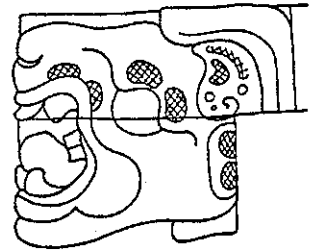


## Copán Mosaics Project

### Copan Note\* 33

November, 1987  
Copán, Honduras



## The Surviving Fragments of Stela 9

by Linda Schele

Morley (1920:93) in his discussion of Stela 9 details the unfortunate history of this monument. Originally drawn by Maudslay (Fig. 1), Gordon reports that it was found in the modern cemetery, where it had been reused as the base of the now destroyed Stela 8. Spinden reported that he found the stela in 1912 broken up to use in the construction of the adobe wall around the cemetery.

Until recently, it was thought that the monument was entirely lost. Happily, this has proven not to be the case. In 1986, David Stuart recognized fragments of Stela 9 that had been given new monument numbers during the P.A.C. I redrew these fragments in November, 1987, and can now confirm that Stela 9, like, Stela 18, was inscribed on the three sides drawn by Maudslay and sculpted with a standing figure on the fourth (Fig. 2). The largest of the three surviving fragments retains the badly eroded image of a ser-

pent bar and portions of a shoulder. The other two fragments appear to retain almost unreadable remnants of the head and headdress of the figure. Nevertheless, it is now possible to place Stela 9 within the stylistic tradition of Stela E, which is dated one katun earlier (Schele 1987).

The date of the rear of Stela 9 has long been deciphered as 9.6.10.0.0 8 Ahau 13 Pax. Glyph F and G were destroyed in Maudslay's time and the portion of this glyph block that survives does not help. Presumably G9 was recorded, although at Copan one never knows.

The lunar age on that day was 27.8 days, as reflected in the glyph at B6, a form of Glyph D that occurs with moon ages around 27 days. In the Uniform System, this date calls for 4C, 30D and 5C, 0D is recorded. The date concludes with Glyph X (correct for numerical coefficient and the face in Glyph C), 30A, and the haab at B8.

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The verb is the 819-day count verb, but here it must refer to the placement or erection of the stela itself, as it does on Stela 4. The proper name of Stela 9 is record at B9-A10 as *Yax Kin ??? Tunil* or something like "first sun-shield stone." The Glyph B closure to proper names.<sup>1</sup>

The protagonist is named in A11-B11 as U Chac-Xib-Chac, "shell-fist" title. This use of a god's name parallels Stela I (Fig. 3), where the actor of the monument dedication is named as GI while the portrait depicts the kind wearing a GI mask. I suggest that like Stela I, Stela 9 depicted its protagonist dressed as a god, in this instance Chac-Xib-Chac.

I cannot make much out of the left side of the inscription (Columns C and D), but the right text (E and F) contains the protagonist's personal name and his parentage. This long name phrase follows a glyph composed of the T684 bundle sign surrounding the head variant of blood (F3). I suspect this glyph records a bloodletting rite for the period ending, rather than an accession.

The tenth ruler's name phrase occurs at E4-F6 followed by the name of his father at E7-F11. Earlier analyses of the father's name had speculated that he was in fact the seventh ruler (Schele and Stuart 1986). This speculation is now supported by additional evidence.

Between the seventh and tenth successors two additional rulers reign (Fig. 4), but by necessity their reigns must have been short. Although the seventh successor's accession occurs on the Hieroglyphic Stairs on Step 55 as "14 Xul he was seated as *ahau*, Jaguar,"<sup>2</sup> the date of his accession cannot be identified at the present time. However, he is clearly be associated with the dates 9.4.10.0.0 on Stela 15 and 9.5.10.0.0 on Stela E. Since the accession of the tenth successor had

been identified as 9.5.19.3.0 5 Ahau 3 Zotz', we are left with a span of 9.3.0 between the latest Waterlily-Jaguar date and the accession of Moon-Jaguar to contain the reigns of the intervening two kings. There are Initial Series dates on the Hieroglyphic Stairs which fit into this interval (Schele and Stuart 1987a), 9.5.13.???.? and 9.5.17.13.7 2 Manik 0 Muan<sup>3</sup> and these are likely to be the accession dates of the two intervening kings. The shortness of these two reigns allows the possibility that the eighth, ninth, and tenth successors were of the same generation and perhaps children of the same person.

