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A Corpus of Cotzumalhuapa-Style Sculpture, Guatemala



Research Year: 1997

Culture: Maya

Chronology: Late Classic

Location: Highlands Guatemala

Site: Cotzumalhuapa

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Inventory of Sculptures](#)

[Advances in Photographic Recording](#)

[Advances in Drawing](#)

[Documentation of Newly-Discovered Sculptures](#)

[Plans for Publication](#)

[List of Drawings](#)

[Sources Cited](#)

[Annex: Checklist of Cotzumalhuapa-Style Sculptures](#)

[Table 1. Bilbao](#)

[Table 2. El Castillo](#)

[Table 3. El Baúl](#)

[Table 4. Other Nuclear Zone Locations](#)

[Table 5. Other Sites](#)

[Table 6. Sculptures of Unknown Provenance](#)

Introduction

Cotzumalhuapa-style sculptures from the Pacific coast and central highlands of Guatemala conform one of the most distinctive corpuses of ancient Mesoamerican art. It is also one of the least studied, although it has been known to scholars since the nineteenth century. Both the art style and the archaeological sites where it originated have received only sporadic attention, and their published record remains poor. Archaeological reports derived from research conducted by J. Eric S. Thompson (1948) and Lee A. Parsons (1967; 1969) are the major sources on Cotzumalhuapa art, adding substantially to earlier works by Habel (1878), Bastian (1881), Eisen (1888), Vreeland and Bransford (1885), E. Seler (1892) and C. Seler (1900). More recent publications by Greene *et al.* (1972) and Hatch (1989) also include photographs and rubbings of selected pieces. Yet, most sculptures are published in very small formats, often photographed at oblique angles, and very few have been drawn in detail.

This project aims to produce a comprehensive set of photographs and detailed drawings of Cotzumalhuapa sculpture that will provide students with a reliable source for iconographic and epigraphic analysis, together with basic documentation of archaeological contexts. It is part of a wider research program that includes archaeological research at Cotzumalhuapa as well as documentary research on early archaeological sources and Colonial-period documents related to the ancient societies of the area (Chinchilla, 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1997b; n.d.a; n.d.b; n.d.c).

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Inventory of Sculptures

An important step accomplished during 1997-1998 was the completion of an inventory of known Cotzumalhuapa-style monuments. This inventory includes sculptures from the major sites of the Cotzumalhuapa Nuclear Zone (Chinchilla, 1996a:185-284) together with sculptures from outlying sites where the style was manifested, as well as sculptures of unknown provenance in private collections. The sculpture inventory includes information on the provenance and history of the monuments, brief descriptions of iconography and inscriptions, and information on published photographs and drawings. The total inventory reached 266 items, of which 187 originate in the Cotzumalhuapa Nuclear Zone, including the sites of Bilbao, El Baúl, El Castillo and other locations. This inventory allows a more precise appreciation of the scale of the project than was initially possible, and has required a reformulation of the project's priorities.

For the purposes of this Corpus, sculptures were categorized in terms of priority for photographic recording and drawing, as follows:

Priority 1: Sculptures that display rich iconography and/or inscriptions. The majority are executed in bas-relief. This category includes 99 monuments.

Priority 2: Sculptures with interesting iconography that are well illustrated by means of photographs. This includes the majority of horizontally-tenoned heads and other tri-dimensional sculptures. This category includes 96 monuments.

Priority 3: Sculptures that do not display interesting iconography or inscriptions, often because of poor preservation. This category includes the remaining 71 monuments.

A checklist derived from the sculpture inventory is included in the [Annex](#). Sculptures are listed by site of origin and in some cases, by their presence in a documented collection. This checklist excludes some sites that have cataloguing problems, such as El Portal, a site in the Antigua Guatemala basin. The number and nature of sculptures from this site reported in early sources is contradictory (Eisen, 1888; Shook, 1952), and no access has been obtained so far to the collection. This checklist also indicates cases of sculptures reported in early sources, whose present location is unknown (21 in total).

Advances in Photographic Recording

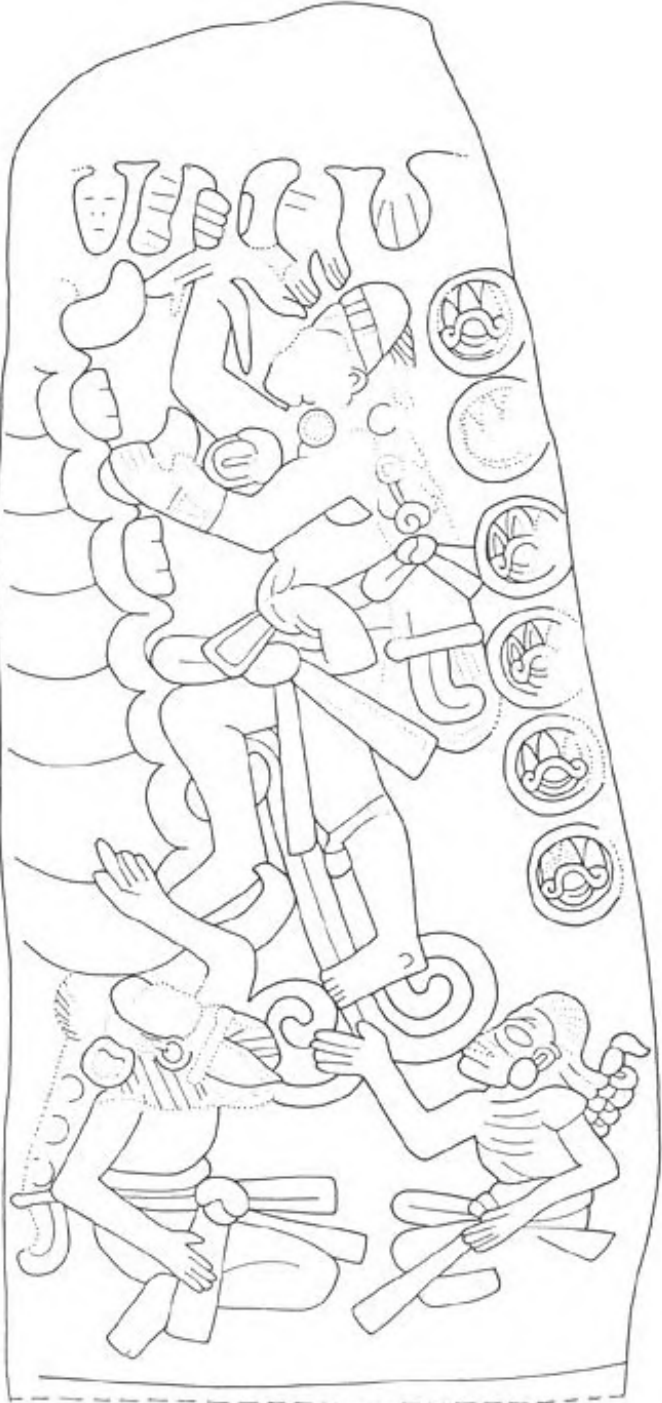
All sculptures are recorded in black and white photography, regardless of their priority. Color slides are also made of significant sculptured surfaces. Either sunlight or artificial light are employed, depending on the sculpture's location. As shown in the [Annex](#), 190 sculptures have been photographed, amounting to 71% of the total number of sculptures listed. This number grows to 88% if sculptures of unknown location and those that are not in the Cotzumalhuapa style (such as Preclassic monuments from El Baúl and Bilbao) are eliminated. Photographed monuments include all but seven of the sculptures listed as "priority 1". The exceptions are mostly monuments whose present location is unknown or inaccessible.

Valuable help was obtained from Miss Debora Kerr of Florida Atlantic University, who visited Guatemala in 1997, and photographed many sculptures from El Baúl and Bilbao with a 6×7 format camera, which allows a much better resolution in enlargements.

Advances in Drawing

Pencil drawings are made on the basis of photographic enlargements. Before inking, the majority of drawings are checked against the original monument. The exceptions are monuments located in private collections, where no access is possible. For example, Vista Linda Monument 1, shown below, was drawn on the basis of a slide made by Dr. Frederick Bove in 1991. No further access has been obtained to the private

collection where the monument is located, making it impossible to check the drawing for errors. No particular scale is being employed. Instead, photographs are enlarged to a size that is considered suitable for detailed drawing, which varies according to the sculpture's size and iconographic detail.



Drawing 33. Vista Linda Monument 1.

Copies of 42 final drawings produced to date are included in the [Annex](#). Fourteen additional monuments have been drawn in pencil, and have already been checked with the originals, but remain unfinished. Besides the priorities indicated in the [Annex](#), no particular order has been followed in preparing these drawings. Finished drawings include many monuments from peripheral sites in addition to those from the Nuclear Zone sites of Bilbao and El Baúl.

Documentation of Newly-Discovered Sculptures

Archaeological sites in the Cotzumalhuapa Nuclear Zone are seriously threatened by intensive agriculture and especially by the urban growth of the modern city of Santa Lucía Cotzumalhuapa. In 1996, a large portion of the El Baúl site's major architectural complex was subjected to urbanization. Major buildings suffered considerable damage, and numerous sculptures came to light as a result of this process. In 1996-1997, the author co-directed a rescue project at this site, in collaboration with Sonia Medrano, with partial financing from the National Geographic Society. Further work was carried out during March and April of 1998.

Recent research at El Baúl is highly relevant for the *Corpus of Cotzumalhuapa-style Sculpture* project, because it has allowed us to document several monuments within their proper archeological context. Twelve new monuments have come to light during excavations, including truly outstanding pieces. Monument 63 is a horizontally-tenoned human bust wearing a huge tasseled headdress, similar to Pantaleón Monument 1 and El Baúl Monument 12. The latter were removed from the Great Precinct of El Baúl in the late nineteenth century, as suggested by unpublished documents recently analyzed by the author (Chinchilla, 1996b). Archaeological documentation of Monument 63 within a sunken court in the same part of the site provides confirmation for the provenance of these sculptures. A radiocarbon date from the court's floor yielded a calibrated date of A.D. 625 (676) 862, which is earlier or contemporary with the construction of this architectural complex and the setting of its sculptures. The latter include monuments 46, 47, 61, 62, 65 and 66, in addition to Monument 63. This dating is consistent with the author's earlier proposals, based on dates that were not specifically associated with monuments (Chinchilla, 1996a:140-184).

Monument 69 is an enormous boulder carved with the figure a composite creature that combines the features of jaguar and iguana. Excavations showed that this important sculpture was set by the side of a 17-meter wide causeway that led south from El Baúl towards El Castillo, and by the edge of the Santiago river gorge. The foundations of a large bridge that ran across the river were also identified. Interestingly, Monument 69 was associated with the first construction stage of the causeway, and was completely buried during the second construction stage, possibly because its huge size made it impossible to raise. Instead, a new sculpture carved with the same creature (Monument

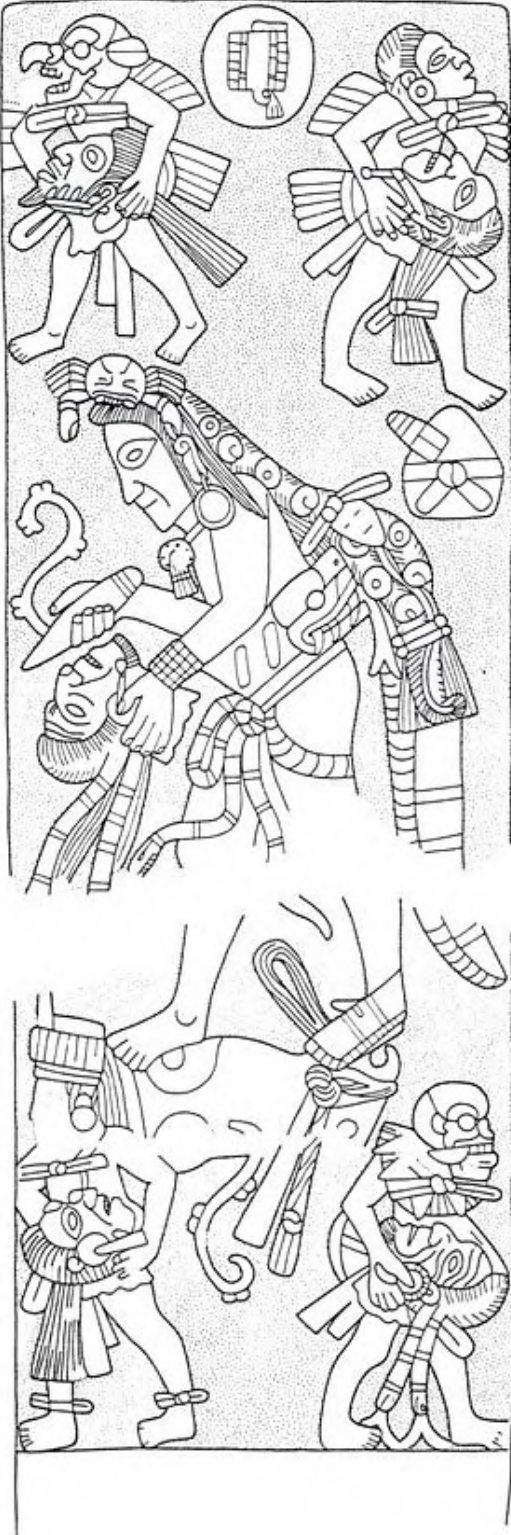
54) was placed directly above Monument 69. Thus, it seems that a jaguar-iguana was required to guard the entrance of the site at this particular place (Chinchilla, 1997b).

These examples illustrate the importance of archaeological documentation. A special effort is being made to recover information on the provenance of other sculptures from analysis of published and unpublished reports and oral interviews with local residents. This method has already allowed a reconstruction of the origins of monuments in the collections gathered in the nineteenth century at Ingenio Pantaleón and the Ethnographic Museum of Berlin, Germany (Chinchilla, 1996b; 1996c).

Plans for Publication

Dr. Jeffrey Quilter, Director of Pre-Columbian Studies at Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, D.C.) has expressed a strong interest in the project and its potential for publication in the prestigious *Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology* series. As currently conceived, the projected book will include a series of essays on iconographic and epigraphic topics, together with illustrations of a majority of the sculptured monuments. I am also making inquiries with editors in Guatemala and the United States for publication of a complete catalog of photographs and drawings, following the format of the *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions* (Graham, 1975). Additionally, plans for publication of the Cotzumalhuapa corpus include a series of journal articles, some of which are already published or in preparation (Chinchilla, 1996a; 1996b; n.d.a.; n.d.b.).

