

*Stela 15.* Searching the ruins in the right flank of the structure, I found a fragment of a stela, but failed to find the remaining pieces. On this fragment is carved a kind of reptile in high relief. A row of glyphs evidently once ran along each one of the narrow side faces.

*Stelæ 16, 17, 18, 19.* I thus numbered four large stelæ, the sculptures on which are destroyed.

Close by Stela 18, I found a circular altar two metres in diameter, broken in two pieces. Neither on its upper surface nor on the sides of its cylindrical columns was there a design of any kind. The slab had once stood on three strong columns, one of which I dug up to find out whether it had an inscription or not, but it was perfectly smooth. I call this altar No. 5.

We had accordingly found in Piedras Negras five altars in all: two round ones and three square ones. The Yāxchilan custom of placing round altars in front of all monumental edifices, on both sides of stelæ, and generally in open squares and on terraces, very plainly did not prevail in Piedras Negras. In their stead great sacrificial altars were set up in the principal open spaces common to both the adjacent temples and the deity-stelæ. In addition to these, short columns are found here and there by the side of a stela, probably for the reception of small sacrificial gifts.

I will add here, that the wood-cutters found in this ruined city — who knows where? — one of the little pillars of a small circular table, on the front of which were two perpendicular rows of five well-preserved glyphs each. As the stone — 46 cm. in height, 21 in breadth — was not very heavy, they had carried it to Tenosique and as far down as Cármen, to show it as a curiosity to their friends there. When I returned by way of El Cármen, this long-forgotten stone, which I re-discovered in a hut outside of the town, was presented to me by the heads of the wood-cutting establishment (Plate XI).

*Stela 20.* Turning a little south of Stela 19 (that is, south of the left wing of the entire structure to which it belongs), a few steps will bring one to a little stela, 83 cm. in breadth, broken in two pieces. The sculptured side, having fallen face upward, is wholly disintegrated; the side lying upon the ground has no sculpture at all. The narrow side faces are also plain.

*Stela 21.* Pushing forward a few steps further from Stela 20, I found a stone, 115 cm. in height, shaped like the angle of a pointed arch. The sculpture which was once on the front face of this stone is wholly destroyed. The back had no sculpture, but there were faint traces of glyphs on the narrow side faces. In searching for another stone which might supplement the one just found, we came upon numerous shards of incense vessels, dishes and bowls of every kind, as indeed remains of earthen vessels, often of the most delicate workmanship, are generally found in the vicinity of all stelæ.

To the Temple of the Lintel with the Consecration of the Warriors belong no less than ten stelæ: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, of which only three, 12, 13, 14, could be photographed.

Before we leave this half-pyramid with its temple and terraces, we will turn once more to the two great sacrificial altars 3 and 4, on the ground at its base, which I photographed in 1895.

Altar 3 (Plate VII, 2, and Fig. 23) is 196 cm. long by 133 cm. broad. The thickness of the slab is 34 cm. It is broken in two pieces lengthwise, but has not fallen to the ground. Around the outside, along the four narrow faces of the table, are the much weather-worn remains of two rows of glyphs. The upper surface has neither ornamentation nor grooves to carry off the blood. The four supporting pillars are quadrangular in section and unornamented.

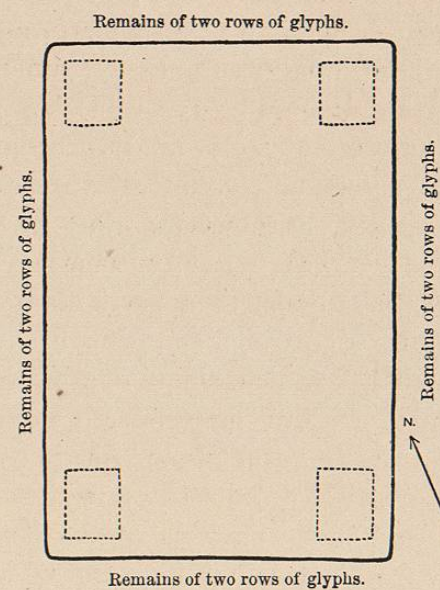


FIG. 23. — ALTAR 3.

Altar 4 (Plate IX, and Fig. 24) is 190 cm. long by 180 cm. broad. The thickness of the stone is 40 cm.

This slab is likewise broken in two lengthwise, but has not yet fallen to the ground. The northern face seemed to have traces of glyphs, but I could find nothing at all on the southern face. The eastern and western faces both have remains of a simple design, but not of a glyphic character. The upper surface seems to have had no sculpture, but three grooves to carry off the blood branching out from a central groove are still distinctly visible.

Of especial interest are the four death's-heads, 76 cm. in height, which support the sacrificial stone. Their form, however, so strongly approaches that of the serpent's head on the façades of Yucatec edifices, that I am in doubt as to whether they are really to be regarded as death's-heads or as serpent's heads. They all have a small indistinct glyph on the forehead. I think I still detected traces of red about the eyes.