The names phrases of the seventh successor are varied and complex. On the Hieroglyphic Stair and Stela E (Fig. 5a-b), he is named with a jaguar head prefixed to the scroll-comb sign frequently found with God K's names. Stela E has another variant in which the jaguar head is repeated twice and adjoined to an *ahau* sign (Fig. 5c). On Stela 15 and Stela E (Fig. 5d,f,g), the jaguar has a zero sign in its mouth, with the patron of pax adjoined in one example (Fig. 5d). Twice (Fig. 5e-g), the jaguar is followed by a dotted disk, and once (Fig. 5g) by a tall oblong cartouche with a probable *na* sign affixed. This last sign follows the jaguar head and precedes the Emblem Glyph in the father's name on Stela 9 (Fig. 5h). I have not explanation for the "head over earth" name or the glyph that follows it because these do not appear in other version of his name. It should also be noted that the "katun shell-fist title" is also problematic since the seventh successor is now firmly associated with 9.4.10.0.0 and 9.5.10.0.0, giving him over a katun of reign and thus also of life. It is possible that the glyph preceding the katun is number, but if so it does not appears in other known contexts with a numerical function.

- 1 At the 1987 Hieroglyphic Workshop at the University of Texas Judy Maxwell suggested that this glyphs reads something like *u kaba*, "is its name." There is little phonetic evidence that can be marshalled in support of this suggested reading at the present time (except the frequent occurrence of T228 *ah* as the final suffix), but the meaning of the glyph is surely very close to this rad, both in the names of objects such as buildings and stelae and in the Lunar Series, where I suspect it refers to Glyph X as the name of the lunation.
- 2 Our earlier speculation that this step fragment names the seventh successor can now be confirmed with the association of Stela 5 with the same ruler. The combination of jaguar with scroll and T25 occurs in both texts (Fig. 5a-b).
- 3 or 9.5.16.13.7 6 Manik 5 Muan

### Summary

Three fragments of Stela 9 have been identified which allow for its identification as a portrait stela in the tradition of Stela E and the later stylistic tradition dominant at Copan. The initial sentence of the text records the erection or dedication of the stela on 9.6.10.0.0 naming it as the "First Sun-shield Stone." The naming of the actor as Chac-Xib-Chac suggests that Stela 9, like Stela I, showed the ruler wearing the mask of a god. Finally, the protagonist, Moon-Jaguar, is named in Columns E-F as the protagonist and as the "child of" the seventh successor.

