

AUGUSTUS LE PLONGEON: EARLY MAYA ARCHAEOLOGIST

by

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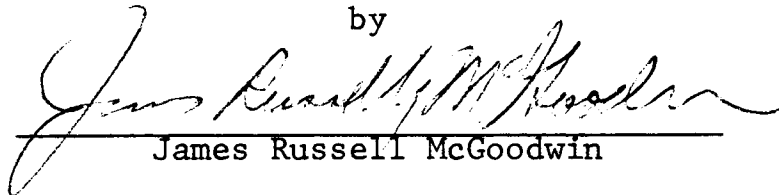
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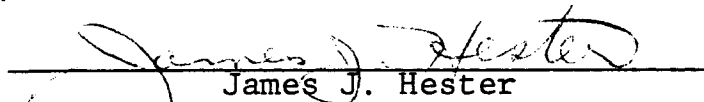
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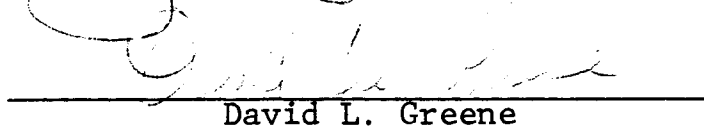
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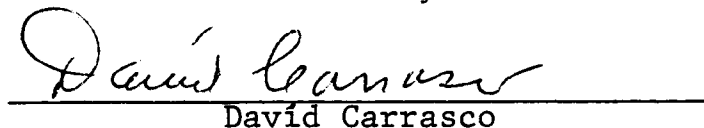
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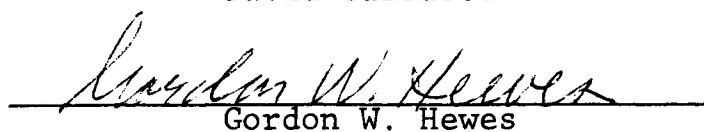
  
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Although he was one of the earliest individuals to investigate extensively the Maya civilization, Augustus Le Plongeon is today dismissed by nearly all Maya scholars as little more than a troublesome eccentric, who spent a considerable time working in Yucatán, and propounded preposterous theories about the ancient Maya.

The purpose of this research was to make a thorough study of Le Plongeon's work, in order to discern just what role his work might have played in the development of Maya studies in their earliest days. Thus, my aim has been to bring Augustus Le Plongeon out of the realm of mythology, and into the realm of history.

The research relied heavily on archival records, including the following: Le Plongeon's photographs from Yucatán, his field notes, drawings, and published writings by both himself and his wife, Alice Dixon; the Le Plongeon correspondence with contemporaries--scholars and others--also involved in studies of the ancient Maya; and writings about Augustus Le Plongeon

and his work. A brief, informal field study was also conducted in Yucatán, Mexico, in order to better understand Le Plongeon's work in the context in which it took place.

In addition to producing a great corpus of descriptive materials, which is little known even now, his main contribution was that of provocateur: one who prompted theoretical controversy about the Maya civilization, forcing other scholars of his time to examine more deeply and refine their own hypotheses.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A great number of people have given me assistance and encouragement during the research for this thesis. To spell out their total contributions would take too many pages, so only a brief indication of their invaluable assistance can be given. I cannot emphasize too strongly that without them I could not have possibly written this dissertation on Augustus Le Plongeon.

Manly P. Hall, President and Founder of the Philosophical Research Society, comes to mind first for his encouragement and generosity in allowing me to work with the Le Plongeon glass negatives and providing me with access to the resources of the Society's collections, archives and library. His staff, including librarian Pearl Thomas, were always ready to locate obscure articles and materials, and to assist me in any way they could.

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Regarding photography, Ansel Adams took time from his busy schedule to review and comment on the Le Plongeon prints. His enthusiasm for photography was an inspiration to me. At the San Francisco Art Institute, Pirkle Jones spent many hours going over each photo, evaluating it technically and aesthetically for publication. Richard F. Carter and Ralph E. Black of the University of Colorado guided me through the intricate techniques of restoration and the making of prints from copies of old photos. And, Carter managed to find a view camera manufactured by Scovill which is similar to the one used by Le Plongeon.

Never one to pass up a challenge, the late Dennis Puleston, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, played an important role in

the Le Plongeon project until his sudden death at Chichén Itzá in June 1978. At the time of his death, a research team comprised of myself, Lewis (Skip) and Phyllis Messenger, Alison Kennedy, and Denny Puleston were investigating the claims of Maude Blackwell that codices were to be found at several locations at the site. Early one morning we had run a number of non-intrusive tests and examined a few structures based on the Blackwell clues when, later, Denny, while examining bas-reliefs on the Castillo Pyramid, was struck by lightning and instantly killed. In life, as in death, he was a great inspiration to us all.

My field work in Yucatán was facilitated by the assistance and encouragement provided by the archaeologist Norberto Gonzalez, Director, Centro Regional Sureste, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), and was further assisted by archaeologist Dr. Peter J. Schmidt of INAH.

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Archivist, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington; and Daniel W. Jones, Jr., Photographic Archivist, who was particularly helpful in locating Le Plongeon photos, Sally L. Bond, Collections Administrator, and Ian Graham, all at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University; Dr. Thomas Niehaus, Director, Latin American Library of Tulane University; Diane Trubandt, John Q. Packard Library, Marysville, California; the staffs of the Bakken Museum of Electricity in Life at Minneapolis; the California Academy of Sciences; the Bancroft Library of the University of California; the Long Island Historical Society; the Smithsonian Institution; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and the Brooklyn Museum.

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Thanks are also due to the members of my dissertation committee for their help, advice, discussions and ideas. They are: Dr. Boulos Ayad, Dr. David Carrasco, Dr. James J. Hester, Dr. Gordon W. Hewes, and Dr. Joseph Lischka.

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FIGURE

Figure

- 1. Map of Yucatán, Mexico with archaeological sites and Le Plongeon's route to Chichén Itzá and Belize . . . . . 61

To my parents:  
Lawrence C. Desmond, and  
Gritli Desmond-Mueller

## INTRODUCTION

False facts are highly injurious to the progress of science, for they often long endure; but false views, if supported by some evidence, do little harm, as every one takes a salutary pleasure in proving their falseness; and when this is done, one path towards error is closed, and the truth is often at the same time opened. (Darwin as cited in Bancroft 1882:368)

### Background

In 1977, while researching historical materials for a course I was teaching on the ancient Maya, I read a short article on Augustus Le Plongeon by Robert Brunhouse in his book, In Search of the Maya. What struck me about Brunhouse's account was his devastatingly critical interpretation of Le Plongeon's life and work, an interpretation that seemed to go against the data he presented. Intrigued, I began to check Brunhouse's interpretations against the original material produced by Le Plongeon, and gradually found not only was Brunhouse in error in his biographical account of Le Plongeon in a number of instances, but that he repeated errors written by the archaeologist Robert Wauchope in Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents. Brunhouse cited Wauchope as an important source of information on Le Plongeon.



In 1980, while working on Le Plongeon material in the archives at Harvard University, I discussed some of my questions with Professor Gordon Willey. He told me he felt a thorough analysis of Le Plongeon's work was needed, and might be a valuable addition to the wealth of extant literature concerning the Maya (personal communication 1980).

Le Plongeon's work in the Maya area took place during the last quarter of the nineteenth century (1873-1884), making him one of the earliest in a long line of Mayanists to intensively research northern Yucatán. To date his contribution has been considered almost nil by most scholars, and a great facet of his work is almost unknown: his fieldwork. What I wanted to do was make a fuller investigation of Le Plongeon, with an eye toward uncovering the truth about his life and work.

Augustus Le Plongeon, a man unknown for his careful archaeological field work and photography, but well known amongst archaeologists for his theories concerning the origins of ancient civilizations, was condemned by scholars of the nineteenth century for his outspoken belief that the Maya were world culture bearers, descendants of the Atlanteans, and founders of the Babylonian and Egyptian civilizations. Le

Plongeon considered of greatest importance, the results of his fieldwork--his synthesis of Maya civilization. He saw little value in mere data gathering, and in spite of his strenuous efforts at precision in the field, he would be chagrined to learn that today few, if any, find his historical writings acceptable.

Had he only published his photos and archaeological drawings with standard descriptions, he no doubt would have been singled out as one of the great archaeological photographers of his time. But he chose instead to use his photos and drawings as reference material, as a record he could call upon to illustrate his theories. Using his experience as a surveyor in California, he drew a number of structures at Chichén Itzá, including a plan and cross-section of the Upper and Lower Temple of the Jaguars; a plan and cross section of the Platform of Venus; a plan of the Akab Dzib; and a plan and cross-section of the Caracol. At Uxmal he drew a plan and cross-section of the Governor's Palace; plan of the Nunnery Quadrangle; a plan of the Adivino Pyramid, including plans of Temple IV and Temple V on that pyramid. At Isla Mujeres he drew plans of the temple at the island's south point, and also of a small structure

nearby. He drew a cross section of the pyramid at Izamal, but no plan survives if he drew one. At Mayapán he surveyed and drew a plan of the Pyramid of Kukulcan, and also of a structure yet to be identified by archaeologists, which he called the Gnomon Mound.

His cross-section of the Platform of Venus was made during the excavation of that structure, and is the first of its kind in the Maya area. It was part of his detailed documentation of that excavation which also included photographs, a plan, and reconstruction drawing.

In his archaeological work he was ahead of most in his attention to detail and efforts to record the work for future analysis. Although mounds in the Mississippi and Ohio Valleys of the United States were also being trenched and recorded at the same time, Le Plongeon was the first researcher in Mesoamerica to use such thorough documentation. It would be 1913 before another unique step in the methodology of Mesoamerican archaeology would come forth: a section drawing of excavations at Atzacapotzalco, in the Valley of Mexico, by the renowned Mexican archaeologist, Manuel Gamio. Le Plongeon's cross-section drawing of the Platform of Venus was the first of its

kind in Mesoamerica, but it went unnoticed, and thus had no direct impact on the development of archaeology. Unfortunately, only three pages of the field notes which were an integral part of Le Plongeon's research procedure remain.

His photographic output was monumental; his technical expertise was of the highest quality. There is no doubt that Augustus Le Plongeon was a master of the art of photography, but photography was not his primary interest. He mastered its techniques easily, and then chose to accept the unbelievably difficult task of trying to unravel the secrets of Maya civilization.

One path to an understanding of that civilization is through its writing system, iconography and literature. Taking that course, Augustus directed most of his efforts at deciphering Maya writing by "translating" what he considered Maya inscriptions on Temple IV of the Adivino Pyramid at Uxmal, Stela 1 at Mayapán, and the east facade of the Nunnery (Monjas) Annex at Chichén Itzá. Nowhere does he actually attempt to work out a glyphic interpretation of hieroglyphic texts such as are found carved in stone in the Akab Dzib and Chichanchob at Chichén Itzá. Those texts and others found at numerous Classic Maya

sites are considered true Maya writing. The designs found at Uxmal on Temple IV may have meaning, but are not translatable in the same sense as is the Maya script. In his interpretation of a section of the Madrid Codex, he gives a "translation" of the drawings that accompany the glyphic text. Augustus Le Plongeon concentrated on iconographic interpretation throughout his work, but left the glyphs to others.

Le Plongeon's efforts at iconographic interpretations during the nineteenth century were just a beginning. Now individual scholars and teams of analysts are attempting to find the meaning of the complicated motifs on Maya buildings. In the area of Maya hieroglyphics, analysis continued for another 70 years before significant breakthroughs occurred on the non-numerical parts of Maya hieroglyphic texts. Le Plongeon was correct and certainly encouraging when he stated about Maya iconography and writing, "if a human intelligence has devised it, another human intelligence would certainly be able to unravel it" (1881:16).

He had friends in powerful places: William Everts, U.S. Secretary of State; Stephen Field, Supreme Court Justice; Stephen Salibury, Jr., patron of American archaeology; Porfirio Díaz, President of

Mexico; Crescencio Carillo y Ancona, historian and Bishop of Mérida; Henry Flower, Governor of Belize; and many others. He also worked among the poor and had their total confidence. His medical practice in Peru was said to have been directed toward helping the needy, and in Yucatán he vaccinated the Maya against smallpox.

While in Yucatán Le Plongeon developed such a rapport with the Maya that he often worked and traveled in territory that others were reluctant to enter because of warfare at the time. He was often amazingly brilliant and flexible, a man capable of communicating with persons from both extremes of society, but, unfortunately, because of his strong scientific beliefs he made enemies of a number of important scholars.

Accompanying Augustus in his travels from about 1871 until his death in 1908 was his wife Alice. Born Alice Dixon in London, England, where they first met, she married him at age 19, but never lost her identity in their 37 years together. Within a few years after their arrival in Yucatán, she began publishing articles on the archaeology, ethnology, and history of the area in a number of important journals and magazines. Through her life with Augustus she wrote about those

things that were of greatest importance to her. Alice was the first woman to study both the modern and ancient Maya in the field. She lived in Maya villages, and also suffered the difficulties of living in the ruins of the ancient Maya. While in Yucatán she took up the cause of the Maya and attempted to show the American people why they fought against their oppressors. Later in life her writings became more literary and she wrote on matters of metaphysics. Augustus and Alice lived and worked together, maintaining their separate identities. They were a rare combination, and knew it.

#### Maude A. Blackwell

Maude Blackwell, a confidante of the Le Plongeons, held much of their work after both had died. In demythologizing Le Plongeon, the numerous statements by Blackwell about the Le Plongeons had to be closely checked and compared with external materials, since she, basically, was attempting to rectify Augustus' ruined reputation. She surfaced in 1931, after holding the Le Plongeon glass negatives, field notes, manuscripts, mural tracings, drawings and other materials for 21 years. Mrs. Blackwell at first wanted the material to be in the hands of archaeologists, so she offered them to Sylvanus

Morley, who was then in charge of the Carnegie Institution's work at Chichén Itzá, and Frans Blom, Director of Tulane University's Middle American Research Institute.

What prompted her to make that offer was the Carnegie Institution and Tulane University work in Yucatán, and the spectacular aerial photos of Maya sites taken by Charles Lindbergh and published in 1929. Morley, in a letter states:

When I asked Mrs. Blackwell why she had kept silent about this matter for so long . . . she replied that on her death bed Mrs. Le Plongeon had left [her husband's] material to her with the understanding that it was not to be made public until the American people evinced a greater interest in the ancient Maya civilization than they had done in her lifetime and that of her husband. Mrs. Blackwell was enjoined to destroy the material before her death if the American people gave no evidence of awakened interest in the ancient Maya civilization up to that time.

When I asked her why, then, she was making it public, at this time, she replied that she felt that Colonel Lindbergh's flights over the Maya area two years ago, and the wave of interest which these had aroused, was sufficient evidence of awakened interest on the part of the American people in the Maya field, to warrant her in making public the Le Plongeon material. (1931)

Morley realized the significance of Le Plongeon's work, and attempted to convince his superiors in Washington to purchase the Le Plongeon collection.

The importance of his [Le Plongeon's] conclusions is nil, but the fact he had been in Chichen Itza so early and had done digging there (having



discovered the Chac Mool, now in the National Museum at Mexico City, as well as the one which Felipe Carillo found in the ball court and removed to the Museum in Merida) would have made his photographs and any excavation notes he may have left of utmost importance to our work . . . and when I took archaeology under Alfred Tozzer at Harvard twenty-six years ago, Tozzer told us that Dr. Le Plongeon had decided to burn all his notes and photographs just before his death to prevent their falling into the hands of such an ungrateful world. (1931).

Frans Blom also emphasized the importance of Le Plongeon's work in his answer to Maude Blackwell's first letter:

It is intensely interesting to me, as an ardent student of the ancient Maya civilization to read what you have to tell me about your close acquaintance with Dr. Le Plongeon.

During my explorations last year at Uxmal, I several times came across short inscriptions on the temple walls written in the hand of Mrs. Le Plongeon, and giving short indications of the work they were conducting, or the date they had been investigating certain sections of the magnificent old city.

Being well acquainted with Dr. Le Plongeon's writings and having from time to time seen some of his drawings and photographs, it naturally gives me great pleasure to hear from you that you are the guardian of the documents he left. You can realize how much I would like to see these papers, not only for the valuable material they may contain, but also because I should like to incorporate them in our library here. (1931)

In one of her last letters to Frans Blom, Maude Blackwell expressed her dissatisfaction with Morley, as well as Karl Ruppert who had interviewed her.

Of course I ought to have been prepared to find that the two archaeologists are too conservative

to pay much attention to Dr. Le P's theories etc. In more ways than one I was disappointed in their visit here. TIME will prove as to which set of "theories" lies nearest the truth. (1931)

And Morley in his letter of 1931:

Like Dr. Le Plongeon, Mrs. Blackwell is a mystic, believing in numbers, signs and symbols, Atlantis, and all that complex of associated absurdities. I believe that it was her devotion to these mystic sciences which finally reconciled Le Plongeon first, to refrain from having his material burned, and second, permitted Mrs. Le Plongeon to leave it all to Mrs. Blackwell, and I spent from noon to ten o'clock one night trying to get concrete facts from her and to pin her down to anything. (1931b)

Concurrent with her correspondence with Morley and Blom, Maude Blackwell had also contacted Manly P. Hall, President of the Philosophical Research Society in Los Angeles. Maude was living in Hollywood at the time, and, after becoming disillusioned with the Carnegie Institution's attitude, she offered all the Le Plongeon material to the Philosophical Research Society, much to Manly Hall's delight. Fully understanding their importance for future scholarly research, Dr. Hall purchased all the Le Plongeon negatives, drawings and manuscripts from Maude Blackwell. Unfortunately, the Le Plongeon manuscript "Pearls in Shells," a "frank and somewhat daring treatise on religions," remains lost (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, December 14, 1908). "Pearls in Shells" may have been the two hand written volumes described by Dr. Hall as

those which Blackwell took back a week after the Philosophical Research Society had acquired the Le Plongeon collection (Hall 1980). She left Los Angeles shortly after selling the collection, and neither she nor the volumes have been traced. But, Augustus' "Origins of the Egyptians" and "Pyramid of Xochicalco" were published posthumously in 1914 through her efforts.

Blackwell, during discussions and correspondence about the Le Plongeon collection, asserted to Morley and Blom that the Le Plongeon had found Maya codices. She had hoped that she could convince them to dig at certain locations at Chichén Itzá and Uxmal, where she believed the Le Plongeon had found the codices. Augustus' name would certainly be cleared if the Maya codices were found but the archaeologists never excavated.

It had been one of Augustus' and Alice's greatest hopes, to find the ancient books of the Maya. To this end they searched the archaeological sites and followed up numerous leads in Yucatán. Augustus thought, since he assumed he had an understanding of Maya symbolism and hieroglyphics, that he would find where they were secreted. It is through Maude Blackwell's letters and statements to Sylvanus Morley

and Frans Blom that one might conclude the Le Plongeons actually found codices. Blackwell states, "records [codices] were positively seen at Uxmal and also at Chichen" (1931a). But, nowhere in his letters, articles and books does Augustus state he actually found codices. In a letter to John W. Foster, Minister to Mexico in 1877, he states

The places of concealment of these and other most precious relics, amongst them probably the libraries of the H-Menes or learned and wise men, yet to be excavated were revealed to my wife and myself on deciphering some hieroglyphics, mural paintings and bas-reliefs. (Emphasis added.) (1877:97)

In 1906 and 1907, shortly before his death, Augustus carried on a lively correspondence with Charles P. Bowditch, patron of the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, devotee of the study of Maya hieroglyphics. Bowditch was interested in Le Plongeon's interpretations and attempted to get Augustus to divulge where he thought Maya codices might be hidden. Dr. Le Plongeon replied to one inquiry from Bowditch,

Dr. Le Plongeon . . . may be induced, perhaps, to mention some of the places where such records may still exist and where some years ago, I began to look, when my researches were interrupted by events beyond my control.

I have no objection to tell you that, in my own mind, I am convinced that very ancient Mss. exist at Chichen. . . . If I had money of my own I would be willing to spend it to bring to light

these ancient books; but I would not care to spend the money of somebody else. (Emphasis added.) (1907)

With the best of intentions Maude Blackwell attempted to right the reputation of Augustus Le Plongeon, but made a number of unsubstantiated claims about his work to Morley and Blom. She may have hoped that the hints and confused statements she attributed to Alice and Augustus in her letters might lead an archaeologist to stumble onto a cache of codices thereby giving credit to the Le Plongeon's. Her statements seem to be a mixture of her own imagination, facts learned from the Le Plongeon's about Yucatán, and theories they had on the possible location of codices.

#### The Purpose of This Research and Its Methodology

Demythologizing Le Plongeon is crucial if we are to reasonably assess his contribution to Maya studies. And if a new or clearer understanding of Le Plongeon's individual accomplishments in archaeology, photography and history occur, as "spinoff" from the main thrust of my research, all the better. Because archaeologists--both past and present--have on occasion mythologized their own professional colleagues, it seems important that I look critically at the myths

that surround Le Plongeon, correcting them for the benefit of present and future scholars interested in the Maya area.

The methodology used in this research entailed the development of a data base through archival research, the use of consultants, fieldwork, and library research. Data from those four sources was accumulated, integrated, compared, and synthesized, facilitating an understanding of Le Plongeon's work which was then assessed in relation to the research of other Maya scholars of the nineteenth century, who likewise concerned themselves with the development of that civilization. As William M. Calder III stated in his critical analysis of the work of another controversial student of ancient civilizations, "we must doubt every statement in an autobiographical document . . . unless an external control can be adduced to confirm it" (1972:350). This has been true not only in working with the autobiographical Le Plongeon material, but particular scrutiny has been given Alice Le Plongeon's short biography of Augustus written one year after his death in 1909. That document is particularly important since there are no autobiographical writings for the period 1826 to 1862. But, equally important, the errors and omissions found

in the biography have helped to shed light on what the Le Plongeons thought was important in their own lives, and what they thought others might find important about them. The same critical approach has been applied to others who have made statements about Le Plongeon's life and scholarship, whether in the nineteenth century or in subsequent decades.

In addition to reading all of Augustus Le Plongeon's known published material, I have searched a number of archives for his correspondence, the correspondence of others about him, his photographs, his drawings, and other materials (see Appendix B). In addition, I have studied the works of his wife, Alice Dixon. Her work is historical, ethnological, journalistic, and literary. And, while it is substantially different from Augustus Le Plongeon's, it obviously influenced his work in a number of ways, as did his work on her writings. It is my feeling that the influences each exerted on the other were primarily of a synergistic nature. Thus, while this work concerns itself primarily with the role Augustus Le Plongeon played in the early development of Maya studies, so much of his work was carried out jointly with Alice Dixon that she will be considered too.

In Appendix B appears a list of institutions which have been contacted by mail or personally. Generally it has been necessary to personally visit the institutions in order to assess their holdings of Le Plongeon materials. In some instances, archives have been found to be completely indexed and readily accessible; other times the researcher was required to search through endless cabinets of unorganized material.

The institutions listed in Appendix B were asked if they held any of the following Le Plongeon materials: a) correspondence by Augustus or Alice Le Plongeon; b) correspondence by others to or about the Le Plongeon; c) Le Plongeon photographs, either prints or negatives; d) Le Plongeon archaeological drawings; e) any miscellaneous items connected with Le Plongeon's work, including archival references, and notes in minutes of organizational meetings. In Appendix B, an "X" under any of the letters A through E signifies a positive response.

I also placed a short query in the Jersey Evening Post, Jersey, Channel Islands, Augustus Le Plongeon's birthplace, requesting information about the Le Plongeon family history on the island. Two amateur historians answered in September 1982, saying



there was no record of Augustus Le Plongeon's birth on the island, and, in regard to the schools where I supposed he might have received a medical degree, there is no record of his attending the Royal College of Physicians in London, or the Medical School of the University of Edinburgh.

Another query was supposed to appear in the Sunday London Times, but was never run. It was hoped that this might be a method to expand on the information on Alice Dixon already at the Philosophical Research Society. Another query was sent to the New York Times in 1980 asking information about Maude A. Blackwell, and the glass negatives, field notes, manuscripts, and drawings. I had hoped to learn the location of the lost manuscripts or field notes known to have once been in her possession. The New York Times responded by acknowledging receipt of the query, but stated that they could not guarantee publication and would not notify me if it was published. I have heard nothing further from them.

In addition to the institutions, a number of individuals were contacted because of their expertise concerning Le Plongeon or knowledge of associated aspects in which I had become interested. In Appendix C are listed those specialists, with a short summary of the reasons why they were contacted.

Because the Le Plongeons worked in Yucatán, photographing ethnographic subjects and Maya ruins, drawing plans of the archaeological sites and structures within those sites, and copying the Maya murals, it was necessary for me to travel to Yucatán for field verification of their photographs and other materials.

Additionally, in his books and articles, Le Plongeon made a number of claims about certain bas-reliefs and structural designs. Some of those reliefs and structural designs were inspected so as to assess the correctness of his statements.

It was also useful for me to go to the field in order to get a "feel" for how difficult their task might have been with the equipment of the nineteenth century. Even though modern conveniences are now common in Yucatán, high temperatures, humidity, insects, and poisonous snakes are still a problem today, suggesting to any investigator an idea of the difficulties faced by the Le Plongeons. Since Augustus Le Plongeon's photographs were made on wet plate glass negatives, they were extremely sensitive to the actions of temperature and humidity, and often insects stuck to the surface, ruining a photo. His surveys of structures at the archaeological sites were done before they were cleared of jungle. Surveying

under such conditions is not easy, even with modern equipment. Thus, it was important to familiarize myself with some of the problems Le Plongeon likely encountered in the field, since that is part of putting his work in proper perspective.

In Los Angeles, at the Philosophical Research Society, are stored the majority of glass negatives produced by Le Plongeon in Yucatán and Belize between 1873 and 1884. Those negatives were wrapped in brown paper and tied with string. In 1978, permission was given to me by Manly P. Hall, President of the Society, to place them in acid free envelopes and storage boxes, identify, and index them. Some could not be identified until they were taken to the field. There were approximately 500 negatives, 200 of which are illustrations used in Le Plongeon's books: maps, line drawings, and materials from other cultures copied in a photo laboratory. I printed approximately 300 of his negatives, most of which are from his fieldwork in Yucatán. Great care had to be taken not to injure these 100-year old negatives, some of which are in a very delicate condition.

In the field, the photographs were identified and their historical value assessed. They were then compared with existing structures and bas-reliefs in

order to determine whether there were any significant changes that had occurred over the past 100 years. It is my opinion that, left unprotected from natural and human causes, little will remain legible of the bas-reliefs in another 100 years.

Finally, on the study of Le Plongeon and the Maya civilization, Manly Hall makes the following cogent comments:

Le Plongeon's photographs are of the highest importance to the modern Mayan archaeology, and we are happy to say that the younger generation of scientific men in this field have never known the intolerance of the earlier school. By an almost miraculous circumstance many of Le Plongeon's negatives and prints have survived. He had intended to destroy everything before his death but a kindly fortune intervened, and while much is lost, considerable remains. (1948:33)

All students of ancient culture and comparative religion, scientists and laymen alike, can profit from the study of the old Mayan civilization. It is not well to be reactionary, or is it necessary to be overconservative, but on the other hand it profits little to indulge in wild flights of imagination. Many books have been written which have no foundation either in fact or in common sense. By filling the mind with absurdities, such writings interfere with the gradual growth of reasonable ideas. Because a civilization is ancient, obviously advanced, and shrouded in mystery, there is no justification for fantastic conclusions. We must proceed carefully and not confuse the mind with absurd notions.

The Mayas were a great people, probably greater than we suspect, and it is not impossible that they possessed certain types of knowledge which would be useful to us. Certainly we are in serious need of cultural inspiration, for we are bogged down in a morass of materialism from which

we seem unable to extricate ourselves. Let us, therefore, approach the mystery of the Mayas with an open mind. (1948:34-35)

Le Plongeon's Method, Theory,  
and Its Impact on Maya  
Studies

Le Plongeon seemingly contradicts the proper method of scientific inquiry, and emerging theories of development of the Maya of the mid-nineteenth century. He believed in using the deductive method for his research, and also believed in world-wide Maya cultural diffusion. Brantz Mayer wrote in "Observations on Mexican History and Archaeology," published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1857:

The American antiquarian should, as yet, avoid the peril of starting in his investigations with an hypothesis, for the chances are very great that, in the mythic confusion of our aboriginal past, he will find abundant hints to justify any ideas excited by his credulity and hopes. In the present state of archaeology, all labors should be contributions to that store of facts, which, in time, may form a mass of testimony whence future historians shall either draw a rational picture of ante-Columbian civilization, or be justified in declaring that there is nothing more to be disclosed. (1857:2)

This article was approved for publication by two men who had an extremely influential part in the development of the descriptive method in American archaeology: Joseph Henry and Samuel F. Haven. Henry had exercised a number of interpretations from the work

of Squier and Davis in their Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley, published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1848, when he was Secretary to the Institution. It was Haven who in 1856 wrote that the American Indian derived from Asia, but "before the existing institutions and national divisions of the parent country were developed" (1856:159), in contradiction to Le Plongeon's opposite hypothesis of cultural diffusion. It was also Haven who approved publication of Brantz's article in 1857 along with Henry in the Smithsonian's Contributions to Knowledge.

Haven later became librarian and manuscript reviewer of the American Antiquarian Society and its Proceedings. Le Plongeon was elected a member of that organization in 1878, and thus came into direct conflict with Haven, not only over issues of scholarship, but in setting forth the publishing goals of the organization. Le Plongeon lost the battle with Haven and others, and resigned from the Society in 1882.

Thomas Kuhn, in his book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, states that conflicting approaches in a developing discipline "should largely disappear" (1970:17), but the theory of cultural diffusion, either to or from Mesoamerica, did not disappear with Le Plongeon's death in 1908. It

continues today, although much diminished. Diffusion in general was furthered by the Egyptocentric, hyper-diffusionism school associated with the University of Manchester, England, until 1928, when, according to Glyn Daniel (1981:150), it was "demolished" by Roland Dixon in his book The Building of Cultures (1928).

Similar to Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, another philosopher of science, would consider the emergence of such a "theoretical monism" as the start of a period of less progress in science. Lakatos would see the competition between the diffusionist and non-diffusionist schools as leading to "better science" (1970:155). But today, the few scholars who work on problems related to diffusion are considered as fringe, contributing little to Maya studies.

The exclusion of cultural diffusionism from the emerging paradigm of Maya civilizational development during the last quarter of the nineteenth century seems congruent with Kuhn's observation that "one of the things the scientific community acquires with a paradigm is a criterion for choosing a problem that can be assumed to have a solution" (1970:37). A serious problem researchers of Le Plongeon's period faced was not only a lack of data about diffusion, but

the tools to work with what little data was available. Le Plongeon could not prove definitively any of his assertions about Maya migrations, nor "demolish" the assertions of his detractors, and thus his particular diffusionist theories were rejected, as well as those of the whole diffusionist "school," 36 years after his death.

Because Le Plongeon pursued a deductive method of research during the nineteenth century (1879:69), others seemed to have invalidated his conclusions before they were critically reviewed. Inductive research, which was more in vogue in Le Plongeon's day, required that all the data be first gathered so as to facilitate hypothesis formation and testing. Prior to his work in Yucatán, Le Plongeon had observed pre-Columbian ruins in South America, had traveled widely, and had gathered enough data to develop various hypotheses. He then worked in the field in Yucatán to find material to support or disprove his hypotheses concerning the world primacy of Mesoamerican culture. That work and its theories would bring him the condemnation of nineteenth century scholars who accused him of wild speculations and eccentricities.



