

TWO NEW PUCARA STYLE STELA FRAGMENTS FROM YAPURA,
NEAR CAPACHICA, PUNO, PERU

Margaret A. Hoyt

During the summer of 1968, while involved in a site survey in the Department of Puno, I was told by Dr. Aurelio Carmona Cruz, who was at that time working with the Instituto Indigenista Peruano in Puno, about two large Pucara style carved stones which had been found the previous year on the Capachica peninsula. This peninsula extends southeast into Lake Titicaca from a point east of Juliaca, and the town nearest to where the stelae were discovered is on the southern side of the peninsula (see fig. 1).¹ The area that the town occupies is marked as Totollín on the Instituto Geográfico Militar map of the district, but seems to be called Yapura by its inhabitants; it is approximately 11 km. by road from the town of Capachica.

The stones are presently set up on a hill slope on the north side of the road, about 300 m. beyond the plaza of Yapura, which has a large, two-story whitewashed building on its north side. Men working on a farm building near the current location of the fragments said that the stones had been discovered in one of the adjacent fields by the owner of the land, while he was plowing, on August 13 (a local saint's day) of the preceding year.² The find consisted of two fragments of stelae, the larger of which (A) measures 190 cm. above ground, and the smaller (B), 76 cm. above ground (figs. 2, 5 and 8). The total maximum height measurements, provided by Karen and Sergio Chávez, who visited the site in August, 1973, and excavated to the bottom of the buried portions of the fragments, are 226 cm. for fragment A, and 93 cm. for fragment B. The material was given a site number, PPU7-18, on the assumption that the stones would have been buried somewhere near their original location, and that some habitation refuse would probably be found in the immediate area.

Both fragments are of the same gray laminar sandstone, and in this are similar to much of the Pucara stone sculpture from Incatunuhiri, Arapa, Taraco and a number of other sites near Lake Titicaca. The majority of known sculpture in the Pucara style seems to be of sandstone, generally in shades of gray, white or red.³ Measurements of both fragments follow:

	<u>Fragment A</u>	<u>Fragment B</u>
Height	226 cm.	93 cm.
Width of decorated portion	81 cm.	82 cm.
Thickness	27-29 cm.	28 cm.
Height of base portion	58 cm.	-----
Width of base portion	94 cm.	-----
Thickness of base portion	41 cm.	-----
Design panel height	75 cm.	75 cm.
Design panel width	69 cm.	69 cm.

On both fragments the motifs are carved in low relief on both faces of the stones, and consist of curvilinear and geometric designs and animal motifs, which include frogs, double-headed serpents and creatures with trapezoidal heads (figs. 3, 4, 6, 7). The upper design panels on both faces of fragment A are almost identical, with a slight difference in the rendering of the tails of the trapezoidal-headed creatures at the sides of the panels. The panels on fragment B show the same complex of motifs, except that they, or at least the more intact south face of fragment B, the only one on which much detail survives, have a frog in the center instead of the double-headed serpent that appears on fragment A. All four panels have froglike creatures with trapezoidal heads facing outward at the top and bottom of each block, other trapezoidal-headed creatures facing inward from the sides, small excised trapezoidal filler elements within the bodies of these creatures, and a motif combining curved lines with a lightninglike jagged line in each corner of the panels. This latter motif is very similar to what Kidder referred to as the "jagged-S" on the Arapa stela,⁴ to a motif on the "Thunderbolt stone" from Tiahuanaco,⁵ and to the motif on both faces of the large stela from Pucara.⁶ The eyes of the outward-facing trapezoidal-headed animals are indicated by a U-shaped incised line or by an incised line forming a square, with a central dot. The eyes of the inward-facing creatures and those of the central frogs and double-headed serpents are marked by small excised circles; the spots of the frog in the center of the panel on the south face of fragment B are indicated by a series of such circles. The mouths of all of the animals and the toes of the trapezoidal-headed creatures are indicated by straight incised lines.