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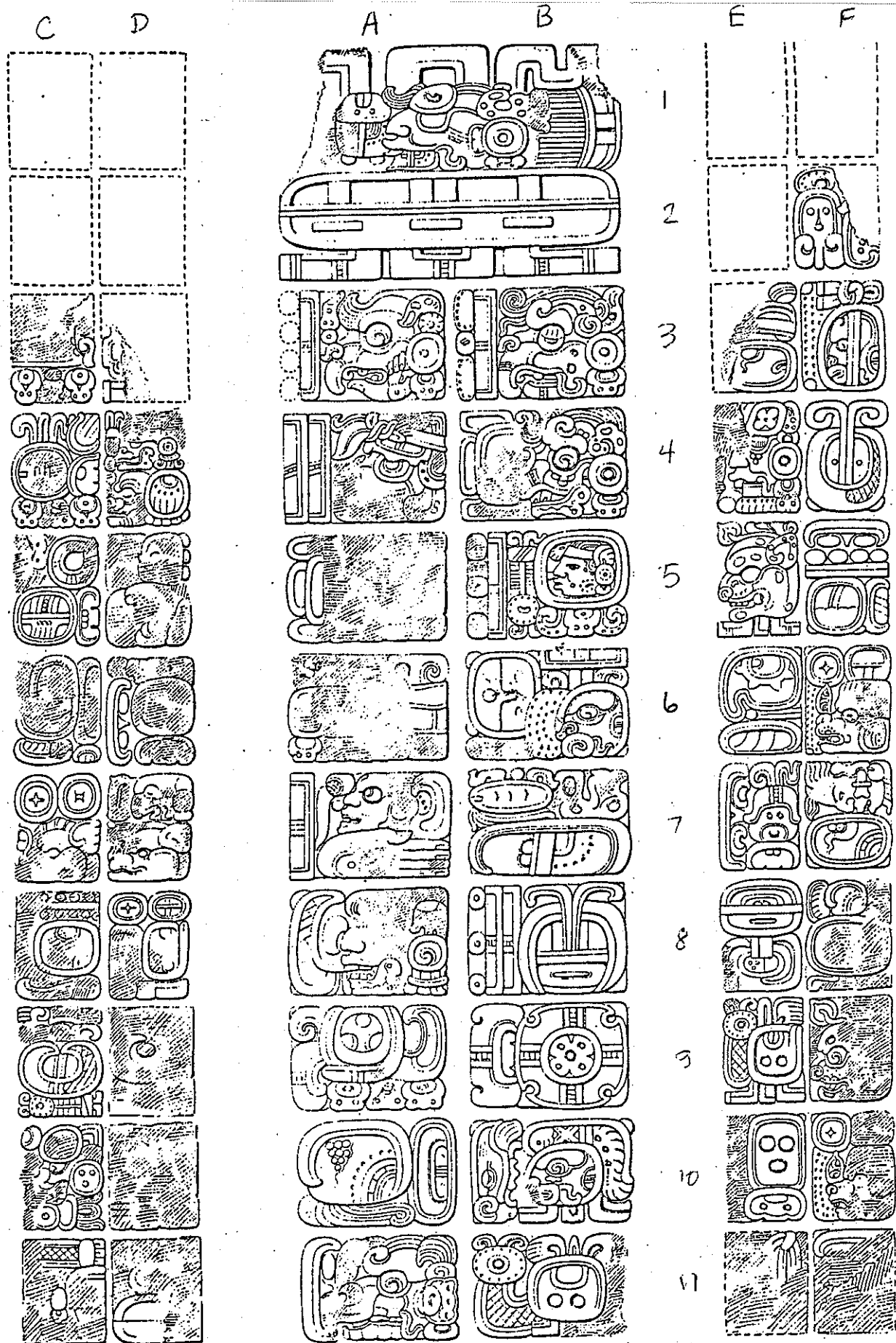


