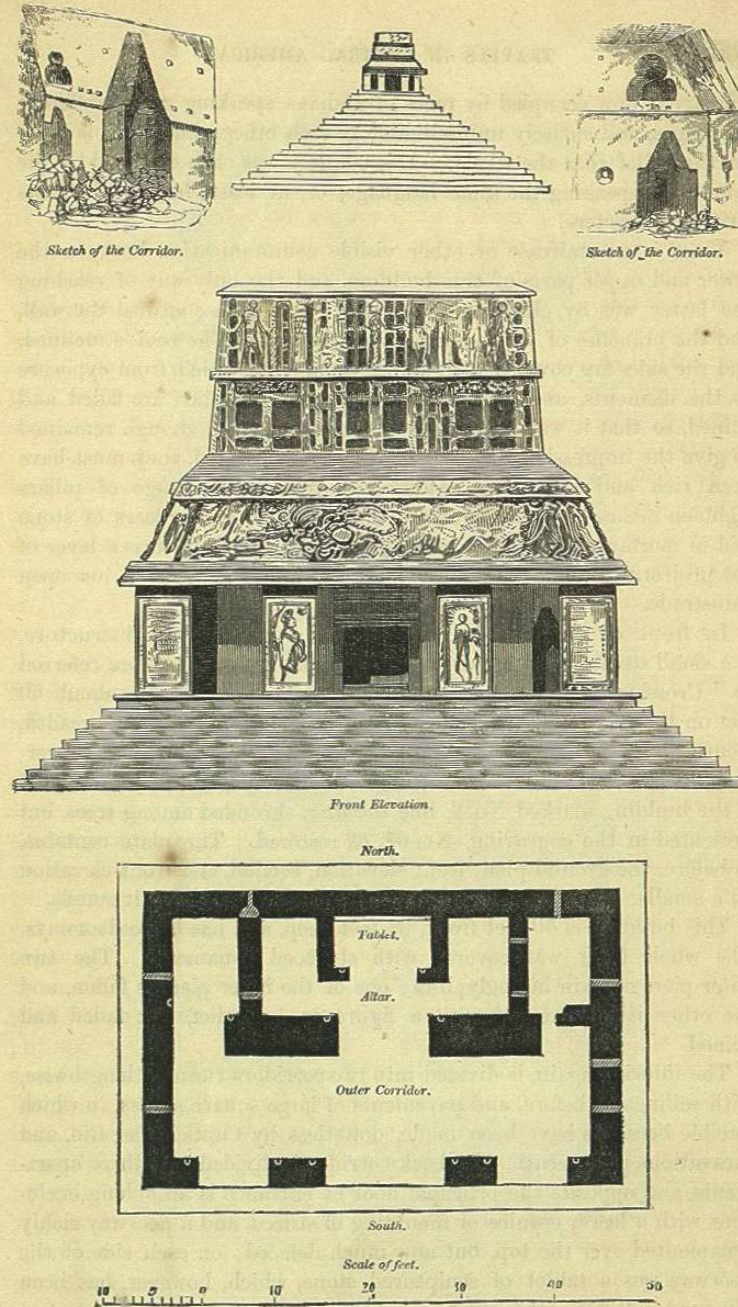


stone, and which we could not remove, though perhaps it might be detached by some chemical process. In the other tablet, nearly one half of the hieroglyphics are obliterated by the action of water and decomposition of the stone. When we first saw them both tablets were covered with a thick coat of green moss, and it was necessary to wash and scrape them, clear the lines with a stick, and scrub them thoroughly, for which last operation a pair of blacking-brushes that Juan had picked up in my house at Guatemala, and disobeyed my order to throw away upon the road, proved exactly what we wanted and could not have procured. Besides this process, on account of the darkness of the corridor, from the thick shade of the trees growing before it, it was necessary to burn candles or torches, and to throw a strong light upon the stones while Mr. Catherwood was drawing.

The corridor in the rear is dark and gloomy, and divided into three apartments. Each of the side apartments has two narrow openings, about three inches wide and a foot high. They have no remains of sculpture, or painting, or stuccoed ornaments. In the centre apartment, set in the back wall, and fronting the principal door of entrance, is another tablet of hieroglyphics, four feet six inches wide and three feet six inches high. The roof above it is tight; consequently it has not suffered from exposure, and the hieroglyphics are perfect, though the stone is cracked lengthwise through the middle, as indicated in the engraving, No. 66.