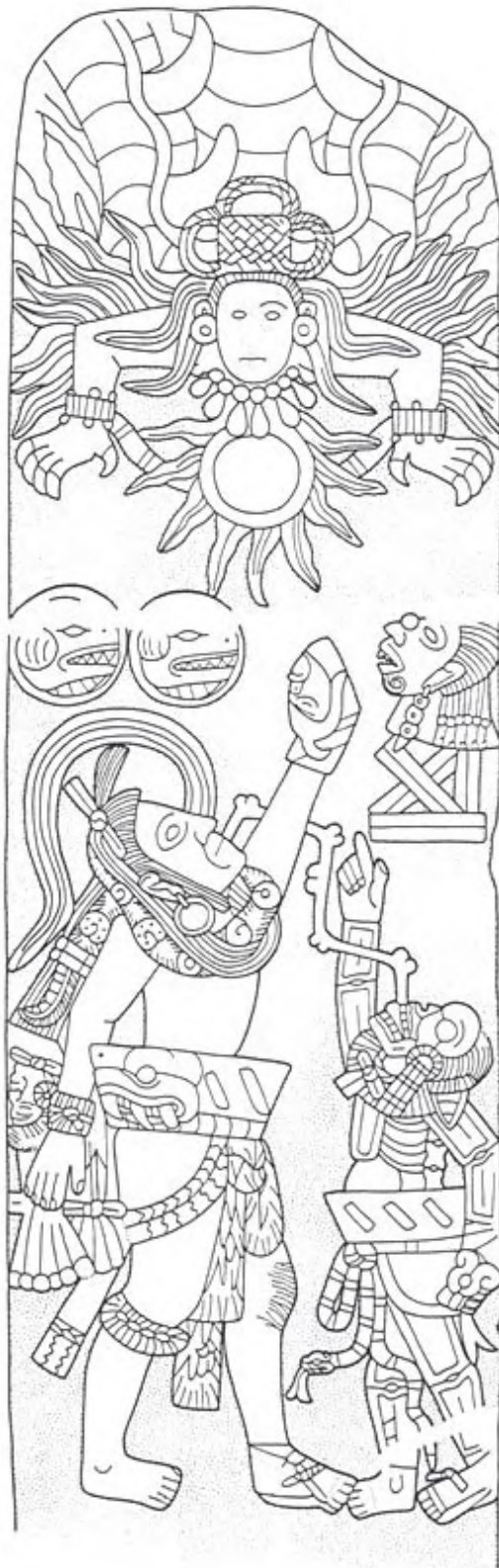
List of Drawings



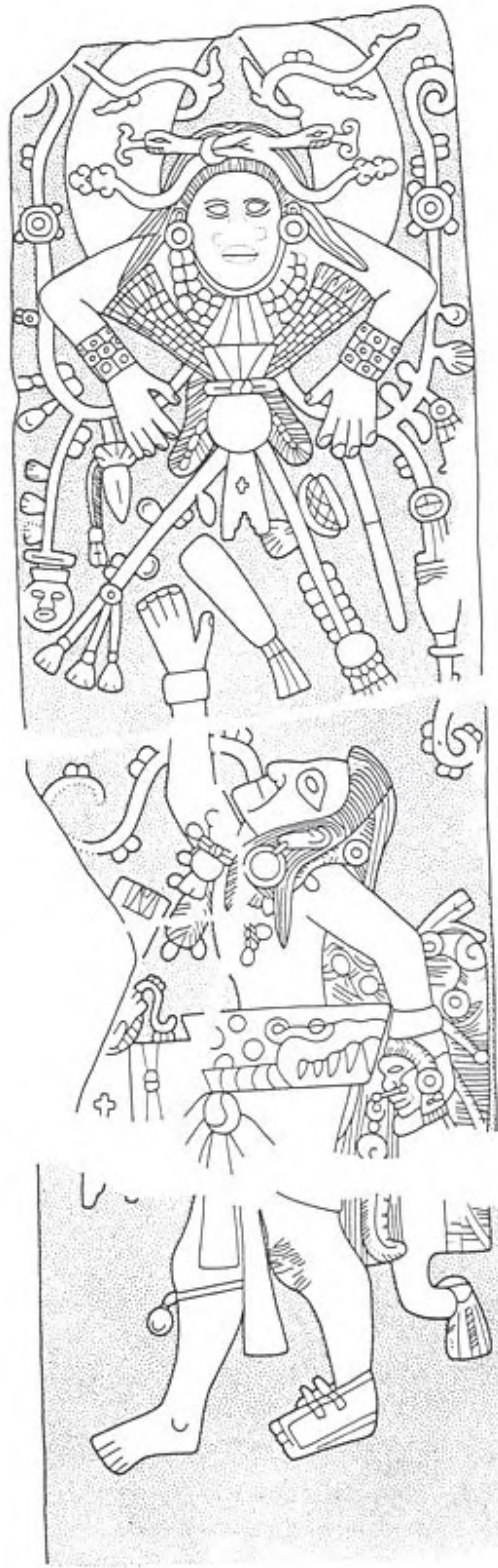
Drawing 1. Bilbao Monument 1



Drawing 2. Bilbao Monument 2



Drawing 3. Bilbao Monument 3



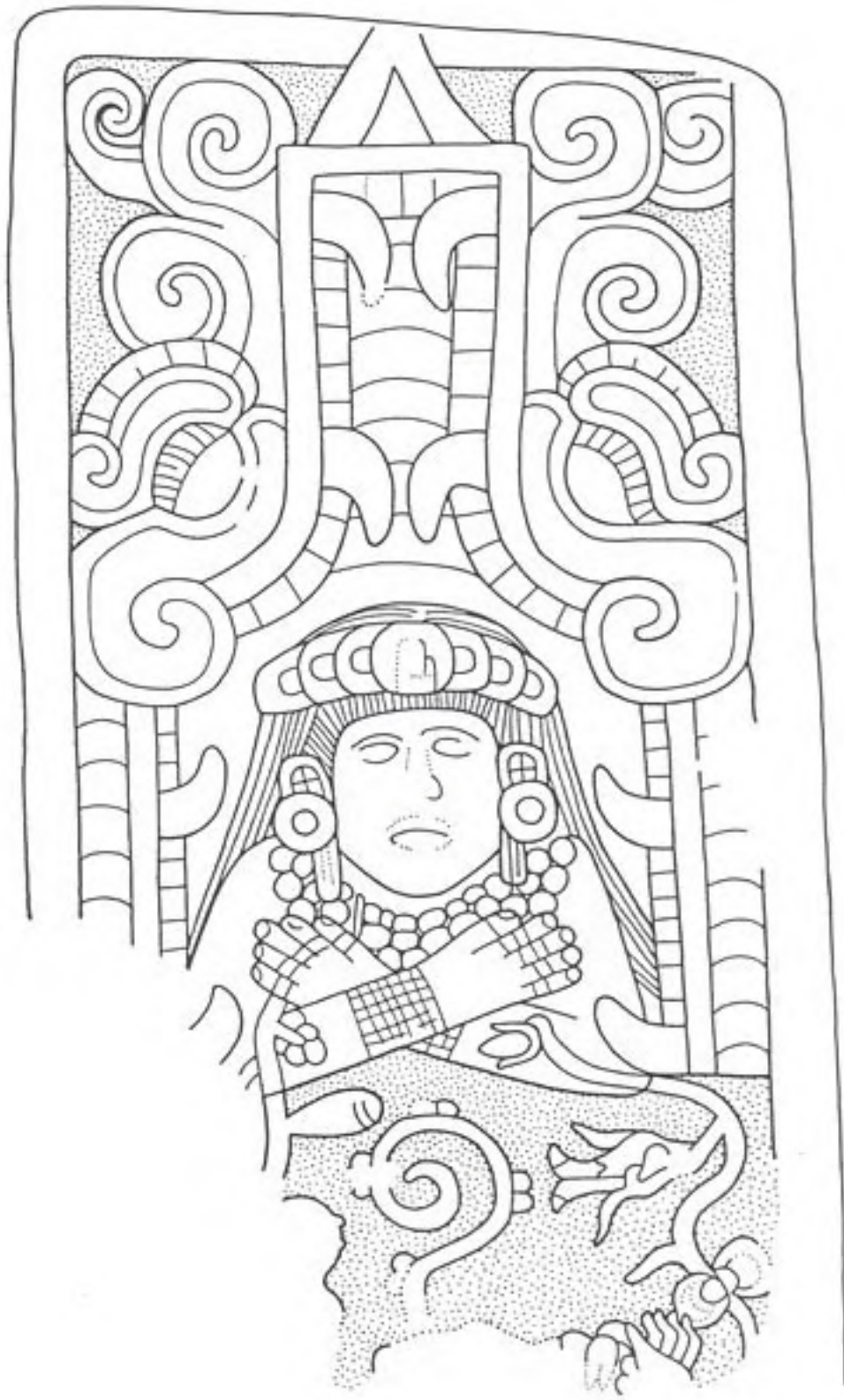
Drawing 4. Bilbao Monument 4



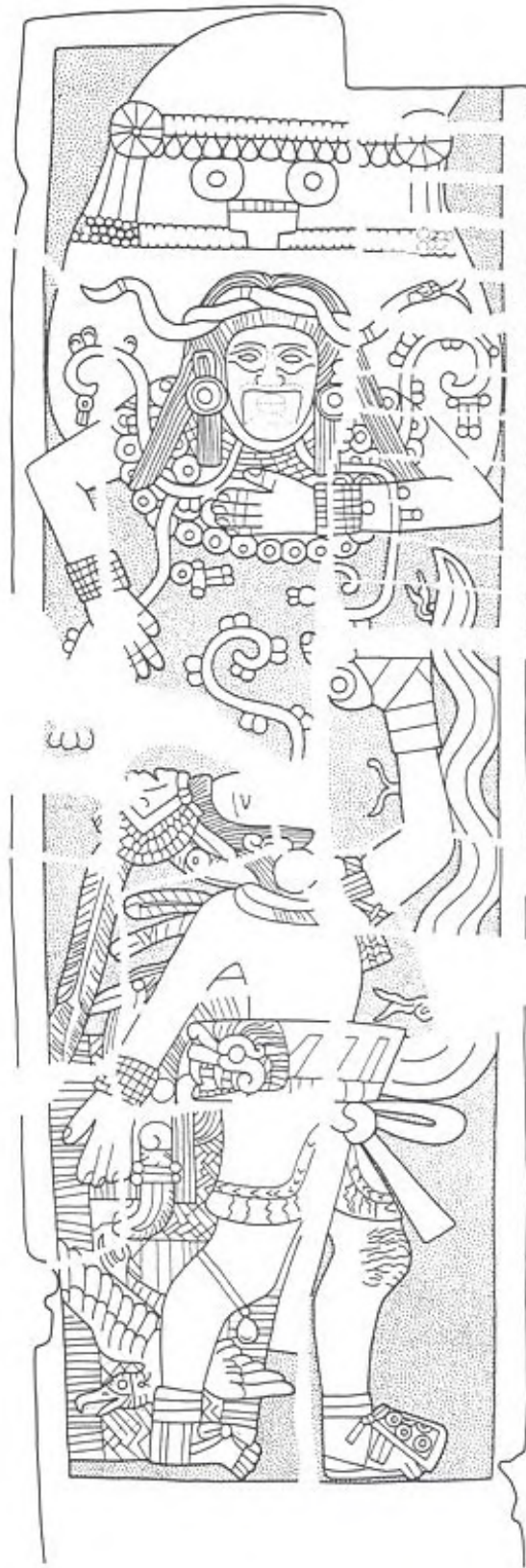
Drawing 5. Bilbao Monument 5



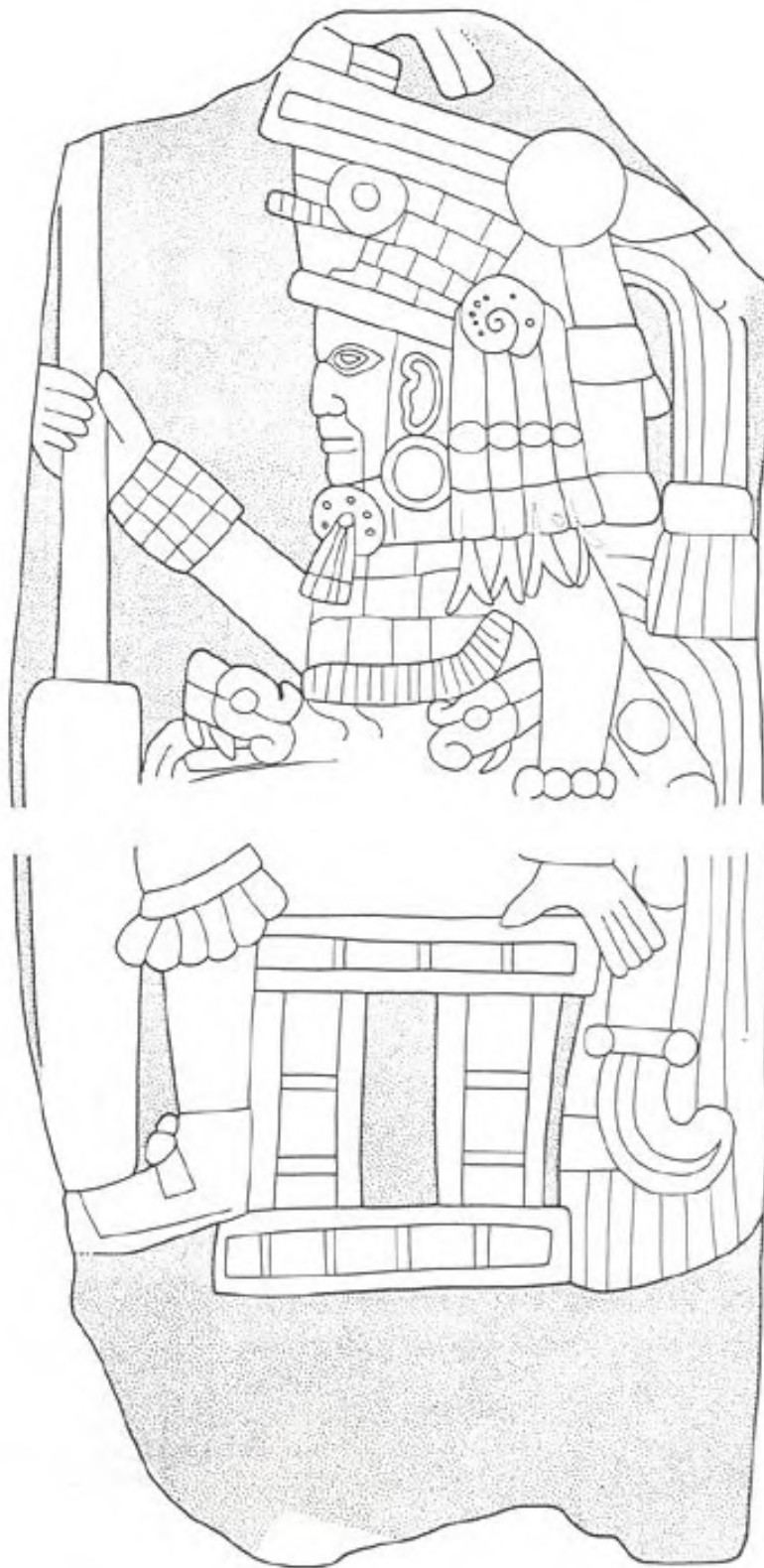
Drawing 6. Bilbao Monument 6



