

Part III of Iconography of Maya Deer

FLAAR Reports
FLAAR (USA)
and FLAAR
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(Guatemala)

Nicholas Hellmuth



Deer Hunters' Headdresses and Conch Shell Musical Instruments



**The same Hunters' Headdresses were worn by many Maya Ballplayers
And Conch Shells were also used by Musicians facing the Ballgames**

Part III of Iconography of Maya Deer

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Acknowledgements

We thank David Pendergast for permission to use the 1990's drawing of the Actun Balam vase. He also provided helpful new thoughts about the actual dating of this vase. We appreciate the okay by Karl Taube for using his drawing of the many animals on a vase that we use in many of our reports—because this vase shows more animal species than any other known Maya vase (even shows a squirrel). I fully understand when scholars are far from Internet while on a field trip, or are very busy preparing research and their classes that they teach, that they are not able to respond to my emails about their drawings or photographs. But I cite the author and the publication.

This is why FLAAR is making its reports on-line as downloadable PDFs so colleagues and students don't have to write to ask permission to use our drawings in their research. Plus we have donated the 30,000+ 35mm color slides and comparable quantity of black-and-white negatives to Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University. Once this archive is unpacked (from being shipped in November 2024), sorted and cataloged in coming years, these photos will be available via Dumbarton Oaks. So all photos by Nicholas Hellmuth in the current report that are scans of 35mm color slides should be cited "Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Photo Archive, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University." Any digital rollouts by Hellmuth should be cited as "Digital rollout by Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Digital Photo Archive." These will be donated to Dumbarton Oaks once we can find all these decades old digital rollouts. A digital rollout has significantly and noticeably better resolution than a scanned transparency taken with 1990's film using a tabulation. With a digital camera we could measure the vase digitally and make each rollout less stretched and less over-scrunched—so the rollouts do not distort the size and shape of personages and hieroglyphs.

We thank Dana G. Moot II for permission to use line drawings and color paintings of Maya vases scenes that show deer hunting or parades after the hunt.

We thank Matthew Looper for permission to use his drawings from his 2019 book on deer iconography, plus he kindly sent several Dana G. Moot II's drawings that were lost when a computer wore out and failed to function (a computer of Moot with all the drawings). In previous years Hellmuth provided Looper with the scans of photos available in that past year, such as for Looper 2019: Fig. 1.7 and Fig. 1.8. In the following five years we had scanned more 35mm color slides so today have more deer hunting scenes to show.

The photos that help see the 6th-9th century Maya deer hunting scenes were photographed over the 1970's, 1980's, 1990's around the world. The earthquake in Guatemala in 1976 damaged our office so we had to move everything into storage while we looked for a new office space. When we went to retrieve the documents from storage, we found that rats and mice had eaten the paper notes to create their nests. Other documents from the 1980's-1990's were moved when Hellmuth lived in Switzerland with his girlfriend there for three years, then were transferred to Austria for nine years there including the years doing research for Hellmuth's PhD dissertation on Surface of the Underwaterworld. Then everything was moved to Germany during nine years with his companion there. Also during those years Hellmuth taught classes at the University of Graz, Austria, held multiple appointments at Yale University as Post Graduate Research Fellow (starting in 1968 then another appointment with George Kubler then another appointment with Michael Coe).

Plus subsequently being a professor at Rollins College in Orlando, Florida, then Brevard Community College and then at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, not to mention being a guest visiting research professor in Japan for six months circa mid-1990's. So notes often were left in storage and we have not yet found them all. Thus which ceramic was photographed in which collection, in which country, or in which museum (or which was photographed in a collection and then was donated to a museum), this information is not yet available for the captions. But what is crucial is to rescue these images and make them available to students for their theses or PhD dissertations and to professors for their PowerPoint presentations, articles and books. For example, we provided photos of deer to Matthew Looper (2019: page 24, page 32, Fig. 1.7 and 1.8; page 70, Fig. 3.7 and 3.8; page 85, Fig. 4.12; page 163, Figure 7.10).

It was very kind of Sebastian Matteo to send a series of his illustrations for FLAAR to utilize to provide documentation. The helpful line drawings by Kornelia Kurbjuhn are also very helpful.

Introduction to Iconography of Hunters in Maya Art, And Discovery that Ballplayers often wore the Same Headdresses

Bernal Diaz del Castillo, traveling with Hernan Cortes, comments that deer in one part of Peten were not hunted or bothered by the local Maya and thus did not run away when the Spanish invaders came close to them. As expected, the Spanish took advantage of this and slaughtered as many deer as they could.

This tribe, to whom the two other large townships also belonged, through which we passed on the following day, were termed the Mazotecs, a name which, in their language, denotes the land or the nation of the wild deer, and this was indeed a most appropriate appellation, as the reader will presently see...

CHAPTER CLXXVIII.

We continue our march, and what further happened to us.

After we had quitted this fortified township, we came into an extensive open plain, on which, as far as the eye could reach, there was not a tree to be seen, and the heat was more excessive than we had ever experienced before. This plain abounded with wild deer, which were so little shy that we could easily catch them with our horses, and in a very short time we killed upwards of twenty. On questioning our guides how it came that these animals were neither afraid of our horses nor anything else, and so easily to be caught, they answered that the Mazotecs revered them as beings of a superior nature, because they appeared such to them from their external form, and their idols had strictly commanded the people not to kill or in any way to scare them.

One of Cortes' relatives, named Palacios Rubios, lost his horse in chasing these deer, for he galloped up and down the plain until the fat melted in its body, and the poor animal dropped down dead all of a sudden.

Diaz del Castillo, page 255

This mention of an ecosystem “an extensive open plain, on which, as far as the eye could reach, there was not a tree to be seen” is an excellent mention of a savanna. The difference is that savannas east of Nakum and adjacent to Naranjo ruins (both in PNYNN) have widely spaced tasiste palm, calabash trees (genus *Crescentia*) and nance trees. But the open space between them is a grassland—and these trees are logos of savannas in many parts of the Reserva de la Biosfera Maya. But savannas in southern Peten may be different—literally no trees as far as the eye could see. That said, most Peten savannas that I have experienced do have trees—and there are savannas near Arroyo Petexbatun upstream from Sayaxche and tributary Arroyo El Faisan that are solid tasiste palms—so solid you can’t see for more than a meter—so clearly Hernan Cortez and Diaz del Castillo did not pass through that kind of flatland of Peten.

But in the Classic period, the Maya did hunt and kill deer for the meat necessary in their diet, since there were no cattle or domesticated game animals, other than possibly domesticated turkeys. No chickens before the Spanish came.

The Post Classic Maya codices show snares used to trap deer. Bernal Diaz del Castillo mentions “Strong nets which they use for the purpose of snaring the wild deer...” (page 183).

Books on “The Maya” tend obviously to feature accomplishments in hieroglyphic writing, art (stelae, murals, etc.) and monumental architecture. For daily life the discussions are mainly on what kind of agriculture the Classic Maya may, or may not, have had. There is no “chapter” on hunting in books on “The Maya” such as J. Eric S. Thompson’s 1966 book (has only one illustration of a hunter, with no caption (page 222)). The other supposed hunting illustrated is more a warrior than a hunter. Sylvanus Morley has no chapter on hunting, nor do the helpful series on literally The Maya by Michael Coe. Hunting is mainly mentioned for the pre-agricultural early inhabitants of the Americas.

One of the few discussions of Classic Maya hunting, with “more than one illustration” are the helpful pages 473-475 in Karl Taube’s “Ancient and Contemporary Maya Conceptions about Field and Forest.”

Matthew Looper’s is the best discussion where an entire book is devoted to a single animal. There is a book by two Spanish-speaking authors on monkeys in Maya art (that we cite in our FLAAR Reports on iconography of Maya monkeys). Other than that, there are only articles on individual animals such as Newman and Rossi on foxes and armadillos. Jaguars definitely deserve an entire book, and monkeys need a new book with more illustrations that are now available. Peccary also deserve their own book. Birds-per-book are challenge, since other than macaws and parrots, and waterbirds, and the Principal Bird Deity, it is not easy to always identify individual species of birds in Maya art. There are definitely enough snakes to encourage a book on the iconography of these creatures plus their scale patterns in Sky Bands.

Kornelia Kurbjuhn has presented a helpful 20 pages of illustrations and documentations in 1983 on the Nebaj/Chama style procession scenes, where most of the Maya wear wide-brimmed “sunshade sombreros” to keep the piercing tropical sun from damaging their skin. She also gave her permission to use her two drawings of procession scenes that so far I have not found in any other discussion of the Ratinlinxul vase (the procession scene that has been known for decades).

For deer, since Looper’s book is so complete, what we can offer in the present series of FLAAR Reports are illustrations in a larger format, and over 80% in color. Large format and color are not realistic in most commercial books. We can also offer several Early Classic representations of deer (hunting) that have not been published previously (only one Early Classic deer hunting scene have we found so far in the Kerr rollouts). Plus we have added photos of bowls and vases of several deer hunting scenes not previously known. Hellmuth published and discussed dozens of Maya deer hunting scenes on vases, bowls, and plates in several 1997 publications, especially 1996c. But now in 2025, we can provide larger images via improved digital technology.

Deer Hunting Scenes of the Early Classic (Tzakol, probably Tzakol 3)



Fig. 1. The hooves of this deer are nicely shown. This is Early Classic and there is not yet a squiggly ?-symbol (Caban scroll) or crossed-bands symbol in the deer's ear. A curling band issues from this deer's mouth.

The hunter is carrying something on his tumpline (mecapal in local Spanish). He carries weapons (but no atlatl). He has a giant conch shell that lots of hunters used in deer hunts and in the parade after deer hunts (that we will see later on a Chama Style vase). No hunter's hat.

We also show the same rollout in Part II of iconography of Maya deer. But we need it also in the present Part III because there are lots of Early Classic deer hunting scenes that need to be compared with this rollout.

Kerr rollout, K1788, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.



Fig. 2, a and b. These are Hellmuth photos showing details of what is in the helpful Kerr rollout. The conch shell is usually oversized and here it is also stylized. The bundle carried on a tumpline (mecapal) is typical for hunters. It also helps to see a scene in color when Kerr rollouts are only in black-and-white.

Stucco-painted cylindrical tripod. Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Photo Archive, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University. All photos that are not credited to another photographer should be cited in that way. To keep captions short we don't repeat it for every photo.



Fig. 3, a, b, c. Each time period and often each atelier had their own style for showing the hair (fur) on the deer. Here the parallel lines of fur have a lighter background color than the center of the body.

The ears here in the Early Classic do not yet have crossed-bands or Caban (?-mark) symbols.

The tail of a deer is shown here with fur sticking out from both sides; in other paintings, when shown at all, the fur is shown sticking out just on the lower side.



Fig. 4, a, b, c. It would help greatly if a kind soul can tell us where these cylindrical tripods are today, since they need to be photographed with a digital camera, so we don't have to scan 35mm color slides. The style of this tripod and the one below are related to the one with stucco-painted rim and lower part, but the deer there faces left, which is the traditional direction for Maya painters. So until we find the original 35mm color slides, we don't yet know whether these two non-stuccoed tripods may have been scanned from the wrong side.



Fig. 5. This is a different cylindrical tripod but potentially a related atelier (the diagonal areas of red color are slightly different).



Fig. 6, a and b. The two red bands that curl out of the mouth are shorter and not as curled as those on the stucco-rimmed tripod. Plus there are two here and only one scroll from the stucco-rimmed tripod. The diagonal paired short lines as background are also found on the stuccoed cylindrical tripod.



Fig. 7. Need better photos and Photoshop expert to see what is issuing from the front of the deer's head.



Fig. 8. The hunter is trying to get the net closer to the deer. Need to identify the curl motifs near the tail.



Fig. 9. Need better photos and Photoshop expert to see what is hanging from the waist of this hunter.



Fig. 10. What is at end of the tail in front of deer's mouth needs to be studied.



Fig. 11. This hunter has a short spear but no atlatl. His mouth is open and tongue sticking out.



Fig. 12. The large horizontal "padlock" does not have diagonal black lines, so unsure whether a hunter's net.



Fig. 13. These deer hunters are keeping a low profile so they can surprise the deer (also there is no more space). The hunter has a net attached to the back of his neck.



Fig. 14. This was a cylindrical tripod but the feet did not survive. The fur marks of the deer are not with light colored background and go across whole body.



Fig. 15. This is the same deer as in the first of the nine photos. His hooves are well shown. The “fur” is horizontal not vertical. To have a rollout line drawing will help future iconographers.

IF, a big if, if the original 35mm color slides are scanned in RAW mode (in addition to JPG or TIF), then the RAW mode can help epigraphers and iconographers see details not visible on a JPG or TIF. Even a faded painting can become “visible” in software if the scene is in RAW mode. Unfortunately I did not realize that when thousands of the FLAAR 35mm color slides were scanned in past decades.

Deer Hunting on a Cylindrical Ceramic but no Tripod Supports



Fig. 16. This hunter has the black spots found on Hunahpu. No Xbalanque in this scene in part because lots of hunters wore widely spaced black spots. His conch shell is of realistic size, not exaggerated as in most other scenes.



Fig. 17. There is no spear point and this is unlikely a blowgun. The deer has mature antlers. Fur is shown at end of the head, and a bit on the body and one front leg. A possible sideways Caban motif is on the deer's body.



Fig. 18. The raised hair of these hunters and lack of fancy jewelry suggests these are hard-working hunters, not members of the elite on a party hunt.



Fig. 19. The wooden pole has no stone at the end. The hunter wears a conch shell, as is typical for Maya hunters of Peten. The deer ears are long and not oval.



Fig. 20. The raised tail is quite furry. The deer has at least two black curl motifs on his body. This could be a sideways Caban motif. This deer is trying to run away from the hunters.



Fig. 21. This probable hunter holds an animal hide, possibly of a deer, though the rows of short parallel lines is not on the hide of the live deer. The hunter's face has painting down from the eye.



Fig. 22, a and b. Closeup of the hide carried by a hunter or assistant. I doubt they would show a peccary hide in this deer hunting scene.

I do not see any remains of a tripod support, but the size and shape of the bowl itself would be acceptable for a Tzakol 3 cylindrical tripod, though this could be an early Tepeu 1 painting.



Fig. 23. A snake-like black wiggly object is in the deer's mouth (as on Late Classic scenes), or else this is something the deer is eating. The antler is relatively simple.



Fig. 24. In the USA this is called a white-tail deer, but the Maya rarely feature the white aspect of a raised tail. No hieroglyphs on any of these Early Classic (or early Tepeu 1) deer hunting scenes.

Deer, probably being Hunted, on Tiquisate Area Cylindrical Tripods

Gomez has documented several Late Classic Tiquisate area scenes where full-figured deer are being grabbed by a man. I photographed several similar tall Late Classic Tiquisate mold-impressed vases but my main focus was Early Classic Tiquisate area scenes before lots of Maya influence arrived in the Late Classic. The Early Classic cylindrical tripods have lots of varied style and content—some very “Teotihuacan”, others with possible Veracruz-related ballgame sacrifice scenes (not found at Teotihuacan itself), and lots of unique Tiquisate mythical persons such as Curly Face of the Tiquisate Trinity—similar faces found in Oaxaca and Curly Face was also found in Peten Early Classic ceramics—but was not present in Peten before or after the Early Classic. Curly Face is also found at Kaminaljuyu—one intermediary between the Costa Sur and the Peten.



Fig. 25, a and b. Nearly identical scene but different cylindrical tripods—the one at the left has a horizontal row of semi-circles below the scene. It would be a great term paper or MA thesis to determine whether they were made with the same mold—though clearly they come from the same atelier or region.

A logical question is whether the man is capturing the deer but I don't see any trap that would have stopped the deer from running away.



Fig. 26, a, b, and c. This other cylindrical tripod is much smaller than the previous two but shows the same scene—it even has a row of semi-circles like one of the larger tripods.



Fig. 27, a, b, and c. Two different Tiquisate cylindrical tripods with the same scene but created with slightly different molds. You can see the differences by looking at the photo in the middle and the one at the right.

The man “crawling” on the ground has his head with a deer head completely around his own head. There are two leaves of a tree above the head of the deer. On the left of the scene are the feet of this crawling man with entangled plants issuing up. There are several Maya scenes where large-leaf plants seem to grow from the buttocks of a man—but this Tiquisate scene is from the Costa Sur, nowhere near the central Peten.

There are no “hunters” but I prefer to show all the Tiquisate Early Classic deer in the same chapter.

Is this a camouflaged hunter? And what is the relationship of the person in the middle with a large local variant of a Teotihuacan Reptile Eye Glyph?

Deer Hunting Scenes, Late Classic (Tepeu 1 and Tepeu 2), Rollouts by Justin Kerr and Photos by Nicholas Hellmuth



Fig. 28. This is one of the best hunting scenes that I have noticed. Four hunters each have an atlatl (spear thrower). The deer has been hit in the neck and one hunter has grabbed the hoof of the unfortunate deer. One hunter has a deer head as headdress. The decorations at the top of the antlers are curious.

The hat of the first hunter is very common for Maya hunters, as is the deer headdress of the taller hunter. He wears an animal hide, probably a deer hide. The other two hunters wear animal headdresses but the pattern on the skin suggests an armadillo. The ears of these two darker headdresses are not deer size.

Kerr rollout, K5857.



Fig. 28 a and b. Hunter with oval black spots and a conch shell. In his other hand three spears. The other hunter has four spears. This quantity suggests they are used with an atlatl although their length is longer than I would expect for a dart thrower. The stick in his raised hand has only a faint black area that may be the indication of an atlatl. All three hunters have large black spots on their body. The hunter with a deer headaddress is getting ready to carve up the deer so no one hunter has to carry an entire animal. That said, another hunter in this scene is carrying an entire (smaller) deer.

This bowl was published in black-and-white photos and line drawings in Hellmuth 1996c. Needs more precise drawings for future research.

The scene on this bowl is a very helpful presentation of Maya hunting practices, in this case, after the hunt. The vase is not repainted so not faked. Curiously there are no hieroglyphs, but there are lots of hunters shown. Essential to find this bowl and have a rollout photo and then a rollout drawing accomplished. In the meantime, we also need to find the Hellmuth 35mm color slides that show the other sides of this bowl.



Fig. 29, a and b. This is one of the best Maya hunting scenes that I have yet found, all the more reason to find a photo of the animal with vertical parallel lines. So far, all the hunters have black spots, so these are either generic for Maya hunters or they are all trying to emulate Hunahpu.

Conch shells are often blown at the end of the hunt to celebrate their success.

The hunter at the left is carrying an entire deer, with a furry tail but no fur-marks elsewhere.

The hunter in the middle of the photo at the right he is holding an obvious atlatl, though the curve at the end is nowhere near as long as atlatls shown elsewhere



Fig. 30. Hunter at the left blows a conch shell of exaggerated size. He carries two spears but no atlatl. The deer has Crossed-Bones on a black outfit over his body. Black Crossed-Bands are also common on bat wings (Hellmuth 2024) and on occasionally on other deer. A bird flies nearby. Birds are very common in deer hunting scenes. The deer has a curious object on both sides of his neck. The deer has a package hanging from a strap around his net. So this looks more like a theatrical pageant since deer out in the savannas do not wear clothing or carry a bag.

The hunter in the middle raises a giant antler (of exaggerated height. He carries two spears but no atlatl.

Another deer sits in front of a sacred tree, with a god head at the base. Need a close-up view of the mouth area of this deity head to see if it is a Pax (often the god head on the lower trunk of other Maya trees). And, this deity head has three black dots over his earring which is a symbol for feline (but also for the ear/gland of a Bufo Toad). But the face is not a toad whatsoever, so more likely a possible Pax Deity. Would be interesting to study whether Pax trees have one size and shape of leaves that are different than trees that have other deity heads at their base or are a crocodile tree?

A snake wraps around the tree. Another deer sits on the other side with its body covered in “wrapping?” A person sits on each lower branch of the tree (rather unrealistic for such a thin branch). Another hunter is at the right.

Kerr rollout, K2785, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.



Fig. 31. Spears, no atlatls, and no hats at all, but clearly a hunting scene since one person, with a spear, is holding the head he just cut off of a deer. Two of the spear-holders and the “cigar” holder have a shield, expected of warriors but not hunters. There is another shield set on two crossed spears. The motif above with something falling out both ends is not a motif I recognize (but this vase is authentic and has not been faked with repainting).

Kerr rollout, K1116, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University. Yellow tone may be from the scanning software—would need to see the actual Maya vase to see the original colors.



Fig. 32. The Kerr rollout scans tend to have an excessive yellow tone. Yes, there are yellow aspects to the paint, but the color in the Hellmuth photo at the right is slightly less yellow.

Closeup view allows you to see more details than in the helpful rollout. This is one of many reasons why FLAAR donated its archive of 35mm color slides, 35mm black-and-white negatives, and Hasselblad medium format black-and-white negatives to Dumbarton Oaks during October-November 2024, Trustees for Harvard University. Once this archive is sorted, organized, scanned, and cataloged it will be possible to find closeup view of each hunter or warrior in this scene.

A very important aspect of this scene is that it seems not to have been faked by repainting—it really helps to have an original painting.



Fig. 33. Deer hunter wearing deer hide, deer head as headdress, and blowing on a conch shell. Other views of this scene were published by Hellmuth, 1998. I named these vases “Catfish Red Style” because many of vases of same color feature a large catfish.



Fig. 34. This supernatural is most likely related to deer hunting. Whether he is the same individual as the one with extended lower jaw needs to be decided by iconographers working on deities and on deer hunting.



Fig. 35, a, b, and c. To see the details better you need the original scans IN RAW MODE and good imaging software—Capture One from Phase One in Denmark is the best, but Adobe Photoshop is what most of us use. The individual at the right is blowing on a conch shell. He wears a deer hide and a deer head as a headdress (same outfit as the person on the left). In the middle a well-fed woman is riding the deer. Really need a rollout line drawing of this important scene. Fortunately this scene was not destroyed by repainting.



Fig. 36, a, b and c. The large red spots on some and equal-sized large black spots are larger than what you expect on Hunahpu. The hunter's nets are larger than we see in most scenes. I show all sides of this bowl in a rollout.

RAW mode scan would allow illustrators to see more details so they can do a complete rollout drawing.



Fig. 37 a and b. It would be helpful to have a MA thesis or PhD dissertation on all the sizes, shapes, and uses of hats of the Classic Maya. The hats here are very low compared to others. All these hunters wear a “necklace” that is more like a narrow scarf.



Fig. 38. A rollout is definitely helpful compared to a series of individual photos. Here in the rollout you can see three white-painted hunters with large red spots and four red-painted hunters of which the first three have large black spots. All seven hunters have hunting nets behind them. All seven hunters wear small low-top, flat top derby hats. The edge is flat not rounded like modern hats of today.

The row of motifs around the upper part is not typical for Peten ceramics.

