

Maya Pseudo-Glyphs and Rare PSSequence Dedicatory Formula on Red Band Tepeu 1 Style Round-Bottom-Edge Vases



Chapter 4 for multi-chapter Presentation:
Que tal si los pseudoglifos en cada region maya son un dialect regional?

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Conferencia Presencial, Jueves 26 de febrero 2026, 7:00 pm
Edificio del Museo Popol Vuh, Universidad Francisco Marroquin

Chapter 1: Pseudo-Glyphs on Gouged-and-Incised Late Classic Lowland Maya Vases

Chapter 2: Pseudo-Glyphs on Chama & Related Styles of Late Classic Highland Maya Vases

Chapter 3: Pseudo-Glyphs on Catfish Red Style & Related Styles of Late Classic Lowland Maya Vases

Chapter 4: Maya Pseudo-Glyphs and Rare PSequence Dedicatory Formula
on Red Band Tepeu 1 Style Round-Bottom-Edge Vases

Chapter 5: Maya Pseudo-Glyphs and “Pseudo-Sky-Bands”
Another “Regional Dialect” ?
Atypical Hieroglyphs
on Tepeu 3 (Terminal Classic) Mold-Impressed Bowls and Vases

Final Chapter, Chapter 6:
Pseudo-Glyphs on Vases, Bowls, and Plates from the Maya Lowlands

Introduction to Red Band Tepeu 1 Style Vases, many with Pseudo-Glyphs

I first noticed several Red Band Tepeu 1 Style vases a half century ago in the Museo Popol Vuh, when it was in Zona 1, where I lived in those years. In either the 1980's or 1990's I named it Red **Rim** Tepeu 1 style, but since the red band is NOT on the actual rim (but below), I renamed it the Red **Band** Tepeu 1 Style. Archaeologists surely have their own Type Variety name (Saxche Orange Polychrome: variety ---). As an iconographer, I prefer to use a name that describes the features of the painting on the ceramics. Besides, I doubt all varieties of Saxche Orange Polychrome have the red band that defines my Red Band Tepeu 1 Style.

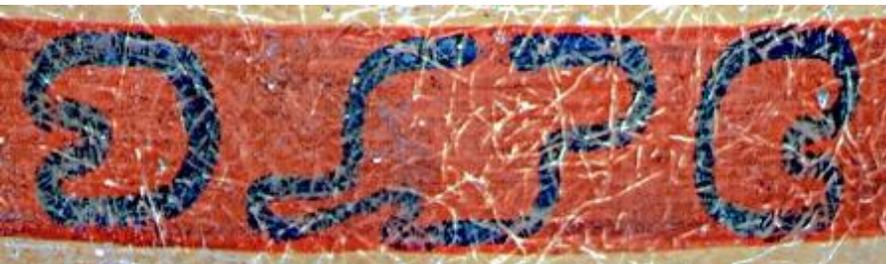
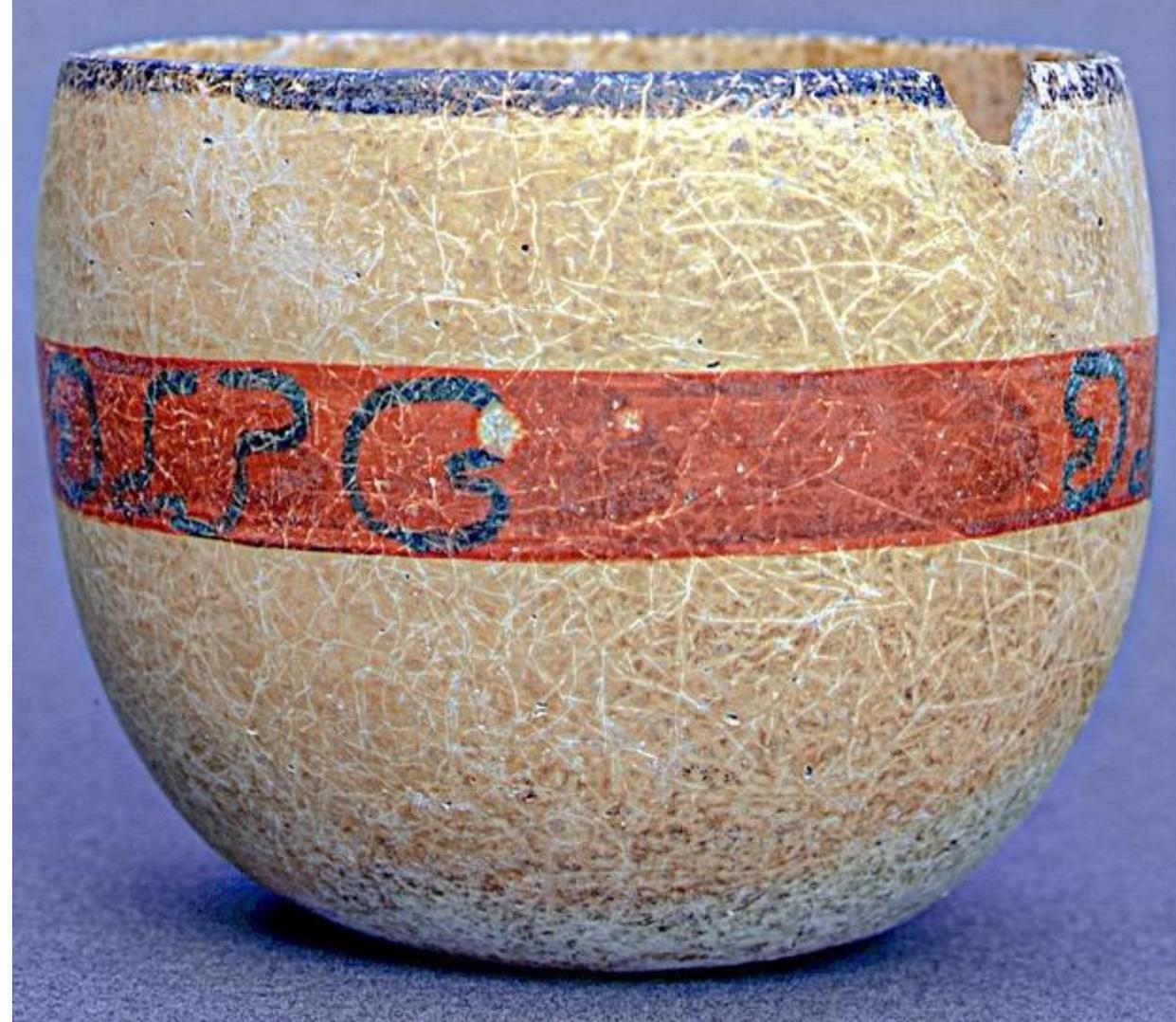
Since neither the Kerr Maya Vase Database nor the improved resolution database of Dumbarton Oaks have yet added Red Band Tepeu 1 as a keyword, it's a challenge to find these vases there. But since many of these scenes include the Hero Twins, the Maize God and the Paddler Gods—if you search for each of these categories individually—you eventually find a few Kerr rollout examples. But would be helpful to add Red Band Tepeu 1 to the Dumbarton Oaks search capability.

Although we at FLAAR did not have outside funding for cataloging our 30 years of photography in museums around the world, we nonetheless keyword-named the styles that stood out as obvious regional styles: Red Band, Catfish Red Style, Chama (Nebaj) style, the obvious Codex Style, and a few others. So, for this Feb. 2026 lecture presentation I can present over 90% of the Red Band Tepeu 1 style bowls of which most have Pseudo Glyphs. But clearly there are more examples in museums around the world, such as the MET.

Where were these Tepeu 1 bowls made? The person helpfully cataloging the Kerr rollouts suggests “Naranja Area Group style vase” for K0621. K0622. Text for K1254 says “Saxche Orange Polychrome: variety unspecified”. Kerr himself says “Tikal style...” but I doubt these all come from Tikal since Culbert shows only a basic example for Tikal (with no scene—just decorative Pseudo-Glyphs). Comparable in Smith for Uaxactun—no canoe scenes, no hummingbird scenes, no personages with jaguar ears.

Coggins 1975: Vol. II: Fig. 72b shows a possibly related scene but since it's just a sherd there is no Red Band visible.

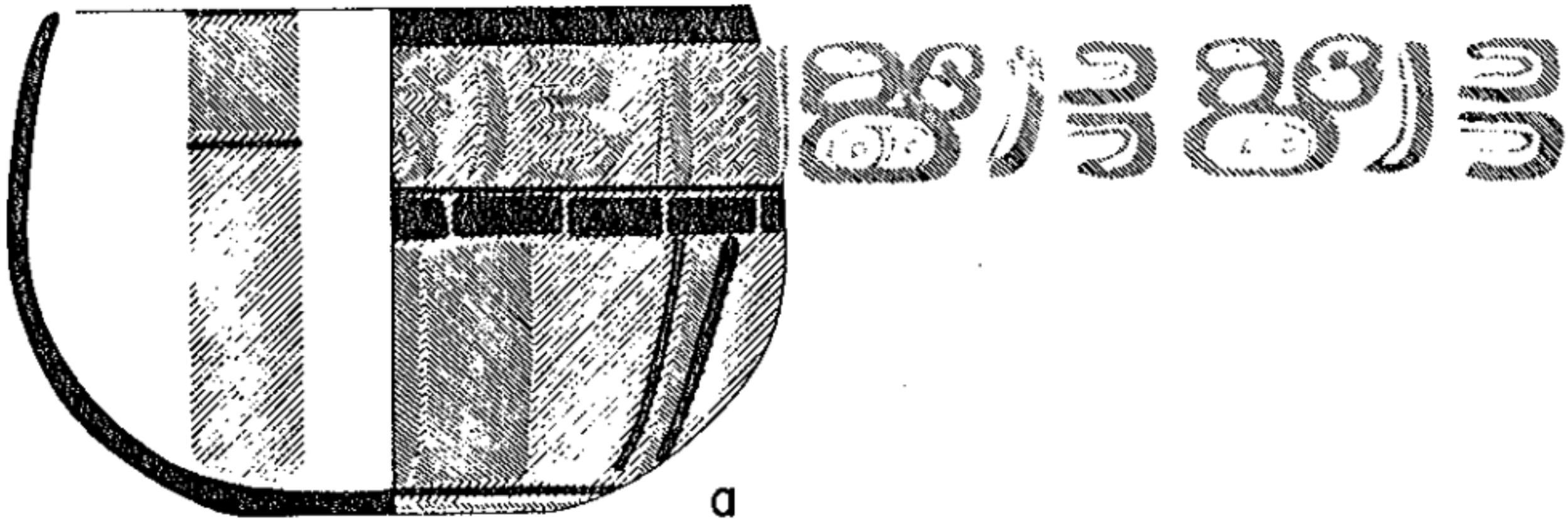
So best to double check with Ronald Bishop and his colleagues including Dorie Reents-Budet.



Tikal, Bu. 132 (Culbert 1993: Fig. 48, 1, a).
The academic tradition of using geometric scribe to show color is a disaster for iconographers and epigraphers.

Since no Tikal ceramics are shown in color in the official ceramics monograph, I never noticed any Red Band Tepeu 1 bowl until I recognized the Pseudo Glyph from Tikal Bu. 132 (Culbert 1993: Fig. 46,1,a). It is captioned as Saxche Orange Polychrome, “design repeated three times around circumference”. I consider this a Pseudo Glyph (so, more than a “design”).

MUNAE has lots of the Tikal ceramics.



Pseudo-glyphs Red Band Tepeu 1 Saxche Orange Polychrome Saxche Variety Tayasal Chase Fig. 3a.

Since over 90% of archaeological publications on provenanced ceramics are not in color, it's not easy to find all the Red Band Tepeu 1 bowls with provenance. And, not all Saxche Orange Polychrome are really "Red Band Tepeu 1 Style". Nonetheless, surely there are more Red Band Tepeu 1 Style bowls documented by archaeologists. Finding them would be a great help.



Repeated

First two glyphs repeated

Repeated but upside down

K7604



Not repeated



K1254

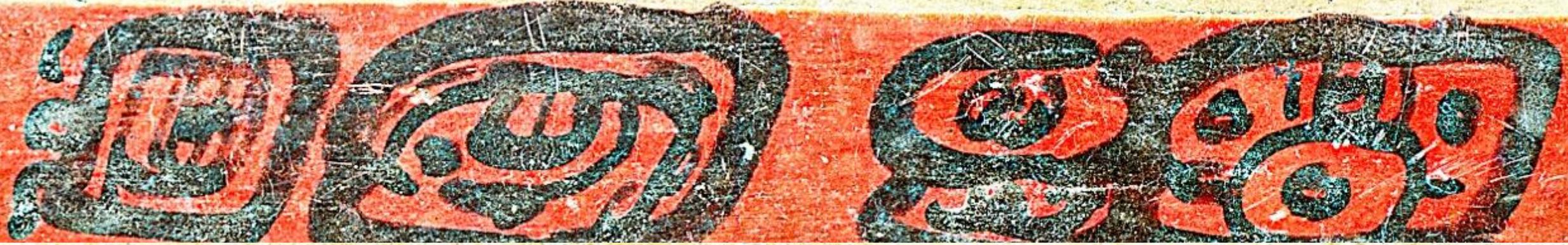
Kerr rollout, K1254, the color depends on who scanned the “1990’s” film.





Kerr rollout, K1254, cropped by Hellmuth from Dumbarton Oaks database.







Main sign duplicated



Duplicated





Not many repeats, no inept glyphs, so I would suggest classifying this text as a regional variant and not dismiss the text as pseudo-glyphs. Surely there were a lot more aspects to record than just via a traditional PSS dedicatory formula.



I hope the quality of enlargement can assist epigraphers, linguists, iconographers and archaeologists.



Museo Fundacion La Ruta Maya



The improved resolution of Dumbarton Oaks database allows to enlarge these glyphs a bit more than the rollouts from the older Maya Vase Database. Kerr rollout K0621. Color is enhanced to allow you to see more detail.



Although not really “repeats” the “vocabulary” is very limited and the glyphs are potentially “simplified” and all shown in very similar style.

I would consider these as possible Pseudo-Glyphs but I estimate they have a clear meaning that was “readable” by Maya elite who knew all the tricks of subtlety and how abbreviations could be “read”.

Hellmuth photograph of same Red Band Tepeu 1 vase as the Kerr rollout K0622. Since I was a Post Graduate Research Fellow at Yale University for about seven years, I had an apartment in New Haven so could easily take my photo studio down to New York and photograph many of the same ceramics that Kerr had separately done rollouts of. In those decades I did not yet have the digital rollout camera from Dicomed/Better Light.

I had multiple sequential fellowships related to Maya iconography, starting with a 1980 OEA (OAS) scholarship associated with George Kubler and when that expired I got additional extensions including an appointment by Michael D. Coe as a research fellow in the Yale Peabody Museum. I also had an earlier fellowship circa 1968-1969 at Yale, related to archaeology of Peru, since I had done field work with two projects in Peru.





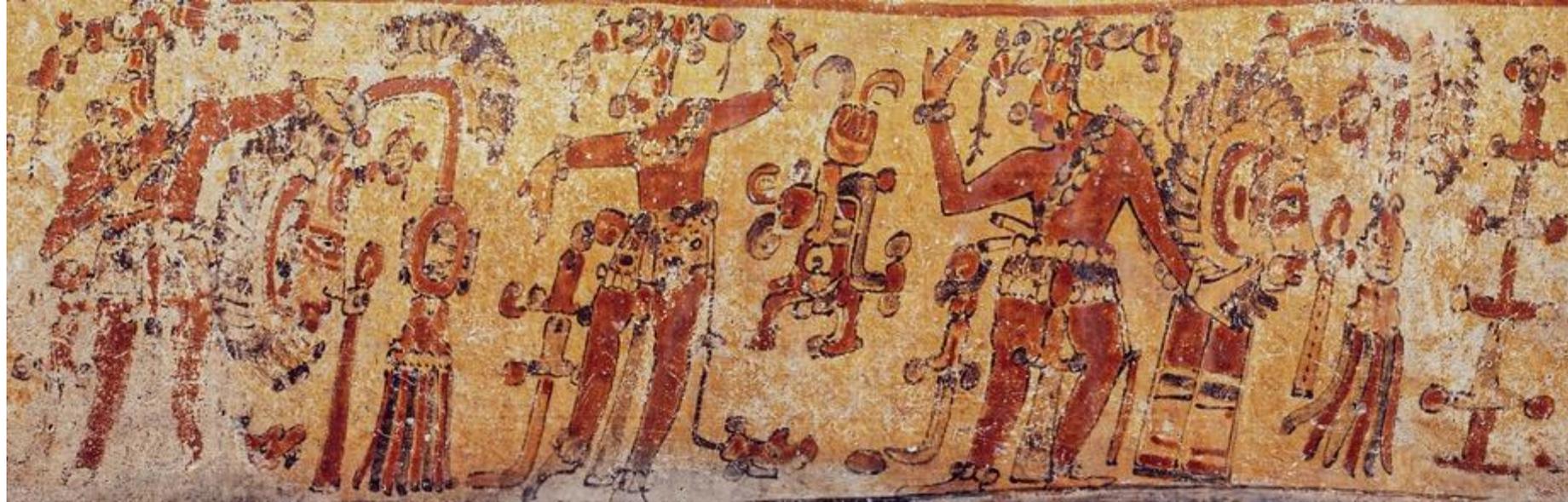
Color is somewhat off but that's a whole other research project.

Kerr-rollout-K0621

Jaguar ear and partial cruller.

We need a name for Giant Head Backrack Dancers.
I don't think they are appreciated Holmul backracks.

