

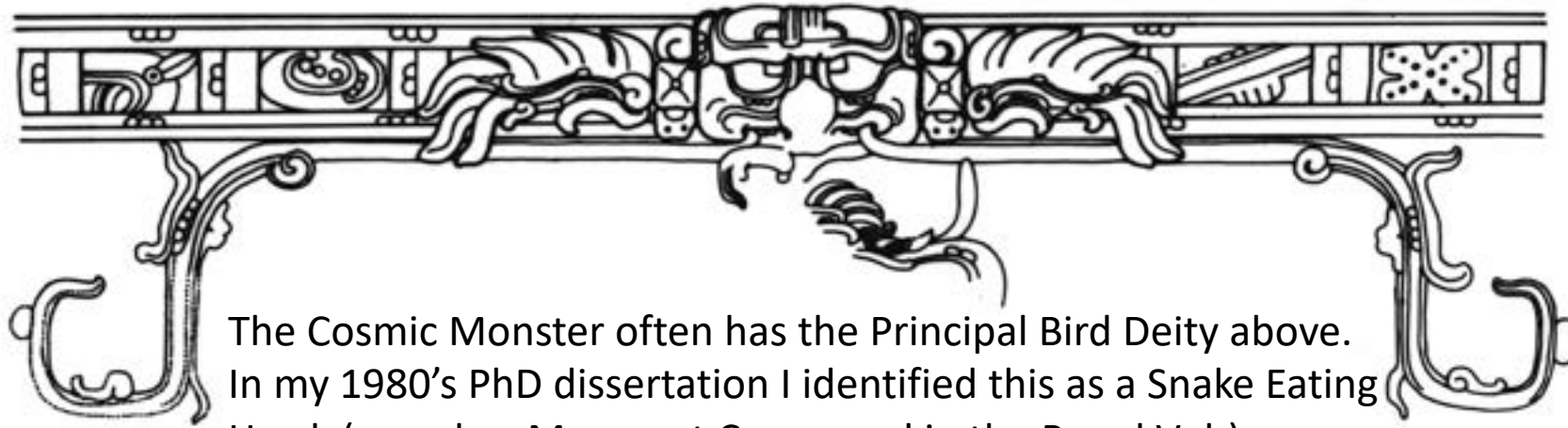
Chapter 6

Crocodile and Composite Deer-Crocodile as Bicephalic Cosmic Monster

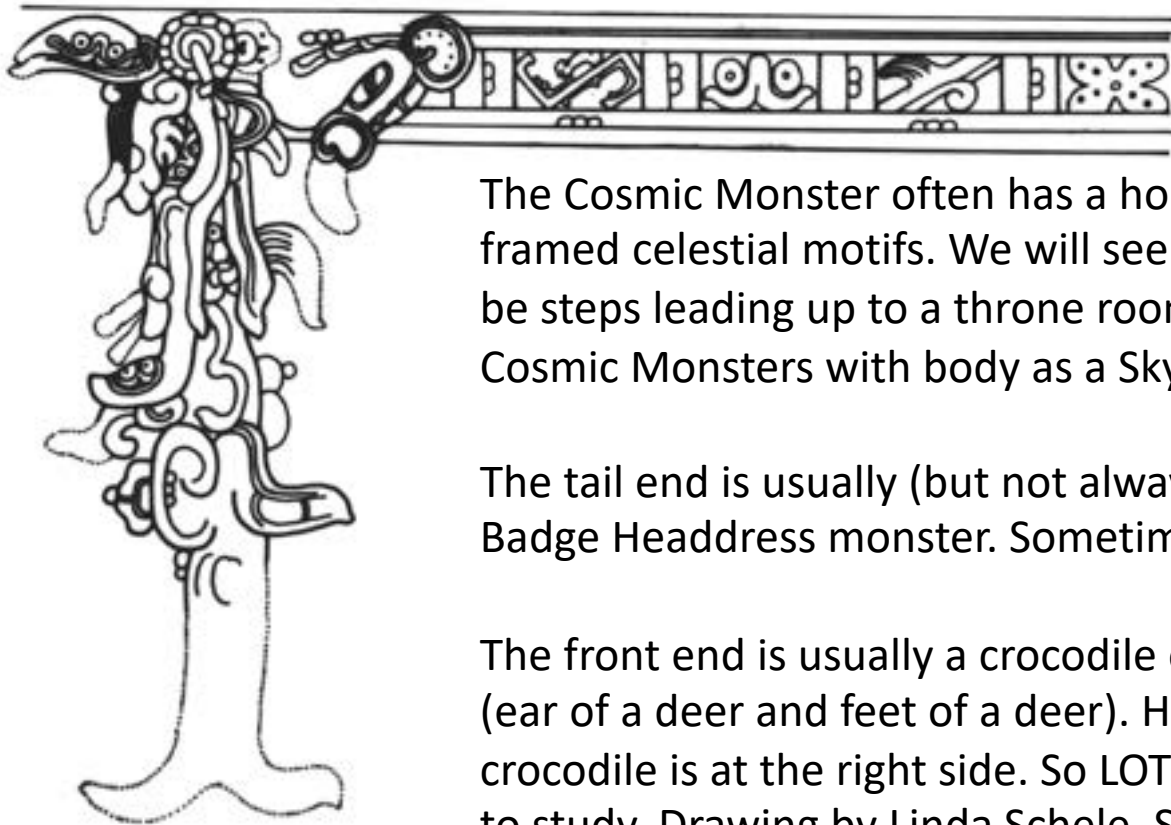
In Symposium Presentation July 27, 2023

Iconography and Ethnozoology of the Crocodiles and Caiman
of Mesoamerica and their relation
with the Cosmology of the Underworld and the Heavens

Nicholas Hellmuth



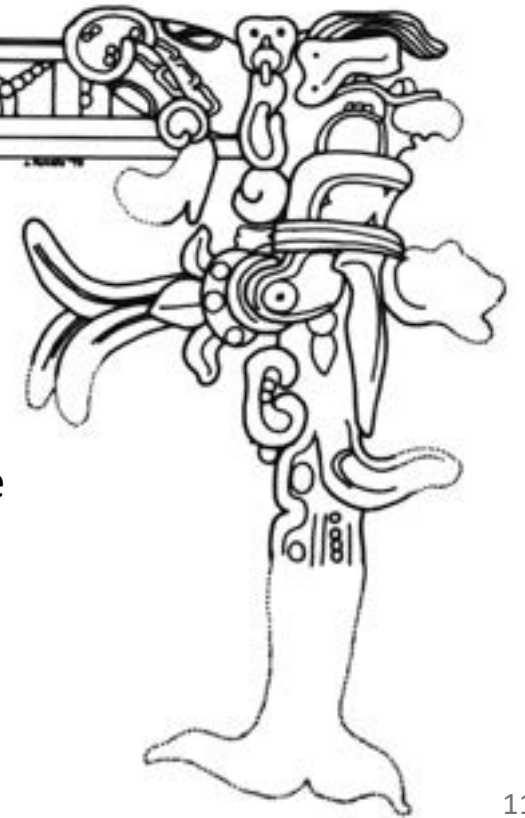
The Cosmic Monster often has the Principal Bird Deity above. In my 1980's PhD dissertation I identified this as a Snake Eating Hawk (so only a Macaw at Copan and in the Popol Vuh).

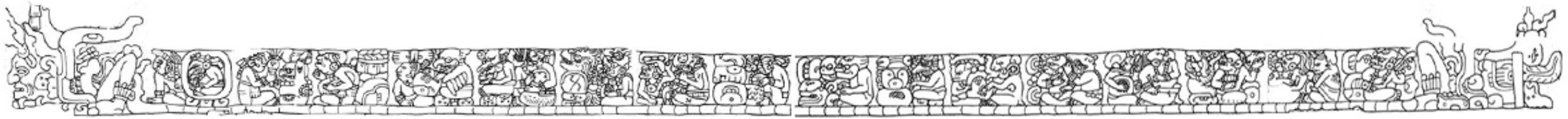


The Cosmic Monster often has a horizontal Sky Band of rectangular-framed celestial motifs. We will see later that the Sky Band can often be steps leading up to a throne room. But let's start with horizontal Cosmic Monsters with body as a Sky Band.

The tail end is usually (but not always) an upside-down Quadripartite Badge Headdress monster. Sometimes it faces up.

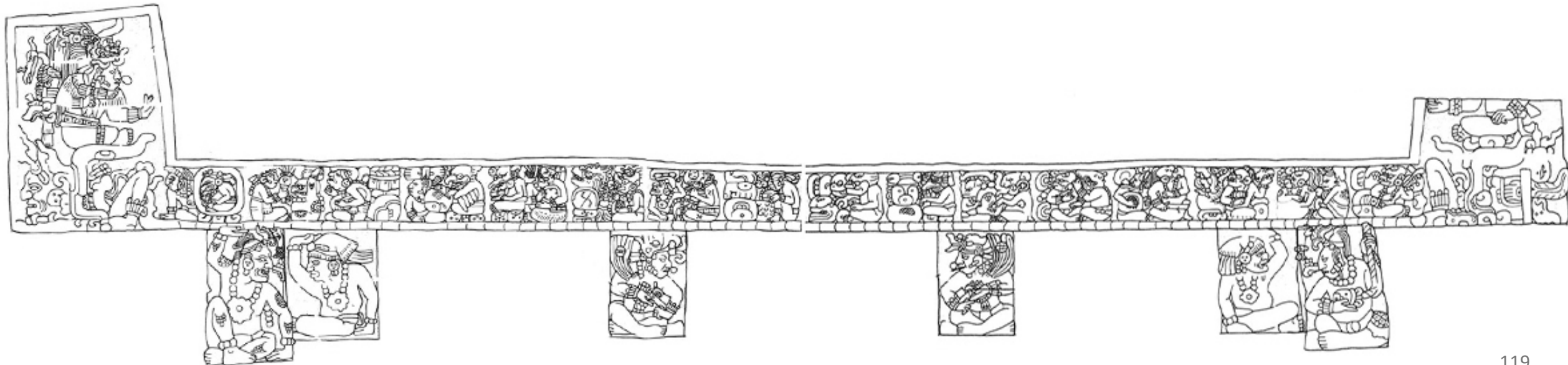
The front end is usually a crocodile or a composite crocodile-deer (ear of a deer and feet of a deer). However in some scenes the crocodile is at the right side. So LOTS for students and iconographers to study. Drawing by Linda Schele, SD-0129





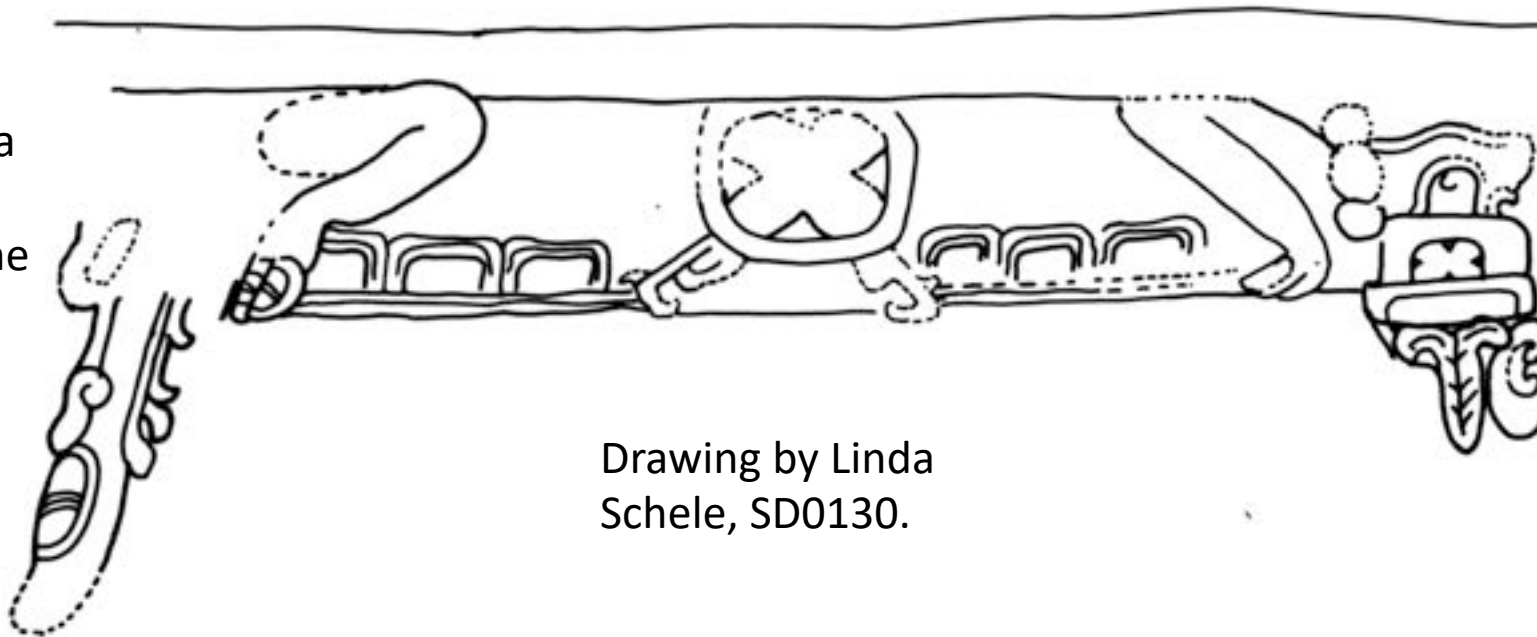
The Cosmic Monster has been studied and published by many capable iconographers. Originally it was named “Bicephalic” dragon (Two-Headed dragon). There is a Cosmic Monster featuring a crocodile at one end (shown here). There is also a Cosmic Serpent that is focused on Water Lilies (McDonald and Stross 2012). Often crocodiles and snakes are merged to create a variant composite monster.

There is also a Cosmic Shark (Christopher Layser). I have found a shark tooth featured in several Maya crocodile monsters. But now let’s look at the Cosmic Monster with crocodile aspects; Cosmic Monster with the body of a snake is also common (so no feet are shown, such as Tikal Temple IV, Lintel 3).





As traditional, the Quadripartite Badge Headdress is upside down. There are deer legs and hooves as well.



Hoof of a deer, leg of a deer; deer ear broke off long ago. Across the base are reptile underbelly designs. And the face is a lot longer and with more large separated teeth than a deer would have.

The Quadripartite Badge Headdress is upside down and usually at the end of the Cosmic Monster (but in other scenes is at the front).

Let's now go focus on Late Classic Cosmic Monsters; Palenque has more than anywhere else.

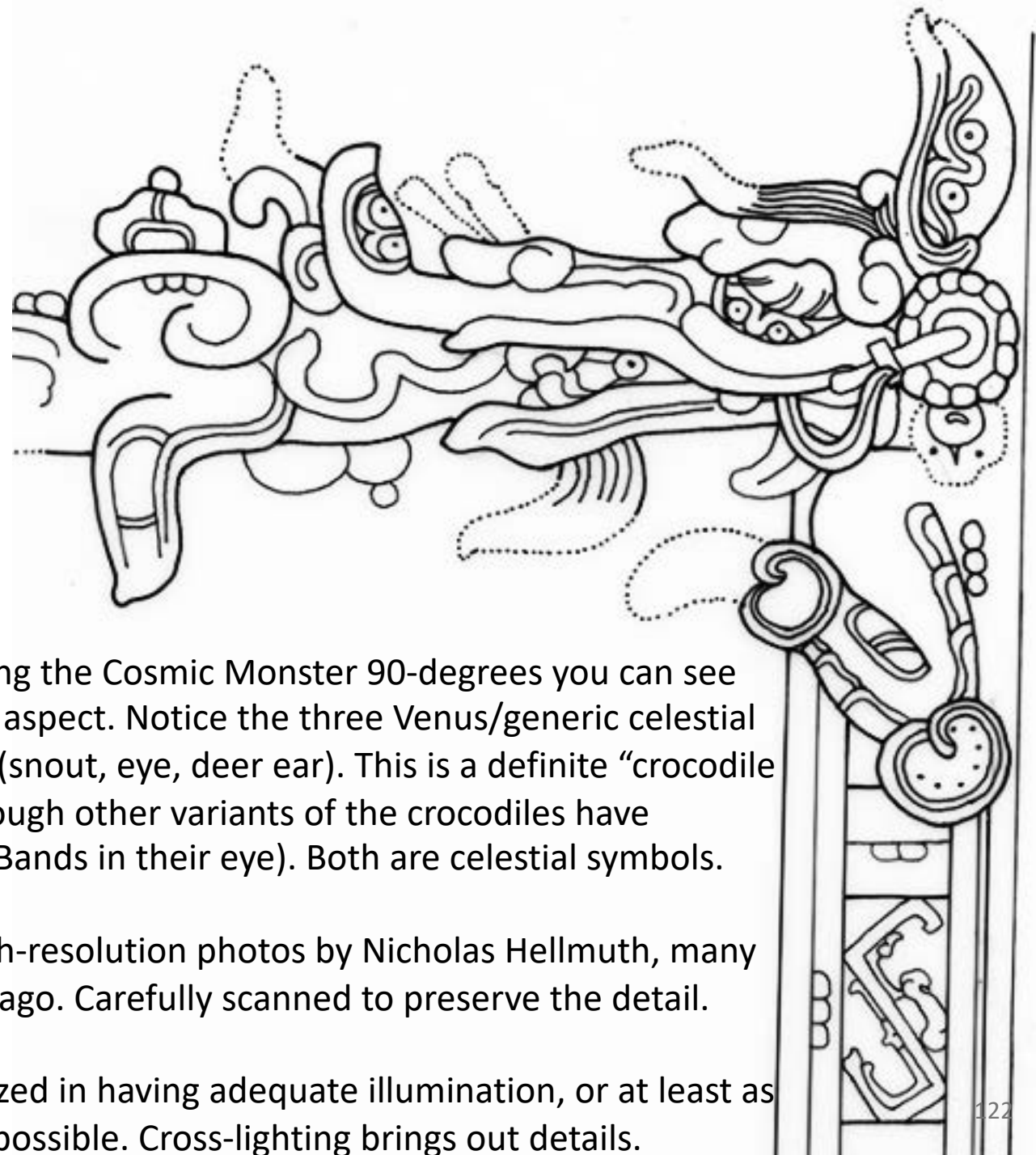
Here is the deer ear

The deer hoof
broke off decades
ago but the
shoulder and elbow
remain (we know
it's a deer leg from
lots of other
examples).

But the jaws are a
tad longer and the
Palenque artist
shows more fangs
than a deer would
have.

Stucco decoration
photographed by
Nicholas Hellmuth
decades ago.





By rotating the Cosmic Monster 90-degrees you can see the deer aspect. Notice the three Venus/generic celestial symbols (snout, eye, deer ear). This is a definite “crocodile eye” (though other variants of the crocodiles have Crossed Bands in their eye). Both are celestial symbols.

Crisp high-resolution photos by Nicholas Hellmuth, many decades ago. Carefully scanned to preserve the detail.

I specialized in having adequate illumination, or at least as good as possible. Cross-lighting brings out details.

Crocodile front of Cosmic Monster at Copan. The back is Quadripartite Badge (not upside down). Cauac Monsters are on the top and both sides (rare for a Cosmic Monster). The generic celestial symbol is often in the eye of the Starry Eye Deer, and often also in the ear. Or here, Copan CPN 25, Altar of Stela M, is just featured on the ear.

There is a separate FLAAR Report on this Copan CPN 25 Cosmic Monster being issued late August or early September 2023. That report will show front, back and both sides in high-resolution photos taken at night.

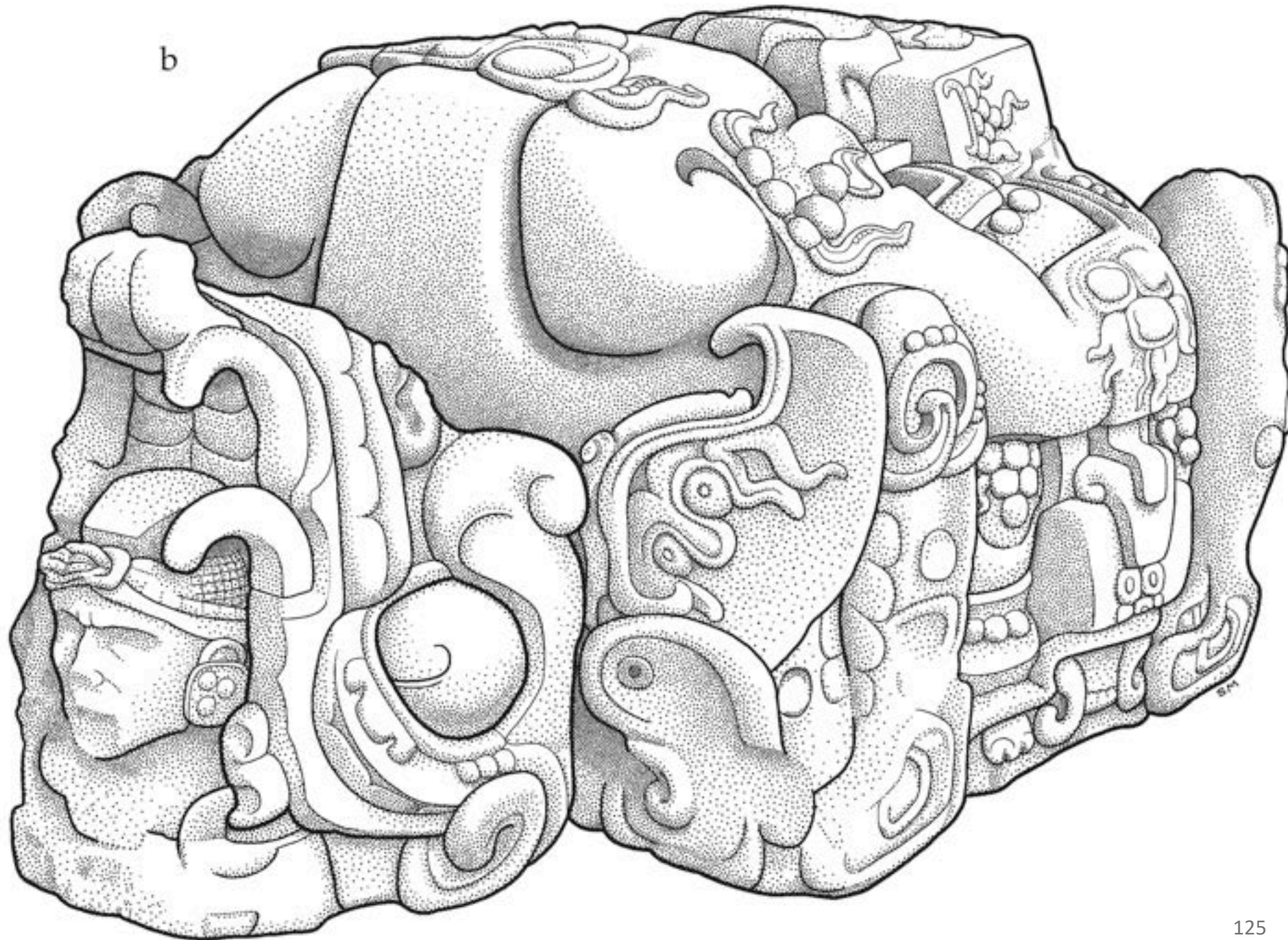




To assist recognizing the Starry Ear Deer aspect. The face is crocodile; legs and hooves are deer. We show the hooves in the separate upcoming FLAAR Report on this CPN 25, Altar of Copan Stela M.



This drawing by Simon Martin is the most helpful style of illustrating a deep-relief 3-dimensional zoomorphic altar. Each different style helps, but this image shows the Old Man God coming out of the open jaws of the crocodile; shows the Cauac Monster at top and right side. And especially, shows the deer ear with generic celestial symbol. Plus, this drawing documents that this crocodile's eye has neither Crossed-Bands nor the Starry Eye. Martin 2015: Fig. 39,b. That excellent article is worth reading.

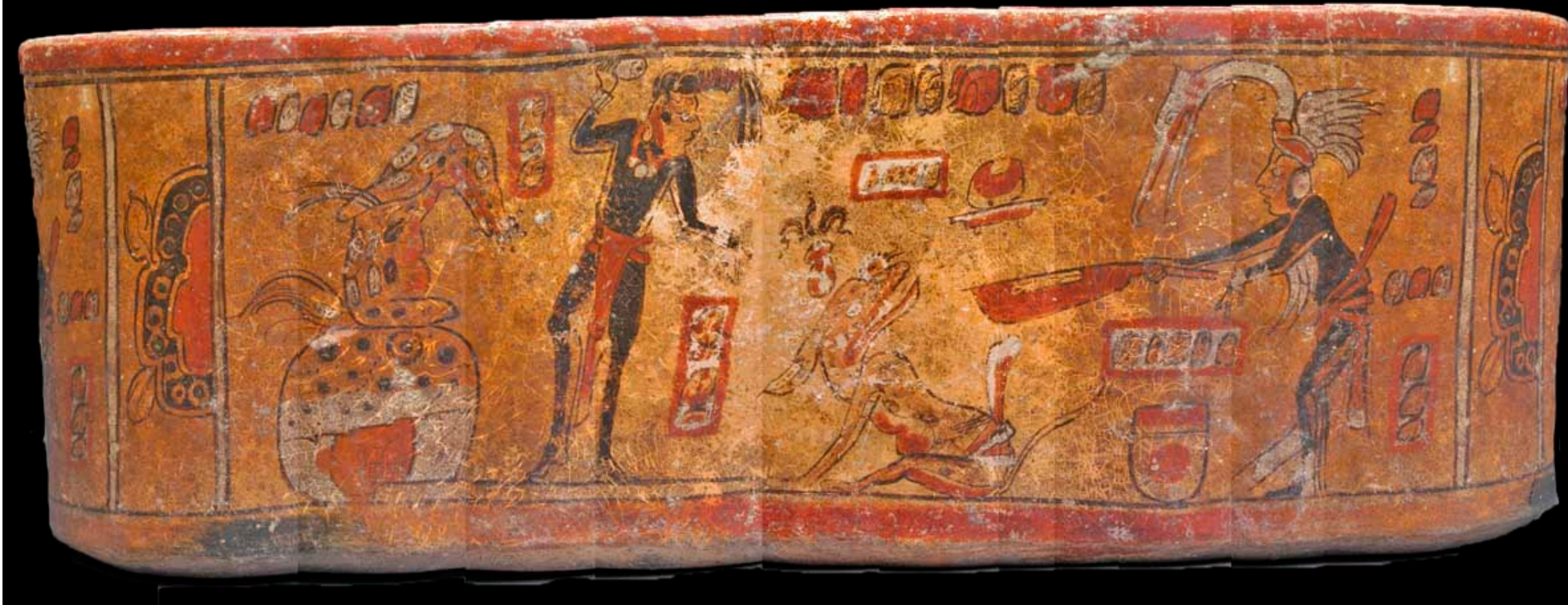


The deer aspect is clearly emphasized in this Palenque stucco. Above is the Cosmic monster with “crocodile” head at left (with deer feet).

Below is a “Deer Snake” (no crocodile) but fingers instead of hooves.

Drawing by Linda Schele, SD130.





Deer with oval designs on their bodies, that remind me of some stylized crocodiles. Deer with elongated mouths; the one seated in humanoid form has its mouth opened in a crocodile-like manner. Kerr manual rollout, K9149. I show these two deer in close-up view on the next page. I am curious whether the “crocodile-like” row of oval symbols on these deer has been commented on before?



Deer with oval designs on their bodies, that remind me of some stylized crocodiles. Deer with elongated mouths; the one seated in humanoid form has its mouth opened in a crocodile-like manner. Kerr manual rollout, K9149. ¹²⁸

Cropped by Hellmuth so you can see the reptile scales, the iguana-like crest on its top middle, and its deer hooves on the front leg.

The face of the creature is not the length of a normal crocodile but I would need to check whether an iguana has three teeth in this position and size. Potentially a composite: deer, crocodile, iguana-sized head.