The impression made upon our minds by these speaking but unintelligible tablets I shall not attempt to describe. From some unaccountable cause they have never before been presented to the public. Captains Del Rio and Dupaix both refer to them, but in very few words, and neither of them has given a single drawing. Acting under a royal commission, and selected, doubtless, as fit men for the duties entrusted to them, they cannot have been ignorant or insensible of their value. It is my belief they did not give them because in both cases the artists attached to their expedition were incapable of the labour, and the steady, determined perseverance required for drawing such complicated, unintelligible, and anomalous characters. As at Copan, Mr. Catherwood divided his paper into squares; the original drawings were reduced, and the engravings corrected by himself, and I believe they are as true copies as the pencil can make: the real written records of a lost people. The Indians call this building an escuela or school, but our friends the padres called it a tribunal of justice, and these stones, they said, contained the tables of the law.

There is one important fact to be noticed. The hieroglyphics are the same as were found at Copan and Quirigua. The intermediate



67. Plan of No. 2, CASAS DE PIEDRA, PALENQUE.

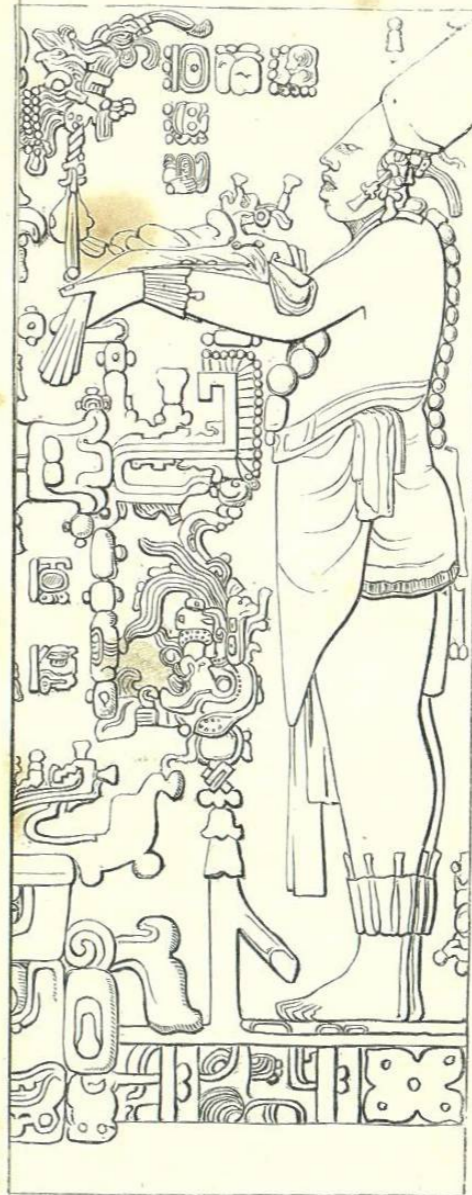
country is now occupied by races of Indians speaking many different languages, and entirely unintelligible to each other; but there is room for the belief that the whole of this country was once occupied by the same race, speaking the same language, or, at least, having the same written characters.