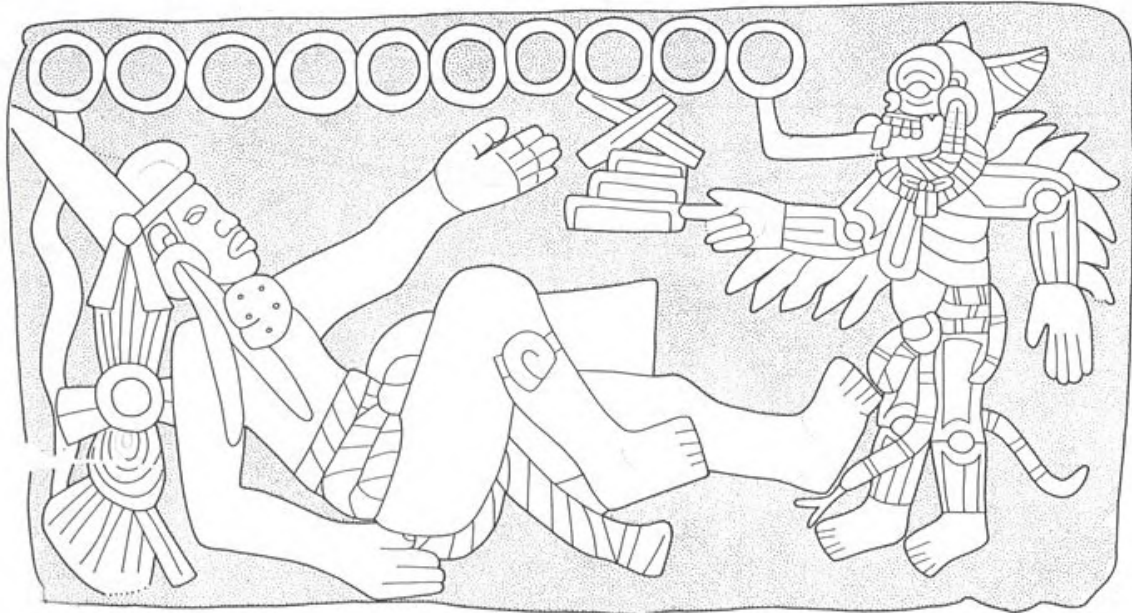
Drawing 7. Bilbao Monument 7



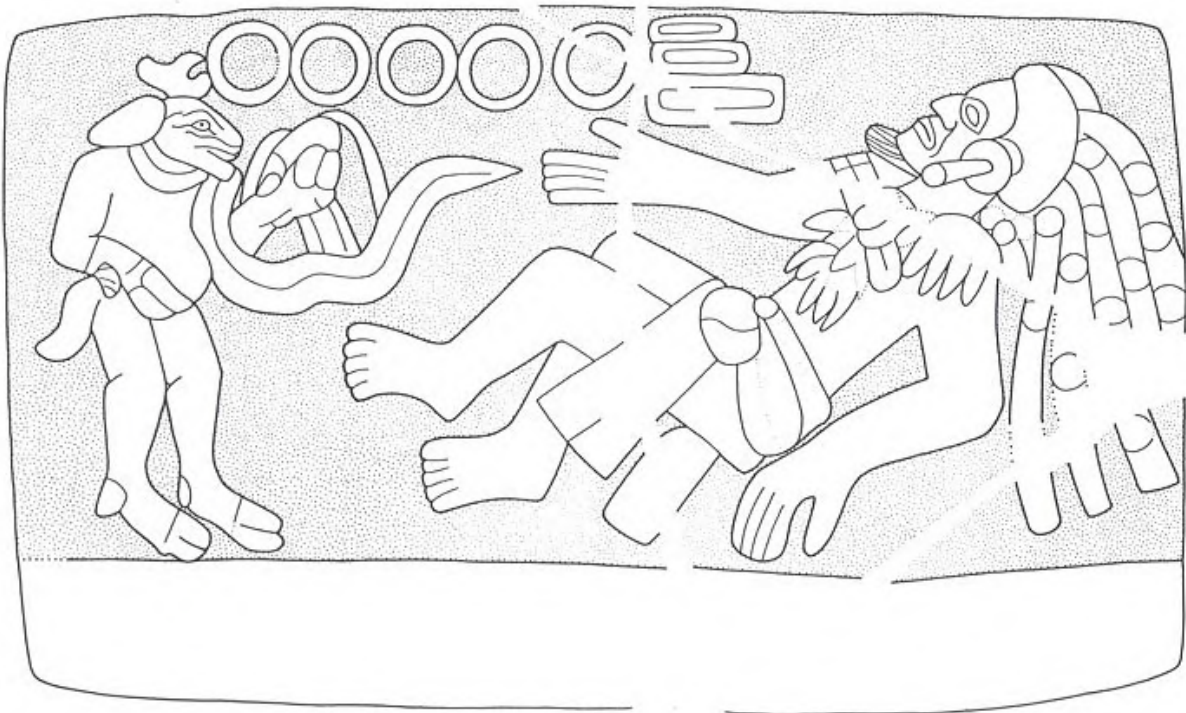
Drawing 8. Bilbao Monument 8



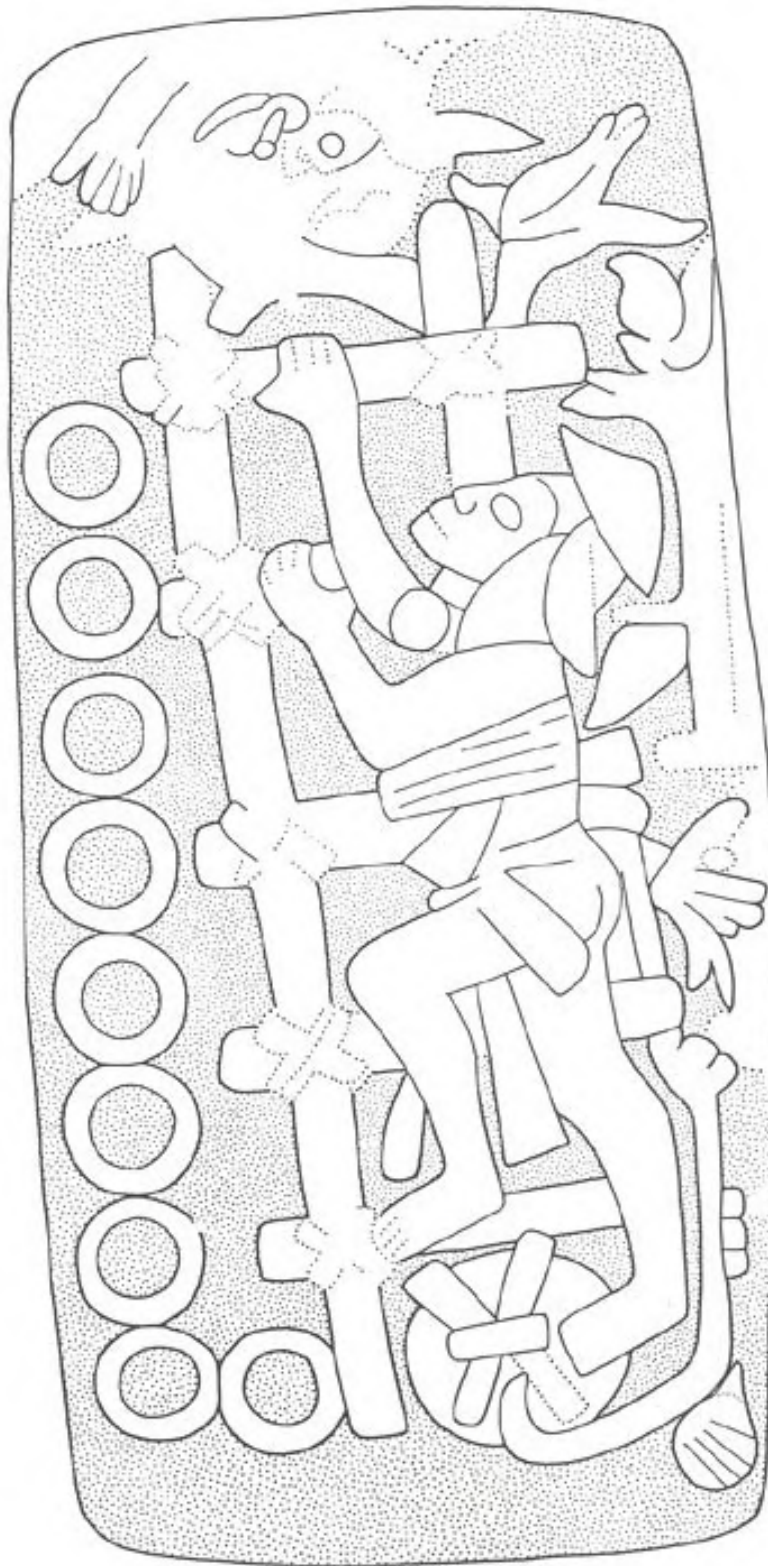
Drawing 9. Bilbao Monument 9



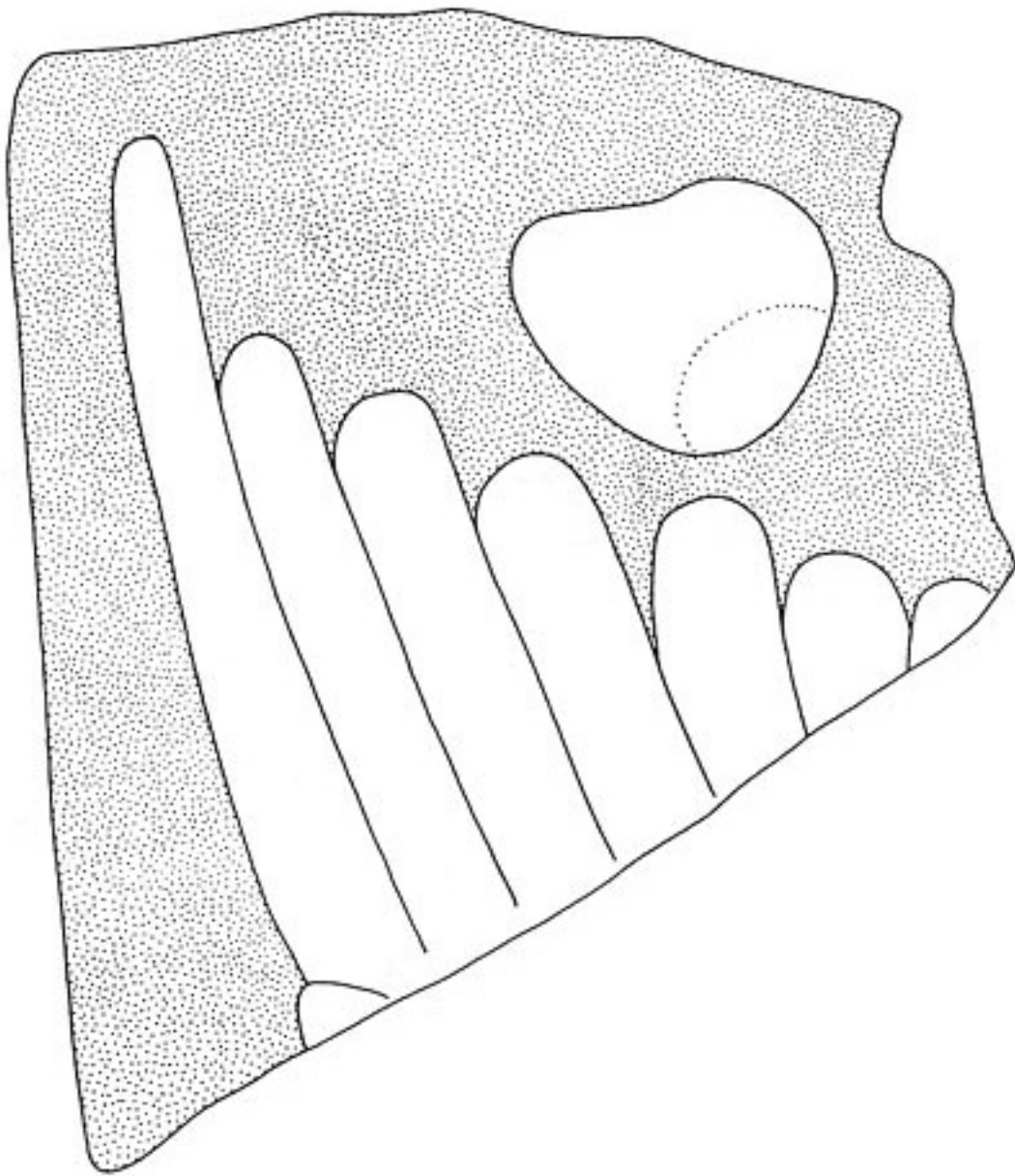
Drawing 10. Bilbao Monument 13



Drawing 11. Bilbao Monument 14



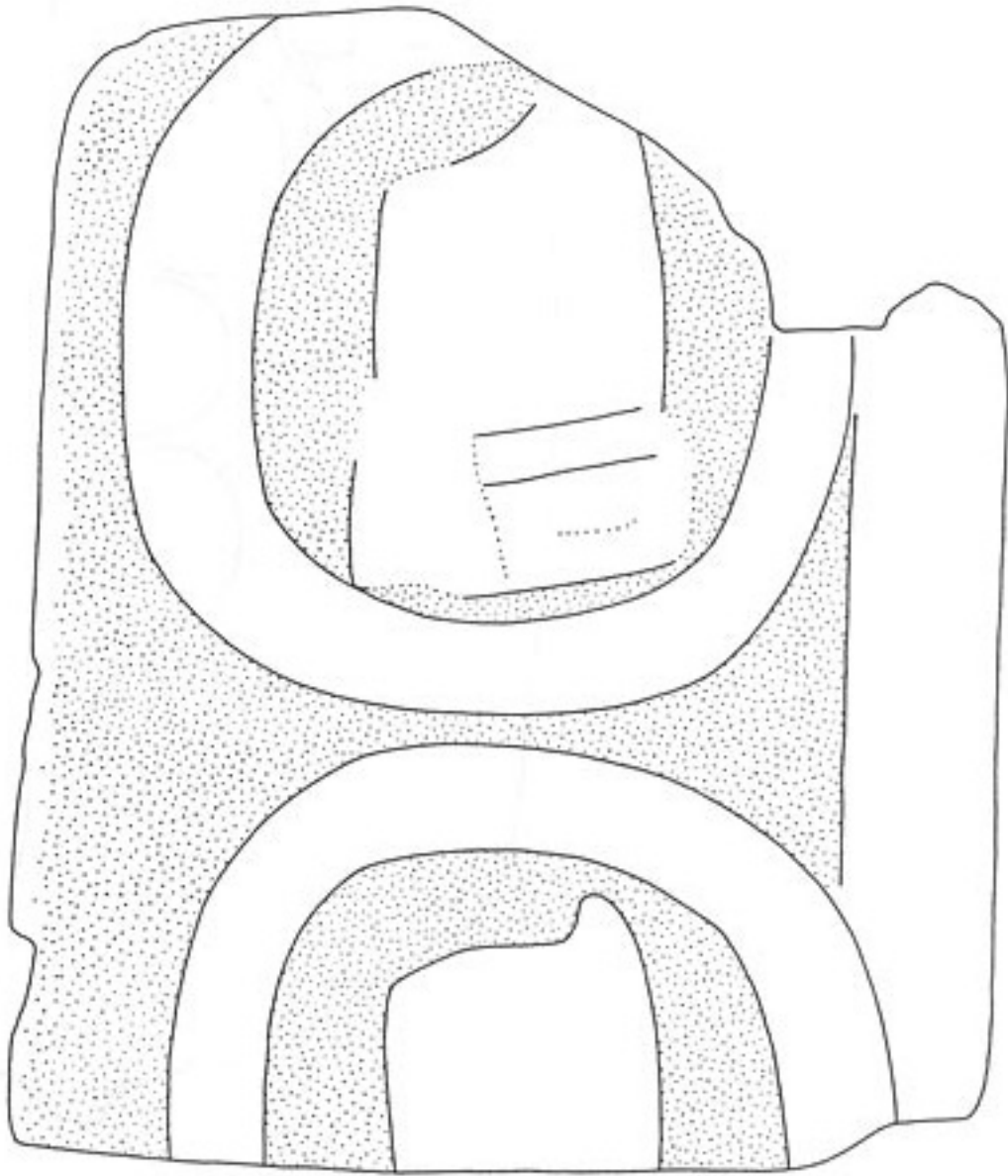
Drawing 12. Bilbao Monument 15



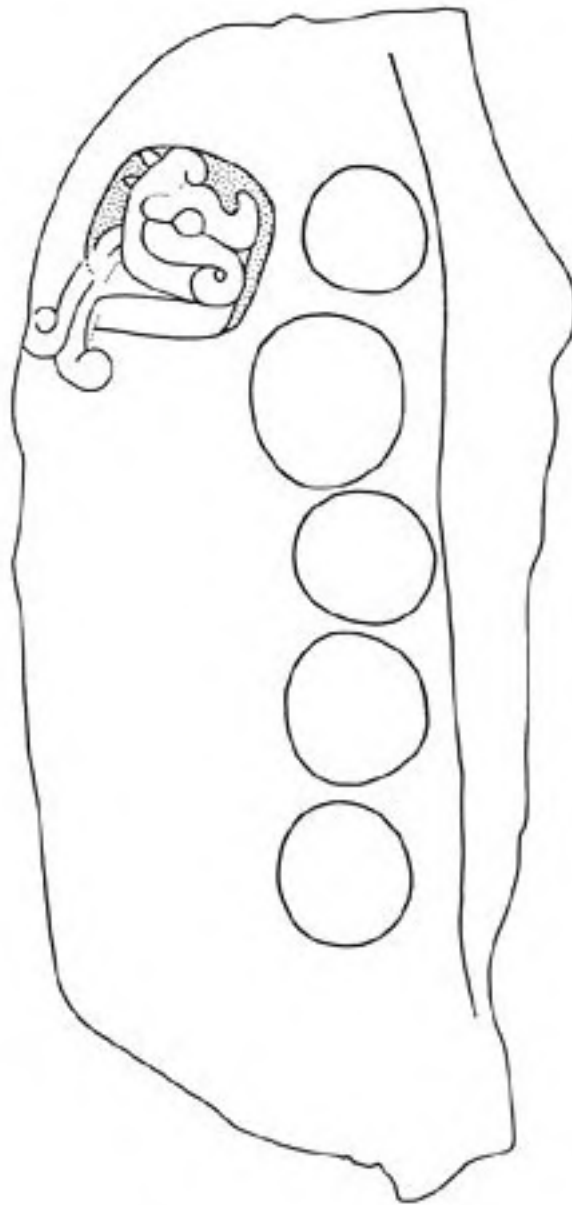
