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**Edwin M. Shook Archival Collection, Guatemala City, Guatemala**



**Research Year:** 2003

**Culture:** Maya

**Chronology:** Pre-Classic to Post Classic

**Location:** Various archaeological sites in Guatemala and México

**Site:** Tikal, Uaxactún, Copán, Mayapán, Kaminaljuyú, Piedras Negras, Palenque, Ceibal, Chichén Itzá, Dos Pilas

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## **Abstract**

The Edwin M. Shook archive is a collection of documents that resulted from Dr. Edwin M. Shook's archaeological fieldwork in Mesoamerica from 1934-1998. He came to Guatemala as part of the Carnegie Institution and carried out investigations at various sites including Tikal, Uaxactún, Copán, Mayapán, among many others. He further established his residence in Guatemala where he continued an active role in archaeology. The archive donated by Dr. Shook to Universidad del Valle de Guatemala in 1998 contains his field notes, Guatemala archaeological site records, photographs, documents, and illustrations. They were stored at the Department of Archaeology for several years until we obtained FAMSI's support to start the conservation and protection of the archive. Basic conservation techniques were implemented to protect the archive from further damage. This report lists several sets of materials prepared by Dr. Shook throughout his fieldwork experience. Through these data sets, people interested in Shook's work can know what materials are available for study at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala.

## **Resumen**

El archivo Edwin M. Shook consiste en una colección de documentos que resultaron de las investigaciones arqueológicas en Mesoamérica realizadas por el Dr. Shook entre 1934 y 1998. El Dr. Shook llegó a Guatemala como parte del equipo de investigadores de la Institución Carnegie y llevó a cabo investigaciones en varios sitios incluyendo Tikal, Uaxactún, Copán, Mayapán, entre muchos otros. Posteriormente estableció su residencia en Guatemala donde continuó con un papel muy activo en arqueología. El archivo contiene sus notas de campo, el registro de sitios arqueológicos de Guatemala, fotografías, documentos, ilustraciones y mapas. Este fue donado por el Dr. Shook a la Universidad del Valle de Guatemala en 1998. El mismo se encuentra en el Departamento de Arqueología de esta universidad donde había sido depositado desde esa época. Sin embargo, no fue sino hasta que se obtuvo el apoyo financiero de FAMSI que fue posible empezar con el proceso básico de conservación y protección del archivo. Se implementaron técnicas básicas de conservación para proteger al archivo de daños futuros. Este reporte lista varios conjuntos de datos separados que cubren los contenidos del archivo Edwin M. Shook. Estas listas contienen información para los investigadores interesados. Esto proporcionará información para todos aquellos que quieran físicamente consultarlo en el Departamento de Arqueología de la Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. La información del archivo de sitios se encuentra completamente disponible en la base de datos que lleva ese nombre.

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## **Background**

Edwin M. Shook came to Guatemala for the first time in 1934 to participate in excavations of the Maya site of Uaxactún in northern Petén, Guatemala. At the time, he was a member of the Carnegie Institution of Washington research team. He was responsible for drafting maps needed by Sylvanus Morley for locating archaeological sites in the Maya Lowlands. He continued doing fieldwork at many important sites in various regions including the highlands (Kaminaljuyú among the most important ones) and the Pacific Coast of Guatemala, México, Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica until the Carnegie Institution closed the archaeological projects in 1958.

From 1955 to 1964, Shook directed the Tikal Project in Petén, Guatemala, sponsored by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. From 1968 to 1979, he was named field director, and subsequently became director of the Monte Alto Project on the south Coast of Guatemala sponsored by the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology of Harvard University, the National Geographic Society and the Miami Museum of Science. From 1980 on, he devoted most of his time to do laboratory work and analysis of the ceramics and other artifacts from Guatemala.

Dr. Shook was a strong supporter of the Archaeology Department at Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG). He donated his specialized library in Mesoamerican studies, now the "Virginia Shook" collection, to UVG where it is housed in a special section of the university's Central Library. In 1998, as his health was weakening and he had to move to a smaller house, Shook decided to donate his archives to our department. As an archaeologist dedicated to the study and protection of Guatemala's national patrimony and heritage, our university was very fortunate to be the institution whom Dr. Shook trusted to care for his library and archive. The archive includes his field notes, maps, correspondence and newspaper clippings, illustrations, archaeological site records, and photographs. The field notes alone, written from 1934 to 1998, total 104 books of approximately 75 pages each. Because the paper records and negatives are perishable, we felt the urgent need to conserve and protect this important legacy for Mesoamerican studies. This FAMSI project has started this important task.

