

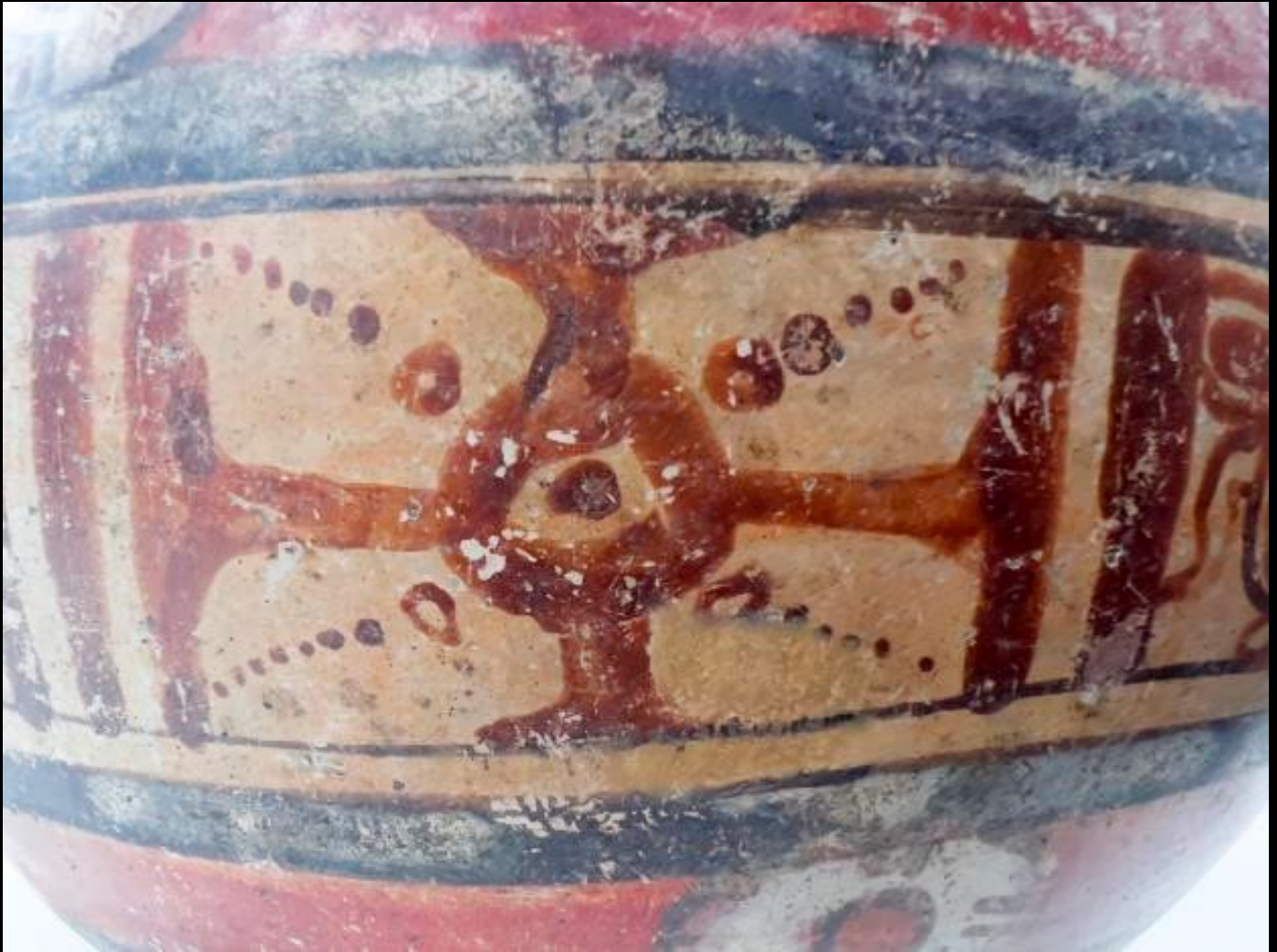
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Iconography of Maya Sky Band Motifs

Part II, Sky Bands on Ceramic Bowls and Vases



**Sky Band Motifs can be better understood
from Iconography but also Epigraphy**

FLAAR Reports

FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala)

Nicholas Hellmuth

October 2024

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Acknowledgements

We thank Fernando Paiz and Sofia Parades for hospitality at the Fundacion La Ruta Maya. The Classic Maya are best known for monumental pyramid temples, palaces, acropolises and ball courts. But you can learn unexpected aspects when you study atypical aspects, for example insects on Maya bowls, 4-petalled flowers on Maya vases, and the subject of this presentation: celestial motifs in rectangular bands.

Schools, universities, and organizations of guides have increasingly been asking for PowerPoint lectures on the Maya. Guides, for example, say they are required to have 30 hours of training each year to maintain their license. So our long range goal is to assist each entity that requests lecture topics. Obviously we do not have 30 hours of lectures up-front, but we are working towards that as a long-range goal. Sky Bands certainly deserve to be one of the 30 hours, so we appreciate access to material so we can provide material for students. I had a Sky Band in my seminar paper for a university course in 1965. So now with the help of Fernando Paiz and Sofia Parades we can help students in Guatemala and around the world learn more about the Sky Band. We presently have many other articles in preparation on Sky Bands (since several motifs of the Sky Band started in Olmec art, was first seen in Guatemala at Takalik Abaj Altar 12, and continued for over a thousand years to be featured in the Dresden Codex, Madrid Codex and Paris Codex). The present report is one small step forward to learning about the easy to see aspects and the more complicated motifs. I provide iconographic introduction: symbolism and design.

Next step is for an epigrapher to document that hieroglyphs are associated with several motifs. Carl Calloway has shown this for T1017. Chris Layser has identified other motifs. Carlson and Landis (1985) have a very helpful illustrated catalog of basic Sky Band motifs from Palenque, Piedras Negras, etc. There are lots of other Sky Band motifs that need comparable expertise by epigraphers (keeping in mind the Sky Band motifs are symbols, motifs, designs: not formal hieroglyphs). But I estimate that every motif is a geometricized, rectangularized design that for any Maya who could read the full glyphs would also understand the "message" "written" in a Sky Band. So now let's look at how examples in the Fundacion La Ruta Maya can assist all of us.

Caption for Front Cover

The Four-Petalled Flower Kin motif is found on hundreds of Sky Bands. I show this on the front cover to document why and how we can identify the entire series of motifs as a Sky Band. Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth, this ceramic is in the registered collection of Fundacion La Ruta Maya.

Caption for Title Page

Rather than the ubiquitous Crossed Band motif, here is an X motif with dots in each segment. When you get an X motif with wiggles in each segment this is an Etz'ban sign, used also for flint (chert is the more likely stone but flint is what most writers call it). Lots of different four-part designs are found in a Sky Band. Each artist will select which aspect to feature. Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth; this ceramic is in the registered collection of Fundacion La Ruta Maya.

Assistance in preparing the Photographs for this first draft

Norma Estefany Cho Cu helped crop the photographs so they could fit into the tabulation.

Introduction to Sky Bands and the Motifs in this Band of Celestial Symbols

Sky Bands, also written Skyband, have primarily been studied by archaeo-astronomers to document the celestial implications for the codices (Dresden, Madrid and Paris) and for the architectural Sky Band at Chichen Itza and also at Uxmal (Yucatan, Mexico), and the peccary and turtle sky images in the Bonampak murals (Chiapas, Mexico).

Epigrapher/iconographer Carl Calloway has made significant advances in the profile deity head in Sky Bands, especially at Palenque (where the deity head is often frontal). Christopher Layser has provided advances in identification of Sky Band motifs. Epigrapher David Stuart has documented crucial aspects of the hieroglyphs associated with the deity face that I call the profile/half-frontal deity. Carlson and Landis have provided helpful documentation on Sky Band motifs. So it helps to have all three kinds of specialists to study Sky Bands:

- Archaeo-astronomers
- Epigraphers
- Iconographers

Even though the bands have motifs and symbols and not actual hieroglyphs, there are designs in 80% and sometimes 100% of the Sky Band motifs that also appear inside complete hieroglyphs.