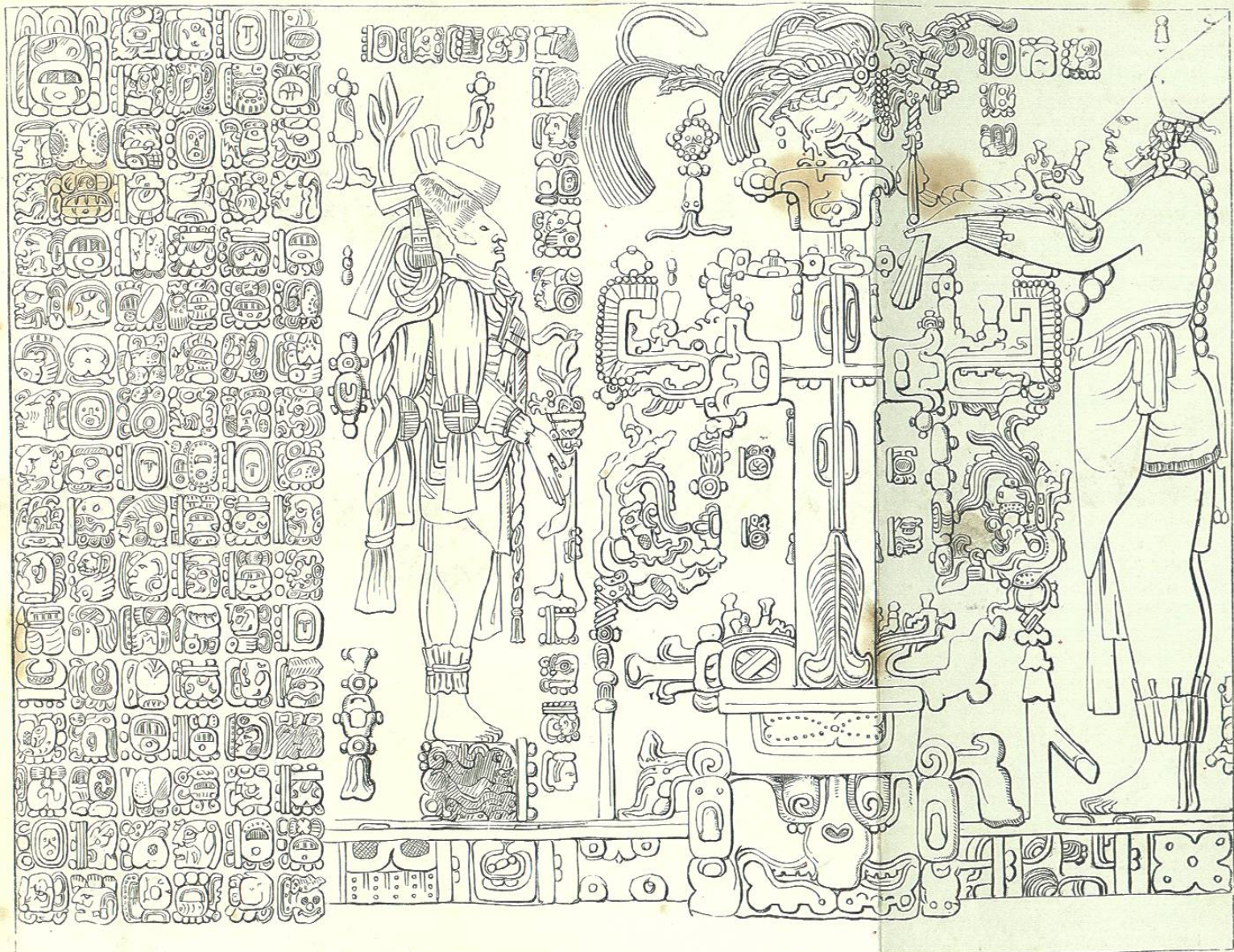
There is no staircase or other visible communication between the lower and upper parts of this building, and the only way of reaching the latter was by climbing a tree which grows close against the wall, and the branches of which spread over the roof. The roof is inclined, and the sides are covered with stucco ornaments, which, from exposure to the elements, and the assaults of trees and bushes, are faded and ruined, so that it was impossible to draw them; but enough remained to give the impression that, when perfect and painted, they must have been rich and imposing. Along the top was a range of pillars eighteen inches high and twelve apart, made of small pieces of stone laid in mortar, and covered with stucco, crowning which is a layer of flat projecting stones, having somewhat the appearance of a low open balustrade.

In front of this building, at the foot of the pyramidal structure, is a small stream, part of which supplies the aqueduct before referred to. Crossing this, we come upon a broken stone terrace about 60 feet on the slope, with a level esplanade at the top, 110 feet in breadth, from which rises another pyramidal structure, now ruined and overgrown with trees; it is 134 feet high on the slope, and on its summit is the building marked No. 2, like the first, shrouded among trees, but presented in the engraving, No. 67, as restored. The plate contains, as before, the ground-plan, front elevation, section, and front elevation on a smaller scale, with the pyramidal structure on which it stands.

