

slope is a low terrace covered with fragments of sculptured stone. From its western end the slope of Pyramid 26 rises to a height of over a hundred feet, strewn with sculptured fragments and building stone. So completely has the ruin been accomplished at this point that not a trace remains of the temple which crowned the summit; but the excellence of the sculptures heaped on every hand bears testimony to the high artistic merit of its architecture.

Attached to the northwest corner of Mound 26 is the low oblong structure, Mound 10. It appears to have the remains of a building on top. A terrace projects from its northern end, and turns at right angles to the west; on the top of its western wing is the square Altar L. Westerly from Mound 10 is Pyramid 9, about forty feet in height, having chambers on the top; at the bottom of its eastern slope is an inclined plane paved with square flat stones, and on the western slope of Mound 10 opposite is a similar inclined plane.

In the space between Mounds 9 and 10 a stone pavement was discovered, covered with a foot of black vegetable mould. The stones of the pavement

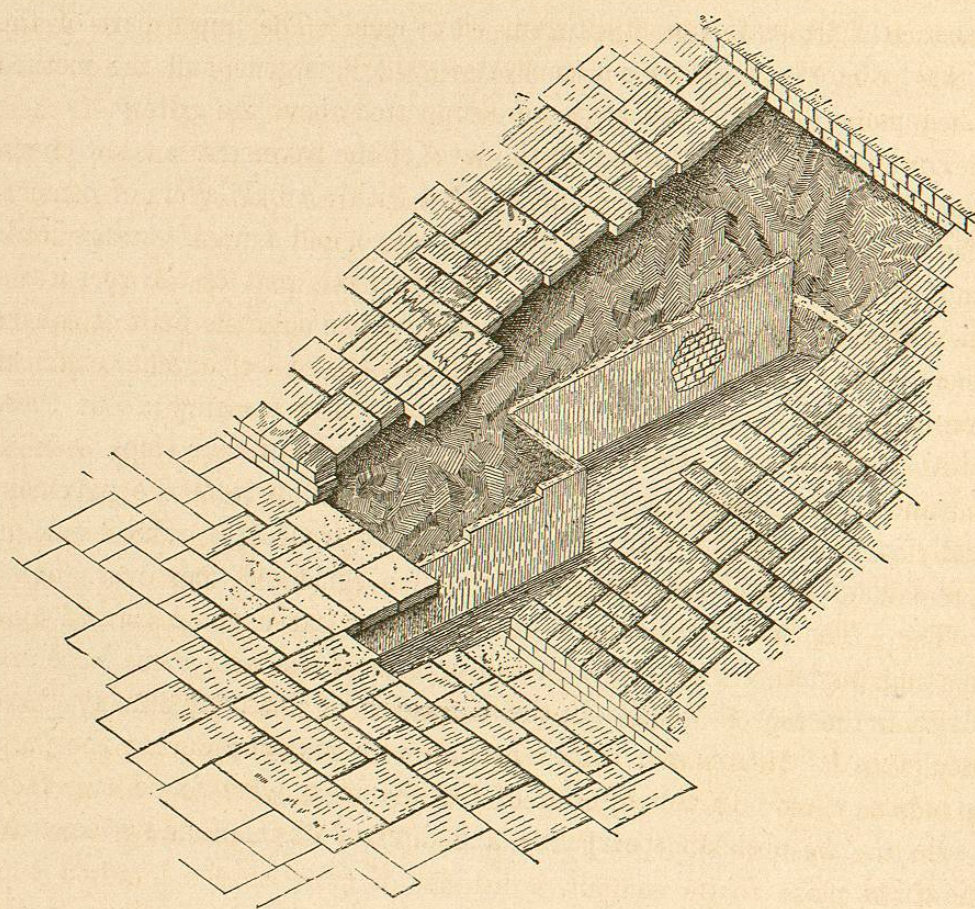


FIG. 1.—EXCAVATION UNDER INCLINED PLANE AT EASTERN SIDE OF MOUND 9.