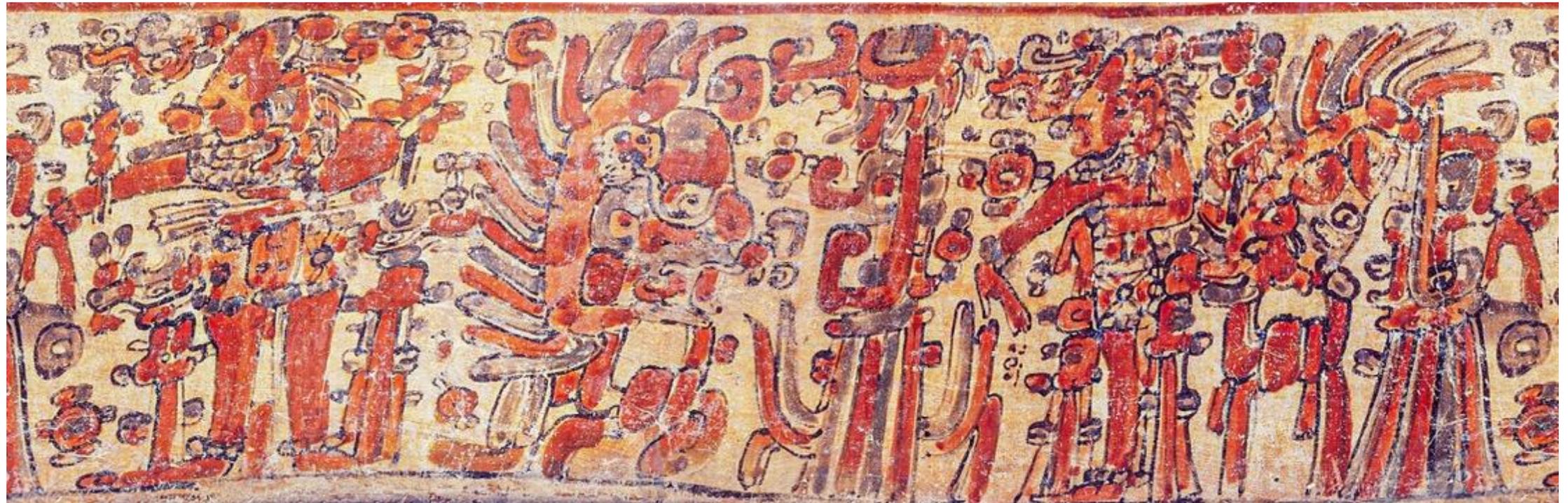
Kerr rollout
K0622



There are several more Maya vases with “abbreviated Holmul Dancer backracks”. But not in pure Red Band Tepeu 1 style.

Giant Head Backrack Dancers. There are lots of vases of other regional styles with same giant heads as backracks.

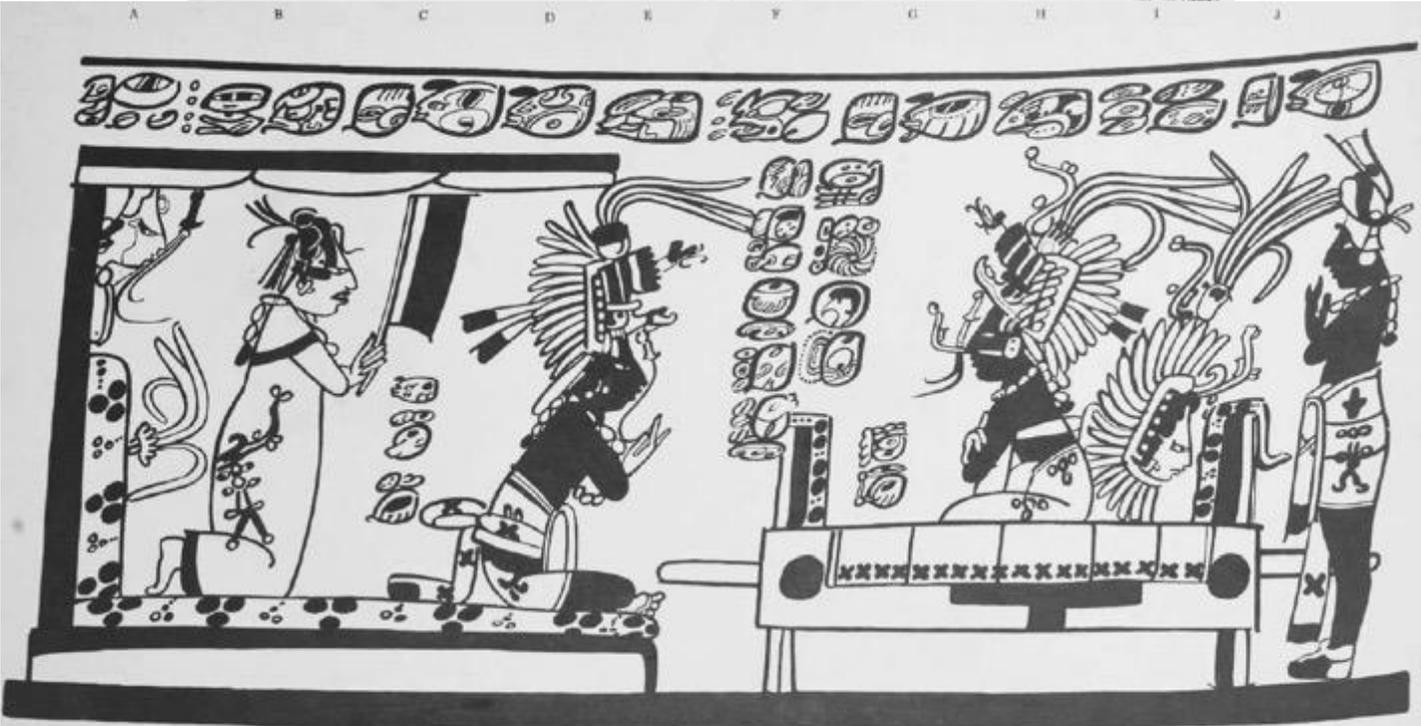
Kerr
rollout
K0621



Hellmuth 1976



Giant Head Backracks



Giant Head Backrack



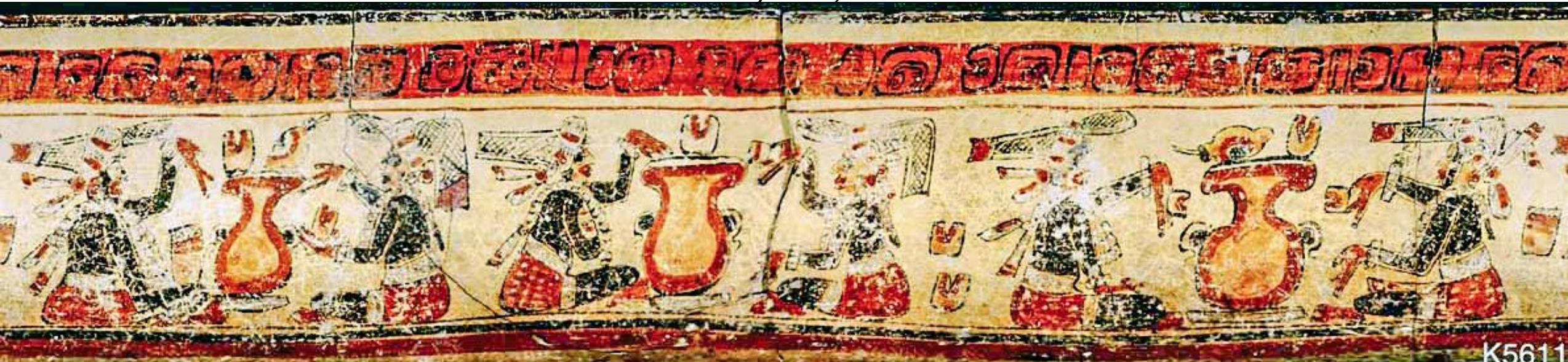
Need much higher resolution file to see the details of each glyph.



Definitely not as fully detailed as hundreds of remarkable PSSequences texts, but clearly this scribe is writing a text—so not Pseudo-Glyphs.

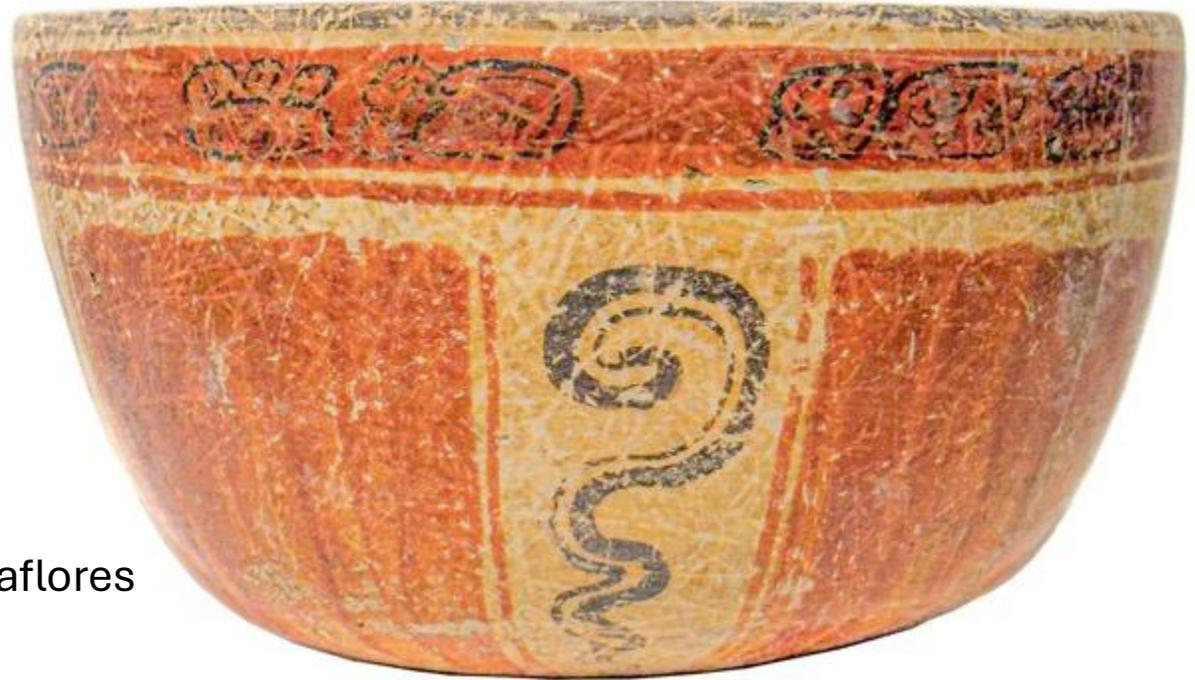
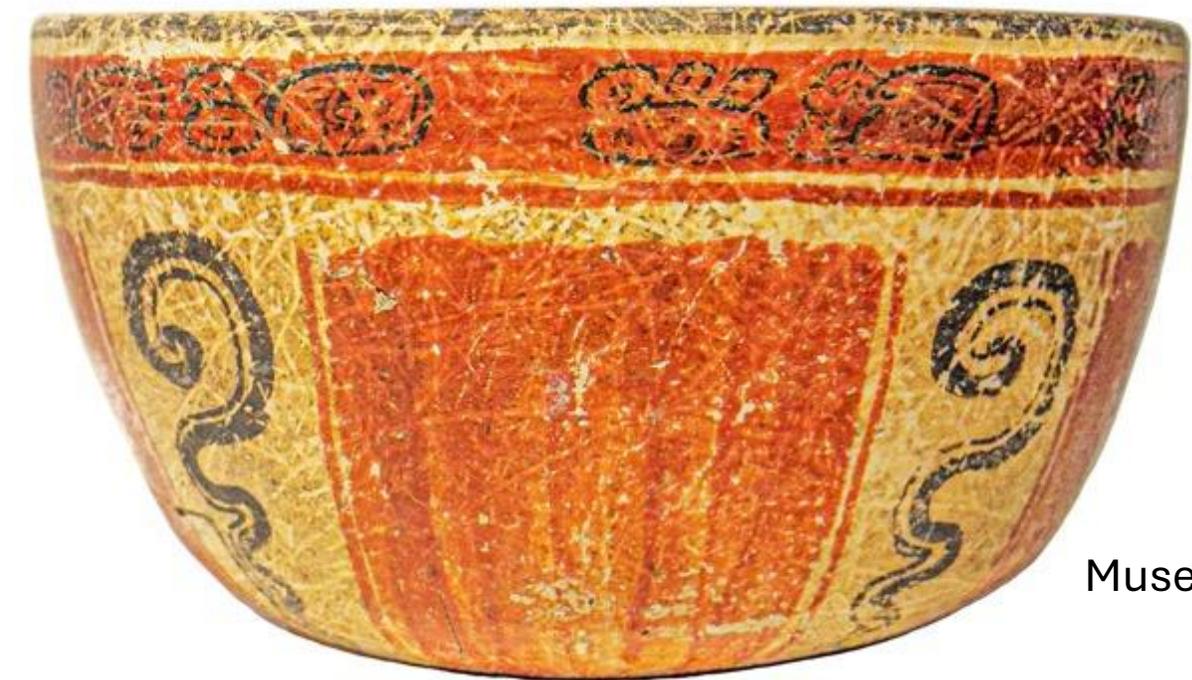


Lots of Kerr scans are too yellow, an issue in scanner software.



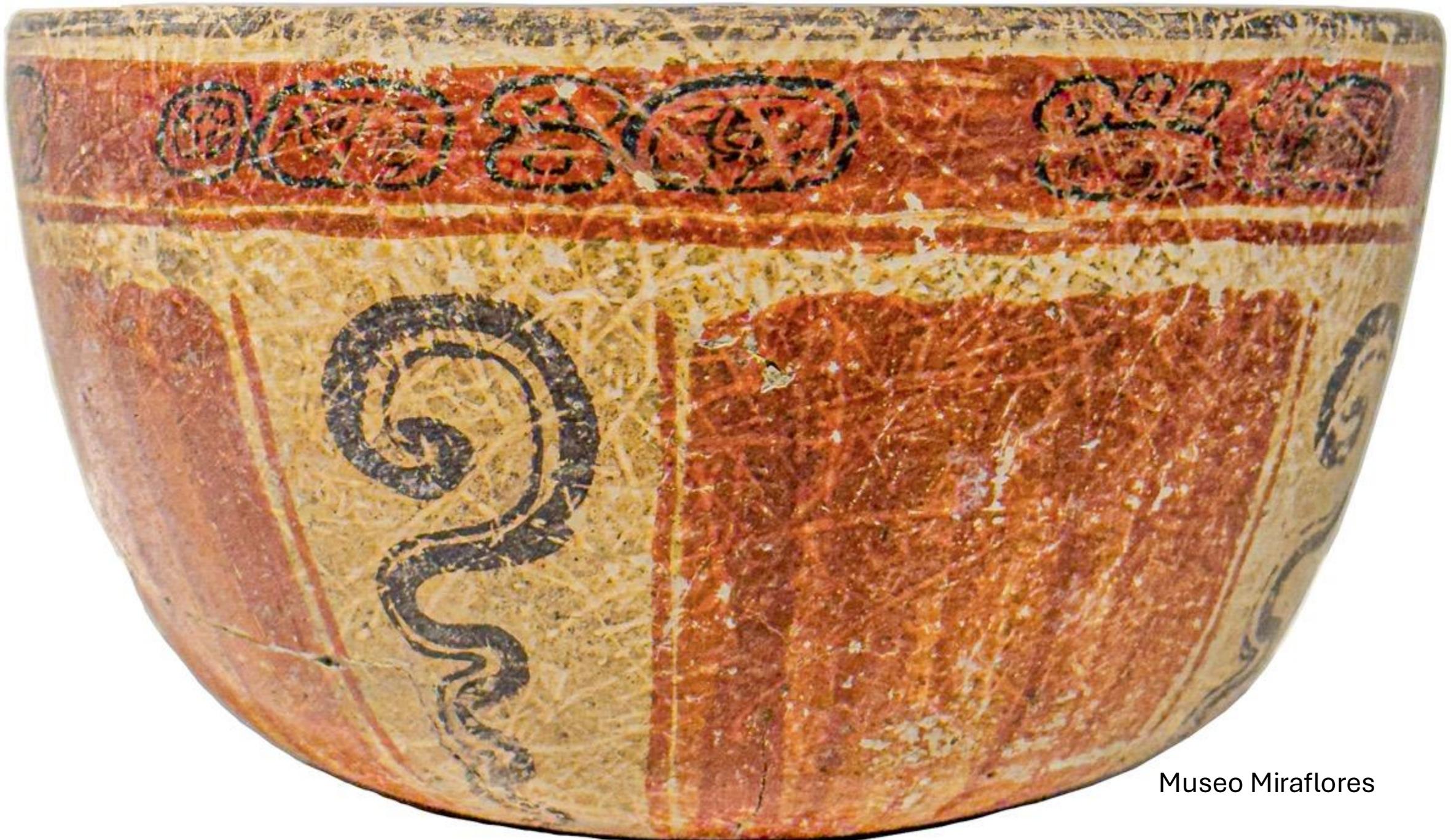


These are not a normal PSS (lots of empty space), but surely they have linguistic meaning and can be read IF STUDIED in-depth.