This building is 50 feet front, 31 feet deep, and has three doorways. The whole front was covered with stuccoed ornaments. The two outer piers contain hieroglyphics; one of the inner piers is fallen, and the other is ornamented with a figure in bas relief, but faded and ruined.

The interior, again, is divided into two corridors running lengthwise, with ceilings as before, and pavements of large square stones, in which forcible breaches have been made, doubtless by Captain Del Rio, and excavations underneath. The back corridor is divided into three apartments, and opposite the principal door of entrance is an oblong enclosure, with a heavy cornice or moulding of stucco, and a doorway richly ornamented over the top, but now much defaced; on each side of the doorway was a tablet of sculptured stone, which, however, has been removed. Within, the chamber is thirteen feet wide and seven feet





deep. There was no admission of light except from the door; the sides were without ornament of any kind, and in the back wall, covering the whole width, was the tablet given in the engraving, No. 68. It was ten feet eight inches wide, six feet four inches in height, and consisted of three separate stones. That on the left, facing the spectator, is still in its place. The middle one has been removed and carried down the side of the structure, and now lies near the bank of the stream. It was removed many years ago by one of the inhabitants of the village, with the intention of carrying it to his house; but, after great labour, with no other instruments than the arms and hands of Indians, and poles cut from trees, it had advanced so far, when its removal was arrested by an order from the government forbidding any farther abstraction from the ruins. We found it lying on its back near the banks of the stream, washed by many floods of the rainy season, and covered with a thick coat of dirt and moss. We had it scrubbed and propped up, and probably the next traveller will find it with the same props under it which we placed there. In the engraving it is given in its original position on the wall. The stone on the right is broken, and, unfortunately, altogether destroyed; most of the fragments have disappeared; but, from the few we found among the ruins in the front of the building, there is no doubt that it contained ranges of hieroglyphics corresponding in general appearance with those of the stone on the left.

The tablet, as given in the engraving, contains only two-thirds of the original. In Del Rio's work it is not represented at all. In Dupaix it is given, not, however, as it exists, but as made up by the artist in Paris, so as to present a perfect picture. The subject is reversed, with the cross in the centre, and on each side a single row of hieroglyphics, only eight in number. Probably, when Dupaix saw it (thirty-four years before), it was entire, but the important features of six rows of hieroglyphics on each side of the principal figures, each row containing seventeen in a line, do not appear. This is the more inexcusable in his publishers, as in his report Dupaix expressly refers to these numerous hieroglyphics; but it is probable that his report was not accompanied by any drawings of them.

The principal subject of this tablet is the cross. It is surmounted by a strange bird, and loaded with indescribable ornaments. The two figures are evidently those of important personages. They are well drawn, and in symmetry of proportion are perhaps equal to many that are carved on the walls of the ruined temples in Egypt. Their costume is in a style different from any heretofore given, and the folds would seem to indicate that they were of a soft and pliable texture,

like cotton. Both are looking toward the cross, and one seems in the act of making an offering, apparently of a child: all speculations on the subject are of course entitled to little regard, but perhaps it would not be wrong to ascribe to these personages a sacerdotal character. The hieroglyphics doubtless explain all. Near them are other hieroglyphics, which reminded us of the Egyptian mode of recording the name, history, office, or character of the persons represented. This tablet of the cross has given rise to more learned speculations than perhaps any others found at Palenque. Dupaix and his commentators, assuming for the building a very remote antiquity, or, at least, a period long antecedent to the Christian era, account for the appearance of the cross by the argument that it was known and had a symbolical meaning among ancient nations long before it was established as the emblem of the Christian faith. Our friends the padres, at the sight of it, immediately decided that the old inhabitants of Palenque were Christians, and by conclusions which are sometimes called jumping, they fixed the age of the buildings in the third century.

There is reason to believe that this particular building was intended as a temple, and that the enclosed inner chamber was an adoratorio, or oratory, or altar. What the rites and ceremonies of worship may have been, no one can undertake to say.

