

Early Travelers to Palenque

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Palenque, the most enigmatically moving of all Maya sites, has held its secrets for over twelve hundred years. The location is imbued with a quality that reaches out and draws one irresistably. Enigmatic though it might be, its architecture sings to us with a Mozartian sort of richness and classical elegance — not mute like the heavier, more rigidly conservative architecture of most other Classic Maya sites. Originality and harmony shine out of the mellow Palenque limestone. The presence of its builders is felt across the centuries by those who give themselves completely to the Palenque experience.

First of all the setting, nestled against the Chiapas mountain wall, most of it engulfed by lush, deep rain forest, is most dramatic. It sits in a shelf sculpted into the mountain by subtle Maya designers, at the edge of a virtual precipice, facing the vast unbroken stretch of eighty miles of savannah and swampland stretching north to the Gulf of Mexico, which provided natural protection in ancient times. At the back of the central nuclear plaza the mountains spin upwards dizzily into clouds of dense soaring rain forest which conceal endless levels of man-made terraces, bearing uncounted structures, most of which appear to have been mausoleums. Through this enchanted setting clear streams splash and tumble, cascading over sinter basins and into sparkling pools. All of the early travelers remarked with pleasure on the extraordinary beauty of the setting of Palenque. In this century Frans Blom remarked “the first visit to Palenque is immensely impressive. When one has lived there for some time this ruined city becomes an obsession.”¹

Indeed there is a marked contrast between Palen-

que and other Classic Maya sites. Only a few sites: Copán, Cobá and Yaxchilán, for example, enjoy the benefits of ample water, rich soil, a bearable climate and an attractive setting. Obviously these things did not matter to the Maya. It seems that in some perverse way the Maya deliberately chose sites which avoided competition with agricultural land.

But as haunting as the setting is the architecture. It is exquisitely balanced and related to its setting. Its heavily overhung roofs and cornices surmounted by the elegant panaches of roof comb, echo the curtain of mountains. Those wise and sensitive Palencian architects employed entasis and manipulated proportions in audacious ways never before used by the Maya. The harmonies that they created with eaves corbals and roof combs quicken the heart of any aficionado of architecture, for they are as subtle as architectural masterpieces anywhere. Those of us who have allowed ourselves to be caught, find ourselves forever haunted by Palenque. And so it has been from the time that it was first reported.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, vague rumors of an ancient city lost in the Chiapas forests persistently reached the ears of Fray Ramón de Ordóñez y Aguiar, who was Canon of the Cathedral in what is now San Cristóbal de las Casas. These ruins were said to be near the tiny pueblo of Santo Domingo del Palenque. In 1773 Fray Ramón sent his brother the long and difficult way to Palenque from San Cristóbal. From what his brother reported he wrote a “memoria”.² This first educated look at the ancient site of Palenque in modern times occurred just exactly two hundred years before our Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque.

¹Blom, Frans. *Tribes and Temples*, New Orleans, 1926, p. 170.

²Blom, Frans. *Tribes and Temples*, New Orleans, 1926, p. 167.

In December of 1784, eleven years later, on orders from Guatemala the mayor of Santo Domingo del Palenque, José Antonio Calderón, accompanied by Antonio Bernaconi, an Italian architect sent from Guatemala, visited the ruins and drafted a report early in 1785.³ That report stimulated the first serious investigation into the ruins. In 1786 an artillery captain, Don Antonio del Río, was officially ordered by the Spanish Crown to search the place for gold or other precious things. In his own words “it would be indispensably necessary to make several excavations . . . that I should find medals, inscriptions, or monuments that would throw some light upon my researches.”⁴

Del Río arrived in early May of 1786. Battling fog and thick foliage del Río retreated from the ruins to the village of Santo Domingo del Palenque to regroup. He sought out José Antonio Calderón, who had explored the ruins a year earlier with Bernaconi, and through him ordered Indian laborers. Seventy-nine Chol-speaking Mayas showed up and finally provided with forty-eight axes and assorted bill-hooks they attacked the Palace on the 18th of May. Two days later a huge bonfire opened up the Palace area for the first time in a millenium. They then attacked the structure with, he complains, but seven iron crowbars and three pickaxes. In his own words: “ultimately there remained neither a window nor a doorway blocked up; a partition that was not thrown down, nor a room, corridor, court, tower, nor subterranean passage in which excavations were not effected from two to three yards in depth, for such was the object of my mission.”⁵

To corroborate his report he dislodged the stucco head of a sacrificial victim on one of the piers of the western façade of the Palace and the leg and foot of the executioner as well as a carved leg of the throne or bench under the elliptical relief in the corridor of Structure E and a part of the corbal decoration found on one of the entrances to the subterranean rooms of the palace. These were sent on to Guatemala and thence to Spain as examples of Palencian bas-relief. He further took stucco from the Temple of the Inscriptions and dug up offerings from under the floors of the Temple of the Sun and the two Temples of the Crosses. But even so, del Río brought from his excavations also a sense of wonder and awe for those Indians who had built Palenque. His report is fair and accurate. It was sent to Spain, where it was swallowed up in the archives, but a copy of it was picked up in Guatemala City by an Englishman, who took it to London, where it was published as a slim volume in 1822. The illustrations were copies of copies of del Río’s sketches, rather flatly rendered into line

lithographs by none other than Jean Frédéric Maximilien, Comte de Waldeck. This little volume caught the attention of a few people and helped kindle investigations into the study of Maya civilization.

Palenque had yielded no tangible treasures to its first investigators. It had, to be sure, stirred up some flurries of correspondence over the years immediately succeeding the investigations, but in a Spanish colony like Mexico, closed to the non-Spanish world, there were few literate travelers permitted to visit the ruins. However, in 1807 the Spanish Crown commissioned Guillermo Dupaix, a retired military captain, to embark on his third expedition to investigate and record ancient ruins in Mexico.⁶ On that expedition he reached Palenque, accompanied by a draughtsman, José Luciano Castañeda. It was a difficult period for travel in Mexico — a few years before the Revolution would wrench Mexico from Spain forever. Castañeda made a series of rather stiff and crude drawings which missed entirely the spirit of the place, turning the landscape into a desert and the elegant buildings into characterless cubes (some of two stories), but they can be recognized. During the trip, Dupaix was jailed in the belief that he was some sort of revolutionary and after the expedition the drawings of Castañeda were shelved for twenty-seven years, until they were transported to France and spruced up for publication.⁷ Lord Kingsborough published a selection of them in his monumental work in 1834, but in that same year they were all published in Paris in a large volume entitled *Antiquités Mexicaines*.⁸

In 1808 a history of Guatemala by Domingo Juarros was published there which included the first printed description of the ruins of Palenque. The author says that “the solidity of its edifices, the stateliness of its palaces, and the magnificence of its public works, were not surpassed in importance by its vast extent; temples, altars, deities, sculptures, and monumental stones bear testimony to its great antiquity.” The author ventured that the ruins must have been an Egyptian colony along with those of Tonina and Culhuacan.⁹

The great Alexander von Humboldt was the first to publish a picture of a Palencian relief. It is to be found as Plate 11 in his great *Vues des Cordillères, et Monuments des Peuples Indigènes de l’Amérique*, Paris, 1810. The plate mistakenly attributes the relief as having been found in Oaxaca. The plate was made from a drawing supplied to Humboldt by the Mexican naturalist, Cervantes.

A number of years went by in which educated visitors left no literary evidence. Much of what is published during these years is a re-hashing of earlier material or

³Brasseur de Bourbourg, Charles Étienne. *Recherches sur les Ruines de Palenqué . . .*, Paris, 1866, pp. 5-6.

⁴Del Río, Antonio. *Description of the Ruins of an Ancient City, Discovered Near Palenque . . .*, London, 1822, p.3.

⁵Del Río, Antonio. *Description of the Ruins of an Ancient City, Discovered Near Palenque . . .*, London, 1822, p.3.

⁶Dupaix, Guillelmo. *Antiquités Mexicaines . . .*, Paris, 1834, p. vi.

⁷Dupaix, Guillelmo. *Antiquités Mexicaines . . .*, Paris, 1834, pp. vi-vii.

⁸Dupaix, Guillelmo. *Antiquités Mexicaines . . .*, Paris, 1834.

⁹Juarros, Domingo. *Compendio de la Historia de la Ciudad de Guatemala*, Guatemala, 1808 (from an English translation by J. Baily published in London in 1808).

romantic venturings about ancient civilizations with colonies in the New World.¹⁰ In April of 1831 Juan Galindo, governor of the Petén, made a visit to Palenque, where he made sketches of the ruins. He wrote several letters — one at the ruins, dated April 27, 1831 — and others written later from Flores, Petén. These were circulated and published in England and France, arousing no small interest on both sides of the Atlantic. While at Palenque he collected stuccos, one of which was illustrated in 1834 and now is at the Trocadero Museum in Paris.¹¹

Jean Frédéric Maximilien, Comte de Waldeck, a picaresque gentleman if there ever was one, had been with Napoleon in Egypt, studied neo-classic rendering under Jacques Louis David and then with Pierre-Paul Prud'hon. After a full life of adventure he found himself in 1822 in London making lithographic illustrations of the copies of del Río's drawings of Palenque. He became enthralled by the idea of lost cities in the forests of Central America, for not only had del Río explored the ruins of Palenque, but he mentioned a certain Fray Tomás de Soza, a Franciscan friar of Mérida, who had visited the ruins of Palenque while del Río was working there. He had talked rapsodically of a building at Oxmutal (Uxmal), which, from his description must be the Governor's Palace, noting that this and many other buildings must have been made by the same ingenious ancients who made Palenque, since the writing system was the same.

