins, and if they were new, I would

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<sup>79</sup> Morley's 1920 visit to Xultun is covered in Chapter 10. See also Chapter 9.

pay him \$25.00. If not, he would not have lost any time. He appeared not overanxious to accept this offer, but I left it up to him and returned to our *champa*.



Figure 16.7. The view to the south from the top of Xultun Structure A-1—Morley's Temple I.

Muddy had fixed up the tarp in front of the *champa*, and so we had supper under this. Later, Rutherford and I had our cots placed here. While we were exploring Xultun and blazing a trail thither, Rutherford was shooting and brought down one dove, which I must say was delicious. Two *chicleros* coming out from the interior bound for El Cayo arrived in the later afternoon and stayed the night.

We are getting down to the following routine: Breakfast about 7, dinner about 4:30 or 5, and a tea at 8:00. In these three meals, we do nicely. We turned in after nine, anticipating a big day's work tomorrow.

## CHAPTER 17.

### XULTUN

#### February 14, Monday

Although I got the boys up at 6:30, we didn't get off for the ruins until nearly 9. Tancredo Pérez decided not to work for me and left this morning, as did the other two *chicleros*. This left 12 of us—our regular 10 from El Cayo, plus Justo and Alejandro. I left Muddy, Charley, Elfio, and Alejandro, and the rest of us set off for the ruins, those with horses went mounted, and in addition we took over one cargo animal with jacks, shovels, and picks. The saddle animals we left at the *jato* (Alto Ramonal) and continued on to the ruins with the one cargo animal.

We stopped first at the new stone George found yesterday, and started to turn it over. While the rest of the men under Ricketson and Rutherford were turning this stone, I took Justo with me and we set out for the main plaza (Group A). Reaching here, we started back to the northeast and in a short time passed the broken stela in the quarry and soon came to Group B. We hallooed from here and got a faint answer off to the northwest somewhere, and made our way through the bush thither. Work was going forward on the monument, but it wasn't up yet. We set to work anew and succeeded in breaking the larger jack. It is not entirely out of commission, since it still can be used in lifting, but in lowering it, considerable coaxing is required.

After I had returned from Group B, I sent Justo out to look around through the bush for the remaining stela Aurelio Aguayo said still existed somewhere in Group B. He returned while we were still worrying with the jack and repeated that he had found three new monuments. We soon satisfied ourselves that George's stone, if it ever had been a stela, was always a plain one, and, gathering together all the tools, we proceeded to follow Justo to his new find.

These three new monuments, which I have named Stelae 19, 20, and 21, respectively, faced west and were arranged along the western base of the large new pyramid I noticed for the first time yesterday.<sup>80</sup> I suspect they are in the same plaza as the other monuments of Group B. We ate dinner here. These three monuments all had their fronts sculptured with human figures and their sides with glyphs, the backs being plain. In falling, the middle one (Stela 20) fell face upward, the other two fell face downward.

We turned our attention first to Stela 19, and by use of the two jacks and all the elbow grease we could muster, we finally got it up, or rather the large part. The bottom quarter was so weathered as to [not] show the sculptured detail. The subject presented was a human facing to

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<sup>80</sup> This large pyramid is now named Structure B-7 and dominated the east side of the Group B Plaza and E-Group. The stelae Morley discovered on the Group B Plaza in 1920 (Chapter 10, pp. 89–92) front a complex of several structures—B-9, B-10, B-11, and B-12.

the left, and in his outstretched hand he held the figure of a tiger [a jaguar cub<sup>81</sup>] from whose mouth there issued a scroll [Figure 17.1]. It was considerably cruder in style than the same subject as portrayed on Stelae 3 and 10 [Figure 10.6] at Group A. It makes, with these three, however, a nice series. Unfortunately, I could get no dates from it.



Figure 17.1. The very weathered upper section of Xultun Stela 19.

When we got this up, we called it a day's work and came home, tired but satisfied. Three new monuments added to the seventeen previously known is not bad at all. I take it from the crudeness of the representation that these three monuments are all Middle or possibly even Early Period. This city of Xultun, as I have named it, must have been a great Maya capital lasting for a long time, and from present indications, at least, surviving all of its contemporaries. The bush is filled with clusters of mounds in every direction from the two principal plazas, and it must be ranked as a city of the second group [see Introduction, pp. xiii–xvi)].

After getting back to camp I tried to persuade Justo Tsul to return to work for me after he had taken don Plácido's mule back to him, but he said he had "*mucho que hacer*" [much to do] in El Cayo, and couldn't. I can see I am somewhat shorthanded, and I wish I had brought three or four more boys with me. The boys did not get back from the other *jato* until after one o'clock, and then they left Elfio searching for one mule.

### February 15, Tuesday

Although we got up fairly early, we did not reach the ruins until after nine; several things delayed us. I had to pay Justo and Alejandro off, and write two letters, one to Plácido Castillo requesting him to send some more men and another to Wyatt asking him to pay the bearer (Justo Xul/Tsul?)

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<sup>81</sup> See Chapter 9, p. 69, note 92.

\$4.50, being \$1.50 for each of the three monuments he had discovered, the premium I am offering for new monuments at old sites.

Not far from the *jato* on the way over, George's dog, Bully, ran into a *tepuscuintli*.<sup>82</sup> This darted into a hollow log, perhaps 30 feet long, and the two dogs held it there until George, Pedro, and I got there. George at once stopped up one end, and then Pedro began "joking" the other. "Joking," I have heard it before in these parts, means poking. The log, however, was too long to "joke" effectively, and the *tepuscuintli* seemed safe. George next selected a place near the middle of the log and began chopping a hole through it. I was near the spot and suddenly heard a scraping sound and through a narrow crack saw the *tepuscuintli* squeeze by. George quickly stopped this up and began poking his end, but the *tepuscuintli* squeezed by this obstruction and was again at Pedro's end. But it was his last journey. George stopped up this crack effectually and they began cutting along a rotten streak from Pedro's end. Soon the *tepuscuintli* was in such close quarters that he began to grunt fiercely, and the two dogs almost went crazy with scratching and sniffing at the log. Pedro's end was next blocked nearer the center, and then with Pedro's joking, the animal was driven from cover and given his death blow by George at the point of a machete. When we dragged him out, he proved to be, or rather she proved to be, a fat animal in good flesh and must have weighed between six and eight pounds. I sent it back to camp by Chico, and we continued on to the ruins whither Rutherford and Modesto had preceded us.

The labors of the morning were on Stela 21, the upper three-fifths of which (in one piece) we finally turned by way of the two jacks [Figure 17.2]. When the right-hand side (when facing it) was uncovered I saw that it had an Initial Series, which unhappily I just miss getting the date of [Figure 17.3].



Figure 17.2. Morley (second from left) and his crew preparing to turn Xultun Stela 21.

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<sup>82</sup> Also spelled *tepezcuintle*; a large rodent, the lowland paca (*Cuniculus paca*).

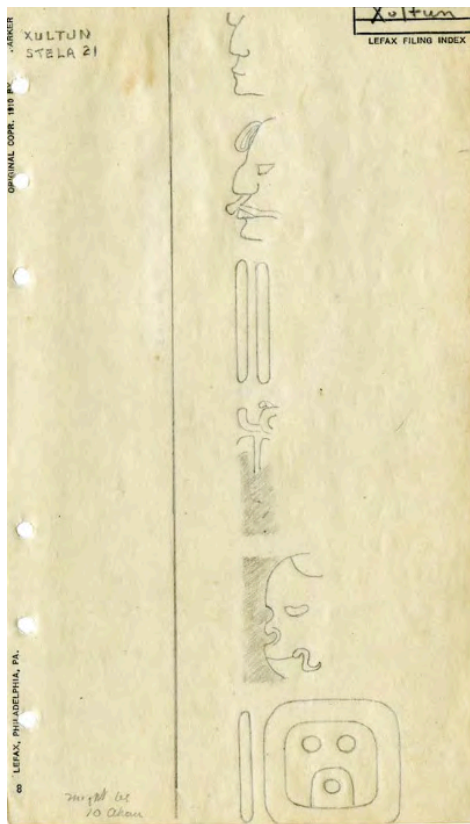


Figure 17.3. Morley's drawing in his field notes of the Initial Series of Xultun Stela 21.

The Initial Series Introducing Glyph is gone, and also the cycle sign and coefficient. The first glyph I could recognize was the *k'atun* coefficient, a head variant numeral. The *tun* coefficient appears quite clearly to be two bars, 10, and part of the zero of the *winal* coefficient appears. The *k'in* coefficient is entirely effaced, although the *k'in* sign itself *may* be traced, but it also must have been zero, since the day sign is unusually clear as Ajaw. The coefficient is at least 5 (one bar), but whether it was any more or not I cannot for the life of me tell, and it is a vital point to determine, too, since upon it depends the decipherment of the whole date, which it is obvious from the above must be a *lajuntun*. The choices available are:

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 9.1.10.0.0  | 5 Ajaw  |
| 9.2.10.0.0  | 3 Ajaw  |
| 9.3.10.0.0  | 1 Ajaw  |
| 9.4.10.0.0  | 12 Ajaw |
| 9.5.10.0.0  | 10 Ajaw |
| 9.6.10.0.0  | 8 Ajaw  |
| 9.7.10.0.0  | 6 Ajaw  |
| 9.8.10.0.0  | 4 Ajaw  |
| 9.9.10.0.0  | 2 Ajaw  |
| 9.10.10.0.0 | 13 Ajaw |
| 9.11.10.0.0 | 11 Ajaw |

9.12.10.0.0	9 Ajaw
9.13.10.0.0	7 Ajaw
9.14.10.0.0	5 Ahaw

If the Ajaw coefficient is 5, and it looks more like 5 than anything else, then the date can only be 9.14.10.0.0 as 9.1.10.0.0 is historically impossible. The trouble with this reading is that I fail to detect the fleshless lower [jaw] on the *k'atun* coefficient. The next best reading of the Ajaw coefficient is 10, giving a reading of 9.5.10.0.0, again historically impossible. I am inclined to think that 9.14.10.0.0 is probably the best reading. It is very aggravating, for if the Ajaw coefficient were only certain, the date would be deciphered certainly. I shall try on it further.

When we finally got this piece turned up it was only to find that it was in very poor condition. Sufficient remained to show, however, that the figure had never supported a tiger [jaguar]<sup>83</sup> in its right hand, as do the others already turned (Stelae 3, 10, and 19). We finished just before noon and then cut across to Stelae 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. These, as I suspected, are on the same plaza as Stelae 19, 20, and 21. We lunched first and then, by common consent, selected Stela 15, the heaviest. This was variously estimated as 10 to 20 tons in weight. I gave it about 12 tons myself. It is a solid piece of limestone, 10 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 2 feet thick.<sup>84</sup> We began by placing the jacks at each end and using a long pole as a lever in the middle. Eight of us got on the end of this and what we gained in lifting the stone, the jacks held [Figure 17.4]. Presently we got it about a third of the way up and the lever began to get unmanageable.



Figure 17.4. The team raising Xultun Stela 15 with jacks and cribbing.

<sup>83</sup> See Chapter 9, page 69.

<sup>84</sup> The dimensions of Stela 15 are 3.30 m high, 1.40 m wide, and 78 cm thick (Von Euw 1978: 49).



Next, we began to build a cribbing of poles under the center to take up what the jacks gained for us, thus reversing the former process, and slowly the stone was raised. There came a time when it began to grow much easier, and at least we got it very nearly vertical.

We next braced the jacks against our crib and applied force here, but although this helped some, it soon began to force the crib itself back and it had to be abandoned, but by now the stela was so nearly vertical that I called it a day's work. It was after five-thirty and the boys had worked hard and faithfully all day long, so we braced the stone with a patent device of Muddy's and also many smaller sticks and poles and returned to camp [Figure 17.5].



Figure 17.5. Xultun Stela 15 raised on its side.

One of the minor incidents of this raising was the unearthing of a small red snake that was at first taken for a coral snake, but after it had been killed, we found it lacked the characteristics—yellow and black bands—and Ricketson, who examined its head, pronounced that it had no poison fangs.

Stela 15 proved a great disappointment. The sculpture was very badly weathered, and although the fact that a human figure could be distinguished, very little else could be made out of it. I had dated this monument last year as 9.14.0.0.0, but the only two glyphs on the front were non-calendar. The first was that rodent's head<sup>85</sup> one sees so much on the fronts of stela with an ending prefix. What is it? Who can say? The more I study the monuments of these ancient Maya, the more convinced I become that whatever it was they were recording, it was the same thing everywhere throughout the Old Empire from Palenque to Copan, and from these northern Petén

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<sup>85</sup> The "rodent head glyph" is T757, a logograph BAH, often used as an expression introducing the name of the individual depicted on a monument: *ubaah*, "his/her image" (M.Looper, personal communication to CW, 8/11/2022).

cities to Ocosingo in the far southwest. Whatever it was the ancient sculptors were recording, it was the same thing everywhere.

I was quite lame and stiff from straining on these stones today, and turned in to my cot immediately after dinner, at which meal we had some of the *tepisquintli* in a stew. It was delicious. Indeed, it is said to be the finest of all the bush meats. The flesh is white and fine grained, and not unlike chicken meat, though sweeter. The English call it a gibnut.

### February 16, Wednesday

This was rather a discouraging day at the ruins. We started felling the big breadnut tree [*ramón*], which has grown on top of Stela 17. This tree had really grown into three and had thrown many roots around the monument. All morning long, George, Modesto, and Pedro worked on this with their axes, but failed to fell it before lunch. When this work was well started, I gave Chico to Rutherford, who started his photography by clearing and photographing Stela 12 [Figure 17.6], the standing monument just south of the temples in front of Stelae 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17.



Figure 17.6. Rutherford's photo of Xultun Stela 12. The principal figure faces right, atypically.

This is in a pretty good condition and has two very unusual features, almost, though probably not quite, unique. In the first place the main figure faces to the right, and in the second place, this stela so far as I can see has no hieroglyphs on it of any sort. The back is plain and so are the sides, and the front has no glyphs.<sup>86</sup>

While they were photographing this monument, Ricketson and I started the map of Group B at the southeast corner of that plaza, and completed the east side before lunch, tying in all the monuments. As I make it, this side had a small pyramid in the southeast corner, then the large central construction in front of Stelae 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, which seems to have had two temples upon it: a lower one and behind it, a higher one. Then farther north and still along the east side of the plaza, there are two small buildings enclosing two very small squares. Finally, at the north end of the east side is a very large pyramid, in front of which stand Stelae 18, 19, and 20.

After this work was over, I returned to the tree-cutting and Ricketson made an exploration of the north and west sides of the plaza. When I got back, Pedro claimed to have found a new monument, but when I was shown it, it proved to be a natural rock, and it had no "*marcas.*" It was in the quarries not far from the standing broken shaft [found last year].

I took Pedro off with me to Group A and, starting from the northeast corner of Temple I [Structure A-1], I struck due north through the bush by compass for 469 paces; then, having got an answer to my shout from the southeast, I returned 69 paces, reaching a point just 400 paces north of my starting point. From here, I turned east and went 200 paces, and then, hearing the boys somewhere off to the south, I turned again and went due south for 100 paces, and then east again for 59 paces, and I exactly reached the base of Stela 17 where they were all working. The roots were not quite finished around the base of this, but I called all hands off for lunch.

After lunch, the boys went at the roots of the *ramón* tree with a vengeance, and presently the triple tree began to strain and groan and finally, with a tear sound, it broke loose, but unhappily leaving the stone in its place, falling in such a way that the butt of the tree prevented us from turning the stela even with jacks. I was very disappointed and all the boys, I noted, were correspondingly depressed. I judged a change of labor and scene to be indicated, and so telling the boys to bring the jacks, we moved over to Group A and turned the three fragments of Stela 10, fitting them. By this time, it was about 3:30, so I decided to let them off. We stopped for a moment at Stelae 7, 8, and 9, the scene of our labors for tomorrow, and then got back to the *champas* a little after four.

There had been some grumbling among the men; stories came back to me that Charley threatens to go home tomorrow, the next day, Sunday, *quien sabe* when, but Charley says nothing to me and I will not prepare a bridge for that stream until I come to it. I plotted up our survey after dinner, and read the diary of the Uaxactun trip, the year Lafleur was killed. Ruddy prepared for developing early tomorrow morning and afterward played casino with Muddy.

### **February 17, Thursday**

Stela 7, 8, and 9 took our time during the morning, but we started first on Stela 5 [Figure 17.7], the upper half of which Carl Guthe and I had tried to turn over last year, but unsuccessfully. This

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<sup>86</sup> Sometime between Morley's visits in the early 1920s and Von Euw's visit in 1974, Stela 12 had been illicitly removed from the site. Its present location is unknown (Von Euw 1978: 39).

morning with the aid of the two jacks it went right over, and to our great delight it had a fairly good figure on the front, well preserved. Again, it held in its right hand the figure of a tiger.



Figure 17.7. Xultun Stela 5, photographed by Rutherford in 1921. The white outline around the monument is the separation technique used to prepare this image for publication in *The Inscriptions of the Peten* (Morley 1937–38, V[i]: Plate 76).

From here we moved to Stela 7 and without much difficulty turned it over. It was almost entirely effaced, and we could not detect the details of the design. Stela 8 was one we had turned

our attention to last year, but equally unsuccessfully. A large *ramón* tree had grown over this stela also, and we cut the roots at the ground, hoping that when the tree fell, it would take the stone with it. Unfortunately, last May when the roots were severed, the branches became engaged and it wouldn't drop. This year we gave it an examination and decided that with the two jacks it could be raised sufficiently so that the tree would be disengaged and carry the stone over. To assist this, we attached a rope to one end of the branches of the *ramón*, and at the same time we raised the jacks we pulled on the rope. But it finally turned out that the *bejuacas* were engaged in the transaction and the top could not be disengaged. Our next step was to cut the tree itself near the base, but even then it did not fall. But at least it permitted us to jack up the step and finally to get it over. The face was not very well preserved.

It was now close on to one o'clock and we stopped for lunch. We had some of those delicious Monterey sardines, of which we brought so many. The two weak points of our larder are our jams and the salmon, both of which are of inferior quality.

After lunch, Ricketson and I took Charley and Pedro and started off for Group B to start running a line back to Group A. We started at Stela 12 and ran 1,000 feet due south; thence 788 feet due west, thence 100 feet due north, thence 49 feet due east to the center of Stela 5. When plotted up this makes Stela 12 at Group B 1,225 feet northeast of Stela 5 at Group A, in other words, not quite a quarter of a mile, which is just what I doped out last year both as to direction and as to distance.

It has been a good day. We turned three monuments and had tied in the two principal groups one to another, and I was tired out. So, I called off work and we started home from the ruins a little after three and were back at the *champas* before four. I am planning on leaving Saturday afternoon. The *mulada* will leave for Desvario in the morning, and we will ride over in the late afternoon. Sunday we will go over to Charley's ruins. When I asked him what is the name of his *jato*, he said La Invidia [Jealousy], because of the chicle business. I asked him if he thought Emilio Urrutia would be there, but he couldn't be sure. I hope he is, because we need more supplies.

## February 18, Friday

This morning started in at Group A. I wrote up Stelae 4 and 5. The former, I think, dates from 9.11.0.0.0 and the latter from 9.12.0.0.0. These are early dates, but the carving is rather crude and the reading on Stela 5 seems particularly close. I was noticing the work George had done on Stela 6 yesterday and I suddenly noticed, very clearly recorded indeed, K'atun 3.<sup>87</sup> Then I saw that above this at A1-B1 had been inscribed an Initial Series Introducing Glyph, now very much gone, and to the left of the *k'atun* sign, the remains of a cycle [*bak'tun* sign]. Part of the head variant of the period glyph still shows, but the coefficient is gone. I think I detect part of a bar, but I am not so sure. The *winals* are very clear as 0, and the *k'ins* must be so since the day is Ajaw, the coefficient is surely 11, 12, 13, and possibly 10. I determined to have this very early stela, some 400 years earlier than Stela 3 in the same plaza, thoroughly cleaned out in the morning.

After lunch, Ricketson, Charley, Pedro, and I went back to Group B to run the survey lines across the south, west, and north sides. We had gotten over to the northwest corner when it came on to rain heavily and suddenly. There was no shelter nearby and we all got well drenched. We

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<sup>87</sup> This would be *k'atun* 3 in *bak'tun* (cycle) 9, or 9.3.0.0.0, a late Early Classic date of AD 495–514.

finally got around the north side and back to the big pyramid. From here we returned to the good wall on the west side, and from here we ran a straight line east to the east side of the plaza. This line passed about 30' [9.1 m] south of the stela I had named 18, but Pedro uncovered another one just south of this, and I will give this the number 18, making the other 19 and the two remaining west of the great pyramid, nos. 20 and 21.

I left Charley and Pedro to uncover this while Ricketson and I returned to see how George was getting on with Stela 6. He was getting down pretty well, but the inscription is very deeply buried, particularly on the Initial Series side. I picked up George, Modesto, and the two jacks to return to the new stela to turn it over when the bottom literally fell out of the sky. I thought it had rained before, but this time it poured. What little of me that had remained dry was soon wet.

As soon as it ceased a little, George, Ricketson, Chico, and I returned to the stela where we found Charley and Pedro under an improvised shelter of palm. At first, I thought to turn Pedro's new monument easily, but this proving refractory and the rain continuing to fall heavily, I called all hands off and we started for home. Modesto did not come back with us, nor did Ruddy, he having remained behind in the shelter of Temple VI [Structure A-14], which is the only roof standing in the city [see Chapter 10, Figure 10.3, p. 78].

It rained so hard that water stood in the trail in pools, and fairly oozed out of our shoes. Ricketson and I had decided to have a bath as soon as we got in. In both cases it was a much-needed ceremony. I hadn't bathed since I left Ixcanrío and Ricketson's record was even higher, in more ways than one. As soon as we reached the *champas*, where everything that was not wet was damp, we stripped to the skin, peeling off our soaking clothes, and went outside in the rain. I stood in the collapsible rubber bathtub which I have had for some years now, and under the tarp, from which trickled little streams of water. This rainwater shower bath was delicious, and afterward clean clothes from union-suit out. And after that, a good, stiff drink of brandy to warm us up inside.

After we were thus comfortably composed, Ruddy came in and we had dinner. It was chilly and damp, and my bedding was wet and clammy cold. I went to bed early and spent some time in arranging my *pabellón* so that the wet edges would not touch me. We had intended leaving tomorrow, but cannot make it now. We will go on Sunday, however.

The surroundings and location of Group B are beginning to be clear. From the *champa*, the path swings west and finally north, approaching the ruins from that latter direction. For a mile [1.6 km] from the main trail into Group B the trail rises gently so that it is possibly 200' [61 m] higher at Group B than where it leaves the main trail. The survey of Group B brings out the fact that on the south, west, and north sides, the ground drops away sharply, leaving Group B as a sort of promontory pointing northwestward. That is, the ground falls away less sharply to the south, more sharply on the west side, and most sharply of all on the north side, indeed along this edge of the plaza, a stone retaining wall has been built. In places this must be 20 or even 30 feet [6-9 m] high. Such a location for this plaza must have set it off magnificently from the rest of the country and made of it a conspicuous landmark with its lofty temple and palaces.

I find myself very much more impressed with Xultun this year than I was last spring. It is much larger than I thought it was last year. It now has 21 monuments, and the extreme in dates indicates occupation of close on to 400 years. It is one of the biggest cities of the Old Empire,

certainly the largest in the northeast, and the discovery today of a K'atun 3 stela makes it of very long duration. I really can spend much more time here to advantage.<sup>88</sup>

### February 19, Saturday

All hands turned to Pedro's new stela, No. 18 [renumbered 19], which though small gave us a lot of trouble in the turning. This was due to the fact that the jacks easily raised it to an angle of 45 degrees, and then there was no place to put them, and from here on it went up very slowly. The relief, happily, is in excellent condition, only the face is slightly marred, a characteristic of most Maya stelae, due I believe to a greater delicacy of the carving at this point. There are some excellently preserved glyphs, though none is calendric. The inevitable tiger is borne aloft on the palm of the right hand extended before the figure. On the right side, about half way down, there are the remains of two coefficients, the lower is surely 9 and the upper one looks like 9 also. As they are so far from the top of the monument, they must belong to the *tun* and *winal*, or the *winal* and *k'in*, and so are of little help in dating the monument. After this was turned, we gave it a good wash, and in an excellent light it was photographed [Figure 17.8].



Figure 17.8. Xultun Stela 18 (now 19), front.

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<sup>88</sup> Morley returned to Xultun as part of his 1923 CIW expedition.



George and Pedro now came with me over to Stela 6, where they spent the rest of the day digging and chopping at the large root of a larger *ramón* tree, which had thrown its roots out toward this monument. The last sign I could see on the right was Glyph C of the Supplementary Series, and I thought there might be four glyphs below this on the same side. But about noon, George reported he had reached the base of the stela, and there only remained to take out the huge forked root which was preventing our getting down to the base. This proved to be a matter of two or three hours, and when it was finished, I knocked off work for the day.

It was the loveliest day we have had yet, from a climatic point of view, and Rutherford spent most of it photographing. He developed in the early morning (i.e., of Sunday) to a dismal accompaniment of rain. Indeed, it rained all the latter part of the night, so much so that I was afraid it would spoil our last day of work at the ruins, Sunday. In the midst of his development at 3 o'clock of the early morning, Rutherford insisted that a jaguar had approached to within 6 feet of his developing, and that he had to shoo it away—some yarn, I thought rather sleepily.

### February 20, Sunday

This was to have been our last day at the *jato* of Alto Ramonal, but owing to the straying proclivities of one mule, the Aragón animal, we are held here another night. The arrangements for the day had been made as follows. Ricketson, Rutherford, Chico, myself, and George rode our animals over to the ruins where we tied them near the big triple *ramón* tree which had grown out of Stela 17. Pedro brought over one cargo mule to carry back the jacks, shovels, picks, and axes. The understanding was that Elfio, Charley, Modesto, Pedro, and Muddy would then move, some on to the old *champas* of Emilio Urrutia, where we were going to camp for the night. Pedro started for the ruins with us, and Chico helped him load the animal with the above material, and he left for camp not later than 10.

George, I put to work cleaning Stela 1 and I finished drawing the I.S. on Stela 6. I had started this yesterday afternoon after everybody had returned to the *champas* except Chico, who waited for me (we didn't get back until five). This Initial Series I am afraid escapes me except to within 3 or 4 possibilities within a fixed 20-year period, i.e., K'atun 3 [AD 495–514]. It reads 9.3.?.0.0 11, 12, or 13 Ajaw. The tun coefficient looks to be above 5 and under 16, and with these data I may be able to work something out. The important point, of course, is already determined, and that surely, namely that the monument is a very early one dating from K'atun 3. In other words, between this Stela 6 and Stela 10 on the opposite side of the same court is a matter of very nearly 400 years, well over 380. In short, almost the whole range of the Old Empire is covered between these two monuments.<sup>89</sup>

As interesting as is this condition, it is by no means unique, since between Stela 9 and Stela 7 at Uaxactun, 8.14.15.13.12 and 9.19.0.0.0 respectively, is another 380 odd years. Long periods of occupation these, for the same sites.

The rest of the morning I spent in finishing my notes on the monuments of Groups A and Rutherford in finishing his photographing here. We ate lunch from the back of Stela 3, the late Initial Series of which, 10.2.3.0.0 [ca. AD 871], took in an excellent diffused light just before lunch.

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<sup>89</sup> Morley is apparently using his own correlation instead of the GMT. Stela 6 is now dated AD 554 and Stela 10, AD 889. The difference between them is 335 years, not 380+.

After lunch we moved over to Group B, where I put George to work cleaning and digging around Stela 11. Ricketson, Rutherford, Chico, and I went over to Stelae 18, 19, 20, and 21, where I measured these four monuments with Ricketson. Afterward they all left me to draw the Initial Series of Stela 21, while they went over to photograph the good wall on the west side of the plaza [Figure 17.9].



Figure 17.9. Rutherford's photo of a well-preserved wall on the west side of the main plaza of Group B. Probably Structure B-19, B-20, or B-23.

While I was drawing here, I heard voices off to the northeast and presently Pedro and Modesto came through the bush with the unpleasant news that they were looking for the Aragón mule, which had strayed, and that the whole *mulada* was still at Alto Ramonal. Of course, this changed all plans for the day. We cannot make Emilio's *jato* before camping time, and the best we can now hope to do is to make Desvario, which is only half a league beyond Alto Ramonal, indeed I doubt if we get away from Alto Ramonal at all.

I sent them on through the bush looking for this miserable animal which has cost us at least half a day, if not a whole day, and went over to see how George was getting on [at Stela 11]. Here a delightful surprise awaited me. George had uncovered on this northern side of this stela (as you face it, the right side) another early Initial Series. The presentation of this was interesting. The first glyph (all gone) must have been the Initial Series Introducing Glyph, the second glyph, also gone, must have been Cycle 9. The third glyph, the second in the left-hand column, was most clearly and beautifully K'atun 5. The coefficient was a single rather deeply cut bar, not the usual *alto-relieve* of later times, but an in-cut sunken carving [intaglio]. The left half of the *k'atun* sign showed quite clearly. I estimated that the stela must originally have been about 2' thick, or 26"

[66 cm] possibly. The fourth sign was gone. It must have been the *tun*, which I passed over for the moment as I read it. The *winal*, the fifth sign, was clearly enough zero, the sixth sign entirely gone, though I have little doubt but that it was 0 *k'ins*. The coefficient of the seventh sign was again beautifully clear as 9. The dots were large sunken cups and the bar again sunken like the K'atun 5. The sign to which this was attached was mostly gone, but I noted the rim of the day-sign cartouche. I couldn't make out any month sign in the two or three remaining glyphs of the left-hand column.

And my reading of the date was 9.5.?.0.0 9 Ajaw. There is only one *tun* ending in K'atun 5 which can fulfill these conditions—9.5.7.0.0 9 Ajaw 3 Sots', and I am inclined to accept this reading as the correct one. If this is correct, it tends to throw light on the I.S. of Stela 6, which I read as 9.3.?.0.0 11, 12, or 13 Ajaw, with perhaps 13 as the best value of the day sign coefficient. The only *tun*-ending in K'atun 3 which ended on a day 13 Ajaw was 9.3.7.0.0 13 Ajaw 3 Kank'in, just two *k'atuns* earlier than the I.S. on Stela 11. I am, therefore, inclined to accept these two stelae recording the following I.S.:

Stela 6	9.3.7.0.0 13 Ajaw 3 Kank'in <sup>90</sup>
Stela 11	9.5.7.0.0 9 Ajaw 3 Sots'

This was a parting and amazing piece of good luck. While I was drawing this Initial Series, I had George saddle my horse, and by the time I had finished Ricketson and Chico were also ready and we left the ruins at 3:30. But I had to return. Speculating on the early date of Stela 11, it suddenly occurred to me that it might be 9.6.0.0.0 9 Ajaw. In other words, that there was a dot to the left of the single bar of the *k'atun* coefficient. So, although we were well back toward the main trails, Chico and I returned to the ruins and I verified the fact that it could never have been 6, the 5 was in exact alignment with the other two coefficients, the 0 and the 9. Moreover, the whole back of the monument had scaled off, and it was obvious there had been two columns of glyphs. I bid goodbye to the ruins of Xultun a second time, wondering when I would return a third time.

Plenty of trouble awaited me at the *champas*. The Aragón mule had not yet been found, and all the boys were still around camp. I was furious and gave Elfio a piece of my mind. He is the chief *arriero*, he knew we were to have gotten off again today, and he should have tied the animals last night, particularly the Aragón animal, which has this straying tendency always. I sent the three of them—Elfio, Pedro, and Modesto out to look again, and in about half an hour Pedro returned with the mule. He said it was straying toward the *jato* of Desvario. I told Elfio to have the animals tied tonight so we should not be delayed in the morning. We sorted out and catalogued the negatives in the evening. Everything was packed, so there was nothing to do but load. The moon was nearly full and very lovely.

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<sup>90</sup> Morley later wrote “WRONG—9.3.14.0.0 11 Ajaw” in the margin. In his field notes, he listed several possible dates for this monument, of which 9.3.17.0.0 was one. His final assessment of the Stela 6 date was 9.3.17.0.0 12 Ajaw 13 Sak (Morley 1937–38, VI: 388–389).

## CHAPTER 18.

### WANDERING FOR UAXACTUN

#### February 21, Monday

Blue Monday. Very Blue Monday, and it started that way before daylight. Everybody was up before dawn, and preparations for the day going forward satisfactorily when Muddy made some unfortunate allusion to the amount of lard the boys were consuming. Charley immediately took it up and soon there was a rapid crossfire of derogatory observations between the two. With common accord, both relapsed into Spanish and ragged each other soundly. Muddy seemed to score heaviest by saying they had all come into the bush "*muerto con hambre*," dead with hunger, literally. They were furious at this. George and Pedro came into the scrap and told Muddy he was using too abusive language. Charley refused to cook breakfast, said "I strike, Mr. Morley." I got dressed hastily, went over to the boys' *champa* and told him I had no objection to the amount of food he was using, and until I did he had no right to abandon me in that way. Further, that the whole matter was none of Muddy's business, and I would guarantee that he would keep out of it in the future. This appeared to pacify him, and he went back to his cooking. I told Muddy that hereafter he was to keep both hands and mouth off the other outfit, and so a temporary peace was restored. Things are in a state of very unstable equilibrium, and it will only take a word to precipitate trouble again.

We got off at 8:50, our earliest hour, and we made very good time. We passed through the *jato* of Desvario [Figure 18.1], and by 11:25 had reached the old *jato* of Emilio Urrutia. Charley brought out the lard he had hidden in the bush, and this was packed on one of the animals. The *macho* I bought off Arriaga has such a sore on his back that he carries no load. We passed on to the main road between Ixcánrío and La Máquina, which Carl Guthe and I had traveled last year, and thence for a few moments only till all reached the south-bearing trail leading off to the new *jato* of Emilio. This we reached at 1:30 and found it abandoned—another bit of ill luck, as I had hoped to buy some further supplies here.

The *champas* were alive with fleas, the worst place we have found yet for these insects, and in fact the only cheerful thing about the place is the large and good *aguada* very nearby. As a whole day will be lost if we do not find [Charley's] ruins today, I at once arranged that we go in search for them. Five of us went: myself, Ricketson, Chico, Charley, and George. We returned along the trail where we had come to the place where a trail led off to the south-by-east to San Francisco. This was very much overgrown, and we had to stop several times to cut away fallen brambles. After a not long ride, Charley stopped and said we take the bush here.

We dismounted, tied the animals, and set off into the bush bearing a little west of south. Charley thought his ruins were about a mile from the trail, so we went into the bush for about 30

minutes and then swung around toward the south, and finally toward the east we hit the San Francisco trail again, hot but not discouraged. We returned along the trail leading north and soon were back at our animals. We rested a few minutes and then went back into the bush again. This time we bore more to the west than to the south and succeeded in raising a single small pyramid. We passed on beyond this hoping to find the ruins beyond, but in spite of much walking, nothing further was encountered.

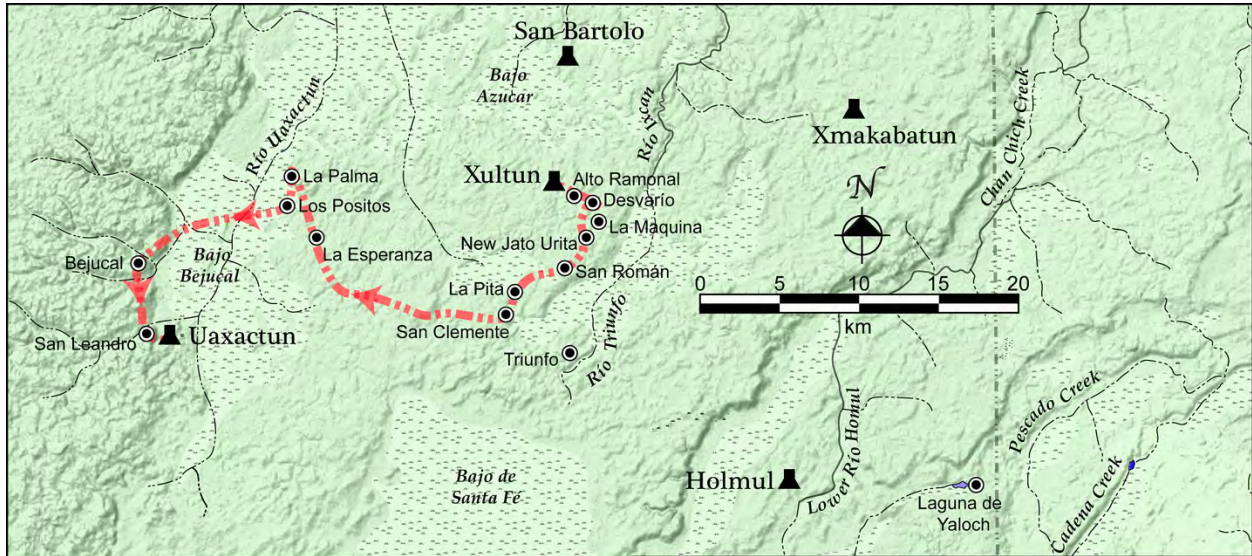


Figure 18.1. Detail of Morley's route from Xultun to Uaxactun.

The going was very hard. *Bejucos*, *escoba* palms, and thorns of all kinds enormously increased our difficulties, until both Ricketson and I were tired out. This, coupled with the heat, and the discouragement of not finding the ruins, was very disheartening. While we were returning to the road, the dogs far in the rear raised something and set up a distant barking. George went back to investigate while Ricketson and I sat down to rest. Charley and Chico bled chicle for amusement. George was gone about half an hour. When he returned, he reported the dogs had treed a *tepisquintli*, but that the tree had an underground outlet and the little rodent had escaped.

It was now after five and we were very tired out, so I gave the word to return to the horses as soon as possible, and we got back to the *champas* before six. Muddy had the oiled tarp up between some trees, and our cots and Ricketson's hammock and the table and chairs set up underneath it. We had supper at once, and fell to on it with vigor. Afterward, I found out I really was very tired and lay down and slept for an hour. The moon is full tonight, and very lovely here in this clearing as it dapples through the foliage, flooding the ground with its light in contrast to the velvet black of the forest.

### February 22, Tuesday

This is Arthur Rutherford's 31st birthday, and we camped all day long. Charley set out for the bush looking for the ruins about 8:30. George went out for game, the other boys departed for the *ramonal*, and we settled down for a quiet morning. I wrote in this book and read what John Held

likes to call my favorite author—Publication 219<sup>91</sup>—and so the morning slipped away. Three mules were missing this morning, all our own animals. Muddy insisted they cut so little *ramón* last night that the animals naturally wandered in search of food.

The greatest disappointment of the day came at one, however, when Charley returned with the news that he couldn't find his ruins. He had searched long and diligently, but could not find them. At once I became convinced that he has been lying all along about them, and that they never existed. Something he told me yesterday more than ever convinces me that this is the case. His mother, he said, was a full-fledged Honduran. And that, mixed with a Jamaica man, makes for unrestrained mendacity. What I think happened was this. Charley was out of a job at El Cayo. He thought his best chance of getting a job was to say he knew where some ruins were, which was true. There never were any ruins except in his lie to me, but it accomplished its purpose and he got a berth with me. It is certain that, had there been ruins in the stretch of the bush where he said there were, he and George, who went with him, would have found them. But no, the ruins did not exist and never did, so of course they were not found. There was no remedy, however, and we had to waste the afternoon as we had the morning. This was pleasant enough, and perhaps the rest was much needed, but this day with the day lost at Alto Ramonal day before yesterday makes two, or about \$50.00.

Arthur [Rutherford] and Oliver [Ricketson] improved the occasion by bathing, while I continued reading. After dinner we got into the interminable and bootless discussion as to the influence of heredity versus environment, Oliver and I espousing heredity and Arthur environment. This futile argument kept us awake until after eleven, and we should have dropped it sooner, since no one changed the other's point of view by his eloquence.

The *aguada* here is a very good one, but the *champas*—and indeed the whole clearing—is alive with fleas and ants. The latter gave me no trouble, though Ricketson and Rutherford complained bitterly of them. The fleas, however, bit me up badly and I itched in many places from their attacks. Before I went to bed, I had Elfio over and we talked over the trail for tomorrow. Charley says the trail south from here leads into a main trail going in toward Triunfo, about a league from here. Both he, Elfio, and I feel that this trail must come in from San Clemente, and if so, tomorrow morning we must turn to the right, i.e., to the northwest along this trail. This would bring us first to La Pita and then to San Clemente.

### **February 23, Wednesday**

I called the boys at 5:45 by my watch, but think it was half an hour fast, because an hour later at 6:45 the sky was just beginning to clear. This early awakening, however, did us little good since it was actually 10:30 when we got off! And I was correspondingly furious. The trouble arose over the fact that they again disobeyed me and did not tie the animals. After breakfast it was discovered that Ricketson's animal and George's mule had disappeared, hunting *zapotes* presumably. George had already gone out in search of them when I discovered the loss, and I at once sent out Pedro, who is the star retriever of mules, to aid in the search. They had not returned by 9:30, and as soon as Modesto and Elfio had finished loading the last mule, I sent them out to join the search. They were gone until 10:25 and they all four came in together leading the animals.

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<sup>91</sup> Morley's own *The Inscriptions at Copan* (1920).

They had strayed a great distance, Pedro said, looking for *zapotes*.

We got off at 10:30. The boys asked that we go first so I rode ahead with Chico. Ten minutes brought us to the trail leading due south to El Triunfo, or so we at first thought. This was rather closed and had to have branches and fallen boughs cut from it here and there. After an hour leaving, we came into a trail bearing from the northeast to the southwest and turning to the right. On this we continued on a good trail until we came to another leading off due south again. On a blaze at the corner, it said the main trail led to San Román. We took the southerly bearing trail, [which was] also the one less clearly defined. We were on the San Román trail just half an hour, reaching the branch at 12:15. This southerly bearing trail was still more overgrown. Boughs had to be cut away frequently, and sometimes new detours had to be cut around fallen trees.

Modesto, who was ahead with me, said he did not know the trail at all, and we went on in this general southerly direction, until going through the bush we heard a chopping off to the right. Modesto called and got an answer, and presently there came to us through the bush a *chiclero*. He told us that we were on a trail going to El Cayo, that somewhat farther on a little-used trail would pass off to the right and that this led through to La Pita and San Clemente.

Before reaching this *chiclero*, at the junction of the first trail we had taken this morning, we had passed a man and woman, both *chicleros* apparently—she was in trousers. They told us that the nearest *champas* were the *jato* of Escondida, where they were living. We had passed these, and beyond, another, the *jato* of Balanza, the home of the friendly *chiclero* who told us about La Pita. We passed this latter *jato* before we saw its [resident]. After Modesto had been told where we were going, he fancied he recognized the trail where he said he had not been for 10 years.

Just before reaching La Pita, we passed through quite a little group of ruins. The *champas* themselves were deserted and the clearing itself overgrown with second-growth bush, including a lot of small red chilies, which excited Muddy's admiration. He said no food was good without some spicy condiment.

We came out onto the *camino real* from El Cayo at 3:25, 3 leagues this side of Río Triunfo (Ixcánrío), and at 3:50 reached San Clemente, our stopping place for the day. A half league farther on one of Domingo Espot's *muladas* was here with a lot of his chicle, and there was also a *cuidador* [caretaker] of Rafael Díaz, watching some of his *chicle*. We are running short of a number of things—coffee, salt, salt-beef, matches, kerosene, and flour. I tried to see if I could replenish our stores of these from either of the two *encargadors*, and succeeded in finding some flour, some matches, and a little kerosene. The coffee and salt-beef, I am afraid, are quite out of the question.

One of Domingo Espot's boys turned out to be a Pancho Orquello [sic.], the brother of Aurelio [Aguayo], the guide to Xultun. He and another boy knew of the ruins beyond Bambonal (Uaxactun) and said they were two *jornadas* beyond here. I cannot get my *mulada* through tomorrow, but will push on to the other side of the Bajo of Bejucal. Bambonal (which I think must be my old *jato* of San Leandro) is less than a mile this side of the ruins, which lie on a hill.

We slept under the oiled canvas and luckily it was too, since it rained hard. Ricketson came in, and Chico and Charley, but Muddy stuck it out and got well wet in consequence. A daring dog came under my cot in the night and was not discovered until the day began to break. He was then vigorously shoved out.

The water here at San Clemente is vile, and is used by all the animals for all purposes; drinking, I should judge by its appearance, being one of its minor uses.



## February 24, Thursday

A bad day, and nightfall finds us camped in the bush at a *jato* which nobody knows where it is. The day started off badly by my telling Charley, who said he was going to El Cayo, that the road was open to him and he could go any time he wanted to. I considered he would go after his threats at Alta Ramonal the morning we left, but I noted he was in the *mulada* when we got off. The boys, Modesto and Elfio, had been talking with the boy Beto, who knew the ruins of Uaxactun (Bambonal), and both felt that to go to Bejucal and Los Positos would be a "*grand vuelta*" [big detour]. Instead, they said, there was a much shorter road which went from San Clemente to Bambonal direct, avoiding the Bajo of Bejucal and indeed avoiding Bejucal itself. I had realized five years ago that we had made a considerable detour to the northwest before starting south to Bambonal (formerly San Leandro) from Bejucal, and this seemed a feasible route as they told it. Moreover, Modesto said he had opened this new road himself four years back when working for Trinidad Flores, and that he had brought chicle out over it. I had visions, therefore, of saving a day since Modesto said (among other lies) that he had made the journey from San Clemente to Bambonal in one day many times. In fine, I agreed to the new route, thinking he knew it.

We left San Clemente at 9:15 and at 10:30 came to a fork in the trail. The right-hand branch led to Los Pozitos and was the way I had gone in 5 years ago with Lafleur and Carpenter. The left-hand trail was the road of Trinidad Flores, and this we took. It led off to the west, and so continued for the first 2¼ hours after the fork. In this distance, we passed a cross trail about two hours out, but both Modesto and Elfio were sure we were on the correct road, so I said nothing.

At 2¼ hours from the fork, we crossed over quite a steep arroyo with a dry creek, and on the far side was an overgrown clearing with some badly destroyed *champas*. It was now 12:45. These *champas* neither Modesto or Elfio remembered, but no other road seemed to go off, so we continued on. And from this point on, they saw nothing further that they remembered. Just before reaching this creek and after passing the cross-roads, both Modesto and Elfio recognized a tree, in a hole of the roots of which they had formerly drunk water. After leaving the creek, we crossed another crossroad, the left-hand side of which, going southeast, was marked La Flor. We travelled on and on and on, and about half past three climbed a small hill whose summit was covered with ruins. Modesto was quite certain he had never been this way. Beyond the hill, the trail led down sharply to some burned *champas* and a fairly good *aguada* beyond. It was now 3:45. We had been traveling 6½ hours, no one knew where we were, and where the next *aguada* might be either, so I gave the word to halt for the day.

Muddy made a pleasant camp, and as George and his mangy old Bully (a terrible dog which smells unto the high heavens and is alive with fleas) had killed a *tepisquintli*, we at least had a good dinner in prospect, though as it turned out we did not eat of it until the morning. The only fly in our ointment is the fact that to all intents and purposes, we are lost.

The road we have followed led in the right direction for Bambonal, according to my notes of five years ago, and both Elfio and Modesto agree in this, but here we are at the end of nowhere with no trail leading from this *jato* save only the one by which we entered! I should judge we could not be very far from Bambonal now, if we could only go to it straight through the bush, but we are not birds and so will have to return tomorrow to one of the trails bearing off to the north or northwest.

The weather looked threatening and there were no *champas*, so we put up the tarp. Again, Ricketson's hammock was swung under the ridge-pole, and Rutherford was on one side and myself on the other. Muddy put his hammock up under one end. The boys cut palm leaves and placed them against the poles and made fairly good improvised *champas*. We got out the graphophone (which I sometimes write as photograph [eds. corrected]) and played for a while, but I was very tired from worry and anxiety of the late afternoon, and so went to bed early. It rained slightly during the night.

### February 25, Friday

I roused the camp at 5:45 by my watch, but when I compared time with Muddy and Ruddy somewhat later—it was quite dark when I first called, save for the light of the moon—it was 5:00 when I gave the alarm. That for today, at least, we might all have the same time—Muddy's watch loses daily and mine gains—I set my watch backward, and by this time we left this *jato* at 8:30 exactly. Elfio, Modesto, and I went first. At nine o'clock, we came to a definite trail leading off to the north, and since any easterly we make is lost motion, we determined to try this out. We followed along this trail for an hour and a half, and at 10:30 reached a fine clearing with some new-looking *champas*, but a place that neither Elfio or Modesto recognized, nor were there any signs to recognize it by save only a box with P.G. on it, which we all took for Pablo Guerra of Benque Viejo. From this clearing, two roads led forth: one to the east, well-travelled; the other to the north, much overgrown. Because we wished to make no easterly, we chose the latter and set off, but after five minutes the road too grew closed, and gave every evidence of having been out of use for so long that Elfio and I both thought we'd better take the other, for it would at least get us back to the road we had taken west so unfortunately yesterday. By the time we had gotten back to the *jato* of Pablo Guerra, if really belonged to him, and got away from there, it was five minutes to eleven.

This trail to the east led up a hill, the top of which was occupied by a well-defined group of mounds arranged about a plaza. I rode around the four sides of this with Muddy—we were ahead—but there were no stelae on any side. Muddy, Modesto, and I went ahead, and in thirty-five minutes (11:30) had reached the road we had taken yesterday afternoon. Two roads cross at right angles, the one we took yesterday afternoon and the one we were on. We waited for five minutes until the *mulada* came up, and after putting them on the right road, we again went on ahead, leaving Modesto to follow.

It took us just 1¼ hours to reach the San Clemente road and the *mulada* was just ½ hour behind us. We left here at 1:15, which makes us 27½ hours lost by this great

NOTE: Page missing here in the diary

the entrance that led to it. About half past four, we began to pass extensive *ramonales*, places where big trees had been felled and large clearings made. These grew more and more frequent until fifteen minutes later, at 4:45, we came into a large clearing with a number of *champas*, and beyond lay another clearing even larger, and with still better *champas*. We moved over there and kept up a constant hallooing, but got no response. This was not the *jato* of Los Pozitos, for which we had been heading, but that of La Palma, about a half a league further north. In the abandoned *champa*

where we were waiting, Modesto found a home-made marimba, and in another a home-made drum. The former tenants of the place, we gathered, had been quite musical.

After we had been in nearly three quarters of an hour, Modesto spied a doe, and Muddy who had brought his gun with him, shot it. Almost immediately I heard a faint answering shot far off to the southeast, whence we had come. I told the boys this, but they said it must be an echo. I had Muddy shoot again, but we got no answer this time. Not long after we heard faint shouts in the distance, and at a quarter before six, just an hour after we got in and 9¼ hours after we left this morning, Charley got in, and soon after him followed the rest of the *mulada*, the animals all being very much tired out. Chico and Ricketson were both walking, both their mounts having petered out. Two of the cargo animals were limping, and all looked pretty tired.

The boys were all tired out, but in good nature. Rutherford was sure they had robbed one of the kyacks of some food. It was broken and some food was missing. Poor devils, I did not begrudge it to them. Pedro and Modesto shouldered their axes and went to fell a *ramón* tree; Ricketson skinned and cleaned the antelope [deer]. I wrote in this book and Muddy and Chico were busy getting the dinner. The antelope had been shot six times and was in pretty shocking condition inside, Ricketson reported. After dinner Muddy washed it and boiled it in salt water.

The boys got back to the *champas* after dark, and by the time they had finished dinner it was 7:30 and quite dark. We gave them both electric lanterns to go off to the *ramonal* with the animals. Muddy insisted a scorpion had gotten in his shoe after dinner, but his ailments are so numerous that this didn't excite much attention, and it later proved to be a wolt [sic.]. Our cots were put up in a *champa* nearby the kitchen, and everything is very comfortable. These *champas*, and in fact the whole clearing, is one of the nicest we have seen anywhere, and after the long hard day we have had it was agreeable to reach it.

This big bootless detour we have been making has been costly in more ways than the fifty dollars for the two days it has lost us. It has taken time which we can ill afford. It has used up just two days more food when we are running low, and finally, it has tired out the *mulada* greatly. I fear that one more hard day like today will about do for several of the animals. It has been a costly error indeed.

## CHAPTER 19.

### Editors' Insert: UAXACTUN

Uaxactun, a medium-sized site about 26 km (16 mi) or a day's walk north of Tikal, has eight plazas, A through H, and 44 carved stelae and altars. It reached its apogee early, in the Late Preclassic and early Early Classic, and may have been a Late Preclassic rival of Tikal. Later, Uaxactun was a satellite of that larger city.<sup>92</sup>

Morley's discovery of Uaxactun happened on Friday, May 5, 1916, on an ill-fated expedition that ended with his party being ambushed by Guatemalan soldiers, with deadly consequences (Rice and Ward 2021: 248–250). He obviously had heard rumors of a major site with carved stones: the ruins of what we now know as Uaxactun were familiar to *chicleros* and were known by the names of Bambonal (Shook 1998) and San Leandro (Graham 1984). After more than a week of “multitudinous humbugs” and generally unrewarding travel through the forests of Petén, Arthur Carpenter left the others on the trail to explore an area with multiple large mounds, and discovered a stela with an Initial Series date on one face. Subsequent exploration led to the recognition of more mounds and plazas with carved and plain stelae and altars.

Of particular interest was a monument, identified as Stela 9 in what is now called Group A, that was badly eroded and asymmetrical. With a figure facing the viewer's left, the stela had a date and style of carving that Morley recognized as “Archaic” (Early Classic, AD 200/250–600). Indeed, the inscribed date (8.14.10.13.15) is AD 328 GMT. From this monument, its unusually early date in Bak'tun 8 (also called Cycle 8), Morley named the site Uaxactun, meaning “eight stone” in Yucateco Mayan: *waxak*, eight; *tun*, stone.<sup>93</sup> (Its ancient name, like that of many sites, may have been *siyan* or *sia'an k'aan*, meaning literally “heaven-born,” perhaps “holy, sacred.”) At the time, this was the oldest known lowland Maya Long Count date, although since then Tikal Stela 29 has been found to date to 8.12.14.8.15, AD 292. A recent find, Uaxactun Stela 28 in Group H-South, is even earlier, with a text in Late Preclassic script (Kováč et al. 2015a: 172, 178).

Edwin Shook (1998: 26) later recounted an anecdote Morley told him about the naming of the site: “One night as he was camping, Morley heard the *chicleros* talking about the site, and they said, ‘This gringo is very impressed with our discovery because he's calling the place

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<sup>92</sup> This chapter is a revision of material we previously published in volume one of the Morley Diary Project (Rice and Ward 2021: 244–247).

<sup>93</sup> Morley apparently imposed a policy, continued until 1933, that “All new sites discovered by the Carnegie Institution Central American Expeditions, save those where a Maya name already exists attaching to the locality, [were] given Maya names ending with the world ‘tun,’ meaning ‘stone’ ... Uaxactun, Uolantun, Xultun, Xmakabatun, Naachtun” (Morley 1937–38, I: 138n36). This would make sense given his abiding interest in stones (stelae) carved with dates.

Washington.' To them, Uaxactun and Washington sounded just alike." Morley returned to Uaxactun in 1921 to make additional drawings of the monuments, an expedition detailed in these pages (Chapter 20).

### History of Investigations

In 1924 Frans Blom, a Dane who had significant experience in Central American jungles as an explorer for various oil companies (Leifer et al. 2017: 66), was asked by Morley to join Oliver Ricketson to make a full survey at Uaxactun as groundwork for a future long-term project there. Blom and Ricketson settled in for a two-month stay and produced the first major survey of the site, a study that, along with later updates by Shook, provided the foundation for current site maps (Figure 19.1) (Von Euw and Graham 1984: 121).

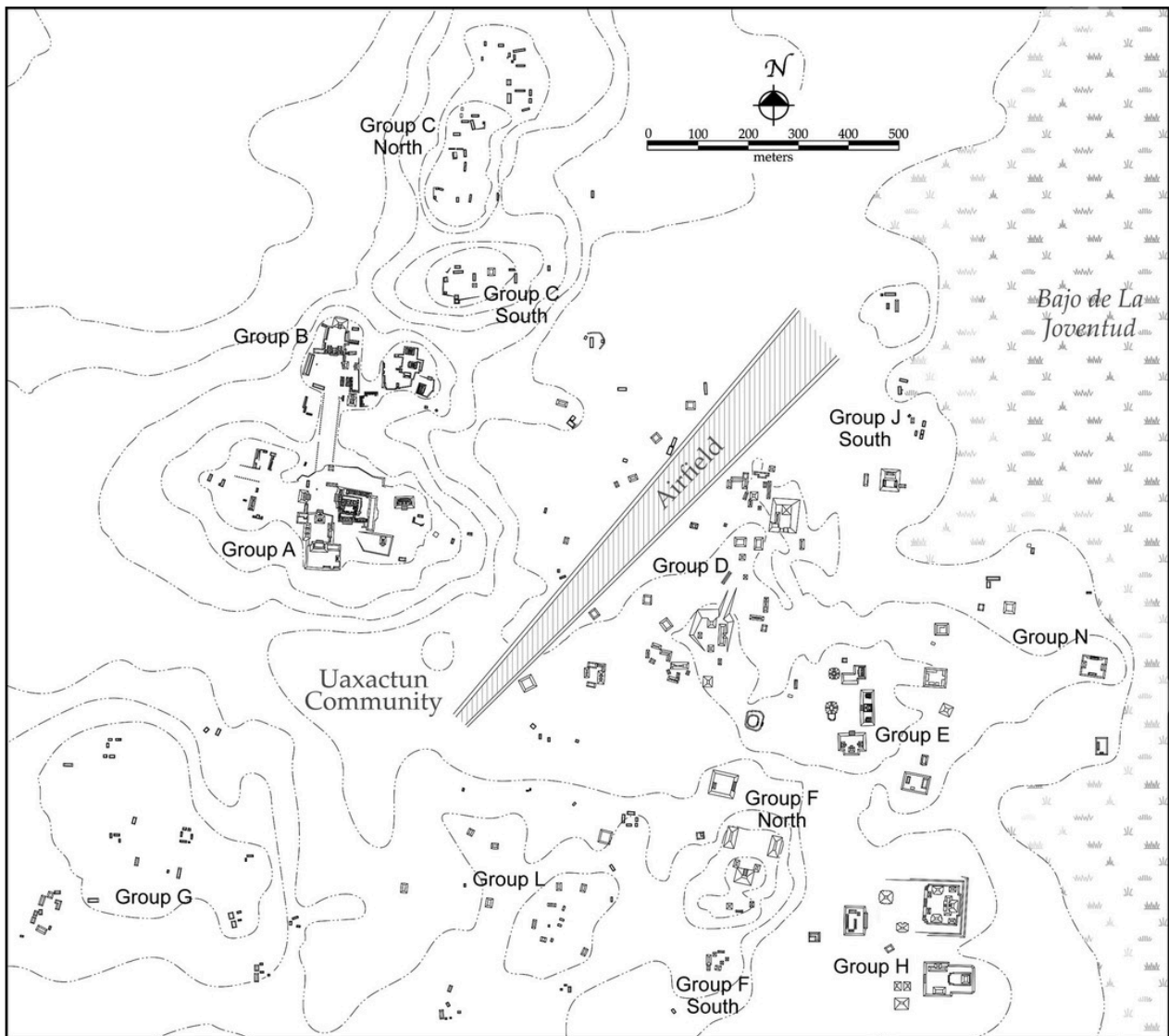


Figure 19.1 Site plan of Uaxactun showing the principal groups.

This was Blom's first significant archaeological field work. At the midpoint of the season, he offered an assessment of conditions: "We have plenty of everything here except water and excavations. Plenty of heat, ticks, game, ruins both known and newly found ones, stelae with and without inscriptions, lazy workers and mules that run away" (Leifer et al. 2017: 108).<sup>94</sup> Blom also wrote a full report on the ruins, a manuscript that remains in the Tozzer Library at the Peabody Museum, unpublished.

The Carnegie Institution mounted a major project of excavations and reconstruction at Uaxactun from 1926 through 1937 (Black 1990), a venture that began with extreme controversy and ill will in the form of William Gates (see Chapter 1, p. 4, notes 12, 13). Gates and Morley had been close associates over the years. When Morley and other Mayanists formed the Maya Society, they elected Gates as its first (and ultimately, only president). Indeed, Gates volunteered to create the large index for Morley's *The Inscriptions at Copan* (1920). As seen here, Gates joined Morley on his 1921 expedition, but their relationship turned sour, and became more and more acrimonious over the coming years (Brunhouse 1975: 136–137). In 1923–24 Gates attempted to negotiate an exclusive concession for excavations of all ruins in Guatemala, something he actually convinced the Guatemalan government to agree to. Morley was, of course, outraged and, emboldened by the success of his 1924 negotiations with the Mexican government for long-term excavations at Chichen Itza, he went over Gates' head to his friends in Guatemala City and negotiated a multi-year contract for work at Uaxactun (Brunhouse 1975: 140–141). Gates was shocked and humiliated, and attempted to get the CIW to fire Morley, but to no avail.

The extensive CIW endeavor at Uaxactun was, perhaps, one of the most influential projects in the Maya area during the halcyon decade of the 1920s. In contrast to the CIW activities at Chichen Itza, the Uaxactun excavations established several methodological "firsts" in Maya archaeology (Black 1990: 272–273; Sharer and Traxler 2006: 78). One was the first residential settlement survey and excavation of domestic structures under Ricketson's direction (Ricketson and Ricketson 1937). This was accomplished through a cruciform survey in transects radiating out in the cardinal directions from the site center. Although it was subsequently found that the settlement size had been substantially underestimated, the mere interest in non-center demographic data was novel at this early stage of Maya archaeology, and the cruciform survey method was later applied at other sites, notably Tikal (Puleston 1983). The two-volume ceramic report by Robert E. Smith (1955) was the first ceramic chronology of a site and remains a standard reference. It was later supplemented by application of the type-variety classification system to give formal names to the units Smith described (Gifford 1960; Smith and Gifford 1966).

Another enduring result of the CIW project stems from work in Plaza E (Ricketson 1933) and an architectural arrangement that has come to be known as an "E Group." An E Group consists of two structures: an elongated, north–south eastern platform with three superstructures and, opposite its centerline, a western pyramid with a square footprint and four stairways (Figure

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<sup>94</sup> This same quote is also cited in Brunhouse's biography of Blom (Brunhouse 1976: 37) but is remarkably different in tone. In place of the word "workers," Blom uses the racist term "N\*\*\*\*rs." And worse still, he writes of the black laborers on the expedition, "They fall into a trance and cramps when they get bawled out, turn the whites of their eyes when they have to go into ruined temples . . . and are as lazy as possible."

19.2). To a person on the radial western pyramid looking east, the three superstructures appear to mark the positions of sunrise on solstices and equinoxes, something first observed by Blom in 1924 (Ricketson 1928; Ruppert 1940).

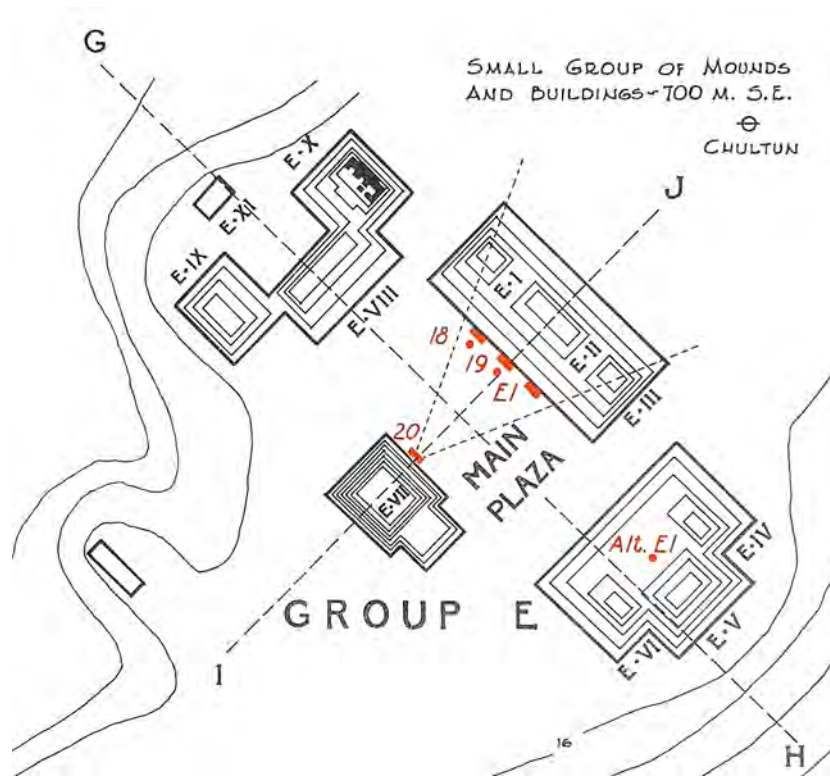


Figure 19.2. The E-Group at Uaxactun, from a detail of Morley's site plan. Indications of purported solar stations are added. North is upper left.

Excavations in Plaza E (and much later in Group A) revealed occupation beginning in the Middle Preclassic period (ca. 800–400 BC), much earlier than Morley could have dreamed. The final E-Group complex construction dates to the Early Classic period. E-Groups, particularly the eastern structure, exist in several variants, and have been found throughout the southern Maya lowlands and elsewhere in Mesoamerica. They are of continuing interest to archaeologists, particularly their much-debated uses and functions (see Fialko 1988; Freidel et al. 2017; Rice 2023; Sprajc 2021).

Since Morley's visit, other Cycle 8 stela have been recovered at Uaxactun. Two, Stelae 18 and 19, date to the Early Classic period—ending of 8.16.0.0.0 (AD 357) and are the earliest known stelae dedicated to k'atun endings. They were erected in front of the eastern building of the E Group. Another Cycle 8 monument, Stela 5, dates to AD 366. In 1940 A. L. Smith and Shook revisited Uaxactun for additional excavations, and much later, in 1974, Shook came back to do restoration work on Structure E-VII-sub (Von Euw and Graham 1984: 125). Ian Graham went to the site in 1978 and 1979 to make drawings and assess the current condition of the inscribed monuments for his *Corpus* series. Anthony Aveni also visited in 1978 to take exact measurements of the E-Group



complex at the vernal equinox (Aveni 1980: 280). In 1982 Uaxactun was incorporated into the larger Tikal National Park and restoration work was begun by the Instituto de Antropología e Historia (IDAEH). At this time, the late Guatemalan archaeologist Juan Antonio Valdés (1989) directed a program of excavations focusing particularly on Group H, first studied by the CIW.

The most recent extensive activity at Uaxactun has been conducted since 2009 by Milan Kováč under the aegis of the Proyecto Arqueológico Regional Uaxactun (PARU), headquartered at the Slovak Archaeological and Historical Institute in Bratislava, Slovakia. His work at Group E has uncovered another structure (E-XIV) that he calls the counterpart of E-VII, and has an orientation exactly the opposite of the well-known E Group (personal communication to CW, February 2020). In addition, Kováč's team spent considerable time studying the long-neglected Group D, one of the earliest areas of occupation at the site. They also confirmed the existence of another E Group there that dated as early as 500–300 BC, predating the more famous Group E (Kováč 2020, personal communication to CW; Kováč et al. 2019). Interestingly, this new E Group permitted observations in both eastern (sunrise) and western (sunset) directions. The ongoing PARU undertaking, now entering its fourteenth year, is the most extensive project at Uaxactun since the CIW work in the 1920s–1930s.

Group H, southeast of Group E in the heart of what investigators call “the ancient city” — the complexes of the eastern part of the site (Kováč et al. 2016: Figure 1a) — was apparently the center of political power during the Late Preclassic and Early Classic periods. Group H has two architectural components, south and north, each of which is dominated by a “triadic group” — three structures arranged in a triangle atop a large platform. Triadic groups are signature Late Preclassic constructions. The main east-side structure of each group is decorated with stucco masks, apparently originally painted, flanking a stairway. The large triadic group at the Acropolis in Group A (Structure A-5) served as the location of four royal tombs during the fourth and fifth centuries AD.

In Group H-South, with construction dating between 100 BC and AD 150, Valdés uncovered a Preclassic ballcourt. Excavation of a small structure (H-XVI and H-XVI-sub) revealed an unusual cave-like Late Preclassic shrine with a cache of lip-to-lip vessels. One item in the cache was a carved perforator or bloodletter of dark stone (serpentine?) with an incised text that seems to refer to it as an offering, dated around 10 BC by a Late Preclassic ruler nicknamed “Blood-Head” (Kováč et al. 2016: 25). This substructure was later enlarged by overbuilding of Structure H-XVI, but Uaxactun and Group H-South were abandoned in the mid-second century AD.

Around AD 250, however, Group H-North was elaborated as the new seat of leadership (Kováč et al. 2016: 17, 25). With beginnings in the Middle Preclassic period, its elongated eastern triadic structure is faced by a western radial pyramid (Structure H-XV), built around 100 BC (Kováč et al. 2015b: 126), making the complex resemble an E Group. The facade of the eastern building is decorated with enormous stucco masks, possibly representing a felid face, as part of 200 m<sup>2</sup> of stucco friezes (Kováč et al. 2015b: 128; Kováč et al. 2016: 25).

Late Preclassic Stela 28 is the upper portion of a monument recovered in the H-North triadic complex, probably moved or re-used in Structure H-IV. Its base has not been found. The stela has a short inscription in Late Preclassic script similar to that of the murals at nearby San Bartolo, but with nothing readable as a date (Kováč et al. 2015a: 172, 178). The investigators suggest a date of around AD 100, proposing that its breakage and re-use signify an early dynastic rupture.

### Reconstructed Chronology of Uaxactun Rulers

Unlike Tikal to the south, Uaxactun presents problems for the reconstruction of the city's dynastic history. Indeed, Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube (2008) did not include a chapter on the site. The primary difficulty is the state of Uaxactun's inscribed monuments, most of which are poor quality limestone. Insofar as the earliest monuments are concerned (those dating back into *bak'tun* 8), their great age has allowed for centuries of additional weathering when compared to stelae erected during the Late Classic. The lack of hieroglyphic inscriptions, however, is not absolute. With an IS date here and a readable inscription there, combined with the excavations of royal tombs and the study of the shifting loci of ceremonial constructions within the site, it is possible to outline, in at least general terms, the political story of Uaxactun. The history of the site can be divided into two phases, the turning point being AD 378 when both Uaxactun and Tikal experienced an *entrada* from Central Mexico's Teotihuacan.

The ancient name of Uaxactun was K'an or K'anko, possibly Doble K'an after AD 702 (Safronov and Beliaev 2017: 518, following Houston 2006). The dynastic founder was Wak Kab Ajaw or "Señor de la Sexta Tierra" around 300 BC, who established Group H South (Safronov and Beliaev 2017: 519). The earliest settlement at Uaxactun can be traced back to the Middle Preclassic period, with stone construction underway on the south side of Group E. By about 150–100 BC, the ceremonial center was shifted to Group H (Valdés and Fahsen 1995: 199). Marginal evidence suggests two rulers at Group H North, before the site was permanently abandoned. One, "Blood Head," is the first named ruler known at Uaxactun; another might be a ruling queen known from the royal tomb of a female (Burial 191) (Valdés and Fahsen 1995: 191). For some reason Group H was abandoned about AD 250, never to be reoccupied, and the entire group was buried and avoided for the next millennium (Valdés and Fahsen 1995: 203). After the rejection of Group H, the monumental center returned to Group E and new structures were built over the previous ones (Valdés and Fahsen 1995: 203). Examples from other sites—Late Classic Piedras Negras comes to mind (see Chapters 43–45)—suggest that construction of civic/ceremonial architecture in new places might indicate a change in rulership or a dynastic change.

Between AD 300 and 350, still another move took place, with Group A expanded into an Acropolis. Group A remained the civic/ceremonial center of Uaxactun until the city was abandoned in the early tenth century. Group E continued to play an important role, with two stelae, 18 and 19, dating to AD 358, erected in front of the eastern platform. As mentioned, these monuments, poorly preserved (Graham 1986: 173–180), are the earliest-known commemorations of k'atun period-endings. They mark the end of the sixteenth k'atun and depict different individuals, possibly the Uaxactun ruler and a ruler from another city.

Uaxactun's Preclassic growth was robust, mostly centered at Group A by the fourth century. Immediately south, Tikal had also expanded at the end of the Preclassic, both cities on a parallel path made possible by the power vacuum left when El Mirador to the north faded as the dominant polity in central Petén. Gradually, proximity engendered a rivalry between Uaxactun and Tikal, but it was an outside force that dramatically upended the balance of power in the region and left a new political order that endured for most of the Classic period.

The turning point was AD 378. On January 15, a party of warriors from central Mexico – most probably from Teotihuacan, the giant metropolis—arrived at Tikal led by Sihyaj K'ahk' (also

known as Smoking Frog or Fire Born). On the same day, Tikal's ruler, Chak Tok Ich'aak, was killed (Martin and Grube 2008: 29). Sihyaj K'ahk' installed Yax Nuun Ahin I (also known as Curl Snout—son of the mysterious Spearthrower Owl, another individual tied to Teotihuacan) as the new ruler of Tikal, a takeover that was clearly hostile: pre-AD 378 stelae were defaced and eventually used as infill as new structures were constructed over old ones. Sihyaj K'ahk' was not done with conquests, his attention now turning toward Uaxactun<sup>95</sup> which, at the time, was probably near equal in size and stature to Tikal.

The new dynasty interred its rulers in the triadic Structure A-V at the Acropolis, the building being altered over time with each subsequent burial (Figure 19.3).<sup>96</sup> In total, four Uaxactun rulers were interred here, each tomb of which has been excavated, offering information about, if not always actual names of, these Early Classic kings.

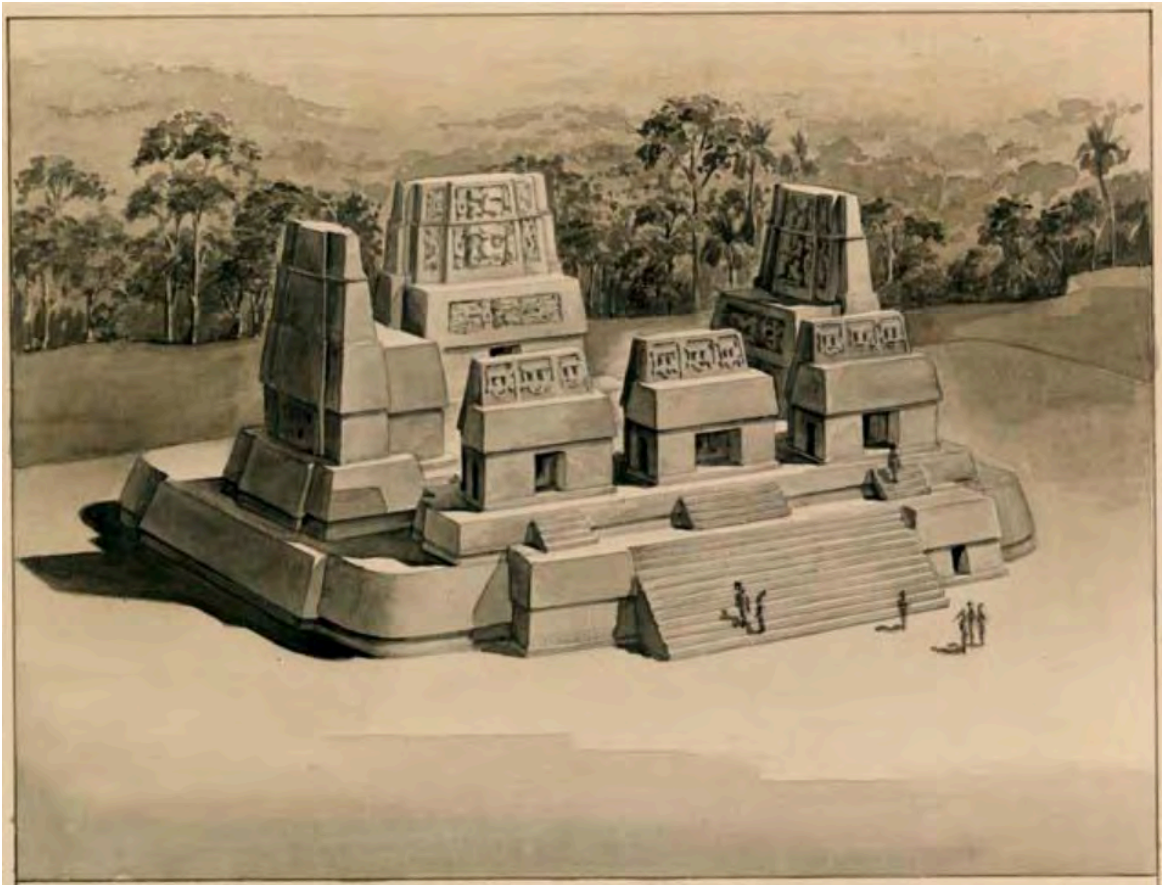


Figure 19.3. Proskouriakoff's rendering of the Uaxactun mortuary temple (Structure A-V). The first burial was in the center of the platform between the flanking temples; the three temples in the foreground surmounted additional interments. In the Late Classic, a residential palace was constructed over A-V.

<sup>95</sup> Eventually Sihyaj K'ahk' came to rule over a large portion of central Petén, including the sites of Bejucal and Naachtun (Martin 2020: 408n21).

<sup>96</sup> In *An Album of Maya Architecture* (1963a), Proskouriakoff devoted 16 pages (including eight renderings) to A-V, showing how the building changed over time.

Several kings have been identified, beginning with Cargador del Sol (Sunraiser), who was a subordinate of Sihyaj K'ahk (Safronov and Beliaev 2017: 520–521). He is named on Stela 4, celebrating the 8.18.0.0.0 k'atun ending, and was seated in August of AD 391. A mural in Room 7 of Uaxactun Structure B-XIII, originally discovered by the CIW project in the 1930s and probably dating to AD 404, shows a ceremony in six scenes, part of a rite of passage for royal youth and dynastic succession (Kováč et al. 2019). It mentions Sunraiser and an important witness, K'inich Mo' (also shown on Stela 5), who was “probably a Teotihuacan military captain or political-military governor, representative of *kaloomte'* Sihyaj K'ahk” (Kováč et al. 2019: 49).

The next named ruler was Baahte K'inich, who supervised the AD 445 *lajuntun* (half k'atun) ending, but there is no hint if or how he might have been related to Sunraiser. The next named king was Witznal, shown on Stela 3 (AD 507?), who was probably the son of a late fifth-century lord named Cabeza de Pájaro. A long hiatus, mirroring that of Tikal and demonstrating the strong ties between the two cities, is manifested in a lack of inscribed monuments from AD 554 (Stela 6) to 702 (Kováč 2012). Little is known about the history of the site from this period, but after 702 stelae were once again being erected and offer limited information on several eighth-century rulers. We also know the names of two Late Classic rulers—Olom Chik'in Chakte (c. AD 830) and K'al Chik'in Chakte (c. AD 889).<sup>97</sup> The last monument with hieroglyphic texts is Stela 12, which shows K'al Chik'in Chakte and the ruler of Tikal in a bloodletting ritual, evidence that Uaxactun remained a vassal of Tikal until the end. Uaxactun is thought to have been abandoned in the early tenth century.

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<sup>97</sup> A forthcoming publication by Milan Kováč and Jakub Špoták (2024) will offer a new account of Uaxactun's Late Classic rulers.

## CHAPTER 20.

### MORLEY AT UAXACTUN

#### February 26, Saturday

As nice as our stopping place was last night, there was the usual trouble this morning of mules missing. This time it was Ricketson's mule and George's again, the same two which had delayed us so outrageously at *jato* Arturo. This time I had determined to reach Bambonal tonight, so set out as soon as the other mules were loaded, leaving George behind to find the other two and bring them on behind. We got underway at just 9:00, and in three-quarters of an hour by going due south, we had emerged at the abandoned *jato* of Los Pozitos. Here the road turned sharply to the northwest, and we were back again for the third time in so many days on the road Lafleur, Arthur Carpenter, and I travelled five years ago when we came this way. Poor Lafleur . . . on his last earthly journey.

It was obvious from the condition of the road after we left Los Pozitos that it had been very indifferently travelled this year. Modesto, who went ahead with me, cutting away fallen branches, boughs, etc., said someone had been over this last season, but very few. Muddy followed along close behind, and drove our poor black *macho*, whose back suffered cruelly yesterday. We reached the Bajo of Bejucal in just an hour and entered it at 10:45. Modesto, Muddy, and I went on ahead opening the trail across the *bajo*, which happily was in excellent condition. The fact that very little rain had fallen recently on this side, coupled with the lack of *muladas* passing over it, made the road excellent save only for a fallen tree here and there, and we got through the *bajo* in just two hours, and the *mulada* itself in 2¼ hours.

We left the other side of this *bajo* at one o'clock and soon passed the old *champas* which I noted five years ago. All traces of the *champas* had disappeared, but the clearing of the underbrush still remained. We got to Bejucal about 15 minutes before the rest of the *mulada*. There were a lot of new *champas*, but both Modesto and I recognized the *aguada* and the site of the former *champas*. But the place was much renovated—new *champas*, a much longer clearing, and a happier condition in general. Two trails led off, one to the west toward the sierra beyond which lies the Mexican boundary, and one to the south which leads to San Leandro: *jato* de Venado, Bambonal, or Uaxactun, as it is variously called. The *mulada* came up at three, and Modesto, Muddy, and I again moved on ahead.

It was obvious from the outset that a new trail, paralleling the old one, had recently been cut. Many cut bushes scarcely had their leaves wilted and the cuts of the small saplings were still fresh. About 45 minutes out, we crossed a dry creek bed and half an hour later we emerged in a large clearing with ground sloping toward a large *aguada* and some well-made *champas*. These were of course new, but by the lay of the land and the *aguada*, I recognized San Leandro. I called but no one answered, though I saw blue wood smoke ascending beyond the last *champa*. I rode

up and saw a man swinging in a hammock and asked him where this was. He said “*Tumba de chicle*,” and I said “What is its name?” and he said “Bambonal.” I asked once more, “Are there ruins nearby?” and he said “On top of that hill.”

At first, they had thought I was one of these new Guatemalan authorities making trouble, and for that reason had not answered. But when they saw I was not, information came fast enough. I asked one of the boys if he would show me the ruins and he said he would, so four or five of us went up, including Modesto and myself. We moved around the north end of the *aguada* and then set off to the west, and in 10 minutes had started to climb a steep hill some 300 feet high. The whole top was leveled off and we reached the terrace just behind a large pyramid with a temple on top, the only one preserved in either Group A or B.<sup>98</sup> This was at Group B [A].

We climbed up into this and out on the roof. Unfortunately, it was not high enough to see out over the surrounding country and I was not able to see Tikal, which I had rather counted on. The boys I was with say it lies directly to the south, or possibly a shade east of south as I had suspected. We next visited Stela 6 [Figure 20.1] with its eight glyphs, each in a cartouche. The I.S. Introducing Glyph, the [*bak'tun*] cycles, *k'atuns*, and *tuns* on one side, the *winal*s, *k'ins*, day, and month on the other. Nothing else, in fact, save the I.S. which is either in K'atun 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10.



Figure 20.1. Uaxactun Stela 6 showing the glyphs in cartouches.

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<sup>98</sup> Morley's 1916 labels of Uaxactun Groups A, B, and C (their order of discovery) were later changed, with Groups A and B switched. We indicate the modern groups in brackets.

From here we went to the leaning stela, Stela 9, the famous monument with the Cycle 8 Initial Series from which I gave this site the name Uaxactun—Stone 8 [Figures 20.2, 20.3]. I made sure that the cycle coefficient really was 8 as I read it five years ago, and it was the clearest sign on the whole monument.



Figure 20.2. The back side of Uaxactun Stela 9 showing the Cycle 8 Initial Series. In this photo the top glyph (surmounting both columns of text) is the very worn Initial Series Introducing Glyph. Immediately under it on the left side (outlined) is the glyph showing 8 bak'tuns—note the single bar and three somewhat effaced dots.



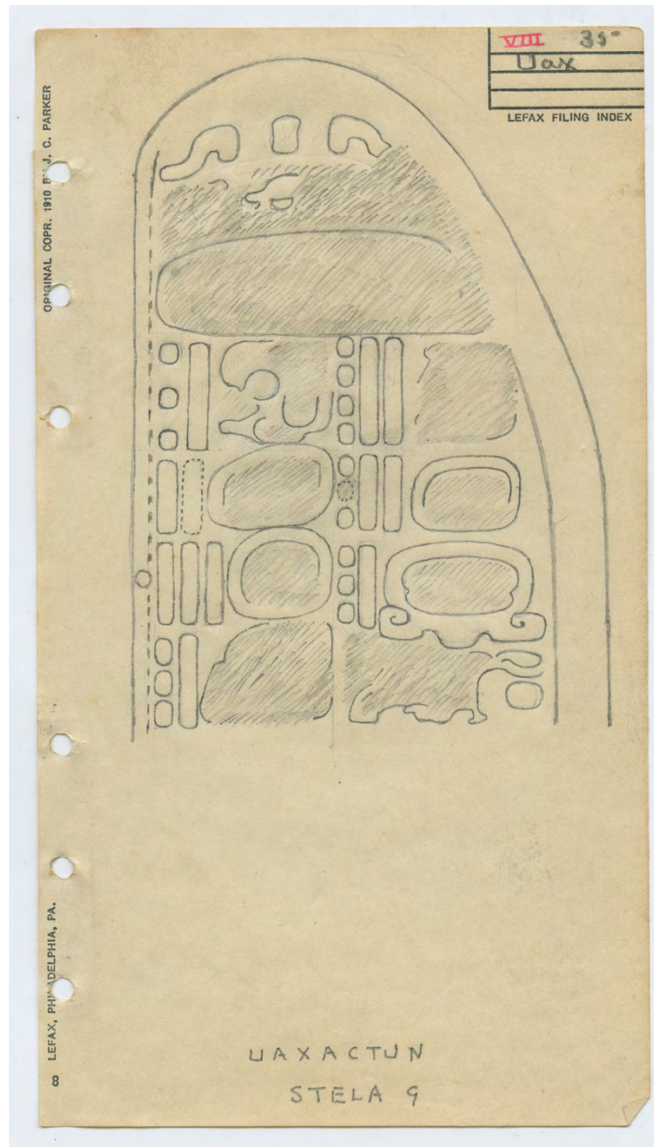


Figure 20.3. Morley's 1921 field drawing of the date on the back of Uaxactun Stela 9.

From here we crossed to Stela 7, the latest stela at the site with the date of 9.19.0.0.0 and then, as it was getting late, we returned to the *champas*. My *mulada* was already in, having made the trip over from Bejucal in 1¾ hours, and arriving at 4:45, just 7¾ hours on the way from La Palma. While dinner was being prepared, George came in and said he could not find either his animal or ours. Plenty of "*rastros*" [traces], yes, but the wandering animals, no. This mule will be a dead loss unless I send for her at once, so I determined to let Modesto go back for her in the morning.

We succeeded in buying a little kerosene, but no flour, which is the thing we need most. The *champas* here are delightfully located; the *aguada* is nearby and we ought to be very comfortable, especially as the ruins are within 15 minutes' walk.

## February 27, Sunday

With one delay and another, it was nearly 9 o'clock when we got started up the hill. In addition to Rutherford, Ricketson, Chico, and myself, there was George, Charley, and a boy named Ascensión Castillo from Benque Viejo, whom I found here at the *jato*, who knew where Tikal, Naranjo, and Nakum are. I annexed his services as guide and general laborer, and he went with us. We first set to work around Stela 9. George built a solid platform facing the back, or Initial Series side for Rutherford to mount his camera upon. Ascensión aided him, while Ricketson and I went over to Stela 7 to look for more fragments of it than were found last year. We found another piece, but it was so far gone that I could do nothing with it. The rest of the morning we spent in photographing Stelae 7 [Figure 20.4] and 9. We got down the hill a little after 12, but it took the boys so long to eat that it was after two when we finally got back up to the ruins.



Figure 20.4. The upper part of Uaxactun Stela 7.

At first, we all went to the building, which is entire, and climbed into it. Its rooms were in an excellent state of preservation for the most part [Figure 20.5], save only for the long front chamber, and the *sapote* door lintels were even intact. One chamber was dark, and on penetrating it a swarm of vampire bats flew out. Two of these were captured, one by Chico and one by Ruddy and Rick. These little mice-like flyers [*Macrotus waterhousii*] have a leaf-nose, the nose turns up and looks something like the snout of a pig. They have large ears and small bead-like eyes. In fact, the Maya month Sots', which means bat, is a perfect picture of this little creature in profile [Figure 20.6].



Figure 20.5. Interior of Structure A-XVIII Room 9 at Uaxactun.



Figure 20.6. Drawing of the Zotz (Sots') glyph, which represents one of the Maya months.

I had brought Pedro back with me, and I left him with George cutting the trees from the back of the temple, this best-preserved structure in the city. Ricketson, Rutherford, and I went back to Stelae 7 and 9. I helped Rutherford around here, and Ricketson and Ascensión set out due north from Stela 9 looking for Group A [B], which according to my notes of five years ago should lie about a quarter mile due north. They had not been gone very long before I heard Ricketson shout, and we answered. From time to time they would shout and we would answer.

Presently, Ricketson came back and reported that he and Ascensión had found a monument, but whether it was in Group A or B or not he couldn't tell. Rutherford, Chico, and I set out with them to their new stela. We followed a northerly course through the bush, and presently came out at the edge of a sharp slope, not more than 100 yards beyond the slanting stela [Stela 9]. Descending this, we passed what appeared to me to be an old quarry, from which building material had been taken, thence by a little *aguada* in a cup of the hill and thence to a very sharp slope running northeast by southwest.

We came out at last on his monument, a new one beyond any doubt, at a point where the slope turns sharply to the west. It was only the top half of a monument, and unfortunately had fallen face up, though the carving was still pretty well preserved. Along the left edge facing it is a line of glyphs. This appears to begin with the day 5 Imix and near the bottom I fancy I read 9 Ajaw 18 Mol. Looking around for the bottom half we found nearby several fragments all fitting together as they fell, all fallen face forward. These we will turn tomorrow.

Continuing on from this point, we bore a little west of north, descended the steep slope leaving a mound on our right, i.e., to the east of us, and continued for some distance on a level plain with never the sign of a hill, mound, or monument. Finally, it seemed no use to continue any farther in this direction, so we returned to the leaning stela (No. 9) which, by the way, leans 3' 2" out of the perpendicular at the top.

Pedro and George had come over here wondering why we were so long—it was well after five—and we all went back to the large complete structure. They had cleared the substructure of this on the back side, save only for a few *bejuco*s and a large dried trunk. I had them put fire to this and we hoped it would burn down in the night.

It was now getting on for 5:30 and we were all tired out, so we came back to camp. For my part, I was well enough satisfied with the day's work and if we can only find Group A [B] tomorrow, I will be completely satisfied. My new acquisition, Ascensión Castillo, tells me of a new ruin and *jornadas más adentro* and actually in Campeche, at a place called Pulgadero, where there is a fallen monument with letters. I take it that the Flores–Yucatan road cannot be too distant from this place, but he seems to think that it is. For all their knowledge of the bush, these *chicleros* seem to have very little ideas of general direction from one place to another, except only by the trail from place to place.

## February 28, Monday

Divided parties this morning. I sent Ascensión out to look through the bush for Group A [B]. Modesto still being out looking for our missing mules, he was not available. I had a fight with Elfio and Pedro, nor did Pedro himself want to go, which proves how hard the *ramón*-cutting must go forward! I took him anyhow and told Muddy to help Elfio to and from the *aguada* with the mules. Ricketson, myself, George, and Pedro went to Ascensión's new monument, and I told

Charley he was to come on after us as soon as he could get through. This left Chico as Rutherford's assistant in the photographic work.

We had little difficulty in raising the upper half of the new stela, but it was plain. While George and Pedro had been doing this, Ricketson and I had been uncovering the bottom fragments from their coat of mold, roots, leaves, and small stones and earth, and when it became apparent that the bottom of the upper fragment contained nothing, we turned to these and here we had better luck.

When these were finally turned, we found we had the bottom part of the same monument, the part showing the principal figure from just above its knees to the ornamented base it was standing upon. One side of one fragment had a beautifully preserved double column of glyphs. We looked below on the slope, and there was at least one piece with some glyphs on it. I left Ricketson with the two boys to look further here, whilst I returned to Stela 9 and commenced to draw the very important Cycle 8 Initial Series. I had this nearly done when they returned and reported they had no more pieces, and the piece with the glyphs on it is only very small.

While I was drawing, Pedro asked me innocently how much I would pay for two new stones, and I told him three dollars for the two. He said he had two, and so I said, let's go and see them at once. We set off in a northerly direction and in 5 minutes had come out at Stela 3 at Group A [B]. There this early monument lay, 9.3.13.0.0, and of course I knew where the others were. In fact, Pedro now led me to Stelae 4 and 5, and George had already uncovered Stela 2. Everybody was highly elated and we returned to camp after one o'clock. Rutherford and Chico had preceded us, and we sat down to dinner at once.

While we were thus engaged, Modesto rode into the clearing on George's mule, with the Pinto and Ricketson's mare following. The wretched animals were found between La Palma and Esperanza. He slept last night at La Palma, and got in about 1:30, which was very good time for that distance.

After dinner, we went back up the hill, leaving Pedro to go to the *ramonal* with Elfio. Modesto went back up with us. I went around with Rutherford, Modesto, and Chico, while Ricketson took George and Ascensión over to Group A [B] and started making clearings around Stelae 2, 3, 4, and 5. The afternoon was very short as we did not get back up the hill until 2:30. Rutherford took photographs of Stela 2 and 3, though the light had grown very dim for photographing, he said, but he used his flashlight, and got some good results. He got some splendid results last night from yesterday's work, but today's results were the poorest yet, though a number are fairly good at that. He says the light is very different here than it is at Xultun. It requires twice as much time for exposures here as it did at Xultun. In addition, he has been feeling very seedy today. He took some calomel<sup>99</sup> last night and feels correspondingly uncomfortable today. This, I think, more than accounts for his poor day today, for yesterday and at Xultun he got away with some fine results.

An armadillo was killed this morning, and Ricketson is going to take the armor plate back with him. He spent most of the evening scraping the flesh off it. It looks now as though we will

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<sup>99</sup> Calomel, mercury chloride, was used to treat diarrhea and malaria. It was considered a medicine through the early twentieth century, but usage declined after recognition of its toxicity (mercury is a poison).

be able to get away from here day after tomorrow, which will put us into El Cayo either Monday or Tuesday, *primero Dios*.

### March 1, Tuesday

A very interesting day, all things considered and with some surprises. I divided the party as follows: Ricketson, myself, Charley, and Pedro gave ourselves over to surveying. Rutherford took Modesto and Chico to aid him in the photographic work, and George and Ascensión I sent over to the northern plaza (Group A [B]) to clear the bush from around Stelae 4 and 5 and the broken monument I supposed was Stela 1, in fact had given it that number five years ago. We first ran a line due east from Stela 6 to the big standing structure and tied that into my map of Group B [A]. Our next line was one due north from the leaning Stela No. 9, and our next another due east from the new stela, which I have named Stela 1 for reasons which I will give later. The north-bearing line from Stela 9 intersected the east-bearing one from Stela 1 at 664 feet [202.4 m] N of the former and 124 feet [37.8 m] E of the latter. From this point of intersection, continuing east in the same east-bearing line from Stela 1 for another 75 feet [23 m], and then due south for 64 feet [19.5 m] Stela 3 is reached, and this ties the two groups together, which we had surveyed separately 4½ years ago. By the time these several lines were run, and several plain stelae tied into them, we had all gradually assembled at Stela 3.

Next, I sent Ricketson with Chico off to make a ground-plan of the large standing structure whilst I went over to inspect the clearing work of George and Ascensión. The latter had discovered a new monument just west of Stela 4. This is hardly a stela, but rather a rounded stone with a sculptured design on top. I set him to work clearing this off, and went with George to look for the broken Stela 1, which I had thought was on the west side of the plaza of Group A [B]. We found a broken stela all right, back toward the northwest corner of this court, and two round altars south of it, all three of which appeared on my map of 1916. And then came the surprise of the trip. We continued south along the west side of the plaza of Group A [B] and came out at Ascensión's new stela! This is actually in the plaza of Group A [B] at its SW corner.

