

FLAAR



# Full-Figure Personified

# Maya Hieroglyphs (many with Tlaloc)

Copan Temple 26

Nicholas Hellmuth

July, 2024

# Acknowledgements

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We sincerely appreciate the permission from IHAH to photograph at night. You can get better photographs at night with a portable electric generator. We have donated these photos to IHAH.

Parque Arqueológico de Copán, the Museo de Escultura de Copán and museum in the town of Copan Ruinas, Honduras are all great places to visit; local people are hospitable and I have enjoyed visiting the park and the village museum in the town of Copan Ruinas in the late 1960's, 1970's, 1990's, and again when digital cameras became available, to return with higher resolution. We sincerely appreciate the assistance of the park rangers and local guides.

I also thank the capable team of FLAAR Mesoamerica who assisted with setting up the portable photo studio, lighting, etc.

We also appreciate the hospitality by the archaeologists working at Copan over decades.

The IHAH team at their headquarters initiated discussions with the FLAAR and FLAAR Mesoamerica team. We sincerely appreciate the initial reunion we had digitally with them.

The IHAH team at Copan provided cooperation and coordination. Manuel Espinoza was assigned to be with the FLAAR team each day; we sincerely appreciate his assistance.

We made a special field trip to Copan in early 2024 to photograph the full-figure hieroglyphs for this lecture.

During our early visits to photograph at Copan (1980's onwards), Oscar Cruz was the Regional Representative of IHAH. He was very helpful on each of our field trips. He is now retired, but we went to say hello to him on our February 2024 field trip.

There are probably hundreds of photos of these sculptures of Copan Temple 26. I would estimate that the various Copan projects have plenty of photos, perhaps including 3-dimensional scans. But to study details it helps to have photographs at larger size and in good resolution. In a peer-reviewed journal article the images are often never in color and tend to be very small. I recently was reading a book on Maya iconography by two capable epigraphers / iconographers and the illustrations were so tiny you could not see details whatsoever. This is the fault of the publishers, not the authors. So we prefer not to publish in commercial books; our goal is to show the Maya sculptures in good details (which starts with using good portable studio lighting and using a tripod so the camera is not vibrating). And publishing at full-page size in good resolution.

It will help children in Honduras and neighboring countries to learn about Maya cultural heritage.

One long-range goal is to "translate" iconographic, epigraphic, and archaeological documentation into Mayan Toons books by FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala) to help school children around the world learn about the Classic Maya of Honduras with reliable archaeological and iconographic documentation (rather than copy-and-paste from normal websites).

## Acknowledgements

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The first step is to find all the photos, scan them if done before digital cameras; process them so you can see the details at high resolution, and provide references in a bibliography to help professors and university students and the general public. But it would be great if primary and secondary school children also had this information in a format appropriate for their early years.

Our material for university students and professors is on:

[www.maya-ethnobotany.org](http://www.maya-ethnobotany.org)

[www.maya-ethnozoology.org](http://www.maya-ethnozoology.org)

[www.maya-archaeology.org](http://www.maya-archaeology.org)

Our material for school children is

[www.MayanToons.org](http://www.MayanToons.org)

[www.digital-photography.org](http://www.digital-photography.org) muestra nuestro equipo fotográfico a lo largo de los años.

## We sincerely thank the IHAH team in Copán for the cooperation and coordination provided

M.Sc. Salvador Varela, representante regional de Occidente.

Lic. Zoila Madrid, Jefa del Patrimonio de la Humanidad

Manuel Espinoza, Jefe de Seguridad y Mantenimiento del

Sitio Maya de Copán. Hilario Vásquez, mantenimiento.

Rita Martínez, vigilante.

## Credits

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### Photographers

Edwin Solares

David Arrivillaga

Nicholas Hellmuth

### Photography Assistants

Norma Estefany Cho Cu

Karla Esperanza Cho Cu

Luis Molina

### Illustrator

Luis Molina

### Coordinator of the field trip

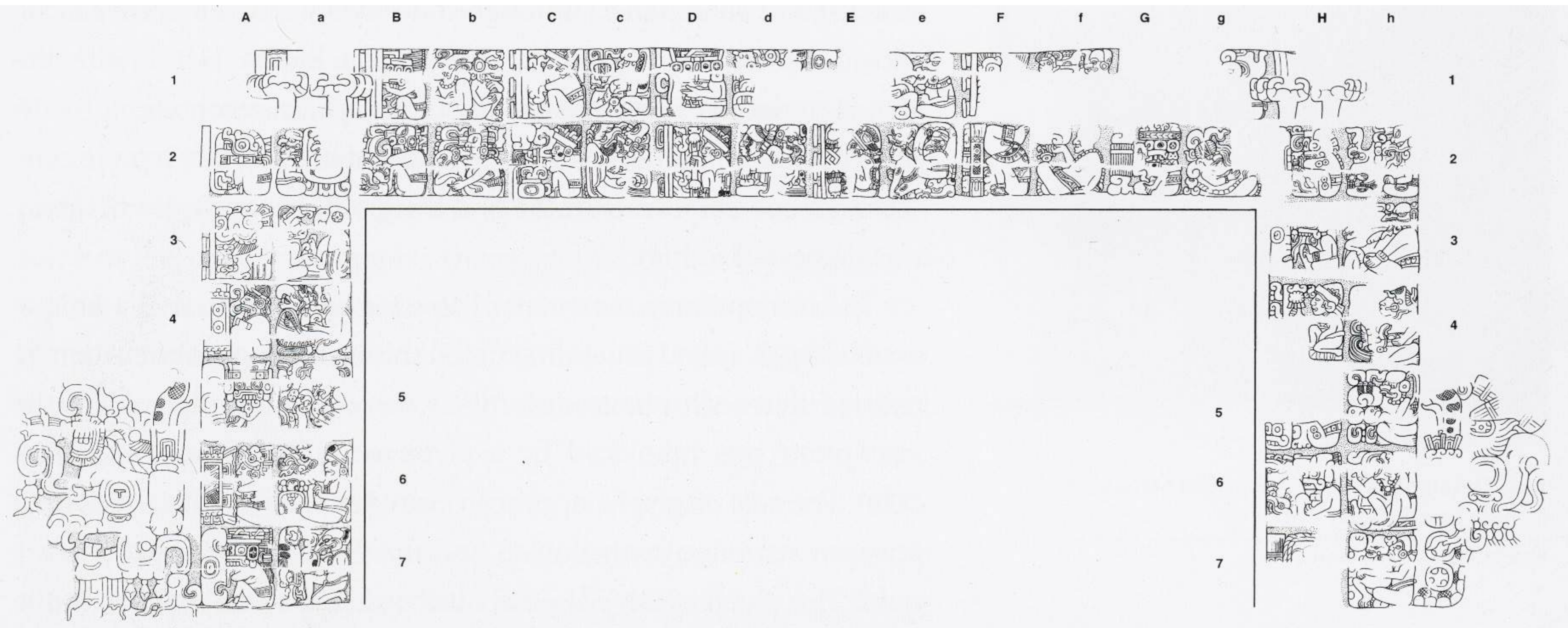
Vivian Hurtado

### Drivers of the two 4x4 pickup trucks that transported the team and all the photography equipment

Anibal Gabriel

David Arrivillaga

# Copan Temple 26, excellent drawing by David Stuart published by Barbara Fash



It took a high-power flatbed scanner to capture the detail from the small size of the drawing in the publication. Would help to have the original drawing to allow showing more details for epigraphers.

## Copan has more full-figure hieroglyphs than any other Maya site

Copan Stela 2, Uinal

Copan Stela 12, Uinal

Copan Stela 15, Uinal

Copan Stela 24, Uinal

**Copan Stela D**

Copan Stela E

**Copan Stela 63**

Copan Altar D', Altar 41, CPN 82

Copan Altar W, Altar W'

Copan Temple 11, Str. 10L-11

**Copan Temple 26**

**Copan Str. 9N-82**

**Copan Str. 9M-146, "Harvard Bench"**

Copan Xukpi stone

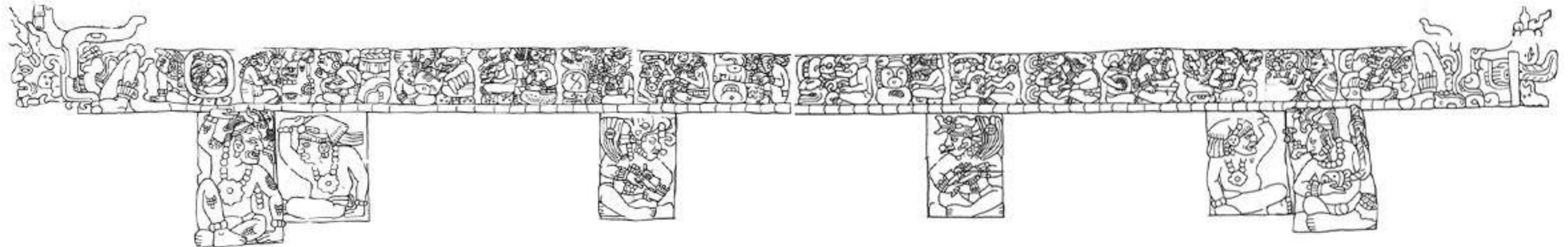
Copan Papagayo hieroglyphic stairway

**Copan Str. 8N-66C, Sky Band Bench**

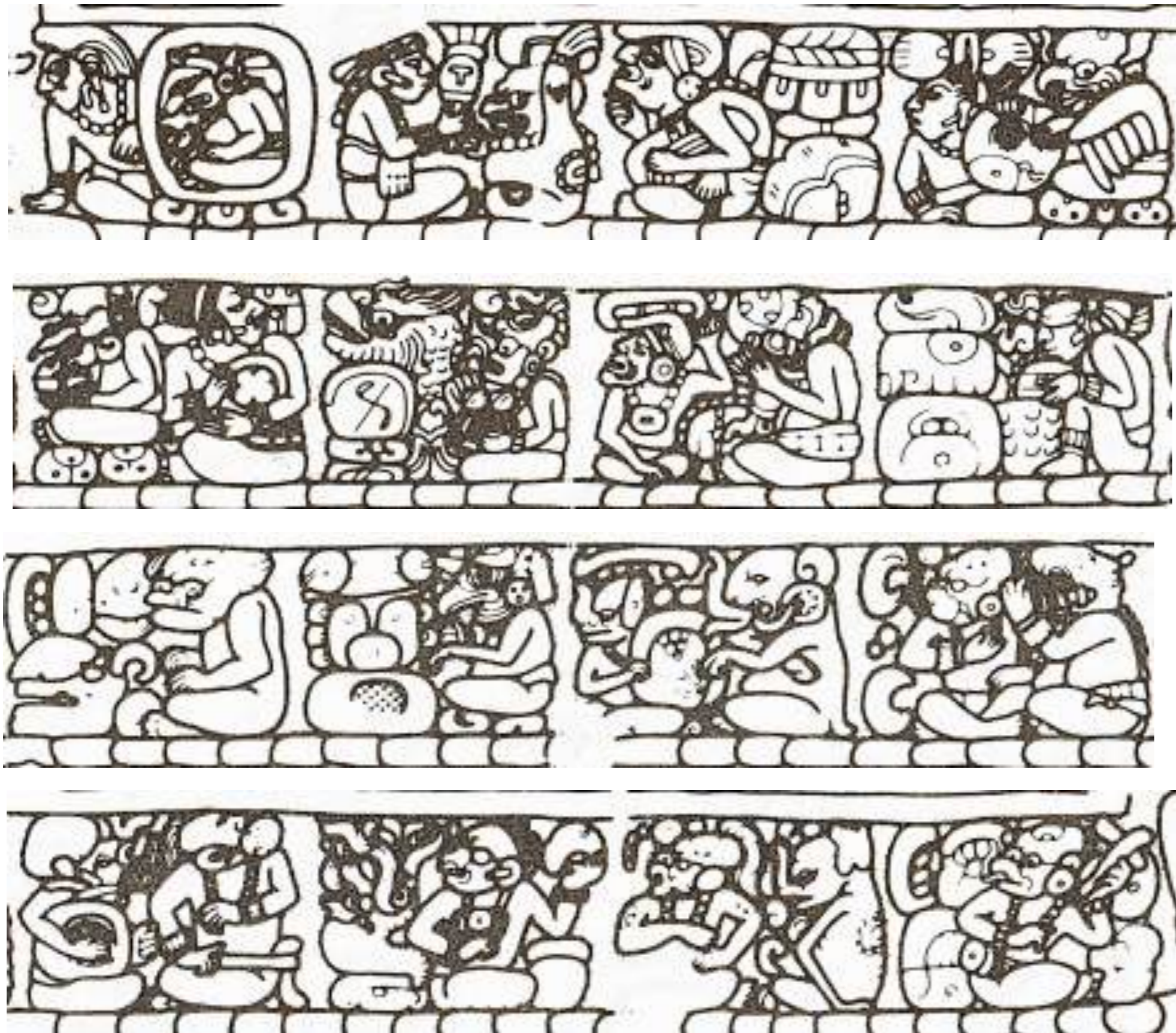
**Copan Hieroglyphic Stairway**

Copan Altar Q'

**Bold font** means these sculptures have the most and/or best full-figure glyphs.



**Twenty-six full-figure personified hieroglyphs on Copan Str. 9N-82, nice drawing by Barbara Fash**



Would help to have access to a JPG or TIF or PDF of these drawings at much higher resolution.

The published drawings are not of a quality that facilitates enlargements.

**Copan Str. 9N-82, Hieroglyph in position A**



All photos are by  
Nicholas Hellmuth

Copan Str. 9N-82, B





## Copan Str. 9N-82, C

An "old man deity". God L, God D and God N are all elderly males. If he is carrying cargo on his back, potentially God L, but without the wide sombrero that is difficult to document. The face reminds me of God N.



Copan Str. 9N-82, D



Copan Str. 9N-82, E



**Copan Str. 9N-82, F**



Fish at the front, but not anthropomorphic. Probable God K behind (K'awil).

Copan Str. 9N-82, G



Copan Str. 9N-82, H



## Copan Str. 9N-82, I

Usually there are two full-figure glyphs but here there is only one that is anthropomorphic.



Copan Str. 9N-82, J





**Copan Str. 9N-82, K**



Bat in front; gopher-like animal to the right.

Copan Str. 9N-82, L



Copan Str. 9N-82, M



Copan Str. 9N-82, N



Copan Str. 9N-82, 0



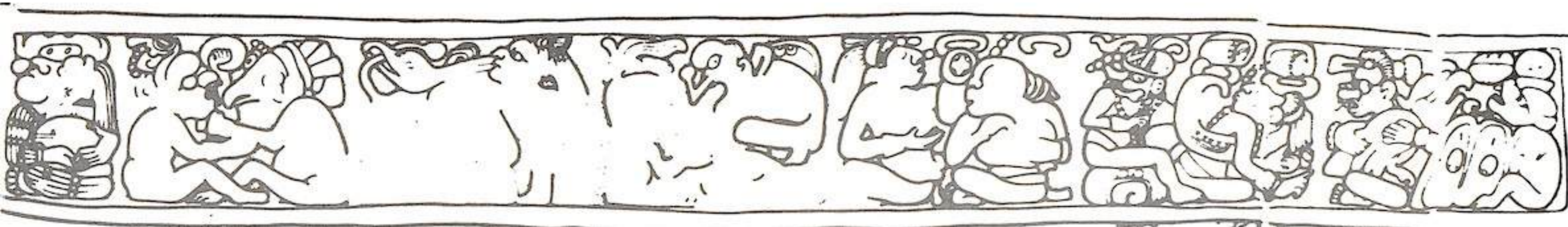
Copan Str. 9N-82, P



Str. 9M-146, drawing by Barbara Fash (Baudez 1994: Fig. 112A)



Bufo Toad



God K, K'awiil holding a bird. A Bat is at the right, probably emblem glyph of Copan.

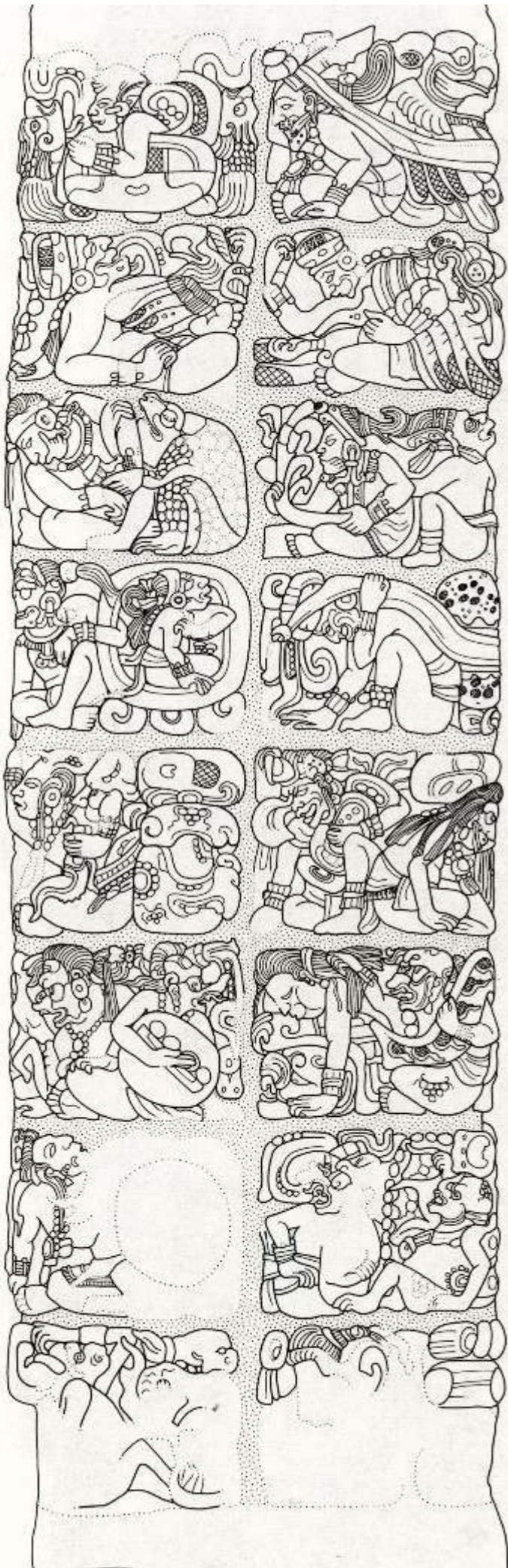
We have a FLAAR Reports on these full-figure personified hieroglyphs of Str. 9M-146.

**Str. 9M-146, Bufo Toad**



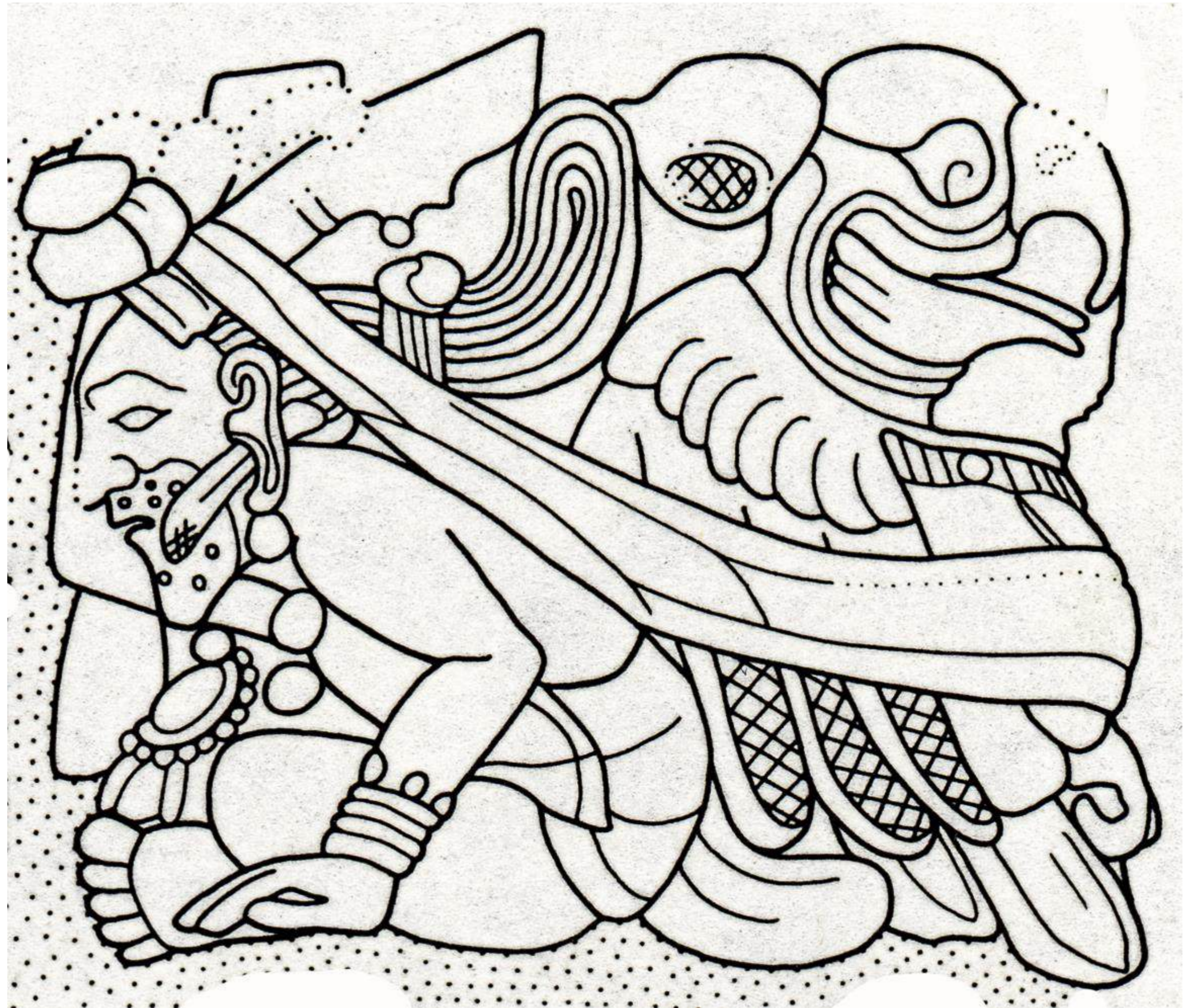


## Copan Stela D



Copan Stela D has the best preserved full-figure glyphs outside of Palenque. And they are not in the convoluted style of full-figure glyphs at Quirigua.

Baktun bird.



Copan Estela D



Copan Estela D



## Copan Estela D

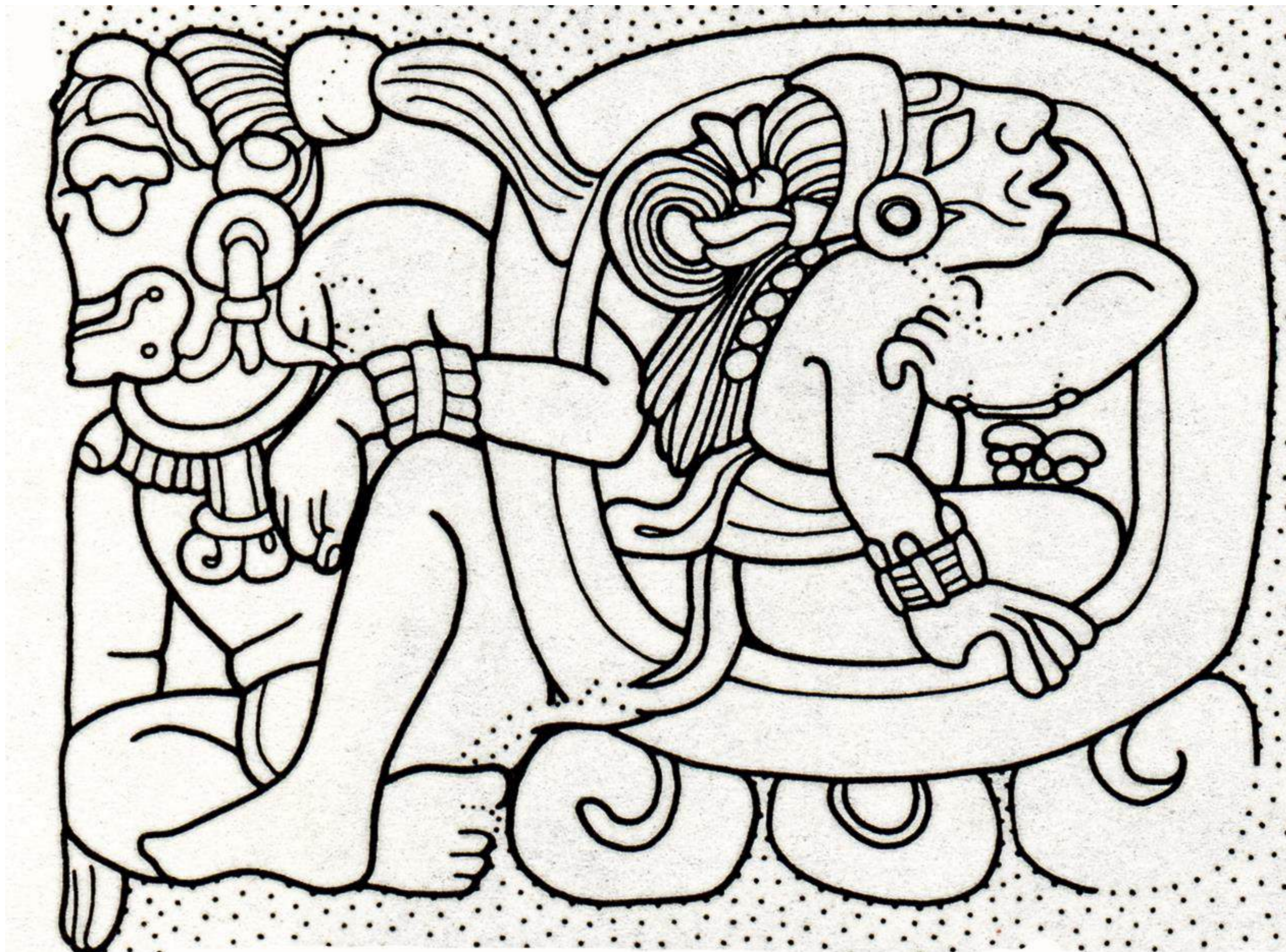


Uinal is a Bufo Toad. I use this term because many decades ago the scientific name of this toad was *Bufo marinus*; today it is *Rhinella marina*.