Le Plongeon's speculative approach is perhaps most clear in an article, "Doctor Le Plongeon in Yucatan," published in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society in 1877:

These inner edifices belong to a very ancient period, and among the debris I have found the head of a bear exquisitely sculptured out of a block of marble. It is in an unfinished state. When did bears inhabit the peninsula? Strange to say, the Maya does not furnish the name for bear. Yet one-third of this tongue is pure Greek. Who brought the dialect of Homer to America? Or who took to Greece that of the Mayas? Greek is the offspring of Sanscrit. Is Maya? Or are they coeval? A clue for ethnologists is to follow the migrations of the human family on this old continent. Did the bearded men whose portraits are carved on the massive pillars of the fortress at Chichen Itza, belong to the Mayan nation? The Maya language is not devoid of words from the Assyrian. (Salisbury 1877:99)

Should such wild speculations by Le Plongeon be considered scientifically worthless? I think not, and agree with philosophers of science, such as Hempel, that

guesses at the connections that might obtain between phenomena under study, at uniformalities and patterns . . . guesses of this kind require great ingenuity, especially if they involve a radical departure from current modes of scientific thinking. (Hempel 1966:15)

Samuel Haven, Daniel Brinton, and others who opposed Le Plongeon, as Lakatos has put it, "wanted scientific theories to be proved even before they were

published" (1970:174). They were attempting to eliminate opposing theories in their effort to keep other research programs or paradigms from fully developing. Ironically, however, in doing so, they were forced to employ more rigorous methods in their own research and had to look deeper into their theoretical positions. Thus, Augustus Le Plongeon--totally vanquished on the diffusionist battlefield--made his greatest contribution by forcing his scholarly critics to do better work, serving as an intellectual provocateur.

## CHAPTER I

### THE MISSING YEARS: 1826-1848

A number of questions pertaining to Le Plongeon's education and early years must, at this time, remain unanswered, since despite considerable effort on my part, I have been unable to locate documentary materials for the early part of Le Plongeon's life. Research concerning Alice Le Plongeon's biographical account of Augustus Le Plongeon's life, published after his death (Alice Le Plongeon 1909a), has shown that work to be in error on a number of important points.

The following is a summary of research so far on Le Plongeon's life from 1826 to 1848, as well as a critique of Alice Le Plongeon's short biography. I need to state at the outset that none of the information presented for that period has been confirmed by an outside control.

Alice Le Plongeon states Augustus Le Plongeon was born on the Island of Jersey on May 4, 1826, and was given the name Augustus Henry Julius Le Plongeon. His father, François Guillaume Le Plongeon, a member

of the Legion of Honor, was a Commodore in the French Navy, and his mother, Frances, was the daughter of Le Gros du Roche, Governor of Mont Saint-Michele. His maternal great uncle was Lord Jersey. In 1837, the year his mother died, he entered the military college at Caen and then in 1841 began his schooling at the École Polytechnique in Paris. At age nineteen he graduated "with full honors" from the École.

She states that after his graduation he and a friend purchased a small boat and were wrecked off the coast of Chile. He then was employed by a "college" in Valparaiso as a teacher of drawing, mathematics and languages, and it was at this time that he learned Spanish. From Chile, Le Plongeon traveled to San Francisco in 1849.

The article continues with highlights of his life and accomplishments to his death in 1908, but an exposition and critique of that part will be left to later chapters.

Inquiries to historians on the Island of Jersey have provided the following information. First, the Catholic and Protestant baptismal and death records have revealed no trace of Augustus Le Plongeon's baptism, nor the death of any member of his family. But, Dr. A. E. Mourant, who consulted

local authorities about the records, states that there were no civil records in the early nineteenth century (Mourant 1982). Thus, if Le Plongeon was not baptized there would be no record. Also, Mr. Frank Le Maistre, who consulted the Anglican records for Dr. Mourant, stated he checked 11 of the 12 parish records on Jersey and found no record of Le Plongeon's baptism or family deaths. Research into the twelfth parish is underway, but a final answer may never be forthcoming if the Le Plongeon family had no religious affiliation.

The archivist at the École Polytechnique was asked if there was any record of Le Plongeon's attendance or graduation around the year 1845. Madame Nadia Bayle stated

J'ai le regret de vous informer que nous n'avons retrouvé aucune trace de Augustus Henry Julius Le Plongeon comme élève étranger ou auditeur externe de l'Ecole Polytechnique en 1845 et dans les années avoisinantes. (Bayle 1982)

Madame Bayle does not state fully what archives she checked, but she writes that Le Plongeon was not registered as a foreign student or external auditor, and says nothing of his graduation. It seems reasonable, though, to assume she searched for a record of his graduation or his registration as a French student, and went even further and looked in the

foreign student and external auditor records. Since this is an important issue in regard to Le Plongeon's educational background, future research should investigate this problem.

In addition, we have no information to confirm or deny Alice Le Plongeon's claim that Augustus was from parents of a high social status, including royalty. Augustus Le Plongeon never wrote anything about his early life in personal letters or in published papers and books.

Finally, Le Plongeon's years in Chile are, thus far, undocumented. It is not known in what college he taught, nor exactly how long he lived in Chile. Other than Alice Le Plongeon's account, we have no information on his activities in Chile, assuming, of course, he actually lived there.

## CHAPTER II

THE CALIFORNIA YEARS: 1849-1862

Surveyor, Land Speculator,  
Photographer and  
Physician

The young Le Plongeon, hearing of the California gold rush, arrived sometime in 1849 in San Francisco. Alice Le Plongeon states, "In San Francisco Dr. Le Plongeon became City and County Surveyor" (Alice Le Plongeon 1909a:277), but we have no verification of such a position. His residence in Marysville, California is first noted in December 1849 in William Chamberlain's History of Yuba County California:

The brightening prospects of the location, and the certainty that it would be the head of navigation, caused the proprietors to have a survey made for a town in December. The work was performed by August Le Plonjean [sic]. . . . Mr. L. H. Babb states that it was a common rumor when he arrived in 1850, that the streets had been laid out and the lines run by the use of a ship's quadrant. (1879:39)

The city plan drawn by Le Plongeon of Yuba-ville, later renamed Marysville, was accepted by the city fathers in February 1851. The plan, dated and

signed by Le Plongeon, still resides in the archives of the John Q. Packard Library in Marysville.

Mr. Earl Ramey, a historian of Yuba County, states that Le Plongeon's "professional card offering his services as surveyor and engineer can be found in the file of the Marysville Herald for 1850 and 1851" (Ramey 1966:17). Also, according to Mr. Ramey, concerning Le Plongeon's real estate dealings, "a dozen conveyances involving Le Plongeon as grantee or grantor . . . in Marysville and Linda," can be found in the Book of Deeds in the Yuba County Hall of Records (Ramey 1966:17).

For his work at Marysville, Le Plongeon received

five choice lots on E Street near the Landing Square or Plaza as it was soon called. Even though the deed states that he paid \$1150 for these lots, it is pretty certain that they were given to him as payment for his services as surveyor. . . . By selling off several twenty foot frontages and some larger he realized \$30,000 from the land. (Ramey 1966:6)

The income of \$30,000 helps to explain where Le Plongeon got the financing to carry out his later research in Peru and Mexico.

Le Plongeon was also requested to provide a survey and plan for Linda, another town being established further up the Yuba River. Earl Ramey writes:



They called their town Linda. Le Plongeon got the job of planning and surveying Linda also. He used a plan of lots, blocks and ranges identical to that plan he had used for Marysville. (Ramey 1966:5)

It was in Marysville in 1850 that Le Plongeon met Stephen J. Field, later to become a justice of the United States Supreme Court.

[Field] arrived with only ten dollars in his pocket, within three weeks he had taken a leading part in establishing the town of Marysville at the junction of the Yuba and Feather Rivers, had contracted to purchase sixty-five lots for over \$16,000, and had been elected the town's alcalde [chief civil magistrate]. (McCloskey 1969:1071)

Le Plongeon at this time is listed in the Bogardus Business Directory, July 1850, as "Land agent and surveyor, E Street between First and Second." The friendship that developed between the "land agent" and the "judge" in the gold fields lasted a lifetime and was especially helpful to Le Plongeon in 1880 when, through Field's influence with U.S. Secretary of State Everts, Augustus gained the official blessing of the President of Mexico to continue his research in Yucatán.

In 1854 Le Plongeon executed a deed to Maria Eugenia Cadiz, handing over some lots and house to this mysterious woman.

He deeded to one Maria Eugenia Cadiz of San Francisco three small lots remaining on E Street and a dwelling on Maiden Lane which he had purchased earlier. Instead of the usual money

consideration, he stated that he was conveying the property to her "in consideration of the many acts of kindness and hospitality" which her father, deceased, had shown Le Plongeon over a period of years. (Ramey 1966:6)

Whether Maria Eugenia was just a friend or a secret lover we have no way of knowing. Her name is never mentioned by Augustus.

Augustus Le Plongeon is last noted in Marysville in June 1854 as a volunteer fireman:

The last record of Le Plongeon's residence in Marysville is a list of members of a new fire fighting company being formed in June 1854. His name appears as a charter member. This company was made up nearly entirely of persons with French names. They called their new organization the "Salamander Hook and Ladder Company." He probably never participated in the activities of the company because before it was officially recognized by the City Council he had left the community. (Ramey 1966:7)

In Alice Le Plongeon's biographical outline of Augustus' life during this period there are a number of possible errors. She states:

In 1851, having contracted a severe fever in the course of his official duties [possibly Valley Fever (coccidioidomycosis), usually contracted in the Sacramento Valley of California and requiring a long convalescence], Dr. Le Plongeon visited Europe and England. At the Sydenham Palace exhibition the paper photographs made by Fox Talbot were admired by the Doctor and he lost no time in inducing that gentleman to teach him his method. As a result, later on, Dr. Le Plongeon was the first to make that photographic work known in America. When he learned it he had Lord Russell for a fellow-pupil, and this gentleman expressed regret that the method had not proved a success in Egypt. Dr. Le Plongeon offered to experiment in similar climates in the western hemisphere

and, if successful, to send modified formulas to Lord Russell. The experiments were made on the Island of Saint-Thomas where Le Plongeon was a guest of the Governor, and resulted in the promised formulas being sent to England. Some time afterwards, Dr. Le Plongeon received an album of Egyptian views and a message of appreciation for his assistance in obtaining the same.

Upon leaving St. Thomas, Dr. Le Plongeon sailed to Veracruz, and thence crossed Mexico on horseback, with one servant. After many exciting experiences, Acapulco was reached. Our traveler also visited Australia, China, and the islands of the Pacific, but the present writer does not know exactly when. (1909a:277)

In 1851, as was stated previously, Le Plongeon was busily engaged in surveying and in real estate dealings in the Marysville area. How long such a trip, as described by Alice Le Plongeon, might take is difficult to estimate, but, if true, six months to a year might not be excessive when one takes his photographic experiments into account. Very likely, Alice Le Plongeon, working in 1909 after her husband's death, found it difficult to recall precise dates in her husband's life.

It is in 1855 that we first find evidence of Augustus Le Plongeon's photographic activities. The San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin for October 20, 1855, contains the following news item:

We are pleased to learn that our friend Plongeon, who has his Gallery of Daguerritypes [sic] and Paper Pictures, at Shew's old stand in Clay Street, near Montgomery, has been obliged to employ additional assistants in consequence of a

rush of business; and has secured the services of Joseph N. Silveira, long known as one of the first operators in the state. . . .

In the L'Echo du Pacific, May 21, 1856, Le Plongeon placed an advertisement for his Daguerreotype studio which appealed to the French members of the community. It is the last notice found of Le Plongeon in San Francisco, and of further interest because the initials on the advertisement read "A.S.L. Le Plongeon," not A.H.J. Le Plongeon, as in the short biography written by Alice Le Plongeon in 1909 (1909a). In none of his published writings or personal letters does Augustus use any middle name. The first instance where his full name appears is in Alice's short biography. Thus, the question remains, if his given middle names started with "S. and L.," what did the initials stand for, and why did Alice Le Plongeon change them? A curious footnote to the question is in noting that the successful and controversial archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann's full name is Johannes Ludwig Heinrich Julius Schliemann, while Alice Le Plongeon states that Augustus' full name was Augustus Henry Julius Le Plongeon. A coincidence? Did Le Plongeon, aware of the fame and controversy surrounding Schliemann's work in Turkey, adopt Schliemann's names?

A month earlier, on April 28, 1856, we observe that "M. [Monsieur] A. Le Plongeon was elected was elected a resident member" of the California Academy of Natural Sciences in San Francisco" (1873: 95) founded in 1853, and known today as the California Academy of Sciences, it elected Augustus its thirty-seventh member. This contradicts Alice Le Plongeon's statement, "The Doctor was one of the founders of the California Academy of Sciences" (Alice Le Plongeon 1909a:278). But, in a letter to Stephen Salisbury of the American Antiquarian Society, Augustus Le Plongeon states in 1879, "I am one of its [California Academy of Sciences] oldest members--I belong [sic] to it since 1856" (Augustus Le Plongeon 1878a).

It must have been during the mid-1850s that Le Plongeon began a serious study of photography. Whether he worked for "Lord Russel" is unconfirmed, but it is certain that he experimented with and learned photography.

In 1839, Daguerre published the results of his experiments. In the same year, in New York, John L. Stephens and others attended a lecture on the Daguerreotype process given by D. W. Seager. Stephens and Catherwood, later known for their excellent work

on Yucatán and Central America, first attempted to use the Daguerreotype in Mexico in 1843, producing some photos, but later gave that process up in favor of using the older camera lucida.

During this same period Fox Talbot was working in England on a photographic method in which a negative image could be produced directly on paper. The Calotype or Talbotype process allowed for the making of transparent negatives from which multiple positives could be printed on silver chloride paper. Le Plongeon may have observed the results of the revolutionary process at the Great Exhibition at the Sydenham Palace in London in 1851 or in the United States where portrait photography was gaining rapidly in popularity. Also during the 1850s paper negatives were being replaced by glass negatives of the wet collodian process, giving far superior results. Although it was the wet collodion process that Le Plongeon used to photograph the ruins in Yucatán in the 1870s, he was a daguerreotypist during the mid-1850s.

In spite of the cumbersome technology, photography had become an important tool for the artist as well as the scientist by the end of the 1850s. Adventurous photographers like Edward S.

Curtis roamed the western United States, photographing the land and people; Matthew Brady and Timothy O'Sullivan covered the American Civil War; and Europeans like Maxime du Camp and August Salzmann photographed Egypt and the Middle East. There developed almost a mania to supplement the travel books of the time with folios of photographs of the remote places of the world.

Without a doubt the books of John L. Stephens and Frederick Catherwood on Yucatán and Central America, published in the early 1840s, caused adventurers, photographers and scientists to think seriously about further explorations in that area. What small success Stephens had with the daguerreotype in Yucatán stimulated others to consider its possibilities. Unfortunately, none of his photos have survived.

Stephens died in 1852 of malaria, and Catherwood drowned at sea in 1854 with the sinking of the ship Arctic. Their deaths were a great loss to serious inquiry into the civilizations of Mexico and Central America. Within a few years, however, another man was on the scene. Late in 1857, Désiré Charnay landed in Veracruz, bringing considerable baggage, his cumbersome photographic equipment and a readiness to

photograph the ruins. He was to become one of Le Plongeon's rivals in the 1870s and 1880s when both were working in Mexico.

Documentation has yet to be uncovered on Le Plongeon's life between 1855, when he was in San Francisco, and 1862, when he opened his photographic studio in Lima, Peru. Alice Le Plongeon states in her short biography,

Upon his return to San Francisco Dr. Le Plongeon took up the practice of law and was successful; but certain occurrences attracted him to the practice of medicine, in which he quickly made a name from the remarkable manner in which he restored various patients who had been pronounced incurable. (Alice Le Plongeon 1909a:278)

It already has been shown that Alice Le Plongeon's account is unreliable, but she does provide some idea as to his activities and location.

Other than Augustus' supposed travels to Mexico and the islands of the Pacific, he apparently remained working as a photographer and, according to Alice Le Plongeon, a lawyer and physician in San Francisco. It would appear that Alice found the work of a commercial portraitist of little consequence in the varied careers of Augustus and, thus, wrote it out of her short biography.



### Le Plongeon as Physician

The following discussion, speculative as it is, is offered in order to shed some light on Le Plongeon as physician. There is almost no solid evidence with which to answer the question, was Le Plongeon trained as a physician and did he actually practice medicine?

Possibly Augustus Le Plongeon acquired some training in medicine between the years 1855 and 1862, but it appears more likely that he acquired it while in Peru. In his first book, La Religion de Jesus, published in 1867, he does not refer to himself as a doctor, whereas in his next book, Los Jesuitas e el Peru, published in 1868, he titles himself "Doctor en Medicine." From that time on he signed his correspondence with the "M.D." and attached it to all his published materials.

His background in medicine may not have been through formal schooling since an alternative to medical school in the United States during the nineteenth century was to apprentice oneself to a physician. Such an apprenticeship was in two parts: the first was a reading of basic texts on medicine under the guidance of the doctor; the second was known as "riding with the doctor," during which the apprentice

gained practical experience. It was after two or three years of apprenticeship that the preceptor gave his student a certificate of completion. Some states then required that the certified apprentice be examined by a state board. It was only toward the end of the nineteenth century that physicians were graduated on a uniform basis from highly regulated medical schools, thereby eliminating many of the abuses that were possible in both the early medical schools and the apprentice education programs.

Finally, in all correspondence to him, he is always referred to as "Doctor Le Plongeon." Even his greatest rivals, the anthropologist Daniel Brinton and the American Consul in Mérida, Louis Aymé, for example, addressed him as "Doctor." Aymé's correspondence to Stephen Salisbury, President of the American Antiquarian Society, is often critical, but yet he refers to Doctor Le Plongeon. The archaeologist Zelia Nuttall, in her writings always addressed Augustus as Doctor Le Plongeon (Parmenter 1981).

Augustus Le Plongeon's difficult trail is picked up again early in 1862 with his arrival in Lima, Peru.

## CHAPTER III

PERU, CALIFORNIA, NEW YORK AND LONDON.

ENTER ALICE DIXON: 1862-1872

### Photographer

The first notice of Le Plongeon's presence in Peru appears in a short article published in Lima's El Comercio on March 27, 1862. The following is a summary from Dr. Keith McElroy's dissertation, The History of Photography in Peru in the Nineteenth Century: 1839-1876:

he [Augustus Le Plongeon] opened the photographic studio of Los Señores Augusto Le Plongeon y Ca., Galería Fotográfica Norte Americana in second floor rooms on Plateros de San Agustín. It was stated at that time that they had just arrived from California and emphasized that their studio was modeled after those of the United States, which included prompt service. The newcomers had apparently been in Lima for some time, since in addition to locating they had built a special translucent glass light source. The operator claimed eleven years of photographic experience and ownership of equipment from the United States, England and Germany. The firm offered the public the choice of paper photography, daguerreotypes, or ambrotypes, and a special changing room had been provided for the ladies. (McElroy 1977: 529)

Then, on March 29, 1862 a second, and last "commercial announcement" was placed by Le Plongeon in El Comercio (McElroy 1977:529). Dr. McElroy found

no other references to Le Plongeon in Lima's El Comercio during the period 1839-1876 after reviewing each edition (McElroy 1981).

### Physician

The only source of information on Augustus' medical practice in Peru is from Alice Le Plongeon's short biography. She states, "In the city of Lima, Dr. Le Plongeon established a private hospital where he introduced the application of electricity in medicinal baths, and effected notable cures" (Alice Le Plongeon 1909a:278). Augustus referred only once in correspondence at the American Antiquarian Society to his "private hospital"; he called it "my electro-hydropathic establishment" (Augustus Le Plongeon 1878a). The use of low voltage galvanic currents for healing had become quite popular by the mid-nineteenth century.

In the United States in 1859, William F. Channing published his book Notes on the Medical Application of Electricity, and in 1866 the first text on electromedicine, Medical Electricity by Alfred C. Garratt, was required reading for physicians. Nine years after Le Plongeon's use of electrotherapy in Peru, George M. Beard and Alphone D. Rockwell published

their thorough work: A Practical Treatise on the Medical and Surgical Uses of Electricity (1871).

Electrotherapy fell into disrepute during the late nineteenth century because of its misuse by charlatans, but is now being seriously investigated. Physicians at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital have succeeded in solving orthopedic problems by using low voltages while Japanese workers have been conducting intensive research in this area for the past ten years. The Bakken Museum of Electricity in Life in Minneapolis is fast becoming a center for scholarly research on electricity and its application to life forms.

#### Earthquake Research

Le Plongeon also became interested in the causes and effects of earthquakes in Peru. After his return to New York his article "The Causes of Earthquakes" was published in 1872 in Van Nostrand's Eclectic Engineering Magazine. He theorized that electromagnetic currents in conjunction with chemical reactions cause certain areas under the earth's crust to heat up and those locations, in turn, super-heat water into steam. With a tremendous increase in pressure, the steam moves through underground channels at

high speed, thus disrupting the surface. This theory is a product of early nineteenth century scientific thought which based interpretations on electro-magnetic theory, rather than on an understanding of plate tectonics. Magnetism, states Le Plongeon, "is, therefore, the life-sustainer, the soul, of the whole creation, of which our reduced planet is but one of the smallest atoms" (1872:541). These concepts also apply to living things, according to the theory, and, thus can be used for healing purposes. Le Plongeon attempted to do just that in applying galvanic currents to earthquake victims, persons injured by another effect of electro-magnetic energy--the destructive effect.

"The internal heat of the earth is also due to the immense chemical operations constantly going on under the agency of electro-magnetism . . ." said Le Plongeon (1872:542). The earthquake that devastated Peru on August 13, 1868, was a result of the action of percolated sea water and "chemical elements" that had reached a critical heat level and were made "incandescent" since that location of chemical activity coincided with "the voltaic arch formed by the electro-magnetic current passing between the sun as positive

element and the earth as negative . . ." according to Le Plongeon's theory (1872:577).

In addition to his theories on the causes of earthquakes he notes some of the premonitions occurring prior to a quake.

In many instances sulphurous vapors have been seen arising from the ground; strange and mysterious underground noises are heard inspiring awe and terror alike in men and beasts; mineral waters are seen to be altered, softwaters are seen to become turbid in wells; the level of these waters is changed. Sometimes even the wells become perfectly dry, without any apparent reason. In caves, cellars, excavations, carbonic acid gas is noticed to emanate from the soil; magnets lose their power according to the force of the impending convulsion. (1872:544)

Although Augustus Le Plongeon's article says nothing of it, Alice, in her short biography of 1909, stated that her husband had built a seismometer and seismograph while in Peru. A seismograph had already been invented, but it would be interesting to know if Le Plongeon had built such a device. Unfortunately, we do not have any of his notes or letters from this period. Whatever the case, Peru provided him with great numbers of earth tremors to observe, and, no doubt, enough victims to keep him medically occupied.

On August 13, 1868, he was in Callao, Peru, when a big quake struck at 4:46 p.m.:

It came with an oscillatory motion--a motion similar to that of a boat in calm weather; it lasted 10 min.; at 6:30 PM another shock was felt,

of 5 min. duration. A few minutes before 7, high water was to take place. The water, instead, began to recede; at 10:30, for the first time, the water reached a higher level than it was ever known to have attained before, within the memory of man; at 11 a tremendous wave 18 feet high, invaded the land to upward of 600 ft. from the beach; currents set in from opposite directions at a velocity of 3 to 4 miles an hour; at the time a soft breeze from S.W. blew, the atmosphere was perfectly clear. (1872:582)

He then describes in some detail the damage to many cities, some of which were totally destroyed by tidal waves, while others were flattened by seismic waves. The earthquake was particularly destructive to the port city of Arica:

At 5 p.m., a very severe earthquake was felt on shore says the commandant of the ill-fated frigate America, which was stranded that day. "All the houses in the city surged, and with an ominous crash fell to pieces; then the earth was open, a rolling, rumbling noise was heard, and gases, stifling gases, emanating from the fissures, soon filled the atmosphere, severely oppressing all living creatures, causing them a sensation of suffocation. The shocks lasted 10 min., and succeeded each other at short intervals, and were accompanied with subterranean explosions. The hills themselves were seen to stagger like intoxicated beings. Large boulders, detached from their brows, rolled down their slopes, while their sides were seen to give up the dead bodies of the Aymarcis, that for centuries had been entrusted to their safe keeping, and had so long peacefully slept in their solitary resting-place, the slumber of death.

The shocks came from the south; the skies were stormy, a very light wind blew from a southerly direction. The whole soil of the country, as far as it could be seen, was moving; first like a wave, from north to south, then it trembled, and at last upheaved heavily.

During that time a very strong current from the south set in in the bay. The current was so



strong as to set adrift the boat of the frigate America, sent to shore for the commandant, notwithstanding the efforts of the crew. It measured 5 1/2 miles an hour, lasted 5 min. Then came a second current from the opposite direction; this left the bay nearly dry.

Currents, now from the north, then from the south, succeeded each other with great frequency, and became so rapid as to make it impossible to send boats to rescue the people who were seen floating on the palisade and imploring help. The frigate began to drag her chains and anchors. At 5:45 p.m. the currents increased to 9 1/2 miles, their duration being from 5 to 10 min.; at 7:30 p.m. a current came from the south, its rate 10 1/2 miles. Then the sea began to retire slowly from the shores, leaving the boats dry. It receded about to the line of extreme low tide, when at once it rose again and invaded the land. It reached a height of 34 ft. above high-water mark, overflowed the town, and destroyed everything that the earthquake left standing. The waters rushed back in the ocean, and rose again to the same height as before. Several times did the advancing waves wash over the doomed city; several times the force of the waters carried all the debris of the ruined habitations of men, until at last, retreating about 2 miles, it returned as an immense wave 50 ft. high, carrying the frigate America more than a mile beyond the railway track, in a place called Chinchero, and the American ship Wateree about a mile further up the beach. (1872:581-582)

Le Plongeon finished the article by giving the reader information on most of the earthquakes known to have occurred in Peru from the time of the conquest; he also gave additional data on the tidal wave action in the Pacific, Japan, Hawaii and New Zealand from the earthquake of August 13, 1868.

The Conflict with E. G. Squier

In 1878, Augustus Le Plongeon, while living in Belize, received an article published in February 1877 in Harper's New Monthly Magazine which caused him to bring up an issue long unresolved. According to Le Plongeon, in a letter to the President of the American Antiquarian Society, Stephen Salisbury (1878a), he had agreed in 1863 to assist Ephraim G. Squier in exploring and photographing the ruins in Peru. He had introduced Squier to a number of his friends who owned land on which ruins were located, and assisted him in a number of other ways. Le Plongeon had already explored and photographed a number of archaeological sites in Peru the year before Squier's arrival in July, 1863.

But, most important, Squier had been entrusted to hand carry Le Plongeon's glass negatives to Anthony and Company in New York for publication. Squier, according to Le Plongeon, kept the negatives and used them in his own publications. When Le Plongeon attempted to publish an article on Peru based on his own research in 1873 through Harper's Brothers, he was told to consult with Squier since they already had a contract with him! Any hope of righting the matter

was soon lost because one year later in 1874, Squier was "declared mentally incompetent" (Tax 1973:351).

Le Plongeon's accusations were not the first of their kind against Squier. A similar incident had erupted in 1847 between Squier and Edwin H. Davis. According to Thomas Tax, "their Report to the Smithsonian . . . named Squier as the sole author of the forthcoming book [Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley] and listed Davis as his assistant" (Tax 1973:201). Thomas Tax further describes how Davis went directly to the Smithsonian Secretary, Joseph Henry, and demanded a correction. Squier stated "only his generosity and friendship continued the partnership in which he alone produced anything" (Tax 1973:201). Finally, through tremendous professional pressure Squier agreed to share the authorship with Davis.

Le Plongeon stated concerning the article published by Harper's Brothers in 1877:

The illustrations on pages 363, 364 and 365 of Harper's Monthly February 1877 are all taken from my own photographic plates. The ruins of Cafamarquilla, 12 miles from Lima belong to Mr. Pablo Saio [spelling is not totally legible]--a good friend of mine to whom I presented Squier, are photographed and surveyed by myself. (Augustus Le Plongeon 1878a)

Dr. Keith McElroy, in his dissertation on photography in Peru, states concerning the work of Squier,

at Cajamarquilla near Lima, he [Squier] stated that he "was accompanied by a friend who was both a draftsman and photographer." In his narratives Squier does not often mention persons by name, but rather, refers to them by letters, for example, Mr. P-- who served as his photographer while working at Chan Chan near Trujillo. (McElroy 1977:736)

The friend mentioned by Squier is surely Le Plongeon, as is "Mr. P" at Chan Chan. Solid evidence yet remains to be uncovered which will prove or disprove Le Plongeon's assertions. This researcher has not seen any negatives or prints of Peru identified as Le Plongeon's. In an article authored by Alice Le Plongeon in 1894 and published under the title "Early Architecture and Engineering in Peru," there are twelve photographs of archaeological sites. Unfortunately, none of the photos is credited except one taken from "Markham's work" (Alice Le Plongeon 1894: 53). The photos have been sent to Dr. Keith McElroy for comparison with Squier photos, and at this time his analysis is not available. Even if the photos are identical to Squier's published materials, we shall still not know if they were taken by Le Plongeon unless we can find original prints or negatives with his name inscribed on them.

Finally, in his letter to Salisbury, Le Plongeon writes that Squier "robbed Mrs. Centeno's collection--the keys of which had been entrusted to

him as a gentleman by that lady--of the celebrated parietal bone on which a trepan operation had been performed" (Augustus Le Plongeon 1878a). According to Le Plongeon, Squier received some fame for presenting the bone to the New York Ethnological Society and to specialists in Paris whose opinions were later published in the proceedings of the New York Ethnological Society. The bone, according to Le Plongeon, was retrieved from Squier by a member of the diplomatic corps and returned to Mrs. Centeno.

The original conflict with Squier in the 1860s was based on Squier's unauthorized use of Le Plongeon's materials. Later, Le Plongeon would have other battles on theoretical issues, and what he perceived to be the underhanded methods used by his opponents to silence him. The tone of his attacks on his opponents remained the same throughout his life--direct and frontal. The following is an example from his letter of 1878:

Little experience was indeed to be gained from such a man as Squier in scientific researches. I have seen him at work in the field of investigation. I know what he is worth and my opinion of him is--that he is a most unscrupulous and superficial man. I have not read his last work on Peru (he might at least have sent me a copy in part payment for my negatives)--but I feel certain that many pages are mere plagiarism, as we find in his book on Nicaragua.  
(Augustus Le Plongeon 1978a)

San Francisco, New York and  
London

After his arrival in San Francisco in 1870 Le Plongeon presented a series of lectures on his archaeological and seismic research in Peru to the California Academy of Sciences. The minutes of the Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences contain the following notes on Le Plongeon's lectures:

August 15, 1870: Dr. Augustus Le Plongeon presented some skulls from Peru. (1873:133)

September 5, 1870: Dr. Le Plongeon read part of a long article on the aboriginal ruins of Peru, referred to the time of the Incas. He also exhibited a collection of remarkable skulls and specimens of art from the ruins, with photographs of the architecture, showing that they were acquainted with the structure of the arch. (1873:137)

December 5, 1870: Dr. Le Plongeon read a lengthy paper on the origin of earthquakes. (1873:148)

December 19, 1870: Dr. Le Plongeon continued reading of his essay on earthquakes. (1873:149)

Alice Le Plongeon stated that Augustus then "went to New York and lectured there, then he visited London to study an old Spanish manuscript in the British Museum. He visited Paris at the close of the siege. In 1872 he was again in New York" (Alice Le Plongeon 1909a:279). His presence in New York in 1871 is confirmed by an article titled "Three Important Paintings from Peru" in the New York Evening Mail,

March 2, 1971, front page. The writer of the newspaper article confirms the claim by Le Plongeon that two of the paintings are by the master Murillo, and one by his student Juan de Castillo. Augustus is then reported to be leaving shortly for Europe (New York Evening Mail, March 2, 1871:1).

#### Enter Alice Dixon

No record was found of Alice Dixon's birth in London by researchers from the Philosophical Research Society. Not all births were recorded in the 1850s, since it was not a legal requirement. Alice was born in 1851 according to her obituary in the New York Evening Post, June 9, 1910.

Further research by the Philosophical Research Society has provided only sketchy background information on Alice, but we do know that her parents were Henry and Sophia Dixon, and she had two brothers, Harry and Thomas, and two sisters, Lucy--to whom she remained close throughout her life--and another whose name is unknown. By the mid-1870s the Dixons lived at 116 Albany Street, Regents Park, London. But where they lived in 1871, when Augustus Le Plongeon met Alice Dixon, is unknown.

