

Notes on the Reading of Affix T142

NIKOLAI GRUBE
University of Hamburg

THE hieroglyphic sign T142 belongs to a group of small affixes which often is simply ignored by epigraphers. The sign occurs very frequently in Late Classic texts from the Southern Lowlands as part of a number of name glyphs, and is especially common with month names and the period glyphs denoting the *katun* and the *tun*.

In this paper I will first describe the T142 affix and its distribution, then analyze its patterns of substitution. Finally, a phonetic reading will be presented, based on the evidence cited.

DESCRIPTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Sign T142 consists of three small circles of equal size arranged in a horizontal line (Fig. 1a). There is another affix similar to T142 which Thompson (1962:448) included under the same catalog number. However, it is graphically distinct from T142 by virtue of the smaller circles or dots infixed into the small circles (Fig. 1b). As noted in the listing of readings compiled by Justeson (1984:326), many epigraphers agree that the two are different signs. Moreover, they do not occur in the same positions relative to "main signs."

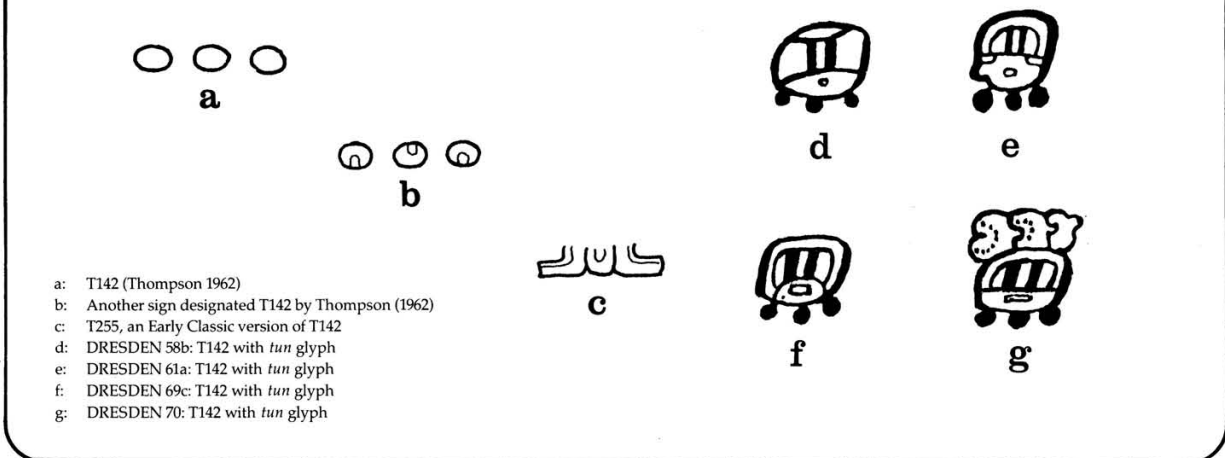
T142 always occurs as a suffix. I have never found it in any different position. This strongly suggests that it functions as a purely phonetic sign without logographic usage. T142 did not enter the writing system before 9.4.0.0.0. There is, however, a different sign, T255 (Fig. 1c), which substitutes for T142 in Early Classic texts, and thus could well be considered a precursor of T142 (Justeson 1984:334). T142 occurs far more frequently in the monumental inscriptions than in the codices, where it is used only with *tun* glyphs (Fig. 1d-g).

SUBSTITUTION PATTERNS INVOLVING T142

I HAVE FOUND five glyphic constructions in which T142 is replaced by T74, the affix given the value **ma** in the now-famous glyphic transcription of *ma in ka ti*, "I do not want," which appears in the surviving manuscript of Bishop Diego de Landa's great work on the sixteenth century Maya (Landa 1938:109). The phonetic value **ma** for T74 is generally acknowledged by all epigraphers (Justeson 1984:321). In one instance T142 is replaced by T502, a sign with the same value as that of T74, **ma**.