Waldeck's life led him to Mexico, where he had been managing a silver mine and painting theater backdrops. With permission and a grant of money from Bustamante, the President of Mexico, he set off for Palenque, arriving on May 12, 1832. Other travelers generally used the ample galleries of the Palace as headquarters and sleeping quarters, even though the Palace was clammy and damp, but Waldeck, who was a robust sixty-six, put up a thatch-roof house of local style at the foot of the base of the Temple of the Cross of Palenque, next to the Río Otolum. There he moved in with a local girl and lived and explored, recording details of the ruins for about a year.¹² Since copying the del Río drawings a decade before he had been convinced that Palencian temples and reliefs were Egyptian and so he drew them in the frozen neo-classic style that he had learned from Prud'hon in the eighteenth century, insinuating Egyptian overtones into them. The most famous of these is the drawing of the "beau relief" in neo-Egyptian style from the so-called Temple of the Lion, reproduced in the I.N.A.H. guidebook to Palenque. Waldeck destroyed

the head and upper part of this stucco after he had drawn it.¹³ These drawings were published as large lithographs in 1866 by Waldeck and Brasseur de Bourbourg in Paris.¹⁴ The illustrations which show the eastern entrance to the Palace — the corballed corridor leading to the Courtyard of the Captives — carefully depict several inscriptions left by travelers. The longest is by Dr. Francois Corroy, of Tobasco, who refers to himself as the "only historian" of the ruins, recording that he was paying his third visit — this time with his wife and daughter on the 25th of August. Below this is scribbled "Troncoso", "contemptible". On the north wall of the corridor is Corroy's name again, with the date 1832 and the name Jules Guillou with the same date. Those bits of graffiti and others which Stephens and Catherwood saw a few years later are now long gone, but diagonally across the "Portrait Gallery" and deeply enough engraved into a pier to last as long as the Palace, itself, is the signature of Désiré Charnay, the same intrepid who re-named Yaxchilán (then Menche) Lorillard City in honor of his patron. Charnay also liberated a stucco human face with mask, which may have been the one pictured by Waldeck lying on the floor to the right of the entrance to the Courtyard of the captives. That stucco is now in the Trocadero in Paris.¹⁵

The most noteworthy travelers to Palenque in the nineteenth century were John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood. As early as 1834 Catherwood had showed Stephens a copy of the del Río report; that same year the Dupaix was first published complete and Lord Kingsborough published in a much more elaborate format some of the Dupaix drawings. Juan Galindo's letters were also available¹⁶ and these all tended to excite the two men into considering an expedition into the jungles of Central America. In 1838 Waldeck published his first book which mentioned Palenque and Uxmal and other ruins in Mexico. By the following year Stephens and Catherwood had talked themselves into a diplomatic mission to the United States of Central America, which was never to get itself off the ground as a nation, from the United States of America.

John Lloyd Stephens was a journalist and already an experienced travel writer.¹⁷ Frederick Catherwood was an excellent architectural draughtsman, adept in rendering the ancient architecture of Egypt and the Near East.¹⁸ The mid-nineteenth century saw the all-time peak of beautifully accurate architectural rendering. The finest of those artists used the camera lucida as an aid to perfect accuracy, and so, too, did Frederick

¹⁰Cabrera, Dr. Paul Felix. *Teatro Critico Americano*, London, 1822.

¹¹Hamy, E-T. *Galerie Américaine du Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadero*, Paris, 1897, no. 76.

¹²Saville, Marshall H. *Bibliographic Notes on Palenque, Chiapas*, New York, 1928, pp. 136-137.

¹³Von Hagen, Victor Wolfgang. *Maya Explorer*, Norman, 1947, p. 169.

¹⁴Waldeck, Frederick. *Monuments Anciens du Mexique*, Paris, 1866.

¹⁵Hamy, E-T. *Galerie Américaine du Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadero*, Paris, 1897, no. 77.

¹⁶Galindo, Juan. A Short Account of Some Antiquities Discovered in the District of Peten, *Archaeologia*, vol. xxv, London, 1834, pp. 570-571.

¹⁷Stephens, John Lloyd. *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea and the Holy Land*, New York, 1837; *Incidents of Travel in Greece, Turkey, Russia and Poland*, New York, 1838.

Catherwood. The two men shared a mutual respect — each man being outstanding and dedicated in his field.

On October 30, 1839 the brig *Mary Ann* dropped Stephens and Catherwood off at Belize, British Honduras, on their way to Guatemala. They were entertained by the Superintendent of British Honduras, Col. Alexander MacDonald. They also met Patrick Walker, a politician who held a fistfull of posts in the colonial government. They told of their mission to explore ancient ruins in Central America — especially Palenque. Palenque lay to the southwest of Belize several hundred miles — beyond the intervening Petén. To quote from an article in the *Belize Advertiser*: “the design of Mr. Catherwood has roused the jealousy of our Settlement, and induced a visit with a like object, to the same place by a different rout.”¹⁹ Patrick Walker was to head the expedition, taking with him John Herbert Caddy, an excellent draughtsman — probably the best in the colony. It was the wrong time of year, the rainy season; ordinarily such a trip would never have been undertaken, but rivalry and honor pushed the group. It seems certain that otherwise Caddy and Walker, especially, had little interest or taste for archaeology.

As it was, they must have passed not too far from the then unknown ruins of Xunantunich, Yaxhá, and Tikal (discovered eight years later), and slipped quietly past Seibal, Altar de Sacrificios, Yaxchilán and Piedras Negras on their river trip towards Tabasco. But they arrived at Palenque the last days of January, 1840 and set about recording and exploring the ruins. All track of the expedition had been lost at Belize and rumors that they had been murdered by Indians along the way even caught up with Stephens and Catherwood in Guatemala. But unaware of these rumors Caddy painted a fine series of sepias in the two weeks that they spent there. Those drawings, the originals of which were lost in this century, were more accurate than those of Frederick Catherwood and possessed a very special charm. Marshall Saville had planned to publish Caddy’s journal and drawings, but never got around to it.²⁰ Caddy, himself was upstaged by the publication of Stephens’ *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan* in New York in 1841.

All over Central America Stephens and Catherwood found themselves in the middle of the imbroglio of warfare between rival factions, bandits and general unrest. Life was picaresque and dangerous and so at the earliest opportunity they departed on the long and uncomfortable journey over the mountains to Palenque. They stopped by the ruins of Toniná on the way, arriving at Palenque in May. They found to their surprise that Walker and Caddy had been there and were indeed alive.

Nineteenth century travelers approached the ruins of Palenque by the trail which ascends steeply to the west of the Río Otolum, emerging near the present museum. The first view of the ruins was of the northeast corner of the Palace. The traveler generally tied his mule to a tree and climbed up the traces of steps to the “Portrait Gallery”, crossed it and entered into the Courtyard of the Captives. All was overgrown — roofs, courtyards and the sides of pyramids. Each traveler had to re-clear the trees and brush to be able to see anything. Stephens declared that without a guide in the ruins he would have been completely lost. His colorful guide was described by Caddy as “dressed in a sort of uniform with a pair of fringe epauletts and overalls of tanned leather with innumerable little buttons down the sides, and his horse was caparisoned in black leather trappings that gave it the appearance of a Rhinoceros.” He had served Waldeck, Walker and Caddy as well as Stephens and Catherwood.²¹ Stephens found that the local people were unacquainted with the site.

Frederick Catherwood was not well at Palenque and somehow his drawings fall far short of his later standards. His drawings of stuccos and reliefs, aided by the precision of the camera lucida, are the first accurate renderings of Palencian sculpture, but his all-over view of the site, the view of the Palace, the Temple of the Inscriptions (which looks as though it rested on flat ground) and the site map are fanciful, to say the least. He re-drew the all-over view on stone in London for his large lithographic portfolio of 1844; the scene bears little resemblance to the layout of the buildings or landscape at Palenque in spite of Stephens’ insistence that Catherwood’s drawings “are more correct in proportions, outline, and filling up” than those of Dupaix and del Río. He had not seen the drawings of Caddy.

On June 1, 1840 Stephens and Catherwood packed up and left Palenque, never to return again. Had they re-visited Palenque on their second voyage to the Maya World in 1841-1842 Catherwood could have been the first person to take photographs of the site. In August of 1839 L.J.M. Daguerre had announced the details of his new process of fixing images from nature through light on a silver plate. By September 20 detailed information of this process had reached New York.²² Samuel F.B. Morse, a great painter and the recent inventor of the telegraph, had just returned from Paris where in March he had spent several hours with Daguerre discussing his new and still-secret invention — for Morse had himself experimented with fixing an image through light. Morse was probably the first person in the United States to take a photograph. Though there must have been a frantic scrambling to get organized for the first expedition, Catherwood may have attempted experiments in the

¹⁸Catherwood, Frederick. *Description of a View of the City of Jerusalem Painted from Drawings*, London, 1835; *Description of a View of the Great Temple of Karnak and the Surrounding City of Thebes*, London, 1839.

¹⁹Pendergast, David M. *Palenque, the Walker-Caddy Expedition to the Ancient Maya City, 1839-1840*, Norman, 1967, p. 33.

²⁰Saville, Marshall H. *Bibliographic Notes on Palenque, Chiapas*, New York, 1928, p. 138.

²¹Pendergast, David M. *Palenque, the Walker-Caddy Expedition to the Ancient Maya City, 1839-1840*, Norman, 1967, p. 121.