Since I have not yet found this scene in the Kerr Maya Vase Data Base I estimate this is a probably a digital rollout by Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Digital Photo Archive. I was not aware of the benefits of RAW mode in the 1990's.



Fig. 39, a and b. This is potentially one of the most educational hunting scenes that to my knowledge has never been published before. Need to find the 35mm color slides of other sides of this large polychrome bowl. Also need to photograph the vase upside down so you can document the lower part of the entire scene (or use special beam of lighting just for the bottom). One hunter has vertical strips having from around his neck; the other hunter has vertical strips more around his waist. Both hunters are carrying “sticks” with no blade at the end and no visible sight what would be expected of a blowgun. There is a small deer between the two hunters (very small because not much space—his tail is very long. The hunter at the left has his hand around the neck of a giant bird.

The style and features of the Maya hieroglyphs around the upper area can help epigraphers determine where this bowl was painted.



Fig. 40. A crucial question is whether this elderly hunter is the same old man who is dying in a bed with lots of females and deer surrounding him. Yet here he is attacking and killing the deer. It seems that the female with the sombrero is not hunting or killing the deer. So why would these females then assist this old hunter while he is dying of old age and associated illnesses? Or is this bearded old man hunter in this scene a different personality?

This vase is listed as Tepeu 3 but today we realize it is Tepeu 2 style and content. David Pendergast (personal communication, December 2024) also agreed that this scene is definitely not Tepeu 3, but is either Tepeu 2 or potentially Tepeu 1.

Helpful drawing by David Findlay in the publication by David Pendergast (1969: Fig. 12) and also published in Hellmuth 1996d. The geometric lines are the way archaeologists and ceramicists show the colors of each part of a scene. So this is a good traditional drawing. For iconographic and epigraphic research, drawings should have no geometric color symbolization at all.

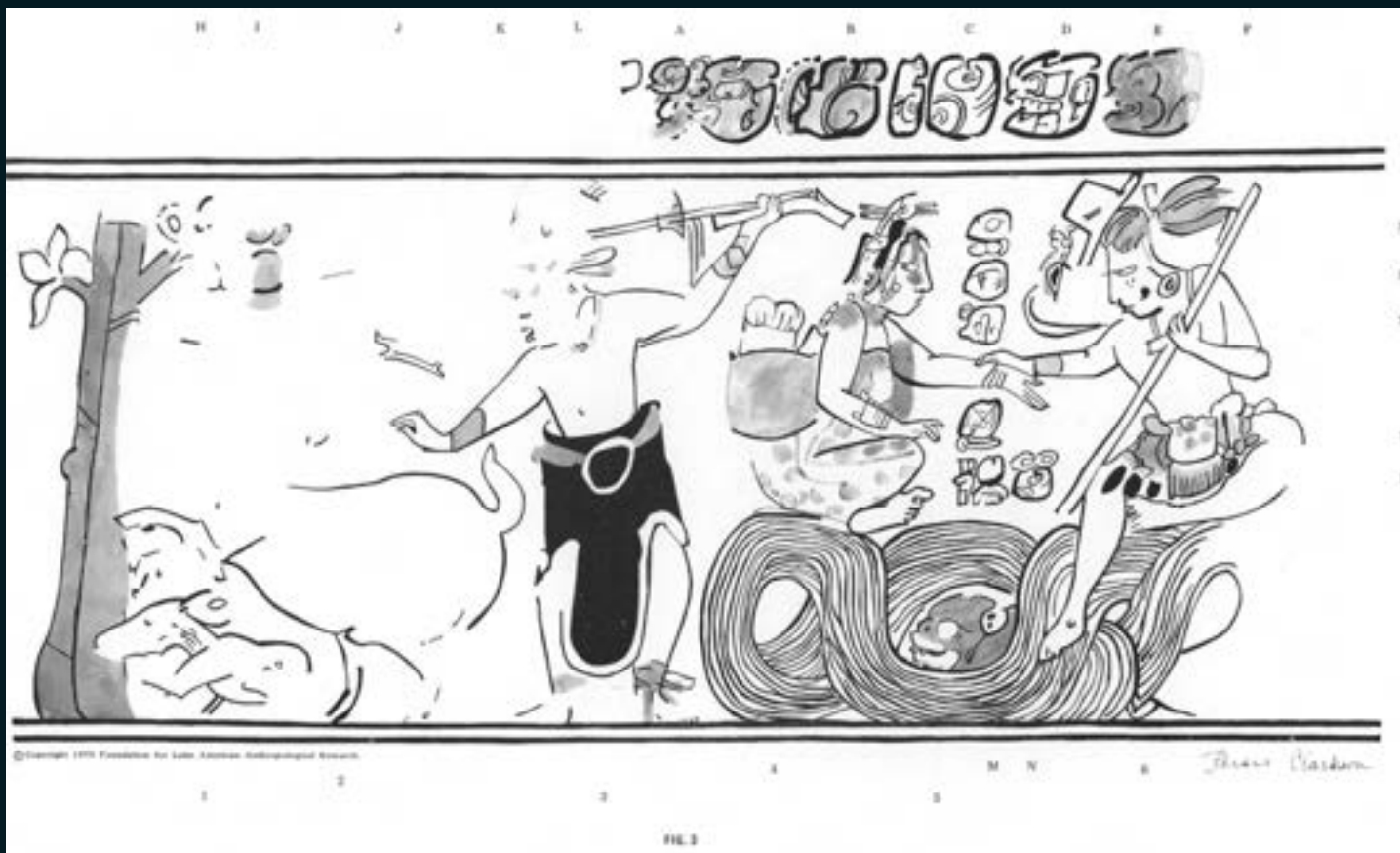


Fig. 41. This deer hunter is very clearly using an atlatl (spear thrower). This is a great view that documents this. There are several deer in front of him, with a tree in front of the deer, suggesting this may not be a savanna. That said, savannas in Peten have *Crescentia cujete* trees and nance trees.

On the other half of the vase, a man with a possible blowgun has a hunter's hat. I do not yet understand the role of the woman in this scene. They are seated on swirling water with a fish in the middle. So lots of material for studying Maya mythology via iconography.

The glyphs of the PSS which were not eroded are nicely detailed.

Need to find the original 35mm color slides of this vase.

Drawing by Persis Clarkson published in Hellmuth 1976: Fig. 3.



Fig. 42. Perfect example of God D—curved Yax symbol rising from his head and headband with round motif in front. I am curious why it's the glyphs behind him that give his name. Best left to an epigrapher. The atlatl of Hunahpu is barely visible in his back hand, in front of the peccary snout. Codex Style



Fig. 43. Hunter with a spear (of a length that would be accepted by an atlatl). He wears a deer headdress. His body has widely spaced black spots, so clearly a reference to Hunahpu of the Hero Twins. In front is a hieroglyph that I estimate is God D since God D is riding a peccary in front.



Fig. 44. Deer hunter carrying the captured deer back home. Kerr rollout, K1283, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.



Fig. 45. Woman with wide-brimmed sunshade sombrero is carrying a heavy load. A person kneels in front of the lord pointing towards what may be a part of a recently captured animal. Needs to have dramatically improved resolution to see what is going on. This kneeling man has a deer head atop his sunshade sombrero. The standing lord also has a wide sombrero to provide shade. His outfit is not common. The man behind is upholding something that looks like it has one handle at the upper right.

This vase has not been faked with modern repainting in New York, Florida or elsewhere.

Hieroglyphs around the top are atypically flat. Rollout by Kerr, K8386.

**Parades that feature Deer Hunting Aspects and Parades after Deer Hunting, Late Classic (Tepeu 1 and Tepeu 2),
Rollouts by Justin Kerr and Rollout Drawings and Paintings by Dana G. Moot II**

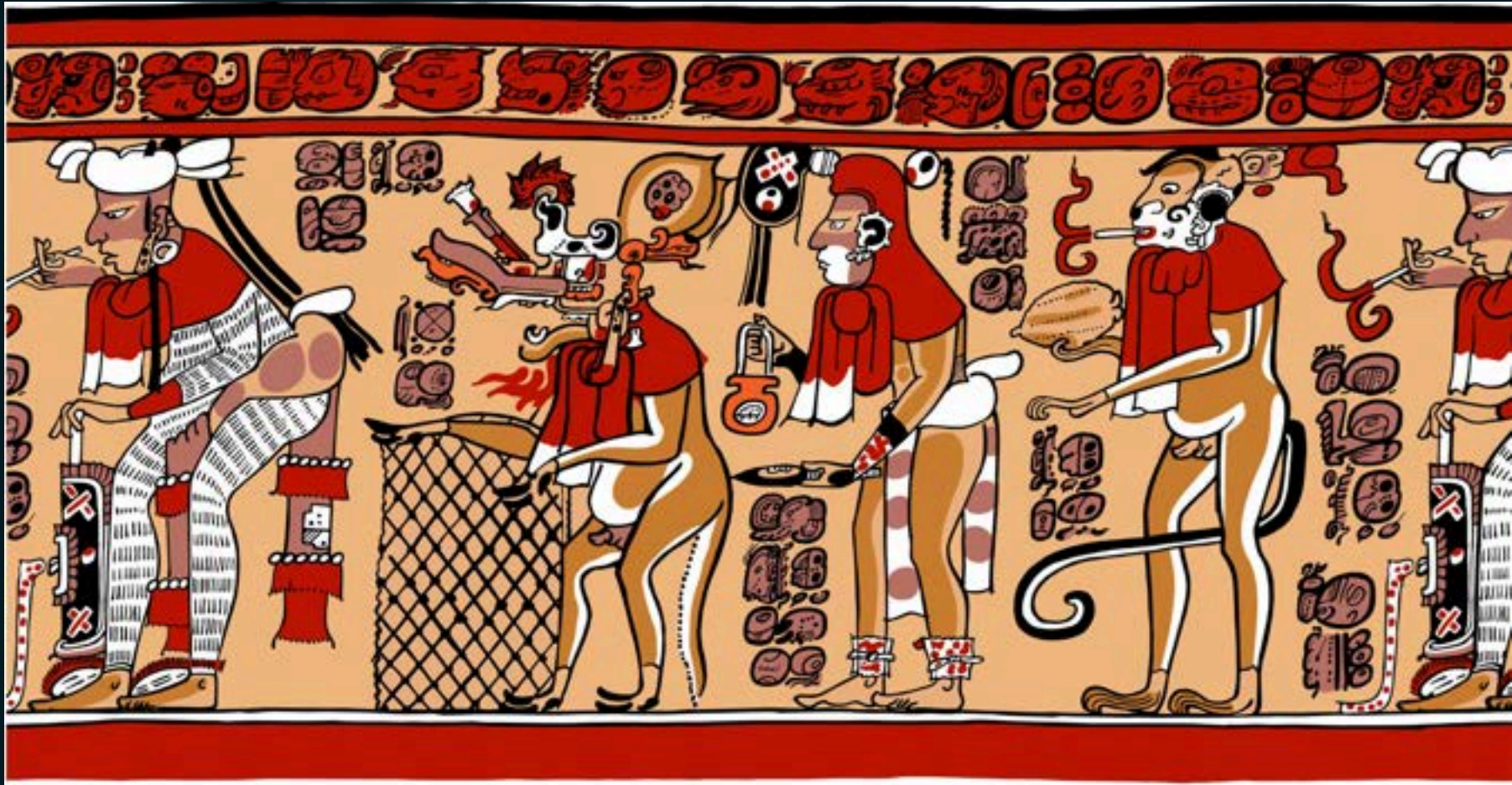


Fig. 46. Curious that a deer is carrying the type of net that is used in hunting, to capture deer. You can see lots of hunting nets on the bowl shown in the previous illustrations. The deer here has an unexpected elongated upper jaw. We show this deer in a closeup in the following illustration. This scene is in the other FLAAR Reports on deer in processions, and in volume on iconography of monkeys. Drawing by Dana G. Moot II (2021: page 159, Figure 88), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 210.1985.



Fig. 47. The ear is one of the several sizes and shapes that Maya artists use for an oval deer ear. The glyph-like feline-pelage-like “glyph” in the deer ear is not found in most Maya deer ears. Most Maya deer ears have either a Caban squiggle sign, crossed-bands, or no motif inside at all.

Instead of deer antlers there is a vaguely antler-like supraorbital plate over the enlarged deity eye.

This deer has no markings for fur and his tail is longer than usual. He wears a wide scarf, often seen on way animal spirit companions parading in a row.

The deer head, other than the ear, is more like a reptilian monster head. We show this and discuss this snake monster in the summary of Part II volume.

The deer is anthropomorphic, so the hooves are folded as if a human foot.

Excellent drawing by Dana G. Moot II in Looper 2019: page 177, Fig. 8.8. There is also a drawing by Linda Schele SD-7631 showing the entire vase scene.

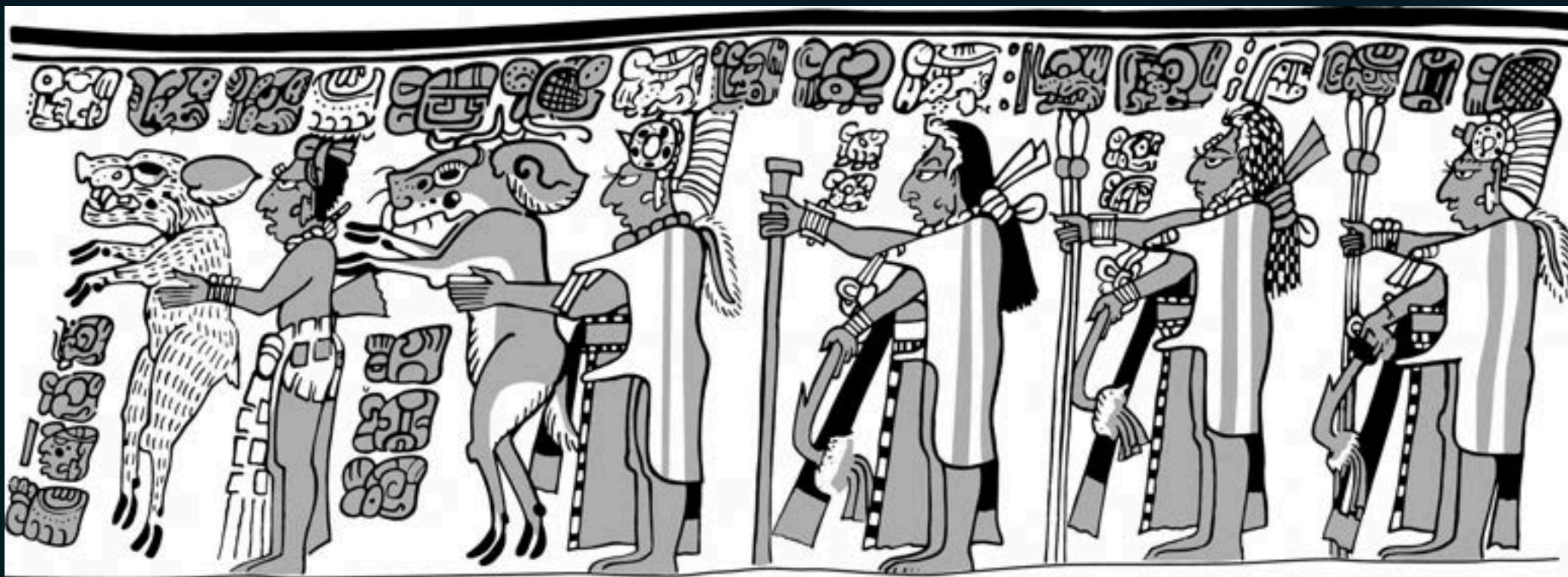


Fig. 48. The front person holds a giant peccary. The next person holds a deer. Note that the Maya show their hooves as being similar. The deer has antlers and a Caban scroll in his ear.

Four of the people in this scene wear deer hides—the furry tail tells you it’s a deer. Three of the hunters carry atlatls. Two carry very long spears yet the Maya seem to use these long spears instead of shorter darts. The person in the middle holds a possible trumpet but it is not the width or shape of what I would expect for a Maya trumpet.

The style of these hieroglyphs can eventually reveal from what atelier or region this scene comes from. A color photo of the vase would be need to assist this documentation (the Kerr rollout that is published so far is in black-and-white).

Excellent drawing by Dana G. Moot II inLooper (2019: page 67, Fig. 3.6).



Fig. 49. Even when you don't have a rollout camera available, this kind of joined-still-photos helps significantly.

Kerr K0414. This is the same vase of the Moot drawing.



Fig. 50. Parade of happy hunters after two large deer captured.

Six of the hunters are blowing on their conch shell to celebrate their success. Most conch shells in other scenes are of exaggerated size—the conch shells here are more realistic size.

Four of the hunters wear thin sombreros with tall center. Two of the hunters wear smaller derby-like hats. Or you could call them bowlers. Chama style or close to Chama style (lacking the chevrons).

Note that the two attendants carrying the deer are shorter, though that may be necessary to allow space to show the deer above them. These two attendants wear identical clothing so their stature is probably to allow showing the full size of the deer.

Kerr rollout, K0808, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.



Fig. 51, a and b. Photos of the two deer in this post-hunt celebration parade. Photos by Nicholas Hellmuth show that the scene is authentic and not repainted. FLAAR Photo Archive, now at Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.

Parades of People with wide-brimmed “Sunshade Sombreros” carrying Maya Noble in a Palanquin with a Dog underneath: Chama and Nebaj Style



Fig. 52. These parade scenes feature carrying a lord in a palanquin, with a dog underneath are well known, primarily from Chama and Nebaj regional style examples.

The deer headdress has a wide brim just like the other hunter's headdresses.

The animal under the lord is a dog despite the deer-shaped ear.

Presently we have only this one photo. Once the entire FLAAR Photo Archive of 30,000+ 35mm color slides is unpacked, sorted, organized and cataloged by Dumbarton Oaks, then hopefully we can find views of the other sides.

Need to study the original vase to see what repainting may have been done. Sombreros as protection against sun for people who have to hike long distances has been proposed by iconographers for scenes such as Kerr rollout K3058 (sunshade sombreros on two women) and K5847 (again the sunshade sombreros are for two women, each being carried by a man). So obviously sunshade sombreros are worn by deer hunters. But I estimate these wide-brimmed hats are potentially a logo for deer hunting as much as a logo for Maya people who had to travel long distances, such as merchants. God L, a patron of merchants, wears a very wide brimmed hat, but with a row of vertical features and then usually a bird on top.

All the Chama/Nebaj style Highland Maya vase processions are well known from Kerr rollouts and from the earlier Ratinlinxul Vase, but the Hellmuth photo we show here is, to my knowledge, not in previous discussions of the processions of an elite Maya in a palanquin with a dog underneath.

Plus, although the wide-brimmed sombreros are sunshades also for merchants and other Maya going long distances under the sun, I feel strongly that there is also a deer hunter association that was recognized. This is documented by the unexpected deer head atop the person in the palanquin that we show here

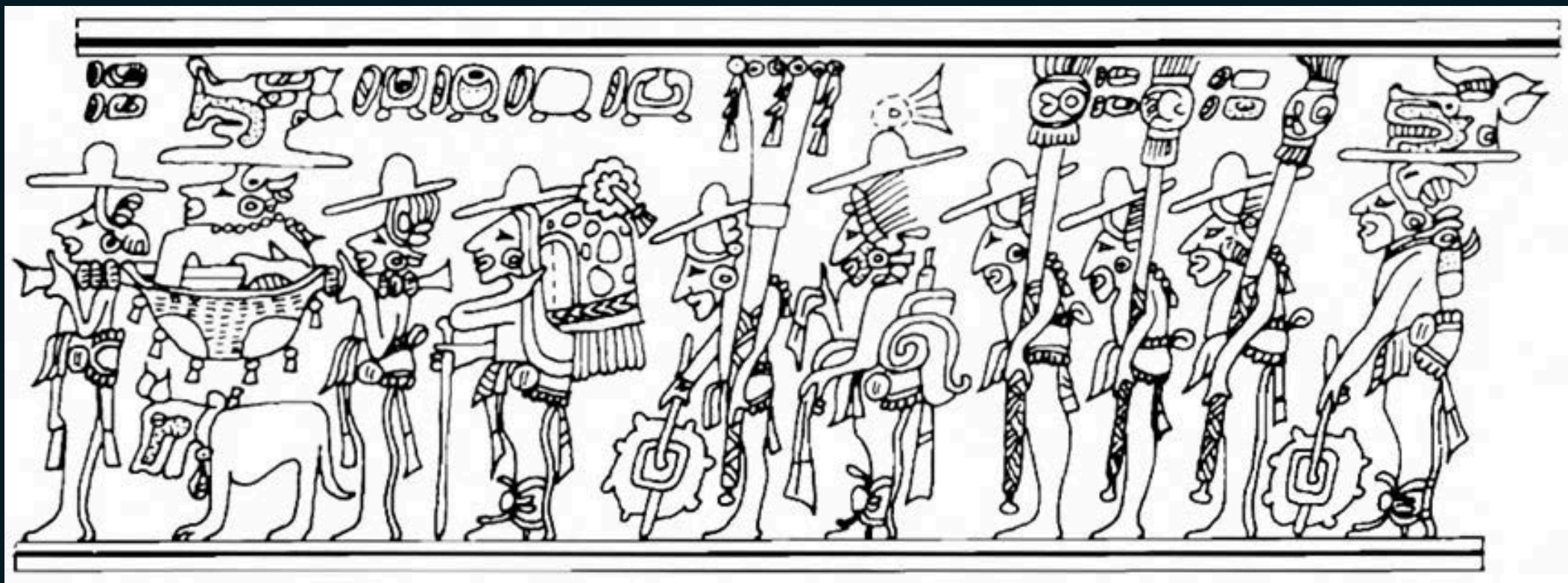


Fig. 53. This is a drawing by Kornelia Kurbjuhn, Figure 3 in her year 2008 article. We show the Kerr rollout K7613, below. Everyone in this scene has a relatively wide-brimmed sunshade sombrero, though in a few other scenes the hats are even wider.

The man in the middle carries a giant conch shell musical instrument on his back.



Fig. 54. Person with jaguar pelage around his mouth and giant conch shell attached to his back. This feline pelage around the mouth definitely reminds me of Xbalanque, one of the Hero Twins who are often hunters. Conch shells are used in many ceremonies, ballgames, deer hunting, parades after deer hunting, parades on Nebaj style ceramics, so in more scenarios than just deer hunting.

Then come three individuals with their chins down towards their chest. They carry what I estimate are trumpets. An even larger trumpet is carried by the last person in the row. The sombreros in this scene vary in width but several are quite wide.

Then comes a taller man carrying the same “fan” as the man at the end. The taller man has an animal head as his headdress. Then two bearers of the palanquin that holds the lord. He has another animal headdress, possibly a peccary based on the blunt nose. The two people with animal headdresses may be their way to mention their wayob, or may be to remind us they have experience in hunting.

There are so many of these vases (there is another but they don’t wear sombreros) that clearly this was a common and well known event.

