

# The Historical Interpretation of the Inscriptions of Uxmal

JEFF KARL KOWALSKI

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During the past twenty-five years, dramatic discoveries have been made in the interpretation of Maya hieroglyphic writing. As a result of the efforts of many scholars, the glyphic inscriptions on the monuments, which were formerly thought to pertain exclusively to calendrical, astronomical, and ritual matters (Morley 1956:229; J. E. S. Thompson 1950:i-2), are now recognized as recording human history, centering on the principal events in the lives of the rulers of the Maya cities.

The first major breakthrough toward demonstrating the historical nature of the inscriptions was made in 1958 by Heinrich Berlin, who discovered the "emblem glyph." After surveying a wide range of Maya inscriptions, Berlin noticed the presence of a specialized type of hieroglyph that always consisted of a standard set of affixes combined with variable main signs. Each main sign had a limited distribution, occurring, with a few exceptions, at one site and no other. Because the main signs were so nearly limited to a specific site and because of certain other contextual clues, Berlin reasoned that these glyphs must have served to identify the locality or city where they appear. He called these specialized signs emblem glyphs, and, although he remained uncertain whether they named a local dynasty, a tutelary deity, or an actual place, he conclusively demonstrated that they function as some sort of identifying sign for a Maya city.

The next important step in the decipherment of Maya inscriptions was made by Tatiana Proskouriakoff. In 1960 she presented glyphic,

iconographic, and ethnohistoric evidence to argue persuasively that the human figures depicted on Piedras Negras stelae are portraits of historical personages, the "lords of the Maya realm" who ruled the city (Proskouriakoff 1960, 1961a).

Since Proskouriakoff's breakthrough in 1960, she and many other scholars have been able to work out dynastic sequences at several other Maya sites, including Yaxchilán (Proskouriakoff 1963, 1964), Naranjo (Proskouriakoff 1960; Berlin 1968), Copán and Quiriguá (Kelley 1962b), Tikal (Coggins 1975; Jones 1977), and Palenque (Berlin 1959, 1970a, 1970b; Kubler 1969, 1972; Lounsbury 1974a; Mathews and Schele 1974;



Fig. 1. The Uxmal Altar.

1985 The Historical Interpretations of the Inscriptions of Uxmal. In *Fourth Palenque Round Table, 1980*, edited by Elizabeth P. Benson. Electronic version. San Francisco: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute.

Schele 1976). In addition, Joyce Marcus (1976) has studied the distribution of emblem glyphs as a means of understanding the social and political structure of the lowland Maya. In each case, subsequent studies have confirmed the correctness of the historical approach.

The prime monument for the study of Maya history at Uxmal is a small cylindrical altar (Fig. 1), designated as Altar 10 (Pollock 1980:275), that was discovered slightly to the south of the House of the Governor (Holmes 1897; Morley 1970). This monument now stands in the courtyard of the church known as the Ermita in Mérida (Fig. 2). Because it has the longest and best-preserved hieroglyphic inscription of any altar at Uxmal, this monument will hereafter be referred to simply as the Uxmal Altar.

The best indication that the inscription on the Uxmal Altar is historical is provided by the presence of emblem glyphs at positions B2, A4, and B5 (Fig. 3). As noted, emblem glyphs apparently name Maya sites; Berlin (1958:111) defined them as consisting of the following principal parts. (1) A principal element (main sign) varies from site to site, with two constant groups of affixes attached: (2) the so-called Ben-Ich superfix and (3) a prefix of the so-called water group as defined by Thompson (1950:276, fig. 43)

On the Uxmal Altar, the glyph at B2 has a

prefix that is definitely a member of the so-called water group.<sup>1</sup> The upper part of the prefix is the often seen cutaway shell motif (T38), but here it is perhaps combined with the T39 prefix, a variant which has a circle with an infixed hook or spiral. The lower part of the prefix has a dotted band that falls from the upper element and terminates in a spiral. The band of dots found in several variants of the water-group prefix (T35, 36, 40) is the essential element. The superfix of glyph B2 is a version of the diagnostic Ben-Ich superfix.<sup>2</sup> The postfix is apparently the comb element (T25), set so that the teeth of the comb face outward (ibid.: 38). The suffix consists of two parts, but they are so eroded as to preclude identification.

The main sign of glyph B2 is the face of a young man wearing a large circular earplug and a close-fitting cap or, perhaps, a cloth strip wrapped around his head. Above the earplug is a dotted form that may represent an animal ear (perhaps a jaguar ear?). The form of this main sign vaguely recalls that of several of the personified variants of the day sign Ahau, but the identification remains uncertain (ibid.: figs. 11, 19-21, 23-25, and 28-29). It is certainly the main sign of an emblem glyph, however; thus it probably refers to some site in the vicinity of Uxmal.

The second emblem glyph on the Uxmal Altar occurs at position A4 (Fig. 3). In this example the



Fig. 2. The Uxmal Altar: (a) as it appears now in the courtyard of the Ermita in Mérida; (b) the side panel.



Fig. 3. The side panel of the Uxmal Altar.

prefix varies somewhat from the most typical forms of the water group, but it still seems to be a variant. Thompson (1962:445) illustrates a God C head as one of the variable elements of the water-group prefix (T41), and this apparently contains a much simplified version of the same motif. The lower part of the prefix contains a long spiral, but no dots or beads such as commonly occur in the water-group prefix. Ordinarily this would suggest that this element is not part of the water group, but the same basic spiral with the expected row of dots occurs at A2 in the prefix of the first emblem glyph. This correspondence of form suggests that this spiral element was considered an acceptable substitute for the more standard form of the water-group prefix. The superfix of A4 is again a variant of the Ben-Ich superfix, and the postfix is probably T130, which often appears with emblem glyphs.

The main sign of the second emblem glyph consists of a circular cartouche containing a vertical band intersecting a diagonal band that connects with the upper right-hand border of the cartouche, passes behind the vertical band, and then stops shortly beyond the center of the left side of the vertical band. As the main sign appears now, it closely resembles glyph T518a or T518b, called the Muluc variant by Thompson (*ibid.*: 119)

If the diagonal band originally continued across the cartouche, the closest parallel would seem to be glyph T73b or T73a, the so-called Hel glyph (*ibid.*: 198). This alternative seems less likely, however, since the diagonals of the Hel glyph normally curve and reach from the upper left to the lower right, the reverse of the Uxmal pattern.

