

# “TO INFLICT THE WOUNDS OF DEATH” MESOAMERICAN SWORDS CIMETERS AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

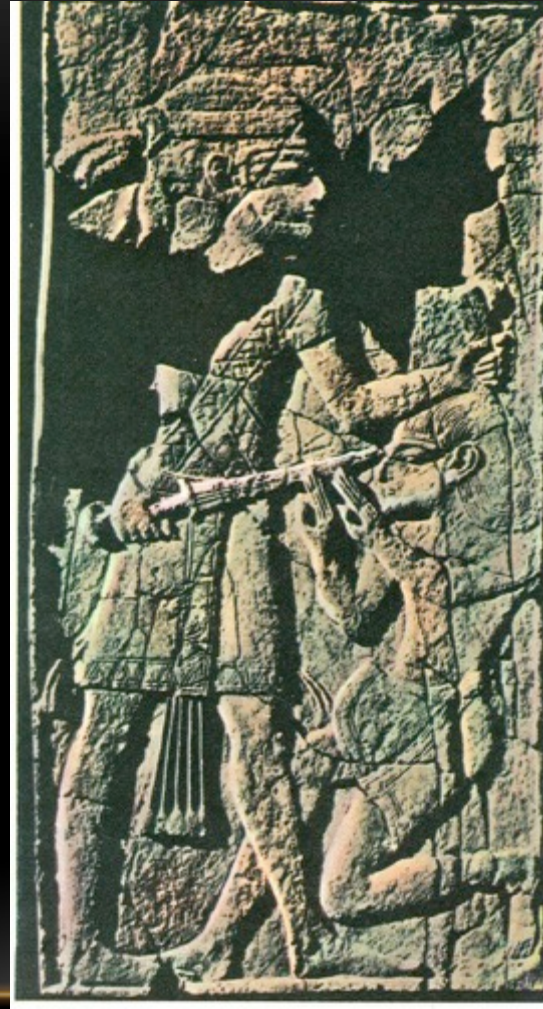


- Steel Swords and the Book of Mormon
  - Representative Examples of Mesoamerican Weapons
  - Swords and Cimeters in Book of Mormon Times
-

# ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SWORDS (FOR STABBING OR THRUSTING)



# ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SWORDS (FOR STABBING OR THRUSTING)





# ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SWORDS (FOR STRIKING OR SLASHING)



E.D. Howe (1834)

“This is the earliest  
account of steel to be  
found in  
history” (*Mormonism  
Unveiled*, 25-26)



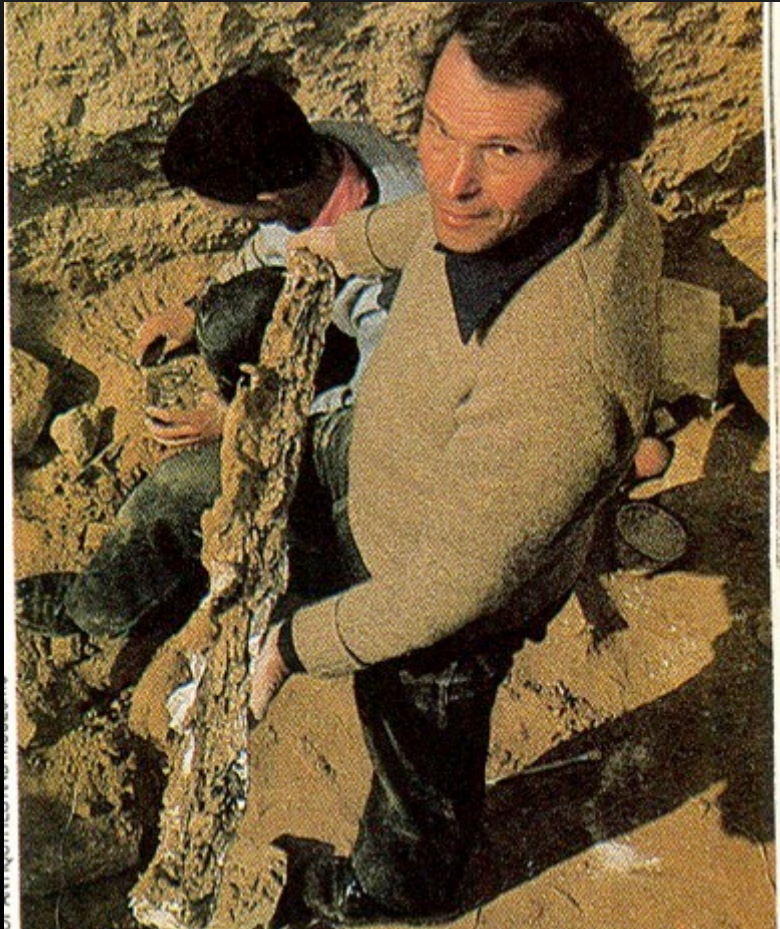
## Clark Braden (1884)

“Laban’s sword was steel, when it is a notorious fact that the Israelites knew nothing of steel for hundreds of years afterwards. Who but as ignorant s person as Rigdon would have perpetrated all these blunders?” (*Debate*, 109).





# ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SWORDS STEEL SWORD (VERED JERICO )



# STEEL SWORD (VERED JERICHO)

This rare and exceptionally long sword, which was discovered on the floor of a building next to the foundation of a man, dates to the end of the First Temple period. The sword is 1.05 m. long (1) and has a double-edged blade, with a prominent central ridge running along its entire length.

The hilt was originally inlaid with a material that has not survived, most probably wood. Only the nails that once secured the inlays to the hilt can still be seen. The sword's sheath was also made of wood, and all that remains of it is its bronze tip. Owing to the length and weight of the sword, it was probably necessary to hold it with two hands. The sword is made of iron hardened into steel, attesting to substantial metallurgical know-how. Over the years, it has become cracked, due to corrosion.



In 1978, a sword (Vered Jericho) was discovered on the floor of a building next to the foundation of a man, dated to the end of the First Temple period. The sword is 1.05 m. long (1) and has a double-edged blade, with a prominent central ridge running along its entire length.

The sword was found on the floor of the building, which has been dated to the end of the First Temple period. It is possible that the building was destroyed by the Babylonians, who captured Jerusalem in 586 BCE. The sword is made of iron hardened into steel, attesting to substantial metallurgical know-how. Over the years, it has become cracked, due to corrosion.

It is possible that the sword was used by a warrior, who fought in the battles of the First Temple period. The sword is a rare find, and its discovery provides valuable information about the military equipment of the time.



“This rare and exceptionally long sword, which was discovered on the floor of a building next to the skeleton of a man, dates to the end of the First Temple period. The sword is 1.05 m. long (!) and has a double edged blade, with a prominent central ridge running along its entire length. The hilt was originally inlaid with a material that has not survived, most probably wood. Only the nails that once secured the inlays to the hilt can still be seen. . . . Owing to the length and weight of the sword, it was probably necessary to hold it with two hands. *The sword is made of iron hardened into steel*, attesting to substantial metallurgical know-how. Over the years, it has become cracked, due to corrosion.”

