

the esplanade of the embankment, and that a great circular altar is centrally placed in front of it. I succeeded in excavating a lintel of one of the doorways in the façade, but as it was without ornament, I discontinued the excavation at that point.

Structure 18. The great Sepulchral Pyramid on the Terrace and the Northwest End of the Embankment, and the adjacent structures on the same terrace. Northwest of Structure 17 and very near it, placed transversely to the embankment, and rising about five metres above its plane, there is a terrace (with hearting of earth and stones) which is reached by a broad stairway situated on its east-southeast side. Upon this terrace stands a great sepulchral pyramid, similar in construction to the two behind the Temple of the headless Ketsalkoatl, but on a much larger scale. The corners of the pyramid, like those of the other two, seem to be drawn inward, while the central portion of the four sides projects somewhat. There is a small quadrangular addition adjoining the northeast corner. A flight of steps on the east-southeast side of the pyramid leads up to the platform on top, upon which no actual temple could have stood, but probably only a small, open *templete*.

Here I found the lower portion of a small stela with remains of sculpture, the greater part having scaled off. I found the upper portion of the stela farther down on one of the steps of the pyramid, but its sculpture was entirely destroyed by the action of the elements.

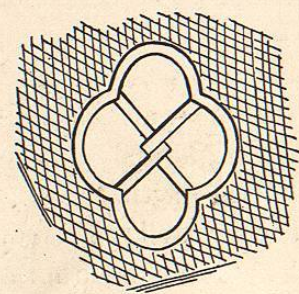


FIG. 44. — DESIGN UPON GARMENT: STELA 8.

The stela is 72 cm. in breadth. It may have been about two metres in height and was probably ornamented only on one side. The preserved relief on the lower portion shows an oval containing the bust of a personage clothed in a tunic. Of the face, nothing remains; but on the reticulated background of the garment there can be seen quatrefoils containing a cruciform pattern (Fig. 44). There are also the remains of two glyphs, one of which distinctly shows the sign of the spider's web. In my list of stelæ this one is No. 8.

While searching the upper steps of the pyramid my men found two interesting incense vessels with a head on the rim. These are shown on the altar in Plate LXXX, 2. They had been protected by a stone slab which leant against the side of a step, and had thus escaped the danger of being broken by falling débris or by mischievous hands. I do not, however, mean to assert that these vessels were placed there during the flourishing period of the city. They are doubtless to be ascribed to Indians, who in the past centuries made pilgrimages to the temples of this city — as they still do today — long after they had been deserted. The face on one of these pottery vessels, especially with regard to its round eyes, has decidedly the character

of figures that are found in the region of the Rio de la Candelaria, near the Lake of Silbituk and near Bolonpeten, regions in which, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, there were still numerous settlements of free Mayas, who have either all died out or have withdrawn into inaccessible wildernesses.

Opposite the southwest side of the pyramid, on the same terrace, lies a quadrangular mass of ruins of considerable size, which must once have been a structure containing passages like the neighboring "Labyrinth." Although everything has apparently fallen down, it is quite possible that a more extensive excavation might disclose remains of chambers.

On the northeast corner of the terrace lie the ruins of a small structure, which seems to have had a projection on the south-southwest side. In front of this structure lie four circular altars of various size, the once interesting sculptures of which are now quite worn away by the elements.

Excavations undertaken in the body of the sepulchral pyramid as well as in and about the adjacent structures and in the terrace itself, might afford interesting results to some future explorer.

Structure 19 (Plates XL, 2, XLIV, 1). "The Labyrinth." Continuing in a southwesterly direction along the terrace with the sepulchral pyra-

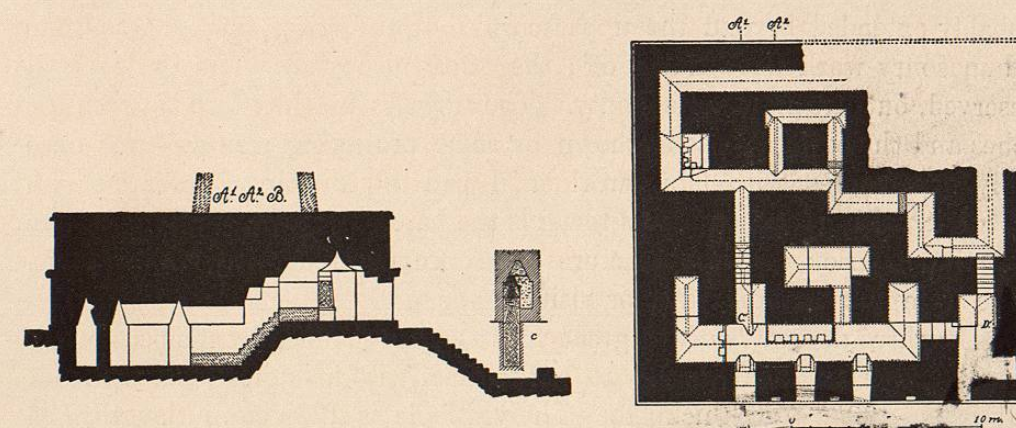


FIG. 45. — STRUCTURE 19 (THE LABYRINTH): SECTION AND GROUND-PLAN (RESERVED).
c, passageway through c'.

mid, one comes upon a terrace two or three metres lower, upon which stands the remarkable, almost square structure which I call "The Labyrinth" on account of its interior passageways (Fig. 45).

