tribal style of Benin, still almost completely unknown. This tribal style is found mostly in villages at some distance from the capital city, and consists of large figures modeled in the clay of the village earth and of wooden sculptures made for the altars of the local chiefs and for the domestic altars of the villagers. Only a month ago, a finely stylized head of an antelope, similar to the one in our Museum (5), was found in Ushen, a Bini village forty miles to the northwest of Benin, and another, at Ugobo, far to the southeast of the capital. According to our records, our head was found at Benin, and this is quite likely, as in the days of its greatest power, the empire of the Oba of Benin was the dominant power of the Guinea Coast, with its influence extending over peoples of many languages and cultures, most of whom paid tribute to the Oba and sent gifts for his royal altars.

Structure 78, one of Tikal's unique four-storied pyramids, was excavated and the nine sets of plain stone altars and stela facing the flat-topped building repaired and reset. Masons were brought in, a kiln for burning lime was built, and the difficult task, as shown here, of reconstructing one side of the pyramid was begun.

TIKAL 1959
WILLIAM R. COE

At this Maya site in northern tropical Guatemala the fourth season of field work under the direction of Edwin M. Shook continues. The Museum's objectives, undertaken in collaboration with the Guatemala Government, are gradually being realized. Our initial difficulties with a dependable water supply have been solved. Excavations, laboratory work, reconstruction and consolidation, analysis of materials, and publication are proceeding in ways that we had hoped for by the time of the fourth season. Tikal as a tourist center has been an undoubted success. Yet, in spite of some contentment that things are going well, we remain aware by the problems of Maya civilization that we had hoped to solve and by the multitude of new problems that our excavations have quite unexpectedly presented to us.

Day after day we work among the bared temples and monuments, extending trenches, tunnels, and pits through floors and stairways, recording in notebooks and on film the often perplexing intricacies of construction, demolition, and rebuilding. The tens of thousands of potsherds and other objects recovered each season become laboratory objects, to be catalogued and studied. All of this work continues with the expectation that the time-sequence of related construction, artifacts, sculpture, and inscriptions, as well as site mapping and important studies of the environment, will collectively produce answers.

Some of our problems are narrow ("What bearing did plentiful flint deposits have on Tikal's growth?") while others are necessarily as broad
as civilization itself. In Tikal we find the outstanding manifestation of Maya culture, a development recognized as a unique climax in the New World. Relatively isolated in the hot rain forest, off the main hemispheric artery, lowland Maya development and Tikal comprise an immense study problem of human evolution. Others long for Mars in order to find out what non-Earth evolution has been; we prefer to stay at Tikal to discover why and how American Indians accepted the challenge of environment, to build through priest and farmer the remotely high-crested Tikal temples, to think in terms of five million Maya years, to go on growing perhaps two thousand years, and then to stop dead (in our limited view), leaving us the facts of sculpture and glyphs, potsheards, and stratigraphy, in endless notes and measurements.

Often while digging we find ourselves with some doubt that all our observations, the essential minutiae of excavation, will someday, by some mental gymnastic, fall into place. "Working hypotheses" are frequently found unworkable; preconceptions and certainties are all too often found to have been delusions. The critical floor, that by all rights should turn up at the stairway, is found to break off maddeningly well in front of it. At that moment, thoroughly discouraged, one tends to the conclusion that human behavior is really too complex to settle with pick, trowel, and shovel.

But the fact remains that some data inevitably do fall into place, providing perhaps only a fragmentary answer to a local problem. Previously discrete observations are found to relate and together they say something entirely new. What is found in excavation may have considerable intrinsic value as an object, but its truer value surely lies in its context and in the interpretative potential of that context. The honest happiness of discovery is all too often linked with apprehension: which problems does the discovery help to solve and what new problems will it raise in itself?

The Temple of the Giant Jaguar, in 1957 (left) and in 1959 (right). A tunnel to its center has located a series of early stairways as well as interesting cached offerings. The temple inner walls and vaults are being rebuilt and beams over doorways replaced. This building is now being consolidated so as to present an outstanding treasure of ancient Maya architecture.

The "Inn of the Jungle" is in full operation with simple but comfortable accommodations for twenty-four persons. It serves as a base for the many tourists whom the frequent planes from Guatemala City bring to the site. Antonio Ortiz, manager of the inn, provides guide service throughout the rains.
DISCOVERIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

Four more carved steles were discovered. The Maya date on one (Stela 29) probably corresponds to A.D. 392, and is surely thirty-six years earlier than the oldest "contemporaneous" date previously known anywhere on Stela 9 at nearby Uaxactun. Three additional carved altars, two Early Classic and one Late Classic, were also uncovered, and it was determined that Altar 11, previously thought to be plain, is actually carved. Considerable evidence of fragmentation and resetting of monuments was recovered. Carved offerings were excavated from the center line of temples and from beneath stelae. Some caches contained hundreds of eccentric flints and obsidians along with human skeletal material, while others yielded sea shells, pigments of various colors, sea wood, sponge, and objects of flint and obsidian. A tiny mosaic mask (shown above) is one of the most remarkable objects ever found in the Americas. It and other mosaic pieces, once portions of an exotic fineline, occurred in a deeply hidden marine offering found in the Temple of the Red Stela. Also in the Temple of the Red Stela was a large Late Classic sealed tomb which had been anciently looted. Above it, the remains of perhaps fifteen individuals were encountered. The basic sequence of ceramics and architecture was found in the Great Plaza and North Terrace. Aubrey Trik, project architect, is proceeding with the reconstruction of selected buildings.

Human head with fantastic bird headdress. 1½ inches high, of thin plates of brilliantly polished jade and tiny cut pieces of white, orange, and yellow shell, all inset in a hollow paste-like form.