Copan Estela D



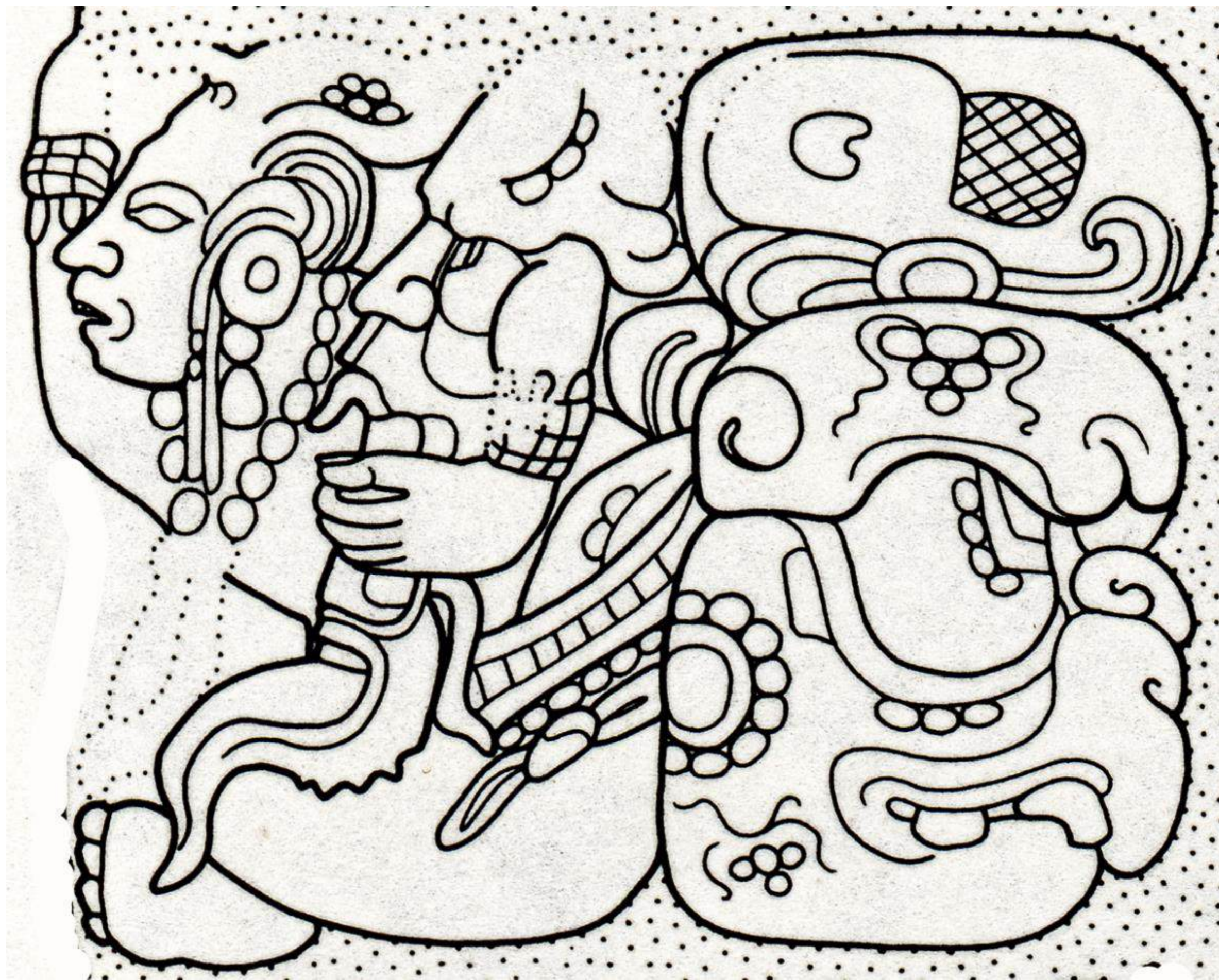
Copan Estela D



Copan Estela D



Copan Estela D





Copan Estela D

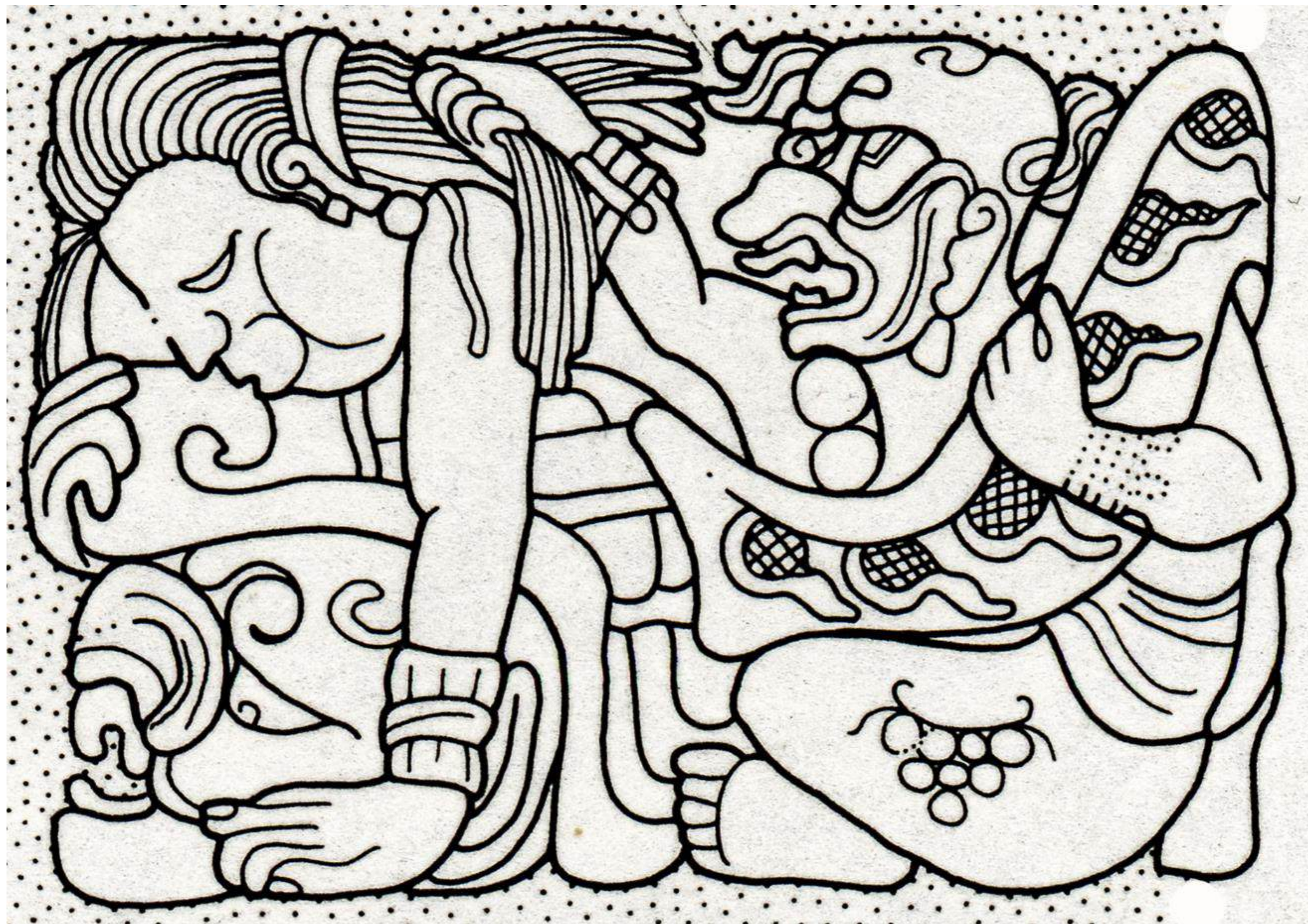


Copan Estela D



God K, K'awil

Copan Estela D



# Copan Estela D

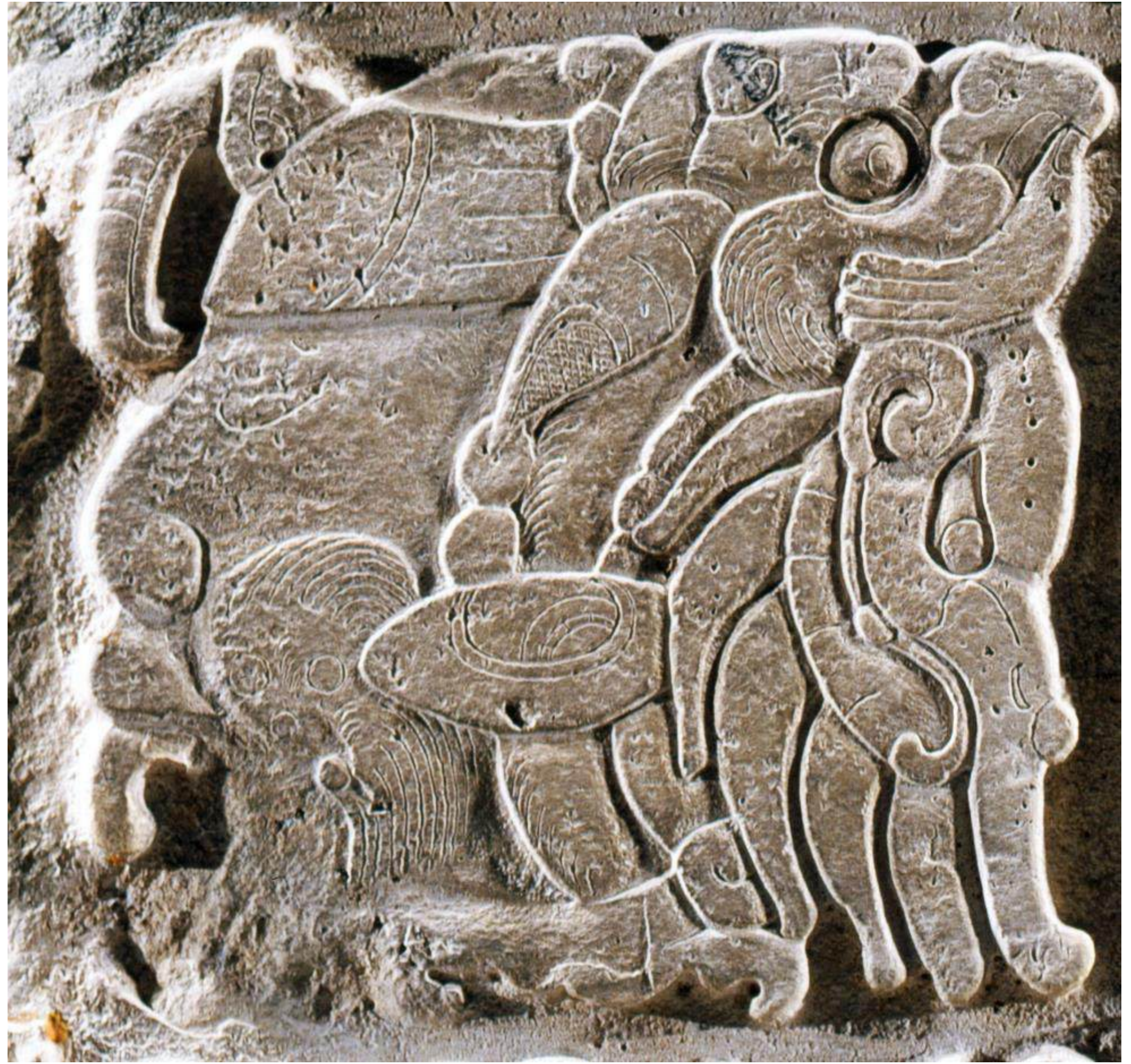
God K, K'awil.



Bat emblem glyph.



**Yaxchilan Lintel 48** is as well-preserved as the Copan Stela D.



Yaxchilan Lintel 48



## Yaxchilan Lintel 48

In my 1980's PhD dissertation on the Surface of the Underwaterworld I show headdresses with the water lily pad with the stem of a flower tied across the water lily pad.

In Maya hieroglyphic writing there are several calendric Tun glyphs that are the same water lily headdress monster as you see here on Yaxchilan Lintel 48.



**Yaxchilan Dintel 48**



Uinal is a Bufo Toad.



Yaxchilan Lintel 48



**Palenque, Palace Tablet**



**Palenque, Temple of the Foliated Cross, interior panel at right, Schele SD-172**

Reclining God K, K'awiil

There are several full-figure personified hieroglyphs hidden in this long text. Here another reclining God K, K'awiil.

Anthropomorphic bird



# Palenque, Palace Tablet



1

I.S.I.G.  
INITIAL SERIES  
INTRODUCTORY GLYPH

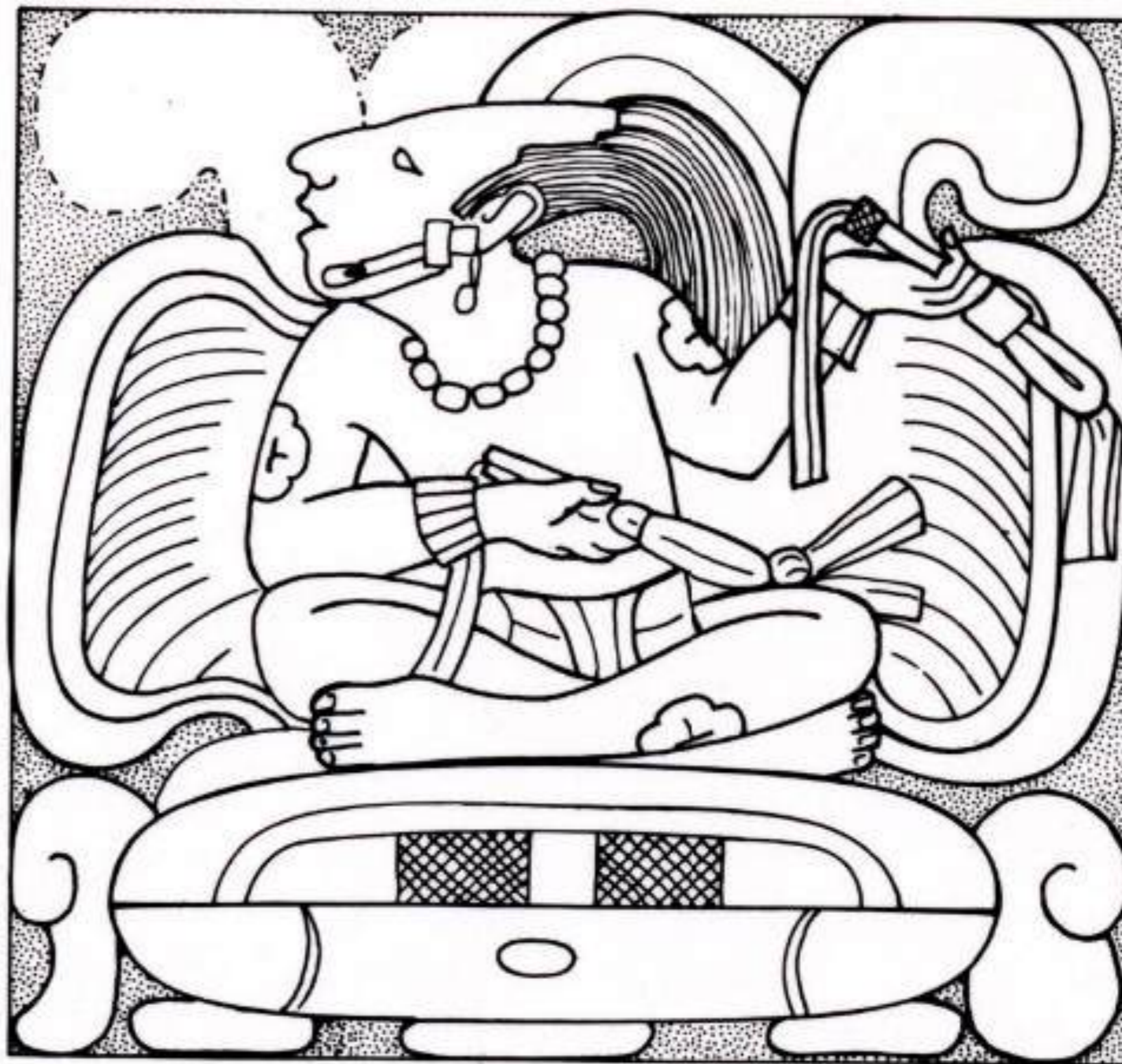
SEATED FIGURE:

GOD OF NUMBER 3 (IK)

PATRON of the MONTH MAC  
of THIS TEXT

HIS SIGN: The 'T'  
on his ARM and LEG

HE IS SEATED ON THE TUN (year sign)



If I remember correctly, text is by Merle Greene Robertson.

## Palenque, Palace Tablet

2

### LEFT FIGURE

GOD OF NUMBER 9

HIS SIGN: JAGUAR SPOTS  
on ARM, LEG and EAR

A RAIN DEITY

### RIGHT FIGURE

BAKTUN BIRD (394 years)

HIS SIGN: HAND with CIRCLE  
on JAW

9 X 400 TUNS

9 X 144,000 ( days in a Baktun) =

1,296,000 days



# Palenque, Palace Tablet

3

LEFT FIGURE

GOD OF NUMBER 10

HIS SIGN: SKELETAL HEADDRESS  
and JAW BONE

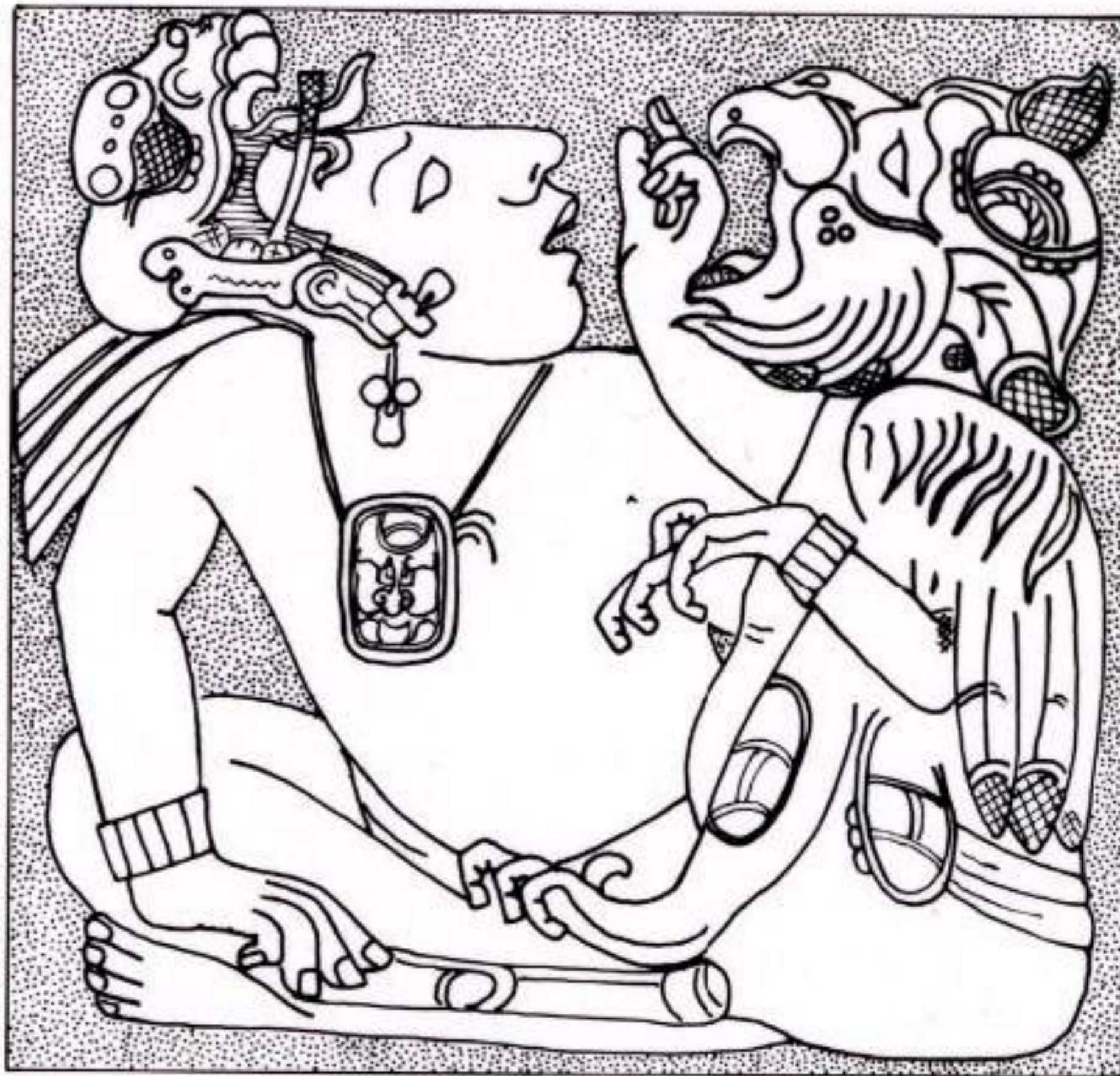
DEATH GOD

RIGHT FIGURE

KATUN BIRD

10 X 20 200 TUNS

10 KATUNS = 72,000 days



# Palenque, Palace Tablet

4

## LEFT FIGURE

GOD OF NUMBER 11

HIS SIGN: QUERY MARKS  
on ARM and LEG

A GOD OF EARTH

## RIGHT FIGURE

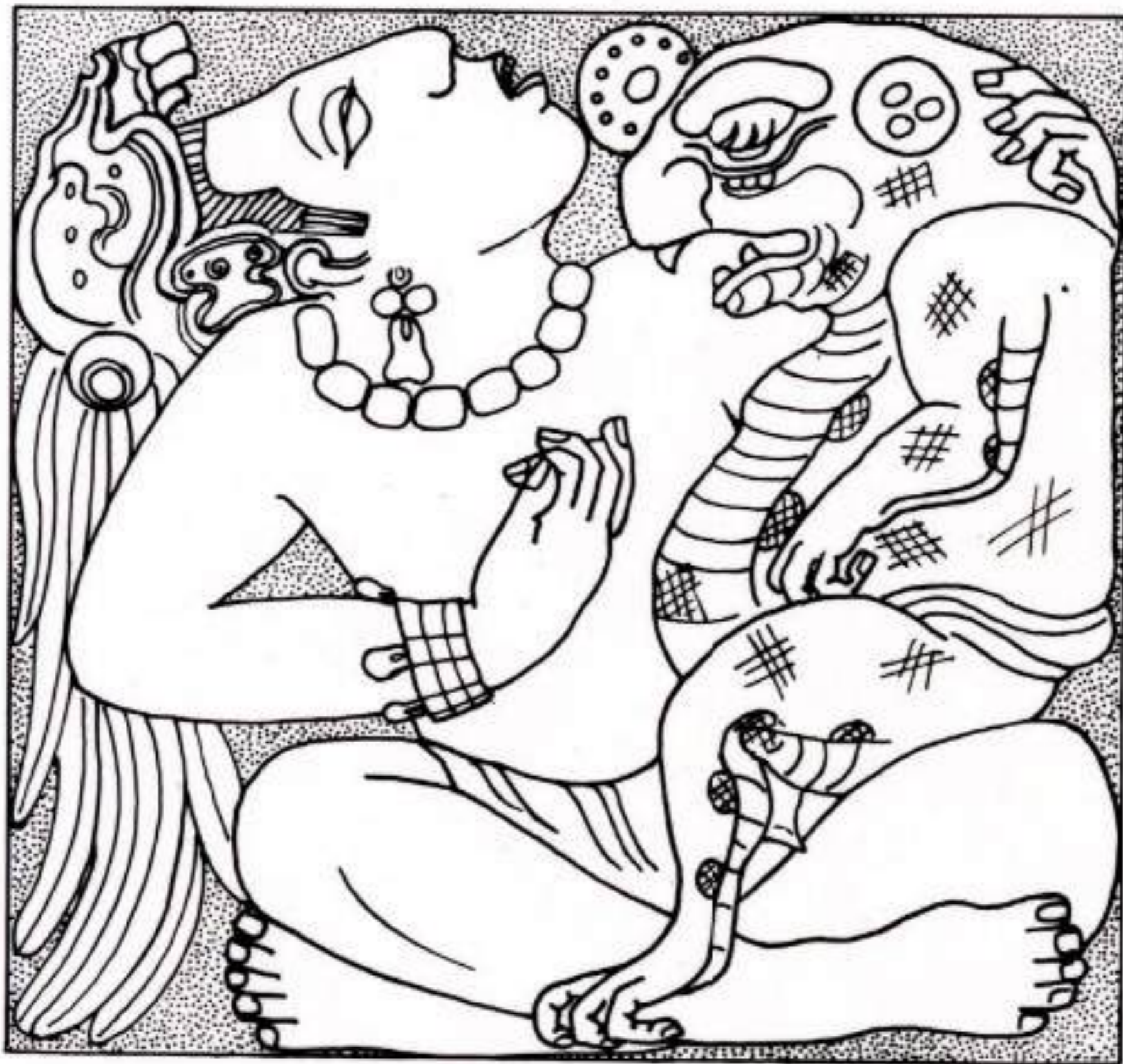
TUN BIRD (year) 360 days

HIS SIGN : FLESHLESS LOWER JAW

11 TUNS 11 X 360 = 3960 days



# Palenque, Palace Tablet



5

LEFT FIGURE

GOD OF NUMBER 17

HIS SIGN: SKULL in HEADDRESS

Skull is the 10

Jaguar ear is the 7

RIGHT FIGURE

TOAD -UINAL (Maya months)