This labyrinth is a quadrangular structure, 20 m. 33 cm. in length by 17 m. 70 cm. in breadth. Height of structure, exclusive of roof-comb, 5 m. 88 cm. This roof-comb is of "twofold character," as I am in the habit of expressing it, and may have had two or even three stories. Each story of this many-windowed, airy superstructure may be estimated at a height of five

metres, consequently the total height of the whole edifice was at least 15 m. 88 cm., and perhaps even more.

The façade with its four entrances faces east-southeast. It is possible that there were small doorways at the back, which have now entirely fallen to ruin. It is quite certain that there were no entrances on the other two slightly narrower sides, which in itself lends an air of mystery to the structure.

Upon the esplanade in front of the building, I found two sacrificial stones of no very great diameter, but of considerable height, with the surface of the cylinders, as well as that of the circular tops, covered with sculptured pictures and glyphs, now, unfortunately, very much weathered. Nevertheless, I took a photograph of the one that was best preserved, which at any rate gives an idea of the arrangement of the figures and the glyphs (Plate LXXX, 2).

From the esplanade a broad stairway about 2½ metres high leads to the upper platform upon which, about 2½ metres from the edge, rises the façade. Its base and principal wall surfaces are plainly treated, as usual, the latter, however, being interrupted by three high and narrow niches.

The frieze shows a rich elaboration, and has a lower and an upper cornice. The actual field of the frieze has five high niches, the central one being broad and the others much narrower. The ornamented head of the middle niche probably extended beyond the upper cornice of the frieze, but all its stucco and masonry work have fallen off; the other niches are more or less well preserved, but are now quite empty. The surfaces of the frieze between the niches and the corners — as is shown by some projecting stones — was once richly ornamented with figure-work, and had a projecting border on each side of it, with **I** shaped niches towards the base. I am inclined to believe that the exterior of this structure was once covered with white stucco. There were no traces of red color visible.

The three doorways of the great vestibule are spanned by stepped lintels, as it would have been difficult to cover them with a single stone, the front wall being 190 cm. in thickness. The vestibule is 1265 cm. in length, 195 cm. in breadth, and 370 cm. in height. The vaulted ceiling is curved but inversely like a tent **^** and not truncated at the top. The vaults of the other parallel or transverse chambers and passages are for the most part wedge-shaped, sometimes ending in an acute angle, and sometimes more or less broadly truncated.

The vestibule has a large rear chamber and three half-chambers, and at its left end a narrow passageway leads to a side chamber, which also has a narrow entrance in front. From this lateral chamber, as also from the opposite half-chamber (the last but one of the vestibules) small flights of stairs lead down to the longitudinal and transverse passages lying 2 m. 25 cm. lower, which seem to receive their scanty supply of light and air only from

these two narrow passages. For a better understanding of the whole plan of this structure I must refer to my drawing of it, which gives a clear idea of this remarkable edifice in all its details.

The portion forming the northwest corner has entirely fallen down, but it is possible that the narrow passages, coming at a right angle from both sides, crossed again and united at this point.

The dazzlingly white stucco covering of the walls and vaulted ceilings is very well preserved in the interior passages, while in the outer apartments it has mostly fallen off. According to this, it would not seem to be the moisture which causes the plaster covering of the walls to fall off, but the too rapid change of temperature; for the interior chambers are much more damp than the outer ones.

Numerous stone couches have been built into the chambers and half-chambers; nine of these are still in a good state of preservation. Even in ancient times there were people who could not resist spoiling a rationally planned building with absurd alterations. Thus the couches, placed before the entrances to the interior chambers, originally occupied half the breadth of their respective anterooms, and left sufficient space for conveniently reaching the little stairways and descending by them; but at a later date they were extended so as to fill up the whole span of the anterooms, and the little stairways were raised to the height of the couches, which unreasonable alteration rendered access to the rear apartments difficult, besides robbing them of light and air.

Of the lofty, double-walled, many-windowed roof-comb above on the stone roof, only the base remains.

What may have been the purpose of this remarkable building? The circular sacrificial stones in front of it indicate a semi-religious character at least. Largely owing to its stone couches and interior passageways, the "Labyrinth" of Yāxchilan always reminds me of the south portion of the principal palace at Palenque.

The "Labyrinth" and the sepulchral pyramid with its enormous terraces form the architectural and strategic northwestern termination of the embankment. At the back of these two structures I found nothing more of importance.

II. THE CHAIN OF TEMPLES NEAR THE FOOT OF THE NORTHEASTERN SLOPE OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGE OF THE GREAT AND THE LESSER ACROPOLIS.

Structure 20 (Plate XLI, 1). *The Temple of Sculptured Lintels 12, 13, 14, and of Stela 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, called by me El Templo de la Ofrenda de Aves, for brevity, the Bird Temple.* Standing on the southeastern part of the embankment of the spot once occupied by Stela 3 and turning toward the opposite