Kerr rollout, K7613, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University. There is a drawing of this scene by Kornelia Kurbjuhn that we show in the previous illustration.



Fig. 55. An excellent example of the size of these wide-brimmed sunshade hats. If this noble person were dead and is being carried to the Underworld, he would not need a hat to protect him from the sun. Also, if he were dead, he would not need to hold on to the horizontal pole.

The first person is painted black with a different color on his cheek and chin, but no obvious spots of feline patch for Xbalanque. Even his hat is black. He carries a large conch shell on his back. The face of the noble in the palanquin also has a black-painted face.

Kerr rollout, K5534, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.

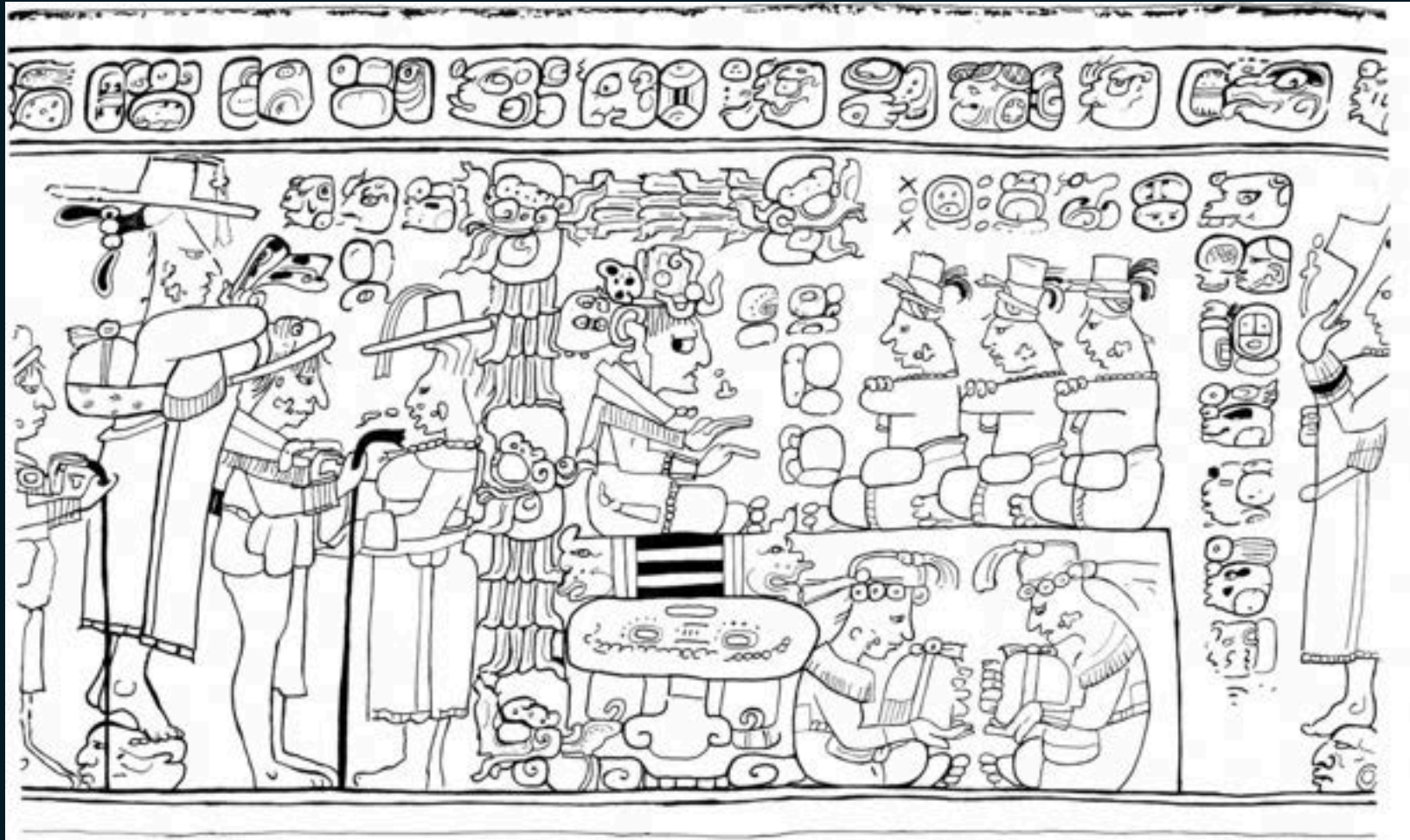


Fig. 56. Wide-brimmed hats are worn by Maya who had to hike long distances. You see these wide-brimmed hats in the procession scenes but also in palace scenes where people have hiked or canoed long distances to reach the palace throne room where they will present themselves to the local noble.

Several such scenes are in Kerr rollouts—we show one drawing kindly sent to us by Sebastian Matteo that shows wide-brimmed hats worn also by women. Hunters tend to wear a derby or other shapes.

The throne room has what are called leafy walls and roof. The lord is seated on a black-white-black throne atop a deity head.



Fig. 57. At the far left a person with a modest sombrero blows a conch shell (as happens in deer hunts). Four people carry Maya trumpets, which are used in warfare and in the ballgame. The dog's ear has been eaten away by leishmaniasis, a disease that also affects the ears of xateros. All the porters and attendants and even the noble in the palanquin all wear medium-sized sombreros. This is not a hunting scene but shares the conch shell and hats. Dogs were also used in hunting though shown rarely.

Kerr rollout, K6317, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.

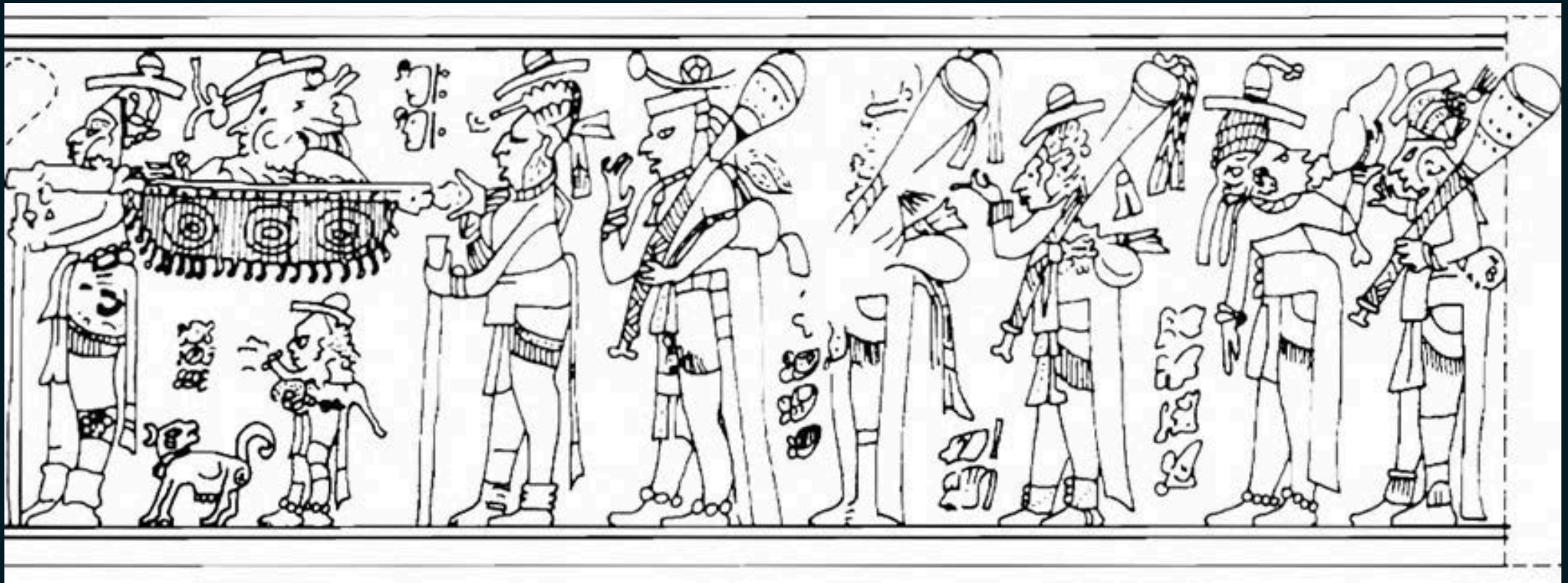


Fig. 58. This drawing from Kornelia Kurbjuhn seems to be of K6317. But the empty areas suggest that these areas were eroded and that the view in the Kerr rollout is after repainting?

One person blows on the conch shell. Four other people carry their trumpets. The two people carrying the weight of the palanquin with the person inside use walking sticks. A dog is always under the palanquin. Sometimes there is a dwarf there also.

Six of the people wear a mid-width turban with a small round top.



Fig. 59. This is the most often published procession scene, the Ratinlixul vase. No dwarf in this procession and no conch shells. But one porter carries the portable throne whose upper half is covered with a jaguar hide. Three of the attendants carry Maya trumpets.

If the ruler is deceased, why is he holding on with one hand and another hand holding that may be a fan?

Drawing by Kornelia Kurbjuhn from Morley 1956: Plate 92,b.

Notice that in the Peten area hunting scenes, the deer hunters wear derby or bowler style hats with no wide rim.

Deer Hunting shown on Maya Plates



Fig. 60. This nice drawing by Matthew Looer helps you be able to see the 21 glyphs of the Primary Standard Sequence (PSS). This drawing (Looer 2019: page 114, Fig. 5.22, citing New Orleans Museum of Art) was kindly sent by Looer to FLAAR to use in this iconography update on Maya deer.



Fig. 61. Hellmuth photo of a relatively well-preserved polychrome plate with eight hunters, so more than most vases and bowls. Most of the hunters wear white bowlers that are typical for deer hunters in Maya scenes. This plate was published in Hellmuth 1996c, Chapter 4.



Fig. 62. Each of these deer hunters wears a bowler hat, also called a derby in USA. Curiously one hunter is smoking a cigar. I estimate that the white object being held up to the mouth of the hunter at the left is a conch shell.



Fig. 63. A challenge to identify what small animal is about to be speared by the hunter. It's a challenge to see an atlatl. The hunter leaning over has one black spot on his thigh and another on his cheek.



Fig. 64. Here a second hunter is smoking a cigar. He carries a load on his tumpline. The hunter at his left may also be smoking a cigar. He holds some in a strap—perhaps a part of a recently killed animal.



Fig. 65. This is a “digital rollout drawing” as Hellmuth’s concept carried out by Byron Pacay, FLAAR Mesoamerica. The actual drawing exists in a Hellmuth publication and a drawing by Matthew Looper (2019: page 114, Fig. 5.22). This is the one we used for this “rollout.” This digital rollout concept was thus first conceived of by Matthew Looper.



Fig. 66. This is a literally “digital rollout” from Hellmuth photo of the plate put together in horizontal format by Byron Pacay, FLAAR Mesoamerica. I don’t think this has often been conceived of as a way to show more of the “total scene” since on a plate you have to turn the plate upside down or your head upside down to see all of what is going on.



Fig. 67. This is a bowl, not a plate, but the deer hunting scene is appropriate to compare with plates that are of similar scenes.

Deer hunter at left carries a deer head back home. He carries several short spears (used with atlatl). He carries a conch musical instrument that is frequently pictured associated with deer hunting. The next person has a deer head as headdress and leg of a deer in his forward hand and spears in his other hand. He and several other hunters have black paint on their bodies and black “handprints” on their legs (others have this all over their body). Third hunter has a tall hunter’s hat. He has a conch shell on his other side. What he carries in his hand is unclear, maybe he is reaching downward for his spears that are on the ground. Third and fourth hunter have thin beards growing from their chin. Fourth hunter has headdress of a deity possibly one related to deer hunting. This potential deer-hunting patron supernatural can be seen in other scenes such as K4626.

Fifth hunter has a deer head as headdress, with ?-mark squiggle as decoration. He holds an armadillo.

Then there is a seated animal communicating with the hunter above. Unsure what’s in the hunter’s hands. Next a hunter with another deity headdress is beginning to cut up a deer to take it home. The person behind holds a segment of the deer similar to what the second hunter is holding. At the back is another hunter with a deer head as headdress. He is blowing on his conch shell (probably to highlight their success). He holds a small unidentified animal in his hand.

No hieroglyphs.

This bowl was published in black-and-white Kerr rollout photo in Hellmuth 1996c.

Kerr rollout, K1373, downloaded from the Dumbarton Oaks database of scans by Justin Kerr of higher resolution than on older the Maya Vase Data Base.



Fig. 68. As soon as the two tons of FLAAR Photo Archive is unpacked, sorted, and organized, then cataloging and eventually scanning each 35mm color slide can begin. Then we will have the other closeup views of each individual Maya hunter on this vase.

These are Hellmuth photos of the same scene that was rolled out by Justin Kerr.



Fig. 69. Maya hunter carrying a very long probable atlatl (the hook is hidden under his hand). He has widely spaced black spots that are the logo of Hunahpu of the Hero Twins (who are renowned hunters).

He wears a bowler or derby, not a wide-brimmed sunshade sombrero.

He holds in his hand an unidentified round object. It is too large to fit into a blowgun and the stick in his hand is not a blowgun.

Original painting in authentic condition with no fakery from repainting.



Fig. 70, left, and Fig. 71, right. Plate showing the hunter grabbing the long-beaked bird by its neck. These birds are found in many deer hunting scenes but this is the first time that the hunter is shown grabbing the bird. Another bird seems to be tied onto his back.

Lots of baby deer and other animals running around. Could be hunting dogs but that is not certain.

This Maya hunter wears the usual round-topped hunter's hat.

The glyphs are not a PSS; whether they are pseudo-glyphs or merely a repeated text would best be documented by an epigrapher.

Drawing by FLAAR illustrator Laura Gornito.

All these drawings can be copied and pasted into your research reports, thesis or dissertation. Please cite the author, title, publisher and illustrator.



Fig. 72, a and b. This deer hunter is painted black except for the lower part of his face and hand. He has a probable deer head as headdress. There is no spear point visible, and no atlatl, so what he carries may be a blowgun? But a blowgun pellet cannot kill a deer. The small animals behind him and running around the edge have heads longer than would be expected for a dog. Baby deer is one possibility but further study is needed. The hieroglyphs are not a traditional PSS and thus all the more important to translate.



Fig. 73. Hunter with two deer that he has killed. The row of large thick circles seems to be one way the Maya show that the deer is dead (even though the eyes are still open).

There is a bird attached to the back of the hunter. Many deer hunting scenes feature one or more birds associated with the hunter or with the deer.

The hunter wears the common small variety of a hunter's hat.

Above the hat is a spiraling corkscrew (or spiraling ?-mark, Caban) that is usually on the deer's ear. The actual ears of both these deer are much smaller than normal.

The wood-like diagonal object held by the hunter has an obvious "sight" at the end. This is how blowguns are usually shown in Maya hunting scenes, but blowguns are used to kill birds, both in trees and in wetlands. It is unlikely that a blowgun pellet would hurt a deer and definitely not kill a deer—since these blowguns do not shoot darts, especially not with poison frog or toad chemicals as used elsewhere in tropical Americas.

I estimate that I photographed this plate twice, in two different locations, since the backdrop here is white or light gray, and the color balance is different. The closeups that I show below were photographed on dark background and when the plate was held in a museum-like support.

These four photos (two here, two on the next page) are not cropped, these are complete closeup photos by moving the camera (on its tripod) closer to the plate to record details. Even though I did this photography in the previous century, you can notice that I was focused on preparing documentation for future studies of iconography.



Fig. 74, a and b. These deer have hair “bristles” spaced around the head, body and tail. Similar bristles sticking straight out are found on a killed deer on another Maya plate.



Fig. 75, a and b. The hunter's body seems to be painted red. He has a patch on his shoulder, thighs and legs. A long-beaked bird is behind the hunter. Worth studying whether the bird is carried on the man's back or is like uncaptured birds in other hunting scenes.



Fig. 76, a and b. I estimate that this plate is either by the same painter as the one before or at least by the same atelier, because the exterior areas of erect fur on the deer are the same (except for the tail), eyes are similar, and the hunter has the same painted area around his ear. However other aspects are not identical, for example his clothing and two round framed hunting nets. A bird is included in this scene (as well as in many other Maya deer hunter scenes).



Fig. 77. This deer hunter is blowing on the common hunter's conch shell. As in many other deer hunting scenes a long-beaked bird is shown. This hunter seems to be seated on a mass of woven nets.

Since this is a plate there is not much space to place the deer realistically. He seems to have been surprised by the hunter and now will turn around the run away. This deer has his tongue sticking out and a conch shell decorating his body. You see that also on the 3-dimensional deer that is on the front page of Matthew Looper's 2019 book on Maya deer. Here on the plate the right side of the profile of the conch shell reminds me of a Caban squiggle.

Now you can estimate that the bird here is not tied on a tumpline or a backpack, but free to fly. This bird's beak is long and thin and is similar to the bird in the previous scene on a bowl. Usually long beaks are found on water birds but there is no other Surface of the Underwater-world motifs in these deer scenes.

Several of these plates have floating oval motifs decorated with round beads. These need to be studied, since they are probably more than just space fillers.

Holmul Burial HOL.T93.76, Building G, Group I.

Drawing by Bryon Pacay. An excellent color rendering is by Alexandre Tokovinine in Tokovinine, Estrada Belli and Vialko 2024: Fig. 13,b.



Fig. 78. This seated hunter wears same cloak as on the plate from Holmul. On other hunter plates a similar outfit with parallel cloth parts is worn around the waist.

What this hunter is seated on is similar to other bound bundles. The Holmul hunter is seated on a bundle of more net-like material without straps around it. Need to check whether this type of bundle shown here is in any Red Background Tepeu 1 parade scenes of wayob. There is an identical bundle on the front of the body of a deer on Kerr rollout, K8262. We show that in the rollout volume of iconography of Maya deer.

The image here is a copy-and-paste from a scan of Hellmuth 1996, from Chapter 7.



Fig. 79. This is a scan from Hellmuth 1996c, Chapter 6.

This vase shows several hunters but the hunter with a deer on its back is badly eroded—that is shown in Hellmuth 1996c.

Once the FLAAR Photo Archive is unpacked, sorted, and prepared for scanning, in a future year it will be possible to see scans of 35mm color slides of all sides of this vase.

But what is important now is to show that this deer hunter is wearing an exaggerated elongated clothing that is found on two other hunter scenes that we show in previous illustrations. But in the other two plates the outfit covers only the top half of the body—shorts are worn from the waist. Other hunters have a similar outfit.



Fig. 80. Two of these hunters are carrying a complete deer. Two of the other hunters have a double-component net. Look at the nets on the bowl that we show earlier in this set of photos that show Maya deer hunting.

Both of the deer hunters with nets on their back have a conch shell. The player at the bottom is blowing on the shell.

Two of the unexplained birds are present—one with a long thin beak.

There are X-marks in empty areas.

There are several scrolled motifs decorated with round circles on the outside. Then there are non-scrolled round or oval motifs floating in other parts of the scene. These can also be seen in the “plate rollout concept”.

The Tucson Museum of Art, Kerr photo, K4805, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.



Fig. 81. This is another “plate rollout concept” by Nicholas Hellmuth, accomplished by illustrator Byron Pacay (FLAAR Mesoamerica). So now you can see each hunter and each animal all in one view. Not many plates with complex scenes such as this have been found at Tikal, Uaxactun or other provenanced locations, so that may explain why not many other iconographers have rolled out scenes from a plate except for Matthew Looper (2019: page 114, Fig. 5.22). Primary Standard Sequences around the side of a plate are obviously also much easier to study and publish if pulled out of the round circle and placed in a horizontal line.

This scene shares several aspects with the next plate that we show in the following illustration—there are several birds with long beaks. Are they interested in something on the deer? These birds are definitely not vultures.

Two of the hunters carry round nets, held with the same strap as on the next plate—but on the present plate there are two sets of oval nets—not just one. All the hunters wear shorts with vertical segments—but no beads on the scene here. The hats are a very different size and shape.

All these hunters are painted black—on the other plate two are painted black. Is that sunscreen? Or camouflage?

On the present plate there is an oval symbol under the elbow of two hunters and a round symbol associated with the deer on one hunter and simply in front of the other hunter.

X marks are widely scattered in the scene especially near the two hunters carrying nets. But most of these X-marks are not shown in this rollout.

Two of the deer have what looks like a simplified conch shell shape (or thick Caban ?) but on the deer it may have another meaning that has not yet been deciphered. The deer on the Holmul plate has a complete conch shell design “painted” on it.



Fig. 82, a and b. A hunter is getting ready to dismember the deer. The artist shows a conch shell “trumpet” at huge size to remind everyone of its importance. Birds are again in the scene, that is common in many other deer hunting scenes. The hunter below at the right has captured a peccary. The third hunter has captured an animal that I have not yet identified. Two of the hunters carry nets plus narrow spear and atlatl. Drawing most likely by an illustrator working for FLAAR many decades ago. We need to find a 35mm color slide of this plate in the future.

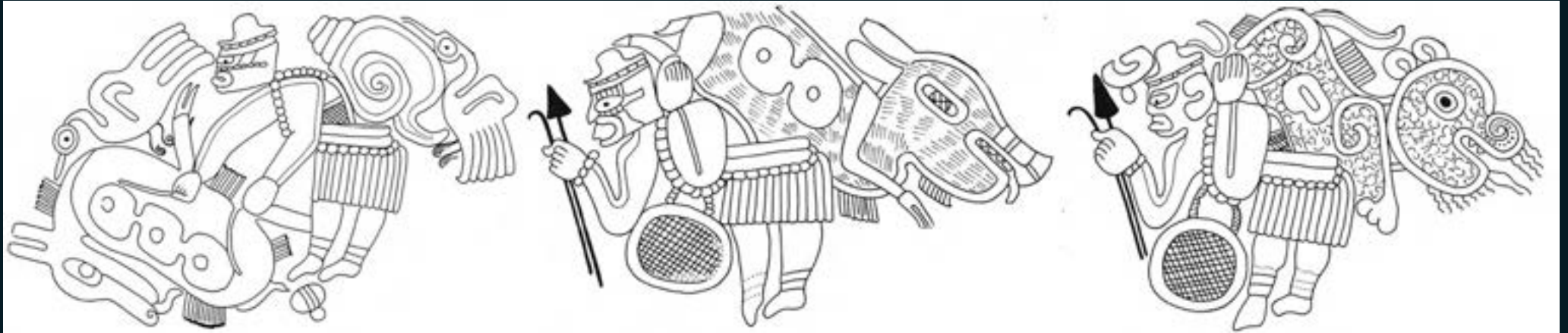


Fig. 83. This is another “plate rollout concept” by Nicholas Hellmuth, accomplished by illustrator Byron Pacay (FLAAR Mesoamerica).

The bowler-like hats are very small. The black darts carried by two of the hunters are much shorter and thinner than the spears carried by most of the other hunters.