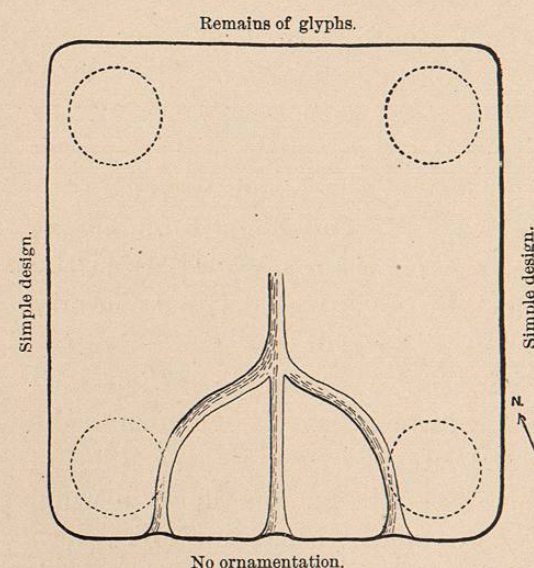


FIG. 24. — ALTAR 4.



*The Temple of the 22d and 23d Stela.* Going in a southerly direction from the base of the pyramid of the Temple of the Lintel with the Consecration of the Warriors, past the 20th and 21st stelæ, a low rocky hillock is reached, upon the upper platform of which are the scanty remains of the walls of what was once a temple with a façade, that must have fronted north. Upon this upper platform, not in line with the centre of the whole structure, but toward the corner of the right wing, I found Stela 22. It had unfortunately fallen with the sculptured side upward, which was consequently entirely worn away by the action of the elements. The back of the stela was perfectly smooth. The two narrow side faces had double rows of glyphs in a partial state of preservation. This principal portion of the stela, which had been broken in two near the bottom, is 240 cm. in height, to which about one metre more should be added in imagination. The breadth of the stela across the middle is 95 cm.; thickness, 42 cm.

On the level ground in front of the whole structure I found Stela 23, unfortunately quite shattered, weather-worn, and crumbling. It had once had sculpture on both of the broad faces, and two perpendicular rows of glyphs on each of the narrow side faces. The height of the stone must have been about four metres; the breadth across the middle is 105 cm.

With the help of my men I set up the large lower piece of this stela, hoping that the sculptured face which had been turned towards the ground would still be preserved. The sculpture consisted of horizontal rows of glyphs which formed the base of the actual relief. Most of the glyphs had unfortunately scaled off so badly that it was impossible to photograph them. Those that were not destroyed still showed distinct traces of red color.

*The Temple of the 24th, 25th, 26th, and 27th Stela.* Constantly roaming about in search of sculptured stones, we came to the site of a temple with faces west-northwest. A terrace rises on that side only about three metres above the level ground, while at the rear the masses of débris from the ruined temple, mingling with the stones of the equally dilapidated masonry of the substructure, reach far down to the road to Tenosique.

On the edge of the terrace (probably in front of the façade of the ruined temple) formerly stood two stelæ, 25 and 26, which have fallen down to the ground at the foot of the terrace. On the ground, to the right and left of the terrace, stood two other stelæ, 24 and 27. The one on the right wing, or Stela 24, had fallen with the sculptured face turned upward, which was consequently quite worn away by the action of the weather. The back face had no sculpture at all. The breadth of this very much impaired stone is 113 cm. A short piece of a thick column, probably intended for the reception of small sacrificial gifts, stood close by.

*Stela 25* (Plate XXII). This stela had fallen from the edge of the ter-

race with the sculptured face downward, which was consequently very well preserved. The face which had fronted the temple was perfectly smooth. The two side faces seem likewise to have been smooth, for I could not find a trace of glyphs upon them.

The height of the stone—including the smooth piece broken off below—is 290 cm.; of these 190 cm. are occupied by the sculpture, measuring from the bottom line of the relief (not including the incised glyphs) to the upper edge of the stela.

In a niche executed in rather low relief, a richly adorned personage sits cross-legged on a kind of dais, which is ornamented with a peculiar design, meant, no doubt, to suggest a heap of bones. The figure in front view is executed in vigorous, high relief.

From a breast-cape, made of large and small beads, depend three medallions,—one on each shoulder and one in the middle. The god in question holds an ornamented pouch in his right hand. In place of a nose the somewhat impaired countenance seems to have had a depression, to suggest the idea of death, as in the case of certain mortuary images at Chichen-Itza. The two round ear-ornaments are very distinct.

The enormous head-dress is worthy of note. It is formed of a fantastic serpent's head which merges into plumes of feathers on the top and at the sides.

Below the dais of bones (?) is a very irregular ornamental design with a band running perpendicularly through the centre, upon which three foot-prints are incised. A band of simplified glyphs (second manner of writing), comprising eleven oblong characters in all, runs along the right, left, and upper sides of the niche. Above the upper edge is a conventionalized mask with feathers and scroll-work to the right and left of it.

The stela is finished at the top with two horizontal rows of nine glyphs each, while a perpendicular row of thirteen glyphs runs down each side, making forty-four glyphs of the monumental manner of writing, very well preserved throughout.

Quite at the bottom, on the otherwise smooth surface of the stone, along the bottom line of the ornamented base of the niche, run two horizontal rows of incised glyphs, which have mostly become indistinct, owing to their want of depth, and because the fracture of the stone runs through them.

Only minute remnants of bright-red color can still be seen on the glyphs, the eyes and the ornamentation of the serpent's head. There are no other traces of color left.

*Stela 26* (Plate XXIII). When this heavy stone fell from the edge of the terrace, it broke into one large piece, three smaller ones, and innumerable fragments that could no longer be fitted together. The photographs, however, of the larger pieces, whose sculptured sides show no trace of decay, give an adequate idea of the nature of the relief.