²²Taft, Robert. *Photography and the American Scene*, New York, 1938, p. 14.

new medium: Morse later recalled that there was an Englishman in New York the first few weeks who was among the amateur experimenters. Certainly by the second voyage to the Maya world Catherwood had mastered daguerreotype technique. A significant contribution to the accuracy of detail in a number of Catherwood's final drawings and plates for the second book may be attributable to his capturing of these details on fine silver-coated daguerreotype plates. So far as is now known none of Catherwood's Yucatecan photographs exist today. Daguerre was the co-inventor of the diorama — an artistic device frequently used by Catherwood throughout his career. The diorama, an interesting predecessor of the motion picture, was usually a large painted canvas view of an exotic journey, historical event, etc., mounted in a special building (often round or octagonal), which could be viewed by a mass audience. While preparing to announce his invention — in fact during the time that he and Samuel F.B. Morse were talking — Daguerre's diorama and its building, with all of Daguerre's early experimental plates and equipment, burned in Paris. Three years later a building called the Rotunda burned in New York with Catherwood's Panorama of Thebes and Jerusalem and all of Stephens' Maya memorabilia and many of Catherwood's paintings and photographs.²³

But with the advent of photography a new day had dawned in the recording of Maya ruins and art. With the exception of William H. Holmes, who on the Armour Expedition in February of 1895, drew a remarkable panorama of Palenque and other technical renderings of specific buildings, it might be said that no significant drawing — other than maps and plans — have been made of the architecture, since Catherwood left. The reliefs and inscriptions are a different story. The drawings of Miss Annie Hunter, under the supervision of A.P. Maudslay, of the stuccos, reliefs and glyphic texts of Palenque and other sites are still the best reference for scholarly use to this day. And yet even she tailored her drawings to her Victorian sensibilities: she put a gratuitous foot on each baby-like stucco figure in the stucco reliefs of the Temple of the Inscriptions — ignoring the fact that the second leg of each ended in the form of a serpent. There is always room for whim in the interpretation of even a conscientious artist.

The daguerreotype was supplanted after 1855 by the collodion glass-plate negative and the paper positive. The equipment for this was ponderous and the technique demanded the competence of an expert. The plate — often large and always friable — had to be

covered evenly with a wet collodion solution in a dark tent or room, hustled into a plate holder, then into a large box camera, the picture exposed, then the plate rushed back into the darkroom before the coating was dry, to be fixed. In spite of the cumbersome nature of the technique the results from these large box cameras and their wet glass plates were often splendid: they often include fine clear detail seldom equalled in more recent photography.

As Stephens and Catherwood explored the Yucatán on their second expedition, the so-called Caste Wars erupted, keeping the northern part of the Maya world in turmoil for some sixty years. This bitter struggle made travel hazardous in the Yucatán and effectively halted most investigations of the Mexican part of the Maya world. A terracotta vessel was collected by L.J. Camacho in 1842; it now is in the collections of the Trocadero.²⁴ Arthur Morelet spent two weeks at the site in April of 1846.²⁵ Désiré Charnay saw Palenque for the first time in 1858 and then again in 1861.²⁶ Captain Lindsay Prime visited the site in 1869, on a trip to Mexico and Guatemala.²⁷ And in 1877 Teobert Maler, who had served under Maximilian as an army officer, made his first visit, which lasted three weeks. He returned to take excellent large glass-plate photographs which are now at the Peabody Museum at Harvard. While photographing the monuments at Yaxchilán, he used the building known as the Labyrinth as a darkroom. His Indian workers refused to go into the building for fear, they said, of jaguars. Maler would take a picture of, say, a lintel in a place high up in the site — exposing it with gunpowder flash at night. Then he would make his way, slipping and stumbling down the near-vertical slopes to the Labyrinth, where he would have to fix the glassplate negative before it dried. He may have used the subterranean rooms of the Palace as a darkroom at Palenque.²⁸

Alfred Percival Maudslay — as great a name in the world of Maya studies as Stephens and Catherwood — worked at Palenque the winter of 1890-1891. His monumental photographs of the site and its sculpture, supplemented by Miss Annie Hunter's meticulous drawings are still the prime reference material today, eighty years after their publication. An expedition in 1892 by Río de la Loza and Romero photographed, made plans and collected material for the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.²⁹ In 1895 the Armour Expedition, with Edward H. Thompson, brought William H. Holmes to Palenque to make a series of lucid line drawings, including the great panoramic view which is still the clearest

²³Von Hagen, Victor Wolfgang. *F. Catherwood, Architect-Explorer of Two Worlds*, Barre, 1968, p. 51.

²⁴Hamy, E-T. *Galerie Américaine du Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadero*, Paris, 1897, p. 54.

²⁵Morelet, Arthur. *Voyage dans l'Amérique Central, l'Île de Cuba et le Yucatan*, Paris 1857, pp. 245-285.

²⁶Charnay, Désiré. *Cités et Ruines Américaines*, Paris, 1863, pp. 411-441.

²⁷Maler, Teobert. *Nouvelles Explorations des Ruines de Palenque*, *La Nature*, Paris 1879, pp. 299-302.

²⁸Maler, Teobert. *Researches in the Central Portion of the Usumatsintla Valley*, *Memoirs of the Peabody Museum*, vol. ii no. 2, Cambridge, 1903, pp. 110-111.

²⁹Saville, Marshall H. *Bibliographic Notes on Palenque, Chiapas*, New York, 1928, p. 150 (under Paso y Troncoso).

³⁰Holmes, William H. *Archeological Studies Among the Ancient Cities of Mexico*, Chicago, 1897, opposite p. 208.

diagram of the site.³⁰

The Loubat Expedition, led by Marshall H. Saville, visited the ruins and worked between December 5th 1897 and January 4th of the next year. The investigation was hampered by lack of cooperation, but it kindled (in Marshall Saville) a lasting fascination, which led to the publication of a splendid bibliography with notes published in 1928 by the Heye Foundation.³¹ In 1908 the right-hand panel of the Tablet of the Temple of the Cross of Palenque was returned by Secretary of State Elihu Root from the Smithsonian to the Museum at Mexico City. It had been purchased by Captain William Brown, of New York, who then tried to sell it to John Lloyd Stephens; it later went to Washington.³² Its arrival inspired the Mexican Government to send for the left-hand panel to complete the Tablet. Stephens and Catherwood had seen the two carved figures which flanked the doorway of the shrine, imbedded into a house owned by two women in Santo Domingo del Palenque. They had coveted them and tried to arrange to buy them (Stephens even considered marrying one of the women, if necessary). Later they were imbedded into the façade of the church, where an old photograph by Teobert Maler taken about 1900 shows them imbedded in severe classic brickwork.³³ They were replaced on the walls of the sanctuary in the middle of this century.

Other distinguished Mayanists visited the site early in this century. Eduard Seler and his wife were at the site in August of 1911.³⁴ Sylvanus G. Morley was there in 1918.³⁵ But modern archaeology saw its first application with Frans Blom in the Tulane Expedition of 1925. Blom was the first person to map the larger extent of the site, which has never been thoroughly mapped even to today.³⁶ But the most impressive excavation of this century was undertaken by the Mexican archaeologist Alberto Ruz. In 1949 he deduced that the floor of the Temple of the Inscriptions must conceal something else. Lifting the huge polished floor stones of the rear chamber he found a steep staircase leading steeply downwards, tightly packed with tons of stone fill. On June 15th, 1952 he opened for the first time in more than a millenium the great tomb, with its beautiful sculpture and jades.³⁷ Today the complete comprehensive photographic record of the sculpture of Palenque is being undertaken by Merle Greene Robertson — the first time that this has been attempted.

Good roads finally had pushed through to the site by 1968, and with them came the influx of tourists. The once remote site of Palenque is now part of the modern world, but nothing can change that haunting blend of rain forest and beautiful architecture. Palenque will always be the most hauntingly eloquent site in Mexico.

³¹Saville, Marshall H. *Bibliographic Notes on Palenque, Chiapas*, New York, 1928.

³²Von Hagen, Victor Wolfgang. *Maya Explorer*, Norman, 1947, p. 177.