Here I was without a Stela 1 and two new stelae, both found by Ascensión. I named this monument at the SW corner of the plaza of Group A [B] Stela 1, and the new monument on the east side, next to Stelae 4 and 5, Stela 10. I may change this nomenclature, but I want to leave Stelae 2, 3, 7, and 9 with their old names. I returned to Stelae 4, 5, and 10 and set George to cleaning off the back of Stela 4, which had tilted forward. This appeared to have a fairly good sculptured panel on its front and down face. A small tree had grown on top of this, but this was quickly downed and George [went to] work clearing off the back. To my surprise and great delight, he uncovered a splendid inscription, four columns of incised glyphs, the style very archaic [Figure 20.6]. The glyphs are all cut in. I could not detect an I.S. at the top, but thought the month sign Sots' was very clear, its coefficient being either 8 or 13.

Ascensión was in the meantime clearing the base of his new find, and our machine was going forward smoothly. I knocked off work about twelve, and as we passed the big structure, we picked up Ricketson and Chico, Rutherford and Modesto having preceded us to the camp. After lunch we went back to Stelae 4 and 5 and put the jack under the former and straightened it up. The panel on the underside is fairly well preserved and shows a squat-like human figure facing to the left. The most interesting detail on it is a *tun* sign in the lower left-hand corner with a tiger's

head upon it. This monument had no glyphs on the front, which is unfortunate, because I could get no date even from the well-preserved inscription on its back. It must be early, indeed all three of the monuments in this little passage are early. Ruddy photographed both the front and the back, and also as much of Stela 10 as we could uncover.



Figure 20.7. Uaxactun Stela 4 back side, showing incised inscription.

The light was now getting too late to photograph successfully—it was after four—and I gave the signal to return. We came back through the plaza of Group B [A], and on our way by the standing building, Chico and I climbed to the top to see if we could get a view of Tikal, but the foliage was so thick to the south that it was impossible. Rutherford was taking his last pictures of the standing structure, and we all came down together.

After dinner he developed [film] for the last time here at Uaxactun. The five rolls that he took turned out beautifully, not a single bad exposure in the lot. He certainly has completed a fine set of negatives here, as well as at Xultun. Our only concern now is lest they do not dry before time to leave in the morning. But hoping for the best, we all turned in.



## March 2, Wednesday

Called Charley at 5:30 with Muddy already up. I had spent a miserable night with indigestion and itching. All night long the various dogs around the *champas* could be heard scratching themselves vigorously.

The plans for the day called for the following: Rutherford, Muddy, and Chico were to go on with all the boys save Ascensión, who was to stay behind with us. Our horses were to be saddled and tied, and Chico was to leave his mount for Ascensión to ride. If the films which Rutherford developed were not dry, he was to leave them for us to bring along.

We set off for the ruins and got up the hill shortly after eight. Ricketson and I climbed the well-preserved structure which he mapped yesterday to make a few final corrections on his map. To our surprise, we found that the west wall is 12 feet thick, as his plot showed. What it could have been so massive for we could not surmise. A ventilator or window ran through it and the dark western chamber into the front chamber. After climbing back down around the western end, we descended to the court, and I went to Stela 6 to give it a final examination. While I was doing this, Ricketson went out to study the contour of the hill or small mountain the city is built upon.

Stela 6 still defies me. The best arrangement would be four glyphs to one side and four to the other, the eight recording an Initial Series. What is certain is that the last, next to the last, and third to the last glyphs on the north side are the month, day, and *k'in* glyphs of an Initial Series, and the top glyph on the south side is an Initial Series Introducing Glyph. Part of a glyph shows above the *k'in* sign on the north side, and this was of course the *winal*. The real problem is to identify the two bird-head periods on the south side. The lower one is either K'atun 6 or Tun 6 and the next is probably K'atun 9 or Cycle 9, though the number is not too clear.

Ricketson returned before I had finished and went off again toward the southern end of the city, from which he returned shortly with the following report. The city is located on a hill about a quarter of a mile long and some 200 to 300 feet high. The long axis is north and south, and the higher end is the southern end crowded by the plazas of Stelae 8 and 9, and the large structure [A-9]. From the south end, the ground slopes away quite gently, but coming north on each side it gets much steeper. In general, the southern end is higher and the northern end lower.

By 9:30 I had finished my notes on Stela 6 and we bid goodbye to Uaxactun, one of the most important cities of the Old Maya Empire because of its antiquity. We got back to the *champas* just before 10 and found the *mulada* had been gone about an hour. I figured it must have got off at nine. Unfortunately, the films were not yet dry, and we had to wait a half an hour. We found some of the black and red paper in which they were originally rolled, and rolled the films between these.

My poor little red mare has a beefworm in each ankle and limped most grievously in consequence. We bid goodbye to the *cuidador* of chicle, and got off ourselves at 10:30, an hour and a half after the *mulada*. We calculated they would travel their classic  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles [3.6 km] an hour, and that we would do  $3\frac{1}{4}$ —that we would gain a mile an hour on them—and that we should catch up about 2:30. A league out, the road entered a very bad *fangal*, which is not a *bajo*, but a low, muddy bottom [bog; *fango*, 'mud']. This was really dangerous as the animals plunged around in the mud striking against the thorny *escoba* palm and the *bayal* (or thorny *bejuco*) which is covered with needle-like spines. Two partially fallen *escobas* nearly got me—one was right

behind the other. I dodged the first but did not see the second and it was on me before I could dodge. I bent back against the cantle of the saddle, the *escoba* caught me in the mouth, but only one spine got my lip, happily. A few minutes later a *bayal* caught me from the knee to the thigh and filled my leg with spines. We were in this Slough of Despond just an hour, and after coming out reached the *jato* of San Francisco. Ascensión said we were within a mile of there when we turned back last week. What a bit of hard luck!

At 2:15 we reached the *jato* of Desprecio. Ascensión says Tikal lies slightly west of south from here, and Bambonal slightly north of west. Fifteen minutes later we heard the boys hallooing ahead of us in the bush, and soon overtook them. After the speed with which we had been travelling, they especially seemed to creep. When I got up, I sent George and Ascensión on ahead to cut *ramón*, for I saw we would get in late, as we did about 5 o'clock. The *aguada* at our stopping place, El Encanto, is fine, but the insect life is appalling: fleas, mosquitoes, ants, *garrapatas*—the last by the thousands—and all sorts of creeping things. Somewhere very near here within half a mile, indeed, I believe within a quarter of a mile, there is a stela, but it might as well be at the north pole so far as my chances of seeing it are concerned. I have offered a reward to the boy who will find it for me, but I am afraid they are all too tired to do much tramping around in the bush. Modesto, Ricketson, and I went out in search shortly after we got in, but save for seeing some mounds and getting a healthy crop of *garrapatas*, we found no stela. And yet it must be nearby.

Everybody was very tired out, and poor Chico, who had to walk all day, especially so. After dinner Ascensión came over to our *champas* with a thorn in his knee, which he wanted a doctor to remove. Ricketson prodded around with a needle and finally squeezed it out. Rutherford spent the evening in roasting a baboon's [howler monkey's] head, from which he wants to remove all the flesh and take home the skull for a tobacco box or something.

I want to add a few words here as to directions. I set up the compass here at Encanto, and then asked Ascensión to point out, without looking at it, what direction Bambonal lay from here, and he pointed 30 degrees north of west, about the right direction I thought. I next said where is Tikal, and he pointed unhesitatingly to the southwest. I asked him if he were sure of this, and he said he was. I then asked him the crucial question as to which is farther west, Tikal or Uaxactun, and he replied that Tikal is slightly west of south from Uaxactun. This I am very doubtful of, as I believe that it is very slightly east of south.<sup>100</sup> I tried vainly last night to catch sight of its towers but could not as the foliage on top of the big structure at Uaxactun is heaviest on the southern side. When I get to Nakum I will try to climb one of those temples and see if I can look out over the bush toward the west. I think the relative positions of Xultun, Uaxactun, Tikal, Yaxha, and Nakum are something like this [Figure 20.8]. The first three almost certainly lie in the Ixcanrio Valley, but Nakum and probably Yaxha and Naranjo are in the Holmul Valley; indeed, I was told last year that the Holmul River rises in Lake Yaxha, a not improbable condition, I should say.

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<sup>100</sup> Tikal's geographical coordinates are 17.2220 N 89.6237 W and Uaxactun's are 17.3949 N 89.6334 W, so technically Uaxactun is slightly west of Tikal, albeit effectively nearly directly north.

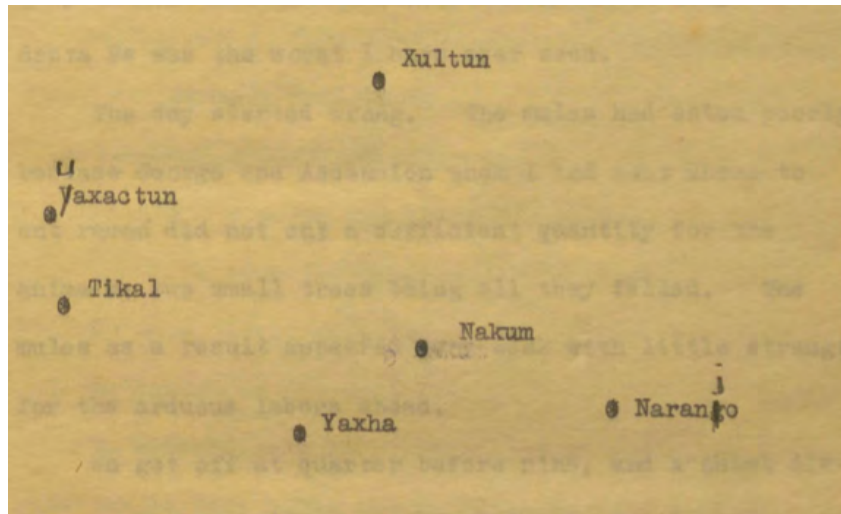


Figure 20.8. Map in the typescript of Morley's diaries.

## CHAPTER 21.

### NAKUM

#### Editors' Note: Nakum

Nakum lies on the northern bank of the Río Holmul between two regional hegemon: 22 km (13.7 mi.) east of Tikal and 16 km (10 mi.) west of Naranjo. It also lies 19 km (12 mi.) north of Yaxha, the two sites separated by the river and seasonal *bajo*. First visited by archaeologists (e.g., Tozzer) in the early twentieth century, then largely ignored, Nakum has been investigated more recently by joint Guatemalan-Polish projects (e.g., Żralka et al. 2020). The site has two major architectural sectors, joined by a long, raised causeway (Figure 20.1). The northern sector has several structural groups around the plaza of a large E Group. The heavily built southern sector includes a large acropolis (Figure 21.1) with numerous structures and courtyards, plus smaller plaza groups and a ballcourt.

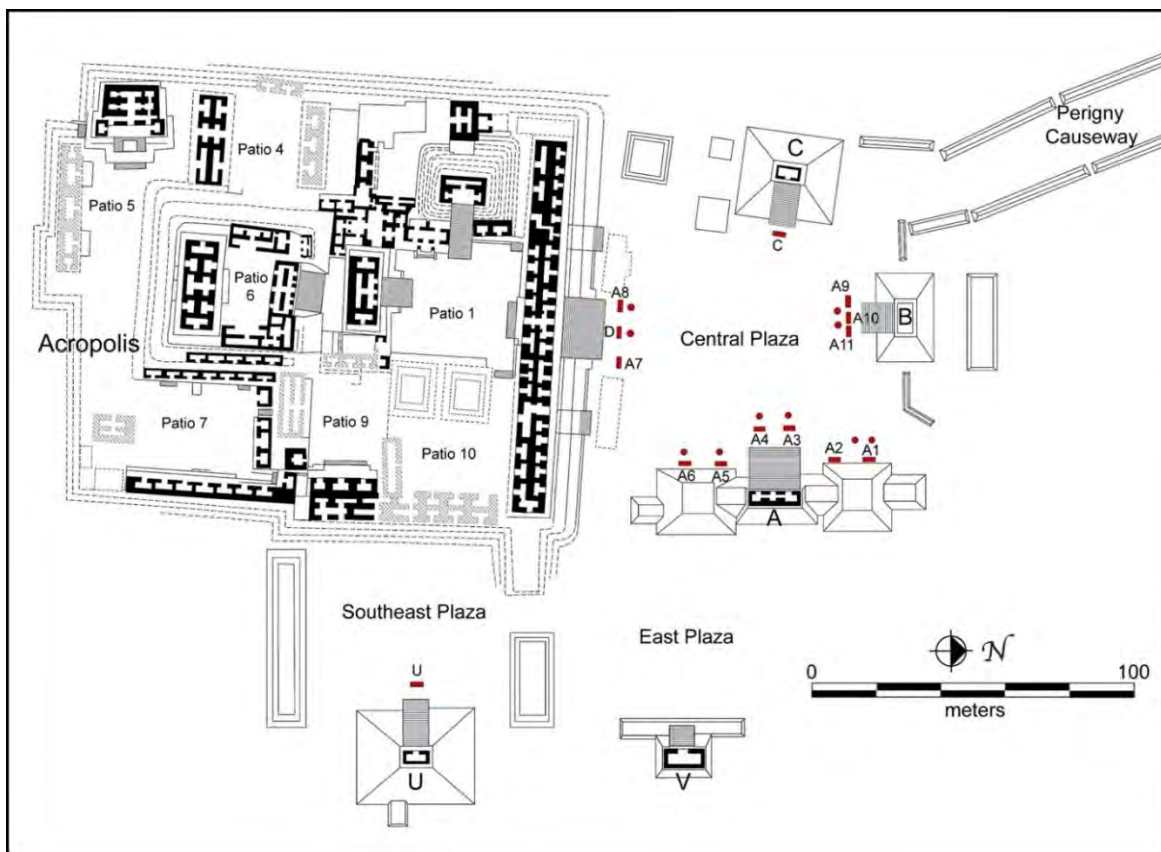


Figure 21.1. The Acropolis at Nakum.

Ceramics reveal close connections with Naranjo until that site was defeated by Tikal in AD 695, after which it appears to have been in Tikal's sphere of influence (Žračka et al. 2020). During the Terminal Classic, Nakum experienced a revival, remodeling major buildings, including the acropolis, with the highest structures at Nakum, as the "main seat of the royal dynasty" (Žračka and Hermes 2012: 168). It boasted divine rulers and perhaps declared some kind of independence with display of its own Emblem Glyph. Three dated stelae are known, Stela U (771; 9.17.0.0.0), Stela C (815; 9.19.5.0.0), and Stela D (849; 10.1.0.0.0) (Žračka and Hermes 2012: Table 1).

Nakum may have had a second, smaller E Group, Group A, immediately north of the acropolis. Structure A, which appears to be the elongated eastern platform of the assemblage, has a raised central temple structure and extensions to the north and south, but these lack superstructures (Žračka and Hermes 2012: Figure 2). Its unusual western face has three doorways, the central one topped by a lintel and the two flanking ones with curved arches. Several monuments were erected in front.

## The Diary

### March 3, Thursday

Everything was at sixes and sevens today: everybody in more or less of a bad humor and the Bajo of Santa Fe<sup>101</sup> was the worst I have ever seen. The day started out wrong. The mules had eaten poorly because George and Ascención, whom I had sent ahead to cut *ramón*, did not cut a sufficient quantity for the animals, two small trees being all they felled. The mules, as a result, appeared very weak with little strength for the arduous labors ahead. We got off a quarter before nine, and a short distance out were held up at a fork in the trail, some going one way and others, the other. In the meanwhile, two *chicleros* came up through the bush and set us right and we got off again. At quarter past nine, we entered the Bajo of Santa Fe, absolutely the worst of its kind I have ever crossed. It is a logwood *bajo*, which means that the trees grow low and slanting, and the bush is very thick. Because of the heavy traffic over it since the rains, it was all cut up, a heavy clay-like mud in which our *mulada* was presently wallowing. It was very hard on the animals to ride them, so Ricketson and I walked, which was equally hard on us.

The hard hummocks of dried mud between the muddy holes where the mules put their hooves were very slippery. These were the chief cause of grief, but added thereto were flies, mosquitoes, low-hanging branches, and the length of the *bajo* itself. We entered this hard place at 9:15 and reached the river at 11:25. This is the Ixcánrío, and the *bajo* through which it runs here is called the Bajo of Santa Fe.<sup>102</sup> We were just two hours and 10 minutes in getting this far. The river itself was a miserable succession of discontinuous shallow pools, no river at all in fact this time of year, but on we went.

We left the river at 11:25 and immediately noticed an improvement in the character of the trail. There was less mud and finally, at 12:15, the *monte* [forest; bush] grew somewhat higher and at 12:45, or 3½ hours after we had entered it, we left this wretched spot. The mules were exhausted, so were the men, and so were our tempers. Fifteen minutes more and we were at the

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<sup>101</sup> The Bajo de Santa Fe lies southeast of Uaxactun and northeast of Tikal; see Figure I.1.

<sup>102</sup> This is a small bajo north of the Bajo de Santa Fe.



*jato* of Santa Fe, where I had a fight on my hands. Elfio and the boys wanted to stay here for the night, as they represented Maroma or [El] Ceibo, the next *paraje*, as three leagues on, and they claimed we would get in too late to get *ramón* for the mules. I sent Modesto and Pedro on ahead to cut sufficient *ramón* and Muddy and Rutherford went on with them. This argument had consumed 15 minutes, and we did not leave Santa Fe until one o'clock.

The next and last lap of the journey today [Figure 21.2] took 2¼ hours, and we got in at just 3:15, or 6½ hours after we started. Shortly after leaving Santa Fe, the trail ascends and at 2:30 we reached the crest of the range of hills on the southern side of the Ixcarrío valley and started down into the Holmul valley. Through malice or stupidity, the *mulada* was unloaded on the wrong side of the *aguada* at the worst *champas*, and we are sleeping on a sharp slope in no good place at all. I told them in no uncertain language just what I thought of this last piece of annoyance. Supper came on. Everybody was famished and correspondingly ugly, snapping at everything everybody else said. The boys' dinner, or supper I guess it was, as we had not lunch, was ready first, and we watched them enviously like hungry wolves. It looked very threatening and the tarp was got up hurriedly over a very uneven bit of ground, so uneven in fact that I had to have holes dug for the legs which were on the upper side of the hill.

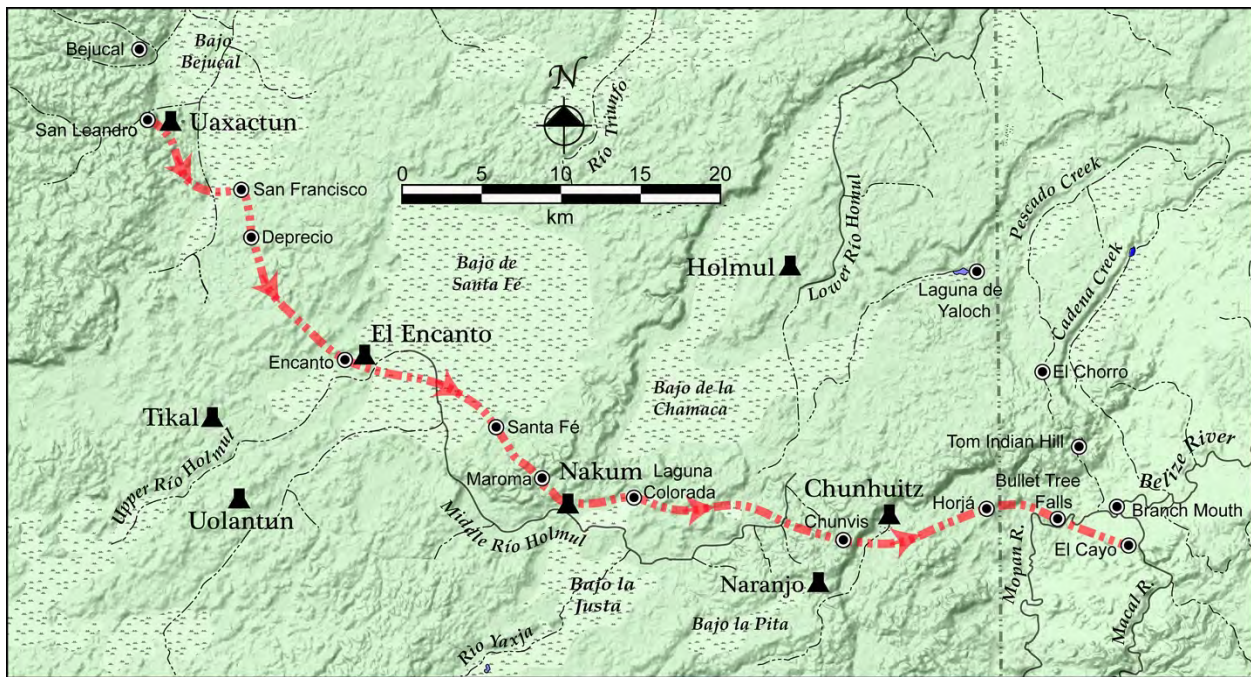


Figure 21.2. Morley's route from Uaxatun back to El Cayo.

After the evening meal, Charley came over and asked if he could speak to me, and I told him "yes," whereupon he went off his head. Said he wanted a settlement, that he was leaving for Cayo in the morning, etc., etc. We had a long conversation, which was a mistake, and the upshot of the whole business was that I gave him a paper acknowledging my indebtedness to him to the extent of \$31.25. Supplies are failing so fast that I will have to abandon the Naranjo trip. It has also made necessary a change in the plans for tomorrow. I called George over from the other side of the *aguada* where he went to sleep for a talk. Charley had acted in a very ugly manner to us, and then

had gone over to the *champas* of the other boys—I am afraid to stir up trouble. He said Charley had only wanted to find out something about the trail. We all slept under the tarp, Ricketson in the middle, Rutherford on the downhill side, and I on the uphill, in case he really should try to start something. Ascención also turned up wanting his time, so I wrote a letter to Father Versavel asking him to pay Ascención what I owed him, \$10.50, and that I would reimburse him when I return next week.

I also asked Charley if he would carry in a letter for me to Carl Guthe, and he said “Why not?” Really, Charley’s Honduran mother has had a bigger effect on his character than his Jamaican father. His “Why not,” which is rather pointless in English, is really a literal translation of the Spanish, “*¿como no!*”<sup>103</sup> I told Carl we would be in Sunday possibly, and Monday surely, as the *mulada* is going very slowly these days.

### March 4, Friday

Inauguration Day and we have changed our president. One cannot help but feel sorry for the poor sick man who is leaving the White House today, who was so greatly lauded to the skies two and a half years ago, and who now, in broken health, maimed in body, and sick of mind, is so generally anathematized. Poor sick man, he must be thankful indeed to lay his burdens down.<sup>104</sup>

The plans for the day were as follows: Rutherford, myself, Elfio, and George (all mounted) were to go on ahead of the others, taking a right-hand trail off to the south to the ruins of Nakum the others were to continue on the main trail to Laguna Colorada, only 2½ leagues off—a short *jornada*—where we were to join them before night. Charley had risen at 4:15 and he and Ascención set off at a terrific pace about 7:30. Elfio and George waited to put the *aparejos* on the mules, and then we four got off at 7:45. Three-quarters of an hour brought us to a *sarteneja* [from *sartén* ‘frying pan’], a hole in some rock where water was standing. The main trail here continued to the east, while we took a much overgrown one to the ruins. We had only been going 25 minutes when we saw on our right (i.e., west of us) through the trees the clearing made by Comte de Périgny as much as ten years ago.<sup>105</sup>

I had been here once before, in 1915, and the second-growth bush which had overrun his clearing was the worst bush I have ever had to fight in my life. Also, the *garrapatas* were the biggest, the fleas the fiercest, the flies the most persistent, and the mosquitoes the most vicious I have ever encountered anywhere. In 1915, there were some *champas* just south of the ruins on the north bank of the Rio Holmul, but when we got where they had stood the clearing was entirely overgrown and no trace of the *champas* left standing.

We unsaddled the animals and, taking the camera, lunch, my notebooks, and the brush, with

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<sup>103</sup> “Why not?” is a literal translation of “*¿porque no?*” which, like *como no*, means “of course.”

<sup>104</sup> On this day Warren G. Harding became president of the United States, replacing an incapacitated Woodrow Wilson. Wilson suffered a stroke in 1919 from which he never fully recovered. He died in 1924 at the age of 67.

<sup>105</sup> Maurice de Périgny (1877–1935) was a French archaeologist/explorer whose career focused on Central America, with emphasis on the Maya lowlands (both northern and southern). He discovered and named Nakum in 1905, a visit followed in 1909–1910 by an expedition from the Peabody Museum under Alfred Tozzer and Raymond Merwin (Tozzer 1913).



a bag of water from the nearby river<sup>106</sup> which Elfio fetched, we set out for the ruins back along the trail we had come. I remembered that this was the way in. When I left Cayo a month ago I did not think I would stop at Nakum on this trip, so I did not bring the Peabody Memoir on this site [Tozzer 1913]. The only part of it I wanted now was the map to locate the three sculptured stelae. We were going back along the trail we had come by when George happily espied a *picada* [small trail] leading into the river, and this we followed. It led straight and true right to the tall Stela U [Figure 21.3], the left-hand corner of which was broken off, and which I found six years ago when I was first this way.



Figure 21.3. Nakum Stela U as photographed by Merwin in 1909–1910.

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<sup>106</sup> This is the middle section of the Río Holmul, which flows east between Yaxha and Nakum.

It is important because it carries the date of this monument—9.17.0.0.0 3 Ajaw 18 Kumk'u, approximately 514 A.D. [AD 771 GMT]. We left all our impedimenta here, including lunch, and after clearing a place in front of the monument for Rutherford to get a set-up with his camera, later we climbed the steep pyramid in front of which this monument stands [Figure 21.4].



Figure 21.4. Nakum Temple U and Stela U in the foreground, as photographed by Merwin in 1909–1910.

The temple on top is riven in two parts, probably by uneven setting of the foundations at the ends. I climbed up on the roof and, mounting a small tree, looked out over the forest. Temple after temple, partly obscured by foliage, lifted their heads above the tree tops.

Truth is, I hadn't the least idea where to start to look for Stelae C and D, the other two monuments for which I was searching. I knew that the long axis of the city was north and south, and that the Great Plaza was at the southern end. We descended and set out through the bush. The growth was very dense, and we were continually running up against buildings, mounds, and pyramids. We must have beaten around through the bush for an hour, and I was beginning to

believe we would not find them, when we crossed over a mound and Elfio spied a tall standing monument. He went around in front of this while the rest of us were coming up. He shouted “*si, tiene figuras*” [yes, it has figures]. It was, in fact, Stela C ([Figure 21.5] 9.19.10.0.0), about 562 A.D. [820 GMT].



Figure 21.5. Nakum Stela C with Morley.

We cleared a space in front of this stela, and then leaving Rutherford to shout back to its location, we set out to go around the sides of this plaza to look for the remaining sculptured monument, Stela D. I remembered this much about Alfred Tozzer’s map—Stela C and Stela D are in the same plaza. We passed a good many of the large plain stelae, fallen all, with simply huge

stone altars. I saw one that must have been at least 7 feet in diameter. We followed around two sides of this court, the principal one in the city, and were working along the remaining side when George came across a pile of fallen fragments, one of which was sculptured, and I knew our search was ended. This was Stela D, dating from 10.1.0.0.0 5 Ajaw 3 K'ayab, or approximately 592 A.D. [849 GMT]. It was badly shattered and it took some time before I found all the pieces of the band of 5 glyphs<sup>107</sup> which formerly composed the top of the stela. I did not try to assemble any of the rest of it, as it was too badly broken.

Nor could I assemble all of the top in one place either. The left-hand corner with the date was itself cracked into a number of pieces which would have fallen apart had I attempted to move it. I finally got all of the top assembled in two sections, cleaned, brushed, and the bush cleared away for the photographing [Figures 21.6 and 21.7]. It was 12:00 by this time, but the sky looked so threatening that I thought we'd better postpone lunch and rush the photographing, lest a heavy rain come on and spoil everything.



Figure 21.6. Rutherford's photos of the two fragmented sections of the hieroglyphic text of the upper portion of Stela D at Nakum. Note the top of the headdress in the right photo.

We returned to Stela U, got the camera, my bag, the water, and the brush, and then came back to Stela D. Rutherford made some exposures of the two sections I had put together for him, some with flashlight, some with a half-hearted sun, and some even in the rain! We next moved over to Stela C, where he made three views, one of the entire monument and two of the glyph panels, which I had to clean by climbing up on George's shoulders, this monument was so high [Figure 21.5]. While we were photographing these two stelae, both in the same court as I have said, two hawks, perched high in a nearby tree top objected raucously to our intrusion to this spot. Indeed, they cried us out in the end, for they were still giving voice to their shrill protests when we finished Stela C and took a final farewell of the Great Plaza of Nakum. We went back to Stela U, which was soon photographed, and then we sat down to lunch in front of it, a box of Peck Frean's biscuits and a tin of pears.

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<sup>107</sup> The text is actually 6 glyph blocks long (see Figure 21.7).





Figure 21.7. Top portion of Nakum Stela D after being photographically reconstructed from Rutherford's images in Figure 21.6.

After lunch I sent George and Rutherford back to the animals to saddle them, while Elfio stayed with me at Stela U while I drew the four glyphs on the broken left-hand upper corner. It was just 2:25 when I finished these. A shout from the trail advised that George and Rutherford had come up with the mules, and I turned my back on this great buried city, so impressive in its desolation and lonely grandeur buried in the forest. Where once its rulers and priests passed in glory and magnificence, now the jaguar prowls or the monkey swings in the trees. All gone the pomp and pageantry of it now; only remains these crumbling walls and pyramids and the fiercely growing forest. We left the ruins at 2:25 and just in time too, as a very heavy shower came on before we had been riding five minutes and gave us a good wetting. We reached the main trail in 25 minutes, but the rain was falling so heavily by this time that we waited for ten minutes, until three, to give it some chance to abate.

We all sought shelter under *champas*, and Rutherford's mule, under urge of the spur, managed to careen into the main support of one under which he had taken shelter, and brought it down on his head. He looked too ridiculous for words, his mule carrying him off with the remnants of the *champas* clinging to his shoulders.

We left here at three, and an hour later descended a steep hill and came out on a savanna, a great relief to our bush-tired eyes. We were 20 minutes in crossing this, and toward the end spied our animals grazing off the luscious green grass, which grows in tufts. We left the savanna for

the heavy bush again at 4:25, but it was another twenty minutes before we came to the *champas*. We found another *mulada* in from Benque Viejo. They had left Chunvis this morning at something after eight and were in here at Laguna Colorada by three. So, we ought to make as good time tomorrow.

Muddy had a good but limited supper ready, and we sat down to it as quickly as Rutherford and I could get into dry clothes. The captain of the *mulada*, one Pedro Castillo, was kind enough to sell me some flour and give me a pack of cigarettes, which I tried to pay for, but he would not permit me to. Charley must have been the jinx of the expedition, for since he left this morning everything has gone beautifully. The *mulada* which came in from Chunvis this afternoon reported passing Charley and Ascensión at the Río Holmul four leagues from here at one.

## CHAPTER 22.

### CAYO/BENQUE, TO BELIZE CITY, AND BACK

#### March 5, Saturday

This *jato* de Laguna Colorada was a very satisfactory camping place altogether. The location on the rising ground southwest of the *laguna*, which is the color of coffee and cream, is pleasant. It did not rain and we bought five more pounds of flour—to that extremity we are reduced. Also, the owner of the *patacho*, a young chap named Pedro Castillo of Benque Viejo, very kindly gave me a package of Yellow Plush cigarettes.

One item of information I should have added yesterday is this: Elfio tells me that the river running through the middle of the Bajo of Santa Fe flows west, not east, and that it is the Río Holmul and not the Ixcánrío. Finally, that the Holmul turns back on itself some eight or ten miles west of the Bajo, just west of the *jato* of El Caldero, or near the Tikal road, and then flows east by Nakum and thence to where we crossed it. It then turns northeast, flows into British Honduras, and by Yalbac, where it is called the Río de Yalbac, and thence southeast into the Belize River as Labouring Creek.<sup>108</sup>

Thus, Nakum is certainly in the Holmul drainage, indeed on its northern bank. Bambonal (Uaxactun), on the northwest of the Bajo of Santa Fe, Elfio says, is in the Holmul valley, and if it is, then Tikal I feel must be also. Naranjo is on the north[west] side of the Sierra de Chunvis, and so on the south side of the Holmul. This big turn, 180 degrees, made by the Holmul certainly was a surprise to me, and considerably changes my conception of the geography here.

We left this *jato* at 9:00 A.M. and passed the *laguna* on our left. Not long after, we could distinguish through the trees an arm of the savanna which we crossed yesterday. Sometime later in the morning, Elfio called my attention to a trail leading off at right angles to the left, to the *jato* del Tigre, so named because it was at this *jato* that a tiger [jaguar] is alleged to have carried off a twelve-year-old boy from under his father's hammock, whilst the latter was sleeping above the boy. This is alleged to have happened fourteen years ago, and all the *chicleros* believe in it explicitly, but I always had an element of doubt as to its strict truth. Elfio says the tigers are bad hereabouts, probably because of the proximity of the savanna; he himself had lost a dog by a tiger catching it. Elfio was very communicative this morning. He showed us later a chicle tree his wife had bled—the cuts were at least 45 feet above the ground—“without spurs and in bare feet,” he added with obvious pride. It was a feat for a woman! Or a man either, in bare feet.

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<sup>108</sup> The account up to this last sentence is correct, but the Río Holmul does not flow into the Yalbac or Labouring Creek. On today's maps, the Holmul is shown in several sections, Upper, Middle, and Lower (see Figure I.1 for river drainages), and do not always clearly join.



In the morning everything went beautifully, in great contrast, alas, to how things went in the afternoon. We passed another trail coming in from the northeast (on our left) which Elfio said came from Corozal and Dos Aguadas, which was one we took coming out five years ago. This being the case, it was the temples of Nakum that Arthur Carpenter and I saw off to the west of us, that evening five years ago, silhouetted against the western sky, a dark blue, like a fairy city almost part of the sky.<sup>109</sup>

We came up to the Río Holmul (on our right) about twelve o'clock, but it was 12:50 before we came up to the *champas* at the crossing. Chico saw a boy making tortillas who we had seen on the way to Petén last May; he even was part of our *mulada*. I did not see him this morning. His name is Eulofio Medina.

The Holmul was bone dry and after crossing it the land begins to rise sharply, and here our *mulada* petered out. The first intimation I got of it was Chico's dropping far behind. I had not noticed it, but Modesto came up from the rear and said Chico's *macho* had stopped in the road and refused to go forward. I fell back with Pedro and presently Chico came up hauling his mule along. The animal was obviously played out. It trembled in the flanks, perspired, and absolutely refused to go forward at times. We took off its saddle and bridle, the former I carried in front of me, and thus proceeded for a while, Chico leading. We moved forward very slowly, not more than 1½ miles an hour, I calculated, including our stops. This system of propulsion finally failed, and then Pedro led the animal, or rather pulled it, whilst Chico walked behind literally pushing it forward.

I saw presently we were too far off to get in in this manner. I calculated that Chunvis was still at least a league off, if not a league and a half. For this reason, I stopped and had Pedro fell a *ramón* tree in the road and we tied the *macho* in front of a pile of its leaves, which Pedro had cut. After leaving the *macho*, we had but very little farther to ascend, and once over the crest it was down all the way to Chunvis, at first gently, but later very steeply. We left the *macho* at 3:40 and reached the *jato* of Chunvis at 4:35, just 55 minutes [Figure 22.1]. We came rather rapidly, and I estimated that it was three good English miles, a league and a quarter.

The last time I had seen this *jato* was at five o'clock on the afternoon of May 17, 1916, when we left here for Benque after the death of Lafleur two hours before near the boundary.<sup>110</sup> It was, therefore, a very great surprise to me to find here today the same old man we had left behind on that afternoon, so ill we could not take him along with us. We had fetched him a bucket of water from the *aguada* and placed a pile of tortillas near him that he might not lack water and food, and then left him. I promised him that if I got out all right, I would send someone after him. He was here today when I got in and recognized me. The whole thing brought that tragic day back to my mind very vividly.

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<sup>109</sup> In his diary entry for May 15, 1916, Morley wrote of seeing the ruins of Nakum off in the distance: "The binoculars swept away the cobwebs of the intervening miles and brought the city almost to our very feet. It towered there above that distant ridge, silhouetted against the roseate glow of the late afternoon light, a thing of towers, pyramids, turrets, minarets, whatnot—a fairy city, exquisite, mysterious, unreal. We waited until sunset, taking its azimuth and time, then hurried camp-ward" (Rice and Ward 2021: 298).

<sup>110</sup> Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 22.



Figure 22.1. Morley's *mulada* stopping at the *paraje* of Chunvis.

The place had changed somewhat, the *champas* were new and in different positions, but that day was so terrible that I would not easily forget the picture of the place. This is our last night in the bush, and I am already making plans to go back again within a fortnight. Ruddy, Muddy, myself, Pedro, and some guide to Naranjo, to Encanto to see that stela which I missed, on to Tikal, and then to Remate and Flores. I will send Guthe, Ricketson, Chico, and Gates direct to Flores, and at least the survey of the peninsula where Tayasal is located can be started.

Tonight, camp was much as usual. Ruddy and Muddy played one of their numerous games of cards, at which they quarrel interminably. Ricketson and I wrote and Chico played the phonograph occasionally. We are all thinking of the huge mail awaiting us at the Cayo. I figure we will have at least two forwardings, and possibly three if the sacks that went to San Salvador come back in time. Ruddy predicts bad news for somebody. He is a regular male Cassandra, and sometimes may hit it right.

### **March 6, Sunday**

Inasmuch as it was the last day, everybody was up early. Pedro rose at three and had his fire going for the boys' breakfast. We stayed abed until the usual time, six o'clock, for in spite of all this early rising, I told Muddy it would still be 9 o'clock when we got off, a prediction which was later verified. When I told George what lay ahead of him, i.e., to return for the *macho* 3 miles back, he grumbled a bit, but that was all. He said, however, it might take him two days to get in, and I believe that is possible.

We got off at 9, and 55 minutes later came to that fork in the road which my party took nearly five years ago which led to Lafleur's death. Had we then turned to the left instead of the right, the poor fellow, Estanislao Romero (our guide), Corporal Flowers, and those Peteneros killed by the volunteers [Guatemalan army] would probably all still be living. Such a disaster can result from such a minute cause.

This morning we took the left-hand fork and after an hour's going, the latter part of it through a dry logwood *bajo*, what they call *akalche* here in the Colony, we came out into a mahogany road—a wide, cleared road through the bush for the hauling out of mahogany logs. I said to Chico that I believed it was the same one we had followed to Horha last May, and sure enough it was. One hour and twenty minutes after leaving the fork, we came to the *aguada* and *champas* of Horha, where we met some old friends, Prisciliano Sánchez and his wife.

We stopped for a cup of coffee and talked over Naranjo. Prisciliano calls it four leagues to the ruins from Horha, and 2½ leagues from Horha to Cayo, or 6½ leagues in all. Back at the *horqueta* [fork] where we turned off, Muddy told me it was only an hour and a quarter to the ruins from there, which, added to the 1:20 to here, makes the Horha–Naranjo end only three hours at the outside.

From here we decided to push on ahead of the pack animals. We left at 11:30 and along a good road trotted forward, a great relief to the slow gait of the past month. An hour brought us to Bullet Tree Falls, where we had a few words with an old friend, don Amado Ángel. I asked him to send his *arriero* back into the bush before I come back this way to get one or two pieces of the Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway which hid there. He said he would arrange this for me. He also told us we could ford the [Mopan] river, but in crossing, Muddy and Ricketson, who were ahead, lost the shallows and we all got wet almost to the waist. When I saw Napoleon—Ricketson's horse, at least 16 hands high—sink in well above the belly, I knew my own little *yegua* was lost.

We emerged well dampened below the equator, but in high spirits and took the highway to Cayo. This was now a *camino real* indeed, as compared with what it had been last May. The *arroyos* had been bridged, a wide trail blazed through the bush, and we trotted across in no time. I had predicted we would be in by two, and it was just 1:50 when we drew up to our house. Imagine our great surprise to find it closed up tight as a drum with no signs of occupation. A cow and calf were tethered under the porch, owner unknown, and I rode across to Aunty Chon's to see if Guthe had not been here at all. The old lady said no one had been here since we left, so we rode on down the street to get our mail.

Fortunately, there was little delay about this as I ran into the clerk at Habet and Savala's and he said Alvaro was up at the store. Our mail proved to be prodigious. The packages of forwarded letters and mails reach to No. 17, that is, the last was No. 16. Two were missing, Nos. 12 and 13. I heard from True, mother, Lybs, the C.I., Bella Weitzner, Anne Buecher, Jane Provost, and Irma Alexander, and many other letters, including one from Alice Espe [Morley's former wife]. The only unpleasant news I received in my mail was a letter from the Internal Revenue Office advising that I owed still \$40.00 on my income tax. The biggest news of all for me was that Senator Fall had received the appointment to the Secretaryship of the Interior.<sup>111</sup> I do not know if this will

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<sup>111</sup> Albert Bacon Fall (1861–1944), teacher and lawyer, held several public offices in New Mexico. In 1896, he successfully defended the alleged murderers in the celebrated “Judge Fountain case” (see Rice and Ward 2021: 35). He was elected U.S. senator in 1912 and later served as Secretary of the Interior (1921–1923) under President Warren G. Harding. Fall fell from grace because of his central role in the Teapot Dome scandal (secretly leasing Navy petroleum reserves in Wyoming

mean the appointment I want, but there is a possibility of it.<sup>112</sup>

Among other things that came was *The Promised Land* by Mary Antin, which Irma had sent me. It is the autobiography of a Jewess who came from Poland to New York. Irma says it explains her. Bella Weitzner writes that Joe Spinden sailed for Central America on February 19. Anne Buecher wrote of the Inauguration festivities in Santa Fe. But why go over all my mail. It seemed strange enough way off down here on the edge of the bush hearing from home and all of its manifold activities and perplexing problems.

Muddy had in the meantime heard through Ed Enright (who went to Belize [City] last week) that Carl Guthe had been up the river as far as Baker's digging [the site of Baking Pot?], but had returned to Belize Wednesday. This was unpleasant news, as I wanted to see him here and now. The District Commissioner was kind enough to have the police officer try to get Gann on the telephone, but although the latter was in communication with Belize, Gann could not be found. The *mulada* got in at four o'clock on the dot. They looked pretty tired out, but the boys said they had come through without further trouble. I spent the rest of the day in sorting my mail and reading it.

We have been gone here just one month tomorrow noon, and the town is the same disreputable place it always has been and always will be. This little wooden shack which looked so down at the heels five weeks ago, in contrast to the bush now seems a veritable palace, and oh, what a relief it is to see distances—to look at least a hundred yards without seeing trees.

### **March 7, Monday**

The first business of the day was to get in touch with Belize. I sent Chico down at eight to put in a call for Gann or Guthe, but the office was not yet open. I went down myself at nine and the boy told me it would not be possible to get Belize before ten. Until the mists burn away and the dew dries up, the line is practically out of commission through short circuiting. I went up to the Wyatts for my Peabody Memoirs and waited until the line dried up. It was some time then before I got ahold of Gann. After greetings, I tried to find out when Guthe and Gates were coming up, and he tried to find out when I was coming down. I could hear him clearly, but he could not hear me at all. The central in Belize relayed the message very kindly, and finally undertook to locate Carl at the International Hotel.

I soon (*mirabile dictu*) had him on the wire, and he said he would look up boats immediately and communicate with me later in the day. I gathered Gates was stopping with Gann and Carl at the International. Later in the day I received a telegram from him saying that he started up on the *Bellona* at four, getting in day after tomorrow morning.

I was so tired from the trip that I slept in the afternoon and took a tub about five. Ricketson more sensibly went down to the river, but it was so far and so tick-y that I used our collapsible tub in the kitchen. After dinner, as we were sitting in the starlight, a weird tom-tom sprang up and we hastened downstairs and out onto the street to investigate it. It was a Jamaican conducting a Salvation Army rally. He was teaching the crowd a hymn called "Brighten up the corner where

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to private oil companies) and was convicted of bribery and conspiracy, serving a year in prison.

<sup>112</sup> The "appointment" he wants is unclear here, but he later (June 4, 1921) refers to the ministry to Guatemala, a possibility raised by colleagues in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

you are." He said it over and over again—Ricketson counted 9 times. The rally grew tiresome after a while and we returned to the house.

I have decided to send all our animals up to Joe Andrew's *potrero* [pasture] when I go to Belize. He will look after their numerous sores, and give them corn twice a day, in which way I hope to have them in condition again when I am ready to go back to the bush two weeks hence. About nine o'clock a.m., George got in with the macho we had left on the road. He had slept at Horha last night.

I paid off the three Spanish boys, Elfio, Modesto, and Pedro, this morning, and as a result all are now drunk. Poor Elfio, so Chico tells me, has lost already half of his hundred, and Modesto told me that he and Pedro had had a fight over some alleged insult the latter had cast upon the former. I was sure it was some drunken brawl, though I had not seen it. Both were intoxicated. And so it goes. These poor devils work hard in the bush, and then when paid off here in town, they throw it all away in gambling and drinking, and in being short-changed by the rascally Turks who keep the grog shops here. I saw Pedro after dinner and he was still quite mellow. He tried to explain why he had not wanted to work today, but I told him to wait until he was sober.

### March 8, Tuesday

I thought some of going to Benque Viejo this morning, but changed my plans because of a *mulada* I understand is on the way from Flores, which will want freight to carry back. I spent the greater part of the day in writing and casting up accounts and in receiving visitors, not only one's friends, but absolute strangers who, after the habit of the country, stroll in, in the most casual way. The District Commissioner came down for quite a while this morning, and we talked over the character of the country between here and Tsotskitan. He stayed for some time and had scarcely gone when Aurelio [Aguayo],<sup>113</sup> the discoverer of Xultun, came in. We had a long *junta* [meeting] and I heard of several new possibilities—one that Sixto Cambranes knows near Encanto! Fancy that, when we were right there—and in addition to the standing one which is already known. Then there is a Luciano Tut who knows where there is a fallen stela there, another. How unfortunate that I did not have at least one of these men with me there last week. Another possibility is a Juan Manzanero of San José, who knows of some ruins near a place called Poe.

I had given Blackman three messages to deliver in Benque Viejo this morning when he got over there, one to Father Versavel, one to Sixto Cambranes, and one to Aurelio. Aurelio he met on the way and also Sixto. The former turned up, as I have said, but the latter he met again on the way home with the strange story that he had looked everywhere for me and couldn't find me! Of course, it was a lie. Aurelio says he (Sixto) hasn't much "*ganas*" [desire, interest] to go into the bush again anyhow! It smacks to me very suspiciously of the Cruz Manzanero episode of last May.<sup>114</sup> If I get to Benque tomorrow, I will look him up. He is almost essential to our plans.

I slept in the afternoon. I still seem to be tired from the past month's exertions. In the evening, just before dinner, Ricketson and I walked down to Waight's saloon and had some anisette. Rick carried the party into the after-dinner hour. Muddy also was considerably under the weather.

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<sup>113</sup> Morley here repeatedly writes Aurelio's surname as Arguello.

<sup>114</sup> Morley had been told of a knowledgeable Flores *chiclero* named Cruz Manzanero to be a guide into the "hinterland" beyond Tikal, but Cruz was uninterested (a frustrating story in Chapter 7).

### March 9, Wednesday

I spent the day in packing. The *Bellona* was expected to be in before night, bringing Carl and Gates, and I wanted to have our packing out of the way before they got here. I saw Messick about Leandro Negrete, who is carrying freight back to Petén when he gets in—he is expected daily—and he thinks I may be able to get him to take my outfit over. *Ojalá que si* [hopefully yes], which means may Allah grant it.

While we were at dinner about six-thirty, just turning dusk, I heard a knocking at the door and who should walk in but Gates and Guthe. This was a great surprise, since the D.C. had had the police telephone to Mount Hope and Mount Hope had answered that the *Bellona* passed there at three, which would put her in at eight to ten. It seems they had reached Duck Run between five and six and walked over. It was a great occasion. Chairs were pulled up to the dinner table, which was doubled by the addition of a second smaller table, and we all sat down.

In five different voices at the same time, we all exchanged views and news. A great chatter ensued. Carl had been up the river excavating at Baker, but had little results. Gates reported promising lines in Maya during the month at Corozal and at Louisville, 12 miles southwest where he was during the latter part of his stay.

The next thing was to find out where they could be put up for the night. Happily, for the sake of room and later on the trail, they are hammock sleepers, so it did not take us long to find a place for them. Gates swung his hammock in the room I occupy and Carl in what we have been calling our living room. It is the middle room between my room and the dining room. Ruddy slept on the porch as usual, and Ricketson slept below, under the tarp, as per usual.

Gates, Carl, and I discussed the finds of the last month, particularly the early dates at Xultun, which are the most surprising of all, and they both urged an intensive project there after Tayasal, but I cannot see it until after Chichen Itza is inaugurated.<sup>115</sup>

There was so much to talk over that we did not get to bed until after midnight, and by that time Ruddy and Carl wanted tea, so the brewing and drinking kept us awake until after one. I should chronicle here that there was a dance down at the moving picture theater, formerly run by Muddy and Enright, to which we all walked down for a short while. The music was furnished by a marimba, and the dancers were mostly Negroes. Ed Enright was again the liveliest of the dancers, cutting splendid steps with great animation. His knees and limbs must all be ball-bearing. Old man Waight's fat son, Frederick, was another star performer, dancing and perspiring profusely. The boy Luttrell, whom I met last year and again this year at San Francisco, was also a star—perfumed and elegant! The ladies were also powdered and perfumed and danced quite artfully. One fashionable trick I noted was for the lady to hold her handkerchief to her nose in the free hand. This seemed quite common. Whether it arose from necessity or whether from coquetry I was unable to determine, but it was quite general. We did not stay long and of course no one danced, but long after we had returned home, even to the late hour at which we were drinking

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<sup>115</sup> Morley decided he would excavate at Chichen Itza after his first visit in 1907, and it was his proposal for long-term Maya archaeology, including at Chichen, that won him the coveted CIW research associateship in 1914 (see Rice and Ward 1921: Chapter 1).

tea, I could hear the beat of the marimba coming down from the dance hall, and just as I was falling asleep, groups of people with lanterns in hand passed the house on their way home.

### March 10, Thursday

About nine, got off for Benque Viejo in Blackman's car. Besides Blackman and myself there was his Negro boy helper and another mulatto with ringworms named John, whom I have known before. Unless I had been in the machine myself, I never could have believed an automobile could have been nursed over that Benque road, even a Ford. The mud had dried under the March sun until it was a series of sun-baked hummocks, in places battered down by more recent rains and traffic into rock-hard waves. There was no making any speed on such a road, we simply bumped along in low, averaging slightly under 6 miles an hour for the entire trip, it taking us 1½ hours exactly to do the eight miles.

I was on the lookout constantly for Umberto Baldizon's *mulada*, in charge of Leandro Negrete, but tho' I heard from several people whom we passed that it was leaving Plancha today, we saw no signs of it. Arriving at Benque Viejo, I soon saw Father Versavel standing in the doorway of Rafael Díaz's shop and I made known to him, after exchanging greetings, the object of my visit—namely interview with Sixto Cambranes and Luciano Tut. We went first to Sixto's. He was in his hammock, somewhat drunk, when we arrived—this being the first day of the Succotz fiesta. At first, we decided not to disturb his drunken slumbers, but he fell out of his hammock while we were talking to his wife, and so came to.

He says quite flatly that he knows where no new cities are. This may or may not be true, since he does not want to go into the bush anyhow. I wanted him to give me the material for a map of the chicle camps in northeastern Petén. The archaeology of this region, the travel to and from Cayo and the archaeological sites, is so intimately bound up with the location of the chicle trails and the chicle camps that it is essential to understand them to make any headway at all as to the geography of this region. These data I want to get from this Sixto Cambranes, who is generally recognized among the *chicleros* and *arrieros* as knowing more about the northeastern Petén than anybody else, and build a sketch map of the region showing the trails, *aguadas*, and *jatos*, all vital information to the future traveler in this region. He persisted that he knew no new ruins, but that he would be glad to give the data for such a map.

From Sixto's house, the father took me to Virgilio Luna's, said to be the next-to-best informed man as to northeastern Petén. He, it turned out, knows where the Encanto stela is, and will guide me thither about a fortnight hence. Merwin only photographed one side of this, and that shows no data, unfortunately. Of course, it may be a blind lead, but as it is on the nearest trail between Naranjo and Tikal, I will not have lost anything if I fail.

The father left me here, returning to his house, while Virgilio and I went over to see Aurelio Arguello [sic.]. The latter's brother came to the door, whom I last saw at San Clemente, and he called Aurelio. Next the three of us went to Leandro Tut's house, but he was not at home. Aurelio says he [Leandro] does not want to go anyhow, as he has his milpa to make. Aurelio is going to persuade him tonight when he comes in from his milpa, and will let me know later.

From Tut's house, we went to a man by the name of Puga who has a *mulada*, which I tried to engage, but after he had been awakened from a "goma," also acquired at the opening day of the Succotz fiesta, he said after much deliberation, "no se puede" [it is not possible]. It was getting on



for eleven by this time. I was quite warm, and bidding goodbye to the two boys, I walked up the hill to the *padre's*, where I had been invited to breakfast. We had a nice long visit before lunch. Aurelio came up again and wanted to know whether or not I would need him in Flores. I told him I would take the matter up with Carl when I returned to Cayo and let him know.

After lunch, although Father Versavel wished to detain me, I felt I must take my leave. Blackman had already sent up word that he was ready twice, so I went down to the car. Alas, there were to be three passengers besides myself returning: a fat Turkish *señora* on the front seat, her husband or brother or cousin or something beside me, highly perfumed. He recalled to my mind that he had met me seven years ago this month at Naranjo, the first and only time I have ever been there. The third was one Albandigo Méndez, a clerk of Brodies in Belize.<sup>116</sup> I had them stop for a moment at Succotz, while I interviewed Eusebio Valdez about his *mulada*. He was eating in a small kitchen behind his house, and he was very casual about going at all. He said C.O. Taylor had nearly killed the mules he had rented from him, and he wanted it clearly understood in advance that the journey to Flores would take seven days! He concluded that day after tomorrow he might come over and let me know whether he would go, but the whole business was very doubtful. I left him, quite disgusted. I stopped to see a woman called Lola Pérez for Muddy, and then returned to the automobile.

The ride back was very warm, but it took no longer than going over, and we got to El Cayo at three. I had heard that the Baldizón *patacho* had passed ahead of us, so my first concern was to look up Leandro Negrete, in charge of it, and try to induce him to take my freight back with him. I finally located him underneath the moving picture theater, a hangout these days for the *muladas* coming in from Petén, but beg as I would and did, he said it could not be done, that all of his cargo was already engaged. I even offered him the price of a mule for his own pocket, but he insisted that it could not be done. This was a very great disappointment indeed, as I had waited for this *mulada* for three days. It left me as practically my only alternative Maccario Frutos, whom I had to have to bow to.

I returned to the house somewhat cast down. Everybody but Gates was preparing to go swimming, but I was too tired to accompany them. Before dinner, I decided I would have to eat my humble pie with Maccario, so sent Muddy over to the house to ask him to come over. He was not in, having gone to Benque Viejo (Muddy thinks to head off anybody renting to me there), but his wife told Muddy she would tell him to go over after dinner.

Muddy also informed me she had told him that all along Maccario knew I would have to come back to him, and so he had not gone out for that reason! Furious as that made me, I will still have to make further concessions to him. After dinner he did not show up, and then I understood I was to be humiliated further by being obliged to go up to his house. If I only had some other means of getting my outfit to Flores, I would have the satisfaction of telling Maccario just where he could go, but as he was my only hope, I swallowed this latest indignity and went with Muddy to his house. And even this may be in vain. Maccario told me that he had that day promised Arsenio Figueroa of Benque Viejo to haul his chicle out of the bush, and that if Figueroa would not release him, he could not go!

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<sup>116</sup> "Albandigo" might be his real name or a nickname: "albondiga" means meatball. "Brodies" (no apostrophe) is a longstanding store—now a supermarket, department store—in Belize City.

This was a cropper. The best I could get him to do was to permit me to call up Arsenio on the telephone in the morning and see if I could persuade him to release Maccario. With this doubtful possibility, I returned to the house thoroughly tired and discouraged with the setbacks of the day. It is no wonder that I hate El Cayo, for it is always the same story in getting away from here. Setback after setback, and the people the most worthless in the world.

### **March 11, Friday**

I went over for Maccario at 8:15 and we went over to the telephone office. The Sidon boy put a call through to Benque Viejo for me for Arsenio Figueroa, and within fifteen minutes he was on the line. I tried to let Maccario do the talking, but he was so stupid—stood so far from the mouth piece that Arsenio could not hear. Muddy finally took the phone and spoke for him. After some persuasion, Arsenio gave his consent and when this was communicated to Maccario he said, “*sta bueno*” [it’s good; okay].

He returned with us to the house, received the cargo, and said there were between 10 and 11 loads. He has 8 animals, Victoriano 2, though there seems to be some doubt as to who owns the last two, whether they really belong to him or are only rented by him from old man Waight. This, with the four that Lewis has promised me, with one or two from Juan Armstrong and our little gelding, will be enough.

I saw Lewis about his four right away, and he sent a boy to look for them that they might be ready against the morrow, which we had decided should be the day Carl should get off. I also sent Chico off to San José to bring back with him Armstrong’s two mules. I was destined to further disappointment here, inasmuch as he came back with the news that Armstrong was not at home, and only one of his animals would be available, and that one was in poor condition. It did not look hopeful.

Anyhow, it appears as though Carl and Ricketson and Chico may get off with the baggage and supplies tomorrow, though I am not too sanguine, knowing the country too well. There were three boats in from Belize—the *Cayo*, the *Amy*, and the *Lion*—so there will be plenty of chance of my getting down tomorrow afternoon. However, to make sure, I went down to the playa and interviewed the captain of the *Lion*, which seemed most likely to be leaving about the time I would want to get off, sometime during the forenoon tomorrow after the boys had started. This one [the captain] was Facundo Andinette. He said he would hold the boats till 10:00 A.M. for me, so I closed arrangements with him.

I was obliged to give Chico a severe talking to this morning, as I had detected him in a lie to me. Three things, I told him, I would not forgive: lying, stealing, and drunkenness. A piece of ham weighing some 4 pounds was stolen from the bodega yesterday while I was in Benque Viejo, and the only people who were near it were Chico and Auntie Chon. I felt sure it could not be the old lady. When she wants anything, she asks, and so I put this up to Chico, not accusing him, but some of his thoroughly disreputable friends. He admitted the lie but denied any knowledge of the missing meat. I told him if he preferred to return to Copan, I would pay his way thither, or if he wanted to stay in El Cayo he might, but he said (almost tearfully) that he wanted to go with me. I told him he could have another chance, but that it would be the last. He said he would lie no more.

Muddy got himself very drunk again tonight and slept in Chico's hammock. Oh, what a country!

### March 12, Saturday

After several 11th-hour changes of plan, the *mulada* is at last off, and I am on my way to Belize [City]. It almost wearies me in advance to chronicle the manifold iniquities of Maccario. The day began wrong, as I was told by Ruddy that Chico's blanket and a book had been stolen. After giving Chico the devil for being so careless as to leave these in his hammock when the latter was so near the street, it turned out that Muddy in his drunken stupor had slept in Chico's hammock only the first part of the night. After midnight he had gone into the bodega to finish his slumbers, taking Chico's blanket with him. So poor Chico came in for an unmerited scolding.

The next thing was that the two mules Lewis brought down last night escaped, and this set us back. I notified Lewis at once, but though he sent out search parties at once, he had only succeeded in locating one by the time I left (3:15).

Maccario did not show up all morning. I sent Chico around several times and went once myself. The mules, he said, were being caught and he himself was at work on his *aparejos*. He told me one thing: that he would not take care of Lewis' mules. His eight and old man Waight's two were enough for him and his boy to look after, and that I would have to get someone else to look after Lewis' four and my own (one), which I was sending. I told him I would pay him extra if he would do this, but he said "*no se puede, señor*" [it can't be done, sir]. So, I had to look for an *arriero* at the eleventh hour.

I failed to note yesterday that old man Waight called upon me in the late afternoon to advise that if I made any advances to Victoriano Hernández for the two mules I was renting from him, he (old man Waight) would have the police seize them before I left in the morning. I told him to come around just before the *mulada* got off in the morning, and that instead of giving Victoriano the advance, I would give it to him. Later, after dinner, Victoriano himself came in and asked me what I was going to do. I told him the mules were not his and that he would have to arrange with Mr. Waight directly as to whether he is to get any of the advance on these two animals or not.

Meanwhile, because Maccario was delaying so long, I looked up the captain of the *Lion* and asked him if he could postpone his departure until later, and he said to between 12 and 1. Muddy had in the meantime located a Corozaleño by the name of John Slasher who had just come from Flores, but who was willing to return there and bring back Lewis' animals for \$15.00 for the trip, grub, and a mule. John Slasher was acquired forthwith, and still the morning wore on, and still Lewis' two missing animals remained missing, and still Facundo tarried.

About eleven, John Slasher—who was making himself quite useful—made the following suggestion: that the riding part of the party follow tomorrow, as Maccario, if he set off at all, was only going as far as Plancha. This pleased Carl and Ricketson, and so this change was made. About 12:30, Maccario brought 10 cargo animals over, his own 8 and the 2 of old man Waight, for the last two of which I had already made an advance of \$10.00 to the old man, and he began to load. Here again the scoundrel so contrived it by putting on such light loads that after loading the 11 animals there still remained cargo enough for 3. One of his own animals carried only 1 quintal, and when I remonstrated, he said the animal was weak! I told him that I was paying for 10 full cargoes of 200 lbs. each, and he replied that if I didn't like it, I could get another *mulada*!

Of course, he knew he had me tight, but if I can ever get him in a similar place, Lord what a squeezing one scoundrel will get.

Something after one, the 11 animals were loaded and he got off, I thought for good. We sat down to a much-needed lunch, very poorly prepared, and by this time Muddy was very drunk indeed. In fact, Chico got lunch. But we were not through with the surliness and impositions of the wretched Maccario yet. We had finished lunch and were smoking when Carl heard a mule without. It was Maccario's boy with Lewis' mule. He said Maccario had sent him back with it saying it was so fractious that it would not carry cargo! The real reason, of course, was that all along he had only intended to take care of 10 mules. The only bright spot in this final exhibition of ugliness was that in unloading Lewis' mule, a tin of lard belonging to Maccario fell to the ground and lost at least a third of its contents. I extracted what comfort I could from that! The surly *arriero* rode off, leaving the cargo in front of our bodega and Lewis's mule tied to our front fence. Lewis himself came in later and roundly cursed Maccario, to which we all subscribed a heartfelt "Amen."

I at once developed another plan to meet this contretemps. Lewis now had three of his animals, which with our gelding will give four. Three of these will do for Guthe, Ricketson, and Chico, and the fourth will have to carry the cargo so basely abandoned by Maccario. This leaves John Slasher without a mount. If Lewis should find his missing animal by tomorrow morning, everything will be all right, otherwise John will have to find himself another mount.

I had thought Muddy was as drunk as he could get, but I was mistaken. I sent him down to find out when Facundo was going to get off, but he picked up some more white rum instead. The repeated "hold up" I had suffered from Maccario seemed to annoy him especially, and I heard him telling everyone in the bodega that Mr. Morley could easily beat Maccario by only giving him the advance demanded now, and when it came time to pay the balance, to default on it. He said, in proof of the wisdom of this course, that when Mr. Morley returned to the States he was going to get married anyhow and would never return to El Cayo again. So why not?

Gates had in the meantime gone down to the waterside with an ultimatum. Either the *Lion* was to get off at once or I moved my baggage to the *El Cayo*, which was about ready to start. I had started down to Lewis on my way to the playa when I met Gates and Muddy returning with the news that Facundo was leaving at once. Muddy also told me that word had just been received by telephone from Benque that Dodd was killed this morning out at Soledad in Petén on the Mopan River by a mahogany log. Tragic news, indeed. They had sent for Doctor Brown of Cayo to go and embalm the body. Poor Dodd, Captain Dodd as they called him, was one of the hardest workers hereabouts. He had cut mahogany on the Mopan for years. I saw him last in Belize with Ismael Pacheco Quevedo, the recent governor of Petén. This must have been about five, or better, six weeks ago. It must have been an extraordinary accident indeed, which could have caught poor Dodd unawares. As far as I could learn, it was a log breaking from its moorings on a hillside that crashed down upon him. And so snuffs out another old acquaintance in these wild parts.

Emilio Urrutia [see May 31, 1920, p. 96, note 117] was at the waterside. He told me Fernando Mejares, a third owner of the Guatemalan Mahogany Co., was up at Peter Brown's hotel en route to the Pasión River and his *monterías* there. As I will later have to see some of his *cayucas* on the Usumacinta, I thought I had better go up and meet him. Emilio presented me, and don Fernando, a portly Spaniard, proved to be an agreeable chap. Said to let him know in advance when I wanted

the *cayucas* and they would be waiting for me. He was just leaving for Benque in the auto, so I did not stay long, but returned to the waterside.

Here everything was in readiness to leave. I bid goodbye to Gates, Carl, and Chico and went aboard. The first [Gates] I will see here in a week or ten days, the last two within three to four weeks at Flores. We cast off at 3:15 and quickly slipped downstream. Facundo at first promised to put me in Belize between 11 and 12 tomorrow morning, but I doubted his ability to do it. He later decided to tie up for the night at Never Delay, which we reached at 11:15, eight hours out, and this will not permit us to get to Belize before five or six tomorrow afternoon.

Ruminating on Dodd's death, the delays, and the annoyance of the past week, I lay on my cot, just fore of the engine, and went to bed and to sleep before nine, tired out.

### **March 13, Sunday**

It was just six when we started this morning and I must say old Facundo did not delay unduly along the way. We are very lightly loaded, in fact we carry no cargo at all, and few passengers. Before noon, we picked up an old colored lady with a great deal of baggage, one Mrs. Sam Burns I believe. She had with her a small granddaughter, whose father was much whiter than the child's mother, I judged. A little after twelve we passed the *Canada* with Johnny Biddle aboard going up to wind up Dodd's affairs. As he was on the *Canada*, Leslie, the *Canada's* engineer who had come up on the *Lion* for the trip, transferred and returned to El Cayo. I do not know the boy we got as engineer, but he is not Leslie's equal, I am confident. Still, they all say we should be in Belize by six if we have no breakdowns or other delays.

I sent up a note by Johnny Biddle to Gates to keep on the lookout for a *mulada* of 7 or 8 animals to take the rest of our freight to Flores to leave either on the 21st or 22nd of this month. Biddle, in his turn, gave me a couple of telegrams to send in regard to Dodd's affairs.

The *Lion* is a very slow boat indeed, and it was just 20 minutes before eight when we reached the last bend in the river and the lights of Belize came into view. I was the first ashore when 10 minutes later we put into the canal, and walked to the hospital at once.

Miss Roberts and her faithful Johnny were at the gate, but I did not tarry, so anxious was I to see old Gann. There he was, unchanged, and we had a happy encounter. Dinner was ready and we went right out. There were many things to talk over, and by the time we got up it was nearly nine. Muddy brought my things and stored them away in my little house by the sea, which Gann had had prepared against my coming. We talked until quite late, going over the last eight months and all that has happened in them. We turned in after eleven.

### **March 14, Monday**

I felt deliciously lazy, so did not stir myself until after our second meal at ten. Then, since securing the sinews of war<sup>117</sup> my first concern, I went down to Jim Craik's to see him about cashing a thousand-dollar draft for me against the America Chicle [Co.]. On the way I stopped in at Melhado's to get my mail, but today's mail was not up yet. I found, however, the two missing parcels, Nos. 12 and 13, which were both second-class mail.

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<sup>117</sup> Another of Morley's Classical allusions. "Sinews of war" refers to the money, equipment, and services needed to carry out a war, the phrase attributed to Cicero.

C.O. Taylor came in while I was talking to Jim and we talked ruins, chiefly those down on the Columbia Branch of the Rio Grande, where Craik is going next week. Jim told me to get a blank draft from the bank, draw it against the Chicle Development Co. of New York and he said he would O.K. it.

After leaving here, C.O. Taylor walked back to the bank with me, where I saw Beattie. The latter gave me his promise that he would give me the gold coin up to \$400.00 or \$500.00. It was now late. I brought C.O. back to breakfast with me, but afterward he went right away. The temptation was too strong to loaf, and afterward I got our mail from the states including an extremely sarcastic, not to say bitter letter from Irma Alexander. She said many unnecessary things, some of which left me in a cold fury. When I answer, it will be in kind.

Gann and I went out to the club. My beard created quite a sensation. Fred Starkey bleated like a goat, and Miss Roberts thought I looked like the missing link. Of one thing I am certain, Ricketson has had to run no such gauntlet in Flores as I have had to down here. Had a chat with the governor, who told me of our sea-planes. Gann told me they made Cozumel in two hours! Wish we could do it that way.

Thus, the afternoon passed. The club is very delightful, but one gets bored to tears out there. We came back about six-thirty. After dinner we separated, but later spent the evening talking archaeology. I verified the fact (from Tozzer's report) that the Encanto stela has glyphs on two sides.

### **March 15, Tuesday**

Went downtown about nine and got Jim Craik to endorse the thousand-dollar draft on the Chicle Development Co. This I deposited in the bank, and with these new sinews of war we will go forward again. I went around to Avery's with C.O. Taylor, whom I met in Craik's office, and gave him some of Rutherford's films to print; also placed an order with him for some photographic material that the latter lacked. He is very doubtful about my getting a film pack adaptor for Gates' 4 x 5 camera. Happily, he has plenty of the pyro developer and sodium sulphite. The former is particularly necessary.

I met Eddie Johnston [who] asked if I might come over to tea tomorrow afternoon, and he got the date confused, thinking it was today. By luck, however, I decided not to go out the club with Gann, but to stay at the house writing, so that I was there when Eddie called up at 5:30 asking why I had not come over. The mistake then came to light, and he ran over for me in the car and I got over in time for what was almost high tea: several kinds of meat sandwiches, several kinds of cake, tea, and candy. Doris came in for a moment to ask me to stay until seven, as she was entertaining company and wanted to dance a bit. The whole Rice family arrived about six-thirty and we danced until seven. Her comment was, "Why, you are not such a poor dancer after all." It seems that years ago John Held had told her I was a rotten dancer, and the impression had struck, though she had had no opportunity to test its accuracy one way or another.

Eddie took me back by car, and I found Gann nearly through dinner. About eight-thirty, the Craiks came over to play auction. Mrs. Craik and I sat together and went down about a dollar. The evening closed with beer, whisky, sandwiches, and cake. The photographs Avery printed for me are far from successful. The only one which came out at all well was, fortunately, the most

important of all, the Cycle 8 Initial Series on Stela 9 at Uaxactun. Even old doubting Thomas [Gann] had to admit that it surely was an 8.

### March 16, Wednesday

I spent most of the day in writing. I sorted over the album of negatives I had brought down, which I am sending on to Rutherford's friend, Mr. Stiff. I arranged all these according to the legend we preferred as we came through the bush. I telephoned Ruddy at Cayo for Stiff's address, and then sent the parcel by registered parcel post. Everything is going O.K. up at the Cayo, though I doubt very much whether the *mulada* of seven or eight animals that I asked Gates for will have been assembled.

Later, I went down to the Post Office and sent my mail. There were some errands to be done today. Connelly [United Fruit Co. agent] telephoned up and wanted to know what I meant by trying to export antiquities from the sacred soil of Guatemala. I assured him my carved wood furniture was none such. I asked him what I should do, and he said to address him a letter authorizing Flucker [Pflucker] to open these boxes in the presence of the inspector of customs. He thinks when they see that there are no vestments in it that they will permit it to go. In the afternoon, I went over to Eddie's for tea again, as Doris wanted me to come over to dance with her again. We were at tea when a Mr. and Mrs. Somebody came in. He was the Wesleyan *padre*, and I thought heavy going. They did not stay too long, and when they went out by the front door, Doris and her mother came in by the back door. They had been waiting in the kitchen for some time, until Doris bethought herself of the old custom of standing a broom in the corner. This was immediately successful, since as soon as she had stood the article in question in the corner of the kitchen, the *padre* and his *señora* took their departure.<sup>118</sup> We danced for a while then, and I returned to Gann's and we had dinner.

He had to go out in the evening to a poker engagement at Sally Wolfsohn's, so I saw no more of him. I wrote and played the victrola and read. Gann did not come back until midnight, so I went to bed without seeing him.

### March 17, Thursday

My last day in Belize, and a very busy one. After breakfast I went down to the American Consulate and executed a consular invoice for the material, fabric, and silver Guthe is going to take into the States for me in my suitcase in June. I also arranged to have old man Reyes come around to Gann's to see about translating Cogolludo for me.<sup>119</sup> He works at the American Consulate and our consul, a Mr. Early, told me he was looking for outside work. I also paid a few visits, went to the bank and got \$450.00 in gold—the yellow metal—against the Petén trip, and bought some tobacco for the boys. Not a sack of Bull Durham in Belize. Poor Carl and Ricketson are out of luck. I bought Prince Albert for them instead.

I had so many things to do—packing, letter-writing, financial matters, etc., etc., that I did not want to go out to the club at all, but it was there that had I arranged a rendezvous with Connelly

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<sup>118</sup> An old superstition held that a broom in a corner summoned guests.

<sup>119</sup> Diego López de Cogolludo (1613–1665), a Franciscan friar in Yucatan, wrote an important early history of the Spanish conquest of the region, *Historia de Yucatán*, which appeared first in 1688.



of the United Fruit Co., so I had to go. I did not stay long, only long enough to give him the letter authorizing Flucker to have my boxes opened in the presence of the customs officers, and to talk the matter over with him.

After dinner old Reyes showed up. After seeing what was to be done, he appeared to be frightened at the magnitude of the job—translating Cogolludo from end to end is no child's play. There are over 1,200 pages in the work. We arranged finally that he is to translate only a part and on that we are able to fix a basis of payment.

John Esquivel [Muddy] brought back the tops of my candlesticks, which Chiuva hammered out for me from some Mexican pesos, at 75 cents per peso. Gann and I talked and made plans until about ten, when Muddy came for me. He said Soldano would be around about 10:30 in his automobile to take the rest of our luggage down, and it was a good thing too, for two of us could not have carried all of it down by ourselves.

The boat, now called the *Preston*, but formerly the *Critic*, had a big load aboard. In addition to the usual amount of river freight—stinking dried fish, oil, corn, etc., and the usual number of passengers—we had three caterpillar trucks for Vaca Falls, huge things which took up most of the room aboard. My cot was just fore of the engine, and it shook so from the vibration of the engine that I thought my head would be jarred loose from my body. We got off from Belize about 11:45, though a slight delay at the shipyard made it about 12:15 before we finally lost sight of the lights of Belize. I had started on my long journey across county out to tidewater in Mexico.

### **March 18, Friday**

I passed a very unpleasant night with the excessive vibrations of the engine. The new *Preston*, *el Critico viejo*, had been lengthened and is now held together by two steel cables. The engine was loose in its bed and pounded so hard that I thought it would go through the bottom of the boat. I was certain that before morning every individual tooth in my head had been jarred loose.

We passed Little Falls early in the morning, about seven, without the necessity of having to use ropes. I had planned on doing a lot of writing coming up the river—in this book, letters, etc., etc.—but the vibrations were so strong that my hand shook like palsy and I had to give it up. Muddy had strung his hammock over my bed, and climbing into his hammock I slept the greater part of the morning. We reached Isabella Bank about 10:30 and here I dispatched a telegram to Gates to have the *mulada* ready for Monday, but with little faith it would be.

Slept the greater part of the afternoon, the rest I really needed against the strenuous days that are ahead of me in El Cayo getting together two *muladas*, where one is as scarce as the teeth of a hen. I tried to persuade Facundo to go on all night, but he said the river was too low to take the heavy chances of stoving up the boat, so we tied for the night. I have forgotten the name of the bank, but it was some place below Banana Bank. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good, since with the engine stopped I was able to get a good night's rest.

### **March 19, Saturday**

We got underway before seven and about half past ten reached Banana Bank, where I went ashore to say hello to old Mr. Burns, who has been manager here for the company (Belize Estate and Produce Co.) for many years. He was down on the playa superintending the unloading of some freight from our boat. He said he had a dead man and a dead steer on his hands. The man had

died last night—an Indian from up the river—and his father was even then making the coffin. I saw him at the riverside with saw and hammer in hand, a sad task indeed making the last furniture for his own son. The steer had died of a broken leg, or rather had been killed because it had broken its leg, and Mr. Burns was kind enough to send some of it aboard for dinner.

The day was warm and I slept for most of it. We reached Mount Hope after dark and here tied up for the night. I tried to persuade old Facundo to go on to Spanish Lookout and tie up there for the night as we could then be within two or three hours of Cayo, but he would not. Said the risk of stoving up his boat was too great.

We heard that there was to be a *baile* [dance] on the other side of the river, but nobody seemed to know anything about it, and later we found it was not coming off.

Our lady passenger had a lady friend and they conversed—on shore—long after I had gone to bed. I am fed up with this trip up the river and will be glad enough when I get in.

## CHAPTER 23.

### CAYO TO NARANJO

#### March 20, Sunday

We got up about six and made excellent time, for we reached Duck Run by ten o'clock. I left the boat here and walked over the two miles to Santa Elena, across the river from El Cayo. Muddy stayed behind in the boat to guard our numerous pieces of baggage. When I got to Santa Elena, as it still wanted something of eleven, I thought I would look up Rachel Thompson, who by this time had been delivered of her child and was living in a little hut on this side of the river in some degree of disgrace, as far as her relatives in Cayo are concerned—Aunty Chon [Rachel's aunt] and Mrs. Andrews. I walked down to the last—and almost the most wretched—hut on the right and turned in whither I had been directed by a boy looking for a mule. I recognized the late ebony black girl (a niece of Aunty Chon's, I believe also) sitting in the doorway. She said Rachel was within.

The hut had two rooms separated by a twig or bough partition. Rachel was within nursing the infant, which had arrived so unexpectedly. She seemed ashamed, but took the affair as a matter of course. The father was Austin Waight, the owner of the house which we were renting. I didn't stay long. It was furiously hot, and I thought I'd better get over to the other side and see how things had been going in my absence.

I walked down to the playa and got a boy to ferry me across in his dory. I had not sufficient change to pay him, but brought him along to the house. Gates in pajamas and in his hammock was surprised enough at seeing me. After paying off the boy I found out what had or rather had not been going forward. There was no certainty that we would have a *mulada* tomorrow. On the contrary, Lewis, in whom Gates had trusted heavily, felt that we could not get off before the end of the week. Personally, I felt Lewis was a weak reed to lean upon, and if we waited for him to get us a *mulada* we would never get off. By and by, Ruddy and Chico came in—they had been to Palm Sunday services—Chico through some obscure sense of duty toward the fathers, and Ruddy to see the girls in their Palm Sunday finery.

I got Aunty on the job to get some kind of lunch. Muddy got in presently and brought several boys with our most sealable luggage on their backs. After a long wait we had something to eat. The place was hot and my spirits were low. Words of mine cannot express here how I loathe this wretched place. Ruddy brought some words of comfort: Antonio Maldonado is here and would like the job of carrying my freight to Flores. Also, after lunch, I looked up Lewis and he said Chema Gálvez would be in by the end of the week and he was looking for freight! From someone else I learned that the Ch[ema?] had a *patacho* of seven or eight animals. I looked him up at once, got him out of his hammock fast, but unfortunately, he was promised to Lysby to take out some chicle for him this week, and Lysby himself had gone to the bush for two or three days, so I could

not see him to get him to release this man. Messiah, who is back from Petén, where he had to testify in all the chicle hearings going on there,<sup>120</sup> said there was a man on the way, Manuel Cruz, with a *mulada* of 20 or 30 animals, who wanted freight. This seemed a bit of good news in the general gloom. This man was at Plancha last night and was expected here in Cayo tomorrow.

I stopped in to see the D.C. after all these visitations, but he was slumbering and I told his children not to wake him up.

While we were at supper, who should come in but Pedro Díaz, the boy who finally had gone with Carl and Ricketson to Flores. He brought a letter from Carl that contained lots of good news. They had reached Remate Friday morning and sent for a boat. Pedro Díaz had turned right around and had come back in 2½ days. The only fly in all this ointment was that the little Mexican *caballo* had petered out under these heavy *jornadas*, and he had to leave it in the home stretch, i.e., between here and Benque. This news put new heart into all of us, for it meant that Carl was at his journey's end and the work at Tayasal would soon be underway.

With all the possible *muladas* in view, it did seem as though the regulation El Cayo hoodoo must at last be broken and that we would soon get off. Comforting myself with these cheery thoughts, I went to bed early, very tired out with the heat and the exertions of the day. The moon now approaching its full was very lovely indeed and, what with thinking of many things, I did not fall asleep as speedily as usual.

### March 21, Monday

When I found out that this Petenero, Manuel Cruz, who has 30 cargo animals, would not reach Cayo until today and would probably return to Flores Wednesday, I decided to go to Benque today, finishing my business there, spend the night with Father Versavel, and return tomorrow. This would leave Wednesday free for the day of leaving Cayo. Ruddy wanted to go along with me and see one of his numerous sweethearts in Benque, so we set off on horseback.

On the way over we met first an American. One could tell by the look of him, the eye of him, that he was a fellow gringo, and when he spoke it was certain. "Where are you American fellows going?" he said. We told him who we were and where we were going. I guessed he was poor Dodd's friend—Walsh—who had been visiting him when he died. He told me briefly the details. They were driving logs down a chute and Dodd had started to follow three which he had started, failing to note that a fourth and fifth had also started. The man working with him shouted a warning and the unfortunate man leaped back toward the point of safety, but failed by two feet. He had gotten back eight feet. The fourth log caught his feet and laid him flat and the fifth crushed the life out of him. We stopped only a moment to talk to this fellow countryman, and then pushed on toward Benque.

Next, we passed Father Versavel in an automobile. He was on his way to Cayo for the day but would return before night. I asked him if I might go to his house, and he told me to get the keys from the [Pallottine] sisters.

Not long after passing Father Versavel, we met a *mulada*, which I felt sure was that belonging to Manuel Cruz. I asked the *halleyegua* [?] and he said that Manuel himself was coming behind. Another turn of the road and Manuel came into view. After the usual salutations, I asked him if

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<sup>120</sup> We have not been able to determine to whom Morley is referring.

he was looking for any freight for Flores, and he said he was. I told him I had 7 or 8 and he said he could take care of it. I wanted to know when it would go, and he said Wednesday surely. This suited me down to the ground and we closed the bargain. I thought it wise to throw a little fear into him by asking him how far behind Chema Gálvez and his *mulada* were. This shot told, for he hastened to urge me that he would be sure to take my cargo Wednesday morning, and not to give it to Chema.

We continued on to Benque Viejo after this. I left Ruddy in the village while I went up to the father's. The sisters got the key to his house, which was in the sacristy, and I laid out my paper on his desk and started laying out my map. I ate lunch about 12:30 and just as I had finished it, Ruddy came in and asked if he might eat also. The sisters obligingly sent over more food and Ruddy ate to repletion, as the sisters always feed the passing stranger well.

After lunch, I got Ruddy a couple of guides who knew where the Benque stela was and dispatched him thither, while I returned to my map-making. About 4, I sent the father's boy for Virgilio Luna, who is to be the guide to El Encanto, and he brought with him another man—Silvino González—who knows where two new ruin groups are: one at Aguacate, three leagues north of Benque, and one, San Mateo, 2½ leagues south of Tikal. I decided to take on this man. He was a man of more than average intelligence, indeed before the long incumbency of Pablo Guerra, [he] had been *comandante* at Plancha de Piedra for a short while. This I was particularly glad to do since Virgilio will not leave Benque until next Sunday, as this is Holy Week. Fortunately, Silvino was troubled by no such scruples, and it was arranged that Gates and Ricketson should ride over day after tomorrow night, sleep here at the father's, and ride to Naranjo via La Aguacate Thursday. I would get the Flores freight off Wednesday morning with Manuel Cruz's *mulada* and get Muddy off with our own *mulada* Wednesday, so that he could sleep at Horha Wednesday night. Virgilio would then join us at Naranjo on Monday, or possibly Sunday night.

While these negotiations were going forward with Virgilio and Silvino, Father Versavel came in and shortly afterward we had dinner. Right after dinner I sent for Sixto Cambranes, who knows more about the bush of northeastern Petén and its trails, *aguadas*, and *parajes* than any other living person. I had arranged with him on my previous visit to Benque for this information, and he soon came up. We lighted cigarettes and got down to business. He acquainted me with one fact I had roughly surmised. The northeastern corner of Petén is divided into four fields of [*chiclería*] activity. 1) The Corozal *chicleros* work in through Tsotskitam and westward just south of the Mexican border. 2) The Cayo *chicleros* work in through Laguna de Yaloch and then northwestward, connecting up with the Corozaleños on their right side and the Benqueños on their left. 3) The Benque Viejo *chicleros* work in through Chunvis and westward through Yaxha. They touch the Cayo people on their right and the Peteneros on their left. 4) Finally, the Flores people work through Remate and San Andrés and San José, all on the north shore of the lake, and touch the Benque Viejo people somewhere in the vicinity of Tikal.

While we were at this map, old Wyatt came in and, as always, was interested in what was going forward in the archaeological and geographical end. He stayed only for a little while, and after he was gone, Sixto and I got down to business again. Father Versavel was so interested in the map that he asked me to give him a copy, which I promised to do. I took down from Sixto not only the directions on the map while I plotted the various trails and *jatos*, but also made a list of

the distances between *parajes*.

We finished about 9:30 and toward the end, I had the satisfaction of seeing the distances prove themselves when I began to make tying-in measurements. When I wanted to pay him, he did not want to take the money, until Father Versavel made him. Both the father and I were so tired after he left that we turned in as soon as he left, that is about 10:00.

### **March 22, Tuesday**

The first thing this morning after rising, I went down to the police station to telephone the District Commissioner in El Cayo, and found him eating breakfast in Benque. He asked me to have some tea and cheese with him, and over these we discussed the geography of the country north of Cayo to San Jose. He tells me that Tsotskitam is not more than two leagues south of the Mexican line, and not more than 1 league within Petén. It is called a *jornada* thither from Kaxuinic. I could not tarry here, however, as Father Versavel and I were to breakfast at eight.

After breakfast, Virgilio and Silvino came up to the father's house, and after the custom of the country, I gave them advances against the coming trip, also advances to the owners of the two animals they are to ride. This finished my business in Benque, and I had Virgilio saddle my little red mare, and, thanking Father Versavel for his hospitality, I returned to El Cayo, whither I arrived just after noon. I had to deliver a message to Father Huerman from Father Versavel, and then went to our house.

Muddy reported that Manuel Cruz had already examined the cargo and arranged it mule by mule, and that it would require eight mules. After lunch, as I was going down the street to telephone to Gann, I met Amado Ángeles from Bullet Tree Falls, who told me that his boy had brought him the fragment of the Hieroglyphic Stairway [from Naranjo] which had been abandoned by the trailside last June into Bullet Tree Falls. I gave him the \$2.50 previously agreed upon and told him to send the stone to the District Commissioner, who would forward it to Gann.<sup>121</sup>

When I reached the telephone office, Gann was just trying to get ahold of me, seeking information about this very stone. He got it and also the request to deposit \$350.00 to my credit in Beattie's Bank. He is so deaf that all our conversation had to be relayed by the Belize Central, but the gist of what each had to say to the other was finally communicated, and we called off. Returning to the house, I got Rutherford to make a tracing of the map I made last night for Father Versavel, while I turned to my sadly neglected correspondence to clear off a few of the more pressing letters.

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<sup>121</sup> Gann's desire to take inscribed stones from the Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway did not sit well with Morley (see entry for March 30, below), who felt the inscriptions should remain at the site. Gann's program of removal was something of a fiasco that took place over several years, with pieces of the heavy stone being stashed in the bush along the *chiclero* trails for later transportation. He eventually got seven steps out of the bush, each of which he sold for profit to the British Museum. They may be viewed at the British Museum website: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/search?place=Naranjo>. Ironically, these steps originated at Caracol and had been removed to Naranjo as a war trophy in the mid-seventh century (Martin and Grube 2008: 92-93). Others were taken to Ucanal and Xunuantunich, both allied with Naranjo against Caracol.

In the late afternoon, Manuel Cruz came in for some advance. I have [given] him in all seventy dollars. Muddy was down in the bodega attending to the packing, and Santiago Aragón and Juliano Hu—both boys from the northern part of the colony who are going with us—were fixing the pack saddles. Toward evening, word came to me that Maccario Frutos had returned from Petén, and after supper he came around for his balance. He reported that all the baggage had gotten through in good shape. I gave him a check on the Royal Bank of Commerce, which he later brought back to me with the unpleasant news that Habet and Savala insisted on a 2% discount. As I will have a number of such checks to give out in the morning, I will have to see them about this before leaving.

### March 23, Wednesday

A typical day of El Cayo hoodoo, a true 23. Things started off too all right to last, and gradually grow worse and worse until total *borrasca* [storm] was only staved off by the slenderest margin. The first cloud to drift over the horizon was the failure of Manuel Cruz to show up. Eight o'clock and no Manuel; nine o'clock and no ditto. Before 10, I got word that one of his mules was missing, the worthless John Oye brought this—he is Cruz's *arriero*—and presently Manuel showed up with the usual complaint, "*Pues señor, está muy tarde para salir hoy, pero mañana me voy pronto!*" [It is too late to start today, sir, but tomorrow I will go promptly.] I raised a great hue and cry against any such postponement of my schedule, and mirabile dictu, he said "*¡sta bueno,*" disappeared, and presently returned with his mules.

When the Petén cargoes were all loaded, eight in number, it was found that a half a cargo remained, so I paid him for this and he got off before noon, and half the load on my mind got off with him. I tried during the morning to get Eduardo Savala to cash me a check for \$225.00, but he said *no hay*. Later, however, Messiah did so, and armed with these sinews of war, I paid off a number of small bills and made advances to the boys I was taking with me, more of whom anon.

Immediately after lunch, I saw that I would need another \$150.00 if I was to save my gold reserve of \$450.00 intact. So, the first thing I did afterward was to go down to the telephone office and put in a call for Gann. The old timer I knew would be at his tea and pilot bread.<sup>122</sup> I soon had him on the wire and asked him to deposit \$500.00 to my credit with Beattie in place of the \$350.00 I asked for yesterday. He said he would, but to be sure to send his precious stones [of the Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway].

The major debacle was yet to come. It resulted directly from the broken promise on the part of Lewis, who had guaranteed to have two mules ready for me this morning, and also from the fact that we underestimated the number of pack animals that we would need. We figured on 6, but it turned we needed 8. Lewis had one of his mules ready by noon. This, with his other and the four of our own, made the 6 we thought would carry the cargo. The afternoon slipped by waiting for Lewis to find his missing animal. I utilized this time in writing a few last letters, for of course I was all packed. I wrote to Gann, to Gilbert asking him to have drafts sent to Gann and Beattie, and to Lucia—a letter of sympathy over the loss of her brother—and one or two others.

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<sup>122</sup> Pilot bread, still available for emergency supply kits, refers to round crackers or biscuits made of flour and water (and sometimes salt). Also known as hardtack, this unleavened "bread" was carried on sailing ships because of its ability to last for many months without spoiling.



As the afternoon wore on, and Lewis still failed to deliver the missing animal, which he could find nowhere, to be brought nearer the destination they were to reach tonight. At first Muddy and I thought they could make Naranjo, later Horha, and at last we felt that if they made Bullet Tree Falls, only a league distant, we would be lucky.

Finally, Lewis came up and said his mule was still missing and he couldn't find it. Ensued for me a hectic search of Cayo in the blazing heat of that torrid town for an animal to replace it. I located one belonging to a man by the name of Martínez, which would be ready by morning, with which I had to be content. George took the occasion at this low interval to announce that his mule couldn't be found, so he couldn't go. He had, however, a substitute, another creole (save the mark) named Rabiteaux. I engaged this Rabiteaux forthwith, for I did not intend George to disrupt my plans for leaving today. Of course, the story of his missing mule was an absolute lie; as a matter of fact, the animal showed up before I had finally closed the arrangements with his substitute. What was the matter with George was this: On the last trip he had ridden his animal without pay for it, and this time, when I was giving my two guides animals, he wanted me to either buy it or rent it from him for him. Failing either, he sulked and didn't want to go.

I decided at this desperate situation to send on Muddy, Chico, Rabiteaux, and the two Corozaleño boys, Santiago Aragón and Juliano Hu, with the five cargo animals, and let George take over the cargo for the sixth to Bullet Tree Falls in the morning early. To my utter dismay, I found that Muddy had very greatly underestimated the number of cargo animals we would need, for when the five available animals were loaded, three cargoes more remained.

I grew desperate. We tried first to load them on the riding animals, but the horses were so unaccustomed to the pack saddle that they bucked the cargo off. At this juncture, George Usher came forward with a suggestion which ultimately solved the apparent impasse. He said there was a Turk nearby, one Rahmat Ali, who had three mules which he would rent for a couple of days, and these George would bring on tomorrow to Horha, where Muddy said Prisciliano Sánchez had two animals that we might rent to carry us on to Naranjo. The Turk was summoned and after some hedging I closed with him for his three animals for two days at the outrageous price of \$2.00 per day per animal. But there was no escape from this final El Cayo holdup.

At five, Muddy, Chico, Rabiteaux, Santiago, and Juliano, with 5 cargo animals, got off for Bullet Tree Falls and, more dead than alive, we went over to Tia Chon's for our last meal in this altogether hateful town, for which I can say not one single good thing, every word underlined twice. After dinner (at which both Ruddy and I had the misfortune to have to use our pen-knives, which were thus left behind), I had a few last things to attend to. To pay my landlord, to pay Lewis, to pay Tia Chon, and to send our package of letters for the States by some boat captain to Gann. Ruddy did the last for me, giving it with a tip of 50 cents to the captain of the cutter to ensure delivery.

We started three times, but each time rode back having forgotten something at the last moment—a raincoat, a blanket, a what not. It was just seven o'clock as we left Cayo and a beautiful moon was just rising over the hill beyond Santa Elena. As I rode up the hill and the lights of the village dropped out of sight, I turned in my saddle and said, "*Adios Cayo, pueblo tan maldito*" [goodbye Cayo, damned town]. God, how I hate that burg! We made the ride over in an hour and a half. Ruddy disappeared at Succotz, but it turned out later that he had ridden on ahead to Benque. We had fancied him as taking in the Succotz fiesta, which is still hanging over

into Holy Week from last week when it is supposed to have terminated.

We went first to Silvino González's, where we left the animals, and then on to Father Versavel's. He was expecting us, and we talked for a little while. Gates was so exhausted by the strain of the day that he turned in at once and was soon up to his old trick of snoring like a grampus. I gave the father a contribution for the sisters, who always put us up so handsomely here. I was to sleep with Gates in one room—Gates in his hammock, and Ruddy shared the father's other room with a piano tuner from Belize. Both of these turned up about the same time, and as it was after ten, we all went to bed without further ado.

It had been a nerve-wracking day. The people of Cayo are, for the most part, utterly unreliable and worthless, and I hate to have to go back there because I fully realize that when I come to leave, I will not only be held up (which I could endure, having become inured to it on many previous occasions here), but also delayed beyond all patience and reason by broken promises both of men and for mules. Adios then to Cayo, with my heartiest ill wishes! It was as cold as charity at the father's and we passed a more or less disconsolate night.

### **March 24, Thursday**

We rose at 5:30, even Ruddy's piano tuner. Father Versavel was to be busy, as it is Maundy Thursday and he has many confessions to hear before mass. We went at once to Silvino's house where we found a nice native breakfast awaiting us: black beans, tortillas, coffee, and eggs.

