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John Lloyd Stephens

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Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan

John Lloyd Stephens (1805–1852) was an American politician, explorer and writer who is renowned for his pioneering research into the ancient Maya civilisation of Central America. In 1839 Stephens was appointed a Special Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Central America (modern Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador). First published in 1841, this two-volume work is an account of his travels in 1839 and 1840, visiting and recording ancient Mayan sites. Stephens describes Copán, Palenque and forty-two other ancient sites and includes over fifty illustrations drawn by his travelling companion Frederick Catharwood (1799–1854), a professional architect. Although earlier accounts of Mayan ruins had been published, Stephens' vivid descriptions and Catharwood's meticulous drawings were far more detailed and accurate than previous reports, and kindled Victorian interest in the ancient Maya civilisation. Volume 1 focuses on Copán and the indigenous cultures of Central America.

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VOLUME 1

JOHN LLOYD STEPHENS



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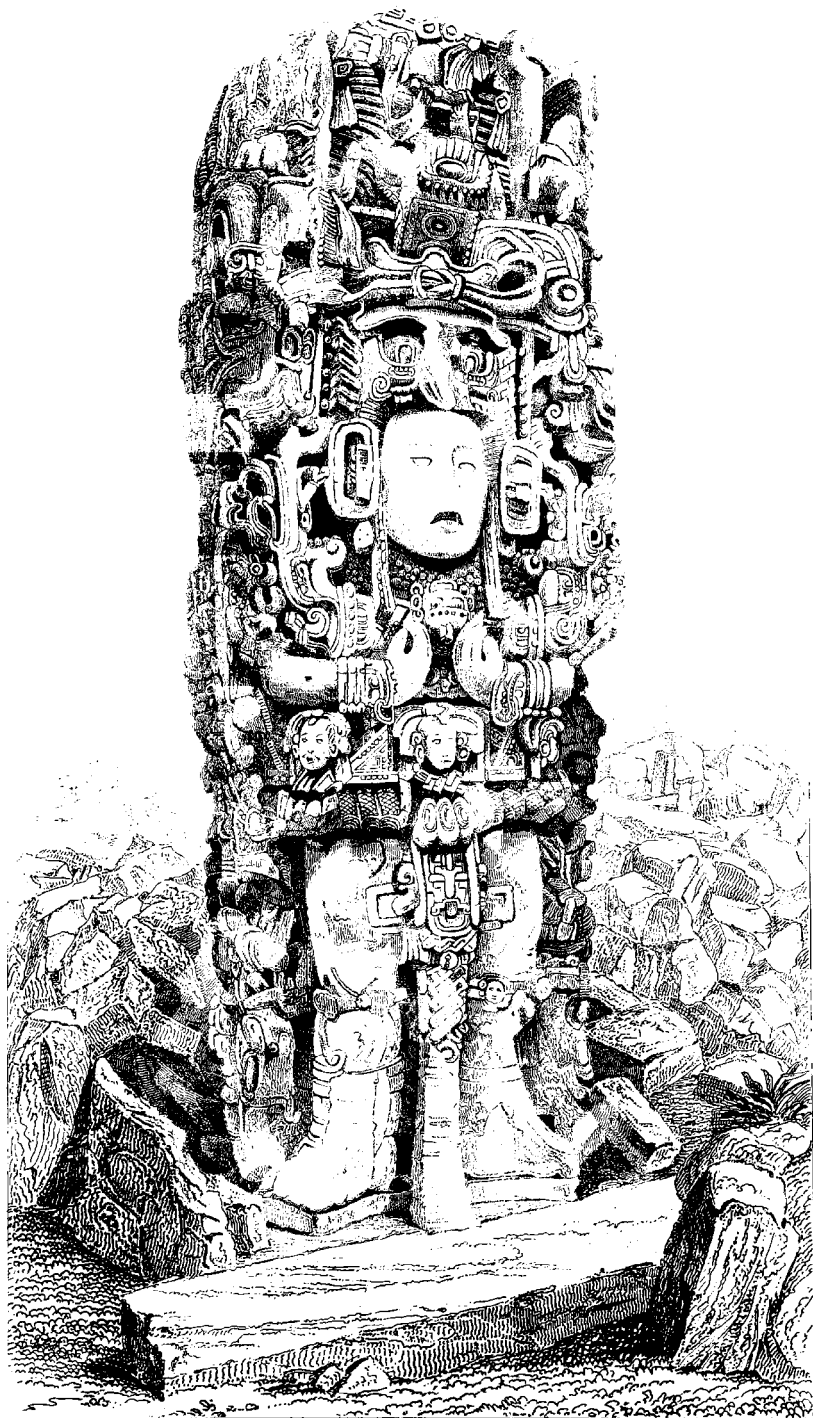
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INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL
IN
CENTRAL AMERICA, CHIAPAS,
AND
YUCATAN.