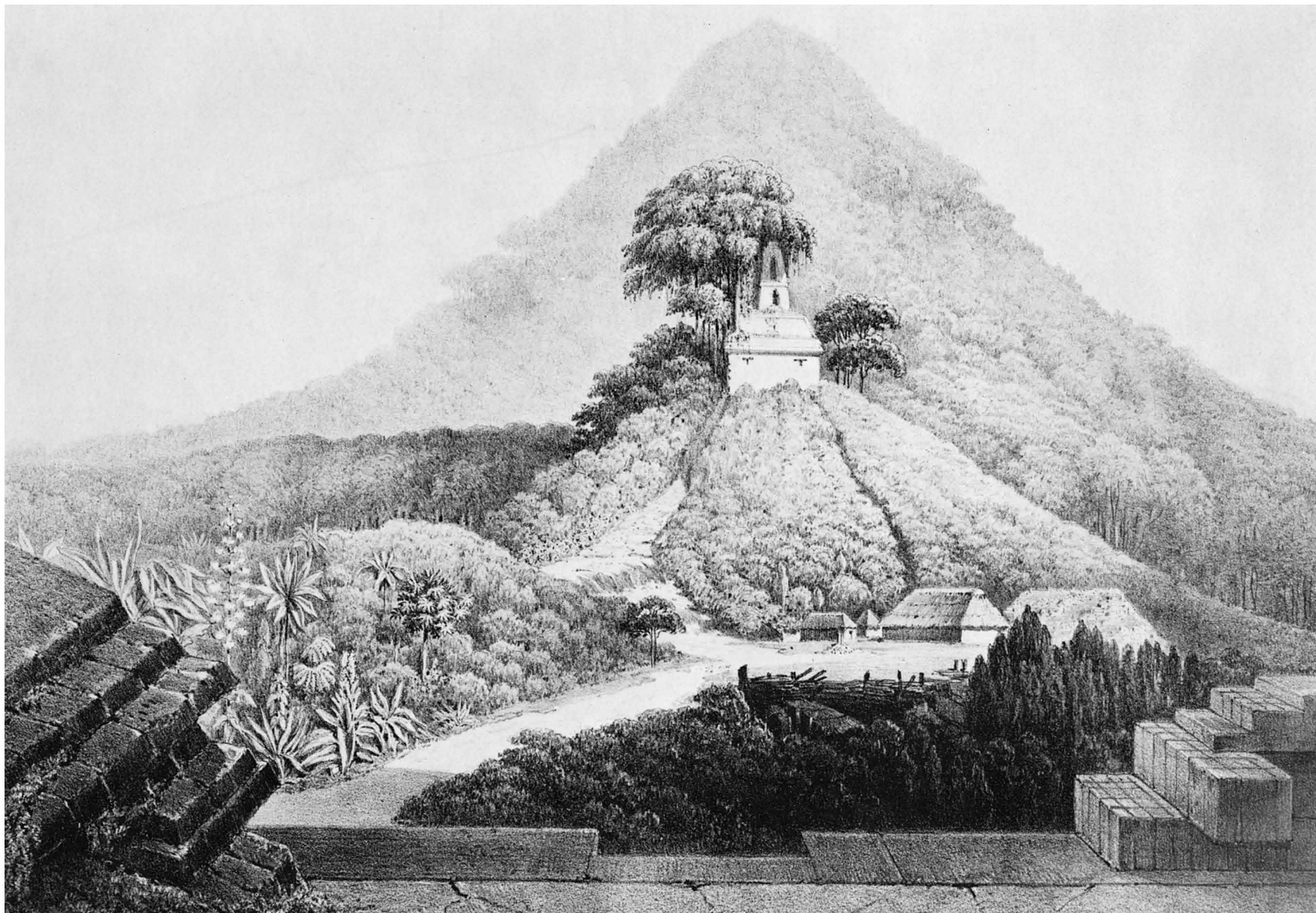
³³Tozzer, Alfred M. Negative no. 6372, taken in 1904. Collections of the Peabody Museum of Harvard.

³⁴Saville, Marshall H. *Bibliographic Notes on Palenque, Chiapas*, New York, 1928, p. 172.

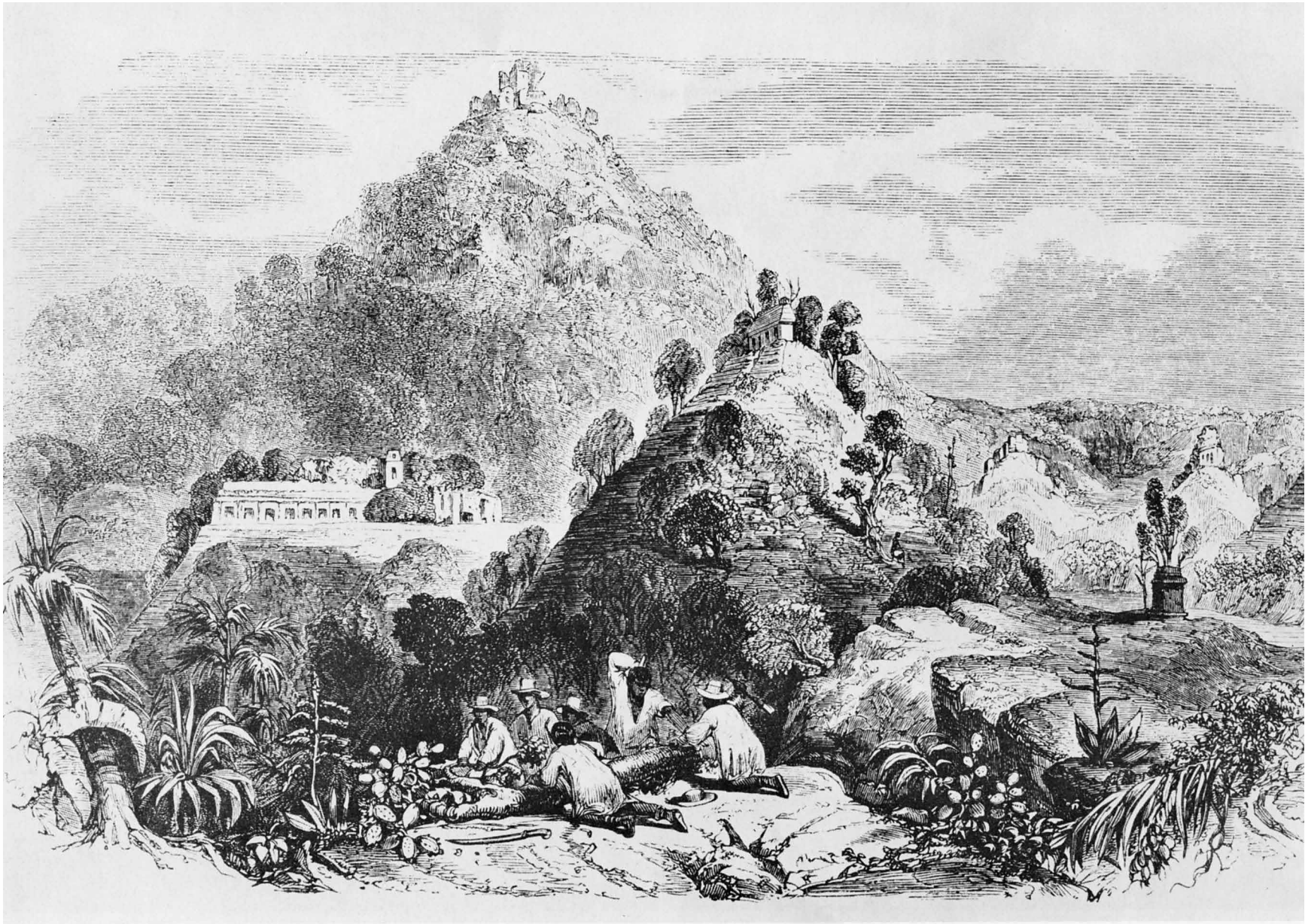
³⁵Saville, Marshall H. *Bibliographic Notes on Palenque, Chiapas*, New York, 1928, p. 173.

³⁶Blom, Frans. *Tribes and Temples*, New Orleans, 1926, vol. 1, p. 180.

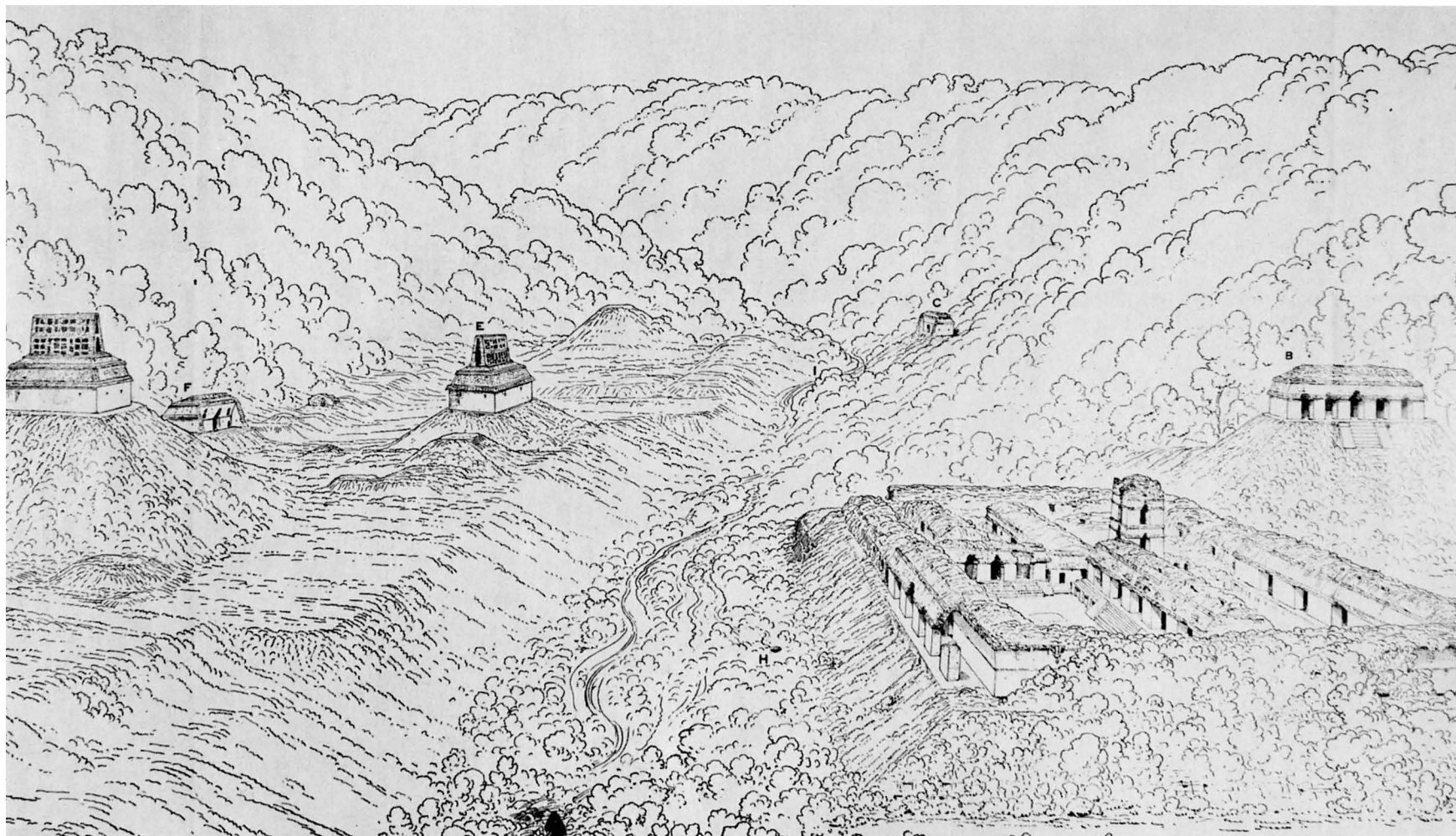
³⁷Ruz Lhuillier, Alberto. *Palenque, Official Guide*, I.N.A.H., Mexico, 1960, pp. 34-36.