We saddled the animals afterward and I rode around town doing a few last errands. Went to Virgilio Luna's house and after getting him up—it was before eight—I extracted from him the promise that he would leave Benque Sunday, coming directly to Naranjo. Before leaving, I also saw Domingo Espat and got him to give me \$15.00 in gold for \$15.00 in American paper. This builds my gold reserve to \$450.00.

We crossed the Mopan at the ford, entrance to which was through private property, and cost us five cents the animal. The Mopan is somewhat lower than a fortnight ago, so we got over without getting wet. Once across, we struck north [Figure 23.1] and Silvino soon became confused in the welter of new trails, hither and yon in the second-growth bush. We came out at an Indian's hut and he put us on the road to La Aguacate, which we did not reach until 12 o'clock.

We stopped here in all about two hours. Virgilio went out twice to look for his stelae, supposed to be three in number—two in one place and one in another—but he returned empty handed both times. His excuse was that much bush had been felled around the *paraje* since he had last been here, and his old landmarks were effaced. He swears, however, that the stelae are here, one practically at the *paraje* and the other two off to the east.

As we could not wait longer, we gave it up and a little before two got underway again. Some distance beyond Aguacate, we climbed a very steep hill, the Sierra de Chunvis, which *paraje* lay east of us. Before coming to this hill, the trail from Chunvis and Bullet Tree Falls came in on the right, and we rejoiced to note the marks of a *mulada* having passed this way today, which we interpreted that our outfit had come through ahead of us today as planned yesterday. About 4, we reached a *sarteneja*, which Silvino said was less than a league from Paraíso, where Muddy was to camp, itself about one-half league this side of the ruins.

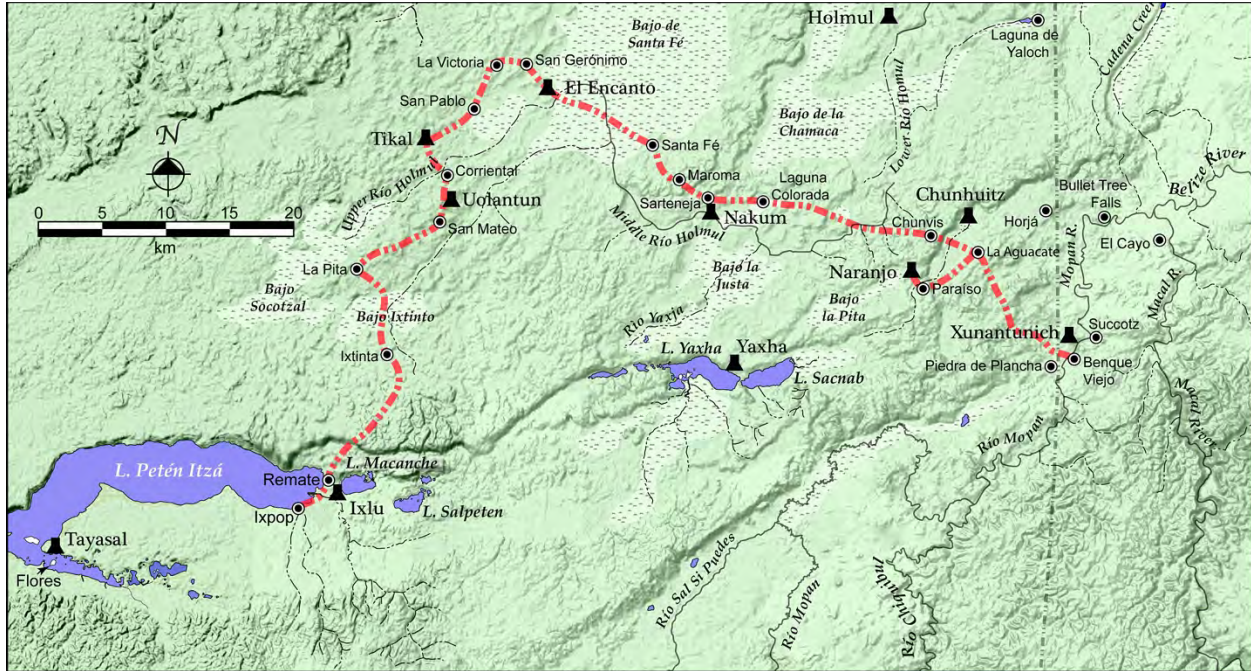


Figure 23.1. Morley's route from Benque Viejo to Lake Petén Itzá via Naranjo, Nakum, El Encanto, Tikal, and Uolantun.

We reached Paraíso about five and found our *mulada* had only just got in, but alas, without the three cargoes left yesterday at El Cayo for George Usher to bring on this morning to Horha. Muddy said that they had waited at Bullet Tree Falls until after nine, and at Horha until 11:30. Again, Rutherford and I were the heaviest sufferers, for among the things left in Cayo to come on to Horha with George was my cot and his hammock. This recalled vividly the same *borrasca* we had had on the first night out of the other trip, when the mule with my cot and his hammock strayed and was not found until the next morning. I followed the same course as then: I had four kyacks set on their sides and put my two comforters on top of them and my *pabellón* above. I would have been quite satisfied with this bed, which indeed was not uncomfortable, had not Rutherford discovered a huge tarantula in it before I retired. The big ugly brute was at least 5, if not six inches long and was the largest one any of us had ever seen. It would have given an ugly bite. He killed it. He found in his own *pabellón* a small scorpion. This place, though called Paradise, would seem to be anything but that. I had considerable reluctance about crawling under my blankets after this discovery. Gates tried to console me with the old saw that lightning never strikes twice in the same place, but I wasn't quite sure that this tarantula had not a husband or wife lurking nearby.

I finally crawled in, however, and found no further trouble. I am sending back Santiago with one of our animals to bring back the cargo, which I think reached Horha today.

## CHAPTER 24.

### Editors' Insert: NARANJO

Naranjo (Figure 24.1) is a large site with an urban core of 3.5 km<sup>2</sup>, second in Petén only to Tikal in spatial extent (Fialko 2019: 3). The city was occupied from the Middle Preclassic until it was abandoned in the mid-ninth century. Located in the 1,200 km<sup>2</sup> Yaxhá-Nakum-Naranjo National Park, the site is known today as Naranjo-Sa'al; the second term was its name during Classic times and references maize *atole*, a common local beverage. Some 50 km east of Tikal, Naranjo lies at the eastern edge of a large *bajo*, which was a reliable water source even during the dry season (Fialko 2019: 1).

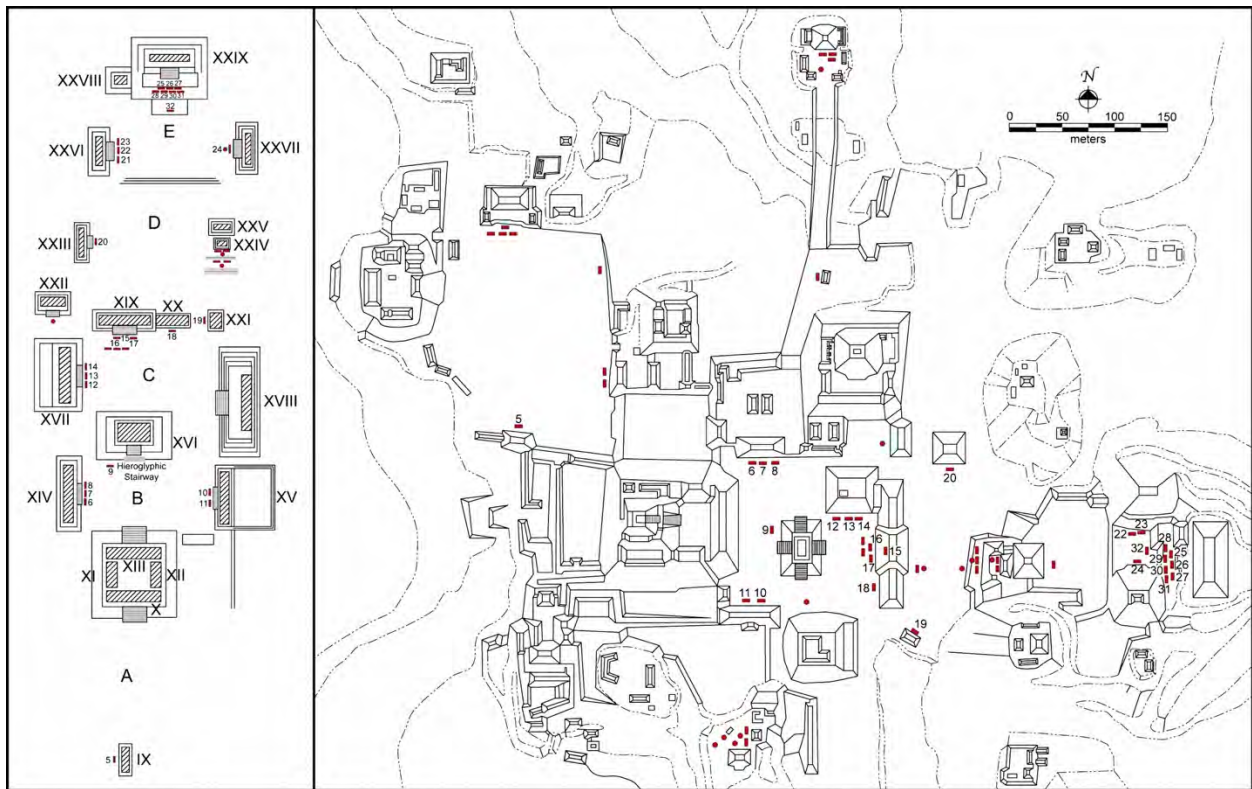


Figure 24.1. Central Naranjo. Left, Morley's original drawing published in his 1909 study of the site's monuments; right, the modern map showing the locations of the many stela.

Nearly 400 structures have been identified in the site core, divided among four principal architectural groups, the largest being Group B with two ball courts, an E Group complex, and



numerous large temples and plazas. Stelae were abundant at Naranjo, 48 in all, and were erected in all four principal groups. After extensive looting resulted in the destruction of numerous monuments, in the early 1970s 19 of the remaining stelae were removed to the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología (see below) in Guatemala City. Many of the stelae are well preserved and contain unusually extensive hieroglyphic texts. As an example, Stela 12 has 96–100 largely readable glyph blocks on its back side, Stela 13 has 64, and Stela 14 has 52. The abundance of good quality inscribed monuments has provided details about Naranjo's role in the inter-site rivalries that dominated Late Classic period Petén. Naranjo is also known for its high-quality polychrome pottery (Reents-Budet 1994: 203–207, 299–302), a feature that would eventually lead to the site's near destruction by looters.

Naranjo, along with Tikal, Calakmul, and to a lesser extent Caracol, was one of four great polities in Petén during Classic times, with warfare between them being the backdrop against which dynastic histories were painted. Indeed, Naranjo's Classic period history is one of three centuries of near constant conflict. The site's history can be divided into three distinct phases, each separated by a hiatus imposed by military defeat (Martin and Grube 2008: 69, 72–73, 78–79).

The first "ruler" of Naranjo was a mythical figure, Square-nosed Serpent, who reigned some 896,000 years ago (Martin 2020: 151), though this mention of the mythical past might be a reference to a Naranjo ruler from Preclassic times (Martin and Grube 2008: 70). Early Naranjo was centered at Group B and consisted of multiple structures including an E Group (Structures B-18, B-19, and B-20), the outlines of which are still discernible despite Classic-era reconstructions. In addition to Group B, the Preclassic also saw the development of a northern complex—Group D—and the construction of a ceremonial arrangement on the eastern side of the main plaza, Group C (Schuster 2012: 20). By the Late Preclassic, the general outline of the urban plan that defined Naranjo until the Late Classic was in place, with large triadic acropolises located at the core of Groups B, C, and D (Schuster 2012: 20). Additionally, at least four outlying urban centers dating from this period were located within a few kilometers of Naranjo (Fialko 2019: 4), giving the city's rulers access to a large hinterland which would provide resources to become an important regional power. Little is known about Early Classic Naranjo, but excavations show that the city continued to grow as new structures were superimposed over Preclassic ones.

Written history slowly begins to emerge in the late fifth century with mentions of early Naranjo rulers (Table 24.1) on two stelae at Tikal—Tzik'in Bahlam and Naatz Chan Ahk. A third ruler from this period, Tajal Chaak, is known from a painted plate. In contrast, the long reign of Aj Wosal Chan K'inich (AD 546–615) is well documented on several intact stelae (Closs 1984: 80), and excavations at Structure B-15, which exposed a 40-m-long ornate stucco frieze, offer evidence of the wealth and grandeur of Naranjo at the end of the Early Classic. An inscription on Stela 25, fronting the eastern building of the Group C triadic complex, provides the first instance of a Maya ruler being installed in power under the aegis of another king: Aj Wosal Chan K'inich was placed on the throne under the authority of K'altuun Hix, the ruler of distant Calakmul (Martin and Grube 2008: 72). This is also the first recorded indication of the Snake Kings' expanding influence over the region. Aj Wosal himself projected Calakmul's influence in the region: the spectacular polychrome frieze decorating a large pyramid discovered by Francisco Estrada-Belli in 2013 at Holmul has inscriptions proclaiming that the Holmul kings were the vassals of Aj Wosal who was, in turn, the vassal of Calakmul's ruler (Sousa 2013).

Table 24.1 Rulers of Naranjo

NAME	REIGN
T'zik'in Bahlam	Fifth century
Naatz Chan Ahk	Late fifth century
Aj Wosal Chan K'inich	546 – c. 615
K'uxaj	c. 629 – 631
K'ahk' Skull Chan Chaak	c. 644 – 680
Lady Six Sky	682 – 741
K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Chaak	693 – 728
Yax Mayuy Chan Chaak	? – 744
K'ahk' Yipiiy Chan Chaak	746 – ?
K'ahk' Kalom Chan Chaahk	755 – c. 780+
Bat K'awiil	c. 780 – 784
Itzamnaaj K'awiil	784 – c. 810
Waxaklahuun Ubaah K'awiil	814 – ?

Source: Helmke, Beliaev, and Vepretskii 2020.

If Aj Wosal's reign was long and successful (by the Late Classic he was considered the stuff of legend), the same cannot be said for his immediate successors. Of the next king, K'uxaj (c. AD 620–631), little is known other than the recording of his defeat in battle against Caracol's ruler K'an II on two occasions in 626. Five years later, in 631, came Naranjo's ultimate humiliation when former ally Calakmul conquered the city (Culbert 1991: 136). This year coincides with the death of K'uxaj, who was taken to Calakmul, presumably tortured, and sacrificed (Sharer and Traxler 2006: 381). Naranjo, however, recovered quickly under the next ruler, K'ahk' Skull Chan Chaak (c. 644–680), who in 680 attacked Caracol, though with little success. Ultimately K'ahk' Skull was not only defeated, but he and his dynasty were eliminated (Martin and Grube 2008: 72–73).

The chronicling of these defeats occurs on the well-studied Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway, a multi-part monument that has a history of its own (Tokovinine 2007). The staircase was originally discovered at the base of Structure B-18, the radial pyramid in the early E Group. Directly across a small plaza lies the royal residential palace. As epigraphers began to understand its text, an apparent anomaly jumped out: Why would the rulers of Naranjo place monuments describing the defeats of their city directly in front of their royal residence? Excavations at other sites have revealed additional panels of the same hieroglyphic stairway, leading to the now generally accepted explanation that the panels were trophies captured later in a war against Caracol, where the stairs were originally located (one step has been found at Caracol). Both Ucanal and Xunantunich, allies of Naranjo, were given (or took) steps as war prizes, but most ended up at Naranjo (Figure 24.2).

The story of the traveling stairway does not end in ancient times. As early as 1905 Maler wrote to Bowditch at the Peabody that he had removed one of the steps and was shipping it to Boston. This step is now found at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York (Graham and Von Euw 1975: 8). Thomas Gann saw the steps as choice examples of Maya

sculpture for the British Museum, and he initiated a multi-year effort to have portions removed from the site, an adventure disapprovingly noted in Morley's 1921 diary. Gann eventually carried out his undertaking and in 1924 sold eight steps to the British Museum.<sup>123</sup>



Figure 24.2. The steps of the Hieroglyphic Stairway at Naranjo as photographed by Maler in 1908.

A new dynasty came to Naranjo in the form of Lady Six Sky, the daughter of Bajlaj Chan K'awiil, the Calakmul-backed ruler of Dos Pilas, himself a scion of the old Tikal dynasty. She arrived at Naranjo on August 27, 682, and reigned as queen-regent (but was never actually described as a ruler) until 741. Five years after her arrival she gave birth to K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Chaak, who, with his mother at his side, presided over a period of growth and military conquest (Martin and Grube 2008: 74–77; Helmke 2017: 94–96). K'ahk' Tiliw assumed the throne five years after his birth in 693 (Closs 1985: 68). Lady Six Sky continued to play a key part of her son's reign and outlived him, resuming her former role as *de facto* ruler after his death in 728. Martin and Grube (2008: 76) identified 12 military campaigns between 693 and 716 in which Naranjo was victorious, mostly over local minor polities. Defeats, of course, are not listed. Although closely tied to Calakmul during this period, only one attack was made on Tikal itself (AD 695), but the high level of military activity indicates that Naranjo played an important role in the geopolitical strife that roiled Petén during the late seventh and early eighth centuries.

A second brief hiatus in Naranjo's dynastic history, AD 741–755, came after Lady Six Sky's death (Martin and Grube 2008: 78). Two kings, both barely mentioned on monuments at Naranjo, ruled during these years and both engaged in disastrous conflicts with Tikal. Indeed, the great wooden lintel of Tikal Temple 4 chronicles the defeat of Naranjo's ruler and his humiliating capture. The next king, Ajaw K'ahk' Ukalaw Chan Chaak (755–c. 780), presided over a city that was in the shadow of Tikal. Interestingly, his monuments (Stelae 6, 13, 19, 33, 36) were all erected on the same date to commemorate the 9.17.10.0.0 period ending, 25 years after his accession and just four years before his death. Some of the finest polychrome vessels from Naranjo date to K'ahk' Ukalaw's era (Helmke et al. 2017: 11–13), demonstrating that the city was at its artistic apogee during his reign. Two remarkable vessels now at the Art Institute of Chicago were painted by the

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<sup>123</sup> These steps can be viewed at the British Museum website, record numbers AM1924,0510.4–AM1924,0510.10 ([www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG123560?id=BIOG123560&page=2#page-top](http://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG123560?id=BIOG123560&page=2#page-top)). See also p. 252, note 121.



artist Ah Maxam in K'ahk' Ukalaw's royal workshop (Figure 24.3).



Figure 24.3. Two cylindrical vessels painted by Ah Maxam at the court of K'ahk' Ukalaw Chan Chaak. Left, the Water Lily Vase; right, the Vessel of the Dancing Lords.

As part of an alliance, K'ahk' Ukalaw wed a queen from nearby Yaxha. Their son, Itzamnaaj K'awiil (784–c. 810), assumed the throne at the age of 13. His reign, like those of his immediate predecessors, was peppered with military campaigns, including a war against Yaxha in 799 (Martin and Grube 2008: 82), despite his familial ties to the Yaxha dynasty. The final recorded king of Naranjo was Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil (c. 814–?). During the early ninth century, the nearby site of Xunantunich, 13 km to the southeast, rapidly expanded and Naranjo may have been abandoned, its rulers relocating there (Martin and Grube 2008: 83). As for Naranjo's ultimate demise, some evidence points to a violent end in the form of the defacing of Stela 32, which depicts Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil on a throne bathed in fire, the surrounding text reporting details of his birth, accession, and possibly death (Savchenko 2015: 38). The otherwise well-preserved stela is severely defaced, the central figure of the king obliterated (Harrison-Buck 2019: 75). Fire damage in some collapsed vaulted rooms may also hint at a violent end, however, evidence is not as compelling as that at other nearby Terminal Classic sites. Just before Naranjo's abandonment, numerous stelae—particularly those associated with Aj Wosal were moved from their original positions to new locations that were the focus of elite Terminal Classic occupation (Schuster 2012: 32). At any rate, Naranjo was largely abandoned by the mid-ninth century, though Postclassic Itza offerings were made at the abandoned temples (Schuster 2012: 32).

## Archaeological Work at Naranjo

Naranjo was first explored in 1905 by Teobert Maler (1908). He describes the site as being settled in the mid-nineteenth century by Maya and Black settlers from Belize, who took advantage of the large *aguada* to plant an orange grove (Morley 1937-38 II: 21), hence the name “Naranjo.” Felipe Novelo, a Petén *chiclero*, began bleeding trees around Naranjo in the 1890s, after which the ruins were well known to locals (Morley 1937-38, II: 22). Maler’s photographs of the stelae inspired a young Morley to write one of his first serious works, “The inscriptions of Naranjo, northern Guatemala” (1909). Those voluminous photographs, taken over a three-month visit while Maler lived in a small cave near the site, remain an essential resource to scholars. Morley himself visited Naranjo on three occasions—1914 (Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 6), 1921 (see Chapter 25), and briefly in 1922. Additional CIW visits to the site took place under Ricketson in 1922 and 1923 to draw a detailed site plan, a map still in use today (Morley 1937-38, II: 22, V (2): Plate 195; Graham and von Euw 1975: 6–7). In 1962, at the urging of Tatiana Proskouriakoff, who was making dramatic headway in the reconstruction of dynastic sequences at various sites, Richard E.W. Adams travelled to Naranjo to make casts of inscriptions, but his expedition was compromised by massive damage caused by Category 5 hurricane Hattie in late October 1961 (Dunn 1962; Graham and von Euw 1975: 8).

Ian Graham noted that after 1964 serious looting was well underway; he had visited the site in 1959 and found no evidence of looting at that time (Graham 2010: 316). When he arrived at the site in the 1970s as part of the *Corpus* project, he was astounded to find many stelae destroyed by crude attempts to thin the slabs in order to facilitate their illicit removal (Graham and von Euw 1975: 8). Seeing that multiple stelae were probably soon going to be lost, in 1972–73 he secured support from IDAEH’s Rafael Morales Fernández for a project to remove 19 stelae, first to nearby Melchor de Mencos (where some remain) and then to the Flores airport, where they were held in a somewhat protected area for several years before ending up at the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología in Guatemala City (Graham 2012: 318; Fialko 2009: 4). It was not just the inscribed monuments that were victims of Naranjo’s robbers: nearly every structure at the site core has been significantly damaged by tunnels and trenches, making the city one of the most aggressively looted major Maya centers (Schuster 2012: 8), a situation so dire as to have garnered international media attention. The main attraction for looters was the remarkable polychrome ceramics, which commanded top dollar on the art market. For five years after 1997, Naranjo was entirely “under the control of the predators” (Fialko 2009: 5).

Not until 2001 did the Peten Archaeological Site Protection Project regain control of the site (Fialko 2009: 5; Fialko n.d.). In 2002, IDAEH launched the Naranjo-Sa'al Project, directed by Vilma Fialko, with a first goal of assessing the damage and stabilizing the site. The city was also incorporated into the Yaxhá-Nakum-Naranjo National Park. Despite support from FAMSI, funds were short and work before 2006 was limited. That year things changed when the World Monument Fund put Naranjo in its list of 100 most endangered archaeological sites. Funding grew and restoration work—not just at Naranjo, but also at Nakum and Yaxhá—went into high gear. Most of the recent work at Naranjo has been reconstruction and stabilization, with some 14 major structures in the urban core having been addressed (UNESCO 2022).

## CHAPTER 25.

### AT NARANJO

#### March 25, Friday

A Good Friday after a Bad Thursday, with apologies to Holy Week. Roused the camp at 5:30 and soon we were all getting about the business of the day. I had decided to send back the second Corozaleño boy, Santiago Aragón, to Bullet Tree Falls to try and trade our white mare for a white gelding Amado Ángeles has there. Muddy reported last night that when he passed through yesterday, Amado wanted to change, but he, Muddy, did not want to take the responsibility. I wrote a note to Amado telling him to send his animal back by Santiago if he wants to make the change. The son of Prisciliano Sánchez returned to his father also, but I get too far ahead.

The first thing done was that Gates, this boy Chelanos, and I rode over to the ruins [Naranjo; at one time called Invierno] to see if the *aguada* has water, since if it had, we were to transfer our camp thither. We took along a shotgun which we were to shoot off if we found water. Thirty-five minutes' ride it took us to go over to the ruins. First, we passed the little *aguada*, which, unhappily, is almost dried up. There is probably enough water in it to last us for two or three days, but not enough for the animals. We therefore reluctantly gave up the idea of camping nearer the ruins.

We rode on to the Hieroglyphic Stairway, which was indeed a scene of desolation. Since Muddy's activities of last May, scattered chips of the broken hieroglyphic slabs lay about, and we even saw two or three pieces with glyphs. I will carefully go over all of these before I leave and send back the inscribed fragments. One of the slabs (that on the extreme left of the lower step)<sup>124</sup> is still in situ, and also the three sculptured tiger or death heads, whichever they may be.

Before returning to camp, we went over to Stelae 10 and 11, both lovely examples of the late Great Period [Late Classic] [Figure 25.1]. Returning to the *champas* of Prisciliano, we met Muddy starting out to find us. He said they had heard no shot. We told him there had been none, that the little *aguada* was too dry to justify our changing camp over there.

As soon as I got back, I paid off Prisciliano's boy and gave him instructions to pick up the fragment of the hieroglyphic slab thrown down on the road, and to pack it on the pack animal he was taking with him. Santiago then would take this piece through to Bullet Tree Falls and hand it over to don Amado, to whom I wrote a note telling him to get it on over to the D.C. in El Cayo. I dispatched these two boys first and then made ready for the ruins. As Rutherford was seedy, he did not go—there was no need—as we first had to locate the monuments.

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<sup>124</sup> Morley later inserted in pencil "P 125, No. 1, inscription 1." We cannot figure out what this means, as it does not match up with anything in his *The Inscriptions of the Peten*.

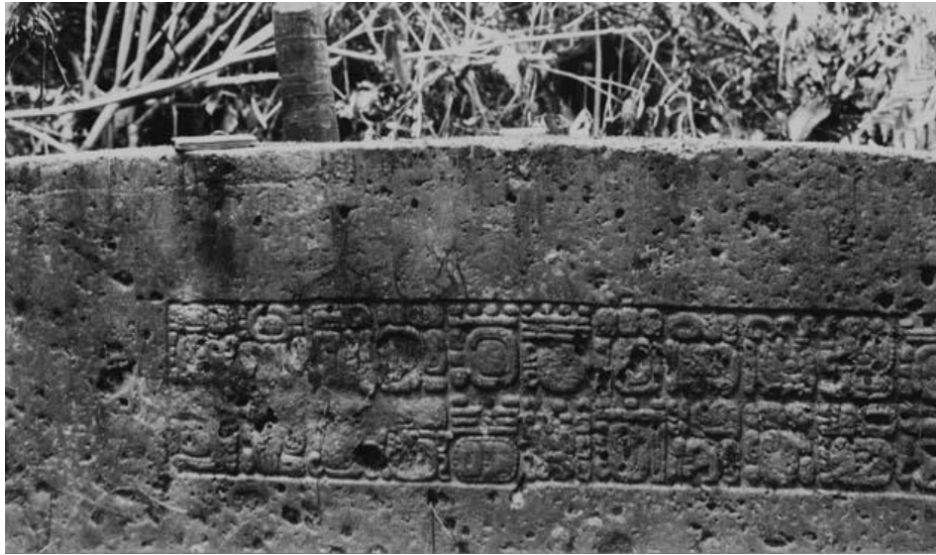


Figure 25.1. The well-preserved inscription on Naranjo Stela 10.

Four of us went back: Gates, Chico, Silvino, and myself. We walked to save the animals, and got back to the court of the Hieroglyphic Stairway about 10 o'clock. We first came out at Stelae 6, 7, and 8, and then went over to the Hieroglyphic Stairway on the eastern side of the same court where we left the lunch. Taking Maler's report and my paper on the Naranjo inscriptions,<sup>125</sup> we set out to find the other monuments. Gates carried the two books and the ever-necessary brush to clean the stelae, and Chico, Silvino, and I wielded machetes. Skirting the mound of the Hieroglyphic Stairway, we located in the court behind, Stelae 12, 13, and 14 [Figure 25.2] on its northern side, and Stelae 15, 16, 17, and 18 on its eastern side. Some of these monuments are in truth very fine.

Maler described three plain stelae in front of Stelae 15, 16, and 17, but the center one of these clearly had remains of carving on it, and I therefore gave it the number 33.<sup>126</sup> We left Gates behind at Stela 18 while we went on to look for Stela 19, and soon located the latter, a magnificent sculpture with traces of the red paint still adhering to it. We crossed this court, coming out by the road to Chelario Sánchez's old *jato*, La Gloria, to Stela 20. It was now past noon, so we returned to the Court of the Hieroglyphic Stairway where we had lunch.

After lunch and a cigarette round, we returned to Stela 20, where we left Gates to shout back to, and set out to look for the principal court at the eastern end of the city. We went for several

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<sup>125</sup> One of Morley's first publications was his short "The Inscriptions of Naranjo, Northern Guatemala" (Morley 1909), the publication of which caused a lasting rift between Morley and his early benefactor, Charles Bowditch of the Peabody Museum. The strained relations between the two are detailed in the third volume of the Morley Diary Project (Ward and Rice 2022: 19–25).

<sup>126</sup> Morley notes in the margins of this diary that this stela was "changed in final numeration to Stela 34").

hundred yards, and then the ground began to rise sharply. Silvino espied two fallen stelae, which Maler seems to have missed; both appeared plain on the sides exposed, but will have to be turned. Just above these on a higher terrace was a large standing stela with a large round altar in front of it. The stela was plain on all four sides, as was the round altar. Maler seems to have missed this.<sup>127</sup>



Figure 25.2. Naranjo Stela 14, then and now. Left: Maler's photograph at the turn of the twentieth century; right: stela as photographed by Ian Graham in the 1970s. It was destroyed by looters in 1964 when it was chopped up for removal for sale on the black market. The looters were foiled, however, when their cache of artifacts was discovered and confiscated (Graham and Von Euw 1975, 2 [1]: 39).

Off to the south, whither Chico and I had wandered, the terrain became hilly and rocky. Indeed, we reached a cup-like depression which might have been a quarry. Convinced we had made too much southerly, we moved north, joined Silvino and, crossing beyond the standing

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<sup>127</sup> But Morley notes in the margins that Maler has both.



stela, came into a court. Here, Chico ran across a small, very much broken stela with carving on top. Because this stood by itself, I thought it might be Stela 24.<sup>128</sup> We kept calling back to Gates to get the direction and taking observations on his shouts.

We proceeded north across the court where this small stela stood, and climbing a terrace espied another stela. We made our way thither and found three stelae instead of one. These I at once recognized as Stelae 21, 22, and 23. I thought Gates would like to be with us when we saw the other in this court, so we called back to him and getting his direction (due west) we started making a trail in this direction. When we got back to Stela 20, Gates [Figure 25.3] said that all that was left of him was the squeak, that the mosquitoes had all but devoured him alive.



Figure 25.3. Gates seated next to Naranjo Stela 3.

We set off for the Eastern Court again and, finding Stelae 21, 22, and 23 again, we followed around the eastern side of the court and soon reached Stela 32 at the base of the terrace. This was indeed more lovely than I had at first imagined it to be seven years ago. The stone is of such a fineness that it could almost be used as a lithographic stone [Figure 25.4]. I noted particularly the terminal date 8 Ajaw 8 Xul, which, given the period ending, [meant] the stela was erected to commemorate 9.19.10.0.0 8 Ajaw 8 Xul [AD 820]. The incised glyphs on the throne are also very beautifully executed.

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<sup>128</sup> A margin note: "later called No. 35." It should be noted that throughout this section of the diary, Morley has hand-corrected (changed the numbers) in pencil of Stelae 34 and 35. We have used his corrected numeration in our text.



Figure 25.4. Naranjo Stela 32.

From Stela 32 we passed to the stelae above—Stelae 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31. I noted, as I had suspected, that Stela 31 is 9.14.10.0.0 5 Ajaw 3 Mac. I suspect too that Stela 28 is 9.14.5.0.0. The two intermediate stelae, Nos. 29 and 30, both record the same date—9.14.3.0.0. The three stelae which stood behind, Stelae 25, 26, and 27, are much earlier. Only one, Stela 25, is at all preserved. The style is very crude and there are no glyphs on the front. There are, however, double columns of incised glyphs on each side. I began to study those on the right (facing the monument) and suddenly found myself confronting a K'atun 5, a very great surprise, since if the contemporaneous date of this stela were in K'atun 5 of Cycle 9 this monument is 100 years older than any other in the city.

But this surprise was nothing to that which followed: the Cycle coefficient is surely 8. I shouted this to Gates, not daring even to believe it. Three dots show clearly and one bar above the normal form of the Cycle [Figure 25.5]. This tremendously important reading, if it is the contemporaneous date of the stela, would make it the earliest date in the Maya hieroglyphic writing, actually older than the Tuxtla Statuette.<sup>129</sup> This, let me hasten to add, I did not believe for a moment, and looked for other later dates and secondary series to bring down the contemporaneous date to a much later period.

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<sup>129</sup> The Tuxtla Statuette is a small (16 cm high) greenstone figurine discovered in 1902 near the site of Tres Zapotes in the state of Veracruz, Mexico. Currently housed at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History, the statuette bears an Epi-Olmec inscription and one of the earliest Initial Series dates known—8.6.2.4.17 (AD 162 GMT).



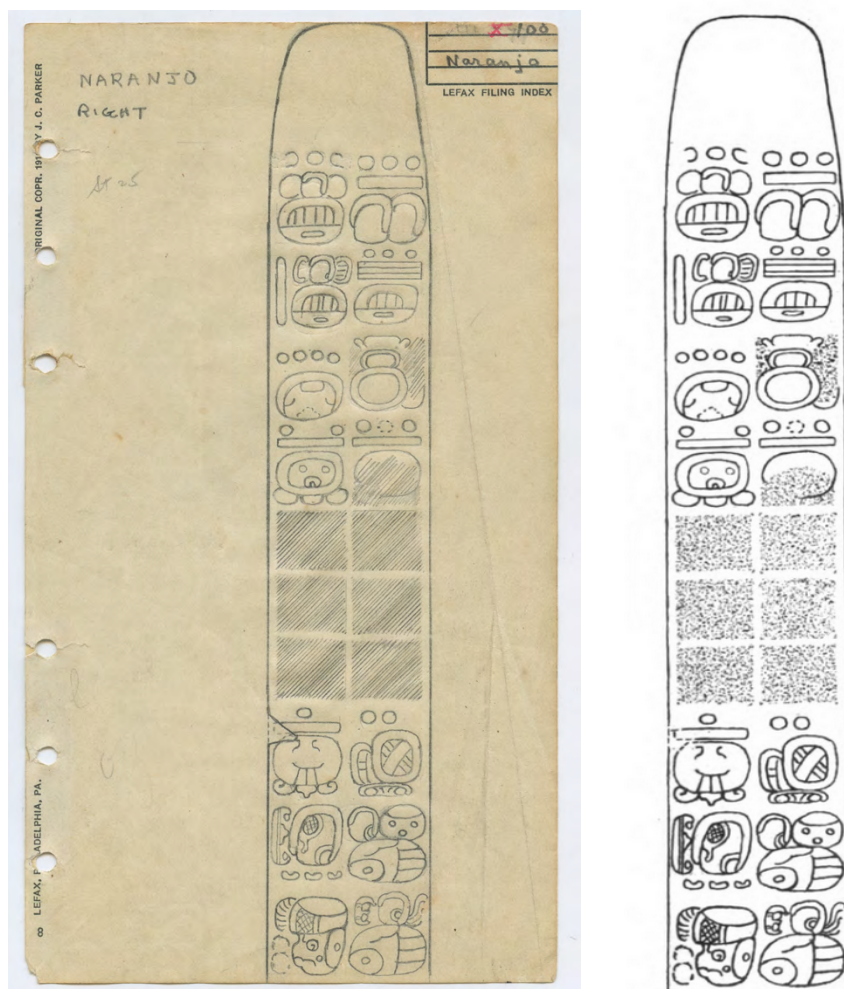


Figure 25.5. Morley's drawing of Naranjo Stela 25: left, field sketch (1920–21, page 100); right, drawing published in *The Inscriptions of the Peten V(i)*, Plate 14. There are few differences: almost all the drawings published in his Petén volumes were taken directly from his field notes.

There were plenty of dates on the other side of the stela, and at the bottom there were four glyphs (left side) which appeared to read on my first hasty inspection, "End of a *tun*," "6, 7, or 8 Ajaw," "13 Wo or Sip," and "End of a *lajuntun*." I told Gates to take these figures down for verification by Goodman's tables [Chapter 4, p. 29, note 51] when we got back to camp.

Before returning to the *champas*, we looked for Maler's Stela 24, which we found nearby, making the monument discovered by Chico a new one, Stela 35. The mile and a half back to El Paraíso seemed twice that long, as we were very tired out with the excitements of the long day; and the first thing we did on getting in was to take a good swig of brandy. Juliano Hu and Ángel Canul came in with the three cargoes from Cayo. The former says George did not arrive in Horha from Cayo until half past four in the afternoon, when, of course, it was too late for him to return.

All our cargo is now here, save only the one Muddy left with Prisciliano at Horha. A boy will go over for this tomorrow. The first thing I did when I got in was to look up Goodman's tables. The only *lajuntun* in either Cycle 8 or Cycle 9 which ended on a month glyph 13 Uo or 13 Sip was

8.14.10.0.0 6 Ajaw 13 Sip. This agrees with everything but the day coefficient, which looks more like 7 than 6. If the reading only were true, it makes an interesting condition. For Stela 31 with the date of 9.14.10.0.0, [this] would be the first 8.14.10.0.0 cycle anniversary of this date on Stela 25, and Stela 32 is the first quarter cycle anniversary of Stela 31. In other words, say a stela were erected in 8.14.10.0.0, a [260-*tun*/256-year] cycle later its cycle anniversary was commemorated by the erection of Stela 31 in 9.14.10.0.0, and a century later the quarter-cycle anniversary was celebrated by the erection of Stela 32 in 9.19.10.0.0.

Gates and I speculated long after dinner on this highly interesting possibility. It will be the first thing I examine when I get back to this court in the morning. Before turning in, we discussed also his phonetic Maya alphabet, trying to find some substitute in Spanish for the hard Maya “k.” Gates suggested to me [when] walking over to the ruins this morning that since “*bak*” is the Maya word for 400, and is so given in the *Motul Dictionary*, that the Maya word for cycle was *bak-tun*. Furthermore, names are given for 8,000, 160,000, 3,200,000, and 64,000,000, which just equal the number of higher terms on Stela 10 at Tikal, viz:

- Bak' tun* = cycle
- Pik tun* = great cycle
- Kinchil tun* = great great cycle
- Kalab tun* = great great great cycle
- Alaw tun* = great great great great cycle

Although these words are, frankly, manufactured,<sup>130</sup> they so closely fit the series on Stela 10 at Tikal, where the Kawak symbol appears in every sign above the *tun*, and the highest term is 64,000,000 *tuns*, it seems that the names suggested are probably those by which these very time periods were known. If this were the case, Cycle 9 was probably called *Bolon pik bak'tun*, and Cycle 10 *Lajun pik baktun*. The word *bak'tun* strikes me so favorably that from now on I am going to use it in place of the word “Cycle.” Which has always been a poor makeshift at best.

During the night, my *yegua* and Napoleon (Gates' mount [earlier he said it was Ricketson's]) strayed back from the *ramonal*, but were caught and tied.

### March 26, Saturday

Aroused camp about 5:45. Already the sun rises earlier than when we set out on our first trip, now seven weeks ago. We got off for the ruins shortly after eight: Gates, Rutherford, myself,

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<sup>130</sup> These counts of elapsed days go well back into mythical times, before the beginning date of the Maya calendar in 3114 BC. Indeed, these terms have survived into the sixth edition of *The Ancient Maya* (Sharer with Traxler 2006: 102):

<u>Morley's Proposed Terms</u>	<u>Number of Elapsed Days</u>
<i>Bak' tun</i>	144,000; 394.5 years
<i>Pik tun</i>	2,880,000
<i>Kalab tun</i>	57,600,000
<i>Kinchil tun</i>	1,152,000,000
<i>Alaw tun</i>	23,040,000,000; ~64,000,000 years

Chico, Silvino, Rabiteaux, and Ángel. The walk was so tiring yesterday that we decided to ride, and take one pack animal with us, with two jacks, the shovel, pick, and axe aboard it. The plan was for Ángel and I to go on to Bambonal (the big *aguada*)<sup>131</sup> to see if we could find water there, and also to look up Stelae 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, all at this western end of the city.

We left the rest of the party at the small *aguada* and pushed on ahead. After some 10 minutes going, Ángel said we had reached the place where one turned off to the standing monument. We took a *picada*, or to me it appeared like raw bush, and after five minutes going came to a mound in front of which was a standing monument. Maler reports indistinct traces of carving on its back, but I could detect none. The date is a Calendar Round in the upper left-hand corner, but I cannot fix its position surely. I did not delay long here, but we went back to the trail and on to Bambonal. Here it was seven years ago this very month that Joe Spinden and I camped. The *champas* were very old and very dilapidated, and in spite of the fact that they were within ten minutes' walk of the ruins, that is, at least three times nearer than where we are now camped, we probably have done the best thing. We went down to the *aguada*, which has plenty of water, but all filled with grass. My little red mare fell to eating this with delight. No clear sheet of water showed, though there was plenty under the grass, so I decided it looked quite impossible.

Returning to the ruins, after crossing the [blank], we turned north to its northeast corner and thence east a hundred feet perhaps (certainly no more) to a small mound on the south side of which are Stelae 1, 2, 3, and 4. Maler did not photograph No. 1 nor No. 4, but did Nos. 2 and 3. He reports 1, 2, and 3 with sculptured fronts and plain backs, and sides covered with delicately incised glyphs. Stela 4 is gone, all but the bottom part. I could see no glyphs on it. I did not delay here at all, having only come to locate the stelae, and we made a clear *picada* out to the main trail and returned to the trail leading off to the *jato* of La Gloria.

When we got to the Eastern Court everyone was at work. They had started to excavate both Stelae 25 and 26 (or 27—we could not tell which the latter was). This work really consumed the rest of the day. The base of Stela 25 must be at least 4½ or 5 feet long and was buried very deep. Our appliances for getting it out of its bed were not very good, and the work dragged. Another discouraging factor was the fact that what I thought might be 6 Ajaw on closer inspection would almost certainly seem to be 7 K'an. On the other hand, the "End of the *tun*," the "13 Wo or Sip," and the "*lajuntun*" signs were verified. The month even looks more like Sip than Wo.

The Initial Series looks like 8.5.7 or 12.4.0, but the *tun* and *k'in* coefficients are by no means certain.<sup>132</sup> The trefoil superfix has a dot for the central element, though, agreeing with the Leyden Plate and Stela 9 at Uaxactun and Stela 10 at Tikal.

While we were at work on Stela 25, Gates went off to look around and when he returned, he thought he had some corrections for Maler's sketch map. When he got back, I climbed to the top of the high structure in front of which we were working. One could see another hill not far off to the southeast, and more distant ones to the northeast. Scrambling back down to the bottom, I

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<sup>131</sup> Not to be confused with Bambonal, the old name of Uaxactun.

<sup>132</sup> We are unsure where Morley gets his "12.4.0"—it may be a typo in the original transcription of the diary. Although Stela 25 opens with an Initial Series of 8.5.18.4.0, Morley (1937–38, 2: 28) later determined the date to be 9.9.2.0.4.

found them still at work on Stela 25, so, taking Chico off the work, I sent him to his new stela (No. 35) while Gates and I went to 24. Here, by shouting to Chico, we found he was due west of us, and, heading in this direction, we made a trail through the bush as straight as we were able toward him. When we came out at Stela 35 we were about 100 [feet] west of Stela 24.

This stela is broken into five pieces, none of which is large, and indeed the monument itself is quite small, so the three of us set to work to turn it over. The first fragment we turned had some beautifully preserved glyphs, and we hastened to turn over the others. It seems to begin with the day 12 Ix, but the closing date is very clearly 10 Ajaw 8 Sak, which can be none other than 9.18.10.0.0 10 Ajaw 8 Sak. As a matter of fact, I returned after lunch and got the following calculation off the monument, though unfortunately not the opening date:

9.18.9.0.13 1 Ben 6 Keh  
17.7  
9.18.10.0.0 10 Ajaw 8 Sak

We were very hot, thirsty, and tired after this piece of work, and as soon as we had finished it, we returned to Stela 25 and knocked off for lunch. Just as we were doing this, we heard some distant shouting off to the west in the bush. This gradually grew nearer and nearer until Muddy arrived, grumbling about where the trail was. He is but a very indifferent bushman and almost invariably loses his way. When he arrived with the lunch, we knocked off. It was then about 12:30.

After lunch, we continued on Stela 25 for the rest of the afternoon. Finally, about 4:00, we got the bottom fragment out of its hole, and the upper fragment up alongside of it, and as we were all very tired out, hot, and thirsty, I said we would call it a day's work and return to the *champas*. We came back slowly, as everybody was pretty well tired out. When we reached camp, we found Santiago Aragón was back with the last cargo, and the new horse we had traded with don Amado at Bullet Tree Falls. It looks like a good animal, and at least it did not have a terrible raw back like the mare we traded for it. He also reports that Prisciliano's boy was unable to find the piece [of the hieroglyphic stairway] so that he, Santiago, could not turn it over to Amado González of Bullet Tree Falls. I thanked him for all he had done, and he seems to be a good hard worker.

Before dinner I had a very unpleasant half hour looking for my notebook of Xultun and Uaxactun trips, which I was unable to find. I thought I had it last at the ruins yesterday morning, but it was not in my *mochila* [backpack] when I left the ruins this afternoon, nor could I remember just where I had had it last. I would have sworn that I took it to the ruins yesterday morning, and Chico says he saw me with it there. Finally, because I cannot bear the thought of its being lost, and because we went first to Stela 6, 7, and 8, where I opened my *mochila* to get out some brushes and stones, and chiefly because Chico remembers having seen it there, I have reached the conclusion that I must have left it on one or the other of those three stelae. If it isn't there, I don't know where it can be, and I am seriously considering sending Silvino back to Benque Viejo tomorrow to see if by any chance I could have left it at the *padre's*. I am very anxious about it and cannot be satisfied until I find out where I left it. I am so careful of it, and I would have sworn so hard that I had taken it to the ruins with me. Well, tomorrow will tell.

Everybody was in bed by 8:30, though I sat up until after nine writing up my diary. The wind was blowing hard and I was a little fearful that some tree might come down, and so was Ruddy. He had one of his hunches that some tree would fall on the *champa* where he is sleeping under

and crush him. Tonight, he said, was one of his sweet-tooth nights, so he made some fudge, which was really delicious. Unfortunately, Gates and I, with our middle-aged stomachs, could only partake of it very sparingly. I asked Ruddy to save some, which he did, though it was some task.

All told, it was a discouraging day—first, my failure to verify the date on Stela 25; next, I could not prove (yet) that Stela 28 is 9.14.5.0.0, though I am practically certain that it is; and lastly, the possible if not probable loss of my notebooks makes me glad enough to turn the page for another day.

### **March 27, Easter Sunday**

The first thing this morning, Chico and I went on ahead of the others going direct to Stela 6, 7, and 8. Then, Chico's lynx-like eyes espied my book, on a fallen stela, just where I had left it day before yesterday. It was scarcely damp and none the worse for wear and I rejoiced to find it. Its loss would have been a serious blow.

We returned to the Eastern Court and found the others had preceded us. The work for today was the excavation of the lower half of Stela 25. I decided I could do nothing with the date until I had the two pieces out and got the two pieces fitted together. This was a laborious task and the men sweated over it all morning. I stayed with it the greater part of the time, but it went so slowly that I took Chico and with Gates we went to see Stela 35, Chico's discovery.

This monument [Stela 35] is broken into half a dozen pieces, but the stone is very hard and there was no sloughing away at the edges, like at Xultun. We fitted them together without too much difficulty—they were not heavy—and Chico and I alone were able to move them. This little monument fell face up, and the figure on the front had suffered somewhat in consequence. On the underside, however, there was a beautiful inscription composed of four columns of 11 glyphs each, less 1 in the first column, or 43 in all.<sup>133</sup> This stela had had a hip, or hollow place in its upper left-hand corner. The inscription being at the first glyph in the second column, the day 12 Ix, the month of this was broken off for the most part. The contemporaneous date is 9.18.10.0.0, as I noted yesterday. After assembling this monument, we were dripping with perspiration, so I called it a half day's work and we returned to the Eastern Plaza and all ate lunch.

After lunch we continued work on Stela 25. When this was finished, I sent Ruddy and Gates with several men down to Stela 35 to clean and assemble it properly, while I went over to Stela 21 to draw the contemporaneous date, which has an interesting "End of 15 *tuns*" on it. While here, Gates and Ruddy called me over to see about the assemblage of the broken fragment of Stela 35, and after this matter was arranged, I returned to my drawing of Stela 21 again. When this was finished, I went over to Stela 35, which had been nicely fitted together and washed. It is a beautiful inscription in late style, agreeing with its date, and is beautifully preserved [Figure 25.6].

From here, Silvino and I went over to look up the two fallen stelae, found by us the first day. We passed a little ravine behind the high mound near Stela 35. This had a low cave in the left side (eastern side) made by an overhanging ledge of the natural rock. From here, we passed around

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<sup>133</sup> The text of Stela 35 records details of the long war between Naranjo and Yaxha at the end of the eighth century, couching it in both historical and mythological terms. Stela 12, which was dedicated on the same day as Stela 35, offers a longer text with exacting details of the conflict. (Helmke et al. 2020; Martin and Grube 2008: 82–83; Stuart 2019: no pagination).

to the right and came out on the terrace where the plain standing stela is. This never had any carving on it but was probably painted originally. In front of it was a large, plain, round altar. To the left of the stela, facing it, was another fallen, and in very bad condition.



Figure 25.6. Naranjo Stela 35, preserved back side.

We next passed down to the two stelae with rounded tops, fallen face forward on the terrace below. These had nothing on the sides or backs, but I had hoped the faces might be carved. I sent Silvino back for Gates and some men to bring the jack, pick, and shovel, and while he was away, I busied myself clearing away the vegetable mold, leaves, and a rotten log which lay over one of them.

While cutting at this latter, a piece of rotten wood stuck to my machete, and as it swung in the air, a small tarantula fell on my neck. I did not know what it was until it fell off, and then I identified it and killed it. Gates, Chico, Rabiteaux, and Silvino came up and we soon had a jack under one of the stelae. Chico and Rabiteaux made a bet of a package of cigarettes, the former that the underside would be plain, the latter that it would be engraved. Unfortunately, when we finally got it up far enough to tell, we found that it was smooth. Happily, the raising of it had not cost too much time. This also proved to be true of the other, which we quickly ascertained. Later in the evening at the *champas* I identified these four stelae as the four plain ones mentioned by Maler and figured on his map.

We returned to the Eastern Court where I assembled all hands for the final job of the day, the assembling of the two fragments of Stela 25. We raised the lower part on its edge and then

jimmied the upper part uphill and fitted it alongside. The light was splendid and Ruddy made a good picture [Figure 25.7]. We had had most of the bush cleared away from the eastern end of the Eastern Court, and the sun beat down fiercely, a typical March sun.



Figure 25.7. Naranjo Stela 25.

When we got back to the *champas*, I found Virgilio had arrived from Benque Viejo. After dinner, whilst Rutherford was developing, Gates and I worked over the calculations on Stela 25. This monument is very intriguing but I cannot seem to work it out. Using the Cycle as 9, instead of 8 as seems to be declared, I can get some sort of readings, and one conclusion I have reached anyhow, regardless of what the Initial Series date may be, the contemporaneous date of the stela is declared by a period ending on the left side to be 9.9.0.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Sots'. This is fairly clear and makes this stela 1 k'atun earlier than the re-used lintel in the Hieroglyphic Stairway.<sup>134</sup>

### March 28, Monday

I have decided to have a final wrestle with this Cycle 8 Initial Series on Stela 25. I sat down beside the stone in the dirt and began drawing it carefully and to scale. I awoke this morning with a terrible pain in the small of my back due to a cold I must have caught yesterday afternoon or last night. This really hurt so badly I could scarcely dress. I had Chico rub on it some medicine Muddy

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<sup>134</sup> Naranjo Stela 25 discusses late Early Classic ruler Aj Wosal Chan K'inich, who took the throne on May 5, 546 [GMT], under the patronage of Calakmul, the earliest record of such a sponsorship (Martin and Grube 2008: 72). Houston (2003: 3) gives the date as 9.5.12.0.4 (June 14, 546) and notes that the stela was dedicated on 9.9.2.0.4, May 3, 615.



brought along with us for the mules, and while I am not an ass, it certainly seemed to improve the stiffness of my muscles.

The first work of the day was for me the drawing of the inscription on both sides of Stela 25, and this took not only all the morning, but about half of the afternoon. The careful drawing of the Initial Series gave the exact date and showed me where my trouble had been. The *tun* coefficient, instead of being 8 or 13 as I had been using it, is really 18. And this I later found to be true on the other side where 12 was drawn and 17. [The problem was that individual bars were not distinct, but blended into each other; Figure 25.8.]

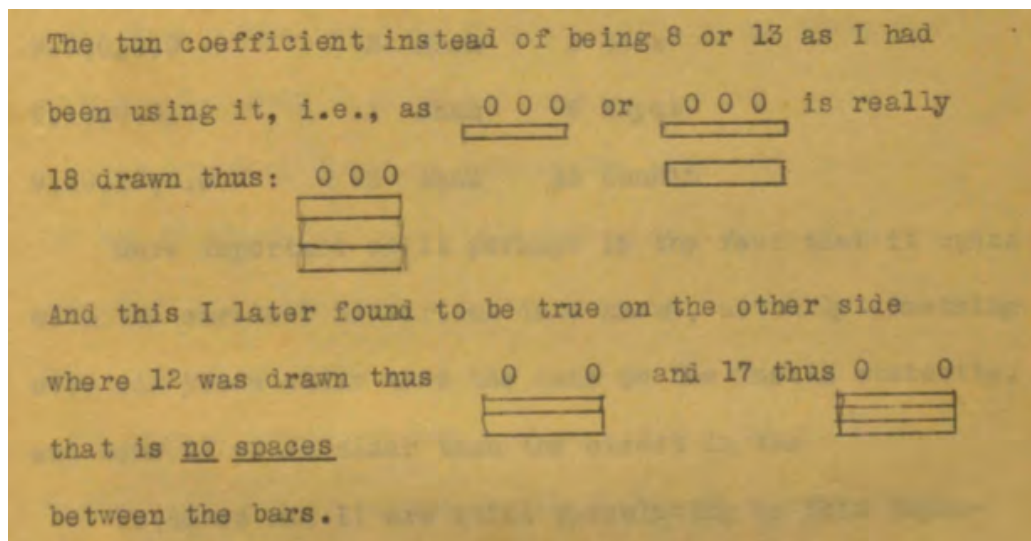


Figure 25.8. Image from Morley's typed diary entry showing the bar and dot numbers of Naranjo Stela 25, which caused confusion because the 5-bars were not carved separately.

This gave me the clue to the correct reading of the Initial Series, which followed as 8.5.18.4.0 7 Ajaw 3 Kank'in. An additional calculation on the other side is:

9.9.0.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Sots'  
 2.0.4  
 9.9.2.0.4 12 Kan 17 Sip [the dedication date of Stela 25]

The ultimate clearing up of this stela was very satisfactory. Stylistically conservative, it is the oldest in the city and, with the re-used slab in the Hieroglyphic Stairway, as well as the Hieroglyphic Stairway itself, gives us three early dates here:

9.9.0.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Sots'  
 9.10.0.0.0 1 Ajaw 8 K'ayab  
 9.10.10.0.0 13 Ajaw 18 Kank'in

More important still, perhaps, is the fact that it opens with the earliest historical date known, actually something over six years older than the date on the Tuxtla Statuette and some 18 years older than the oldest in the [blank].

We (Gates and I) are still speculating on this important discovery, which carries back recorded history for 480 years before the date of the monument upon which it is inscribed [recall that Morley is using his own, incorrect, calendar correlation]. I drew not only the Initial Series side, but all the opposite side [Figure 25.9], in fact, all the glyphs on the stela, save only the six following the Initial Series, which were too effaced to make out.<sup>135</sup> By the time I was finishing these the sun had grown furiously hot. All the trees we had cleared away to facilitate the photography permitted the sun to blaze down upon us during the afternoon hours. Most of the boys were taking shelter in the bush, and as there was nothing for them to do, I let them rest.

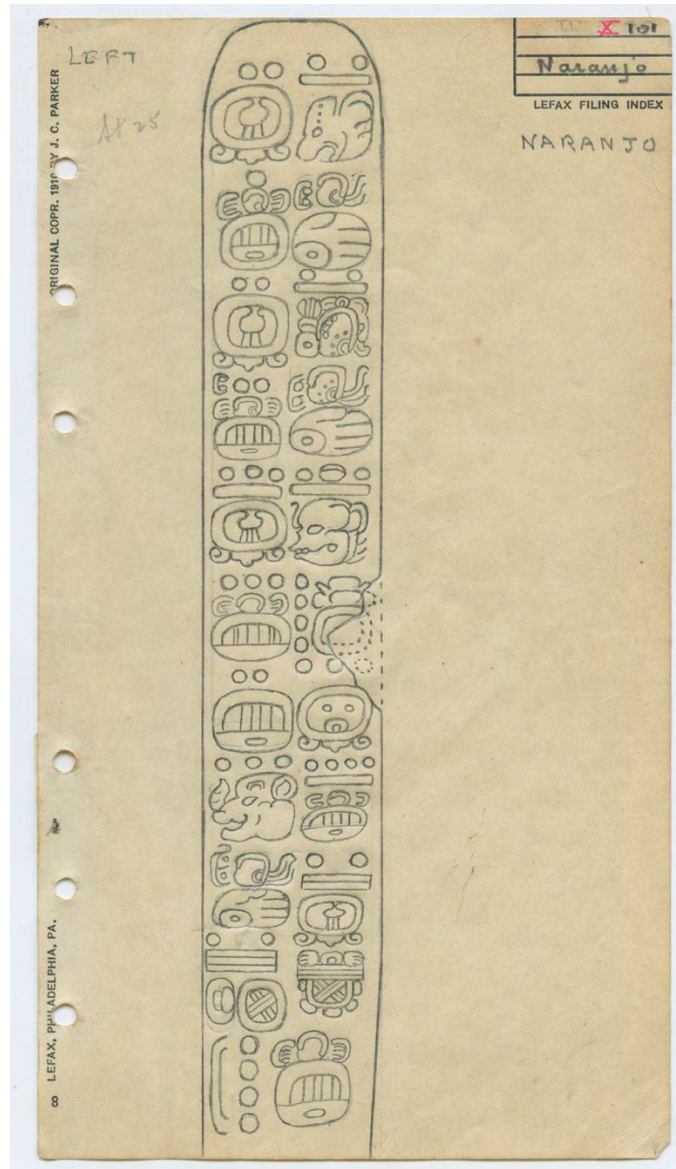


Figure 25.9. Morley's field notebook drawing of the glyphs on the left side of Naranjo Stela 25.

<sup>135</sup> Morley rarely drew glyphs that were not related to dates; the fact that he drew all of the glyphs on Stela 25 indicates his view of the importance of this monument.

Rutherford finished taking the backs of Stelae 28 and 31, which Maler did not photograph at all, and of which in consequence I was especially anxious to secure good pictures. Before leaving, I had the boys gather up most of the tools and carry them down to Stela 20, as I have planned to examine Stelae 15, 16, 17, and 18 in the morning. When I got back to the *champas*, I found my lame back almost gone, but I was very tired indeed, and after dinner lay down a few minutes to rest and did not have courage enough to rise again and write, though I had a great deal of it that I should have done.

Poor Silvino is all choked up with asthma. He told me today he did not know whether he would be able to strike through the bush or not. We have another patient also in Ángel Canul, who has a terrible looking ear as a result of a *coloradía* [chigger] bite. He says it has been running for about a year and in one place the edge of his ear has been completely eaten away. I brought some C.P. nitric acid for this very purpose when I was in Belize last time, and we applied this. Some spilled on my hands when I was opening it and gave it an ugly stain. Ángel said though it burned badly, he thought it helped the ear somewhat.

Rutherford developed again and got some splendid negatives, in fact some of the best of the entire trip were exposed today.

### **March 29, Tuesday**

We started late this morning as some of the animals were missing. We went first to the Court of Stelae 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. I started the boys raising Stela 18, which has the Initial Series 9.14.15.0.0 on it, so that it could be photographed.<sup>136</sup> From here we moved over to Stelae 15, 16, and 17. Stela 17 seemed to be entire, though in bad condition. It was completely buried by debris that had fallen from above, and only a small part of the top showed. I started Rabiteaux and Silvino digging here to expose it. Two glyphs show on top, though neither appears to be calendrical in nature, and I had some hopes that the figure might possibly be standing on a panel of glyphs.

While they were doing this, Rutherford, Virgilio, and Chico were cleaning the central stela (No. 34) in front of this pyramid, which Maler described as plain. Rutherford also thought the other two (33 and one to the south of 34) should be turned. I left him to do this while I went over to take some notes on Stela 12, 13, and 14. I had not been over here very long when Rutherford shouted back, "Here is another monument." I dropped my note-taking instantaneously and hurried through the bush back to the scene of his activities. Sure enough, the northern one of Maler's three plain stelae (No. 33), a slender shaft 7' 8" high and only 1' 6" wide and 10" thick, had on its under face a beautiful carving, a tall standing human figure with elaborate headdress and a staff of office carried diagonally across the body. The nose was large and suggested forcibly some of the Yaxchilan figures [Figure 25.10].

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<sup>136</sup> Stela 18 was erected by Lady Six Sky (Lady Wak Chanil Ajaw), the daughter of the ruler of Dos Pilas and queen-regnant in early eighth-century Naranjo. As the mother of K'ahk Tiliw Chan Chaak, the 38th ruler, who acceded in 693 at only 5 years of age, her arrival at Naranjo in 682 re-established dynastic rule after a 40-year hiatus (Martin and Grube 2008: 74–75).



Figure 25.10. Close up of the figure and glyph block on Naranjo Stela 33.

There were three glyphs in the upper left-hand corner, and three in the lower left-hand corner. The first two were very beautiful and clearly 12 Ajaw 8 Pax, or 9.17.10.0.0 12 Ajaw 8 Pax (approximately 522 A.D.) [AD 780 GMT]. This was a great find and heartened everybody. Poor Gates was a little peeved that it had not been he who found it, and he scurried over to the southern one of the three stelae, which we now all felt sure must have carvings on it, as did the other two. After some difficulty we turned all three pieces of this shaft, which was the same circumference as the last one described, but to our disgust it had nothing on it.

I went back to my notes and Rutherford to his photography. Lunch finally arrived, and we ate it by the central one of Maler's three plain stelae (No. 34) [Figure 25.11].

The sculptured monument Rutherford discovered this morning I have named Stela 33, the one just south of it (the central one of Maler's three plain ones in this court) has been named Stela 34, and the new one found by Chico—the only new monument actually found this time—will be called Stela 35.

After lunch Rabiteaux and Silvino finished the standing monument (No. 17) and Rutherford photographed it. I could make no calendar glyphs out on it. Stela 16 is canted forward and has very few traces of its original sculpture, so I decided to waste no time on it. Stela 15, the upper fragment, I found without difficulty. It had incised glyphs on the two sides, but they were so far gone I could do nothing with it. It was a tantalizing possibility, for with a very little more I could have deciphered it.



Figure 25.11. The team having lunch at plain Stela 34. Morley is in the center wearing the dark hat; Gates is holding the plate to Morley's right; to Morley's left is A.K. Rutherford, which begs the question of who is taking the photograph?

After finishing in this court, which now has five dated stelae in it as follows—

Stela 12	9.18.10.0.0
Stela 13	9.17.10.0.0
Stela 14	9.18.10.0.0
Stela 18	9.14.15.0.0
Stela 33	9.17.10.0.0

--we returned to the trail leading to La Florida, and thence back to the Court at the eastern end of the city. Here Rutherford again photographed the two sides of Stela 25.

I made some notes on Stela 28 and 31. The Initial Series of the latter is pretty surely 9.14.1.12.17 3 Manik 15 Mol, though the contemporaneous date is surely 9.14.10.0.0 5 Ajaw 3 Mac. I believe this latter is also the contemporaneous date of Stela 28, though I have not proved it as yet. I took some notes on the Initial Series of the latter and want to get up there once more tomorrow afternoon before leaving.

We spent some little time also in searching for fragments of Gates' Stela 27, and also Stela 26. The former would seem to have been earlier, like Stela 25. The carving is in very low relief, the glyphs only incised, and their style quite cursive. The glyphs on Stela 26, on the contrary, are in

quite deep relief, at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch [13–19 mm]. The lower right-hand corner of the glyph panel of Stela 26 is way out at the edge of the platform. After finishing these labors, we returned to the horses and back to the *champas*.

Rutherford developed [film] again in the evening and got a splendid series of pictures. I wrote and Gates went to bed. Muddy is seedy with a cold, though how he caught it in all the hot weather we have been having is more than I know. Went to bed about 10.

### March 30, Wednesday

This was our last day at the ruins and we finished up many odd jobs. Before leaving, I dispatched Santiago back on the Bullet Tree Falls road to look for the animal of Prisciliano Sánchez, which strayed yesterday afternoon. He had strict instructions to return before nightfall, as we want to get a good early start in the morning. These he has disobeyed, for as I am writing these lines now after nine o'clock he has not yet come in. We all think he continued on to El Cayo to buy some tobacco and possibly a little rum. He ought to be in fairly early in the morning.

I went first to Stelae 1, 2, and 3, [with] all hands except Juliano Hu, who stayed behind to cook. The work here was not heavy. Maler photographed only Stelae 2 and 3, and only the fronts at that. We assembled the three fragments into which Stela 1 is broken, and jimmied them into position. The light was fine and Rutherford got what we hope will be a splendid photograph.

In moving a large stone from in front of Stela 2, so that we might throw it over to the edge which was down, we found it was the upper third of Stela 4. This was in sufficiently good condition to photograph. The base still stands in situ; the middle half seems to have broken into smaller and more unrecognizable pieces.

We photographed the Initial Series side of Stela 2 (left side), the opposite side of Stela 1 (right side), and both sides of Stela 3. After this work was finished, Muddy, Rabiteaux, and Ángel went back to the Court of the Hieroglyphic Stairway for making ready the fragments left over from last year, which I am anxious to see out of the bush and once more assembled.

I have been rather let in for this business. Gann sent Muddy in last year, and he broke some of the slab up, and then sent a man back to do the rest. This rascal left some broken pieces on the ground, others he hid on the road when the mule gave out, and another is said to have been used as a grinding stone and thrown down in the bush somewhere. I disapproved of the whole business, but rather than leave a few broken fragments in the bush to become irretrievably lost, I have taken on myself the onus of getting them out to El Cayo where I turned them over to Gann. I have to do it against my own wishes to save the text complete.<sup>137</sup>

Chico and Ruddy went back to the court of Stela 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 33, and 34, where he had a couple of pictures to take. Silvino, Virgilio, Gates, and I stayed on at Stelae 1, 2, 3, and 4 until I had finished my notetaking. I think I find 13 Ajaw 18 Kank'in on the right side of Stela 1, which is probably 9.10.10.0.0 13 Ajaw 18 Kank'in [AD 642 GMT]. I believe there are calculations present on Stelae 2 and 3 which will enable me to date at least 2, and possibly 3, when I see my notes of seven years ago.

I finished my drawing and notes about 12:30 and we went back to the court where Ruddy was photographing. We had lunch here and then most of the men returned to camp. "El Paraíso,"

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<sup>137</sup> See Chapter 23, p. 252, note 121.



in contradistinction to “El Infierno” [a pun on Invierno?], the ruins. Muddy, Rabiteaux, and Ángel had in the meantime finished their gruesome task on the remaining block of the Hieroglyphic Stairway and had returned to camp. We met Ángel looking disconsolately for his hat, which he had left at Stelae 1, 2, 3, and 4; fortunately, Virgilio had found it and brought it in.

Everybody returned to camp after lunch, save only Gates, myself, and Virgilio. I had a few more notes to take on Stela 28 and we went back to the Eastern Court. While I was doing this, Gates was taking samples of Stela 25, 26, and 27.<sup>138</sup> While thus employed, he turned over a large fragment with a small part of a glyph upon it, which I identified as part of the base of Stela 27. With great labor and perspiration in the hot blazing sun, the three of us rolled this big piece up the hill and finally jimmied it into position on top of the base of Stela 27. The fragment completed the three glyphs on the lower left-hand corner, which I sat down and drew. By the time this labor was over, it was 3:30 and we called it a finished day. Bidding farewell to the ruins, we returned to the animals and thence to El Paraíso.

Here, a pleasant job awaited me. I was in sad need of a bath and change of clothing—indeed had been for several days. I got the bathtub out and proceeded to give myself a real treat. It was a real relief. Before dinner was ready, Rutherford and I catalogued the negatives he developed last night. They are all splendid.

Dinner still delaying, I got out the Tikal report and made a list of the stelae there with notes as to the arrangements of the figures and inscriptions. I was interrupted at this task by the welcome word and we sat down to a delicious soup of partridge with the meat, quite the best meal we have had here. After dinner, I wrote a while in my diary, but was very tired and soon gave it up, going to bed about 8:30. Sometime after I had retired, Santiago returned, having gone all the way into Cayo and back. He reported that he could not find Prisciliano’s animal. He was in Cayo for about half an hour.

Later, I had fallen asleep by this time, Ruddy fancied he saw a snake in the roof of the *champa* under which he was sleeping, and tried to rouse Chico to aid him in the search, but Chico only laughed and said “*muchas pulgas*” [many fleas], and would not leave his hammock. All the others were laughing but me, who was sound asleep. Finally, Ruddy mustered up enough courage to go in and to bed. Still later, I was awakened by a commotion. Silviano thought he heard an animal passing along the road to Horha. Chico and Santiago gave chase, but returned presently reporting that it was a tapir. Muddy insisted still that it was the missing mule, but no one believed him.

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<sup>138</sup> It is unclear what these “samples” might be. Bits of the stone?



## CHAPTER 26.

### NAKUM AND EL ENCANTO

#### March 31, Thursday

We made a bad start, that is to say, a late start. I roused the camp at five-thirty. It was an hour later, however, before the boys started out for the mules, and another hour before they finally got back. No one had seen the missing animal of Prisciliano, and it was necessary to go on without it. Santiago said he had seen the “*rastros*” of an animal returning toward Horha yesterday, and we concluded it had returned to its master. We had the cargo shifted somewhat better than when we came, and moreover had eaten considerably during the past week, so that it went comfortably onto six animals. We got underway at just 9:30 and, after retracing our steps for an hour, we took a trail leading off to the northeast to the Río Holmul, which we reached an hour later (2 hours later, probably). It was here four weeks ago that Chico and I recognized an old friend in the boy who was making tortillas.

One of the animals took the occasion to lay down, and all of them, of course, had to have their packs adjusted. The road from the *horqueta* down to the Río Holmul led mostly north and dropped off the plateau on this side of the Sierra Chunvis, where Naranjo is located. In fact, for the last half hour we came down quite a steep little ravine where the limestone was clearly exposed. One saw here clearly how little soil overlays the limestone, in places not more than a foot, and all this dense bush is supported by this shallow depth of soil.

After leaving the Río Holmul, the trail turns almost due west save for a shade northerly, and so continues the three leagues to Laguna Colorada. Shortly after leaving the river (which I should add was bone dry), one of the mules (that of Lewis) hid itself in a *desecho* and when we had a count of noses farther on, turned up missing. I sent Santiago and Juliano back for it, and before we reached the *laguna*, the latter caught up with us driving this miscreant.

We reached the *laguna* at 4:30, after seven hours in the saddle. No *mulada* was in, so we had the place to ourselves. I was quite tired and Gates more so; only Ruddy seemed to have an excess of pep and busied himself about everything. After dinner, Virgilio and Santiago promised to bring in a deer from the nearby savanna if we loaned them our electric lantern. Ruddy put in a new set of batteries for them and they set off about eight. It must have been 10:00 when they returned, but without a deer. We had heard several shots and thought they must have hit something. The story was that they had hit a deer but could not find it owing to the darkness.

There is a mild epidemic of colds running through camp. Silvino brought it with him from Benque. He was all stopped up and at Naranjo could scarcely breathe. He gave it to Muddy, who has been blowing his nose and wiping his eyes for the past few days. Today I have been sneezing and blowing my head off, and I suppose it will run through the outfit. I suppose that is the way the [1918 Spanish] “flu” ran through these poor folk down here. Succotz lost over half of its

population. Some households were literally decimated to the last member. It was worse in El Cayo than in Benque, but not so bad in the bush.<sup>139</sup>

The *paraje* here—Laguna Colorada—is a delightful place as bush stopping places go. The *laguna* is quite large and of a red color, hence the name, and has some alligators and great numbers of crawfish. The savanna of the same is nearby, where deer and jaguar abound. It is almost due north of Yaxha, I should judge, though the boys point somewhat east of south in indicating its location.

### Friday, April 1

We rose shortly after five and by seven-thirty Gates, Virgilio, and I went on ahead. The animals had *ramón* branches from a tall *ramón* tree just behind the *champas*, which Ángel and Virgilio had climbed last night, and were consequently nearby—in fact I heard them chomping away at their *ramón* leaves before I went to sleep. The plan for the day was that Gates, Virgilio, and I were to start on ahead and after reaching the *sarteneja* about 1½ leagues out, to take the trail leading to Nakum. The rest of the *mulada* was to go on direct to Santa Fe. This program we put through.

We left Laguna Colorada, as I have said, at 7:30, and at 8:45 we reached the *sarteneja*. Here we took the trail leading due south, and in 15 minutes saw the clearing on our right (west) made by Conde de Périgny eleven years ago.<sup>140</sup> I told Virgilio to keep his eyes open for a *picada* leading off to the right. We passed an empty Peck-Frean biscuit tin, which I thought was nearby the *picada*, but Virgilio saw none so we continued on. Presently came out at the site of the *champas* where we tied our horses just four weeks ago this very morning. We retraced our steps to the biscuit tin, and here Virgilio found the *picada*. We left the horses tied in the trail and entered the bush, emerging presently at Stela U.

Although this is a pleasure trip to show Gates Nakum, I managed to combine business with it. My drawing of the month sign which I made before did not satisfy me, and I seized the opportunity to redraw it [Figure 26.1]. From Stela U we followed our *picada* first to Stela C, which Gates admired greatly, and then to Stela D. This was just as we had left it four weeks ago, the small fragments still fitted together and standing there undisturbed in the bush.

We returned from Stela D to Stela U and there climbed the steep pyramid just behind the latter [Figure 21.4, p. 227]. This was even more precipitous than the one we climbed last month, but the view was correspondingly splendid when we gained the summit of the temple above. To the southeast stretched a range of hills, the southern side of the Holmul Valley. Northwest, another much closer range closed in the horizon, behind which we imagined our *mulada* was already passing, and beyond which lies the Bajo of Santa Fe. At our feet lay the dead city, its higher temples rising above the treetops, but most of its fallen buildings buried in the dense forest. It was with a feeling of genuine sadness that I turned to descend; so much labor, so much toil, so much human endeavor gone for naught.

The descent was more perilous than the ascent, and had it not been for the trees and vines would have been well-nigh impossible. As it was, even with the aid of these, we slipped and slid to the base, torn to pieces and to blood by the sharp thorns en route.

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<sup>139</sup> The Spanish flu of 1918; see Ward and Rice 2021: 145-154.

<sup>140</sup> See Chapter 21, p. 183, note 105.

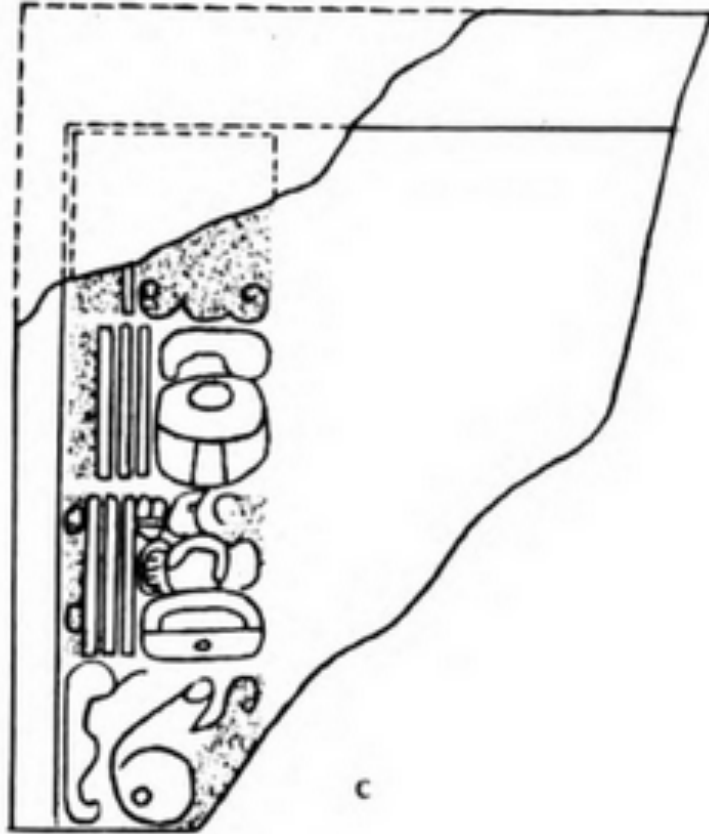


Figure 26.1. Morley's field drawing of the inscription on Nakum Stela U.

We went back to our horses and returned to the *sarteneja* at 10:45, just two hours since we left. I found a note from Rutherford—including a pencil sketch of myself *con barba* [bearded]—saying he had passed through with the *mulada* just half an hour ahead of us. We continued on our way and after passing the *aguada* of Santa Rosa (on the left) we reached in 55 minutes the *jato* de Maroma. Beyond here we overtook Chico, Santiago, Ángel, and Prisciliano's mule. The latter had fallen down and could not get up until they had taken off its cargo. It is a poor, weak animal, and if it only lasts us through to Tikal, I shall be more than satisfied.

We overtook no more of the *mulada* but got in ourselves to the *jato* of Santa Fe at one o'clock, just 5½ hours after leaving the Laguna Colorado, inclusive of our side trip to Nakum. Ruddy was in with the animals and said they, too, had only just arrived. They left at eight and were, therefore, just five hours on the way. We found another *patacho* in, one belonging to a man we had met several times on our former trip, and whom we had seen last the morning we left Chunvis.

The boys soon had the tarp up and under this we had tea. After lunch, Gates took a nap, Rutherford made some fudge, which, by the way, he does very well, and I wrote in this book right up to dinner time. In the later part of the afternoon, Rutherford and Virgilio went hunting. We heard one shot and thought they must have hit something, but no: when they came in about dark, they had killed nothing. Virgilio had shot at an ocellated turkey, nearby too, but had missed it. Ruddy came in late with him. He reports the *bajo* very hard walking.

During the latter part of the afternoon, I had been sitting by Gates' hammock, and in walking

over to the dinner table a short distance I lost the top of my fountain [pen], a great loss. I had everybody looking for it, but with no result. It wasn't found.

The man whom we last saw at Chunvis has an ugly-looking sore on his leg, the result of a blow from a log or a bough. It is infected and looks bad. After dinner, Rutherford dressed it with iodoform and bandaged it. Chico brought over a boy, one Timoteo Tut from Benque (who is watching chicle here), who knows where there is a new stela at Bambonal [Uaxactun] with a carved round altar! What irony, and in addition another at Aguacate. The latter is east of the *paraje* and must be one of the two Silvino looked for. He says Manuel and José Silva of Benque both know where it is, also. What a pity I did not have either of these two brothers or this Timoteo with me instead of old Silvino when I passed through there. But the crowning irony of all is to learn of the discovery of another stela at Bambonal. From this boy's description of it, it lies north of the road to El Encanto about a mile from the *paraje*. He says there is a round stone with carvings on it, and behind a stone with letters. Of course, it is barely possible that this is one of the stelae at Group C, which I discovered five years ago but did not see last month. At any rate, I got this boy's name and when I come back next year, possibly I can take him on with me.

I did no more writing after dinner, but turned in about eight, though it was some time after that before the camp finally settled down for the night. It came on to rain about 3:30 and most of the boys took shelter under the tarp, so that there was not much sleeping after that. Silvino was the first voice I heard after the rain began to fall, though soon the others joined the chorus. The only two who stuck it out were Gates and Muddy, neither of them stirred throughout all the ensuing confusion, so I concluded they were not getting wet. Virgilio, Santiago, Chico, Rabiteaux, and I think Juliano took refuge under the tarp. Silvino and Ángel sought shelter elsewhere. The rain had one advantage—it got everyone so uncomfortable that when 5:30 came around I had no difficulty in arousing the camp.

## Saturday, April 2

Owing to the rain of last night, we got an early start. In fact, we left Santa Fe at 8:00 sharp. Ten minutes after going down a gentle decline, we entered the Bajo of Santa Fe—but a very different place from what it was a month ago. Now the mud is all dried into iron-hard hummocks, which makes hard walking for the animals. At 9:15 we reached the river, which still has a little water in a pool here and there. This, I am satisfied, is the Río Holmul, which rises in this Bajo of Santa Fe, flows west first to some point southeast of Tikal, and then doubles back on itself, flows east by the southern edge of Nakum, and thence northeast and out to the colony.<sup>141</sup>

I rode ahead from the river to overtake Virgilio, as I wanted him to climb some high trees for me in the *bajo* to ascertain whether or not the towers [temple roof combs] of Tikal were visible. I caught up with him presently, and from this point we rode on together. Sometime later, we heard shouts and cries ahead in the *bajo*, and soon the tinkling of a bell. It was a chicle *patacho* bringing chicle from El Encanto to Santa Fe. Virgilio knew all the *arrieros* and we stopped to exchange greetings. Farther on, we passed another *mulada*, in which I recognized one of the boys we left at Bambonal. Shortly after passing this second *patacho*, Virgilio saw a high tree which he thought might serve our purpose. He climbed this but found it was too low to see out over the rest of the

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<sup>141</sup> For more of his discussion of the complexities of the Río Holmul, see Chapter 22, pp. 232–233.

bush. From its top, however, he saw another higher one nearby, and descending the first made his way to the second, which he climbed.

By this time Chico and Gates, who were the last, had caught up, and the three of us waited for word from Virgilio. He soon called out that off to the west he could plainly distinguish three high towers above the bush, two close together and somewhat white, the other off by itself and apparently covered with bush. He had taken my compass up with him and said the exact bearing from where we were was 10 degrees south of west. The distance he estimated to be about six leagues. Both direction and distance seemed to be to be about right [for Tikal], but I thought I would try to climb the tree and see for myself.

I made my way through the closely knit undergrowth, a tangle of vines, logwood thorns, and *bejucos*—a veritable thicket—to the tree and started up. I had not gone very far, however, before a very large ant stung me in the wrist, and I knew when I had enough and came down. In the meantime, Chico was fired by similar ambitions, and he started up the tree, getting somewhat farther than I did. The same cause was his undoing also, for these fierce ants seized upon his leg and he beat a hasty retreat ground-ward. He said they hurt him worse than the bite of a scorpion, with which Virgilio concurred. He had six bites on his left leg and felt sure they would give him a fever.

As soon as Virgilio descended, I had him point out the direction of Tikal on the compass and then we continued on our way through this long wearisome *bajo*. Although it was much drier, and therefore easier going than it had been when we were last this way a month ago, it is bad enough now, and we were thankful enough when the *escoba* palms began to appear and we knew we were out of it. It was just 11:25 when I reached higher ground, 2¾ hours to cross. I daresay we made about 2¼ miles an hour, certainly not more than 2½, in which case the *bajo* would be between 6 and 7 miles wide at this point—certainly not more.

Ruddy was waiting for us on the far side of the *bajo* and a short ride brought us to some mounds [the site of El Encanto; see Chapter 27]. Virgilio said the stela was hereabouts, so we tied the horses while he struck off into the bush. In five minutes more, we heard him shout that he had found the stela and we made our way thither. It was a stela, right enough [Figure 26.2], but surprising and disappointing at the same time—disappointing because I could not decipher the date, which apparently had been a Calendar Round at the beginning of the right side facing it, and surprising because of its style.<sup>142</sup>

It is only 4'8" high with glyphs on both narrow faces and a figure on the front. The surprising feature is that all of the glyphs practically are new forms. Rutherford made exposures of the two sides and front, but I doubt greatly that I will be able to date it. This stela stands, or rather stood (for it is now fallen) at the southwest corner of a rather high pyramid, which Gates, Chico, and I climbed. Virgilio climbed a tree on its summit but failed to see the towers of Tikal therefrom. There was nothing more to be done here, so I told the boys we would return to the camp. The annoying part of this whole business is that I do not think it is the same stela that Merwin photographed here, which is the one I would like to find. I cannot be sure of this until I can

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<sup>142</sup> Morley here refers to El Encanto Stela 1. Oddly for Morley, he failed to recognize that it had an Initial Series inscription recording the date 9.8.5.0.0 (Morley 1936–37, II: 4), an error he corrected when he revisited the site in 1922.

compare Rutherford's photographs with the published Merwin photographs, but I believe the two are different monuments.<sup>143</sup>



Figure 26.2. El Encanto Stela 1 as photographed by A.K. Rutherford in 1921 (see pp. 289–290).

Just as we were ready to leave, Ruddy heard some monkeys nearby and he, Chico, and Virgilio went to look for them while Gates and I returned to the horses and then to the *paraje*, which was nearby. It was quite hot and Muddy had pitched the tarp in the hottest place. It turned out later that it was the only place in the clearing where there were no fire ants! We had tea as soon as it could be got ready, and then everybody scattered. Some went to fell *ramón*, Gates to sleep, Ruddy to hunt (having returned empty-handed from the monkey expedition), and I to write. One bit of good news we picked up here—Tikal is only five leagues distant, and if a small bit of the road is not too closed, we will be able to go through tomorrow. This agrees better with Virgilio's distance of six leagues this morning, and it looks as though we might get through tomorrow. ¡*Ojala!*

El Encanto is alive with ants and *garrapatas*; and soon all the boys were stamping about. We were all covered with *garrapatas* and itched correspondingly. After dinner, Virgilio's compadre came forward with the news that he knew where another stela was on the "*orilla*" [edge] of the "*bajo*." Whether it had carvings on it, he could not say, but a stela it surely was, that is a long-surfaced stone. There was no other remedy but that I put on my heavy boots again and go to see it in the dark, since we want to start early in the morning.

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<sup>143</sup> Because Merwin photographed the monument's rear side rather than the front, Morley thought that there were two stelae at El Encanto, but in fact the stela he examined and the one earlier described by Merwin were one and the same.

Ruddy put new batteries in the two lanterns, and Virgilio, his compadre, and I set off back toward the *bajo*. This man led us almost direct to the stone we had seen this afternoon! Such is the usual luck in these matters. There was no use being put out about it. We laughed it off and returned to camp. This same boy said he knew where three new stones were at Bambonal [Uaxactun], apparently the same as the Tut boy told me of last night at Santa Fe. They are to the right of the main road leading "*para adentro*," i.e., north of the *champas*. At first, I thought these might be new, and that I ought to go and see them. We held a *junta* [meeting, conference] by Gates' hammock—he had turned in. I had the boy over and questioned him closely. But on intensive cross examination it gradually began to develop that these three stones are probably the three at Group C [D], which I saw five years ago.<sup>144</sup> I decided, moreover, that with so much important work ahead, and the season so far advanced, it would be ill advised to try to go back to Bambonal to see these stones at this time. Both Gates and Rutherford agreed with me in this, so we gave up the idea.

In putting up our sleeping quarters, it looked so much like rain that Rutherford decided to sleep under the tarp with me. He took the center under the ridgepole. Muddy was on one side in his hammock, and I was on the other side in my cot. The mosquitoes were bad outside, so we went to bed early; also, we probably have a big day tomorrow.

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<sup>144</sup> The groups at Uaxactun were renamed when the intensive CIW work began at Uaxactun under Blom in 1924. What Morley refers to here as Group C, is now known as Group D.



## CHAPTER 27.

### EDITORS' INSERT: TIKAL AND ITS DOMAIN

The Classic Maya city of Tikal in central Petén is widely known from the earliest European and American explorers in the area, and especially from the years of excavations and reconstruction by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropology beginning in 1956. The site, its high crested temples poking out of the dense forest, may be even better known as the setting for the rebel base in the 1977 Episode IV of the Star Wars movies.

The archaeological site of Tikal is the core of the Parque Nacional Tikal, created in 1955, which covers an area of 576 sq km (222.5 mi<sup>2</sup>; see [www.tikalnationalpark.org](http://www.tikalnationalpark.org)). The Parque protects not only archaeological sites within its boundaries but is also part of the enormous Maya Biosphere Reserve, protecting and managing the tropical forest vegetation and wildlife of Petén. Tikal had numerous smaller satellites within its political orbit, some of the closest being Jimbal (north), El Encanto (northeast), Uolantun (southeast), and Navahuelal (south), all but Jimbal lying within the park limits.

#### El Encanto

El Encanto (Figure 27.1) lies northeast of central Tikal on the northwest edge of the Bajo de Santa Fe (see Beliaev and de León 2019). Discovered by a *chiclero* in 1907, the site was first explored by Raymond Merwin in 1911 (published in Tozzer 1913), then briefly studied by Morley in 1921, and later by Dennis Puleston while working on the University of Pennsylvania's Tikal Project in 1964. El Encanto has seen more recent explorations by the Proyecto Atlas Epigráfico de Petén, which re-mapped the site and made 15 test unit (1 x 1 m) excavations in 2018 (Beliaev and de León 2019; Beliaev and Vepretski 2020: 18–19).

The site is small, with two main civic-ceremonial groups, North and South, joined by a causeway, and two smaller ones, East and West (the latter at some distance). Two residential groups, Northeast and Southwest, were likely occupied by sub-royal elites and exhibit the Patio Plan 2 arrangement (Becker 1971) characteristic of Tikal and other centers in the area.

Unlike most of the sites Morley visited, El Encanto is not known for an abundance of carved, dated stelae; only one is known, Stela 1 (Figure 26.2). Stela 1 was found in the South Group, in the plaza in front of the main structure. It has an Initial Series on one side, which Morley read as 9.8.4.9.1 1 Imix 4 K'ayab [AD 598], but there is ongoing debate about the specifics, with Simon Martín (2000, 2002) suggesting an Early Classic date and offering alternatives between AD 305 and 308. Martín further suggested that the monument, commissioned by Tikal ruler Sihyaj Chan K'awiil I and referencing the Paddler Gods and ruler Chak Tok Ich'aak, was moved to El Encanto from an original location in Tikal, which seems likely considering that no other carved

monuments exist at the site and there is little evidence for Early Classic occupation.<sup>145</sup> Plain stelae or fragments at El Encanto were incorporated into architecture.

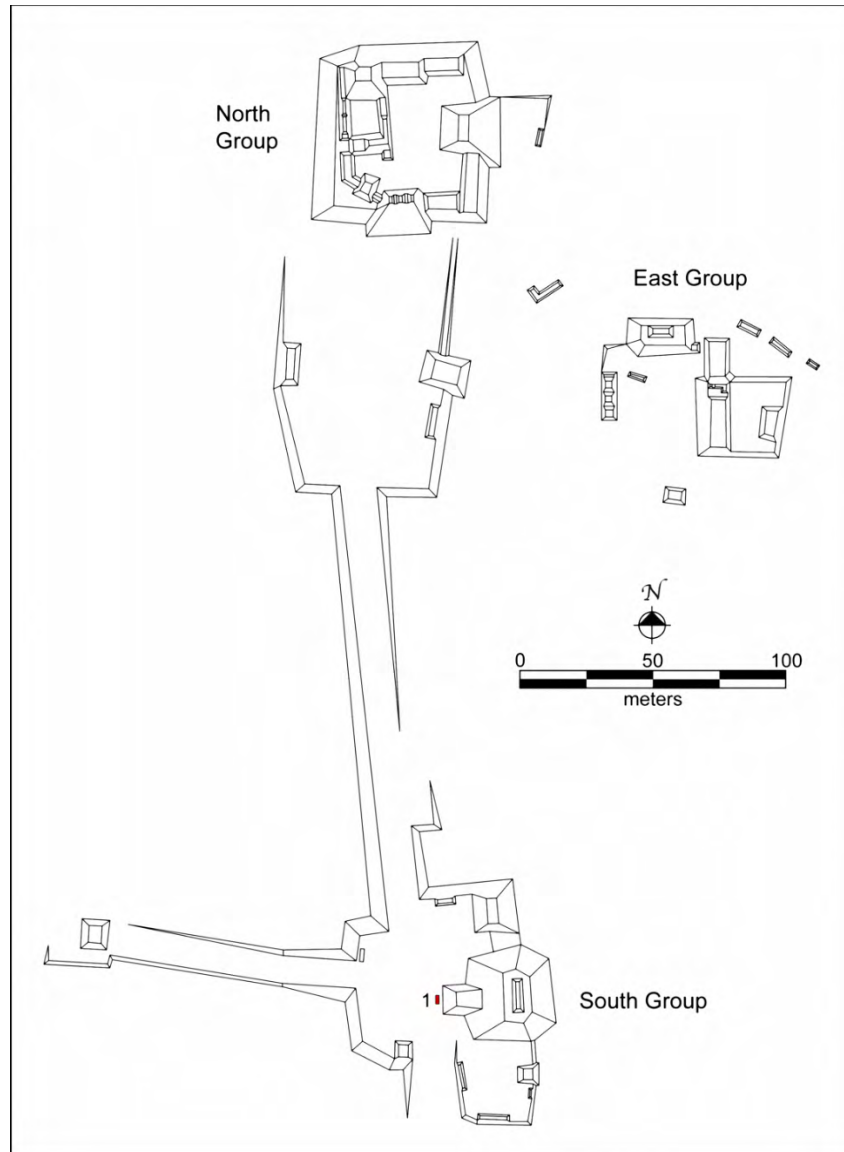


Figure 27.1. Site core of El Encanto showing the location of Stela 1 at the South Group.

Ceramic evidence suggests that the locale that became El Encanto was occupied in the Middle Preclassic and construction of the South Group began in the Late Preclassic, with heaviest occupation and construction in the Late Classic. The site's politico-economic functions in Tikal's domain, and those of similar sites such as Uolantun, are unclear, however. Several suggestions have been offered, including maintenance of agricultural canals in the Bajo Santa Fe (Beliaev and de León 2019: 162–163). More work is needed at these sites to ascertain their roles.

<sup>145</sup> El Encanto may have suffered the “Preclassic collapse” suggested by scant Early Classic construction in several areas of the lowlands.

## Uolantun

Uolantun (Figure 27.2), 5 km (3.5 mi.) southeast of Tikal, was originally settled in the Middle Preclassic period and later became one of several satellites in that great center's orbit. Described as more complex than other secondary sites (Laporte 2003: 313), Uolantun preserves its main building, Structure SE-486, which dates to the Early Classic, plus a twin-pyramid complex and a stela, Early Classic Stela 1, possibly originally erected at and moved from Tikal (Martin 2000: 58). Six caches of unworked jade were found in Str. SE-486 plus a large deposit of smashed Late Classic incense burners in sealed pits. Earlier interpreted as Terminal Classic ritual and renewal ceremonies (Fry 1985), the breakage might have resulted from collapse of a wall over the stored vessels (Moholy-Nagy 2003: 100–101).