HIS SIGN: 3 CIRCLES on HEAD

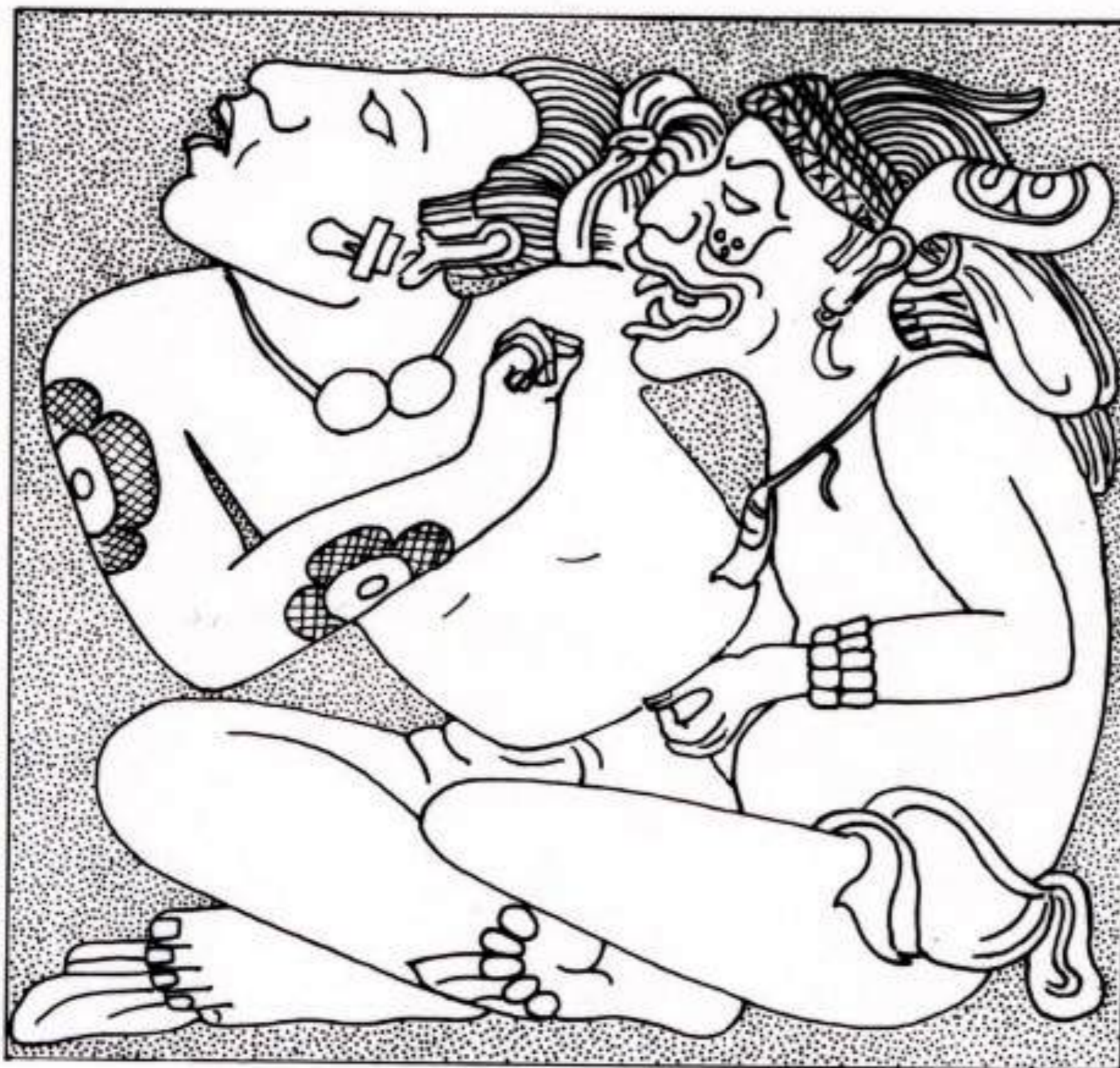
The month reached is MAC

17 UINALS

17 X 18 days in a Maya month = 306 day



## Palenque, Palace Tablet



6

LEFT FIGURE

THE GOD OF ZERO

HIS SIGN: 'COMPLETION'SIGN on ARM  
(the floral pattern)

RIGHT FIGURE

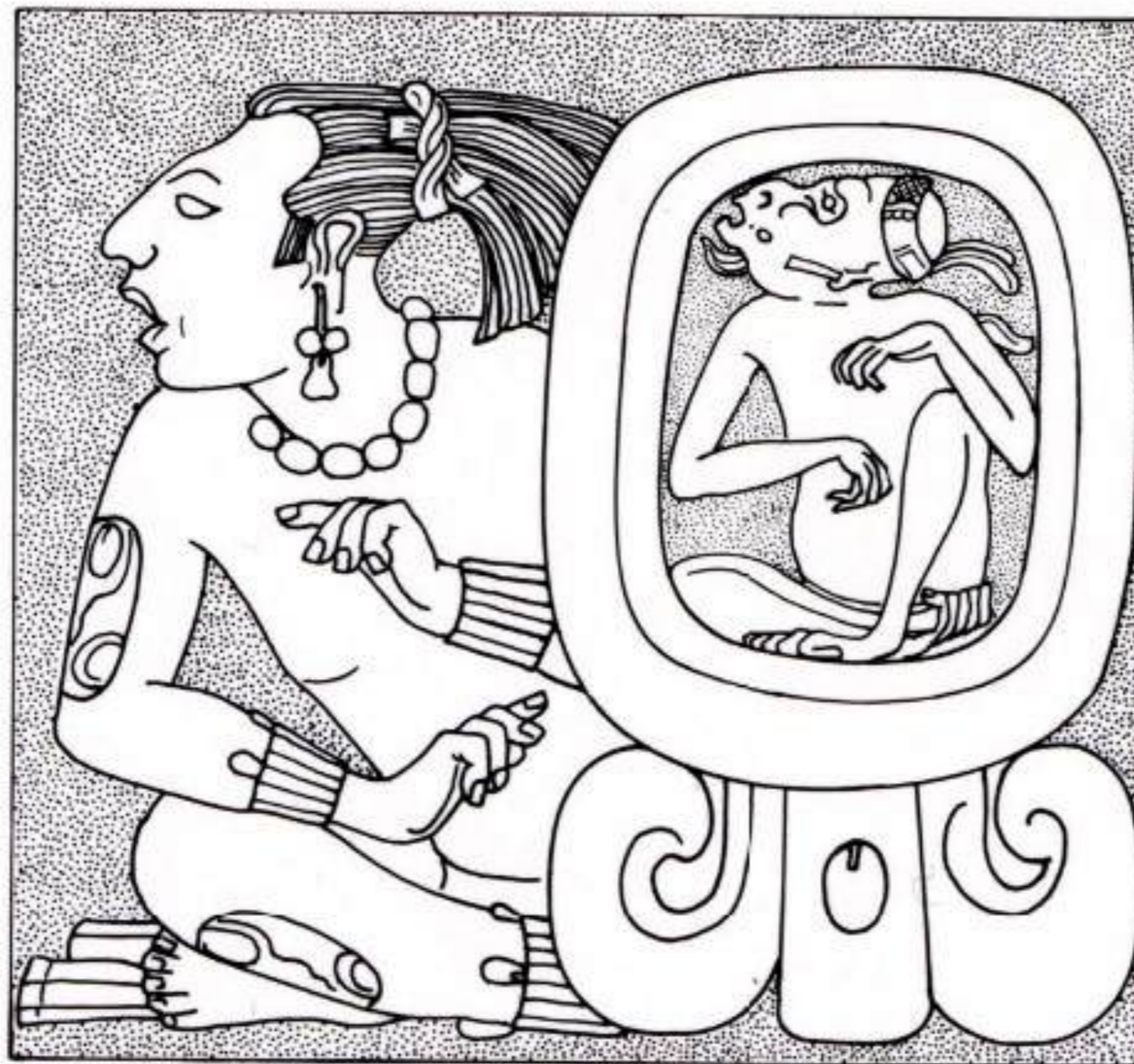
KIN (Day)

HIS SIGN: SUN GOD'S FACE  
and 3 dots under eye

A HOWLER MONKEY

0 KINS

# Palenque, Palace Tablet



*Mark Greene*

7

LEFT FIGURE

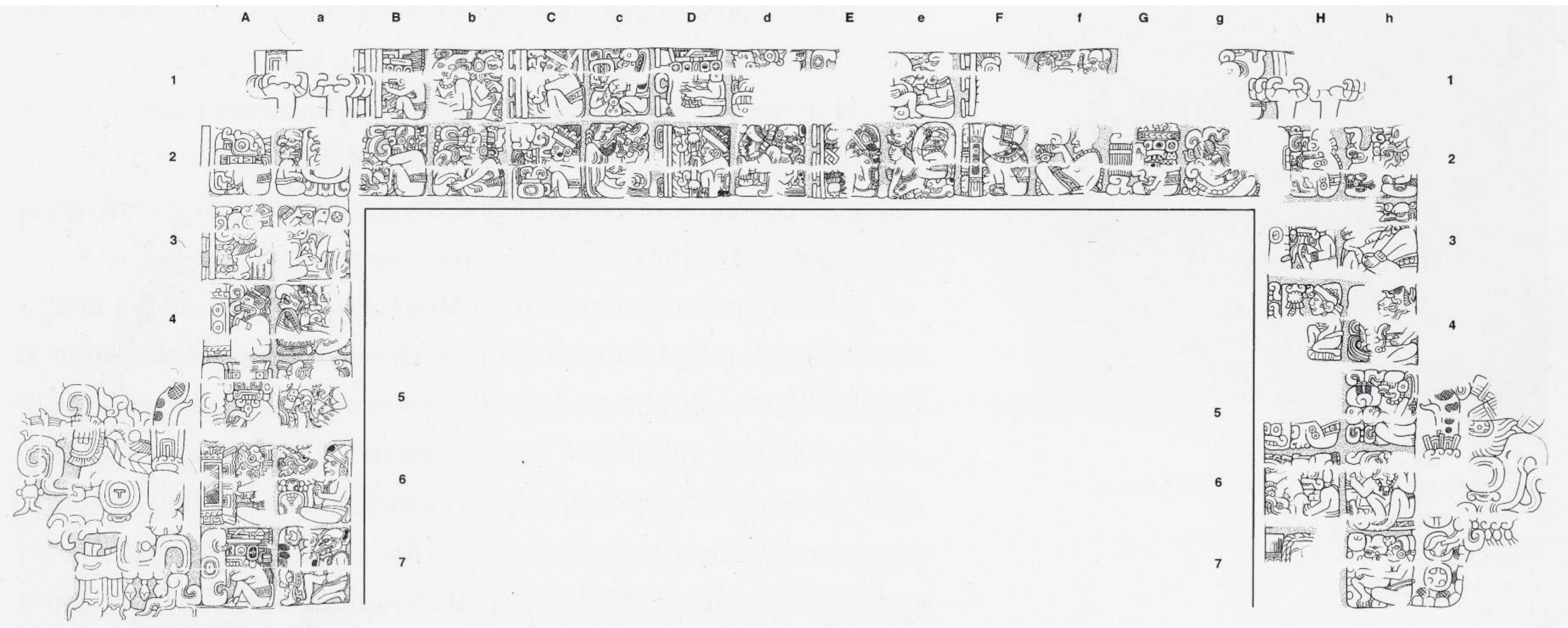
GOD OF NUMBER 11

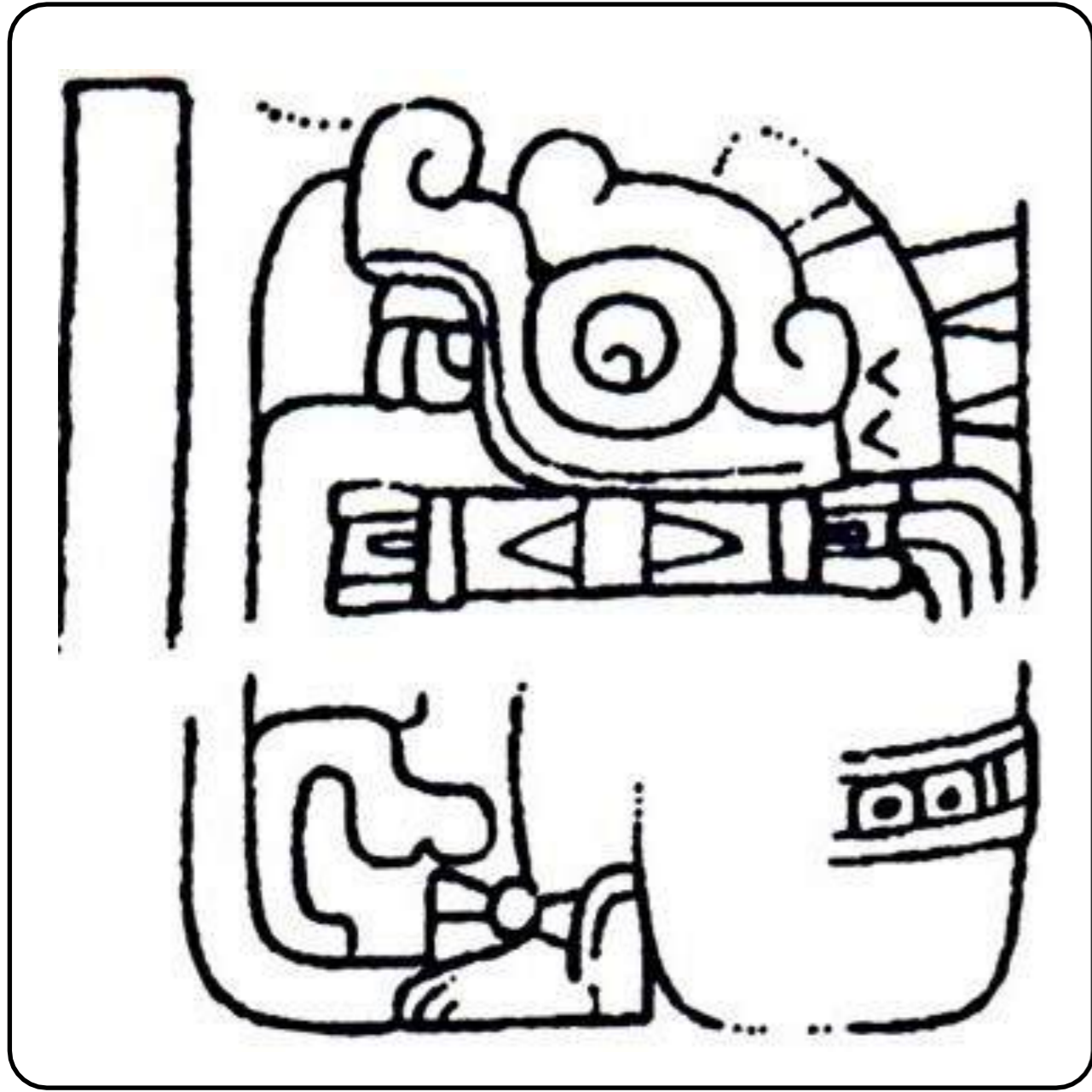
RIGHT FIGURE: (in cartouche)

AHAU THE DAY  
THE YOUTHFUL SUN GOD  
Here as a Spider Monkey

11 AHAU IS THE DAY

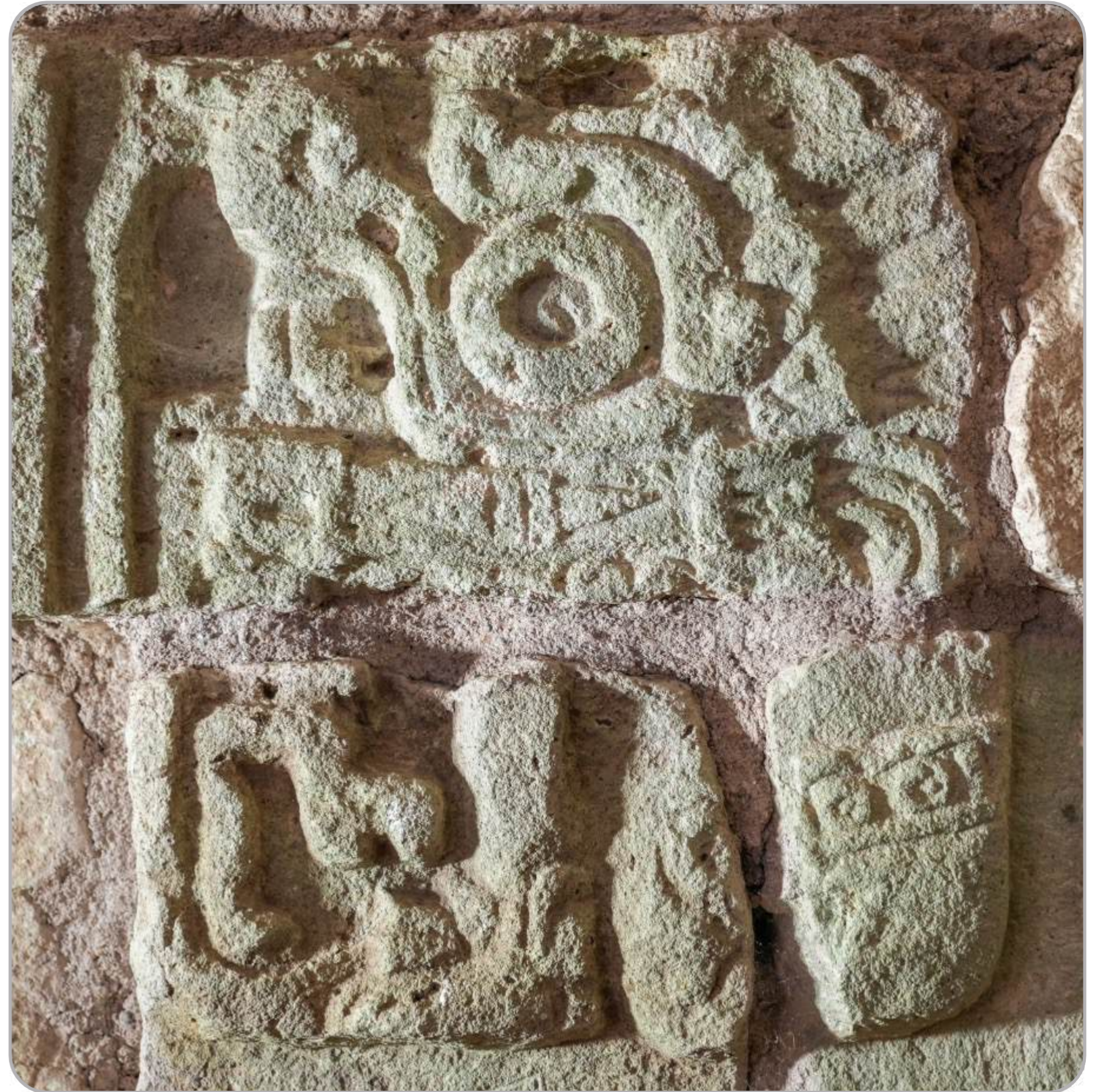
# Copan Temple 26, nice drawing by David Stuart published by Barbara Fash





A2

The goal of this PDF is to show you what the full-figure personified Maya hieroglyphs look like. Translation is best done by an epigrapher.





a2





**A3**

Need to d e (not an owl). But for the time being, because it is a double-circle round eye, I include it.





**a3** Macaw or Kan-cross eye quetzal-headed bird man interacts with seated individual.





**A4** The mouth of this person reminds me of some of the Tlaloc mouths. So although no Yearsign and no goggle-eyes, I include it for the time being.

The vertical set of double-round circles is not in the position of a Tlaloc face.



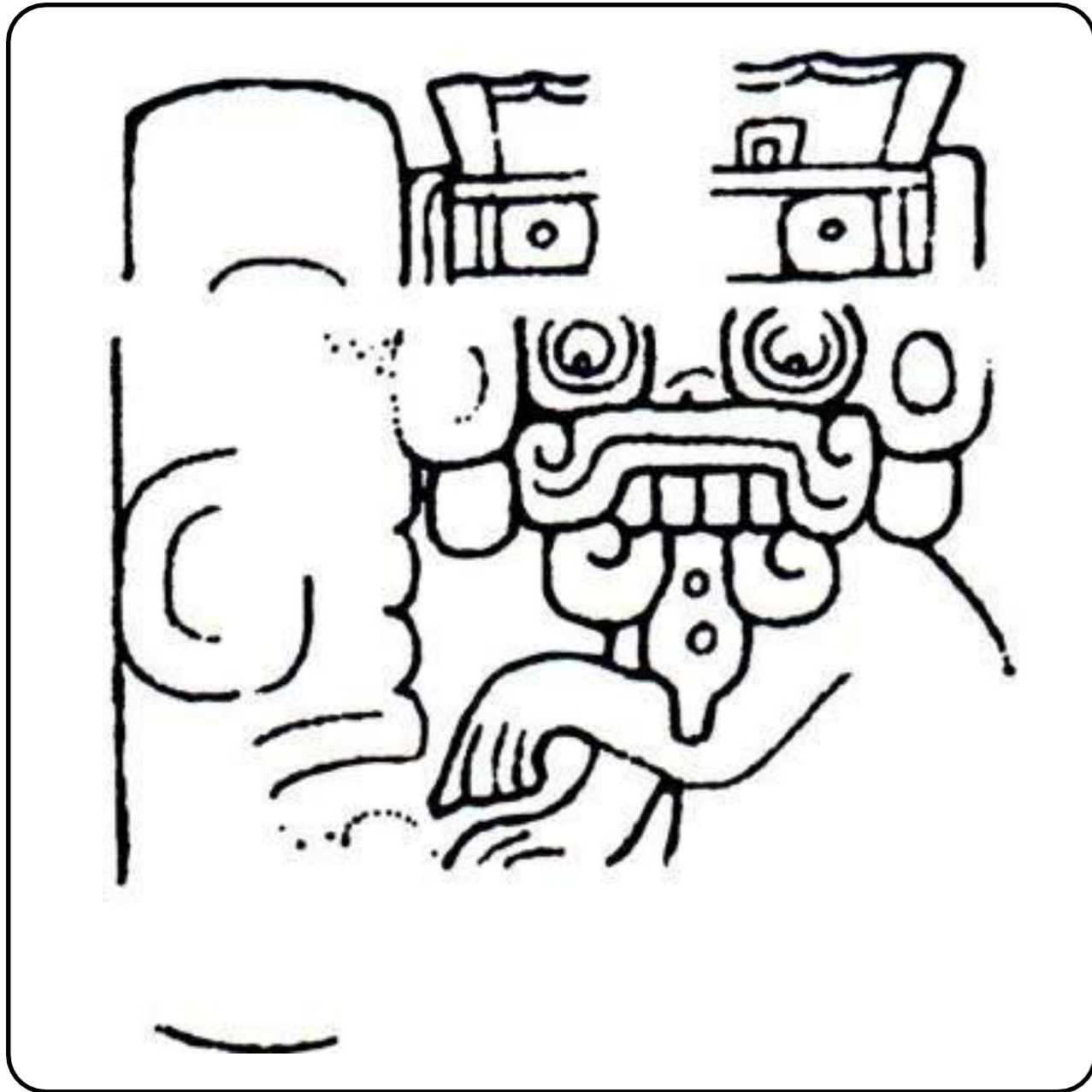




**a4**

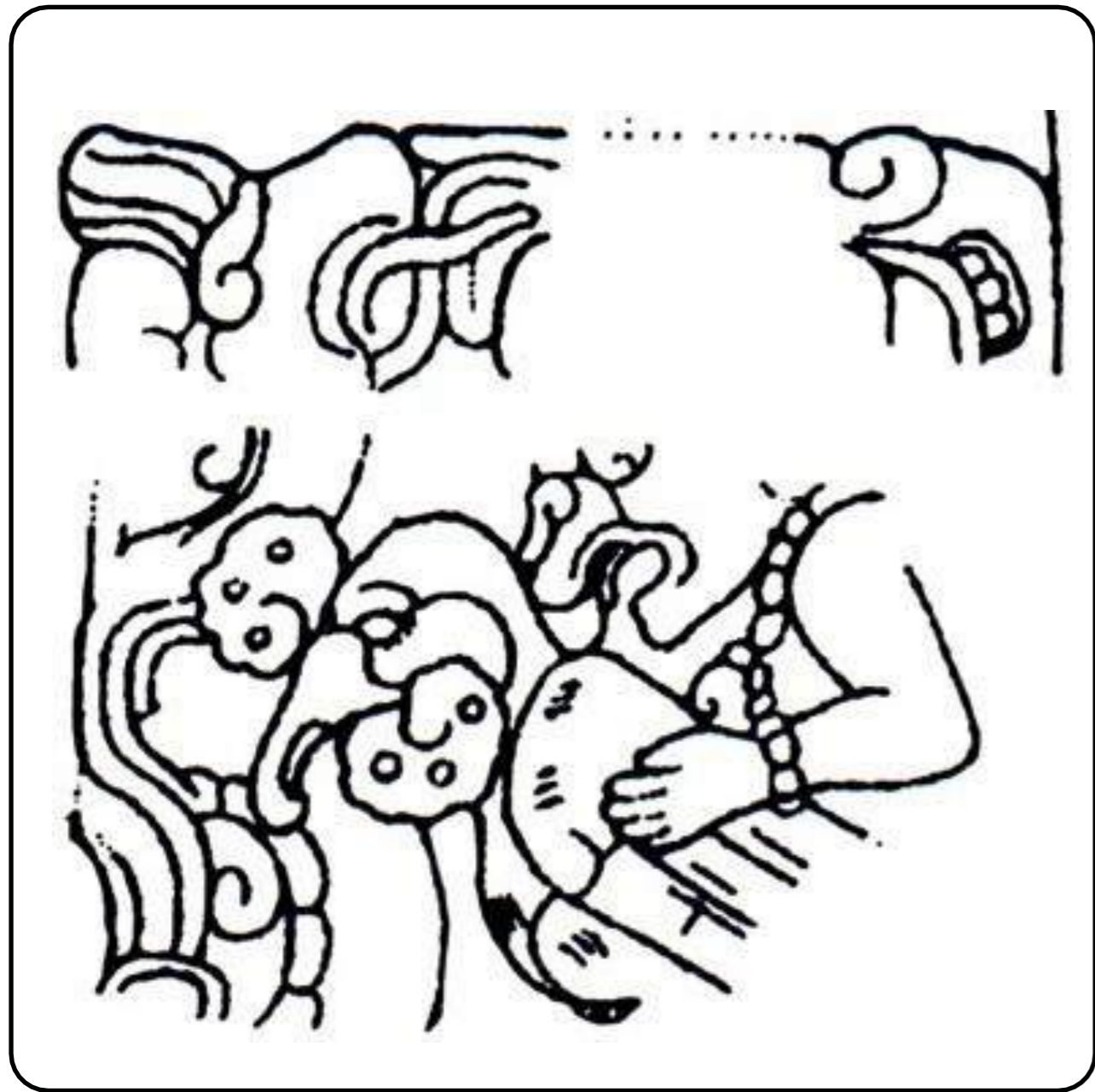
Obviously Temple 26 hieroglyphs have been published many times, but I have not yet found an article or book that shows each hieroglyph at this helpful size. And definitely no publication previously that shows each full-figure hieroglyph in a well-illuminated photograph in the Hellmuth-FLAAR style of cross-lighting.