Both deer have small ears, parallel to each other. The deer at the left has four areas of stiff “fur” sticking out. The probable deer in the middle has space for only two such areas of stiff fur sticking out. This middle probable deer has areas of parallel lines signifying fur.

The animal at the right is not a deer.

Notice that two of the animals have thick round circles on their body. This seems to be an indication that they have been disemboweled by the hunter before he carries the animal back home.

The round net-like accessories are a curious size but appear in other scenes.



Fig. 84. This hunter clearly carries an atlatl. These Late Classic Maya spears are longer than the Early Classic Teotihuacanos used for their atlatl.

His body is painted black. He has a feline head as his hat. A conch shell of exaggerated size and stylized shape is held on his back.

Museo VIGUA, Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala.



Fig. 85, a and b. The deer is at the left. Seated hunter carries atlatl and long spears in one hand and conch shell (to make loud sounds). He has an antler and deer ear with squiggle-?-mark. He also wears a small version of a hunter's wide-brim hat. Helpful drawing by illustrator for FLAAR in the previous century, Laura Gornto.

There is a photograph of this same plate by Kerr, K9260. He says the seated person is "Ruler with all the trappings of Wuk Sip, Patron of deer hunting". Yes, he has deer antler, deer ear, and conch shell—and spears and atlatl—but all that means he is posing as a successful hunter. Is he imitating Wuk Sip? That is a valid question. The Zip patron of deer hunting is usually a very old man.



Fig. 86. This polychrome Maya painting shows hunters bending over to keep their bodies low to the ground (to make it harder for the deer to see them). This position is similar to that as shown on earlier Maya cylindrical tripod (in the first chapter of this presentation).

Two of the deer around the edge and the deer in the middle have parallel lines to symbolize fur. The deer in the middle seems to have had one leg cut off by the hunter.

A bird is on top of the tube held by the hunter at the bottom area of this scene (we show a close-up in the following illustration),

The hunters around the raised side have very short tubes in front of their mouths. This is the only Maya deer hunting scene that I know of that has this item in front of the mouths of the hunters. Perhaps it is a musical instrument since it is too short to be a blowgun.

Notice that all the hunters around the edge have deer headdresses to help camouflage themselves. A sitting deer at the top of this scene has the same black-white color pattern as that worn by the seated hunter in the middle. Since this deer has no human hands, I am not sure whether it is a hunter clothed in a deer costume.

This plate is shown on facebook.com but the photo here is by Nicholas Hellmuth from the FLAAR Photo Archive, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.



Fig. 87. This hunter has a deer head as his headdress, probably as camouflage. He is down on all fours though there is no space to show him standing up.

Whether the bird on top of the tubular musical instrument is part of the hunter's camouflage remains to be studied (to find if something similar is in other deer hunting scenes). Birds with long beaks are found in lots of deer hunting scenes.

We have not done a rollout of this scene since the hunter and deer are repeated around the scene.



Fig. 88, a and b. This is a hunter of peccary and armadillos, but his body painting and woven accessory helps in research on deer hunters. He is “walking” on all fours, a common position for deer hunters (who even if only walking on two feet are often leaning way over). This hunter has his conch shell. He has a potential net or bag in one hand. He is marked with two widely spaced dots which may have been emblematic to hunters in general as well as to Hunahpu of the Hero Twins. We cover iconography of peccary in a separate FLAAR Reports; we cover iconography of armadillos in another FLAAR Reports.

Drawing by illustrator for FLAAR many decades ago. This is a good example that a line drawing really helps an iconographer to study the entire scene.



Fig. 89. Peccary hunter. Unclear what he is carrying in this forward hand. Deer is at the left.



Fig. 90. Peccary that I show in the FLAAR Reports on iconography of peccary in Maya art.



Fig. 91. Hunter carrying a possible mass of nets on his back via a tumpline (mecapal).



Fig. 92. This scan of the entire piece decades ago was not adequate to show at full-page size. We need to find the original 35mm color slide and rescan it. Best to scan in RAW format since that makes the scan easier to correct.

The animal at the bottom is a deer. Once we can find the slides at Dumbarton Oaks, and have it scanned at high resolution, definitely need to do a horizontal rollout rendition of this scene.

There is a long undulating form issuing out of the front of the peccary's mouth. This ends in a scroll decorated with an unknown cross-section motif. The longer scroll issuing from the mouth of the deer ends in the same motif.

Deer probably need to graze and probably prefer savannas? Around all the savannas that we found in PNYNN there is a ring of water, which we estimate was dug out by the Classic Maya to hold at least some of the water from the rainy season. Peccary would enjoy wallowing in these water areas. So Maya could find both deer and peccary in or near a savanna.



Fig. 93. No hunters but the scene shows the prancing deer realizing the danger of the net used to trap them on their trails.

Polychrome plate, photo by Kerr, K6804.



Fig. 94, a and b. So you can see all the animals we turn the plate around. I would have done a rollout drawing several one of the animals are too eroded to be able to draw its details.

There are also several other hunting scenes where the “target” is the Principal Bird Deity, often in a tree with Pax deity at the base of the trunk. But since there are no deer or deer antlers or deer ears, we do not show this Codex Style scene here.

Deer Hunting on Gouged or Incised Vases or Bowls



Fig. 95. Xbalanque, one of the Hero Twins, is obvious at the left because of the patches of jaguar pelage on his arms and legs. He holds either a rope or snake around the head (but not yet around the neck) of the deer. The deer has a row of dots as does the deer on the bowl shown in the previous drawing. The deer has nice antlers and oval pointed ears. He has crossed-bands on his body rather than on his ear. His tail ends in a mythical motif. A Bird is atop the deer. Birds are found in several other Maya deer hunting scenes.

Behind the deer is another animal with two disembodied eyes sticking out of one eye. With no fur and no hooves I can't identify this animal as a peccary.

The seated man at the back is probably Hunahpu, but has no black spots on his body.

No hats on either hunter—no spears. No conch shells.

Very helpful drawing by Dana G. Moot II published previously inLooper 2019: page 156, Fig. 7.3. Cited as from Finca Esquipulitas with drawing after Chinchilla Mazariegos (2011: page 159, Fig. 63).



Fig. 96, a and b. Gouged incised bowl with two hunting scenes, peccary on one side, deer on the other side. As in many scenes the hunter is holding the deer. What looks like a baby deer is on the ground underneath. No weapon is visible. The deer's body has a woven fabric across the top. A deer in another scene (in volume I) has a fabric with Crossed Bones across the top of his body.

Is this a hunter with a deer he has just captured, or is this a person preparing a semi-trained deer to march in a procession?

Excellent drawing by Dana G. Moot II, in Loope 2019: page 164, Fig. 7.13.

Fig. 97, a and b. This bowl is pictured in FLAAR Reports on peccary but we did not have this drawing available at that time. The peccary has a beard, is snorting (as is common in Maya renditions). A giant snake undulates above the peccary with something (not yet identified) held in his open mouth. The peccary has a four-petalled flower (Kin) glyph-like motif on its back. The peccary has lots of rows to show bristle-like fur, as is common on most Maya renditions of peccary. Deer sometimes have rows of fur but not on the deer on this bowl.

Here is a great example that a precise line drawing can be very helpful so you can see the whole scene, even when not a rollout.

Mold-Impressed Scenes, Late Classic, Potentially Costa Sur/Boca Costa area—Scenes are “Maya-related” but from outside Maya Heartland

Several vases with this mold-impressed style have been published by Erika Magalí Gómez González both in her thesis for Licenciatura (2006) and also for dissertation (2011).



Fig. 98. Vases that are not polychrome painted usually come from outside Peten (such as this one) or from the Yucatan Peninsula.

This vase has a bat in the center, in front of a deer. Two smaller deer are elsewhere in the scene. The tails of the deer are very long. The possible identification of this bat is being studied by bat specialist Jose Cajas. His report will be published on www.maya-ethnozoology.org hopefully during February or March 2025.

A tree with thick trunk but not very high is behind one of the deer, with a snake winding around the trunk. Surely there are more of these scenes to be found.

Kerr rollout, K1605, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.



Fig. 99. The stylized “tree” here is very similar to the tree in the previous scene. A seated monkey is in front—a bird is above. Interesting that a deer hunting scene not from Peten shows a bird as do many of the polychrome painted Tikal vases and plates.

Two men are after the deer. Are they hunters? Out in a savanna, bajo, or forest it would not be easy to get this close to a deer and they grab it by the leg. That said, the Spanish who went through Peten speak about finding a savanna where the deer did not run away at all because they were revered by the local Maya of that region and that time (Bernal Diaz del Castillo).

These two vases are clearly from the same atelier or at least the same region.

The cross-lighting by Kerr in both these vase rollouts is exceptional—this lighting allows you to see all the details. K4599, downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.



Fig. 100. A third vase with the same tree. Again a monkey at the trunk area and a bird above.

Each deer has been grabbed by a man, but there are no weapons or nets.

I had originally thought that this style was from the Rio Motagua area of Guaemala but Erika Magali Gómez González shows Late Classic mold impressed scenes from Tiquisate.

Digital rollout by Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Digital Photo Archive (which is separate from the FLAAR Photo Archive).



Fig. 101, a and b. Is the person capturing the deer or simply embracing a tame deer used in ceremonies?

We estimate this is a scan of Hellmuth 35mm slide, FLAAR Photo Archive, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University. Digital rollout by Hellmuth of the same vase with FLAAR digital Better Light brand rollout camera. The FLAAR Digital Photo Archive will also be donated to Dumbarton Oaks in the future.

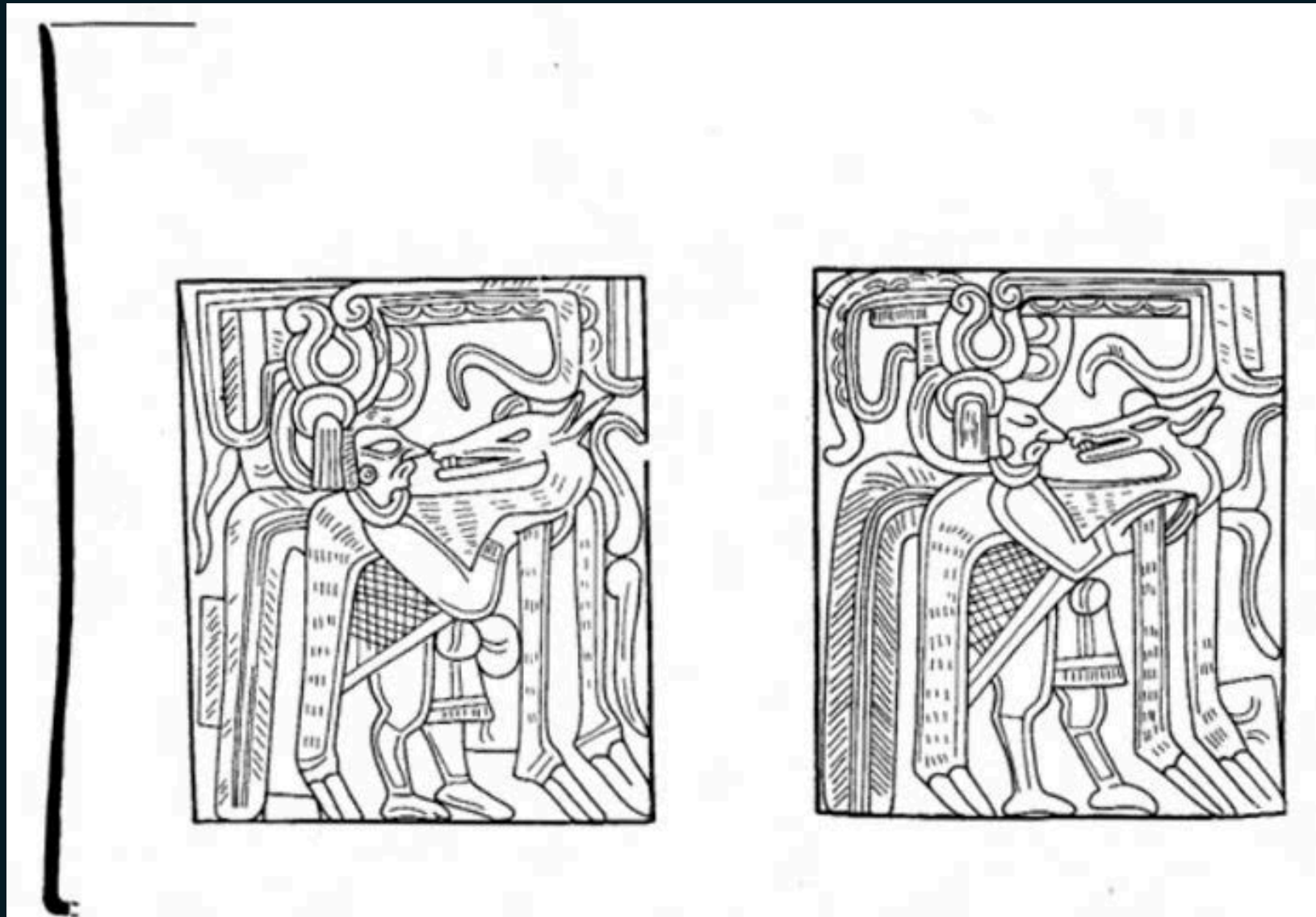


Fig. 102. There is a series of these scenes where a man (with no hunting weapons) is grabbing the deer by one leg (as here). Below we show another scene where the man is also holding the leg but he is kneeling down. This helpful rollout drawing is by Erika Magali Gómez González in her year 2006 thesis for Licenciatura. She produces another drawing for her 2011 dissertation for a similar scene from the Bilbao area.



Fig. 103. Digital rollout by Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Digital Photo Archive. This is the same scene as the nice rollout line drawing by Erika Magali Gómez González in her year 2006 thesis. Since this rollout is more than two decades old, it may have been provided to her.

This rollout is the same scene as the two still photos below—you can tell by the vertical damage from past centuries. The color balance is different (scans often changes the color).

Museo Popol Vuh, Universidad Francisco Marroquin, so this vase would have been available for USAC students to study.

We show this same rollout in the deer volume on Kerr rollouts and Hellmuth rollouts.



Fig. 104. If this scene is mold-impressed the mold was not the same for both scenes. Same with the vase published by Erika Magali Gómez González in her year 2006 thesis.

Normally I would expect the same mold to be used for each side of a vase.

If these are gouged-incised either two artists worked—one on each side—or the artist had an image in front of him and designed each side as best he could.

Would be super helpful to find all these scenes and then have a ceramicist study each panel at high resolution to document whether they were mold impressed or gouged and incised.

Either way, this series of scenes of a man holding the leg of the deer are very important. If these are really made in Tiquisate, they don't seem to have that much heritage from Tiquisate cylindrical tripods. That is why decades ago—before I had the thesis of Erika Magali Gómez González available—I thought these were Motagua area ceramics—so definitely not from Peten, but still with awareness of Maya scenes. Because if these are all from Tiquisate, what language did the people there speak in the Late Classic? I don't see much “Cotzumalhuapa” symbolism in these scenes and definitely nothing from earlier Teotihuacan or Teotihuacan-influenced Tiquisate tripods.



Fig. 105. A different vase than pictured by Erika Magali Gómez González. But a man holding one leg of a deer is wearing a diagonal woven outfit (same as on that Gómez shows in her thesis and dissertation).



Fig. 106. This helpful rollout drawing is by Erika Magali Gómez González in her year 2011 dissertation. Offering EB9A-2, page 96, Illustration 3. She also shows (her Fig. 29,a) another deer on Ajaxa Monument 1 (Chinchilla 1996: Fig. 8.13). And another deer from a ceramic scene (2011: Fig. 29,b). Would help to have a scan of the original drawings so they can be shown at higher resolution without fuzzing.



Fig. 107. Possible monkey at the base of the tree. A bird on the branch. So this is clearly a vase from the same area as the others that have a monkey at the base of a tree with a bird on top.

A hunter has a possible weapon without enough details to show what it is.

The other hunter is grabbing the deer as on the other vases. A snake seems to be under this crouching hunter. Now you can see the monkey's tail.

This deer seems worn out and thus hunter seems to be grabbing the deer more than just embracing it.

Kerr rollout, K8829, with overly-yellow tone from scan software. Downloaded from database of improved digital quality, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.

Brief Introduction to a Deity Head with long Lower Jaw/Lower Lip, that may be a Patron of Deer Hunters



Fig. 108. Kerr also recognizes that the last person in the row is wearing a “hunter’s hat.” The first person in the row however is not identified in “Iconographic Elements”. I estimate this long-lipped supernatural is one of the patrons of deer hunters. This head on other vases is pictured and discussed in Hellmuth 1996c: Appendix A, The Old Patron of Deer Hunting.

No mention in description whether the entire scene is original or whether there might have been retouching. Fortunately the missing hieroglyph in the horizontal band was not forged. Kerr rollout, K4625.

Deer and Deer Hunting in the Maya Codices

Part I: Obvious Deer

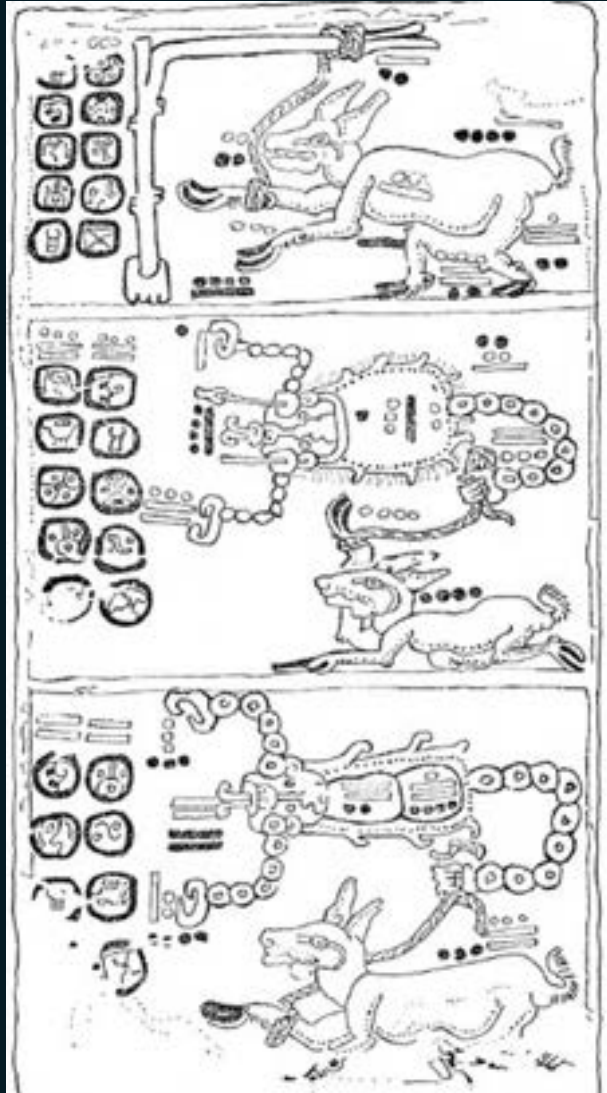


Fig. 109, a and b. Three deer: hooves, ears, eye with design on both sides, furry tail. Deer in the codices often have a blip on the underside of their jaw. In the middle and also in the lower scene, a scorpion is holding the front leg of the deer with a rope.

Codex Madrid, page XLIV, Villacorta.

Both peccary in Classic Maya art and deer are shown with hooves, so the animal at the bottom, due to its flat snout, is potentially a peccary. Codex Madrid, page XLIX, Villacorta.

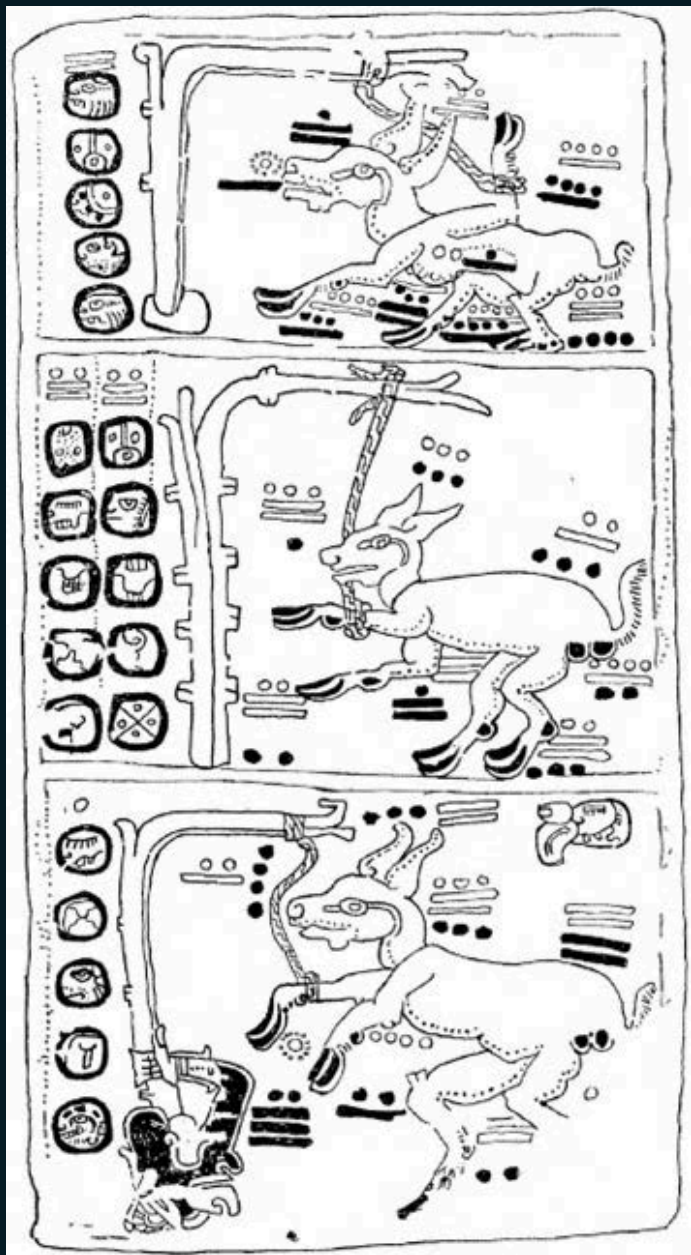


Fig. 110. Deer caught in a trap. Codex Madrid, page XLV, Villacorta.

