

Observations on the Cross Motif at Palenque

LINDA SCHELE

University of South Alabama

A great deal of work has been done in the last five years on glyphic patterns, dates, historical personages and events at Palenque. Berlin has interpreted a ruler list involving Tablet of 96 Glyphs; Kubler has suggested various events, names and a history for the Tablets of the TC, TFC, and TS.

This paper is based on the above work and will examine evidence through repetition and placement of motifs in the Inscriptions tomb and the Tablets of TC, TS, TFC suggesting an inter-relationship of all four temples. The examination presented is based on the assumption followed both by Kubler and Berlin that the sculptural images are primarily historical in character, not mythical.

I accept Kubler's definition of Maya visual images as a specific language of pictorial conventions used in company with and perhaps to convey more information than the accompanying text. As pictorial conventions designed to convey specific information, the visual images of Maya art are subject to strict control much like verbal language.

The terms, lord names and abbreviations developed by Thompson, Kelley, Berlin and Kubler will be employed throughout the paper. The following list will clarify references used throughout the paper:

Temple of the Cross	TC
Temple of the Foliated Cross	TFC
Temple of the Sun	TS
Temple of Inscriptions	TI
Berlin's Ruler A and	

the tomb occupant	Shield <i>Pacal</i>
Large figure in TC, TFC and TS (Kubler's Snake-Jaguar)	<i>Chan Bahlum</i>
Small figure, TC, TFC and TS	Pyramid
Berlin's Ruler C	<i>Chaac</i> or <i>Chac Zutz</i>
Ruler of Palace Tablet (Ruler B)	<i>Hok</i>
Rear head of the bicephalic monster	The Triadic Monster
TI sarcophagus lid	TI, lid
TI sarcophagus side walls	TI, sidewall
PN	Piedras Negras

THE THEMATIC CORRESPONDENCE

The Inscriptions Tomb is divided into three sculptural areas: the sarcophagus lid, its side walls, and the crypt walls. The themes of each area correspond to the themes of the TC, TFC and TS Tablets.

1. The Tablet of the Cross is composed of two figures flanking a central cross image (plate 1). The cross is composed of the rear head of the bicephalic monster surmounted by the triadic symbol in normal configuration: feather, shell, and crossed bands-trileaf elements. On either side of the cross above the triadic symbol rest two small serpents with bone elements attached and without lower jaws.

A cross rises from the monster's head with each horizontal arm terminating in a serpent head rendered in rectilinear form and bordered on the inside of the mouth by jade elements. This configuration of the serpent head will henceforth be called the "jeweled serpent."

2005(1974) Observations on the Cross Motif at Palenque. Originally published in 1974 in *Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque (First Palenque Round Table), Part I*, edited by Merle Greene Robertson, pp. 41-61. Pebble Beach, California: Robert Louis Stevenson School, Pre-Columbian Art Research. Electronic version: www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/RT01/Observations.pdf.

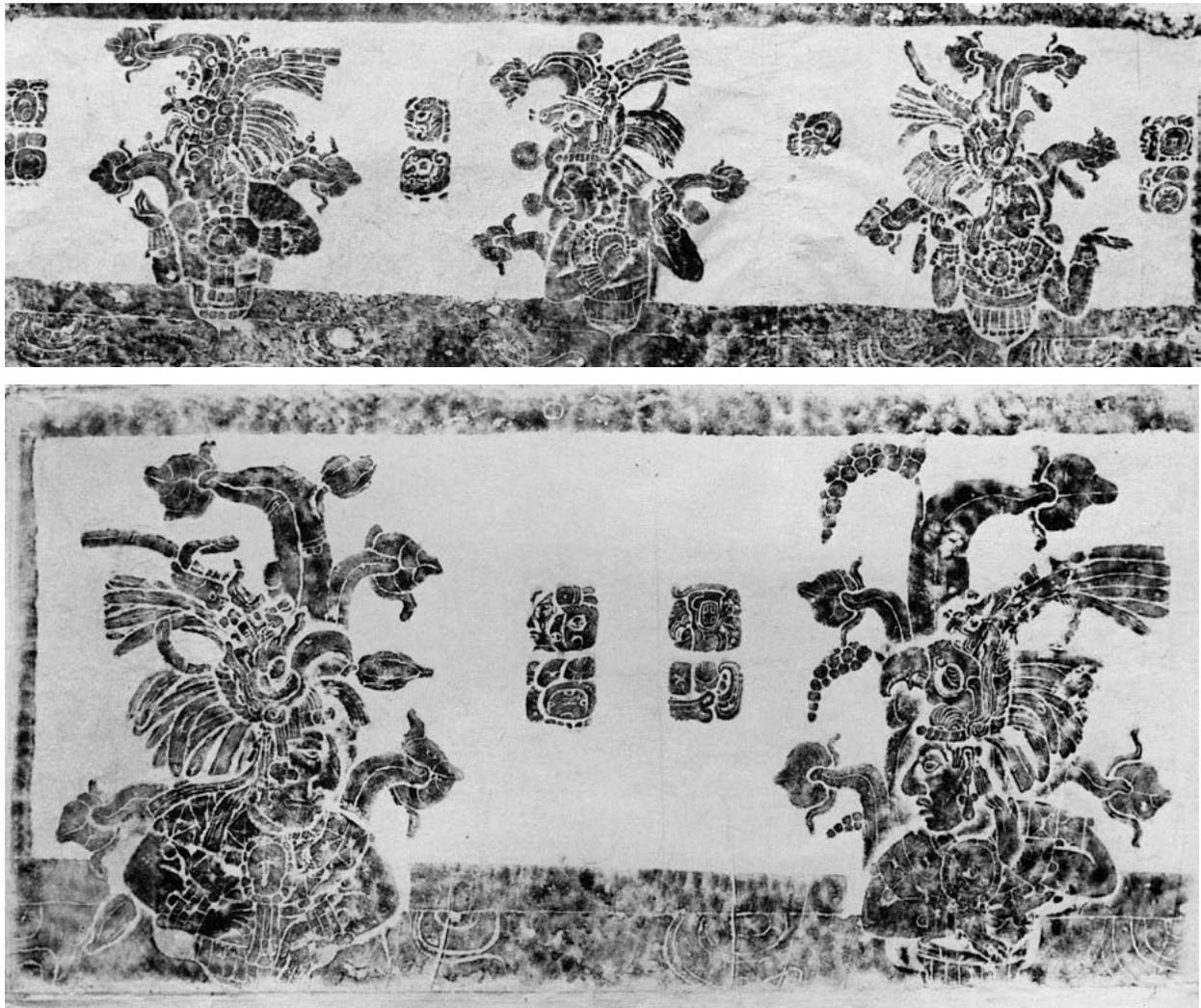


Fig. 1a & b. Temple of Inscriptions, Sarcophagus sides (a) east (6) north (Rubbing by Merle Greene 1967 Pls. 20 and 17).

Atop the cross stands a mythical bird complete with head mask, serpent wing, pectoral, and a mat, jade element hanging from his mouth.

The TI lid (plate 4) presents a figure falling in front of a similar cross motif. The cross rises from the same monster head as seen in TC with the exception that the crossed band element has been replaced by the "*cimi*" death sign in the triadic symbol. The monster's head is flanked on either side by a skeletal serpent with jaws opened at a 90° angle.

The cross rises from the monster's head and terminates all three arms in the same jeweled serpent as the TC Cross. The internal signs engraved on the TC and TI lid crosses differ.

The TC and TI lid serpent-birds are identical including the elements falling from the mouth

and the shell signs attached to the forehead. A *sun-Ahau* sign is attached to or near each tail. It is important to notice that the pectoral and head details of the TFC bird are different from the TC and TI birds.

A double headed serpent bar is draped around both crosses, passing in front of the vertical members and behind the horizontals. Each serpent head is the longnosed, fanged variety with corn elements attached. The same mat-jade element associated with the TI and TC serpent-birds emerge from the mouths of the TC serpent heads. Effigy gods emerge from the mouths of the TI serpents; the flare god emerges from the left head and a god I shall call the "jester god" from the left head.

The serpent body of the TC serpent is composed of alternated jade and *yax* signs. The body



Fig. 2. Temple of Inscriptions, Tomb stucco figure 7 (Merle Greene Robertson photo).



Fig. 3. Temple of Inscriptions, Tomb stucco figure 7, det., shield (Merle Greene Robertson photo).

of the TI serpent is either intersected or encircled by jade rings.

The TI lid and the TC Tablet are bordered by sky bands. All of the signs in the TC band are repeated in the TI lid band, although some of the TI lid signs are not in the TC band.

Finally, many of the signs found on each tablet, including jeweled *Ahaus* or Sun Gods, shell in profile or front view, and jade-bone signs, are suspended in the negative spaces of both tablets.

2. The Tablet of the TFC (plate 3) is composed of the same figures as seen in the TC Tablet flanking another cross. The cross rests on a monster head, which may represent the earth, but which definitely differs from the TC and TI triadic monsters. A Kan Cross is inset into the forehead and corn elements surround the head.

The shaft of the cross rises from the monster's head to be crowned by the Sun God.¹ A pectoral with a rare front view head hangs from the cross; from it dangles a mask element frequently found in loin cloths of portrait figures.

A god is attached to either side of the cross; elaborate corn scrolls extend from each head to form the arms of the cross. A Maya head with breath signs nestles in each corn leaf cluster as would an ear of corn.

Other motifs of interest include the shell and emerging god beneath "Pyramid," the right figure. The Maya head within the leaves is without breath sign.

According to Joralemon, "Pyramid" is holding a penis perforator, the male instrument of self-sacrifice.

¹ During the conference, the similarity of the so-called Sun God to the "north star" head of the sky-bands was pointed out. The sky-band head is a sectional profile of the god atop the foliated cross. I have serious reservations about identifying this head as the north star. He reappears on the shaft of the TI lid cross, emerging from behind the figure.



Fig. 4. Palace, House A, Pier c (Merle Greene Robertson photo, 1973).

The left figure stands on a tri-headed god with glyphs in each eye. Corn leaves swirl from the head and triangles of circular jade-like elements are found on the muzzle and forehead. The identical head with glyphs in the eyes and mouth is found on the rear of Stela B, Copan. A face mask element similar to the TFC Cross pectoral is in the loin cloth of the Stele B figure.

Ten figures are presented on the TI sarcophagus sides (fig. 1). Kubler believes they represent three men and one woman (Kubler 1969:27-28). The North 1 and South 2 figures both have oddly blunt figures and lineal scarification on the cheek. It has been suggested that the figure shown exhibits a congenital or amputation deformity. The contour of the nose of the North 2 and South 1 figures is rather large and different from other profiles presented. The careful presentation of such characteristic differences strongly suggests specific portraiture, not mythological generalities.

Each figure rises from a ground line carefully depressed in a crack-like pattern around each figure. Earth-query marks identify the ground line as the earth (Kubler 1969:27). A tree emerges from behind each figure laden with specific edible fruits which include *cacao*, *aguacate*, *guanavana* and *chico zapote*. The leaf pattern of the trees is not specific but rather is that appearing often in association with god figures, specifically in the line drawing on the floor of TI and perhaps in the Oval Palace Tablet, right figure.

The TI and TFC compositions specifically relate through presentation of the motifs of the emergence of main elements from the earth and the presence of tree or plant forms purposefully associated with major food bearing plants. In addition Chan-Bahlum offers the jester god to the Cross in TFC; the head of the same god appears in the headdresses of six of the TI sar. figures, while God C appears in the other four.

3. The Temple of the Sun (plate 2) repeats the composition of the TC and TFC Tablets. The same two figures flank a central shield portraying the Jaguar God of Number 7 (Kelley 1965:102). Serpent spears are crossed behind the shield. The shield and spear appear in conjunction at many other sites, including Bonampak, Stele 1.

A rigid serpent bar rests below the shield, supported by two gods, one of which, God L (Kelley

1965:99) appears on the East TC jamb panel. A front view, open-mouthed jaguar is mounted in the center of the serpent bar. The same jaguar face appears as the pectoral of the central figures in the Palace Tablet, the Tablet of the Slaves, No. 7 Stucco figure in the TI Tomb and on the figure, west TC jamb. The pectorals may be a short-hand substitute for the TS serpent bar.