# JAREDITE SWORDS



# KING LIMHI'S SEARCH PARTY

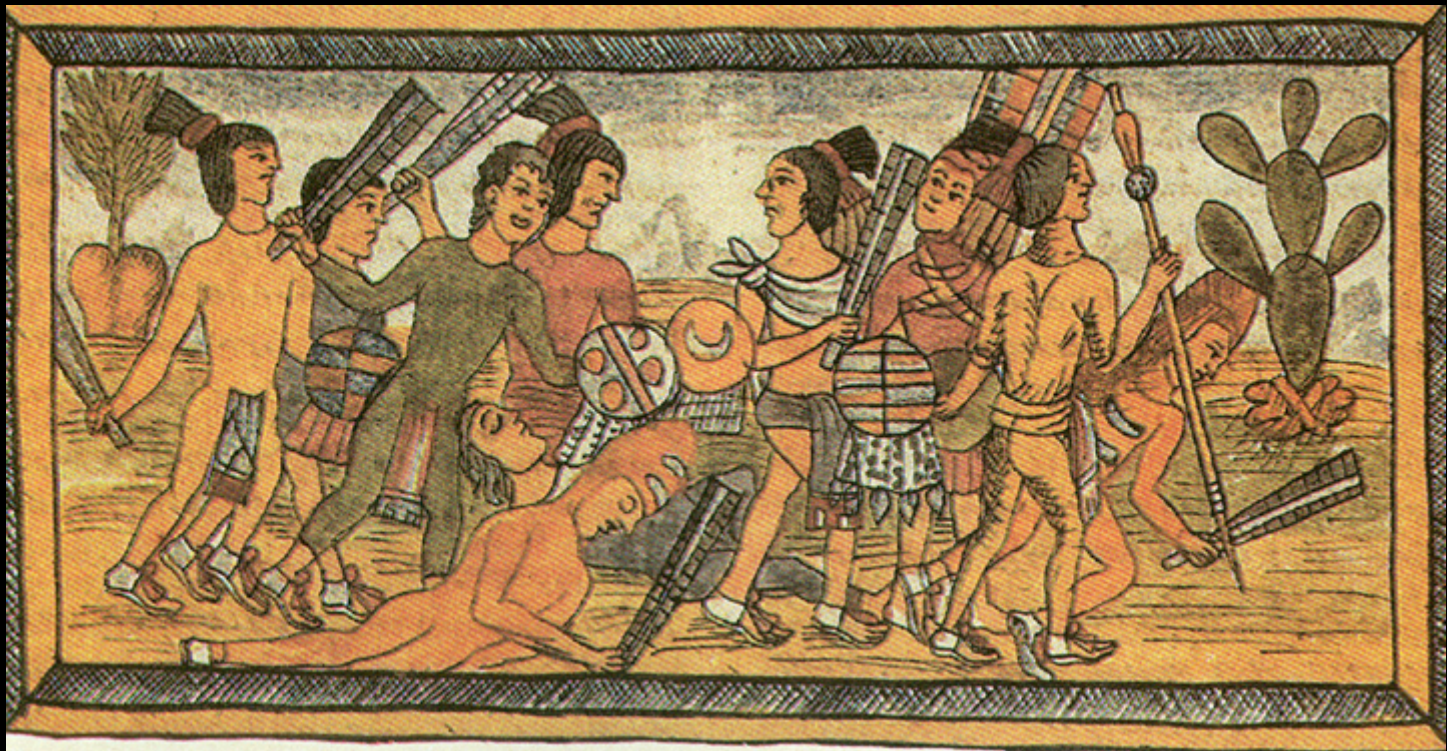




# THE SWORD OF LABAN



- Mesoamerican Swords





# MESOAMERICAN SWORDS HISTORICAL REFERENCES

- Sharp Wood Bladed Swords
  - One-Handed Swords with Obsidian Blades
  - “Two-Handed Swords” with Obsidian Blades
  - “Various Kinds of Swords”
  - “Cutlasses made of flint”
-

# MODERN MACHETE WITH A STEEL BLADE



# PRE-COLUMBIAN WOOD MACHETE (CHICHEN ITZA



# THE MACUAHUITL OR MACANA SWORD



# MESOAMERICAN SWORDS VARIANT FORMS (SHORTER)





# SEPARATED BLADE EDGES (CODEX TELLERIANO REMENSIS)



# SEPARATED BLADE EDGES (CODEX TELLERIANO REMENSIS)





# SEPARATED BLADE EDGES (DURAN, *HISTORY*)





# SEPARATED BLADE EDGES (DURAN, *HISTORY*)





# SEPARATED BLADE EDGES (DURAN, *HISTORY*)





# SEPARATED BLADE EDGES (LIENZO TLAXCALA)



# POINTED EDGES (HISTORIA CHICHIMECA)



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# CONTINUOUS EDGE (DURAN, *HISTORY*)





# CONTINUOUS EDGE (DURAN, *HISTORY*)





# CONTINUOUS EDGE (DURAN, *HISTORY*)



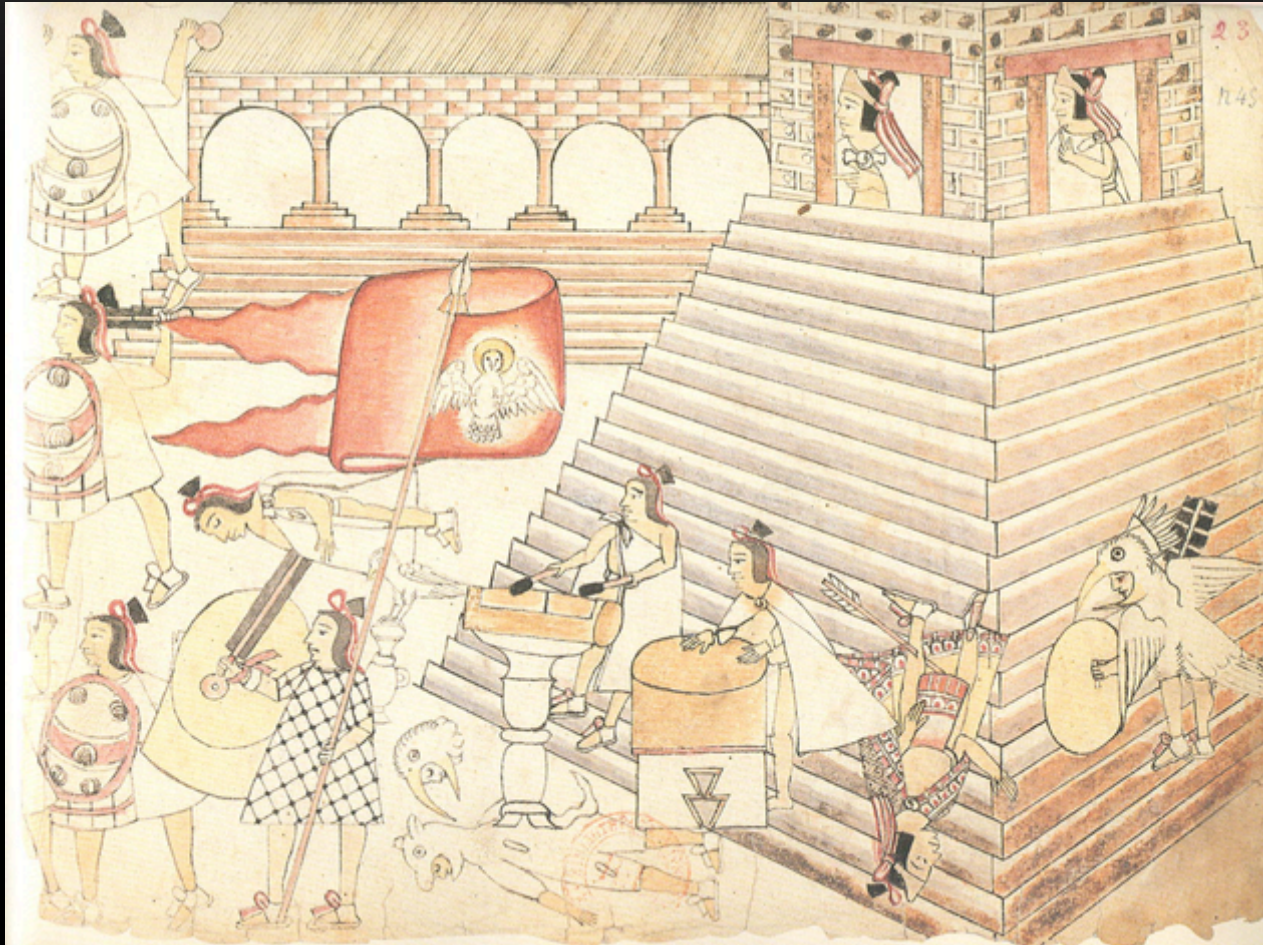


# CONTINUOUS EDGE (DURAN, *HISTORY*)

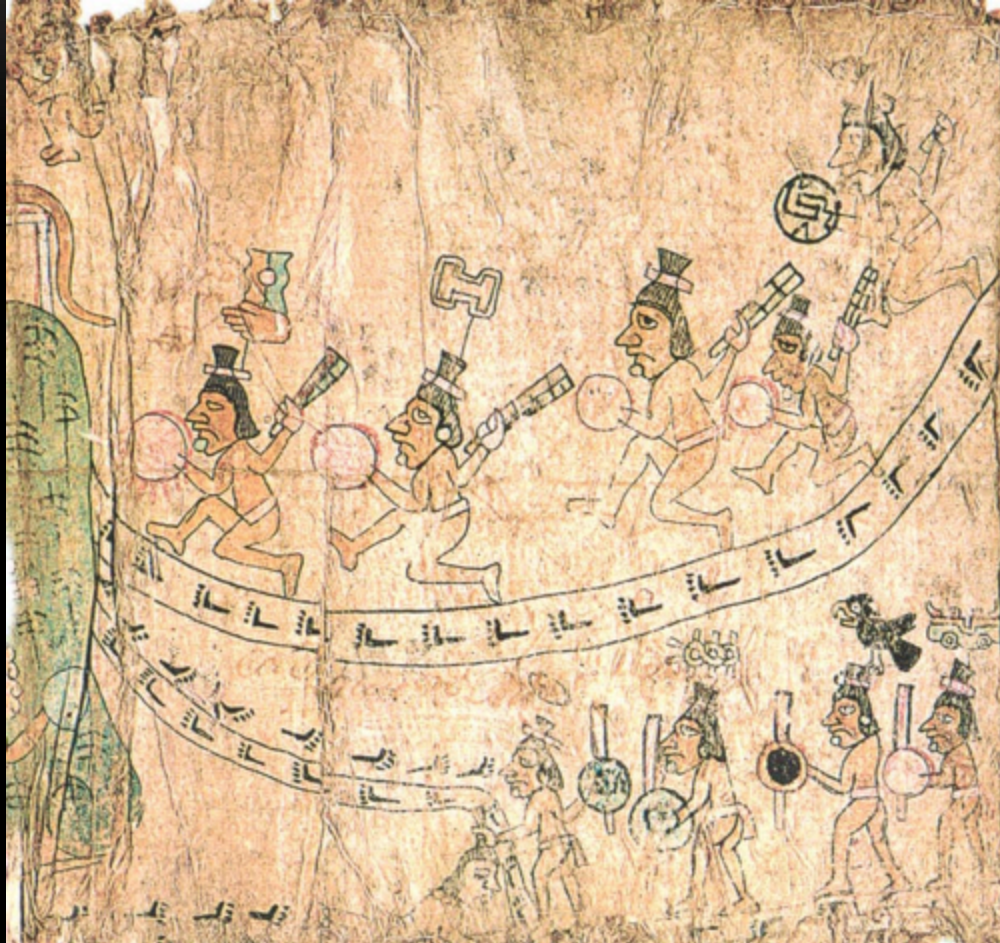




# CONTINUOUS EDGE (CODEX AZCATITLAN)



# CONTINUOUS EDGE (CODEX FERNANDEZ LEAL)





HOW SHARP WERE MESOAMERICAN SWORDS?

# HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS

- Two Indians were waiting for the horsemen on the side of the road. One Indian at a single stroke cut open the whole neck of Cristóbal de Olid's horse, killing the horse. The Indian on the other side slashed at the second horseman and the blow cut through the horse's pastern, whereupon this horse also fell dead.
- One Indian I saw in combat with a mounted horseman struck the horse in the chest, cutting through to the inside and killing the horse on the spot. On the same day I saw another Indian give a horse a sword thrust in the neck that laid the horse dead at his feet.
- While we were at grips with this great army and their dreadful broadswords, many of the most powerful among the enemy seem to have decided to capture a horse. They began with a furious attack, and laid hands on a good mare well trained both for sport and battle. Her rider, Pedro de Moron, was a fine horseman . . . [they] seized his lance so that he could not use it, and others slashed at him with their broadswords, wounding him severely. Then they slashed at his mare, cutting her head at the neck so that it hung by the skin. The mare fell dead.”

# COULD THEY SEVER LIMBS OR CUT OFF A HEAD?

- [The Lamanites] did fight like dragons, and many of the Nephites were slain by their hands . . . And they did smite off many of their arms; and thus the Lamanites did smite in their fierce anger” (Alma 43:44).
- Their naked skins and their bare heads were exposed to the sharp swords of the Nephites” (Alma 44:18)
- And it came to pass that when Coriantumr had leaned upon his sword, that he rested a little, he smote off the head of Shiz” (Ether 15:30).



# COULD MACANA SWORDS SEVER LIMBS OR CUT OFF A HEAD?

- Are we to see the street of our city again bathed in *blood*, covered with *entrails*, with *arms* and *heads* and *severed legs* . . . . No we do not wish war or any quarrel with them (Diego Duran, *History of the Indies of New Spain*, 85).
- “While he yet spoke, Teconal appeared, sword in hand, and with one blow *cut off Cueyatzin’s head*. This head was then carried to the boundaries of Tenochtitlan, where it was thrown. After that the Tlatelocas set up a great howling, calling out “Tlateloco! Tlateloco!” (Diego Duran, *History of the Indies of New Spain*, 258).

# CODEX AZCATITLAN



# CODEX FERNANDEZ LEAL

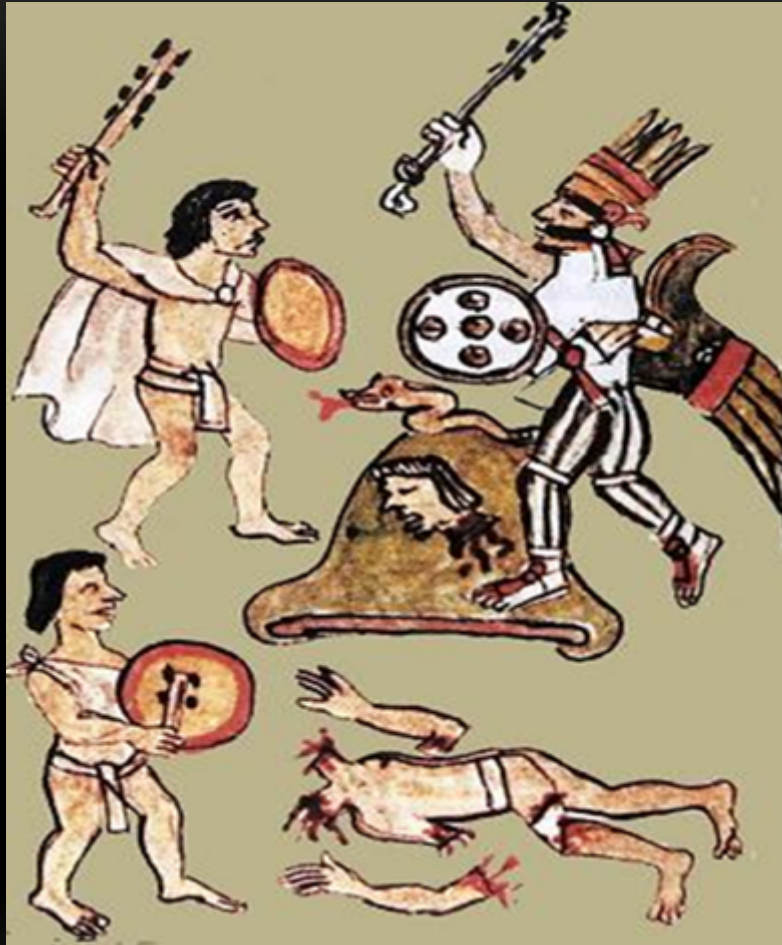




# CODEX AZCATITLAN



# FLORENTINE CODEX



# LIENZA TLAXCALA





# FLORENTINE CODEX



# CODEx TELERIANO-REMENSIS



# HUMAN BONE SEVERED BY A *MACUAHUITL* BLADE





# STAINED WEAPONS MADE BRIGHT A METAPHOR OF REDEMPTION



# STAINED WEAPONS MADE “BRIGHT”

## A METAPHOR OF REDEMPTION

- And I also thank my God, yea my great God, that he hath granted unto us that we might repent of these things, and also that he hath **forgiven us** of those our many **sins** and **murders** which we have committed, and *taken away the guilt from our hearts*, through the merits of his Son.
- And now, behold my brethren, since it has been all we could do (as we were the most lost of mankind) to repent of all our **sins** . . . And to get God to *take them away from our hearts*, for it was all we could do to repent sufficiently before God that he would *take away our stain*.
- Now . . . Since God hath *taken away our stains*, and **our swords have become bright**, then let us *stain our swords no more with the blood* of our brethren. . . . Let us retain our swords that they be *not stained with the blood* of our brethren; for perhaps, if we should *stain our swords* again they can no more be **washed bright through the blood of the Son** of our great God, which shall be shed for the atonement of our sins . . . .

# STAINED WEAPONS MADE BRIGHT A METAPHOR OF REDEMPTION

- Oh, how merciful is our God! And now behold, since it has been as much as we could do to get our *stains taken away* from us, and *our swords made bright*, let us hide them away that they may be *kept bright*, as a testimony to our God at the last day, or at the day that we shall be brought to stand before him to be judged, that we have *not stained our swords in the blood* of our brethren since he imparted his word unto us and has *made us clean* thereby.
- And now, my brethren, if our brethren seek to destroy us, behold we will hide away our *swords*, yea, even we will bury them deep in the earth, that they may be kept *bright*, as a testimony that we have never used them, at the last day (Alma 24:10-16).



# ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF ANCIENT WEAPONS

- “Specialized weapons often represented objects of such social significance that they are only rarely found in original archaeological contexts (only disposable weapons were buried in graves; specialized weapons were left only exceptionally in settlements or on battlefields). All these factors jointly lower the frequency (in extreme cases to zero) of weapons in archaeological data, which undoubtedly results in consequences for the evaluation of the character and development of societies and cultures. The volume of weaponry that has perished is impossible to quantify” (Slavamil Vencel, “War and Warfare in Archaeology”).
- “One should recognize that very few items of ancient steel or semi-steel are known, though doubtless many are in archaeological dumps, rusted beyond visual and chemical recognition” (Leonore O. Keene Congdon, “Steel in Antiquity: A Problem in Terminology”).

