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Jaguars



on Late Classic Maya Plates

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Nicholas Hellmuth

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Anthropomorphic jaguar with stylized spots (all same size and shape). He wears a scarf. The diagonal line behind the jaguar has unknown meaning. On other plates the jaguar holds a stick of this length.



Has same size and shape of spots; has same scarf. Has two flower-like motifs above his head. The band around the jaguar shares some features with a Sky Band but the motifs are not in separated rectangles.



Same spots and same scarf (but shorter).



Same scarf but spots are of several sizes. The over 2-meter long stick is visible.



Scarf but no parallel design on it. Jaguar holds the head of a sacrificed human. Several other ceramics also show jaguars associated with human sacrifice. In two of the scenes the jaguar holds a stick that is over 2 meters long. I estimate these are trained jaguars kept in the palace of the king.



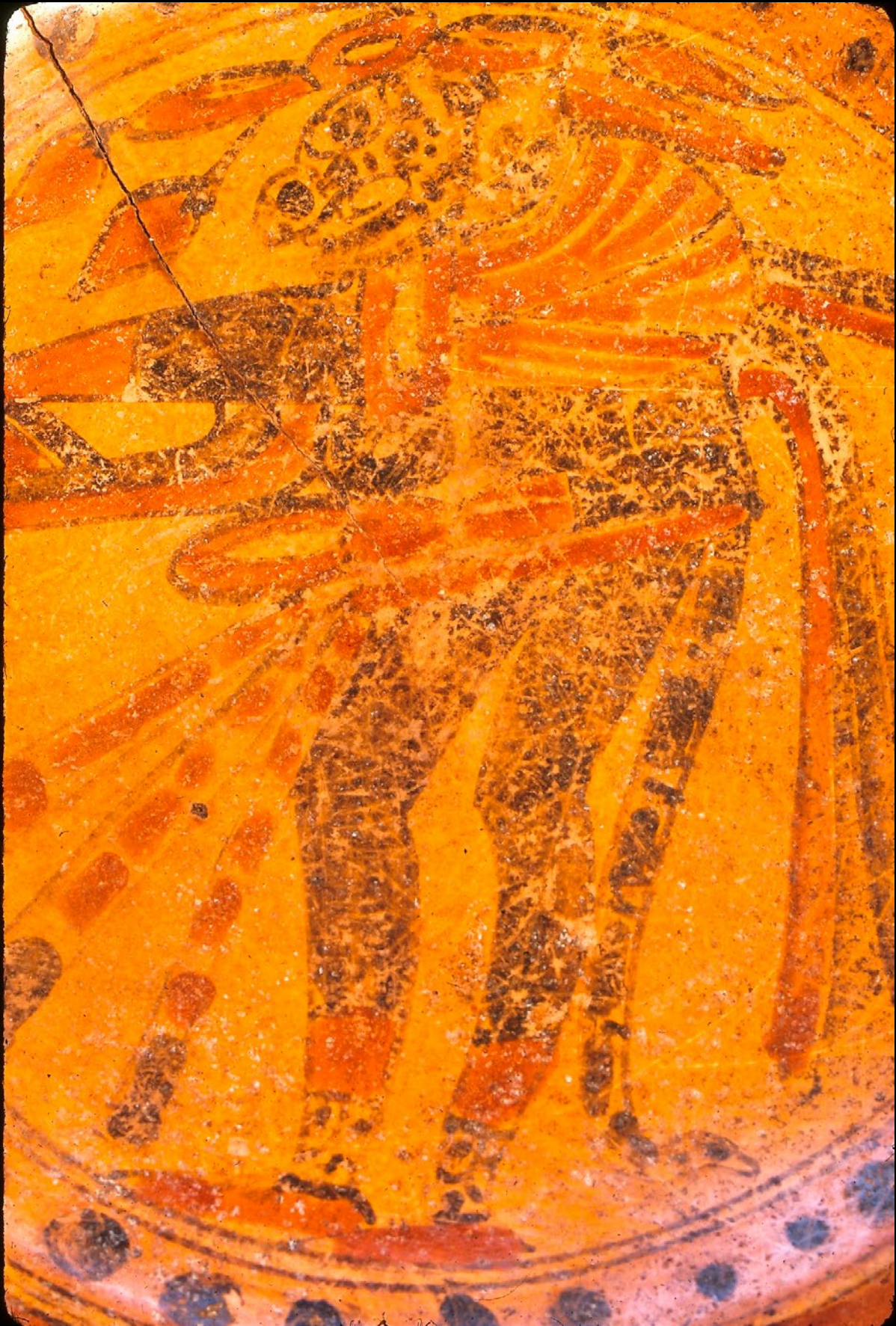
Jaguar holding the head of a recently decapitated sacrificial victim.