Similar animals with trapezoidal heads also occur on the Arapa stela and the "Thunderbolt stone," as do frogs and small excised triangular filler elements placed similarly to the trapezoidal fillers on the Yapura stones. Trapezoidal-headed animals have been variously described by different authors as tadpoles⁷ or catfish,⁸ and may well represent either of those animals, or possibly frogs, as the details of their depiction vary considerably. The large white sandstone stela at Pucara and another stela from near Pucara, reported by Valcárcel, are themselves in the form of such a creature.⁹

The complex of designs on all four panels is bilaterally symmetrical and, except for the central frog and serpent elements, continuous. In their combination of a large number of motifs and their bilateral symmetry, the panels resemble the stelae from Hatuncolla, Arapa, Pucara and the "Thunderbolt stone."¹⁰ The continuous-line nature of the designs is most similar to certain panels of the Arapa stela¹¹ and the "Thunderbolt stone."¹²

The lower design panels on the two faces of fragment A are not identical, although there are some similarities between them as well as to the panels already discussed (figs. 4, 6). All contain the froglike, trapezoidal-headed creatures, although those on the lower portion of fragment A are in a somewhat different form from that of the other panels. These lower panels also contain a number of small excised trapezoidal filler elements on both faces, as well as some square fillers. The south

face (fig. 4) exhibits a different motif, the ring shape, which also appears on the stelae from Arapa and Pucara, the "Thunderbolt stone," and many other, less complex sculptures in the Pucara style, notably some from Incatunhuiri, Taraco, Asiruni, Caminaca and Kala Uyu.¹³

Although the first impression of the designs visible above ground on these lower panels was that they might represent rayed head-dresses above anthropomorphic faces, as on the Kala Uyu stela fragment illustrated by Valcárcel,¹⁴ excavation by myself and later by Karen and Sergio Chávez showed that this was not the case. The complete panels contain a bilaterally symmetrical geometric design with no face included in it except those of the froglike trapezoidal-headed creatures. Except for the elements previously mentioned, the designs on these two panels do not much resemble any other known Pucara style sculpture.

As the motifs on both fragments are so similar, it is possible that the two stones may originally have been part of a single stela or, because of their differences, may be considered as fragments of two separate stelae. Of the currently known Pucara style stelae decorated with designs in a number of rectangular panels, two different arrangements occur. The first type, exemplified by one of the stelae from Hatuncolla, has the same design panels in the same order on both faces of the stone, and the upper and lower panels are identical, separated by a differing central panel; on this stela the narrow sides of the stone were also decorated, and the same arrangement occurs: both faces of the stone show the same designs and each has identical upper and lower panels, with a central panel containing other motifs.¹⁵ The second sort, typified by Sergio Chávez' reconstruction of the Arapa-Thunderbolt stela, has on each face of the stela a reversed version of the other, so that the uppermost panel on one side is identical to the lowermost on the other, and vice versa.¹⁶ The fragments from Yapura exhibit, as far as can be deciphered, five or six different design panels: the upper panels on fragment A, which are similar enough to be considered identical; the lower panel on the north side of fragment A; the lower panel on the south side of fragment A; the upper panels on fragment B; and the lower panels on fragment B, which may differ from each other, although that portion of the stone is so weathered as to make deciphering of its designs almost impossible.

It does not seem probable that the Yapura fragments formed a single stela of the second type, as they have identical panels in the same position on opposite faces of both fragments, unlike the reversed arrangement on the "Thunderbolt stone." Because of the differing lower panels on fragment A, it also seems unlikely that the pieces could have come from a single stela of the first type, which has the same panels in the same position on both faces. It is of course possible that the fragments were part of a stela of some third type, of which no examples have as yet been uncovered, on which some panels are identical to those in the same position on the opposite face, some are different from their opposites, and where neither the reversed symmetry of the Arapa-Thunderbolt stela nor the identical faces of the Hatuncolla stela was the stone-worker's model. According to observations by Karen and Sergio Chávez,

none of the broken design panels, can be matched with each other. If these pieces were once part of a single stela, it is obvious that a portion is missing; if they are parts of two stelae with similar motifs, even more of them has yet to be found. Until more material in this sub-style appears, it would seem somewhat premature to declare that the two fragments were once definitely part of the same monument.