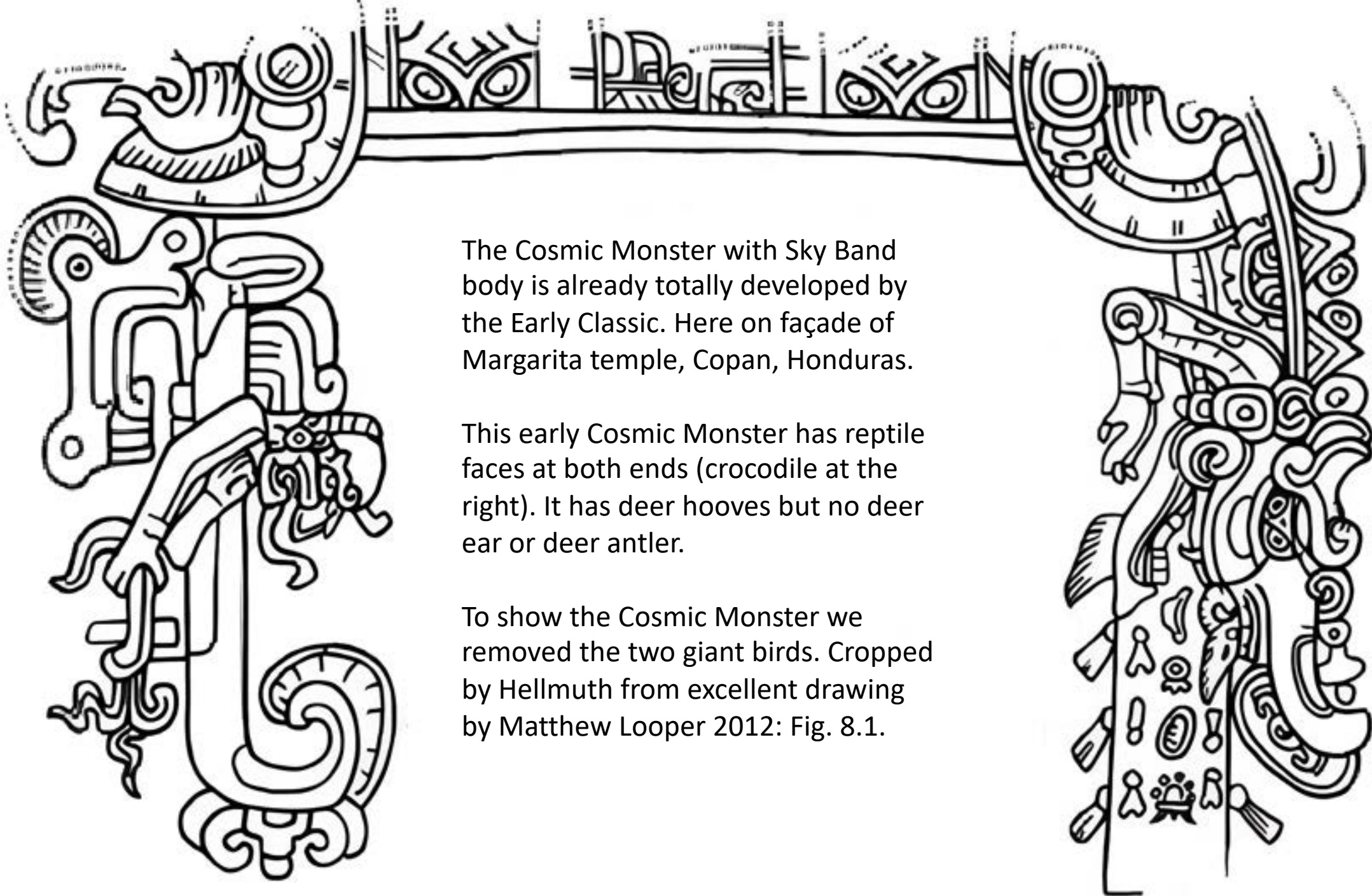
The body is a traditional Sky Band, but not many reptile belly scales are shown.

This Cosmic Monster is “up in the sky”.

This scene is in hundreds of articles and web pages and in many books.



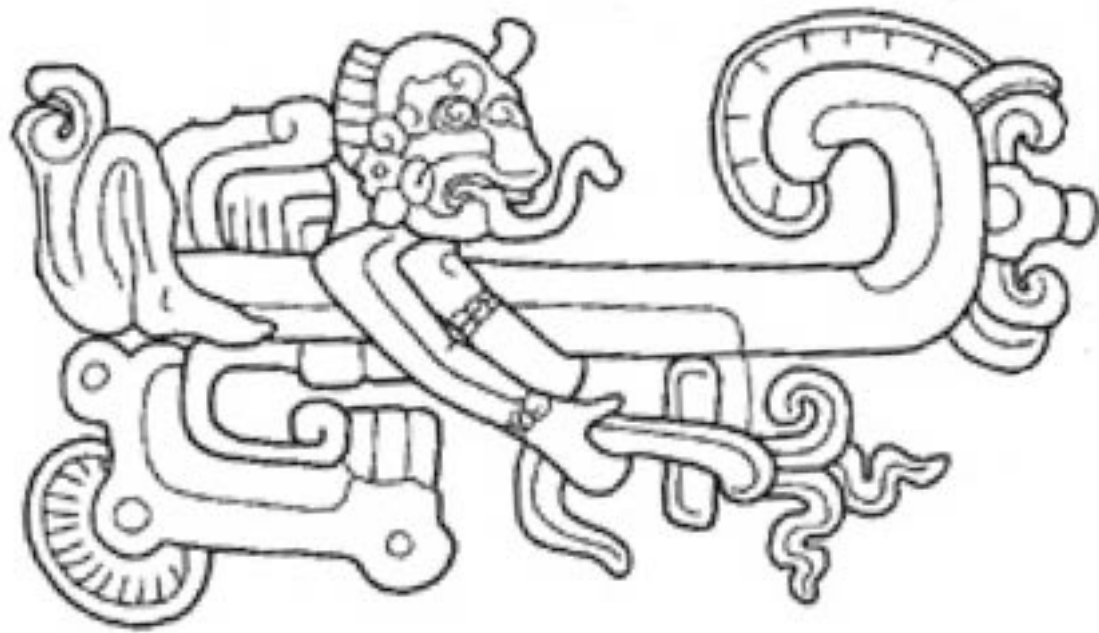
Codex
Dresden
LXXIV,
Villacorta
and
Villacorta
page 158.



The Cosmic Monster with Sky Band body is already totally developed by the Early Classic. Here on façade of Margarita temple, Copan, Honduras.

This early Cosmic Monster has reptile faces at both ends (crocodile at the right). It has deer hooves but no deer ear or deer antler.

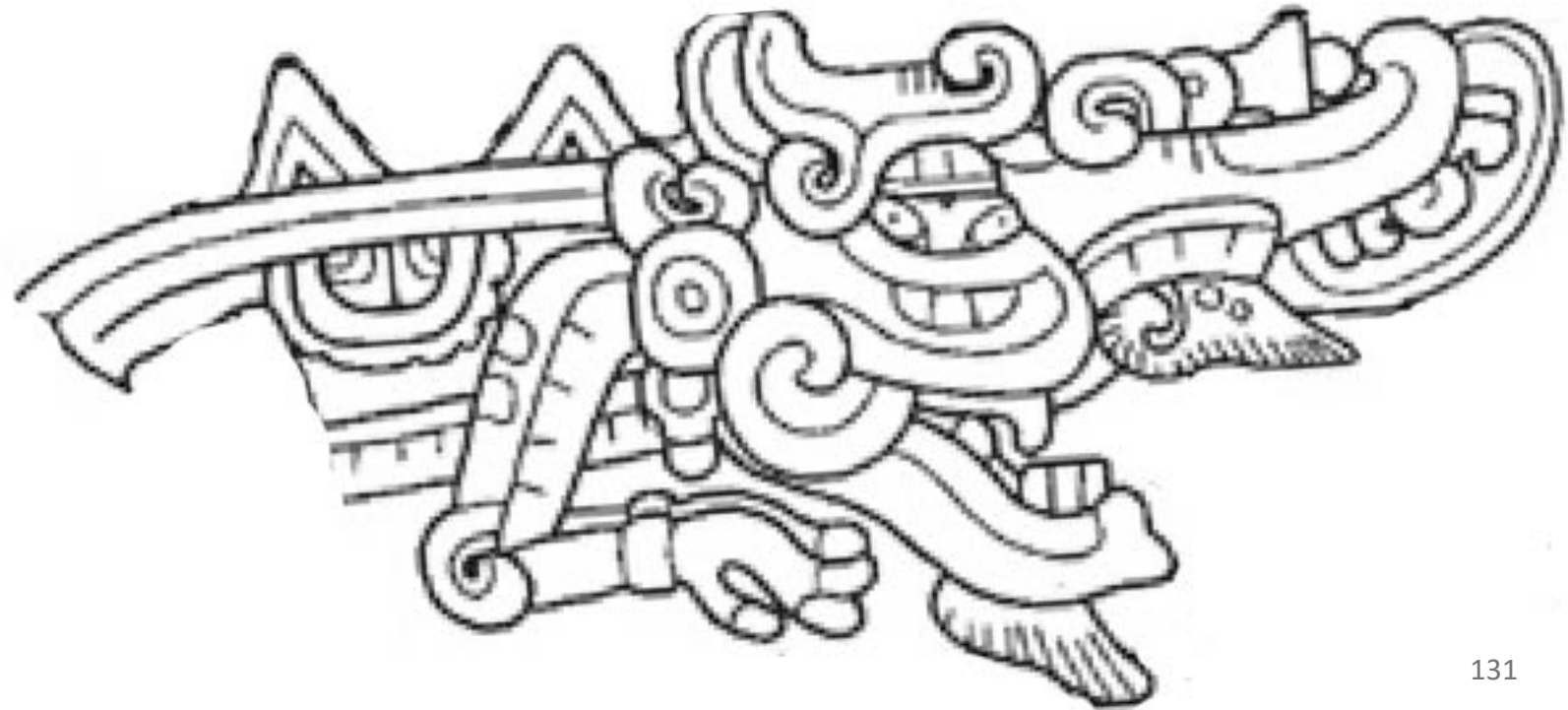
To show the Cosmic Monster we removed the two giant birds. Cropped by Hellmuth from excellent drawing by Matthew Looper 2012: Fig. 8.1.



I enlarge each drawing on a 32" 4K monitor (5K is too expensive and 4K is enough, unless you win the Lottery). Once the drawing is enlarged I use Photoshop with a white brush to remove the areas so we can all focus on the aspects that I am working on.

Cropped by Hellmuth from excellent drawing by Matthew Looper 2012: Fig. 8.1. Copan, Margarita stucco.

Crocodile at right has human-fingers but the upper arm has reptile scale marks. Front fang is what I prefer to call a shark's tooth. Eye is of a Starry Eye Deer. No deer ear is present.

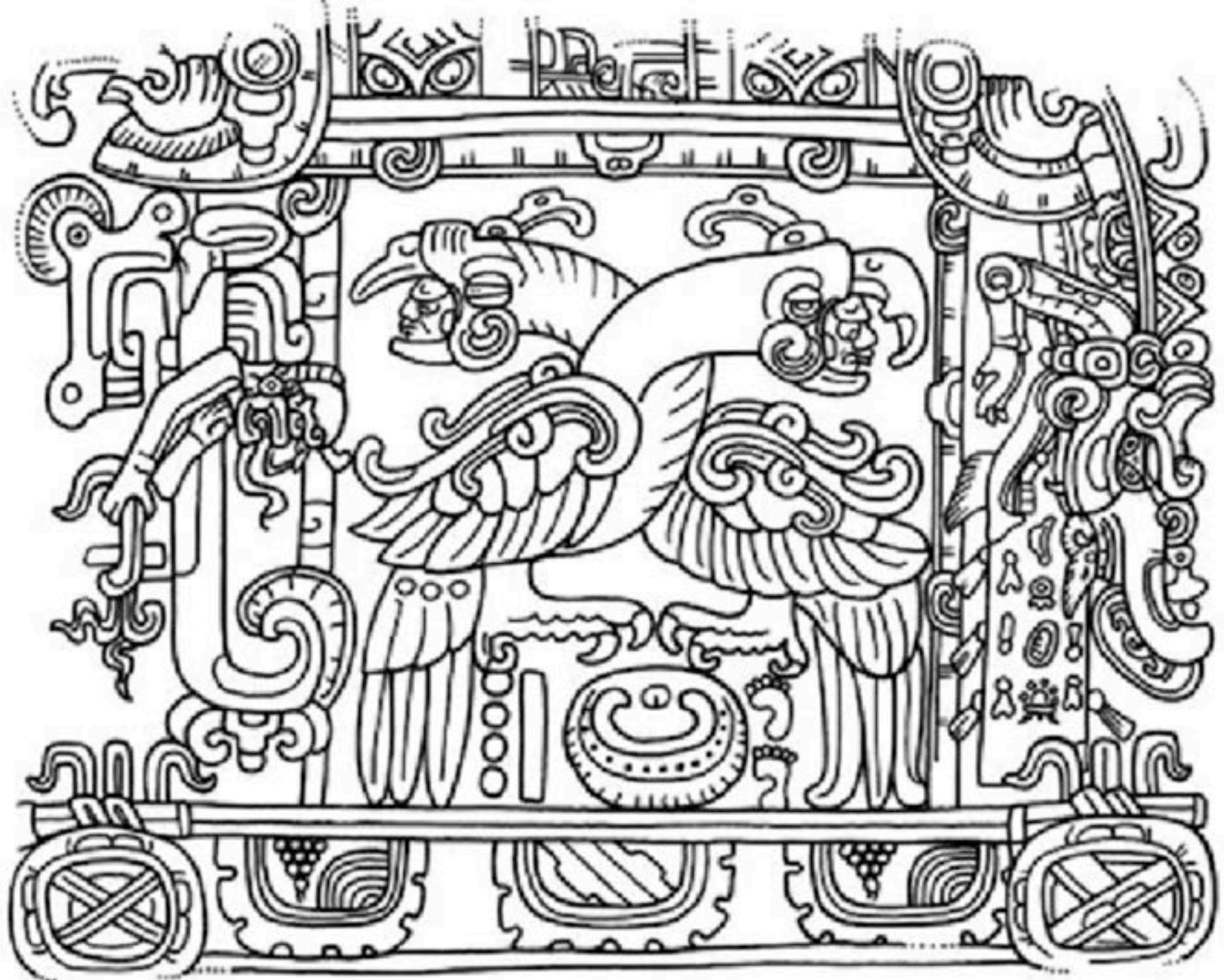


This is the whole scene.

Excellent line drawing by Matthew Looper (Looper 2012: Fig. 8.1).

This Cosmic Monster is crossing the sky.

Birds crossing their necks are also found (in rare instances) on Tzakol basal flange polychrome painted ceramics (but not surrounded by a Cosmic Monster).





Cropped and rotated by Hellmuth from excellent drawing of Copan Margarita façade by Matthew Looper 2012: Fig. 8.1. The eye here is the Starry Eyed Deer version.



The Crossed-Bands eye is used by crocodiles that have either no deer features (as here) or few deer features. The shark's tooth on the base of the Crocodile Tree of the Deletaille Tripod is almost identical to that on the Margarita façade of Copan. Both are Early Classic. Cropped from excellent drawing by Lin Crocker.



It helps to pull out each aspect that you wish to study. Once pulled out, you can see the shark's tooth on Tikal Stela 31 is very similar to the Early Classic crocodile on Margarita façade and the Deletaille Tripod.

The incised cylindrical tripod and the Tikal crocodile have crossed bands in their eyes. The crocodile of Margarita has a generic celestial (Venus) symbol.

All three have the same shark's tooth.



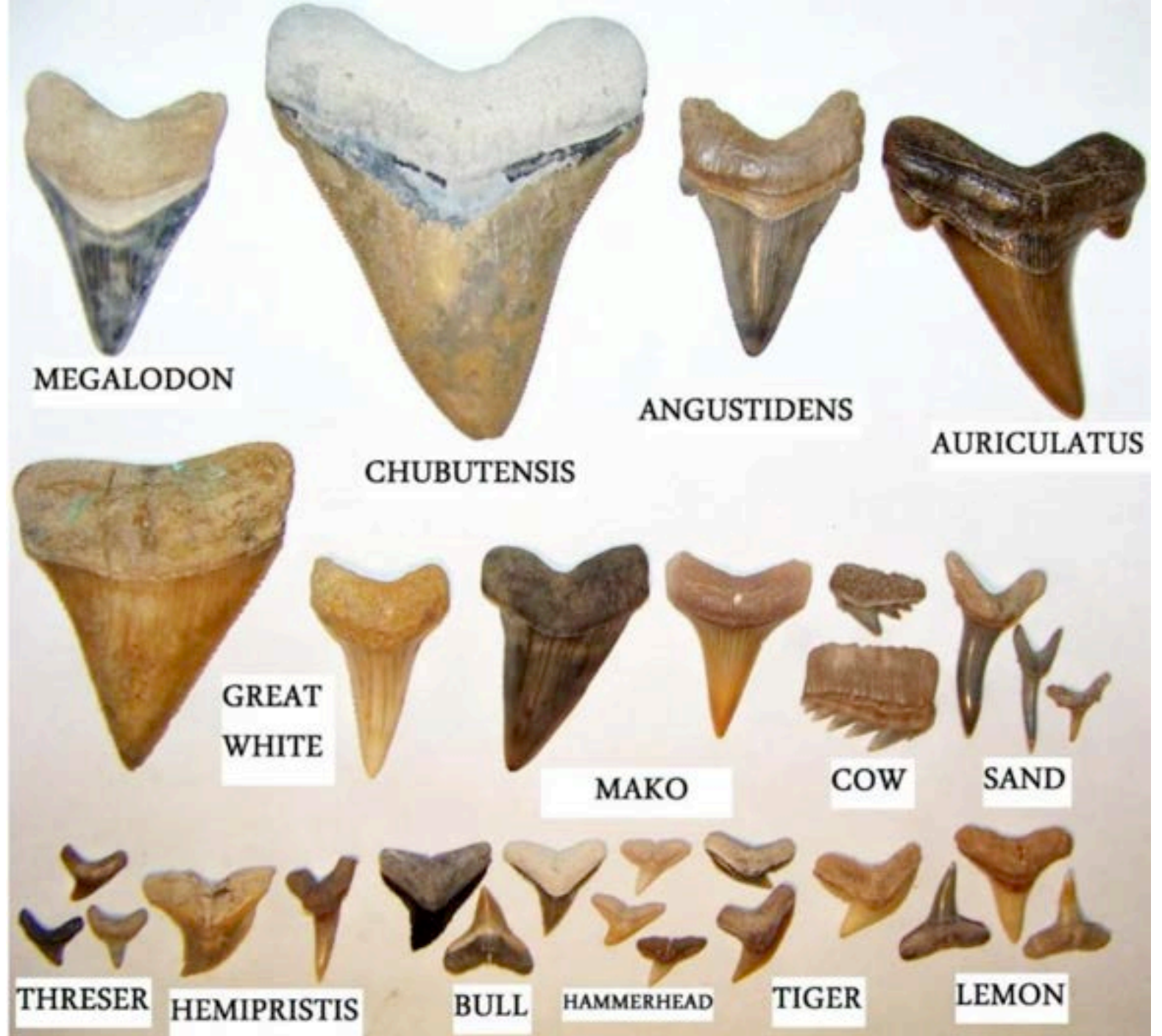
Cropped and rotated by Hellmuth from drawing of Tikal Stela 31 by John Montgomery, JM00852.

I do not accept this "tooth" as a stingray spine whatsoever.



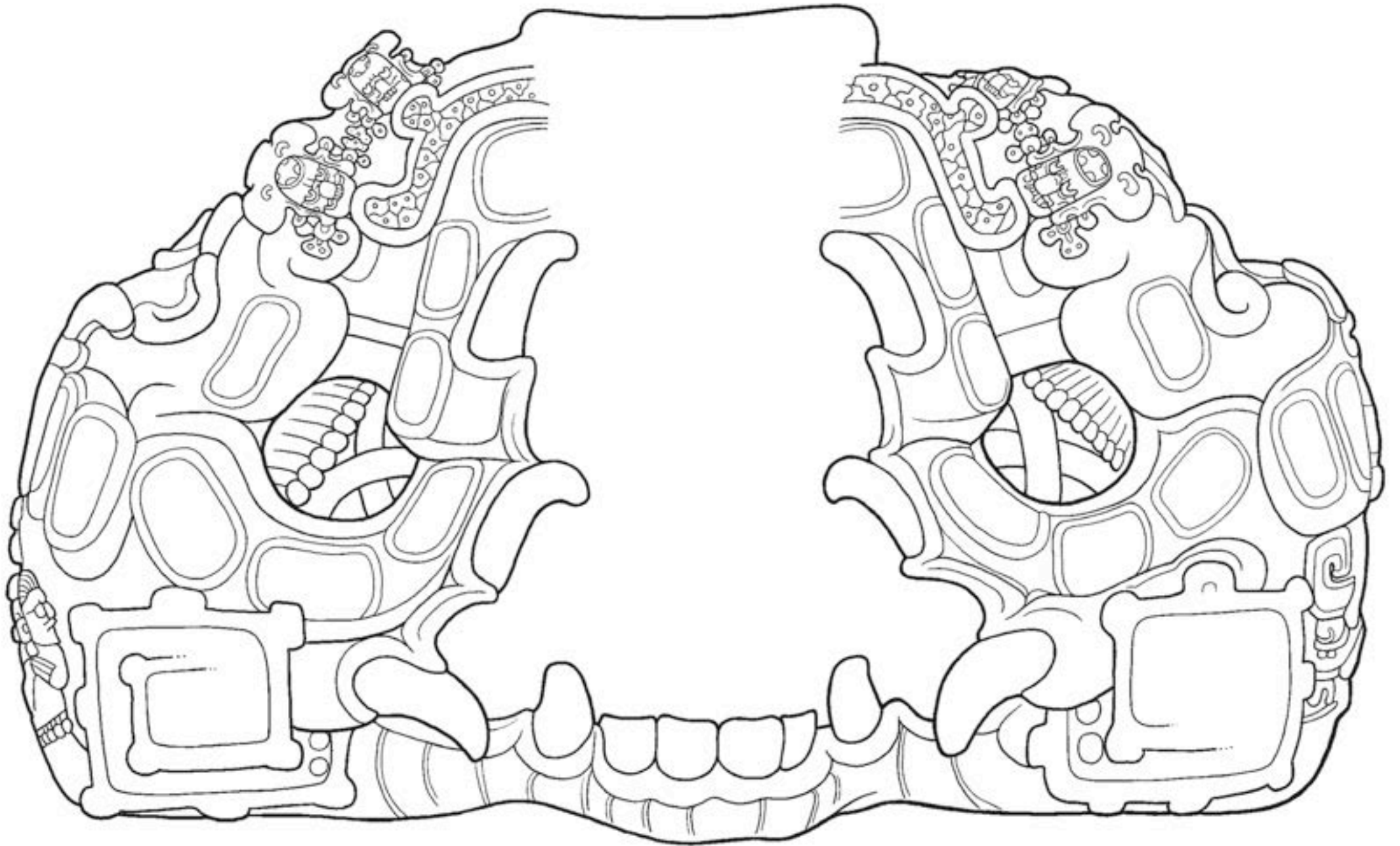
There will be a FLAAR Report on the central fang of Maya deities and monsters by September. But since these same front fangs are on the Cosmic Monster.

Downloaded from fossil.fandom.com, https://fossil.fandom.com/wiki/Shark_teeth?file=SHARKTEETHOVERVIEWID.jpg

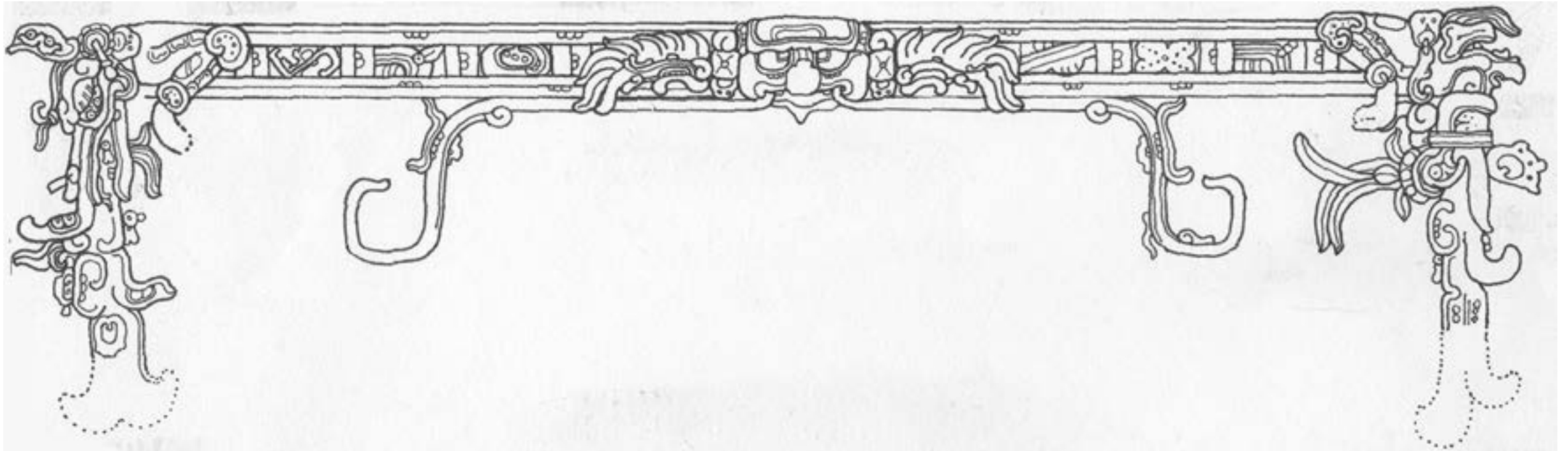


Crossed-Bands
celestial
symbol as
the eye of
a crocodile
rendition
is crucial
to find and
document.

This is one
of the best
and most
helpful line
drawings
of this
Quirigua
monument



Quirigua, Zoomorph P, front, drawn by Simon Martin after Maudslay 1989-1902,2: Plate 558,c (Martin 2015: Fig. 15,a)³⁵

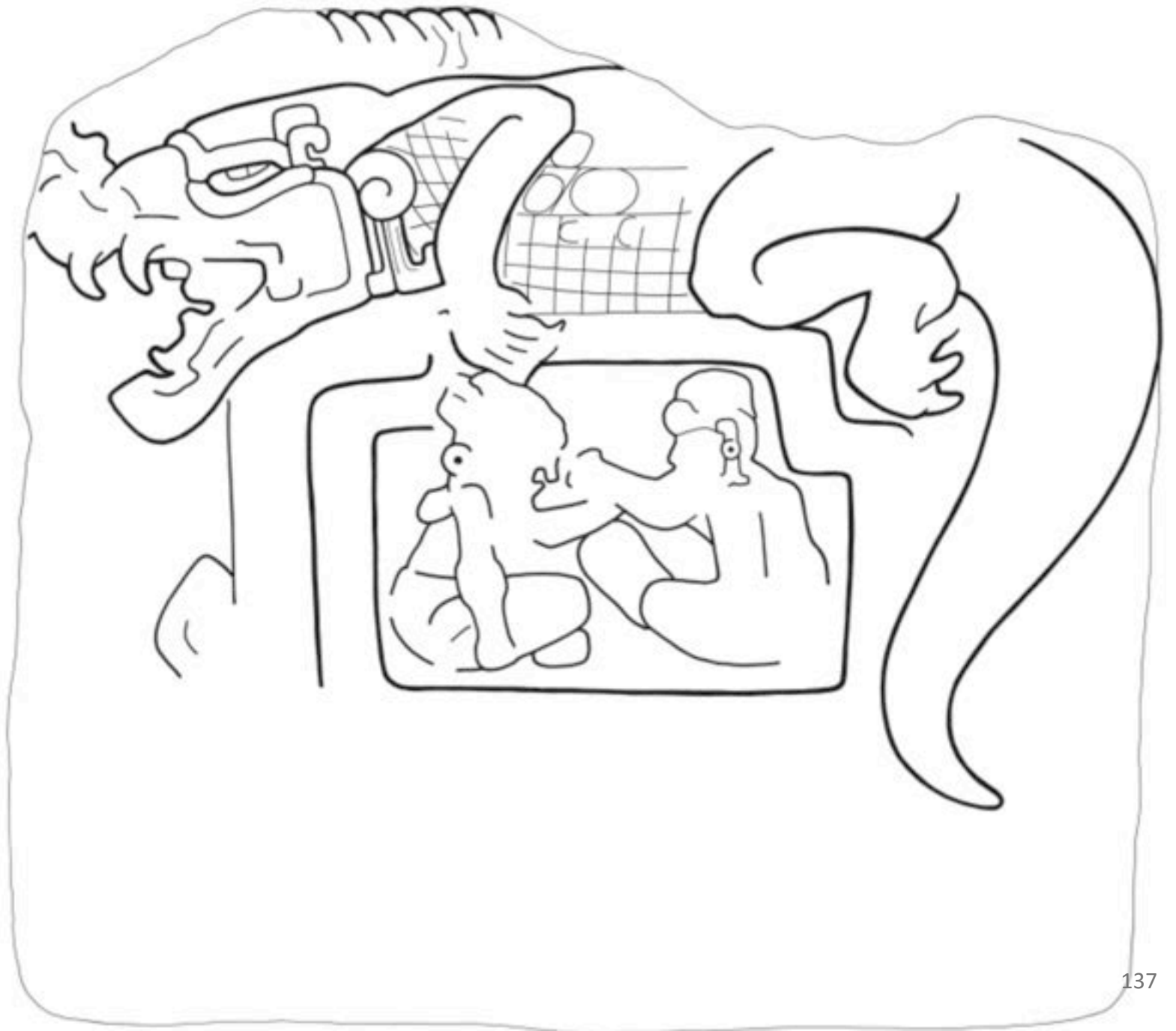


Some of the Crocodiles have Crossed Bands in their eyes. But when at the end of a Cosmic Monster, the deer-ish “crocodile” have generic sky (Venus) symbols. Cropped from various drawings, Simon Martin, Linda Schele.

Crocodiles are found “up in the sky” and “down in Xibalba.” So here is a ferocious crocodile over the four-sided Cave Entrance to the Underworld, Izapa Stela 1.

Since crocodiles are rarely adjacent to the cave entrance, it is important to show this, but the main theme of the present chapter is the crocodile at the front of the Cosmic Monster.

Cropped for this lecture from excellent drawing by Moreno in Moreno and Clark 2007: Fig. 13.15.





Sky Band celestial symbols across the middle.

Humanized size deer arm and deer leg with deer hoof clearly visible. Bottom of the arm has reptile scales.

Reptile with open fanged mouth has deity head sticking out (but is not God N). Reptile jaws are not very long (no space).