Chan-Bahlum and "Pyramid" each stands on a crouched person wearing god masks and body marks. The right bearer (TS) may reappear as the bearer of the left figure in the Tablet of the Slaves. The left bearer's (TS) mask resembles the

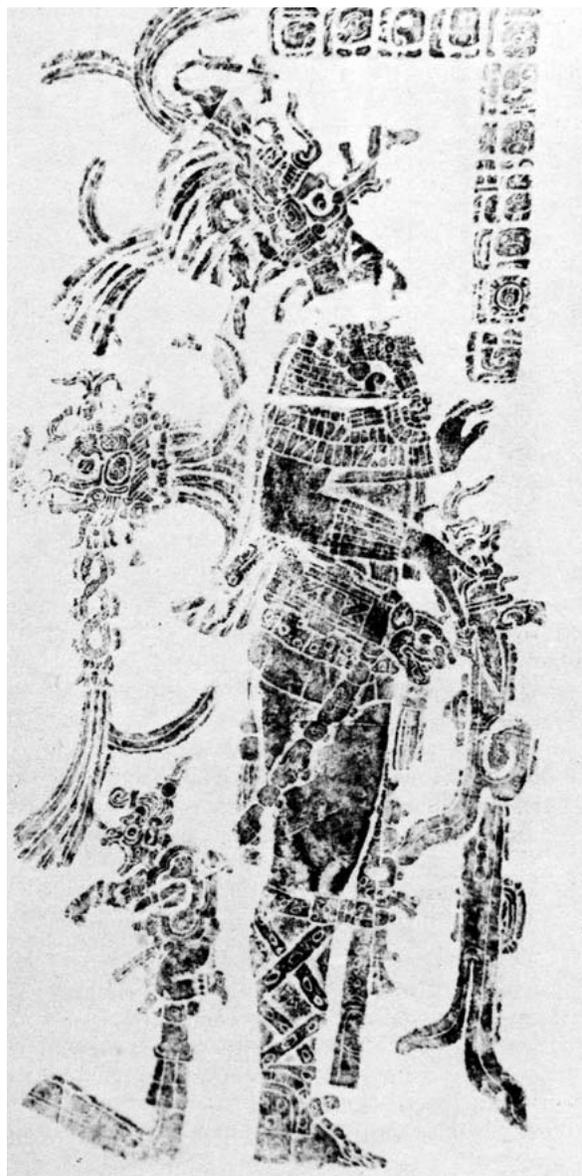


Fig. 5. Temple of Cross, West Sanctuary Jamb (Rubbing by Merle Greene: 1967 Pl. 31).

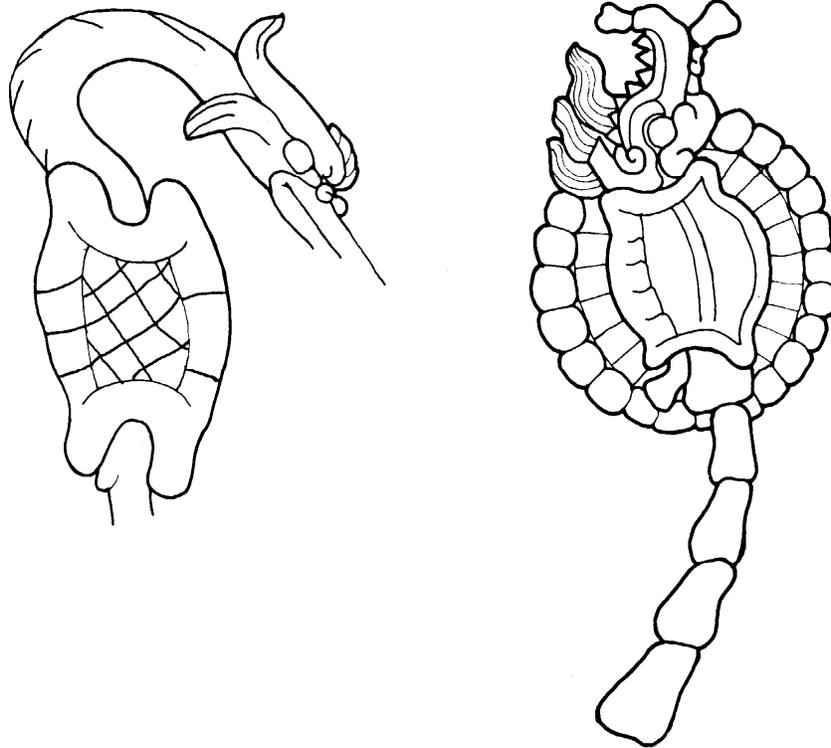


Fig. 6. Turtle shells (a) Temple of Cross, west jamb, from the headdress (b) Temple of Inscriptions, sarcophagus lid, det. main figure, pectoral.

Sun God face appearing in the headdresses of the main figures, east piers, Palace.

"Pyramid" holds an effigy god, which to my knowledge is unique to Palenque. It has an oddly shaped head and holds a shield which appears to be a stretched human face skin. I believe he reappears in a simplified form (head and shield) as the offering presented by the right figure in the Palace Tablet and the Tablet of the Slaves. In both cases the figures are female.

Chan-Bahlum holds a full-figured flare god effigy. The flare god is frequently used and is an important god in Palenque's iconography. The pattern of its appearance will be discussed later.

The nine stucco figures (fig. 2) on the crypt walls are among the most elaborately dressed figures in Palenque's sculpture. All face north or west; the TS is the west temple and Chan-Bahlum, the Palenqueño, is on the north side of the TS tablet. The stucco figures are large, standing approximately 6 ft. tall without headdress. Each holds a shield (fig. 3) identical to the TS shield in one hand. The other hand holds a short serpent scepter terminating in the head of the flare god.

The costumes of the tomb figures are unusually elaborate for Palenque, but many features are repeated elsewhere. The presence of the same general costume on the East piers of the Palace (fig. 4), which are generally accepted as portraiture, may help to support my premise that the tomb figures are as much portraiture as mythological. The third figure related to the specialized costuming of the tomb stuccos is found on the figure of the west jamb, TC sanctuary (fig. 5).

The headdresses of all the groups of figures while different in detailing are constructed of 5 main characteristics:

1. A major mask or domed mass with cantilevered mask.
2. Serpent-wing to the rear of the main mass.
3. Small god heads or animal figures mounted atop the main mass.
4. Two main feather masses, one emerging from the top and one from the rear.
5. "Fish-eating plants" motifs or similar forms emerging from behind the serpent-wing.

The headdresses of the TC jamb and tomb

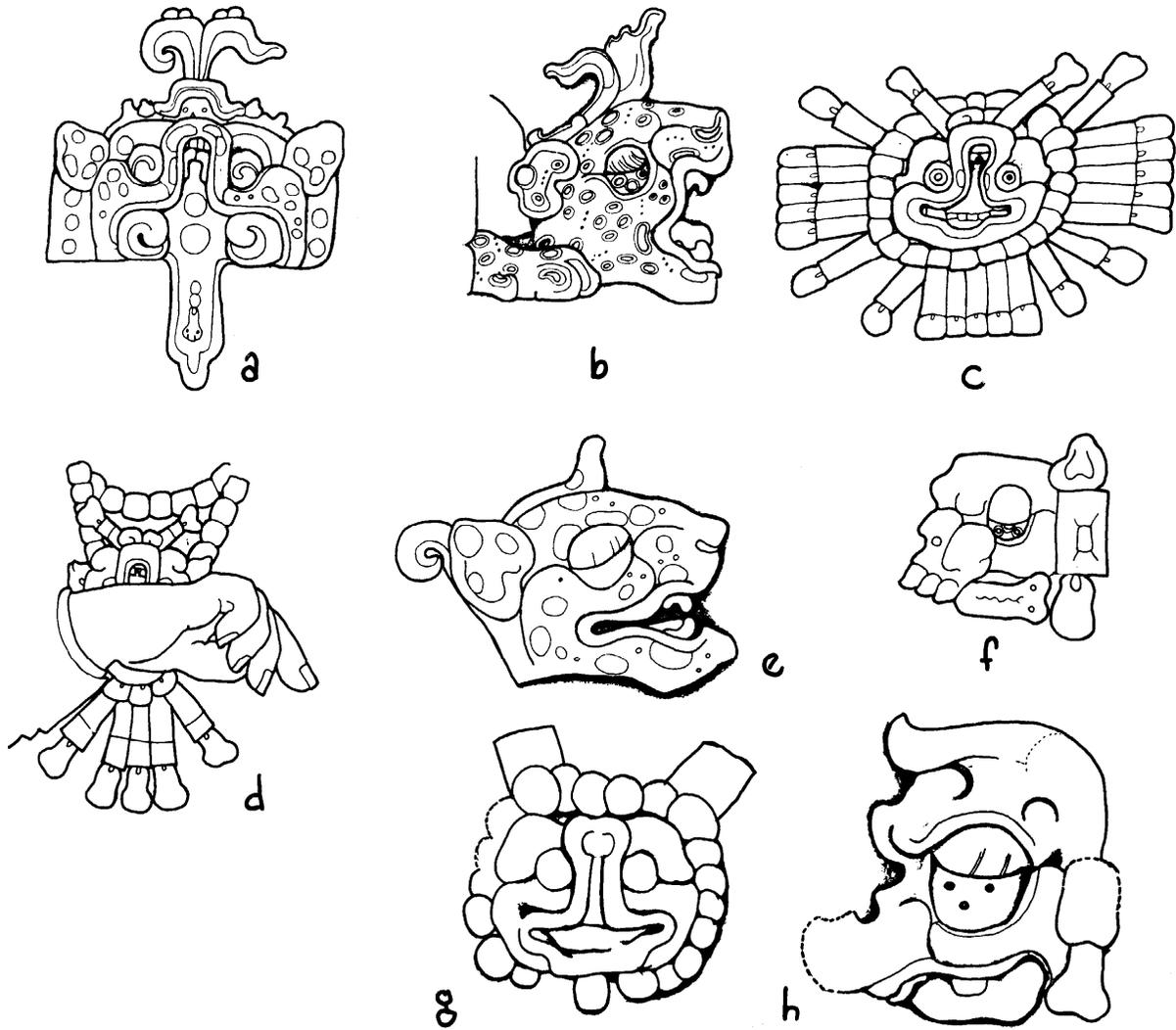


Fig. 7. Jaguar details (a) Temple of Sun; (b) Palace Tablet; (c) Palace Tablet; (d) Tablet of Slaves; (e) Temple of Cross, west sanctuary jamb; (f) Temple of Inscriptions, sarcophagus lid; (g) Temple of Inscriptions, tomb stucco 7; (h) Palace, House D, Pier f.

figures share one further and rare feature — a rectilinear jawstrap including an ear plug and composed of serpent or god features. The strap in neither case is presented as the lower jaw of the main headdress mask; instead each is presented as a separate serpent or god form. To my knowledge this strap feature appears in no other location in Palenque.

All three groups of figures wear elaborate jade capes, jaguar skirts, belts with mounted masks, and jaguar sandals with crossed straps rising to the knees. The high strapped sandals are unusual in Palenque sculpture.

Finally, the tomb and Palace figures both hold shafts bearing the flare god as major features. The

TC figure holds an inverted scepter with the triadic god and falling water symbols.

If the costumes of the Maya persons can be accepted as a specific visual vocabulary of signs and symbols indicating office, function, ceremony, lineage, etc. then the three groups of figures in the TI tomb, TC jamb and east piers, Palace, are engaged in a similar activity or represent holders of the same office. At the very least, the features of dress strongly indicate the personages presented in the tomb stuccos and the TC jamb are historical, not mythological.

I have at present no speculations as to the identity of the tomb figures, but I believe the figure in the TC jamb can be identified. The inscrip-

tion includes two lord names including the lord prefixes identified by Berlin and the main signs identified by Kubler. The name of Lord Jaguar-Snake or Chan-Bahlum identified by Kubler (1972) as the large figure in the TFC, TC, TS tablets, appears at E2. The name, Lord Sunshield, T 624a, or Pacal identified by Kubler as the person of the Inscriptions tomb, appears at E6. The identifying text then probably refers to one of the two rulers.

Features of the visual image help to clarify the identification.

1. The body of the bird atop the headdress has a tortoise shell body very similar to the pectoral worn by the falling figure in the TI lid (fig. 6). The presence of the same rather strange motif would support a relationship between the figures.
2. A jaguar head appears on the belt of the TC figure and recalls the TS jaguar on the serpent bar, the belt jaguar of West Pier f, Palace, the belt of the figure, sarcophagus lid, and the throne for the left figure on the Palace Tablet (fig. 7). Seemingly the



Fig. 8. Palace, House D, Pier c detail, scepter, left figure (Merle Greene Robertson photo 1973).



Fig. 9. Profiles of Lord Chan-Bahlum: (a) Temple of Sun; (b) Temple of Foliated Cross; (c) Temple of Cross, West sanctuary jamb; (d) Temple 14.

figure, as are others including Pacal, is associated with the jaguar.