Drawing 13. Bilbao Monument 17



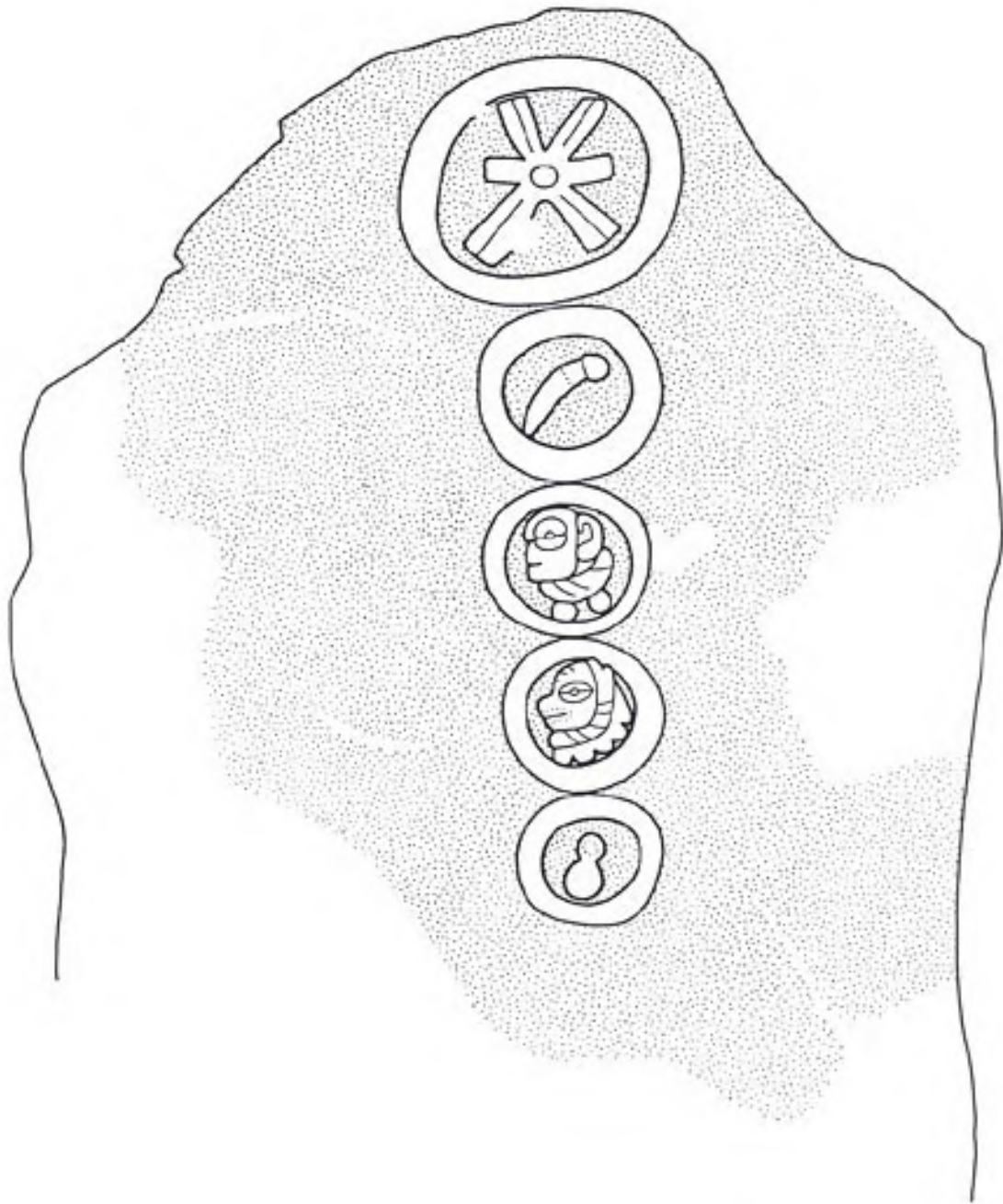
Drawing 14. Bilbao Monument 20



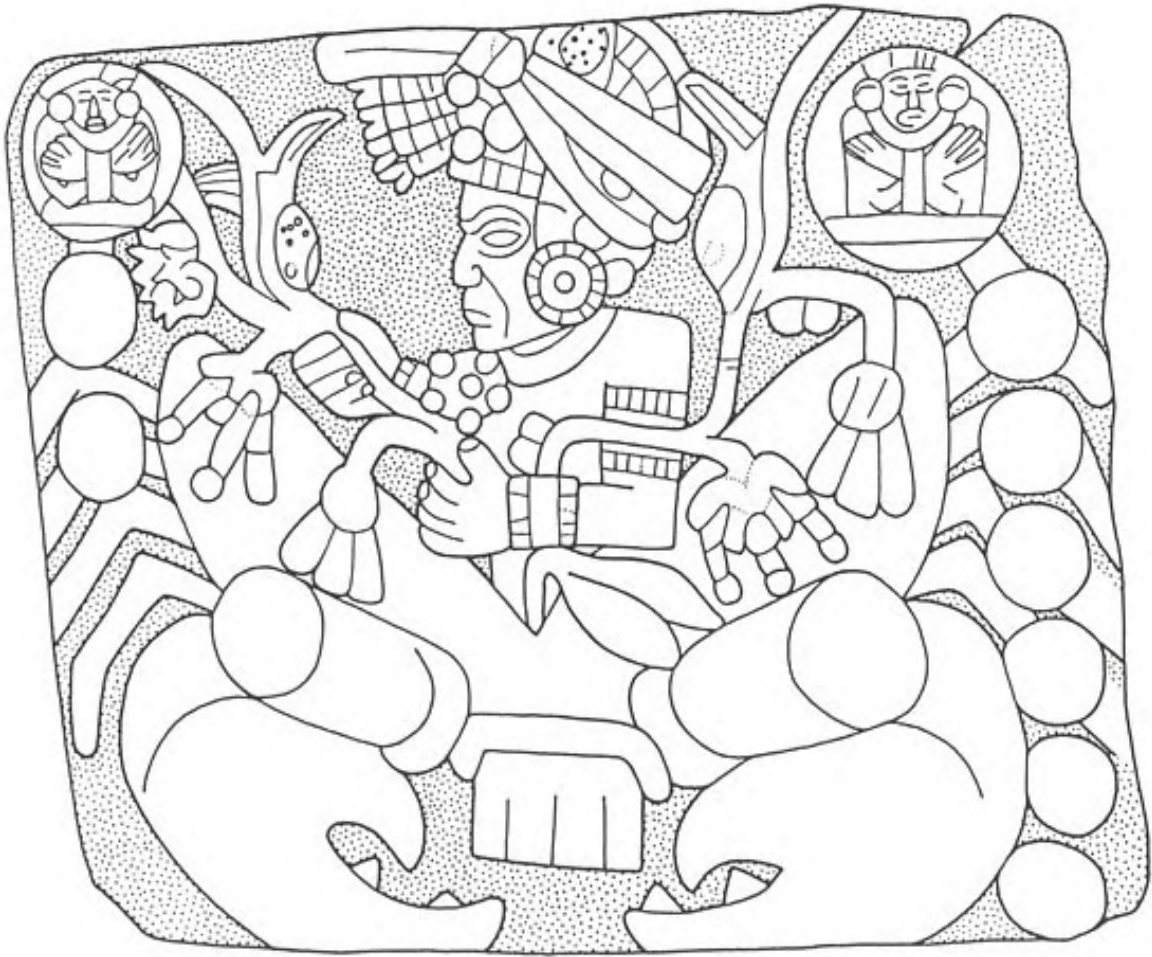
Drawing 15. Bilbao Monument 89



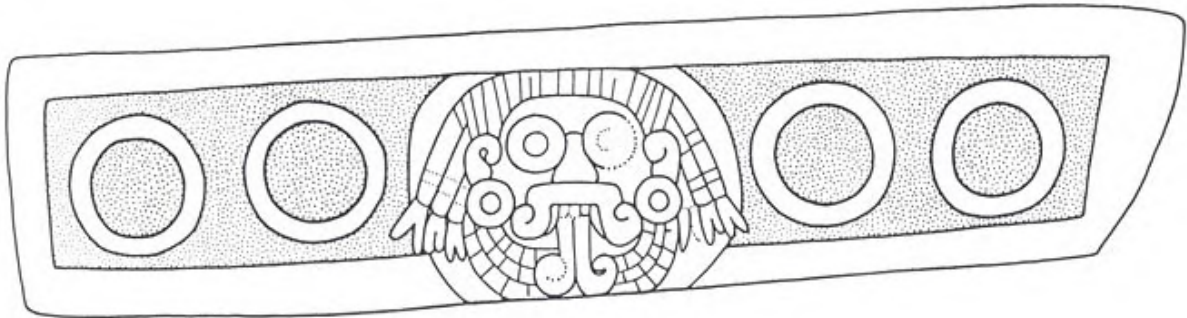
Drawing 16. El Castillo Monument 10



Drawing 17. El Baúl Monument 6



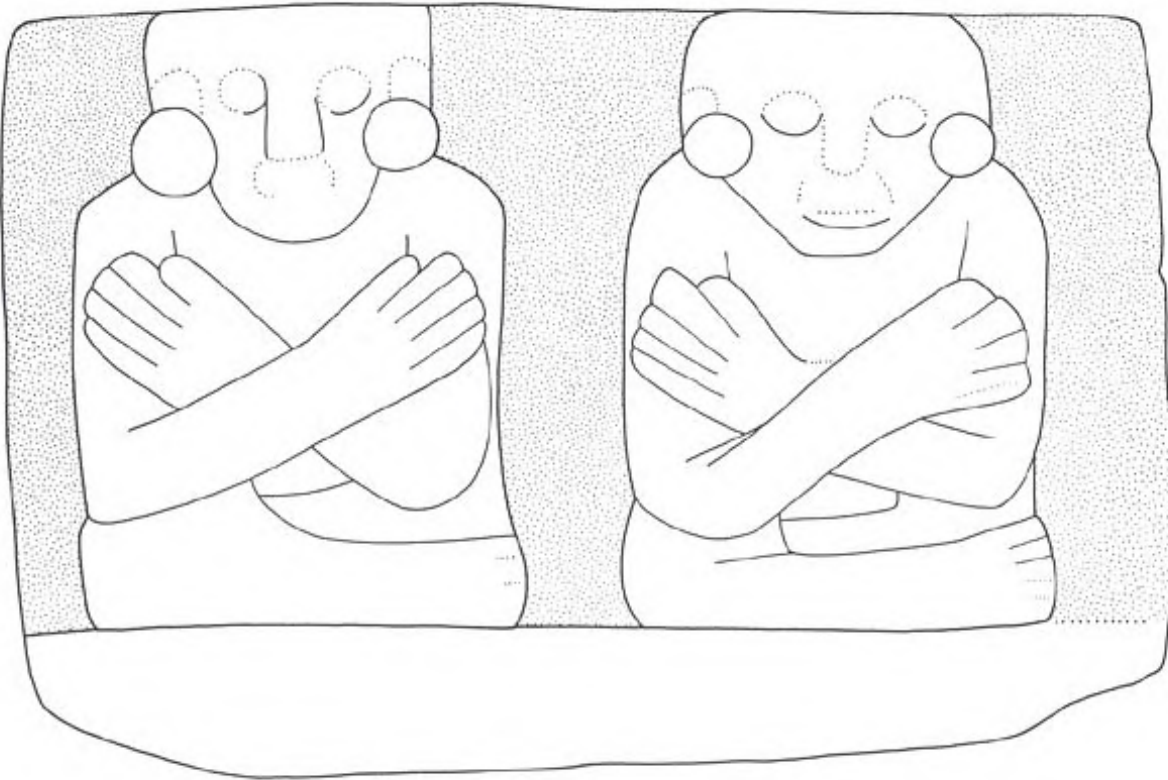
Drawing 18. El Baúl Monument 7



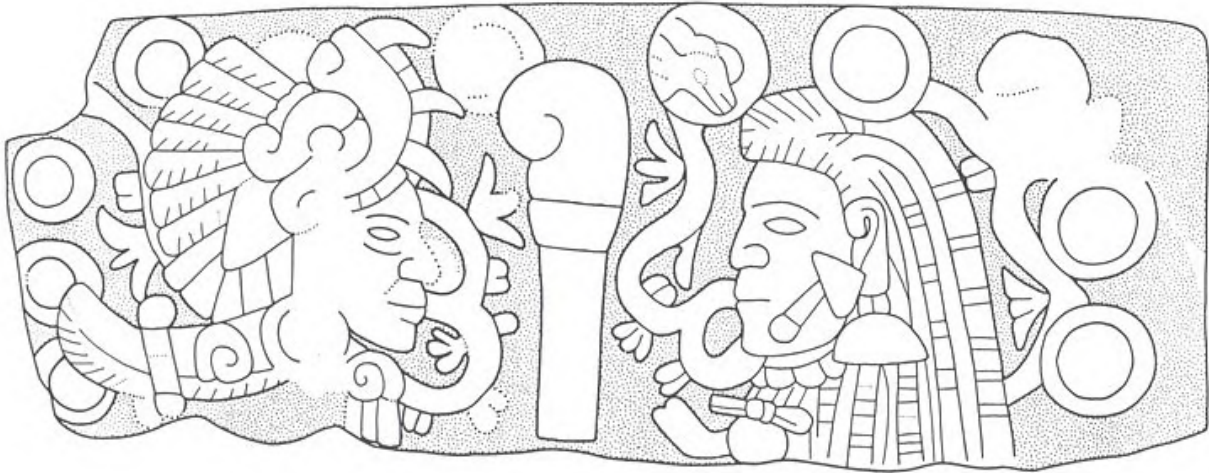
Drawing 19. El Baúl Monument 15