Fig. 1 Copan Stela 9, the Maudslay drawing

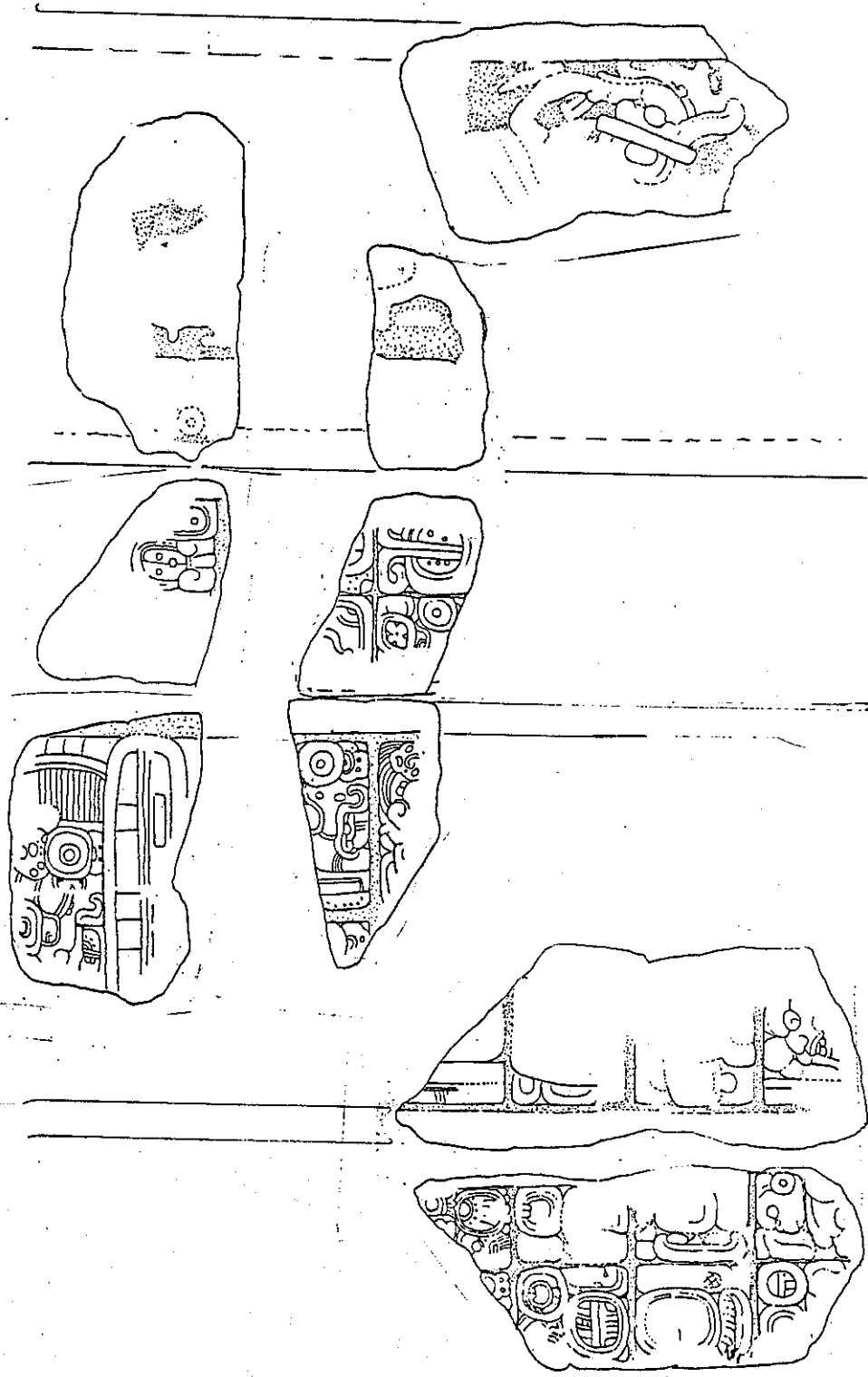


Fig. 2 Stela 9, the surviving fragments