3. The figure holds an inverted scepter with the triadic monster. It is identical to the object held by "Pyramid" in the TC main tablet. The only other figure holding a similar object appears in West Pier c, Palace. The Pier c (fig. 8) scepter is upright and composed of elements identical to the TC cross motifs. A tri-branched cross of three jeweled serpents rise from the triadic monster's head. I suggest that the Pier c scepter is a short-hand, transportable object meant to exactly represent the iconographical content of the cross image in the TC Tablet and sarcophagus lid. The crossed band sign and the profile jeweled shell are attached to the Pier c scepter and appear prominently in the TC and TI lid compositions.
4. The final and most important evidence is presented through a comparison of the jamb face profile to the TC, TS and TFC faces of Chan-Bahlum. I believe the specific contour of the nose and general form of the faces, especially in the chin area favor strongly an identification of the TC jamb figure as "Lord Chan-Bahlum." The profile strongly supports in addition an

identification of the right figure in Tablet XIV as Chan-Bahlum.

THE EFFIGY GODS

Three effigy gods appear with consistent pattern in the TC, TFC, TS and TI tomb (fig. 9) and throughout Palenque's sculpture. The specialized presence of these gods in Palenque seem to indicate specific function connected to but not limited to their presentation in the TS, TC, TFC and TI Tomb sculptures.

1. The "jester" god is held by Chan-Bahlum in TFC and in TC (in a reclining position). He emerges from the left serpent head of the serpent bar, TI lid. He appears consistently as a head in many headdresses, especially in the figures of the Tomb stuccos, TI sarcophagus sides, east and west piers of the Palace and the west piers, House C Palace (fig. 10).

His most consistent appearance at Palenque and most Maya sites, is as a god attached to the front of a drum major headdress. Specifically at Palenque drum major headdresses are not worn, but are presented, always from the left, to a central and dominant figure. Such compositions are seen in the Palace Tablet, Tablet of the Slaves and Oval Palace Tablet.

2. The flare god is held by Chan-Bahlum in TS and by all nine stucco figures in the Tomb. He emerges from the right serpent head of the serpent scepter, TI lid. Furthermore, he appears on the shafts held by the central figures, east piers, Palace. On the north sub-structure he again emerges from a double-headed serpent, enframed by the bicephalic monster and surrounding large "portrait" heads presented with wing elements identical to the flanged incensarios of Palenque (fig. 11).

Proskouriakoff has associated the bicephalic monster with accession rites at PN. The double-serpent bar is recognized as a sign of office among all Maya sculpture and thus the flare god would seem to be associated with ascension rites and the power of kingship.

3. The last effigy god is the shield-bearer held by "Pyramid" in the TS (fig. 12). He appears to my knowledge only at Palenque and there in only two other places, the Palace Tablet and the Tablet of Slaves. The shield seems to be composed

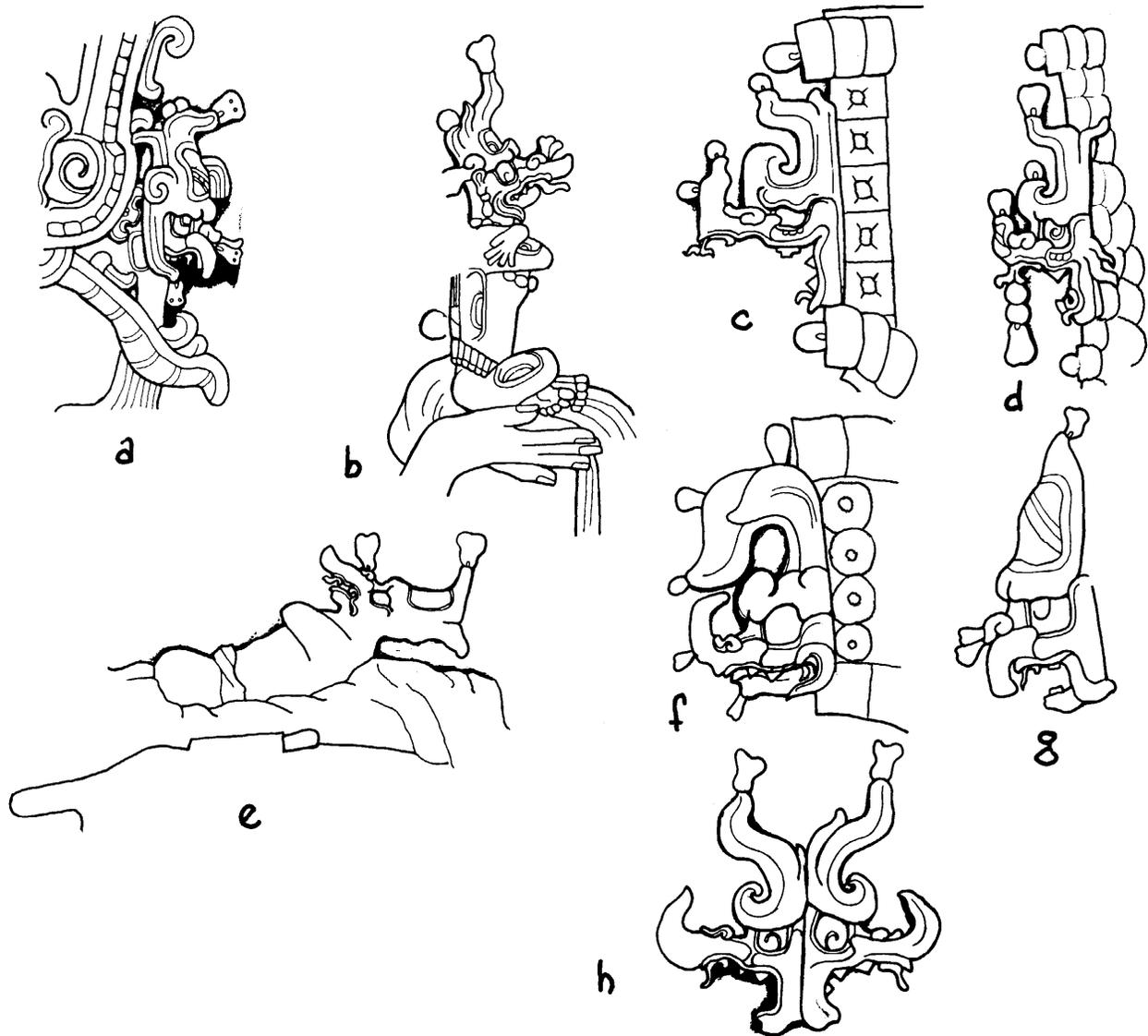


Fig. 10. Jester Gods: (a) Temple of Inscriptions, sarcophagus lid; (b) Temple of Foliated Cross; (c) Palace Tablet; (d) Tablet of the Slaves; (e) Temple of Cross; (f) Oval Palace Tablet; (g) Temple of Inscriptions, east sarcophagus side, detail of headdresses; and (h) Palace, House A, Pier c, det. main figure, headdress.

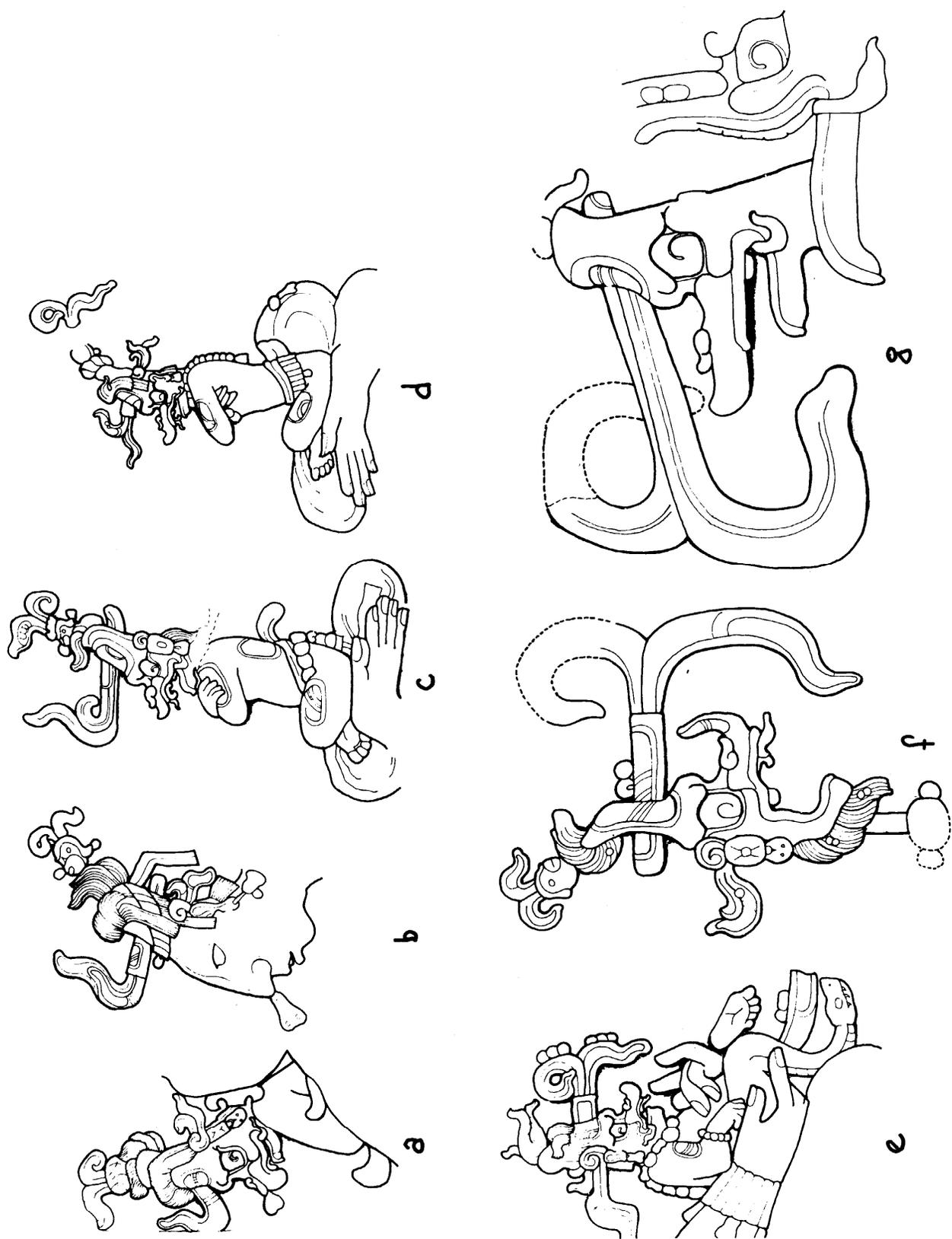


Fig. 11. Flare Gods: (a and b) Temple of Inscriptions, sarcophagus lid; (c) Temple 14; (d) Temple of Sun; (e) Tablet from Dumbarton-Oaks; (f) Palace, House A, Pier b; and (g) Palace, north sub-structure, Tier 3.

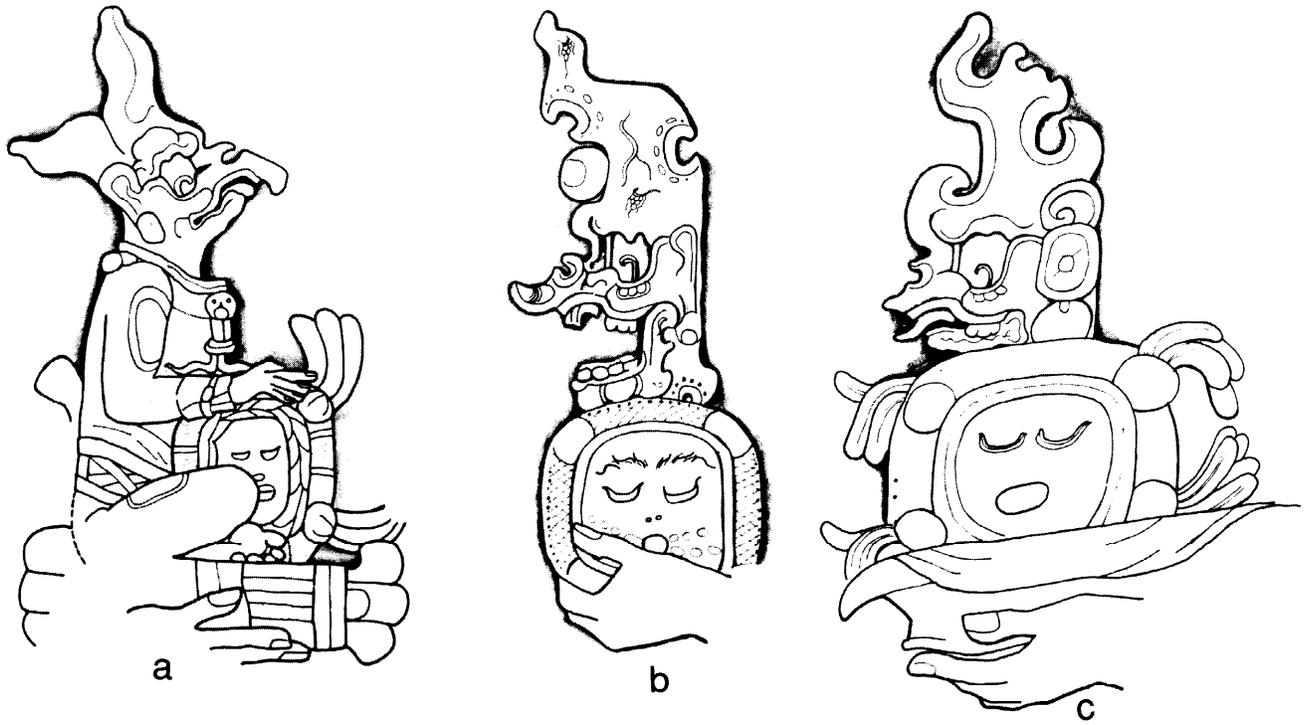


Fig. 12. Shield-bearing gods: (a) Temple of Sun; (b) Tablet of the Slaves; (c) Palace Tablet.