So far most advances have been made from drawings of Merle Greene Robertson and Linda Schele (primarily for Palenque). In other words, if additional images are available for students to do their MA thesis (such as Calloway's MA thesis and Layser's MA thesis) or for articles, more advances can be made now that we are moving into year 2025.

Sky Bands on plates and vases are occasionally very long, with lots of different motifs (so the motifs are not always simply repeated). But most Sky Bands on painted or incised ceramics do not provide planetary documentation to archaeo-astronomers comparable to Chichen Itza, Uxmal, Bonampak or the Codices. Thus it will be a good first step for epigraphers and iconographers to have images from painted and incised ceramics to study.

Thus I wish to show the Sky Band motifs on a bowl, jug, and small vase of the registered collection of Fundacion La Ruta Maya. Guatemalan students are inspired to learn, plus students around the world. So far Chiapas and Yucatan have been the source for most Sky Band research. Let's share the Sky Band motifs from Guatemala.

Due to the quantity of Sky Bands, I have divided them into different reports:

Part I, Sky Bands on Plates

Part II, Sky Bands on Ceramic Bowls and Vases

Part III, Sky Bands on Kerr Rollouts and Hellmuth Rollouts

Part IV, Sky Bands on Stelae, Lintels and Murals

Part V, Sky Bands at Palenque

Part VI, Sky Bands on woven textile hems, especially Yaxchilan, Bonampak, and Tikal

Part VII, Sky Bands in the Maya Codices

The photographs included in the report on vases and bowls were taken over many decades. It will take years to document which were photographed in which museum in which part of the world (because I photographed around the world, including Japan and Australia). Plus many were photographed in collections before they were later donated to a museum. But it is important that a sample of the vases that I can find with Sky Band motifs are included in the present report (most of the ones that were rolled out are in the rollout volume and plates are in a separate volume).

Totally Unexpected Designs in this Late Classic Sky Band

I would rate the Sky Band on this painted jug as having several of the most unexpectedly bizarre motifs that I have seen. So there is no misunderstanding. This jug is not a fake; this jug is not faked by repainting. The easy to recognize motifs are on the front cover and title page. Now I show the surprisingly designed motifs: not quadrilateral and not geometric in any manner. Keep in mind that about half the motifs of a traditional Sky Band are four-sided (quadrilateral).

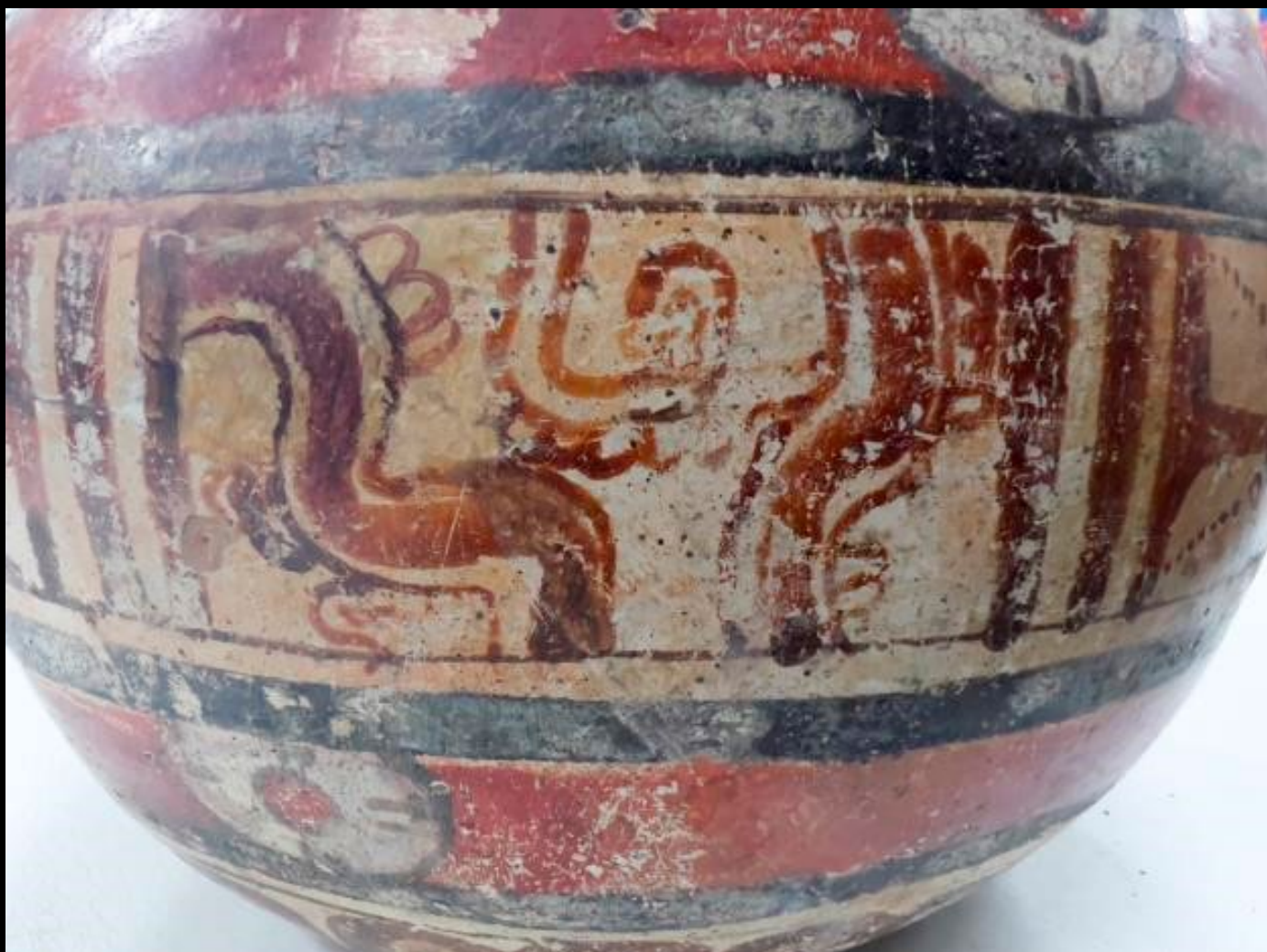


Fig. 1. Surely other vases or plates have a motif in a Sky Band that shares features with this, but even turning it sideways does not really explain that celestial aspect this painter was intending. Since a typical Sky Band motif occupies a rectangular space (so not a square space), the designs are stretched when not quadrilateral. Often the designs face downward (or upwards) and to recognize the motif you need to turn it 90-degrees: this is how you recognize the deity face that is associated with hieroglyph T1017, that we will see in several of the Sky Bands today. But the present motif is best left horizontal and try to work it out from the angle that it is shown. All photographs are of this ceramic in Fundacion La Ruta Maya.



Fig. 2. There are many of these motifs in this Sky Band. So clearly this artist or patron felt it was crucial to show this reptilian concept multiple times.

Here you can interpret the question mark as an eyeball and the curved forward part the snout/upper lip of a minimized serpent (that is my initial suggestion). But I would not suggest this is a Zip Monster (at least not yet).



Fig. 3. Here the eye is definitely like dozens of different deity, demon, or reptilian eyes. The snout curves down. So after comparing all three, I suggest that each of these motifs is a slightly different rendering of the same enigmatic rectangular reptilian concept.



Fig. 4. This design is not what you normally find on a Sky Band. But 80% of the other motifs on this Sky Band are completely traditional: Etz'bab, Kan Cross, Pop and two 4-petaled flower Kin signs.



Fig. 5. So far in the Kerr rollout data base of Sky Bands I have not yet found a motif precisely of this design. But surely this motif can be found in other Sky Bands on ceramics elsewhere. Robert Smith is one of the few ceramicists who mentions and shows Sky Band motifs (1955, Volume I, pages 71ff). His "Bracketed Parallel Lines" is the closest (ibid.: 71). Carlson and Landis have provided a helpful year 1985 catalog/inventory of Sky Band motifs from well-known stelae and lintels. But a motif with two parallel lines is not yet in their inventory.