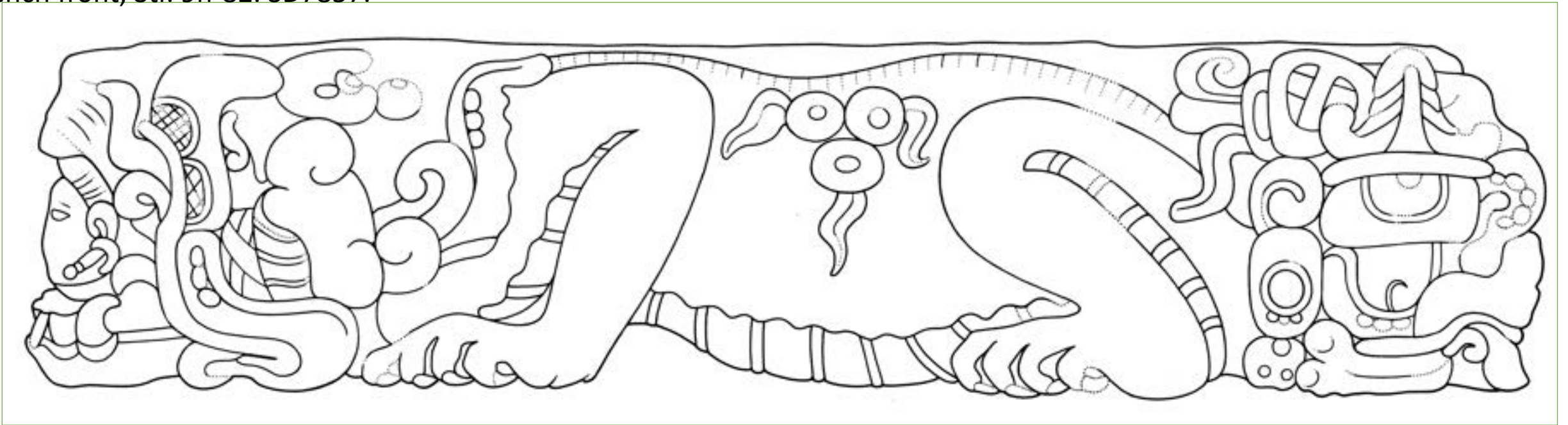
Venus celestial symbol is the eye of the reptile and in the ear of the deer.

Need to find a line drawing and to ID this fragment. 138

Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth many decades ago.

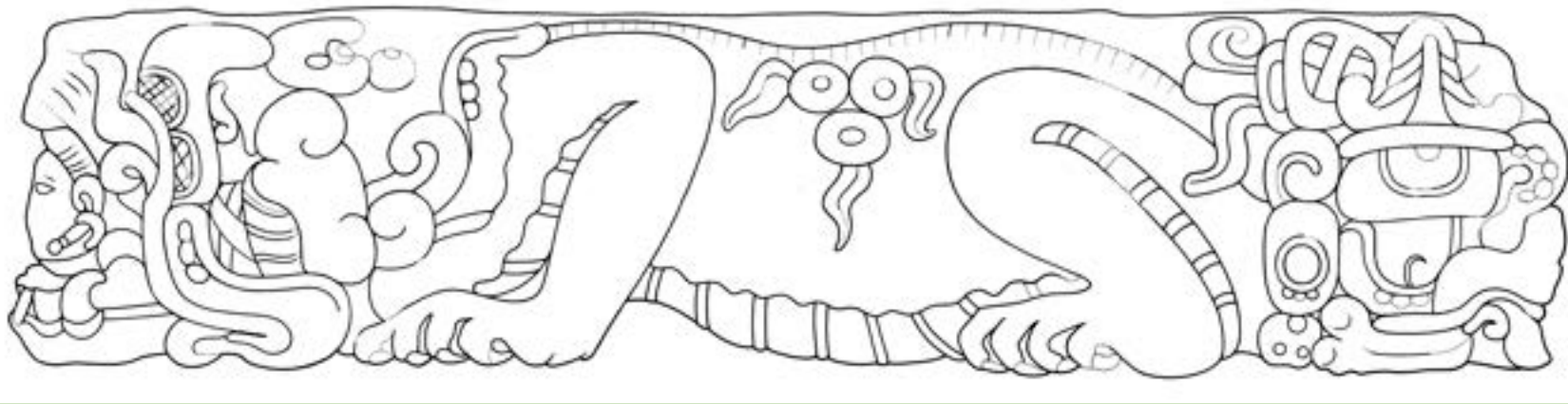


Most databases of drawings are not adequate for digital research; the files of Schele's great drawings are crudely pixellated for publication. This is because most web servers cannot handle the "weight" of heavy files. So all files are low-resolution (even when you Click to supposedly get better resolution; yes, its better than the wimpy web images but still not adequate). Copan, bench front, Str. 9n-82. SD7857.



But we were able to copy-and-paste this excellent resolution image from Baudez, Figure 67. Drawing by A. Blanck, Copan CPN82, Altar 41. We enlarge the image on a 32" 4K monitor (so it has larger file size) then reduce it to page size with great resolution.

It really helps to have a line drawing by an illustrator who knows and respects Maya iconography.



Drawing by A. Blanck, Baudez Fig. 67.

CPN 82, Altar 41.

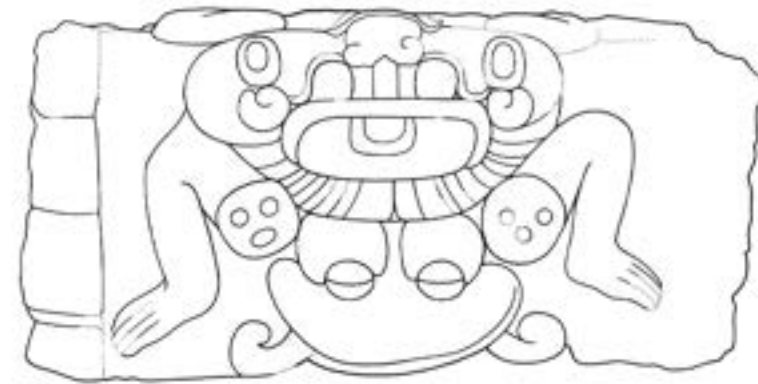
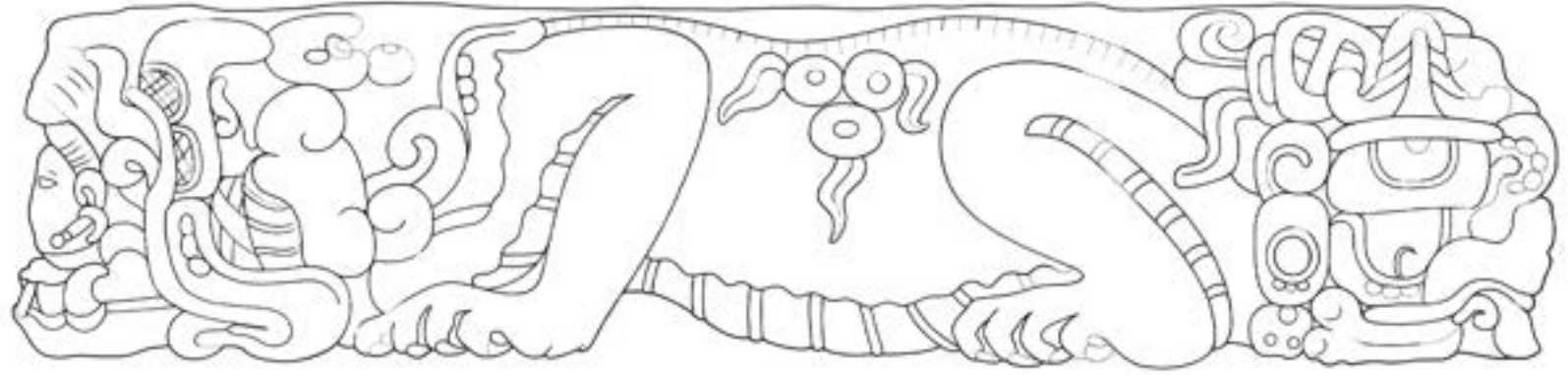
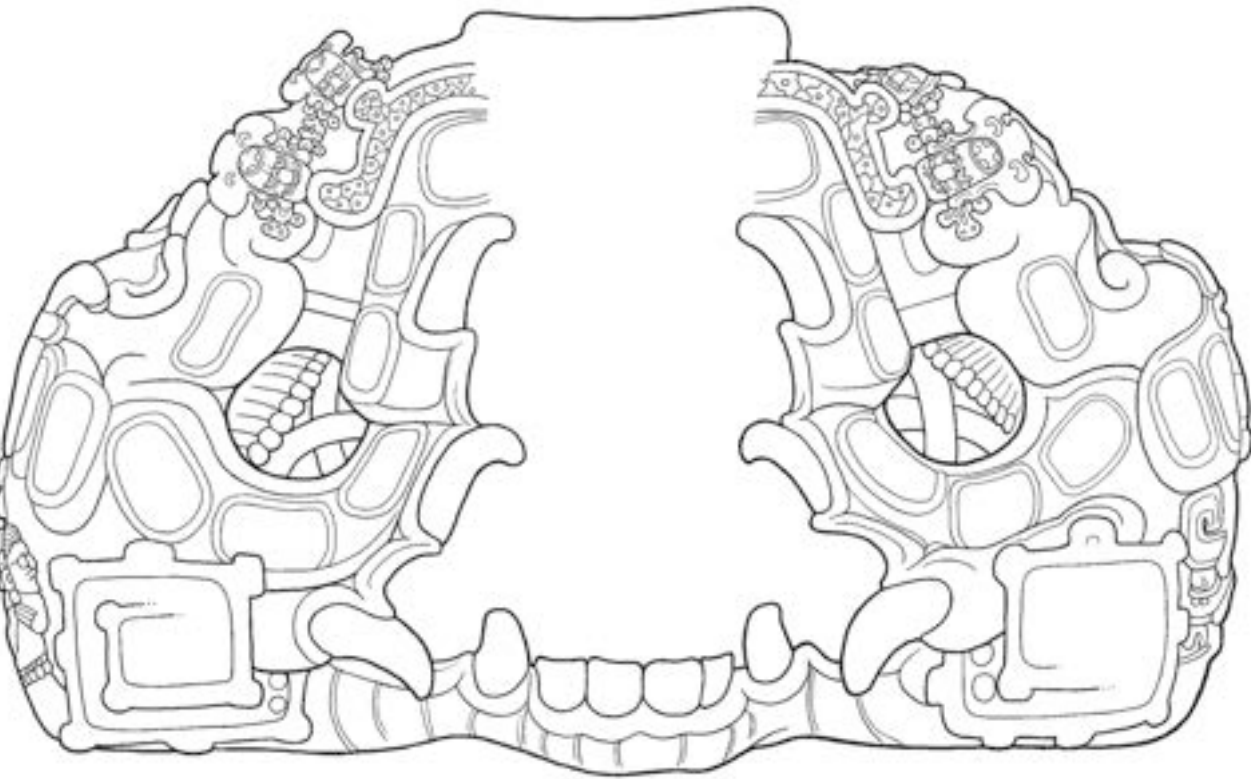


Crocodile head is at the left. Eye has crossed bands (typical for many but not all crocodiles).

Quadripartite Badge Head is at the right, but is not upside down.

Body is crocodile, with slightly humanized shape of legs. No Sky Band across the body.

Baudez, Figure 67. Drawing by A. Blanck, Copan CPN82, Altar 41.

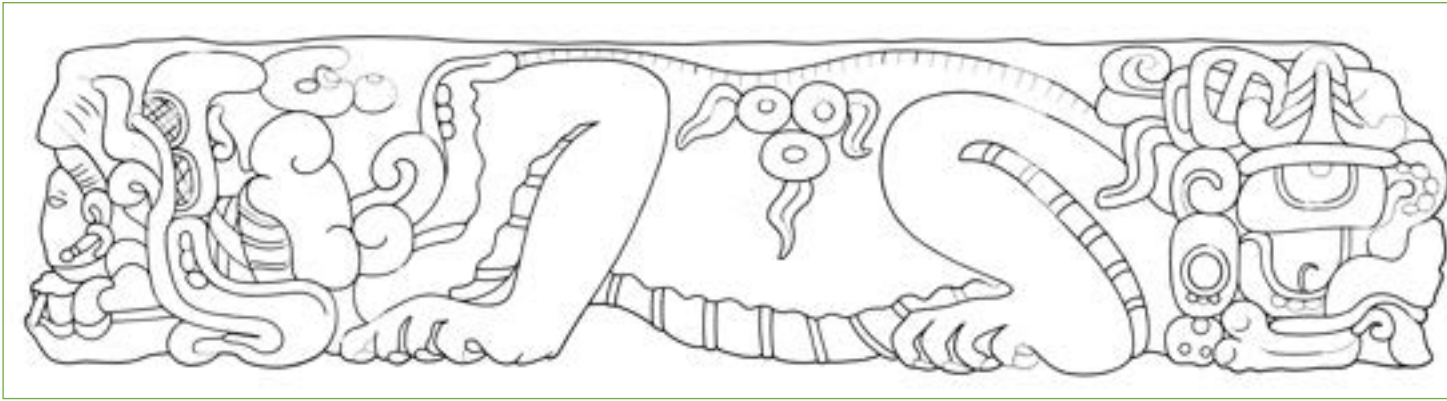


B

FIG. 67 CPN 82: (a) east side; (b) north side. Drawings by A. Blanck.

This Cosmic Monster has a “Bufo Toad” on north side of CPN 82, with other features that we are working on for a separate upcoming lecture on Bufo Toads (occasionally composite with iguana). Drawing by A. Blanck.

Most Crocodile heads on Cosmic Monster have deer features and the eyes have Generic celestial/Venus sign. Here at Quirigua Zoomorph P the crocodile has Crossed Bands. Drawing by Simon Martin after Maudslay; Martin 2015: Fig.15,a.

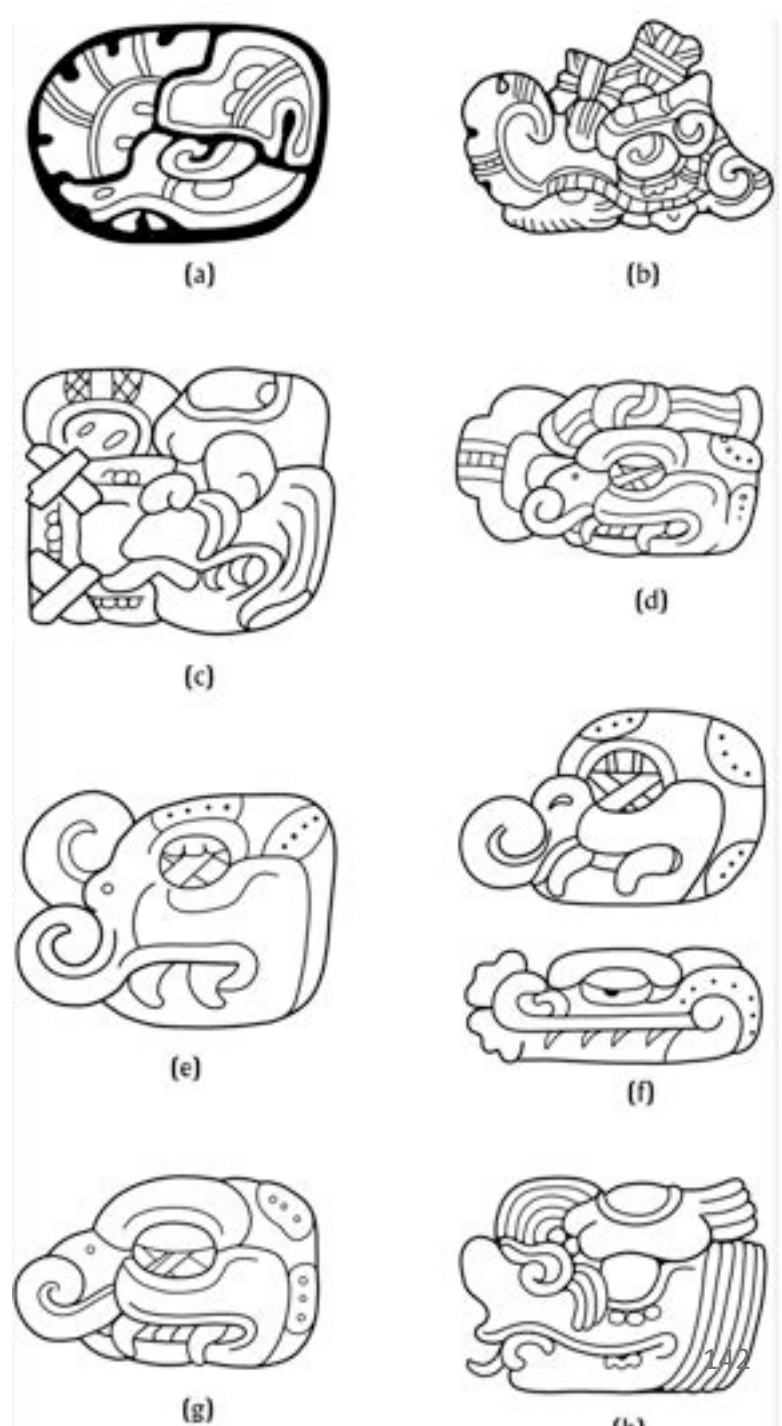


The Crossed Bands in the eye of 3-dimensional crocodile renditions adds support for recognizing crocodiles in hieroglyphic inscriptions (but not all eyes even of actual crocodiles will be Crossed-Bands...).

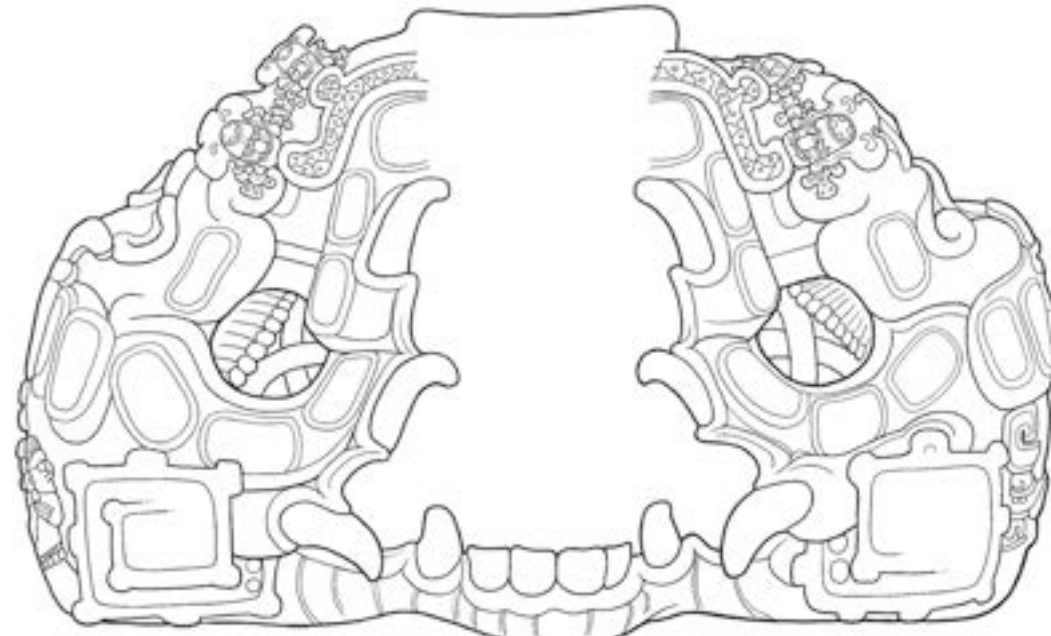
The “Starry Eyed Deer-Crocodile” have a different eye (generic celestial/Venus “Starry” sign).

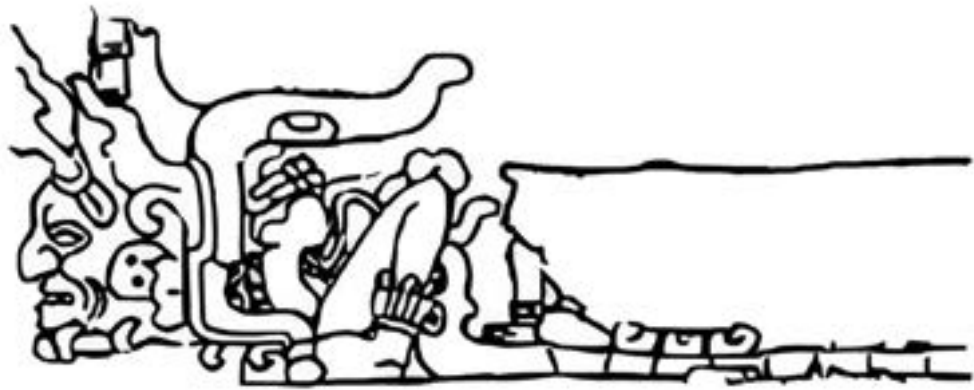
Would be very helpful for an epigrapher or student to publish the hieroglyph for that variant since most of the crocodile hieroglyphs have Crossed Bands or a simple eye-curl (no generic celestial symbol). So why do some have the celestial symbol and others not???

The glyphs at the right are from the excellent research and publications by Prudence Rice on the Maya site in Peten that is, literally, modeled after a crocodile pattern. Her b, d, e, f, and g are obvious crocodiles, albeit shortened since there is not space in a hieroglyph for the complete length of a crocodile jaw.



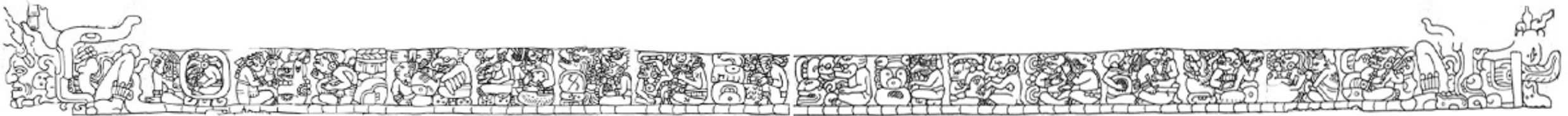
Quirigua Zoomorph P crocodile has Crossed Bands in its eye. Drawing by Simon Martin after Maudslay; Martin 2015: Fig.15,a.

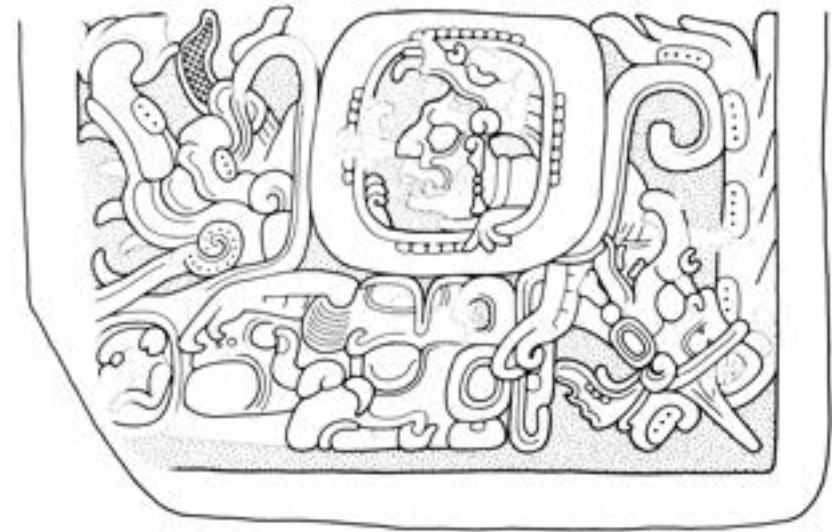




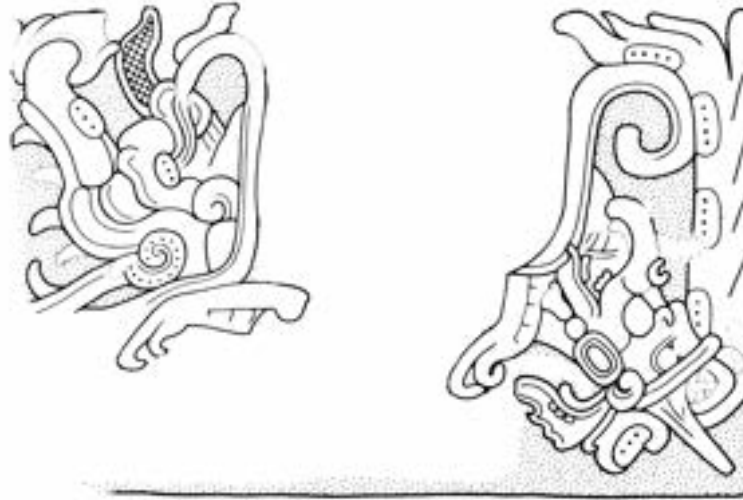
You can see the
Quadripartite Badge
Headdress Deity best if
you turn it upwards. 90%
of these Quadriparte
Badge Headdress long-
snouted monsters are
just the face (though you
can consider the
attached reptile as its
body).

Cosmic Monster, Copan
Str. 9N-82, cropped by
Hellmuth from drawing
by Linda Schele, SD-7657-

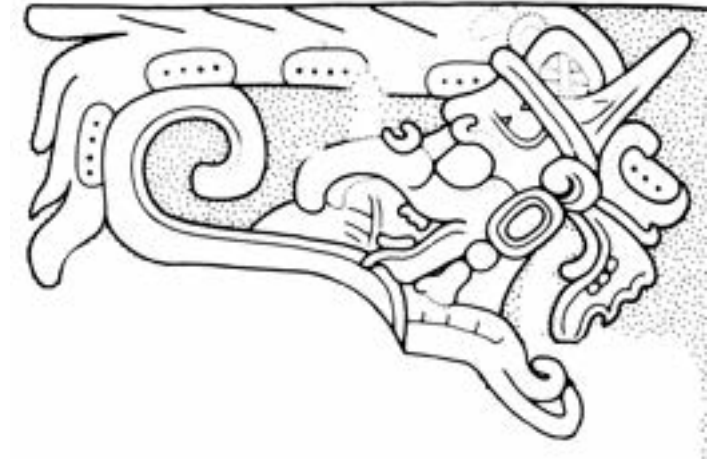




Cosmic Monster but other than two heads, two limbs, and tail, does not have space for the usual body.



This Cosmic Monster has no Starry Eye, no deer hooves. Plus a total crocodile tail rises straight up. Yet this Cosmic Monster has a complete "upside down" Quadripartite Badge Headdress Monster at the end of the body before the tail starts.



Quadripartite Badge Headdress rotated to make it easier to see.

You can digitally separate each feature of each complex scene. Separated by Karla Cho from helpful drawing by Tate 1992: Fig. 25b, Yaxchilan Structure 44, Step III.

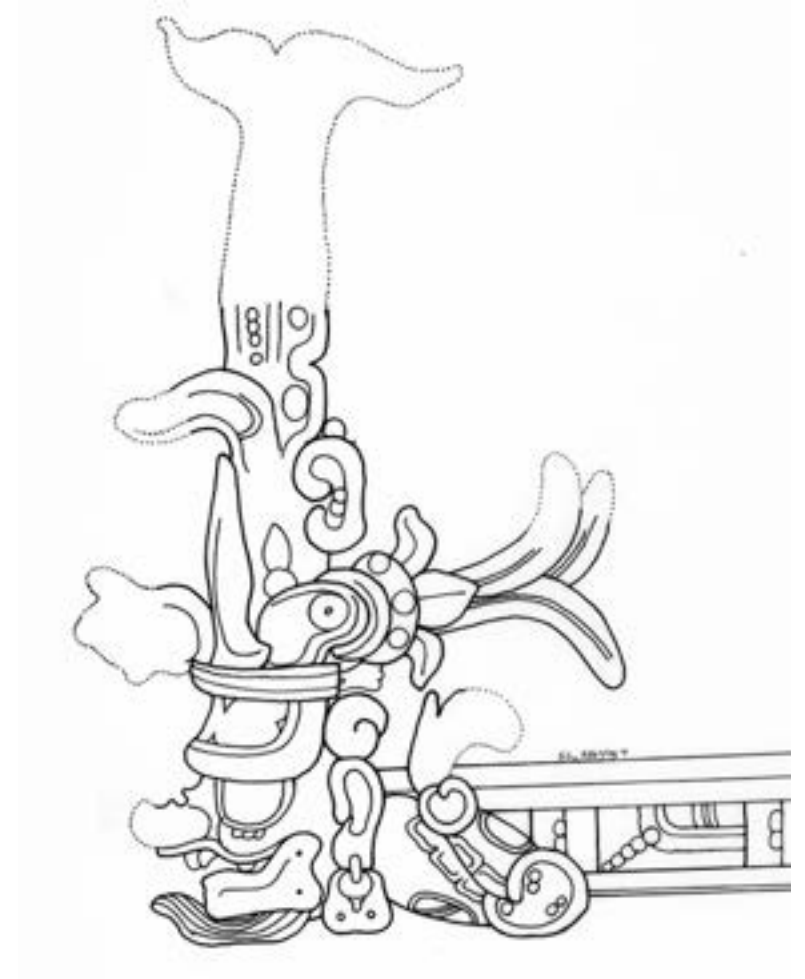
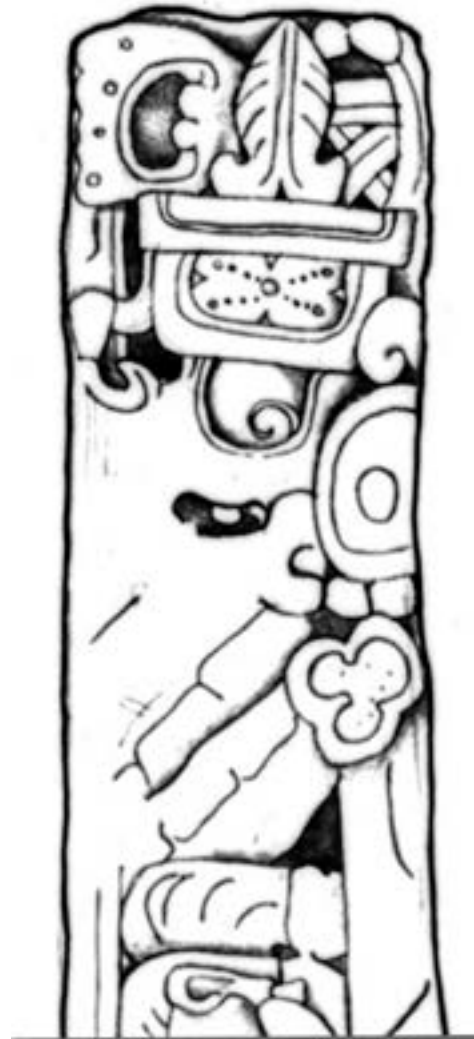


Kin is missing
from forehead area.