Jaguar holding freshly decapitated head from sacrificial victim. Fundacion La Ruta Maya, on exhibit at Hotel Hyatt Centric, Guatemala City.



Seated jaguar holding a bleeding decapitated head of a sacrificial victim. The scene is eroded but you can see the three flows of blood from the bottom of the head. The jaguar himself has a typical headdress decoration sticking out frontwards. The orange area over his shoulder could be a scarf. In two of the scenes with a decapitated head, the jaguar holds a stick that is over 2 meters long.



Scarf decorated with parallel lines. Body is black so spots only on ankles and head. Several of the jaguars have one flower-like design rising from their head; this jaguar has two. I have not yet found a photograph of the entire plate.



Another standing jaguar with a scarf, although different design. Headdress has several bulbs sprouting.



Standing jaguar. One typical "flower" sticks out from the headdress.



Neck area is covered by a probable scarf. Headdress has two flower-related sprouts rising up.



A challenge to tell whether the orange material on the shoulder is a scarf or not. Has headdress accessories similar to those of other jaguars. The black object in front of the jaguar is unknown (it is not a ballgame ball).



Seated jaguar has same headdress element as many others. I do not interpret this as a waterlily flower, but it is flower-like.



Seated anthropomorphic jaguar interacts with an unidentified animal.



Seated anthropomorphic jaguar with no spots on his skin, only on his clothing.



The jaguar is on the left side of this plate.



Only the head of a jaguar is shown here. The tied red/orange bundle under his head may be a scarf. The decoration around the plate is a row of turkey tail feather ends.



Naturalistic jaguar head, Codex Style plate.



This man wears a jaguar head as his headdress. The jaguar head has its own headdress. In the circular space around this person there are four segments of feline hide patterns. I have no idea what is the diagonal line across the background. There is a kill hole drilled into the middle of this plate.



Seated jaguar with several deer (with no antlers).



Has spots of various sizes. Headdress is sprouting two buds.



Seated jaguar.



Small simplified jaguar.



Squatting jaguar with spots of different sizes (so more naturalistic). Wears loincloth apron around his waist. Holds a potential rattle musical instrument close to his shoulder. Headdress has no floral aspects. The plate is ringed with a Sky Band. Kill home drilled in the middle of the plate.



Seated feline; the spots remind me more of margay or ocelot.
The headdress is similar to that of the other jaguars.



Howling jaguar with atypical headdress. Codex Style plate.



A complex scene rises up from the horizontal Surface of the Underwaterworld.