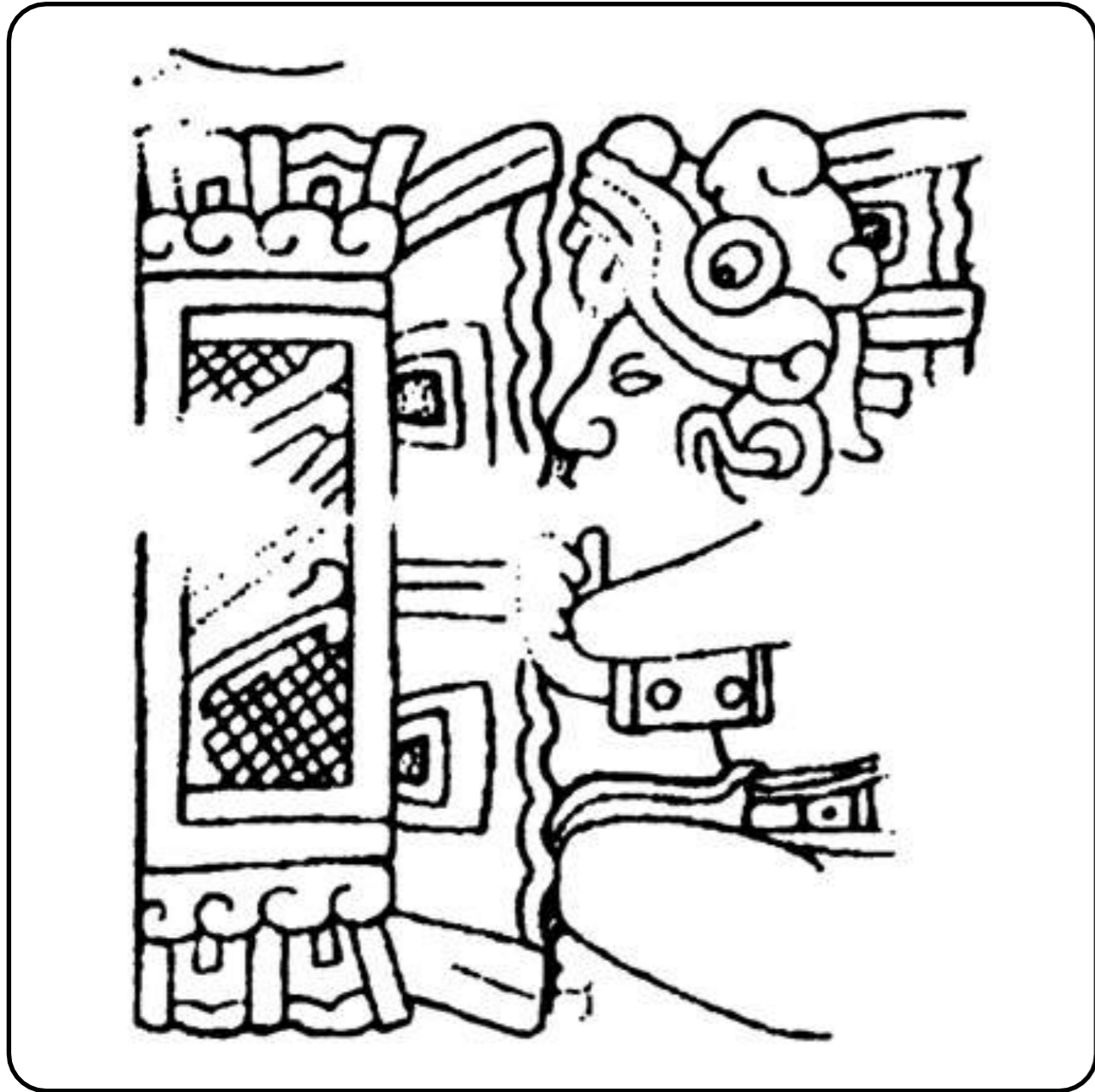


**A5** Traditional frontal Tlaloc as found elsewhere at Copan but rare as full-figure hieroglyph outside Copan hieroglyphic stairway area. Similar face on G2 and similar Tlaloc but profile on glyph blocks A7 and H3





a5



**A6** The reconstruction of the facade of Temple 26 is missing about two or three hieroglyphs. But we show the drawing(s).





a6





**A7** Profile "half-frontal" presentation of Tlaloc. Two Yearsigns in the headdress.



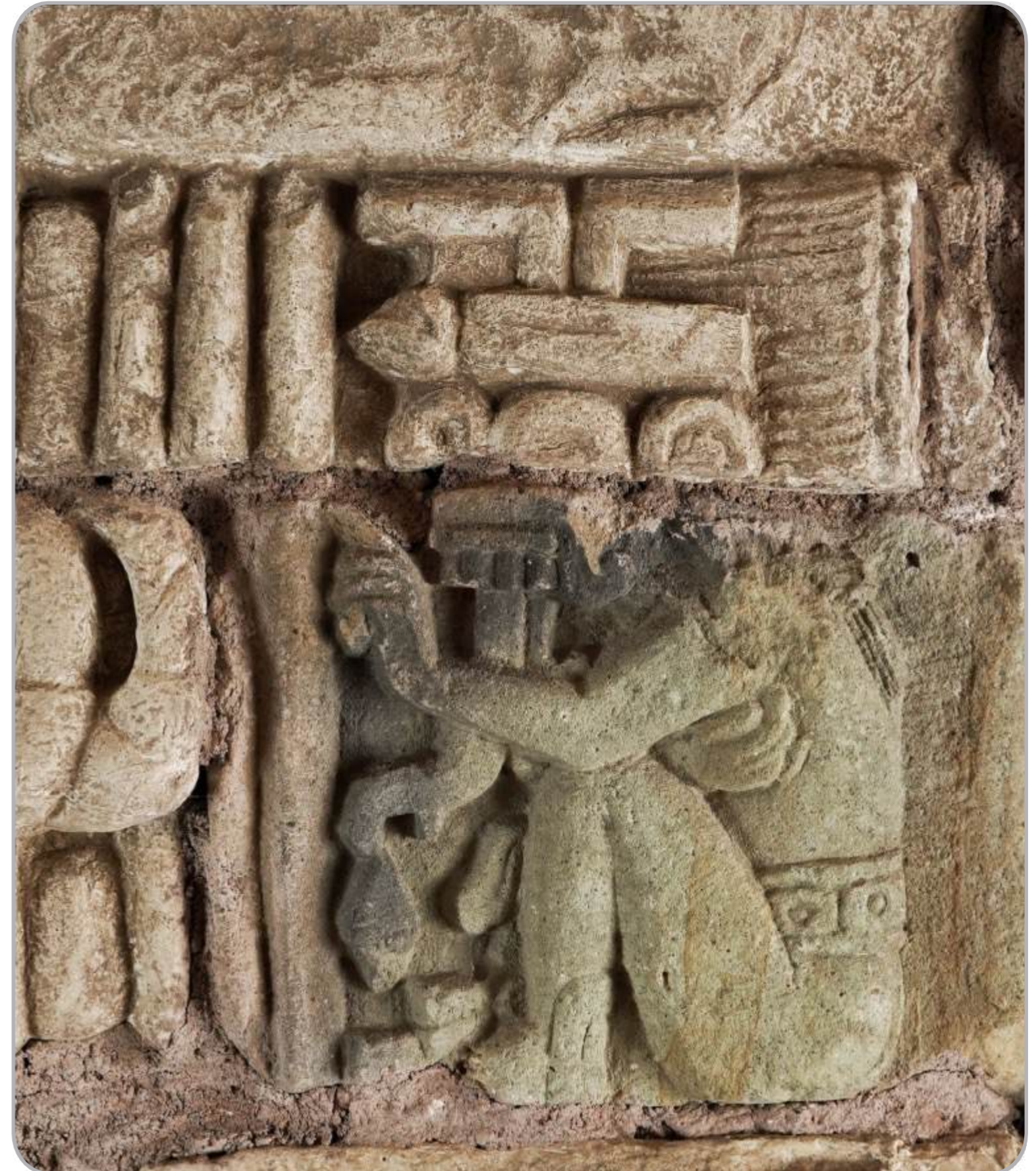


a7





**B1** The vertical "bars" may be possible Maya numerals; seated profile Tlaloc

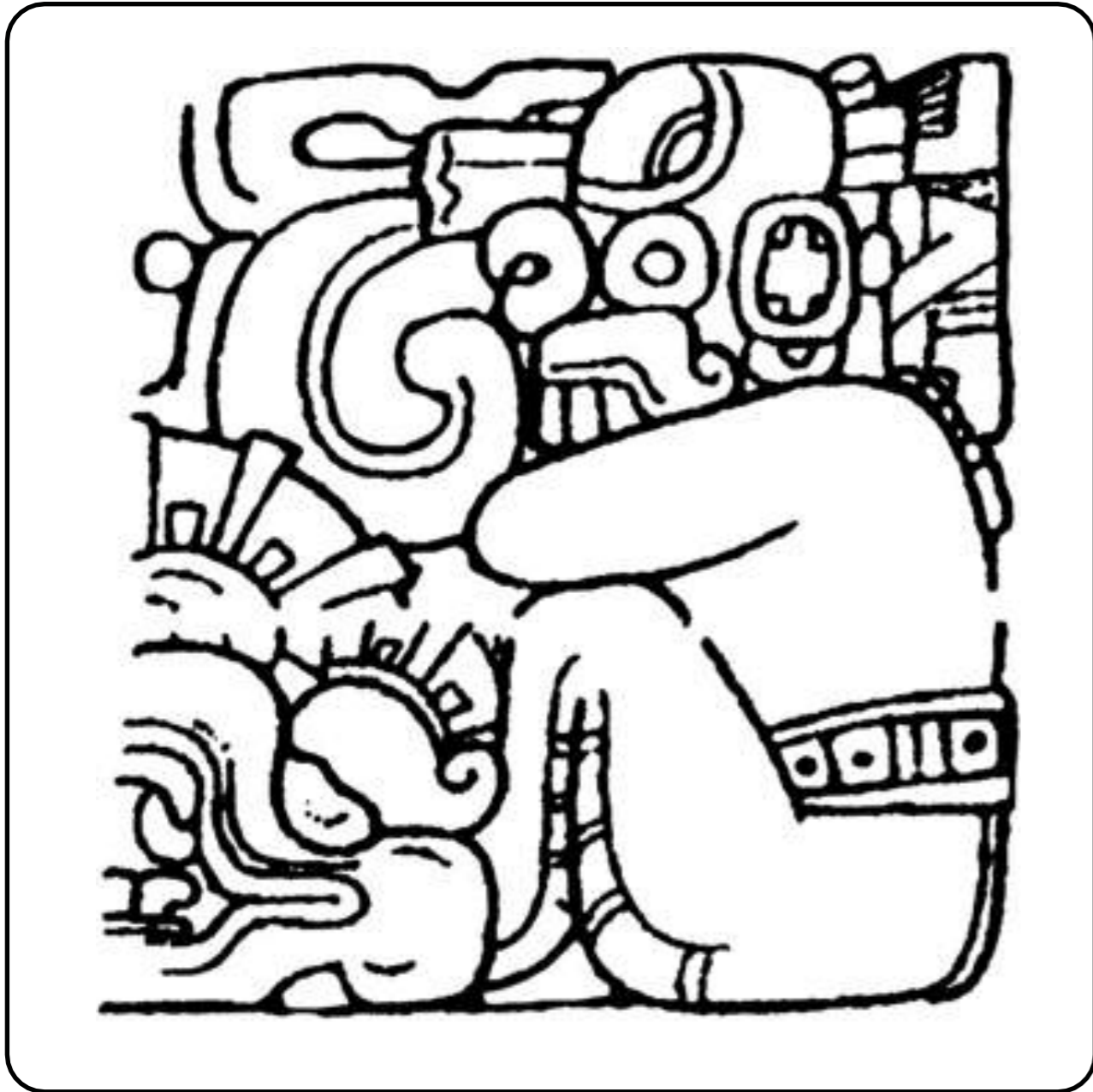






b1





**B2** K'awiil God K but Tlaloc and Yearsign headdress; reptile head with stylized cross-section of flowers (designs frequently found on Tlaloc eye serpent but this serpent has no goggle eye).

The drawings are David Stuart are excellent, but with the help of 1:1 macro photos of each full-figure hieroglyph, some details can be improved, especially if the drawing is direct from the digital photo and not a freehand sketch.





**b2** Traditional K'awiil God K with "gopher" in front. More likely a pocket gopher, with Kan Cross earring.

Same with this drawing; it's great but details and curves can be improved with the help of the new 1:1 photos of FLAAR Photo Archive.





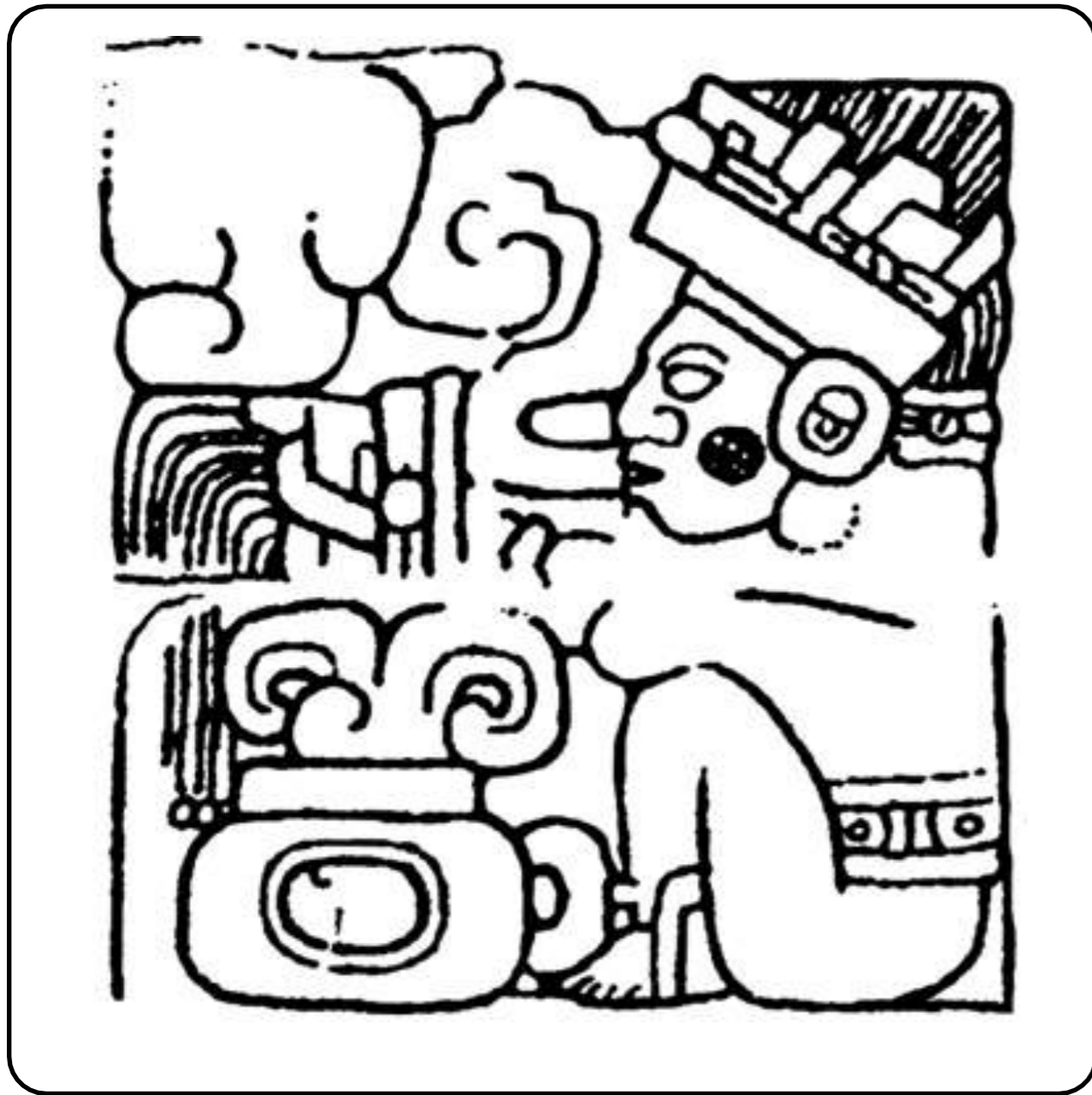
**C1**

Potential bar-and-dots number, but rectangles rather than traditional circles.

Front part definitely needs to be redrawn. The actual hat is slightly curved, not straight.







**C2** Yearsign on headdress but no Tlaloc or other obvious Teotihuacan features. Face is pure Maya style. See glyph block D2.

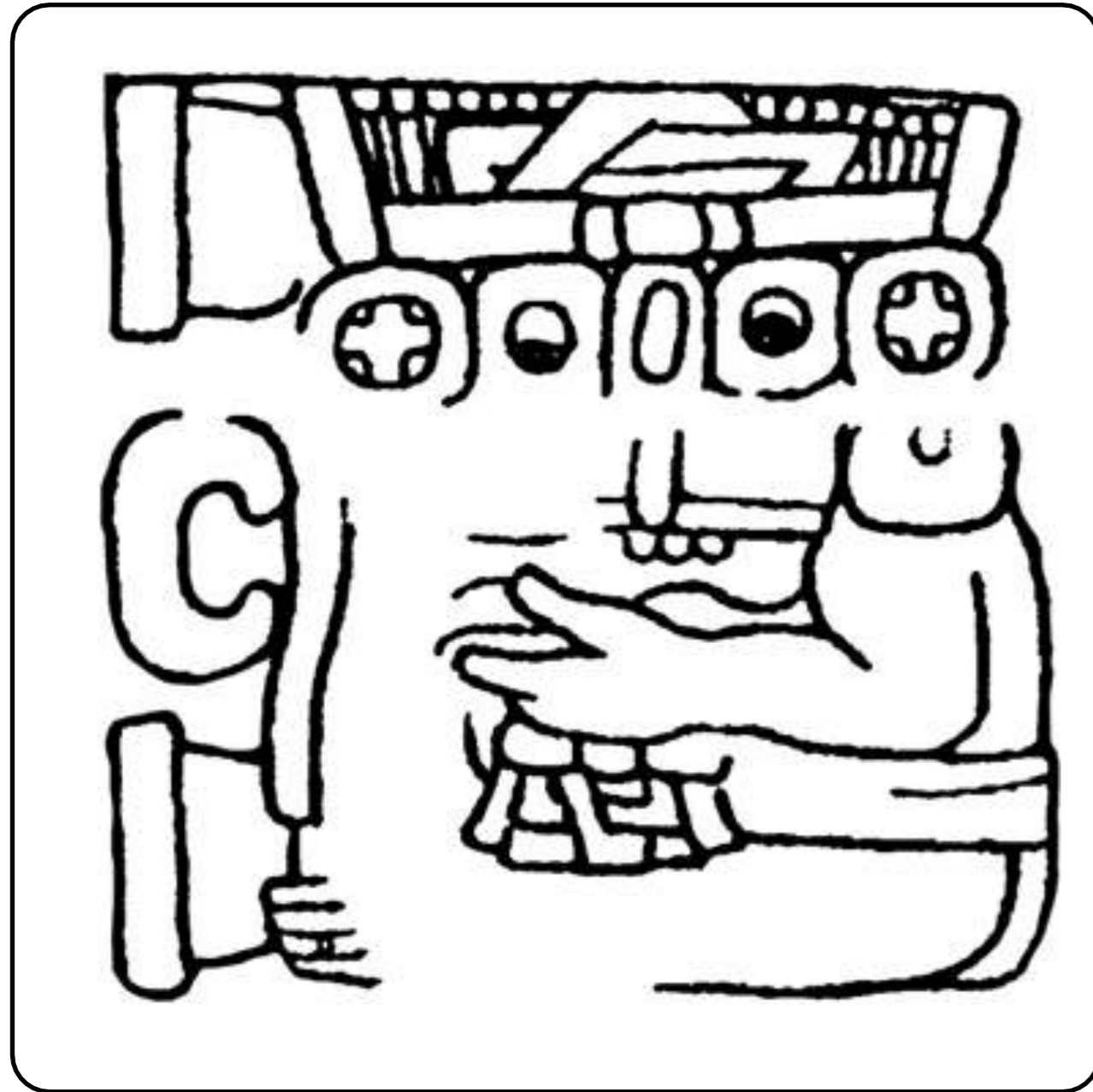
Lots of details, such as the sandals, seem to have been sketched freehand. Now they can be rendered directly from the new 1:1 digital photos.





**c2** Giant bird interacts with God K, K'awil.  
Not all the original stones are still in place  
to photograph.





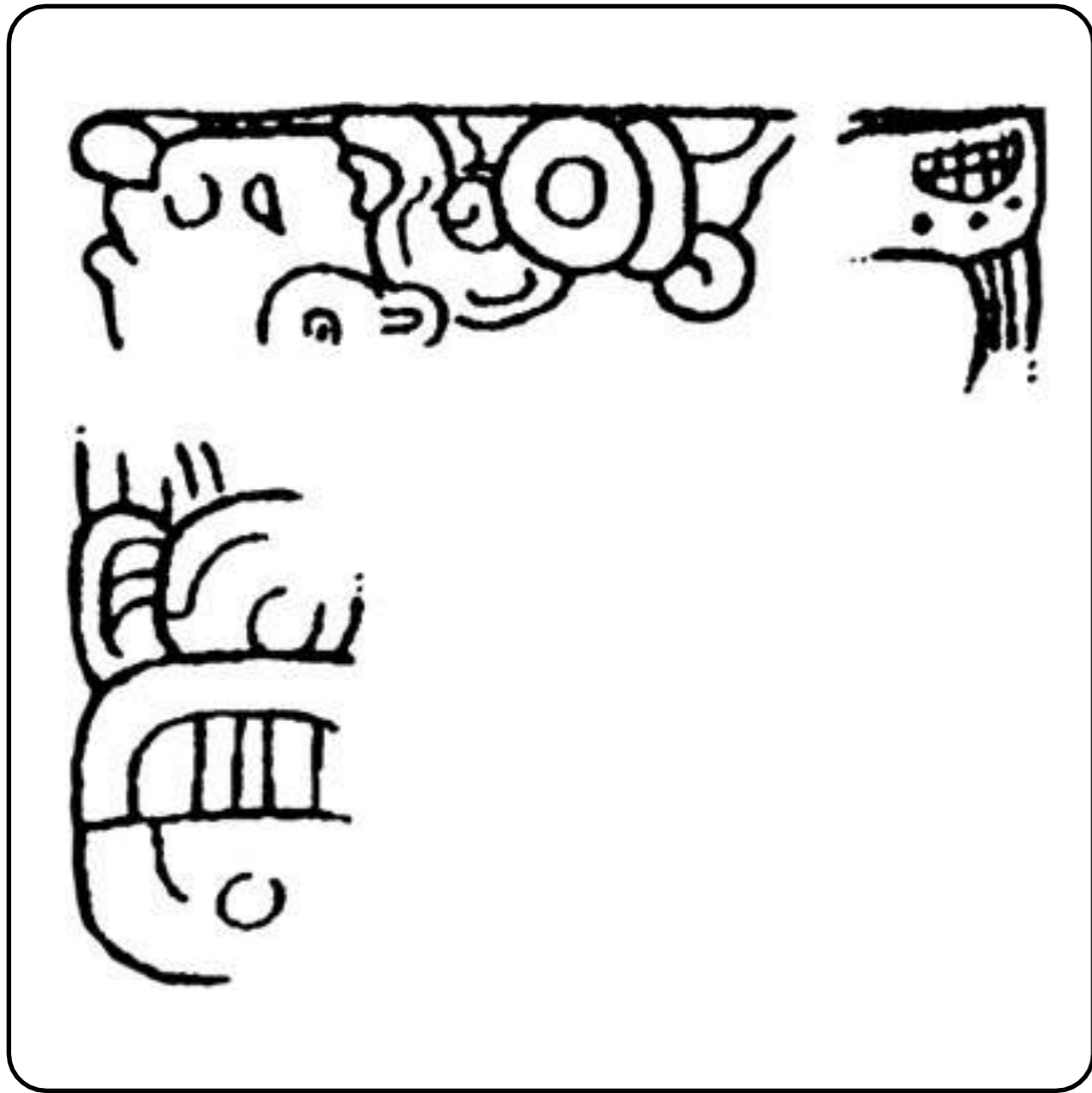
Frontal Tlaloc, flat frontal Yearsign headdress on profile body.