vary in size and shape. Some are square, and measure from eight inches to three feet on a side; others are oblong, and sometimes as much as four feet in length. All are nicely cut and fitted together, and the upper surface is smooth as if worn by use. In removing some of the stones forming the pavement of the inclined plane on the east side of Mound 9, one was found having two glyphs on its under side. It appeared to have been cut from a larger piece having an inscription. Beneath this pavement an excavation was made (Fig. 1). On a level with the pavement of the court the top of a wall was found running at right angles to the edge of the mound; it is faced toward the north, and was plastered; at a depth of one foot from its top a mortar floor was reached, extending in front of the wall to an unknown distance. Below this the wall continued to a depth of three feet, and at the bottom is another floor. The space between the floors was walled up with red clay and large pebbles. The excavation was continued, following the wall and the lower floor toward the centre of the mound; at a distance of fifteen feet inwards the wall turned at right angles and ran three feet to the south, then turned again at right angles and continued toward the centre of the mound a distance of fifteen feet, and again turned at right angles toward the south. At this point the excavation was discontinued in order to do other work deemed more urgent. No explanation can at present be given of these underground walls and floors. They are entirely below the surface of the surrounding plaza; the upper parts of the walls are broken and irregular, as if part had been torn down, and they are completely buried by the under-filling of the mound; the entire face was plastered, and the plaster at the corners showed traces of paint. There seems to be only one reasonable conclusion,—that they are the remains of older buildings that had been condemned or were in ruins before the later structures were built.

At a distance of eighteen feet inward from the edge of the inclined plane and two feet below the level of the plaza, a shell (*Spondylus calcifer*) was found close to the wall. This shell contained a large bead of polished jadeite; the remainder of the space within the shell was filled with cinnabar.

The north side of this mound (9) was cleared also; it consists of steps like a stairway, and is in a very good state of preservation.

Upon the top of Mound 9 are a series of chambers which have been partly cleared. Here was found a small jar, with a wash resembling a glaze. It stands on three hollow legs, in each of which is a small loose ball of clay.

On the western slope of Pyramid 26 (Plate V. 1), reaching from the floor of the plaza to its summit, a distance of more than a hundred feet, was a grand stairway, the ruins of which impress upon the beholder a deep sense of its vastness and complexity, and force upon him a conviction of what must have been, from the beauty of its situation and the barbaric grandeur of its architecture, the effect of the city in its prime. It is in

complete ruin; and, before excavation was begun, it was so deeply buried beneath the accumulated soil and rubbish that one might easily pass it by without suspecting its character. The discovery of its real character is due to Mr. John G. Owens, who in January, 1893, began an excavation in this place, which, though he did not live to see it completed, resulted in this important discovery. The whole structure is being thoroughly explored, and it is hoped that all the sculpture, or enough of it to indicate its character and design, will be preserved for the ultimate restoration of the stairway. Each step has a row of hieroglyphs running the entire length of its face, for which reason it has been called the Hieroglyphic Stairway; and by this name it will be hereafter designated in our work. Several of the stones which formed a portion of this stairway are shown on Plate V. Fig. 2. A seated human figure (Plate IX. 4) was discovered among the debris. A description of this stairway is deferred until its further exploration leads to a better understanding of its structure.

To the southwest a broad flight of steps, forming the northern termination of the Main Structure at that part, rises from the plaza. Twenty-nine great steps lead to a narrow landing, at the western end of which, at a slightly greater elevation, is a flat platform. From this landing the stairway ascends again, the western end leading to an elevated platform covered with fragments of sculpture fallen from Temple 11. The eastern end of the same stairway leads to the level height at the east of Temple 11, on the same plane as the terraces surrounding the Eastern Court. The central portion of the stairway probably ascends to the entrance of the elevated Temple 11, from which such a quantity of material has fallen as to bury the stairway many feet deep. Temple 11 was one of the largest and most elevated in the group. It was probably a tower, and must have been of considerable height, judging from the quantity of stone lying around its base in every direction. It has never been thoroughly explored, although Maudslay made some excavations into the lowest chambers which were still standing. On pages 21-22 of his volume he gives the result of this investigation as follows:—

“This building presented the appearance of a formless heap of stones, out of which a huge ceiba tree was growing. Some portions of the chambers were excavated. The porches on each side probably extended some distance beyond the line of the walls of the building. The roof and superstructure had entirely disappeared, but the inner wall was in places perfect up to the spring of the vault.