The upper part of this building differs from the first. As before, there was no staircase or other communication inside or out, nor were there the remains of any. The only mode of access was, in like manner, by climbing a tree, the branches of which spread across the roof. The roof was inclined, and the sides were richly ornamented with stucco figures, plants, and flowers, but mostly ruined. Among them were the fragments of a beautiful head and of two bodies, in justness of proportion and symmetry approaching the Greek models. On the top of this roof is a narrow platform, supporting what, for the sake of description, I shall call two stories. The platform is but two feet ten inches wide, and the superstructure of the first story is seven feet five inches in height; that of the second eight feet five inches, the width of the two being the same. The ascent from one to the other is by square projecting stones, and the covering of the upper story is by flat stones laid across and projecting over. The long sides of this narrow structure are of open stucco work, formed into curious and indescribable devices, human figures with legs and arms spreading and apertures between; and the whole was once loaded with rich and elegant ornaments in stucco relief. Its appearance at a distance must have been that of a high, fanciful lattice. Altogether, like the rest of the architecture and ornaments, it was perfectly unique, different from the



F. Catherwood.

Scale of feet.

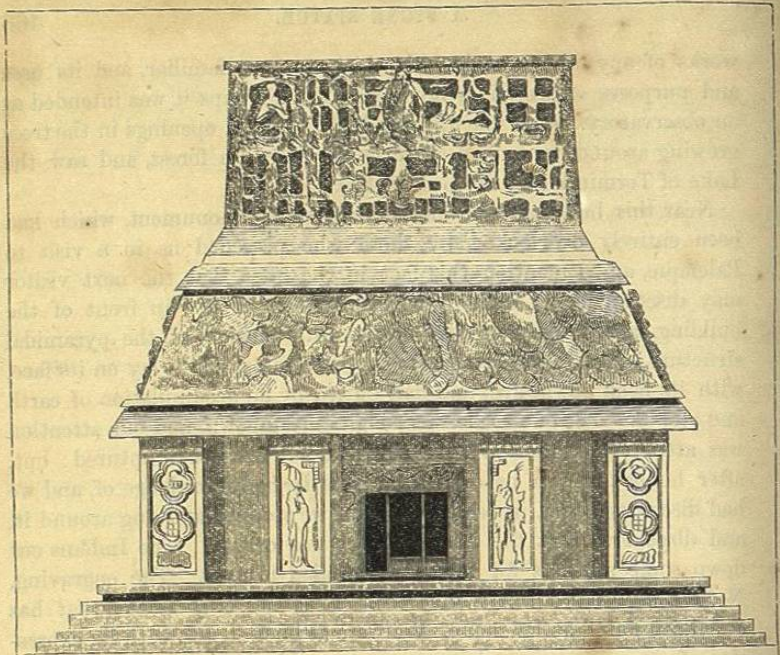
69. STONE STATUE IN FRONT OF CASA, No. 2.

works of any other people with which we were familiar, and its uses and purposes entirely incomprehensible. Perhaps it was intended as an observatory. From the upper gallery, through openings in the trees growing around, we looked out over an immense forest, and saw the Lake of Terminos and the Gulf of Mexico.

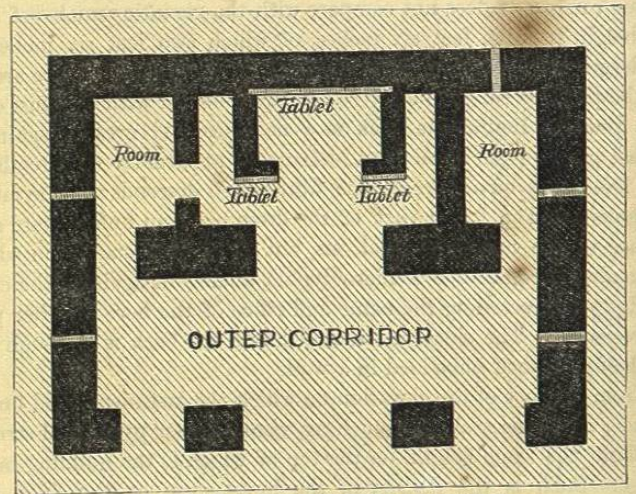
Near this building was another interesting monument, which had been entirely overlooked by those who preceded us in a visit to Palenque, and I mention this fact in the hope that the next visitor may discover many things omitted by us. It lies in front of the building, about forty or fifty feet down the side of the pyramidal structure. When we first passed it with our guide it lay on its face, with its head downward, and half-buried by an accumulation of earth and stones. The outer side was rough and unhewn, and our attention was attracted by its size; our guide said it was not sculptured; but, after he had shown us everything that he had knowledge of, and we had discharged him, in passing it again we stopped and dug around it, and discovered that the under surface was carved. The Indians cut down some saplings for levers, and rolled it over. The engraving, No. 69, represents this monument. It is the only statue that has ever been found at Palenque. We were at once struck with its expression of serene repose, and its strong resemblance to Egyptian statues, though in size it does not compare with the gigantic remains of Egypt. In height it is ten feet six inches, of which two feet six inches were underground. The head-dress is lofty and spreading; there are holes in the place of ears, which were perhaps adorned with earrings of gold and pearls. Round the neck is a necklace, and pressed against the breast by the right hand is an instrument apparently with teeth. The left hand rests on a hieroglyphic, from which descends some symbolical ornament. The lower part of the dress bears an unfortunate resemblance to the modern pantaloons, but the figure stands on what we have always considered a hieroglyphic, analogous again to the custom in Egypt of recording the name and office of the hero or other person represented. The sides are rounded, and the back is of rough stone. Probably it stood imbedded in a wall.

