

*24 pages
J. Laming*

MEMOIRS

OF THE

PEABODY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND
ETHNOLOGY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

Vol. I.—No. 2.

CAVE OF LOLTUN,
YUCATAN.

REPORT OF EXPLORATIONS BY THE MUSEUM, 1888-89 AND 1890-91.

BY

EDWARD H. THOMPSON.

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1897.

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EDITORIAL NOTE.

DURING a visit to Yucatan in 1888, Mr. Charles P. Bowditch was impressed with the importance of archaeological research in this land of ancient culture. On his return to Boston, he interested several friends of the Museum to join him in the project of carrying on explorations in this region under the auspices of the Museum. Mr. Edward H. Thompson, who, as United States Consul to Merida, had been living in Yucatan for several years, was engaged to direct and to conduct the work on the part of the Museum.

The first expedition left Merida on December 3, 1888, for the Ruins of Labná, where the work was carried on during the winter and spring. The second expedition started in the autumn of 1890, and continued the exploration of these ancient ruins for several months. Important discoveries resulted from the explorations, and many interesting photographs and moulds were secured. A survey was made and a plan drawn of the group of ruins. A report on the Ruins of Labná was prepared by Mr. Thompson, but circumstances have not yet permitted its publication.

On the first page of this Memoir is a small outline map of Yucatan showing the relative position of the principal ruins and of the Cave of Loltun.

Mr. Henry N. Sweet, photographer, and Mr. Clifton H. Paige, civil engineer, both of Boston, arrived at Merida the last of November, 1888, and the expedition soon started for the Cave of Loltun on the way to Labná. Here for some days during the heavy rains the explorations were carried on. Photographs of different parts of the cave were taken, several of which are reproduced in the plates accompanying the following report. A survey was made of portions of the cave, and a few of the plans are reproduced in the following pages.

The second expedition to the Cave of Loltun was in December, 1890, when several passages and chambers, not previously entered, were examined. On this expedition Mr. Marshall H. Saville, of the Peabody Museum, assisted Mr. Thompson in the explorations. Additional photographs were

taken by Mr. Saville. The most important of these is the sculptured human figure which is here reproduced as Plate VI. On Plates VII. and VIII. are photographic reproductions of numerous objects found in the cave, and referred to in the text. A few other cave specimens of peculiar interest are shown in the text by drawings made by Mr. C. C. Willoughby.

The discovery of filed teeth in the cave is of particular interest, owing to the fact that these teeth are filed in the same manner as those in a skull found under one of the ruined buildings at Labná. Similarly filed teeth have been found in several other places in Mexico, and they evidently represent a peculiar custom of a certain group of the ancient Mexicans. The ethnic importance of the several styles of filing and ornamenting teeth, as shown by specimens in the Museum, will be considered in a special paper.

As the manuscript for this report was prepared by Mr. Thompson in 1891-92, it is thought best to print it without any reference to the recent explorations in this cave by Mr. Henry C. Mercer. It will be seen that Mr. Thompson was the earlier explorer, although the publication of his report has been so long delayed. It is due to Mr. Thompson to state that, owing to his residence in Yucatan, he has not had the opportunity to revise the proof of his report.

F. W. PUTNAM,
Curator of the Museum.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE,
MAY 26, 1897.

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CAVE OF LOLTUN.

REPORT OF EXPEDITION OF 1888-89.

AFTER a week of preparation in Merida, the members of the expedition* went on to Ticul where they were heartily welcomed by Don Antonio Fajardo whose genial face and kind courtesy are most pleasing remem-

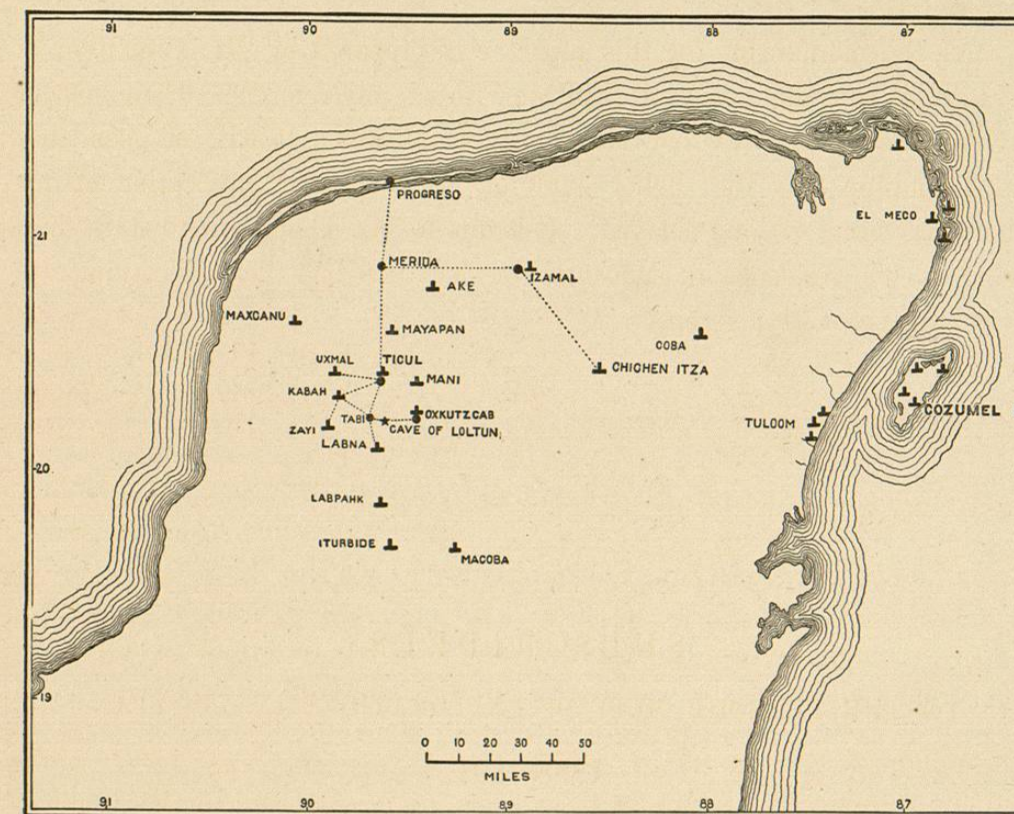


FIG. 1.—MAP OF YUCATAN.

The dotted lines show routes taken by the Peabody Museum Expedition of 1888-1891.

brances of the winter's work. Having partaken of an excellent dinner with his pleasant family, we entered the volans, each drawn by a trio of mules, and were soon on our way to the frontier hacienda of Tabí, whose

* Consisting of EDWARD H. THOMPSON, *Director*; H. N. SWEET, *Photographer*; CLIFTON H. PAIGE, *Civil Engineer*.