Augustus was most likely in New York at least until March 1871, having come from San Francisco to

sell his paintings after he finished his lectures at the California Academy of Sciences in December 1870. Thus, he may have spent the latter part of 1871 and most of 1872 in London and Europe--certainly enough time to court and marry Alice. But, the New York Times obituary (June 10, 1910) states she was 19 years old when she married, making the year of marriage 1870 if she was born in 1851. Based on the documentary evidence of Augustus' travels she may have been a year or two older when she married.

What the circumstances of their courtship and marriage were is unknown at this time. The only possible hint, vague and disguised, may be implied in Brooke Betts' play, "The Fall of Maya," with music by Alice Le Plongeon and based on Augustus' Queen Mío and the Egyptian Sphinx. According to a review (without name of publisher, reviewer and date) pasted in the front of the manuscript, the play was written between 1908 and 1910. The first scene takes place in front of the Upper Temple of the Jaguars at Chichén Itzá. Professor Louis Planeant, an archaeologist, is speaking to a young couple in love, his niece Hope Mayland and Charlton Canet. Hope and Charlton wish to marry and ask the professor's permission, but he is unable to give it because he promised his sister Celia that Hope will marry Alfred. They



protest and he answers "Yes, and we, too, will find a way out--if we are but patient" (Betts 1911). He then asks the lovers if they would like to hear a romantic story "centuries old" about a Maya queen. Hope answers, "Oh please tell us, uncle" (Betts 1911) and so the main part of the play begins. At the end of the play Professor Plangeant says, "'and dear children, if you are but patient--' He places either arm around the young lovers and tenderly draws them toward him, till their faces meet" (Betts 1911).

In applying this part of the play toward an understanding of the lives of Augustus and Alice, it seems obvious that Louis Plangeant is Le Plongeon, and Mayland could be Mayaland. More intriguing is that Louis might be one of Le Plongeon's middle names. In Chapter I, we noted in the advertisement in L'Echo du Pacific in 1856, that Le Plongeon's initials were given as "A.S.L."; the "L." might be Louis. The professor's sister Celia's name comes from the Latin and means "dimsighted," as well she is, unable to see Hope and Charlton as true lovers. Finally, the name Canet is very similar to the Yucatecan command canex, "let's go," or to the name of Jacinto Canek, hero of the Maya in the eighteenth century in their fight against the Spanish.

There are also two other possible messages in the first and last scenes of the play, albeit obscure.

First, Augustus is presented as his close friends may have seen him--the kind, understanding uncle. He is clearly a man of patience whose theories, given time, will eventually find acceptance. Was Alice Dixon promised to another man. Did she marry Augustus through the intercession of a patient, kindly relative? We shall not likely find out, but it seems certain that the Le Plongeons and Betts enjoyed the writing of this play and providing its readers with some tantalizing possibilities.

## CHAPTER IV

### FIELD WORK IN YUCATÁN AND BELIZE:

1873-1884

#### Arrival in Yucatán

In her diary Alice wrote about their first sight of the Yucatán coast:

We are not sorry, on the 6th of August [1873], two days after leaving the Island of Cuba, to cast anchor three miles from the shore in the roadstead of Progreso. Seen at that distance, Yucatan appears a low, level plain, scarcely rising above the sea--not a hill, not even a hillock, to relieve the monotony of the landscape, or to intercept the line of the horizon. The first sound from the land that reached our ear was the sharp, shrill call of the bugle--ill omen for the peace of the country.

The custom-house boat soon drew up alongside of the Cuba, and the health officer, with Mr. Martin Hatch, the American Consul, came on board. Mr. Hatch told us that the yellow fever was making havoc among the strangers in the Capital. He had just lost his father by it. The health officers also assured us that it was unusually severe that season among the people not acclimated. The Consul even advised us not to land, lest we should fall victims to the fever. We also learned from him that the country was in a state of revolution, and had been for some time past; that encounters were frequent between the troops of the revolutionary chief and the State and Federal troops. Notwithstanding this rather discouraging news, having started to see Yucatan, we left the steamer about 8 o'clock, A.M., on board a lighter. As the weather was very calm, it took us three hours, under scorching sun, to reach the land. At 11 o'clock we were on the wharf. (179:79)

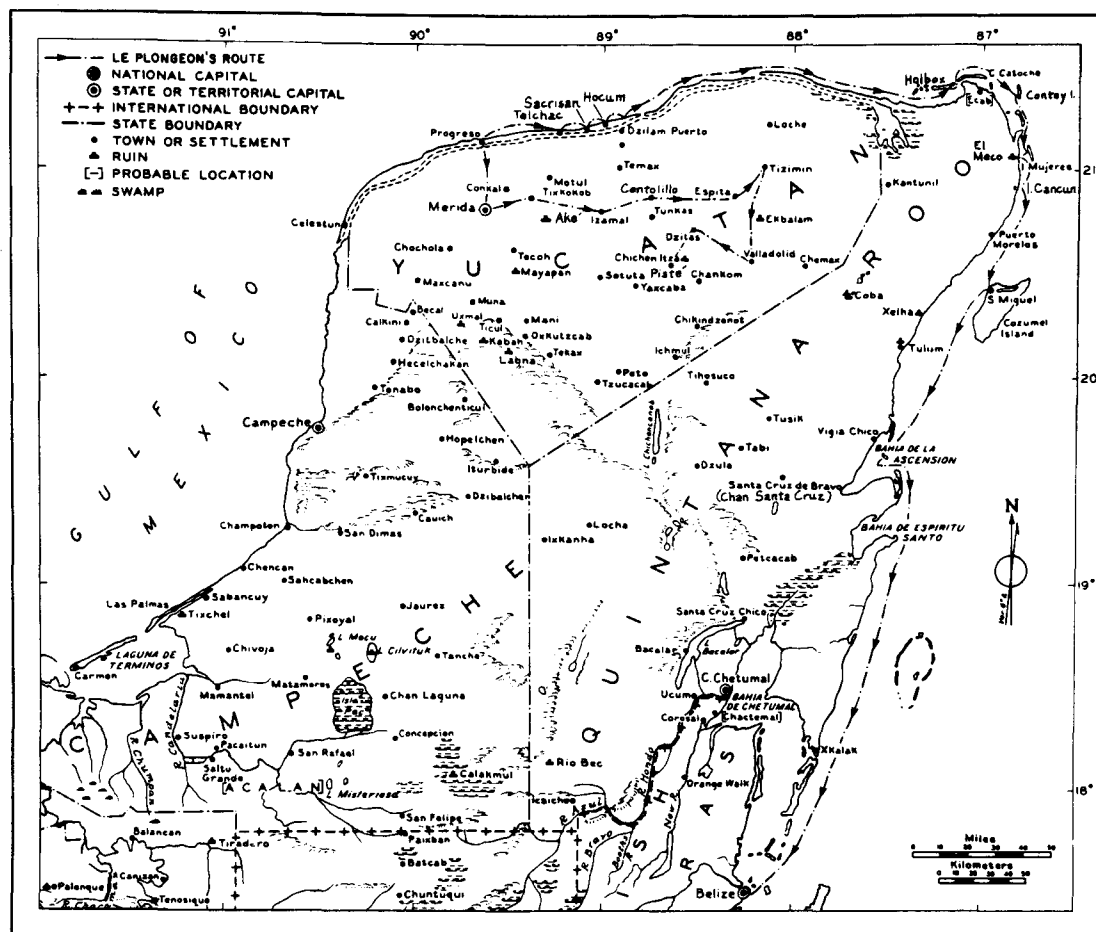


Figure 1. Map of Yucatán, Mexico with archaeological sites and Le Plongeon's route to Chichén Itzá and Belize.

Mérida in 1873 was a far cry from the armed fortress into which it had been transformed in 1848, when surrounded by Chan Santa Cruz Maya. It had been on the verge of complete evacuation. For two years the Maya had slowly but surely pushed the hated Spanish Ladino oppressors out of most of Yucatán. Only the large cities remained; and they were ready to be taken. It was just a matter of time. Then, just as complete victory was in their hands, they withdrew. From the siege of Mérida they pulled back and returned to their fields. Winged ants had appeared in enormous numbers, signaling the coming of the rains. The pleas of their leaders could not stop them. The soldiers returned to their villages and the fields which were waiting to be planted. Had the rebels stayed one more month, Yucatán would have fallen to the Maya, but now, slowly, the Ladinos were recovering. Troops from Mexico were brought to Yucatán in great numbers and the Maya were pushed back to a line running approximately north and south beyond Chichén Itzá and Valladolid. In the 1870s the frontier line still existed and one could feel relatively safe traveling in areas near Mérida and Izamal, but once the traveler got 25 or so miles from those cities an ambush or even the siege of a town was very possible. Most of what

today comprises the states of Quintana Roo, Campeche, and part of the state of Yucatán was under the control of the Chan Santa Cruz Maya. Warfare was constant until the final taking of their capital, Chan Santa Cruz, in 1901. Today Chan Santa Cruz is called Felipe Carillo Puerto, but it is the same town that was located a few miles south of the ancient Maya city of Tulum.

Life in Mérida could be quite gay in those days for those who could afford it. Alice Le Plongeon describes some of the life in the city:

The prettiest spot in Merida is the Plaza de Jesus, or Jesus Square. It is a small enclosure, with an Italian marble fountain in the centre, patches of ground laid out as flower beds, and an abundance of elegant iron seats. The walks are paved with marble, and over all trees wave their green foliage. Formerly the orchestra played there, but it was abandoned for the larger square, not being spacious enough for all the people to enter the garden. This is enclosed by an iron railing, and only opened to the public at certain hours. A few days after our arrival we went to that place to listen to music and we almost imagined ourselves upon enchanted ground. The band was excellent; Maestro Cuevas was director, and the Opera of Semiramis was well executed. The atmosphere was soft and balmy; and how graceful were the ladies! Dressed, nearly all of them, in white, they glided, rather than walked, to the compass of harmonious sounds. We have never seen any people move as gracefully as do the Yucatecan ladies; this walk is not studied, but natural to them. Their harmonious, amiable character shows itself in their way of walking. This scene was yet more enhanced by the pale moon that shed her silvery light over all. (1879:100-101)

Then yellow fever struck Alice.

The evening will always be remembered by me, for before morning I was prostrated with yellow fever. I passed through that illness in the Hotel Meridiano, attended by Dr. Le Plongeon, who patiently fulfilled the duties of nurse and physician with the most assiduous care, not sleeping, during seven days, more than an hour in every twenty-four, as we had been assured that no stranger attacked with the fever that year had escaped death. (1879:101)

Behind the balmy evenings and gliding ladies the Le Plongeon soon discovered the hacienda system and the cruel exploitation of the Maya. Within ten years they were writing of the Spanish conquest of Yucatán in the sixteenth century. Alice Le Plongeon, in several articles for the Magazine of American History, gives a good summary of the conquest. She exposes the excesses of the Spanish military and church and gives great credit to the Maya, who were in a lesser position technologically, and divided politically, but nevertheless heroically resisted the invasion. She concludes

The fact is that ever since the 16th century, when the conquest was said to be effected, the people have from time to time renewed their vain struggle, till, in 1847, after a long contest and many scenes of horror, a few thousand freed themselves from all government save the authority of their chiefs. From that time to this they have waged war against all the other inhabitants, and though many expeditions have been organized against them, they have not for one moment been reduced to obedience. (1881:120)

The Le Plongeon arrived in Yucatan 26 years after the outbreak of the Caste War. The war had not

ended, but had merely changed in outward appearances. Both sides intended to remove the authority of the other and their methods often were brutal. The Maya remembered well an earlier rebellion at Quisteil in 1761, where Jacinto Canek led his men in a vain attempt to drive the foreigners from their homeland. Canek paid the price of Spanish justice; he was drawn and quartered, his parts burned, and the ashes scattered. Eight of his most important lieutenants were garroted, and 200 more received 200 lashes each and had one ear cut off so as to be identified as rebels.

When the rebellion broke out in 1847 Jacinto Canek's name was scrawled on many walls by the Maya. By the time the Le Plongeons arrived in Yucatán a hundred new names could be added to Canek's. In 1893, writing again for the Magazine of American History, Alice Le Plungeon gives a very balanced view of the Caste War. She convincingly explains the reasons for the Maya uprisings, the excesses on both sides, and gives her American readers a detailed and original view of why the war had dragged on for over 40 years.

Augustus, in his Queen Múo and the Egyptian Sphinx, gives a description of the life of the Maya hacienda worker in the nineteenth century:

Every day, all over the land, some workingmen in the haciendas (plantations), sirvientes as they



are called, are pitilessly and arbitrarily flogged by their overseers; put in stocks during the night, so that their day's work may not be left undone, and otherwise cruelly punished for the smallest offense or oversight. True, we are told that there are laws printed in the codes that forbid such iniquitous treatment, and that those subjected to it can complain. Complain! And to whom? If they lay their grievances before the owner of the hacienda, their only redress is to receive a double ration of lashes for (se atrevimiento de quejarse) daring to complain. If they lodge a complaint before a Judge, as by law they have a right, he, of course, is the friend or relative of the planter. He himself may be a planter. On his own plantation he has servants who are treated in like manner. What remains for the poor devil to do but endure and be resigned? That is all. His fathers have suffered as he suffers, as his children will suffer.

Of course, those ill-treated people at times become exasperated--who would not? They kill their overseers. Woe to them then! for they soon and surely are made to remember that there are criminal laws, enacted by congress to punish such as they.

With Madame Le Plongeon, I have been altogether in their power for months at a time, in the midst of deep forests, far from any city or village, far from any inhabited place; I have invariably found them respectful, honest, polite, unobtrusive, patient, and brave. I cannot say as much for the mestizos in general; though among them, also, there are honorable exceptions, unhappily not as numerous as might be desired. During my expeditions I have always preferred to be accompanied by Indians. I could trust them even in cases of alarm from hostile Indians of Chan Santa Cruz. They knew that I had full confidence in them. I never had occasion to regret having relied on them. Of course, they have defects; but, who has not? (1896:178-179)

### Research Begins

Augustus and Alice found accommodations in Mérida and spent the following year researching ruins

in the immediate vicinity, getting a clearer picture of the relationship of the various sites, determining their condition and noting features that might lead to further research. They spent a great deal of time searching the archives in Mérida since they were not in Yucatán merely to photograph and survey the archaeological sites as a number of travelers had done earlier; they were there to try to unravel the meaning of a civilization long since abandoned. This required knowledge, in depth, of the history, ethnology, linguistics, ecology and archaeology of the area.

Augustus Le Plongeon, in a statement published in 1879, clearly states that he uses deductionist methodology in his research and that world civilization diffused from the New World.

I began my work in Yucatan, I will not say without preconceived ideas, but with the fixed intention of finding either the proof or the denial of an opinion formed during my ramblings among the ruins of Tiahuanuco, that the cradle of the world's civilization is this continent on which we live. Ready to retract such opinion if I should find plausible evidence that I was wrong, I cared too little for the theories that others have advanced, to allow my mind to be influenced by them. I judge for myself; if my conclusions are the same as theirs, it is a proof to me that I am not far from the truth. But I prefer to listen to the mute yet eloquent voices of the painters, sculptors and architects, who have written the history of their nation on the stones of the monuments reared to perpetuate and make known to succeeding generations the events recorded by them. (1879:69)

To this end Augustus and Alice learned to speak Yucatecan Maya and became acquainted with local scholars and Maya linguistic informants. After November 1874 Augustus administered smallpox vaccine to potential victims of the disease wherever the Le Plongeons traveled in Yucatán. A year after his arrival in Mérida Le Plongeon had been approached in a panic by the governor of Yucatán, Dr. Liborio Irigoyen, who had begged him to carry smallpox vaccine and vaccinate whenever he saw the need since the epidemic was out of control. The treasury was too low to pay the doctor any salary because of the war, but Le Plongeon readily agreed. So it was that Alice and Augustus scrutinized the area, traveling for a year to Uxmal and a myriad of lesser sites and towns.

They also attended a number of festivals, religious and secular, and noted closely the customs of the people. Alice wrote for the American Antiquarian Society that

Apart from the festivals of the church, the Indians have many ceremonies of their own that their forefathers practiced. They regarded them with far more veneration than those forced upon them by the priests. One of these rites is the Etzmeek Naylan, or act of placing the child, when four months old, astride the hip of a woman chosen for the occasion. She represents for them the godmother, from Naylan (godmother). These godmothers faithfully keep their promise to bring up the child, if the parents are removed from it. The child, and its mother, both have a great

respect for her, the little one being taught to kiss her hand when she approaches it. The ceremony is as follows: After the child is placed astride of the hip, the woman walks round the outside of the house five times with the baby. Five eggs are buried in hot ashes, that they may there break, and the child thus have its five senses awakened. If the eggs do not break readily, it is a sure sign that the children will not be very intelligent. If they wish to write well, they place a pen in its hand during the ceremony; to read well, a book; to work in the fields, a machete (a long knife generally used by the natives). (1879:94)

In December 1874 the Le Plongeurs traveled to Izamal and Alice, again in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, describes the scene at Izamal:

The second mound, on the south side of the square, is very extensive. It was called by the Indians Ppapp-Hol-Chac, which means "heads and thunder." Father Lizana, an historian of the time of the conquest, said that the word Ppapp-Hol-Chac meant the mansion of the priests of the gods. This mound was occupied by the palaces of the priests, which were destroyed by Bishop Diego de Landa, who built in their place the church and convent of the Franciscan monks, in order, says Cogolludo in Book V of his Historia de Yucatan, to drive away the devil and the sight of the holy habit of the friars, from a place which had been defiled by the presence of the priests of idols. (1879: 90)

In Yucatán, the ancient holy places of the Maya and the objects of worship were destroyed by the Spanish friars. Idols were broken, temples were torn down, and churches were built over the holy places. In a number of the religious places "miracles" had occurred in pre-Columbian times, the sick were healed

and petitions answered. The Maya held Izamal in great veneration. Bishop Landa knew its power, and, based on his policy to root out paganism, he was determined to destroy it and replace the idols with the Virgin. After he had destroyed the idols, Landa wished to induce the Maya to return to their holy place and practice the Catholic religion. To this end he ordered a sculpture of the Virgin Mary made in Guatemala and transported to Izamal. The monks in Mérida, hearing of his order, asked also that the Guatemalan sculptor make a Virgin for them. While the Virgins were being transported to Yucatán, it is said, the rain fell heavily, but failed to strike the box in which the sculptures were packed. The sculptures were delivered. The people of Valladolid coveted the Izamal Virgin and attempted to take it, but no amount of physical effort could move it.

Alice continues,

Cogolludo goes on to tell of the wonderful and numerous miracles performed by Our Lady of Izamal, in healing the sick and raising the dead. Even today they are said to be performed, and her shrine is a place of pilgrimage for the people of Yucatan, notwithstanding that the original image was destroyed some years ago in the burning of the church, and replaced by another, as stated on a marble slab at the principal entrance of the church. Landa destroyed the idols that healed the sick and raised the dead, putting that of the Virgin Mary in their place, and the same miracles have continued. The image, however, that had remained at Merida effected nothing. (1879:91)

The Le Plongeons also noted that some of the curanderos knew little about herbal medicine and were merely taking advantage of their patients. Alice wrote:

Throughout Yucatan, when the Indians or Mestizos suffer from a disease they do not understand, they are often said to be, and really imagine themselves bewitched, and that this or that medicine man (H-Men) can cure them by destroying the sorcery. The medicine man is generally an Indian who pretends to a great knowledge of medicinal herbs; and who, in fact, has an insight into the use of some few, having received the instruction from his parents, who have, in their turn, received it from theirs. . . . The ancient H-Men (wise man) was possibly a sage of great learning, but the H-Men of today is a trickster and imposter. . . . The rogue uttering cabalistic words, goes under the bed or hammock to dig up the figure of the person that has done the mischief. This, at least, is what he pretends. (1879:91-92)

### Uxmal

On the way to Uxmal, today as well as in 1873, the main road passes through the small town of Muna. Alice Le Plungeon in an article for Harper's magazine describes the interesting trip from Merida to Uxmal.

Almost everyone who visits Yucatan inquires for the ruined cities; that of Uxmal being the most spoken of and of easiest access is, unhappily, the most visited. I say unhappily, because it seems as if each visitor believes it a duty to carry away some memorial from the old city, thus often destroying some precious link in the history of its ancient inhabitants. Although several railways are projected and some being constructed, people wishing to go to Uxmal must hire a volan coche. This is a conveyance peculiar to the country, a kind of palanquin, supported on leather straps; the covering is like that of

emigrants' carts. A mattress is spread in the bottom to sit or lie on. It accommodates six persons squatting, or two at full length, which is the way generally preferred by the inhabitants. The volan is very suitable for the roads of Yucatan, that, with few exceptions, are like a stormy sea petrified. Three mules and a driver make this conveyance go good speed. (1885:374)

If you leave from Mérida early enough, Alice continued, the sights and sounds are exciting--men and women on their way to market carrying their goods in a variety of manners the visitor is not accustomed to see. She notes that the ramon tree served as fodder for animals, little realizing the fruit of the tree would someday be identified by some archaeologists as an important staple for the ancient Maya. The Le Plongeon's first stop before Muna was the small town of Abala about 24 miles from Mérida. In a photo, Alice Le Plongeon can be seen at the side of the road in a high necked, full length, Victorian dress. It is difficult to understand how she could tolerate the heat and humidity of Yucatán with such a dress, but later she adopted pants with an overdress. The conservative Maya women were scandalized by a woman in pants so she wore the dress over the pants when in the presence of the Maya and rolled it up around her waist when working in the ruins.

Finally they reached Muna, about 15 miles from Uxmal. Augustus photographed the colonial church and

the village with 5 x 8 inch glass plates. In a photo of the town square one can see the Puuc hills in the background and a well (enclosed by a wall) in the center. Alice was fascinated by the public well where she saw women drawing water from a trough filled continuously by a simple mechanical device powered by a mule. The women gave a handful of maize for each jug of water they took and thus kept the animal fed. The well must have been a welcome sight after a hot, long dusty ride in the volan in a country where water is exceedingly scarce.

During their stay in Muna, in addition to photographing, they explored the many caves that penetrate the limestone hills nearby, but give no report on their findings, if any. When their work was completed they left by the old route around the steep hills. In 1865, a direct road climbing over the Puuc Hills had been cut so that Emperor Maximilian's Queen, Maria Carlotta Amalia, Empress of Mexico--later to go insane after his execution--might be carried in a palanquin to Uxmal by the more direct route. Two days were spent by her at Uxmal and then she returned to Mérida for more royal treatment. Finally, traveling to Campeche, she departed after a flurry of balls,



parades and 101-gun salute for Mexico City and eventually returned to Europe.

The Le Plongeon photos of Uxmal were taken at three different times: the first set was taken shortly after their arrival in 1873 or early 1874; the second in 1876; and the last in 1881. Any 5 x 8 inch photos were very probably taken in 1873 during a short visit to the site. The youthful-looking Le Plongeon appear in the photos of them in the Governor's Palace where they camped. Stereo photos date from 1876 to 1881--a time when the Le Plongeon photographed in great detail the facades of the Governor's Palace, Nunnery Quadrangle and the Pyramid. A stereo view of Augustus standing beside the tall monolith in front of the east side of the Governor's Palace shows an older Augustus. The strain of exploration in the Yucatán seems to have taken its toll on the man during the eight-year interval.

Most of Le Plongeon's work at Uxmal took place between 1876 and 1881. Alice's theorizing in later articles, as well as the Le Plongeon's extensive stereo photography of the site, probably date from around 1876. They had already spent considerable time at Chichén Itzá, where their analysis of the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars prompted

them to return to Uxmal. We see a great emphasis in their photography on the iconographic details and individual sculptures that fit into theories they were developing about the history of the Maya.

In the 1870s, Uxmal was a hacienda which produced sugar cane and cattle. In the New York World Alice describes life there in the 1870s and '80s, and the difficulties of surveying the archaeological site:

The principal house--the residence of the proprietor--stands within a large enclosure, where the numerous cattle belonging to the estate congregate to drink from stone troughs at the base of the house. There also is a small store where various necessities of life are sold to the people that work on the plantation. These number about five hundred. They are freemen by law, but enslave themselves by borrowing money from people, who thus have a right to their services. This custome of borrowing money exists all over the country owing to the exceedingly small wages given, insufficient for the most ordinary comforts. The poor laborers are consequently obliged to borrow, and they live and die in abject misery.

Uxmal is one of the most extensive Maya cities and is more frequently visited than any other. When John L. Stephens and Catherwood came here in 1842 all the brush was cleared from the monuments and they were able to make a general plan of the ruins, a thing today impracticable, except at a large expense. The plan mentioned is correct as far as it goes, but the remains extend in every direction over a much larger surface of the ground than is shown by it. (1881b:1-2)

In 1881, in his Vestiges of the Mayas, Augustus Le Plongeon described their field procedures:

We began our work by taking photographs of all the monuments in their tout ensemble, and in all

their details, as much as practicable. Next, we surveyed them carefully; made accurate plans of them in order to be able to comprehend by the disposition of their different parts, for what possible use they were erected; taking, as a starting point, that the human mind and human inclinations and wants are the same in all times, in all countries, in all races when civilized and cultured. We next carefully examined what connection the ornaments bore to each other, and tried to understand the meaning of the designs. At first the maze of these designs seemed a very difficult riddle to solve. Yet, we believed that if a human intelligence had devised it, another human intelligence would certainly be able to unravel it. (18881:16)

After their arrival the Le Plongeurs quickly set up housekeeping in the Governor's Place at Uxmal. The building is 320 feet long with a facade of undulating Chac masks, step frets and serpent designs all moving together in an interwoven, wave-like pattern across the east face of the building. Over 20,000 individually cut stones are used to create this beautiful facade. Augustus noticed the importance of the building aesthetically as well as iconographically. Le Plongeur hypothesized this building, and the Chenes temple on the west side of the Adivino Pyramid with its estoteric motifs, would provide, when deciphered, a great deal of knowledge about Maya astronomy. To this end he photographed the entire east facade of the Governor's Palace in overlapping stereo photos. From a precarious ladder set near the edge of a 60-foot drop-off on the west side of the Pyramid he also

photographed the facade of the Chenes temple--Temple IV. In Harper's Alice wrote,

From afar is seen the Dwarf's House, on the summit of an artificial mound one hundred feet high [Adivino Pyramid]. The ascent is on the east side, by a hundred narrow steps, so perpendicular that some of those who go up, when they have to descend wonder how they could have been so rash, and repent having made the attempt, as Father Cogolludo did, according to his own writings. The ascent is more tiresome than dangerous: when visitors think they must surely be near the top, they look up to find that they are only half-way. (1885: 376)

The Adivino Pyramid was constructed in five phases, the last being the Puuc style Temple V on the very top of the pyramid. Temple IV is an example of the Chenes style found in the northwest region of Campeche. Here the Classic Maya built structures with gaping serpent mouths surrounding the entrances, a motif which dominates the facade of Temple IV. In addition to the serpent mouth doorway there are a number of other motifs in this facade including Chac masks covering the corners and a huge Chac mask in the center over the door. Even in Le Plongeon's time the nose over the door had been broken, but above, intact, are two very interesting figures on their hands and knees. Covering the temple facade are a large number of carved motifs that attracted Le Plongeon's interest. They, by and large, have not, to date, been interpreted by iconographers and do not resemble hieroglyphics in

any known Mesoamerican system of writing. Clearly, the symbols are not random designs and do represent some aspect of Maya thought--religious, astronomical or both.

### Life at Uxmal

In the center rooms of the Governor's Palace, as was mentioned earlier, Alice and Augustus set up their temporary living quarters and darkroom. Dr. Le Plongeon is seen in a 5 x 8 inch photo writing up his field notes for the day. Trinity, their dog, is curled up in the corner next to Le Plongeon's rifle and pith helmet, and Alice sits next to a guitar (which she liked to play) as she contemplates a manuscript she is composing. In the foreground there are some photographic items, food and mixing bowls, and in the doorway, a hammock with a mosquito covering. They slept in the rear (inner) room. Cooking was done in the front rooms, where, in another photo, Alice can be seen sitting, with light streaming through the smoke, waiting for the pot to boil. On the left is a wooden cask for water. Alice describes a little of their lives at Uxmal in an article in the New York World in 1881:

We are settled for the present in what is called the "Governor's House." It is the most central building, and from the broad terrace we look upon

all the surrounding monuments, which cover an immense extent of ground. Far beyond are the hills, the same that were gazed upon by the people who dwelt here so long ago. We are in a valley, and every edifice is constructed on elevations, in some cases partly natural, but mostly artificial.

There is no solitude here, though far from the abodes of living men. The place swarms with life and perfect silence never reigns, for every tiny insect has something to say for itself. The quietest hour is mid-day, when all seek rest and shelter from the burning rays of the tropical sun. Not a sound is then heard save the sighing of the wind among the trees of the forests spread out at our feet, and standing above this sea of verdure when the breeze runs through it, it seems to us that we listen to the roar of the ocean. Is it that we hear the waves of time dashing against these old walls? Every creature seems made with thirst. Suicide is committed every few minutes by foolish bees which throw themselves into any liquid they can find and part with life for a drop of it. When they feel the dark waves closing over them they doubtless repent of the rash deed, and having taken a drink and a bath, are very grateful if anyone will ladle them out. They then crawl away like turtles, and after a while repeat the suicidal attempt. The iguanas enter our rooms at night in search of water, and play the mischief generally, besides waking us with their noise. But worse than all are the flies, or "flying bed bugs," as they are sweetly called in Spanish. These are brown beetles about an inch long, which support life by sucking blood from any animal they get hold of, not excepting man. When they begin to feed on one it is like a needle running in the flesh. A dozen of them will give you bad dreams and draw an ounce of blood. Man does not require bleeding every night in a place where food is scarce and work plentiful. (1881b:1-2)

Alice continues the article with a description of the building, giving measurements of the rooms, the directions they face and surmising that the wings (part of the building north and south of the corbelled

arches) were built at a later time because the stone work is inferior to the main sections. She writes:

At each end of the building are two rooms that look north and south. All the others face the east. The doorways are 2 meters 15 cm high, 1.5 meters wide; a second exactly opposite the first leads to an inner room. No pair of apartments has any communication with any other pair. There is no indication of doors having existed, but vestiges of stone rings fastened in the inner part of the walls on each side of the entrance cause us to suppose that curtains were used. Openings about twenty-five inches square, a little below the cornice, serve for ventilation in the front rooms; the back have not even these, and the sunlight never illumines their corners. It might be supposed that these chambers would be close and unhealthy. Far from it. They make delightful habitations, and their atmosphere is never oppressive. During the heat of the day they are so cool that to step outside is like entering a heated oven, and at night, when the air is sometimes damp and chilly, they are comfortably warm. (1881b:1-2)

Alice describes the rooms and their condition, thickness of the walls, and a large hole dug by John L. Stephens into the west wall from inside the center room. She deplored the graffiti left by visitors with which she was constantly being confronted.

