

From this monument we went back over the trail to a pyramid about 25 meters high, which was facing south. There was no sign of a structure on its top, and if Bernal Diaz really was at this place, the idol house he slept in must have been a palm-roofed building possibly with adobe walls.

The next monument found by our guides we named Stela 2 (fig. 69). This was a large monolith, 3.20 meters high and 2.00 meters broad. Fortunately, it also lay on its back, showing us a standing human figure with a large head-dress and holding a ceremonial bar diagonally across its breast (figs. 70-71). It is a full face figure, carved on the somewhat rough surface of the stone, standing out boldly against a set of three smaller figures on either side. These are carved in low relief following the irregularities of the stone. They turn their knees towards the main figure, heads away, and also hold staffs in their hands (fig. 72).

There is no doubt that this figure is strongly influenced by Maya art, if it is not really Maya. The ruins of Comalcalco, the nearest Maya city previously reported, lies 100 kilometers to the east. The crudity of some of the La Venta figures must undoubtedly be ascribed to the hardness of the material in which the carving was done. All the monuments at La Venta are of igneous rock and are all of great size. Inquiring of the oil geologists who work for the Cia. Mex. de Petroleo El Aguila, we were told by one of these, Mr. N. F. Keller, that rock of this kind could not be quarried nearer than 100 kilometers up the river at a place called La Laja. At Paraje

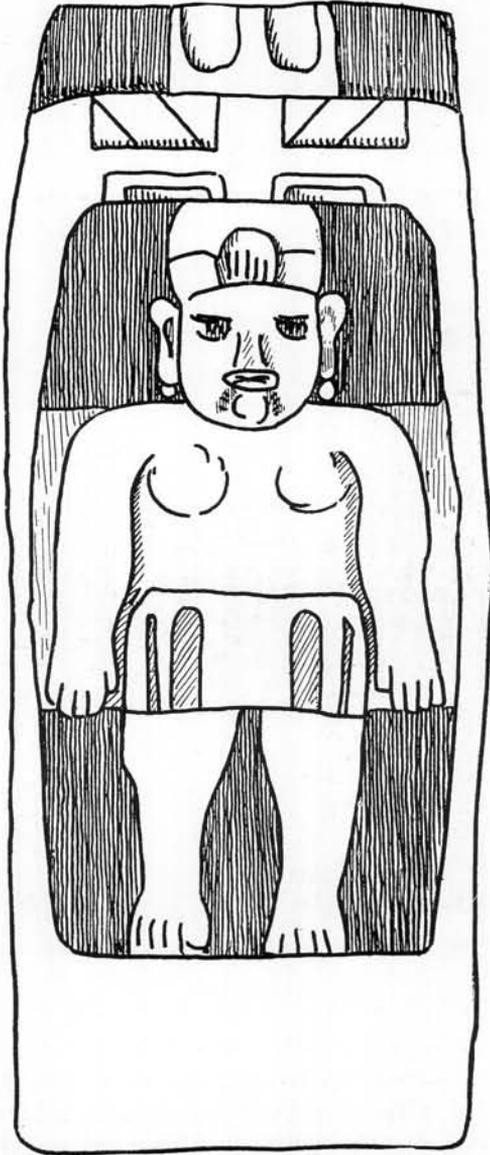


FIG. 67—La Venta, Tab. Stela No. 1.