

## NARRATING CHICHEN ITZA:

A Modest Contribution to the History of Ideas—and Storytelling—about the “City of the Sacred Well”, with bibliographic points of departure\*

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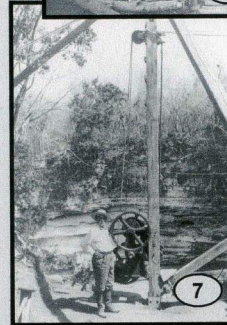
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**1532: THE PRAGMATIC:** Francisco Montejo the Younger (born ca. 1507), Spanish conquistador who, during a hard-won conquest of Yucatan, established a base at Chichén Itzá: See Robert S. Chamberlain, *The Conquest and Colonization of Yucatán, 1517-1550* (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1948), chap. 7.



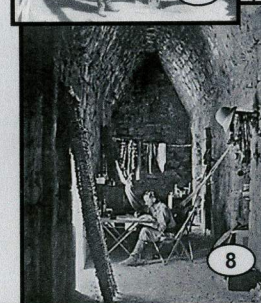
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**1875-1880s: THE ECCENTRICALLY DIFFUSIONIST:** Augustus LePlongeon (1825–1908), French antiquarian, excavator & photographer: See Le Plongeon, *Sacred Mysteries Among the Mayas and Quiches, 11,500 Years Ago* (New York: R. Macoy, 1886); and Lawrence Desmond & Phyllis M. Messenger, *A Dream of Maya: Augustus and Alice Le Plongeon in Nineteenth-Century Yucatan* (University of New Mexico Press, 1988).



7

**1885-1920s: THE PATERNALISTIC AMATEUR:** Edward Herbert Thompson (1857–1935), American diplomat, archaeologist & owner of the hacienda that included Chichén Itzá (1894–1926): See E.H. Thompson, *People of the Serpent* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1932); and T. A. Willard, *The City of the Sacred Well: Being a Narrative of the Discoveries and Excavations of Edward Herbert Thompson in the Ancient City of Chi-chen Itza* (New York: Century, 1926).



8

**1889: THE STUDIOUSLY METICULOUS:** Alfred P. Maudslay (1850–1931), British explorer & archeologist: See Maudslay, *Biologia Centrali-Americana: Contributions to the Knowledge of the Fauna and Flora of Mexico and Central America* [originally 1889-1902] (Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1983); and Ian Graham, *Alfred Maudslay and the Maya: A Biography* (Univ. of Okla. Press, 2002).



9

**1894: THE RIGOROUSLY SCIENTIFIC:** William Henry Holmes (1846–1933), American anthropologist, archaeologist, surveyor, geologist & museum director: See William H. Holmes, *Archaeological Studies Among the Ancient Cities of Mexico* (Chicago: Field Columbian Museum, 1895-97).



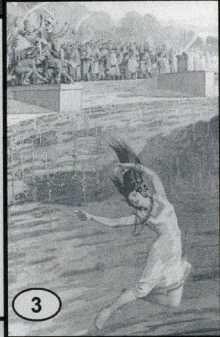
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**1900-1905: THE RELIABLE COPYIST:** Adela Breton (1849–1923), British gentlewoman, illustrator, and an associate of Alfred Maudslay & Alfred Tozzer: See Adela Breton, “The Wall Paintings of Chichén Itzá,” in *Actes de congrès International des Americanistes* (Quebec: 1906); and Mary F. McVicker, *Adela Breton: A Victorian Artist Amid Mexico's Ruins* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).



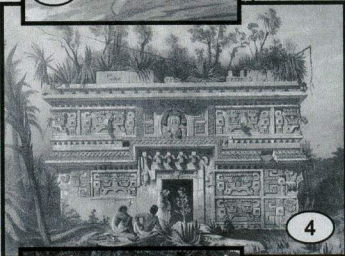
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**1566: THE INTOLERANT:** Diego de Landa (1524–1579), Spanish Franciscan Bishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Yucatán: See Diego de Landa, *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* [originally 1566], trans. & edited by A. Tozzer, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology #18 (Harvard University, 1941).