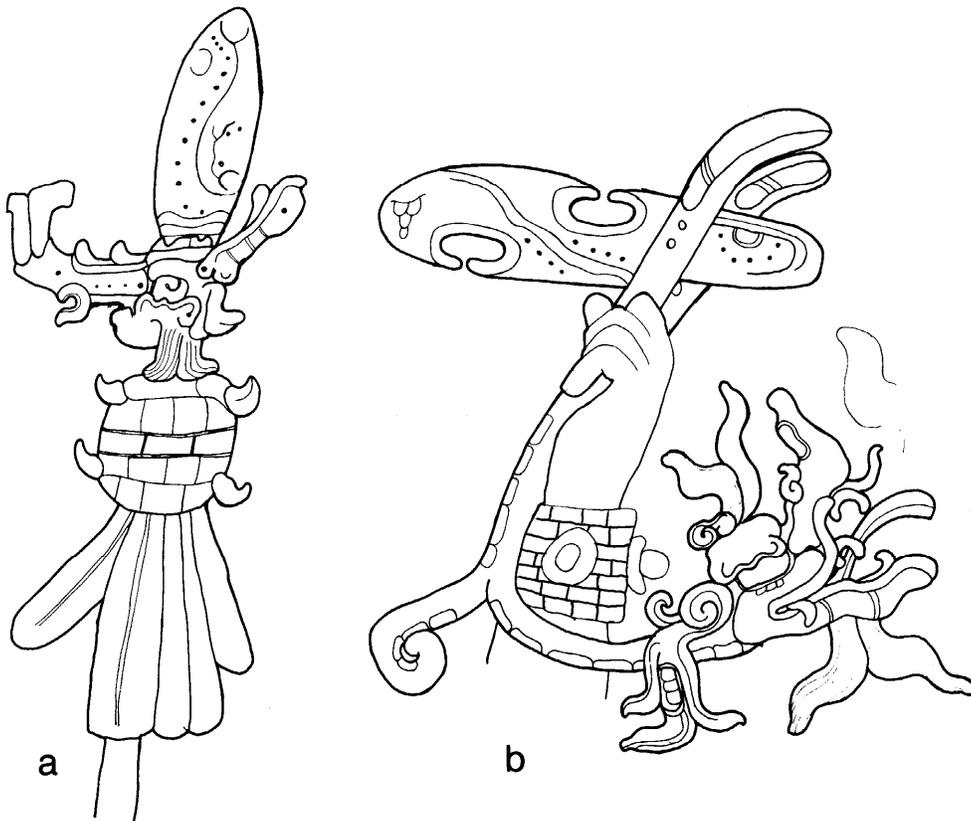


Fig. 13. (a) Temple of Cross, detail, serpent spear head; (b) Tablet from Dumbarton-Oaks, detail, serpent axe.

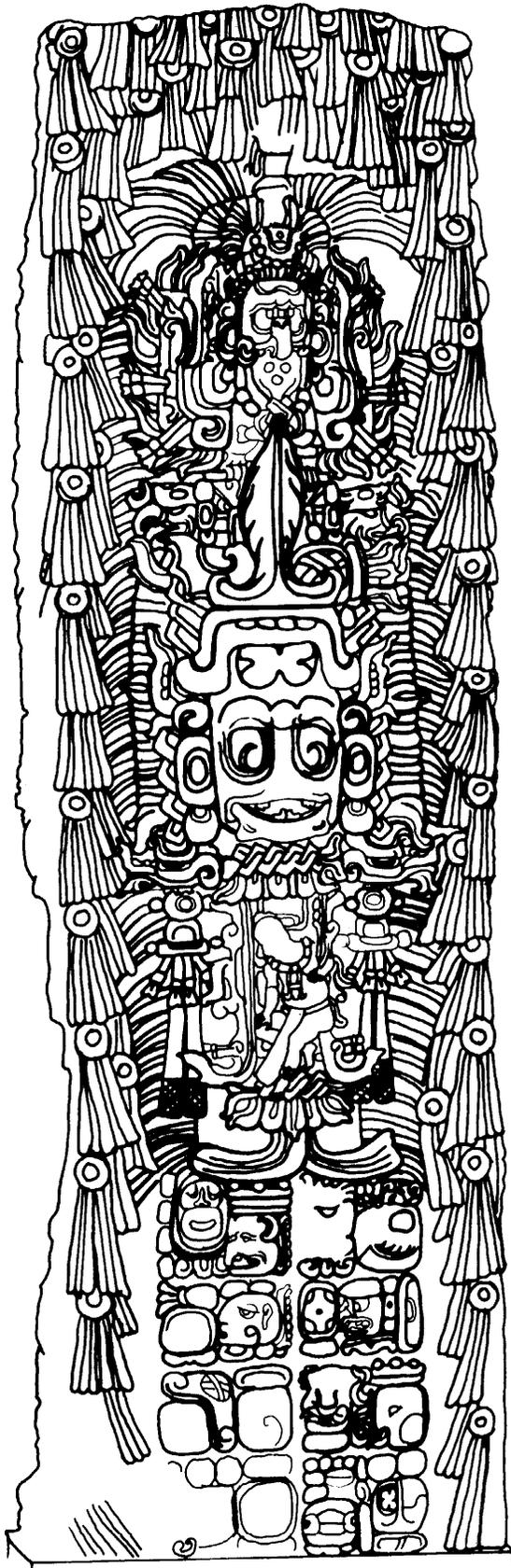


Fig. 14. Copan, Stele H, rear. After Maudslay 1889-1902 IV Pl. 61.

of a stretched human face skin (Moises Morales, personal communication) with clusters of feathers mounted at each corner. The shield is held by the god in the TS Tablet and supports an elaborate head of the god in the Palace Tablet and Tablet of the Slaves. The markings on the head resemble the marks indicating flint on the spear heads, TS, and axe head, Dumbarton-Oaks Tablet (fig. 13).

The shield bearer is presented exclusively as an offering from the right to a central image or person, who evidently holds a seat of power.

All three effigy gods seem to be associated with the giving of power for kingship in Palenque. In the Palace Tablet, Tablet of the Slaves, and Oval Palace Tablet, the action seems to be offertory. In the East Piers, Palace and Stucco figures, tomb, the gods seem to be symbols of power, as perhaps are the serpent bars of TC, TI lid and north substructure panels, Palace. The TC, TS and TFC effigies are presented in the same configuration as the offertory compositions of the Palace Tablets and the Tablet of Slaves. The question remains "why should the chief figures of Chan-Bahlum and "Pyramid", make, rather than receive, offerings from the central images?" The TC, TFC, and TS Tablets may show scenes of the dedication or a process of "seating" or transfer of power from the main image to the persons of Chan-Bahlum and "Pyramid" or to the effigy gods and scepters.

OTHER SITES

Elements of the TC Cross and the Foliated God of the TFC tablet appear in stelae at Copan. The relationship of the Copan motifs to the TC and TFC sculpture suggest possible meaning for the motifs.

Stela H (fig. 14) presents a portrait of a Copanec female. The sculptural handling of the figure is advanced in the control of volumetric space. The rear presents a combination of gods and symbols very similar to Palenque TC Cross motif. The rear of the stela was handled as a continua-

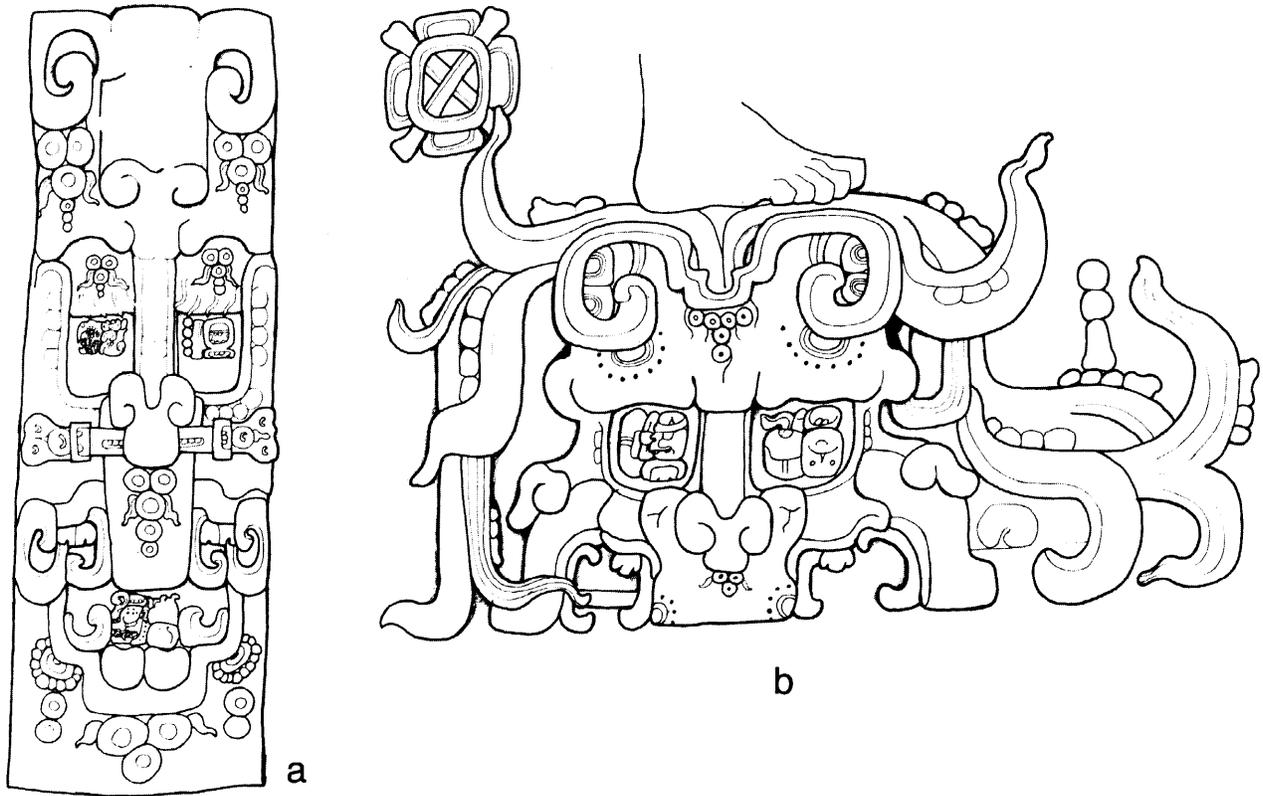


Fig. 15. Foliated Gods: (a) Copan, Stele B, rear; (b) Temple of Foliated Cross.

tion of the front figure who wears a back rack of feathers. Mounted among the feathers is a triadic monster: serpents (without the jade border of the jeweled serpent, but similar to the TI lid skeletal serpents) flank a figure below the monster's head. A front-view serpent bird rests atop the monster; the same element falls from his mouth as from the TC and TI birds.

Stela B presents a male figure; the rear of the stela, instead of being portrayed as the rear of the figure, is composed of a flat-planed mask. The mask is the same god upon which stands Chan-Bahlum in the TFC. The significant features are the scrolls in the forehead, the triangular clusters of round jade-like signs on forehead and muzzle, the highly curvilinear teeth, and the eyes which contain glyphs (fig. 15) as if the god was thinking. To my knowledge no other god image incorporates glyphs into the eyes.