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF MESOAMERICAN SWORDS

- “Identifiable weaponry is seldom, if ever, recovered in Maya graves, but only the lost durable parts (e.g. stone blades) would be recoverable in any case, and these would be difficult to distinguish between other tools and ritual objects” (David Webster)
- “There are no known surviving examples of the *macuahuitl*” (Ross Hassig)
- If it were just from Mexica archaeological evidence alone, we might think that this weapon [the *macuahuitl*] was hardly used by this people. Very few archaeological objects have been recovered” (Marco Antonio Cervera Obregon).
- “Remains of the *macuahuitl* are practically non-existent” (Marco Antonio Cervera Obregon)

# MESOAMERICAN CIMETERS



# THE CURVED SHORT SWORD

- “The Short sword . . . was lighter and carried more cutting surface, and each blade was backed by a wooden base that provides direct support; it was an excellent slasher and yet the forward curve of the sword retained some aspects of a crusher when used curved end forward . . . . Shorter than spears and lighter than clubs, the short sword was considerably more mobile. Its use marked a major shift in singlehanded weapons, away from the weight and crushing power of clubs to the cutting surface and lightness of swords . . . . It was now feasible for a single soldier to carry a short sword, atlaltl and darts, knife, and shield supported by an armstrap. Instead of dividing their forces into mutually reinforcing atlatlists and spearmen . . . Soldiers could now provide their own covering fire with altlatls while they advanced and still engage in hand-to-hand combat with short swords once they closed with the enemy” Hassig, *War and Society in Ancient Mesoamerica*, 113).

# NORTH AMERICAN PLAINS INDIAN WAR CLUB



# BORGIA CODEX





# BORGIA CODEX

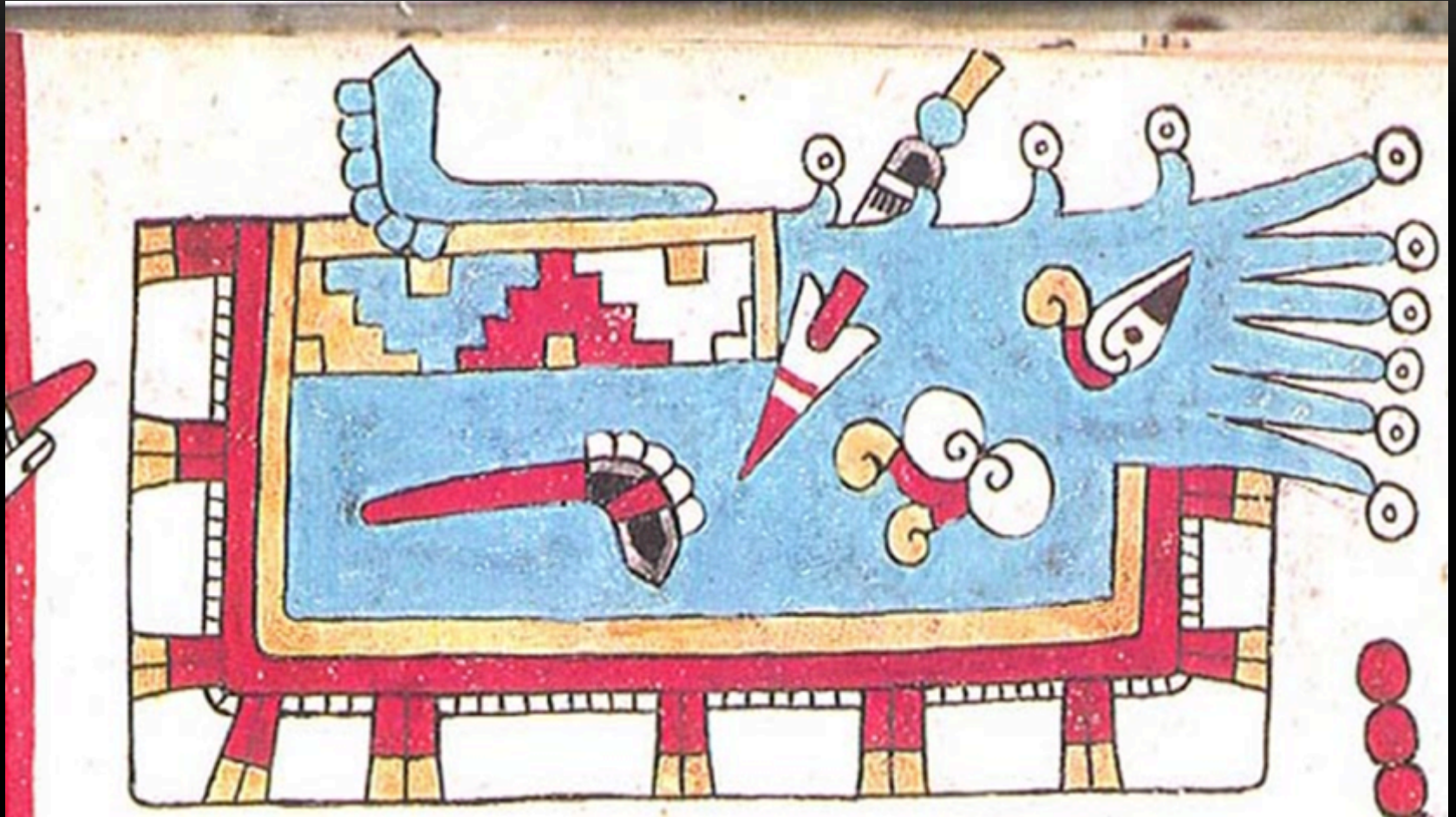


# ZOUCHE NUTTAL CODEX



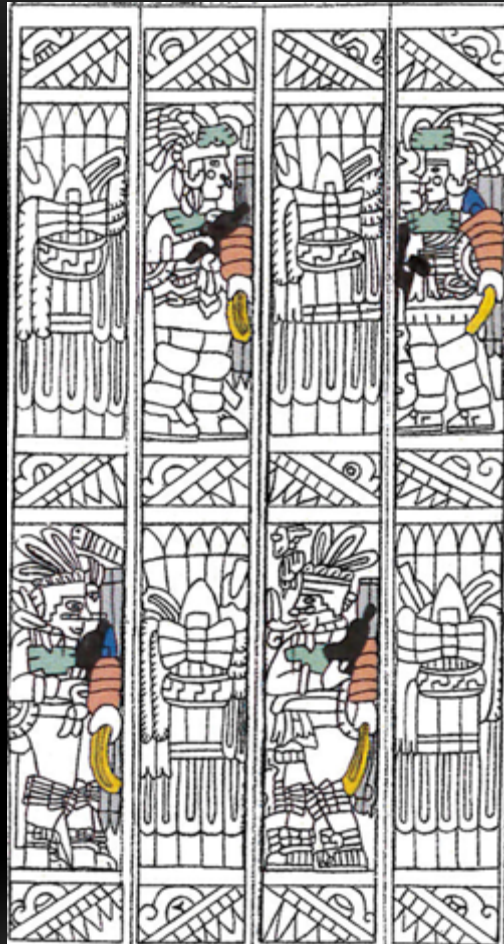


# ZOUCHE NUTTAL CODEX





# TULA PILLARS



# TULA PILLAR



# ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN AND MESOAMERICAN CIMETERS



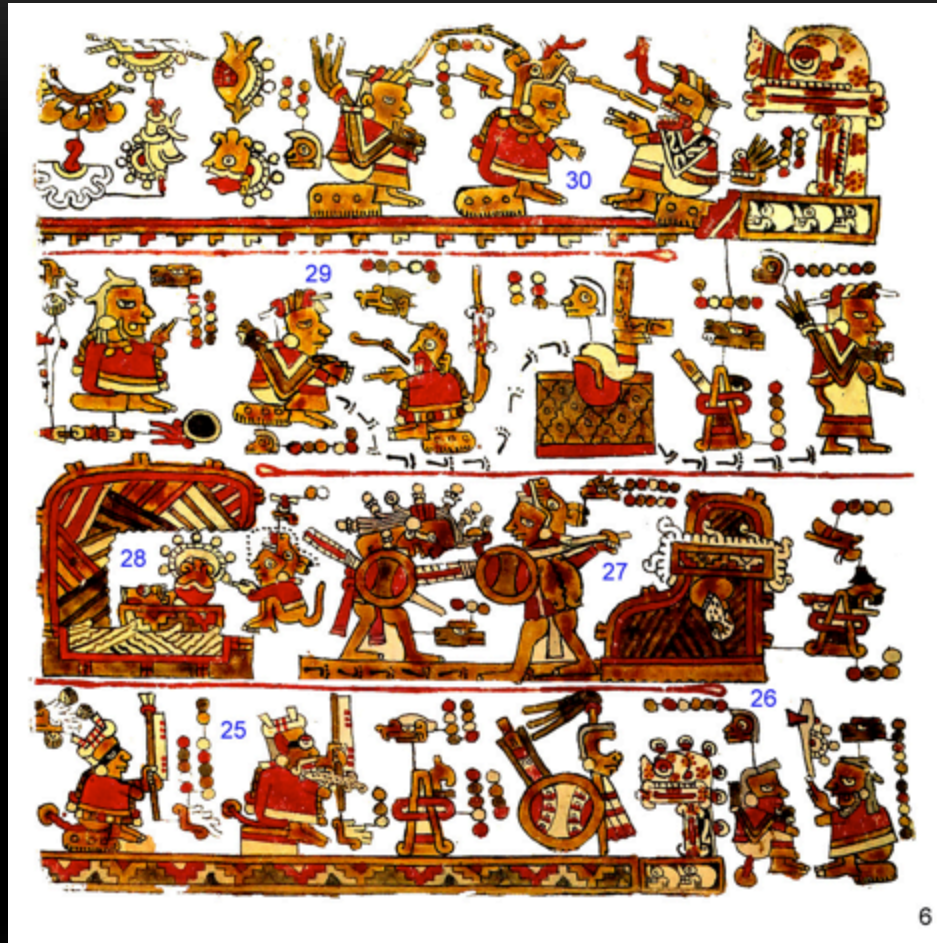


# WHY A CIMETER AND A SWORD?

# SWORDS THAT CAN “PIERCE” SWORDS WITH A “POINT”

- “The soldier who stood by . . . took up the scalp from off the ground by the hair and laid it upon the point of his sword” (Alma 44:13).
- “Their naked skins and bare heads were exposed to the sharp swords of the Nephites, yea, behold they were pierced and smitten” (Alma 44:18)