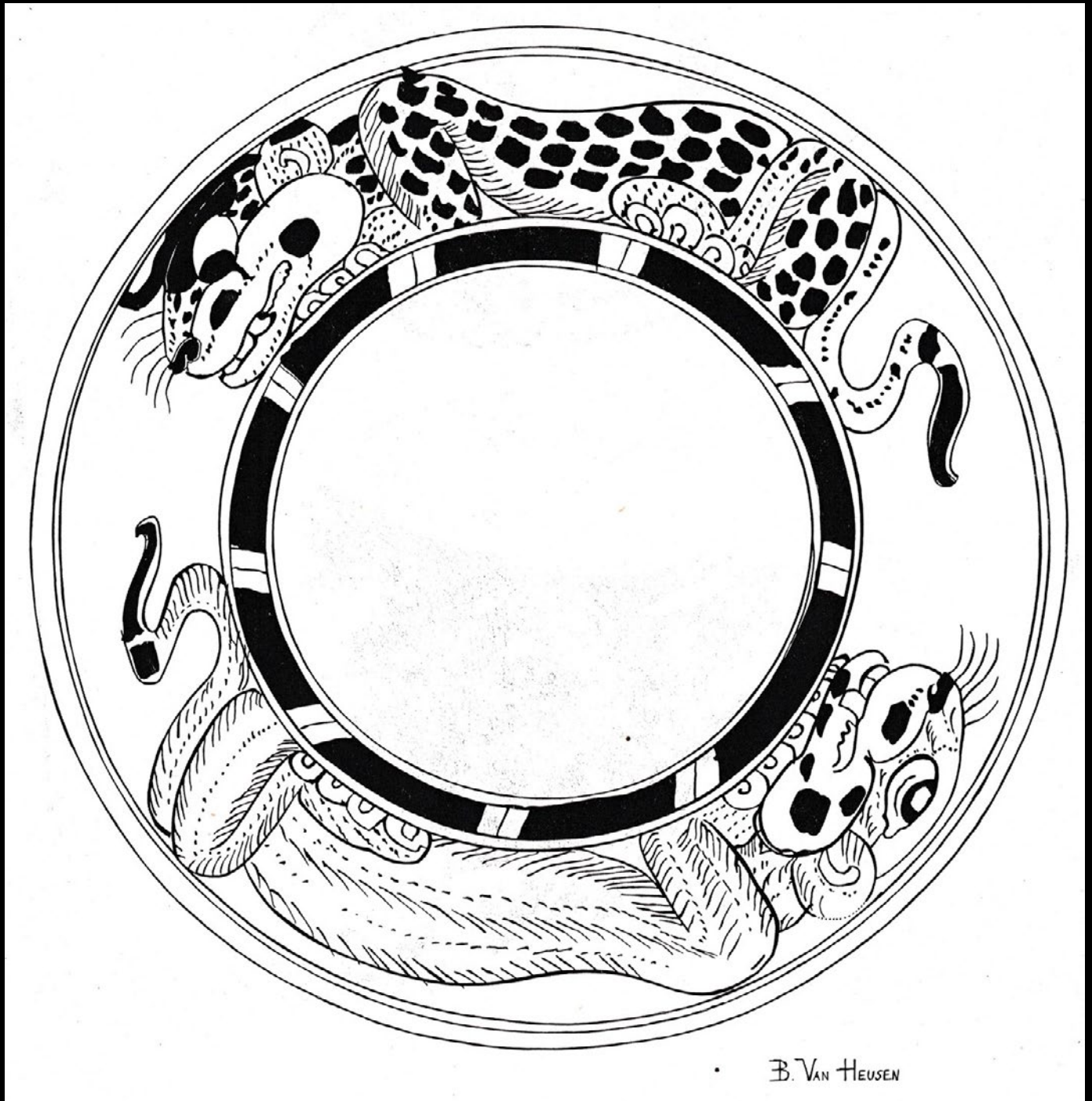
Very different regional style but the jaguar is wearing a scarf and has a "flower" growing from its head. The three black spots on the side of the plate is a common symbol for jaguar.



Stylized animal potentially of an anthropomorphic jaguar albeit no spots.



Stylized jaguar.