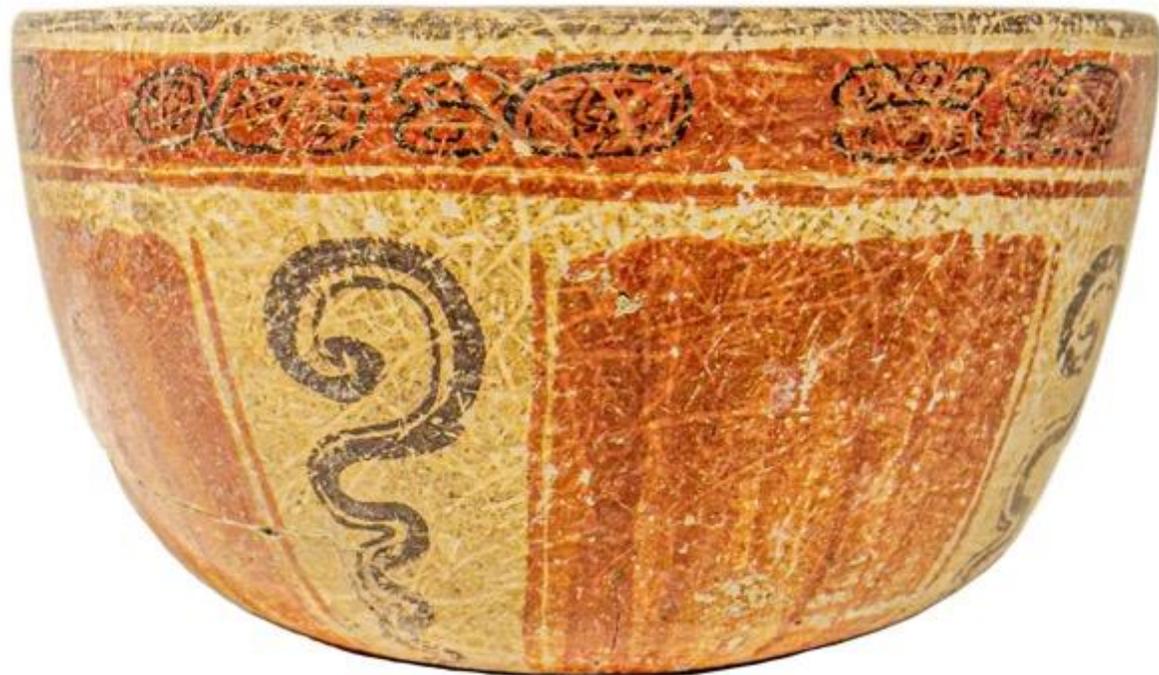
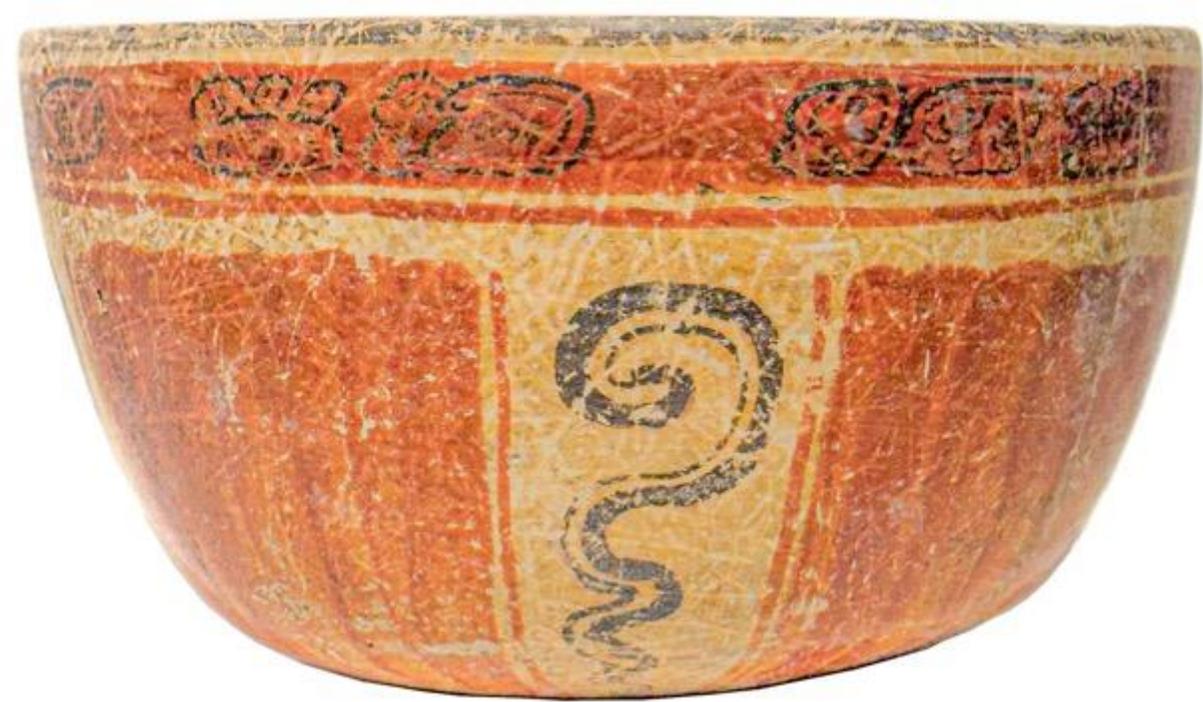
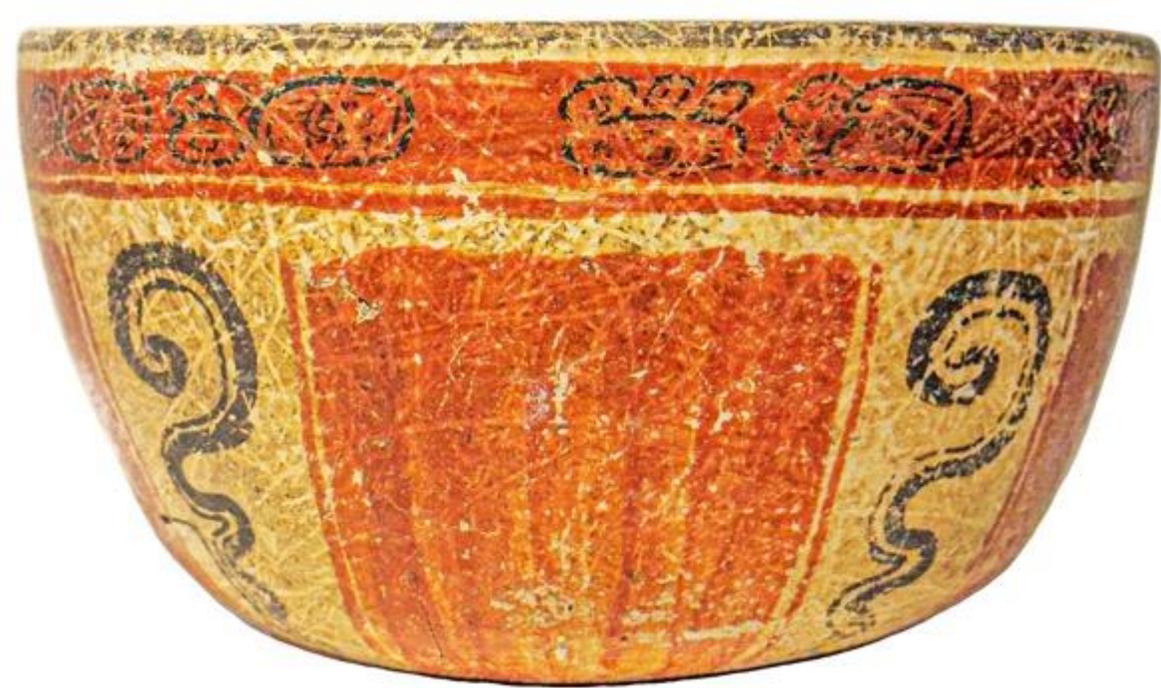


Museo Miraflores

Red
Band
Tepeu 1
Style



Museo Miraflores

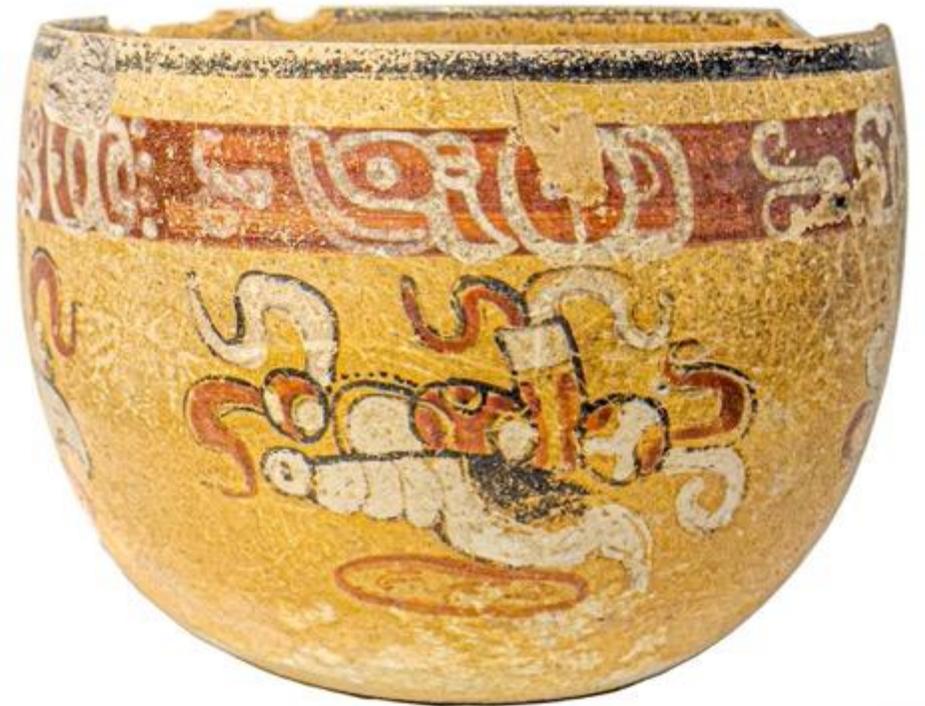
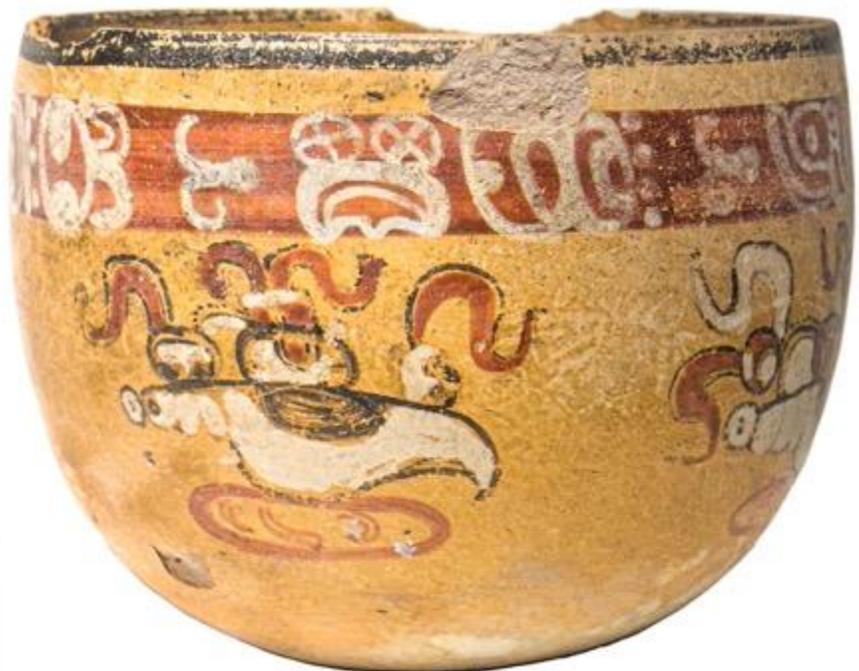
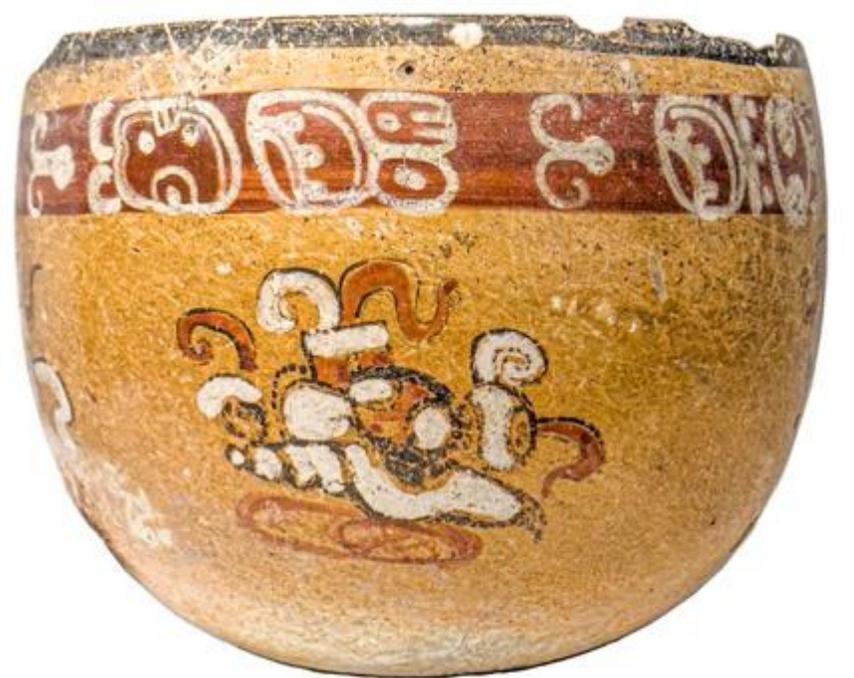
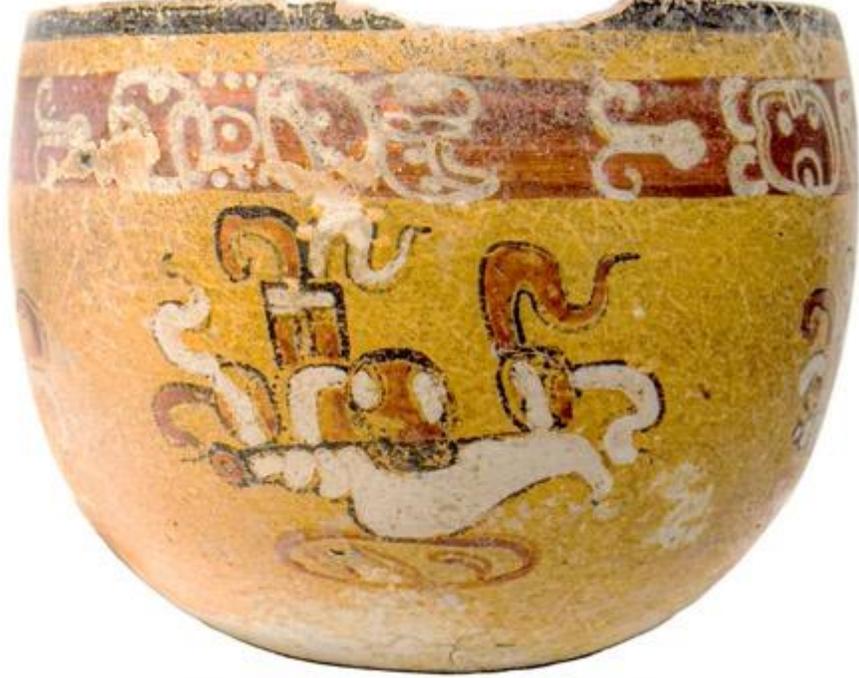


The Tikal bowl on the previous page is the logo size and shape of thousands of Tepeu 1 bowls (that were shaped in clay to show the *Crescentia cujete* fruit that Maya people still use today in remote areas when they don't have money to buy modern bowls). While hiking through remote rural areas, the local Maya often invite us inside their home and they offer us a cacao beverage in a jicarro bowl. It's amazing to be an archaeologist drinking out of the size and shape of bowl used for thousands of years.

The bowl we show on the present have is much lower than most of the other Red Band Tepeu 1 ceramics—but has the same red band and comparable Pseudo Glyphs.



Once the team at Dumbarton Oaks has organized the 30+ years of Hellmuth's photography in museums around the world, we hope to find the other sides of this vase so we can see the complete text, but in the meantime we have more than half to make available to epigraphers, linguists and iconographers.



Regional variant of Red Band Tepeu 1, or a painter wanting to produce slightly different tones in the “red” band. Museo Miraflores..



This page is for epigraphers and linguists.



Clearly we now have to realize that the surface of bowls, vases and plates was used for a lot more messages than just the wonderful PSSequene dedicator formula.

Regional variant of Red Band Tepeu 1, or a painter wanting to produce slightly different tones in the “red” band.





During over a half-century of studying scenes on Tepeu 1 Maya bowls, I have never seen conch shells pictured in this manner (as ink pots yes—but never with so many symbols on top).

This bowl of Museo Miraflores is authentic and has not been repainted.

This page is for iconographers.