## **Project Priorities**

The project had three main priorities that involved the basic conservation and proper housing of the collection, preparation of a catalog, and partial digitization of the archive, particularly the archaeological site records.

## Conservation Issues

One of the most important conservation issues was to properly house the archive. While the archive was lodged in a special room behind the Department of Archeology at UVG, it needed some work to establish the proper environment ([Figure 1](#)). Drapes were installed to protect the archive from natural light. All the wooden furniture was checked to assure that it was free of moths, and if not, was replaced with a new piece of furniture ([Figure 2](#)).

The paper documents were subjected to proper basic conservation treatment. This involved the cleaning of all paper documents. Each one was superficially cleaned. This consisted of rubbing a soft eraser over the surface, avoiding contact with fragile illustrations. The objective of this cleaning was to erase spots and paper impurities. However, one of the main damages already suffered is that of acid and rust spots (from paper clips used in the past). No further treatment was carried out as it would be extremely expensive. All paper clips were removed and replaced with plastic ones. When the process was finalized, each record was placed inside an acid free cardboard box that was properly labeled. This process has, as per the main objective, prolonged the documents' lives. The same procedure was followed for all the documents including Shook's site record forms, field notes, photographs, and correspondence.



Figure 1. View of items in the Edwin M. Shook archive prior to intervention.



Figure 2. View of some items that have been properly housed after intervention.

### **Guide to the Edwin M. Shook Archive**

Several Microsoft Access databases were prepared to catalogue the contents of the archive. Most contain basic information about the content of each set of materials. These lists were prepared so that the academic community interested in Mesoamerican studies now knows what is available for research at the Universidad del Valle de

Guatemala. All the information was transcribed literally from the original sources. Inquiries can be addressed to the Archaeology Department of the University ([arqueolo@uvq.edu.gt](mailto:arqueolo@uvq.edu.gt)).

### **Site Records**

The Guatemalan archaeological site record forms were digitized by putting the data contained on each record into a Microsoft Access file that contains the following information: site name, department, municipality, alternative name, informant, dating, cultural phase, samples, location, map name and number, and sketch map when available. The sites are organized by department (Guatemala has 22 departments). The text was transcribed literally from the original source. This file contains 1614 entries which represent the total number of archaeological sites recorded by Dr. Shook. Many of these sites have disappeared so this record is important in understanding Guatemala's archaeological landscape. Following is a sample of a site record form.

Click here to [Search and View the Edwin M. Shook Site Records](#).

<u>Site Id</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Alternative Name</u>	<u>Informant</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Cultural Phase</u>	<u>Samples</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Map Name &amp; No</u>
1	Alta Verapaz	Senahú	Arenal Cave		Tulane Map	1940			S.W. Of Cahabón	2262 III

### **Field Notes**

All Shook's original field notes were carefully photocopied so that the originals could be housed properly. Scholars interested in consulting his notes, can do so by accessing the copies housed at the Archaeology Department of Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. Another Microsoft Access file was prepared containing the following information: book number, year, topic (here, a reference to the page numbers is included), description, collaborators, and illustrations. This file contains 102 entries.

Click here to [Search and View the Edwin M. Shook Field Notes](#).

<u>Book Number</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Collaborators</u>	<u>Illustrations</u>	<u>Date</u>
104	1936	Uaxactún	Notas de campo: sobre los trabajos en Uaxactún.	Edwin Shook	Estructuras, cotas de nivel y detalles arquitectónicos.	2003-09-09

## **Photographs**

This section contains a listing of the photographs that are part of the Edwin M. Shook archive. A sample of photographs was scanned to show the kind of information available (see Figures 3-26). Scanning the photos is a costly process that is being planned for the next stage of the archive digitization. This data set lists 4752 photos. Once the listing was completed, the photographs were stored flat in clear polypropylene pages. These pages were housed in binders.