The walls of the rooms are now covered with the names of visitors in letters of every size and color. Some silly people, called civilized, have thought theirs so important that they have painted them on several walls within the same building. The students who have visited the place seem to have been less anxious to mark their passage, for we seldom find their names in more than one place--often in an obscure corner. . . . There are three front rooms and another opposite the middle one leads to the inner chamber. Just facing it in the back wall, is a deep hole which stares at all who enter the room reproachfully in the face, for

the desecration of the building by Stephens, who thought that a wall 2 m 50 cm thick must contain a room, though there was no trace whatever of any doorway. The west wall is only of this thickness in the main and more ancient portion of the edifice. At the time it was built cyclones and other atmospheric disturbances may have made it necessary thus to strengthen the structure in its lofty position. The middle wall is 1 meter 15 cm thick and the eastern 0 meters 90 cm. (1881b:1-2)

Alice makes a humorous remark about the hiding of large phallic stones at the southeastern corner of the terrace on which the Governor's Palace stands:

At the southeast corner of the terrace is an oblong structure. The round columns and the religious symbols they supported, which once stood on it, were thrown down by order of the owner of the hacienda, Don Simon Peon, at the time when the Empress Carlotta visited these ruins, lest she should be offended by the sight of them! (1881b:1-2)

On the same terrace but to the northwest is a beautiful building, small compared with the Governor's Palace, but superbly designed, constructed and placed by itself near the corner of the terrace. She thus describes it:

At the northwest corner of the terrace is the building called the "Turtle House." The eight large rooms of this house are all much damaged. In 1842 Stephens found one part of the roof supported only by two small stones. In 1876 we found it in the same state and made a photograph of it. Two days after we had obtained this photograph, during a severe tempest, it was struck by lightning and fell. (1881b:2)



Le Plongeon as Archaeological  
Photographer

The amount of effort Augustus expended photographing and making moulds of the facade of the Governor's Palace was extraordinary. In sixteen adjoining stereo photographs, taken from a ladder and scaffolding, we have a record of the whole facade as it looked in the late 1870s. The blank space in the photo mural is the section that had fallen between 1825 and 1842. Stephens noted it was missing in 1842 and was told by the hacienda owner Don Simon Peon that it was still intact in 1825. In a 5 x 8 inch photo, Augustus can be seen making moulds, and in another he is on a ladder taking stereo views with his large camera. In addition to the stereos he also photographed various buildings, facades and reliefs with 5 x 8 glass plates, if he thought a print of that size would give more detail and a clearer perspective to the viewer. In 1902, 264 moulds made by Augustus Le Plongeon were deposited with the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Of those 264, 83 were of the Governor's Palace. Moulds can provide very accurate replicas of sections of facades, low reliefs, hieroglyphs, sculptures and many details too small, or at difficult angles, to photograph. Le Plongeon knew

of this advantage, and, to supplement his photographic work, which did not always pick up all the details even in stereo, he made hundreds of moulds. At Uxmal, in addition to the moulds of the east facade of the Governor's Palace, he made 16 moulds of the west side, 43 of the temples on the Adivino Pyramid, 17 of the Nunnery Quadrangle, and 18 of sculptures, small cornices, and miscellaneous reliefs. The curatorial staff of the American Museum of Natural History has made a most thorough search of that institution, but the location, at present, of the moulds (if they are still intact) is unknown. Should they be located they would add to our knowledge of the physical features of the sites.

In addition to photographing the facade of the Governor's Palace, he photographed the temples on the Adivino Pyramid, using the pyramid itself as a platform to make a panorama of the site. These adjoining stereo photos, from the Governor's Palace to the Nunnery Quadrangle, present an almost 180° perspective.

It is important to look closer at Le Plongeon's photographic method before proceeding further. The photos taken of the facade of the Chenes Temple were especially difficult; not only was Le Plongeon working in a precarious location, but he was subject to the

extremes of sun, wind, dust, humidity, and the heat of Yucatán, to say nothing of the resident insect population.

Le Plongeon wrote a book in Spanish called Manual de Fotografía, published in New York in 1873. The book is a thorough treatise on photography and covers in a little more than 200 pages all the needs of a professional photographer of the 1870s. He begins with a brief history of photography and mentions such important early experimenters as Niépce, Daguerre, Herschel, Talbot, Schönbein and Archer.

In the book's first section, in great detail, he describes for the photographer the darkroom, cameras and their operation, chemicals--their preparation and action--and the method of development, fixing, washing and drying of negatives. With as much precision as possible he describes the art of preparing collodion glass plate negatives. The collodion syrup, used to coat the glass plate, is made by dissolving cellulose nitrate (gun cotton) in a solution of alcohol and ether. He then provides a number of possible formulas of iodide and bromide to be added to the collodion. Finally, the plate is sensitized by immersion in a bath of silver nitrate. After the plate is withdrawn from the bath, the ether and alcohol

slowly evaporate, causing the plate to lose its sensitivity.

Thus, Le Plongeon, in the field, had to rush the glass negative to the camera, expose it, develop it, fix and wash it, within a short amount of time, usually less than an hour. His portable darkroom also needed some source of water. In Yucatán, water is very scarce during November through April; photographing during that period, when temperatures were milder and the humidity less, had the distinct drawback of lack of water. Of course, just to get a correctly exposed negative was no easy task, since the silver nitrate, temperature, illumination and sensitivity of the collodion emulsion all varied from batch to batch. Even with today's advanced technology, it is not a simple matter to make a good print, and few photographers would choose to set up a darkroom in the Governor's Palace, much less in Temple IV of the Adivino Pyramid, attempting there to produce negatives and prints. Le Plongeon very likely did his processing in the Governor's Palace when he was working near that area, or in the Nunnery Quadrangle, or the pyramid, at the time he was photographing the details on those buildings.

Le Plongeon, in his Manual, offers a number of guidelines to help the photographer, but in the end he asserts that the photographer has to become totally familiar with his own camera equipment, chemicals, and the vagarous environment in order to make a perfect image. He does provide detailed assistance in the processing of the negative where any number of reactions related to chemistry can cause problems. Some are diagnosed as originating in the camera, but he provides the photographer with extensive suggestions on how to avoid cloudiness, particles in the collodion, turbidity of the silver nitrate solution, streaks on the negative, etc. Once he has guided the photographer through the process, from preparation of the glass plate negatives, through exposure in the camera, developing and fixing--with a good dose of problem analysis--he begins the next section on how to print negatives.

In the 1870s most photographers had to prepare printing paper by a hand process. Le Plongeon guides the photographer in the selection of paper for sensitizing. The French papers of Saxe or the Causon Brothers are generally preferred by photographers, he says, but the English papers of Whitman and Towgood are the best. Then he goes on to describe the various

chemical processes that can be used for sensitizing the paper, fixing, washing, and toning. Formulas are provided for the preparation of collodion silver chloride and albumen printing-out paper. These papers needed no development, just exposure by a strong light through the negative. The image would slowly appear, was then fixed, toned in gold chloride, and given a final wash. It is interesting to note that Le Plongeon recommends the use of fresh eggs in the preparation of albumen paper, implying that it is a delicate process. Since albumen paper is no longer manufactured, photographers today who wish to reproduce the quality of print that this nineteenth century paper provides have to make their own. One of the many problems they face is a result of the modernized chicken industry; because the eggs are now the product of chemically fed birds, the whites do not flow as smoothly.

Le Plongeon continues by giving instructions to those who would like to use the "old fashioned" paper-negative method developed by Fox Talbot: the Calotype. He then describes how to enlarge photos, make stereo photographs, as well as how to use various precise lenses and equipment for stereo work. Finally, he gives the reader instruction on how to use

photographic equipment specifically in archaeology: e.g., how to solve photographic perspective problems when photographing the architecture of the ruins; how to take scenic overviews, copy daguerreotypes and make reductions.

In a postscript of some length he also gives directions on the making of tintypes, long since abandoned as a process worthy of the modern photographer, but still of great interest to experimenters. Augustus Le Plongeon, unknown today as a photographer, was one of the more knowledgeable photographers of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

#### Work at Uxmal Completed

The east building in the Nunnery Quadrangle suffered little from the destructive environment and has been consolidated by archaeologists without much reconstruction. The south wing has also fared well except for a large crack noted by the Le Plongeon in the arch, which they feared would collapse. The west and north buildings needed major reconstruction to bring them back to a condition resembling their original condition. Most of the facade in the West Building had fallen by the time the Le Plongeon visited the site, leaving only a few sections. The collapse had

occurred after 1835, and before 1841, when Stephens and Catherwood were at the site.

Désiré Charnay's photos of 1860 show the buildings in essentially the same condition as do Le Plongeon's photographs. John L. Stephens states that the hacienda owner Don Simon told him that "in 1835 the whole front stood, and the two serpents were seen encircling every ornament in the building" (1843:179). Not that Don Simon really cared a whit for the Maya City, for as Stephens notes

From the ruin to which all was hurrying, Don Simon cared only to preserve this serpent's head. He said that we might tear out and carry away every other ornament, but this he intended to build into the wall of a house in Merida as a memorial of Uxmal. (1843:179)

Alice Le Plongeon continues with her description of Uxmal for the New York World.

From the north end of the "Governor's House" we look out upon the building called Adivino and Monjas [Nunnery Quadrangle]. The latter faces south, and its general appearance, as viewed from the elevated terrace on which we stand, is imposing and beautiful. . . . At a distance of 50 to 70 metres from the lower terrace of Governor's House is what remains of the tennis [ball] court, namely, two walls 36 m 80 cm long, 9 m 20 cm thick and 21 m apart. Portions of two large stone rings, and fragments of stone pillars, with the feathers of the winged serpent carved on them, are on the ground. The rings were originally opposite each other, above the middle and near the top of the wall.

Torquemada, if I remember well, tells us the use of these rings. The players were to receive the ball on the hip, and from there by a peculiar motion of the hip throw it upward. If they



succeeded in throwing it through either of the rings, it was their right to seize the cloaks of as many of those present as they could catch.

We can now enter the front arch and sit there a moment. Seats are not wanting, there are stones of every description, even a stone turtle has found its way there, and this is the coolest spot in the edifice. We have besides a magnificent view of the Casa de Gobernador, Casa de Tortugas, Casa de Palomas, Canchi mount [Great Pyramid] and other surrounding buildings which so viewed form an imposing mass. Small pieces of plaster yet remain on the archway and there are traces of paint--blue, yellow, red. It must have been brilliant with colors at one time. On the upper part of the arch, where the stucco has fallen off, high above the cornice, we count nine red imprints of small hands--two very clear, the others less so, but decidedly hands. There is an ugly crack in this arch. It begins at the base on one side, runs up to the top of the roof and comes down again to the base on the opposite side. This is the consequence of the removal of the stone facing by means of crowbars.

There is an acal or reservoir open on the northside of the court, affording excellent opportunity for any visitor to examine the construction of these deposits. Permit me to say here that our studies lead us to understand that they were build solely for the reception of rain water on which depended a population of 30,000 to 40,000 for they had to dig very far into the bowels of the earth to obtain even a small quantity otherwise. (1881c:2)

She goes on to describe the four buildings, their iconographic and architectural details, and general condition. Of the West Building she notes "the most noticeable objects are two large feathered serpents that extend from one end to the other of the facade, along the upper and lower edges of the armaments. At regular intervals they intertwine" (1881c: When describing the North Building she states "The

facade was very elaborate but by no means chaste" (1881c:2). Some of the statues display phallic symbolism and it is a wonder they were not torn down so as not to offend Empress Carlotta!

The Use of Dynamite at Uxmal  
and Chichén Itzá

In an interview of Augustus by Alice in the New York World, November 1881, we encounter a description of the finding of a sculpture, and an explanation of Augustus' use of dynamite:

Is it true that you put dynamite in monuments to protect them from Indians?

This is the origin of that story: On the 1st of June last I made the mould of a certain inscription, but could not unravel the puzzle contained in the lines and characters of the sculpture. But little by little I made out the name of Cay, the elder brother of Chaacmol, and the thought struck me that the place had been dedicated to him, and that his effigy, like the statue of his brother, might be hidden near by. I went to work during the night alone, and made a hole in the wall large enough to crawl in. After penetrating something like three yards in that wall I suddenly found myself in presence of a superb cast of the personage whose name I was then satisfied I had interpreted rightly, since the diadem that adorned his brows sustained his totem--the head of a fish, Cay in the Maya language being a fish. (1881d:10)

Augustus was then visited by two members of the American community in Mérida to whom he showed his find. He asked them to keep his discovery a secret, but one of the party indiscreetly leaked the news to a Mérida newspaper.

From that day my position in Uxmal became, if possible, more annoying than before. The administrator of the plantation endeavored in every way to discover where I had found the bust of Chaacmol's brother. Then I published in the *Eco del Comercio* for July 19 that I had placed dynamite near the monument to prevent its destruction, not at the hands of the Indians, who stand in awe of the effigies of the ancient rulers of the country, but by the very administrator who is destroying these monuments, by order of the master, to use the stones in the building of his farm-house. (1881d:10)

There has been another popular myth about the use of dynamite by Le Plongeon. At Chichén Itzá, the large dismantled area on the west side of the stairway of the north face of the Monjas has been attributed to Le Plongeon's "dynamite excavations." But it was noted by Stephens in 1843, "On one side of the staircase a huge breach, twenty or thirty feet deep, has been made by the proprietor, for the purpose of getting out building stone, which discloses only solid masonry" (1843:191). The area was further cleared and excavated by the Carnegie Institution in the 1930s to expose the east wall for research purposes. A partial arch above the excavated area was built under the direction of John Bolles of Carnegie to prevent the second floor from collapsing.

#### Looting the Ruins

Since its inception, the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) has been instrumental

in preserving the ancient heritage of Mexico throughout the Republic. Dedicated archaeologists and technicians of this organization have not only sought to preserve the ancient monuments, but have instituted an enormous amount of research directed toward understanding the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica. Additionally they have worked at stopping looters from tearing the archaeological sites to pieces. The archaeologists have been shot at, their lives threatened and some have been killed. At times the Mexican Army and Navy have been brought in to stop the looting, but the area to be protected is enormous and the funds of INAH are limited, as is the number personnel.

In Le Plongeon's time there were people who seriously attempted to protect the antiquities of Mexico. Laws were passed, but the difficulties of enforcing those laws were great. The political atmosphere was one of turmoil, with warfare and disease running rampant.

Often the Le Plongeon's were shocked by the condition of the ruins. Reporting for the New York World, Alice wrote in 1881:

The Peninsula of Yucatan is strewn with fragments of departed grandeur; silent, deserted, fallen cities. Some are not approachable without danger,

lying as they do within the territories of hostile tribes. Others--and these are the worst treated--are in the power of the whites. (1881b:2)

Augustus, in a letter to Stephen Salisbury of the American Antiquarian Society, deplored the destruction of Uxmal by the owner of the hacienda and threatened to call in government officers to try to stop what he described as the "fury for destruction of the handiwork of the ancient inhabitants of this peninsula" (1881d).

Some of the persons who Augustus accused of looting, or vandalizing the ruins, were politically important persons in the United States. For instance, in an article in the Scientific American in 1884, Alice states they had returned to Chichén Itzá to record the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars.

To our grief, we at once saw that some one had tried to clean the wall by scratching off the dirt. In answer to our exclamations of disgust, some of the soldiers that escorted us in our expedition said "Oh, yes! that gentleman who came two years ago did it; he scraped it with a machete, and said: "Look at this ugly old woman." We said "What! did M. Charnay do that?" "No, it was M. \_\_\_\_\_ the Consul Americano, who accompanied M. Charnay." We left the wall as we found it, it was no longer in a condition to be copied. (1884a: 7144)

The American Consul was none other than Louis Aymé, a relative of Stephen Salisbury, President of the American Antiquarian Society, who had important political connections throughout the eastern United States.

Aymé was replaced by Edward H. Thompson a few years later, and Thompson became famous for his dredging of the sacred well at Chichén Itzá and the subsequent removal of the artifacts from Mexico to the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. After almost 60 years, the Peabody Museum has returned some of the more valuable pieces to Mexico. Le Plongeon may not have understood while he was in Yucatán that he was jeopardizing his own professional career as a Mayanist by making examples of people like Aymé. It must be conceded that Le Plongeon had great courage and seldom backed off from a challenge, but he may not have gauged the strength of the personal network of scholars who could influence publishers, universities and professional societies to counter-attack and discredit him. They found fertile ground for attack in his unusual and difficult-to-prove theories of Maya civilization, and by 1890 Le Plongeon found himself isolated from the mainstream of academic life.

#### Le Plongeon's Evidence of Freemasonry at Uxmal

It seems reasonably certain that Le Plongeon was a member of the Masonic Order, although it has not been determined to what lodge he belonged or to what

level he might have attained. We have one photo of him in his Masonic collar and apron, but, since there is a great amount of variation in the symbolism used during the nineteenth century, experts have, so far, been unable to use these symbols to provide more information on Le Plongeon's Masonic involvement. Masonic historians have been contacted in London, Paris, the Island of Jersey, Worcester, Massachusetts, New York, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, but none have found any records of Augustus Le Plongeon's membership.

A common interest of nineteenth century scholars was origins. Those origins might be of the human species or a civilization, and in this particular case, Le Plongeon's interest was in the origins of Freemasonry. To his satisfaction, Le Plongeon found evidence at Uxmal that led him to believe that ancient rites of Freemasonry were practiced among the Maya, and, thus, in 1886 he published his findings in his book, Sacred Mysteries among the Mayas and Quiches, 11,500 Years Ago.

As proof he cited the following: the cornice at door height around the Chenes temple, adorned with what he described as crossed bones and skeletons; a sculpture of the lower half of a human figure with a

hand sculpted facing down on an apron; the construction style of the chambers of the Puuc temple on the very top of the pyramid, and the motifs contained in them. The construction of the arch in those rooms atop the pyramid was similar to those found in tombs in Chaldea and in Egypt, he said. Carved into the ceilings of those rooms, Le Plongeon located hemispheres which he thought represented the stars and planets.

The sculpture with the hand was seen by two members of the American community in Mérida: Louis Aymé, American Consul, and Porter Bliss, formerly with the American Legation in Mexico City, but has not been seen since. Le Plongeon said he buried it.

Substantiation of reliefs described by Le Plongeon of the cornice has not been made in the field. An attempt was made to observe and photograph the cornice in 1981 by the art historian Dr. Linnea Wren, but the cornice is in such a location that it cannot be seen close up without the help of ladders and ropes (Wren 1981). Le Plongeon's photo of the cornice on the Chenes Temple in his book Sacred Mysteries (1886:appendix) has been slightly retouched, not to deceive the reader but to enhance the original photo. The original glass



negative has been examined by this writer and no additions to the negative through retouching were detected. Only one vague skeletal figure appears on the left side of the photo and could easily be interpreted otherwise, and crossed bones are lacking. Le Plongeon also provides a drawing of that motif (1886:39), but the crossed bones are found also at Uxmal in the Cemetery Group, an area Le Plongeon does not cite. To single out such a motif as indicating Masonic practices shows little control of the material on the part of Le Plongeon, since similar motifs are found throughout the world under a number of very dissimilar conditions, most of which have no connection with Freemasonry.

With regard to the corbelled arch used by the Maya, we certainly have no reason to accept cultural connections between the Maya and Egypt based on such a common architectural form.

The purpose of the hemispheres is yet to be determined, but Le Plongeon is correct when he surmised that the Maya were astronomers. From the top of a pyramid, according to Le Plongeon,

the learned priests and astronomers, elevated above the mists of the plains below, could without hindrance follow the course of the celestial bodies in the clear cloudless skies of Yucatan.  
 . . . (1881c:851)

Le Plongeon published no more on Masonic origins amongst the Maya after 1886, setting aside

that hypothesis for more important research. No doubt he found further substantiation of Freemasonry in Mesoamerica a difficult task to accomplish. Instead, he set out to find linguistic evidence of Maya colonization of the Middle East and Egypt.

### Chichén Itzá

The Le Plongeurs arrived at Chichén Itzá for the first time in September 1875, after a long and dangerous trip through territory mostly controlled by the Chan Santa Cruz Maya. During their first stay they spent five months in and about the ruins, departing toward the end of February 1876. After a long absence, they returned again, probably in 1883, and stayed until February or March 1884. Their accomplishments were extraordinary.

They photographed every building, facade, bas-relief and important artifact at the site, copied the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars, made approximately 90 moulds of important reliefs, including: a 13-meter long inscription in the Chichanchob (Red House); reliefs on the Platform of Venus, the Platform of the Eagles; the Monjas, the Temple of Jaguars; and the Castillo. In addition, they carried out two excavations: the first, into the Platform of the

Eagles in 1875, led to the discovery of the Chacmool now in the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City; and the second, in 1883, into the Platform of Venus, uncovered a number of unique sculptures.

Alice and Augustus arrived in Valladolid on May 20, 1875, but due to the necessity for military escort, the slow mails, and the constant reports of guerillas in the area, they were delayed until September 21, when the Mexican General Guillermo Palomino (later to become Governor of Yucatán) finally completed arrangements for their protection. They were accompanied on the journey by Colonel Felipe Díaz, commander of the eastern defense line, Colonel José Coronado, and two companies of soldiers. They arrived at Dzitas only to find the path to Pisté completely closed. Colonel Coronado volunteered with some men to clear the way. A few days later, on September 27, after a six hour journey from Dzitas, they arrived in Pisté without incident.

Augustus describes the scene at Pisté, the colonial period village that was the site of a massacre in 1865:

Pisté, ten years ago, was a pretty village, built amid forests, around a senote sic of thermal waters, surrounded by most fertile lands, which the industrious dwellers cultivated. Suddenly, on a certain Sunday (election day), when they were entertained at the polls, the ominous war-cry of

the Indians of Chan-Santa-Cruz fell upon their ears. Few were the villagers that, taking refuge in the bush, escaped the terrible machete of their enemies. Of this village only the name remains. Its houses roofless, their walls crumbled, are scarcely seen beneath the thick green carpet of convolvulus, and cowage (mecuna). These over-spread them with their leaves and beautiful petals, as if to hide the blood that once stained them, and cause to be forgotten the scenes of butchery they witnessed. The church alone sad and melancholy, without doors, its sanctuaries silent, its floor paved with the burial slabs of the victims, surrounded by parapets, yet stands in the midst of the ruined adobes of those who used to gather under its roof; it is today converted into a fortress. The few soldiers of the post are the only human beings that inhabit these deserts for many leagues around; its old walls, its belfry, widowed of its bells, are all that indicates to the traveller that Pisté once was there. (Salisbury 1877:83-84)

After resting we continued our march to Chichen, whose grant pyramid of 22 meters 50 centimeters high, with its nine andenes [platforms] could be seen from afar amidst the sea of vegetation that surrounded it, as a solitary lighthouse in the midst of the ocean. Night had already fallen when we reached the Casa principal of the hacienda of Chichen, that Colonel Coronado had had cleaned to receive us. (Salisbury 1877:84)

The next day Colonel Díaz had the house fortified and lookouts placed strategically so as to provide a warning if attack came from the Chan Santa Cruz. Augustus had underestimated the work necessary to sufficiently investigate the ruins (based on previous travelers' reports), believing three weeks at the most sufficient. He states

I had really scarcely commenced my studies, notwithstanding I had worked every day from sunrise

to sunset, so many and so important were the monuments that, very superficially, my predecessors had visited. (Salisbury 1877:84)

Colonel Díaz reported that the Chan Santa Cruz were about to attack and urged withdrawal from Chichén Itzá. Le Plongeon refused.

I resolved to remain with my wife, and continue our investigations until they should be completed, in spite of the dangers that surrounded us. I made known my unalterable resolution to Colonel Díaz, asking him only to arm a few of the Indians that remained with me, for I did not wish even a single soldier of the post of Pisté to accompany me. Leaving my instruments of geodesy and photography at the ruins, I made the church of Pisté my headquarters where we went every night to sleep, returning always at daylight to Chichen, one league distant. (Salisbury 1877:84)

Finally, Le Plongeon was ordered to disarm his men and was therefore forced to retreat from Chichén Itzá and Pisté. There had been a revolt led by Theodosio Canto (in 1884, General Canto was part of a group that signed a peace agreement with Yucatán) of those Maya allied with the Mexican government. It was feared the revolt would spread to other Maya soldiers in Yucatán, thus the order was given to disarm all Maya soldiers, including Le Plongeon's small detachment.

And what were the accomplishments of Alice and Augustus in their "100 days" at Chichén Itzá? Augustus writes in a letter to Mexico's President Lerdo de Tejada:

I have made 500 stereoscopic views, from which I have selected eighty, equal to those that accompany this writing; I have discovered hieroglyphics which I have caused to reappear intact, and taken photographs of some that are said to be a prophecy of the establishment of the electric telegraph between Saci (Valladolid of to-day), and Ho (Merida); I have restored mural painting of great merit for the drawing, and for the history they reveal; I have taken exact tracings of the same which form a collection of twenty plates, some nearly one meter long; I have discovered bas-reliefs which have nothing to envy in the bas-reliefs of Assyria and Babylon; and, guided by my interpretations of the ornaments, paintings, etc., of the most interesting building in Chichen (historically speaking), I have found amidst the forest, eight meters under the soil, a statue of Chaacmol, of calcareous stone, one meter, fifty-five centimeters wide, weighing fifty kilos, or more; and this I extracted without other machine than that invented by me, and manufactured from trunks of trees with machete of my Indians. I have opened two leagues of carriage road to carry my findings to civilization; and finally I have built a rustic cart in which to bring the statue to the high road that leads from Dzitas to Merida. (Salisbury 1877:85)

The photos from this time at Chichén usually show armed Maya guards. The 5 x 8 inch photos taken on the second level of the Monjas building showing an officer, Maya soldiers, and two men laid out (possibly dead) may be from 1883, but more likely the date is late in 1875. It appears to be a lookout post, but it is also likely that the Le Plongeurs, in 1883, lived in one of the rooms of the second floor, since the hacienda was difficult to defend and Pisté a bothersome daily commute.

In order to photograph the various buildings, Le Plongeur faced the same monumental problems faced by

his predecessors: the jungle needed to be cleared. To that end he hired Maya men with machetes to cut down the heavy growth that extended to the tops of the buildings. Thus, he managed to photograph all the important structures, and made closeups of what he thought were important iconographic details. He concentrated much of his efforts on the east wing of the Monjas. This extraordinary facade, and that of the beautiful structure called La Iglesia, he photographed from several angles. A photo of the complete roof comb of La Iglesia is found in Le Plongeon's "Origins of the Egyptians" and was taken from the roof of the east wing of the Monjas. It gives excellent detail of that part of the building.

A good number of the Le Plongeon negatives have been lost during the last 100 years, but fortunately prints have been preserved. Of course, it is not possible to know how many negatives without prints are missing, but we can surmise there may be a number, because a few shots, in what should be a series of photos of particular buildings, are missing.

The Le Plongeon believed the Upper and Lower Temple of the Jaguars contained important material. It was here that Le Plongeon recorded murals, made moulds and photographed the reliefs. He made a

composite of the bas-reliefs in the Lower Temple of the Jaguars, all in stereo--an important decision since they are quite low in relief.

In October and November of 1875, Alice and Augustus worked in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars, copying what remained of the murals. A 5 x 8 inch photo shows Alice seated on one of the serpent columns in front of the temple. Augustus photographed and made moulds of the reliefs on the columns in the entrance, the carved lintel, and the altar table and atlantes that supported it. He found the altar table, broken by the fallen roof, centered behind the serpent columns in front of the entrance to the temple and made moulds of the edge of the altar table and some of the atlantes. The murals that Alice and Augustus copied were for many years forgotten in archives, but are now being analyzed for design and content, and will undoubtedly add to our knowledge of the murals.

#### The Chacmool and Its Excavation

The murals were the key to Augustus' history of the Maya. They led him to the deeply buried Chacmool in the Platform of the Eagles in 1875. After studying the murals and iconography of the Upper Temple of the Jaguars, he deduced very quickly where he might find the burial mound of Prince Chaacmol:



In tracing the figure of Chaacmol in battle, I remarked that the shield worn by him had painted on it round green spots, and was exactly like the ornaments placed between tiger and tiger on the entablature of the same monument. I naturally concluded that the monument had been raised to the memory of the warrior bearing the shield. . . . I then remember about one hundred yards in the thicket from the edifice, in an easterly direction, a few days before, I had noticed the ruins of a remarkable mount of rather small dimensions. It was ornamented with slabs engraved with the images of spotted tigers, eating human hearts, forming magnificent bas-reliefs, conserving yet traces of the colors in which it was formerly painted. I repaired to the place. Doubts were no longer possible. The same round dots, forming the spot of their skins, were present here as on the shield of the warrior in battle, and that on the entablature of the building. (1881:16-17)

Augustus describes the locating of the Chacmool in the letter to President Tejada.

Guided, as I have just said, by my interpretations of the mural paintings, bas-reliefs, and other signs that I found in the monument raised to the memory of the Chief Chaacmol, by his wife, the Queen of Chichen, by which the stones speak to those who can understand them, I directed my steps, inspired perhaps also by the instinct of the archaeologist, to a dense part of the thicket. Only one Indian, Desiderio Kansal, from the neighborhood of Sisal-Valladolid, accompanied me. With his machete he opened a path among the weeds, vines and bushes, and I reached the place I sought. It was a shapeless heap of rough stones. Around it were sculptured pieces and bas-reliefs delicately executed. After cutting down the bush, and clearing the spot, it presented the aspect which plates No. 1 and 2 represent [included in the letter to Tejada]. A long stone, half interred among the others, attracted my attention. Scraping away the earth from around it, with the machete and the hand, the effigy of a reclining tiger soon appeared. . . . But the head was wanting. This, of human form, I had the happiness to find, some meters distant, among a pile of other carved stones. My interpretations had been correct; everything

I saw proved it to me, I at once concentrated all my attention at this spot. (Salisbury 1877:86)

A few months later Juan Peon Contreras, Director of the Museo Yucateco, recounted his version of how Le Plongeon located the Chacmool "by abstruse archaeological reasoning, and by his meditation, [he] determined the place, and, striking the spot with his foot, he said 'Here it is, here it will be found'" (Salisbury 1877:93).

In a very interesting paper published in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society in 1931, Edward H. Thompson relates an interview he held with what may have been the grandson of Desiderio Kansal. The young Maya's account differs from Le Plongeon's when he states that all the men accompanied Augustus to the mound.

"I, the young son of my father, stood by his knee listening to the words of my father's father. Listening, I remembered and remembering, later I understood." Then he went on to say, "My father's father told my father that one day the bearded white one came from 'Who knows where' and made his home in the Sacred City. He chose my father's father to be one of those to do his bidding. One day the bearded white one rose, thinking deeply and plucking at his long beard, then he said to my father's father and those with him, 'Come with me' and they went ready to do his bidding. He stopped before a mul (artificial mound made by the ancient people) and pointing to the mul, said 'Dig.' They cleared away the brush and trees and then the earth and stones until the big stone figure of a chacmool rose up from the mul as if to greet the bearded white one.

"Another came and again the bearded white one said to my father's father and those with him

'Come with me' and they went. He said 'Dig' and as they dug the figures of Bacabes (minor gods) rose out of the ground as if to meet the bearded white one. He looked at them long and thoughtfully, plucking at his beard, and as he looked at the Bacabes, we saw that his lips were moving. Then we who saw these things said to each other, 'Doubtless he is speaking to them.'

"Another day my father's father told my father that the bearded white one stood beside the figure of a god carved on the walls of the temple and we saw that the face of that god was a bearded one, and then we saw that the faces of the two were as the face of one. Then we said one to the other, 'Doubtless they are one.'

"My father's father told my father that one day he climbed the pyramid and entered the temple of Kukulkan, the god, and there he saw the bearded white one standing in front of an earthen vessel, the kind the ancient ones used in burning incense before their gods. (Thompson 1831:341-342)

Le Plongeon stated in his book, Vestiges of the Maya, the reason for his actions on the Castillo pyramid. He was attempting to motivate his workers, who balked at digging in a sacred mound, and to prove to himself that they held to the belief of reincarnation.

In order to overcome their scruples, and also to prove if my suspicions were correct, that as their forefathers and the Egyptians of old, they still believed in reincarnation, I caused them to accompany me to the summit of the great pyramid. . . . On one of the antae, at the entrance on the north side, is the portrait of a warrior wearing a long, straight, pointed beard. The face, like that of all the personages represented, is in profile. I placed my head against the stone so as to present the same position of my face as that of Uxan and called the attention of my Indians to the similarity of his and my own features. (1881a:54)

The men, according to Le Plongeon, recognized the similarity and believing him to be one of their great

personages "disenchanted," and agreed to continue their work and pay him homage. Although we find no reference to their refusal to dig in the letter to President Tejada or in Edward H. Thompson's report, they may, in fact, have been reluctant to excavate for any number of reasons, including a fear of retribution by the Chan Santa Cruz, who did not want the ruins disturbed. Le Plongeon may have increased his chances of survival in hostile territory by creating a myth of holiness about himself. He was already on his way to that end when he became known in Mérida for his "intuitive" approach in finding the Chacmool. He and Alice could not have missed the striking similarity between his profile and that of the relief in the north door of the Castillo, and in a brilliant stroke decided to capitalize on that resemblance. Thus, short of guards, and unable to repulse a serious attack by the Maya, Augustus used the profile to his benefit. But, publishing this episode brought no end of accusations and recriminations against him. Some stated it was a fabrication, others felt it was true, but was the product of a deranged mind.