This particular god reappears in the altar for Stele D at Copan and on the south substructure of the Palace, Palenque. He definitely appears on the base of Stele 1, Bonampak (fig. 16), with heads emerging from foliage very similar to the same

motif in the TFC, Palenque. He does not have eye glyphs as do the Copan and Palenque presentations, but the Stele 1 figure carries the TS shield and serpent spears.

All of the themes presented from Copan and Palenque suggest strongly an association of the triadic monster-serpent bird theme and the foliated god theme with the power of office or dedication of the persons presented in each of the sculptures.

DATES AND EVENTS

The aim of this paper is to suggest that two major monument clusters exist: (1) The TC, TFC and TS group and (2) the TI tomb cluster of sarcophagus lid, sidewalls, and crypt stuccos. Each monument cluster celebrates an event from three different viewpoints and those viewpoints are the same in each group, although the events are different. Two major questions remain. What and when are the events, and what are the viewpoints?

The events and dates of each monument group are stated specifically in the West Inscriptions Tablet, S5 to T12. The text reads as follows:

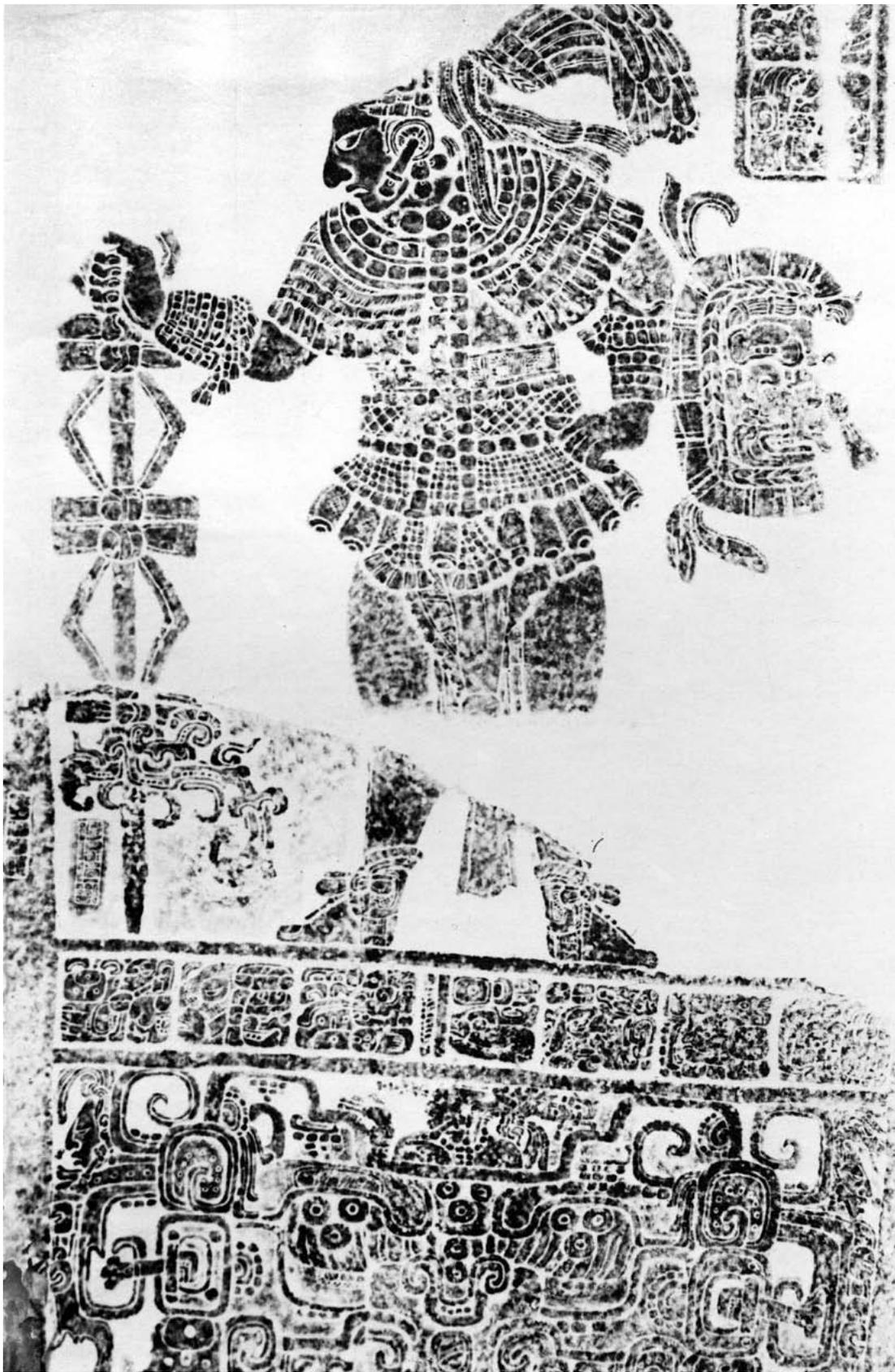


Fig. 16. Bonampak, Stele 1 (Rubbing by Merle Greene: 1972 Pl. 68.

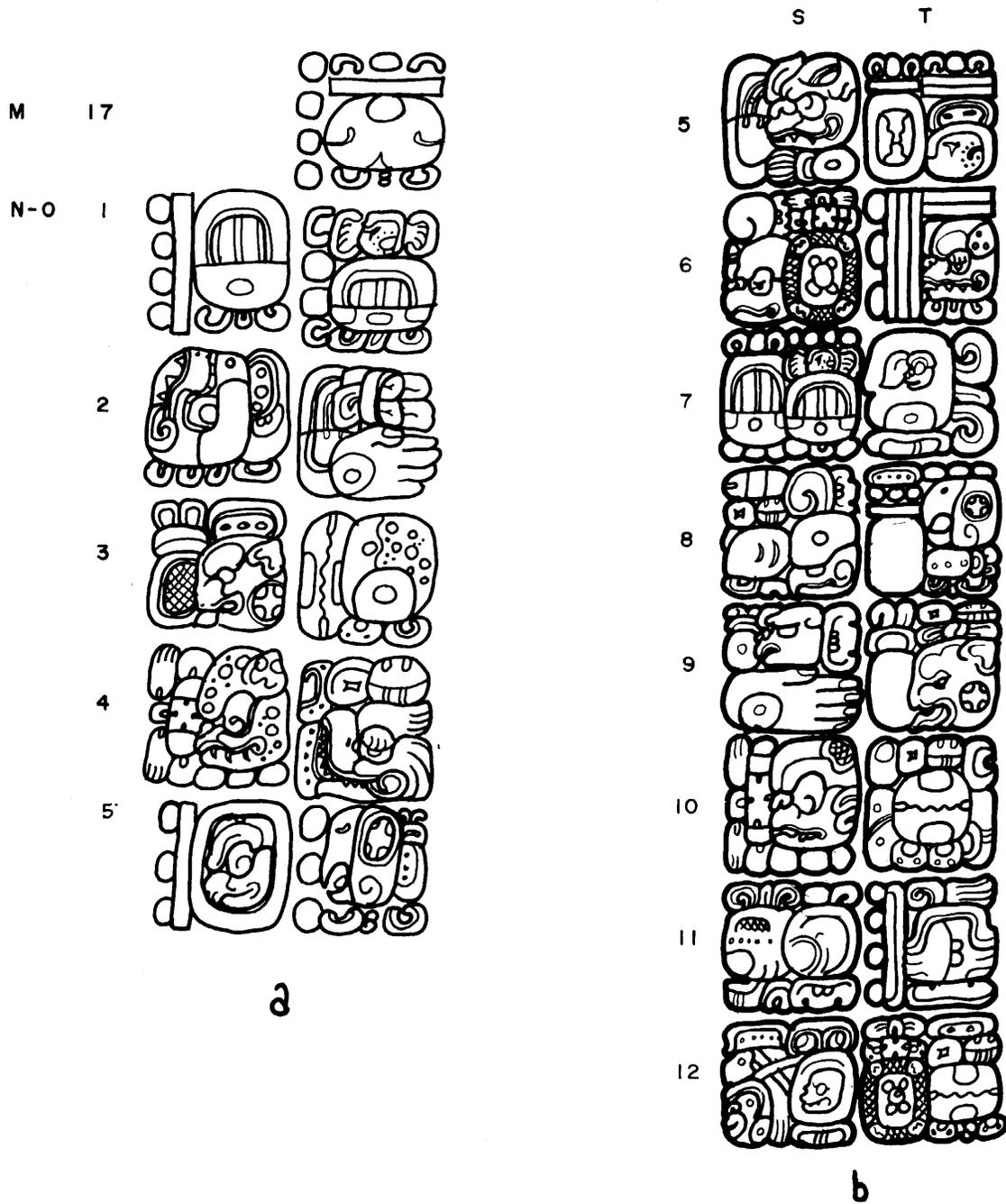


Fig. 17. (a) Temple of Foliated Cross; (b) Temple of Inscriptions, West Tablet S5 to T12.

S5	"count forward to"	T9	compound"
T5	6 Etz'nab 11 Yax (9.12.11.5.18.)	S10	Lord Chan-Bahlum
S6	?, Lord Pacal	T10	Palenque emblem
T6	18 Kins, 10 Uinals	S11	death complex??
S7	1 Tun, 4 Katuns (age at death)	T11	unknown
T7	"seating"	S12a	God C with sky bracket
S8	unknown (seating complex?)	S12b	"u cimi," his death
T8	8 Oc, 3 Kayab (9.12.11.12.10.)	T12	Lord Pacal of Palenque
S9	"accession		

"Count forward to 6 Etz'nab, 11 Yax; Lord Pacal with 4 Katuns, 1 Tun, 10 Uinals, 18 Kins; Seating in office on 8 Oc, 3 Kayab; completion of accession of Lord Chan-Bahlum of Palenque; .. .; His death, Lord Pacal, of Palenque."

The Inscription texts record the life and death of Pacal. The texts had to have been completed at least 132 days after Pacal's death in order to include the accession of Chan-Bahlum.

The date most frequently recorded for Chan-Bahlum in the Cross Group is the 8 Oc, 3 Kayab date. It occurs six times in Palenque's texts. The accession text is repeated in the TC, TFC, and TS Tablets in immediate juxtaposition to Chan-Bahlum's head. Each text repeats exactly the same statement:

- Glyph 1 8 Oc
- Glyph 2 3 Kayab
- Glyph 3 "completion of"

Glyph 4 accession
 Glyph 5 Lord Chan-Bahlum
 Chan-Bahlum's accession is recorded with his "age distance number" in the TFC at M17-O5 as follows:

- M17 4 Kin, 6 Uinals
- N1 9 Tuns
- O1 2 Katuns (2.9.4.6., age at accession)
- N2 "birth" at 9.10.2.6.6. 2 Cimi, 19 Zot'z
- O2 Accession compound
- N3 Accession compound
- O3 "Darkened Ahau" title
- N4 Lord Chan-Bahlum
- O4 Palenque Emblem Glyph
- N5 8 Oc
- O5 3 Kayab (9.12.11.12.10. 8 Oc, 3 Kayab)

The Kan-rodent glyph for accession is repeated throughout Palenque always with specific dates. Some of the Kan-rodent dates are repeated with the "seating" statements identified by Berlin