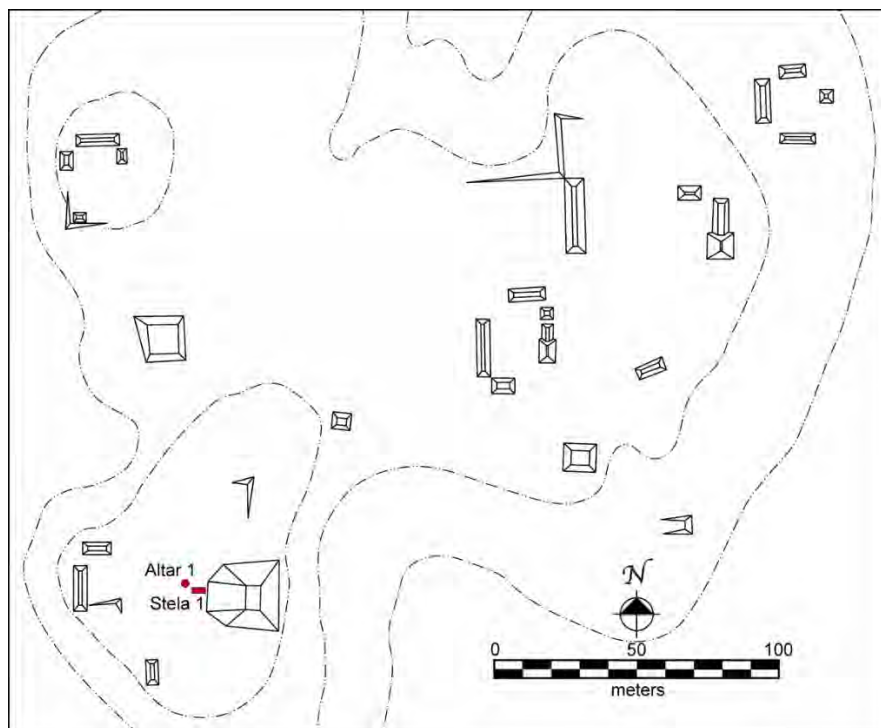


Figure 27.2. Plan of the site of Uolantun.

## Tikal

Tikal's name probably derives from an identifier bestowed by *chicleros* and other forest travelers: *ti ak'al*, 'at the waterhole' (Martin and Grube 2008: 30). In Classic times, the city was referred to by its Emblem Glyph, the main sign of which is described as a tied pouch or topknot of hair<sup>146</sup> and read *mutal* (later variants *mutul*, *motul*). Covering an area of about 16 km<sup>2</sup> and with some 3000 structures, Tikal is thought to have housed a population estimated at 45,000–60,000 persons during its Late Classic apogee. Most of the structures that have been excavated and reconstructed

<sup>146</sup> PMR (Rice 2019: 100–103) has always seen it as the back of a head with the knot of the tied headband of rulership, the *huun* or *sak huun*.

for tourism date to the Late Classic, but they cover a much longer period of growth. The area began to be settled in the Middle Preclassic period, and grew continuously until it was depopulated, succumbing to the same poorly understood circumstances—drought? wars? uprisings? famines? epidemics?—that led to what is widely known as the southern lowland Maya “collapse” in the Terminal Classic period.

The site layout overall is a right triangle, its base an east-west axis anchored by the major temples, acropoli, and plazas in the southeast, with its north vertex the North Group and two twin-pyramid groups (P and M), and the western vertex Temple IV. These vertices are joined by three causeways named for early archaeologists who explored the site: Maudslay, Maler, and Tozzer. Another causeway leads half a kilometer southeast to Temple VI (the Temple of the Inscriptions, its roofcomb covered with text) and south of the southern causeway between the Great Plaza and Temple IV lie numerous large buildings and the complex known as Mundo Perdido.

The University of Pennsylvania project discovered a ditch-and-embankment earthworks 4.6 km (2.8 mi) north of the city, with a smaller section to the northeast near the small site of Ramonal (Puleston 1983; Puleston and Callendar 1967). It was long believed that this was a defensive fortification with a similar earthwork to the south, with bajos protecting the east and west sides. Later remapping and excavation, however, revealed that the northern construction extended discontinuously from the west, across the north, and along the east side for a total length of 15.3 mi (24.6 km); there was no southern segment (Webster et al. 2007). The trench, excavated into bedrock, was as much as 3.5 m wide and 3 m deep, and the embankment 2 m high and 4 m wide, with no traces of postholes of a possible defensive palisade (Silverstein et al. 2009: 46). Datable artifacts were scarce in the excavations, leaving the date of construction in the range of AD 550–850, the end of the Early Classic and the Late Classic (Webster et al. 2007: 56). Although a defensive function cannot be definitely excluded, other explanations are possible, including as a territorial boundary marker or a hydraulic feature to collect water (Silverstein et al. 2009).

The core of Tikal is its Great Plaza and surrounding structures, especially Temples I and II, the North and Central Acropoli and adjacent smaller plazas, ballcourt, and, off to the east, a possible marketplace. Much of this core area can be considered a massive monument to Tikal’s royal history. The North Acropolis is a two-acre necropolis of temples and other buildings, masks, stairways, and lavishly furnished tombs of former kings, with construction beginning in the Late Preclassic period (Coe 1980: 40–50). The Central Acropolis, by contrast, is an even larger complex of palaces and courtyards, primarily Late Classic royal or noble residences (Coe 1989: 55–71).

The imposing Temples I and II flanking the Great Plaza are funerary monuments. Ruler Jasaw Chan K’awiil I (AD 682–734) constructed Temple II, on the Plaza’s west end, to honor his wife (Sharer and Traxler 2006: 395). He himself was interred in Burial 116, a chamber carved from bedrock under later Temple I, on the eastern end of the Plaza, and richly furnished with jades (beads, necklaces, and other jewelry), pearls, polychrome pottery, alabaster, shells from the Pacific coast, jaguar skins, and engraved human bones (Coe 1980: 33; Sharer and Traxler 2006: 397–400). His son, Yik’in Chan K’awiil, succeeded him and built Temple I over his tomb.

Jasaw Chan K’awiil I also extended the construction of distinctive architectural complexes known as twin-pyramid groups. These complexes feature two “radial” pyramids (square footprint; stairs up each side; no superstructure) on west and east sides (the latter with paired

stelae-altars in front), an open stela enclosure on the north side, and a 9-doorway range structure on the south. They are cosmograms, the radial pyramids marking the sun's track, the northern enclosure (home of the ancestors) housing a k'atun-ending stela and altar, and the southern structure symbolizing the nine lords of the Underworld. These groups began to be constructed at the 9.2.0.0 (AD 475) period ending by K'an Chitam, then at 9.3.0.0 (AD 495) by Chak Tok Ich'aak II (Sharer and Traxler 2006: 393). Six others are standing, constructed at 20-year k'atun intervals, beginning in AD 711 with that of Jasaw Chan K'awiil I. They are typically associated with causeways, either at their termini or, in the case of three, near their midpoint.

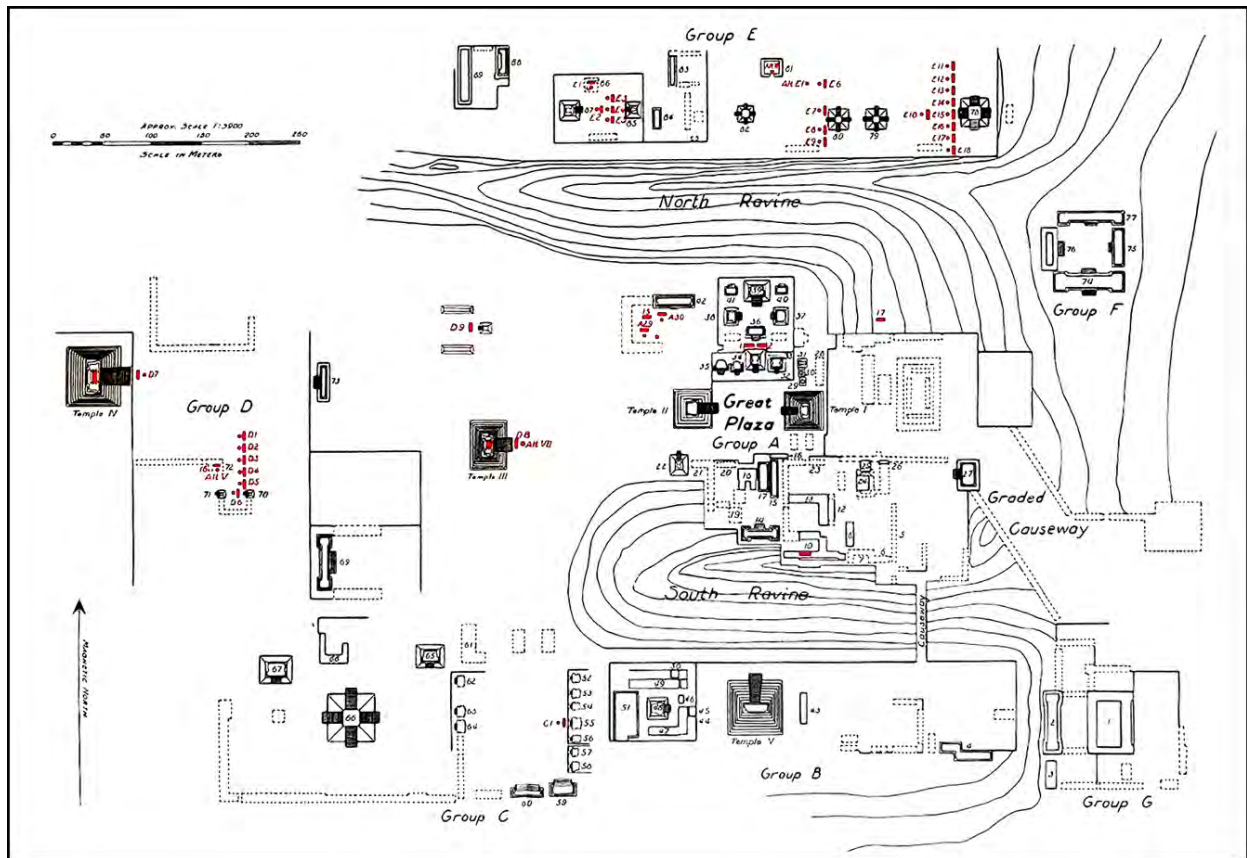


Figure 27.3. Early map of central Tikal (Morley 1937-38, V(ii): Plate 188, after Merwin). In the center is the Great Plaza, with Temples I and II on the east and west. The structures north of the plaza comprise the North Acropolis, with the Central Acropolis to the south. The Mundo Perdido complex is in the southwest. Few of the city's distinctive twin-pyramid groups are shown. The "South Ravine" is now called the Palace Reservoir; the "North Ravine" is the Causeway Reservoir. The famed Tikal "aguada" lies just beyond the upper right corner of the map.

Besides Tikal's stone monuments, beautifully carved wooden lintels topped the doorways of the major temples and, like the stelae, suffered greatly from early twentieth-century looting:

Unfortunately, the great beauty of these carved wooden lintels not only attracted the attention of travelers, but also aroused the cupidity of ignorant local politicians

and merchants. The actual removal of these priceless records of ancient Maya art was entrusted for the most part to Indians from the villages of San José and San Andrés on the north shore of Lake Petén Itzá, who, more zealous than careful, not only hacked these beams out with their machetes, but actually burned them out with fire—both processes playing havoc with the delicate relief. (Morley 1937-38, I: 347)

Of the original ten wooden lintels or beams in Temple II, Morley (1937–38, I: 349) notes that eight were missing. One section of a lintel in the Ethnographic Museum in Basel, Switzerland, depicts the ruler of Tikal (Jasaw Chan K'awiil) celebrating Tikal's AD 695 victory over long-time rival Calakmul. Interestingly, the lintel was dedicated on the 13th k'atun anniversary of the legendary Spearthrower Owl's death, referencing two of the most significant events in Tikal's Early Classic history—the defeat of Calakmul and the arrival of central Mexicans at Tikal in the late fourth century (Martin and Grube 2008: 31–32, 45).

### **The Central Mexican “Entrada” in 378**

On January 15, AD 378, a group of central Mexicans, probably from the metropolis of Teotihuacan, more than 1000 km (630 mi) to the west, made a famed “*entrada*” into Tikal (Martin and Grube 2008: 29–38; Stuart 2000). Not coincidentally, Tikal ruler Chak Tok Ich'aak I died that day—the Maya metaphor is “entered the water”—along with his dynastic line, and a new ruler was installed, Sihyaj K'ahk', depicted in Mexican warrior costuming.<sup>147</sup> Another participant in the *entrada* has been nicknamed Spearthrower Owl, because imagery associated with him is also seen at Teotihuacan, such as owls and spearthrowers (atlatls). The journey and arrival of these Mexicans was recorded at numerous central Petén sites, including El Peru/Waka and La Sufricaya (mural), often giving the same date. Monuments often depict rulers in the distinctive garb of the Mexican Storm God Tlaloc (e.g., Tikal Stela 32, Yaxha Stela 11).

This Mexican “arrival”—often a metaphor for political takeover—signaled the beginning of a new era in the southern lowlands, not only at Tikal and more widely in Petén, but as far south as Copan (Stuart 2000: 491; Sharer 2003). However, this was not the first Tikal-Teotihuacan rodeo, so to speak: instead, there must have been numerous interactions preceding the 378 event, as Maya glyphs have been found painted on walls in Teotihuacan residential compounds (Taube 2003; Sugiyama and Sugiyama 2020), and Tikal displayed characteristic Teotihuacano *talud-tablero*<sup>148</sup> architecture before that date.

### **Staff Stelae**

In studying the Tikal monuments in and around the Great Plaza, Morley was struck by a distinctive staff held by rulers on multiple Early Classic stelae (Figure 27.4). He referred to this object as a “triplicate staff,” but others have since called it a ceremonial “fire-drill” (Martin and

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<sup>147</sup> Martin and Grube (2008: 31) suggest Sihyaj K'ahk' “seems more like a general sent to further Teotihuacan's ambitions among its eastern neighbors.”

<sup>148</sup> “*Talud-tablero*” architecture refers to the two-part construction of the tiers of stepped (multiple-tiered) pyramids. The lower part of each tier has a sloping face, a *talud* (after “talus” slope), topped by a slightly projecting horizontal panel or tablet (*tablero*).

Grube 2008: 37) or a “walking and fighting implement” (Jones 1991: 113), or have seen in its three knots a “bloodletting symbol” (Michel 1989: 99). The “staff stelae” are generally small, with sparse text other than the date, the ruler’s name, and his parents (Jones 1991:113). The staffs consist of three long, thin shafts presumably of wood, tied with triple knots in three places: the middle and near the ends (Figure 27.4).

**Tikal, Stela 7, Front**  
 Copyright © 2000  
 John Montgomery  
 JM00810

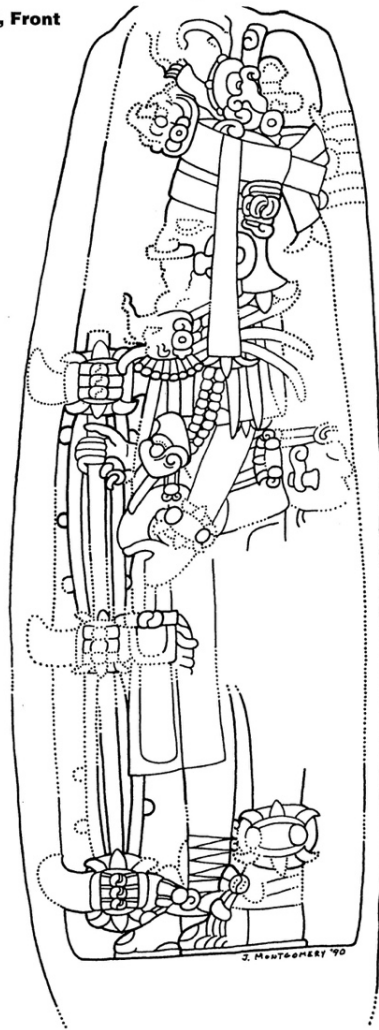


Figure 27.4. The front of Tikal Stela 7 showing Chak Tok Ich'aak II holding a triplicate staff.

Six staff stelae are among the ~38 stelae in the Great Plaza in front of the North Acropolis, most accompanied by altars (Martin and Grube 2008: 43). The staff stelae stand at the northern edge of the plaza, between Temples I and II, at the foot of the stairs leading up to the southern terrace. The North Acropolis was a kingly necropolis, with many of Tikal’s rulers buried there in its complex of temples, and these monuments might be considered tributes to kingly ancestors. Most of these and other dated stelae in this arrangement celebrate k’atun endings (Table 27.1) and many are thought to have been reset there by the Maya from some earlier positioning elsewhere.



Table 27.1. Stelae in the Great Plaza, in front of the North Acropolis.

NO.	DATE/YEAR		RULER	COMMENT
	MAYA	GREG.		
4	8.18.0.0.0	396	Yax Nuun Ahiin I	In Mexican costume
18	8.18.0.0.0	396	Yax Nuun Ahiin I	In Mexican costume
9	9.2.0.0.0	475	K'an Chitam	Staff stela
13	undated		K'an Chitam	Staff stela
3	9.3.0.0.0	495	Chak Tok Ich'aak II	Staff stela
7	9.3.0.0.0	495	Chak Tok Ich'aak II	Staff stela
15	9.3.0.0.0	495	Chak Tok Ich'aak II	Staff stela
8	9.3.2.0.0?	497?	Bird Claw	Staff stela
6	9.4.0.0.0	514	Lady of Tikal	Fragmentary
14	9.4.3.0.0	517?	?	
12	9.4.13.0.0	527	Lady of Tikal (and Kaloomte' Bahlam?)	
10	9.4.13.0.0	527	Kaloomte' Bahlam	
5	9.15.13.0.0	744	Yik'in Chan K'awiil	Trampling a prisoner
11	10.2.0.0.0	869	Jasaw Chan K'awiil II	

Source: Martin and Grube 2008: 32–52; Michel 1989.

The Early Classic Tikal “triplicate staff” can be associated with fire ritual at Teotihuacan. A study of architectural sculptures at that city and central Mexico in general noted that the Adosada platform in front of the Pyramid of the Sun appears to be linked to the New Fire ceremony, better known from the Aztecs (see Fash et al. 1991). In particular, the later Aztec painted manuscript known as the Codex Borbonicus depicts astro-calendrical and New Fire rites, with page 34 showing priests carrying bundles of long sticks at the front of a temple (Fash et al. 1991: Figure 3). The bundles are bound and tied in three places, the middle and both ends, making them resemble the Tikal tripartite staffs.

At Tikal, this staff apparently had some symbolism connected to personnel involved in the AD 378 Teotihuacan “*entrada*.” The first Tikal ruler to erect a staff monument was K'an Chitam, a third-generation descendant of Spearthrower Owl. Spearthrower Owl had installed his young son, Yax Nuun Ahiin I (overseen by a regent), who later married a local Maya woman, presumably noble. Their son, Sihyaj Chan K'awiil II, took the throne after an interregnum that might have seen some dynastic conflict. Sihyaj Chan erected monuments proclaiming a revival of the Tikal dynasty going back to the founder, Yax Ehb' Xook, in the first century AD (Martin and Grube 2008: 34). Sihyaj Chan's son, K'an Chitam, seems to have wanted to re-assert the Mexican connection (to his grandfather, Yax Nuun Ahiin I), which he did by erecting the first staff stela. K'an Chitam's son, Chak Tok Ich'aak II, continued the program by erecting three staff stelae to celebrate the ending of K'atun 3 in AD 495, more than a century after the arrival (note that k'atun-ending ceremonies were not part of Teotihuacano ritual). At least one of the two late staff stelae, 6 and 8, were raised by “Lady of Tikal,” almost certainly the daughter of Chak Tok

Ich'aak II and thus Yax Nuun Ahiin I's great-great-granddaughter. There seems to be, in other words, a multi-generational familial connection to central Mexico asserted by this staff, and the males portrayed on these monuments are typically shown in characteristic Mexican/Teotihuacano garb and accoutrements.

### **Late Classic “Star Wars”**

Beginning sometime in the sixth century, Classic cities large and small were engaged in conflicts identified in the texts as axing, burning, taking captives, downing the “flints and shields,” and so on. The most serious of these conflicts have come to be known as “star-wars” because of their hieroglyphic referent: a “Venus” or “star” glyph. The chief participants in these hostilities were the “Snake kingdom” (Dzibanche/Calakmul)<sup>149</sup> and Tikal and their allies (and enemies). In 556, Tikal axed (decapitated) the king of Caracol (south-central Belize), and Caracol (an ally of the distant Snake kingdom) attacked Tikal in 562 in the first of nearly 30 star-war events. This defeat, along with other reversals of fortune, precipitated Tikal's “hiatus,” a period between AD 562 and 692 during which no carved, dated monuments were erected. Considered a time of reversal of fortunes, it has been linked to the fall of Teotihuacan, defeat by Caracol and its ally Calakmul, and the rise of Calakmul to the north (Martin and Grube 2008: 40–45). Hiatuses followed similar defeats of other sites during these wars, including one at Caracol beginning in 680 when it lost to Naranjo.

At least four of Tikal's subsequent star-war events involved Dos Pilas, a site in the Petexbatun region established shortly before 650 by a scion of the Tikal ruling dynasty, who displayed the Tikal *Mutal* Emblem Glyph. The events leading up to this dynastic break are unclear, but seem to have intimately involved struggles between Tikal and Calakmul/Snake kings, with multiple clashes among the three parties. Dos Pilas was likely abandoned around 761.

In 695 the Tikal ruler, Jasaw Chan K'awiil I, defeated Calakmul and engineered a revitalization of Tikal following its long dark hiatus period. One sign of renewal was a new architectural program: the construction of “twin-pyramid” complexes to commemorate the endings of successive k'atun periods, as seen by dated stelae and altars in the northern stela enclosures of these complexes. Another was the return to traditional symbols of rulership: a possible variant of the knotted triplicate staff appears as a much shorter ceremonial bar, held by the rulers across their chests. It is unclear if there is any meaningful connection to the earlier vertical staffs other than their appearance at k'atun-ending ceremonies. However, Jasaw's revitalization was predicated in part upon the Teotihuacan connection: a mural in the Central Acropolis and a carved wooden lintel over a doorway in Temple I, his funerary monument, show him with Teotihuacano costuming and other motifs (Martin and Grube 2008: 45).

### **Terminal Classic Decline**

The early ninth-century marked the beginning of the end for Tikal's Classic glory, as it did for many southern lowland cities. Commonly known as the “collapse” of the southern civilization, this was a long, slow decline marked most vividly everywhere by a drop in the dedication of

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<sup>149</sup> Identified by a snake-head Emblem Glyph, this Kan/Kanul dynasty/polity was originally centered at Dzibanche in Campeche and moved to Calakmul in 635.

carved monuments. At Tikal, period-ending stelae and altars were placed in 790 (Stela 22), 810 (Stela 24), and 869 (Stela 11); curiously, however, the turning of the bak'tun from 9 to 10 in 830 appears to have gone uncelebrated in stone.

Although Tikal experienced few signs of growth or prosperity during the Terminal Classic, secondary sites in its orbit continued to erect stelae in Bak'tun 10, sometimes displaying the Mutal Emblem. These include Uaxactun ( $n = 2$ ), Jimbal (2), and sites in the lakes area: Flores (3), Ixlu (2), Zacpeten (1), and Nakum (3) north of Yaxha (Hermes and Žračka 2012: 192).

### **Postclassic and Recent Remains**

Between 1957 and 1959, the University of Pennsylvania Tikal Project explored the rooms of Temple I and recovered Postclassic pottery, chert, and other artifactual material (Adams and Trik 1961). Caches of marine material—stingray spines, coral, sponges, covered with cinnabar—had apparently been placed in the walls above the doorway and were exposed by the robbery of the lintel by Swiss physician and naturalist Carl Gustav Bernoulli in 1877. Another cache consisted of four balls of copal coated with Maya Blue pigment, and red handprints decorated the wall. A cut in the floor of the doorway between Rooms 2 and 3 of the temple marked the outlines of a 1.78-m deep, rectangular pit cut through several deposits of construction material. Two burials were found, the uppermost of an adult female, and, below, a Late Classic cist burial of an individual of undetermined sex and age. Fragmentary pottery occurring in the upper levels included sherds of two Postclassic footed plates (Ixpop Polychrome; Paxcaman Red), five non-effigy censers, and two utilitarian jars, and a jade bead was found embedded in copal. The remains of a second Ixpop plate were found in Temple 2, plus more copal. These finds indicate continued reverence for the ritual architecture of Tikal on the part of local residents, even though the site itself was unoccupied.

The first Europeans to set foot in Tikal are sometimes thought to have been the Franciscan friar Andrés de Avendaño y Loyola and his men, who were abandoned by Maya guides after a visit to the Itzas' island capital in Lake Petén Itzá in 1695–96. Trying to find their way back to the Tipu mission in Belize, they got lost and nearly starved to death. Avendaño writes of hills and old buildings, “in the form of a convent” with “cloisters,” all “roofed over and arched like a wagon.” These old buildings were thought by Morley and most scholars thereafter to be part of Tikal. But the description “arched like a wagon” suggest the unusual arched doorways of Nakum to the east, north of Lake Yaxha, rather than the flat or corbeled ceilings of Tikal. The official “discovery” of the city is credited to Ambrosio Tut, the Maya governor of Petén, and Col. Modesto Méndez, the Spanish governor. Subsequent nineteenth-century visitors commented on a small village or aldea of around ten to twenty families near the aguada, some of whom were escapees from the Caste War in Yucatan, but it had been abandoned by the time of Alfred Maudslay's visit in 1881 (Moholy-Nagy 2012: 2–6). Settlers and visitors vandalized the site, including removal of the carved wooden lintels of temple doorways. The aldea was abandoned after reported plagues of mosquitoes, bats, rats, illness, and “wild Indians.” A small archaeological project at the aldea recovered pieces of glass, metal, pottery (much like that made at San José in the twentieth century), and other items (Moholy Nagy 2012).

## CHAPTER 28.

### AT TIKAL

#### April 3, Sunday

Aroused the camp at 5:30 and we got another excellently early start at 8:00. We followed back along the Bambonal road, across the small *bajo* slightly northwest of El Encanto. The *compadre* of Virgilio had told us that the stretch was only half a league, but it took us one and a half hours to do it. From this *horqueta* to the *horqueta* just before reaching La Victoria was an hour. We really left this *horqueta* at 11:00, but we made a mistake and got clear into La Victoria and had to come back out. This, I estimated, cost us half an hour. Starting then at 11:00, the road set off to the southwest, making more westerly than southerly. This leg of our journey took one hour and a half to three quarters. The *jato* we reached was a miserable affair. No water, poor *champas*, and no clearing. Some writing on a tree, in addition to some ribaldry, proclaimed it to be the *jato* of La Paloma. Our dope should have made it San Pablo, but from this point on, in fact from La Victoria, Silvino, supposed to be our guide, consistently fell down. He wanted to take a southerly bearing road—going, so he said, one league farther on to the *aguada* of La Reforma, sleep there, and make Tikal tomorrow. Another trail, leading off to the west and scarcely open enough to pass, agreed better with the direction of Tikal and, with the description of the shorter trail thither given us by the *compadre* of Virgilio, through Muxanal.

After some confusion at this wretched *jato*, where several of the cargo animals took the occasion to lie down, we got under way again at one o'clock. Our westerly trail was supposed to have a *picada* bearing off to the south from it, i.e., on the left as we were going, about a quarter of a league beyond this *jato*. The trail, however, was so overgrown that it was necessary to send all hands ahead, save only Santiago, to cut away or around fallen trees and boughs. It took us forty-five minutes to reach the *picada*, and that our boys saw it was all to me little short of miraculous. The *entrada* was completely overgrown, but the sharp eyes of the boys ahead espied the blazes on three trees where it left the trail we were on. By circling around through the bush, Ángel and Juliano picked up the trail beyond the *entrada* and we started down this.

I had many misgivings. We did not know whether it was the Muxanal cutoff or not, to begin with. Next, we did not know whether we could get through a *bambonal* which Silvino thought lay between; and finally, we did not know where the next water might be, in case we did not reach Tikal that day. I had determined, however, to travel forward on this road until about 2:30 and then if we came out nowhere to retrace our steps back through La Paloma and take the La Reforma road to the south.

The bush work of Juliano, Virgilio, and Ángel through this bit was beautiful. Juliano worked ahead about a hundred yards following the trail, which had not been travelled for at least seven years, so the boys agreed. Virgilio and Ángel worked just ahead of Rabiteaux and Silvino, who

worked just ahead of me cutting bush, overhanging branches, *bejuco*s, and vines. Gates told me later that he said to Santiago that we must be on a fairly good road because we were making such steady progress.

When Juliano called back that he had lost the trail, the boys in common accord all circled out like a fan and beat around through the bush until one or the other of them had picked it up. The finder called this out, and all at once fell into line, cutting through to him. In this way the *mulada* moved forward, slowly to be sure, but practically without stopping.

About two, I grew so anxious that I thought Virgilio had better try to climb some high tree and see if he could locate the towers of Tikal. He selected a high *ramón* with a thick *bejuco* hanging from near its top, hanging from a limb at least 50 feet above the ground. It was a pretty bit of tree-climbing as he shinned up the *bejuco*. He took with him my compass, and when he reached as high as he could go, he swept the western horizon. One can well imagine our great relief when he called down "*se ve tres torres, como una legua el poniente*" [three towers are seen, about a league to the west]. I called up to him to take their exact bearing by the compass, and after doing this he descended.

He said he had seen three towers, one off to the right by itself, and two close together. The former was, of course, Temple IV, the latter two Temples I and II. He said further that they lay 10 degrees south of west from where we then were and could not be more than a league off at the outside. Finally, that if the trail we were following continued in the same direction it had been going, it would pass to the left, i.e., out of the ruins.

This was heartening news indeed, and I had no further misgivings about pushing ahead on this *picada*. Both Silvino and I agreed this road should come out at the *aguada* of Tikal, which lies about a kilometer southeast of the ruins. An hour later, at three o'clock, the ground began to fall away suddenly to the left and we came out at an old clearing on the edge of a fairly good-sized *aguada*. Neither Silvino or myself recognized this body of water as the *aguada* of Tikal, and both of us agreed it must be Muxanal, a league north of Tikal—a calamitous blunder this decision later proved to be.

After refreshing themselves at the *aguada*, the boys pushed on. Soon we passed a *naranjal* [orange grove] and within fifteen minutes crossed through a number of mounds and pyramids. I became suspicious, as did Silvino. To both of us it now appeared that we might have passed the *aguada* of Tikal in the water-hole we had just left behind us. The blame of the whole situation could only be laid upon our shoulders since we were the only two of the eleven in our party who had ever been to Tikal before. The road we were following passed beyond the mounds and merged in another coming from the east and entering our road from the left. This road was much more open and the boys said had been travelled in the past *temporada*, i.e., last fall. In all we went about two miles along this. We were getting nowhere, it was now close on to four, and both Silvino and myself were convinced we had passed the ruins and that the *aguada* we had left was that of Tikal.

When Gates came up, I told him of our unfortunate error, and that we would have to retrace our steps to the *aguada*. Muddy, Rabiteaux, Virgilio, and Ángel had gone on ahead, but not waiting for them, the *mulada* was swung around by the rest of us and headed back toward the *aguada*, which we reached at just five o'clock, two hours after we had passed through here for the first time. Everybody was exhausted. We had been in the saddle just nine hours and tempers as

well as bodies were worn out. Gates contends his temper was good when he got here, *pero Dios sabe* [but God knows].

Gates and I selected the camping place, the same knoll just northeast of the *aguada*, which Joe Spinden and I camped upon seven years ago this month.<sup>150</sup> This we fell to bushing, while Chico fetched, and later when Muddy got in, the fire was started. The tarp was put up before dinner and afterward we finished getting the bed and hammock up [Figure 28.1].



Figure 28.1. The tarp set up at the camp at Tikal.

The mosquitoes were so numerous, and we were all so tired after the vexations of the road and the anxieties of the day, that we lost no time in going to bed. It was just 7:30 when I crawled in under my *pabellón*, tucked in the edges, and not long after fell asleep.

#### **April 4, Monday**

I did not intend to call the boys until six, but all of them were up by 5:30, and I rose myself at 5:45. Immediately after breakfast, Santiago climbed a tree just west of camp and on the same knoll, and found that the ruins lay 35 degrees south of west of us, and not more than a mile off [Figure 28.2]. Gates was too done up to think of overtaking himself this morning by going to the ruins,

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<sup>150</sup> This previous visit (April 11—April 15, 1914) is discussed in Rice and Ward 2021: 85–94.

especially since some hard bushing might be necessary before we found them, so he stayed at camp. There was no need for Rutherford to go either, so he stayed in camp, also to superintend the making of his darkroom. The following sextette went to the ruins: myself, Chico, Silvino, Virgilio, Ángel, and Rabiteaux. Ángel had already distinguished himself by going off before daybreak and bringing back a large fat *kambul* [great curassow], which weighed at least 10 pounds.



Figure 28.2. The “towers” (Temples I, right, and II, left) of Tikal’s Main Plaza, from the treetops.

After walking ten minutes, we crossed a long range of buildings and after this we turned from the trail to the right. Soon Silvino picked up an old trail and this we followed in a northerly direction. Presently we heard shouting ahead of us, “*aquí están las ruinas*” [here are the ruins]. Virgilio, who had come along behind us, had cut off into the bush to the right before we had and had reached the ruins first. His voice came from the treetops, but I did not climb the temple where he was since it was not on the main plaza. We continued to the latter at the southeast corner and skirting the western base of Temple I, crossed to the northern side [of the Great Plaza] where are all the stelae. I did not wait here, however, as I wanted to see the carved lintel in the doorway of Temple II. Five of us, all save Virgilio, climbed to the summit of the latter, but I was disgusted to find the lintel was not in this temple at all.

While we were climbing Temple II, Virgilio had climbed Temple I on the opposite side of the court [Great Plaza; Figure 28.3] and I shouted across to him asking whether the sapote beam



might be there. In a moment he called back that it was. Before descending, however, I climbed to the roof of Temple II where a splendid view of the city is to be had. Temple I faces Temple II and far off to the west lies Temple IV, the highest of all, in the same straight line. Temple III faces east and lies south of the line of Temples I, II, and IV, and Temple V faces north and also lies south of the same line.



Figure 28.3. Tikal temples as seen from Temple I: center, Temple II; left, Temple III; right, in the distance, Temple IV. Photograph from Maler's earlier expedition.

Descending Temple II and crossing the court, I climbed Temple I [Figure 28.4], as did also Chico, Rabiteaux, and Ángel. Poor old wheezy asthmatic Silvino, however, did not essay it. The carved beams in the middle doorway of this temple, which had all been in situ at my first visit in 1914, were unfortunately disturbed. The outer two were still in position, and the inner one lay on the floor of the sanctuary. The third one (from the outside), however, had been removed and was nowhere to be found. This was a disappointment, as I wanted Rutherford to make a flash-light [photo] of the complete lintel.



Figure 28.4. Tikal Temple I after being cleared of vegetation on Maudslay's earlier expedition.

I descended the pyramid and gave parting instructions to Silvino, who was returning to camp. He was to take food for two days and a riding animal and set off in search of the new ruin group south and west from here near San Mateo, which he knows. After he had gone, I put Rabiteaux to work digging along the east side of Stela 10, and left Ángel cleaning the fragments of Stela 6, which Maler did not photograph. Virgilio went off in search of Stela 17, and soon called back that he had found it. Chico and I went over to where he was, and sure enough he had located this early and highly interesting monument, which is only one of two in the whole Maya area which has the same Initial Series recorded upon it twice. The other is Stela 11 at Yaxchilan, with the curious date 9.16.1.0.0. This one records the date 9.6.3.9.15.

We returned to Rabiteaux and Ángel after this, and I set all four of the boys looking for Stela 7,<sup>151</sup> for in the meantime I had seen Stelae 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14.<sup>152</sup> This they soon located under a dense tangle of second-growth vines and creepers, which melted away under the vigorous attacks of their machetes. Maler had only photographed two fragments of this (the top he figures upside down in the Peabody Museum *Memoir*<sup>153</sup>) but we found the base in situ. Instead of facing the court, i.e., south, as Alfred Tozzer shows it in his map,<sup>154</sup> in reality it faced quite irregularly to the west. I set the boys digging around this fragment, and Rabiteaux uncovered a beautiful 2 Ajaw, the last glyph on the right side.

The real adventure of the day occurred right here shortly after this, and one which still has the power of turning my flesh to goose quills when I think of it twelve hours later. The discovery of this 2 Ajaw so intrigued me that I had the boys make a larger clearing on this side of Stela 7 that I might draw it. Ángel was cutting away an overhanging *bejuco* when he suddenly shouted, “*barba amarilla, se brinca!*” [lit. “yellow beard”—a fer de lance snake—and “it jumps!”] and he himself leaped back [Figure 28.5]. We all rushed thither and there behind a tree was a huge snake of this deadly variety, coiled, with ugly yellow head swaying back and forth. While Ángel ran back to Stela 11 where he had left his gun, Virgilio threw a rock at it, and the ugly brute actually jumped toward him. A hasty retreat was beaten by all, during which, with some considerable speed, the snake nearly got away. Ángel arrived, however, in time to prevent this, and Virgilio, shooting at a range of about 20 feet, killed it. We approached it, however, with great care and a long, forked stick, and after making sure that it was dead, Chico tied a string about its neck and dragged it over to Stela 11. Here I measured it and found it was 6’ 6” [1.98 m] long.



Figure 28.5. Central America’s deadliest snake, the fer de lance (*Bothrops asper*).

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<sup>151</sup> Tikal Stela 7 dates to 9.3.0.0.0 2 Ajaw 18 Muwan, during the reign of the Chak Tok Ich'aak II (see Table 27.2; Martin and Grube 2008: 37; Michel 1989: 98–99).

<sup>152</sup> These monuments are mostly staff stelae commissioned by different rulers (see Table 27.2).

<sup>153</sup> Maler 1911: Plate 18.

<sup>154</sup> Tozzer 1911: Plate 29.

The memory of this thick writhing serpent, its ugly, flat, yellow head, its bead-like eyes, and awful fangs so unnerved me, particularly when I thought how close we all had been to its lair, that I had little "*ganas*" [desire, inclination] to work anymore this morning, and since it was 11:45 we returned to camp, opening a broad clear trail as we came back. The trail takes 10 minutes from the principal plaza to the main road, and another ten minutes from here back to camp. Ángel says this snake has the same name in Maya as it has in Spanish—*k'anchi'*, "yellow mouth," also the same in English of the colony—"yellow jaw." It is a pit viper, though which one I do not know.

After lunch, Gates was still feeling seedy. He did not come back with me, nor did Chico, but Rutherford came to skin the snake. This occupied him for the greater part of the afternoon. He found it was a female and had 38 eggs in it.

I spent the entire afternoon with Virgilio, Rabiteaux, Ángel, and Santiago, whom I had picked up at the *ramonal* on the way back, assembling the several fragments of Stela 7. We dug out the base and fitted together numerous small pieces. Returned to the camp at five. I was greatly surprised to find Silvino had returned. He followed the trail we took yesterday and after two leagues going came out at some splendid *champas* made last year, but no water. The trail continued west and the *jato* he did not know. Moreover, his mule threw him off and he decided to return here and try again tomorrow.

We had the *kambul* for dinner tonight, and it certainly was delicious. After dinner was cleared away, I sat down to the table to write in this book while Rutherford developed the last films taken at Naranjo. These all turned out splendidly.

The inscription on Stela 7 is so important because of its antiquity, and so shattered that I have decided to draw the 16 glyphs of which it was originally composed. These are arranged two glyphs to the pair, and four pairs to the side; definite plain areas separating the pairs. Went to bed about ten.

## CHAPTER 29.

### TIKAL: THE INSCRIPTIONS

#### Tuesday, April 5

We got off to the ruins at 7:30, Gates, Rutherford, Chico, myself, Ángel, Rabiteaux, and Virgilio. We met Silvino and Santiago bringing in the mules. I bid the former goodbye and wished him a “*que [le] vaya bien*” (lit. may it/you go well; idiomatically, safe trip). I doubt much that he will find his ruin, but I will be satisfied if he finds the road out to Remate, which is still missing.

My work at the ruins consisted today in drawing the inscription on Stela 7 [Figure 29.1]. This belongs to the group of Stelae 6, 8, 9, and 13, with figures engraved on their fronts and glyphs on their sides, the backs being plain. The date on this monument [Stela 7] I believe is 9.3.0.0.0 2 Ajaw 18 Muwan [AD 495]; the 2 Ajaw is the bottom glyph on the left side facing the monument and the top glyph on the right column is 18 Muwan. The drawing of this occupied the greater part of my day, though I managed to see that other work went forward.



Figure 29.1. Rutherford's photo of Tikal Stela 7 (right side) with a blurry image of Morley making notes in his field diary.

One of the first things Gates and I did was to climb the North Acropolis and locate Stelae 1 and 2. I forgot for the moment that Maler had photographed the back of the former, and had the boys throw it forward where Rutherford took a picture of it under excellent lighting conditions. Alas, I could get no date from either text. After this I returned to my drawing {Figure 29.2} and Gates took the men back to the Great Plaza and set them to looking for the important missing southeastern edge of Stela 12, which had presented the coefficients of the Initial Series period glyphs on the earlier side. Although a few fragments of this monument were recovered, no part of the piece bearing these important coefficients was found.



Figure 29.2. Morley's field drawing of the inscription on Tikal Stela 7.

Just before lunch we made a search for the fragments of Stela 6, which Maler describes as a splendid carving. We found a number, though very badly shattered, so much so in fact that we agreed with Maler that the damage wrought must have been done by milpa fires rather than by falling trees. Enough pieces were recovered to indicate clearly that it belonged to the Early Period

and not the Great Period.<sup>155</sup> In the first place, the figure seems to have held in its hand the same triplicate staff<sup>156</sup> as the figures on Stelae 7 and 8 [see Figure 27.4]. Second, the character of the glyphs is early and not block-like. Finally, the size and shape of the monument closely resembles those of Stelae 7, 8, 9, and 13. We assembled a number of fragments, which Rutherford then photographed.

Lunch having not yet arrived, we had the carved altars of the two plain stelae just west of Stela 6 cleaned and photographed. The western and smaller one of these was in the better condition of the two, and offers considerable hope of an ultimate reconstruction of the design. After lunch, while I was finishing my drawing of Stela 7, the boys cleaned behind Stela 10 so that Rutherford may take a picture of its back, which has never been photographed before, tomorrow morning. The last job of the day was the turning over of Stela 7 and the fitting together of its numerous fragments so that Rutherford can photograph its face tomorrow.

We left the ruins for camp at just four and managed to lose ourselves twice. Once Gates and I lost the trail and later, when Rabiteaux joined us, he strayed off it himself. I took a bath between mosquito bites, which refreshed me greatly.

It looks now as though we will be able to finish here Thursday, possibly by noon, certainly by evening. If Silvino brings in word of his monument, we will move there next; if not, we will head directly for Flores. After dinner I had some writing to do and Rutherford very kindly fixed my table under his *pabellón*, where I had the great satisfaction of hearing the hordes of mosquitos outside sing, but without having to feel their stings. Rutherford developed again the first of his Tikal exposures and I am delighted to be able to record that they turned out splendidly.

### **April 6, Wednesday**

Four years ago today, the United States declared war against Germany. I was in Washington and that same afternoon became an ensign in the United States Navy.<sup>157</sup> Three years ago today, I was in Yucatan with John Held—Gann had returned to Belize some ten days before, and John and I were just getting back to Merida from the Santa Rosa Xlapak trip. Two years ago today, I was in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, getting ready to come back north, and last year I was again in Washington working at top speed seeing publication No. 219 through the presses.<sup>158</sup>

Today was a splendidly successful one. Two new Initial Series, one of which is dated surely and the other probably, but these things in their proper order. We got off for the ruins at 7:35, and the light on the back of Stela 10 was just right about eight when we got there. A tree, however, remained to be felled, and by the time this had been cut away, shadows were already falling on the right upper half. Also, Rutherford had forgotten his ground glass [lens] and, by the time Rabiteaux had returned with it, the shadows had so lengthened that it seemed wisest to postpone

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<sup>155</sup> Stela 6 dates to 9.4.0.0.0, AD 514. Morley's Early Period is roughly equivalent to the Early Classic, AD 200–600. See-Introduction.

<sup>156</sup> This is a distinctive staff held by rulers on Early Classic stelae at Tikal (see Chapter 27).

<sup>157</sup> Morley served as the head of an espionage ring for the Office of Naval Intelligence in 1917–1918. His diary of this period is published in the second volume of *The Morley Diary Project* (Ward and Rice 2021).

<sup>158</sup> CIW Publication 219 was *The Inscriptions at Copan* (Morley 1920).



the photographing of this hitherto unphotographed inscription until tomorrow morning. From Stela 10, I moved everybody to Stela 17, where Rutherford exposed three negatives, one of each of the two sides and one of the front, under splendid light conditions [Figure 29.3].



Figure 29.3. Rutherford's photograph of the well-preserved text on Tikal Stela 17. The Initial Series begins in the upper right-hand corner.

On the way back to the Great Plaza, the boys stopped to fell a *pimienta* tree,<sup>159</sup> in the trunk of which Chico had located "*señas*" [signs] of some honey. That which I got was considerably mixed with bees and had a wild tang, which I like, but it produced such a thirst that I did not indulge freely.

Leaving Rutherford in charge of Santiago, Ángel, Rabiteaux, and Chico, Gates and I set off with Virgilio in search of Stela 15, which Maler describes as just southwest of Structure 42<sup>160</sup> in a group of five or six other plain stelae. We located this without much difficulty, incidentally noting at the same time that the Tozzer-Merwin survey map is correct probably only for the principal buildings—smaller platforms and mounds are not located upon it. Thus, for example, we found a platform running west from the really large Structure 42, which turns south and then east, making this group of stelae in a small court.<sup>161</sup> Just south of Stela 15—for which we were searching—is a small mound not noted on the Tozzer-Merwin map.

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<sup>159</sup> The allspice tree, *Pimenta dioica*. Its leaves, steeped in hot water, make a delightful tea.

<sup>160</sup> Now designated 5D-15, this is the principal structure in what is now called the West Plaza, just northwest of Temple II, and probably a noble or royal residential group.

<sup>161</sup> This structure, now designated 5D-11, was never completed. Excavations by the Penn Tikal

Arrived at this group of stelae which Virgilio located first, it did not take me long to find the first sculptured fragment and presently two other large ones into which Stela 15 was principally broken [Figure 29.4]. This stela faced south and the two upper fragments had fallen forward. Maler had evidently not done much work here as we found a number of small fragments practically in situ where they had first fallen, and with sharp edges. On disinterring the top piece, we found glyphs on both sides in an excellent state of preservation, that on the right being no less than the I.S. Introducing Glyph. The figure on the front had suffered heavily, but with certain fragments which we recovered it was possible to place it in the same group with Stelae 3, 6, 7, and 8. The figure faces to the left, holds in its hand the triplicate staff, and the sides are carved with a single row of glyphs each, the back being plain.



Figure 29.4. Tikal Stela 15, left side, with Morley at his notebook drawing the Initial Series on the right side of the monument.

The last glyph on the right side happily was perfect and beautifully declared the day 2 Ajaw. The top glyph on the left side only had its coefficient preserved, which was 18. Unfortunately, the coefficients of all five period glyphs had been stricken off by a blow of some tree, but with the I.S. terminal date as 2 Ajaw 18 ??? and under the two postulates that this is a *jotun* ending in the first quarter of Cycle 9, these conditions are only met at 9.3.0.0.0 2 Ajaw 18 Muwan, which not only has the merit of being a *jotun* ending, but a *k'atun* ending as well.<sup>162</sup>

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Project revealed Late Classic Burial 77 with a beautiful jade pendant (Coe 1967: 74–75).

<sup>162</sup> Morley's reading is otherwise correct, but it is not a *jotun* ending. Stela 15 dates to AD 495 (Early Classic), the same as Stela 7 and also commissioned by Chak Tok Ich'aak II (Martin and Grube 2008: 37; Michel 1989: 99–100).

After getting the two upper pieces assembled and the base, which was in situ, partially uncovered, I sent Virgilio back to the boys with a note for Rutherford, telling him to send all hands over with pick and jack. Presently they began to filter in. Rabiteaux brought the pleasing news that he probably has the base of Stela 6. The jacking out of this piece and the assemblage of the three pieces took the rest of the morning. While some of the boys were doing this, others were felling the bush to the west so that we might get some afternoon pictures of this precious little stela, for it is only 6 feet high overall.

Muddy brought lunch and we ate it at Stela 15. I changed with Gates my ration of apricots for his second ration of tea, to the very great gusto of us both. After lunch, Gates took Rabiteaux, Ángel, and himself off to Stela 6 to continue the search for missing fragments. Rutherford, Virgilio, Chico, and Santiago assembled Stela 15, and then, after one side was photographed, jimmied into position so that the opposite side might be taken, and lastly the front. I took no part in these labors as I was drawing the Initial Series [Figure 29.5].

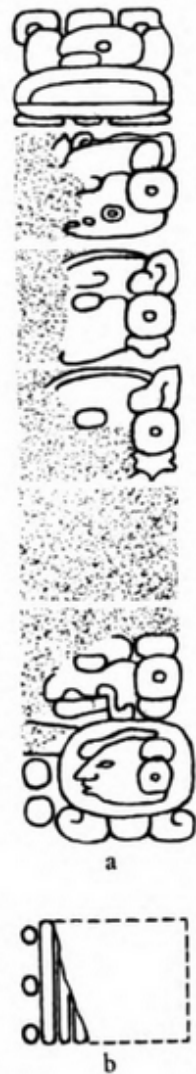


Figure 29.5. Morley's drawing of the initial series on Tikal Stela 15.

Rutherford finished first, and with Virgilio and Santiago returned to aid the work on Stela 6, Santiago returning to camp. Chico stayed on with me until I had finished. It was a boiling hot job there in the sun, till the perspiration just rained down onto my drawing.

Muddy and Gates had managed to lose themselves between Stela 15 and the Great Plaza to the amusement of all hands including myself. But when Chico and I essayed the same short journey, *no más que un medio grito* [no more than half a shout], we also lost not only ourselves but the *picada* and finally got back to the Great Plaza by way of the North Acropolis and Stelae 1 and 2. Rotten bush work, I call it.

Gates had in the meantime made a splendid discovery, no less than the base of Stela 6 in situ, with six beautifully clear glyphs on the left side as you face it, practically in mint state [Figures 29.6, 29.7]. They were just getting this base out when Chico and I arrived.



Figure 29.6. The freshly excavated and cleaned base of Tikal Stela 6 with the well-preserved inscription. The area on the right with no inscriptions was the part that had been buried.

Yesterday I had noted something which looked like period glyphs. These now appear to be the k'atuns and *tuns* of an Initial Series, of which the day is declared, or rather part of it, as the top glyph on the base. The coefficient is surely 12 or 13, and I assume the day is Ajaw. This goes clear across both columns. The date I believe is 9.5.0.0.0 13 Ajaw.<sup>163</sup>

It was now getting on for five o'clock and we were all tired, so I called it a day and we returned to camp. But our good luck still held. Silvino was back and reported the re-discovery by him of one of the three monuments he described to me in Benque on March 21. The other two stelae he had not had time to locate. This is a true find, I believe. He describes the stela as fallen and inscribed with glyphs on the back, and a figure on the front and the side plain. In front is an

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<sup>163</sup> Stela 6, on the North Acropolis terrace, is one of the staff stelae in this grouping, dedicated in AD 514 by Lady of Tikal (Martin and Grube 2008: 38). See Table 27.1.

inscribed round altar. The stela lies southeast of here about three leagues distant by trail. It is half a league or more beyond Corriental to the *entrada*, and a half a league from there to the stela. From the *entrada* on to San Mateo, which is the nearest *paraje*, is another half league.

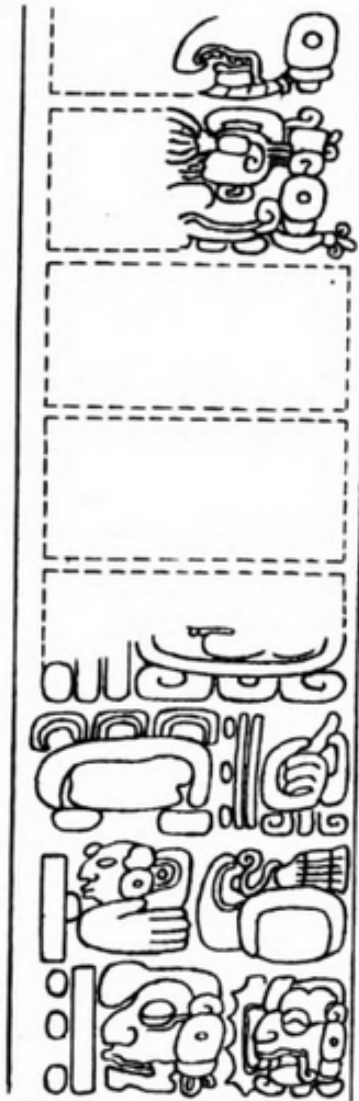


Figure 29.7. Morley's field drawing of Tikal Stela 6.

After dinner I crawled into the Turkish bath that is under Rutherford's *pabellón*, where I do my night writing and chronicled the events of the day. Rutherford developed the pictures he exposed today and got another splendid series. We note that the weather is getting much warmer, and we have had no rains to speak of. The insect life is also far more abundant than it was on the first trip but who cares, when we are getting such good results?

#### **April 7, Thursday**

The last day at the ruins. We made a special point of getting over early so that we could take

plenty of time to get ready to photograph the back of Stela 10<sup>164</sup> [Figure 29.8], which is best about five or ten minutes past eight. We got over to the ruins by seven-thirty, and for a little bit it looked as though the clouds would obscure the sun until sometime after eight. They broke in time, however, to disclose another difficulty—several *bejuco*s still cast shadows upon the back. I summoned Ángel and his axe hastily, and he felled five trees before the mass finally fell. It is astonishing the strength of these great hanging vines, which keep great trees from falling even after they have been completely severed through.



Figure 29.8. Rutherford's photo of the back of Tikal Stela 10.

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<sup>164</sup> Stela 10 has a dedication date of 9.4.13.0.0 13 Ajaw 13 Yaxk'in (AD 527). Stylistically (deep relief carving), and by its imagery and dedicatory date, it seems to be a companion to Stela 12 (see Table 27.1), both of which were dedicated by or reference Lady of Tikal and Kaloomte' Bahlam (Martin and Grube 2008: 38). The ruler, presumably the *kaloomte'*, stands on the front with a prisoner, and the sides and back are covered with badly damaged text that mentions an accession. Repetition of 13—the tun ("year") and the day in both calendars—suggests some symbolism.

I put all the boys to work digging around in front of Stela 6 in the hope that they would find some of the many missing fragments, especially the coefficients of the Initial Series. The rest of us scattered during the meantime. Gates climbed Temple I to get some “architecture.” Ruddy went off with Chico stela-hunting, and I set to work drawing the period-ending dates on Stelae 8 and 9. Rutherford, extraordinary to relate, really found another sculptured stela, which I promptly dubbed No. 18, as which it will pass down to posterity. It is located between Stelae 8 and 9, somewhat nearer the latter than the former. It is preserved now in three fragments which fit, though how much of the upper part is missing is impossible to say. The front was sculpted with a figure (or figures) and the back with glyphs. None are calendric and I am unable to date it, though by the character and style it may be assigned with certainty to the Early Period.<sup>165</sup> Gates had in the meantime returned from Temple I and set off again for the westernmost of the five great temples, Temple IV.

The work at Stela 6 in the meantime was dragging heavily. The boys were digging up nothing but very small, almost tiny pieces, and they had gradually drifted over to the raising of Stela 18, which finally enlisted all hands. When this was finally assembled—the base was in situ—I had the bush felled so that its faces were in the sunlight and Rutherford photographed it [Figure 29.9].



Figure 29.9. Left, the first photograph of the newly discovered Tikal Stela 18. Right, John Montgomery’s drawing of the front of Stela 18.

By this time, it was getting on for noon and Gates had been gone a long time, so I sent Virgilio and Silvino to look him up. All the other boys wanted to go along too, so I let them. Rutherford and I returned to Stela 6, where I started drawing the inscription on the Initial Series side. Presently we heard hallooing in the bush and Santiago came up, bringing the boys’ lunch. It was

<sup>165</sup> Stela 18, one of the earliest among the many monuments in the Great Plaza, is broken, but shows the seated ruler Yax Nuun Ahiin I, son of Spearthrower Owl, bedecked with Teotihuacan finery. It commemorates the *k’atun* ending of 8.18.0.0.0 (AD 396).



after one, however, and Rutherford and I had already had two cups of tea each before they came back with Gates. They had been everywhere. They had climbed to the top of Temple IV, they had found Stela 16 and the round altar in front of it, and Gates had made a number of corrections on the Tozzer-Merwin map. He thinks he may have seen the tower of Uaxactun, in which case the site lies 5 degrees east of north from here.

We had a belated lunch next, and just as we were finishing, Chico spilled some hot tea on Gates' hands and all but scalded him. After lunch Gates and Chico and all the boys save Virgilio returned to camp. Rutherford and I stayed on with Virgilio as assistant to finish a few odd jobs. After I had finished the drawing of Stela 6, Rutherford photographed the inscription, and then the front, which we assembled as near as possible in its original position. This completed the photographic work here and Rutherford returned to camp. Virgilio and I stayed on for another hour, while I drew the inscription, or rather the Calendar Round date, on the back of Stela 4 [Figure 20.10].<sup>166</sup>

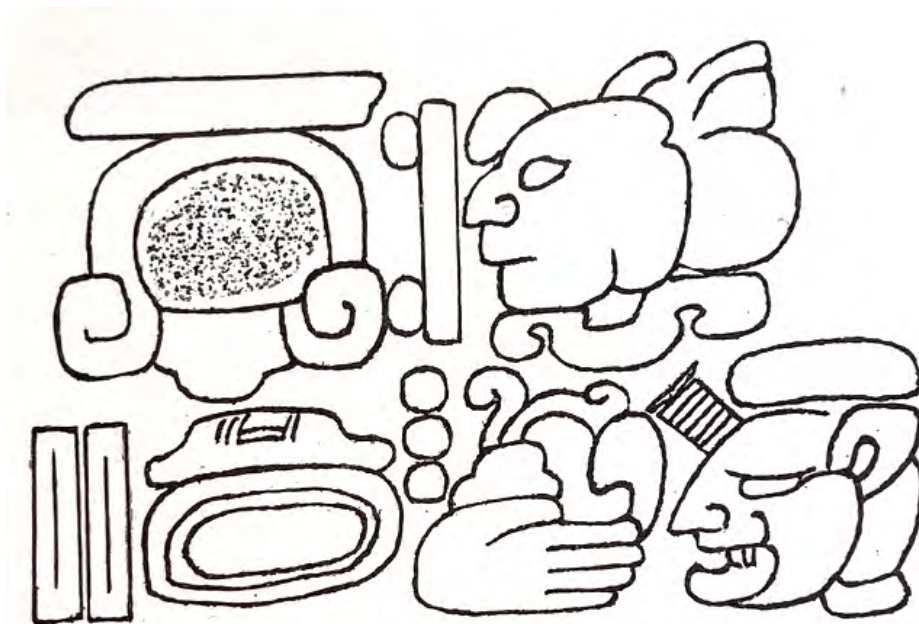


Figure 29.10. The Calendar Round date on Tikal Stela 4.

We got back from the ruins about 5. After supper, Gates got under his *pabellón* as usual, Ruddy and Muddy played cards, and I wrote as usual. A pleasant, strong, and cool breeze was blowing, which kept the mosquitoes away, and so it was not necessary for me to write under a *pabellón*. The four days here have been most satisfactory. One new Stela, No. 18, Rutherford's contribution, two new Initial Series, Nos. 6 and 15, and fairly satisfactory dating of the earlier

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<sup>166</sup> Early Classic Stela 4, celebrating the 8.18.0.0 *k'atun* ending, was discovered by Maler standing upside down on the North Acropolis terrace (Michel 1989: 75). It celebrates the accession of ruler Yax Nuun Ahiin I on 8.17.2.16.17 5 Kaban 10 Yaxk'in, September 12, 379, who is depicted in Mexican attire (Martin and Grube 2008: 32).

stelae and their division into a number of well-defined stylistic groups as follows:<sup>167</sup>

- Group A. Stela 1 and 2, flat, curiously rounded relief. Principal figure extends around on to the adjacent sides. Back inscribed with glyphs. No dates.
- Group B. Stelae 9 and 13. Principal figure in profile facing to the right holds staff in one hand. One date on Stela 9—9.2.0.0.0. Two sides inscribed with glyphs, back plain.
- Group C. Stelae 3, 6, 7, 8, and 15. Principal figure faces to left holding a highly characteristic triplicate staff in the hand. Sides inscribed with glyphs, back plain. Three are I.S.—3, 6, and 15, and two period-ending dates as follows chronologically:

Stela 3	9.2.13.0.0 4 Ajaw
Stela 7	9.3.0.0.0 2 Ajaw
Stela 15	9.3.0.0.0 2 Ajaw
Stela 8	9.4.8.0.0 7 Ajaw
Stela 6	9.?.10.0.0 12 Ajaw or 9.4.0.0.0 13 Ajaw

Stylistically, Stela 6 seems to be the latest of the group.

- Group D. Stela 10 and 12. Principal figure in front view, glyphs on sides and on back. One dated—Stela 19, 9.3.11.2.0.
- Group E. Stelae 4 and 16, Front figure, back glyphs, sides plain, no date.

This leaves five stelae, Nos. 5, 11, 14, 16, and 17, of which Nos. 5, 11, and 16 belong to later periods and need not be considered beyond giving their dates:

Stela 16	9.14.0.0.0
Stela 5	9.15.12.0.0
Stela 11	10.2.0.0.0 <sup>168</sup>

This leaves two unclassified early stelae, Nos. 14 and 17. No. 14 had glyphs on the front—4 columns—but no figure and nothing on the sides. Stela 17 had inscriptions on the back and sides and a profile figure on the front facing right. This latter feature recalls the presentation of the principal figures in Group B, the arrangement—3 sides inscribed with glyphs, the 4th with a figure—recalls Group D, the difference being that the figure on 17 is in profile, while in Group D the figures are in full front. The date on Stela 17 is 9.6.3.9.15,<sup>169</sup> this being the latest date of the 15 early stelae.

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<sup>167</sup> These are Morley's stylistic groupings of the Tikal stelae, not the structural groups at Tikal.

<sup>168</sup> Stela 11, at 10.2.0.0.0 (AD 869), the latest date recorded in the corpus of Tikal inscriptions, is associated with the final named ruler at the city—Jasaw Chan K'awiil II. He stands with "cloud rider" figures above him, and holds a segmented bar with three knots across his chest (Michel 1989: 136). This same name (same ruler?) appears on Stela 12 at Uaxactun dating to AD 889 (Martin and Grube 2008: 52–53).

<sup>169</sup> Stela 17 was found broken at the base of a stairway in the East Plaza (Michel 1989: 114). Featuring many dates, it shows ruler Wak Chan K'awiil (537–562), the son of Chak Tok Ich'aak II, and celebrates the 20-year (*k'atun*) anniversary of an event in 537, possibly his "arrival" at Tikal,

Another feature of the four days' work is this: that whereas the Tozzer-Merwin map is correct and dependable for larger features such as the location of the principal structures, courts, and stelae, it omits entirely many of the smaller constructions and a whole system of causeways, esplanades, and courts lying west of the Great Plaza and reaching to Temple IV, which Gates visited this morning. Gates feels from the cursory examination he made this morning that this was the residence part of the city, possibly the residences of the *nobleza*. He found many walls built of fine massive stones, but no fallen buildings. He also noted one *chultun*.

I am leaving Tikal convinced more than ever of its great antiquity as compared with most other Old Empire sites, and especially in the belief that it was the most powerful Maya city of its time, as it certainly was the largest—in brief, the metropolis of the Old Maya Empire. Its dates go back to the end of the second k'atun of Cycle 9, and from this time onward for the next 80 years there are more stelae here than any other site, not even excepting Copan.<sup>170</sup> About 9.7.0.0 the fashion of carving their period markers passed out at Tikal and from this time onward, save for the 3 late stelae noted, all the stelae at Tikal, now 52 in number, are plain. Even here in these plain stelae, however, stylistic differences are to be noted. The early ones are small, just like the early carved stelae, and the later ones are tall, broad, fine stones, just like Stela 11. I refer especially in this to the two fine, standing, plain stelae just east of Stela 11, one split by a large root. In closing, I should note that Stela 11 is split in half, and the large slab lying now just west of it is its back.

We leave tomorrow, going first to Silvino's new ruin, which lies a half a league off the road from Corriental to San Mateo, where Silvino reports fine *champas* and good water. We plan to camp there tomorrow night.

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possibly after a period of exile (Martin and Grube 2008: 39). The date Morley transcribed appears on the left side of the monument and is that arrival/accession anniversary (Michel 1989: 116).

<sup>170</sup> These superlatives were true in Morley's time but a century later, they are not. Tikal is a spectacular lowland Maya center, but neither the largest (whether measured by area, number of stelae, or other criteria) nor the oldest. It is now known that many other centers also have their beginnings in the Middle Preclassic period or earlier ("Pre-Mamom," Walker 2023), as dated by ceramics and/or radiocarbon assay, not inscriptions. And period (k'atun)-endings were commemorated throughout the Late Classic period, especially in the distinctive twin-pyramid complexes.

## CHAPTER 30.

### UOLANTUN, THEN LOST

#### April 8, Friday

A remarkable day, like so many in this Petén bush, which make it so wonderful and redeems the multitudinous insect pests, the heat, the poor water, and the tinned food. But I get ahead of my story. Yesterday afternoon, in the rush of doing last things at the ruins, I forgot to locate the new stela, No. 18, with reference to Stela 10, and so this morning took Silvino back with me to get this measurement. The camp had arisen early—at five—against an early start, and before eight, Silvino and I had started off for the ruins, the mules were about packed, and I wanted to pick up the measurement I had forgotten yesterday. This turned out to be just 34 feet. I tied the new stela in to the west side of Stela 10, as this is the only standing stela nearby. When we returned to the main road, the *mulada* had not yet come up. I left Silvino behind and got to camp just as they were leaving it. It was just 8:15. At 8:30 we were back at our entrance to the ruins and soon after had turned off to the southeast.

We reached the *aguada* and *champas* of Corriental at 9:20 and here filled up the water bags, as this was the last place where water was to be had this side of San Mateo. This took fifteen minutes and then we changed our direction more to the south. The point where Silvino's *picada* leaves the San Mateo trail is about 20 minutes beyond. Here, a general shifting of cargo and arrangements was made. Gates, myself, Rutherford, Chico, Silvino, Virgilio, Rabiteaux, and Ángel turned off to the left along the *picada*, leaving our saddle animals tied to trees at the main road, and Muddy with Santiago and Juliano carried the *mulada* through to San Mateo, which Silvino said lay about half a league beyond. He also said his ruin lay half a league from the main road, but when we walked it, we concluded it was every inch of two miles. The general direction bore southwest. Once we crossed an arm of the Bajo of Santa Fe. Some distance beyond this we skirted a hill on our left and presently headed up a rather steep little ravine. This was hard going—Gates was well-nigh spent, and more than once I had to halt Silvino to give him a chance to catch up.

After ten minutes of this perhaps, we climbed out of the ravine on the left side in the direction we were going, and going up a very steep hill came out on the top of the hill. Beyond lay a fairly good-sized pyramid, and in front I could see a round stone—I assumed an altar—and the stela fallen prostrate behind it.<sup>171</sup> The altar had two columns of glyphs, very much effaced, and the

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<sup>171</sup> Here Morley chronicles his discovery of the small site of Uolantun. Morley's report (1937–38, I: 262–266), based on visits made in 1921, 1922, and 1923, is limited to Stela 1 and the altar. In 1961 during the University of Pennsylvania Tikal Project, Dennis Puleston visited Uolantun (which had been neglected since the time of Morley) and was surprised to see that it was far more complex than Morley described, counting 15 mounds and two chultuns (Puleston 1983: xi).

back of the stela ditto. The front had fallen face forward and gave promise of being in a good state of preservation.<sup>172</sup>

Gates was completely exhausted and lay against a tree, done up.<sup>173</sup> It was too early to [have] lunch, just 11:00, so I put the boys to work cleaning the base of the stela and making a footing for our little five-ton jack, which has been indispensable and without one of which I would never again venture into the bush. We got it up on end before lunch and discovered that the front had a human figure facing to the right, but the whole top from the neck up was missing. The back had had two parallel columns of glyphs, but I could see no calendrical ones among them. We knocked off here for lunch. Silvino was retuning immediately to San Mateo to look for two other stelae he knows in the vicinity, and I persuaded Gates to return with him. He should never have come in the first place, as the trip has been very hard on him. He consented and they left us shortly before one. We next turned to the stela to clear the surrounding trees away and assemble the parts.

Rutherford had made a unique discovery in the meantime. The altar was sculptured on both sides, one with two columns of glyphs, the other with some sort of a design. The sides were flat and he found the length was just the width of the stela! In fact, he suggested that this was the top of the stela. Both Gates and I scouted the idea as too unique to be worth considering, and yet there were the measurements. After Gates left, I had the altar cleaned up and washed, and lo, it was an Initial Series. The glyphs continued right down to the edge of the altar, and then it suddenly dawned on me that Rutherford was right—that the stela had broken in ancient times and then the old Maya had re-shaped the top fragment into a round altar.

Extraordinary and unique as this was and is, it is the case. The broken top fragment had been worked down in ancient times into a round altar—I think the top of the stela was originally round—so that all that was done was to work down the fractured edge. The fractured edge of the larger part of the stela had also been worked down fairly smooth, and this became the new stela [Figure 30.1].

But the surprises were not over yet. When I got the top—the altar—washed up, I saw that I would be able to read the I.S. The day of the I.S. terminal date was surely 6, the k'ins practically surely 11, the *winals* surely 5, the k'atuns surely 16, 17, or 18, and the *tuns* surely 12, 13, 17, or 18. With this much to start, I was practically certain of being able to work out the date recorded. I had assumed as a matter of course that the cycle coefficient was 9, but when I came to draw it, I found it was 8! In short, I had here another Cycle 8 contemporaneous monument. The I.S., which I worked out during the evening at camp from my notes, is 8.18.13.5.11 6 Chuwen. I was both amazed and delighted, and sitting down among the *garrapatas* I began to make an exceedingly careful drawing of this Initial Series, which took me two hours [Figure 30.2].

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<sup>172</sup> The costume of the figure on Uolantun Stela 1 includes a “Jaguar Paw” hanging from the belt, an unusual feature also associated with Early Classic Tikal ruler Chak Tok Ich'aak I (d. 378) (see Tikal Stela 39; Martin and Grube 2008: 28). This monument, like many others of the period, may have been removed or “exiled” from Tikal (Wanyerka 2005: 184). The paw motif is also seen on Uxbenka (Belize) Stela 11 (ibid.).

<sup>173</sup> Recall that Gates, born in 1863 (see Chapter 1, p. 4, note 13), was nearly 60 years old, and his professional career focused on study of documents, not physical exertions in the bush. The rigors of the expedition—heat, insects, exhaustion—took a toll.



Figure 30.1. Uolantun Stela 1 in two parts: the main monument and, left, the altar created from the stela top when it broke off in ancient times.

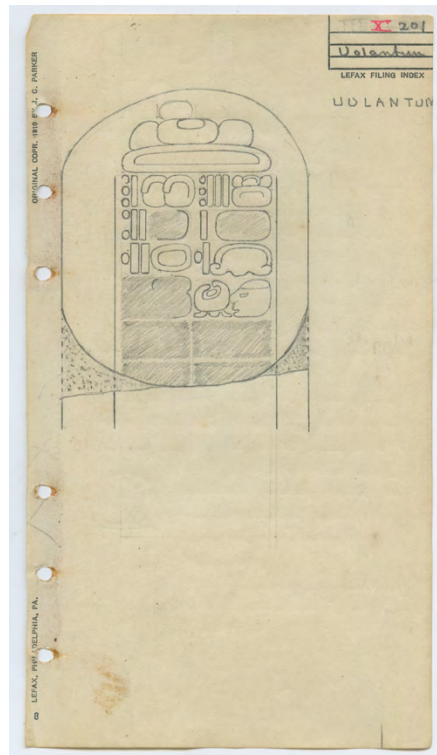


Figure 30.2. Morley's field drawing of the Uolantun Cycle 8 Initial Series.

Rutherford, in the meantime, exposed five negatives of the two sides and I hope got some good results, though he will not develop again until we reach Flores. While I was drawing, the boys wandered off in search of honey. Ángel located a tree and when they felled it, they found one, so they said, for I did not see it (being busy at my drawing) that gushed like a fountain.

I finished my drawing at 4:30 sharp, and at 4:38 we set off for the road, heavily laden—the jack, pick, lunch, etc., etc. Very, very exhausted, but speaking for myself at least, exceedingly happy. It took us 36 minutes to do the two miles from the ruins to the road, which Gates afterwards told me had taken them 48 minutes to do. We climbed on our horses and about six o'clock reached San Mateo, a long, long "*media legua*" [half league].

The tarp was pitched, dinner was ready, and Gates was surprised as I had been over the find. I made calculations all evening, and wrote, but went to bed about nine after having had tea with Rutherford. This is getting to be a nightly function ever since Tikal. I had a nightmare as a result of indigestion and woke up with a scream.

### **April 9, Saturday**

A long, unsatisfactory day, during most of which we were lost. We rose before five, everybody cheerful in the belief that this was to be the last night in the bush. Silvino, who had planned on returning from here direct to Yaxha and Benque, I persuaded to stay with me since he was the only one who knew the trail to Remate,<sup>174</sup> which we were to take. He started off in advance about seven and returned a half hour later reporting the trail clear enough, but very much overgrown. At 7:40, Silvino, Virgilio, Ángel, and I started on ahead, and the *mulada* left at eight.

After going fairly for perhaps half an hour, Silvino lost the way and led us into a tangled *bajo*. To be sure, we were following a trail, but one that hadn't been used for five years, and through a *bajo*! Finally, he disappeared altogether, leaving Virgilio and Ángel to cut through this thicket. Sometime later we heard his voice calling far off to the left, a faint halloo. He had found an old *champa*, and thither with much difficulty we made our way. A half hour later, the rest of the *mulada* came up, and we made a new start—this time along a better trail, and he appeared to have his bearings. At 10:20, two hours and twenty minutes of very slow going after leaving, a trail came in from the right, which Silvino said was from Tikal. At 1:15 we reached an *aguada*, which both of us thought must be Ixtinta,<sup>175</sup> though neither of us could be sure.

The party by this time had divided into three groups: Silvino, Virgilio, Rabiteaux, two cargo animals, and myself were first. About fifteen minutes later the second group arrived. Here was Muddy with two cargo animals, Chico, Rutherford, and Ángel. We waited for a long time and the third section did not turn up. I feared something might have happened, so, taking Virgilio back with me, we returned along the road, shouting loudly at intervals. We raised them eventually. The white mule carrying kyacks Nos. 9 and 1 was very unequally loaded, No. 9 outweighing my own kyack, No. 1, by a score of pounds. Gates said that the poor mule lay down ten or fifteen times to rest itself until Santiago had readjusted the cargo.

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<sup>174</sup> El Remate ("the end") is a village at the far eastern edge of Lake Petén Itzá, at the north end of the isthmus between that lake and Lake Salpeten to the east.

<sup>175</sup> An Ixtinta or Ixtinto once lay between Tikal and Remate, but that name is no longer known.



We got under way again at 2:45, just 1¼ hours after getting into Ixtinta. Going around the *aguada* to the southern side, we came upon an old clearing which had been the *paraje* seven years ago when Joe Spinden and I passed through here. I still have vivid recollections of the Ixtinta variety of ticks and fleas.<sup>176</sup> From Ixtinta on, everything went wrong. Silvino did not know the road and when two hours had passed and we did not reach La Pita it looked as though we were lost. At five we passed a large pyramid, which neither Silvino or myself recognized, and afterwards some large *ramonales*, and at 5:30 some *champas*, and most important, since we were lost, an *aguada* that still had water in it. I gave word to camp for the night.

We were tired out and I had been 9½ hours on the saddle. Muddy got us a good dinner out of nothing, and we were glad enough to go to bed at once. Sometime before midnight Santiago aroused the camp by the discovery of a “night walker,” a small mammal overhead in a tree.<sup>177</sup> Ruddy, Chico, Silvino, and Santiago got up and banged away at him several times, but no one registered a hit. Someone suggested even that they were shooting at stars, but the consensus of opinion among those who had arisen was that there had been a bona fide “N.W.”

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<sup>176</sup> Joe Spinden and Morley came through Ixtinta on April 15, 1914 (Rice and Ward 2021: 94).

<sup>177</sup> This is a kinkajou (*Potos flavus*), a small, nocturnal animal with a long, prehensile tail, monkey-like but biologically related to raccoons and coatimundis.

## CHAPTER 31.

### DISCOVERY OF IXLU, AND TO FLORES

#### Editors' Note: Ixlu

Ixlu (Figure 31.1) is a small site on the narrow isthmus between the eastern tip of Lake Petén Itzá and the western edge of Lake Salpeten (Rice and Rice 2016). Near the Río Ixlu (*ixlu*, “catfish”), which empties into Lake Petén, the site was occupied from the Middle Preclassic into the Colonial period. During the Postclassic and later, Ixlu was a key node in north–south overland and east–west waterborne trade and travel through central Petén. Architecturally, the site is characterized by a large central plaza anchored to the east and west by large pyramidal structures, two ballcourts to the south, a twin-pyramid complex, an acropolis with three courtyards northwest of the plaza, and a causeway from the northeast of the plaza toward Lake Salpeten. The twin-pyramid complex and display of Tikal’s Emblem Glyph support the interpretation of Ixlu as a satellite of that great center. Numerous Postclassic structures were placed in the Main Plaza.

Ixlu engaged in monument erection during the Terminal Classic period, with carved, dated stelae and altars, few of which remain at the site today. Morley saw Stelae 1 and 2, which at the time stood on the large eastern pyramid (Temple 1). Stela 1, dated to the 10.1.10.0.0 (859) *lajuntun*, is currently in the national archaeology museum in Guatemala City; Stela 2, probably 10.0.19.4.11 (849), is now in the Flores plaza. Altar 1 displays the Tikal Emblem Glyph and bears an inscription identical to one on Stela 8 at Dos Pilas in the Petexbatun region. Fragments of carved Stela 5 lie near the stela enclosure in the twin-pyramid complex. Morley also found all-text Altar 1, currently embedded in a wall in the Flores plaza, which dates to 10.2.10.0.0 (879). A second carved altar was discovered in authorized excavations near the western ballcourt. Other monuments originally existed at Ixlu, but were incorporated into the facades of Postclassic structures.

#### The Diary

##### April 10, Sunday

This morning we arose with the conviction that it surely must be our last day in the bush. Against this probability, we got up about 4:30 and soon were dressed and packed. At breakfast we had an unpleasantness between Gates and Rutherford, which possibly I should not chronicle even here. It has been brewing for a week and came to a head this morning at breakfast. It was due to great differences in personality, over which neither has any control, and partly due to the bush

nerves, the hellish state of mind which results from the intolerable itching of all sorts of insect bites (inescapable no matter what precautions are taken), sleeplessness which arises therefore, hard work fighting bush, long days without food, and the intense intellectual stimulation of the work, which causes a perfectly definite and recognizable irritation.

We got off, Gates, Silvinio, Ángel, and I at 7:10, and thought we'd be in Remate in two hours. As a matter of fact, we got there at a little after twelve, and lost every minute of the time until we actually came out at Remate! Our first mistake came about two hours out of La Pita. We came to a right-hand fork, somewhat less travelled than the main road, but which both Silvino and I felt sure was the Remate trail. I left a note here for Ruddy telling him to take the right-hand fork and we continued on our way rejoicing. But not for long. After following this miserable trail for half an hour, it began to bear northwest and actually north. It was a trail "*para adentro*" [to the interior]. We turned around in disgust to hurry back to the fork to head off the *mulada*, and just before reaching it met Muddy's mule, riderless. It was almost uncanny. Quite several hundred yards beyond we ran into the rest of the *mulada*, and finally Muddy, who said his mule had escaped and gone back toward Ixtinta, whither he sent Chico to look for it. We told him we had it, and it turned out that his mule had come along ahead of the *mulada*, stopped at the *horqueta*, read my note to Ruddy, and then taken the right-hand fork!

From here on we knew nothing as to the trail—it looked unfamiliar to both Silvino and myself, and in fact I thought we would come out at San Clemente, and Silvino thought we would come out at Macanche. When we had reached this conclusion and had even bet with Gates as to our probable plan of emergence, the land suddenly fell away to the right, we descended a very steep hill, and came out at Remate! Our relief can better be imagined than described.

It was a little after twelve, and 20 minutes later the rest of the *mulada* came up. I inquired of the only man I could find—the rest of them were out at their milpas—how often the motorboat came down from Flores. He said "*hasta 15 dias ahora*" [it's been 15 days now], and when I asked further when it would come next, I got the only answer I could have expected, "*¿quién sabe?*" [who knows?].

It seemed best to go over to Ixpop where Boburg's boat comes almost daily. Estimates of distance ranged from 1 league to 4. Boburg calls it five miles, and that is about right. And here a great bit of luck overtook me—the kind that has followed me now these last seven years when it comes to the discovery of new stelae. When Joe Spinden and I went to Tikal seven years ago this month, our guide was an Indian from this place called Jacobo Melchor. While I was trying to get a guide to take me around to Ixpop, he came up, and though I did not recognize him, he told me who he was. I finally engaged him to take us around to Ixpop. Just as we were starting, he mentioned quite casually, or rather asked me, if I had seen the new "*piedra dibujada*" [carved stone] nearby. I was amazed. "*No, a donde está?*" "*No más que 3 gritos del camino real*" [No, where is it? No more than 3 shouts from the *camino real*].

I was keen to go at once. The new stone, indeed, was just off our road to Ixpop. We left Remate at 12:40 and skirted the east end of the lake to get to the gate in the fence which encloses the Remate *potrero* [pasture]. Jacobo said the new ruin was down the road leading to Benque, i.e., to the left as we left the gate. Five minutes later we crossed the *arroyo* of Ixlu and at two reached Ixpop.

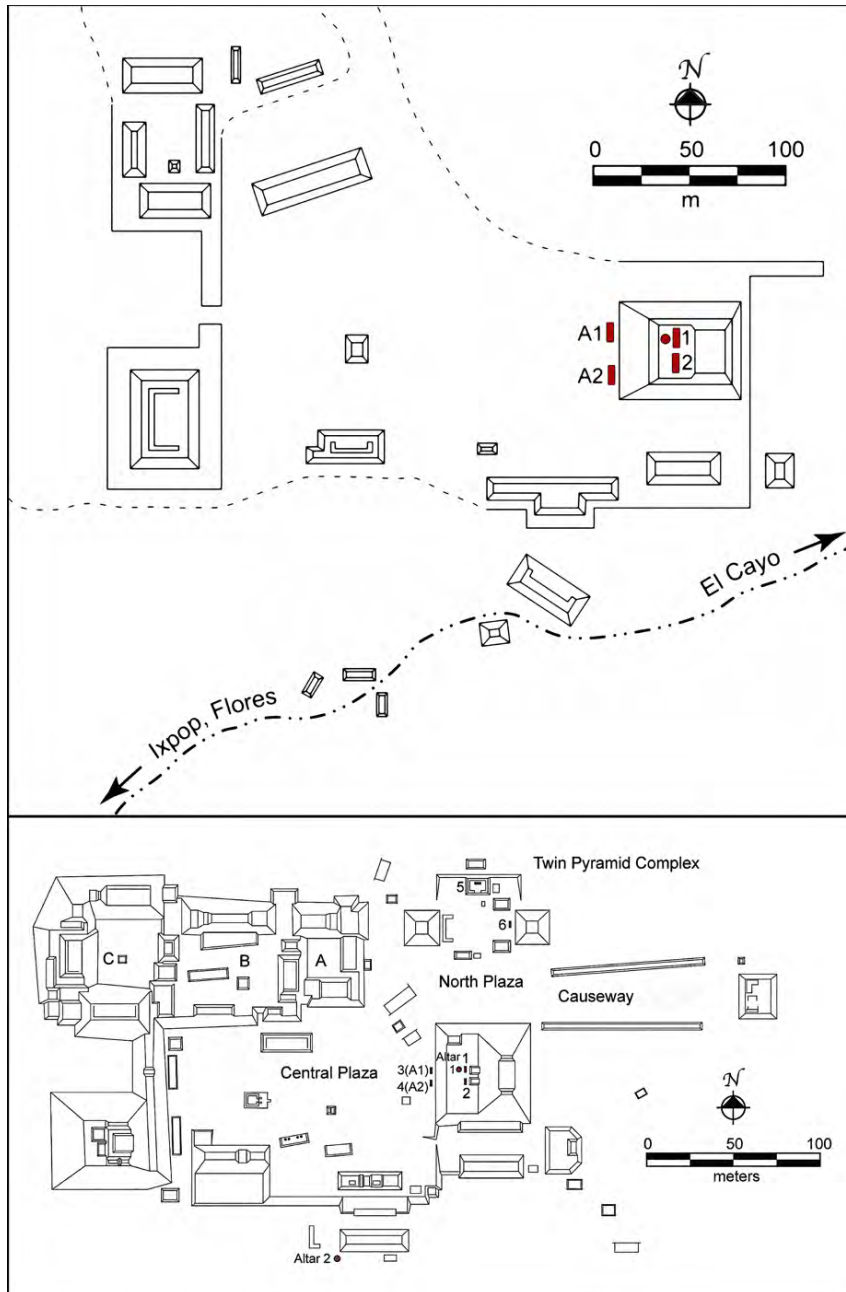


Figure 31.1. The site core at Ixlu.

The inevitable *mulada* was in, and the lazy *arrieros* sleeping in hammocks. One turned out to be a former and disreputable employee, one Felipe Cetina, whom Joe Spinden and I had had seven years ago on the Santa Toribio, Dolores, Ixkun trip. I roused the *encargador* on the other side by a shout and he came over. He proved to be the same chap, Montero, who was in charge here for Boburg last year when I arrived and also when I departed with that cruelly suffering foot, torn ligament that I had. Meanwhile, the rest of the *mulada* came in and I made immediate arrangements for returning to the new site. Gates, myself, Jacobo, Rutherford, Virgilio, and Rabiteaux returning, taking with us a jack, pick, and the small camera.

Forty minutes after leaving Ixpop, we reached the arroyo of Ixlu. Five minutes later we passed the gate leading to Remate, and ten minutes later Jacobo said we had reached the *entrada* [to the site of Ixlu]. We left the Benque road, turning into the bush to the left, i.e., to the west. A hundred yards in we came to a fairly high pyramid, perhaps 40 feet high.

We skirted this and on the west side Jacobo led us to a fallen stela. The briefest glance showed us that it had been exquisitely sculptured and indeed was still, in spite of the fact that it had fallen face up. There were five glyphs down the left side near the bottom. The first was clearly 4 Ajaw, the second 13 ?. I soon decided this was 14 Kank'in, and in a few minutes calculated mentally that this must be 10.1.10.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Kank'in. Meanwhile, there was another fallen stela nearby, and an equally cursory examination showed that it had happily fallen face forward.

We got the jack under it and soon had it on edge. If the carving of the first had been exquisite, words fail to describe the brilliant but delicate carving on the face of this other monument, which was preserved in all of its original beauty because it had fallen face forward [Figure 31.2].

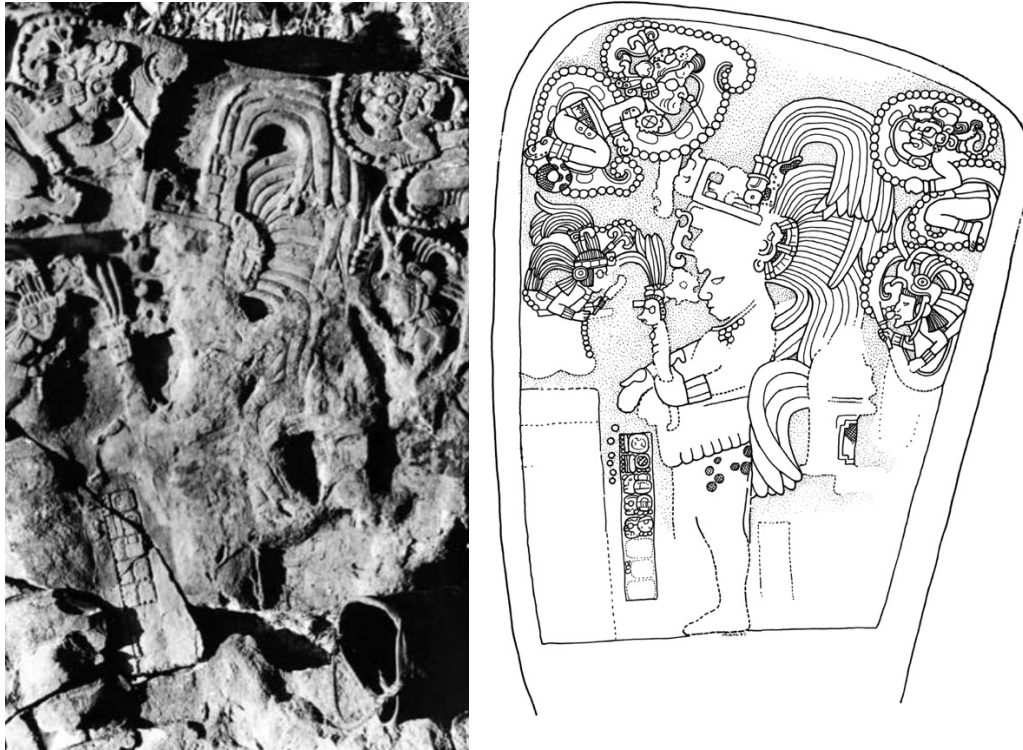


Figure 31.2. Left: photo of the front of Ixlu Stela 2. Right: Linda Schele's drawing of the same. The ruler, wearing a jaguar skirt, is "scattering" with his right hand. The figures in the dotted scrolls (clouds) above and behind are the aged "Paddler gods," who paddled a canoe bearing the Maize God to the Underworld. These supernaturals, also known as "cloud riders," are associated with solar cycling: one with a stingray spine through his nose (and a *k'in* glyph) and the other with a jaguar ear and *ak'ab* (darkness, night) insignia (Stone and Zender 2011: 51).

The glyphs, which I had great difficulty in finding at all, were tiny—about 3" wide by 2½" high [7.6 by 6.3 cm]. There were eight in number, beginning with the Calendar Round date of 9 Chuwen 19 Sip [Figures 31.3 and 31.4] following a Secondary Series composed of 1 *k'atun*, ? *tuns*.

? *winals*, and ? *k'ins* and a 2? (the last question doubtless a day-sign). Here I drew a long string to my bow, and on the basis of the 2 in the last glyph assumed it was a 2 Ajaw and that it was a *jotun*-end, and finding, since it was apparently more beautiful than the neighboring stela dating from 10.1.10.0.0, I assumed this monument was later. The only *jotun* answering these conditions was 10.2.10.0.0 2 Ajaw 13 Chuwen and I called this stela that *jotun* marker. I assumed the Secondary Series would connect the opening date of 9 Chuwen 19 Sip with 2 Ajaw 13 Chuwen. Later, at Ixpop after I had returned, I found this was true, and filled in the missing *tun*, *winal*, and *k'in* coefficients as 15, 14, and 9 respectively:

[10.0.14.3.11] 9 Chuwen 19 Sip  
 1.15.14.9  
 [10.2.10.0.0] 2 Ajaw 13 Chuwen



Figure 31.3. Closeup of the small inscription on Ixlu Stela 2 (top to right). Note the Calendar Round date (9 Chuwen 19 Sip) in the two rightmost glyphs.

There appeared to be a third stela just north of the second, caught in the roots of a *ramón* tree, but it was already late, nearly five, and I saw that we would have to return to the place anyhow tomorrow, so we passed it up to turn over in the morning. We left the jack, the spade, and the camera at the ruins, and returned to Ixpop, where Muddy had the tarp up, and a pleasant supper ready.

I should have noted that when we first reached here this afternoon, I had sent off a messenger to Flores to get in touch with Carl [Guthe] to tell Boburg to send the launch up for us first thing in the morning, so that we might get into Flores about noon. The necessity for going back to the ruins tomorrow made this impossible, but I know that the launch could and would wait for me.

After dinner, Gates, who was completely exhausted by the long day and the long hours without food, plus the strain of the new monument, went off by himself to hang his hammock. My cot was already up under the tarp and after verifying my calculations, I paid off Virgilio,

Silvino, and Rabiteaux, who are returning to Benque, and then I turned in. Ángel was elected to go on with me, and so I gave him nothing. Lewis is to take back Prisciliano's horse.

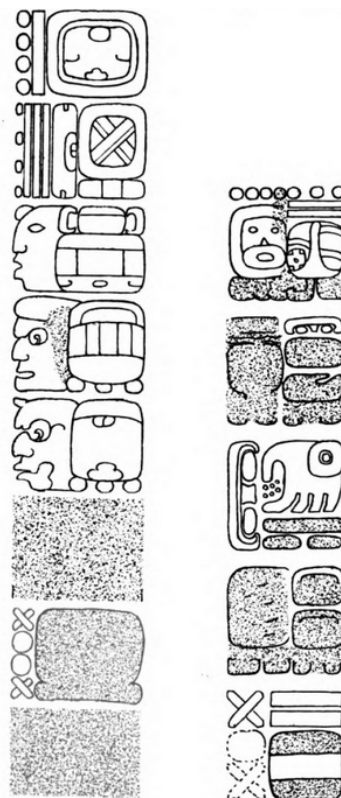


Figure 31.4. Morley's field drawings of the inscriptions on Ixlu Stela 1 (right) and 2 (left).

There appeared to be a third stela just north of the second, caught in the roots of a *ramón* tree, but it was already late, nearly five, and I saw that we would have to return to the place anyhow tomorrow, so we passed it up to turn over in the morning. We left the jack, the spade, and the camera at the ruins, and returned to Ixpop, where Muddy had the tarp up, and a pleasant supper ready.

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### April 11, Monday

Virgilio roused everybody at 4:30, so anxious was he to get off for Benque. We all got up save



Gates, whom I did not call as he had decided not to go to the ruins, but to rest during the morning. The ruins party consisted of myself, Rutherford, three soldiers, and later Chico and Rabiteaux. Jacobo was up to meet us at the ruins. We set off somewhat after seven and reached the ruins, which I shall henceforth call Ixlu, at 8:10. There was Jacobo sitting on his haunches, waiting for us.

Rutherford took charge of the raising of Stela 2, while I put the three soldiers to work felling the *ramón* over what I had supposed was Stela 3. While these operations were going forward, I started to draw the inscriptions on Stelae 1 and 2. The three soldiers soon cut away the roots of the *ramón* and we jimmed out my Stela 3, which turned out to be no stela at all, but a round altar! [Altar 1; Figure 31.5]. This had six columns of glyphs. These were 42 in number, and in a brilliant state of preservation. Mint state, as the numismatists say. And here I got the confirmation of my reading on the accompanying stela last night.

Glyph 1 is 2 Ajaw  
Glyph 2 is 13 Chuwen  
Glyph 3 is the *lajuntun* sign  
Glyph 4 is *tun* 10 of K'atun 2  
Glyph 5 is the end of a *tun*.



Figure 31.5. Ixlu Altar 1 with its “mint state” inscription. This is one of four text-bearing monuments at the site (two stelae and two altars, the second altar discovered during recent excavations (Rice and Rice 2016: 39). This altar displays the Tikal Emblem Glyph (third column from left, second glyph from top), and has an eight-glyph phrase identical to one on Dos Pilas Stela 8, which prompted speculation that Ixlu had a dynastic connection to the Pasión region to the southwest (Schele and Freidel 1990: 390). It is now in the Flores plaza.

None of the other glyphs are calendrical, so far as I can tell. The altar is only broken into 2 pieces, one small and the other large. What impressed us was the beauty of the carving and the fine state of its preservation. After getting the two stelae and this altar on edge ready for photographing, I set all the boys to felling the bush so that an eleven o'clock sun would fall on the monuments, which we had arranged parallel to the rays of the 11 o'clock sun. I spent most of my time making extremely careful drawings of these several inscriptions, all on Stela 1 and Stela 2, and the first five glyphs on the altar of the former.