**D1**

I won't make any more comparisons between the helpful initial drawing and the photos. 90% of the drawings need to be redrawn. But I won't repeat this statement for every following drawing. Original freehand drawings are essential and greatly appreciated. But today in the digital era, drawings of hieroglyphs should be traced from a high quality photograph.







d1





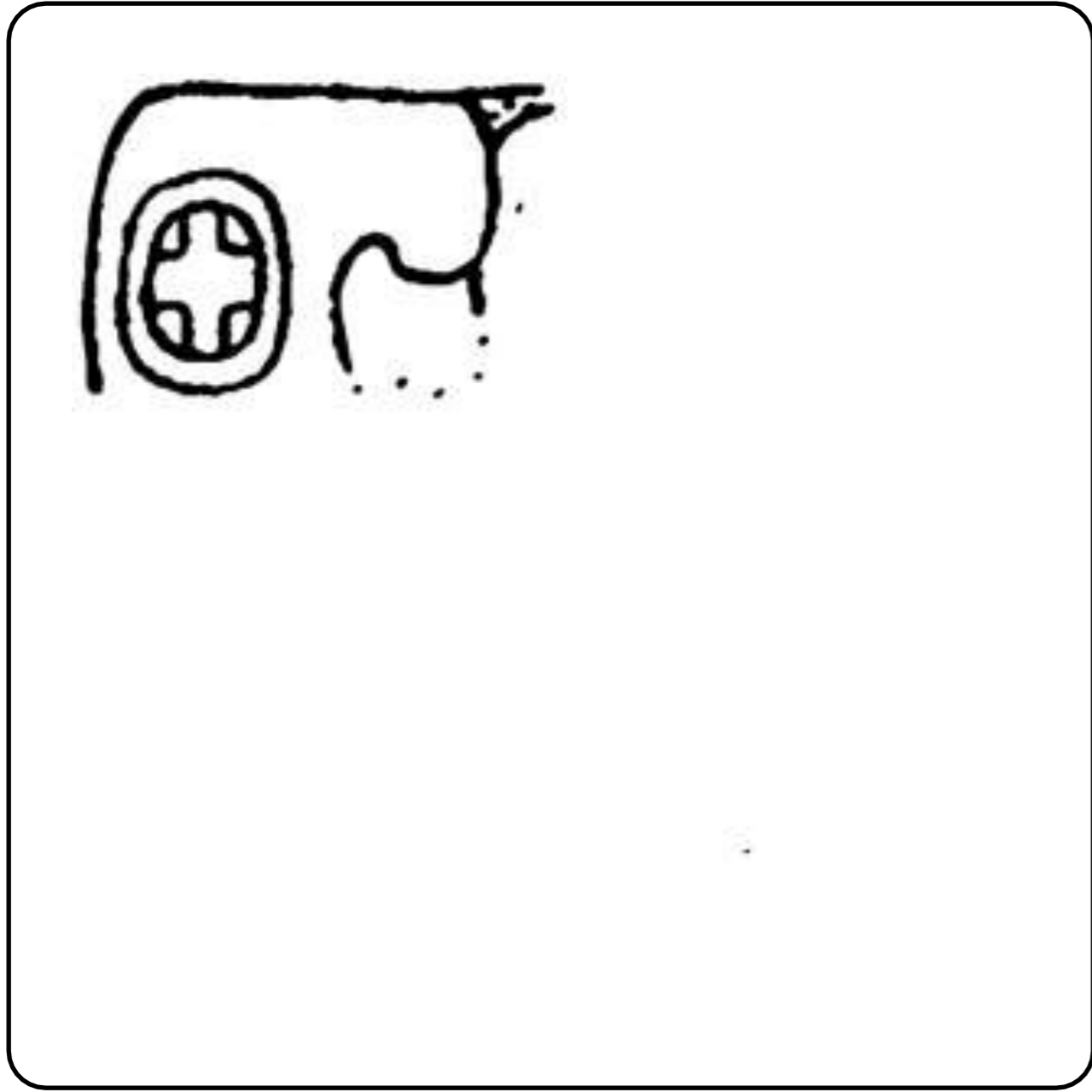
**D2** Yearsign on headdress but no Tlaloc or other obvious Teotihuacan features. Face is pure Maya style. See glyph block C2.





d2





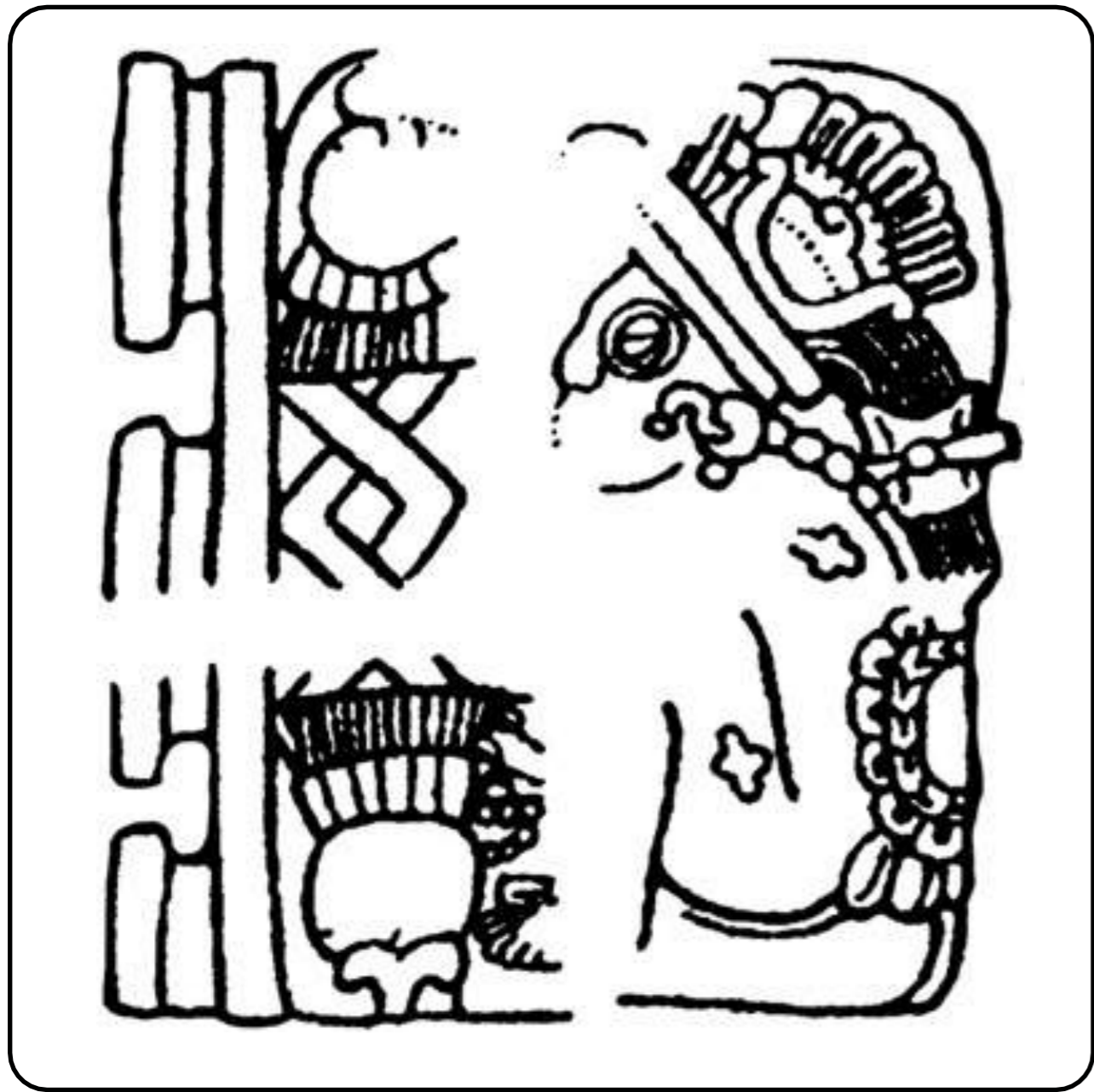
**E1**



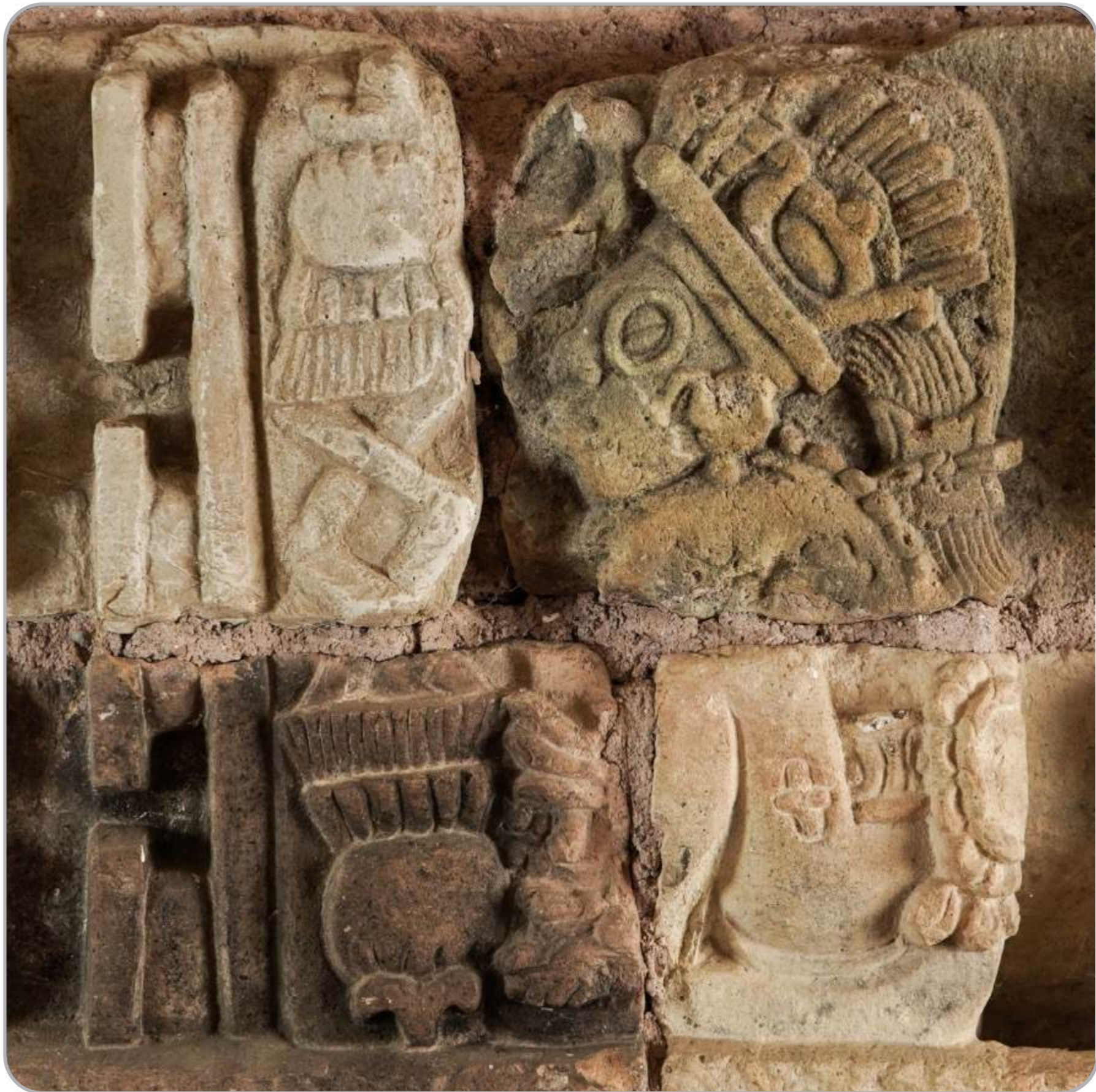


e1



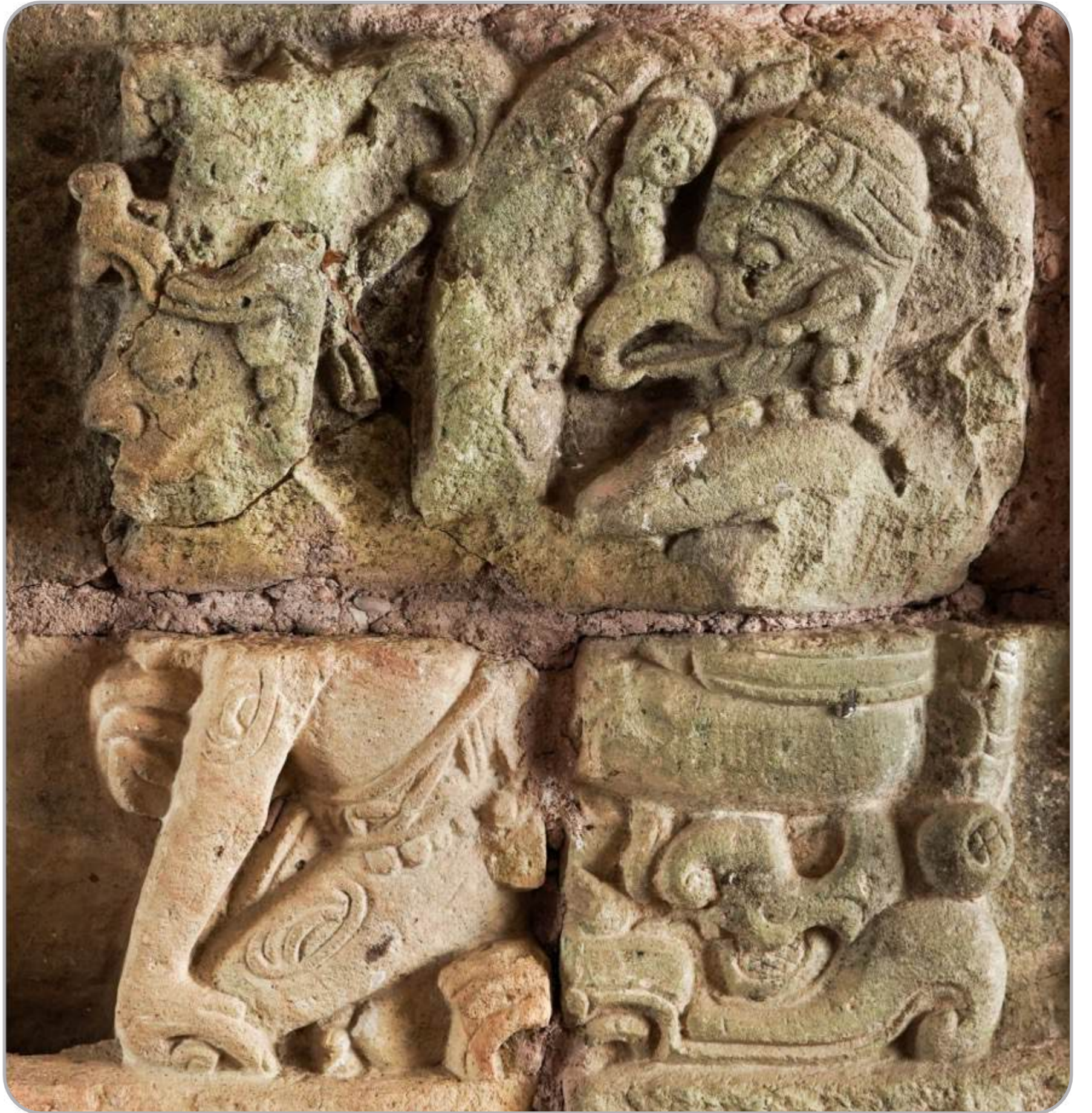


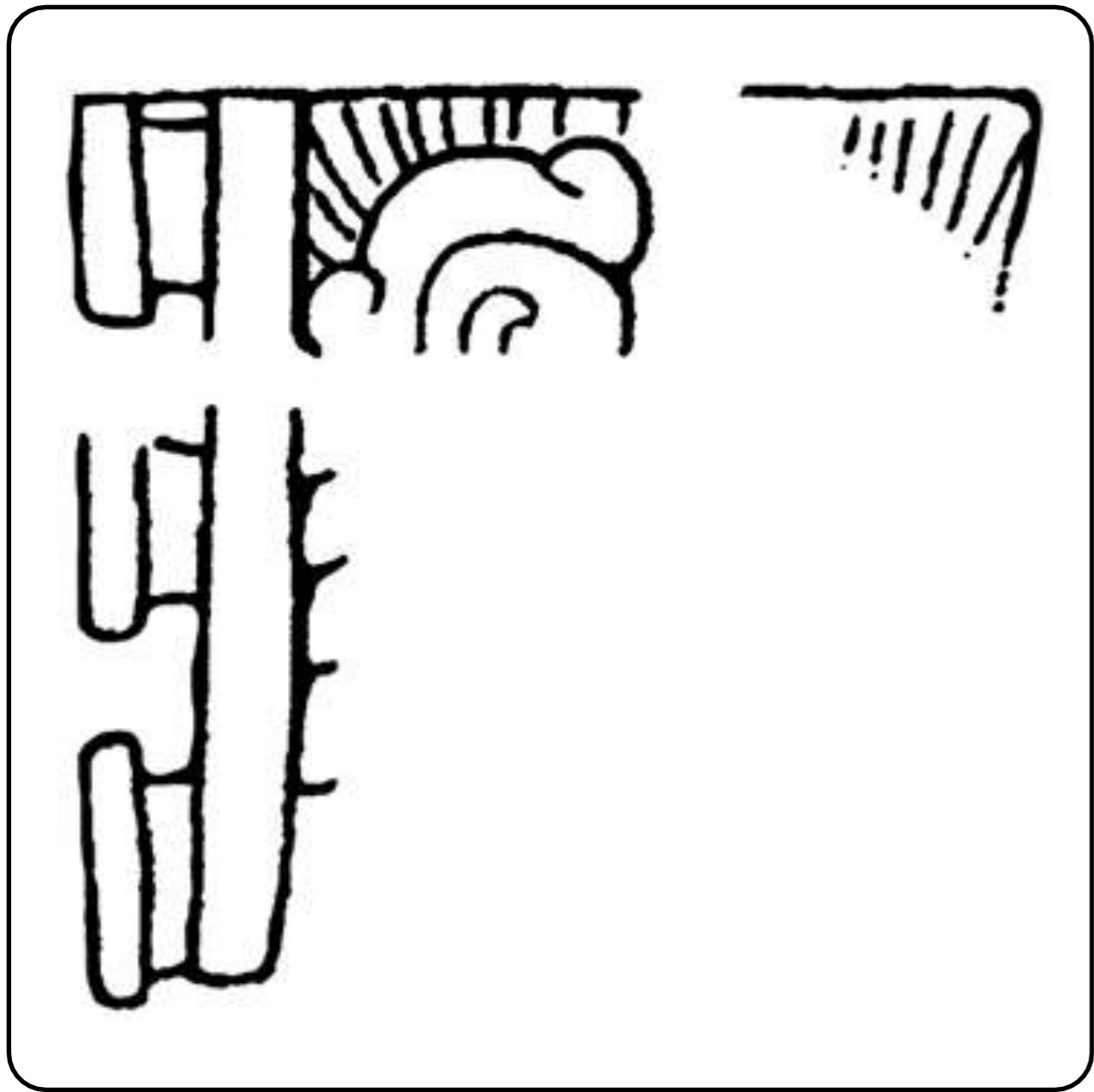
**E2** Goggle eye but face is Maya and no Yearsign in headdress





e2





F1







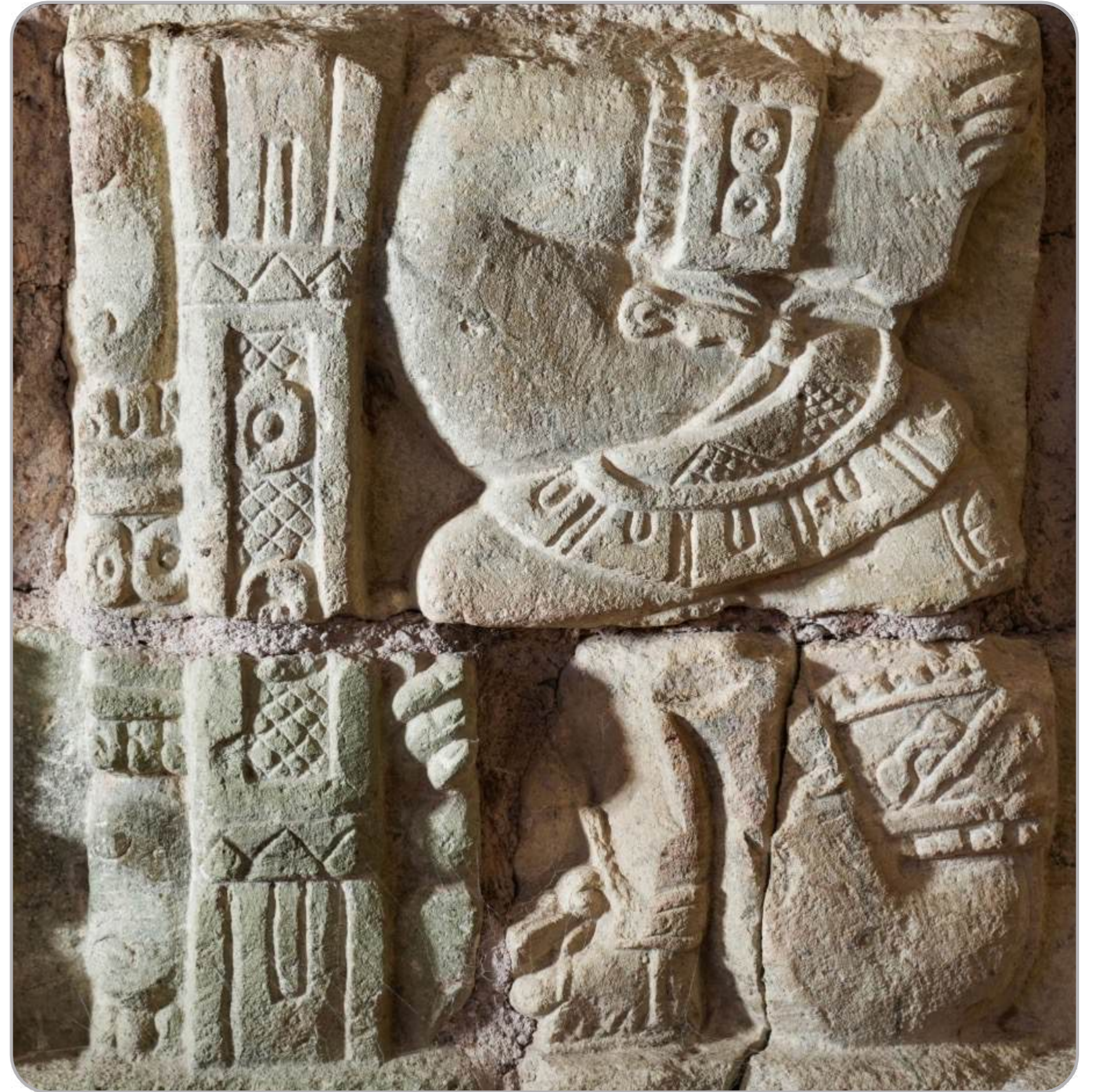
**f1**

Bat head at the right.





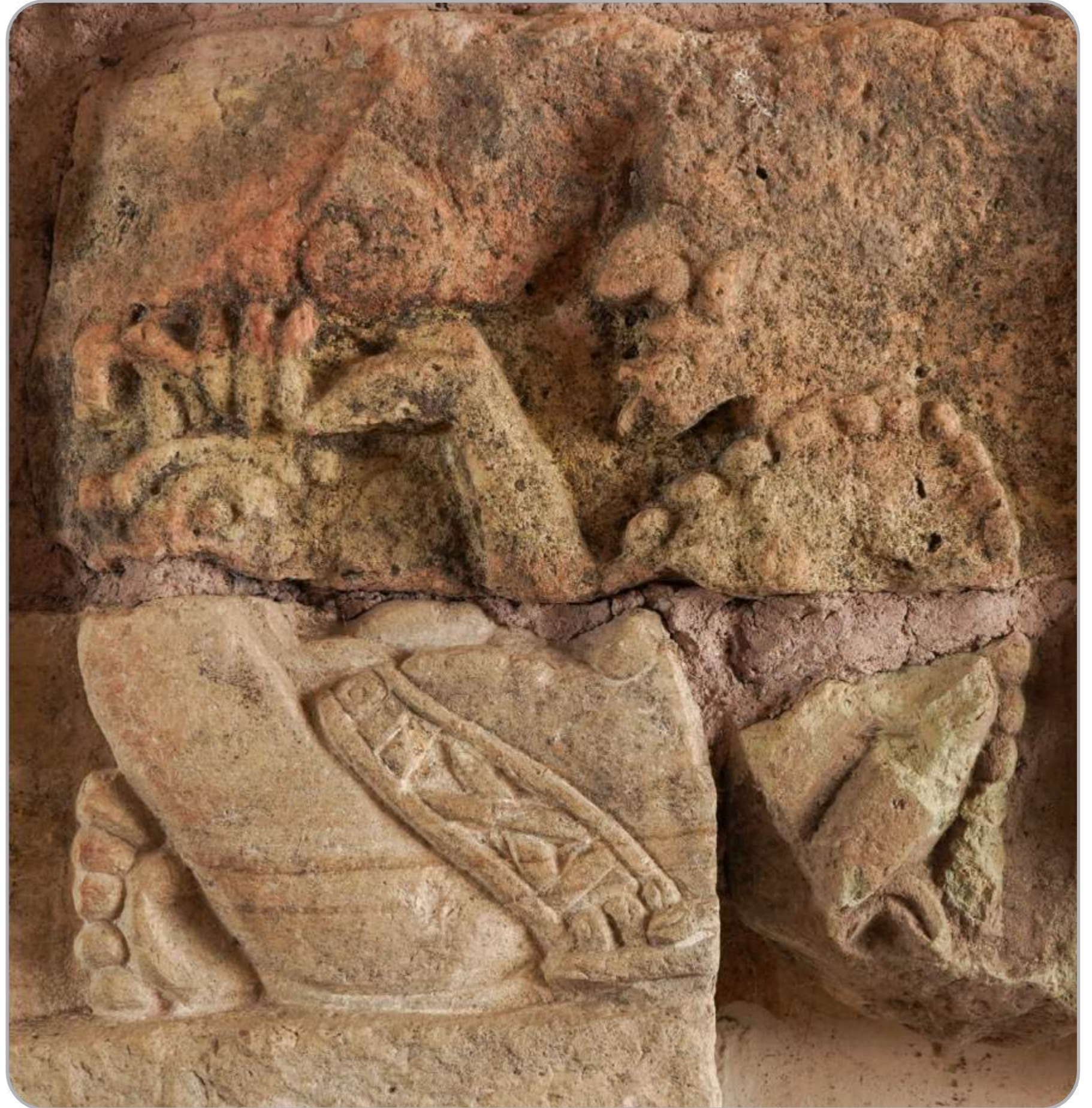
**F2** Upside down personage on shoulders as head.  
A rather bizarre arrangement.