# SELDEN CODEX





# SELDEN CODEX

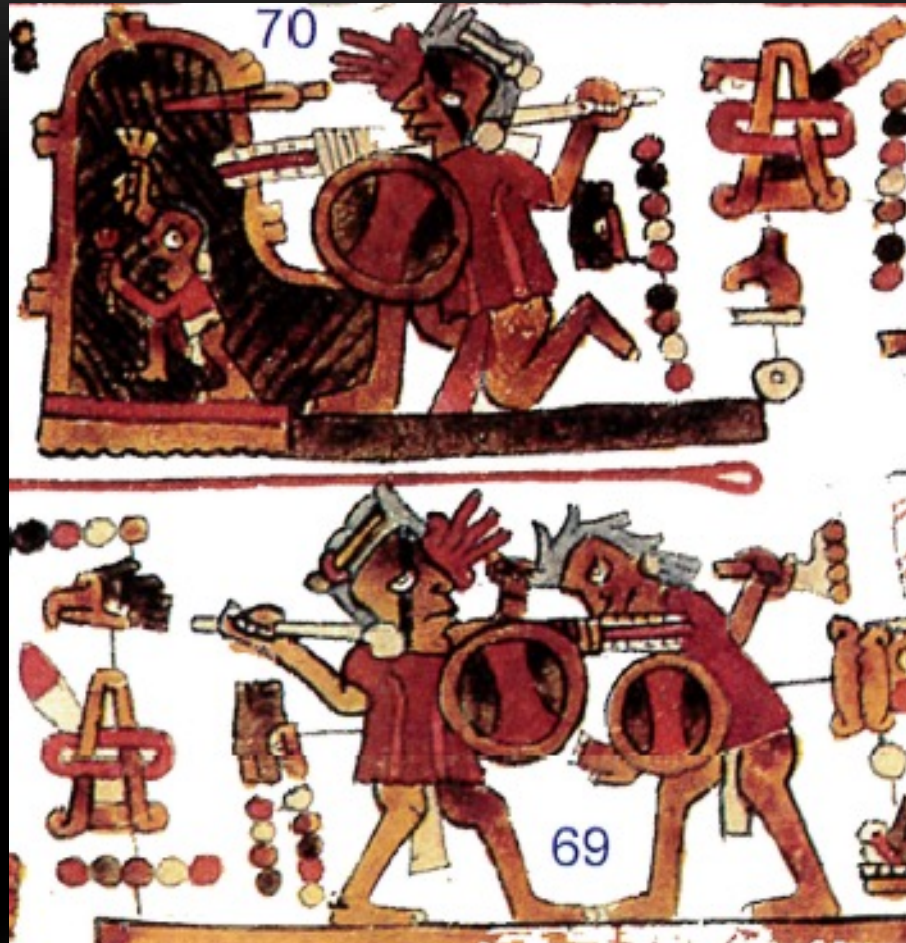


# SELDEN CODEX





# SELDEN CODEX





# SELDEN CODEX



# AZTEC POINTED SWORD



“TWO TLAXCALAN NOBLES WITH SWORDS (MACUAHUITL).  
NOTE THEIR DIFFERENT CONSTRUCTION” (HASSIG, *AZTEC  
WARFARE*, 84)