Meanwhile, we had three sets of visitors. First Virgilio and Silvino on their way out to Benque stopped in a moment to secure a note from me to Cifuentes (the *receptor* of customs at Plancha de Piedra) saying that they were my men and requested permission that they might pass through Plancha and on to Benque. The second group was composed of two Maya boys out hunting. They stayed a while and then strolled on. Montero, Boburg's manager, was the last visitor, and he stayed on helping us lift stones, etc., etc.

I spent the greater part of the morning in drawing, all in fact save for such times as I had to be superintending the felling of trees, etc., etc. When noon came, I saw that if I were to finish all the drawing I had to do before one o'clock, I would have to pass up dinner. This I did. I finished drawing at 1:10 and a quarter of an hour later had measured the monuments and we set off for Ixpop. We had hardly gotten under way when a gentle rain came on. It was quite hot, and although I had my raincoat behind me on the saddle, I did not put it on. Suddenly, it came on to rain very heavily and I found myself wet through before I could get it on, so soaked to the skin I rode into Ixpop.

I met Santiago on the road and he told me the motorboat was in [Figure 31.6]. I called across the stream and Julian put over in a *cayuca*. The motor was in, in charge of Paco Boburg. It was filled with chicle, however, and I had to get my three soldiers to put to and get it out. Both Ruddy and I were soaked through, and we stopped long enough to have a bath in the Ixpop off the prow of the *Atlas*, which was to carry us to Flores. Finally, about three, we were at least ready—bathed, dressed, the chicle unloaded, and our own baggage stored aboard.



Figure 31.6. Boburg's motorboat, the *Atlas*.

As we pushed out into the lake, we could see that a heavy rain was falling along the north shore. I thought at first that we would escape, but after passing Pichi'in we saw it was just ahead. The *Atlas* has no cabin, only a shelter, and this was already full. It seemed to me that it was best to weather the storm outside. I got on my saddle-slicker and sat down on my chair, covering the same with the skirt of the slicker. I drew my head underneath just before the bottom fell out of the sky. In this dismal, cheerless gray, we continued until almost Flores [Figure 31.7].



Figure 31.7. View of Flores from the west; compare with Figure 6.2. Note the whitewashed church at the island's highest point.

Indeed, it was still raining slightly when we rounded the point of the peninsula of San Miguel. And just as we landed, it came down in bucketsful again. We landed on the south shore [Figure 31.8], and Carl and Rick came down to see us. It certainly was good to see them both again.

We went first to Boburg's and here was the doctor himself, a little thinner, a little more dried up, but not a day older for all the six years that have gone by since last we met. His large, fat, and amiable *señora* was out, he said, looking for our boat. We went on to dinner, which Carl and Rick had ordered prepared at their boarding place, doña Manuela Mena's, an old friend.

The rain still kept up, and after dinner when we came to our house [Figures 31.9 and 31.10]—a 4-room structure on the Calle Central, it was still at it. Although our house has four rooms, only two of them are available to use for us. The owner has a lot of his own things locked in them, and we are left with two rooms only—a large front one in which everybody sleeps, and a small back one, which is used as a bodega. In spite of the rain, Carl got ahold of one of his, and with Muddy and Chico aiding, all of our baggage was got up in due time.





Figure 31.8. Oliver Ricketson's photo of the south shore of Flores, one of the principal landings.



Figure 31.9. Morley's house on Calle Central in Flores (right foreground; see map, Figure 6.1). The elliptical arches over the doorways are typical of Flores's older structures (Chapter 6, p. 39).



Figure 31.10. The back yard of Morley's place in Flores.

Boburg came up and a convivial evening ensued. Carl tells me he has several stones with fragments of glyphs on them.<sup>178</sup> He has parts of 6 skeletons and a large foot made of [fired] clay [Figure 31.11], apparently part of a large anthropomorphic idol, perhaps one of the very ones broken by Father Delgado or Father Orbita.<sup>179</sup> We finally got to bed about midnight, poor old Boburg very much the worse for wear.



Figure 31.11. The large clay foot found by Guthe at Tayasal. It resembles the feet of effigy figures attached to some Postclassic incense burners, but is life-size or more.

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<sup>178</sup> The "stones with glyphs" refer to sculptured fragments unearthed during Guthe's excavations.

<sup>179</sup> Postclassic incense burners or *incensarios* in the Maya lowlands were made in two general forms: open vases, often decorated with applied disks and or fillets, and effigies ("idols"). Effigy censers feature a modeled anthropomorphic deity figure, often with elaborate attire, attached to a large vase or urn. These vessels may be 18 inches (45 cm) tall, or considerably more.

## April 12, Tuesday

It was a day of loafing for everybody; even Carl did not go over to Tayasal. It started off soberly enough. Just before we left the house for breakfast, Gates said he wanted to say a few words, and proceeded to hand out some Big Berthas to Ruddy and Carl, to Rick, and to me by indirection. The conviviality of the night before had marred forever his first impressions of Flores,<sup>180</sup> and though subsequent less unpleasant ones might follow, he would never forget the disgust of his first night. "Bush nerves."

About nine, Carl, Boburg, and I went to pay a visit to the Governor, Doctor José Prado Romaña. He is a delicate-looking man with beard and extremely affable in manner. We had a long, delightful visit. He put himself at our disposition in whatever way he could aid us, and said he had offered to get Carl men. Boburg says [M.D.] Bromberg, [vice president] of the American Chicle Co., is in Laguna Perdida and will be over before the end of the week.

I had told Dr. Prado Romaña of the discovery of the new site at the east end of the lake, and it was suggested that we make a picnic of it and all go up next Sunday. There will be five of us—Bromberg, Boburg, Prado Romaña, and Shufeldt, if he comes over with Bromberg. It was well on the way toward eleven, and Boburg and I had a professional engagement, so we took our leave of the governor and returned to our house by way of the customs house, where he had some business, and his own house. Here I saw Mrs. Boburg, who is still her large, amiable self. She was swinging idly in a hammock, as the very first time I saw her. We exchanged a few memories of six or seven years back (1914 and 1915) and then Boburg came back to the house with me.

I came to the conclusion last night that the four sores I have on my left ankle are not infected sores at all, but *colmoyotes* or beef-worms.<sup>181</sup> They only smart and sting and burn. This morning Boburg brought up some chloroform and tried to kill them by stopping up the breathing holes they leave behind them with gauze soaked in chloroform. Afterward he tried to squeeze them out, but without success. They have to be either dead or stupefied to squeeze out and apparently these were neither. Indeed, he reached the conclusion that I have no beef worms after all. Later in the day, however, they began to sting and burn again, and I am confident that I have them. He recommended putting on adhesive tape the last thing before retiring, which, if the skin around is shaved and the adhesive plaster stuck on so tightly that the air is kept out, will smother them eventually. Rick shaved me (my leg, that is) and put on the adhesive plaster just before we went to bed. In the night they twinged sharply, said to be a sign that they are being smothered.

Just before dinner I took Gates and went up to the plaza and climbed the church tower [Figure 31.12] to give him the lay of the land. The approaching sunset was very lovely. The heavy rains of yesterday still filled the sky with dark masses of clouds and these, though they had the sun, permitted its rays to flow down at the western end of the lake in a golden shower. We

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<sup>180</sup> The implication here is that the "Big Berthas" were strong words of criticism, although why the conviviality of the evening might have led to disgust is unclear, other than sheer exhaustion.

<sup>181</sup> *Dermatobia hominis*, or human botfly. The adult female botfly (a large insect, the size of a bumblebee) captures mosquitoes, ticks, and other biting insects and attaches its eggs and then releases them. When the egg-laden insect bites a person, the eggs migrate through the bite wound and may develop into a larva which, over the course of some eight weeks, grows into a pupa.



scanned the peninsula where Carl is working and tried to pick out his particular plaza without success.



Figure 31.12. The church on the east side of the Flores plaza in 1921. The façade shown here differs significantly from the church as it exists today (see Figure 6.2). In 1954 a tornado damaged the nave roof, and twin bell towers were added in the 1970s.

Descending, we crossed to the *cuartel* in front of which leans Stela 2. It was approaching six, and the guard was about to be changed. The soldiers were assembling under the corridor, and at six, amid the beating of drums and the blowing of a bugle, they came to quasi- if not military attention and the exercise was on [Figure 31.13].





Figure 31.13. The “changing of the guard” at Flores as photographed by Oliver Ricketson.

The Flores church clock is the only one of its kind I have ever heard, since it strikes the hour twice—once on the hour and then repeats at one minute past the hour [see Chapter 7, p. 50, note 77]. We were hungry, so returned to the house and then down to Doña Manuela’s. I went to bed early, as I did not get much sleep the night before.

## CHAPTER 32.

### EDITORS' INSERT: TAYASAL

The site of Tayasal stretches over the western end and center of the broad Tayasal Peninsula that divides the body of Lake Petén Itzá into northern and smaller southern arms. It covers about 3 km<sup>2</sup> and can be divided into five parts, basically north, east, south, west, and central (the Main Group) (see Chase 1983: 355–366). Other sites (e.g., Cenote) lie farther east on the base of the peninsula. The area was continuously settled and (re)constructed beginning in the Middle Preclassic period until the present day. Classic occupation is found primarily at Cenote and epicentral Tayasal, on the elevated spine of the peninsula, with Postclassic habitation closer to the lakeshore (Chase 1983: 17–18).

Tayasal is best known for its roles in Postclassic and Contact period Itza geopolitics and was once thought to have been the Itza Maya capital, Ta-Itza; “Tayasal” is a corruption of that toponym. Today it is agreed that the Itza capital was located on what is now Flores Island (*noj peten*, ‘big island’) in the lake’s southern arm. During most of the Postclassic period (ca. AD 1000–1525) and later the lake basin and areas to the west were occupied by Itzas and their allies. After the 1697 Spanish conquest of the Itzas, the island and its presidio became known as Remedios, and two missions were built on the peninsula, San Bernabé on the western tip and San Miguel on the southern shore opposite Flores.

Tayasal has been investigated by multiple projects, beginning with the CIW.<sup>182</sup> Morley had a keen interest in Tayasal because he saw it as a successor to the northern lowland site of Chichen Itza. Morley wrote to William Gates in 1920:

Another big thing is that I am laying before the Trustees [of the CIW] this Fall is the inauguration of the Chichen Itza project this winter by beginning with the excavation of Tayasal, a concession to do which the Institution now holds. You will of course see the historical propriety of such a step, since what we will find in the lower levels at Tayasal should correspond to the upper levels at Chichen Itza, and a 2 or 3 year preliminary examination at Tayasal will offer a logical and proper introduction to the opening of the larger subsequent investigation at Chichen Itza.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> For a thorough discussion of the history of archaeological excavations at Tayasal, see Arlen F. Chase’s (1983) University of Pennsylvania doctoral dissertation.

<sup>183</sup> BYU Digital Collections Gates (MSS279) Box 2, Folder 10: letter from Morley to Gates, October 7, 1920.

Moreover, Morley very much wanted to believe that Tayasal was the capital of the Contact-period Itzas. He and Guthe expended considerable effort trying to determine the likelihood of the peninsula having been the Itza capital, trying to figure out how it once could have been an island, as it is described in colonial sources (see the last half of his very long April 21 diary entry, below). Morley was so convinced that Lake Petén Itzá had been 40–45 feet higher during the Postclassic that he had the CIW send surveyor J. O. Kilmartin to make a detailed study of the topography of areas surrounding the lake (Kilmartin 1923). The survey confirmed that it was not possible for the lake to be high enough to render the various peninsulas into islands. Morley also seems to have rewritten Guthe's 1922 report to conform to his belief, and dated what is now Structure T117-1st to the Postclassic period (Chase 1983: 465).

The first major excavations at Tayasal were conducted by Guthe as part of the 1921–1922 CIW expedition and outlined in the following chapters. He (Guthe 1921, 1922) worked in what is now identified as Structure Group 25 in the eastern part of the Main Group ("Tayasal proper"). Group 25 consists of structures arranged around three plazas and Guthe excavated in four of them around his Plaza A: Structures T108, T117, T123, and T124. Guthe's "investigations, although fully documented in [his] copious field notes," were never fully published in his brief reports of the CIW *Yearbooks* but were presented "in a much expanded form" in Arlen Chase's massive dissertation (Chase 1983: 356).

Plaza A began as a Late Classic "Plaza Plan 2" arrangement first identified at Tikal (Becker 1971). Structure T124 was the east-side temple of this group, approximately 9.5 m high, with a western stairway. Structure T123 is a small, square (5.8 m on a side) structure, approximately 1.2 m high, in the center of the plaza (Chase 1983: 468–478). The one-room superstructure had four doorways and its substructural platform lay below the latest plaza surface, meaning that it was a late addition, thereby converting the plaza into a "Plan 4." Excavations uncovered Lintel 1, probably placed over the north doorway, with a Calendar Round k'atun-ending date of 11 Ajaw 18 Mak (9.18.0.0.0; AD 790). Stela 1 (9.17.0.0.0, AD 771) was found lying on the interior of the building, possibly repositioned as an altar. The very large (>29 x 24.5 x 9 cm) modeled clay foot of a human figure, estimated at 8' tall (Figure 31.11), was also found inside. The butt of Stela 2—or possibly another lintel—lay about 10 m north of it and may have been dated to 9.19.0.0.0 (AD 810). Six burials in poor condition were found between Structure T125 and Stela 2; three were commingled, one a child; the other three were in anatomical order, one an elderly female.

Guthe and later Morley thought Str. T123 dated to the Terminal Classic, but it also resembles Postclassic shrines at northern sites. More specifically, the Structure 25 Group resembles Late Postclassic temple assemblages throughout the lowlands, with their eastern temples and central shrines (Rice et al. n.d.). Nonetheless, Guthe and Morley came to the disappointing conclusion that Tayasal was primarily Classic in date.

In 1970 the University of Pennsylvania, wrapping up its project at Tikal, began reconnaissance to find Postclassic sites in central Peten to fill in the chronology of Maya occupation of the region (see Chase 1983:1–5). The earlier excavations of William R. Bullard (1970) on Topoxte Island in Lake Yaxha, George L. Cowgill (1963) around Lake Petén Itzá, and other studies encouraged the Penn researchers and helped develop their focus on the Tayasal Peninsula. In May 1971, archaeologists under the direction of William R. Coe began mapping and excavations at Tayasal but ended the project in August because they "felt that their primary goal

of locating major Postclassic Period Maya architecture had not been met” (Chase 1983: 2, 17). Virtually the only structure they determined to be entirely Postclassic in date was Structure T100 in Structure Group 23. Group 23, part of the Main Group, consists of 15 structures in two plazas, north and south (Chase 1983: 368). Two monuments, Stelae 3 and 4 also were noted in this group.

Part of the Penn archaeologists’ problem—like that of Guthe and the CIW earlier—was an inability to recognize Postclassic architecture. Postclassic structures, exceedingly well described at Mayapan (Proskouriakoff 1962), are generally unimposing in central Peten, compared to the area’s Classic period temples and palaces and to Postclassic architecture in the north. In addition, the Postclassic Itzas living around Lake Petén Itzá erected virtually all their ceremonial edifices—now destroyed—in their capital, Noj Peten/Flores Island, rather than on the mainland (Pugh and Shiratori 2018). Nothing resembling the architecture of Topoxte Island can be found around Lake Petén, a finding that basically echoed the earlier CIW conclusions and put a damper on interest in the Postclassic in the region.

Twenty-five years later, fieldwork around the lakes began to reveal the true extent of heavy Postclassic occupation in the central Peten lakes area. Proyecto Maya Colonial, directed by Don S. Rice, Prudence M. Rice, and Grant D. Jones, was initiated in 1996 to investigate Maya-Spanish relations in central Petén detailed by ethnohistorian Jones (1998). This included work in Tayasal Group 23, which was revealed as a Late Preclassic “E Group”:<sup>184</sup> an arrangement of two structures named for a grouping at Uaxactun and once thought to have had observatory functions (see Blom 1924; Ricketson and Ricketson 1937; Ruppert 1940; cf. Freidel et al. 2017). The eastern platform, 5.5 m high, and the western pyramid, excavated independently by Guatemalan archaeologist Fredy Ramírez, yielded abundant fragments of Late Postclassic Patojo Modeled incensario fragments. Stela 3, north of Structure T100, was found to display an Ik’ Emblem Glyph, thought to refer to the site of Motul de San José, on the northern lake shore, and Stela 4 was the base of a monument reset in Structure T94 (Pugh 2012: 9).

Proyecto Arqueológico Tayasal, directed by Timothy W. Pugh (Pugh et al 2012; Pugh et al. 2016), focused on the mission of San Bernabé on the western peninsula. Established sometime before 1712, San Bernabé was one of six Spanish *reducción* or *congregación* communities in the western Lake Petén basin, consolidating the dispersed Maya population into more compact—and thus more easily controllable—towns. The others were: San Miguel,<sup>185</sup> less than a kilometer east of San Bernabé on the southern shore of the peninsula; San Jerónimo, on the western side of the lake opposite San Bernabé and Candelaria, on the peninsula just to the south; and San Andrés and San José on the northwestern lakeshore. San Bernabé had 126 residents in 1712 (Pugh et al. 2016: 52, Figure 5).

San Bernabé’s structures followed the western lake shoreline, with the church, Structure T31, built on a pre-Hispanic mound near the community’s northern edge. It was not recognized

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<sup>184</sup> This structure was later remodeled by the Itzas into a “basic ceremonial group” (BCG), consisting of a hall, raised shrine, and oratory.

<sup>185</sup> Penn excavations in San Miguel were limited owing to modern settlement, but a test-pit revealed Str. T380 (not visible on the surface). With several burials and construction levels, the latest construction (Middle/Late Postclassic) yielded fragments of polychrome fresco paintings on its northern interior wall (Chase 1983: 868–877).

as such by the Penn project, and subsequently it was partially bulldozed. Numerous subfloor burials were discovered, of which 33 were excavated: these consisted of 27 individuals, 20 adults (10 male, 10 female), 1 adolescent, and six children (Pugh et al. 2016: 56–57). The bones of the adults exhibited non-specific stress markers, traumatic lesions (especially back strain), and other injuries probably stemming from paddling canoes. Grave goods were rare. Artifactual materials recovered elsewhere around the church and in the community included typical Postclassic (Itza) Maya pottery and other goods as well as various Spanish items: majolica, glass, a coin, a musket ball, and bones of introduced European animals including pig, horse, and cow.

## CHAPTER 33.

### TAYASAL, PART I

#### April 13, Wednesday

A highly interesting day. It had been decided last night that Gates, Rick, and I should accompany Carl to the ruins when he goes over early, so we all rose at 5:30 and had breakfast at six. Carl went over in a large *canoa* called the *Carmelita* with his own men. Aurelio, Gates, Rick, myself, and Chico went over in a smaller one. Carl and Gates went over to the ruins directly, while I stopped where our mule boys were to pick up Ángel to take him on to the ruins and at the same time to arrange about a guide to take Santiago around to San Benito. Rick led us up the hill by a path leaving the *playa* near the *trapiche*.<sup>186</sup> A sharp ascent of some 200 feet brought us to the summit and to Plaza A, where Carl is now working, excavating a small low mound in the center [Figure 33.1].



Figure 33.1. Carl Guthe and two workmen at Tayasal.

After looking at this for a while—it appears to be a platform mound—he showed me his stela fragments, one a base with two columns of glyphs on two adjacent sides. I measured the width of these glyphs and found that this coefficient could only have been nine. Below, there appeared

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<sup>186</sup> A *trapiche* is a sugar mill. This was situated east of San Miguel.

to be part of the day-sign cartouche. Could this be the day 9 Ajaw, and possibly a K'atun 9 Ajaw? But his most promising find was a large fragment showing clearly the day-sign Ajaw. The coefficient looked like 6 and had been so identified by Carl, but on careful examination it proved to be 11. This glyph was high, 18½ inches, and very crude in execution, and the Ajaw sign late in style. Carl had found another stone, which I later fitted to this day sign. It has the lower half of a month sign, probably because its coefficient is surely 18. 11 Ajaw 18 ?

At first, I assumed this must be a K'atun 11 Ajaw after the Itza had returned to Tayasal, i.e., 12.10.0.0.0 11 Ajaw 8 Ch'en (in my correlation 1556) [AD 1815 GMT]. I did not know at the ruins that the month of the *k'atun* ending was 8 Ch'en, but believed it to be 12.10.0.0.0 11 Ajaw 18 ? Alas, when I got back to the house, about noon, I looked this point up and found it could not be 18, but was 8. In the meantime, we had decided that the month sign looks more like Mak than anything else, and that the Calendar Round date here received is probably 11 Ajaw 18 Mak.

I suggested this might be a *tun*-ending and, on looking it up in Goodman [see Chapter 5, p. 29, note 51], I found it at 12.5.9.0.0 11 Ajaw 18 Mak, which corresponds with the date 1468 A.D. [AD 1726 GMT, a historically impossible date]. This seemed to be fairly conclusive until I remembered that the important Old Empire date 9.18.0.0.0 is also an 11 Ajaw 18 Mak [GMT 790], some 950 years earlier.

In concluding my notes on this date, I will say as follows: The style of the Ajaw is very late and the stone on which it was sculptured seems to be more like a slab than a stela. It was found at Tayasal, which was not founded until after 1447 [incorrect]. Therefore, I may say that (1) if it is the date 11 Ajaw 18 Mak, and (2) if it is a *tun*-ending date, then the reading suggested, 12.5.9.0.0 11 Ajaw 18 Mak 1468 [AD 1726 GMT], is probably correct.<sup>187</sup> After drawing these two glyphs, which I did very carefully, we returned to Flores.

After lunch we loafed around most of the afternoon. I wrote in my diary at intervals. Ed Enright came in and said he had brought a Mr. Walsh over with him, the [American] man Ruddy and I had met on the Benque road three weeks ago day before yesterday [see diary entry, March 21]. By and by, Boburg brought him in. It seems as custodian of Dodd's property, he had to come to Flores. He was incidentally looking for two mules that George Usher had stolen from Dodd's camp, and which Gates had had the impudence to tell Simon in Cayo he had sold to me for \$125.00 each. I assured him I had bought no animals at all since the 7th of February, though I had made two swaps, and that I did not buy any animals at any time from George. I remembered now, however, that George had brought around some friends who had animals to sell, among others a dun-colored beast and a black macho, which answered to the description of two of the stolen animals.

Boburg was sending off a courier to Shufeldt, so I took the opportunity to write him asking whether Piedras Negras is to be reached easier by way of Laguna Perdida or by the Río de la Pasión, and requested an answer before Sunday. If it is easier to reach P.N. from Laguna Perdida, then I will take all my baggage on from here with me when I go; if not, I will go over light and leave my heavy baggage here.

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<sup>187</sup> Eventually, Morley realized that this initial dating was nonsense, informed by his mistaken belief that the Tayasal Peninsula was the island capital of the last Itza polity. Also, the "slab" was a lintel, now Lintel 1.



After dinner I was tired, so I went to bed very early. We first had a mild session with Aurelio, whom Carl discharged. He has proved utterly worthless and drunken. Also, there was some hold up about the *Carmelita*. The owner wanted \$2.50 a day for it, more than twice the regular price. Carl offered \$1.50, but the man would not take it.

One thing I want to note as to the date found this morning on the lintel or slab or whatever it is—I do not think it can be part of a stela—the fact that the coefficient is 18, and the day sign is Ajaw, indicates that the shift forward of 1 in the month sign coefficients had not taken place when this monument was made. If this is true, it is as I suggested in 219 [*The Inscriptions at Copan*, Morley 1920], the shift of 1 came in very late and was due to the forcing of the Maya calendar into agreement with the Nahuatl.<sup>188</sup>

### April 14, Thursday

Nobody went over to Tayasal this morning, save Carl. I wrote in this book all morning waiting for the *Atlas*, which was to go down to Candelaria to pick up Bromburg. At first, they were going at 11:00, and at that hour I sent Chico down to find out, and Paco sent back word that they were going at 11:00 “*en punto*” [on the dot]. When Chico got back it was 20 past 11, and so I thought I had better hurry down. When I got to Boburg’s, Paco was placidly swinging in a hammock, his mother’s first born in very truth. I asked him when he was going, and he said “11 *en punto*.” In answer I showed him my watch, which was reading 11:25. Instead of scurrying around to get off at once, he lay back in the hammock and said, “*Pues a las doce*” [at twelve, then]. Telling him to send up word when he was ready, I returned to the house and had lunch.

About 12:30 I took Chico with me and we got off. I had him take along some chairs and a tarp because the sun was so cruel. We reached Candelaria a little after one. It is just opposite the peninsula of San Jerónimo, which is one of the three large *cayos*<sup>189</sup> shown on the Avendaño map, [Figure 33.2] according to Boburg, which I feel sure is reasonably correct. Paco told me it is covered with walls, pyramids, and platforms.<sup>190</sup>

It was blazing in Candelaria, even worse than at Flores—the place is in a narrow arm of the lake, which at its upper end received the Candelaria River, and it gets no breath. Bromberg was not in yet, and there was nothing to do but wait. Paco had immediately taken possession of the

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<sup>188</sup> It is not clear exactly what Morley meant in this comment. In 1539 the Maya reached a compromise between two calendars, that of the Xiws (basically the Classic calendar) and the Itzas. The technicalities are complex (see Edmonson 1988), as they involved different starting days, and the “shift of 1” refers to starting the counts of units with 1 instead of 0 (“seating”). This may reflect central Mexican influence on late Maya calendars.

<sup>189</sup> Avendaño’s map showed three large islands in the lake, some of which are peninsulas, rather than islands. The eastern end of the San Jerónimo peninsula, now known as the Candelaria Peninsula, might have appeared as an island because it was cut off from the larger, western side (the site of Nixtun-Ch’ich’) by a moat-and-ditch fortification complex. If lake levels were high, this eastern portion might have been island-like. For more on Avendaño’s map, see D. Rice 2018.

<sup>190</sup> This is the large site of Nixtun-Ch’ich’, with occupation and construction dating from the Middle Preclassic into the Contact period. It was the home of the Chakan Itzas, opposed to the policies of the Ajaw Kan Ek’ in dealing with the intrusive Spaniards (see Jones 1998).

only hammock in the *encargo's* shack, and into the rest of it Chico quickly crowded himself. When I asked if there was another hammock, both boys sprang to their feet, but I would not take theirs and went over to the chicle bodega instead, where I found a short, home-made affair, and climbed into that.

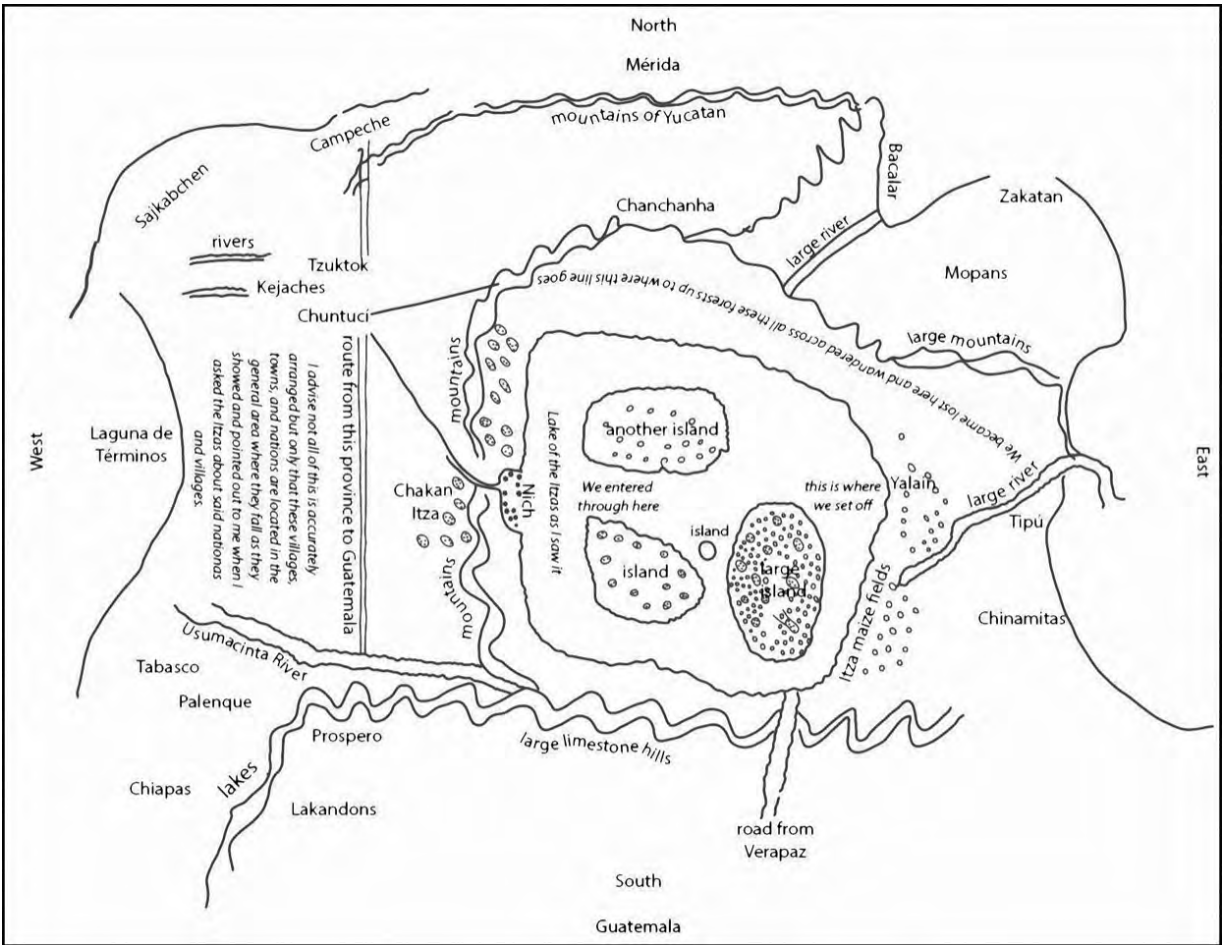


Figure 33.2. The Avendaño map of Lake Petén Itzá with English translation of original texts.

The sun was stifling. The moment one fell asleep or even dozed, the relaxed energy broke out in perspiration, and one was dripping. About half past three, I heard some animals coming into the clearing and it was Bromberg, and most extraordinary of all, Carlos Castañeda. Bromberg had brought him along to help as an interpreter and secretary, and the arrangement had proved most successful, for in addition to being efficient, he is a delightful companion.

Carlos, or Carlitos ["Charlie"] as we called him in Guatemala City, was not surprised at seeing me, as he had heard from Kid Taintor that I was in Flores. My own surprise, however, was not mitigated by any such advance notice, and my mind went back to the time I had seen him last: twenty minutes past ten on the night of December 25, 1917, just five minutes before the great earthquake of Guatemala.<sup>191</sup> We had both been to dinner at Toxica Roach's and were returning

<sup>191</sup> The 1917 Guatemala City Christmas earthquake is detailed in Ward and Rice 2021. Morley

Carlitos to his house and myself to the Imperial Hotel. We had stopped at the corner of 11th Street and 7th Avenue just in front of my hotel, and I had asked him to go down to the American Club with me and have a nightcap, as it was too early to turn in on Christmas night. He replied that there had been so many “*temblorcitos*,” or little earthquakes, that his mother would worry if he stayed out late, so that he had better move on, and we parted.

Five minutes after this, while I was in front of the Carmen Church going toward the American Club on 7th Avenue, the street suddenly broke into waves before my astonished eyesight and began to heave mightily. Carlitos had continued on and had been caught a block below. He was dressed in high hat, pumps, and evening clothes. He tells me he lost his hat and pumps immediately in his first wild rush toward safety. I myself reached the Plaza de Armas in record time, but even at that people were pouring in from all sides. I had not seen Carlos since that night, now something like three and a third years ago, and here we were meeting on the shores of Lake Petén Itzá.

They wanted to take their baggage through with them, so we waited for their pack animals to come in, which they did an hour later. We left Candelaria at 4:40 and reached Flores not long after five. As we passed the small island [Santa Bárbara] just west of the town, we saw our boys all bathing: Gates, Guthe, Rick, and Walsh.

When I got back to the house I found Ruddy had not gone, and we finished supper before the others got back. In the evening we had a regular reunion here at the house: Bromberg and Castañeda came up, Boburg, Walsh, and with us five we had a warm welcome. The heat was still intense long after sunset, but the moonlight was beautiful and we put the chairs out in front and sat there in the street, after the custom of the country.

The heat exhausts one so that we all broke up about ten and went to bed, save only the more festive ones like Ruddy and Chico, who attended a *baile* and did not get in until after midnight.

### **April 15, Friday**

This morning Gates went off to Bromberg’s to write, Carl to the ruins, Muddy and Ruddy at San Benito looking after the animals, and Ricketson with Walsh at the ruins. This left the house strangely empty, and I sat here at our table to write a report on the activities of the field season to date to Doctor Merriam. This I knew was to be a long letter, nor did I expect to finish it at one sitting, but as the morning wore on, I managed to put on paper fact after fact of our long journey and our principal discoveries. I reached the halfway point in the letter before lunch.

When Carl came in from the ruins, he, Rick, and Gates decided to go over to the mainland and explore the Cave of Hobilsina.<sup>192</sup> They took with them plenty of string, so they thought, lanterns, etc., and got off about three. I was to follow with Bromberg, Walsh, and Rutherford later in the cool of the afternoon. It was a vicious hot day, even worse than yesterday, and the Peteneros

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described the moment it struck: “I reacted instantly. My first fear was not of falling buildings but of falling live wires, and I dodged into the nearest doorway. At once, however, I perceived the imminence of a general collapse here, and darted back into the street. It came to me, too, in the same instant, that the nearest safe place was the Plaza de Armas” (Ward and Rice 2021: 307).

<sup>192</sup> Numerous caves lie in the karst hills south of San Benito, but the name Hobilsina did not survive. Cave use began in the Middle Preclassic and one cave had paintings (Brady et al. 1997).

themselves are beginning to complain of the fierce heat. In the afternoon, I continued my writing and almost completed my letter to Dr. Merriam before we got off for the cave. The party consisted of myself, Bromberg, Walsh, Rutherford, Chico, and Ángel. Before leaving I sent Muddy over to San Benito to look for a man named Julio Quitario, who, Boburg says, knows the bush north of the lake. I wanted to get from him information relative to the chicle trails of that region.

We crossed to Horcado, a little settlement just opposite Boburg's *playa*,<sup>193</sup> so named because local tradition says some padres were once hanged there [*horca*, 'gallows']. Carl said it would take just one hour from our house in Flores to the mouth of the cave. The cave itself I estimate at two kilometers from Horcado, south. It lies—the entrance—in the base of the hill or range of hills stretching from east to west south of the town. We got to the cave about 5:30 and after the two boys had gathered some guano leaves for torches, we went in. The entrance was unimposing, quite unlike that of the Cave of Loltun, for example, and I had some difficulty finding the next chamber (Figures 33.3, 33.4).



Figure 33.3. The unimposing entrance to the Hobilsina cave.

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<sup>193</sup> "Boburg's *playa*" was probably the southeast corner of Flores Island, and the "little settlement" of Horcado opposite might have been the tiny island later incorporated into the causeway linking Flores and Santa Elena. This island was renamed *Islote Jacinto Rodríguez Díaz*, for a military aviator who helped found Guatemalan air mail service, landing in Santa Elena in 1929. The legend of hanging padres might refer to the several Itza massacres of Spanish missionaries who ventured to Tayza to try to convert them before the 1697 conquest.



Figure 33.4. Carl Guthe (right) with Ángel and Chico in the Hobilsina cave.

We got into this finally, and thence into a third and fourth. We shouted to reach the others, but the turns are so sharp it was certain our voices carried no distance beyond the chamber where we were. We had no string, nor lanterns, and already we were five or six chambers in, and the smoking of our torches filled the air almost to the choking point. We shouted and shouted but got no responses and were just on the point of turning back to the outside chamber where the air was better when we heard a faint halloo, and presently the three emerged from a lateral chamber covered with mud and Carl trembling with happiness—a broken bowl in his hands.

He had found it in a passage far in the interior—they had come to the end of the string, literally—which they calculated was nearly a mile long. The bowl had a red slip and was old. At the height of the discovery, he had recovered all of it, but on assembling it after we got back to the house, we found we have only  $\frac{3}{5}$ ths to  $\frac{2}{3}$ rds. They had left the string anchored in the cave, intending to return tomorrow and explore further. It was now after six and our party had no desire to go in any further. We had seen the cave, though to me it was somewhat disappointing. The stalactites and stalagmites were not especially effective, and the real explorers complained we had smoked up the cave with our guano torches like Cooks' tourists, which was quite true.

Our *cayuca*, which we had left on the *playa* at Horcado, had been pretty full with the six of us coming over, but going back the additional three nearly caused us trouble. I asked a surly Petenero, who was crossing at the same time, to take one or two of us over with him, but he refused. I gave him a good Spanish "cussing" and he said "many thanks," to which I replied that "he need not mention it." Because of this we all had to pile into one *cayuca*. Three of the nine did



not swim: Gates, Rutherford, and Chico. Rutherford got in the bow, I sat next, then Bromberg, then Walsh, then Gates, then Guthe, then Ricketson, then Chico, and then Ángel. As long as we were in the river<sup>194</sup> it was all right, but when we came out into the lake the breeze had kicked up a little swell which slopped against us and eventually, as we got farther out, it got worse. Finally, we began to ship water at our (the bow) end. Ruddy discovered it first, and soon it began trickling under me. Bromberg caught it next, and Walsh next. It reached Gates before it was finally absorbed. For a moment it looked a bit ugly, but the waves dropped a bit and we were soon over.

After supper some of the boys came up, and that San Benito man, Julio Quitario, for whom I send Muddy in the afternoon, came over. He gave me some data about the trails north of the lake, but not too much, and altogether proved an unsatisfactory witness. With Boburg's help I extracted some dope from him, and then let him go early. Walsh wanted to copy my map on one of Dodd's and I asked him in exchange to let me add his map to my own, and he said he would. We went to bed about nine.

### **April 16, Saturday**

Finished my letter to Doctor Merriam, also wrote mother and Gann. When Bromberg goes out tomorrow, he will take our mail down to Gann in Belize, who will re-mail it in Belize. In the morning, Walsh came up and copied the details from my map, which he wanted. In the meantime, before I returned his map, I extended my own to take in the details of the country southwest of Benque, Santa Toribio, Dolores, San Lorenzo, Soledad, Salsipuedes, and Ucanal. In this way I am gradually building up my map, which should be fairly accurate.

In the afternoon while I was writing my letters, I had a most interesting visitor, the old *padre*, José María Pinelo,<sup>195</sup> now 88 years old, and 46 a *padre*. He was born here in Flores and knows a lot about the early history of the town. He was born in 1832 or 1833 and was able to give light on the names in the Torres Lanzas map.<sup>196</sup> For example, the name at the end of the point which we were trying to read is San Bernabé. Just opposite the island here, and west of the *trapiche* was San Miguel; at the east end of this arm of the lake, Jesus de María. The patron saint of Flores proper

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<sup>194</sup> It is not clear what this refers to. Morley's party might have traveled through the south shore of the lake by one of several small seasonal streams that drained this low-lying area, which are now overbuilt by modern San Benito and Santa Elena.

<sup>195</sup> Padre José María Pinelo Reinoso (1833–1922) was the son of a wealthy owner of a cattle ranch in the savannas near San Francisco (Petén). He became a teacher, held several local government positions, and married a local woman when he was 25; she died in 1873, a heavy blow to "don Chema," as he was known. Shortly thereafter, following a festive wedding of friends, he went to take a nap and fell into a cataleptic state, his body unmoving and rigid. A healer ("curandero") pronounced him dead, but an elderly stranger appeared at the wake saying that he was alive and his feet needed to be soaked in hot water. The assembled did so, whereupon don Chema opened his eyes and sat up. He went to seminary and was ordained as priest in 1876 (Alvarado Pinelo 2006).

<sup>196</sup> Pedro Torres Lanzas was a nineteenth-century historian who produced a detailed inventory of Spanish maps and plans related to colonial Mexico, held in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain (Torres Lanzas 1985 [1900]).

is San Pablo. The old padre says that all the images of these churches—which now exist no longer—are in the church at San José, save that of old San Bernabé, which is broken and is in San Andrés. He says these were Indian villages, and the one at San Miguel still shows the graveyard.

All day long preparations went forward for the picnic tomorrow. When Bromberg, Walsh, and Carlitos go down to Ixpop tomorrow, we are all going with them, including the governor, and take in the new monuments at Ixlu. Muddy cooked a ham and got out the food we are to take with us. Boburg was up a hundred times during the day to arrange details. He has fixed the impossible hour of 3:00 A.M. as that at which we must arise, and himself guarantees to get us up then. Against the long day tomorrow we all tried to turn in early, but after Carl and I got abed we had an archaeological discussion, which kept us awake until 11, and more unfortunate still, kept poor Gates awake. We got to bed at 11 and woke up at ?



## CHAPTER 34.

### IXLU AND FLORES

#### April 17, Sunday

A great *dia de fiesta*. Boburg, true to his word, appeared at our open door at 3:00 sharp, and roused us. It was a terrible wrench to get up, and one we did not achieve all at once. Gradually, however, we began to wake up and to get up. By four we were getting down to the *playa*, but by the time Bromberg's baggage and Carlito's was brought down to the *playa*, and we finally got off it was 4:40, not daylight. The night, or rather the coming day, was threatening. Heavy clouds hung over the sky, the moon had set, it was almost pitch dark, fitful gusts of wind blew through the towns, and it was obvious that rain was imminent. We had scarcely turned the point of San Bernabé, or Tayasal, when it came on to rain sharply. We all got under our raincoats and slickers and conversation fell off into fragments and scraps.

At daybreak, Bromberg thought of some coffee. He had some George Washington coffee, but we thought we had no hot water. Paco said the hot water from the engine could be used, though some thought it might taste like oil. But when it was tried out it proved to be alright. Muddy dug out the sugar from the lunch boxes and most of us had coffee, though I did not. Boburg and I took instead a hot toddy, with Scotch. The rain let up and after coffee we all proceeded to thaw out and brighten up. The clouds remained heavy though, and it looked to me as though we would catch rain later.

We got into Ixpop a little before eight, and [after] breakfast, or "coffee" as it was called, soon got ready. Boburg had brought down some long boards and a couple of sawhorses, and these were put up in the main house [Figure 34.1]. We also brought all our camp chairs, and Boburg had contributed some others, and these were arranged around the table, and we sat down, ten strong. Gates, Guthe, Ricketson, Rutherford, and myself; the governor, Bromberg, Carlos Castañeda, Boburg, and Walsh. We had coffee, tortillas, ham, bread, and butter for breakfast.

Before we finally got off again in the *Atlas* [Figure 34.2] for Ixlu Creek, it was nearly ten. Everyone went who was at breakfast save old Boburg, who felt he must use the occasion to inspect his *finca*. I took Chico and Paco. Paco went along to run the *Atlas*, and in addition we had two other *macheteros*. Paco got us up the Ixlu quite a distance, and then we came to a log across the stream and had to disembark. We landed on the left side going up and found a boy going along the path to the east, i.e., toward the Benque-Cayo road. We struck this in five minutes and turned northeast, and in fifteen minutes were at the tree I had blazed to indicate the point at which one takes to the bush to the left to go to the ruins.



Figure 34.1. Boburg's ranch at Ixpop showing the main house. This photograph was probably taken on the day of the Ixlu picnic.



Figure 34.2. The picnickers aboard the *Atlas* at Ixpop, Morley, in pith helmet, third from left.

The monuments excited everybody's liveliest admiration. Carl was especially pleased; Ricketson and the governor took great interest in them. After showing the monuments off, Carl, Ricketson, and I set about the task of making a sketch-map of the mound with its associated stelae. The pyramid faces west, i.e., down the long axis of the lake, which would be visible therefore if the intervening *monte* were felled. The two carved stelae are symmetrically placed on the platform in front of the temple, and below on the ground level, but in front of them are two other plain stelae. While we three were making this map, Rutherford was doing the photographic work, winding up with a group picture—the party arranged around [Altar 1] [Figures 34.3, 34.4].



Figure 34.3. Rutherford's group photograph at the Ixlu "picnic," with Altar 1. Left to right: Ricketson, Bromberg, Guthe, unknown (Walsh?), Morley, Gates, and Gov. José Prado Romaña.

Before we returned to the *Atlas*, the governor, Walsh, and I discussed the easiest method of transporting the altar and Stela 1 to Flores.<sup>197</sup> The easiest and shortest appeared to be to build a sled and drag it out to the Benque *camino*, and thence down to the Ixlu [creek] and out to the nearest point where a boat could be got to. The heaviest piece, Walsh estimated, could not weigh more than 2,800 pounds.<sup>198</sup> The governor thought it might be bound to a pole and carried out by men. He thinks of putting the road gang on it on their way back to Ixpop.

<sup>197</sup> Altar 1 (Figure 31.5) dates to (10.2.10.0.0) 2 Ajaw 13 Ch'en, AD 879), as does Stela 2, suggesting that it was paired with that monument rather than with Stela 1 (Rice and Rice 2016: 37, 39).

<sup>198</sup> These monuments were moved to Flores, where they are now on display in the plaza in the center of the island.



Figure 34.4. Another group shot. Standing, left to right: Morley, Ricketson, Gates, Guthe, Bromburg. Seated: Castañeda, Boburg, Walsh, Romaña.

Muddy and Boburg had dinner well forward by the time we got back to Ixpop, and we soon sat down to a big turkey dinner [Figure 34.5], which was preceded by some Scotch. The governor poured mine for me and gave me such a long drink that my head began to go around. Just before dinner closed, Gates rose, and in an exceedingly graceful speech, toasted the governor. Afterward, the latter rose and in an equally cultured manner and happy response, returned Gates' compliments. Even Bromberg, in good old Anglo-Saxon, told the governor what a fine chap he thought he was. After dinner we brought the chairs out under a large tree in front of the house and sat and smoked for an hour.

Bromberg's pack animals had gone on to Macanche, and now the time had arrived when he and Walsh must follow them. It was with reluctance that they broke up the party. Walsh said the longer he stayed the less he wanted to go, and Bromberg said it had been the most delightful break in his journey. Bidding the three of them goodbye, they were ferried across to the other side, and mounting their animals, waved us adieu and trotted off down along the road to the outside. And here came a break in our very congenial party.

After they left, we only stopped long enough to get our dishes and boards together and left Ixpop about 3:30. The sun was out quite brightly, and the boys put the tarp up over us, and then everyone fell asleep except Ricketson and Boburg, who were wakeful enough and had presence of mind enough to finish the Scotch before anybody else awakened.





Figure 34.5. Lunch with the governor at Boburg's ranch. The governor and Morley sit in the center opposite each other; Ricketson is in the foreground on the left.

The last half hour of the trip, as we approached Tayasal, was very instructive. One gets a better view of the island, or peninsula as it is now, from this side [east] than from the south side. We easily picked out the tall eastern pyramid [Structure T374] and from there west to the western point of the island appeared to be about two kilometers [Figure 34.6]. The scene of Carl's excavations is about 2/5ths of the way from the western end. The level of Plaza A comes out remarkably and runs as a bench clear around the central part of these 2 kilometers. A little bushing (which must be done before we take final photographs) would disclose its outline very clearly. We are inclined to think that this stretch of two kilometers was the principal part of ancient Tayasal.

Just as we rounded the point of the peninsula, Paco saw the *Alpha* going down toward Candelaria and came to the conclusion that Shufeldt must be there and had sent for the boat to bring him up to Flores. This later proved to be true.



Figure 34.6. The pyramids of Tayasal on the west end of the peninsula, looking northwest from the southern arm of the lake.

We took leave of the governor on Boburg's playa and came back to the house. Later when Gates, Guthe, and Ricketson got back from dinner, they reported that Shufeldt had dined with them. He sent word that he might not get up tonight, but surely would in the morning. The day had been long and trying. It had begun at three, and we were all of us ready to close it by 8, which was the hour that I crawled into my cot (Figure 34.7). Gates and Ricketson were already snoring in their hammocks at that early hour, and I daresay the others soon followed suit. I wasn't awake to say.



Figure 34.7. Interior of Morley's house at Flores. Morley's cot is in the background.

## April 18, Monday

Shufeldt's coming has made it possible to make and unmake a number of final plans. For one thing, he is of the opinion that it will be easier to reach Piedras Negras through Laguna Perdida, Paso Caballos, and Progreso than through Tanay and the Pasión. In any event, one thing is certain—whichever way we go, the *mulada* is to go on to El Sos, because that is on the road both to Laguna Perdida and the Pasión from here.

Later in the day, he got in touch with a man who knows down there, and he says that from Progreso to Desempeño is only 12 or 14 leagues, not more than two *jornadas*, and what is most important of all, Shufeldt can put me right into Piedras Negras with the Company's mules, a very decided consideration. We talked these things over, pro and con, until I reached the definite decision that I will go to Piedras Negras by Laguna Perdida and the San Pedro River instead of the Pasión route.<sup>199</sup> At first, I thought I would go on over to Laguna Perdida with Shufeldt myself tomorrow, and let the *mulada* follow as far as El Sos, but as I have to return here anyhow, I gave up the trip tomorrow with him, though I did not decide to do so until after I had seen Santiago down to Candelaria with my little red *yegua*.

Gates had an appointment with the governor at two, and he dressed magnificently therefor. High, stiff collar, tweed suit—God knows where he had had it concealed all these days and in semi-pressed condition. Rick was so impressed by all this array of purple and fine linen that he got out his small moving picture camera—the movette—and took Gates emerging from our door. Carl, in roughneck clothes, was lugged in as a foil, and they emerged together, the rough and the fine of it.

Gates reported later a most satisfactory and *simpático* interview with the governor. He feels the latter is distinctly interested in the progress of the department (a point we all have felt) and that if he is let alone long enough, that is, not removed by the central government, he may greatly forward the development of the country. He is sending Gates on tomorrow, by the regular post-courier. He will leave here then, sleeping in La Libertad tomorrow night, and at Sayaxche the following night. Here he will join the postman and 10 *jornadas* later should be in Coban.

Shufeldt had lunch with me here and stayed for a while after dinner. In the late afternoon we went down to a neighboring cantina to get an *anisado* before dinner, which we were all to take together at doña Manuela's. And here started a party "*de primera orden*" [of the first order]. After two *anisados*, not the imported variety, but raw sugar rum with anise, we went into Boburg's and had two or three cognacs there. From here we descended upon doña Manuela's and Shufeldt had sherry on the table. By this time there was considerable "*alegría*," Carl being especially enthusiastic. After dinner we came back to the house, whither Carl and Ricketson had preceded the rest of us to lay in a couple of scotches. Rick's Scottish ancestry shows amazingly at times [Figure 34.8]. This was very canny, since the *despedida* [good-bye party] of Shufeldt was thus continued without interruption, an important point.

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<sup>199</sup> Morley's trip to Piedras Negras in 1914 had been rather easy by way of the Río Pasión and up the Río Usumacinta (Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 7). As the following pages show, his choice of the overland route was a mistake that led to one of the most difficult journeys of his long career.





Figure 34.8. Oliver Ricketson outside the expedition house, quaffing some scotch.

From now on, three of the party, whose names I shall not confide even to diary, got pretty low in spirits. One, and in fact the only, contretemps which happened was the following: I was lying in Gates' hammock when Carl sat down beside me. There was a deafening crash, and the whole doorframe, and the two heavy sapote [wood] doors, fell in, just missing Carl's head by two inches. Gates' hammock had been fastened to this doorframe and it had pulled the whole frame from the house wall when Carl added his weight to mine. The surprising thing, of course, was that it had not fallen before, several nights ago for example, when Carlitos and I were sitting in it. This sobered the party somewhat, and it was not difficult to persuade Shufeldt that it was time he was starting for Candelaria, as he was going to sleep there and ride clear through to Laguna Perdida the first thing in the morning—a devilish hard *jornada* of 14 leagues.

Boburg and I were going down to Candelaria with him, and Carl elected to come along. We stopped at Boburg's to pick Paco up, and here Shufeldt and Carl had a very hard fall or push. Happily, neither was hurt, and we got on for the *playa*. We went in the *Alpha*, Boburg's first motorboat, which is much smaller than the *Atlas*, and got there in half an hour. The lake is covered with a fine mist, which beat against the face, and with the moon cast a weird light over everything.

Arriving at Candelaria, Santiago met me. But I had changed my plans, as I have already noted, and decided not to go on to Laguna Perdida with Shufeldt. I told Santiago to return to San Benito in the morning and take my little mare back with him. Bidding goodbye to Shufeldt for a week—or possibly even less—we returned to Flores.

Chico met me at the *playa* and told me Ricketson was not at the house, but was in some house at the western end of the island. Fearing that possibly some of his friends might rob him, I went down there and after waking him, he came home with me. The house looked like an earthquake survival, with the doorframe and doors out, and within like a pigpen, with fallen plaster all over the floor. Gates had already gone to bed. Someone said he only said two words when he saw the doorframe fallen: "Good God!" Guthe was undressing, and Ricketson did so as soon as we came in. Well, the *despidida* of old Shufeldt was very *alegre*—I fancy just as he wanted it to be.

### **April 19, Tuesday**

Patriot's Day, or Bunker Hill or some other Day in the good old Bay State [Massachusetts]. Gates' *arriero* to Sayaxche, a man named Echeverria, came in fairly early and said they would get off about 10:00. Gates finished his packing and we sat around talking, waiting for his *arriero* to go. It was a muggy gray day and Carl did not go up to the ruins. About ten we went down to the *playa* to one of our numerous canoes and went across. I had previously commandeered Ángel and Chico to carry down the two kyacks which he is taking with him, Nos. 7 and 8. We had to wait some time on the other side until Echeverria came across, but finally all the animals were saddled and loaded and the time had come to say goodbye to the old man. We had left Washington together more than three months ago (i.e., January 3rd) and, barring the time he was at Corozal, we had been together continuously ever since. We probably will not meet until September in Washington, though of course we'll write.

After Gates had vanished down the road to La Libertad, Carl and I returned to Flores. I will only be here myself another three or four days, as I want to get on as soon as I can now. Everybody's spirits were very low and little was accomplished in the afternoon. About five, I went down and had a long talk with old Boburg and later he came up here until seven to finish it up. We talked of what looks like an imminent break between Shufeldt and Bromberg. From what the former said here the other day, I could see that there had been friction. Indeed, he had intimated as much in the States last December. Of one thing I am sure, if Bromberg removes him, the personal machine that he, Shufeldt, has built up out there at Laguna Perdida will collapse, and another manager will have to build up his own. In these countries, government, business, and everything else is personal. Shufeldt has surrounded himself with a group of men of his own, his own *chicleros*, *arrieros*, *contratistas*, clerks, etc., etc. and if he were to be removed or go, he would carry most of them with him. It was no idle boast of his when he said yesterday that if he were to say "*vámonos*" [let's go], the whole crowd would follow him anywhere. I do not think Bromberg fully realizes this, but if he tries to remove Shufeldt, he will find it out very quickly.

It was a damp rainy evening and Carl, Ricketson, and I dined over the war and our several services therein. We went to bed about nine.

### April 20, Wednesday

Another rainy and overcast morning. Carl even debated whether he would go up the hill this morning [to the Tayasal ruins], but he finally started. I passed the morning in writing here at the house and also reached the decision that we will leave here Friday night after supper, going down to Candelaria on the *Atlas*, and on to El Sos Saturday.

In the afternoon the sun came out, and about three I went up to the plaza to see about moving Stela 2<sup>200</sup> out from in front of the cuartel that we might photograph it. The permission of some commanding officer was sought—not our *jefe*—and then second, the aid of the soldiers on duty was enlisted. As usual, Chico turned the monument. We used the small jack and a number of *palancas* [planks, for leverage]. A colony of small ants had made their nest under the stela, and when these were eventually disturbed, they greatly increased the difficulties of the work, as everyone who stood by was soon stamping and moving about. With great labor, for the stone was exceedingly heavy, we got it up on its edge, and then jimmied one end around so that the sun shown on its face, and then we turned the back toward the sun with its glyph panel and photographed this. The two coefficients of the terminal date with which it begins are 3 and 3. I think this is almost certainly 3 Ajaw 3 Kej and the whole date 10.2.0.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Kej [AD 869].

While we were at this job the governor passed by and exchanged a few pleasantries. He asked if we did not know it was forbidden to photograph the military equipment of the country, this because a lot of old cannon wheels and timbers were behind the stela when Rutherford took it. After finishing this work, we put the stela back where we had found it and returned to our house. Another job of the afternoon, which Muddy did, was to get the doorway and doors back in the wall. This was a great relief to me, as from the inside the sash-less hole where they had been was a constant reproach as well as reminder (of our debauchery).

Boburg came up in the late afternoon to visit while Carl and Ricketson went down to bathe. This is the last day for the latter at doña Manuela's, as he will eat with Rutherford and myself here at the house beginning tomorrow.

There is a full moon tonight of great silvery beauty and also a *baile* [dance]. As I had not been to any Flores *bailes* this year, I thought I would take this in. Indeed, we all did, except Guthe. It was held in a clean, white-washed room on the same street Boburg lives on. The music was a violin and guitar. There were five or six dancing ladies, girls really of all builds from a tall, very short-waisted willowy one to a *guapa* [beautiful] dumpling who had a most coquettish pink bow in her hair and who kicked out to the off side at certain measures of the dance. The *guitarista* was from Xcalac (Quintana Roo) and knew Octaviano Solis and Gann quite well. He was well along in spirits when we arrived and lamented to me bitterly of the high cost of living here in Flores.

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<sup>200</sup> Morley misstates the stela number. The photos taken on this day, now in the Peabody Museum online collection, are of the front and back of Stela 3, not Stela 2. Stela 2 is actually a stone that was incorporated into the structure of the Flores church (Morley 1936-37, III: 432-433). The photos taken are very poor and show no detail.

He placed himself at my disposition "*en cualquiera manera que se necesita*" [in whatever way is needed], and then withdrew to play the next piece.

I thought some of dancing, but the girls were all too active and I was too tired, so I did not leave my seat until I left. Also, I passed up the sugar rum which was passed around at frequent intervals. We walked back to the house under a brilliant moon. The trade winds were blowing and had already cleared the skies of the past week's heavy clouds, and everything gives promise of a clear day tomorrow.

## CHAPTER 35.

### TAYASAL, PART II

#### April 21, Thursday

A most interesting day. Carl took me over to his Tayasal [excavations] with the result that I know considerably more about it than I did before. Carl went on ahead, and later Ricketson, Rutherford, Chico, and I went over with Santiago as ferryman. We got to the ruins before nine and Carl showed me his Mound 2 on the south side of his Plaza A<sup>201</sup> [Figure 35.1]. This is developing splendidly. It turns out to be a platformed substructure. He has laid bare the eastern end and finds it will have four terraces. What troubles us both is the fact that from the top terrace up there is only left of the mound a scant two feet to have been the foundations of the temple above.



Figure 35.1. Tayasal Mound 2 near the end of Carl Guthe's 1921 excavations.

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<sup>201</sup> Guthe's Plaza A is now identified (via the later Penn project; Chapter 32, pp. 340–341) as Structure Group 25, with four structures that he excavated: T108, T117, T123, and T124. His "Mound 2" would be Structure T177, 6.14 m high, on the south side of the plaza.

They had not yet reached the wall of the superstructure, but in front toward the eastern end were two steps. Whatever remained of the structure is so scant that it is safe to assume that the greater part of it was of some perishable material—boughs, withes, plaster, and guano-palm thatch. He has uncovered the two top terraces, and by calculation, if all of the same height, there must have been four originally. He has also started digging in the west side of Mound 3, the mound on the east side of Plaza A [Structure T124], but nothing has turned up yet.

When the boys were all working well and we had explained to Rutherford what pictures we wanted, and leaving Ricketson to superintend the excavations, Carl and I started out to give Tayasal a thorough reconnaissance. He showed me first a house foundation in the northwest corner of his Plaza A with but a single course of stones left. Why such an insignificant construction should have been placed so asymmetrically in a corner of one of the principal plazas was beyond us, unless it was a later construction. Carl thinks it a modern house foundation, i.e., within the last 100 years.<sup>202</sup>

From here we skirted along the long terrace flanking the complex of Plaza D on the north side of the peninsula. This is the most conspicuous landmark on the peninsula as viewed from the lake to the north. Climbing out again, we continued on to the west end, or rather to the west end of what we assumed as the 1696 island. This is clearly defined by a sharp descent some 200 feet before reaching the present west end, and by a drop of some 30 to 40 feet. This drop is clearly defined and, because of our later work, strongly indicates that it was the west end of the island in 1696 [Figure 35.2].<sup>203</sup>

From here we climbed back to a plaza just west of the high west pyramid where Carl showed me the remains of a wall (modern masonry) standing 3 or 4 feet high. This, I believe, may be the old mission of San Bernabé shown on the Torres Lanzas map (middle of the XVIIIth century) as at the point of the peninsula, a fact also corroborated by Father Pinelo, who tells me he remembers a village there and that the image of the local saint is in San José now.

From old San Bernabé, which we called this ancient crumbling fragment of a wall, we ascended to the high west pyramid,<sup>204</sup> whence there is a wonderful view of the whole western end of the lake. The terrace lies just above the level which Carl calls the northern group, which is much lower and extends to a fringe of low bush, quite thick. Where this touches the northern group, which is in grass and looks like savanna, Carl thinks is the Tayasal waterline, i.e., to where the lake reached in 1697.

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<sup>202</sup> This is doubtless a Postclassic structure, which usually had only a single course of foundation stones and were often placed “asymmetrically” — that is, without regard for cardinal orientations or for alignments with earlier (Classic) constructions.

<sup>203</sup> The Tayasal Peninsula was never an island, despite Morley’s determined efforts to make it one. Early scholars’ views that it once may have been an island might have been influenced by a lovely ~1740 watercolor of Colonial-period settlements around Lake Petén Itzá, found by anthropologist Ruben Reina (1966) in the Archivo General de Indios, Sevilla, Spain. (Reproduced in Pugh et al. 2012: Figure 3). It correctly places the new Spanish mission towns, but shows Tayasal as an island.

<sup>204</sup> Classic-period triadic Structure T65, which today is a *mirador*: a ladder-accessed platform in a tall tree atop the mound, affording a wonderful view. This lookout, locally called Cerro Kan Ek’, is a popular tourist destination, only a few minutes’ ride in a water taxi from Flores.

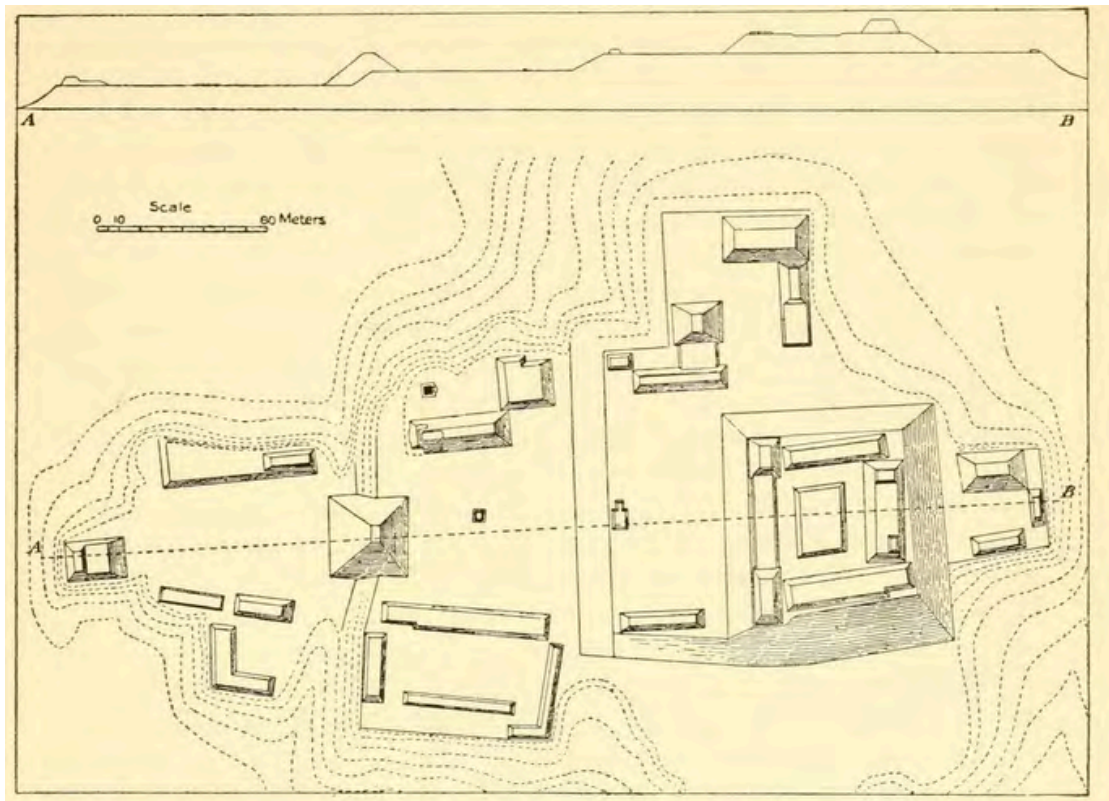


Figure 35.2. Carl Guthe's 1921 map of the principal group at Tayasal.

We passed north of Plaza D, the highest point on the peninsula, something over 200 feet, and on toward the west end. The plaza grouping appears to break down toward this end owing to the confused character of the topography, though closer examination might develop definite plazas. Still continuing west, we struck a swale bearing in that direction and almost walked into Rick's cenote.<sup>205</sup> This appears to be a perfectly definite cenote about 100 feet in diameter at the top, and perhaps 30 feet deep. We climbed down into it. The vegetation was very dense at the bottom, but it contained no water.

Boburg's two motorboats were just leaving Flores together, and we watched them far below us cutting the waters of the lake, the faint chug-chug of their engines floating up to us from below. We wondered what the Itza would have said, could they have stood behind us and watched them speeding along, driven by no visible force. It would have been accounted a miracle by them at the very least.

Presently the *Atlas* headed toward Candelaria, while the *Alpha* took the narrows between Lepet [Island] and the peninsula and pointed eastward to Ixpop. We learned later that poor

<sup>205</sup> This is doubtless the same cenote that was excavated by Pugh's test unit in 2016. It apparently held water when lake levels were higher, as the deepest levels were clayey and a pond slider (turtle; *Trachemys scripta*) skeleton was recovered. The water table was encountered at the current lake level (Pugh et al. 2016: 53).



Montero's father had died at eight this morning, and Boburg was sending the *Alpha* to fetch him.

When we had rested and cooled up, we started back east along the south side of the crest of the peninsula. Carl said it was easier to slide down the steep slope of the high west pyramid than to try to walk down the slippery grass, and so we slid. I could not refrain from voicing the hope as we slid down that no cactus grew there. Carl said the slide we were using had been tried out by himself several times previously with no unfortunate sequelae.

The southern slope is a confused assemblage of mounds, which follow the contours of the ground rather than any formal arrangement around courts. We got back to Plaza A, where the excavations are going forward, about a quarter to eleven, having been gone a good hour and a half. Before leaving this Plaza A I want to record here a prediction concerning it. I believe the large structure on its north side is the house of the *Canek*, or king. It has two or three large halls or rooms. These two *salas*, or halls, are the only ones large enough to answer to the large assembly halls of Father Fuensalida's account,<sup>206</sup> and the distance from the shore of the lake on the north side would be about right, a half or a quarter of a league. It is only a conjecture, and Carl has already a hundred strong scientific reasons why it is not, but I still make the prediction nevertheless, for what it is worth.

After looking over the work and taking a good drink to put back the water the sun had drawn from us, and having a cigarette to refresh ourselves, we started off again at eleven for the far eastern pyramid [Figure 35.3]. Carl struck first a *picada* of his own leading east. This gave into a path bearing south, which we followed until it hit the Benque road,<sup>207</sup> and thence back along it to the northeast until we reached a point near the east pyramid. We turned off here to the right and in a couple of hundred yards reached a terrace in front of it. This gave to a higher one still farther east, which in turn led to the base of this really high pyramid.

It was very warm. There was an old milpa here with its second-growth bush, through which the sun poured down. The slope of the pyramid on its west, or front face, was not steep, but when we finally reached the summit, the ground literally fell away at our feet to the eastward.

We noticed clearly that the general appearance of the terrace changed. Whereas to the west there were mounds, pyramids, terraces, platforms, courts, and plazas, to the east it flattened out into a plain or savanna. Beyond this at some distance, perhaps a kilometer, was a higher ridge, but the mounds and pyramids stopped, particularly to the northwest. A few groups were seen to the S.E., however. We felt that the civic and religious center of the city was behind us (i.e., from west to the point) and that before us, i.e., to the east, lay the huts of the common people. I feel this so strongly that I believe Carl's labors will all lie west of this pyramid. From here, we could see clearly that a 40-foot rise in the waters of the lake would wipe out the entire present southern shore of the lake. Point Nimá would go, Point Pichi'in likewise, and the lake would bathe the far ridge to the east of us.

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<sup>206</sup> Franciscan fathers Bartolomé Fuensalida and Juan de Orbita led entradas from Belize to Lake Petén Itza in 1618 and 1619 in unsuccessful attempts to convert the Itzas to Christianity. Their encounter with the Itza king in Flores was peaceful at first, but after they destroyed the "Thunder Horse" idol (Chapter 7, p. 47, note 74) the Itza turned against them (Morley 1937-38, VI: 27-31).

<sup>207</sup> The original trail ("road") between Benque and Flores passed over the Tayasal Peninsula, and required water transport to the island.



Figure 35.3. The eastern pyramid (Structure T375) at Tayasal seen from atop Guthe's Mound 3.

When we had rested again and taken in all this geography, we returned to Plaza A, reaching there just 15 minutes before closing time. At 12:30, Carl called off his men and, bidding goodbye to Tayasal for at least nine or ten months, I descended to the *trapiche* on the southern playa of the peninsula. Santiago was lying under it sound asleep. We waked him and he soon put us across in one of our own canoes. Carl crossed with his men.

Before I came down the hill, I noticed the month sign in the Calendar Round date from Mound 1. This had no cross-hachure as I at first drew it, but only has the lines one way. This makes the identification of Mak even more certain.

The early part of the afternoon I spent in writing. About four I had a bath, and then this question of how much the water of the lake had fallen in the past  $2\frac{1}{4}$  centuries, i.e., since 1696, began to interest me. Finally, I got Carl to get me out his hand-level and with Rick as rodman and myself taking notes, we ran several level lines from the present water's edge to the plaza [of Flores] to see what 30, 25, 40, 45, and 50 feet rises respectively would do to the present island.<sup>208</sup>

Just west of the plaza there is a rock, part of the natural limestone outcropping of the island, with some ancient carving on it—scrolls, etc. I made the obvious assumption that this must have been out of the water when it was carved, and we took the levels on the west side first. We found that a rise of 45 feet would just bathe the foot of this rock (i.e., would be about 3 feet below the carving) but that 50 feet would put the carving under water. Obviously then the lake had not

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<sup>208</sup> Note that the following paragraphs of Morley's diary relate his ardent but mistaken conviction that the Tayasal Peninsula was once an island, that it was the capital of the Conquest-period Itza Mayas, and that the level of Lake Petén Itzá had fallen 40–45 feet since then. The levels of all the Peten lakes periodically rise and fall several meters as a result of complex natural phenomena, such as seasonal rainfall, evapotranspiration, and probable subsurface drainage. The last such rise began in 1978 and lasted until the early 1980s (see Rice 2018a: 284–285).

dropped 50 feet, though it conceivably might have dropped 45 if this rock was formerly at the water edge. The level of the plaza is 63' 8" above the water level now [the official benchmark of Flores is 56 feet].

We also ran up to the plaza from the south side of the island by don Clodovego Berges' house. The 45-foot contour strikes almost up to the plaza, i.e., just below the new *cabildo*. We carried this 45-foot line around to Father Pinelo's house [Figure 35.4] just east of the church and found out that his front yard would have been submerged, but his backyard would have been above the 45-foot level.



Figure 35.4. Father Pinelo's house in 1921. It seems to lie at the intersection of Calles Santa Ana and Las Flores in the "Patio Grande" sector of modern southeastern Flores (see Figure 6.1).

A 45-foot rise would leave little more than the plaza, the rock with the carving as the west end, the street running east from the new *cabildo* would roughly mark the southern side of the island, and just east of Father Pinelo's backyard would mark the east end. The northern shore would be about behind the *cuartel*, the post office, custom's house, and hospital.

With these observations the sun had all but set, and indeed Carl had had to light matches for his last reading. We had collected a crowd of small boys also, and when we got back to the house Ruddy informed us that the people said we were looking for gold on the island!<sup>209</sup>

After supper, these figures were so intriguing that Carl got out his notes and figured out just what rise of water would reach the edge of the bush on the northern side of the north group on

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<sup>209</sup> "Looking for gold" is a common assumption (sometimes an accusation) among minimally educated and/or rural people about archaeologists' peculiar doings.

the northern slope of the peninsula. His calculations finally showed that a rise of 41 or 42 feet would just bathe the edge of his northern group, which fits very closely with our 45, which would just bathe the base of the sculptured rock here in Flores. Indeed, we reached the firm conclusion—Carl, Boburg, and I—that it was a pretty safe conclusion to say that the lake had fallen between 40 and 45 feet in the past 225 years, and very possibly as closely as 41 or 42 feet.

Carl got out Means' [1917] book and read us the various descriptions of the island. Padre Avendaño speaks twice of five *cayos*, of which the present island of Flores must have been the smallest. He shows only four on his 1696 sketch map, which Boburg has surely identified as Flores (the smallest *cayo*), Tayasal, San Jerónimo, and San Benito, the last three now all peninsular. We think the fifth must have been that high land lying east of Tayasal, and Carl and Boburg are going over there before Carl finishes. One thing is certain—a 15 or 20 foot rise would wipe out all of the existing ten islands save only Flores, so the four others besides Flores on the 1696 map must now be peninsulas.

One other line of checking evidence we developed. Assuming the fall to have been gradual since Father Avendaño's time, i.e., 1696, and to have been between 40 and 45 feet. This makes the lake to have fallen from 8 to 9 feet every 45 years. Now, 30 years ago several people remember that the island south of Boburg's playa, where the new bridge is being built, consisted of a single rock from which they used to swim.<sup>210</sup> 30 is two-thirds of 45, and two thirds of 8 is 5½ feet, and two thirds of 9 is six. Therefore, if the drop has been even 30 years ago the water was from 5-1/3 to 6 feet high, which would practically submerge this entire island. Tomorrow we are going to take the present height of this rock above the level of the lake.

We went to bed about 10, tired out with the strenuous day. As Rutherford had some development to do, he promised to wake us up for the full eclipse of the moon which takes place tonight. This he did. It began shortly after midnight, but did not become total until after one. I saw it this far, but was too tired to wait and see the moon disengage itself from our own shadow. When it finally passed completely under, and only the righthand upper edge was touched by a thread of silver light, it changed its appearance to me entirely, and instead of looking like a disc, became a globe floating in the air, just faintly visible. The last eclipse I saw was one of the sun from the side porch of Provost's house in Chester [PA], several summers ago. Jennie, her father, mother, aunt, and brother were there. It was almost sunset, and was by no means total, but was a good eclipse.

This was a far cry indeed from Chester. The moonlight had been quite brilliant but was totally obscured and all the stars came out while it lasted. As I say, I was too tired, however, to see it through.

### **April 22, Friday**

This was our last day in Flores, and it was correspondingly busy. Carl got off for the ruins a little after six, and we had breakfast ourselves about seven. The morning was devoted to packing. Everybody seemed to experience the same difficulty getting his effects into the containers. I

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<sup>210</sup> For more on this island/rock, see Chapter 33, p. 348, note 193. As for the "new bridge," this wooden bridge was destroyed by Hurricane Hattie in 1961 and replaced by a causeway to the mainland, finished in 1966.

packed No. 1 kyack (Nos. 1 and 2 have been mine throughout the trip) with my books, the Peabody reports, Publication 219, and all the scientific equipment. Chico's clothes and my own and the graphophone discs filled No. 3 to the top, and the graphophone plus shoes and odds and ends filled No. 4. Meanwhile, both Ricketson and Rutherford were having the same difficulty. It became apparent finally that neither of them could get their bedding into their personal kyacks. Rutherford has two with the photographic outfit, and Ricketson one with the medical outfit, so we made two rolls containing all the bedding and hammocks. I had to keep my kyacks open until the last minute as Pablo was washing some last soiled clothing.

Santiago and Ángel in the meantime were carrying down the boxes and kyacks to the *playa* and storing them aboard the *Atlas*, and the house gradually was emptied. Indeed, when all of our impedimenta was gone, it looked quite bare and empty.

We had heard that a Claudio Urrutia<sup>211</sup> and two engineers were to get in today, one that McCrorie whom I met in Guatemala City in January, and other a man by the name of Chapman, whom I do not know. Both, or rather all three, failed to come in. They were heard of on the *Pasión* three days ago, and I think they must be hunting petroleum on the savanna! McCrorie represents some oil company.

In the odd moments between packing and changing money and paying odd bills here and there, I wrote to Mother, to True, and to Jennie. In spite of the cool weather of the last three or four days, it came on furiously hot. Carl said when he came in that it was the hottest day this morning he has yet experienced on the hill. In the late afternoon, I went up to bid the governor goodbye. We had a pleasant informal chat, and he again took the occasion to impress upon me that anything he could do, he would, to further our work.

After taking leave of him, I returned to the house and got Guthe and Rick, and the three of us crossed to the little island opposite Boburg's *playa* to take its maximum elevation above the water level of the lake as it is today. There is a rock near the center, which thirty years ago was the only part of it above water. There are people, boys, who went swimming from this rock once, and all agree that thirty years ago only its top rose above the level of the lake [see previous page, note 210]. Carl ran a level line from the present water level to the top of this rock and found it just ten feet high. The base of the rock is about 5 feet lower, so a rise of 5 to 6 feet would just leave it showing. If the average drop has been 8 to 9 feet every 45 years, it would be 5-1/3 to 6 feet in 30 years, and this again checks with our other results.

It had been so dreadfully hot that on our way back we paddled out into the lake southeast of Flores and took a bath from the *cayuca*. It was just sunset, and the cloud effects were beautiful. A storm of rain was brewing off to the east, which for a time looked as though it would bring relief to us, but in the end bore off to the east still farther where it seemed to rain. The water was deliciously cool to our hot, thirsty skins, and literally cooled off a grouch Carl had. He called attention to the phenomenon himself.

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<sup>211</sup> A highly accomplished engineer (see Chapter 11, p. 96, note 117), Urrutia was part of the first Guatemalan Boundary Commission that operated between 1884 (he left in 1887) and 1895 to negotiate the disputed border between that country and Mexico. Nearly 300 assistants died in the Ixcán region of Petén. In 1895 he became head of a second Guatemalan commission, and later was a member of the commission drawing the boundary with Honduras.

On my way back to our house I stopped in to say goodbye to the *padre*. He gave me a blessing and told me he would pray for me. I gave him my warmest regards for his Juliano, the apple of the old man's eye, who leaves Guatemala for Flores next week. I think it is very doubtful whether I will ever see the old man again. He is now 88 and getting shaky.<sup>212</sup>

After dinner I held up proceedings long enough to finish a letter to Jane, and a very short note to Gann, and then about half after eight we set off for the *playa* with the last of our baggage. We had all agreed a toast would be necessary, though before we could locate the beverage we wanted, whiskey or cognac—we are all off *anisado* for various reasons—we had to go to four cantinas. Finally, after all but circling the island, we found a cantina on the north side which had some vile whiskey called Niagara, and in this we pledged the success of the Piedras Negras trip, as well as that of the Tayasal excavations, and thence proceeded to the *Atlas*.

We pushed off at 9:00 and were in Candelaria about 9:30. Santiago and Ángel had already arrived and came down to the beach to meet us. Other boys were waiting to carry up our baggage, and it was not long before it had all been put in a bodega. The time had now come for taking farewell of Carl and Boburg. We saw them aboard the *Atlas*, which pushed out into the moonlit waters of the lake, and soon was lost to sight.

A long day was nearly over. The hammocks and my cot had in the meantime been put up in the corner of the *estacionero's* [station manager's] house, and we turned in at once. We are at last heading toward the outside, and barring our visit with Shufeldt at Laguna Perdida, one day's work at Itsimte and the three weeks I want to put in at Piedras Negras, the trip is over. If I can only accomplish at Piedras Negras what I have in mind, it will have been one of the most successful trips I have ever taken. A lot of ground has been covered, and a number of new important discoveries made.

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<sup>212</sup> Father José María Pinelo passed on May 7, 1922 (Versavel 1923: 176).

## CHAPTER 36.

### JOURNEY TO PIEDRAS NEGRAS: ITSIMTE

#### April 23, Saturday

Up early and saw an exquisite sunrise. There was a big stir, and such efficiency in handling mules I have never seen before. A tremendous contrast to the Cayo fashion. Our baggage was soon arranged in cargoes by the *capataz* [foreman, overseer], a good-looking Mexican from Tuxpam named Fabian, and long before we were ready the greater part of it had started on the 8-league journey to El Sos. At the last minute it was found that they hadn't sufficient animals for two cargoes, which were left behind to come on tomorrow. My own seven animals were used as follows: myself, Rutherford, Ricketson, Muddy, and Chico rode, and Santiago and Angel drove the pack animals with our bedding and chairs and table and such immediate things as we would need in the road.

We got underway at eight. The road headed off to the west and for a long time on the right we saw low bush leading down to the lake, though not the lake itself. About an hour out we passed into a savanna with a number of mounds, like those around Tayasal in every way. I could not help but feel that these were of the Tayasal period [Postclassic], and not Old Empire. Indeed, I think it possible to make the rather sweeping generalization that the Old Empire people never built their permanent abodes on the savannas, and vice-versa, the late New Empire people (Tayasal period) built only in such places.<sup>213</sup>

This savanna (doubtless an arm of the great La Libertad savanna) was short-lived, and we soon passed back into *monte-grueso* or *monte alto*. Ricketson called my attention to what seemed to be a variety of the *escoba* palm. It had the same leaves and general appearance, but the spines instead of being pointed were blade-shaped and grew not perpendicular to the trunk of the tree. Fabian told me that the name of this palm is the "*chichón*."

We passed through long stretches of low bush, which were neither savanna nor bajo, and looked more like old milpa than anything else. I found out later that for many years the San Benitanos and the Floresanos have made their milpas up the Candelaria Valley, and that these stretches of low, close, viny bush were in fact old milpa lands ["second growth"]. Now everybody is "*chiclero*" and earns enough money to be worthless, and buys his corn from the United States at exorbitant price. To be *soy chiclero* ["I am a chiclero"] is to be *soy hombre* ["I am a man"], but to be *soy milpero* ["I am a farmer"] is to be *soy nadie* ["I am nobody"], and so the ancient honorable agriculturist is passing. Let anything happen to chicle, however, and they will all become *milperos*

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<sup>213</sup> A survey of the savannas south of the lakes revealed numerous structures resembling those of the Postclassic: very low, with stone foundation lines and gravel surfaces (Rice and Rice 1979).



again or starve.<sup>214</sup>

We passed a small sugar *finca*, where there was some very black-looking *panela* [dark brown sugar or sugar syrup], the blackness being supposed to add potency to the rum, which was made from this *panela*. Later we climbed a hill and came out on to its cleared summit, the *medio camino* to El Sos. This place was called Sunahuitz and is pleasantly located overlooking a series of ridges to the south. The only water was two holes back in the road to Candelaria and later the *paraje* must be dry. There is a fine *galerón*, under which we rested for a few minutes. Just after leaving here, a road came in from the left [south] from La Libertad, which a boy and a man who came along from there said was about 3½ leagues distant.

After leaving this *paraje*, we saw very little old milpa land. We passed instead into a *corozal* [stand of corozo palms], which was a league long and still heavy going, being actually muddy in places. This stretch of the road, in fact from the *galerón* clear through to El Sos, was bad. We had made good time up to the *galerón*, but from there on it was almost all walking.

We came about 2:30—6½ hours out—to a low place on the right, which the guide said was the laguna of El Sos, and soon on the left a great huge clearing. We passed into the bush again and came out next to some well-built bush house with sides of sticks and roofs of the *guano* palm, and as we got into the little settlement the houses grew better and better, until at the corner of the bodega we saw to our utter and blank amazement a delightful house with clean white plastered walls,<sup>215</sup> thatched passages leading to kitchen and outhouses, lime-plastered floors—a veritable oasis in the desert, as altogether delightful as it was utterly unexpected. It made me proud that I was a fellow countryman of the man who had done this thing, for with all our manifold faults (and their number is legion), we Americans have that great dynamic push, that divine energy which is really the force that drives the world forward, accomplishes things, and is, in short, the march of civilization.

Shufeldt had so arranged it when he passed through last Tuesday en route to Laguna Perdida that we had a splendid reception, the *estacionario* [station chief], a Spaniard named Fidel Caso, made us at home and we were soon seated at a delicious lunch of beans, rice, tortillas, corned beef, and coffee. Food rarely has tasted better.

Someone discovered a bathroom with tins of water waiting, and Ricketson and I lost no time in getting to work, Rutherford was not long behind. The bath, the clean white surroundings, plastered walls, cement floors, tables, chairs, tablecloth, glasses, etc., etc., worked such a miracle that when later we discovered the only drawback to this terrestrial paradise, it did not trouble us—the mosquito.

Don Fidel located a man who knew where the ruins of Itsimte [El Sos] were, about 1½ to 2 leagues off and arrangements were made that he take us to the ruins tomorrow morning. We had

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<sup>214</sup> With the discovery of a synthetic substitute for chicle in chewing gum, the chicle boom ended and the men indeed became *milperos* again. But this too passed and after the 1970s, with easier road and air travel and better schooling, male children abandoned farming and secured jobs in tourism or in office work. The manly art of wielding a machete has also declined.

<sup>215</sup> The walls of these houses “of sticks” and thatch typically incorporated clay packed between the poles, a type of construction called *bajareque*. Those associated with higher economic status or in towns were usually whitewashed.

a long and bootless discussion during and after dinner about which way the National Museum, the Capitol, and the White House face. It was a classic, and ranks with what I will now call the Trinity of Damn Foolishness, one of the Heredity-Environment arguments at the *jato* Arturo, and the other the aeroplane landing (on tree tops) argument at the *jato* Perdido. This will be my last as it exhausts my patience too much. At times the argument became so strenuous that pencils and paper and signed statements were made use of. A camel could gallop through the needle's eye and a rich man pass in the front door of Heaven far easier than I can convince Rutherford of a bald fact when it is even staring him in the face. But enough.

I wrote in my diary all afternoon and got out Maler's report on Itsimte. The Austrian describes 6 stelae (sculptured) and 1 large round altar. I have been here once before in 1915 and then got the dates 9.15.0.0.0 and 9.15.10.0.0 with two doubtful readings.<sup>216</sup> The other time I came in from La Libertad, [it was] a hot ride of five leagues from the south. They tell me now that this road is closed. Our baggage will wait here tomorrow and go on again with us the day after.

### April 24, Sunday

I wrote a note to Shufeldt last night telling him of our plans and that we would come over on tomorrow if we finished at the ruins today, which appeared highly probable and indeed happened.

We set off at 7:30 for the ruins going in a southerly direction. After getting clear of Shufeldt's large clearing and corral, it was *monte grueso* almost all the way. After an hour and a half, we came out on another clearing, also very large. This is to be the milpa for this year. The ruins, the guide said, lay beyond. In addition to this guide, I had two other men from El Sos besides Chico, Ángel, and Santiago, the two last drove a cargo animal with the jack, pick, and lunch on it. We crossed this milpa and then turned into the bush again, skirting it. Mr. Harvey, Shufeldt's brother-in-law, had made a *picada* to the ruins when he took Fernando Cruz to see them about a month ago.

We finally reached the acropolis just two hours and 20 minutes after leaving El Sos. El Sos, I should add, here is probably a Hispanicised form of *zotz'*, since it means "bat,"<sup>217</sup> just as the Spanish in Yucatan softened *xonot* [*dzonot*] into "cenote." We came out at Stela 4 and found Stelae

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<sup>216</sup> This trip to Itsimte in May, 1915, was not part of Morley's published diaries for that year (Rice and Ward 2021). The site, once locally known as El Sos and now Itsimte, lies west-southwest of Lake Petén Itzá and was occupied from Late Preclassic times (Beliaev and Vepretskii 2018). Its monumental zone features six main groups, with 20 stelae and 12 altars (most of which have been moved to more secure locations after heavy looting; see Robertson 1972), and a residential area lies to the east. Study of three Late Classic monuments with Initial Series dates showed that Stela 5, dedicated at the *k'atun*-ending of 731, was followed by Stela 2, with a *lajuntun*-ending date of 741. Stela 7 (Beliaev and Vepretskii 2018: Figure 1), dedicated in 771, shows a ruler (Jun Tzak Tok') holding a lance, the staff of which has three shafts and five knots (see discussion of Tikal "triplicate staff," Chapter 27, pp. 294–297), and the text refers to fire rites. It also suggests that Itsimte's dynastic history begins around AD 200–220. The site may have been allied with Motul de San José, on the north shore of Lake Petén Itzá.

<sup>217</sup> El Sos is not to be confused with the archaeological site of El Zotz', west of Tikal.

3, 2, and 1 in that order [Figure 36.1]. The first point I wanted to determine is whether Stela 1 and Stela 4 had glyphs on them. Maler said not, and it took me no time at all to verify the truth of what he has said. Stela 1 [Figure 36.2] and 4 are sculptured with a human figure on the front side, the back and sides are plain. The stone is dressed and smoothed, but has no carving.

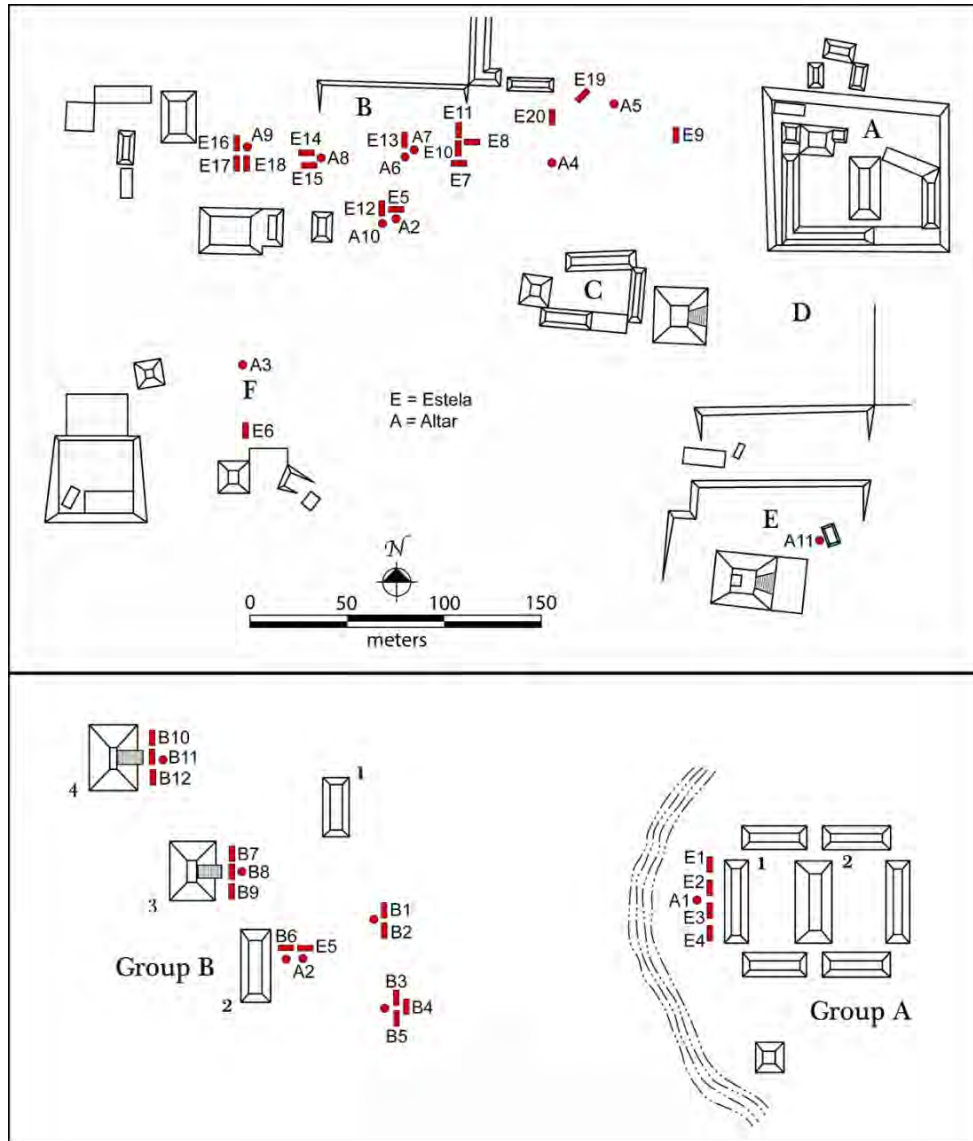


Figure 36.1. Two plans of Itsimte (El Sos) site core (bottom is Morley's).

I did nothing with Stela 2 beyond verifying its date as 9.15.10.0.0. The relief is low and is badly preserved, however, all the coefficients and the day and month sign are clear. Stela 3 is broken in half, the bottom part is in situ, but leans forward. The top is split down through the sides into two fragments, and the front has the upper part of the carving. We found this, but it is badly weathered. Ruddy, with Santiago and Ángel, spent the greater part of the morning straightening this. Poor Chico is laid out. He has a lame hand and for the first time since I've known him, was not a hard worker at the ruins. It was not his fault, though.

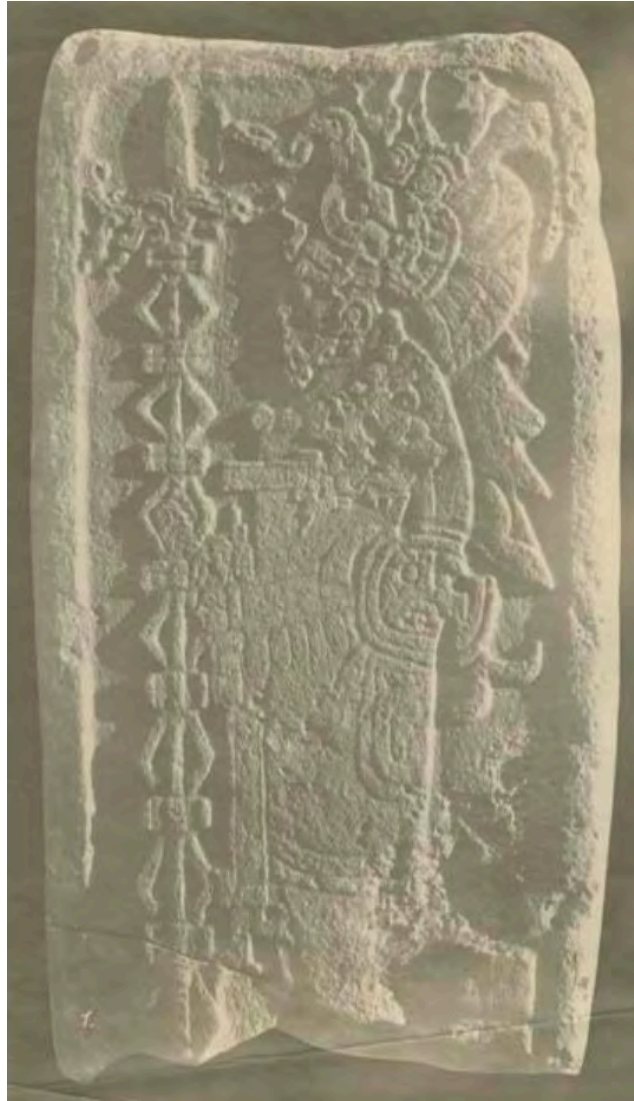


Figure 36.2. Itsimte Stela 1 as photographed by Maler. Note the multi-knotted lance shaft, also on Stela 7.