Click here to [Search and View the Edwin M. Shook Photographs.](#)

<u>Number</u>	<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Photograph Number</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	2	Belize/ México	Quintana Roo		Jade tallado estilo Olmeca con incisiones por la parte posterior	2000-03-12

## **Correspondence and Documents**

This section contains a listing of correspondence exchanged between Edwin M. Shook and colleagues as well as newspaper clippings and other papers. The FAMSI grant was used to prepare a listing of these documents. Further work will include a detailed description of each document. Because this was a time consuming effort, it will be done in the next stage of the project. Documents were cleaned and interleaves were used to separate each page in order to protect them. All paper clips were removed. These documents are currently housed flat, in folders inside a file cabinet following alphabetical order. A total of 1475 entries were recorded.

Click here to [Search and View the Edwin M. Shook Correspondence and Documents.](#)

<u>Assigned</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Of</u>	<u>Topic</u>
A	14	Artículos de periódico.	García, Carlos	Abaj Takalik, Altar Calavera.

## **Illustrations**

This database lists various illustrations available in the archive. It includes the following information: location of the illustration, illustration number, type of illustration, reference to an archaeological site, location, description, and draftsman. The illustrations are currently housed inside a cabinet.



A number of water colors done by Antonio Tejeda Fonseca were scanned to show the quality of materials available in this section of the archive (Figures 30-40). The water colors correspond to a special collection from the Salcajá, Quetzaltenango area, in the highlands of Guatemala.

Click here to [Search and View the Edwin M. Shook Illustrations.](#)

Shelf	No. of Drawings	Drawing Type	Site	Location	Description	Draftsman
1	32	Dibujo a lápiz	Complejo Dorion		Croquis del Complejo Dorion	Jose Luis Leiva

### **Maps**

The Edwin M. Shook collection includes a large number of maps. A listing of them was prepared in order to show scholars what is available for study in Guatemala. This file contains 547 entries. All maps were cleaned and re-housed. They were originally inside an old wooden cabinet that had moths in it. All maps were placed in a specially designed baked enamel finished cabinet with drawers.

Click here to [Search and View the Edwin M. Shook Maps.](#)

Area	Type/Place	Quadrant
	Topográfico, Guatemala	2562 III
Agalteca	Honduras	

### **Future Work**

More work is being planned to continue the conservation and digitization of this archive. The next stage will focus on the digitization process which will involve the scanning of most photos and illustrations. To be able to continue with this ongoing project Luisa Escobar, from Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, has requested funding from the Catherwood and Soros Foundations.

### **Acknowledgements**

Many people have collaborated on this important project. FAMSI, our sponsor, kindly provided the funding to obtain the materials to properly house the archive and begin the



digitization process. Lic. Luisa Escobar supervised Jenny Guerra and María de los Angeles Corado, archaeology students who recorded all the entries. They were responsible for inputting the data into the Microsoft Access files. They also helped with the design of the database. Alejandro Seijas and Luis Velásquez also contributed ideas on how to handle the database.

Stephen H. Shook provided permission to carry out this work and we greatly appreciate it. Marion P. Hatch supported the project. Dorie Reents-Budet was very supportive of the work and visited the archive and so did Harriett Beaubien who assisted us with basic conservation issues.

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2003 "La cerámica arqueológica vista por un artista: ilustraciones de Antonio Tejeda sobre los materiales de la finca El Paraíso" (Quetzaltenango, Guatemala)  
in *Revista Española de Antropología Americana* vol. extraordinario, 161-176.



Figure 3. Photograph of Stela 2 from Ceibal, Sayaxché, Petén.