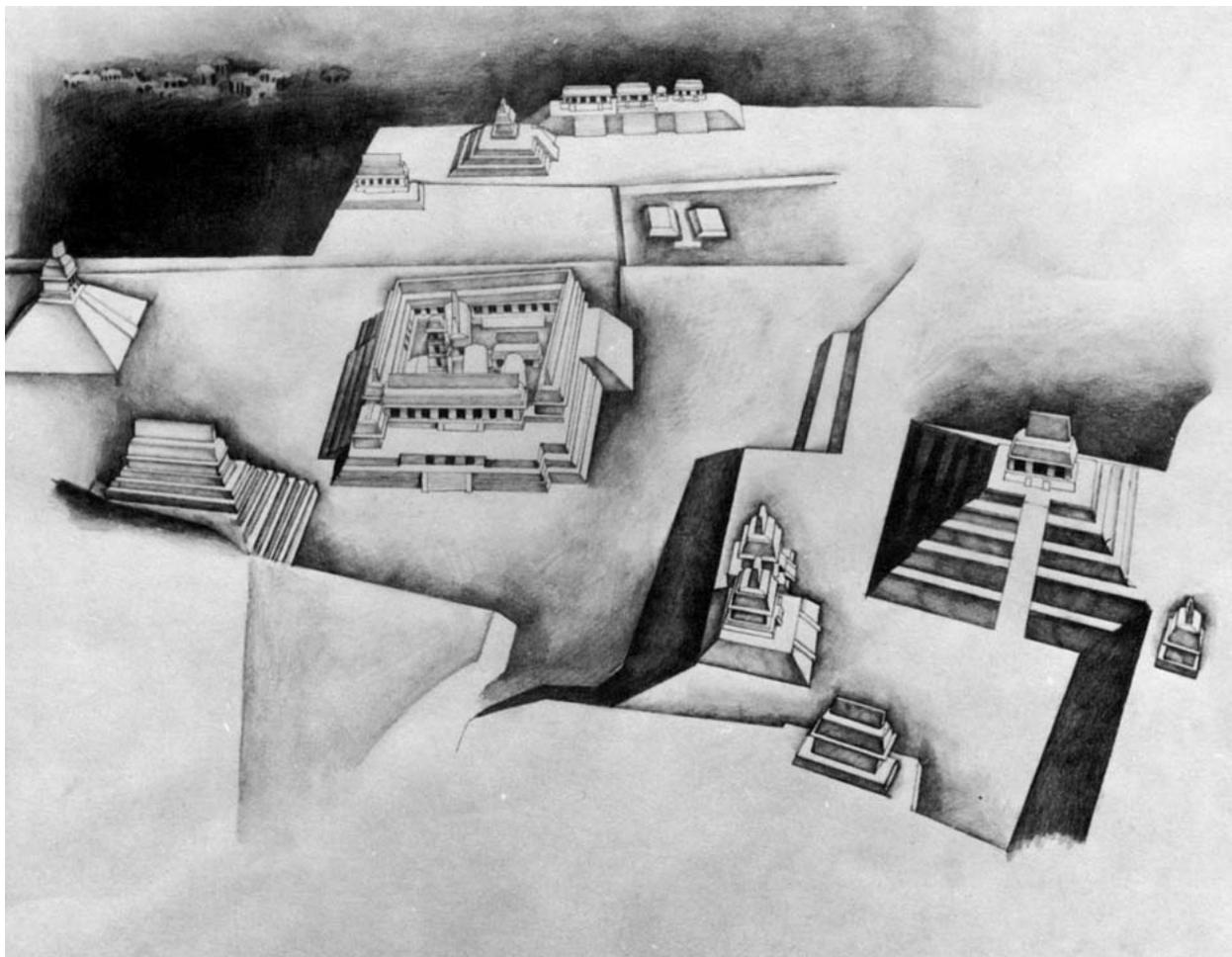


Fig. 18. Palenque, aerial view from south.

(1968) in the ruler list of the 96 Glyphs. Seemingly "accession" included two glyphic descriptions — one of "seating" in office and one a ceremonial sequence requiring an act of "completion."

The Temple of Inscriptions then records the life and death of Pacal. The texts include the accession of Chan-Bahlum 132 days after Pacal's death. The Cross Group celebrates primarily the accession of Chan-Bahlum on 8 Oc, 3 Kayab. Later events are included in Chan-Bahlum's texts, but the latest date seems to be 13.0.0.0., 8 years after accession. I believe that the Cross Group was completed before Chan-Bahlum's death and thus includes records of contemporary events. Chan-Bahlum's death may have been recorded in the Palace Tablet, L15 to N12, on 9.13.10.1.5. 6 Chicchan, 3 Pop; the accession of the next ruler, *Hok* is recorded in the same tablet on 9.13.10.6.8. 5 Lamat, 6 Xul.

The appearance of "Pyramid" in TC, TS and

TFC is mysterious. Kubler points out his highland dress. His dates are earlier than Chan-Bahlum and in the 96 glyphs, his name glyph is associated with Pacal and the date 9.11.0.0.0. 12 Ahau, 8 Ceh (Berlin 1968). I do not know what his function was, but the pattern of his placement suggests he had some relationship to the dynasty headed by Pacal.

ARCHITECTURE AND CERAMICS

A lengthy architectural analysis of the area of the Cross Group and TI is not appropriate to this paper, yet the architectural character of the Group of the Cross is important to the full understanding of the sculpture in the group. The entire group with the dominant north temple (which provides the highest and most spectacular view of any structure on the central plane of Palenque) exhibits a singleness of mind in its form and planning (fig. 18).

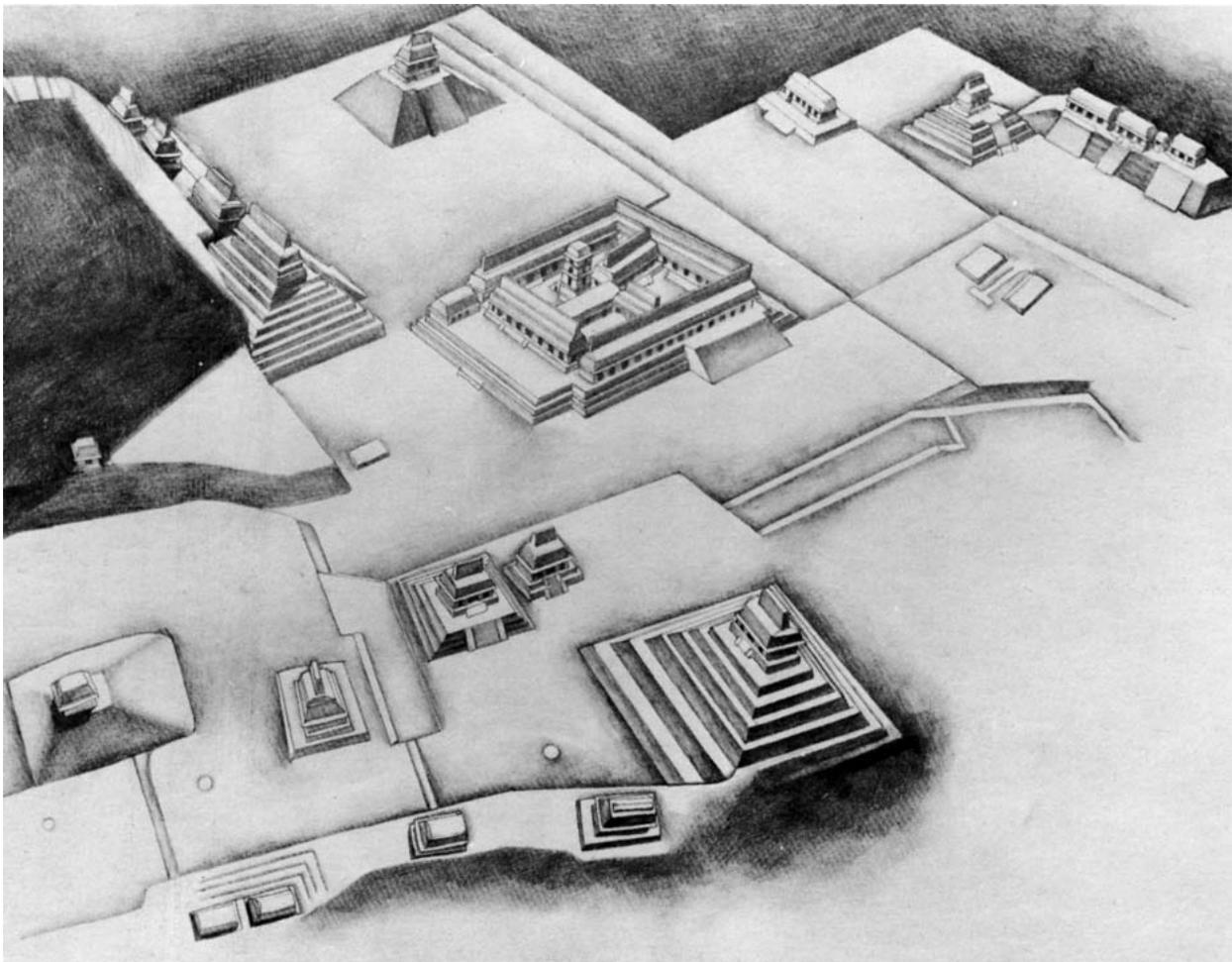


Fig. 19. Palenque, aerial view from east.

All access routes into the area were designed for specific control. Entrance into the area was controlled to enhance a sense of isolation and to deliberately emphasize a sense of transition. Exits were designed to merge serially with spaces beyond. The group was separated by platforms and terraces from the groups to the south of it (fig. 19).

The three temples of the group were controlled in scale, form, and frontality to be perceived from all views as an interrelated group. At the same time, the roof comb of the TC has an interior stairwell, perhaps primarily for maintenance, but at the same time the position and height of the roof-comb relate spatially and visually to the groups atop the Inscriptions ridge.

The TI in a similar way dominates its enormous court in front. The western facade of the Palace seems more related to the TI than to interior spaces. TI is specifically placed to relate to

the great northern horizon. A visual corridor from TI toward that vista was carefully preserved (fig. 20).

The form, space and visual controls of the Cross Group and TI spaces suggest a singleness of mind, a directed, planned construction of architectural sequences. The only jarring note to the sequences is the incongruous placement of Temple XIV. I believe Temple XIV was dedicated to Chan-Bahlum, thus was placed in juxtaposition with the group specifically recording Chan-Bahlum's reign. But TC, TFC and TS record the same event and I believe they were designed if not constructed as a group. Temple XIV relates, I believe, to a later or different event and was constructed at a different time. Most certainly it does not seem to have been included in the planning of the Cross Group.

Dr. Rands has shared much information with me on his ceramic and chronological finding at

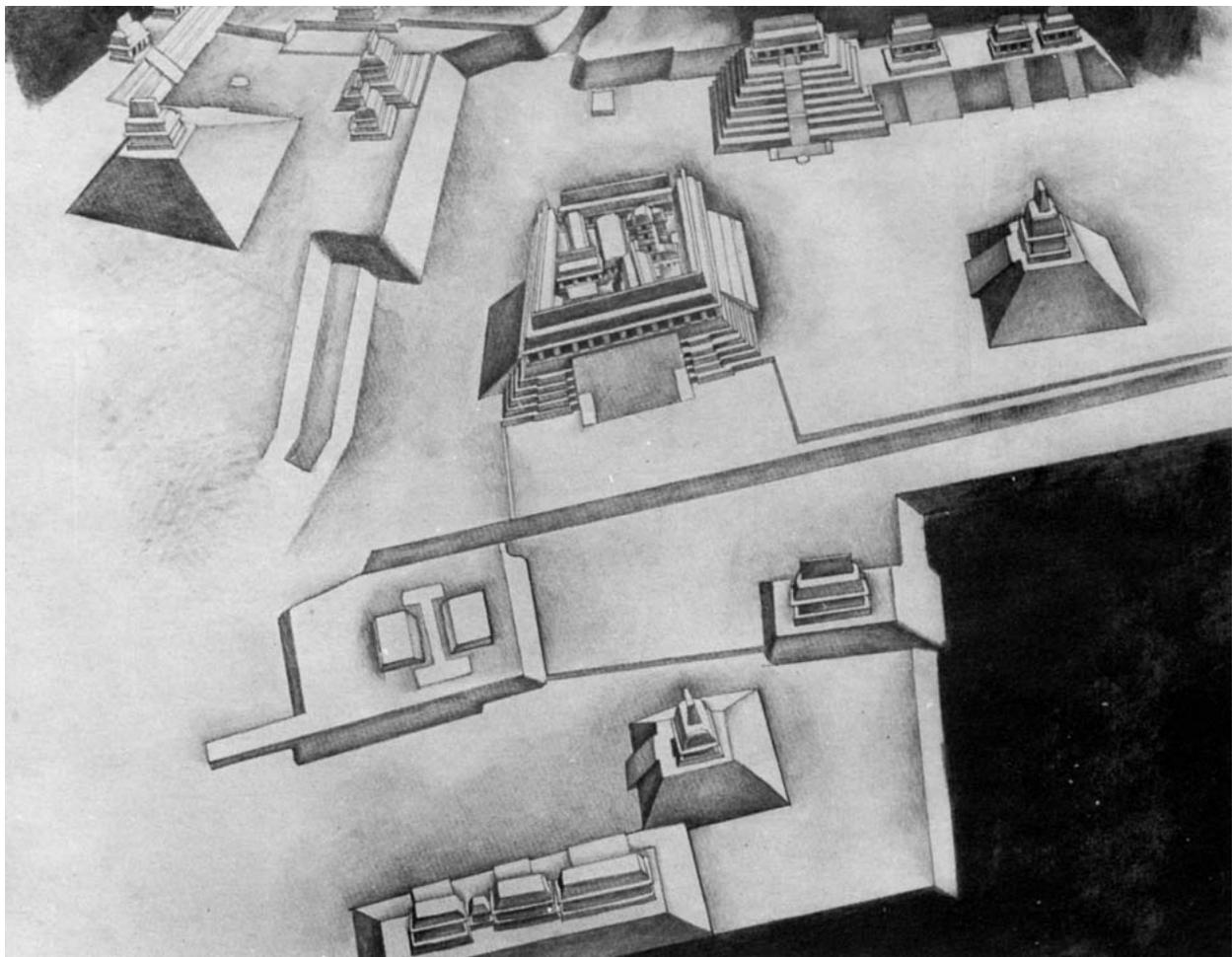


Fig. 20. Palenque, aerial view from north.