From the foot of the elevation on which the last-mentioned building stands, their bases almost touching, rises another pyramidal structure of about the same height, on the top of which is the building marked No. 3. Such is the density of the forest, even on the sides of the pyramidal structure, that, though in a right line, but a short distance apart, one of these buildings cannot be seen from the other.

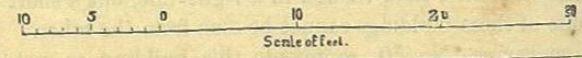
The engraving, No. 70, represents this building as restored, not



Front Elevation.

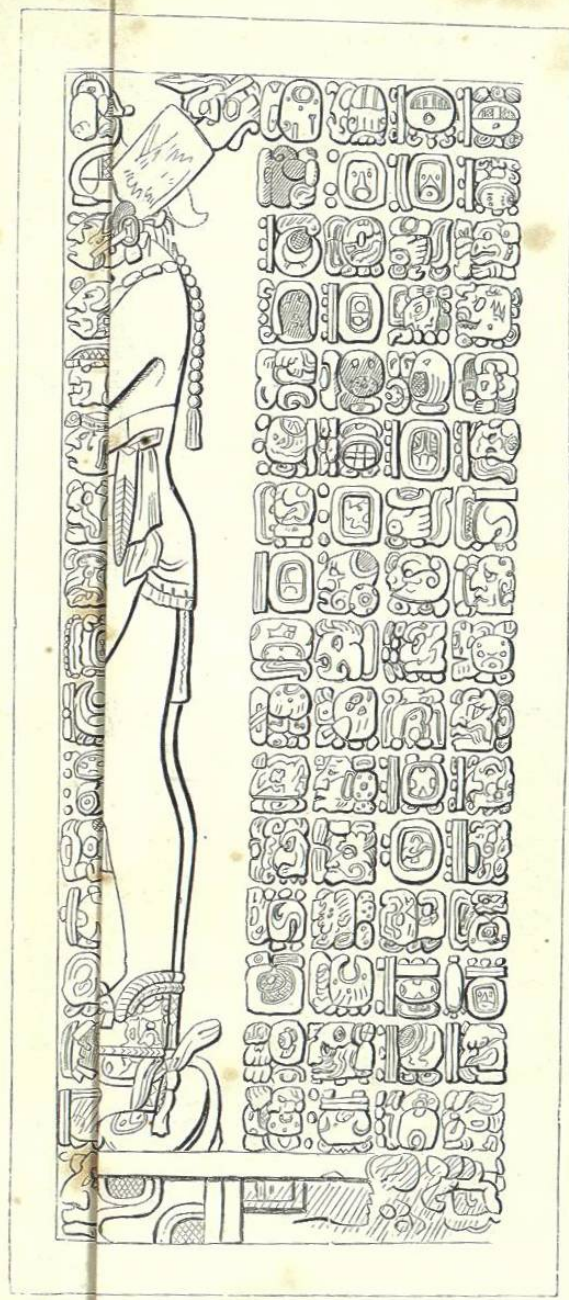


PLAN OF No. 3, CASAS DE PIEDRA, PALENQUE.



F. Catherwood.

No. 70



F. Catherwood.