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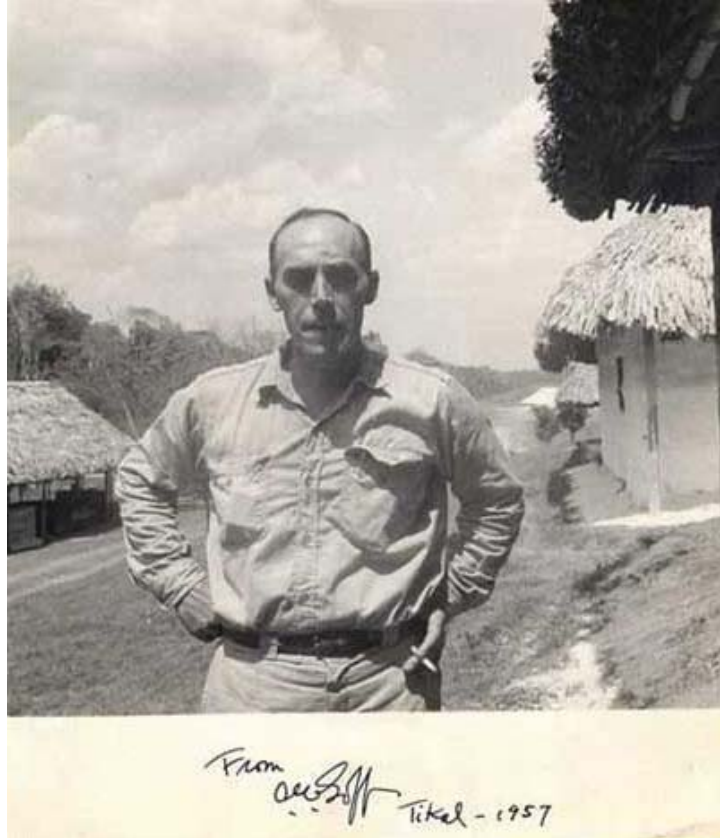


Figure 8. Photograph of Dr. Edwin M. Shook at Tikal project camp (1957).