While these activities were going forward, I asked Rick to assemble the several fragments of Stela 5. After some examination of it I came to the conclusion that it could not have been a stela. It appeared to be a long, flattish boulder, with glyphs on the side and sculpture on the top. Rick finally began to find other pieces, and with Rutherford's help and mine, and even the tall Honduran Negro, it began to be assembled until I saw what this large monument had formerly been. It was a large roughly oval altar 6½ feet long, perhaps 4 feet wide, and 1½ feet in thickness. It had four rows of glyphs which apparently completely encircled the periphery originally, and a composition on the top composed of a large central cartouche. This has in it a panel of glyphs and some figures. To the right and left are flanking cartouches [Figure 36.3] which have the heads of deities in them. The left-hand one is badly effaced; the right one is the head of God B.



Figure 36.3. Itsimte Altar 1 (formerly known as Stela 5) pieced together by Morley and colleagues.

While Rick was superintending this work, I sent the Honduran Negro and another man off to look [for] Maler's Stela 6. They hallooed back presently that it had been found, and I crawled through a tunnel of thick tangled second-growth bush, second-growth over old milpa, and found the large, flat, round altar with sculpture on it. I thought it had a date of 9.14.10.0.0 here six years ago, but I failed to detect it this time. I sent the boys farther afield and after a long hunt they located it, and I went over to see it. Unhappily, it is not so clear as the date on Stela 2, but I think it is 9.15.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Yax nevertheless. It was now getting furiously hot in this close tangle, and it was also after one, so after getting the stela prepared for photo-graphing—happily, there was nothing to do to it save fell the bush about it—we returned to the acropolis for lunch.

When I was here at Itsimte six years ago (in May 1915), it had just been cleared bare for milpa. During the intervening time it has grown up into a thicket, through which it is exceedingly difficult to hack and hew. Everyone was thirsty and no one was hungry at lunch. Fortunately, we had some tea and a tin of peaches, which were the only things that I enjoyed. There was not much to do after lunch. I had to draw the Calendar Round date on the front of Stela 3, which I make out to be 2 Ajaw 13 Sek, or 9.16.0.0.0 2 Ajaw 13 Sek.

Rutherford raised the side of Stela 2 so that the Initial Series might be photographed, and by that time we were ready to go. It took us 1½ hours to come back to El Sos, 40 minutes less than going out. We were drenched with perspiration and made for the shower bath as quickly as we got in. It was the greatest relief, this cooling off of our hot, sticky skins, and we emerged feeling like different people. After dinner I attempted to write, but the mosquitoes were so bad that I had to give it up.



## CHAPTER 37.

### JOURNEY TO PIEDRAS NEGRAS: LAGUNA PERDIDA

#### April 25, Monday

We got off at 7:40 for Laguna Perdida. The road bore north and some west, though I learned when I reached Laguna Perdida that Flores is actually almost due east of here, being a shade to the south, and El Sos is southeast of here.

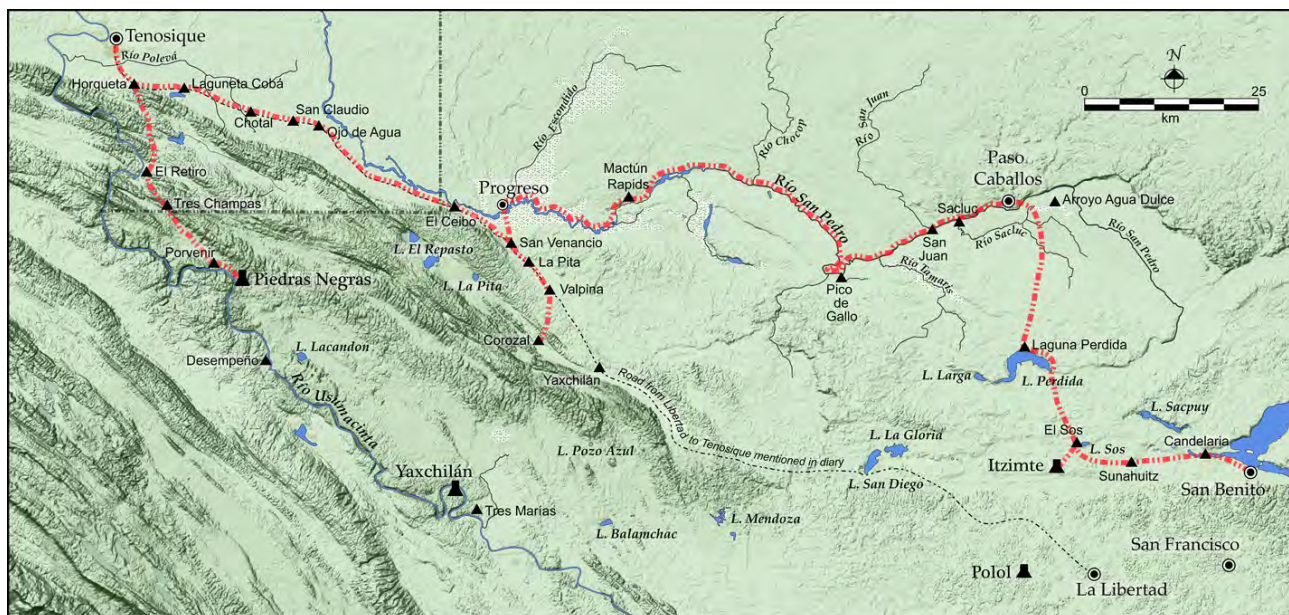


Figure 37.1. Morley's route from Flores to El Sos, Laguna Perdida, and Piedras Negras, 1921.

The road is 6 leagues long, and a splendidly cleared *camino real* it is too—9 meters wide and all the logs and bush cleared from the right of way. It drives through the bush almost straight, and it took us something less than 4 hours, about  $3\frac{3}{4}$ , to do its 6 leagues. About two-thirds of the way there, we came to the southeastern end of the lake, Laguna Perdida, and about 2 leagues farther on to the settlement which Shufeldt has built. Just before getting in, Ricketson captured an ant-bear, or ant-eater [*Tamandua mexicana*], a little fellow with a long tapering snout and big front claws. He carried it in to Laguna Perdida in his coat.

The *capataz* who rode with us once again, Fabian, told me of some important ruins near Tuxpana in the state of Campeche. The whole region has long been one that I have wanted to get into, and his accounts, plus what Shufeldt has told me, have almost decided me to go in by way of Campeche next year.

Just before reaching Laguna Perdida, we came to a perfectly immense clearing on the right, which is to be this year's milpa. It must contain several hundred acres. We came around a corner of the bush on our left, and there lay the settlement, a goodly looking place, more improved, larger, and more habitable than even El Sos (which the day before yesterday we had thought the height of achievement in these countries). But this was even better. The houses were larger and better constructed, and there were more of them. We rode to the bodega where I left my horse and walked over to the office. Shufeldt was surprised to see us so early, and after finishing his work took me over to his house [Figure 37.2].<sup>218</sup> This house was even more pretentious than the one we had lived in at El Sos. It was painted white with a green band. It had a delightful porch paved with lime concrete, is screened (mirabile dictu) and sealed from above with corn stalks, muddy on the top side to keep out the bugs, which make a very attractive ceiling.



Figure 37.2. Shufeldt's well-made house that so impressed Morley.

I saw Mrs. Shufeldt again, and in spite of the fact that she has had a lot of fever, she has grown even more attractive down here. She is not yet 21 and is a very beautiful woman. I haven't got the family straightened out yet, but doubtless will before I leave; there are a number of children, one very young—less than five; one set are Shufeldt's own children by his first wife, an aunt of his second wife, and another of his brother's and sister's-in-law. Mr. Harvey, his brother-in-law, we met in the trail coming over here. He was on his way to El Sos and came back to Laguna Perdida later in the day.

We had a highball of Sandy MacDonald and then a delicious lunch, including lettuce salad. After lunch we talked all afternoon until about five, when Rick and I took a very much needed bath. It was quite hot again, and the water was very cool and refreshing. We were to sleep in a large tobacco bodega [Figure 37.3], where also the manufacture of the cigars used on the place

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<sup>218</sup> Shufeldt describes his first encounter with Morley: "Morley was in the lead, badly needing a shave. He jumped off his mule, and although we had never met before, he embraced me and called me *compadre*. I do not recollect the number in the party; there were four or five, including a photographer and his equipment, and Mr. O.G. Ricketson, who had a full black beard and whom my young daughter immediately christened San José" (Shufeldt 1950: 224–225).



goes on. This has split poles floor and sticks sides, and is filled with long strings of the tobacco, which is curing. Our cot and hammocks were put up here, and we went to bed about ten o'clock.



Figure 37.3. The tobacco shed where Morley's expedition resided while in Laguna Perdida.

I plan to stop here for two or three days or until Echeverria gets back—he is the man who took Gates to Sayaxche, and he is the one whom Shufeldt has detached to guide us to Piedras Negras. He is known as El Microbe in Flores and is a terrific old drunk. If he gets in by Wednesday or Thursday, so we can get off Thursday or Friday, I will be satisfied.

#### **April 26, Tuesday**

Disquieting news came this morning, brought in by one of Shufeldt's contractors, a Campechano who had just come up the river from Balancan.<sup>219</sup> This is to the effect that General Greene<sup>220</sup> is on the warpath in Tabasco and Santa Margarita (near Tenosique) is in his hands. He also says that the company mules which Shufeldt had ordered held for us at Progreso have been ordered moved back from the [Mexican] frontier by Cooper, the agent at Paso Caballos. If this news is true, it may mean an ugly business and cause me to have to postpone my Piedras Negras trip, though I am of course not going to do that until absolutely necessary. All I can do, we have both decided, is to

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<sup>219</sup> Balancan is a small city in Tabasco, Mexico, on the Usumacinta River, ca. 25 miles downstream from (north-northwest of) Tenosique.

<sup>220</sup> General Carlos Greene (1879–1924), a leading figure in Tabasco during the Mexican Revolution, served as Governor of Tabasco in 1914–1915 and again between 1919 and 1922. He sided with Álvaro Obregón against President Victoriano Carranza, which led to political instability in the area in the early 1920s. He was assassinated on December 1, 1924, after having joined still another rebellion against federal authorities. A modern town is named after him.

postpone a final decision until I reach Progreso, and then find out what is afoot down there. If I have to give up the P.N. trip it will disappoint me bitterly.

I spent the morning map-making. Mrs. Shufeldt kindly allowed me to clear the dining room table, and I pasted together my map of Peten and gradually got the country west and north of Flores laid out. It was almost dinner time when this was done. Afterward we sat and talked all the rest of the afternoon. It was very warm and the air had that peculiar stifling quality it gets down here toward the close of the dry season. Ricketson and I took a bath about five and it both cooled and refreshed us.

After supper we sat on the porch and talked, and later Anastasia Harvey and I danced to the phonograph. We are beginning to separate the different people here into their proper relationships. Shufeldt's first wife, who died here about two years ago, was an aunt of his present and second wife, to whom he has been married about 16 months. By his first wife he had four children—Enrique, Luisa, Matilde, and Guillermina, 15, 13, 9, and 4 years old [Figure 37.4].



Figure 37.4. The Shufeldt children, Guillermina and Luisa, with Ricketson's anteater.

His second wife was a Gwendolin Harvey, whose half-brother Clarence Harvey is a man of about 40, whom we met on the road the other day. Gwendolin is 20, Anastasia is 19, Alfredo 17, and Arturo 12. The children are all delightful, and the girls from little Guillermina up to Mrs. Shufeldt are down-right handsome, particularly Anastasia.

Poor little Guillermina has been ill with the malaria since we have been here and hasn't been to a meal yet. Mrs. Shufeldt herself has been feeling seedy, and Shufeldt has been dosing her regularly with quinine.

### **April 27, Wednesday**

Early this morning I closed my accounts with Santiago and Ángel and let them return to Cayo. I got Shufeldt to give me orders on his agents, one in favor of Ángel on the Flores agent. I gave them food to get back to Cayo, and entrusted to them three animals—my little *yegua*, the little black Mexican macho, and the white gelding. These I am trading definitely with Aragón for his 2 mules, which in turn I will leave with Shufeldt to dispose of for me when I go on. I also wrote a letter to Carl telling him I might have to give up the Piedras Negras trip, provided there was a revolution on in Mexico, when we got out there to the Usumacinta. I also wrote Boburg to get ahold of Father Pinelo and find out from him all that he knew concerning the size and population of the three Indian villages which formerly existed on the Tayasal Peninsula: San Bernabé, San Miguel, and Jesus María. I daresay the old *padre* is the only man living who has any first-hand knowledge of them.

There is a Corozaleno boy here, who is going back with them, and after he had got his check and I had given Ángel and Santiago theirs, they all got off. After lunch we sat and talked all afternoon. Mrs. Shufeldt was with us, but she is feeling very seedy. Shufeldt is very much worried about her because as yet she has had no direct outbreak of fever—only aches and is sleepy.

The heat is so great we all grew sleepy and Ricketson and I came back to the tobacco bodega to take a nap. I was awakened by the sound of voices: Muddy talking to someone. I heard my name mentioned several times, Triunfo, and finally Doctor Lafleur. It came to me suddenly that the voice was not unfamiliar. I got up and the man to whom Muddy had been talking introduced himself to me as Ambrosio Toca. He had been the *cuidador* of chicle at the *jato* of Triunfo when we passed through it to Uaxactun early in May 1916, and later (on the 14th), three days before Lafleur was killed. He recalled the whole incident to my mind and asked me if I did not remember him. Of course I did, and the *enfermo* [sick person] Lafleur had treated going in, who had just been buried the morning we got there on our way out, and the bird feather furniture which this Ambrosio Toca had made for Lafleur, which had disappeared in the tragedy.<sup>221</sup> All these things I remembered vividly, and it seemed strange meeting this man five years later, over on the other side of Petén.

After bathing with Ricketson, Arturo Harvey and I took quite a paddle on the lake. It was cool and the sky overcast and more breeze found its way to us than on the shore. After dinner Anastasia sang to us both in English and in Spanish, very simply, very sweetly, and very delightfully. Sometimes she plays on a guitar with Gwendolin, but more often the latter only

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<sup>221</sup> For the details of this tragedy, see Rice and Ward 1921: 300–324.

played for her. Her voice is not strong, but sweet, and her English is very charming. She sang some old, old favorites, "Old Black Joe," etc., and some of Harry Lauder's songs.<sup>222</sup> After her singing, Shufeldt and I went out on the porch and talked while the others played cards. And before turning in, we played the graphophone a little, and Anastasia and I had two dances.

Today another and more definite piece of news came up the river, namely that the revolution is all talk. Two soldiers had stolen something from somebody and had escaped, and upon this incident the whole story of a revolution had been based. This was encouraging news indeed, and makes it look probable that we will get to Piedras Negras after all.

The large milpa clearing was burned off this afternoon, and when I got back to our bodega and looked that way it seemed like the lights of a great city. Each [tree] trunk that was still red-hot looked like a lamp-post, and in the aggregate the effect was that of a great city at night. We are waiting now only for Echeverria, and if he will only show up, we will get underway "*en seguida*" [right away].

### **April 28, Thursday**

Mrs. Shufeldt is down again, today with a low fever, and Shufeldt has definitely decided that she has malaria and is going to treat her that way regardless of the other somewhat delicate complication.<sup>223</sup> He did not go over to the office at all today as he wanted to stay right here in the house by her so that he might watch closely the effect of the quinine he has started to give her. Poor Harvey also came down with chills and fever. He ate no breakfast, and by the late afternoon had broken out with a fever. George Chavez gave him an injection of 15 grains of quinine, which we hope will prove enough.

I went over to see him just before dinner, and we compared notes about the state of Chiapas. A don Gonzalo, who is an assistant of some sort here, said in the course of conversation that a friend of his had waited 20 days for a boat downstream from Tenosique to Frontera.<sup>224</sup> This possibility gave me something to think about, and I finally asked if there were no motorboats on the Usumacinta River. Harvey said Atalano Cámara had one, and fortunately he was still in camp. They sent for him and he came. His motorboat is kept at Montecristo and his agent there is Celestino Martínez. He will make the trip up from Montecristo to Tenosique and then take us back to Frontera for \$75.00 gold. I closed arrangements with him then and there to see his agent on the way down and tell him that some time about May 25 a telegram would be sent him, and to send the boat up to Tenosique, when we would all come down. This does away with our chance

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<sup>222</sup> Sir Henry Lauder (1870-1950) was a popular vaudeville singer of Scottish descent. His biggest hit was "I Love a Lassie."

<sup>223</sup> Morley never specifies this "other...complication," but we suspect Mrs. Shufeldt was pregnant.

<sup>224</sup> Morley's plan was to end the expedition by traveling down the Usumacinta River through Tabasco, Mexico, to Frontera. From there he hoped to get a boat back to New Orleans. Tenosique lies on the lower Usumacinta, at the point where the river slows into a series of wide meanders, oxbow lakes, and swamps. With a history going back to the Middle Preclassic period, its name may mean "house of weavers or thread counters" in Mayan. It is now known as Tenosique de Pino Suárez, after revolutionary hero José María Pino Suárez." Frontera is an important port and fishing center on the Grijalva River near where it flows into the Gulf of Mexico.

of a long wait, and if we can only get something out of Frontera for New Orleans without too long a wait, we may make it yet before the middle of June.

I do not know why we should all feel this intense lassitude. Rick has it, I have it, apparently Ruddy has it. We do not feel ill, only all tired out. The baths Rick and I take daily seem to pep us up, but before them we are as logy as a mahogany *trogo* [wooden trough or drain]. Mrs. Shufeldt's indisposition rather cast a gloom over everyone and we neither danced nor played cards. I wrote in my diary for a while, and the other two fellows talked with Shufeldt on the porch. The mosquitoes were bad, however, and mindful of the peculiarly fatal form of the malaria<sup>225</sup> that seems to be rampant here—68 people have died in less than three years—we all went to bed early. It was not yet nine, in fact, when I went to the tobacco bodega and turned in.

### **April 29, Friday**

Still no Echeverria. We worked on our map and sat around all morning talking. Shufeldt has great plans for the Arthes concession if he is not interrupted. I will not go into all the details here. He hopes to get the Wer concession attached to the Arthes concession and operate both as a single unit.<sup>226</sup> He would put his headquarters on the San Pedro Mártir River past Paso Caballos. He would bring in his supplies through Frontera, Mexico, and ship out his chicle and lumber the same way. He would cut wide roads through the bush, 9 meters in width, from one end of the concession to the other. He estimates that he would go from Paso Caballos to the British Honduras frontier in 4 or 5 *jornadas*. A sub-base would be established at some point near the line, possibly Laguna de Yaloch, and from here operations in the northeastern part of the department would be controlled. El Cayo would be sidetracked, and the single line of transportation to the outside would be the San Pedro River.

The big argument in favor of his plan from the Guatemalan point of view is that when chicle and the hardwoods are exhausted, as they will be within 20 years, something will be left behind—roads, large cleared areas, and small agricultural communities. And the latter, agriculture, is the only future for Petén, unless petroleum should be found, which will, of course, eclipse everything else. Agriculture, plus stock raising, can probably be made to pay here as well. The underlying limestone continually enriches the soil, and corn and grass will support a large herd of cattle. His plans, for what really constitutes about 3/5ths of the department, are splendid and I hope he will be able to carry them through.

Mr. Shufeldt was seedy today. He is worried about his little Tehuna wife, and with good

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<sup>225</sup> Pernicious malaria, also known as *falciparum malaria*, is one of the most virulent forms of the disease. It causes massive breakdown of red blood cells, which causes capillaries to clog with sticky hemoglobin. When the hemoglobin appears in urine, the illness is called blackwater fever. (<https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/pernicious+malaria>)

<sup>226</sup> A Mexican firm, Arthes and Sons (headed by Federico Arthes), worked chicle trees under the umbrella of an old logging concession. Shufeldt regularly purchased chicle from Arthes but then, in 1920, Bromberg acquired the concession directly. The concession held by José Wer also dealt with Shufeldt and the American Chicle Co., but the Wer concession eventually came under Shufeldt's control only in the mid-1920s when he acquired it for his new employer, the Wrigley Company (Schwartz 1990: 323).

reason, having lost his first wife here not two years since. She is probably in an interesting condition which causes him to hesitate somewhat in giving here large doses of quinine. I am seedy myself and do not like all the malaria, a good bit of it is pernicious, to which we are constantly being exposed.

Delightful as this visit is, I feel we should be getting on for Piedras Negras, as the season is going forward and I will be glad when Echeverria shows up. In the evening, there was no dancing or phonograph as usual, as Mrs. Shufeldt felt too badly and went to bed early. We talked on the porch until about 10:00.

### **April 30, Saturday**

And still no Echeverria. Of course, he is drunk in Flores, though Muddy picked up a rumor somewhere amongst the *arrieros* to the effect that José Prado Romaña has sent him on to Cayo!

Harvey is down this morning with fever. He came to the breakfast table but did not stay. In the late afternoon I went over to see him. Chavez was just giving him a hypodermic of quinine, 15 grains. I also saw Harkey, the only other American assistant here except Harvey and Shufeldt. I have known him now for several years, four in fact. Met him first at Mrs. Craik's in Belize in June 1917 when John Held and I first came down to those countries during the war. We met him again two months later at San Pedro Sula during the Cowie-Honduras fiasco. We met again in Belize six years later, but since then I have not seen him. When Shufeldt spoke of his American assistant Harkey, I did not associate the name with the man, but the moment I saw him I recognized him. It is these strange encounters in out of the way places that constantly make interesting moments in traveling through these countries. Anyone who has been coming to Central America as long as I have gets to know everybody, more or less, and sooner or later runs into them, even in out of the way corners such as these.

Mrs. Shufeldt is somewhat better and the children played the graphophone. I felt seedy though, and Anastasia and I only danced for a few minutes.

This is the last day of April; the last day of March we set out for Naranjo and slept at Laguna Colorado. I am only surmising where we will be the last day of May, but think that we should be going down the Usumacinta River, or possibly even at Frontera. And June 30th? *¿Quién sabe—* Chester, Washington? *¿Quién sabe?*

Shufeldt says he has not taken so many days off since he has been connected with the company. Think the rest is doing him good.

### **May 1, Sunday**

And still no Echeverria. However, Shufeldt has decided to wait for him no longer and got another man who knows the road from Progreso to Desempeño, having crossed it within the last year. To skip to the end of the day, Echeverria got in very late, long after dark. It seems the *jefe político* at Flores had sent him on to the road work, which he found had got as far as Ixtinta. This, of course, delayed him greatly in reaching Laguna Perdida. I am glad he has turned up because he knows more about the road from Progreso than anyone else.

Rick felt miserably all morning, and shortly after lunch took his own temperature, which was 101.8 degrees. This is probably malaria, and before going to bed he took 25 grains of quinine.

Mrs. Shufeldt had planned a very delightful picnic for the end of the day. About 5:30 we all



went out on the lake for supper, which was a regular *cena de pais* [country dinner] consisting of delicious chicken tamales and *atole*, made of ground corn, cinnamon, and panela mixed with water and drunk as a beverage. There were 11 of us aboard. Clarence Harvey seated imposingly in one of our camp chairs paddled in the bow. Aft him came Ricketson and Shufeldt, sandwiched into a somewhat abbreviated space. I sat on a cross board next to them, and Anastasia in another camp chair sat with her back to me. The center of the boat was occupied by Tilde and Luisa, who served the ever-faithful phonograph,<sup>227</sup> which Shufeldt hates as much as Rick. Behind them sat little Guillermina, and then Ruddy, artistically if not effectively brandishing an oar. Arturo stood in the stern and guided the boat.

Shufeldt declared all the time we were out that in all the two years he had been at Laguna Perdida he had never taken such a foolish outing. He nevertheless seemed to enjoy it along with the rest of us. The graphophone which the two girls served continuously and faithfully enlivened the party and everybody had a good time. We paddled toward the other end of the lake and had supper drifting back. There were no mosquitoes, and the water of the lake was without a ripple on its placid surface.

Many trails of bubbles crossed and recrossed our course, the surface indications of alligators swimming below.<sup>228</sup> Not two years ago one great brute, 3½ meters long, nearly carried off Luisa, then a child of 11. They were all swimming in the shallow water off the point in front of Shufeldt's office where they were all living at that time. Shufeldt was in the house and heard the shrieks of the women—Mrs. Shufeldt and all the others were also in. He grabbed a gun and rushed down to the *playa*, and sensing what had happened, dived in and grabbed the girl. The alligator dived and dragged them both down. Shufeldt hung on and finally wrenched Luisa away and swam to shore. The child was fearfully lacerated, the arm, the shoulder, and the breast being dreadfully torn. It cured them all of bathing in the lake. Shufeldt killed the alligator after getting Luisa ashore. It measured 3½ meters. The lake is full of the creatures and we saw them, or rather these lines of bubbles, crossing back and front across our bows.

We got back to the house about dusk and sat on the porch talking for a while. Rick went to bed at once. We talked of many things, his [Shufeldt's] plans, the future of the concession, and what a wonderful project could be put through here. Later, Anastasia and I danced for about half an hour. She is a beautiful natural dancer, having had no lessons. She enjoys it and in this short week we have had many delightful dances.

After everyone had gone to bed, Shufeldt and I sat on the porch and he told me much of his early life, of his grandfather, Admiral Shufeldt,<sup>229</sup> and of his own first wife whom he described as

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<sup>227</sup> "Servicing" the record player was not a simple task of changing records every two to three minutes—the needle also had to be changed every one or two records. Needles were sold in packs of 100 and came in several forms to impact the volume and texture of the sound.

<sup>228</sup> These are probably crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, endemic to Petén), rather than alligators.

<sup>229</sup> Rear Admiral Robert Wilson Shufeldt (1850–1934) contributed to the expansion of relations with Japan, Korea, and China as one of the key naval officers in the Asian theater. He was later named Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Observatory before serving as U.S. Consul General to Cuba. His son, our Shufeldt's father (also with the name Robert Wilson Shufeldt), was a scientist and specialist on bird anatomy. Well published, he was also a noted white supremacist.



the noblest woman almost that he ever met. He reviewed the circumstances surrounding his second marriage, and the conditions which led him to that step. I had never misjudged his motives even without knowing the circumstances which gave rise to his actions, but when I had heard him, I felt stronger than ever that he had been right and had done right. He is a fine example of American manhood, and I was proud to call him a compatriot. This is to be our last night at Laguna Perdida and it is with genuine regret that we are leaving. It has been an altogether pleasant oasis of lotus-eating in the past four months of hard work. I bade him goodnight about ten, and went over to the tobacco bodega, where I found them all abed but not asleep. Rick thinks his fever is coming down.

## CHAPTER 38.

### JOURNEY TO PIEDRAS NEGRAS: ON THE RIVER TO PROGRESO

#### May 2, Monday

Before I was up, though awake, Muddy came to my cot-side with a letter from Carl which Echeverria brought over last night. He was somewhat distressed about the Piedras Negras rumors, but like a good sport does not want me to go if there is any danger. He says the two engineers, McCrorie and Chapman, have come and gone, the former a great booze-hoister, as he learned to his sorrow. General José Prado Romaña, he said, visited the workings at Tayasal and was much impressed with the undertaking. The dig, he reports, is getting beyond him because of its complications. He says the east end of Mound 2 is not the regular recessed platform series that we thought it was. This, however, I think is just Carl. I wrote to him today pointing out that poor masonry, fallen walls, destruction by padres, etc., probably account for the observed confusion. The really remarkable thing he says is that the floor level of the top of this mound is only 10 inches below the present top of the mound.<sup>230</sup> There are no signs of a wall along the edge of this as far back as Carl had cleared when he wrote, but instead there is a central depression several inches deep.

Also there came yesterday a mail from the States. I only had three letters in it, and the boys had not one. I had a letter from Safford, Secretary Fall's<sup>231</sup> secretary, stating that the Secretary had read my two letters with interest, or would read them with interest as soon as he had time! Another was from Grosvenor's secretary stating that the manuscript of my southwestern article had been received and that Mr. Grosvenor would read it as soon as he returned to the city. My third and last letter in this altogether unsatisfactory mail was from Dr. A.A. Hearne, who of all persons is back in El Cayo. I thought we bid goodbye on February 7 at Branch Mouth. He must not have found Jamaica too pleasant. He writes that he is to be transferred to Orange Walk and that Doctor Lewis is coming back again to the Cayo. I am to send the balance due on Old Napoleon Bonaparte, who must have arrived in Guatemala City by this time, to him in Belize, care of the Royal Bank of Canada. I will write to Gilbert going down the San Pedro River requesting that this be done.

A corps of efficient *arrieros*!!! save the mark, descended upon us about six and began clamoring for our baggage. That was too good to be true, and we all rose hastily and fell to dressing that we might assist in the good work. My No. 1 kyack was the last to be ready. It carries all the books and scientific equipment. I got this packed before breakfast, however, and before we had finished that meal the *mulada*, together with Muddy and Chico, were underway. They are

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<sup>230</sup> The lack of debris indicates that there was no masonry structure or temple on top of the mound.

<sup>231</sup> See Chapter 22, p. 235, note 111.

riding our own animals, and Ruddy will ride the fair Betsy for the last time. Old, crooked-legged Betsy has, with the exception of my little red *yegua*, finished in better shape than any animal we have had.

The morning passed in conversations on the porch, letter writing, and picture taking [Figure 38.1]. Shufeldt has prepared a great number of letters for me to various agents of the company at different points and everything is ready for the excursion to Piedras Negras. We are going to pick up his young brother-in-law, Alfredo Harvey, at Progreso, who is to go along with us in the capacity of Ricketson's assistant on the map work and time keeper.



Figure 38.1. Ricketson's photo of Laguna Perdida.

After lunch there was little left to be done but the highly unpleasant business of saying goodbye to these congenial folk. The time had come at last to say goodbye. The horses were saddled and the two boys who were to accompany us were ready. I saw the Shufeldts last six months ago in Washington. I wonder where I will see them next again, possibly in Guatemala next summer, since Shufeldt tells me he may take his whole family there.

I went over to the office and took leave of the boys there: Gonzalo, Harkey, and young Quiñones, whom I used to know in Guatemala City 3½ years ago. I finally bid goodbye to all the Shufeldts and Harveys and we got off. We had not got to the edge of the clearing, however, when we heard faint shouts behind and saw a boy running after us with something in his hands. It turned out to be some clothes I had washed which I left to dry on the fence this morning and forgot to pack. Ruddy obligingly packed them in his saddlebags.

We left Laguna Perdida at just 3, and reached the San Pedro River at 6:45, just as dusk was

falling. The general direction was west of northwest, and the intervening country all low. Indeed, three leagues of it was a bad *bajo* where, in spite of Shufeldt's 10-meter road, he already had to have *desechos* cut. Not far from the river we crossed a dry arroyo, the Agua Dulce, which Shufeldt says he has seen 300 feet wide at this point. Two Indian women, a boy of 12 or 14, and a little girl of 3 were resting here, having walked over from Laguna Perdida and hoped to make San Pedro by night. They were very thirsty and the water holes were dry, so I gave them my canteen full. One of the *arrieros* picked up the little girl and we went on.

It was dark when we reached the riverbank, and it took a great deal of shouting to raise a canoe from the other side, where the settlement is. I found out we had come to the upper *paso* [crossing] because the lower one is too muddy. After fifteen minutes' wait, during which the mosquitoes ate us alive and Rick mothered the little girl (who all but walked off into the bush looking for her mother), a canoe came around the bend and we all got in. The lower *paso* was not far downstream, and as we came around the point behind which it lay, the scene was one of considerable activity. A number of *canoas* and two or three motor[boat]s were moored alongside the bank. There were many lanterns and fires here and there and people all about.

Chico met us and said all our baggage was aboard a boat, and Muddy was guarding it. By the looks of the number of people around I thought it a wise precaution. I went ashore telling Chico to send Muddy up to the house above, and I gave Shufeldt's letter to his station agent, one Gonzalo Morelo, and he said everything was ready to leave when I wanted to get off.

Mr. Cooper was waiting for me in his quarters on the hilltop. He welcomed us and soon had supper on the way. We met here a Mr. McLain, the same chap I met a week ago at Laguna Perdida who is representing the Astoria Mahogany Co. He has been waiting for us ever since. After supper, Mr. Cooper and I got to talking maps, and he brought out a lot of his data. He came into this region from Campeche over the old road from Champoton through to Batcab and Chuntuqui.<sup>232</sup> This was a region I wanted first-hand information about.

He says that beginning in southern Campeche the land begins to rise steeply. This continues beyond the *aguadas*, or rather *lagunas*, near San Felipe, which is about three leagues north of the international boundary. These lagoons lie in the valley of the San Pedro Candelaria,<sup>233</sup> which empties into the Laguna or Bahia del Términos. Beyond the line the land continues to rise. The Río Paixban shown on the Hedges map [Figure 38.2] is a branch probably of the San Pedro Candelaria. The divide is reached at Batcab (Hedges map) and between Batcab and Chuntuqui at least two branches of the same river are crossed, which eventually empties into the San Pedro Mártir River.<sup>234</sup> These are the Río Xan first, and below this the Río Cujche, so known in the vicinity of Chuntuqui. These two streams form the Río Chocop, which empties into the San Pedro Mártir

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<sup>232</sup> This "old road" is the northern part of the *camino real* cut by the Spaniards in the 1690s to join Yucatan with the *audiencia* of Guatemala (the highlands) and thereby facilitate the conquest of the Itzas in central Petén (see Jones 1998). The road went from Campeche to near San Andrés, Petén.

<sup>233</sup> The river is known today as the Río Candelaria, without the San Pedro preface. It begins in the Mirador Basin in northern Petén, flows north into Campeche, Mexico, where it is joined by several tributaries, and empties into the Laguna de Términos, on the Gulf of Mexico.

<sup>234</sup> These two rivers in Campeche do not join with the Río San Pedro Mártir, which flows through Petén past Paso Caballos and into Tabasco, joining with the Río Usumacinta.

some three to four leagues above the rapids of Mactun. Once over the divide, the land begins to come down and the valley of the San Pedro Mártir is reached. Cooper estimates that Paso Caballos is about 600 feet above the sea,<sup>235</sup> and that the divide between it is at least 1200 feet. I think these estimates are all high. If Flores is 438 feet above the sea, as given on don Clodovego's oil painting (the latitude is there given as 89 degrees 59 mins west and the longitude 16 degrees and 56 mins north),<sup>236</sup> then the level of the San Pedro Mártir at Paso Caballos is less. Muddy, Ruddy, Rick, and I all feel this.



Figure 38.2. M. Hendges 1902 map of Guatemala prepared for the Bureau of the American Republics.

<sup>235</sup> Internet searches give the elevation of Paso Caballos at 45 to 63 meters (147–206 feet). The airport lies at 213 feet.

<sup>236</sup> The water level of Lake Petén Itzá is variously given as 360 feet and 110 m above sea level, with Flores rising ~56 feet/17m above that. See Chapter 6.

A terrible interruption. I have just tipped the boat so that the table with the cherished graphophone and all our records together with this diary and my fountain pen all fell into the [San Pedro Mártir] river, and all save the diary found a watery grave. It happened like this: I had sent Chico ahead with the teakettle to get some water heated on the second boat, which has the only fire in the four boats (I am writing up yesterday's events, those of Monday May 2nd on late Tuesday afternoon, May 3rd). He had gotten on to the third *canoas*, and could not get forward. There was a small dory in tow by this *canoas*, and I called forward to have it carry him forward, and the *boga* in it had the supreme impudence to say that the captain would not permit it. This literally infuriated me, and I started forward to row this insignificant wretch and stepped on one side of our boat (the *Aurora*), and this so tilted it that the table fell overboard with the phonograph, all records, this book, and my fountain pen. Rutherford jumped for the table, but failed to catch it. When we finally got the motorboat stopped and she put back to look for the wreckage, the only thing that was afloat was my notebook.

Well, to close the day (May 2nd, Monday), I was tired and, interesting as all these map speculations were, I was more than ready for bed. Ricketson and Rutherford had already gone over to the office where we were to sleep, and Mr. Cooper was kind enough to show me the way over. It is the only building in Paso Caballos which has a plastered floor, and we felt it correspondingly insect-proof. Muddy had my cot up near the door, and my *pabellón*, at least one end of it, tied to it. A foolish business since it fell down on me during the night.

### May 3, Tuesday

#### Santa Cruz Day

We arose about 6:30 and Rutherford discovered immediately a scorpion in his boot, which he killed, and another which escaped. Before I was out of bed, a *mozo* appeared with coffee, which I did not want particularly, nor liked much, but which I took to keep up with the general luxury of the custom. We had breakfast at seven, and then with one thing and another we lost about two hours. Cooper and I exchanged more map data and I wrote to Shufeldt and Dr. Hearne.

Down at the river everything was going forward smoothly. Muddy, who sometimes exhibits a streak of pessimism, insisted that the engineer who was to carry us down river was still missing and had been since yesterday afternoon—off hunting turtle. This, on immediate investigation, was contradicted, though I found out later that it was true. At the waterside, we were assigned the *Aurora* for our men, outfit, and ourselves. This is a long-built *canoas*, i.e., not a dugout, of mahogany [boards] of about 3½ tons burden. It has no covering, though a space toward the center was decked over. If I may call these two places between the central deck the forward and after holds, our men and their baggage with a few overflow kyacks occupied the forward hold, we sat on the deck under which was stowed our baggage, and in the after hold was more baggage and a space left for eating and sitting. As it grew warmer, the boys rigged up an awning over this after hold and after we got under way, I wrote down here.

But the *Aurora* was not the only *canoas* on the beach. There were two other boats: another mahogany-built one of from 8 to 10 tons burden, and a small one of sheet iron of about 3 tons, the former named the *María*, the latter the *Pluma*. The motor[boat] which towed these cargo *canoas* was named the *Tenosique* and had a 12-horsepower engine. To photograph this marine caravan on the march, Rutherford went ahead in a small canoe to a mahogany raft around the first bend.



But at last, everybody was ready to get off. The wandering engineer of the *Tenosique* was getting some premonitory coughs out of his engine, our passengers—chicle gangs, their women, children, dogs, cats, chickens, and baggage were aboard and stowed away on the 3 *canoas*. We bid goodbye to Mr. Cooper, who went ashore, and we swung out into the stream. The *Aurora* was last, the large *María* first, and the small sheet iron *Pluma* between the two. We left at 10:30.

I noticed one peculiarity of the terrain—the spurs of hills which came down to the bank on the northern side, and which actually made limestone cliffs 30 or more feet high at points, had no counterparts on the left (or south) bank at all. On this side the country stretches back flat as far as the eye can reach. At 11:35 we were off the mouth of the Sacluk arroyo, and here the motorboat left us to go up for some people. McLaney (I have been misspelling his name) went along to examine some mahogany. The *canoas* were moored under the north bank and Chico and Muddy went ashore to prepare tea for lunch. We were here for four hours before the motor returned with more *gente* [people], and we again got under way.

We reached San Juan at five and stopped to take on a great increment of passengers. Here we picked up Atalano Cámara and many of his people, and a *cayuco* with seven or eight dogs. Rutherford went ashore and took several photographs from the rather high bank looking down toward our flotilla [Figure 38.3].



Figure 38.3. The flotilla at Paso Caballos.

We got away from here about 5:30 and shortly after, whilst Chico was going forward to get the water heated for our tea, occurred the catastrophe which consigned our phonograph to its watery grave. I was writing yesterday's events (Monday, May 2nd) when this happened. As I recorded in pencil at the time, only this diary was salvaged.



We had supper in the afterhold, McLaney being our guest. Because of the tippiness of the *Aurora*, everybody advised against putting up my cot on the deck. I put it cross-wise, however, and let the legs at the head rest against a pole lashed to one side which kept it from slipping, and left me a margin of 2". Muddy slept next to me, flat on the deck, and Rick was curled up God knows how on some miscellaneous baggage in the after hold, Muddy being next to Ruddy. McLaney slept on the afterdeck. Chico had the best bed of all in a small *cayuca* lashed to the side of the *Aurora*.

About eight the *Tenosique* cast us off and went up a small arroyo also coming in from the south called Pie de Gallo, where we had to pick up a few more passengers. This was only a short delay, however, and we were soon under way again. I was awakened at 2:30 by a great confusion of voices, the bumping of the *Aurora* against another boat, and people moving about. We had reached the head of the rapids of Mactun. These cannot be attempted at night, so we were tied up at the bank.

There was a very great confusion, everyone talking and calling back from the bank to people on the boat, children crying, and dogs scrambling around in the menagerie boat. There was very little sleep for anyone after we reached here. Many went ashore to eat, others were continually bumping into our boat. Ruddy got dressed and took a flashlight, which caused a momentary excitement. Gradually, however, the hubbub subsided and just before daybreak it was possible to sleep for a while. Putting up the *pabellones* was out of the question, but fortunately, even when tied to the bank, we were not troubled with insects. I fell asleep with Rutherford beside me, but when I awoke at daybreak Ricketson had traded places with him. All things considered it had been a somewhat trying 24 hours.

#### **May 4, Wednesday**

We were underway early. Most of our passengers were put across on the other side to walk down to the foot of the rapids. This was to lighten the canvas so that we could get over the ground in better shape. At first, the rapids were not swift, but as we got down farther the water became swifter. We only struck fast at one place, just above Mactun. The boys jumped overboard, and even McLaney, and putting their shoulders to the prow, shoved us off. At the foot of this last run on the north bank was Mactun, where we had put in to receive another big increment. This brought us up to more than 150 souls. A shift in arrangement was also made here: Ricketson, Rutherford, McLaney, and Muddy all went forward onto the motorboat. Our men and baggage were all shifted from the forward hold to the afterhold, and I moved up on to the stern. I wanted to write during the 7 leagues downstream from Mactun to Progreso and the motorboat would have vibrated too much to permit me to do so. For this reason, I occupied the stern of the *Aurora* in lonely grandeur with only the helmsman behind me.

I wrote all the way down to Progreso, which we reached a little before noon, although toward the end the sun began to come down pretty straight. I should have recorded yesterday that Mr. Cooper knows Arthur Carpenter very well.<sup>237</sup> He told me a lot about him and how remarkable he

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<sup>237</sup> Arthur Carpenter of the Peabody Museum was the second-in-command of Morley's ill-fated 1916 Uaxactun expedition, which ended in the ambush that killed Dr. Moise Lafleur. Carpenter's heroic action during the incident is chronicled in Morley's own words in a detailed letter he wrote

thought he was. He even told me of Arthur's mission to San Pedro Sula in 1917, and hinted at secret government business.<sup>238</sup> I held my peace about the "secret" end of it, but told him how I had helped Arthur rehabilitate himself with the American Consul in Puerto Cortés, Honduras, so that he might get some money to get home.

We reached Progreso just before noon, and I went up to the hill (the settlement is on the northern bank) to present my letter to the station agent, don Pastor Piedra. Also, I was presented to Alfred Harvey, a nice-looking youth of 17. I gave him the letters from his sisters and Shufeldt. Progreso was formerly the headquarters of don Federico Arthes, when he operated this concession. In the Revolution of 1917, it was destroyed by don Clodovego's order because he had heard a new revolutionary movement against him was to be inaugurated there. The present thatch and bough houses are built on the old cement floors of don Federico's house.

It was dinnertime and all sat down to it at once. As soon as it was over, we went down to the bank to see McLaney off. He is planning a trip up the Usumacinta to examine the parcels of land which, from his description, I judge to be somewhere in the Lacantun Valley. He had first thought of going up there after re-outfitting at Frontera, but when he learned it was such a hard trip, he decided to put it off until next January.

He is taking my mail down, including a cable to Jennie, which I have asked him to see is not sent until May 15, so that it may reach her on her birthday, the 16th. I also wrote the consul in Frontera asking him to hold our mail until we get down and also to send me information regarding the sailings from Frontera to New Orleans during the first week of June.

McLaney told me of a remarkable escape he had from a terrific death at the Colorado bar—the mouth of the San Juan River, just below Bluefields, Nicaragua. They were crossing the bar, going in the company's tug, when two successive waves swamped her. There were 14 people aboard and all were lost save himself and the engineer, both of whom were in the engine room. He grabbed an empty gasoline drum (barrel) and the engineer a box with some wood in it. Both floated free of the wreck and were picked up half an hour later. The miracle lies in the fact that they were in those waters for half an hour without being devoured by sharks. The Colorado bar has the worst name for these beasts of the entire Atlantic littoral of Central America. From Belize to Colón, there is no place where the sharks are so voracious. People have fallen into the Colorado bar and have been snapped up at once. That he could have remained in such waters for half an hour without meeting such a fate is little short of incredible. It would have been incredible if it had not happened, as Doctor Woodward would say.

After McLaney got off, we returned to the house and waited for the afternoon to get by. It was decided that the baggage should be crossed to the south bank late in the afternoon and that we ourselves would sleep on the other side, eating dinner at Progreso. Fortunately, the mules are all over, and it simply will be a question of catching them. *Arrieros* were sent to bring them in.

In the late afternoon, we dispatched a large and small *cayuco* with Muddy and Chico and about half of the baggage. After dinner, about eight, Rutherford, Ricketson, Alfred, and I got off

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to Dr. Robert Woodward, then President of the CIW (Rice and Ward 2021: Chapter 22)

<sup>238</sup> This is an intentionally cryptic reference to Morley's espionage work during the First World War. Although Carpenter was not an agent in Morley's spy ring, Morley did try to recruit him (Ward and Rice 2021: 298–300).

in the large *cayuco* and the greater part of what remained. We left a few things for don Alfredo [unclear who this is; Echeverría? A guide?] to bring, and most of the men. The insects were a veritable plague as we left, and I was eaten of, every time I approached the lanterns. Once off from the shore, the insects, save for the sand flies that were in the boat with us, disappeared and it was delightful. This change for the better grew more pronounced as we approached the southern shore. A breeze was blowing from the north, which swept the insect life of the bush behind Progreso down on the settlement. But across the river there were no insects at all.

We did not land on the opposite bank direct, but made up a little waterway cleared in the tall rank grass. Alfred said Federico Arthes had made this for his chicle workings on the south side. The landing was difficult, being a muddy swamp. The second canoe was run up on the mud as far as it could be, and then we had to walk on a log and finally, before we reached dry land, on the mud itself. The camping place was delightful. Muddy had the hammocks up and my cot under the tarp. We went to bed at once, though such a strong breeze was blowing that I did not put my *pabellón* down for a long time. When the large *cayuco* went back to fetch the other men and the rest of the baggage, I sent special word to don Alfredo that he be sure and bring everybody over tonight so that we might get an early start, and before I finally fell asleep, they had arrived. I called out to don Alfredo to see if all were there. He assured me they were and I soon fell asleep.

Poor Ricketson had a fever again tonight. He took his temperature before we left Progreso and it was 100.8 degrees. It began Sunday with 101.8, and then Monday he had none at all. It came back a little on Tuesday, and now again today. He took 20 grains and it broke just as we were leaving Progreso, and by the time he got over to the other side he was feeling fine. What an extraordinary disease it is. I am taking 15 grains a day myself as a prophylaxis and am going to keep it up until I reach Piedras Negras.

Don Alfredo dealt me a heavy bit of news in the late afternoon when he told me he would have to go to Tres Marías first, before going to Desempeño. This is a tremendous detour, in fact two sides of a triangle from Progreso. There is, or rather was, four years ago, a *picada* from the Laguna de la Repasto to Ojo de Agua, and thence through to Desempeño, but it is now closed, and worse still, this bush has been extensively worked by Tenosique *chicleros* since don Alfredo has been there. Mindful of our experience on the San Clemente–Bambonal short-cut in February, I reluctantly gave consent to this long detour. It is 15 leagues from Progreso to Tres Marías, and 16 from there back along the river to Desempeño, and 4 more to Piedras Negras—35 in all.

Nor does the Tenosique road make it any shorter. It is 22 leagues from Progreso to Tenosique, and 15 or 16 from there to Piedras Negras, 37 or 38 leagues in all. Long as is the detour, it is the best road. It is a case of the longest way around is the shortest way home, and this Tres Marías road, therefore, is the one we will take tomorrow.

## CHAPTER 39.

### JOURNEY TO PIEDRAS NEGRAS: BAD TRAILS AND *AKALCHES*

**May 5, Thursday**

#### **The Battle of Puebla**

A bad day. We rose long before six, about 5:30 in fact, but four mules had strayed from the corral, and we had to wait about an hour to get them. I lost my spur too, which proved to be a bad omen.

We got off at 9:15 and soon were out on the open ground adjoining the river. This was the *camino real* to Tenosique, and the La Pita road branched off this to the left. Alfred Harvey set out with Joaquin, the captain, and his four men to clear the road, which don Alfredo feared might be overgrown. He felt quite sure he knew the *entrada* for the La Pita road. This, however, was not his first trouble. We had got some distance down river when we discovered that we only had 15 cargo animals. We had started with 11 riding animals—mine, Ricketson's, Rutherford's, Chico's, Muddy's, Alfred's, don Alfredo's, and the four *arrieros*: Sineido Mar, Miguel Avendaño, Margarito Hernández, Antonio Jiménez—and 16 cargo animals. We had in addition 5 men who walked, the *capataz* Joaquin Castellanos and his four men—Gabriel Reyes, Martín Guzman, Porfirio de la Cruz, and Pedro Peche.

Don Alfredo was of the opinion that it had gone on before, so we continued for 3 or 4 miles along the south shore of the river. He finally reached a piece of the road which showed no mule trail on ahead, so he advised our turning back. Before he had finally found the La Pita *entrada*, we had lost two hours and gone two leagues out of our way. The missing animal was found just inside of the bush on the La Pita road—the only one of the whole *mulada* which had gone the right way!

Our course lay some west, but mostly south. The road lay through a thick tangle of low bush, obviously at one time the floodplain of the river, and it was very hard going. It was lucky indeed that we had sent men on to cut the road, otherwise we would have been held back all the time. As it was, we just crept along, the *mulada* was collectively one of the worst I have ever seen. Individually the mules were excellent—fat, strong, and lively, too lively in fact. They darted into the bush at every opportunity and brushed off their cargoes whenever they had the opportunity. In addition to this, poor Ricketson had his fever again—101.8—and felt rotten.

It was about 11 when we finally got back onto the La Pita road, and for two hours we were in this low, thick, bottomland bush. Then the road began to rise, and at the same time the bush grew higher. This I took to be the foothills of the range we saw on the south side of the San Pedro River. At 3 we came to the *champas*, or rather the *paraje*, of La Pita. Alfredo and the five boys were waiting for us here, having been in for 3½ or 4 hours. Don Alfredo said the next *paraje*, Corozal, was 3½ leagues. It had been a bad day all around: Rick still had a fever, and we were all tired out.

It seemed to me the best to stop for the day and try to make it up tomorrow.

There was good water in the *aguada*, but no *champas*, and worse still, no *ramón*. The reason for this was because this place had been a *paraje* on the *camino real* from La Libertad to Tenosique for more than twenty years, and the *ramón* nearby has all been cut out. This place is even on the Hendge's map, and approximately correctly located. This surprised me somewhat and I was glad to have stopped at one *paraje* on this road, which I have wanted to see for a long time.

While the animals were being unloaded, we nearly had a fight develop between Sineido and Margarito. The former thought the latter had insulted his mother and started for the machete. Don Alfredo intervened, and this incident subsided in a deal of insults, mostly from Sineido. There was no water on the road after leaving the river, and the poor *arrieros* who had sweated in the low grass of the river bottoms were nearly dead with thirst before they reached La Pita. One Antonio drank some water in a hole in the road, made by a mule's hoof, and as a result had diarrhea. I gave him some bismuth, which helped, he said.

As quickly as we got in, Rick climbed into his hammock and fell asleep, which with the quinine he has been taking brought down his fever. We all slept close together because of the trees—the usual tiger [jaguar] story pursues Rutherford. Don Alfredo told a harrowing one which happened near this very *paraje*. A man was killed in a *champa* near here (but on the Mexican side) in a drunken brawl, and they sent to Tenosique for the authorities to view the body before it was buried, according to the law of the land. It was ten days before they got back and examined the body, over which don Alfredo had had a man and woman standing guard. The body lay in a ravine and when the examination was over, they left it there. Shortly after they heard a noise and ran back to see what it was and were just in time to see the corpus delicta being carried off by a large jaguar. They gave chase and the jaguar carried it up one hill and down the other side before he finally dropped it. When the cadaver was recovered, they found one leg had been gnawed off.

With this and similar tales, the evening was passed until poor Rutherford was ready to believe anything. The only time during the night I awoke was when he asked Muddy if he heard what he (Ruddy) did. Two mules strayed into camp, but were caught with an offer of corn and tied against the morning.

### May 6, Friday

A day from bad to worse. A devilish discouraging day, in fact. We got up at daylight and by seven-fifteen don Alfredo, myself, and the five laborers set out ahead to open the road. The rest of the party were to come on with the *mulada*. Don Alfredo said we had to go back on the Libertad *camino real* for 3/4ths of a league before we reached the turn off (on the right) for Tres Marías. His estimates, I now know, are very low. It took us just two hours and five minutes to reach this point!! We closed this road off well and then went on. The road continues to the south. It was over very gently rolling country, and was therefore fairly open, However, the boys had to cut around more than one fallen tree. We reached Corozal at 10:55, one hour and twenty-five minutes after leaving the Tenosique–La Libertad road.

The *aguada* was almost dry, *leche gal* [milky], in fact. We saw a large glass carafe by the road, left by *fulano de tal* [whatshisname; so-and-so]. We stopped here for 26 minutes while the boys made *atole*, that is *masa*, the wet ground corn, mixed with water. I wrote a note to the boys that we were going on to Yaxchilan and to “carry on.” I noted our leaving time as 11:08, though just

as we were leaving the boys declared they heard the *arrieros'* cries, and the blowing of a horn already coming up behind us. It was just twelve when Muddy caught up, and the *mulada* was not far behind him. About this time also we began to encounter hills, the road gradually ascending. At 1:05 we crossed an arroyo which had water in it, and from here our trouble began.

We were undoubtedly on the right road, but the country through which it passed was the most god-forsaken I have ever seen. It was literally good for nothing. It appeared to be a considerable range of limestone hills, I take it the divide between the San Pedro and Usumacinta Rivers, because the general trend of the range appeared to be running north and southeast. These hills were all right—there was no difficulty in tracing the road over them—but between them were *akalches*, veritable thickets which looked more like second growth of 6 or 7 years on old milpa than anything else, but were not. I had never seen such thickets—vines, *bejucas*, creepers, *lianas*... Where the road entered these, it was immediately lost and the only thing we could do was to cut through it and look for the road on the other side. Time after time the boys did this, and always it was Joaquin who found the road.

The boys, as on the occasion of the Tikal trip, scattered fan-like in the bush when the road was lost and then the man who found it shouted back, and all fell into line cutting thither. This slow, laborious, time-consuming business went on practically all afternoon, from one until five-thirty, or at least from one-thirty to five-thirty. Four hours.

When we were in the depths of these *akalches*, occasionally the foliage was low enough to see through, and fairly high above us we could see these high hills. We learned to long for them, too, before the afternoon was out, since on them the road went fair and clear. Over these divides and down into *akalches* and over and down again, and so on all afternoon. Don Alfredo seemed to have no idea of the distance yet remaining to be covered, and still we wandered on, always bearing south, the boys cutting through these terrible (and thorny) *akalches*.

Finally, we gave up trying to reach Yaxchilan today and based our hopes on a water hole two leagues this side, which don Alfredo said might have water. We passed this a little after five, and it was as dry as the U.S.A.<sup>239</sup> It then became apparent that we would have to make a dry camp, and we only continued to find a *ramón* tree, but we found none. We finally picked out a place where there were some palms and cleared a place of bush so that when the pack animals came in there would be a place to put the baggage. This we had just cleared—I wielded a machete myself—when the mules began to struggle in. They were all there and we soon had their cargoes off. There was some little confusion in the clearing when 26 mules were tied there, and during the night they were tied on its very edges.

Supper was a dry feast. Sardines, beans (Van Camp's), crackers, butter, and tinned fruit (pineapple). After supper I passed my canteen, out of which I had not taken one drop, around to Ricketson, Rutherford, Alfred, and Chico. Muddy did not care for a drink. I myself drank nothing until I undressed and went to bed about 8:30. I was some thirsty, but not too much so.

Muddy and Chico came to words today in the road. I did not hear it, but Muddy recounted it to me at supper. Chico had insulted his family, etc., etc. I half suspected that Muddy had been unduly hard on him, and Chico himself told Muddy he had talked to him like an animal. Muddy sometimes gets an ugly streak on and I fancy today was one of them. I doubtless spoil Chico, all

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<sup>239</sup> This is a reference to the recently passed Prohibition.

the world says I do, so it must be so, but even at that Muddy must not treat him like a dog.

After everyone had gone to bed, and just before I was ready to go under my own *pabellón*, I went over to Chico's and got under it and had a talk with my *hijo* [son, child], as I call him. He said, poor boy, that if I scolded him it made no difference because I was his *patrón*, but that with Muddy it was different. I told him Muddy was imperative to my work, and that the three of us would have to live together a lot, and that I wanted him to apologize, which he promised to do.

### May 7, Saturday

A day in which things went from worse to worst. He we are sleeping at a water-course some six leagues south of La Pita, have given up the idea of getting through by way of Tres Marías, and are on our way back to the Libertad–Tenosique road, which we will follow through to nearly Tenosique, and then out over to the Desempeño road, but everything in its place.

We got another splendid start. Everybody was thirsty and nobody was hungry, so we eliminated breakfast, that is we did, though I believe the *arrieros* and laborers ate something. I had given each group a tin of fruit last night to help quench their several thirsts. Don Alfredo and I and the five laborers got off at 6:15, and it was lucky we did so, for the road continued just as before. At four o'clock yesterday I think we passed the actual divide, i.e., the highest point of the range between the two rivers, but from then on up to four-thirty, when we stopped for the day, I noticed the hills continued, but the *bajadas* [descents] always seemed larger than the *subidas* [climbs]. For the rest, the *camino* grew worse, but the little valleys up which we went grew thicker in bush, and we soon began to lose our way here also.

Immediately after leaving the place where we slept, we passed an old *paraje* which don Alfredo remembered, but after that it was quite obvious to me that he was confused as to just where the road did go. Time and time and time again he said it went one place, and Joaquin found it in another place. That we were on the road I could not doubt, because of various signs in these passes through the hills; in the *akalches* we could see nothing. For instance, Chico called my attention to an old pack saddle abandoned by the road. Someone else noted an empty bottle, and Muddy pointed out the bones of a mule.

At 9:15, three hours after we had left the camping place, Rutherford rode up and reported he had made it in at just 45 minutes. I calculated on this basis that we had done from 3 to 3½ miles. He had done in 45 minutes what it had taken us 180 minutes to do. In other words, he travelled four times quicker than we did. This time was not lost in cutting the road through the *akalches* so much as it was lost in looking for the track, which often disappeared entirely. Finally, at 10:30, just as Ricketson caught up, we reached a narrow canyon, and here lost the road altogether. Twice Joaquin, don Alfredo, and the other three boys tried to find it, but without success. They got distinct traces up to a certain point, and then lost them. Nor could searching bring them to light.

Don Alfredo was obviously confused and knew not which way to turn, or indeed how far it was on ahead to the arroyo of Yaxchilan. Indeed, he said, from the point where we were lost, he calculated it was two leagues still to Yaxchilan, and beyond another three leagues to the Tres Marías–Desempeño road—fifteen miles of such going. It was quite clear to me that neither mules nor men could stand it that long without water. The laborers had been drinking *bejuca* water<sup>240</sup> all

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<sup>240</sup> Certain thick vines (*bejuca*s) hold a watery, drinkable liquid.



morning, and Chico had given me half a cup. It wasn't bad, but it was only a drop in a very big bucket to all the water we needed. A quick decision of some sort was necessary and a shift of plan imperative.

Don Alfredo offered to go on and open the road through, whilst we went back to the next water and camped until they came back to advise us. But, with the road so overgrown as it is, I doubt whether they could get through to the Tenosique–Desempeño road in two days, and certainly not in one. Much as I hated to turn back, it seemed to me, and does yet after a good supper, plenty water, and a clear think, that the longest way around was the shortest way home, and I gave the word to him to get back as far as the first water and then camp for the night.

My plan is to hit the Tenosique–La Libertad road and go through to Tenosique or near there, and then on the Desempeño road as far as Piedras Negras. This road is always traveled, in fact both these are main highways and we have a reasonable security of finding them open.

We turned back at 10:30 and gradually passed all the cargo animals but four, which without *arrieros* ran into the camping place ahead of me, which I reached first at 11:45. The others soon came into the clearing. Oh, what a sorry *mulada*—every pack animal required readjustment, and some of the animals lay down as if completely exhausted. It had taken me an hour and a quarter to cover in coming back what had taken at least 3¾ hours to do going out, at least three to four times slower. At the most we had made but four miles.

We left camp at 12:00 and were back where I am writing these lines—the nearest water—at 1:50, but travelling hard, possibly 4.75 miles an hour, say nine miles for all. More than this we could not have done. We cleared a space for the cargoes and the animals began to struggle in. All were in by three, and Muddy had led. Never has liquid tasted better. I drank four cups. This tea was ready about three, and carried over to four. We talked until 6:30 and then we had dinner. After dinner I had the table put under my *pabellón*, where I am now writing the events of this unfortunate day.

It is decided definitely, however, that we will sleep tomorrow night at [El] Ceibo, about a kilometer from the Mexican boundary, and the last *paraje* in Guatemala on the Libertad–Tenosique road. Alfred with one man will go into Progreso and get 4 *quintales* of corn and meet us tomorrow night at Ceibo, if he can make it (if not, as far as he can and overtake us the next day). These are the plans, but *quién sabe* whether they will carry through, this country is so full of the unexpected. Moreover, as I write, the animals, which are not tied, keep coming back to water and then wander away from the *ramonal*. God knows how many we will have left in the morning when we get ready to start.

And now for a few notes on the geography of this benighted section of Petén. One thing I have noted in my five visits to the department is this—chewing gum and archaeology go hand in hand; that is to say, that wherever you find ruins in any extent, you also find the *chico zapote* [tree] abundantly, and vice-versa, and where you find plenty of the *chico zapote*, there you will find ruins. It certainly has worked out in this neck of the bush. I haven't noticed a single ruin since leaving Progreso and only two or three *chico zapote* trees. Nor do I think there are any considerable sites in these non-chicle-bearing hills [Figure 39.1].<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Morley was partially correct. The area east of the Usumacinta, in the Sierra del Lacandon between Laguna Perdida and Piedras Negras, is nearly devoid of Maya sites. However, surveys

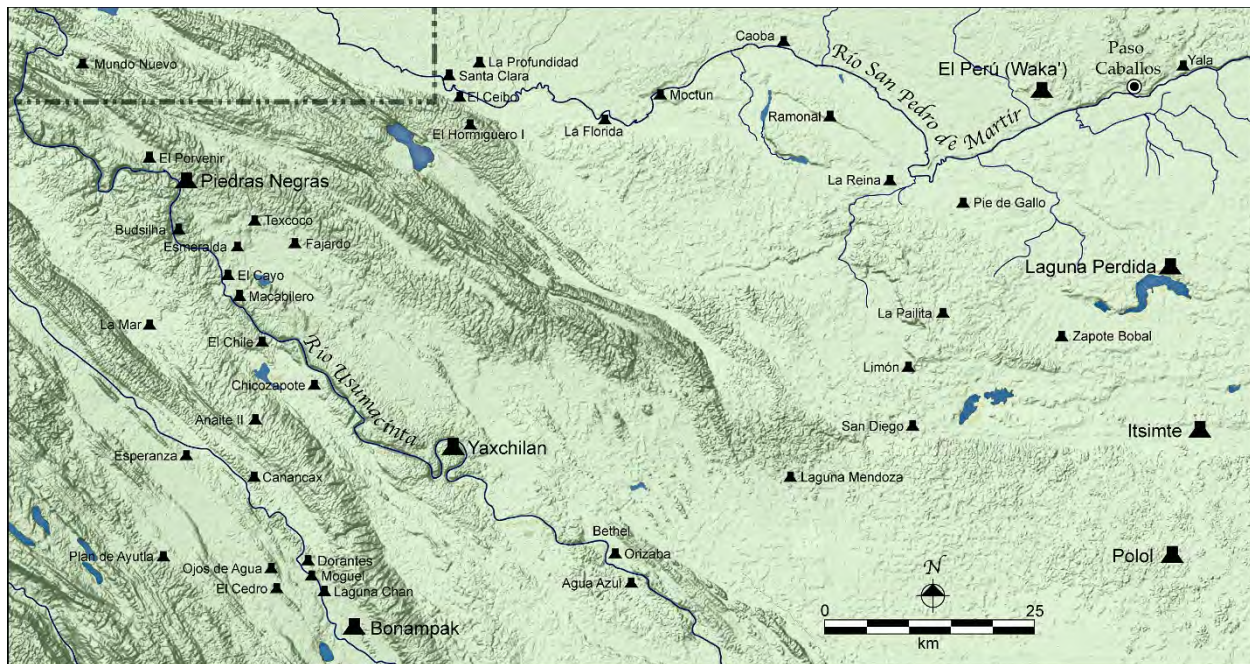


Figure 39.1 The desolate area devoid of Maya sites between Laguna Perdida (extreme right) and the Usumacinta (river on the left).

On the map, this western part of Petén, that region just east of the Usumacinta, shows as a blank, unpopulated region. Now I know why. It appears that there is a range of hills [the Sierra del Lacandon] running roughly parallel with the Usumacinta on its eastern bank. This, I believe, is what forces the San Pedro River to make such a northerly bend before it come into the Usumacinta River at Balancan. This range, or series of ranges, then, I believe must start somewhere between Balancan and Tenosique, running generally from northwest to southeast. This range we cut through diagonally on this unpleasant journey, due southward toward Tres Marias. It is composed of limestone hills, with rather sharply rounded tops not more than 200 feet from the general ground level. In places they are quite steep and are covered with trees.

Between these are stretches of thick viny tangles, *akalches*, which gave place to a higher vegetation as soon as the ascents are reached. This range is the watershed between the Usumacinta and the San Pedro rivers. I believe we were well over the divide when we turned back. A more useless bush—*lutamente inútil* [woefully useless], don Alfredo calls it—I have never seen. I did not see one single mound between Progreso and where we turned back. Neither did I see but one or two *chico zapotes*, mahoganies, cedars, or even rubber. I do not believe, as I stated before, that the Maya ever occupied this region, and for the reason that it was unsuited, perhaps because it would raise nothing. How far this extends to the east, I cannot say. There must be a range between here and the La Libertad savannas, which are in the drainage of Lake Petén, or

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of approximately 300 km<sup>2</sup> immediately east of the river between Yaxchilan and Piedras Negras revealed a site-settlement hierarchy of secondary and tertiary centers, some of which were fortified and related to boundary defense of these two kingdoms (Golden et al. 2005; Scherer et al. 2022).

rather better in that interior or lacustrine drainage system. It will, of course, take a [hydro]geologist to work out these several drainages in Petén, but I think I have a rough grasp on the general features:

The Belize and its tributaries draining the eastern part of the Department. The Pasión, rising in the Colony, but flowing south, southwest, west, and north and west again into the Usumacinta. [The Río de la Pasión rises in Alta Verapaz, flows north through south-central Petén, then turns west and joins the Usumacinta.] The Usumacinta's eastern tributaries rising in the range I have just been speaking of, and running only short distances before reaching the Usumacinta, the San Pedro Mártir and the San Pedro Candelaria draining the northwestern corner and flowing generally westward into Mexico, the former into the Usumacinta below Balancan, the latter into the Bahía de Términos.

Thus, two rivers drain the whole northwest. The northeast is drained by tributaries of the Hondo River, Blue Creek, Booth's River, and the Bravo [see Figure I-1]. I believe Ixcánrío is Booth's River farther down, and the high divide known as the Sierra de Chunvis divides this system from the Belize system. This leaves the interior lacustrine drainage: Yaxha and the lakes west of it, Petén Itzá itself and the lakes north and west, and the savannas, which I believe must also have been originally old lake beds.<sup>242</sup> This, at least, is what I make of it in a very crude way.

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<sup>242</sup> There is no evidence of lacustrine deposits in the savannas.

## CHAPTER 40.

### JOURNEY TO PIEDRAS NEGRAS: CONTINUING TROUBLES

#### May 8, Sunday

A most unpleasant day, ending in a serious division and disruption of our *mulada*. The day started bad. When the mules were brought in, we only had 14, one over half. At break of day, Joaquin heard a number cross the arroyo and set off for Progreso. We all shouted warnings to the *arrieros*, but they insisted that they wouldn't go far, and calmly let them go. Before seven, another 9 mules had been found wandering in the bush south of the arroyo, and a final count revealed 4 still missing, which all felt were well on their way back toward Progreso.

Two animals and the *arrieros* were sent on ahead to look for these four animals, and we all sat down to wait. At seven, Alfred set out for Progreso with one boy and two animals, our weakest. He is to change these for stronger ones and meet us tomorrow at Ceibo with two cargoes of corn. We waited and waited and waited, cursing the negligence of the *arrieros* which permitted the animals to escape under their very noses because of negligence and laziness. About 9:45, Sineido and Antonio returned, reporting that they had seen the four mules just ahead of them a number of times, but when they tried to head to them, they galloped on ahead. They chased them, they said, almost as far as La Pita, but were unable to head them off, so they returned.

I was determined to get off, and we were six animals out, the four lost, and the two which Alfred and Martín took. The cargo, including two pack saddles and three saddles, took up 14 cargo mules. This left 7 animals for riding—4 for the *arrieros* and 3 for ourselves, which left nothing for poor Muddy, Chico, and don Alfredo. There was no remedy for it, these three had to walk. Rick and I left last. The last cargo animal in crossing the arroyo fell down, and most unfortunate of all, it was No. 5, the photographic kyack, which got wet. Muddy reported that this for a moment was completely submerged. There was no hope of examining it then, and we devoutly hoped it might have escaped a thorough drenching within. Rutherford thinks there were clothes packed on top and if so, they may have absorbed what water leaked in. Muddy thinks the kyack was not submerged more than half a minute.

We left at 11:23 and to my disgust had a number of *akalches* to ride through before we reached Corozal at 1:10. I think it must be a fair two leagues, though it took us 13 minutes under two hours to do it. At 2:00, we passed the *entrada* for La Libertad, another scant league, and at four we were back at La Pita, which we left the day before yesterday at 7:15. I think it safe to estimate five leagues from where we slept last night to La Pita. It was now only four o'clock and don Alfredo said it was only two leagues further to Ceibo. He said this openly in everybody's hearing, and thinking that Alfred might by chance be there, and Joaquin and his gang which had gone ahead to fell *ramón*, I had no hesitancy in saying "Forward."

I sent Miguel on to Progreso to advise Alfred that we were going on to Ceibo, and to come

in as soon as he can. After leaving La Pita, our trouble started. Don Alfredo went on ahead to stop the mules from turning down the Progreso road, and the *mulada* . . . the last of it got off at 4:05. Ricketson and I rode behind to see that nothing was lost. About half a league out we came to the turnoff, and after some difficulty persuaded the tail of our *mulada* to head in on the Ceibo trail. Immediately after getting them on it, the one-eared mule apparently began to peter out, and Antonio announced it wouldn't last through to Ceibo. Rick gave up his riding animal for this cargo, and his saddle was changed to it. Rick took my animal and I started to walk, but One-Ear actually trotted on ahead, and I decided to catch him and ride. He carried me through. We rode and rode and rode. Don Alfredo said it was only two leagues. Five, six, seven...and still we continued. Meanwhile, the heavy bush had given way to the low bush which borders the San Pedro River. I felt sure when we reached this low bush that we must be nearby the *paraje*, but we were not.

Dusk began to fall, and still we wound around through this wretched low bush. Just after dusk, we stumbled on to some boxes of tin goods which had been abandoned. The animal which had carried it must have gone on because we saw no signs of it. Anyhow, by this time the darkness had come on so much that we could scarcely see the road. I had Chico light the lantern, but it cast such a light all around that it made the going worse, and finally when he fell and put it out, I told him not to light it again.

Poor little boy was all tired out and stumbled over every log. By this time, we were reduced to two cargo animals and four saddle animals: mine and Ricketson's, Antonio's, and Sineido's. We all kept close together and moved forward stumblingly as fast as we might. About 7:15 we stumbled over some saddles and knew that another cargo animal had pitched its load and either gone on or hidden out in the bush.

We called ahead several times, but got no answer. Finally, we heard a faint shout and made sure that the *mulada* had arrived—what was left of it—at Ceibo. Our consternation may well be imagined when we found that we had reached nowhere, in fact that it was another dry camp. Indeed, it was no camp at all, not even a clearing in the bush, only a place where Joaquin and his men had stopped when dusk began to fall!

Everybody was tired and cross and hungry, and, above everything else, thirsty, and there was no water. I had been giving Chico out of mine all day, so there remained in it less than a tablespoonful. And a worse calamity was soon to develop. A count of the cargo animals revealed that one had not come in. A frantic search ensued in which it developed that it was the animal which had No. 5 kyack with the photographic outfit and the bundle with my cot, the table, and chairs. I was well disgusted, but there was no remedy. This makes the third time this season that I have been caught in this plight. The first time was on the first night out from El Cayo, on February 7. On that occasion I used the expedient I have followed since—placing four kyacks on their sides and put my blankets and comforts on them. The second time was the first night of our second trip to Naranjo (the first was in the bush a league or so south of El Chorro). This was the 24th of March, and now, tonight, was the third time.

I had Joaquin cut out the bush from behind where the kyacks had been unloaded and laid out my four kyacks here. Supper for me consisted of cheese, crackers, sardines, and some tinned pineapple—a most indigestible compound which I paid for afterward. Our situation is far from pleasant. One cargo, and that a very important one since it has the photographic outfit, is actually

missing. Two are behind on the road, and all the men are dissatisfied. I think the blame may be placed equally on the shoulders of the *arrieros* who permitted the mules to escape last night in the direct face of my warning that they should tie the animals, and they did not, and upon [don] Alfredo's shoulders for saying at four o'clock in the afternoon when we were at water at La Pita that it was only two leagues on to Ceibo, when it is at least four, if not five leagues. This unfortunate calculation, or downright ignorance on his part, has caused the present *fracaso* [failure, breakdown]. What a contrast to a week ago tonight when, with the Shufeldts and Harveys, we had a picnic on the Lost Lake.

Just before falling asleep, don Alfredo said that we were sleeping at the same site where Gerónimo Villanueva, the brother of Manuel Villanueva was killed. The latter had a *montería* at Tres Marías eight years ago when Joe [Spinden] and I were down the Usumacinta River. He is now Shufeldt's agent at Tenosique. As Manuel told it to me, the *arriero* with whom he was travelling killed him, and sometime later the mule of don Gerónimo came out at La Libertad. It is this same mule we have now, which don Alfredo is riding. Don Alfredo, however, has a different version—that don Gerónimo was assassinated by people of don Luis Felipe Domínguez, who had sent him to do the very job, and he was buried here. There was a cross here, so don Alfredo said—I did not see it—which our mules had knocked down.

What a tragic spot to have happened upon thus casually; out of all the bush we strike upon this gloomy piece of the *monte*, replete with such dark memories, as our own stopping place. The last thing I remember was the usual thing about tigers, and their possible descent upon us. Wherever we go, the boys quickly find out that Ruddy is apparently afraid of them and they delight in ragging him about them.

### **May 9, Monday**

Troubles continue. We lose more baggage. Because everybody was thirsty, they rose early. We were all up before six, and Muddy, Chico, and Ruddy had started off for Ceibo at six. Antonio and Sineido took two cargo animals back and brought in the pack of tinned goods and the saddles which had fallen by the wayside last night. In the meantime, don Alfredo had gone on to close off a right-hand trail, which led to Progreso, but returned to superintend the loading of the mules. It was decided that all the cargo should be taken on that could be, and that what had to be left we would send back for from Progreso. Joaquin and his men set out first, but Muddy, Ruddy, and Chico overtook them on the road.

We found that two cargoes would have to be left—the jack, the box of crackers and four boxes of tinned goods, the corn grinder, and the saddles. The rest went on 12 cargo animals, which we had 3 *arrieros* to operate: Antonio, Sineido, and Margarito. Don Alfredo, Ricketson, and I went on ahead to the turnoff to Progreso. Here don Alfredo left us to head off any mules wishing to turn in there, and we went on ahead into Ceibo.

Yesterday we traveled from La Pita to the place we slept in 3½ hours. This morning, before we finally reached Ceibo, we were 2-1/3 hours on the road, from 8:55 to 11:20. Even discounting our slow rate of travel, in these five hours and 50 minutes, we must have covered at least 5 leagues. From where we slept to where the Progreso road comes in is about 1½ miles and from that point it is another 4½ to Ceibo. Indeed, before we reached there, I almost despaired of ever getting in.

We had quite left the region of low bush, *zacatales* [*zacate*, a type of coarse grass], and were now winding in and out among the spurs of the range which forces the San Pedro River northward. We had been going for some time when we came upon a cargo fallen by the wayside. They were Nos. 6 and 9, the former being Ricketson's, which caused him some dismay. It looked like the Napoleonic retreat from Moscow, our cargo scattered from hell to breakfast (Rick's profane simile). Shortly after, we came to the mule which had done this thing, just about to dart off into the bush. Sineido stopped to tie it to a nearby tree until someone could come back for it. We continued for about another mile and were about at the conclusion that don Alfredo had made another mistake when we came to a bend in the road and on the right side saw the San Pedro River through the bush. Never was the sight of water so welcome.

Chico, Muddy, and Ruddy had taken two hours to get in and it could have been no less than two leagues. We certainly covered three leagues, a minimum of five leagues, and don Alfredo called it two leagues. I was not so thirsty by this time as I had been, but about 12:00 we had lunch and I found I was more than ready for it. The Ceibo at which we had arrived was [El] Ceibo, Petén, i.e., Guatemala. At first, don Alfredo contended that we were in Mexico, but we convinced him by compass, pencil, and location of the international monuments that we were still east of the line. This place had been used as a *montería* by don Eduardo Aguilera of Tenosique last year and there were a number of good *champas*, the boys having already appropriated one for us fronting the river—a delightful location.

It was very hot and an inferno of mosquitoes. As soon as the *arrieros* had had lunch, they went out again. Antonio and Margarito took their hammocks and *pabellones* and food and set out to look for the mule lost last night. They were to go first to La Pita and then work back along the Progreso road. Another great loss developed when all the cargoes were counted. We had started out with 12 cargoes this morning from where we slept, and only 11 came in to Ceibo. It was quickly discovered that kyacks Nos. 2 and 12 are now missing. The former with all my books, drafting material, maps, and tobacco, and the latter with tinned foods. If these are lost this will be a real calamity, beside which all that has gone before will have been as nothing.

Immediately after lunch, Seneido set out to look for this animal, which was lost between here and the branch where the Progreso road comes in, for Ricketson and I had stood here and verified the count. About two we heard shouts in the distance and Alfred came in with Martín and Miguel with 6 mules and 100 kilos of corn. They had seen no trace of either animal, save that Alfred had seen a fresh mule track in the savanna just beyond Hormiguero, and this had continued right up to where the La Pita road comes in. These tracks were going toward Progreso and were very fresh, possibly within an hour or so.

We had verified the count at the branch at 9:30; at 11:15 when we got here this morning the animal was missing. Alfred passed here not later than one. There are many *desechos* in the Progreso road, and especial in the *tintal* [grove of logwood trees, *tinta*], which lies between the branch and Progreso. Here, probably, the cargo will be found.

After Miguel and Martín had had breakfast (lunch), I started them off again for the two cargoes left where we slept, and someone brought in Nos. 6 and 9. They left about 3:30 and we thought they would just about have time to get in before dusk, allowing 1½ hours back to the cargo, and two hours back here. As I have said it grew very hot here in the afternoon, and the mosquitoes were voracious. About 4, Chico, Alfred, Ricketson, and I went in bathing. The water



was warm though refreshing, and we greatly enjoyed it. Again, I had to prepare to sleep on kyacks, and after supper set to work getting these arranged.

The water of the San Pedro is supercharged with lime, as is to be expected, and we are all beginning to feel its ill effects. The first to feel nauseated was don Alfredo, who, when he came in was so thirsty as to drink 14 glasses! This nauseated him so that he threw up. Chico, who was similarly indiscreet, felt pains in his stomach and nausea. Later in the afternoon I felt it, and after dinner was quite nauseated. Ricketson and Ruddy both experienced the same discomfort. Part of this is doubtless due to the empty condition of our stomachs for the last three days, but also in part we all feel it is the hardness of the water. Our carbolic acid soap makes no impression on it so far as a lather is concerned.

The mosquitoes were so fierce this afternoon after dinner that we all went to bed as speedily as we could get our *pabellones* up. I listened to a long and highly diverting conversation between Muddy and don Alfredo as to what animal led the happiest life. It boiled down to a rooster and a jackass.

About a quarter past nine, Martín and Miguel got back without the two cargoes. They got lost in the *bajo* near here and left it to bring in in the morning. No signs of Antonio and Margarito. Do hope they will find the missing baggage. We are planted here until it is recovered.

### **May 10, Tuesday**

A wasted day, though no additional misfortunes and some good luck. I should have noted yesterday that Sineido came in about four and reported he had found the *rastros* [tracks] of the lost animal but had lost them again. The animal had taken a left-hand *desecho* around behind a big hill and had circled back to the main road again. That it still had its cargo on its back at this point was indicated by the fact that the sticks and poles within 20 yards of the point where this *desecho* came into the main road were bruised. At the point of entry, the *rastros* of Antonio and Margarito going back obliterated the earlier *rastro*, and Sineido could not distinguish whether it had gone forward or backward, so came back. I sent Sineido out to look again this morning, and Miguel and Martín to bring in the two cargoes from the *bajo* where they had left them last night.

Joaquin and his gang went back to the *ramonal* to fell some trees for today. I wrote in my diary during the morning, between fighting mosquitoes and cursing out the carelessness of the *arrieros*, which has hung us up here. Just before noon, Alfred said here comes the motor [boat] and in another ten minutes it had put in. I had decided to get a guide from it, who knew the Tenosique road, and also to send a note on to Shufeldt. Don Pepe, the *encargo de las embarcaciones*, a robust Spaniard, was properly sympathetic and said if he had only been along the *fracaso* could not have happened.

There were two men aboard, an old chap named Tacho Mai and a younger man named Genaro. The former is the best-informed man as to roads south and west of Tenosique, having been the mail man, but unfortunately, he is carrying a special message from Manuel Villanueva to Shufeldt, and could not come. The younger man, Genaro, would come, and I had him in the *champa* and quickly made satisfactory financial arrangements with him.

I wrote next to Shufeldt telling him of our several misfortunes, and while I was thus employed Margarito and Antonio came in with the lost cargo, the photographic kyack, No. 5, and the bundles of cot, chairs, and tables. I was very thankful for this—at least we can go ahead with

our photographic program, and the furniture will not come amiss. The most important thing still lacking is the Morley-Shufeldt-Walsh-Boburg-Cambranes map of Petén. This recovery of kyack No. 5 and the bundles of furniture and the finding of a guide who really knows the country were two bits of good luck, two rays of sunshine after a very rainy week, and we hope the weather of our prospects is clearing. By this time, I had finished my letter to Shufeldt, and bidding us goodbye, don Pepe put out and soon disappeared around a bend of the river towing the familiar trio—the *María*, the *Pluma*, and the *Aurora* behind.

Sineido came back and reported no luck. I was somewhat indignant at him. It is his animal and he keeps running back regularly for meals. Antonio is a far better *arriero*, I am convinced, and he went out and got what he had lost. After lunch, about 3 o'clock when they had eaten and fresh animals had been brought up, I started out Sineido and Antonio with grub and instructions to go clear through to Progreso if necessary and bring back the cargo and the animals.

Something after four when the mosquitoes and the heat were at their height, we all went in bathing; much fun ensued at Ruddy's expense in his efforts to learn swimming. He insisted on having a huge rope tied around his waist, one end tied to a tree. He would then spring in, and when he felt he was going under he would gargle, pull, and I would drag him back to shore. This was done several times, and after he had swallowed plenty of water, he would gargle, pull, and I would pull, and out he would come, puffing and spluttering. This bath has been a delightful feature of this enforced stop here at Ceibo, and it is one of the few things I will look back upon with pleasure.

The water here for drinking purposes is vile, and is upsetting everybody. Also, Ruddy found it unsuitable for photographic work when he developed after supper. His films have been accumulating and he has eight or nine, so he developed. He complained about its effect on films, and how it softened them. We all got under our *pabellones* early because of the plague of mosquitoes. Chico, Alfredo, Muddy, and Ruddy played Spanish cards.

## CHAPTER 41.

### JOURNEY TO PIEDRAS NEGRAS: BETTER DAYS

#### May 11, Wednesday

Our good luck continues. The new man, Genaro Olan, proved his worth by going out early this morning and finding the two missing kyacks. This was very good news indeed, as it means the map I worked so hard and long on is not lost. He got in about 8:30 with this news, and as soon as Martín came back from the *ramonal* I sent him post haste to Progreso to bring back Antonio and Sineido in the hope, which proved to be in vain, that we might get off today. But as the morning wore on these hopes dwindled, and at 10:30 I sent Joaquin out with his men to fell *ramón* for the night. Also, I sent Margarito back with Genaro to where the cargo had fallen in the bush on the side toward the river. This is just where I thought it would be found: the animal was thirsty and took the shortest route thereto. Genaro had reported blood on the baggage and the *arrieros* all thought the mule must have hurt itself in some way.

Margarito brought the cargo back before noon, and it was none the worse for its night in the bush. Now we are all assembled again and ready to go forward on this unlucky journey. About three o'clock, my three *arrieros* got back with old Isidro, the mule man at Progreso, who came over to get a mule which had strayed into Ceibo.

The heat today was terrific. All the boys were complaining and the humidity was as high as it can get without the bottom falling out of the sky. And the mosquitoes were at their worst. We could not keep them off. Right after lunch, I retired under my *pabellón* to escape them, and there had the pleasure of a Turkish bath. Later, about 4:30, the four of us went in bathing again. This time, hot as it was, we could not get Ruddy to go in. The other boys, Martín, Antonio, Sineido, and even old don Alfredo, went in.

It looked as though it might rain, but no such luck. Of one thing I am satisfied—this heat cannot keep up much longer without a break in the weather and a beginning of the rains.<sup>243</sup> I am glad we are leaving this place because the water here is certainly upsetting everybody. It is not only hard but seems to have a decided nauseating effect. We went to bed against an early rising and a possible (??) early departure.

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<sup>243</sup> The Petén rainy season begins in late May or early June, and continues into November. May is normally the driest and hottest month, the unpleasantness exacerbated by the burning of the milpas to plant the corn before the rains start. The rainy season begins when the moisture-laden trade winds from the Caribbean become prevalent, a response to broader seasonal shifts relating to the winds and moisture of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ).

## May 12, Thursday

The plan of the day was that Ricketson and I go ahead with Genaro (the guide) and Joaquin and his four men finding the trail, closing off side roads, and opening around fallen trees, etc. We got off at 7:15 and in fifteen minutes were back on the main La Libertad–Tenosique road. We turned to the right and at 7:50 crossed into Mexico. The boundary is marked by a tall concrete obelisk with two bronze tablets, one saying MEXICO on the western side and the other GUATEMALA on the eastern side. Ten minutes later (8:00) we passed some low bush and a number of lime trees, which were on the site of Ceibo, Mexico, now quite abandoned.

I have entered Mexico at many places on its southern and eastern frontier—Cozumel, Tulum, Bacalar, Payo Obispo, the mouth of the Pasión River, and at Ayutla on the Suchiate—but I think this point the most out of the way place of all. The country appeared to be a succession of low ridges, over which we crossed. Our general direction seemed to be northeast. Two hours out we passed three well-defined mounds, two on the left and one on the right, the last a well-defined pyramid.<sup>244</sup> Fifteen minutes later we found ourselves at an old *chiclería* with one long *champa*. There were several roads leading out from this, one to the *aguada*, another to an old *ramonal*, and before we finally found the Tenosique road we had lost half an hour.

About an hour later we passed an *aguada* on the right. It still had water in it, and Genaro stopped to take a drink. At half past twelve (another hour and a half later), we passed an abandoned *chiclería* and at one o'clock we reached Ojo de Agua, which it took us 5¼ hours to do from Ceibo. We were well ahead of Joaquin and his men here, and we waited for them to catch up. Genaro got some fruit of a chocolate [*cacao*; *Theobroma cacao*] tree and cut out the seeds and put them in his bag.

Joaquin came in with a fever; said his legs and feet were hot but that his body and head were cool. I took his temperature and he had 102.2. I gave him 10 grains on the spot, and another 15 later in the day. I wrote a note and left it on a forked stick, saying we were going on the three remaining leagues to San Claudio, and were leaving at 1:30. I had hopes that this might not be a full three leagues since Genaro estimated the distance back to Ceibo as seven leagues, which I knew it could not be. My estimate of 5¼ leagues seemed far more reasonable and accurate.

We got underway at 1:30 and two hours and 10 minutes later (3:40) reached San Claudio. As we came into the *paraje*, Genaro signaled to us to bring a gun. There was a large peccary about 200 feet off drinking at the *aguada*. Unfortunately, Ricketson had no cartridges for his gun, so he used his .45 army automatic. The first shell only went off at the cap, and when the second went off it jammed, and there was no further shooting. At the sound of the second cartridge, the peccary gave a great jump and made off through the bush and was seen no more. The *paraje* was far from attractive. There were no *champas*, and some rank, stiff bushes grew all over the clearing.

The day had been almost insupportable, the heat was so intense. The perspiration just dripped off me, in fact coursed down my body. And the mosquitoes were hell. Whenever we stopped, they buzzed about us, and as Ruddy says, “nearly ruined us.” We were thus pretty well heated when we got to the *paraje* and then we fell to on making a clearing, which finished us off. Both canteens were empty and our thirst was very great. There was nothing to do but wait for the rest to get in. About twenty minutes later, Joaquin and his men came in, and after ten minutes

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<sup>244</sup> This small ruin could possibly be El Homiguero (I or II), El Ceibo, or Santa Clara.

rest they went off to fell *ramón*. Ruddy came in at 4:20 and 20 minutes later, or just an hour after we had gotten in (3:40), the first cargo animals got in, a bunch of five. There was a long wait after these got in, and then an hour later, at 5:40, the other 9 came in with Chico bringing up the rear.

Meanwhile, it had been thundering a great deal and clouds piled up overhead. It looked like rain and the excessive heat and the high humidity made it almost certain. On the other hand, it had not rained for so long that we felt it would not, and though we put up the tarp, only Ricketson and I slept under it. The heat and the long day had thoroughly exhausted me, and I was as tired as I have been any time in the past three months. Supper tasted delicious, and I was so hot and tired I could hardly sit up to it.

I had Chico put up my cot and *pabellón* under the tarp during dinner, and immediately afterward undressed to the wrist-watch. I lay on it and smoked. It cooled off slightly, and it seemed that it had rained somewhere else and the storm had passed by. Gradually camp settled down. Joaquin, his men, and some of the *arrieros* slept between us and the *aguada*, whose water was delicious and sweet to us after that awful stuff at Ceibo. Ricketson and I were the only ones under the tarp and the only ones who remained dry when the heavy rainstorm broke at a little before eleven. It started rather gently, but thundering began with lightning and the first thing we knew a heavy shower was upon us.

Gradually the line awoke. Muddy was one of the first to come under, then don Alfredo, Alfredo, and Chico. Ruddy didn't come under until one of the last. I remained dry in my cot throughout, though Ricketson, in order to do the same, had to abandon his hammock for the ground—one end hung out, and down this the water trickled. He dressed and slept on the ground under his hammock. Alfred came in and had his head near mine. Chico was curled nearby. I put my head out long enough to see that my clothes were not getting wet in the chair by my cot and went to sleep to the patter of the rain on the tarp above, the only really dry member of the *mulada*. To me there is nothing more unpleasant than to get wet after going to bed, and I could not help comparing my comfortable dry condition with the varying degrees of wetness around me.

It was still raining when I went to sleep, but Ruddy says it had practically stopped by 12:30 when he went out again to his hammock. I am wondering if this is the first of the rainy season. If so, we will be out of luck at Piedras Negras.

Before closing today's entry, let me add a word as to distance. The distance between Progreso and Tenosique is said to be 22 leagues, and San Claudio is the *medio camino* [halfway point]. From Progreso to Ceibo is three leagues, leaving eight from Ceibo to San Claudio, which just agrees with my estimate. We were 7½ hours on the way, and at the rate of three miles an hour, this makes 22½ miles, and 8 times 2.6 miles is about 21 miles, which is about what we did, I think. Don Alfredo says there are forty measured leagues between La Libertad and Tenosique. This about agrees with my map, which give 28 leagues in an air line, and adding 50% for *vueltas* [turns], i.e., 14, makes some 42 in all.

### May 13, Friday

Another change of plans made necessary by the events of the morning. This morning early, when I told Joaquin to do something, he went off in a huff, firing himself and his four men, including the old rascal who is cooking for his gang. These men are all from Balancan, and I understand from what Muddy and don Alfredo tell me they have overheard them saying that they never

intended to go to Piedras Negras at all, but have intended to go to Tenosique from the nearest point we reach to there. Their French departure left me in a double quandary. In the first place, it leaves me without men to work at the ruins, and in the second place it would have placed me in an awkward position with the Tenosique authorities. Had these fellows gone into Tenosique with the word that a *mulada* of 27 animals and 16 cargoes was passing through a corner of Mexico from Ceibo to Tres Champas without calling at Tenosique, we would probably have a mounted troop overtake us long before we reached Tres Champas and force us to return to Tenosique to explain ourselves. So certain I am of this that I changed plans so that tonight, while we are sleeping at the Laguna of Koba, we will not take a short cut from here to the Tenosique–Desempeño highway by way of Santa Rosa, but will go direct to Tenosique. This will quiet any yarn these men may have circulated that we are evading the authorities and enables me to find out from don Manuel Villanueva how conditions are there. I figure that if we can get out of Tenosique on Monday the 16th, we will be in Piedras Negras not later than Wednesday the 18th, and we can have 10, 11, or 12 days there and get back to Tenosique on the 31st of May or the 1st of June. I made this decision en route from San Claudio to Laguna Koba, where we are sleeping tonight, and the gods willing, we will sleep in Tenosique tomorrow night.

We changed the order of march for today. Muddy, Ruddy, Chico, and Alfred went on ahead with the guide and one pack animal, the *arrieros* strung along behind, and the last two, Sineido and Margarito, got off at 8:56, and we pulled in behind them. Joaquin and his men had started off before breakfast. Ruddy tells me he overtook them, but that he said nothing and got ahead again, and we have not seen them since. The boys think they went on to Santa Rosa.

The road continued over these same low hills and, after about an hour out, crossed a long *fangal* [bog], a low muddy plain with high bush. At twelve, we came to the abandoned rancho of Chotal, where there was a small arroyo with water in it. And from this time on, water became more plentiful. Also, from Chotal in we followed wherever we could what must have been a good, wide, cleared road through the bush. This is now badly grown up, but we could and did follow along it for considerable stretches at a time. It was almost straight enough, wide enough, and well cleared enough to have been a mahogany truck pass.

About 3:30 the land broke away suddenly to the east on our right, and we saw the Lake of Koba, possibly two miles long judging from what I saw of it through the trees. There was a destroyed *champa* at the southern end, but skirting around the western side we reached our *paraje*—without *champas*—at the northwest corner at four o'clock, just 7 hours and 10 mins after starting. I calculate we did 7 leagues today. Genaro says we are only three leagues off from Tenosique, but I think it may be nearer four before we get in.

In coming down to the level of the lake, we descended quite a steep hill and I think we must now be on the plain or point between the San Pedro and Usumacinta Rivers. Genaro tells me he thinks we are not more than three leagues in a straight line from the Usumacinta River, but don Alfredo and I both think it cannot be more than two leagues, especially if we are only three leagues from Tenosique.

Don Alfredo is not very keen on going into Tenosique. I can imagine he may have been involved there four years ago,<sup>245</sup> but it seems to me the best thing to do under the circumstances

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<sup>245</sup> Presumably Morley means some involvement in the Mexican civil war.

I have outlined. It forestalls any adverse criticism on the part of the Mexican authorities at Tenosique.