Although one might expect to find Pucara ceramics somewhere near two Pucara style fragments of such size and complexity of design, a thorough surface survey of the plowed field adjacent to the stones and their former place of interment produced only one sherd which might be construed as Pucara, and that only because of the red slip on its surface. All other sherds found in the immediate area were modern, and a site survey of the Capachica peninsula that summer produced no other sherds remotely resembling Pucara ceramics. The only other evidence of ancient human activity found near the fragments was two chunks of a fine-grained dark stone, probably basalt, which had been roughly chipped around the edges. Worked stone of a type and technique similar to these has been found at a number of other sites around the Lake Titicaca Basin; some of these sites do produce Pucara style sherds, but they also generally contain material from most of the other known cultures in the area. Since no other Pucara sculpture, architecture or ceramics have yet been found on the Capachica peninsula, it seems probable that no very large Pucara settlement was present there. How and when the fragments came to be where they were found in 1967 therefore presents a problem. It has been suggested that other large pieces of Pucara style statuary may have been transported over considerable distances, and it is at least possible that the Yapura fragments were also moved to their present location from elsewhere.¹⁷

The Yapura fragments, as described above, share a number of motifs and design features with other, previously illustrated stelae in the Pucara style. These are: the depiction of frogs or toads; serpents; ring shapes; small trapezoidal, triangular and square excised filler elements; the "jagged-S"; creatures with trapezoidal heads; and the rendering of these motifs in a bilaterally symmetrical arrangement within an outlined square or rectangular design panel. The treatment of these motifs as a complex, connected series around the panel, and the use of frogs or serpents as motifs in the center of such a continuous design are also similar to other Pucara style stelae. The fact that the Yapura fragments are of sandstone, rectangular in cross section, and carved with low relief designs on their two broader faces also indicates a close stylistic relationship to the stelae from Arapa, Pucara and Hatuncolla, and to the "Thunderbolt stone" from Tiahuanaco. Of these, the greatest similarities are to the Arapa and Tiahuanaco pieces, both in complexity of design and in shared motifs.¹⁸ The Pucara stela is obviously stylistically similar also, but its treatment of animal heads differs considerably, and its decoration is generally less complicated and is not entirely within outlined rectangular panels, as is that of the Yapura, Arapa and Tiahuanaco specimens.¹⁹ The Hatuncolla stelae appear to be stylistically less closely related to the aforementioned pieces, as one of them is decorated on all four faces, their designs are less complex, and the

rendering of animal forms on them differs from that on the other stelae. Their chief points of similarity to the other stelae from Arapa, Tiahuanaco, Pucara and Yapura are the presence of frogs and serpents and the fact that they are of sandstone and come from within the Titicaca Basin.

Because of the numerous features common to the Yapura fragments and to these other complex stelae, and also to some other Pucara pieces with less complicated decoration, it would seem that the pieces from Yapura, Arapa, Tiahuanaco, Pucara and possibly Hatuncolla represent a substyle of the Pucara tradition of stone sculpture. To date, all of the known pieces in this substyle have been found in the Titicaca area, but its full geographical spread will probably not be known for some time, as new specimens in the Pucara style continue to be found as far north as Chumbivilcas,²¹ and it is quite possible that other pieces similar to the stelae may also be found outside of the lake basin. Until the sample of such material is more extensive, we can only indicate similarities and differences in the repertoire of motifs used in the substyle; later it may be possible to create a seriation of these pieces and to relate it to the other, more common pieces in the Pucara style.

Acknowledgements

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NOTES

¹Kidder (1943, p. 4) includes a map of the Lake Titicaca Basin, showing most of the other sites mentioned in this paper.

²Sergio Chávez reports being told by people owning and living on the property where the fragments were found that the pieces were dug up, by them and others, during adobe making in the yard (canchón) of the house nearest the current location of the fragments, that is, uphill and to the south of them, and that this happened on the day of the Virgin of Copacabana (whose festival is August 1-7), so that the finding was regarded as a miracle by the local people.

³Kidder, 1943, pp. 47-48.

⁴Kidder, 1943, pp. 33-34.

⁵Posnansky, 1945, fig. 153.

⁶Mason, 1957, pl. 18B; Valcárcel, 1935, fig. 10.

⁷Kidder, 1943, p. 33.

⁸Valcárcel, 1935, p. 27.

⁹Valcárcel, 1935, figs. 10, 12.

¹⁰Squier, 1877, pp. 385-386 (Hatuncolla); Kidder, 1943, pl. VII, 10-11 (Hatuncolla), pl. VI, 1-2 (Arapa); Mason, 1957, pl. 18B (Pucara); Valcárcel, 1935, fig. 10 (Pucara); Posnansky, 1945, figs. 152, 153 (Tiahuanaco).