The number of substitutions among T74, T502, and T142 could suggest that T142 has the same phonetic value as the others. I do not favor this interpretation since, as shown above, T142 never substitutes for T74 when the latter occurs in initial position. T142 is limited to the final position in

FIGURE 1. AFFIX T142 AND RELATED SIGNS



glyphs. I propose that T142 is read as either **-vm** or **-mv**. The function of this sign may be to stress a final **-m** (or **-mv** or **-vm**) of a word. It seems to be employed in most cases as a purely phonetic complement. The presence or absence of T142 does not alter the meaning of a glyph. Sometimes T142 is suffixed to glyphs known to end in **-n**, as in the case of T28:548, the *katun* glyph. I suspect that this is because there is no clear distinction between **-n** and **-m** in word-final position in most Mayan languages (Note 1).

I am not certain whether T142 had a consonant-vowel (cv), a vowel-consonant (vc), or simply a consonant (c) value. If it were cv or vc the vowel could have been either **a**, by reason of the **ma** substitution, or a reflexive vowel, one matching that in the root of the suffixed word.

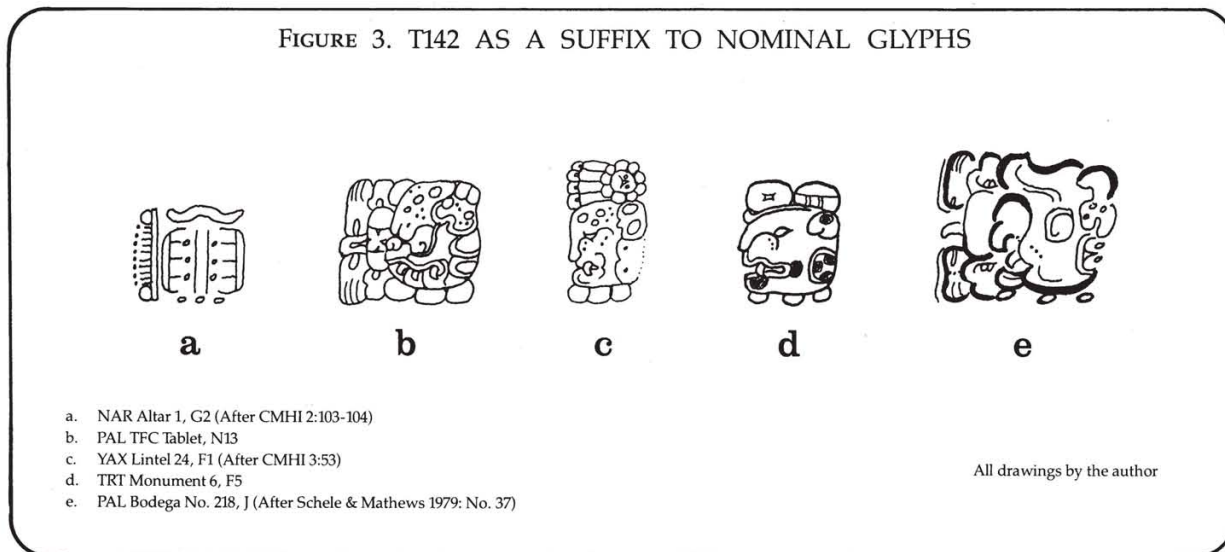
The nominal glyphic of "Lord Kuk," the last ruler known to have reigned at Palenque (Mathews and Schele 1974:75) is written T74.184.744:142, or **ma-k'in-ah-k'uk'-T142** (Fig. 3e). The main sign obviously represents the head of a quetzal bird and for this reason has been read **k'uk'**. I suggest that this nominal glyph does not refer to the quetzal bird itself, but rather to its plumage, since *k'uk'mal* is given in Chol as "plumage" (Aulie and Aulie 1978:174). Kaufman and Norman (1984:124) reconstruct the root in Proto-Cholan as **k'uk'um* ("pluma"). The same word is used in all Yucatec languages. I wonder if T744 represents **k'uk'-ma(l)** or **k'uk'-um**. The last would argue for a reading of T142 as **-vm**.

