



Light Stands



Light Stands for Outdoor Photography of Art & Archaeology

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I have been photographing stelae, other sculptures, pyramids, temples, and palaces for over 52 years (since age 16, when I was at Palenque with a 35mm Leica G series camera).

We did a higher level of photography of stelae of Yaxha, El Peten, while working there during five years (circa 1970-1975).

FLAAR continued to evaluate photography equipment for recording sculptures for another decade. By then our photography style had advanced to the point that a Japanese coffee table book publisher asked us to spend 18 months photographing Maya stone sculptures, architecture, and artifacts. So during the 1990's we got even more experience with what were the best lighting and light stands.

After another decade of experience in Belize, Guatemala, Mexico, and Honduras, we switched from tungsten lighting to fluorescent lighting. This was for two reasons:

- Tungsten halogen lights were extremely hot
- Their lamps (bulbs) were expensive and broke easily
- Most museums did not have enough power in their sockets to handle four Lowel units (at even only 750 watts per light, using a set of four was too much for most local museums in remote areas)





The entire set of lighting could be handled by even a portable generator, actually even by a portable battery.

Circa 2011 we returned to the Maya ruins (and two museums) at Copan Ruinas, Honduras. We donate our photographs to the local museums and to the park and to the national institute of anthropology. We are interested in studying the plants and animals shown in the art. And we have a long-range project to better understand the costumes and ceremonial accessories used by the kings of the Classic Maya civilization.

When we did the photography this year we found that some of the light stands were not high enough (some of the stelae are three or more meters high)






And some of the altars are on the ground. So we need really low light stands for these.

So we have been looking for a set of two really tall light stands and a set of two really low light stands. If they have one moveable support that also helps, since sometimes there are concrete platforms in front of the stelae. So it would help if at least one support could be raised.

The purpose of this FLAAR Report is to assist archaeologists and museum curators, and park administrators to see which photography equipment is best.