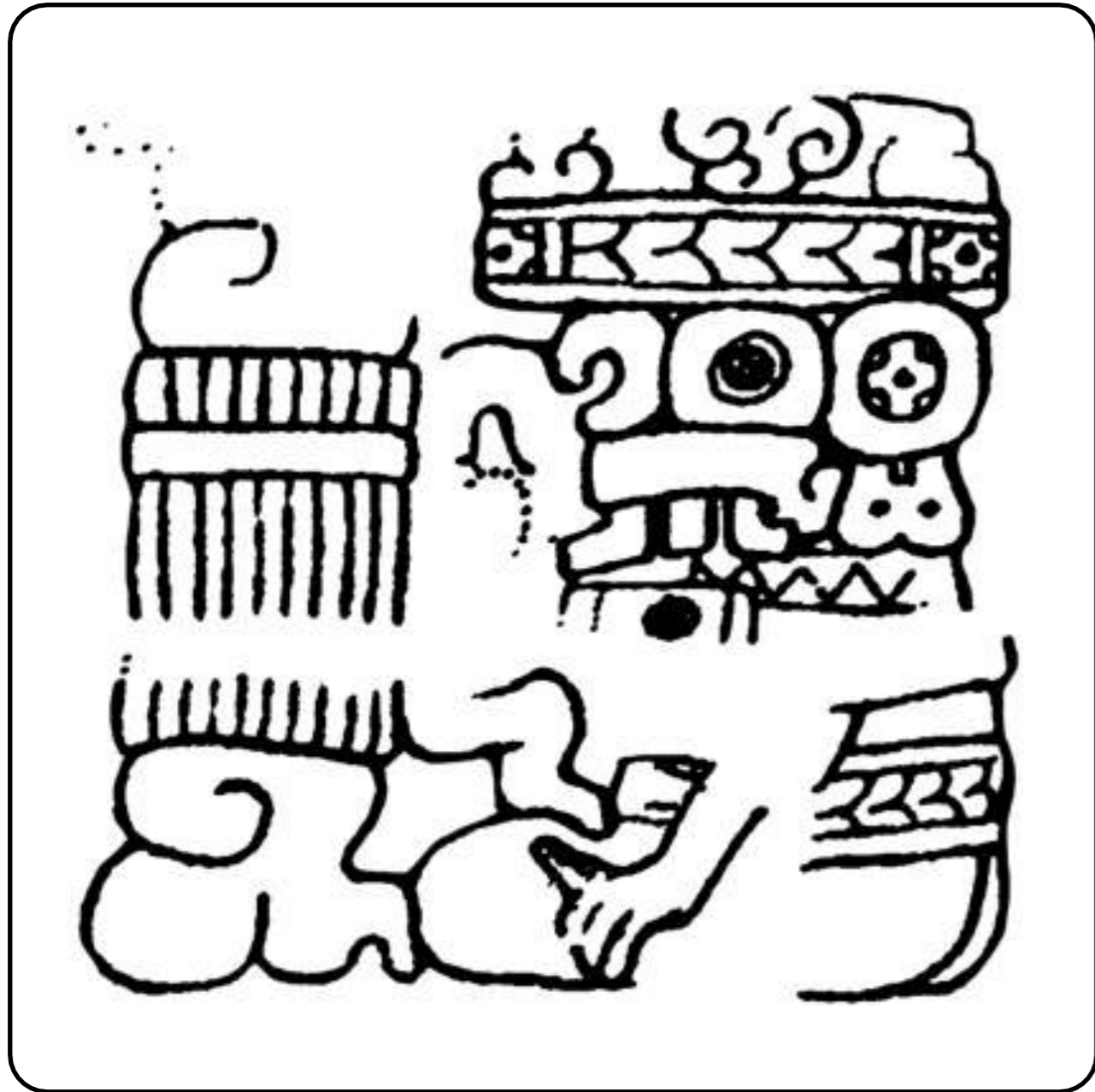




f2

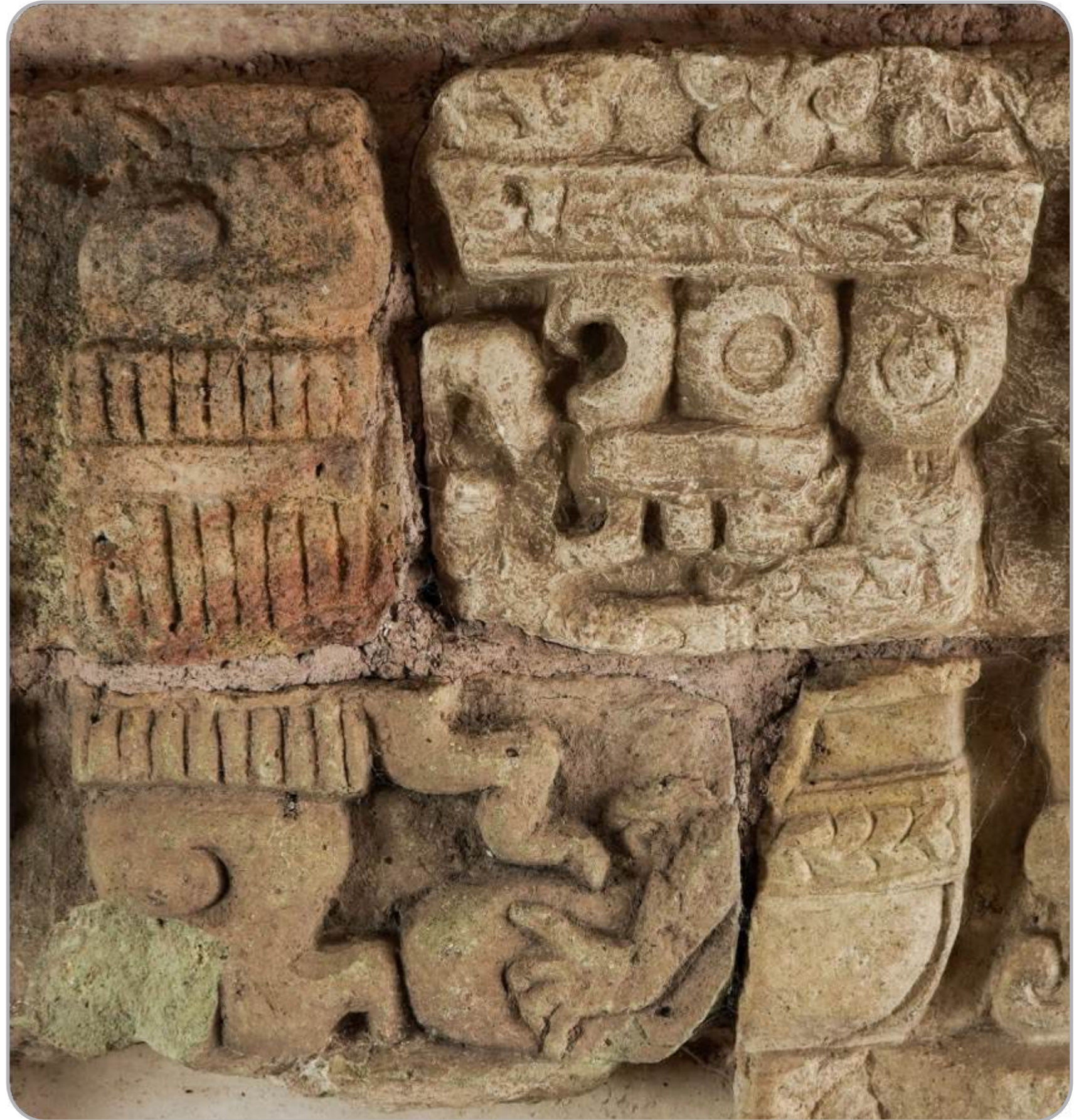
Common seated/reclining Old Man Deity

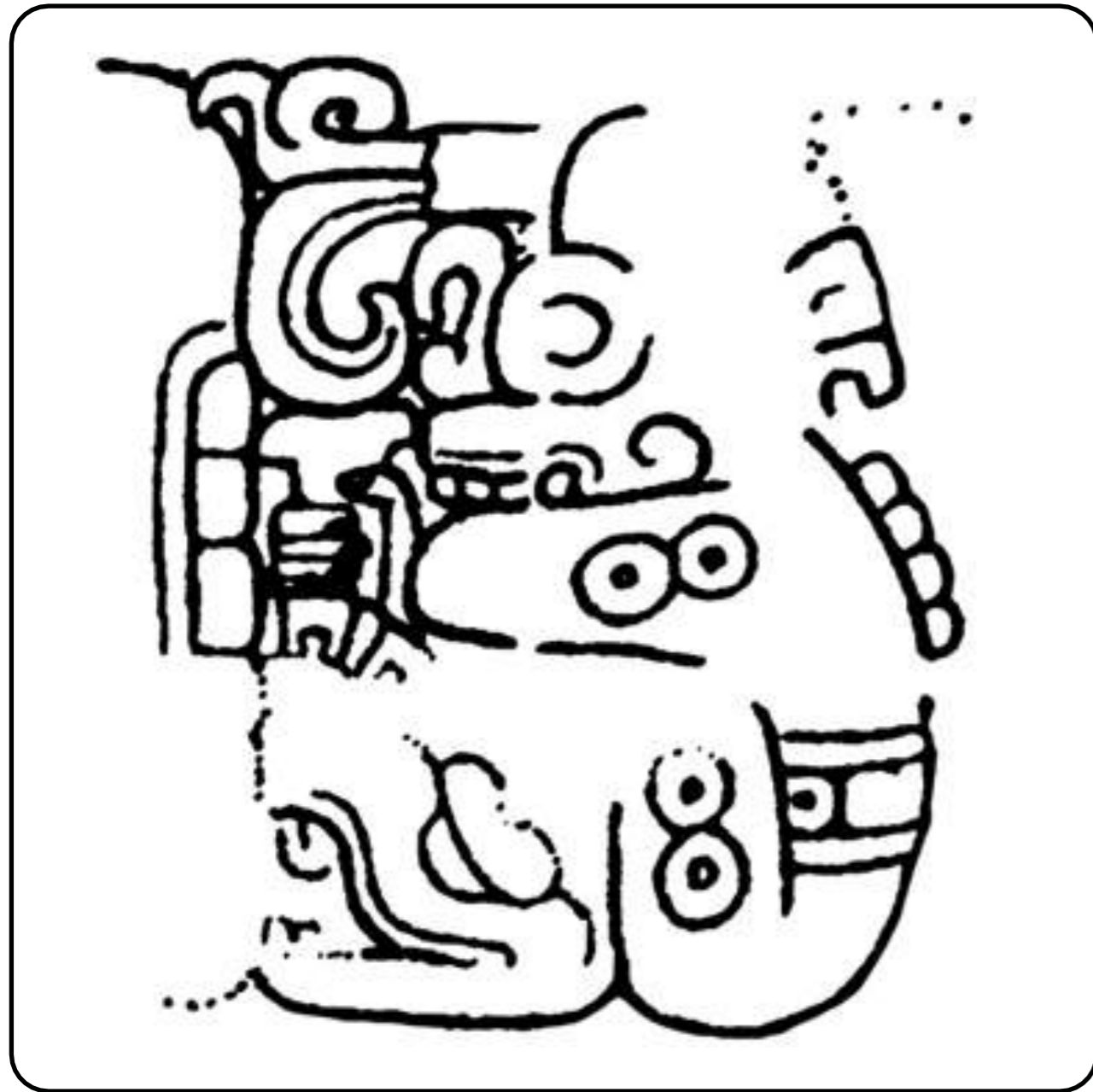




**G2**

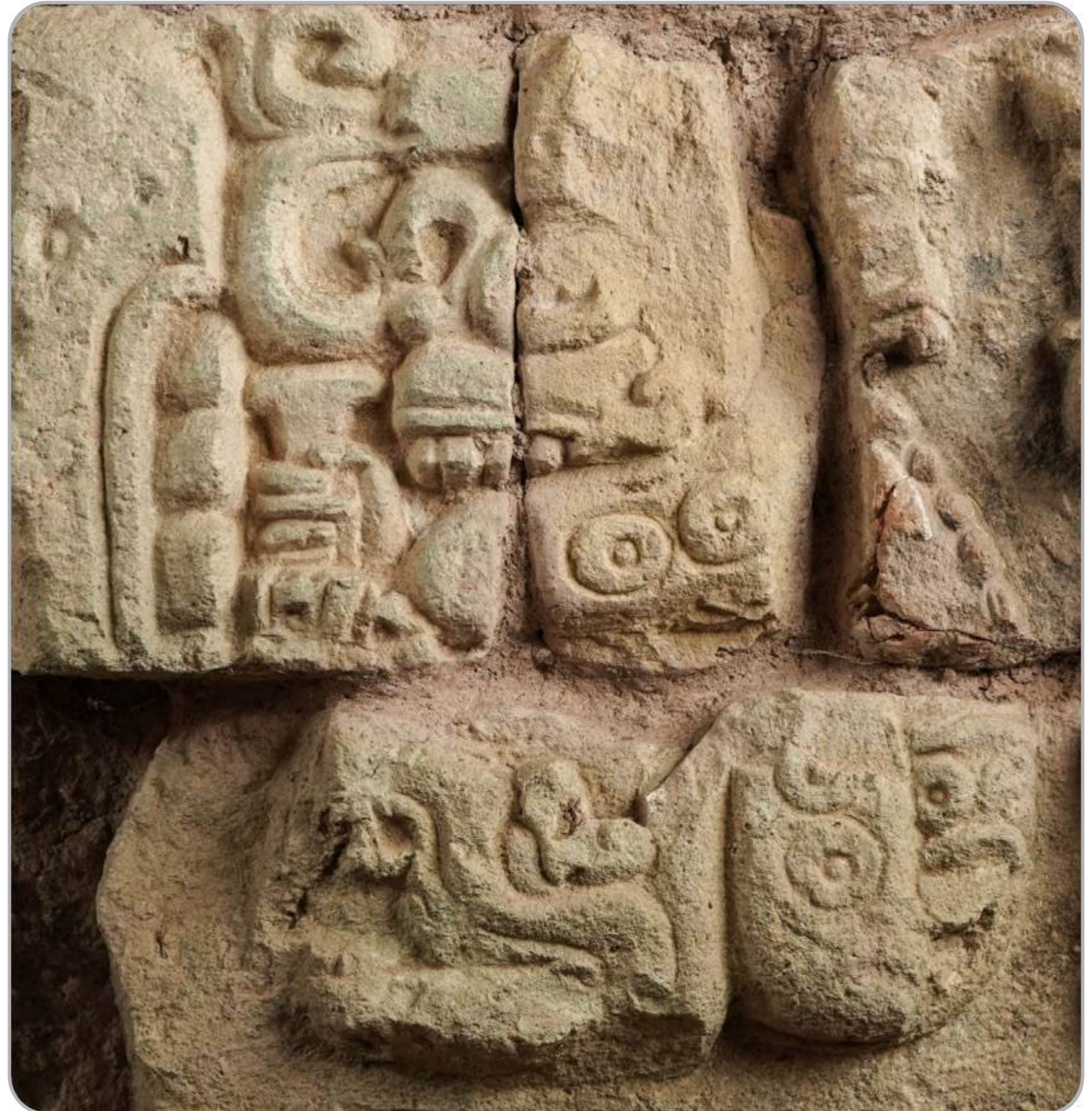
Profile Tlaloc head. Headdress has symbols that need to be studied to learn to what degree are "Teotihuacan" influence.

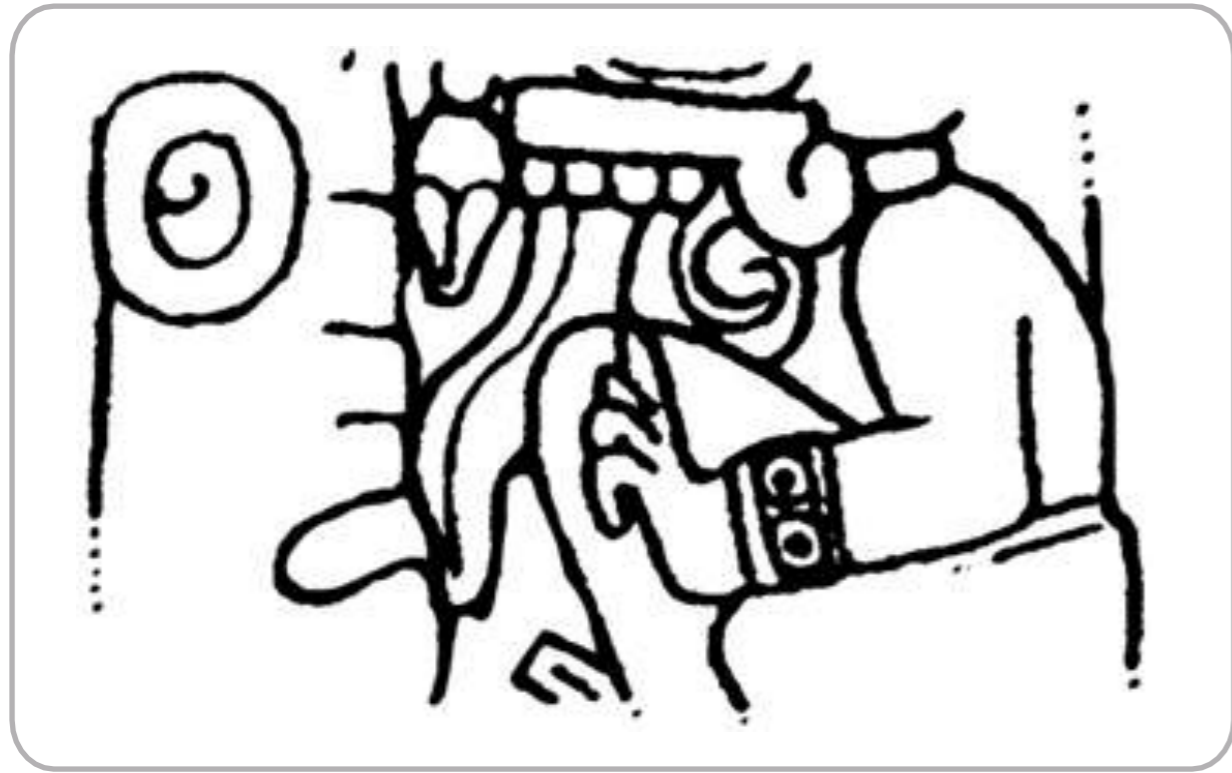




**H2**

Goggle eye size and shape of Tlaloc but otherwise no "Tlaloc face". Forehead has God K feature, K'awiil.





**H3** Remains of what was once a profile Tlalochead.

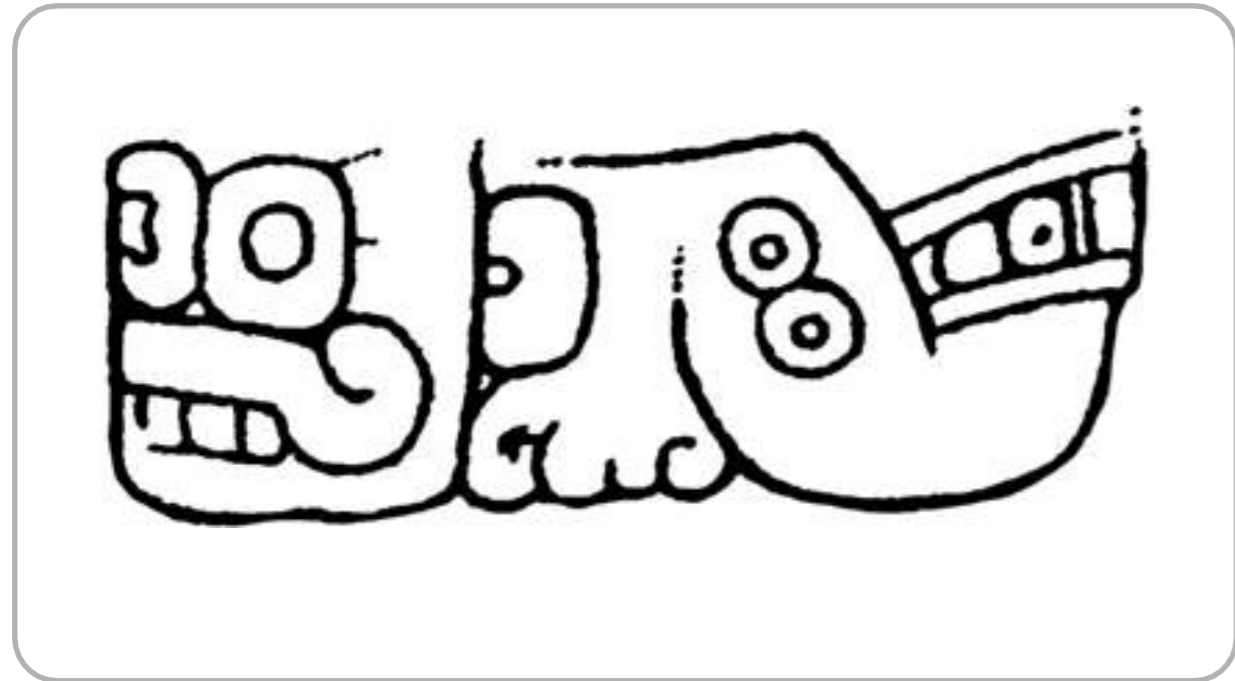




**H4**

Miniature Yearsign headdress but on a totally Maya personage (unless what he is holding in his hand has Mexican features)?