Fig. 6. Identical motif as the other, but with brown paint especially the vertical bands at the right. It would help if iconographers and epigraphers decide how to name this "new" motif.



Fig. 7. Notable that there are two examples of most of the designs on this painted jug. Here is one of the two 4-petalled flower Dotted Kin designs.

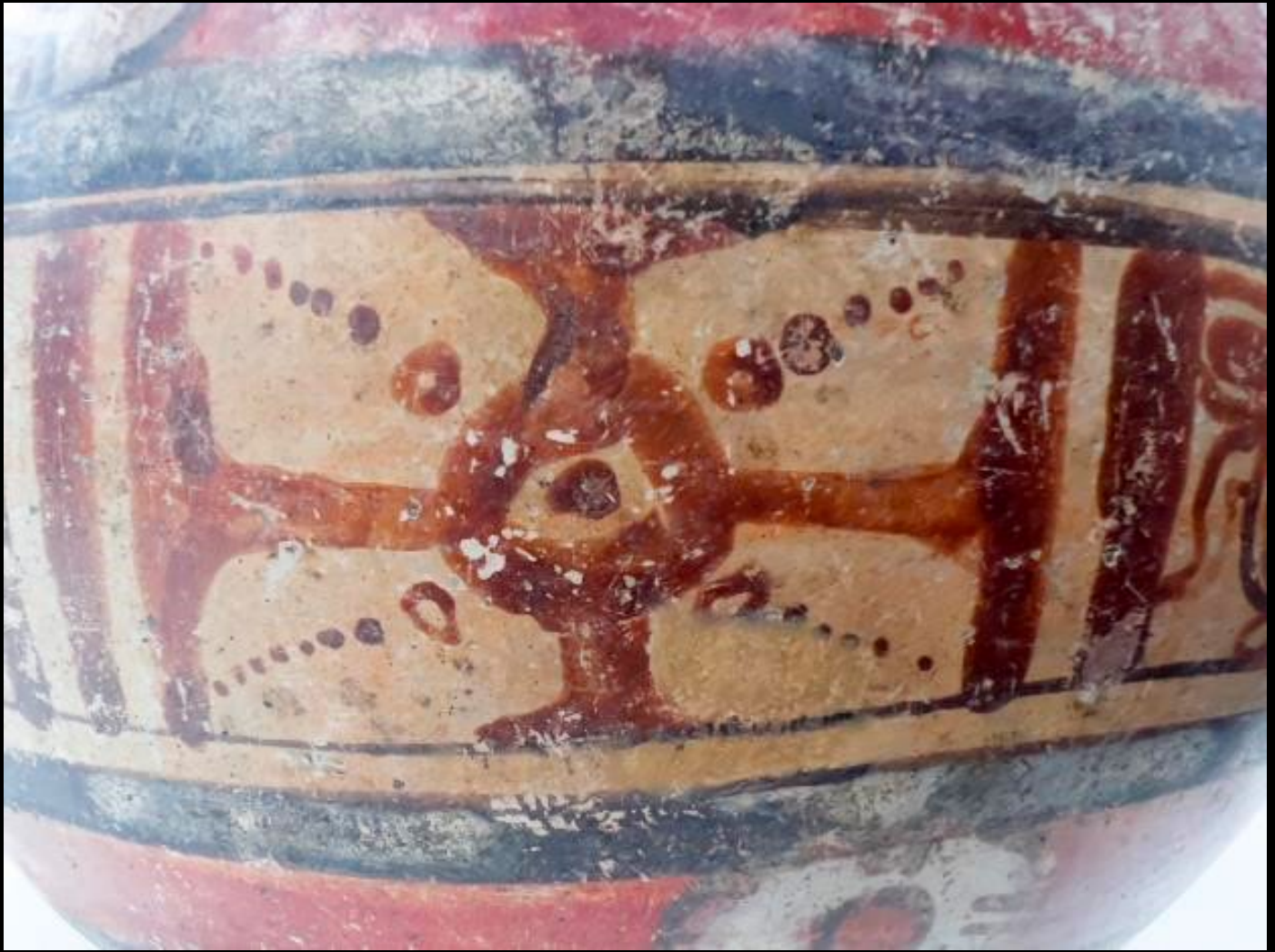


Fig. 8. Having studied 4-petalled flowers of Guatemala for years I can sense that is the origin of this design, albeit scrunched a bit to make it rectangular.
Most of the actual flowers would be bilaterally symmetrical.

J. Eric S. Thompson claimed the *Plumeria* flower was the source of the sun glyph, Kin. This is what happens when an individual does not immerse themselves in swamps, marshes, seasonally inundated savannas: they focus on the wrong flower, in his case a 5-petalled flower: Kin is rather obviously a 4-petalled flower.

I met Thompson twice, once at a conference he gave in Guatemala and once inside a palace at Tikal while I was guiding the President of Guatemala. I have most of the books written by Thompson and have learned a lot. But I stay out of epigraphy because I am not a linguist or experienced in the nitty gritty of subtle aspects of hieroglyphs. Instead I focus on flora and fauna so I can better identify symbols in Classic Maya art. I have explored the several bosque seco areas of Guatemala so I know the natural habitat of wild white *Plumeria* flowers. All the other colors occur only in gardens; the wild species is only white (with varying amount of yellow inside, depending on which regional variant you are standing in front of).

Although *Plumeria* is wild and native to the Bosque Seco areas, we have found it at Nakum (on top of a pyramid). So we estimate that *Plumeria* is adaptable (and can also escape a house garden and continue to reproduce centuries after the original house is no longer standing). *Plumeria* is NOT 4-petalled and highly unlikely has anything to do with the Kin glyph. There are dozens of species of 4-petalled flowers in Guatemala, Mexico, and surrounding areas of the Maya Lowlands.



Fig. 9. Zig-zag X is found on lots of Sky Bands. Rollout photo K758 is one example. These are usually considered Etz'nab, flint (but best to call it chert). Since the Etz'nab is relatively common it deserves its own space in an update on an inventory. Space is needed to show the regional, temporal, and stylistic variants.



Fig. 10. Red-brown and brown; the other X-motif is more red-brown than brown-brown.



Fig. 11. And to remind us of the innovative Late Classic Maya painter of this jug, here is a motif that is great for scholars to see and to try to figure out what was intended. I estimate that if I turn it 90 degrees we will see an adaptation of the common profile/half-frontal Loincloth Apron deity face (in more traditional guise seen at Palenque; lots documented by MA Thesis of Carl Calloway). Also check David Stuart's epigraphy reports on deities.