Augustus and Alice felt that fate, rather than accident, had brought them to Yucatán, and that they were looking into profound matters connected with

their own personal lives. It is clear they were intrigued by the facial profile and other events connected with the excavation of the Chacmool, but they were not fools, nor were their workers. We will never know the real truth concerning this event, but Alice and Augustus were certainly able to avoid an attack, and to depart, unscathed, in January 1876.

Alice, in the introduction to her book, Queen Mío's Talisman, writes that the Maya considered the statue of the Chacmool to be sacred, and that they also felt Augustus had been reincarnated from an ancient Maya past. She describes the tense moment when a Maya Band (apparently Cruzob guerillas) came into their camp to inspect the statue. The Maya on patrol were living off the land, and were part of a network used for gathering information on the enemy. They came into the camp one day not only to pay homage, but to see for themselves what the bearded white man was up to.

They were a religious people who combined the practices of Catholicism with those of the ancient indigenous Maya belief. They were believers in the Speaking Cross that directed much of their strategy. The Cross, a Maya oracle, spoke; but it was a Maya ventriloquist who made it speak. Leaders of the Chan

Santa Cruz later condemned the Speaking Cross as a deception, but still held to it as a sacred symbol of their struggle for control of Yucatán.

Le Plongeon, in his Vestiges of the Mayas, describes the event and how he handled close questioning by one of the men.

A few days later some strange people made their appearance suddenly and noiselessly in our midst. They emerged from the thicket one by one. Colonel Don Felipe Diaz, then commander of the troops covering the eastern frontier, had sent me, a couple of days previous, a written notice, that I still preserve in my power, that tracks of hostile Indians had been discovered by his scouts, advising me to keep a sharp look out, lest they should surprise us. Now, to be on the look out in the midst of a thick, well-nigh impenetrable forest -- is a rather difficult thing to do, particularly with only a few men, and where there is no road; yet all being a road for the enemy. Warning my men that danger was near, and to keep their loaded rifles at hand, we continued our work as usual, leaving the rest to destiny.

On seeing the strangers, my men rushed on their weapons, but noticing that the visitors had no guns, but only their machetes, I gave orders not to hurt them. At their head was a very old man: his hair was gray, his eyes blue with age. He would not come near the statue, but stood at a distance as if awe-struck, hat in hand, looking at it. After a long time he broke out, speaking to his own people: "This, boys, is one of the great men we speak to you about." Then the young men came forward, with great respect kneeled at the feet of the statue, and pressed their lips against them.

Putting aside my own weapons, being consequently unarmed, I went to the old man, and asked him to accompany me up to the castle, offering my arm to ascend the 100 steep and crumbling stairs. I again placed my face near that of my stone Sosis, and again the same scene was enacted as with my own men, with this difference, that the strangers fell on their knees before me, and, in turn, kissed

my hand. The old man after a while, eyeing me respectfully, but steadily, asked me: "Rememberest thou what happened to thee whilst thou wert enchanted?" It was quite a difficult question to answer, and yet retain my superior position, for I did not know how many people might be hidden in the thicket. "Well, father," I asked him, "dreamest thou sometimes?" He nodded his head in an affirmative manner. "And when thou wakest, dost thou remember distinctly they dreams?" "Má," no! was the answer. "Well, father," I continued, "so it happened with me. I do not remember what took place during the time I was enchanted." This answer seemed to satisfy him. I again gave him my hand to help him down the precipitous stairs, at the foot of which we separated, wishing them God-speed, and warning them not to go too near the villages on their way back to their homes, as people were aware of their presence in the country. Whence they came, I ignore; where they went, I don't know. (1881:55-56)

The Cruzob did not stay long, but the tension must have been great for the Le Plongeurs and their workers. They must have wondered what would be their next step after their "paying homage" to the Chacmool. Whatever notions the Chan Santa Cruz had about the Chacmool and the bearded white man, these worked to the Le Plongeurs' favor, for no attack came. The Chacmool was eventually removed to Pisté by Le Plongeur, since such a subterfuge could only work for a while. The Cruzob, religious as they were, still wanted all foreigners out of their territory. After the forced disarming of their workers and guards, the Le Plongeurs felt that a longer stay in Chichén Itzá would be an invitation to attack.

Let us look further at their excavation of the Chacmool. Continuing with his description of the excavation Le Plongeon states that the first major sculpture he encountered was a reclining jaguar. A large sculpture, the jaguar must have weighed over 1000 pounds. But, in spite of its size and weight, it disappeared a few years after Le Plongeon photographed it, and has not been seen since.

Resolved to make an excavation at this spot, I commenced my work at the upper part of the heap. I was not long in comprehending the difficulty of the task. The pedestal, as in all the later monuments which were raised in Chichen, was of loose stones, without mortar, without cement of any kind. For one stone that was removed, a hundred fell. The work was hence extremely dangerous. I possessed no tools, nor machines of any description. I resorted to the machete of my Indians, the trees of the forest, and the vines that entwine their trunks. I formed a frame-work to prevent the falling of the stones.

It [shoring] is composed of trunks of trees of two to two-and-a-half inches in diameter, secured with vines. In this way I was able to make an excavation two meters, fifty centimeters square, to a depth of seven meters. I then found a rough sort of urn of calcareous stone; it contained a little dust, and upon it the cover of a coarse earthen pot, painted with yellow ochre. (This cover has since been broken.) It was placed near the head of the statue, and the upper part, with the three feathers that adorn it, appeared among loose stones, placed around it with great care. Colonel D. Daniel Traconis, who had that day come to visit and bring me a few very welcome provisions, was present when it was discovered. [Traconis, a famous military commander in the area became governor of Yucatan in 1890]. I continued to work with precaution and had the satisfaction, after excavating one-and-a-half meters more to see the entire statue appear.



After some sleepless nights (the idea of being unable to present my discoveries to the world did not let me rest), I resolved to open the pedestal on the east side, form an inclined plane, construct a capstan, make ropes with the bark of the hablin (a tree that grows in these woods), and extract, by these means, my gem from the place where it lay. (Salisbury 1877:86, 87)

He describes the capstan he devised to pull the statue from the excavation:

The trunk of a tree, with two hollowed stones, were the fundamental pieces of the machine. These rings of stone were secured to the trunk with vines. Two forked poles, whose extremities rest at each side of the excavation, and the forked sticks tied up to the superior ring embracing it, served as arc-boutant in the direction where the greatest force was to be applied. A tree trunk, with its fork, served as a fulcrum around which was wound the cable of bark. A pole placed in the force served as a lever. It is with the aid of this rustic capstan that my ten men were able to raise the heavy mass to the surface in half an hour. (Salisbury 1877:87)

Again, worry of a Chan Santa Cruz attack was ever present:

They always had an ear attentive to catch the least sound that was perceived in the bush. The people of Crecencio Poot might fall upon us at any moment, and exterminate us. (Salisbury 1877:87)

Within the stone urn was found a broken flint blade, a jade bead, and organic material that Le Plongeon thought was from the cremated heart of Prince Chaacmol. In 1880, Charles Thompson, Ph.D., Professor of Chemistry at the Worcester Free Institute, analyzed the material and declared it "once part of a human body

which has been burned with some fuel" (Thompson 1880) At the base of the Chacmool were found 18 flint projectile points (seven of green stone), two flat ceramic plates, and one ceramic pot. The lithics are now on deposit at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. One additional artifact, reported by Alice to have been found in the urn, a jadite tube--called by her the Talisman of Queen M'oo--was mounted in gold by Augustus as a brooch, and kept by Alice as a symbol of her spiritual connection with the sister of Prince Chaacmol, Queen M'oo of Chichén Itzá. This talisman of Queen M'oo is now lost.

Finally, they moved the Chacmool to a hiding place on the way to Dzitas and then began negotiations to have it sent to Philadelphia to be part of the Centennial exposition.

On the 5th of January 1876, I conducted the statue of Chaacmol on the road to Dzitas, and at about a quarter of a mile from Piste, that is to say, far enough to put it out of the reach of mischief from the soldiers of the post, I placed it in a thicket about 50 yards from the road. There, with the help of Mrs. Le Plongeon, I wrapped it in oil-cloth, and carefully closed the boughs on the passage that led from the road to the place of concealment, so that a casual traveller, ignorant of the existence of such an object, would not even suspect it. (Salisbury 1877:97)

### The Chacmool

In January 1876, after Le Plongeon moved the Chacmool to a hiding place near Pisté, and returned to

Mérida, he wrote a letter to the then President of Mexico, Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, asking that he be allowed to take the Chacmool to Philadelphia to exhibit it at the Centennial Exposition. Further, he requested that he be made a member of a committee of Mexican scientists to accompany the exhibit, and that there be made space available to him in the Mexican section of the Exposition to display his finds. Finally, he requested that he be given presidential authorization to continue his investigations and armed protection where needed. After a long delay Tejada answered that the Chacmool could not be exported. The delay was due to the political upheavals he was facing (by November he was forced out of office by Porfirio Díaz).

Le Plongeon may have made his case too well, and perhaps he set the wheels in motion for the eventual confiscation of the Chacmool by Porfirio Díaz. But his next step, after the Tejada refusal, was to send a few small artifacts for display at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

The Le Plongeon lived in Mérida until September 1876, and visited Uxmal during July, later visiting Motul and Aké. Augustus states they spent eight days at Aké, but could remain no longer because

The malaria of that place very seriously affected the health of my wife, and obliged us to hasten back to Tixkokab. We brought with us the photographic views, and plans of the principal buildings regretting not to perfect our work by a complete survey of the whole of them, scattered as they are over a large extent of ground. (Salisbury 1877: 100)

Unable to move the Chacmool, but hoping that the artifacts and photos he sent to the Exposition might enthuse the American people about Maya civilization, he and Alice departed November 1876 for Isla Mujeres. They departed within days of Tejada's resignation, and they little realized that within four months the Chacmool would first be confiscated by the government of Yucatán, then be taken from Yucatán to Mexico City by soldiers sent by President Díaz. It all happened very quickly, and before the Le Plongeurs could take any action.

Bad luck also plagued the artifacts sent to the Centennial Exposition. They did not reach the Exposition in time, and, instead, were purchased by Stephen Salisbury for the American Antiquarian Society. The artifacts and photographs are now deposited with the Peabody Museum at Harvard, and the American Museum of Natural History in New York. The photos are presently in the archives of the Peabody Museum, as a set of eleven 20 x 24 inch display boards, with Le Plongeur photos pasted on them, and entitled "From the Wilds

of Yucatan." These cover Le Plongeon's work at Uxmal, Chichén Itzá, Aké and the Maya people of Yucatán.

In a letter to the provisional governor of Yucatán, Augustin del Rio, the Director of the Museo Yucateco, Juan Peon Contreras, recounts how he and an armed force left Mérida on February 1, 1877 to retrieve the Chacmool. They cut a road through the jungle and with "150 Indians" pulled the Chacmool on its wagon first to Izamal on February 26, and finally to Mérida on March 1 (Salisbury 1877:94). There was great excitement in the capital over the arrival of the Chacmool, and a holiday was declared. From an article in Mérida's Periodico Oficial, March 2, 1877:

An immense crowd filled the road that leads from the hacienda Multuncue to this Capital. The statue arriving at the spot called "la Cruz de Galvez," the military band broke into joyful strains executing a war march in keeping with the festivities. General Protasio Guerra, Governor and Military Commander of the State, headed the multitude in an open carriage accompanied by Counselor Dario Galera, and the Political Chief Pedro Echanore; near these citizens came the conducting commission, composed of the said Director of the Museum; of Lieutenant Colonel Landi and Commander Alfredo Tamaya, aide de-camp of the Governor. These were followed by a multitude of carriages and by an extensive and numerous concourse of people. The lyceums and municipal schools were also represented. It caused great satisfaction to see the bevy of children that attended this triumph of Science. The crowd took the road to the "Plaza de Majorada." When the colossal statue entered the "Calle de Porfirio Diaz," the music of the Master Cuevas, "The Hymn

of the State" was played. The sidewalks were filled with ladies and gentlemen up to the "Parque Central." At the time the Chaacmol passed in front of the Society "la Siempre Viva," the little girl Isabel Ciroot, a pupil of that lyceum, read a beautiful poem that we will publish later in this journal. We always believed that this Society, enthusiastic for scientific glories, would not fail to burn its grain of incense before the altar of the illustration. The triumphal entry of the effigy was then continued up to the main square, placed in the middle of the street between the park and the atrium of the Catholic church, it remained until after midday, when it was transported into the same atrio, where it will remain for some days on public exhibition. It was afterwards placed in the Museum for which it has been destined. During the time that it remained in the center of the street, facing the main square we had the pleasure of hearing Pedro Landi and Francisco Novelo Quijano, read compositions allusive to this great festival, and C. A. Tamoyo read a precious ode composed by our friend Rodolfo Menendez. We will publish those pieces at the first opportunity.

The statue of Chaacmol measures a little more than nine feet in length. His beautiful face is turned to one side in a threatening attitude and has a fierce expression. It is of hard stone, nearly granite-like. Resting upon a pedestal with the herculean arms upon the abdomen, he appears in the act of rising to execute a cruel and bloody order.

This precious object of antiquity whose origin is lost in the night of time is worthy of the study of thinking men. History and archaeology in their great and profound investigations will perhaps discover some day the arcanum that it encloses as all these precious monuments do that are studied by scholars and give proof of the antiquity of Maya civilization.

The entrance to the Capitol of the statue of Chaacmol will also form an epoch in the annals of Yucatecan history and it will be remembered along with Governor General Protasio Guerra under whose administrations our Museum has been enriched with a jewel so priceless. On the pedestal upon which rests the King-tiger, the following inscription should be placed: "Governing the Mexican Republic, the illustrious C. General Porfirio Diaz,

and the State of Yucatan, C. General Protasio Guerra, the colossal statue of Chaacmol was brought to the Capital in the midst of an immense multitude on the first of March 1877. (Periodico Oficial 1877)

The dedication originally had included Augustus Le Plongeon's name as discoverer, but deferring to the new President Díaz, Contreras thought it wise to substitute the president's name. The original dedication read, "The discovery of the wise archaeologist, Mr. Le Plongeon, in the ruins of Chichen Itza" (Salisbury 1877:95).

The politicians of Yucatán had their day, but it was short. The director of the museum, Señor Contreras, was shocked to learn that Governor del Rio had given in to pressure from Mexico City, agreeing to have the Chacmool carried off to the National Museum, possibly as another offering to the new President Díaz (a street had already been named after him). Del Rio's predecessor, Governor Protasio Guerra, only two months before, had arranged its installment in Mérida. Contreras wrote,

Still later, at the direction of the Governor of the State, Sr. D. Augustin del Rio, its transfer to the National Museum of Mexico was permitted, where so notable an archaeological monument will show to better advantage, leaving in its place a copy in plaster, made by a skillful Yucatecan artist. (Salisbury 1877:95)

How it must have galled the independent-minded Yucatecans to have their Chacmool moved to Mexico City! Even today there is a strong movement in areas such as Yucatán to keep archaeological finds in local museums. Apparently, to mollify the Yucatecans, President Díaz agreed to let them make a cast of it "by a skillful Yucatecan artist." Then, as if that were not enough, troops arrived from a Mexican warship and rushed off with the Chacmool before a cast could be made. Contreras adds in a note,

The unexpected arrival and early return to Vera Cruz of the national war steamer Libertad, which conducted the recovered statue to the Department of State, gave no time in which a copy of it could be taken in this capital, the Government of the State reserving the right to ask the President of the Republic, who resides in Mexico, to send such a copy to the Museo Yucateco, as a just compensation. (Salisbury 1877:95)

The Yucatecans were asking for "just compensation" from Mexico and, shortly, so would Le Plongeon. When he first heard that Governor Guerra had ordered the Chacmool brought to Mérida he sent a letter to him protesting the action

In consequence of all I have said, Senor General before you as Governor of the State, before the whole world, and before the Supreme Government of the Nation, we present ourselves claiming for us as our property the two statues [Chacmool and reclining jaguar of Chacmool] bas-relief of the same and other stones found by us; and protesting against any act which tends to deprive us of them making responsible the authors, be they who they may, for damages that may result to us. (1877a)



Lerdo stated, in his only response in 1876 to Le Plongeon's request to ship the Chacmool to Philadelphia, that Article 41 of the Law of the sixteenth of December 1827 expressly prohibited the exportation of Mexican antiquities. Le Plongeon's case rested on two parts: 1) Laws regulating the exportation of antiquities from Mexico; and 2) ownership of the Chacmool. There was no reason to apply further pressure for an export permit since the Centennial Exposition was almost over, but nothing in the Law of 1827 forbade the ownership of antiquities by private individuals. Le Plongeon felt he should at least receive some redress for the amount of money and labor it took to uncover the Chacmool. Additionally, Le Plongeon pointed out that he had found the piece in disputed territory--Chichén Itzá was not, at that time, under the control of the Mexican or Yucatecan governments. Finally, a law of Yucatán at the time specifically stated that objects found that are of value for the sciences and arts can be purchased at a just price from the finder, thus essentially acknowledging the ownership of the object by the individual.

Le Plongeon next appealed to the American Minister in Mexico City, John W. Foster, and the American Consul in Mérida, A. J. Lespinasse, but

received no assistance. It was "a personal question between yourself and the parties who took possession of the statue" stated Lespinasse (March 8, 1877). In September 1877 and again in April 1878 Le Plongeon wrote directly to President Díaz for return of the Chacmool, explaining most carefully his legal position and the amount of money and time he had expended in excavating it. Stephen Salisbury was asked to intercede through his Washington connections. Senator George Hoar of Massachusetts presented Le Plongeon's claims to the United States Congress in 1878, but they were never acted on. The matter was closed. The Chacmool was in Mexico City, and there it would remain. Le Plongeon would receive no compensation. Alice Le Plongeon, in a letter written in April 1877 to her friend Mrs. Gaylord, gives us some idea of how profoundly the confiscation of the prize of their labors affected her:

We have suffered from extreme indignation and sorrow, and have been quite unwell in consequence of what has happened. The bust and most beautiful fruit of our knowledge, labor, suffering, and heavy expenditures, stolen: and by the Government of the place where in we have made those expenses. . . . We have with satisfaction, together, deprived ourselves of all that makes life pleasant, and even of its commonest necessities, in order to complete our grand discovery. We have been sick to death in places where we could not procure medicine of any description, where, at times, we had not even bread; and when we could obtain a few black beans or some squash it was a feast.

Surrounded by enemies, Remington always at hand, death lurking for us in every direction. All this was nothing, for we were buoyed up with the pleasant thought of carrying Chaacmol back to the world. (April 3, 1877)

### The Akab Dzib

A short distance to the southeast of the Caracol is a structure called by the Maya the Akab Dzib. In Maya this has been interpreted by some to mean "house of dark writing," since a hieroglyphic lintel over the entrance to room two is located in a room where light is somewhat obscured. The interpretation may not be correct since the sun in the west does lighten the room considerably during the afternoon. Another interpretation of Akab Dzib might be a house of writing that pertains to matters of religion or priestcraft--the occult.

It is not known whether the lintel was contemporaneous with the structure, or if it was installed in an earlier structure and then reused when the south wing was built. The sequence of construction of the building has been a question in the minds of archaeologists for some time. In his 1952 report for the Carnegie Institution, Karl Ruppert states that the small, central, west-facing building was constructed first, and the north-and-south wings and core area added immediately after. The core is a huge foundation,

built of large stones laid out in even courses, with earth and rubble packed between, rising to roof height. A second level was never built on the foundation. Since there are finished facing stones on the east wall of the west central structure facing the core it seems likely that the wings, which have no finished stones, were built in conjunction with the core area after the central building a considerable time later.

Le Plongeon was interested in the Akab Dzib primarily because it contained the hieroglyphic lintel. His photos of the west side of the building and the lintel are the earliest renditions of the Akab Dzib, as is his floor plan.

Alfred P. Maudslay, in his Biologia Centrali-Americana (1889-1902), provides an excellent drawing of the lintel both above the door and the underside. No Le Plongeon photo of the underside of the lintel has been found, but he may have photographed it since he photographed all the important reliefs at Chichén Itzá. Maudslay's drawings were made from moulds he fabricated at the site around 1900. Le Plongeon also made a mould of the lintel, but it is now lost. Frederick Catherwood's drawing of the lintel was published in 1843 in Incidents of Travel in

Yucatan, and Désiré Charnay included a drawing of it in his book Ancient Cities of the New World (1887). The Catherwood drawing is superior to Charnay's, which lacks glyptic detail; but neither of them give the amount of information contained in the Le Plongeon photo or the Maudslay drawing.

The Le Plongeon photo, taken in room one with no direct sunlight, required a long exposure and a good deal of trial and error before a good negative could have been made. He describes taking the photo: "With care I washed the slab, then with black crayon darkened its surface until the intaglio letters appeared in white on a dark background" (Salisbury 1877:118). He took the photo in stereo which further enhanced its clarity.

His floor plan of the Akab Dzib is quite accurate, and varies little from Karl Ruppert's drawing in Carnegie Institution Publication 595 (1952:92). Room nine is the only exception, and is about one meter smaller in the Le Plongeon drawing. The notations on Le Plongeon's drawing describe the room as 8.40 meters long, while Ruppert's text states it is 8.90 meters long. When each drawing is measured, the room is eight meters on the Le Plongeon drawing, and nine meters on the Ruppert drawing. Also, in his

drawing Le Plongeon records tunneling in rooms seven, seventeen, nine and ten. Ruppert states (1952:94) that a tunnel from room seven was there prior to 1924, and he notes access to the eastern wall facing the core in room nine, but says nothing about its age. Nor does he comment on tunneling from rooms seventeen or ten. The Le Plongeon drawing hypothesizes a mirror image of the west central structure (rooms nine and ten) by dashed lines in the center of the core area. Apparently, he observed the filled-in rooms on the second level of the Monjas and conjectured that a similar method might have been used to provide a foundation for a second level on the Akab Dzib. The northeast corner of the structure is shown to have collapsed in the plan, but is intact in the Catherwood drawing which dates from 1842.

#### Maya Hieroglyphics and the Electric Telegraph

In the letter of 1877 to President Tejada, Le Plongeon makes his first reference to the meaning of the hieroglyphic lintel in room one of the Akab Dzib.

I have discovered hieroglyphics which I have caused to reappear intact, and taken photographs of some that are said to be a prophecy of the establishment of the electric telegraph between Saci (Valladolid of to-day), and Ho (Merida). (Salisbury 1877:85)

With the best of academic wording, ("that are said to be a prophecy") he makes the point that it is not his interpretation, but another's. Two months later, in a letter to Stephen Salisbury of the American Antiquarian Society, he gives detailed information on his contention that the ancient Maya priests prophesied the use of the telegraph.

When Alice and Augustus were in Espita, on the way to Chichén Itzá via Tizimin and Valladolid in 1875, the curate of Espita, Señor Dominguez, introduced them to a very old man named Mariano Chablé (said by some to have reached the astounding age of 150 years). Augustus, willing to gather as much information as possible on Chichén Itzá before arriving there, interviewed the man through an interpreter who fluently spoke both Spanish and Maya. Le Plongeon says he did not know enough at that time to hold a long conversation. Out of the interviews, however, Le Plongeon discovered two very important facts: the first, that a man named Manuel Alayon, who died in 1835, "had a book that none but he could read," a "sacred book"; and second, the statement by Chablé about the hieroglyphic text in the Akab Dzib, that "A day would come when the inhabitants of Saci would converse with those of Ho (Mérida) by means of a cord, that would be

stretched by people not belonging to the country" (Salisbury 1877:117). Le Plongeon continues to explain that "Old Chablé" had no knowledge of the telegraph, which convinced him that there must be something to the story since his informant had no reason to deceive him.

Upon arriving at Chichén Itzá, he went straight away to the Akab Dzib and searched for the lintel. One can see from a photo that the building was quite overgrown, but undaunted they searched the rooms and finally found it in room one. After clearing the lintel they saw to their astonishment the glyphs that represented to them "lightning" or electricity, and that the cord spoken of by Chablé was represented in the glyphs as one moves from right to left. With almost no explanation by Augustus of his glyphic analysis, his interpretation was published in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society in 1877, and soon thereafter was misinterpreted as: Le Plongeon stated that the Maya used the telegraph for communication.

Le Plongeon had hoped to gain insight into deciphering the hieroglyphs through older Maya persons who might have had some knowledge of the glyphs. No one at that time, and for a long time thereafter, was sure if anyone retained the ability to read the glyphs.



To this day little has been done in the way of analysis of the texts of Chichén Itzá. Researchers have been concentrating their efforts on the Peten area and find the texts in Yucatán quite different. Dorie Reents of the University of Texas states in regard to the Akab Dzib lintel,

Given the iconography, one could follow the possibility that this is an accession text [a new ruler has been elevated to the throne] or some other bloodletting event. However, we do not have the iconographic understanding and glyphic control for the Yucatecan carvings that we have for the Peten. (Reents 1981)

Thus, to date, we are not much better off than we were in Le Plongeon's day with regard to understanding the texts. Translation should come more easily once scholars begin concentrating their efforts on that area.

An important observation made by Le Plongeon at Chichén Itzá was that the hieroglyphics were the result of influences from a number of areas, including that of Palenque. He found Chichén Itzá to have a much longer cultural history than Palenque. Late in the history of Chichén Itzá people from the Tabasco area moved eastward into Yucatán.

But since its foundation [Palenque], people from its neighborhood abandoned their country and homes, traveled Eastward toward the coast, leaving traces of their passage, invaded the Yucatan Peninsula, and settling among its inhabitants, at the same time that they accepted new customs, also ingrafted

some of their own, with their arts and sciences on those of the Mayas. Hence the introduction of Palenque characters in the Maya alphabet, and vice versa. (1881b:255)

Le Plongeon's belief that Chichén Itzá glyphs represent a "pure" Maya style is opposed by most scholars today, as is his position that Palenque glyphs were non-Maya. But his observation that invaders came from the Tabasco coast into Yucatán bringing non-Maya cultural traits is accepted today by Mayanists.

These invaders were the Putun Maya, an aggressive people from the Tabasco region (not from Palenque), who were greatly influenced by highland Mexican (Nahau) civilization. They invaded Yucatán a number of times between the years 700 and 900 A.D., and were carriers of new ideas and absorbers of the old. Le Plongeon states,

There can be no possible doubt that different races or rather nations practicing distinct religious rites inhabited the country at different epochs and destroyed each other by war. So at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards the monuments of Chichen Itza were in ruins and were looked upon with awe, wonder and respect, by the inhabitants of the country, when the city of Uxmal was thickly peopled. There cannot be any reasonable doubt that the Nahuas, the invaders and destroyer of the Itza metropolis, introduced the phallic worship into Yucatan. The monuments of Uxmal do not date from so remote an antiquity as those of Chichen, notwithstanding that Uxmal was a large city when Chichen was at the height of its glory. Some of the most ancient edifices have been enclosed with new walls and ornamentation to suit the taste and fancy of the conquerors. (Salisbury 1877:99)

From Yucatan to Belize

During the years they fought for the return of the Chacmool, Alice and Augustus also carried out explorations of the east coast of Yucatán, including such sites as Cancun, Niscuté, El Meco, and the islands of Mujeres and Cozumel.

They sailed for the Isla Mujeres on November 20, 1876 aboard the Viva, described by Augustus as

A small boat about 15 tones calibre. . . . All things considered--putting aside discomfort, danger of capsizing, and all other small inconveniences that we have become accustomed to bear patiently we did not fare as bad as we expected. (1876a)

Alice did not fare as well as Augustus, and recorded the crossing in her diary:

[November] 21. At dusk anchored a short distance from land at a place called Telchac. How stupid I was to come in this miserable boat! [November] 22. Stopped at Sacrisan, and again at Hocum. Don't know why. [November] 23. Stopped at Dzilan. Wish the water would stop. Head wind. Heavy thunderstorm. Very rough. Extra sick. Wish I was dead! [November] 24. Stopped at Holbox. Feel a little better. Ate a cracker. Fine weather.

And she adds

To those who have been seasick I need offer no apology for such a diary, they will fully understand that I am not responsible. (1886a:2)

The Le Plongeurs sailed on to Contoy Island, arrived at Isla Mujeres on December 2, and anchored in the Bay of Dolores. Alice, in her Here and There in Yucatan,

gives some delightful accounts of their adventures along the coast of Yucatán, but we will give only the highlights and emphasize mostly the archaeological aspects of the trip.

Alice and Augustus sought the Maya city of Ekab (Ecab) which, according to the historian Cogolludo, was on the mainland west of Isla Mujeres, but they were unable to locate it. Augustus thought it might now be called El Meco.

From the door of my dwelling about 6 miles distant we see the main land and with the spyglass among the woods the ruins of an ancient city called-- in illo tempore--Ekab--today Mecco. No traveller has ever mentioned it in modern times. The old chronicles speak of Ekab as a large city, inhabited even at the time of the conquest. Today it is in the territory of hostile Indians who without asking if they like it or not, invariably kill every white individual who dare to indulge for a stroll on their premises. Customs, friend, are said to change with time--when the Spaniards first landed there, those people were very kind, welcomed them with open arms and doors--but since then, the conquerors and their descendants having made them selves obnoxious to the people--these in turn have changed their mild habits and acquired the strange custom of cutting any intruder to pieces. (1876a)

### Isla Mujeres

They began their exploration of Isla Mujeres soon after they arrived and headed directly for the ruins at the south end of the island. Augustus hired a boat and under the watchful eyes of the island's inhabitants sailed down the coast. Since the island

had been used for years as a pirate's lair it was thought that Alice and Augustus were on a treasure hunt. They came upon a small destroyed structure on the east side of the island near the south point first. Le Plongeon was told that the walls stood in 1848, "but were demolished by the people who immigrated at that time, in order to procure materials for building their houses" (Salisbury 1878:80). Then, on the narrowest part of the point, they found and drew a plan of the main temple. Included in Salisbury's article "Terra Cotta Figurine from Isla Mujeres" (1878) is a thorough description by Le Plongeon of the structure, and a brief mention of a Dr. Febregas who had excavated there in previous years. They returned a few days later with Señor Don Salustino Castro from Cozumel and his family. The Le Plongeon joined them in their boat on their "outing to see the ruins" and, thus, avoided the arduous walk to the south end of the island. It was during the trip on December 28 that Augustus found the figurine pictured in Salisbury's article (1878:72), which was broken by an assistant too eager with a shovel. He describes the incident.

At the foot of the altar, on the south side, I saw a place that had all the appearance of having once been disturbed. . . . I called for a shovel, one of the servants was soon by my side with the instrument called for, and in order to show his willingness to please me, unasked he thrust with

all his might the tool into the soft sand, and with a smile of pride at his exploit, brought forth a foot within a sandal, which have unmistakable marks of having just been amputated from its corresponding leg. He was about to repeat the operation when I swiftly interposed. Falling on my knees, in presence of all the picnicking party, with my own hands, I carefully removed the damp sand from around an incense burner, of which the whole body of a female in a squatting posture had occupied the front part. It had lain there for ages, but alas! it was now before us in pieces. (Salisbury 1878:83)

Then on January 2, 1877 he returned on another boat and photographed the ruins, but only two prints remain.

From Isla Mujeres they took a small boat and visited El Meco. Augustus writes,

There I found a ruined edifice surrounded by a wall forming an inclosure, adorned with rows of small columns. In the centre of the inclosure an altar. The edifice, composed of two rooms, is built on a graduated pyramid composed of seven andenes. This building is without a doubt an ancient temple. (Salisbury 1877:103)

They found similar structures at Niscuté and surmised that these small structures had been constructed by a race of small people--"dwarfs." Since they had heard numerous tales of the Aluxob (a magical race of small people said to be living in the jungles of Yucatán) and knew there was a tradition of "little people" among the Maya, they concluded the small buildings were the work of these same diminutive persons.

