

Mexico Exploring Aztec Ruins

Archaeology

The archaeological activities of the Mexican government will be directed to four distinct points during the coming season, touching four ancient civilizations, the Mayas of Yucatan, the Toltecs of Teotihuacan, the Aztecs at Tenayuca, and the Tarascans in Michoacan.

With the discovery of a great terrace in Chichen Itza, faced with stone death's heads in its entire extent, decorations which make archaeologists hope they may have found the tombs of Maya kings, systematic investigations will be made at the spot as soon as the oncoming dry season permits. With the exception of a burial found by Edward H. Thompson, former American consul in Yucatan, during the private excavations made before archaeological sites were controlled by the federal government, no Maya tomb with human remains has been found in the great city of Chichen Itza.

The city had a life lasting over many centuries, and its population was claimed to be in the hundred thousands, but no remains of its great men have ever been found.

In addition to investigating the site of the death's head terrace, the Mexican government will continue the restoration of the "Castillo", near which the terrace was discovered. The Castillo is the dominating structure in the entire city. It is a great pyramid with a stairway on each of its four steep sides leading up to the temple of the Maya Feathered Serpent God, Kukulcan, at the top.

At Teotihuacan, some thirty miles from Mexico City, a Toltec city whose story had been forgotten by the Aztec tribes which Cortez found there at the Conquest, excavations will be resumed about a group of buildings known as the "Subteraneos", where buildings of one epoch are superposed on those of another. Teotihuacan is the largest archaeological site now known, and investigations so far made show that there have been at least three distinct periods in the great city's history, when peoples of different cultures inhabited it long enough to leave their special style of remains.

Teotihuacan is characterized today by two great pyramids and a great sunken court surrounded by terraces topped with smaller pyramids, within which stands the "Temple of Quetzalcoatl". The city is oriented about a central axis, a wide avenue a mile

and a third long, running slightly east of north and south. At the north end of this avenue is the "Pyramid of the Moon", so called because when the Spaniards came it still had its stone moon-god on top. To the east, and practically at the center of this avenue, is the still greater "Pyramid of the Sun", which used to have a stone idol of the sun god on top. The Pyramid of the Sun is a landmark for miles around the valley.

At the south end of the avenue, and also to the east, lies the great sunken court, surrounded by the pyramid-topped terraces. In the eastern half of the court, which resembles a giant athletic field, because steps like seats of bleachers run up from the ground to the terrace tops, is the pyramid called the Temple of Quetzalcoatl. The front of it is a simple Aztec style of structure, but when it was excavated it was discovered that it was merely added on to an older and much more ornate Toltec pyramid. This inner pyramid is noted for the grotesque stone carvings of Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent god of the Toltec.

The avenue, which is about one and a third miles long, is called the Pathway of the Dead, because it is bordered by a symmetrical arrangement of minor mounds which were first thought to be tombs. These, however, have been revealed to be only the substructures for buildings which have now for the most part disappeared.

In Tenayuca, six miles from Mexico City, a tunnel is being run through the Aztec pyramid there from west to east, to probe its structure and determine how many times it was enlarged. Tenayuca is both the most recently discovered and the most important Aztec site in the country because of the finds that have been made there. Studies now being made of thousands of pottery fragments from the pyramid excavations show that it was probably one of the earliest Aztec settlements in the valley. By the end of December, 1929, practically all the work at Tenayuca will be finished.

Eduardo Noguera and Ignacio Marquina, archaeologist and architect of the Mexican Direction of Archaeology, have left to explore the region between Zamora and Patzcuaro, in Michoacan, the center of the ancient Tarascan culture, a civilization which has never been

systematically studied. They will select a suitable site for archaeological investigation.

The Tarascan race, like an island in the sea surrounded by more advanced cultures, appear to have remained more primitive than their neighbors, for reasons that have never been understood, or for which no satisfactory guess has even been made. Their idols and pottery remains, quite numerous in museums and private collections, and still being found by the old sites, have many of the characteristics of the early "archaic" people of Mexico, whose remains have been found from Tampico west to the northern part of South America. Among the Tarascans, whose geographic center was Michoacan, the archaic culture seems to have endured perhaps thousands of years after it had undergone radical evolution in other parts of Mexico.

Science News-Letter, November 9, 1929

Fawns Travel By Air

Zoology—Aviation

Airplanes are being used in restocking the south rim of the Grand Canyon with deer from the famous Kaibab herd on the north rim. Eight fawns were transported by airplane from Fredonia, Arizona, on the north side of the Grand Canyon, to Red Butte 95 miles away, on the south side. They had been brought the 16 miles from Pine Springs to Fredonia by truck, and completed the 17 miles from Red Butte to Grand Canyon village by the same mode of travel. Their combined air and truck journey was made in exactly three hours, whereas their predecessors of the last two or three years who made the entire trip by truck had to travel 240 miles and were from 24 to 30 hours on the road.

The new arrivals showed no ill effects from their pioneer air flight, and it remains to be seen whether they will high-hat their mere truck-riding predecessors.

The young deer were carried across the canyon in one of the Ford tri-motored airships in which the Scenic Airways Company has been carrying passengers on sight-seeing trips over the Grand Canyon during the past two summers. The seats were removed from the cabin of the plane to make room for the fawns, which had been placed in specially made individual crates.

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