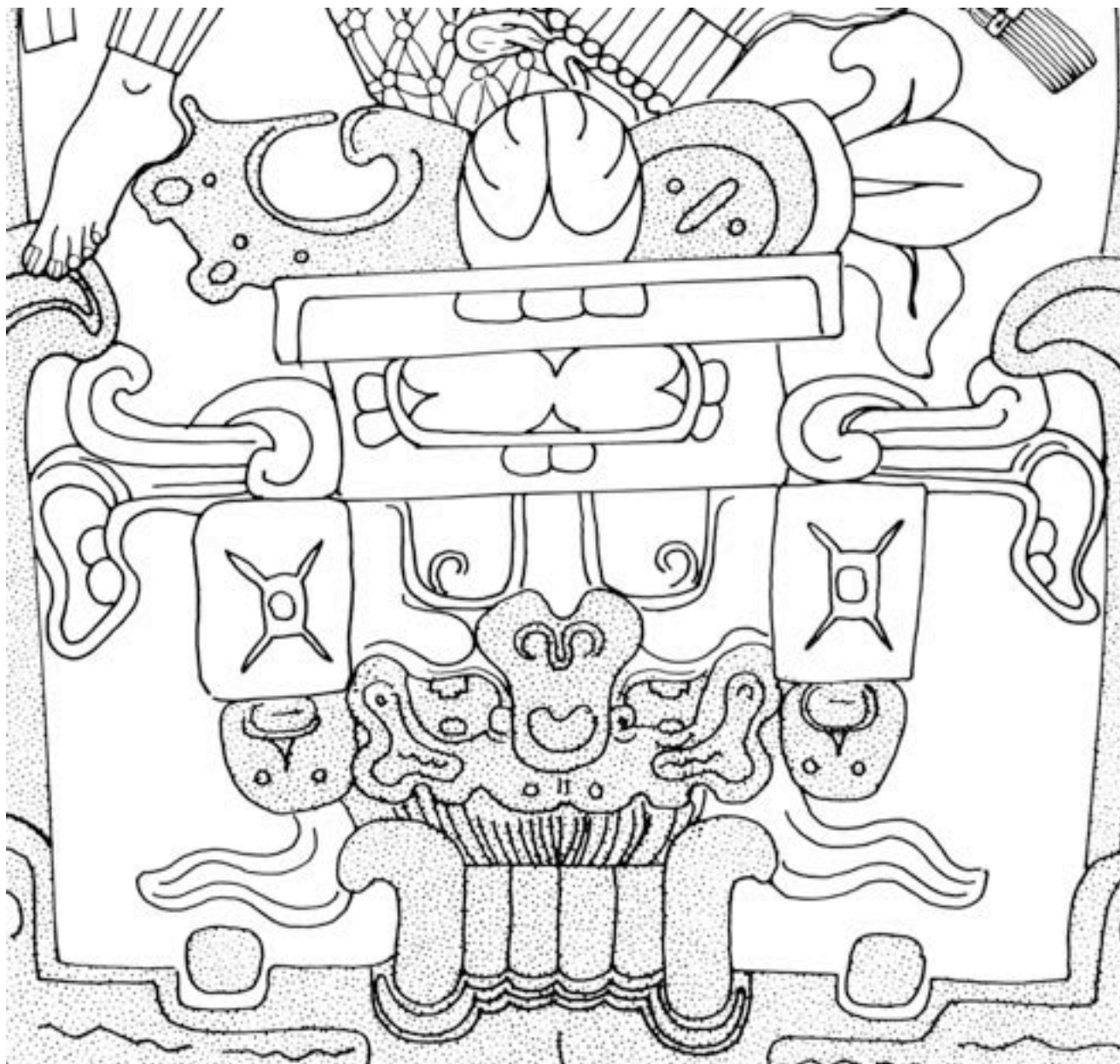
Quadripartite Badge Headdress has four aspects:

1. 4-petalled Kin-like glyph over the forehead.
2. Raised exaggerated stingray spine standing up.
3. Bivalve shell on left (usually, can be on right)
4. Crossed Bands in cartouche on the right (or left)

Note that all three have a bone for the lower jaw.



Frontal
Quadripartite
Badge,
cropped from
Palenque
Sarcophagus
cover.



Three
Divisions of
Maya World,
Robertson,
Vol I, Fig.145.

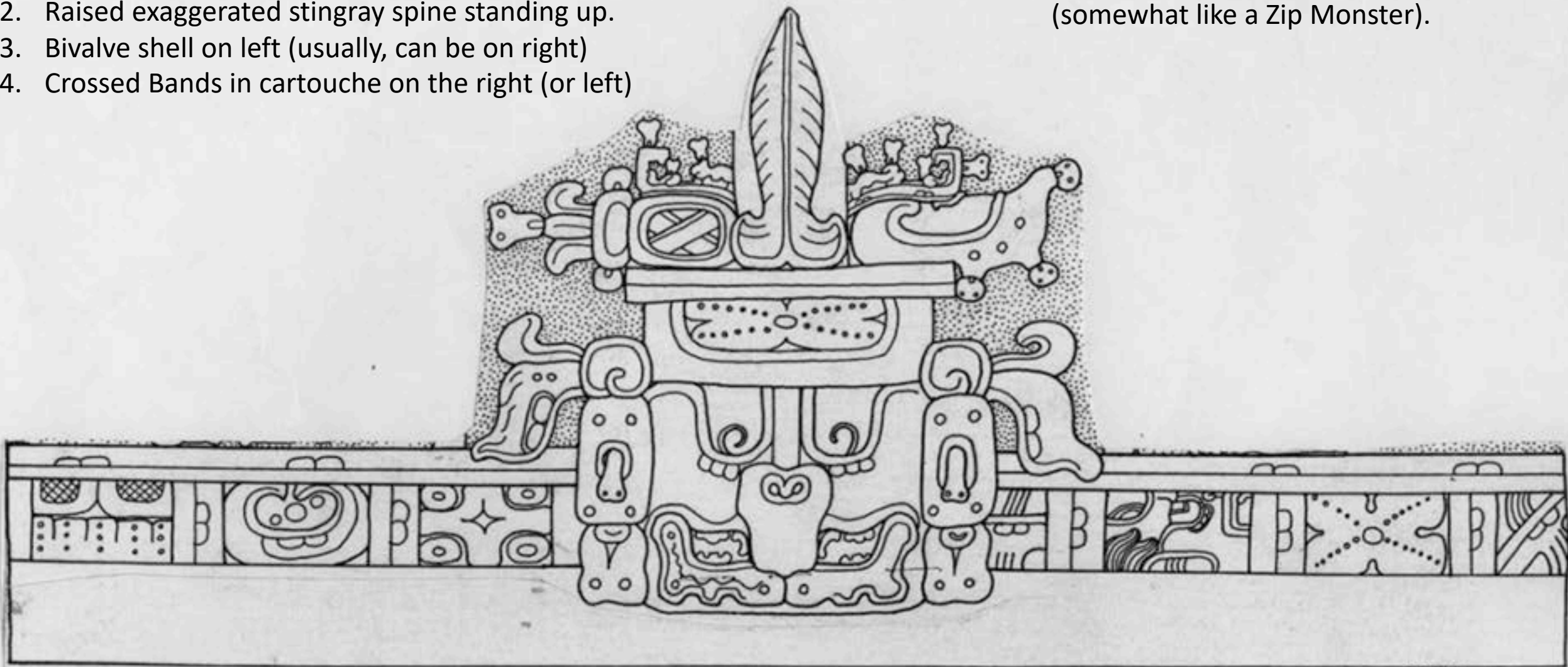


Shell is at the left; other symbol at
the right. Kin-sign is flattened so not
easy to see, but it is there. Copan
CPN 25, Altar of Stela M, photo by
Nicholas Hellmuth

Quadripartite Badge Headdress has four aspects:

1. 4-petalled Kin-like glyph over the forehead.
2. Raised exaggerated stingray spine standing up.
3. Bivalve shell on left (usually, can be on right)
4. Crossed Bands in cartouche on the right (or left)

The left (Crossed Bands) and the right (sea shell) have a reptilian upper jaw over them (somewhat like a Zip Monster).



Probably because of its length, the raised element in the headdress is called a Stingray Spine. But need to study which species because the two stingray spines that I discovered inside Tikal Bu. 196 (Tomb of the Jade Jaguar) were straight and not wide. And the curved aspect is that I expect from a shark's tooth (which of course is nowhere near this long). So a lot more to study.

Here is a complete Quadripartite Badge
Deity head/headress, but the Sky Band
encircles it and with no crocodile.

This rectangular-oblong shaped bowl has
been published by archaeologists,
epigraphers and iconographers (Houston
as one of several examples). I will check if
the mismatch with Cosmic Monster has
been mentioned before.

Dos Pilas, Burial-30, Structure L5-1 (Calvin
Fig. 67).

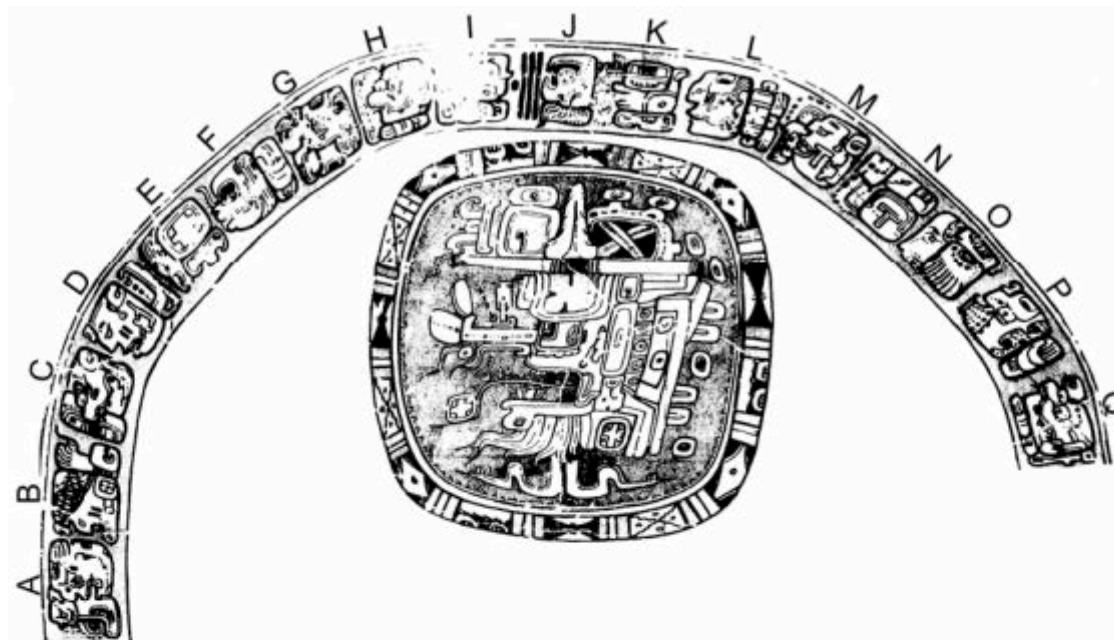


Figure 67 Photograph of MNAE 15357, a Palmar Orange Polychrome tripod



Fig. 53. Tikal, blackware vessel with fitted lid from Central Acropolis, Early Classic (after Coe, 1965, 30)



Quadripartite
Badge
Headdress on
profile face on
oft-published
blackware Tikal
cache vessel.
Same shark's
tooth as on
crocodiles.



This scene has two Quadripartite Badge Headdress monsters, one "flowering".

Kerr K501 (also labeled K0501).



K501

150

Photograph © Justin Kerr File no. K501

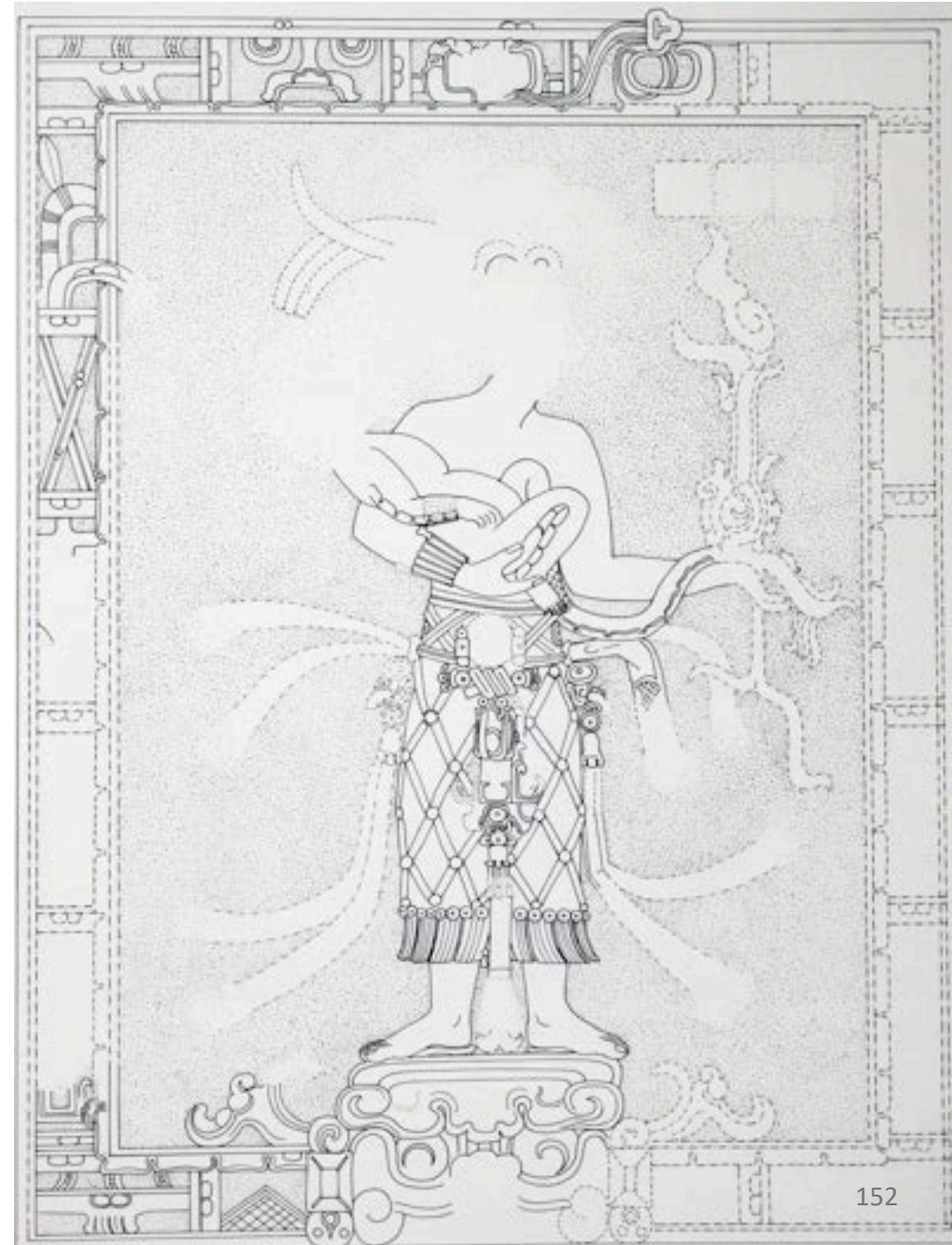
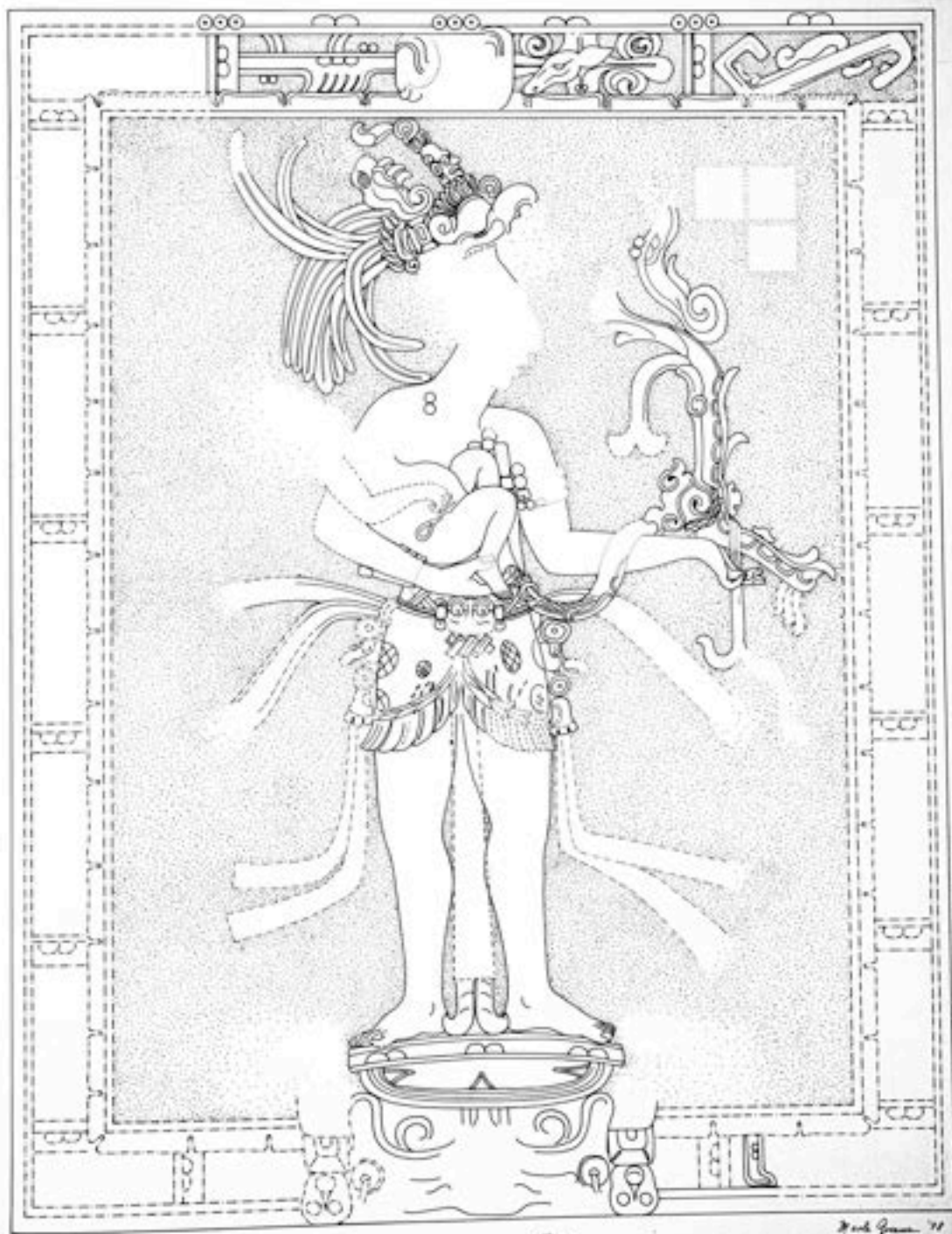


It is easier to recognize individual supernaturals when you crop to them. K0501 ¹⁵¹

Here a Deer Head is a celestial motif at the top center right. This Sky Band "ends and begins" with the Quadripartite Badge Headdress god. No crocodile face. Note that the underside of the entire Sky Band are reptile underbelly scale pattern.

Palenque stucco pier decoration, Temple of the Inscriptions Pier B Robertson 1983: Fig. 21, Volume I

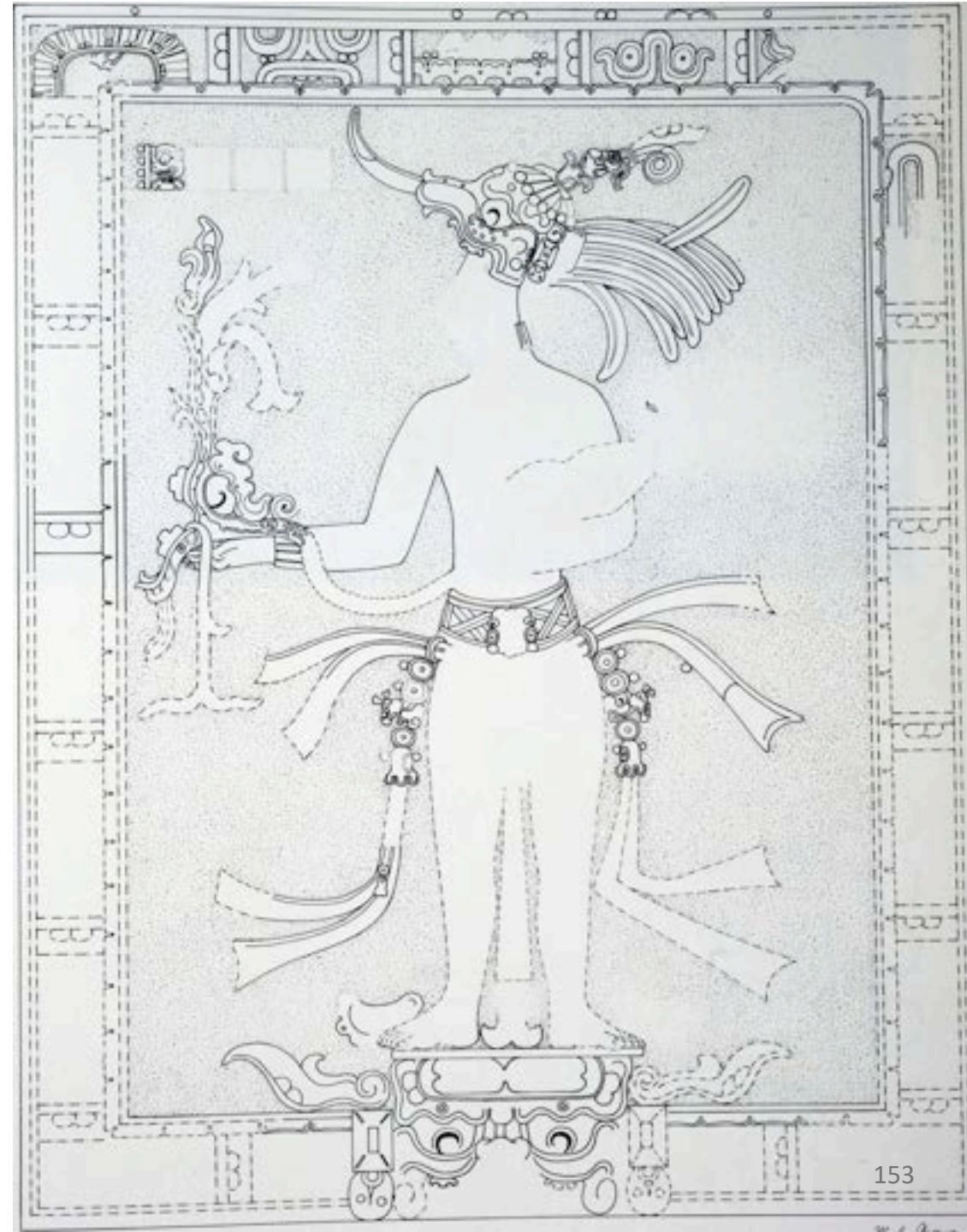
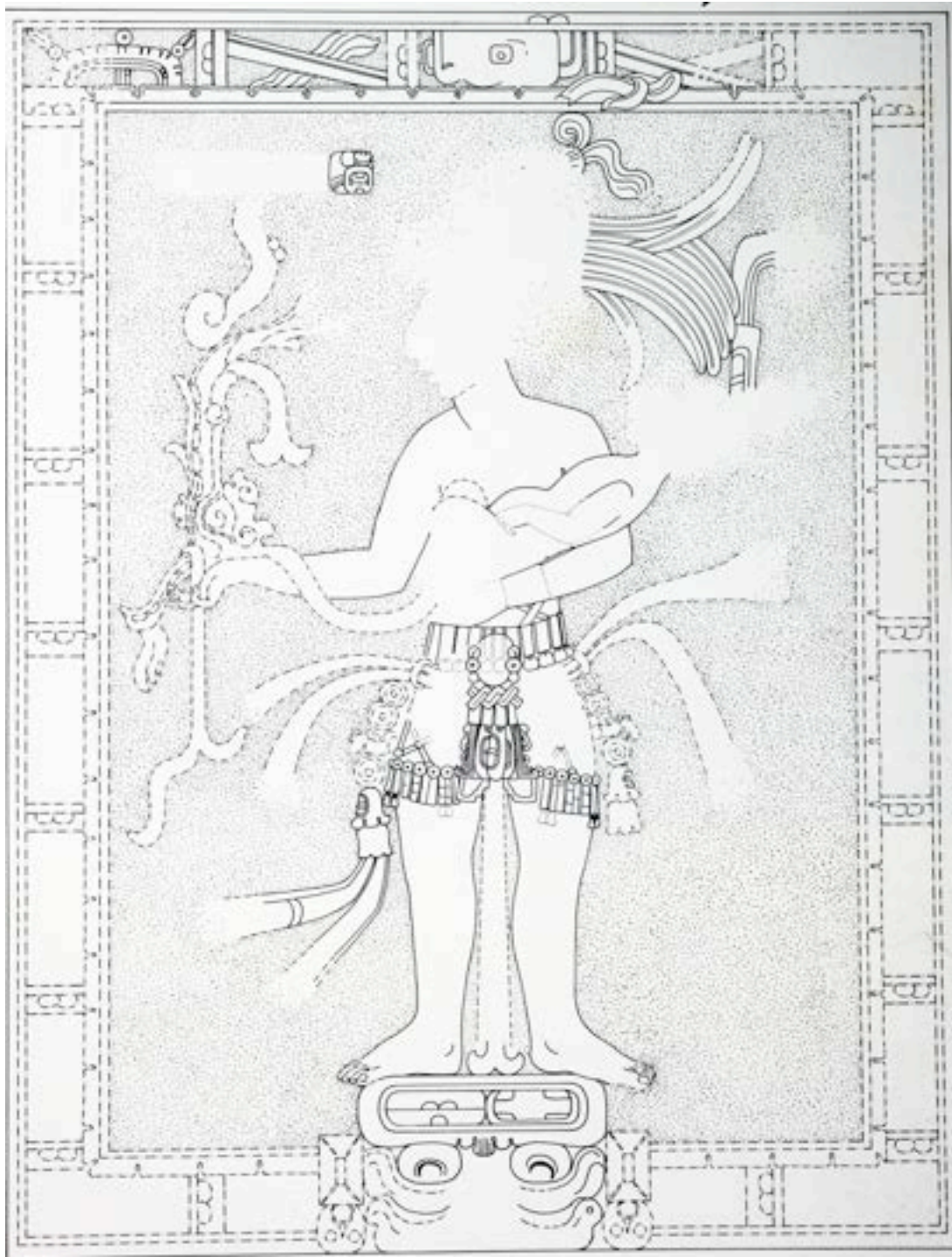
Palenque stucco pier decoration, Temple of the Inscriptions Pier C Robertson 1983: Fig. 39, Volume I

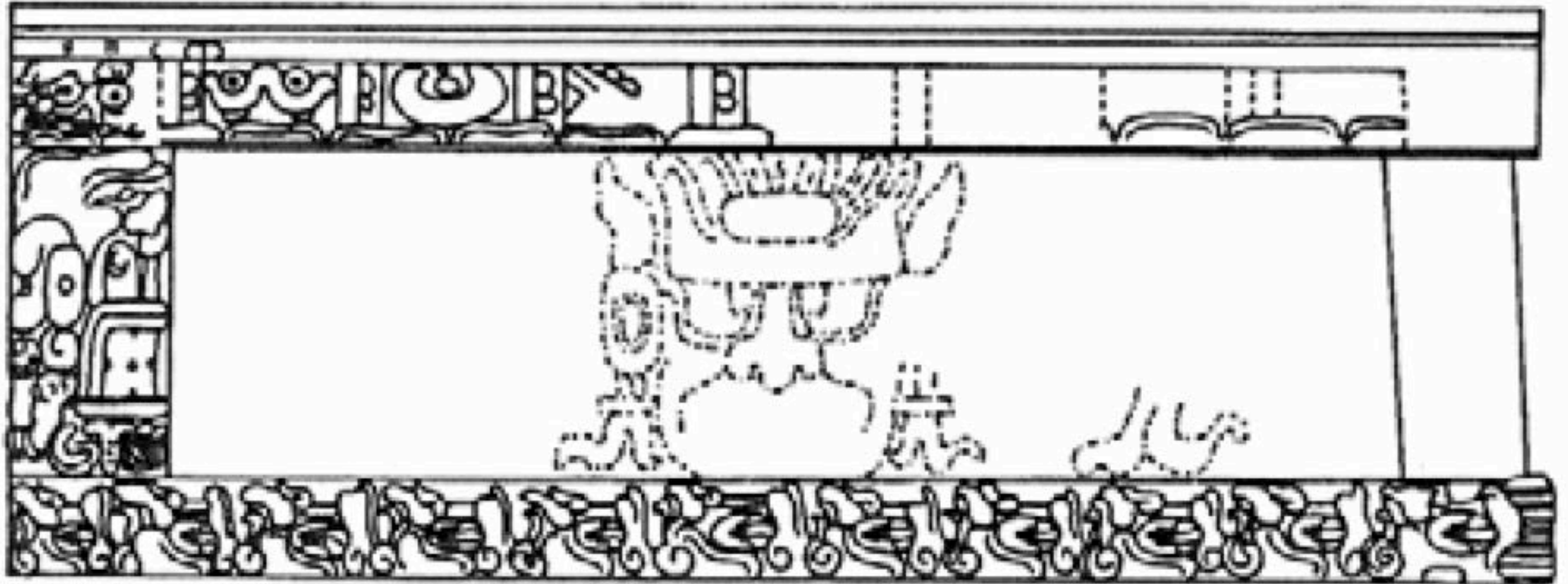


These two Sky Bands “end and begin” with the Quadripartite Badge Headdress god.