¹¹Kidder, 1943, pl. VI, 2, panel A; Chávez, 1976, fig. 2.

¹²Posnansky, 1945, fig. 152; Chávez, 1976, fig. 3.

¹³Kidder, 1943, pl. VI, 1-2 (Arapa); Mason, 1957, pl. 18B and Valcárcel, 1935, fig. 10 (Pucara); Posnansky, 1945, fig. 152 (Thunderbolt stone); Kidder, 1943, pl. II, 4-5, 8-10 (Incatunhuiiri), pl. IV, 2 (Taraco), pl. VII, 1 (Asiruni); Chávez and Chávez, 1970, pp. 24, 28-30, 36 (Caminaca); Valcárcel, 1935, figs. 7, 9 (Kala Uyu).

¹⁴Valcárcel, 1935, fig. 9.

¹⁵Kidder, 1943, pl. VII, 10; Squier, 1877, p. 385.

¹⁶Chávez, 1976, fig. 1.

¹⁷Chávez, 1976, pp. 10-13; Posnansky, 1945, p. 229.

¹⁸Chávez, 1976, fig. 1; Kidder, 1943, pl. VI, 1-2; Posnansky, 1945, figs. 152, 153.

¹⁹Valcárcel, 1935, fig. 10; Mason, 1957, pl. 18B.

²⁰Kidder, 1943, pl. VII, 10-11; Squier, 1877, pp. 385-386; Posnansky, 1945, fig. 154a (p. 230). Squier's illustration on p. 386 shows the two decorated faces of one of the stelae from Hatuncolla. Note that Posnansky's fig. 154b is said to be "a stela from Hatuncolla," but is in fact the other face of the Arapa stela (compare with Kidder, 1943, pl. VI, 2).

²¹Núñez del Prado Béjar, 1972; Chávez, ms.

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KEY TO ILLUSTRATIONS

Plates XIII and XV

Figs. 3, 4, 6, and 7 were drawn by Catherine T. Brandel. They are based on the photographs in figs. 2 and 5, the original slides from which the photographs in fig. 8 were made, and slides of the rubbings made by Karen and Sergio Chávez which they kindly provided.