Figure 2 shows six glyphs in which T142 is replaced by T74 or other signs. In the glyph of the month *Ch'en*, T142 and T74 may indicate that T528 had a final consonant **-m**. Fox and Justeson (1984:48-53) have shown that T528 is a polyvalent sign with at least the following values: **hab**, **tun**, and **ku**. If T142 is suffixed, the reading **tun** for T528 becomes plausible. However, if T58 is to be read **tun**, it is usually written T528.116. T116 depicts a tail which, according to Kaufman and Norman (1984:127) is **neh* in Proto-Cholan, and the sign is read by almost all scholars as **ne/ni** (Justeson 1984:324). T116 and T142 cannot have the same value since there is no substitution between them.

T142 is the common sign suffixed to T528 in the "color months" *Ch'en*, *Yax*, *Zac*, and *Ceh*. On Ixkun Stela 5, the month name *Zac* is spelled T58.528:582 (D. Stuart, cited in Fox and Justeson 1984:52). This alternative spelling confirms the reading of T142 as **-vm** since T582 is generally acknowledged as possessing the value **mo** (Justeson 1984:345).

No convincing readings for the color month names have yet been offered. In all cases, however, the names should end in **-m** or **-n**. Fox and Justeson (1984:52) discuss two possibilities. The root of each of the month names could be **hab**, and the final **-b** could have shifted to **-m** (Note 2). Alternatively, the intended reading could have been *sihom*. This word appears in a number of

FIGURE 3. T142 AS A SUFFIX TO NOMINAL GLYPHS



languages as an element of the names of the four months in question. Perhaps T528 had an additional value, **zih**, or **zihom**, which was restricted to these month names. The problem cannot be solved here, but any readings proposed in the future for the renderings of the color months should take into account the suffixes T74, T142, and T582, which share the **m** value.

Another glyph in which T74 replaces T142 is the title first described by Proskouriakoff (1973:172-73) as referring to deceased persons. No reading has ever been proposed for this title or for its main sign, the T672 “fire fist” element. It is suffixed by either T74 or T142, and should therefore represent a word ending in **-m**. A glyph of unknown meaning, usually written T74:110:142, occurs at Copán. The suffix is replaced in at least one case — Copán Stela A, D1 — by T74. Additional substitution patterns involving T142, T74, and T502 occur at Naranjo and Xcalumkin.

Among the most interesting substitution patterns between T142 and the **ma** signs are those nominal glyphs of Classic Period Maya rulers which feature the name-element *balam* (“jaguar”), with minor attributes. In these nominal glyphs, T142 is especially prevalent. I interpret all these occurrences of T142 as phonetic complements. In the name of “Bird Jaguar” of Yaxchilan, either T142 or T74 can represent the final **-am** or **-m(a)** of *balam*. Numerous T751 signs — the jaguar head itself — occur with a **ma** suffix in the monumental inscriptions, among them Poco Uinik Stela 3 (at B10), Arroyo Piedra Stela 2 (F7), and Yaxchilan Hieroglyphic Stairway 5 (Glyph 127).