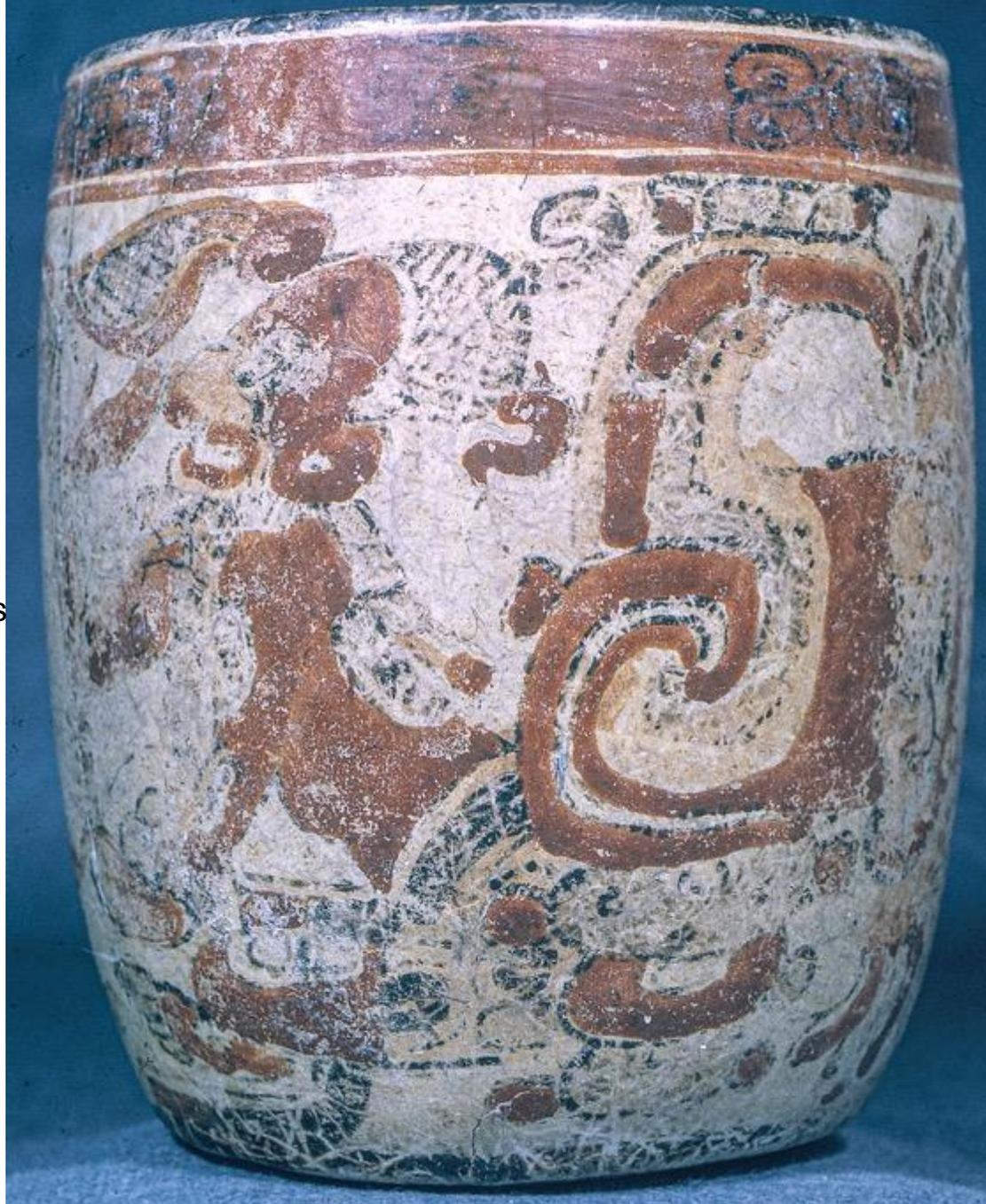






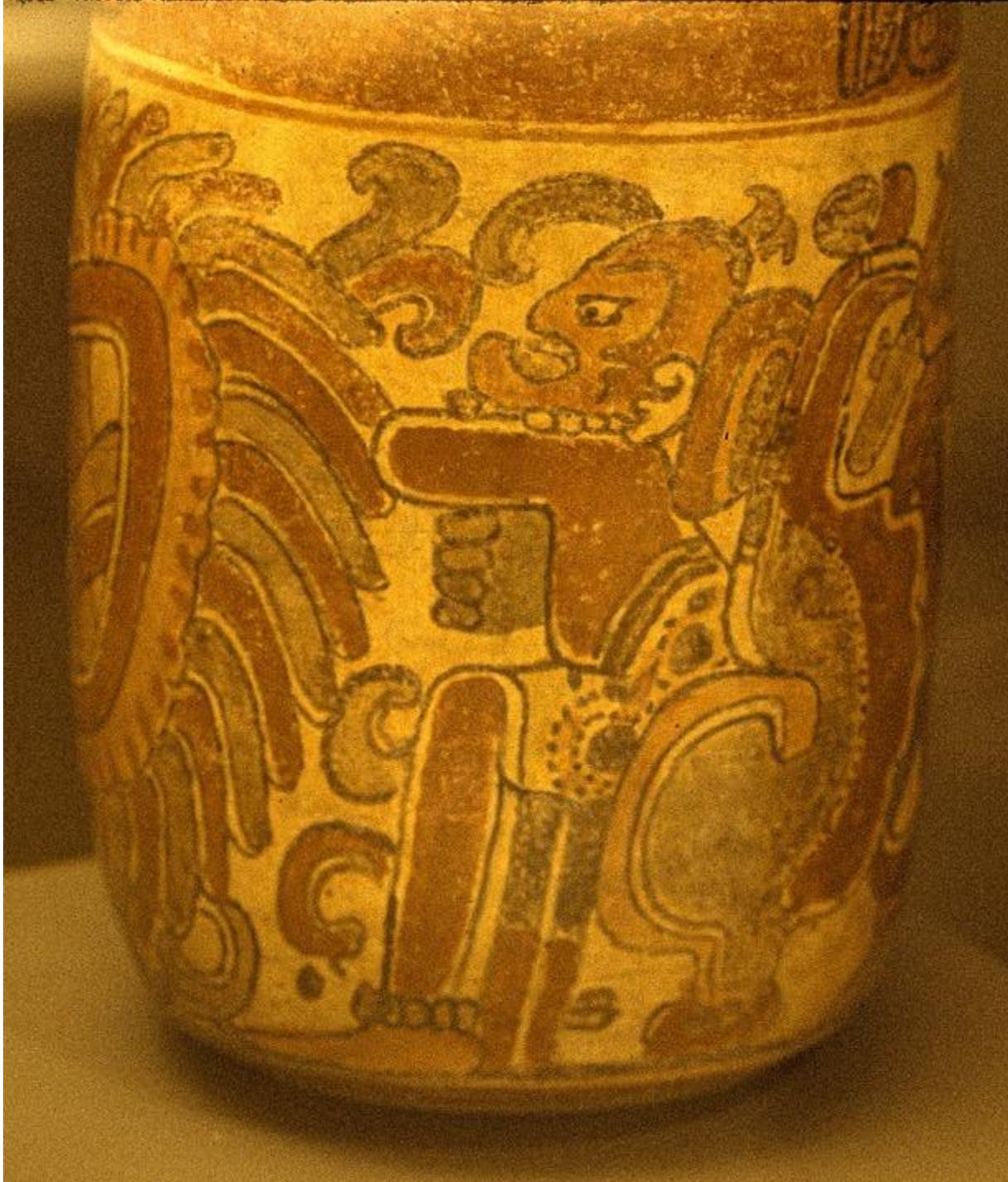


Both obviously traditional God N in his conch shell, but facial size, shape and features differ. Only one has glyph like infixes on his back and arm and leg.



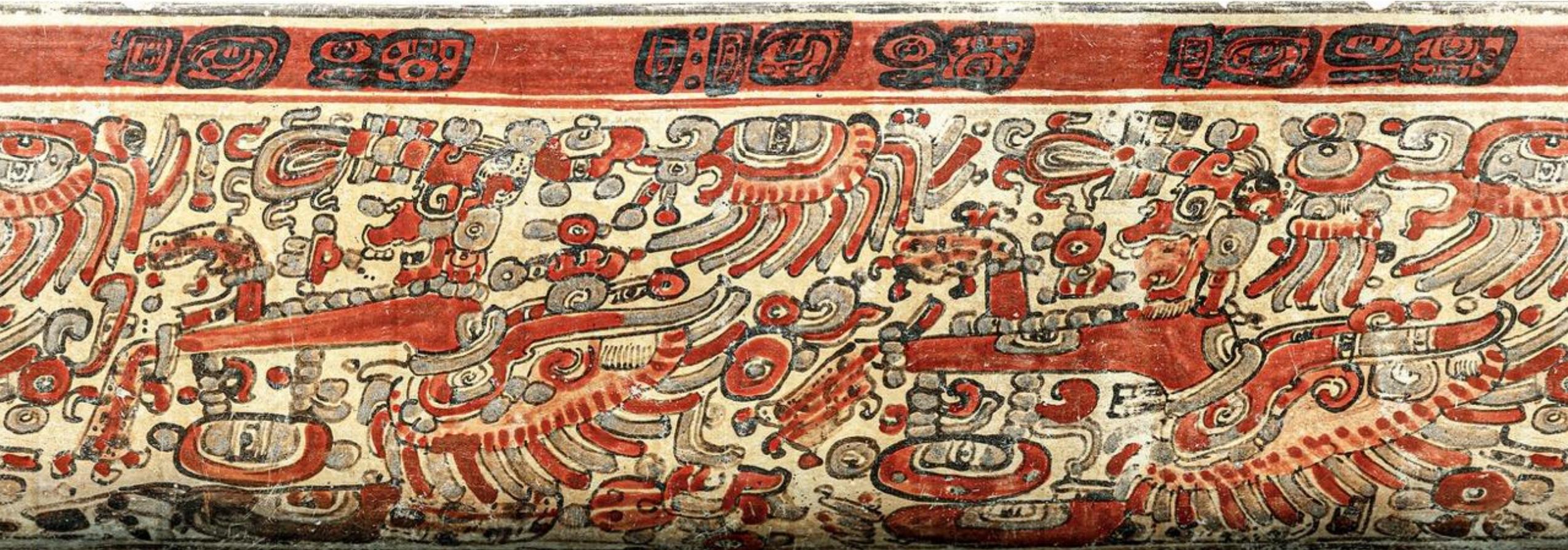
Another God N on a Red
Band Tepeu 1 style vase.

Snapshot in a museum
somewhere in the world.





A capable digital illustrator in the future can hopefully create a digital rendering as a black and white drawing, since it's a black on white drawing that helps epigraphers, linguists, and iconographers. But in the meantime, at least we show that these texts are available from high resolution digital rollouts by Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Digital Photo Archive, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.

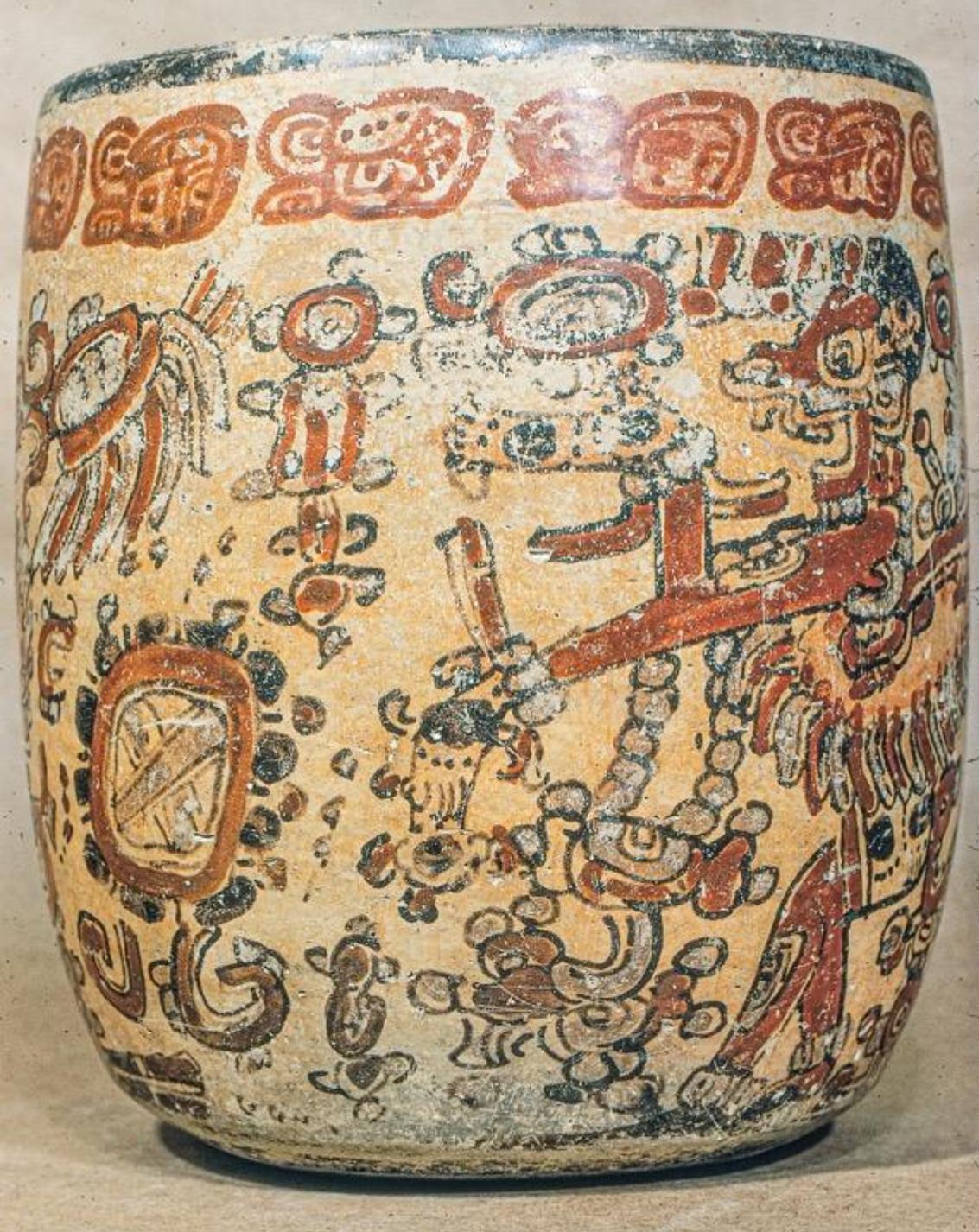




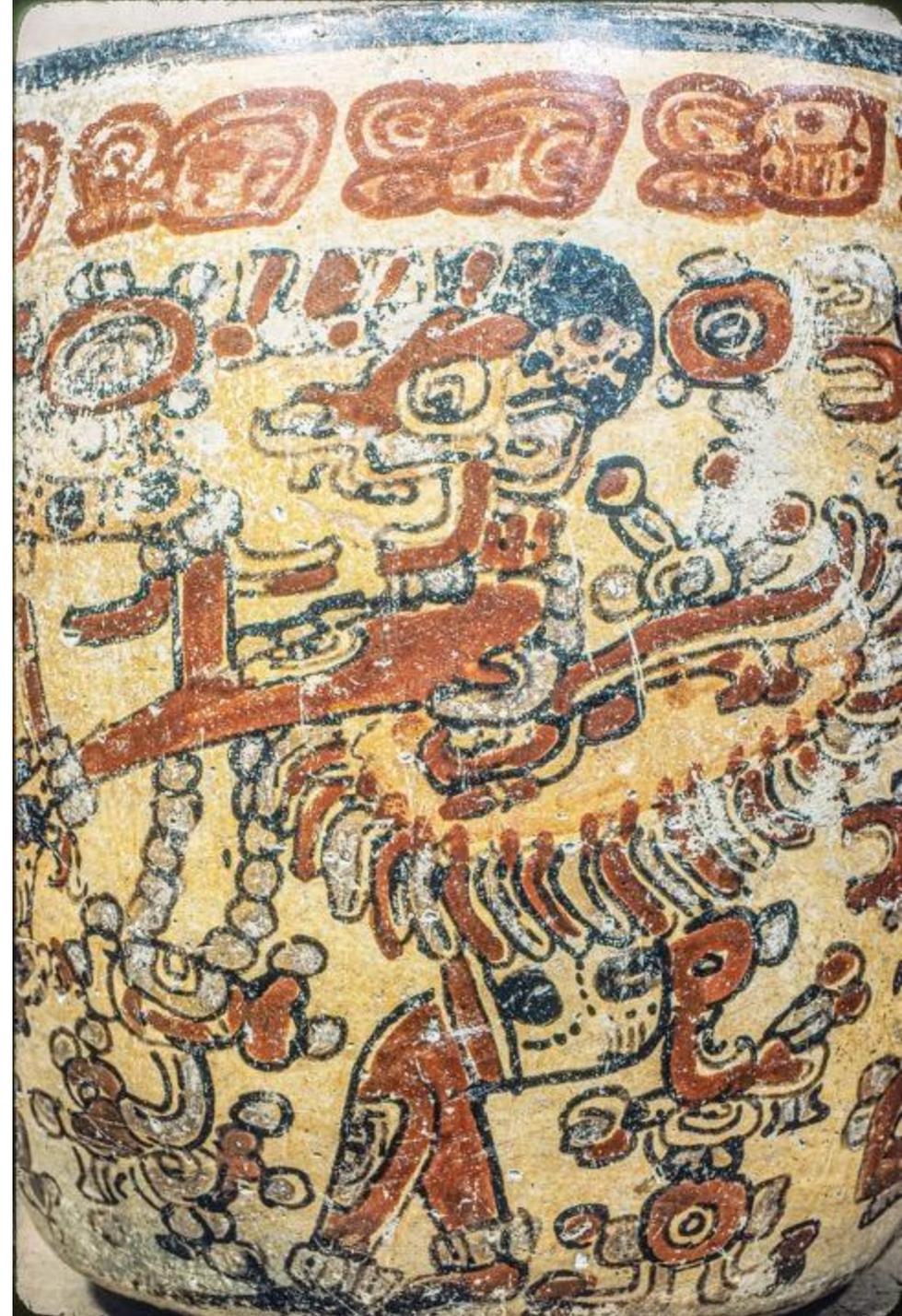
These two texts are repeated except for the prefix at the left.



Similar first glyph (at the left) but second glyph is potentially different.



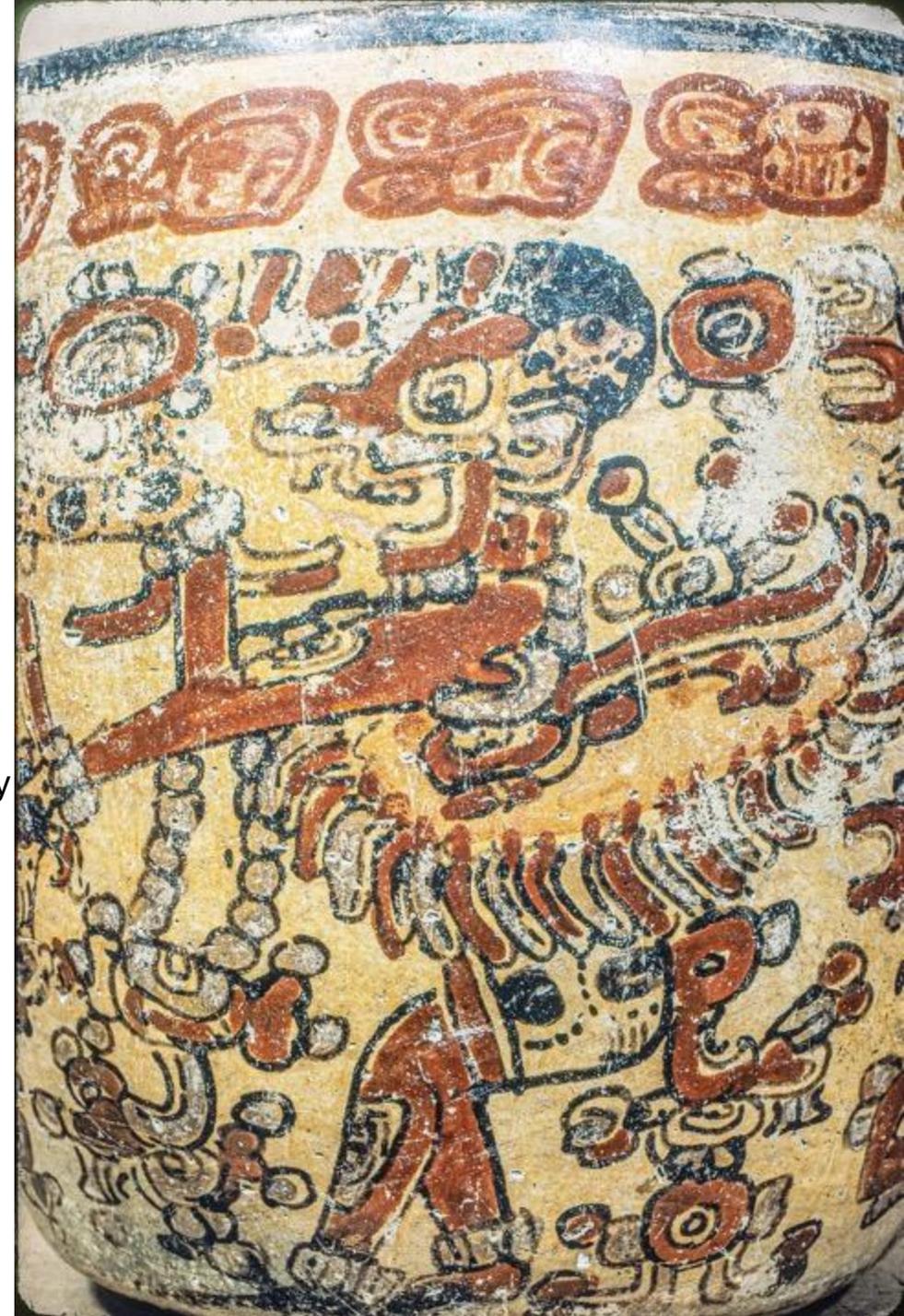
Although no “Red Band” these jaguar-ear, serpent-winged personages are clearly painted by the same or related atelier as the traditional Red Band Tepeu 1 scenes.