Drawing 20. El Baúl Monument 18



Drawing 21. El Baúl Monument 25



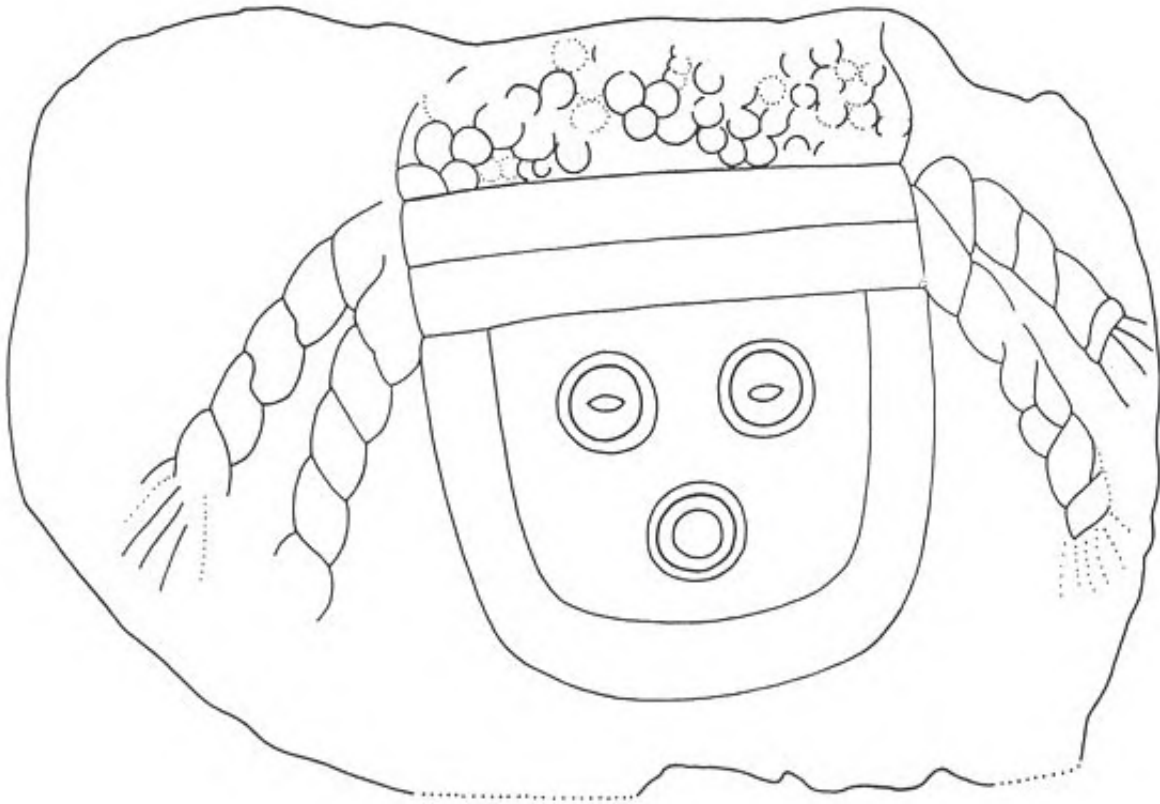
Drawing 22. El Baúl Monument 30



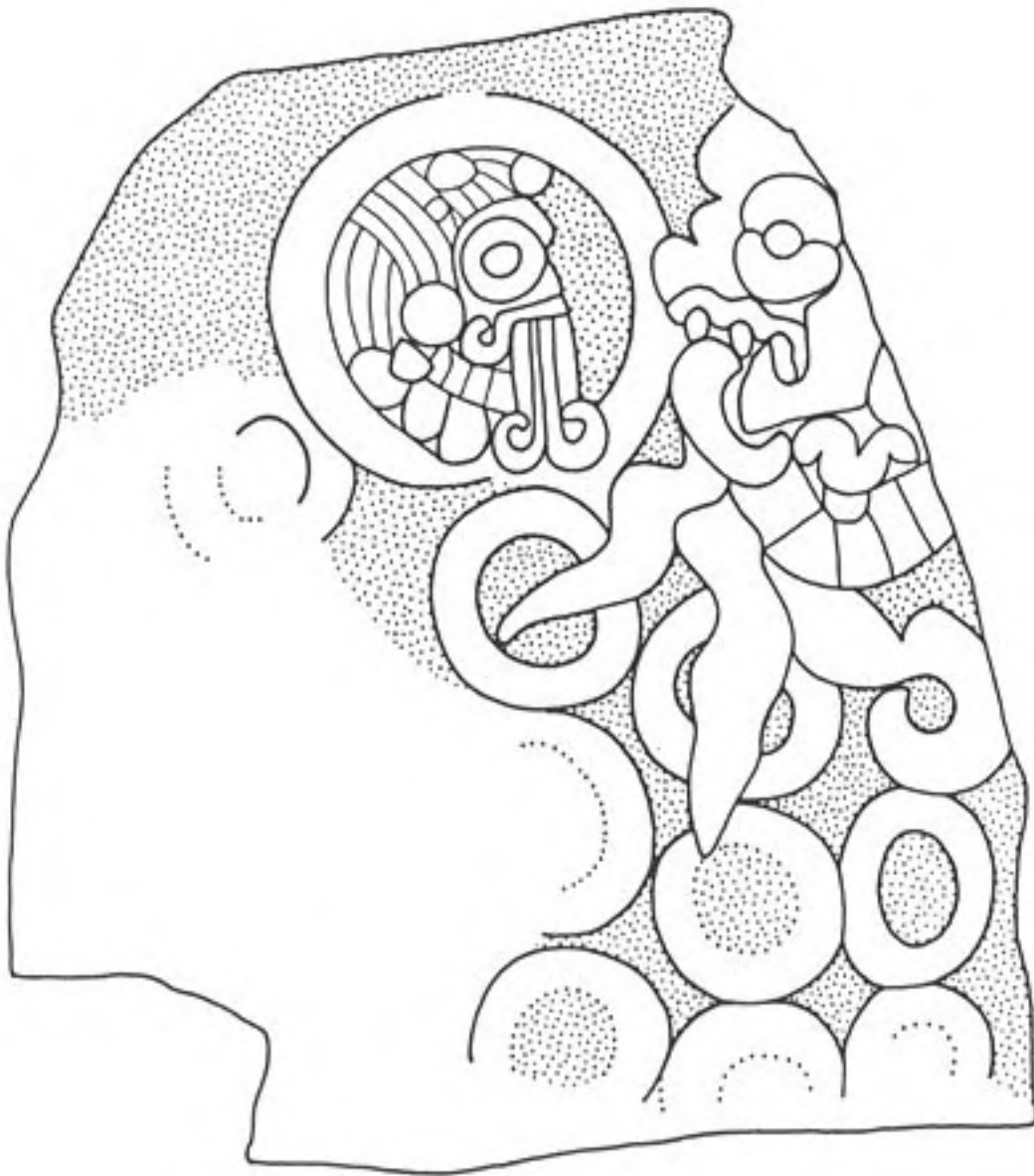
Drawing 23. El Baúl Monument 32



Drawing 24. El Baúl Monument 34



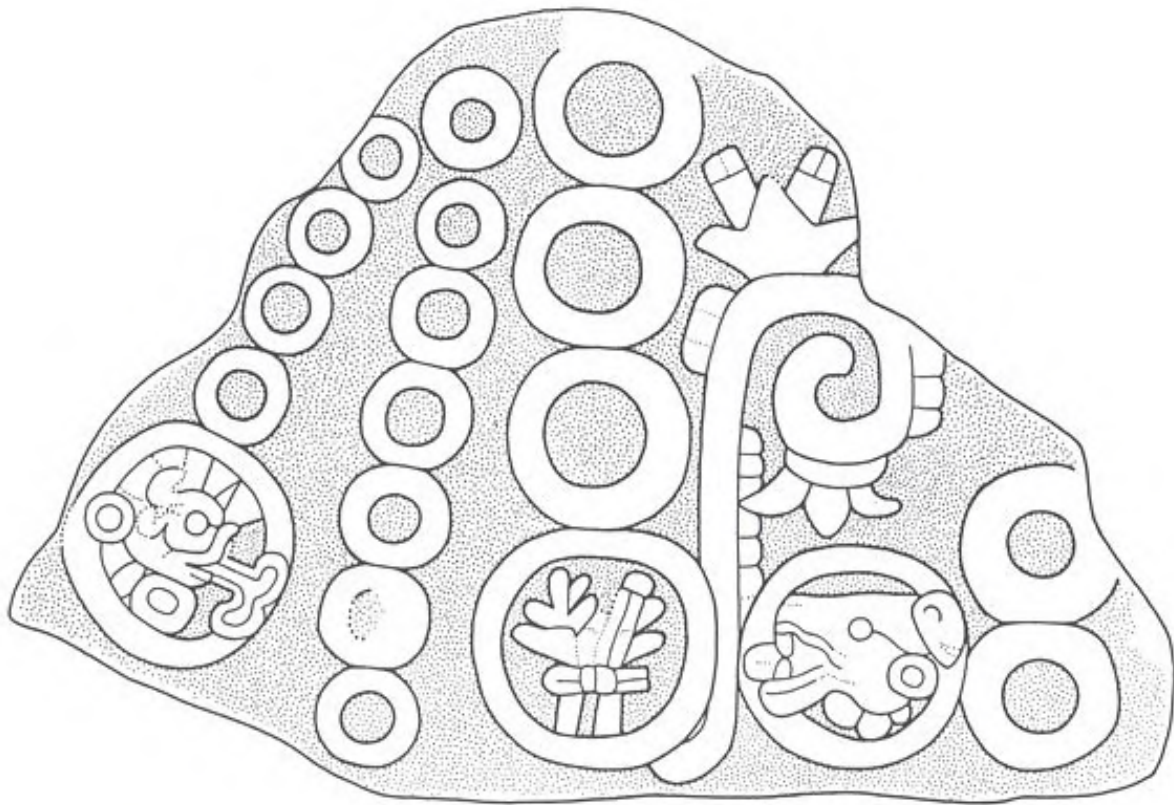
Drawing 25. El Baúl Monument 35



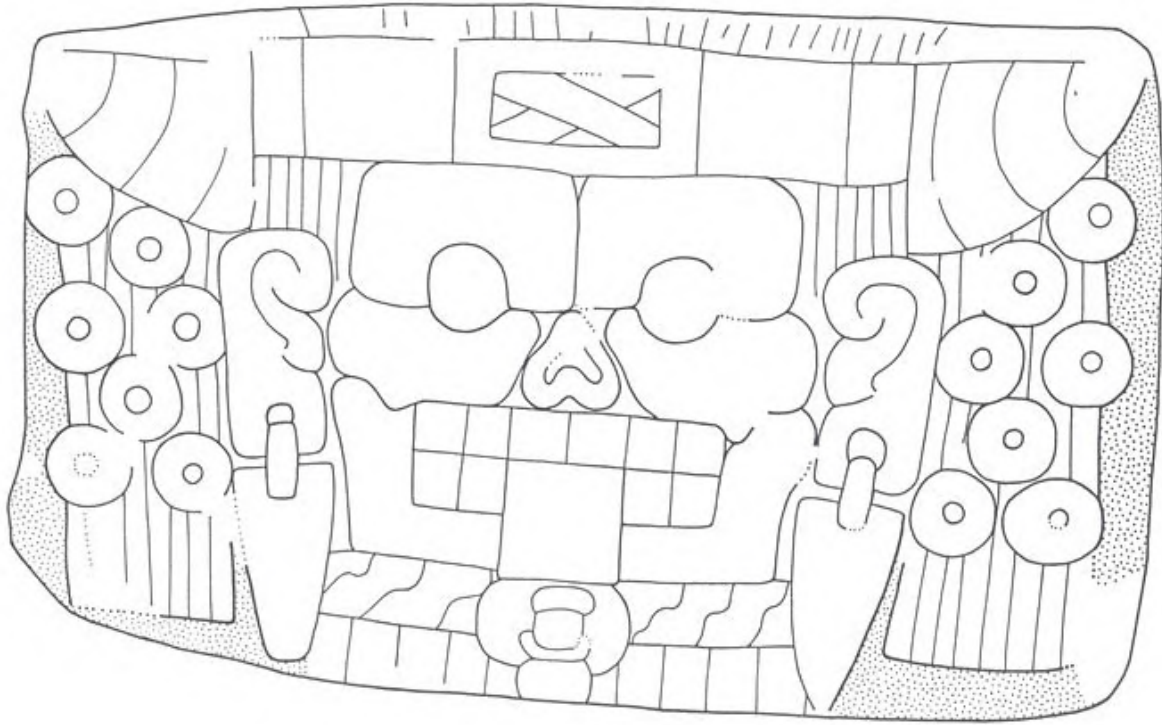
Drawing 26. El Baúl Monument 36



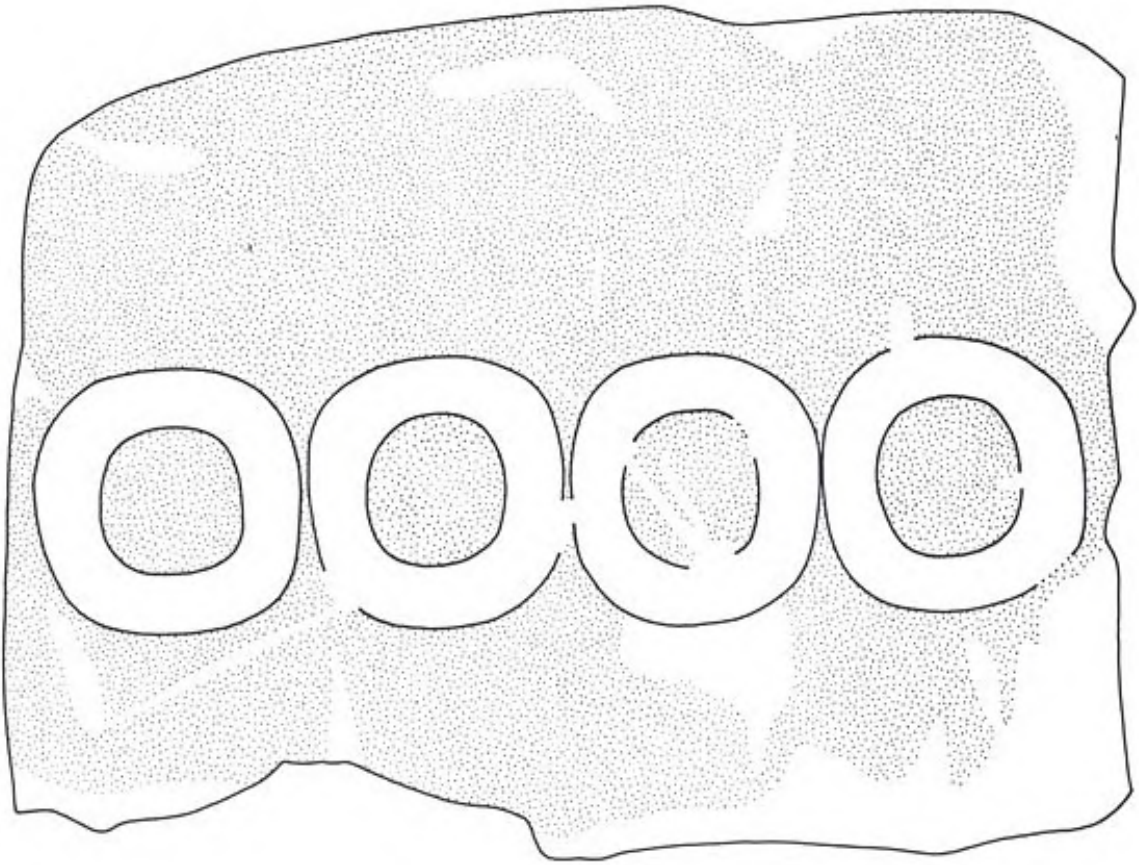