# POINTED SWORD

LOLTUN CAVE



# CHICHEN ITZA TEMPLE OF THE WARRIORS



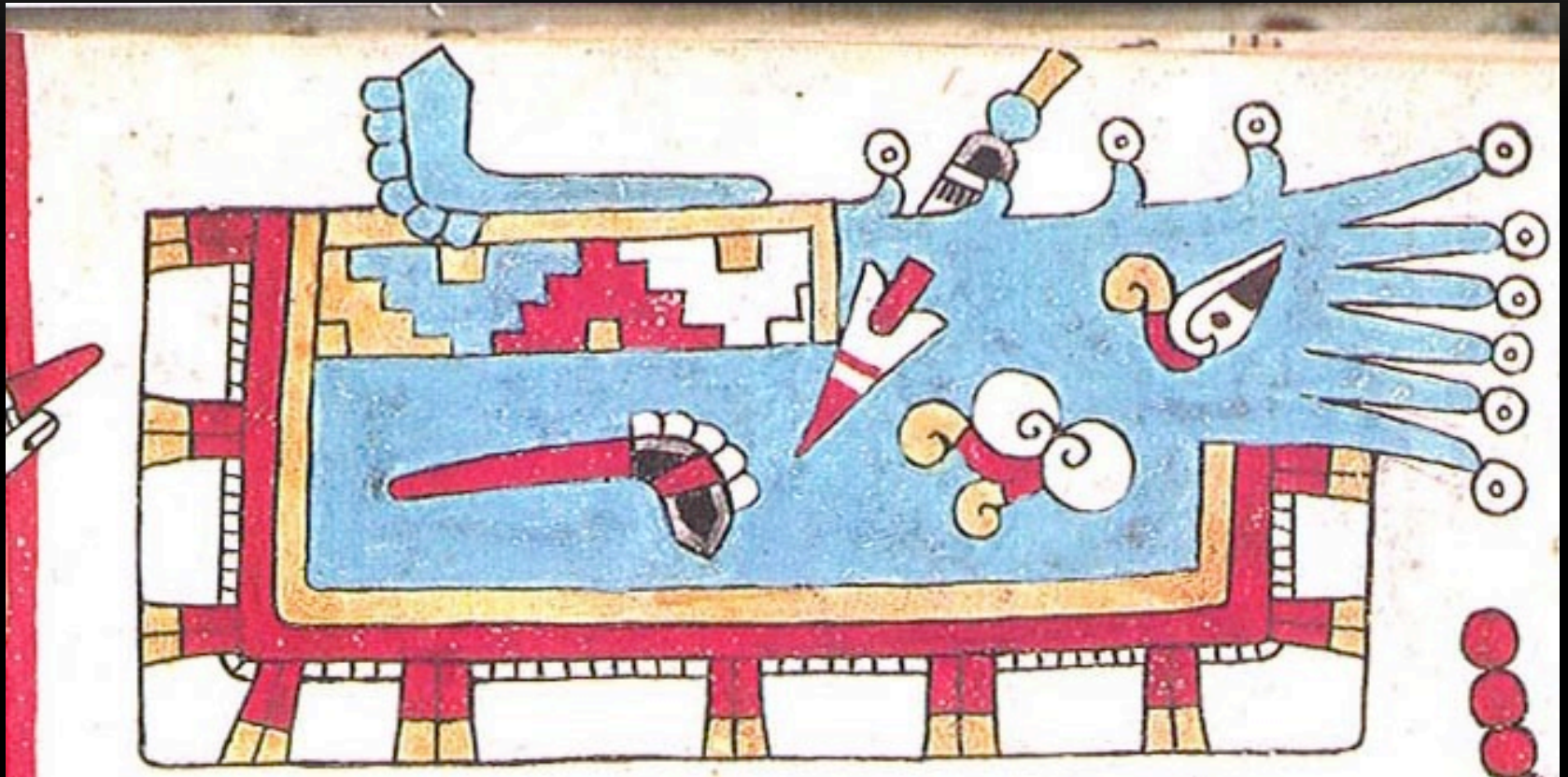
# TULA HIDALGO

## PILLAR 2 BUILDING B

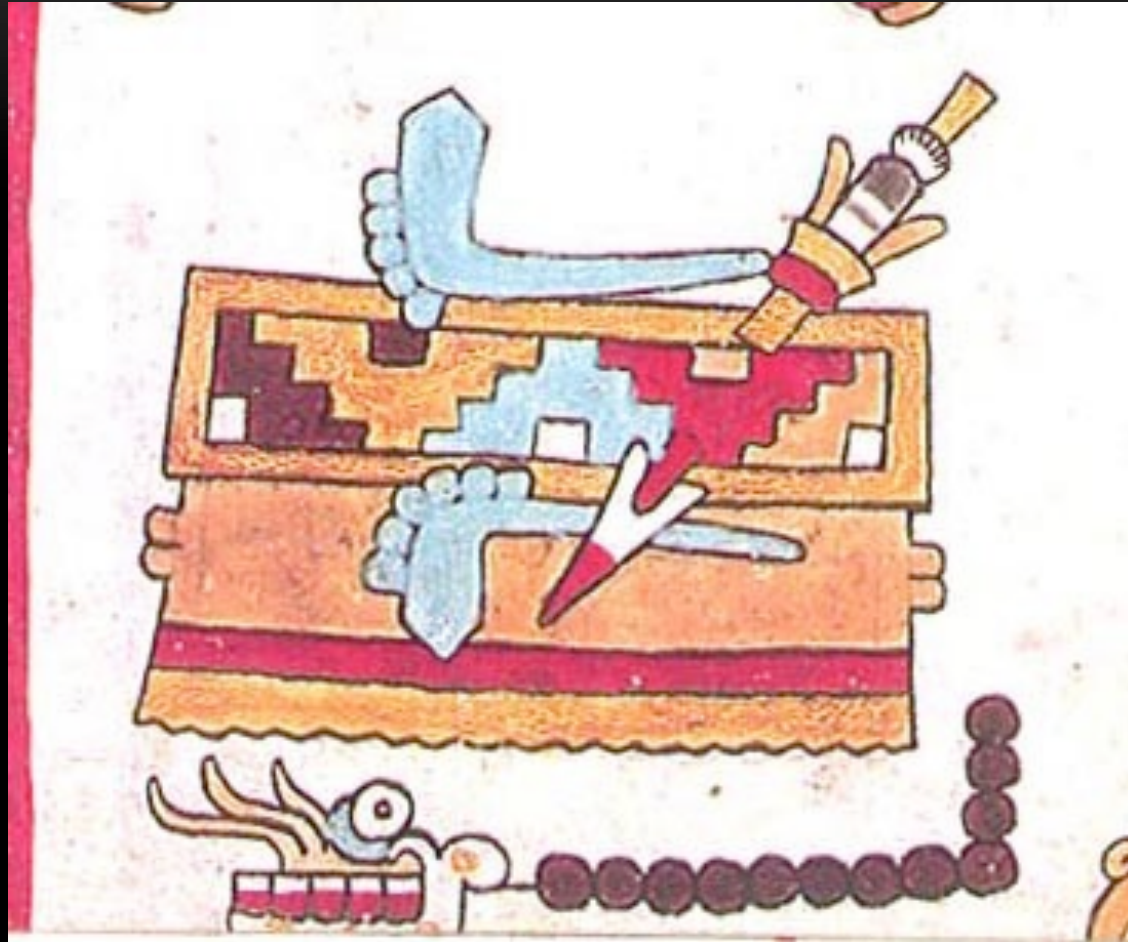




# CODEX ZOUCHE NUTTAL



# MIXTEC POINTED CURVED SWORDS



# MAPA DE TEOZACOALCO





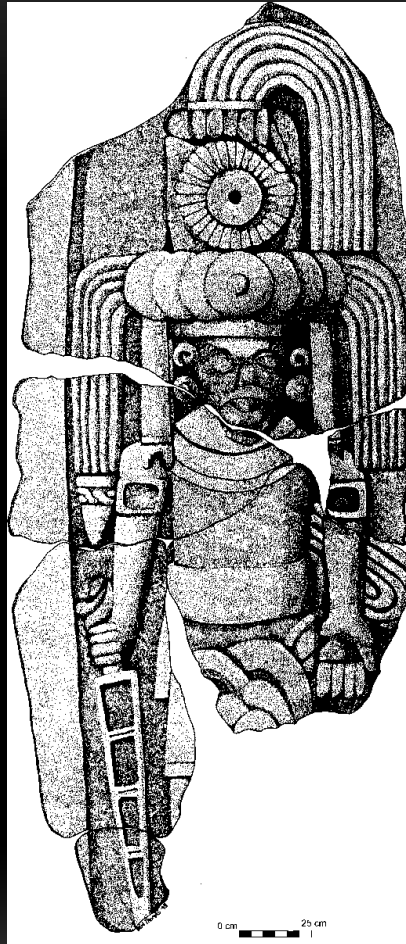
# MAPA DE TEOZACOALCO



# MAPA DE TEOZACOALCO



# LA NUEVA MONUMENT 11





# MESOAMERICAN SWORDS IN BOOK OF MORMON TIMES

# MESOAMERICAN SWORDS

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400 AD. To 900 AD.

# WARRIOR FIGURINE (PALENQUE 400-750 A.D.)

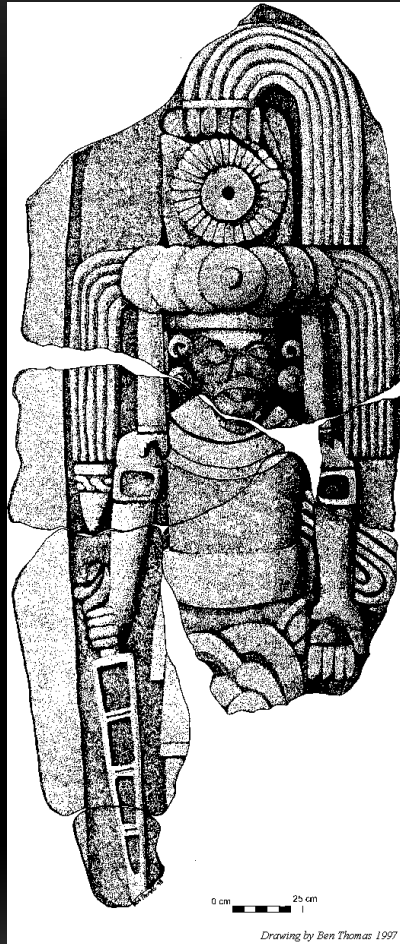




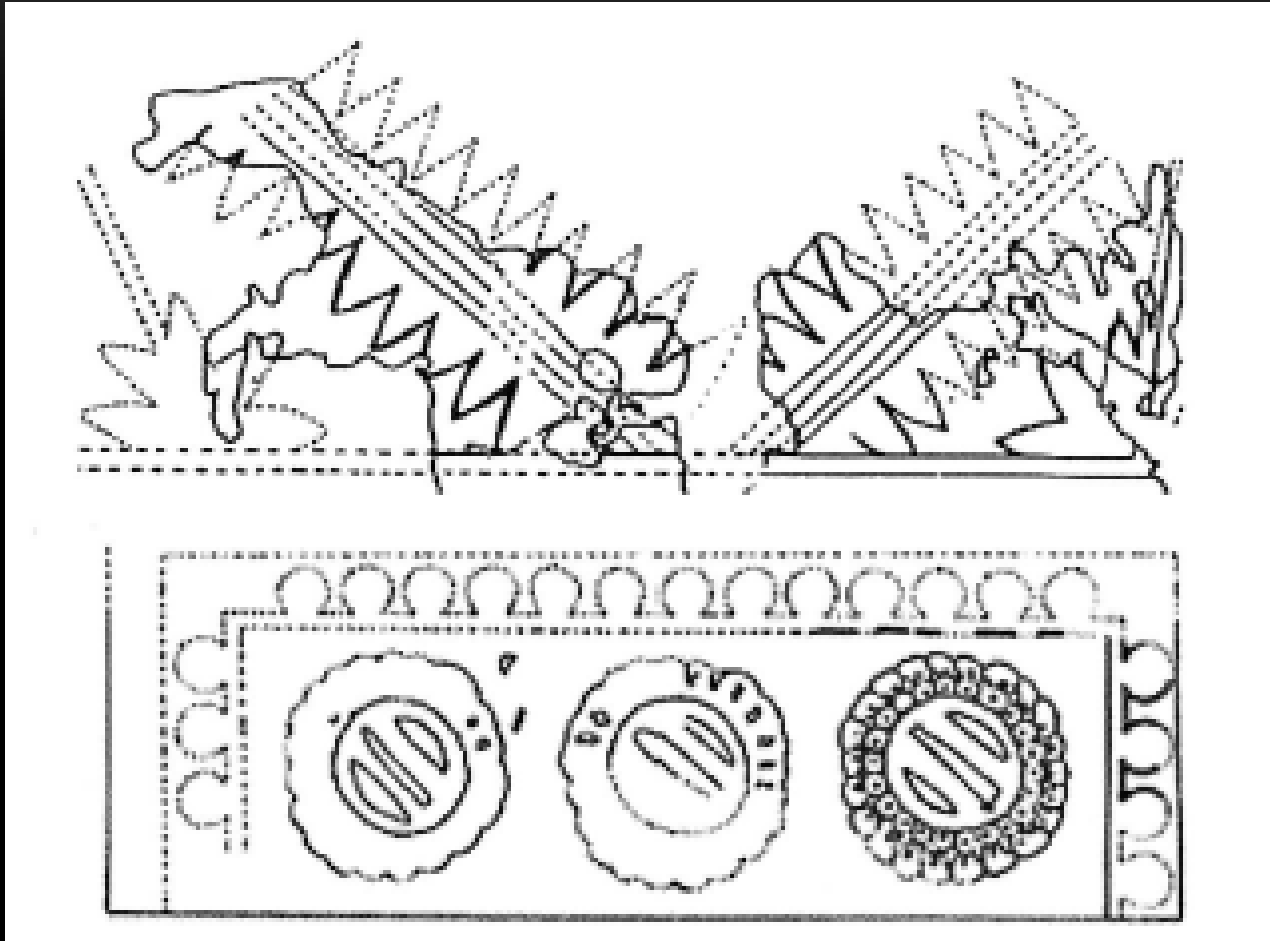
# WARRIOR FIGURINE (PALENQUE 400-750 A.D.)