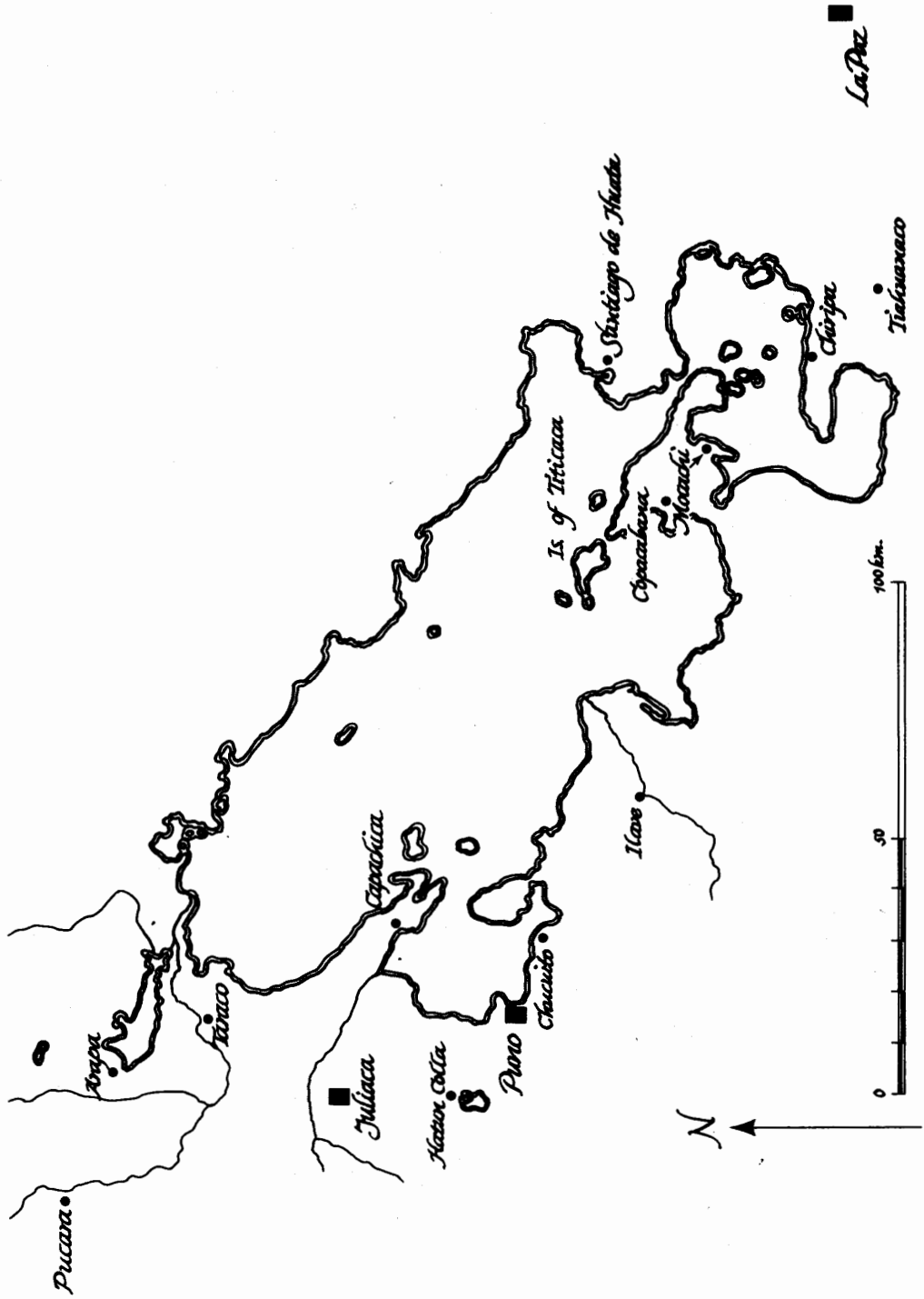


Plate XI. Fig. 1, map of Lake Titicaca region with major sites indicated.



Plate XII. Fig. 2, south faces of Yapura fragments B and A. Photograph courtesy of K. and S. Chávez.