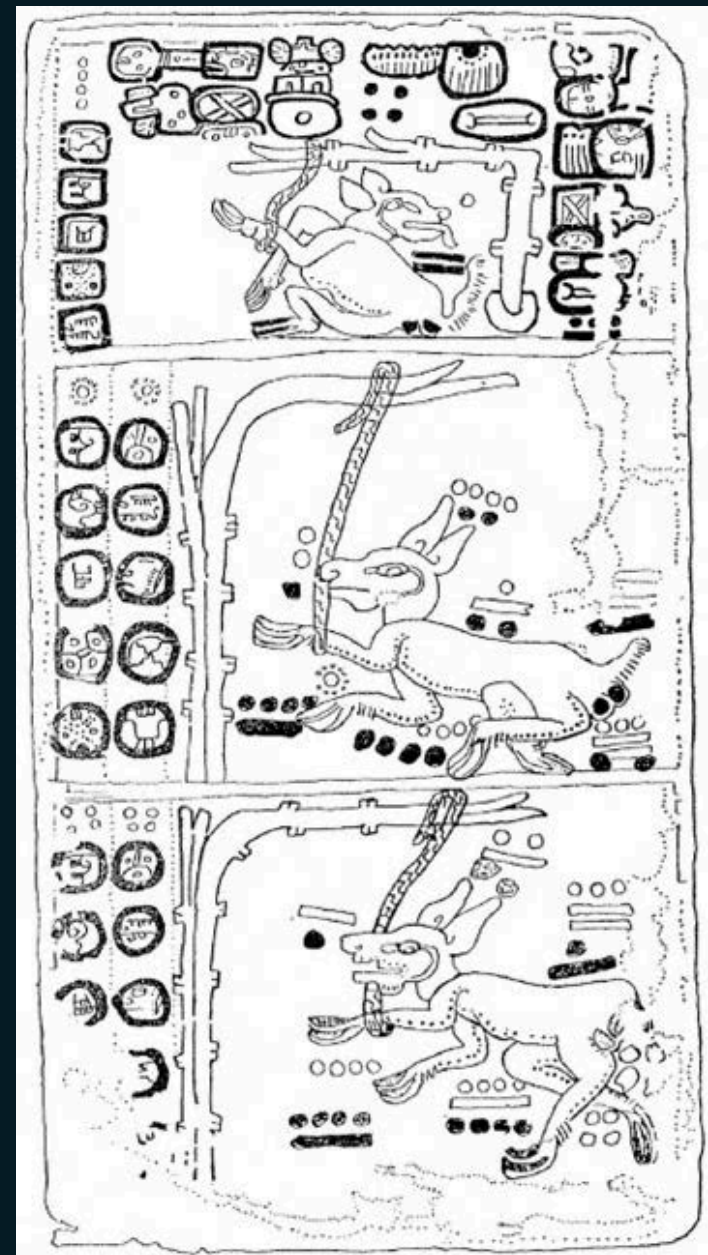


Fig. 111. Deer caught in a trap. Codex Madrid, page XLVI, Villacorta.

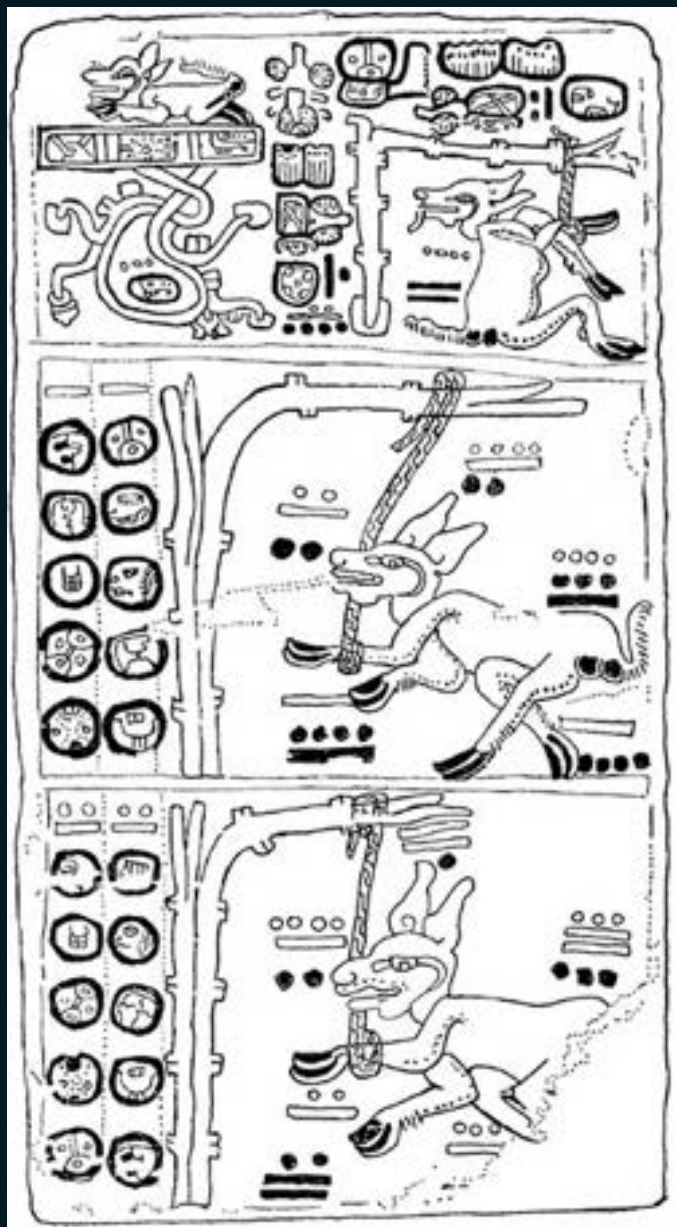


Fig. 112. Space shown on both sides of the eye are typical for Maya deer in the codices. Codex Madrid, page XLVII, Villacorta.

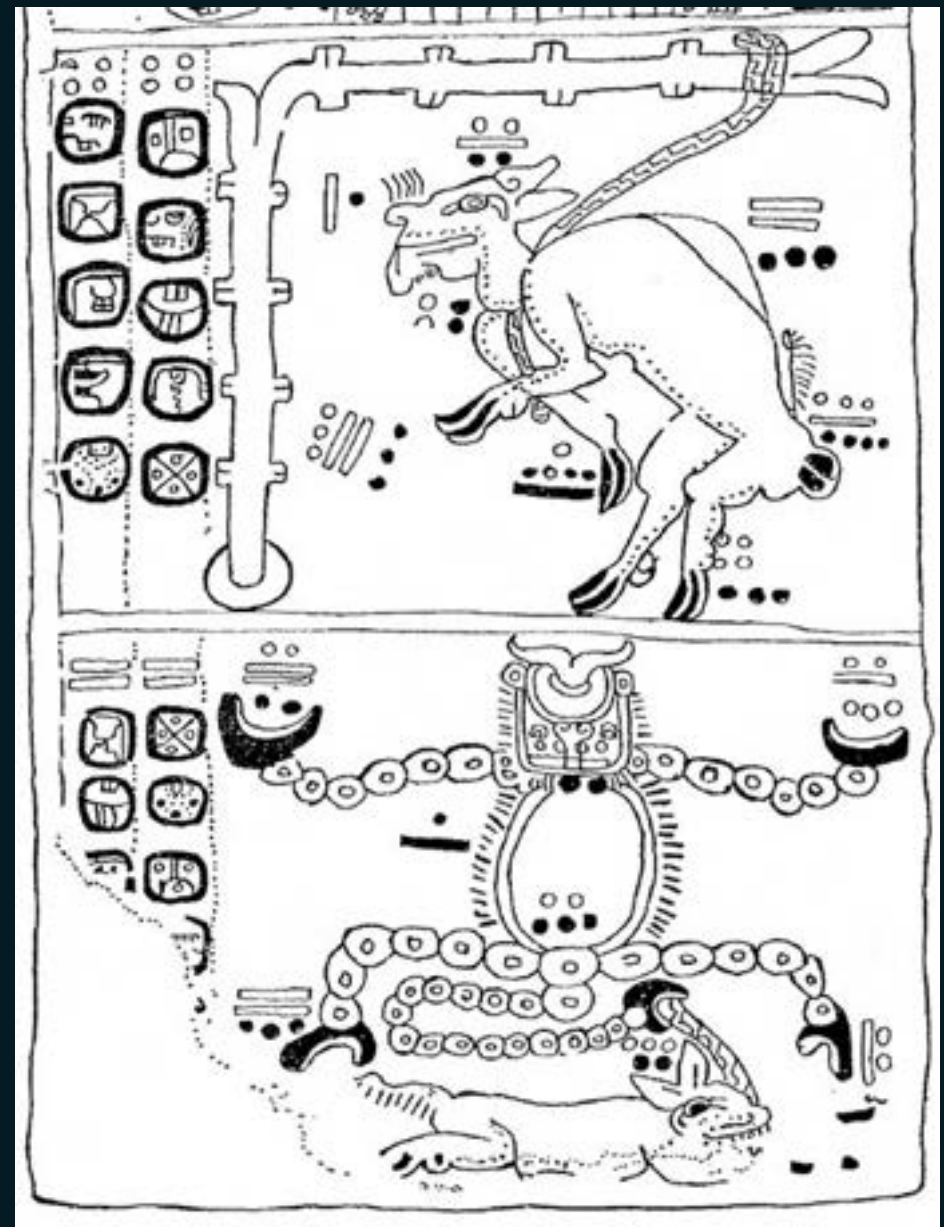


Fig. 113. Area on both ends of the eye are typical for Maya deer in the codices but not in Late Classic Peten. Codex Madrid, page XLVIII, Villacorta.

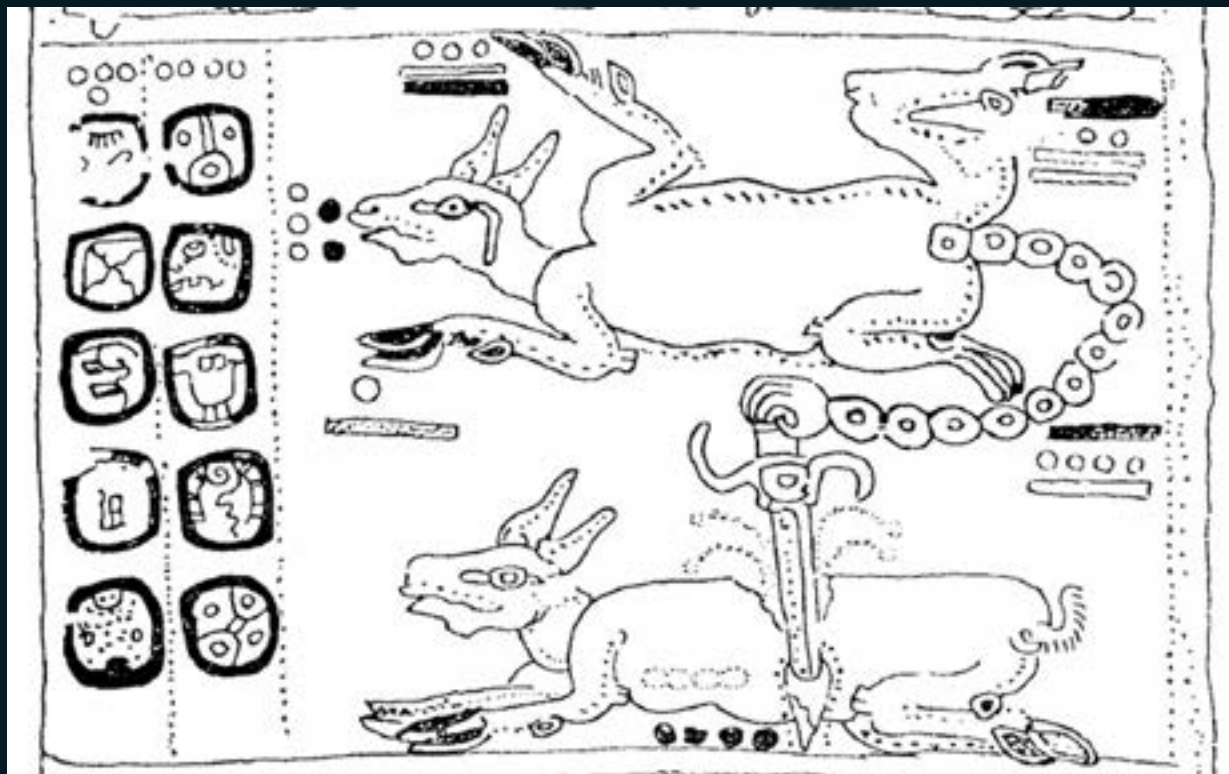


Fig. 114. Deer with scorpion tail cuts other deer in half. Both deer have “Codex eyes” and bump under their jaw. Madrid Codex, page XXXIX, Villacorta.



Fig. 115. Deer in Codex style atop a giant rattlesnake. Codex Madrid, page XIV, Villacorta.



Fig. 116. This deer is very afraid. God N above at the left, in his seashell. Codex Dresden, page LX, Villacorta.

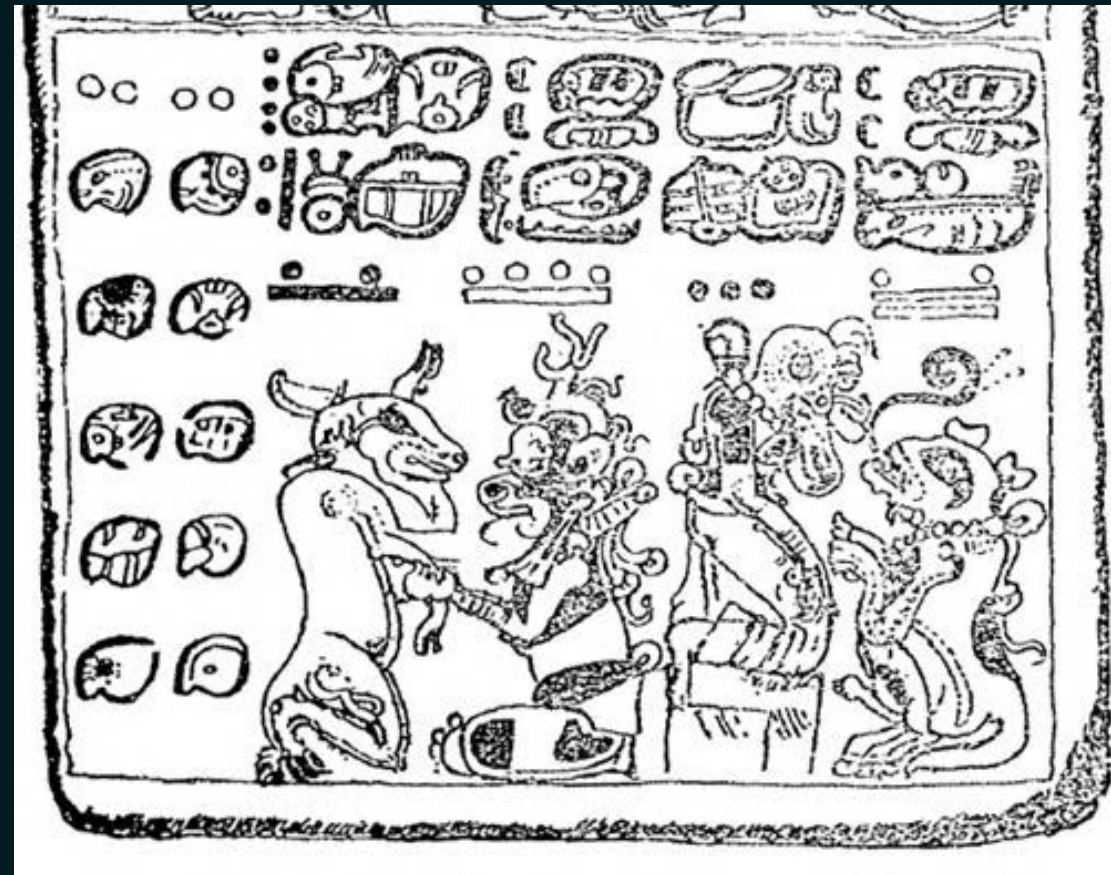


Fig. 117. Obvious deer at the left. The supernatural in front may have a deer antler. The glyph names the man with antlers as 7 Zip (Taube 2003). Codex Dresden, page XIII, Villacorta.

There are several editions of Villacorta and Villacorta. I use the drawings of Carlos Villacorta since by removing the color, especially the background, you can see the costume outfits and the other details better. There are several editions of the codices in facsimile (original photos of the actual codices) including by ADEVA, Graz, Austria but I find it easier to use the drawings by Villacorta.

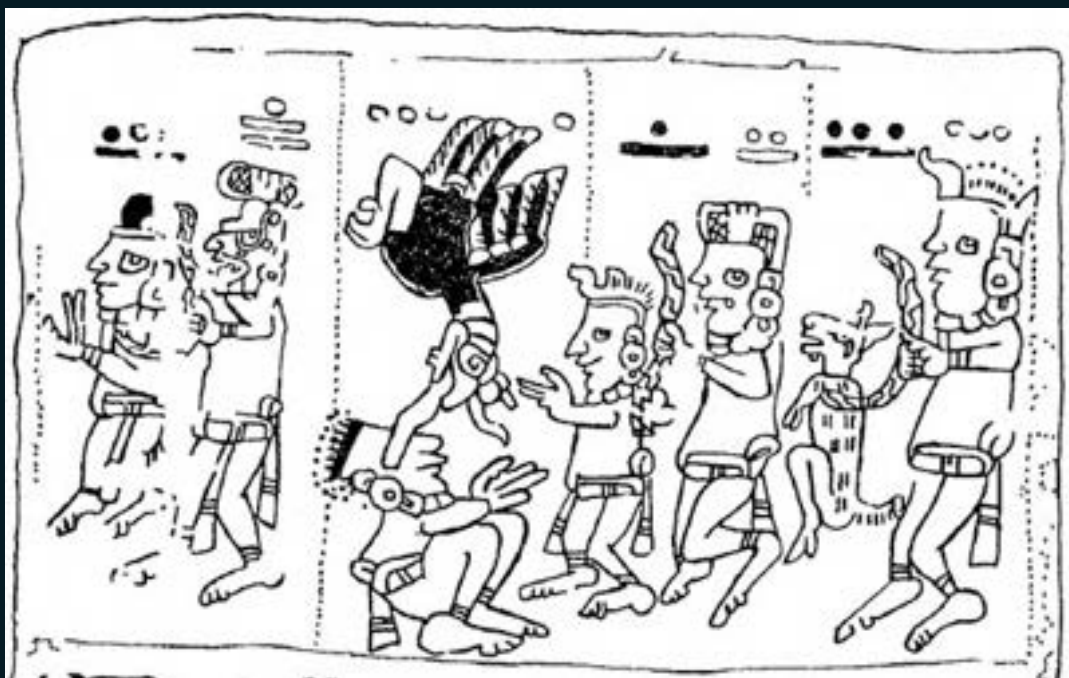


Fig. 118. Probable deer (head size, shape, eye form like deer in the codices). Feet lack black color of a hoof but that can be checked in a color version. Deer is held captive by Maya hunter.



Fig. 119. Deer hooves on front legs but not on back. But head and ears are acceptable for a deer. Eye is different. The deity at the far right is an obvious God L.

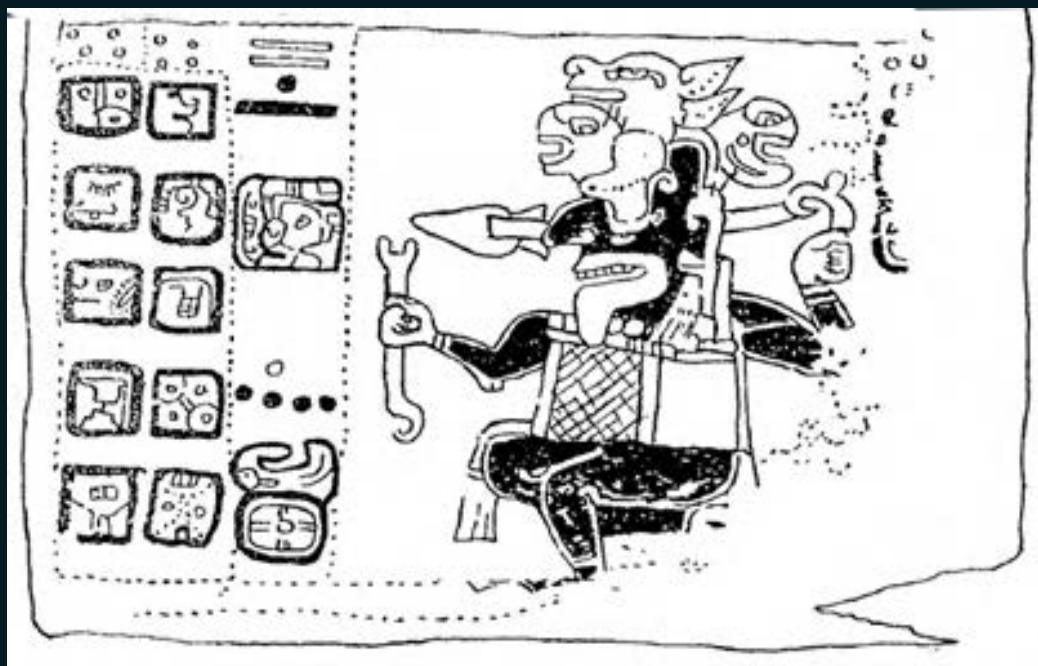


Fig. 120. Obvious deer head as headdress for the black-painted supernatural. Codex Madrid, page LI, Villacorta.

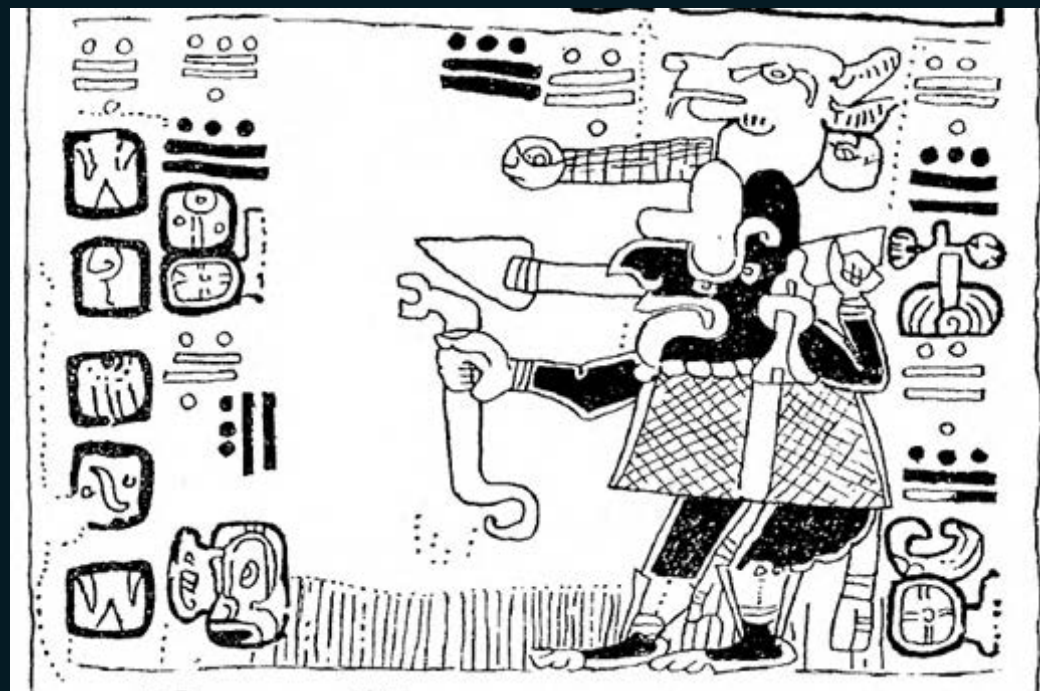


Fig. 121. Obvious deer head as headdress for the same black-painted supernatural. Codex Madrid, page L, Villacorta.