3

**1600's- THE REVERENT (& THE RELUCTANT):** Mayas practicing (and protesting) sacrifice at the Sacred Cenote: See, e.g., Tomas Lopez Medel's *Relación* (1612), “concerning the false religion and idolatry of the Occidental Indians...”, reprinted as Appendix B to Landa's *Relación*, ed. Tozzer.



4

**1842: THE EMINENTLY REASONABLE:** John Lloyd Stephens (1805–1852), American explorer, author & diplomat; and **THE ARTFULLY EMBELLISHING:** Frederick Catherwood (1799–1854), British artist & architect: See Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas & Yucatan*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper Brothers, 1841); Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, 2 vols. (New York: 1843); and F. Catherwood, *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan* (London: 1844).



5

**1860, 1880s: THE DASHINGLY AUTODIDACTIC:** Désiré Charnay (1828–1915), French explorer, photographer & excavator: See Charnay, *The Ancient Cities of the New World: Being Voyages and Explorations in Mexico and Central America from 1857-1882* (London & New York: Chapman & Harper Brothers, 1887); and Keith F. Davis, *Désiré Charnay: Expeditionary Photographer* (University of New Mexico Press, 1981).



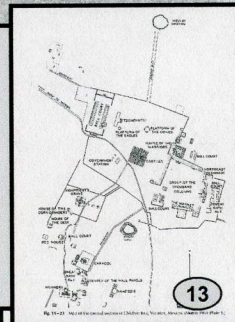
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1902-40s: **THE FULLY PROFESSIONAL:** Alfred M. Tozzer (1877-1954), American anthropologist, archaeologist, linguist & Harvard [Peabody Museum] professor: See Tozzer, *Chichén Itzá and its Cenote of Sacrifice: A Comparative Study of Contemporaneous Toltec and Maya*, Memoirs of the Peabody Museum, vols. 11 & 12 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1957).



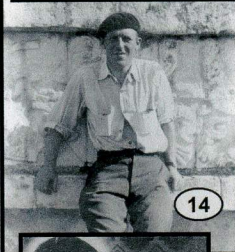
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1910s-40s: **THE FAMOUSLY EXUBERANT:** Sylvanus G. Morley (1883-1948), American archaeologist, epigrapher & director of Carnegie Institution of Washington's Chichén Itzá Project (1922-1940): See Sylvanus Morley, "Chichén Itzá, An Ancient American Mecca," *The National Geographic Magazine* 47 (January, 1925): 63-95; Robert L. Brunhouse, *Sylvanus G. Morley and the World of the Ancient Maya* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1971); and Charles H. Harris III and Louis Sadler, *The Archaeologist was a Spy: Sylvanus G. Morley and the Office of Naval Intelligence* (University of New Mexico Press, 2003).



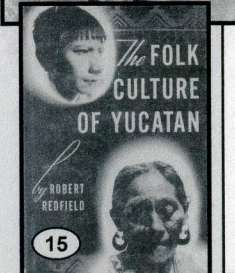
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1925-40s: **THE ACCURATE:** Karl Ruppert, American surveyor & illustrator: See Ruppert, *Chichén Itzá Architectural Notes and Plans*, publication #595 (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1952), which still provides the best collection of Chichén Itzá maps and plan drawings.



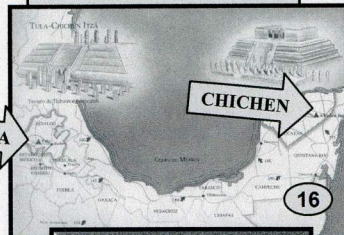
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1926-60s: **THE BRILLIANTLY ROMANTIC:** J. Eric S. Thompson (1898-1975), British archaeologist, epigrapher & Mayanist: See J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954); and J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya History and Religion* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970).