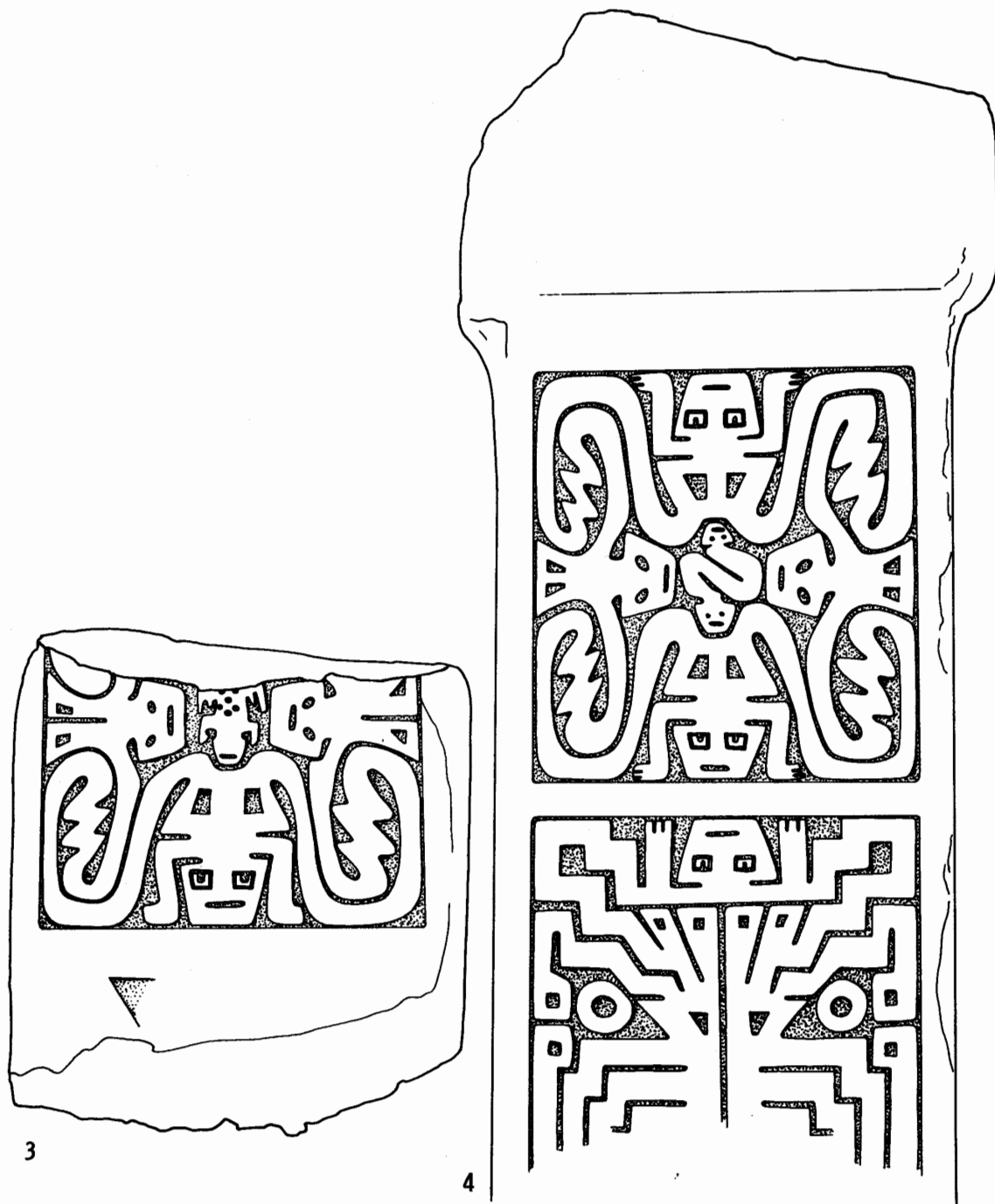


Plate XIII. Fig. 3, south face of fragment B; fig. 4, south face of fragment A. See Key to Illustrations.



Plate XIV. Fig. 5, north faces of Yapura fragments A and B. Photograph courtesy of K. and S. Chávez.

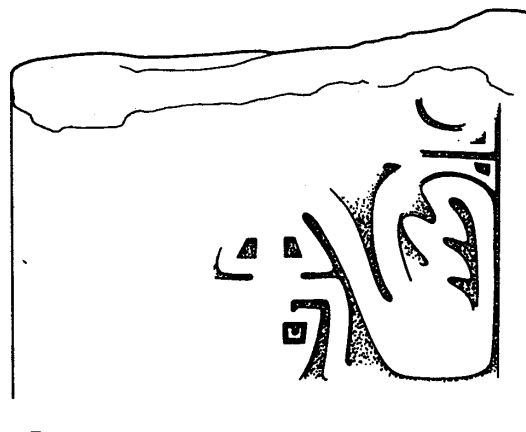
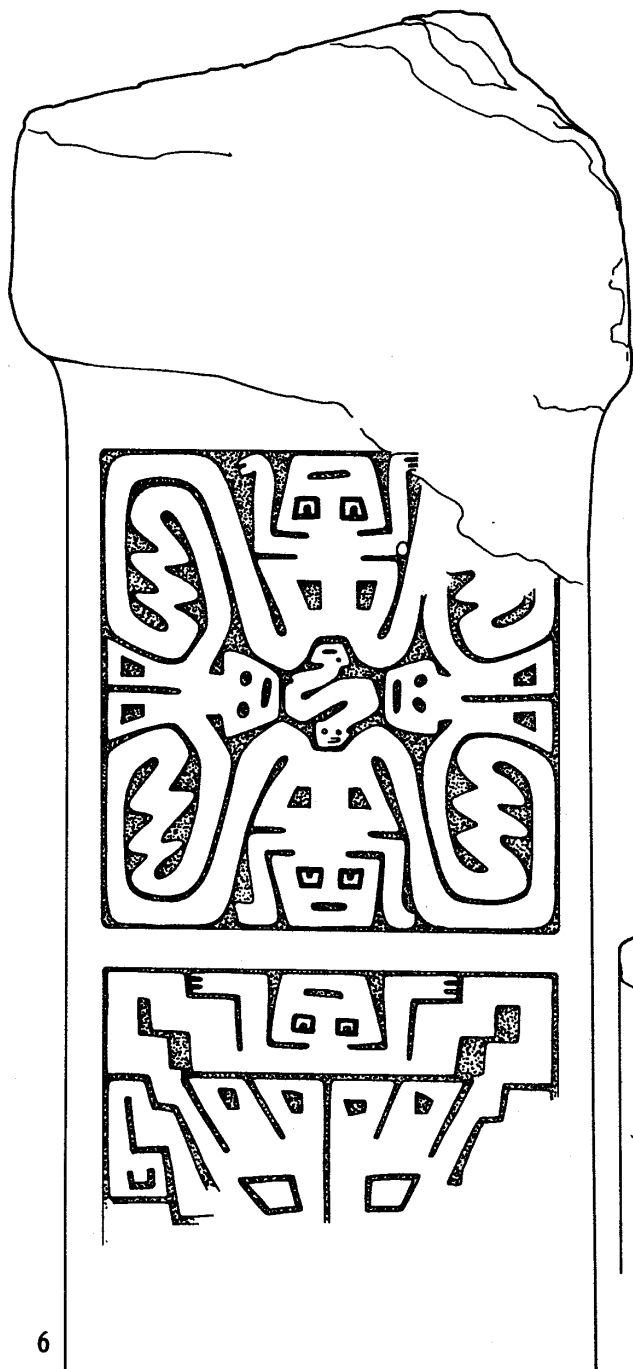