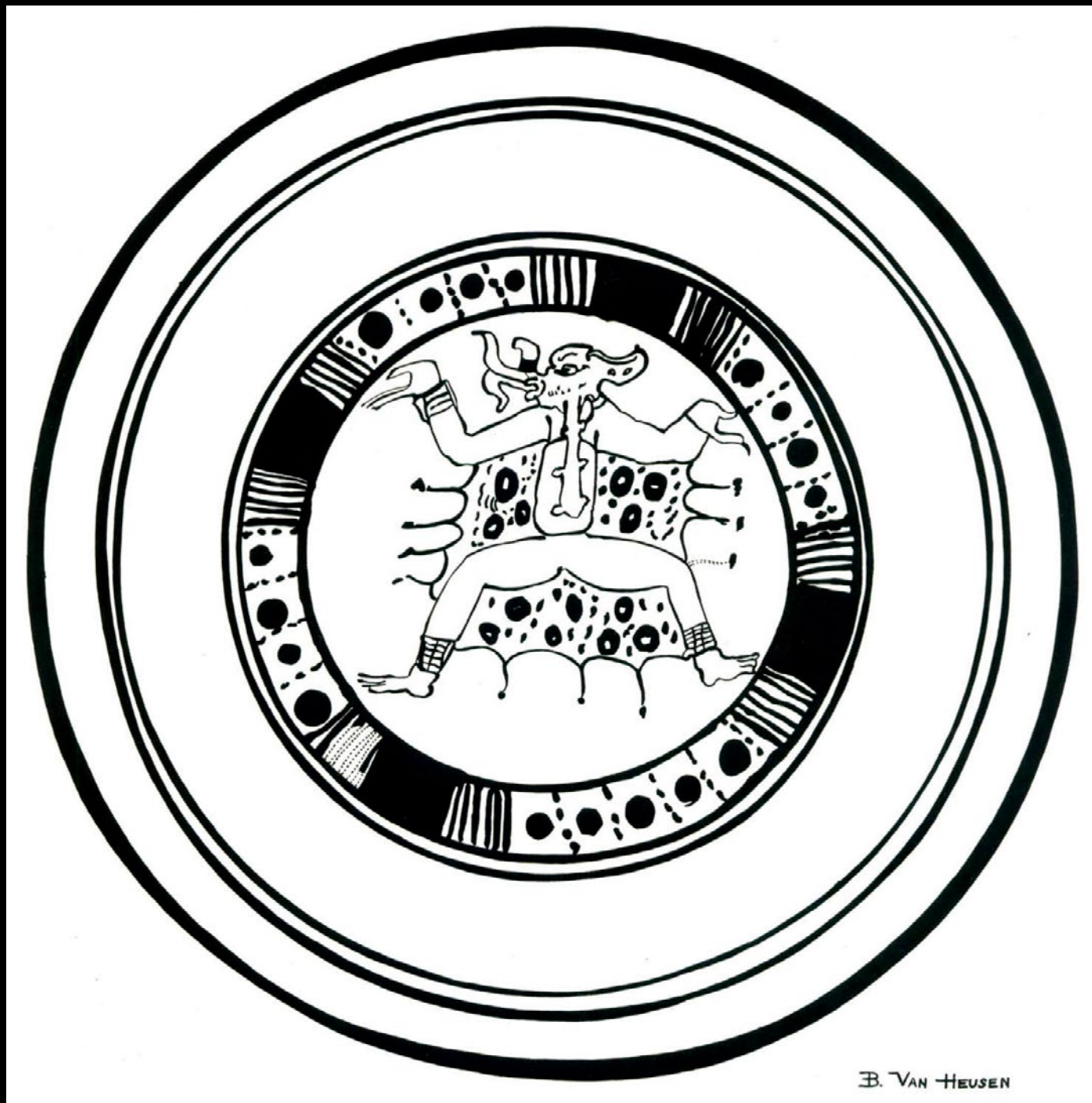
Jaguar across the top; puma across the bottom. It is very rare to see a puma, margay, or ocelot in Classic Maya art. Drawing by Barbara Van Heusen, FLAAR Photo Archive.