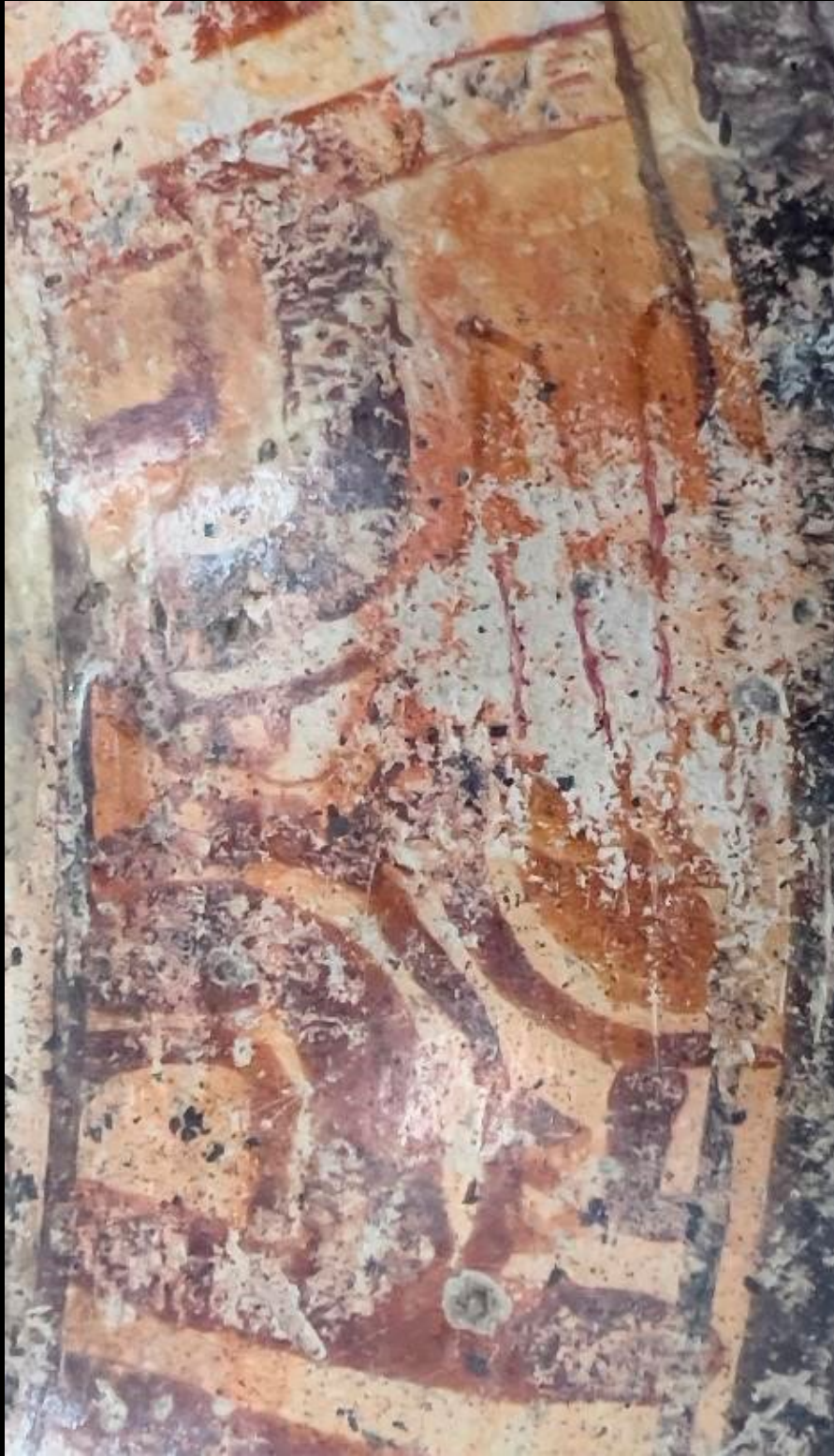


Fig. 12. When you turn this motif 90-degrees you can see all the expected features of the Sky Band somewhat rectangularized version of hieroglyph T1017. When you have been looking at this profile/half-frontal deity head for weeks in Sky Bands at Palenque and on ceramics of Peten you can recognize the features. But seeing the mish-mash of features for the first time, this does not stand out as a recognizable motif. But it is.

On this jug most other motifs repeat themselves: so often two of each. For this profile deity face there is only one example.



Fig. 13. Fundacion La Ruta Maya. Unexpected to have a jug this size and shape painted with color and with a Sky Band of remarkable content. If these scenes remain unknown on shelves then students in Guatemala will lack innovative material to study.

Sky Band on the Inside of a Late Classic Bowl



Fig. 14. I generally associate any “knot-like design” with woven Pop motif. Often the “wrap-around” is in a different manner: two horizontal < shaped wraps; on the present Sky Band it is horizontal V not sideways <. But there are Codex Style vases with one, or the other. Robicsek and Hales show lots of rollouts of Codex Style vases with Sky Bands; not cited to Justin Kerr but I estimate many or most are by Kerr.

An entwined crossed-band is in rare instances repeated around an entire vase; but usually it's a simple crossed-bands that repeats. Fundacion La Ruta Maya.



Fig. 15. This is the common traditional Crossed-Bands motif. This is one of the most common motifs (along with Ak'bal, 4-Petalled Flower/Kin and others). Note these are crossed-bands; they are not “wrapped around” each other; they are not woven (so they are not a Pop motif).



Fig. 16. Ak'bal design is very common in Sky Bands.



Fig. 17. Kan Cross is so common it is often the only motif in an entire Sky Band: Kan Cross repeated multiple times (often repeated more than 20 times). In Teotihuacan-related scenes, the Kan Cross is not as elongated and has a circle in the middle. Same on Maya scenes: the Kan Cross has a circle in the middle, black at each corner, and not as elongated. The Kan Cross here has the color inside, not outside.



Fig. 18. There were two of these 4-Petalled Flower motifs on the painted jug. On the plate no motif is repeated (which is rare). 4-Petalled Flowers are a Kin motif.



Fig. 19. This motif is in hundreds of Sky Bands. It is a generic sky/Venus celestial symbol.



Fig. 20. This wide X motif is zig-zag (so not a straight X). You can see even more zig-zaggy on the small vase we show in our volume on Kerr rollouts. The zig-zag aspect you notice on Etz'nab glyphs, usually listed as flint (but chert is the more likely stone in Maya areas).

A good place to see identifications of the symbols in Sky Bands on ceramics is Figure 16 on page 28 in the 2018 MA thesis of Christopher Layser, on *Maya Skyscape Iconology*. His ID for numbers 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 get you started. Motif number 9 is a challenge. The example he shows has more designs than most.

Number 2 was the subject of weeks of my work just on this one (profile/half-frontal deity motif) and was the subject of months of thesis research by Carl Calloway. Carlson and Landis show and name additional motifs.



Fig. 21. This motif is present elsewhere but not common in this size and shape. Rollout K3007 has a comparable curved symbol. Some of these are called crescents and considered to be lunar motifs.



Fig. 22. Unless you are into Sky Bands week after week, this motif has so many parts that it is not easy to recognize. But it is the traditional profile/half-frontal Loincloth Apron face that is all over Sky Bands at Palenque. I found this as a curious deity on the back of Bufo toads on four Codex Style vases plus all over Palenque. Carl Calloway has identified its presence as a design and as a hieroglyph in even more locations. I have a separate FLAAR Report on the toad instances plus its appearance at Copan as full-frontal deity face.



Fig. 23. When you turn the motif to this angle, you can recognize that it is half a face.

Another Sky Band Example for Today: Four Popular Motifs

When a vase is small, I would estimate that the artist will select the most important motifs (or select motifs that send the message desired by the patron). So now I show a Sky Band with four motifs; and they are indeed among the most common (but other motifs such as "Venus" and Ak'bal are also common elsewhere but not featured by this painter).



Fig. 24. Zig-zag rendition of Etz'nab sign. It helps when the area is close to square rather than stretched rectangular. Fundacion La Ruta Maya.



Fig. 25. This Kan Cross is more traditional since it has a circle in the middle. If on a polychrome scene rather than simple Codex Style would have black color at each extreme corner. Fundacion La Ruta Maya.



Fig. 26. Traditional Pop "woven petate" motif that I call an entwined crossed-bands. A petate is woven of wide strips of palm or other comparable material: so not string or threads as in clothing. This rendition is a crossed < >; in other sky bands it is crossed V ^. Sorry I don't know how to make the second V upside down in MS Word. Fundacion La Ruta Maya.



Fig. 27. Stylized 4-petaled flower as traditional Kin design. So all the motifs here are common in Sky Bands for over a thousand years. Ak'bal would be another common motif. Zip and others are often seen but would not yet label Zip Monster as "common." Also depends whether you are looking at the Palenque Sky Bands or celestial bands around the inside bottom of plates. Fundacion La Ruta Maya.



Fig. 28. There are lots more Sky Bands in the registered collection of Fundacion La Ruta Maya. Here is one. The atypical motif at the left shows that any and all catalogs of Sky Band motifs need to be improved. That is one reason why we are searching for images of Sky Bands in the FLAAR Photo Archive.

Summary of the previously pictured Sky Bands

The purpose of the previous pages is to make material available to students for their term papers, theses and dissertations; to professors for their PowerPoint presentations for their classes (and for their own research), for guides throughout Guatemala to provide documentation so that visitors to Guatemala learn about the celestial symbolism. The pages and photographs are to provide visual material. To explain each motif is an entirely additional research project.