Drawing 27. El Baúl Monument 50



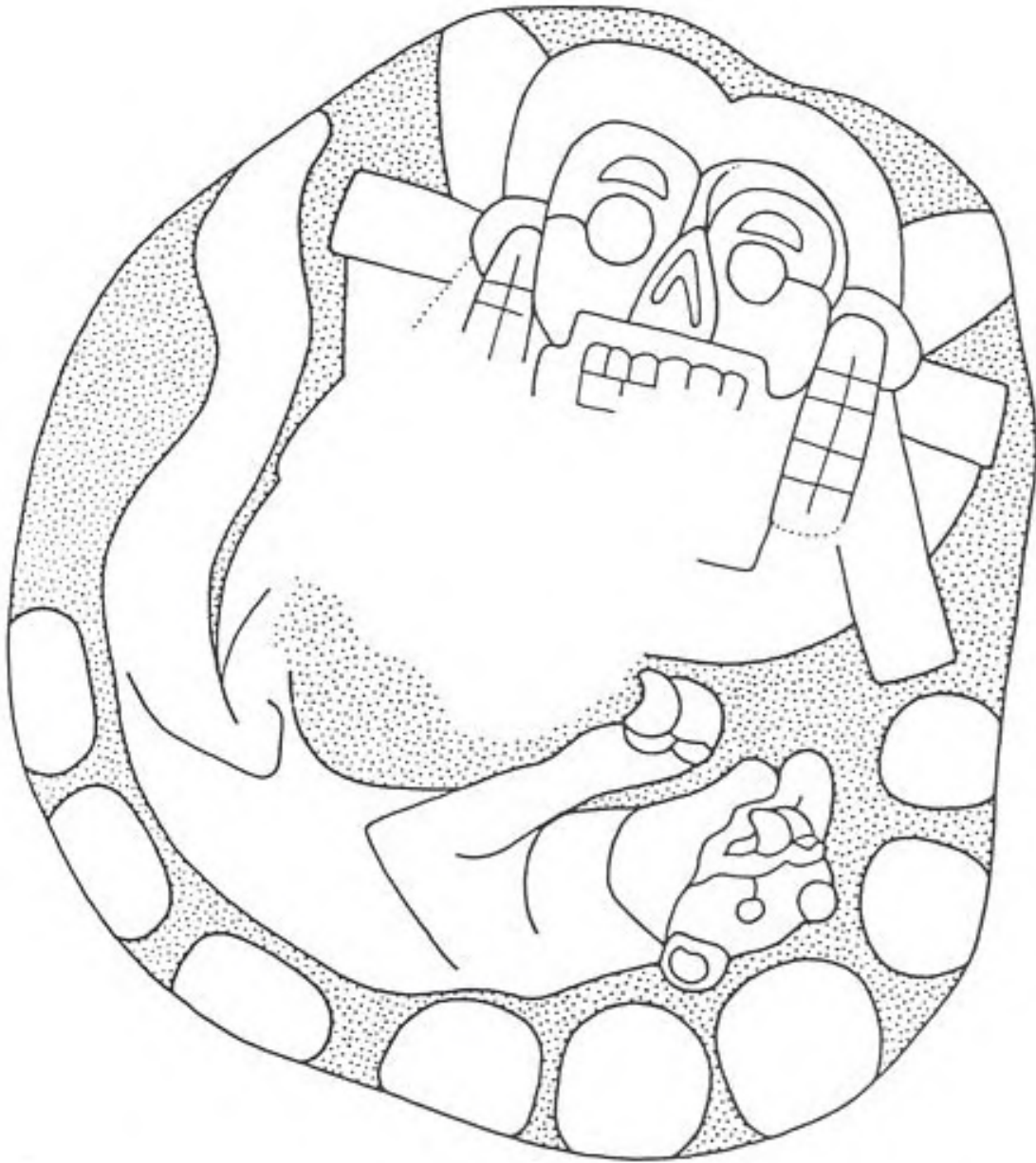
Drawing 28. El Baúl Monument 59



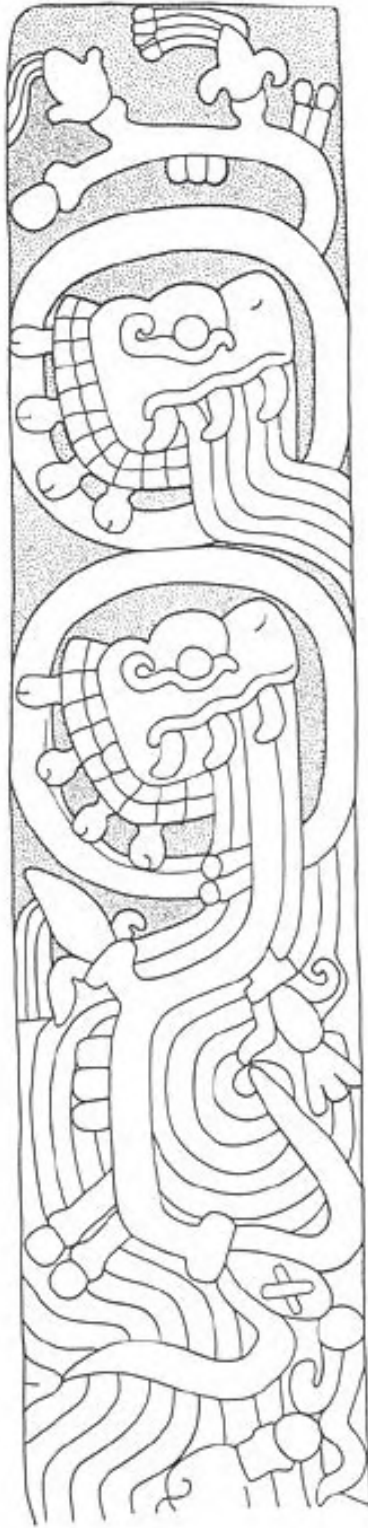
Drawing 29. El Baúl Monument 67



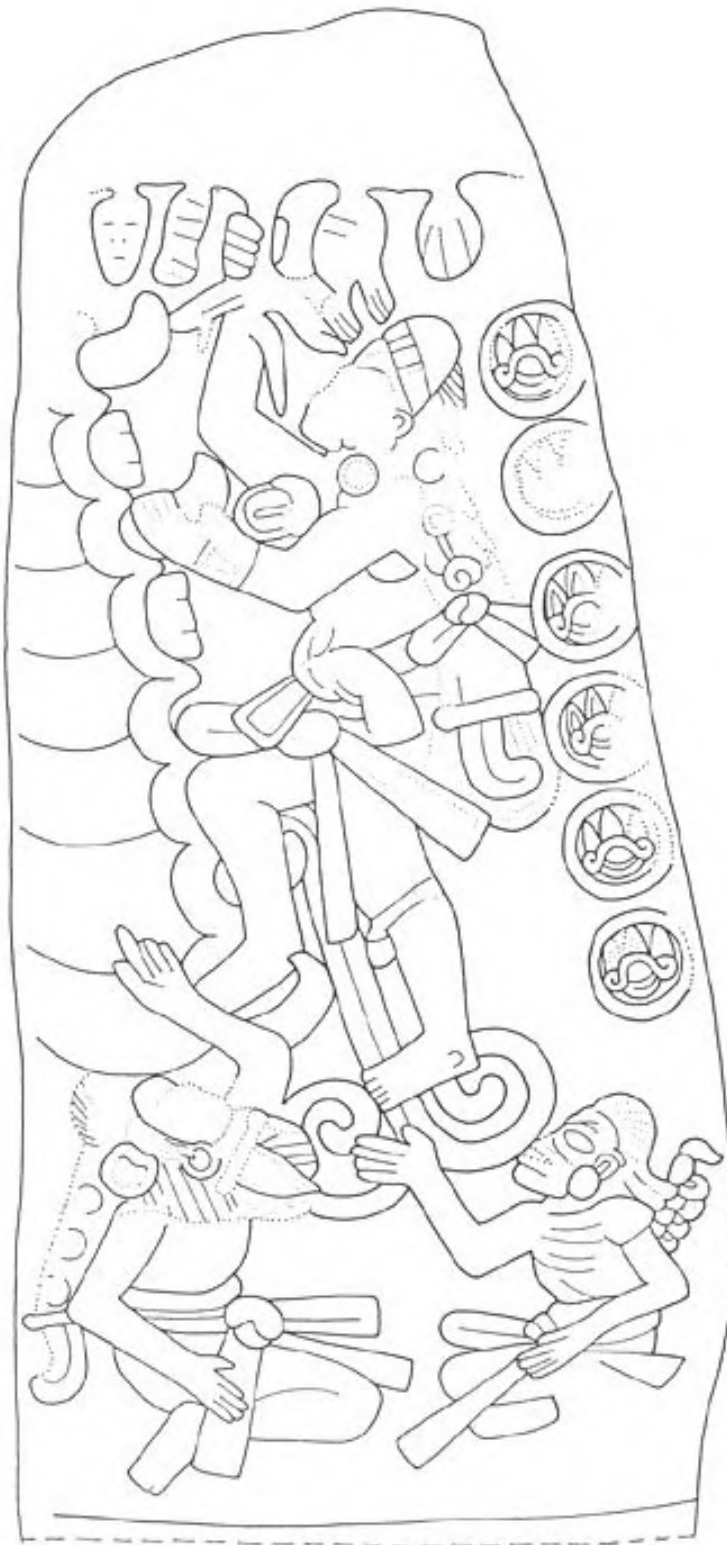
Drawing 30. El Baúl Monument 68



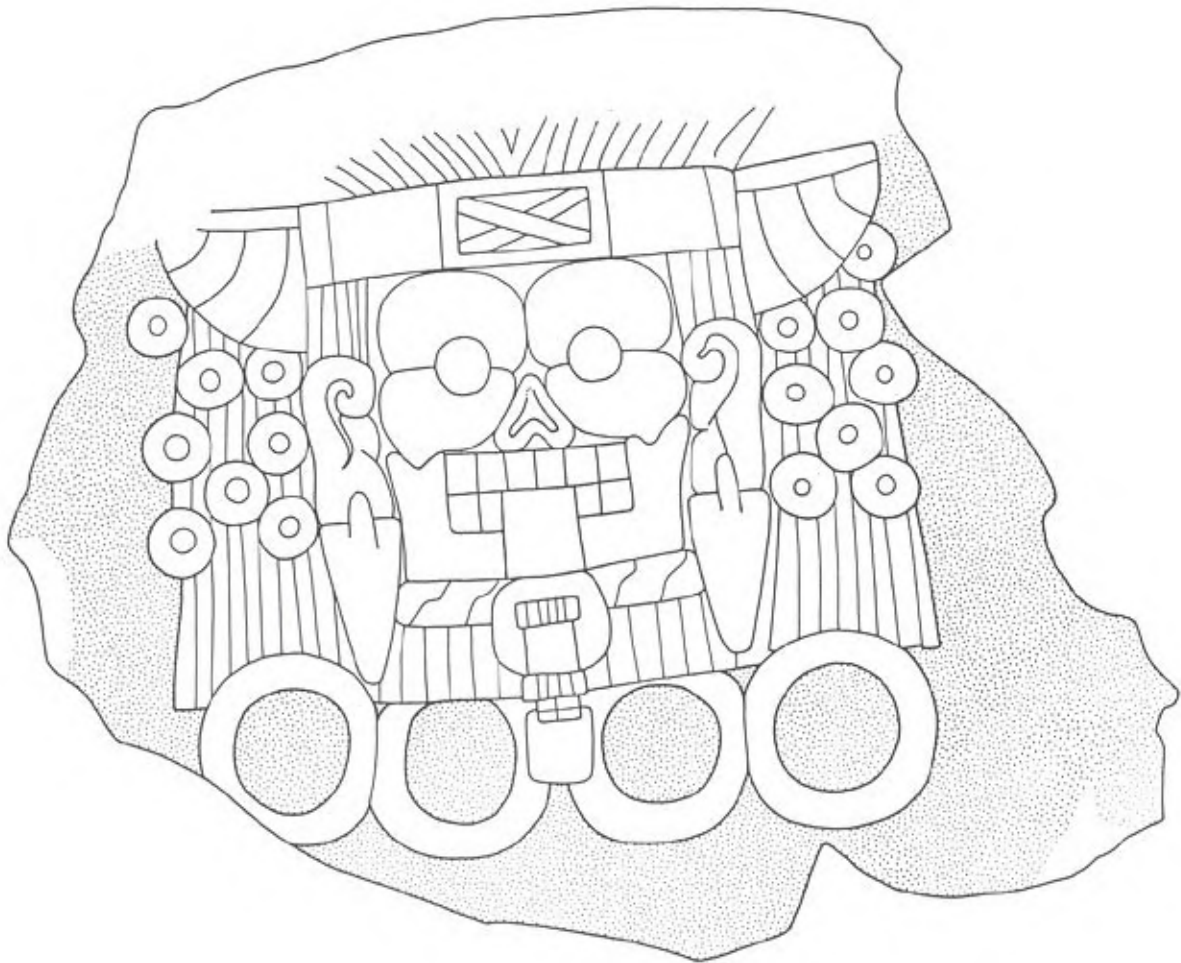
Drawing 31. Golón Monument 1



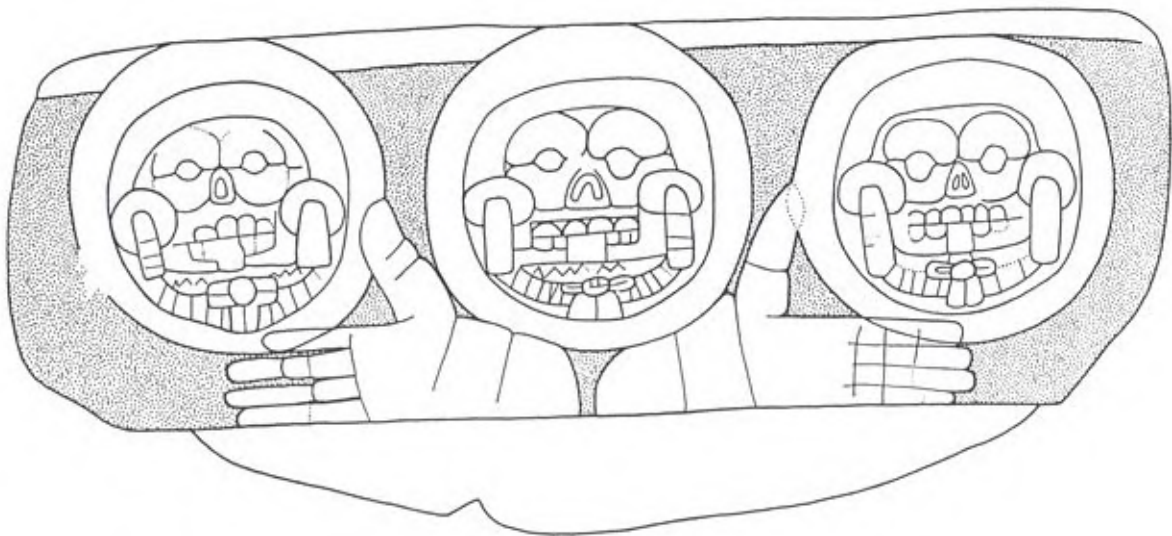
Drawing 32. Golón Monument 2 (front)



