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Altun Ha Style Vases D



Iconography and Primary Standard Sequence (PSS) Hieroglyphs

FLAAR Reports
FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala)

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Introduction

Altun Ha Style is a name for vases that have certain colors and hieroglyphs in a very easy to recognize regional style. These vases were photographed in collections and museums but their "Altun Ha Style" is easy to recognize.

Since I have written several FLAAR Reports on glyphs of the Primary Standard Sequence, I wanted to show the regional style of glyphs on Altun Ha Style vases. So far most are vases, a few are bowls; none (so far) are plates.

Ceramicists call these *Petkanche Orange-polychrome* (Helmke, Guenter and Wanyerka 2018: caption of Figure 3).

I do not have notes at hand as to where each vase was photographed, but probably none actually in Belize. These vases were traded around the Maya areas in the Late Classic; there is a nice example excavated at Copan, Honduras. There should be several that are still in Belize, and other Altun Ha vases in collections and museums around the world that I did not visit in the 1970's-1990's. So far,

whatever ones may be in the Kerr rollout collection are not yet cataloged as Altun Ha Style. So I have not yet found any rollouts of Altun Ha Style vases there.

If a student could find all the missing examples, they could do a MA thesis or PhD dissertation on Altun Ha Style ceramics that would be very helpful. This is why we are publishing the examples that we have found so far in the FLAAR Photo Archive. Would also help to check all the publications on Altun Ha by David Pendergast and colleagues.

The article by Helmke, Guenter and Wanyerka show several that I have not photographed, including a very nice one originally from Copan available in photos by the Peabody Museum, Harvard (2018: Fig. 13).

I thank Camila Morales for helping to scan 35mm color slides for many years.

Reference cited

HELMKE, Christophe, GUENTER, Stanley P. and Phillip J. WANYERKA

2018 Kings of the East: Altun Ha and the Water Scroll Emblem Glyph. *Ancient Mesoamerica*, 29 (2018), 113–135.



Fig. 1. Typical colors for an Altun Ha Style vase. And glyphs are painted in rounded style (not many sharp angles). Four creatures are visible here; on later pages I show some in close-up. The mammal at the bottom left has black triangles in a row across his back; this suggests an armadillo but the legs are too high and the tail is not of an armadillo.



Fig. 2. Altun Ha Style vase. Original condition. Breaks glued back together.



Fig. 3. Here is another bird and a black insect-like creature above (the Maya show only four legs on insects, not the actual six legs). The plant-like area under the bird needs study to see if there is a deity face at the base. Lots of Maya trees have a face at the bottom of their trunk.



Fig. 4. The animal scene does not go all the way around the vase. This black area has potential "fleur de lis" above and below the reptilian monster in the circular area. Fleur de lis is a stylized flower (if these are fleur de lis motifs).



Fig. 5. This is the second black-background area. Same decorations as black area to the left.



Fig. 6. Closeup of fanged monster.



Fig. 7. Rotated so you can see the creature better. With four legs this is not likely a hummingbird; the Maya show insects with only four legs, not six.



Fig. 8. The Classic Maya picture insects with "four legs" not six.
This creature is not pictured on vases from Peten.



Fig. 9. A furry mammal.



Fig. 10. This is a bird with long beak (similar to the beak of the four-legged insect).
Something is below this bird.



Fig. 11. Another vase in Altun Ha Style colors. Initial Sign and God N in PSS.



Fig. 12. The decorative motif is not common on Peten vases (Altun Ha is in Belize).



Fig. 13. As on many vases, there are two panels, each with similar decoration.



Fig. 14. The second panel.