The third emblem glyph on the Uxmal Altar appears at position B5 (Fig. 3). It is the least typical of the three, since it apparently lacks the standard water-group prefix or the prefix is badly eroded. The superfix is definitely the Ben-Ich superfix. Here the Ich again appears with an inscribed cross, much like that of the first emblem glyph at B2.

The main sign of the third emblem glyph is difficult to make out in Holmes' photograph, and is now partly covered with cement. It is possible, though not certain, that the main sign may be a slight variant of the Muluc variant seen at A4, and the two may be the same emblem glyph.

Supporting this possibility is the fact that another example of the Muluc variant glyph, accompanied by a Ben-Ich superfix, occurs on one of the painted capstones from the Nunnery Quadrangle at Uxmal (Fig. 17; Thompson 1973b: fig. 3). More will be said about this example later, but this additional appearance of the Muluc variant glyph does tend to confirm the identification of the two main signs of the emblem glyphs on the Uxmal Altar as Muluc variants as well.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that three of the glyphs in the panel on the Uxmal Altar are emblem glyphs suggests that historical matters of some importance are being recounted. We might therefore expect to find among the remaining glyphs personal names, titles, events, or relationships of some sort.

At other sites where dynastic content has been demonstrated in the inscriptions, the names of rulers and their associated titles often stand in a clause that immediately precedes an emblem glyph. This suggests that the glyphs found in this position on the Uxmal Altar might also be personal names or titles. The clearest confirmation of this hypothesis occurs in glyph A5, which precedes the final emblem glyph and which is surely a female name or title (Fig. 3). The main sign of this glyph is a left-facing human head in profile, with the small rounded forelock and strand of hair curled about the ear that Proskouriakoff (1961b: 83) has identified as the diagnostic traits of female



Fig. 4. God B as he appears in the Codex Dresden.

name glyphs at several sites. This feminine head glyph is prefixed by what seems to be a variant of the 1110 "bone" glyph. Glyph A5 thus seems to name a noblewoman who is connected in some way with the emblem glyph at B5. Because the "bone" element is prominent, a nickname of Lady Bone seems appropriate for this woman.

Our initial assumption that name glyphs should precede emblem glyphs has now been borne out in one instance, strengthening the possibility that the same rule may hold good for the other two examples as well. Preceding the first emblem glyph is a glyph at position A2 that is readily identifiable to students of the Maya codices, for it is the name glyph of God B, the Yucatec rain god Chac, T668 (Figs. 3 and 4; Thompson 1962:264-265). The main sign of the glyph is a cartouche with the features of a face: a small earplug, a mouth with an undulating line at the rear, and a T-shaped eye that resembles the Ik sign and is diagnostic of God B's glyph. The postfix of this glyph is T103, a standard postfix for the name of the rain god occurring often in the Codex Dresden (Villacorta and Villacorta 1930). Thus, the glyph in front of the first emblem glyph is definitely a name, since it appears frequently as the name of God B in the manuscripts. In this instance, however, it seems logical to suppose that it is not the rain god himself who is being named but, rather, a human ruler who has adopted the name of God B as his personal name or title.

Several lines of evidence support this identification of the God B glyph as the name or title of a human ruler. First of all, in most Maya dynastic inscriptions, in contradistinction to female name glyphs, which take the form of a naturalistic feminine-profile head, glyphs that name male rulers or nobles usually take zoomorphic or abstract forms, such as jaguar, shield, serpent-jaguar, "sky," and so on (Proskouriakoff 1961b:84, 1963, 1964; Mathews and Schele 1974; Kelley 1962b). The use of the God B glyph as a ruler's name at Uxmal would be consonant with this trend.

Aside from this general glyphic correspondence, there is also evidence that several of the Late Classic rulers of Tikal may have incorporated the name of the rain god as an element of their personal name phrases. For example, the individual whom Jones has called Ruler A has

as part of his name phrase a glyph with a T561 "sky" prefix and a T1030 long-snouted-head main sign. A second individual, Jones' Ruler B, has in his name phrase a similar glyph consisting of the T16 "yax with darkened sun" and T561c "sky" elements as prefixes and another variant of the T1030 long-snouted head as a main sign (1977: 35, 45). Kubler (1976) has suggested that possible names for Ruler A and Ruler B might be Sky-Rain and Sun-Sky-Rain respectively, in both instances interpreting the long-snouted main sign T1030 as a rain god glyph. At Tikal, then, two earthly rulers incorporated the name glyph of a long-snouted figure, perhaps the rain god, in their own name phrases, suggesting that the God B glyph at Uxmal may also have been used as a personal name.

Finally, the most persuasive evidence supporting the identification of the God B glyph on the Uxmal Altar as a ruler's name comes from the Maya chronicles, wherein references are made to several preconquest Maya lords who took the name of the rain god. For example, in Chilam Balam of Mani, the following reference is made to a ruler of Chichén Itzá named Chac-Xib-Chac: (Katun) 8 Ahau, [10.19.0.0.0 8 Ahau: 1185-1204] he abandoned, (he) the *halach uinic* of Chichén Itzá of the Itzá men, their homes a second time, because of the treachery (plot) of Hunac Ceel Cauich against Chac Xib Chac of Chichén Itzá, because of the plot of Hunac Ceel, *halach uinic* of Mayapan Ichpa. (Barrera Vásquez and Morley 1949: 34-35)

Chac-Xib-Chac is also mentioned several times in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel. Chac-Xib-Chac was said by Landa to be one of the names of the Red Bacab, and Roys believes that this may actually be the name of the red rain god who lived in the east (Tozzer 1941:138; Roys 1967:67, n. 5). That a ruler of Chichén Itzá bore the name of Chac-Xib-Chac suggested to Roys that "here we have an important personage bearing the name of the rain-god, and we may infer that he figured as the representative of the god." In support of this idea, he mentions the fact that five god impersonators wear the mask and headdress of God B on the painted bench from the Temple of the Chac Mool at Chichén Itzá. He suggests that

these figures "impersonated the five Maya rain gods who, like the five Mexican Tlaloque, were set at the four cardinal points and at the center of the heavens" (1967:67, n. 5).