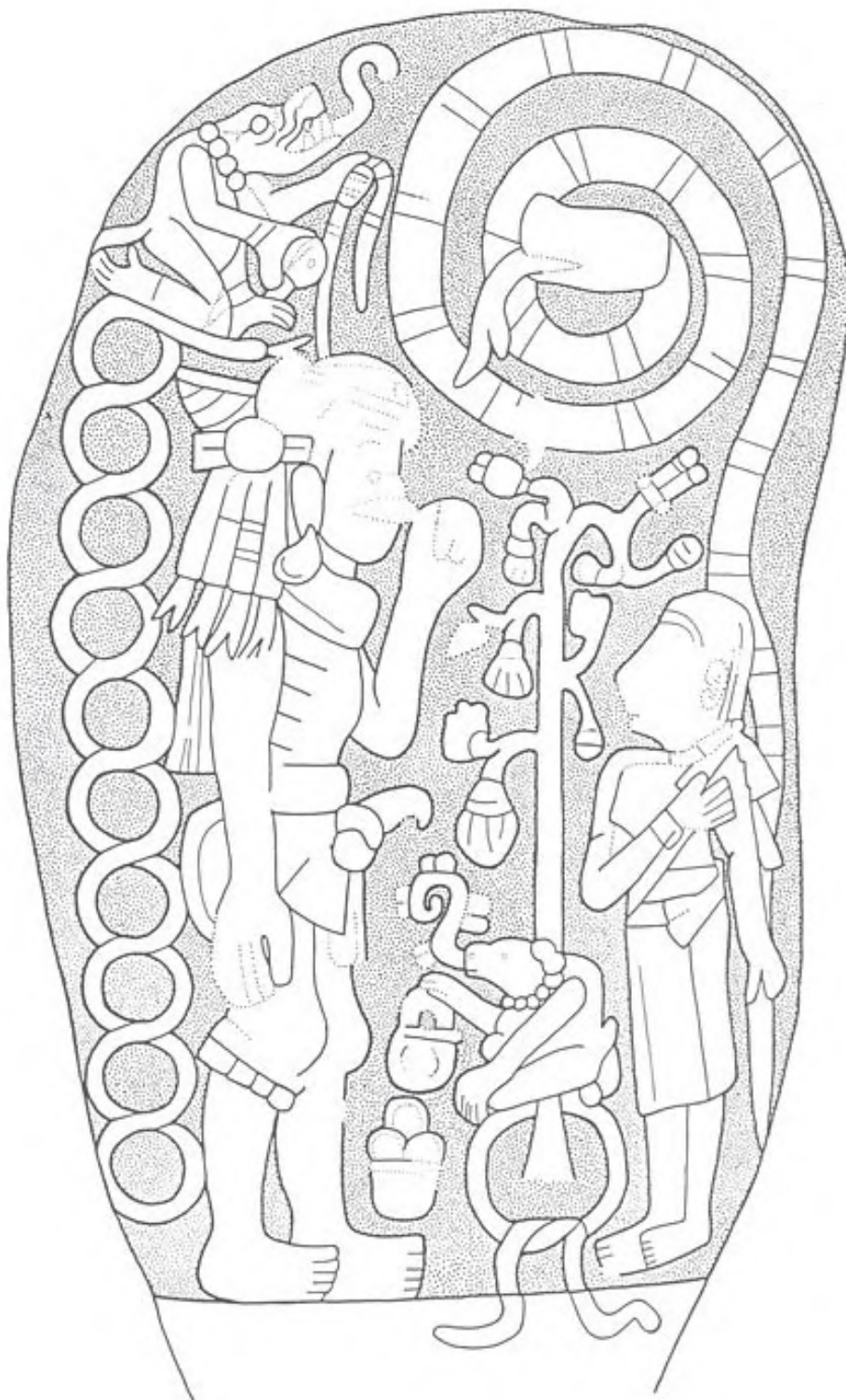
Drawing 33. Vista Linda Monument 1



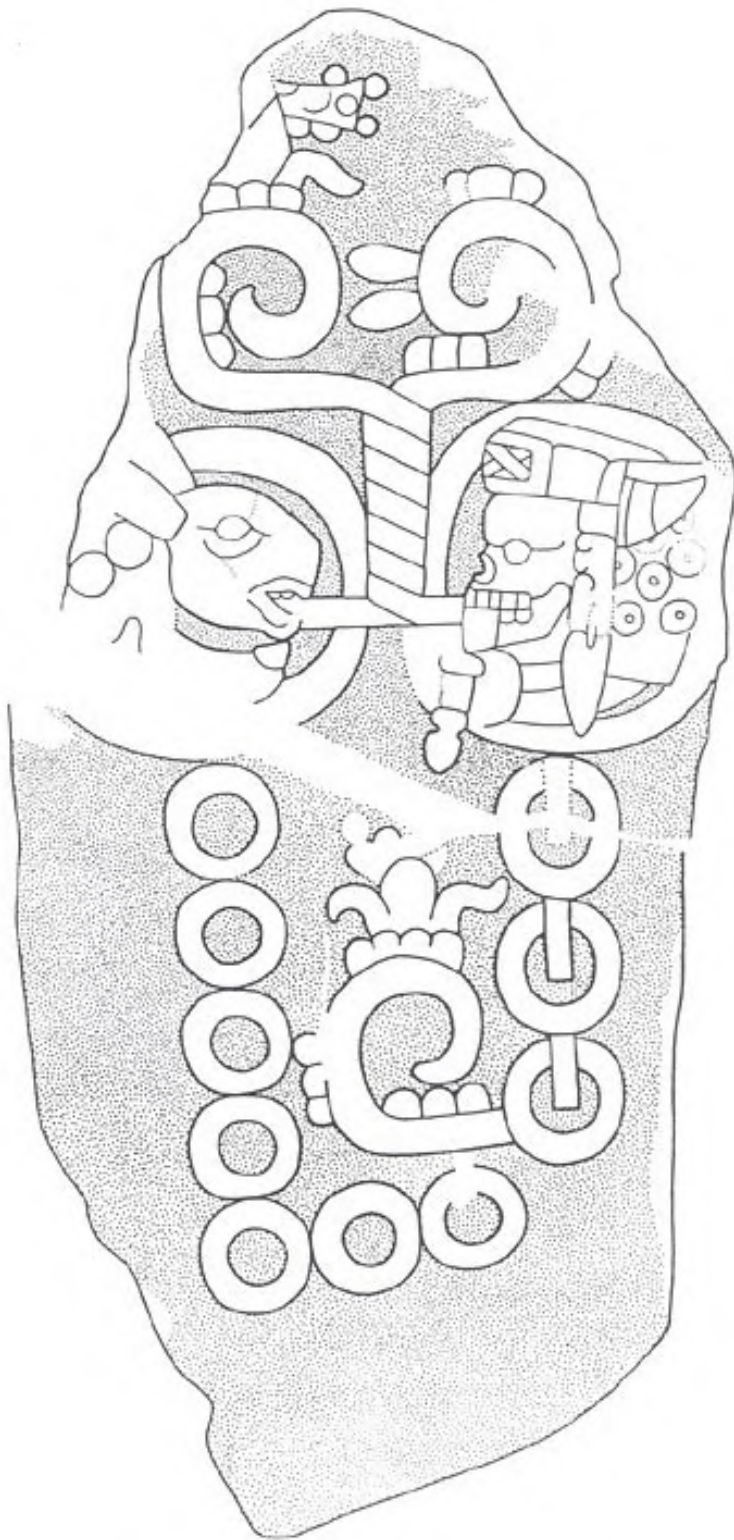
Drawing 34. La Gloria Monument 1



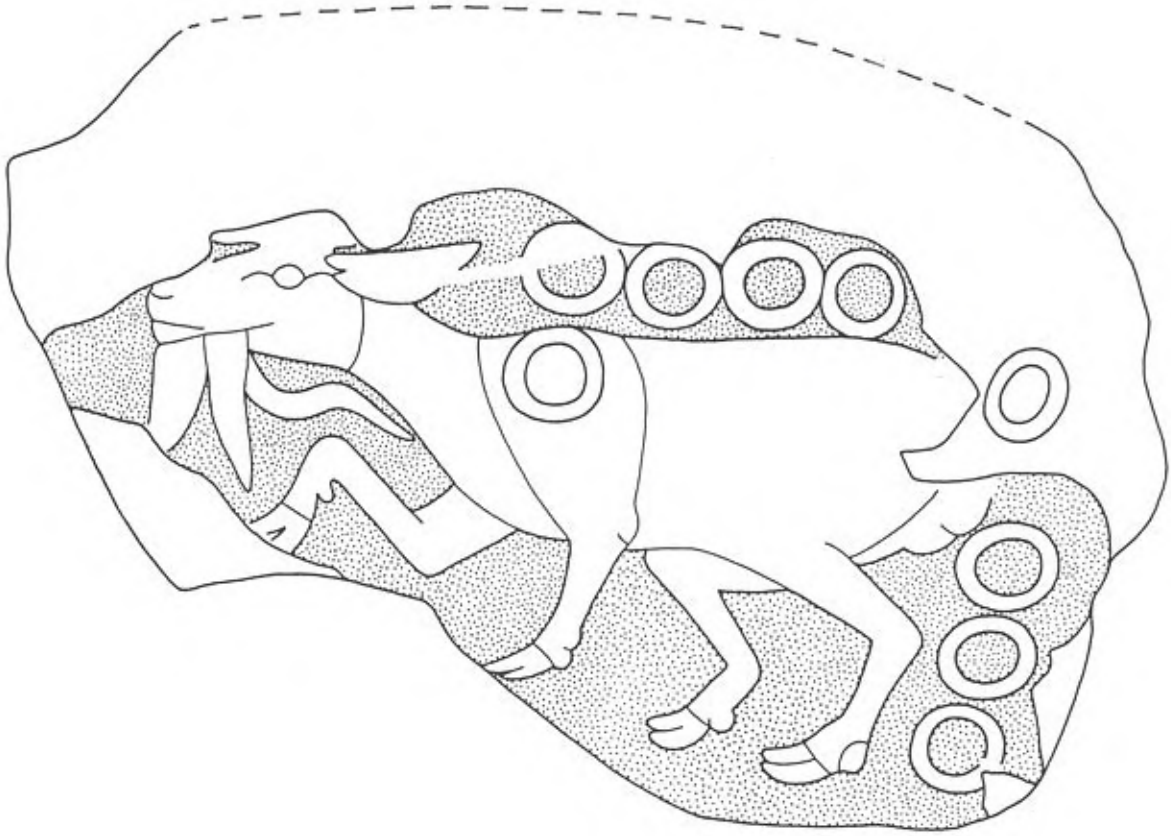
Drawing 35. Palo Gordo Monument 10



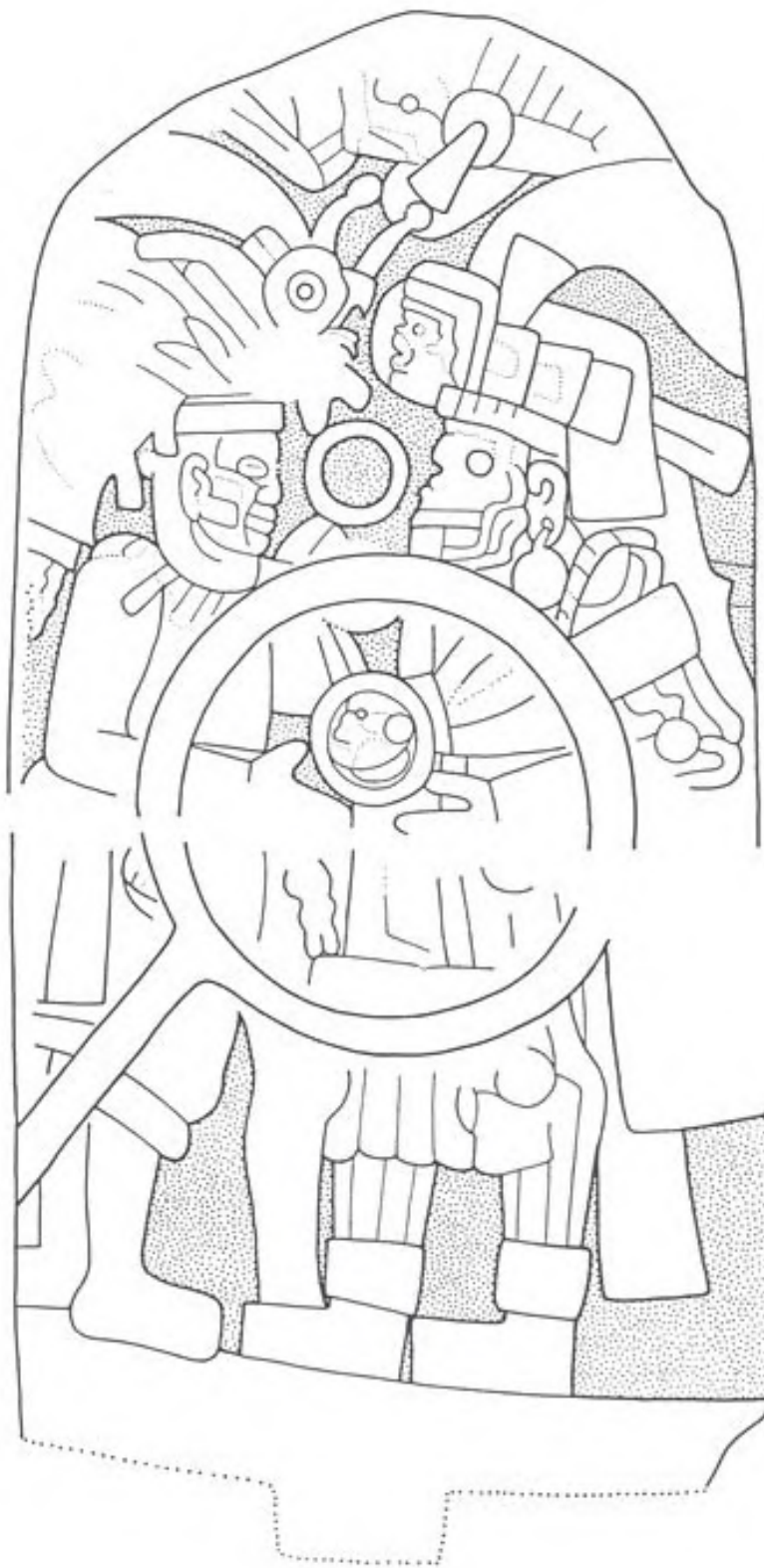
Drawing 36. Palo Gordo Monument 25



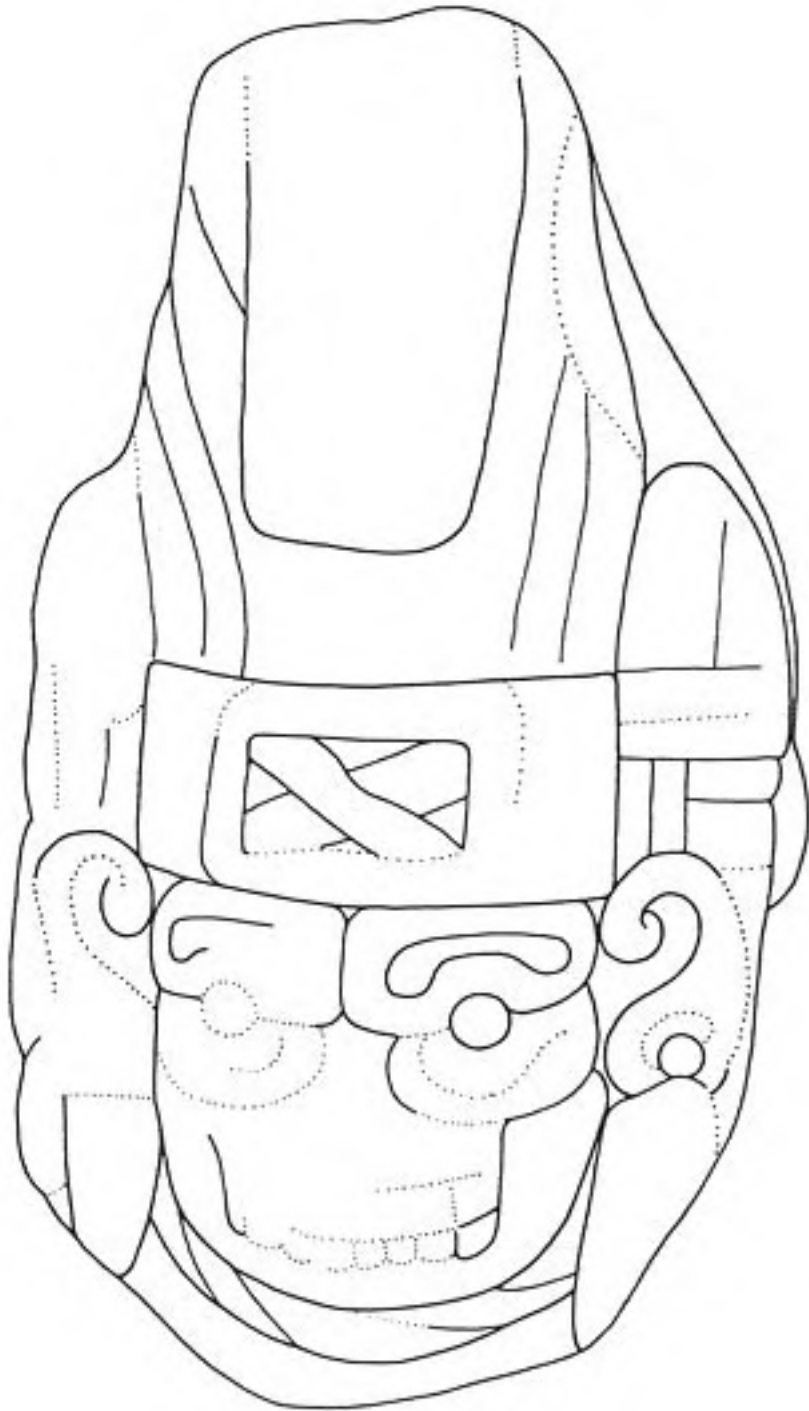
Drawing 37. Finca San Cristóbal Monument 1