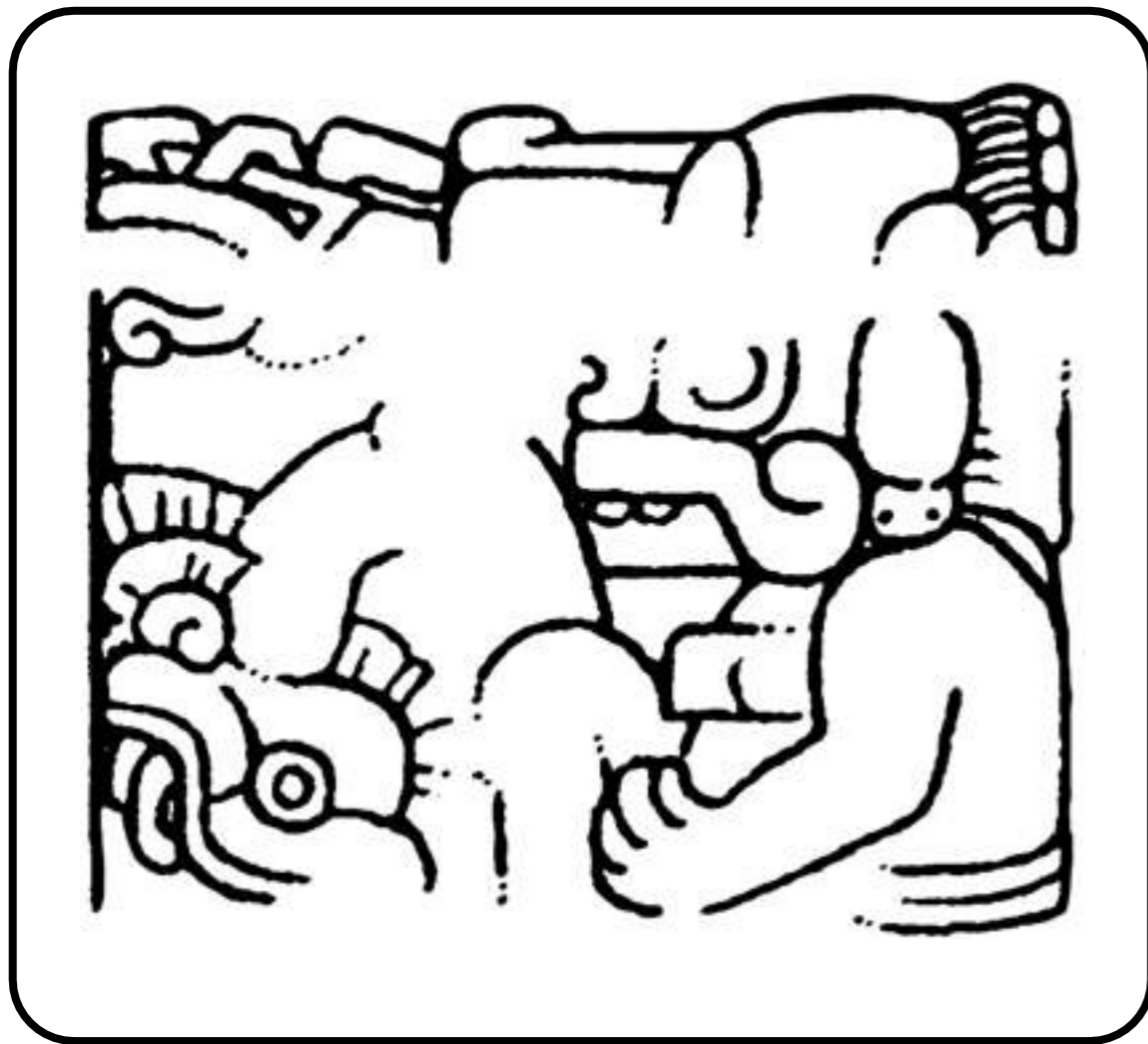




**H5** Tlaloc head or bundle at left







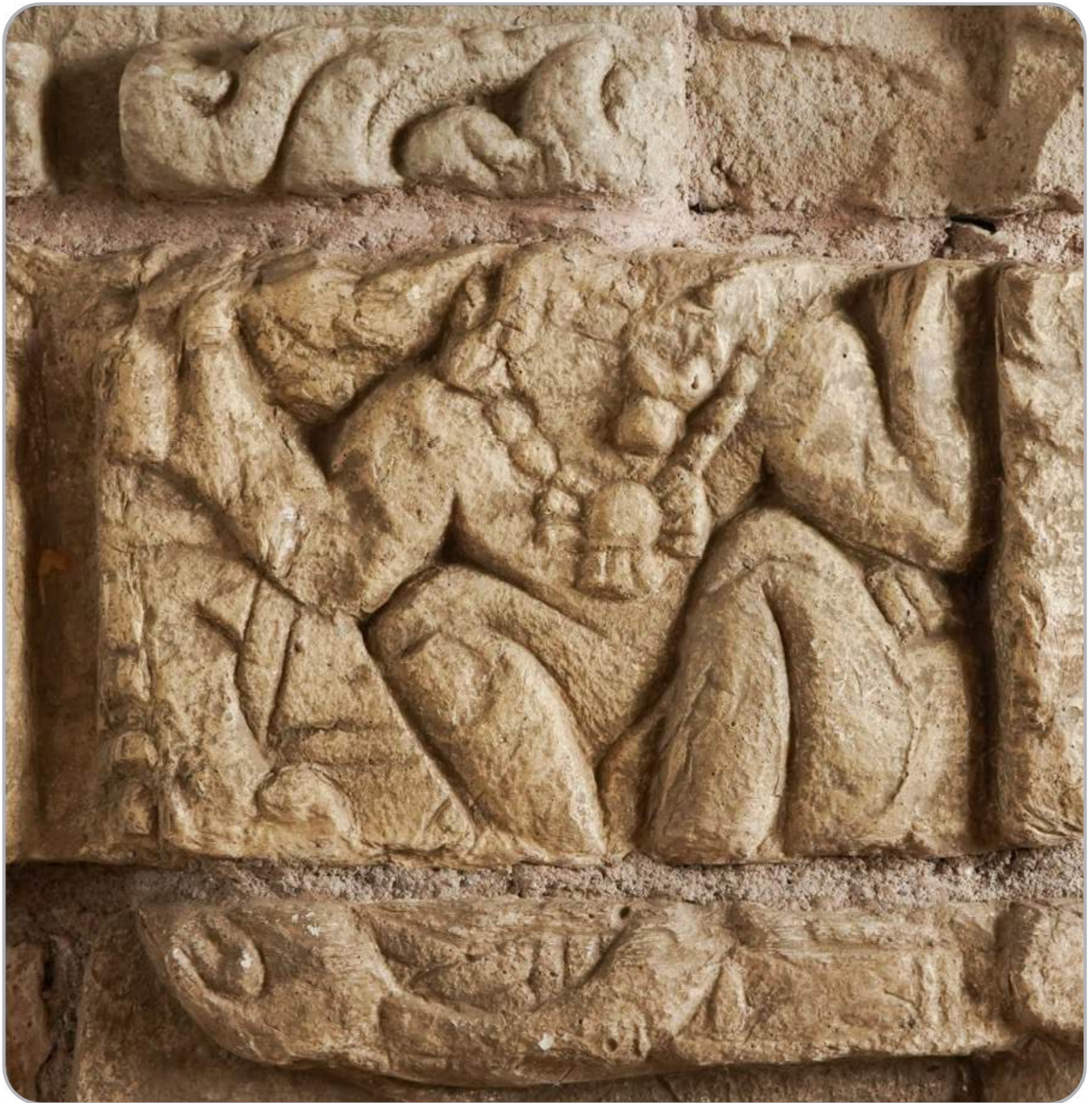
**H6**

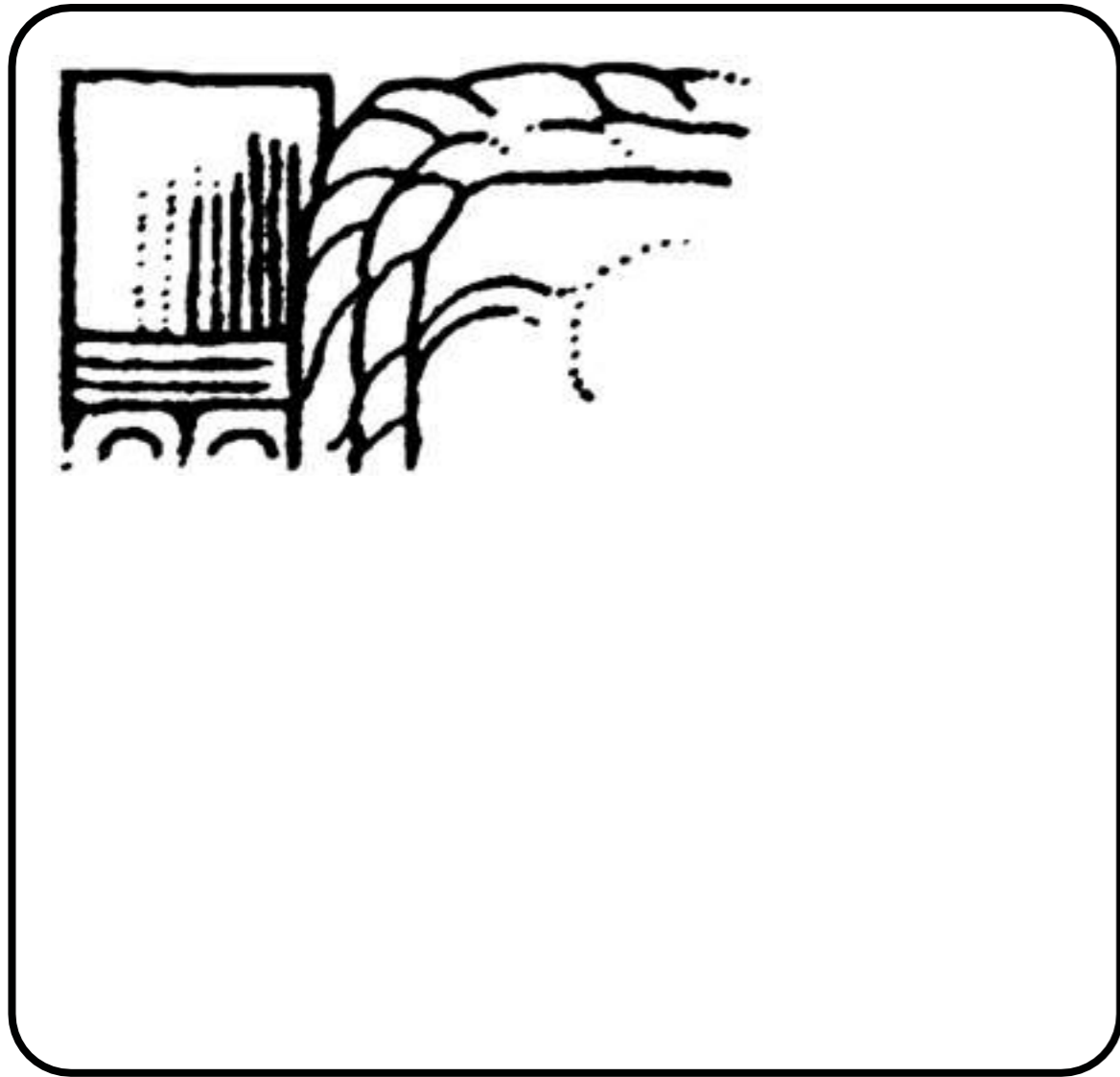
Yearsign far out front at top left. Main head has Tlaloc goggles and Tlaloc mouth, but may have had God K aspect sticking out of forehead (too eroded to decide).



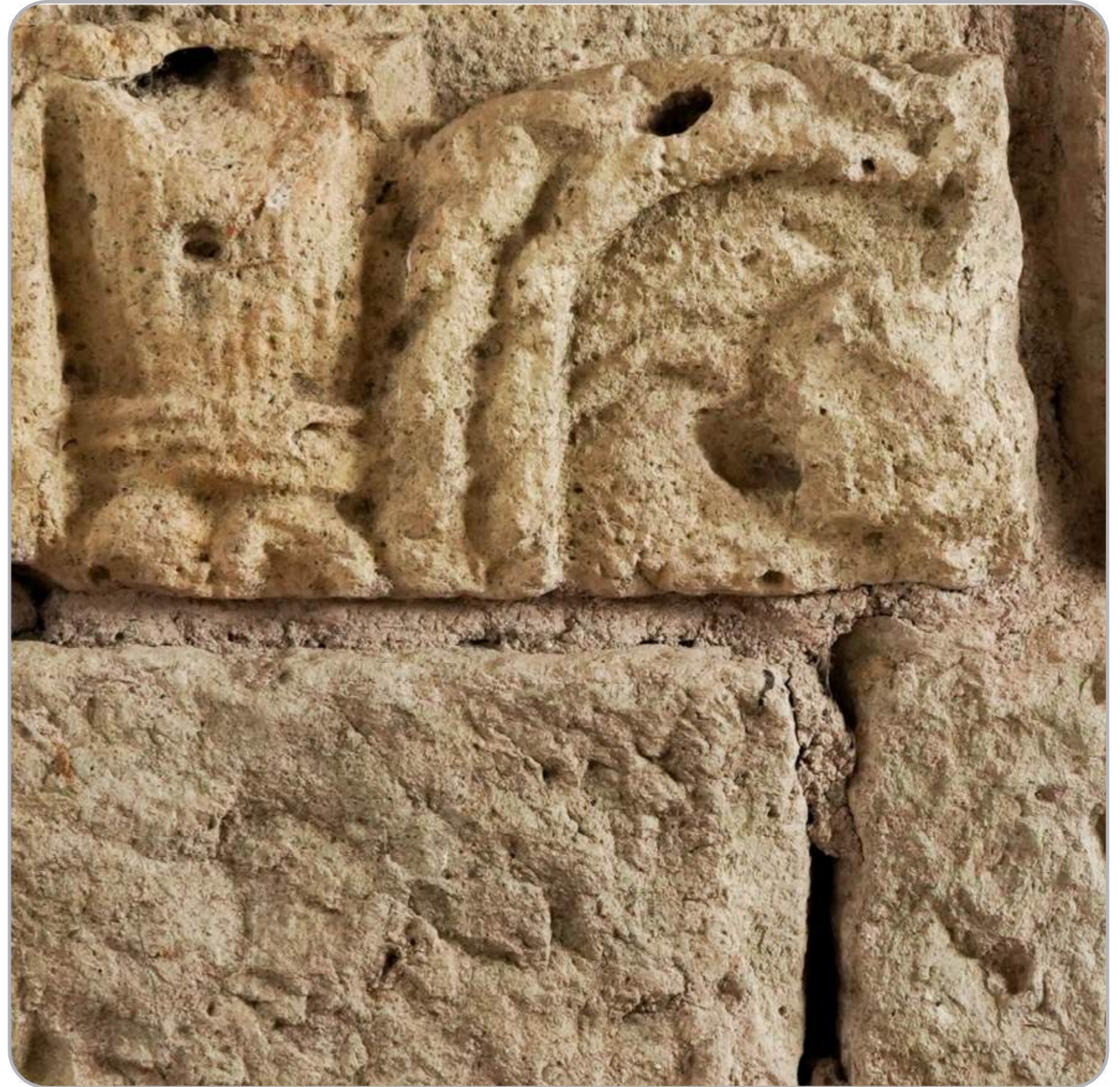


**h6** Since one foot turns into a snake, this is probably God K.





H7

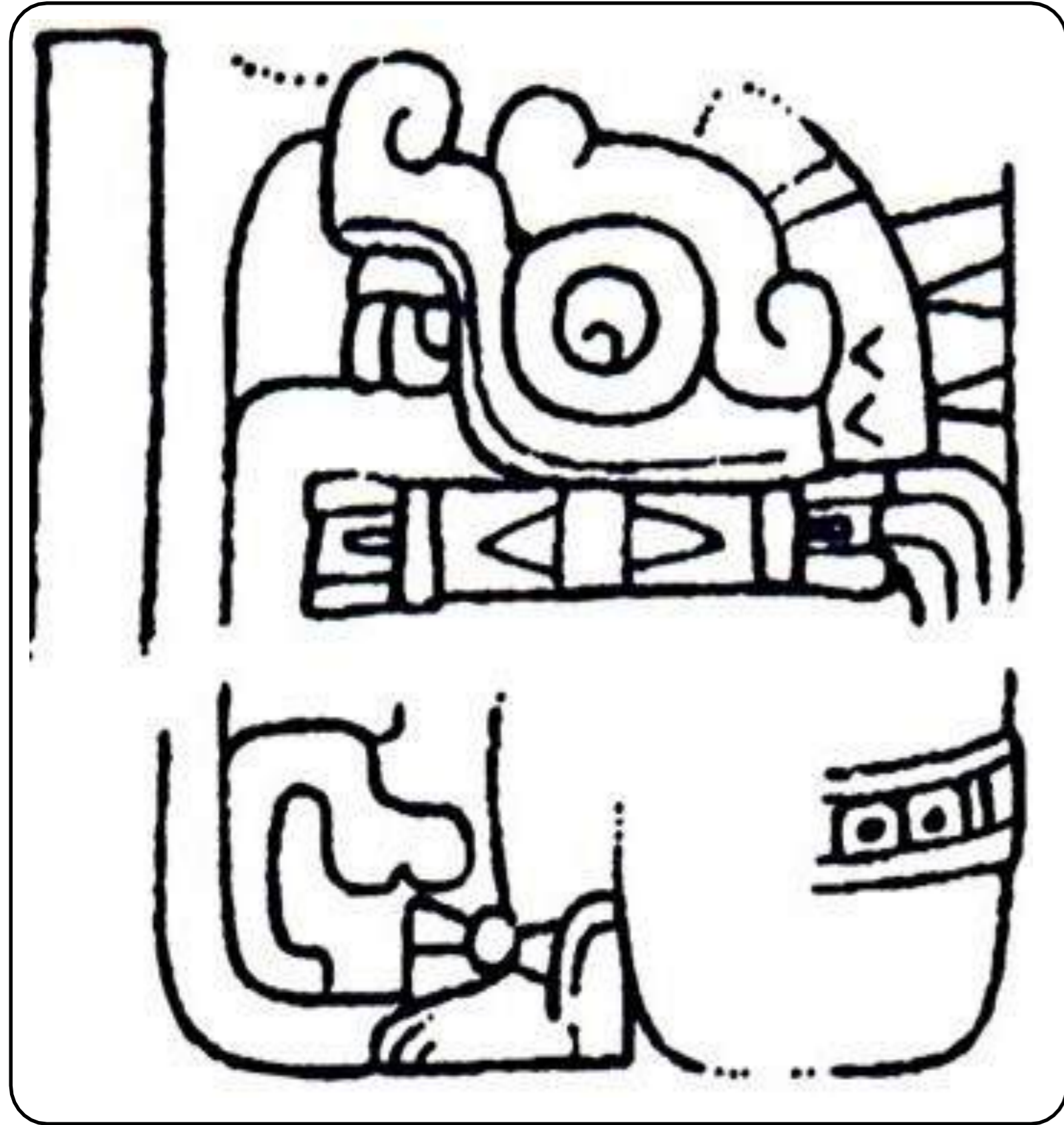




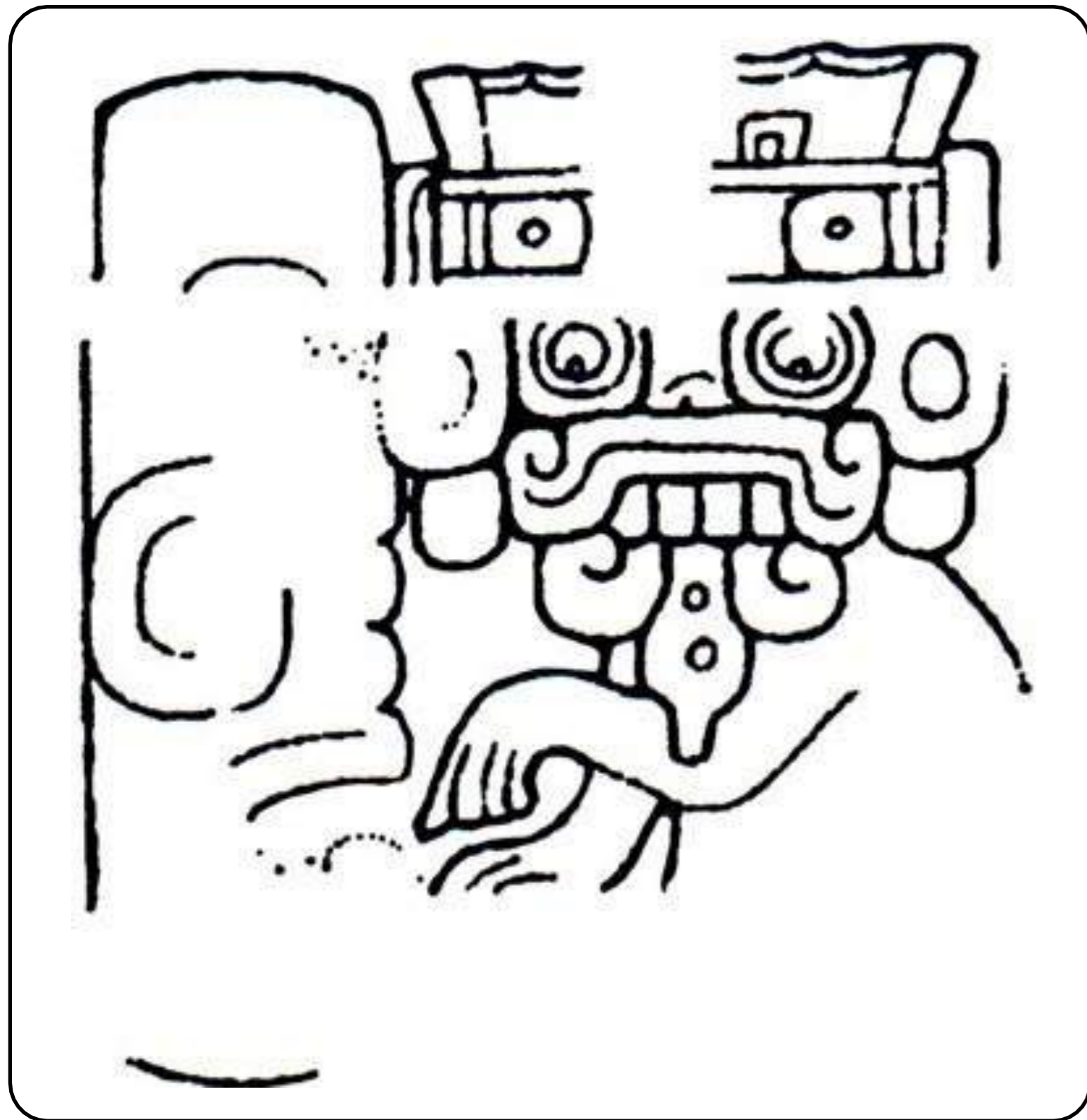
**h7** Bat at the left.



Now I repeat all the full-figure personified hieroglyphs that have Tlaloc eyes or other Teotihuacan-related features.



**A2** Goggle eyed serpent head.



**A5** Traditional frontal Tlaloc as found elsewhere at Copan but rare as full-figure hieroglyph outside Copan hieroglyphic stairway area. Similar face on G2 and similar Tlaloc but profile on glyph blocks A7 and H3



**A7** Profile "half-frontal" presentation of Tlaloc. Two Years signs in the headdress.



**B1** Seated Tlaloc with possible bar-numbers in front.

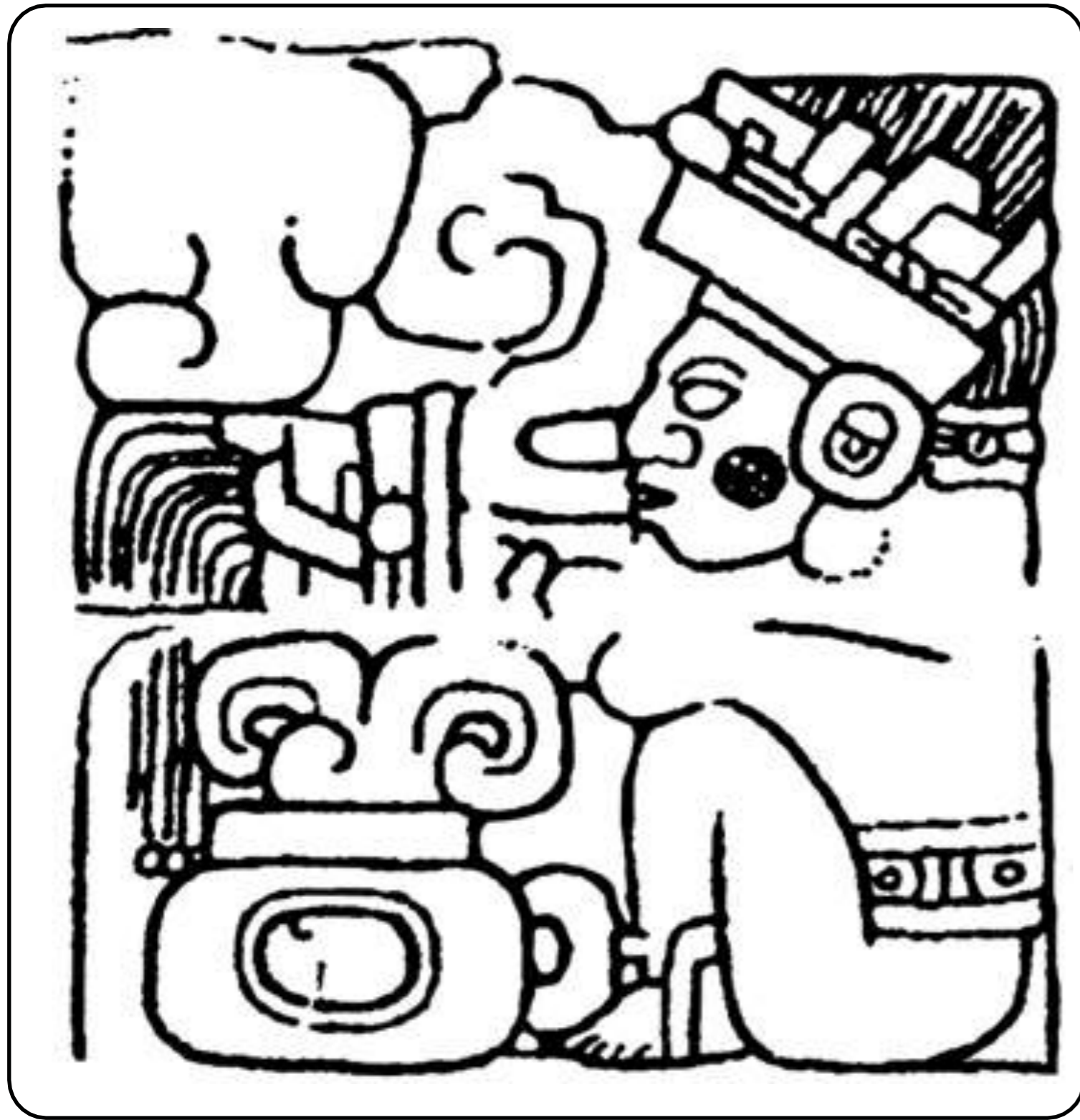




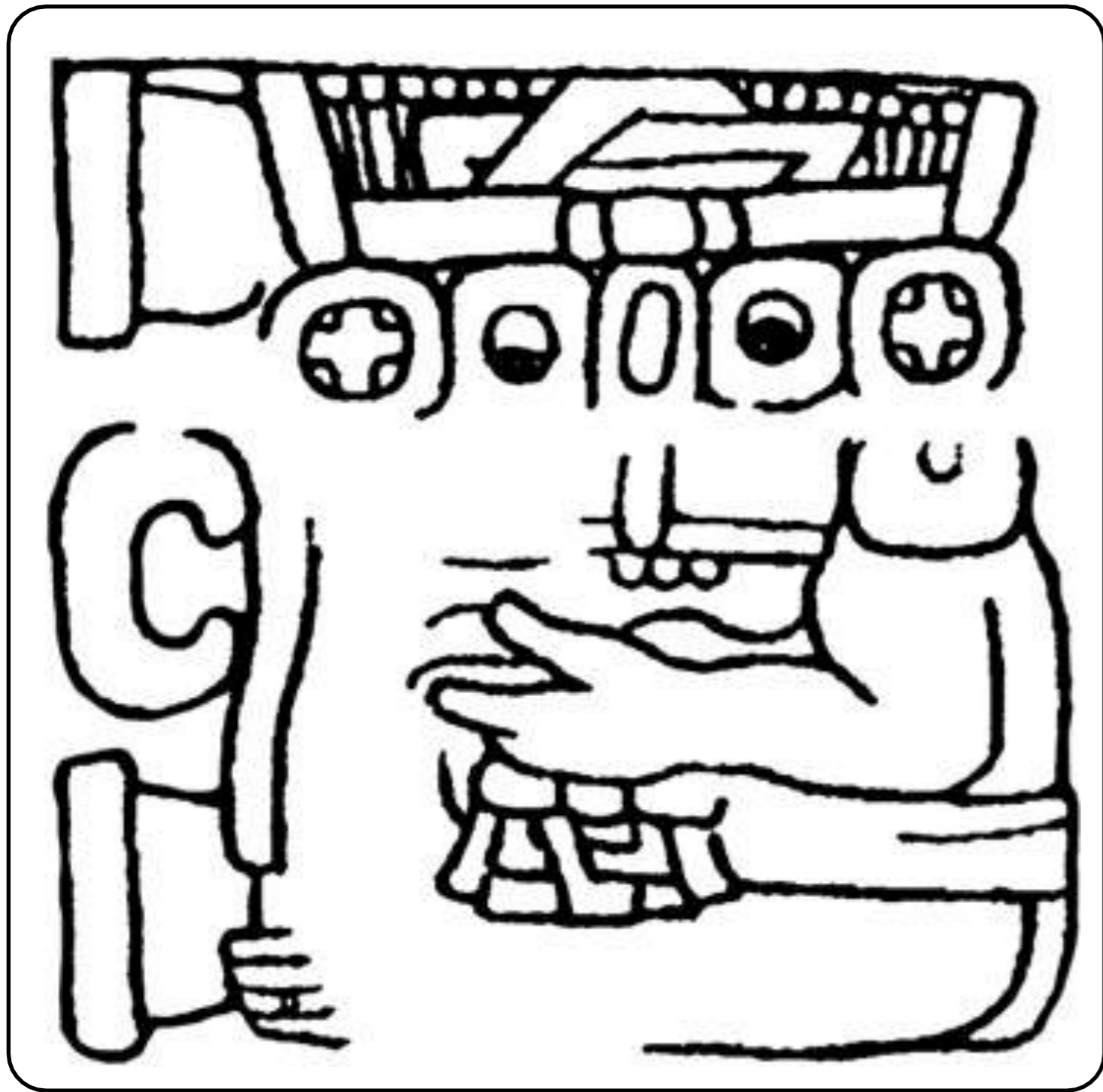
**B2** K'awil God K but Tlaloc and Yearsign headdress; reptile head with stylized cross-section of flowers (designs frequently found on Tlaloc eye serpent but this serpent has no goggle eye).