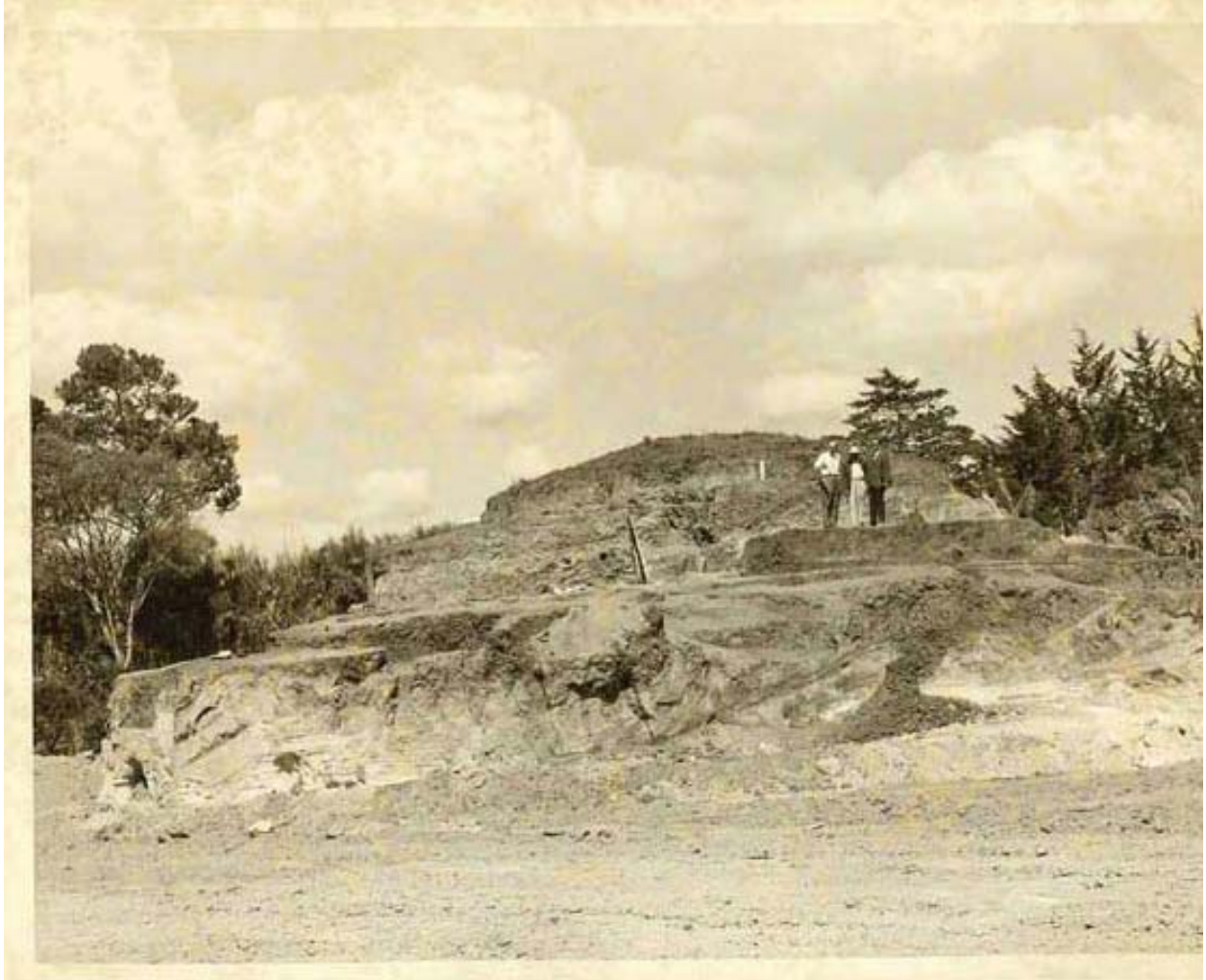


Figure 9. Dos Pilas hieroglyphic stairway.



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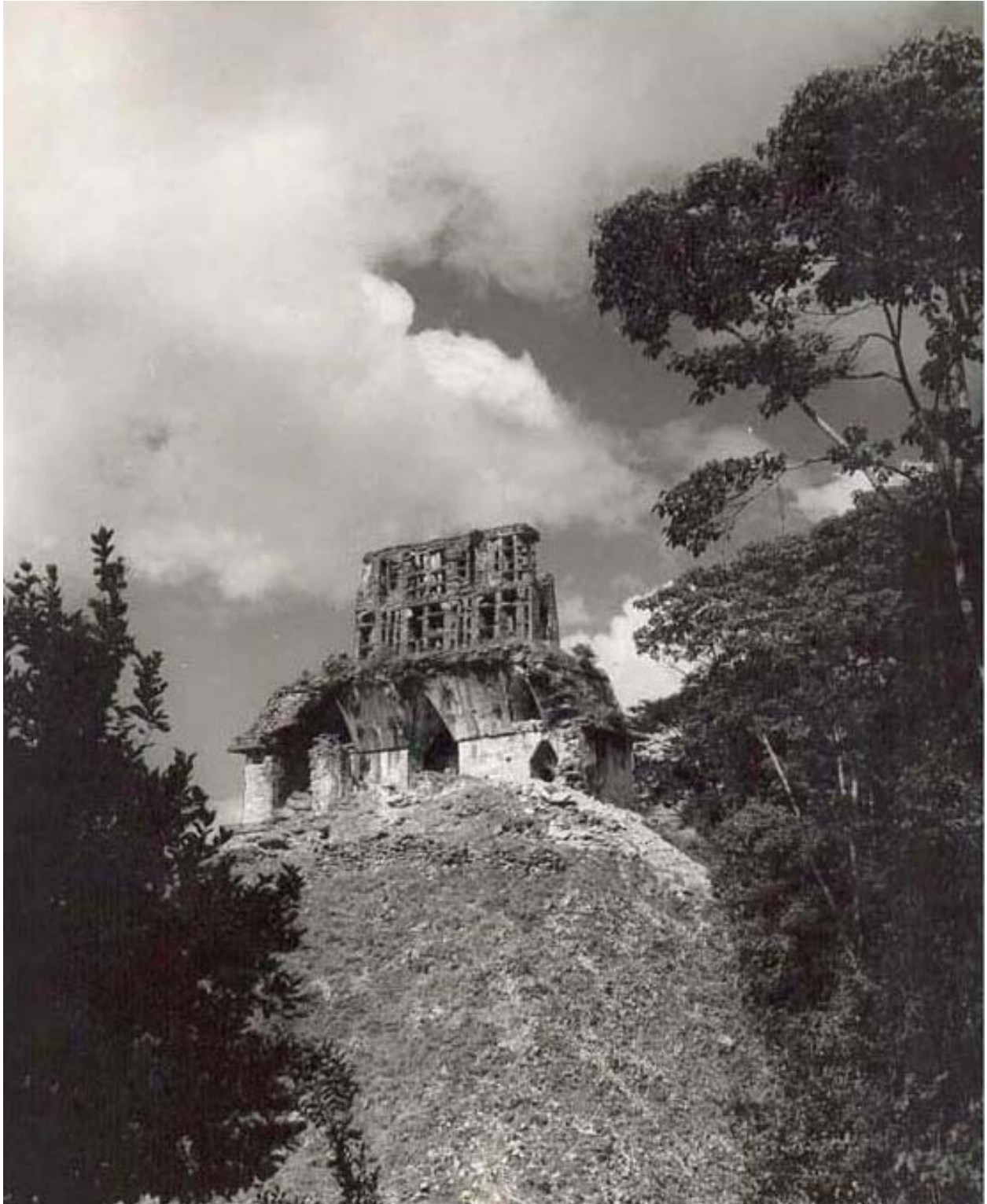