For Uxmal itself, there is evidence that several rulers bore the name of the rain god, the most important being a certain Hun-Uitzil-Chac, said to be the founder and first lord of the city. The most important reference to this personage occurs in Juan Bote's 1581 *relación* of Teabo:

At one time all this land was under the dominion of one lord, although with change and the passage of time, which have been considerable, the last lord of them was a Tutul Xiu from whom descend the natural lords of the said town of Mani of the Royal Crown: and he subjected all the lords of the land more by finesse than by war. They say the first of them [the Tutul Xiu] was called Hunuizilchac. Lord of Uxmal, a most ancient city and well renowned for its buildings, a native of Mexico. And from there he had access to all

the remaining provinces, and because of his grandeur, and especially it is said of him that he was very learned in the natural sciences and in his time he taught them to cultivate the land, divided the months of the year and taught the letters which they were using in the said province of Mani when the conquerors entered this land and little by little they said the Tutulxius came to command all the land, very much to the liking of the natives.<sup>4</sup> (my translation)

Further references to Hun-Uitzil-Chac, the ruler of Uxmal, occur in the Chilam Balam of Mani, the Chilam Balam of Tizimin, and the Xiu family tree of the Xiu family papers. The Chilam Balam of Mani refers to this figure twice in the following terms:

In the book of the Seven Generations, the priest Chilam Balam saw it and he read the roll of the Katun with the priest Napuc Tun, the priest of Hun Uitzil Chac of Uxmal. (Codex Pérez, p. 111; translation in Morley 1941:25)



Fig. 5. Uxmal Stela 14.



Fig. 6. Uxmal Stela 14.

and further:

I, Ah Kauil (Chel) and Napuc Tun and Ah Xupan Nauat the priest(s) of the *halach uinic* Ah Hun Uitzil Chac Tutul Xiu at the *villa* of Uxmal in the land, the district, there in the province of Mayapan, Mai[a] Cu[zamil]. (Codex Pérez, p. 114; *ibid.*)

In the Chilam Balam of Tizimin, the ruler of Uxmal is mentioned in almost the same terms:

The priest Chilam and the priest Napuc Ten the priest of Hun Uitzil Chac [at] Uxmal. (Chilam Balam of Tizimin, folio 6r; *ibid.*)

and again:

I, Ah Kauil Chel and Napuc Ton and Ah Xupan Nauat, the priest(s) of the great *halach uinic* Hun Uitzil Chac Tutul Xiu at Uxmal in the land of Mayapan, May [a] Cu [zamil]. (Chilam Balam of Tizimin, folio 7r; *ibid.*)

Finally, this figure Hun-Uitzil-Chac is mentioned twice in the Xiu family tree, document 3 of the Xiu family papers at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University (*ibid.*:25-26, Morley 1946: 166-167, pl. 22).

In the region where Uxmal is located, southeast of the low chain of hills known as the Puuc, there are many detached hills known locally among the Maya as *uitz*, from which the entire region takes its name (Roys 1943:177). Roys believes that the title Hun-Uitzil-Chac may therefore mean something like 'ruler of the hill country' (*ibid.*: 175). He has also suggested that the word *chac* in the name

probably refers to the Yucatec rain god (1967:66-67). It is also possible that the name Hun-Uitzil-Chac may mean 'the first (*hun*) rain god (*chac*) of the hill country (*uitzil*),' an appropriate title for a ruler supposed to have founded Uxmal.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to Hun-Uitzil-Chac, it is possible that another ruler of Uxmal also carried the title Chac. In the account in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel of the rise of Hunac Ceel to power, we are told that:

Canul [occupied] the jaguar-mat. The second Priest Chable was their ruler. Cabal Xiu was their priest. Uxmal Chac was their commander; formerly he was their priest.

Then Hapay Can was brought to Chemchan. He was pierced by an arrow when he arrived at the bloody wall at Uxmal. (*ibid.*)

Roys writes of this passage that "one of the first rulers of Uxmal was called Hun Uitzil Chac. Evidently the ruler at Uxmal still retained the title of Chac" (*ibid.*: n. 1).

The foregoing evidence strongly suggests that the God B glyph at position A2 on the Uxmal Altar is the name or title of a male ruler who is connected with the following emblem glyph at B2. In northern Yucatán two eminent rulers took the name of the rain god as their own title. The documented use of such a title at Uxmal suggests that this God B glyph may refer to a ruler of the site, although there is little reason to suppose that it refers to Hun-Uitzil-Chac himself. For convenience, we might nickname this ruler Lord Chac.

The final example of a name glyph on the Uxmal Altar would be expected at position B3, before the second emblem glyph at A4 (Fig. 3). Here there are apparently two main signs. The first of these is seemingly a head-form glyph, since it has a recognizable mouth, a circular eye, and a rounded triangular "ear" with three internal spots. The mouth somewhat resembles that of the God B glyph at A2, but with more teeth, and there is some indication that a T form, like that seen as the eye on the T668 God B glyph, may have been carved inside the circular eye. This suggests that the glyph may mix God B characteristics with those of another glyph. The circular eye and the multiple teeth set beneath the thick upper lip are like the features of the highland Mexican rain god, Tlaloc. Combining the features of two rain gods



Fig. 7. The inscription on Uxmal Stela 14.