“A step about eighteen inches high and eighteen feet long, formed of two blocks of stone, projected in front of the inner doorway; the face of this step is ornamented with a number of figures seated cross-legged and covered with elaborate breastplates and other ornaments in sharp and well-preserved carving. A carved ornament, made up of several stones let into the wall, rises from this step, on each side of the doorway, and reaches to the top of the wall. This carving is, I believe, meant to represent a

huge serpent's head without a lower jaw; but the design is executed in a conventional form, and its meaning can only be made out by comparison with many other sculptures of a similar kind.

“The effect of this ornament must have been considerably marred by the continuation of the wall of the passage to the face of the step.

“Above this curious ornament, and extending to a distance of seven feet on each side of the doorway (and probably continued over the doorway itself, although all trace of it has disappeared), ran an elaborate cornice, ornamented with seated human figures and hieroglyphs carved in medium relief. The height of the wall from the floor to the cornice is about nine feet. Ornaments similar to the serpent's head already mentioned occur where a step descends into the southern porch; but in this case the face of the step is ornamented with a row of teeth, and it forms an under jaw common to the serpent's head on each side. Unfortunately no copy of this design could be made, as the carved stones comprising it were so much broken and displaced by the pressure from above and the growth of the roots of trees that they fell to pieces as the excavation proceeded.

“The interior walls of both the outer porches were ornamented with hieroglyphic and other carvings; but here also the stones were so much worn and displaced by the roots of trees that nothing could be preserved or copied.

“The walls of the house are built of blocks of stone averaging in measurement 1 foot \times 1 foot \times 6 inches.

“The wall-surfaces retained traces of a coating of plaster which had probably been ornamentally coloured, and the floor was covered with several layers of cement.”

To the north of this is the Great Plaza of Copan; and the whole space from the place where Stela N stands to the north end of the Plaza appears to have been paved with mortar cement, now nearly all broken up by the vegetation, and mingled with the soil. In patches where it is still entire, it is covered with about a foot of black vegetable mould.

In the Plaza are thirteen Stelæ, each having in front of it a sculptured block of stone to which the name of “Altar” has been applied. Excellent drawings of the principal stelæ made by Catherwood in 1839 are given in Stephens' *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, Vol. I.; and in Maudslay's work photographs of the originals and drawings made from plaster casts of nearly all these stelæ are reproduced with admirable fidelity. Of the plaza group of stelæ, six (A, B, D, F, H, N) are standing, the others are fallen and broken (Plate VI. 2).

In the plaza is a Pyramidal Mound (4) with stone casing in the form of steps; it runs up almost to a point, and had no building on top. Maudslay made an excavation into its southern side, and found the interior to be built of rough stones and hard rammed earth.

“The upper part was composed of rough unworked blocks of stone and mud, with occasional layers of cement and sand; the lower two thirds of stone and mud only. The excavation was then continued below the level of the plain, through about twelve feet of hard-rammed earth, free from stones, below which the natural soil appeared to

have been undisturbed. In the centre of the mound, about six feet from the top, an earthen pot was found containing a bead-shaped piece of greenstone, pierced, diameter two and three quarters inches, the jade whorl of a spindle, the remains of a necklace of nine jade beads, four pearls, some small rough figures and other ornaments cut out of pearl oyster-shell, and other irregular pieces of roughly carved pearl-shell. At the bottom of the pot was some red powder (which proved to be finely ground cinnabar), and several ounces of quicksilver. Eighteen inches above this pot some traces of bone were found, mixed with sand. At the level of the ground, more traces of bones were found, mixed with red cinnabar powder and sand, and one large pierced bead-shaped stone, diameter three inches. About eight to nine feet below the level of the plain, a skeleton of a jaguar was found lying under a layer of charcoal. I was able to preserve some of the teeth and some part of the jaw, as well as a few small pieces of the other bones, by dropping them into glue. The teeth and part of the skeleton had been painted red. About 100 yards almost directly to the south of this mound, I shortly afterwards opened another very much smaller and much more ruined mound (No. 5),* and, under a thick layer of cement at the level of the ground, found a few small fragments of human bones, two small stone axes, and portions of another jaguar's skeleton, and some dog's teeth, showing that such an interment of animals was not a matter of chance." — MAUDSLAY, page 20.

