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Thomas Athol Joyce

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The discovery of material remains from the recent or the ancient past has always been a source of fascination, but the development of archaeology as an academic discipline which interpreted such finds is relatively recent. It was the work of Winckelmann at Pompeii in the 1760s which first revealed the potential of systematic excavation to scholars and the wider public. Pioneering figures of the nineteenth century such as Schliemann, Layard and Petrie transformed archaeology from a search for ancient artifacts, by means as crude as using gunpowder to break into a tomb, to a science which drew from a wide range of disciplines - ancient languages and literature, geology, chemistry, social history - to increase our understanding of human life and society in the remote past.

### Mexican Archaeology

An anthropologist and archaeologist working for much of his life at the British Museum, Thomas Athol Joyce (1878–1942) succeeded in making American archaeology more accessible to non-specialists. Through careful analysis and presentation of the available evidence from South and Central America, he secured his reputation as an authority in this field, especially with regard to Mayan civilisation. Drawing on his wide reading of the published literature, he produced three pioneering and highly illustrated textbooks. The present work appeared in 1914 and focuses on Mexican and Mayan culture. The topics discussed include social structure and daily life, warfare, trade and architecture, as well as religious observance and mythology. Particular attention is paid to the calendar, with appendices providing the names of days and months along with a provisional dating scheme. Joyce's *South American Archaeology* (1912) and *Central American and West Indian Archaeology* (1916) are also reissued in this series.

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# Mexican Archaeology

*An Introduction to the Archaeology  
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of Pre-Spanish America*

THOMAS ATHOL JOYCE



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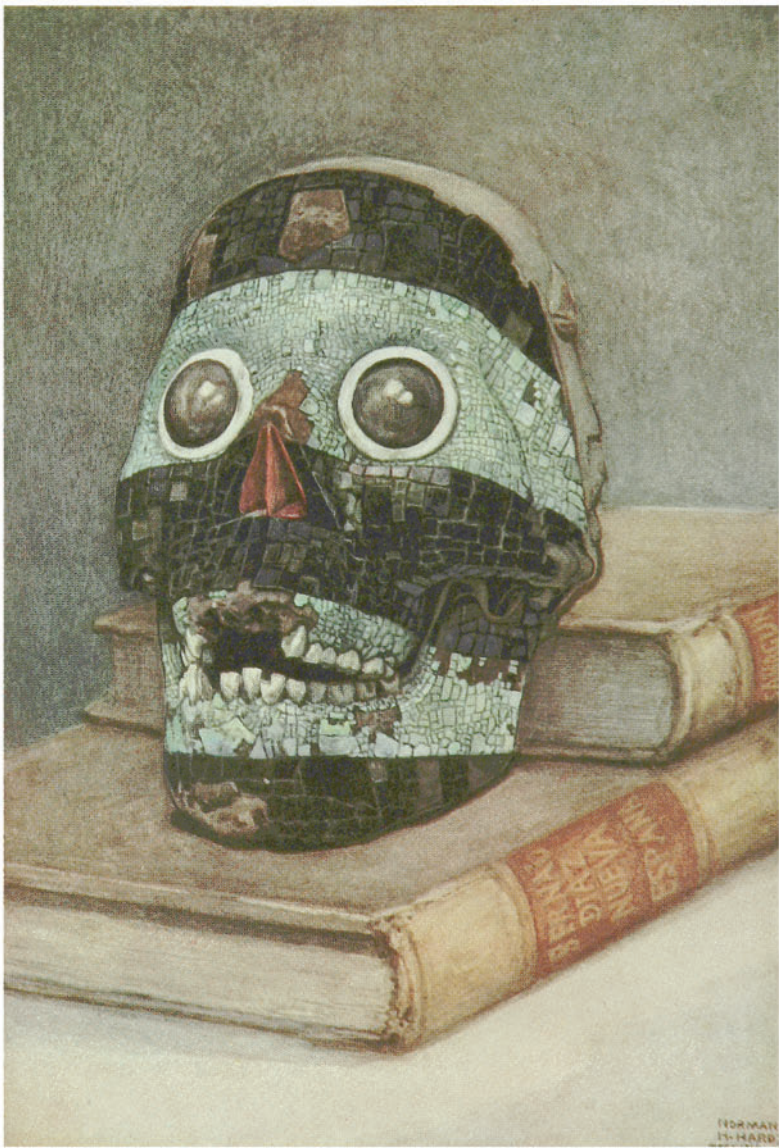
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PLATE 1