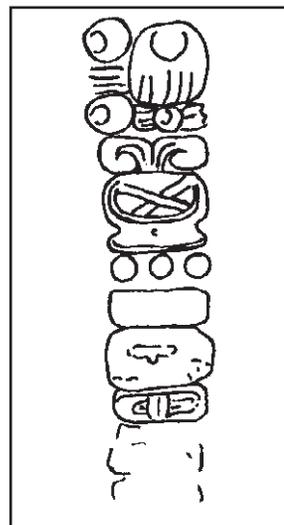


Fig. 8. The inscription on Uxmal Stela 14.

in this manner seems logical and is supported by the fact that images of Tlaloc are closely associated with long-snouted rain god masks on the North Structure of the Nunnery Quadrangle at Uxmal. The spotted circle on the glyph resembles the spotted tympanum on the "frog" uinal glyph (Thompson 1950: fig. 27). The subfix beneath this glyph is probably T84, the same element that occurs beneath the feminine head glyph at A5. The second main sign seems to be a variant of T507, the so-called spotted Kan glyph (Thompson 1962: 105). This glyphic compound is surely the name or title for a male ruler associated with the following emblem glyph. Since a principal element of his name glyph seems to combine the features of both the Yucatec rain god and the uinal glyph, this ruler may be nicknamed Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan.

We have now established that the glyphs at positions B2, A4, and B5 are emblem glyphs and that the glyphs at positions A2, B3, and A5 are appellative glyphs, identifying individuals that we have nicknamed Lord Chac, Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan, and Lady Bone. With persons and places named in this manner, we might expect to find events or relationships of some sort set forth as well.

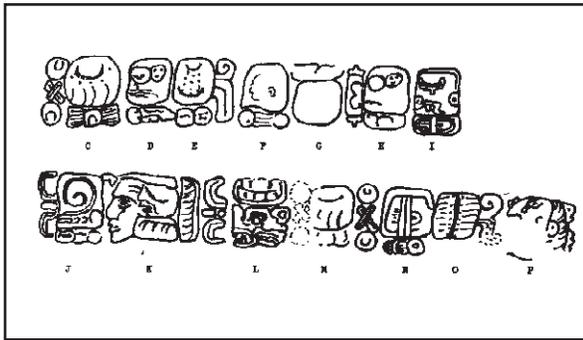
Appearing at positions A3 and B4 are two identical glyphic compounds, the main sign of which is one of the "serpent-segment glyphs (Fig. 3). The entire compound can be transcribed in the Thompson system as T17:565a:?. These two identical glyphs appear before the names of both Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan and Lady Bone and are interposed between their name glyphs and that of Lord Chac. This suggests that they refer to some similar relationship that exists between Lady Bone and Lord Chac and between Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan and Lord Chac. The most common relationship of this type, where one person is identically related to both a man and a woman, is the parent-child relationship. We might interpret the glyphic compound as having some meaning like 'the child or offspring of.'<sup>6</sup> Thus, the final eight glyphs on the Uxmal Altar apparently name a Lord Chac, who is perhaps a ruler of Uxmal, as well as a Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan and a Lady Bone, both from an as yet undetermined site, who are declared to be the parents of Lord Chac.<sup>7</sup>

The panel on the Uxmal Altar opens at A1

with a glyphic compound whose main sign is the Imix glyph (T501). The prefix is T13, and the subfix is a knotted element (T60), below which are two dots.<sup>8</sup> The second glyph at B1 is composed of a T552 crossed bands main sign, with a T122 prefix and a damaged subfix which appears to consist of three dots. The crossed bands main sign has two indentations near the base of its cartouche which give it the appearance of an inverted jar. The T122 prefix consists of two scrolls, which in several contexts are thought to represent smoke or flames.<sup>9</sup>

The form of the first two glyphs on the Uxmal Altar is significant because they also appear on Stela 14 at Uxmal, thus giving us a clue to the content of the inscription on the stela (Figs. 5-8). The inscription on Stela 14 appears to the left of the principal figure, with the glyphs arranged in a single vertical column. The introductory glyph is the same as that seen on the altar, with a T13 prefix, a T501 Imix main sign, and a T60 subfix resembling a knotted element. The second glyph has the same smoking crossed bands on an inverted jar seen in position B1 on the Uxmal Altar. Following this, the third glyph is somewhat worn, but it is apparently composed of the T668 main sign with the T103 subfix and an unidentifiable prefix. In other words, this is the name glyph of God B, or Chac, the same glyph that appears in position A2 on the Uxmal Altar. The T668 main sign is very faint, but both Morley's photo (1970: fig. 21) of Stela 14 and my own show a T-shaped infix in the position of the eye, which is the crucial diagnostic element of the glyph. The subfix is clearly T103, and, since this subfix occurs so commonly as part of God B's name glyph, it serves to confirm the identification of the main sign.

We have seen that the first two glyphs on Stela 14 duplicate those on the Uxmal Altar and that these are followed by the name glyph of God B on both monuments, suggesting that the two texts refer to the same thing. This is also suggested by the fact that the T122:522 compound seen on both of the Uxmal monuments occurs only rarely on other monuments in the Maya region.<sup>10</sup> This indicates that the God B glyph on Stela 14 refers to the same human ruler whom we have designated as Lord Chac, whose name appears coupled with an emblem on the Uxmal Altar.



**Fig. 9.** The hieroglyphic band at the top of the Uxmal Altar.



**Fig. 10.** The hieroglyphic band at the top of the Uxmal Altar.



**Fig. 11.** Detail of the hieroglyphic band at the top of the Uxmal Altar.



**Fig. 12.** Detail of the hieroglyphic band at the top of the Uxmal Altar.



**Fig. 13.** Detail of the hieroglyphic band at the top of the Uxmal Altar.



**Fig. 14.** Detail of the hieroglyphic band at the top of the Uxmal Altar.



**Fig. 15.** Detail of the hieroglyphic band at the top of the Uxmal Altar.



**Fig. 16.** Detail of the hieroglyphic band at the top of the Uxmal Altar.

The name glyph of Lord Chac is the only name glyph evident in the inscription on Stela 14. This is important, since this text is coupled with an image that depicts a richly clad Maya lord wearing a huge stacked feather headdress and standing on a two-headed-jaguar throne (Morley 1956: fig. 41) (Fig. 6). I think we can reasonably assume that the single name glyph in the inscription refers to the principal figure on the stela and that Stela 14 therefore presents a portrait of Lord Chac, whom we can also assume to have been a ruler of Uxmal, since his image appears on a monument at that site and since he stands on a bicephalic-jaguar throne like that found in the platform in front of the House of the Governor at Uxmal. If this ruler on Uxmal Stela 14 is indeed Lord Chac, we may safely identify the emblem glyph following his name at position B2 on the altar as an emblem glyph of Uxmal.