One mule, the boys report, has strayed. It is one of their own saddle animals and we hope went on to the *ramonal*. At least it did not turn back toward San Claudio. The chief insect pest of this place is, for a change—bees. They have already stung several of us. Nature is ever new and usually unpleasant down here. To bed early—about 8:30.



## CHAPTER 42.

### JOURNEY TO PIEDRAS NEGRAS: TENOSIQUE TO EL RETIRO

#### May 14, Saturday

We rose before six but were some time in getting started. One mule turned up missing, this time one of Antonio's—the one-eared creature. Genaro, Ricketson, Rutherford, myself, and Alfred went on ahead of the cargo animals, leaving at 7:30. For a while, the road continued around the end of Lake Koba and then, after passing over a low divide, we began descending. Not all at once, but by degrees, and when considered together quite a descent in all.

About an hour and a half of this going, Genaro called back to me that there were some people ahead. We came upon two *mozos* presently loading *guano* [thatch palm] leaves on two mules. They said Tenosique was not more than a league off. Much heartened, we pushed on and soon crossed the [Río] Poliva. There was a rough pole bridge over this. Everybody but Alfred and I dismounted to cross, but we managed to coax our mules across with ourselves on their backs. At 9:30 we came out on to a clearing, and soon met several laborers going to their milpas, a boy cutting firewood, and some women coming out from town.

At 10:00 we rode into Tenosique, a large, rambling place covering quite an area but with a population of not more than 3,500 [Figure 42.1].



Figure 42.1. A street in “large, rambling” Tenosique.

Some houses were of stone, a few had *lámina* roofs, but most were thatched with *guano*. After several turns Genaro led us down a street which led toward the river and we soon reached don Manuel Villanueva's house, a somewhat pretentious building as the houses here go. Don Manuel was on the porch, but I would scarcely have recognized him had he not told me whom he was, he has grown so stout. When I last saw him seven years ago this month at Tres Marías, his *montería* just above Yaxchilan, he was very thin and even sick-looking. Now he has grown fat, not to say portly, and is quite a handsome man. He introduced me to a son of his, the oldest, Pepe—a young man of 23—and to a Manuel Otero, a nephew of old Manuel Otero, whom I had met before, however, either in 1914 or 1915 at his uncle's house in La Libertad. I introduced the other three and he asked us into his *sala* [living room]. He was somewhat surprised at seeing us, but I explained why we were there.

After resting a bit, we went up to the *comandante's*, a captain in the Mexican army. Don Manuel introduced us and I presented our passports and credentials. He was not overly impressed, I thought, though pleasant enough. We returned to don Manuel's after these formalities, and about noon sat down to a delicious meal which was preceded by two strong *habaneras* [drinks of sugar rum], which on empty stomachs made our heads go around.

Muddy got in about one-thirty with Sineido and five pack animals. By mistake these cargo animals were unloaded in the wrong place and stored in a bodega some distance away from don Manuel's house. He informed me that the house he had intended us to occupy, opposite his own, had been bespoken by the *comandante* for General Pineda, who is coming in on the steamboat *Clara Ramos* late this afternoon.

Don Manuel Otero, however, put a house of his at our disposition, and I went up to look at this. All the interior partitions had been removed, and it was at least 100 feet deep. It had a tiled roof, wooden side boards, and a tiled floor. It looked more like a moving picture theater than anything else. I returned to don Manuel's after this inspection, and not long after don Alfredo got in with five more cargo animals that had absolutely refused to cross the narrow pole bridge over the Poliva and that Antonio and Margarito had had to take off their packs and force them over. He had come on with Martín and five animals.

I had planned, in my own mind, to cut our cargo in half, leaving what we would not need here at Tenosique and going on tomorrow again with don Alfredo's outfit, but he quickly dispelled this illusion. He said he would go no farther. The mules were all in, and in addition he had lost two, which he would have to find at once, or pay Mr. Shufeldt. The old man is pretty well shot to pieces. His cheeks are all fallen away, he has large circles under blood-shot eyes, and he has lost his nerve. And to this add the fact that he is scared to death to be here in Tenosique and you have a picture of almost complete demoralization. In fact, he says himself that this trip has left him "*desorganizado y demoralizado*" [disorganized and demoralized]. He asked me to release him from his obligation to carry us to Piedras Negras, and to get don Manuel to rent me his *mulada* for that purpose. I took the matter up at once with don Manuel and he said he could do this, but we would have to defer our departure until Monday. I was not at all loath to do this, because first, we are pretty-well *desorganizado y demoralizado* ourselves after these last trying ten days, and in the second place, it will give me an opportunity to meet General Pineda, whose troops garrison all the river towns.

Don Manuel tells me that there is no likelihood of an immediate outbreak [of violence], but

that the prospects for one at no distant date are bright. He is just back—day before yesterday—from Villahermosa and says that a revolutionary movement in Tabasco is probably imminent with Greene as the leader [see Chapter 37, p. 380, note 220]. These at least are rumors he heard down there. It suits me well then to meet the general commanding the river towns. He comes today or tomorrow on the *Clara Ramos* with his *estado mayor* [staff assistants].

In view of these several conditions, I released don Alfredo from carrying us any farther and engaged a *mulada* from don Manuel. This he will send for to his *finca* tomorrow, and we will get off again early Monday morning. The boys had not yet come in with the last four cargo animals, and I was just on the point of sending Genaro after them when they came in. These four animals, and the five don Alfredo and Martín brought in, were unloaded at the house opposite don Manuel's and [the cargos] stored in a small back room. Muddy elected to sleep here, crowded as it is, but Chico, Alfred, Ricketson, Rutherford, and I moved our beds and bedding up to the moving-picture theater. Don Alfredo and the four *arrieros* slept in the bodega where the first five cargos had been stored, so we were pretty well scattered.

The nervous strain of not knowing what lay ahead of us here, plus the actual exhaustion due to the last arduous ten days, has tired us all out, and we went to bed early, though not to sleep. Ricketson fell asleep almost at once, but Rutherford and I were both wakeful. He had two of his not unusual hallucinations. First, he thought that there was a man in the house, and second, just as he went to bed, he said he saw a dead man standing before his hammock. Being in this Cassandra-esque vein, he told me that on April 6th a letter had been written me from the States which would very materially change my plans, and that another bearing on the same business had been written on March 26! He really believes these things, too.

We were wakeful enough at first because of nervous strain, but soon the barking of dogs put all sleep out of the question for me. Word had been received from Balancan that the *Clara Ramos* with General Pineda aboard would get in about midnight, and the town was getting ready for his reception. The moving about of people caused the dogs to bark practically all the time, and at midnight, the crowd having assembled, they gave "*¡vivas!*" for the general and everybody else and added to the confusion.

At 2:30 a loud whistle blew, announcing the arrival of the *Clara Ramos*. At the same moment a number of guns were shot off, a band burst into music, and the crowd began to cheer. It was some distance from our house to the *playa*, but the noise was loud enough to wake Alfred, who sat up and said "*llegado el general*" [the general arrived]. The dogs continued to bark until the crowd went home, which for the stragglers (judging from the barking) must have been as late as four o'clock. At least it was that before I finally fell asleep.

### **May 15, Sunday**

A great fiesta. A river excursion in the *Clara Ramos* to Santa Margarita. I rose early and went down to don Manuel's where I had breakfast, or rather coffee only. I went over to the bodega from there. Muddy was up and puttering about. He reported that old don Alfredo had not shown up all night. I went next to the first bodega and found the old man. He was in a blue funk; said that there was a personal enemy of his on General Pineda's staff, and that he was afraid to go out on the street. He had decided to stay in the bodega until the *mulada* was all ready to go out, when he would have his saddle animal brought around ready to the bodega and he would mount it and

disappear. Finally, he wanted me to tell Muddy to bring over his pistol, which was in his saddlebags. He was literally in a funk.

The *mulada* was being assembled, though somewhat slowly as Antonio and Margarito had considerable *goma* to impede their movements. Both don Alfredo and don Manuel thought the sooner the *mulada* could be moved the better it would be. Shufeldt has had to buy all the mules he could get, and many of them have undoubtedly been stolen on the Mexican side. Indeed, we had one of don Manuel's own mules as I have said, the one his brother was riding when he was killed. He said that he had noticed several brands belonging to people there in Tenosique. What both feared was that such owners might see their animals and seize them, as they could, of course, do under Mexican law. All these considerations made it advisable that the old man be gotten out of town as speedily and as expeditiously as possible.

I went back to our house to write a letter to Shufeldt to send back by him and found the boys just leaving for breakfast. While I was finishing my coffee down at don Manuel's, General Pineda had been escorted by a band and a group of townspeople from the *Clara Ramos*, where he had slept all night, to the house opposite don Manuel's. From what little I could see of him from a distance, he looked like a rather fine type of man—strong and at his prime, scarcely more than 41 or 42. This impression the boys confirmed when they returned from breakfast, which they had had with him at don Manuel's. Ricketson told me of a *gaucherie* that Rutherford had made unwittingly. Noticing that both Alfred and Ricketson were drinking a great deal of water he tried to explain to the general that there was a saying in English that the heaviest drinkers of water the morning after had been the heaviest drinkers of something else the night before, and the General had been drinking water more especially than anybody else, [but] Ruddy had not noticed it. The thing was smoothed over and no hard feelings were left, but it illustrates well the inadvisability of putting English near-witticisms into Spanish, especially when you do not know the Spanish.

As soon as my letter was finished, I took it down to old don Alfredo and then came over to don Manuel's again, where I met the general. My first impressions were confirmed: he is a strong man and affable in conversation. A big excursion is planned up the river to Santa Margarita this morning in the *Clara Ramos*. The general asked us to attend, and I accepted for us with pleasure. Rutherford took his camera and was a leading light. Sometime before we left, I went over to the general's and had a talk with him in his *sala*. One of his staff was ill with malaria, and Ricketson got him some quinine. I went back to don Manuel's for something and presently the general sent over asking if we were all ready to go.

[Editors' note: Although one would expect Morley to have finished this day's entry, the diary skips to May 16, leaving the rest of the events of May 15 unrecorded].

### **May 16, Monday**

At four this morning I was awakened by the blowing of the whistle on the *Clara Ramos* as she started back to Villahermosa with General Pineda and his *estado mayor*. At five-thirty, by Mexico City time, which we got from the telegraph office—the local time is just a half hour earlier—I roused the boys. Everybody was sleepy and it took some time to overcome this inertia, but we finally got under way with the day's business.

Muddy came up when I got down to the bodega, and packing, though not finished, was

going forward rapidly. He had no hangover, as I predicted he would not have. It was too crowded in the bodega to pack comfortably with Rutherford, Ricketson, and Muddy all at it, so I dragged my two kyacks, Nos. 1 and 2, out onto the back porch and repacked each to the bottom. In No. 1 I packed the things I am to take with me to Piedras Negras and in No. 2 the things I am leaving behind. At present I am the guardian of three other people's tobacco besides my own: Rutherford's cigars and Chico and Alfred's cigarettes.

After the task was finished, we had breakfast, a real one: tortillas, beans, beef stuffed with nuts, olives, and peppers—a fine dish—fried chicken, and potatoes. We ate long at this as it may be another *quincena* [fortnight] before we dine thus again. By the time we had finished breakfast it was after eight and the *arrieros* were slowly getting the *aparejos* on. Muddy had finished his share of the packing, and we all sat around to wait for the muleteers. I improved the occasion by writing a birthday note to mother to reach her on her 63rd anniversary, and my 38th. As I wrote her, we are getting on. Today is Jennie Provost's birthday. She ought to be getting a cable from me today, at least McLaney said he had arranged the matter satisfactorily. I also wrote her a short letter of good wishes on the occasion.

After taking a great deal of time (so as not to break the general rule that on the first day of a trip a late start must be made [sarcasm]), we got off at 10:30. At first the going was over the river plain. We passed the *campo santo*, which has a new brick front wall, the back and sides fenced with barbed wire. About a kilometer out we passed the first arroyo, Chaxchin, and at 12:00, perhaps a league and a half from Tenosique, we crossed the [Río] Poliva, a small stream now, but obviously a good-sized arroyo in the rainy season. We stopped here ten minutes to fix the cargoes. Everything is coming along nicely, and we almost think that we have a good outfit this time, but a new broom sweeps clean even in *muladas*. There is a notable difference in the manner of the men, who are more jolly and cheerful, and *mirabilissime dictu*, the laborers, of whom we have six, actually helped the *arrieros* unload them when we got in.

Our *mulada* consists of 21 animals, 6 riding animals of our own, that of Estanislao Reyes, those of the three *arrieros*, ten in all, 10 cargo animals, and the bell-mare. I have six laborers in all, headed by Estanislao as *capataz*, the other five are Martín Guzman, Luciano Ara, Diego López, Ramiro Suárez, and Miguel de la Cruz. Martín Guzman is the only one of the old outfit left, and he is a good boy.

We left the Poliva at 12:10 and at once began to ascend a series of low rises, which are the foothills of the *serranía* we passed through yesterday. Coming down into one of these steep little arroyos, I got a fall which might well have proved serious if not fatal, but which happily only gave me a blow on the knee, though how I escaped breaking my neck is beyond me. We were coming down into this little ravine when my saddle went clear over my mule's head and threw me head over heels into the ravine on my neck. I rolled aside as quickly as I could, in case the mule should follow, but he held his own above. I picked myself up and limped around. Estanislao was far ahead, but I called him back and he was most solicitous, even to the point of offering me his fast-diminishing bottle of *aguardiente* to bathe my knee with. I did rub a little of it in, and it helped some, I thought. Fifteen minutes after leaving the Poliva we crossed the third arroyo of the day, the Tutuyeha, and a league beyond the fourth, the Sayalito. This we crossed several times before we saw the last of it. At two we reached a large clearing with several *guano*[-roofed] houses, a *rancho* called Tepiscuintla. A woman was working about under an open shed.

We waited here 'till the *mulada* came up to see if the head *arriero* wanted to go any farther or not. They were only ten minutes behind us, and when he came up he said we would stop for the night at the Arroyo of Saya, half a league farther on. We reached the latter at 2:40, just four hours and ten minutes after leaving Tenosique. There were no *champas*, but a good-sized clearing in the bush, overgrown with an herb or grass which is used for flavoring soup in Yucatan. They call it here *perejil*<sup>246</sup> and in Yucatan cilantro. It grows quite rankly in this clearing. I rather like the odor, but am in a lonely minority. All the others cordially dislike it.

Estanislao says we have covered five leagues already, though I can give it no more than four leagues. But then Estanislao is high in all estimates—he calls it 24 leagues when it can't be more than 21. The best estimate of the distances I can get from the other boys is as follows:

Saya	4 leagues
Retiro	5 leagues
Nuevo Mundo	2 leagues
Tres Champas	1½ leagues
Piedras Negras	5½ leagues

### May 17, Tuesday

Five years ago today, Moise Lafleur was killed by the Peteneros just outside the Colony. The world has rolled on since. We entered and helped with the war, and that smaller event has all but been forgotten. Only the heading of the page recalled it to my mind, who was so closely connected with it. I do not seek to open all those painful tragic memories here, only to note the fact that he died five years ago this afternoon a little after three.

These present *arrieros* and laborers are far ahead of the Progreso bunch. This was exemplified by the hour at which they arose (4:30) and got about the business of the day. We ourselves got up at five and were through with breakfast by seven. It was exemplified again in the careful way they went over the mules, with salt, water, and oil curing their small sores and seeing that cuts were washed out. The pack saddles were all carefully stuffed again before being put back on the cargo animals, and though this took time, the mules came through the better for it.

We left Saya at 8:30 and began soon to go over some steep limestone ridges. In fact, I think I can safely say we saw more limestone outcroppings today than in the previous four months combined. At 10:45 came about the biggest surprise one could imagine to have encountered in this bush: We were riding through a heavily forested level stretch when we came suddenly on a railroad track, quite overgrown with smaller bush, running at right angles through the bush! A railroad track in these jungles—it was like meeting a *barba amarilla* at the Biltmore. It turned out to be an abandoned mahogany track. To the right, two leagues, lay the *montería* of San José on the Usumacinta; to the left, i.e., toward the interior, the railroad ran for another league to San Marcos. Incidentally, Estanislao tells me that it is the stretch between San José and Retiro which has never been navigated on the Usumacinta. *Cayucas* have gone up as far as San José, and have come down as far as Retiro from above. Between these two points no one has ever passed on the river. Estanislao estimates it roughly as a three-league stretch, though it may be less.

At 11:00, 2½ hours out, we passed a *paraje* called La Parida, so named because a woman once

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<sup>246</sup> *Perejil* generally refers to parsley, not cilantro/coriander.

gave birth to a child here and continued on her way the next morning. At 11:50 we crossed the *arroyo* of Santa Tomás, another *paraje* and after going over some very steep limestone hills came down sharply to a level of second-growth bush, obviously an old milpa. A turn in the trail brought a glimpse of the Usumacinta River through low bush, and a few minutes later we came to the *paraje* of El Retiro, now inhabited by but two families, and, remarkable to relate for these countries, no children.

The boys who had gone ahead were waiting here and we, in turn, waited for the *mulada*. I went into the hut of one family and sat down in the hammock. Muddy, who is always wide awake, soon had brought some eggs and onions. While we were waiting, he also had some *posole*. The *dueño* [owner] of the *rancho*, one Domingo Pena, was living with a young Indian girl, and with them was a young and we thought rather lively widow. She said her husband had been dead for four months, but the *arrieros* said she was only a grass widow.<sup>247</sup>

We waited here for forty minutes until the *mulada* came up, and then moved on. The widow tried to persuade us to stay, but the stern realities of the road drove us forward. El Retiro is supposed to be halfway from Tenosique to Piedras Negras, i.e., nine leagues from each. We left there at 1:20 and soon started up a long and very steep hill. This I can say without any exaggeration was the longest and steepest we have encountered in the entire trip. It was almost straight up in places over outcroppings of native limestone. At Estanislao's suggestion, we waited behind the *mulada* here to urge it up the hill. When at last we reached the top, Estanislao and one of the *arrieros* stayed behind to close up a narrow place between two steep rocks, so that in case the mules escaped from the *paraje*, they cannot get beyond this point back to Tenosique.

We came to the *rancho* of Mundo Nuevo at 3 o'clock exactly, just 6½ hours after leaving and counting out the forty minutes wait at Retiro, about 6 hours on the way. They call it seven leagues, but I think it hardly more than six. Allowing four leagues for yesterday and six for today, we have covered ten leagues in all. The *capataz* of the *mulada* tells me we are 7 leagues from Piedras Negras: 1½ leagues to Tres Champas, 5 leagues to El Porvenir, and 1 league to Piedras Negras. He says it is two leagues from here to the line, that the line is half a league beyond Tres Champas. This *rancho* has a pleasant location by a sweet-water *arroyo*. We got in at 3:00 and by four Muddy had a dinner ready.

All our boys took the wrong road at the top of the hill and in consequence did not get in until about five. At leaving the top of the hill, there is only a small drop and then a long level stretch. It is apparent that the land on this side of the range is much higher and it is easy to understand how dangerous must be the rapids in the Usumacinta through here. This *paraje* will remain forever memorable because of its freedom from insects. I have not heard one mosquito, have not picked off one *garrapata*, nor been stung by one flea. The house is distant enough so that we can be comfortable, and I am looking forward to a good night's rest.

Rutherford lost my good khaki wool blanket today. It was left out and he was using it as a saddle seat. His mule ran down a hill, loosened the saddle, and in the general debacle the blanket was lost and he did not recover it. I am sorry because it was a good one. Thus, gradually, we are losing our equipment.

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<sup>247</sup> The term "grass widow" refers not to a dead husband, but one who is away much of the time in the bush. The term now applies to wives of men who spend too much time on the golf course.



## CHAPTER 43.

### EDITORS' INSERT: PIEDRAS NEGRAS

Piedras Negras, known in Classic times as Yokib, lies on the hilly eastern bank of the Usumacinta River in the extreme northwest corner of Guatemala, an area now designated as the Parque Nacional Sierra del Lacando. The site looms large in the history of the ancient Maya as one of two large polities in the middle Usumacinta basin, and in the history of Maya archaeology owing to its well-preserved monuments, which played a key role in the advancement of epigraphic studies especially after 1960.

#### **Piedras Negras: A Brief Chronology**

Piedras Negras was one of two important Maya sites—the other being Yaxchilan—along the middle reaches of the Usumacinta. Occupied continuously since the Middle Preclassic (900–400 BC), its florescence dates to the Late Classic, specifically the reigns of seven rulers beginning in AD 603 and lasting until the early ninth century (Martin and Grube 2008: 142–153; Clancy 2009). These rulers erected carved stelae of high-quality (and thus well-preserved) limestone marking the ending of every *jotun* (a five-year period) for 200 years. This series, which provides one of the most detailed and uninterrupted chronicles of political history in the Maya area, is a key to our modern understanding of the contents of Maya hieroglyphic monuments.

Although Piedras Negras was one of the largest sites along the middle Usumacinta, it was rather small compared to other major Maya sites. An extensive study of domestic dwellings at the Piedras Negras site core calculated a maximum population of just over 2,500 people, although a more probable number might have been closer to 1,800 (Nelson 2005: 156, 171). Other estimates range as high as 5,000 (Golden et al. 2016: 109). But the relatively small population of the city itself is somewhat misleading. Considering the entire polity, which included an expansive hinterland covering some 3,450 km<sup>2</sup>, the census rises to between tens of thousands (Golden et al. 2016: 109) to about 51,000 (Nelson 2005: 161–162). It was this larger population that supported Piedras Negras' status as a significant city and military power. The population declined sharply at the end of the Late Preclassic, AD 200–250 (Nelson 2005: 155), part of a wider decline across the Maya area sometimes attributed to drought (Ebert et al. 2017; Gill 2000: 316). Piedras Negras was never fully abandoned, however, and recovered in the Early Classic, so that by the fifth century a dynastic line again ruled over a large area of peripheral settlements.

Compared to the wealth of epigraphic information pertaining to the Late Classic, the Preclassic and Early Classic periods at Piedras Negras are less documented. Excavations by Stephen Houston and Héctor Escobedo (Houston et al. 1998, 1999) show that the Early Classic

city was extensive and covered much of the same footprint as the Late Classic city core, although the South Court group was the principal focus of civic-ceremonial activity (Clancy 2009: 8). Its plaza was also the location of the earliest Piedras Negras occupation (Nelson 2005: 152).

Only a few monuments date to the Early Classic period: Stelae 29 and 30 and Panel 12. Both stelae are poorly preserved, although Panel 12 (AD 518) is in good condition (Figure 43.1). It depicts a ruler presiding over bound figures, each of whom are identified as being from different polities. These figures are shown as “ceremonial captives” participating in an elite ritual (Clancy 2009: 22–23). One figure, very overweight, is identified as Knot-Eyed Jaguar, then (c. AD 518) ruler of Yaxchilan 40 km to the southeast (O’Neil 2012: 163; Martin and Grube 2008: 141). (That site, upriver and on the opposite bank in what is now Mexico, provides more information about Piedras Negras and its early rulers, for example on Structure 12 (Martin and Grube 2008: 140; O’Neil 2012: 95–96; Tate 1992: 277). The Yaxchilan texts offer evidence of the long-standing rivalry between the two cities, each vying to dominate the local Usumacinta demesne through centuries of warfare, with each claiming victories and suffering defeats (O’Neil 2012: 25–26; 165–168; Martin and Grube 2008: 140–141; Martin 2020: 134).

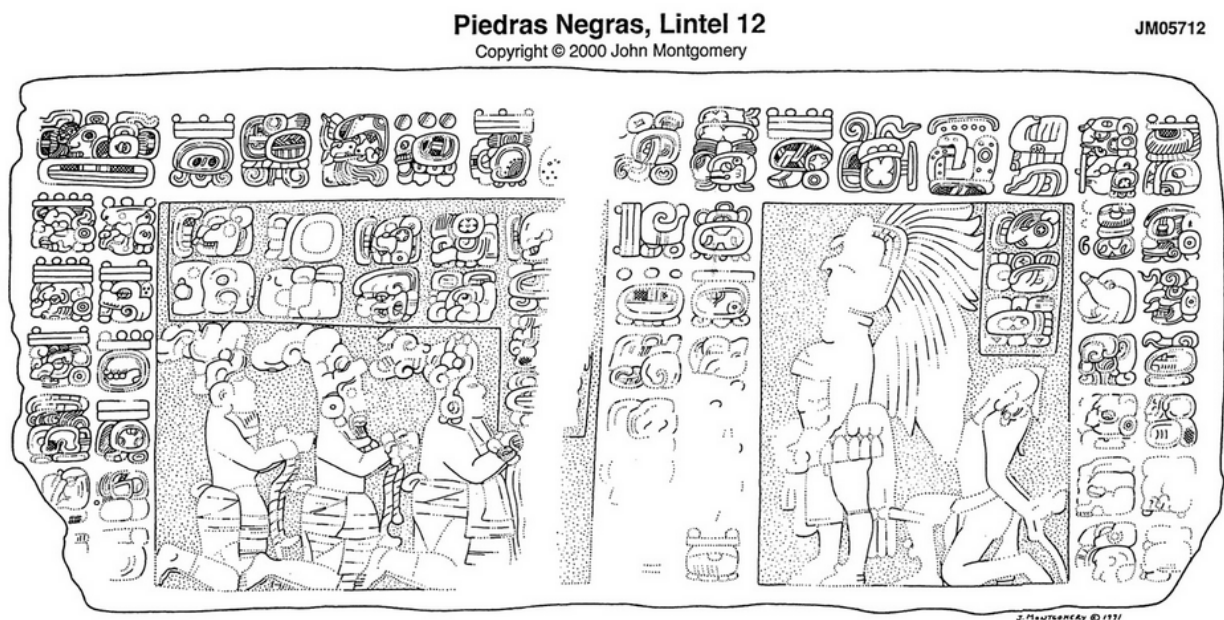


Figure 43.1. Piedras Negras Panel 12 showing three bound rulers (left) facing the king (Ruler C). The portly figure in front is thought to be Knot-Eyed Jaguar, ruler of Yaxchilan.

Four Early Classic kings—Ruler A (c. 460), Ruler B (c. 478), Turtle Tooth (c. 508), and Ruler C (c. 514)—have been identified at Piedras Negras (Martin and Grube 2008: 140). During the fifth century, if the texts from Yaxchilan are to be believed (never discount the role of propaganda), Piedras Negras was in a subservient position, its rulers regularly defeated. Even so, the Panel 12 depiction of bound Knot-Eyed Jaguar before Ruler C indicates that in the early sixth century, Piedras Negras had turned the tables on its rival (Martin and Grube 2008: 141; Clancy 2009: 19–23). A retrospective inscription on Piedras Negras Panel 2 indicates that during the reign of Turtle Tooth, Teotihuacan may have expanded into the Usumacinta area to the advantage of Piedras

Negras and may have played a role in defeating Yaxchilan (Martin and Grube 2008: 141; O’Neil 2012: 160; Martin 2020: 81).

After 518, the historical record at Piedras Negras has an 85-year gap until 603, when K’inich Yo’nal Ahk I came to the throne, an event marking the beginning of its Late Classic florescence (Table 43.1). During this dark period, Piedras Negras may have suffered a military defeat at the hands of Pomona (Golden et al. 2016: 123). Between 603 and 808, seven rulers reigned over Piedras Negras, most erecting multiple stelae with historical inscriptions.

Table 43.1. Piedras Negras Late Classic rulers, dates, and monuments.

RULER				
NO.	NAME	DATES	MONUMENTS	LOCATIONS
1	K'inich Yo'nal Ahk I	603–639	Stelae 25, 26, 31	South Group Court: R-9, R-2
2	Itzam K'an Ahk I	639–686	Panels 2, 4, 7, Stelae 33–39, 46	South Group Court: R-5 <sup>a</sup>
3	K'inich Yo'nal Ahk II	687–729	Panel 15, Stelae 1–8, Altar 1	West Group Plaza: J-4
4	Itzam K'an Ahk II	729–757	Stelae 9–11, 22, 40, Altar 2	West Group Plaza: J-3
5	Yo'nal Ahk III	758–767	Stelae 14, 16	East Group Plaza: O-13
6	Ha' K'in Xook	767–780	Stelae 13, 18, 23	East Group Plaza: O-13
7	K'inich Yat Ahk II	781–808	Throne 1, Stelae 12, 15, Panels 1, 3	East Group Plaza: O-13

a, Ruler 2 initiated a move to the West Group Plaza, where he erected Stelae 38 and 39 (Clancy 2009: 41).

Warfare was a main theme during this period (Golden et al. 2008), with many clashes mentioned on monuments. Conflict occurred not only with Yaxchilan, but also with other sites, including Santa Elena, Sak Tz'i, Pomona, and a rising newcomer, Palenque. Evidence also hints that Piedras Negras was, at least for a time, drawn into the ongoing rivalry between Tikal and Calakmul, on the side of the latter. The competition between Piedras Negras and Yaxchilan, however, was the principal source of warfare along the river, with Piedras Negras suffering frequent losses, especially during and after the reign of Ruler 4, Itzam K'an Ahk II. Indeed, the Piedras Negras dynasty met its end in 808 when Ruler 7, K'inich Yat Ahk II, was captured by Yaxchilan's K'inich Tatb'u Skull III. Desecrations, such as the deliberate smashing of Throne 1, and evidence of destruction and fires, may indicate that the city itself was sacked (Martin and Grube 2008: 153; Harrison-Buck 2016: 68; Golden et al. 2019: 112), although this vandalism may have happened later (Golden et al. 2016: 112). Piedras Negras remained occupied, though in decline, after the 808 event:

In the century following that defeat, the population of the kingdom shrank. Rural communities were slowly abandoned, and the residents of Piedras Negras filled in the rooms of their homes and once-royal buildings with debris, gradually reduced the number of room spaces used as living quarters, and departed for other regions. Thus, the political, economic, and ritual community of Piedras Negras dissipated with an

initial loud military bang followed by a slow, wheezing population decline (Golden et al. 2016: 109).

A declining population continued to struggle along until about 930—the date usually cited for “elite abandonment” of Piedras Negras (Harrison-Buck 2016: 67). Interestingly, the other main sites along the Usumacinta suffered a similar fate at almost the exact same time a century earlier: Yaxchilan in 810 and Palenque in 815 (Harrison-Buck 2016: 67-68). Of course, the first decades of the ninth century saw similar abandonments across the Maya area.

### The Site

Most of the main structures of Piedras Negras lie on hills at elevations ranging between 80 m (South Groups) and 120 m (West and East Groups) above the Usumacinta. Two valleys offer entrance to the city, one on each side of the site core; a third valley nearly bifurcates the city center but apparently was not used as a means of access from the river (Stuart and Graham 2003: 9.11). Although the steep incline might have had a defensive advantage in an area of ongoing warfare, there appear to be no defensive constructions at any of the entrances. Indeed, the valley offering access to the Acropolis and Western Group Plaza leads to the site’s principal ballcourt.

Late Classic Piedras Negras was divided into several principal groups: South Group Plaza, South Group Court, East Group Plaza, and West Group Plaza, the last siting the large Acropolis. Multiple smaller groups fill out the intermediate areas (Figure 43.2). The South Group Court was the center of Early Classic ceremonial activity (Clancy 2009: 19; Stuart and Graham 2003: 9.11) as well as during the reigns of the first two Late Classic rulers at Piedras Negras, both of whom erected stelae there. Ruler 2, however, initiated a move to the Acropolis facing the West Group Plaza, a move finalized by Ruler 3, who erected his stelae in front of Structure J-4 (Clancy 2009: 71). Ruler 4 also placed his inscribed monuments on the West Group Plaza (at Structure J-3), but the final three rulers again shifted the civic/ceremonial locus, this time to the smaller East Group Plaza centered on Structure O-13 (Clancy 2009: 135, 149; Montgomery 1995). Each ruler’s program of erecting monuments at discrete locations aided Tatiana Proskouriakoff in her groundbreaking discovery of the historicity of the Piedras Negras inscriptions (below).

### Early Archaeological Investigations at Piedras Negras<sup>249</sup>

Nineteenth-century explorations of the middle reaches of the Usumacinta, then called the Usumacintla, discovered Yaxchilan, which was known as early as 1833 (Galindo 1833) and in the 1880s Edwin Rockstoh, Alfred Maudslay, and Désiré Charnay visited the site. None of these early explorers knew about additional major ruins downriver. The Usumacinta south (upriver) of Yaxchilan was easily navigable, but rapids downriver toward Piedras Negras made travel a challenge. In 1914, Morley pursued the difficult river route to reach the ruins, as described in his diary entry of May 8:

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<sup>249</sup> Unless otherwise noted this section draws from the following sources: Houston n.d.; Morley 1937-38 vol. 3; Stuart and Graham 2003; Satterthwaite et al. (1931–1939) in Weeks et al. 2005.

So swift runs the Usumacinta here that in a short time we were at the rapids and going over these consumed about two hours because it was necessary to discharge cargo and carry it for about 100 yards. It was hot going after leaving the rapids. The river narrows down and runs very swiftly, and in one of the many rapids we got drenched when a whitecap hit us broadside (Rice and Ward 2021: 111).

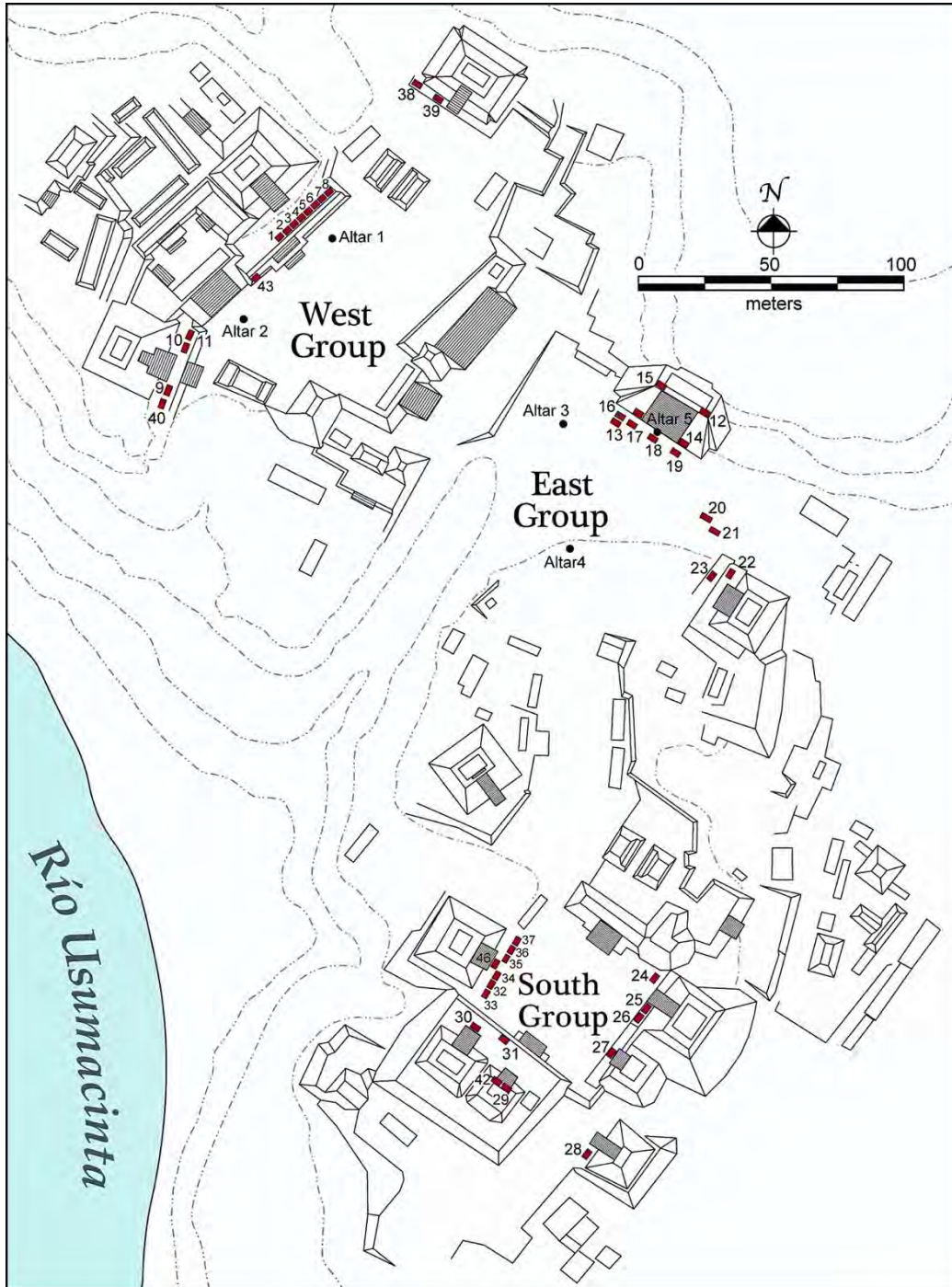


Figure 43.2. The site core of Piedras Negras.



In 1889, Ludovic Chambon (1994) visited Piedras Negras and published a brief account of some of the ruined structures. Morley, apparently unaware of Chambon’s visit, states the initial reports came in 1894 as the result of mahogany operations that accessed the site not from the river, but rather overland from the north via the town of Tenosique (the same route taken by Morley in his difficult 1921 expedition; see Chapters 36–42). For Morley, the “discoverer” of Piedras Negras was Emiliano Palma, who founded a series of *monterías* nearby—El Porvenir, some 4 km from the ruins in 1885; Desempeño, 20 km southeast of the ruins; and finally, Piedras Negras in 1894, from which the ruins take their name (Morley 1937-38, iii: 1).

The first archaeological study at Piedras Negras came when Teobert Maler made four visits to the site (twice in 1895, then in 1897 and 1899). His longest stay at the ruins was a three-month sojourn in 1899. The initial visits were exploratory in nature, but taken together, and especially including the extended 1899 expedition, Maler’s contribution was profound: he made an initial map of the site (Figure 43.3) and discovered many of the inscribed monuments known today.

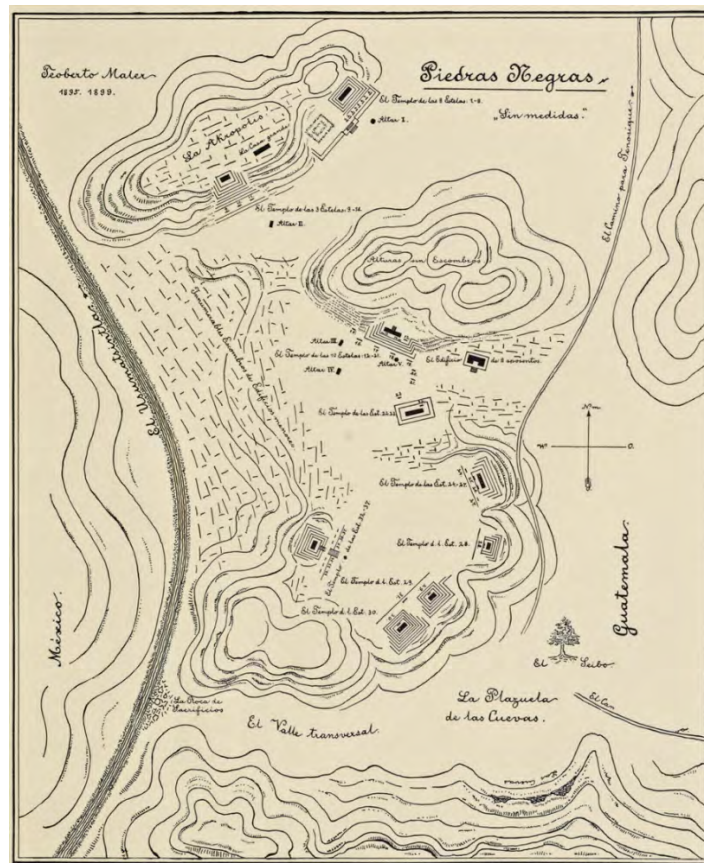


Figure 43.3. Maler’s early map of Piedras Negras.

Maler’s (1901) excellent photographs of the monuments (e.g., Figure 43.4)<sup>250</sup> are especially important given that Morley’s CIW photos are of lesser quality and because looting and weathering have decimated the inscriptions. The University of Pennsylvania explorations during

<sup>250</sup> These photographs are available online at [https://www.mesoweb.com/photo/Maler\\_1901.pdf](https://www.mesoweb.com/photo/Maler_1901.pdf).

the 1930s also made a series of photographs, many of which were published in Morley's *The Inscriptions of the Peten* (1937–38, 1: Plates 130–146), though these, too, are rather poor.



Figure 43.4. Maler's photograph of Piedras Negras Stela 3.

No scholars visited Piedras Negras for 15 years, doubtless because of the difficulty in reaching it, until Sylvanus Morley and Joe Spinden arrived in May 1914 (Rice and Ward 2021: 111–116). Morley returned four more times (1921, 1929, and twice in 1931) spending an aggregate of over four weeks at the site. He undertook no excavations, limiting his work to surveys and photographing, drawing, and translating the dates on the inscribed monuments (Figure 43.5). His drawings are published in *The Inscriptions of the Peten* (Morley 1937–38), which devotes nearly all



of volume 3 to the site. The most significant visit was the 1921 expedition, Chapters 41 and 42. Morley recognized Piedras Negras' importance for the study of Maya hieroglyphs because of the number of extant stelae, their generally good state of preservation, and, given his fixation on dates, the complete *jotun*-ending sequence spanning more than a century.

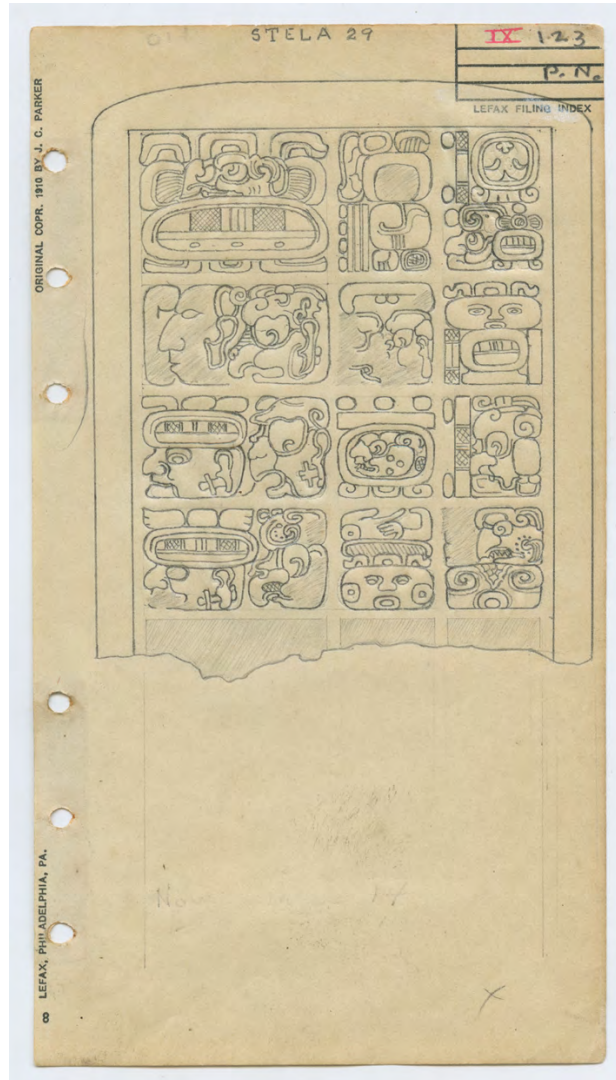


Figure 43.5. One of Morley's field drawings made at Piedras Negras.

During the 1920s, the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) was by far the most robust player in Mesoamerican archaeology. In the late 1920s, Horace Jayne, director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (the Penn Museum; hereafter the Museum), expressed interest in a large archaeological project in the Maya area. Morley, knowing that the CIW was at maximum capacity, strongly encouraged Jayne and J. Alden Mason, curator of the American section of the Museum, to visit Piedras Negras as a potential site for an extended project. As Mason himself wrote in the first of the project's *Preliminary Papers*:

Piedras Negras was particularly chosen from among the possible sites of the Old Maya Empire, largely on the advice of Dr. Morley. Its preference was due to the following causes: Piedras Negras stands preeminent among Maya cities in artistic sculpture; its series of carved and dated stela [sic], one of which was apparently erected every five years, is the most complete and unbroken in the Maya region; it is more accessible than most of the ancient cities and therefore the problem of exporting characteristic examples of its monumental statuary was easier of solution; further, the situation of the site on a large river with ample water-supply promised unusual facilities for the camp (Mason in Weeks et al. 2005: 11).

The Museum was not completely new to Maya studies. George Byron Gordon, who led the Harvard expeditions to Copan after John Owen's untimely death in 1891 and until 1901, was hired as director of the Museum to oversee expeditions to the Arctic. His direction of the Museum, in contrast to the focus of the Carnegie, was decidedly aimed at artifact acquisition, and one of his lasting achievements was building the large collections now held by the Penn Museum. He was instrumental in building a collection of Maya artifacts, mostly with the help of Robert Burkitt, an eccentric linguist who resided in Alta Verapaz. Burkitt supplemented his income by being a full-time "finder" for the Museum.<sup>251</sup> Morley himself met Burkitt when he travelled in Alta Verapaz in May of 1915 (Rice and Ward 2021: 225–226).

When Mason first visited Piedras Negras in 1930 to ascertain its potential for excavation, one of his primary concerns was exploiting the Usumacinta as a means of exporting artifacts, include large stone stelae, back to Philadelphia. Although he quickly ascertained that the river was not a reliable means of transport, he saw that the ruins were well worthy of a long-term project. His first order of business was to cut a road so that the site could be more easily accessed, a project completed in 1931, when excavations began under his direction. Stephen Houston (n.d.: 4) notes that Mason's work was shoddy and his field notes almost worthless.<sup>252</sup> His excavations at Piedras Negras, especially the digging undertaken at Structure O-13, "gutted the building with shocking violence.... Sifting through Mason's backdirt attested to haste and indifferent supervision ..." (Houston n.d.: 4). Fortunately, Mason only supervised the operation for one season. In 1932, Linton Satterthwaite took charge and competently ran the project until its completion in 1939.<sup>253</sup>

Although the initial aim of the Museum project was to export artifacts to Philadelphia—multiple large objects, including Stela 14, were removed from the site in 1931—Satterthwaite shifted the focus to study of the architecture. One important result was the preparation of a detailed site plan by Tatiana Proskouriakoff and Fred Paris, a map not updated until the 1990s. But it was a struggle to bring the project's results to publication. The Great Depression, followed by the onset of World War II, dried up most funding (it is remarkable that excavations were able to continue at all during the 1930s). Only about 20 copies were published of each of

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<sup>251</sup> In 2009, 150 artifacts Burkitt collected were presented at the Penn Museum's exhibition *Painted Metaphors: Pottery and Politics of the Ancient Maya* (Schuster 2009). See Chapter 13, p. 139, note 53.

<sup>252</sup> To be fair, Mason was a linguist and his only previous archaeological experience was a single season of survey in Colombia in 1922–23.

<sup>253</sup> Margaret Satterthwaite, Linton's wife, maintained a detailed field diary during the 1931 season, published by Mesoweb (Satterthwaite 2018).

Satterthwaite's *Preliminary Reports*, with limited circulation (Weeks et al. 2005: 3–4), and were not widely available until 2005, when they were collected and published as *Piedras Negras Archaeology, 1931–1939* (Weeks et al. 2005). Also included are monographs on Piedras Negras architecture, originally published in the 1940s, devoted to temples, ballcourts, sweat houses, and unclassified buildings. After the 1939 season, no archaeological work was undertaken at the site for more than 50 years, but the field notes, reports, photographs, and other data that resulted from the Museum project provided ample material for study during subsequent decades (Coe 1959; Holley 1983).

By far one of the most significant legacies of the Museum expeditions of the 1930s was the introduction of Tatiana Proskouriakoff to the field of Maya studies. Proskouriakoff was born in 1909 in Tomsk, Russia, emigrating with her parents to the United States in 1916.<sup>254</sup> Her formal training was in architecture, graduating from Pennsylvania State University in 1930 as the only woman in her class. She became an illustrator, specializing in making paintings of houses for wealthy clients; she also took graduate courses at the University of Pennsylvania, where she prepared drawings and archaeological renderings for the Museum. Taken by the quality of her work, Satterthwaite offered her a position on the 1936 expedition to Piedras Negras. Thus began one of the most illustrious careers in Maya archaeology, Proskouriakoff going on to play major roles at the CIW (1940–1958) and at the Peabody Museum (1958–1977).

Satterthwaite, who became one of Proskouriakoff's two mentors (the other being Morley), assigned her to survey. Besides the detailed map she and Paris made, she produced a watercolor rendering of the Piedras Negras Acropolis (Figure 43.6), no small feat given that the ruins were in poor state of preservation and buried under collapsed masonry and thick jungle growth. Later, when Morley saw this rendering, he urged her to visit other sites and make similar drawings, going so far as to raise money to support her travels. After she painted Copan, Morley was convinced she was a talent he needed at the CIW. In 1939, he offered her permanent employment with a first assignment to draw Chichen Itza (Villela 2000). After working there, she played a key role at Mayapan in the 1950s as the CIW wound down its Historical Division. Proskouriakoff's renderings were published as *An Album of Maya Architecture* in 1946 (Proskouriakoff 1963). If one were to make any criticism of these stunning artworks it is that they invariably show temples, palaces, and urban cores nearly devoid of people, only populated by a few priests and elites. This, of course, reflected the prevailing position of the day that Maya centers were not "cities" as such, but rather nearly unpopulated civic/ceremonial centers, a view strongly supported by both Morley and Thompson.

As early as 1942, Proskouriakoff's focus began to shift away from architecture toward Maya art and hieroglyphics. She published a study of Maya sculpture (Proskouriakoff 1950), the first significant comprehensive study of the subject since Joe Spinden's *A Study of Maya Art* (1913). Influenced by Morley's fixation on dating Maya monuments, she attempted to propose a stylistic chronology for monuments lacking hieroglyphic dates. Before modern linguistic-epigraphic approaches to Maya inscriptions, the study of Maya hieroglyphics was closely tied to art history, the texts, of course, being a form of sculptural art in and of themselves. Accordingly, Proskouriakoff's new focus led her directly into the study of inscriptions and her first-hand

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<sup>254</sup> Our summary is primarily drawn from a biography of Proskouriakoff by her late life assistant Char Saloman (2002).

familiarity with the Piedras Negras monuments pulled her back to the Usumacinta area. During the late 1950s, she began a systematic study of those texts, the result of which was a breakthrough that upended the study of the ancient Maya.

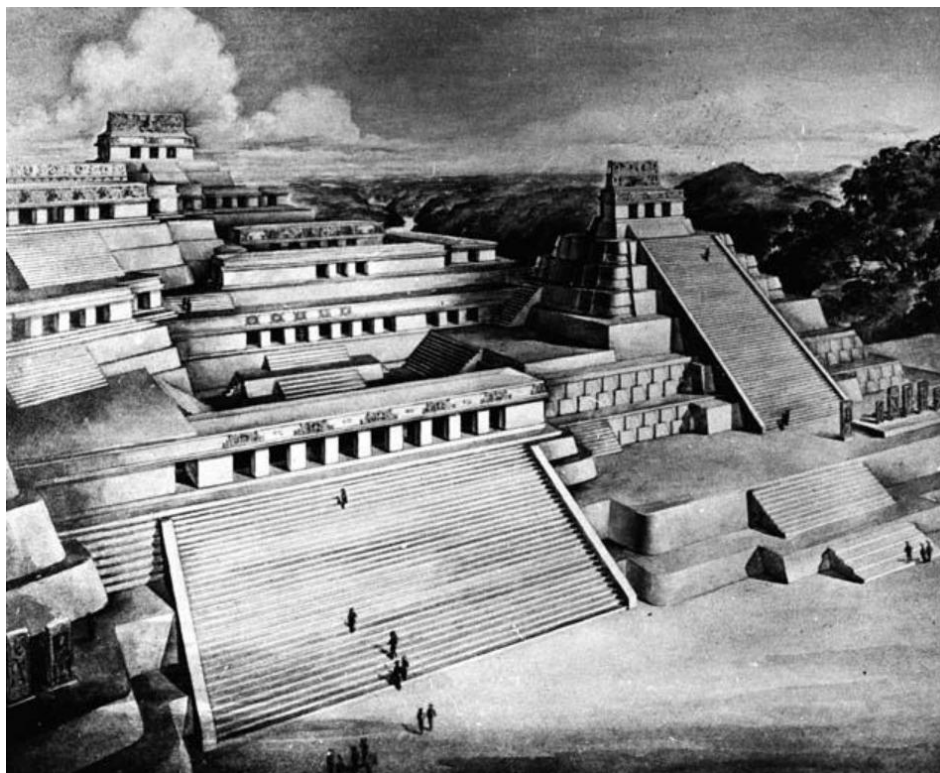


Figure 43.6. Proskouriakoff's rendering of the Acropolis at Piedras Negras.

As mentioned, the seven rulers of Late Classic Piedras Negras erected monuments at discrete locations, each ruler's monuments placed together at locations at the site core (see Table 43.1). With the monuments clearly segregated, Proskouriakoff noted that, in each of the individual groupings, the range of inscribed dates invariably fitted within the range of a human lifetime. This realization, which would have been more difficult to discern had the monuments not been positioned as they were, was profound and Proskouriakoff began to suspect that the inscriptions might contain dynastic history instead of astronomical/astrological content. Proskouriakoff's biographer quotes a telling passage from her 1958 diary: "I have been working at home on stela groupings and date arrangements. Although no simple solution has emerged as yet, certain patterns are suggested that may have real significance" (Saloman 2002: 137).

The patterns she saw were focused on two glyphs—one being an "upended frog" and the other the so-called "toothache glyph" (Figure 43.7). The first of these normally occurred on a monument some 12–31 years before the second (Coe 1992: 172–173; Proskouriakoff 1960). She correctly suggested that the upended frog glyph indicated birth and the toothache glyph recorded the accession of a ruler to the Piedras Negras throne. In her seminal article "Historical Implications of a Pattern of Dates at Piedras Negras, Guatemala" (Proskouriakoff 1960), she presented her findings which outlined the first dynastic sequence at any Maya site. Her research was so thorough, and her presentation so precisely argued, that even Thompson, long the leading

proponent of the argument that the Maya texts contained no historical data, was unhesitatingly convinced that he had been wrong.

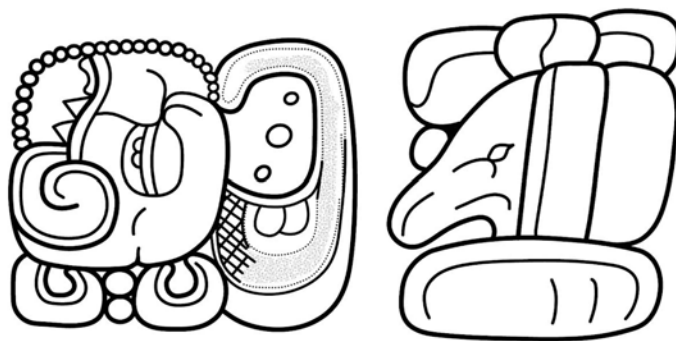


Figure 43.7. Left, the “upended frog” glyph (T740); right, the “toothache” glyph (T684). Proskouriakoff identified these as birth and accession, respectively.

Proskouriakoff published similar studies on Yaxchilan in 1963 and 1964. At about the same time (1958), Heinrich Berlin made another important discovery in the form of site-specific emblem glyphs that showed the inscriptions also contained identifiers of places (see Martin 2020; Stuart and Houston 1994). Together, Proskouriakoff and Berlin opened the door to the new discipline of Maya “history,” in the sense of the study of the Maya written word, which would supplement traditional archaeology. Archaeologists after 1960 had to make room for the new students of epigraphy and art history, an adjustment that has not always been easy.

With the completion of the Museum’s season in 1939, Piedras Negras returned to backwater status and saw no major archaeological work for the next 58 years, despite Satterthwaite’s desire to continue for at least five more seasons (Houston n.d.: 7). World War II ended any hopes for continued work in the 1940s. Eventually the Museum moved on to tackle the very large project at Tikal in the 1960s, which ended its focus on Piedras Negras. In the last decades of the twentieth century, the 30-year Guatemala civil war saw the Usumacinta basin turned into a violent and unapproachable region as the FAR (*Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes*) rebel group set up camp in and around Piedras Negras. Just as Morley’s Chichen Itza project had been delayed by a full decade after it was first conceived in 1914 owing to the political instability in Mexico, so too, work in northwestern Petén was delayed until the Guatemala civil war came to an end in 1996. One dramatic example of the dangerous conditions in the region occurred in 1993 when a team led by Peter Matthews was attacked while working to salvage a large altar at the site of El Cayo. Beaten and stripped of belongings, Matthews and his colleagues survived only by swimming across the Usumacinta and walking for days to Frontera Corozal (Schuster 1997).

During those civil war years, the site was occasionally visited by archaeologists. For example, Ian Graham made stops at Piedras Negras in 1974 and 1975. In 1983, in response to a proposal to dam the Usumacinta—a project that would have flooded multiple sites along the river, including parts of Piedras Negras—Michael Coe, Mary Miller, Jeffrey Wilkerson, and George and David Stuart developed a plan to conduct excavations at the site (Wilkerson 1985). The goal was to excavate royal tombs and study the relationships between architecture and dynastic history (Houston n.d.: 16). Fortunately, the plan for the dam never materialized, but neither did the

proposed excavation project, the funds being shifted to a project at Caracol, Belize. Another effort to undertake work was proposed by Miguel Valencia of IDAEH, but the region was too dangerous, and the project never got beyond the planning stages.

### **Proyecto Arqueológico Piedras Negras**

In 1995 Stephen Houston (then at Brigham Young University) and Héctor Escobedo (then working on Vanderbilt University's Petexbatun Project) visited Piedras Negras during a rafting trip down the Usumacinta. Both decided to explore options for a long-term project at the site, and with the signing of the Guatemala peace accords in 1996, Piedras Negras was again accessible to scholars. Proyecto Arqueológico Piedras Negras was planned during 1996 with BYU, IDAEH, and the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG) as sponsors, with early funding by FAMSI. The goals of the project were to update the site survey, to continue study of inscribed monuments and their relationship to architecture, and to offer research opportunities for both U.S. and international graduate students. On-site work continued over the course of five annual expeditions (1997–2000, 2004) with additional goals, such as the study of the Piedras Negras periphery, added as the project grew.<sup>255</sup>

The 1997 season began in April with work spread across multiple parts of the site core: test pits and architectural clearance were undertaken at the South Group, the Acropolis (Structures J-3 and J-4), Structure O-13, and other locations at the site core. Photographing the remaining inscribed monuments was also a priority, especially given the severity of the looting that had taken place since the 1930s (see below). The first season closed at the end of May after backfilling.

The 1998 season saw a major expansion of the project: 75 laborers allowed numerous operations to run simultaneously, including limited surveying at the peripheral site of La Pasadita. Houston divides the 1998 excavations into two categories—monumental architecture and smaller structures and patios. Because of the instability of the rubble, work on the larger structures required shoring, and in some cases, excavations had to be aborted. Such dangerous conditions nearly thwarted ongoing excavations at O-13, supervised by Escobedo, which uncovered intact masonry still retaining red pigment, burials, a large cache that included 129 eccentrics, and discovery that a tomb found during the 1997 season was that of Ruler 4. At the West Group Plaza, excavations at the Acropolis confirmed the Late Classic date of the final constructions and revealed building activity in the Early Classic, displacing the long-held notion that early Piedras Negras existed exclusively at the South Court and Plaza. Digging also revealed that the West Group Plaza itself was created as an open space after the destruction of numerous structures from the end of the Early Classic. The several Piedras Negras sweat baths were investigated during 1998, which also involved stabilization work. A GPS-focused peripheral settlement survey identified some 85 smaller Late Classic sites within a few kilometers of the site core. An updated map of Piedras Negras, correcting some errors found in the Museum map, was also produced. As a poignant highpoint of the 1998 season, Tatiana Proskouriakoff's remains

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<sup>255</sup> Information on the BYU/UVG project comes from Houston's book on Piedras Negras (in prep.). Chapter 2, summarizing work at the site, is available online at [https://www.academia.edu/37012293/Archaeowork\\_at\\_Piedras\\_Negras\\_Guatemala](https://www.academia.edu/37012293/Archaeowork_at_Piedras_Negras_Guatemala). (For annual reports on three seasons, see Houston et al. 1998, 1999, 2000.)



were interred in Structure J-23 on Easter Day.

During the 1999 season, efforts focused on the Acropolis with the goal of establishing a construction chronology from bedrock to the final Late Classic exposed structures. Concurrently, excavations at the South Group Court included Structure R-5, which glyphic evidence indicated was the burial location of Ruler 1. Sweat baths garnered additional attention, specifically those not studied in previous seasons, and probable residential areas immediately adjacent to the main plazas were explored. Stabilization efforts, required by the project's permit, centered on Structure J-11 at the top of the Acropolis, which had been damaged by the Museum's work in the 1930s and, more recently, by vegetation.

In 2000, work continued in the South Group Court with excavations in multiple structures and discovery of a royal tomb (Burial 110) in Structure R-8-Sub 1. Areas of the Acropolis not fully studied earlier were excavated, along with the residential area on the slope behind it. Panel 15 was discovered in the stairway of Acropolis Structure J-4 (Figure 43.8), the first significant inscribed monument found at Piedras Negras since the time of Morley and Satterthwaite. Weighing more than 3,000 pounds, the panel had been originally located near the top of the stairway before falling to the lower position where it was found. It may have been deliberately cast down the stairs at the time of Piedras Negras' final demise in a mimicking of the practice of throwing sacrificial victims from pyramid temples (Houston et al. 2000: 103). The panel was boxed and carried by helicopter to Guatemala City where it resides today in the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnografía (Houston et. al. 2000: 103).



Figure 43.8. Piedras Negras Panel 15, discovered in 2000 on the stairway of Structure J-4.



The 2004 season focused almost exclusively on large Structure K-5 on the north side of the West Group Plaza. The Museum project had worked this structure extensively in the 1930s, exposing plaster masks on the face of the building, which remained exposed and were in poor condition by the late 1990s. Numerous burials were placed directly in front of the pyramid, close together and containing persons of all ages. Additional excavations between K-5 and the West Plaza ballcourt confirmed the 1998 findings that much of the Western Group Plaza had been created by the razing of earlier structures.

After completion of the BYU/UVG project, conservation work at Piedras Negras, mainly at the Acropolis, continued, along with survey and excavation projects at smaller sites in the surrounding region, including La Técnica, El Kinel, and Zancudero (Figure 43.9; Golden and Scherer 2006). The Sierra del Lacandón Regional Archaeology Project (SLRAP), begun in 2003, was thwarted by a return of violence to the region, this time at the hands of drug traffickers (Golden and Scherer 2006: 14–15), and the project ended in 2010. Subsequent work focused on sites in neighboring Chiapas.

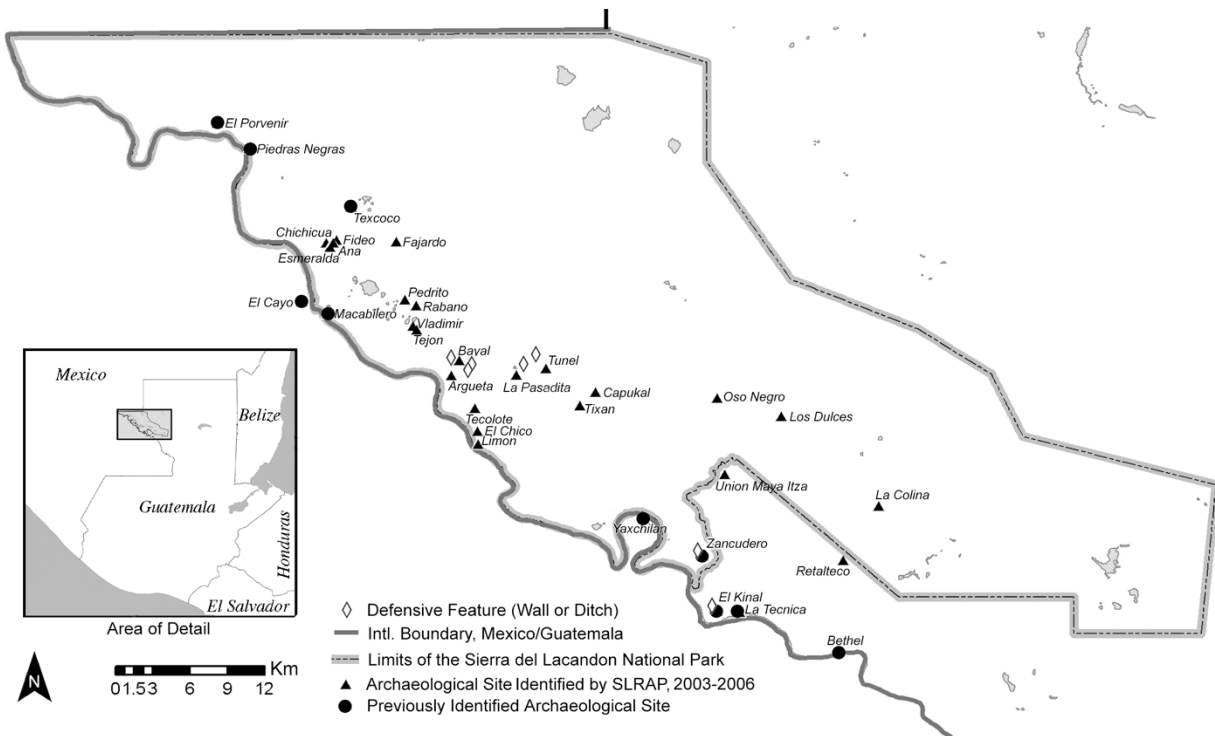


Figure 43.9. Map showing sites in the area studied by the Sierra del Lacandón Regional Archaeology Project.

After 2015, the Piedras Negras/Yaxchilan area was explored by the Proyecto Paisaje Piedras Negras-Yaxchilan (PPPNY). Excavations were carried out near the South Group Court at the Piedras Negras site core, including a study of teeth that had been extracted during ancient times, likely because of pathologies (Schnell and Scherer 2021). Andrew Scherer and colleagues (2022) summarize the more than two decades of archaeological exploration into relations between Piedras Negras and its neighbors in this region of the Usumacinta.

## Looting at Piedras Negras

The stunning beauty and good state of preservation of the Piedras Negras inscribed monuments have been a boon to scholars, but, unfortunately, these very qualities have led to a staggering level of displacement. Few monuments remain on site: some have been moved to museums, but many have been looted and withdrawn from public access. Several were severely damaged by looters, known locally as *huetcheros* (after *huetche* or armadillo, which digs in the ground), with fragmentary bits of stelae scattered about across the globe. As recently as 2019, a key segment of Piedras Negras Stela 9 was offered for auction in France (Kaur 2021).

When one thinks of looting of the ancient Maya sites, what usually comes to mind is trenching through mounds in search of portable objects deposited in elite burials—the grand prizes being jade and fine polychrome pottery, which are easy to transport and hide, and command high prices on the illicit art market. One needs only to look at Ebay.com or Invaluable.com to witness the thriving open market for these objects. The removal of large stone sculptures, on the other hand, is a challenging task not only from a logistical standpoint, but also in terms of end placement. Today few collectors can accommodate large pieces without raising eyebrows and, in the case of the Piedras Negras monuments, photographic documentation is strong, making the resale of these objects in any open setting nearly impossible. But if we look to the decades before the 1960s, we see that institutions, not individual collectors, were the principal recipients of extracted monumental art, and certainly this is the case insofar as the Piedras Negras stelae are concerned. An excellent example, from the other side of Petén, is found in Morley's diary entries regarding Thomas Gann's many attempts to remove large blocks of the Naranjo Staircase (see Chapter 23, p. 252, note 121; Chapter 24, pp. 259–260), an adventure that teeters on the edge of outright institutional looting. Although the blocks Gann removed ended up in the British Museum, the record lists them as “purchased” from Dr. Gann. As revealed in his diary, Morley strongly disapproved of the removal of sections of the stairway. And as noted above, the initial goal of the University of Pennsylvania project was the removal of large stelae for display in Philadelphia. Morley, and the CIW for its entire period of work in Mesoamerica, strongly avoided any aspect of collecting specimens for individuals or institutions.

Looting by private individuals at Piedras Negras was largely carried out by thieves from Tenosique (Houston 2021: 5; O'Neil 2012: 192; Stuart and Graham 2003). Interestingly, looting declined during the 30 years of the Guatemala civil war, the Usumacinta being too dangerous even for criminals (Houston 2021: 5). Because of their large size, looted stelae were shaved (to make them thinner and less heavy) or broken into pieces for easier transport. Sometimes this process destroyed the monuments being looted. Ian Graham, in *The Road to Ruins* (2010: 431), his delightfully titled memoir, tells the story of the main culprit behind the looting of the Piedras Negras stelae:

In the Maya area, the first example of large-scale looting that I myself came across—and certainly one of the most regrettable—was the work of a wretch named Delfino Suárez. A native of Tabasco, he'd had chicle and lumber concessions in the lower regions of the Usumacinta River before devoting himself to the plunder of ancient sculpture. To this end, he established a base on the banks at El Cayo, about nine miles upriver from the great ruins of Piedras Negras, but across the river on the Mexican side.... From this

base he was able to engage in the dismemberment and removal of Piedras Negras stelae without worrying in the least about interference from Guatemalan authorities, for in those days not a soul was living on Guatemalan territory within fifty miles of that great ruined city. So, he and his men sawed up the fallen stelae and panels with careless abandon into chunks they could drag down to the riverbank, and they did their work in a most destructive manner.

Table 43.2 shows the current documented (if known) locations of many of the Piedras Negras stelae. As one can see, if the goal is to view the Piedras Negras monuments in person, Piedras Negras is the last place one would go. Thirteen monuments (or fragments) are now in the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología in Guatemala City. Others can be found in multiple museums in the United States, Europe, and Mexico (six in the United States, two in Germany, one in Oaxaca, Mexico). Of the eight that remain at the site, most are effaced or severely damaged. Sixteen have been looted to some degree, and of these, the current location of more than 10 remains unknown or in private hands.

Table 43.2. Current locations of Piedras Negras monuments, with looted monuments in red.

MONUMENT		RULER			CURRENT LOCATION <sup>a</sup>
ID No.	Date	No.	Name	Date	
Panel 12	603? 609?				MNAE, Guatemala City
Stela 29	539		Ruler C	514–553	Private collection, Tokyo
Stela 25	608	1	K'inich Yo'nal Ahk I	603–639	Fragment, MNAE, Guatemala City; top, Linden Museum, Stuttgart; fragment offered in auction in 1985
Stela 26	628				Unknown; French collector?
Stela 31	637				On site
Stela 33	642	2	Itzam K'an Ahk I	639–686	MNAE, Guatemala City
Stela 32	647				Unknown; recarved and auctioned 1968
Stela 34	652				Last report, Jaeger Gallery, Paris, 1966
Stela 35	662				Top at Rautenschauch-Joes Museum, Cologne, Germany; base lost in river
Stela 6	664				MNAE, Guatemala City
Stela 36	667				MNAE, Guatemala City
Panel 2	667				PMAE, Boston
Panel 4	667				MNAE, Guatemala City
Stela 37	672				On site, but mostly effaced
Stela 39	677				On site, but mostly effaced
Panel 7	677?				MNAE, Guatemala City; 5 fragments
Stela 38	682				Unknown
Stela 2	697	3	K'inich Yo'nal Ahk II	687–729	Minneapolis Institute of Arts
Stela 4	702				Fragments on site; Museo Rufino Tamayo in Oaxaca; private collection
Panel 15	706				MNAE, Guatemala City
Stela 1	706				On site but partly destroyed by looters
Stela 3	711				MNAE, Guatemala City; private collection, Merida, Yucatan
Stela 5	716				Top, MOMA, New York; bottom on site

Stela 7	721				Upper, MNAE Guate. City; rest unknown
Stela 8	726				Unknown; some fragments on site
Stela 11	729	4	Itzam K'an Ahk II	729–757	Top, Houston Museum of Fine Arts; bottom lost in Switzerland
Stela 10	736				Top missing; bottom on site
Stela 9	736				4 fragments on site; one looted section offered on auction in France, 2019, but returned to Guatemala
Stela 40	746				MNAE, Guatemala City
Stela 14	761	5	Yo'nal Ahk III	758–767	U. Penn. Museum, Philadelphia
Stela 16	766				On site
Stela 23	767?	6	Ha' K'in Xook	767–781	Fragments on site
Stela 13	771				MNAE, Guatemala City
Throne 1	785	7	K'inich Yat Ahk II	781–808	MNAE, Guatemala City
Stela 15	785				MNAE, Guatemala City
Stela 12	795				MNAE, Guatemala City
Panel 3	795?				MNAE, Guatemala City
Panel 1	???				PMAE, Boston

Sources: Clancy 2009; Martin and Grube 2008; O'Neil 2012; Stuart and Graham 2003; Yates 2019. a, MNAE, Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, Guatemala City; PMAE, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Boston.

## CHAPTER 44.

### AT PIEDRAS NEGRAS

#### May 18, Wednesday

Everyone was up early—it's one of the numerous good points about these Tenosique men that they get up early in the morning without having to be called. At 7:10 we left Mundo Nuevo. We went on ahead of the *mulada* that we might choose a good *champa* not far from the Roca de Sacrificios on the waterside. Fifty minutes later, we came to the former *paraje* called Remolino, and five minutes later to the *arroyo* of Tres Champas, where our laborers who had set out before us were bathing. At 8:30 we came to a clearing on our *paraje* called El Pabellón, through which Estanislao said the Guatemala-Mexico line passed, and we were back in Petén again. There were two other *parajes* through here, one called Cuatro Reales (“Four Bits” for short in English) which we reached at 8:37; and another at 8:45 called El Cabro.

For the next two hours we passed through a heavily forested but level plain. The mountains here must make a big bend away from the river, at least we struck no steep hills in this stretch, which was very level and correspondingly easy going. At 10:50 we came to an old clearing which Estanislao called Porvenir de Mehenes, since Mehenes (probably Tránsito) had formerly had a *montería* here. At 11:00 we again crossed the *arroyo* of Tres Champas, which we had not seen for nearly three hours, and which must do a deal of wandering on the west side of the trail to cross it again so much farther south.

At 11:20 we came to the fork which leads down to El Porvenir on the river, the left-hand one being the *camino real* for Piedras Negras and Desempeño. At 12:30 we crossed over a steep range of hills and came down through the ruins to the big ceiba tree [Figure 44.1],<sup>256</sup> which Maler marks on his map, and which was formerly the old *paraje* of Piedras Negras. This enclosed for me a tremendous stretch of territory—all of western Petén in fact, since Joe Spinden and I had come into Piedras Negras from the south in 1914,<sup>257</sup> and now here I was approaching it from the north. Coming to this great ceiba tree closed the last gap and finished the great circle I had made about western Petén.

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<sup>256</sup> The majestic ceiba, *Ceiba pentandra* (kapok tree), is a large deciduous tree that the ancient Maya held as sacred, a “world tree” that unites the levels of the universe, sky, earth, and underground. Growing up to 70 m (230 feet) in height and with a trunk up to 3 m (10 feet) in diameter, the ceiba is anchored to the ground by enormous buttresses and its high branches are home to many birds' nests, bromeliads, and other epiphytes. When cutting and burning the forest for their milpas today, the Maya leave ceibas standing.

<sup>257</sup> The approach from the south along the Usumacinta River was much less arduous than Morley's overland route described earlier (Chapters 36–42). See Rice and Ward 2021: 108–115.





Figure 44.1. An enormous ceiba tree at Tikal, photographed at the end of the dry season before it had regrown its leaves. Note the buttresses and the abundant epiphytes covering its branches.

We did not tarry here but cut our way through the thick underbrush down to the arroyo, and down its bed to the Usumacinta itself. We tied the horses on the sand bank and looked around for a camp site. It did not take long to select this, a bench in the hill well above the usual high watermark, and under the shade of some heavy trees. The laborers had in the meantime come up and we put them to felling all the underbrush and clearing it back. We all fell to on this and soon had quite a clearing. Muddy gave us a lunch and afterward, leaving Ricketson and Rutherford with Muddy, Chico, Alfred, and most of the boys to finish getting the clearing made for camp, I took Estanislao and Martín off with me to look for the ruins.

We followed the arroyo back to the ceiba tree, and thence back along the Tenosique trail until we were about opposite the ruins. Here, Estanislao picked up an old *picado* and following this in we came presently to a large stela, which I identified as No. 14. With this as a starter, it did not take us long to locate the other monuments at this group—Stelae 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, and 19. Stela 15 I did not locate, nor did Joe and I seven years ago.<sup>258</sup>

We did no clearing here, my only idea in coming out at all being to locate as many monuments as possible today so we could get to work tomorrow without loss of time. I thought I would let the far group (Stelae 1–11) go until tomorrow and locate the others (Stelae 22–37) between where we were and the river. We started out from the middle group to do this, and presently Estanislao picked up an old *picado*, which we followed. This bent so much to the right, however, that I knew it was leading us to the far group and sure enough we began to ascend a hill presently, skirting the arroyo on our left, and finally climbed up over a steep terrace and found ourselves in front of the stairway between Stelae 9–11 on the left, and Stelae 1–8 on the right. I verified all the latter, 8, and Nos. 10 and 11 of the former. I did not take time to hunt for Stelae 9, however, as I knew it must be nearby.

We returned to Stelae 12–19 and set out again to look for Nos. 22–37, which we had missed. But we turned again too far to the right and came into a ravine, which eventually brought us out to the river somewhat below camp. We climbed along the rocky shore and when I got back to camp, I was about all in. Ricketson said he didn't see how I had been able to do it in the first place, nor do I now, come to think of it.

The *mulada* was in and Muddy had a fine camp already fixed. After a good supper, I made preparations to retire almost at once, being not only very tired, but also well aware of the strenuous day we are going to have ahead of us tomorrow. Everybody quickly followed suit.

### **May 19, Thursday**

This was the first day of work at the ruins, what Estanislao, Martín, and I accomplished yesterday afternoon being little more than a location of the monuments so that we could find where we were. The plan of operation was this. Chico was to stay in camp and help Rutherford build a photographic *champa* down by the river. Muddy was to make our own camp more livable—yesterday we had done hardly more than fell the underbrush and put up the tarp, and all the rest of us were to open up paths between the different groups of monuments as well as between the monuments within the groups so that they will be more get-at-able.

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<sup>258</sup> Morley “rediscovered” Stela 15 in 1929 on the 12th CIW Expedition (Morley 1937–38, III: 248). Today it is located in the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología in Guatemala City.



Instead of cutting through the bush direct to the city from camp, we went back up the arroyo to the Tenosique–Desempeño road and thence back along until we were behind some of the mounds of the city. Here we left the road and struck into the bush to the left. Once over this line of mounds, instead of turning to the right, which would have brought us to Stelae 12–19, which we found first yesterday, I had the boys turn to the left to see if we could locate Stelae 22 to 37, which we did not find yesterday.

They scattered through the bush in this general direction and soon a shout advised that something had been found. It was Stelae 25 and 26, and soon 24, 27, and 28 were located. And quickly after, Stelae 29, 30, and 31. Meanwhile Alfred, I think it was, had gone around this court from Stela 31 and picked up Stela 32, Stela 33, and Stela 34. I went over there and found the other three—Nos. 35–37. Between Stela 34 and 35 there was a round column with two large glyphs on it, both heads. This was Altar 6.

While I was cleaning up around these monuments, Ricketson had been looking around for the shortest way to camp. He returned presently saying that it could not be more than ten minutes' walk then to camp. I gave him Martín and the two of them opened a trail from between the mound of Stela 28 and that of Stelae 29–31. When we walked through this going back to lunch, it only took us five minutes.

While he and Martín were cutting this road through to camp, I had the boys drag down the large bottom fragments of Stela 29 from where it was and assemble it with the top fragments, which Maler had brought down to the platform in 1899. By the time this work was done it was only 11, so we started back and I sent Estanislao and Martín on ahead to find the middle group of monuments, which we had found first yesterday—Stelae 12–19. We waited at the northwest corner of the Southern Plaza (plaza of Stelae 24–37) until they shouted that they had found the other group, and then from both ends we started opening up a trail. As this was to be a main thoroughfare of communication while we are here, I had it particularly well made—wide and fairly cleared.

While the *cuadrille* [*cuadrilla*: squad, gang] under Estanislao were cleaning up around these monuments, Ricketson and I set out to look for Stelae 20–21, 22, and 23. We picked up the first two quickly enough, though I very much doubt whether either of them was ever a stela. Ricketson next found Stela 22 where it should be, and soon after, Stela 23. I was not sure at first that Stela 23 was Maler's 23, but came to the conclusion that it could be no other.

It was now noon and we returned to camp well satisfied with the first half-day's work. Rutherford said that he and Chico had built a *champa* down by the water's edge and that he was getting well-fixed for the photographic work. Muddy, on his part, had got camp looking more homelike and convenient, and if it doesn't rain too hard, we will do very well here.

After lunch, Ricketson and I again took our *cuadrilla* back to the group of Stelae 12–19 and started making a new road to the far group, Maler's Acropolis. This is really not far off, and when we came home tonight it took me just fifteen minutes from the stairway between Stelae 1–8 and Stela 9–11 to camp. I should estimate it by trail as not more than three-quarters of a mile at the outside. We connected these two groups with a well-defined trail and spent the rest of the afternoon in bathing and cleaning around the several fragments into which Stela 1 to Stela 8 have broken. I had all the boys at work cleaning around these pieces with the result that before we

knocked off for work tonight here, I had a pretty good idea as to the general condition of these eight stelae and the large round altar (No. 1) in front of them.

This was pretty hot work, and when we got back to camp four of us went in bathing in the river—Ricketson, Alfred, Chico, and myself. The water was wonderfully refreshing and we all agreed that this daily bath will be one of the most delightful features of our life here. I stopped off to see Rutherford's *champa* on the way back up the hill to camp. It is on a rock by the water's edge and most conveniently located and arranged. He christened it by developing tonight.

### May 20, Friday

A big red-letter day full of remarkable discoveries. It was also the first day of intensive work, really, since yesterday was only a preliminary day of cleaning and locating the monuments. The work was divided into three parts or divisions: Ricketson and Alfred with two *mozos* devoted themselves to clearing lines of sight, prior to starting the measuring. The two *mozos* were used in opening lines through the bush. Rutherford with Estanislao worked on assembling the monuments. Rutherford decided to get these all together first and then do the photographing at one fell blow. A good idea, it seemed to me. I had one *mozo*, Martín, and my work consisted in drawing all the inscriptions I could in the time available.

I drew the Initial and Supplementary Series on Stela 37, which took the greater part of the morning, the date I had already deciphered seven years ago as 9.12.0.0.0 [AD 672 GMT]. Before dinner, I also drew the two glyphs on the round column of Altar No. 6, between Stelae 24 and 35. I thought yesterday when I found this that it was a new discovery, but on reading Maler last night I found he had located this altar, though he had failed to note the two glyphs on it. All that is left of these are their two coefficients, both expressed as very large head-variants. The first is clearly 5 and the second 3. It cannot be mere coincidence, therefore, that the terminal date of the next *jotun* ending on Stela 35 (9.11.10.0.0) is 5 Ajaw 3 Sak, i.e., 9.11.5.0.0 5 Ajaw 3 Sak. In fact, I think there can be no doubt but that this is the date of this altar or column. This was the last thing I did before lunch.

Rutherford, in the meantime, had been assembling the broken fragments of Stelae 35 and, later, 37. After lunch he returned to the stelae of the West Group and put in the rest of the afternoon there. I drew the I.S. and S.S. on Stela 35, which took me well on toward the close of the afternoon, and was thus employed when Ricketson and Alfred came up with the news of a wonderful discovery. Alfred, in scouting around at the far group, had discovered two new stelae [Stelae 38 and 39, Figures 44.2 and 44.3], each having inscriptions on their sides. Although I was busy enough, I had to go forthwith and see them.

At first, I thought these might be 9.15.15.0.0 [AD 746 GMT], still missing [from the inscriptions at the site], and a stela for 9.16.0.0.0 [AD 751 GMT] (only represented by Altar 2). But I decided since there were two, the most likely *jotuns* would be 9.12.5.0.0 [AD 677 GMT] and 9.12.10.0.0 [AD 682 GMT], both missing [at Piedras Negras]. I wrote this latter pair [of dates] down first and the other as second choice, and showed it to the boys as my guess as to the dates of the new monuments.

On our way thither, we passed Stela 26 and the light was falling across its side so that it brought out the fact that it had an I.S. on the left side, and though most of the coefficients were missing, happily the terminal date was very clear as 8 Ajaw 13 Kumk'u; and by turning to my

notebook I found this date was none other than 9.9.15.0.0 8 Ajaw 13 Kumk'u [AD 628], just one *k'atun* later than the stela next to it (Stela 25, 9.8.15.0.0) [AD 608]. This is a fine new early date and fits in with the sequence of *jotun* markers we are building up here.



Figure 44.2. Piedras Negras Stela 38 (right side) as discovered in 1921.



Figure 44.3. Piedras Negras Stela 39 with its well-preserved inscription.

From here we passed the middle group, where Rutherford and his men were at work. They are really doing splendid work and had Stela 14 beautifully fitted together. From Stela 16, they had cut through a due west line to the far group, which struck the latter just south of the central stairway. Before reaching this, however, we turned off to the right, i.e., north, and after circling this last high plaza, we came to two tremendous monuments. Both had fallen face upwards.

The first [Stela 39] had its Initial Series on the left side (facing it) [Figure 44.4, left] and the coefficients were in bars and dots. The date was beautifully clear as 9.12.5.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Xul [AD 676]. This was one of my first pair of dates, and we went at once to the other [Stela 38], which I knew must be 9.12.10.0.0 9 Ajaw 18 Sots' [AD 682; Figure 44.4, right]. This was somewhat more difficult to decipher as it was like Stela 37, having large head-variant glyphs. The 12 head and the 10 head were fairly clear, and the 9 of the 9 Ajaw also showed.

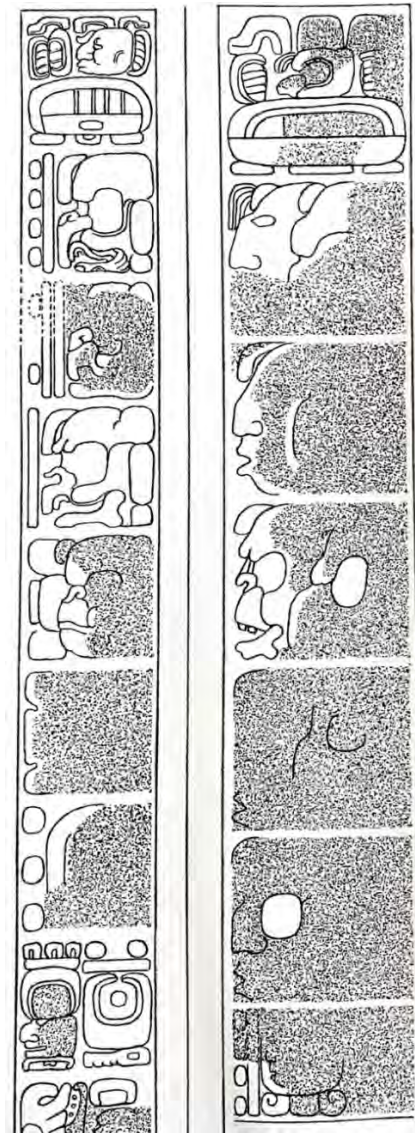


Figure 44.4. Morley's drawings of the Initial Series Inscriptions on Stelae 39 (left) and 38 (right; note head-variant number glyphs).

There could be no doubt as to either date, and we named them Stela 38 and Stela 39, the former having the date 9.12.10.0.0 9 Ajaw 18 Sots' and the latter 9.12.5.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Xul. We were well tired out and returned to camp after these discoveries, and Rutherford came in with his gang shortly afterward. Ricketson and I were the only two who went down to the river for a bath. We noticed it has gone down a lot in the past two days.

After supper, Ricketson and Alfred worked on their map [of the site] and I on the calculations on Stela 35. The Initial Series I finally worked out as 9.11.9.8.6 12 Kimi 9 Kumk'u. The biggest discovery of the day, of course, is that of the two new monuments, Stelae 38 and 39. This means that after completing Stela 37 in the south plaza in 9.12.0.0.0, the people of Piedras Negras moved up to the far group and at the next *jotun* ending they put up there Stela 39, 9.12.5.0.0, and from then on for 75 years there is only one *jotun* marker now missing: 9.15.15.0.0. It now makes a very remarkable sequence, in fact the most remarkable and complete sequence yet found anywhere.

It looked something like rain, but it did not come down. How much longer will it hold off?

### May 21, Saturday

A rather slow-moving day. I started work on Stelae 33 and 34, but as soon as the light got up, I drew Stela 31. The inscription on the top of this is in shocking condition—rarely have I seen a text more effaced by weathering without being actually gone. I had to make the identification on the basis of the month glyph, which is fortunately quite clear as 3 Pax. If this is a *jotun*-ending, it occurs at 9.10.5.0.0 7 Ajaw 3 Pax [AD 638] and cannot occur again or before for 949 tuns. Since at this position it fits so well with the other stelae in this same court, I think that there cannot be any doubt that this is its date.

Rutherford had, in the meantime, finished turning all the stelae we are going to photograph in this court, and was ready for more work, so I accompanied him to Stelae 22 and 23. There was nothing to do on Stela 22, but on Stela 23 it was a delicate piece of assemblage. To begin with, it was by no means certain that all the fragments were parts of one and the same stela. This monument, in falling, had broken first into three large fragments [Figure 44.5]. The top then broke into three pieces, and the bottom fragment into two pieces, one large and one small. The middle section was broken into 10 or 15 pieces, but lay as it fell. It looked to me as though it had been cracked by a tree growing on top of it. With considerable difficulty the boys assembled this. It has two Initial Series, a very unusual feature, occurring on less than ten other monuments everywhere. I could not decipher this today, but I believe it probably records the date 9.16.10.0.0 1 Ajaw 3 Sip [AD 761]. After fitting together the several pieces of this monument, we returned to camp for lunch.

After lunch I took Rutherford and his men up to the far group and, after showing him the work to be done at Stelae 1–8 inclusive, I took him next to the two new stelae, 38 and 39. These he is to assemble first. On returning to Stela 25, where Martín was waiting, Alfred and Ricketson soon came up with the news that they had found a new stela, No. 42.<sup>259</sup> This evidently stood just next to Stela 29, the bottom of which I had moved yesterday. It had a round top and had broken

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<sup>259</sup> Morley noted the number of this stela, 42, in pencil in the margin, indicating that it was named subsequent to the finding of Stelae 40 and 41.

into three pieces. It had every appearance of having fallen face downward, and as the sides were plain, we had great hopes of finding a carving in good condition on the bottom side. Ricketson, Alfred, and Martín turned the top fragment and our chagrin can better be imagined than described when we discovered that it was quite plain and devoid of ornamentation. It seems likely now that the face that had fallen up was the sculptured front.



Figure 44.5. Broken Stela 23 at Piedras Negras.

I returned to Stelae 25 and 26. I drew the Initial Series of the latter, which, as I recorded yesterday, is 9.9.15.0.0 8 Ajaw 13 Kumk'u [Figure 44.6]. Although the light was getting poor, I turned next to the Initial Series of Stela 25 [Figure 44.7] and finished it before I had to give up on account of the failing light.

It was so late when we got back to camp that we passed up our evening bath, which I have been regretting ever since. It refreshes one greatly and a change into even soiled linen is very restful. After dinner, I wrote up this diary while Ricketson and Alfred worked on the map, which is actually taking shape. Rutherford's work is developing a crop of *golpes* [blows]. Ramiro Pino Suárez, who by the way is the nephew of Pino Suárez, who was vice president of Mexico during Francisco Madero's presidency, sustained a painful blow on the foot from a stone while he was working yesterday. And this morning before lunch, Luciano got a bad pinch from a stone at the work on Stela 23. Ricketson dressed Ramiro's toe this morning and Luciano's finger this noon. The latter's nail has already turned black, and he will surely lose it.

It looked very much like rain tonight, and it must have rained somewhere, for in the early evening it grew very much cooler and a delightful breeze sprang up. Of course, it is bound to rain sooner or later, but we are all hoping it will hold off until after we finish, and that is nine days off.

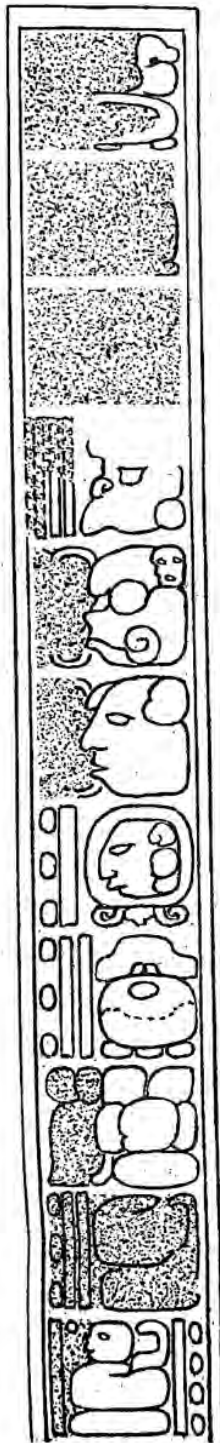


Figure 44.6. Morley's drawing of Piedras Negras Stela 26, left side.





Figure 44.7. The beautiful and well-preserved front of Piedras Negras Stela 25.

## May 22, Sunday

Today was anything but a day of rest. Everybody worked at top speed, and Ricketson made a splendid discovery.

I began the day with Stela 25, which I had not quite finished yesterday afternoon, and when this was done, I took all the necessary measurements on Stelae 24, 25, and 27 as well. Martín, who is turning into a good assistant, and I next moved over to Stelae 22 and 23. The former never seems to have had an Initial Series, though a period-ending date of 8 Ajaw 8 Sots'—end of a *jotun* surely—fixes its position in Maya chronology as 9.16.5.0.0 [AD 756]. It did not take us long to draw this, and we then moved over to the large fine stela, No. 23. In spite of the fact that this has two Initial Series, one on each side, I could not date it. Both are in shocking condition. The limestone is soft and rubs off even with a brush. There are some Secondary Series left in the panel of 64 glyphs at the bottom of the front (or back—whichever it is) that I may be able to do something with when I get where I can calculate with more time, but all I had time to do this morning was to make notes on them.

While I was drawing here, I heard halloos in the bush and two men with guns came up. They were living at Porvenir, 1½ leagues northwest of here on the river, and this being Sunday, they were out on a hunting trip for the day. Later in the day, Estanislao told me that one of them had offered to go a two-day journey distant to Busiliha to get some Lacandon incense burners, but he said nothing to me about it. They stayed for a while watching my drawing and asked where the “*minas de gas*” [gas mines] were located! Of course, they cannot even conceive of anyone so *tonto* [foolish] as to waste his time over “old stones.”

I was still here when Ricketson and Alfred came up with the fine news that they had discovered one or two new stelae on beyond 9 and 10. As I had not found Stela 11 the first afternoon Estanislao and I were over here, I felt surely that one of these must be it, but Alfred thought both were new. One, however, I knew at once was the missing stela 9.15.15.0.0. As Alfred was going back up again to this far group after lunch, I decided to wait until afterward to go up and see it.

I finished Stela 23 before lunch and got a good start on Stela 12 before the noon hour. The only date that is now open for Stela 23 is 9.16.10.0.0, 5 years after the date of Stela 22, since Stela 16 at the last group records 9.16.15.0.0, and I think there is very little doubt but that this monument belongs to this period ending.

Immediately after lunch I went with Alfred up in the far west group (i.e., of Stelae 9, 10, and 11) and saw his two new monuments. One was Stela 11 as I had suspected, and for one minute I feared the other might be a part of it. It lay on the slope of the terrace nearby and lower than the fragments of Stela 11 above. I started Martín cleaning the top, and he soon uncovered another and larger fragment. Alfred and I measured the two and they were 15' 8" [4.75 m] long. Our line probably is a little short, but it will easily reach 16'. This monument, to which we gave the name Stela 40, had glyphs on its side, and I at once called Ruddy and his gang and started them digging around its sides.