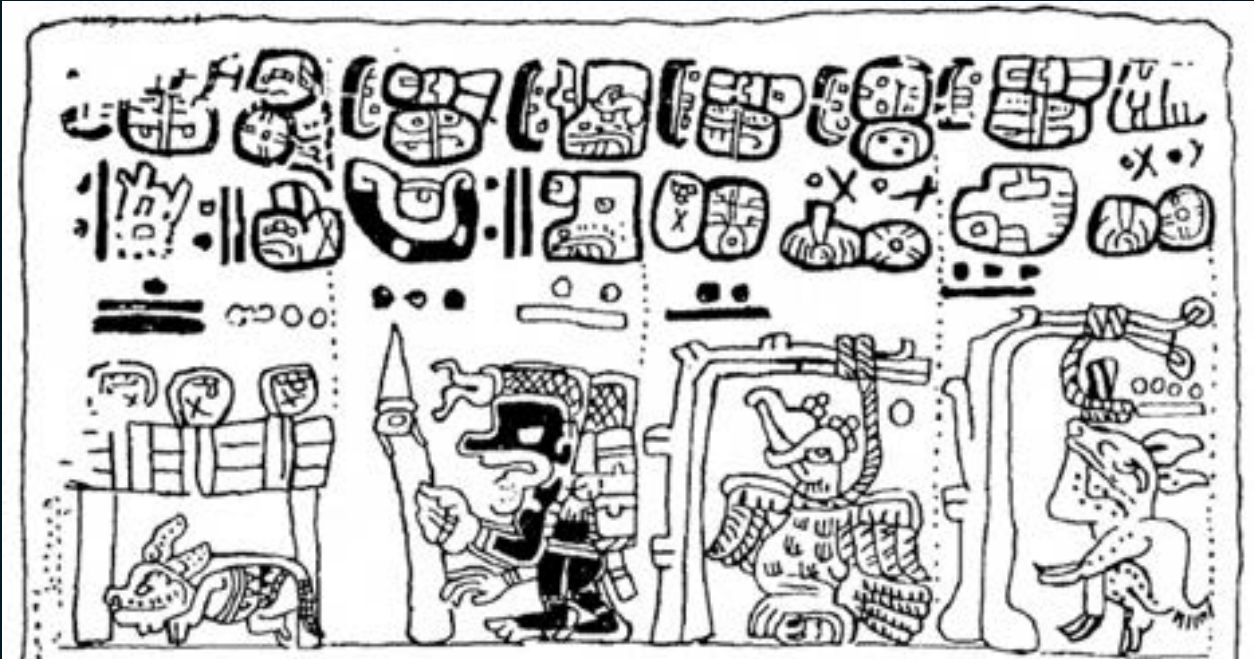


Fig. 122. Hoofs and furry tail, plus head size, shape, eyes, and ears, document the animal at the right as a deer. Animal at the left is an obvious armadillo whose iconography we have discussed in another FLAAR Reports. The bird is probably a turkey. Codex Madrid, page XCI, Villacorta.



Fig. 123. Third example from Codex Madrid of a deer headdress atop a black-painted supernatural. Page LXVIII, Villacorta.

The deer in the Codex Madrid are well known since copies of the codices are readily available on-line for many years.

In the middle the deer is shown as a sex symbol, with an erect penis. At the bottom are two deer each caught in a trap. At the upper left a deer is sprawled across something that is eroded over past centuries.

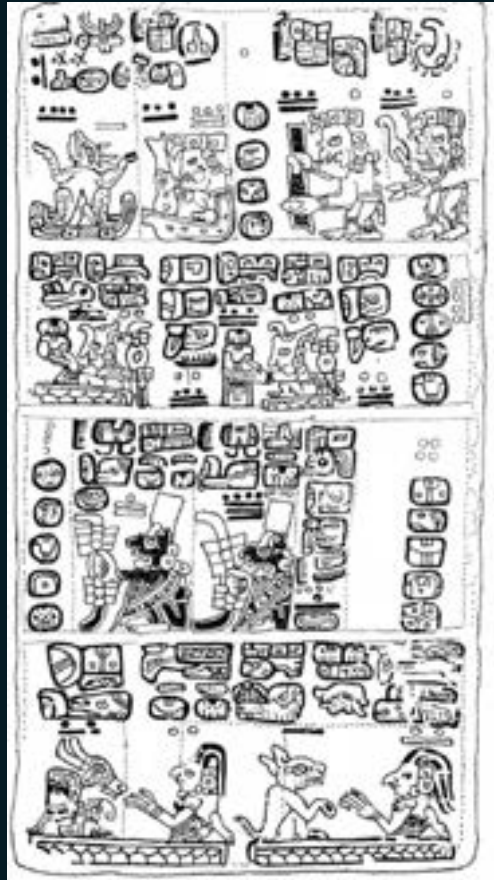


Fig. 124. Obvious deer hooves at upper left. Lower right has deer-like tail, ears, head, and two extensions on each side of the eye (tradition in Codex epoch style). Animal at the left is an armadillo. Codex Madrid, page XCII, Villacorta.



Fig. 125. Codex Madrid, page XLII, drawing by Carlos Villacorta in Villacorta and Villacorta. We usually abbreviate this reference in captions to save space.

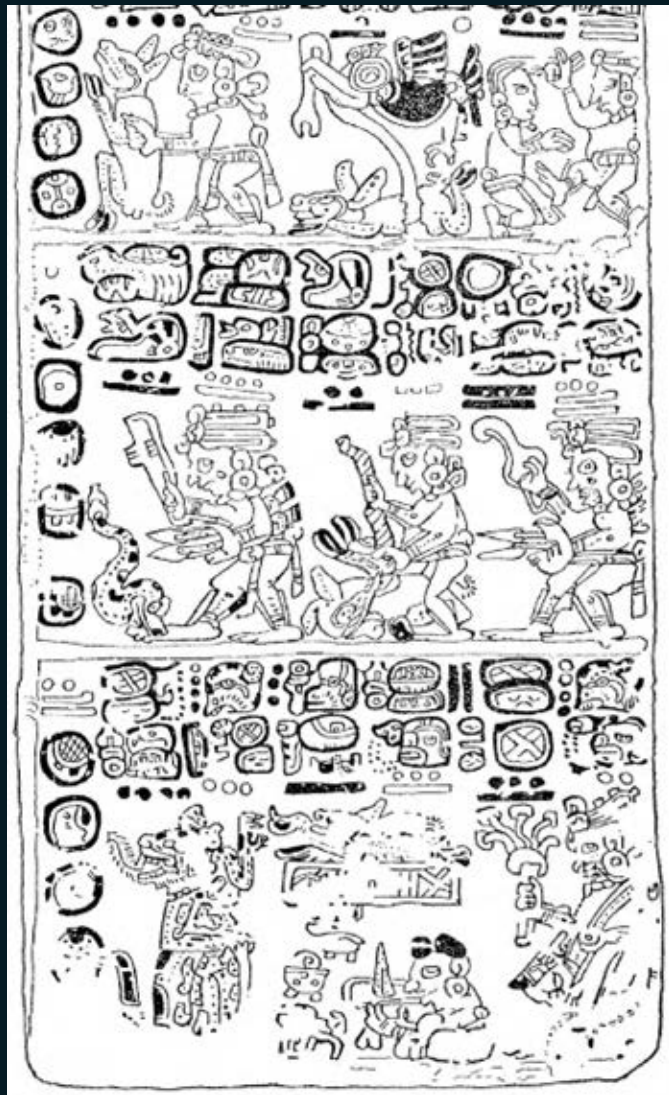


Fig. 126. Obviously two deer in upper area. Another deer is being tied up by hunter to carry him back to the village. Another deer is on top of the Sky Band (lower area, middle). The animal at the left is unlikely a deer. Codex Madrid, page XL, Villacorta.

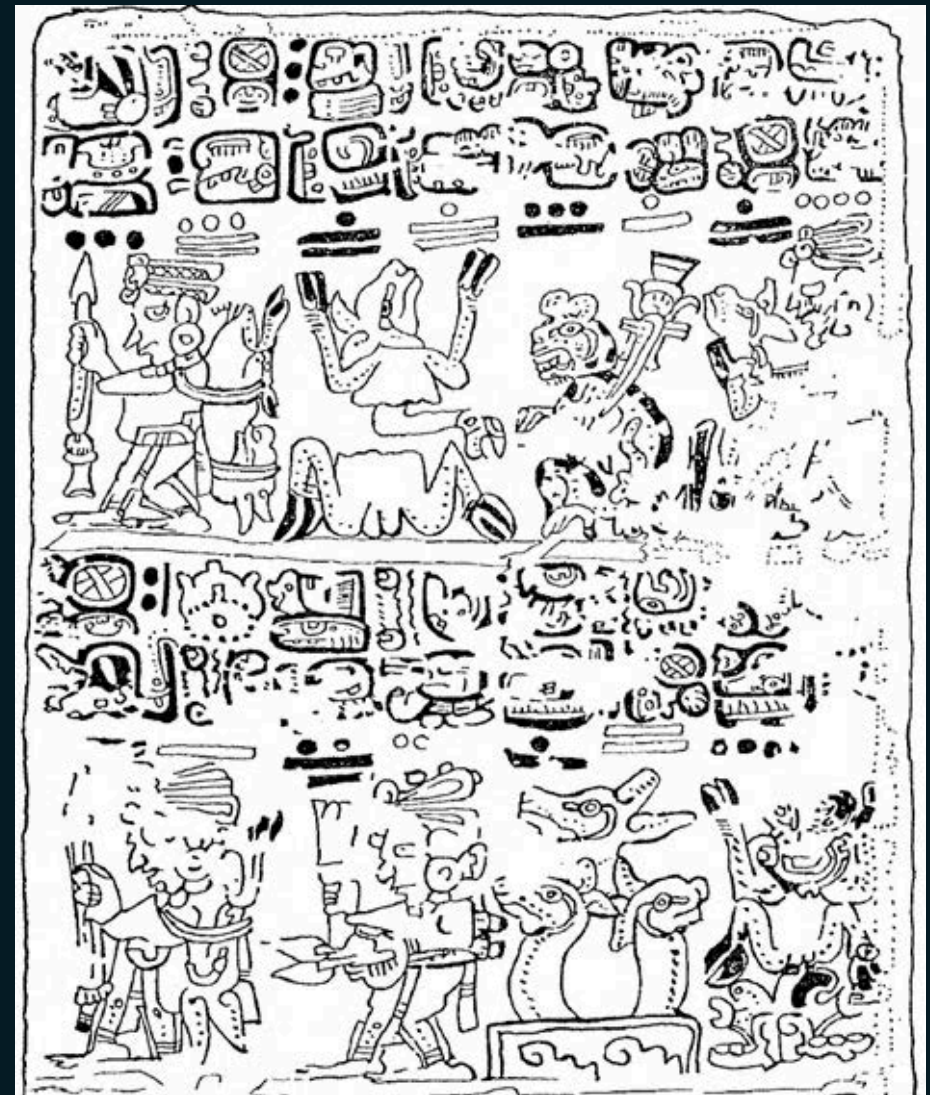


Fig. 127. Deer being carried by hunter at the top left. Deer chopped in half. Another deer poorly preserved at the right. At the bottom several more deer. Codex Madrid, page XLI, Villacorta.

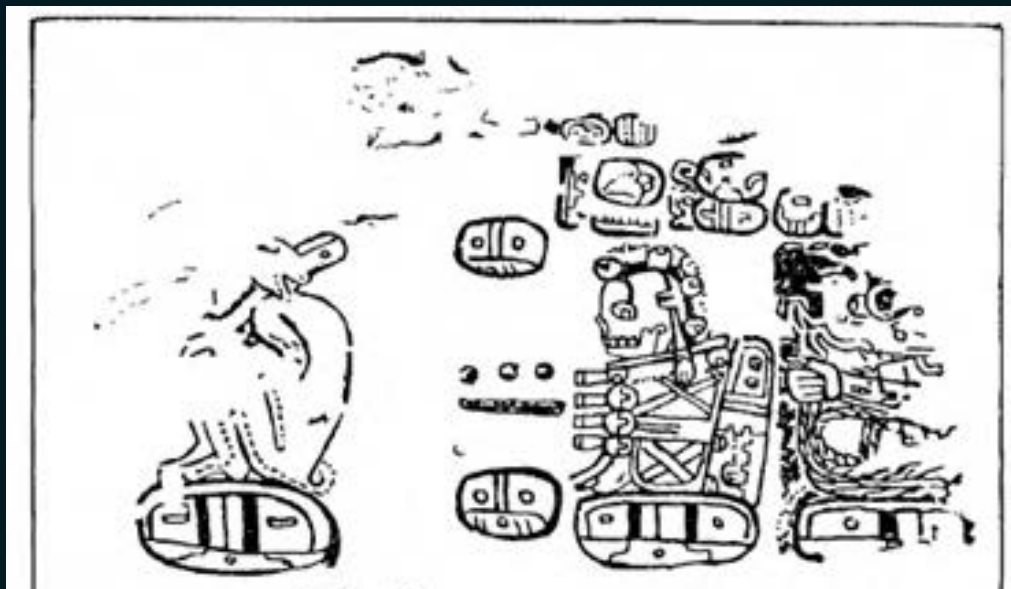


Fig. 128. Probable deer at the left. Codex Paris, page IV, Villacorta.



Fig. 129. The deer in the Paris Codex has the same geometric shape on both sides of the eye as do deer in the Codex Madrid. Codex Paris, page V, Villacorta.

Deer and Deer Hunting in the Maya Codices

Part II: Animals with Deer Hooves but Recurved Snout

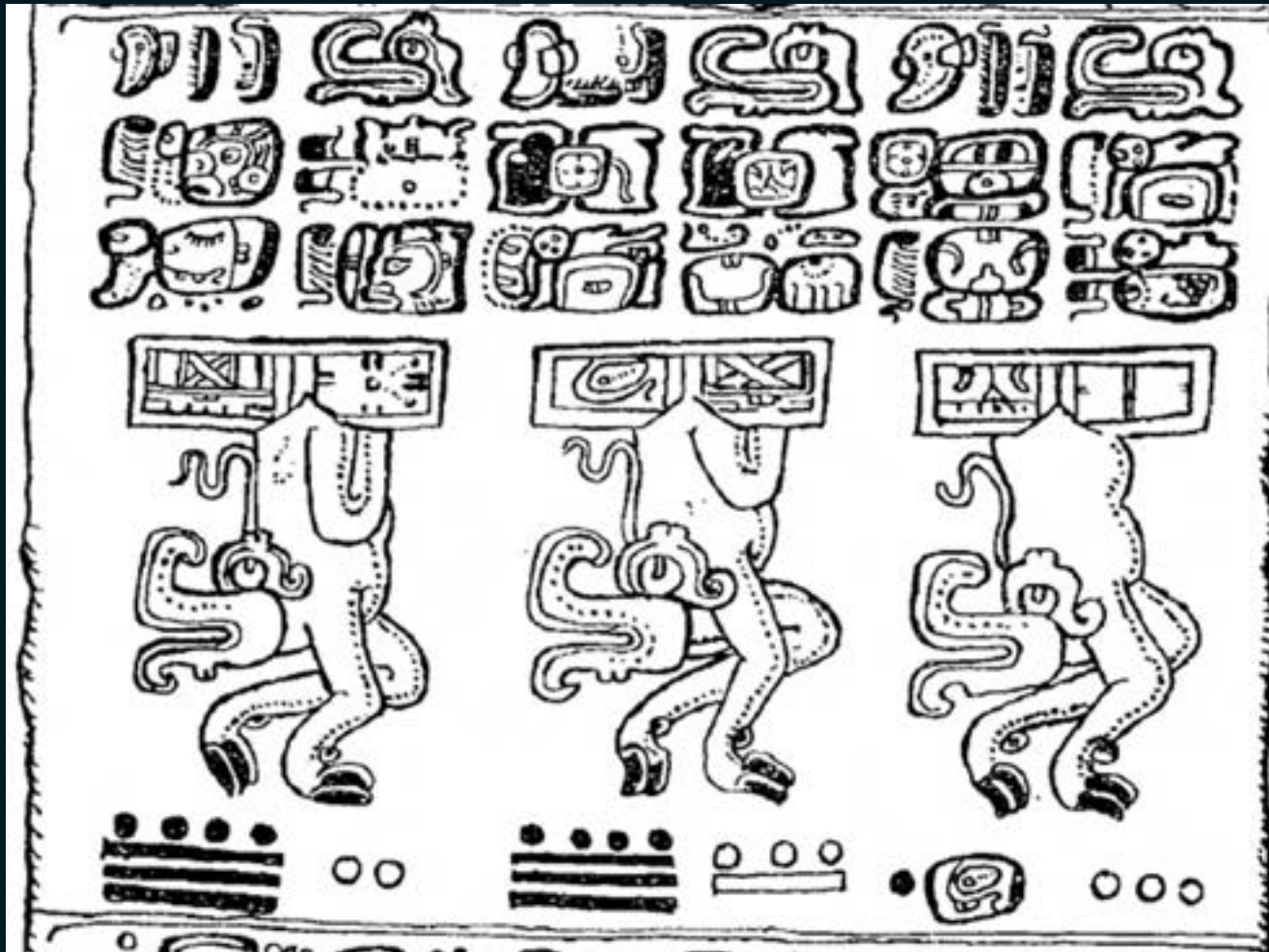


Fig. 130. There are three animal heads with recurved snouts in the top row of the hieroglyphs. This is not often found in hieroglyphic texts of the Classic (so before the collapse).

In the lower row there are three segments of a Sky Band. Each has a deer-like animal hanging from this celestial band. This “deer” has a totally different eye, no ear, but hooves and body size of a Maya deer.

The first glyph in each two-column text is the same. The second glyph in each two-column text is the head with upturned recurved snout.

Codex Dresden, page XLV, drawing by Carlos in Villacorta and Villacorta.



Fig. 131. Another “recurved-snout deer” hanging from a Sky Band. Codex Dresden, page LXVIII, Villacorta.

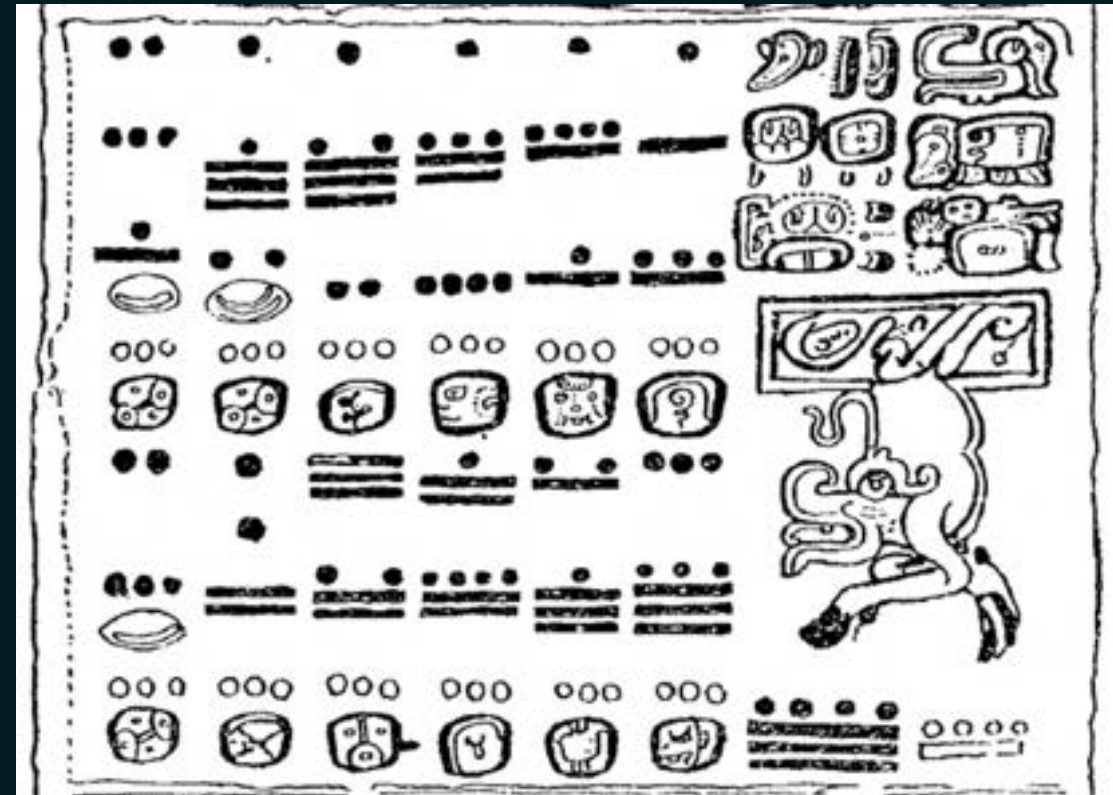


Fig. 132. Another “recurved-snout deer” hanging from a Sky Band. Why the face is distorted and the eye is raised up needs to be explained. Recurved-snout deer head in glyphic text above. Codex Dresden, page LXIV, Villacorta.

Deer and Deer Hunting in the Maya Codices, Part III: Probably Deer

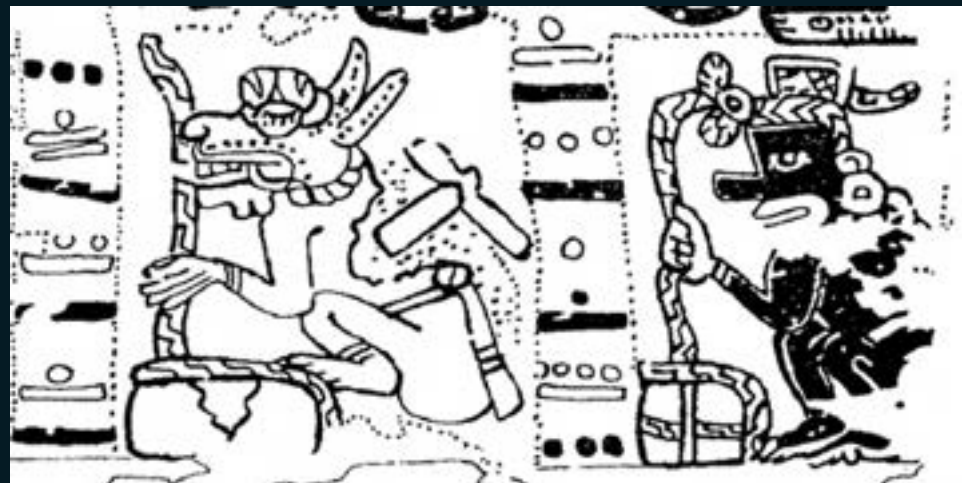


Fig. 133, a and b. No hooves, but head is approximate shape of a deer, and has a two-part bump under the jaw. But the eye is totally different and has a hieroglyphic feature on top. The ears are thinner. Each deer has been hit hard by an axe. Codex Madrid, page LIV to the left, page LV to the right. Villacorta.