From Stela 14 let us now return to the Uxmal Altar and consider the hieroglyphs on the band running around the top of the monument, where we again find references to Lord Chac, Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan, and possibly to Lady Bone as well (Figs. 1, 2, 9-16). The text opens at position C, above the upper left-hand corner of the side panel, with the same introductory Imix compound (T13:501:60) seen at A1. Following at D and E is the name glyph of Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan, with the Tlaloc(?)–God B-uinal main sign followed by the T507 spotted Kan main sign.

The main sign of the glyph at position F is badly damaged, but the suffix is evidently the same T110 "bone" element that accompanies the feminine head in the name glyph of Lady Bone at A5. There is a faint trace of carving on the interior of the main sign, and it is possible that this was intended to represent a feminine head form. Ian Graham (personal communication, 1979) also shows the outlines of a human face on the interior of this main sign, so this may not be entirely a case of wishful thinking. Glyph G is almost completely obliterated. The main sign has the same large rounded form as the T563 glyph at positions A3 and B4 below, but the T16 prefix does not seem to be present and the identification is therefore extremely doubtful.

At position H we have another possible reference to Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan. Though damaged,

the main sign appears to resemble his name glyph. Here the main sign takes a different prefix and suffix, however. The prefix may be a variant of T184, an important prefix that has been shown to be a title or honorific coupled with rulers' names at Palenque (Lounsbury 1974b). The suffix is unknown, but it is not the T184 or T187 seen in other examples of the name glyph of Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan. Following this glyph at position I is Lord Chac's name glyph, T668:102, appearing virtually identical to the reference at A2 on the altar and on Stela 14.

Having established the presence of emblem glyphs and personal names or titles in the inscriptions on the Uxmal Altar and on Stela 14, we may now scan the other hieroglyphic texts of Uxmal to see if our characters are referred to elsewhere at the site.

On the painted capstone from Building Y of the Nunnery Quadrangle, the glyph of God B (T668:103) is seen in a register below a figural panel (Fig. 17). The register concludes with what is apparently T168:518a. This final glyph has two important components of the emblem glyphs that appear at positions A4 and B5 on the Uxmal Altar: the Ben-Ich superfix and the Muluc variant main sign. This strongly suggests that this glyph is a condensed form of the emblem glyphs on the altar.<sup>11</sup> If this is an emblem glyph, then the preceding God B glyph may refer to the historical ruler of Uxmal, Lord Chac. In this case, however, Lord Chac's name appears in association not with the emblem glyph seen at position B2 on the Uxmal Altar, which we have reason to believe is the emblem glyph of Uxmal, but rather with the emblem glyph associated with his parents, Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan and Lady Bone. This might suggest one of two possibilities: either this Muluc variant emblem glyph is that of another site, from which come the parents of Lord Chac and of which Lord Chac is also the ruler or in some other way connected, or this emblem glyph also refers to Uxmal itself, the site having more than one emblem glyph. This last option is possible, since southern cities such as Palenque and Yaxchilán are known to possess more than one emblem glyph (Marcus 1976: fig. 16).

The Uxmal capstone thus seems to name Lord Chac and to link him with the site of his parents.

Another indication that history is recorded on this capstone occurs in the upper register. There the last glyph bears a similarity to the name glyph of Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan, suggesting that the father of Lord Chac may again be mentioned. Aside from its possible historical content, this capstone is also important because it contains a calendar round date read by Thompson (1973b:62) as 4 Eb 5 Ceh, for which he proposed the Long Count date 10.3.18.9.12 (A.D. 907). The Building Y capstone is similar in format, style, and theme to another painted capstone from the East Structure of the Nunnery. Thompson reads the date on this capstone (Fig. 18) as 10.3.17.12.1 5 Imix 18 Kankin (A.D. 906). Assuming that his readings are correct, we can make a rough placement of the date of the reign of Lord Chac.<sup>12</sup>

On the two hieroglyphic rings from the Ball Court at Uxmal, there are six God B name glyphs (Figs. 19-22). On the south side of the west ring, glyph XIII is composed of two main signs that contain large T-shaped Ik signs (Ruz 1958b:646, fig. 5). These two main signs are surely God B name glyphs (T668), since the second still has a nose and traces of a mouth visible near the lower edge. Thompson (1962:265) identifies them as T668 main signs in his catalog. The suffixes of these T668 main signs do not appear to be the



Fig. 17. Painted capstone from Building Y of the Nunnery Quadrangle, Uxmal.

T103 affix seen on the other versions of Lord Chac's name glyph discussed earlier. The first suffix is partly destroyed but has a large circular element. The suffix of the second glyph may be T23, which appears occasionally with the name glyph of God B in the Codex Madrid.

A similar pair of God B name glyphs appear on the north side of this same Ball Court ring at positions XX and XXI. There the first glyph has the T23 (or T103?) suffix, while the suffix of the second example is different but difficult to identify. This inversion of order is probably insignificant; both paired glyphs probably refer to the same thing. Two more examples of God B glyphs also appear on newly discovered fragments of the east ring of the Uxmal Ball Court (David Kelley, personal communication, 1979).