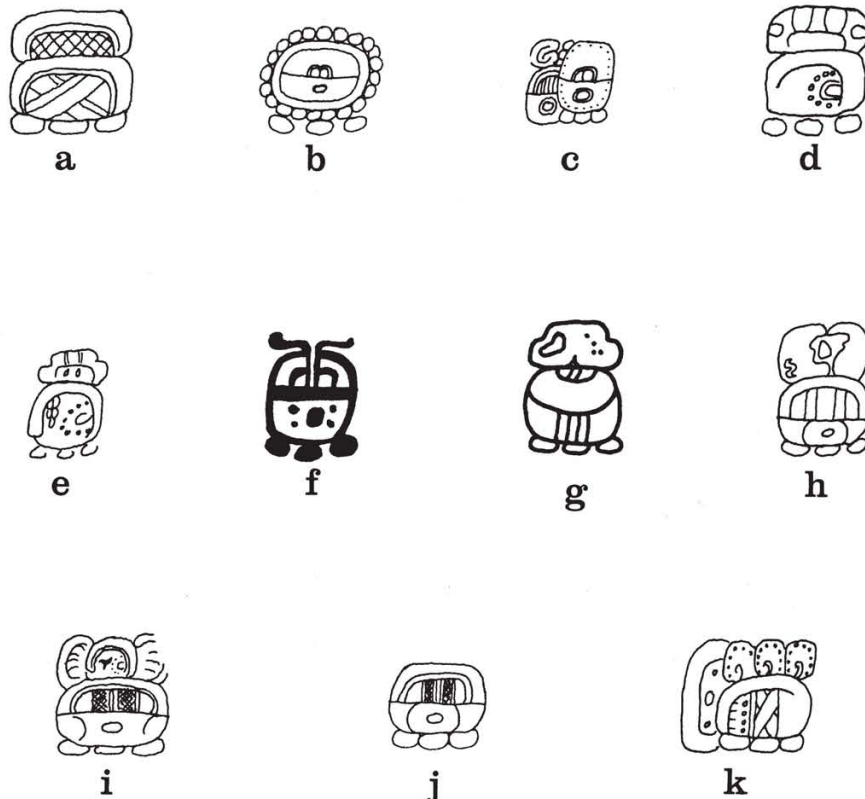
Stephen Houston (1984:129-30) has shown the existence of an additional spelling of the name component *balam*. He reads the glyph T501:140:74 phonetically as **ba-la-m(a)**. Houston found this spelling in the name glyph of a dancing lord on the Bonampak murals and on an unprovenanced stela (Mayer 1980: No. 43), where it demonstrably substitutes for a jaguar head.

OCCURRENCES OF T142

AFFIX T142 frequently occurs as a suffix to nominal glyphs (Fig. 3a-e). Most of the names suffixed by T142 are animal heads. T142 is attached to the name glyphs of “Chan Bahlum” of Palenque (Fig. 3b), “Shield Jaguar” of Yaxchilan (3c), “Lord Jaguar” of Tortuguero (3d), and “Lord Kuk” of Palenque (3e). It also occurs with other names which are not based on animal heads, such as “Ruler Ia-Double Comb” of Naranjo (Fig. 3a).

T142 occurs in a number of additional glyphs. It is frequently employed in calendrical glyphs (Fig. 4a-k), but readings of any of these would be purely speculative. However, at least a few are known to represent words ending in **-m** or **-n**, such as *katun* (Fig. 4i) and *tun* (4j). T142 is also

FIGURE 4. T142 AS A SUFFIX TO CALENDRIAL GLYPHS



- a. PAL Bodega No. 561, I2 (After Schele & Mathews 1979: No. 334)
 b. CPN Stela 8, B1
 c. PAL TC Tablet, D9
 d. PAL Bodega No. 562, B1 (After Schele & Mathews 1979: No. 333)
 e. PAL Bodega No. 119, D4 (After Schele & Mathews 1979: No. 391)
 f. NTN Group II.a, B1 (As in D. Stuart 1981) (After G. Stuart 1981:225)
 g. PAL TC Tablet, C4
 h. PAL TFC Tablet, D8
 i. PAL Bodega No. 561, II (After Schele & Mathews 1979: No. 334)
 j. PAL TC Tablet, B5
 k. PAL Bodega No. 119, A2 (After Schele & Mathews 1979: No. 391)

All drawings by the author

suffixed to a considerable number of other glyphs which cannot be discussed here in detail. It is interesting to note that there is no verbal glyph to which T142 is attached.

In conclusion, there is some evidence that the T142 sign is functionally restricted as a phonetic complement used with words ending in **-m**. This reading is supported by several substitution patterns involving signs securely read as **ma**.

NOTES

1. In Yucatec, the word *katun* means both "twenty tuns" and "war". Interestingly, Fray Padre Morán (ca. 1625) gives <catum> with a final **-m** as "gerra" [sic] in his Spanish-Cholti Maya vocabulary list (Gates 1935:33).

2. The same *b*-to-*m* shift probably occurs in the glyphic name of the month *Pop*. The name is documented in a Pocomchi source as *kanhalam* (Thompson 1950:106). The month glyph itself suggests a reading **k'an-hal-aw** or **k'an-hal-ab** (Fox and Justeson 1984:67-68).

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