Augustus had intentions of visiting the Maya city of Tulum, but was unable to do so because of the presence of the Cruzob in the city. At that time the village of Tulum, about three miles from the ruins, was under the control of a priestess who spoke for the cross at her village. It had been, and still was, a particularly holy place and she had, through the power of the cross, ordered the execution of a missionary who had landed in their territory near Tulum. Le Plongeon wanted badly to visit Tulum, but did not have enough protection to hazard such a trip. Alice writes

Three miles from the ancient city is a new village, Tulum Pueblo, whose inhabitants come regularly to the old castle to burn copal, incense, and wax candles; and practice rites of the religion of their forefathers. These people are ruled by a queen, named Maria Uicab. It is as much as one's life is worth to land at Tulum; the natives being very hostile, make it necessary to be always on the alert and ready to take to the boat or fight. (1886a:65-66)

### Isla Cozumel

By early February 1877, the Le Plongeon were settled on Isla Cozumel, and would remain there until June. After they landed at San Miguel, Alice describes their attempts to set up housekeeping:

Having no tent to pitch, we emphatically insisted on a house, and were at last allowed to take possession of a one-room residence at the southeast corner of the square. It was gloomy, damp, dirty; the floor thickly strewn with dry cocoa-nuts. It had two doors but no window. In one corner there

was a pile of cocoa-nuts, to which we immediately began adding others. We were throwing one after another as fast as possible when the old priest of the village introduced himself and said he was glad to find out what the noise was, and he had feared it might be an earthquake coming on; though they had never had one in Cozumel. Father Rejon was in his shirt sleeves, for, said he, "I cannot afford to wear a coat every day." He invited us to go and play cards with him in the evening; and also gave us the welcome intelligence that our house was haunted. (1886a:28-29)

### The Priest

The Le Plongeons were also befriended by a local man called Father Rejon, who according to his own claim, suffered from the evil eye, but enjoyed a fine game of manilla. The local Maya were forever accusing him of nefarious deeds such as looking at a pig, causing it to drop dead, and then, of course, asking for remuneration. The poor cura could do little about the affliction and was convinced of its authenticity.

Augustus, while examining a small structure about a mile from the village (the doors, according to Le Plongeon, were three feet high and 20 inches wide) had a near fatal accident. Father Rejon had brought them to a spot where they had found a cenote somewhat obscured by a heavy growth of brush. Augustus, to get a better look into the cenote, leaned on a weak branch which instantly gave way causing him to plummet



to the rocks below. He incurred a severe gash on his forehead which bled profusely. Alice could not control the bleeding with a tight handkerchief so she and one of the Maya assistants clambered to the water below to get a gourd full so as to wet the kerchief and stop the bleeding. Try as she might she could not reach the water--two inches more and she could have filled the gourd. Meanwhile Augustus was bleeding dangerously. His cut ran from the top of his forehead to the eyebrow, "disclosing the bone." The Maya would not help her, apparently feeling the water to be sacred, so in desperation she drew her revolver and ordered the Maya to fill the gourd. After applying the wet handkerchief

under a scorching sun we walked back to our thatched cottage. Then I had to play at surgeon. Certainly the patient was much to be pitied in my hands; nor did I like the business. It was a jagged wound; bled for six hours, in spite of perchloride of iron, and refused to close by first intention. After a new skin formed, I had to cut it to extract splinters that worked their way to the surface, though we believed they had all been washed out. (1886a:51)

### Belize

Their trip to British Honduras (Belize) aboard the Truinfo, captained by a smuggler named "Antonio," was quite eventful, as one might expect. Alice describes one night aboard:

We went down into the little hole called the cabin, to find that the turtles did not leave room for more than one person. The atmosphere was sickening, but having a severe cold I remained below, sitting on the floor among the turtles, keeping out of reach of their horny bills, lest they should visit their just wrath on my innocent head.

After a while, insensibly to myself, one of my fellow sufferers was utilized as a pillow. I was aroused by members of the cockroach colony that seemed to have selected me as a site to hold a mass meeting. From a second troubled doze upon my turtle pillow I was awakened by a shout and, going to the foot of the scuttle, saw my husband holding the tiller, giving orders in not sweet Spanish. His attention had been attracted by a strange sound; peering through the darkness he saw that the boat was sailing straight toward breakers, but a few yards ahead. A glance showed him that the man at the helm was sound asleep; he pushed him aside and veered the boat.

Not even a star glimmered overhead; we therefore went back about half a mile and hove to till morning. Daylight showed that we were entirely out of our course, and had been close upon the reefs at the entrance of Ascension Bay, where the water is very deep and alive with sharks. (1886a: 66-72)

Bahía de la Ascensión was but a few miles from the capital of the Cruzob at Chan Santa Cruz, and to land on any part of the coast meant certain death. They finally arrived in Belize City, but waited until after dark to allow "Antonio" to "smuggle in a few thousand cigars" to the local tobacconist" (1886a:69).

The British had been in Belize since the late seventeenth century. Originally the region had been exploited by the British for a wide range of lumber products, and then in the latter half of the eighteenth century specifically for mahogany. When Alice and

Augustus arrived along with "Antonio" and his cigars, the colony was under the governorship of Henry Fowler, the Lieutenant Governor was Frederick Barlee, and the Chief Justice was William A. Parker. These all became life-long friends of the Le Plongesons.

Information on the Le Plongesons' activities while in Belize is sketchy. They made several explorations into northern Belize and possibly Honduras. It is not clear whether they traveled to Honduras to acquire a number of artifacts from General Don Luis Bogran (which were eventually deposited at the Peabody Museum), or whether he met them in Belize. In a letter to a Mr. Lewis in New York He states, "I will also visit the island of Cozumel and Copan perhaps" (1876). In northern Belize they spent four months exploring the ruins and attempted to see the sites near Bacalar, petitioning Crecencio Poot, leader of the Cruzob, for permission, but were unsuccessful.

Alice gave a lecture on Yucatán, illustrated by Augustus' photos, which was attended by Barlee and Parker, among other notables of the Colony. It was a great success and raised a good sum of money for a local Catholic school for the poor. The lecture, "Notes on Yucatan," was published in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society in 1879.

The Le Plongeons at this time were beginning to suffer financial difficulties, and things would not improve for them in the 1880s. In a letter to Salisbury in 1878, Augustus states, "I have taken more views of Belize, in order to dispose of them here and pay our daily expenses" (1878b). A new friend, Mr. Benar, was asked to help find a buyer for some of their pictures in London, and was given a letter of introduction to Alice's father Henry Dixon, but we do not know if anything came of the photos' sales in London. In another letter to Salisbury (1878a), Augustus thanked him for all the assistance he had given them in their efforts to make known their researches, but added that they were very short of funds and were prevented from doing anything further-- unsupported as they were by any private or public institution. Le Plongeon then suggested to Salisbury that he contact President Hayes to see if the Mexican government could be convinced to provide him with armed protection in the area of Chichén Itzá. Salisbury was told to tell Hayes he (Le Plongeon) had secreted a number of important sculptures that would bring renown to those who assisted him in presenting them to the world--renown equivalent to the finds of Schliemann, or Cesnola of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Augustus must have, by this point in his work, expended most of what money he had acquired in land dealings in California in the 1850s and what money he had earned in Peru through photography, publishing and as a physician. The expenditures for travel, living and the payment of Maya workers must have been great even by nineteenth century standards. By the time the Le Plongeons returned from Yucatán in 1884, Augustus was 58 years old and had hoped to teach and to write in order to support himself and Alice. As we shall see later those sources of income would become closed to him.

A Short Trip to New York:  
April 1880

In April 1880, the Le Plongeons returned to New York in order to secure political and monetary backing. Possibly their return was motivated by Alice's attacks of yellow fever and Augustus' malaria. By all accounts they were successful. Pierre Lorillard provided some financial backing, and Stephen Salisbury, after discussions about their research, arranged meetings in Washington with Secretary of State S. M. Everts. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Field, an old friend of Augustus Le Plungeon from his gold rush days in Marysville, also applied his influence in Washington,

and the outcome of the meeting with Everts was his agreement to see that Le Plongeon got permits to work in Yucatán. He had already instructed John W. Foster, in 1878, to assist Le Plongeon in his Chacmool claims, but Foster, as it turned out, was no help in the issue. We will see later on their return to Yucatán that they were given, through the intercession of Judge Phillip Morgan, the blessings of President Porfirio Díaz to continue their work in Yucatán. One compromise they made was to drop their claims for the Chacmool. Everts, Morgan and Salisbury made it clear to Le Plongeon that he could make fine progress in Mexico if the claim was set aside.

Shortly before his departure, Augustus discussed the possibility of an exploration of Tulum with Lorillard. But, as Augustus explained, under the political circumstances it would be impossible. Somewhat displeased and suffering from gout, Lorillard agreed to more limited objectives. Money was provided, and in 1886 Augustus dedicated his book, Sacred Mysteries, to Lorillard in gratitude for his assistance.

#### Return to Yucatán

After eight days at sea they landed in Progreso on July 8, 1880, and soon traveled to Mexico City at

the request of the American Minister, Judge Phillip Morgan, to discuss their research plans in Yucatán. According to Le Plongeon, Judge Morgan was "a perfect gentleman in every sense of the word" (1880a). On September 25, they had their first meeting with President Porfirio Díaz.

He received us, I must say with opened arms, and appeared gratified that I should have come to Mexico and have paid my respects to him. I told him what I wanted from the Mexican government. He was impressed that I should ask for so little. . . . [to be allowed to excavate] the ruined monuments of Yucatan and exporting the moulds of the inscriptions, bas reliefs, etc., that we might take. General Diaz then added, "and all objects that you may find underground will be yours provided you leave a small part for our Museum." (1880c)

General Díaz was merely reiterating the law that one owned what one found.

Then, again, near the end of October, Alice and Augustus met with President Díaz, but this time socially at his house. "Then and there," Augustus wrote, "he repeated his offers spontaneously made [previously] in the presence of the American Minister" (1880e).

#### Enmity Between Le Plongeon and Charnay

Before the Le Plongeon left Mexico City for Yucatán, Augustus gave several lectures at the National Museum, and made a cast of the head of the Chacmool.

Désiré Charnay, the French photographer, was also present in Mexico City at this time, and Le Plongeon, in his letter to Stephen Salisbury dated November 2, 1880, gives us a humorous anecdote that tells us something of the enmity that existed between Charnay and Le Plongeon:

Mr. Morgan gave a ball in honor of Mrs. Le Plongeon . . . at the ball were part of the diplomatic corps and some of the most prominent members of the American population or colony in the city. Mr. Charnay was invited in order to meet me--he arrived at 9 PM. As Mrs. Le Plongeon had to fix one of her dresses for the occasion, with the help of her lady friends, we did not go until a little after 10. When we entered Mr. Charnay was conversing with the correspondent of The World. When Judge Morgan presented Mrs. Le Plongeon and myself to Señor Zamacona, the ex-minister of Mexico at Washington, Mr. Charnay heard our name, and asked if I was Dr. Le Plongeon from Yucatan--on being answered in the affirmative, he soon rose and was seen no more in the ballroom or any where else in the legation during that night. (1880e)

Augustus states, further, that he had on other occasions met with Charnay, but he (Charnay) always found an excuse to avoid him. He was not a man of "manners and good breeding," Le Plongeon concluded. This was only the beginning of a rivalry between the two that would go on for several years, but strangely their paths would never cross again. By November 1880, the Le Plongeon family, having been feted by the diplomatic community in Mexico for two months, were back in Yucatán



and had resumed their research, no longer in pursuit of the Chacmool.

### Mayapán

Their time in Yucatán was spent in research at Mayapán and Augustus wrote, as a result, his paper "Mayapan and Maya Inscriptions." It was published in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society in 1881. This was their first visit to that site and with the monetary assistance of Lorillard and the hospitality of Don Vicente Solis de Leon, one of the owners of the hacienda within which Mayapán was situated, and all went very well.

Augustus intended, as one of his primary purposes for being at Mayapán, to strengthen his argument that Bishop Landa's Maya alphabet was of some use in understanding Maya hieroglyphics:

I am nevertheless far from agreeing with Prof. Valantini, that the characters preserved by the fanatical Bishop, as by a miracle (he being most enthusiastic in the destruction of all the books and things belonging to the Mayas that fell into his hands), were not used even as late as his time. For I ask how can a reasonable and honest man deny that the probabilities are in favor of Landa? Unless we take him for a fool or an imposter, how are we to dispose of his assertion, when he says, speaking of the stones he saw at Mayapan: They were inscribed with characters used by them (y que tienen renglones de las caracteres que ellos usan.) He does not say usaban, in the past, but usan in the present. (1881b:255-256)

Scholars today would agree that the Landa alphabet is not a fabrication, but its practical use in deciphering the Maya script is limited.

His next insight at Mayapán was that a large mound he found (with two upright columns on top) was used as an astronomical gnomon. Frederick Ober states the mound was "situated about one hundred metres from the corner of the principal pyramid (named anciently Kukulkan)" (1884:97). This researcher has been unable to identify the "gnomen" mound at Mayapán.

By placing a style, or any narrow object, on the top of the columns, so as to rest on the centers C-C', and noticing when its shadow fell perpendicularly on the platform and covered exactly the line they had traced for that purpose between the stelae, they knew when the sun had passed on their zenith, which phenomenon occurs twice every year, in March and July [May]. (1881b:275-276)

He surveyed the pyramid of Kukulán and concluded it to be of a late date-it is Postclassic.

This mount, as all those that I designate as belonging to the latter period, in order to distinguish them from the most ancient, (which are built of solid stone masonry from their foundations to their summits, as those of Khorsabad), is made of loose unhewn stones and rubbish, piled up so as to form the interior mass, which was then encased by a facing of carefully hewn stones. (1881b:278)

Not having excavated the finely built structures of the classic Maya period, Le Plongeon assumed them to be built of cut stone, and not filled rubble as is the case. The structures at Mayapán are Postclassic, and

are not constructed with the care and precision of earlier Maya buildings, which led Le Plongeon to assume the difference in construction method.

When he was first shown the "Stela of Mayapán" (now called Stela 1), he had hoped that it might be a rosetta stone of the Maya, but upon closer observation he found the whole upper section weather-worn to the point of uselessness.

On examining attentively the few lines that remain of the characters once engraved on each of the compartments, we thought for an instant, that at last we had stumbled upon such a monument as we are in hopes of finding some day, an inscription written in two or three languages, one of them known perhaps. . . . Alas! had our hopes been gratified, of what earthly use would it have been to us in the present instance, these carvings being so obliterated by the hand of time and the action of water. (1881b:258)

In his analysis of the iconography of the lower section of the "Stela of Mayapán" his method of deducing the meaning of the floral design is similar to the comparative method used by iconographers today. He explained that a similar relief was found "on the antae sustaining the north-east end of the portico of the castle [Castillo]" (1881b:259), and in the Lower Temple of the Jaguars, also at Chichén Itzá. To identify the individual so portrayed he looked to the flowered head-dress as a clue. He believed it to be the Cocom flower, "It is a peculiar yellow flower, well-known in

the eastern and southern portions of the Peninsula" (1881b:259). And then, he states, from the Maya dictionary of Don Pio Perez the definition of Cocom to be

Cocom is a sarmentous plant, with yellow flowers. . . . Cocom was the name of an ancient Maya dynasty, and is still preserved as an Indian family name among the natives of Yucatan." (1881b:260)

Then, Le Plongeon notes more evidence from Landa for the name of the individual on the stela,

That after the departure of Kukulcan, the lords agreed in order to make their republic stable, to give the principal command of it to the house of the Cocomes, either because it was the most ancient, or perhaps the richest, or may be that the man then at its head, was the one of most worth among them. (1881b:260)

Le Plongeon concluded that the personage was of great authority because of his height on the stela relative to the other figure, who is

but on a low stool (a proof of his inferiority) in order to reach, somewhat, to the exalted position of his lord, who is pictured condescending to stoop toward his subordinate, clearly indicates that Cocom is the King. (1881b:261)

If Le Plongeon's identification of the floral relief is correct the name may be of the historic person Cocom.

In the end Le Plongeon thanked all parties for the assistance that made his research possible, and sent casts to Lorillard, who then donated them to the American Antiquarian Society. Le Plongeon then returned to New York in November, after more research at Uxmal.

Another Short Visit to  
New York: 1881

Early in 1880, the Le Plongeons had become acquainted with General Luigi Palma de Cesnola, Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and General Cesnola requested that Le Plungeon make casts of his moulds so that he could arrange an exhibit. Alice continues with an account of how Cesnola had not only failed to exhibit the pieces after the Le Plongeons had spent a great deal of money in their preparation, but how he had also mishandled the casts.

General Cesnola begged us to have casts made from some of these [moulds of Uxmal], promising to exhibit them in the Museum of Art and thus open the way to the purchase of our entire collection. At our own cost we then had architectural sections made, particularly one that had been reproduced in Paris, from our photographs, in a work of comparative architecture. General Cesnola received these casts at the Museum; but they were placed in its basement, never exhibited, and then when we again returned to New York we found many of them broken. General Cesnola greatly resented our chagrin and never forgave us for expressing it, although our remarks were more than moderate and self-contained. (1900a)

So upon their arrival in New York, at the end of 1881, they found Cesnola had failed in his promises to them. Augustus did exhibit his photos at the American Archaeological Exhibition in Madrid that year and we can assume he received some compensation for that work. The four months spent in New York were, again,

to set their finances in order, prepare for another trip to Yucatán, and to arrange for the publishing of his Vestiges of the Mayas. It appears that the Le Plongeons received no financial assistance from the American Antiquarian Society, nor any other funding source at this point. Feeling that his patrons had deserted him in favor of persons like Désiré Charnay and the American Consul in Mérida, Louis Aymé, Augustus saw no reason to continue supplying them with the fruits of his research. This, and efforts on the part of persons within the Society to isolate Le Plongeon, caused a continuing widening of the cleavage. What may have bothered Le Plongeon was seeing important friends like Salisbury falling under the spell of others less talented. Charnay, Augustus pointed out, was fast becoming a joke among Mexican scholars, and was being used by certain unethical Mexicans as a source of new and unusual artifacts. Charnay was not a party to any criminal act as far as Augustus knew, but others watching his excavations would loot the sites, later using what information they could extract from him to find artifacts (Le Plongeon 1880e).

Charnay's photographic output never came close to Le Plongeon's, since he spent only a short amount of time at each site. Additionally, there was a dispute

over mould making, with Charnay claiming his work was superior to Le Plongeon's. Le Plongeon countered by having experts attest to the exquisite detail in his work. This dispute must remain unresolved until the Le Plongeon moulds can be found and the analysis made. A number of the Charnay moulds are in the storerooms of the Peabody Museum at Harvard.

There was something very basic in Charnay's personality that drew the wrath of Augustus. Possibly it was his elitist attitude toward the Maya, or perhaps his official connections with the French government, which had invaded Mexico, that provoked Le Plongeon. Or possibly it was Charnay's achievements, which Augustus saw as small compared to the financial assistance he received. Not all financial aid to Charnay came from the French government, but the aid he received from Lorillard, and the approval he received from the American Antiquarian Society, hit Le Plongeon in a particularly sore spot.

As mentioned previously, Le Plongeon and Charnay met only once, in Mexico City, late in 1880. Fortunately, they did not have any other meetings. Charnay came to Mexico in 1880, and left again in July 1882. The Le Plongeon's were also in Mexico in July 1882, but in Mérida while Charnay was in Mexico City.

Augustus threatened to give him "the cold shoulder" (Augustus LePlongeon 1881d) should he and Charnay meet.

The Break with the American  
Antiquarian Society

In June 1882, Augustus submitted his letter of resignation to the American Antiquarian Society:

I hope you have been so kind as to place in the hands of the recording secretary of the American Antiquarian Society my letter of resignation as a member of the same; with the papers accompanying it. (1882b)

He continues by asking the return of "objects of antiquity" he had left with the Society for safe-keeping, and states in no uncertain terms, that he does not want to have his name associated with persons he considers amateurs in the field of Maya studies.

Some influential members of the Society had been pressuring Stephen Salisbury to back men like the American Consul Louis Aymé, who, according to Le Plongeon, were unable to take a decent photo, let alone "even say 'Goodmorning' in the vernacular of Yucatan" (1882b).

Further, he alleged that Aymé (elected a member of the Society in 1882) was instrumental in an attempt made on the lives of himself and Alice at Uxmal. He finished his letter sarcastically with

You will understand--will you not? That Dr. Le Plongeon feels too much his own unworthiness to permit his obscure name to remain in the same list



with those such eminent Antiquarians as Mr. Ayme and his personal friend of Worcester. (1882b)

And, in a postscript,

I have heard a man saying the other day: In our days to the most shameless the victory. Be shameless and you are sure to succeed--for there are still many fools remaining in the world who will rather believe the lies told by certain individuals, than credit the truth from the mouth of honest men--What do you say of such opinion? (1882b)

Stephen Salisbury seems to have been caught in a dispute between Le Plongeon and those within the Society. Analysis, thus far, does not clearly indicate the nature of the dispute, that is, if it was personal, or based on professional opinions concerning the nature of Maya civilization.

It is clear from a letter by Louis Aymé to Stephen Salisbury (1880) that Aymé had taken the side of Désiré Charnay, but the grounds of the dispute between Le Plongeon and Charnay are not stated.

As early as 1877, Samuel Haven, librarian for the American Antiquarian Society, had taken a position against Le Plongeon. In his report to the Society for October 1877, he stated

The principle paper is an effort on the part of one of our associates, Mr. Stephen Salisbury, Jr., to present in an intelligible and appreciative manner, the claims of Dr. Augustus Le Plongeon to have made surprising and greatly significant discoveries at Chichen-Itza in Yucatan. (1877: 96)

Haven continues "Like Brasseur he [Le Plongeon] is an enthusiast, but less guarded and more impetuous" (1877:97).

In the April 1878 Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, Philipp J. J. Valentini published a paper titled "The Mexican Calendar Stone." Professor Valentini was an important contributor to the Proceedings, and well thought of in scholarly circles.

But in his letter of September 29, 1880, to Stephen Salisbury, Le Plongeon makes the following damning statement about Valentini's paper on the Calendar Stone.

I have seen Mr. Alfredo Chavero. I do not know how far he is justified, but he pretends that Professor Valentini has robbed him of his own interpretation of the Calendar Stone. He showed me letters of Valentini asking him the meaning of several signs. The Minister of Justice Mr. Mariscal has assured me that Mr. Chavero has published a pamphlet long ago on said Calendar Stone, and that he had studied it since many years. Mr. Chavero has promised to send me a copy of his own work. (1880f)

Benjamin Keen, in his important work, The Aztec Image, states of Chavero,

Chavero was a careful student of codices and manuscripts who edited works by Ixtlilxochitl, Duran, and Munoz Camargo, and published numerous essays on Aztec topics. (Keen 1971:424)

If Le Plongeon's letter was shown to Valentini, and it seems very likely Valentini was at least told about it, he must have been determined to get back at

Le Plongeon. In his article, "The Olmecas and the Tultecas," published in the Proceedings only three months after the resignation of Le Plongeon in 1882, Valentini attempts to discredit Le Plongeon's scholarly work. He published two of Le Plongeon's photographs from Chichén Itzá, never referred to them in his text and made the following statement in each caption:

1) Figure of [supposed] bearded Itza offering sacrifice from a collection of photographs of Yucatan sculpture by A. Le Plongeon,

and

2) Head of a [supposed] bearded Itza, or magician, from a collection of photographs of Yucatan sculpture by A. Le Plongeon. (Brackets are in original text.) (1882:227, 229)

For Valentini to have used the photos after Le Plongeon had resigned from the Society with the expressed wish that his name be disassociated from that Society seems inappropriate; but nothing compared to the insult of adding "supposed" to Augustus' own written description of his photographs. The apparent implication was that Le Plongeon had retouched the photos in order to support his position of Semitic contact at Chichén Itzá. Those bearded reliefs have been identified by art historians and found to be authentic.

By 1885 the friendship between Stephen Salisbury and Augustus Le Plongeon was renewed and

continued throughout both their lives. It speaks highly of Stephen Salisbury that he was not swayed to desert his long-time friend by the powerful individuals in archaeological circles, who had caused Le Plongeon to resign.

Excavation of the Platform  
of Venus

In April, 1882, Augustus, having sent his letter of resignation to the American Antiquarian Society, remained in Yucatán with Alice, continuing their work. In November 1883, while they were at Chichén Itzá, an enormous flight of locusts passed through the site. Alice described the incredible destruction.

In the months of November 1883, while living among the crumbling palaces of Chichen Itza, a procession of locusts, perhaps a mile wide in width, passed by one spot for seven consecutive days. At dusk they settle, devour what they can find, and rest till nine or ten o'clock the next morning. (1884a:7174)

There was little that could be done about the locusts. For Yucatán they were a disaster--crops were eaten, and water polluted by the thousands of dead insects. Everything was done to destroy them; thousands of acres were burned, and the owners of haciendas paid their workers by the bushel for locusts they killed.

It was at this time that Augustus began his long postponed excavation of the Platform of Venus.

Le Plongeon noted the similarity between the Platform of Venus and the Platform of the Eagles, and deduced that the Venus should contain another statue similar to the Chacmool. The bas-relief of a fish led him to believe the platform was the burial mound of the warrior Chacmool's brother, who, according to Le Plongeon, would perhaps be the High Priest Cay (fish in Yucatecan Maya). The "organic" material he found in the urn in the Platform of the Eagles had been analyzed in 1880 by the chemist Charles O. Thompson of the Worcester Free Institute, and proved to be human remains. It must have seemed obvious to Le Plongeon that similar platforms must have been used for similar purposes.

Surviving notes and drawings by Le Plongeon give us a good idea of the original dimensions of the Platform of Venus. No scale is given on the plan or section, but the original drawing measures 15.9 meters for each of the north and south sides (with the excavation cut in the northwest corner where Le Plongeon's notes state he began). The east and west sides measure 15.75 meters each. The section measures 15.9 meters from the outer edge of the platform on each side. The height is 4 meters according to Alice Le Plongeon

(1884:7145). Thus, the approximate scale intended on the drawings is 1:100.

A plan and section of the platform by George F. Andrews of the University of Oregon (unpublished, dated August 1981a) gives the following dimensions taken at the top: 15.93 meters south side, and 4.12 meters in height at the southwest corner.

A second plan and section provided by Donald Patterson (unpublished, dated September 1981) of the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia y Historia Documentation Project in Mexico gives measurements as follows from the same points: north side: 16.12 meters; south side: 16.05 meters; east side: 16.01 meters; west side: 16.18 meters. Height at the northwest corner is 4.07 meters.

In the field notes Le Plongeon gives the position of the structure as north 10 degrees east. We do not know if he took into account declination in calculating the position of the structure.

Dr. Andrews' compass bearing, without compensating for local declination, is 14 degrees east of north. He estimates the declination to be about 6 to 7 degrees east in the area today (1981b).

Le Plongeon began a trench in the northwest of the platform, 1.5 meters wide, at a point away from the stairs, where facing stones were largely no longer in place. As he cut into the mound working toward the center, the first material encountered was stones laid out with mortar between them (Alice Le Plongeon 1884:7145).

After eight days of excavating, Le Plongeon's workmen uncovered a sculpture about 1.5 meters north of the center of the platform, at ground level.

We saw a figure on its back, about one and a half meters north from the center of the monument, and exactly on a level with the surface of the earth. The figure was thickly coated with loose mortar. One leg was broken off below the knee, but we found it under the figure, and afterward adjusted it in place to make a picture. (1884:7145)

Alice Le Plongeon, in her Scientific American article (1884) describes the sculpture in detail giving its dimensions and colors. She notes that the shell finger and toe nails had become separated from the figure. Those same nails were shown to Sylvanus Morley and Karl Ruppert in Los Angeles in 1931 by Maude Blackwell (Morley 1931). It is unknown what the final disposition of the nails was, since neither Morley, Blom, nor Hall acquired them. The statue is currently on display in the Museo de Mérida.

Blackwell commented on the nails in a letter to Blom: "The Cay Tomb [Platform of Venus], same place, is where the curious finger nails came from" (1931b).

And from Morley's letter to J. C. Merriam:

What was exceedingly interesting, however, were five finger-nails, made of highly polished bone or shell, and a bone or shell eye, which she said Dr. Le Plongeon had told her he found on the ground by this statue, which, from his cross-section, would appear to have been buried in the very center of the Terrace of the Cones [Platform of Venus]. (1931)

It is unclear how Morley identified the statue from the section unless it was pointed out by Blackwell as the object on top of a "cone" to the right of the far left two "cones." Alice Le Plongeon's statement, "it was found that the statue had rested on conodial stone pillars" (1884:7145), further confirms Morley's location.

Alice described the uncovering of the "conodial pillars" and 12 "serpent heads" in some detail.

The pillars on which the statue rested were not the only ones; they extended over a space of about eight square meters, and in some places were three or four deep, the total number being 182. . . . Two-thirds of the pillars are painted blue and one-third red; they vary in height from eighty centimeters to one meter twenty-five centimeters. On a level with the pillars were twelve serpent heads. . . . (1884:7146)

The "conodial pillars" are currently located near the ticket office at Chichén Itzá.



Alice indicated the direction each serpent head faced and described their interesting sculptural detail. "From the top of each head rises a kind of plume or perhaps a flame, and on each side of the front of the head perpendicular ornaments like horns" (1884: 7146).

The location of all the serpent heads at present is not known, but some are resting in the vicinity of the platform. The eccentric plumed element is no longer on any of these sculptures.

The serpent heads were further described as having feathers incised on the upper part, and were painted green. Their undersides were covered with serpent scales and were painted yellow. The edges of the jaws were also yellow, while the forked tongue along with the gums was red. The teeth were white. Around the eyes and "over the brow" was blue and the eyes were filled with a white "shell." The horns or nose plugs which project up from the snout were green, and tipped in red as was the "feather" on the top. Alice lamented the broken condition of the heads and stated they probably had been fractured at the time of their interment.

They then uncovered a stone urn which contained a flat jade piece, two pieces of jadeite made by cutting a bead in half, a jade tube, a spherical

crystal described by Alice as "a ball of white glass nearly an inch in diameter," and the remains of a mosaic (1884:7146). Except for the two halves of a bead (now in the American Museum of Natural History) none of the items found in the urn are known to be in museums. She described the dimensions of the urn and mentioned a flat "trapezoidal . . . green jade with a human face--full face . . ." (1884:7146).

Finally, excavating to bedrock, they encountered more cultural material, including an obsidian projectile point, sherds of "fine pottery," the bones of a small animal, and three floors, the upper two of which were red, while the lowest was yellow. In the field notes the lowest floor is described as red.

They trenched to the southwest and uncovered a number of flat stones carved in low relief. The red floor extended further south. Laying on it face down was "another stone with a fish sculptured on it, the fish being surrounded by the fold of a serpent's body" (1884:7146).

In the cross-section, the first important floor is indicated by a double line across the drawing of the section measuring 4 meters below the top of the platform, and laid down just above the stone urn. But, the statue of the "sacred monkey" was located 4 meters

from the top according to Le Plongeon's field notes, not within the first floor. The field notes state: "Round stone urn . . . at the feet of the sacred money but lower down." To correct for his error we can assume that the urn was about 50 centimeters below the statue, making the white floor (first floor) 4.5 meters from the top of the platform.

The first red floor is 1.1 meters below the white floor and the second and last red floor (described as yellow in the Scientific American article (1884:7146) is from 40 cm below the first red floor or 6 meters from the top. Bedrock is indicated approximately 60 centimeters below the last floor or 6.6 meters from the finished top of the platform. What the lowest double line indicates is unknown, but it may be the trace of yet another floor.

This writer noted the edge of a red floor, north of the platform and below the surface in a trench dug for the sound and light installation, in February 1980. It is 5 meters north and 1 meter below the surface. This may be the outer edge of one of the red floors noted by Le Plongeon within the platform.

From Le Plongeon's section we also note that the Maya excavated below the surface and placed the cones, urn, and serpent heads at or below a surface

which is actually fill. The depth of the fill is approximately 2.6 meters around the platform, if one begins measurements from the statue, which Le Plongeon stated was "exactly on a level with the surface of the earth" (1884:7146). From the surface to the first white floor is 50 centimeters, from white floor to first red floor is 1.1 meters, the second red floor is 40 centimeters below, and bedrock is 60 centimeters below the second red floor, giving a total of 2.6 meters of fill.