The God B glyphs on the Uxmal Ball Court rings bear an obvious resemblance to the name glyph of Lord Chac, and it is tempting to regard them as further examples of this ruler's name. There is, however, one obstacle barring such an interpretation which must first be overcome. This is the fact that Ruz (1958b:650) has suggested that the dates on the Uxmal rings read 9.10.16.6.14 6 Ix 17 Pop (actually registering 16 Pop in the Puuc style) and 9.10.16.6.15 7 Men 18 Pop (actually registering 17 Pop in the Puuc style), corresponding

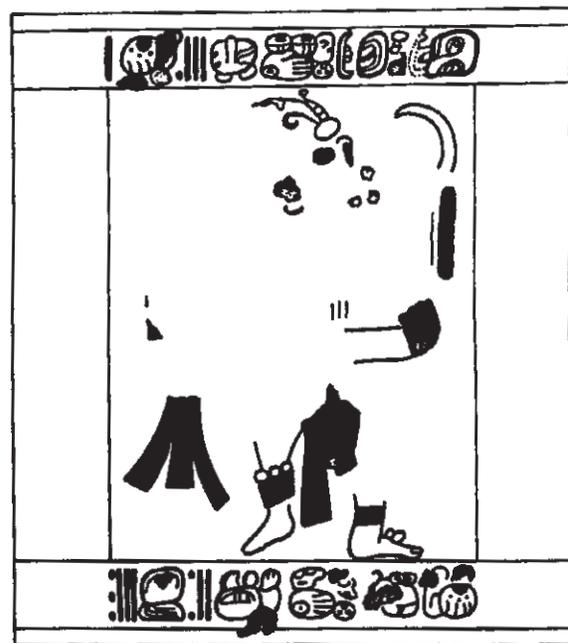


Fig. 18. Painted capstone from the East Structure of the Nunnery Quadrangle, Uxmal.

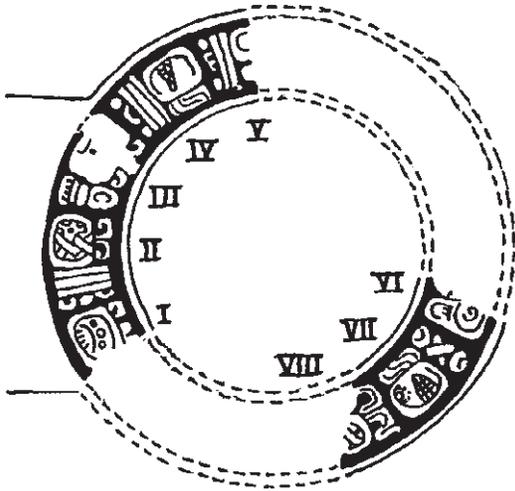


Fig. 19. East ring of the Uxmal Ball Court, north side.

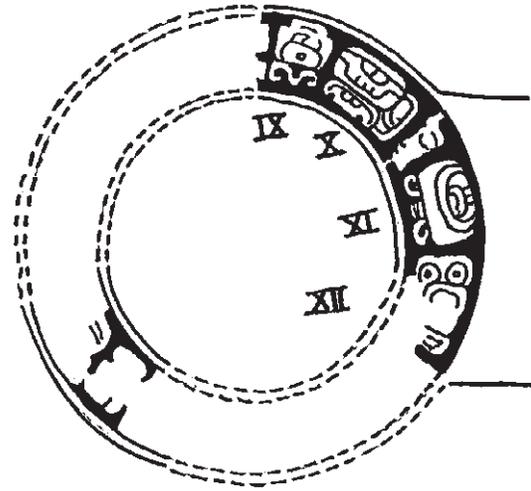


Fig. 20. East ring of the Uxmal Ball Court, south side.

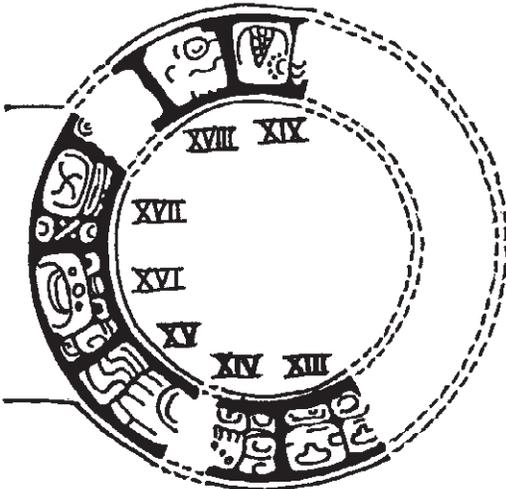


Fig. 21. West ring of the Uxmal Ball Court, south side.



Fig. 22. West ring of the Uxmal Ball Court, north side.

to dates in the year A.D. 649. If Ruz' interpretation of the dates on these rings is correct, it seems impossible that the God B glyphs on them could refer to Lord Chac, since we have seen that his name occurs on the late Stela 14 and possibly on a capstone from the Nunnery dated 10.3.18.9.12 4 Eb 5 Ceh or A.D. 907.

Ruz himself (ibid.:656-657) noted the incongruity of the dates on these Ball Court rings, which seem too early for what is surely a late structure at Uxmal. The fact that the Ball Court is precisely aligned on an axis with the portal vault at the center of the South Structure of the Nunnery and the fact that it has feathered serpents, like those of the West Structure of the Nunnery,

decorating its vertical platform walls suggest that it was built contemporaneously with the Nunnery Quadrangle.<sup>13</sup> As a possible solution to this chronological problem, Ruz suggested that the dates on the rings might commemorate an event of great importance to the city which had taken place in the past, such as the founding of Uxmal.

Considering that God B glyphs like those of the name glyph of Lord Chac appear on the rings of the Ball Court, it seems logical to reexamine the dates to see if they might somehow be brought into accord with the architectural evidence and with the other dates associated with Lord Chac. Fortunately, David Kelley has recently proposed a way out of this chronological dilemma. When

examining all the fragments of the Ball Court rings, Pauline Hartig found that the numerical dot of the 16 Pop on the east ring was sculptured with a sunken center. This would normally have been interpreted as a decorative filler, except that the two flanking elements were, in this case, clearly fillers. On this basis, Kelley (1982:15) suggests that the sunken dot in the haab (winged Cauac) glyph might also be numerical and that the two flanking elements might be fillers rather than numerical dots. This would provide a reading of sixteenth tun, rather than the previously accepted seventeenth tun. Kelley provides three possible readings for this date: 10.3.15.16.14 2 Ix 17 (written 16) Pop, 10.16.15.8.14 11 Ix 17 Pop, and 11.9.15.0.14 7 Ix 17 Pop. He is inclined to accept the first date as probably contemporary with the Ball Court.<sup>14</sup> This date falls less than two years before the first of the Nunnery capstone dates proposed by Thompson. On the basis of this contemporaneity and the presence of the God B name glyphs, it seems reasonable to suppose that Lord Chac is also named on the Uxmal Ball Court rings.