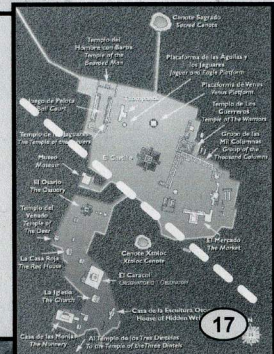
15

1930s-40s: **THE THEORETICAL:** Robert Redfield (1897-1958), American anthropologist and ethnolinguist: See Redfield & Alfonso Villa Rojas, *Chan Kom: A Maya Village* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1934); Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress: Chan Kom Revisted* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1950); and Clifford Wilcox, *Robert Redfield & the Development of American Anthropology* (Lexington Books, 2004).



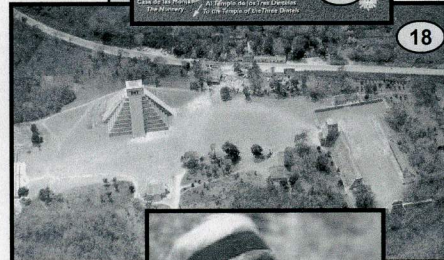
16

1950s-1980s: **THE INDEPENDENT:** George Kubler (1912-1996), American art historian: See George Kubler, "Chichén Itzá y Tula," *Estudios de Cultura Maya* 1 (1961): 47-49; George Kubler, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient America: The Mexican, Maya, and Andean People* (New York: Penguin Books, 1962, 1975, 1984); and George Kubler, "The Design of Space in Maya Architecture," *Miscellanea Paul Rivet*, 1 (Mexico, 1958).



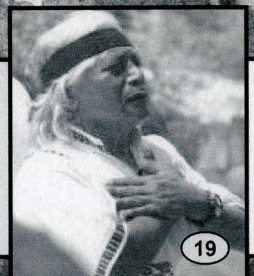
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1980s: **THE ICONOCLASTIC:** Charles E. Lincoln, Harvard-trained archaeologist, then lawyer[?]: See Lincoln, *Chichén Itzá and the Total Overlap Model: An Attempt to Synthesize Archaeological and Monumental Data* (1982); and Lincoln, "The Chronology of Chichén Itzá: A Review of the Literature," in *Late Lowland Maya Civilization: Classic to Postclassic*, ed. by J. Sabloff and E. W. Andrews V. (Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1986).



18

1980s: **THE VENTUROUS:** Clemency C. Coggins, Boston University professor of archaeology & art history: See Clemency Coggins and Orrin Shane III (editors), *Cenote of Sacrifice: Maya Treasures from the Sacred Well at Chichén Itzá* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984); and Clemency Coggins, "A New Sun at Chichén Itzá," in *World Archaeoastronomy*, edited by Anthony F. Aveni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).



19

1960s-present: **THE NEW AGE SPIRITUAL:** Hunbatz Men (1941- ), Maya elder, shaman & day-keeper: See Hunbatz Men, *Secrets of Mayan Science/Religion* (Sante Fe: Bear & Company Publishing, 1990); and H. Men, *The 8 Calendars of the Maya* (Bear & Company, 1983, 2010).



20

1987- **THE HERMENEUTICAL:** Lindsay Jones, historian of religions: See L. Jones, *Twin City Tales: A Hermeneutical Reassessment of the Tula and Chichén Itzá* (University Press of Colorado, 1995); and Jones, "Conquests of the Imagination: Maya-Mexican Polarity and the Story of Chichén Itzá," *American Anthropologist*; vol. 99 (June 1997).

\* Of course, there is abundant literature by (and about) nearly all these figures, and thus I am providing only a title or two to start a search. Dates of their visits to Chichén Itzá, which in some cases span decades, are approximate and not inclusive. Likewise, the elliptical titles are distressingly simplistic...