The drawings are David Stuart are excellent, but with the help of 1:1 macro photos of each full-figure hieroglyph, some details can be improved, especially if the drawing is direct from the digital photo and not a freehand sketch.



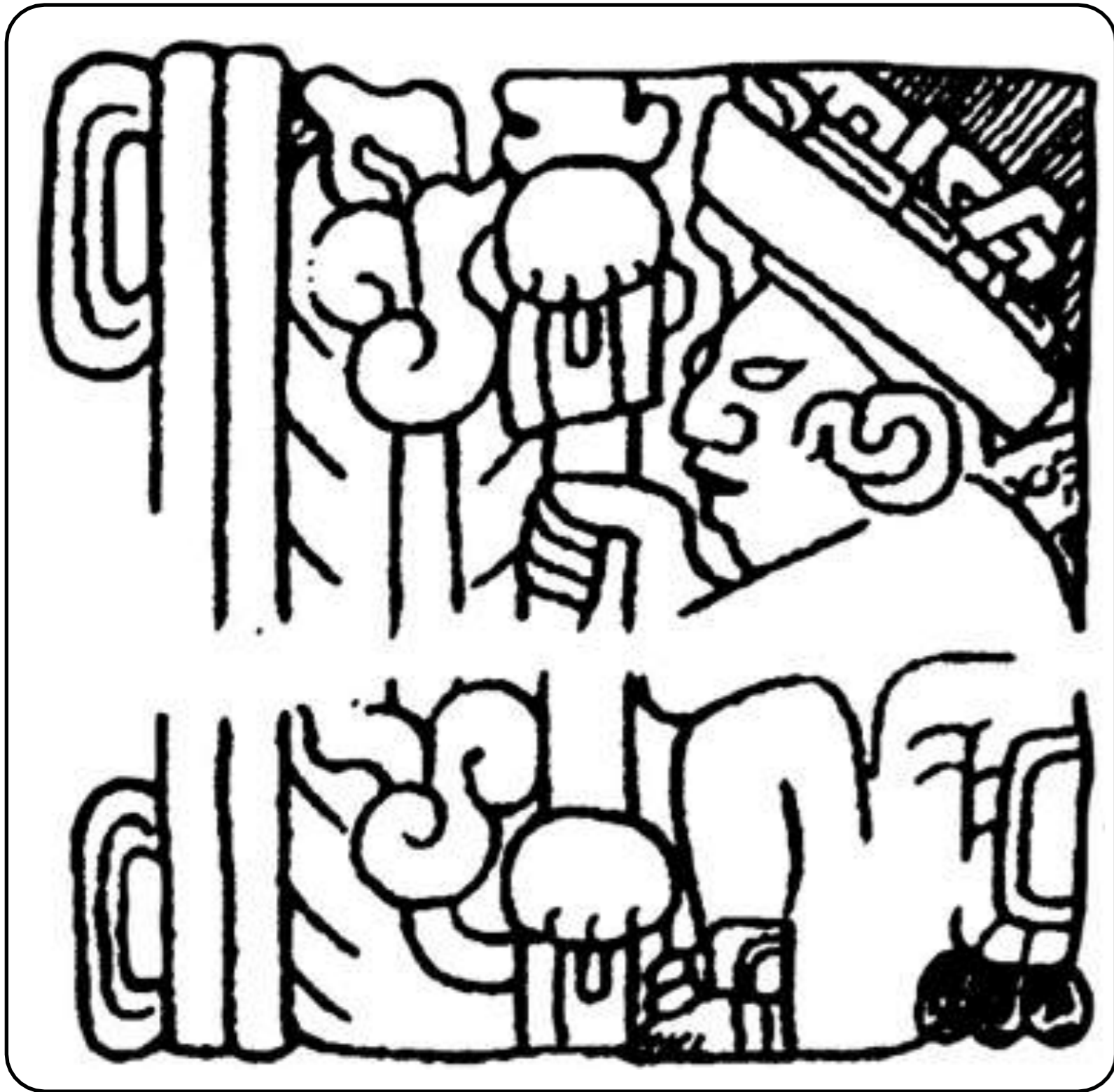


**C2** Yearsign on headdress but no Tlaloc or other obvious Teotihuacan features. Face is pure Maya style. See glyph block D2.

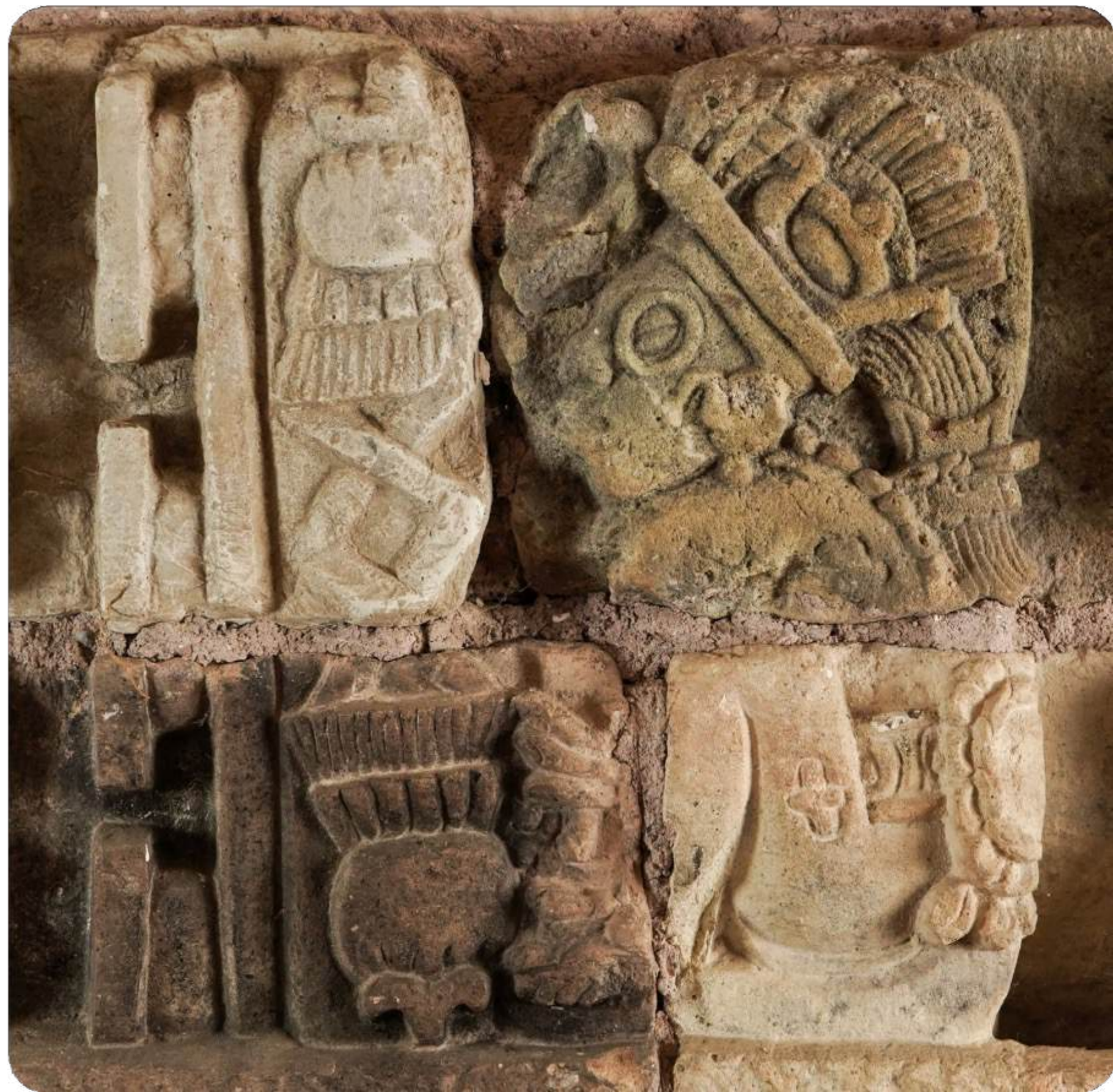
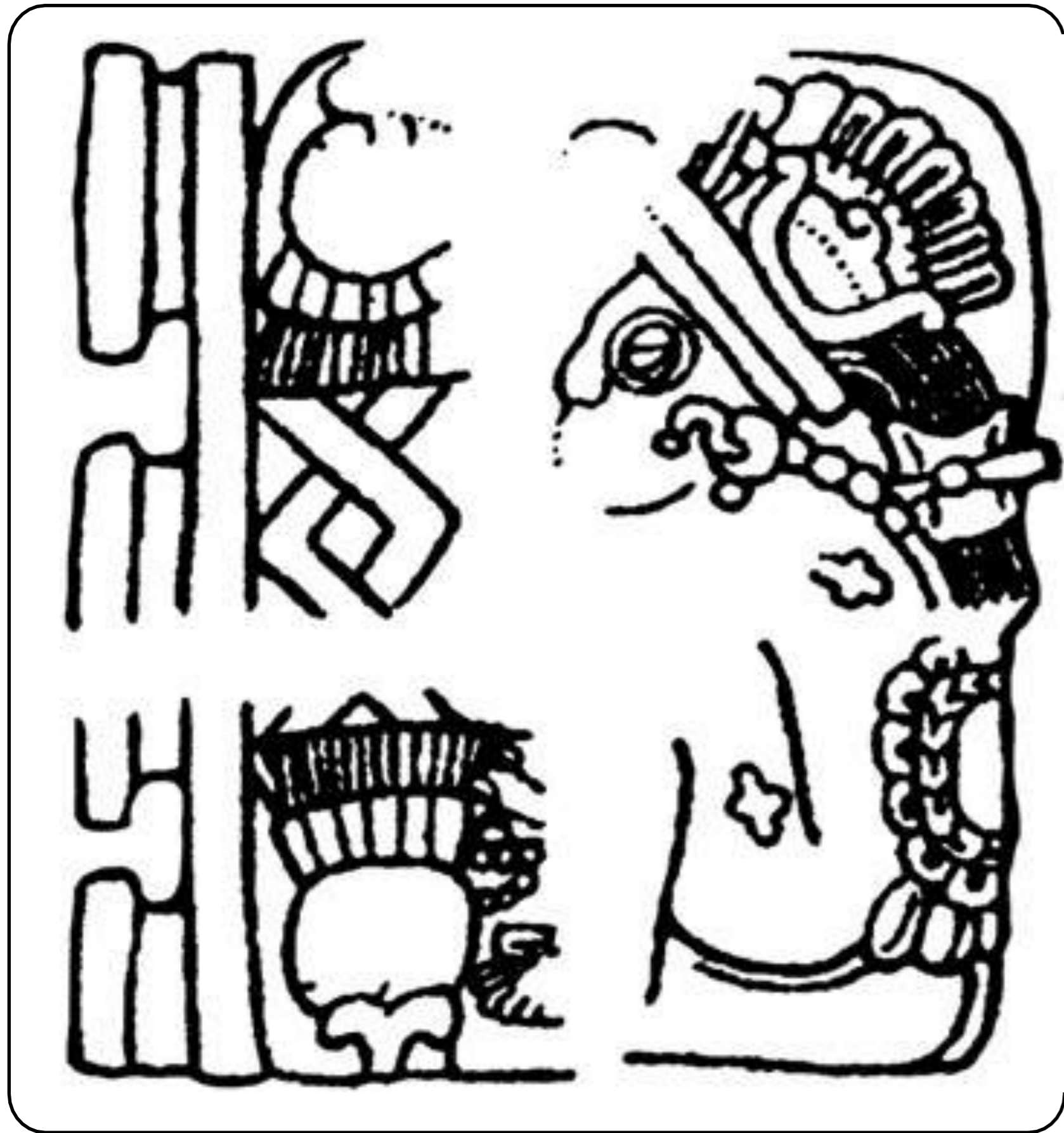


**D1** Frontal Tlaloc, flat frontal Yearsign headdress on profile body.





**D2** Yearsign on headdress but no Tlaloc or other obvious Teotihuacan features. Face is pure Maya style. See glyph block C2.



**E2**

Goggle eye but face is Maya and no Yearsign in headdress.



**G2**

Profile Tlaloc head. Headdress has symbols that need to be studied to learn to what degree are "Teotihuacan" influence.

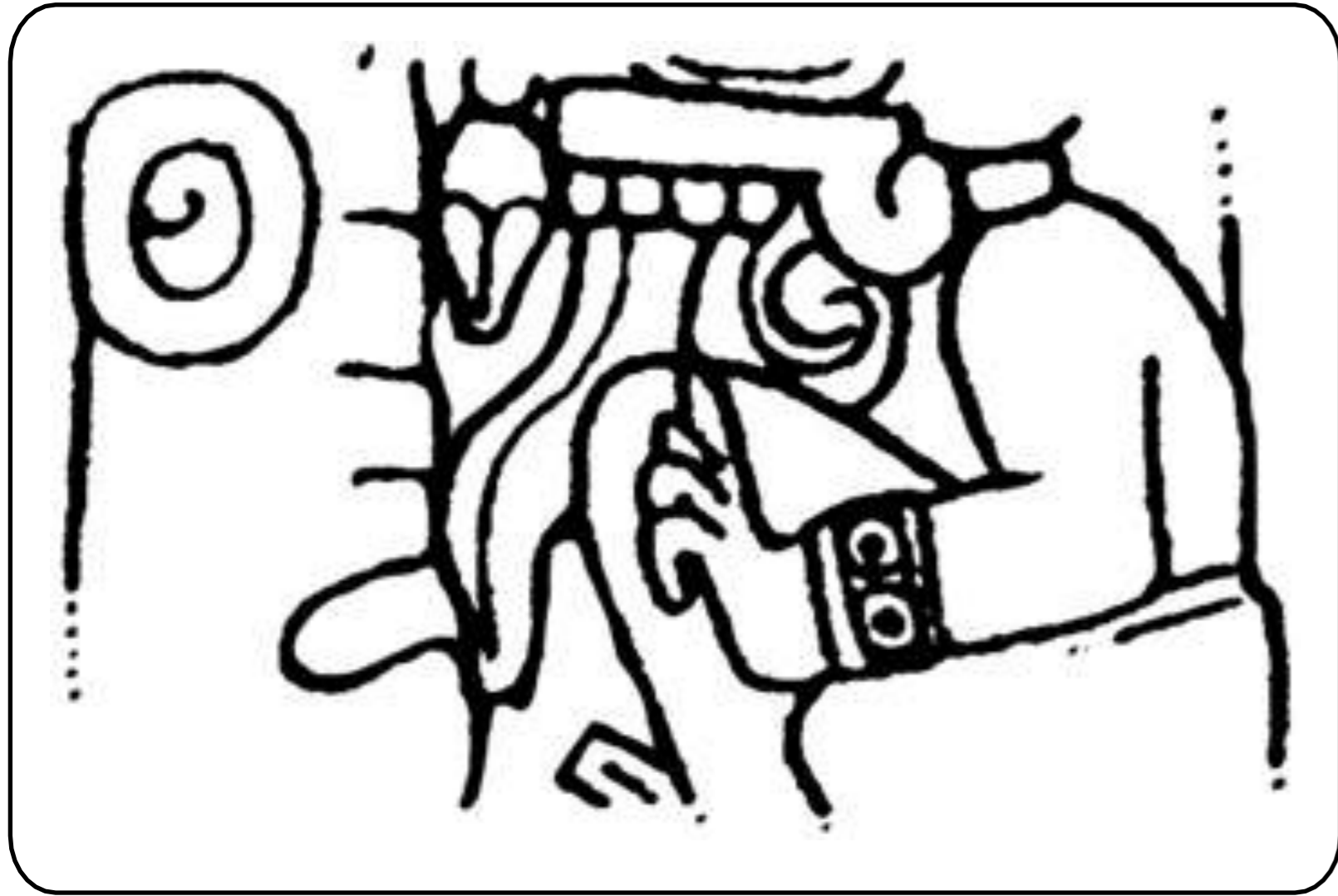


Keep in mind that all these Tlalocs and associated motifs are Late Classic. The imperial capital of Teotihuacan itself has long ago collapsed. But Late Classic Maya rulers wanted to show that the military and supernatural power of former Teotihuacan was still living on at Copan.



**H2**

Goggle eye size and shape of Tlaloc but otherwise no "Tlaloc face". Forehead has God K feature, K'awiil.



**H3**

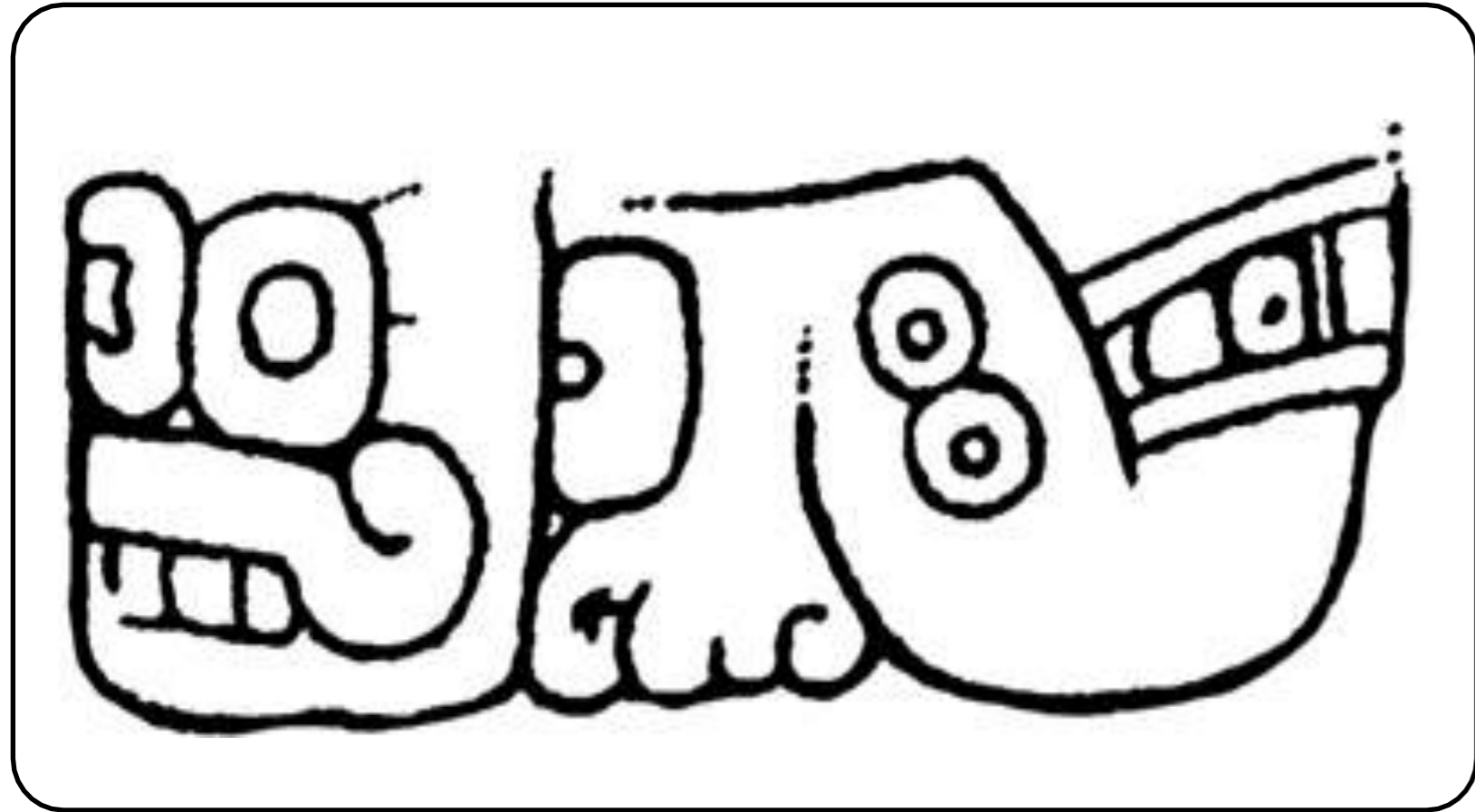
Remains of what was once a profile Tlaloc head.



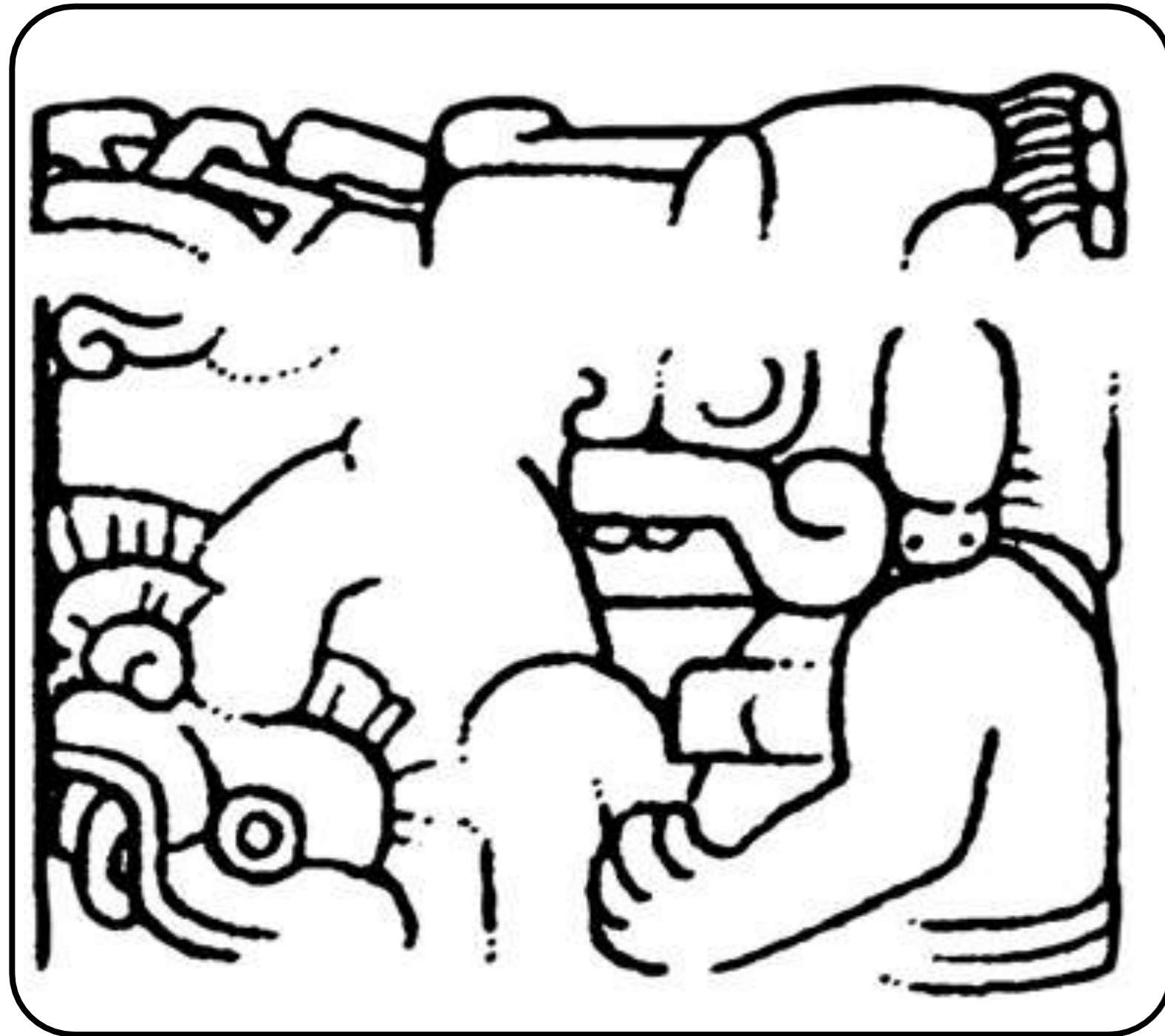


**H4**

Miniature Yearsign headdress but on a totally Maya personage (unless what he is holding in his hand has Mexican features)?



**H5** Tlaloc head or bundle at the left.



**H6**

Yearsign far out front at top left. Main head has Tlaloc goggles and Tlaloc mouth, but may have had God K aspect sticking out of forehead (too eroded to decide).

In conclusion, Copan Temple 26 potentially has more Late Classic Tlalocs and Yearsigns than any other Late Classic Maya sculpture across the entire Maya Lowlands. Making all these Teotihuacan influenced scenes available as an easy PDF download can jump start further research on the continuation of Teotihuacan influence centuries after Teotihuacan itself had collapsed. In my decades of studying iconography, I was not aware of the overlooked treasure in these Temple 26 inscriptions. The helpful drawing by David Stuart in the publication by Barbara Fash is what allowed me to recognize the importance of Copan Temple 26 for further research, iconographic and epigraphic.



My 1969 MA thesis at Brown University was on Teotihuacan influence continuing into the Late Classic Maya, especially throughout Peten. But in 1969 I was not aware of all the Teotihuacan features on Copan's Late Classic Temple 26.

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