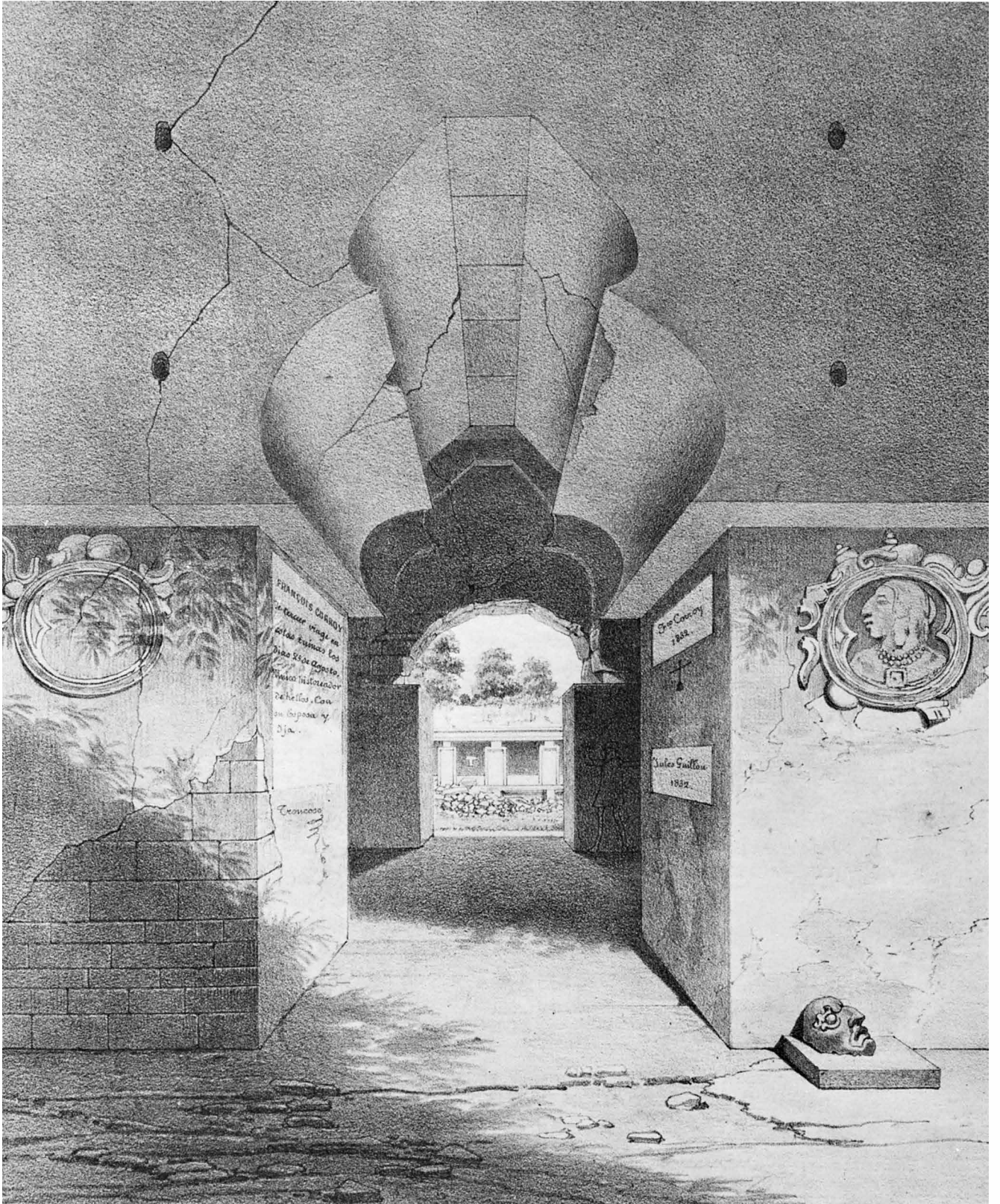
Jean Francois Maximilien comte de Waldeck. View of the Temple of the Cross of Palenque from the Palace, showing the compound he built and lived in. The terrain is undoubtedly borrowed from Catherwood's general view, which is equally inaccurate. A lithograph from sketches made in 1832-1833, from "Monuments Anciennes du Mexique", Paris, 1866, plate 20.



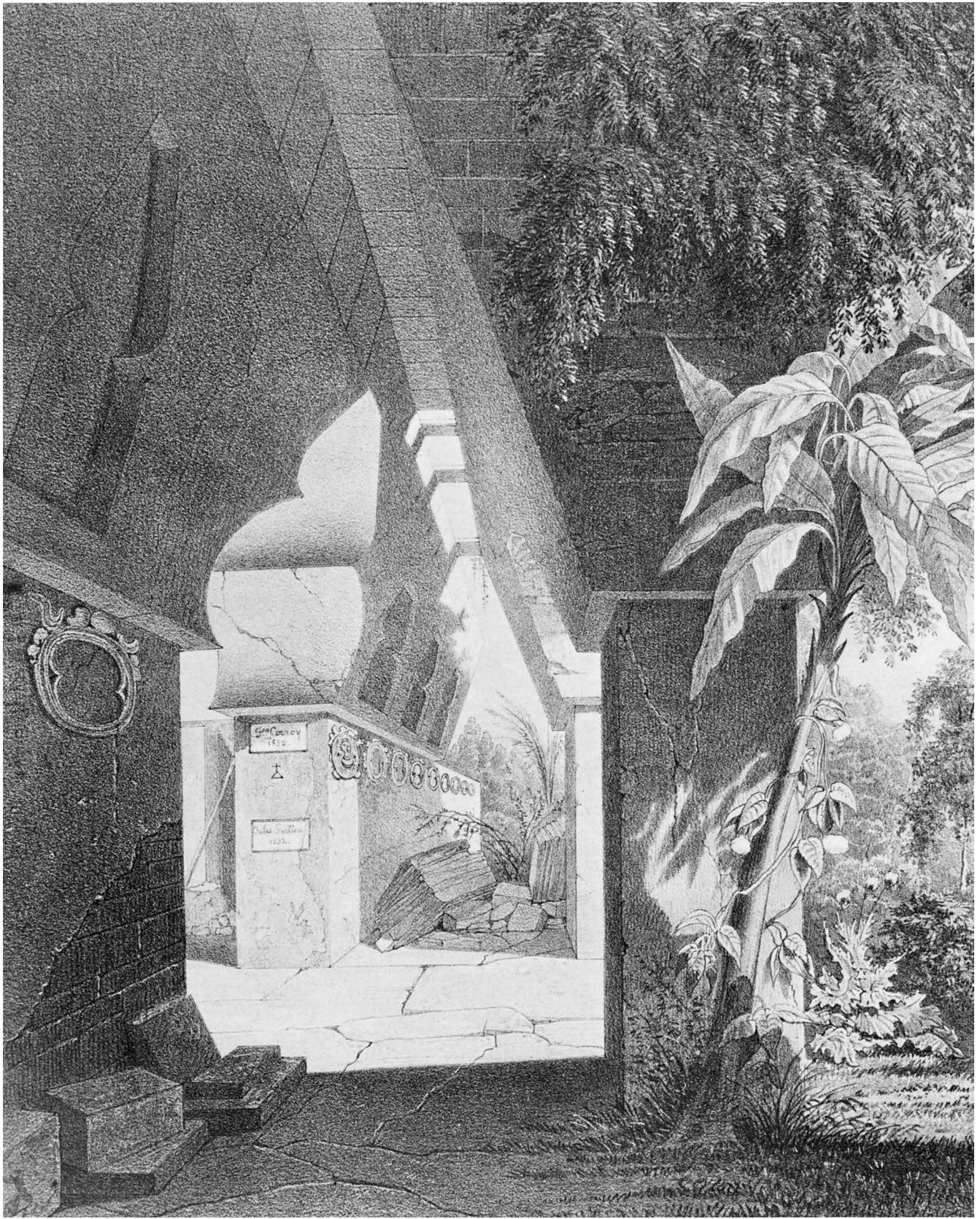
Frederick Catherwood. General view of Palenque. The topography and buildings show little relation to the actual site. Note the castle-like structure at the top of the conical hill, about where "el Mirador" should be. Full page illustration opposite page 336 of "Travels in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan", New York, 1841.



William H. Holmes. Panoramic view of the site of Palenque, sketched in 1895. This view still gives the most information about the central portion of the site. It appears as a folding plate opposite page 208 of "Archeological Studies Among the Ancient Cities of Mexico", 1897.