Palenque stucco pier decoration, Temple of the Inscriptions Pier D
Robertson 1983: Fig. 64, Volume I

Palenque stucco pier decoration, Temple of the Inscriptions Pier E
(Robertson 1983: Fig. 78, Volume I.

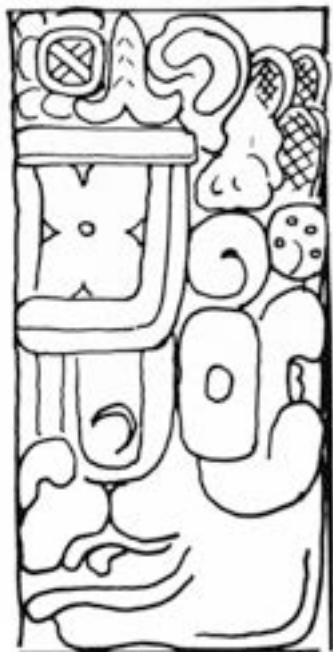




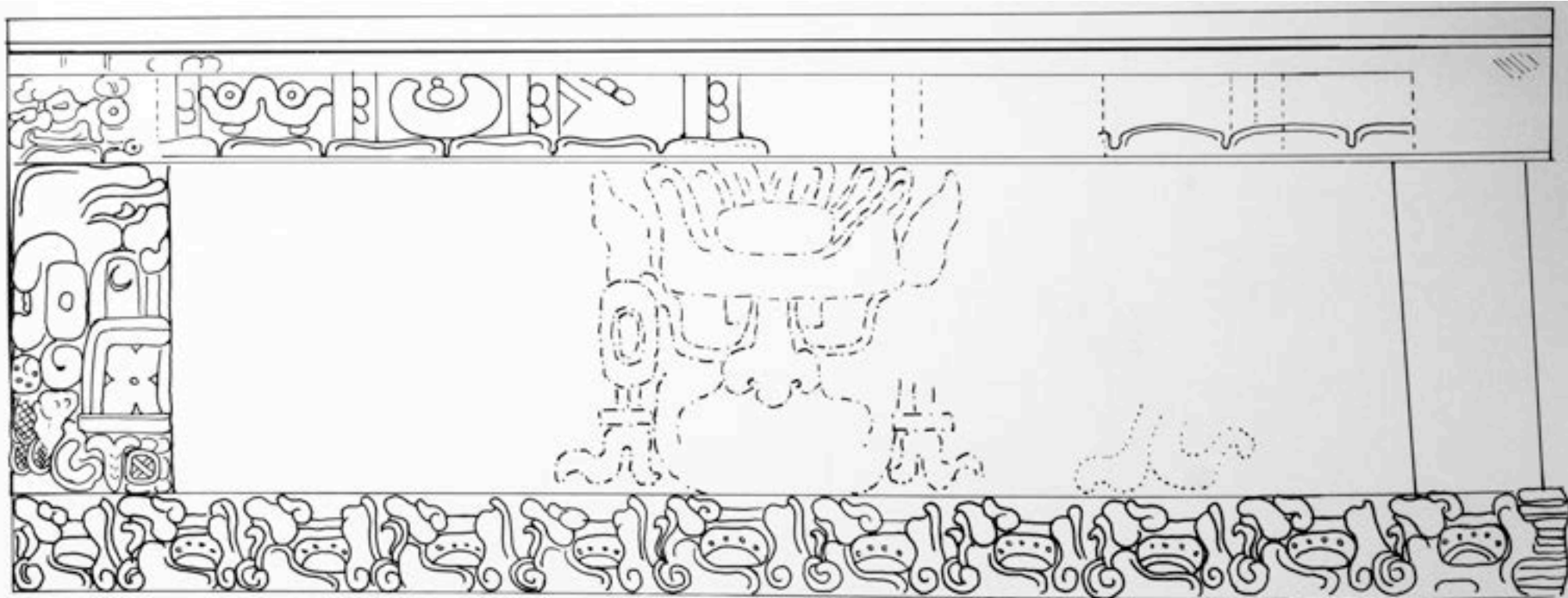
Sad that resolution is not better. Palenque stucco, Temple of the Sun, Sanctuary tablet. Robertson 1991: Fig. 134, Vol. IV.

I have not yet found all the Merle Greene Robertson drawings in a database. There is higher resolution in Callaway 2006: Fig. 4,1,c citing Robertson.

Palenque, Temple of the Sun, sanctuary. Drawing by Merle Greene Robertson, Vol. IV 1991: Fig. 134.



To show you the Quadripartite Badge Headdress that is normally (as here), Upside down.



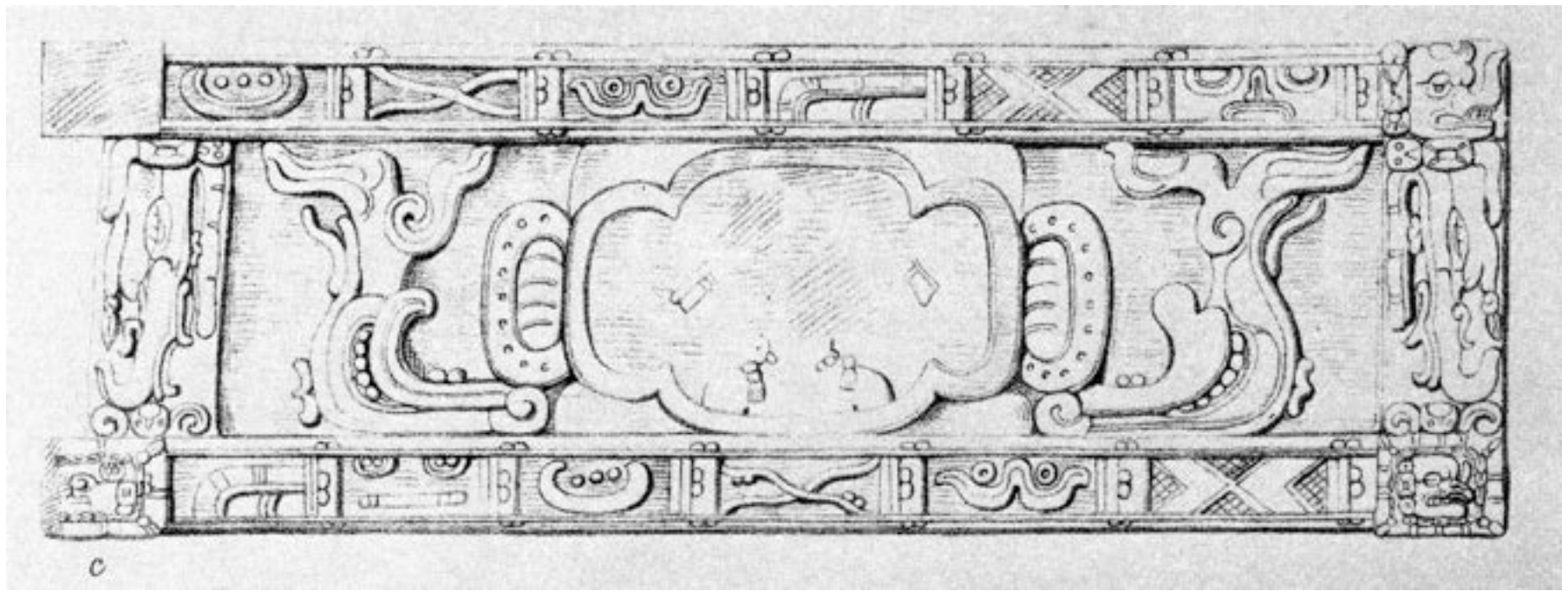
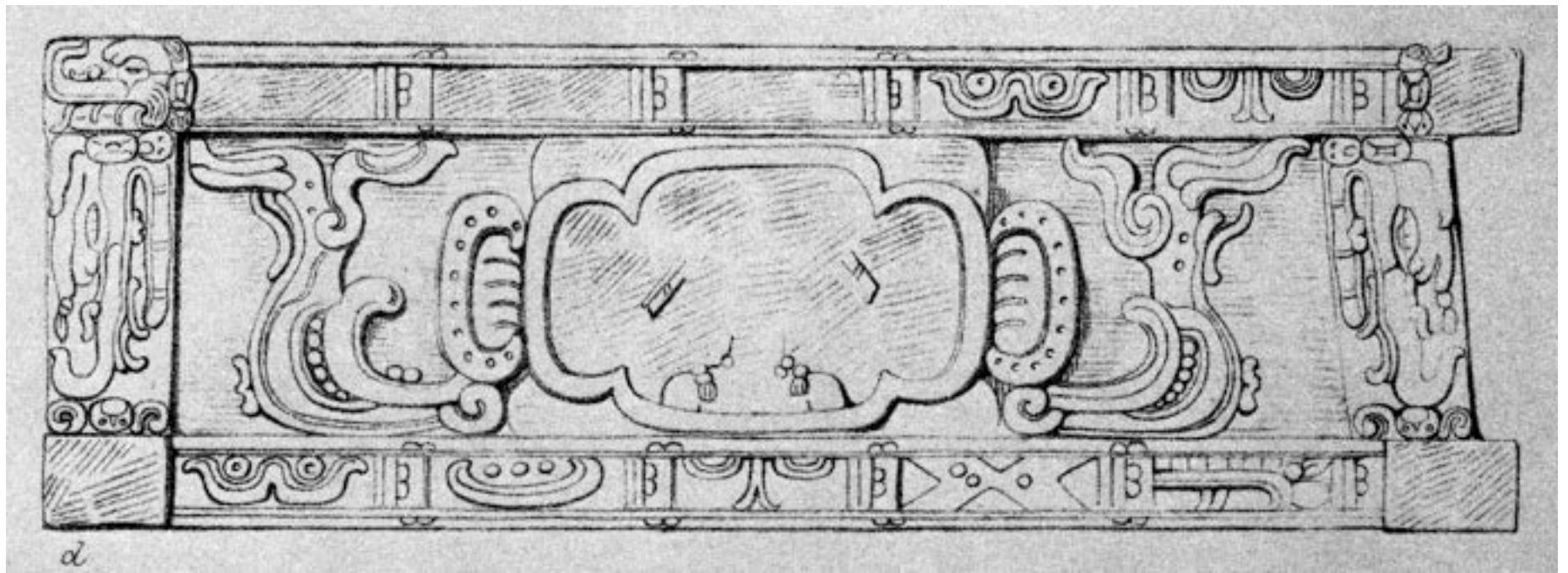
The Crocodile head is not preserved. But it would have been in the now empty space. 155

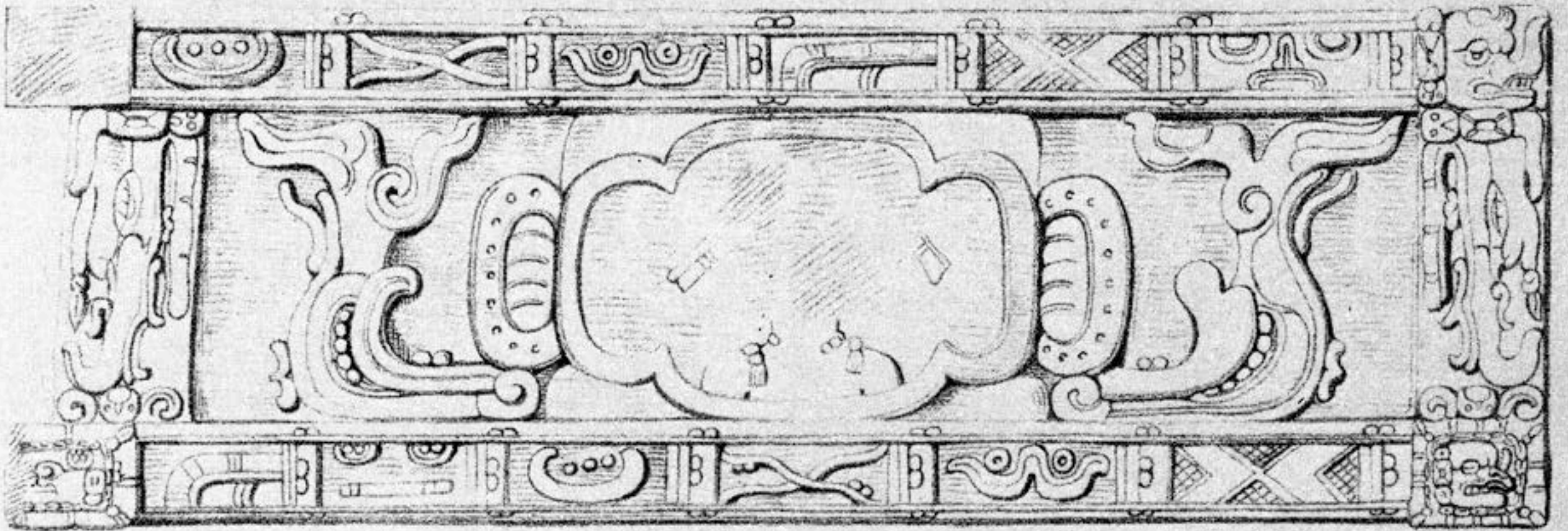


Here the Quadripartite Badge headdress deity is at the left; and the deer-ear-deer-hoof-crocodile is at the right. The body of the bicephalic Cosmic Monster is a Sky Band of celestial motifs each in a rectangular frame. In the middle panels a God K (Manikin Scepter deity) is sticking out the head of a reptile.

Need to ascertain whether the “starry eye” (and starry ear) is a feature of deer and not as crocodile-related.

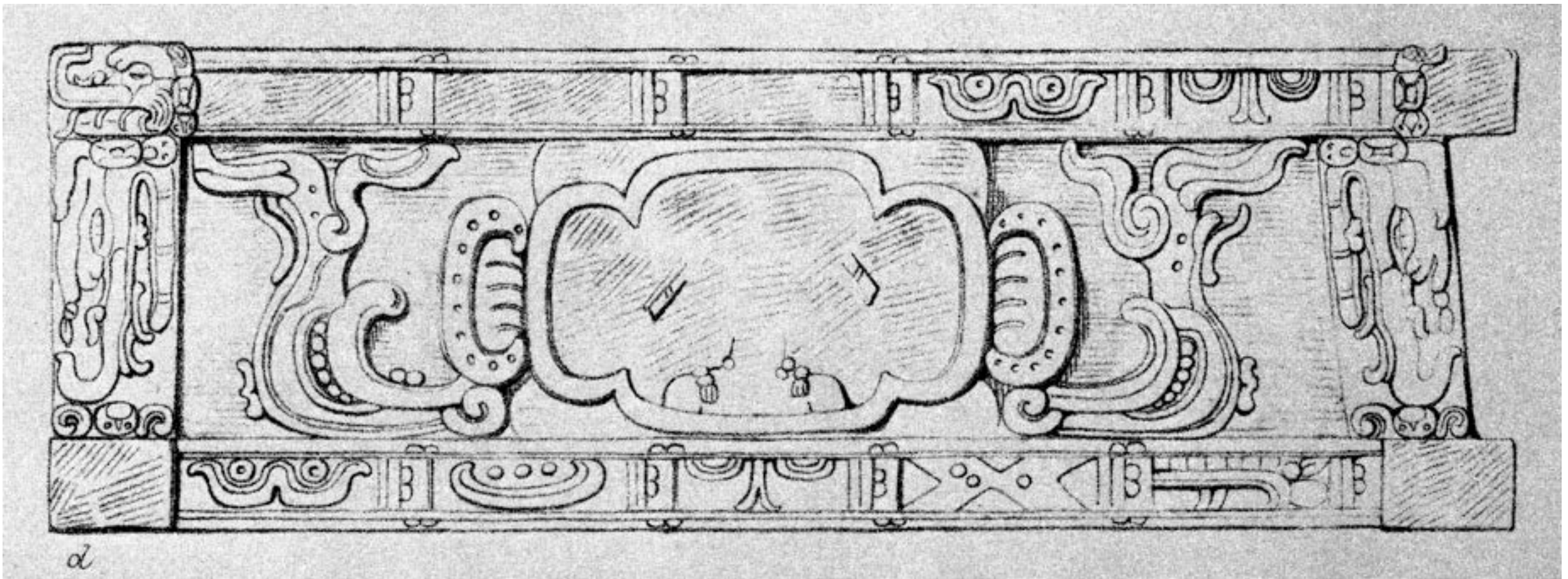
Palenque
stucco
reliefs,
Temple of
the Cross,
frieze, west
side,
Maudslay
from the
1800's.





c

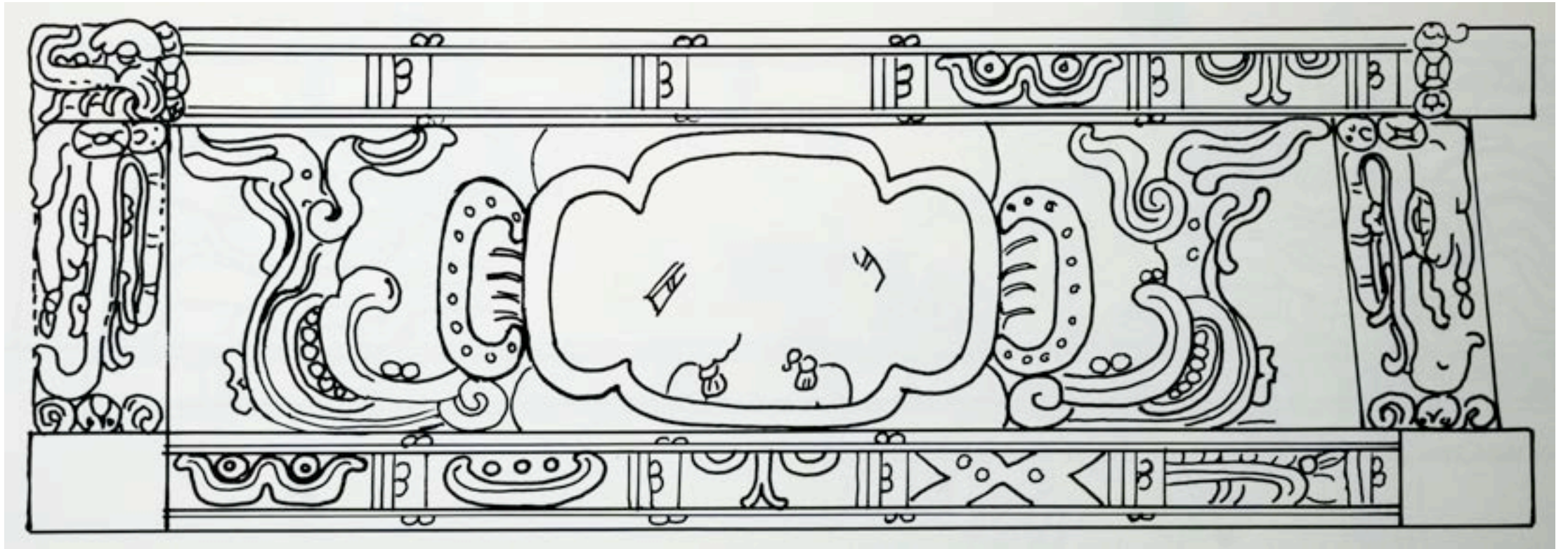
Palenque, Maudslay. Notice that the bicephalic heads of the two horizontal Sky Bands are heads of supernaturals, but neither a deer or crocodile nor the Long Count bird head that is common at each end of steps leading up to a throne room. The two crocodile heads here simply hang down as though they are a secondary set of heads. But we know from other scenes that their downward-pointing angle is traditional.



The Sky Band seems to have two sets of heads: horizontal and 90-degrees downward. At the left, both are crocodile-like though the top (horizontal) had has a recurved snout of a “Zip Monster.”

Palenque, Temple of the Cross, frieze of sanctuary, Maudslay Plate 68.

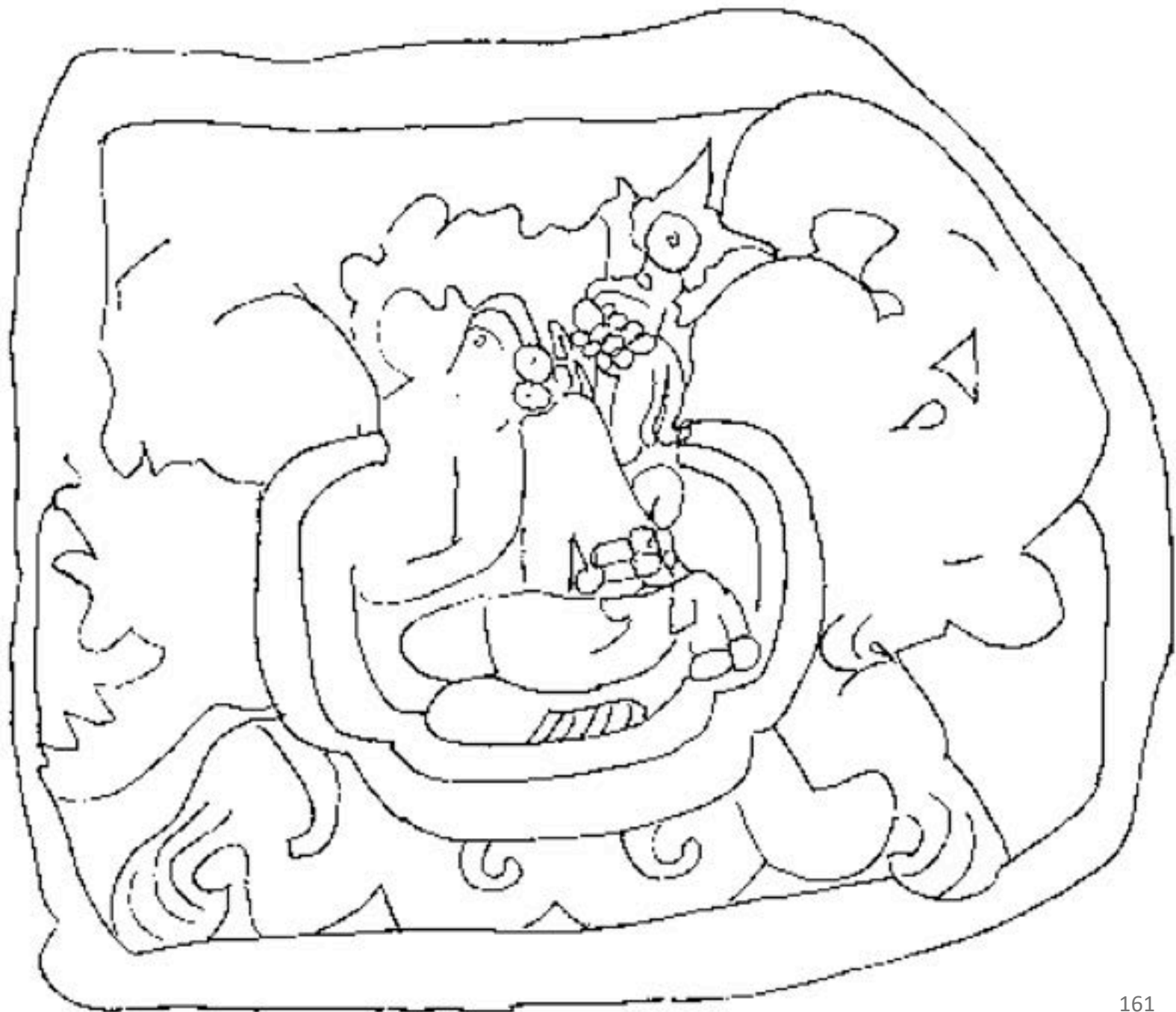
Palenque, Temple of the Cross, west Sanctuary upper façade stucco (Robertson Vol. IV, 1991: Fig. 47)



Cosmic Monster
associated with
Quatrefoil (cave
entrance). Takalik
Abaj, Altar 48,
drawing by Rachel K.
Egan, Egan 2011: page
16, Figure 8.

New Perspectives On
The Quatrefoil In
Classic Maya
Iconography

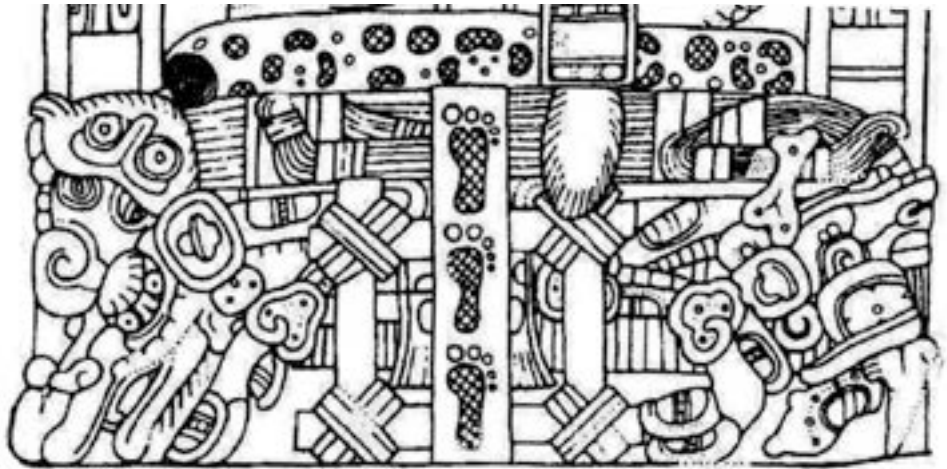
The Center And The
Portal. MA thesis.



Cosmic Bands, in addition to common at Palenque are present as the top of “Sky Band Thrones” that are at the front of “Sky Band Throne Rooms.”

I estimate these are temporary structures constructed of perishable material (so not solid stone). These were built for festivals and ritual performances (probably in courtyards or plazas; not sure most vaulted rooms had enough space for these).

We appreciate line drawings from CMHI of PMAE, Harvard. Since many stelae have been drawn by CMHI, also by Linda Schele, also by John Montgomery, and also by other epigraphers and iconographers, we have to dedicate more time to caption each drawing in the future.

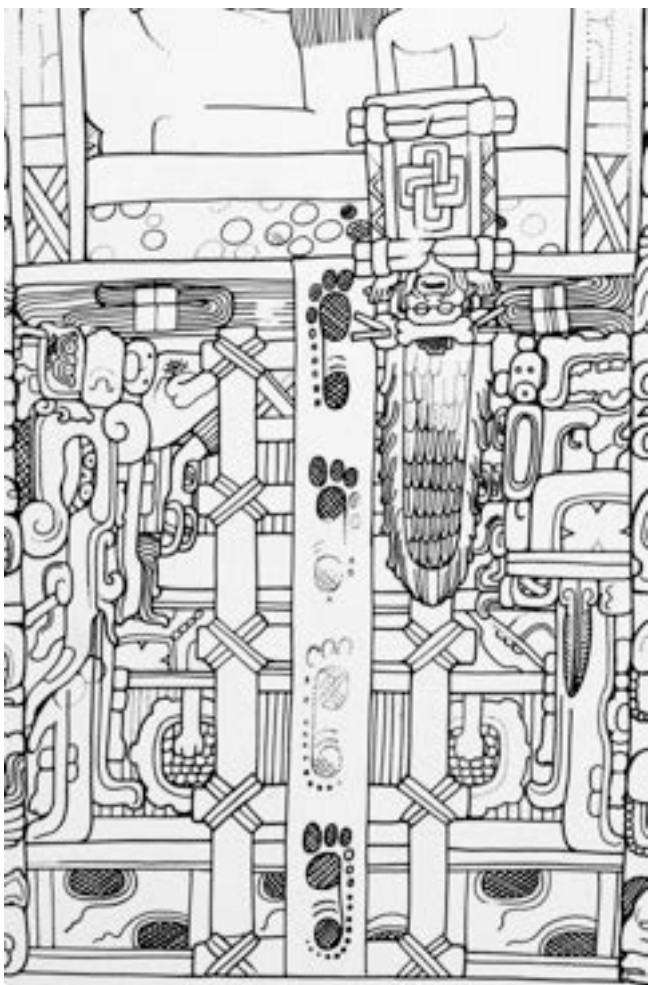


Generic celestial/Venus symbol, not crossed-bands.