Le Plongeon's excavation techniques at the Platform of Venus seem superior to those of most archaeologists of the time, especially when we examine his attention to detail and efforts to record his work for future analysis. But, advanced as it was, his methodology remained an isolated incident in the history of archaeology, no more effective in changing the course of the discipline than was Thomas Jefferson's controlled excavation in 1784 of a burial mound in Virginia. It was not until 1913, when Manuel Gamio published his detailed stratigraphic section of excavations at Atzacotalco in the Valley of Mexico, that cross-sections became part of the archaeological record in Mesoamerica.

The Le Plongeon's were satisfied they had actually excavated the burial chamber of the high

priest but they remained disappointed at not finding better evidence to bolster this segment of Augustus' history of the Maya.

Alice and Augustus then continued their work on the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars, noting more details about reliefs at the site, before returning to New York in June 1884. Alice describes the north temple of the Ball Court:

The front half of the roof was supported on round stone pillars, still in place, with figures of warriors and other designs sculptured on them. The back wall and sides of this box are covered with bas-reliefs that do great credit to the dead and forgotten artists. They represent human figures in various dresses and attitudes and landscapes. There is one face with Semitic features and full beard. (1884:7147)

The tracings made by Augustus and Alice of parts of the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars are now in the archives of the Philosophical Research Society in Los Angeles. Art historian, Dr. Linnea Wren states in regard to the accuracy of the drawings "Groups of figures can be identified with those copies by Adela Breton made in 1901, although differences in details of dress and proportions of the figures, and sometimes in pose, are apparent" (Wren 1981).

#### Queen M'oo

The story that Le Plongeon found graphically illustrated on the walls of the Upper Temple of the

Jaguars tells of the love between Queen Móo and Prince Coh, of Prince Coh's death at the hands of his brother Aac, and of Queen Móo's final escape to Egypt where she is welcomed as Isis (translated by Le Plongeon to mean "little sister"). Le Plongeon stated the evidence he found in the murals was an indication of real history, not unsubstantiated myth, as is found in other cultures. Further, he claimed he had found the cremated remains of Prince Coh.

Nowhere, except in Mayax, do we find it as forming part of the history of the nation. Nowhere, except in Mayax, do we find the portraits of the actors in the tragedy. There, we not only see their portraits carried in bas-relief, on stone or wood, or their marble statues in the round, or represented in the mural paintings that adorn the walls of the funeral chamber built to the memory of the victim, but we discover the ornaments they wore, the weapons they used, nay, more, their mortal remains. (1886:84)

The story opens during the ancient epoch, discussing the royal family in residence at Uxmal: the sovereign, Canchi, his wife Zoo, and their children --eldest son, Prince Cay (later to become high priest), Prince Aac, the youngest son, Prince Coh, Princess Móo, and Princess Nicté. In Sacred Mysteries, Le Plongeon presents his first version of the story. "It was among the Mayas," he writes, "that the youngest of the brothers should marry the eldest of the sisters, to insure the legitimate and divine descent of the

royal family" (1886:78). It is not known where he found this unsubstantiated ethnographic or archaeological evidence.

Le Plongeon continues the account by describing how Princess M'oo became queen of Chichén Itzá after the death of her father, the ruler Canchi, and how she married the great warrior Prince Coh, whom she loved. Uxmal had been inherited by Prince Aac, but he coveted Queen M'oo and was jealous of the fame of Coh. He conspired to kill his brother, Coh, capture Queen M'oo, marry her, and unite the divided empire under himself. He murdered Coh, and a civil war then broken out, which Aac offered to stop if Queen M'oo would accept his romantic advances. She rejected him, and his armies finally defeated her followers. Sometime after her capture, with the help of friends, she escaped, but her brother Cay was put to death. Le Plongeon says of Aac,

In token of his victory, Aac caused his statue--the feet resting on the flayed bodies of his kind, their heads being suspended from his belt--to be placed over the main entrance of the royal palace [Governor's Palace] at Uxmal, where, as I have said, its remains may be seen today. (1886:82)

Alice, in an article in the New York World in 1881, describes the sculptures, but laments their partial destruction. The sculpture that was to the lower right of Prince Coh is now in the American Museum

of Natural History, along with a small sculptured head from the same location, said to be that of High Priest Cay. Le Plongeon stated that in addition to the statue Aac place of himself above the door in the Governor's Palace, Aac also added the wings to the north and south of the corbelled arches, and had the House of the Turtles built as his private residence.

Finally, Le Plongeon finishes this early version of the story with Queen M'oo's death, stating,

After her death she received the honors of apotheosis; became the goddess of fire, and was worshipped in a magnificent temple, built on the summit of a high and very extensive pyramid whose ruins are still to be seen in the city of Izamal. (1886:78)

In his book, Queen M'oo, published in 1896, Le Plongeon presents a more detailed account of the story. It is basically the same, but he provides the reader with some of the drawings from the Temple of Jaguars, and an expanded version of the lives of Queen M'oo and Prince Coh, including Queen M'oo's travels to Egypt. After her escape from Prince Aac, he states, Queen M'oo had the Temple of the Jaguars erected in Prince Coh's honor and a mausoleum built to contain the cremated remains of his body (Platform of the Eagles). A similar mausoleum was built in honor of High Priest Cay near that of Prince Coh. It is now called the Platform of Venus, and was excavated by Augustus in



1883. He interpreted the iconography on the outside of the Temple of the Jaguars to read "Cay, the high priest, desires to bear witness that M'oo has made this offering, earnestly invoking Coh, the warrior of warriors" (1896:122).

He derived the name he gave to the sculpture he found in the Platform of the Eagles as follows:

The etymon of the last word is: Chaac "thunder," "tempest," hence "irresistible power," and mol, "paw of any carnivorous animal . . . the Mayas, who as we have said, named all things by onomatopoeia, called their most famous warrior Chaacmol; that is, "the paw swift like thunder," "the paw with irresistible power like the tempest. . . ." (1896:157)

Le Plongeon's gloss of the two Mayan words Chaac and mol is correct, but Stephen Salisbury, in his article in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, 1877, titled "Dr. Le Plongeon in Yucatan," changed the spelling to Chacmool (an archaic term in Yucatecan Maya for puma) and that spelling has stuck to this day. Interestingly, Le Plongeon later changed the name from Chaacmol to Coh, which was the current word for puma in Yucatán, thus more directly equating the power and lightning speed of his warrior-prince to a puma (MacLeod 1981).

After the construction of the two burial monuments, Augustus wrote, Queen M'oo fled to Zinaan

(Le Plongeon's name for the Antilles), but not feeling safe there resolved to travel on to one of the remaining islands of sunken Atlantis. She found no islands and continued her journey to Egypt where she was given a warm welcome (1896:154).

At this point in the book, Queen Mío, Augustus enters a new interpretation of the lintel in the Akab Dzib, stating that it tells of the destruction of Mu (Atlantis, not to be confused with Churchward's Mu located in the Pacific), but adds no more about the prophesy of a cord that would stretch between Valladolid and Mérida to provide communication.

In Queen Mío, Le Plongeon gives the reader little in the way of methodology to verify his interpretations either of the hieroglyphic texts or the murals. We saw earlier he did not give us a glyphic translation of the Akab Dzib lintel, but only stated some of the glyphs represented a cord and others electricity. He used ethnohistorical information as the basis for his statement that the Maya priests foretold the use of rapid communication between Valladolid and Mérida. Possibly, in 1877, when he interpreted the Akab Dzib lintel, he considered Maya hieroglyphics ideographic, as aids to the memory in an oral tradition similar to the Aztec codices. It has not been until

the last ten years that scholars have seriously considered the hieroglyphics as having a phonetic component. In 1881, as we saw earlier, Le Plongeon defended the Landa alphabet as being authentic, and must have seen it as a phonetic source in the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphics. Nowhere does he provide us with a clue as to why he later interpreted the lintel as describing the destruction of Atlantis.

Arthur G. Miller, in his article "Captains of the Itza," provides a most comprehensive interpretation of the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars. He states that little use has been made of the murals as a source on Maya Prehistory.

I would venture to say that part of the reason why the Temple A murals had been neglected for so long has to do with the fact that the murals were so rich and so detailed that they were seen only as quaint scenes of village life and military conflict, with no particular relevance to the archaeological and ethnohistorical record as it was known. It is only recently that these apparently general scenes have taken on specific meaning and can be seen to fit into our understanding of the complex and far-reaching events of the Terminal Classic period in the Maya area. (1977:198)

Miller calls one of the two military leaders "Captain Serpent," but Le Plongeon calls that leader "Prince Coh," because he holds a shield with jaguar spots on it. Miller identifies the figure as "Serpent" since a large serpent looms over his head. The other

military figure is called by Miller "Sun Disk," while Le Plongeon designates him Prince Aac. Miller states that Captain Serpent and his faction are victorious (1977:219), as does Le Plongeon

Prince Coh is pictured at the head of his warriors in the heat of battle, accompanied and overshadowed by the winged serpent as by an aegis. The genius of Mayach guards him, fights at his side, leads his followers to victory. (1896:136)

But, according to Le Plongeon,

We next see him [Coh] in a terrible altercation with his brother Aac. The figures in that scene are nearly life size, but so much disfigured and broken as to make it impossible to obtain good tracings. Coh is portrayed without weapons, his fists clenched, looking menacingly at his foe, who holds three spears, typical of the three wounds he inflicted in his brother's back when he killed him treacherously. (1896:137-138)

The above description may refer to what Miller designates as Mural 4.

At least superficially, Miller and Le Plongeon interpret the murals in a similar manner, but, Le Plongeon early saw their value as a source of historical material about Chichén Itzá. Those murals, and his interpretation of them, were the basis which led to his belief that the Maya diffused their culture to Egypt.

#### Alice Le Plongeon and Queen Móo

Alice Le Plongeon, in her book, Queen Móo's Talisman (1902), gives, in the fashion of epic poetry,

a story of Queen M<sup>o</sup>o and Prince Coh. It was only one of several fine pieces she wrote just a few years before her death, and gives us insight into spiritual connections the Le Plongeurs felt they had with their work at Chich<sup>é</sup>n Itz<sup>á</sup>. As already mentioned, Alice had found a cylindrical jade piece in Prince Coh's mausoleum which was later mounted as a brooch. The brooch is the basis for the title to her poem, in which she gives more hints about Augustus' and her own relation to Queen M<sup>o</sup>o and Prince Coh.

While mortals slept and stars lit up its bed,  
Ere Phoebus smiled the infant's soul had fled.

Kissed by the god of day, a blue-eyed boy  
Sprang from his couch, with eager love and joy.  
White twinkling feet then ran across the floor  
To Natalie, as many a morn before.  
Death's mystery to him was yet untaught;  
The lifeless babe no dread to his mind brought;  
To mother's arms he bore the drooping form--  
"Poor baby cold! make pretty sister warm."

The lustrums sped. A girl of lightsome heart  
Was told. "He comes! with him thou must depart."  
To find her in the East, he sailed from the West,  
Responsive to the power of soul's request.  
Resistless forces bade her go fulfill  
The part that she, by her own human will  
Had planned upon a day; when swayed by love  
She would her consort find, on earth, above,  
Wherever might he dwell there too would she:  
Attachments deep can bind like stern decree.

To learn the past, to Maya-land both turned,  
But no faint ray of mem'ry in them burned.  
Altho' he murmured in a certain place--  
"Familiar 'tis, there's something I would trace."

As Maya chief reborn, men of the soil  
Hailed him, and led by him would patient toil

In forest depths, 'mid desert mansions old  
And temples drear--their history to unfold.

Within a white stone urn in ancient tomb.  
Charred heart and talisman lay in the gloom.  
To her he gave the gem.--"Now take thine own,  
I pray: henceforth it must be thine alone."

In dancing flame the mortal dust from urn  
Was thrown. "A form ascends from what doth burn!"  
The natives loud exclaimed. "A princely shade  
That into nothingness doth quickly fade."

When evening came, and all from work reposed,  
They told the white man why the things inclosed  
Were found by him: "Thou art returned once more  
From long enchanted sleep; wast here before."  
To this, both earnestly responded--"Nay,"  
But nothing changed; the men thought their own way.

Fantastic though cut loose from reason cool  
Are dreams wherein the wisest play the fool.  
Can dreams be memories? Are some portents?  
Who knows? His ignorance man still laments.

The woman dreamed among the Ruins gray,  
Where moon shines in at night and sun by day  
On crumbling floors where powdered bones thick lie  
And glistening serpents glide with gleaming eye.

Now as she seemed to roam in palace drear,  
A man in rich and strange attire drew near,  
Bemoaning thus: "May every wind and leaf  
Re-echo now my wail of hopeless grief!  
In mercy shine upon my endless woe,  
Great sun! from whom all life and light outflow.

Here crouches Aac, alone from age to age--  
Absorb me now, my wretchedness assauge!  
Remorse, to thee I said, "Return no more"--  
Thou shalt not stay to goad me as before!  
O Light Eternal! bid this mem'ry die  
While penitent upon the ground I lie.  
Tho' long the years of anguish I have spent,  
The worm gnaws on as if "twould ne'er relent."  
He prayed and wept. Response came from above--  
A woman's voice replied with pitying love.

Up started he--"Hush! hush! thou knowest not,  
but I know who thou art. O bitter lot!

To jealous frenzy I became a slave  
 And vilely slew my brother true and brave,  
 Thus casting o'er my sister's life a blight.  
 Still made with rage and lost to sense or right,  
 I crushed my elder brother in my wrath;  
 Tho' Pontiff he, I swept him from my path."

"My vicious mood led many where they fell;  
 I lied to them that they might serve me well.  
 No fiery couch was lit for heroes slain;  
 Now I could crawl o'er moldering bones, and fain  
 Would lick their dust--so low my haughty head--  
 I, lord of all! for whom their blood was shed.  
 A tyrant harsh, embittered I became;  
 Nor could my soul's rebuke awaken shame.  
 O Mother! drop thy tears; accurst for aye  
 Am I! the drouth of this, my land, allay.  
 Send down thy light. Great Sun!" he cried aloud,  
 "Let me forget! with mortal form endowed."

To her he turned again:--"Forgive! forgive!  
 Earth-born thro' thee. ah! let me once more live.  
 My crimes and victories, my soul's defeat,  
 My anguish and remorse, wilt thou repeat;  
 For thus alone new life may dawn for me--  
 In solitude I've long awaited thee."

A falling tear the sighing dreamer woke:  
 No mem'ry of the past could she evoke.  
 (1902:69-75)

Long before 1902, when Queen Mío's Talisman was written, both Alice and Augustus must have believed themselves to be Queen Mío and Prince Coh reincarnated. No doubt the idea germinated while they were in Yucatán, but no mention is ever made of their secret until the publishing of Talisman.

Before Talisman, much of Alice's writing consisted of journalistic and historical pieces about Yucatán. With Talisman, in 1902, however, she began a new phase in her literary output. She was doing what

she wanted to do at that point--writing fiction based on Augustus' historical analysis--in an epic style. For many years she had written articles about Augustus' work, and about her own experiences in Yucatán, but had always kept within the bounds of reporting fact. Then, in 1902, it seems she broke loose, allowing herself to write for herself, following her own far-ranging thinking patterns. The product was the prodigious work, "A Dream of Atlantis," published in 1909 and 1910 in The Word magazine. Unfortunately, Alice died before the last installment was printed in October 1910.

There is no doubt Augustus realized Alice's talent and encouraged it. A brilliant woman, strong in character, she would not have stood for the usual dominating Victorian husband. He fully realized the large part she played in their work, and never once fooled himself into thinking he was on his own. He wrote often of their collaboration, constantly reminding associates and publishers of her part in their work. In a letter to Stephen Salisbury in 1877 he makes this clear:

Bye the bye in publishing anything on this subject [work in Yucatan] please do not forget that the scientific world is as much indebted to Mrs. Le Plongeon as to myself and that I decline receiving all the honors and see her deprived of her part she so richly deserves. So be kind



enough not to publish my portrait unless hers is also published as in the "Illustracion Hispano-Americano." (1877b)

And Alice dedicated Talisman to Augustus:

To Doctor Augustus Le Plongeon, whose works inspired these pages, their author dedicates them; not as a worthy offering, but as a small token of loving endeavor to gratify his oft expressed desire.

Augustus, going against the trend of the time, encouraged Alice to develop her own talent. Finally, in a letter dated 1893 to Mrs. Newbury Adam, who was working with Susan B. Anthony in arranging a Woman's Congress, Alice states in closing

All his life through he has been an earnest worker and advocate for the advancement of woman, and he has insisted on my lecturing instead of his doing so, saying "If I do not keep you in the foreground people will speak of what I have done and quite lose sight of the fact that you have toiled and suffered by my side." (1893a)

## CHAPTER V

### THE FINAL YEARS: 1885-1910

After only a short time in New York Augustus heard that there might be a possibility of creating a small Maya temple from his moulds at the New Orleans Exposition. A Mr. Burke, Director of the Exposition, invited the Le Plongeons to come to New Orleans and work on the building. There was one catch, however. Burke needed \$5,000 to construct the building with fireproof materials; otherwise the exhibition could not be covered by fire insurance. President Díaz offered space already allocated to the Mexican government for its part in the exposition, but could give no financial assistance. Spencer Baird, at the Smithsonian, was contacted to see if that organization could assist, but the Smithsonian did not consider the project important enough to spend \$5,000--a considerable amount of money in 1884. Thus, with reluctance, Le Plongeon had to drop this project.

The next ten years for the Le Plongeons were most productive. In 1886, Alice published Here and There in Yucatan, a delightful account of their

adventures, and Augustus published Sacred Mysteries among the Mayas and Quiches, dedicated to Pierre Lorillard. In it he synthesizes his findings in Yucatán and the Maya's connection with Freemasonry and the civilizations of the Middle East. Two other manuscripts which were not published were "Monuments of Mayax and their Historical Teachings," and "Yucatan, its Ancient Palaces and Modern Cities, Life and Customs of the Aborigines." A shorter version of "Yucatan, its Ancient Palaces" was later published by Alice in the Magazine of American History in 1887. A lecture entitled "The Monuments of Mayax and their Historical Teachings" was also given by Alice before the Albany Institute in 1896 and later published by the Institute. Alice also read a paper before the New York Academy of Sciences in 1886, titled "Yucatan, its Ancient Temples and Palaces," and another in 1887, titled "Eastern Yucatan, its Scenery, People, and Ancient Cities and Monuments."

#### The Conflict with Daniel Brinton

It was also during this period that the Le Plongeons' conflict with Daniel Brinton surfaced when Brinton failed to invite, in time, the Le Plongeons to speak at the meetings of the American Association

for the Advancement of Science in 1887. The late and inconsiderate reply to the Le Plongeons' request to present papers at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1887 may have also set the stage for the later challenges.

Alice Le Plungeon had proposed to give a lecture with slides on Yucatán to the Association during its meetings of August 10 to 17, 1887. Brinton, at that time Vice-President of the anthropological section of the association, answered that while the members all agreed such a lecture would be of great value, that all the evening lecture rooms were occupied, and the only space available was a room during the day which could not be darkened. Further, they could only allow Alice 30 minutes to cover her topic in that room. Brinton's letter, dated August 13, three days after the association meetings had begun, was in response to Alice's inquiry made more than a month earlier. Embarrassed by his late reply, Brinton added that he had written the letter on August 5, had "entrusted it to an assistant who placed an erroneous address upon it," and thus the letter (dated August 13) had never gotten to her (Brinton 1887). Brinton had also accepted a paper by Augustus titled "Ancient American Civilization," but the invitation was not

received by Le Plongeon until three weeks after the close of the meeting, having been inadvertently sent to San Francisco!

Daniel Brinton, Professor of American archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania, unlike Le Plongeon, never went into the field; he was an "armchair archaeologist." Supplied with data from field workers, he wrote extensively on American archaeology and became a scholarly rival of Le Plongeon's, a rivalry which lasted until Brinton's death in 1899.

In 1890, the smouldering animosity between the two men exploded into the open with Brinton's publication, Essays of an Americanist, which charged Le Plongeon with "eccentricity" for asserting that the basic unit of measure among the Maya was the meter. Brinton contended that one of the basic units was the cubit (Brinton 1890:439). Then, Le Plongeon challenged Brinton twice to a debate. The first challenge was in 1893, and the second was again published in the Brooklyn Eagle in 1894. Le Plongeon's challenge was thus set forth:

to meet me before the association [The American Association for the advancement of Science, of which Brinton was president] and discuss all the points treated by you in your book above mentioned [Essays of an Americanist]. 1. Maya phonetics.

2. What were the true signs used by ancient Maya for cardinal points? 3. Landa alphabet and Maya prophecies. 4. Maya standard of measure. And, besides, the following: 1. Maya science and numbers, 2. Maya cosmogony, 3. Maya Knowledge of geography, geology and if you please, 4. Maya language and its universal spread among all ancient civilized nations of antiquity in Asia, Africa and Europe.

Hoping, sir, that you will gladly improve the opportunity to show that you are really superior an authority, with right therefore to criticize others on such an important subject, to all American scientists, and afford me one for displaying my extravagancies or eccentricities before the members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, I beg to subscribe myself.  
(Augustus Le Plongeon 1896:205-206)

The debate was never held. Le Plongeon stated "Dr. Brinton took no more notice of this challenge than he had taken of the former one, published in August 1893, in the New York Advertiser" (1896:206). Brinton, an excellent scholar and strategist, was wise not to engage in an open debate before his peers with a man who had studied the ancient Maya, not only through archival sources, but who had spent 11 years in and about the ruins, and had learned to speak Yucatecan Maya. It had been necessary for Le Plongeon to learn Maya so he might carry out his excavations. He had learned it from Maya excavators who worked for him, and from his friend, Bishop Crescencio Carrillo y Ancona of Mérida. Further, Le Plongeon felt that in order to decipher the ancient Maya script it was necessary to have a knowledge of spoken Maya, a point which Brinton

had already conceded to him in 1886 (Brinton 1886). He knew full well that Brinton had never entered the field, and thus had a limited knowledge of many of the fine points of Maya ethnology and archaeology, other than those he had gleaned from field workers such as Dr. Karl Berendt. Also, for Brinton to agree to a public debate would have been tantamount to admitting that Le Plongeon was on his own intellectual level, and had serious things to say, something Brinton could not bring himself to admit.

In 1896, in the preface to Queen M'oo, Le Plongeon made a less direct attack on Brinton:

I have been accused of promulgating notions on ancient America contrary to the opinion of men regarded as authorities on American Archaeology. And so it is, indeed. Mine is not the fault, however, although it may be my misfortune, since it has surely entailed upon me their enmity and its consequences. But who are those pretended authorities? Certainly not the doctors and professors at the head of the universities and colleges in the U.S.; for not only do they know absolutely nothing of Ancient American civilization, but, judging from letters in my possession, the majority of them refuse to learn anything concerning it. (1896:xxi)

Through events such as these, Le Plongeon became isolated from the mainstream of Maya studies and particularly because of his scholarly position that the Maya were bearers of culture to the world.

Even after Brinton's death in 1899, Le Plongeon continued to attempt to bolster his own position as a

Mayanist and to show Brinton to be a fraud and a poor scholar.

In the fall of 1902, W. J. McGee of the Smithsonian Institution requested comments from Augustus Le Plongeon concerning three Maya dictionaries the Smithsonian proposed to publish. Le Plongeon provided McGee with a thorough background on the origin of each dictionary, as well as a review of the linguistic merits of each.

The Motul dictionary owned by Brinton was not worth publishing, Le Plongeon explained, since it was an unedited mix of linguistic material compiled partly from the Ciudad Real Dictionary in the Brown University library, and partly from modern linguistic informants who assisted Dr. Berendt. And, with regard to Brinton's scholarly merits, Le Plongeon states:

I accused Dr. Brinton of impeding the progress of Maya ethnology in this country by publishing books on a subject of which he knew absolutely nothing, and of using the notes of Dr. Berendt and palming them on his readers as his own knowledge. After Dr. Berendt's death in the village of Coban (Guatemala) of an overdose of morphine, someone seized his papers and sold them to a bookseller in Broadway N.Y. who in turn sold them to Dr. Brinton. (1902).

Brinton had stated, though, in his Essays of an Americanist, "Only two copies of it [the Motul dictionary] are in existence, one, very carefully made, with numerous notes, by Dr. Berendt, is in my



possession" (1890:119). Thus, Brinton was not attempting to conceal that he had the Berendt linguistic information, but it does appear that Le Plongeon considered his opinion about the value of that material to scholarship as incorrect.

### The Struggle Continued

Financially, the Le Plongeon family were having more and more difficulties. Augustus was unable to find a teaching post. Alice wrote in later years in a letter to Phoebe A. Hearst:

As we spent all our means in those explorations, expecting to replenish our purse by the sale of our work, our researches came to a standstill. . . . Since 1885 we have tried our best to dispose of our moulds, but have met with opposition and disappointment on all sides, because our studies did not tally with old ideas of certain professors; and meanwhile we have lectured in order to live, and to make known ancient American civilization while writing the results of our researches.  
(1900a)

They lived on the royalties from Sacred Mysteries until the book was sold out. Alice continues bleakly, "While the book was in the market we managed, with very strict economy, to live from its proceeds, at the same time writing other volumes" (1900a). Mrs. Hearst did come to their rescue, however, and through a donation helped the Le Plongeon family to publish Queen M'oo in 1896.

But, they continued to be plagued by unauthorized use of their materials. In January 1889, for instance, they were invited to attend a lecture in New York by the traveler Frederick Ober, who had written Travels in Mexico. But once there, to their great shock, they saw their own photos projected on the screen. Of this event, Augustus, in a letter to Stephen Salisbury, says

but imagine our amazement when he threw upon the screen wretched copies of the east facade of the Palace at Chichen--made from imperfect prints that he had begged from Mrs. Le Plongeon for his album, and she having given him with the understanding that he should not use them either in his lectures or articles, etc., and coolly told his audience that he had photographed himself the buildings in situ--you knew probably that he never visited Chichen and that Mrs. Le Plongeon stands among our workmen in the foreground of the pictures--we expected that he would complete the story by pointing at Mrs. Le Plongeon's picture and say--Here is my wife:--he did not happily. (1889)

The public use of Augustus' photos seems more of a mistake than a deception, but Keith Davis states in his thesis, "Désiré Charnay: Photographer," that Ober also used Charnay's wood engravings in his book Travels in Mexico without crediting Charnay (1979:200).

In spite of infighting and scholarly "dirty tricks," the Le Plongeon continued their work in earnest and did receive much moral and financial assistance from some who thought their work important.

In 1890, Augustus gave seven lectures to the Lowell Institute on "Ancient American Civilization."

These lectures were illustrated with slides covering the present ethnology of Yucatán, the history of the conquest, Maya language, development of architecture, and a detailed look at Chichén Itzá with regard to its architecture and history, based on his interpretations of the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars.

The Le Plongeons traveled to Europe in 1891, so Alice could visit her sisters and brothers in London. As far as we know this was the first time she had returned home since 1873. For her, it was like being a tourist. They visited the Crystal Palace, Westminster Abbey, Covent Garden, and heard a musical program performed by the Band of the Royal Horse Guards. She kept a number of mementos from her visit pasted into a scrap book. On one page remains, and it is now in the archives of the Philosophical Research Society. Most important for Alice was her reunion with her family after 18 years in America. Toward the end of the summer, they returned to New York, having spent two months with her family.

In 1894, Marshall H. Saville, Assistant Curator of Ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History, attempted to raise enough money to acquire the Le Plongeon moulds and copies of the frescos, and although the moulds and some casts were "received in the Museum, . . . no subscription was started, nor were

the casts exhibited" (Alice Le Plongeon 1900a). Later Alice was asked to lecture at the Museum to raise money to donate the moulds. They asked, she stated,

If I would give an illustrated lecture on our explorations in the Museum, to Mrs. Jesup [wife of the President of the Museum] and her coterie exclusively, as I was the only woman who had explored the Yucatan Ruins and accomplished something in American Archaeology, Mrs. Jesup would, among her lady friends, make a subscription to donate the collection to the Museum. (1900a)

The lecture went very well, Professor Putnam "rose and stated that my lecture was the best exposition of the subject he had ever listened to" (1900a). But no one made a move to contribute toward the acquisition of the moulds, and it was a severe blow to Alice:

the only result of the lecture was a severe illness for me. This was induced by extreme depression through disappointment at seeing no action taken at the close of the meeting, and also by a severe chill, because we walked under a drenching rain without umbrella from the Museum to the elevated railway, and I was at the time only convalescing from grippe. (1900a)

A Mr. Loubat then made a miserly offer for the purchase of the moulds, but when that was refused by the Le Plongeon, he had other casts made in Paris, which, according to Alice, were of inferior quality. He then donated them to the museum and this, as Alice states, allowed it "to defer the acquirement of similar objects--no matter how superior these might be" (1900a). Still writing with controlled reserve, Alice hoped that

Mr. Loubat's offer to purchase their moulds for almost nothing and his subsequent action in having more expensive ones made in Paris was, "We do not wish to believe . . . done with unkind purpose" (1900a).

The location of the moulds has never been determined. In her will in 1910 Alice states they were on deposit at the American Museum of Natural History, but it is difficult to see how the Le Plongeons would allow them to remain there from 1894 on if others were donated.

Both Augustus and Alice again visited London in 1897. Elbert Hubbard, who reviewed Augustus' Queen Móo, writes about his encounter with Augustus and Alice on a ship returning from London.

Dr. Le Plongeon may be sixty, seventy, or ninety years of age. He is becoming bald, has a long, snowy, patriarchal beard, bright blue eyes, and a beautiful brick-dust complexion. When every passenger on board had lost appetite and animation, this sturdy old man trod the upper deck and laughed at the storm as the winds sang through the cordage of the trembling ship. . . .

. . . his faithful coadjutor, collaborator, and companion . . . Madam Le Plongeon is a rare woman; she is possessed of that "excellent thing in a woman," and when she gave us a little lecture on board ship it was voted a great treat. My private opinion is that she is of a little better fibre than her husband, in which remark I am quite sure I should be backed up by the learned doctor himself. (1897:343)

In a neutral conclusion about Queen Móo, Hubbard also writes,

the work is intensely interesting, even to a layman, and in its bold statements is sure to awaken into life a deal of dozing thought, and some right lively opposition as well. (1897:345)

Within a few years of their return Augustus suffered more and more from a heart condition. Alice wrote in a letter to Phoebe Hearst,

He is very ill with angina pectoralis which causes him acute pain, and is, as you are aware, very liable to affect his heart. He is unable to take solid food, and should have an immediate change of climate. He is the victim of conservative opponents, and his condition is undoubtedly the result of prolonged disappointment and anxiety. (1900b)

At that same time Alice may still have been affected by the malaria and yellow fever she had contracted in the tropics. In 1905, in her last letter to Mrs. Hearst, Alice tells of her own and Augustus' failing health:

I am sorry to report that Dr. Le Plongeon since his severe illness has been less well than before that event, and this winter has tried him severely. Unfortunately I too have been less strong and able during the last two years, so that life is a distressing problem. (1905)

In 1902, Alice, in a letter to F. W. Putnam at the American Museum of Natural History, offered for sale seven small pieces they had found 20 years before in Yucatán in order to bolster their deteriorating financial condition. A small stone head of High Priest Cay, and a torso of Prince Coh, both from the center section of the east facade of the Governor's

Palace at Uxmal, are still on display in the Natural History Museum. A Crude "bear's head," a flint point, a stone attached to a handle, and two sections of wooden beams are in storage. No doubt those pieces had great sentimental value to the Le Plongeons, and Putnam, in a memo to President Jesup, stated, "I know how hard it is for them to offer to dispose of these objects which they brought from Yucatan many years ago" (1902). Putnam knew the Le Plongeons well and sympathized with their plight. So, in 1902, in his memo, he recommended strongly to Jesup that the seven pieces should be acquired, and in a postscript said \$100 had been raised already to help with the purchase (Putnam 1902).