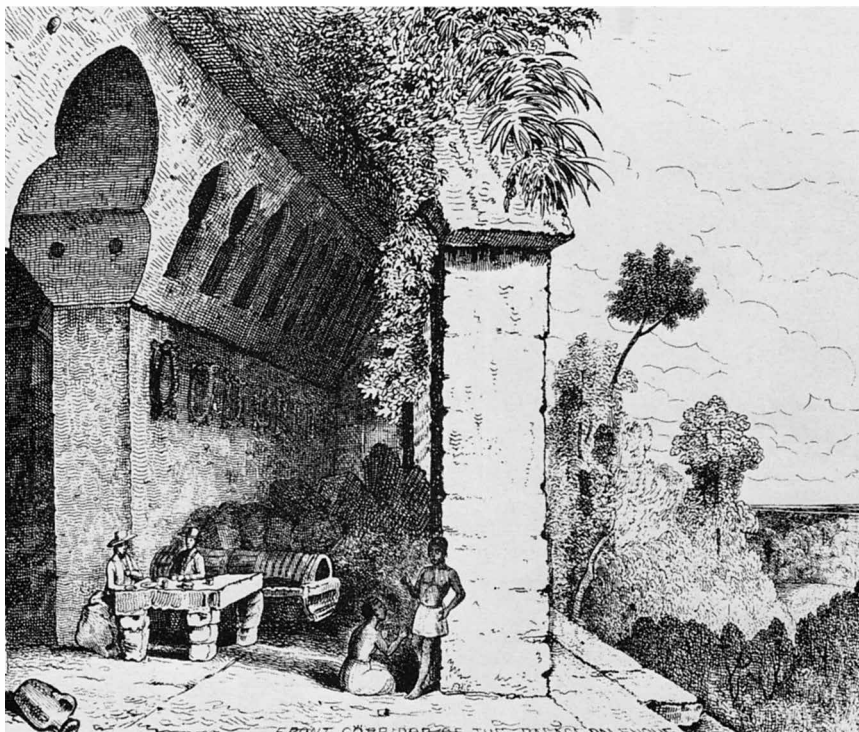
Waldeck. View of the eastern entrance of the Palace, looking towards the Courtyard of the Captives. Note the graffiti, the stucco head lying on the ground (possibly the one later taken by Charnay) and the stucco head still in place in its encadrement to the right of the entrance. A lithograph from sketches made in 1832-1833, from "Monuments Ancienne du Mexique", Paris 1866, plate 9.



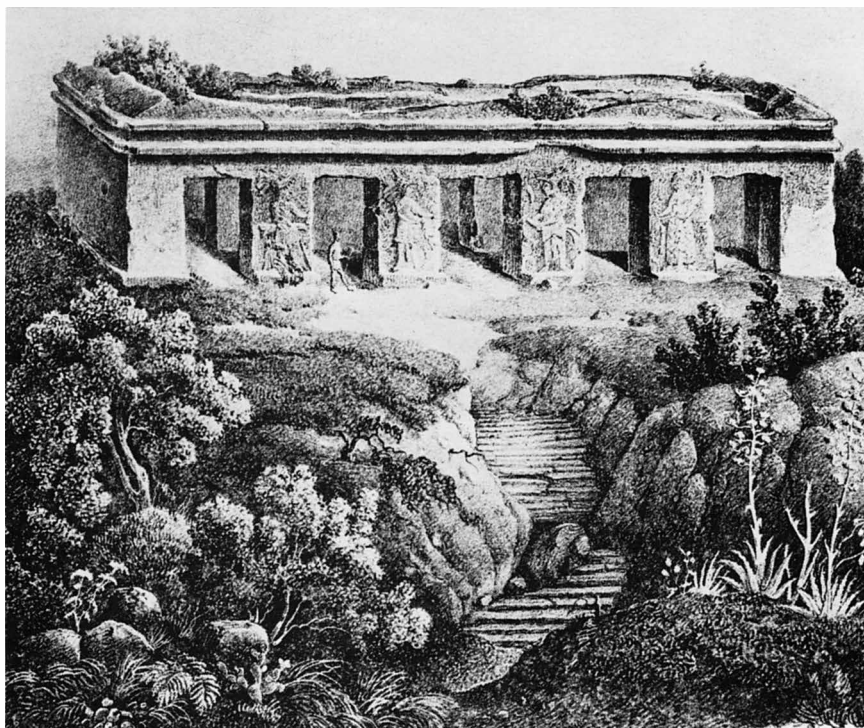
Waldeck. View north along the "Portrait Gallery", a lithograph from sketches made in 1832-1833, from "Monuments Ancienne du Mexique", Paris 1866, plate 9.



John Herbert Caddy. Sepia drawing of the north part of the "Portrait Gallery" made in January of 1840. Caddy's drawings were the most accurate and lyrical of the early depictions of Palenque. Notice that Caddy inserts curtain tie-holds and T-shaped wind ventilators where there were none, for additional descriptive information. From "Palenque Walker Caddy Expeditions to the Ancient Maya City", plate 14.



Frederick Catherwood. View of the north part of the "Portrait Gallery", as set up for living, drawn several months after Caddy's sepia, in May of 1840, and next to the Caddy it appears wooden; it is not one of Catherwood's best. From "Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan", New York, 1841, opposite page 313.



José Luciano Castañeda. Temple of the Inscriptions, depicted as a flat-roofed building on top of a rocky, grass-covered hill, with maguey plants and shrubs lending a desert-like aspect. The original drawing was made in 1808. From "Antiquités Mexicaines", Paris, 1834, plate 28.



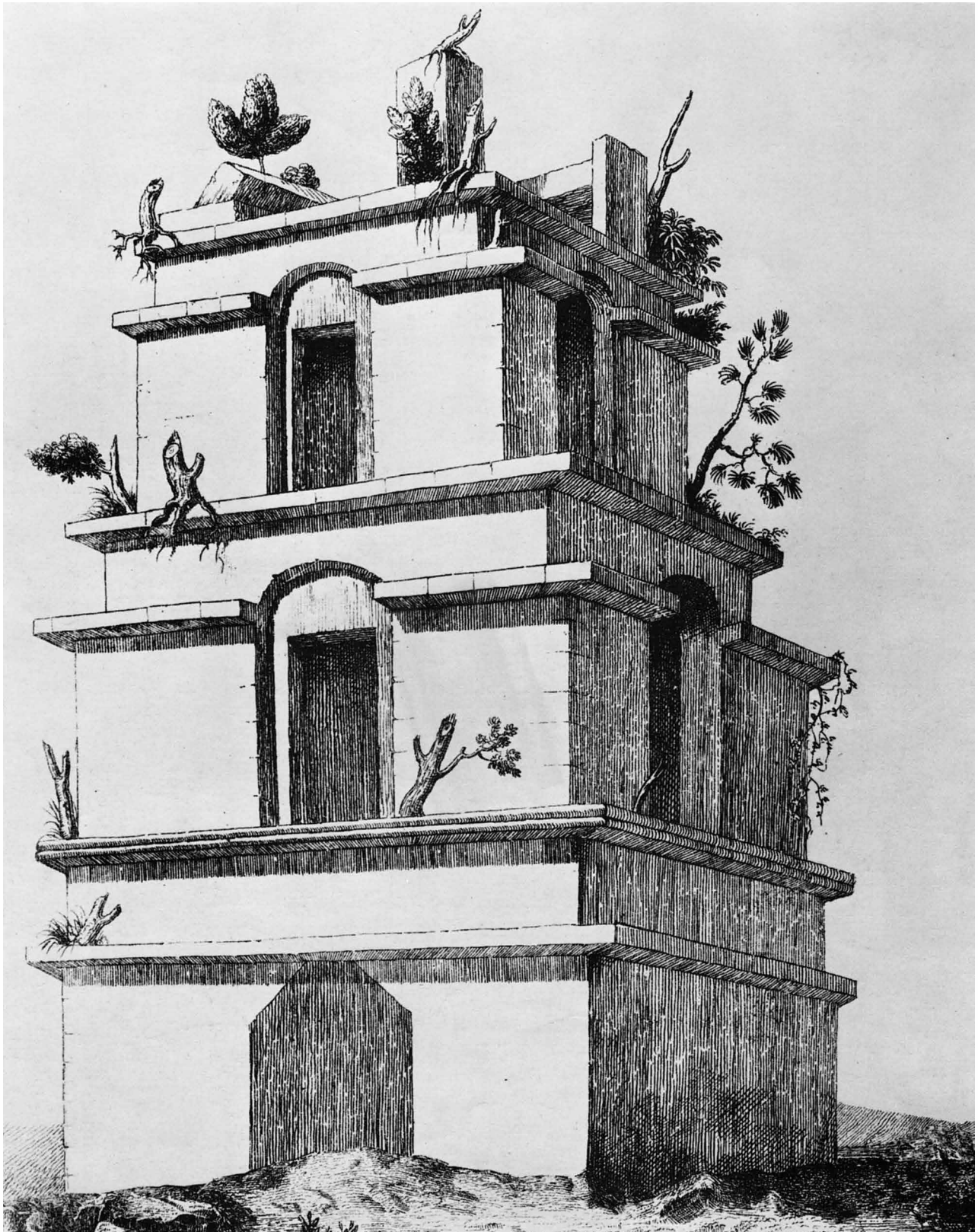
Teobert Maler. Photograph of the Temple of the Inscriptions taken circa 1899. Collections of the Peabody Museum at Harvard.