Every painter, every scribe, uses different proportions, different colors, different aspects. So it helps to show the motifs as a comparative tabulation.



Fig. 29, a, b, c. There are two 4-petalled flower Kin signs in the Sky Band of the middle, but to save space we show just one.



Fig. 29, d, e. Surprising that no Kan Cross is on the painted jug.



Fig. 29, f. The Ak'bal motif is common in many but not all Sky Bands. This motif is present as part of many hieroglyphs.



Fig. 29, g. Crossed Bands are as common as Kan Cross; Crossed Bands you get repeated on rectangular waist bands of lords and rulers.



Fig. 29, h, i. Pop sign is usually a simple design but occasionally it gets quite complicated. It is common but not 100% of bands. Entwined Crossed Bands.



Fig. 29, j, k. This profile/half-frontal Loincloth Apron head is common but not in every sky band. The decipherments and interpretation have been discussed by Carl Calloway in his MA thesis and by David Stuart.



Fig. 29, l, m, n. This motif is on all three Sky Bands. So yes, Etz'nab is common, but by no means on every band. There is one Codex Style vase that has the entire band of repeated Etz'nab motifs.



Fig. 29, o. The star/Venus sign is very common but by no means is on every Sky Band.



Fig. 29, p. The lunar crescent is on many Sky Bands but is not as common as other motifs.



Fig. 29, q. This motif I do not tabulate since it still needs lots of study; it is definitely not on the other two painted ceramics.



Fig. 29, r. These four variants of the same "reptilian" motif are only on the painted jug. Nothing like this is on either of the other two Sky Bands, so I show all four in here.

I am very curious why there are FOUR of these all in one Sky Band (and one is on steroids, far left below).



Fig. 29, s, t, u. Three versions of the same motif of a stylized reptilian head in profile view.

Sky Bands are so common that most archaeologists know them but because there are so many not much comment is made. The impressive book by T. Patrick Culbert on *The Ceramics of Tikal* does not mention the Sky Bands and most reports on iconography of Tikal art focus nicely on stelae or if on ceramics talk about other important aspects. So the work by Clemency Coggins on iconography is essential. But I would like to jump-start iconographic studies of Sky Bands. A good start is to show a really unique sky band that has motifs almost never seen before. Yes, the 4-petalled flower Kin sign, Crossed Bands, etc. are in almost every Sky Band. But there are motifs here that I have literally never seen before. Plus, it is extremely rare for a ceramic container of "jug" shape to be painted.

I also have included a nice example of "zig-zag" motif (the ziggy-zaggy style is very very common on Codex Style vases, sort of Etz'nab on steroids) plus a rare Sky Band on the inside of a large bowl that has the profile/half-frontal deity face that is related to hieroglyph T1017. This T1017 Sky Band motif is one of my favorites but it is not in every Sky Band. And in all the codices it appears as "God C." Stuart discusses this in a professional epigraphic and iconographic manner. I prefer to avoid calling the profile/half-frontal deity either God C or Sun God. I call it a Loincloth Apron Face.

Sky Bands would be a great subject for a session at the Simposio de Investigaciones Arqueológicas de Guatemala for a future year with one presentation on archaeo-astronomical aspects (but focused on Sky Bands other than only in the Codices or Chichen Itza or Bonampak). Then one lecture on Sky Bands of each area of the Maya Lowlands: so one on Sky Bands at Palenque, Sky Bands at Bonampak (a lot more than just the peccary and turtles; the other actual bands of sky symbols at Bonampak tend to be ignored or not illustrated). Then one presentation on each motif or groups of related motifs: by iconographers and by epigraphers.

Sky Band Motifs on Ceramics in other Museums and Collections

Sky Bands that are on vases or bowls photographed in rollout format are in the separate volume on Sky Bands in rollouts. On the present pages we show vases and bowls that were not rolled out (or if rolled out are missing from the rollout volume because I found them after that volume was finished).

In the notes from 1970's-1990's, I have found a dozen or so ceramics either with individual motifs (not in a band) or Sky Bands. I show these below.

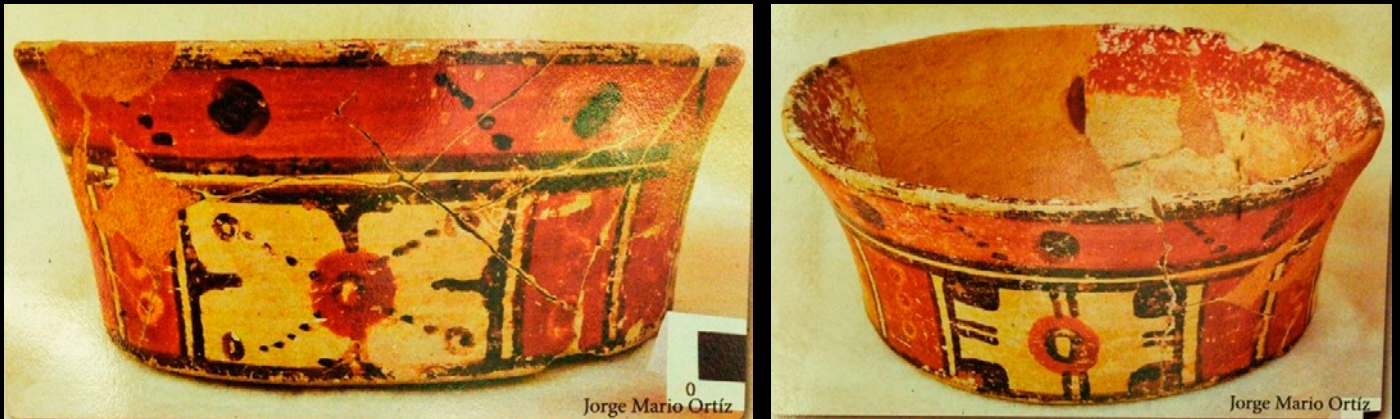


Fig. 30, a, b. Although not in a "band" the Dotted Kin (4-petalled flower) and the Kan cross are both obviously associated with Sky Bands. During the 1970's-1990's many people sent me 35mm color slides of ceramics that they thought I would be interested in seeing. So we do not know today in 2024 where images came to us a long time ago. But these two images very clearly say Jorge Mario Ortiz, but I could not find these images on-line, not even in Google images.



Fig. 31, a, b. Kan signs are common throughout Mesoamerica and are not always in a Sky Band, such as here. Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth.



Fig. 32, a, b. Clearly bowls of this size and shape were mass produced throughout Peten and adjacent areas during Late Classic times. Both show 4-petaled flowers and Kan cross, in a horizontal band but with no divider areas (that are present on true Sky Bands). Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth, as are all following.



Fig. 33, a, b. There are many vases and bowls that do not have a Sky "Band" but do have individual motifs repeated. Here are two. There are lots more in archaeological publications on ceramics of Tikal, ceramics of Uaxactun, etc. This motif is very common on ceramics but is not in Sky Band motif list of Carlson and Landis (1985: Appendix II). So it may be an independent motif.



Fig. 34. Here the motif is one-per-space.

Sky Bands on Maya Ceramics



Fig. 35, a, b, c. A black and white rollout by Justin Kerr, K6613, is in the Hellmuth volume on Sky Bands on rollouts. The present individual photos, by Hellmuth, are to show the vase in color. The motif at far left (above) and far right (Fig. 35, e) is labeled Beard and Scrolls (Carlson and Landis 1985: Appendix II, 13).



Fig. 35, d, e. The Kan and Crossed-Bands at the left are easy to recognize.



Fig. 36, a, b. The Sky Bands on Late Classic Codex Style vases tend to be conservative which means with common popular motifs. There are many Codex Style low vases with the frontal Ahau-like image. You can see them in Robicsek and Hales and also in Justin Kerr rollouts (we show the rollouts in the rollout volume).



Fig. 36, c. Crossed-Bands motif in the middle.



Table 8. Codex style vases with sky bands and calendrical date cartouches.