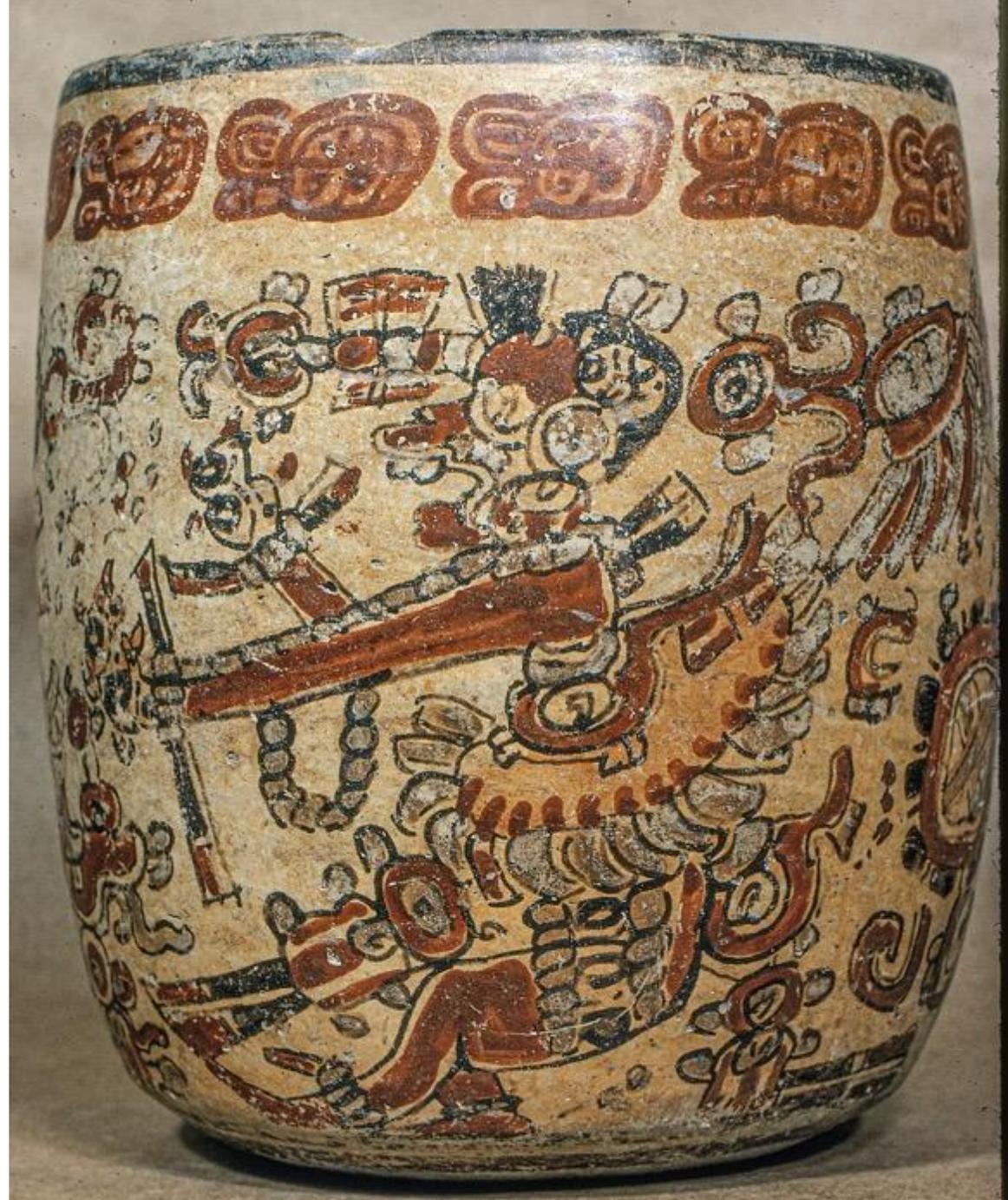
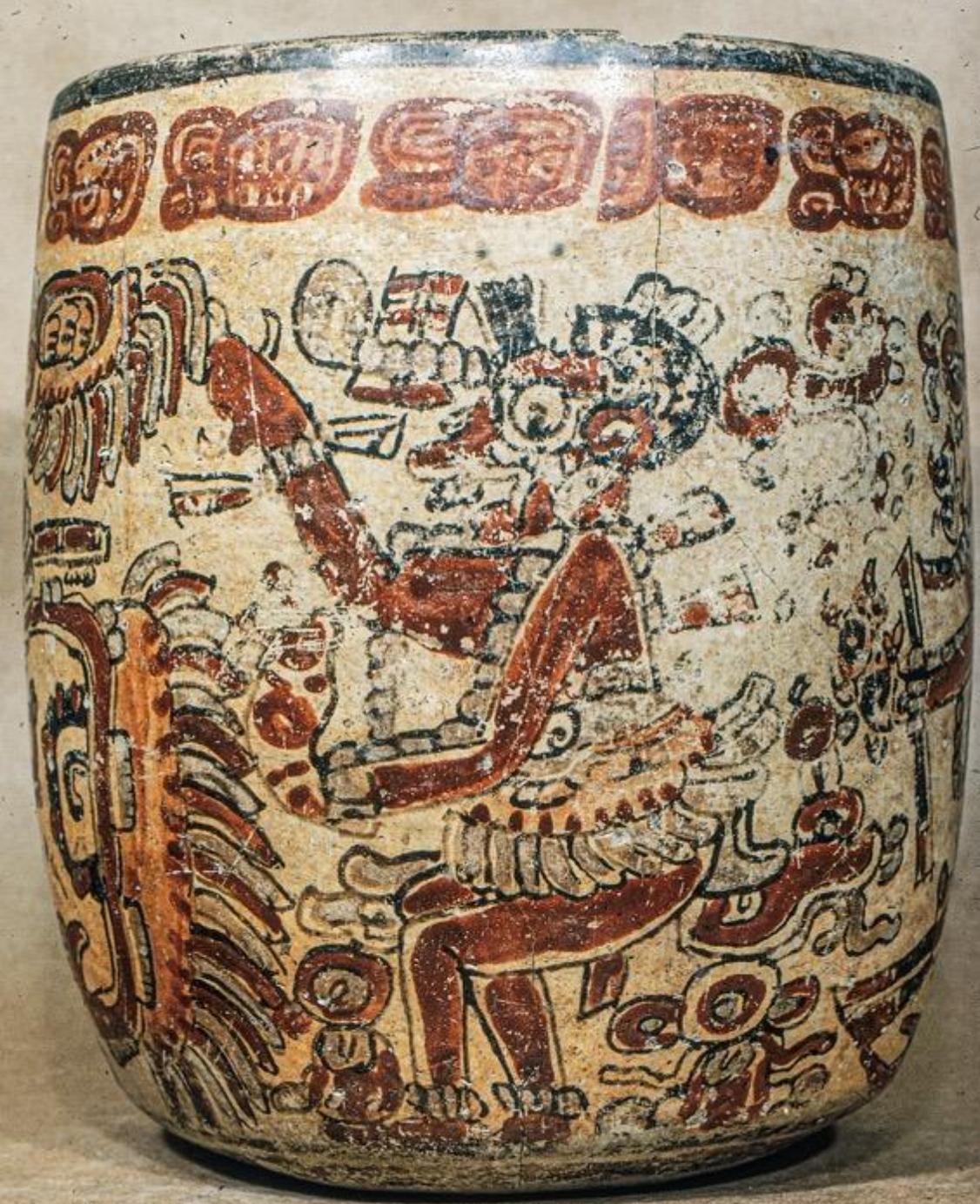


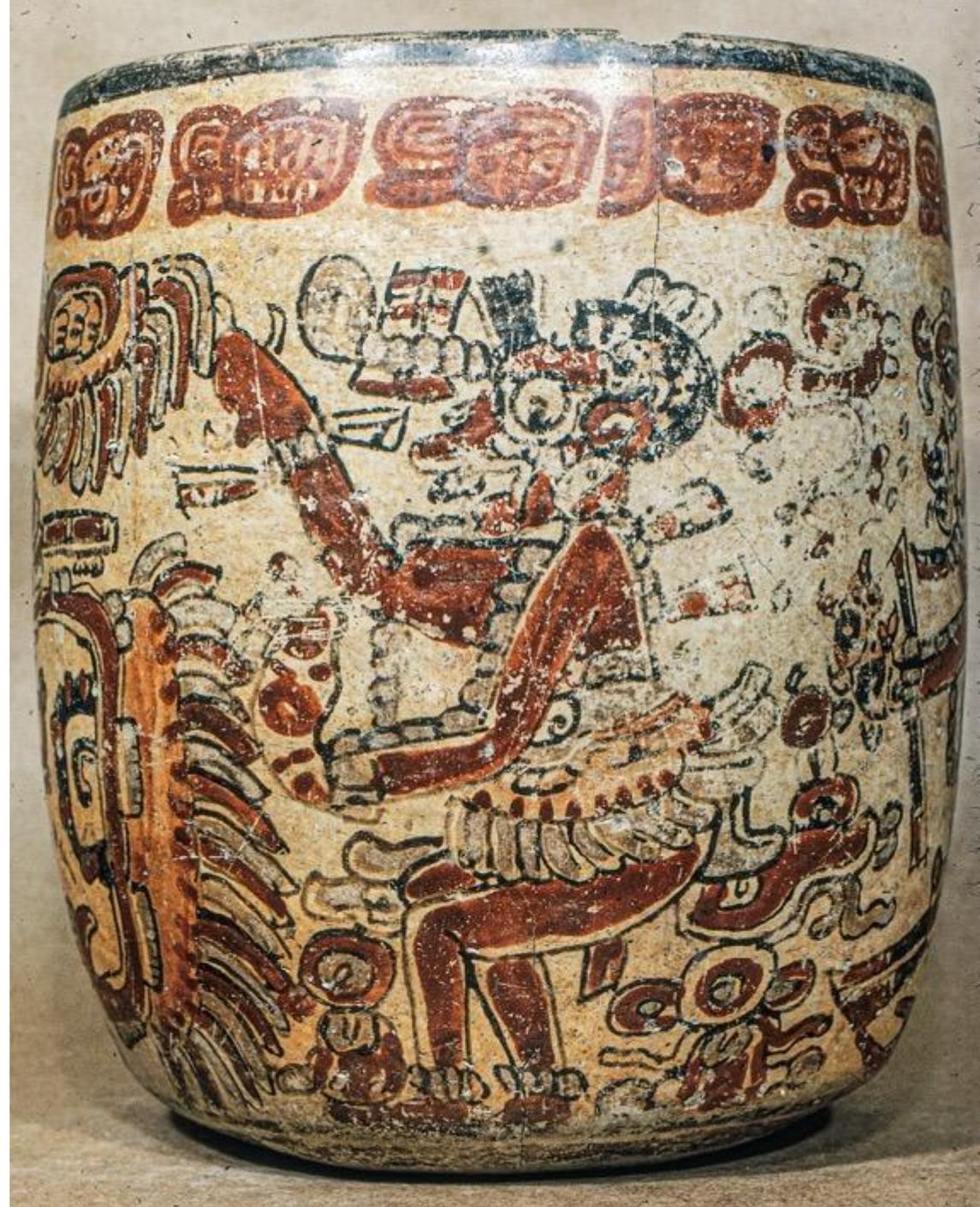


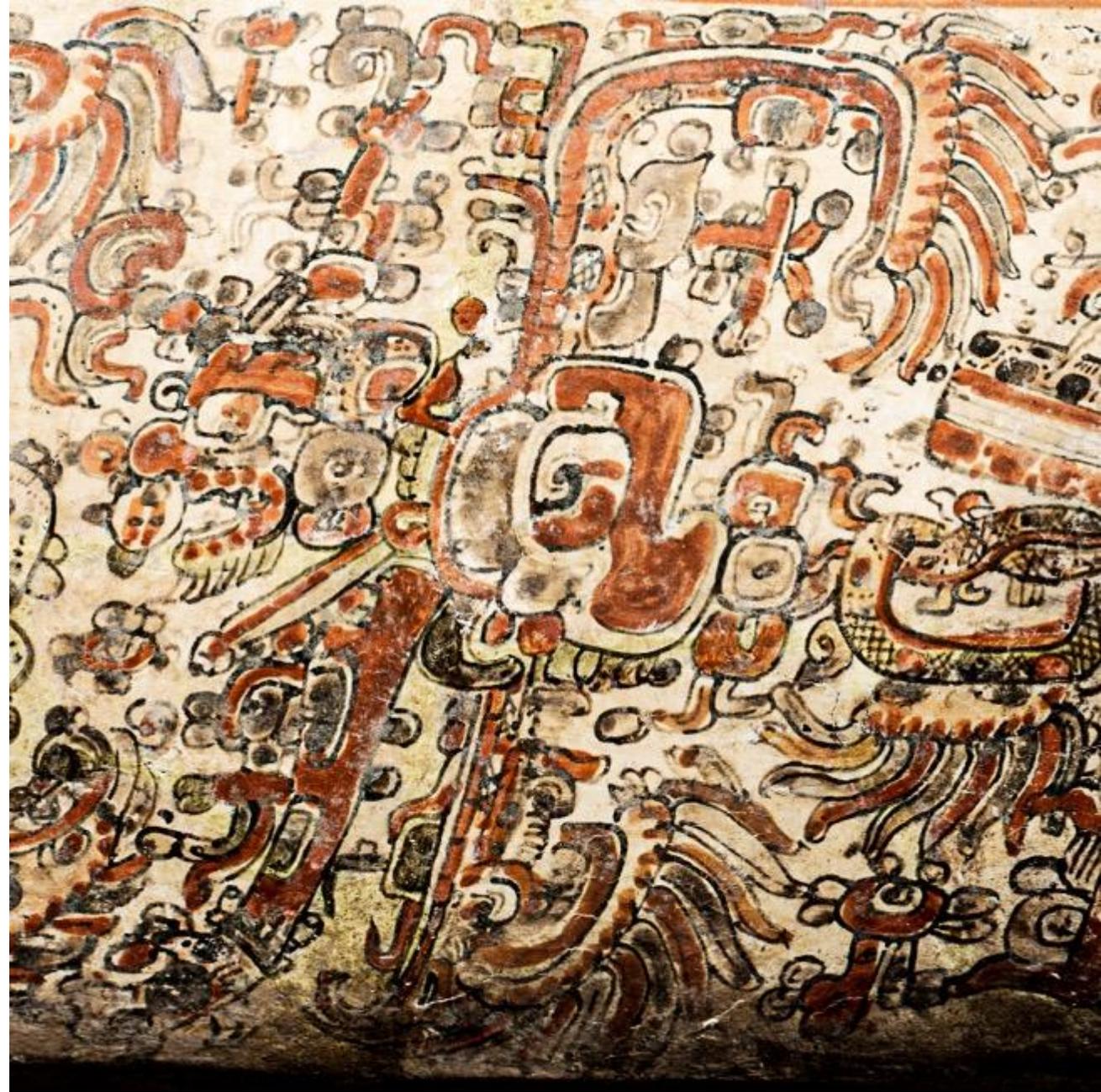
There are three different supernaturals, each with feline ears, long-snout, and large serpent-face wing under their arms.