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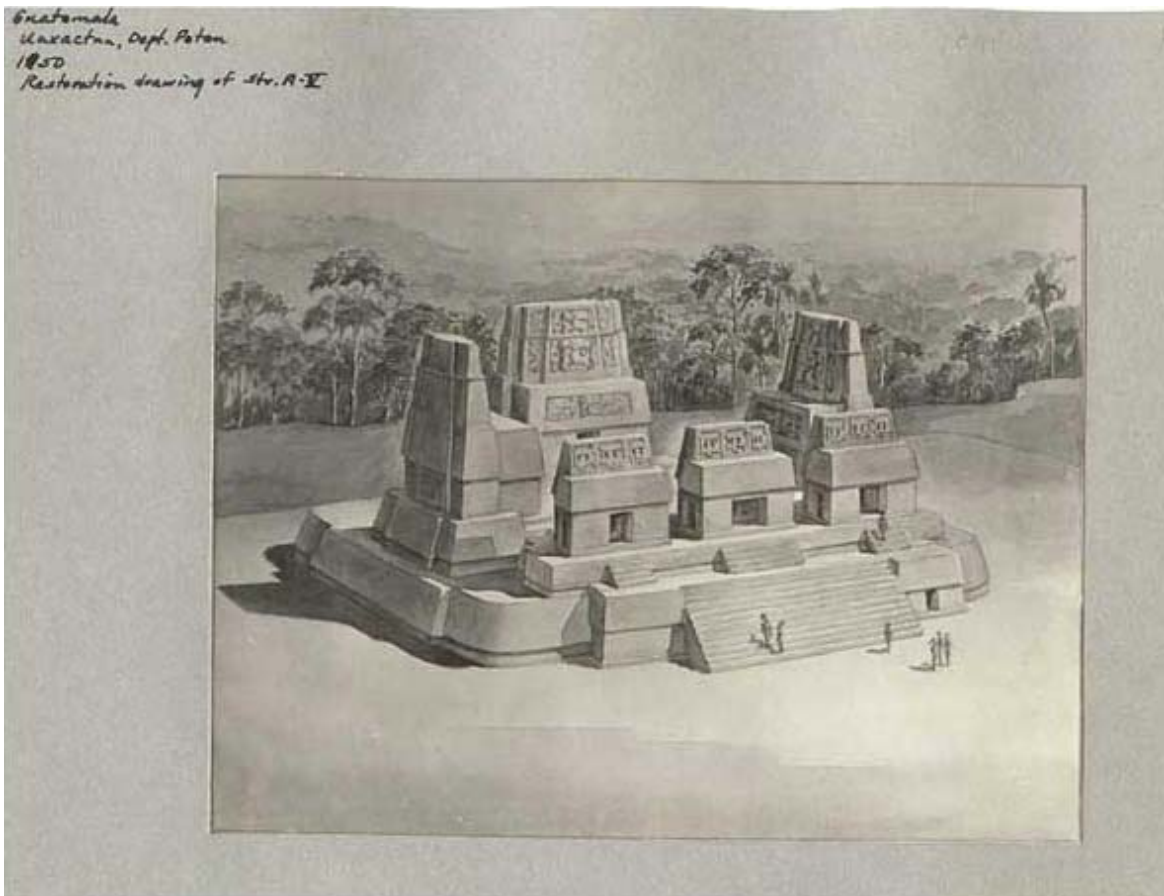


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