This plaza has the appearance of an amphitheatre; ranges of seats or steps enclose it on the eastern, northern, and western sides, while the southern side is open. Above the steps on the eastern side a level area extends eastward to Mound 3. On its northern side this area is bounded by a range of steps leading up to a more elevated terrace, on which are what appear to be the remains of stone houses. At a distance of fifteen feet in front of these steps, and 150 feet from the top of the range of seats facing the plaza, two flat stones were discovered in 1895, lying side by side. They had been buried by the soil and rubbish to a depth of several inches, and rested on a layer of broken stone with which the area was paved. Each of these stones measures 2 feet 9 inches by 1 foot 5 inches, and each has a full-length figure carved in high relief on the upper side. (Reproduced from photographs on page 2.)

A fallen Stela E lies on the terrace to the west of the Great Plaza. Stela J stands by itself some distance to the east near Mound 3. To the north, in the centre of the elevated terrace, is a small pyramid (Mound 2) which has a depression in the top, and just west of it is a long, low mound with a similar depression.

Just north of Stela D, two steps lead to a narrow terrace, from which a flight of steps leads up the side of Mound 2. In the centre of the first step in this flight is a stone with eight glyphs in a row on its face. The centre of the next step above is occupied by a block slightly shorter than the first, with twenty-two glyphs carved in two rows on the face. (Plate VI. 1, which also shows Stela D.)

* Mound 5 is not numbered on the plan, Plate I., but is there shown west of Mound 9.

The Square Pyramid (1), rising on the terrace to the west of the plaza, was faced with stone in the form of steps consisting of single rows of stones, and seems to have risen nearly to a point having a square flat space on top. Some visitor has dug into the foundation, but apparently discovered nothing of interest. A stairway in which the steps are elevated slightly above the casing, ran up the centre of the east side. West of this mound is a broad flat terrace, which appears never to have been completed, and is in a very advanced state of ruin. Still farther west, on the plain, the three pyramidal structures, Nos. 54, 55, and 56, also present an unfinished appearance, and are very much destroyed. From the west side of No. 54 the front of a terrace formerly faced with stone runs to the west, and continues three or four hundred yards in a straight line to another group of buildings buried in a thicket. The difference of level is about four feet, and probably corresponds to a natural slope shaped artificially.

A few yards south is the irregular edge of another terrace, also shaped artificially to some extent, but not faced with stone; it extends eastward to Mound 51, which, with Mounds 48, 52, 53, and several smaller mounds, forms an interesting group arranged around the four sides of a court. No. 49 is a detached pyramid badly destroyed. No. 6 seems to be the remains of a long house with a number of chambers. No. 7 has some chambers on top reached from the plaza by a stairway, in front of which is the Sculpture O, an oblong piece, tapering toward the top. This was overlooked by Stephens, but is described, with drawings, by Maudslay. On the west side of this sculpture is the conventional design which Maudslay calls the plumed serpent. On the east side are two similar serpents intertwined; on the north end are a frog and a fish, and on the south end two human figures and a fish.

No. 8 has the appearance of a rough heap of building stone, from the steep sides of which trees are growing. Close by is the group (47) of stone houses, arranged on the four sides of a square court. The most northerly building of the group seems to have been considerably larger than the others. Group 46 presents the appearance of rounded heaps of rough stones.

Immediately south of the Main Structure the ground rises from the river bed in the form of a double terrace, running southward in a straight line. On the first elevation nearest the river there are no buildings. On the second, corresponding to the level of the plain, are many structures of different sizes and shapes, arranged for the most part in groups enclosing a court or square. Of these only a few have been explored.

At the southeast corner of the Main Structure, where the plain terminates in the terrace just described, is a group of buildings which comprises Nos. 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34. Of these only one (32) has been explored; its chambers, of which only the lower parts of the walls remained in position, were cleared