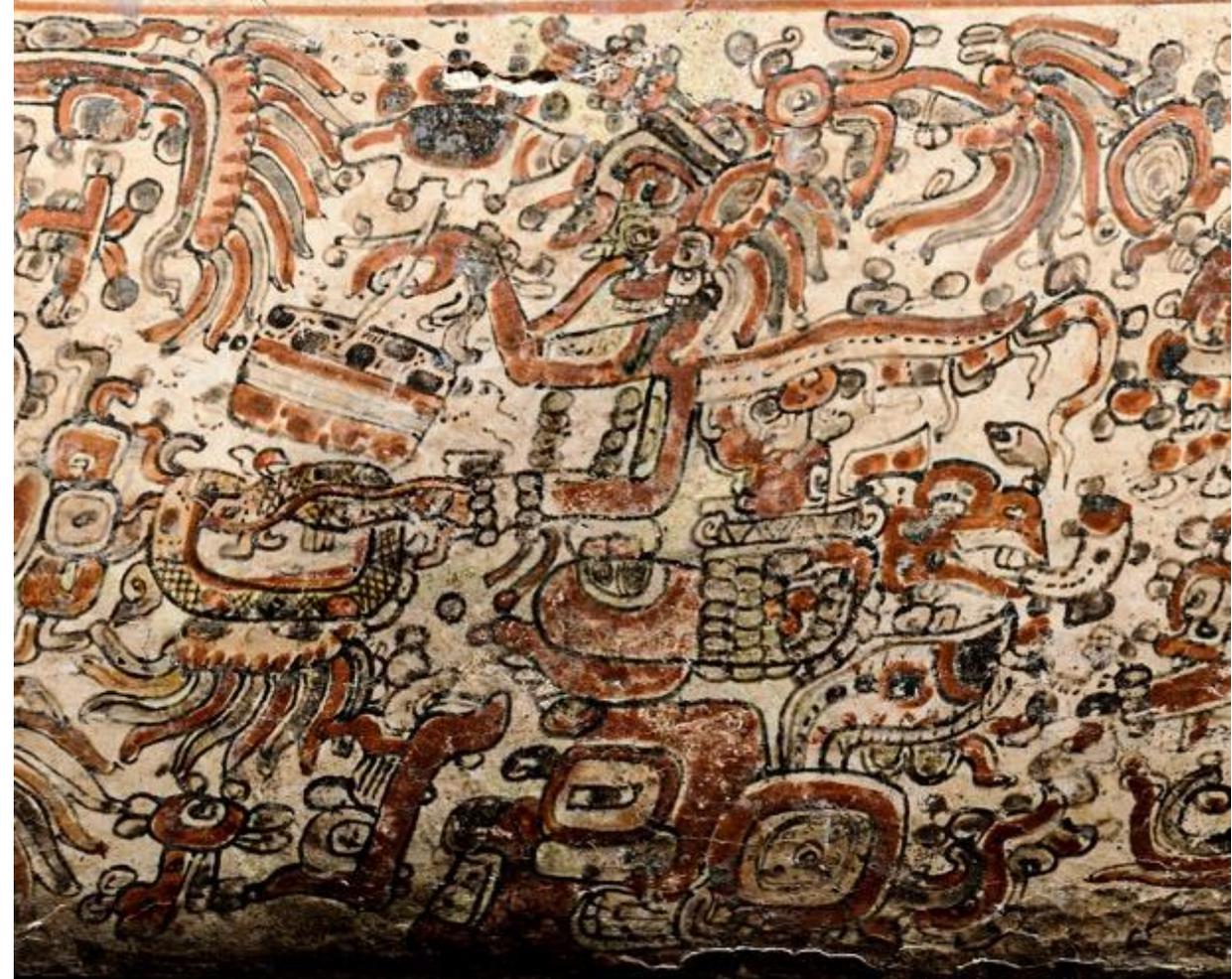
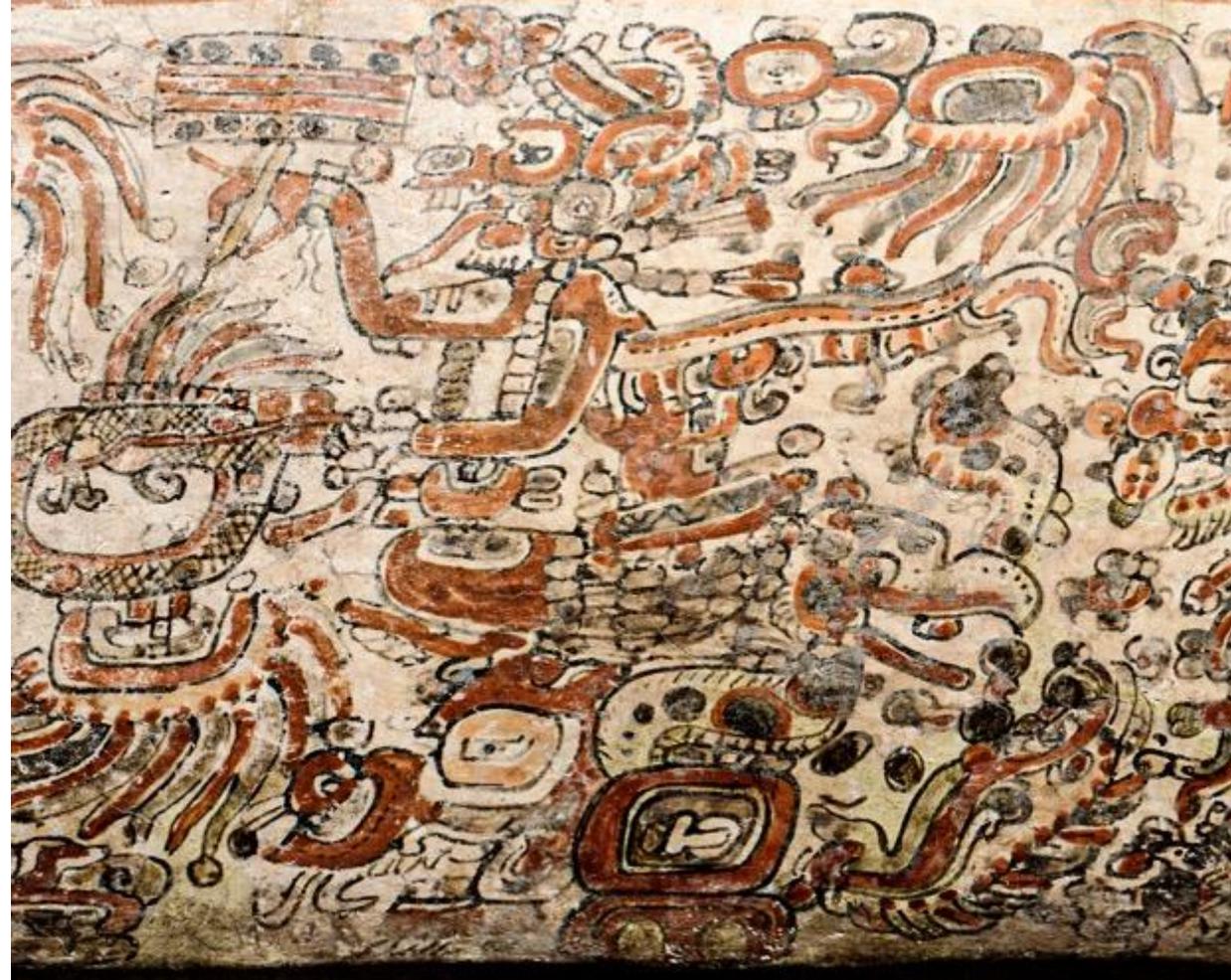
Needs further research to ascertain whether it's one monster in slightly different guides, doing slightly different aspects—or whether there really are three slightly different supernaturals featured in this parade.



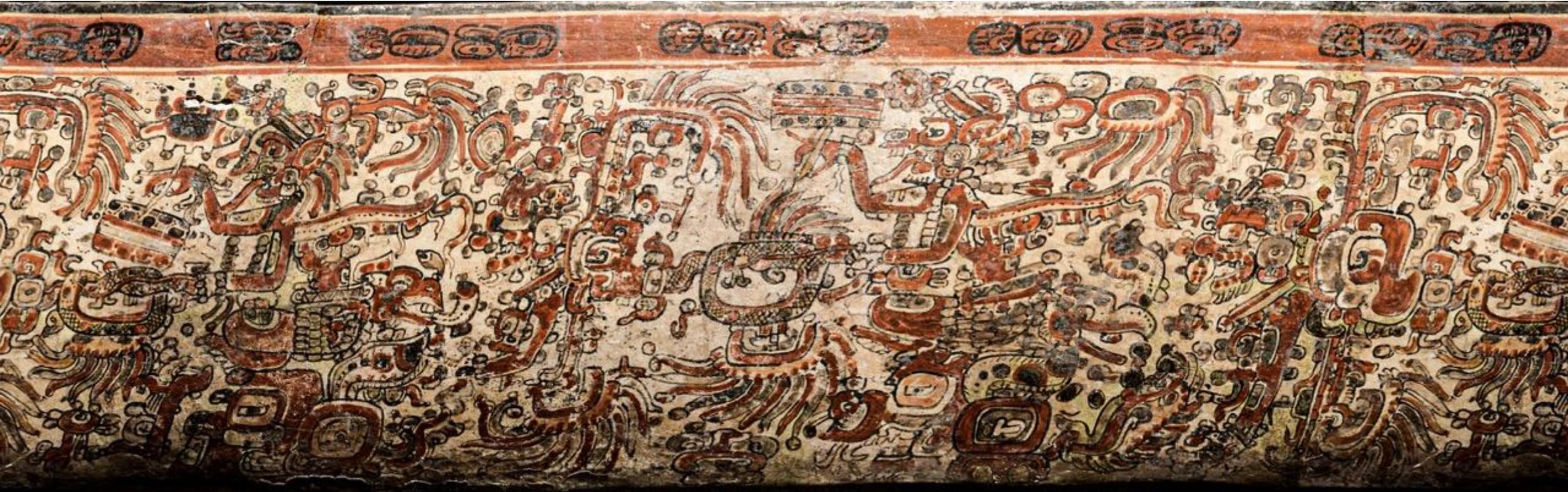


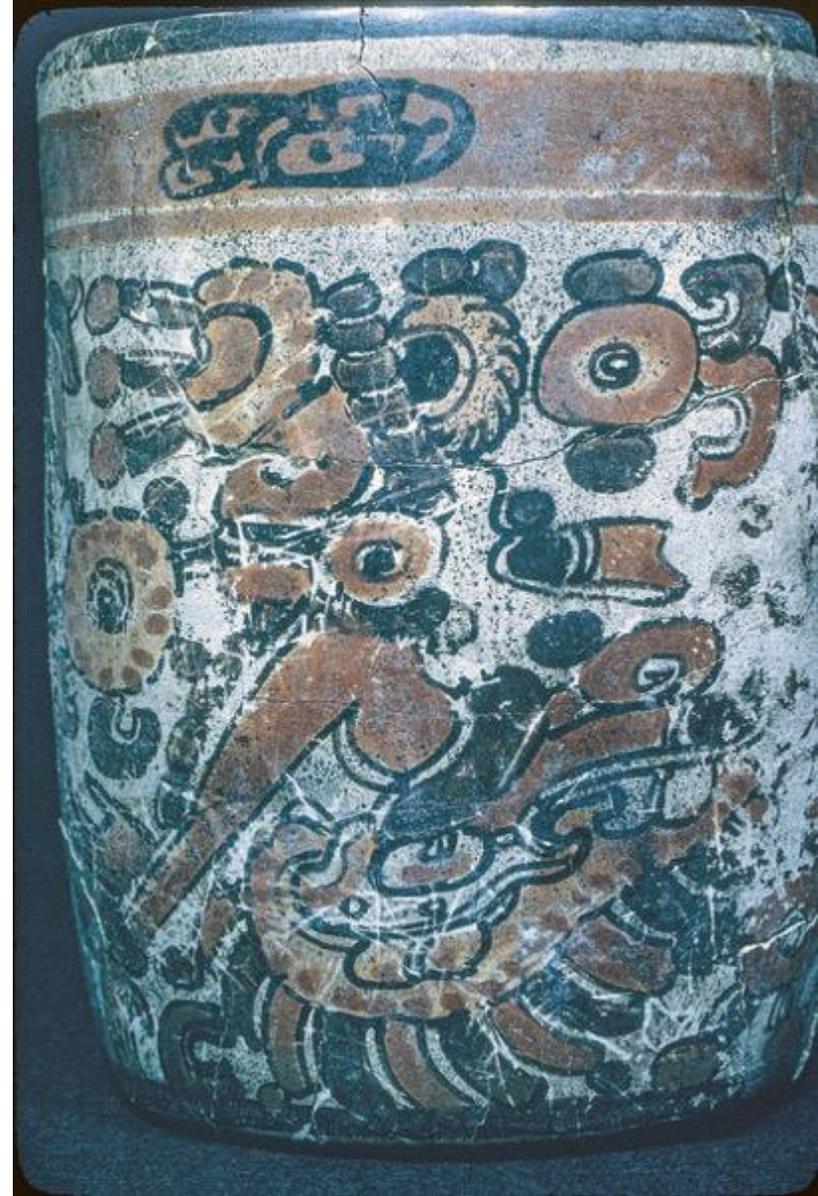


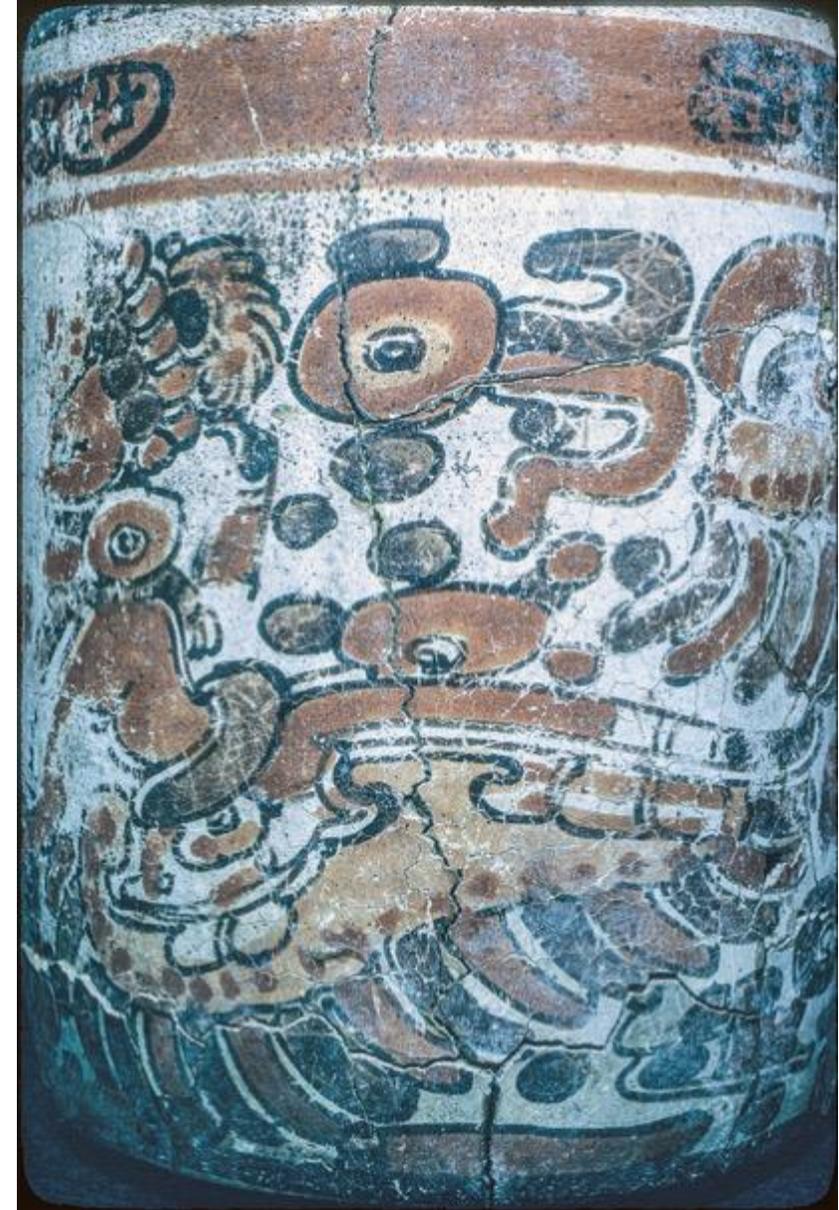
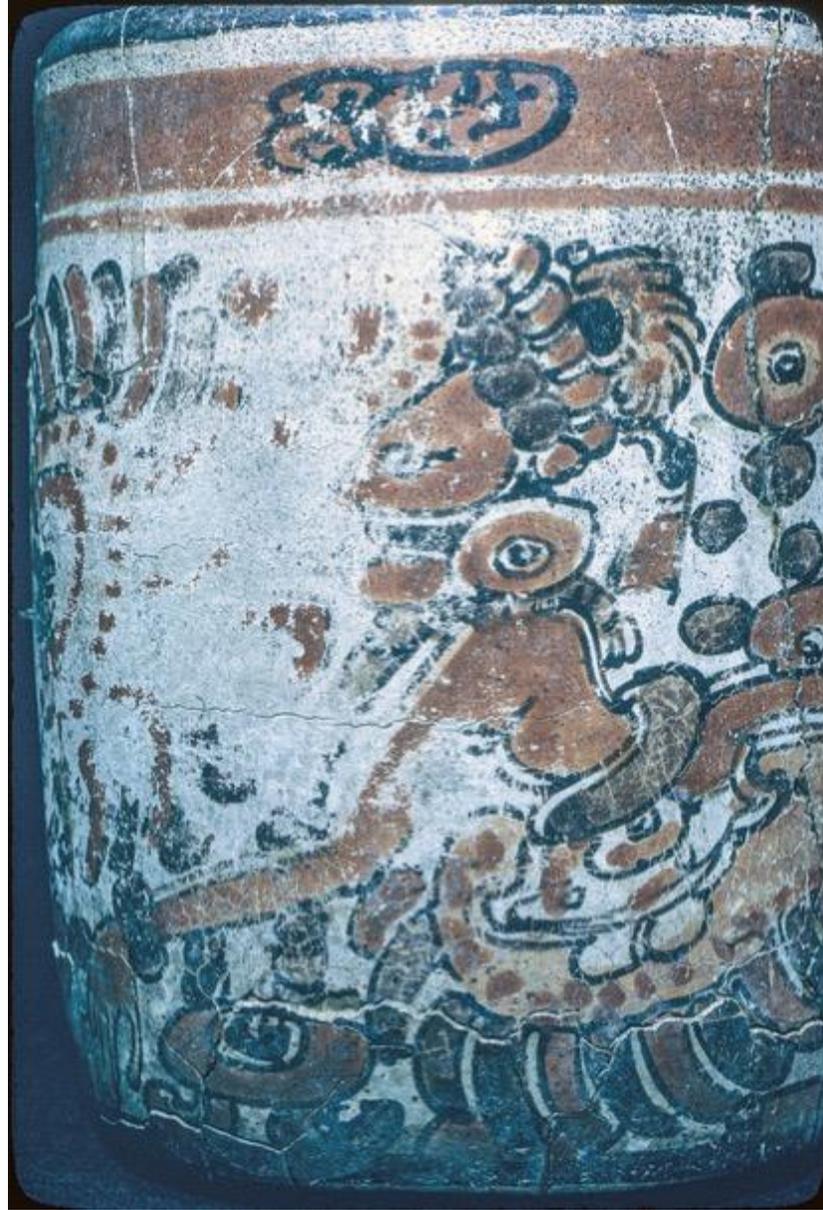


