



MYSTERY SOLVED

New Mayan findings indicate this little statuette is oldest known dated Mayan object. It bears the date May 16, 98 B. C.

TECHNOLOGY

Gold-Plated Reflectors Aid in Drying Auto Bodies

GOLD, which has found its way into objects ranging from money to false teeth, has been pressed into service to dry the enamel on your new automobile in one-tenth the time required by older methods.

Special heating lamps, equipped with gold-plated reflectors costing between five and seven dollars apiece, have been developed by the General Electric Company's Nela Park laboratories to line the walls of drying ovens in auto manufacturing plants.

So efficient are the new reflectors—about 98 per cent. for the warm infrared rays—that even after operation for several minutes, the outside of the reflectors is still cold to the touch.

The new lamps, each of which consumes electricity at the rate of 250 watts, have been in service for several months in the River Rouge plant of the Ford Motor Company, for which they were developed. Steam baths hitherto used take about ten times as long to dry the car body. Special electric controls turn the new heating lamps on and off in a traveling wave as the painted body passes through the drying tunnel.

Possible medical uses of the lamps are now being considered.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Mayan Diggings Shed Light On America's First Calendar

Monument Unearthed in Mexico is Dated in Short Style Previously Thought To Be Comparatively Recent Method

A MONUMENT unearthed in tropical Mexico is, from first reports, evidence that brilliant Mayan Indians actually invented a short-cut system of writing dates in the New World before the birth of Christ. The monument, dated in the concise manner, is apparently strong confirmation that the small Tuxtla statuette of jade, dated in the short-cut system and treasured in the U. S. National Museum, is what archaeologists have hoped it was—the oldest known object dated by the Mayas.

The Tuxtla statuette, a figure of a priest in penguin regalia, bears the date May 16, 98 B. C., according to reading by Dr. H. J. Spinden of the Brooklyn Museum, and authority on the Mayan calendar. But some archaeologists have doubted that Mayas living in the century before Christ wrote the date on the image. They believed the style of short-cut date writing was a later Mayan invention, and therefore probably some Maya of comparatively late centuries inscribed the statuette, much as we might set correct dates on a statue of Ben Franklin.

The dated monument, solving the Tuxtla statuette mystery, has come to light not far from Tuxtla, at Tres Zapotes, in the state of Vera Cruz, southern Mexico. A joint expedition of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Geographic Society is exploring this site, which proves to be the most far western settlement of Mayan Indians ever found. It lies fully 100 miles west of the known Mayan zone of civilization.

Not Translated

The monument dated in the fashion of the Tuxtla statuette has not yet been fully translated into terms of our calendar. But Matthew W. Stirling, Smithsonian archaeologist and director of the field work, has concluded that it was erected early, not late, in Mayan times, thereby removing reason to doubt the great antiquity of the Tuxtla statuette. Mr. Stirling has called a consultation of Mexican and American archaeologists at the site, in view of importance of the

monument. Many archaeologists have heretofore been inclined to consider Mayan inscriptions old if dates were written in long style, and not so old if written in short style.

One archaeologist explains the Mayan date systems this way: Early Mayas wrote out cycle, day, and month as we might write "March the first, Anno Domini nineteen hundred thirty nine." Later Mayas recognized a date by position of signs, as we easily read "3-1-1939." An early monument dated in short style upsets this idea of early and late ways of ancient American dating.

Settle Old Problems

With this stone's inscription deciphered, American scholars may settle old theories as to how, and when, Mayan Indians moved over tropical America in their destiny of building the New World's greatest native civilization. Imagine archaeologists of the future arguing over the United States, and unable to decide whether the country was occupied all at one time, or whether New York and San Francisco represented different eras, centuries apart! But that is the sort of puzzle regarding what went on in the New World in centuries before, and after, the time of Christ, which has delayed complete understanding of the amazing Mayan civilization which covered 175,000 square miles in the tropics.

The stone clew is apparently one of the date markers that Mayas set up. For some 1,500 years, these methodical Indians raised such stones every 20 years, and in their big cities even at five or ten year intervals. It is by deciphering these mileposts of time that archaeologists have trailed Mayan progress in Guatemala, Honduras, southern Mexico and Yucatan.

Discovery of the monument and ruins of a Mayan settlement so far west in Mexico is pronounced "exciting" by Dr. Spinden, who is awaiting final word as to whether the far west settlement proves early or late in Mayan history.

If it is early, as first reports indicate,