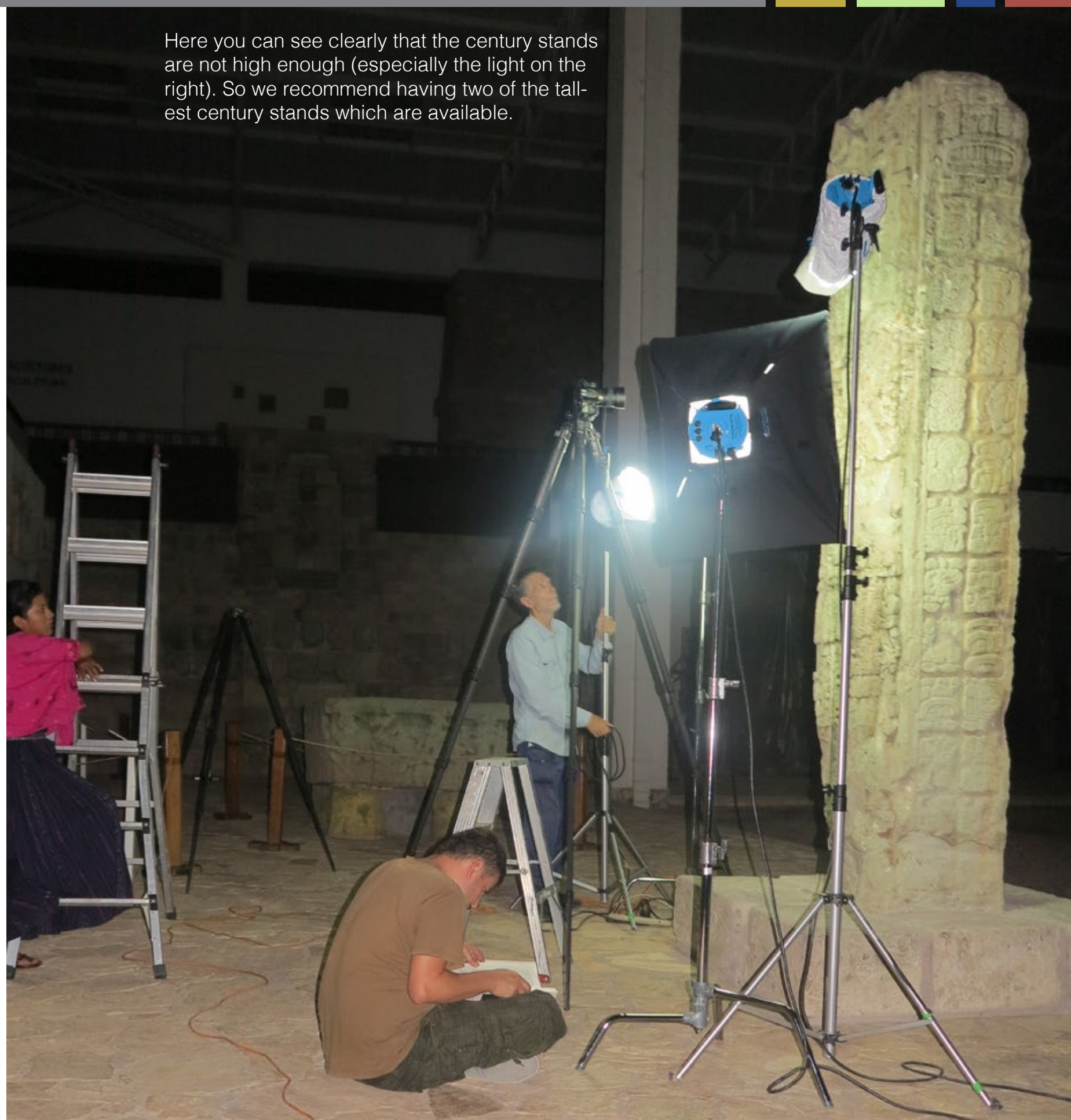


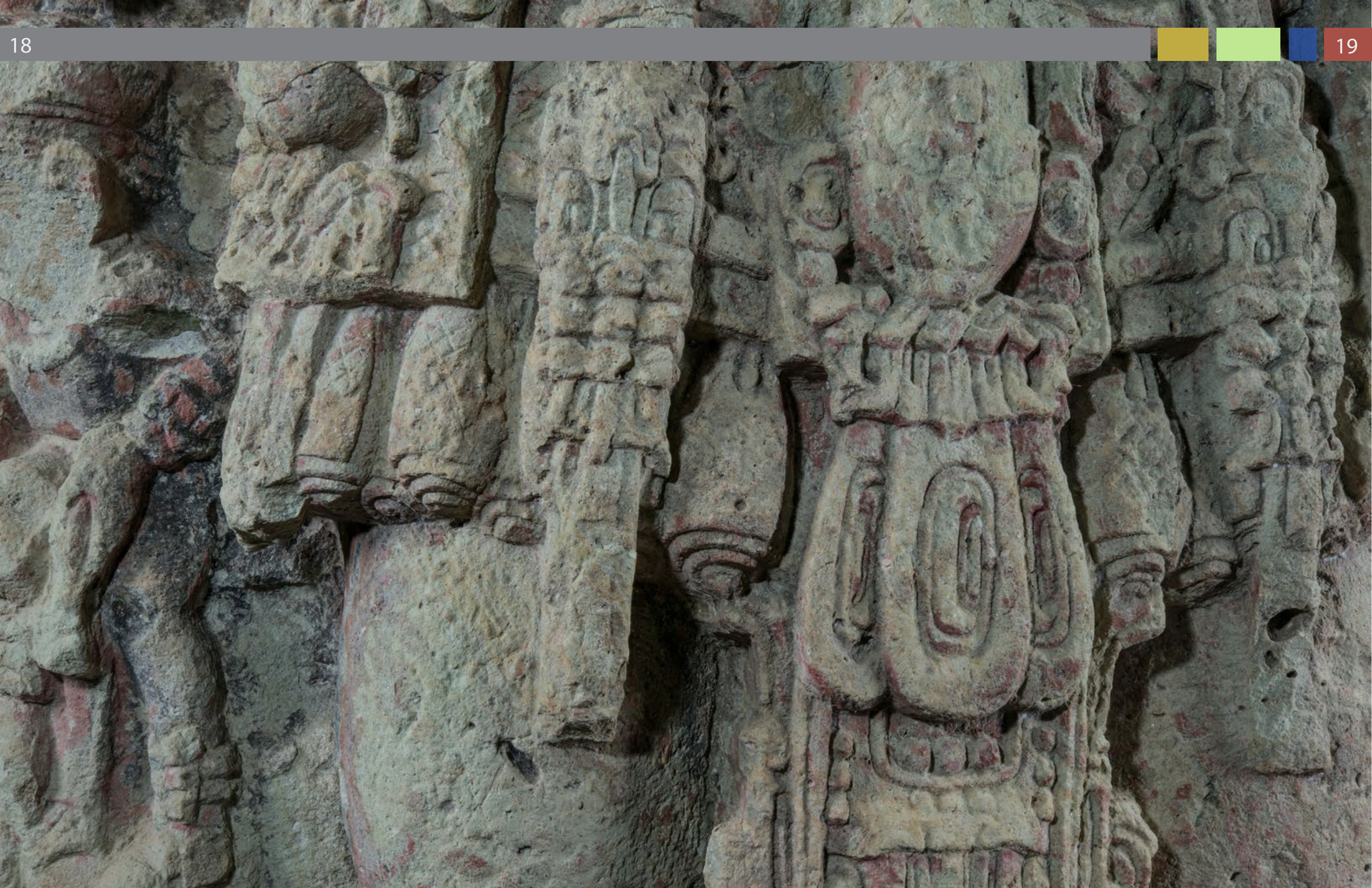


With a good Gitzo tripod we are fully equipped in the tripod department. But in this scene you will note that we are not using any century stands. So each light stand with a softbox needs an assistant to physically hold onto the light stand.



Here you can see clearly that the century stands are not high enough (especially the light on the right). So we recommend having two of the tallest century stands which are available.





Giant marine turtles are found on both coasts of the Maya realms (Caribbean coast and especially on the Pacific coast). These large marine turtles are a millennium long symbol of the birth of the Maize God. On both plates, vases, stone sculptures and other artifacts the stylized, idealized young lord is pictured rising majestically (and miraculously) out of a diagonal split into the top of the shell.

Here you see the turtle itself (not yet splitting). The paws and head are at ground level, so it would help to have a century stand which was not two meters high!





Here are the front covers of FLAAR Reports on photography of plants and animals.



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