Fig. 134. Probably a deer because it will be eaten. To the right is a turkey head. Codex Madrid, page LXIX, Villacorta.

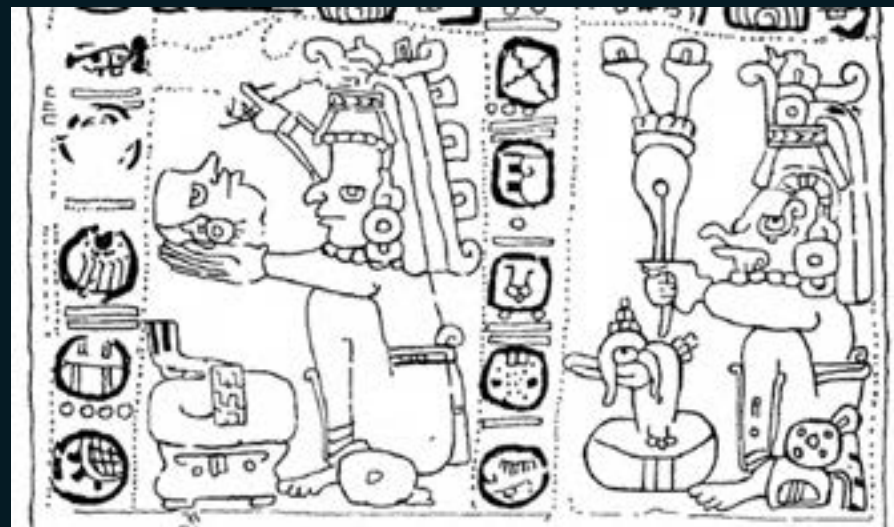


Fig. 135. Definitely a deer because of the hooves. To the right is a turkey. Codex Madrid, page LXV, Villacorta.

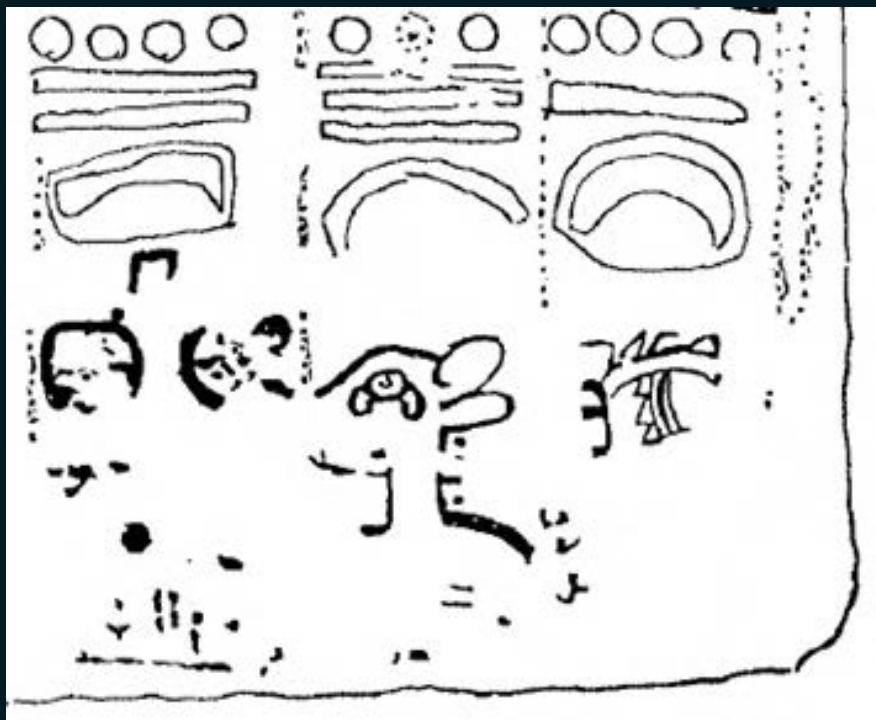


Fig. 136. Possible deer but not enough detail remaining to tell for sure. Codex Madrid, page LXXVII, Villacorta.



Fig. 137. Eye, head shape, size, and ears suggest a Maya codex-style deer, as a curious hieroglyph. Codex Madrid, page LXXVIII, Villacorta. Deer head in text also on Codex Paris, page X, that we show later.



Fig. 138. Two mammals in anthropomorphic pose. A prominent glyph covers their eye area. Probable deer but no hooves. Interesting that instead of hunters capturing deer, here the deer have captured humans.

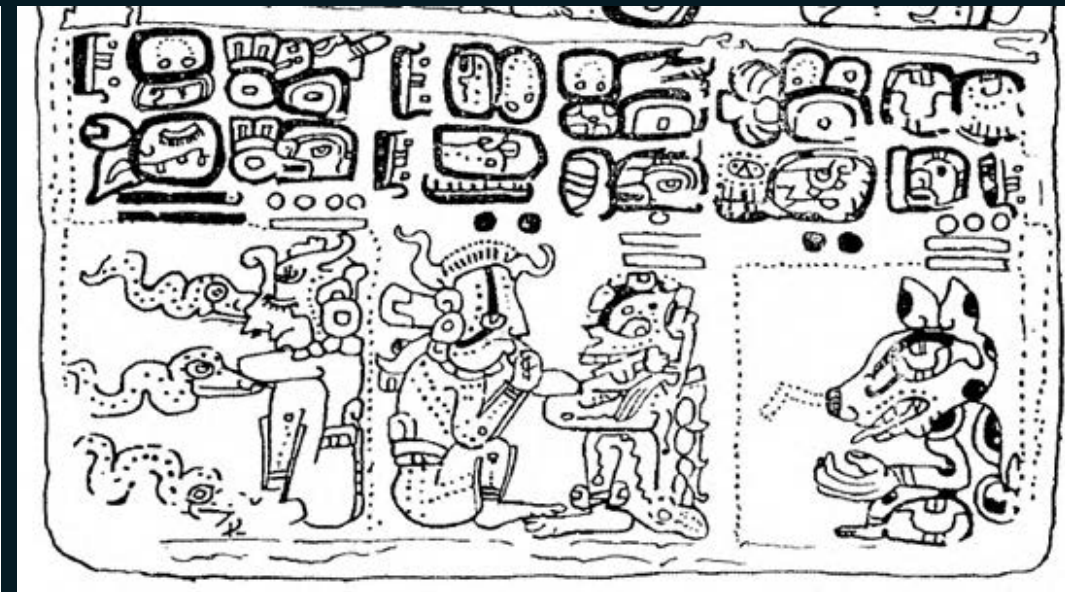


Fig. 139. There are several of these black-spotted animals in the Codex Madrid. The head is size and shape of a deer head, albeit different eyeball (with glyph inside) and ears are slightly smaller than expected.



Fig. 140. Another deer holding the hair of a captured human (top left). Another possible deer, although different face and body decoration, in front of a monkey. Codex Madrid, page LXXXVIII, Villacorta.

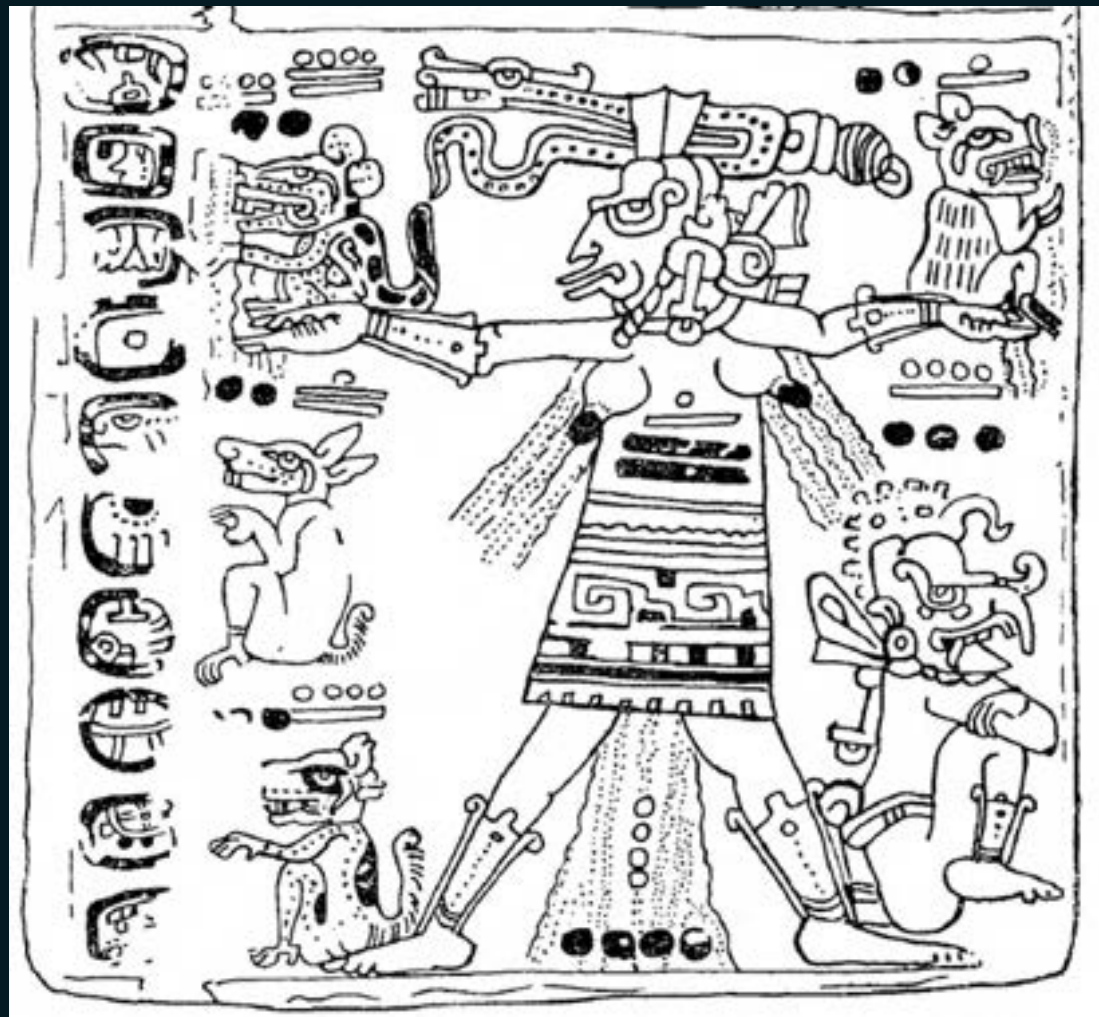


Fig. 141. Obvious peccary at top right. Deer at middle left even though no hooves. Animal below has tail similar to deer but not the long ears. Animal in the hand of the woman also has no deer ears and un-furry tail. Codex Madrid, page XXX, Villacorta.



Fig. 142. Probable deer playing a Maya ceramic drum. The spotted animal below has deer eye and tail but different body (the spots). Codex Madrid, page XXXVII, Villacorta.



Fig. 143. Codex Paris has thicker lines than Codex Madrid. A deer head is in column B of the hieroglyphic text.

Codex Paris, Page X, Villacorta.

Deer and Deer Hunting in the Maya Codices

Part IV: Potentially Deer but could be another Animal



Fig. 144. Has the blip under the jaw, that is common on Maya representations of deer in the codices. Has potentially deer-shaped ears, but tail is not deer-like. Has the same glyph in the eye area as several other animals in the codices. Codex Dresden, page VII, Villacorta.

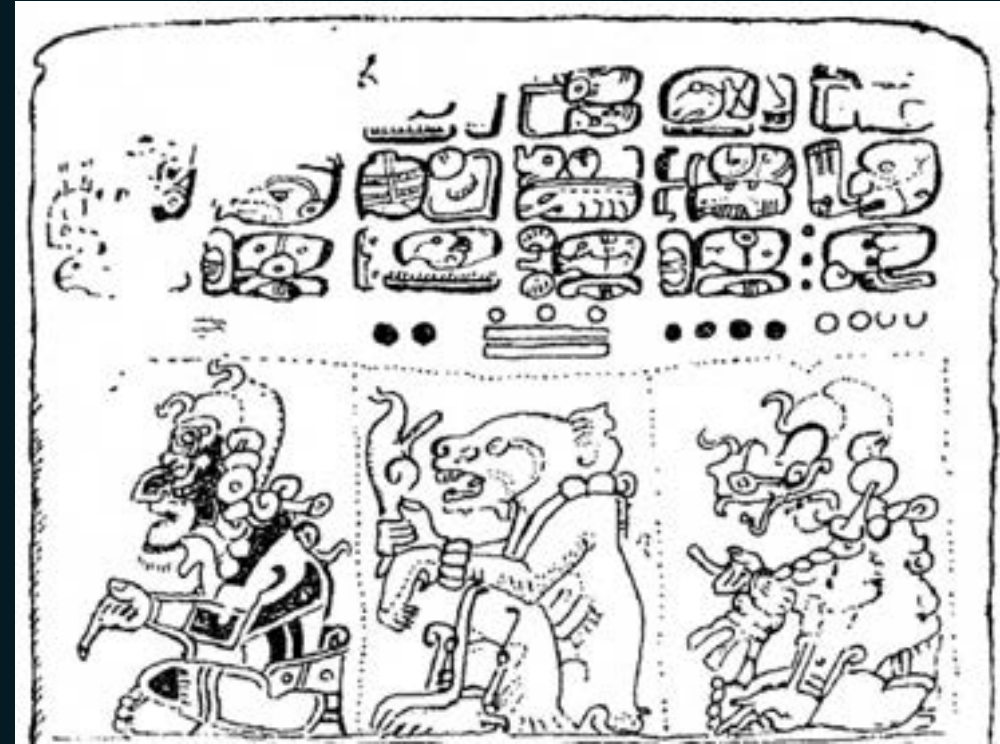


Fig. 145. Has claws not hooves, and ears not the shape of a deer, so more likely a dog or other animal. Codex Dresden, page VII, Villacorta.

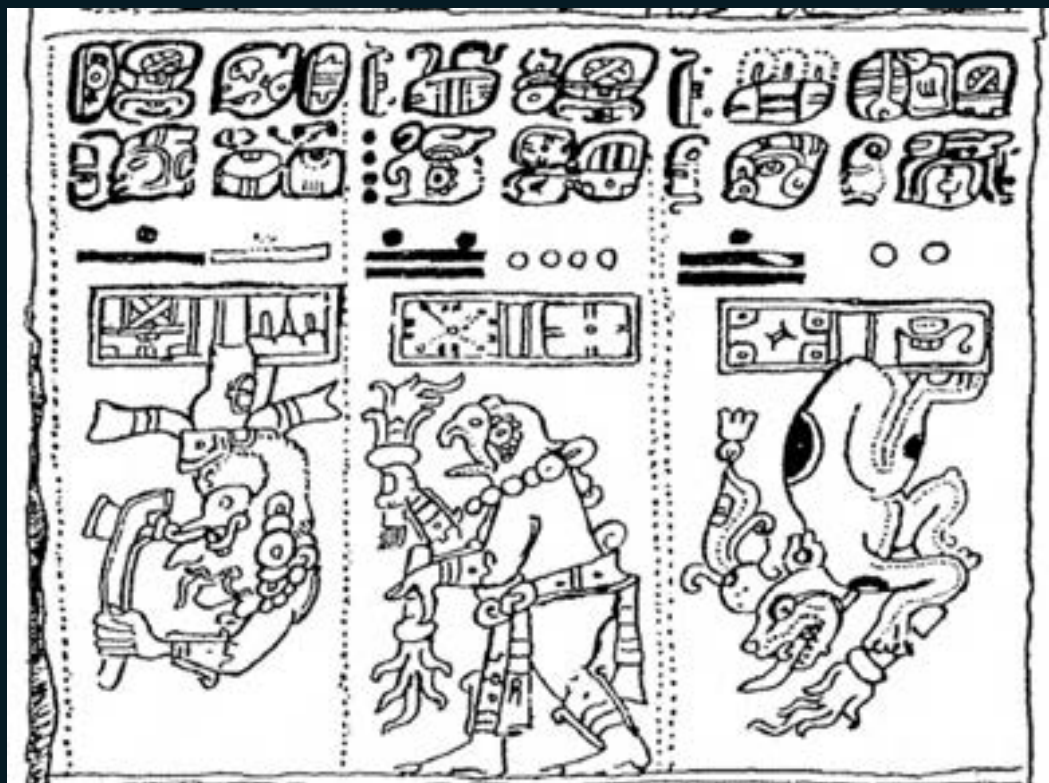


Fig. 146. Head is shorter than deer head, ears are different, as are paws. Possibly a dog. Codex Dresden, page XL, Villacorta.

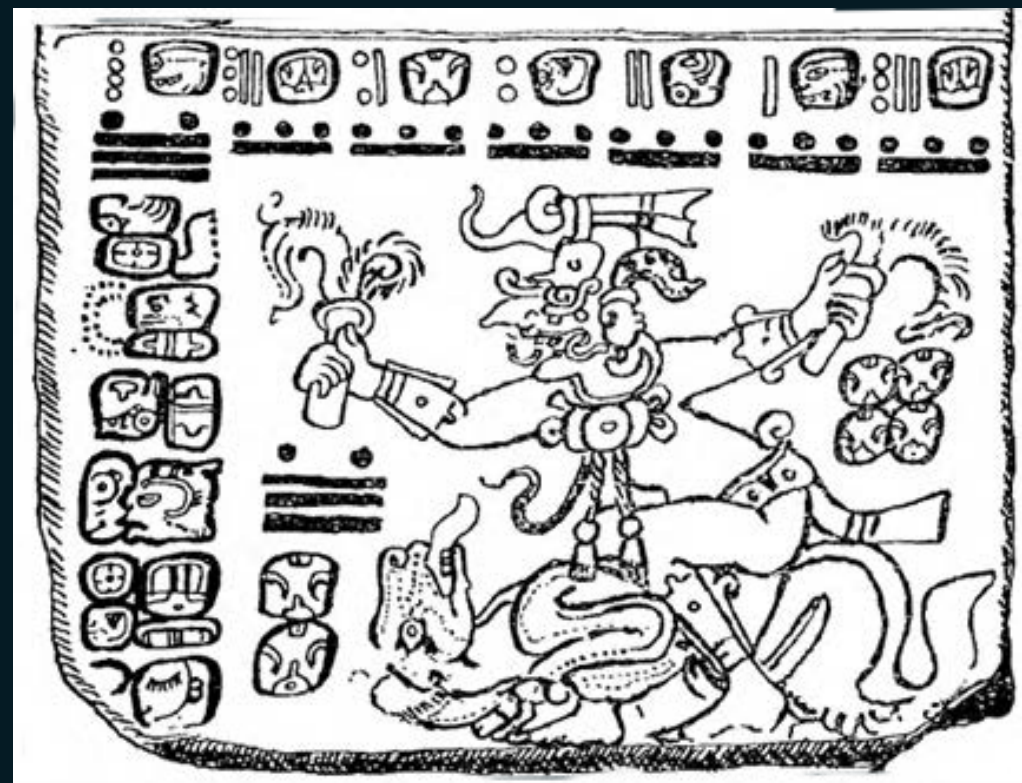


Fig. 147. This animal is more likely a deer. Codex Dresden, page XLV, Villacorta.



Fig. 148. Possible deer, but possibly not. Codex Dresden, page XLVII, Villacorta.

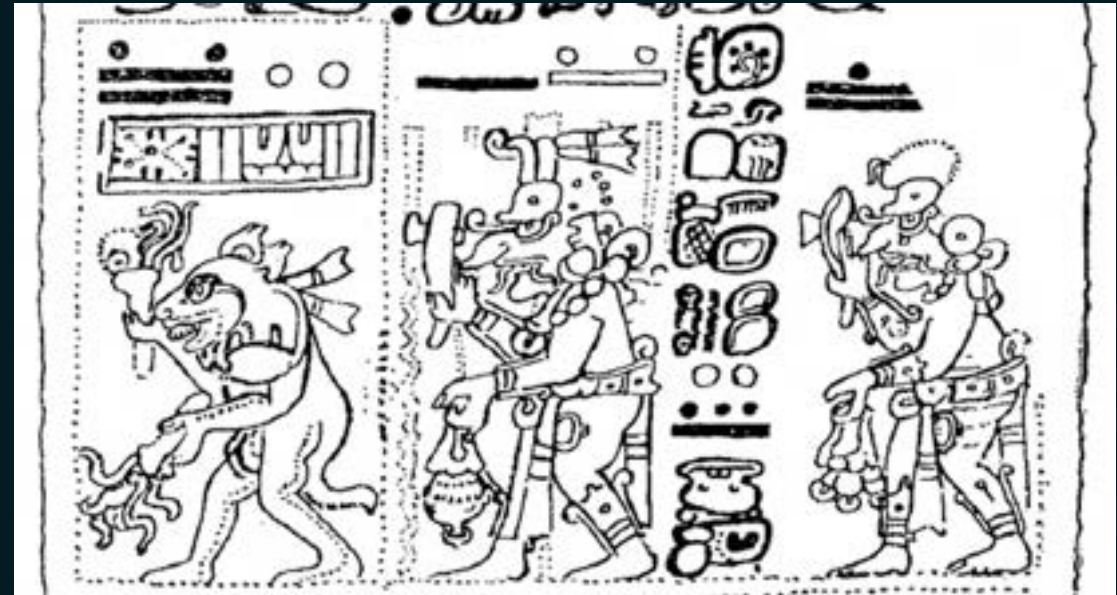


Fig. 149. Tail and areas on both sides of the eye are deer-like, but ears are shorter as is the head. Codex Dresden, page XXXIX, Villacorta.