Palenque. Ceramic evidence tends to show that before 9.10.0.0.0. Palenque was a very minor site concentrating in the west around the Picota group. By the end of the Otolum period or 9.13.0.0.0. the major structures in the central area including TC, TFC, TS and TI were completed. Palenque had grown from almost nothing into the major site in the extreme western area, although its influence remained primary in the Sierras. The TFC provided the latest ceramic sample from the Cross Group; it was found to be early Murcielagos or early 14th Katun. Most other ceramics were from the Otolum.

Excavations in the central area suggest the main court floor was laid in individual cubes of different depths and fill material. The ceramic evidence and lack of sub-court floors suggest a monolithic construction of the central area in front of the TI during the Otolum period.

Caches were found at the north end of the NW

Palace Court, which seem to correspond, perhaps to dedicate, a late major architectural change on the north of the Palace. I estimate the style of the newly revealed north-sub stuccos to be architecturally early to middle Murcielagos. The cache was early Balunte. The Palace Tablet was found in the north gallery, directly above the north-sub stuccos. The Palace's Tablet, according to Berlin, records the reign of the Trias Group and Ruler B of the 96 Glyphs Tablet. The ruler of the Palace Tablet, Hok, ascended into office on 9.13.10.6.8. 5 Lamat, 6 Xul. He seems to be responsible for the north facade stuccos.

Significantly the Otolum ceramic period spans 9.10.0.0.0. to 9.13.0.0.0., an exact correspondence to the combined reigns of Chan-Bahlum and Pacal. The change to the Murcielagos and the alteration of the north facade of the Palace corresponds to the "seating" of Lord Hok of the Palace Tablet (fig. 21).

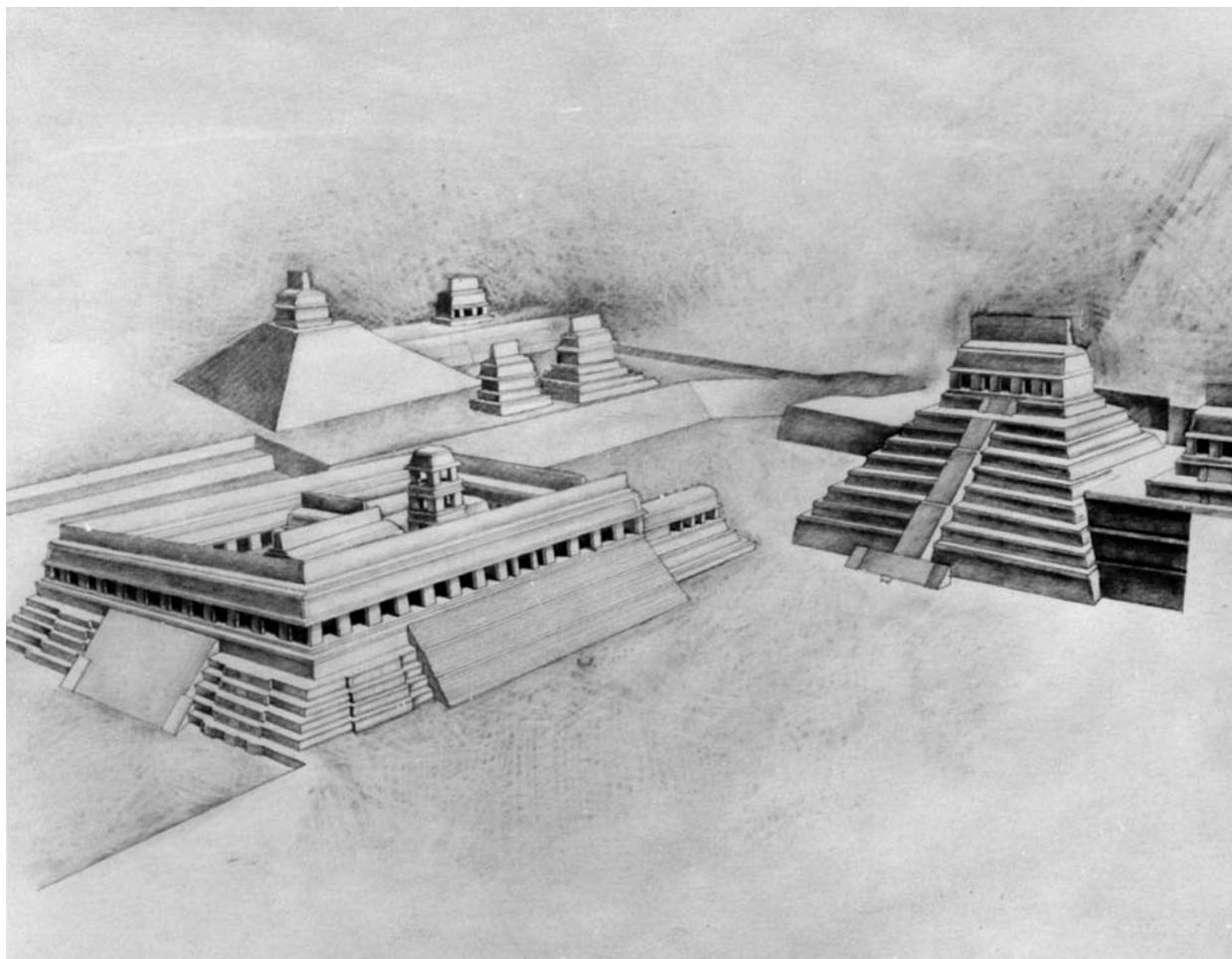


Fig. 21. Palenque, Temple of Inscriptions, and the Palace, north and west facilities.

The correspondences of ceramic periods and major architectural alterations in the Palace to major sculptural records suggests a practice of major change architecturally for each dominant king. We can identify major monumental groups of architecture and sculpture for each of the five known rulers of Palenque.

SUMMARY

The Tablets of the TC, TFC, and TS record the accession of Chan-Bahlum to the rulership of Palenque following the death of Pacal. The Inscriptions Tomb records the death and lineage of Pacal. Both events are celebrated from three distinct viewpoints, represented by motif groups:

1. The triadic monster, a cross of jeweled serpents, a double-headed serpent bar, the serpent bird and its regalia, and sky band.
2. The earth and food bearing plants or associated gods, and perhaps the foliated god below Chan-Bahlum (TFC).
3. The Jaguar-No. 7 shield, the flare god, the shield bearing god, and underworld or war associations.

Each motif group suggests thematic interpretations.

1. TC and TI lid: the power of rulership in the double-headed serpent bar, the heavens in the sky band, the skeletalized sun in the triadic monster, a state of transition of a man (Pacal) deified as the flare god.
2. TFC and Tomb sides: agricultural rites and domesticated food plants.
3. TS and stucco figures: war and the underworld in God L and the jaguar shield.

Because each of the three themes are so explicitly presented in hierarchical settings which repeat in each monument group, it must be accepted that each theme was important to a Palenqueño ruler's life and role. It may be argued that each theme represents a deity or group of deities associated with rulership, but much more is shown than offerings or god images. Pacal, as Merle Greene Robertson brought out (at this conference) is shown in a eternal state of falling, seemingly in death, into the Underworld, and that it is the moment of transition that is shown, not the

end of the journey. Furthermore, he is portrayed as the flare god, so that he is deified. Chan-Bahlum when shown with the same theme (TC) appears in a balanced pose, dressed in simple, but ceremonial clothes and in the act of offering the jester god. He is shown to be alive and specifically not deified. Thus, the iconographic themes of the Cross Group and the Inscriptions refer as much to the men portrayed as to the images. I believe we are seeing dedication of the ruler in each of the major roles he played. The three roles are ranked in importance by location, scale, and detailing.

The ruler roles in order of importance were:

1. The power of the "seat" of the ruler which partakes of the heavens, the middle world, and the underworld, and the ruler as a *divine* mortal.
2. The rites and responsibilities of raising and distributing food.
3. The waging of war and rites for the dead and the underworld.

Because the serpent bar of office is presented in the TC and TS tablets, the power and ceremonies of rulership seems to have participated in both the underworld and the middle worlds. Because the Pacal figure is portrayed as a god falling through the passage of death into the Underworld, the ruler seems to have been considered a deity on earth. The deity of the king seems to be the flare god; Coe believes the flare god is the equivalent of Tezcatlipoca, the Smoking Mirror, of Central Mexico. If the ruler was considered to be a living Tezcatlipoca, then his divinity was essentially of the Middleworld.

A very special reverence was shown to Pacal and Chan-Bahlum. The Inscriptions Tomb and I believe the Cross Group are without equal in innovation, artistic and architectural refinement among Maya art. The power of the sculpture and architecture has tended to awe us. At least we have not found a suitable explanation for the Tomb, the Cross Group or for Palenque's refusal to fit into patterns developed to describe other Maya sites.

The ceramic evidence gathered by Rands seems to suggest that during the combined reigns of Pacal and Chan-Bahlum, Palenque exploded from a very minor site to a major western power. During the same period all of the major monu-

ments, the TC, TFC, TS, TI, and the major buildings of the Palace were completed or brought into a lasting configuration.

The Otolum accomplishment is not an accumulated effort as at Tikal and Copan, but a brilliant explosion of artistic effort, secular organization and community will. The labor, material and organization requirements alone were massive, but to bring the Otolum architectural groups into existence in the unparalleled form of Palenque's art created an accomplishment which has few equals in the history of art. Again I emphasize it seems to have been accomplished without a local tradition upon which to base the accomplishment and in approximately 80 years. If Pacal and Chan-Bahlum were the leaders during the explosion or perhaps its creators, then their monuments are perhaps equal to their accomplishments.

Finally, artistically the Murcielagos and Balunte periods, which followed the explosive Otolum, seem to have been periods of political and economic expansion onto the northern plain, architectural expansion within the city, and of artistic refinement of the Otolum heritage. The complex symbolism of the Cross group and Inscriptions seems to have been refined, simplified and reduced.

The effigy gods are offered to a central figure in the Oval Palace Tablet, the Palace Tablet and the Tablet of the Sun. The powers of office seem to reside in the jester god drum major headdress and the shield-bearing god. In the north-sub the flare god and double-headed serpent completes the triadic givers of power. By 9.17.0.0.0. the Tablet of "Creation" shows a lord, whom I believe to be Berlin's Ruler D or "Lord Kuk", seated in the opposite monster mouth. The monumental scale and achievement of the Otolum was reduced to the small but exquisite tablet of the early Balunte.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BERLIN, HEINRICH

- 1959 Glifos Nominales en el Sarcofago de Palenque, *Humanidades* 2, no. 10. Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala.
- 1963 The Palenque Triad, *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, N.S. vol. 52 Paris.
- 1965 The Inscription of the Temple of The Cross at Palenque, *American Antiquities*, vol. 30, no. 3.
- 1968 The Tablet of the 96 Glyphs at Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico. *Middle American Research Institute*, Tulane University, New Orleans.

COE, MICHAEL D. AND ELIZABETH BENSON

- 1966 Three Maya Relief Panels at Dumbarton Oaks, *Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archeology*, no. 2. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington.

GREENE, MERLE AND J. ERIC S. THOMPSON

- 1967 Ancient Maya Relief Sculpture. Museum of Primitive Art, New York.

GREENE, MERLE AND ROBERT L. RANDES AND JOHN A. GRAHAM

- 1972 Maya Sculpture of the Southern Lowlands, the Highlands and Pacific Piedmont. Lederer Street & Zeus, Berkeley.

KELLEY, DAVID

- 1962 Glyphic Evidence for a Dynastic Sequence at Quirigua, Guatemala. *American Antiquity*, vol. 27.
- 1965 The Birth of the Gods at Palenque. *Estudios de Cultura Maya*, vol. V, Mexico.

KUBLER, GEORGE

- 1969 Studies in Classic Maya Iconography. *Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, vol. XVIII. New Haven.
- 1972 The Paired Attendants of the Temple Tablets at Palenque. *Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología*, XII Mesa Redonda: 317-28. Mexico.

MATHEWS, PETER

Notebooks on the dates and chronology of Palenque.

