

PLATES

MEMOIR IV

PLATE

- I. Colored plate, potsherds from Uloa Valley.
- II. Map of the lower watershed of the Uloa and Chemelican Rivers.
- III. Designs on painted vessels (owl and bat), Uloa.
- IV. Colored designs on a vase (human figures and serpents).
- V. Colored design on vase (human figures).
- VI. Sites of excavations 3 and 4, on banks of Uloa.
- VII. Pottery vessels of various shapes, Uloa.
- VIII. Terra-cotta figures and masks, Uloa.
- IX. Terra-cotta whistles and images, Uloa.
- X. Portions of terra-cotta statuettes, Uloa.
- XI. Terra-cotta stamps, Uloa.
- XII. Fig. 1, *a, b, c*, terra-cotta faces; *d*, double paint holder; *e, t*, ornamented vases of calcite; *g*, head of a turkey in terra-cotta; *h*, cup in shape of human head.
Fig. 2. Waterfall and pool in Quebrada Encantada.
Fig. 3. Excavations at ruins near Quebrada Encantada.

MEMOIR V

- I. Pottery from Caverns of Copan.

MEMOIR VI

- I. Mound 26, before excavation of Stairway, showing site of Hieroglyphic Stairway, and position of Stela N.
- II. Removing the fallen steps of Hieroglyphic Stairway.
- III. Hieroglyphic Stairway after excavation.
- IV. " " " "
- V. " " " " Fallen steps arranged in order.
- VI. " " " " Steps in position.
- VII. " " " " Middle section of lower portion, showing altar and seated figure.
- VIII. " " " " Altar at base of Stairway.
- IX. " " " " Details of altar. Fig. 1, southern half; Fig. 2, northern half.
- X. " " " " Seated figure above altar.
- XI. " " " " Top of altar at base of Stairway.
- XII. " " " " Disconnected fragments of the inscription.
- XIII. " " " " Fragments of inscriptions and other sculptures.
- XIV. " " " " One of the seated figures from centre of Stairway.
- XV. " " " " Various sculptures.
- XVI. Stela M, Copan. Front, back, and upper portion.
- XVII. Altar of Stela M. Five views.
- XVIII. Mound 26, after excavation of Stairway.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

PEABODY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND
ETHNOLOGY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

VOL. I.—No. 1.

PREHISTORIC RUINS OF COPAN,
HONDURAS.

A PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE EXPLORATIONS BY THE MUSEUM,
1891—1895.

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EDITORIAL NOTE.

WITH this Memoir is begun a series of publications of quarto size, in order to provide for larger plates than can be given in the octavo "Archæological and Ethnological Papers" of the Peabody Museum.

This preliminary report of the explorations at the Ruins of Copan is intended to give only a general description of the ruins and a summary of the work of the several Museum expeditions to Honduras from 1891 to 1895. It will be followed by special papers relating to discoveries made during the explorations.

The following pages have been compiled from the field notes of Marshall H. Saville, John G. Owens, and George Byron Gordon, who at different times have carried on the explorations under the direction of the Museum.

The compilation of the report was intrusted to Mr. Gordon, who, since the lamented death of Mr. Owens, which occurred at Copan on February 21, 1893, has been in charge of the field work at the ruins.

Previous to the explorations by the Museum, Alfred P. Maudslay, of London, had carried on extensive researches among the ruins of this remarkable prehistoric city, and had begun the publication of his work on the Archaeology of Central America. His elaborate and important memoir has been continued; and free use has been made of it in the preparation of this report. Mr. Maudslay has most heartily coöperated with the Museum in the continuation of the work at Copan, and during the year 1893-94 he was the representative of the Museum at the Ruins. As Mr. Maudslay had given names, with reference by letters and figures, to the various portions of the Ruins and to prominent sculptures, the same designations are given in this report and on the accompanying plan. Additional features have been indicated by continuing in sequence the letters and figures, thus avoiding duplication and confusion.

The accompanying plan of the principal part of the Ruins is from a survey by Mr. Gordon, who made the drawings for several of the illustrations in the text. Other illustrations are from drawings by C. C. Willoughby, who has also assisted in the preparation of the report.

This important research at the Ruins of Copan has been made possible by the generous contributions of the patrons of science whose names are given in the following list.

F. W. PUTNAM,
Curator of the Peabody Museum.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.,
June 1, 1896.

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THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY OF NEW YORK
COÖPERATED IN THE EXPEDITION OF 1894-95.

EXPLORATION OF COPAN.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE.

WITHIN the territory of Honduras, about twelve miles from the frontier of Guatemala, in a beautiful valley watered by a rapid, winding stream, and shut in by mountains that rise in ridges to a height of three thousand feet, are situated the Ruins of Copan (lat. 14° 51' 30"). The only roads leading to the ruins are rough mule-tracks over the mountains; the shortest route from the Atlantic coast is that from Yzabal, crossing the mountain ranges of Mico and Espiritu Santo, between which the river Motagua flows in a circuitous course to the sea.

After leaving Comotan, the last town within the territory of Guatemala to which the account given by Stephens in 1839 applies to-day, the road crosses the river Copan on its way to join the Motagua and ascends a mountain ridge, from whose summit glimpses can be caught of the stream, winding in and out between precipitous banks, tumbling over ledges and leaping among the rocks, a perfect cataract, not navigable even to the lightest canoe. The road reaches a height of 2,800 feet, and then descends abruptly into the Copan valley, which has an elevation of 2,000 feet above the sea. The upper slopes of the surrounding mountains are covered with open pine forests, but the foot-hills and the plain of the valley are clothed in an impenetrable thicket of low trees and brush.

Stephens states that at the time of his visit, in 1839, the whole valley was buried in a heavy forest. Monkeys stared at him from the branches of the trees, and passed to and fro high above his head. To-day there are no monkeys in the vicinity, and the deep, gloomy forest where they like to roam is wanting.

According to information obtained from the oldest inhabitants of the modern village of Copan, the forest of gigantic trees that clothed the place in Stephens' day was cut down about thirty years ago by a colony from Guatemala who came to plant corn and tobacco in the fertile lands of the valley. They left the trees that grew on the higher structures of the ruins, making a picturesque grove, a remnant of which still remains, a few cedars and ceibas of gigantic proportions, clustered about the ruins of the temples,