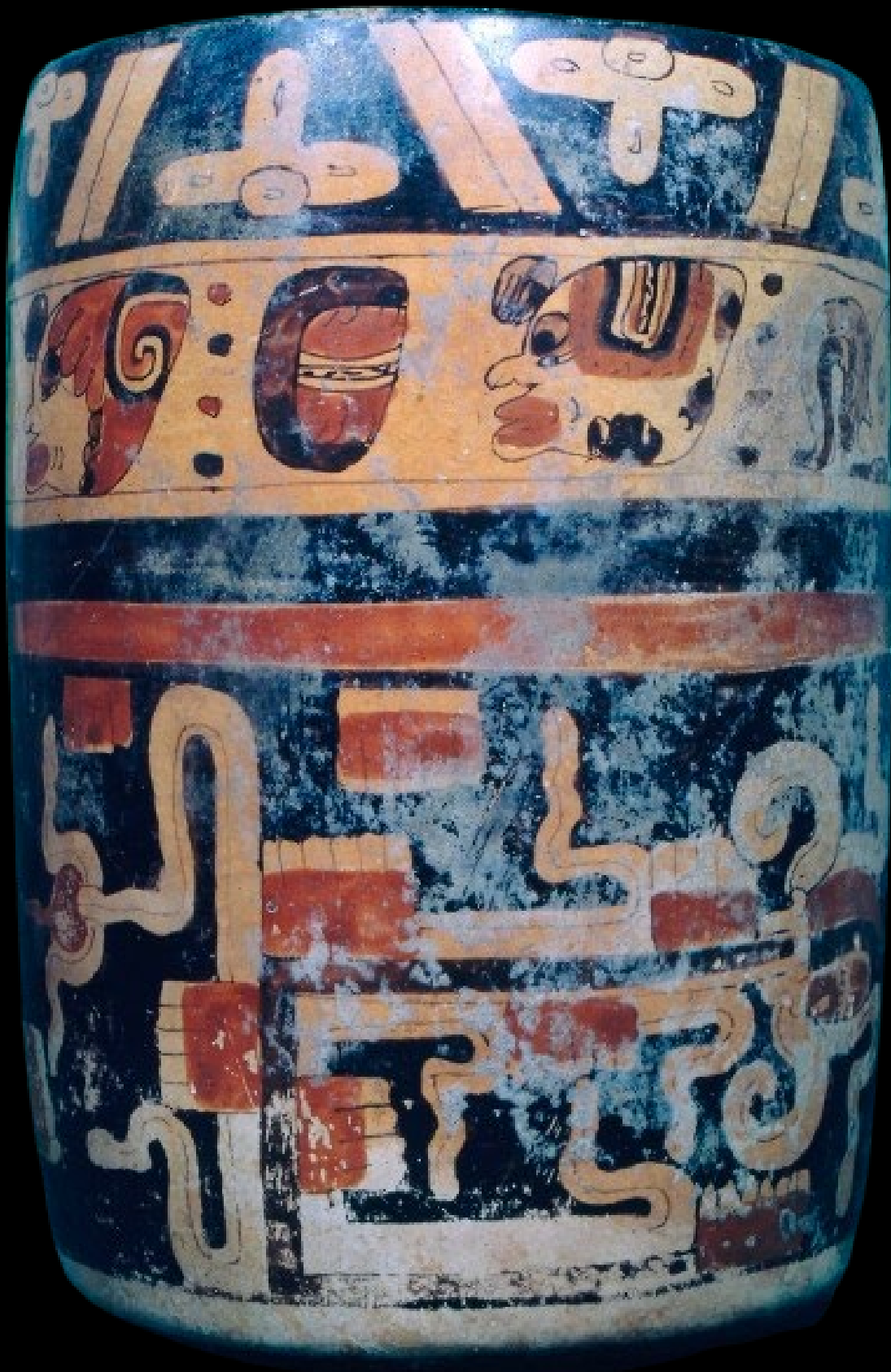


Fig. 15. More of the second panel.



Fig. 16. Altun Ha vase whose iconography needs to be studied in depth.



Fig. 17. Another Altun Ha Style vase. The motif here, is a frontal view of what is often shown on Late Classic Peten area Maya plates: goggle-eyed Mayanized Teotihuacan reptile creature.



Fig. 18. Many vases have their circumference divided into two panels by a divider motif



Fig. 19. The panels are both sides are the similar except for what's under the mouth.



Fig. 20. Goggle-eyed frontal monster on Altun Ha Style vase.



Fig. 21. Divider design to separate the two panels.



Fig. 22. Altun Ha Style vase.



Fig. 23. Most Altun Ha ceramics of these colors are vases, but here is a bowl. The scribe that painted the PSS hieroglyphs had a very personal style.



Fig. 24. Another bowl with the same colors as Altun Ha vases. So far no plates.



Fig. 25. So far we have found only one 35mm color slide of this vase. Snake rises up.



Fig. 26. Altun Ha Style colors but no Primary Standard Sequence glyphs around upper part.



Fig. 27. Bird at the top; large hieroglyph in the round area.



Fig. 28. Altun Ha Style vase.



Fig. 29. Bird-like animal at the top; large hieroglyph in the round area.



Fig. 30. Face of this animal looks like a bird.



Fig. 31. Hieroglyph on Altun Ha Style vase.



Fig. 32. Altun Ha Style Vase; very helpful that it was not repainted under pretext of "restoration."



Fig. 33. Initial Sign in the middle. God N behind.



Fig. 34. Initial Sign in the middle. God N behind.



Fig. 35. Probable Initial Sign in the middle. Probable God N behind. Style is unique.



Fig. 36. God N in the middle; Initial Sign at the left.



Fig. 37. God N in the middle; Initial Sign at the left.



Fig. 38. God N in the middle; Initial Sign at the left.



Fig. 39. Third glyph of Primary Standard Sequence is in the middle.



Fig. 40. Third glyph of this Primary Standard Sequence is in the middle.



Fig. 41. Fourth glyph of this Primary Standard Sequence is in the middle.



Fig. 42. Fourth glyph of another Primary Standard Sequence is in the middle. Same glyph as previous vase.



Fig. 43. Fourth glyph of Primary Standard Sequence is in the middle. Same glyph as previous vases.



Fig. 44. "Two" glyphs are part of each other.



Fig. 45. "Two" glyphs are part of each other. Have divider tower of four spots on each side.



Fig. 46. This bird glyph is very common in Primary Standard Sequence (PSS).



Fig. 47. This bird glyph is very common in Primary Standard Sequence (PSS).



Fig. 48. Same bird glyph but by different scribe. Initial Sign is to the right.



Fig. 49. A PSS can be up to 22 glyphs long, but Altun Ha PSS are shorter; here is final glyph for this PSS. Initial Sign is at far right.