Fig. 37. Lots of Sky Bands on Codex Style vases (Robicsek and Hales 1981: Table 8).
Illustration G has no Sky Band.



Table 10. Codex style vases with hieroglyphic and sky bands, glyph cartouches and with black-brown wash probably representing "water."

Fig. 38. A, B, C, and E all have traditional Peten-style Sky Bands (though many Codex Style ceramics may also come from far southern Campeche, which borders on northern Peten). Robicsek and Hales 1981: Table 10. The motif at the left on E is not documented.



A



B



C

9. *Codex style vessels with sky bands and glyph cartouches.*

Fig. 39. Sky Bands all over the place on lots of Codex Style ceramics, including C which has two Sky Bands. Robicsek and Hales 1981: Table 9.



Fig. 40. This is a rare vase with two Sky Bands. This Codex Style scene shares several aspects with Kerr K1387 though probably by a different scribe and painter. We show Kerr K1387 as Fig. 17,a in the Hellmuth volume on Sky Bands on rollouts. The present photo is from Reents-Budet et al. 2011: Figura 8,a. Their Figura 9, b has a similar bird-man. Variant of Bearded Sky at left (similar, Carlson and Landis 1985: Appendix II, 12).



Fig. 41,a. Would help to find this actual vase to see whether it is really painted "facing backwards."
 "There are a few bowls with the glyphs facing right."



Fig. 41,b. This is the standard manner of painting a vase scene: main personage faces left; all hieroglyphs face left. Sky Band on ceremonial bar.



Fig. 42. This is the only set of Sky Bands in this diagonal format that I have found so far. The triangular motif is occasionally elsewhere but is not yet in the 1985 Appendix II of Carlson and Landis. The first question is whether it's a stylized Etz'nab concept or completely different (since it is only "half" on the above vase).



Fig. 43. The Sky Band motif has a vertical spacer on both sides. In the Carlson and Landis list, Beard and Scrolls is the closest motif. The other wider motif is not a normal Sky Band motif.



Fig. 44,a. I found this Kerr rollout after I had finished the rollout volume, so I include it here. The shawl/cape of the God L-like personage is a Sky Band (with spacing areas between each rectangular area for the motifs). Kerr K1200. An actual God L would be much older and have a different sombrero (often with a bird perched on top). But God L does often wear a shawl/cape.



Fig. 44,b. Here the shawl/cape is rotated so it is vertical so the Sky Band aspect is clearer. The motif in the middle is either a variant of Crossed-Bands or is new.

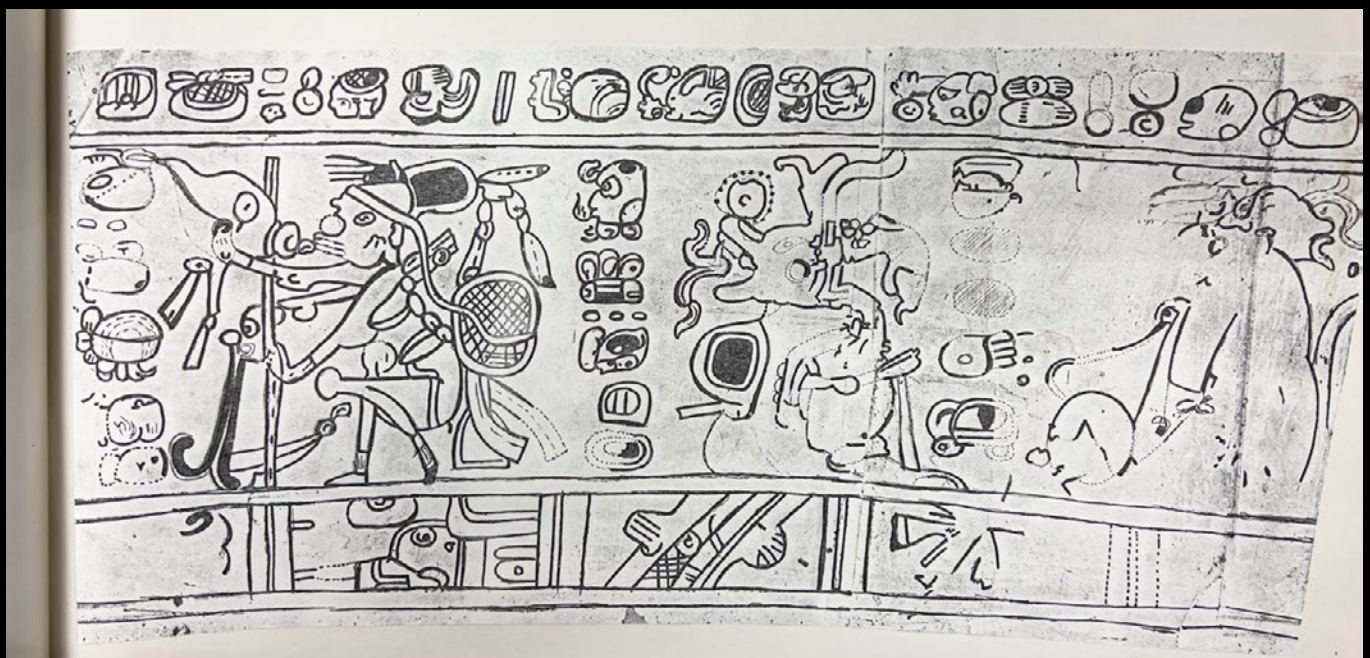


Fig. 45. Here is a rollout drawing that evidently we found in the library of Fundacion La Ruta Maya. Has a profile/half-frontal Loincloth Apron Face at the left. Then a possible variant of Beard and Scrolls.

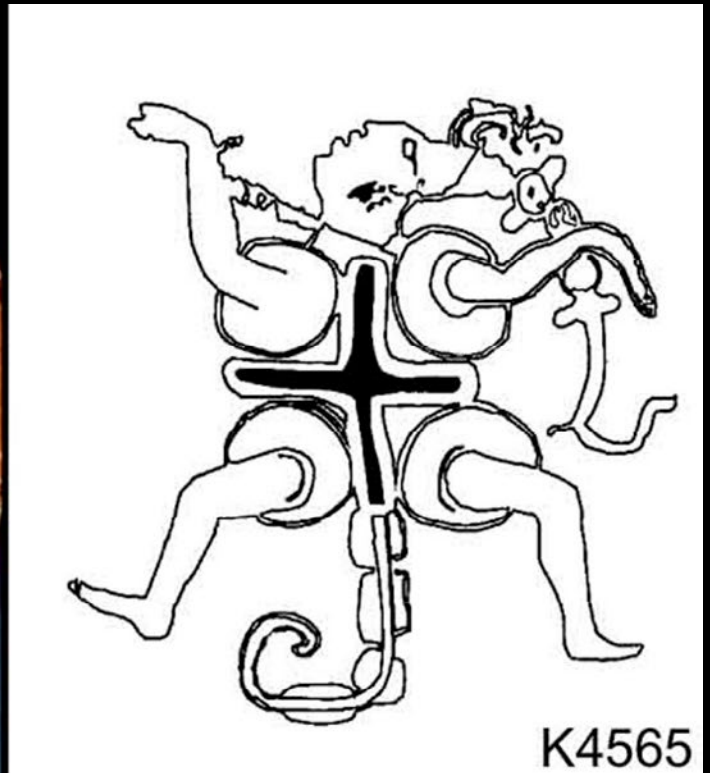


Fig. 46, a, b. Plates are in a separate volume, but we show this one here. The motif is an obvious scorpion. Scorpion motifs are a celestial design frequent in caches under Maya stelae. This scorpion has the person's arms and legs sticking out star/Venus circles. Two celestial motifs at Palenque are similar (but are not scorpions). Photo by Justin Kerr, K4565. None of these are in Sky Bands—they are in other contexts.



Fig. 47. This scene should be in the volume on Sky Bands on stelae and lintels but we did not find this scene until the carved monuments volume was already finished. Here it is on an incised material. It shows a common Sky Band throne room hut. The wrapped/tied peccary-like animal is at the top of the "stairway" which has a Sky Band along its top step. The Principal Bird Deity is perched, as usual, atop the roof. As common the bird has a God D headdress. Another Sky Band is around the waist area albeit with no vertical divider spaces.