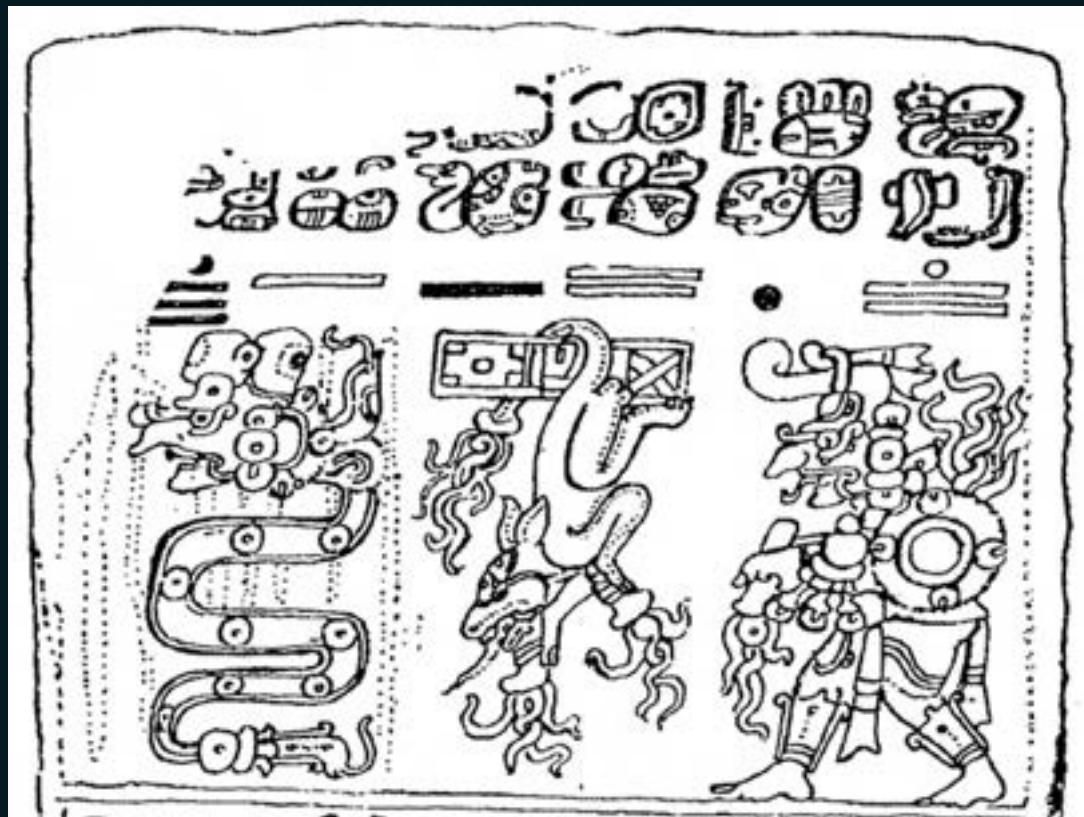


Fig. 150. Tail is too long, eye is different, and paws are not deer hooves. Codex Dresden, page XXXVI, Villacorta.



Fig. 151. The animal at the right has hoof-like front legs, so probably a deer. Codex Madrid, page LXVI, Villacorta.

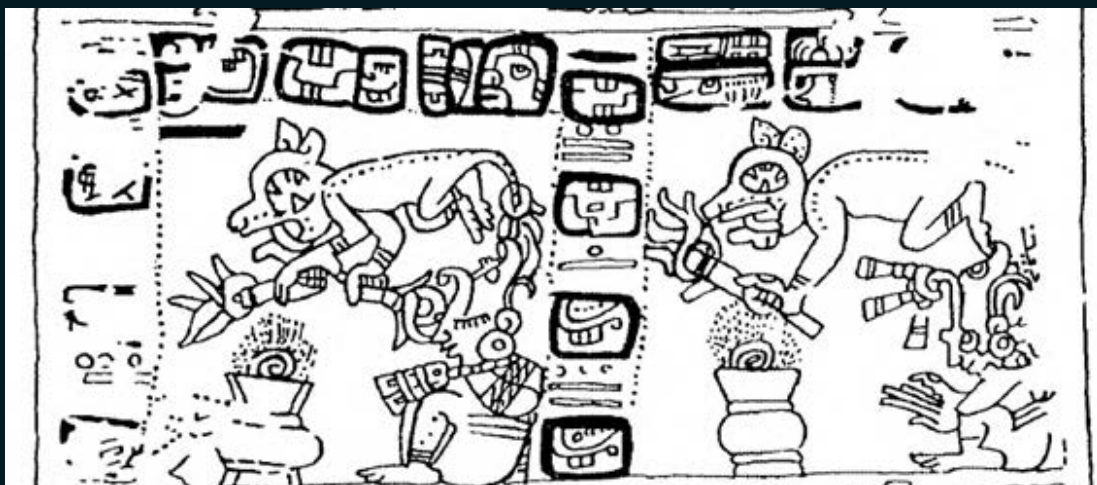


Fig. 152. Head is rather short for a deer and no hoof.
Codex Madrid, page XXIV, Villacorta.

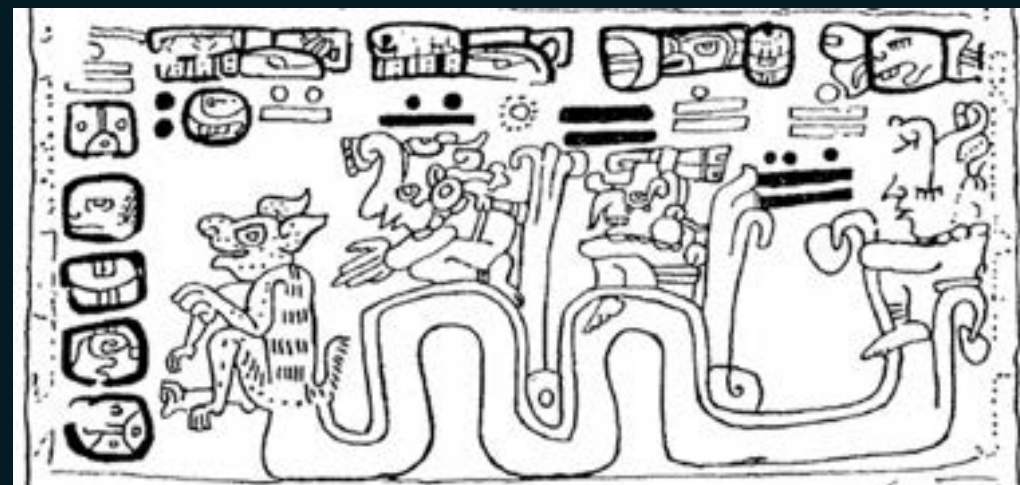


Fig. 153. Deer-like furry tail, deer-like ears, but eyes are large and round and head is not as long as expected for a Maya deer (plus no hooves). Codex Madrid, page XXIX, Villacorta.

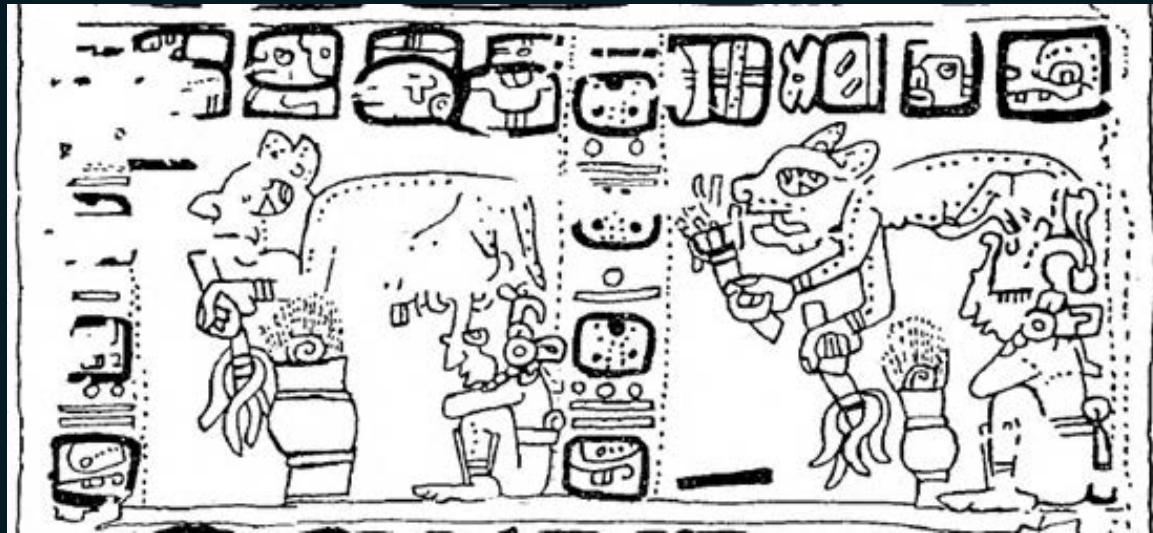


Fig. 154. Not likely deer. Codex Madrid, page XXV, Villacorta.



Fig. 155. The animal in bottom row is more deer-like than the two animals above. But other animals with wide black areas are also in the codices. Codex Madrid, page XXV, Villacorta.

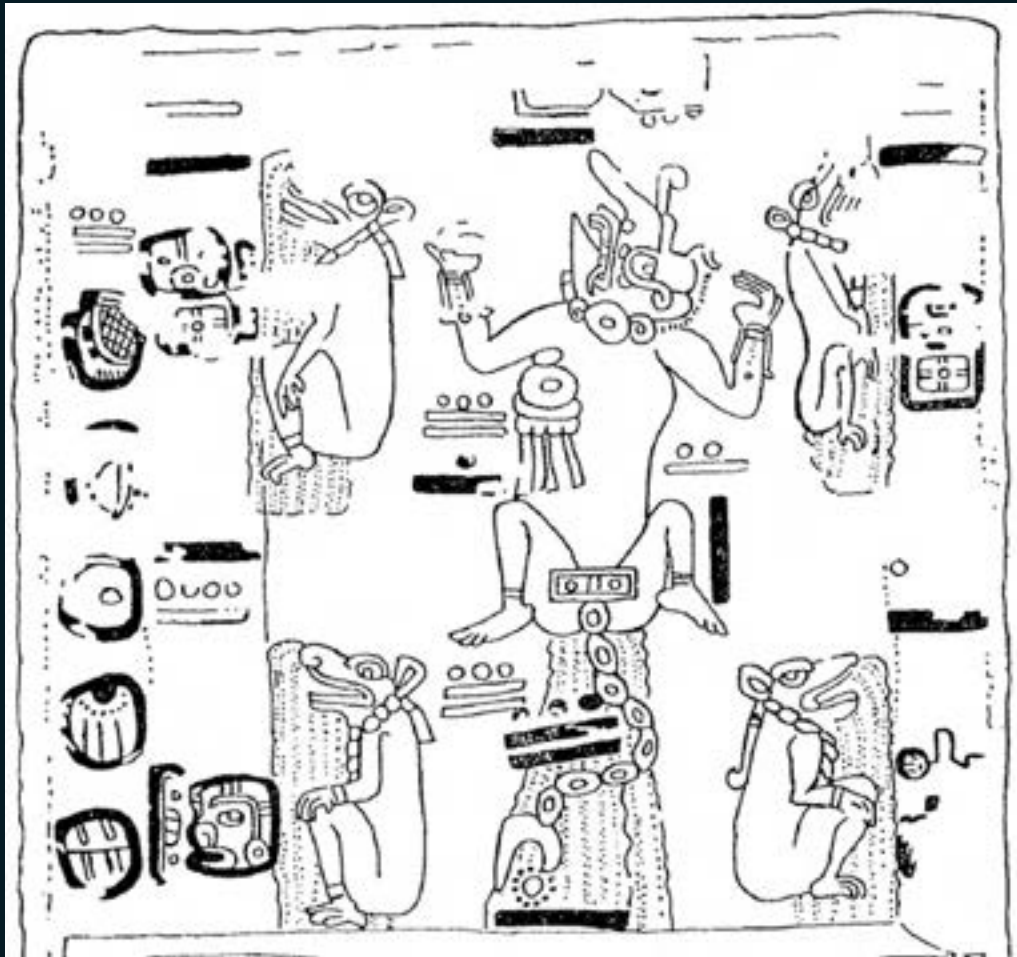


Fig. 156. Anthropomorphism may be reason for no deer hooves, but eye shape and ear size are also different. Codex Madrid, page XXI, Villacorta.



Fig. 157. Animal in middle has head of deer size and shape, but longer tail and no hooves. Small animal above is potential deer but ears are too short. Animal with black areas has deer eye, head size, and ears. Codex Madrid, page XXXVI, Villacorta.

Summary and Conclusions

This is the first time in decades of studying Maya art that I came up with the idea to show complex scenes on plates separated out as a rollout photo or rollout drawing. Having the images in a horizontal row can help iconographers see everything that is going on in the scene. Matthew Looper had already showed a nice “rollout of hunters on a plate” in his 2019 monograph on deer in Maya culture.

Since deer have been thoroughly studied by Matthew Looper, and since several of the rollouts, like the Highland procession scenes with a palanquin, have been published many times, my main goal has been to search through the FLAAR Photo Archive to find scenes not in the Kerr Maya Vase Data Base. Once Dumbarton Oaks has scanned all 30,000 color slides even more examples will be available to colleagues and students around the world.

One discovery that surprised me was finding a long-beaked bird in so many of the deer hunting scenes. And in one scene the bird is clearly treated as a potential meal. In all the other scenes the bird is everywhere but not noticeably being hunted. Does the bird want to eat the entrails that the hunters will hack out of the body before taking it home? These are not vultures but this question should be asked of an ornithologist. Yet these birds are neither owls nor hawks nor eagles.

The Post Classic codices show traps but no use of nets. The Tepeu 1 and Tepeu 2 Maya surely used traps but in the hunting scenes the Maya show only nets.

Most Peten Maya deer hunters wear derby or bowler type of hat, without a wide brim. Some deer hunters wear deer antlers, deer ears, or an entire deer head.

The spears are usually unexpectedly long but still seem to be thrown with the help of an atlatl. Only one deer hunter carries a blowgun. Blowguns were used mainly to hunt birds (like the Principal Bird Deity).

Conch shells are carried by many hunters, often to celebrate their success as a hunter. Yes, a conch shell is a generic musical instrument, used in many ceremonies and situations, so merely carrying a conch shell does not always mean you are a hunter. That said, the presence of conch shells with hunters does connect the two. For example,

- there are no conch shells in the row of musicians at Bonampak (Miller 1988).
- Chama parades of animal-costumed musicians do not feature conch shells

Conch shells are frequent in:

- Red Band Tepeu 1 style parades of wayob animals including deer and Xibalba death demons. You can see the obvious association of deer and conch shells in Part II of the current deer iconography publication. Scene after scene show conch shells musical instruments carried by skeletal demons, often with deer anglers or deer head associated. The incised peccary skull of Copan shows the same association of conch shells and deer, especially the skeletal demon. On both Kerr rollout K3924 and K1559 a deer even has a conch shell affixed to the underside of his belly.
- Conch shells are frequently held by Zip-related deer-patron deities issuing from deer-eared-serpents on many Codex Style vases. In the many scenes where the snake monsters have no deer ear and no deer antler the deities in the serpent's fanged jaws have no conch shells.

Matthew Looper shows a vase from the Art Institute of Chicago (2019: Fig. 4.9). This scene deserves a rollout or a full-page size presentation.

Giant conch shell is usually present in Nebaj-style parade scenes where a lord is carried in a palanquin with a dog beneath.

Conch shells cut in half are well known to be used to hold paint for scribes and artists. And mythical conch shells are frequently where God N resides—he is not often associated with deer.

A totally unexpected additional association of conch shells with deer is shown at helpful size and in color by Looper and Polyukhovych (2018: Figs. 1 and 2) and in black-and-white in Looper 2019: Fig. 4.9. This scene is so crucial that we show it below at a healthy size so you can see more details.

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Fig. 158, a and b. The Art Institute of Chicago, Vase 2009.735, photos by Matthew Looper (Looper and Polyukhovych 2018: Figs. 1 and 2).

This is a scene that I have never seen before: idealized youthful Maize-God-like individual with deer ear and deer antlers holding a large conch shell. In front of this elite or supernatural individual is a bundle with a giant deer ear with Caban squiggle (same motif as on the deer ear above). I show this to document the direct association of conch shell with deer. Obviously conch shells have additional associations but the clear connection with deer is shown here. What is needed is a rollout drawing or at least photos of the other sides of this remarkable scene. Fortunately The Art Institute of Chicago has published, in public domain, views of all sides of this vase, that we show below.



Fig. 159, a, b, c, and d. The snout is more crocodile-like than a snake. It has deer antler and deer ear with Caban motif. But the tail end is a clearly defined God K—so same as many of the giant snake monsters on Codex Style vases that we show in Part II of the four-volume series on iconography of Maya deer. Thus the front would be expected to be a snake more than a crocodile. Yes this composite creature is bicephalic—but the Bicephalic Cosmic Monster usually has a Quadripartite Badge Headdress monster at the tail end (and usually upside down)—and usually has a Sky Band as a body, plus often has deer hooves when one face is a Starry-Eyed-Deer (no celestial symbol is the crocodile/snake face on this present vase). Either way, what counts is the association of a conch shell with deer ears and deer antlers.

Each artist has a different manner of showing the fur of a deer or the fur on its tail. But some artists don't add fur marks to the deer.

A probable deer deity is shown on the Actun Balam vase and in other scenes as a headdress. Further study needs to be advanced to ascertain whether this is the same old deity as is shown on many Codex Style vases dying in bed with females and deer nearby. These we show in the volume (Part II) featuring rollout photographs of scenes with deer. I estimate that there are at least two Maya deer patrons—one with an elongated lower lip/jaw (headdress on K4626 is a potential example; K1373 is another). Lots of examples are pictured by Hellmuth 1996c: Appendix.

A few deer hunters wear a deer hide on their lower body (Red Rim Tepeu 1 Style vase). Lots of ballplayers wear a deer hide on their lower body. Parading people usually wear the deer hide on their upper body.

Part IV of our FLAAR Reports on the iconography of deer in Maya art shows ballgame players that wear hats that remind me of hunters' hats. And several ballplayers wear a deer head as a headdress. Part I of this series shows deer and deer headdresses not in hunting or ballgame scenes.

There is a lot more detail on Maya deer hunters in several Hellmuth reports of year 1996 especially 1996c.

References Cited and additional Suggested Reading

CHINCHILLA Mazariegos, Oswaldo

1996 Settlement Patterns and Monumental Art at a Mayor Pre-columbian Polity, Cotzumalguapa, Guatemala. PhD dissertation, Vanderbilt University. 541 pages.

So far the only website that has it as a download demands money to even look at it. So I have no way to comment on his drawings. Fortunately he seems to have sent me a copy many years ago, so now I can see his drawing Fig. 8.13 has the deer from Ajaxa Monument 1.

CHINCHILLA Mazariegos, Oswaldo

1998 A Corpus of Cotzumalhuapa-Style Sculpture, Guatemala. FAMSI. 63 pages.

It is helpful that the hundreds of FAMSI reports are still available long after FAMSI phased itself out. <http://www.famsi.org/reports/96008/96008Chinchilla01.pdf>

CHINCHILLA Mazariegos, Oswaldo

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COE, Michael D.

1973 The Maya Scribe and his World. Grolier Club.

DÍAZ del Castillo, Bernal

2010 The Memoirs of the Conquistador Bernal Diaz del Castillo, Vol 2. E-book on Gutenberg.org

This book title is also known as The True History of the Conquest of New Spain. There are many editions, in Spanish, and in English. So many dates and many publishers.

GÓMEZ, Erika Magali

2004 Iconographic Study of Tiquisate Vessels with Molded Decoration, South Guatemala Coast. FAMSI. 15 pages.

Easy download: <http://www.famsi.org/reports/03101/69erika/69erika.pdf> I put 2004 as the date as that was the date of presentation at XVIII Simposio.

GÓMEZ, Erika Magali

2005 Estudio iconográfico en vasijas Tiquisate con decoración moldeada, Costa Sur de Guatemala. In XVIII Simposio de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Guatemala, 2004 (edited by J. P. Laporte, B. Arroyo and H. Mejía), pp.712-723. Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, Guatemala.

Spanish version of the English language from FAMSI. Easy download: <https://www.mesoweb.com/Simposio/pdf/18/Gomez.2005.pdf>

GOMEZ González, Erika Magali

2006 Estudio Iconográfico de la cerámica Tiquisate Moldeada de la Costa Sur de Guatemala. Thesis for Licenciatura, USAC, Guatemala. 176 pages in the PDF.

Helpful download on-line.

GOMEZ González, Erika Magali

2011 Las Ofrendas de Cotzumalguapa, Guatemala, en el Clásico Tardío (650/700-1000 d.C.). Dissertation. 152 numbered pages.

<https://comum.rcaap.pt/bitstream/10400.26/28819/1/TesisFinalErikaMGomez.pdf>

HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.

1976 Tzakol and Tepeu Pottery Paintings. Foundation for Latin American Anthropological Research. Portfolio of rollout drawing by Barbara Van Heusen, Persis Clarkson and Lin Crocker.

We will have this portfolio on-line by late January 2025 or February as a no-cost download.

HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.

1996b Hunting pictured on Early Classic Maya Pottery: cylindrical tripods and basal flange bowls. Foundation for Latin American Anthropological Research, Cocoa, Florida (Brevard Community College).

60 numbered pages + 35 unnumbered pages of photos and drawings = 95 pages.

Third volume on deer hunting scenes in order to document what are “hunting clothing, accessories, etc.”

HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.

1996c Headdresses and Skirts shared by Deer Hunters and Ballplayers. Foundation for Latin American Anthropological Research, Cocoa, Florida (Brevard Community College). 86 numbered pages + v pages of frontmatter + 55 unnumbered pages of photos and drawings = 146 pages.

After the three photo essays on deer hunters comes the summary publication to document their relationship with one of the variants of the Classic Maya ballgame, namely, that “some ballgames had players dressed as deer hunters... so was the game a hunt for deer with the “deer” to become a sacrificed ballplayer?” Or was the deer hunt aspect without human sacrifice and just a celebration of a successful deer hunt?

HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.

1996d The Old Deer Hunter and the Woman Riding the Mythical Deer. THE ACTUN BALAM VASE, Belize, Tepeu 3 and the Prototype Actun Balam Scene, Peten, Tepeu 1. 38 pages. FLAAR.

HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.

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2019 The Beast Between, The Deer in Maya Art. University of Texas Press. 288 pages.

MILLER, Mary

1988 The Boys in the Bonampak Band. Chapter 11, pages 318-330, in Maya Iconography, Elizabeth P. Benson and Gillett G. Griffin, editors. Princeton University Press.

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1956 The Ancient Maya. 3rd edition. Stanford University Press.

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2022 The Fox and the Armadillo: An Inquiry into Classic Maya “Animal” Categories. Ancient Mesoamerica, 23 pages.

PENDERGAST, David M.

1969 The Prehistory of Actun Balam, British Honduras. Art and Archaeology Occasional Paper 16, Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum.

TAUBE, Karl A.

2003 Ancient and Contemporary Maya Conceptions about Field and Forest. Chapter 26 in The Lowland Maya Area, Three Millennia at the Human-Wildland Interface. Edited by Arturo Gómez-Pompa, Michael F. Allen, Scott L. Fedick, and Juan J. Jiménez-Osornio. CRC Press.

His Figure 26.7 on page 475 shows his consideration of the Zip deity in Classic and Post Classic art.