Chico and Martín dug down on the left side and uncovered the Initial Series. This starts out 9.15, the *tuns* are not clear, but the *winal* is 9, and the day coefficient is 11. At the bottom of this side, the last glyph is 9 Ajaw. This is the day of the terminal date 9.15.15.0.0 9 Ajaw 18 Xul and I

am satisfied later Secondary Series on either this side or the other will bring it up to 9.15.15.0.0 [AD 746].

While Ruddy and his men were getting the jack placed, Alfred and I climbed the high hill behind Stelae 9, 10, 11, and 40 and, turning to the right, worked over behind the stairway between this mound and the one behind Stelae 1–8. What a welter of buildings. There were several succeeding terraces, each higher than the other. The Maya always feared their false arch and almost never superimposed weight upon it.

We passed old Maler's Casa Grande [Structure J-9], which Ricketson and Alfred made out to be 150' [45.7 m] long. Climbing still higher, we passed around the crest of the hill and saw, or rather heard, the river just below us. This is the hill we saw from camp, which makes the river turn to the left around it. We calculate its base is about 1,000 feet [305 m] from the Roca de Sacrificios.

Before returning to the work at Stela 40, I went over to Alfred's two stelae, 38 and 39. Rutherford's gang had made a good job assembling these, and both monuments showed up very clearly. The inscription on Stela 39 (9.12.5.0.0) is in the better condition, but there is no doubt about Stela 38 (9.12.10.0.0)—I found the day of the terminal date 9 Ajaw repeated as the last glyph. Both unfortunately fell face up and are pretty badly destroyed in consequence. Stela 39 has a figure in full front presentation, but the features of the face are partly destroyed.

After looking these monuments over, we returned to Stela 40. Ruddy and his men were making good headway in getting it ready to turn over, but as I had a lot of work to do on Stela 14, I did not tarry but returned to that monument. It grew so dark in the bush by five—it was cloudy and rain threatened—that I gave up trying to finish Stela 14 today and came back to camp.

Being a feast day, our turkey from Desempeño had been sacrificed for the evening meal and it tasted good to eat fresh meat again. We are all feeling a bit seedy anyhow, with colds in the nose and throat, and the treat was enjoyed by everybody. In the evening I worked for a while on the calculations of Stela 14, but they would not come out satisfactorily, so I went to bed early. Now that Ricketson and Rutherford have *champas* for their hammocks, I suppose it will not rain.

### **May 23, Monday**

Beginning today we have seven more days of work as we plan to leave here on Monday the 30th. The work continues to go forward satisfactorily. These Tenosiquenos are by all odds the best bunch of laborers we have had anything to do with yet, and under Ruddy's supervision they are assembling the monuments in fine shape.

I started out the day on Stela 14, finished my work there, and before noon also drew the Initial Series and Supplementary Series on Stelae 13 and 16 [Figure 44.8].

During the morning Ruddy sent over for me, and I went over to see how his work was going forward. Words fail me to describe adequately the beauties of the new monument (Stela 40) [Figure 44.9]. Ruddy had both pieces turned over on their backs and the sculptured face turned up. It was practically in mint state and the most delicate details of the carving perfectly preserved. The composition is a principal figure kneeling, facing to the left. He kneels on top of a very large human head only drawn as far as the breast. The details are extraordinarily preserved. The delicate lining of the hair, the fabric-like treatment of the headdress, the small heads on the necklace, all as perfect as the day they were carved. Ruddy will, of course, photograph the front.

The Initial Series is not complete as it stands, the *tun* and *k'in* coefficients being uncertain and the day sign effaced, the month's coefficient also is not certain. The following, however, are sure:

- 9 Cycles
- 15 *k'atuns*
- 9 *winals*
- 11 (day sign, coefficient and)
- 16, 17, or 18 Pax

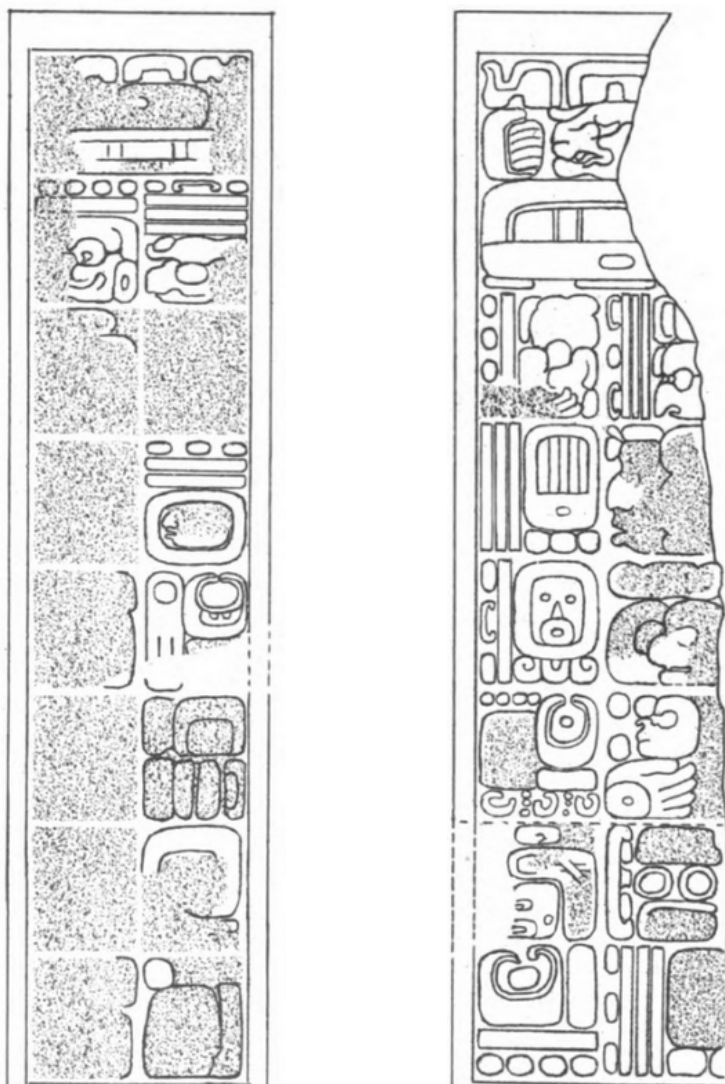


Figure 44.8. Morley's drawings of the Initial Series on Stelae 13 (left) and 16 (right).

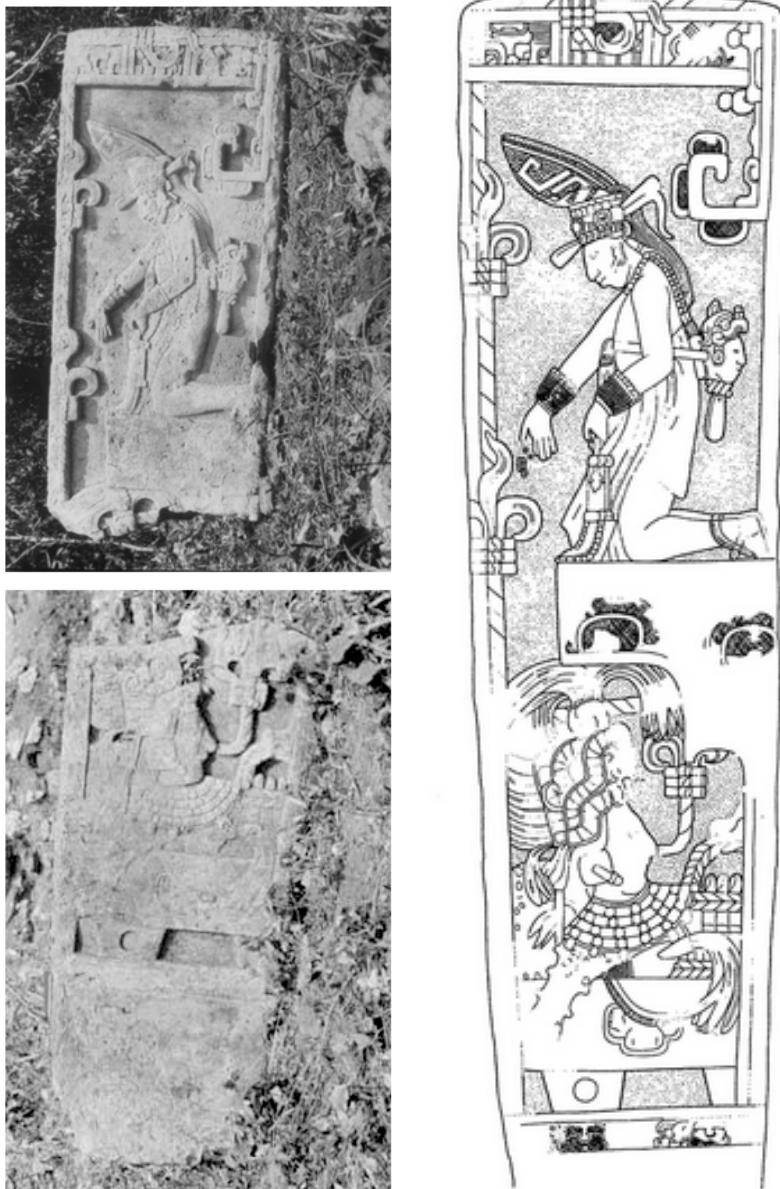


Figure 44.9. Piedras Negras Stela 40, front. Left: top, upper half showing a figure in the act of scattering; bottom, lower section of monument. Right: Drawing by John Montgomery.

In the evening I worked the Initial Series out and found it was 9.15.14.9.13 11 Ben 16 Pax [AD 745]. This is the only I.S. agreeing with all the factors present, and I see no objection to it. When I come to work over the stela at first hand (drawing it), I hope to be able to confirm this reading. The terminal date of the *jotun* monument erected to commemorate is recorded once very clearly as 9 Ajaw 18 Xul.

Chico, who was feeling very seedy with an upset stomach, diarrhea, and a cold in the head, with “*no ganas a trabajar*” [no desire to work], as he himself says, I put on the comparatively easy

job of cleaning the dirt off this stela. After helping Rutherford over his difficulty—something about Stela 9—I returned to my drawing at the middle group and finished Stelae 13 and 16 before lunch, though it was 12:40 when I returned to camp. After lunch I took final notes on Stela 16, and also finished Stela 12. This brought me to Stelae 17 and 18, which I finished about 5. I was held back today by one or two slight showers. The rains are threatening, and I am afraid it is only a question of a few days before they will break. We are all hoping they will hold off for another week, but *¿quién sabe?*

The four large stelae—16, 17, 18, and 19—which are all 12 feet or over are interesting. The fronts and sides only of each were sculpted, all the backs being plain. The only one I can date surely is Stela 16 (9.16.15.0.0) [AD 766] and it seems almost certain that Stelae 17 and 18 did not have Initial Series at all. I can find no trace of one on either. There can be little doubt but that Stelae 14, 17, 18, and 19 are to be referred to the following 4 *jotuns*, but which to which I have not decided yet:

9.17.5.0.0	6 Ajaw 13 K'ayab
9.17.10.0.0	12 Ajaw 8 Pax
9.17.15.0.0	5 Ajaw 8 Pax
9.18.0.0.0	11 Ajaw 18 Mak

As I have Stela 12 (9.18.5.0.0) [AD 795] and Stelae 13 and 16 (9.17.0.0.0 and 9.16.15.0.0) [AD 771 and 766], I feel reasonably certain that these four monuments correspond to these four periods, which, if so, will leave me without a break.

In the evening, Rutherford developed. He reports his Flores and Ixlu films turned out beautifully, but that most of the Tenosique ones are ruined. Ricketson and Alfred worked on their map, which is at last taking final form, and I not only wrote up my diary, but also worked out the date of Stela 33. This is 9.10.10.0.0 13 Ajaw 18 Kank'in [AD 642 GMT]. Of the group of stelae in front of Temple 5 [Structure R-5] (Stelae 32–37 inclusive), all are now dated save Stela 32, and I think there can be but little doubt but that this dates from 9.10.15.0.0 6 Ajaw 13 Mak. This makes the Series as follows:

Stela 33	9.10.10.0.0
Stela 32	9.10.15.0.0
Stela 34	9.11.0.0.0
Altar 6	9.11.5.0.0
Stela 35	9.11.10.0.0
Stela 36	9.11.15.0.0
Stela 37	9.12.0.0.0

These, added to the discoveries of Stelae 38, 39, and 40 and the allotment of Stelae 14, 17, 18, and 19 to the *jotuns* from 9.17.5.0.0 to 9.18.0.0.0 inclusive, leave not a single gap between 9.9.15.0.0 and 9.18.5.0.0, save only 9.10.0.0.0, which I think is almost certain was recorded on the large and fine Stela 30 (see Chapter 45, pp. 467–469).

It came on to rain quite heavily in the evening, and Ruddy in his photographic work got soaked to the skin. I put Chico in bed with a stiff drink of cognac and 10 grains of quinine. He has

a good hard cold in his head—sneezing and blowing his nose all of the time. The men are out of *totoposte* [toasted tortillas; corn chips], their cook reports, and since don Manuel Villanueva is already three days overdue, there is no telling when he will get in. I will have to send to Desempeño again in the morning for *totoposte* and limes.

The rain gradually slackened after about an hour and we all went to our hammocks and cot. Instead of breaking with a smash, it looks like the rains were breaking gently this year. I hope the heavy *aguaceros* [downpours] will hold off for another ten days.

## May 24, Tuesday

Poor Chico continues miserable and I had him stay at home all day long. As *viveres* [food, groceries] were running low, I dispatched Luciano to Desempeño again with a note to Silvario Campo Seco, asking him to send us some *totoposte*, onions, etc.

The morning did not get underway very rapidly with my work. I started at work on Stela 19 but could do nothing with it. I had Rutherford's star wood-chopper felling a tree which had overgrown its bottom fragment. While this was going forward, I went back to draw the glyphs on Stela 32. This had an Initial Series on the back, which is so far gone I hardly dared guess at it, but faint heart never won a fair date, and I guessed for it 9.10.15.0.0 6 Ajaw 13 Mak. I think as a matter of fact I found this terminal date on the monument. After looking the inscription over, I decided there was too little left to draw it, so I returned to Stela 19 where Miguel was still chopping away.

I sent Martín on to the far group, to Stela 40, to await me there, and I followed him shortly. I worked its Initial Series out last night as 9.15.14.9.13 11 Ben 16 Pax, and the drawing this morning corroborated this reading. The date 9 Ajaw 18 Xul occurred twice. This is the current *jotun* ending, 9.15.15.0.0, the monument was erected to commemorate.

I had finished the I.S. and the S.S. [Figure 44.10] and was just about to start on the Calendar Round dates when Chico came up saying don Manuel was in camp and wanted to see me. It was only 11:30, but I went back. Don Manuel, Manuel Cisniega (the nephew of old don Manuel Otero), and two *arrieros* were in. We shook hands and he returned to his breakfast, which Muddy had prepared for them. He brought a telegram from Blohm, our consul in Frontera, saying the fruit vessels demanded a residence of six days in Frontera before they will permit you to go aboard. This was a heavy blow, but Manuel Cisniega says Blohm is a good scout and when he knows us he will let us go. *¿Pero, quién sabe?*

This has not caused any change in plan, however, as I had more or less discounted this action on our Consul's part. If he sees us and lets us go on the steamer of the 3rd, well and good. If not, we would have to be in Frontera anyhow by the 4th to make the steamer of the 10th. I arranged with don Manuel that the *mulada* is to return for us on Sunday the 29th and we will leave Monday morning, the 30th. As don Manuel wanted to be getting on, he did not stop long and by one-thirty was on his way again. He brought me a bottle of *habanero* (sugar rum) as a present from his son Pepe.

I had come in early, almost an hour before Rutherford, and so after an early lunch I returned to the ruins with Martín without waiting for him. In the afternoon I finished Stela 40, and also Stela 9. This leaves me only Stelae 10 and 11 and the square table in front of the pyramid. Stela 9 took so much time that it was after six when I finished and the bush was actually growing dark.



It showered on and off all afternoon, and this delayed the drawing somewhat, but I kept at Stela 9 until I got all I wanted to from it. When I have finished these ten days, I will have about all of the chronological data that is to be got at Piedras now.

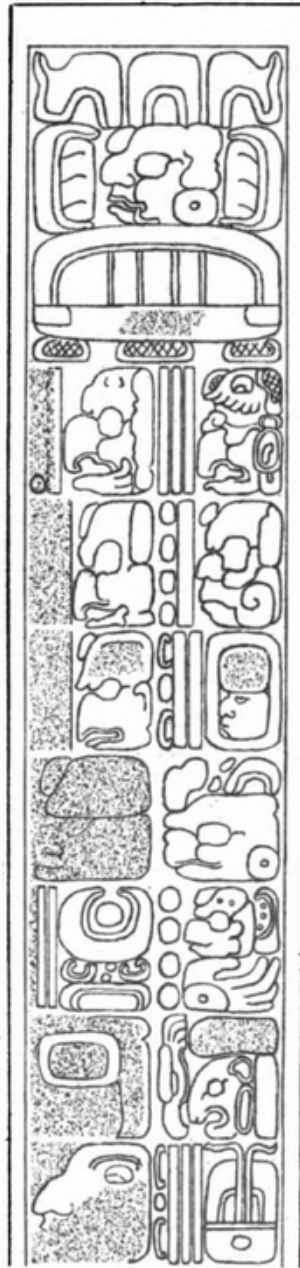


Figure 44.10. Morley's drawing of the well-preserved Initial Series and Supplementary Series on the left side of Piedras Negras Stela 40.

Dusk was falling when Martín and I started back, and also a shower. This increased as we got back toward camp, but happily we got in before its heaviest downpour. Muddy had patched up the tarp with adhesive plaster, and in quite a downpour we ate dinner. Fortunately, his

patches held and we ate dry. The poor men, though, were soaked to the skin and I sent Rutherford to offer them a drink of Pepe's *habanero*, which Ricketson says he likes, but which to me is pure fire—*aguardiente* [lit. "fire water"] in very truth.

Luciano got back from *Desempeño* with some lemons and sugar, but no *totoposte*. Don Manuel, however, had brought some crackers to tide us over until the *mulada* comes through with more supplies for us, and with this we can get along.

Nothing to me is more dismal than rain in the bush, and as I lay under my *pabellón* and heard it beating against the tarp above, it was very depressing. We are having wonderful luck here, and everybody keeps well and the boys satisfied, but I will be glad when we finally get back out and down to tide water. I am pretty-well tired out and need a rest. We are hoping these showers are not the beginning of the rains. Both Muddy and don Miguel think they are not, being due to the change of the moon [see Chapter 13, p. 124, note 33].

## CHAPTER 45.

### CONTINUING WORK AT PIEDRAS NEGRAS

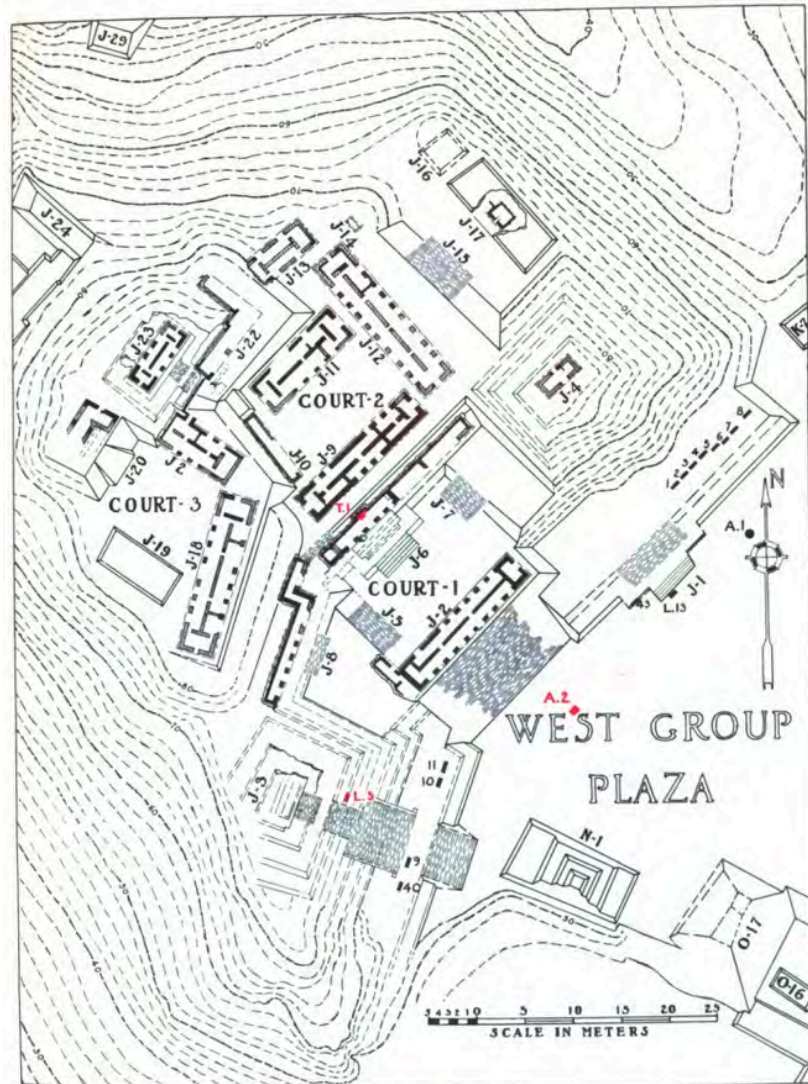
#### May 25, Wednesday

Just five more days of work. I finished three more monuments today: Stelae 10 and 11 this morning, and Stela 39 this afternoon. At this rate I will just get through Sunday night. Rutherford started his photograph-taking today and made fair progress. Of all our activities, the map is the most forward. Ricketson says, in fact, that it is practically done, save only for a few tie-in measurements. He and Alfred have done splendid work on it, and have every cause to feel proud of the result. The Maler map is extraordinarily inaccurate—he shows no plazas at all. Ricketson finds the city grouped into three well-defined units.

The Western Group [Figure 45.1]: This includes the Acropolis and Stelae 1 to 11 inclusive, Stelae 38 and 39, and Altars 1 and 2. At the risk of repetition, it seems well to repeat the dates here in their chronological sequence:

Stela 39	9.12.5.0.0
Stela 38	9.12.10.0.0
Stela 6	9.12.15.0.0
Stela 8	9.13.0.0.0 ?
Stela 2	9.13.5.0.0 ?
Stela 4	9.13.10.0.0
Stela 1	9.13.15.0.0
Stela 3	9.14.0.0.0
Stela 5	9.14.5.0.0
Stela 7	9.14.10.0.0
Altar 1	9.14.15.0.0 ?
Stela 11	9.15.0.0.0
Stela 9	9.15.5.0.0
Stela 10	9.15.10.0.0
Stela 40	9.15.15.0.0
Altar 2	9.16.0.0.0

There are three doubtful readings here, which I later (in fact, tomorrow) hope to clear up.



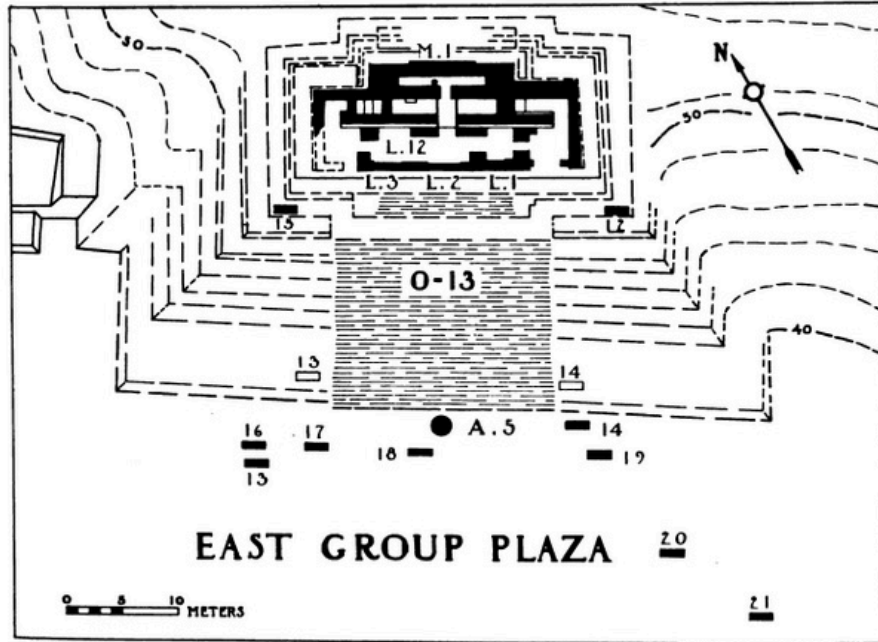
Map of the Acropolis of the West Group at Piedras Negras showing the location of Throne 2 and Lintel 5.

Figure 45.1. Morley's 1937 map of the Piedras Negras Acropolis and West Group stela.

The Northern Group [now known as the East Group; Figure 45.2]: The Northern Group, which includes but one or two buildings and seven monuments, as follows.

Stela 16	9.16.15.0.0
Stela 13	9.17.0.0.0
Stela 17	9.17.5.0.0 ?
Stela 18	9.17.10.0.0 ?
Stela 19	9.17.15.0.0 ?
Stela 14	9.18.0.0.0 ?
Stela 12	9.18.5.0.0

There are four doubtful stelae here but, undoubtedly, they fit into the four gaps between Stela 13 (9.17.0.0.0) and Stela 12 (9.18.5.0.0).



b. Map of Structure 0-13 at Piedras Negras showing the location of Stelae 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, Lintels 1, 2, 3, 12 and Miscellaneous Sculptured Stone No. 1.

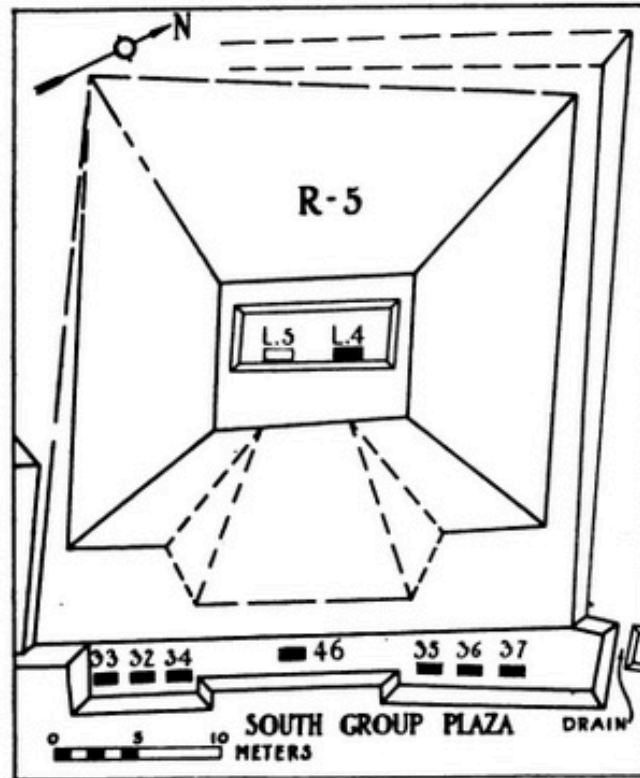
Figure 45.2. Morley's diagram of the East Group Plaza (called the North Group in his diary).

The Southern Group [Figure 45.3]: The Southern Group is a well-defined plaza with six pyramids around it and 15 stelae (Nos 24–37 and Stela 42). Of these, Stelae 24, 27, 28, and 42 are now plain. They have no glyphs on the sides and their backs are plain and their fronts are so weathered, all having fallen face upwards, that it is impossible to tell whether they were sculptured or not. They date as follows:

Stela 29	9.5.5.0.0 <sup>260</sup>
Stela 25	9.8.15.0.0
Stela 26	9.9.15.0.0
Stela 30	9.10.0.0.0 ?
Stela 31	9.10.5.0.0
Stela 33	9.10.10.0.0
Stela 32	9.10.15.0.0
Stela 34	9.11.0.0.0
Altar 6	9.11.5.0.0
Stela 35	9.11.10.0.0
Stela 36	9.11.15.0.0
Stela 37	9.12.0.0.0

Some of these are doubtful and one, Stela 30, is entirely effaced, the date being based on position.

<sup>260</sup> Morley later assumed that this apparent K'atun 5 date was taken forward by a missing S.S. to a contemporaneous date of 9.6.0.0.0. (Morley 1937-38, V(iii): 43).



Map of Structure R-5 at Piedras Negras showing the location of Stelæ 33, 32, 34, 46, 35, 36, 37 and Lintel 4.

Figure 45.3. The location of the stelæ of the South Group.

This afternoon just after lunch, in fact just after Martín and I got back to the ruins again, we heard a faint hallooing off on the Tenosique road. It was don Manuel's *mulada* on its way to Desempeño with supplies for the *monteros* who are going into the bush, 15 days journey up to the headwaters of the Salinas River for Manuel Otero. The poor devils are signed on for a year, the boys say. We are chiefly interested in the *mulada* because it brought some supplies for us.

Two mounds in the northern group have excited my liveliest curiosity. They are parallel, face each other, and each has a platform in front of it. In shape and arrangement, they so forcibly suggest a ballcourt that I am going to have them excavated tomorrow. Now that Ricketson and Alfred are through with the map, I am going to have them take a couple of men and have a trench dug into one of these mounds. Are they solid walls, or are they a ballcourt? We will dig in the morning in one of them and if they are the sides of a ballcourt, we ought to find the rings. We have always held that *tlachtli* was an Aztec (or Nahuatl) game, but it might have originated in the Maya area. It would be a spectacular study if we could turn up one or the other of these rings.<sup>261</sup>

<sup>261</sup> *Tlachtli* is the Nahuatl word for the Mesoamerican ballgame, played with a large rubber ball in the alley or court between two parallel, elongated, flat-topped mounds. Some courts, particularly in the Postclassic and with "Mexican" influences, had stone rings affixed into the high, upper, interior walls, believed to have been related to scoring goals. Here Morley apparently refers to

After dinner Rutherford went down to develop with Chico, Alfred, Diego, and Ramiro as assistants. While they were at it, it came on to rain quite heavily and they all got soaked. What was more serious, however, is that fact that many of them [the pictures] are light struck! [Figure 45.4]<sup>262</sup> The camera is literally falling to pieces. Rutherford tells me that there was not a single screw or nail used in putting it together, and that the binding material was a cheap grade of glue. *Dios Santo* [Holy God], what is America coming to next!



Figure 45.4. One of Rutherford's Piedras Negras photographs (Stela 8), showing the "lens flare" (left) caused by a failing camera.

The rain came down hard for about half an hour, and a number of the boys took refuge under the tarp, but it passed about nine and the boys returned to their wet hammocks. I wrote until about nine-thirty, and then went to bed. While my bedding was not actually wet, it was very moist and clammy.

### May 26, Thursday

With me, at least, it was a slow day. I started out early enough (before seven) going to the West Group. I drew the I.S. and S.S. on Stela 8 [Figure 45.5], a difficult piece of drawing, as the glyphs on the monument are well-executed to begin with, and are small—always a complicating feature.

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the second of two courts at Piedras Negras, Structures R-11a and R-11b (the main ballcourt, Structures K-6a and K-6b) are in the West Group Plaza, adjacent to the Acropolis. The second, smaller court sits between the Eastern and Southern Groups; Morley describes it as being in the Eastern (his Northern) Group, but today it is considered to be part of the Southern Group (Satterthwaite et al. 2005: 205–240). Varied forms of the Mesoamerican ballgame were played from Arizona south to Nicaragua over multiple millennia, but it is best known from central Mexico and the Maya area (see Scarborough and Wilcox 1991). There, the "game"—part ritual and part sports entertainment (with wagering)—served important religious and political roles. In the Maya lowlands, it reenactf a contest described in creation myth, and rings were uncommon.

<sup>262</sup> This is now more commonly called a "lens flare," in which light enters either through the lens or the back of the camera and creates a burned-out area on the film.





Figure 45.5. Piedras Negras Stela 8 showing the quality and good preservation of the inscription.

After finishing this, the sun was so furiously hot in Rutherford's clearing that I could not sit down to draw another monument with it beating on the back of my neck. I worked, therefore, on Altar 1 [Figures 45.6, 45.7]. The calculations are very unusual, running way back before the beginning of the Maya chronological era, and coming down as far as Cycle 10, certainly a prophetic date when this monument was erected.<sup>263</sup>

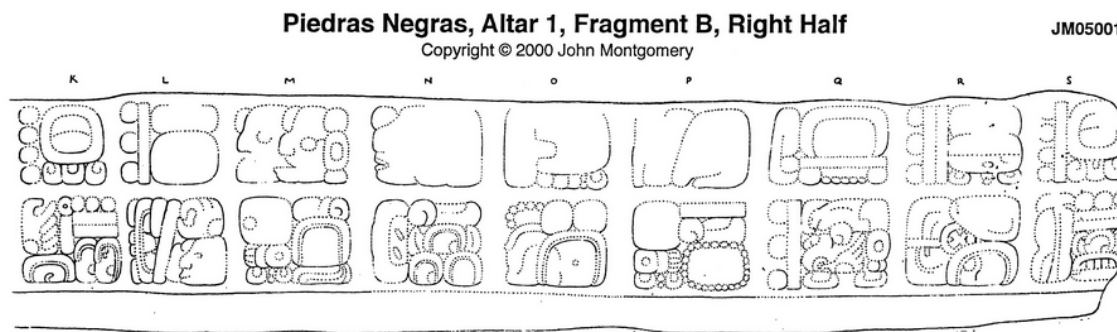


Figure 45.6. Part of the circumferential text of Piedras Negras Altar 1. The Maya Creation date, 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u (August 13, 3114), is recorded in glyphs K1 and L1 on the upper left side.

<sup>263</sup> Although this monument has been nearly destroyed by vandalism (Romero Rodríguez et al. 2010: 85), the drawings and photographs made by Maler, Morley, and other early scholars allow study of its inscribed texts. Like those of Cobá Stela 1 and Quirigua Stela C, they record mythical events of the deep past, including the August 13, 3114 BC Maya Creation date (O'Neil 2012: 55, 93–95). Altar 1 was dedicated on 9.13.0.0.0, a period-ending that coincided with the reconstruction of the West Plaza and other major constructions during the long reign of K'inich Yo'nal Ahk II, AD 687–729 (Houston, Escobedo, Child, et al. 2000: 100–103; Martin and Grube 2008: 145–146).



Figure 45.7. Piedras Negras Altar 1.

After finishing the notes (I made no scale drawings for the reason mentioned), I went over to Stela 38. On the way I stopped to see Ricketson's digging. He has uncovered a low platform in front of a wall, though as yet he has been able to develop no floor to the former. The wall, curiously enough, rests apparently directly on dry-laid stone thrown in roughly. As he was getting down pretty deep into this, I suggested that he go no farther but put his men to trenching through the building or wall behind. He says tonight that they are already halfway through this construction, and it is just pure stone, not even laid in courses. Dumped in, he says. It almost looks as though this construction was used for spectacles or ceremonies, possibly even a court. I am afraid I will have to give up the idea of *tlachtli* because we found no rings.<sup>264</sup> His two men worked here all day and will keep at it tomorrow until they get the trench clear though and out the other side.

During the last part of the morning, I drew the I.S. and S.S. on Stela 38, one of Alfred's new stelae. This was in much worse condition than the sister monument, Stela 39. It had not only broken into more fragments but was also more badly weathered. The I.S. was composed of very large head variant numerals like those on Stela 37. The *k'atun* (12) and the *tun* (10) coefficients were happily fairly clear, and the day of the I.S. terminal date was 9. It was repeated again at the end of the inscription, so there was little doubt as to what it was.

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<sup>264</sup> *Tlachtli* is the Nahuatl word for the Mesoamerican ballgame. The game—part ritual, part sport—was played with a large rubber ball in the alley or court formed by the two parallel mounds. These mounds were broad with flat tops; sometimes the ends of the alley were left open and other times they had end zones defined by walls (I-shaped). Some courts, particularly Postclassic and with “Mexican” influences, had stone rings affixed into the high, upper, interior stone walls, believed to have been related to scoring goals.

When we got back to camp, it was one o'clock. I only took half an hour off, and returned at one-thirty to my work at the fragment and I finished Stela 38 and then moved to Stela 7. The I.S. of this monument is in very bad condition, but happily is perfectly clear as 9.14.10.0.0. This took the greater part of the afternoon and I finished up by taking notes on the Secondary Series on this and Stela 8 for verification in the evening. Rain threatened all afternoon and the heat was so intense I thought I we would get it, but beyond a few drops we did not.

Took a bath on getting back to camp. We all noticed the Usumacinta is rising, and rather rapidly; a log or two went by, and Alfred saw in it a sign of high water. If it comes up much it will wash Rutherford's photographic camera [Morley means shelter] into the sea.

Luciano—who is cooking for the boys now, since his finger is hurt—killed our last fowl and Muddy had this served up in two courses at dinner: soup and the *piece de resistance*. After dinner I got to work on the calculations and made great headway on Stela 8. Also, I was able to tie Stelae 7 and 8 together by a Secondary Series on the former, which leads to the latter's Initial Series.

Rutherford, with the assistance of Alfred, Diego, and Ramiro, developed again tonight. He had a million faults to find in the negatives, and a few are still a little light struck, but on the whole, they came out pretty well. While he was down developing a rain came on, not very heavy, however, and his assistants stuck it out.

The plague of insects—non-bitable, let me hasten to record—which the proximity of the rains is bringing out, is very annoying, as one writes by lantern. I swallowed one, in fact. I hope to get finished Sunday, but if it takes another day, I shall have no hesitation in staying on for it. Chico is somewhat better, but still seedy. He caught a cold with all the rest of us but had some stock disorder with it.

### May 27, Friday

Work continues, but there is so much to be done that I have decided to stay another day. That is, we will leave here Tuesday the 31st instead of Monday the 30th. Showers in the afternoon slowed up work again. I do not mind getting wet, but drawing simply couldn't be done under sprinkling conditions. In spite of these handicaps, however, I did my daily stint of three monuments—Stelae 1, 3, and 5. I did 5 the first thing in the morning. It is very simple—bar and dot numerals that declare the date 9.14.5.0.0 very clearly. Also did Stela 3 in the morning. This is equally clear as 9.14.0.0.0, but took considerably more time as so much of the detail is still preserved: cross-hachure, double lining, etc. [Figures 45.8 and 45.9].

After lunch I started on Stela 1, which has large numerals like Stelae 37 and 38, except that they are in bars and dots. This went fairly rapidly and the date again is very clear, 9.13.15.0.0.

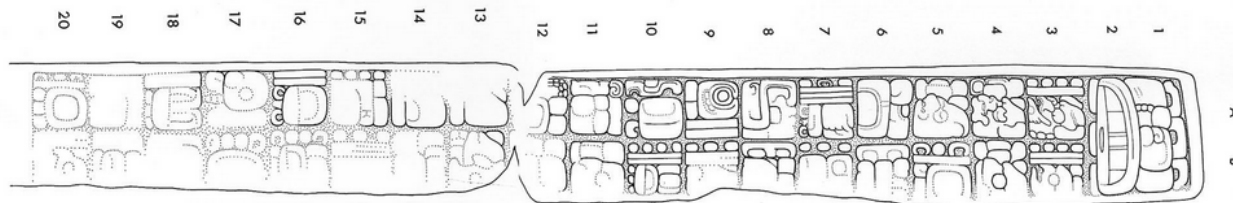


Figure 45.8. Drawing of the left side of Piedras Negras Stela 3 by David Stuart. Image has been rotated to more closely match Rutherford's photograph (Figure 45.9).



Figure 45.9. Piedras Negras Stela 3 as photographed by Rutherford. Note the clarity of the Initial Series inscription, including the ISIG (right). Stelae 4, 5 and 6 are seen in the background.

On the way back to camp I went around by Stelae 32–37 and found Rutherford had been digging in a drain at the north end of the platform, and to my delight and amazement he had found a fragment of stone with glyphs which had been used to cover the drain. The glyph side was not down, but on one edge were glyphs. I did not see anything decipherable as I passed tonight, but it was late. One thing very noticeable is that the glyphs are all incised, a feature I have noted nowhere else here, save possibly on Stela 30 [Figure 45.10]. I could not determine whether this is part of a lintel or a stela. It is interesting as showing secondary usage, which was so prevalent at Copan.



Figure 45.10. Detail of the fragment of Stela 30 discovered reused as a drain cap.

Rutherford developed again and had much better luck, that is, fewer are light struck. It isn't his fault, the camera is literally falling to pieces. He says it is put together only with glue. It makes one blush for our cheap American methods. The Eastman Co. have a monopoly on the photographic business and can put over any inferior workmanship that they want and the public has no redress. I am afraid we are not going to get a very good photographic reward here. He also finds that the films are getting a bit old. Well, it only shows that I have got to be more careful with my drawing. In fact, I prefer the drawn glyphs to the photographed ones.

### **May 28, Saturday**

Last night I had Muddy write a note to don Silverio Camposeco telling him to tell don Manuel's *arriero*, if don Manuel has not left, that he is not to come over tomorrow, but on Monday; that we will leave Tuesday morning instead of Monday morning. I had decided to send Luciana again, as he has not been working at the ruins since he gave his finger that bad jam between two rocks, but he had a fever last night, so I sent young Pino Suárez instead.

Ricketson had finished at the ballcourt (?) and I decided to have him dig out the drain thoroughly, in hopes we might find some more fragments of the monument that Rutherford had uncovered there yesterday. He went with me there first and I gave it a closer examination, which was amply rewarded. I recognized the first Glyph C of the S.S., then Glyph A, and then the month 18 Sek very clearly. After this came the well-known hand-ending sign with all the regular elements present, and after it, half of a glyph which was clearly the end of K'atun 5. I thought I remembered that K'atun 5 ended on 18 Sek, but I was so excited I sent one of the boys back to the house (or rather to camp—we have no house) to bring Goodman's tables. When he got back, I looked it up and it was so—9.5.0.0.0 11 Ajaw 18 Sek [AD 534]. This made this fragment the oldest dateable object in the city by 75 years, the next oldest being Stela 25 at 9.8.15.0.0 [AD 608].

And at this point I had little short of an inspiration. I remembered that the glyphs on Stela 30 are incised, and also that part of its inscription is missing. We hastily measured this fragment and went across the court to Stela 30 and measured it. Both were the same thickness, and this fragment was the right shape to fill the missing part of Stela 30. I had the boys carry it over to 30 and it fitted [Figure 45.11].

This was real luck, and it gives me the date of that monument now, which is the oldest yet recovered from the city. It makes the dated occupation of Piedras Negras extend for more than 2½ centuries, i.e., from 9.5.0.0.0 to 9.18.5.0.0. Happily, the 19 Sek, the hand-ending sign, and the K'atun 5 fix this date beyond any doubt, in spite of the loss of all the Initial Series.

After this big discovery, because it really is big, I went up to the West Group and started in at my daily stint of drying to draw the Initial Series and Supplementary Series on three stelae. I started on 4, which has large head variant period glyphs like Stelae 37 and 38, but the light was so poor coming from directly behind it (and throwing it into heavy shade) that I had to give it up. That it will be all right in the afternoon light was my consolation.

Stela 2 was in pretty good light, so I drew the inscription on that. This date had been in doubt since I first visited here as between 9.13.0.0.0 and 9.13.5.0.0. The k'atun coefficient is very clearly 13, and the day coefficient is either 1 or 8, but this did not help any, as the terminal date of 9.13.0.0.0 is 8 Ajaw 8 Wo, and of 9.13.5.0.0 1 Ajaw 3 Pop. I inclined to the latter position, since the tun coefficient appears to have a tun for its headdress, and more important still, there is a

Secondary Series composed of 1-2-7, and the date 1 Ben 1 K'ayab. This number exactly leads to 1 Ajaw 3 Pop, viz:

9.13.3.15.13	10 Ben 1 K'ayab
1.2.7	
9.13.5.0.0	1 Ajaw 3 Pop

So, I accept this as the *jotun* Stela 2 was erected to commemorate.



Figure 45.11. Piedras Negras Stela 30 with the missing piece (Figure 45.10) put in place on the right side. Note the poor quality of the photo owing to Rutherford's failing camera.

I should note one other exceedingly unusual, if not unique feature of this stela, namely, it is sculptured on top with a figure and some small glyphs [Figure 45.12]. I have never seen this feature before and the closest approximation to it is the meeting of the inscriptions on two sides of Stela 7, also here [at Piedras Negras; Figure 45.13].





Figure 45.12. The carved top of Stelae 2, with a figure and glyphs. This would not have been visible to observers on the ground.



Figure 45.13. The sculptured top of Stela 7.



Rutherford, who is always finishing things, called my attention to another example also here. The top of Stela 32 is sculptured with a large single glyph with the numeral 16 attached to it. This cannot be a day, but it is interesting, nevertheless. I know of no other site in the Maya area where this feature occurs.<sup>265</sup>

I started to draw Stela 4, but it was so near lunch time that I only got as far as the day sign when we went back. It had grown very hot and a thunderstorm threatened. Muddy said don Miguel had been through. He said he had passed Luciano on the way to Desempeño and he said the *arrieros* would wait until Monday afternoon before coming over.

I got back to the ruins about two and sat down to Stela 4 again. The clouds piled up gray and ugly and spread all over the sky. The wind blew through the forest and the leaves fell. I had Martín clear out the space under Altar 2 and had all our impedimenta carried there so that I could work up to the last minute. Just as I finished the last glyph I had to draw on it, the lajuntun sign—the date of Stela 4 is 9.13.10.0.0—the rain began to patter down. Rutherford and his men had in the meantime prepared Altar 1, the round stone in front of Stelae 1–8, for their occupation, and now took shelter there [Figure 45.7, above].

Martín and I ran to our own altar. It was rather low, but we crawled in and kept quite dry through the downpour which followed. There was a bottle of *chechem* sap there which Rutherford had drawn, and I inadvertently turned the poisonous stuff over—a drop in the eye will put it out.<sup>266</sup> We gave it a wide berth. We must have stayed under the altar for an hour and a half, all through the storm itself and then through a period of sprinkling. I hoped it would finally clear up, but it did not, and so when there was a lull between showers, we returned to camp.

Ramiro (Pino Suárez) was in and reported that the *mulada* would come over Monday instead of Sunday. The evening closed in lowering and very threatening. It came on to rain very early and increased in violence. The thunder rolled and the lightning played and down came the rain heavier than ever. The bush to me is cheerless enough at best, but when it is dripping wet it is all but impossible. I expected every moment that a trickle of water would find its way into my cot, but it did not. My *pabellón* got wet, but no water to speak of reached me. I got up once during the night and put a couple of Turkish towels on top of my *pabellón* to absorb what water dropped on it, and my two cotton comforters did the same underneath. Between this blotter-like sandwich, I managed to pass a dry night, though I was the only one who did so (besides Muddy). Alfred, who slept on the ground under the center of the tarp, even got wet. This sounded like a real rainy season downpour, and I fear we must accept the fact that the rains have at last begun. It is lucky that we are so nearly finished here.

## May 29, Sunday

I had thought to make this my last day of drawing, and the weather conditions were excellent

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<sup>265</sup> Some have proposed that the inscriptions occasionally found on the tops of stelae were not meant for human eyes, if only because they were not visible to viewers (O’Neil 2012: 103).

<sup>266</sup> *Chechem* (*Metopium brownie*, also called black poisonwood) is a shrub with leathery leaves and yellow flowers. Its caustic, poisonous sap or exudate can, like poison ivy, “cause painful irritation of the skin and yes, the sanding dust can cause dermatitis and respiratory problems” (Quattrocchi 2012: 2492).

too, only a little sprinkle all day long, but I had bitten off too much and did not complete my program.

I started on Stela 6 and soon finished it. In order to save time, I had lunch sent out for Martín and me, and Rutherford had the same done for himself and Diego, who has been helping him. About nine o'clock, I had finished Stela 6 and began on the four legs of Altar 2. Each one of these has 9 glyph blocks and I had drawn the calendric ones in 1914, though not to scale. Though time was pressing, I decided to draw the whole thing over again. Rutherford had had a great clearing made around it and the light conditions were excellent.

The first thing I discovered when I got over to it and gave it a close examination was that it had had an Initial Series. This could be made out in spite of almost complete effacement due to the rains of 15 centuries. I knew from my work of seven years ago that the date of this altar was 9.16.0.0.0 2 Ajaw 13 Sek, and it did not surprise me, therefore, to find this date repeated as the I.S. on the front of this altar. This brings the number of I.S. here at Piedras up to 34 as follows:

West Group	
<u>Monument</u>	<u># of Initial Series</u>
Stela 1	2
Stela 2	1
Stela 3	2
Stela 4	1
Stela 5	1
Stela 6	1
Stela 7	1
Stela 8	1
Stela 9	1
Stela 10	1
Stela 11	1
Stela 38	1
Stela 39	1
Stela 40	1
Lintel 2	1
<u>Altar 2</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

North Group	
[Today's East Group]	
<u>Monument</u>	<u># of Initial Series</u>
Stela 12	1
Stela 12	1
Stela 14	1
Stela 16	1
<u>Stela 23</u>	<u>2</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>

South Group	
<u>Monument</u>	<u># of Initial Series*</u>
Stela 25	
Stela 26	
Stela 29	
Stela 30	
Stela 31	
Stela 32	
Stela 34	
Stela 35	
Stela 36	
Stela 37	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>
<b><u>Grand Total</u></b>	<b><u>34</u></b>

\*No I.S. count is given for these stelae, but the total is given as 10 for those listed. One presumes each had a single I.S.

This is the largest number, next to Copan, of any city in the Maya area.

To return to Altar 2: The drawing of the inscriptions on the four legs or supports of this altar was difficult because, being under the table part, I had to stoop all the time to make my measurements. I drew from nine to five before I finished it. Ricketson and Alfred had been helping Rutherford all day. They moved monuments about until the sides were in favorable light for photographing.<sup>267</sup> By five it had grown so dark that it was difficult for me to see to draw the last glyphs on the last support of the altar, and when I finished, I told Martín we were through for the day. But we were not.

We returned by way of the North [East] Group where we found Ricketson and his *cuadrilla* at work on Stela 16. It was much lighter here, away from the shadows of the Acropolis, and while Ricketson was finishing his work on Stela 16, I drew the Supplementary Series on Stela 13, which I had passed at first. In fact, I am not sure that what I drew this afternoon was the S.S., at least I could identify neither Glyph C or Glyph A, the essential signs in the present state of knowledge.

It soon grew too dark to draw here. Ricketson's men had put in a hard day, so we called it that and returned to camp. It had not rained all day and we were perspiring profusely. Ricketson,

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<sup>267</sup> Morley and other archaeologists typically did not relocate monuments (unless exporting them to museums). Often, they returned a stela to the position in which it was found—i.e., if fallen face down it was left face down, to preserve the inscription against the elements. One wonders if stelae were always returned to their original orientation, which could have been significant. At Piedras Negras, for example, the monuments' texts might have been read in counter-clockwise order (O'Neil 2012: 88–102), or the stelae's original positioning/orientation might have implied who (commoners vs. elites) were able to view or "interact" with them (O'Neil 2012: 78). The fronts and backs also had differing themes: rulers on the front and females (queens or mothers) on the back.

Alfred, and I went in bathing and Rutherford joined us. The river had risen very considerably, the rocks from which we used to go in are now completely submerged. The water too has changed color completely since we came. It was green at first, but it is now muddy. It was wonderfully refreshing, however, and for the hundredth time we blessed its proximity to camp—a 75-yard run downhill in the sand and splash!

Of all the camps during the past four months, I shall look back upon this as the most delightful. The cool refreshing river a stone's throw off, an open vista to lovely hills across in Mexico, and an absence of *garrapatas* and fleas. Thrice blessed spot!

It rained early, and afterward Rutherford developed. At last, he is beginning to get good results here. He has apparently stopped all leaks in the camera, and he has conquered the light conditions. He developed five rolls and did not get to bed until about eleven.

### May 30, Monday

This was Decoration Day at home, but down here at Piedras Negras it was the last day of the field season, or that is to say, the last day of work. I got up very early and Martín and I were out at the ruins by 6:30. I went first to the South Plaza and finished some drawings I had to do there on Stela 34. Also took some final measurements. I also began a systematic inspection of the coefficients of Glyphs C and A of the Supplementary Series, which I carried on all day and finished in the late afternoon at the West Group. After finishing here, I went over to Stela 30 and drew the inscription on the piece found by Rutherford in the drain. This, as I noted before, records the date 9.5.0.0.0 11 Ajaw 18 Sek and is the earliest monument yet discovered, or at least yet deciphered, here.

This took some time, as I made very complete measurements and worked out the arrangement of the inscription. From here, I climbed the pyramid where Stela 29 was found [Structure R-3] and took the measurements of Ricketson's Stela (42) which unfortunately has no carving left on it at all. I stopped at Stelae 25 and 26 to verify the coefficients of Glyphs C and A, then went over to take the measurements of Stela 41. I had Martín clean the top of this off and traces of a large figure facing to the left could still be distinguished upon it. The sides and back were plain.

I stopped at Stelae 22 and 23 only long enough to study the S.S. on the latter, and then moved on to the Northern [Eastern] Group. There was very little to do here, only four Supplementary Series (12, 13, 14, and 16), and I next went over to Altar 4. This is supported by four large heads [Figure 45.14]. Each has a row of delicately carved glyphs on its forehead, but none were calendric in nature. The back of the altar—the table part—had been inscribed with glyphs, and I think had had an Initial Series, but it was too far gone to tell anything about, and I had to give it up.

From here, I went over to the West Group, or the Acropolis. On the way over, I met Ricketson and his *quadrille* coming back. They reported work going along all right and all stones ready for photographing save one, which they were on their way to turn. I got up to the West Group at eleven and went first to Stelae 38 and 39. It did not take me long to finish here, and I came back to Stela 1 to 8 where Rutherford was taking his last photographs. It had grown fearfully hot, and this place is the hottest in the city because the number of trees that have been felled here to let in the light.

We ate off Stela 1 and then we parted for the afternoon labors. Chico, who had brought the lunch, said the *mulada* had arrived from Desempeño and presently several of the *arrieros* came

over to see the work. I showed them the new Stela 40, and they were greatly impressed. One of them said the people of that day must have been "*muy bruto*" [very brutish] to have moved such stones. Also, because of the size of the principal figure, that they must have been "*gigantes*." I have learned by sad experience that it is impossible to correct these illusions, so I let it go at that.



Figure 45.14. Piedras Negras Altar 4 with its large head supports.

In coming back to Stela 11, I slipped on one of those very smooth boughs, one of the many Rutherford's men had cluttered up things with, and had a bad fall. My notebook went in one direction and I in the other. Before I looked to myself, I looked to see that the former was still intact. Though I did not realize it at the time, I really gave myself a hard shaking up, sprained my back, and twisted my neck. It was quite like me to feel sure that I had cracked a vertebra or something. It nauseated me, gave me a headache, and upset me generally. I had little desire to go on working, but there was no remedy. I had to.

I spent the rest of the day in taking final notes on the Secondary Series of Stelae 1–8 and Altar 1. One point which came out of the afternoon's work was a Secondary Series on the front of Stela 8 in the panel of glyphs across the front. This is:

9.12.15.0.0 2 Ajaw 13 (blank)  
5.0.0  
9.13.0.0.0 Ajaw

I think all things considered that there can be little doubt as to the age of this monument. It must almost certainly date from the k'atun ending 9.13.0.0.0.

The eight stelae and altars of this group are to be assigned as follows:

Stela 6	9.12.15.0.0
Stela 8	9.13.0.0.0
Stela 2	9.13.5.0.0
Stela 4	9.13.10.0.0
Stela 1	9.13.15.0.0
Stela 3	9.14.0.0.0
Stela 5	9.14.5.0.0
Stela 7	9.14.10.0.0
Altar 1	9.14.15.0.0

I have stated elsewhere that of all the 42 stelae here at Piedras Negras, the base of Stela 8 was the only one in situ. This morning I discovered that a large flat stone which I had turned yesterday was the base of Stela 4, and is in situ. I measured the distance between it and Stela 8 and found this to be 41 feet. Allowing an average width of  $3\frac{2}{3}$  feet for each of the three intervening stelae, 30 feet remained for four inter-stela spaces, which makes these stelae about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet apart each. Or, from the outside edge of Stela 1 to the opposite edge of Stela 8, the distance is  $33\frac{1}{2} = 41 = 44\frac{1}{3}$  [feet].

The work here consumed the rest of the afternoon. I finished with some final notes on the dates on Altar 1. A troop of *arriero* [army?] ants had built their road just in front of, or rather under, the date I had to draw last. Before I had finished, I was well covered with them.

The sun had gone behind some heavy clouds for the rest of the day and it was getting dusk in the bush when we finally left for camp. Tired as I was, I think I would have bathed a last time in the Usumacinta had it not been so late. As it was, we had dinner at once, and we turned in early. It only rained slightly and it would have been a good night to have developed, but it took so long for the films to dry today that Rutherford thought he had better not try.

## CHAPTER 46.

### PIEDRAS NEGRAS TO FRONTERA, TABASCO

#### May 31, Tuesday

Everyone was up early. It was 4:40 when I rose myself, and the *arrieros* had been up a good hour by then. It did not take me long to pack my single kyack (No.1) and we sat down to breakfast before six o'clock. The plans for the day were these: Estanislao Reyes was to stay behind with me, while the others were to go on ahead as soon as they could get off. Estanislao and I set off for the ruins before 6:30. Muddy had lent me his watch, and it was just 6:30 by it when I started to draw the inscriptions on Stela 29. This was the only task that I had left for myself to do this morning, but I knew that it was going to take some time. The monument is an early one, and the glyphs are highly elaborated, cross-hatching, double lining, circles, extra ornaments—all time-consumers when it comes to drawing.

The I.S. is 9.5.5.??, but there is a later Secondary Series of 1.1.7.19 followed by a day 8 ? Whatever the date of this may be—I mean its contemporary date—it is early, i.e., between 9.5.0.0.0 and 9.10.0.0.0. I was about halfway through it when the shouts of the *mulada* advised that they were getting under way. I looked at Muddy's watch and it was just 8:20. I recognized Chico's halloos and also the melancholy plaintive falsetto one that Alfred gives vent to in the bush. These gradually grew fainter as the *mulada* passed farther and farther on ahead. I worked on for something more than an hour before finishing the drawing of this text.

It was 9:40 when I got back to camp. It was a changed place. In the trail coming into it was a tin of lunch—crackers and cheese with a note from Rick saying they were getting off at 8:15. Our animals were saddled and we only waited long enough to tie on my bag of drawing materials, notebook, measure, etc., and the lunch. We left camp at 9:45 and five minutes later were riding behind the mounds on the east side of the city. I bid farewell to the ruins as we left them behind. There has scarcely been a place on the face of the globe that I have wanted to see more for the past seven years than Piedras Negras, and our 13-day stay here has been profitable beyond my greatest expectations. Five new monuments—Stelae 38, 39, 40, 41, and 42—and three of them dated, besides a lot of new Secondary Series, and all the Supplemental Series. These, with Rutherford's photographic record and Ricketson's map (a fine piece of work), make a splendid rounding out of the field season.

Estanislao and I rode forward at a good gait. We stopped for ten minutes to eat lunch shortly after 12, and then continued. The way seemed much shorter returning and it was still early in the afternoon when we passed Tres Champas and said goodbye to Petén for this season and entered Mexico again for the second time within three weeks. We reached the top of the Tapesco hill about three and dismounted. This is exceedingly steep and must be all of 200 feet high. We got down without mishap and at 3:45 we rode into El Retiro, our stopping place for the night.



Everybody was in before us. Rutherford, Ricketson, Alfred, Chico, and Muddy had taken a wrong road and had come down to the river at Tumbo Romano. Before they had gotten back to the main road again and into El Retiro, the rest of the *mulada* had overtaken them and they arrived together about twenty minutes before we did.

So far as I could see, El Retiro had changed none for the better since we passed through here two weeks ago today. The doubtful widow Justa had taken unto herself another man, the new corn was in—we had some of it in tamales—and the rains had started. Muddy had established our camp under a porch at the end of some thatched huts, and here amid the dogs, pigs, mules, chickens, and ducks we managed to keep very active. It looked like rain and all the hammocks were hung under the porch. We squeezed in, but were at pretty close quarters. One of the minor misfortunes of the late afternoon was the breaking of my cot leg. Rick was sitting on it and quite without warning the mahogany leg which had been put on it at Flores broke. It will last out the few more nights I will have to use it, however, by being propped up by a box at the end.

I tried to write, but we were on our last lantern full of oil, and it was so mixed with water that it would not burn strongly. Everybody retired before me, but when the light gave out, I too was driven under the *pabellón*. It had come on to rain early, and though it was not a heavy rain, it kept up fairly persistently. Chico had fixed my *pabellón* with too dry and almost rotten sticks, so that they broke about ten. I gave him a good scolding for such carelessness. He knows better than to use such rotten sticks. The next time I went to sleep, it was for the rest of the night.

### June 1, Wednesday

The first day of summer. A fortnight hence will be the Pennsylvania Military College commencement. Will I be there? *¿Quién sabe?; creo que no* [Who knows; I don't think so]. Everyone was up in good season and more or less ill-tempered. I was speaking for myself. Chico's thoughtlessness of the night before and the unpleasant waking which it had given me, put me out of sorts. Then, too, I still feel sore and upset over the spilling I got day before yesterday at the ruins.

I reached the decision to send Chico back by land to Belize from Tenosique. Alfred will take him on to Laguna Perdida and Shufeldt will send him on from there. Muddy told him of this before breakfast. He was not so disappointed as I expected he would be. Muddy says he has been secretly dreading the sea trip.

We left El Retiro, which is on the Usumacinta, at seven o'clock. The road was very slippery and the going hard. The road between El Retiro and Saya is a bad bit anyhow, many steep rocky hills which, now that the rains have started, are really slippery and dangerous. We passed the railroad tracks leading off through the bush, crossing our trail at right angles, an uncanny sight in such a place. The rails are not rusted at all, and the roadbed, save for the young forest that covers it, looks to be in good condition.

We came along at a fairly good gait. The road seemed to be more closed than when we came through a fortnight ago. This results from the rains, which weigh down the boughs and tend to close it up. When we got to Tepiscuintle we asked the woman in the *rancho* there whether she had heard anything about the Río Poliva—was it up or could we still ford it? She said that it had not come up and we continued on our way, greatly relieved because we had anticipated trouble here. Sometime after this we came down to the Poliva. Estanislao had chosen another ford, higher up, which he thought was more shallow, and we crossed here without much trouble. Rutherford's

mule, instead of going down the steep bank slowly and with caution, leapt clear into the middle of the stream causing a great splash. He [Rutherford] actually turned quite white, due, he said, to surprise.

Once over the ford, our troubles began in real earnest. The land beyond was low, a sort of flooded bottom woodland and here we slithered and slipped around for another ten minutes until we emerged on higher ground. Just before we had reached the ford, we passed Trinidad Peck—one of our men—who said the other boys had taken the main trail. We were now coming in by a trail which runs between the one we entered by from Petén three weeks ago and the one we went out by something more than two weeks ago. The former lay east of us, the latter west of us. The weather began to cloud up and to threaten rain. We hastened out apace to escape a wetting. It began to sprinkle a little when we passed the cemetery, and by the time we were riding down the main street of Tenosique it had come on to rain quite heavily.

We first went to the corral behind Pepe Villanueva's new house and left the mules and then went over to don Manuel's. They gave us a warm welcome, and some *habanera*, and soon a delicious breakfast, the likes of which we had not set down to since we left here before. We had arrived at 2:05, just seven hours and five minutes on the road, and it was time too. We had hardly got into don Manuel's when the bottom fell out of the sky. We were glad enough to have escaped the wetting.

Going to Piedras Negras it had taken us just 15 hours staying behind with the *mulada*, eight from Tenosique to El Retiro, and 7 from El Retiro to P.N. Sixteen leagues I call it, or about 42 to 45 miles. It is another four leagues on to Desempeño, or twenty leagues from Desempeño to Tenosique. At the time of year we did it, the journey can be made from Tenosique to the ruins in two days with *mulada*, but in the rainy season it would take nearer to four.

About three, the boys began to struggle in and the *mulada* itself arrived with the cargo before five. It was a great disappointment not to find the *Triunfo* waiting for us. It had been up on the 26th but had gone back without waiting. Don Manuel showed me a telegram to Celestino Martínez sent the day before telling him we would be in today *sin falta* [without fail] and that the *Triunfo* must be in by tomorrow. Also, a reply from Celestino stating that she would be in early in the morning.

I was surprised to get some letters from McLaney. He had returned to Tenosique and only been gone a day. He left yesterday for the San Pedro River to see Aguilera's *montería* at Piedra Santa on that river. He may see us in Frontera before we finally get off, as he only expects to be there a week. He wants me to take some money on to his wife, which I suppose I will have to do. I hate to be responsible for other people's money.

We heard some rumors of troubles between Shufeldt and Cooper, of course due to Bromberg's visit. McLaney had told don Manuel that Cooper had told him (McL) in Balancan the other day that Shufeldt had been discharged and he, Cooper, appointed manager in his stead. I told don Manuel that I hardly thought this accurately represented the situation and made it clear to him that Shufeldt had not in any way been discharged, that he had resigned and his resignation had been accepted, but that he would not get out until he had been freed of all responsibilities he had incurred as manager of the C.E.G.

Pepe paid off my men and made out my accounts. All together I will owe about 600 odd dollars for the last two weeks. Very cheap I thought, considering the services rendered and the

information secured. Pepe asked me to stay with him that night, the others, however, went up to don Manuel Otero Cisneros's house. It started to rain early and kept it up pretty steadily all evening long. Chico and Alfred went to a "velación," a prayer and singing fiesta [? a wake], but the rest of us were too tired to do anything else but go to bed.

### **June 2, Thursday**

The *Triunfo* did not get in all day long. Toward noon I thought I had better send a telegram to Celestino Martínez at Montecristo asking where in the devil she was. Don Manuel sent this off for me and the answer came back in the late afternoon that the *Triunfo* had left Montecristo early yesterday. The *telegrafista* here had the kindness to ask the *telagrafista* at Balancan whether she had passed there or not, and Balancan answered that she had, about eight o'clock last night. What don Manuel thinks she did was to go up the San Pedro River with Atalano Cámara aboard, and some of his *gente*, and that she will get in tomorrow. All we could do is smile and wait.

We did a little souvenir buying. I bought, or rather ordered made, a pair of jaguar skin slippers. Rick bought a leather bag with a jaguar skin front, and Rutherford bought a small ocelot skin. Preparations went forward for Chico and Alfred and Martín's leaving also. It was decided that they will go overland to La Palma on the San Pedro River and thence up by motorboat to Paso Caballos.

Prisciliano Colorado came over from La Palma on horseback today—he is a Tenosiquero employed by the C.E.G.—and brought some more letters from Shufeldt. It appears he has refused to resign, apparently, and there are two managers on the river now—himself at Laguna Perdida and Cooper at Paso Caballos. One sends out a circular that no drafts are to be honored unless signed by himself, while the other does the same thing. It is an unfortunate condition, and will destroy the good standing of the C.E.G., which Shufeldt has so laboriously built up, if it continues. What Bromberg fails to understand is that the C.E.G. is a personal machine built up by Shufeldt out of men—Mexicans, Guatemaltecos, Campechanos, Tuxpanos, etc.—who like him, and if the head is removed the whole organization will fall.

McLaney had left behind him some *Saturday Evening Posts*, and I had a regular *Saturday Evening Post* gorge. I am pretty tired, too, and find it very comfortable to lie down and just read. After dinner, or really after supper, because the Villanueva's mid-day meal is a dinner in itself, Pepe came to me and asked if Ricketson would be willing to go up and call on his prospective father-in-law, don Tránsito Mehenes of Laguna de Carmen. Don Tránsito and his father are old compadres in the mahogany business, and I fancy the engagement has reached the stage of formal acceptance on both sides. It seems that don Tránsito has a fever, bad cold in his throat, and coughs a lot. In short, Pepe wants Dr. Ricketson to take a look at him. We went up after dinner, Ricketson, myself, Pepe, and don Manuel. Don Tránsito was in a hammock and really appeared to be suffering. He had a fever of 101, coughed a lot, and ached all over. Ricketson diagnosed it as laryngitis with malaria as a probable complication. We left some directions as to quinine and aspirin and when we returned to the house, we sent the medicine back. I also included a bottle of Horlick's malted milk, which he can take for nourishment.

It rained again hard all evening; began early and continued until quite late. Pepe as usual spent the evening with his *novia* [fiancée]. He is a very regular young man, however, and is always back a little after ten.

### June 3, Friday

Just before we sat down to breakfast, someone came in with the welcome news that the *Triunfo* was rounding the last bend in the river and would soon be in. This hastened our last preparations for leaving. I had to write a number of letters for Chico to facilitate his getting through to Belize, one to Shufeldt, one to Boburg, another to Cifuentes (the *receptor* of customs at Plancha de Piedra), and one to Gann. I rather think, however, the last will not reach him until after Muddy gets back to Belize. This took some time too. Chico had to be provided with funds and there were many last little things to be done.

I got my jaguar skin slippers for one thing. They are not unsuccessful, but could be made much better. He has put the hide on the wrong way, with the hair pointing forward instead of backward. After the letters had been written, we went up to don Tránsito Mehenes' again to have a look at Rick's patient. He was doing famously. No fever, his cough all but gone, and feeling better in general. Ricketson acquired great kudos, and we left in a blaze of professional glory. In the meantime, Muddy had been seeing our baggage on board, Luciano, Martín, and Chico carrying it down.

The time had come to say farewell to don Manuel and his hospitable household. We bid goodbye to the *señora* first in her house. Don Manuel and Pepe came down to the playa with us. I gave my Chico a good hug and told him to take care of himself on the road. Also bid goodbye to Alfred and Martín.

We went aboard. A comfortable awning had been spread over the deck, and our chairs and table arranged comfortably. Queen Cleopatra in her most gorgeous galley was not more impressive than ourselves. The engine coughed two or three times, and then began to explode regularly. The propeller churned the water, and we pulled out into the stream. Goodbyes flew back and forth, the distance widened, and finally only the waving of hands was left to be done.

This stretch of the Usumacinta [Figure 46.1] is the last I have to complete, save of course the unnavigable stretch from Santa Margarita to Desempeño. In 1914 Joe Spinden and I covered from Seibal on the Pasión to Desempeño on the Usumacinta. In 1915 I came down from the headwaters of the Pasión, striking it at a place called New Porvenir, above Cancuen, and came down as far as Sayaxche. In 1918 I came from the other direction, landing at Laguna de Carmen and coming up as far as Montecristo. A fortnight ago when I went along the river (more or less close to it, that is) from Tenosique to Piedras Negras, I closed part of this gap, and this afternoon from Tenosique down to Montecristo I will close the last of it.

About three we ran aground. The man at the wheel got off the channel and we were soon bumping bottom. The crew tried all the usual expedients of shoving and pushing, backing the engines, etc., but the *Triunfo* would not budge. They finally went overboard—most of them—and shoved from below. They carried the anchor off and tried to pull the boat over it, but this did not work either. At last, they came to the final expedient of shifting the cargo forward (we were caught at the stern). By this time Ricketson had gone overboard, Muddy also, and I followed soon. Only Rutherford sat in lonely and unclean magnificence on board. When our great weights were raised—I weighed 123 lbs this morning, and Ricketson 138 (both being seven pounds low)—the *Triunfo* moved and we gradually worked her off into deeper water. In fact, I had some difficulty in getting back on board as the current is very swift here.

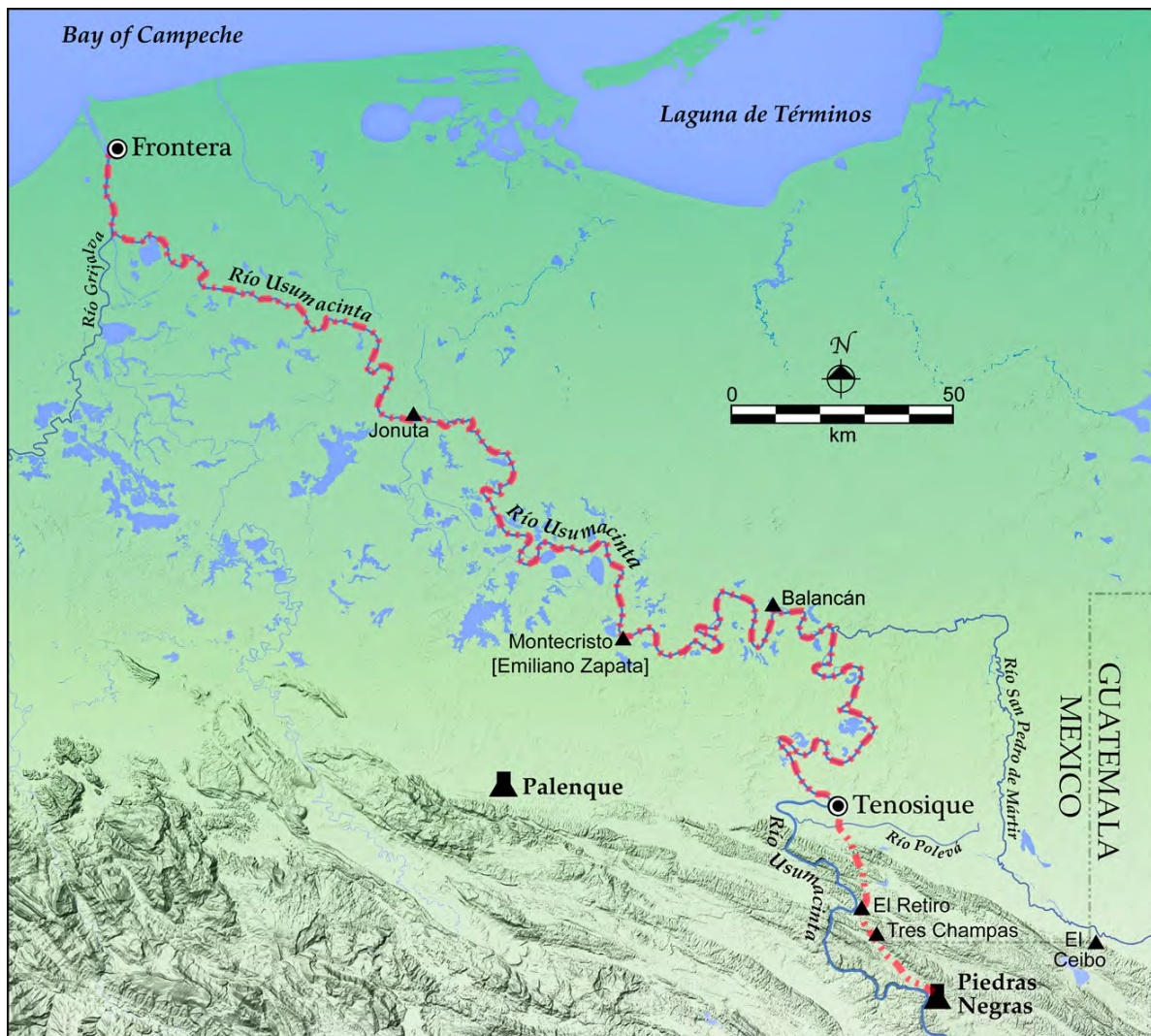


Figure 46.1. Morley's overland and riverine journey from Piedras Negras to Frontera along the Usumacinta, marking the end of the 1921 field season.

In getting under way, the rowboat which we are towing with the kitchen firewood turned and spilt our oar and the wood. A boy went over to retrieve the oar, and before we could finally pick him up again his strength was almost gone in fighting the current and he nearly drowned. About dusk we reached Balancán, where we took on a number of passengers, including a cute little girl of 6. Her mother is dead but she always goes with her father to the bush. This influx of passengers made us somewhat crowded, but they only went as far as Montecristo, which we reached at just eleven o'clock by the Montecristo clock bell.

I had gone to bed, but when I heard they planned to stop here all night, I went ashore to look up our captain and find out what was afoot. The last time I had been here was about the middle of May 1918 with John Held, when we went over to the ruins of Palenque for a few days. I found the captain, Pepe Rodríguez, and don Celestino Martínez—in whose house I had stopped

before—closeted together in the last's office. The captain said they would not pull out tonight, but when I said I would not pay for the boat if they didn't, he changed his mind.

I made myself known to don Celestino, who remembered the circumstances of my visit. It was fairly remarkable for him, because he was taken down to Villahermosa a prisoner while we were there. He offered me some sugar rum, which I took sparingly, knowing its deadly effects.

At the last minute they sprang a bill of \$411.00 on me for charter of the *Triunfo*, which, however, I refused to sign. The price Atalano and I had agreed upon in Laguna Perdida was between \$75 and \$100, and not four hundred odd. I refused to sign this bill and things were a bit strained for a moment. I said I would sign a bill for use of the boat from Montecristo to Tenosique for me, and then back to Frontera. This paper was soon drawn up and I signed it. We bid goodbye to don Celestino and went down to the bank and cast off. It rained during the night and conditions were generally sleepless.

Pepe Rodríguez, Muddy, and Rutherford had their hammocks slung under the awning. Ricketson had gone forward to the pilot house, where there are four bunks, and I had my cot crossways just fore of the engine house. There was some difficulty with the engine, and it was clearing the day when this part was finally repaired and we got underway. What with the rain and the engine and the attempted holdup of Montecristo, I passed a fairly sleepless night and woke up in the morning anything but refreshed.

#### **June 4, Saturday**

All day long we steamed down the Usumacinta. Gradually the banks flattened out and we knew that at last we were getting back toward tide-water again. As far as the eye could reach, there were no hills or elevation, only the level flat river plain of this mighty stream, the largest in Central America, I believe.

There were many little thatched huts here and there on the banks, fields of banana, plantain, and corn, canoes creeping up along the bank or floating with the current—evidence of a considerable river population. About one, we passed quite a tall pyramid on the right bank (going down) with a reservoir on top of it. This was, of course, a re-use of an ancient construction. There were several houses built on the flanks of the pyramid and the latter itself was on the outskirts of [left blank in diary],<sup>268</sup> which they said was still six hours from Frontera. This pyramid was a considerable landmark.

At first the captain had estimated that we would reach Frontera at four, but it became apparent as the afternoon wore away that we would not do this. About five thirty we came to the mouth of the Grijalva River, two leagues above Frontera. Three large streams come together here, the two easternmost being arms of the Usumacinta and the western one, the Grijalva. Locally I believe the river is known as the Grijalva from this point on, but the Usumacinta is the larger and should have the pass here. From this point down, the water is salt and the waterway rather a broad channel, an arm of the sea rather than a river.

The sun was setting as we approached Frontera, indeed it sank into the low trees along the western bank just before we put into dock at seven o'clock. As we approached the wharf, the

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<sup>268</sup> Morley leaves a blank in his diary here. We speculate the pyramid he mentions may be the large mound called "El Cuyo" in the riverside town of Jonuta, Tabasco.



place looked like a city to us, and was indeed the largest place we had seen in four months [Figure 46.2].



Figure 46.2. The wharf and customs house at Frontera, Tabasco.

We had to wait a moment when we were made fast for the custom's house inspector to look at our papers before we could come ashore. It was agreed that Ricketson, Rutherford, and Muddy should attend to getting our baggage up to the Hotel Diligencias, which McLaney had told us was the best hotel, while I was to go over to the American Consulate and retrieve our mail. I lost no time in putting my part of this program into effect. I found Mr. Blohm<sup>269</sup>--the consul--a pleasant enough gentleman, the guardian of great piles of mail for us. In all there were ten or twelve large Carnegie Institution envelopes full of mail. One of my first inquiries was directed toward the ship sailing and he told me that one had gone yesterday and that the next would be on the 9th or 10th. He informed me further that he could not have let me go on the boat of the 3rd without the six-days residence here, and that the first date we could get off would be that of the 9th or 10th. In this direction, the most he would concede was that he would call today, the 4th, the first day which would allow us to get off on the 9th, if the boat did. He was anxious to have me sleep there and all of us eat there. I said I would have to consult first and that I would see him later.

Taking my mail, I returned to the landing, picking up don Manuel Otero Cisniego on the way. Our baggage was being removed to the customs house for inspection, and we followed it thither. Leaving Muddy to see it through and have it carried up to the hotel, I went on ahead to engage rooms.

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<sup>269</sup> Lee Ross Blohm (1886-1960) served as American Consul in Frontera from 1919 to 1921.



The Hotel Diligencia faces the plaza and was unfortunately quite full. We could not have any rooms entirely to ourselves, but had to bunk with other people. Ricketson and I in a front room overlooking the plaza, which we shared with a Yucateco, and Muddy and Ruddy in a back room overlooking the sea, which they shared with a lieutenant colonel, the commander of the garrison here. As we did not want all of our belongings, don Manuel Otero offered to let us have them stored down at his place, two blocks below.

Before going to dinner, I sorted the mail, and we started getting acquainted with the outside world at dinner. And such a catching up as it was. I heard from everybody and happily everybody was well. The family all doing their best in that direction. True wants to go to a summer camp somewhere in the East, and of course she can if she wants.

Two letters puzzled me. One from Professor A. F. Walters in Santa Fe, urging me to take the ministership to Guatemala if it were proffered me, as he understood it might be! Another from Irma to the effect that she supposed congratulations were in order as she had it from P.A.F.W. [Professor Walters] again that I could have the ministership to Guatemala if I wanted it. Of course, both of these letters go back to the same source, but at least the thing was being talked of in March. If it is offered and the C.I. will permit me to, of course I will take it.

A letter from Colonel Frank Sweeney<sup>270</sup> informs that in place of the Master's degree I was to have had last year, I will be given a doctorate this year. Letter from Alice Jackson written in Merida. She says she fell quite in love with Yucatan. Joe [Spinden], it seems, had a young marine captain and another ex-army officer with him. I do not believe he got out of Yucatan all the time he was there. A letter from Neil Judd says that the Chaco Canyon project finally got underway. Also had letters from brother, Irma, the C.L., Jowett Fall (Mrs. Brant Elliott), Bella Weitzner, and a valentine from Madeline Norris!

There was a circus in town, but I thought my mail would be more attractive than the third-rate performance it was sure to be, so I did not go. I stayed at home with my correspondence and let the others take it in. Ricketson came in during the middle of the evening thoroughly disgusted, said it had been unusually poor. I was glad that I had not gone. Muddy and Ruddy, as might have been expected, saw it through.

Our room is delightfully located opposite the plaza, which, however, is rather a sorry affair. There is some shrub or bush now in bloom that fills the night air with an exquisite fragrance [probably jasmine], and it was a pleasure just to take it in. Iced drinks, electric lights, a good dinner, and the prospect of getting away within the week—all these things combined to make life pretty attractive, and perhaps most of all, the successful field season behind us.

### **June 5, Sunday**

A Day of Rest, and what a contrast to last Sunday which was spent at Piedras Negras in the hardest kind of work. Mr. Blohm, the American consul, had asked us to breakfast at eight and promised hot pancakes. Needless to say, we were on time. Besides the consul and ourselves, the only other guest was a Mr. Kilpatrick who is living with the consul. The food was delicious, the water is boiled and filtered, and we all agreed later that we could not do better than eat at the consulate. I forewent the pleasure of sleeping there, however, as I wanted to be more by myself.

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<sup>270</sup> Sweeney was the President of the Pennsylvania Military College's Board of Trustees.

Ricketson decided to make his map down there, however. There is a large desk, plenty of light, and a room. It seems the best place.

I gathered in the *Saturday Evening Post* and a *Digest* after breakfast and returned with them to the hotel, where I passed a pleasant morning in their company. At one we had a big turkey dinner! Never have I enjoyed a meal more. After dinner, we returned to the hotel and slept it off. In the evening after dinner occurred one of those unpleasant instances which are always cropping up in these countries, and which are sinister not only because of what they may lead to, but also because of the undercurrent of hatred which they indicate is always against us.

The commanding general of the state [Tabasco], General Luis T. Mireles [Figure 46.3], whose headquarters are at Villahermosa [capital of Tabasco], was giving a dinner here at the hotel. It was a wet dinner and all the diners got pretty damp. Ricketson, myself, and Pepe Rodríguez (the Spaniard who came down river with us) were seated at one of the small round tables in front of the hotel. The only American at the table in General Mireles' party was a Mr. MacRoberts, the manager of the Mexican Fruit Co. Steamship Co., on which we will sail at the end of this week.



Figure 46.3. General Luis T. Mireles.

Presently the party broke up and came out on the sidewalk. The general took a position—I can hardly say stand, as he was so drunk—just behind Pepe. He had a riding crop in his hand and he was obviously drunk. Suddenly, without any warning, he asked Pepe if he was a *cabrón Americano* [dumbass/bastard American] and struck him heavily on the head with his riding crop. Fortunately, the first blow was a glancing one and hit the brim and slipped off. Not so the second one, however. This was an even heavier blow, a vicious cut which landed full on the top of his hat, a broad-brimmed, cow-puncher Stetson. Pepe's conduct was admirable under the circumstances. If he had struck General Mireles he would have been killed, as the sequel will show. Instead, he only jumped up and put up his hand to ward off the next blow. But the general was through with his crop. He whipped out his revolver and tried to shoot Pepe. A dozen hands, men of his own staff, grabbed his arm and forced it up in the air, during which time he frantically tried to pull the trigger.

But what a scatteration when that revolver appeared on the scene. Ricketson crossed the street to the nearest tree. Muddy, who had also been at the table, fled toward the market, and I

lost no time in fading into the nearest doorway. The crowd—waiters, hotel boys, etc.—all disappeared. Only the general's friends stood by him. MacRoberts passed me going not slowly and said, "Come on or hell will be popping." I followed on a little way with the whole string of apologizing Mexicans trailing along behind. They tried to stop MacRoberts, saying the general was drunk and meant no harm, but MacR. said he had been insulting Americans all night long at dinner and he couldn't stand it any longer. He continued on his way.

The lieutenant-colonel asked me what nationality Ricketson was—he thought it was Rick that had been struck because of the similarity of the hats—and I told him American. Ricketson, it seems, had returned to the table to finish his drink and the general had started after him. He had left the table and retreated a second time, so as to avoid trouble.

Finally, the general's friends had led him down to the waterside and put him on a boat for Villahermosa, whither he was bound. Afterward, the lieutenant-colonel profusely apologized for his superior, said he was a good fellow, only bad in his cups. MacRoberts had told one of the party, a Mexican bank manager from Veracruz, that this was the sort of thing that held off recognition. A good point.

The whole thing was outrageously unjustifiable. Pepe did not even see his attacker at first, and the general was in an ugly temper and wanted to start something. The incident beautifully illustrates the undercurrent of hatred running against us here among certain classes, chiefly the military set raised by the revolution. This group, in fact all of official Mexico, is more or less aggrieved with us as a people because the American government will not recognize, or at least has not as yet recognized, the Obregón government. And this is the way they show it. Mireles is the highest military authority in the state [of Tabasco], and if he acts this way toward foreigners, what will not his subordinates do?

We talked about the incident long after it was over, and everybody agreed a dangerous situation had been averted. Fortunately, his pistol did not go off, and the alarm was not general. What a country! If we had been killed in a general shooting, it might have brought about intervention, but neither Ricketson nor I had any desire to be such a *casus belli* [an event starting a war].

## June 6, Monday

Ricketson and I started off the day by getting haircuts and beard trims. I went first, and the barber made such a success of my hair that I felt encouraged as he approached my beard. Unfortunately, before I had quite realized what was afoot, he had used the clippers on the sides and it left me with plenty below, but an unsightly hiatus on each side. He avowed stoutly that this was a French cut, but it left me looking—I thought at least—quite Hunnish. Ricketson says the general effect is that of Prado Romaña's beard, which I always thought was farmerish. However, the milk was spilt and I had to be satisfied with this French cut! Ricketson fared better. I was able to keep the barber from clipping his beard with clippers and he only gave it a trim, which permitted a much better effect. Anyhow, we felt cooler and cleaner and I was glad to get it off.

From the barber's, I went down to don Manuel Otero's to present my drafts which Pepe Villanueva had given me in Tenosique against him, and to my chagrin I found the Villanuevas so overdrawn against him that he said he could not pay. He showed me where he had already cashed drafts for over a thousand dollars for them. He advised my wiring don Manuel Villanueva

and asking him what to do about it, which I did. He says the fault is not don Manuel's but Pepe's, which I daresay is true.

I went next to the telegraph offices and sent two messages to the United States, one a birthday greeting to mother, and another to the United Fruit Co. telling them to tell Guthe to leave all of our baggage at the St. Charles Hotel when he passed through New Orleans, instead of sending it on to Washington direct.

After lunch I got some more magazines at the consulate and spent the remainder of the afternoon in reading. Tonight, there was no General Mireles in town and no excitement. Rutherford and Muddy again went to the circus, but Ricketson and I stayed at home. The odor of the flowers in the plaza is far sweeter than the crowded, perspiring thong at the *payaso* [lit. clown], and we enjoyed ourselves more. Tonight is the last night I am 37. A year ago tonight I was at El Cayo. Awful hole.

### **June 7, Tuesday**

Mother's 63rd birthday and my 38th. If I had only come along a little later and she also, we might almost always spend it together, but it is a little early for me to get back from the tropics on the 7th of June.

Don Manuel Otero took me around to don Álvaro Pérez, on whom I have a draft of \$750 from Shufeldt. I presented this and got the cash, mostly in gold. Later in the day, don Manuel went to Villahermosa; he thinks he may go to the States with us. He was in seeing Blohm about a passport at any rate, and this trip to Villahermosa was to arrange about going on the *Yuma*, the same ship we are going to take.

Later in the day, after he left, I received a telegram from don Manuel Villanueva saying that he had telegraphed don M. O. to pay the draft, and that if he did not do so, he would send it on to Washington. I had written Shufeldt about it, and sent the letter of this a.m. by Pepe Rodríguez, who by the way took Rutherford's broken revolver but left no . . .

\*\* Morley's diary for 1921 ends here, in mid-sentence \*\*

## GLOSSARY

- adentro* – inside, in the interior (of the forest)  
*aduana* – customs, customs house/office  
*aguacero* – downpour of rain  
*aguada* – water hole  
*aguardiente* – raw sugar alcohol; lit. “burning water”  
*akalche* – low-lying, often swampy areas with dense trees, vines, and thorny vegetation  
(*ak'al* means waterhole, and *che* means tree)  
*alacran* - scorpion  
*alcalde* – mayor  
*alegre, alegría* – happy, happiness; often a term for inebriation  
*aparejo* – harness, tack, etc.  
*arriero* – mule-team driver, muleteer  
*arroyo* – a small, steep-sided watercourse or stream  
*atole* – a warm drink made of ground corn and flavored with brown sugar and cinnamon  
*aviso* – notice, announcement, warning
- bajareque* – wattle-and-daub construction  
*bajo* – low-lying, often swampy terrain with low, often thorny vegetation  
*bambonal* – stand of bamboo  
*barba* - beard  
*bejuco* – large, thick vine hanging from trees  
*boga* – boatman, oarsman
- cabildo* – town hall, headquarters of town council  
*camino real* – lit. royal road, but here refers to the main trail (Morley calls trails “roads”)  
*campo santo* – cemetery  
*canoa* – a canoe-like boat built of planks, sometimes large for carrying cargo  
*capataz* – foreman, overseer  
*cayuco* – a dugout canoe  
*celador* - watchman  
*champa* – a thatch-roofed hut, usually without walls or flooring  
*chicle* –the gum or sap of the chicle tree (*Manikara zapota*, *Manikara chicle*; formerly *Achras sapota*), formerly used to make chewing gum  
*chiclero* – a person (usually male) who taps (or bleeds) chicle trees for their sap  
*chiclería* – chicle processing station; the chicle business

*chultun* – a pit the Maya excavated in the limestone to store water or food, or for burials  
*coloradía* (also *anigua?*) - chigger  
*colmoyote* – the word in Petén for *Dermatobia hominis* (human botfly), called beef-worm in Belize.

*corozo* – a large palm tree (*Orbignya cohune*), also known as cohune palm, has long, graceful fronds. It grows in moist areas and produces clusters of egg-sized “nuts” that can be grated and made into a coconut-like candy. The fronds can be used for thatch and fed to mules.

*corozal* – stand of corozo palms

*cuartel* - barracks

*cuidador* – caretaker, guard

*deshecho* – shortcut

*despedida* – goodbye, farewell

*encargador* – person in charge, foreman, supervisor

*entrada* – entry, entrance

*escoba* – broom; name for a thorny-trunked fan palm tree (*Chrysophila stauracantha*), the stiff fronds of can be tied together and attached to a stick, to make a broom

*finca* – farm, ranch

*fracaso* – fracas, failure, breakdown

*galerón* – shed; a large, open, thatch-roofed structure in the forest

*garrapata* – tick

*gente* – people

*goma* – hangover

*grito* – shout, curiously used as an informal estimate of distance

*guano* – leaves of the *guano* palm tree (a fan palm, *Sabal* palm) used for thatching of roofs

*guía* – guide; identification document

*haab, ha'b* – Maya solar calendar of 360 + 5 days (*k'ins*)

*habanero* – raw sugar alcohol drink

*horqueta* – fork in a trail or road

*jato* – a forest dwelling or camp, typically created by *chicleros*

*jefe politico* – political boss

*jornada* – day's journey

*kambul* – a large, black, pheasant-like bird with a bright yellow beak; the great curassow,  
*Crax rubra*

*k'atun* – a Maya calendrical unit of time, approximately 20 Gregorian years

*k'in* – sun, day; one of 20, named and numbered, cycling in the *haab/ha'b*

*laguna* – small lake

*lámina* – corrugated zinc sheet roofing, typically painted red

*lancha* – small motorized wooden boats serving as water taxis

*macho* – male mule or other animal

*mampostería* – rubble masonry construction

*más adentro* – beyond, farther on (lit. “more inside”)

*milpa* – a small plot planted with corn and usually other cultigens (beans, squash)

*mochila* - backpack

*monte* – forest, bush

*montería* – a hunting camp in the *monte*

*mosca* – housefly

*mozo* – youth, young male

*mulada* – mule train; *patacho*

*niño* – young boy, male child

*novio* – boyfriend, fiancé (fem. *novia*)

*pabellón* (lit. pavilion) – mosquito net, hung like a tent over a bed or cot

*panela* – dark brown sugar made from unrefined cane syrup and hardened in a mold; it  
was also used to make potent local rum (*habanero*)

*paraje* – stopping place, usually with several thatched huts and a water source

*patacho* – mule train; *mulada*

*patada* - kick

*picado* – a narrow, crudely hacked trail

*playa* – beach, shore

*potrero* – pasture

*práctico* – experienced guide

*pulga* – flea

¿*Quién sabe?* – Who knows?

*ramón* – the breadnut tree, *Brosimum alicastrum*. Its small nuts are edible and were said  
to be “famine food” for the Maya, ground and made into tortillas.

*ramonal* – grove of *ramón* trees; the leaves are favored fodder for mules



*rastros* – tracks (of an animal)

*receptor* – lit. receiver; a receptionist-like official or manager in a business or government office

*resguardo* - guard

*sancudo* – mosquito

*sarteneja* – shallow area of water (from *sarten*, “frying pan”)

*totoposte* – corn chips, fried tortillas

*trapiche* – sugar mill, for crushing cane to extract the juice

*tun* – stone; “year” of 360 days

*tzolk'in* – the ritual almanac (“calendar”) of 260 days; 18 day names preceded by numbers 1–13

*verano* – dry season (summer)

*viveres* -groceries

*winal* – a Maya “month” of 20 *k'ins*; one of 18 cycling in the *haab/ha'b*

*yegua* – bell mare; a female mule wearing a bell and leading a packtrain

*xate* – a small, low, understory palm, genus *Chamaedorea*; its fronds are popular in floral arrangements because they stay green after being cut

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CIW Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC  
FAMSI Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies (www.famsi.org)  
MARI Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA  
PARI Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, San Francisco  
PMAE Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA  
SAR School of American Research, Santa Fe, NM  
SUP Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA  
UNMP University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque  
UOP University of Oklahoma Press, Norman  
UPC University Press of Colorado, Louisville (earlier Boulder)  
UPM University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia  
UTP University of Texas Press, Austin

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## THE MORLEY DIARY PROJECT FINDING GUIDE

Note: This finding guide gives the table of contents for each volume of the Morley Diary Project.

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