Drawing by Linda Schele, SD-6721, © David Schele. Drawing courtesy Ancient Americas at LACMA (ancientamericas.org).

Sky Bands on Molded-Carved Bowls and Vases, Tepeu 3

Molded-Carved rollouts with Sky Bands are in the volume on Sky Bands on rollouts. Other molded-carved ceramics that are not rolled out, are presented below. Since these bands are during Terminal Classic (Tepeu 3) and since these ceramics often have outside (non-Peten) influence, the motifs are usually not found on Tepeu 1 and Tepeu 2 ceramics. A separate research project is needed to study bands on Tepeu 3 ceramics.

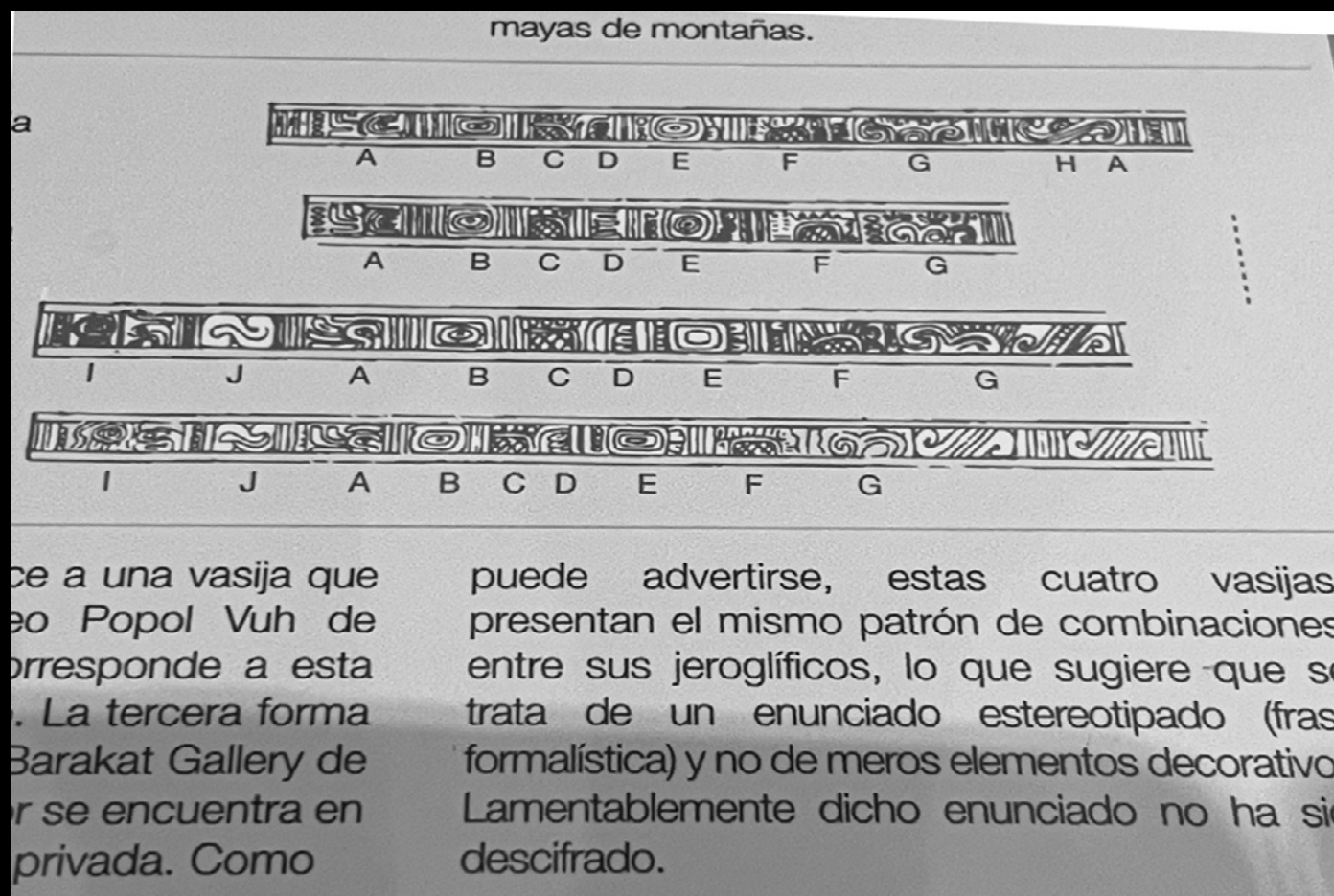


Fig. 48. I found this illustration buried in my notes from past decades. It would help if a kind colleague or student could recognize who wrote this and the bibliographic data. But I show it in the meantime, as is, because I estimate that all four Sky Bands are from Tepeu 3 ceramics. The top row has a clear Zip Monster at H. The bottom band has two typical Late Classic motifs after G (not numbered but should be H).



Fig. 49. Here is a typical molded-carved Tepeu 3 bowl. As do most of these many bowls, it has a band around the upper area that includes motifs comparable to but often different than motifs on traditional Sky Bands of Tepeu 2 and Tepeu 1 times. Maline D. Werness has produced a comprehensive inventory of molded-carved Maya ceramics.

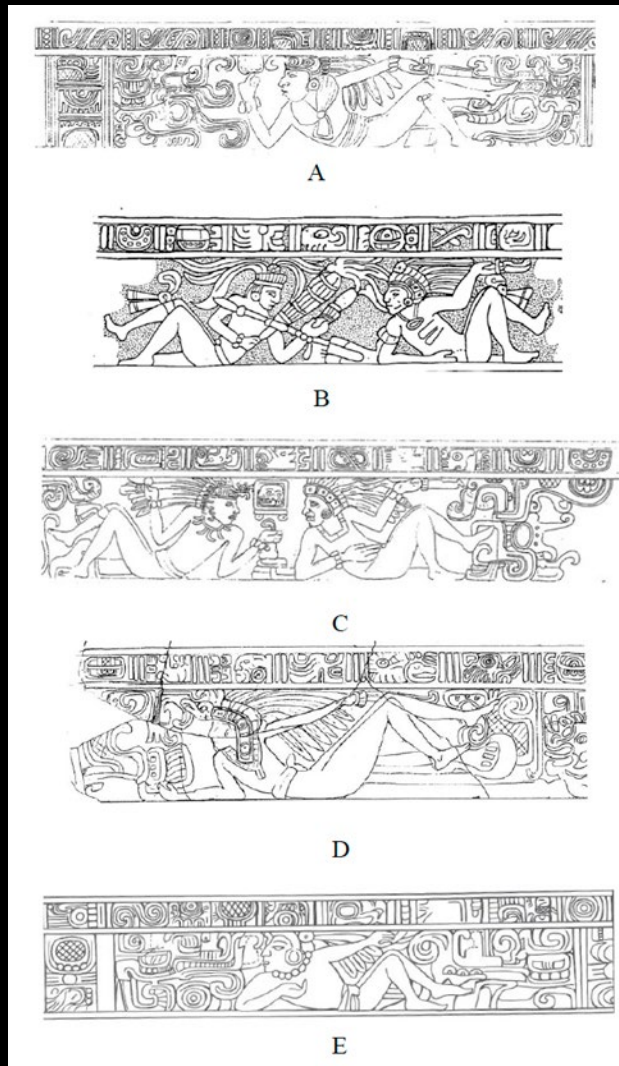


Fig. 50. Molded-carved bowls. Reproduced from Coltman 2021: Fig. 5.7 with his permission.

So that illustration Figure 50 can be at full-page height, I put my comments on a separate page.

Fig. 5.7a, drawing by Cherra Wyllie.

Fig. 5.7b, from Taube 2020: Fig. 10.11c.

Fig. 5.7c, drawing by Cherra Wyllie.

Fig. 5.7d, Altar de Sacrificios, from Wyllie 2002: Fig. III.C.