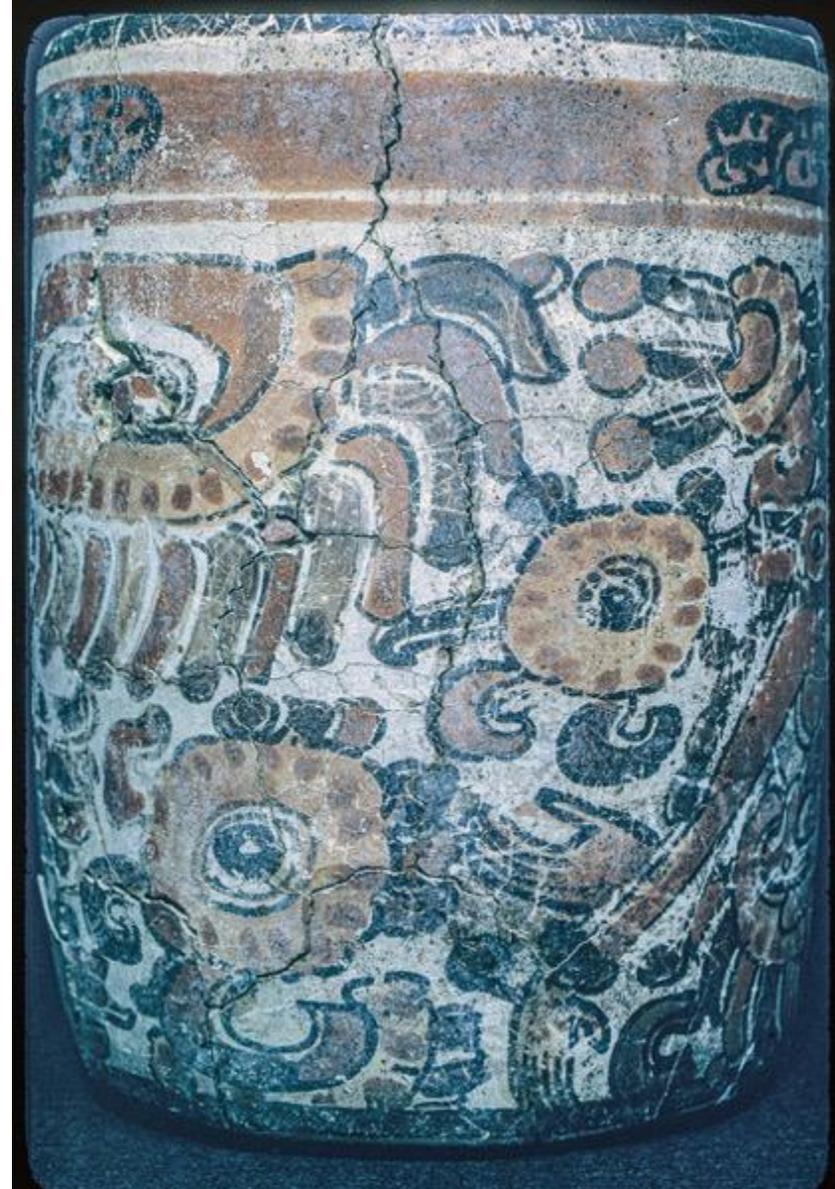


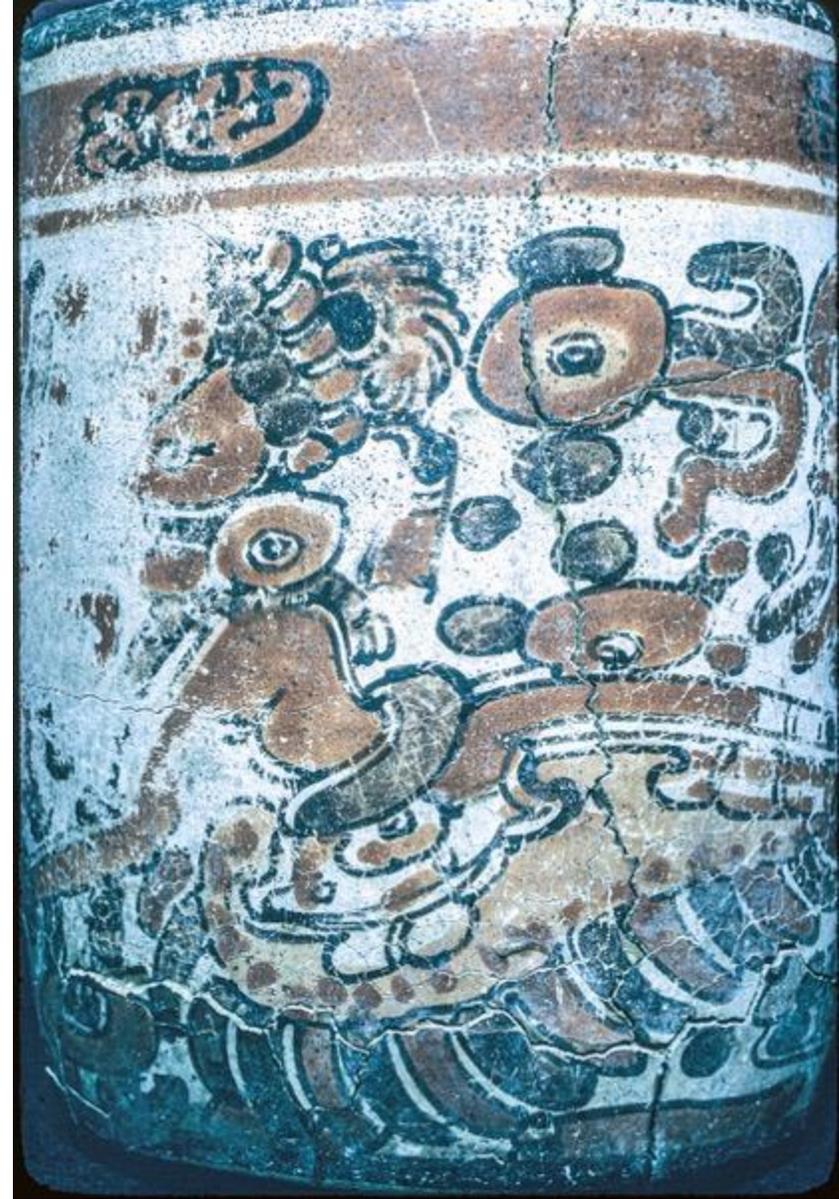
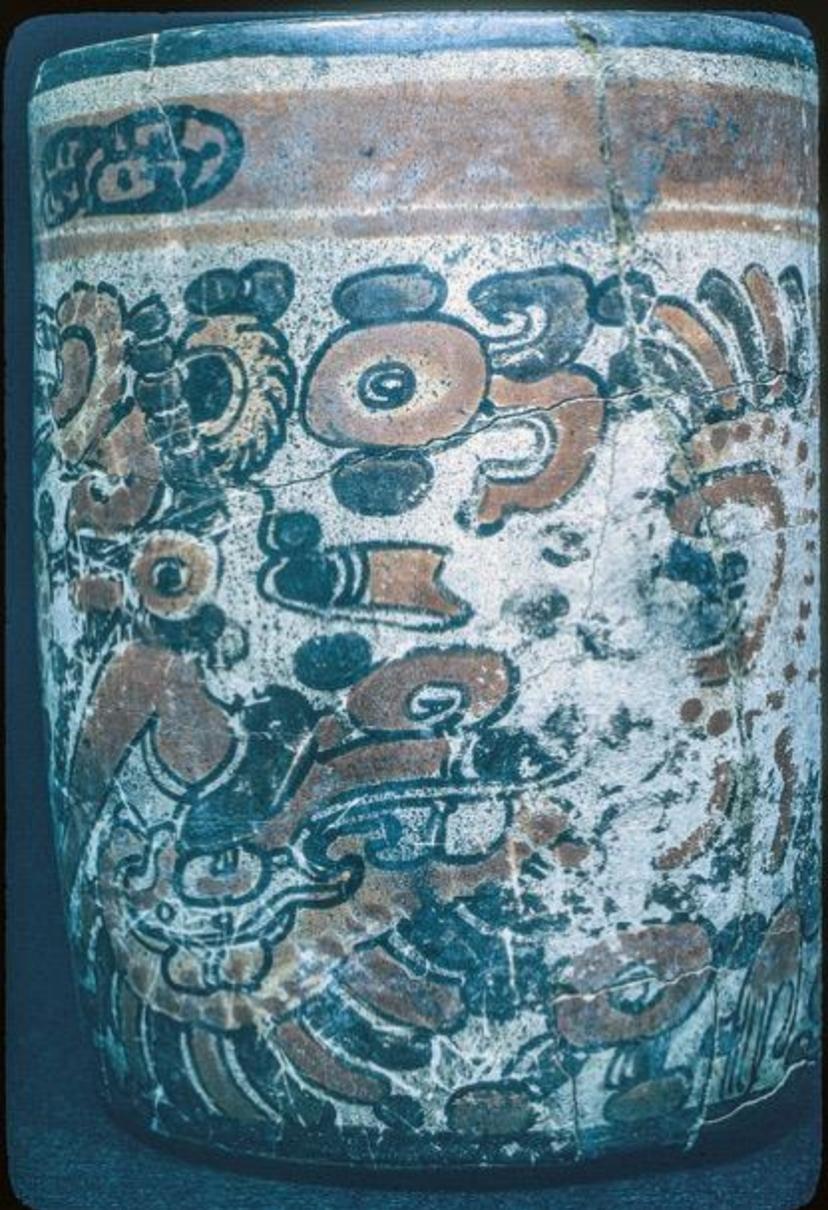
The present FLAAR Reports is for the lecture at MPV, UFM on Red Band Tepeu 1 vases and bowls with Pseudo Glyphs. We will be preparing a separate presentation in the future on the iconography of these incredible scenes. But to do that we need our team to “clean” each individual personage, since there is so much going on it’s now easy to study each individual participant. Plus we need precise line drawings to show the entire scene (and also to show each individual actor). Once we find an illustrator we will begin preparing the drawings. But in the meantime, we document that this vase of Museo Fundacion La Ruta Maya is the most complex scene of the entire series. Many of these supernaturals are not well documented elsewhere, so these scenes are a gateway to a better understanding of chapters in Maya mythical story telling that did not survive in the Popol Vuh.

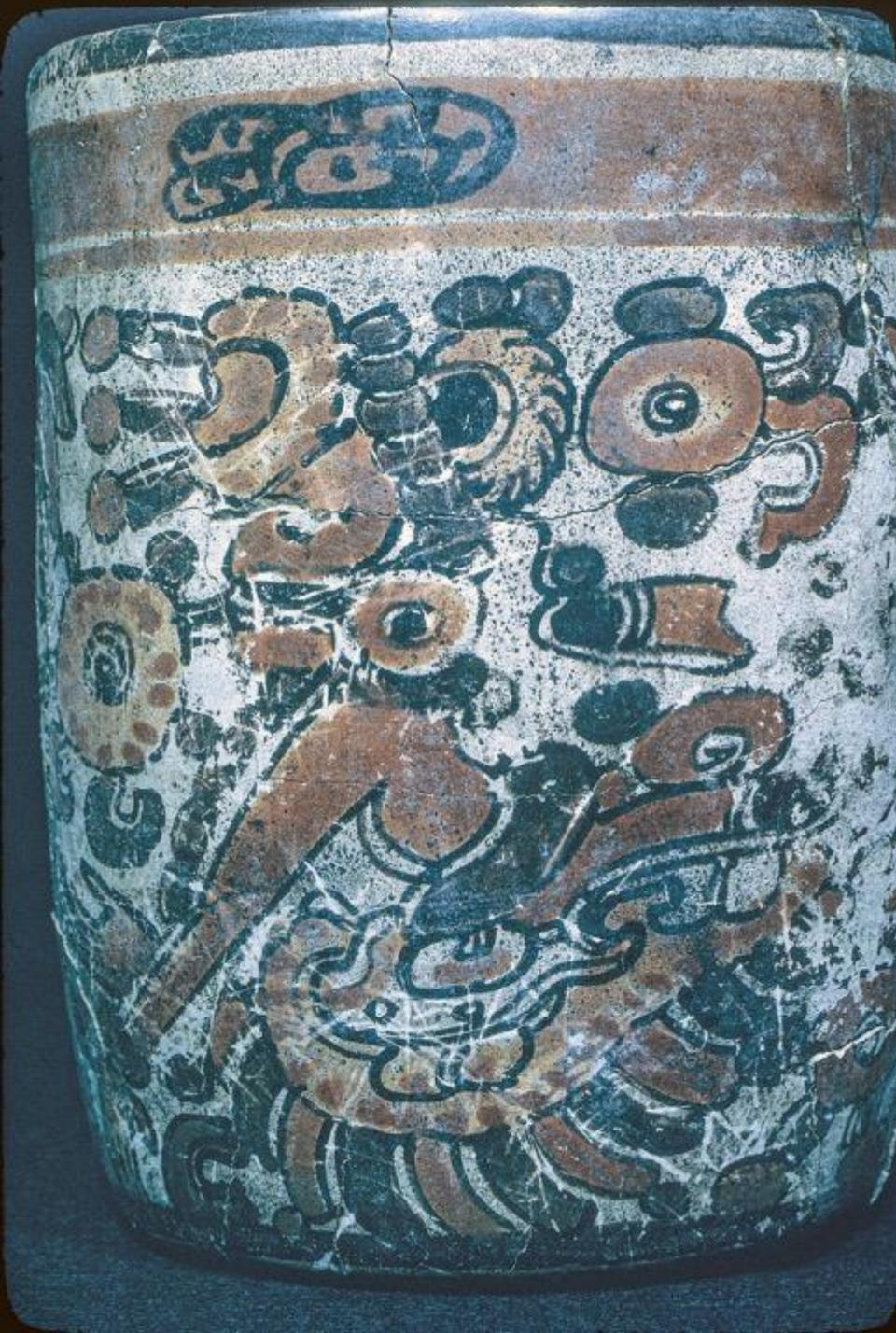






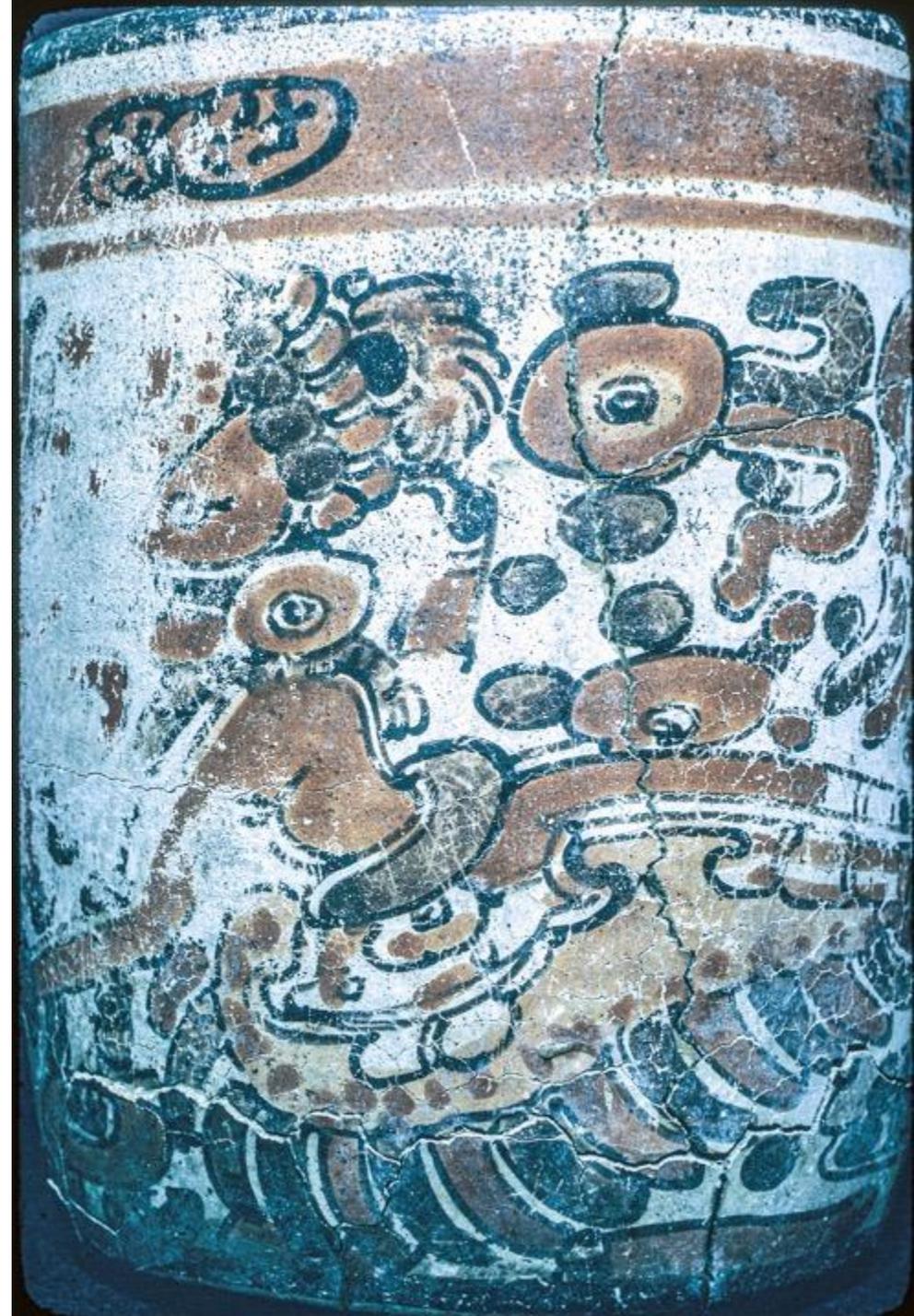


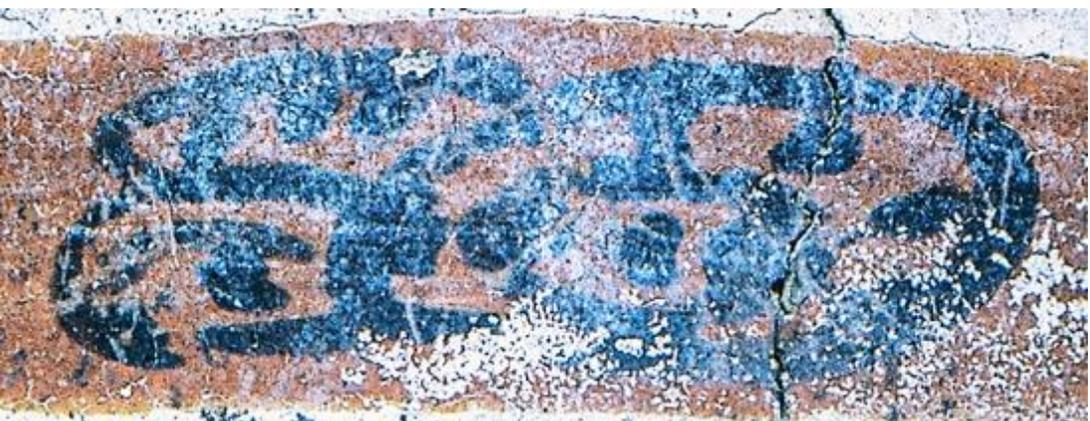




Very similar but not identical.