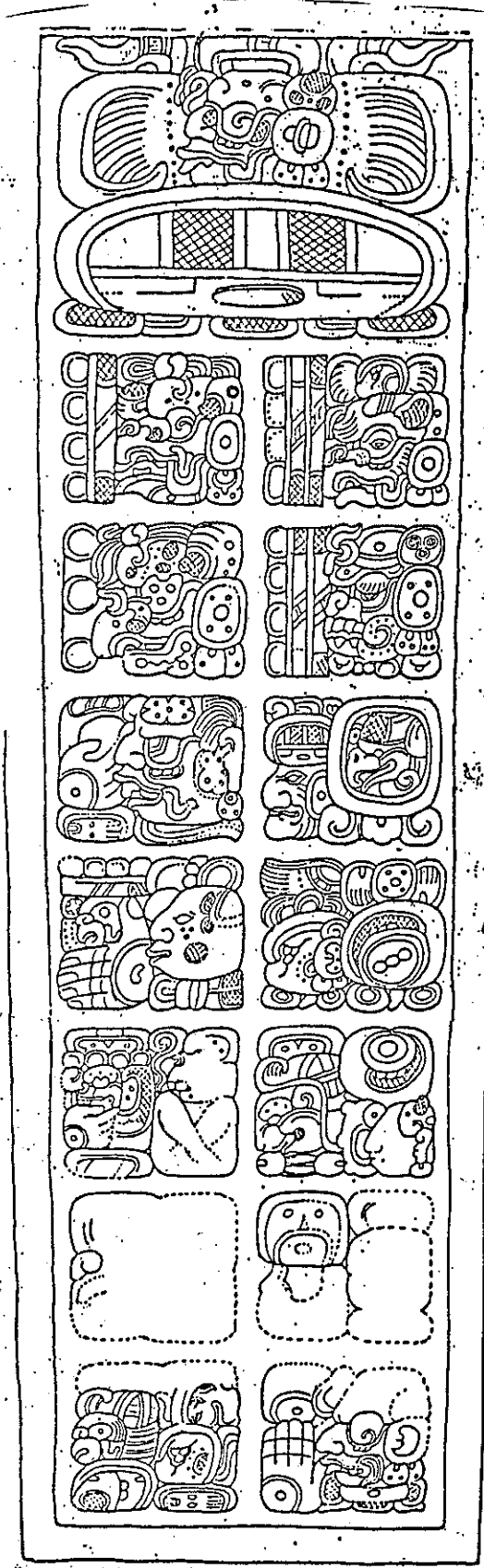
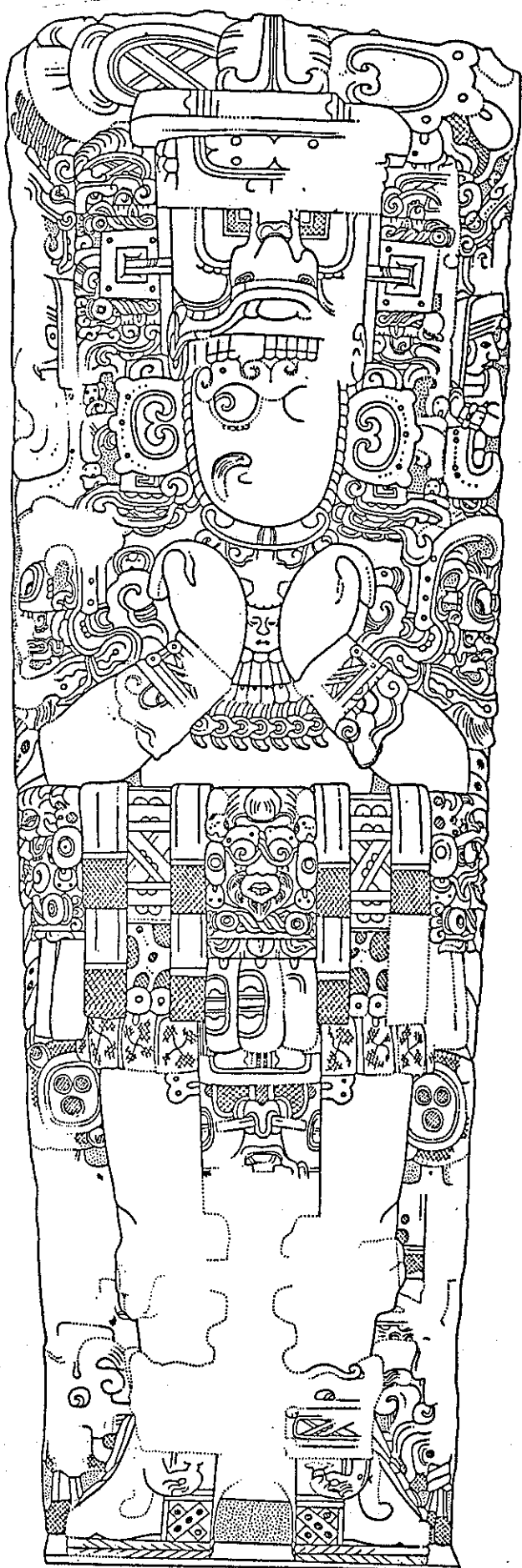
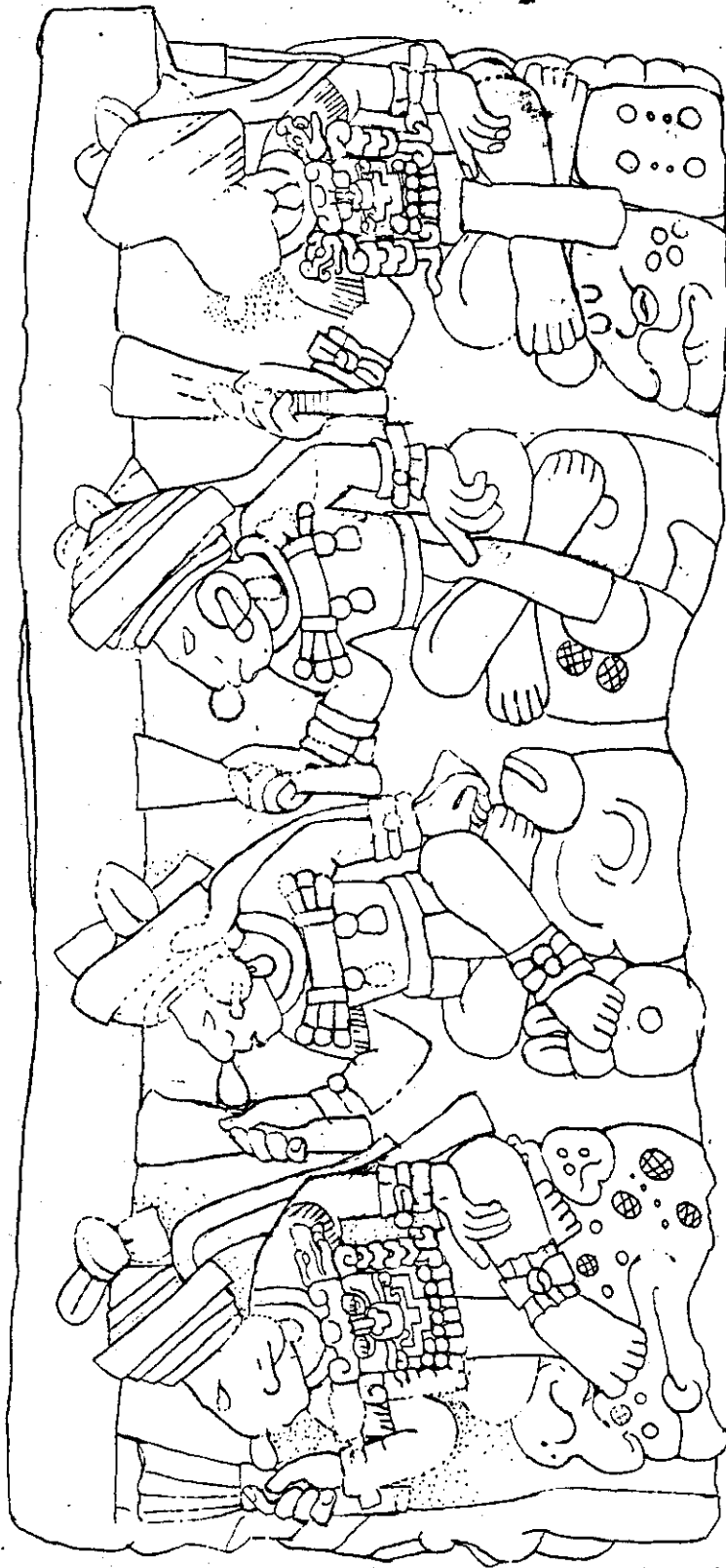