Fig. 5.7e, Ceibal (Seibal), from Sabloff 1975: Fig. 385.

A new MA thesis or PhD dissertation needs to be accomplished on "Sky Bands of Molded Carved Bowls and Vases." We show here only several bowls, but there are also vases with Sky Bands (including one molded-carved vase with a Sky Band below the scene, at the lower part of the vase). The other issue is the drawings, molded-carved art is not easy to render in a line drawing. And often the original photos are not high enough resolution to help the illustrator. This is a polite way to indicate that most line drawings of molded-carved ceramics need to have the Sky Bands redrawn. When the Dumbarton Oaks rescanning of Kerr rollouts is finished and on line (hopefully by late 2025), at least the few molded-carved vases there will be at better resolution. We at FLAAR Photo Archive are hoping to get our photos of molded-carved vases and bowls more available in 2025, because an entire catalog and inventory is needed of the individual Sky Band motifs from this Terminal Classic time.

Lots more Vases and Bowls have Sky Bands

Most discussions of Sky Bands and their motifs have been on Sky Bands in codices, on architectural facades at Chichen Itza, at Uxmal, and on stelae and lintels. Not as many articles or theses have been about Sky Bands on vases, bowls, and plates. Yet there are so many plates with Sky Bands that we produced an entire volume on these. And there are so many Sky Bands on vases and bowls that we produced two volumes: the present one plus another on rollouts by Kerr and by Hellmuth. There is also an entire corpus of Sky Bands on hems of woven textile clothing of men and women, at Bonampak, on Yaxchilan lintels, and on a polychrome vase from Tikal Burial 116 (we have a separate volume on all these together). I estimate that the current research reports by FLAAR have increased the number of Sky Bands by over 100% plus we have documented lots of motifs not in previous catalogs.

Despite these two years of research on Sky Bands and multiple publications, there is a lot more to do by students, iconographers, and archaeo-astronomers. There are all the Sky Bands on Tepeu 3 molded-carved bowls and vases whose motifs need better drawings and a special catalog. All the motifs on woven textile hems also need realistic drawings and their own catalog. Plus an entirely separate PhD dissertation would be "Sky Bands outside the Maya Areas". There are lianzos and probably Aztec and Mixtec codices that include Sky Bands or comparable designs. Surprisingly several of these late motifs are essentially the same or obviously derived from Maya designs or elsewhere.

The origin of Sky Bands also needs further research. Several individual motifs are known from Olmec artifacts but the earliest traditional Sky Bands are at Takalik Abaj. This raises the question of where are they at Izapa? I am also curious why no Sky Bands from Kaminaljuyu are yet in publications. Other iconographers and archaeo-astronomers will have additional valid and helpful research questions. But at least now over 90% of the available corpus is in the series of FLAAR Reports.

Although we have 98% of known carved sculptures with Sky Bands with multiple different motifs, and hopefully over 95% of Kerr rollouts with Sky Bands, there are surely dozens of vases, bowls, and plates from archaeological sites and in museums that have not yet been cataloged with Sky Band designation. In the FLAAR Photo Archive there are surely lots more Sky Bands on vases, bowls, and plates that we have not yet scanned or at least not yet cataloged. So a lot of future potential for PhD dissertations and for iconographers.

Our counts are for Sky Bands with a series of different motifs in a row. Waist area Sky Bands and on ceremonial bars, where just one motif is repeated, are not counted but are worth studying.

References Cited

The MA thesis of Layser had a good bibliography on Sky Band motifs. I list here only the ones I cite in discussion of the jug, inside bowl, and small vase.

The three essential discussions of the profile/half-frontal deity head are by Calloway, Layser, and Stuart.

Most of the items listed here are References Cited but I also include other works that are essential.

CALLOWAY, Carl

2007 The Maya Cross at Palenque, A Reappraisal. MA Thesis, Department of Art and Art History. University of Texas at Austin.

This thesis deserves to be cited for many reasons; one is being daring as a graduate student to realize that the excellent studies of the previous generation of renowned scholars should be updated. He does this gently and capably.

CARLSON, John B. and Linda C. LANDIS

1985 Bands, Bicephalic Dragons, and other Beasts: The Skyband in Maya Art and Iconography. *Fourth Palenque Round Table*, 1980. Volume editor, Elizabeth P. Benson. *The Palenque Round Table Series, Volume VI*. The Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute.

COLTMAN, Jeremy

2021 City of the Sun: Early Postclassic Chichen Itza (900-1150 C.E.) and the Legacy of Solar Ideology in Late Postclassic Yucatan and Central Mexico. PhD dissertation, University of California, Riverside. 414 pages.

REENTS-Budet, Dorie, BOUCHER Le Landais, Sylviane, PALOMO Carrillo, Yoly, BISHOP, Roland L., and M. James BLACKMAN

2011 Cerámica de estilo códice: Nuevos datos de producción y patrones de distribución. (Editado por B. Arroyo, L. Paiz, A. Linares y A. Arroyave), pp. 832-846. Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, Guatemala (versión digital).

<https://www.asociaciontikal.com/simposio-24-ano-2010/68-reents-budet-boucher-doc/>

HELLMUTH, Nicholas

2022 Profile Deity Head which is a Half-Frontal Head in Sky Bands especially at Palenque but also elsewhere on ceramics.

Lots of research reports on Sky Band iconography as work-in-progress.

HELLMUTH, Nicholas

2022 Sky Band Celestial Symbols on a Patolli Game Board Rescued from unrecognized aspects of Uaxactun Str. V Graffiti. Work-in-progress.

HELLMUTH, Nicholas

2022 Sky Band Motifs on Two Polychrome Vases from Tikal Burial 116, Temple I. Work-in-progress.

HELLMUTH, Nicholas

2022 Sky Band Motifs on Painted Late Classic Maya Vase, Copan Ruinas, Honduras. Work-in-progress.

LAYSER, Christopher

2018 Can an Iconological Analysis of a Classic Period Vase (K1485) Further our Understanding of Ancient Maya Skyscapes? MA thesis In Cultural Astronomy and Astrology, University of Wales Trinity Saint David. 79 pages.

This thesis is helpful and deserves to be cited.

ROBICSEK, Francis and Donald M. HALES

1981 The Maya Book of the Dead, The Ceramic Codex: The Corpus of Codex Style Ceramic of the Late Classic Period. University of Virginia.

STUART, David

2017 The Gods of Heaven and Earth, Evidence of Ancient Maya Categories of Deities. Pages 247-267 in *Del Saber Ha Hecho su Razón de Ser...: Homenaje a Alfredo López Austin*, edited by Eduardo Matos Moctezuma and Ángela Ochoa.. 2 vols. INAH, UNAM, Ciudad de México

Essential reading if you wish to learn in-depth about the hieroglyphic and linguistic aspects for the profile/half-frontal deity.

Downloadable (Academia...) but locked. Maybe there is an open download elsewhere. But locked is better than not being readable on your computer.

TOKOVININE, Alexandre

2013 Beginner's Visual Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs. Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. 36 pages.

Shows hundreds of different hieroglyphs but organized into one visual or epigraphic concept per page. No discussion; pure illustrations. But very helpful to get your eyes used to the similarity and differences of components of glyphs. Some components are used in dozens of different glyphs. Definitely useful (but in companionship with other "Introduction to Maya Hieroglyphic Teaching Guides.").

To help you identify aspects of Sky Band motifs, this set of illustrations and suggested names by Alexandre Tokovinine are very helpful. Would be great to have this expanded, with multiple more illustrations-per-hieroglyph (since today in 2022 lots more inscriptions are available to study, both stelae, lintels, and on ceramics).

WERNESSE, Maline Diane

2003 Pabellon Molded-Carved Ceramics: A Consideration in Light of the Terminal Classic Collapse of Classic Maya Civilization. MA thesis, University of Texas at Austin. 94 pages.

Download: <http://www.famsi.org/research/werness/Pabellona.pdf>

The FAMSI version is curiously very short, 94 pages. The complete MA thesis is 315 pages.