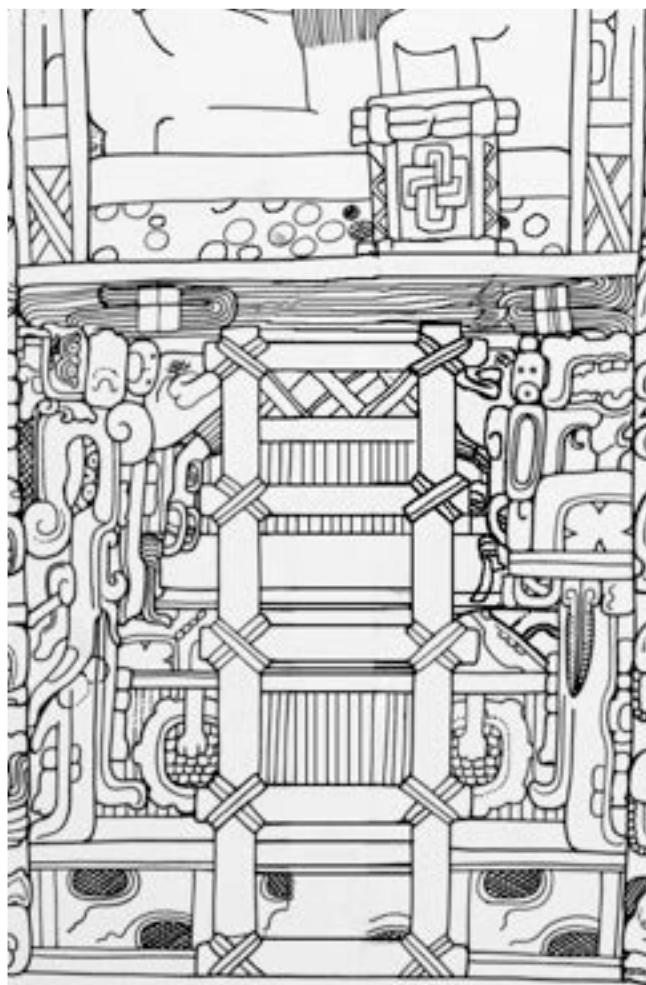


Piedras Negras Stela 25.





This is the actual Sky Band Stairway, PN Stela 1. Earth Band at base; then another band (reminds me of a water lily pad but could be something else). Then a not very high sky band. The top “step” is also a sky band.



Here is first draft (by Byron Pacay) to show what is really under the “foot prints” and under the incense bag. We need to add the Sky Band symbols on the two steps on which they occur.

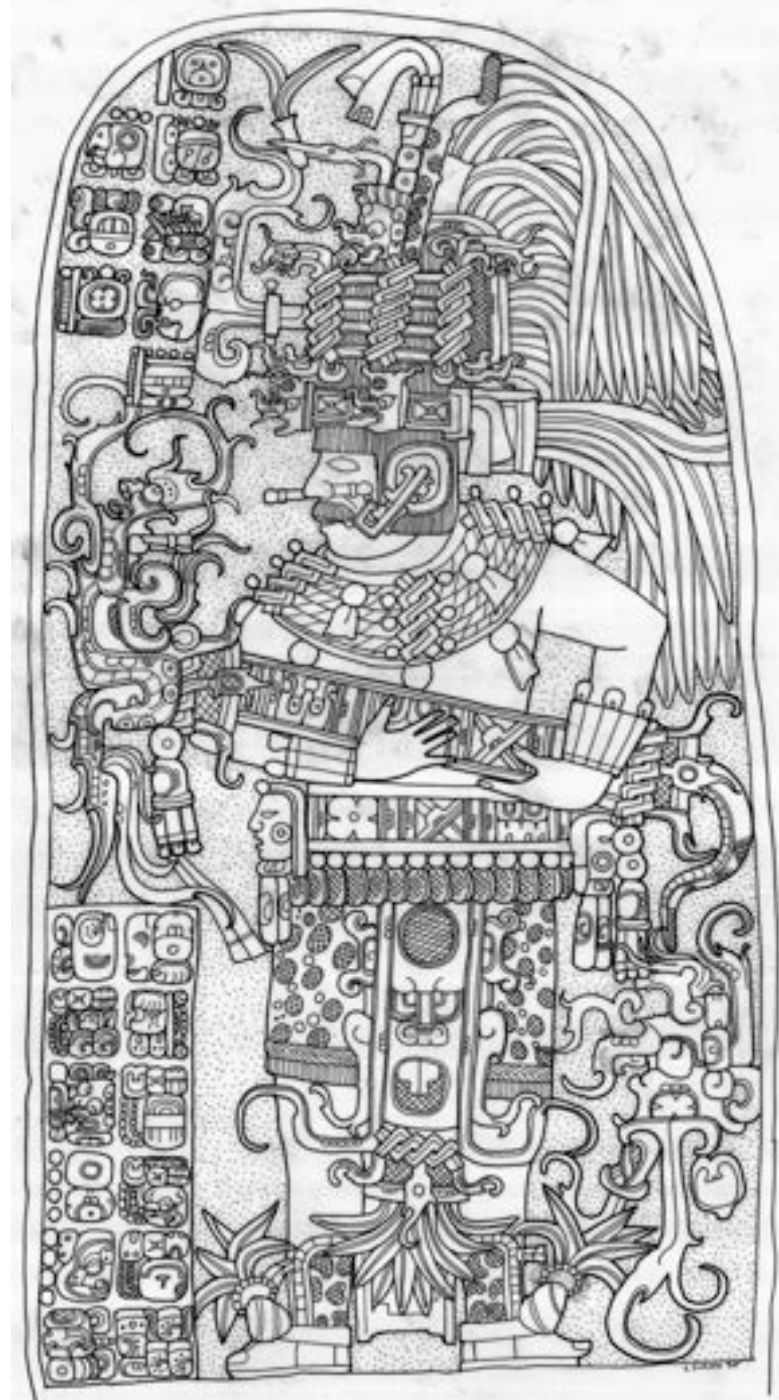
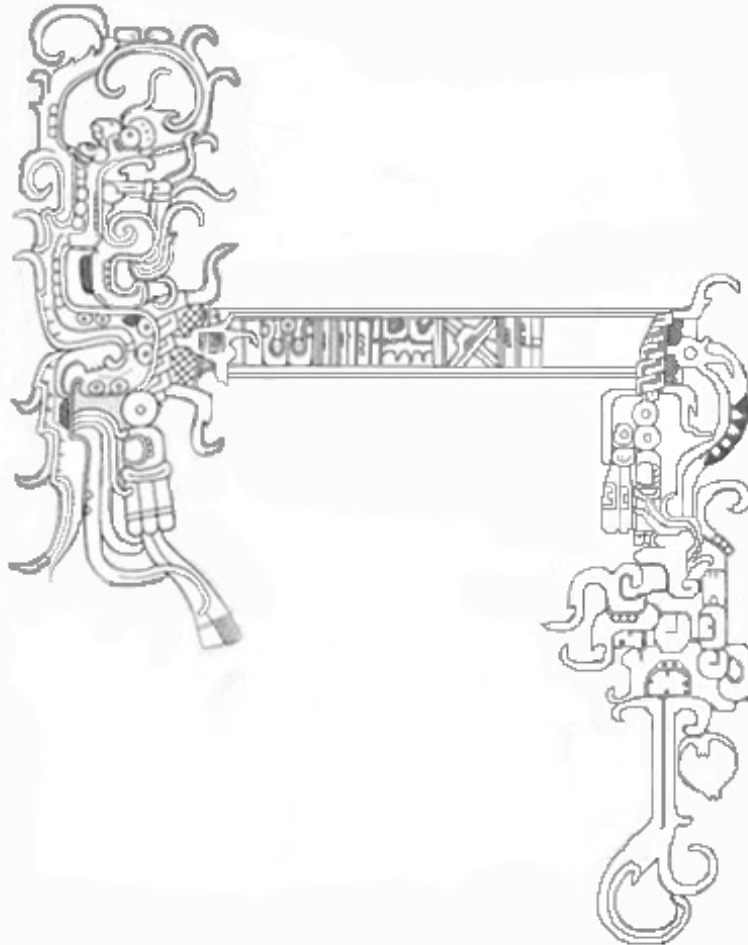
Sky Band Thrones in a Sky Band Throne Room deserve a separate publication (which we have been working on for over a year).

Here the Cosmic Monster is a Ceremonial Band.

Nonetheless, it has the “body” as a Sky Band (albeit with no reptile scales across the bottom). The Quadripartite Badge does show reptile scales on the tail of a snake (not the tail of a crocodile). The “stingray spine” curls out as if it were on steroids.

The main face of this Cosmic Monster, traditionally at the left, has no noticeable deer features.

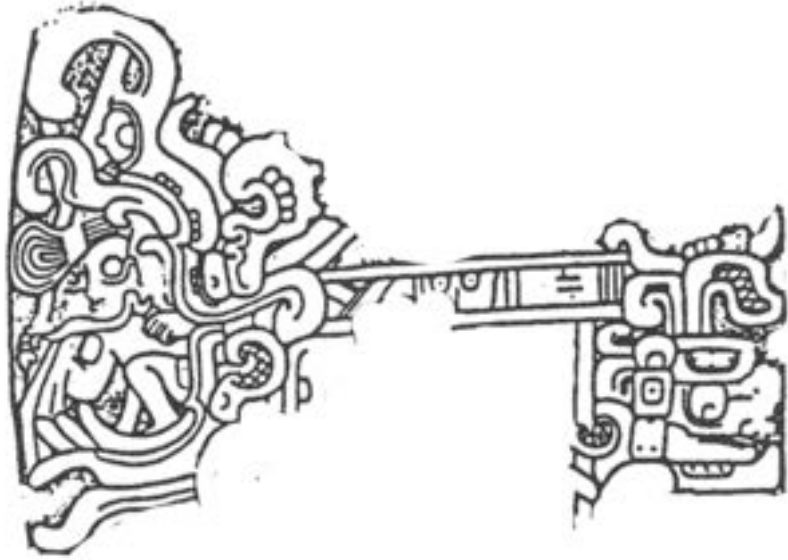
Byron Pacay, FLAAR Mesoamerica, turned this Cosmic Monster straight.



Below we show the Quadripartite Badge Headdress with the Stingray Spine almost like deer antlers (though I estimate the Maya had other concepts in mind)



Seibal (Ceibal) Stela 10, helpful resolution though the top quality drawings kindly sent to my long-range iconography research by CMHI PMAE are often better. Drawing by Linda Schele, SD-7646.



Yaxha Stela 31.

This upper part has so many monsters, animals, deities, it's amazing. Would help to be redrawn with more detail.

We (FLAAR) assisted Ian Graham while we were mapping Yaxha. We also assisted Merle Greene Robertson. I can still remember Ian Graham showing his appreciation by carrying buckets of water all the way from Lake Yaxha up the steep path up a high hill overlooking the lake (where the campsite was, near the entrance to the ruins). Only when the President of Guatemala visited Yaxha and asked us how he could help us was it possible to move the camp to near the lake (so we could have water for drinking, cooking, and bathing).

Ian Graham kindly gave me any and all drawings of his that were of iconographic topics that he noticed that I was interested in.

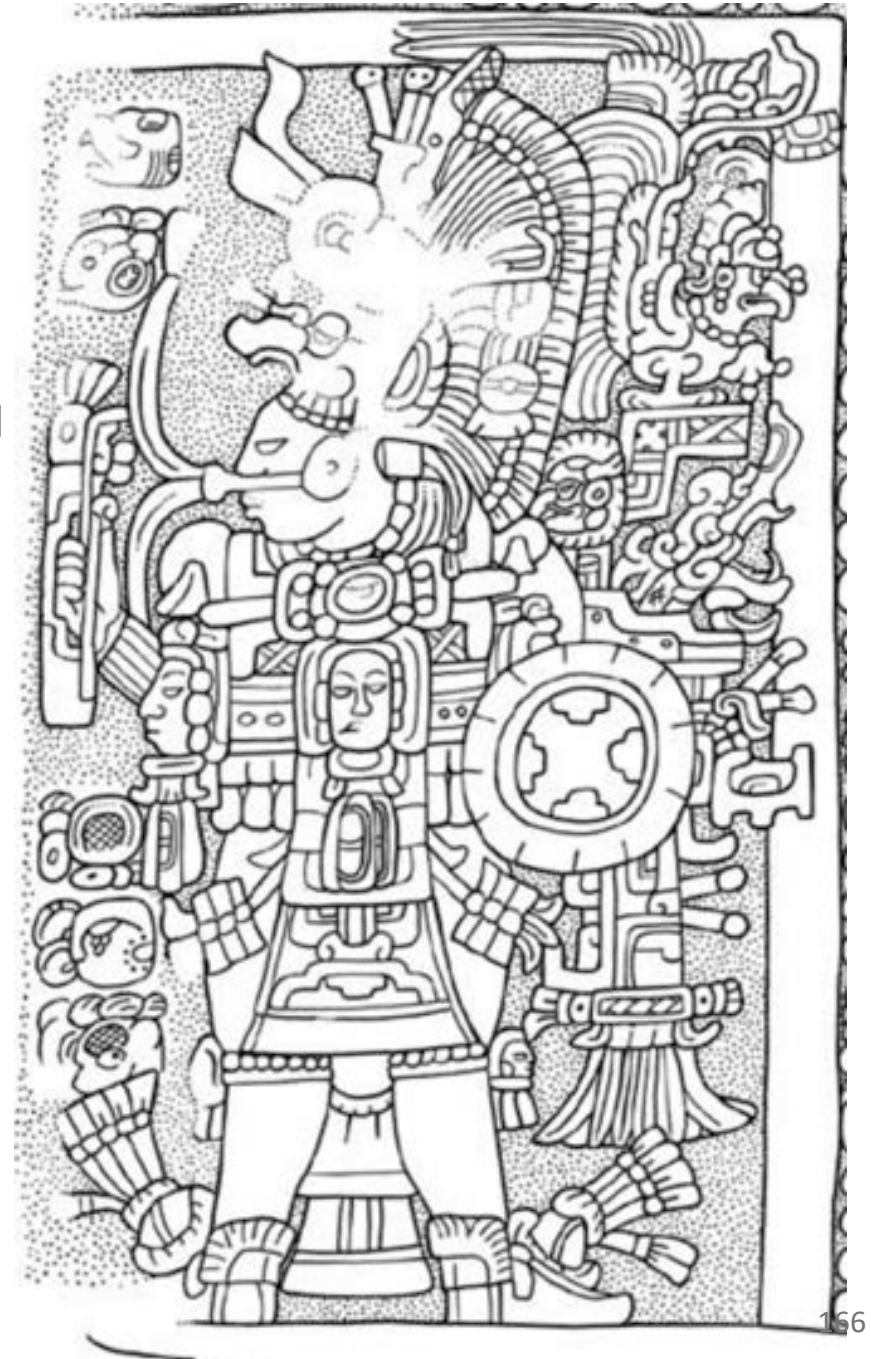


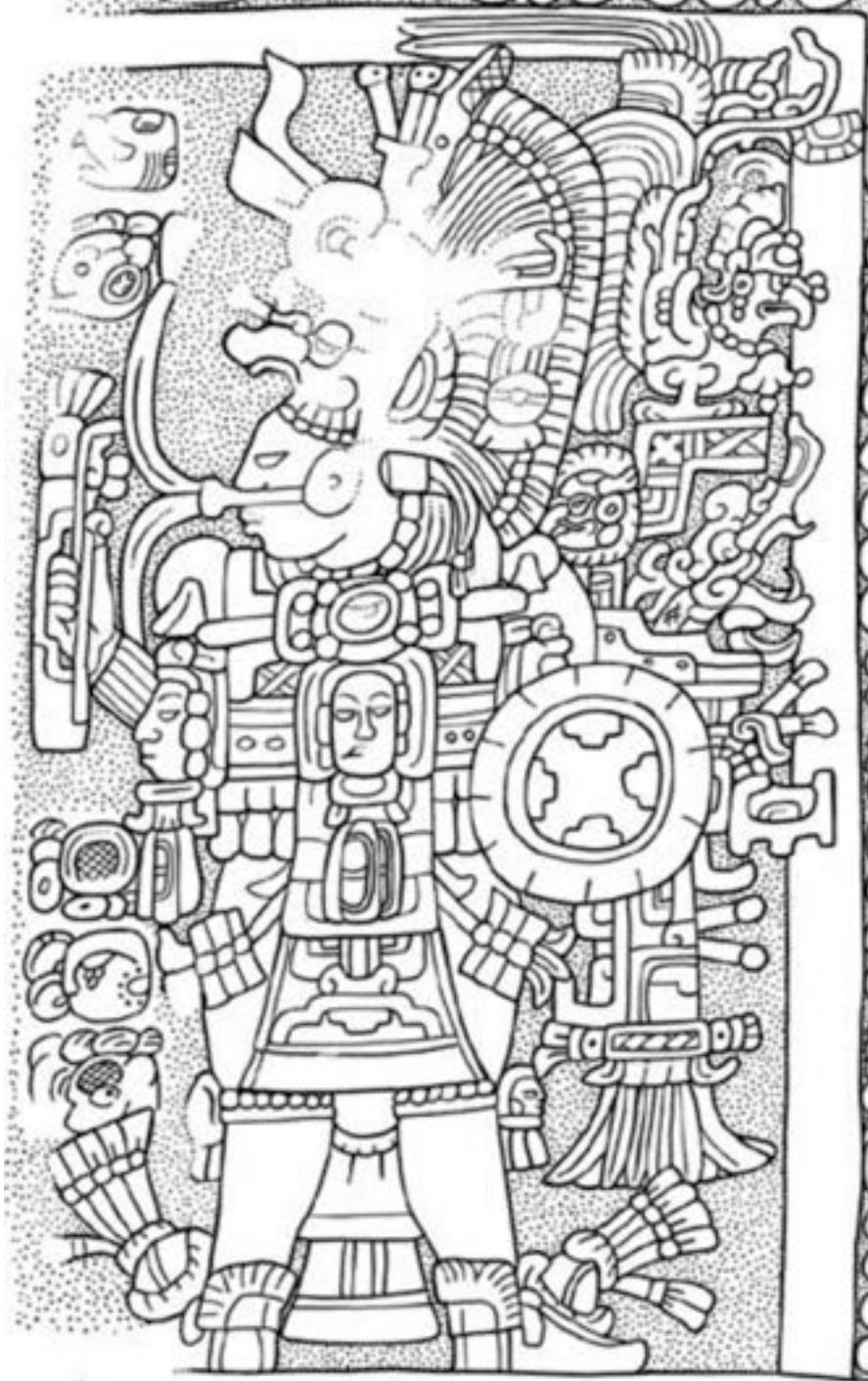
Many Sky Band elevated throne rooms have a Principal Bird Deity in the middle of the roof.

When I saw the crocodile-like (also snake-like) feature, I definitely felt this should be discussed. Then I saw the “calendric bird” at the end of the Sky Band and I realized this was not the Crocodile Cosmic Monster but the Calendrical Bird Sky Band.

This backrack is very common on Holmul Dancer vases and the few Holmul Dancer plates. Not many bas-relief stelae show the Holmul Dancer backrack.

There are several sculptures that show backracks and dozens of vases and a few plates. There is so much symbolism associated with Holmul Dancer backracks that I show only two pages in this presentation (because Holmul Dancer outfits need a separate research project).





Holmul Dancer on bas-relief stone sculpture at the left.

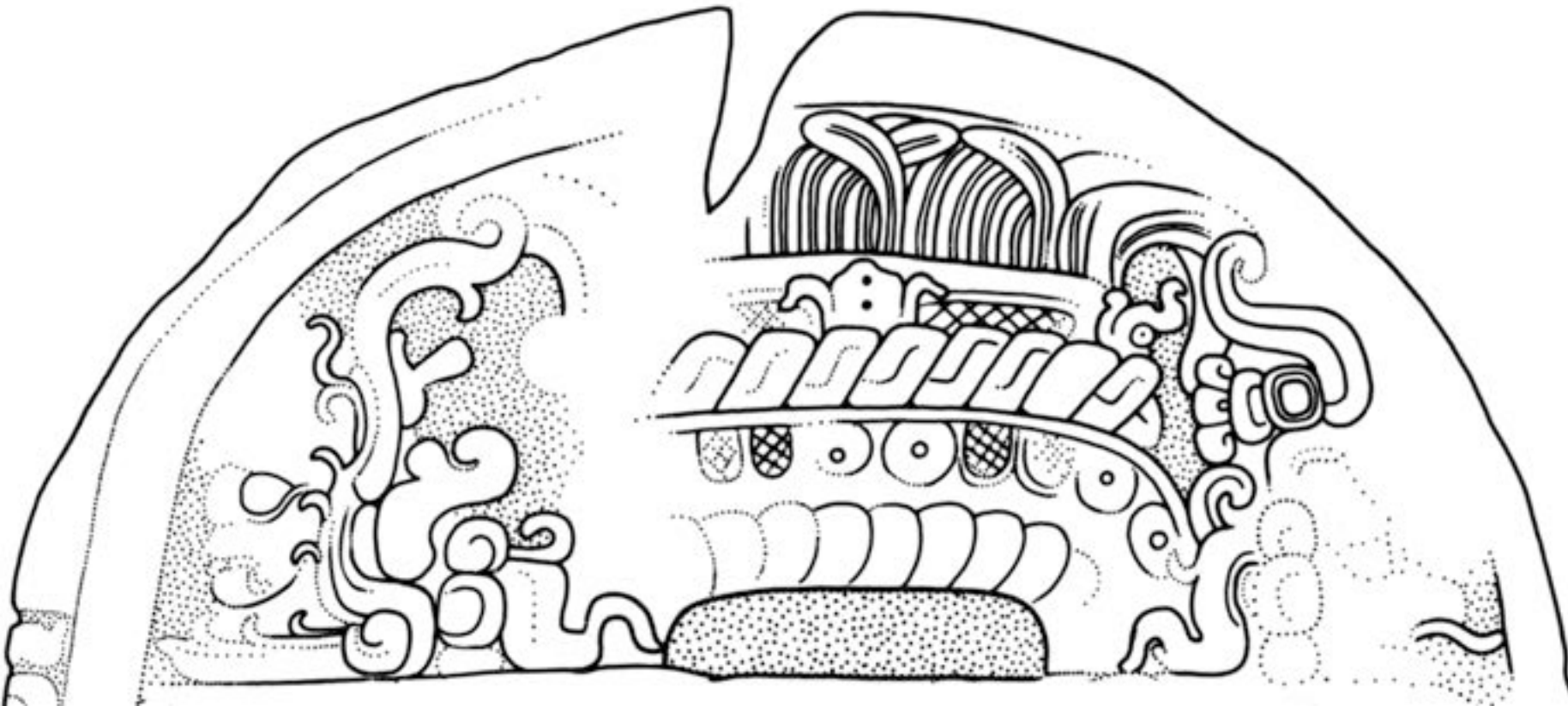
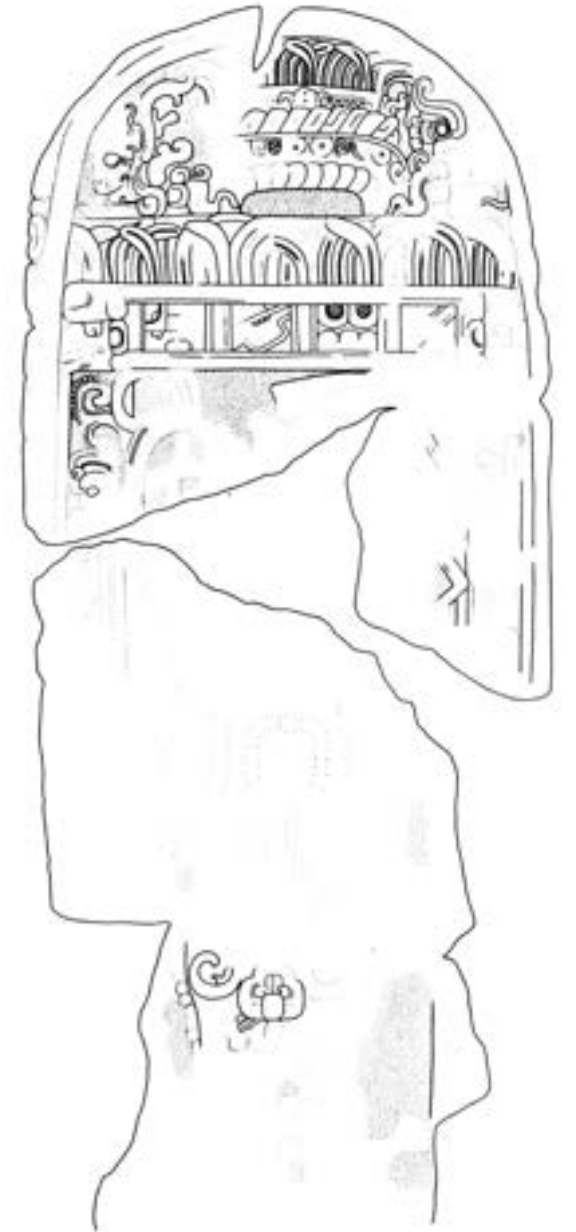
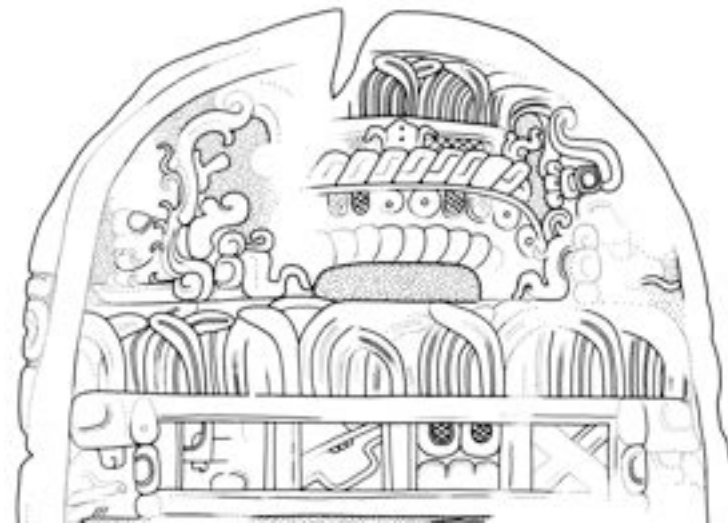
Simplified Holmul Dancer on polychrome vase (Kerr rollout, K5355).

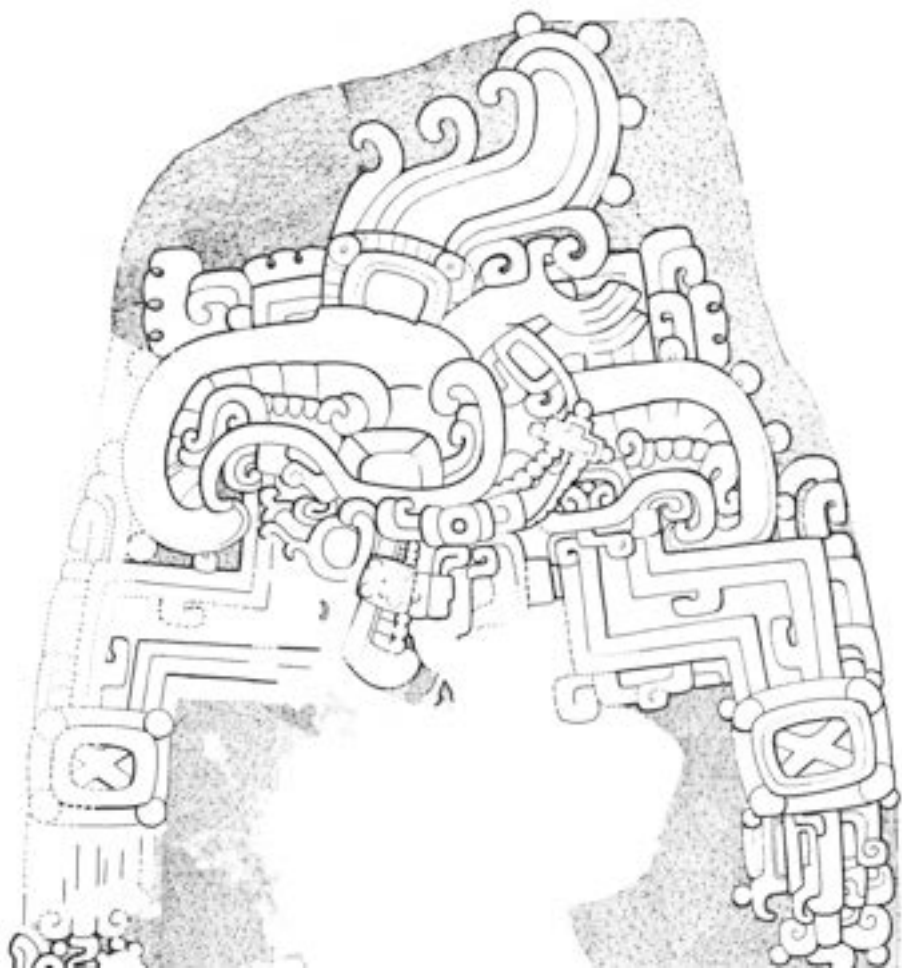


4.12. Maize God, detail of vessel MS0159 (K5355) from San Agustín Acasaguastlán area. Drawing by author.

Cropped by Hellmuth to show Sky Band and the Bicephalic Serpent Monster (not a crocodile Cosmic Monster). Cropped from Graham 1986: Page 5, 151 PMAE-112880304.