Near Uxmal, at the ruins of Kabah, there are several indications that the inscriptions pertain to historical matters. The longest glyphic text at Kabah is found on four sides of a small square platform in front of the Codz Poop (Figs. 23-28). As on the Uxmal Altar, the surest indication of the historical content on this platform is the presence of emblem glyphs. One of these occurs as the third glyph from the left on the lower register of the west side (Fig. 24). This glyph apparently has a water-group prefix (perhaps a variant of T41 or T229?) and the Ben-Ich superfix. The postfix is T130. The main sign of this emblem glyph does not seem to occur in the Thompson catalog. It is a cartouche containing a band of striated lines that curve from the upper right-hand edge to the lower left-hand edge.

A second emblem glyph is found in the upper register of the east side of the platform (Fig. 28). This glyph has the same water-group prefix variant seen on the west side of the platform (T41 or T229?), a Ben-Ich superfix, and the T130 postfix. The main sign is a cartouche containing a vertical band, behind which passes a horizontal element. This sign closely resembles the Muluc variant main signs of the two emblem glyphs found on

the Uxmal Altar at positions A4 and B5, suggesting that it may be the same emblem glyph. This raises interesting possibilities. We have seen that the Muluc variant emblem glyph names a site connected with Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan and Lady Bone, the parents of Lord Chac of Uxmal. This emblem glyph differs from that following the glyph of Lord Chac on the Uxmal Altar (at position A2), but it does seem to occur after his name on the painted capstone from Building Y of the Nunnery. For this reason it was suggested that the Muluc variant emblem glyph might actually be another variant of the Uxmal emblem glyph. If this is the case, its appearance on the Kabah platform indicates that Uxmal is referred to in the Kabah inscriptions and would signify that close political ties existed between the two sites. On the other hand, it may be that this emblem glyph, appearing as it does at Kabah and differing from the Uxmal emblem glyph at position B2 on the Uxmal Altar, might actually be the Kabah emblem glyph. In this case Lord Chac's parents may have come from Kabah. I regard the first explanation as more likely but can supply no further evidence to support it.

Aside from these two emblem glyphs, there is some evidence that personal names or titles occur on the Kabah platform. For example, on the west side of the platform a clearly recognizable feminine head glyph appears to the left of the emblem glyph (Fig. 24). This is surely a noblewoman. The form resembles that of the feminine head glyphs on the Uxmal Altar but has a different affix. Above this feminine head is a glyph whose main sign incorporates a large T-shaped Ik sign. The lower part of the main sign is worn, but it could have had a mouth and nose. This is followed by an eroded and broken postfix. It seems probable that this glyph is the T668 God B name glyph. Judging from the fact that an emblem glyph appearing on the Uxmal Altar also occurs on the east side of the Kabah platform, it seems possible that this God B glyph may refer to the ruler Lord Chac of Uxmal. On the south side of the Kabah platform, several other female head glyphs are evident (Figs. 25-27). One of these appears in the upper register, followed by what looks like a "moon sign" glyph (T683). Another occurs in the lower register with a T16/T17 "yax" postfix. Both of these may also be the names of upper-class women.



**Fig. 23.** Hieroglyphic platform in front of the Codz Poop at Kabah, west side, north end.



**Fig. 24.** Hieroglyphic platform in front of the Codz Poop at Kabah, west side, south end. God B glyph at upper left. Female head glyph at lower left. Emblem glyph at center of lower register.



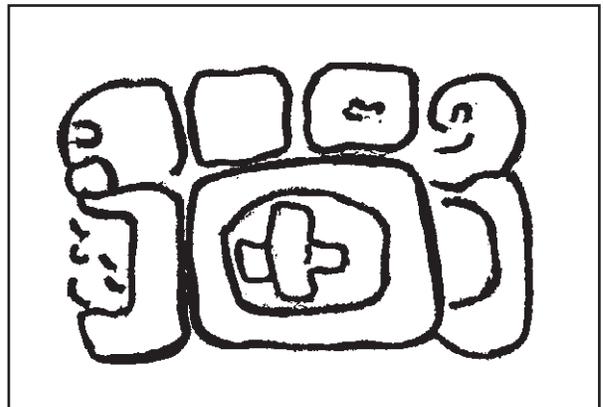
**Fig. 25.** Hieroglyphic platform in front of the Codz Poop at Kabah, south side, west end. Female head glyph in upper register.



**Fig. 26.** Hieroglyphic platform in front of the Codz Poop at Kabah, south side, central section. Female head glyph in upper register at left.



**Fig. 27.** Hieroglyphic platform in front of the Codz Poop at Kabah, south side, east end. Female head glyph in lower register.



**Fig. 28.** Emblem glyph on the east side of the hieroglyphic platform in front of the Codz Poop at Kabah.

The two emblem glyphs on the Kabah platform, that on the east side resembling an emblem glyph found on the Uxmal Altar, and the God B glyph that may refer to Lord Chac of Uxmal suggest that close political amid dynastic ties existed between Uxmal and Kabah. Such bonds are presumably reflected in the fact that an artificial road or *sacbe* originally linked the two cities (Stephens 1843:415). The several female head glyphs presumably name various noblewomen, and this again suggests an interest in family and dynastic matters. It may be that one of these women is from Kabah and married Lord Chac to cement friendly relations between the two cities. This is pure speculation, however; only future research may be able to clarify the nature of this Uxmal-Kabah connection.

What kind of man was Lord Chac of Uxmal? Scant references in glyphic texts are rarely enough to breathe life into a figure, but from the preceding study I think we can see that he must have been a powerful personality. His name dominates the major Late Classic texts of Uxmal, probably appears at Kabah, and perhaps occurs in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá as well.<sup>15</sup> The Uxmal texts serve to connect him with some of the most magnificent late buildings of the site, such as the Nunnery Quadrangle and the Ball Court. His portrait on Stela 14, showing him haughtily surmounting a two-headed-jaguar throne, further suggests a connection with the House of the Governor. It thus seems likely that many of the edifices for which Uxmal is most renowned were begun or brought to completion during his reign. Perhaps we should envision Lord Chac in terms similar to those applied to Lord Pacal of Palenque: as a ruler who through force of character was able to transform Uxmal into one of the great architectural centers of the Maya world.

