

Terrace May be Tomb of Mayan Kings

The important discovery of a carved stone terrace in the ruined Mayan city of Chichen Itza, which may prove to be the long-sought tomb of the rulers of one of America's greatest prehistoric cities, has just been announced by José Reygadas, director of Mexican archaeology.

Heavy tropical rains stripped the covering of earth from one corner of the buried structure, and Martinez Canton, inspector of Mexican archaeology, was the first to discover the stones which gave a clue to the new ruin. The terrace has been completely unearthed from its mantle of weeds and earth, except for a small temple and one stairway, Director Reygadas reports.

When the archaeological season begins in Yucatan at the end of December, Mexican archaeologists will probe the newly discovered terrace to learn whether it will give up the secret of the ancient kings of Chichen Itza. This greatest of known Mayan cities

is said to have had a population of several hundred thousand inhabitants in its prime and its existence lasted through many centuries. Yet the only record of a tomb of any great Mayan personage was the discovery of remains in one of the ancient buildings, by Edward H. Thompson, once American consul in Yucatan.

If the terrace is a royal tomb like the pyramids of Egypt, as has been suggested, it is appropriately decorated, for bands and panels in the sloping walls are decorated with rows of carved and painted stone skulls. The sloping, panelled walls are pronounced identical in style with the structures found in the great Toltec capital city Teotihuacan, which lies thirty miles from Mexico City. Hence, the new found terrace was apparently built or at least remodeled by Mexican Toltec tribes who established themselves in the Mayan city of Chichen Itza, in Yucatan, during the last troubled centuries of the great Mayan Empire. This would

date the battered structure in its present appearance at about 1200 to 1500 A. D. Indians of tropical America frequently overbuilt or remodeled important edifices, and the tomb, if it proves to be such, may be far older than this.

Chichen Itza, the holy city of the Mayas, contains the ruins of many stone temples of great beauty, and also elaborately decorated buildings which are believed to be the homes of rulers and priests. But whether the ruling class was buried with the pomp which attended them in life has never been known. The heat and dampness of the climate are not conducive to preservation of burials. The new stone structure stands in a prominent location in the plaza between the most sacred of the temples, El Castillo, and the Temple of the Tigers.

Present theories as to the use of the stone terrace will be probed when explorations are continued during the coming season.

Science News-Letter, October 19, 1929

Automobile Parking Machine

Hailed as a possible solution of the serious automobile parking problem on busy city streets, engineers of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company recently exhibited an unusual and unique automobile parking machine which they have just developed. It is shown on our cover.

Entering this new type of storage garage, a motorist can drive his car onto a platform, pull a lever, obtain a check and the car is automatically whisked upward out of sight. The device immediately places another empty platform at ground level ready for another car.

When ready to leave, the motorist can push a button corresponding to his check, and his car is delivered to him at ground level almost immediately, without any of the ordinary vexatious garage delays.

This new automobile parking machine occupies a ground space equal to that of only a small private double garage, and according to H. D. James, the engineer who had charge of the development, can be built for almost

any capacity into old or new buildings, or can be set up on small vacant lots. Several bunched together would constitute a big ultra-modern storage garage.

The machine consists of two endless chains passing over wheels at the top and bottom. Platforms are suspended between these chains. Each platform provides space for one automobile. The housing for the machine is unique because it has no floors. The automobile remains parked on the machine until called for.

An important feature of the new device is that it can be equipped to operate by placing a coin in a slot, thereby doing away with the necessity for attendants. Several machines could be connected by telephone to a central office, and could be quickly serviced from the one point.

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