Fig. 3 Stela I, front (drawing by B.W.Fash) and rear



Alt Q East  
Aug, 1917 L5  
Pers. added

Fig. 4 Altar Q, seventh through the tenth successors

2

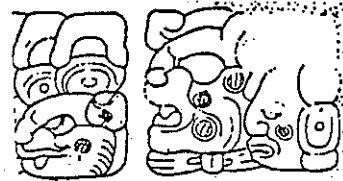
a. HS step 55



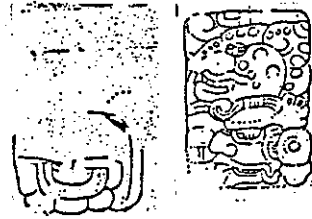
b. Stela E



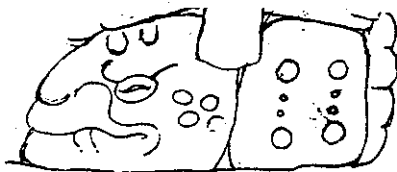
c. Stela E



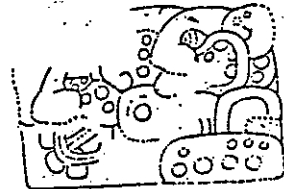
d. Stela 15



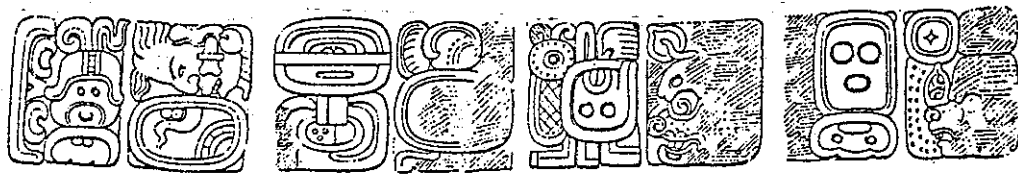
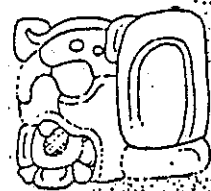
e. Altar Q



f. Stela 15



g. Stela E



h. Stela 9

Fig. 5 The names of Waterlily-Jaguar