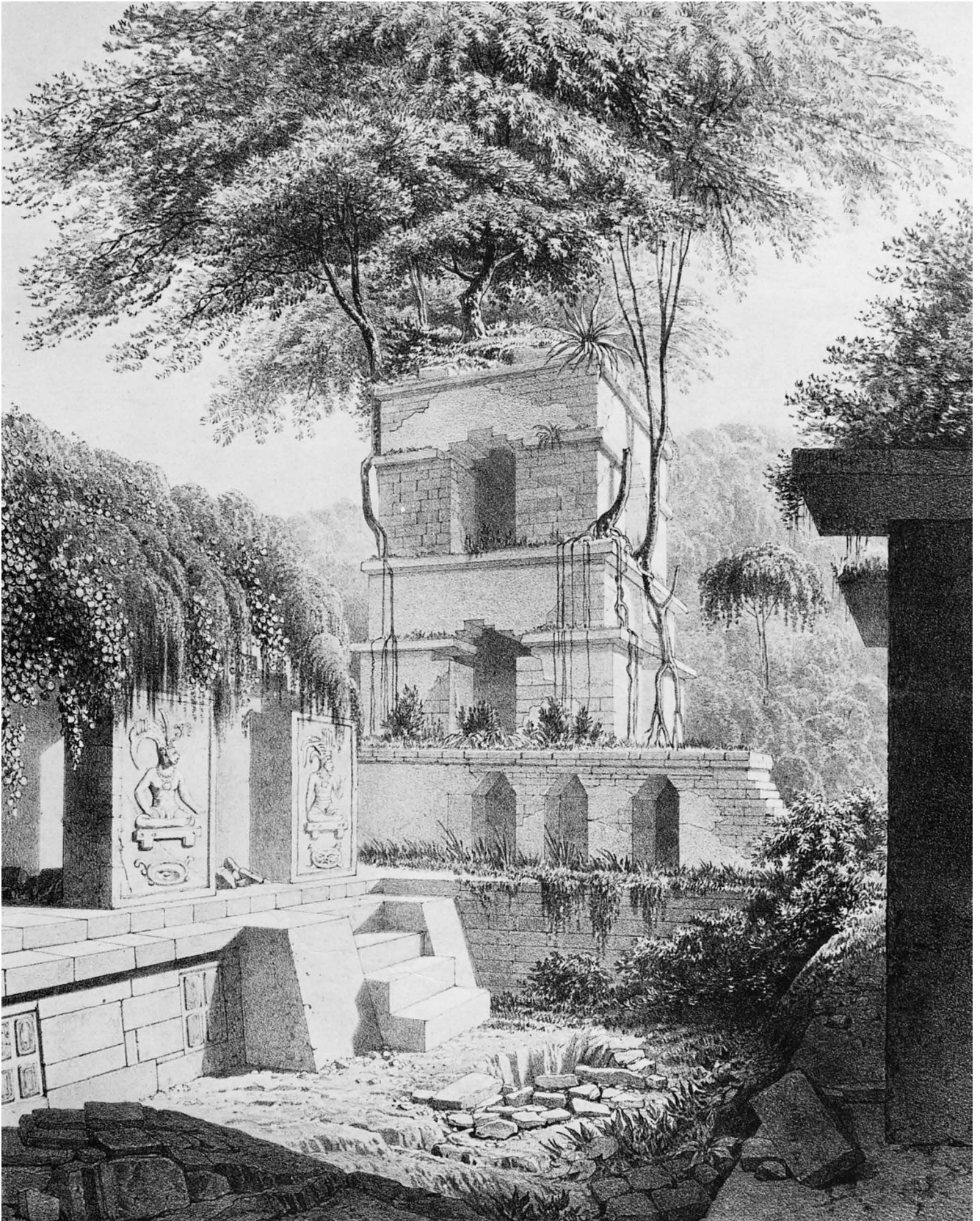
Teobert Maler. Photograph of the east façade of Building C of the Palace, probably taken in 1898. Collections of the Peabody Museum at Harvard.



Teobert Maler. The East Courtyard of the Palace, showing the east façade of Building C cleared. Photograph circa 1900. Collections of the Peabody Museum at Harvard.



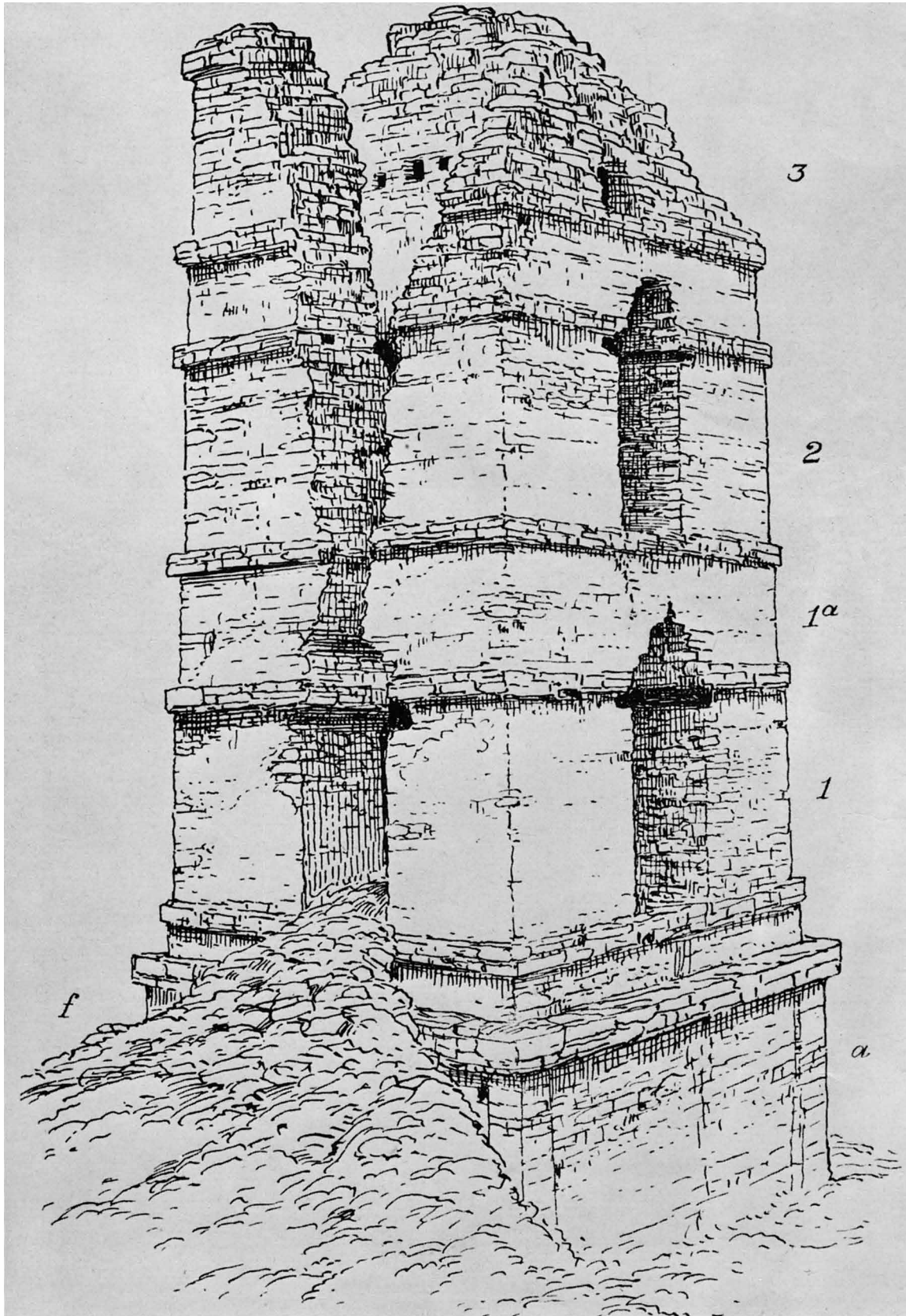
Antonio del Río. The earliest illustration of the Tower of the Palace, the drawing was made by del Río in 1786 and copied on stone by Waldeck in 1822. The rendering makes it look European and the collapsed lintels are misinterpreted as arches, but it is surprisingly faithful. From "Description of the Ruins of an Ancient City, Discovered Near Palenque", London 1822 (the plates are not numbered).



Waldeck. *View of the West Courtyard and Tower of the Palace.* From "Monuments Anciennes du Mexique", Paris, 1866, plate 18.