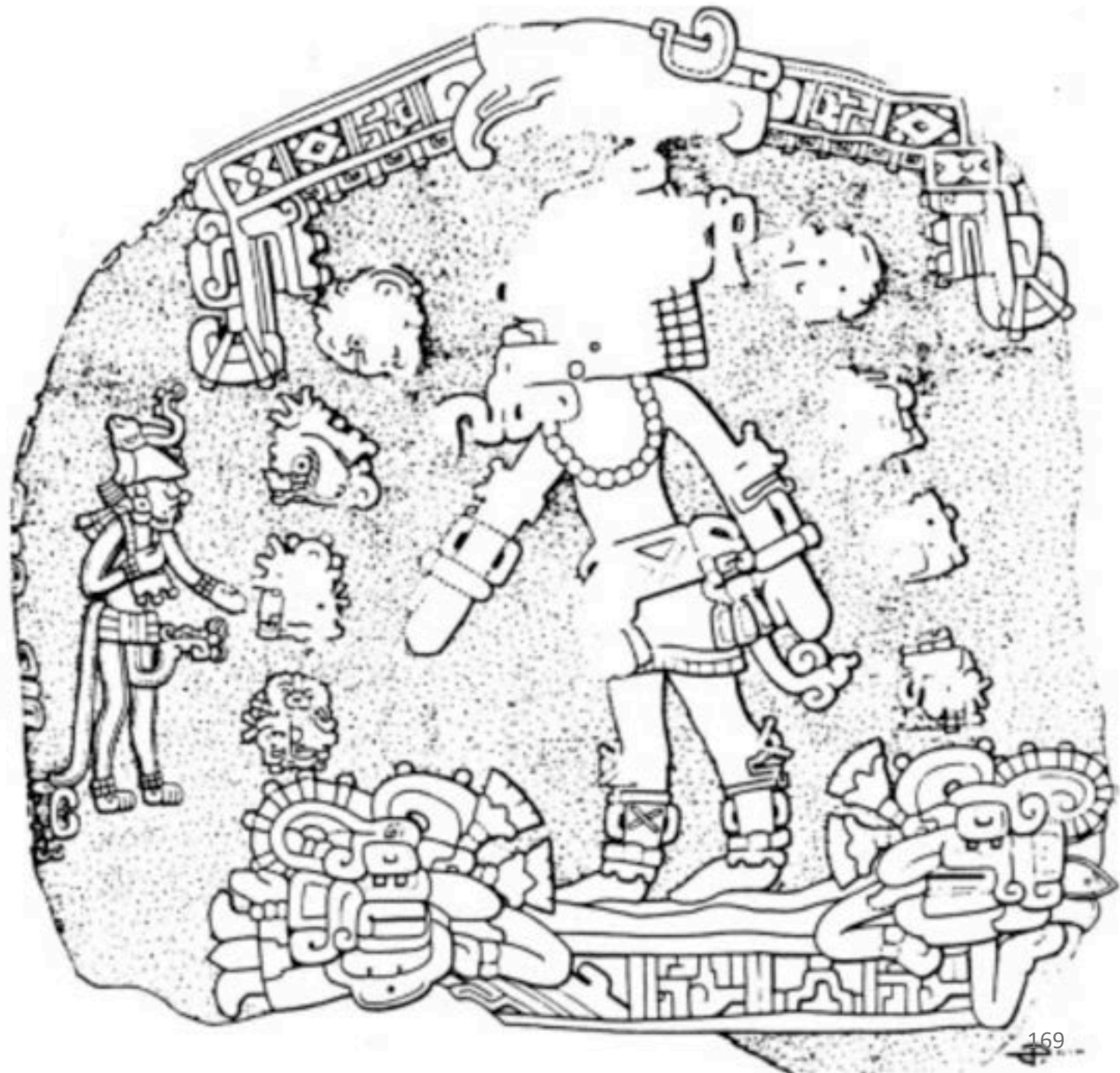
These helpful line drawings are part of the CMHI of the PMAE, Harvard University.



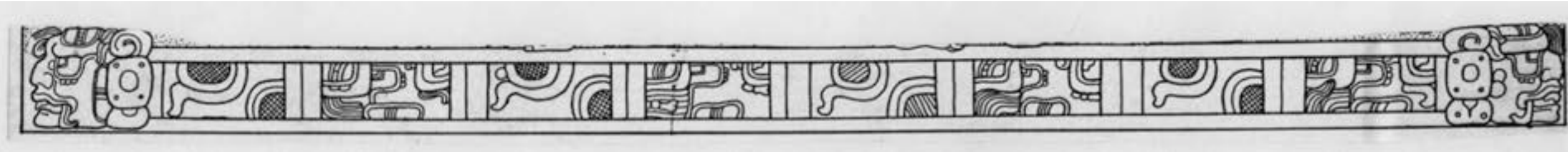


Two-headed Sky Band Monsters already existed at Takalik Abaj, centuries before Palenque or elsewhere. Some symbols of the Sky Band are in Olmec or related pre-Maya inscriptions.

The Takalik Abaj Sky Bands even have the Principal Bird Deity at their center.



Other Bicephalic Sky Band Monsters



Base of sanctuary sculpture, Palenque, Temple of the Sun. Usually this would be higher up in a scene.

Sky Band with Calendric Bird Head at Each End (no Crocodile, no Quadripartite Badge at either end).

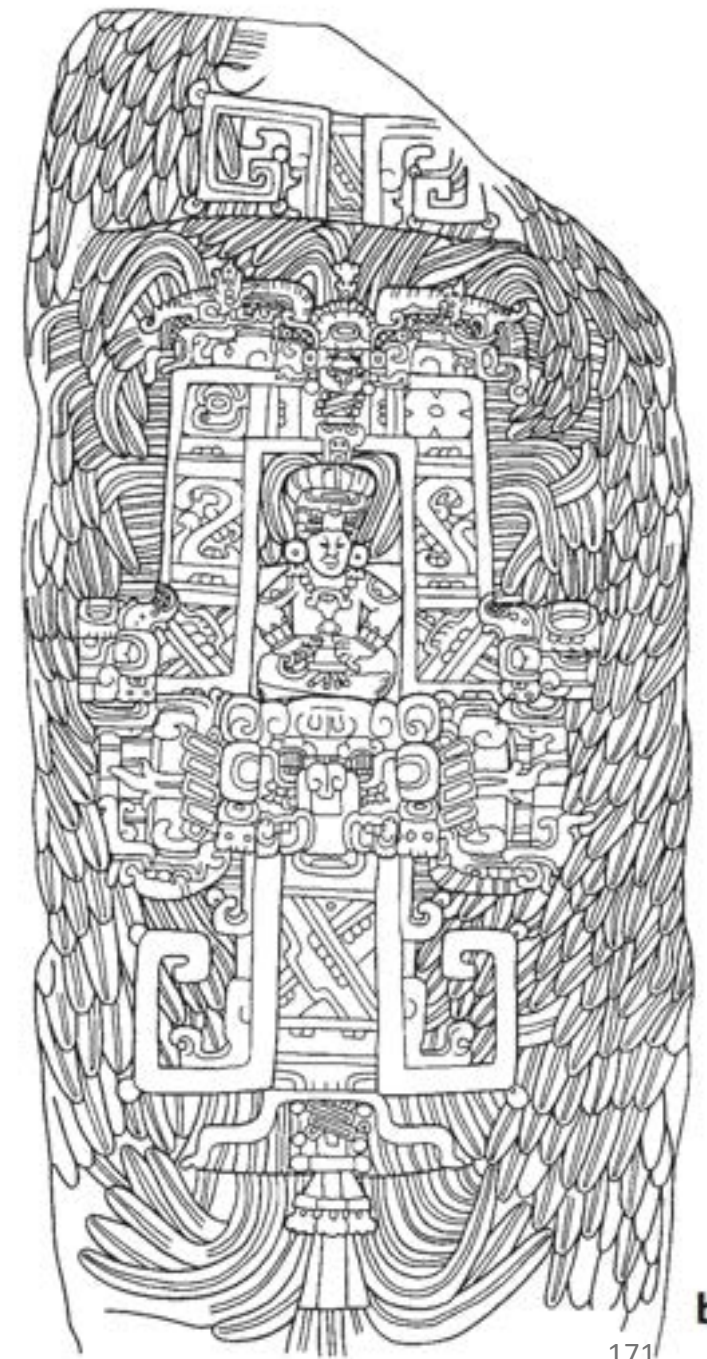
Lots of Sky Bands have a calendrical bird at each end (instead of a crocodile, deer or Quadripartite Badge Headdress deity). The Sky Bands with calendrical bird have the same bird at each end.

Sometimes the Sky Bands are horizontal; other times they rise up to form corners (walls) of a “Sky Band Throne Room.”



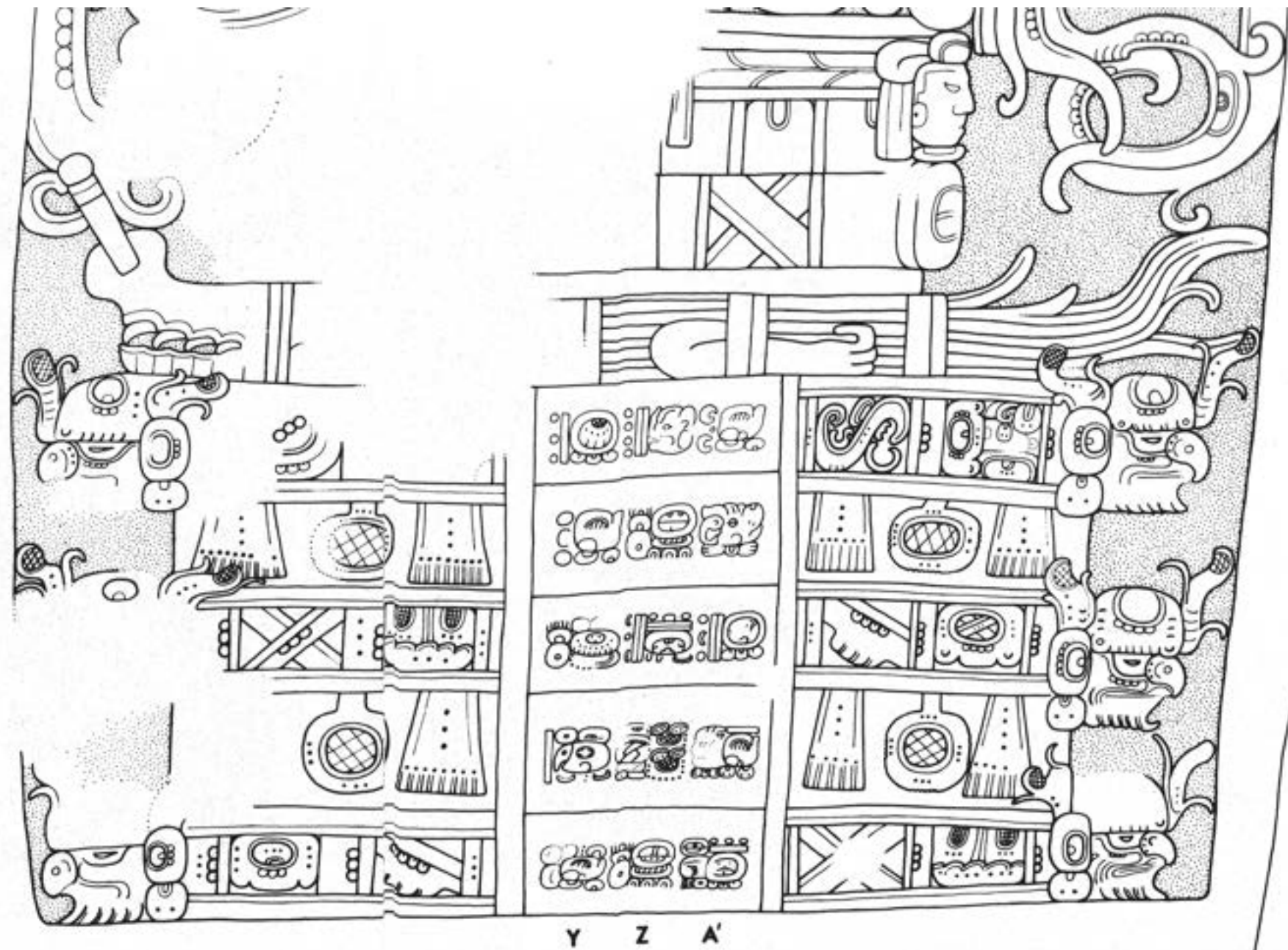
Quirigua Stela I, drawing byLooper 2008: Fig. 4-16

This throne room shows no sky band steps (or any steps). But the Sky Band enclosure (Sky Band Throne Room) is very similar to others (with bicephalic calendrical birds).



Tied animal across the top. The Sky Band Thrones of Codex Paris also have a bound animal across the top (but the heads at each level point downward).

The bicephalic sky bands on this Sky Band Stairway (up to a throne room) have calendrical birds at each end. So these Sky Bands are bicephalic but no reptiles.



As here, the
Quadripartite Badge
headdress deity is
usually upside down.

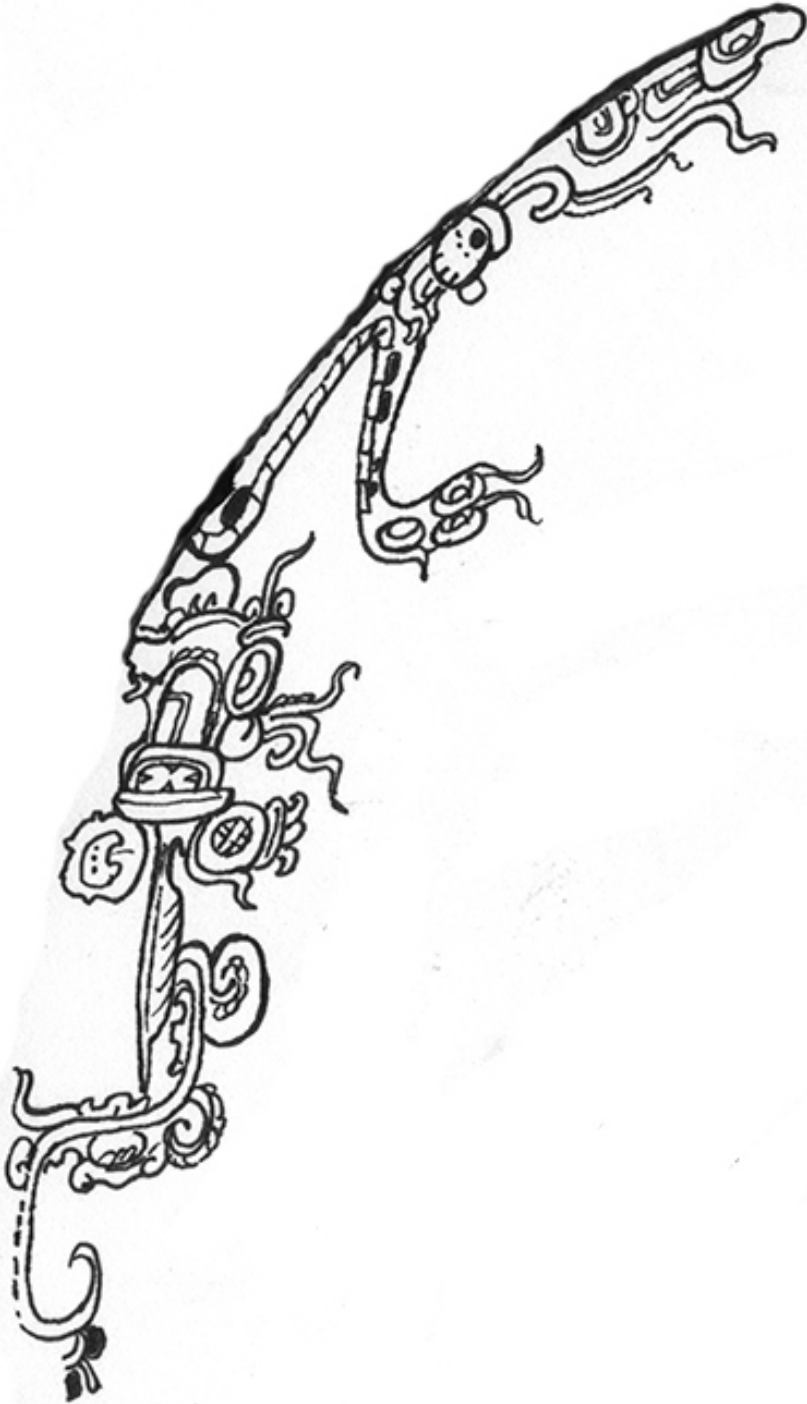
But this symbol is
normally at the right
end of the crocodile.



Crocodile is usually (but not
always) at the front of the
Cosmic Monster.

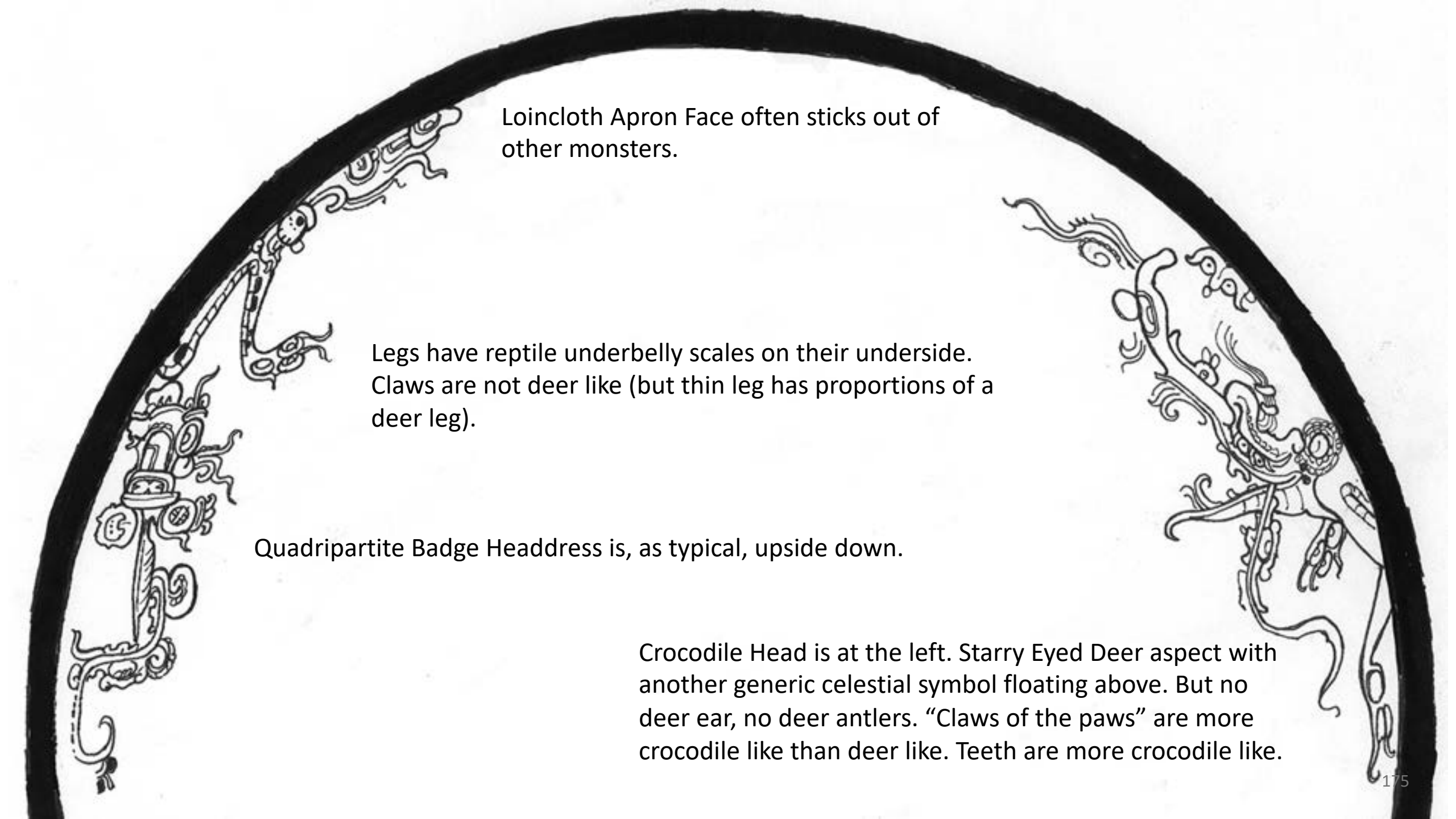


Drawing by
Linda Schele,
SD-7321.



This often generic Recurved Snout Monster is found in hundreds of stelae, stucco, paintings, etc. It comes in many sizes and shapes, often resembling the calendrical Zip Monster.

Quadriparte Badge Headdress Monster



Loincloth Apron Face often sticks out of other monsters.

Legs have reptile underbelly scales on their underside. Claws are not deer like (but thin leg has proportions of a deer leg).

Quadripartite Badge Headdress is, as typical, upside down.

Crocodile Head is at the left. Starry Eyed Deer aspect with another generic celestial symbol floating above. But no deer ear, no deer antlers. "Claws of the paws" are more crocodile like than deer like. Teeth are more crocodile like.



Profile Half-Frontal



Joined to make a frontal face that now we can recognize as a variant of the common Loincloth Apron Face. Best not to call this God C. Only about 2% of the hundreds of these faces have monkey features. Carl Callaway also independently has suggested not to confuse this with the monkey-face-God C.

I could recognize the Profile Half-Frontal face because in year 2022 the two surgeons who operated on my sinus system said I had to stay in bed in order to recuperate from their many hours of surgery inside my face. They said not work at my desk for several months! So I turned my bedroom into an office: had a 32" 4K monitor installed, moved hundreds of books to tables next to my bed, installed a "computer desk" that straddles your body on the bed so you can work on a computer without getting out of bed. The same table can be your table for eating breakfast, lunch and dinner. But every time the care-giver left the room, I moved to the adjacent desk since I can study iconography best on the space of a 32" monitor (on the bed-desk I used just my 17" laptop); the huge monitor was on the actual desk adjacent to my bed.

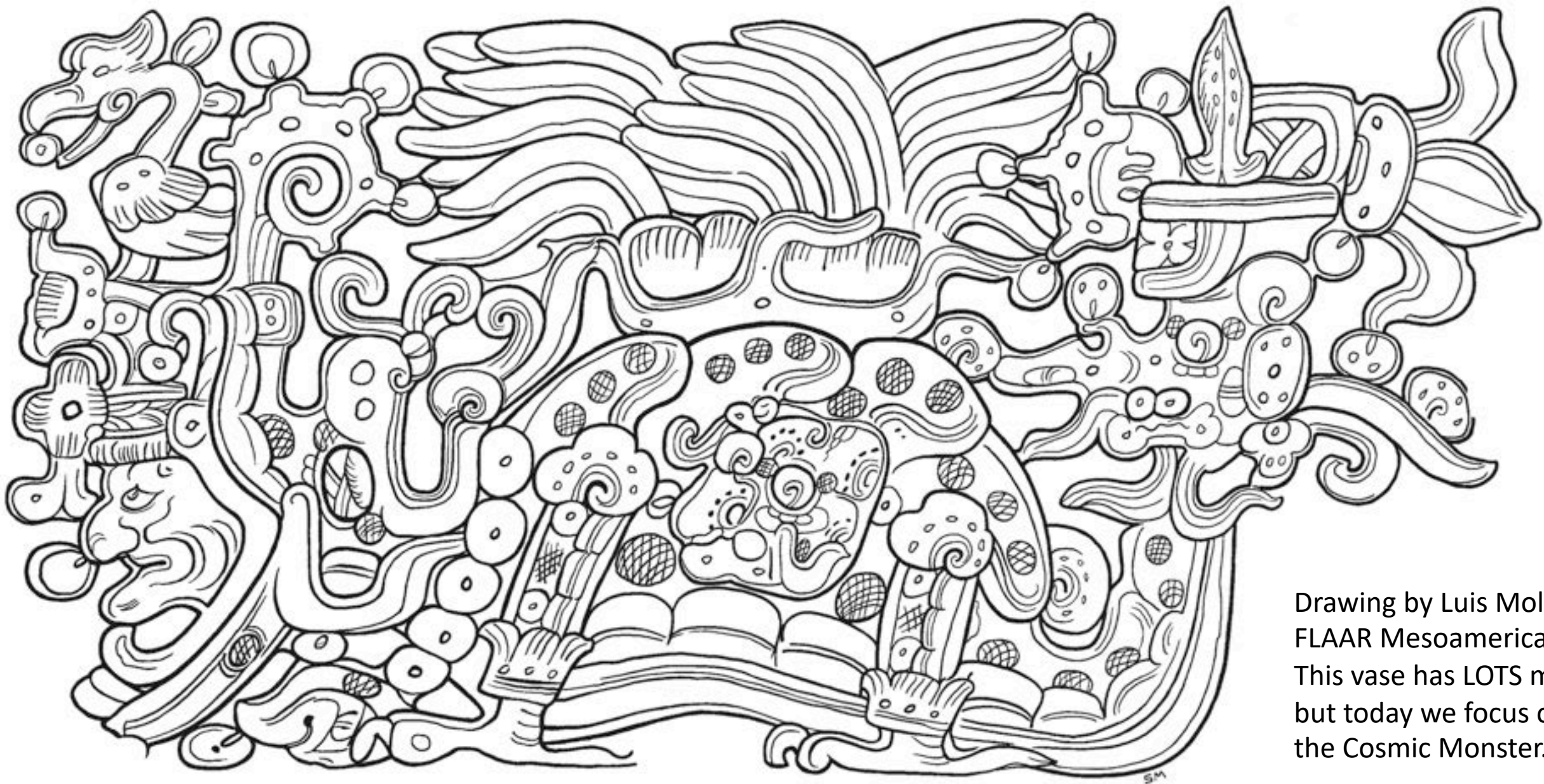
I decided to focus on Sky Bands for the several months that the doctors ordered that I "stay in bed" (meaning also no more field trips to swamps, marshes and savannas of Peten). So for 10 to 12 hours a day I studied Sky Bands on stelae, murals, stucco façade decoration, the codices, and ceramics (vases, bowls and plates). The Profile Half-Frontal face is common and well known from Palenque Sky Bands. I then found the same face on hundreds of other carvings, paintings, etc. So when I see a complex plate such as this scene, my eyes can detect dozens of different deities, monsters, and mythical symbols.



How can we notice, and showcase, such a small deity face?

It helps to be at my desk 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, holidays and weekends, with several thousand PDFs, downloaded by my reference library team. Plus all the hundreds of line drawings and PDFs of books and articles on iconography kindly sent to me by epigraphers and iconographers over the years. Plus of course my library of actual (old fashioned) books.

Now let's return to pure crocodile monsters in the Surface of the Underworldworld. The Cosmic Monster is (usually) high above up in the heavens. But the same monster also likes to associate with the Underwaterworld.