In 1911, after Alice Le Plungeon's death, Professor Putnam wrote to Maude Blackwell about the possible acquisition of the Le Plungeon material by the Peabody Museum, especially the mural copies. Blackwell had written to him shortly after Alice's death in 1910, stating that she had been given the negatives, drawings, and other items (Putnam 1911). Apparently, she decided not to release the material until much later; thus, in 1911, Putnam wrote to her wondering what had become of the material. But, he

was never to acquire the drawings, and it was not until 1931, over 20 years after both Augustus and Alice had died, that the Le Plongeon materials became available for acquisition.

1908: Augustus Dies

Augustus died on December 13, 1908, at the age of 83. According to an obituary in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle,

Dr. Augustus Le Plongeon, the noted archaeologist and scientist, whose explorations in Yucatan and other portions of Central America have resulted in some highly interesting discoveries, died suddenly of heart trouble, in his home at 90 State Street. . . .

In addition to his interesting works on the discoveries he made in Yucatan, and which, it is said, aroused jealousies and disagreements in other archaeologists, Dr. Le Plongeon wrote many books in Spanish dealing with religion. . . .

Mrs. Le Plongeon is in possession of many manuscripts by the doctor which have not yet been published. Among the most interesting of these, a work called "Pearls in Shells," which is a frank and somewhat daring treatise on religions. (Brooklyn Daily Eagle December 14, 1908)

He was cremated at Fresh Pond the next day. A few close friends attended the funeral. Alice scattered the ashes of her beloved Augustus at sea. Lamentably, the manuscript, "Pearls in Shells," possibly seen by Manly P. Hall in 1931, when he acquired the Le Plongeon collection from Maude Blackwell, has been lost.



1910: Alice Dies

Then, just a little over a year after Augustus' death, in the spring of 1910, Alice traveled to London to visit her family, and draw up her will. There she published "The Mystery of Egypt: Whence Came Her Ancestors?" in the London Magazine, and then returned to New York around mid-May. Herbert Spinden, then Assistant Curator of Anthropology at the Natural History Museum, was asked by a friend of the Le Plongeons, Colonel James Churchward, to meet the ship and assist Alice on her arrival (Spinden 1947). She had become seriously ill during the crossing, and soon after her return she entered New York's Woman's Hospital. Shortly thereafter, on June 8, 1910, she died at age 58. An obituary in the New York Times stated

Mme Alice Le Plungeon, widow of Augustus Le Plungeon, Comte de Coqueville, writer and explorer, and herself a writer of note, died on Wednesday in the Woman's Hospital in this city after a long illness. She was 58 years old. She was born in London and married when she was 19 years old (June 10, 1910:9)

And, in the New York Evening Post:

. . . Mme Le Plungeon arrived in this country 3 weeks ago, in ill health, having been seriously ill during the voyage, and was obliged to go under the care of a physician as soon as she landed.

She was born in London in 1851. Her lectures were on Central and South American subjects. . . .

She left two brothers, Thomas L. Dixon and Henry Dixon in London. (New York Evening Post June 9, 1910)

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The archaeological studies pursued by Dr. Le Plongeon through a number of years, have induced the author of the present work to suppose that the very ancient Mayas had, in remote times, gone forth from the west to people Atlantis, the same land which is called Mu in the Troano Manuscript according to the translation of Le Plongeon--and that a few years prior to the destruction of that famous land a colony of the Old Maya stock again returned to the fatherland, in these days named Yucatan, and there founded a new empire that was under the rule of the Cans, the first king of this dynasty having been unanimously proclaimed by the colonists as their chosen monarch. (1909b:14)

So wrote Alice Dixon Le Plongeon one year after the death of her husband Augustus, and one year before her own death, after almost 40 years of immersion in Maya studies. Augustus had long held that the Maya emanated from Atlantis, developed their own astounding civilization, and then traveled west to found new civilizations. For him, the greatest bearers of culture to the ancient world were the Maya! Strangely, however, even though Alice attributes the founding of Atlantis to the "very ancient Mayas," nowhere in Augustus' writings can that assertion be found.

Atlantis, as the origin of any number of civilizations, was a popular theme of the nineteenth

century. Two other Mayanists, the Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg (1814-1874) and Edward H. Thompson (1856-1935), were firm believers in its existence and its direct connection with Mesoamerican civilization.

While much discussion in scholarly circles has centered on Le Plongeon's Atlantean Maya origins, and his historical account of the destruction of Maya civilization at Chichén Itzá and Uxmal by civil war, the main thrust of his work lies in his efforts to prove that the Maya were world culture bearers. That effort reached its culmination in his book-length article, "The Origin of the Egyptians," published posthumously as a series in The Word magazine, in 1913 and 1914.

From his "Origin of the Egyptians," Le Plongeon states,

They [the Maya] ascended that river to its confluence with the Euphrates. Entering this stream and following its course for about sixty-five miles, they founded a settlement in the marshy lands to which, on account of the nature of the soil, they gave the name Akal, a word which in the Maya language means swamp, marsh. (1913a:17:69)

Maya was the sacred language of the Chaldeans, and these were the descendants of those missionaries of civilization and science who founded, with Oannes (He who dwells on the water) at their head, the settlement in the marshes in their country of Akkad, and that they were of Maya stock. (1913a:17:72)

Le Plongeon concluded that after the development of Babylonian civilization the learned Maya pushed farther

west, to the Nile, "and established their first settlement at Maiu" (1913a:168).

Brasseur de Bourbourg also proposed that "all civilization originated in America" (Bancroft 1882:125), and Le Plongeon accepted his theory in spite of a very strong negative reaction to it by historians of the period. Le Plongeon had already begun his fieldwork in Yucatán at the time of Bourbourg's death in 1874, and not only attempted to find proof for Bourbourg's theories, but expanded on them. In the end, Bourbourg escaped total condemnation because his Histoire des nations civilisée du Mexique et de l'Amérique centrale (1857-1859) was considered an example of outstanding scholarship, and it was generally conceded that the Abbé had more knowledge of Mesoamerica than any other competitor. When his theory on the origin of American and Egyptian civilizations was published in his Quatre Lettres ten years later, it was still too early in the development of Mayanist thought to allow him to be completely demolished by the opposition, who could not "prove" the non-existence of Atlantis nor the autochthonous development of Egypt to anyone's satisfaction at the time. The historian Hubert Bancroft does not attack his theories point by point, but states

His [Bourbourg's] Quatre Lettres are a chaotic jumble of facts and wild speculations that would

appal the most enthusiastic antiquarian; the materials are arranged with not the slightest regard for order; the reader is continually harassed by long rambling digressions--literary no-thoroughfares, as it were, into which he is beguiled in the hope of coming out somewhere, only to find himself more hopelessly lost than ever. (Bancroft 1882:128)

However, the lines of a scholarly battle had been clearly drawn by 1873, when Le Plongeon entered the arena. Whether Le Plongeon fully understood the opposition he faced is unknown. He received the patronage of the American Antiquarian Society and it would seem that they implicitly approved of his theories. His writings, until 1879, only imply America as the origin of world culture. Then, in his article "Archaeological Communication on Yucatan" (1879), he uncompromisingly states, "the cradle of the world's civilization is [on] this continent on which we live" (1879:69). Thus, within three years he resigned from the Society, and found himself isolated.

In a sense, he had begun the study of Maya civilization at the turning point in the development of Maya studies, and had chosen not only to defend, but to develop hypotheses soon to be totally discarded. He was practically alone after 1882 in his defense of Atlantean origins and Mesoamerican diffusion, but continued to publish extensively his evolving proofs, aggressively attacking his detractors.

Little appears in print in the nature of a direct attack on him from 1882 to 1908, in fact, it is Le Plongeon who strikes out publicly. In Désiré Charnay's book, The Ancient Cities of the New World (1887), Allen Thorndike Rice makes no mention of him in his introduction which outlines, in part, the history of Maya exploration and research. It almost seems there might have been a conspiracy of silence.

In this case the rivalry between Charnay and Le Plongeon may have resulted in Rice's eliminating reference to Le Plongeon. After mentioning the work of Stephens and Catherwood, Rice continues in his introduction,

The region embracing Yucatan, Guatemala and Nicaragua has been ably treated by Mr. E. G. Squier, and in the same territory, at Uxmal and Chichen Itza, Waldeck has been carefully supplemented by the labors of M. Desire Charnay. (Charnay 1877:xx)

A few scholars remained sympathetic and respectful of Le Plongeon's accomplishments in the field, but not even they defended his diffusionism. A book reviewer for the American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal, C. S. Wake, in 1904 broke the silence in professional journals with an assessment of Le Plongeon's Queen M'oo. His tone is measured and conservative; his review is not an attack, but an analysis of Le Plongeon's theories clearly understanding the

limitations of opposing theories--he appears to be making an "official" statement for Le Plongeon's silent opposition. Wake's review opens with praise for Le Plongeon's fieldwork and then asks "Why, then, have they practically agreed to taboo the work he has done?" (Wake 1904:361). He then offers a number of explanations:

Perhaps the time for this [the acceptance of his new ideas] has not yet arrived, but surely, if it is to be so, we ought to see signs of its approach [it had been 18 years since Le Plongeon had formally proposed his theories]. (1904:361)

Specialists are very apt to look with an unfavorable eye on anything outside of their own particular specialty, particularly . . . the work of an "amateur," or, let us say, a non-professional. (1904:361)

And, "we think it must be because there is something radically wrong in the author's explanation of the facts" (1904:361).

On the subject of diffusion, Wake vaguely concedes "there was a communication between the two continents for a long period," but he points out that Egypt and Babylonia were important civilizations far earlier than Mesoamerica, thus contradicting Le Plongeon's position of the primacy of Mesoamerican civilization (1904:363). He ends the article with praise, again, for Le Plongeon's fieldwork.

None the less Dr. Le Plongeon is to be congratulated on the good work he has done in collecting



information which will aid largely some-day in deciding the important question of American origins. (1904:363)

Yet, by the time of Le Plongeon's death in 1908, his reputation seems totally destroyed, and not yet through attacks in print; those would come later, discrediting his fieldwork along with his theories.

In 1924, Lewis Spence, who attempted to prove that Atlantis existed, stated "In the first place, we must absolutely cast behind us the wild and unscientific theories and alleged 'discoveries' of Le Plongeon and his school" (1924:124). Spence, in his book, The Problem of Atlantis, fares no better than his predecessors in attempting to prove the past existence of Atlantis. He appears to be attempting to validate his "scientific" approach by invalidating Le Plongeon. In the style of a journalist who dares no more than repeat what authorities have told him, he states, Le Plongeon's "attempts to probe the mystery of Maya symbols . . . did incalculable mischief in spreading the delusion that they had at last been deciphered" (1924:127).

Spence confuses Le Plongeon's efforts to decipher motifs at Uxmal with the efforts of the early hieroglyphics specialists, such as Ernst Forstemann. Forstemann was attempting to read the

Maya script, not Uxmal or Chichén Itzá motifs, and, thus, was under no "delusion" that the script had been deciphered.

In 1926, Colonel James Churchward published his The Lost Continent of Mu. Churchward attributes to the long sunken continent in the Pacific, called by him Mu, the origin of world civilization. It appears to be no more than his own interpretation of Atlantean theories transferred to the Pacific. This work was written off by normal science as the work of an outrageous crackpot. To make matters worse for Le Plongeon's long ruined reputation, Churchward speaks of Le Plongeon as an authority in a number of places, uses much of his material without citing his authorship, and states

Before the death of Dr. Le Plongeon, he gave the writer his unpublished notes and translations for copy; so that what I say about Yucatan comes principally from the result of Dr. Le Plongeon's twelve years among the ruins, much of which, however, I have corroborated by a personal examination.  
(1926:235)

Here, Churchward contradicts the fact that Maude Blackwell actually received the Le Plongeon collection, but it is interesting that he speaks openly of his close personal connection with the Le Plongeon family. To make such glowing comments of Le Plongeon meant Churchward certainly was not writing for Mayanists who

were doing normal science. His audience must have been similar to today's avid readers of such books as von Daniken's Chariots of the Gods (1970), giving us some idea of how far the name Le Plongeon had shifted in meaning from its original scholarly association with the American Antiquarian Society.

Even today, understandably, historians such as Glyn Daniel (1981:144) and Robert Brushhouse (1973:153) have focused on Le Plongeon's more outrageous speculations about the Maya, for example his claim that Christ's last words on the cross were spoken in Maya. Le Plongeon states that the recording of those words in Matthew, Chapter xxvii, vers i is incorrect. Thus instead of the Aramaic, "Eli, Eli, lamah sabachthani," he suggested it should be read as Yucatecan Maya, "Hele, Hele, lamah zabac ta ni," or "Now, now, I am fainting, darkness covers my face" (Augustus Le Plongeon 1896:38). Probably on the wrong track, Le Plongeon felt the last words of Christ in Aramaic, which stated "God had forsaken Him," were inappropriate to a personage such as Christ (Augustus Le Plongeon 1896:38).

Outright misrepresentation of Le Plongeon's writings have also been uncritically passed on by some authors. For instance, as I mentioned earlier, it was

stated that he said the ancient Maya used the telegraph (Brunhouse 1973:155; Davis 1981:33; Wauchope 1962:16). In Chapter IV, we noted that in none of his writings does he make the statement that the Maya used the telegraph. But, he does make the statement that the hieroglyphic text on the lintel in the Akab Dzib building at Chichén Itzá says that Maya priests predicted that someday there would be a communications system using a "cord" between Vallidolid and Mérida, which could be interpreted as being similar to the telegraph (Salisbury 1877:85, 117). It is not unexpected that even careful researchers, as noted above, could fall victim to 100 year old myths about Le Plongeon. But, Brunhouse's work does provide an excellent starting point for research on Le Plongeon where none had previously existed.

To their credit, for an open minded and conservative sensibility in the face of much conflicting data, Willey and Sabloff, in their important A History of American Archaeology, take a more neutral stance, stating "Le Plongeon made some early excavations and was one of the most fantastic characters in American archaeology" (1974:65).

Le Plongeon's record of his Maya arachaeological fieldwork; photographs, excavation plans, and

tracing of the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars at Chichén Itzá are now in the archives of the institutions listed in Appendix D. His record of Maya archaeological sites made 100 years ago, will be useful for future archaeological research of the Maya for the following reasons.

Le Plongeon's photographs--at Uxmal, Aké, Chichén Itzá, Izamal--comprise a record whereby the current condition of the Maya structures, and bas-reliefs can be compared with their condition of 100 years ago, thus, change over time can accurately be assessed. Specifically, the accuracy of the reconstruction of structures and the amount of loss of detail due to natural causes and/or human intervention in bas-reliefs can be gauged by comparison with the Le Plongeon photos.

The excavation plan and cross-section drawn by Le Plongeon of his excavation of the Platform of Venus at Chichén Itzá, while not up to today's precise standards, do contain information to supplement his photographic and written record of that excavation. The positions of some of the contents are given along with the plan of his excavation trench, thus, giving data for interpretation of Maya construction and/or reconstruction practices, and their disposal method of

important but no longer desirable iconographic elements, statues and other artifacts. The placement of a number of artifacts for possible ritual use is also given in the drawings.

The accuracy and exact coverage of Le Plongeon's tracings of the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars is yet to be determined. Although they are copies of only part of the murals, they are potentially of great value since they are the earliest, and may include material lost before later and more complete copies were made.

The earlier comments by Lewis Spence have a certain truth when he says of Le Plongeon's impact on Maya studies, he "did incalculable mischief" (1924: 127). But, the impact was an ironic one; it spurred scholars to look for anti-diffusion evidence so as to totally devastate Le Plongeon. In another sense, Le Plongeon, their polar opposite, was also used as a straw man, providing students with a negative image with which to compare their "right" scholarly course.

Gordon Willey, in his article, "The Social Uses of Archaeology," speaks of "core and fringe" in archaeology (1980). Willey's concept of core and fringe, or "center and periphery" as used by David Carrasco in his book Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of

Empire (1982), is a useful concept in coming to an understanding of Le Plongeon's role in the development of Maya studies.

Carrasco uses the model to provide an understanding of the Aztec state. Similar to Willey, the concept is applicable as a model for understanding any center of power, or mature scientific paradigm, and its competition. Carrasco states "centers not only dominate and control peripheries, but . . . peripheries influence and sometimes transform centers . . ." (1982:180).

The coalescing paradigm of Maya studies of the late nineteenth century "dominated" Le Plongeon only in that it prevented his acquiring a teaching position, and it restricted his publishing. But, it did not alter his theoretical position. The "center's" efforts to neutralize Le Plongeon's diffusionism, in turn, forced it to justify its own stand. The "center" had to bolster its theories by additional research, and by resorting to a more critical analysis of its methodology, such as to be sure no issues were left unresolved, at least to its own satisfaction.

Thus, Le Plongeon found that the more intensely he defended his position, the more the opposition found to attack in it. At some point in the process of

attack and counterattacks, Le Plongeon became overwhelmed, and thus fell from his position as a key provocateur. The "center" eventually would no longer be influenced by the "periphery."

That point may have been reached during the mid-1890s when he was forced to provide his own finances to publish Queen M<sup>o</sup>o and the Egyptian Sphinx, and publicly challenged Daniel Brinton.

Along with the new paradigm, professionalism in anthropology was becoming more routine by around the turn of the century, and Le Plongeon found himself not only excluded because his theories had been found unacceptable, but also, according to Regna Darnell, because of new "standards for membership in . . . the professional community, through formal training or research results" (Darnell 1970:87). Darnell also notes that during the process of new paradigm formation in the sciences, "the established practitioners . . . must be won over to alternative perspectives and methods" (1970:87). Le Plongeon was at one time considered by some to be an "established practitioner," but his firm refusal to change his methodology, and his theories, prevented him from being incorporated into the mainstream of an evolving discipline.



In the end, his possible role as a father figure to the profession, albeit eccentric, was not only prevented by his own recalcitrance, but particularly by a new generation of Mayanists who wished him, and his "explanation of the facts," totally excluded. But the old doctor was not one to give in to any whom he considered scholarly lightweights.

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APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1826\* May 4. Augustus Henry Julius Le Plongeon was born on the Isle of Jersey, the child of Francois Guillaume Le Plongeon, of the Legion of Honor and a Commodore in the French Navy, and Frances, daughter of Le Gros du Roche, Governor of Mont Saint-Michèle. Lord Jersey was his maternal great uncle. He had a sister who died at a young age (No records exist on Jersey about the Le Plongeon's).
- 1837\* Augustus placed in the military college at Caen. His mother died while he was there.
- 1841\* Entered the École Polytechnique in Paris.
- 1845\* Graduated from the École Polytechnique, with honors (there is no record of his attendance).
- 1845-49\* After graduation, he and a fellow student purchased a yacht, sailed around South America, and were wrecked off the coast of Chile. While in Chile he taught mathematics, drawing, and languages at a college in Valparaiso.
- 1849 Set sail as commander of a small vessel for San Francisco. Became City and County Surveyor (Alice Le Plongeon 1909a:277). Laid out Marysville, California, set up an office as a surveyor.
- 1851 Alice Dixon born in London (no record). Augustus, in Marysville, contracted a fever. The following is Alice Le Plongon's account:
- in the course of official duties in the San Francisco area [he contracted a fever] and left for England to

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\*This information is based on Alice Le Plongeon's account (1909a).

regain his health. At the Sydenham Palace Exhibition he studied the paper photos by Fox Talbot. Contracted with Lord Russell to develop a photographic formula so that photos could be taken for Queen Victoria in Egypt. Experiments were carried out on the island of St. Thomas and the completed formulas sent to England. Le Plongeon then traveled to Veracruz, then to Oaxaca, Puebla, Mexico City and Acapulco. From Acapulco he sailed to Tahiti, Australia, China and Hawaii. (1909a:278)

- 1852-62 In Marysville and San Francisco.
- 1854 July 26--Founding member of Marysville "Salamander" volunteer fire company.
- 1856 April 28--Elected a member of the California Academy of Sciences.
- Operated a photographic studio in San Francisco.
- (During the remainder of this period it is possible Le Plongeon learned the practice of medicine.)
- 1862-70 In Peru. Photographer and physician. Photographed the archaeological sites.
- 1862 March--opened a photographic studio in Lima, Peru. Opened a medical clinic in Lima, Peru.
- 1863 Associated with Ephraim G. Squier.
- 1867 Published La Religion de Jesus Comparada con las Ensenanzas de la Iglesia.
- 1869 Published Los Jesuites e el Peru. Research material for a scientific paper on seismic phenomena, published in 1872.

- 1870 Returned to San Francisco. Gave lectures on his findings in archaeology, and two lectures on seismology to the California Academy of Sciences.
- 1871 March 2--In New York, displayed Murillo paintings he had acquired.
- 1871-72 Traveled to New York, Paris and London. Met Alice Dixon in London. Alice and Augustus were married.
- 1873 By January 28 had returned to New York where he read a scientific paper before the New York Geographical Society. Published: Manual de Fotografía.
- July 29: Sailed for Yucatán aboard the Cuba.
- August 6: Arrived in Progreso, Yucatán. Visited and photographed Uxmal and Muna. Alice contracted yellow fever in Mérida--recovered after seven days near death.
- 1874 November 3: Commissioned by the Governor of Yucatán to administer smallpox vaccine during epidemic.
- December: They travel to Izamal and area east of Mérida to Tizimin.
- 1875 May 20: Arrived in Valladolid.
- September 27: Arrived in Pisté and then went to Chichén Itzá. Armed escort needed because of warfare in the area.

During the rest of the year they photographed the site, made tracings of murals in the Temple of the Jaguars (November 1875) and carried out excavations. The Chacmool was uncovered in the Platform of the Eagles late in 1875.



- 1880 July 8: Arrived in Progreso, Yucatán.
- September-October: In Mexico City--two meetings with Porfirio Díaz. Rivalry with Désiré Charnay begins. Alice given ball.
- November: Returned to Yucatán.
- 1881 January-September: In Yucatán. Researched at Mayapán and Uxmal in June and July.
- October-December: In Brooklyn. Le Plongeon photos exhibited in the American Archaeological Exhibition in Madrid. Augustus published Vestiges of the Mayas.
- 1882 January-February: In Brooklyn.
- April: Casts and originals from Uxmal deposited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Resigned from the American Antiquarian Society.
- May-December: In Mérida.
- 1883 January-December: In Mérida. Photographed Chichén Itzá and excavated Platform of Venus. Plague of locusts.
- 1884 January-May: At Chichén Itzá--copied more of the murals in Temple of Jaguars. In Mérida.
- June-September: In Brooklyn.





- 1908      December 13:    Augustus Le Plongeon died at the age of 83, in Brooklyn Heights. Obituaries ran in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle and the New York Times.
- 1910      June 8:            Alice Dixon Le Plongeon died at the age of 58. Died in Woman's Hospital in New York, a short time after her return from London. "A Dream of Atlantis," an epic poem by Alice, published. Henry Field Blackwell, an engineer, and Maude Blackwell receive the Le Plongeon photographs, drawings, maps, notes and unpublished manuscripts.
- 1914      Augustus' "The Origin of the Egyptians" published posthumously.
- 1931      The Le Plongeon photos and other materials acquired by the Philosophical Research Society from Maude A. Blackwell. Blackwell correspondence to Sylvanus Morley and Frans Blom about Le Plongeon discoveries and photos.

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONS QUERIED AND/OR VISITED CONCERNING  
MATERIALS ABOUT THE LE PLONGEONS, AND  
THEIR HOLDINGS

Institutions Queried and/or Visited Concerning  
Materials About the Le Plongeons, and  
Their Holdings

Institutions	A	B	C	D	E
1. Albany Institute of History and Art, New York			x		x
2. American Antiquarian Society	x	x		x	x
3. American Museum of Natural History	x	x	x		x
4. American Philosophical Society					
5. Anthroposophical Society of America, New York					
6. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley	x				
7. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France					
8. British Museum, London, England					
9. Brooklyn Museum		x			
10. Carnegie Institution of Washington			x		
11. California Academy of Sciences		x			
12. California Historical Society					x

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Note: A signifies: correspondence by Augustus or Alice Le Plongeon; B signifies: correspondence by others to or about the Le Plongeons; C signifies: Le Plongeon photographs, either prints or negatives; D signifies: Le Plongeon archaeological drawings; E signifies: any miscellaneous items connected with Le Plongeon's work, including archival references, and notes in minutes of organizational meetings.

	Institutions	A	B	C	D	E
13.	California State Library, Sacramento, California					x
14.	École Polytechnique, Paris, France					
15.	The Grand Lodge of England, Library and Museum, London					
16.	INAH, Yucatán, Mexico			x		
17.	The Jersey Historical Society, Jersey, Channel Islands					
18.	John Packard Library of Yuba County, California			x		x
19.	Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.					
20.	Library of the Supreme Council 33, Scottish Rite, Washington, D.C.					x
21.	Long Island Historical Society	x				
22.	Masonic Temple, Worcester, Massachusetts					
23.	Mechanics Library, San Francisco, California					
24.	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		x	x		
25.	Microscopical Society of San Francisco					x
26.	Museum of Man, Paris, France					
27.	Museum of New Mexico, Labora- tory of Anthropology, Santa Fe					
28.	Museum of the American Indian, New York					
29.	National Archives, Washington, D.C.		x	x		

	Institutions	A	B	C	D	E
30.	The New York Historical Society, New York					
31.	New York Public Library					x
32.	The Peabody Museum at Harvard	x	x	x		
33.	Philosophical Research Society, Los Angeles, California	x	x	x	x	x
34.	Quatuor Coronati Correspondence Circle, London					
35.	San Francisco Public Library					x
36.	Society of California Pioneers					
37.	The Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, California					
38.	The Theosophia Magazine, Los Angeles, California					
39.	Theosophical Society of America, Olcott Library and Research Center, New York					
40.	The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, California					
41.	Tulane University Library		x	x	x	
42.	The United Lodge of Theosophists, New York					
43.	Widener Library, Harvard University, Massachusetts					

APPENDIX C

INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED AND/OR QUERIED

## Individuals Contacted and/or Queried

### Historians

Dr. Curtis Hinsley, Jr., historian of American ethnology and archaeology, Colgate University, New York. He recently published a history of the Smithsonian Institution and is currently working on a history of the Peabody Museum at Harvard University. Much of his research directly overlaps the Le Plongeon research.

Dr. William M. Calder, III, a historian with the classics Department of the University of Colorado. He is currently researching the work of H. Schliemann and nineteenth century archaeology in the Classical area.

### Art Historians Specializing in Pre-Columbian Art

Dr. Linnea Wren of Gustavus Adolphus College, Minneapolis, Minnesota has been researching the iconography of the Ball Court and the murals in Upper Temple of the Jaguars at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán. She is a specialist in Maya iconography.

Dr. Susan Milbrath is an art historian/archaeoastronomer specializing in Mesoamerica and the Maya. She has an extensive background in Maya iconography and art.

Dr. Keith McElroy of the University of Arizona is a specialist in pre-Columbian art and nineteenth century photography in Mesoamerica and South America. He has written on Le Plongeon's work in Peru, as well as Le Plongeon's interaction with E. G. Squier.

### Historians of Photography

Dr. Richard Rudisill of the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico, is a specialist on the history of photography and early photographic work in Mexico.

Mr. Keith Davis, photoarchivist with Hallmark Cards, has written a biography of Désiré Charnay, Le Plongeon's rival in Mexico.

### Maya Hieroglyphics and Linguistics

Dr. Linda Schele of the University of Texas, Austin, Texas, is a specialist in deciphering Maya hieroglyphics with extensive knowledge of Maya iconography.

Ms. Barbard MacLeod of the University of Texas, Austin, Texas is a linguist specializing in Yucatecan Maya and Chol. She is a hieroglyphic and iconographic specialist, archaeologist/anthropologist.

Ms. Dorie Reents of the University of Texas, Austin, Texas is a specialist in deciphering Maya hieroglyphics with a special knowledge of northern Yucatán.

### Archaeologists/Anthropologists

Dr. Gordon Willey of Harvard University; has special expertise in the history of American archaeology, archaeological methodology and technique.

Dr. David Grove of Southern Illinois University has special knowledge of Mesoamerican archaeology, technique, and history.

Dr. Payson Sheets of the University of Colorado is a specialist in archaeological methodology and technique in the area of Mesoamerica.

Dr. Peter Schmidt of INAH, Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico, is an archaeologist with knowledge of Le Plongeon's work at Chichén Itzá, Aké, Uxmal, and Izamal, and has been in charge of consolidation and reconstruction of a number of structures at those sites.

Mr. Norberto Gonzalez of INAH, Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico, has been director of archaeology for the Yucatán peninsula and has knowledge of historical archives in Yucatan.

Dr. Jaime Litvak King of UNAM, Mexico City, is publishing on the history of archaeology in Mexico and is familiar with archival sources in Mexico.

Dr. Gordon Ekholm of the American Museum of Natural History in New York is curator of American Archaeology and of the Le Plongeon artifacts, photos, and other materials acquired during the 1950s.



### Biographer

Mr. Ross Parmenter of Oaxaca, Mexico, is writing a biography of Zelia Nuttall. Some of his research is connected with the life of Le Plongeon.

### Writer-Orientalist

Dr. Manly P. Hall of the Philosophical Research Society, Los Angeles acquired the Le Plongeon materials in 1931 from Maude A. Blackwell. He has written on Masonic symbolism and secret metaphysical schools of Egypt, Rome, Greece, and the Middle Ages.

### Photographers

Mr. Ansel Adams of Big Sur, California is a fine arts photographer and able to assess Le Plongeon's work in the light of technique and artistic value.

Mr. Pirkle Jones of the San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, California, is a fine arts, ethnographic and technical photographer. He is able to judge Le Plongeon's technical expertise by the standards of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Richard Carter of the photographic department of the University of Colorado has duplicated the camera used by Le Plongeon in Yucatán in the 1870s and has extensive knowledge about nineteenth century photographic equipment.

### Maya Architecture

Dr. George Andrews of the University of Oregon is a specialist in Maya architecture and has been able to assess the accuracy of Le Plongeon's drawings of structures at archaeological sites. He has provided plans of structures not published for comparison with Le Plongeon's drawings.

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONS WHERE LE PLONGEON PHOTOGRAPHS  
AND DRAWINGS ARE HELD, AND  
THEIR INVENTORIES

The materials listed have not been inventoried by the institutions which house them. An inventory was made by the author of the various holdings, but due to its informal nature there may be inaccuracies in counts and occasional omissions.

1. Philosophical Research Society  
3910 Los Feliz Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90027

#### Negatives

Location/Description	Quantity
Chichén Itzá	128
Uxmal	77
Aké	3
Mitla	4
Xochicalco	12
Yucatán, general, non-archaeological	28
Artifacts	36
Portraits, Maya or non-Maya	13
Graphics	23
Miscellaneous cultures	47
Total	371

## Prints

Location/Description	Quantity
Chichén Itzá	65
Uxmal	65
Aké	3
Yucatán, general, non-archaeological	35
Artifacts	21
Portraits, Maya or non-Maya	5
Graphics	6
Miscellaneous cultures	9
Belize	15
Labna	1
Izamal	7
Mérida	2
Total	234

Drawings

Tracings of parts of the murals in the Upper Temple of the Jaguars, Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico  
 Quantity: 27 drawings.

2. American Museum of Natural History  
 Central Park West at 79th Street  
 New York, New York 10024

Negatives

Location/Description	Quantity
Chichén Itzá	6
Uxmal	3
Palenque	1
Portraits, Maya or non-Maya	12
Total	22

Prints

Location/Description	Quantity
Yucatán, general, non-archaeological	48
Uxmal	1
Birds and mammals	17
Total	66

## Lantern Slides

Location/Description	Quantity
Yucatán, general, non-archaeological	8
Portraits, Maya or non-Maya	15
Chichén Itzá	4
Total	27

3. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology  
 Harvard University  
 11 Divinity Avenue  
 Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

## Prints

Location/Description	Quantity
Chichén Itzá	41
Uxmal	55
Aké	14
Portraits, Maya or non-Maya	10
Artifacts	2
Total	122

4. Latin American Library  
Tulane University  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

Excavation Drawings

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Location/Description	Quantity
Plan by Le Plongeon of his excavation of the Platform of Venus, Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico	1
Cross-section by Le Plongeon of his excavation of the Platform of Venus, Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico	1

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