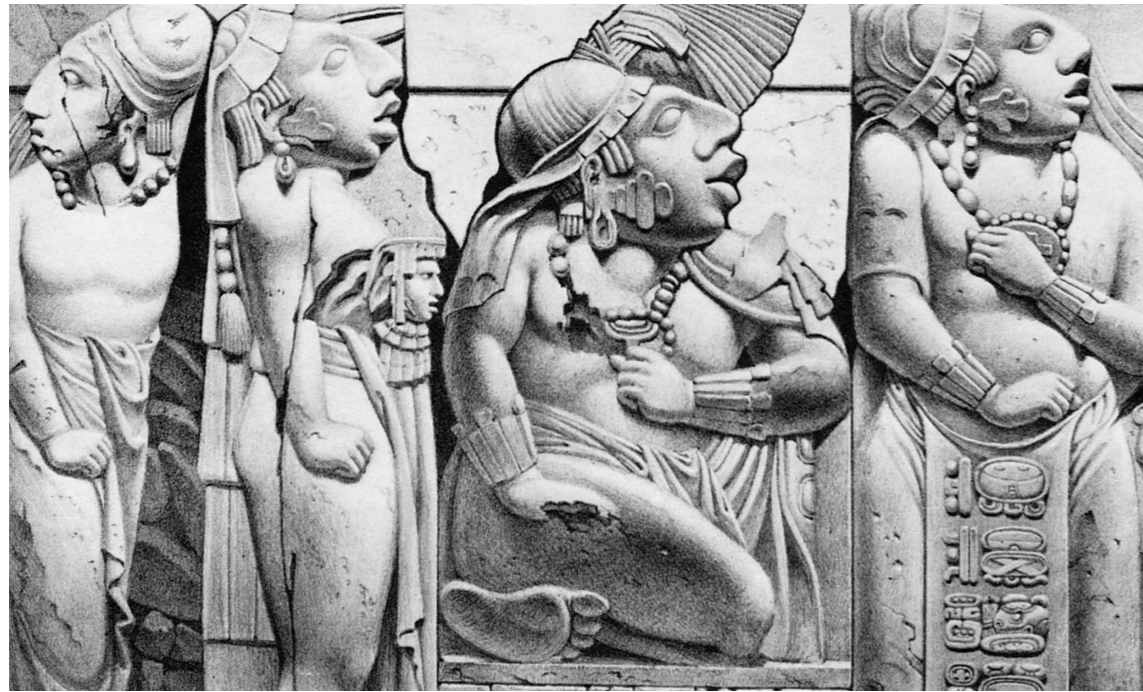
Désiré Charnay. View of the West Courtyard and Tower of the Palace. In the 1880's photographs were often developed directly on end grain wood blocks, which were then engraved by professional wood engravers. Thus a photograph could be reproduced with some accuracy. Notice, however, that Charnay's engraver makes the Tower look like a medieval keep; he suggests vaulted arches and intrudes the silhouette of the Temple of the Inscriptions near the upper right. From "The Ancient Cities of the New World", New York, 1887, page 241.



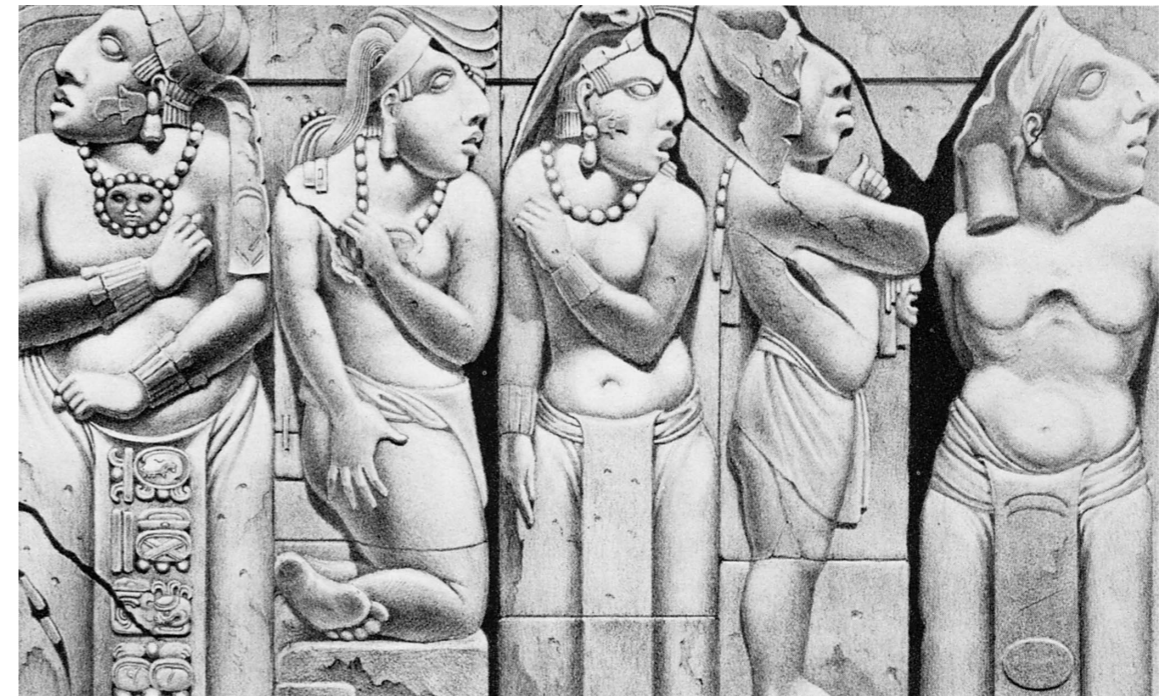
William H. Holmes. Lucid, schematic line rendering of the Tower of the Palace, as it would be if it were to be stripped of trees and foliage. From "The Ancient Cities of Mexico", Chicago, 1897, page 181.



Alfred P. Maudslay. Great wet plate photograph of the West Courtyard and the Tower of the Palace, taken in 1891. From "Biologia Centrali-Americana", Volume IV, plate 26.



Waldeck. Neo-classic renderings of the Captive Figures in the Courtyard of the Captives. The right-hand figure on the lower right side has been rendered as a woman wearing a loincloth with an oval emblem, instead of a kneeling male with a ridiculously large phallus. From "Monuments Anciennes du Mexique", Paris, 1866, plate 16.

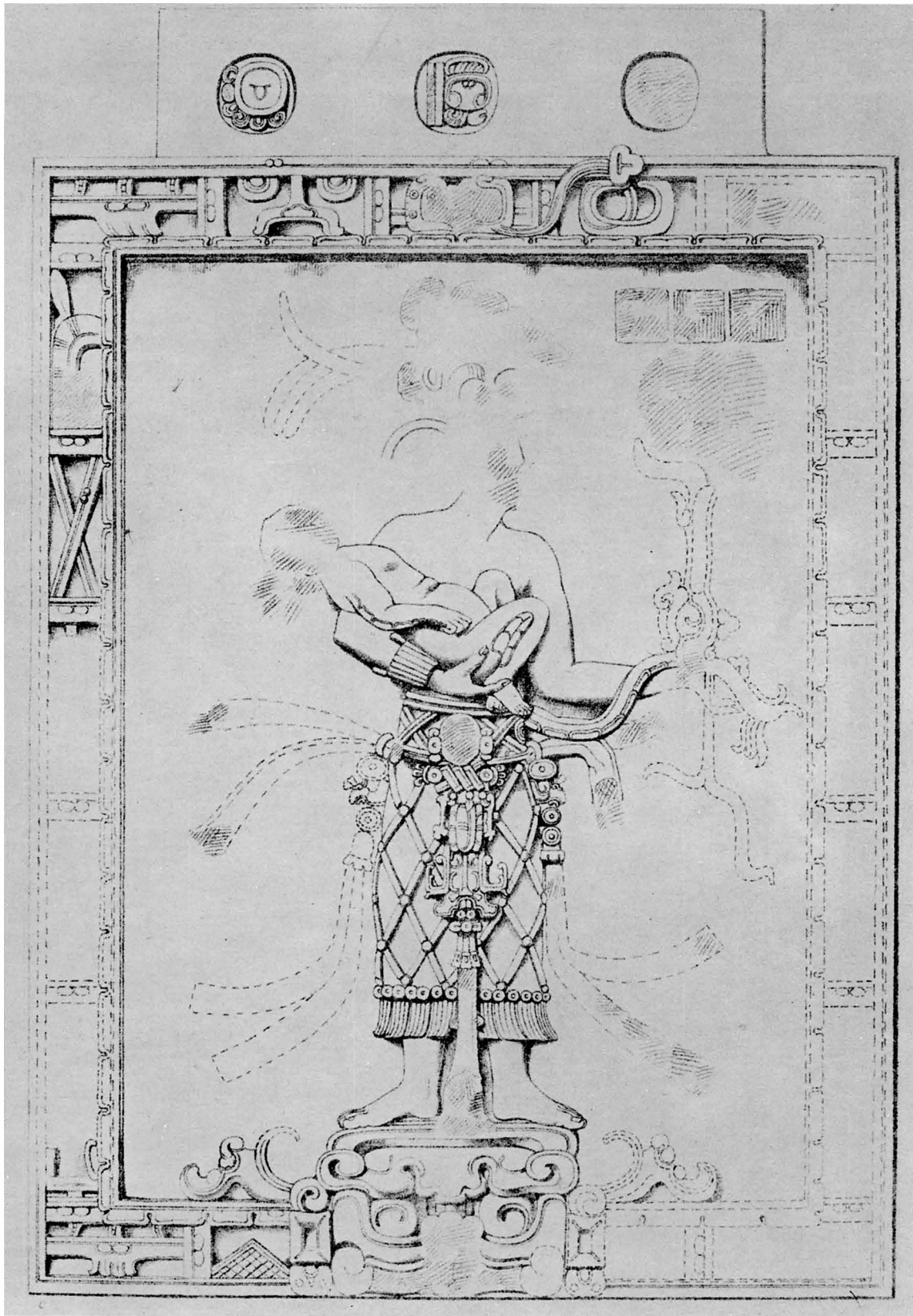


Teobert Maler. The same Captive Figures photographed about 1900. Collections of the Peabody Museum at Harvard.





José Luciano Castañeda. Drawing of Pier c of the Temple of the Inscriptions. First sketched in 1808, this is a copy made in Mexico City in 1820. From "Expediciones Acera de los Antiguos Monumentos de la Nueva España 1805-1808", Madrid, 1969, plate 116.



Miss Annie Hunter. Drawing from a photograph, supervised by Maudslay. The depiction is nearly faithful except that Miss Hunter couldn't resist putting in the hint of a left foot on the figure being carried—in spite of the fact that the left leg ends in a serpent. From "Biologia Centrali-Americana", Volume IV, plate 55.



Merle Greene Robertson. Photograph made in 1973 of Pier c of the Temple of the Inscriptions as a part of the comprehensive photographic record of the sculptures and inscriptions of Palenque.