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## Notes

The illustrations in this essay, with the exception of Figs. 1, 5-7, 17, and 18, are by the author. Fig. 1 is after Holmes (1897:pl. VII). Figs. 5 and 7 are after Morley (1970: figs. 21 and 22). Fig. 6 is after Morley (1956; fig. 41). Figs. 17 and 18 are after Thompson (1973b: figs. 3 and 2).

<sup>1</sup> The water group includes affixes T32 through T41 in the Thompson catalog (1962:445).

<sup>2</sup> For an exhaustive study of the Ben-Ich prefix, wherein a reading of Ahpop, Ahpo, or Ahau is proposed, see Lounsbury 1973.

<sup>3</sup> The entire glyphic compound at B5 is surely an intended emblem glyph, since it has the requisite Ben-Ich superfix, probably shares the main sign of the second emblem glyph, and stands at the end of a text, a traditional position for emblem glyphs at other sites. David Kelley (personal communication, 1979) interprets the final emblem glyph at B5 in yet a different way. He believes that there is an emblem glyph prefix, perhaps T229, and that the main sign may be a variant of the moon glyph, perhaps T683a, with no postfix. Moreover, he would not interpret the main sign of the second emblem glyph (at A4) as a Muluc variant. He does agree, however, on the fundamental point that both are emblem glyphs.

<sup>4</sup> *Relaciones de Yucatán* (1898-1900, 1:287). According to Morley (1941:15), the original manuscript of the *relación* has the name spelled Hunuitzilchac.

<sup>5</sup> The last translation is my own, based on the following facts: the word *hun* means 'one' in Yucatec Maya (Tozzer 1921:99); the word *chac* can mean the rain god, as well as 'rain' (Martinez Hernández 1929:240); the root word of *uitzil* is

*uitz*, which means 'hill.' It is here combined with the suffix *-il*, one function of which is to express a gentilitious relationship, as in *Ho-il*, 'a Meridano' (Tozzer 1921:31).

<sup>6</sup> The compound certainly could not signify marriage in this case, since it links two males. Another possibility would be that it names a relationship between close kin, such as a brother and a sister. We have already pointed out that the two emblem glyphs associated with Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan and Lady Bone may be variants of the same glyph. This would strengthen the interpretation of this compound as a parentage glyph, since we might expect to find a married couple associated with the same site, although this is not always the case. For example, a woman who is referred to on several stelae at Naranjo and who seems to have played a major role in the history of that site is associated with a Tikal emblem glyph (Marcus 1976:58-60).

<sup>7</sup> Some evidence in the inscriptions of other sites supports the idea that Lord Chac-Uinal-Kan and Lady Bone are the parents of Lord Chac and that the distinctive serpent-segment glyph names this relationship. The main sign of this glyphic compound, T565a "serpent-segment," has been interpreted by Kelley (1962b:324) as referring to interpersonal relationships in the inscriptions of Quiriguá, where it appears between appellatives. Pahl (1976b) has also discussed the relationship value of T565a. The strongest evidence for the "parentage" meaning of this glyph, however, comes from its usage in the present context and from the structure of the passage. According to Lounsbury (personal communication, 1979), this is the standard format of a parentage statement as part of the extended appellative phrase of a protagonist: OWN NAME - RELATIONSHIP-FATHER'S NAME - RELATIONSHIP - MOTHER'S NAME.

<sup>8</sup> This Imix compound occurs as an introductory glyph with some frequency in Yucatecan inscriptions. Its close connection with a name suggests that it may be a title.

<sup>9</sup> For example, such scrolls represent smoke or flames when emerging from the smoke tube in the forehead of the flare god or God K or when seen atop a glyph that has been identified as a fire glyph (T122:563a; Kelley 1968). Lounsbury (per-

sonal communication, 1979) has suggested that this inverted vase with a prefixed flare, crossed bands on the side, and three dots beneath it (or sometimes with a prefixed numeral 9) may be one of the appellatives or attribute glyphs of the sun god; this was also used as a name or title by Maya rulers.

<sup>10</sup> According to the Thompson catalog (1962: 166), a T122:552 combination occurs at Palenque, where it is prefixed by the number 9. See also note 9 above.

<sup>11</sup> There are examples of recognizable emblem glyphs without the water-group prefix in the inscriptions of other Maya sites (see Marcus 1976:10).

<sup>12</sup> Whether or not we should make this assumption is debatable. In a recent paper, David Kelley (1977a) argues that Thompson's methodology is unjustifiable; Kelley accepts Morley's original reading of 11.12.17.11.1 5 Imix 19 Kankin.

<sup>13</sup> The masonry of the Hall Court is also extremely fine and probably late.

<sup>14</sup> Floyd Lounsbury (personal communication, 1979), before learning of the results of Hartig's inspection, also proposed that the tun coefficient might be 16 rather than 17, which places the date at 10.3.15.16.14 2 Ix 17 (written 16) Pop.

<sup>15</sup> God B glyphs (T668) occur on Lintel 3A (front edge of Lintel 3) at position B and on Lintel 7A (front edge of Lintel 7) at Las Monjas of Chichén Itzá (see Thompson 1977). The events described on the lintels seem to have occurred about fifteen to twenty-five years before the references to Lord Chac at Uxmal. There is, however, no other contextual evidence to prove that these God B glyphs refer to Lord Chac. Another possible God B glyph appears at position D4 on a drum from the south column of Structure 6E 1 at Chichén Itzá (Proskouriakoff 1970: fig. 17). Proskouriakoff has pointed out resemblances between the figures on this column and those of the Puuc area. The God B glyph names a figure wearing a broad-brimmed headdress similar to that worn by Lord Chac on Stela 14 at Uxmal. Significantly, all four figures on the Chichén column wear distinctive two-lobed pectorals, whose only other occurrence is on the minor figure to the right of Lord Chac on Stela 14.