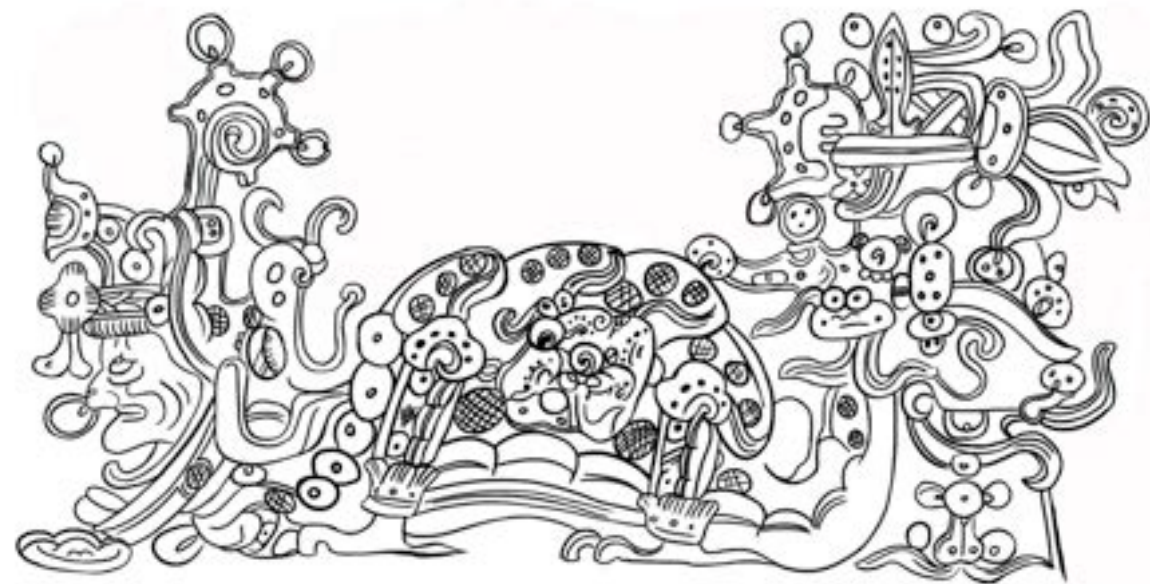
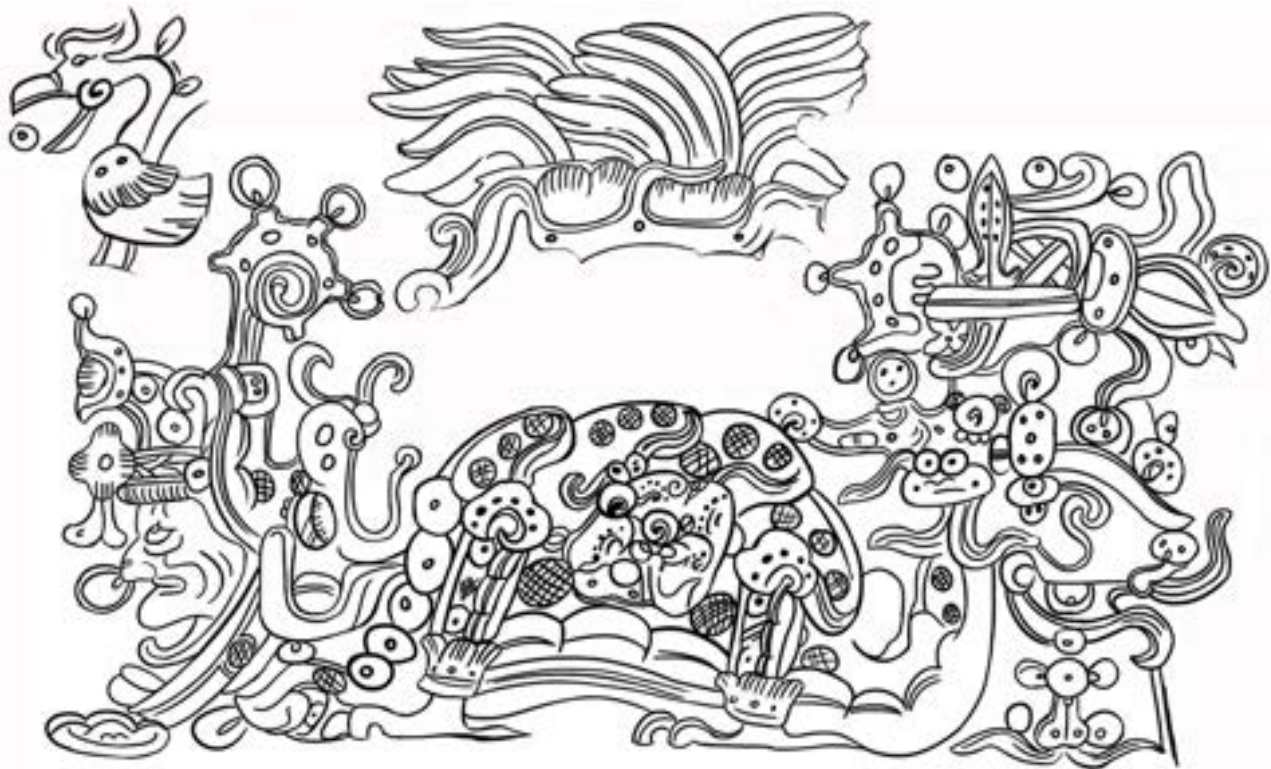
Drawing by Luis Molina,
FLAAR Mesoamerica.
This vase has LOTS more
but today we focus on
the Cosmic Monster.

There is also a drawing by Simon Martin (2015) of this same segment. But we did our drawing directly from the rollout of the vase. ¹⁷⁸

We (Norma Cho Cu and Nicholas) move off the waterbird and move up the feathered" water lily flower.

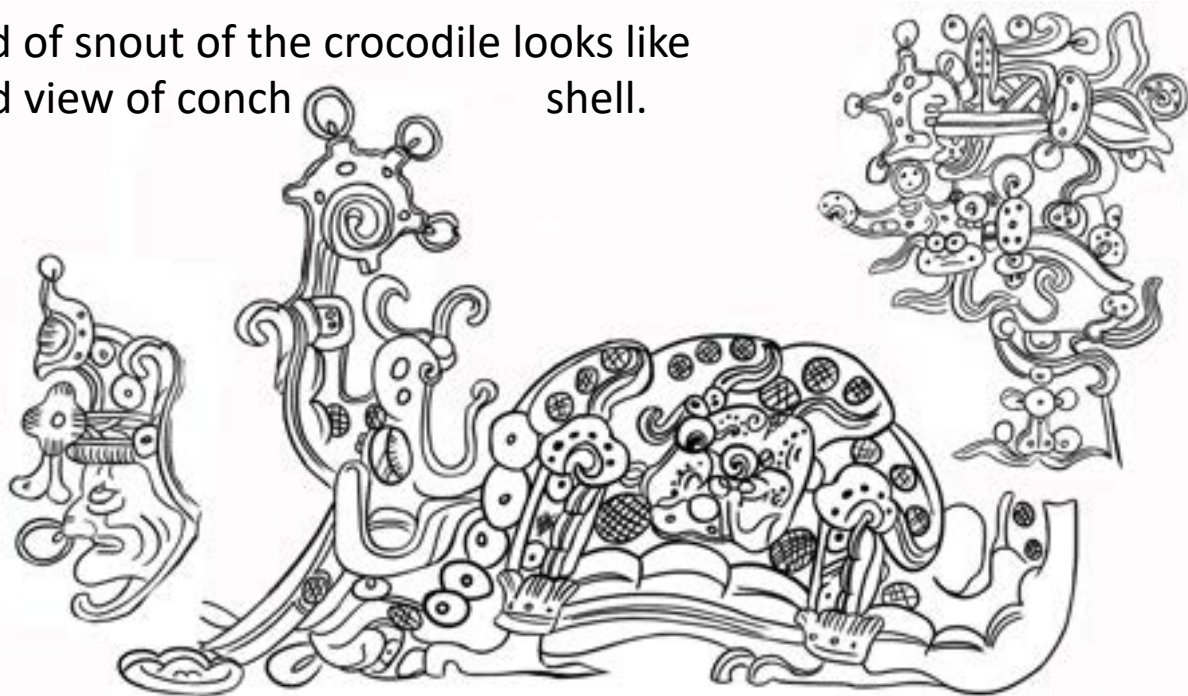
We want to show the bicephalic crocodile monster (so we remove the accessory decorations of waterbird and water lily).

The head at the back is not upside-down so you can see it better.

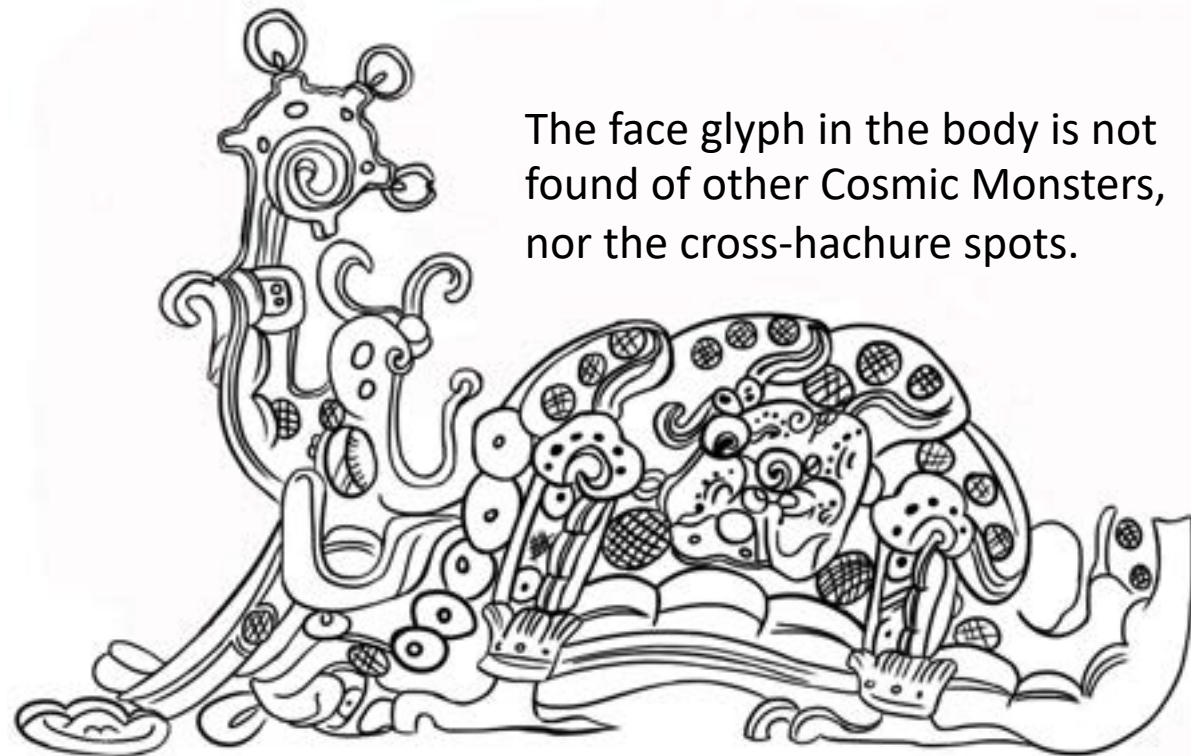


The scene on this vase is so detailed that it helps to separate each aspect. To be able to do this, 50+ years of iconographic study of Classic Maya art helps my eyes notice each aspect.

End of snout of the crocodile looks like end view of conch shell.



The face glyph in the body is not found of other Cosmic Monsters, nor the cross-hachure spots.



To show you the crocodile's mouth, we move the God N.

The Quadripartite Badge has very small 4-petalled Kin sign; the giant seashell above takes all the space.



The Crossed Bands has a large "plant bud" at it's right side.

I am not an ornithologist but the feet look more like bird feet than a crocodile foot.

God N is often associated with the Cosmic Monster, usually inside the mouth of the crocodile. God N is also associated with crocodiles that are not bicephalic.

Here are two images from Quirigua Zoomorph P, Panels C and D.

Would be essential to visit Quirigua in-person and check to see whether the crocodile image has crossed-bands or other symbol in its eye.

Drawing by Simon Martin after Maudslay 1989-1902, 2: Pl. 83 c and d, in Martin 2015: Fig. 15c.





Bicephalic; obviously a crocodile (length and posture). But the rear head is atypical. Pictured by Martin in a helpful article in Mesoweb.

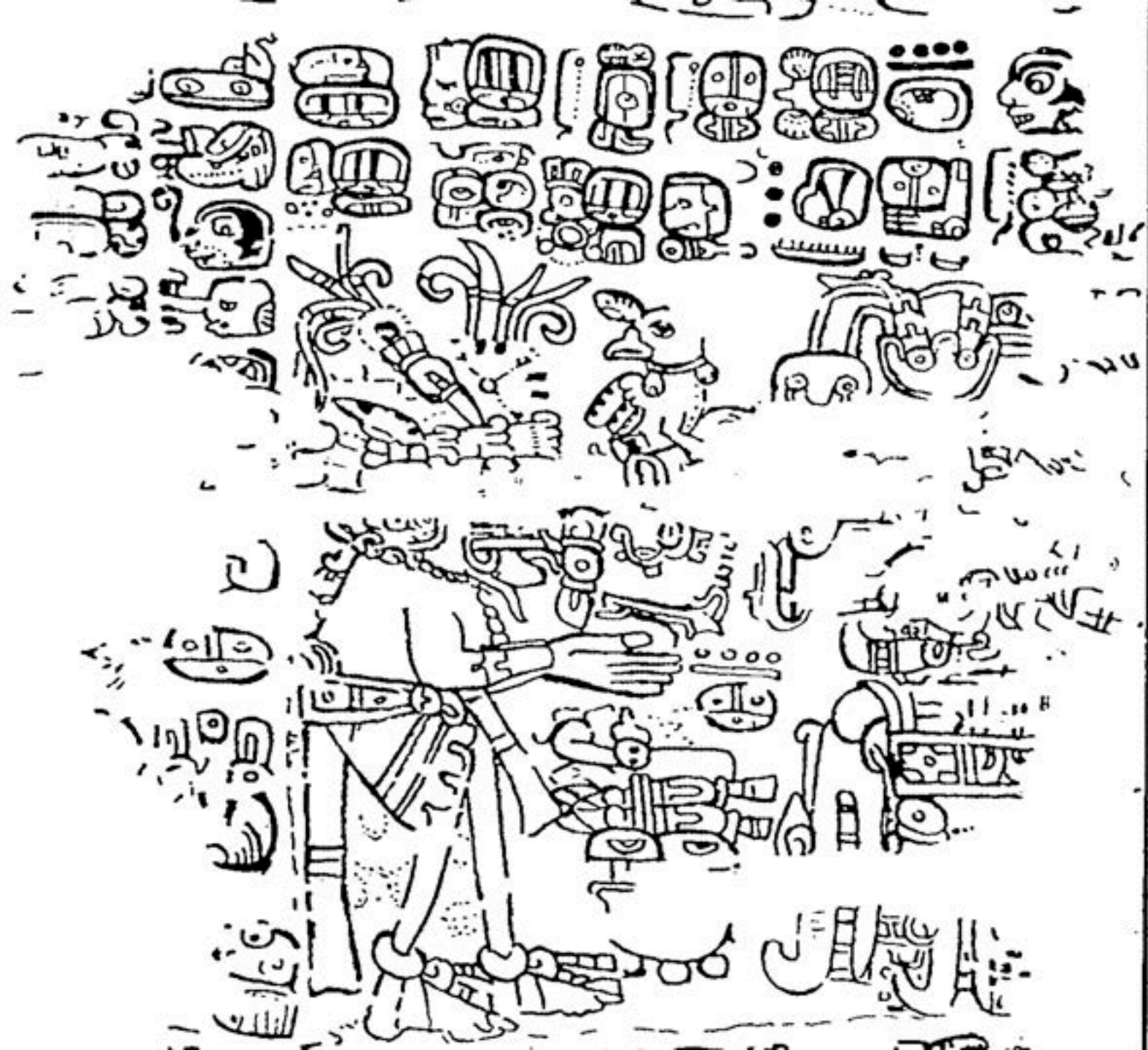


There are almost a dozen thrones in the Codex Paris that are very similar to thrones on Late Classic bas-relief Maya stone stelae.

Each throne has two levels of decoration remaining (the middle portion and back portion are not shown; either no space for a wall and roof or in the Post Classic they did need primarily just the Sky Band Throne). The bottom level is the Sky Band, with a simplified stylized reptile head pointing down at the end.

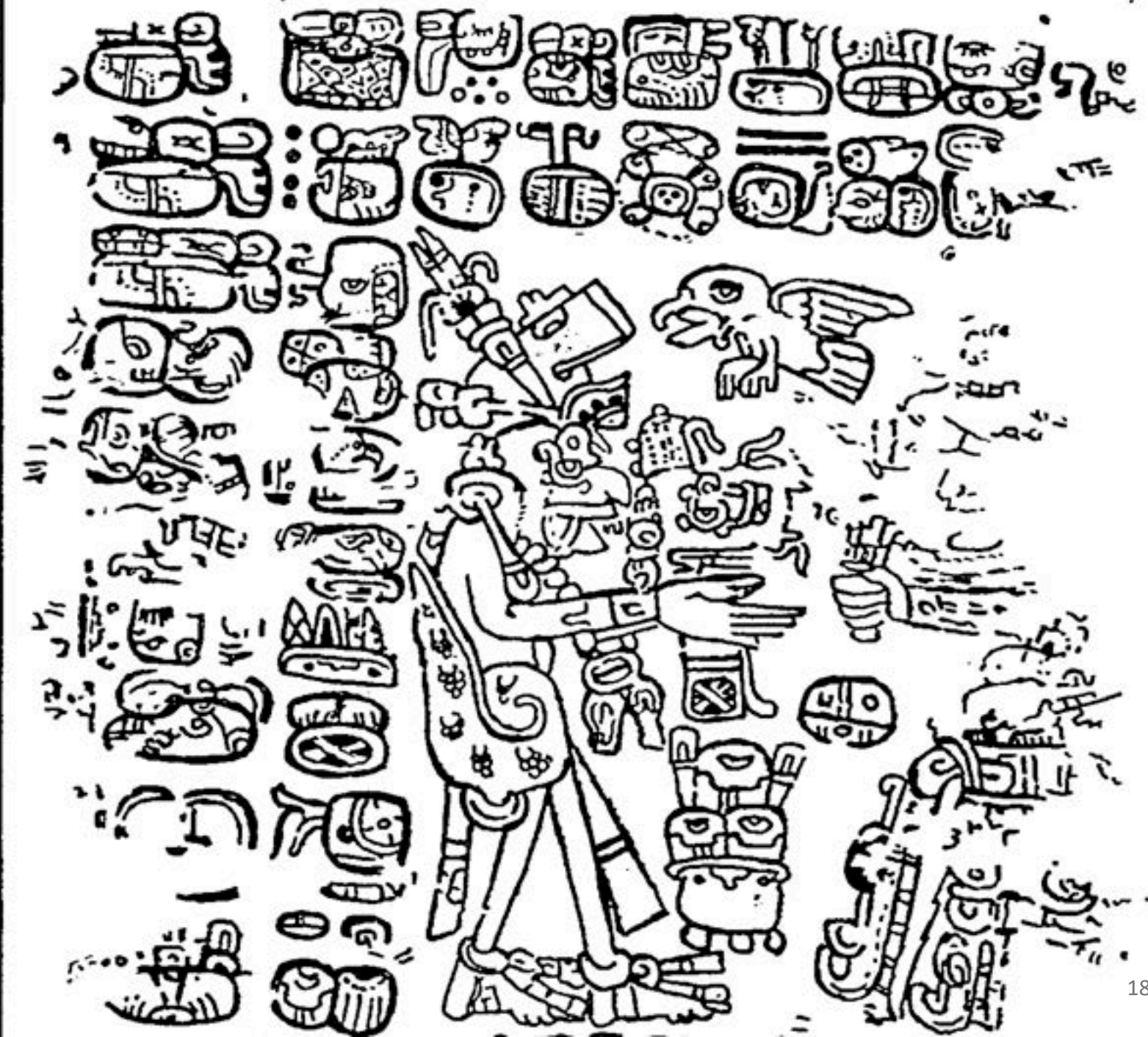
Above this is a “bound-legs” deer-like animal but with a long crocodilian-sized mouth. These bound animals are so similar to ones on Late Classic stelae it’s notable (not “identical” but so obviously similar).

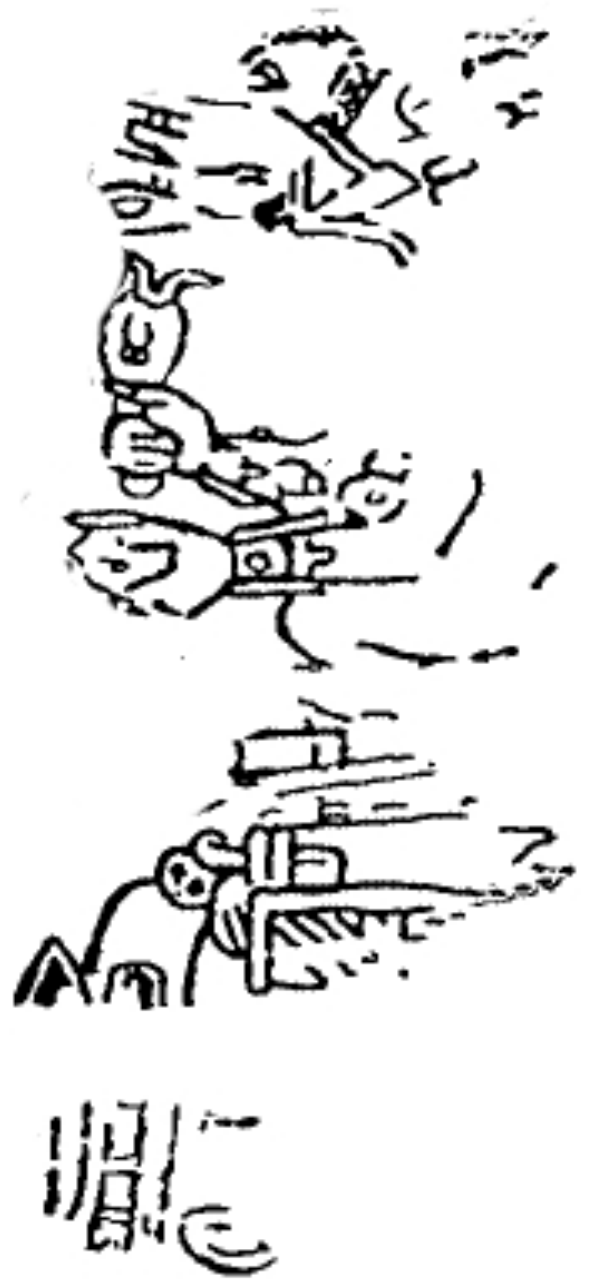


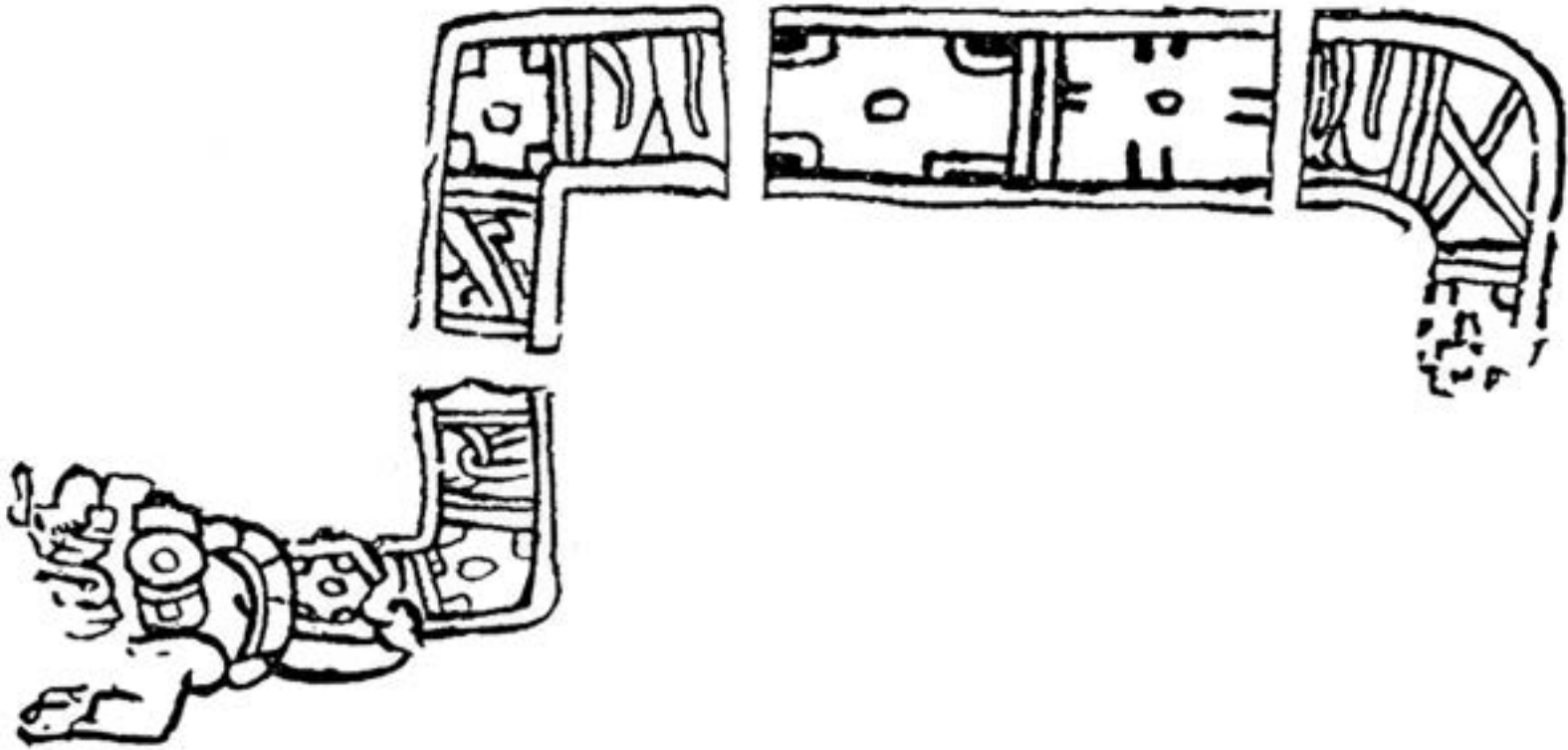








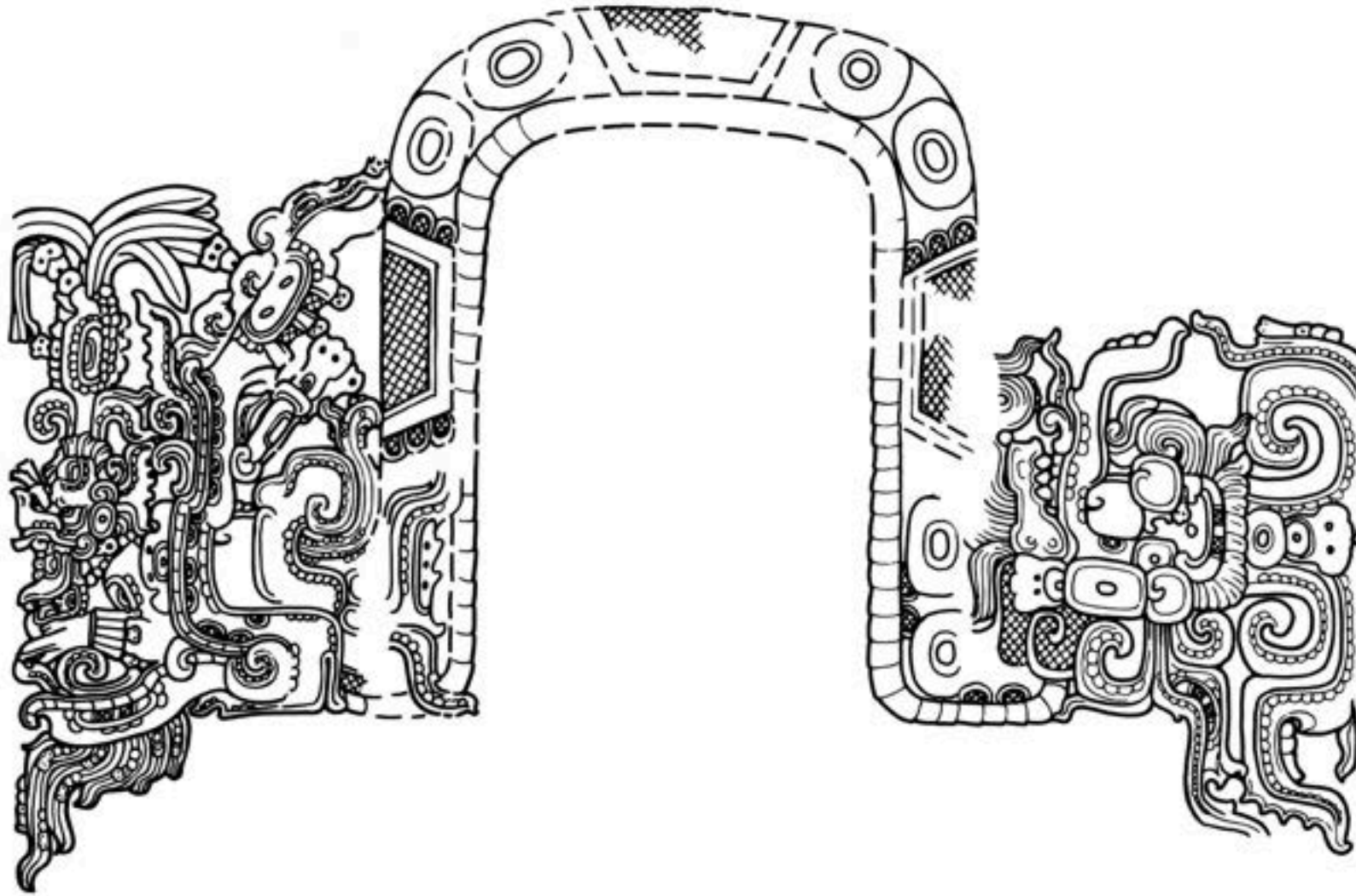




Many other Cosmic Monster Sky Bands are tops of thrones. But here the throne itself is up in the sky. The front face at the left is eroded, but this creature has arms/legs “on the ground” so is either a crocodile or crocodile deer.

Codex Paris, page XXII, Villcorta and Villacorta page 218.





There are also Bicephalic Snake Monsters. So a lot more demons, devils, and deities to study for your thesis or PhD dissertation.

Tikal Temple 4, Lintel 3, drawing by either Schele or Mark Van Stone, cropped to 2-headed Snake Monster by Hellmuth.

The bibliography on crocodiles of Mesoamerica and their iconography is a separate FLAAR Report.
Each chapter is also a separate PPTx.

Contents of this presentation

1. Crocodiles are obviously associated with Water, So in Maya Art, Crocodiles as associated with water Symbolism
2. Maya portraits of Crocodiles as 3-dimensional ceramic figurines and deep-relief renditions
3. Full-bodied Crocodiles as Roof of Throne Rooms
4. Crocodiles in Bas-relief Sculptures at Copan, Honduras
5. Crocodile Trees, Izapa, Early Classic Maya, Late Classic (Codex Style vases)
6. Crocodile and Composite Deer-Crocodile as Bicephalic Cosmic Monster