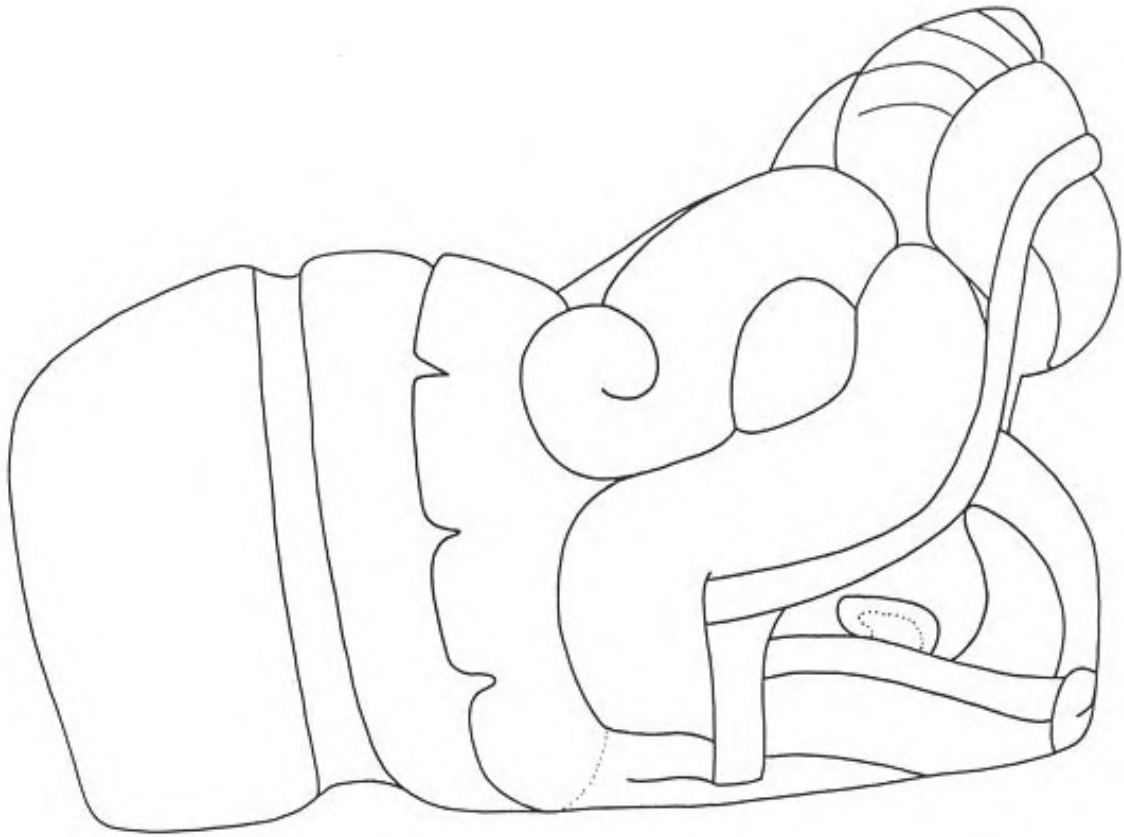
Drawing 38. Ajaxá Monument 1



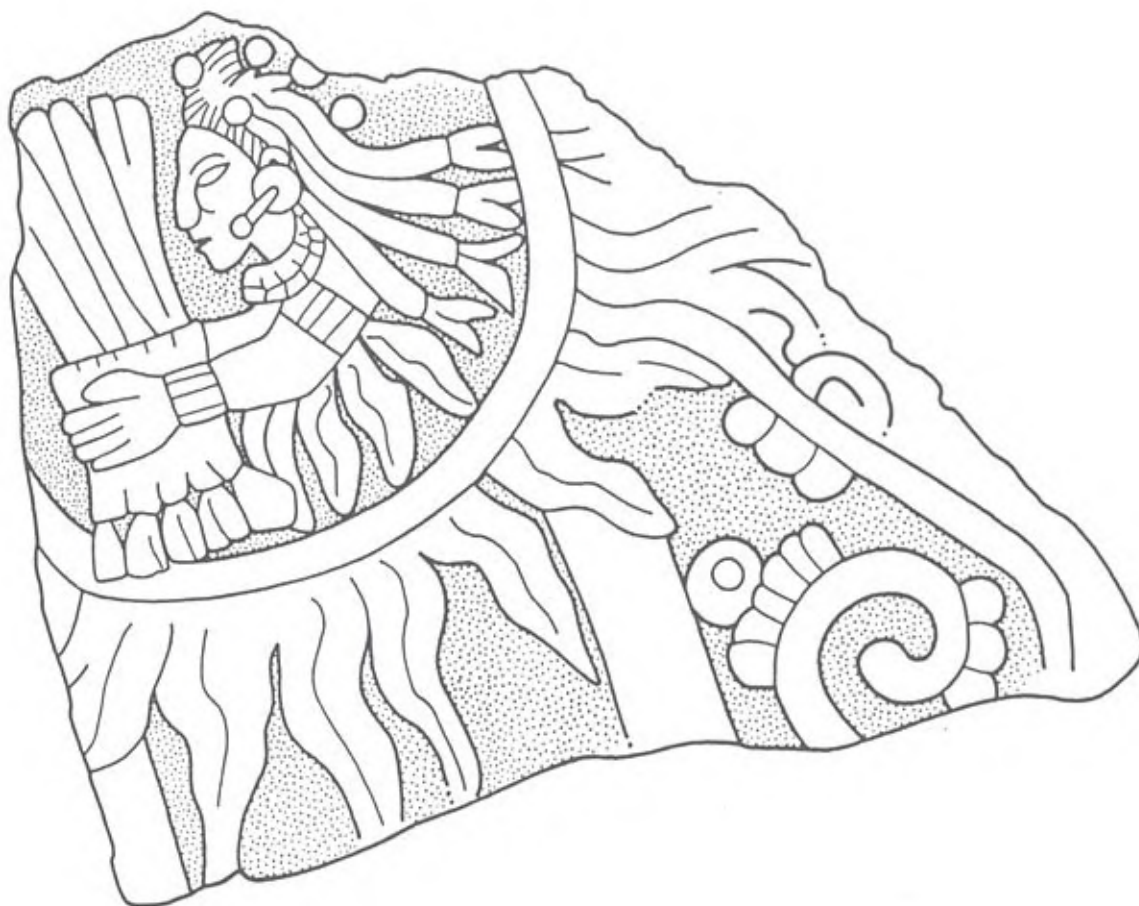
Drawing 39. Los Cerritos Norte Monument 1



Drawing 40. Concepción-Cementerio Monument 2



Drawing 41. National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Guatemala, Catalog #2013



Drawing 42. National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Guatemala, Catalog #7896

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Annex: Checklist of Cotzumalhuapa-Style Sculptures

Click on the "X" in the Drawing column to view the available drawings.

Table 1. Bilbao				
(Includes 18 Preclassic monuments, non-Cotzumalhuapa style)				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X	X	
2	1	X	X	
3	1	X	X	
4	1	X	X	
5	1	X	X	
6	1	X	X	
7	1	X	X	
8	1	X	X	
9	1	X	X	
10	1	X		
11	3			Lost. Drawing in Habel 1878.
12	3			Lost. Drawing in Habel 1879.
13	1	X	X	
14	1	X	X	
15	1	X	X	
16	1			
17	3		X	Main portion lost. Drawing in Habel 1878.
18	1	X		
19	1	X		
20	1	X	X	
21	1			Accurate drawing published in Parsons 1969.

22	3			Lost. Drawing in Habel 1878.
23	3			Lost. Drawing in Habel 1879.
24	2			
25	3			Lost. Drawing in Habel 1878.
26	2	X		
27	3			Photograph in Parsons 1969.
28	2	X		
29	1	X		
30	2	X		
31	2	X		
32	2	X		
33	1	X		
34	1	X		
35	3			Plain columnar basalt. Photograph in Parsons 1969.
36	2			Rubbing in Parsons 1969.
37	2	X		
38	2			
39	2			Rubbing in Parsons 1969.
40	3	X		
41	3			Photograph in Parsons 1969.
42	1	X		
43	3	X		
44	3			Plain columnar basalt. Photograph in Parsons 1969.
45	3			Plain stela. Photograph in Parsons 1969.
46	2	X		
47	2	X		

48	1	X		
49	2	X		
50	3			Plain stela. Photograph in Parsons 1969.
51	3			Plain stela. Photograph in Parsons 1969.
52	3			Plain stela. Photograph in Parsons 1969.
53	3	X		
54	3	X		
55	1	X		
56	3			Plain stela. Photograph in Parsons 1969.
57	3			Photograph in Parsons 1969.
58	3	X		Drawing in Rodas 1993.
59	1	X		
60	3			
61	3			Plain columnar basalt. Photograph in Parsons 1969.
62	3			
63	1	X		
64	3			Vertically-tenoned sculpture. Photograph in Parsons 1969.
65	3			
66	2			
67	2	X		
68	3	X		
69	2	X		
70	2	X		
71	2	X		
72	2	X		
73	2	X		

74	1	X		
75	3			
76	3	X		
77	1	X		
78	1	X		
79	1	X		
80	2	X		
81	3	X		
82	1	X		
83	1	X		
84	1	X		
85	1	X		
86	2	X		
87	2	X		
88	3			Lost. Drawing in Chinchilla 1996b.
89	1	X	X	
90	1	X		
91	1	X		
92	3	X		

Table 2. El Castillo				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X		
2	1	X		
3	1	X		
4	1	X		
5	2			Present location unknown.
6	2			Present location unknown.
7	3			Present location unknown.
8	3			Present location unknown.
9	2	X		
10	1	X	X	
11	2	X		
12	2	X		
13	3	X		
14	2	X		

Table 3. El Baúl				
(Includes Monument 1, non-Cotzumalhuapa style)				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X		Many published photographs and drawings.
2	1			Badly damaged. Rubbing in Greene <i>et al.</i> 1972.
3	2			Badly damaged. Several published photographs.
4	1	X		
5	2			

6	1	X	X	
7	1	X	X	
8	3	X		
9	3			Present location uncertain.
10	2			
11	2	X		
12	2			Several published photographs.
13	2	X		
14	2			Many published photographs.
15	1	X	X	
16	3	X		
17	1			Present location unknown.
18	1	X	X	
19	2	X		
20	2	X		
21	2			
22	2	X		
23	2	X		
24	2			
25	2	X	X	
26	2	X		
27	1	X		
28	2	X		
29	3			
30	1	X	X	
31	3	X		Published drawing in Parsons 1986.
32	1	X	X	

33	3	X		
34	1	X	X	
35	1	X	X	
36	1	X	X	
37	3	X		
38	3	X		
39	3	X		
40	3	X		
41	3	X		
42	3	X		
43	2	X		
44	2	X		
45	2	X		
46	3	X		
47	3	X		
48	3	X		
49	3	X		
50	1	X	X	
51	2	X		
52	3	X		
53	3	X		
54	1	X		
55	1	X		
56	1	X		
57	3	X		
58	1	X		
59	1	X	X	

60	3			
61	3	X		
62	3	X		
63	2	X		
64	3			
65	3	X		
66	3			
67	1	X	<u>X</u>	
68	1	X	<u>X</u>	
69	1	X		
70	2	X		

Table 4. Other Nuclear Zone Locations				
Golón				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X	<u>X</u>	
2	1	X	<u>X</u>	Sides missing.
3	1	X		
4	1	X		
5	1	X		
6	1	X		
Vista Linda				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X	<u>X</u>	Poor photograph. Monument in private collection, no access.
2	1	X		Poor photograph. Monument in private collection, no access.

La Gloria				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X	X	
2	1	X		
Río Santiago				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1			
Palo Verde				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X		
2	1	X		
3	1	X		
4	1	X		
5	2			
6	3			
Aguná				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X		
2	2			Present location unknown.
3	2			Present location unknown.
4	3			Present location unknown.
5	3	X		
6	3	X		
7	3			Present location unknown.
8	2	X		

Pantaleón				
(This name refers to a collection assembled at Ingenio Pantaleón, which includes monuments from the sites of El Baúl, Pantaleón-El Idolo, Bilbao and others)				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	2			
2	2	X		
3	2	X		
4	2			
5	2	X		
6	2	X		
7	2	X		
8	2	X		
9	2	X		
10	2			
11	2	X		
12	2			
13	2	X		
14	2	X		
Palo Gordo				
(Monuments 1-6, 8 and 15-22 are not in the Cotzumalhuapa style)				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
7	2	X		
9	1	X		
10	1	X	X	
11	2	X		
12	3			

13	3			
14	3			
23	1	X		
24	1	X		
25	1	X	<u>X</u>	
26	2	X		

La Nueva-Pasaco

(Monuments 1-3, and 13-15 are not in the Cotzumalhuapa style)

Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
4	2			
5	2	X		
6	1	X		
7	1			
8	2			
9	1			
10	2	X		
11	1			
12	2			

Table 5. Other Sites				
Finca San Cristóbal				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X	X	
Morelia				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X		
Xata				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	2			Present location unknown.
2	2			Present location unknown.
Ajaxá				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X	X	
2	2	X		
Los Tarros				
(One known sculpture at Ingenio Los Tarros, of unknown provenance)				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	3			Present location unknown.
San Andrés Osuna				
(Monuments 1-3 are not in the Cotzumalhuapa style)				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
4	3	X		

Gamero				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	2	X		
Los Cerritos Norte				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1	X	X	
2	1	X		
Cadiz-Ulapa				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1			Present location unknown.
Obero				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	2			
Concepción-Cementerio				
(Monument 1 not in the Cotzumalhuapa style)				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
2	2	X	X	
3	3	X		
El Cerrito-Guazacapan				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
	2	X		

Pueblo Nuevo Vinas				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	2	X		
2	2	X		
Santa Rosa				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	1			Drawing in Robinson 1993.
Pompeya				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
1	2	X		
2	2			
3	2			

Table 6. Sculptures of Unknown Provenance				
National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Guatemala				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
Cat. #2013	2	X	X	
Cat. #2012	2	X		
Cat. #2005	2	X		
Cat. #2011	2	X		
Cat. # unknown	1	X		
Cat. #7896	1	X	X	
Museo Popol Vuh, Guatemala				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
Cat. #4114	2	X		
Cat. #4115	2	X		
La Democracia Museum				
Monument	Priority	Photograph	Drawing	Comments
Unnumbered	2	X		Monument possibly from El Baúl.