British Museum

MEXICO

HUMAN SKULL, INCRUSTED WITH MOSAIC, REPRESENTING TEZCATLIPOCA

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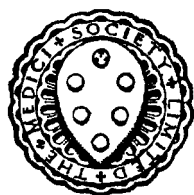
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# MEXICAN ARCHÆOLOGY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHÆ-  
OLOGY OF THE MEXICAN AND MAYAN  
CIVILIZATIONS OF PRE-SPANISH AMERICA.  
BY THOMAS A. JOYCE, M.A. WITH MANY  
ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP



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## PREFACE

THE object of this small book is to summarize shortly the extent of our knowledge concerning the life and culture of the Mexican and Maya peoples of pre-Spanish America. It has no pretence whatever to finality ; indeed, the time is not within sight when a complete elucidation of all the problems connected with this most fascinating area can be put forward. At the same time it is useful to pause occasionally and summarize results, if only because attention is thereby drawn to the more serious gaps in the data available, and it becomes easier to direct the course of future investigations. An ulterior motive lies in the hope that a little stimulus may be given to American studies in this country, which have languished sadly during the past few years. This fact is all the more to be regretted since Englishmen, such as Dr. A. P. Maudslay, have done so much in the past to unveil the mysteries of ancient American civilization, and the collection at the British Museum, though small, is rich in the finest collection in the world of Mexican mosaics. At present, as far as the Old World is concerned, the torch has passed to Germany, the labours of whose investigators, in particular of Dr. Seler, have done so much to place the study of American antiquities upon a thoroughly scientific footing. No part of the world, perhaps, has formed the subject of so many wild theories as ancient

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Mexico, and few present so many fascinating riddles to the expert. It has therefore been impossible in the present work to keep clear of controversial ground, but I have tried as far as possible to take a sane view of each problem, and to indicate in some measure the evidence for each conclusion. Many of the suggested solutions are purely tentative, and must doubtless be modified in the light of subsequent investigations. This remark applies especially to the scheme of dating which forms an appendix. I am quite prepared to be accused of rashness in presenting it, and I admit that it is purely provisional. But I think it may have its use as a framework for history, and it will at least serve the purpose of exciting criticism. Subsequent to its preparation a monograph on "Maya Art," by Dr. Spinden, has made its appearance under the auspices of the Peabody Museum in America, in which the author provides a somewhat similar scheme. His table differs somewhat from mine, but I think that the reasons for my dating, which I give in the last chapter, render mine the more satisfactory, and I have therefore made no alteration. His full treatment of Maya art has however led me to curtail my remarks on that subject, since much of what I had written appears on his pages ; and I have rather given emphasis to those points of difference which exist between us.

My original intention was to include in the present book a sketch of the archæology of Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, but the material proved too great, and I have thought it better to deal thoroughly with the related cultures of the Mexicans and Maya rather than to give an incomplete or over-compressed picture of the archæology of a wider area. Even as it is I fear

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that certain chapters may have suffered from over-condensation, more especially that on the Mexican gods. However Mexican religion is in itself rather an intricate subject, and requires studying in considerable detail if a proper view of the life and culture of the people is to be obtained. Religion amongst the Mexicans was the mainspring of all private and public life, and few of the archæological remains cannot be brought into direct relation with it. Yet even Mexican religion is not as complicated as it appears at first sight ; it is in reality the language, with its fondness for long compound names, which renders it so difficult a study to the amateur in the initial stages. I had also intended to add a bibliographical note, similar to that with which I concluded my volume on South America. But in view of the existence of an admirable bibliography in Dr. Walter Lehmann's little monograph, "Methods and Results in Mexican Research," I judged it unnecessary.

I find it difficult to express to the full my thanks to the many friends whose encouragement and assistance are really responsible for such success as this book may achieve. Without the work of Dr. Maudslay and Dr. Seler its production would have been impossible, and I owe them both much gratitude for the great generosity which has led them both to place their illustrations at my disposal. Professor Holmes, of the Bureau of American Ethnology, has shown me similar kindness in permitting me to reproduce five of the charming illustrations in his admirable monograph, "Archæological Studies among the Ruined Cities of Mexico," published by the Field Columbian Museum (now the Field Museum of Natural History) of Chicago.

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## PREFACE

I am also deeply indebted to Sir Hercules Read, to Colonel Ward and to Mr. Cooper Clark for much advice and the use of valuable photographs, and also to the Trustees of the British Museum and the Director of the Peabody Museum for the loan of certain illustrations. To Dr. Wallis Budge I owe much for his kind encouragement ; it is in fact to him that the inception of the present work is due. I must also express my gratitude to my wife for many hours spent in the preparation of line-drawings, and to my colleague, Mr. H. J. Braunholtz, of the British Museum, for assistance in the laborious task of proof reading. Finally I should like to thank my publishers for the consideration which they have always extended to me, as well as for their enterprise in producing a series of archæological works which will, I trust, do much to stimulate interest in the efforts of the present to unveil the past.

T. A. JOYCE.

LONDON,

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