# LA NUEVA MONUMENT 11 (450-900 A.D.)



# TEOTIHUACAN (450-650 A.D.)





# TONINA (613 A.D.)



## TONINA (613 A.D.)

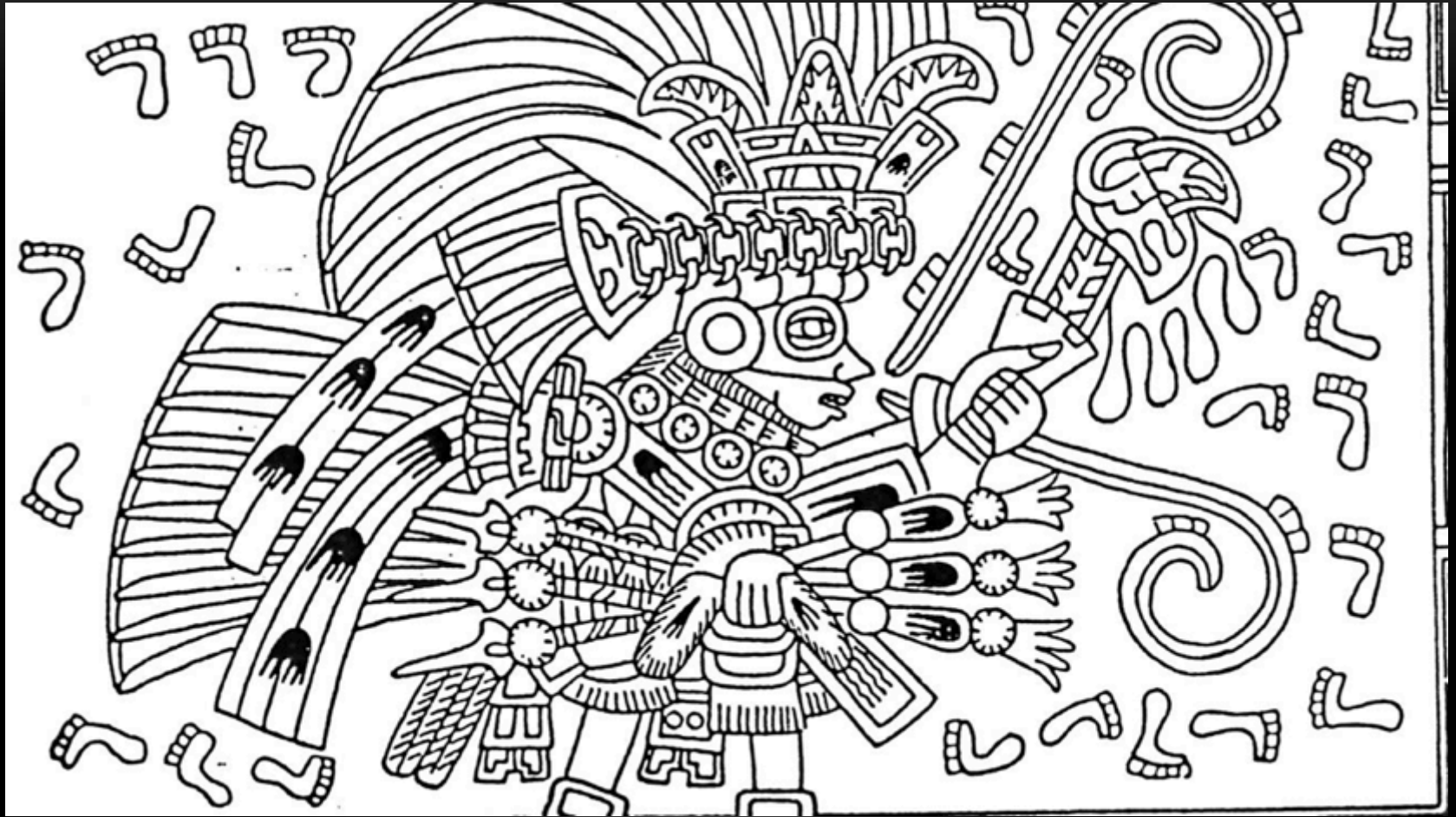


- “The Lord on this panel wears a Jester God headband of exalted rank” and holds a scimitar-like flint blade” in his right hand (Mary Miller and Simon Martin, *Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya*, 188).