BY JOHN L. STEPHENS,
AUTHOR OF "INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL IN EGYPT, ARABIA PETRÆA, AND THE
HOLY LAND," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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P R E F A C E.

THE author is indebted to Mr. Van Buren, late President of the United States, for the opportunity of presenting to the public the following pages. He considers it proper to say, that his diplomatic appointment was for a specific purpose, not requiring a residence at the capital, and the object of his mission being fulfilled or failing, he was at liberty to travel. At the time of his arrival in Central America, that country was distracted by a sanguinary civil war, which resulted, during his sojourn there, in the entire prostration of the Federal Government. By the protection and facilities afforded by his official character, he was enabled to accomplish what otherwise would have been impossible. His work embraces a journey of nearly three thousand miles in the interior of Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan, including visits to eight ruined cities, with full illustrations from drawings taken on the spot by Mr. Catherwood. Its publication has been delayed on account of the engravings; but on one consideration the author does not regret the delay. Late intelligence from Central America enables him to express the belief that the state of anarchy in which he has represented that beautiful

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country no longer exists ; the dark clouds which hung
over it have passed away, civil war has ceased, and
Central America may be welcomed back among re-
publics.

New-York, May, 1841.

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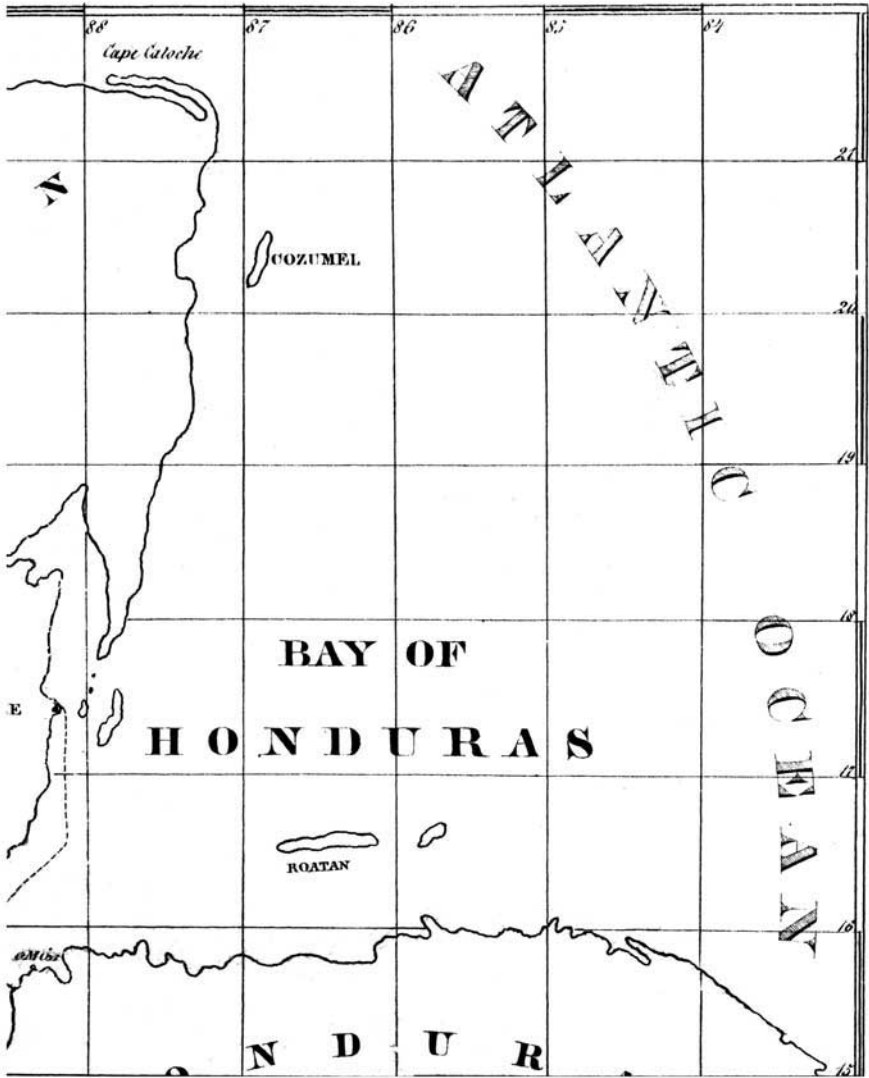
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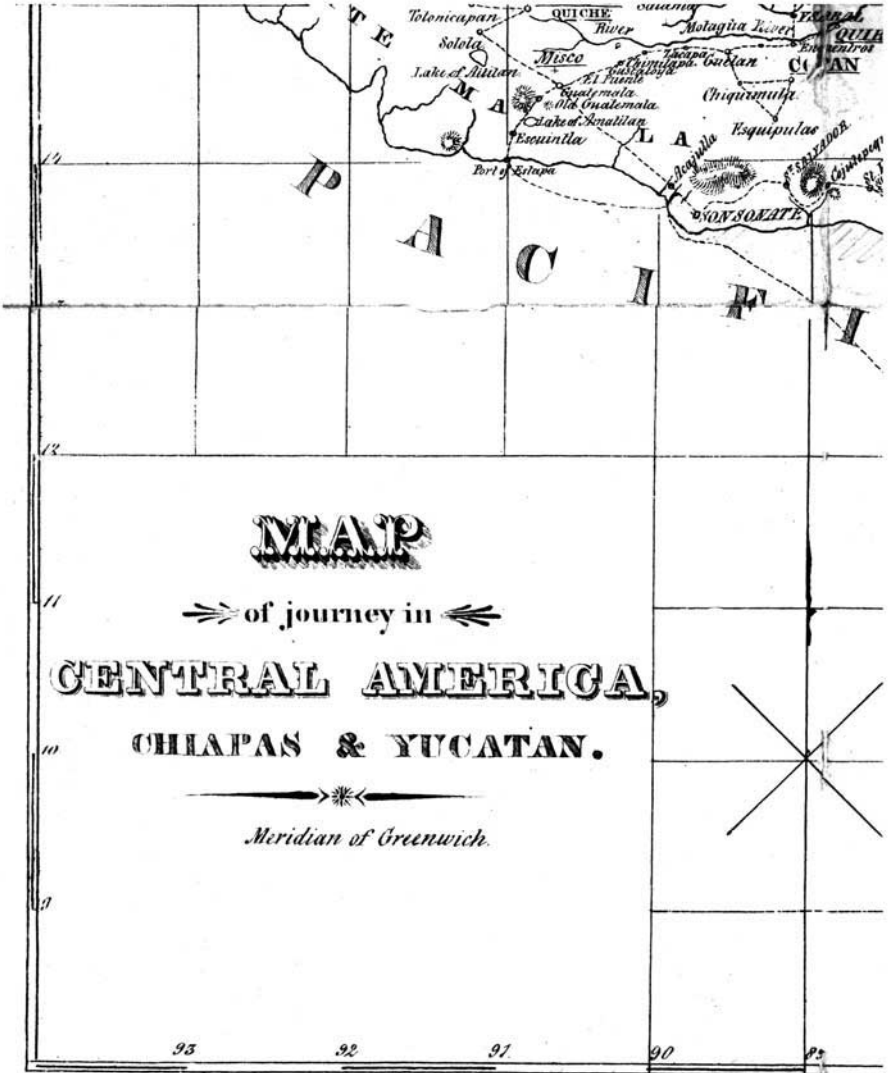
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