



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Désiré Charnay photographs of Mitla, Uxmal,
Chichen Itza, and Palenque, circa 1857

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Désiré Charnay photographs of Mitla, Uxmal, Chichen Itza, and Palenque
Date:	circa 1857
Identifier:	NAA.PhotoLot.4449
Creator:	Charnay, Désiré, 1828-1915
Extent:	12 Prints (albumen) 1 Print (silver gelatin)
Language:	Undetermined .

Administrative Information

Provenance

Probably donated to the Bureau of American Ethnology circa 1948.

Location of Other Archival Materials

Casts made by Charnay held in the anthropology collections of the National Museum of Natural History in accessions 042420 and 013211.

Contained in

Numbered manuscripts 1850s-1980s (some earlier)

Available Formats

Copy negatives in 43,193.

Preferred Citation

Photo Lot 4449, Désiré Charnay photographs of Mitla, Uxmal, Chichen Itza, and Palenque, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Access to the collection requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

Claude Joseph Désiré Charnay (1828-1915), a French archeologist and pioneer of expeditionary photography, explored and documented Mexico and Central America. He was commissioned by the French government in 1857 to collect artifacts and document archeological sites in Mexico. Charnay completed

three tours between 1858-1860, 1880-1882, and 1886; the latter two trips were funded by New York resident Pierre Lorillard and were largely photographic expeditions. Charnay later went to Madagascar (1863), North America (1867-70), South America (1875), Australia and Oceania (1878), and Central America (1880-83). He was among the first to use photography to record Meso-American archaeological sites, as well as the Indigenous peoples of Mexico whom he encountered.

Scope and Contents

Photographs made by Désiré Charnay depicting the Grand Palace at Mitla, the Governor's Palace at Uxmal, a convent at Chichen Itza, and a large stone tablet at Palenque.

Bibliography

Photographs may have been published in Désiré Charnay *Cités et ruines Américaines. Mitla, Palenqué, Izamal, Chichen-Itza, Uxmal. Recueillies et photographiées par D. Charnay. Avec un texte par [E.E.] Viollet-le-Duc, suivi du voyage et des documents de l'auteur. With atlas.* (Paris: Gide, 1862-1863).

Local Call Number(s)

NAA Photo Lot 4449

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Places:

Chichén Itzá Site (Mexico)
Mexico -- Antiquities
Mitla Site (Mexico)
Palenque Site (Mexico)
Uxmal Site (Mexico)