Would help to learn where this vase is today and to obtain enough views so a rollout can be created.

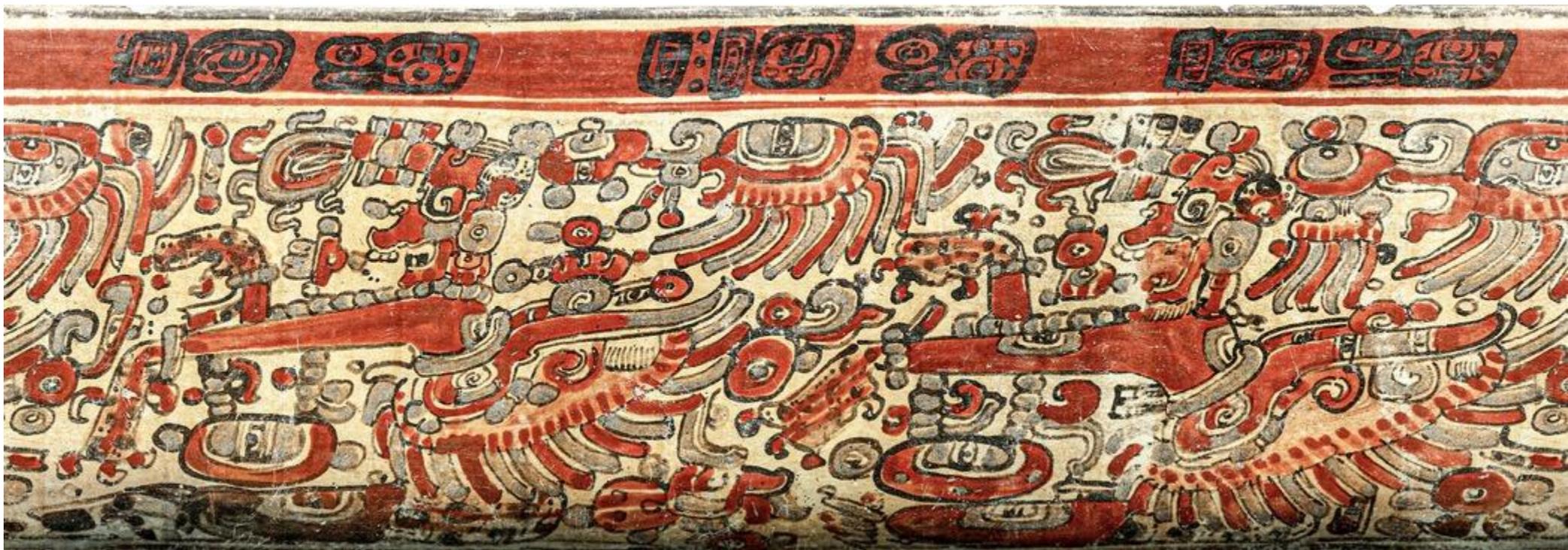




Resolution of K4950 is so low you can't see details in the hieroglyphs. But at least you can notice that both this "human hummingbird" and the long snouted cruller eyed jaguar ear supernatural both have serpent face wings.



Digital rollout is noticeably better resolution than photos of the previous generation.





I do not have a Dumbarton Oaks good resolution scan of this vase rollout, so the glyphs are totally weak and fuzzy from the Maya Vase Database—but at least “something is better than nothing”



K4950



The Maya Vase Book, Vol. 4 p. 623. He says “other text” not “pseudo glyphs”. Kerr does not use that term at all.

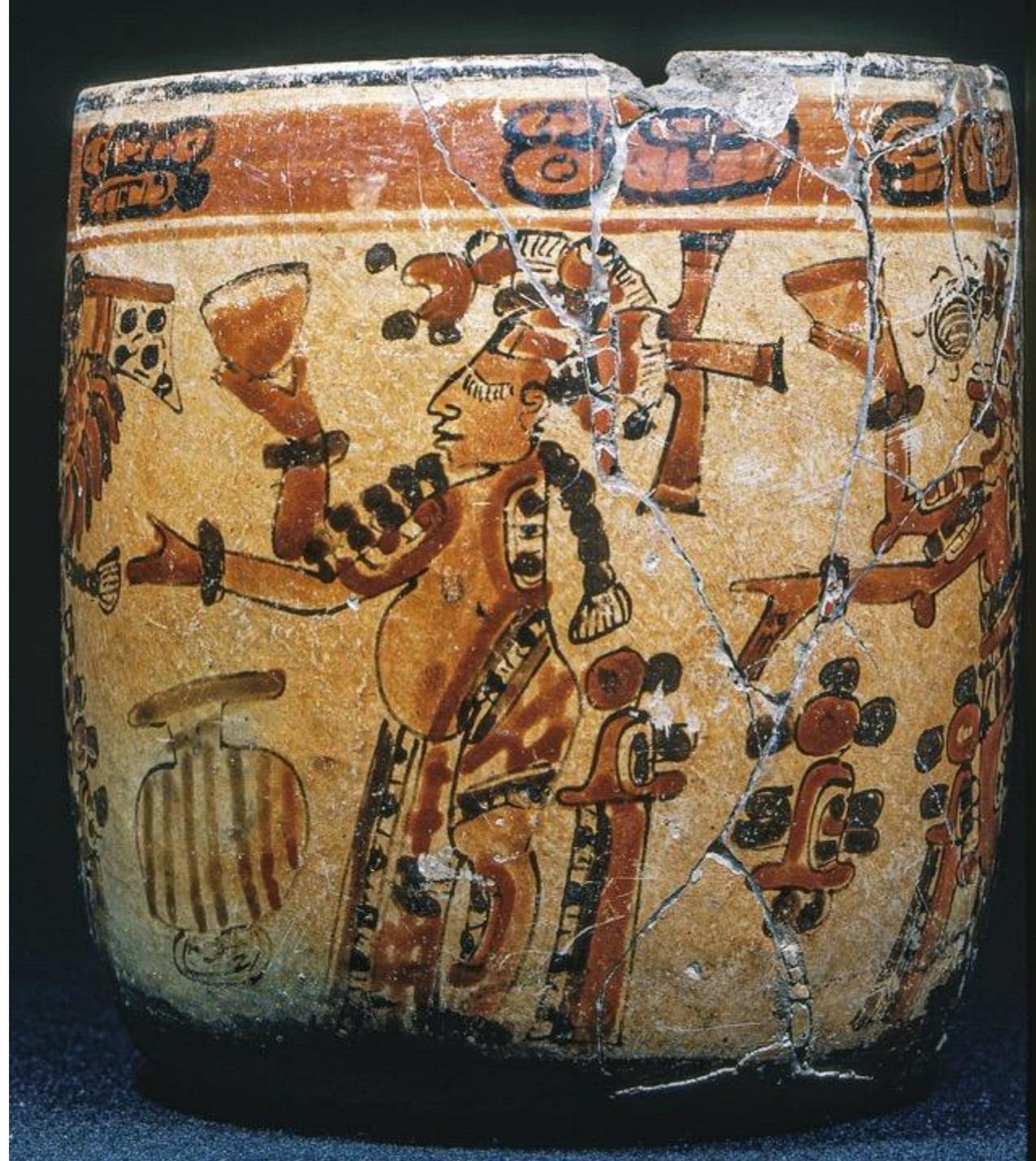
Kerr mentions two other of his rollouts with similar long beaks: K7433 and K8342 but neither of these is a Red Band Tepeu 1 bowl.





This has the same Red Band but the bottom is not “rounded”. That said, I estimate it’s from the same region and the Pseudo Glyphs on the Red Band are from the same atelier or related.

Eating too much, and not exercising often enough, results in a bloated sagging stomach.







Same “beak”, same row of hair standing up, same bird wing issuing off the back of the head—and—both individuals are clearly in an enema scene.

Curious if this is the same black-painted “JGU” as in the canoe scenes but no Hero Twins in this enema scene.



Enema jug, enema clyster, plus the hand-held cup is very common in enema scenes.

Enema jug, enema clyster, plus the hand-held cup is very common in enema scenes.

Enema jug, enema clyster, but no hand-held cup—instead an object I rarely see in enema scenes.

Kerr rollout K7604 was not available in D.O. database of improved digital quality.



The headdress with feline pelage designs that is sticking out horizontally from the headdress, and the black body paint, and the fact that both are in an enema scene, documents that these two nearby artists are picturing the same mythical personage. K8736 shows a similar black painted person but as a canoe paddler.





K5611

Both are Red Band Tepeu 1, both are enema scenes—but not by same painter or even same atelier.





Prefix

Prefix



Not a “complete PSSequences” but definitely all glyphs are complete and readable.



This is not a traditional PSS dedicatory formula but is continuous glyphs with no empty space. So not all artists were "required" to put empty space between text segments. And/or this scribe needed to present lots more glyphs to finish the text.

Red Band Tepeu 1 style vase (with rounded lower circumference). Cropped by Hellmuth from Kerr rollout K0622, Dumbarton Oaks database of improved digital quality.

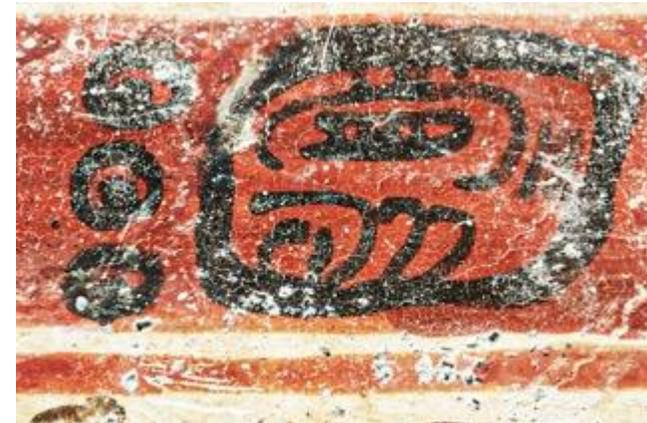


So this Red Band Tepeu 1 round-edged vase clearly are NOT pseudo-glyphs. But curious how the rules of their regional style require glyphs in segments—is each segment a phrase or are the segments artistic?

Clearly the two most common initial glyphs in a traditional Maya Lowlands PSS dedicatory text.



Stylised “foot walking up steps of a Maya mound”?





Clearly the artists of each of these Hero Twin and Paddler God scenes are both showing the same story, though the one at the top is more complicated.



I estimate that these were painted in the same region, but not necessarily by the same artist or same atelier, although clearly they shared the same knowledge.



The Better Light brand rollout camera is digital and the rollout is measured by the computer and is precise. Plus, the file is significantly higher resolution.



This canoe is stretched.



This canoe is crunched.



JGU Paddler but not a complete cruller.

Decoration on the canoe reminds me of a profile/half-frontal Loincloth Apron Face.

Maize God

No stingray spine and has cruller and jaguar lower jaw and ear decoration. Need to see whether two “jaguar-ish” paddlers are the rule on Red Band Tepeu 1 style scenes.



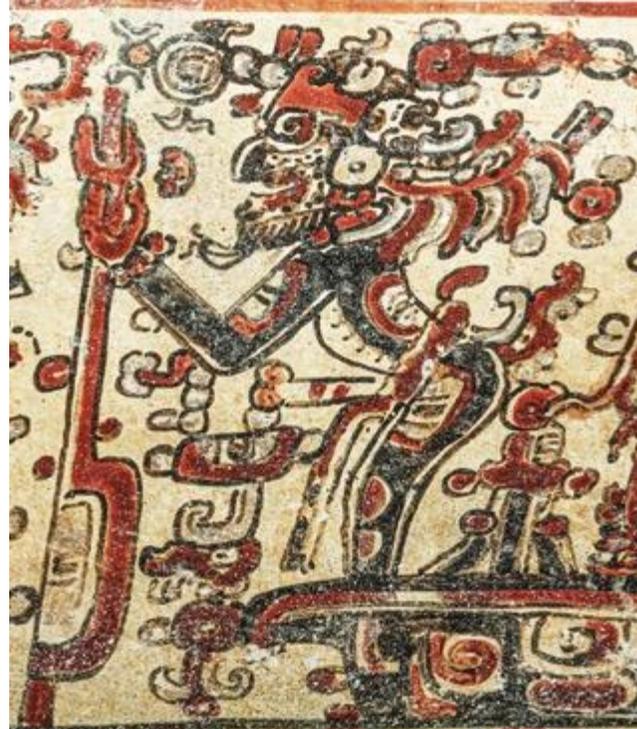
Obviously Hunahpu.

Jaguar ear, jaguar paw hands, but no feline pelage on face—but has a rudimentary cruller.

Obviously Xbalanque.



Black paddler with jaguar hands and shorts with feline pelage.



Paddler, jaguar ear and chin skin, but no jaguar shorts or hands



Jaguar ear, slight pelage on face, cruller, same beard as other paddler—but no jaguar paws.

Black celebrant with jaguar hands, tail and shorts with feline pelage.



All have glyph-like infixes on their upper arms, thigh or leg and back,.



Jaguar ear, cruller, and jaguar paws but no canoe paddle and no feline pelage on chin or cheek.

Summary, Concluding Remarks (Additional Research is Needed on Red Band Tepeu 1 Vases)

So far, I have found Red Band Tepeu 1 vases in the database of Kerr rollouts, because Red Band Tepeu 1 is not a ceramic name nor iconography name used outside the FLAAR database. But if you search for Hero Twins and Paddler Gods you can find the ones that I found:

K0621, with backrack of giant heads. Widely spaced potential Pseudo-Glyphs.

K0622, another with backrack of giant heads. Glyphs are continuous (no empty space) and not really “pseudo” glyphs.

K1254, wasp nest on bull-horn Acacia shrub, vulture, bat, deer, feline and lots more. Widely spaced potential Pseudo-Glyphs.

K7604, enema scene, Pseudo-Glyphs in widely spaced segments.

K8736, Hero Twins, black paddler. Widely spaced potential Pseudo-Glyphs.

MPV-UFM, two tiny canoes, Hero Twins as the paddlers (so, not the Paddler Gods). Widely spaced potential Pseudo-Glyphs.

MPV-UFM, two similar jaguar-pawed deities with serpent-face-wings. Widely spaced potential Pseudo-Glyphs.

Museo Fundacion LRM, incredible scene, very complex. Widely spaced potential Pseudo-Glyphs.

Single canoe with one paddler and Maize God, followed by Hero Twins, 2nd paddler and another black-painted personage. PSS, not pseudo.

So, the corpus for Red Band Tepeu 1 is currently 9 vases:

One PSS albeit widely spaced and only about 8 glyphs—most vases and plates have up to or more than 21 glyphs in a full PSS sequence.

One PSS with continuous text (K0622) and although not a traditional PSS, nonetheless, potentially readable, so not really Pseudo-Glyphs

Seven with widely spaced potential Pseudo-Glyphs but surely more than half can be read by inspired epigraphers and linguists.

This chapter thus adds nine Pseudo-Glyphs to the extensive Corpus of Inga Calvin (2006), since so far I have not found these five Kerr rollouts in her lists. One of many advantages of the corpus of Calvin is that most are from ceramics with provenance.

The very important next steps are:

- to learn whether archaeologists excavating at Naranjo-Sa'al or nearby have uncovered sherds of Red Band Tepeu 1 vases?
- to learn whether Ron Bishop and Dorie Reents-Budet know of other vases of Red Band Tepeu 1 style and tested their composition?
- to learn the technical words that classify these scenes, since Red Band Tepeu 1 is not a Type-Variety name—it's an iconographic classification.

A bibliography on Pseudo-Glyphs will be in the final lecture (that has all the chapters together). But here are key PDFs to start with:

CALVIN, Inga E.

2006 Between Text and Image: An Analysis of Pseudo-Glyphs on Late Classic Maya Pottery from Guatemala. PhD dissertation, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Colorado. 656 pages.

FAMSI website is defective for about a month (since June 2025), so no Calvin PDFs on FAMSI website open as a PDF after they initiate downloading. And recently (late 2025-2026) the FAMSI website is “down for repairs and updating”. Fortunately the helpful PhD on pseudo-glyphs can be downloaded from <https://colorado.academia.edu/IngaCalvin> She provides an incredible illustrated list of 314 Pseudo-Glyphs (Appendix 1, pages 278ff).

CALVIN, Inga E.

2009 Proyecto Fotográfico las Cerámicas Mayas con Seudo-glifos. Informe Final 2009. 81 pages.

Includes helpful catalog of 270 pseudo-glyphs present in more than one vase.

HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.

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

These drawings are NOT based on any Kerr rollouts and should not be given Kerr rollout numbers.

HELLMUTH, Nicholas

2025 Pseudo-Glyphs on Late Classic Maya Ceramics in Museo Popol Vuh, UFM, Fundacion La Ruta Maya and on other Vases. Pseudo-Glyphs on Late Classic Vases, Bowls and Plates. Why not all these Texts are completely legible. Examples from Burials 196 and 116 of Tikal.

Chapter 1: Pseudo-Glyphs on Gouged-and-Incised Late Classic Lowland Maya Vases

Chapter 2: Pseudo-Glyphs on Chama & Related Styles of Late Classic Highland Maya Vases

Chapter 3: Pseudo-Glyphs on Catfish Red Style & Related Styles of Late Classic Lowland Maya Vases

Chapter 4: Maya Pseudo-Glyphs and Rare PSequence Dedicatory Formula
on Red Band Tepeu 1 Style Round-Bottom-Edge Vases

Chapter 5: Maya Pseudo-Glyphs and “Pseudo-Sky-Bands”
Another “Regional Dialect” ?
Atypical Hieroglyphs
on Tepeu 3 (Terminal Classic) Mold-Impressed Bowls and Vases

Final Chapter, Chapter 6:
Pseudo-Glyphs on Vases, Bowls, and Plates from the Maya Lowlands