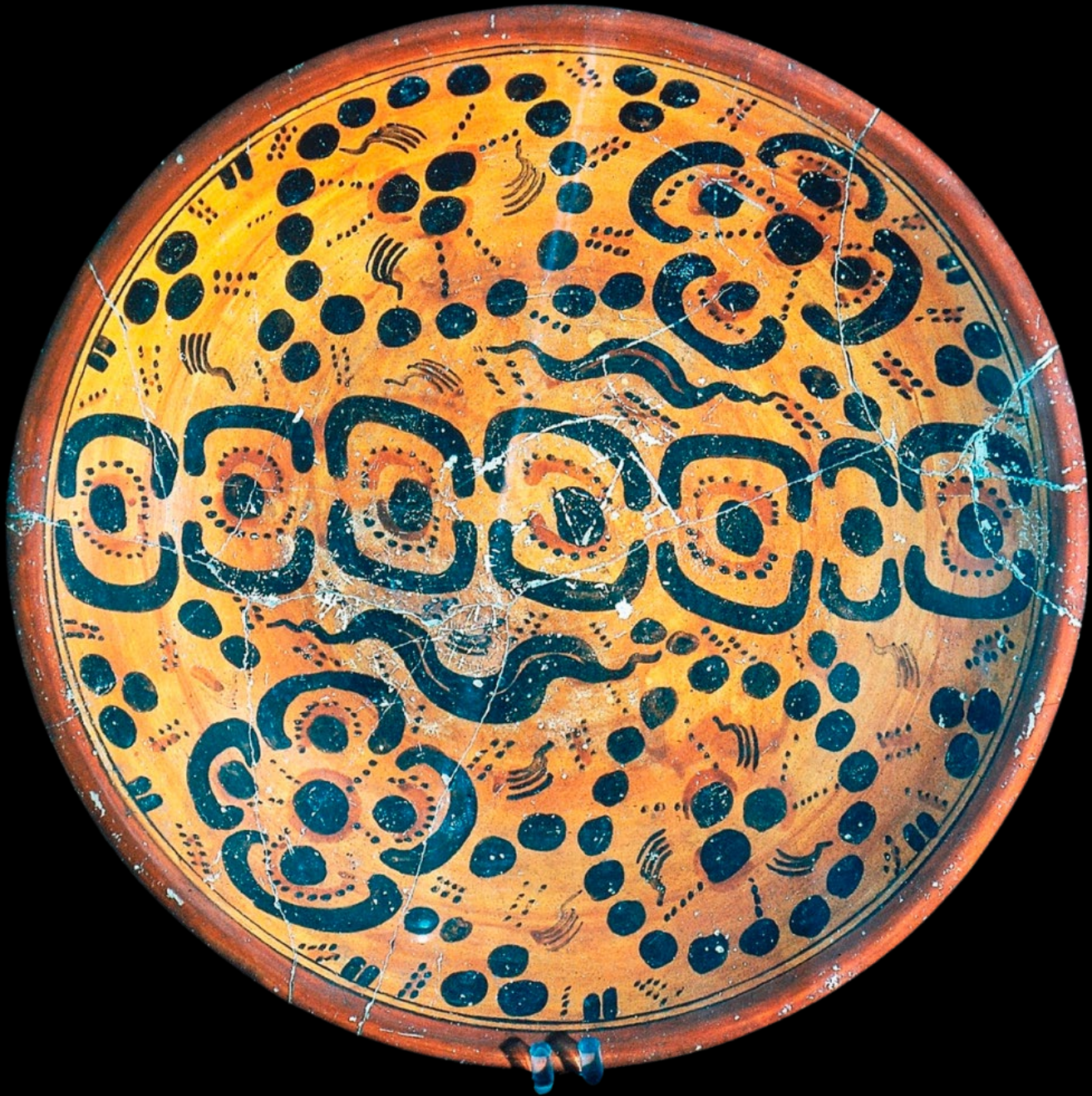
Natural jaguar, not anthropomorphic.



Bat with jaguar spotted wings.



Bat with jaguar spotted wings. Drawing by Barbara Van Heusen, FLAAR Photo Archive.



Jaguar spots. The sets of three black spots are a generic Maya symbol for jaguar. Museo Amparo, Puebla, Mexico. This plate is a Peten style ceramic.



Stylized feline spots including one set of three spots in a triangle.



Plate with stylized feline spots in geometric pattern. One triangular set of three spots on each side.



Feline pelage on the outside of a plate.
You can see several triangular arrangements of three black spots, the generic symbol for jaguar.



Decorative designs based on feline spots.



Decorative designs based on feline spots.



Jaguar pelts can be photographed on the walls of restaurants and the homes of (illegal) hunters. On this photo you can see solid black spots on the white underbelly. The other spots vary in size, shape, and design depending on what part of the body you look at.



Decorative designs based on jaguar spots.



Decorative designs based on jaguar spots.



Geometric decoration possibly inspired in part from feline spots.