# TEOTIHUACAN (450-650 A.D.)



# TEOTIHUACAN (450-650 A.D.)



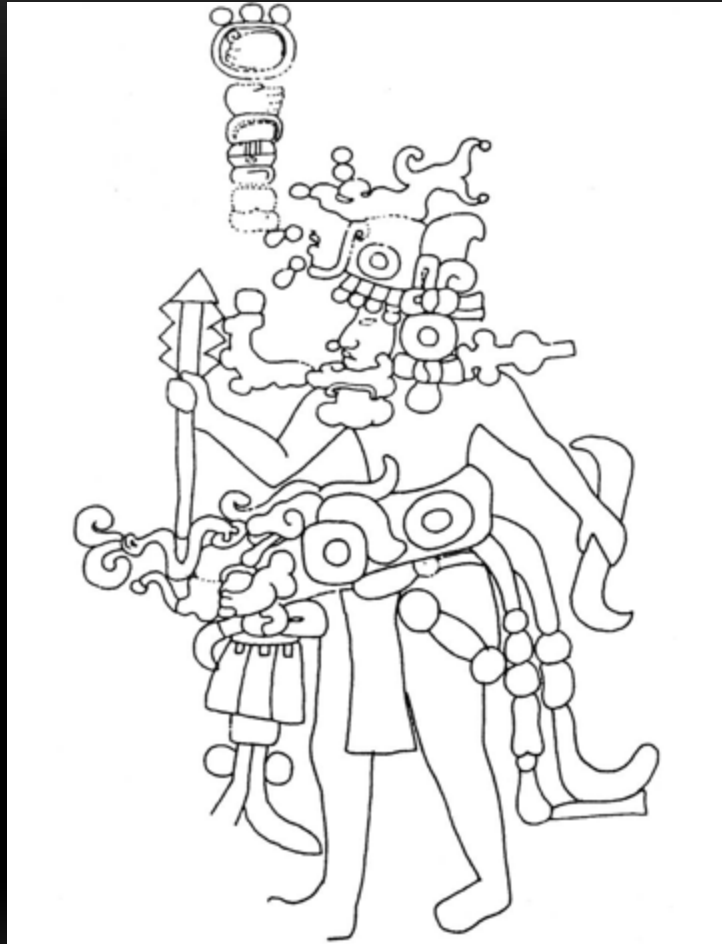
# MESOAMERICAN SWORDS

## 1200 BC. TO 400 AD.

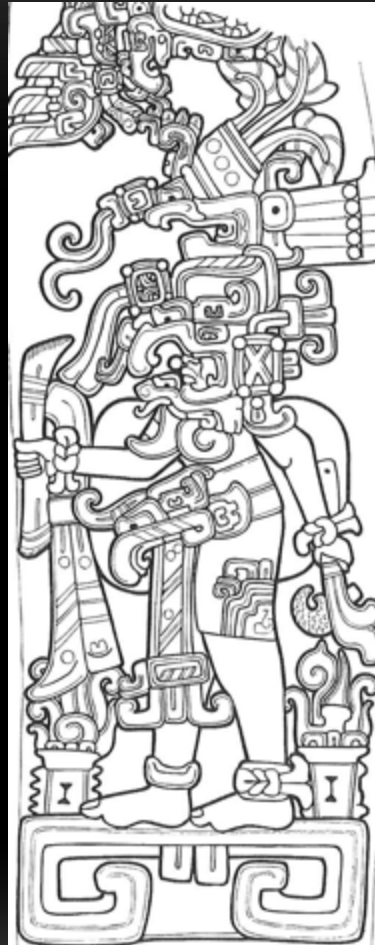


# CURVED WEAPON

## “EL GUERRERO” LOLTUN CAVE



# CURVED BLADE (KAMINAJUYU)



# CURVED BLADE (KAMINAJUYU)

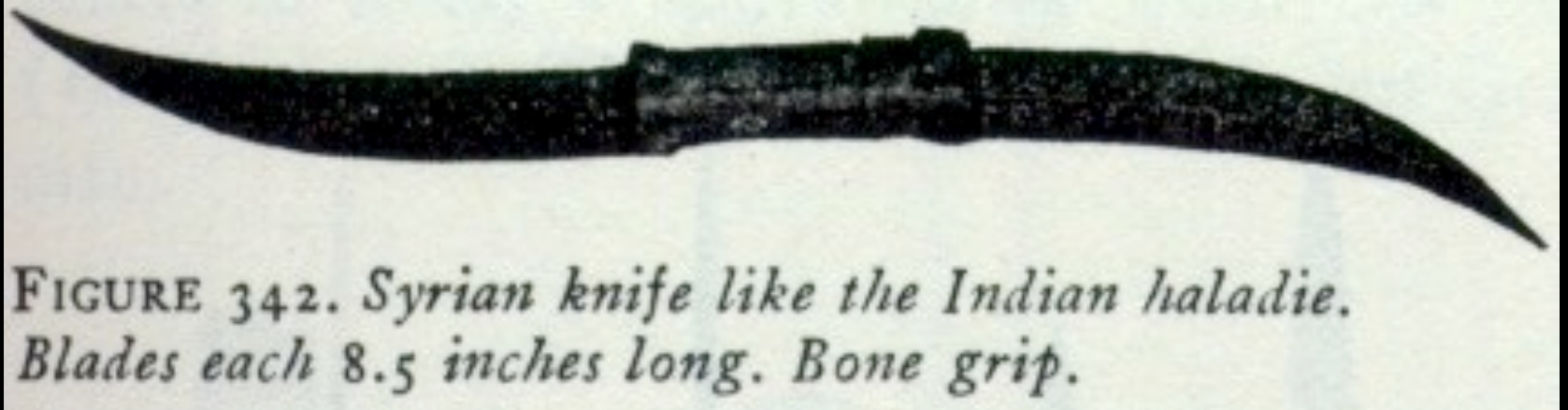




# CURVED BLADE (KAMINAJUYU)



# CURVED DOUBLE DAGGER BLADE (SYRIA)



# CURVED DOUBLE DAGGER BLADE





# CURVED DOUBLE DAGGER BLADE



# IZAPA



# IZAPA

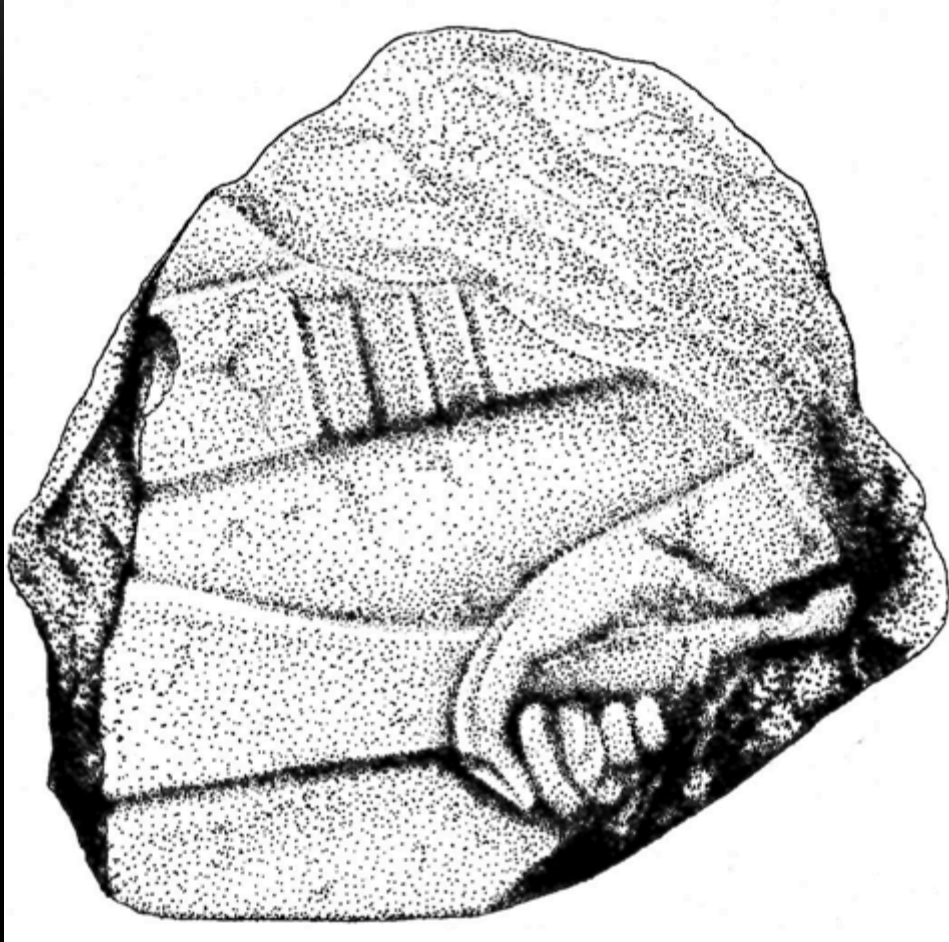




# LA VENTA



# SAN LORENZO MONUMENT 83



# SAN LORENZO MONUMENT 83



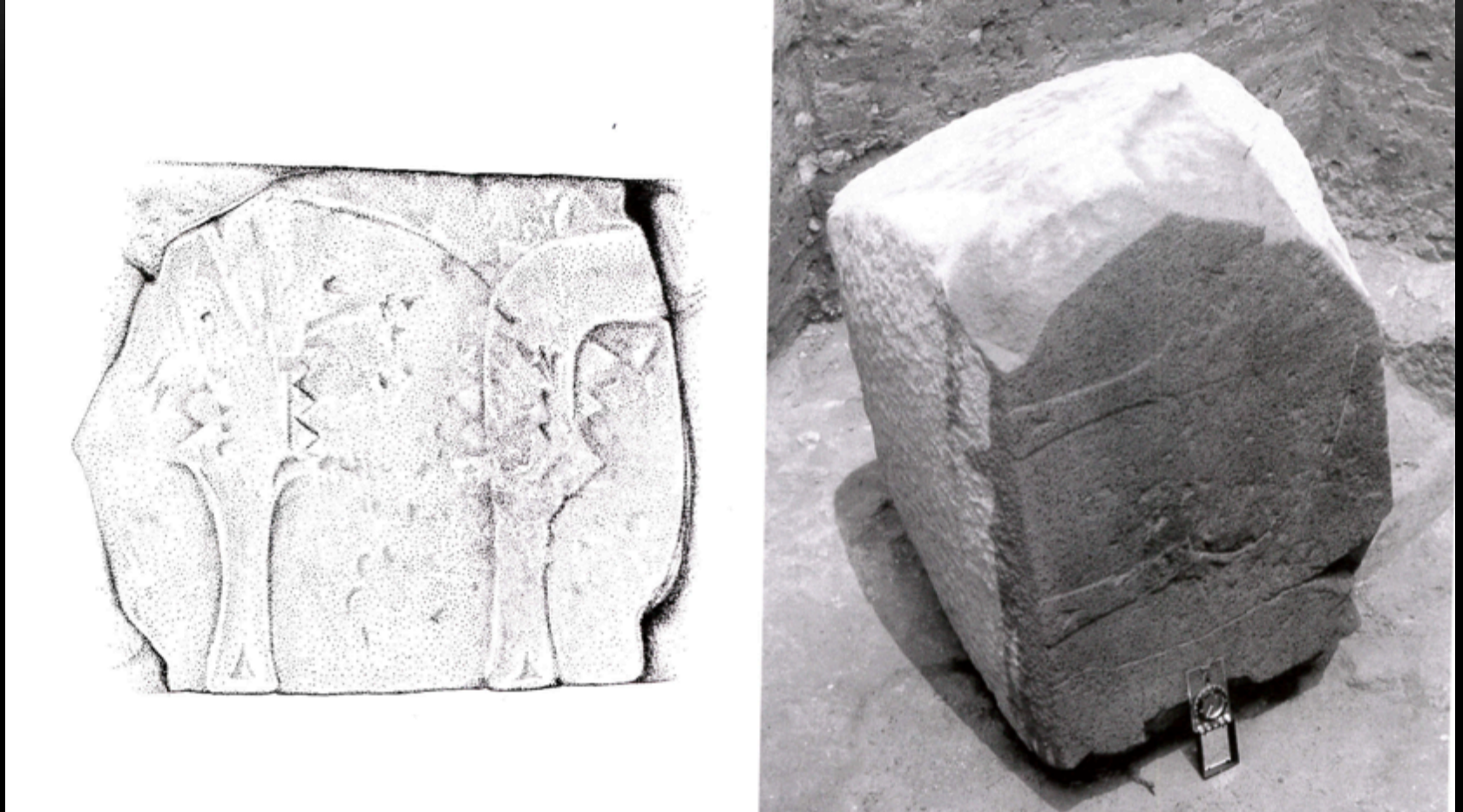


# SAN LORENZO MONUMENT 78





# SAN LORENZO MONUMENT 78



# SAN LORENZO MONUMENT 78



# SAN LORENZO MONUMENT 91