MATHEWS, PETER AND LINDA SCHELE

1974 Lords of Palenque: The Glyphic Evidence. *Primera Mesa Redonda, Part I.*

PROSKOURIAKOFF, TATIANA

1960 Historical Implications of a Pattern of Dates at Piedras Negras, Guatemala. *American Antiquities*, vol. 25. no. 4.

1963 Historical Data in the Inscriptions of Yaxchilan, *Estudios de Cultura Maya*, vol. 3.

1964 Historical Data in the Inscriptions of Yaxchilan, Part II. *Estudios de Cultura Maya*, vol. 4.

RANDS, ROBERT

1973a The Classic Collapse in the Southern Maya Lowlands: Chronology. *The Classic Maya Collapse*, (ed. by T. Patrick Culbert). Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press.

1973b The Classic Maya Collapse: Usumacinta Zone and the Northwestern Periphery. *The Classic Maya Collapse*, (ed. by T. Patrick Culbert): 165-205, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

SCHELE, LINDA

1973 Observations of the Palaces at Palenque. M.S.

THOMPSON, J. ERIC S.

1970 *Maya History and Religion*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

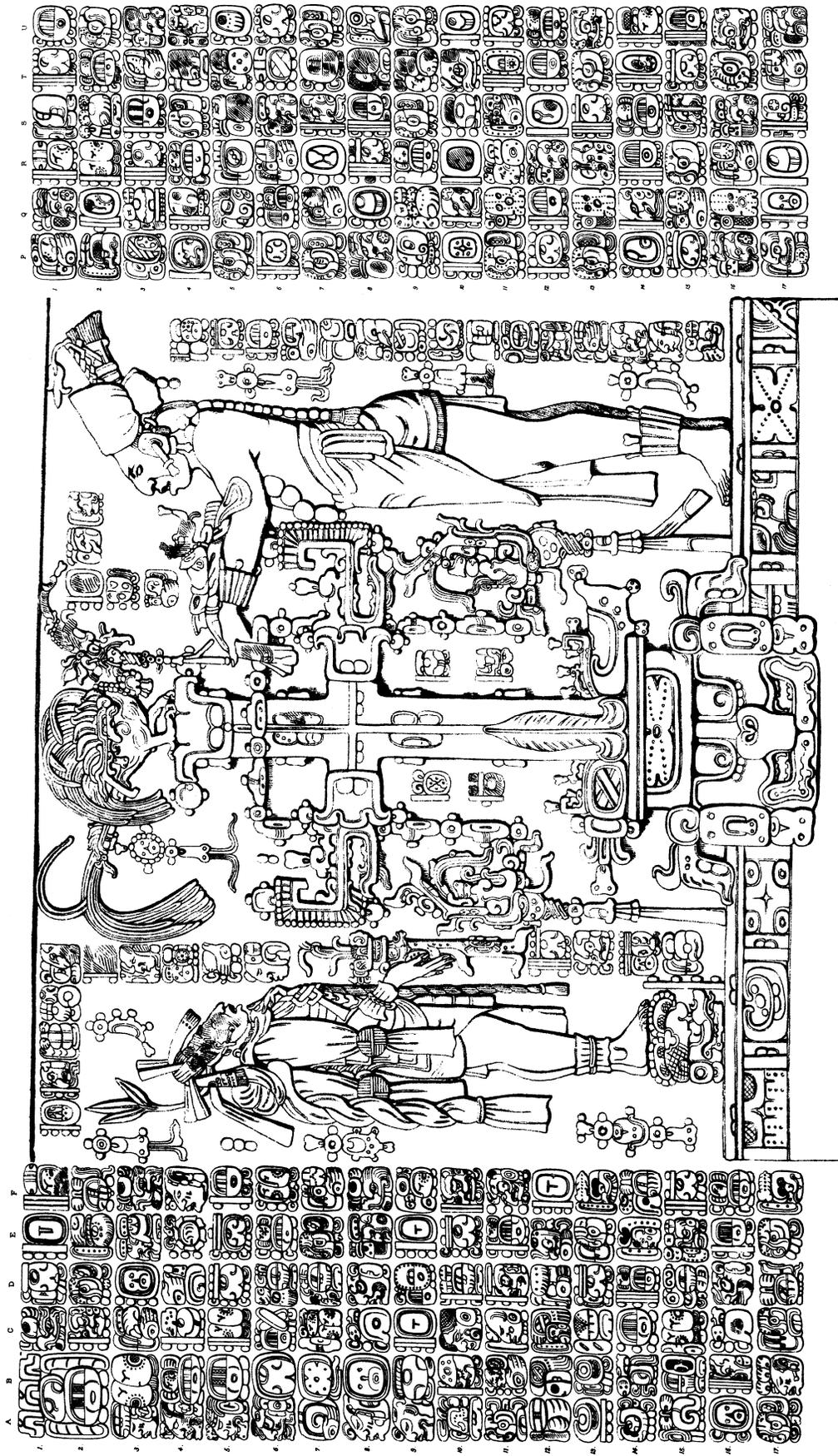
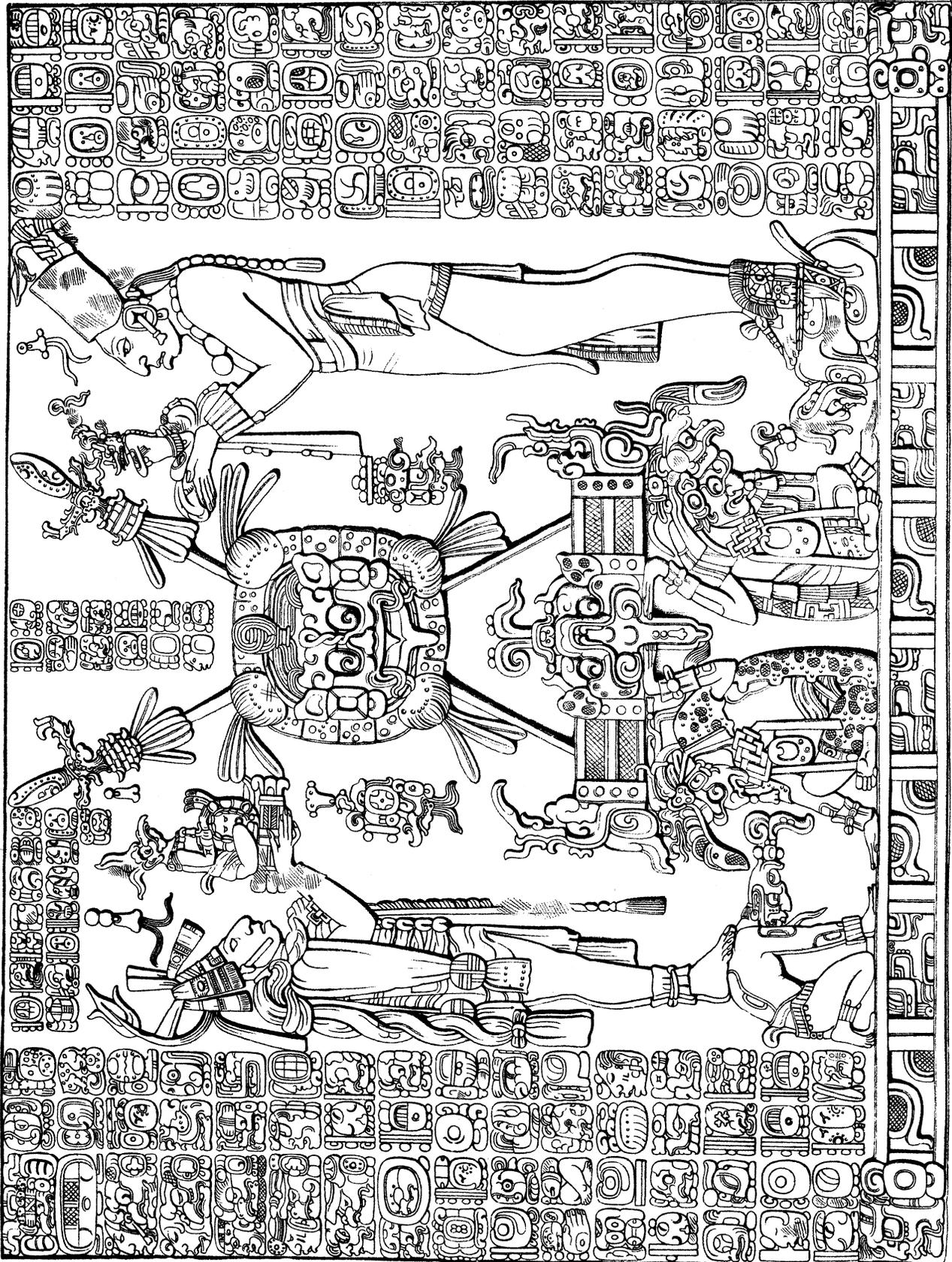


PLATE 1 *Temple of the Cross* After Maudslay, IV, Pl. 76



After Maudslayi, IV, Pl. 88

Temple of the Sun

PLATE 2

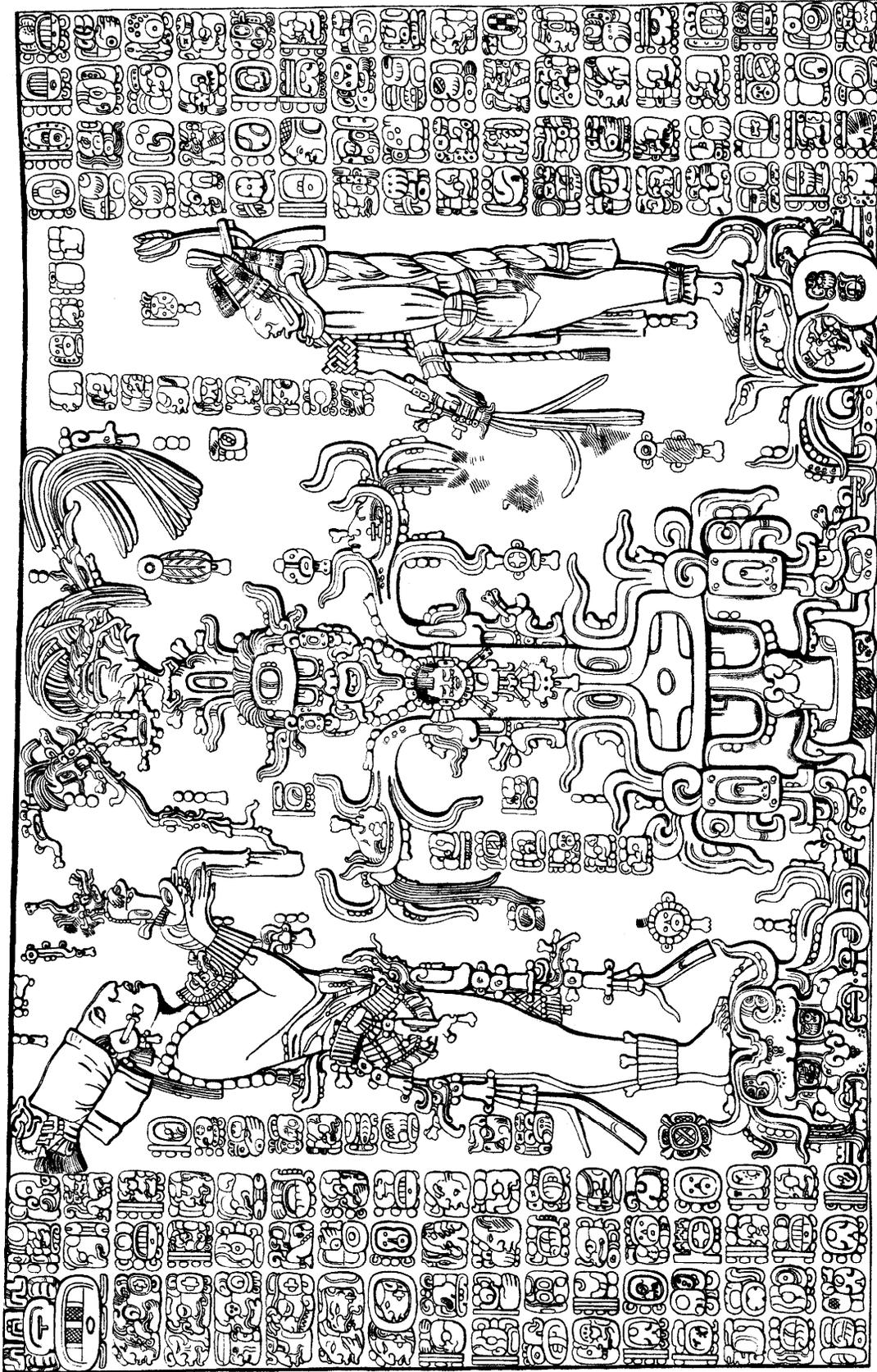


PLATE 3 *Temple of the Foliated Cross* After Maudslay, IV, Pl. 81



PLATE 4

The Sarcophagus Lid

Rubbing by Merle Greene 1967 Pl. 15