

A Variant of the *chak* Sign

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT is to present brief arguments leading to the recognition of a new variant of T109, commonly agreed to have the value *chak*, “red,” or, sometimes, “great” (Justeson 1984:324). The variant sign is that of an inverted mandible, a representation not to be confused with T111, the depiction of a simple longbone whose special markings relate it graphically to T109.

The first context where the jawbone variant of *chak* becomes clear is the name glyph of “Jaguar Paw Skull” (Fig. 1a,b), associated with the early inscriptions of Tikal (Jones & Satterthwaite 1982:127). This name may be the same as that of an even earlier Tikal ruler known as “Jaguar Paw” (Fig. 1c), since the only difference between the two hieroglyphic names lies in the presence or absence of the skull which, when present, has the jaguar paw on its nose. A name on Tikal Stela 39 (dated at 8.17.0.0.0) shows that the “Jaguar Paw Skull” hieroglyph can be used as the name of the earlier “Jaguar Paw,” effectively obliterating any distinction between the two name designations (Fig. 1d). Another example of the name (Fig. 1e) appears in the headdress depicted on an Early Classic cache vessel of unknown provenance (Berjonneau, Deletaille, & Sonnery 1985:231). While the names of these kings appear to be identical, it is clear that we are dealing with two persons rather than one.

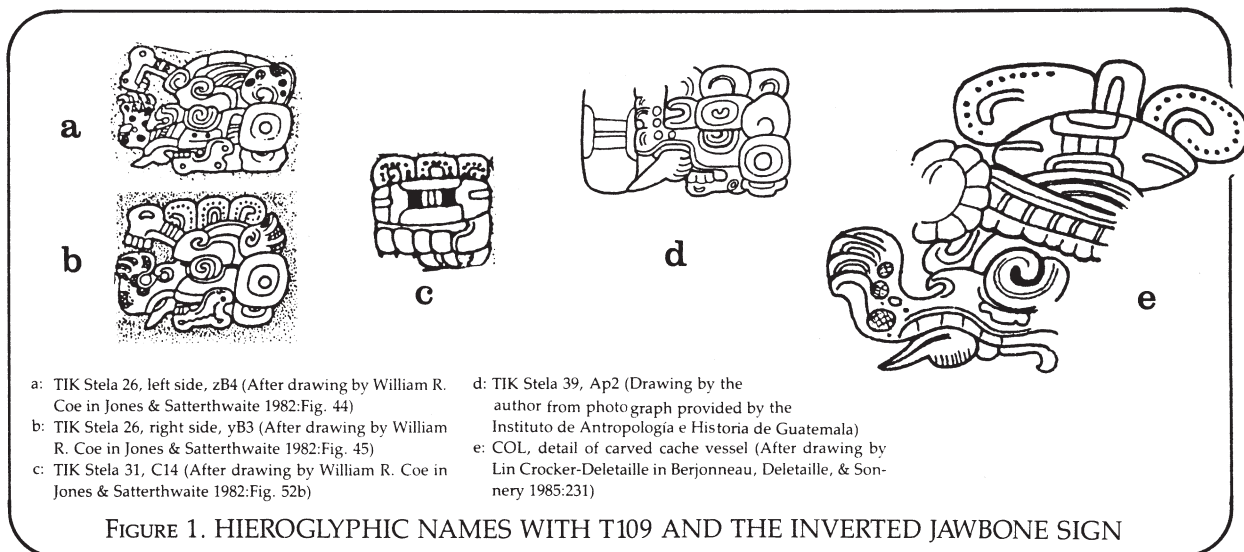
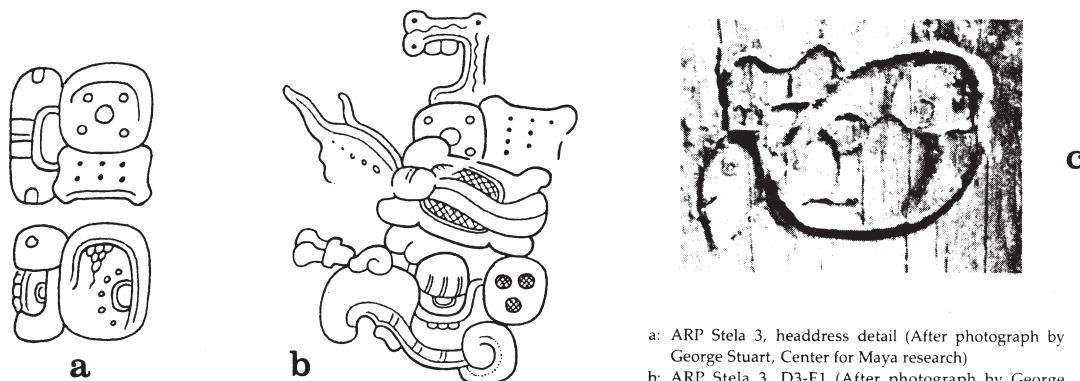


FIGURE 2. NAMES AT ARROYO DE PIEDRA AND EL ZOTZ', GUATEMALA



a: ARP Stela 3, headdress detail (After photograph by George Stuart, Center for Maya research)
 b: ARP Stela 3, D3-E1 (After photograph by George Stuart, center for Maya Research)
 c: ZTZ(?), detail of wooden lintel in the Denver Art Museum (Photograph by George Stuart)

As can be seen in Figure 1, T109 *chak* is shared by both versions of the name. It can be a prefix to the “Jaguar Paw Skull” version, or infixed into the “Jaguar Paw” glyph. Often, however, T109 is absent from this name compound, seemingly replaced by an inverted jawbone sign with similar markings (Fig. 1a,b). Presumably, then, this jawbone sign is an allograph of T109.

This equivalence may also be seen on Stela 3 at Arroyo de Piedra, Guatemala, dated 9.15.0.0.0. The name glyph of the individual who performs the scattering rite on this Period Ending is composed of four main elements: T109 *chak*, T585a *bi*, T596, and the combination T229:528 (Fig. 2a). The name is also given in the headdress of the portrait on the stela (Fig. 2b). There, the *bi* and T596 signs are clear, and the T229:528 (a-k(u)) is replaced by its “turtle” (*ak*) head variant, T741a. The T109 *chak* sign appears to be represented by the inverted jawbone, just as in the Tikal examples.

I know of one additional example of the inverted jawbone sign in the Maya corpus. It occurs as part of a name recorded on a wooden lintel in the Denver Art Museum, identified by Ian Graham as having come from the site of El Zotz', Guatemala (Fig. 2c). The name is that of a person who is probably the father of the individual portrayed on the underside of the lintel.

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LIST OF REFERENCES

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