

M0004282: Illustration of two Mayan individuals

Publication/Creation

5 November 1935

Persistent URL

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Painting by H. M. Herget

A PENITENT MAYA TORTURES HIMSELF BY DRAWING A BARBED CORD THROUGH HIS TONGUE

Here the artist reproduces a famous carved lintel from Yaxchilan, now preserved in the Royal British Museum, London. Self mutilation was a form of devotion among the Mayas. Bloodletting by piercing the ear lobes was common. Worshipers are ascending the steep steps of the pyramidal temple in the background. The bloody cord is kept in the carved stone vase.