Plate XV. Fig. 6, north face of fragment A; fig. 7, north face of fragment B. See Key to Illustrations.

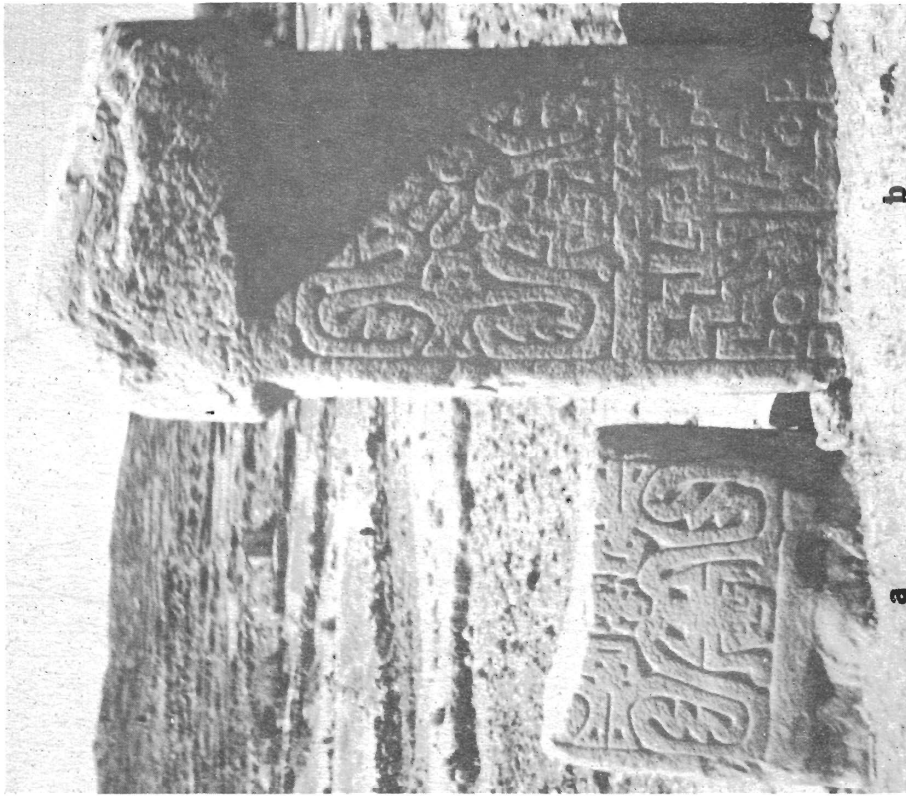


Plate XVI. Fig. 8, north and south faces of the Yapura fragments taken at a different time of day than figs. 2 and 5; fig. 8a, south face of fragment B; fig. 8b, south face of fragment A; fig. 8c, north face of fragment A; fig. 8d, north face of fragment B. See Key to Illustrations.