

## REMARKABLE DISCOVERY OF THE RUINS OF A PREHISTORIC CITY IN MEXICO.

AN EXTRACT FROM MEXICO.

A discovery of great archaeological value and importance has recently been made by Mr. Wm. Niven, a well-known mineralogist of New York City.

Mr. Niven is a life member of the American Museum of Natural History and owner of the Rose Garnet quarries near Cuautla, Morelos. While on a prospecting tour in 1894 for Mr. Morris K. Jesup, president of the American Museum of Natural History, through the state of Guerrero, he found ruins of what appeared to be a great and unknown prehistoric city, in the mountains northwest of Chilpancingo, capital of the state.

Mr. Niven has just returned from a trip through that region and has over 300 photographs of the most interesting localities. The ruins are more numerous than he had first supposed and extend for over an area of ten leagues square, or 900 square miles, he found in every foot-hill and mountain ridge the remains of houses and great buildings. In most instances these prehistoric structures were little more than foundations, but many of the walls are standing from three to eight feet high and all substantially built of stone and lime.

Mr. Niven, during the trip visited the ruins of twenty-two temples occupying a space averaging 600 square feet each, with altars in the center of all of them from five to twenty feet high and from ten to fifteen feet square.

At Quechomictlipan, (the name being Aztec for "a quantity of bones on top") he found that the building stone, in some of the edifices had been carefully cut of equal dimensions; and while excavating in one of these a great quantity of bones of animals were secured. This proved to be a circular chamber, or tower, about 12 feet in diameter, which was filled with dust and broken plaster painted a brilliant red and white. On the floor, which was also of plaster, there were large quantities of stone beads and many very curious and interesting objects with a great abundance of broken pottery, metals, etc.

Excavations at Jabalin revealed plastered walls and a great quantity of broken pottery. Near the great barranca of Xilatlahco, over fifteen hundred feet deep, the altar of one of the temples was over twenty feet high and eighteen feet square.

The walls of the temple at Yerba Buena are in some places eight feet high, and the altar is twelve feet high with parts of the stairs still remaining. Here were also found many objects of terra cotta.

Photographs were made of a stone in hieroglyphics a short distance from Xoquapan and on the top of a hill were the ruins of a temple with the usual altar in the center.

At Organos the ruins were almost entirely under ground. An excavation was made into one, and at ten feet the foundation of the walls was not reached. Three chambers were partly cleared out and they were found to be filled with clay, ashes and broken pottery. Another temple was found near here at a place called Tejas and more subterranean dwellings.

One large cut stone at Xochocolzin, seven feet long by two feet wide, had a figure of an idol carved on one side—with head-dress all complete. About eight hundred yards west on the summit of the hill were two large idols, one weighing about five hundred pounds.

At Texcal the buildings were all under ground, and near the roof of one of them twelve prepared stones of the shape and size of a sugar loaf were built into the walls, placed side by side with their broad ends projecting. Here, as well as in many other localities, were found circular stones which looked like grindstones but which might have been used as caps for pillars. On the summit of the Cerro Portrerio, as well as at Chalchintepetl, there are what appear to be great pyramids over sixty feet high. At both places some digging was done and many interesting and unique objects were found.

Perhaps the most remarkable find was made at a place called Guaybo. Here were the ruins of a temple 600 feet by 200 feet. At the depth of nine feet from the surface, under the altar, an olla of terra-cotta was discovered filled with dirt, secreted in which were seventy-two beautiful objects of mother of pearl. Four of them were carved heads with a peculiarly shaped head-dress and the others were carved representations of fish, etc. The olla was broken by the pick of the peon but the fragments were carefully collected and one-half of it with the earth and objects sticking to it undisturbed, was secured.

To reach the ruined city Mr. Niven passed over the route of the new railroad to Accpulco, now in course of construction, and both going and coming he was kindly entertained at the different camps. At Buena Vista he met a fellow Scotsman, the well-known general contractor, Col. Dave Shaw, and this meeting, Mr. Niven reports, was one of the most pleasant reminiscences of the trip.